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Abstract

This dissertation examines the application of Islamic theology (*kalām*) and philosophy to the elaboration of Almohadism, a new form of Islam founded in North Africa by Muḥammad Ibn Tūmart (ca. 1080-1130). There has been a consistent interest in Ibn Tūmart's role as the progenitor of the Almohad Caliphate (1121-1269) and his claim to be the infallible *imām* and awaited *mahdī*, a messianic figure within Islam. However, most treatments of Ibn Tūmart's religious thought have relied on historical accounts rather than the extant body of writings attributed to him, *The Book of Ibn Tūmart* (*BIT*). Using manuscript evidence and an array of Arabic and Latin sources, I confront questions about the authenticity of this compilation of Ibn Tūmart's writings. I conclude that Ibn Tūmart authored all texts in *BIT* (except the few explicitly attributed to other hands) and offer a new arrangement of the text that reconciles discrepancies between the two extant manuscripts. I propose a new reading of the text based on the structure imparted to the compilation by its compiler. *BIT* begins with an analysis of the epistemological principles of the Islamic sciences—especially jurisprudence and theology. Ibn Tūmart's epistemology is remarkable for its deep commitment to rationalism in speculative theology and the interpretation of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. On these principles, it proceeds to an exposition of divine unity (*tawḥīd*), a theory of religious leadership (*imāma*), and a program of missionary activity and militant *jihād* under the belief that Ibn Tūmart possesses exclusive authority to adjudicate among and teach all Muslims. Throughout this dissertation, I aim to contextualize Ibn Tūmart's thought within contemporary intellectual developments, particularly the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) and his Ash'arī reception by al-Juwaynī, al-Ghazālī, and others. I argue that, although Ibn Tūmart emerged from a Sunnī background, he adopted minoritarian views within

Sunnism and applied them in a radical way. These views include the idea that one's salvation is predicated on knowledge of (rather than mere belief in) God and the rejection of the Sunnī principle of infallibilism in legal reasoning (*ijtihād*). These positions, along with Ibn Tūmart's claim to be the awaited *mahdī*, put the Almohad movement into conflict with North African Sunnism. The Almohads' struggle to impose a rationalist vision of Islam on twelfth-century Morocco culminated in several bloody purges of those who opposed them in favor of a traditionalist form of Islam. Within Ibn Tūmart's writings, we see a push toward popular enlightenment, an outgrowth of his belief that salvation requires knowledge. I conclude the dissertation with a discussion of Almohadism's decline and its influence on intellectual life in Morocco and al-Andalus. Almohad Islam, likely due to its radicalism, failed to maintain its viability as a new form of Islam separate from Sunnism because it failed to win enough converts among local scholars to effect a lasting demographic shift. However, Ibn Tūmart's mahdism and emphasis on popular enlightenment provoked skepticism in the following centuries toward the role of religious rationalism within Islamic politics.

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A Note on the Text and Abbreviations

Editions of the Text

There are five extant versions of *The Book of Ibn Tūmart*: two manuscripts, the *editio princeps*, and two critical editions. Capital letters "A" through "E" denote one of the five complete versions of *BIT*:

A = Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds arabe 1451

B = Ms. Rabat, Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc, al-Khizāna al-'Āmma, 1214 qāf

C = J. D. Luciani, ed., *Le Livre de Mohammed Ibn Toumert, mahdi des Almohades* (Algiers: P. Fontana, 1903).

D = 'Ammār Ṭālibī. *A 'azz mā yuṭlab* (Algiers: 'Āṣimat al-Thaqāfa al-'Arabiyya, 2007 [1985]).

E = 'Abd al-Ghanī Abū al-'Azm, *A 'azz mā yuṭlab* (Mu'assasat al-Ghanī li-l-Nashr, 1997).

Unless otherwise noted, I cite 'Ammār Ṭālibī's edition ("D")

Abbreviations

Encyclopaedia of Islam (Brill):

EI2, "Title" (Author).

EI3, "Title" (Author).

Introduction

The story of the Almohad Caliphate begins with one man's journey across a large swath of the Islamic world in search of knowledge. Muḥammad ibn Tūmart was born in the village of Īgīllīz in present day Morocco around 471/1080. While the exact location of Īgīllīz remains an open question, we can comfortably locate Ibn Tūmart's birthplace somewhere in the Sūs valley between Marrakesh and Taroudant.[1] As a scion of a prominent family within the Hargha, one of the major tribes of the Maṣmūda federation, Ibn Tūmart likely had access to a network of mosque schools in which young Amazigh boys learned the fundamentals of the Arabic language, memorized the Qur'ān and prophetic traditions (sing. *ḥadīth*), and studied Islamic Law. Little is recorded about Ibn Tūmart's early education, but we know that he continued his studies in Marrakesh.[2] Founded by the Almoravids, a Ṣanhāja Amazigh empire that swept into Morocco from the Sahara just a few decades before Ibn Tūmart's birth, Marrakesh quickly became the political and intellectual capital of this North African empire. In order to raise the standards of Islamic education in southern Morocco, the Almoravids recruited major Sunnī scholars from Fez, al-Andalus, and Tunisia to support the mission of their founder, ʻAbdallāh b. Yāsīn (d. 451/1059). Ibn Yāsīn (who may have been a convert from a traditional Amazigh religion, rather than a born Muslim) dedicated his life to the promulgation of Mālikī-Sunnī Islam among the Ṣanhāja and other Amazigh tribes whom he believed to be unorthodox or insufficiently Muslim.[3]

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[1] Henri Basset and Henri Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et fotresses almohades* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001 [1932]), 13. Rachid Bourouiba, *Ibn Tumart* (Algiers: Société Nationale d'Edition et de Diffusion, 1982), 11-15. Allen Fromherz, "The Almohad Mecca: Locating Igli and the Cave of Ibn Tūmart," *al-Qantara* 26 (1), 175-90.

[2] On Ibn Tūmart's early studies, see Rachid Bourouiba, *Ibn Tumart* (Algiers: Société Nationale d'Edition et de Diffusion, 1982), 17-18; 22-23. See also, Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan b. al-Qaṭṭān, *Naẓm a-jumān li-tartīb mā salafa min akhbār al-zamān*, ed. Maḥmūd ʻAlī Makkī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990), 90; ʻAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn, *Histoire des Berbères et des dynasties musulmans de l'Afrique septentrionale*, trans. Le Baron de Slane, vol. 2 (Algiers: Imprimerie du Gouvernement, 1854), 163.

[3] Michael Brett and Elizabeth Fentress, *The Berbers* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 100.

Like many Muslim youths in the Islamic West with scholarly aspirations, Ibn Tūmart embarked upon "a journey in search of knowledge" (*riḥla fī ṭalab al-ʿilm*) to the Islamic East beginning with the *ḥajj* pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina.[4] The traditional account of Ibn Tūmart's sojourn in the East is a mix of history and hagiography. The most striking claim we encounter concerns his relationship with the Sunnī luminary, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, at the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad. Some sources even claim that al-Ghazālī gave Ibn Tūmart his great commission to return to his native land after hearing that the Almoravid authorities had burned copies of his *Revival of the Religious Sciences* in cities across Morocco and al-Andalus.[5] While recent scholarship tends to agree that Ibn Tūmart did not study with (and likely could not have studied with) al-Ghazālī, the content of Ibn Tūmart's extant writings evince his intimate knowledge of the style of theology (*kalām*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) which the professors of the Baghdad Niẓāmiyya had developed over the last half of the fifth/eleventh century. Characteristic of their approach to the Islamic sciences is their modification of Ashʿarī theology in response to Abū ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā's philosophy (in particular, his metaphysics and theory of modality), the study

[4] On the theme of *riḥla fī ṭalab al-ʿilm*, see Roxanne L. Euben, *Journey to the Other Shores* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 13-14.

[5] On the hagiographical elements of Ibn Tūmart's biography, see David J. Wasserstein, "A Jonah Theme in the Biography of Ibn Tūmart," in *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung*, eds. Farhad Daftary and Josef W. Meri (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 232-49; and Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 754-56; 765-66. On the burning of al-Ghazālī's *Revival*, see Dominique Urvoy, "The *'Ulamā'* of al-Andalus," in Salma Khadra Jayyusi (ed.), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 866-67; Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Why Did the Scholars of al-Andalus Distrust al-Ghazālī? Ibn Rushd al-Jadd's *Fatwā* on *Awliyā' Allāh*," *Der Islam* 83, no. 1 (2006), 137-40; 150-56; Xavier Casassas Canals and Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Putting Criticisms of al-Ghazālī in Perspective: New Materials on the Interface between Law, Rational Theology and Mysticism in Almoravid and Almohad al-Andalus (Ibn Rushd al-Jadd and al-Qurṭubī)," in Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (eds.), *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ashʿarism East and West* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 257-67.

of the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) elaborated by the Shāfi'ī legal school, and an openness to Ṣūfī psychology and ascetic practices.[6]

The Almohad movement began to take shape upon Ibn Tūmart's arrival in Tunis in 508-9/1115-16 after nearly a decade in the East. The Almohad chronicler, al-Baydhaq, begins his *Memories of the Mahdī* (*Akhbār al-mahdī*) by tracing Ibn Tūmart's gradual journey from Tunis to Marrakesh. A central component of al-Baydhaq's official history of the Almohad movement is the notion that there was a great hunger for Islamic learning in North Africa that the schools patronized by the Almoravids in Morocco and al-Andalus, and the Zīrids and Ḥammādids in Algeria and Tunisia could not satisfy. In *Memories*, Ibn Tūmart encounters many devout Muslims looking for spiritual and moral guidance. Of these, the most prominent is the Zanāta Amazigh, 'Abd al-Mu'min, who would later succeed Ibn Tūmart and become the first Almohad caliph. As al-Baydhaq tells it, 'Abd al-Mu'min was on his way to the Islamic East for the same reasons that brought Ibn Tūmart there just a decade before: to study the fundamental questions of Islam with the great scholars of Baghdad and Alexandria. His meeting with Ibn Tūmart changed his mind; he was convinced that the light of the East had already arrived in the West:

> The Infallible One [i.e. Ibn Tūmart]—may God be pleased with him—asked him, "Where are you going, young man?" He replied, "My lord, I am going to the East to search for knowledge." The Infallible One—may God be pleased with him—said to him, "The knowledge that you want to acquire in the East you have already found in the West!"[7]

Along the way back to Marrakesh, Ibn Tūmart acquired many Amazigh followers who, like him, were dissatisfied with the state of Islam under the Almoravids. Ibn Tūmart gained a reputation as

[6] On Ibn Tūmart and the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa*s, see Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 757-65. Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 25-40; 77-81.

[7] Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-mahdī*, (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr, 1971), 16.

a fiery preacher and a strict moralist. He and his followers agitated against the Almoravid authorities and entered into debates with prominent Mālikī scholars over law and theology. Famous among these episodes was his habit of entering marketplaces to break musical instruments and to pour out jugs of wine into the streets. Ibn Tūmart criticized the Almoravids for their (as he saw it) lax enforcement of the Islamic public code known as the *ḥisba*.

The Almoravid *amīr* ʻAlī b. Yūsuf (r. 500-37/ 1106-43) eventually granted Ibn Tūmart an audience, perhaps hoping to neutralize the danger posed by this popular preacher by bringing him into a closer relationship with the court. Ibn Tūmart publicly insulted the *amīr* by criticizing the Ṣanhāja custom of men wearing a face veil (*liththām*) as un-Islamic and feminine. Ibn Tūmart's opposition to the Almoravids was twofold. On the one hand, the Maṣmūda tribal federation chafed under Almoravid rule (and taxation) and resented the presence of the invading Ṣanhaja in their lands. On the other hand, in historical sources Ibn Tūmart comes across as genuinely critical of the style of Islam the Almoravids wanted to impose on their subjects across the empire.[8]

ʻAlī b. Yūsuf banished Ibn Tūmart to nearby Aghmāt after he had assaulted the *amīr*'s sister for riding in the streets of Marrakesh with her face uncovered (a common practice for Ṣanhāja noblewomen). Ibn Tūmart continued to agitate against the Almoravid state in Aghmāt and entered into public debates with Sunnī scholars and jurists. On the recommendation of his advisors, ʻAlī b. Yūsuf ordered Ibn Tūmart's arrest.[9] Ibn Tūmart and his closest followers sought refuge in the fortress (*ribāṭ*) of his native Hargha tribe in 515/1121. During this time, reminiscent

[8] On Ibn Tūmart's agitation against the Almoravids in Fez and Marrakesh, see Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-mahdī*, (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr, 1971), 23-24; 27-29; 31-32.
[9] Al-Baydhaq attributes this plot against Ibn Tūmart to the Andalusī jurist and philosopher, Mālik b. Wuhayb. See Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-mahdī*, (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr, 1971), 27-29.

of the early Muslims *hijra* to Medina, Ibn Tūmart made major steps toward organizing his followers into a coherent movement that was both politically and intellectually opposed to the Almoravid state. In Īgīllīz, he declared himself to be "the infallible *imām* and acknowledged *mahdī*" (*al-imām al-ma'ṣūm wa-l-mahdī al-ma'lūm*) and summoned his students and local notables to pledge an oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) to him. Ibn Tūmart designated 'Abd al-Mu'min and nine others from his entourage as "the Ten" (*al-'ashara*).[10] The surviving members of this group would come to occupy the highest political and religious offices in the early Almohad state.

Politically, Ibn Tūmart rallied many from the Maṣmūda federation around himself. He conquered the fortress of Tīnmall tribe, killing all those who opposed his leadership. Together they led a prolonged war against the Almoravids. The Almohads faced setbacks early in their campaign, prompting Ibn Tūmart to pursue a bloody purge (*tamyīz*) of his own followers. The *tamyīz* ("act of distinction") was originally an Amazigh political ritual in which the representatives of various tribes would line up before the ruler in a military formation to be inspected. The Almohads inverted the *tamyīz* by using it as a pretense to slaughter Almohads who questioned the Mahdī's absolute authority as an example to those who were tempted to abandon the Almohad cause.[11] Ibn Tūmart died in 524/1130 in the middle of the war against the

[10] According to Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, the Almohads recognized Ibn Tūmart as the awaited *mahdī* in 515/1121. Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan b. al-Qaṭṭān, *Naẓm a-jumān li-tartīb mā salafa min akhbār al-zamān*, ed. Maḥmūd 'Alī Makkī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990), 123-28. Compare, al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-mahdī*, (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr, 1971), 34-35.

[11] Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-mahdī*, (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr, 1971), 41. For an interpretation of the *tamyīz* within the Amazigh tribal context, see Allen J. Fromherz, *The Almohads: The Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 65-66. Al-Marrākushī uses the term *tamyīz* in reference to the dress Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb al-Manṣūr imposed upon Maghribī Jews to distinguish them in public from Muslims. He clarifies that this is not because the Almohads permitted Jews to continue practicing Judaism, but rather to distinguish Almohad Muslims of Jewish origin from other Almohad Muslims! See 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *al-Mu'jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-maghrib* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2006), 223-24.

Almoravids. ‘Abd al-Mu’min took the reins of the Almohad movement and concealed Ibn Tūmart’s death from the majority of the Almohads, possibly fearing that the news of his death would detract from Ibn Tūmart’s messianic claims.[12] The Almohads entered Marrakesh victoriously in 526/1147 and quickly absorbed the remnants of the Almoravid empire. Under ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s leadership, the Almohad Caliphate expanded their empire over virtually all of the Islamic West.

But the Almohad movement was not only motivated by tribal politics. In tandem with the foundation of the Almohad movement in Ribāṭ Hargha, Ibn Tūmart dedicated himself to explaining his objections to the Almoravid-Sunnī establishment and elaborating his unique vision for Islam. This dissertation concerns itself with the provenance and content of these writings, published posthumously as *The Book of Ibn Tūmart*. Although political motives were certainly at play in the early history of the Almohad Caliphate, we cannot sufficiently account for Ibn Tūmart’s political success unless we confront his establishment of a novel Islamic movement, at the heart of which are his objections to Sunnism and his claim to be the infallible *imām* and awaited *mahdī*.

Recent scholarship has raised doubts about the Almohads’ characterization of Mālikī Sunnism under the Almoravids, particularly the allegation that the Almoravids encouraged a corporealist or anthropomorphic view of God (*tajsīm*). Many scholars that the Almoravids patronized promoted an Ash‘arī theology quite similar to Ibn Tūmart’s in order to eradicate corporealism among Muslims in Morocco and al-Andalus. Regardless, the accusation that the Almoravids promoted *tajsīm* or neglected the study of the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* in favor of popular

[12] On Ibn Tūmart’s death, see al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-mahdī*, (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr, 1971), 41-42. See also, Allen J. Fromherz, *The Almohads: The Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 67-69.

manuals of legal precedent (*furūʿ*) remains a key component of the Almohads' self-understanding. The historicity of these allegations remains an important question, but to restrict ourselves to evaluating their veracity reinforces the impression that the Almohad Caliphate was primarily a propaganda effort. Underneath these allegations against the Almoravids lurks a more important question for our understanding of the form of Islam to which Ibn Tūmart gives expression in his writings. To what extent were Almohad Muslims self-conscious of Almohad Islam's incompatibility with the legal and theological positions common to local, Mālikī Sunnism and global Sunnism?

The title of this dissertation— "The Dearest Desire: Philosophy and Islam in *The Book of Ibn Tūmart*"—refers to the title of the opening chapter of *BIT*: "The Dearest Desire" (*Aʿazz mā yuṭlab*). The dearest thing that human beings can desire, seek out, and possess is knowledge (*ʿilm*). As Franz Rosenthal has shown in his monumental study, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (originally published in 1970), medieval Muslim scholars conceptualized knowledge in many different ways. For Qur'ān commentators, *ḥadīth* scholars, and jurists, knowledge was primarily that which the pious Muslim extracted from scripture through laborious study. For the *mutakallimūn* and other theologically minded folk, both revelation and human reason were rich sources of knowledge about God and His operation in creation. For mystics, ascetics, and some Shīʿa Muslims, true knowledge emerged from the individual's direct encounter with the divine, whether through prayer and renunciation or literal kinship with the Prophet Muḥammad. Philosopher's, physicians, and other freethinkers sought knowledge in the consideration of logic and nature outside of the influence of Islam. Each of these groups tended to portray their knowledge or science as the primary, or even *exclusive* candidate for *ʿilm* in the truest sense. In Ibn Tūmart we see an individual thinker who, though

discriminating, remained open to the possibility that knowledge was to be found in all of the pursuits enumerated above.

As will become clear, knowledge for Ibn Tūmart was not simply beneficial, a commendable but optional pursuit reserved for men of leisure and ability; rather, he posits on the basis of his reading of Islamic scripture and tradition that knowledge is the *sine qua non* of salvation for all Muslims. In opposition to the majority of Muslims scholars who considered the simple but sincere faith of the intellectually average believer to suffice for salvation (i.e. for one to be included in the community of *believers* that will enter Paradise), Ibn Tūmart portrayed simple faith as insufficient to validate the belief and acts of worship necessary to secure God's salvation in this life and the next. *BIT* responds to the urgency of imparting to all Muslims and all potential Muslims, the elite and the masses, this saving knowledge by showing the individual how to understand the fundamental doctrines and practices of Islam for himself instead of rendering uninformed assent to an authority (*taqlīd*).

This dissertation makes two over-arching claims: one regarding the text's provenance, the other regarding its contents:

1.) Contrary to a dominant, revisionist strand within Almohad scholarship, which portrays *BIT* as subject to manipulation by subsequent authors, I argue on the basis of the text itself and on historical testimony that, although *BIT* is a posthumous compilation of Ibn Tūmart's writings and lectures, we have no substantial cause to doubt the traditional ascription of the authorship of these texts to Ibn Tūmart.
2.) The individual texts included in *BIT* are mutually consistent and reflect Ibn Tūmart's project of elaborating the tenets of Almohad Islam and how he arrived at these tenets. I divide *BIT* into four main sections: (i) knowledge and epistemology, (ii) theology,

(iii) leadership, and (iv) conflict (*fitna*) and *jihād*. *BIT* progresses from a consideration of the nature and definition of knowledge to the application of epistemology to jurisprudence, theology, and the imāmate.

To the Almohads, Ibn Tūmart's writings were not merely the teachings of an esteemed master, but rather the teachings of the man they held to be the infallible *imām* and awaited *mahdī* who would re-establish Islam as the Prophet had practiced it. *BIT* served as the blueprint for the practice and propagation of Almohad Islam. There are a wide range of views on *BIT* in the secondary literature. Over the twentieth century, major scholars of the Almohad period, such as Ambrosio Huici Miranda and Roget Le Tourneau, advanced the view that the Ibn Tūmart's writings were neither coherent nor original. More recently, scholars have tried to rehabilitate *BIT* as a source in Almohad historiography. Madeleine Fletcher and Maribel Fierro call the authorship of *BIT* into question. Contrary to the traditional ascription of the text to Ibn Tūmart, they argue that *BIT* is the work of many authors and that its primary purpose was the political legitimation of the Almohad Caliphate upon their expansion into al-Andalus in the mid- to late sixth/twelfth century. Although there have been recent attempts to examine Ibn Tūmart's doctrines, this dissertation will be the first study dedicated to exploring the contents and context of *BIT* in a systematic way. In order to understand the Almohad movement and its profound impact on Islamic thought, in both the West and the East, we must examine the documents the Almohads held to be fruit of Ibn Tūmart's retrospection of the Islamic sciences from the revelation of the Qur'ān up to the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century.

The major tenets of Almohad Islam that I will highlight in my analysis of *BIT* are:

(a) *Epistemology:* Ibn Tūmart makes a radical commitment to the principle "reality/truth is one" (*al-ḥaqq wāḥid*).[13] Knowledge (*'ilm*), conceived of as the conformity of the human intellect to reality or truth, is also one and is formally distinct from other, deficient forms of cognition (e.g. ignorance, doubt, and conjecture). Although his commitment to this epistemological principle seems ordinary when viewed from a philosophical perspective, *al-ḥaqq wāḥid* has startling ramifications when applied to the elaboration of Muslim beliefs (*'aqā'id*) and the independent interpretation of Islamic Law (*ijtihād*). In theology, the exclusivity of knowledge as a form of cognition entails that if something *can* be known by way of reason (*'aql*), then it *must* be known by way of reason. Ibn Tūmart understands this "must" in both a metaphysical and a legal sense. Some doctrines, especially the doctrine of God's unity (*tawḥīd*), must be known according to reason because the content of this doctrine is such that one cannot achieve the formal criteria for knowledge of it without appealing to reason. Otherwise, the doctrine of *tawḥīd* is reduced to the rote repetition of the proposition, "God is one" without comprehending its meaning. Ibn Tūmart believed rational knowledge of Almohad doctrines to be incumbent on all Muslims and a prerequisite for the validity of ritual prayer and other acts of worship before God.

(b) *Legal Positivism:* Unlike *tawḥīd* and other theological topics that one can pursue by way of reason, Ibn Tūmart sets apart Law and ethics as a body of knowledge that can only be accessed by appealing to the positive content of divine revelation. This body

[13] D, 51. Here, Ibn Tūmart uses a variant phrase: "reality/truth is unified" (*al-ḥaqq muttaḥid*). See also, Aron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 275 n. 120; 280.

of knowledge also includes credal points about the afterlife, God's essence, and spiritual beings, since the nature of these things are utterly foreign to human reason and sense perception. As opposed to earlier Muslim positivists, who accept the primacy of scripture at face value, Ibn Tūmart defends his positivist approach to these topics by appealing to reason, in particular, his doctrines of God's absolute unity and transcendence (*tanzīh*). If God's essence and will are such that no created being can acquire knowledge of it by sense-perception or reason, then human beings depend on the positive revelations God grants them by the mediation of His prophets and the human languages through which they deliver these revelations. As a consequence, Ibn Tūmart argues that Muslims must eschew any interpretive methodology that deviates from or adds to revelation's positive content. Like many Ash'arī theologians, Ibn Tūmart pursues a divine command meta-ethics. On this view, moral and legal predicates (e.g. good/bad, obligatory/forbidden, etc.) do not refer to attributes subsisting in things themselves, but rather reflect God's stated will with regard to a particular thing, action, or state of affairs. Therefore, the positive laws God reveals in the Qur'ān and the *sunna* are the sole determinants of what is licit and illicit, in a legal sense, and what is morally good and bad.

(c) *Fallibilism in* ijtihād*:* Ibn Tūmart rejects the Sunnī position, known as infallibilism, which says that all qualified independent legal interpreters (sing. *mujtahid*) are correct (*kull mujtahid muṣīb*). Fallibilism, an opposing, minoritarian position which Ibn Tūmart likely encountered through Shāfi'ī legal theorists in the Islamic East, grows out of the epistemological principle, "reality/truth is one" (*al-ḥaqq wāḥid*). If legal command *x* is a facet of reality—that is, a facet of the reality of God's will—that can

be expressed in a true proposition like any other facet of reality, then one cannot admit two or more conflicting interpretations of the same legal statute in the same situation. One interpretation must necessarily be correct to the exclusion of all others.

(d) *Declaring non-Almohad Muslims Unbelievers (*takfīr*):* The Almohads declared anyone who did not "know" theology and Law in the correct manner, as well as anyone who rejected Ibn Tūmart's status as *imām* and *mahdī*, to be unbelievers (sing. *kāfir*). In *kalām*, accusing those who, by reason of their intellectual limitations, have not acquired knowledge of God and Islam of unbelief is known as *takfīr al-ʻawāmm* ("declaring the masses unbelievers"). By the sixth/twelfth century, most Ashʻarīs had abandoned this doctrine because it put too great a burden on average Muslims. How could Muslims, many of whom could not read and write, be expected to learn and understand the vicissitudes of theology and jurisprudence? Ibn Tūmart's *takfīrī* stance had two outcomes. In order to contribute to the salvation of as many souls as possible, Ibn Tūmart and his successors pursued missionary work and educational reforms. Notable among these reforms was the publication of Islamic literature in the Tamazight language, then the majority language in North Africa and a prominent minority language in Iberia. At the same time, the Almohads targeted Sunnīs who disagreed with Ibn Tūmart's vision of Islam. In most instances, the Almohads suppressed Sunnism among elites and the masses alike. However, during the early Almohad campaigns against the Almoravids and conquest of North Africa, Ibn Tūmart and the Almohads engaged in bloody purges, executing whole villages who rejected Almohad Islam outright, as well as members of the Almohad movement who faltered in their belief in Ibn Tūmart's authority. Although previous scholarship has

emphasized the way in which these Almohad policies affected non-Muslim communities, we must confront the fact Almohad *takfīr* was a central feature of Almohad politics and that the majority of those who suffered under these policies were in fact other Muslims.

(e) *Rationalism in Theology:* Ibn Tūmart's rationalist approach to theological questions, such as the proof of God's existence, the distinction between God's actions and essence, and the doctrines of divine unity (*tawḥīd*) and transcendence (*tanzīh*), became a distinguishing feature of Almohad Islam and its approach to missionarism (*da'wā*). This emphasis on rational theology was reinforced by their self-identification as the *Muwaḥḥidūn*, "the monotheists" or "those who affirm *tawḥīd*." Ibn Tūmart's theology follows the methodology and content of Ash'arism as it was expounded in the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa*s at Baghdad and Nishapur. Although Ibn Tūmart agrees with the Ash'arīs on most points, he lays greater emphasis on the God's unity and transcendence. In practice, this focus entails finer qualification of the non-scriptural terms through which one reasons about God, as well as a more exacting interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of scriptural passages that describe God's essential attributes in terms that appear to contradict God's unity or anthropomorphize Him. In reading Ibn Tūmart's theological works, one gets the impression that the Ash'arīs, though theologically close to the Almohads, do not go far enough in defending God's absolute unity and transcendence, whether from the side of reason or revelation.

(f) *Infallibility of the* imām *and* mahdī*:* Ibn Tūmart presented himself to his followers and his Maṣmūda tribesmen as the infallible *imām* and awaited *mahdī*. In the former role, he claimed universal authority over all Muslims along with the right to

adjudicate and teach with infallibility (*bi-l-ʿiṣma*). As the *mahdī*, a messianic figure within Islam, Ibn Tūmart claimed to be the divinely-guided descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad through his daughter, Fāṭima. In *BIT*, he cites prophetic traditions that detail how the *mahdī* will arrive at the end of time in order to restore Islam to its original purity and to fight against the "Anti-Christs" (sing. *dajjāl*), whom he identified with the Almoravids and their allies. Ibn Tūmart did not see his roles as extraneous to his epistemological rationalism. On the contrary, he understood the superiority of his teachings as proof of his claim to be the *imām* and *mahdī*. As opposed to the Shīʿī model of the imāmate, which understands *imām* to be a descendant of the Prophet who imparts privileged, esoteric knowledge to his adherents, Ibn Tūmart saw his mission in terms of popular enlightenment. Instead of giving Muslims information which they could not access without privileged mediation, he desired to expose the process whereby one acquires knowledge to his followers so that they could understand the fundamental tenets of Islam for themselves. Almohad soteriology revolves around this image of the *imām* and *mahdī* as an educator.

Overview of Chapters

In Chapter 1, I survey the literature on Ibn Tūmart and the Almohads since the late nineteenth century. I divide the approaches to Ibn Tūmart into four "schools" on the basis of their views regarding the historicity of *BIT*, as well as its value for reconstructing the history of the Almohad Caliphate as a religious and political movement. The "early school" is responsible for the publication of *BIT* and other Almohad sources. Though critical of the official Almohad account

of Ibn Tūmart's career, these scholars accepted the traditional ascription of *BIT* to Ibn Tūmart and made significant efforts toward interpreting his teachings. The "non-doctrinal school," represented by Ambrosio Huici Miranda and Roger Le Tourneau, dismissed *BIT* and the religious background of the Almohad movement in favor of military-political explanations. The "revisionist school" argues that an overwhelming majority of the sources on the Almohads are either too propagandistic (whether pro- or anti-Almohad) or too distant to be reliable. They seek to render an account of how and why Almohad propaganda came about. With regard to *BIT*, scholars like Fletcher and Fierro claim that doctrines we commonly associate with the Almohads were later accretions to the simpler reformist policies the "historical" Ibn Tūmart advocated. The "post-revisionist school," represented by scholars like Frank Griffel and Allen Fromherz, acknowledge the revisionists' concerns, but argue that they overstate their case regarding *BIT*'s authorship. I side with the post-revisionist school and argue that the evidence surrounding and internal to *BIT* favors the traditional ascription of its authorship to Ibn Tūmart.

Chapter 2 presents the two surviving manuscripts of *BIT* and discusses issues with the three editions of the text that have been published thus far. Ṭālibī's and Abū al-'Azm's editions (1985 and 2005, respectively) make use of both MS Paris and MS Rabat. The manuscripts follow different arrangements and contain some unique texts. Neither editor provides a clear account of how he decided upon the order of the texts, and, in both, texts are divided into sections that do not correspond to the MSS. Using scribal queues in the MSS, I offer an arrangement of the texts that accounts for the differences between the two MSS and which does not break up larger sections arbitrarily. In the remainder of the chapter, I discuss internal evidence regarding the authorship and compilation of *BIT* and provide a survey of historical attestations of the text from

Arabic and Latin sources. I briefly touch on the rich commentary tradition on Ibn Tūmart that scholars in North Africa are beginning to explore.

In Chapter 3, I introduce Ibn Tūmart's definition and theory of knowledge (*ʿilm*) in the context of a building crisis within the Islamic sciences at the turn of the sixth/twelfth century. I perform a close reading of "The Dearest Desire" in order to draw out the relationship between epistemic success and the individual's moral disposition in Ibn Tūmart. Using virtue epistemology and recent research on epistemology in the Qur'ān, I synthesize a definition of knowledge in terms familiar to contemporary epistemologists. I then show how Ibn Tūmart applies this definition of knowledge to a broader interpretation of the epistemic and moral lexicon of the Qur'ān.

Chapter 4 builds upon the definition of knowledge from Chapter 3 by outlining the epistemological principles Ibn Tūmart lays out in "The Dearest Desire" and other texts devoted to knowledge and jurisprudence. These principles include metaphysical realism, the oneness of reality, the correspondence theory of truth, the univocity of knowledge, the limitation of the human intellect with respect to moral knowledge, and that human beings can attain knowledge of these epistemological principles by way of reason alone. I argue that Ibn Sīnā's theory of modality, mediated by al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī, shaped Ibn Tūmart's understanding and articulation of these "intellectual rules" (*qawāʿid ʿaqliyya*). Further, I show how Ibn Tūmart applies these principles to jurisprudential questions like fallibility in legal reasoning, legal analogy, and the consensus of the Companions.

Chapter 5 explores Ibn Tūmart's theological writings. I begin by looking to the epistemological distinctions he makes between reason and positive revelation as ways to knowledge (*ṭuruq al-ʿilm*) of God and Islam. Appealing to epistemological texts such as "The

Discourse on Knowledge," I show that Ibn Tūmart divides the theologian's task into independent reasoning about God's actions and reasoning with scripture in order to properly qualify positive revelation. Ibn Tūmart understands the Qur'ān to command rational inquiry into God's actions because the simple recitation of revealed statements about God, though true, are not sufficient to yield knowledge within the individual believer. The bulk of this chapter consists in a commentary on and intellectual-historical contextualization of "The Creed of the Almohads." I respond to historians who see contradictions within Ibn Tūmart's theological writings by showing that his teachings reflect Ash'arism as it was expounded in the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa*s and that his shorter theological poems (such as "The Spiritual Guide") are consistent with the "Creed" and other, more systematic theological compositions.

My study of Ibn Tūmart culminates in Chapter 6. I discuss Ibn Tūmart's treatise "On the Imāmate" and his collection of prophetic traditions concerning the identity of the *mahdī* and the characteristics of the *mahdī*'s enemies, the *dajjālīn*. I argue that previous misunderstandings of Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of *imāma* result from a conflation of the roles of *imām* and *mahdī*. As the *imām*, Ibn Tūmart claims to derive his authority from superior knowledge and righteousness, rather than his blood relationship to the Prophet Muḥammad. His *mahdī*-hood, however, is bound up with early Islamic prophecies concerning a descendant of the Prophet who would re-establish Islam in its original purity. By separating out Ibn Tūmart's two roles within Almohad Islam, we see that Ibn Tūmart does not so much derive his theory of Islamic leadership from Shī'ī or Khārijī influences (as some argue), but rather from his application of his epistemological principles to sources accepted by the broader Sunnī community.

Chapter 1: Introduction to *The Book of Ibn Tūmart* and Literature Review

Most pre-modern accounts of the life and career of Ibn Tūmart—pro-Almohad and anti-Almohad alike—agree that the founder of the Almohad movement primarily engaged with North African Muslims in the role of a preacher, an educator, and a scholar. Only four of the many works attributed to Ibn Tūmart survive: *The Book of Ibn Tūmart* (known to contemporary readers as *A'azz mā yuṭlab*), his edition of the *Muwaṭṭā'* of Mālik b. Anas, a digest (*talkhīṣ*) of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, and a handful of epistles. A list of his writings appended to *Talkhīṣ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* reveals that what has come down to us is but a fraction of Ibn Tūmart's total literary output, some of which was composed in Tamazight.[14] While the latter three texts attest to his capacity as a legal scholar and political leader, *The Book of Ibn Tūmart* (henceforth *BIT*) offers a comprehensive vision of Islam and the Islamic sciences. This compilation of writings and lectures touches on a variety of topics: knowledge (*'ilm*/*ma'rifa*), logic (*manṭiq*), *ḥadīth* transmission, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), prayer (*ṣalāh*), worship (*'ibāda*), Muslim theology (*kalām*), philosophy (*falsafa*), sectarian conflict (*fitna*), *jihād*, ritual purity (*ṭahāra*), and the enforcement of Islamic law (*ḥisba*).

There is little consensus among historians of Islam and North Africa as to the meaning and historical significance of *BIT*. To begin with, the nature of such a posthumous compilation attributed to a legendary religious founder makes it difficult to connect its contents and their arrangement to the author. According to *BIT* itself, Ibn Tūmart's successor, 'Abd al-Mu'min, compiled these texts from lecture notes twenty to thirty years after assuming leadership of the

[14] 'Ammār Ṭālibī, "Introduction" to *A'azz mā yuṭlab* ("D"), 7-16; Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 765-770.

Almohad movement. Arabic and Latin sources attest to the fame of *BIT* throughout North Africa, even after the Almohad Caliphate's demise. Portions of the text, particularly the shorter creed (*murshida*), were the subject of some controversy in the Islamic East during the course of the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries. However, the anti-Almohad stance of the subsequent dynasty, the Banū Marīn (or the Marīnids), as well as that of Sunnī *'ulamā'* ("religious scholars") who opposed Ibn Tūmart's pretensions to *imāma* even while the caliphate flourished, suggests that the paucity of Almohad texts and manuscripts we possess today is not simply a result of neglect over time, but rather the outcome of systematic opposition to the Almohads. Two complete manuscripts of *BIT* survive: Ms. Paris 1451 ("A") and Ms. Rabat 1214 qāf ("B").

A survey of secondary literature on Ibn Tūmart and the Almohads might suggest that there are more obstacles to interpreting *BIT* than clear avenues. Yet, I believe that many of the concerns scholars have raised are the result of their focus on select parts of *BIT* (especially Ibn Tūmart's theological writings), and an unsubstantiated skepticism toward pro-Almohad sources. This study makes two claims about the authenticity of *BIT*: (a) that Ibn Tūmart authored all the texts in *BIT* which are not attributed to another author (such as *The Book of Jihād*, a *ḥadīth* compilation appended to *BIT* by Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf), and (b) that, despite being a posthumous compilation, *BIT* lays out a coherent argument that brings together the various Islamic sciences in a holistic way, giving expression to the basic tenets of Almohad Islam. The internal coherence of the text rests upon the fact that Ibn Tūmart's primary concern is with *epistemology* underlying all of the sciences relevant to Islam, rather than with *kalām* or *fiqh* taken separately. His theory of knowledge, as well as the high bar he sets for what constitutes knowledge in the proper sense (*'ilm*), unite his conclusions across disciplines and subjects. Ibn Tūmart's epistemology,

moreover, is intertwined with his claim to be the awaited *mahdī*. He alone possesses the theory of knowledge that will yield certain knowledge regarding theological and juridical matters, without which correct belief and correct action are rendered impossible. Without correct belief and action, salvation (*najāh*) is likewise impossible.

In this chapter, I address some of the concerns that scholars have raised about *BIT*'s authorship, provenance, and meaning. I will show that *BIT* is an authentic work of Ibn Tūmart's and that the text is internally coherent. Prior studies of *BIT* approach the question of authenticity with the same criteria one approaches a text whose compilation and publication was overseen by its author.[15] By its very nature, a compilation like *BIT* will not meet these criteria. We can only judge *BIT*'s authenticity by paying attention to its editorial history. In Chapter 2, I will present historical attestations of the work to establish an account of its genesis and of its function within the Almohad Caliphate. In addition, *BIT*'s compiler(s) leaves some clues within the text which give us a clearer picture of the provenance of many of Ibn Tūmart's writings and the way in which they were compiled. A sample of these editorial interventions will show that the compiler(s) assembled *BIT* from multiple copies of the same texts, occasionally providing variant readings. By holding *BIT* to standards of authorship appropriate to a compilation, we will we see that there is little reason to doubt the traditional ascription of the work to Ibn Tūmart.

Literature Review

Along with al-Baydhaq's *Akhbār al-Mahdī* and al-Marrākushī's *al-Muʿjib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib*, *The Book of Ibn Tūmart* is one of a few sources we can date to the Almohad Caliphate

[15] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 765-66.

prior to al-Ma'mūn's (r. 1226-32) public repudiation of the belief in Ibn Tūmart as the Mahdī. For this reason, *BIT* figures prominently in secondary literature on the Almohad movement. There are, however, a variety of positions on the value of *BIT* as a historical source and as a work of medieval scholarship. Although there are a handful of studies dedicated to the interpretation of select texts from *BIT*, two issues have frustrated attempts to interpret the text as a whole: the authorship of the text and interpretive methodology.

In what follows, I will outline the major trends in Almohad historiography, giving particular attention to how these trends bear upon *BIT*. To date, there have been four major "schools" of interpretation: (i) the early school, (ii) the non-doctrinal school, (iii) the revisionist school, and (iv) the post-revisionist school. While these scholars have not always understood themselves as pertaining to well-defined schools, they have nevertheless created common methodologies by which they approach the interpretation of Almohad history. To the early school belong Ignác Goldziher and Robert Brunschvig. What unites them is the belief that Ibn Tūmart authored all of the texts in *BIT* (with the exception of *The Book of Jihād*) and that the text expresses a novel set of doctrines. Because they believe Ibn Tūmart to have originated a new form of Islam, the early school engages in close readings of the text and gives priority to Ibn Tūmart as a figure within Islamic *intellectual* history, as well as *political* history. The non-doctrinal school emphasizes Ibn Tūmart as a political and military leader within his North African, Amazigh context. Its members, such as Ambrosio Huici Miranda, Roger Le Tourneau, and J.F.P. Hopkins, share a depreciative attitude toward *BIT* as a work of *fiqh* or theology. Because they understand *BIT* to be derivative, they seek to explain the success of the Almohad movement without appealing to the content of Ibn Tūmart's doctrine, borrowing methods from sociology and anthropology. The non-doctrinal school also engages in the criticism of Almohad

and post-Almohad sources, many of which were not available to Goldziher. Discrepancies between these sources have raised questions about the authorship of *BIT*, the ideological biases of major chroniclers, and the details of Ibn Tūmart's biography. These questions influence the agenda of the revisionist school, the unifying characteristic of which is skepticism toward official Almohad sources. The two major representatives of this school, Madeleine Fletcher and Maribel Fierro, justify their positions in different ways, but agree that discrepancies between sources and what they consider to be contradictions in the text of *BIT* indicate that Almohad doctrine changed as the movement expanded from North Africa into al-Andalus. Fletcher and Fierro both suggest that these changes were intentional strategies aimed at establishing the Mu'minid dynasty's control over the larger Almohad movement.

Concurrent with the revisionist school is a group I call the "post-revisionist" school. While these scholars—Dominique Urvoy, Frank Griffel, and Allen Fromherz—hold different positions on Almohad doctrine, they share two beliefs about *BIT*. Like the early school, they believe that Ibn Tūmart authored *BIT* and that its contents reflect his originality as an Islamic thinker. For this reason, these scholars engage in close readings of *BIT* and seek to establish an internal argument that unites the compilation as a whole. Despite their belief in the text's authenticity, the post-revisionist school takes some of the revisionist school's concerns seriously. Griffel and Fromherz share the revisionists' critical approach to Almohad sources, especially the official accounts of Ibn Tūmart's biography. Fromherz, moreover, accepts the possibility that later scribes may have manipulated or embellished sources for political reasons. Contra Fletcher and Fierro, the post-revisionists do not concede that the existence of such discrepancies reduces historical works like *Akhbār al-Mahdī* to the level of propaganda. Rather, these works blend history with the foundational myths of Almohad movement. As for *BIT*, they dismiss Fletcher's

and Fierro's alternative authorship hypotheses as improbable and offer internal evidence supporting the traditional ascription of authorship to Ibn Tūmart. Although I do not agree with the post-revisionists on every point, my approach to *BIT* in this dissertation frequently aligns with theirs.

The Early School

Modern scholarship on the Almohad Caliphate began in the nineteenth century with the research of Jacob Christian Gustav Karsten (1781-1866), Ernest Renan (1823-92), and Reinhart Dozy (1820-83). Part of the Almohad Caliphate's intellectual legacy had been present in Europe since the thirteenth century in the form of Ibn Rushd's commentaries on Aristotle. Renan's *Averroès et l'Averroïsme* (1852) marks the first attempt by a European scholar to return Ibn Rushd—known up to this point only through Latin and Hebrew translations—to his Andalusī-Islamic context with aid of newly available Arabic sources. Karsten and Dozy published the first print editions al-Marrākushī's *al-Mu'jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib* from a manuscript held at Leiden University.[16] Dozy would continue to produce several works on Iberian Islam and Arabic lexicography, making use of manuscripts at the Escorial.

The above scholars (especially his close friend, Dozy) paved the way for the Hungarian Jewish orientalist, Ignác Goldziher (1850-1921). His interest in Ibn Tūmart and the Almohads is visible in his 1884 work on the Ẓāhirī *madhhab* (still a classic within modern Islamic studies),

[16] 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *Des Marockaners Abdulvaheb Temimi Fragmente über Spanien*, ed. Jacob Christian Gustav Karsten (Rostock: K.C. Stiller, 1801); 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *The History of the Almohades: preceded by a sketch of the history of Spain* (Leiden: S. & J. Luchtmans, 1847).

Die Ẓâhiriten: Ihr Lehrsystem und ihre Geschichte.[17] He would later publish excerpts from *BIT* in his 1887 article, "Materialen zur Kenntnis der Almohadenbewegung". Using the Paris ("A") manuscript and a variety of classical and medieval sources, Goldziher offers a holistic account of Ibn Tūmart's writings within his Amazigh socio-religious context. With the assistance of the Algerian scholar, Muḥammad ibn Muṣṭafā ibn al-Khūja al-Kamāl, J. D. Luciani published an *editio princeps* under the title *Le Livre de Ibn Toumert* (1903), to which Goldziher contributed a substantial introduction.[18]

In addition to his role in the publication of *BIT*, Goldziher is also the first modern scholar to propose an account of the authorship of *BIT*. According to the text itself, the writings that make up *BIT* come from the lecture notes (*ta'ālīq*) that 'Abd al-Mu'min took during the colloquia (*majālis*) that Ibn Tūmart held for his closest followers at Ribāṭ Hargha in 515/1121. 'Abd al-Mu'min then dictated (*amla'a*) Ibn Tūmart's doctrines to scribes so that they would be available to the Almohad *shuyūkh*, elders who distinguished themselves through their relationship to Ibn Tūmart, his family, or 'Abd al-Mu'min, and the *ṭalaba*, the "students" appointed by the caliph to study and preserve Almohad doctrine. Although the Paris manuscript was copied a few decades later, Goldziher surmises that 'Abd al-Mu'min edited and compiled *BIT*—except *The Book of Jihād*—some time after Ibn Tūmart's death, but before his own death (i.e. between 524-558/1130-63).

Based on evidence from MS Paris, as well as on al-Marrākushī's testimony, Goldziher further proposes that the last section of *BIT*, *The Book of Jihād*, was compiled even later by 'Abd al-Mu'min's successor, Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf. *The Book of Jihād* consists of *aḥādīth* excerpted

[17] Ignác Goldziher, *Die Ẓâhiriten: Ihr Lehrsystem und ihre Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1884); English translation: *The Ẓāhirīs: Their Doctrine and their History*, trans. Wolfgang Behn (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
[18] J. D. Luciani, ed., *Le Livre de Mohammed Ibn Toumert, mahdi des Almohades* (Algiers: P. Fontana, 1903).

from canonical and non-canonical collections. These prophetic traditions, support, among other things, Ibn Tūmart's claim to *imāma* and the Almohad Caliphate's right to engage in holy war against non-Almohad Muslims and *dhimmīs*, the Jews, Christians, and other monotheists normally permitted to live under Muslim rule. While we cannot directly attribute *The Book of Jihād* to Ibn Tūmart, Goldziher believes it likely that Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf appended these traditions to *BIT,* because Ibn Tūmart and his students had singled out these *aḥādīth* and studied them during the Mahdī's lifetime. Goldziher, in no uncertain terms, concludes that we have no cause to doubt the authenticity of the text as it presents itself, and that it is therefore representative of Ibn Tūmart's doctrines:

> There is, as we shall see, no reason to doubt that what we have before us are the works of the "Mahdī of the Almohads" mentioned by al-Marrākushī, Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh, Leo Africanus, and Ibn Khaldūn, in their Arabic form… We have no cause to mistrust the chronological date, which, to be sure was attached to this treatise by 'Abd al-Mu'min, and it stands in no contradiction with the statements of historians.[19]

BIT is, then, a multi-generational project. It is authentic insofar as is its contents record the teachings Ibn Tūmart imparted, whether in writing or orally, to those who would become the Almohad élite. Yet, as a compilation assembled from lecture notes, the coherence of *BIT* as a text reflects, at least in part, 'Abd al-Mu'min's or an appointed compiler's editorial judgment.

In the early twentieth century, *BIT* enjoyed the attention of orientalists and historians of religion. Along with Goldziher's select German translations, translations of Ibn Tūmart's creeds appeared in both English and French.[20] Henri Massé, Robert Brunschvig, and Rachid Bourouiba each published studies on one or more texts from *BIT*. All of the above scholars engage in a

[19] Ignác Goldziher, "Materialen zur Kenntniss der Almohadenbewegung," *Zeitschrift der Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 41, no. 1 (1887), 76-77 [my translation].
[20] See L. M. Simmons, "Confession of the Faith of the Almohades," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 3, no. 2 (1891): 360; and Henri Massé, "La Profession de foi (*'aqîda*) et les guides spirituels (*morchida*) du Mahdi ibn Toumart," *Memorial Henri Basset* 2 (1928), 105-121.

close reading of the text, differentiating them from biographical studies produced around the same time.[21] Although the popularity of *BIT* waned among later historians, the work of the early school continued to influence later scholars, many of whom it seems treated this secondary literature as an adequate substitute for *BIT* itself.

The Non-Doctrinal School

By the mid-twentieth century, secondary literature on the Almohads had expanded, in large part due to the efforts of É. Lévi-Provençal, Ambrosio Huici Miranda, Roger Le Tourneau, and J.F.P. Hopkins. Lévi-Provençal and Huici Miranda, in particular, published a variety of new sources related to the Almohad period.[22] At the same time, historians turned away from *BIT* and looked to other sources and methodologies to interpret the Almohad movement, such as political and military history and anthropology. This turn coincided with a categorical disparagement of the writings attributed to Ibn Tūmart. In his two-volume *Historia política del imperio almohade* (1956), Huici Miranda describes *BIT* as an incoherent pastiche without a semblance of a unified plan or argument.[23] Le Tourneau's assessment is not much better:

> But what can we really say about Ibn Tūmart's doctrine? His religious ideas are known to us through writings presented as his and gathered in a late twelfth century manuscript… The main features of that doctrine, if I may say so, have no originality whatsoever—the author unceasingly proclaims God's unity and immateriality, together with the absolute necessity of complying with His commands.[24]

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[21] For example, É. Lévi-Provençal, "Ibn Tūmart et 'Abd al-Mu'min: le 'Fakih de Sous' et le 'flambeau des Almohades'" in *Mémorial Henri Basset*, v. 2 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1928), 257-80.
[22] See, for example. É. Lévi-Provençal, *Extraits des historiens arabes du Maroc* (Rabat: Dār al-Amān, 1923 [2013]); *Documents inédits d'histoire almohade* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1928); *Majmū'at rasā'il al-Muwaḥḥidiyya* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-dīniyya, 2010); Muḥammad b. 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib fī akhbār al-Maghrib*, ed. Ambrosio Huici Miranda (Rabat: Université Mohammed V, 1963).
[23] Huici Miranda, *Historia política del imperio Almohade*, vol. I, 96.
[24] Le Tourneau, *The Almohad Movement in North Africa in the 12th and 13th Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 28.

The above summary of Ibn Tūmart's writings could only apply to the short credal texts found in the middle of *BIT*. Le Tourneau appears not have taken the chapters on *fiqh*, knowledge, and *ḥadīth* into account at all. He nevertheless concedes that Ibn Tūmart and his doctrine had an inestimable impact on North African Islam. Though unoriginal, and "presented in a scattered form and in a barren and trite style," *BIT* helped introduce "the Moroccan masses" to Ash'arī theology. In his lifetime, Ibn Tūmart could not have accomplished the popularization of Ash'arism without "an extraordinary force of persuasion," and, after his death, the doctrine of the *mahdī* to reinforce the authority of his ideas.[25]

J.F.P. Hopkins' entry on Ibn Tūmart in the second edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* reflects the influence of Huici Miranda and Le Tourneau. Hopkins portrays Ibn Tūmart as an uncompromisingly pious religious reformer who "found himself by accident the spiritual leader of substantial forces."[26] He succeeded in garnering this following through "personal magnetism," a "peculiar force of personality" coupled with 'Abd al-Mu'min's "administrative and military genius."[27] Hopkins appears to admire Ibn Tūmart, the reformer, but with regard to the doctrine of the *mahdī*, his assessment goes beyond healthy skepticism toward hagiographical elements in Almohad sources. For instance, he labels Ibn Tūmart's speech concerning the attributes of the awaited Mahdī a "harangue" and refers to the *BIT* as "a collection of short pieces without organic unity" and as having "nothing original in them." Hopkins attributes this lack of unity to Ibn Tūmart's opportunism after embracing the *mahdī* doctrine. Ibn Tūmart adopted the Shī'ī idea of the infallible *imām* because it allowed him to fit the pattern of a "charismatic personality." Ibn

[25] Le Tourneau, *The Almohad Movement in North Africa in the 12th and 13th Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 28-29.
[26] *EI2*, J.F.P. Hopkins, "Ibn Tūmart."
[27] *EI2*, J.F.P. Hopkins, "Ibn Tūmart."

Tūmart, he argues, merely fell into a leadership type prevalent in the Maghribī-Amazigh context. Accordingly, his followers were not motivated by the content of his teachings, but by his charisma and place within a tribal structure that already opposed the Almoravids. Hopkins can say "[h]is theology is not important" because, as he claims, the personality of "the Berber race" is not motivated by doctrine, but rather seeks out a complimentary personality in their leaders.[28]

The non-doctrinal school's emphasis on Ibn Tūmart's charisma reveals the influence of Max Weber's tripartite classification of authority.[29] Huici Miranda's assessment of *BIT* seems merely to reflect his opinion of the text as a reader of medieval Arabic literature. Le Tourneau and Hopkins, however, deploy Weber's classification of authority in such a way as to justify their neglect of the content of Ibn Tūmart's writings. The *mahdī*'s words need not mean much (or anything at all) as long as his tone and presence fulfilled his audience's need for a charismatic leader. The Almohads, mediated through Ibn Khaldūn, would figure into Ernest Gellner's sociology and anthropology of North African Islam. Although Gellner moves away from Hopkins' racial hypothesis, he retains "personality," "pattern," and "career" as explanatory concepts in his account of social cohesion among the Imazighen. Despite his wish to avoid racial-psychological explanations, Gellner's more structuralist approach simply reproduces the reductive attitude toward religious doctrine among the Imazighen that we see in Le Tourneau or Hopkins.[30]

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[28] *EI2*, "Ibn Tūmart".
[29] Max Weber, "Die drei reinen Typen der legitimen Herrschaft," *Preussische Jahrbücher* 187, no. 1-2 (1922). English translation: "The Three Types of Legitimate Rule," translated by Hans Gerth, *Berkeley Publications in Society and Institutions* 4, no. 1 (1958), 1-11.
[30] For an evaluation of Gellner from the perspective of the Moroccan academy, see Mohammed Masbah, "Anglo-Saxon Anthropology in Morocco: evaluating Gellner's segmentary theory," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 6, no. 2 (2013), 260-76.

Two features of Gellner's account of social cohesion in the Maghrib concern us here. The first is his distinction between rural and urban religious authority. In *Saints of the Atlas* (1969), Gellner defines the role of the Amazigh holy man, or *agurram* (pl.: *igurramen*). The ideal *agurram* shares many qualities with Ibn Tūmart, as well as with other Amazigh spiritual leaders like 'Abdallāh b. Yāsīn (Almoravid) and Ṣāliḥ b. Ṭarīf (Barghawāṭa). He is a recipient of God's blessing (*baraka*), which allows him to mediate, not only between God and humankind, but between human beings. His strict observance of Qur'ānic laws and moral precepts, coupled with his magical powers, confirms his status within Amazigh society. His charismatic authority is often supported by the authority conferred upon him through his lineage, either that of a prominent Amazigh family or, as is common in Islamic societies, a *sharīfī* one.[31] The *agurram*'s urban counterparts are the urban scholars and marabouts. Their authority is not hereditary, but rather conferred upon them by their knowledge of and association with a particular legal tradition or devotional practice. The urban type of authority, though more stable over time, is, at the same time, more diffuse. It cannot create the widespread, punctuated social cohesion in the same way that the *agurram*'s charisma does.[32]

Gellner credits his use of this rural/urban distinction to Ibn Khaldūn. Following the great medieval historian, Gellner concludes, "Education and law-abidingness are politically debilitating; they undermine that social cohesion which alone confers authority."[33] This thesis is "slightly embarrassing for Ibn Khaldun as a Muslim" insofar as it calls into question "laws and precepts of religion" that the *ṣaḥāba* had received from God through Muḥammad. Gellner notes

[31] Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (New York: ACLS, 1969 [2014]), 74. *Sharīfī* typically denotes descent from the Prophet Muḥammad.
[32] Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981 [1993]), 49.
[33] Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981 [1993]), 26.

that Ibn Khaldūn avoids this embarrassment by attributing the success of Muḥammad's prophetic career to his kinship with the *ṣaḥāba*. The revelation of God's law, therefore, did not produce cohesion among early Muslims; rather, the pre-existing group feeling (*'aṣabiyya*) made it possible for Islam to take root.

The second feature of Gellner's account of social cohesion is a consequence of his appropriation of Ibn Khaldūn's *'aṣabiyya* thesis. If kinship structures can explain rural social cohesion by themselves, what function does doctrine perform in a religious society? While Gellner never outright dismisses the significance of doctrine within Maghribī society, he makes it clear that doctrine and its transmission are the purview of urban societies. Education in Islamic law and theology devalues the intercessory role of the holy man because the literate can access God directly through texts. The people's conferral of authority upon the rural *agurram* as a divine intermediary depends upon their illiteracy. Here, we see Gellner reproduce Le Tourneau's and Hopkins' racial caricature of the Imazighen, albeit in a structuralist way.

> By contrast, the religious life of the tribe may be quite different. Illiteracy makes the audio-visual aids of religion, a richer and more ecstatic ritual life… Having no access to the Book, the tribesman needs a personalised religion… The towns have not merely their learned *ulama*, but also their Sufi mystics. In the towns, mysticism is an alternative to formal Islam. In the tribe it is a surrogate for it. The moderate, literate, rational religion may well satisfy the well-established bourgeoisie, it may in fact minister admirably to its tastes: but the lower classes may often have more emotional needs, and turn to religion not as a form of scholarship and contemplation, but as an alleviation of suffering, as a more drastic alternative to ordinary life.[34]

Gellner does not stop here. The "tribesman", as rural as he is lower class, is determined by his social conditions to be *incapable* of understanding (or even *desiring*) complex religious doctrines. Gellner's tribesman does not follow urban Islam, but rather the "normal religion" of the marabout. This normal religion consists of local festivals, the "anthropolatry" of *igurramen*

[34] Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (New York: ACLS, 1969 [2014]), 8.

(living and deceased), and minimal adherence to Islamic law.[35] Even in the case of an exceptional preacher, who unites multiple tribal groups under the banner of "a purer religion," an extreme puritanism and unitarianism, Islamic doctrine serves as little more than a tool meant to legitimize his mission. Gellner's illiterate tribesmen confer authority upon this exceptional preacher only inasmuch as they recognize his purer religion (in this case, a form of Islam) as a means to transcend what is merely local *and* experience shame on account of their normal religion. The preacher's suspension of normal religion effects widespread social cohesion in a time of exceptional crisis. However, upon resolving the crisis, the tribesmen gradually abandon the purer religion in favor of normal religion.[36] Doctrine indeed plays a part in Gellner's account of social cohesion—but only *formally*. Under normal conditions, Gellner's tribesman does not seek out complex theology or jurisprudence. In crisis, it appears before him, not as knowledge, but as a means to solidarity and a source of shame. In either case, Gellner does not believe him capable of understanding doctrine. Whether we seek to explain a crisis, or simply ordinary religious life, the *content* of doctrine is epiphenomenal. Although his work has only a tangential connection to the Almohads, several historians of the revisionist school often appeal to Gellner when making claims about the origin, reception, and possible manipulation of *BIT* over the sixth/twelfth century.[37]

[35] Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981 [1993]), 52-53; *Saints of the Atlas* (New York: ACLS, 1969 [2014]), 8.
[36] Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (New York: ACLS, 1969 [2014]), 9.
[37] See, for example, Maribel Fierro, "Le mahdi Ibn Tûmart et al-Andalus: l'élaboration de la légitimité almohade," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 91-94 (July 2000), 107-24; Madeleine Fletcher, "al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology," in Salma Jayyusi (ed.), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 235-58; Bruce B. Lawrence, *Ibn Khaldūn and Islamic Ideology* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 79, 84; Amira K. Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 122, 139.

The Revisionist School

Following Huici Miranda's and Le Tourneau's lead, recent scholarship on the Almohads has increasingly gravitated toward historical criticism of Ibn Tūmart's biography. His studies in al-Andalus and the Islamic East, his alleged relationship with al-Ghazālī, and his return journey to the Sūs region are major points of contention.[38] While there is little consensus about the facts of Ibn Tūmart's biography, many recent historians of the period agree that discrepancies between Almohad and non-Almohad sources indicate that much of what we know of Ibn Tūmart and the early Almohad movement is the construction of the authors who produced these sources. In light of these discrepancies, they revisionists argue, we must revise our basic account of Ibn Tūmart's biography and the Almohad Caliphate as a whole.

The revisionist school represents a plurality of opinions. However, the revisionists share three major opinions regarding Almohad historiography. (i) Regarding discrepancies between sources, the revisionists divide relevant materials into three groups: Almohad, anti-Almohad, and politically neutral. The revisionists argue that Almohad sources, which include al-Baydhaq, *BIT*, and al-Marrākushī, do not so much reflect historical reality as they do the version of history that supported the Almohad Caliphate's official *ideology*. In like fashion, Émile Fricaud has called attention to an anti-Almohad bias which pervades Marīnid sources, what he calls "de-Almohadization."[39] As an opposing dynasty, the Marīnids stood to benefit from the denigration of the Mu'mid dynasty and the Almohads' founder. De-Almohadization helped to eliminate (or at least to soften) popular belief in Ibn Tūmart as the *mahdī* and the legitimacy of Almohadism as a form of Islam. The third group consists of accounts written by authors whose geographical

[38] I will discuss the details of Ibn Tūmart's biography and religious education in Chapter 2.
[39] Émile Fricaud, "Les *ṭalaba* dans la société almohade", *al-Qanṭara* 18, no. 2 (1997), 331-87.

and temporal distance from the Almohads ensures a relative lack of bias toward them. Revisionists often give greater weight to these later voices. (ii) The revisionist school stresses the cultural differences between the Amazigh Maghrib and Arabized al-Andalus. They believe that the Almohad Caliphate's need to legitimize itself upon entering the Iberian Peninsula prompted the Mu'minids to change key tenets of Almohad doctrine and history. (iii) The revisionists view the official biography of Ibn Tūmart and *BIT* through the lens of *longue durée* patterns or "careers." Developments in the anthropology of Islam and North Africa, particularly Ernest Gellner's *Saints of the Atlas* (1969) and *Muslim Society* (1981), provided historians new ways to categorize the many roles Ibn Tūmart filled within his cultural context: tribal elder (*shaykh*/*amghar*), holy man (*agurram*), *'ālim*/*faqīh*, *mahdī*, etc. According to the "career" thesis, the goal of Almohad descriptions of Ibn Tūmart is not to produce an accurate account of the Mahdī's life, but rather to show how his biography conforms to cultural patterns conducive to religious and political authority.

In her study of mahdism in Western Islam, Mercedes García Arenal identifies two opposing approaches to Almohad doctrine among the revisionists. The first is represented by Madeleine Fletcher. Fletcher posits that *BIT* contains two textual strata. The earlier substratum pertains to the North African, Amazigh cultural context. She argues that this substratum is heavily mahdist and reflects the teachings of the historical Ibn Tūmart. The superstratum, by contrast, reveals the influence of Andalusī intellectual culture on Almohadism. Fletcher alleges that court intellectuals in Almohad Spain manipulated or added to *BIT* with the intention of softening its mahdist elements for an Andalusī readership. She attributes texts defined by theological rationalism, such as "The Creed of the Almohads" (*'Aqīdat al-Muwaḥḥidīn*), to Mu'mind *'ulamā'* rather than to Ibn Tūmart. Fletcher's thesis has influenced Amira K. Bennison,

author of *The Almoravid and the Almohad Empires* (2016), and, to a lesser extent, García Arenal herself.[40]

The second strand of revisionism is most closely associated with Maribel Fierro. Like Fletcher, Fierro believes that Almohad Islam changed upon entering al-Andalus. However, Fierro claims that the Almohads strengthened the mahdist elements of their "ideology"[41] in order to make Ibn Tūmart conform to Ṣūfī models of the *mahdī* current in the Iberian Peninsula. This emphasis on Ibn Tūmart's divine guidance (*hudā*) and infallibility (*'iṣma*) helped 'Abd al-Mu'min to pursue sweeping legal reforms and to convert the Almohad movement into a hereditary caliphate. Fierro understands the goal of the post-conquest ideology to be a revolution, not only against the Almoravids, but also against the dominant Mālikī school of law (*madhhab*). Scholars associated with Fierro include Émile Fricaud and Tilman Nagel.

Fletcher and Fierro are deeply ambivalent about the value of *BIT* to the reconstruction of Almohad history. On the one hand, both scholars presuppose that the compilation, like other official Almohad sources, was subject to manipulation after the Almohad conquest of al-Andalus. Yet, *BIT* is unique among these sources because, in their view, the doctrines contained therein not only go against historical reports about Ibn Tūmart, but are also *internally* contradictory. The existence of such internal contradictions precludes the possibility that *BIT* presents a unified argument. On the other hand, Fletcher and Fierro, though indebted to the non-

[40] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform: Mahdīs of the Muslim West* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 161. Amira K. Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 135.

[41] See Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 150. Nagel has famously referred to the form of Almohadism that 'Abd al-Mu'min promoted as a "state ideology" (*Reichsideologie*). He argues that 'Abd al-Mu'min transformed the Almohad movement into a hereditary caliphate by pursuing a monopoly over Ibn Tūmart's intellectual legacy. That is, his establishment of an Almohad catechetical school within his court at Marrakesh meant that many newcomers to Almohad Islam imbibed the Mu'minids' dynastic claims along with Ibn Tūmart's teachings.

doctrinal school, are not so keen to dismiss doctrine altogether. Since *BIT* figures prominently in the majority of medieval sources, it stands to reason that even unauthentic doctrines offer insight into the evolution of Almohadism. Fletcher and Fierro ultimately recast *BIT* as propaganda which secured the Almohad Caliphate's religious legitimacy across its diverse empire.

I will show that these revisionist accounts of *BIT* and its authorship rest on two problematic assumptions. First, the internal contradictions Fletcher and Fierro see in the text are not contradictions at all, but are instead misconstruals of Ibn Tūmart's positions on theology and mahdism. Their division of Almohad doctrine into authentically Tūmartian and post-Andalusī phases makes sense only if such internal contradictions exist. Second, the criteria by which they determine what aspects of *BIT* are Tūmartian and Andalusī often overstate the differences between North African and Iberian Islam. Because of this, Fletcher and Fierro often reproduce the non-doctrinal school's anthropological caricatures of religious and intellectual life in North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula.

Fletcher[42] believes that, while some of the writings in *BIT* are authentically Tūmartian, the "initial fact of internal contradiction already suggests to the historian the necessity of interpreting these discrepancies." She considers these discrepancies "evidence that different texts come from different stages in the Almohad intellectual evolution."[43] In order to explain what she regards as contradictions in Ibn Tūmart's statements concerning, in particular, *kalām*, *imāma*, and miracles (*mu'jizāt*/*karāmāt*), she posits a sharp anthropological divide between *BIT*'s

[42] Fletcher puts forward her interpretation in two articles: "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic," *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 110-127; and "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology" in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayussi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 235-58. She has also translated roughly half of *'Aqīdat al-Muwaḥḥidīn*. See Ibn Tūmart and Madeleine Fletcher, "35. The Doctrine of Divine Unity" in Olivia Remie Constable (ed.), *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 190-97.

[43] Fletcher, "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology" in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayussi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 237.

mahdist and supernatural elements, on the one hand, and its rationalist tendencies, on the other. As mentioned above, she attributes the former to an earlier Amazigh substratum that reflects the Almohad movement's emergence out of the High Atlas region and subsequent war against the Ṣanhāja Almoravids. The latter is an Andalusī superstratum, which later *'ulamā'* added to *BIT* in order to justify the Almohad cause to urban Andalusīs, who, Fletcher suggests, had little patience for talk of mahdism, the Shī'ī sounding doctrine of infallibility (*'iṣma*), or the miracles (*karāmāt*) of holy men.[44]

Fletcher bases her two-strata thesis on two premises, one anthropological, and one theological. She confines her analysis of *BIT* to "The Creed of the Almohads" and "The Spiritual Guide" (*murshida*), two relatively short texts within the compilation. She determines that each text not only addresses itself to different audiences, but also that the author of the simpler "Guide" could not have written the "Creed," and vice versa. She cites homiletic style and lack of protracted arguments in the "Guide" and "On the Imāmate" (*Fī al-imāma*) as evidence that Ibn Tūmart composed these texts for rural Imazighen who would not have had even a cursory understanding of *kalām*.[45] The "subtlety" of the arguments in the "Creed," coupled with its "anti-miracle bias" and lack of explicit mention of mahdism, leads Fletcher to conclude that Ibn

[44] Fletcher "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology" in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayussi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 240-43.

[45] Madeleine Fletcher, "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology" in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayussi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 241-42. Fletcher and others interpret *BIT* as being the work of multiple authors because they misunderstand the genre to which each Ibn Tūmart's credal writings apply. Although "creed" conveniently translates *'aqīda*, this Arabic term more often applies to texts of various lengths, the goal of which is catechesis or the discussion of theological topics in a dialectical or "proof" form. The *murshida* more closely resembles the creed genre familiar to Christians. The *murshida* was never intended to be anything more than a statement of belief, though, as we can see from the commentary tradition, many *'ulamā'* used it as a jumping-off point for catechesis. In the same way, it is obvious that the *'aqīda* is not a ritual text intended to be recited in a liturgical context, as the *murshida* was. In Chapter 4, I put forward the argument that the *'aqīda* is an advanced text geared toward demonstrating many of the credal points we see in the *murshida*.

Tūmart did not write the "Creed," or at least that the text we possess was heavily redacted. She puts forward the philosopher, Ibn Rushd, as a candidate for its author.[46]

Fletcher portrays her analysis as a middle course between two reductive alternatives. Earlier historians like Alfred Bel, Henri Terrasse, and Goldziher understand the conflict between the Almohads and Almoravids as motivated by *ideological* differences, comparable to the way in which historians describe the Protestant Reformation or the French Revolution. Fletcher dismisses this approach out of hand, arguing that "the notion of ideology as the key to this conflict is formed upon a set of inappropriately Eurocentric assumptions about the historical and sociological reality of North Africa."[47] An opposing interpretation is represented by Hopkins' article on Ibn Tūmart in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. As we have seen, Hopkins concludes that the content of Ibn Tūmart's doctrine "is not important."[48] Rather, Ibn Tūmart succeeded because he followed the pattern of the "charismatic personality" who unites Amazigh kinship groups that normally exist in "anarchical fragmentation."[49] Fletcher argues that her two-strata thesis avoids both Eurocentrism and Hopkins' anthropological reductiveness.

As much as she tries to avoid Hopkins' errors, Fletcher's reading of *BIT* relies on similar stereotypes about the Maghrib and al-Andalus, which she sometimes credits to Gellner. For her, the rural Imazighen of the eleventh and twelfth centuries lacked formal education and a native intellectual class comparable to the Sunnī jurists (*fuqahā'*) in al-Andalus and Tunisia. They were

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[46] Madeleine Fletcher, "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology" in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayussi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 244. Despite Ibn Rushd's extended engagement with *kalām* throughout his career, his extant writings on Islam, metaphysics, and physics suggest that he would have rejected many of the *'Aqīda*'s arguments. It is extremely unlikely that Ibn Rushd authored *'Aqīdat al-Muwaḥḥidīn*, and regrettable that some historians cite Fletcher's attribution as plausible. I will return to this topic in Chapter 5.
[47] Fletcher, "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology" in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayussi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 238-39.
[48] *EI 2*, "Ibn Tūmart" (J.F.P. Hopkins).
[49] Fletcher, "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology" in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayussi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 239.

prone to magical curiosity and often turned to holy men (*igurramen*) and *mahdī*s instead of jurists. At the same time, the flourishing of Islamic and Greek sciences in the Iberian Peninsula protected the predominantly urban Andalusīs from magicians, miracle workers, and messianic claimants. Historical sources belie Fletcher's neat separation of the Maghribī and Andalusī milieus. For example, in his biography of Ibn Tūmart, Rachid Bourouiba shows that, by the time of Ibn Tūmart's birth, the Maṣmūda had access to Islamic education in the High Atlas and the Sūs Valley. Advanced students, moreover, could and, as in Ibn Tūmart's case, *did* pursue further study in Northern Morocco, al-Andalus, Tunisia, or further east.[50] Al-Andalus likewise produced its share of *mahdī*s. Of these, Abū al-Qāsim b. Qasī of Silves stood in direct competition with Almohad interests in the peninsula.[51] Medieval Spain also has a rich tradition of literature dealing with miracles and magic that crossed the confessional boundaries of its three faiths.[52] The supernatural certainly played a role in Maghribī religious culture, but such beliefs were not unique to the region. Nor should we suppose that belief in magic or miracles is necessarily incompatible with rationalism, whether on a civilizational or individual scale.

Ultimately, Fletcher reaches the same conclusion as Hopkins. Hopkins rejects the importance of doctrine because theological rigidity creates unnecessary obstacles to the unity of

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[50] Rachid Bourouiba, *Ibn Tumart* (Algiers: Société Nationale d'Edition et de Diffusion, 1982), 17-18. We do not know the exact way in which Ibn Tūmart and other rural tribesmen were educated. However, the many accounts of Ibn Tūmart's penchant for studying in mosques from a young age suggest that he received much of his early education in Qur'ānic schools in provincial mosques. Bourouiba adds (following Brunschvig) that Ibn Tūmart almost certainly would have studied in Marrakesh, which, under the Almoravids, had become a hub for Islamic scholars from al-Andalus and the northern Maghrib. I believe that Almohad chroniclers likely underemphasized Ibn Tūmart's scholarly relationship prior to his sojourn in the east in order to strengthen the contrast between Almoravid Mālikism and the Mahdī's "superior" eduction in the *mashriq*. The extent to which Ibn Tūmart's thought opposes itself to Almoravid Mālikism supports the notion that he first pursued a formal education in Marrakesh but was dissatisfied with the local expression of the Mālikī *madhhab*.

[51] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 136-137.

[52] See Maribel Fierro, "The Polemic about the *Karāmāt al-awlyā'* and the Development of Ṣūfism in al-Andalus (Fourth/Tenth-Fifth/Eleventh Centuries)", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 55, no. 2 (1992), 236-249.

the tribal confederation. By rejecting the possibility that a movement motivated primarily by religion or ideology could have emerged among the Maṣmūda, Fletcher is forced to relegate *BIT* to the level of propaganda. "[W]e must," she concludes, "be less concerned with reconciling the inconsistent elements of Ibn Tūmart's thought, because in his time the sociological diversity of the milieu meant that all politically successful ideas had to be porous enough to accommodate this wide diversity."[53] *BIT*'s internal contradictions function like an inkblot test that offers the potential adherent whatever doctrine he wants to see in it. Although Fletcher cautions us against seeing *BIT* as an example of "conscious deceit or double dealing," the priority she gives to political accommodation in her interpretation entails that the text holds no value beyond what it tells us about the Almohads' efforts to accommodate Muslims from diverse backgrounds.

But are the contradictions in Ibn Tūmart's theology upon which Fletcher builds her account contradictions at all? Her two-strata thesis emerges from her belief that the simultaneous presence of Mu'tazilī and Ash'arī doctrines in *BIT* constitutes internal contradiction. On the basis of external sources, Fletcher argues that the "Guide" expresses Mu'tazilī ideas and reflects the historical Ibn Tūmart's theology. From the preponderance of Ash'arī doctrines in the "Creed," she judges this text to represent the Andalusī "high culture" that Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf fostered in Seville.[54] However, the "Guide" and the "Creed" resist such a tidy interpretation. Fletcher makes much of the absence of divine attributes (*ṣifāt*) in the "Guide." Aversion to divine attributes and an emphasis on (*tanzīh*) may suggest a Mu'tazilī leaning. Like Goldziher and many others, Fletcher sees Ibn Tūmart's *tawḥīd*-centered approach as further evidence that Ibn Tūmart

[53] Fletcher "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology" in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayussi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 239.
[54] Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic", *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 111; 113.

identified with the Mu‘tazila, who called themselves “the People of divine unity” (*ahl al-tawḥīd*).[55] The “Creed” emphasizes the limitations of the intellect and takes an Ash‘arī approach to *tawḥīd* whereby the believer affirms certain predicates of God without establishing *how* these predicates apply to God (*bi-lā takyīf*). The “Creed” also explicitly condemns the Mu‘tazilīs’ rejection of divine attributes (*ta‘ṭīl*).

Fletcher’s attribution of individual doctrines to the Mu‘tazila or the Ash‘arīs is mostly correct. Yet, in order to say that the “Guide” or the “Creed” pertains to one school or the other, Fletcher must ignore significant portions of both texts. The evidence she martials to establish Mu‘tazilī character of the “Guide” is inconclusive. The “Guide” indeed stresses God’s unity and His non-resemblance to His creatures; Ibn Tūmart cites Qur’ān 110:17, “There is nothing like Him; He is All-Hearing and All-Seeing” (*laysa ka-mithlihi shay’un wa-huwa al-samī‘u al-baṣīru*), twice in this text which occupies no more than a page in Arabic.[56] However, Ibn Tūmart does not engage in *ta‘ṭīl*, and he describes God in terms with direct parallels to his treatment of divine attributes in the “Creed.” The sole textual evidence Fletcher puts forward to defend her interpretation is that Ibn Tūmart mentions God’s “most beautiful names” (*al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*).[57] Fletcher construes God’s names as Ibn Tūmart’s way of smuggling the Mu‘tazilī stance on *tawḥīd* (according to which God’s attributes are identical with, rather than separate from, his essence) into the “Guide.” But nowhere in the “Guide” does Ibn Tūmart eschew all anthropomorphic language or critique the Ash‘arī doctrine of *ṣifāt*, as we would expect from a Mu‘tazilī. Moreover, the doctrine of divine names is not exclusive to the Mu‘tazila and it

[55] Madeleine Fletcher, “The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic”, *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 116-17; Ignác Goldziher, “Materialen zur Kenntniss der Almohadenbewegung”, *Zeitschrift der Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 41, no. 1 (1887), 60-61; 82-86.
[56] *BIT*, 226.
[57] Madeleine Fletcher, “The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic,” *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 117.

receives a much longer treatment in the "Creed," which Fletcher believes to be thoroughly Ash'arī. Fletcher likewise appeals to Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwa* condemning the Mu'tazilī elements of Ibn Tūmart's "Guide."[58] Although Ibn Taymiyya aligns "the author of the *murshida*" with the Mu'tazila and the Jahmiyya, it is unlikely that he reached this conclusion from the "Guide" alone. If we take into account Ibn Taymiyya's comments on Ibn Tūmart in *Dar' ta'āruḍ*, as well, it is clear that he deems both the "Guide" and the "Creed" to be the work of a Mu'tazilī.[59]

Fletcher's failure to separate Ibn Tūmart's theological writings into Mu'tazilī and Ash'arī groups reveals that the theology they express is more consistent than most commentators have observed. This attribution of *BIT*, in whole or in part, to the major schools of *kalām* or *fiqh* is not unique to Fletcher. The labelling of individual texts and doctrines has unduly occupied many modern scholars, who are themselves imitating medieval sources, such as al-Marrākushī, Ibn Taymiyya, and Ibn Khaldūn.[60] Medieval reports concerning Almohad doctrine, though sometimes helpful, often tell us more about the reporters than about Ibn Tūmart or the Almohads. George Makdisi cautions historians against making too much of the Ash'arī-Mu'tazilī conflict after the fifth/eleventh century. Our current picture of Ash'arism's opposition to Mu'tazilism is itself a product of later Ash'arī historians. Biographers like Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (683-756/1284-1355) likely exaggerated the differences between the two schools in order for Ash'arism to establish stronger links to the Sunnī *madhāhib*.[61] Frank Griffel notes that the "assumed connection between Ibn Tūmart's ideas and Mu'tazilism has often been some evident

[58] See George Makdisi, "Ash'arī and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History I," *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), 37-80; and "Ash'arī and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History II," *Studia Islamica* 18 (1963), 19-39.
[59] See the section on Ibn Taymiyya in Chapter 2.
[60] Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic," *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 116 (n. 14).
[61] See George Makdisi, "Ash'arī and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History I," *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), 37-80; and "Ash'arī and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History II," *Studia Islamica* 18 (1963), 19-39.

oddities of his teaching if compared to with that of classical Aš'arites."[62] Ibn Tūmart's writings and his official biography indicate that the Mahdī found inspiration, not in *classical* Ash'arism, but instead in the Ash'arī *kalām* developed by the Niẓāmiyya school. The influence of Ibn Sīnā on Niẓāmiyya *kalām* is visible in its commitment to rationalism, the same commitment we find in *BIT*.[63]

I will revisit some of Fletcher's arguments in my discussion of Ibn Tūmart's theology in Chapter 5. It is nonetheless evident that the internal contradictions she sees in *BIT* cannot, on the basis of the evidence she provides, be substantiated. Her division of the compilation's authorship into an Amazigh substratum and an Andalusī superstratum, therefore, has no foundation in the text itself.

Fierro's thesis regarding *BIT*'s authorship is bound up with her radical skepticism toward official Almohad sources. The relatively late dates of *BIT*, al-Baydhaq, and *Kitāb al-anṣāb*, which are strongly mahdist, suggest that early, non-official sources render a more accurate picture of the Almohad movement's birth. Such sources, although few, cast some doubt on the centrality of mahdism within early Almohad doctrine. Fierro cites the Syrian chronicler, Ibn al-Qalānisī (463-555/1071-1160), whom Francesco Gabrieli first brought to the attention of Almohad scholars.[64] Ibn al-Qalānisī's sources on the Almohads are unique. He bases his account of Ibn Tūmart on the oral testimony of a Maghribī *faqīh* named Abū Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Ṣiqillī. This informant arrived in the *mashriq* in 541/1146-7, which means that he

[62] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Bafhdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 802.
[63] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 802-803.
[64] Francesco Gabrieli, "Le origini del movimento almohade in una fonte storica del'Oriente," *Arabica* 3, no. 1 (1956), 1-7.

likely departed from North Africa within fifteen years of Ibn Tūmart's death. His other source is an epistle written by 'Abd al-Mu'min that is absent from the collection Lévi-Provençal published.[65] Ibn al-Qalānisī characterizes Ibn Tūmart as a *faqīh* and ascetic who founded a "school of thought" (*madhhab al-fikr*) instead of as a *mahdī*. He only applies "the Mahdī" to 'Abd al-Mu'min, which is a reference to the title the caliph uses in the epistle.[66] Fierro sees Ibn al-Qalānisī as evidence that the rationalist and juridical components of the writings attributed to Ibn Tūmart are closer to historical reality, whereas his identity as *mahdī* developed after his death.[67]

In essence, Fierro reverses Fletcher's thesis. Although Fierro does not explicitly divide *BIT* into textual strata, she claims that the historical Ibn Tūmart was a jurisconsult applying qualified independent legal reasoning (*faqīh mujtahid*), and that the sections of *BIT* dedicated to *uṣūl al-fiqh* reflect this stage in the Almohad movement.[68] The mahdist parts of *BIT*, along with al-Baydhaq and the Almohad epistles, correspond to the Almohad conquest of al-Andalus. Fierro argues that two key features of Almohadism, mahdism and opposition to the Almoravids, were enhanced—or possibly developed *de novo*—in order to accommodate the politico-religious

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[65] Francesco Gabrieli, "Le origini del movimento almohade in una fonte storica del'Oriente," *Arabica* 3, no. 1 (1956), 2; 5.

[66] Abū Ya'la Ḥamza b. al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl tārīkh Dimashq* (Beirut: Maṭba'at al-ābā', 1908), 293: "After this, the reports from the Maghrib are confirmed by the appearance of one of the aforementioned pupils known as the *faqīh* 'Abd al-Mu'min. He was given the name *al-mahdī* [or] 'Commander of the Faithful and Successor to the Mahdī on the path of the monotheists' (*amīr al-mu'minīn wa-khalīfat al-Mahdī ilā sabīl al-muwaḥḥidīn*)." It could be interpreted from Ibn al-Qalānisī's wording that 'Abd al-Mu'min is both the Mahdī *and* the Mahdī's successor.

[67] Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphate and Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-mujtahid*", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (1999), 228. See also Maribel Fierro, "El *Mahdī* Ibn Tūmart: más allá de la biografía official*"* in *Política, sociedad e identidades en el occidente islámico (siglos xi-xiv)*, eds. Miguel Ángel Manzano and Rachid El Hour (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, 2016), 76.

[68] Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphate and Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-mujtahid,*" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (1999), 231. Fierro's position is informed by Abdallah Laroui, "Sur le mahdisme d'Ibn Tumart" in Abdelmajid Kaddouri (ed.), *Mahdisme: Crise et Changement dans l'Histoire du Maroc du Maroc. Actes de la table ronde organisée à Marrakech par la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Rabat du 11 au fevrier 1993* (Rabat: Royaume du Maroc Université de Mohammed V, 1994), 9-13; and Tilman Nagel, "La destrucción de la ciencia de la *šarī'a* por Muḥammad b. Tūmart," *Al-Qanṭara*, 18 (1997), 295-304.

expectations of Andalusī Muslims and to strengthen ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s legitimacy among the Almohad *shuyūkh*, some of whom resented the caliph’s power within the movement.[69]

Many obstacles stood in the way of ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s legitimacy among factions within the Almohads. Al-Baydhaq, Ibn ‘Idhārī, al-Nāṣirī, Ibn Khaldūn, and Ibn al-Khaṭīb give many examples of revolts against the caliph from within the Almohad movement and without. When he proclaimed Ibn Tūmart’s death in 526/1132 (a fact that the Almohad *jamā‘a*, or high council, hid for three years), some revolted (*irtadda*/*thāra*) against ‘Abd al-Mu’min.[70] The same year the caliph took Marrakesh from the Almoravids (541/1147), Muḥammad b. Hūd al-Massī led the Jazūla (also spelled “Gazūla”) tribe in an unsuccessful uprising against the Almohads. Ibn Hūd’s rebellion precipitated widespread apostasy from Almohadism in areas outside the Almohad strongholds of Marrakesh and Fez. In 543/1149, ‘Abd al-Mu’min conducted a systematic purge (*i‘tirāf*) of dissenting tribesmen; by al-Baydhaq’s account, Mu’minid forces executed 32,730 men, women, and children. Despite this brutal response, Ibn Hud’s rebellion was followed by that of the Barghawāṭa, Yaddar al-Dukkālī, and Ibn Qasī, a rival mahdist claimant in Gharb al-Andalus (now the Portuguese Algarve) who had initially supported the Almohads’ entry into Iberia.[71] Ibn Tūmart’s brothers attempted to take control of Marrakesh in 551/1156-7 in the caliph’s absence. The conspiracy was a response to ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s appointment of his son, Muḥammad, as his successor and his installation of his other sons as governors of major Almohad cities.[72]

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[69] Maribel Fierro, “Le mahdi Ibn Tûmart et al-Andalus: l’élaboration de la legitimité almohade” in *Mahdisme et millénarisme en Islam: Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 91-4 (2000), 115-16.
[70] Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-Mahdī*, 45-46.
[71] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 188-190.
[72] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 195-96. See also Roger Le Tourneau, “Du mouvement almohade à la dynastie mu’minide: la révolte des frères d’Ibn Tūmart de 1153 à 1156”, *Mélanges d’Histoire et d’Archeologie de l’Occident Musulman, Hommage à Georges Marçais*, vol. II, 111-16.

For Fierro, ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s transformation of the Almohad movement into a hereditary caliphate is directly tied to *BIT*’s emphasis on mahdism. Increasing his family’s presence within the Almohad state allowed him to embark upon a legal reform whereby the caliph, as successor to Ibn Tūmart, would possess dual authority over *sharī‘a* and the state, as Ibn Tūmart had. By this point in time, most Sunnīs had reached a consensus on the division of law and executive power. The *sulṭān* was charged with enforcing the *sharī‘a*, whereas the *‘ulamā’* were responsible for interpreting its content. Ibn Tūmart rejected the Sunnī principle of *taṣwīb*, the idea that the considered opinions of all qualified, independent legal interpreters (sing.: *mujtahid*) are valid, and that Muslims must respect differences (sing.: *ikhtilāf*) among these opinions. He criticized *taṣwīb* on the grounds that acceptance of *ikhtilāf*, as a form of conjecture (*ẓann*), is epistemologically contrary to knowledge (*‘ilm*). *Sharī‘a*, which Ibn Tūmart considers a form of knowledge, does not allow for two valid decisions regarding the same point of law; there is one true interpretation apart from which all others are false. Ibn Tūmart (or, as Fierro would have it, ‘Abd al-Mu’min) resolved this problem by claiming the status of “the infallible *imām* and acknowledged *mahdī*” (*al-imām al-ma‘ṣūm wa-l-mahdī al-ma‘lūm*). Like prophets in Sunnī thought, and the *imām*s in Shī‘ism, the Almohad *mahdī* is protected from error (*ma‘ṣūm min al-khaṭa’*) and does not engage in independent legal reasoning (*ijtihād*) as others do. Because his knowledge of the law is above *ijtihād* and *ẓann*, his judgments are exclusively correct and binding upon all believers.[73] The Mahdī’s dual authority, Fierro argues, presented ‘Abd al-Mu’min with an opportunity to impose a unified legal code upon his caliphate, much like that

[73] Maribel Fierro, “The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphate and Ibn Rushd’s *Bidāyat al-mujtahid,*” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (1999), 232-33. Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 178.

about which Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (d. 139-42/756-60) theorizes in his *Risālat al-ṣaḥāba*.[74] In this treatise addressed to the ‘Abbāsid caliph, al-Manṣūr, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ calls attention to the existence of contradictory legal opinions and the social ills they cause. He observes that, within Iraq alone, the public application of Islamic Law could differ substantially from one city to another. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ theorizes that the caliph, rather than independent legal scholars and local judges, has the prerogative to impose legal uniformity by recording his decisions on individual legal questions into a single, written code.[75]

Fierro understands the Mu’minids’ mahdist ideology to be in conflict with Ibn al-Qalānisī’s description of Ibn Tūmart. As the founder of a *madhhab fikr*, Ibn Tūmart advocated a return to the “roots” (*uṣūl*) of Islam, the Qur’ān and the *sunna*, and to apply human reason to the study thereof. Ibn Tūmart certainly rejected *taṣwīb*—this is evident from many passages of *BIT*.[76] However, Fierro rightly recognizes that ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s arrogation of the *mahdī*’s dual authority over law and state is not the only alternative to *taṣwīb* suggested by Ibn Tūmart. Ibn al-Qalānisī describes Ibn Tūmart as exhorting *all* Muslims to worship God “in accordance with thought” (*bi-l-fikra*), an idea that is echoed in the “Creed.”[77] Moreover, Ibn Tūmart’s asceticism and celibacy (which is confirmed by both Almohad and non-Almohad sources) seem to preclude the possibility that he wished to found a hereditary dynasty.

Almohad mahdism and the legal reform founded upon it enabled the Mu’minids to carry out a revolution in the Maghrib and al-Andalus. Under the auspices of Ibn Tūmart’s authority,

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[74] Maribel Fierro, “Le mahdi Ibn Tûmart et al-Andalus: l’élaboration de la legitimité almohade” in *Mahdisme et millénarisme en Islam: Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 91-4 (2000), 112-13.
[75] Frank E. Vogel, “The Closing of the Door of Ijtihad and the Application of the Law,” *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 10, no. 3 (1993), 398-99. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Muqaffa‘, *Risālat al-ṣaḥāba* in *Rasā’il al-bulaghā’*, ed. Muḥammad Kurd ‘Alī (Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-‘arabiyya al-kubrā, 1913), 126-27.
[76] D, 51. See section on *ijtihād* in Chapter 4.
[77] Abū Ya‘la Ḥamza b. al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl tārīkh Dimashq* (Beirut: Maṭba‘at al-ābā’, 1908), 291; Francesco Gabrieli, “Le origini del movimento almohade in una fonte storica del’Oriente”, *Arabica* 3, no. 1 (1956), 6. See also, *BIT*, ?

the Almohads adopted new religious and political practices in order to signal "its discontinuity with the recent past." Instead of round coins, they minted square dirhams in accordance with a mahdist legend popular in the Maghrib.[78] Following Ibn Tūmart's critique of Mālikism, they discouraged (and sometimes forbade) the use of *furū' al-fiqh* manuals.[79] They constructed austere mosques based on *ḥadīth* reports of those used by early Muslims. In many areas, they abolished the *dhimmī* status of Jews and Christians. Within a few generations, the native North African church disappeared; the region's Jews were faced with the choice of conversion, death, or expulsion. The Almohads discouraged pilgrimage to Mecca and amended the call to prayer, sometimes allowing the *mu'adhdhin* to recite it in Tamazight.[80] The greatest change the Almohads effected in the region was the displacement of the Almoravid-Mālikī scholarly elites. In some areas, the *ṭalaba* and *ḥuffāẓ*, scholars and preachers who believed in the Mahdī and were loyal to (as well as financially dependent upon) the Mu'minids, gradually took their place. In other areas (particularly in al-Andalus), the Almohads incorporated Mālikīs willing to cooperate with them into the state and local administration. The education of the *ṭalaba* and *ḥuffāẓ* consisted in the study and memorization of Ibn Tūmart's writings and they engaged in public teaching sessions (*mudhākara*) intended to prepare them for missionary work in recently acquired territories.[81]

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[78] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 218. Ibn Khaldūn explains that Ibn Tūmart was described as "the master of the square dirham" (*ṣāḥib al-dirham al-murabba'*) by practitioners of magic who predicted the coming of the dynasty. Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-Mahdī* (Rabat: Dār al-Mansūr li-l-ṭabā'a wa-l-warāqa, 1971), 27-29. Al-Baydhaq puts this legend in the mouth of Ibn Tūmart's rival, the pro-Almoravid *faqīh* and logician, Mālik b. Wuhayb. The chronicler provides an alternative epithet, "the master of the *cornered* dirham" (*ṣāḥib al-dirham al-murakkan*). See also, Mercedes García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 167.

[79] On al-Manṣūr's burning of *furū'* manuals, see 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *al-Mu'jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-maghrib* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2006), 202-03.

[80] Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphate and Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-mujtahid,*" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (1999), 227.

[81] Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphate and Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-mujtahid,*" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (1999), 228.

Much of Fierro's account of the Almohads' use of mahdism as revolutionary propaganda centers on the career of Abū al-Qāsim b. Qasī (d. 547/1151). This rival mahdist belonged to the ṣūfī *murīdūn* movement based in what is now Portugal and Western Spain. Despite differences in their cultural milieus, there are many similarities between Ibn Qasī and Ibn Tūmart: the influence of al-Ghazālī, disapproval of the Almoravids, and criticism of Mālikī *fuqahā'*. Ibn Qasī briefly supported the Almohads on the grounds that the Almoravids were their common enemy. After *murīdūn* troops captured Mértola in 540/1144, he established himself as *imām* and ruled over a handful of cities in the Algarve. He was instrumental in facilitating the Almohads' arrival in al-Andalus. However, many of his followers quickly abandoned him and formally recognized Almohad sovereignty and doctrine. Regretting his appeal to the Almohads, he approached the Christian Portuguese in Coimbra about repelling the invaders from the Maghrib. A group of Muslims from Silves later assassinated him for conspiring with Christians against the Almohads.[82]

Fierro argues that Ibn Qasī's competing claim to be the *mahdī* influenced the way in which the Almohads presented Ibn Tūmart to Andalusī Muslims. She cites numismatic evidence compiled by Sidarus and Telles Antunes as evidence of this.[83] There are many similarities between the coins the *murīdūn* and the Almohads minted in al-Andalus. The coin attributed to Ibn Qasī bears the legend *Allāhu rabbunā wa-Muḥammadun nabiyyunā wa-l-mahdī imāmunā* ("God is our Lord, Muḥammad is our Prophet, and the *mahdī* is our leader.") and is dated 539/1144. The undated Almohad coin bears a nearly identical legend, but substitutes the

[82] *EI 2*, "Ibn Ḳasī." Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 136-39; 190- 92.
[83] A. Sidarus, "Novos dados sobre Ibn Qasi de Silves e as taifas almorávidas no Gharb al-Andalus," *I Jornadas de Silves Actas*, 35-40. M. Telles Antunes and A. Sidarus, "Mais um quirate cunhado em Beja nome de Ibn Qasi e Abu Talib al-Zuhri," *Arqueologia Medieval* 1, 221-23.

incorrect formula, "*Muḥammadun rasūlunā*" ("Muḥammad is *our* messenger," rather than *God's*).[84] Sidarus and Telles Antunes determine that Ibn Qasī's coin was minted earlier than the Almohad coin. Fierro believes that the similarity between the two coins is evidence of a larger Almohad program to restyle Ibn Tūmart according to Andalusī models of mahdism current among Andalusī Muslims.[85]

Fierro's authorship hypothesis poses a challenge to the interpretation of *BIT* insofar as she places Ibn Tūmart's rationalism and fundamentalism in tension with Almohad mahdism. Her belief that the Mu'minids inserted a doctrine of the *mahdī* into the compilation[86] not only rules out the authenticity some texts, but also casts serious doubts on the possibility of doctrinal consistency between authentic and inauthentic texts. It is not, therefore, surprising that she considers *BIT* to be "a curious miscellany of opuscules whose meaning and internal unity have yet to be revealed."[87] As a consequence, Fierro's engagement with *BIT* throughout her career tends to consist in readings of individual texts, which she regards as having, at best, a tenuous historical connection to other texts in *BIT*. Fierro's hypothesis is, however, less reductive than Fletcher's. *BIT* is not an inkblot in which the potential believer sees what he wants, but rather a possible guide to the development of Almohad propaganda and the motives behind it.

Some historians take issue with Fierro's hypothesis. For example, García Arenal, though sympathetic to Fierro's belief that 'Abd al-Mu'min appropriated the Almohad movement for

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[84] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 190-91.
[85] Maribel Fierro, "El *Mahdī* Ibn Tūmart: más allá de la biografía official*"* in *Polítca, ociedad e identidades en el occidente islámico (siglos xi-xiv)*, eds. Miguel Ángel Manzano and Rachid El Hour (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, 2016), 94-97.
[86] Such insertions would include: "*A'azz mā yuṭlab*", "*Fī al-imāma*", and "*Bāb fī bayān al-ṭawā'if al-mubṭilīn*" See Maribel Fierro, "Le mahdi Ibn Tûmart et al-Andalus: l'élaboration de la legitimité almohade" in *Mahdisme et millénarisme en Islam: Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 91-4 (2000),112-13.
[87] Maribel Fierro, "El *Mahdī* Ibn Tūmart: más allá de la biografía official*"* in *Polítca, ociedad e identidades en el occidente islámico (siglos xi-xiv)*, eds. Miguel Ángel Manzano and Rachid El Hour (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, 2016), 94.

himself on the grounds that a hereditary caliphate seems incongruous with Ibn Tūmart's teachings and personal asceticism, takes issue with Fierro's comparison of Ibn Tūmart to Ibn Qasī.[88] The numismatic studies she cites as evidence that the Almohads imitated Ibn Qasī are not generally accepted. Moreover, García Arenal considers it unlikely that mahdism (as opposed to Mālikī Sunnism) was prevalent enough among Muslims in al-Andalus such that the Mu'minids would have considered it strategically prudent to reshape Almohadism in order to accommodate it.[89]

Fierro remains the most prominent voice in the secondary literature, not least because of her prolific contribution to Almohad scholarship and adjacent subjects. Although I believe there are certain faults with her account of *BIT*'s authorship and the propagandistic character of Almohad sources in general, her skepticism has yielded several insights that we cannot ignore. If official Almohad sources, notably al-Baydhaq and *Kitāb al-anṣāb*, do not always reflect historical events *wie sie eigentlich gewesen waren*, we must ask what the authors of these works otherwise sought to express by blending history and hagiography. Her division of Almohad doctrine into Tūmartian and Mu'minid phases often suggests that 'Abd al-Mu'min deliberately reoriented the Almohad movement in ways that he knew contradicted the intentions of its founder. I find nothing in the primary sources that suggests that 'Abd al-Mu'min was anything but a true believer in Almohad Islam in the way he understood Ibn Tūmart to have communicated it to his followers. Revisionists, like Fierro, point to disputes (often violent) between the Mu'minids and the Almohad *shuyūkh*, but the existence of differences within a nascent religious community does not entail that the victorious party disingenuously altered its

[88] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 189.
[89] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 161-62; 190-92.

core beliefs in order to ensure its political victory. However, Fierro is right to highlight the fact that the entire corpus of official Almohad sources—including *BIT*—have demonstrable ties to the Mu'minid dynasty. In light of this, we could (and I propose that we *should*) consider Mu'minid Almohadism to be but one, authentic expression of the form of Islam that Ibn Tūmart developed. Future comparisons of *BIT*'s contents to contemporaneous descriptions of Almohad religiosity must take into account the possibility that other Tūmartian traditions existed alongside the politically dominant Mu'minid tradition.

Tilman Nagel devotes the first section of his *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (2000) to Ibn Tūmart. Unlike Fletcher and Fierro, he does not advance a detailed hypothesis regarding the Mu'minids' development of the *mahdī*-doctrine. Nagel nevertheless approaches *BIT* with the understanding that the mahdist writings attributed to Ibn Tūmart are likely inauthentic. His reading of *BIT* places greater emphasis on texts like "The Dearest Desire" and "The Creed" because their content more closely resembles historical descriptions of Ibn Tūmart's career from outside the Almohad movement. In this way, he echoes Fierro's claim that Ibn al-Qalānisī's identification of Ibn Tūmart as a jurist (*faqīh*) and ascetic (*zāhid*) who founded a school of thought (*madhhab al-fikr*) reflects a pre-mahdist strain of Almohadism—and perhaps a non-mahdist Ibn Tūmart.[90] Contrary to other historians, Nagel does not see Almohadism as distinct from Sunnism. Rather, he consistently states that "Ibn Tūmart was a Mālikī" (*Ibn Tūmart war Malikit*) whose major intellectual goal was to return North African Sunnism to the sources and hermeneutic principles that guided Mālik b. Anas and the early members of the Mālikī school.[91] Despite Nagel's caution toward certain texts in *BIT*, he differs from other revisionist scholars

[90] Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 64; 138 (n. 238).
[91] Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 64-65

insofar as he does not regard the problem of authenticity as an impediment to a close reading of the text and has done much to contextualize Ibn Tūmart's jurisprudence and theology within dissident strands of Sunnism that had once existed in the Islamic East.[92] In many ways, he preempts some of the post-revisionists' concerns regarding the devaluation of *BIT* and other Almohad sources on account of their association with the Mu'minid dynasty.

The Post-Revisionist School

The post-revisionist school, represented by Dominique Urvoy, Frank Griffel, and Allen Fromherz, pushes back against Fletcher's and Fierro's belief that *BIT* is in some sense inauthentic. They nevertheless take revisionist claims concerning the historicity of *BIT* and other official Almohad sources seriously. In terms of methodology, post-revisionists hold much in common with early Almohad scholars—especially Goldziher and Brunschvig. Like early Almohad scholars, Griffel and Fromherz believe the traditional ascription of *BIT* to Ibn Tūmart (by way of a Mu'minid compiler) to be the most plausible account of its authorship. Urvoy and Griffel, in particular, adopt an intellectual historical approach to *BIT* that puts Ibn Tūmart in the context of major crises in philosophy and the Islamic sciences that erupted during the course of the fourth-fifth/tenth-eleventh centuries. Although primarily interested in the politico-religious development of the Almohad Caliphate, Fromherz is the first historian to propose an account of *BIT* as whole. He argues that the text's compiler arranged its parts in a logical way in order to

[92] Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 174-75. Nagel concludes his study of Ibn Tūmart by reflecting upon Ibn Taymiyya's and Ibn Khaldūn's assessments of the founder of the Almohad movement. There, he compares Ibn Tūmart's theological emphasis on God's absolute existence and transcendence to the Sunnī Jahmiyya, a heretical group of theologians who denied God's attributes and names.

demonstrate the connection of Ibn Tūmart's *fiqh* and *kalām* to belief in him as the *mahdī* and what this belief entails.

Dominique Urvoy's 1974 study, "La pensée d'Ibn Tūmart," responds to the criticism that Huici Miranda and Le Tourneau level against *BIT*. He believes that it is unfair to judge the merit of a posthumous compilation against systematic works of *fiqh* and *kalām* from the same period. We should instead judge Ibn Tūmart according to his "aptitude for *understanding* certain questions posed by the situation in which he lived."[93] Urvoy's study is by no means exhaustive. However, his identification of the questions most relevant to Ibn Tūmart's context orients us toward the two principal arguments that *BIT* seeks to formulate.

The first argument concerns the place of rationalism in Islam with regard to both theoretical and practical inquiry. Urvoy notes that scholars often misconstrue the contours of theological rationalism. For Ibn Tūmart, rationalism does not mean "detached speculation." Rather, rationalism, like all human activity, is linked to divine revelation by "the promise and the threat" (*al-wa'd wa-l-wa'īd*) that God extends to humankind through his messengers.[94] By understanding the role of revelation in Ibn Tūmart's rationalism, we avoid ascribing to Ibn Tūmart contradictory positions. One of the particular challenges posed by *BIT* is the different status he grants to the intellect (*'aql*) in *fiqh* and *kalām*. At first blush, Ibn Tūmart appears to champion rational necessity in theological discourse, while rejecting the intellect as a source of law in *fiqh*. Urvoy claims that this "characteristic contradiction" of *BIT* is merely an apparent one. Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of *tawḥīd* is rational, but not the product of detached speculation; revelation informs his arguments at every stage. In the same way, Ibn Tūmart restricts the

[93] Dominique Urvoy, "La Pensée d'Ibn Tūmart", *Bulletin d'études orientales* 27 (1974), 20.
[94] Dominique Urvoy, "La Pensée d'Ibn Tūmart", *Bulletin d'études orientales* 27 (1974), 23.

sources of positive law to the Qur'ān and *sunna*, not because he believes the human intellect has no place in *fiqh*, but precisely because the satisfaction of "the demands of reason" requires him to restrict himself to positive methods. Urvoy maintains that the ancillary status of reason in Ibn Tūmart's *fiqh* is entirely consistent with his doctrine of God's absolute transcendence (*tanzīh*). Human reason can, by itself, establish absolute distance between God and humankind. However, the rationale that underlies the *sharī'a*, insofar as it issues from a transcendent God, cannot be fully grasped by human reason. The reasons behind the divine law rest with God alone. The existence of such limitations entails that the intellect's role in *fiqh* is not the free elaboration of positive laws and moral precepts according to reason, but rather is restricted to clarifying the content and meaning of the *sharī'a* as it appears in positive sources.[95]

The second aspect of *BIT* Urvoy addresses is the role of the *mahdī*. Other scholars believe that *BIT*'s mahdism contradicts Ibn Tūmart's commitments to rationalism. Urvoy hypothesizes that Almohad mahdism, particularly the doctrine of the "infallible *imām*" (*al-imām al-ma'ṣūm*), is grounded in Khārijī-Ibāḍī theories of *imāma*.[96] The Khārijī-Ibāḍī conception of the *imām*, unlike Shī'ī conceptions of this office, is "purely practical." The *imām* does not derive his knowledge by supernatural means; the quasi-divine authority the Shī'a attribute to the *imām*s would seem to obviate Ibn Tūmart's rationalist project. Urvoy argues that the Almohad *mahdī* most resembles the Khārijī-Ibāḍī *imām*. The *imām* exists only to unify the community by sanctioning a single interpretation of the *sharī'a*. The community's belief in his infallibility

[95] Dominique Urvoy, "La Pensée d'Ibn Tūmart", *Bulletin d'études orientales* 27 (1974), 33-37. See also Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 98-99.
[96] Dominique Urvoy, "La Pensée d'Ibn Tūmart", *Bulletin d'études orientales* 27 (1974), 21-22. Unlike many Almohad scholars, who stress Sunnī and possible Shī'ī influences on Almohadism, Urvoy highlights the role Khārijī and Ibāḍī movements played in the Islamization of Ifrīqiyya and the Far Maghrib (especially of the Imazighen) prior to the rise of the Almoravids. Khārijī-Ibāḍī ideas, Urvoy claims, likely exerted an influence on Ibn Tūmart despite Sunnī antagonism toward them.

(*ʻiṣma*) reflects a preference for unity of action over the legal pluralism characteristic of Sunnism.[97] While I believe Urvoy dismisses Shīʻī influences too hastily, his Khārijī-Ibāḍī hypothesis offers a way of reconciling Ibn Tūmart's rationalism with his role as *mahdī*. The need for the *mahdī* stems from the same reality that prompts Ibn Tūmart to restrict the role of the intellect in *fiqh*—God's absolute transcendence. In order for the Islamic community (*umma*) to achieve practical unity, it requires a leader with the authority of the Prophet, the last intermediary between humankind and a transcendent God, to unify the implementation of divine law.[98] Although Urvoy's Khārijī-Ibāḍī hypothesis requires further scrutiny, his study indicates that *BIT*, despite being a compilation, presents arguments that are internally coherent.

Griffel's study of Ibn Tūmart's "Creed" and "Guide" primarily focuses on Ibn Tūmart's intellectual debt to al-Ghazālī and the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa*. He argues that, while Ibn Tūmart's purported relationship with al-Ghazālī is not consistent with sources about the last years of al-Ghazālī's life, this fictive element of his biography nevertheless alludes to Ibn Tūmart's *intellectual* relationship to Niẓāmiyya Ashʻarism.[99] What differentiates Niẓāmiyya Ashʻarism from classical Ashʻarism is its engagement with the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā, particularly his kinematic proof of God's existence.[100] Griffel determines that Ibn Tūmart's "Creed" and "Guide" thoroughly reflect the Niẓāmiyya's synthesis of Ashʻarism and Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics, and that there is "no Muʻtazilite influence." He argues that previous scholarship on Almohad theology either defers too much to the testimony of al-Marrākushī, al-Subkī, and Ibn Taymiyya

[97] Dominique Urvoy, "La Pensée d'Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 27 (1974), 37-39.
[98] Dominique Urvoy, "La Pensée d'Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 27 (1974), 28-29.
[99] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 754-57.
[100] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 757-62.

to establish Ibn Tūmart's Mu'tazilism, or mistakenly labels some of Ibn Tūmart's doctrines Mu'tazilī because they do not fit an idealized model of classical Ash'arism. I will discuss Griffel's reading of Ibn Tūmart's theology again in Chapter 5. However, his approach to the Mu'tazilī-Ash'arī question bears directly upon the question of *BIT*'s authorship and textual unity. Griffel states that "[t]he confusion on Ibn Tūmart's intellectual influences led to widespread erroneous judgments on his theology." Fletcher, for example, cites the alleged Mu'tazilī features of the "Guide" as evidence that *BIT* possesses two textual strata. Griffel also singles out Hopkins' article on Ibn Tūmart in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, in which he writes that Ibn Tūmart's theology "is not important." The confusion surrounding Ibn Tūmart's influences suggests to historians like Hopkins that the Almohad founder's eclecticism resulted from mere political opportunism. The revisionist school not only perpetuates Hopkins' attitude, but incorporates it into their hermeneutic approach to *BIT*.[101]

The overall consistency of the "Creed" and the "Guide" with developments made by *'ulamā'* associated with the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa*s in Baghdad and Nīshāpūr around the turn of the sixrth/twelfth century supports the traditional ascription of *BIT* to Ibn Tūmart. Griffel likewise believes that Niẓāmiyya *uṣūl al-fiqh*, developed in concert with their particular brand of Ash'arism, informed Ibn Tūmart's juridical methodology. Contra Goldziher, who sees Ibn Tūmart's rejection of rational analogy (*qiyās 'aqlī*) as a sign of Ẓāhirī influence, Griffel holds that al-Ghazālī is a more likely candidate. "In al-Ghazālī," he writes, "just as in Ibn Tūmart, a rationalist position in the rational sciences leads to strict methodological restrictions for the use

[101] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 802, n. 144.

of reason (*'aql*) in the religious sciences."[102] By properly identifying Ibn Tūmart's intellectual lineages, Griffel believes that we will begin to see the contentual coherence of *BIT*. Griffel's judgment on the text's authenticity is not, however, unqualified. Although he maintains that Ibn Tūmart authored the texts compiled in *BIT*, he remains open to some of the revisionists' concerns over manipulation. In his bibliographical sketch of Ibn Tūmart's writings (including his *ḥadīth* compilations), Griffel calls attention to the "conscious detachment" that is characteristic of his style. It is possible that *BIT*'s compilers employed this impersonal style as a fiction "to further strengthen parallels between him [Ibn Tūmart] and the Prophet Muḥammad."[103] However, in light of the *BIT*'s internal coherence, Griffel limits the possible extent of editorial manipulation to these rhetorical elements.

Allen Fromherz's *The Almohads: The Rise of an Islamic Empire* (2010) is noteworthy, not least because it is the first book-length study of the origins of the Almohad movement published in English. The author sets himself the goal of challenging "prevailing views of how primary sources of Almohad history were manipulated at the time they were produced."[104] He takes particular issue with Fletcher's and Fierro's respective accounts of Andalusī influence on extant Almohad sources. Although the culture of Almohad al-Andalus holds a privileged place in the minds of modern historians, Fletcher and Fierro exaggerate the significance of al-Andalus during the caliphate's early years. For 'Abd al-Mu'min, the Iberian Peninsula was a "sideshow"

[102] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 805.
[103] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 765-66.
[104] Allen Fromherz, *The Almohads: Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 8.

to the consolidation of the caliphate's power in Ifrīqiyya and the Maghrib.[105] Fromherz further argues that revisionists do not give enough allowance to the sources from *within* the Almohad tradition. As far as their historicity is concerned, the ideological bias and hagiographical elements of these official sources should certainly give us pause. Yet if we recognize that the commitments of writers like al-Baydhaq, Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, and al-Marrākushī reflect an *Amazigh* context (rather than an Andalusī-Arab one), Fletcher's and Fierro's manipulation hypotheses seem less plausible. Fromherz views Almohad sources through Patrick J. Geary's concept of the "founding myth."[106] The attention the official sources give to Amazigh tribal culture attests to the centrality of the Maghrib to the Almohad myth of origins. Even if we could be certain that Andalusīs manipulated these sources, we could not conclude, as Fletcher and Fierro do, that such manipulations accommodate the Andalusī perspective. On the contrary, the Amazigh-centric character of these works "would alter current assumptions about the Andalusīs' hostile reaction to the Almohad presence."[107]

Fromherz sees *BIT* as participating in the construction of the Almohad myth of origins. Given that Ibn Tūmart used his theology "to challenge the legitimacy of the Almoravids and to justify *jihād* against other Muslims," *BIT* bears witness to the specific politico-religious situation in which the early Almohads found themselves. Fromherz unequivocally rejects Fletcher's thesis that the Almohads *tamed* Ibn Tūmart's doctrines for an Andalusī audience. Fletcher's assertion that Ibn Rushd authored the "Creed" rests on the assumption that someone from Ibn Tūmart's

[105] Allen Fromherz, *The Almohads: Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 11. See Jamil Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 92-93. Abun-Nasr notes that, in 1148, 'Abd al-Mu'min diverted a significant portion of the Almohad army to Tunisia in order to combat the invading Normans. Following this campaign in the east, the caliph spent the remainder of his reign between Marrakesh and Salé dealing with Arab tribesmen and advocating for hereditary succession.
[106] See Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).
[107] Allen Fromherz, *The Almohads: Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 11-14.

background would have been incapable of producing a text of such a "dense philosophical nature." Fromherz objects that not only would Ibn Tūmart have been able "to develop an advanced understanding of theological issues," but also that the Almohad *shuyūkh* would have noticed such significant changes to fundamental aspects of Ibn Tūmart's doctrines.[108] *BIT*'s concern for conflict between the Almohads and Almoravids in the Maghrib indicates that the traditional ascription of the text to Ibn Tūmart is still the most plausible.

The Almohads remains, first and foremost, a study of the Almohad founding myth within its Maghribī context. Fromherz nevertheless proposes an account of *BIT*'s structure—something which no prior scholar has ventured.

> There are roughly four main parts to the book, representing different periods in the life of Ibn Tūmart and the Almohad movement. The first part addresses the heated ideological debate over the authenticity of the sayings of the Prophet and the proper way of distinguishing true from false *ḥadīth*… The second part of the book is much more philosophical and rationalist, the *'aqīda* or profession of faith sets out to prove the absolute, single unity of God with Aristotelian logic… The third part, the revelations and the anthems, the section on the Mahdī and imamate is specifically oriented towards the recitation and memorization by the wider public. Finally, the rest of the book is devoted to a catalogue of reasons why the Almoravids must be punished for their sins against 'true' Islam.[109]

Fromherz's proposed structure appears to divide *BIT* into sections that cohere in style or rhetoric, rather than in their subject matter. Although I agree with Fromherz that *BIT* divides into four parts, I take issue with the way he characterizes the goals of each part. I do not believe that the "Creed" should be separated from the other credal texts on the grounds that the former uses proofs and the latter consists in doctrinal statements intended to be memorized. His description of the first section as a work dedicated to the science of *ḥadīth* transmission, though correct, overlooks the epistemological elements that put it on par with (and perhaps *above*) the "Creed"

[108] Allen Fromherz, *The Almohads: Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 179-80.
[109] Allen Fromherz, *The Almohads: Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 170-71.

in terms of intellectual rigor. I will revisit these issues when I present my proposed outline of *BIT* in the next chapter. On the whole, however, Fromherz's description of *BIT*'structure in *The Almohads* offers strong evidence in favor of the work's internal coherence and, ultimately, its authenticity.[110]

[110] For further details on Fromherz's proposed structure for *BIT*, see "Chapter 3: The Doctrine of Muḥammad Ibn Tūmart: Mahdī of the Almohads" in Allen Fromherz, *The Almohads: Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 135-186.

Chapter 2 – The Text of *The Book of Ibn Tūmart*: Manuscripts, Authorship, and Historical Attestations

Description of the Text

Manuscripts and Editions

BIT has come down to us in two manuscripts: Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds arabe 1451 ("A") and Ms. Rabat, Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc, al-Khizāna al-ʻĀmma, 1214 qāf ("B"). While there is some disagreement among scholars over the date of A[111], the colophons indicate that A was copied in 579/1183-4 and B in 595/1198-9. We can comfortably determine that A was completed within a year of Abū Yaʻqūb Yūsufʾs death at the Battle of Santarém in 580/1184. B, on the other hand, dates to the last year of the reign of his son, Abū Yūsuf Yaʻqūb (r. 580-95/1184-99).

A served as the basis of J.D. Luciani's and Muḥammad b. Muṣṭafā b. al-Khūja al-Kamāl's *editio princeps* ("C"), published under the title *Le Livre de Ibn Toumert* (Algiers, 1903). Later in the twentieth century, researchers discovered B in the library of the Great Mosque of Taza. The majority of the texts B contains are the same as those found in A. There are, however, some differences. B omits many of Ibn Tūmart's shorter theological writings—most noticeably, the *murshida*. B also adds a few epistles attributed to Ibn Tūmart and ʻAbd al-Muʻmin. The

[111] For example, Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 766-767. Griffel establishes the date of A as 579/1178, and that of B as 595/1198-9. His dating of B is consistent with standard Hijrī-Gregorian conversion, whereas A is nearly five years off.

discovery of B led to the publication of two substantially different critical editions, the first by ʻAmmār al-Ṭālibī (Algeria, 1985/2007), and the second by ʻAbd al-Ghanī Abū al-ʻAzm (Morocco, 1997). Both critical editions contain some noticeable errors, mostly typographical[112], but are relatively accurate representations of the individual texts belonging to *BIT*. Abū al-ʻAzm's edition, in particular, pays close attention to the difference between Ibn Tūmart's voice and that of the compiler(s). It is rather unfortunate that the majority of scholars writing after 1985 have ignored these editions, preferring Luciani's *editio princeps* instead. This neglect is especially perplexing in the cases of Fletcher, Fierro, and Fromherz, each of whom make arguments concerning *BIT*'s authorship and compilation history without taking the Rabat manuscript into account. In this dissertation, I will primarily cite Ṭālibī's edition ("D"), which I believe is the best edition of *BIT* available on the grounds that it incorporates texts unique to both manuscripts, but mostly defers to the arrangement of texts we see in the older, MS Paris.

Title

In this dissertation, I refer to the compilation of Ibn Tūmart's writings as *The Book of Ibn Tūmart*, following J.D. Luciani. Since medieval times, Arabic-speaking authors have sometimes referred to the work as *Aʻazz mā yuṭlab*, the title of the first text in the compilation.[113] Manuscript A gives the full title as *Sifr fīhi jamīʻ taʻālīq al-Imām al-maʻṣūm al-Mahdī al-maʻlūm raḍiya Allāh ʻanhu mimmā amlāhu Sayyidunā al-Imām al-Khalīfat Amīr al-Muʼminīn Abū*

[112] This is especially true of Abū al-ʻAzm's edition because he vowels the text in its entirety. I and other readers have noticed misvowelled words and words where alternate readings are possible or make more sense in context.
[113] Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʻibar*, vol. 6 (Beirut: Dār al-kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1956-61), 466.ʻAbd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *al-Muʻjib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-maghrib* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʻAṣriyya, 2006), 141. Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 777.

Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Muʻmin b. ʻAlī.[114] That is, "The Book that contains all the notes on the infallible Imām and acknowledged Mahdī [Muḥammad Ibn Tūmart] as dictated by our Lord, the Imām, the Caliph, and the Commander of the Faithful, Abū Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Mu'min b. ʻAlī.

The title gives many key details of the book's genesis. "Notes" (*taʻālīq*) suggests that *BIT*'s contents were gathered from various lecture notes that ʻAbd al-Mu'min and perhaps other prominent Almohads wrote while studying under Ibn Tūmart. This is consistent with the compiler's claim at the beginning of that the text that *Aʻazz mā yuṭlab* derives from the lecture notes (*taʻālīq*) which ʻAbd al-Mu'min took during the colloquia (*majālis*) which Ibn Tūmart held at Ribāṭ Hargha in 515/1121 before relocating to Tīnmall.[115] "Dictated" (*amlāhu*) indicates that, while written copies of Ibn Tūmart's lectures may have existed prior to his death in 1130, ʻAbd al-Mu'min did not compile *BIT* (or have it compiled by others) until much later. It is nevertheless clear that Almohad readers (many of whom would have already encountered these texts orally) understood *BIT* to be a *posthumous* compilation produced under the supervision of ʻAbd al-Mu'min himself. If this is the case, the compilation, with the exception of *The Book of Jihād*, came into being sometime between Ibn Tūmart's death (524/1130) and ʻAbd al-Mu'min's death (558/1163).

Manuscript A likewise lists the contents of the work on the title page.[116]

Table 1: Table of Contents from MS Paris

Table of Contents from Ms Paris 1451, 1r.
Al-Kalām fī al-ʻilm *Al-Maʻlūmāt* *Al-Kalām ʻalā al-ʻibāda* *Al-ʻAqīda*

[114] MS Paris 1451. 1r. D, 29; E, 32. B 1r adds, "… *adāma Allāh ta'yīdahum wa-aʻazza naṣrahum wa-makkana suʻūdahum.*" A later scribe added this formula to the title page of A.
[115] D, 30.
[116] See also, D, 29.

Al-Tanzīhān
Al-Tasbīḥān
Al-Imāma
Bayān al-mubṭilīn
Ḥadīth ʻUmar
Ikhtiṣār Muslim
Kitāb al-ghulūl
Kitāb al-jihād
Shiʻr al-aḥmas
Wa-ʻAlāmāt al-mahdī
Wa-Taʻālīq ṣughghār

Table 1 (continued)

Neither the *editio princeps* nor the two critical editions completely adhere to this list of titles when dividing up the texts. Although all three editions more or less preserve these titles in the first half of the book, each editor cuts up longer writings (particularly *Aʻazz mā yuṭlab*) into smaller sections that do not accurately reflect the manuscripts and give the reader a distorted impression of the compilation's boundaries and structure. In my proposed structure, I use the original titles the compiler gives at the beginning or the end of each text as much as possible in order to avoid artificially cutting up longer texts and preserve the unity of each discrete section as the compiler intended.

Colopha

Most scholars agree that the A was copied in 579/1183-4, and B in 595/1198-9. We do not know where either manuscript was produced. Abū Yaʻqūb Yūsuf's involvement in the compilation of the section entitled *The Book of Jihād* suggests that A originated either in the Almohad court at Marrakesh or (perhaps more likely) at Seville. Aside from the dates, the colopha add to our knowledge of *BIT*'s compilation history.

Table 2: Colopha

“A”, Ms. Paris 1451	**“B”, Ms. Rabat 1214 qāf**
تم كتاب الجهاد بحمد الله وحسن عونه وبتمامه كملت جميع التعاليق الإمام المعصوم المهدي المعلوم رضي الله عنه مما أملاه سيدنا الإمام الخليفة أمير المؤمنين أدام الله تأييدهم وأعز نصرهم ومكن سعودهم وذلك في العشر والأواخر من شعبان المكرم سنة تسع وسبعين وخمس مائة “The *Book of Jihād* is complete—praise be to God for His support! “With its completion, all the remarks of the infallible Imām and acknowledged Mahdī—may God be pleased with him—have also been completed, based on what our Lord, the Imām, the Caliph, and Commander of the Faithful dictated—may God perpetuate their support, glorify their victory, and enable their felicity. “This [occurred] during the last ten days of Sha‘bān 579 [approx. November 1183].”	تم جميع التواليف بحمد الله وحسن عونه وبتمامه كمل كتاب الجهاد الذي أكمله الخليفة رضي الله عنه وكان الفراغ منه في العشر الأول من شهر ربيع الأول عام خمس وتسعين وخمسمائة “All the writings are complete—praise be to God for His support! “With its completion, the *Book of Jihād*, which was finished by the Caliph—may God be pleased with him—is [also] complete. “This was concluded on 11 Rabī‘ al-Awwal 595 [December 1198/January 1199].”

Both copyists employ formulas almost identical to those found on the title pages of A and B. In addition, both colopha refer to the *ḥadīth* compilation, *The Book of Jihād*, appended to *BIT*. Based on evidence from A, as well as the testimony of al-Marrākushī, Goldziher proposes that the *The Book of Jihād* was compiled later than the rest of the text under Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf (r. 558-80/1163-84), ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s son and successor. *The Book of Jihād* consists of *aḥādīth* excerpted from other collections, both canonical and non-canonical. These prophetic traditions support, among other things, Ibn Tūmart’s claim to *imāma* and the Almohad Caliphate’s right to engage in *jihād* against non-Almohad Muslims and *dhimmīs*. While we cannot directly attribute *The Book of Jihād* to Ibn Tūmart, Goldziher believes that Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf likely appended these traditions to *BIT* because Ibn Tūmart and his students had singled them out and studied

them during Ibn Tūmart's lifetime and used them to elaborate their policies toward the peoples they conquered.[117]

The differences between the two colopha suggests a change in attitude toward *BIT*. A emphasizes 'Abd al-Mu'min's role in the compilation of the text. The invocation of the title *imām* signals that he is the rightful successor to Ibn Tūmart and that he possesses some or all of the authority the Almohads formerly conferred upon Ibn Tūmart. B, by contrast, highlights Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf's contribution to *BIT*, rather than 'Abd al-Mu'min's. This shift likely reflects the caliph al-Manṣūr's ambivalence toward Ibn Tūmart and 'Abd al-Mu'min. Al-Marrākushī tells us that, while al-Manṣūr participated in Almohad rituals, such as the pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) to Tīnmall, he did not share his father's and grandfather's belief that Ibn Tūmart was the awaited *mahdī* and that his infallibility (*'iṣma*) transferred to the Almohad caliphs.[118] However, like his father, al-Manṣūr took great interest in the study of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. It is possible that some of B's unique features reflect al-Manṣūr's desire to reorient Ibn Tūmart's legacy away from mahdism and focus on his work in the field of jurisprudence.

Differences between the Manuscripts

To my knowledge, no prior scholar has adequately addressed the differences between the two manuscripts of *BIT* available to us. In terms of content, there are five texts unique to A and five to B. All five texts in A—*al-Muḥdath*, *Tawḥīd al-Bārī*, *al-Murshida*, *Tasbīḥ al-Bārī*, and *Shahādat al-dalālāt*—deal with theology. Given the fame of Ibn Tūmart's "Spiritual Guide"

[117] Ignác [Ignaz] Goldziher, "Materialen zur Kenntniss der Almohadenbewegung," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 41 (1887), 98-9; al-Marrākushī, *al-Mu'jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'aṣriyya, 2006), 175-76.
[118] See the section on al-Marrākushī below.

(*murshida*) across the Islamic world, its absence in B is rather conspicuous. Of the texts unique to B, ‘Abd al-Mu’min clearly authored the *Risāla Amīr al-mu’minīn* and *Wa-Min kalām Amīr al-mu’minīn*. Between these two epistles we find Ibn Tūmart’s *Risāla ilā jamā‘at al-tawḥīd*, which al-Baydhaq also mentions in *Akhbār al-Mahdī.*[119]

The order of individual texts differs between the two manuscripts. Some appear in significantly different places, such as the *ḥadīth* section *Bāb wa-‘an Ibn ‘Abbās*. Most sections of B remain in the same relative position as in A, though their locations with regard to adjacent texts have changed. I have identified several recurrent groups of texts that are consistent between the manuscripts. I propose an arrangement that (a) includes all texts unique to both manuscripts and (b) gives precedence to A in terms of order. A is not only more than a decade older than B, but the material qualities of A, such as the use of gold and colored ink, suggest that A was produced within the Almohad court, possibly for ceremonial purposes. The simple script and lack of decorative elements in B indicate that it was copied for personal use or as a reference work.[120]

Al-Ṭālibī’s and Abū al-‘Azm’s critical editions include the texts unique to each manuscript. However, both editors differ with regard to the order of the text as a whole. Neither offers a detailed explanation as to how he decided to incorporate the unique texts into a synthetic edition of *BIT*. Abū al-‘Azm’s arrangement gives greater weight to B. This choice seems odd given that the earlier A more likely reflects what *BIT* looked like when ‘Abd al-Mu’min

[119] Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-Mahdī* (Rabat: Dār al-Mansūr li-l-ṭabā‘a wa-l-warāqa, 1971), 95.
[120] I am grateful to Dr. Mohamed El Ferrane, director of the BNRM, for granting me permission to briefly check the condition of MS Rabat and make some observations about its material features. Due to its fragility, the BNRM is not at this time able to allow outside scholars to work with the MS for a prolonged period of time. In the past, the pages were removed from their original binding and are now out of their original order. The library has yet to prepare a microfilm or a digital copy.

originally compiled it twenty or more years prior. While al-Ṭālibī's arrangement gives greater weight to A, his placement of the unique texts reflects his personal sense of thematic similarity rather than any evidence marshalled from the manuscripts themselves.

Luciani/al-Kamāl, al-Ṭālibī, and Abū al-'Azm often ignore the editorial elements that demarcate the boundaries between each text. Instead, they break up larger texts into their constituent sections (or what they *believe* to be their constituent sections), obscuring the relationship of these smaller sections to each other, as well as their place and function within the argument of *BIT* as a whole. The chart below compares the contents of A and B. I divide the texts according to the scribal conventions used in A. Each of these texts begins with a *basmala* (usually in blue ink) and a title or *incipit* in red ink. Most of the texts end with an *explicit* that repeats the title of the text in whole or in part. Some of the texts between 57r-62v lack titles and *explicits* but are nevertheless divided from each other by a *basmala*.

Table 3: Comparison of MSS Contents

"A" Contents: MS Paris 1451	**"B" Contents:** MS Rabat 1214 qāf/Taza 645[121]
(61v-62r) Tawḥīd al-Bārī [no ending] **(62r)** [No title: al-Murshida] [no ending] **(62r-62v)** [No title: Tasbīḥ al-Bārī] [no ending] **(62v)** [No title: Shahādāt al-dalālāt] [no ending] **(62v-65r)** [No title: al-Imāma] [no ending] **(65r-65v)** al-Qawā'id [*kamalat al-Qawā'id*] **(66r-69v)** Bāb fī bayān ṭawā'if [*kamala*] **(69v-79r)** Bāb fī anna al-tawḥīd huwa asās al-dīn [*kamala*] **(79r-86v)** Bāb wa-'an Ibn 'Abbās [*kamala*] **(86v-90r)** Kitāb al-ghulūl [*kamala*]	(1) A'azz mā yuṭlab (2) al-Kalām fī al-ṣalāh (3) al-Ma'lūmāt (4) al-Kalām 'alā al-'ibāda (5) al-'Aqīda (6) Bāb wa-'an Ibn 'Abbās (7) al-Dalīl 'alā anna al-sharī'a lā yathbut bi-l-'aql (8) al-Kalām fī al-'umūm wa-l-khuṣūṣ (9) al-Qawā'id (10) al-Imāma

[121] This list is based on Ṭālibī's and Abū al-'Azm's descriptions of the Rabat manuscript. I have not yet been able to verify the order of MS Rabat 1214 qāf directly. The librarians have informed me that the unbound folios are no longer in the correct order. We can, however, be reasonably confident that Abū al-'Azm's edition reflects the original order of MS Rabat, even if he divides the texts in a different way.

(90r-93r) Bāb fī anna al-khamr dā' wa-laysa fīhā shifā' [*kamala al-imlā'*] **(93r-98r)** Kitāb al-jihād [*tamma/kamala Kitāb al-jihād*]	(11) al-Kalām fī al-'ilm (12) Bāb fī anna al-tawḥīd huwa asās al-dīn (13) Bāb fī anna al-khamr dā' wa-laysa fīhā shifā' (14) Ma'rifat aṣḥāb al-fitan wa-uṣūl al-fitan (15) Bāb fī bayān ṭawā'if (16) Ma'rifat al-Mahdī (17) Risālat Amīr al-Mu'minīn (18) Risāla ilā jamā'at al-tawḥīd (19) Wa-min kalām Amīr al-Mu'minīn (20) Kitāb al-jihād (21) Kitāb al-ghulūl

Table 3 (continued)

The *explicits* at the end of each text perform two functions. First, they demarcate the boundaries between major sections within the text. Second, the phrase used to state that a text has concluded offers insight into the provenance of the text. (See *Method of Compilation* below.) The order of both manuscripts strongly suggests that the compiler of *BIT* arranged the text with a particular progression in mind. In order to engage in a holistic reading of *BIT*, I wish to propose an arrangement of the text that includes the texts unique to A and B without altering the compilation's rhetorical structure. The following chart compares the contents of the texts common to A and B. The numbers in parentheses on side B show each text's order within B as a whole. I have separated the texts into four groups in order to show that, regardless of difference in order, these texts bear a relationship to each other in both manuscripts.

Table 4: Common Texts

"A", MS Paris 1451	"B", MS Rabat 1214 q/Taza 645
A'azz mā yuṭlab al-Kalām fī al-ṣalāh	(1) A'azz mā yuṭlab (2) al-Kalām 'alā al-ṣalāh

al-Dalīl ʻalā anna al-sharīʻa lā yathbut bi-l-ʻaql al-Kalām fī al-ʻumūm wa-l-khuṣūṣ al-Kalām fī al-ʻilm al-Maʻlūmāt al-Kalām ʻalā al-ʻibāda al-ʻAqīda al-Imāma al-Qawāʻid Bāb fī bayān ṭawāʾif Bāb fī anna al-tawḥīd huwa asās al-dīn Kitāb al-ghulūl Bāb fī anna al-khamr Kitāb al-jihād	(7) al-Dalīl ʻalā anna al-sharīʻa lā yathbut bi-l-ʻaql (8) al-Kalām fī al-ʻumūm wa-l-khuṣūṣ (3) al-Maʻlūmāt (4) al-Kalām ʻalā al-ʻibāda (5) al-ʻAqīda (9) al-Qawāʻid (10) al-Imāma (11) al-Kalām fī al-ʻilm (15) Bāb fī bayān ṭawāʾif (12) Bāb fī anna al-tawḥīd huwa asās al-dīn (13) Bāb fī anna al-khamr (20) Kitāb al-jihād (21) Kitāb al-ghulūl

Table 4 (continued)

Using this common underlying structure as a guide, this dissertation will adhere to the following arrangement. I include al-Ṭālibī's and Abū al-ʻAzm's arrangements for the purpose of comparison. Texts unique to A are in blue; texts unique to B are in green.

Table 5: Proposed Order of Texts

Ṭālibī "D"	Abū al-ʻAzm "E"	Proposed
(10) Tawḥīd al-Bārī pp. 225-26 **(11)** al-Murshida p. 226 **(12)** Tasbīḥ al-Bārī p. 227 **(13)** Shahādāt al-dalālāt pp. 227-28 **(14)** al-Imāma pp. 229-36 **(15)** al-Qawāʻid pp. 237-39 **(16)** Maʻrifat aṣḥāb al-fitan pp. 240-41 **(17)** Bāb fī bayān ṭawāʾif pp. 242-253 **(18)** Maʻrifat al-Mahdī p. 254 **(19)** Risālat Amīr al-Muʾminīn pp. 255-57	**(11)** Shahādāt al-dalālāt (p. 226) **(12)** Bāb wa-ʻan Ibn ʻAbbās pp. (227-267) **(13)** al-Dalīl ʻalā anna al-sharīʻa lā yathbut bi-l-ʻaql (pp. 268-83) **(14)** al-Kalām fī al-ʻumūm wa-l-khuṣūṣ (pp. 284-91) **(15)** al-Qawāʻid (pp. 292-95) **(16)** al-Imāma (pp. 296-304) **(17)** al-Kalām fī al-ʻilm [partial] (pp. 305-311)	**(15)** al-Qawāʻid **(16)** Maʻrifat aṣḥāb al-fitan wa-uṣūl al-fitan **(17)** Bāb fī bayān ṭawāʾif **(18)** Bāb fī anna al-tawḥīd huwa asās al-dīn **(19)** Maʻrifat al-Mahdī **(20)** Risālat Amīr al-Muʾminīn **(21)** Risālat al-Mahdī **(22)** Min kalām Amīr al-Muʾminīn **(23)** Bāb wa-ʻan Ibn ʻAbbās **(24)** Kitāb al-ghulūl **(25)** Bāb fī anna al-khamr dāʾ wa-laysa fīhā shifāʾ

(20) Risālat al-Mahdī pp. 257-64 **(21)** Min kalām Amīr al-Mu'minīn pp. 264-65 **(21)** Bāb fī anna al-tawḥīd huwa asās al-dīn pp. 267-346 **(22)** Bāb wa-'an Ibn 'Abbās pp. 299-332 **(23)** Kitāb al-ghulūl pp. 333-45 **(24)** Bāb fī al-khamr dā' wa-laysa fīhā shifā' pp. 347-57 **(25)** Kitāb al-jihād pp. 359-422	**(18)** Bāb fī anna al-tawḥīd huwa asās al-dīn (pp. 312-62) **(19)** Bāb fī anna al-khamr dā' wa-laysa fīhā shifā' (pp. 363-82) **(20)** Ma'rifat aṣḥāb al-fitan wa-uṣūl al-fitan (p. 383) **(21)** Bāb fī bayān ṭawā'if (pp. 384-99) **(22)** Ma'rifat al-Mahdī (p. 400) **(23)** Risālat Amīr al-Mu'minīn (pp. 401-3) **(24)** Risālat al-Mahdī (pp. 404-10) **(25)** Min kalām Amīr al-Mu'minīn (p. 411) **(26)** Kitāb al-jihād (pp. 412-59) **(27)** Kitāb al-ghulūl (pp. 495-510)	**(26)** Kitāb al-jihād

Table 5 (continued)

I do not use the chapter headings al-Ṭālibī and Abū al-'Azm list in the table of contents. Following Luciani and Kamāl, both treat *Kitāb al-ṭahāra* as a standalone text. In A, *al-Ṭahāra* clearly belongs to *Bāb fī anna al-tawḥīd huwa asās al-dīn* (A 72v-79r). My arrangement differs from al-Ṭālibī's in one key respect. Al-Ṭālibī places the unique B texts before *Bāb fī anna al-tawḥīd huwa asās al-dīn* rather than after the group comprised of *Bāb fī bayān ṭawā'if* and *Bāb fī anna al-tawḥīd asās al-dīn*. In B, the unique texts appear *after* these two texts. My proposed arrangement seeks to preserve the integrity of the individual texts and the order of the compilation as the compiler understood them. The arrangement suggests a larger rhetorical

structure that consists of four major parts: epistemology (1-7), theology (7-13), *imāma*-mahdism[122] (14-25), and *jihād* (26).

Method of Compilation

While we cannot be certain of the extent to which the writings compiled in *BIT* correspond to Ibn Tūmart's speeches or the writings shared amongst his students, the revisionist school's claim that 'Abd al-Mu'min selectively edited *BIT* in order to support his claim to the caliphate is grossly exaggerated. On the contrary, the compiler takes care to separate Ibn Tūmart's voice from their own and to explain the provenance of the texts.

In order to understand how the compiler speaks within *BIT*, let us examine the compilation's opening text, "The Dearest Desire" (*A'azz mā yuṭlab*). This text begins with a fragment that consists of three parts:

Table 6: Opening Texts i-iii

(i) The dearest thing one can desire, the best thing one can acquire, the most precious thing one can store, the finest thing one can forge, is the knowledge that God made to guide us to every good. *This* is the dearest desire, the best thing acquired, the most precious thing stored, the finest thing forged!	أعز ما يطلب وأفضل ما يكتسب وأنفس ما يدخر وأحسن ما يعمل العلم الذي جعله الله سبب الهداية الى كل خير. هو أعز المطالب وأفضل المكاسب وأنفس الذخائر وأحسن الأعمال.
(ii) An indication[123] of this that whatever God creates in the higher, the middle, or the lower	وبيان ذلك أن ما خلق الله في العالم العلوي والوسطي والسفلي معنى يفصل به بين النفي الاثبات والحق والباطل

[122] Mahdism is simply the positive side of the texts in this section. Here, Ibn Tūmart's mahdism is portrayed as a remedy to the Almoravids' corporealism and laxness in the enforcement of *sharī'a*.

[123] *Bayān*: Joseph Edmund Lowry has examined the significance of this term (which means "indication" or "explanation" within the context of *fiqh*) in al-Shāfi'ī's epistemology. See *Early Islamic Legal Theory: The Risāla of Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). Here, Ibn Tūmart includes God's creatures, no matter what rank they occupy within the cosmos, as in the class "indications," which, according to Shāfi'ī's usage, primarily derive from scripture (i.e. God's *speech*).

world is a meaning by which one distinguishes between negation and affirmation, truth and falsehood, and the like. Whoever seeks help from knowledge is a seeker of knowledge, who desires to open what is closed, to reveal what is covered, sincerity of intent, to take advantage of the benefits of knowledge, and to be zealous in its increase. Moreover, he wishes that God will grant him guidance and success. Knowledge is a light in the heart that distinguishes truths and attributes; ignorance is a darkness in the heart that confuses truths and attributes.	سواه. والذي يستعين به طالب العلم على فتح ما انغلق وكشف ما التبس (و)اخلاص النية واغتنام الفوائد والحرص على الزيادة الرغبة الى الله في الهداية والتوفيق. والعلم نور في القلب تتميز به الحقائق الخصائص. والجهل ظلام في القلب تلتبس به الحقائق والخصائص.
(iii) The ways to knowledge are confined to three: sense perception, the intellect, and revelation. Sense perception has three divisions: continuous, separate, and what a human being finds within himself. The intellect has three divisions: necessary, possible, and impossible. Revelation, too, has three divisions: the Qur'ān, the *sunna*, and consensus.	وطرق العلم منحصرة في ثلاثة: الحس والعقل والسمع، فالحس على ثلاثة أقسام: متصل ومنفصل وما يجده الانسان في نفسه. والعقل على ثلاثة أقسام: واجب وجائز ومستحيل. والسمع على ثلاثة أقسام: الكتاب والسنة والإجماع.

Table 6 (continued)

These are Ibn Tūmart's words. Directly after the end of the third part of the fragment, the compiler interjects in order to transition from this prefatory material to Ibn Tūmart's "speech" (*kalām*) concerning revelation as a way to knowledge (*ṭarīq al-ʿilm*).

Table 7: Opening Text iv

(iv) Now, the speech concerning the way of revelation and what the infallible *imām* and acknowledged *mahdī*—may God be please with him—said concerning this matter…	الكلام الآن في الطريق الذي هو السمع فمما علق عن الأمام المعصوم المهدي المعلوم رضي الله عنه في ذلك...

Section (i) and section (ii) appear to derive from the same original source, possibly a *written* work of Ibn Tūmart's that is now lost. The expression "[a]n indication of this" (*bayān dhālik*) signals that section (ii) constitutes an explanation of the prose poem (*sajʿ*) in section (i). It is more difficult to determine whether section (iii) comes from the same source as sections (i) and

(ii). While all three parts of the fragments deal with knowledge (*ʿilm*), the move from section (ii) to (iii) is stylistically abrupt. Even if section (iii) is an interpolation, the threefold restriction (*inḥiṣār*) of knowledge is authentically Tūmartian. We find identical phrases concerning "the ways to knowledge" in *al-Kalām fī al-ʿilm*. It appears that the compiler references section (iii) in order to show that "the speech concerning the way of revelation" to follow constitutes Ibn Tūmart's protracted oral commentary on revelation that is not available in *al-Kalām fī al-ʿilm*.

Later in section (iv), the compiler informs us that Ibn Tūmart gave this "discourse" concerning revelation (and likely the rest of *BIT*) at Ribāṭ Hargha in 515 following a debate with Almoravid scholars at Aghmāt on a related topic and the sulṭān's banishment of Ibn Tūmart from Marrakesh. The compiler's consistent use of the terms "discourse" (*kalām*) and "dictation" (*imlāʾ*) within the texts and in the *explicits* suggests that these labels may speak to the way the text was edited for inclusion in *BIT*. Most texts conclude with the formula "*kamala[t]* + [title of the text]", or simply "*kamala[t]*". Based on the style of these texts, I believe "*kamala[t]*" indicates that the text in question was penned directly by Ibn Tūmart or, in the case of *The Book of Jihād*, by Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf. The compiler refers to two texts as "the discourse" (*al-kalām*) and to three texts as "the dictation" (*al-imlāʾ*). On the surface, the compiler refers to the former texts as "the discourse" because their titles include that term: "The *Discourse* on Prayer" (*al-Kalām fī al-ṣalāh*) and "The *Discourse* on Knowledge" (*al-Kalām fī al-ʿilm*). The only other "discourse," "The Discourse on Worship" (*al-Kalām ʿalā al-ʿibāda*), does not carry an *explicit*. The way that the compiler uses the term "discourse" in "The Dearest Desire" to introduce the different sections of that chapter suggests that the label indicates something about the provenance of the texts or the way they came to be compiled in *BIT*. For example:

• "Now, the *discourse* on revelation as a source of knowledge…" (*al-kalām al-ān fī al-ṭarīq al-ladhī huwa al-sam'…*)[124]
• "The *discourse* on concurrent transmission and what pertains to it…" (*al-kalām fī al-tawātur wa-mā yata'allaq bihi…*)[125]
• "Let us present the *discourse* on the root-principle and the branch…" (*nuqaddim al-kalām fī al-aṣl wa-l-far'…*)[126]
• "Next, let us return to the second chapter of the *discourse* on concurrent transmission and what pertains to it…" (*thumma narji' ilā al-faṣl al-thānī min fuṣūl al-kalām fī al-tawātur wa-mā yata'allaq bi-hi…*)[127]
• "Next, there is also the *discourse* on the reports and what pertains to them…" (*thumma al-kalām ayḍan fī al-akhbār wa-mā yata'allaq bi-hā…*)[128]

"The Dearest Desire" is best described as a compilation within a compilation. These "discourses" appear to have been separate texts—perhaps lecture notes—that the compiler brought together because of they treat of similar themes (e.g. *ḥadīth* transmission, legal hermeneutics, etc.). The strongest evidence for this is the compiler's return to the "second chapter" of "the discourse on concurrent transmission" after a break of more than thirty pages in Ṭālibī's print edition, wherein he gives us "the discourse on the root-principle and the branch." Although medieval authors sometimes used *al-kalām* in the more general sense of "a set of remarks on a topic," the compiler's reference to chapter numbers and the verbatim repetition of the title "the discourse on concurrent transmission and what pertains to it" indicates that he is interpolating separate texts into one document. In "The Discourse on Knowledge," the compiler gives us variant readings of one passage, evidence that he consulted at least two sources in editing this text (see below).

By understanding how the compiler uses discourse, we are now in a place to understand the compilation history of the three "dictation" (*imlā'*) texts: "The Dearest Desire," "The Discourse on the General and the Specific," and "Chapter: That Wine Is a Disease and Has No

[124] D, 30.
[125] D, 31.
[126] D, 32.
[127] D, 68.
[128] D, 77.

Healing in It." The longest of these is "The Dearest Desire." As we have seen, this text contains a number of "discourses," which I believe represent separate texts that were available to the compiler. The claim on the title page, namely, that 'Abd al-Mu'min dictated the contents of *BIT* suggests one possible method of compilation. Abdessamad Belhaj's recent article on al-Sam'ānī's (d. 562/1167) *Adab al-imlā' wa-l-istimlā'* (*The Manner of Dictation and Copying*) clarifies the way in which "councils of dictation" produced and published books in the Islamic East. Al-Sam'ānī describes the council of dictation as having three parts: "the *mumlī*, the dictatee who transmits knowledge to the audience, the *mustamlī*, the dictation assistant, and the *kātib*, the transcriber, usually a student or a group of students."[129] The *mumlī* would dictate, either from notes or from memory, the work he wished to have copied directly to his assistant. The assistant would then enunciate the dictation in a clear and audible voice to the scribes who were in the room with them. Belhaj argues that "*imlā'* is a locus of collective authorship" in which the dictatee is the primary author, and the assistant and scribes are secondary authors.[130] The three-part dictation Belhaj describes was a common way of authoring texts in the medieval Islamic world. While the exact structure of the council of dictation may have looked somewhat different in the Islamic West, the manner in which the compiler prepared "The Dearest Desire" and other dictated texts for publication likely resembled what we see in al-Sam'ānī. It is likely that 'Abd al-Mu'min and early Almohad *ṭalaba* dedicated a considerable amount of time to dictating Ibn Tūmart's writings and oral teachings to younger copyists within the *ṭalabat al-ḥadar* and *ṭalabat al-muwaḥḥidīn* in order to produce the earliest written copies of *BIT*.

[129] Abdessamad Belhaj, "The Council of Dictation (*imlā'*) as Collective Authorship: An Inquiry into *Adab al-imlā' wa-l-istimlā'* of al-Sam'ānī," in Lale Behzadi and Jaakko Hämeen Anttila (eds.), *Concepts of Authorship in Pre-Modern Arabic Texts* (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2015) 95-96.
[130] Abdessamad Belhaj, "The Council of Dictation (*imlā'*) as Collective Authorship: An Inquiry into *Adab al-imlā' wa-l-istimlā'* of al-Sam'ānī," 94.

In other parts of *BIT* in which the compiler's hand is less visible, he nevertheless informs us when he has come across alternate versions of a given text. A clear example of this appears in *al-Kalām fī al-ʻilm*. In describing that in which knowledge of God's existence (*wujūd*) consists, Ibn Tūmart says:

Table 8: from "The Discourse on Knowledge"

Concerning knowledge of His existence, it is founded upon the rejection of resemblance. There are three kinds of resemblance: restriction in time, restriction in place, and restriction in genus.	فأما العلم بوجوده فينبني على نفي التشبيه. والتشبيه على ثلاثة: التقييد بالزمان والتقييد بالمكان والتقييد بالجنس.

The compiler then adds that, "in another wording" (*fī lafẓ ākhar*)[131], the three kinds of resemblance are: "change" (*taghayyur*), "occupation of space" (*taḥayyuz*), and "composition" (*ta'līf*). ʻAmmār al-Ṭālibī believes that ʻAbd al-Mu'min (whom he considers to be the text's compiler) uses the phrase *fī lafẓ ākhar* to indicate that his edition depends on two divergent texts or sets of oral transmissions (*naṣṣayn*).[132] Whether or not ʻAbd al-Mu'min edited this particular text, or merely provided written and oral records of Ibn Tūmart's doctrines to a team of scribes, the compiler's willingness to include alternate versions of a given text calls key tenets of the revisionist school into question. In particular, the critical attitude evident in the compiler's voice controverts the notion that ʻAbd al-Mu'min sought to suppress or distort elements of Ibn Tūmart's teachings in order to craft a *Reichsideologie* favorable to him and his successors.

[131] I am indebted to Prof. Yousef Casewit for pointing out that the compiler is employing terminology used in *ḥadīth* criticism (i.e. *riwāya bi-l-maʻnā* vs. *riwāya bi-l-lafẓ*). "In another wording" (*fī lafẓ ākhar*) indicates that, while the meaning (*maʻnā*) of the text is the same, one or more transmitters gives a different wording (*lafẓ*).
[132] Ibn Tūmart, *Aʻazz mā yuṭlab*, ed. ʻAmmār al-Ṭālibī, 182 (see footnote).

With the exception of *The Book of Jihād* and the epistles added to B, I believe that Ibn Tūmart penned much of the shorter texts (especially those pertaining to theology) himself. The "discourse" texts are likely the records of his lectures, which were perhaps conducted in the manner of a council of dictation comparable to what al-Sam'ānī describes. The collation of "discourse" texts from two or more copies shows that, prior to their inclusion in *BIT*, these lecture notes circulated within Almohad circles. The variant readings that we see in "The Discourse on Knowledge" may reflect copyist errors in the intervening decades, or evidence of paraphrastic comments Ibn Tūmart or one of his assistants made when these notes were originally taken. The three "dictation" texts—"The Dearest Desire," "The Discourse on the General and the Specific," and "Chapter: That Wine Is a Disease and Has No Healing in It"—were likely delivered to the dictation council responsible for *BIT* by 'Abd al-Mu'min himself or a scholar whom he designated. The many references to "discourses" within the text of "The Dearest Desire" demonstrates that the dictatee (*mumlī*) was reading from lecture notes taken down during Ibn Tūmart's lifetime. With regard to the other two texts, it is possible that the dictatee either worked from notes with no variant copy or delivered their contents from memory.

Commentary Tradition and Historical Attestations

Prior to engaging in a close reading of *BIT* as a posthumous compilation that expresses a structured argument, it is necessary to reevaluate historical attestations of the text and Ibn Tūmart's doctrine as a whole. In what follows, I will focus on what medieval authors report concerning the genesis, content, and social function of *BIT*. A great deal of secondary literature has been devoted to such attestations. However, I believe that many scholars have misused the

Arabic historiography surrounding Almohadism in two fundamental ways. In many cases, historians have relied too heavily upon the testimony of chroniclers. The obvious problem with this approach is that the medieval sources often contradict one another, especially as regards Ibn Tūmart's affiliation with a particular *madhhab* (school) of jurisprudence or *kalām*. The revisionist school is prone to such over-reliance insofar as they question the authenticity of *BIT*. If *BIT* is pseudepigraphal, then we must reject much of what we read in Almohad sources and look to non-Almohad sources in order to reconstruct what the historical Ibn Tūmart believed and taught. Modern historians also weigh medieval sources counterintuitively. Often, they dismiss Almohad chroniclers as ideologues while, at the same time, holding up major luminaries, such as Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldūn as authorities on Almohad doctrine. Writers like al-Baydhaq and al-Marrākushī, as believers in the Almohad cause, cannot possess the same critical distance that we see with non-Almohads. Yet, on the subject of doctrine, we cannot deny that Almohad chroniclers knew *BIT* more intimately. Additionally, we must recognize that authors like Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldūn, regardless of their achievements, had their own intellectual and religious commitments, many of which prejudiced them against Ibn Tūmart and Almohadism. This survey of historical attestations, therefore, not only aims at recovering information about *BIT* as a text *used by a particular community*, but also attempts to show that much of what is available in non-Almohad sources is an unreliable guide to Almohad doctrine. By recognizing that we cannot depend on politically and temporally distant authorities to tell us what *BIT* says, we must turn to the text itself.

Almohad Era

(a) Ibn al-Qalānisī, Ḥamza b. Asad (463-555/1071-1160, Syria)

The earliest historical attestation of Ibn Tūmart appears in Ibn al-Qalānisī's chronicle, *Dhayl Tārīkh Dimashq*. News of the conflict between the Almohads and the Almoravids had reached as far as the Levant via merchants, pilgrims and itinerant scholars. Ibn al-Qalānisī cites one Abū Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Ṣiqillī as his source. The chronicler interviewed this *faqīh* (based on his *nisba*, likely from Sicily or Tunisia) concerning the Almohads in Damascus in 541/1146-7. Ibn al-Qalānisī speaks of Ibn Tūmart as "*al-mahdī ilā sabīl Allāh*" and the founder of a "school of thought" (*madhhab al-fikr*). Although shorter than al-Baydhaq's account of Ibn Tūmart's life, Ibn al-Qalānisī consistently presents Ibn Tūmart as a jurist (*faqīh*) devoted to renunciation (*zuhd*), public disputation (*jadal*), and the teaching of jurisprudence (*tadrīs al-fiqh*). By the time he reached Aghmāt, Ibn Tūmart had attracted four hundred followers from among the Maṣmūda tribal confederation whom he taught *fiqh* and *zuhd*.[133] Ibn al-Qalānisī includes his description of the Almohad movement and the Almoravids' reaction under the year 541/1146-7. As I mention in the literature review, revisionists like Fierro see the absence of certain mahdist elements in Ibn al-Qalānisī as evidence that Mu'minid Almohads attributed more messianic qualities to Ibn Tūmart only after he died. I find nothing in Ibn al-Qalānisī to support Fierro's assessment. Moreover, Ibn al-Qalānisī's Maghribī informant almost certainly emigrated before many of Ibn Tūmart's writings and oral teachings (with the exception of the "Spiritual Guide") were edited as *BIT* and allowed to circulate outside of the scholarly circles of the *shuyūkh* who studied under Ibn Tūmart at Ribāṭ Hargha and Tīnmall. If al-Ṣiqillī was indeed

[133] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Tārīkh Dimashq* (Leiden: Brill, 1908), 291-3. Francisco Gabrielli, "Le origini del movimento almohade in una fonte storica d'oriente," *Arabica* III (1956), 1-7. Mercedes García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 167; 177. Maribel Fierro, "El *Mahdī* Ibn Tūmart: más allá de la biografía official*"* in *Polítca, ociedad e identidades en el occidente islámico (siglos xi-xiv)*, eds. Miguel Ángel Manzano and Rachid El Hour (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, 2016), 76.

from Sicily or Tunisia, rather than the lands that today correspond to Algeria or Morocco, his direct of knowledge of Almohad doctrine would have been limited, as ‘Abd al-Mu’min would not secure Tunisia until after the Norman invasion in 1148.

(b) Abū Bakr b. ‘Alī al-Ṣanhājī “al-Baydhaq” (5-6th c./11th-12th c., Morocco)

Little is known about the identity of the historian nicknamed “al-Baydhaq” (the Arabic word for a pawn in chess) beyond what he says about himself in *Akhbār al-Mahdī*. He was an early follower of Ibn Tūmart from among the Ṣanhāja, the same Amazigh confederation from which the Almoravids emerged. His account of Ibn Tūmart’s life and career, as well as his description of the early years of ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s campaign against the Almoravids, serves as the source for many later historians interested in the Almohads. Among these are Ibn ‘Idhārī, Ibn Abī Zar‘, Ibn Khallikān, Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn al-Khaṭīb, and al-Nuwayrī.[134] His portrayal of ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s relationship to Ibn Tūmart reveals al-Baydhaq to be an ardent supporter of ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s claim to succeed Ibn Tūmart. Maribel Fierro believes that al-Baydhaq’s blatantly pro-Mu’minid stance and the hagiographical quality of his history reflect a need to legitimize ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s succession claim over those of other Almohad notables. For this reason, she claims that we cannot take al-Baydhaq at face value, nor, by extension, many of the sources based on his *Akhbār al-Mahdī*.[135]

[134] Maribel Fierro, “El *Mahdī* Ibn Tūmart: más allá de la biografía official*”* in *Polítca, ociedad e identidades en el occidente islámico (siglos xi-xiv)*, eds. Miguel Ángel Manzano and Rachid El Hour (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, 2016), 76.
[135] Maribel Fierro, “El *Mahdī* Ibn Tūmart: más allá de la biografía official*”* in *Polítca, ociedad e identidades en el occidente islámico (siglos xi-xiv)*, eds. Miguel Ángel Manzano and Rachid El Hour (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, 2016), 82.

Putting these considerations aside, al-Baydhaq's account of Ibn Tūmart's activity as a teacher reflects many of the doctrines we find in *BIT*, especially the first text, "The Dearest Desire." There, Ibn Tūmart calls knowledge "a light in the heart by which we distinguish essences and properties."[136] Al-Baydhaq describes many occasions on which Ibn Tūmart used light to symbolize both the source and transmission of knowledge. Before proceeding to al-Maghrib al-Aqṣā, Ibn Tūmart asks 'Abd al-Mu'min to light a lamp (*sirāj*) so that they might read together. Ibn Tūmart then prophesies: "The command (*amr*) in which the religious life exists will only be fulfilled by 'Abd al-Mu'min b. 'Alī, the lamp of the Almohads."[137] Ibn Tūmart's companions likewise nicknamed him "the lamp" (Az. *Asafū* or *Asāfū*). Ibn Khaldūn tells that *asāfū* is a Shilḥa word for a candle used to light mosques in North Africa. According to Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Tūmart earned this epithet for his penchant for studying and praying well into the night, as in the scene above. Brett interprets this scene as Ibn Tūmart *transferring* the light of his knowledge (and *authority*) to 'Abd al-Mu'min.[138]

On another occasion, while Ibn Tūmart is meditating in a cave near his native Īgīllīz, a man named Yalliltan lays down his burnous for Ibn Tūmart to sit upon. Upon seeing this, a follower of the *mahdī*, Ismā'īl Īgīg, says to Yalliltan, "My brother! How can you lay down [your] burnous for the light of knowledge? Only light may be upon light (*nūr 'alā al-nūr*)" Ismā'īl then takes off his own cape and lays it down for Ibn Tūmart. Brett and García Arenal explain that,

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[136] D, 30: "*wa-l-'ilm nūr fī al-qalb tatamayyaz bihi al-ḥaqā'iq wa-l-khaṣā'iṣ.*"
[137] Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-Mahdī* (Rabat: Dār al-Mansūr li-l-ṭabā'a wa-l-warāqa, 1971), 16: "*lā yaqum al-amr allādhī fihi ḥayāt al-dīn illā bi-'Abd al-Mu'min ibn 'Alī sirāj al-Muwaḥḥidīn*".
[138] Rachid Bourouiba, *Ibn Tumart* (Algiers: Société Nationale d'Edition et de Diffusion, 1982), 16; Michael Brett, "The Lamp of the Almohads: Illumination as a Political Idea in Twelfth-Century Morocco" in *Ibn Khaldūn and the Medieval Maghrib* (London: Ashgate/Variorum, 1990), 11-12. Both Bourouiba and Brett note that *asafū/asāfū* is a rather obscure Tamazight word. Bourouiba further specifies that the term denotes a *bougie*, a wax candle from Béjaïa/Bougie, Algeria, a city famous for its wax candles. In al-Baydhāq's account, the lamp scene takes place near Tlemcen, not long after Ibn Tūmart's arrival there from Béjaïa.

among the Maṣmūda, the burnous was typically black. Ismā'īl, who was from another tribe, would have worn a white cape. *Nūr 'alā al-nūr* is a clear allusion to the *Āyat al-nūr* in the Qur'ān, which, Brett shows, serves as the source text for al-Ghazālī's concept of "the light of the niche of prophecy" (*nūr mishkāt al-nubuwwa*).[139] Brett interprets the light symbolism in both al-Ghazālī and al-Baydhaq in relation to the crisis of leadership instigated by the Fāṭimids in Egypt and the Nizārīs of Alamūt. For al-Ghazālī, this prophetic "light" represents the knowledge that guides the discerning Muslim to *iṣlāḥ*, "reform or improvement of himself and others."[140] For al-Baydhaq and the Almohads, the Almoravids were an obstacle to reform (*iṣlāḥ*) comparable to the Ismā'īlīs who challenged Sunnism.

Al-Baydhaq also speaks of a *book* in relation to Ibn Tūmart's personal instruction of 'Abd al-Mu'min. When Ibn Tūmart calls 'Abd al-Mu'min "the lamp of the Almohads" he likewise retrieves a literal lamp in order to illumine "a book [bound by] a red cover."[141] Ibn Tūmart then tells one Abū Bakr (possibly al-Baydhaq himself) to call the youths standing outside into the mosque. Abū Bakr then cries out, "None but God is one! The Messenger is the truth! The *mahdī* is the truth!" Ibn Tūmart proceeds to guide them through a *ḥadīth* from Abū Dāwud and a *ḥizb* of the Qur'ān.[142] Drawing on medieval accounts, many historians associate the red book with the legendary *Kitāb al-jafr*. In Twelver Shī'ī tradition, the *Jafr* is a pair of esoteric

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[139] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 183. Michael Brett, "The Lamp of the Almohads: Illumination as a Political Idea in Twelfth-Century Morocco" in *Ibn Khaldūn and the Medieval Maghrib* (London: Ashgate/Variorum, 1990), 6-7. See al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, ed. Farid Jabre (Beirut: Commission internationale pour la traduction des chefs-d'oeuvre, 1959), 39:"…*nūr mishkāt al-nubuwwa wa laysa warā' nūr al-nubuwwa 'alā wajh al-arḍ nūr yastada'u bihi*"; *Deliverance from* Error, trans. R.J. McCarthy, 81: "And beyond the light of prophecy there is no light on earth from which illumination can be obtained."

[140] Michael Brett, "The Lamp of the Almohads: Illumination as a Political Idea in Twelfth-Century Morocco" in *Ibn Khaldūn and the Medieval Maghrib* (London: Ashgate/Variorum, 1990), 7.

[141] Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-Mahdī* (Rabat: Dār al-Mansūr li-l-ṭabā'a wa-l-warāqa, 1971), 16: "…*kitāb allādī fī al-wi'ā' al-aḥmar*".

[142] Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-Mahdī* (Rabat: Dār al-Mansūr li-l-ṭabā'a wa-l-warāqa, 1971), 17. Abū Bakr's adapted call to prayer reads: "*innamā Allāh illāhun wāḥid [!] wa-l-rasūl ḥaqq [!] wa-l-mahdī ḥaqq [!]*".

books—one white and one red—passed down from ʻAlī b. Abī Ṭālib to the sixth *imām*, Jaʻfar al-Ṣādiq. Al-Ghazālī mentions the *Jafr* in his commentary on the names of God. He describes it as containing the secret virtues of God's names, instructions for writing spells using Qur'ānic verses, and methods for contacting supernatural beings, among other things.[143]

Al-Ghazālī likely drew his account of the *Jafr* from al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*, which includes an entire chapter of statements regarding *al-Jafr al-Jāmiʻ* and the *Muṣḥaf Fāṭima*. In one *ḥadīth*, Jaʻfar al-Ṣādiq explains to al-Ḥusayn b. Abī ʻAlā':

> "With me is the white *Jafr*." I then asked the *imām*… "What is in it?" The *imām* said, "In it are the Psalms of David, the Torah of Moses, the Gospel of Jesus, the Books of Abraham, the laws that explain lawful and unlawful matters, and the *Muṣḥaf Fāṭima*…in which I do not think there is anything from the Holy Qur'ān. In it is all that people need us to do for them, so that we would not need anyone else. In it is information about a lash, half of a lash and one-fourth of a lash, and about the amount of compensation for a scratch caused to someone."[144]

The white *Jafr* contains prophetic wisdom and precise guidelines for adjudication beyond what is found in the Qur'ān. The red *Jafr* that al-Baydhaq references, however, has another purpose:

> "With me there is the red *Jafr*." I then asked the *imām*, "What is in the red *Jafr*?" The *imām* said, "In it are the armaments. It is because it is only opened for bloodshed. The owner of the sword opens it to settle cases of murder."[145]

Ibn Tūmart's request for ʻAbd al-Mu'min to retrieve the red book to read in the mosque dramatically portrays the intimate relation of *ʻilm* and *jihād* that we see in *BIT*. After finishing his readings that night, Ibn Tūmart declares to ʻAbd al-Mu'min, "The knowledge you seek to acquire in the East has already come to the West."[146] There are other sources associating Ibn Tūmart with the *Jafr* and magic. Goldziher locates a note in a manuscript of the Pseudo-

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[143] Ignác Goldziher, "Introduction" to *Le Livre de Mohammed Ibn Toumert: Mahdi des Almohads*, ed. J. D. Luciani (Algiers: P. Fontana, 1903), 15-19. I have not been able to locate the text which Goldziher cites here.
[144] *Al-Kāfī*, Chap. 40, Ḥ 631.
[145] *Al-Kāfī*, Chap. 40, Ḥ 631.
[146] Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-Mahdī* (Rabat: Dār al-Mansūr li-l-ṭabāʻa wa-l-warāqa, 1971), 17.

Ghazālian work on the *Jafr* entitled *Sirr al-ʻālamīn wa-mā fī al-dārayn* (*The Secret of the Worlds and What Is in the Two Abodes*) in the Khedival Library[147] concerning Ibn Tūmart and the *Jafr*. "The first to have made a copy of [Pseudo-Ghazālī's book of secret knowledge] and to have read it in my presence and in secret during my second time at the Niẓāmiyya Madrasa after my return from travelling was a man of the Maghrib called Muḥammad b. Tūmart of the people of Salamiyya. I drew his horoscope [and saw that] he would reign [over the Maghrib]."[148] Ibn Khallikān also preserves Almohad lore regarding Ibn Tūmart's knowledge of the *Jafr* and its contents.[149] Although *BIT* is certainly not the *Jafr*, the red leather cover of manuscript A seems allude to the mysterious red book mention al-Baydhaq mentions, and to its role in conferring scholarly and political authority upon ʻAbd al-Mu'min prior to Ibn Tūmart's return to the Maghrib.

(c) The Almohad Epistles (6th/12th c.)

The earliest Almohad epistles offer some evidence as to the consistency of *BIT* with early Almohad doctrine. E. Lévi-Provençal first published a trove of Almohad letters along with the Almohad genealogical treatise, *Kitāb al-Ansāb fī maʻrifat al-aṣḥāb*, under the title *Documents inédits d'histoire almohade*. A handful of these letters are attributed to Ibn Tūmart and ʻAbd al-Mu'min, and are identical to the epistles included in MS B of *BIT* and al-Baydhāq's *Akhbār al-Mahdī*. The manuscript that contains these epistles (MS Escurial, *Legajo* 1919) dates to

[147] Now MS Or., Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, 386, 2v.
[148] Quoted in Ignác Goldziher, "Introduction" to *Le Livre de Mohammed Ibn Toumert: Mahdi des Almohads*, ed. J. D. Luciani (Algiers: P. Fontana, 1903), 18-19: "*awwal man istansakhahu wa-qara'ahu ʻalaya bi-l-madrasa al-niẓāmiyya fī al-nūba al-thāniyya baʻd rujūʻī min al-safr rajul min arḍ al-Maghrib yuqāl lahu Muḥammad ibn Tūmart min ahl Salamiyya [?] wa-tawassamtu fihi minhu al-mulk.*"
[149] See below.

714/1314. However, the dates of *BIT* MS B and *Akhbār al-Mahdī* confirm that these epistles circulated during the reign of ʻAbd al-Mu'min, if not earlier.

While we cannot confirm that the two epistles attributed to Ibn Tūmart—*al-Risāla min al-mahdī Ibn Tūmart ilā al-Murābiṭīn* and *Risālat al-mahdī ilā jamāʻat ahl al-tawḥīd*—are authentic, the letters appear to be those which al-Baydhaq describes in *Akhbār*. Moreover, the conceptual vocabulary of the Tūmartian epistles is highly consistent with that of *BIT*. In his letter to the Almoravids, he encourages them to uphold the legal rights due to Muslims (*ḥuqūq*) according to the *sunna*. In his letter to the Almohads (*ahl al-tawḥīd*), he takes a different tack. This later letter's critical stance toward the Almoravids resembles much of the material we find in *BIT* concerning "the factions" (*al-ṭawā'if*), such as *Bāb fī bayān ṭawā'if* ("Chapter on the Explanation of the Factions") and *Maʻrifat aṣḥāb al-fitan wa-uṣūl al-fitan* ("Knowledge of the Inciters of Strife and the Roots of Strife"). Ibn Tūmart claims to have written the letter (*al-kitāb*) after hearing news of his followers "striving to support the truth and their struggle to revive the *sunna*" in their "*jihād* against the corporealists (*mujassimīn*)," Ibn Tūmart's preferred epithet for the Almoravids.[150] He further identifies *three* enemies in their struggle for justice according to the *sunna*: "I mean, the face-veiled corporealists (*ahl al-tajsīm al-mulaththamīn*), the corrupt Berbers (*al-barābir al-mufsidīn*), and the deceitful hypocrites among the *ṭalaba*—the worst of the three (*al-mukārīn al-mulabbisīn min al-ṭalaba wa-hum [a]sharr al-thalātha*)."[151] Though the rhetoric of this letter is quite political, its vocabulary resonates with Ibn Tūmart's epistemological treatise, "The Dearest Desire" and the apocalyptic tone of "On the Imāmate."

[150] *Al-Rasā'il al-Muwaḥḥidiyya*, ed. Aḥmad ʻAzāwī, vol. 1 (Kénitra: Jāmiʻat Ibn Ṭufayl, 1995), 45: "*katabnā ʻalaykum hādha al-kitāb baʻdamā ittaṣalat bi-nā akhbārukum, wa-qiyāmukum fī nuṣrat al-ḥaqq wa-ijtihādukum ʻalā iḥyā' al-sunna…*"
[151] *Al-Rasā'il al-Muwaḥḥidiyya*, ed. Aḥmad ʻAzāwī, vol. 1 (Kénitra: Jāmiʻat Ibn Ṭufayl, 1995), 48.

Four terms that appear multiple times in the epistle—*ḥaqq*, *bāṭil*, *ḍalāl*, and *ʻaql*—are deployed in ways that are consistent with their technical usage in *BIT*.

Included in *BIT* MS B is ʻAbd al-Muʼmin's *al-Risāla al-munaẓẓama*. Addressed to the Jazūla tribe, al-Ṭālibī dates this letter to 537/1142-3, nearly four years prior to ʻAbd al-Muʼmin's conquest of Marrakesh.[152] The Jazūla (sometimes "Gazūla") were one of the prominent Ṣanhāja tribes represented in the Almoravid state. In the letter, the future Almohad caliph seeks to convince the Jazūla that Ibn Tūmart's followers do not oppose the Almoravids based on "the judgment of [their] intellect" or on "the actions of freethinkers." Rather, the Almohads' war against the Almoravids is justified insofar as Ibn Tūmart "distinguishes between truth and falsehood with the intellect God gave him…for the truth is a light upon him which is hidden from no one."[153] ʻAbd al-Muʼmin concludes the letter by explaining that he has appended Ibn Tūmart's epistle to the *ahl al-tawḥīd* mentioned above. The authenticity of *al-Risāla al-munaẓẓama* provides some support for the authenticity of the other two letters attributed to Ibn Tūmart. ʻAbd al-Muʻmin does not mention *BIT* explicitly. However, the conceptual overlap between his and Ibn Tūmart's extant letters, on the one hand, and *BIT*, on the other, suggests that the texts compiled in *BIT* are consistent with the doctrines promoted towards the end of Ibn Tūmart's life and during the early years of ʻAbd al-Muʼmin's reign.

(d) Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh (d. 578-94/1182-98)[154]

[152] *Al-Rasāʼil al-Muwaḥḥidiyya*, ed. Aḥmad ʻAzāwī, vol. 1 (Kénitra: Jāmiʻat Ibn Ṭufayl, 1995), 53.
[153] *Al-Rasāʼil al-Muwaḥḥidiyya*, ed. Aḥmad ʻAzāwī, vol. 1 (Kénitra: Jāmiʻat Ibn Ṭufayl, 1995), 54: "*wa-yumayyiz bi-ʻaqlihi allādī aʻṭāhu Allāh li-l-mayz bayna al-ḥaqq wa-l-bāṭil…fa-inna al-ḥaqq ʻalayhi nūr lā yukhfā ʻalā aḥad.*"
[154] *EI2* "Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāt" (J.F.P. Hopkins). Brockelmann gives the date of Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh's death as 578/1182. However, J.F.P. Hopkins believes that the internal evidence of *al-Mann bi-l-imāma* suggests the later date, 594/1198.

Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh is the earliest witness to the text of *BIT* as we know it. We have few biographical details about the author of *al-Mann bi-l-imāma*, which survives in an incomplete form. The extant portions offer a glimpse into the political and intellectual climate during the reigns of ʻAbd al-Mu'min and Abū Yaʻqūb Yūsuf.

His description of the life of the *faqīh* Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. al-Ishbīlī shows how *BIT* was studied among the Almohad élites during the middle of 6th/12th century. From Almería, al-Ishbīlī was not only a *faqīh* and *khaṭīb*, but was also a member of the Almohad *ṭalabat al-ḥaḍar*, the small circle of *'ulamā'* who travelled in the company of the caliph and his immediate family.[155] Al-Ishbīlī was particularly devoted to the propagation (*mudhākara*) of the caliph's teachings[156] at the high council (*al-majlis al-'ālī*). These teachings focused on "the knowledge of the *mahdī* (*'ilm al-mahdī*)." Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh met al-Ishbīlī in 560/1164-5, only seven years before the *faqīh*'s death (567/1171-2) in Marrakesh. He heard al-Ishbīlī recite and lecture on "*'aqīdat al-tawḥīd*", "*Kitāb al-ṭahāra*" and "*Kitāb A'azz mā yuṭlab,*" all of which we find in *BIT* under those titles.[157] Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh's testimony suggests that the texts compiled in *BIT* circulated and were memorized by Almohad scholars under the supervision of the caliph and the *ṭalaba* at least ten to twenty years *prior* to the date of MS A (579/1183-4).

(e) ʻAbd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī (581-after 617/1185-after 1224)

Al-Marrākushī finished *al-Muʻjib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib* in Baghdad during the final years of his life. A native of Fez, he spent much of his career in Seville after studying in

[155] See Émile Fricaud, "Les *ṭalaba* dans la société almohade," *al-Qanṭara* 18, no. 2 (1997), 331-387; and Maribel Fierro, "Algunas reflexiones sobre el poder itinerante almohade," *e-Spania* 8 (2009), 180 [24].
[156] Based on the dates, Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh likely means ʻAbd al-Mu'min.
[157] Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh, *al-Mann bi-l-imāma* (Beirut: Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1987), 160-62.

Córdoba and Marrakesh. His chronicle indicates that he had access to many of the Almohad élites in Marrakesh and Seville. Much of his knowledge of the Mu'minid dynasty appears to be based on his personal memories rather than on official documents or other historical works.[158]

Al-Marrākushī reports that Ibn Tūmart himself compiled (*ṣannafa*) several works for his followers after leaving Marrakesh for Ribāṭ Hargha and Tīnmall. The compiler of *BIT* likewise claims that the texts compiled therein originated with Ibn Tūmart's colloquia held around 515/1121 in Ribāṭ Hargha.[159] He describes the Mahdī's beliefs concerning the principles of religion (*'aqā'id fī uṣūl al-dīn*) as being in line with the Ash'ariyya except on the matter of the divine attributes (*ṣifāt*). Al-Marrākushī states that Ibn Tūmart followed the Mu'tazila's teachings on God's attributes, as well as on some other issues in *kalām*. The chronicler also claims that Ibn Tūmart "took something from the Shī'a, but that none of this was apparent to the general public."[160] It is not clear whether al-Marrākushī means that the public was not familiar enough to recognize commonalities between Shī'ism and Ibn Tūmart's mahdism, that the doctrines which Ibn Tūmart adapted from Shī'ī sources were intentionally restricted to the Almohad élites, or simply that he was discrete about his Shī'ī leanings.

Al-Marrākushī also attests to a conflict between Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb al-Manṣūr and other Almohads over the interpretation of Ibn Tūmart's writings, as well as their status in relation to Islam as it was practiced in Almohad lands. At the time of his accession, al-Manṣūr noticed a split amongst prominent *'ulamā'* (most of whom were of Andalusī origin) and the Almohad *shuyūkh* from Morocco. The former never completely accepted Ibn Tūmart's teachings, and

[158] *EI2* "'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī" (E. Lévi-Provençal).
[159] *BIT*, 30-31.
[160] al-Marrākushī, *al-Mu'jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'aṣriyya, 2006), 141. "*wa-kāna yubṭin shay'an min al-tashayyu', ghayr annahu lam yaẓhar minhu ila al-'āmma shay'*."

instead advocated a return to pre-Almohad Mālikism. At the same time, al-Manṣūr was concerned with the emphasis Almohad Muslims placed on the mahdist elements of Almohadism. He sought to steer a middle course between these two trends. He formally banned the Mālikī *madhhab* and burnt popular *fiqh* manuals. In keeping with Ibn Tūmart's preference for source texts (*uṣūl*) over the positive legal precedents (*furū'*) established therefrom, he prompted scholars to produce topical *ḥadīth* compilations to encourage the study of original sources. Among the books the caliph burned were *Kitāb uṣūl al-dīn wa-l-maqālāt* by Abū Muẓaffar 'Ubayd Allāh b. Yūnus (d. 593/1197), *al-Nawādir fī al-lugha* by Abū Zayd Sa'īd al-Anṣārī (d. 210/830), *al-Tahdhīb* by Khalaf b. Thābit al-Barādhi'ī, and *al-Wāḍiḥa* by Abū Marwān 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb (d. 238/803).[161] Abū Yūsuf exhibited a similar attitude to Almohads that treated *BIT* as a substitute for the study of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. On a visit to Jaén, the caliph asked Abū Bakr b. Hānā' what he had studied. He told the caliph that he had studied "the writings of the *imām* [Ibn Tūmart]," sending al-Manṣūr into a rage. The caliph said, "I expected you to say, 'I have read the Qur'ān and some *aḥādīth*.' After that, say anything you like!" This anecdote suggests that, by this time, even those who accepted Ibn Tūmart as *imām* and *mahdī* had begun to treat *BIT* like a *fiqh* manual rather than as a guide to the interpretation of Islamic scripture.

Abū Yūsuf also sought to refigure Ibn Tūmart as an Islamic reviver (*mujaddid*) in order to draw focus away from Ibn Tūmart's claims to divine guidance (*hudā*) and infallibility (*'iṣma*).[162] In the *Mu'jib*, we see two stories that shed light on al-Manṣūr's attitude toward the Almohad mahdism his father and grandfather had professed. On a pilgrimage to Tīnmall to visit the graves of Ibn Tūmart and the first two caliphs, the caliph brought a group of Oghuz Turks

[161] al-Marrākushī, *al-Mu'jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'aṣriyya, 2006), 202-03.
[162] Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1987), 97.

who had arrived in the Maghrib on a diplomatic mission from Egypt. The visitors sat beneath a famous carob tree facing the Tīnmall mosque. Ibn Tūmart once prophesied to his companions, "There is one among you who, before the end of his life, will see princes of Egypt seeking shade by sitting under this very [carob] tree!" Upon seeing the prophecy fulfilled, local Amazigh women ululated and beat drums to celebrate. Al-Marrākushī claims to have heard that al-Manṣūr smiled with disdain at the sight of their revelry.

The chronicler also reports that, while standing at the black stone at the Kaʿba, al-Manṣūr told his companion, Abū ʿAbbās, "Bear witness to me, between the hands of God [i.e. in the presence of the Kaʿba]—exalted and glorified—that I do not speak with infallibility (*bi-l-ʿiṣma*); I mean, with the infallibility of Ibn Tūmart." On another occasion, the same Ibn ʿAbbās had asked al-Manṣūr to do something that required the *imām*'s infallible authorization. The caliph replied, "Abū ʿAbbās! Where is the *imām*? Where is the *imām*?"[163] Al-Marrākushī adds that there are too many similar stories about al-Manṣūr to fit into his chronicle.[164] This scene from the *Muʿjib* is particularly valuable to the reconstruction of Almohad doctrine and ritual. The very fact that Ibn ʿAbbās approaches the caliph with the expectation of receiving an authoritative judgment on a religious question reveals that such requests to the Almohad caliphs were common and that Almohad Muslims understood the caliphs to speak with the same infallibility (*ʿiṣma*) that Ibn Tūmart had claimed.

The doctrinal reforms that al-Manṣūr pursued may offer some explanation as to the differences between the two manuscripts of *BIT*. Many of the texts missing from MS B deal with *ʿilm al-kalām*. While B retains the longer *ʿaqīda*, it omits the treatise "That Which Originates in

[163] al-Marrākushī, *al-Muʿjib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿaṣriyya, 2006), 211-12.
[164] al-Marrākushī, *al-Muʿjib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿaṣriyya, 2006), 212.

Time" (*al-Muḥdath*), as well as shorter creedal texts like the "Spiritual Guide." However, based on al-Marrākushī, these are not the omissions we would expect. Despite al-Manṣūr's skepticism toward mahdism, MS B does not suppress the treatise on *imāma* or the claims of *'iṣma* that we find in other sections of *BIT*. Although al-Manṣūr publicly emphasized his view that Ibn Tūmart was a reviver (*mujaddid*) on the Sunnī model, it appears that he was uncomfortable expressing his rejection of Ibn Tūmart's infallibility to those outside of his inner circle because the Mu'minid dynasty's authority was entangled with it. It is likely that al-Marrākushī, an Almohad patriot, felt safe enough to include these episodes in his *Mu'jib* because he wrote his chronicle in Alexandria for an *Egyptian* audience, rather than for a Maghribī one.

(f) Ibn al-Qaṭṭān (d. 628/1231)

Ibn al-Qaṭṭān claims that, during his years in Tīnmall, Ibn Tūmart wrote a book entitled *al-Tawḥīd* in Tamazight (*bi-l-lisān al-gharbī*). The book contained seven sections (*aḥzab*), one for each day of the week.[165] He preserves a fragment of another text by 'Abd al-Mu'min. The caliph commands every *faqīh*, student (i.e. an Almohad *ṭālib*), scribe, and poet to read the Qur'ān and to memorize "the creeds of the *imām* and *mahdī*" and "the *tawḥīd*, in both Arabic and Tamazight."[166] Ibn al-Qaṭṭān credits 'Abd al-Mu'min with copying down (*imlā'*) of "the knowledge possessed by the *mahdī*" (*'ulūm al-mahdī*), including his creeds, his edition of the *Muwaṭṭā'*, and the colloquia (*majālis*) that he held for the *ṭalaba*.[167] At the end of 'Abd al-Mu'min's reign, Almohad scholars approached the spread of the *'ulūm al-mahdī* in a more

[165] Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, *Naẓm al-jumān* (Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1990), 129.
[166] Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, *Naẓm al-jumān* (Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1990), 173.
[167] Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, *Naẓm al-jumān* (Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1990), 173-74. Ibn al-Qaṭṭān appends a *madḥ* poem by Ibn Ḥabūs (500-70/1106-74) describing Ibn Tūmart's curricula (pp. 174-76).

systematic way. The caliph summoned fifty boys from prominent families in Seville, Córdoba, Fez, and Tlemcen to the Almohad court in order study and memorize the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. The boys then traveled together from their homes with two professors to the court at Marrakesh. There, the *wazīr* Abū Ja'far b. 'Aṭiyya ordered them to write out and memorize "*al-Tawḥīd*" and Ibn Tūmart's editions of the *Muwaṭṭā'* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. After six months, "the light of *imāma* had set upon them," at which time the next caliph, Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf, sent these "memorizers" (*ḥuffāẓ*) back to their parents.[168] Ibn 'Aṭiyya appears to have undertaken this program in order to instill the tenets of Almohadism in recently conquered areas in the northern Maghrib and al-Andalus by converting the sons of prominent families to Almohadism.

Ibn al-Qaṭṭān not only verifies 'Abd al-Mu'min's role in compiling *BIT* in Arabic, but also explains how the Almohads incorporated *BIT* and other texts attributed to Ibn Tūmart into an overall vision for Islamic education. *BIT* was not only a compilation intended for a scholarly readership. Rather, it seems likely that many of the texts included in *BIT* had a ritual purpose. Moreover, the episode concerning the *ḥuffāẓ* attests to 'Abd al-Mu'min's and Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf's interest in creating a class of popular preachers who could recite from Ibn Tūmart's writings in both Arabic and Tamazight, especially in urban areas still committed to Mālikism.

(g) Latin Sources – Mark of Toledo and the *Chronica latina regnum Castellae*

In the early thirteenth century, Mark of Toledo, a deacon and Arabic translator in the service of Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (1170-1247), finished a complete Latin translation of the Qur'ān, as well as full Latin translations of Ibn Tūmart's creedal texts: *Tractatus Habentometi de unione Dei* (*'Aqīdat al-Muwaḥḥidīn*); *Unio gloriosi laudabilis*

[168] Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, *Naẓm al-jumān* (Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1990), 178-79.

("*Tawḥīd al-Bārī*"); *Vinculum* (*murshida*); *Laudation Dei Gloriosi* ("*Tasbīḥ al-Bārī*"); and *Laus secunda* ("*Shahādat al-dalālāt*"). Mark's preface to the collection—the *Libellus Habentometi* ("The Little Book of Ibn Tūmart")—explains why he chose to translate Ibn Tūmart after completing his Latin Qur'ān. Mark seeks to show the untruth of Qur'ānic doctrine (*preceptis inhonestus*) in comparison to the truth of the New and Old Testaments. Ibn Tūmart's "Creed" helps Mark's polemic insofar as (a) Ibn Tūmart's approach to theology is thoroughly rational and (b) takes up the problem of unclear or allegorical verses in the Qur'ān (*mutashābihāt*; *similitudinaria*).[169] Mark argues that Ibn Tūmart's well-meaning intention of proving that God is absolutely one and prior to all creation is frustrated by his commitment to the Qur'ān as revelation. The "Moor" (*Maurus*), then, is open to rational discourse despite his commitment to the Qur'ān, and, by way of reason, could come to accept the Christian scriptures as revelation.[170]

Ulisse Cecini and Thomas Burman understand Mark's translation of Ibn Tūmart as directly connected to the *Reconquista*. Mark himself likely participated in the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa against the Almohads in 1212. He tells us that he completed this translation a year after Alfonso VIII defeated "the Commander of the Faithful [Muḥammad al-Nāṣir]." Mark also stands at a transitional point in the history of Arabic studies in Toledo. Between 1050-1200, the Mozarabic Christians of Toledo translated parts of the Latin Bible and texts concerning canon law into Arabic. Conversely, analysis of the terms used in extant Arabic and Latin works of Mozarabic theology—especially those concerning divine attributes (*ṣifāt*)—indicate familiarity

[169] Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny and Georges Vajda, "Marc de Tolède: traducteur d'Ibn Tûmart," *Al-Andalus : Revista de las Escuelas de estudios arabes de Madrid y Granada* 16 (1951), 53; 58.
[170] Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny and Georges Vajda, "Marc de Tolède: traducteur d'Ibn Tûmart," *Al-Andalus : Revista de las Escuelas de estudios arabes de Madrid y Granada* 16 (1951), 52-53.

with Muslim and Jewish *kalām*.[171] Mark's capacity to render Ibn Tūmart's "Creed" in Latin presupposes a grasp of the language and concepts particular to *kalām*. However, the Christian *kalām* that developed in Toledo as means of engaging Spanish Muslims in informed polemic and reviving the study of Latin sources among Mozarabic Christians resulted in the Latinization of Toledo's Christians.[172] Mark's fascination with Ibn Tūmart's rationalism ironically *mirrors* the strategy the Ibn Tūmart pursued a century earlier. Ibn Tūmart's manner of approaching possible converts to Almohad Islam presupposed that, because the faculty of reason was common to all human beings regardless of their religious and historical particularity, rational theology should be the common language employed by the missionary. For Mark, the *Libellus Habentometi* was evidence of the Moors' rational disposition and, by extension, openness to the aspects of the Gospel that could be communicated by rational argument.

The *Chronica latina*[173] documents the lives of the kings of Castile from the death of Count Fernán González (970) until the conquest of Córdoba by Ferdinand III in 1236. Most scholars now agree that Juan de Soria, Bishop of Osma, authored the chronicle in the early thirteenth century.[174] In a section dedicated to Alfonso VII (1105-57), Soria gives a detailed description of early Almohad history until Las Navas de Tolosa. He includes: (a) Ibn Tūmart's studies in Baghdad; (b) his and 'Abd al-Mu'min's war against the "Moabites" (i.e. the Almoravids); (c) the conquest of Marrakesh; (d) the death of Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf at Santarém;

[171] Thomas Burman, "Libellus Habentometi de unio Dei" in *Christian-Muslim Relations 600-1500* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). 155-56.
[172] Thomas Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050-1200* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 188-89.
[173] I would like to thank David Cantor Echols for bringing this passage from the *Chronica* to my attention.
[174] Derek W. Lomax, "The Authorship of the Chronique latine des rois de Castille", *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, XL (1963), 205–11.

and (e) the Almohad defeats at Alarcos and Las Navas de Tolosa. He likewise mentions a "little book" (*libellus*):

> Then 'Abd al-Mu'min was established as a king in that city [i.e. Marrakesh] and in the kingdom of the Moabites by the hand of Ibn Tûmart, who was, as it were, his prophet. Now those who won the kingdom in this way were called Almohads, that is, Unitarians, because they devoted themselves to the cult of one God whom Ibn Tûmart preached, as set forth clearly in a certain book (*libellum*) that he wrote.[175]

Mark of Toledo also uses "*libellus*" to describe *BIT*. Soria shares Mark's assessment of the Mahdī of the Almohads. Though an "infidel," Ibn Tūmart was "a wise and discreet man;" without these qualities he could not have drawn so many to his cause.[176] These commonalities suggest that Soria drew upon Mark's translations and other documents from the school of Toledo.

The *Libellus Habentometi* and the *Chronica latin* show that *BIT* was available in Castile in the early thirteenth century, if not earlier. Mark does not disclose *how* Ibn Tūmart's creedal texts came into his or the Archbishop of Toledo's possession. Castilian troops could have seized a cache of Almohad books in Jaén—or even in al-Nāṣir's tent—after Las Navas de Tolosa. It is also possible that the school of Toledo acquired these texts earlier, especially if we consider that Almohad Muslims often committed credal texts to memory in order to engage in missionary activity (*da'wa*). Mark's and Soria's references to Ibn Tūmart's sojourn in the Islamic East and his alleged relationship with al-Ghazālī could not have come from *BIT* itself. They likely had access to al-Baydhaq or a similar text written before 1213, the date of Mark's translation. These

[175] *Latin Chronicle of the Kings of Castile*, trans. Joseph F. O'Callaghan (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002), 13-14.
[176] *Latin Chronicle of the Kings of Castile*, trans. Joseph F. O'Callaghan (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002), 13.

Latin sources do, however, confirm that a version of *BIT* identical or similar to MS A circulated in Christian Iberia.

Post-Almohad Sources

(h) Ibn Abī Zar‘, Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad al-Fāsī (d. 710-20/1310-20)

Ibn Abī Zar‘ represents a shift in the portrayal of Ibn Tūmart and the Almohads in the Maghrib. Most historians consider his *Rawḍ al-Qirṭās* unreliable, at least insofar as Ibn Tūmart is concerned.[177] Under the Banū Marīn, the dynasty that replaced the Almohads in the western Maghrib, historians like Ibn Abī Zar‘ recast Ibn Tūmart and the Almohads as heretics and tyrants, a tactic that resembles the Almohads’ demonization of the Almoravids. By contrast, Marīnid chroniclers were prone to extoling the orthodoxy of the Almoravids, who, as Amazigh Mālikīs had much more in common with the Banū Marīn. The most salient example of Ibn Abī Zar‘’s disdain for Ibn Tūmart is his description of the *tamyīz*, the Almohad purge of Maṣmūda tribesmen deemed unfaithful to the *mahdī*. Earlier sources report that Ibn Tūmart caused the men killed in the *tamyīz* to speak in their graves in order to dissuade Almohad Muslims from abandoning their leader. Ibn Abī Zar‘ explains that this was no miracle, but instead the work of a trickster. Ibn Tūmart did not make the dead speak, but rather “buried his companions alive with an air hole” so that they could speak. Ibn Abī Zar‘ adds that Ibn Tūmart left these men to die after the spectacle was accomplished.[178]

Ibn Abī Zar‘ criticizes the Almohads’ attitude to *BIT*, too. Like some other historians, Ibn Abī Zar‘ refers to Ibn Tūmart’s book as *al-Tawḥīd*. He claims that Ibn Tūmart “instructed [his

[177] Allen Fromherz, *The Almohads: Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 73-75.
[178] Ibn Abī Zar‘, *Rawd al-Qirṭās* (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr li-l-ṭabā‘a wa-lo-warāqa, 1972), 182-83.

followers] in *al-Tawḥīd* in the Berber language (*al-lisān al-barbarī*) …and told them, 'Whoever does not memorize this *Tawḥīd* is not a believer. He is an unbeliever who is not permitted to lead prayer, and the meat that he slaughters is not to be trusted [as ritually clean].'" Among the Maṣmūda, "this *Tawḥīd* became like the glorious Qur'ān, since [Ibn Tūmart] found an ignorant people, who knew nothing about the world, nor about religion."[179] Despite his low opinion of Ibn Tūmart, Ibn Abī Zar' appears to have read *BIT*. His description of Ibn Tūmart's teachings regarding the principles of knowledge and debates with Mālikī *fuqahā* in Marrakesh is an accurate summary of "The Dearest Desire," the first text in *BIT*.[180] Although Ibn Abī Zar' incorporates *BIT* and other Almohad sources into his history in order to impugn the Almohads, he is one of a few historians to paraphrase (and quote *verbatim*) the writings of Ibn Tūmart. Clearly, *BIT* enjoyed a wide circulation well into the Marīnid era, in both written and oral forms. His attention to Ibn Tūmart as a teacher is even more surprising given that he composed *Rawḍat al-Qirṭās* in Marīnid capital at Fez.

(i) Ibn Taymiyya (661-728/1263-1328)

Ibn Tūmart occupies a surprisingly prominent place in Ibn Taymiyya's works. Ibn Taymiyya mentions him several times in *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql*. Here, he criticizes Ibn Tūmart in three respects. First, while Ibn Taymiyya concedes that Ibn Tūmart's critique of corporealism (*tajsīm*) was justified, he claims that Ibn Tūmart's *kalām* follows the Jahmī-Mu'tazilī school too closely. Ibn Taymiyya sees the "Spiritual Guide" (*murshida*) as evidence

[179] Ibn Abī Zar', *Rawd al-Qirṭās* (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr li-l-ṭabā'a wa-lo-warāqa, 1972), 177. Ibn Abī Zar' also reports that, on his deathbed, Ibn Tūmart gave 'Abd al-Mu'min the *Jafr*, which he claimed to have received from al-Ghazālī. See *Rawḍat al-Qirṭās*, 182.
[180] Ibn Abī Zar', *Rawd al-Qirṭās* (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr li-l-ṭabā'a wa-lo-warāqa, 1972), 172-75.

that Ibn Tūmart rejects divine attributes (*ṣifāt*) and, by extension, the text of the Qur'ān.[181] Second, Ibn Taymiyya associates Ibn Tūmart's theology, particularly his description of God as "absolute existence" (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*), with Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics, and the philosophical ṣūfism of Muḥammad b. Sab'īn (614-69/1217-69). For Ibn Taymiyya, the Avicennan doctrine of absolute existence is nothing more than a philosophical route to the rejection of divine attributes (*ta'ṭīl*), insofar as one cannot tenably predicate further attributes of God beyond "existence."[182] Third, Ibn Taymiyya's most significant criticism of Ibn Tūmart is against his pretensions to *imāma* and authoritative teaching (*ta'līm*). He describes Almohadism as the belief that "no one before Ibn Tūmart knew [the truth], that he was more knowledgeable about God than everyone else, and was more virtuous than everyone else."[183] This statement clearly refers to the central thesis of *Dar' ta'āruḍ*. Ibn Taymiyya seeks to refute all theories of Islamic leadership founded upon the pretension to epistemic and/or practical superiority to the prophet Muḥammad.[184] In Ibn Taymiyya's eyes, Ibn Tūmart brings together several such pretensions from Mu'tazilī *kalām*, philosophy, ṣūfism, and Shī'ism.

The attention Ibn Taymiyya gives to Ibn Tūmart in *Dar' ta'āruḍ* reflects more than a desire to address all historical examples of rationalism in Islam. A *fatwā* of Ibn Taymiyya published by Henri Laoust[185] reveals that Muslims from Egypt and the Muslim East were drawn to Ibn Tūmart's writings, especially his "Spiritual Guide." The question (*istiftā'*) addressed to Ibn Taymiyya seeks answers regarding the following questions surrounding Ibn Tūmart's

[181] Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql*, vol. 3, 438-41.
[182] Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql*, vol. 5, 20-21; 157-60. See also, Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql*, vol. 10, 298-301.
[183] Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql*, vol. 10, 261.
[184] Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql*, vol. 1, 9-10.
[185] Henri Laoust, "Une Fetwà d'Ibn Taymiya sur Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 59 (1959), 157-84.

"Spiritual Guide": (i) What is its origin? (ii) Who composed it, and for what purpose? And, (iii) is it permissible to read/recite it, or not?

In what follows, Ibn Taymiyya produces what we might call an "anti-commentary" on the "Spiritual Guide" and on Ibn Tūmart's career in general. Regarding the first two questions, Ibn Taymiyya reports that Ibn Tūmart travelled to Iraq and learned "a bit of science (*'ilm*) and a bit of asceticism (*al-zuhd*)." He then returned to the Maghrib in order to target "one of the Berber tribes (*qawm min al-barbar*) who were ignorant and knew nothing of religion except what God had willed (*illā mā shā' Allāh*)."[186] Ibn Taymiyya recounts two examples of faux miracles Ibn Tūmart performed in order to draw followers to his cause. The first example is identical to Ibn Abī Zar''s story concerning Ibn Tūmart's causing the dead to speak. The second concerns a companion of Ibn Tūmart's who feigned insanity (*aẓhara al-junūn*) such that the Berbers knew him only as a madman. One day, he began to recite the Qur'ān, *hadīth*, and *fiqh* in public, claiming that the Prophet taught him all these things in his dreams over the course of one night (!). He proceeds to give a sermon in which he asserts that whoever follows Ibn Tūmart will secure a place for himself and his family in paradise. However, the madman, Ibn Taymiyya tells us, was in fact a scholar (*'ālim*) who was known for his skill as a *ḥāfiẓ* outside of the Sūs Valley.[187]

With regard to the third question—Is it permissible to read Ibn Tūmart's "Spiritual Guide"? —Ibn Taymiyya repeats[188] many of the above points from *Dar' ta'āruḍ*: *ta'ṭīl*: the

[186] Henri Laoust, "Une Fetwà d'Ibn Taymiya sur Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 59 (1959), 163.
[187] Henri Laoust, "Une Fetwà d'Ibn Taymiya sur Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 59 (1959), 163-64.
[188] Ibn Taymiyya indicates in the text of the *fatwā* that *Dar' ta'āruḍ* ("*kitāb kabīr*") had been completed some time beforehand. See Henri Laoust, "Une Fetwà d'Ibn Taymiya sur Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 59 (1959), 168.

doctrine of absolute existence, his claim to *imāma*, etc. He gives two additional reasons to show the dangerous qualities of the "Spiritual Guide." From Ibn Tūmart's denial of divine attributes (in the style of Jahmiyya), Ibn Taymiyya infers that Ibn Tūmart likely believed that the Qur'ān is created, and that God neither has knowledge of the afterlife (*al-ākhira*) nor power (*qudra*) over the world.[189] The latter two charges Ibn Taymiyya associates with "the philosophers" (*al-falāsifa*), here taken to mean Ibn Sīnā.

Ibn Taymiyya also takes issue with the doctrine of *takfīr al-'awamm* present in *BIT*. *Takfīr al-'awamm* is a doctrine, developed by early Mu'tazilī and Ash'arī *mutakallimūn*, that makes one's status as a Muslim conditional upon rational knowledge of God. In stipulating rational knowledge as a requirement, these theologians were essentially "declaring the masses (*al-'awāmm*) to be unbelievers." By al-Juwaynī's and al-Ghazālī's time, a majority of Ash'arīs had abandoned this doctrine. They reasoned that *islām* (the profession of belief in Islam) does not depend upon theological knowledge because most of humankind lacks the capacity for such knowledge. Ibn Tūmart revived the doctrine and deemed those who professed a defective doctrine of *tawḥīd* to be unbelievers. The Almohads' restrictive use of the term "monotheist" (*al-muwaḥḥid*), which indicates correct knowledge of *tawḥīd* and acceptance of Ibn Tūmart as *imām* and *mahdī*, places the bar too high for Muslims and potential Muslims. Moreover, Ibn Taymiyya rejects any division between "believer" (*mu'min*) and "unbeliever" (*kāfir*) based on allegiance, either epistemic or political, to anyone other than the prophet Muḥammad.

> We have already expounded up this in a large book and have mentioned the reason [Ibn Tūmart] called his companions "the monotheists" (*al-Muwaḥḥidūn*), for which [most] Muslims disavowed him, since *all* of Muḥammad's *umma* are monotheists. None of the

[189] Henri Laoust, "Une Fetwà d'Ibn Taymiya sur Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 59 (1959), 164.

> people of *tawḥīd* will spend eternity in the fire. *Tawḥīd* is what God Himself made explicit in His Book, according to the language of His Messenger.[190]

Ibn Taymiyya's *need* to give a ruling on the permissibility of Ibn Tūmart's "Spiritual Guide" shows that Ibn Tūmart's works not only circulated in the Islamic East, but also drew a consistent readership. What remains to be shown are the contours of this readership. Interest in the "Spiritual Guide" suggests that readers in the east saw Ibn Tūmart primarily as a *mutakallim* or a *faqīh*, rather than as a mahdist claimant. However, Ibn Taymiyya's knowledge of the historical details of Ibn Tūmart's life and career (likely through Ibn Abī Zar' or Ibn al-Athīr) entails that Ibn Tūmart's pretensions to *imāma* and *hudā* were well known to at least some of his eastern readers.

Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwā* and *Dar' ta'āruḍ* also offers information regarding the form in which *BIT* circulated in Egypt and the Mashriq during the thirteenth century. In *Dar' ta'āruḍ*, he mentions several texts by title. Aside from the "Spiritual Guide," he cites "*al-Dalīl*", "*al-Ma'lūmāt*", and "*al-'Aqīda.*" With regard to the latter, he calls this "*Kitāb al-tawḥīd.*" Other Almohad era sources, including Mark of Toledo, use "*al-Tawḥīd*" to refer to the series of texts from "*al-'Aqīda*" through "*Shahādat al-dalālāt.*"[191] The works Ibn Taymiyya cites confirm that he had access to at least the first half of *BIT*, if not the whole compilation. Moreover, his intimate knowledge of the *murshida* indicates that Ibn Taymiyya's text resembled the earlier MS A. In addition to these familiar titles, Ibn Taymiyya twice references a work he calls "*al-Fawā'id al-mashriqiyya*" (lit: *Fawā'iduhu al-mashriqiyya*). From his description, this text seems to pertain to *kalām*. "Ibn Tūmart mentioned in his 'Acquisitions from the East' that 'being (*wujūd*) is

[190] Henri Laoust, "Une Fetwà d'Ibn Taymiya sur Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 59 (1959), 168.
[191] *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql*, vol. 3, 438-439. For "*al-Tawḥīd,*" see ibid., vol. 5, 20.

shared by the Creator and the creature. Therefore, the Creator's being is undetermined (*mujarrad*), whereas the creature's being is determined.'"[192] It is possible that another recension circulated in the Islamic East. While Maghrībī scholars, like Ibn Marrākushī, could have brought *BIT* to Egypt, Baghdad, or Mecca following the reign of al-Manṣūr or al-Nāṣir, Ibn Taymiyya's citations of Ibn Rushd's *Kashf 'an manāhij al-adilla wa-'aqā'id al-milla* raises another possibility.

Frank Griffel and Marc Geoffroy have located passages from Ibn Rushd's *Kashf* in *Dār' ta'āruḍ* wherein the philosopher speaks about Ibn Tūmart's proof of God's existence in the "Creed" directly.[193] We find no such reference to Ibn Tūmart in the Hebrew and Latin translations of *Kashf*, nor in any modern edition, all of which are based on Escurial 632 (20v-74r). Geoffroy has also discovered previously unknown manuscripts of *Kashf* in Instanbul: Köprülü 1601 (177v-194v) and Süleymaniye, Laleli, 2490 (139v1-187v). Both manuscripts contain the passages Ibn Taymiyya cites. Geoffroy proposes two explanations for the differences between the eastern and western manuscript traditions. Geoffroy believes that MS Escurial contains an early version of *Kashf* in which Ibn Rushd moves away from Ibn Tūmart. Later, Ibn Rushd felt pressured to add these modifications, "which completely transfigured the text into a veritable panegyric of the Mahdī."[194] Inversely, the eastern manuscripts, which reference Ibn

[192] *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql*, vol. 3, 439. Ibn Taymiyya quotes this same passage again; see ibid., vol. 5, 20.
[193] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 794-801; Marc Geoffroy, "À propos de l'almohadisme d'Averroès: l'anthropomorphisme (*taǧsīm*) dans la seconde version du *Kitāb kašf 'an manāhiǧ al-adilla*" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, ed. Patrice Cressier et al. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 858-861; 876-82.
[194] Marc Geoffroy, "À propos de l'almohadisme d'Averroès: l'anthropomorphisme (*taǧsīm*) dans la seconde version du *Kitāb kašf 'an manāhiǧ al-adilla*" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, ed. Patrice Cressier et al. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 876 [my translation].

Tūmart, may reflect the original edition of *Kashf*. In this case, an anti-Almohad copyist may have redacted the Escurial version.

Geoffroy omits one other possibility. The eastern manuscript tradition reflects the original edition Ibn Rushd composed around 575/1179, the same year Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf appointed the philosopher *qāḍī al-quḍāt* of Seville.[195] The Escurial version would then date to the reign of al-Manṣūr. Al-Marrākushī's testimony supports this hypothesis. As mentioned above, al-Manṣūr rejected certain tenets of Almohadism and may explain the absence of most of Ibn Tūmart's *kalām* texts from MS B. The caliph likewise *burned* many of Ibn Rushd's writings after exiling the philosopher to Lucena under suspicion of heresy in 1195. The eastern version of *Kashf* Ibn Taymiyya cites was likely transmitted from al-Andalus to the Muslim east prior to Almohad censorship of Ibn Rushd's works. The recension history of *Kashf* offers a model by which we can understand how Almohad texts like *BIT* came to exist in different forms in the Islamic world. The later Almohad state seems to have tried to suppress *kalām* texts attributed to Ibn Tūmart, as well as texts sympathetic to his theology. At the same time, Ibn Taymiyya's treatment of *BIT* and Ibn Rushd in *Dar' ta'āruḍ* shows that eastern Muslims understood the contents of these suppressed *kalām* texts to be Ibn Tūmart's most significant contribution to the religious sciences.

(j) Ibn Sammāk, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Ma'ālī (d. 783/1381)

[195] Ms. Escorial, Casiri 879/Derenbourg 884, fol. 82b contains a list (*barnāmaj*) of Ibn Rushd's works. This list mentions a commentary on Ibn Tūmart's theological works, which has not survived. See Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 794 (n. 126). If Ibn Rushd authored such a commentary, he would most likely have done so between 1178-81, the years in which he composed *Tahāfut al-tahāfut*, *Kashf*, and other works related to *kalām* topics.

We know little about Ibn Sammāk beyond the fact that he was a scholar working in Marīnid Fez and that he authored *Ḥulal al-mawshiyya*.[196] Although the *Ḥulal* appears to draw much of its information from Marīnid sources like *Rawḍat al-Qirṭās*, Ibn Sammāk's account of Ibn Tūmart is far more balanced than what we see in Ibn Abī Zar'. He repeats many details from *Rawḍat al-Qirṭās*, as well as from Ibn al-Qaṭṭān and Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh. He says:

> [Ibn Tūmart] composed a book for them called *al-Tawḥīd* in the Berber language (*al-lisān al-barbarī*). It [contains] seven portions, [onefor] each day of the week. He commanded them to read one portion of it every day during *ṣalāt al-ṣubḥ* after finishing the Qur'ān portion. [The book] contains knowledge of God (*ma'rifat Allāh*) and the creed; for example, the reality of [God's] judgment and power, belief in what is necessary with regard to God, what is impossible of Him, what is possible, and what is incumbent upon the Muslim with regard to enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil…[197]

In addition to *al-Tawḥīd*, Ibn Sammāk mentions two other texts included in *BIT*— "The Rules upon Which the Religious Sciences Are Founded" and "On the Imāmate"—and quotes the "Spiritual Guide" in its entirety. Counter to the "de-Almohadization" thesis advanced by Fricaud and others, Ibn Sammāk reports that these texts have been "in the hands of the people up to the present age," and that those most fluent in Arabic and Tamazight continued to read, memorize, and even lecture on Ibn Tūmart's writings. He offers two reasons for this continued readership. First, teachers of *fiqh* and *'ilm al-kalām* used sections of *BIT* in their lectures because Ibn Tūmart had summarized the principles of these disciplines very efficiently. Second, Ibn Sammāk suggests that many *'ulamā'* and public preachers remained committed to Ibn Tūmart in some form, whether as the *mahdī* or simply as a respected scholar.[198]

(k) Ibn Khaldūn (732-808/1332-1406)

[196] In fact, many historians still refer to the author the *Ḥulal al-mawshiyya* as "Anonymous."
[197] *Ḥulal al-mawshiyya* (Casablanca: Dār al-Rashād al-ḥadītha, 1979), 109-110.
[198] *Ḥulal al-mawshiyya* (Casablanca: Dār al-Rashād al-ḥadītha, 1979), 110; 118.

Ibn Tūmart and the Mu'minid dynasty occupies an important place in *al-Muqaddima* and *Kitāb al-'ibar*. Despite his sojourns among the Marīnids and Naṣrids, many interpreters of Ibn Khaldūn attribute the historian's interest in Almohadism to his relationship with the Tunisian Ḥafṣids. As an Almohad successor state, the Ḥafṣid dynasty was invested in Ibn Tūmart's legacy. Several members of Ibn Khaldūn's family served the Ḥafṣids after emigrating from Seville (the Almohads' capital in Iberia) shortly before the Castilian *reconquista*. After many years in Fez and al-Andalus, Ibn Khaldūn would return to Tunis to serve Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad (r. 1370-94). In Tunis, Mālikism and Ash'arism gradually replaced Almohad *fiqh* and Ibn Tūmart's creed. Almohadism was formally banned in Tunis in 1311 when the *sulṭān* al-Liḥyānī suppressed prayer in the name of the *mahdī*.[199] Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad, however, sought to revive the former glory of the Almohad caliphate under the banner of the Ḥafṣids.[200] Ibn Khaldūn supported the Ḥafsids prior to the Marīnid incursion into Tunisia. Ibn Khaldūn generally supported the Ḥafsids' self-identification with the memory of the Almohad Caliphate, but, in his *Muqaddima*, often seems to disapprove of their attempts to revive Tūmartian doctrine.

In addition to showing how the Almohads transitioned from a tribal movement to an urban caliphate, Ibn Khaldūn concerns himself with the origin and development of Ibn Tūmart's doctrines. He introduces Ibn Tūmart as the initiator of "a mission against corporealism" (*da'wat nafī al-tajsīm*) and a "a school that accuses others of unbelief" (*madhhab al-takfīr*).[201] Unlike earlier historians, Ibn Khaldūn emphasizes Ibn Tūmart's Ash'arī lineage, rather than the

[199] Michael Brett, "The Lamp of the Almohads: Illumination as a Political Idea in Twelfth-Century Morocco" in *Ibn Khaldūn and the Medieval Maghrib* (London: Ashgate/Variorum, 1990), 23. See also, Roger Le Tourneau, "Sur la disparition de la doctrine almohade," *Studia Islamica* 33 (1970), 193-201.
[200] Allen Fromherz, *Ibn Khaldūn* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 14-15.
[201] 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Khaldūn *Kitāb al-'Ibar wa-dīwān al-mubtada' wa-l-khabar fī ayām al-'arab wa-l-'ajam wa-l-barbar*, ed. Abū Ṣuhayb al-Karamī (Amman: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyya, 2000), 1692.

Mu‘tazilī aspects we see in some parts of *BIT*. The biggest discrepancy between Ibn Tūmart and later Ash‘arīs (like Ibn Khaldūn) was the former’s commitment to *tafkīr al-‘awamm*. In his “Creed,” for example, Ibn Tūmart states that the sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*) and worship (*‘ibāda*) that defines a true Muslim is contingent upon demonstrative knowledge (*‘ilm yaqīn*; *burhān*). Most Ash‘arīs, including al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī, rejected *takfīr al-‘awamm* because such knowledge would be too great an obstacle to accepting Islam—and therefore *salvation*—for the vast majority of human beings. Ibn Khaldūn hypothesizes that Tūmart derived his doctrine of *takfīr* from pre-Niẓāmiyya Ash‘arīs who held that knowledge is a necessary precondition for salvation.[202] In this way, Ibn Tūmart’s “*murshidat al-tawḥīd*” (i.e. the “Spiritual Guide”) remains consistent with Ash‘arism despite its atavism on the matter of *takfīr*.

Although Ibn Khaldūn sees Ibn Tūmart’s “Creed” as thoroughly Ash‘arī, he claims that Ibn Tūmart’s “On the Imāmate” (*kitābuhu fī al-imāmiyya*) reflects Shī‘ī influence. What is most remarkable about Ibn Khaldūn’s interpretation of Ibn Tūmart’s doctrine of the *imām*’s infallibility (*‘iṣmat al-imām*), however, is his insistence that the Ibn Tūmart agreed with “the opinion of Imāmīs (*al-Imāmiyya*) among the Shī‘a.”[203] Other historians have drawn comparisons between Ibn Tūmart and the Shī‘a, most often the Fāṭimids, but Ibn Khaldūn is unique in tracing Ibn Tūmart’s doctrine of *‘iṣma* to the Twelvers. Wilferd Madelung has documented the presence of a Musawī Shī‘ī community in Taroudant, a Maṣmūda settlement not far from Ibn Tūmart’s birthplace. As an offshoot of Twevler Shī‘ism, it is possible that the “Bajaliyya” Shī‘a of

[202] ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Khaldūn *Kitāb al-‘Ibar wa-dīwān al-mubtada’ wa-l-khabar fī ayām al-‘arab wa-l-‘ajam wa-l-barbar*, ed. Abū Ṣuhayb al-Karamī (Amman: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyya, 2000), 1669. Griffel explores *takfīr al-‘awamm* and presents evidence confirming Ibn Khaldūn’s hypothesis. Frank Griffel, “Ibn Tūmart’s Rational Proof for God’s Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *Madrasa* in Baghdad” in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier et al, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 776-77.

[203] ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Khaldūn *Kitāb al-‘Ibar wa-dīwān al-mubtada’ wa-l-khabar fī ayām al-‘arab wa-l-‘ajam wa-l-barbar*, ed. Abū Ṣuhayb al-Karamī (Amman: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyya, 2000), 1668.

Taroudant had access to early Twelver literature through their founder, ʻAlī b. Warsand, a Shīʻī teacher from Tunisia.[204] Ibn Khaldūn may have learned of the Bajaliyya's existence from Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn Abī Zarʻ, and (perhaps) al-Qāḍī al-Nuʻmān. Ibn Khaldūn also draws attention to Ibn Tūmart's alleged ʻAlīd lineage. It is possible that the historian seeks to associate the Almohads with Twelver *imāma* as a genealogical/political principle in order to avoid associating with the Ismāʻīlīs.

Commentaries on the Murshida

Ibn Khaldūn's portrayal of Ibn Tūmart as an Ashʻarī (albeit an Ashʻarī with divergent opinions) is characteristic of the reception of Ibn Tūmart from the seventh/thirteenth century onward. Others, such as Ibn ʻAbbād al-Rundī, sought to reshape Ibn Tūmart into a ṣūfī or ascetic (*zāhid*), even though *BIT* has very little in common with Islamic mystical literature. Ibn Tūmart's short *murshida* was the subject of a fairly continuous commentary tradition in al-Andalus and the Maghrib long after his death and the decline of the Almohad caliphate. Below is a list of the extant commentaries on the *murshida* based on ʻAbd al-Majīd al-Najjār's *al-Mahdī Ibn Tūmart* and Abū al-ʻAzm's edition of *Aʻazz mā yuṭlab*.[205]

[204] *EI2*, "Ibn Warsand" (Wilferd Madelung). See also, Wilferd Madelung, "Some Notes on Non-Ismāʻīlī Shiism in the Maghrib," *Studia Islamica*, xliv (1976), 87-97.

[205] Dr. Mohamed El Ferrane, director of the BNRM, has kindly provided me with a list of MSS containing commentaries on Ibn Tūmart housed in archives across Morocco and North Africa, many of which have not yet been included in published catalogue. I am grateful to him and the staff of the BNRM for helping me to add to the above list.

Table 9: Commentaries on BIT

Author	**Title**	**Details**
Abū Bakr b. Maymūn al-ʻAbdarī (d. 567/1171 – Morocco)	*Sharḥ Kitāb Aʻazz mā yuṭlab*	MS Marrakesh, Ibn Yūsuf, 403
al-Sakūnī, Abū ʻAbd Allāh (7th/13th c. – Seville; Tunis)	*Sharḥ al-Murshida*	MS Tunis, Dār al-kutub, 11273 MS Fez, Quaraouiyine Print edition: Yūsuf Iḥnāna
al-Subkī, Tāqī al-Dīn (683-756/1284-1355 – Cairo; Damascus)	*Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʻiyya*, vol. 5, p. 30	
Ibn ʻAbbād al-Tilimsānī al-Rundī (733-92/1333-90 – Ronda; Morocco; Algeria)	*al-Durra al-mushīda fī sharḥ al-Murshida*	MS Tunis, Dār al-kutub, 14559 & 16359 MS Rabat, Bibliothèque Nationale, 1059 k
al-Shaybānī, Abū ʻAbd Allāh (8th/14th c. – Tripoli, Libya)	*Sharḥ al-Murshida*	MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, arabe 5296
al-Sanūsī, Muḥammad b, Yūsuf (839-895/1436-90 – Tlemcen)	*Sharḥ al-Murshida*	MS Tunis, Dār al-kutub, 16953
Muḥammad al-Murād (copyist) (11th/17th c. – Jerusalem)	*ʻAqāʼid* collection containing *al-Murshida*	MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, arabe 1285
Yibūrk/Ībūrk b. ʻAbd Allāh al-Simlālī (1026-58/1617-48 – Sūs Valley, Morocco)	*Sharḥ al-Murshida*	MS Marrakesh, Ibn Yūsuf, 541
al-Nāblusī, ʻAbd al-Ghanī b. Ismāʻīl (d. 1143/1731 – Damascus)	*Nūr al-afʼida fī sharḥ al-Murshida*	MS Rabat, Bibliothèque Nationale, 2414 k
Ibn al-Naqqāsh, Abū ʻAbd Allāh Muḥammad (dates unknown)	*al-Durra al-mufrada fī sharḥ al-ʻaqīda al-Murshida* *al-Durar fī sharḥ al-ʻaqīda al-Murshida*	MS Rabat, Bibliothèque Nationale, 283 MS Rabat, Hassania 12467, 13218, 13722, 10880
Anonymous (dates unknown)	*al-Anwār al-Mubayyinna al-Muʼayyida li-maʻānī ʻaqd al-ʻaqīda al-Murshida*	MS Meknes, Grand Mosque, 339 MS Taroudant, Tidssia MS Tangier, Guennoun Inst.

	al-Mubayyina al-mu'ayyida li-ma'ānī 'aqīda al-Murshida	

Table 9 (continued)

Aside from Yūsuf Iḥnāna's edition of al-Sakūnī's commentary (1993), Abū Bakr b. Maymūn al-'Abdarī's *Sharḥ Kitāb al-'ilm/A'azz mā yuṭlab* (2005)[206], and al-Subkī's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya*, all of the above works are only available in manuscript. Yet, the details surrounding this commentary tradition reveal certain trends. Beginning with al-Sakūnī's commentary, we see shift away from Ibn Tūmart, "the *imām* and *mahdī*," toward Ibn Tūmart the *mutakallim*. Iḥnāna shows that al-Sakūnī and other commentators go to great lengths to make Ibn Tūmart out to be an orthodox Ash'arī. While the commentary tradition remains relatively restricted to former Almohad lands between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, by the seventeenth, we see several commentaries written in Libya, Egypt, and the Levant. The growing popularity of the *murshida* in the Islamic East corresponds to the gradual, eastward movement of Maghribī scholars and ṣūfīs after the twelfth century.

Conclusions

In light of the manuscript elements and historical attestations, I would like to draw some conclusions regarding the genesis, authorship, and purpose of *BIT*. I incline toward the view advanced by the post-revisionist school that *BIT* consists of texts authored by Ibn Tūmart and compiled under the patronage of 'Abd al-Mu'min and Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf. The internal

[206] On al-'Abdarī's biography, see Conclusion.

coherence of *BIT* and the consistency of its conceptual lexicon strongly suggest that its contents, though gathered from a variety of oral and written sources, reflect the mind of a single author—Ibn Tūmart. We must attribute the basic overall *structure* of *BIT*, which has not drastically changed between the two manuscripts, to the original compiler. The order of the text prepares the reader to see the intimate connection between Ibn Tūmart's thought regarding the principles of the Islamic sciences and his claim to be the awaited *mahdī* and infallible *imām*.

(a) Genesis

Revisionist scholars have typically been wary about assigning a date to *BIT* much earlier than the date of MS A (579/1183-4). This reticence reflects their belief that *BIT* did not take its current form until the Almohads began to establish their presence in al-Andalus. As I discussed in the literature review, while there are reasons to be skeptical of the Mu'minid version of Almohad history, the particular arguments Fletcher and Fierro use to confirm the presence of manipulations in *BIT* lack a strong foundation in the text itself. I agree with Fromherz as to the reliability of the Almohad-era chroniclers (i.e. al-Baydhaq, Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh, al-Marrākushī, and Ibn al-Qaṭṭān), despite their commitment to the Almohad cause on a political or religious level.

The genesis of *BIT* likely coincides with 'Abd al-Mu'min's turning away from the caliphate's expansion toward internal matters. Following the Almohads' expansion into al-Andalus and campaigns in Tunisia and Algeria (542-5/1148-51), 'Abd al-Mu'min spent his time between Salé and Marrakesh. Most historians emphasize his efforts to convert the Almohad movement into a hereditary caliphate and to deal with rebellions provoked by his decision to do so. However, Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh and Ibn al-Qaṭṭān reveal that, immediately following 'Abd al-Mu'min's death, Marrakesh was the center of the study of Ibn Tūmart's writings. Ibn Ṣāḥib al-

Ṣalāh's claim to have heard the Almohad *ṭālib* Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. al-Ishbīlī lecture on Ibn Tūmart's writings in Marrakesh in 560/1164-5—roughly a year after 'Abd al-Mu'min's death—shows that *A'azz mā yuṭlab*, the *'Aqīda*, and *al-Ṭahāra* had circulated within Almohad circles for at least a few years. As a native of Almería, it is unlikely that he would have been admitted to the elite "students of the [caliphal] presence" (*ṭalabat al-ḥaḍar*) at Marrakesh and given permission to lecture on Ibn Tūmart without having spent several years in the company of 'Abd al-Mu'min.[207] In addition, Abū Bakr al-'Abdarī's commentary on "The Dearest Desire," which was completed before his death (ca. 567/1171), is also evidence that *BIT* (or, at the very least, significant portions thereof) was edited long before MS A.[208] If, as we read in "The Dearest Desire," 'Abd al-Mu'min initiated the compilation of *BIT*, we can reasonably propose that *BIT* (minus *The Book of Jihād*) dates between 546-58/1151-63. The *ḥadīth* section entitled *The Book of Jihād*, which, according to both manuscripts, Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf authored, could have been added to *BIT* at anytime between 558-80/1163-84. I agree with Goldziher that, while *The Book of Jihād* is a later addition, Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf likely drew upon Islamic traditions that Almohad scholars had studied since Ibn Tūmart's return to the Maghrib in order to understand and govern their military campaign against the Almoravids.[209]

(b) Authorship

I reject the revisionists' claims that the Mu'minid dynasty manipulated *BIT* in any way in order to accommodate an Andalusī audience. Their arguments presuppose contradictions within

[207] Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh, *al-Mann bi-l-imāma* (Beirut: Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1987), 160-162.
[208] Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām al-Mahmāh, *al-Ma'rifa 'inda Ibn Tūmart: dirāsa li-kitābay: Kitāb al-'ilm li-Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh ibn Tūmart wa-Sharḥ Kitāb al-'ilm li-Abī Bakr Muḥammad ibn Maymūn al-'Abdarī*, vol. 1 (Tangier: Salīkī Ikhwān, 2006).

[209] Ignác Goldziher, "Materialen zur Kenntniss der Almohadenbewegung," *Zeitschrift der Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 41, no. 1 (1887), 76-77.

Ibn Tūmart's theology, which Griffel and Fromherz have shown is internally consistent. *BIT*'s editorial elements constitute further evidence against the revisionist account of the book's authenticity. It is difficult to imagine that the compiler would carefully demarcate his words from Ibn Tūmart's and provide alternate versions of texts while simultaneously interpolating doctrinal content that he believed to be inauthentic. I do, however, concede that *BIT* likely represents the politically dominant form of Almohadism promoted by the Mu'minid dynasty. Although I understand 'Abd al- Mu'min and Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf to have been "true believers" (rather than disingenuous propagandists), the numerous internal rebellions with which the first caliph dealt imply that other groups within the Almohad movement differed with regard to the interpretation of Ibn Tūmart's doctrines, the manner in which they understood his role as *imām* and *mahdī*, and the question of succession. I maintain, along with Goldziher and the post-revisionists, that the contents of *BIT* are authentic. We cannot, however, rule out the possibility that the compiler of *BIT* may have omitted authentic texts available to him on the basis that they contradicted his understanding of Ibn Tūmart's project.

The differences in the *explicit* formulas speak to the provenance of each text included in *BIT*, as well as the extent to which the compiler had a hand in the reconstruction of a particular text. The texts that conclude with the formula "*kamala[t]*" or "*tamma[t]*" appear to have been written by Ibn Tūmart directly and likely circulated among his students separately. The texts described as a "dictation" (*imlā'*) or "speech" (*kalām*) exhibit a stronger editorial presence. The content and accuracy of these texts are hard to scrutinize given that they are the only extant records of Ibn Tūmart's colloquia (*majālis*) and disputations (*munāẓarāt*) that aim to reproduce his words *verbatim*. In analyzing the dictated texts, "The Dearest Desire" in particular, we must recognize that, while the content is authentic, their rhetorical structure depends much more on

the compiler understanding of how the fragments of Ibn Tūmart's oral and written teachings relate to one another.

(c) Structure and Argument

The identical groupings of texts common to manuscripts A and B (see section II.1.4) suggest that *BIT* consists of four major parts. In *The Almohads*, Fromherz likewise identifies four majors components that make up the overall argument of the work: *tawḥīd*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, the condemnation of Almoravid "anthropomorphism" (*tajsīm*), and mahdism.[210] These themes are certainly prominent, but they do not reflect the actual *order* of the text. Instead, I believe *BIT*'s four sections are: (i) epistemology, (ii) theology, (iii) *imāma*-mahdism, and (iv) *jihād*. The content of each section prepares the reader to comprehend the arguments in the next in a cumulative fashion. Once the reader understands the relationship between Ibn Tūmart's claim to have discovered *the* path to the knowledge necessary to think and conduct oneself as a Muslim, on the one hand, and his role as *mahdī* and *imām*, on the other, the final section will serve as a guide to living out Ibn Tūmart's vision for Islam and the measures the reader must take to propagate this vision. By showing how the thematic content of *BIT* maps onto the order of the text, I hope to counter a view quite prevalent in the secondary literature that *BIT* is internally inconsistent or compiled without an eye to an overall argument or plan.

[210] Allen Fromherz, *The Almohads: Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 156.

Chapter 3: Knowledge and Epistemology I – Defining Knowledge

Wilferd Madelung opens his monumental study, *The Succession to Muḥammad*, with this remark: "No event in history has divided Islam more profoundly and durably than the succession to Muḥammad."[211] I do not believe that it would be an exaggeration to say that the question of succession is *the* fundamental problem underlying the various Islamic sciences that emerged after the Prophet's death. Although early Muslims were indeed concerned with the legitimacy of religio-political institutions such as the imāmate (*imāma*) and the caliphate (*khilāfa*), the issue of succession runs much deeper. In the absence of the Prophet, who enjoyed a unique relationship with God, how is the individual Muslim to know that of which Islam, the religion of the Prophet, consists? And, with reference to communal life, how is the individual Muslim to verify to others that the manner in which he worships and observes the *sharī'a* is in continuity with the religion established by the Prophet?

Ibn Tūmart's establishment of the Almohad movement and his claim to be the *imām* and *mahdī* to whom all Muslims owed their allegiance rested on the unique and often radical answers he provided to these questions in *BIT*. Almohadism holds three major beliefs that, when taken together, set it apart from other forms of Islam:

> • The truth is one (*al-ḥaqq wāḥid*). For every question the answer to which is within the human capacity to know, there is one correct answer to the exclusion of others.
>
> • In order to validate one's belief (*īmān*) and acts of worship (*'ibāda*) and to attain salvation (*najāh*), one cannot simply imitate (*yuqallid*) a religious authority or assent to religious statements on faith, but must rather possess knowledge (*'ilm*).
>
> • In the last age, God will raise up a leader (*imām*) and *mahdī* who, through study and divine guidance, will impart this saving knowledge to humankind. He will not demand

[211] Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

> imitation (*taqlīd*) or blind obedience to his teachings (*ta'līm*), but will rather show human beings how to assimilate this knowledge to their own minds.

I argue that Ibn Tūmart's project is ultimately one of epistemological reform. His commitment to the one truth and his belief that he, as the *imām* and *mahdī*, was responsible for the enlightenment of humankind informed the exclusivist spirit of the Almohad movement. In this chapter, I will explore the significance of knowledge to Ibn Tūmart's thought and reconstruct his definition of knowledge. In Chapter 4, I will demonstrate how this definition of knowledge plays out in Ibn Tūmart's doctrines, in particular, his elaboration of jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

Historical Background

The Almohad movement is remarkable in that, while its founder was raised and educated in a Sunnī milieu, it put the belief in the authority of an infallible *imām*—a typically Shī'ī concept—at the center of its doctrinal system. Regardless of any resemblance that the Almohads might bear to the Shī'a or other *imām*-centered movements (e.g. Khārijism), the conceptual vocabulary Ibn Tūmart employs throughout *BIT*, as well as the value he gives to Sunnī *ḥadīth* corpus, leaves no doubt to the fact that Almohadism was a response to Sunnī problems articulated in Sunnī terms. The attention Ibn Tūmart gives to knowledge (*'ilm*) reflects a shift within toward methodological rigor in the study of *ḥadīth*, jurisprudence, and theology which began around the third/ninth century. Proto-Sunnī attitudes toward the question of continuity with the Prophet had existed at the beginning of the post-prophetic era. Although Sunnism would eventually become the majority expression of Islam, it was one of the last denominations to form a discrete self-identity.[212]

[212] According to Jonathan A. C. Brown, the Sunnī canon, which was centered around the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, did not take definite shape until the fifth/eleventh century. Prior to this time, many of the Muslims whose

I understand Ibn Tūmart as responding to a certain crisis of knowledge that arose over the course of Sunnism's development. This crisis arose out of two major intra-Islamic conflicts, one intellectual and one theologico-political. Beginning in the second-third/seventh-eighth centuries, the simultaneous systematization of *ḥadīth* criticism and dialectical theology (*kalām*) raised questions concerning methodological precedence in matters of faith and law. Should Muslims give greater weight to positivist interpretations of the Qur'ān and prophetic traditions, or instead apply reason in order to draw inferences about the nature of God and the application of His law? Although *kalām* continued to develop well into the sixth/twelfth century, it is clear that, by the fourth/tenth century, most Sunnīs gravitated toward positivist styles of *ḥadīth* criticism and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). In matters of creed, Sunnīs increasingly allied themselves with the Ash'ariyya, a theological school known for its cautious deference to scripture, or the Ḥanbalī creed, a text that eschews all speculative theology. Around the same time, all Sunnī *madhāhib* began to crystalize. They moved away from the qualified interpretation of the law and its principles (*ijtihād*) to its clarification and application on the basis of the precedent established by each *madhhab*'s founder and their immediate disciples.

Most modern accounts of this crisis of knowledge (such as those of Joseph Schacht, Franz Rosenthal, and John Walbridge) focus on intra-Sunnī conflicts precipitated by differences between legal schools during the formative period of Islamic jurisprudence.[213] While local "schools" of Islamic law developed in several cities and settlements (*amṣār*), the jurisprudence

descendants (both literal and intellectual) would identify as Sunnī adhered to the positions of local legal schools. Brown attributes the formation of this broader identity to the institutionalization of the Sunnī *madhāhib* through the composition of systematic works of *fiqh* and *ḥadīth*, as well as to the growth of the *madrasa* model of education in the Islamic East. See Jonathan A. C. Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 367-68.

[213] Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950). Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). John Walbridge, *God and Logic in Islam: The Caliphate of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

elaborated by scholars in Kufa and Medina would come to define legal discourse in Sunnī Islam.[214] The Iraqi Abū Ḥanīfa b. al-Nu'mān b. Thābit (80-150/699-767) and the Ḥijāzī Mālik b. Anas (93-179/711-95) were the first to outline methodologies for interpreting the Qur'ān and growing corpus of *ḥadīth* literature as prescriptive texts. The schools of Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (150/767-204/820), Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal (164-241/780-855), and Dāwūd b. 'Alī al-Ẓāhirī (201-70/815-83 grew out of Mālik's and Abū Ḥanīfa's circles. Originally a student of Mālik in Medina, al-Shāfi'ī, the author of the famous *Risāla fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, offered the first systematic presentation of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence. Ibn Ḥanbal's public "ordeal" (*miḥna*) concerning his rejection of al-Ma'mūn's promulgation of the Mu'tazilī doctrine of the Qur'ān's createdness reveals the extent to which the early *madhāhib al-fiqh* had begun to intertwine themselves with the 'Abbāsid state, particularly in Iraq.

In the generations following the founding of the Sunnī *madhāhib*, the study of *ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, and *'ilm al-kalām* began to flourish. Muslims transmitted, memorized, and discussed traditions attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions (*ṣaḥāba*) well before the formal compilation of *ḥadīth*. The *Muwaṭṭā'* of Mālik and Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* are two of the earliest extant compilations. Ibn Tūmart held the former in great esteem and penned his own recension of it.[215] While many other compilations appeared during the second/eighth-third/ninth centuries, contemporary developments in legal theory, *tafsīr*, and historiography[216] spurred

[214] John Burton, *The Sources of Islamic Law: Islamic Theories of Abrogation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990): 12-3.
[215] Mālik b. Anas and Muḥammad b. Tūmart, *Muwaṭṭā' al-imām al-mahdī* (Algiers: Pierre Fontana, 1905).
[216] Christopher Melchert notes that two of the most important traditionists in the development of Sunnī jurisprudence were the Qur'ān commentator, Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/777-78), and the historian, al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923). See Christopher Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law, 9th-10th Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 3-13.

increasingly critical examination of the prophetic traditions that had proliferated throughout the expanding Muslim world. In the fifth/eleventh century, Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir al-Qaysarānī would declare six *ḥadīth* collections from this period to be "canonical" for Sunnī Muslims.[217] "The Six Books" (*al-kutub al-sitta*) or "the authentic six" (*al-ṣiḥaḥ al-sitta*) include: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (d. 256/870), *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (d. 261/875), *Sunan Abī Dāwud* (d. 275/888), *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* (d. 279/892), *Sunan al-Sughrā* by al-Nasā'ī (d. 303/915), and *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (d. 273/887).[218]

During the same period (second/eight-third/ninth century), *'ilm al-kalām*—often translated as "dialectical theology"—emerged as a distinct discipline. Evolving out of early Islamic *tafsīr* and Arabic grammar (*naḥw*), the *mutakallimūn* sought to provide a rational basis for the basic tenets of Islamic theology. Of particular concern were the Qur'ān's (apparently) conflicting presentations of God's oneness (*tawḥīd*) and attributes (*ṣifāt*), on the one hand, and its ambiguous language concerning the extent which God's will determines the actions for which human beings will be judged. While most modern scholars hold that *kalām* developed out of early Muslims' need to debate extant religious communities in still pluralistic contexts of Mesopotamia and the Levant, conflict between rival schools of *kalām* stoked the fires of discord within the Muslim community itself.

Rosenthal's and Walbridge's respective theses on knowledge in classical Islamic thought bear upon the epistemic crisis that arose in the Islamic world in the fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth centuries. Rosenthal believes that the question as to the *nature* of knowledge took on greater

[217] On the canonization of the "Six Book," see Jonathan A. C. Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 8-9 (n. 7), 233, 337.
[218] Mālikīs often substitute Mālik's *Muwaṭṭā'* for *Sunan Ibn Majah* or simply add it as a "seventh" canonical collection.

meaning as consequence of the work undertaken by second/eight-third/ninth century *ḥadīth* compilers (*muḥaddithūn*). Whereas the relationship between knowledge and authority was already obvious during the Prophet's lifetime, *ḥadīth* compilers, such as al-Bukhārī, began to pose properly epistemological questions. If life in submission to God (*islām*) demands sound knowledge regarding law (*sharī'a*), belief (*īmān*), and temporal power (*sulṭa*), what, precisely, is the character of such knowledge, and how do Muslims attain it? With regard to the possibility of dissent—or outright rebellion (*fitna*)—what methods of scrutinizing the nature of knowledge might lead the Muslim community into error?

Rosenthal demonstrates that the first steps toward a formal exploration of knowledge take the form of changes in the arrangement of *ḥadīth* compilations. The place of *aḥādīth* regarding knowledge (*'ilm*) in Mālik's *Muwaṭṭā'*, one of the earliest known compilations, is telling. The section entitled "The Search for Knowledge" (*ṭalab al-'ilm*) appears toward the end of the *Muwaṭṭā'* (chapter 59 of 61!), and contains only one tradition attributed, not to the Prophet, but rather to his companion, Luqmān al-Ḥakīm: "Yaḥya related to me from Mālik that he heard that Luqmān al-Hakīm had made his will and counseled his son, saying, 'My son, sit at the feet of learned men (*'ulamā'*) and keep them close. God enlivens hearts with the light of wisdom (*nūr al-ḥikma*) just as He enlivens the dead earth with abundant rain from the sky!"[219] The *Muwaṭṭā'* itself is the earliest source of this tradition. Per Rosenthal, the conspicuous lack of other, more authoritative traditions in Mālik's chapter on knowledge strongly suggests that Mālik was not aware of other authentic *aḥādīth* that he could have included.[220] Knowledge may not have figured as an important problem among traditionists of Mālik's generation, but the situation

[219] Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭā'* 1859.
[220] Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 70-71.

changed over the next few generations. *Ḥadīth* scholars began to devote special treatises to the problem of knowledge in relation to the study of Islamic traditions. Significant among these are the *Kitāb al-ʻilm* by Mālik's student ʻAbdallāh b. Wahb (125-97/742-813), al-Shāfiʻī's *The Sum Total of Knowledge* (*Jimāʻ al-ʻilm*), and Abū Khaythama's (160-234/776-849) *ḥadīth* collection devoted to knowledge, *Kitāb al-ʻilm*. Each of the above authors offer answers to the epistemological question, "What is knowledge?", in relation to the content and practice of *ʻilm al-ḥadīth*. Ibn Wahb differentiates between knowledge, in the sense of expertise in the science of *ḥadīth*, and "knowledge" in the strict sense, "a light that God has placed in the hearts of men."[221] By contrast, al-Shāfiʻī understands knowledge as the establishment of legal principles. Abū Khaythama's compilation aims to distinguish revealed or *traditional* knowledge from other approaches (e.g. *raʼy*, *kalām*, *ijtihād*, and *qiyās*) and show its superiority to these approaches.[222]

The great *muḥaddithūn* of the ninth century effected a major shift in the way Muslim authors in various fields addressed knowledge. The earliest of these, al-Bukhārī, made his section on knowledge (*bāb fī al-ʻilm*) the third of ninety-seven. What is more, knowledge forms a triad with two other epistemic concepts, revelation (*waḥī*) and belief (*īmān*). How might we explain knowledge's rise from the back pages of Mālik's *Muwaṭṭāʼ* to a place of prominence in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukharī*? I do not share Rosenthal's (apparent) assumption that position indicates the weight an author gives to a chapter within a larger text. After all, it is hard to imagine that later sections, such as "Ch. 93 – Judgements" (*Kitāb al-aḥkām*) and "Ch. 97 – God's Oneness" (*Kitāb al-tawḥīd*), were less important to al-Bukhārī. The epistemic triad of revelation-belief-knowledge

[221] Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 71. Although the comparison of knowledge to a divinely apportioned light was common in classical Islam (and indeed traces back to the Qurʻān and *ḥadīth*), knowledge-as-light figures heavily in the works of al-Ghazālī and runs throughout *BIT* and other Almohad literature, principally al-Baydhāq's *Akhbār al-Mahdī*.
[222] Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 72-74.

does, however, confirm Rosenthal's overall thesis, namely, that knowledge *had become a problem* within the Islamic sciences. Al-Bukhārī "stresses the urgency of that need [for knowledge and instruction] by citing the Prophet to the effect that the disappearance of knowledge and of scholars will herald the end of the world."[223] The placement of his chapter on knowledge within the overall structure of his compilation shows, not only the urgency of knowledge, but also that al-Bukhārī felt the need to address knowledge (particularly in its relation *ḥadīth* studies) as a *propaedeutic* to the study of other topics, such a ritual purity, theology, and legal statutes. The compilation history of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* itself attests to the increasing ubiquity of epistemological questions and their bearing on methodology.[224] The compilations of Abū Dāwūd, Muslim, and al-Tirmidhī follow al-Bukhārī's example inasmuch as they include distinct chapters concerning knowledge and select traditions in such a way as to indicate their respective definitions knowledge. However, al-Bukhārī's transposing of "On Knowledge" to the beginning of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, according to Rosenthal, "was decisive". In the first place, the increasing temporal distance between first generations of Muslims and the *ḥadīth* collectors pushed traditionists such as al-Bukhārī to develop a methodology for appraising and interpreting traditions. The need for a relatively systematic approach to *ḥadīth* criticism is evident from the anecdotes about the compilation of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. From the age of sixteen, when al-Bukhārī began to collect *aḥādīth*, to the age of thirty-six, when he is believed to have completed his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, he collected around 600,000 traditions. Of these, only 2,602 unique *aḥādīth* met the criteria to be considered *ṣaḥīḥ* ("sound").[225] Secondly, the efforts of many of the above

[223] Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 83.
[224] Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 78-83.
[225] John Walbridge, *God and Logic in Islam: The Caliphate of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 44.

mentioned traditionists to translate their *ḥadīth* methodology into a positive Islamic curriculum by dealing with the question of knowledge directly had wide-reaching consequences. Scholars inside and outside *ḥadīth* studies began to treat knowledge (or "science") the proper starting point for any scholarly work. The now almost obligatory discussion of the essence of knowledge and its merits (*faḍl*, *faḍīla*) reached its apogee in the first chapter of al-Ghazālī's late eleventh-century work, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, especially its first book, *The Book of Knowledge*.[226]

Walbridge's thesis can be seen as a corollary to Rosenthal's description of the *natural* crisis precipitated by the passage after Islam's founding. Although early Islamic scholarship was beset with struggles to determine which of the nascent sciences would prove authoritative in matters of law and creed—above all, those between the *muḥaddithūn* and the *mutakallimūn*—Walbridge shows the relative ease with which the Sunnī mainstream accommodated epistemic difference. How did Sunnīs come to accept "the institutionalization of disagreement," especially "in matters that would seem to have only one right answer"?[227] As I have already mentioned, the emergence of the various Sunnī legal *madhāhib* and schools of *kalām* was not without controversy. Long after Ibn Ḥanbal's persecution at the hands of the 'Abbāsid state over his rejection of the Qur'ān's createdness, the Ḥanbalīs' combativeness led to intermittent conflicts between, not only the 'Abbāsid authorities, but also Shī'īs and other Sunnīs. In 243/857-8, Ḥanbalīs rioted against a public funeral for the Baghdadi renunciant, al-Muḥāsibī. Ibn Ḥanbal himself had condemned this early ṣūfī's theological speculation as innovation (*bida'*). Ḥanbalīs also prevented the public funeral of the historian and jurist, al-Ṭabarī, for the same reason.

[226] Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 93-96.
[227] John Walbridge, *God and Logic in Islam: The Caliphate of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 142.

During the fourth/tenth century, Baghdadi Ḥanbalīs were known to break musical instruments, beat singing-girls, stone Shāfi'īs at their mosques, and to harass Shī'īs at the tombs of their *imām*s and saints. Upon their arrival in Baghdad (ca. 334/945), the Shī'ī Buyids persecuted Iraqi Ḥanbalīs and deported the *madhhab*'s leaders.[228] Despite these conflicts, Sunnīs tended to avoided questioning the legitimacy of scholars who belonged to other schools. Over time it became standard practice for *fuqahā'* to study works pertaining to other *madhāhib* in order to supplement their own schools' curricula.[229]

Walbridge (and others) attributes the survival of the four Sunnī *madhāhib* until the present day to their members' recognition of the legitimacy of other *madhāhib*, despite maintaining a reasoned preference for their own school. From an epistemological perspective, however, the institutionalization of disagreement seems to enshrine a form of moderate skepticism with regard to knowledge gleaned from Islamic scriptures. This lack of certainty applies not merely each *madhhab*'s positive rulings (*furū'*) but also (and more properly) to differences in the articulation of the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). For example, the use of *qiyās* ("analogical reasoning") was perhaps the most contentious source of law. Abū Ḥanīfa, whom sources describe as the first jurist to render a systematic account of *qiyās*, resorted to analogical reasoning in the absence of an authentic, multiple-source *ḥadīth*.[230] On the other

[228] Christopher Melchert, *Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (London: Oneworld, 2006), 80. Nimrod Hurvitz, "Early Hanbalism and the Shi'a" in *The Sunna and the Shi'a in History: Division and Ecumenism in the Muslim Middle East*, Ofra Bengio and Meir Litvak (eds.) (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 45-6.
[229] John Walbridge, *God and Logic in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 143-5. Christopher Melchert shows that this "institutionalization of disagreement" applied to later Ḥanbalīs, as well. Melchert attributes the survival of the Ḥanbalī *madhhab* to the Syrian *faqīh*, Ibn Qudama (d. 620/1223), who understood the expedience of bringing Ḥanbalī *fiqh* closer to the Sunnī mainstream: "However, his writings have a significant admixture of Shafi'I doctrine, extending even to plagiarism of Shafi'I works. This was how Hanbalism survived until modern times, as a school of law parallel to other schools… However, Ahmad ibn Hanbal certainly wanted nothing like the others." Christopher Melchert, *Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (London: Oneworld, 2006), 80-1.
[230] Many medieval sources over-simplify Abū Ḥanīfa's stance toward *qiyās* and weaker traditions. His critics allege that he universally rejected single-source traditions (*āḥād*) in favor of *qiyās*. Some even claim that Abū Ḥanīfa would resort to *qiyās* even in cases where authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*), multiple-source (*mutawatir*) traditions were available

end of the spectrum, Ibn Ḥanbal detested *qiyās*. He preferred weak, single-source *aḥādīth* over analogical reasoning, which he considered to be the lowest source of law to which a jurist should turn, and that only as a last resort. The *qiyās* question reveals the early schools' deep concern for epistemological certainty.

Abū Ḥanīfa presupposes that each positive law expresses a deeper legal or ethical principle that the jurist may extend to other situations by way of *qiyās*. This use of qiyās arose as a solution to specific legal questions, which, for historical reasons, Muḥammad and his Companions had not or *could* not have resolved. In some cases, *qiyās* had the potential to amend a settled practice if its traditional iteration threatened to undermine the rationale of Islamic law. For example, early Muslims apportioned one share of the spoils to each participant in a military expedition along with two additional shares if he rode a horse or camel on the expedition. Jurists like Abū Ḥanīfa and al-Awzā'ī (d. 157/774) considered the practice unreasonable because an animal earned a greater share than a Muslim![231] According to Abū Ḥanīfa's epistemology, jurists could not satisfactorily rely on *ḥadīth* evidence to make a ruling in the present because (a) some of the available *aḥādīth* contradicted each other or (b) some practices indicated in these *aḥādīth* contradicted the deeper principles of Islamic law as expressed in the Qur'ān. Analogical reasoning offered a rational method of both clarifying these underlying principles and assessing the authenticity of laws and practices transmitted by the *muḥaddithūn*.

While *qiyās* (sometimes) privileges human reasoning over the content of *aḥādīth*, Ibn Ḥanbal's avoidance of analogical reasoning in favor of tradition—even traditions of questionable

(!). These exaggerated descriptions speak to the complexity of Abū Ḥanīfa's understanding of single-source *ḥadīth* and *qiyās* and *when* a jurist should resort to one or the other. On Abū Ḥanīfa's position on single-source traditions, see Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Abū Ḥanīfah's Use of the Solitary Ḥadīth as a Source of Islamic Law," *Islamic Studies*, 40, no. 2 (2001), 257-72.

[231] Joseph Schacht, *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 108-9.

provenance—is no less rational. Instead of trying to extend certainty through the application of *qiyās*, as Abū Ḥanīfa did, Ibn Ḥanbal's *fiqh* rests on the principle that the jurist should avoid uncertainty. In each positive law, the particular iteration of the law is properly connected to its underlying rationale as understood by God, the Prophet, and his Companions. The individual jurist may apply *qiyās* with good intention, but Ibn Ḥanbal believed that the human intellect could not dependably resolve legal questions in a consistent way. Ibn Ḥanbal's preference for the *sunna* rests on the assumptions that (a) long-standing traditions (even if they are unsound) are a safer guide to revelation and the Prophet's practice of the law than human inference, and (b) *qiyās* and related forms of reasoning carry great risks. A jurist may apply *qiyās* badly and reach a bad conclusion, reach two valid, but mutually exclusive conclusions, or (as was more often alleged) simply use *qiyās* in order to produce a ruling that suits his own ends.[232] Ibn Ḥanbal's *sunna*-centred *fiqh* indeed prevents the validation of uncertain or speculative rulings. However, Ibn Ḥanbal's epistemological commitment to avoiding uncertainty restricts his ability to address new questions.

With respect to Ibn Tūmart's immediate context, the theologico-political conflict surrounding Sunnism's toleration of scholarly disagreement (*ikhtilāf*) among the *madhāhib* concerning legal points upon which there is no consensus (*ijmā'*) was a pressing issue between the third-sixth/nine-twelfth centuries. While Shī'ī Muslims privileged the authority of the Imāms long before the toleration of *ikhtilāf*, the political success of the Ismā'īlī-Shī'ī Fāṭimid Caliphate represented a sustained effort to upbraid Sunnī scholars for canonizing disagreement about Islamic law and theology where, ideally, none should exist. The Fāṭimids and, later, the Nizārī "Assassins" adhered to *ta'līm*, the authoritative teaching of a living Imām. Deference to a

[232] See Christopher Melchert, *Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal* (London: Oneworld, 2006), 61-2.

divinely-guided descendent of the Prophet would, in theory, eliminate disagreement in religious matters—as well as obviate the need for *fuqahā'* in the Sunnī model.[233] Although neither the Fāṭimids nor the Nizārīs managed to create Shī'ī majorities within their realms, their relative military and political success threatened Sunnī hegemony in the Middle East and Africa on both a political and ideological level. This is particularly true of the Fāṭimids, whose declaration of a Shī'ī *caliphate* put them at odds with the 'Abbāsid Caliphate and its Sunnī protectors, the Saljūqs.

No less of a scholar than al-Ghazālī confronted the Ismā'īlī threat in *Fadā'iḥ al-Bāṭiniyya wa-faḍā'il al-Mustaẓhiriyya*.[234] *Al-Mustaẓhirī* is the only surviving text in which al-Ghazālī confronts the Ismā'īlī concept of *ta'līm*, though he wrote four others. I will return to the specifics of al-Ghazālī's polemic in Chapter 5 when dealing with Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of *imāma*. It will, however, suffice to provide a brief summary of how he frames the Sunnī-Ismā'īlī conflict. Both Sunnīs and Shī'īs "were equally locked into a post-prophetic era." The Ismā'īlīs maintained that the Imāms are an extension of the Prophet's authority in both religious and temporal matters. As such, the Imāms enjoy the same infallible authority (*'iṣma*). The succession of Imāms ensures a continuous source of *ta'līm* to which Muslims can turn. In this way, the Ismā'īlīs understood *ta'līm* as epistemically superior to *fiqh* and *kalām*. The Imāms' words represented "realities" (*ḥaqā'iq*), whereas the Sunnī tradition, as a product of individual reasoning, offered only "opinion" or "conjecture" (*ẓann*). Politically, the 'Abbāsid Caliphate's institutional connection to

[233] In practice, however, many Fāṭimid and Nizārī imāms developed their doctrines in tandem with other scholars or simply authorized texts composed by senior missionaries (sing.: *dā'ī*) within the Ismā'īlī movement.
[234] Or, "The Infamies of the Bāṭinīs (i.e. the Ismā'īlīs) and the Virtues of the Mustaẓhirīs (i.e. those who recognized the 'Abbāsid Caliph Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Mustaẓhir bi-Llāh, 470-512). Henceforth, *al-Mustaẓhirī*.

Sunnism, which tolerated *ikhtilāf* out of an effort to preserve the majority, rendered it illegitimate in the eyes of the Ismā'īlī Shī'a.[235]

I contend, along with Michael Brett, that the theologico-political conflict between *ikhtilāf* and *ta'līm* is the catalyst for Ibn Tūmart's elaboration of Almohadism.[236] It is surprising that a self-professed follower of al-Ghazālī should develop a form of Islam in which *he*, as Imām and Mahdī, claims the same infallibility that his teacher denounced in order to resolve the problem of *ikhtilāf*. Ibn Tūmart, like the Ismā'īlīs, frames his theory of knowledge in terms of the opposition of "realities" (*ḥaqā'iq*) to "conjecture" (*ẓann*) in an attempt to re-open the gates of *ijtihād*. Despite his affinities with the Shī'a, other elements of Ibn Tūmart's doctrines reveal the influences of Sunnism on his epistemology. He counts *ijmā'* (especially that of the Medinese) among the sources of Islamic knowledge. He lays great emphasis on positivist methods in the interpretation of scripture and rationalist methods theology. Yet these considerations take a back seat to more fundamental epistemological commitments concerning knowledge, faith, and action.

Ibn Tūmart indeed holds a doctrine of *ta'līm*. However, the way in which Ismā'īlī movements applied authoritative teaching in their missionary work (*da'wa*) leaned more toward authority than *teaching*. Ibn Tūmart never mentions the Ismā'īlīs in *BIT*. Nevertheless, many of his criticisms of the state of knowledge in Sunnism apply to Ismā'ilism, as well. If a Shī'ī accepts *ta'līm* out of blind obedience to his imām, is not his situation comparable to the Sunnī who imitates (*yuqallid*) the traditions of a major school without understanding how these traditions came to be? In both cases, the individual Muslim merely accepts a set of propositions on

[235] Farouk Mitha, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ismailis: A Debate on Reason and Authority in Medieval Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 25-7.
[236] Michael Brett, "The Lamp of the Almohads" in *Ibn Khaldun and the Medieval Maghrib* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Variorum, 1999), 3-6. Brett notes that al-Ghazālī, though concerned with the Fāṭimids, devoted much of his attention to the more extreme Ismā'īlī doctrines of Ḥasan-i Ṣabaḥ, leader of the famed Assassins.

authority; he does not *understand* these propositions, but merely parrots them. The possibility that a doctrine might change from *imām* to *imām* likewise mirrors Sunnī *ikhtilāf*. For Ibn Tūmart, the possibility that a doctrine might change signals that said doctrine is based on conjecture (*ẓann*), a cognitive state which is epistemically distinct from knowledge (*'ilm*).

From these observations, we may now infer Ibn Tūmart's two primary epistemological commitments: one external, one internal. His external commitment concerns the sources of knowledge and the uniqueness of knowledge as a cognitive state. While talk of cognitive states suggests something internal to the knower, the fact that Ibn Tūmart, like the majority of philosophers and *mutakallimūn* in the Muslim world, held to a foundationalist epistemology and correspondence theory of truth means that *all questions regarding the sources of knowledge* (in particular, knowledge of God and revelation) *concern the knower's judgments of things outside of the mind.* Ibn Tūmart's most unique contribution to epistemology is his distinguishing of knowledge from other cognitive states, such as conjecture (*ẓann*), which had played a significant role in the development of Sunnī *fiqh*.

His internal commitment deals directly with the radical fundamentality of knowledge in Islam. Let us turn to *BIT*. The "Dearest Desire"—the compilation's first text—opens:

> The dearest thing one can desire, the best thing one can acquire, the most precious thing one can store, the finest thing one can forge, is the knowledge that God made to guide us to every good. *This* is the dearest thing desired, the best thing acquired, the most precious thing stored, the finest thing forged![237]

This passage of rhymed prose (*saj'*) announces that "The Dearest Desire" and, with it, *BIT* as a whole are predominantly concerned with knowledge: its origin in God, the means by which humans acquire it, and its purpose. The opening of *BIT* certainly expresses the extent to which its

[237] *BIT*, 29.

author values knowledge, but what is at stake in Ibn Tūmart's theory of knowledge does not become clear until the middle of the compilation. In "The Creed of the Almohads" (*ʿAqīdat al-Muwaḥḥidīn*), he writes:

> A *ḥadīth* narrated by Ḥumrān, a client of ʿUthmān b, ʿAffān: "The Messenger of God—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—said, 'Whoever dies knowing that there is no god but God will enter the Garden (*al-janna*).'" There is another *ḥadīth* narrated by Ibn ʿUmar from the Prophet—may God's blessings and peace be upon him: "He said, 'Islam is built upon five things: divine unity (*tawḥīd*), the performance of prayers, the giving of alms, fasting during Ramaḍān, and the Ḥajj."
>
> From this it is established that worship (*ʿibāda*) is not correct except through belief (*īmān*) and sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*). One achieves belief and sincerity through knowledge (*ʿilm*), knowledge by study, stydy by the will, the will by desire and fear, desire and fear by the promise and the threat, the promise and the threat by the Law, the Law by the trustworthiness of the messenger, and the trustworthiness of the messenger by the appearance of a miracle by God's permission—may He be exalted.[238]

Knowledge of divine unity is, therefore, *the* precondition of belief and sincerity, both of which are preconditions of worship (*ʿibāda*). Worship embraces every aspect of a Muslim's life, from ritual prayer (*ṣalāh*) to righteous deeds (*muʿammalāt*). By extension, knowledge of divine unity is the *sine qua non* of salvation (*najāh*), whether we conceive this in terms of the afterlife or the individual's inclusion within the Muslim community in this life.[239]

The above passage from the "Creed" likewise presents us with some methodological considerations which we must address prior to rendering an account of Ibn Tūmart's epistemology. While the history of human thought is replete with examples of formal inquiries into the essence of knowledge, "epistemology," as a distinct philosophical discipline, is thoroughly modern.[240] Recent developments in epistemology offer the intellectual historian

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[238] D, 213-14. Both the first (1:43) and second (1:19) *ḥadīth* are taken from *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "The Book of Belief."
[239] In "The Discourse on Knowledge," Ibn Tūmart asserts that Almohad Islam offers salvation (*najāh*) in both this world and the next. See D, 180.
[240] Most scholars credit the Scottish philosopher, James F. Ferrier (1808-64), with coining the English word "epistemology" in his *Institutes of Metaphysics* (1854). Ferrier's pseudo-classical term was likely invented to gloss

much in the way of conceptual vocabulary. Yet, as Lloyd Gerson cautions in his *Ancient Epistemology*, contemporary epistemological descriptors carry the potential to mislead the historian because these terms arose to facilitate research into contemporary problems. Contemporary epistemology takes the "Standard Analysis" (SA) as its starting point.[241] According to the SA, knowledge may be broken down into three components. Subject "S" *knows* proposition "p" if and only if: (1) p is true, (2) S believes p, and (3) S is justified in his belief. But the historian of pre-modern epistemology will immediately discover that most past theorizers of knowledge would have outright rejected the analysis of knowledge as "justified, true belief." In Gerson's words:

> A central problem I have had to face is that the English word 'knowledge' is not an entirely helpful translation for any single Greek word. It is usually the word that translates *epistēmē*. For reasons that will emerge, one should not assume that *epistēmē* is related to *doxa* (the word which is usually translated as 'belief'), as knowledge is related to belief, or at least they are typically related in contemporary epistemology. For example, in English it would certainly be odd to say, 'I know p, but I don't believe it' … By contrast, Plato and Aristotle, to take two central figures, do no assume that the things of which one has *epistēmē* are the same as the things of which one has *doxa*.[242]

We must take the same caution in approaching Ibn Tūmart's epistemology, not only because of his indebtedness to the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, but also (and principally) because his work responds to epistemological problems unique to his context, and in ways that are radically different from those of his predecessors and contemporaries. What is clear from the "Creed" is that, unlike the SA, Ibn Tūmart does not conceive of knowledge as belief in a proposition that

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related German terms from the late 18th and early 19th c. For example: *Wissenschaftslehre* (Johann Fichte, Bernard Bolzano), *Wissenschaftstheorie* (Eugen Dühring), and *Theorie der Erkenntnis* (Ernst Reinhold). See Jan Woleński, "The History of Epistemology" in *Handbook of Epistemology*, eds. Ilkka Niiniluoto, Matti Sintonen, and Jan Woleński (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2004), 3.

[241] On the Standard Analysis, see Ichikawa, Jonathan Jenkins and Steup, Matthias, "The Analysis of Knowledge", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/knowledge-analysis/ .

[242] Lloyd Gerson, *Ancient Epistemology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2-3.

graduates to knowledge by way of further criteria like justification or truth. "Belief" or "faith" (*īmān*) *follows* knowledge. In light of these historical differences, I will endeavor to use contemporary epistemological terms whenever possible, but depart from them whenever they fail to capture Ibn Tūmart's meaning.

Description of the "Section on Knowledge"

In Chapter 1, I put forward a four-part division of the texts compiled in *BIT*. Although the work as a whole deals with knowledge and its real-world implications, the compiler dedicates the first section, beginning with "The Dearest Desire," to Ibn Tūmart's theory of knowledge, especially as regards Islamic law and scripture.

The "Section on Knowledge" consists of seven texts:

> (1) "The Dearest Desire" – *A'azz mā yuṭlab*
> This chapter brings together Ibn Tūmart's oral teachings on knowledge. "The Dearest Desire" sets the agenda for the discussion of knowledge by posing three questions: (a) What is knowledge? (b) What are the ways of knowledge (*ṭuruq al-'ilm*)? And, (c) by what criteria do we distinguish knowledge from mere conjecture (*ẓann*)? Ibn Tūmart proceeds by applying a logical technique derived from *uṣūl al-fiqh* known as *ta'ṣīl*, or "root analysis."[243] Instead of treating knowledge as a cognitive state that one can resolve into component parts (as contemporary epistemologists do), Ibn Tūmart opposes knowledge to other cognitive states, such as ignorance (*jahl*), doubt (*shakk*), and conjecture (*ẓann*). Each of these cognitive states is a root-principle (*aṣl*, pl. *uṣūl*) existing within a web of opposition between "truth" or "reality" (*ḥaqq*), on the one hand, and "falsehood" (*bāṭil*) and "error" (*ḍalāl*), on the other. From a structural perspective, he approaches these cognitive states in the same way the jurist brings together source texts (also called *uṣūl*) from the Qur'ān and *sunna* in order to establish a judgment (*ḥukm*). Knowledge, then, relates to the truth of a proposition in the same manner a source text

[243] From the root '-ṣ-l, *ta'ṣīl* means "the act of establishing the root or foundation of something." This could be interpreted as giving something without foundation a foundation. However, in the context of jurisprudence and *ḥadīth* science, *ta'ṣīl* is the act of discovering the root-principle or source text that underlies another text or concept. *Ta'ṣīl* is especially associated with the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* and plays a significant role in the *fiqh* texts composed by al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī, both of whom had a profound impact on Ibn Tūmart and other North African and Andalusī thinkers from the sixth/twelfth century onwards.

relates to judgment derived therefrom. In the remainder Ibn Tūmart applies his epistemological conclusions to the interpretation of Islamic scripture.

(2) "The Discourse on Prayer" – *al-Kalām fī al-ṣalāh*
This lengthy examination of Qur'ānic and sunnaic sources on ritual prayer (*ṣalāh*) constitutes roughly half of the "Section on Knowledge". This chapter has two goals. First, Ibn Tūmart discusses his dissatisfaction with contemporaneous scholarship on prayer and, by extension, ritual purity (*ṭahāra*). The content of "Discourse on Prayer" confirms historical records regarding the Almohads' attitude to the Sunnī-Mālikī *madhhab* championed by the Almoravid dynasty. Second, Ibn Tūmart demonstrates many of the hermeneutical principles that he introduces in "The Dearest Desire". "The Discourse on Prayer" likewise contains many of Ibn Tūmart's scant references to specific legal schools, above all, the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*.

(3) "Proof that the Law is not Established by the Intellect" – *Dalīl 'alā anna al-sharī'a lā yuthbat bi-l-'aql*
Ibn Tūmart seeks to determine the extent to which one may apply "reason" or "intellect" (*'aql*) to the interpretation of Islamic law. He steers a middle course between two well-known theories of divine command and prohibition (*al-amr wa-l-nahī*). The rationalist theory, attributed to the Mu'tazila, holds that Law merely confirms or sanctions actions, the goodness or badness of which human beings *can* know by reason alone. The traditionist theory, associated with *fuqahā'* like Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, reject juridical opinion (*ra'y*) and intellect as sources of knowledge, instead preferring a positivist approach to law, as well as theology. While Ibn Tūmart rejects the idea that one can derive commands or prohibitions from pure reason—the very basis of *philosophical* ethics—he nevertheless aims to show, in opposition to the traditionist theory, that scripture *obliges* the jurist to apply reason in some juridical contexts and in most theological contexts. Ibn Tūmart's conceptualization of the intellect as an innate faculty that categorizes any given proposition according to modality (i.e. necessary, possible, or impossible), however, commits him to an extreme form of divine command theory. On the most extreme reading of the relevant statements scattered throughout the "Section on Knowledge," Ibn Tūmart excludes *all* moral reasoning that is not properly grounded in divine revelation.

(4) "Juridical Analogy" – *al-Qiyās al-shar'ī*
This chapter is a corollary to "Proof that the Law is not Established by the Intellect". Ibn Tūmart presents his critique of what he sees as the abuse of juridical analogy or inference (*qiyās*). Although he permits juridical analogy, he restricts its use in two ways. (a) The jurist must not extend one ruling (*ḥukm*) by way of analogy such that the new ruling exceeds the context of the original ruling or that of another positive ruling. (b) The jurist may not reject a soundly transmitted ruling *in toto* by appealing to reason alone. Both of these *qiyās* strategies tend toward the rationalist theory of divine command by enabling the individual jurist to over-extend or ignore a ruling on the basis of pure reason. In (a), the inferred ruling would either change or contradict a *positive* ruling present in the Qur'ān or *sunna*. The rejection of a positive ruling in (b) is tantamount to putting independent reasoning above divine law.

(5) "The Discourse on the General and the Specific" – *al-Kalām fī al-ʿumūm wa-l-khuṣūṣ*
Ibn Tūmart defends and explains various juridical and hermeneutical terms used in *fiqh*. The two principle terms, "general" (*ʿumūm*) and "specific" (*khuṣūṣ*), as well as "unqualified" (*muṭlaq*) and "qualified" (*muqayyad*), relate to the generality or specificity of terms (*alfāẓ*) and the extent to which statements in the Qur'ān and *sunna* are qualified. These hermeneutical categories are of particular importance to Ibn Tūmart insofar as they determine whether the jurist may apply analogy to a given positive ruling or not. He also discusses abrogation (*nusūkh*) in the Qur'ān, a traditionally contentious topic in *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

(6) "The Discourse on Knowledge" – *al-Kalām fī al-ʿilm*
This short text echoes and clarifies many of the epistemological terms Ibn Tūmart uses in "The Dearest Desire". Furthermore, Ibn Tūmart offers a thorough classification of the sciences (*ʿulūm*), their relation to one another, and the place each occupies in the hierarchy of knowledge. "Discourse on Knowledge" strongly suggests that Ibn Tūmart was influenced by a sub-genre in Islamic philosophy concerned with curricula and the hierarchy of scientific, the most famous examples of which are al-Fārābī's *The Enumeration of the Sciences* and *The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*. Although his classification clearly privileges the religious sciences, this chapter shows that Ibn Tūmart sought to respond to the competing claims of philosophy and the "Greek" sciences.

(7) "The Objects of Knowledge" – *al-Maʿlūmāt*
Ibn Tūmart's categorization of the possible objects of knowledge (*maʿlūmāt*) pertains to a common *topos* within the later history of *kalām* initiated by the Muʿtazila. This chapter expresses Ibn Tūmart's overall ontology and his understanding of how individuals come to know certain objects which, by their nature, are *knowable*, and why other objects stand beyond human comprehension. From and intellectual-historical point of view, Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of *maʿlūmāt* resembles that of the Baghdadi Muʿtazila more than that propounded by Ashʿarī theologians, such as al-Juwaynī.[244] "The Objects of Knowledge" serves as a transition from the "Section on Knowledge", which is grounded in *fiqh*, to the "Section on Theology", in which he outlines Almohadism's creed.

In the remainder of this chapter, I restrict myself to expositing the principles of Ibn Tūmart's theory of knowledge. Ibn Tūmart draws several important jurisprudential conclusions from these principles: rejection of singular *ḥadīth* (or "unit traditions"; *akhbār al-āḥād*) as a basis of knowledge, rejection of *taqlīd*, rejection of the Sunnī principle *kull mujtahid muṣīb*,

[244] D, 42.

restriction of *qiyās shar'ī* to *a minore ad maius*, and the rejection of naturalist ethics in favor of a voluntarist divine command theory. I will take up these topics in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Here, I address:

(i) The definition (or "essence") of knowledge (*ḥaqīqat al-'ilm*)
(ii) The merit (or "virtue") of knowledge (*faḍl al-'ilm*)
(iii) The ways of knowledge (*ṭuruq al-'ilm*)

These three points correspond to the agenda Ibn Tūmart sets out for himself in the two texts where he discusses knowledge most directly: "The Dearest Desire" (*A'azz mā yuṭlab*) and "The Discourse on Knowledge" (*al-Kalām fī al-'ilm*). I offer a synthetic definition of knowledge that balances the *BIT*'s explicit and implicit content and, at the same time, employs language appropriate to contemporary epistemology.

Defining Knowledge

For Ibn Tūmart, knowledge is *the rational self-awareness of one's cognitive contact with reality arising out of one's moral disposition to the truth*. The above is synthetic definition that I have reconstructed from the text using contemporary epistemological language. This definition not only reflects Ibn Tūmart's position regarding the (i) essence or nature of knowledge, but also his concern for the (ii) virtue and (iii) ways of knowledge. The "moral disposition" to (or away from) the truth speaks to how Ibn Tūmart conceives of the relationship of moral virtue and vice to epistemic success and failure. The ways of knowledge flesh out the contours of the reality with which the knower puts himself into cognitive contact.

Explicit Definitions of Knowledge

In "The Dearest Desire," Ibn Tūmart approaches knowledge in two ways: by explicit definition and by comparing it to other forms of cognition. He gives two different, explicit definitions of knowledge. Respectively, they express the ontological and psychological dimensions of knowledge that we normally associate with epistemology and theories of truth. These explicit definitions appear, however, within the broader context of his analysis of the Qur'ānic concepts *ḥaqq* ("truth" or "reality"), *bāṭil* ("falsehood"), and *ḍalāl* ("error"). Knowledge (*'ilm*) figures in this analysis insofar as the root-principles (*uṣūl*) of *ḥaqq* ←→ *bāṭil-ḍalāl*. This analysis reveals that cognitive states, like knowledge, have a *moral* dimension that is more fundamental to epistemic success than their ontological and psychological dimensions.

Ibn Tūmart first defines knowledge as:

> **(def. 1) Knowledge is a light in the heart (*qalb*) by which realities (*ḥaqā'iq*) and properties (*khaṣā'iṣ*) are distinguished (*tatamayyaz*).**

As a corollary, he defines ignorance (*jahl*), the cognitive state most contrary to knowledge, in like fashion:

> **(cor. 1) Ignorance is a darkness in the heart that confuses realities and properties.**

Later in the text, he rephrases the first definition and corollary:

> **(def. 2) The meaning (*ma'nā*) and proper sense (*ḥaqīqa*) of knowledge is that clarity (*wuḍūḥ*) of truths (*ḥaqā'iq*) in the soul (*nafs*).**
>
> **(cor. 2) The contrary (*ḍidd*) of knowledge is ignorance, the proper sense of which is the confusion of truths in the soul.**

On the surface, these definitions appear to express the same idea in synonymous terms. Both situate knowledge within the individual knower by reference to the "heart" and "soul." "Light"

and "clarity" both point to a metaphorical description of knowledge as something that aids the faculty of sight. However, I argue that, by understanding the technical meanings of the terms he employs and the different contexts in which these definitions appear, def.1 and def. 2 differ in significant ways.

Ibn Tūmart's approach to defining knowledge both follows and departs from the tradition of Ash'arī *kalām* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* to which he belongs. Fig. 1 traces Ibn Tūmart's intellectual genealogy through his professors as the Niẓāmiyya in Baghdad and al-Ṭurṭūshī in Alexandria. Both the eastern Niẓāmiyya scholars, through al-Juwaynī, and Andalusī-Maghribī scholars, through al-Bājī, are the intellectual descendants of the Iraqi *mutakallim* and *faqīh*, Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Bāqillānī.

The members of this tradition accepted the formal definition of knowledge al-Bāqillānī lays out in his *al-Tamhīd*: "Knowledge is the cognition of the object of knowledge according to what it is" (*al-'ilm huwa ma'rifat al-ma'lūm 'alā mā huwa bihi*). Al-Shīrāzī and al-Bājī repeat this definition verbatim in their systematic introductions to *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Al-Juwaynī also preserves the exact wording of al-Bāqillānī's definition in *al-Irshād* and *al-Shāmil* and offers several arguments intended to show why this definition is more correct than those the Mu'tazilīs and early Ash'arīs offered.[245] It is not until al-Ghazālī that this definition comes under suspicion. In *al-Mustaṣfā*, he objects to al-Bāqillānī's formulation on the grounds that his use of "cognition" (*ma'rifa*), a term that is often considered a synonym of knowledge, renders the definition tautological.[246]

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[245] Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Tamhīd* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Thaqafiyya, 1957), 6. Al-Shīrāzī, *al-Luma' fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, (Tangier: Dār al-Kitāniyya, 2013), 78. Al-Bājī, *Iḥkām al-fuṣūl fī aḥkām al-uṣūl*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2009), 281. Al-Juwaynī, *al-Irshād* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Thaqafiyya al-Dīniyya, 2009), 18; *al-Shāmil fī uṣūl al-dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999), 8, 32-3.

[246] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā*, ed. Muḥammad Tāmir (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2011), 71.

Both definitions address the same three elements:

(i) The quiddity of knowledge (def. 1: light; def. 2: clarity)
(ii) The substrate of knowledge with respect to human beings (def. 1: heart; def. 2: soul)
(iii) The function or *activity* particular to knowledge (def. 1: to distinguish realities and properties; def. 2: to clarify truths)

I believe that Ibn Tūmart's usage of precise (*ḥaqīqī*) terms (i.e. heart, soul, reality, and property) is consistent with the broader Bāqillānīan tradition. The metaphorical (*majāzī*) terms (i.e. light and clarity), however, pertain to al-Ghazālī's incorporation of concepts from *taṣawwuf* and *falsafa* into his mature philosophical theology. Once we grasp the technical meanings of these terms and their respective roles within Ibn Tūmart's definitions, we can then look to the context in which these definitions appear in "The Dearest Desire." The exigencies of each context explain why Ibn Tūmart articulates the definition of knowledge in two different, thought compatible, ways. Def. 1 emphasizes the ontological, outward-facing side of knowledge, whereas def. 2 stresses it internal, psychological aspect.

What will become clear through this discussion is that the "knowledge" that Ibn Tūmart seeks to define is not the individual instance of knowing or the sum of these instances—the very concept of knowledge the Standard Analysis implies. Rather, he sees knowledge as a *faculty* that renders individual instances of knowledge possible in the first place. While Ibn Tūmart rejects the *falāsifa*'s concept of nature (*ṭabī'a*; *phusis*) in favor of one that emphasizes God's activity in creation[247], his characterization of knowledge as a faculty puts him in closer alignment with ancient epistemology, particularly that of Plato.[248]

[247] For Ibn Tūmart's approach to causation, see Chapter 5.
[248] See Jaakko Hintikka, "Knowledge and Its Objects in Plato" in *Knowledge and the Known: Historical Perspectives in Epistemology* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1991), 9-10.

Essential Terms – Light (nūr) and Clarity (wuḍūḥ)

The metaphorical usage of light most likely derives from al-Ghazālī's *The Niche of Lights*. Al-Ghazālī combines ṣūfī treatments of the Qur'ānic motif of light with a Neoplatonizing cosmology he derives from Ibn Sīnā and *The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*. Within *The Niche of Lights*, light has several meanings. Whereas the "vulgar" (*'āmma*) restrict light to visible light, the elect (*khāṣṣa*) understand light to be that which constitutes the "luminous world" (*al-'ālam al-nūrī*) or "the world of dominion" (*'ālam al-malakūt*), which exists parallel to the "visible world" (*'ālam al-shahāda*).[249] The luminous world proceeds from God, "the First Source" (*al-manba' al-awwal*); He is "most worthy" (*awlā*) of the name the Light. From God emanates a hierarchy of lights which includes a series of angels and spiritual beings whose individual lights are mere reflections of the highest light.[250]

The lowest manifestation of God's light in the luminous world is the rational faculty or intellect (*'aql*) of the human soul. Psychologically, the light of the rational faculty is characterized by self-reflexive awareness of itself and what it comprehends: "[The rational faculty] perceives its own knowledge of something, the knowledge of its knowledge of that thing, and its knowledge of its knowledge of its knowledge."[251] Like the Ash'arīs and the *falāsifa*, al-Ghazālī sees the intellect as the source of self-evident knowledge (*al-'ulūm al-ḍarūriyya*), such as the principle of non-contradiction.[252]

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[249] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights – Mishkāt al-anwār* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 5; 11.
[250] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights – Mishkāt al-anwār* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 14.
[251] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights – Mishkāt al-anwār* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 8.
[252] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights – Mishkāt al-anwār* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 9-10.

From an ontological perspective, light and darkness express, in a figurative way, the gradations of being (*wujūd*). God is the "Real Light" (*al-nūr al-ḥaqq*) who possesses existence in Himself (*al-wujūd min dhātihi*). By His "illumination" (*ināra*), the lower beings "borrow" (*ista'āra*) their existence. Because all beings other than God come to possess existence from something other than themselves, only God can be said to exist in the proper sense. By contrast, "darkness" (*ẓulma*) is non-being (*'adam*), whether absolute non-being or the privative non-being characteristic of the world of generation and corruption. When viewed in itself, each thing other than God is "pure non-existence" (*'adam maḥḍ*).[253] [254]

Al-Ghazālī's identification of light with the substance of the world of dominion—in which the human intellectual faculty participates—accounts for both the origin of the rational faculty and the formal structure of knowledge from the perspective of the human soul. He follows the Parmenidean-Platonic principle according to which "like knows like" (*ginōskesthai gar tō homoiō to homoion*).[255] Human knowledge, whether immediate (*ḍarūrī*) or acquired (*kasbī*), is possible because the intellect *qua* substance is like (though not identical to) the substances of which the higher world consists.[256]

The substantial similarity of the intellect to what exists in the luminous world explains the origin of the human being's immediate knowledge of first principles insofar as the intellect's ontological likeness to the objects of its knowledge renders it receptive (*qābil*) to "the differentiated sciences" (*al-'ulūm al-mufaṣṣala*) that God engraves upon each being in the

[253] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights – Mishkāt al-anwār* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 15-6.
[254] The "in itself" (*bi-dhātihi*)/"from another" (*min ghayrihi*) distinction is typical of al-Fārābī's and Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics and accounts of modality.
[255] Aristotle, *De Anima* 404b16.
[256] Al-Ghazālī speaks of the intellect as "the luminous human substance", which, once stripped of its accidental relation to this world (*dunyā*) and the hereafter (*al-ākhira*), can turn toward God. See Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights – Mishkāt al-anwār* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 30.

luminous world. God accomplishes the transfer of immediate knowledge by way of a " hierarchy" (*tartīb manẓūm*) of spiritual beings, which al-Ghazālī identifies with the Qur'ānic images of the "the hand" (*al-yadd*), "the preserved tablet" (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*), "the pen" (*al-qalam*), and "the book" (*al-kitāb*).[257] Al-Ghazālī's account of how humans possess immediate knowledge from God through a series of intermediaries closely resembles the early *falāsifa*'s doctrine of the active intellect.[258] Frank Griffel has shown that al-Ghazālī's mystical cosmology in the Veil Section (III) of *The Niche of Lights* reproduces the philosophical doctrine of celestial spheres without significant changes. The "pen" and "preserved tablet" to which al-Ghazālī refers in relation to immediate knowledge correspond to the highest part of the world of dominion, "the world of command" (*'ālam al-amr*). The writing upon the preserved tablet refers to the transference of first principles from "the world of lordship" (*'ālam al-rubūbiyya*) to the world of dominion. The world of command also contains the universal forms, including the human form. The human intellect's immediate knowledge of first principles stems from origin in the world of command.[259]

Equipped with the immediate knowledge of first principles, the human intellect may prepare itself to acquire knowledge of the universal forms and the hidden nature of the world of dominion. According to al-Ghazālī, the human being must discipline the other parts of his soul in order to prepare the intellect to receive uncorrupted knowledge. Although al-Ghazālī does not offer a formal, philosophical definition of knowledge in *The Niche of Lights*, he portrays the way in which the human being acquires knowledge in terms of reflections in a mirror. He likens the

[257] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights – Mishkāt al-anwār* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 31.
[258] See, for example, Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī, *al-Risāla fī al-'aql*, ed. Maurice Bouyges (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1938), 8-14.
[259] Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 256-57.

imaginative faculty, through which human beings extract universal forms from sensible particulars, is the clay (*tīn*) that God combines with His spirit (*rūḥ*) in order to create Adam. The clay receives the similitude of a form. If the clay remains in its initial state, solid and dense, the imagination fails to reproduce the form for the intellect's consideration in an accurate way. However, a human being may purify his imaginative faculty, such that the clay "becomes like clear glass" (*ṣāra ka-l-zujāj al-ṣāfī*). The clarity of the glass allows the individual to reflect the similitudes (*amthila*) of the forms within his soul. From here, the rational faculty can combine knowledge of forms, which derives from both the visible world and the world of dominion, with immediate knowledge of first principles to make new "combinations and pairings" (*ta'līfāt wa-zdiwājāt*). These combinations represent the acquisition of demonstrative knowledge by way of syllogisms.[260]

Ibn Tūmart's scant (albeit prominent) references to multiple worlds in *BIT* is evidence ṣūfī influence on his cosmology.[261] However, while we find multiples worlds in *The Niche of Lights* and other Ghazālīan texts, we find similar concepts in earlier Islamic mystical literature.[262] Ibn Tūmart's association with the Niẓāmiyya nevertheless makes it plausible that he had access to *The Niche of Lights* or other Ghazālian texts on cosmology, particularly *The*

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[260] See Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights – Mishkāt al-anwār* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 33, 37, and 39-40. Al-Ghazālī presents a similar mirror analogy in *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (*Kitāb 'ajā'ib al-qalb*), eds. 'Alī Muḥammad Muṣṭafā and Sa'īd al-Muḥāsinī (Damascus: Dār al-Manhal, 2019), 3: 524-29. See Alexander Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought: al-Ghazālī's Theory of Mystical Cognition* (London: Routledge, 2012), 32-33. Earlier, (see page 29) Treiger asserts that al-Ghazālī "provides no definition (*'ilm*) in the strict philosophical sense of the term 'definition'—a formula that includes a thing's genus (*jins*) and specific differentia (*faṣl*)." With regard to al-Ghazālī's discussion of the definition of knowledge (*ḥadd al-'ilm*) in *al-Mustaṣfā*, as well as his symbolic treatment of knowledge in *MA* and *IUD*, Treiger is correct. However, in *MA*, al-Ghazālī himself points us to *al-Mi'yār fī al-'ilm* and *Miḥakk al-naẓar* to his discussions of the errors attributable to the imaginative faculty. In *Mi'yār*, al-Ghazālī offers a definition of knowledge that is compatible with his what he says in *MA* and *IUD*:

[261] D, 30; 226.

[262] For a discussion of the light in early ṣūfī cosmology and psychology, as well as its reception by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, see Saeko Yazaki, *Islamic Mysticism and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī: The Role of the Heart* (London: Routledge, 2013), 36-38; 56-58; 69-70; 77-78.

Revival of the Religious Sciences, which was already circulating in the Islamic West by the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century. None of the texts in *BIT* address cosmology in the same detail we see in Ash'arī *kalām* treatises. However, "What is Originated in Time" and "The Creed of the Almohads" apply *kalām* concepts that are more consistent with the Ash'arī occasionalism espoused by al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī's *Iqtiṣād* than the secondary causality of the later al-Ghazālī. At the same time, the role of light in his theory of knowledge and affirmation of multiple worlds suggests that, like al-Ghazālī, Ibn Tūmart sought to develop a cosmology that preserved both secondary causality and God's absolute sovereignty without embracing philosophical naturalism.[263]

"Clarity" (*wuḍūḥ*) and its morphological derivatives appear infrequently in *The Niche of Lights*, and only then to express the way in which the similitudes (*amthila*) he uses "become clear" (*yattaḍiḥ*) to his readers. However, "clarity" possesses a technical meaning in al-Ghazālī's ethics. In *The Scale of Action*, clarity stands midway between mere imitation (*taqlīd*) and demonstration (*burhān*). Clarity, then, corresponds to the conceptualization (*taṣawwur*) of forms that one combines and separates in syllogisms in order to reach demonstrative knowledge. Although clarity in *Niche* at first appears in the colloquial sense of "becoming clear," we should recall that, for al-Ghazālī, "similitude" not only indicates metaphorical speech, but (as in *The Standard of Knowledge*) also denotes the form achieved through conceptualization. It is more curious that the similitude which "becomes clear" in this passage of *Niche* is the Qur'ānic image

[263] To my knowledge, the term "nature" (*tabī'a* or ṭab') does not occur in *BIT* except with reference to the four humors (*ṭabā'i'*) known to medieval medicine. Ibn Tūmart mentions these toward the end of "The Dearest Desire," D, 81: "…the four humors, which are phlegm, yellow bile, black bile, and blood" (*al-ṭabā'i' al-arba' al-latī hiya al-balgham wa-l-ṣafrā' wa-l-sawdā' wa-l-damm*). This omission implies an evasion (perhaps even a tacit rejection) of the concept of "nature" in the way the *falāsifa* understood it, perhaps because of its incompatibility with the *kalāmī* understanding of beings as creatures (*makhlūqāt*), rather than natural bodies (*ṭabī'iyyāt*).

of "light upon light" (*nūr ʻalā nūr*) (Q 24:35), which al-Ghazālī explains is the proper subordination of the faculties of the soul to the intellect according to the light of divine guidance (*hidāya*). By adhering to this order, the believer purges his soul of immoral appetites and corrupt opinions such that it may receive the truth clearly. Clarity the power to correctly conceptualize forms that results from the moral preparation of the human soul.

Substrate Terms – Heart (qalb) and Soul (nafs)

The terms "heart" (*qalb*) and "soul" (*nafs*), alongside their associate terms, "heart" (*fu'ād*) and "breast" (*ṣadr*), occur with great frequency in the Qur'ān.[264] The Qur'ān describes the heart and soul as the seat of the individual's personality, cognition, emotions, and appetites. The heart possesses an added feature within the Qur'ānic anthropology in that it serves as the locus of contact between God and the human being. Ibn Tūmart explicitly grounds his usage of heart according to this specialized sense by citing 29:49 as a source text for def. 2: "Rather, it [the Qur'ān] is [a set of] distinct signs (*āyāt*) in the breasts (*ṣudūr*) of those who have been given knowledge."[265]

These Qur'ānic concepts served as the source texts for the discussion of psychology in *kalām* and *taṣawwuf*. Most scholars credit al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (21-110/642-728) as the originator of "the science of hearts and incoming thoughts" (*ʻilm al-qulūb wa-l-khawāṭir*). Al-Baṣrī's science of hearts developed into two different branches of inquiry. The Mu'tazila focused on the heart and its movements with regard to the question of the freedom of the will. On their account,

[264] *Qalb* occurs 132 times, *nafs* 295 times (sometimes meaning "self" rather than "soul"), *ṣadr* 44 times, andn *fu'ād* 16 times.
[265] E, 45.

the human being is the agent of his owns actions, which they divide into "acts of the limbs" (*a'māl al-jawāriḥ*) and "acts of the heart" (*a'māl al-qulūb*). The latter includes thought (*fikr*), will (*irāda*), and conviction (*i'tiqād*). Although the Ash'arīs opposed the Mu'tazila's belief in free will, they preserved their opponents' terminology, especially in polemical literature.[266]

The Ṣūfīs took the science of the heart in another direction. While we see Ṣūfī theologians, like al-Muḥāsibī, engaging with Mu'tazilī psychology, the larger tradition understands the science of the heart as a way to discipline the soul and reach awareness of, or even union (*ittiḥād*) with, God.[267] The major representatives of this tradition are al-Ḥallāj, al-Muḥāsibī, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Nūrī, and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī. Al-Makkī's *magnum opus*, *The Nourishment of Hearts* (*Qūṭ al-qulūb*), heavily influenced al-Ghazālī's later psychology, and is cited frequently in *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*. Despite his debt to al-Makkī, al-Ghazālī understands "heart" and its associate terms in a different way. Al-Makkī emphasizes that the awareness of the divine one attains through the purification of the heart goes beyond reason (*'aql*), which is connected to the flesh. Al-Ghazālī *identifies* the heart and the soul (*nafs*) or spirit (*rūḥ*) it houses with the intellect (where in Ghazali is that? See his *Ihya* book *Marvels of the Heart*). This identification is in line with the Ash'arī tradition, which designates the heart as the substrate (*maḥall*) of the intellect.[268] What al-Makkī and al-Ghazālī hold in common is the belief that knowledge, insofar as its occurs in the heart, requires significant moral preparation such that human vices do not distort the knowledge that the heart receives.

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[266] Louis Massignon, *La Passion d'al-Hallaj: martyr mystique de l'islam*, vol. 2 (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1922), 481-84, 488-89, 491-94.
[267] Michael Ebstein, "The Human Intellect: Liberation or Limitation? Some Notes on *'Aql* in Classical Islamic Mysticism," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 8 (2019), 201-02. Gavin N. Picken notes that, in works such as *Māhiyyat al-'aql*, *Kitāb al-'ilm*, and *Kitāb fahm al-Qur'ān*, al-Muḥāsibī directly addresses "the controversies of the Mu'tazilites and the associated *miḥna*." See Gavin N. Picken, "Al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī and Spiritual Purification between Asceticism and Mysticism," in *Routledge Handbook on Sufism*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (London: Routledge, 2021), 18.
[268] Al-Bājī, *Iḥkām al-fuṣūl fī aḥkām al-uṣūl*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2009), 282-83.

Ibn Tūmart's use of heart in the context of epistemology reveals that *taṣawwuf* plays a greater role in his thought than is evident from a cursory reading of *BIT*. Although the Ash'arī emphasis on the intellect and the heart as the seat of immediate knowledge in the human being remains a key aspect of Ibn Tūmart's arguments, the similarities between his concept of heart and those of al-Muḥāsibī and al-Makkī show us two ways in which Ibn Tūmart departs from the non-ṣūfīs among the Ash'ariyya. First, the "knowledge" Ibn Tūmart defines here is not a quantity of things known, the product of knowledge. Rather, knowledge is an intellectual *faculty* which God grants to human beings; it contains both immediate knowledge and the power to acquire knowledge by separation and division. Second, the Ṣūfī lineage of Ibn Tūmart's epistemology is consistent with his claim that epistemic success demands the moral preparation of the soul. At the same time, we must qualify al-Muḥāsibī's and al-Makkī's influence on Ibn Tūmart. Ibn Tūmart's identification of both "light" and "heart" with the intellect, rather than with supra-rational cognition, leaves little doubt that his interpretation of the "science of the heart" is mediated by al-Ghazālī's synthesis of *taṣawwuf* and *falsafa*.[269]

Functional Terms – "Reality/Truth/Essence" (ḥaqīqa) and "Property" (khāṣṣiyya)

Ḥaqīqa is an equivocal term derived from the Arabic root *Ḥ-Q-Q*. The substantive *ḥaqq* encompasses a variety of concepts: "truth," "reality," "legal right," "suitability," and "necessity." *Al-Ḥaqq* is also one of God's names. This epithet implies that God is the ultimate reality and that his Qur'ān bears the ultimate truth. In the religious sciences and philosophy, *ḥaqīqa* has three meanings, each of which Ibn Tūmart employs in his definitions of knowledge.

[269] See, for instance, Ch. 31, *Sharḥ 'ajā'ib al-qalb*, and Ch. 32, *Riyāḍat al-nafs wa-tahdhīb al-akhlāq*.

The primary meaning of *ḥaqīqa* is "truth" or "reality," often in the sense of "a true proposition" or "an individual facet of reality." *Ḥaqīqa* is semantically predisposed to a correspondence theory of truth. A statement is true only insofar as its content corresponds to extramental reality. In *kalām* and (to a lesser extent) *falsafa*, *haqīqa* intends the "essence" of a thing or "the aggregate of properties or qualities whereby a thing is what it is."[270] To state a thing's essence (*ḥaqīqatuhu*) often means to give a formal definition of the species to which it belongs. In *fiqh*, *ḥaqīqa* denotes "the meaning of *x* in the proper sense." Here, the jurist does not apply *ḥaqīqa* in an ontological sense, but rather seeks to circumscribe the precise meaning of an utterance (*lafẓ*) that occurs in the Qur'ān or *ḥadīth* that possesses multiple meanings. The precise (*ḥaqīqī*) meaning of an utterance is opposed to its metaphorical (*majāzī*) meaning, whether the metaphorical meaning is intrinsic to it or merely contextual.[271] *Uṣūlīs* extend this meaning of *ḥaqīqa* to describe technical terms used in *fiqh* and *kalām* that have non-technical meanings in spoken Arabic and in other genres of Arabic literature.

Khāṣṣiyya (pl. *Khaṣā'iṣ*) expresses the specific properties that, in the aggregate, constitute a thing's essence. Ibn Tūmart uses this term throughout *BIT*, in both the context of *fiqh* and *kalām*.[272] Ibn Tūmart sometimes uses *khāṣṣiyya* in a qualified sense. For example, "The Objects of Knowledge," he speaks of "generic property" (*khāṣṣiyya jinsiyya*), "property of likeness" (*khāṣṣiyya mithliyya*), and "differential property" (*khāṣṣiyya khilāfiyya*).[273]

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[270] *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Edward William Lane (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863), s.v. "*ḥaqīqa*."
[271] See al-Shīrāzī, *al-Luma' fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Khaṭīb al-Ḥasanī (Tangier: Dār al-Kitāniyya, 2013), 85-87 ; al-Bājī, *Iḥkām al-fuṣūl fī aḥkām al-uṣūl*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2009), 286.
[272] See especially, "The Dearest Desire," "Analogy," and "The Creed of the Almohads."
[273] See D, 185-94. *Khāṣṣiyya* should not be confused with the *Khāṣṣa*. In *Kitāb al-Najāh*, Ibn Sīnā defines *khāṣṣa* as an *accidental* property that belongs to a member of a species, the opposite of a species' specific difference (*faṣl*). See Ibn Sīnā, *al-Najāh*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Umayra , vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992), 17.

In def. 1, Ibn Tūmart speaks of knowledge as that by which *ḥaqā'iq* and *khaṣā'iṣ* are distinguished (*tatamayyaz*). This function of knowledge is clear allusion to al-Ghazālī's concept of "discernment" (*tamyīz*). Discernment is an intermediary stage in al-Ghazālī's developmental psychology between sense perception and the intellect. From birth to the age of seven, a child's awareness of the external world is limited to sense perception. After this point, the child develops the faculty of discernment. Discernment provides immediate knowledge (*'ilm ḍarūrī*) of first principles. After the age of fifteen, the young man comes into his intellect and can use sense perceptions and first principles to discern essences and specific properties and thereby form syllogisms.[274] We should note that *tamyīz* is a developmental precursor to "conceptualization" (*taṣawwur*), which al-Ghazālī expresses through the metaphor of "clarity" (*wuḍūḥ*).

Def. 1 in Context

> Def. 1 appears in the opening passage of "The Dearest Desire":
>
> The dearest thing one can desire, the best thing one can acquire, the most precious thing one can store, the finest thing one can forge, is the knowledge that God made to guide us to every good. *This* is the dearest desire, the best thing acquired, the most precious thing stored, the finest thing forged!
>
> Evidence of this is that whatever God creates in the higher, middle, and lower worlds is a significative being (*ma'nā*)[275] by which negation and affirmation, truth (*ḥaqq*) and falsehood (*bāṭil*), and the like, are separated from each other… **Knowledge is a light in the heart by which realities are distinguished.**[276]

[274] Alexander Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought: al-Ghazālī's Theory of Mystical Cognition* (London: Routledge, 2012), 23-24; 29. Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, ed. Farid Jabre (Beirut: Commission international pour la traduction des chefs-oeuvres, 1959), 41-42.
[275] Though commonly translated as "meaning," *ma'nā* has an ontological valence in *kalām* and *falsafa*. Here, I believe Ibn Tūmart has both meanings in mind.
[276] D, 29 [my bold].

The above passage prioritizes the knower's orientation toward the external world. Ibn Tūmart as a significative being intended by God. Regardless of the level of reality to which it pertains,[277] the created being functions as the standard against which the knower judges the affirmations and negations that arise in his mind. Knowledge is, properly speaking, the light that allows the knower to differentiate these significative beings as they exist in the world such that his thoughts correspond to extramental reality. Ignorance, as darkness, frustrates the knower's attempts to make properly distinguish between beings in the world. In this context, the *ḥaqā'iq* and *khaṣā'iṣ* are the individual facets of creation. Like def. 1, cor. 1 looks outward. What Ibn Tūmart means by defining ignorance in this way is not the *failure* to make true propositions of reality one-hundred percent of the time. Ignorance is, rather, a state of confusion in which the potential knower's experience of beings in the world is so muddled that the success of his propositions at any given moment is random. He may posit a true proposition out of ignorance, but this state of affairs does not constitute knowledge because he is not properly aware of the corresponding reality that renders his proposition true. As we shall see in Ibn Tūmart's treatment of conjecture (*ẓann*), the disconnect between a proposition that is probably, or even coincidently, true and the individual's awareness of reality—that in which certainty is grounded—serves as the basis of his critique of Sunnī *ijtihād*.

[277] The statement, "the higher, middle, and lower world," alludes to two developments in classical Islamic philosophy. The first is the tripartite cosmos elaborated by early Muslim Neo-Platonists. Although we find tripartite cosmologies in Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī, and al-Juwaynī, their terminology differs from that of *BIT*. See, for example: Ibn Sīnā, *al-Risāla fī ithbāt al-nubuwwa* in *Risālāt fī'l-ḥikma wa'l-ṭabī'iyyāt* (Cairo: Dār al-'Arab, 1979), 131; al-Juwaynī, *al-Irshād* (Cairo: Maktaba al-thuqāfa al-dīniyya, 2009), 192-93; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2005), 1609. The texts whose terminology matches Ibn Tūmart's most closely are those composed by Ismā'īlī theologians working in the Muslim East. See Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Iṣlāḥ* (Salamiyya: Dār al-ghadīr, 2008), 30. Paul Walker, "The Universal Soul and the Particular Soul in Isma'ili Neoplatonism," in Parviz Morewedge (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 154-55.

Def. 2 in Context

Def. 2 appears within Ibn Tūmart's discussion of the cognitive state, conjecture (*ẓann*). Conjecture, like ignorance and doubt, is one of the contraries of knowledge. In Arabic philosophy, conjecture corresponds to the Greek *doxa* ("belief"), which Plato and Aristotle distinguish from higher forms of cognition, such as *epistēmē* ("scientific knowledge") and *nous*/*noēsis* ("intellection").[278] In *uṣūl al-fiqh*, conjecture is an epistemological value that jurists assign to a prophetic tradition that only one narrator has reported. Many jurists deem these "unit-traditions" (*akhbār al-āḥād*) unreliable sources of credal knowledge, though there remains some debate concerning the conditions under which Muslims may derive positive laws from them. All *madhāhib* recognize that "concurrent traditions" (*akhbār mutawātira*), *aḥādīth* with multiple narrators, provide certain knowledge.

Ibn Tūmart attributes the epistemic superiority of concurrent-traditions to the form of transmission common to all *aḥādīth* in this category. Concurrent-traditions are "self-evident" (*ḍarūrī*) from a *formal* perspective because of their "repetition" (*tikrār*).[279] The definition of concurrent-tradition as any *ḥadīth* with a "great number" (*ʿadad kathīr*) of narrators is, by itself, false. Under certain conditions, a jurist may classify a tradition as unit even though it has two or three narrators. Instead, a concurrent-tradition is self-evident insofar as it is repeated enough times "until knowledge definitively occurs in the soul" (*ḥattā yaqaʿ al-ʿilm fi-l-nafs wuqūʿan*).

[278] Plato compares four types of cognition (*eikasia*, *pistis*, *dianoia*, and *noēsis*) in his analogy of the divided line (*Republic* 509d-510a). In the dialogue, Socrates bisects the line, one side (*eikasia* and *pistis*) representing opinion (*doxa*), the other (*dianoia* and *noesis*) knowledge (*epistēmē*). Opinion-based cognition pertains to the visible world, whereas knowledge-based cognition pertains to the world of intelligbles. Versions of this doctrine heavily influenced Islamic philosophy. Although we no longer possess a complete Arabic translation of any Platonic dialogue, Arabic translations of and commentaries on *Republic* and other dialogues circulated in Islamic East and West.

[279] D, 40-41.

Repetition entails that the number of narrators be more than one, but, after that, there is not fixed minimum number that guarantees concurrence. Ibn Tūmart uses the example of learning a craft to illustrate this point. One must repeatedly sew or write in order to hone the crafts of sewing or writing. However, there is no set number of repetitions after which any individual may be said to know how to sew or write. He may require as many as one hundred repetitions, or as little as two, to learn his trade. The certainty that attaches to concurrent-traditions does not originate in external reality. Rather, the concurrence of a single tradition meets logical criteria given by the human intellect. Although knowledge of a historical report differs from knowledge of a mathematical object in that we cannot derive knowledge of an historical event from pure reason, a *ḥadīth*'s concurrence in both language and meaning produces a similar certainty that its content corresponds to a past reality.

It should now be clear that Ibn Tūmart conceives of truth as the correspondence of a *ḥaqīqa*, in the sense of an extramental being (or state of affairs), to a predication of that being or a conception of its essence in the mind. The essence of knowledge is the "light" or "clarity" that enables us to achieve this correspondence. How might we interpret these essential terms in non-metaphorical language, yet remain faithful to the text? The visibility metaphors indicate that Ibn Tūmart regards knowledge as something more than a set of true propositions about any given subject. One cannot attain one, let alone a set, of true propositions without first possessing this "light" or "clarity." From this perspective, knowledge is not an object or a content, but rather *a state of awareness of* or *disposition toward* the relationship of the mind to extramental reality.

Ibn Tūmart's definition of knowledge dovetails well with a recent approach to the analysis of knowledge, virtue epistemology. In his seminal study, *The Structure of Ethical Terms*

in the Qur'ān (1959)[280], Toshihiko Izutsu shows how epistemic terms, such as "truthfulness" (*ṣidq*) and "falsehood" (*kidhb*) pertain to the same semantic fields as more general moral categories, such as "righteousness" (*ṣalāḥ*) and "injustice" (*ẓulm*). These semantic fields represent what Izutsu calls "the basic moral dichotomy" of the Qur'ān, the structural opposition of "believer" (*mu'min*) and "unbeliever" (*kāfir*).[281] By citing a Qur'ānic scholar like Izutsu, who approaches the Qur'ān with the aim of expositing its lexicon as it was understood during the time of its composition, I do not mean to suggest that Ibn Tūmart's exegesis captures *the* original, historical meaning of the Qur'ān—even if Ibn Tūmart understood himself to have succeeded in discovering such a definitive interpretation. Rather, Izutsu helps to shed light on the moral valence of the Qur'ān's epistemic terms that would have stood out to even medieval exegetes.

More recently, Ashraf Adeel has advocated the use of contemporary virtue epistemology to interpret the Qur'ān's epistemology because "the Qur'ānic ascriptions of ignorance seem to point to various epistemic vices in agents. This means…that ascriptions of knowledge should involve presence and exercise of epistemic virtues in epistemic agents."[282] Contemporary virtue epistemology begins with Ernest Sosa's paper, "The Raft and the Pyramid" (1980).[283] Sosa develops virtue epistemology in order to address problems with justification in the two dominant theories of knowledge, foundationalism and coherentism. He argues that we should look to intellectual virtue a general principle of the justification of true belief. If we conceive of virtue as a stable disposition toward an action in a given circumstance, this disposition *justifies* our acting

[280] Republished as Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Relgious Concepts in the Qur'ān* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2002).
[281] Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Relgious Concepts in the Qur'ān* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2002), 105-06.
[282] Ashraf Adeel, *Epistemology of the Quran: Elements of a Virtue Approach to Knowledge and Understanding* (Berlin: Springer, 2019), 1.
[283] Ernest Sosa, "The Raft and the Pyramid: Coherence versus Foundations in the Theory of Knowledge," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5, no.1 (1980), 3-26.

in accordance with it in the absence of another, equally compelling disposition. Just as virtue justifies our actions, our intellectual virtues are "stable dispositions for belief acquisition through their greater contribution toward getting us to the truth."[284]

While Ibn Tūmart does not accept the Standard Analysis to which Sosa responds, I believe virtue epistemology offers an authentic means of interpreting Ibn Tūmart's theory of knowledge, which is thoroughly grounded in the Qur'ānic worldview. Linda Zagzebski, another prominent virtue epistemologist, puts forward a definition of knowledge that strongly resembles what Ibn Tūmart seeks to express in "The Dearest Desire": "Knowledge is a state of cognitive contact with reality arising out of acts of intellectual virtue."[285] For Zagzebski, this sort of cognitive contact does not occur randomly, but rather presupposes that the knower possesses an intellectual virtue that will motivate him to seek out cognitive contact with reality.[286] In light of Zagzebski's definition, I would like to assay a definition of knowledge that brings together Ibn Tūmart's two explicit definitions and interprets his metaphorical language in contemporary epistemological language.

> **(def. 3) Knowledge is the rational self-awareness of one's cognitive contact with reality arising out of one's moral disposition to the truth.**
>
> **(cor. 3) Ignorance is the absence of rational self-awareness of one's cognitive contact with reality arising out of one's moral disposition away from the truth.**

"Cognitive contact with reality" and "disposition to the truth" reflect the dual meaning of *ḥaqīqa*: a true proposition in the mind and the extramental reality to which a proposition corresponds.

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[284] Ernest Sosa, "The Raft and the Pyramid: Coherence versus Foundations in the Theory of Knowledge," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5, no.1 (1980), 23.
[285] Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 270 [bold in the original].
[286] Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 270.

"Rational self-awareness" captures the intention behind metaphor's "light in the heart" and "clarity in the soul." Ibn Tūmart is likely alluding to al-Ghazālī's *The Niche of Lights* here. Al-Ghazālī describes the rational faculty (*'aql*) as a light (*nūr*). The superiority of the rational faculty to the "light" of the eye lies in its capacity to perceive, not only external things, but also its own attributes. "Since [the rational faculty] perceives itself as knowing and powerful, it perceives knowledge of itself, it perceives its knowledge of its knowledge of itself…and so on *ad infinitum*."[287] The portrayal of Ibn Tūmart as a "lamp" (Ar. *sirāj*, Amz. *asafu*) in Almohad sources suggests that he sought to style himself as what al-Ghazālī calls "a light-giving lamp" (*sirāj munīr*).[288] The light-giving lamps are prophets and (secondarily) scholars who derive their knowledge from the rational faculty and possess the ability to *kindle* this faculty in others.[289] The centrality of this prophetological concept to *BIT* and Almohad Islam confirms Ibn Tūmart's familiarity with *The Niche of Lights*.

The close association of epistemic success and moral correctness we see in Ibn Tūmart raises some doubts about the applicability of his theory in all observable circumstances. The basic formulation seems to hold true. Moral turpitude leads one to assert a falsehood in order to satisfy or justify a personal desire. In the medieval Islamic context, we might picture a judge (*qāḍī*) who makes a ruling contrary to the *sharī'a*—whether consciously or unconsciously—in order to raise his public status or for financial gain. Epistemic failure may lead to errors in moral thinking and practice. Ibn Tūmart's project is founded on his belief that Muslim scholars have

[287] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights–Mishkāt al-anwār*, trans. David Buchman (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 6.
[288] This is an epithet God's applies to Muḥammad in Qur'ān 33:46. For Ibn Tūmart's nickname, see Michael Brett, "The Lamp of the Almohads" in *Ibn Khaldun and the Medieval Maghrib* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Variorum, 1999), 11.
[289] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights–Mishkāt al-anwār*, trans. David Buchman (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 13.

misunderstood and, therefore, misapplied the *sharī'a*. As we will see in the next chapter, Ibn Tūmart approaches morality according to the Ash'arī divine command theory, according to which what is morally good is equivalent to compliance with God's Law. To misapply the *sharī'a* in the public sphere or to mis-adjudicate a civil or criminal case are obvious instances of moral failure.

However much Ibn Tūmart's theory seems to hold in individual cases of epistemic and moral success or failure, we cannot say the same (or at least not immediately so) when we apply his theory of knowledge to the epistemic-moral disposition of the individual human person as a whole—the disposition that determines his intellectual faculty as a whole. We can easily imagine two exceptions. The first exception is the twentieth century trope of the evil genius.[290] This science fiction cliché unites deep scientific knowledge and practical know-how (epistemic success) with moral evil. According to Ibn Tūmart's epistemology, the evil genius should not exist because his evil disposition away from the truth should inhibit him from epistemic success, and his epistemic successes in the sciences and technology should reflect a moral disposition toward the truth and, ultimately, the good. Let us call the second exception the "well-meaning simpleton." This individual indeed possesses a moral disposition to the truth, but, out of some lack in his intellectual faculty, consistently fails to achieve epistemic success.

These exceptions reveal two weak points in Ibn Tūmart's close association of epistemic and moral success. In order to solve the problem of the evil genius, Ibn Tūmart must maintain a sharper distinction between theoretical knowledge and practical wisdom, as Aristotle and many *falāsifa* do. To do this, however, Ibn Tūmart must abandon Ash'arī divine command theory for a

[290] Not to be confused with the "Evil Genius" in contemporary epistemological literature, a revival of Descartes' Evil Demon from *The Discourse on Method*.

metaethics closer to natural law, thereby contradicting many of his deepest beliefs with regard to the nature of revelation and revealed Law. Although Ibn Tūmart concedes that God grants human beings a minimal conception of morality based on the naïve perception of advantage and disadvantage[291] (which includes the basic moral disposition to the truth), his commitment to divine command metaethics leaves no place for practical wisdom in the Aristotelian sense because the question of the good, that is, what is lawful according to the *sharī'a*, is a factual one. Ibn Tūmart approaches the question of the licitness of alcohol in the same way that he would approach the question of the Prophet's place of birth: in positive sources received through concurrent transmission (*tawātur*). The well-meaning simpleton is less problematic for Ibn Tūmart, yet this exception shows that a moral disposition to the truth is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for epistemic success. Insofar as Ibn Tūmart's theory of knowledge is informed by al-Ghazālī and ṣūfī psychology, further work is needed to understand what such exceptions mean for medieval and ancient epistemologies that emphasize the necessity of ascesis and other forms of moral preparation for epistemic success.[292]

The Virtue of Knowledge

Ibn Tūmart's implicit definition of knowledge concerns his statement, "The root-principles of truth (*ḥaqq*) and falsehood (*bāṭil*) are four: knowledge (*'ilm*), ignorance (*jahl*), doubt (*shakk*), and conjecture (*ẓann*). Ignorance, doubt, and conjecture are root-principles of error (*ḍalāl*)."[293]

[291] See "The Discourse on Knowledge," D, 180.
[292] Cyrus Ali Zargar has made a major contribution to research on moral preparation in classical Islamic though. See *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017).
[293] D, 32.

Knowledge finds itself within a complex web of oppositions and associations. Ibn Tūmart opposes knowledge, not only to ignorance, but to two other deficient forms of cognition, doubt and conjecture. Each of these cognitive states stands in relation to the higher oppositions "truth ←→ falsehood" and "truth ←→ error."[294]

Ibn Tūmart's root-analysis (*ta'ṣīl*) of truth←→ falsehood-error is peculiar in some respects. First codified by al-Shāfi'ī in *al-Risāla fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, root-analysis is a form of juridical analysis whereby the jurist relates a particular law to a root-principle (*aṣl*) of Islamic Law—often a source text from the Qur'ān or *sunna*. But Ibn Tūmart does not derive a particular law from a text or set of texts. He attempts nothing less than to show how cognitive states underlie truth and falsehood. His reliance on the Qur'ān's description of these four cognitive states more closely resembles *fiqh* root-analysis. Nevertheless, by using the root-analysis' form, we are confronted with a puzzling analogy: text is to cognitive state as law is to propositional judgment (e.g. "true", "false").

Many of the interpretive principles Ibn Tūmart uses in *BIT* are derived from the Aristotelian and Stoic logic studied by the *falāsifa* and Niẓāmiyya theologians. But here, too, his application of root-analysis departs from the conventions of Islamic logic. His choice of the terms *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil* to express propositional truth and falsehood is odd given that both philosophers, such as al-Fārābī, and legal and theological authors who incorporated Greek logic into their writings, such as Ibn Ḥazm, and al-Ghazālī, frame the discussion of truth and falsehood

[294] The single arrow "→" represents a vertical relationship "root principle → branch". The double arrow "←→" represents a horizontal opposition, such as "truth ←→ falsehood" or, on the root-principle level, "knowledge ←→ ignorance".

in terms of *ṣidq* and *kidhb*, rather than *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil*.[295] The second way Ibn Tūmart frames his analysis, "truth ←→ error", is even more abnormal within a logical context.

These peculiarities, once understood, highlight the originality of Ibn Tūmart's implicit definition of knowledge. I believe that his adaptation of root-analysis for the purposes of elaborating a theory of knowledge reveals his desire to bring Islamic jurisprudence and logic together in a novel way. This set of root-principles (knowledge, ignorance, doubt, conjecture) is not original to Ibn Tūmart. The fifth/elevent-century Ash'arī theologian, al-Juwaynī, gives the same set of cognitive states in a chapter of his *Irshād* entitled "The Sciences and their Contraries," and we find similar sets in the wider Ash'arī-Bāqillānīan tradition.[296] Ibn Tūmart may prefer al-Juwaynī's terminology over and against that of Aristotelian-Stoic logic because al-Juwaynī's approach centers on the knower as "believer" (*al-mu'taqid*) and the obstacles that stand in the way of correct credal belief (*i'tiqād*). However, al-Juwaynī never places these four cognitive states within the structure of a root-analysis as we see in *BIT*.

The terms al-Juwaynī and Ibn Tūmart use to designate these cognitive states are, moreover, thoroughly Qur'ānic. His departure from the *ṣidq-kidhb* opposition conventional in Arabic logic in favor of "*ḥaqq* ←→ *bāṭil*" brings his logical methodology closer to the language and content of revelation. Not only are the individual terms Qur'ānic, but the oppositional and associative pairs are well attested. These changes are not merely cosmetic. The idea that we can express theories of truth and knowledge in the language of the Qur'ān entails that the Qur'ān itself communicates in propositions that we can assess by reason, and that we can extract, among other things, a coherent account of truth and knowledge from these propositions. Al-Ghazālī is

[295] See, for example Muḥammd al-Ghazālī, *al-Mi'yār fī al-'ilm* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 2013), 33-34.
[296] Al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād* (Cairo: Maktabat al-thaqāfa al-dīniyya, 2009), 21.

perhaps the first theologian to adopt a systematic, logical approach to Qur'ānic propositions in his *Qisṭās al-mustaqīm*. Ibn Tūmart frequently appeals to Qur'ānic *āyāt* as propositions to support his analysis of cognitive states, truth, and the sources of knowledge. After Ibn Tūmart, the next major figure to adopt such a logical approach to the Qur'ān is the philosopher and Almohad courtier, Ibn Rushd.[297]

Additionally, why does Ibn Tūmart present us with *two* forms of opposition: "truth ←→ falsehood" and "truth ←→ error"? One is tempted to conclude that falsehood and error are merely synonymous here, a byproduct of the text's compilation from multiple sources and multiple copies of those sources. There are two reasons to think that falsehood and error are distinct (rather than synonymous) concepts. First, there are multiple instances in "The Dearest Desire" where the oppositions "truth ←→ falsehood" and "truth ←→ error" appear in quick succession.[298] Were error synonymous with falsehood, it is hard to imagine why the compiler would preserve these repetitions. Second, though *bāṭil* and *ḍalāl* belong to the same semantic field, these terms are not synonyms in the Qur'ān. Falsehood, as a value of assertoric propositions, is opposed to truth and belief (*īmān*) (e.g. 16:72, 47:3), and associated with lying or untruth (*kidhb*) (e.g. 40:5) and concealment (*katm*) (e.g. 2:42). "Truth ←→ falsehood" is also attested far more in the Qur'ān than "truth ←→ error", which appears just twice.

The answer to this question becomes clear if we understand ignorance's role in Ibn Tūmart's analysis. As the contrary of knowledge, ignorance is the lack of rational-awareness of one's cognitive contact with reality arising out of a moral disposition away from the truth. Though we now understand the ontological and propositional dimensions of Ibn Tūmart's

[297] See, in particular, Ibn Rushd, *Kashf 'an manāhij al-adilla wa-'aqā'id al-milla*, ed. Muḥammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī (Beirut: Markaz dirāsāt al-waḥda al-'arabiyya, 1998), 118-19 (§§67-71).
[298] D, 32; 36.

definition of knowledge, we have yet to specify the *moral* dimensions of knowledge, ignorance, and the two other deficient cognitive states Ibn Tūmart opposes to knowledge, doubt (*shakk*) and conjecture (*ẓann*). We observe in "The Dearest Desire" that Ibn Tūmart devotes far more attention to the moral consequences—the errors—of *deficient* cognitive states than to those of knowledge. This emphasis is not merely polemical. Rather, Ibn Tūmart acknowledges that, in the Qur'ān, the semantic field to which terms like *jahl* pertain encompasses a greater diversity of lexical items than the semantic field to which *'ilm* belongs. By focusing on the lexical diversity of the "negative" semantic field, Ibn Tūmart can offer more examples of how the Qur'ān understands the origin of both cognitive states and actions in general, moral dispositions.

Ibn Tūmart's root-analysis of *ḥaqq* ←→ *bāṭil-ḍalāl* points to *kufr* being the moral disposition that accounts for deficient cognitive states and their associate vices. *Kufr* is often translated as "unbelief," which would suggest that it is primarily an epistemic concept. Izutsu advises against translating *kufr* at all because non-Arabic languages fail to capture its total anthropological value.[299] Izutsu identifies *kufr* as the negative side of the Qur'ān's basic moral dichotomy (the positive side being *īmān*) because it accounts for humankind's epistemic *and* moral failings.[300] In Tūmartian terms, *kufr* is the fundamental moral disposition that explains why deficient cognitive states lead to both "falsehood" (i.e. epistemic failure) and "error" (i.e. moral failure).

The deficient cognitive states, ignorance, doubt, and conjecture, differ from knowledge in specific formal respects. In the case of knowledge, the knower clearly observes the correspondence of a true proposition (also *ḥaqīqa*) in his mind to a facet of reality (*ḥaqīqa*)

[299] Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Relgious Concepts in the Qur'ān* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2002), 4-5.
[300] Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Relgious Concepts in the Qur'ān* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2002), 119.

outside of his mind. As we have seen, ignorance results when a potential knower lacks this clarity and fails to observe the correspondence of proposition to reality. Ibn Tūmart cites proof-texts from the Qur'ān that suggest that the ignorance of the *kāfirūn*/*kafara* ("those in the state of *kufr*"; "those who conceal assertoric and moral truth") results from their distorted view of reality. For example, "But when the truth (*ḥaqq*) came to them, they said, 'This is magic (*siḥr*), and we do not believe in it'."[301] The "truth" in the context of this passage is divine revelation in the mouth of a prophet. Out of their moral disposition away from the truth, the *kafara* instead posit that the words and miracles of God's messengers are "magic," an illusion.[302]

Ibn Tūmart associates *kufr* with the adoption of any beliefs and practices that go against Islam. The source text, "We have not heard of this among our forefathers" alludes to the concept of *taqlīd*.[303] Applied to non-monotheists or non-Muslims, *taqlīd* denotes the "following" of pre-existing traditions out of filial piety or mistrust of true divine revelation. The propositional consequence of *taqlīd* is *shirk*, asserting that God has a partner (*sharīk*) or that there are other gods beside Him. *Taqlīd* not only leads to propositional falsehood, but to error, as well. In a later passage of "The Dearest Desire," Ibn Tūmart argues that, prior to "the coming down of the Law" (*wurūd al-shar'*), human beings *could not* have had knowledge (*'ilm*) of good and bad because such knowledge derives from revelation alone. Because the intellect (*'aql*) can only ascertain logical possibility, human beings cannot attain moral knowledge through reason.[304] *Taqlīd* leaves the *kafara* in a state of moral ignorance that contributes to unjust action (*ẓulm*).[305]

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[301] Qur'ān 43:30.
[302] D, 38.
[303] Qur'ān 28:36. D, 38.
[304] D, 65-6. He discusses this idea in greater detail in "Proof that the Law is not Established by the Intellect".
[305] It should be noted that the Qur'ānic word for injustice *ẓulm* shares the same root (*ẓ-l-m*) as "darkness" (*ẓulma*), as in "Ignorance is a darkness in the heart".

Doubt (*shakk*) is formally closer to knowledge. Ibn Tūmart defines doubt as "perplexity" (*ḥayra*) and blindness (*ʿamā*)."[306] By itself, "blindness" is not particularly helpful in interpreting Ibn Tūmart's meaning. "Perplexity" (*ḥayra*), however, is a logical term going back to the early philosophical translation movement (third-fourth/ninth-tenth century) which describes a case in which one has reason to say that "*x* is true" and "*x* is false" at the same time. Though only one statement can be true, according to the law of non-contradiction, one must suspend judgment until such time that he can disqualify one of the two statements.[307] The doubter has the proposition that corresponds to reality in his mind; but, because he lacks sufficient evidence to choose between the true proposition and a false alternative, he fails to achieve epistemic success. Ibn Tūmart envisions two ways in which the doubter may respond. The first is epistemic inaction. "Rather, their knowledge concerning the hereafter is arrested; they are in doubt about it; concerning it, they are blind."[308] Epistemic inaction leads to either a weak commitment to Islam (i.e. doubt in the promise of the afterlife) or to *taqlīd*: "Do you forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped? We are in great doubt concerning that to which to call us."[309] In the latter case, epistemic inaction puts the doubter in the same state of ignorance in which we find the ignorant *kafara*. In the former case, the doubter does not attain moral knowledge and simply follows an *imām* in practical matters. Materially, the doubter avoids error. However, his deference to an *imām* is, in a formal sense, no different from *taqlīd*. In Ibn Tūmart's eyes, the cognitive deficiency of doubt applies not only to *kafara*, but to Sunnī, Shīʿī, and Ibāḍī Muslims

[306] He gives this definition twice. D, 39, 43.
[307] See al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-Fārābī li-kitāb Arisṭūṭālīs fi-l-ʿibāra* (*Commentary on Aristotle's De Interpretatione*), 203, lines 17-21.
[308] Qur'ān 27:66.
[309] Qur'ān 11:62.

who derive their moral and legal beliefs from an authority rather than achieving this knowledge for themselves.

The second response to doubt relates directly to the third deficient cognitive state, conjecture (*ẓann*). Presented with two, equally-compelling alternatives, the doubter may turn to conjecture in order to resolve doubt. He defines conjecture as "preponderance of one possibility over another" (*taghlīb aḥad al-jānibayn*). The conjecturer tends toward one alternative over another because there is greater (albeit non-demonstrative) evidence in its favor.[310] Ibn Tūmart finds conjecture pernicious because, unlike ignorance and doubt, conjecture places the individual above reality by disregarding the form which knowledge must take in the intellect in order to be knowledge. The ignorant man assents to a false proposition, but believes that the proposition corresponds to reality. The doubter respects the form of knowledge inasmuch as he is unwilling to risk assenting to a falsehood and remains in a state of epistemic inaction. The conjecturer violates the form of knowledge because he shapes his beliefs and behaviors according to what is likely or even personally preferable, rather than to what is certain. Ibn Tūmart cites a verse to which many jurists appeal to as evidence that the Qur'ān does not allow conjecture to serve as a source of positive law: "They have no knowledge of it. They follow only conjecture."[311] Ibn Tūmart is more explicit about the moral cause and effect of conjecture. The individual's "desire" (*hawā*) motivates the conjecturer: "They only follow conjecture and what their souls desire".[312] As a disposition of the soul or mind, desire inhibits rational self-awareness in the potential

[310] D, 43.
[311] Qur'ān 53:28.
[312] Qur'ān 53:23.

knower and motivates him to assent to a proposition, not because it is true, but rather because doing so might help him fulfill a desire.[313]

Although each of the deficient cognitive states is unique in how they miss the mark of knowledge, they share certain characteristics. Each originates in *kufr*. Each leads to both epistemic failure (i.e. propositional falsehood) and error. Each tends toward *taqlīd*, which, in its most general sense, Ibn Tūmart believes constitutes the denial and ignorance of divine law, humankind's sole source of legal and moral guidance. By design, Ibn Tūmart's root-analysis shows the epistemic and moral dimensions of *ḥaqq* by opposing it to the lexically diverse semantic field to which *bāṭil*, *ḍalāl*, and *kufr* belong. The association knowledge → *ḥaqq* mirrors the structure we saw in the analysis of falsehood-error: (a) general, moral disposition that determines one's cognitive state (e.g. *kufr*), (b) a cognitive state (e.g. *jahl*), (c1) a cognitive result (e.g. *bāṭil*), (c2) general moral result (e.g. *ḍalāl*), and (d) specific moral results (e.g. *ẓulm*). I believe "The Dearest Desire" and "The Discourse on Knowledge" point to the following structure: (a) *raghba wa-rahba* ("desire and fear") (b) knowledge, (c1) *ḥaqq*, (c2) *hudā/hidāya* ("divine guidance"), and (d) *najāh* ("salvation").

Like its cognate *haqīqa*, *ḥaqq* derives from the Arabic root *Ḥ-Q-Q*. *Ḥaqq* may denote the totality of extramental reality (the sum of all *ḥaqā'iq*) or the totality of propositional truth. *Ḥaqq* also carries two specialized meanings in Islam. *Al-Ḥaqq* is one of God's ninety-nine names in the Qur'ān. I believe that *ḥaqq*, in this particular sense, means "the ultimate reality", in that God creates all facets of extramental reality outside of Himself. According to Mohammad Roshan, "the Qur'ān characterizes itself by the general image that it is truth (*ḥaqq*)." In the Qur'ān, *ḥaqq*

[313] D, 40. On the role of *hawā* as a cause of *ḍalāl* in the Qur'ān, see Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Relgious Concepts in the Qur'ān* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2002), 139-42.

possesses both a theoretical and a practical valence. Regarding its status source of theology or narration, the Qur'ān offers its own meta-commentary concerning the truth of the statements it contains: "These are the verses of God. We recite them to you in truth (*ḥaqq*)" (3:108); "This is surely the true narration" (3:62). The practical valence is never far behind. The other half of 3:108 reads, "what God wants is that no injustice befall the world." As Roshan clarifies: "…from a Qur'ānic perspective, the history of the nations progressed according to [both] divine habits and the struggle between truth and false, and their consequences."[314] Thus, *ḥaqq* encompasses theoretical or propositional truths, on the one hand, and the practical consequences of these truths, on the other.

I argue that Ibn Tūmart treats "divine guidance" (*hudā*/*hidāya*) as synonymous with the practical side of *ḥaqq*. Although he does not include divine guidance in his original framing of the root-analysis *ḥaqq* ←→ *bāṭil/ḍalāl*, in another passage, he speaks as if he intended to do so. This sentence appears within the context of his rebuttal of pro-Almoravid scholars he debated in Aghmāt.[315]

> To deny that knowledge without conjecture, is a root-principle of divine guidance (*hudā*), and that ignorance, doubt, and conjecture are the root-principles of error (*ḍalāl*) is to contradict the texts of the Qur'ān. That is, there is no middle position between truth and falsehood, nor any third between the one who is divinely guided (*al-muhtadī*) and the one who has fallen into error (*al-ḍall*).[316]

We may draw two conclusions from the above passage. First, like *ḥaqq*, divine guidance is rooted in knowledge. The fact that both *ḥaqq* and divine guidance are rooted in knowledge entails that they belong to the same branch (*far'*) level of the root-analysis. Second, Ibn Tūmart

[314] Mohammad Roshan, *Manṭiq al-khaṭāb al-qur'ānī* (Beirut: Markaz al-ḥaḍāra li-tanmiyyat al-fikr al-islāmiyya, 2016), 318 [my trans.].
[315] For the text of this debate, see the next chapter (Chapter 4).
[316] D, 36.

opposes divine guidance to error. Error is a contrary of truth and the practical side of falsehood. Ibn Tūmart further reinforces the association knowledge → divine guidance by incorporating divine guidance into the light metaphor he employs in his first definition of knowledge: "The one who is divinely guided is guided by the light of knowledge. The one who has fallen into error is constrained by the darkness of ignorance, for knowledge is a light, and what opposes light is darkness."[317] Ibn Tūmart, therefore, understands knowledge to have the same causal relationship to divine guidance as it does to *ḥaqq*.

Ibn Tūmart mentions the association knowledge → salvation (*najāh*) in just one passage from "The Discourse on Knowledge." His explicit framing of this association is problematic insofar as it obscures the distinction between (c2) general moral result and (d) specific moral results in the structure of the root-analysis.

> Knowledge is, moreover, the cause (*sabab*) of salvation (*najāh*) from everything in this world that brings destruction in this world and the next, because acts of disobediance (*maʿāṣī*) in this world are destruction in this world, as well as the next. Obedience (*ṭāʿa*) in this world is salvation (*najāh*) in this world and the next. One does not come to understand (*yatawaṣṣal ilā maʿrifa*) obedience (*ṭāʿa*) and disobedience (*maʿṣiyya*) except through knowledge. Knowledge is the root-principle of salvation (*aṣl al-najāh*) from that which brings destruction in this world and the next.[318]

Ibn Tūmart refers to knowledge as both the "cause" and "root-principle" of knowledge. He also identifies salvation with "obedience". If this is the case, salvation would pertain to the same level of the root-analysis as *ḥaqq* and divine guidance. However, Ibn Tūmart's placement of the contraries "obedience" and "disobedience" between knowledge and salvation suggests that he conceives of knowledge as a *distal* cause or root-principle of salvation, whereas divine guidance is its proximate cause. Ibn Tūmart does not mention divine guidance in "The Discourse on

[317] D, 36-37.
[318] D, 180.

Knowledge", but we find evidence in "The Discourse on Prayer" that supports the association with salvation:

> People are of two sorts: the ones who have fallen into error (*ḍall*) and the ones who are divinely guided (*muhtadī*). The divinely guided is he who is guided by the light of knowledge away from the darkness of ignorance. Knowledge prevents him from engaging in acts of disobedience (*ma'āṣī*) and wicked deeds.[319]

Because divine guidance *prevents* one who is divinely guided from engaging in disobedience and rebellion, we may infer that the cause of disobedience occupies the same causal level as divine guidance. The moral contrary of divine guidance is error. Divine guidance is, therefore, the cause of obedience, a concept Ibn Tūmart identifies with salvation. We have now recovered the majority of the structure of the root-analysis knowledge → *ḥaqq*: (b) knowledge, (c1) *ḥaqq*, (c2) divine guidance, and (d) salvation.

We must now identify the principle moral disposition that determines the specific cognitive state knowledge. Izutsu's structural-anthropological analysis of Qur'ānic terms parallels Ibn Tūmart's root-analysis in many ways. While I believe that Ibn Tūmart would support Izutsu's thesis that the opposition of *īmān* and *kufr* represents the fundamental moral dichotomy of the Qur'ānic worldview, I do not believe that Ibn Tūmart regards *īmān* ("belief") as the principle moral disposition that correctly disposes an individual to the truth in the same manner that *kufr* disposes an individual to falsehood. To do so would violate the epistemic order to which he commits himself. As we learn in the "Creed," belief follows from knowledge, not the other way around. Let us reconsider a passage I cited earlier in the chapter:

> One achieves belief (*īmān*) and sincerity through knowledge (*'ilm*), knowledge by study (*ṭalab*), study by the will, the will by desire and fear, desire (*raghba*) and fear (*rahba*) by the promise and the threat (*al-wa'd wa-l-wa'īd*), the promise and the threat by the Law (*al-shar'*), the Law by the trustworthiness of the messenger, and the trustworthiness of

[319] D, 86. I take this version of the text from E, 91.

> the messenger by the appearance of a miracle by God's permission—may He be exalted.[320]

In order to achieve knowledge, the knower must possess the proper motivation to *seek out* (*ṭalab*) knowledge. Here, we see the motivation that Zagzebski and Adeel identify as a necessary condition of the knower's epistemic success. "Desire" and "fear" arise in response to the potential knower's contact with revelation through the mediation of a "messenger" or prophet. The fear of God's "threat" and his "promise" of salvation kindles the feeling of fear and desire within the potential knower. Desire and fear properly dispose the potential knower to the truth such that he will approach reality with the requisite self-awareness to achieve epistemic success.

This dual feeling of desire and fear is fundamental to Ibn Tūmart's epistemological project in two respects. On the one hand, desire and fear complete the structure of the root-analysis knowledge → *ḥaqq*: (a) desire and fear, (b) knowledge, (c1) *ḥaqq*, (c2) divine guidance, (d) salvation. We see, from beginning to end, the complete path at the end of which the potential knower, owing to his moral disposition to truth, achieves epistemic success and its moral consequences. On the other hand, Ibn Tūmart's claim that fear and desire originate in the prophetic promise and threat points to the *social* and *divine* origins of our moral disposition to knowledge. The promise and the threat not only entail an association of God and His prophets through miracles—the greatest example of which is the revelation of the Qur'ān—but through the association of prophets with the rest of humankind. The fear and desire that awaken the potential knower's will to grow in knowledge does not, under normal conditions, arise spontaneously. Rather, he depends on religious communities who, as the custodians of revelation, endeavor to make God's promise and the threat known.

[320] D, 213-4.

Chapter 4: Knowledge Part II – The Ways of Knowledge and Their Consequences

Although Ibn Tūmart expresses the essence of knowledge in an oblique and symbolic way in just a few pages of "The Dearest Desire," he frequently appeals to the third aspect of the definition of knowledge: the ways of knowledge (*ṭuruq al-ʿilm*; sing. *ṭarīq*). The ways of knowledge are a significant interpretive lens for identifying the overarching goals of Ibn Tūmart's epistemological writings. Along with his preambular prose poem and the first explicit definition of knowledge, this list of the sources of knowledge appears on the first page of "The Dearest Desire" (and of *BIT* as a whole):

> The ways to knowledge are confined to three: sense-perception (*ḥiss*), intellect (*ʿaql*), and revelation (*samʿ*). Sense perception has three subdivisions: contiguous, separate, and that which a human being finds within himself. Intellect has three subdivisions: necessary, possible, and impossible. Revelation has three subdivisions: the Qur'ān, the *sunna*, and consensus.[321]

This manner of organizing knowledge according to the way (or combination of ways) in which one knows a particular object of knowledge (*maʿlūm*) gives thematic unity to the "Section on Knowledge". Ibn Tūmart appeals to the sources of knowledge throughout the "Section on Knowledge" in order to negotiate the boundaries between intellect (or "reason") and revelation, as well as to identify the contexts in which they complement or conflict with one another. What will become clear in this chapter is that Ibn Tūmart's approach to question of the proper *interaction* of reason and revelation is thoroughly rationalist insofar as the intellect is that which reveals the principles according to which he classifies the sources of knowledge and the individual sciences founded thereupon. The purpose of the "Section on Knowledge" is to elaborate a *normative typology of knowledge according to rational principles*. This typology is

[321] D, 30.

normative because it guides Ibn Tūmart's derivation of legal and credal norms, which he considers binding upon all Muslims.

In this chapter, I focus on Ibn Tūmart's presentation of the three "the ways of knowledge." The first part concerns the pre-revelational ways—sense-perception and intellect—and how knowledge acquired through the senses and the intellect relate to revealed knowledge. Ibn Tūmart grants the human intellect pride of place in his hermeneutics insofar as this faculty allows us to intuit certain principles and "intellectual rules" (*qawā'id 'aqliyya*) that govern the way in which we organize the information that we receive via sense-perception and revelation. The centrality of logical modes to Ibn Tūmart's elaboration of these rules and principles allows us contextualize *BIT* within the reception of history of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics and theory of modality. In the latter half of the chapter, I examine how Ibn Tūmart applies his epistemological principles to jurisprudence, particularly to juridical analogy (*qiyās shar'ī*) and independent legal reasoning (*ijtihād*). Ibn Tūmart's commitment to the principle, "The truth is one" (*al-ḥaqq wāḥid*), leads him to adopt fallibilism in *ijtihād*, a minority position in Sunnism which states that, to any given legal question, there is one exclusively correct answer. In this way, we begin to see how the priority of epistemology to praxis in Ibn Tūmart's thought leads him to adopt radical positions that put him in conflict with Sunnism.

"The Discourse on Knowledge" contains the most detailed account of the ways of knowledge, expounding upon the passage from "The Dearest Desire" cited above. Ibn Tūmart refers to the nine subdivisions of the three ways of knowledge as a "restricted allotment" that "concerns the human being in both this world and the next."[322] In doing so, he claims that his typology of knowledge is both practically and theoretically normative. The fact that human

[322] D, 181: *wa-hadhihi al-qisma al-munḥaṣira tadūr 'alā ibn ādam fī al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira*.

knowledge is restricted to what one can know by following these three ways will determine that for which each individual is responsible on the Day of Judgment. He "will not be asked about anything in the hereafter (*al-ākhira*) except [what pertains to] this allotment, because it is restricted to what may be asked of him regarding what he witnessed with his faculty of sight, what he heard with his faculty of hearing, or what he grasped with his intellect."[323] For Ibn Tūmart, the proper understanding of the ways of knowledge is indispensable to soteriology. As I show in the previous chapter, salvation (*najāh*) encompasses human action in both this world and the next. In this world (*al-dunyā*), knowledge enables man to distinguish between what is advantageous and disadvantageous for the preservation of life, and, upon receiving divine revelation, to understand and apply its content. In the hereafter (*al-ākhira*), God will evaluate each individual according to the extent to which he acquired and applied this knowledge. The ways of knowledge are theoretically normative because "*all* knowledge is included *in* this allotment and derives *from* it."[324] Understanding the ways of knowledge not only allows Ibn Tūmart to establish definite epistemological principles that will define his investigation of particular questions, but also serves as a critical tool. All propositions the content of which misapplies or falls outside of this typology of knowledge may be said to be false in some sense. Seen in the light of Ibn Tūmart's critique of Sunnism, his typology is inclusive in that it speaks of knowledge in a univocal way. One may privilege religious knowledge in specific inquiries, but knowledge derived from non-revealed sources is not, from the standpoint of the human mind, essentially different from the knowledge one acquires through divine revelation.

[323] D, 181.
[324] D, 181 [my emphasis].

Following the opening "The Dearest Desire" (D, 29-30), the compiler signals that the next part of the text (D, 30-2) consists in a "discourse on revelation as a source of knowledge."[325] This short "discourse," is dated 515/1121, when Ibn Tūmart was lecturing at Ribāṭ Hargha, a Maṣmūda settlement near his birthplace. He introduces the differences between concurrent (*mutawātira*) and unit (*āḥād*) *ḥadīth* and their relation to the four cognitive states: knowledge, doubt, conjecture, and ignorance. Within this frame, the compiler relates the content of a public debate (*munāẓara*) that occurred between Ibn Tūmart and an unnamed Mālikī scholar in Aghmāt, then a buzzing commercial and religious center that lay a few kilometers from Marrakesh. The setting of this debate is significant to the founding of the Almohad movement. After offending the Almoravid *amīr*, ʻAlī b. Yūsuf (476-537/1084-1143), Ibn Tūmart was banished from Marrakesh. He settled in Aghmāt, where he continued to teach and engage in the same public antagonism against the Almoravids that earned him banishment from Marrakesh. His persistence provoked the once merciful ʻAlī b. Yūsuf to seek his arrest. From the Almohad point-of-view, Ibn Tūmart's 515/1121 flight from Aghmāt to Ribāṭ Hargha resembled the early Muslims' *hijra* from Mecca to Medina.

The compiler(s) includes the debate narrative to show that the lectures recorded in "The Dearest Desire" constitute Ibn Tūmart's considered response to his interlocutor in Aghmāt. He tells us that his reason for including the debate narrative is that it is "evidence" (*bayān*) of Ibn Tūmart's statement that "[only] concurrent reports yield knowledge (*mufīda li-l-ʻilm*)…because unit reports do not yield knowledge, on account of their being conjectural (*maẓnūna*), since conjecture (*ẓann*) neither yields knowledge nor suffices to obtain a single truth. For this reason, it

[325] D, 30: *Wa-l-kalām al-ān fī al-ṭarīq al-ladhī huwa al-samʻ…*

is impossible to establish legal judgments (*al-aḥkām*) through conjecture."[326] The compiler's account of the debate reveals that Ibn Tūmart regarded the jurisprudential weight of *ẓann* and the sources of knowledge as the fundamental point of divergence between Almohadism and Mālikī-Sunnī Islam. The broader implication here is that one's failure to enumerate the sources of knowledge and understand their relationship to one another will lead to epistemic failure and, by extension, error in the practical application of the *sharī'a*.

> There is an explanation of [the fact that concurrent reports yield knowledge and the unit reports yield conjecture] and more in the debate between the nfallible *imām* and acknowledged *mahdī*—may God be pleased with him— and the slanderers (*mudda'īn*) in Aghmāt. When they gathered for his lecture, [to be followed by] a public debate, he—may God be pleased with him—saw that they had mixed in [amongst his students] while he was teaching.
>
> He said to them, "Put forward one from amongst you to present your proof. Comport yourself according to the manners of people of knowledge and conform to the conditions of the debate."
>
> They put forward a representative. This is among the things that he—may God be pleased with him—asked them. "Are the ways of knowledge confined or not?"
>
> Their representative answered, saying, "Yes. They are confined to the Qur'ān, the *sunna*, and the meanings that they indicate."
>
> The *imām* and *mahdī*—may God be pleased with him—said, "On the contrary: I asked you if the ways of knowledge were confined or not, but you only mentioned one [way of knowledge]. It is a condition of the debate that your answer be in keeping with the question."
>
> The representative did not understand him and was astounded by his response.
>
> Then he—may God be pleased with him—asked them about the root-principles of truth and falsehood. He said, "What are the root-principles of truth and falsehood?" [The representative] responded with the same answer as before. When he saw that their confusion about the question, judging by their answer, he—may God be pleased with him—set out to explain the root-principles of truth and falsehood.
>
> He said, "The root-principles of truth and falsehood are four: knowledge, ignorance, doubt, and conjecture." He—may God be pleased with him—explained that knowledge is

[326] D, 31.

> a root-principle of divine guidance, and that ignorance, doubt, and conjecture are root-principles of error.
>
> The one who responded on their behalf said to him, "You have made ignorance a root-principle of error, but it is not the root-principle of anything. You have made doubt a root-principle, but it is not the root-principle of anything. You have made conjecture a root-principle of error, but the bulk of the judgments of the Law are founded upon conjecture, such as eyewitness testimony. It is conjectural, but the judgment that is in accordance with it is established!"
>
> He said to them, "All of what you have rejected is decisively true! Rational proofs and demonstrations from revelation indicate that this is so. Regarding the rational [proofs], they are constructed according to three rules: it is impossible to join two contraries, it is impossible to overturn truths, and [the fact] that conjecture is contrary to knowledge. For if it is established that they are contraries, it is impossible to join them; it is impossible that they be overturned (or converted), since it is impossible to overturn truths, and the conversion of conjecture into knowledge, and knowledge into conjecture, is absurd."[327]

When reading the dialogue, it is hard to resist attributing the Mālikīs' confusion to the simple fact that Ibn Tūmart holds them to the standards of his idiosyncratic system. This impression holds particularly true of his question regarding the root-principles of truth and falsehood. As I discuss in the previous chapter, although the group of cognitive states "knowledge-ignorance-doubt-conjecture" is attested in al-Juwaynī's *Irshād*, Ibn Tūmart's *ta'ṣīl* analysis of these forms of cognition in relation to epistemological and moral categories (i.e. truth/guidance ←→ falsehood/error) appears to be original to *BIT*.

The narrative's hagiographical elements likewise present some interpretive challenges to reconstructing the religious and epistemic conflict between the Almohads and the Almoravids. First, *BIT* treats Ibn Tūmart's opponents in the Aghmāt debate as a metonymy for the Mālikī *madhhab* in the Maghrib, an undifferentiated group of "slanderers" (*mudda'īn*) that uncritically adopt the same faulty jurisprudential methods. This attitude toward Almoravid-era Mālikism predominates, not only in Almohad sources, but in many modern accounts, as well. Second, the

[327] D, 31-32.

brevity of the Mālikis' responses to Ibn Tūmart makes it difficult to determine their full position on the matter with any accuracy, which precludes identifying their party with a particular strand of Mālikī thought prevalent in the region at that time.

Delfina Serrano Ruano has published several studies on *kalām* in the late Almoravid period. She challenges the notion, long prevalent in Almohad historiography, that the Almoravids endorsed a *furū'*-centered brand of Mālikism and promoted a literalist (even "corporealist") theology. Closer inspection of the relevant sources—Ibn Rushd al-Jadd, 'Iyāḍ b. Mūsā, and Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī—reveals that prominent Almoravid *'ulamā'* were already engaged in a reform of theology and jurisprudence that was, in many respects, similar to what Ibn Tūmart proposes in *BIT*. Central to this episode is the reception of al-Ghazālī's *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*) in al-Andalus and the Maghrib. Serrano maintains that Almohad agitation in favor of al-Ghazālī and Niẓāmiyya Ash'arism prompted the Almoravid rulers to censor and destroy theological texts in an effort to prevent lay Muslims from siding with the Almohads and similar religious movements. This hypothesis runs counter to the Almohads' claim that the Almoravids had *always* opposed Ash'arism. In reality, the Almoravids supported scholars sympathetic to Ash'arism and theological rationalism.

The charge of corporealism (*tajsīm*)[328] common in Almohad literature does not reflect the Almoravids' official stance at the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century. The *Risāla* of 'Abdallāh b. Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 386/996) was popular among Mālikī students throughout the eleventh century. Al-Qayrawānī indeed inclines toward a literal reading of the Qur'ān, which, like the Ḥanbalī-Atharī creeds, can be construed as corporealist. Had the Almoravids held up the

[328] Historians have traditionally translated *tajsīm* as "anthropomorphism." While *tajsīm* includes anthropomorphic interpretations of the Qur'ān, it encompasses all instances in which God is described in terms of body (*jism*). I prefer the translation "corporealism" for this reason.

Risāla as the last word in theological matters, the Almohads' accusations would have made sense. However, prior to the Almohads' political ascent, the Almoravids promoted Ash'arism in order to weed out both corporealism and bāṭinism, which many in Africa associated with the Shī'ī Fāṭimid Caliphate. Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī (d. 521/1127) and Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 543/1148) published refutations of corporealism and bāṭinism. The latter devotes particular attention to corporealist elements in al-Qayrawānī in his *al-'Awāṣim min al-qawāṣim*.[329] Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ went further in publishing *al-I'lām bi-ḥudūd qawā'id al-Islām*, a widely read creed (*'aqīda*) directed toward lay Mālikīs. Serrano and Cassassas note that this push against corporealism is consistent with the promotion of Abū 'Imrān al-Fāsī's (d. 430/1039) blend of Mālikism and Ash'arism from the earliest days of the Almoravid empire.[330]

Ibn Tūmart was likely familiar with both 'Iyāḍ's *I'lām* and Ibn al-'Arabī's *'Awāṣim*. Not only were both works popular in the early sixth/twelfth century, but there are striking similarities between these texts and *BIT* with regard to theological method. Like 'Iyāḍ and Ibn al-'Arabī, Ibn Tūmart deploys the *qawā'id al-'aql* or *aḥkām al-'aql* as an interpretive principle in *kalām*. 'Iyāḍ begins his *'aqīda* with a commentary on the *shahādatayn* (i.e. the two sentences of the *shahāda* most Muslims recite daily). He divides this commentary into forty credal points (*arba'ūna 'aqīdatin*): ten believed to be necessary (*'ashr yu'taqad wujūbuhā*), ten believed to be impossible (*'ashr yu'taqad istiḥālatuhā*), ten the existence of which is confirmed (*'ashr yataḥaqqaq wujūduhā*), and ten the revelation of which is certain (*'ashr mutaqayyan wurūduhā*).[331] The latter

[329] Xavier Casassas Canals and Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Putting Criticisms against al-Ghazālī in Perspective," in *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ash'arism East and West*, eds. Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 257-59.
[330] Xavier Casassas Canals and Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Putting Criticisms against al-Ghazālī in Perspective," in *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ash'arism East and West*, eds. Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 258. Al-Fāsī was himself a disciple of al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013).
[331] 'Iyāḍ b. Mūsā, *al-I'lām bi-ḥudūd qawā'id al-islām*, ed. Bassām 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jābī (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2010), 36.

twenty pertain to truths that must be established by positivist, rather than strictly rationalist methods. These include historical statements about Muḥammad and statements about the hereafter that humans cannot verify by reason or direct experience. The first twenty are noteworthy because the necessity and impossibility of each point refer not to the Muslim's legal obligation (*taklīf*) to assent to or reject the statement in question, but rather to the *rational* necessity or impossibility of each proposition in the intellect. These twenty points deal exclusively with what we can know about God through reason irrespective of revelation.[332]

Ibn al-'Arabī applies a similar principle in *'Awāṣim*. Like Ibn Tūmart, he divides theological statements according to the three *aḥkām al-'aql*: necessary (*wājib*), possible (*jā'iz*), and impossible (*mustaḥīl*). The intellect is "the purifier of the Law" (*muzkī al-shar'*); for, "if something arises the literal meaning of which the intellect denies [i.e. deems impossible], one must apply interpretation (*ta'wīl*).[333] Ibn al-'Arabī's use of reason to determine whether the literal meaning of a verse should be rejected in favor of another interpretation resembles *al-qānūn fī-l-ta'wīl* that al-Ghazālī elaborates in *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*.[334] Although Ibn Tūmart certainly consulted eastern books in the development of his doctrine of the intellect, his use of the term *ṭuruq al-'ilm* is likely of western provenance and attests to his familiarity with the writings of Ibn al-'Arabī on these matters. Ibn al-'Arabī uses *ṭuruq al-'ilm* in the same section of *al-'Awāṣim* in which he confronts scriptural literalism, corporealism, and Ẓāhirism.[335]

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[332] 'Iyāḍ b. Mūsā, *al-I'lām bi-ḥudūd qawā'id al-islām*, ed. Bassām 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jābī (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2010), 36-41.
[333] Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī, *al-'Awāṣim min al-qawāṣim*, ed. 'Ammār al-Ḥālibī (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 1974), 231: *idhā jā'a mā yanfī al-'aql ẓāhirahu fa-lā budda ayḍan min ta'wīlihi*.
[334] See al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, ed. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 5-7.
[335] Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī, *al-'Awāṣim min al-qawāṣim*, ed. 'Ammār al-Ḥālibī (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 1974), 226-27. His discussion of corporealism begins on ibid., 213.

These similarities between Ibn Tūmart, ʻIyāḍ b. Mūsā, and Ibn al-ʻArabī indicate that the founder of the Almohad movement knew of the Almoravid-sponsored theological reforms. How, then, do we make sense of Ibn Tūmart's accusations of corporealism against the Almoravids in *BIT*? Serrano argues that the Almohads' criticisms were directed against the Almoravids' restriction and censorship of certain theological and mystical texts, among which many Ashʻarī books were included. The Almohads and other contemporary charismatic movements played a part in motivating the Almoravids to eye Ashʻarism with suspicion. Serrano has published two studies (2006 and 2020, with Cassassas) on *fatwā*s Ibn Rushd al-Jadd (d. 1126) issued at the behest of the Almoravids authorities. In each case, the petitioner of *fatwā* (*mustaftī*) was not concerned with Ashʻarism *per se*, but rather with movements opposed to the Almoravids that had adopted aspects of Ashʻarism. One *fatwā* concerns the reception of al-Ghazālī's doctrine of the *awliyā' Allāh* and its implications for Almoravid legitimacy in the region. In *The Book of Knowledge* of *Iḥyā'*, al-Ghazālī presents a scholarly hierarchy with respect to knowledge of God (*maʻrifat Allāh*): *awliyā' > ʻārifūn > ʻulamā' rāsikhūn > ṣāliḥūn*.[336] The *mustaftī* asks Ibn Rushd whether al-Ghazālī's *awliyā'* are equivalent to the rank of *awliyā'* in the *Risāla* of al-Qushayrī, a ṣūfī treatise then popular in the Muslim west. At stake, here, is the authority of the juridical class in contradistinction with the mystics and ascetics. If the *awliyā'* are indeed superior to the *ʻārifūn*, whom Ibn Rushd takes to be the *ahl al-furūʻ wa-l-uṣūl*, then true religious authority rests in the hands of the mystics who acquire direct, experiential knowledge of God through self-

[336] Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Why Did the Scholars of al-Andalus Distrust al-Ghazāli? Ibn Rushd al-Jadd's *Fatwā* on *Awliyā' Allāh*," *Der Islam* 83, no. 1 (2006), 142.

denial and hardship, rather than with the *fuqahā'*, whose knowledge is merely textual and discursive.[337]

In his ruling, Ibn Rushd focuses on the dichotomy of *'ilm*/*ma'rifa* and *'amal* in order to argue that the preeminence of Prophet Muḥammad derives more from his knowledge than his actions. In emphasizing the Prophet's knowledge, Ibn Rushd seeks to neutralize the belief popular among mystics that the *awliyā'* could attain the rank of prophet through asceticism (*zuhd*) and the performance of miracles (*karāmāt*).[338] By identifying Muḥammad's preeminence with his knowledge, Ibn Rushd achieves two goals. First, he reasserts the authority of the *fuqahā'* and *mutakallimūn* in interpreting revelation and guiding lay Muslims by dissociating the knowledge mystics claim to attain through asceticism and states (*aḥwāl*) from the theological and legal knowledge Muḥammad and his Companions handed down to later generations of Muslims. If mystics *qua* mystics lack access to the discursive knowledge that characterizes Muḥammad's prophesy, then one cannot regard the *awliyā'* as equal or superior to the Prophet on the basis of their actions, miraculous or not. Second, Ibn Rushd's critique of the *awliyā'* doctrine challenges mystical narratives that seek to supplant the authority of the Almoravids, on the one hand, and the Mālikī *'ulamā'*, on the other. Ibn Rushd's emphasis on the Prophet's uniqueness and superiority in terms of religious knowledge resonates with the project 'Iyāḍ b. Mūsā pursues in *al-Shifā'*.

Ibn Rushd influenced the Almoravids' stance toward ṣūfism. They saw prominent mystics, such as Ibn Barrajān and Ibn al-'Arīf, as possible threats to their authority, a suspicion

[337] Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Why Did the Scholars of al-Andalus Distrust al-Ghazāli? Ibn Rushd al-Jadd's *Fatwā* on *Awliyā' Allāh*," *Der Islam* 83, no. 1 (2006), 141-42.
[338] Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Why Did the Scholars of al-Andalus Distrust al-Ghazāli? Ibn Rushd al-Jadd's *Fatwā* on *Awliyā' Allāh*," *Der Islam* 83, no. 1 (2006), 147.

that was confirmed by the Andalusī mahdist claimant, Ibn Qāsī.[339] At the same time, Ibn Rushd's *fatwā*s on Ash'arism gave the Almoravids cause to censor *kalām* in their territories. Even if they rejected al-Ghazālī, it is unlikely that Ibn Rushd and other prominent Ash'arī *'ulamā'*, like Ibn al-'Arabī and Mālik b. Wuhayb, desired the suppression of an otherwise orthodox theological school. Serrano and Cassassas argue (I think rightly) that the unnamed group of Asharīs Ibn Rushd discusses in *fatwā* Mīm 278[340] is the Almohads. The *mustaftī* seeks Ibn Rushd's opinion on a group of Ash'arīs who claim that "faith is not complete without knowledge the science of *uṣūl*, nor is Islam correct without its use."[341] These Ash'arīs believe that the study of theology "is incumbent upon the scholar and ignoramus alike" (*wa-innahu yata'ayyan 'alā al-'ālim wa-l-jāhil qirā'atuhu wa-dirāsatuhu*); "whenever someone disagrees with their position, they declare him to be an unbeliever" (*wa-matā khālafa dhālika min qawlihim kaffarūhu*).[342] This description is consistent with Ibn Tūmart's adherence to the doctrine of *takfir al-'awāmm*. By the sixth/twelfth century, the Ash'ariyya had largely abandoned this *takfīrī* stance, although al-Ash'arī, like his Mu'tazilī contemporaries, had espoused it. Ibn Rushd defends Ash'arism, arguing that "not one of their [Ash'arī] imāms claims this, nor would anyone interpret them in this way except a stupid ignoramus" (*lā yaqūluhu aḥad min a'imatihim wa-lā yata'awwaluhu 'alayhim illā jāhil ghabī*). Whether or not Ibn Rushd was aware that early Ash'arīs taught *takfīr al-'awāmm*, his statement holds true of contemporary Ash'arism in the Muslim west. Despite his own adherence to Ash'arism, Ibn Rushd rules that:

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[339] Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Why Did the Scholars of al-Andalus Distrust al-Ghazāli? Ibn Rushd al-Jadd's *Fatwā* on *Awliyā' Allāh*," *Der Islam* 83, no. 1 (2006), 156.
[340] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad b. Rushd al-Jadd, *Fatāwā Ibn Rushd*, ed. al-Mukhtār b. al-Ṭāhir al-Talīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī), 2: 966-72.
[341] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad b. Rushd al-Jadd, *Fatāwā Ibn Rushd*, ed. al-Mukhtār b. al-Ṭāhir al-Talīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī), 2: 966.
[342] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad b. Rushd al-Jadd, *Fatāwā Ibn Rushd*, ed. al-Mukhtār b. al-Ṭāhir al-Talīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī), 2: 967.

> One who is charged with ruling over Muslim is truly obliged to forbid the vulgar and those just beginning their studies (*al-ʻāmma wa-l-mubtadi'īn*) to read [books composed by] the Ashʻarī theological schools (*madhāhib al-mutakallimīn min al-ashʻariyyīn*). He should prevent them from doing this most emphatically out of the fear that they will misunderstand [these books] and will be lead astray by reading them. [Instead,] he should command them to confine themselves to what must believed according to the arguments the Qur'ān presents.[343]

Ibn Rushd concludes that this group's belief in *takfīr al-ʻawāmm* is itself unbelief (*kufr*) because it excludes the vast majority of Muslims (*wa-yukhrijūn min jumlat al-muslimīn*) on the basis of their inability to comprehend the subtleties of *kalām*.[344]

The Almoravids used this *fatwā* to censor Ashʻarism across their empire. "The same scholar who had held for punishing recalcitrant opponents of Ashʻarism had to declare it forbidden…for lay believers to read books on the subject for fear that they would lose their faith."[345] The Almohads, who themselves provoked Ibn Rushd's *fatwā*, could now use the ban on Ashʻarism as evidence that the Almoravids and the Mālikī establishment opposed *kalām*. Ironically, the Almohads used many of the same arguments against theological literalism that pro-Almoravid reformers had developed to combat corporealism in the Mālikī *madhhab*.[346]

I agree with Serrano's and Cassassas' claim that, contrary to accepted historiography, the Almoravids supported Ashʻarism and that Almohad activism in the Maghrib precipitated the censorship of Ashʻarī literature. However, their account leaves certain questions unanswered.

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[343] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad b. Rushd al-Jadd, *Fatāwā Ibn Rushd*, ed. al-Mukhtār b. al-Ṭāhir al-Talīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī), 2: 971. Ibn Rushd's grandson, Ibn Rushd al-Ḥafīd, takes the same anti-Tūmartian stance in *Faṣl al-maqāl*. See Conclusion.

[344] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad b. Rushd al-Jadd, *Fatāwā Ibn Rushd*, ed. al-Mukhtār b. al-Ṭāhir al-Talīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī), 2: 972.

[345] Xavier Casassas Canals and Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Putting Criticisms against al-Ghazālī in Perspective," in *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ashʻarism East and West*, eds. Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 269.

[346] Xavier Casassas Canals and Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Putting Criticisms against al-Ghazālī in Perspective," in *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ashʻarism East and West*, eds. Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 269. Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Why Did the Scholars of al-Andalus Distrust al-Ghazāli? Ibn Rushd al-Jadd's *Fatwā* on *Awliyā' Allāh*," *Der Islam* 83, no. 1 (2006), 156.

Why did the Almohads agitate against the Almoravids prior to their censorship of Ash'arism? The first burning of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* in 502-3/1109 coincides with Ibn Tūmart's return to North Africa from the east and the first breathes of the Almohad movement. The Mālikī *madhhab* in the early sixth/twelfth century was not as uniform as Serrano sometimes suggests. Although reformers like Ibn Rushd eventually ruled against certain followers of al-Ghazālī and the Ash'ariyya, the instigator of the first burning, Qāḍī Ibn Ḥamdīn of Córdoba, opposed "the proponents of Ash'arism, Shafi'i *fiqh* and al-Ghazālī's work in particular."[347] Serrano's account tacitly presupposes that position similar to Ibn Ḥamdīn's were common throughout al-Andalus and the Maghrib. But how could there be an Ash'arī reform movement within the Mālikī *madhhab* if there was nothing to reform? It is likely that, like his pro-Almoravid predecessors, Ibn Tūmart encountered *'ulamā'* in Marrakesh and Aghmāt who resembled al-Qayrawānī and Ibn Ḥamdīn more than Ibn al-'Arabī or Ibn Rushd. Serrano is right to challenge the narrative which states that the Almoravids always suppressed Ash'arism—for clearly, they did not. However, the religious climate of the late Almoravid period appears far more complex. The majority of Serrano's sources about the Mālikī reformers center on al-Andalus, particularly Córdoba. Although news from the Maghrib plays a role in the reformers' efforts, this archive does not offer a complete picture of Islam in the Maghrib. Even if the Almoravids introduced this theological program into Amazigh heartland, it is hard to say how successful their campaign was. Pro-Almoravid Ash'arīs probably co-existed with Mālikī traditionalists, charismatic movements, and non-Sunnī sects still extant in the Atlas and Sahara.

[347] Amira K. Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 242-43.

What, then, do we make of the debate narrative? If we assume that Ibn Tūmart's interlocutors were receptive to the Almoravid-Ash'arī reforms, the debate amounts to nothing more than Ibn Tūmart holding these *'ulamā'* to the standards of a system of *fiqh* and *kalām* of which they were ignorant. This reading is consistent with the Almohads' portrayal of Mālik b. Wuhayb, the advisor responsible for Yūsuf's persecution of the Almohads. If we put aside the Almohads' unsubstantiable accusations of corporealism, the debate attests to complex struggle between the Almoravids and the Almohads over the allegiance of Maghribī *fuqahā'* who followed the traditions of jurisprudence and exegesis pre-Ash'arī Mālikism. On this reading, the Almohads exaggerate the ineffectiveness of the Almoravid reforms by accusing the Almoravids of promoting theological literalism when in fact they only tolerated it.[348]

The debate narrative nevertheless emphasizes three points of contention that, I will show, have a basis in Andalusī-Maghribī intellectual history: (i) the scope of knowledge (*'ilm*), (ii) the principled organization of knowledge, and (iii) the status of *ẓann*. Interpreting the content of *BIT*'s epistemological chapters in light of this short narrative will further show that these three principles explain how Ibn Tūmart differentiates Almohadism from Sunnism, and indeed all other forms of Islam.

[348] Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Por qué llamaron los almohades antropomorfistas a los almorávides?" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 819-20.

The Three Ways of Knowledge (*ṭuruq al-'ilm*)

Sense-Perception (ḥiss)

Ibn Tūmart explains that the three subdivisions of sense-perception—contiguous, separate, and what the human being finds within himself—classify human senses according to the individual's proximity to the object of perception (*maḥsūs*). These subdivisions correspond roughly to Aristotle's and Ibn Sīnā's division of the five senses into those in which the perceiver makes direct contact with the perceived object, and those, like sight and hearing, which require a medium (*mutawaṣit*), such as air. Ibn Tūmart's identification of a sixth, internal sense differs sharply from late-antique and medieval accounts of sense-perception based on *De anima*. For the Peripatetics, hunger and thirst do not pertain to the senses, but are rather desires (*erōtes*) that result from the movement of the animal soul. Sense-perception is prior to even the most basic desires of the appetitive part of the soul. The descriptors *munfaṣil* and *muttaṣil* likewise differ from Aristotelian terminology. We find these terms, however, in Ibn Sīnā's refutation of the emission theory of vision in *al-Najāh*.[349] The discussion of medicine at the end of "The Dearest Desire" suggests that Ibn Tūmart may have borrowed this terminology from medical literature.[350] It is possible that Ibn Tūmart classifies appetites as internal sense-perceptions, instead of as desires, in order to avoid adopting the Aristotelian model of the soul uncritically.

[349] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Najāh*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Umayra (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992), 2: 5-7.
[350] D, 91.

Sense-perception is foundational to Ibn Tūmart's anthropology. Like Aristotle, Ibn Tūmart defines human beings, not only by their capacity to know, but by their *desire* to seek knowledge.[351] What distinguishes Ibn Tūmart's account from Aristotle's is his emphasis on God's sovereign role in the creation and nourishment of both the capacity and the desire for knowledge in human beings. Aristotle sees knowledge as an end in itself, something which human beings desire for more than its practical value. Our esteem for the senses—above all, sight—is evidence of this desire for knowledge. Ibn Tūmart positions knowledge as a locus of struggle between good and bad, salvation and damnation. Within the context of the religious sciences, God motivates human beings through the communication of "the promise and the threat" (*al-wa'd wa-l-wa'īd*); in the rational sciences (under which we may include *kalām*), the intellect constitutes its own law, according to which human beings judge propositional knowledge. Ibn Tūmart makes it clear that, while sense-perception is a lower source of knowledge, human beings nevertheless depend on sense-perception to create meaning and form a pre-rational, pre-revelational idea of advantage and disadvantage. Meaning and advantage/disadvantage are indispensable precursors to the intellectual and revelational investigations that Ibn Tūmart believes are necessary for salvation. On this matter, Ibn Tūmart is in agreement with Aristotelian psychology. The human faculty of sense-perception and memory enables humans to collect vast quantities of sense-data on which the rational faculty can work and develop.

[351] Aristotle, *Metaphysics A* 980a21-27. Modern Arabic editions of the medieval recension of *Metaphysics* are based on Ibn Rushd's *Tafsīr Mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*, 4 vols., ed. Maurice Bouyges (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1938). Unfortunately, Ibn Rushd begins his commentary on Metaphysics *A* at 987a6-7, leaving out Aristotle's preliminary remarks about knowledge. It is possible that, by Ibn Rushd's time, these pages had ceased to circulate or that their contents were incorporated into other chapters of the Arabic recension of *Metaphysics*.

Ibn Tūmart's classification of all species of revelation—of which "divine revelation" (*waḥy*) is only one—under *sam'* indicates the role of sense perception in the religious sciences. Although I normally translate *sam'* as "revelation," "transmission" or "audition" better captures its function as a generic term and the connection of the genus "revelation" to sense perception. This choice of term reflects the historical way in which Muslims studied the Qur'ān and *sunna* by listening to a teacher or *ḥadīth* transmitter. The extent of what falls under *sam'* is clear in Ibn Tūmart's classification of the religious knowledge (*al-'ilm bi-l-dīn*) in "The Discourse on Knowledge" (see Appendix III, I. b-c). The first division of religious knowledge (I. a) concerns rational knowledge of God, but second and third divisions concern the characteristics of prophets, such that human beings can evaluate the trustworthiness of a prophetic claimant, as well as the provenance and content of prophecy. The prophet whose veracity is to be proven is, of course, Muḥammad. Ibn Tūmart follows the conventions of the Muslim "proofs of prophecy" (*dalā'il al-nubuwwa*) genre of apologetics. This genre emerged as a way of grounding the legal and theological content of the Qur'ān in accounts of the Prophet's moral conduct and attribution of miracles to him. These proofs not only helped clarify Islam for Muslims, but also aided in debates with members of other religions and aided missionary outreach. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we see (especially in al-Andalus and the Maghrib) a shift in the epistemological aim of the apologetic literature that focused on the Prophet's biography (*sīra*). In areas where Islam had become the majority religion, prophetological apologetics was no longer primarily aimed at the conversion of non-Muslims, but rather at establishing the reasonableness of accepting Muḥammad's claims to prophethood to a Muslim audience.[352] Ibn Tūmart's

[352] On the *dalā'il al-nubuwwa* genre, see Gabriel Said Reynolds, *A Muslim Theologian in a Secular Milieu: 'Abd al-Jabbār and the Critique of Christian Origins* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 80-81; and Camila Adang, "The Proofs of Prophethood," in *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 139-91. On two of the

assertion that salvation is contingent upon the individual's knowledge brings a greater sense of urgency to the study of *ḥadīth* and *al-sīra al-nabawiyya*. Because later generations of Muslims cannot see and hear the Prophet as the early believers did, they must rely on transmission (*sam'/naql*), the second-order hearing and seeing of the Prophet, in order to confirm the veracity of the message he brought. Consistent with his epistemology, Ibn Tūmart argues that Muslims cannot receive transmission in a casual way (which leads to *taqlīd*) but must rather approach transmitted sources in a systematic fashion so that the information received may constitute knowledge.

The distinguishing features of revelational transmissions lie in their provenance and content. From an epistemological perspective, the formal criteria for establishing the trustworthiness of a particular bit of information are no different from those we apply to a non-revelational transmission. Ibn Tūmart's connection of revealed sources of knowledge—the Qur'ān, *aḥādīth*, and consensus—to the way human beings use sense perception and reason to establish the validity of information transmitted from person to person is not wholly original. *Uṣūlīs* of the classical period were deeply invested in ascertaining the modes of *ḥadīth* transmission in order to classify prophetic reports according to their epistemic strength. Ibn Tūmart indeed takes positions on the finer points of such debates. However, his purpose in identifying the reception of revealed knowledge with the reception of *any* knowledge one might receive by means of the senses is to show the unity of knowledge. Revealed knowledge might take on a privileged status in certain contexts (*fiqh*, for example), but the fact that we receive revealed knowledge through the senses and organize these perceptions through the intellect

earliest authors working in this genre, Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038) and Abū Bakr Aḥmad al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), see Mareike Koertner, "*Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa* Literature as Part of the Medieval Scholarly Discourse on Prophecy," *Der Islam* 95, no. 1 (2018), 91-109.

reveals sense perception to be a sign of God's providence.[353] For Ibn Tūmart, investigating the nature of sense-perception, as well as the nature of reason, when applied to worldly matters demonstrates that God creates human beings already predisposed to reception of revelation.

Sense-perception, especially the sense of hearing (*sam'*), figures heavily in the religious sciences because all revealed sources—the Qur'ān, the *sunna*, and the historical record of consensus—are subject to transmission from one generation to another. The vast majority of scholars divide transmissions into the broader categories of "concurrent" (*mutawātira*) and "unit" (*āḥād*). Although the various schools of Islamic jurisprudence differ with regard to epistemological weight of unit reports, concurrent reports are widely regarded as certain and, therefore, admissible as sources in *fiqh* and theology. Following al-Ghazālī, Ibn Tūmart highlights "concurrence" (*tawātur*) as a feature of transmitted knowledge in general. One major example of transmitted, non-religious knowledge is language. Ibn Tūmart seeks to show that, by neglecting the quality of concurrence as it applies to non-religious bodies of knowledge, which, at the same time, constitute the building blocks of revealed transmissions, we risk error in the interpretation and application of revelation.

Ibn Tūmart defines "concurrent reports" as "reports that yield knowledge by virtue of widespread transmission and the continuity of a large number [of reports] by way of sense-perception."[354] While widespread transmission and continuity are ultimately what confer concurrent status upon reports, the requirement that a transmitter have direct *perception* of both the report and of the individual who conveys the report grounds the act of transmission in the reality of human experience:

[353] Ibn Tūmart stresses the providential nature of the senses and parts of the human in "Creed" §§3-4. See D, 214-15.
[354] D, 40: *...al-akhbār mufīda li-l-'ilm bi-l-naql al-mustafiḍ wa-bi-ttiṣāl 'adad kathīr 'an maḥsūs*.

> We say, "by way of sense-perception" in order to guard against that which is unseen, because the transmission of that which the senses do not perceive does not allow the acquisition of knowledge from it. If what is transmitted is perceived by the senses, then the transmission in the reports suffices for the acquisition of knowledge from it.[355]

Ibn Tūmart agrees with al-Ghazālī that the epistemological force of concurrence is self-evident (*ḍarūrī*) to the extent that, once we hear a particular piece of information enough times from trustworthy witnesses, we hold this information to be true.[356] Ibn Tūmart describes the conviction that follows from a report that meets the formal criteria of concurrence as a subjective condition that arises in the soul:

> The [idea of] a minimum [of reports that produces concurrence] is false. Rather, [concurrence] requires repetition and the continuity of the reports until knowledge truly occurs in the soul such that doubt cannot assail it and it is impossible to reject it, because "many" and "few" have no limit. Every "many" is in addition to the "few" that is above it; every "few" is in addition to what is "many" below it. For everything that requires practice and repetition [to learn], the soul cannot reject the knowledge that occurs in this way. All crafts, sewing, writing, etc., are an example of this. Knowledge of these crafts does not occur except after repetition and practice.[357]

Ibn Tūmart's craft analogy indicates that the acquisition of knowledge, whether a set of information or a skill, by way of concurrent experiences is not unique to revelation, but is, instead, common to all human beings. In this way, we might say that Ibn Tūmart regards the variety of possible sense impressions that human beings receive as the most basic component of humanity's relationship to a God who only discloses himself through revelation.

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[355] D, 41: *wa-qawlunā ʻan maḥsūs taḥarruz min al-ghāʼibāt. Idh mā ghāba ʻan al-ḥawāss lā yaṣiḥḥ bi-l-naql ḥuṣūl al-ʻilm bi-hi. Fa-idhā kāna al-manqūl maḥsūsan, wa-kāna al-naql fī al-akhbār ʻanhu mustawfiyyan li-shurūtihi ḥaṣala* [*ḥuṣūl*?] *al-ʻilm bihi*.

[356] D, 68: *fa-naqūl inna ʻilm al-tawātur ḍarūrī li-annahu yaqhar al-nafs ḥattā lā tanfakk ʻanhu wa-laysa la-hā ikhtiyār fī dafʻihi*. On al-Ghazālī, see Aron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 10-11. In *kalām*, the contrary of "self-evident" (*ḍarūrī*) is "acquired" (*muktasab*), referring to knowledge that one must infer from bits of information that are already self-evident (e.g. reason, direct sense perception, etc.).

[357] D, 68: *fa-naqūl inna al-ḥadd fihi bāṭil wa-innamā ṭarīquhu al-tikrār wa-ttiṣāl al-akhbār ḥatā yaqaʻ al-ʻilm fī al-nafs wuqūʻan lā yataṭarraq ilayhi shakk wa-lā yumkinuhā dafʻuhu li-anna al-kathra wa-l-qilla lā ḥadda la-hā fa-kull kathīr fa-huwa bi-l-iḍāfa ilā mā fawqahu qalīl wa-kull qalīl fa-huwa bi-l-iḍāfa ilā mā dūnahu kathīr wa-kull mā ṭarīquhu al-mumārisa wa-l-tikrār fa-inna al-ʻilm yaqaʻ bi-hi wuqūʻan lā yanfak al-nafs ʻanhu wa-mithāl dhālika jamīʻ al-ṣanāʻāt min khiyāṭa wa-kitāba wa-ghayr dhālika la yaqaʻ al-ʻilm bi-hā illā baʻd al-tikrār wa-l-mumārisa*.

Intellect (ʿaql)

Ibn Tūmart approaches the intellect from two angles. As we saw in Part I, the intellect plays a significant role in Ibn Tūmart's definition of knowledge. Insofar as knowledge is, in the primary sense, a *faculty* that enables one to perceive and organize information, knowledge is identical to the intellect. Ibn Tūmart also classifies the intellect among the three "way of knowledge" (*ṭuruq al-ʿilm*). According to this secondary sense, the intellect is not only a faculty, but also a source of information in the same way that sense-perception and divine revelation are.

Although Ibn Tūmart may categorize the information that sense-perception and revelation provide in a manner different from other *mutakallimūn* and *falāsifa*,[358] the way in which these two are ways to knowledge is quite clear. Most (if not all) human beings understand that sense-perception yields data concerning the external world or the perceiver's body. And even those with only a cursory familiarity with the revealed religions see their adherents transmit this knowledge through written and oral texts, even if this chain of transmission terminates with a prophet's direct experience of God or His intermediaries. Unless one is a prophet or divinely inspired, the experience of acquiring revealed knowledge is no different from reading a letter or

[358] Philosophers like Ibn Rushd and Maimonides often speak of revelation as coming to prophets by way of dreams. As consequence, they approach prophecy through the conceptual vocabulary of Aristotle's *Parva Naturalia*, particularly, *De insomniis* (*On Dreams*). See Averroës [Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad b. Rushd], *Decisive Treatise & Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, UT: Brigham Young Unviersity Press, 2008), 42. Maimonides, for his part, makes a sharp distinction between Moses and the rest of the Hebrew prophets. While he believes that majority of the prophets received revelations through dreams, he states that Moses received the Torah directly from God while awake. See Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 385-403 (II, 41-45). For further treatment of Maimonides' and dreams, see Alexander Altmann, "Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas: Natural or Divine Prophecy?" *AJS Review* 3 (1978), 1-19; Alan Brill, "The Phenomenology of True Dreams in Maimonides," *Dreaming* 10 (2000), 43-54; Howard Kreisel, *Prophecy: The History of an Idea in Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2003), 263-84.

listening to a speech. But what sort of knowledge does the intellect provide? How do human beings experience the intellect?

Ibn Tūmart frequently describes the intellect in terms of its capacity for making modal judgments. In "The Dearest Desire," he says, "The intellect has three subdivisions: necessary, possible, and impossible."[359] In *kalām* and *falsafa* (as well as in Ash'arī-inspired *uṣūl al-fiqh*), these three terms are modes that are either predicated on an individual subject or used to qualify the content of an entire proposition. Examples of such statements that are common in these disciplines include, "The world's existence is possible," or, "It is necessary that God is one." The thrust of his statement that intellect, as a way of knowledge, can be divided into three modes becomes clearer in "The Discourse on Knowledge":

> The intellect has three subdivisions: necessary, possible, and impossible. The necessary has three further subdivisions: the necessity of restricting truths (*ḥaqā'iq*), the necessity of the consistency of truths, and the necessity of specifying these truths with judgments.[360] The impossible has three further subdivisions: the overturning of truths, contradiction of truths, and the falsity of the law of the excluded middle. The possible hesitates between the necessary and the impossible. The possible is [only] possible *to us*; to God, [what we consider possible] is either necessary or impossible.[361]

Ibn Tūmart reiterates his division of the intellect into necessary, possible, and impossible nearly verbatim. However, he adds what appear to be rules regarding truth. By dividing intellectual knowledge into the three modes, does Ibn Tūmart mean that we can categorize information according to the modality that we assign to it, or does he want to draw our attention to these six rules whose content can be expressed in terms of necessity and impossibility? The way he applies modal judgments and these rules throughout *BIT* shows that Ibn Tūmart considers both

[359] D, 30.
[360] Especially in the third subdivision, *ḥaqā'iq* could be rendered as "essences," rather than "truths," and *aḥkām* as "properties," rather than "judgments."
[361] D, 181.

alternatives as features inherent to the intellect as a path to knowledge, although the rules are more primary, not only because of how they enable and govern modal judgments, but because they are purely intuitive or *a priori*.

Let us examine Ibn Tūmart's six rules. Ibn Tūmart uses nominal constructions here, but we can restate each of them as a proposition to which a mode is attributed.

Table 10: Intellectual Rules

R1 – It is necessary that truths are restricted.	**R4** – It is impossible that truths are overturned.
R2 – It is necessary that truths are consistent.	**R5** – It is impossible that truths contradict one another.
R3 – It is necessary that truths are specified by judgments.	**R6** – It is impossible that the law of the excluded middle is false.

In R1, Ibn Tūmart uses the same term ("restriction", *inḥiṣār*) that he does when he says that the ways of knowledge are restricted (*munḥaṣir*) to sense-perception, intellect, and revelation. If we understand *ḥaqīqa* as a statement that expresses an ontological reality, true statements are restricted to those which reflect either a necessary state of affairs or a realized possibility; statements that reflect impossibilities and unrealized possibilities must be excluded. R4 is the corollary to R1 in that the overturning (*inqilāb*) of a true statement, or its conversion into a falsehood, would imply a change in a facet of reality, whether necessary or contingent. R2 and R5 extend R1 and R4 to the macro level. These rules govern judgments concerning multiple states of affairs. If *x* is a true proposition that expresses one state of affairs (or SA-1), and *y* a true proposition that expresses SA-2, *x* and *y* must be mutually consistent (R2), otherwise either *x* or *y* is false, or both *x* and *y* is false (R5). These four rules deal with the first two laws of logic, the Identity Law and Law of Non-Contradiction. R6 covers what is held to be the third law of logic, the Law of the Excluded Middle.

Although R3, like the above pairs, finds its corollary in R6, it communicates something more fundamental about the form that any logical judgment must take. In the medieval Islamic context, the classical statement of this law comes from Aristotle's *De interpretatione* I 16a4-19:

> Words are spoken symbols or signs of affections or impressions of the soul. As writing, so also is speech not the same for all races of men. But the mental affections (*pathēmata tēs psukhēs*; *āthār al-nafs*) themselves, of which these words are primarily signs, are the same for the whole of mankind, as are also the objects of which those affections are representations (*homoiōmata*; *amthila*)… As at times there are thoughts in our minds unaccompanied by truth or by falsity, while there are others at times that have necessarily one or the other, so also it is in our speech, for combination and division are essential before you can have truth and falsity. A noun or a verb by itself much resembles a concept or thought, which is neither combined nor disjoined. Such is 'man,' for example, or 'white,' if pronounced without addition. As yet it is not true nor false. And a proof of this lies in the fact that 'tragelaphos,' while it means something, has no truth nor falsity in it, unless in addition you predicate being or not-being of it, whether generally (that is to say, without definite time-connotation or in a particular tense.[362]

Ibn Tūmart differs from Aristotle and the *falāsifa* in many respects, but his outlook on truth and ontology is quite similar. In Part I, I mentioned that his use of *ḥaqīqa* to indicate both a "true proposition" and "an individual facet of reality (*al-ḥaqq*)" implies his commitment to the correspondence theory of truth; that is, what makes a proposition, as the bearer of truth, true is the extent to which it corresponds to reality. In R3, Ibn Tūmart seeks to make much the same point Aristotle does in *De interpretatione* I. He distinguishes between the conception of a subject in the mind and judgment of that subject by way of affirming or negating a predicate of it. A predicate-less subject cannot bear truth because the predicate is needed to qualify the way in which the subject manifests in reality. Aside from essential and accidental attributes, the kinds of predication with which Ibn Tūmart concerns himself in *BIT*—with particular regard to the intellect as a path to knowledge—are being, time, and modality.

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[362] Aristotle, *De interpretatione*, in *Aristotle: Categories, On Interpretation, Prior Analytics*, trans. Harold P. Cooke (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938), 115-17 (16a 4-19). For the Arabic, see 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Badawī (ed.), *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1980), 99-100.

What are we to make of Ibn Tūmart's caveat concerning possibility: "The possible hesitates between the necessary and the impossible. The possible is [only] possible *to us*; to God, [what we consider possible] is either necessary or impossible"? The first sentence is consistent with the definition of possibility many *mutakallimūn* held: "possible" means that which is neither necessary nor impossible. The second sentence, by contrast, suggests that the predication of possibility of subject is only true from a *human* perspective. From a God's-eye-view, possibility is simply unreal.[363] This caveat is hard to reconcile with R1 and R4 in that, if possibility only obtains perspectivally, to predicate possibility of a something would constitute a pseudo-judgment: "I do not know if *x* is necessary or impossible." In this case, all propositions regarded as *possibilia* would amount to nothing more than conjecture (*ẓann*), a cognitive state that Ibn Tūmart holds to be inferior and contrary to knowledge.

R3 and the caveat about possibility lead us to consider the secondary significance of his division of intellectual knowledge into necessary, possible, and impossible. Just as we can classify sense data into separate (seeing, hearing), continuous (touching), and what one finds within himself (hunger, thirst), we can categorize propositions according to their respective modes. Ibn Tūmart takes such an approach to the laws of logic themselves. He expresses each one in modal terms. We should not simply reduce his reasons for doing so to the sheer fact that human beings communicate laws and rules in terms of obligation, permissibility, and prohibition. Rather, we must interpret his appeal to the intellect's capacity for making modal judgments in light of contemporary developments in the study of modality and its role as the criterion for separating demonstrative sciences (*'ulūm burhāniyya*) from non-demonstrative sciences. Ibn

[363] Ibn Tūmart's distinction between "to us" and "to God" resembles Aristotle's epistemological distinction between that which is known *to us* and that which is known *according to nature* in *Physics* I 184a 16-18.

Tūmart's intellectual laws agree, at least in a general way, with what the three principles philosophers call the "laws of logic": Identity, Non-Contradiction, and the Excluded Middle. But, as nineteenth and twentieth century developments in logic have shown, the manner in which one articulates these principles depends on one's ontological commitments. Following W.V.O. Quine, some philosophers hold that logic can be restricted to the study of formal languages and propose "free logics," a system in which terms do not denote objects and, hence, requires no ontological commitments.[364] Ibn Tūmart's appeal to modality in his articulation of the laws of logic makes it clear that, in order to properly distinguish the function of the human intellect and the particular kind of knowledge it provides, we must determine how Ibn Tūmart understands modes and their relation to reality.

Almohad historiography's association of Ibn Tūmart with the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* again affords us some insight into his engagement with modality. Moreover, Ibn Tūmart's brief comments on modes in "The Creed of the Almohads" provides us with an exemplar that we can compare and contrast with his possible sources. Over the last few decades, scholars have taken up Ibn Sīnā's contribution to the theory of modality, as well as those of al-Ghazālī, who positioned himself against Ibn Sīnā on this and many other questions.

In *al-Qiyās* (from *Kitāb al-shifā'*) and *Kitāb al-najāh*, Ibn Sīnā develops Aristotelian term logic into a modal syllogistic. Although there is evidence in *Prior Analytics* that Aristotle

[364] W. V. O. Quine, "Quantification and the Empty Domain," *Journal of Symbolic Logic* 19 (1954), 177-79; Neil Tennant, *Natural Logic* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990); Timothy Williamson, "A Note on Truth, Satisfaction and the Empty Domain," *Analysis* 59 (1999), 3-8; Karel Lambert, "Free Logics," in *Philosophical Logic*, ed. Lou Goble (Oxford: Blackwell2001), 258-79. From Thomas Hofweber, "Logic and Ontology," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/logic-ontology/ .

experimented with modal syllogisms,[365] his formal exposition of logic largely concerns assertoric syllogisms. In assertoric syllogisms, one affirms or negates a predicate of a subject, whether universal or particular. For example: "Every man is an animal" or "Zayd is in the market." Ibn Sīnā claims to perfect the assertoric syllogism by including modes in the syllogism itself: "Every man is *necessarily* an animal," or "Zayd is *possibly* in the market."

According to Alan Bäck, Ibn Sīnā worked out his modal syllogistic in order to resolve two problems that he perceived in Aristotle. First, Aristotle defines modes in temporal terms. "Necessary" indicates what always is, "impossible" what never is, etc. Aside from *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle's treatment of modality appears in works on the natural sciences.[366] Ibn Sīnā sometimes uses temporal terms to define modes, but he also pushes to separate modality from existence in time. He allows for particular and universal possibilities that are never actualized in time by positing two forms of existence: extramental (*fī al-aʿyān*/*khārij al-nafs*) and mental (*fī al-nafs*/*fī al-dhihn*).[367]

On the basis of the Aristotelian corpus and the Hellenistic commentary tradition, Ibn Sīnā asserts six modes of necessity, that is, six senses in which one may say that "*x* is necessary." In descending order of degree of necessity:

(1) "The predicate (*al-ḥamal*) that always holds, has never changed, and never will; for example, 'God—may He be exalted—is alive.'"
(2) "That which is [predicated] so long as the same subject (*dhāt al-mawḍūʿ*) exists and is not subject to corruption; for example, 'Every human being is necessarily (*bi-ḍarūra*) an animal.'"

[365] It is likely that Ibn Sīnā also picked up on elements of Aristotle's modal syllogistic in *Prior Analytics* and its commentary tradition, since *al-Qiyās* (also the title of *Prior Analytics* in Arabic) and the relevant sections from *al-Najāh* correspond to it in both content and its place within the order of the *Organon*.
[366] Allan Bäck, "Avicenna's Conception of Modalities," *Vivarium* 30, no. 2 (1992), 222. See Aristotle, *On the Heavens* I.12; *Parts of Animals* I.1; and *Physics* II.9.
[367] Allan Bäck, "Avicenna's Conception of Modalities," *Vivarium* 30, no. 2 (1992), 217-8.

(3) "That which is [predicated] so long as the essence of the subject is described by the attribute that makes it described by it; for example, 'Every white thing necessarily possess a color that makes it visible.'"
(4) "That, so long as the predicate exists, does not have [this predicate] by necessity without this condition (*sharṭ*); for example, 'Zayd is necessarily walking so long as he is walking, since it is not possible that he not be walking while he is walking.'"
(5) "That the necessity of which must [be predicated] according to a specified time (*waqtan mu'ayyanan*); for example, 'The moon is eclipsed by necessity; it is not always eclipsed, but only at a specified time.'"
(6) "That which is [predicated] by necessity as some time, but not at a specified time; for example, 'Every human being necessarily breathes.'"[368]

Ibn Sīnā further clarifies the manner in which necessity obtains in 1-4 is "absolute" or "unqualified" necessity (*muṭlaqan*) because, in each case, the predicate holds of the individual substance or its essence.[369] In 5-6, the predicate only holds of something accidental to the subject or its essence. In the example of the lunar eclipse, we equivocate when we predicate "is eclipsed" of "moon," since the state of being-eclipsed in no way applies to the moon's essence, but rather speaks to a complex state of affairs surrounding the moon in a particular time and place.

Second, Ibn Sīnā's incorporation of modality into his syllogistic? responds to a discrepancy in the commentary tradition concerning truth conditions for universal affirmative categorical propositions. All agree that, given the proposition "Every S is P," the statement is about S. However, as Bäck explains, "the categorical proposition does not specify whether the reference is to the entire existence of that thing, or to it while it has the attribute of being S."[370] On one side, Alexander of Aphrodisias claims that P must hold of S according to one of the six modes of necessity in order for the universal affirmative categorical proposition to be true. On the other side, Theophrastus argues that P need not hold of S always, but only at some time. Ibn

[368] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Najāh*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Umayra (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992), 1: 30-31. Allan Bäck, "Avicenna's Conception of Modalities," *Vivarium* 30, no. 2 (1992), 219-21.
[369] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Najāh*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Umayra (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992), 1: 32.
[370] Allan Bäck, "Avicenna's Conception of Modalities," *Vivarium* 30, no. 2 (1992), 223.

Sīnā asserts that his solution synthesizes Alexander's and Theophrastus' positions. He allows for universal affirmative categorical propositions that hold at one instance in time, but not always. Yet, because Ibn Sīnā proffers six modes of necessity, some necessary propositions are *more* necessary than others. Ranking the necessity of propositions in this way enables the philosopher to select, in a very precise way, necessary propositions for demonstrative syllogisms. Since the universal affirmative categorical proposition is the standard for demonstrative science (*'ilm burhānī*) on the Aristotelian model, Ibn Sīnā's attention to the modality enables him to specify which body of propositions will yield demonstrative knowledge in the most precise sense, as well as to judge those sciences which, thought in some sense demonstrative, depend on propositions of weaker necessity.[371]

Theologians like al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī applied themselves to the study of Ibn Sīnā's modal syllogistic because it underlies his proof of God as the Necessary Existent in *al-Ilāhiyyāt min al-Shifā'*. These theologians' effort to critique Ibn Sīnā's philosophy and, at the same time, appropriate from it whatever was useful for *kalām* changed the way Niẓāmiyya scholars talked, not only about God, but propositions in general. Al-Juwaynī's *Creed for Niẓām al-Mulk* opens with the chapter entitled, "On that the knowledge of which is necessary in the rule of religion." What is necessary for the religious sciences, al-Juwaynī claims, is:

> …speculation regarding intellectual perceptions, for it perfects the soundness and correctitude of the intellect, [and] leads to the knowledge of the possibility of the possible, the necessity of the necessary, or the impossibility of the impossible. Those who possess sound intellects and great acumen are distinguished by their grasp of these cognitions (*'ulūm*).[372]

[371] Allan Bäck, "Avicenna's Conception of Modalities," *Vivarium* 30, no. 2 (1992), 224.
[372] Al-Juwaynī, *al-'Aqīda al-niẓāmiyya fī arkān al-islām*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya li-l-Turāth, 1992), 13.

Al-Juwaynī further subdivides each mode into *a priori*, or what is known by "immediate" intuition (*badīhī*), and *a posteriori*, or what is known through reasoning (*naẓarī*). The theologian offers several examples of each that will help us distinguish *a priori* modality from *a posteriori* modality.

Table 11: al-Juwaynī on A Priori *and* A Posteriori *Propositions*

A priori (*badīhī*)	*A posteriori* (*naẓarī*)
Possible (*jā'iz*) • Observing a building, we can determine that its attributes and characteristics (e.g. length, width, height, and determination in time) are "not impossible in the intellect" (*lā yamtani' fī al-'aql*). (p. 13)	• Considered by itself, the movement of the celestial bodies from east to west is just as possible as their moving from west to east. Yet, although the intellect can conceive of the celestial bodies as moving from west to east, we know from observing the heavenly bodies that their motions are constant (*dā'im*). West-to-east motion is not possible *a posteriori* because God does not realize this possibility in creation. (pp. 13-4) (*See Griffel, pp. 171-2)
Impossible (*mustaḥīl*) • Black and white cannot be joined together. • A body cannot be moving to one place and resting in another place at the same time. (p. 14)	• It is impossible for something to occur without something to determine it occurrence. (p. 14)
Necessary (*wājib*) • That which makes a thing and brings it into existence must be able to act. (p. 15)	• The originator of things necessarily knows the details of His actions. (p. 15)

Al-Juwaynī's division of modes is far simpler than Ibn Sīnā's presentation thereof in *al-Qiyās* and *al-Najāh*. Ibn Sīnā's modal syllogistic was attractive to theologians like al-Juwaynī, not only because he built an effective cosmological proof of God's existence on modality, but also because the Niẓāmiyya *mutakallimūn* recognized the importance of modal propositions to raising *kalām* to a demonstrative science (*'ilm burhānī*) that could compete with *falsafa*. However, al-Juwaynī's restriction of modal judgments (*qaḍiyyāt al-jihāt*) to *a priori* and *a posteriori* signal his rejection of the philosophers' claim that possibility requires a substratum—usually pre-

existing matter. To accept that possibility, as an attribute of a real substance, requires a material substratum leads to the conclusion that the realization of the possibility of the world's existence requires a material substrate, and, in turn, that matter is eternal. On al-Juwaynī's account, the truth of modal propositions is verified with reference to either the intellect alone or what we observe in creation. Citing the constancy of celestial motion from east to west, he confirms the *a posteriori* falsehood of the proposition "It is possible that the celestial bodies move from west to east" in light of God's habit (*i'tiyād*/*'āda*) of not realizing that possibility. God does not realize west-to-east motion *not* because there exists no material substrate in which this possibility could be actualized (as the *falāsifa* claim), but rather because he habitually chooses to realize east-to-west motion. In this way, al-Juwaynī divorces modal judgments from Aristotelian metaphysical commitments and preserves the volitional character of creation. His attention to way that the *a posteriori* differ from *a priori* modal judgments, moreover, preserves the integrity of the empirical sciences insofar as God's observable habits correct (or at least pare down) the list of possibilities of which we can conceive after experience. *A priori* possibility reflects possibility from a God's eye view—that which is possible without consideration of God's habit as it manifests itself in the current state of affairs that obtain in the perceptible world.

By comparing his examples of *a priori* and *a posteriori* modal judgments, we see that al-Juwaynī implies that what distinguishes the two is a notion of conceptual containment similar to what we see in Kant.[373] The Creator's ability to act is contained in His identity as a creator (*ṣāni'*) and cause-of-existence (*mūjid*). For, if He could not act, we could not properly predicate

[373] Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philsophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 169-72; [373] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 760 (n. 21), 793.

"creator" or "cause-of-existence" of Him. By contrast, the proposition "the originator of things necessarily knows of his actions" is an *a posteriori* modal judgment because the predicate "originator" (*mukhtari'*) does not contain "knowledge of his actions" *a priori*. For example, we may predicate "originator" of an inventor who originates a new chemical compound by accident, without the knowledge that he is doing so. (In this example, it is not even necessary for the inventor to know that the new compound exists, as he may not notice its presence.) In order for his example proposition to be necessarily true, he must intend the particular subject for which it holds true—namely, God.

Al-Juwaynī quickly shows the efficacy of his adapted modal syllogistic in the second chapter of his *Creed*: "On the Origination of the World in Time" (*bāb al-qawl fī ḥadath al-'ālam*). Here, the theologian seeks to prove that the world, defined as "every existent other than God" (*kull mawjūd siwā Allāh*), is possible and, therefore, originated in time. The world consists of discrete bodies and their accidents. Since what our senses perceive and what our senses do not perceive are equal insofar as we can affirm the property of possibility of them to each alike without contradiction, it is not impossible that the world take on another arrangement. If the world and its constituent parts could have been different than they are, we may continue to affirm that the world is possible. That the possibility of which has been affirmed cannot be necessary, and thus cannot be eternal. Therefore, the world is originated in time.

Griffel explains that Ibn Sīnā made a significant step toward the conception of possibility as "a synchronic alternative state of affairs." The philosopher's necessitarian ontology nevertheless prevents him from accepting this understanding of possibility because it does not allow alternatives to what currently exists. [374]

[374] Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philsophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 169.

Al-Juwaynī's inclination toward the intellect as the true judge of possibility allows him to commit himself to possibility as a synchronic alternative state of affairs, unencumbered by ontology. His division of modality in *a priori* and *a posteriori* in fact mirrors Ibn Sīnā's distinction between an entity's mode seen *in itself* and its mode in view of another. Within the context of cosmology, his privileging of *a priori* modal judgments over *a posteriori* judgments allows al-Juwaynī to affirm that the world is possible, because we can conceive of the world existing in alternative arrangements in the mind without logical contradiction. Later, in *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, al-Ghazālī pushes al-Juwaynī's critique of Ibn Sīnā's modality even further.[375] Al-Ghazālī does not preserve al-Juwaynī's division of modal judgments into *a priori* and *a posteriori*. Instead, he claims that all modal propositions are intellectually *a priori* (*min ḍarūrat al-'aql*). In his view, modal predicates do not indicate real attributes that exist in a subject and exist only in the mind. It is possible that al-Ghazālī understood al-Juwaynī's *a priori*/*a posteriori* distinction as vulnerable to criticism from the philosophers. Although al-Juwaynī privileges *a priori* modal judgments in his treatment of cosmogony, the way in which *a posteriori* modal judgments are constrained by what actually exists resembles the way in which Ibn Sīnā's equation of possibility with its material substrate prevents him from affirming logically possible states of affairs as truly possible. As will become clear in the next chapter, Ibn Tūmart's theology inherits the fruit of this evolution in medieval Arabic literature on modality through al-Ghazālī. Insofar as Ibn Tūmart nowhere makes the *a prior*/*a posterior* distinction characteristic of al-Juwaynī's later theology, it is evident that his conception of modality leans towards al-Ghazālī's. That modal predicates exist only in the mind (rather than in the things of which they are

[375] See al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, ed. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 42-43.

predicated) offers us a way of approaching Ibn Tūmart's statement from "The Discourse on Knowledge": "The possible is [only] possible *to us*; to God, [what we consider possible] is either necessary or impossible."[376] This sentence makes sense once we acknowledge that Ibn Tūmart restricts modality to the *human* mind. From a God's eye view, certain states of affairs (e.g. logical absurdities) are impossible, but no states of affairs are possible. By process of elimination, everything that exists outside of the human mind is necessary. The human ability to conceptualize possibility is, on Ibn Tūmart's view, a fundamental aspect of human experience, since, unlike God, human beings do not have the power to predetermine the sum total of events that comprise the world.

Intellectual Rules in Jurisprudence

Ibn Tūmart gives a different list of intellectual rules in "The Dearest Desire" to explain why it is impossible to affirm one branch (*far' wāḥid*) based on two opposing root-principles (*aṣlayn mutanāqiḍayn*).[377]

Table 12: Intellect Rules in Jurisprudence and Hermeneutics

1. It is impossible to affirm a branch without a root-principle.
2. It is impossible to join two contraries.
3. It is impossible to make numerous what is one.
4. It is impossible to overturn truths.

The second and fourth rules are identical to R5 and R4, respectively. The language of the first and third rule here reflect his application of the intellectual rules, which obtain for all investigations that require the intellect, to *uṣūl al-fiqh* and the derivation of new cases from

[376] D, 181.
[377] D, 48.

source texts. Both the first and third rule appear to derive from R2, which stipulates that truths must remain consistent with one another, and R3, which stipulates that truths are necessarily specified by judgments. Regarding the first, Ibn Tūmart explains that the affirmation of a branch without a corresponding root-principle would entail a branch that exists independently (*mustaqill bi-nafsihi*). The independent existence of a branch violates Ibn Tūmart's distinction between rational and revealed knowledge. The truth conditions for applying the judgment (*ḥukm*) from a source text (*aṣl*) to a branch case concern not only the logical form by which one compares the two, but also the exclusivity of revelation as a source of the content of divine law. Without a root-principle, the branch lacks the specification (*ikhtiṣāṣ*) needed to establish it as parallel to a case in a revealed source-text.[378] By definition[379], a branch cannot be independent of a root-principle. To affirm a branch without its root-principle is tantamount to inventing a law and its relevant judgment without deference to revelation (violating R3). If we conceive of revelation as that which verifies the relationship of the branch to its root-principle, an independent branch will not cohere with the totality of revealed root-principles and the branches validly derived therefrom (violating R2).

Regarding the third rule, Ibn Tūmart shows that it is impossible to establish one branch from two contradictory root-principles because only one of the two can necessitate the specification of the root (*mawjib ikhtiṣāṣihi* [*al-aṣl*]). Were both of the contradictory root-principles to specify the branch, we would have one branch that is also numerous (*kawn al-muttaḥid muta'addidan*), which implies "mutual inconsistency in the unified essence" (*al-tanāfī*

[378] D, 49.
[379] Abū Bakr b. Maymūn al-'Abdarī, *Sharḥ Kitāb al-'ilm*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām al-Mahmāh (Tangier: Salīkī Ikhwān, 2008), 126. Al-'Abdarī's emphasizes that a branch's attachment (*ta'alluq*) to its root-principle is a specific property (*khāṣṣiyya*) of the branch. To negate attachment of a branch negates the branch altogether.

fī al-dhāt al-muttaḥida).[380] The unified essence refers to the judgment derived from the root-principle and applied to the branch case. Were it possible to derive one branch from two contradictory root principles, the branch would contain two contradictory judgments. This state of affairs would not only violate R3, by preventing either of the two root-principles from specifying the branch in any meaningful way, but would also violate R6, the law of the excluded middle, since one could judge a single branch case to be both obligatory and forbidden. Abū Bakr adds that the multiplication of the branch through its derivation from two contradictory roots violates R4, which states that it is impossible to overturn truths. On this view the truth (*ḥaqīqa*) in question is the essence (*ḥaqīqa*) of what is unified (*muttaḥid*). A branch case is one (*muttaḥid*) by virtue of the judgment applied to it. The application of the judgments applied in the two contradictory root cases to the branch case entail that the judgments would not only contradict one another in the branch, but also multiply the branch, overturning its essential unity.[381]

Ibn Tūmart's invocation of these four intellectual rules in "The Dearest Desire" is not meant to be exhaustive. He only claims that it is impossible to derive one branch from two contradictory root-principles because they violate four intellectual laws out of an undisclosed many. However, we must still contend with discrepancies between his articulation of the intellectual laws in "The Dearest Desire" and "Discourse on Knowledge." Although rules two and four are identical to R5 and R4, the fact that Ibn Tūmart, in reality, appeals to multiple intellectual rules (as stated in "Discourse on Knowledge") to explain the first and third rules raises an important question. If the intellectual rules in "The Dearest Desire" are consistent with

[380] D, 49.
[381] Abū Bakr b. Maymūn al-'Abdarī, *Sharḥ Kitāb al-'ilm*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām al-Mahmāh (Tangier: Salīkī Ikhwān, 2008), 128.

those in “Discourse on Knowledge,” why does he articulate them in different ways? The number and formulation of the intellectual rules seem to depend on the immediate context in which Ibn Tūmart appeals to them. In “The Discourse on Knowledge,” he presents the six intellectual rules as binding in a general way, regardless of context. The four intellectual rules we find in “The Dearest Desire” are articulated with an eye to their application within *fiqh*, as is evident in the root–branch terminology he employs.

Intellectual Principles

From these six general intellectual rules, Ibn Tūmart derives a number of principles that will determine the position he takes in *fiqh*, theology, and, most significant to Almohad historiography, *imāma*.

There are some aspects of *BIT*, as well as of other Almohad sources, we must keep in mind when evaluating how Ibn Tūmart applies his definition of knowledge and epistemological principles to the study and practice of Islam. Throughout *BIT*, he makes claims about knowledge that bear, not only upon the members of the Almohad community, but also upon Islam, Muslims, and humankind in a *universal* sense. For him, Almohadism is synonymous with Islam. Contemporary sources, such as al-Baydhaq’s *Akhbār al-Mahdī* and al-‘Abdarī’s commentary on “The Dearest Desire,” echo these universalizing tendencies. Arabic historiography as a whole, even sources that express a negative attitude toward the Almohads, testify to the early Almohads’ commitment to missionarism based on their founder’s doctrines and militant *jihād* for the purpose of converting both non-Muslims and Muslims. Most historical sources (*BIT*

included) explain the emergence of Almohadism by appealing to intellectual and political conflicts particular to the Maghrib and al-Andalus at the turn of the 6th/12th c. There is much truth to this. As the debate narrative shows, the Almohads articulated their emergent identity as a separate religious community *against* the Almoravid state and the Mālikī-Sunnī judiciary they patronized. That al-Baydhaq's narrative begins with Ibn Tūmart's arrival in Tunisia, rather than with a detailed account of his *riḥla fī ṭalab al-ʿilm* in the east, frames Almohad movement in terms of its relationship to North Africa.

Beneath this process of local self-definition, however, we see that Ibn Tūmart implicates himself in debates relevant to the wider Islamic world. Scholars like Huici Miranda, Hopkins, and Le Tourneau misconstrue Ibn Tūmart's divergences from Maghribī Islam as eclecticism because they do not appreciate his pretensions to universalism. *BIT* indeed contains doctrines that are similar (and sometimes identical) to extant Sunnī, Shīʿī, and Ibāḍī teachings. Yet to characterize the development of Almohad doctrine as haphazard or capricious ignores Ibn Tūmart's consistent effort to establish each point of doctrine according to a defined set of rational principles, which he believes to be incumbent upon all human beings. Although we can debate the manner in which he connects individual claims to these principles, his insistence upon their universality helps to explain why he appeals to doctrinal options from across Islam.

From Ibn Tūmart's definition of knowledge, we can derive a short list of epistemological principles that inform his classification of the sciences and his understanding of the obligations incumbent upon Muslims.

1. Metaphysical realism: there are things that exist outside of the mind; their existence is also independent of any mind.[382]

[382] Alexander Miller, "Realism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/realism/.

2. Reality (*al-ḥaqq*) is one (*wāḥid*)/ unified (*muttaḥid*)[383] and finite.
3. Truth (the propositional counterpart of *al-ḥaqq*) corresponds to reality, and is, therefore, one and finite, as well.
4. Knowledge is, by definition, true and certain; all other cognitive states are deficient by comparison and formally different from knowledge.
5. Epistemic success reflects one's moral disposition toward reality.

The remainder of this chapter will show how Ibn Tūmart's typology of the sources of knowledge yields three further epistemological principles:

6. Knowledge, regardless of its source, is knowledge (i.e. the univocity of knowledge).
7. The human intellect is limited with respect to morality, God, and the *sharī'a*.
8. Human beings can discover the above intellectual principles independently of revelation by way of the intellect.

In the remainder of this chapter, I examine how, on the basis of these principles, Ibn Tūmart elaborates the positive doctrines that characterize Almohadism as a unique form of Islam.

The Univocity of Knowledge

This notion of the univocity of knowledge is reflected in Ibn Tūmart's division of the sciences in "The Discourse on Knowledge." He divides the sciences into three groups: (i) "knowledge of religion" (*al-'ilm bi-l-dīn*), (ii) "knowledge of the world" (*al-'ilm bi-l-dunyā*), and (iii) "knowledge which concerns both religion and the world" (*al-'ilm bi-mā yutawaṣṣal bi-hi ilayhimā*).[384] The first two divisions echo the *dīnī-dunyāwī* distinction common in medieval Islamic classifications of the sciences. The third category is somewhat unique to Ibn Tūmart. This tripartite division of knowledge not only reflects Ibn Tūmart's anthropology, which understands perceptual and intellectual knowledge as propaedeutic to revelation, but also singles

[383] D, 51.
[384] D, 181.

out three sciences, the principles of which are grounded in pre-revelational human experience, but which are nevertheless necessary for accountability (*taklīf*) to the *sharī'a*. The sciences that concern both religion and the world are language (*lugha*), expression (*i'rāb*), and calculation (*ḥisāb*).

Ibn Tūmart conceives of language as any allusion (*ishāra*), writing (*kitāba*), or verbal expression (*'ibāra*) by which a speaker conveys meanings (*ma'ānin*) to his addressees. Language, therefore, is a system of denotations (*dalālāt*) that point to meanings or notions (*madlūlāt*). The indicated meanings exist independently of their indicators. The relationship between the indicators and the indicated in a language depends on the convention (*mawāḍa'a*) the users of this language establish and accept. With regard to Arabic, the language of the Qur'ān and *sunna*, Ibn Tūmart states that only the Arabs (and perhaps only the Arabs of old) received knowledge of the conventions of their language because "the Arabs were the ones who set down and *decided upon them*" (*al-ladhīna waḍa'ū wa-ṣṭalaḥū 'alayhā*).[385] All others acquire Arabic through transmission (*naql*). By pointing to the fact that Arabic is a conventional, human language, Ibn Tūmart raises the question as to how the indicators (*dalālāt*) particular to the Qur'ān and *sunna* came to indicate specific meanings in the first place, as well as how humans—Arab and non-Arab—continue to acknowledge the same indicator-indicated relationships current during the career of the Prophet. Ibn Tūmart's Mālikī interlocutor acknowledges the importance of lexicography and grammar to our understanding of revelation. On a charitable reading, the Mālikī might concede that the science of language is one branch of knowledge that applies to language of revelation and mundane languages alike. However, if we accept Ibn Tūmart's premises that Arabic is conventional and that meanings (or "notions of things") reflect a reality

[385] D, 58.

that remains independent of language, the Mālikī cannot appeal to the meanings to which Arabic terms refer as a source of knowledge without also appealing to sense-perception and intellect.

Let us reframe the question. From what source do we know the meaning of "hunger," as in "which neither nourishes nor avails against hunger?"[386] "Hunger" means nothing to whomever has never experienced the feeling of going without food. The meaning of hunger and like phenomena derive from sense-perception. We reach the same conclusion with regard to a related question: from what sources do we know the relationship between "hunger" (the denotation, *al-dalāla*) and the phenomenon this word intends (*al-madlūl*)? Ibn Tūmart attributes the acquisition of linguistic knowledge to transmission (*naql*), the same process Muslims use to establish the text of the Qur'ān and *sunna*. As we shall see, Ibn Tūmart understands sense-perception and intellect as integral to verifying the transmission of revealed texts, as well as other phenomena, such a historical reports, testimony, and language. The Mālikī's restriction of the sources of knowledge to revelation and its meanings, to the exclusion of sense-perception and intellect, leaves him unable to render account of how language indicates meaning.

The other two sciences that deal with both religion and the world—expression (*i'rāb*) and calculation (*ḥisāb*)—vouchsafe intellect as a source of knowledge in the religious sciences. Ibn Tūmart does not restrict *i'rāb* to its grammatical meaning (i.e. the inflection of Arabic nouns, verbs, and adverbs), but rather extends it to include the logical arrangement of sentences and rhetorical choices (*ta'līf*).[387] If language is a set of indicators by which a speaker refers to meanings, expression concerns the ways in which the speaker arranges them into logically and

[386] Qur'ān 88:7.
[387] With regard to *i'rāb*, Ibn Tūmart offers several examples of how one might denote similar ideas through various grammatical constructions. Although the basic meaning does not change, the emphasis and aesthetic qualities of the sentence may. See D, 58.

rhetorically effective statements. Without such arrangements, language can do no more than point to individual things. The fact that the Qur'ān contains sentences that are more than indicative entails that its content conforms to the rules of the intellect (*al-qawā'id al-'aqliyya*). Ibn Tūmart also stresses the role of the intellect in determining the meaning of equivocal terms (*dalālāt muttaḥida al-lafẓ muta'addida al-ma'ānī*) in context.[388]

Calculation is a more conspicuous example of the Qur'ān and *sunna* implicitly commanding the study of sciences the subject matter of which overlap with worldly sciences. Of the use of calculation in religion, he says:

> With regard to religion, certain acts of worship have an appointed time that can only be known by calculation. Through calculation, we know the days, weeks, months, and years, as well as all the acts of worship that are arranged according to them, such as the Friday prayer. If one does not know that it is Friday, then the prescribed prayer will be invalid. It is the same with fasting: if one does not know the calculation whereby one determines that it is Ramaḍān, the fast will likewise be invalid. It is the same with years, especially as regards the prescribed alms and the Ḥajj. Therefore, calculation is an important root-principle in religion.[389]

In commanding Muslims to observe the Friday prayer, or any time-specific act of worship or legal obligation, God implicitly commands the study of mathematics, astronomy, and calendation. Like the science of language and expression, calculation comprises a genus of sciences common to human civilizations regardless of their awareness of divine revelation. Although revelation sets the agenda of "religious" calculation, as applied mathematics, its source is not revelation, but rather intellect and sense-perception.

[388] D, 59.
[389] D, 183.

Reason, Morality, and Sharī'a

"The Dearest Desire" and "Proof that the Law is not Established by the Intellect in Certain Respects" (henceforth "Proof") contain Ibn Tūmart's argument against ethical realism in favor of divine command ethics. Since he does not consider moral judgments to reflect real qualities subsisting in things, Ibn Tūmart does not believe that human beings have access to moral truth outside of divine revelation. Rather, the truth of all meaningful ethical statements lies in God's subjective approbation, which, in revelation, takes the form of command and prohibition. Although his commitment to divine command ethics is consistent with Ash'arism, which articulates its ethical theory in opposition to the ethical realism of the Mu'tazila, Ibn Tūmart's specific argument against ethical realism is unique insofar as it relies on modality.

Ibn Tūmart makes his case for divine command ethics in four ways.

1. Knowledge excludes doubt: "…there is nothing in the intellect except contingency and [intellectual] admissibility, both of which are [kinds of] doubt, and doubt is the contrary of certainty. To derive a thing from its contrary is absurd."
2. Intellectual necessity: "…the inevitabilities of the intellect are three: necessary, possible, and impossible. Yet acts of worship are not of this kind of intellectual necessity or impossibility. Thus only possibility remains, and possibility leads to mutual opposition."
3. All particulars morally equal *vis-à-vis* the intellect: "…all concrete things are intellectually equal, and it is not the case that some of them are more deserving of permissibility or prohibition than some others. If they are equal, then they are mutually opposed. If they are mutually opposed, then they are voided."
4. God's sovereignty: "…God—may He be exalted—is the possessor of all things and does what He wants in His dominion and renders judgment in His creation how He wills. Thus it is not for intellects to render judgment, and there is no insight (*madkhal*) into that according to which the Lord renders judgment."[390]

[390] D, 157.

4 is the standard Ash'arī objection to the ethical naturalism held by the Mu'tazila and some *falāsifa*. In the cross-hairs of the Ash'arī critique stands the ethical naturalists fusion of fact and value; if the value of an action or thing is a natural quality pertaining to that action or subsisting in that thing, this quality "fundamentally removes God's will from normative evaluation."[391] 2-3 appeal to the intellectual rules Ibn Tūmart elaborates on the basis of modality. These arguments seek to arrive at the conclusion that moral qualities do not inhere in things by appealing to the unaided reason, rather than God's creative sovereignty. Without assuming anything about God or cosmogony, the intellect can only evaluate a thing, action, or proposition according to modality. "Drinking wine," to take one example, is either (a) necessary, (b) impossible, or (c) possible. We can immediately eliminate (a) and (b) because we know that consuming wine is neither necessary, in the sense of eternity or habit, nor impossible, since we observe that human beings sometimes drink wine. Only (c) remains: it is possible both to drink and not to drink wine. The intellect cannot prescribe or proscribe things or actions, but only assign modality to them.

Legal propositions differ from purely intellectual judgments because their verifiability depends on matter of fact rather than on intellectual admissibility. When we evaluate the statement, "God forbids human beings to drink wine," from a purely intellectual standpoint, we reach the same conclusion. God's prohibition of drinking wine (or his allowance of it) is neither necessary nor impossible. The intellectual admissibility of this proposition does not ensure its truth or falsehood, but rather requires revelation, as matter of fact, to establish whether God does or does not prohibit the consumption of wine. Even if we rephrase the statement as a simple predication—"Wine-drinking is forbidden"—we reach the same impasse. All legal judgments assume an agent who makes these judgments. If, according to the intellect, it is possible for God

[391] Anver Emon, *Islamic Natural Law Theories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 110-11.

to prohibit, allow, or prescribe wine-drinking, either always or at different points in time, we cannot claim that any of these legal judgments are necessary on the basis of reasoning alone, but must appeal to revelation or another source to verify their contents.

What about *moral* propositions? Like Ash'arī's before him, Ibn Tūmart frames his discussion of *taḥsīn-taqbīḥ* in terms of legal obligation (*taklīf*), rather than moral obligation. The question he seeks to answer in "Proof" is, *Can Muslims derive legally binding commands and prohibitions from reason alone?* The answer is a resounding "no." Like al-Bāqillānī and al-Juwaynī, Ibn Tūmart rejects the rational *taḥsīn-taqbīḥ* associated with the Mu'tazila because a "Hard Natural Law" theory (to borrow Anver Emon's phrasing) infringes upon God's sovereignty.[392] To view reason as a supplementary or parallel source of knowledge of one's obligation to God binds God. The Ash'arīs' distinction between moral and legal obligation protects God's sovereignty by allowing him to issue commands that contradict or exceed human moral reasoning. Moreover, the position imputed of the Mu'tazila, according to which divine revelation confirms the moral truths available to the unaided reason, significantly undercuts humanity's need for revelation at the heart of Ibn Tūmart's anthropology. That Ibn Tūmart and al-Juwaynī deny that legal and moral predicates refer to attributes (*ṣifāt*) of things nevertheless suggests a thoroughgoing critique of naturalist ethics. Al-'Abdarī's commentary supports the extension of Ibn Tūmart's critique from law to ethics.[393]

[392] Anver M. Emon, *Islamic Natural Law Theories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 90.
[393] Abū Bakr b. Maymūn al-'Abdarī, *Sharḥ Kitāb al-'ilm*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām al-Mahmāh (Tangier: Salīkī Ikhwān, 2008), 84: "The intellect does not indicate a thing's goodness or badness with regard to the judgment of obligation. On the contrary, the designation of good and bad is to be derived in revelation, nor is goodness or badness a particular attribute belonging to a thing" (*fa-huwa lā yadull 'alā ḥusn shay' wa-qubḥihi fī ḥukm al-taklīf wa-inna-mā yaltaqā al-taḥsīn wa-l-taqbīḥ min al-sam' wa-laysa al-ḥusn wa-l-qubḥ bi-ṣiffa nafsiyya li-l-shay'*).

If we apply Ibn Tūmart's test to al-Juwaynī's example of killing, whether by itself or within a proposition like "Killing is bad," we see that moral judgments are no different from legal ones. The intellect can only determine that killing is possible. When we examine the proposition, "Killing is bad," we see that "bad" is not a necessary attribute of "killing" in the sense that this attribute is essential or obtains in all cases. We may, perhaps, balk at al-Juwaynī's claim that revenge and retributive justice are valid exceptions, but many would agree that killing in self-defense is, at least, morally permissible, if not simply good. Nor is it impossible to predicate "bad" of "killing"; it is easy to conceive of murder and accidental manslaughter as "bad." Putting aside necessity and impossibility, the intellect can do no more than determine that it is possible to predicate "bad" of "killing": "It is possible that killing is bad" and "It is possible that killing is not bad." Using his theory of modality, Ibn Tūmart reaches the same conclusion that al-Juwaynī does in *Irshād*. Good, bad, and other moral judgments do not describe qualities or attributes of things themselves. Rather, they indicate a subjective judgment, whether limited, in the case of human laws, or absolute, in the case of God's subjective judgment as expressed in revelation.

In order to evaluate Ibn Tūmart's rejection of naturalist ethics, and to see how he departs from his Ash'arī predecessors, we must confront certain passages in "The Discourse on Knowledge" wherein he suggests that moral reasoning outside of revealed sources is possible. He describes pre-revelational moral reasoning in terms of "advantage" and "disadvantage":

> Knowledge of the world has three subdivisions: knowledge of what is advantageous in the world, knowledge of what is disadvantageous in the world, and knowledge of what sustains one's livelihood (*'ilm asbāb al-ma'īsha*). [*In another version of his statement on knowledge of the world, he tells us,* "The consequence is the world's cultivation until its collapse." *And another:* "The consequence is the world's population until its destruction."][394]

[394] D, 183.

Ibn Tūmart does not further expound upon this division of knowledge. His focus on "livelihood," "cultivation," and "population" does, however, echo another passage from "The Discourse on Knowledge" concerning the significance of knowledge with regard to the world:

> Concerning a perceptible [example of knowledge], namely, the crafts, God causes all of these to serve as a support for souls and religions (*adyān*). These include building, agriculture, weaving, and whatever else brings about what is beneficial. Were humankind ignorant of all of this, their lives and livelihoods would be poorer; they would lack everything that is beneficial; they would be destroyed. Thus, we see that whoever knows a craft acquires what it is good in it, and, from it, brings about what is beneficial. Whoever is ignorant of the craft does not reap a single benefit from it; in fact, he cuts himself off from everything that is beneficial. He is lost and in need. His life and livelihood are poorer—and so is his religion.[395]

This small sampling is enough to show that Ibn Tūmart equates the "good" and "beneficial" with those actions that contribute to human survival and cooperation. Positing the preservation and improvement of life as pre-revelational principle seems incongruous with a rejection of ethical naturalism insofar as the it provides an avenue for valid moral inquiry outside of revelation. As Emon cautions, it is a mistake to attribute to Ash'arī voluntarists the view that divine command ethics absolutely excludes non-*shar'ī* moral reasoning.[396] Ash'arīs like al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī concede that, in the absence of a revealed law, one can engage in moral deliberation quite effectively. The character of this deliberation, however, remains only probable and prudential. Ibn Tūmart restricts the field of pre-revelational moral inquiry further. From the limited text we have, we see that Ibn Tūmart confines pre-revelational ethics to the customs, skills, crafts, and technologies that enable human beings to preserve life and mutual cooperation. The self-evident differences between human communities in this respect shows that, while provisionally successful, pre-revelational ethics is still only prudential. That certain customs and

[395] D, 180.
[396] Anver Emon, *Islamic Natural Law Theories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 90-91.

crafts are only probable solutions to human needs leads us back to Ibn Tūmart's first argument against ethical naturalism, namely, that knowledge excludes doubt. While the primary aim of this argument is to show that reason alone cannot produce definite legal obligations—thus violating Ibn Tūmart's principle that action be grounded in certain knowledge—we may secondarily apply this argument to pre-revelational moral reasoning. Human beings can approach near-certain knowledge of those things or actions that prevent survival. Beyond this negative knowledge, humans can only make conjectures with regard to the good and human flourishing.

Bringing together Ibn Tūmart's reduction of the intellect to one's capacity for modal judgments and his observations regarding pre-revelational ethics, we see why he identifies moral knowledge with the *sharī'a*. Ibn Tūmart is not saying that, because a moral predicate does not belong to a concept by necessity (e.g. "bad" does not belong to the concept "killing" by necessity), we should conclude from this that moral predicates do not refer to attributes existing in things themselves. Most ethical naturalists would agree that "bad" does not necessarily pertain "killing," since some acts of killing are morally good or, at the very least, morally permissible. This missing step, so to speak, is Ibn Tūmart's claim that we do not observe moral attributes in things or actions in the same way that we observe colors, shapes, or other qualities in things. A particular act of killing may indeed be bad, but we cannot make this judgment on account of any attribute existing in the beings involved in the act. The truth of such judgments depends on criteria wholly external to the act or the intellect making the judgment. Ibn Tūmart does not consider pre-revelational ethics to constitute moral knowledge in the proper sense because the criteria, though external, lack a proper foundation such that we can distinguish them from a set of mere conjecture (*ẓann*). For Ibn Tūmart, even the preservation of life is a conjectural end without the sanction of divine revelation. Even if we consider an action to be good on the grounds that it

contributes to survival, we must either judge survival to be good because of some attribute existing in it (which Ibn Tūmart denies) or appeal to external criteria. The ethical naturalist might argue that, by "good," he means "that which is conducive to the preservation of life and human flourishing," he must contend with G. E. Moore's "Open Argument Question." Moore argues that the naturalist confuses the question, "What things are good?" with the question, "What is goodness?" The naturalist makes the assumption that "goodness" and "that which is conducive to *x*" intend the same thing. But, as Moore shows, "goodness" is quality, whereas "that which is conducive to *x*" always means a thing. What both Ibn Tūmart and Moore desire to show is that, by trying to reduce *the* good (i.e. the standard by which we judge things, actions, and states of affairs) to things that are good, the ethical naturalist has simply proffered a list of possibly good things in lieu of establishing *the* good.[397] Although one might object that the same burden of proof rests on Ibn Tūmart—namely, that he must show why the *sharī'a* determines what *the* good is—he does not try to accomplish this through metaethical arguments. Instead, he argues that, by establishing God's existence, attributes, and historically particular relationship to the Prophet Muḥammad, one has sufficient grounds to accept the *sharī'a* as the moral standard.[398] In this way, Ibn Tūmart sees the *sharī'a* as an antidote to moral uncertainty inasmuch as it brings diverse human communities under a universal law that is accessible only through the positive repository of revelation. Only by confronting the centrality of epistemic certainty to Ibn Tūmart's

[397] G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 9-21. For a treatment of the Open Argument Question and objections to it, see Matthew Lutz and James Lenman, "Moral Naturalism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/naturalism-moral/.

[398] Ibn Tūmart deals with this question in "The Creed of the Almohads." See in particular D, 222-23 (§17: On the Confirmation of the Message by Miracles").

elaboration of Almohad Islam can we understand why Ibn Tūmart identifies moral inquiry with jurisprudence.

Qiyās

"Proof that the Law is Not Established by the Intellect in Certain Respects" is alternatively entitled "The *imām*'s Chapter on Analogy" (*Bāb al-qiyās li-l-imām*).[399] Ibn Tūmart devotes the bulk of this chapter to a critique of "rational analogy" (*qiyās 'aqlī*) and "legal analogy" (*qiyās shar'ī*). He concludes that rational analogy is not permitted *with regard to God* on the grounds that analogy, by definition, presupposes comparison. Since God is unlike any other being, comparing Him to His creatures is itself absurd and leads to further absurdities. He does not prohibit all forms of legal analogy, but restricts its use to two types: *a minore ad maius* (*tanbīh bi-l-adnā 'alā al-a'lā*) and common factor analogy (*tanbīh al-jāmi' bayn al-ghayrayn al-mutasāwiyayn fī al-ma'nā*).[400]

Ibn Tūmart justifies his treatment of rational and legal analogy by appealing to his teaching on objects of knowledge (*ma'lūmāt*). *Kalām* literature concerning what constitutes an object of knowledge (sing.: *ma'lūm*) began within Mu'tazilī circles and was later picked up by al-Ash'arī and al-Bāqillānī.[401] Ibn Tūmart presents his views on this topic in detail in "On the Objects of Knowledge," the final text in the epistemological section of *BIT*.[402] In "Proof," he

[399] E, 268 (n. 1).
[400] D, 165.
[401] Alnoor Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalām: Atoms, Space and Void in Baṣrian Mu'tazilī Cosmology* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 20-7; 27-9 (n. 34).
[402] I will return to the theme of objects of knowledge in Chapter 5.

connects objects of knowledge to his anthropological division of the sources of knowledge into sense-perception, intellect, and revelation.

> There are two kinds of analogy: rational and legal. That is to say, all objects of knowledge are of two kinds: those which we ourselves observe and those which we do not observe. Those which we observe are of two kinds: those which we perceive by contact (*'ind al-ittiṣāl*) and those which we observe separately (*'ind al-infiṣāl*). Those that we do not ourselves observe are of two kinds: those that we attain by way of the intellect and those that we attain by way of revelation. That which we attain by way of the intellect is of two kinds: that which we attain through indications of action (*dalālāt al-af'āl*) and that which we attain by analogy. That which is obtained by indications of action is like the indication that every action proceeds from an agent.[403]

Ibn Tūmart categorizes the objects of knowledge according to manner in which human beings encounter them. Direct observation, whether contiguous (i.e. touch, taste, smell) or separate (i.e. sight, hearing), pertains to sense-perception. Analogy concerns the objects of knowledge that human beings do not or cannot observe by way of sense perception. These are not only objects of knowledge that are remote in space or time, such as the content of *aḥādīth*, but also objects that are, by their very nature, imperceptible (*ghā'ib*). To analogy, Ibn Tūmart opposes "indications of actions" (*dalālāt al-af'āl*). These indications are *data* which inform discursive reasoning based on necessary truths, such as "every action proceeds from an agent." Throughout "Proof," Ibn Tūmart shows that indications of actions are superior to analogy because the former entail necessary connection, whereas the point of comparison in a given analogy may be necessary or accidental.

Ibn Tūmart allows two types of rational analogy: essential analogy (*qiyās al-ḥaqīqa*) and generic analogy (*qiyās al-jins*). Analogy, then, is an inference drawn by comparing two non-identical things (*ghayrayn*) on the basis of either a species-level quality or a generic one. An example of the first is a comparison of two things of different species on the basis of their being

[403] D, 158.

the same color as a feature of their essences. An example of the second is a comparison of two things that belong to the genus of "things that originate in time" (*al-muḥdathāt*).[404] Ibn Tūmart does not categorically deny rational analogical inferences. He rejects rational analogies that compare God to created things, because analogy requires one to identify an essential or generic feature common to God and the creature in question. Ibn Tūmart's commitment to God's transcendence (*tanzīh*) and unity (*tawḥīd*), which he establishes on the basis of "indications of actions" in texts like "The Creed of the Almohads," excludes all manner of comparison between God and his creatures (*tashbīh*). In order to draw an analogical inference about God, one must adopt a conception of God that lowers him to the level of created beings, all of which are, by definition, created in time.

That his rejection of rational analogy extends only to God becomes clear in his discussion of the five types of unsound analogies: (1) analogy of existence, (2) analogy of habit, (3) analogy of testimony, (4) analogy of cause, and (5) analogy of action.[405]

Analogy of existence begins with the supposition that "all we observe in existence pertains to three divisions: atoms, accidents, and bodies." The reduction of all conceivable beings to atoms, accidents, and bodies (defined as the combination of two or more atoms and their accidents), entails that analogy must be established on the basis of one of these three aspects common to all entities. Ibn Tūmart calls analogy of existence "corporeal analogy" because, for it to be valid with respect to God, God must have a body composed of atoms and accidents like any other entity.[406]

[404] D, 160.
[405] D, 158.
[406] D, 158-59.

Analogy of habit denotes arguments against God's creative acts on the basis of our habitual experience of generation and corruption. One may argue that God does not create individuals by observing that "a son comes from a father, a plant from a seed, or a bird from an egg," expanding this, by analogy, to "all existents" (*kull al-mawjūdāt*). Ibn Tūmart appears to allude to the Dahriyya's and the *falāsifa*'s belief that the world is eternal and, by extension, that all species that undergo generation and corruption are eternal.[407] He attributes analogy of testimony to "the perspectivalists" (*aṣḥāb al-jiha*). The perspectivalists maintain that "what we perceive of all existents [including God] is only some aspect [of them]." Such a view not only runs against Ibn Tūmart's commitment to metaphysical realism, but also reduces theology to analogical inferences drawn by comparing *perspectival* apprehensions of God to perspectival experiences of created beings.[408] Analogy of habit and testimony are invalid, in Ibn Tūmart's view, because they reflect specious forms of empiricism. The proponents of habit rightly observe that parents precede children, seeds plants, and eggs birds. However, in order to argue that these ways of generation demonstrate that God does not create individuals, they must exclude other explanations of God's creative efficacy that the senses do not perceive, such as occasionalism and secondary causation. Testimonial analogy is scientifically weaker, because its matter remains subjective. By separating the aspect (or "mode") from the thing of which it is an aspect, the matter from which one builds the analogy will only yield subjective inferences that are valid in a merely personal sense. Both analogy of habit and testimony constitute *tashbīh* because their proponents substitute naïve perceptions and the inferences drawn therefrom for propositions about things themselves.[409]

[407] D, 159.
[408] D, 159.
[409] D, 159.

The analogy of causes rests on the assumption that what we predicate of created beings is univocal with what we predicate of God. It is permissible to say of a human being that "the subsistence of knowledge in the knower is the cause of his being knowledgeable."[410] If "knowledgeable" (*ʿālim*) means the same thing when predicated of God, then, by analogy, the subsistence of knowledge in God is the cause of His being knowledgeable. The transposition of causal language from human beings onto God introduces multiplicity into God because His being knowledgeable, the effect, is separate from His knowledge, its cause, both existing together in Him. Increase–decrease, composition, and change violate God's internal unity. Moreover, by explaining God's knowledge in terms cause-and-effect, one introduces the possibility that God is the effect of an external entity, whether another deity or a lower object of knowledge.

Ibn Tūmart attributes the analogy of actions to "the partisans of actions" (*aṣḥāb al-afʿāl*), those who claim that individuals create their own actions. He, no doubt, has the Qādiriyya in mind, the most famous proponents of which are the Muʿtazila. They argue that "whatever an individual does, [this act] is attributed (*yuṣaf*) to him." We attribute injustice to someone who performs unjust acts. Revelation does not call God "unjust" in order to indicate that God does not perform unjust acts. But since we observe unjust actions in the world, the agents of these actions must be other than God. Ibn Tūmart objects to the analogy of actions because its proponents presuppose that good and bad are qualities of things themselves. As we have seen, Ibn Tūmart denies that moral qualities are attributes subsisting in things. He argues that legal and moral judgments derive from God's stipulation thereof in the Qur'ān and through the example of His prophets. On this model, the attribution of justice or injustice to an agent refers to his being

[410] D, 159.

"obligated" (*mukallaf*) to observe God's commandments. God, as sovereign, is not obligated to observe these commandments because He addresses them to human beings, not to Himself. Even if God pre-determines that an agent will commit unjust actions and the agent merely "acquires" (*iktasaba*) them (per Ash'arism), we cannot attribute injustice to God because he is not legally or morally obligated to observe His commandments.[411]

Legal Analogy

Ibn Tūmart accepts only two forms of legal analogy: *a minore ad maius* (*al-tanbīh bi-l-adnā 'alā al-a'lā*) and "analogy of the meaning common to two non-identical things that are equal in meaning" (*al-tanbīh 'alā al-ma'nā al-jāmi' bayn al-ghayrayn al-mutasāwiyayn fi-l-ma'nā*). The classic example of *a minore ad maius* is "Do not say 'fie' to [your parents]" (Q 17:23). Saying "fie" is the minor, source case. If talking back to one's parents is forbidden, then "whatever is more than saying 'fie' is [likewise] prohibited and forbidden."[412] Beating one's father or mother, for example, would exceed the minor prohibition, and is thus prohibited even if it is not stated explicitly in revelation.

An example of the analogy of the common meaning is the *ḥadīth*, "No one among you should withhold surplus water."[413] Ibn Tūmart argues that "surplus" water extends analogically to all surplus goods that "enliven souls." His acceptance of the analogy of the common meaning sets him apart from Ẓāhirism, with which some historians since Goldziher have associated him and other members of the Mu'minid dynasty. The normative force of the prohibition does not

[411] D, 159-60.
[412] D, 165.
[413] D, 165; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, 2572.

rely on the literal meaning of surplus water, but rather on its legal rationale (*ʻilla*), the preservation of life. Had Ibn Tūmart rejected analogy outright, the *sharīʻa*'s prohibition of withholding surplus water would not extend to other goods such as surplus food or medicine. The medieval Ẓāhirīs and some Ḥanbalīs would object by claiming that Ibn Tūmart defies his own prohibition against using human reason to infer the law by speculating about the underlying rationale of each particular statute. Ibn Tūmart, like many legal formalists, understands the inference of God's legal rationale or "wisdom" (*ḥikma*) to be permissible because identifying a legal rationale by analogy merely restates human beings' obligation (*taklīf*) to God and does not require a jurist to make legal or moral judgments independent of the *sharīʻa*.

Ibn Tūmart limits analogy to these two forms in order to avoid erroneous inferences and to preserve constancy in the *sharīʻa*. The principle of constancy in legal analogy derives, not from the Law, but from the intellect:

> …one pursues what is constant in all of the judgments of the Law (*aḥkām al-sharīʻa*), just as all intellectual judgments (*ʻaqliyyāt*) are constant. There is no difference between rational and legal analogy because the meaning has been verified, for rational analogy is equality in what is necessary, possible, or impossible, while legal analogy is equality in obligation, permissibility, and prohibition.[414]

Ibn Tūmart draws our attention to the similarity of the three *aḥkām ʻaqliyya* to three of the five traditionally recognized *aḥkām sharʻiyya*: *wājib–wājib*, *jāʼiz–ḥalāl*, and *mustaḥīl–ḥarām*. Ibn Tūmart appears to exclude "encouraged" (*mandūb*) and "discouraged" (*makrūh*) from legal judgments arrived at by analogy because they have no equivalent logical mode. These formal similarities between rational and legal analogy confirm that, for Ibn Tūmart, legal analogy is a fundamentally logical operation. I will discuss this problem below in relation to Ibn Tūmart's principle of "caution" (*iḥtiyāṭ*). His main objection to further applications of analogy concerns

[414] D, 165-66.

the misidentification of the meaning common to an *aṣl* and a *far'* or two *aṣlayn* whose legal qualifications are not the same. He cites a *qiyās* ruling against killing women apostates as an example of unsound legal analogy:

> "Whoever changes his religion, strike his neck." They claim that women should not be killed if they change their religion, arguing that this *ḥadīth* is addressed only to men on the basis of another *ḥadīth* that forbids the killing of women.
>
> One should say to them: "Do the meanings resemble one another, or do they differ?" Their resemblance is invalid. The meanings differ because the meaning of the prohibition against killing women reflects their [i.e. women in general] weakness and inexperience in combat—and this only in [the context of] *jihād*. As for the killing of someone who changes his religion, it is [intended as] an exemplary punishment and a deterrent that applies to *whomever* [changes religions].[415]

The meaning (*ma'nā*) of each *ḥadīth* reflects a different legal rationale (*'illa*). The prohibition against killing women does not qualify the command to execute apostates because the prohibition concerns non-combatants in war. The above inference invalidly truncates the command to execute apostates by suggesting that the "he" in "strike *his* neck" is meant in the most literal sense, rather than as a neutral possessive pronoun. Beyond issues of context, the legal qualification (*ḥukm*) of the analogous case contradicts the ruling of the source case, violating basic analogical form.

[415] D, 166. For the *ḥadīth* ("strike his neck"), see Sunan *al-Nasā'ī*, 4023, 4059-65; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3017, 6022; for ("women"), see *Muwāṭṭā'*, 21.9; *Jamī' al-Tirmidhī*, 1569; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3014; *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, 2668; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1744a-b.

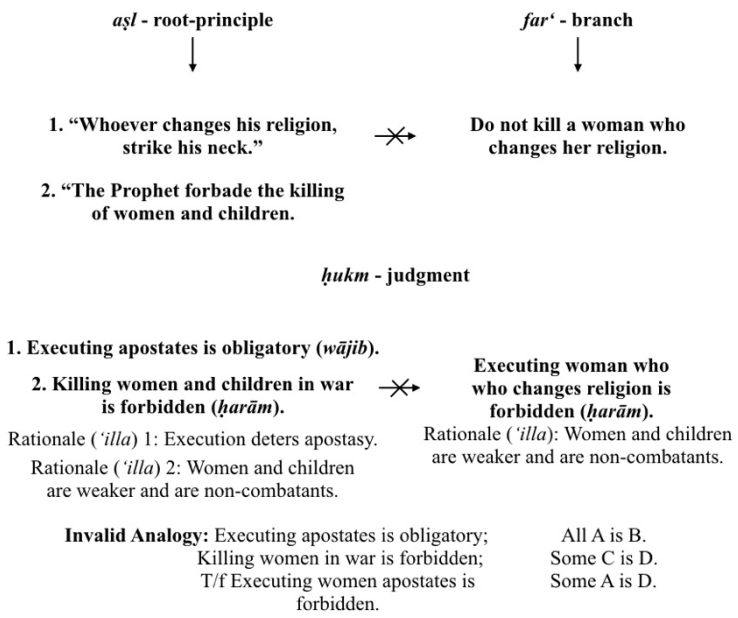

Figure 1: Invalid Analogies

Ibn Tūmart cites another example of unsound analogy in which jurists use valid analogical form to infer a branch judgment that contradicts an explicit judgment in the Qur’ān or *sunna*. One may argue that it is not obligatory to perform ritual ablutions (*wudū’*) after touching one’s penis on the grounds that the penis is a body part like any other.[416]

[416] D, 166.

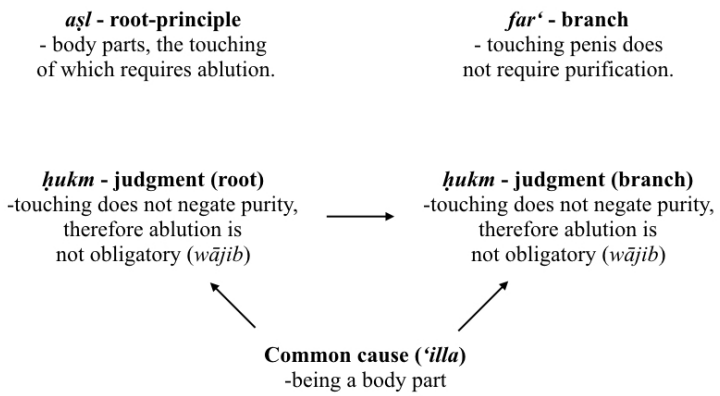

Figure 2: Positive Text Overrides a Valid Analogy

While this analogy is valid by itself, it contradicts another explicit statement in the *sunna* that qualifies the penis as different from other body parts in terms of purity, and explicitly commands ablution after touching it. The formal validity of the analogy does not carry greater weight than another report which contradicts or qualifies the conclusion the jurist infers through analogy. Nor can the jurist say that a valid analogy is of equal weight, such that he could choose to follow the judgment he infers through the analogy or the qualifying report. Ibn Tūmart places such a great emphasis on positive revelation, which reflects his commitment to a strong notion of ethical voluntarism, that he privileges positive revelation (even unit traditions) over any judgment attained by juridical reasoning.

In the above cases, the jurists either "rejected the conditions [of analogy]" (*ṭaradū hadhihi l-shurūṭ*), such as the consistency of judgments and context, or gave "precedence to

analogy over the *ḥadīth* reports."[417] The first case adds to the "source text" (*'ayn al-manṣūṣ*) by using the analogy of killing women in *jihād* to qualify the command to execute apostates in a way that is not explicit in the text (i.e. that the command applies only to *male* apostates). The second case reflects a use of analogy that is in conflict with or ignores another source text. Consistent with the moral dimension of Ibn Tūmart's epistemology, he attributes the misuse of analogy to jurists' moral failings, whether outright "avarice," or a willingness to compromise the standards of analogy and *ijtihād* for financial gain, even if such is necessary for subsistence.

Ibn Tūmart believes that many jurists justify the use of invalid analogy by attributing "free" or "textless" analogy to the Companions of the Prophet.

> If someone says: "We find that the Companions used analogy and acted in accordance with analogy."
>
> One should respond: "The Companions' analogy must have derived from an indication (*dalīl*) in the *sunna*, or from their intellects. If [the analogy] alludes to a prophetic statement, then it is valid; it is derives from their intellects [alone], it is inadmissible, because it is not valid that they should derive analogy from their intellects when it concerns the Law.[418]

He seeks to show how many scholars have confused the intellect's role in valid analogy in relation to the precedent the Companions established. One should not say that the Companions "derived judgments and Law from their intellects [alone]." Instead, the Companions "understood the meaning [of the *aṣl*] to which the Prophet had referred and made the meaning agree [in the *far'*]."[419] After deliberating on the meaning—whether *maṣlaḥa* or *mashūra*[420]—in the root case,

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[417] D, 166.
[418] D, 167.
[419] D, 167.
[420] D, 167. *Maṣlaḥa* refers to the "public benefit" of "well-being" that a jurist may assume underlies the revealed law. Some jurists admit the principle of public benefit in *ijtihād*, arguing that the *sharī'a* is obligatory precisely because God instituted it to benefit human beings. In practice, the jurist may assume the veracity of an uncertain transmission if the legal command or qualification it contains proves beneficial. See Aron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology Islamic Legal Theory* (Atlanta: Lockwood, 2013), 27-28. *Mashūra* (derived from *shūra*, "council") is a principle that allows counselors, often the people as a whole, inform the

the Companions used proper analogical form to apply the root-meaning to branch case. Legal analogy concerns the intellect insofar as establishing the proportion is a logical operation. The Companions, Ibn Tūmart concludes, never used legal analogy independent of the content of revelation. To derive legal rulings from personal observation or speculation is *taḥsīn–taqbīḥ*, and elevates the jurist's opinion to the same level as the *sharī'a*.

Let us return to Ibn Tūmart's restriction of analogy to the judgments "obligatory," "permissible," and "forbidden." He cites an example from the *sunna* in which a Companion, 'Uthmān, rendered judgment on a case in which two Qur'ānic verses conflicted with one another:

> …a man asked 'Uthmān b. 'Affān whether one could have intercourse with two sisters one owned as slaves. 'Uthmān said, "One verse permits it, and one verse forbids it. As for me, I would not do that."[421]

In all cases in which a revealed statement is decisive (*qaṭ'ī*), but confused, "caution is an obligatory root-principle." This principle is not only evident by way of consensus of the Companions, as in the above example, but also in the Qur'ān and *sunna*.[422] Ibn Tūmart extends the principle of caution (*iḥtiyāṭ*) to analogy.

> ['Uthmān] held to the principle of caution in prohibiting [sexual intercourse with two female slaves who were sisters] out of fear of what might occur with regard to it. There are many examples of this among the actions of the Companions, the model or regulator of which is for the individual to consider what requires an action [to be performed], and what requires its omission. That which requires action is of two sorts: "obligatory" (*maḥtūm*) and "encouraged" (*mandūb*). If one hesitates in judging between the two, caution [dictates] that one take it as obligatory. That which requires omission is of two

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mujtahid. See Emile Tyan, "Judicial Organization," in *The Origin and Development of Islamic Law*, vol.1, eds. Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Liebesny (Washington D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1955), 248.

[421] D, 168-69. *Muwattā'* 1128. The following *ḥadīth* (1129) provides context for the verse: "Mālik said that if a man had sex with a female slave that he owned, and then wanted to have sex with her sister, the sister was not permitted for the man until sex with the slave-girl had been made forbidden for him by marriage, manumission, *kitāba*, or the like—for example, if he had married her to his slave or someone other than his slave."

[422] D, 168. Ibn Tūmart cites the following verses from the Qur'ān as evidence of the principle of caution: 7:33, 17:36. He also mentions "caution in religion" (*al-iḥtiyāṭ fī al-dīn*) in "The Discourse on Knowledge, D, 182.

> sorts: "prohibited" and "discouraged" (*makrūh*). If one hesitates in judging between the two, caution [dictates] that one take it as prohibited.[423]

Although Ibn Tūmart does not spell out the relationship of caution to analogy, we may infer from his exclusion of *mandūb* and *makrūh* from analogy that analogies based on original cases that apply these judgements are valid if and only if the jurist applies the principle of caution.

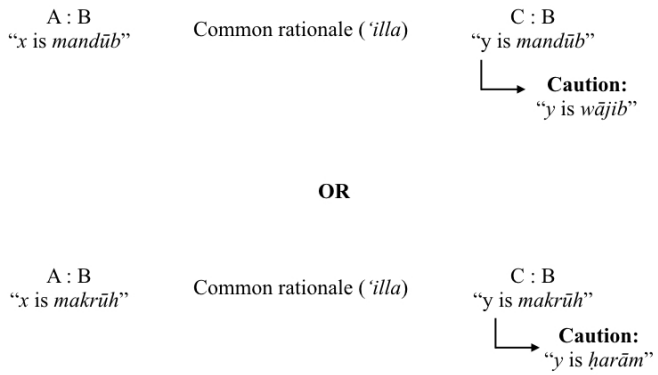

*Figure 3: The Principle of Caution (*iḥtiyāṭ*) in* ijtihād

Ibn Tūmart likely demands caution in such cases because of the indefiniteness of *mandūb* and *makrūh* as legal qualifications. These two qualifications describe an action's tendency toward obligation and prohibition (perhaps even good or bad) in the context of the whole *sharī'a*, but do not make a definite command or prohibition. One might apply caution in analogy in order to avoid qualifying a branch case in an indefinite manner. Even if the rationale (*'illa*) of the branch case adequately resembles that of the root case, the tendency of the branch action analogically qualified as *mandūb* or *makrūh* toward *wājib* or *ḥarām* leaves some doubt as to whether the

[423] D, 168-69.

branch case, the qualification of which is not explicit in revelation, may in fact be *wājib* or *ḥarām* in God's eyes.

An objector to Ibn Tūmart who embraces a materialist approach might object that the principle of caution does not save analogy because it leads to the same problem that Ibn Tūmart attributes to the proponents of unsound analogy. That is, he makes obligatory what God does not oblige, and makes forbidden what God does not forbid. In Ibn Tūmart's defense, the objector would then be committed to the view that what the law does not oblige is optional, and what the law the law does not forbid is licit. This impasse is characteristic of a totalizing view of *sharī'a*, according to which divine law holds a solution to every conceivable legal question, even if it is not readily apparent in the available sources. Ibn Tūmart believes that, in many situations, one cannot assume that the *sharī'a*'s silence implies that an action is optional or licit because to make this assumption discounts the attested consensus of the Companions—the third source of revelational knowledge after the Qur'ān and *sunna*—who exercised *qiyās* according to the principle of caution in these situations. Ibn Tūmart's emphasis on the principle of caution in *fiqh* suggests that Almohad Islam (at least in the beginning) tended toward legal and moral rigor. Actions the sources about which vacillate between *wājib* and *mandūb*, *ḥarām* and *makrūh*, as well as actions that are qualified as *mandūb* and *makrūh* via analogy, become definitive obligations and prohibitions. Ibn Tūmart attributes this rigor to the example of the Companions, whose consensus forms the third and historically final pillar of revealed knowledge in his typology of knowledge. As in the passage about 'Uthmān, his principle of caution reflects his fear of permitting or neglecting to command an action that may be definitively *wājib* or *ḥarām* from a God's eye view. Ibn Tūmart's composition on legal analogy not only sheds light on his understanding of revelation to human reason, but also offers some insight into the historical

practice of Almohad Islam, of which we know regrettably little. The principle of caution serves as a means of legislating ascesis (*zuhd*) for a broader community in that the supererogatory becomes the norm.

Knowledge and Taqlīd

The rejection of *taqlid* ("imitation of an authority") is a major practical implication of Ibn Tūmart's epistemology. Although he does not speak of *taqlīd* often, he addresses it definitively in "The Dearest Desire."

> Establishing [a branch ruling] on the basis of *taqlīd* is invalid due to the lack of explanation (*bayān*)…and because *taqlīd* is ignorance and does not lead to knowledge. Establishing knowledge on the basis of ignorance is absurd.[424]

Here, he refers to the *taqlīd* of the individual jurist in relation to a master, whether his teacher or an authority within his *madhhab*. His rejection of *taqlīd* is consistent with his criticism of the use of *furū'* manuals popular among North African Mālikīs.[425] In his commentary, al-'Abdarī extends Ibn Tūmart's argument against *taqlīd* beyond the student–teacher relationship to *all* Muslims:

> [All] people are of two sorts: the knowledgeable and the imitators (*muqallidūn*).
> The knowledgeable follows argument (*dalīl*).
> The imitator follows the statement of another individual without argument.
> Imitators are of two sorts: the imitator in legal judgment (*ḥukm*) and the imitator of argument.
> The imitator in legal judgment is he to whom it is said, "This is permitted or forbidden"; he assents to this and acts upon it.
> The imitator in argument is one who asks about the argument in outline (*bi-mujrarradihi*) and transmits it without knowing if it is correct or incorrect.
> Neither of these two approaches leads to knowledge.
> Thus, their divisions are four:

[424] D, 46-47.
[425] For a brief survey of Mālikī *furū'* literature, see Umar F. Abd-Allah, *Mālik and Medina: Islamic Legal Reasoning in the Formative Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 81-84.

(i) The knowledgeable man who imitates (*yuqallid*) one who is knowledgeable.
(ii) The ignoramus who imitates an ignoramus.
(iii) The knowledgeable man who imitates an ignoramus.
(iv) The ignoramus who imitates a knowledgeable man.[426]

Al-'Abdarī dismisses the first three possibilities on logical grounds. Imitating an ignoramus leads only to ignorance; a knowledgeable man may learn from another knowledgeable man, but since his mind assents only to argument, he would have no need to imitate his teacher simply because he is his teacher. He accepts the fourth arrangement but qualifies it:

> This ignoramus [who follows a knowledgeable man] is of two sorts: He is either one for whom knowledge is possible and can attain knowledge by arguments, in which case learning (*ta'allum*) is obligatory (*farḍ*) for him and *taqlīd* is not permitted; or, he cannot attain knowledge by argument, in which case *taqlīd* is obligatory for him.[427]

Although al-'Abdarī concedes that *taqlīd* is incumbent upon the invincibly ignorant Muslim, he concludes his argument by quoting Ibn Tūmart: "All of this has been settled. '*Taqlīd* is ignorance and does not lead to knowledge. Establishing truth on the basis of ignorance is absurd."[428] This discrepancy between Ibn Tūmart and al-'Abdarī raises historical questions with regard to the place of *taqlīd* within Almohad Islam. On the one hand, al-'Abdarī appears to indicate that, in his own time, *taqlīd* was obligatory for those men and women who did not have the intellectual capacity to digest arguments establishing creed and law. On the other, his deference to Ibn Tūmart indicates the commentator's recognition of the fact that Ibn Tūmart's soteriology excludes all *taqlīd*, even in the case of the invincibly ignorant. This is one of the few passages

[426] Abū Bakr b. Maymūn al-'Abdarī, *Sharḥ Kitāb al-'ilm*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām al-Mahmāh (Tangier: Salīkī Ikhwān, 2008), 78.
[427] Abū Bakr b. Maymūn al-'Abdarī, *Sharḥ Kitāb al-'ilm*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām al-Mahmāh (Tangier: Salīkī Ikhwān, 2008), 78.
[428] D, 47. Abū Bakr b. Maymūn al-'Abdarī, *Sharḥ Kitāb al-'ilm*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām al-Mahmāh (Tangier: Salīkī Ikhwān, 2008), 78.

within al-‘Abdarī’s commentary that offers evidence of possible jurisprudential and theological development within Almohadism after Ibn Tūmart’s death.

The Status of Ẓann

Ibn Tūmart’s rejection of *ẓann* as a source of knowledge, at first blush, appears uncontroversial. Virtually all Sunnī *‘ulamā’*, as well as those Shī‘a who privilege *aḥādīth* in the elaboration of theology and jurisprudence, agree that one may only derive credal knowledge from traditions whose content and chain of transmission (*isnad*) are shown to be certain. Knowledge of this kind usually deals with the nature of the hereafter (*al-ākhira*), the angels, and God insofar as these truths are not accessible to the senses or human reason. In addition, jurists give greater weight to this class of traditions as a source of action (*‘amal*) because it allows the stipulated action to be grounded in knowledge.

The majority of jurists do not, however, contend that legal rulings must be grounded in certain knowledge. To do so would create an unrealistic standard according to which a great number of *aḥādīth* would become invalid as sources of action, limiting the jurist’s ability to apply *sharī‘a* to new cases in the present. Ibn Tūmart’s discomfort with *ẓann* likewise contradicts the way in which Sunnīs conceptualize the relationship of conjecture to legal procedure. Although most *madhāhib* permit some form of juridical analogy (*qiyās shar‘ī*) as a method for deriving a ruling in a branch case (*far‘*), they do not consider the conclusions one draws from analogy to be certain (*yaqīn*), but rather “presumptive” or “probable” (*ẓannī*). Later, we see that Ibn Tūmart permits juridical analogy within certain parameters, but he tends to regard these forms of analogy as conducive to certainty, in opposition to the broader Sunnī

tradition. Eyewitness testimony (*shahāda*) belongs to this epistemic class, as well. In the debate narrative quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the Mālikī representative objects to Ibn Tūmart on the grounds that making *ẓann* a root-principle of error would frustrate the real-world application of Islamic Law because eyewitness testimony is always conjectural (*maẓnūna*). The only way to resolve this problem would be to require the judge ruling upon the case to witness every relevant aspect for himself (!). The Mālikī's objection is not unique to the Almoravid context. In circumstances where the jurist must rely on *ẓannī* sources to form an opinion, most Sunnīs agree that all that he is required to do (all things being equal) is to establish a judgment on the basis of "the preponderance of evidence and belief" (*ghalabat al-ẓann*).

His objection to *ẓann* as a source of law reveals that the conflict between Almohad *uṣūl al-fiqh* and Sunnism springs from their irreconcilable epistemological commitments. Sunnism, with few exceptions, conceptualizes certainty in terms of gradation. The derivation of legal qualifications (*aḥkām*) from traditions that yield certain knowledge is a maximum, the ideal to which the jurist aspires. Requiring the jurist to operate according to this maximum, in the majority of cases, is unrealistic. Many *aḥādīth*, especially those dealing with civil law, do not satisfy the criteria Sunnī *uṣūlī*s and *muḥaddithūn* use to determine their certainty. (Ibn Tūmart himself, it should be noted, adheres to most of these criteria in *BIT*.) Furthermore, banishing *ẓannī* sources from Islamic legal procedure, particularly eyewitness testimony, renders the *sharī'a* impracticable. In both *ijtihād* and practice, Sunnī *fuqahā'* need only meet the minimum requirements of *ghalabat al-ẓann*. The Sunnī *madhāhib*, in general, are comfortable working from presumptive evidence because, to do otherwise, would constitute a failure to recognize the epistemic constraints placed upon the *umma* in a post-prophetic world.

Ibn Tūmart founds his rejection of *ẓann* in both theology and law upon two principles: (i) the unity of truth and (ii) uniqueness of knowledge as a cognitive state. Although he marshals evidence from the Qur'ān to establish these principles, he considers both to be rationally self-evident. His rejection of *ẓann* will bear upon his discussion of the Sunnī legal principle *kull mujtahid muṣīb*, which stipulates that "every qualified independent legal interpreter (*mujtahid*) is correct."[429] Ibn Tūmart objects to this principle on the grounds that it absolves jurists from the task of ascertaining the one truth by allowing for coexistence of multiple rulings on one question. His attack on the tolerance of legal "differences" (*ikhtilāfāt*) strikes at the heart of Sunnism's majoritarian spirit. The various *madhāhib* regard *kull mujtahid muṣīb* to be such a valuable principle because it codifies intellectual humility in the practice of *ijtihād* and alleviates tension between members of different schools by treating the acceptance of differences as a duty.

Ibn Tūmart's argument signals his desire to raise *fiqh* to the same level as the rational sciences by applying the standards of the correspondence theory of truth to *ijtihād*. Commenting on the Mālikī's "denial that knowledge, apart from conjecture, is a root-principle of guidance," or action in accordance with the truth, Ibn Tūmart cites Q 10:33: "For what is there after the truth, but error?" The content of God's speech, in this instance, does not belong to the repository of commands and prohibition to which human reason is not privy, but rather a confirmation of what human reason knows independently of revelation. The verse indicates that "there is no intermediate position (*manzila*) between truth and falsehood," an appeal to the *qā'ida 'aqliyya*, the Law of the Excluded Middle.[430] Since truth (*al-ḥaqq*) conforms to reality (also *al-ḥaqq*), any deviation from that reality constitutes falsehood. His adherence to a strict version of the

[429] *Muṣīb*, the active participle of Form IV of *ṣ-w-b*, means "to hit a target," as in archery.
[430] D, 36.

correspondence theory leaves no room for cases in which a proposition might hold true despite flaws in the manner of its correspondence to reality, such as differences among individuals in the way they conceptualize (*taṣawwur*) the terms that comprise the proposition. Nor does he concede that the nature of reality is such that one could conceptualize it and form two mutually exclusive, true propositions (e.g. a multiverse).

As we observed in the previous chapter, Ibn Tūmart conceives of knowledge as both a faculty and what results from this faculty when it functions properly. Knowledge in the second sense is knowledge only insofar as its occurrence in the intellect meets certain formal criteria presented by the knowledge-faculty. Defective forms of cognition, like conjecture, result from the individual's failure to meet these formal requirements. Under this formalist rubric, which excludes probability, "there is no intermediate position between what one knows and what one does not know"; knowledge is ontologically different from all other forms of cognition.[431] And although Ibn Tūmart's epistemology allows for non-existent things (*ma'dūmāt*) to be counted among objects of knowledge (*ma'lūmāt*) and, by extension, knowledge of false propositions (e.g. "Zayd knows that proposition *p* is false."), "false knowledge" is an oxymoron.[432] The truth of a proposition, whether affirmative or negative, is the most basic criterion for an individual instance of epistemic success. A proposition that is only *probably* true, even to a high degree, fails to meet the formal requirements of knowledge and therefore constitutes *ẓann*.

The formal disparity between knowledge and conjecture appears at the end of the debate narrative in the guise of the third *qā'ida 'aqliyya*, namely, that knowledge and conjecture are contraries. This intellectual rule does not correspond to the first-order laws of thought that Ibn

[431] D, 37.
[432] See "On the Objects of Knowledge," in D, 185-94.

Tūmart lays out in "The Discourse on Knowledge," but is, rather, one of the second-order rules that he applies in the context of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. The contrariety of knowledge and conjecture results from Ibn Tūmart's commitment to realism and the correspondence theory of truth. However, if we compare Ibn Tūmart's later comments on the debate in "The Dearest Desire" to the laws of thought in "The Discourse on Knowledge," it becomes clear that he grounds the contrariety of knowledge and conjecture to R1 ("The number of truths is finite.") and R2 ("For any given state of affairs, there is but one truth."). Once these rules are translated to establish opposition between the *fiqhī* categories of *'ilm* and *ẓann*, he can apply two more first-order laws of thought to exclude *ẓannī* evidence from the domain of knowledge. R5 ("Two truths cannot contradict one another.") translates into the impossibility of joining knowledge and conjecture *qua* contraries. His application of R4 ("It is impossible to convert truths.") relies heavily upon the premise of the formal difference between knowledge and conjecture. One may object to Ibn Tūmart on the grounds that, given new evidence, a formerly conjectural judgment may be converted into knowledge. However, it is likely that Ibn Tūmart argues on the assumption that all possible evidence pertinent to a given question is available. Under these conditions, the knowledge that one can derive from this body of evidence according to the formal criteria he sets out in his epistemology is limited, and a judgment the evidence for which is conjectural cannot be converted. A conjectural judgment that could be converted to knowledge in this static context implies that the judgment had already met the formal requirements for knowledge and was, therefore, never conjectural in the first place.[433]

Many *'ulamā'* of the period shared Ibn Tūmart's premises regarding the unity of truth, and some others the uniqueness of knowledge, if not in such an extreme form. That so many of

[433] D, 32. Ibn Tūmart repeats this line of reasoning on D, 42-3.

his contemporaries and later scholars rejected Ibn Tūmart's approach to *fiqh* points to a fundamental difference in their understanding of the nature of *ijtihād* and the relation of rational sciences, like *kalām*, to the legal sciences. The jurists often disputed the application of Aristotelian logic within *fiqh*. Although some objected to logic because of its Greek origins, some *fuqahā'*, who were otherwise supportive of philosophical logic, conceded that the importation of deductive reasoning into the interpretation of the law, characterized by inductive reasoning, was methodologically unsound. In his logic textbook, *Mi'yār al-'ilm*, al-Ghazālī cautions the reader against applying the epistemic standards of the rational sciences to the practice of *fiqh* because they seek different sorts of conclusions. He singles out a prominent Ḥanafī, Abū Zayd al-Dabūsī (d. 1038/9) as a proponent of the view that juridical analogy should use only explicitly identified causes (*'ilal*) in order "to raise the status of analogy to that of the rational sciences."[434] Al-Ghazālī claims that:

> [Abū Zayd] makes claims appropriate to reason against all that is used in *fiqh*. But when he comes to defend his own school in detail he cannot sustain it according to the standard he adopts in principle… The point of what we say is that the exactitude we spoke of in connection to the rational sciences ought to be abandoned in *fiqh* entirely. To confuse the path leading to the attainment of certainty (*al-yaqīn*) with that leading to the attainment of opinion (*ẓann*) is the work of one who has picked up a bit of both (disciplines) but not mastered either.[435]

The rational sciences seek certainty (*al-yaqīn*) in both the conclusion of an argument and its premises; *fiqh*, on the other hand, seeks only *ẓann*. "Opinions (*ẓunūn*) concerning matters of jurisprudence that have been given due consideration are the deciding factor (*murajjiḥ*) that make it easier on [the *mujtahid*] when he hesitates between two possibilities (*'ind al-taraddud*

[434] Aron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 205.
[435] Al-Ghazālī, *Mi'yār al-'ilm fī al-manṭiq*, ed. Ahmad Shamseddin (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2013), 165; translation from Aron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 204-05.

bayn amrayn)."[436] Al-Ghazālī's separation of *fiqh* from the rational sciences is not only grounded in the epistemological distinction between demonstrative and practical sciences inherited from Aristotelianism, but also in the actual practice of *fiqh*. Even if al-Dabūsī could meet his own standards, the restriction of analogy to cases where the cause of a judgment has been made explicit or established by consensus would entail "a radical retraction of the law."[437] Identifying the goals of analogy and, by extension, *ijtihād* with probability, rather than certainty, is necessary to protect jurists' ability to extend the limited content of the law to an unlimited number of new cases.

Ibn Tūmart's focus on *ẓann* in "The Dearest Desire" implicates him in a longstanding debate concerning the infallibility (*taṣwīb*) of the *mujtahid*. Al-Ghazālī, like most Sunnīs, pertains to a class that Aron Zysow calls "infallibilists." The rationale for adherence to infallibilism differs from scholar to scholar, but they are united in their recognition of the principle that "every *mujtahid* is correct" (*kull mujtahid muṣīb*). Ibn Tūmart belongs to the opposing side, the fallibilists, who hold that it is possible for *mujtahidūn* to err in their judgments. Although fallibilism is typically associated with the Ẓāhirī *madhhab* and Shī'ī jurisprudence, some of the Ash'arīs within Ibn Tūmart's intellectual genealogy (most notably Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarayīnī, al-Juwaynī's teacher) rejected infallibilism. However, although the fallibilists accepted the possibility that a jurist could err, in practice, their response to error differed little from the infallibilists' tolerance of differences in legal rulings. Below, I will outline Ibn Tūmart's position in relation to prominent exponents of infallibilism (al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī) and fallibilism (Ibn Ḥazm) in order to show that Ibn Tūmart adopted a radical form of

[436] Al-Ghazālī, *Mi'yār al-'ilm fī al-manṭiq*, ed. Ahmad Shamseddin (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2013), 165.
[437] Aron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 205.

fallibilism. The hallmarks of his stance are (a) the re-orientation of *ijtihād* toward certain conclusions, rather than probable ones, and (b) an intolerance of legal difference in both theory and practice.

Ibn Tūmart articulates his objection to *kull mujtahid muṣīb* in a section of "The Dearest Desire" called "The Root-Principle" (*al-aṣl*). This section consists of fourteen divisions (*fuṣūl*), in which he discusses a variety of hermeneutical rules concerning the relationship of the root to the branch. Although the derivation of branches from root-principles is an expansive topic within *uṣūl al-fiqh*, he states that his purpose in these *fuṣūl* is to show that "it is impossible to derive legal judgments from [*ẓann*], and that *ẓann* is contrary to knowledge."[438] He broaches the subject of infallibility in *faṣl* 13, "On the Impossibility of One Root Establishing Two Mutually Exclusive [Branches]":

> The impossibility of a unified meaning being a root of two mutually exclusive [branches] is based on the impossibility of overturning truths. One aspect of the overturning with regard to this is known, namely, that this stems from the conceiver's conception (*taṣawwur al-mutaṣawwir*) and the believer's belief (*i'tiqād al-mu'taqid*). This is because the truth is unified (*al-ḥaqq muttaḥid*), and it is impossible to multiply that the unification of which is necessary. If the believer's belief [has] a unified meaning [and, at the same time] is a root of two mutually exclusive [branches], then he has already overturned the truth (*ḥaqīqa*) of his belief, for mutual exclusion is the pinnacle of conflict. If conflict exists, then opposition is necessary. If opposition is necessary, this leads to contradiction and the affirmation of the negation, which overturns truths, and the overturning of truths is absurd.
>
> There is much confusion concerning this rule, and many people stray from it, whether out of ignorance of it or from a lack of a firm understanding of it. They say, "Every *mujtahid* is correct." They have made this statement into a ladder leading to the destruction of the law, caused the basis of judgments to be other than its [true] cause, and inverted truths from their subject (*'akasa al-ḥaqā'iq 'an mawḍū'ihā*). They have caused what is permitted to become forbidden, and what is forbidden to become permitted. They have made the Law a contradiction, and they obey what anyone says, even if it is contradictory. They believe that the truth is in the various results of *ijtihād* (*al-mujtahadāt*), even if [these results] oppose one another.[439]

[438] D, 44.
[439] D, 51.

Ibn Tūmart is drawing a comparison between the individual act of deriving judgment on a branch case from a source text and the practice of *ijtihād* as a whole. According to the infallibilist model, it is conceivable that, given the same branch case, two jurists could derive mutually exclusive judgements from the same source text, or, alternatively, that one jurist could derive mutually exclusive judgments on two separate cases from the same source text. In either scenario, Ibn Tūmart believes that one of the two judgments mispresents the meaning of the source text. Aside from error, the only way the jurist could properly derive two mutually exclusive judgments from the same text is if the text in question possessed two (or more) mutually exclusive meanings. The "unified meaning" in the above example is analogous to "the truth" (*al-ḥaqq*) in the fallibilist model. If there is one correct judgment in every branch case, and the goal of *ijtihād* is certainty (rather than probability), then the principle of the infallibility of the *mujtahidīn* authorizes Muslims to observe legal rulings that are either extraneous to the Law or run counter to it.

Ibn Tūmart's critique of infallibilism resembles those of Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī, and al-Juwaynī in some respects. The former two come down on the side of fallibilsm. Al-Juwaynī, though ultimately an infallibilist, makes certain concessions to the fallibilists in order to critique al-Bāqillānī's articulation of infallibilism, then current among many Ash'arīs. The cornerstone of any fallibilist argument is the recognition that "the truth is one" (*al-ḥaqq wāḥid*), and that, in any given case, there is what Sohaira Z. M. Siddiqui calls an "ontologically correct answer." From a theological perspective, such an answer would be identical to the judgment God would render in a particular case.[440] Ibn Ḥazm argues that "the truth is in one

[440] Sohaira Z. M. Siddiqui, *Law and Politics under the Abbasids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 229-30.

[judgment]" (*al-ḥaqq fī wāḥid*) by appealing to the example of the Prophet. He stipulates, as a matter of doctrine, that "a Muslim is not permitted to hold the opinion (*yaẓunn*) that the Prophet judged incorrectly while knowing that he judged incorrectly"; Ibn Ḥazm goes as far as to declare one who even allows *another* to hold this opinion (without holding it himself) an unbeliever, "whose blood and property are licit."[441] We should note that Ibn Ḥazm does not argue that Muḥammad necessarily arrived at the ontologically correct judgment in every case his followers brought to him, but rather that the Prophet always approached each case with the intention of arriving at the ontologically correct judgment. Ibn Ḥazm puts forward the Prophet's intention to certainty as the correct model of *ijtihād* because his goal (*maṭlūb*), regardless of his success in reaching it, is the ontologically correct judgment. Once one accepts this fallibilist model, to entertain the principle of *taṣwīb* goes against, not only the example of the Prophet, but also leads to logically untenable positions, such as "The truth is [to be found] in two different points of view" (*al-ḥaqq fī wajhayn mukhtalifayn*).[442]

Ibn Ḥazm attributes the source of the infallibilists' error to a misconception of the goal of *ijtihād* and the duty particular to the *mujtahid*.

> We do not say: "Every *mujtahid* is commanded to follow that to which his *ijtihād* leads him." This is, in fact, the source of the error. Instead, we say: "Every *mujtahid* is commanded to engage in *ijtihad* and to attain the truth (*bi-iṣābat al-ḥaqq*). *Ijtihād* is the action [particular to] the *mujtahid*, yet [*ijtihād*] is not what is sought after (*al-shay' al-maṭlūb*), because we are commanded to seek, not [to do] that thing which finds is not the source of truth. All *ijtihād* is true insofar as it is the seeking of truth and its decree. Yet one may still make a mistake because he imagines that *ijtihād* is the action of the *mujtahid* for the thing to which his *ijtihād* leads him. They have made an atrocious blunder.[443]

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[441] Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Iḥkām fī uṣūl al-aḥkām*, ed. Fawwāz Aḥmad Zamarlī and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Zamarlī (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2016), 5: 123.
[442] Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Iḥkām fī uṣūl al-aḥkām*, ed. Fawwāz Aḥmad Zamarlī and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Zamarlī (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2016), 5: 123.
[443] Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Iḥkām fī uṣūl al-aḥkām*, ed. Fawwāz Aḥmad Zamarlī and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Zamarlī (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2016), 5: 125.

The infallibilists' omission of the attainment of truth from the goals of *ijtihād* troubles Ibn Ḥazm because, without a point of reference outside of the action of *ijtihād* itself, the *mujtahid*'s reasoning, as well as what results from it, devolves into solipsism. The goal of *ijitahād* remains, tautologically, that to which the act of *ijtihād* leads the *mujtahid*. Under these conditions, *ijtihād* falls short of the typical infallibilist goal of establishing probability in favor of one judgment over another. What Ibn Ḥazm is arguing is that the primary standard for assessing *ijtihād* should not be the *mujtahid*'s subjective experience of probability, the quality of the action that he performs, but rather the objective result. There is no doubt that the methods of *ijtihād* occupied Ibn Ḥazm, as is evident from his vociferous objections to juridical analogy. The epistemological value of analogy nevertheless remained, for him, secondary to orienting the goal of *ijtihād* toward the ontologically correct judgment. Even if such an answer escapes the *mujtahid*, his intention to certainty secures an objective by which one can evaluate both the method and result of legal reasoning.

Although Ibn Ḥazm appeals to reason (especially *reductio ad absurdum*) in his argument against infallibilism, his case rests primarily on example of the Prophet as he is portrayed in the Qur'ān and *sunnah*. Although the Andalusī Ẓāhirī *madhhab* may have influenced Ibn Tūmart's fallibilism (though not to the extent many historians believe), Zysow attributes his position to the influence of 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī and, most of all, Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī.[444] The connection Zysow draws between Ibn Tūmart and al-Isfarāyīnī is consistent with the scholarly genealogy Griffel establishes (2005; 2009). Most of what we now know about al-Isfarāyīnī's teachings comes from the writings of scholars associated with the Niẓāmiyya, particularly al-

[444] Aron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 275 n. 120; 280.

Juwaynī's *al-Burhān*. In comparison to Ibn Ḥazm, al-Isfarāyīnī builds his arguments on logical principles in a manner similar to what we see in *BIT*. According to al-Juwaynī, "Master Abū Isḥāq began by stating that the correct answer (*al-muṣīb*) is one. Then he said to one who held that the *mujtahidīn* are correct, 'This *madhhab* espouses sophistry (*safsaṭa*), first of all, and, in the end, espouses heresy (*zandaqa*)—and the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* is famous for this!'"[445] Al-Juwaynī interprets his teacher's charge of "heresy" as meaning the infallibilists' affirmation of a mere choice (*khīra*) and mandating it as a divine command. "Sophistry" pertains to the use of disputation to permit what is forbidden and forbid what is permitted.[446] Al-Isfarāyīnī elaborates upon the danger of sophistical conclusions inherent to the infallibilist model of *ijtihād*:

> Master Abū Iṣḥāq said: "Prohibition is the goal, and it has a procedure (*maslak*) within the Law. Permission is [another] desired goal, and it has its procedure in the Law. The procedure of prohibition and that of permission run counter to and mutually exclude one another (*'alā al-muḍādda wa-l-mutanāqiḍa*). How, then, can we believe that two contradictory procedures can be applied to a judgement in one-and-the-same situation (*maḥall muttaḥid*)?"[447]

Although he focuses on the method of *ijtihād* in this passage, a mainstay of the infallibilist case, al-Isfarāyīnī remains committed to the idea that the goal (*maqṣūd*/*maṭlūb*) of *ijtihād* both determines the method that the *mujtahid* must use and serves as the point of reference for verifying what his method yields. As in the passage from "The Dearest Desire," al-Isfarāyīnī draws our attention to the illogical conclusion (which he attributes to the infallibilists') that one can validly derive two mutually-exclusive, contrary judgments (i.e. "prohibited" and "permitted") in one-and-the-same case. The similarity between his and Ibn Tūmart's terminology is striking. Both oppose "the one" or "the unified" (*al-muttaḥid*), which encompasses both the

[445] Al-Juwaynī, *al-Burhān fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. 'Abd al-'Aẓīm al-Dīb (Cairo: Dār al-Wafā', 1999), 1319 (§1462).
[446] Al-Juwaynī, *al-Burhān fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. 'Abd al-'Aẓīm al-Dīb (Cairo: Dār al-Wafā', 1999), 1320 (§1464).
[447] Al-Juwaynī, *al-Burhān fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. 'Abd al-'Aẓīm al-Dīb (Cairo: Dār al-Wafā', 1999), 1321-22 (§1467).

branch case and the source-text from which it derives, to "mutual exclusion" (*tanāquḍ*), "contrariety" (*taḍādud*), and "contradiction" (*tanāfī*). It is likely that Ibn Tūmart encountered al-Isfarāyīnī's critique of infallibilism (or a version thereof) through the Baghdad Niẓāmiyya.[448]

Griffel situates Ibn Tūmart's claim that belief is founded on knowledge, rather than simple assent, to the early Ash'arī and Mu'tazilī doctrine of *takfīr al-'awāmm* ("declaring the vulgar masses to be unbelievers").[449] These theologians made a distinction between one who is a Muslim and one who is a believers (*mu'min*). The former, who assents to Islamic doctrine and obeys the *sharī'a*, but does not have knowledge of either, may be counted as a Muslim in the legal sense (i.e. he cannot be punished or have his property seized), but may not be considered a believer, one who will attain salvation. Although later authorities like al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī condemned this view, al-Isfarāyīnī and others in the Nishapur Niẓāmiyya were associated with this view.[450] We might consider *Takfīr al-'awāmm* to be the theological corollary to al-Isfarāyīnī's and Ibn Tūmart's stance on fallibilism in in jurisprudence. However, Ibn Tūmart takes *takfīr al-'awāmm* one step further. Earlier Ash'arīs still considered the vulgar masses to be Muslims, even if they were not believers; Ibn Tūmart consistently uses language that indicates that the vulgar are neither Muslims nor believers. The missionary and military activism we see in early Almohad historiography reflects the status of unbelief (*kufr*) that Ibn Tūmart accords to all human beings, even professing Muslims, outside of the Almohad fold. That Ibn Tūmart grounds both fallibilism and *takfīr al-'awāmm* in the unity of truth strongly suggests that, like Ibn Ḥazm,

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[448] Al-Zarkashī cites al-Isfarāyīnī's student, 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, as evidence that Shāfi'īs in the 10th/11th century had not reached a consensus regarding the position of the school's founder on *taṣwīb*. Al-Baghdādī seems to come down on the side of al-Isfarāyīnī and Ibn Fūrak, who believed that al-Shāfi'ī supported fallibilism. Al-Zarkashī, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ* (Cairo: Dār al-Ṣafwa, 1992), 6: 246-47.

[449] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 776-77.

[450] Frank Griffel, *Apostasie und Toleranz* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 208-15.

he and the Almohads would have charged other Muslims with unbelief simply for holding (or permitting others to hold) infallibilism in *ijtihād*.

Despite differences in their theoretical arguments for fallibilism, Ibn Ḥazm's and al-Isfarāyīnī's camp agree on how Muslims should respond to the errant *mujtahid* in practice. Though an infallibilist, al-Juwaynī's position on *taṣwīb* is germane to the analysis of *BIT*, not least because of his influence on Ibn Tūmart in theology, ethics, and epistemology. In his treatment of infallibilism in *al-Burhān*, al-Juwaynī makes some concessions to the model of fallibilism al-Isfarāyīnī expressed. He embraces, in particular, the principle common to all fallibilists, "the truth is one" (*al-ḥaqq wāḥid*), regardless of whether the question at hand is theological or jurisprudential. To accomplish this, al-Juwaynī adopts the same strategy Ibn Ḥazm employs: the division of *ijtihād* into the activity of the *mujtahid* and the judgment that results from this activity. In this way, he separates the assessment of the jurist's methodology from the assessment of the truth-content of the result. While results of *ijtihād* have some bearing on the *mujtahid*'s moral standing in relation to God, the correspondence of his ruling to the ontologically correct answer is primarily an epistemological judgment. If one recognizes that there is an ontologically correct answer, the activity of *ijtihād* must be oriented to this goal and its results evaluated accordingly. Yet even though al-Juwaynī concedes this point to the fallibilists, the issue of *how* (given the paucity of evidence in many cases) to verify a ruling's correspondence to the ontologically correct answer—the very problem that gave rise to infallibilism. Since, in most cases, the *mujtahid* lacks the means of verification, such that only God knows the ontologically correct answer, al-Juwaynī claims that we can only assess the quality of his reasoning and the moral intention behind his reasoning. The Muslim community should follow the *mujtahid*'s judgment, even when he errs, if he applies himself to the evidence

at hand in good faith. God will reward him despite his falling short of the ontologically correct answer. Al-Juwaynī defers verification of a correct judgment to the hereafter. If the *mujtahid* reaches the ontologically correct answer, God will reward him twice: once for the quality of his *ijtihād* and again for ascertaining the correct judgment.[451]

Why does al-Juwaynī make these concessions to the fallibilists? Zysow claims that his critique targets the infallibilism which al-Bāqillānī had espoused. Al-Bāqillānī argues in favor of a probability-oriented model of *ijtihād* by appealing to the concept of "communication" (*khiṭāb*). A legal norm requires a definite relationship between the communicator (God) and the addressee (prophet). This relationship is normative because the intended addressee has privileged knowledge of the context and purpose of God's message. Without such a relationship, we can not establish a "definite act of communication involved in God's setting down this evidence," and, hence, no valid norm. The interpretation of a communication without a definite addressee remains only probable because it depends on the personal state of the *mujtahid*, who, by the nature of his role, does not have the knowledge needed to pick out the "particular information" God's message conveys, and therefore relies on personal judgment to derive the likely meaning from the evidence. Al-Bāqillānī moves the question of certainty from the sources and results of *ijtihād* to the manner in which the *mujtahid* applies juridical analogy. Instead of a general norm, consensus (*ijmāʿ*) requires that the *mujtahid* must interpret evidence according to a rigid system of analogy. While the nature of scriptural evidence entails that the results of *ijtihād* are only

[451] Sohaira Z. M. Siddiqui, *Law and Politics under the Abbasids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 230-31.

probable, al-Bāqillānī finds an appropriate standard of certainty in the systematization of analogy.[452]

Following al-Isfarāyīnī, al-Juwaynī rejects al-Bāqillānī's infallibilism, not because he believes that it is possible that a *mujtahid* can reach the ontologically correct judgment, but rather because of the way in which his predecessor's identification of certainty with analogy unnecessarily limits the *mujtahid*. Although al-Juwaynī takes a fallibilist stance with regard to the results of *ijtihād*, he allows the preponderance of certainty (*ghalabat al-ẓann*) to stand as an adequate (and *realistic*) goal. Al-Juwaynī simply maintains that we cannot rule out methods of legal reasoning that fall below the formal standards of analogy because they might still be adequate to establish probability.[453] The fact that al-Juwaynī adopted this methodological openness from al-Isfarāyīnī suggests that some fallibilists endorsed a model of legal reasoning that was less restrictive than al-Bāqillānī's, not because (per al-Juwaynī) one can establish probability in many ways, but rather because they laid the burden of certainty on the results of *ijtihād*. If there is an ontologically correct answer to every legal question, the *mujtahid* must avail himself of whatever method leads to this answer. As we saw above, al-Isfarāyīnī understands the particularity of each question to entail a particular method that cannot be generalized to the extent to which al-Bāqillānī demands.

The preceding discussion of the infallibist-fallibist debate will help us to see the intra-Sunnī polemic in which Ibn Tūmart implicates himself by rejecting *kull mujtahid muṣīb*. We can reduce this debate to three mains points: (a) the oneness of truth, (b) the location of certainty in

[452] Aron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 270.
[453] Aron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 270-71.

ijtihād, and (c) the practical implications of rejecting the infallibility of the *mujtahid*. On all three points, Ibn Tūmart takes a radical stance that differentiates Almohad *fiqh* from prior articulations of fallibilism. His adherence to the oneness of truth should already be clear; however, the extent to which he embraces this principle affects his positions on the latter two points. The fallibilists locate certainty within the results of *ijtihād*, whereas infallibilists emphasize the method of *ijtihād* because they do not believe that certain results are attainable. Ibn Tūmart seeks certainty in both the results and methods of *ijtihād*. His commitment to basing legal action upon knowledge is clear throughout "The Dearest Desire." In his writings on juridical analogy, he takes a strict position which resembles al-Bāqillānī's in some respects.[454] Ibn Tūmart's stance on analogy is less extreme than Ibn Ḥazm's, who rejected analogy outright, but it certainly sets him apart from the eastern Ash'arī fallibilists that influenced him.

The way in which Ibn Tūmart's fallibilism bears upon the actual practice of *ijtihād* is the most distinguishing feature of his *fiqh*. While most Sunnī *fuqahā'* adopted *taṣwīb* on theoretical grounds, this principle had the added benefit of reducing conflict between the *madhāhib* and securing a majority. Sunnī fallibilists do not set out practical repercussions for the jurist who errs. Al-Isfarāyīnī's view on the standing of the errant jurist is not clear, but it seems likely that, without access to an objective standard against which to compare individual judgements *in this world*, he may have believed, like al-Juwaynī, that God will evaluate the *mujtahid* who fails to achieve the ontologically correct answer in the hereafter. Ibn Ḥazm appeals to a *ḥadīth* to argue that the *sharī'a* does not oblige Muslims to censure or punish a *mujtahid* who fails to reach the ontologically correct answer. God does not reward the *mujtahid* who errs in judgment, but

[454] On *qiyās*, see above.

rewards his valid exercise of *ijtihād*, "since *ijtihād* seeks the truth."[455] In this way, Sunnī fallibilists limit their ability to respond to juridical error, and, in practice, behave as if they accepted the principle of *taṣwīb*. At most, fallibilism manifests as a sort of intellectual activism directed toward reshaping the principles of an existing *madhhab* (the Shāfi'ī school, in al-Isfarāyīnī's case), or convincing Sunnīs from an infallibilist *madhhab* to convert to a fallibilist one (as Ibn Ḥazm tried to bring others to the Ẓāhirī *madhhab*). By contrast, Ibn Tūmart's fallibilism is activist to the point of literal militancy. His belief that, for every imaginable case, there is an ontologically correct answer that must be sought and applied with epistemological certainty entails that Sunnīs who embrace infallibilism are not only in error, but also unbelievers. In dismissing the ontologically correct judgment as an appropriate goal of *ijtihād*, the infallibilists no longer even *seek* the ontologically correct law which God obligates all Muslims to obey. Ibn Tūmart redraws the boundaries of the Muslim community in a rather restrictive way. Fallibilist Muslims must approach infallibilist Muslima as they would unbelievers, whether as communities in need of missionary enlightenment or as enemies hostile to the propagation of Islam.

One might object, as his Mālikī interlocutor does, that Ibn Tūmart cannot extend the positive source texts of *sharī'a* to every branch case and, at the same time, demand that every actionable judgment be derived in a way that excludes all probability. This is a particular problem for any branch case that requires the *mujtahid* to consider eyewitness testimony, since such testimony is conjectural (*maẓnūna*) in its very nature. The proximity of Ibn Tūmart's treatment of conjectural sources (such as eyewitness testimony and the unit tradition) to his

[455] Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Iḥkām fī uṣūl al-aḥkām*, ed. Fawwāz Aḥmad Zamarlī and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Zamarlī (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2016), 5: 118. The *ḥadīth* Ibn Ḥazm cites is *al-Nasā'ī*, 5381: *idhā ijtahada al-ḥākim fa-akhṭa'a fa-lahu ajr*.

discussion of *kull mujtahid muṣīb* indicates his understanding that his radical fallibilism stands or falls on his ability to ensure certain judgments despite the practical necessity of weighing conjectural evidence.

Ibn Tūmart accepts *ẓannī*/*maẓnūn* evidence as actionable insofar as a piece of conjectural evidence functions as a "sign" (*amāra*; sometimes *'alāma*). In such cases, the *mujtahid* does not establish the judgment (*ḥukm*) on the basis of the sign alone, but requires a decisive root-principle (*aṣl maqṭū' bi-hi*) to validate the sign's content. Eyewitness testimony (*shahāda*) and the reception of unit traditions (*qubūl akhbār al-āḥād*) are two examples of such signs. Considered in its own right, the epistemological weight of testimony is conjectural. As such, testimony cannot serve as the root-principle of a judgment. However, Ibn Tūmart classifies testimony as a sign on the condition that one guarantees the probity (*'adāla*) of the witness and that there is a preponderance of opinion that the witness is trustworthy (*ghalabat al-ẓann bi-ṣidq al-shāhid*). The appearance of the sign (*ẓuhūr al-amara*) in conjunction with the decisive root—in this case, Qur'ānic and Sunnaic source texts that describe or imply adjudication on the basis of eyewitness testimony—renders the sign actionable, though it falls short of knowledge (*'ilm*).[456]

Ibn Tūmart argues, on the same grounds, that, while unit traditions do not meet the formal criteria of knowledge, "it is necessary to act in view of them" (*yajib al-'amal 'inda-hā*). The evaluation of unit-traditions is identical to that of eyewitness testimony: one must establish the probity of the transmitter (*al-nāqil*) and there must be a preponderance of opinion in favor of his trustworthiness. The sole difference between the eyewitness testimony and the unit-tradition is that the latter purports to record testimony regarding the remote past. Ibn Tūmart identifies three specific root-principles that vouchsafe action in view of unit traditions. His primary source

[456] D, 51-52.

text is the Qur'ānic injunction: "Whatever the Messenger gives you, take; whatever he forbids you, refrain from it" (Q 59:7). He interprets this verse in accordance with the Ash'arī principle that the *sharī'a* covers every possible case and that a Muslim, as the "addressee" (*mukhāṭib*) of divine revelation who is under obligation (*mukallaf*), must conduct all of his affairs in accordance with the divine law. Ibn Tūmart recognizes that the extant body of source-texts of which we can be certain do not cover every aspect of human conduct. "Human beings are in a state of taking [what is] between evident and uncertain" (*al-nās fī kayfiyyat al-akhadh bayn shāhid wa-ghā'ib*). This predicament, which defines post-prophetic Islam, does not, however, absolve Muslims of obedience (*imtithāl*) to God's law. He considers four solutions to this problem:

> One can either [i] find this [answer] directly from the Messenger… [ii] remain without obligation (*taklīf*), [iii] accept law from other people, the just and the unjust alike, or [iv] the unit tradition may be repeated [until it is] concurrent.[457]

He dismisses all four possibilities. We should note, however, that Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of *imāma* leaves the first option open because he, like the Shī'ī *imām*s, claims infallibility (*'iṣma*) for himself. I will address the relationship of Ibn Tūmart's jurisprudence to his role as *imām* of the Almohads in a later chapter. From the perspective of Ash'arī divine command ethics, the second and third options are untenable: the former liquidates obligation of all meaning, and the latter requires the Muslim to place human obligations higher than his obligation to God. The fourth option is, in practical terms, the same as the second. Waiting for a unit tradition to become concurrent (which may never happen), and thus *certain*, entails suspending obligation until that happens. Treating unit traditions from trustworthy transmitters as signs whose validity depends

[457] D, 52. Ibn Tūmart repeats this same list with slightly different wording later on in the text (*al-Kalām fī al-tawātur*, *faṣl* 10). See D, 74-5.

on the universality of obligation and the Qur'ānic injunction to accept what the Prophet brings remains the only feasible way of extending the *sharī'a* as far as possible.

Ibn Tūmart also appeals to the *sunna* and the consensus of the Companions (*ijmā' al-ṣaḥāba*) to support the reception of unit traditions as signs. He argues that the *ḥadīth* which beings "Pass on information from me, even if only a verse" (*ballighū 'annī wa-law āyyatan*) reflects the Prophet's awareness of the unlikelihood that the *umma* would transmit every statement he made that might be pertinent to the application of the *sharī'a*, "…for the concurrence of everything that was conveyed about [the Prophet] is impossible."[458] The full text of this *ḥadīth* (from al-Bukhārī) expresses a juridical *ethos* that stands open to unit traditions, both prophetic and non-prophetic: "Pass on information from me, even if only a verse, and relate the traditions of the Banū Isrā'īl, for there is no restriction (*lā jaraḥa*). [But] whoever deliberately tells lies about me, let him take his place in the fire!"[459] The validity of unit traditions as that which necessitates action (*'amal*) hangs on its relation to Prophet's command to transmit as much from him as possible, even if these traditions fail to achieve the certainty present in concurrent traditions. Ibn Tūmart further claims that the Companions reached a consensus regarding the root-sign conjunction as a basis for action (*fa-qad ajma'at al-ṣaḥāba 'alā al-'amal bi-akhbār al-āḥād*).[460] Consensus, as a division of revelational knowledge (*'ilm sam'ī*), affords him an opportunity to balance the practical use of unit traditions in determining action with the more stringent demand that action should follow from knowledge. The content of individual unit traditions remains conjectural, but the Companions' consensus regarding the obligation to act upon unit traditions constitutes knowledge.

[458] D, 52.
[459] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3461.
[460] D, 74.

His usage of the root-sign conjunction to allow *ẓannī* evidence shows Ibn Tūmart stepping back from the more radical claims he makes about the uniqueness of knowledge as a form of cognition. Robert Brunschvig demonstrates that this formalist accommodation of unit traditions is quintessentially Sunnī. We find the idea that the unit tradition "necessitates action, but does not necessitate knowledge" (*yūjib al-ʿamal, wa-lā yūjib al-ʿilm*) in the works al-Bazdawī (Ḥanafī), al-Juwaynī (Shāfiʿī), and al-Bājī (Mālikī). Brunschvig likewise finds parallels to Ibn Tūmart's use of the sign-root conjunction in al-Ghazālī's *al-Mustaṣfā*.[461] Despite the hypothesis, first formulated by Goldziher and adopted by Fierro, that Ibn Tūmart had significant ties to the Ẓāhirī *madhhab*, Brunschvig and Zysow claim that Ibn Tūmart's acceptance of some types of *qiyās* and unit traditions in matters of action place his jurisprudence squarely within a formalist, Sunnī tradition. The one position that might indicate Ibn Tūmart's affinity to the Ẓāhirīs, his rejection of infallibilism, was not unknown to the formalist *madhāhib*, as evidenced by the number of prominent fallibilists within the major Shāfiʿī intellectual centers in the Islamic east. Although it is quite possible that Ibn Tūmart and other Almohads read Ibn Ḥazm and held his works on jurisprudence in high regard, their adoption of formalist methods in *ijtihād* separate them from the legal materialism characteristic of Ẓāhirism.[462]

Brunschvig, however, expresses some caution regarding the identification of Ibn Tūmart with Sunnism in light of his claim to *ʿiṣma*. "But once he confers upon the sole imām—that is, his own person— 'infallibility,' he is no longer orthodox: the 'people of the sunna' can do nothing else but fight him and disavow him."[463] The Almohads' attribution of infallibility to their

[461] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā min ʿilm al-uṣūl*, ed. Muḥammad Tāmir (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2011), 1: 355-56.
[462] Robert Brunschvig, "Sur la doctrine du Mahdī ibn Tūmart," *Arabica* 2, no. 2 (May 1955), 140-01; Aron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 279-82.
[463] Robert Brunschvig, "Sur la doctrine du Mahdī ibn Tūmart," *Arabica* 2, no. 2 (May 1955), 148.

founder presents a significant challenge to a coherent account of Ibn Tūmart's *fiqh*. As Fierro rightly points out, Muslim theologians have typically reserved the quality of *'iṣma* for the prophets—particularly Muḥammad—and, in Shī'ism, the *imām*s descended from the Prophet through 'Alī and Fāṭima. In both Sunnī and Shī'ī theories of *nubuwwa* ("prophethood") and *imāma*, one who possesses the quality of infallibility is denied *ijtihād*. The infallible individual (*al-ma'ṣūm*) enjoys privileged access to knowledge of *sharī'a* and, therefore, has no need to exercise *ijtihād* in order to answer legal questions. Ibn Tūmart tacitly acknowledges Muḥammad's *'iṣma* in legal and theological matters by defining *ijtihād* as the process by which the jurist ascertains the ontologically correct answer based on the extant sources attributed to the Prophet. To put it bluntly: if Ibn Tūmart claims *'iṣma* for himself, why does he devote so much effort to outlining a theory of *ijtihād*?

I see three possible ways of confronting this problem in the text. First, it is possible that Ibn Tūmart claimed *'iṣma* for himself some time after giving the lectures that make up "The Dearest Desire." A moderate reading of this possibility would indicate that Ibn Tūmart initially saw himself as only a *mujtahid*, but later abandoned this role in favor of *'iṣma*. An extreme reading, characteristic of the revisionist school, is that Ibn Tūmart *never* claimed infallibility for himself and that the Mu'minid dynasty attributed it to him only later, possibly for political reasons. The second possibility is that Ibn Tūmart only claimed what we might call "functional" infallibility, similar to what we see with *imām*s in Khārijī and Ibāḍī communities. This is Urvoy's position.[464] The third possibility is that Ibn Tūmart's elaboration of *ijtihād* on the basis of his epistemological principles constitutes a sign or proof of his *'iṣma*. I understand *BIT* and the extant Almohad sources as representative of the third possibility and the moderate reading of

[464] Dominique Urvoy, "La Pensée d'Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 27 (1974), 38-39.

the first. The chronicles agree that Ibn Tūmart claimed the title of *imām* and *mahdī* after relocating to Ribāṭ Hargha and Tīnmall. It is therefore likely that his claim to *ʿiṣma* was not made known to his followers until after he authored much of the material that forms the epistemological section of *BIT*. His text, "On the Imāmate," however, stresses the importance of knowledge as a qualification of both the *imām* and the awaited *mahdī*. The apocalyptic tone of this text rules out Urvoy's assertion of a functional infallibility, but confirms that, in Almohad thought, the *imām*'s scholarly qualities validated his ultimate claim to *ʿiṣma*. I will take up this question in greater detail in my discussion of *imāma* and the role of the *mahdī* in Almohadism in Chapter 6. Although the extent to which Ibn Tūmart leaves space for *ijtihād* in Almohadism is unclear, his lectures on *ijtihād* represent a critique of Sunnism out of his concern for epistemic certainty in the practice of Islam and offer a unique insight into how the Almohads understood themselves to be fundamentally different from the Sunnī-Mālikī orthodoxy that dominated the Maghrib at the time of their movement's founding.

Chapter 5: Ibn Tūmart's Theology

For evidence of the significance of theology to the Almohads, one need look no further than to the name by which they identified themselves: *al-muwaḥḥidūn*, "the monotheists." In a more precise sense, the name means "those who profess God's unity," a reference to their unwavering commitment to the doctrine of divine unity (*tawḥīd*). They labelled their enemies (especially the Almoravids) corporealists (*mujassimūn*), those who posit that God has a body or is a body. All Muslims are required to affirm that the God of the Qur'ān alone is God. In *ḥadīth* literature, the first pillar of Islam is "to bear witness to the fact that there is no god but God, and that Muḥammad is His messenger."[465] In another narration, Muḥammad states that the first pillar is "to declare God's unity" (*yuwaḥḥid Allāh*).[466] Over the development of classical Islamic theology, theologians from various schools began to interpret the first pillar, not only as the duty to declare that there is no god but God (i.e. that God is numerically one), but also the negation of any statement about God that implies any plurality in His being. The Mu'tazila were the first to identify their theological school with the doctrine of *tawḥīd*, calling themselves "the people of divine unity" (*ahl al-tawḥīd*),[467] but the notion that compliance with the first pillar of Islam required affirmation of God's transcendence (*tanzīh*) and the rejection of corporealism (*tajsīm*) also became commonplace in competing theological schools like the Ash'ariyya and the Māturīdiyya which developed in reaction to the Mu'tazila.

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[465] *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* 2609: *…shahāda anna lā ilāh illā Allāh wa-Muḥammad rasūl Allāh…*
[466] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 16a.
[467] A variation of the Mu'tazila's self-designation is *ahl al-'adl wa-l-tawḥīd* ("the people of justice and divine unity"), a reference to their theological and ethical activism in the early 'Abbāsid Caliphate. See Kifayat Ullah, *Al-Kashshāf: Al-Zamakhsharī's Mu'tazilite Exegesis of the Qur'ān* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 139; Richard C. Martin and Mark Woodward, *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997), 64.

Ibn Tūmart and other Almohad authors portray the conflict between the Almohads and the Almoravids as a clearly defined theological struggle between pure monotheism and unmitigated corporealism. Recent scholarship, however, shows that it is highly unlikely that the Almoravid rulers and the religious scholars whom they patronized embraced corporealism at all, let alone to the extent which Ibn Tūmart and Almohad historians describe. The derisive epithet *mujassimūn* nevertheless reflects the Almohads' sensitivity to theological difference.[468] Were one to deviate from Ibn Tūmart's elaboration of *tawḥīd* in the slightest—even if this deviation could not, properly speaking, be regarded as corporealism—it would be as if one had assented to corporealism. 'Abd al-Majīd al-Najjār argues that *tawḥīd* is "as much the foundation of religious thought for the *mahdī* as it is the foundation of his revolutionary movement."[469] Al-Najjār shows how Ibn Tūmart's identification of *tawḥīd* with the doctrine of God's "absolute transcendence" (*al-tanzīh al-muṭlaq*) puts God's transcendence at the heart of Almohad hermeneutics.[470] The content of all thought about God—whether scriptural or independent of scripture—must be judged against His absolute transcendence. The Almohads' conflict with the Almoravids and the Mālikī scholars they supported must be seen in light of their belief that Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of transcendence was the exclusively correct interpretation of *tawḥīd* in Islam. To put it another way, we should not ask *whether* Muslim scholars associated with the Almoravid state embraced corporealism in the typical sense—we know that they did not. Instead, we should ask *how* the

[468] Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Por qué llamaron los almohades antropomorfistas a los almorávides?" in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 816-17.
[469] 'Abd al-Majīd al-Najjār, *al-Mahdī Ibn Tūmart: ḥayātuhu wa-ārā'uhu wa-thawratuhu al-fikriyya wa-l-ijtimā'iyya wa-atharuhu bi-l-maghrib* (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1983), 202.
[470] 'Abd al-Majīd al-Najjār, *al-Mahdī Ibn Tūmart: ḥayātuhu wa-ārā'uhu wa-thawratuhu al-fikriyya wa-l-ijtimā'iyya wa-atharuhu bi-l-maghrib* (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1983), 204; 214; 220-21.

Almohads appropriated the idea of corporealism and transformed it in order to push away from the local *status quo* and define themselves as a separate and exceptional movement within Islam.

With some exceptions, most scholars writing on the Almohad Caliphate agree that theology held a deep meaning for the group's self-identification. However, there remains disagreement over the content of Ibn Tūmart's doctrines and their relation to the broader currents of Islamic intellectual history. In this chapter, I analyze Ibn Tūmart's theological writings in relation to contemporaneous developments in Islamic theology. I make two major claims. First, Ibn Tūmart holds theological views that reflect his association with Ash'arism as practiced in the Nizāmiyya *madrasa*s in Baghdad and Nishapur. The defining characteristic of this style of Ash'arism is its assimilation of and response to Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics, particularly his theory of modes and his cosmological proof of God as the Necessary Existent (*wājib al-wujūd*). Second, the manner in which Ibn Tūmart classifies theological knowledge reflects his persistent concern with "the ways of knowledge" (*ṭuruq al-'ilm*). Since the fulfillment of the *sharī'a* requires knowledge of certain propositions and that they be known in a certain way (i.e. by reason or by revelation), Ibn Tūmart takes great care to distinguish which theological statements are known by way of reason from the subjects of theological inquiry that must bow to what is stated positively in revelation. The uniqueness of Ibn Tūmart's theological writings stem not from the particular doctrines (since they are mostly Ash'arī), but rather from his attention to the epistemological provenance of each doctrine, as well as the manner in which he synthesizes and presents them.

The Field of Theology in *The Book of Ibn Tūmart*

In the Islamic tradition, there is no one science the contours of which correspond exactly to the science called "theology" in the European-Christian context. Rather, several sciences, none of which are mutually exclusive, investigate God and religion: dialectical theology (*'ilm al-kalām*), the principles of religion (*uṣūl al-dīn*), exegesis (*tafsīr*), creeds (*'aqā'id*), ṣūfism (*taṣawwuf*), and even philosophy (*falsafa*/*ḥikma*). In certain respects, even typically legal sciences, such as *fiqh* and *'ilm al-ḥadīth* have played and continue to play an important role in the development of scientific discourse about the nature of God in Islam. Although the style of argument Ibn Tūmart pursues in *BIT* bears the greatest resemblance to *kalām* and *uṣūl al-dīn*, he refers to this field of inquiry as "knowledge of religion" (*al-'ilm bi-l-dīn*), or simply "knowledge of God" (*al-'ilm bi-llāh*).[471] "Knowledge of religion" encompasses theology or the "religious sciences" (*'ulūm al-dīn*) in the broadest sense. Under this umbrella, Ibn Tūmart includes knowledge of God, knowledge of the messengers (*al-rusul*), and knowledge of the message (*al-risāla*). In this chapter, I will primarily focus on Ibn Tūmart's theology in the narrower sense of "knowledge of God," addressing prophecy only as it relates to God's relationship with humankind. Ibn Tūmart's manner of discourse is largely redolent of *kalām*, but, as we shall see, he bookends his presentation of God in the "Creed" with a discussion of the merit of *tawḥīd* in the *sunna* (§1) and an argument concerning the verification of Muḥammad's prophecy on the basis of miraculous signs (§17). Throughout the "Section on Theology," Ibn Tūmart takes care to ground the activity of theology in human experience. His theology not only proceeds from the

[471] D, 181-2 ("Discourse on Knowledge"); 210 ("Worship").

human being as an epistemic subject, who must appeal to reason, revelation, and the senses in order to parse pressing questions about the nature of the divine, but also from the fact of human limitation and human needs. The theology of *BIT* is ever oriented toward determining the demands which theoretical knowledge makes of practical knowledge, the demands which God makes on the human being.

Knowledge of God (al-ʿilm bi-llāh)

In "The Discourse on Knowledge," Ibn Tūmart subdivides[472] knowledge of God into:

I. Necessary
   a. Existence
      i. Negation of resemblance
   b. Oneness
      i. Negation of association
   c. Perfection
      i. Negation of defects
II. Possible
   a. Causing world to exist
   b. Causing the world's non-existence
   c. Causing world's return after its non-existence
III. Impossible
   a. Resemblance
      i. Restriction in time
      ii. Restriction in place
      iii. Restriction in genus
   b. Association
      i. Continuity
      ii. Separation
      iii. Inherence of an accident in an subject
   c. Defects
      i. Actions
      ii. Awareness
      iii. Speech

[472] For a complete outline of Ibn Tūmart's division of knowledge, see Appendix III.

As in the previous chapter, we see Ibn Tūmart use modality to classify the various propositions one can make about God. Since God is the only necessary being, the world (which most *mutakallimūn* define as all beings other than God) is wholly contingent.[473] God can bring it into existence, cause it not to exist, and bring it back again according to His will. The necessary and impossible relate to one another insofar as Ibn Tūmart does not believe that one can positively affirm God's existence, oneness, and perfection through independent reason because human reason does not have immediate access to God *qua* object of knowledge. Although revelation speaks of God's existence, oneness, and perfection in a positive way, human reason must approach these aspects of God's being by way of negation. For this reason, Ibn Tūmart equates the affirmation (*ithbāt*) of God's existence with the negation (*nafī*) of His resemblance (*tashbīh*) to temporally originated creatures, the affirmation of His oneness with the negation of His partner (*sharīk*), and the affirmation of His perfection with the negation of deficiencies (*naqā'iṣ*) in Him.

Ibn Tūmart understands the task of theology as the pursuit of God's essence and attributes by examining the actions that are possible of Him (*af'āl*) and by demonstrating what is impossible of Him.[474] Below, I will address possible criticisms of this method. In particular, there remains some question as to whether Ibn Tūmart's negation of *x* attribute of God necessarily entails affirmation of the contrary of *x*. Much of Ibn Tūmart's proof of God as

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[473] Al-Juwaynī defines "world" (*'ālam*) in his *Irshād*: *al-'ālam wa-huwa kull mawjūd siwā Allāh ta'ālā wa-ṣifat dhātihi*. Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā qawāṭi' al-adalla fī uṣūl al-i'tiqād*, ed. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Sā'iḥ (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-thaqāfiyya al-dīniyya, 2009), 23. Paul Walker translates this passage as: "… 'world', which is all existents save God, the Exalted, and the attributes of His essence." Al-Juwaynī, *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief (=Irshād)*, trans. Paul Walker (Reading, UK: Garnet, 2000), 11.
[474] Al-Najjār traces the *dalālat al-af'āl* method to al-Māturīdī (*Kitāb al-tawḥīd*) and al-Shahrastānī (*Nihāyat al-aqdām fī 'ilm al-kalām*). See 'Abd al-Majīd al-Najjār, *al-Mahdī Ibn Tūmart: ḥayātuhu wa-ārā'uhu wa-thawratuhu al-fikriyya wa-l-ijtimā'iyya wa-atharuhu bi-l-maghrib* (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1983), 213-14.

absolute existent (*al-mawjūd ʻalā al-iṭlāq*/*muṭlaq*) relies on the validity of this conversion. This problem is particularly evident in Ibn Tūmart's belief that the negation of resemblance entails the affirmation of God's existence, since resemblance and existence, unlike partnership/oneness or deficiency/perfection, are not immediately recognizable as a pair of contraries. In order to render a fair assessment of Ibn Tūmart's methodology, we must look at his assumptions through the lens of Ibn Sīnā's development of Aristotelian modal logic and metaphysics his cosmological proof of God as Necessary Existent, as well as the reception of these ideas among later Ashʻarīs like al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī.

The project Ibn Tūmart sets for himself is the confirmation and clarification of revealed theology by way of rational inquiry. Ibn Tūmart's "Creed," to take a prominent example, allows its reader to approach the truth of revelation from two directions. Readers from a Muslim background, whom we may assume have the positive content of revelation at their disposal, may follow Ibn Tūmart's line of argument in order to understand what the Qur'ān and *sunna* communicate about God's being and activity. The primary objective here is the elimination of statements about God, such as corporealist readings of scripture, that contradict what reason tells us about God and His attributes. Ibn Tūmart does not, however, leave the non-Muslim reader empty-handed. The non-Muslim reader will follow the rational proofs of God's existence, oneness, and transcendence and see how the Qur'ānic verses which Ibn Tūmart cites reflect the fruits of rational inquiry. From there, the non-Muslim must make the leap of accepting the positive content of the Qur'ān and *sunna* to which reason has no access on the basis of the harmony of reason and scripture that Ibn Tūmart highlights in his theological proofs. To this end, Ibn Tūmart takes the reader's own origination in time as his starting point in "Creed" §2 and expands his argument to encompass God's role in creation as a whol. Examining God's role in

cosmogony provides crucial empirical (*ḥissī*) and rational (*ʻaqlī*) evidence from which to infer God's existence and what is necessary of Him. "Arguments from [God's] action" (*dalālāt al-afʻāl*) and the modal approach unite Ibn Tūmart's epistemology to his theology. The pervasiveness of this modal framework throughout *BIT* offers the strongest evidence for the cohesiveness of the compilation's individual texts and single authorship. What we read in the "Section on Theology" is grounded in the epistemological work Ibn Tūmart accomplishes in "The Dearest Desire," "The Discourse on Worship," "Analogy," "The Discourse on Knowledge," and "The Objects of Knowledge."

The Theologian as Missionary – "The Discourse on Worship"

"The Discourse on Worship" (henceforth "Worhsip") has received little to no attention in the secondary literature, despite its importance within *BIT*. "Worship" brings together many different themes from both the epistemological and theological sections of *BIT*. Its style is likewise noteworthy. It takes the form of a *daʻwa* manual instructing Almohad Muslims in how to approach individuals receptive to Almohadism. It also stipulates *when* and *in what order* the missionary should reveal Ibn Tūmart's doctrines to the initiate. Its language resembles that of *kalām* apologetics ("If he says…then say to him…"/*in qāla…fa-qīla lahu…*), as well as that of Ismāʻīlī *daʻwa* manuals current in fifth/eleventh century North Africa and Persia.[475]

In "Worship," Ibn Tūmart states that:

[475] On the development on the style of *kalām* disputation, see Michael Cook, "The Origins of *Kalām*," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 43, no. 1 (1980), 32-43. On Ismāʻīlī *daʻwa* manuals, see Farouk Mitha, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ismāʻīlīs: A Debate on Reason and Authority in Medieval Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 39-40. For an example of an Ismāʻīlī *daʻwa* manual, see Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī, *A Code of Conduct: A Treatise on the Etiquette of the Fatimid Ismaili Mission* [= *al-Risāla al-mūjaza al-kāfiya fī ādāb al-duʻāt*], ed. and trans. Verena Klemm, Paul E. Walker, and Susanne Karam (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012).

> [t]he first among all obligations incumbent upon one who is legally responsible (*mukallaf*) is the knowledge of God—may He be exalted—since worship is only valid after one knows *Whom* one worships. After this, the knowledge of the messengers and the knowledge of what the messengers bring… The proper means [by which one attains] knowledge of God is the [application of] the intellect to the evidence of acts according to [the principle that] "every act requires an agent"…[476]

He dedicates the final sections of "Worship" to explaining how knowledge of God based on "the evidence of acts" differs from, and is epistemologically prior to, knowledge of the prophets and the *sharī'a*. My presentation of Ibn Tūmart's theology will focus on the first and second points of the tripartite division of religious knowledge he lays out in "Worship" and "The Discourse on Knowledge.": God and the messenger. Because of its exhaustive and systematic nature, I will build my analysis around the "Creed." I will bring in evidence from the "Section on Knowledge" and the shorter theological texts. Aside from providing a commentary on Ibn Tūmart's theology, I will highlight the conceptual coherence between these texts. Such coherence constitutes strong evidence in favor of the traditional ascription of *BIT* to Ibn Tūmart, rather than to multiple authors.

Theological Texts in BIT

There are two groups of texts relevant to Ibn Tūmart's theology. The first group consists of writings from "The Section on Knowledge" that deal with theology as a science in relation to other sciences, as well as with God's unique status among objects of knowledge (*ma'lūmāt*). The second group is "The Section on Theology" proper. The former group includes "The Discourse on Knowledge," "The Discourse on Worship," and "The Objects of Knowledge." While the first

[476] D, 210-11.

two discourses explore a variety of epistemological questions, "The Objects of Knowledge," an elaboration of metaphysical categories, serves as a transition from "The Section on Knowledge" to "The Section on Theology."

As its title indicates, "The Objects of Knowledge" (henceforth, "Objects") presumably treats of the parameters of the possible objects of knowledge. The object of knowledge (*ma'lūm*) was a *topos* in Mu'tazilī literature which the Ash'arīs later took up. Many *mutakallimūn* use the concept of *ma'lūm*, not only to lay out their epistemological positions, but also to fix the boundaries of their ontologies. To admit object *n* into the class "objects of knowledge" is often tantamount to granting that object a place in one's ontology or classification of beings, though the extent to which a particular object of knowledge participates in being differs from school to school. In his study of Baṣran Mu'tazilism, Alnoor Dhanani highlights,the significance of the doctrine of the objects of knowledge to the Mu'tazilī doctrine of attributes through a reading of the *Tadhkira* of Ibn Mattawayh (d. 415/1025) and the *Mughnī* of 'Abd al-Jabbār (415/1024). Although the *mutakallimūn* were epistemological realists, they considered perceptual knowledge of *n* to be knowledge of only some of the attributes (*ṣifāt*) that derive from *n*'s essence (*dhāt*). For the Baṣran Mu'tazilīs, attributes and essences are objects of knowledge that the knower can know separately. However, by investigating a particular being (*shay'*) that exists with a particular combination of essential and accidental attributes, one can identify the perceptible attribute (or attributes) that belongs to that being's essence (*al-ṣifa al-dhātiyya*). The Baṣrans hold that the essential attribute does not cease to be, regardless as to whether the atom (*jawhar*)[477] in which the essential attribute is instantiated is existent (*mawjūd*) or non-existent

[477] *The mutakallimūn* appropriated the term *jawhar* (borrowed from the Persian for "precious stone") to denote "atoms," or "indivisible substances" (*jawhar lā yatajazza'*). Philosophers also use *jawhar* to denote "substance" (Gr. *ousia*), the first of Aristotle's ten categories. Most philosophers did not subscribe to *kalām* atomism. However, both

(*ma'dūm*) at the present moment. The Baṣran doctrine of the objects of knowledge determines their analytical distinction between object/essence (*shay'*/*dhāt*) and attribute/state (*ṣifa*/*ḥāl*), as well as the borders between existence and non-existence.[478]

The Baghdadi Mu'tazilīs and the Ash'arīs objected to the Baṣrans' epistemology on ontological grounds. For the Baghdadis, the Baṣran approach reifies non-existents by describing non-existents in terms of atoms and accidents. Instead, they limit non-existents to the categories of "object of knowledge" or "object of autonomous power" (*maqdūr*). The Ash'arīs, who believed that only impossible things (i.e. those things which never exist) are truly non-existent, rejected the Baṣran model because it both misunderstood non-existence and, in doing so, allowed non-existents to be objects of knowledge. For example, the later Ash'arī, asl-Juwaynī regards the statement "Object *n* is a non-existent object of knowledge" as equivalent to "Object *n* is non-existent and existent."[479]

As we saw in Chapter 3, what constitutes an object of knowledge is significant to most *kalām* schools because their members often articulated the definition of knowledge in terms of the relation between the knower and the object of his knowledge in any given instance. As we will see, the ontological commitments which Ibn Tūmart makes in "Objects" inform the basic assumptions underlying his proofs of God's existence and his description of God's attributes.

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the *mutakallimūn* and the *falāsifa* agreed that a *jawhar* is a substance that can receive accidents (sing. *'araḍ*). On atomic theory in *kalām*, see Shlomo Pines, *Studies in Islamic Atomism* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997); and Jon McGinnis, "Arabic and Islamic Natural Philosophy and Natural Science," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/arabic-islamic-natural/

[478] Alnoor Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalām: Atoms, Space and Void in Baṣrian Mu'tazilī Cosmology* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 20-27.

[479] Alnoor Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalām: Atoms, Space and Void in Baṣrian Mu'tazilī Cosmology* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 27-9, n. 34. See also, al-Juwaynī, *al-Shāmil fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. 'Abdallāh Maḥmūd Muḥammad 'Umar (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999, 23-33.

Foremost among these is the metaphysical distinction between qualified existence (*mawjūd muqayyad*) and absolute existence (*mawjūd muṭlaq*).[480]

What I am calling "The Section on Theology" consists of the following six texts: (1) "That Which Originates in Time," (2) "The Creed of the Almohads," (3) "The Unification of the Creator," (4) "The Spiritual Guide," (5) "The Exaltation of the Creator," and (6) "The Witness of the Signs." The literary form of the first two texts differs sharply from that of the other four. "That Which Originates in Time" and "Creed" are protracted treatises that advance detailed arguments about ontology, God, and Islam. The four shorter text, while theological in content, make use of rhyming prose, repetition, and parallel structures. The difference between the treatises and the poetic texts has provoked many questions among scholars regarding their provenance and function. The brevity of the poetic texts has led some to conclude that these were of a popular nature and intended for uneducated Almohads who could not understand the longer "Creed."[481] Fletcher hypothesizes that the difference in form and theological content between the "Creed" and the "Spiritual Guide" suggests that the author of the "Creed" and "Spiritual Guide" were not the same person. She argues that Ibn Tūmart likely authored the "Spiritual Guide," the simplicity of which reflects his Amazigh milieu. She believes the "Creed" to have emerged much later in the court of Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf, and even puts forward Ibn Rushd as a candidate for its authorship.[482]

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[480] See D, 185.
[481] See Xavier Casassas Canals and Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Putting Criticisms against al-Ghazālī in Perspective," in *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ashʿarism East and West*, eds. Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 268; Dominique Urvoy, "La pensée d'Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 27 (1974), 31.
[482] Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic," *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991),110-27. Madeleine Fletcher, "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992/1994), 235-58. Ibn Tūmart and Madeleine Fletcher, "35. The Doctrine of Divine Unity" in Olivia Remie Constable (ed.), *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 190-97.

Fletchers' dissociation of Ibn Tūmart from his "Creed" has exerted an unfortunate influence on Almohad historiography. Fletcher advances the dual strata hypothesis to account for "the incoherence and lack of unity" that Ambrosio Huici Miranda attributes to *BIT* in his *Historia política del imperio almohade*.[483] As I show in Chapter 1, Huici Miranda's assessment (as well as those of Roger Le Tourneau and J.F.P. Hopkins) is rather uncharitable and betrays an ignorance of the text. Fletcher's attribution of the "Guide" to an Amazigh substratum and the "Creed" to an Andalusī superstratum reflects her misreading of key passages in the text and a misunderstanding of each text's function. Her revisionism, moreover, confuses what Ibn Tūmart *consistently* teaches about theological method, God's essence and attributes, and miracles.

Fletcher's manner of interpretation finds parallels in the work of Maribel Fierro, Amira K. Bennison, and Delfina Serrano Ruano.[484] Although Bennison and Serrano Ruano do not express their agreement with Fletcher on individual theological topics, they adopt of some of her conclusions about *BIT*'s authorship. Bennison lends credence to her multiple author hypothesis.[485] In similar spirit, Serrano Ruano characterizes the shorter "Guide" as "an eventual surrender to the realization that the masses,—even though they possess full mental capacity and hence, responsibility (*taklīf*)—are unable to grasp the subtleties of Almohad theology; in consequence, their obligation was reduced to the sole memorizing of a similar adapted version of

[483] Ambrosio Huici Miranda, *Historia política del imperio almohade*, vol. 1 (Tetouan: Editora Marroquí, 1956), 32; 96.
[484] Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphs and Ibn Rushd's *Bidayāt al-Mujtahid*," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (1999), 230-31. Amira K. Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 135. See Xavier Casassas Canals and Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Putting Criticisms against al-Ghazālī in Perspective," in *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ash'arism East and West*, eds. Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 268.
[485] Amira K. Bennison, "Almohad *tawḥīd* and its Implications for Religious Difference," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2 (2) June 2010, 199-201.

the Almohad credo."[486] There is no evidence that 'Abd al-Mu'min's command that Almohad Muslims memorize the "Guide" on pain of death was intended as a concession to the limitations of the masses. Moreover, Serrano Ruano implies that this concession was not only a later Almohad custom, but that Ibn Tūmart wrote the "Guide" with the express purpose of making such accommodations. This gesture would contradict what Ibn Tūmart says about individual obligation (*taklīf*) throughout *BIT*, since the individual's legal obligation pertains not only to the *sharī'a*, but also to knowledge of God.

In opposition to such revisionist readings, which rely on the assumption put forward by earlier scholars that *BIT* is internally inconsistent, I maintain that:

> (a) Ibn Tūmart authored all of the texts in "The Section on Theology" (whether in writing or orally).
> (b) The theological positions of one text are consistent with the positions advanced in the other five and with other texts in *BIT*.
> (c) The differences in form do not suggest different authors, but rather different functions.
> (d1) The longer texts present full arguments, the conclusions of which find direct parallels in the shorter texts.
> (d2) The shorter texts have a ceremonial and pedagogical purpose; they do not contain full arguments, but instead serve as an "index" to the arguments present in the longer texts.

Furthermore, there is no evidence in *BIT* or external sources to support the idea that Ibn Tūmart authored the shorter texts to serve as a permanent substitute for the arguments in the "Creed." Even if the later Almohads tolerated such a practice, substitution is inconsistent with Ibn Tūmart's soteriology. Salvation requires *knowledge* of God to the exclusion of rote repetition or *taqlīd*. The shorter creeds likely had three functions: to prepare beginners for further theological study; to help students and scholars memorize the salient points of Ibn Tūmart's theology; and to

[486] See Xavier Casassas Canals and Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Putting Criticisms against al-Ghazālī in Perspective," in *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ash'arism East and West*, eds. Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 268.

be recited, as sacred poetry, during common prayer services. The historical record confirms that, even after the Almohad period, Muslims used these texts (especially "The Spiritual Guide") as a mnemonic device.[487] The sheer amount of commentaries on "The Spiritual Guide" alone attests to the fact that later scholars understood these shorter texts as more than poems written for the masses.[488] I will return to the question of the mutual consistency of Ibn Tūmart's theological writings below, following the exposition of the "Creed."

The "Creed" and its Divisions - §1

Like his presentation of knowledge in "The Discourse on Knowledge" and "The Dearest Desire," Ibn Tūmart opens "The Creed of the Almohads" (or, "…of the *monotheists*") with a statement on the "virtue" or "merit" (*faḍl*) of *tawḥīd*.

> [A *ḥadīth* narrated by] Ḥumrān, a client of ʻUthmān b. ʻAffān, [who received it] from ʻUthmān b. ʻAffān: "The Messenger of God—God's blessing and peace be upon him—said, ʻWhoever dies knowing that there is no god but God enters the garden.'"[489] [There is another *ḥadīth*] from Ibn ʻUmar, who heard it from the Prophet—God's blessing and peace be upon him: "He said, ʻThe structure of Islam is built upon five things: the unification of God (*tawḥīd*), the performance of prayers, the giving of alms, fasting during Ramaḍān, and the *ḥajj*.'"[490]
>
> [There is another *ḥadīth*] from Ibn ʻAbbās: "The Messenger of God—God's blessing and peace be upon him—sent Muʻādh to Yemen. He said, ʻPresent yourself to the People of the Book and let the first thing to which you call them be the worship of God (*ʻibādat Allāh*). If they know God, then tell them that God imposed the five prayers upon them, day and night. And if they do this, then tell them that God has imposed alms upon them. You shall take from their possessions and distribute [them] to the poor among them. If

[487] One might compare this function of Ibn Tūmart's "Guide" to that of the *Ājurrūmiyya* by the Moroccan Amazigh grammarian Abū ʻAbdallāh b. Ājurrūm (672-723/1273-1323) and the *Alfiyya* by the Andalusī grammarian Abū ʻAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Mālik (600-72/1204-74). The former is a short presentation of Arabic grammar intended to be memorized. The latter is a versification of the principles of Arabic grammar. Both works are still used in the Muslim world to teach Classical Arabic grammar and (at least in the Arabic world) are available at any bookstore or kiosk.
[488] For a list of extant commentaries on the *murshida*, see Chapter 2.
[489] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1:43.
[490] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1:19.

> they obey, take from them, but avoid their most prized possessions.'"[491] In an alternate narration [of the same *ḥadīth*, Muḥammad says], "Fear the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no veil between him and God."[492]
>
> From this it is established that worship (*'ibāda*) is not valid except through belief (*īmān*) and sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*). Belief and sincerity [are achieved] by knowledge, knowledge by study, study by the will, the will by desire and fear, desire and fear by the promise and the threat, the promise and the threat by the Law, the Law by the faithfulness of the messenger, the faithfulness of the messenger by the appearance of the miracle by God's permission—may He be praised.[493]

The three *aḥādīth*—all taken from *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "The Book of Faith"—draw our attention to the significance of *tawḥīd* in Ibn Tūmart's image of Islam, both as a scientific concept and as personal duty. 'Uthmān's *ḥadīth* signals a connection between *knowing* (*'ilm*) the content of the statement "There is no god but God" and one's salvation in the hereafter. I have shown in the previous chapters that the majority of Muslim scholars did not regard rational, demonstrative knowledge of God's oneness as a requirement for salvation because it places too great a burden on the average believer. This majority might have interpreted this *ḥadīth* as praise of those who acquire deeper religious knowledge through study. Ibn Tūmart radicalizes this *ḥadīth* by presenting it as evidence that knowledge of, rather than verbal assent to, *tawḥīd* is necessary (though not sufficient) for individual salvation, as if the Prophet had said, "Whoever dies *not* knowing that there is no god but God does *not* enter the garden." Ibn 'Umar's *ḥadīth* reflects the place of *tawḥīd* within missionary work, Islamic education, and the just administration of the community (*umma*).

Ibn 'Abbās' *ḥadīth*, as well as Ibn Tūmart's final statement in §1, parallels the missionary program Ibn Tūmart lays out in "Worship." Prior to Mu'ādh's mission to Yemen, the Prophet

[491] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1:31.
[492] *Saḥiḥ al-Bukhārī*, 46:9.
[493] D, 213-14.

gives him detailed instructions with regard *to whom* and *the order in which* he should introduce Islam to the people he encounters.

(i) Approach the People of the Book; call upon them to worship God.
(ii) On the condition that they *know* God, impose the five daily prayers upon them.
(iii) If they accept the daily prayers, impose the legally mandated alms (*zakāh*), but avoid taking their most prized possessions (i.e. The missionary should not abuse the Qur'ānic command to redistribute wealth, either for personal gain or out of an overzealous commitment to the poor).

Ibn Tūmart highlights the relationship between knowledge of God and the validity of the ritual prayers, on the one hand, and the principles of Islamic law and governance, on the other. Most salient here is that Muḥammad enjoins Mu'ādh to approach the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*), or monotheists, to the exclusion of polytheists. In "Worship," Ibn Tūmart sets down a missionary order that mirrors Muḥammad's instructions to Mu'ādh in several respects. Anyone the missionary approaches must be either "an unbeliever" (*kāfiran*) or "a knowledgeable monotheist" (*muwaḥḥidan 'ārifan*). If he is an unbeliever, the missionary cannot speak to him about worship (*'ibāda*) "until he knows [God's] oneness and establishes [His] lordship" (*ḥatā ya'rif al-waḥdāniyya wa-yuthbit al-rubūbiyya*). If he already knows God's oneness and has established His lordship, he is either "one who seeks guidance" (*mustarshidan*) or "presumptuous" (*mukābiran*). If he is presumptuous, the missionary should cease speaking to him (*saqaṭat mukālamatuhu*). If he seeks guidance, the missionary should then introduce to the tenets of Almohad epistemology and theology.[494]

These points find exact parallels across Ibn Tūmart's credal writings, whether prose or poetry. In both §1 and "Worship," *tawḥīd* emerges as a necessary, preliminary doctrine that the initiate must grasp prior to learning specific credal points, worship, and the statutes of Islamic

[494] See D, 208 ff.

law. The above passage likewise reveals something about the Almohads' view of the world outside of their movement. The missionary will encounter monotheists and unbelievers. In the Maghrib, we may assume that "unbelievers" includes polytheists and followers of other folk religions[495], but perhaps also *Muslims* whose belief in corporealism invalidates their acts of worship and adherence to the *sharī'a*. While there is evidence that Ibn Tūmart regarded some People of the Book as monotheists (particularly Jews), it is likely that he and his successors categorized many of them as unbelievers.[496] For Ibn Tūmart, what determines one's monotheism is not visible adherence to Islam (or any other positive religion), but rather *knowledge* of God's oneness and lordship established by rational argument. "Monotheist," then, holds two distinct, but related meanings in Ibn Tūmart's lexicon. In the final sense, a monotheist (*al-muwaḥḥid*) is one who belongs to the Almohad community by dint of his acceptance of Ibn Tūmart as *imām* and *mahdī*. In a more basic sense, a monotheist is one who unifies (*yuwaḥḥid*) God according to the intellect. To become the former, one must have already reached the stage of the latter.

From these three *aḥādīth*, Ibn Tūmart derives a chain of causes that links worship to knowledge and the initial occurrence of revelation confirmed by "the appearance of a miracle by God's permission" (*ẓuhūr al-mu'jiza bi-idhn Allāh*). The final passage of §1 is nearly identical to one in "Worship." The chain of causes serves as an argument (*dalīl*) that shows the *mustarshid*

[495] The geographer, Ibn Ḥawqal (d. after 367/977), mentions astral religion and nature worship with regard to the Barghawāṭa tribe. This central Moroccan tribal confederation followed a religion that incorporated elements of Islam with ancestral Amazigh religious concepts. The religion's founder, Ṣāliḥ b. Ṭarīf (110/744-?) claimed to be a prophet and to have received a new Qur'ān in the Tamazight language, the central text of the Barghawata religion. The Almoravids exerted much effort to eradicate the Barghawata religion and convert the tribe to Sunnī Islam. Although Ibn Ḥawqal may exaggerate certain details about the "infamies" (*kabā'ir*) of the Barghawāṭa from the point of view of Islam, he does relate that the Barghawāṭa religion made inroads into the areas around Sijilmāssa and the Sūs where Ibn Tūmart's Maṣmūda tribe predeominated. See Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayā, 1992), 82-83.

[496] Al-Baydhaq begins his *Akhbār al-mahdī* by describing how Ibn Tūmart buried and prayed over a Jewish man who had died in Tunis. Al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-mahdī*, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Manṣūr (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr li-l-Ṭabā'a wa-l-warāqa, 1971), 11-12.

why his belief in God's oneness and lordship entails "the worship the Lord of the Worlds" (*'ibādat rabb al-'ālamīn*):

> Next, one should say to [the *mustarshid*], "Your worship is not correct without belief and sincerity; belief and sincerity are not correct without knowledge; knowledge is not correct without striving; striving is not correct without the will; the will is not correct without that which stirs and arouses it. That which stirs it is desire and fear, desire and fear by the promise and the threat, the promise and threat by the Law, the Law by the trustworthiness of the Messenger, the trustworthiness of the Messenger by the appearance of a miracle, and the appearance of a miracle by God's permission—may He be exalted… All of these things are interrelated and connected to one another. The existence of one thing among is not correct without the existence of the other, nor is it possible to put one condition among these in another place [in the causal order]. It is like a string strung with beads: if one of them falls off, they all fall off. The truth (*ṣiḥḥa*) of this is evident and is not disputed among those who possess intelligence (*'inda al-'uqalā'*).[497]

Despite its priority in the text, it is not clear if Ibn Tūmart authored "Worship" before "Creed." Based on the primacy of worship in the causes chain ("Your *worship* is not correct without…"), one would expect this passage to have originated with a text whose theme is worship. Alternatively, Ibn Tūmart claims to derive this causal chain from the three *aḥādīth* he cites in §1, which suggests that the passage originally appeared in "Creed." It is likely that the passage is original to "Creed," and only later appeared in "Worship."[498] "Worship" both contextualizes this passage within the Almohad mission and provides a commentary on the meaning of the passage. It also makes sense to date "Worship" after the "Creed" if we consider that "Worship" synthesizes points (sometimes quoting other theological texts in *BIT*) from across Ibn Tūmart's theological and epistemological writings.[499]

Frank Griffel shows that Ibn Tūmart's causal chain relates to two points of contention within contemporary Ash'arī theology. The first is Ibn Tūmart's revival of *takfīr al-'awāmm*,

[497] D, 206-07.
[498] The only other possibility is that this passage, like the prose poem that opens "Dearest Desire," comes from a third text or oral recital that has not come down to us.
[499] For example, much of the content on D, 210-11 also appears in "The Discourse on Knowledge," D 181-83.

"calling the mass of the population unbelievers," a position early Ash'arīs inherited from the Mu'tazila.[500] Following the persecution of Khurasānian Ash'arīs which began in 445/1053, many Ash'arīs abandoned "the condition that true belief must be accompanied by knowledge."[501] Al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī rejected *takfīr al-'awāmm*, the latter condemning it quite explicitly.[502] The conditionality of worship, belief, and sincerity upon *knowledge* (in the sense of certainty [*al-yaqīn*]), that we see in the "Creed" and in other passages of *BIT* reveals that *takfīr al-'awāmm* not only followed from Ibn Tūmart's epistemological principles, but was also a cornerstone of Almohad religiosity on par with the acceptance of Ibn Tūmart as *imām* and *mahdī*.

The causal chain likewise points to Ibn Tūmart's position on causality. Most of Ibn Tūmart's theology meshes well with classical Ash'arism. However, his claim that belief is contingent upon a chain of causes leading back to the conjunction of a miracle with the Prophet's receipt and dissemination of the Qur'ān flies in the face of Ash'arī occasionalism, which holds that God creates belief (*īmān/i'tiqād*) in the believer directly and in each successive moment. In terms that prefigure David Hume, even though knowledge or will may precede God's creation of belief in the believer, God is the sole efficient cause of the belief, the knowledge, and the will. Ibn Tūmart's insistence that the sequence "will→knowledge→belief" is necessary likewise contradicts the more fundamental Ash'arī position, which attributes absolute sovereignty to God over His creation. To stipulate that belief *must* follow knowledge (whether or not God or

[500] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 776. Griffel bases this claim on 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *Tafsīr asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*, ms. London, British Library, Or. 7457, 220b ff.
[501] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 776.
[502] Al-Ghazālī, *On the Boundaries of Theological Tolerance in Islam: Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's* Fayṣal al-Tafriqa, trans. Sherman A. Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 105-06, 112, 122-24.

knowledge causes the belief) is equivalent to claiming that God *cannot* create belief in the believer independently of knowledge.

I agree with Griffel that this passage from "Creed" and "Worship" indicates that Ibn Tūmart taught secondary causality rather than occasionalism. In fact, Griffel has identified several parallels between Ibn Tūmart's causal chain and passages from al-Ghazālī's *Revival*, in which he expresses "an ontology where events in the sublunar sphere (like a person's belief) are caused by chains of secondary causes that would all depend on God's power and eventually end with him."[503] (See §12 below.)

§1 serves as a preamble to the "Creed" as a whole. It explains the virtue of *tawḥīd* and its significance within the economy of salvation. I divide the remainder of the "Creed" (§§2-17) into three major sections. §§2-11 consists of rational (*'aqlī*) theology, comparable to what philosophers in the Latin West called "natural theology" or "general revelation." §§12-14 deal with revealed topics, such as predestination, the afterlife, and divine justice, but build upon the rational theology of §§2-11 in a direct manner. §§15-17 deal with propositions that one only knows by revelation (*sam'*), or "special revelation."

In this final section, Ibn Tūmart uses reason to qualify revealed statements about the divine names, the beatific vision (*al-ru'ya*), and miracles. Instead of positing theological statements, reason eliminates interpretations of the above topics that conflict with God's unity and transcendence. This division between rational and revealed theology reflects the distinction between the intellect and revelation/transmission as "ways of knowledge" which Ibn Tūmart makes throughout *BIT*. With regard to theology, Ibn Tūmart's commitment to God's absolute

[503] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 777-78. Griffel (2009), ??

transcendence, which comes to be known by reason alone, becomes the standard by which he qualifies and interprets (*ta'wīl*) corporealist statements in scripture.[504] In "Dearest Desire" (in the section entitled *Tawātur Faṣl 6*), he distinguishes between that "the knowledge of which is known validly by recurrent transmission (*tawātur*), and that which not known validly by recurrent transmission":

> That which is not known validly by recurrent transmission is, for example, *tawḥīd*, divine transcendence (*tanzīh*), penance, punishment, the garden, the fire, the qualifications of legal obligation (*aḥkām al-taklīf*), and the [identity of] the true *madhhab* from the false ones. Knowledge of these is not valid [if achieved] by way of recurrent transmission, because their source is not transmission (*naql*)… As with repentance, punishment, the judgments [of the Law], and all that was given to the Messenger, its source is not concurrent transmission, but is rather known by divine inspiration (*waḥī*).[505]

We should recall that, in *fiqh*, recurrent transmission is a necessary condition that a statement or body of statements (including the Qur'ān) must meet in order to be counted among the deposit of revelation. Ibn Tūmart does not deny that recurrent transmissions about *tawḥīd* and *tanzīh* exist. (He quotes some of them in §1!) Rather, he means that knowledge of these theological topics is not *valid*—is not knowledge *in the proper sense*—if revelation is the only way of knowledge that we follow in trying to understand them. In the same chapter, he states that "the way (*ṭarīq*) of *tawḥīd* is the intellect, as it is for divine transcendence (*tanzīh*). There is no way to [attain] concurrent transmission with regard to either."[506] However, penance and punishment, the garden and the fire would pertain to knowledge of the hereafter, a category of knowledge Ibn Tūmart otherwise associates with revelation or "transmission." But if we consider theodicy to be a

[504] 'Abd al-Majīd al-Najjār, *al-Mahdī Ibn Tūmart: ḥayātuhu wa-ārā'uhu wa-thawratuhu al-fikriyya wa-l-ijtimā'iyya wa-atharuhu bi-l-maghrib* (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1983), 220-21.

[505] D, 69-70.
[506] D, 69.

rational pursuit (as Leibniz[507] did), it is possible for Ibn Tūmart to claim that reason can establish some aspects of God's justice (*'adl*) and, as a consequence, reward and punishment for humans in the afterlife.[508] Humans depend on revelation to know the details of heaven and hell, but the intellect suffices to affirm the basic claims of divine justice.

Ibn Tūmart expands upon this epistemological distinction in "Worship":

> The source of knowledge of God is [the application of] the intellect to the evidence of acts (*bi-shahādat al-af'āl*) with respect to an act's need of an agent, whereas knowledge of the messengers is according to the appearance of a miracle. Knowledge of what the messenger brings is established by confirming the message in light of the veracity of the messenger (*ṣidq al-rasūl*), which is confirmed by a miracle, which appears by God's permission—may He be exalted…[509]

In MS A, this passage leads into a short text which may have belonged to one recension of "Worship."[510] Here, Ibn Tūmart connects God's effecting the miracle that confirms the prophet's message to his persistent claim (which we encounter in "Creed" §2) that "the existence of the Creator is known by rational necessity (*bi-ḍarūrat al-'aql*)."[511] This additional passage clarifies that "His existence is not known by *taqlīd*, since *taqlīd* cannot [by definition] derive from rational argument or demonstration, nor is His existence known from the senses, because sight does not reach Him."[512] The principle that we may only reason about God's *acts* (as opposed to His essence [*dhāt*]) explains Ibn Tūmart's division of the "Creed" between rational theology

[507] Leibniz writes in his preface to *Theodicy*: "For in doing one's duty, in obeying reason, one carries out the orders of the Supreme Reason. One directs all one's intentions to the common good, which is no other than the glory of God… Whether one succeeds therein or not, one is content with what comes to pass, being once resigned to the will of God and knowing that what he wills is best." Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*, trans. E. M. Huggard, (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2009 [1710]), 51-52.
[508] Epistemologically, this claim resembles the Mu'tazilī approach, although Ibn Tūmart disagrees with the Mu'tazilīs with regard to the human agency.
[509] E, 210. I prefer Abū al-'Azm's edition here. Ṭālibī omits this passage from "Worship."
[510] E, 210, n. 1; A, 59r.
[511] E, 210.
[512] E, 210.

(§§2-14) and revealed theology (§§15-17). That which can be known by reason (*tawḥīd*, *tanzīh*, *af'āl*, etc.), *must* be known by reason precisely because it is available to human reason; that which cannot be known by reason God must reveal (*sharī'a*, the *ghayba*, divine essence, etc.). With regard to God's essence, Ibn Tūmart concedes that God cannot disclose every aspect of it because its nature is so different from the nature of created beings that we could not possibly assimilate the divine essence to our ways of knowing, which are defined by createdness and limitation.[513]

In light of these epistemological considerations, we can now interpret 'Uthmān's and Ibn 'Umar's *aḥādīth* in an Almohad way. If entry into "the garden" requires knowledge of God, and if knowledge of God requires reason, then salvation requires reason. If the intellect is the sole sufficient means attaining of knowledge of *tawḥīd* (to the exclusion of revelation and *taqlīd*), and if *tawḥīd* is the first of the five pillars of Islam, then the unification of God in the intellect is a legal command (*amr*).[514]

One may object that, because Ibn Tūmart makes copious use of scripture within the rationalist portions of the "Creed," Ibn Tūmart relies on revelation and *taqlīd*. As we shall see, Ibn Tūmart cites certain verses of the Qur'ān in §§2-14, not as evidence, but rather in order to make the case that the Qur'ān itself presents rational arguments about God, or, at the very least, the kernels of such arguments. In many cases (e.g. §3), Ibn Tūmart uses citations from a the Qur'ān as *demonstranda*, the propositions at which the Qur'ān wants us to arrive by way of rational proof. He does not deny that rational arguments about God form a significant portion of

[513] Ibn Tūmart discusses this matter in "Creed" §8 (D, 217-8) and §10 (D, 218-9).
[514] Ibn Rushd plays on the Almohad belief that the *sharī'a* commands rational inquiry into God's unity and transcendence in his defense of philosophy in his *Decisive Treatise*. See Averroës [= Ibn Rushd], *The Book of the Decisive Treatise Determining the Connection between the Law and Wisdom & Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 1-4.

the Qur'ān and corpus of accepted *aḥādīth*. However, the transmission and recitation of these texts do not fulfill the obligation to *know* God because the authors of these texts (i.e. God and Muḥammad) understood these statements as arguments, *not* as claims to which Muslims must give their assent on authority alone. These kernels of rational argument also provide the reader grounds to make the leap from the rational content of scripture to its supra-rational, positive content on the basis of the Qur'ān's credibility as a source of rational theology.

Part I of the "Creed" – The Proof of God's Existence and Oneness

§2 – Modality of the Intellect

> By intellectual necessity one knows the existence of the Creator—may He be praised. Necessity is that which is not open to doubt and which is impossible for a rational individual to reject. This necessity has three divisions: necessary, possible, and impossible. The necessary is that for which being is unavoidable, such as the need for an action to have an agent. The possible is that which possibly exists and possibly does not exist, such as rainfall. The impossible is that for which being is impossible, such as the joining together of two contraries. This necessity is independently [present] in the minds of all rational individuals. It is established in their minds that an action must have an agent and that there is no doubt about the existence of said agent. Therefore God—may He be praised and exalted—indicated this in His Book, saying, "Is God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, to be doubted?"[515]

§2 consists of two parts. The first concerns the principle of "intellectual necessity" and the theory of logical modality that defines Ibn Tūmart's methodology throughout the "Creed."[516] As Griffel shows, this passage bears the influence of al-Juwaynī's late work, *Creed for Niẓām al-Mulk* insofar as the first topic of discussion is not the creation of the world or the definition of knowledge, as is typical of earlier Ash'arī works like al-Juwaynī's *Irshād* and al-Bāqillānī's

[515] D, 214; Q 14:10.
[516] D, 214.

Tamhīd, but instead the elaboration of modality according to Ibn Sīnā's model.[517] Al-Ghazālī likewise makes use Avicennan modality in his *Iqtiṣād*.[518] "Intellectual necessity" (*ḍarūrat al-'aql*) is an expression common in *kalām*, which refers to the way in which the intellect "constrains" or "forces" (*yuḍirr*) the intellect to assent to proposition. The division of intellectual necessity into the three division, necessary (*wājib*), possible (*jā'iz*), and impossible (*mustaḥīl*), reflects al-Juwaynī's appropriation of Ibn Sīnā's account of modality in order to strengthen Ash'arī arguments for creationism against Ibn Sīnā's argument that God is "the Necessary Existent" (*wājib al-wujūd*). Ibn Sīnā's argument presented a challenge to Ash'arism because it presupposes the eternity of the cosmos and, insofar as it portrays God's causal role as necessary, rather than voluntary, contradicts Ash'arism's deep commitment to God's sovereignty.[519] Ibn Tūmart's insistence that it is impossible for "a rational man" (*'āqil*) to reject what is intellectually necessary, and that "this necessity (*hadhihi al-ḍarūra*) is independently present in the minds of all rational men (*al-'uqalā' bi-ajma'ihim*)" indicates his familiarity with *Creed for Niẓām al-Mulk*. Al-Juwaynī speaks of the effect of intellectual necessity on the "rational man" (*'āqil*) in nearly identical terms.[520]

The second part of §2 consists of his presentation of "Every act must have an agent" as an example of an intellectually necessary proposition. This example, which we not only find in "Worship," but in al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* and many other *kalām* texts, is not an arbitrary one. The intellectual necessity of the statement, "Every act must have an agent," is an important

[517] Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 171-2.
[518] Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 170.
[519] D, 214.
[520] Al-Juwaynī, *al-'Aqīda al-niẓāmiyya fī arkān al-islām*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya li-l-Turāth, 1992), 13-15. Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 171. Al-Juwaynī characterizes the compulsion intellectual necessity exerts upon the rational man as "an impulse" (*badīha*).

premise of the proof of God's existence that Ibn Tūmart lays out in §§2-5. Moreover, this example allows him the opportunity to show how he selects and makes sense of scripture within the rationalist section of the "Creed" (§§2-14). He says that "an act must have an agent"—that, if one posits an act, one also necessarily posits its agent—is evident from Q 14:10: "Is God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth to be doubted?" From a literary standpoint, 14:10 stands out because this question is not particular to one prophet, but is instead raised by *all* prophets who approached unbelieving peoples:

> Their prophets [i.e. the prophets sent to each nation] said, "Is God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth to be doubted? He calls you so that He may forgive you of your sins and give you respite up until the specified term (*al-ajal al-musammā*)."… Their prophets said to them, "We are no more than human beings like you, but God shows His favor to whomever of His servants that He wills. It is not for us to bring an authority to you except by God's permission, and believers must place their trust in God.[521]

On Ibn Tūmart's reading, the "messengers" (*rusul*) sent to these various "peoples" (*aqwām*) understood that the sheer existence of world (the act) attested to God's creative capacity (the agent). With regard to the question of God's existence, the peoples do not need the authority of a mortal prophet, but are instead able to affirm God's existence by examining the world.[522]

The validity of §§2-14 rests on Ibn Tūmart's assumption that we may properly categorize every being other than God as an act (*fi'l*). If we remember that "agent" (*fā'il*) also means "efficient cause" (*'illa fā'ila*), then Ibn Tūmart says nothing more than "Every effect has an efficient cause." The *falāsifa*, however, did not consider all beings to be the result of efficient causes. Let us imagine that one of these *aqwām* whom the prophets visited consisted of philosophers and other sorts of skeptical folk (like the Athenians whom St. Paul addresses in

[521] Qur'ān 14:10-11.
[522] D, 214. *Sūra* 14 contains verses that argue for divine providence on the basis of the cosmic order (14:32-3). These verses are very similar to 2:164, which Ibn Tūmart cites in §4, where he argues that every thing (or *act*) is equal with respect to its origination from God.

Acts 17:16-34). Instead of objecting to the prophet's insistence that they abandon the religion of their fathers to serve the one God, they might have noted that the prophet's insistence that the creation of the heavens and the earth proves the existence of a Creator merely begs the question. Is it not possible, as Aristotle holds, that certain components of the world, such as the heavenly spheres, do not have an efficient cause, but rather exist eternally? Even if we attribute final or formal causation of the heavenly bodies to God, these bodies do not result from an efficient cause and cannot rightfully be called "acts."

Ibn Tūmart's sweeping categorization of all beings outside of God as acts reflects the influence of *kalām* atomism and occasionalism. At the heart of his categorization is the assumption (redolent of the modern scientific approach to causation) that no being outside of God exists eternally, and thus all beings outside of God require an efficient cause to account for their origination (*ḥudūth*). He proceeds to seek out this ultimate efficient cause, but has not yet provided evidence of his implicit claim that all beings, *qua* acts, originate in time. Ibn Tūmart addresses this question in §§6-7, which draw on two other texts in *BIT*: "On the Objects of Knowledge" and "That Which Originates in Time." We shall see that his categorization of all beings outside of God as acts leads to another possible instance of circular reasoning. His argument for God's knowledge of particulars (§§10-12) reflects the common Ash'arī position that the definition of "agent" includes the agent's knowledge of the act he performs. This analysis excludes many animate and inanimate beings that philosophers normally classify as efficient causes from agency because they are incapable of the requisite knowledge. If agency necessarily includes knowledge of the act, the classification of all beings outside of God as acts allows Ibn Tūmart to prove the existence of an ultimate agent analytically. In light of this, we *cannot* gloss Ibn Tūmart's basic assumption as "Every effect has an efficient cause." Rather, we

must understand him to mean: "For every act *x*, there is an agent that does *x and* has particular knowledge of *x*." Our assessment of Ibn Tūmart's "Creed" will depend on the extent to which he justifies his assumptions that (a) all beings outside of God are acts and (b) agency necessarily includes knowledge of the act.

§3 – The Human Being Originates in Time

In §2, Ibn Tūmart establishes that, if we observe an act (and if we are justified in classifying what we observe as an act), then this act has an agent. §§3-5 establish that God, as opposed to any other possible being, is the agent who performs this and every act. The specific act to which he draws our attention is our own origination in time (*ḥudūth*) as human beings. The *demonstrandum* here is "I [God] brought you into being when you were nothing before" (Q 19:9).[523] By narrowing in on the individual human born of human parents (in context, John the Baptist), rather than extraordinary births (e.g. Adam, Q 23:12-14; Jesus, mentioned later in *sūra* 19), Ibn Tūmart shows the extent to which God's creative agency is present in run-of-the-mill events like conception. His agency manifests itself in the individual, not as a creation *ex nihilo*, but as a change of attributes (*ṣifāt*) in a pre-existing substrate. If we concede that, under normal conditions, human beings develop from "seminal fluid" (19:9, *mā' dāfiq*), how do we account for the vast difference in attributes pertaining to semen and those proper to fully formed human beings? According to the medical knowledge of the time, seminal fluid, as "water" (*mā'*), has but "one attribute" (*ṣifa wāḥida*) in which "there is no difference, composition, formation, bone, flesh, hearing, or sight."[524] Human beings, by comparison, possess all of these attributes. They

[523] D, 214.
[524] D, 214-5.

came to exist in the undifferentiated matter of the water/seminal fluid and necessarily require some agent or cause which explains this change, how "all of these attributes came to exist in [the substrate] after they were not."[525]

§4 – The Need for a Creator (al-iftiqār)

From one's own origination in time (*ḥudūth*), one knows there is an agent who existed prior one's origination and who brought about this origination. We can apply this same inference to all acts (*afʿāl*), to all instances of origination in time: "From *one* act, he knows the existence of the Creator…as well as the second, the third, and so on."[526] All temporally originated beings, their movement (*ḥarakāt*) and change (*taghayyur*), regardless of their position in the world or relationship to each other, attest to their "need for" (*iftiqār ilā*) an agent. In order to account for something that comes to be, we must offer an explanation of how it acquires the attributes proper to it such that we can say that it exists. The same need applies to motion. If we conceive of self-

[525] D, 215.

[526] D, 215. Madeleine Fletcher translates this passage as: "By the first act the existence of the Creator is known, Praise to Him, and in the same way the second and third all the way to limitlessness." While one may translate *bi-l-fiʿl al-wāḥid*, as "from the *first* act," which conforms to the ordinal adjectives "second" (*al-thānī*) and "third" (*al-thālith*), Fletcher's translation too strongly suggests that one must investigate acts/beings in a certain order in order to arrive at God. This understanding of the passage suggests that inferring God's agency requires us to understand beings inasmuch as they belong to different classes in a cosmic hierarchy, an arrangement that Ibn never introduces in "Creed" or any other theological writing. Her translation overdetermines the text in the direction of philosophical cosmology in order to support her claim that Ibn Tūmart's "philosophical propositions about God (Chapters 2-11) are largely those of Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*." "Creed" bears no resemblance to *Metaphysics* XII. It covers similar ground that Aristotle does in *Physics* VI-VIII, wherein he investigates the origin of motion and change; but, unlike Aristotle, Ibn Tūmart makes virtually no observations or assumptions about the structure of the cosmos. He does not recognize that some primary substances are natures. He also excludes material, formal, and final causes, as is evident his choice of the term "agent" (*fāʿil*), which is etymological related to "efficient cause" (*ʿilla fāʿila*). Despite the fact that some commentators, like Simplicius, attributed efficient and final causation to God, Aristotle regards God only as a final cause in both *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. These inconsistencies count against her already imaginative claim that Ibn Rushd wrote part or all of the "Creed." See Ibn Tūmart and Madeleine Fletcher, "35. The Doctrine of Divine Unity" in Olivia Remie Constable (ed.), *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 190-1; 193.

motion (*taḥarruk*) as an attribute common to humans, animals, and heavenly bodies, we must identify a prior "mover" (*muḥrik*) to account for the occurrence this attribute in individuals. This observation applies to all being that have "extension in space, mutability, possibility, particularity, origination in time, and the need for an agent." This list of attributes corresponds to one he gives in an earlier theological text, "That Which Originates in Time" (*al-Muḥdath*). Any being that possesses one or more of these attributes necessarily originates in time (i.e. is not eternal).[527]

Unlike Aristotle's kinematic proof in *Physics* VIII, Ibn Tūmart does not grant motion pride of place in his account. In his *kalām* framework, motion is an attribute (*ṣifa*) like any other attribute, such as extension in space (*taḥayyuz*). The existence of any one of the above attributes in a subject indicates that (a) it originates in time and that (b) it requires an agent to specify (*yukhaṣṣiṣ*) its specific attributes, as well as the time and place of its origination. Ibn Tūmart's approach allows us to examine beings and phenomena at any level in the cosmic order—"[i]n the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of night and day; in the ships that sail the ocean with cargoes beneficial to men; in the water which God sends down from the sky and with which He revives the earth after its death, dispersing over it all manner of beasts; in the disposal of the winds, and in the clouds that are driven between sky and earth"—and see that all are equal in terms of their need for an agent to bring about their origination in time. The radical equality of temporally originated beings entails that, irrespective of any rank we might assign to them, they "are signs for rational men" (*li-āyāt li-qawm ya'qilūn*).[528]

[527] D, 195-98, 200-01. See also, D, 186-87, 192 ("On the Objects of Knowledge").
[528] D, 215. The verse Ibn Tūmart cites is Qur'ān 2:164.

§5 – Creatures Cannot Create

If we acknowledge that we and all things that exist, at one point in the past, did not exist (or, in Tūmartian terms, the set of attributes particular to *x* had not yet come about at the same time and in the same place), we must identify whether the agent responsible for our particular existence is another creature (*makhlūq*) or uncreated. Ibn Tūmart divides all creatures into three groups: rational animate (*ḥayawān ʻāqil*), non-rational animate (*ḥayawān ghayr al-ʻāqil*), and inanimate (*jamād*).[529] Inanimate creatures cannot create because they lack the capacity to act; by definition, they cannot be agents. Irrational animates cannot create humans because this would entail that an irrational creature could bring a rational creature into existence.[530] But even reason is not sufficient condition of creatorship. If human beings convened a committee of rational individuals to "put one finger back after its disappearance"—to create a new finger from scratch—"they would not be able to so," let alone create an entire human being, or non-rational animal. If we cannot[531] identify any animate creature, whether rational or non-rational, holds the capacity to fulfill any other creature's need for a creator (*iftiqār*), we must posit the existence of such a being whose agency is not limited in the way that our agency is.

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[529] D, 197 ("That Which Originates in Time").

[530] Most ancient and medieval and early modern philosophers likewise considered this arrangement absurd because it is inconceivable that the lower could cause the higher. See Dominik Perler, "Suárez on Intellectual Cognition and Occasional Causation" in Dominik Perler and Sebastian Bender (eds.), *Causation and Cognition in Early Modern Philosophy*, 18-38; Cees Leijenhorst, "Cajetan and Suarez on Agent Sense: Metaphysics and Epistemology in Late Medieval Thought" in Henrik Lagerlund (ed.), *Forming the Mind: Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment*, 243-44; and William Jaworski, "Powers, Structures, and Minds" in Ruth Groff and John Greco (eds.), *Powers and Capacities in Philosophy: The New Aristotelianism* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 160.

[531] Ibn Tūmart's argument makes sense from a human standpoint. Even if we know that human beings reproduce sexually and even if we understand some aspects of how sexual reproduction occurs, no human being can claim responsibility for devising human physiognomy. However, even in pre-Darwinian thought, philosophers could attribute causation to a confluence of agents or higher beings (e.g. angels). Ibn Tūmart tacitly accepts secondary causation, rather than occasionalism, but he appears to clear this hurdle in his argument prematurely in order to avoid the possibility (known to the *falāsifa*) that a higher creature, rather than God, is responsible for both the efficient causation and *design* of lower creatures. He dismisses the possibility of a second creator in §9 and §12.

§6 – The Creator does not Resemble His Creatures

§§6-8 build upon Ibn Tūmart's initial proof in §§2-5 by identifying the source of the limitations that prevent creatures from being creators, and why these limitations do not apply to God. God's non-resemblance to His creatures (*tanzīh*) follows from His creatorship because the generic features that define all created beings speak to their limitations. The relationship between resemblance and deficiency stands unclear in §6. However, the list of generic attributes in §4 and §7 again point us back to "On the Objects of Knowledge" and "That Which Originates in Time." In these texts, Ibn Tūmart shows in systematic fashion how the generic attributes of creatures imply deficiency, limitation, and need for a creator. Each of these texts begins with a different goal, as their titles attest. The first classifies the objects of knowledge; the second speaks to the generic qualities common to temporally originated beings. Despite their divergent foci, both culminate in short, *a priori* cosmological proofs of God's existence, oneness, and non-resemblance (or "transcendence") comparable to those in the "Creed."[532] Virtually all scholars have ignored these two texts because the language Ibn Tūmart uses in both in quite technical.[533] These proofs are both *a priori* and cosmological insofar as Ibn Tūmart derives conclusions about God from generic attributes abstracted from particular objects of knowledge and temporally originated beings.[534]

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[532] From "On the Objects of Knowledge," see E, 193-94. (*Wa huwa Allāh…*); from "That Which Originates in Time," see D, 201 (*Wa-lā yajūz al-shafʿiyya ʿalā al-wāḥid al-qahhār…*).

[533] ʿAbd al-Maǰīd al-Najjār is a notable exception. He brings "Worship" into his analysis of Ibn Tūmart's theology. See ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Najjār, *al-Mahdī Ibn Tūmart: ḥayātuhu wa-ārāʾuhu wa-thawratuhu al-fikriyya wa-l-ijtimāʿiyya wa-atharuhu bi-l-maghrib* (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1983), 190-92.

[534] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 793. Although he does not speak in terms of *a prioricity*, see Herbert Davidson's classification of Ibn Sīnā's "Proof of the necessary existent by

"On the Objects of Knowledge"

"On the Objects of Knowledge" begins, "Objects of knowledge are of two sorts: non-existent (*ma'dūm*) and existent (*mawjūd*). Existent is of two sorts: absolute (*muṭlaq*) and qualified (*muqayyad*)." Ibn Tūmart deems *muqayyad* any being that possesses specific attributes (*mukhaṣṣaṣ bi-l-ikhtiṣāṣ*) related to a particular time (*zamān*), a particular direction (*jiha*), or a particular specific attribute (*khāṣṣiyya*).[535] He further classifies qualification (*taqyīd*) according to five major types: (i) a choosing agent (*fā'il mukhtar*), (ii) habitual cause (*sabab mu'tād*), (iii) corporeal connection (*muqārana jurmiyya*), (iv) differentiating concomitance (*mulāzama ghayriyya*), and (v) generic property (*khāṣṣiyya jinsiyya*). The generic property further includes the specific difference of the various genera of temporally originated beings and the determination of their states (*taqyīd al-aḥwāl*):

virtue of itself": Herbert A. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 298-304, 366 ff.

[535] D, 185.

Table 13: Generic Properties and States

Generic Properties	**States**
Otherness (*ghayriyya*)	Priority (*qabliyya*)
Likeness (*mithliyya*)	Posteriority (*ba'diyya*)
Difference (*khilāfiyya*)	Ubiety (*ayniyya*)
Contrariety (*ḍiddiyya*)	Structure (*buniya*)
Spatiality (*ḥayziyya*)	Environment (*hay'a*)

Ibn Tūmart contrasts "qualified existents" (*mawjūdāt muqayyada*) to the "unqualified" or "absolute existent" (*al-mawjūd al-muṭlaq*): "He is that which is neither qualified (*muqayyad*) nor specified (*mukhaṣṣiṣ*). His existence is not specified by any particular time, direction, or specific property."[536] Ibn Tūmart's cosmological argument rests on his ability to show that, if no absolute existent exists, then we cannot account for the origin of beings that originate in a particular time, place, and with particular characteristics. He illustrates this need (*iftiqār*) by eliminating the possibility of mutual causation between creatures. Even if we allow that qualified being A causes and particularizes (*yukhaṣṣiṣ*) qualified being B's origination in time, the fact that A also originated in time at some point in the past requires us to assign a cause or "particularizer" (*mukhaṣṣiṣ*) to A.

> If [a particularizer] requires (*iftaqara*) a particularizer like it, then particularization is impossible for both because of their being equal in terms of them necessarily requiring a creator (*bi-musāwiyātihimā wa-wujūb iftiqārihimā*).[537]

[536] D, 185. Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 112. Nagel identifies Ibn Tūmart's elaboration of these properties and states that define created beings to Aristotle's teaching on the categories. I agree with Nagel to the extent that Ibn Tūmart is indeed advancing *his* version of the categories, which is informed by both philosophy and *kalām*. However, there is not clear one-to-one correspondence between Aristotle's and Ibn Tūmart's lists of ten. Further research is required in order to determine how Ibn Tūmart and his contemporaries appropriated the concept of categories *without* also uncritically adopting Aristotle's claims about being or "substance" (*ousia*), the first of the ten categories.

[537] D, 191.

The ability to determine another's particularization (*takhṣīṣ*) in time, space, or attribute requires a difference, an inequality that puts the particularizer above what is particularized. The interpretation of this passage turns on the phrase "a particularizer like it" (*mukhaṣṣiṣ mithlihi*). One interpretation leans toward occasionalism. Namely, if a particularizer requires a particularizer "like it" *in terms of particularizing*, then neither of these are particularizers at all, since their equality *in terms of particularizing* prevents both of them from performing the act of particularization. In this case, there is but one, unparticularized being that particularizes many beings, which, by dint of their being particularized, cannot themselves particularize other beings. This interpretation is suspect because "particularizer" is the criterion for likeness and equality between the two beings in question. If sameness in this one respect inhibits the attribution of "particulizer" to either being, it is absurd to assume to the existence of two beings equal insofar as they are both particularizers.

We may also interpret "like it" to mean "like it *with respect to other specific attributes*." Here, likeness and equality would refer to the equality of members belonging to the same species (e.g. human, dog, angel). Whether or not a human can particularize a dog, or an angel a human, in reality, the inequality between the species in terms of attributes other than "particularizer" renders the possibility of particularized particularizers admissible within Ibn Tūmart's framework. We can imagine a chain of such particularized particularizers that are all qualified (*muqayyad*) in some way, but in order to avoid an infinite regress we must terminate the chain with a particularizer who is neither particularized nor qualified in any respect. This final link in the chain is God, the absolute existent (*al-mawjūd al-muṭlaq*):

> He is God, who is not defined by any limit, nor determined, nor compassed in any direction; thoughts do not reach Him, intellects are not sufficient to grasp Him, minds cannot conceptualize Him, or imaginations measure Him.[538]

Since God's role as particularizer is necessarily connected to His absoluteness, He cannot be qualified by any qualifications (*quyūd*) or properties (*khawāṣṣ*). In the final analysis, Ibn Tūmart expands the list of qualifications and properties that differentiate creatures from God to ten: (i) multiple properties, (ii) a single substrate occupying space, (iii) determinate places, (iv) successive times, (v) possibility, (vi) corporeal connection, (vii) differentiating concomitance, (viii) determine direction, (ix) a specific structure, and (x) a specific environment.[539] To attribute any of these ten to God not only implies multiplicity in Him, but also compromises His finality in the causal order.

"That Which Originates in Time"

"That Which Originates in Time" begins and ends with credal statements similar to those in "On the Objects of Knowledge" and "Creed" §§6-8. They form a cosmological proof of God' existence that highlights the relation of His oneness and absoluteness to His uniqueness as an agent. Ibn Tūmart starts from the assumption that a creature's limitations and particular properties make it such that we cannot explain its origin by appealing either to the creature itself or to another, more capable creature. Since a creature *qua* originated-in-time (*muḥdath*) is limited (*inḥajaza*) "by a particular direction…by a particular time and…by a particular attribute," the power of "invention" (*ikhtirā'*) is impossible of the creature, both with regard to

[538] D, 185.
[539] D, 188.

itself and another.[540] He attributes this inability to the impossibility of the creature "overturning its essential property" (*inqilābihi ʻan khāṣṣiyyat dhātihi*) and "the necessity of its determination and its and its attributes' need for the attributes of the one who particularizes it (*mukhaṣṣiṣihi*), who brought its essence (*dhāt*) into existence from nothing (*min ghayr shayʼin*) that existed with Him in eternity."[541]

The first point is clear: we cannot attribute "invention" (*ikhtirāʻ*) to a creature because such a limitation necessarily holds of any particularized being (*mukhaṣṣaṣ*). To do so would be tantamount to saying, "The creature could create itself or another *if* the creature were other than what it is." Note that Ibn Tūmart also excludes self-creation of God: if God invents (*yukhtariʻ*) Himself, He is a creature; all creatures are particularized; particularized beings are incapable of invention; therefore, if God invents Himself, He is necessarily other than what He is. The second point brings us back to the cosmological nature of Ibn Tūmart's argument. Since limitation is the characteristic that unites *all* creatures, we must ascribe the particularization of their direction, time, and attributes to someone whose capacity for invention is not limited by direction, time, or attributes. Among these limitations, time is the most significant. In order to avoid an infinite temporal regress, we must establish the existence of an eternally existent inventor (*mukhtariʻ*). Therefore, Ibn Tūmart concludes that creatures *qua* temporally originated beings "are necessarily limited in their totality by their very origination in time" (*wa-l-muḥdathāt bi-asrihā yajib inḥiṣāruhā bi-ḥudūthihā*).[542]

By contrast, God is:

> ...the One, the Besought of All (*al-ṣamad*), whose existence is not specified by choice, nor qualified by others, nor is need [for a creator] attributed to His majesty. His existence

[540] D, 195.
[541] D, 195.
[542] D, 195.

> does not change along with the modes of being (*akwān*), is not restricted to certain times (*azmān*), and is not limited by relations (*aqrān*). There is no god but He, the Opulent, the Praiseworthy (*al-ghanī al-ḥamīd*).[543]

I believe that Ibn Tūmart's use of the divine names "the Opulent" (*al-ghanī*) and "the Praiseworthy" (*al-ḥamīd*) here are intentional. In the tradition of divine names literature, a famous example of which is al-Ghazālī's *al-Maqṣad al-asnā sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*, Ibn Tūmart creates associations between the names that God reveals in the Qur'ān and aspects of His being and activity. Aside from Ibn Tūmart's list of names in §15, Opulent and Praiseworthy appear prominently in §§7-8. He believes that Muḥammad said, "I cannot count Your praises, for You are as You have praised Yourself"[544] in order "to alert us to the denial of resemblance and qualification (*tanbīhan 'alā nafī al-tashbīh wa-l-takyīf*) and to have us acknowledge the loftiness and majesty that belongs to the Opulent, the Praiseworthy.[545] In §8, Ibn Tūmart concludes that everything that falls within the limits before/after, above/below, right/left, in front of/behind, and all/some "necessarily has origination and the need for a creator; the Creator—may He be praised an exalted—is the Opulent and the Praiseworthy."[546] Opulence and Praiseworthiness, in Ibn Tūmart's lexicon, express God's absoluteness, His freedom from all limitations. As literary devices, the divine names also help us to demonstrate the consistency of Ibn Tūmart's thought on this theological question throughout *BIT*.

The choice with which we are presented in §6 should now be clear. If we accept that resemblance (*tashbīh*) to creatures in any respect entails limitation in time, space, or attribute, then we cannot ascribe resemblance to God without also attributing to Him deficiency in terms

[543] D, 202
[544] *Muwaṭṭā'* 15:503; *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* 48: 124; *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* 16:1430.
[545] D, 217 (§7).
[546] D, 218.

of His creative agency. To do so would lead us to conclude that the highest being in existence is incapable of acting. Were this the case, we would be forced to admit that, although we observe *acts*, no being is capable accomplishing these acts.

§7 – Negation of Resemblance

In §7, Ibn Tūmart moves from the basic cosmological proof of God's existence to deploying elements of that proof to establish God's absolute existence and oneness. Ibn Tūmart regards the conclusion of §6 as a sufficient and affirmative response to the question, "Is there a God?" §§7-14 seek to answer the question, "What is God?"

If, to secure God's agency and avoid the absurdity that acts exist without an agent, we must deny His resemblance to temporally originated beings in every respect, "then one knows that the Creator is absolute (*muṭlaqan*)." The oppositional pair "absolute" (*muṭlāq*/*'alā al-iṭlāq*) and "qualified" (*muqayyad*) appears throughout *BIT*. Although *muṭlaq* is common in *falsafa*, rendering Aristotle's "unconditional" (*haplous*),[547] this exact pair derives from legal hermeneutics.[548] In the theological context, absoluteness expresses God's self-sufficiency: "everything that necessarily has a beginning and end, limitation and particularization, necessarily has spatial extension, mutability, possibility, particularity, origination in time, and need for a creator, as well."[549] God's agency is incompatible with any but absolute, unqualified existence.

[547] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Lambda 7 1072b 4-14; Delta 1015b 11-15.
[548] See D, 173 ("The Discourse on the General and the Specific").
[549] D, 216.

Ibn Tūmart again offers the example of creation by committee from §5. However, in §7 he is less concerned with the uniqueness of God's creative capacity as he is with the absolute existence that this capacity entails:

> If [all] intellects were gathered together so that they could identify how a creature's sight, hearing, or intellectual faculty [comes to be], they would be unable to do so, even though is a creature [like them]. If they are incapable of identifying how that which is created [comes to be], then [they are likewise incapable of] identifying how that which is not of genus "creature" or what does not lend itself to intelligible comparison [comes to be]. There is nothing like Him that [can be] compared to Him, as He—may He be exalted—said, "Nothing can be compared to Him. He alone hears and sees all."[550]

Insofar as they are beings (or parts of beings) that originate in time, intellects cannot ascertain how mere aspects of creatures—sight, hearing, intellect—come to be (*kayfiyya/takyīf*) because intellects *qua* temporally originated are subject to the same limitations as their objects of inquiry. How, then, can the intellect ascertain God's being, which is absolute and in no way resembles any other being? In §7, Ibn Tūmart shows how his cosmological proof leads to the epistemological principle that governs his division of knowledge into what one knows by reason and what one knows by revelation. Rational theology is limited to "the indications of acts" (*dalālāt al-afʿāl*) precisely because the only aspects of God that the intellect can assimilate to itself are God's *acts*, the results of His causal efficacy in the cosmos. The intellect can assimilate God's acts because the intellect is itself such an act, defined by limitations and particularization in time, space, and attributes.

Ibn Tūmart's conclusion to §7 (parts of which we have already seen) is somewhat cryptic:

> The imagination does not reach Him, nor does the intellect apprehend how He is (*lā yukayyifuhu al-ʿaql*). The Chosen One [i.e. Muḥammad] said, "I cannot count Your praises, for You have praised Yourself" in order to alert us to the denial of resemblance and the identification of how [He comes to be], and to have us acknowledge the loftiness

[550] D, 217. Ibn Tūmart cites Qur'ān 42:11.

> and majesty that belongs to the Opulent, the Praiseworthy. This is the utmost wisdom (*fa-hadhihi ghāyat al-ma'rifa*)…[551]

In practical terms, this passage preempts his discussion of divine names in §15 ("…You have praised Yourself…"). However, to reduce this passage to the legal obligation to use God's revealed names in order to avoid assigning resemblance (*tashbīh*) or corporealism (*tajsīm*) neglects what Ibn Tūmart wants to express about the utter gratuitousness of revelation from an absolute God, whose essence remains unknown and unknowable to all but Him. Ibn Tūmart indeed makes a conclusion in favor of God's transcendence (*tanzīh*). At the same time, the Muslim community possesses a document—the Qur'ān—in which God praises Himself in ways that humans cannot count. If God has no need for praise, whether from Himself or from humankind, the purpose of His self-praise is to inform human knowledge of God and human worship of God, both of which benefit humans more than they benefit God. Revelation is a grace because it either guides our intellects to the consideration of God's actions or alerts us to the limitations of our intellects, such that moral guidance and deeper understanding of divine things must be regarded as a gift that simultaneously affirms humanity's utter dependence on God for answers to the most important questions and bears witness to God's benevolence, for divulging this knowledge to human beings *cannot* benefit, harm, or change Him in any way.

§8 – Limits of the Intellect

Ibn Tūmart's radical doctrine of *tanzīh* enshrines within the "Creed" the epistemological position that "[i]ntellects have a limit (*ḥadd*) at which they stop and which they cannot

[551] D, 217

exceed."[552] Such an assertion, at first glance, seems odd given the author's commitment to theological rationalism—knowledge of God according to the intellect—as both epistemologically and soteriologically necessary. Yet this admission that the intellect has limits is consistent with Ibn Tūmart's overall epistemological project. By confining rational theology to God's acts, a genus of beings to which the human intellect belongs, one avoids the Scylla and Charybdis of corporealism (*tajsīm*) and the denial of God's attributes (*ta'ṭīl*). "The knowledgeable ones (*al-'ārifūn*) know Him by His acts and reject the assignation of modality (*takyīf*) to His majesty because assigning modality leads to corporealism and the denial of attributes."[553] To predicate anything of God's essence (*dhāt*) or to assign Him any attributes (*ṣifāt*) that are not mentioned in the Qur'ān and *sunna*, as well as excessive speculation as to the meaning of revelation, risks corporealism and the denial of attributes because the subject in question bears no resemblance to temporally originated beings, and, by consequence, escapes our power of inference. Inference relies on the analogical comparison (*qiyās*) of beings according to their particular time, space, and attributes.

§8 alludes to conflicts over corporealism among early Islamic theologians, as well as contemporary theologians. Ibn Tūmart mentions "ambiguous verses" (*mutashābihāt*) in revelation, such as the "Throne Verse" and the "*Ḥadīth* of Descent." Because of their anthropomorphic language, these texts were loci of contention between literalists like the followers of al-Qayrawānī, and Ash'arī reformers like Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī. We know from "Proof That the Law" and subsequent texts that Ibn Tūmart not only considered the Almoravids corporealists (*mujassimūn*) who tolerated corporealism in their realms, but also (per §1) enjoined

[552] D, 217.
[553] D, 217.

the Almohads to engage in military *jihād* against the Almoravids and anyone who promotes or tolerates corporealism.[554] Ibn Tūmart marshals evidence from the Qur'ān to argue that assent or indifference to both *tajsīm* and *ta'ṭīl*, especially on account of verses that the Muslim community regards as unclear, is not an accidental error, but rather an epistemological error that results from one's moral disposition away from the truth: "Those whose hearts [i.e. the seat of the intellect] are deviant observe the ambiguous part (*mā tashābuh minhu*) [of the Qur'ān], so as to create strife (*fitna*) by seeking to interpret it (*ta'wīlihi*). But no one knows its interpretation (*ta'wīlahu*) except God. Those who are well-grounded in knowledge say, 'We believe in it: it is all from the Lord.'"[555]

In all of his writings, Ibn Tūmart discusses *tajsīm* far more often than *ta'ṭīl*. This disproportionate focus on corporealsim reflects the Almohads' immediate context. By the end of the fifth/eleventh century, most *'ulamā'* would have professed theological literalism, classical Ash'arism, Niẓāmiyya Ash'arism on the model of al-Juwaynī or al-Ghazālī, or a mystical theology on the model of al-Qushayrī's *Risāla* or the Maghribī-Andalusī *mu'tabirūn*.[556] This spectrum runs from what Ibn Tūmart labels *tajsīm* to theories of *tawḥīd* that affirm attributes of God. Despite objections to some finer points of Ash'arism, Ibn Tūmart's theology pertains to the latter group because he rejects *ta'ṭīl*. He devotes less time to *ta'ṭīl* because this position is normally associated with the Mu'tazila. The Mu'tazila had already begun to decline in the Islamic east; though there is some evidence of Mu'tazilī activity in the Islamic west centuries prior, their *madhhab* likely vanished from al-Andalus and the Maghrib before or during the early

[554] D, 158-59 ("Proof That the Law"); D, 238-39 ("Rules upon Which the Religious Science are Built"); D, 240-41 ("The Companions of Strife"); D, 242-53("Explanation of the Sects"); D, 257-64 ("Epistle of the Mahdī").
[555] D, 217. Qur'ān 3:7.
[556] See Yousef Casewit, *The Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barrajān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 22-25, 33-39, 57-83.

Almohad period.[557] I interpret his passing mention of *ta'ṭīl* as a caution to his own followers. Some of the ways in which he articulates *tanzīh* and God's absolute existence leave the door open to the denial of divine attributes altogether. This risk is evident in many later medieval assessments of Ibn Tūmart's theology—principally Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwa* and Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddima*—which accuses Ibn Tūmart of siding with the Mu'tazila on this point. Ibn Tūmart's explicit rejection of *ta'ṭīl* in §8, affirmation of attributes like knowledge (*'ilm*) in §10, and his criticism of the Mu'tazila in "Worship," however, are more than sufficient to show that he does not espouse Mu'tazilism in any way.[558]

§9 – God is One in His Domain

Ibn Tūmart's reference to God existing "in an absolute way" (*'alā al-iṭlāq*) indicates the influence of Ibn Sīnā on Ibn Tūmart.[559] In early writings like *al-Risāla al-'arshiyya* and *al-Najāt*, Ibn Sīnā describes God as "absolute" (*muṭlaq*) with regard to His attributes.[560] Griffel has shown the significance of Ibn Sīnā's "absolute existent" within al-Ghazālī's presentation of metaphysics—"the divine science" (*al-'ilm al-ilāhī*)—in *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*. As opposed to mathematics and the natural sciences, the subject matter (*mawḍū'*) proper to metaphysics is "the

[557] Ibn Rushd discusses Mu'tazilī positions in *Manāhij al-adilla wa-'aqā'id al-milla*. Ibn Rushd likely depended on Ash'arī texts and heresiographies, like Ibn Ḥazm's *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-niḥal*, because—as he himself admits—no primary Mu'tazilī sources were available to him. Ibn Rushd, *Manāhij al-adilla wa-'aqā'id al-milla*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abid al-Jābirī (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥda al-'Arabiyya, 1998), 118 (§67).
[558] D, 207-08 ("Worship). Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 108. Nagel also regards Ibn Tūmart's apparent evasion of the doctrine of divine attributes as an impediment to reconciling him with Ash'arism.
[559] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 787-89.
[560] See Amélie Marie Goichon, *Lexique*, 205-06 (§402: *iṭlāq*); 206-07 (§403: *muṭlaq*). See Ibn Sīnā, *al-Risāla al-'arshiyya*, ed. Ibrāhīm Hilāl (Cairo: Kulliyat al-Banāt Jāmi'at al-Azhār, 1980), 25, 32-33, 39.

most general of matters (*a'amm al-umūr*), which is absolute existence (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*). What is sought in [this science] are the concomitants of existence pertaining to itself (*li-dhātihi*) only insofar as it is existence."[561]

Al-Ghazālī applies the Aristotelian definition of the science of metaphysics as the study of being *qua* being, or being *in general* to Ibn Sīnā:

> [What] occurs in this science is the examination of the cause of all existence, because "the existent" (*al-mawjūd*) divides into "cause" (*sabab*) and "caused" (*musabbab*), as well as the examination of the singularity of the cause, its being the Necessary Existent (*wājib al-wujūd*), of His attributes, of the relation of all other existents to Him, and of the way in which they attain [existence] from Him.[562]

On the surface, al-Ghazālī's description of the science of metaphysics appears to center around God. Yet what is central here is not God seen by Himself, but rather God's relationship to all beings inasmuch as they exist. The name "the divine science" is somewhat of a misnomer because God is not the primary subject matter of metaphysics, but rather one of its branches. Joseph Owens' *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian* Metaphysics (1951) highlights the historical debate between readers of both Plato and Aristotle regarding the proper subject matter of metaphysics. Some, like Ibn Rushd, held that God and the separate substances are the subject of metaphysics. However, Ibn Tūmart's theological writings indicate his adherence to the Avicennan position that metaphysics addresses God only insofar as He pertains to our understanding of being *qua* being.[563]

The Avicennan background of Ibn Tūmart's theology is evident in two respects. First, the fact that Ibn Tūmart does not assume God's existence from the outset, but instead offers a proof

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[561] Al-Ghazālī, *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mizyadī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyya, 2008), 66.
[562] Al-Ghazālī, *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mizyadī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyya, 2008), 66-67.
[563] Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian* Metaphysics*: A Study in the Greek Background of Medieval Thought* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1951), 5-6.

(*dalīl*) of God's existence, shows that the science in which Ibn Tūmart is engaged is broader than (though still inclusive of) theology. In *al-Shifā'*, Ibn Sīnā applies Aristotelian rules about the subject matter proper to a science to argue that God is not the subject of metaphysics. A science does not demonstrate the existence of its own subject matter, its principles, or its essential attributes as a discreet science. Metaphysics assumes its subject matter, *being*; although metaphysics can provide us with the concepts to prove God's existence, it does not assume it.[564] Second, Ibn Tūmart's approach to the proof of God's existence in "Creed," as well as in "On the Objects of Knowledge" and "That Which Originates in Time," is thoroughly metaphysical in the sense that he divides entities (*mawjūdāt*) insofar as they are knowable (*ma'lūm*) or not, temporally-originated (*muḥdath*) or not. The apparent need that certain beings have for a cause, whose existence is not immediately evident, is what allows Ibn Tūmart, like Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī before him, to infer the existence of God.

In §9, we see a major transition from the proof of God's existence (§§2-8) to the clarification of God's attributes on the basis of what Ibn Tūmart has already established about being outside of God, or *theology* in the proper sense of the term (§§9-14). §§9-11 build upon God's absolute existence, His lack of qualification comparable to temporally-originated beings, to argue for His oneness and uniqueness from eternity. If God's existence is absolute, it follows that "nothing else is with Him in His domain (*mulk*)."[565] Were we to posit the existence of a second, "independent being" (*kawn mustaqil*) alongside God who was likewise absolute, both

[564] Herbert Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 284-8. Ibn Sīnā, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 7-13 (I.2).
[565] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 789.

God and the second being would exist separately from one another. This state of affairs is untenable because, in order to distinguish one being from the other, one or both must have a distinct characteristic or qualification (in terms of time, space, or attribute) that is not present in the other. If both possess such a qualification, we cannot call them absolute, because both are qualified in at least one way. In this case, neither could fulfill the role of creator, or the unparticularized particularizer. If only one possesses a qualification, then that being is not absolute and, as a temporally-originated being, does not exist in the domain of the absolute existent.

§10 – God's Oneness (waḥdāniyya) and Uniqueness (infirād)

Ibn Tūmart infers from God's absoluteness and uniqueness that it is impossible that He be characterized by imperfection. §10 is a challenging passage inasmuch as Ibn Tūmart leans on the witness of revelation to establish God's positive attributes—in particular, His omniscience. If we accept Ibn Tūmart's prior arguments establishing that only God *qua* absolute existent is uncreated and is the sole candidate for creatorship, it is not hard for us to accept his argument for the negation of imperfection in God:

> Were defects (*naqā'iṣ*) attributed to Him, then the existence of [His] actions would be impossible, since it is impossible that [one] who is ignorant, incapable, asleep, or dead be the Creator.[566]

This passage is consistent with Ibn Tūmart's earlier statement that any form of qualification (*taqyīd*) disqualifies one from creatorship. However, the inverse of the above passage also holds true: it is impossible that [one] who is knowledgeable, capable, awake, or alive to be the Creator!

[566] D, 218.

Like their contraries, these positive attributes, predicated univocally of creatures and God, entails qualification, createdness. Moreover, even if we accept the negation of incapacity, sleep, and death as evidence of God's capacity, awakeness, and life, each intended in an equivocal sense particular to God's unique mode of being, the negation of ignorance of God does not necessarily entail that He is knowledgeable, even in an equivocal sense.

As we noted above, implicit in Ibn Tūmart's concept of agency is the precondition of knowledge: the agent necessarily *knows* or *is aware of* the act he accomplishes. Failing this, the act is not an act, nor the agent an agent. He takes over this concept of agency from the Ash'arīs, who developed it in order to argue, against the Mu'tazilīs, that human beings are not the agents of the actions they perform or "acquire" (*kasaba*). For the Ash'ariyya, agency belongs to God alone. In *Irshād*, al-Juwaynī deploys the precondition of knowledge for agency to defend occasionalism. Even if one concedes to the Mu'tazilīs the premise that human beings act through power given to them by God (i.e. secondary causation), it makes more sense that this power "to persist as being within the power of God and deny that it is within human power than in terminating the application of God's power to it because of its falling intermittently within human power."[567] Al-Juwaynī then argues that, because some acts issue from humans in moments when they are confused, careless, or ignorant of their actions, but which are nevertheless "well-ordered and arranged, displaying the qualities of competency and proficiency," God must be the author of these acts, since order and competency cannot derive from an agent who lacks knowledge and awareness.[568]

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[567] Al-Juwaynī, *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief (=Irshād)*, trans. Paul Walker (Reading, UK: Garnet, 2000), 104.
[568] Al-Juwaynī, *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief (=Irshād)*, trans. Paul Walker (Reading, UK: Garnet, 2000), 104.

His emphasis on the incongruence of ignorance and proficiency makes sense in the restricted context of his example. But the application of occasionalism to the whole cosmos also requires al-Juwaynī to say that God causes improficient acts to issue from humans, regardless of their individual competency. God either causes improficient acts, too, in which case al-Juwaynī's prior argument is inconclusive, or there are no improficient acts. If the latter obtains, attributing proficiency to an act is likewise meaningless. While these considerations do not prove the contrary position, al-Juwaynī and other Ash'arīs who appeal to proficiency to justify their concept of agency stand on flimsy footing. Although he does not specify why he embraces this Ash'arī position in *BIT*, it is likely that Ibn Tūmart would have justified the inclusion of knowledge in the definition of agency in a manner comparable to what we read in al-Juwaynī. As it stands, the inclusion of knowledge in the concept of agency is an assumption, and a problematic one at that. Without this necessary condition, Ibn Tūmart cannot proceed to conclude that God is knowledgeable on the basis of the negation of ignorance of Him, which he shows, *not* by appealing to God's creatorship, but rather to his absolute existence.

§10 introduces another element from Ash'arī *kalām*: the principle of *bi-lā kayfa* ("without asking, 'How?'"). Ibn Tūmart updates this principle in post-Avicennan fashion as *min ghayr takyīf*: "…the Creator is living, knowledgeable, capable, willing, hearing, seeing, and speaking without [us having to] imagine how He is so (*min ghayr tawahhum takyīf*)."[569] Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Ash'arī devised *bi-lā kayfa* as a way of assenting to anthropomorphic statements in the Qur'ān without also assenting to corporealism. "God hears and sees," understood in the same manner as "Zayd hears and sees," suggests that God has ears and eyes, the organs that enable humans and animals to hear and see. To accept the implication of sensory organs requires us to attribute a

[569] D, 218.

body to God, which contradicts his absolute existence and oneness. To deny, however, that God hears and sees raises questions about His providence, omniscience, and recompense for good and bad deeds in the afterlife. Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Ash‘arī determined that, in the absence of a clear account of how it is that God hears without ears and sees without eyes, Muslims should simply assent to God’s assertion of His hearing and sight in scripture without asking how He does so.[570] §10 leads us back to the Scylla and Charybdis of *tajsīm* and *ta‘ṭīl* from §8. *Takyīf* (“saying how”) leads to corporealism when we claim that God has ears and eyes in order to explain how He hears and sees. *Takyīf* leads to the denial of attributes whenever we conclude that, because God’s having ears and eyes is inconsistent with His absolute oneness, God does not hear or see at all.

Ibn Tūmart’s appeal to *min ghayr takyīf* is not merely a surrender to a positivist hermeneutic or an appeal to the authority of earlier theologians. His strategy remains consistent with the epistemological distinction between the knowability of God’s acts and His essence, which includes attributes like knowledge and perception. Since the created intellect cannot access God’s essence directly, the theologian must either remain silent with regard to the details of God’s essence or turn to revelation, wherein God discloses His essence in human language. In §10, which contains more citations of the Qur’ān than any other chapter of the “Creed,” Ibn Tūmart does exactly that.

Table 14: Divine Attributes Cited from the Qur’ān in §10

Qur’ān	**Attributes**
11:107/85:16	Will
2:226	Life, Eternity, Awakeness
6:73	Knowledge
3:5	Knowledge
6:59	Knowledge

[570] *EI3*, “Ibn Ḥanbal” (Livnat Holtzmann). Holtzmann notes that Ibn Ḥanbal may not have been committed to a non-physical conception of God in the same way that al-Ash‘arī was.

34:3	Knowledge, Providence
65:12	Knowledge
72:28	Knowledge, Providence
67:14	Knowledge, Providence, Grace

Table 14 (continued)

§10 stands out as a weak point in Ibn Tūmart's line of argument in "Creed." His argument for God's knowledge of particulars and providence depends on (a) the assumption that the negation of a negative entails the affirmation of its contrary in all cases (e.g. negation of "defect" = affirmation of "perfection"), and (b) that the concept of the agency necessarily includes knowledge of acts. On these grounds, we may rationally infer some attributes of God's essence from His acts. Negating a negative is valid in the case of God's eternity: that which exists in an absolute way, unqualified by time or space, exists eternally. But even if we concede to Ibn Tūmart that the negation of God's ignorance entails knowledge in some respect, this knowledge is not necessarily knowledge of particulars, or even knowledge of things outside of God. Ibn Sīnā holds the former hypothesis, whereas Aristotle (likely) holds the latter. Ibn Tūmart's invocation of *min ghayr takyīf* in §10 suggests tacit acknowledgement of the fact that he must appeal to revelation in order to affirm God's knowledge of particulars. In this context, the Qur'ānic citations in §10 are a mixture of *demonstranda* and, with respect to divine knowledge and providence, proof-texts, the content of which cannot be attained by reason alone. Regardless, Ibn Tūmart proceeds to §11 with the understanding that he has validly inferred God's knowledge of particulars from the negation of His ignorance.

§11 – God's Eternity

Like §10, §11 is challenging because the manner in which Ibn Tūmart connects God's eternity to His knowledge of particulars is unclear.[571]

> If one knows the necessity of His existence from eternity, then one knows the impossibility of His changing from that which is necessary for Him with respect to His power and glory, since it is impossible to overturn truths.[572]

Ibn Tūmart appeals to the intellectual rule (*qā'ida 'aqliyya*) regarding the impossibility of overturning necessary truths (*istiḥālat inqilāb al-ḥaqā'iq*) to demonstrate that God does not change. This intellectual rule is not only germane to the question of God's necessity, but also to the validity of all knowledge proper to the intellect. "If the necessary were to become possible, or the possible impossible, then what is known would be rendered false."[573] In its immediate context, this statement applies to the *a priori* connection of the necessity of God's existence from eternity to the impossibility of His changing. If we accept the former, we accept that latter, and *vice versa*. Were God's existence from eternity merely *possible*, His immutability would also be possible. Were this the case, we could know nothing about God beyond such truisms as "God either exists from eternity or does not exist from eternity," or "God either changes or does not change." However, as Griffel notes, Ibn Tūmart seeks to make a more general claim about modal inferences:

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[571] §11 also stands out because it is the only chapter of the "Creed" in which Ibn Tūmart does not cite the Qur'ān or *sunna*.
[572] D, 219.
[573] D, 219.

> The argument for God's existence rests on the *a priori* certainty of human knowledge. Humans have certain knowledge about things in this world. The most important element of such knowledge is the "essences (*al-ḥaqā'iq*) do not change." By essence (*ḥaqīqa*), Ibn Tūmart means the fact of whether a thing is necessary, contingent, or impossible. If such an essence could change, humans would loose [*sic*] all possibility to gain knowledge…[574]

This passage set Ibn Tūmart's epistemology apart from that of al-Ghazālī. In *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, al-Ghazālī acknowledges the possibility that human knowledge is false. Ibn Tūmart instead assumes *a priori* "that humans do have certain knowledge of objects (*ma'lūmāt*) and that therefore the essences (*ḥaqā'iq*) do not change…The very fact that humans are able to conclude God's existence from the epistemological unchangeable distinction into necessary, contingent, and impossible leads to conclude that God is necessary and unchangeable."[575]

Once we understand the general connection of modality to rational knowledge, we can better see the relationship of both to God's necessary existence and providence. Ibn Tūmart understands the existence of necessary truths as the supreme manifestation of God's providence for humankind. Without such necessary truths as "Every act must have an agent," human beings would not only not be able to prove God's existence, but they would also lack knowledge, full stop. As Griffel puts it, "Ibn Tūmart's proof focuses on the epistemological repercussions of God's necessity," a concern that once again points to Ibn Sīnā's influence.[576] The wording of the last half of §11 alludes to the Avicennan argument against God's knowledge of particulars *qua* particulars:

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[574] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 790-1.
[575] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 791, 792 n. 119.
[576] Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 793.

> He does not cease nor will He cease to be knowledgeable of all the beings that originate in time (*jamī‘ al-muḥdathāt*) according to their characteristics, the differences of their genera , the arrangement of their times, and their number before their actual existence.[577]

For Ibn Sīna, God cannot know things themselves (*laysa yajūz…ya‘qil al-ashiyā’ min al-ashiyā’*) because this would entail that "either His essence (*dhātuhu*) would be rendered subsistent by what He intellectually apprehends (*muqawwama bi-mā ya‘qil*) and, hence, its being rendered subsistent would be through things, or it would accidentally occur to it to intellectually apprehend, in which case [the essence] would not be a necessary existent in every respect—and this is impossible."[578] In both cases, God's knowledge of things' particulars *after* they come into existence would implicate His essence in the world of natural change and of matter, contradicting His necessary and absolute existence, as well as His unity. Ibn Sīnā tries to salvage God's knowledge of beings outside of Himself by appealing to His uniqueness as a causal principle.

> As for the manner of this, it [takes place] when He intellectually apprehends His essence and apprehends that He is the principle of every existent, He apprehends the principles of the existents [that proceed] from Him and what is generated by them… He would thus apprehend particular things inasmuch as they are universal—I mean, inasmuch as they have attributes. If these [attributes] become specified individually in [the particulars], [this takes place] in relation to an individuated time or an individuated circumstance.[579]

His claim that God knows particulars in only a general way (rather than in a particular way, as the Qur'ān suggests) led many post-Avicennan theologians to try to resolve the apparent incompatibility of God's oneness and His knowledge of particulars.

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[577] D, 219.
[578] Ibn Sīnā, *The* Metaphysics *of the Healing*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 287: 5-11 (VIII.6).
[579] Ibn Sīnā, *The* Metaphysics *of the Healing*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 288: 5-6, 10-11 (VIII.6).

Al-Ghazālī figures prominently among these. In *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*, he famously describes Ibn Sīnā's position "that God's knowledge does not encompass the temporal particulars among individual [existents]" (*inna Allāh lā yuḥīṭ 'ilman bi-l-juz'iyyāt al-ḥāditha min al-ashkhāṣ*) is sufficient to declare the philosopher and anyone who shares his view unbelievers (*takfīr*).[580] Al-Ghazālī addresses this topic in Chaps. 11 and 13 of *Tahāfut*. His argument against God knowing particulars in only a universal way is founded on the premise that God's knowledge of particulars does not entail change in His *one* knowledge because He knows of these events from eternity. The *falāsifa*, who hold that the world is eternal (albeit dependent on God for its existence), conceive of God's knowledge in a more limited way. Minimally (*a là* Aristotle's *Metaphysics* XII), God knows only Himself and contemplates His being eternally; the movement of the cosmos is a response to God's eternal act of self-thinking. Maximally, late antique Neoplatonists and philosophers like Ibn Sīnā understand God's knowledge as containing all universals (i.e. knowledge of the forms) within it. Because God's knowledge does not contain particulars from eternity in either case, knowing particulars would implicate Him in matter and entail change within His knowledge over time. These changes hold dire implications for both models as explanations of the origin of existence and motion. For the minimalists, the introduction of changes into God's knowledge affects His perfection, and thus dislodges Him as the center of cosmic motion, the object of desire (*erōs*) that the separate intellects pursue and seek to emulate. For the maximalists, like Ibn Sīnā, change in God's knowledge entails subsistence by what he intellectually apprehends or accidence, thus disqualifying Him as the necessary existent, Ibn Sīnā's cosmological principle.

[580] Al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 226.

In his first objection, al-Ghazālī argues that knowledge of particulars only changes the knower if, like humans, the knower acquires knowledge after the event in question. The God of the *falāsifa*, who does not know particulars prior to their particularization, either knows them afterward (i.e. He perceives them in some way) or does not know them *qua* particulars. From the Ash'arī principle "every agent knows his act,"[581] al-Ghazālī concludes that God's knowledge of particulars does not entail change in His "one knowledge" (*'ilm wāḥid*) because this knowledge precedes the particularization of the act in time and constitutes a part of God's knowledge "in the eternal past and future, [His] state never changing" (*fi-l-azl wa-l-abad wa-l-ḥāl lā yataghayyir*).[582] His second objection emphasizes the philosophers' position that "it is impossible for a temporal event (*ḥādith*) to proceed from the eternal," which he discusses in Chap. 1 of *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. Although the second objection has many facets, his primary point is that what prevents the *falāsifa* from accepting the alternative account of God's complete foreknowledge of particulars *qua* particulars prior to their coming-to-be is their commitment to the eternity of the cosmos alongside God. God's knowledge cannot be prior to particular events if there has never been a gap-in-time at any point in the past between God's knowledge and the existence of particulars in succession. For Ibn Sīnā, temporal events proceed from God "by necessity and by nature" (*'alā sabīl al-luzūm wa-l-ṭab'*), which, on the Ash'arī model, entails that God "has no power not to act" (*lā qudrata lahu 'alā an lā yaf'al*). Since God does not act, but instead causes things to proceed from Him by necessary compulsion (*taskhīr*; *iḍṭirār*).[583]

[581] See Al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 127: 15-19 (Ch. XI).
[582] Al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 139: 1-2 (Ch. XIII).
[583] Al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 142-3 (Ch. XIII).

Although we cannot confirm that Ibn Tūmart studied Ibn Sīnā's writings directly, his statement about God's knowledge of particulars in §11 is directed at Ibn Sīnā and those who hold similar views. He not only wants to secure universal knowledge in God (knowledge of genera and specific differences), but also their particular number, arrangement, and existence in time.

> The All-Seeing predestines them from eternity and they emerge through His wisdom in accordance with His capacity (*ẓaharat bi-ḥikmatihi 'alā wafq taqdīrihi*). They occur according to His capacity, and [it is] an arrangement that cannot be disrupted or figured out.[584]

The above passage presupposes the philosophical objection that God's knowledge of particulars *qua* particulars entails change or determination within His essence—equally a problem for Ibn Tūmart's cosmological proof of God's existence as it is for Ibn Sīnā's. Appealing to God's eternal foreknowledge, which is consistent with his belief in the origination of the world in time, Ibn Tūmart is able to preserve both God's knowledge of particulars and His absolute existence. He makes it clear, however, that this conception of God's knowledge of particulars as *eternal* entails that all particulars proceed in a pre-determined arrangement that human beings cannot change or fully predict. Although, in practice, Ibn Tūmart's account is just as determinist as Ibn Sīnā's (perhaps even more so!), his argument ascribes the determination of all particular beings to God's voluntary agency, rather than to impersonal necessity.

[584] D, 219.

Part II of the "Creed" – Predestination and Justice

§12 – Decree (qaḍā') and Predestination (qadar)

From God's eternal foreknowledge, Ibn Tūmart infers that "all creatures proceed from [God's] decree and predestination (*'an qaḍā'ihi wa-qadarihi*)" and that God stands alone as Creator.

> The Creator—may He be praised—causes [all creatures] to emerge (*aẓharahā*) in the manner in which He predestined them from eternity, without increase, omission, or change in what was predestined, or alteration in what was determined. He causes them to exist without intermediary or obstacle (*li-'illatin*). He has no associate (*sharīk*) in their origination (*inshā'ihā*) or partner (*ẓahīr*) in His causing them to exist. He causes their origination from nothing that was with Him in the beginning (*ansha'ahā lā min shay'in kāna ma'ahu qadīman*).[585]

Ibn Tūmart strengthens the position he lays out in §11 by qualifying that what God predestines does not change. God's eternal plan pertains to His knowledge; any alteration in it would require alteration in one of God's attributes. Of particular concern here is God's uniqueness in terms of His predestination and determination, since the realization of His plan through His causal agency excludes all other agents. He interprets the Qur'ānic negation of partnership (*shirk*), which applies to polytheism, dualism, and Trinitarian Christianity, as a statement about the relationship of predestination to causal agency. There are two ways of reading the above passage:

[585] D, 219.

(i) The language of §12 suggests an occasionalist cosmology. Nothing exists that can prevent or compel God to create, nor is there any intermediary (*wāṣita*) or associate (*sharīk*) who assists him in bringing things into existence. These qualifications are consistent with Ash'arī occasionalism, which states that God causes (in the sense of efficient causation) every substance and accident on an atomic level without intermediary. Strong occasionalism absolutely excludes efficient causal interaction between created things. An occasionalist interpretation is likewise consistent with Ibn Tūmart's profession of atomism earlier in *BIT*.[586]

(ii) Ibn Tūmart leaves open the possibility of what we might call a "Ghazālian" interpretation of §12: creatures relate to one another by way of secondary causation, but ultimately follow the course that God predetermines, from the world's inception to its end. The negation of any intermediary or associate with respect to God's origination (*inshā'*; *ījād*) does not suffice to prove occasionalism, if we take this negation applies only to the creation of the world *ex nihilo* and *de novo*, rather than to the direct origination of every individual creature.

I prefer the second interpretation for two reasons. First, secondary causation is consistent with the way in which Ibn Tūmart describes human beings' relationship to knowledge an worship in the causal chain passage that appears prominently "Creed" §1 and "Worship." Strong occasionalism would interpret the causal chain "miracle→revelation of the Qur'ān→promise and threat→fear and desire→will and study→knowledge→belief and sincerity→correct worship" as wholly separate instances of God's causal efficacy. On this model, the will does not bring about study, nor study knowledge; God directly creates each state within the human individual. The

[586] D, 201-02 ("That Which Originates in Time").

occasionalist does not recognize any relation between these events except their succession in time. At best, the occasionalist could say that knowledge habitually—though not *necessarily*—follows study because God intends for humans to glean a certain meaning from this arrangement. (That being said, the occasionalist would still maintain that the human apprehension of the meaning of this arrangement remains contingent upon God's creation of this apprehension in an individual!)

Second, Griffel shows that, although al-Ghazālī deploys a strong occasionalist framework in *Tahāfut* (Ch. XVII) to argue against the *falāsifa*'s view of causality, closer scrutiny of his *Revival of the Religious Sciences* and *Niche of Lights* indicates that al-Ghazālī also taught secondary causality and likely preferred this account of causation to hard occasionalism. Griffel likewise attributes this position to Ibn Tūmart on the basis of parallels between the causal chain passage and statements al-Ghazālī makes on secondary causation in *Revival*:

> (…) and the conviction [that some humans will be punished] is a cause for the setting in of fear, and the setting of fear is a cause for abandoning the passions and retreating from the abode of delusions. This is a cause for arriving at the vicinity of God, and God is the one who causes the causes (*musabbib al-asbāb*) and who arranges them (*murattibuhā*). These causes have been made easy for him, who has been predestined in eternity to earn redemption, so that through their chaining-together the causes will lead him to paradise.[587]

And:

> You might say: The gist of this…talk is to say that God has put a purpose (*ḥikma*) into everything. He made some human acts causes (*asbāb*) for the fulfillment of this purpose and for its attaining the objective that is intended in the causes. God (also) made some human actions obstacles to the fulfillment of the purpose.[588]

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[587] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Beirut: Dār al-Fayḥā' li-l-nashr wa-l-tawzī', 2019), 5: 175 (XXXII – *Kitāb al-ṣabr wa-l-shukr*); translation from Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 220.

[588] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Beirut: Dār al-Fayḥā' li-l-nashr wa-l-tawzī', 2019), 5: 186-7 (XXXII – *Kitāb al-ṣabr wa-l-shukr*); translation from Frank Griffel *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 221. Muṣṭafā's text reads "…*annahu ja'ala ba'ḍ af'āl al-'ibād* sababan," rather than "*asbāban*."

Both al-Ghazālī and Ibn Tūmart commit themselves to the view that God works through secondary causes because they emphasize human participation in "purpose" or "wisdom" (*ḥikma*) in a way that strong occasionalism does not. Their connection of God's decree predestination (*qaḍā' wa-qadar*) to secondary causation allows them to steer a middle course between Avicennism (which takes will and knowledge away from God) and Ash'arī occasionalism (which takes will and agency away from human beings). If human actions ultimately, though not proximately, derive from God's predestination, secondary causation does not necessarily detract from God's absolute sovereignty, the very theological commitment underlying strong occasionalism. Rather than limiting God's creative agency, secondary causation points to His wisdom in a way that more accurately reflects human perception: "He devises [His creatures] so that they may point to His capability and His choice. He subjugates them so that they may point to His wisdom (*ḥikmatihi*) and His governance (*tabdīrihi*)."[589]

§13 – Precedence of God's Predestination

§13 clarifies two points that remain implicit in §12. First, God's "dominion" (*mulk*) over all things derives from the ontological disparity between Him and His creatures, even those which are higher than human beings in the cosmic order. "Everything the existence of which emerged after its non-existence (*ba'da 'adamihi*) is among the classes of creatures (*min aṣnāf al-khalā'iq*) within the Creator's dominion…[and] proceeds from His decree and predestination."[590] This statement on the relation of God's dominion to His eternal, ontological priority echoes §9 (i.e. that God alone has dominion), §11 (i.e. that God knows and predestines particulars *qua*

[589] D, 220.
[590] D, 220.

particulars), and §12 (i.e that alone predestines? and creates *ex nihilo*). Second, §13 expresses the extent of God's dominion, down to the smallest atom, in terms that would be familiar to any reader of the Qur'ān. Ibn Tūmart draws three theological propositions from God's predestination that are pertinent to human individual:

(a) "The rations are divided up, the steps set down in writing, the souls are numbered, and the times (*ājāl*) allotted. Nothing comes after its time appointed time (*ajal*) nor precedes it." Human beings exist within a complex system the God has predetermined. Each event in this world, no matter how great or how small, reflects God's providential will.

(b) "No one dies without completing the life allotted (*ajal*) to him. No one exceeds what was predestined for him. All was made clear when He created him; everything was anticipated when He predestined him." In this world (*al-dunyā*), no human being can act counter to what God has determined for him, nor extend his life beyond his allotment (*ajal*). Ibn Tūmart's appeal to the Qur'ānic *ajal*[591] is in line with Ash'arī exegesis, which marshals these verses against the Mu'tazilīs, who embrace free will.

(c) "By the creation of Paradise (*al-na'īm*), He will make things easy [see Q 92:7]; by the creation of Hell, He will ease some toward difficulty. The happy man will be happy in his mother's womb; the wretch will be a wretch in his mother's womb. All of this is in accordance with His predestination and determination." God's predestination extends beyond this world to the

[591] The Qur'ānic term *ajal* ("allotment"; "appointed time") applies to a wide variety of created beings: nations (7:34; 10:49), individuals (6:2; 39:42), heaven and earth (30:8), sun and moon (13:2), punishment of sins (20:129), and the unborn child in the womb (22:5).

> hereafter (*al-ākhira*). The complete predetermination of all things that are not ontologically eternal entails double predestination. God creates Heaven and Hell in the beginning because He knows who will end up there and how they will end up there prior to creation.[592]

The above three points—especially c—typically fall outside of rational theology because as they deal with the afterlife. Read from this perspective, Ibn Tūmart seeks to show what the rationally derived assertion, "all creatures are with God's dominion," means for the interpretation of the Qur'ān. These three points, then, result from the application of the fruits of rationalist theology to the Qur'ān and *sunna*. Although their primary content is revelational, Ibn Tūmart understands these statements consistent with the description of God he lays out in §§2-11. The Qur'ān and *sunna* allude to these ideas in two ways. The first way is rather intuitive: revelation discloses the nature of phenomena like Heaven and Hell because they, like the divine essence (*dhāt*), exist outside of the realm of normal human perception. Alongside this purely revelatory function of scripture, there is an allusive function. This second way appeals to human reason in order to show God's "wisdom" (*ḥikma*) to the extent that human beings can. In the earlier chapters of "Creed," Ibn Tūmart highlights certain passages which he considers examples of God appealing to reason in order to prove His own existence, as well as the manner of His existence and interaction with creation. Ibn Tūmart believes that the Qur'ānic statement on predestination in 92:7 ("…in his mother's womb…") is not purely revelatory, but also contains the kernel of a rationalist account of double predestination. Without revelation, a Muslim could not know some details about the afterlife, such as the existence of "the bridge" (*al-qanṭara*; *al-ṣirāṭ*) between

[592] All of the above passages are from D, 220.

Heaven and Hell.[593] Ibn Tūmart implies that one can know something about the existence of Heaven and Hell, double predestination, and God's justice from reason. For example, double predestination, the belief that God creates some individuals to be saved and some to be damned, necessarily follows from God's particular providence and predestination.

§14 – God's Justice

In §14—the last chapter of "Creed" that pertains to rational theology—Ibn Tūmart seeks to extricate God's justice (*'adl*) from the charge that double predestination in unjust. We may approach the injustice of predestination in two ways, neither of which is exclusive of the other. On the one hand, double predestination is unjust because human beings have no control over their actions. On the other, God's predetermination of bad actions in some individuals suggests that God Himself wills and performs bad actions. In this venue, Ibn Tūmart follows the example of Ash'arism by first stressing that things are just or unjust, not by virtue of something that subsists in them, but rather because God determines that they are just or unjust and communicates these determinations in revelation. In a nutshell, "good" is whatever accords with the *sharī'a*, and "bad" is whatever transgresses the *sharī'a*.[594] Because God is not legally obligated (*mukallaf*) under His Law, but rather *obligates* (*yukallif*) others, He "is unique in terms of justice and goodness" (*infarada…bi-l-'adl wa-l-iḥsān*).[595] Unlike human beings, to whom justice and goodness are attributed to the extent that their beliefs and actions conform to the *sharī'a*, God's justice and goodness are sovereign. His justice and acts of charity proceed from

[593] For example, see *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 2440, 6535; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, 4279.
[594] I discuss Ash'arī divine command theory in depth in Chapter 4.
[595] D, 220.

His will, unrestrained by external obligation. "He guides and misleads; He strengthens and weakens. No one provides order except Him. There is no sovereign except Him."[596] Like other predestinarians, Ibn Tūmart must square the perceived compliance and non-compliance with divine Law with God's ultimate agency over the actions of saints and sinners alike. To accomplish this, he must adopt divine command theory in order to extricate God's justice, which is, at bottom, inscrutable, from our human understanding of justice and injustice. This is only possible if good and bad, justice and injustice, are not attributes that inhere in things themselves, but rather *descriptors* of the relationship of a thing or action to divine commands and prohibitions.

Ibn Tūmart summarizes Ash'arī divine command theory:

> Injustice and enmity are only attributed to someone upon whom prohibition and judgment [fall]. Whenever one transgresses the limits of the Sovereign and implicates himself in what does not concern him, injustice and enmity are attributed to him, since something being forbidden him is with his [i.e. the human being's] domain (*mulk*), and a judgment being rendered of him within his action. The Creator—may He be exalted—has no prohibition upon Him in His judgments, nor is any judgment rendered of Him in His actions. He is unique in sovereignty, oneness, domain and divinity. In His domain, He does what He desires and judges in His creation what He wills.[597]

If we conceive of justice and injustice as ways of relating to an externally imposed law, rather attributes that inhere in things themselves, we cannot predicate injustice of God in the way we do of humans. Even in the event that God chooses to lead an individual astray by predetermining him to perform acts considered sinful in light of the *sharī'a*, there is no law above God that obligates Him to do otherwise or which gives us grounds to interpret His actions as unjust. This case of predestination is a sovereign exercise of His will. Just as we cannot rationally determine what constitutes a just act, because moral attributes do not subsist in things, we have no standard

[596] D, 220.
[597] D, 220.

against which to judge God's predestination with respect to this individual, however unfair it seems from a human perspective. Ibn Tūmart's last rational proposition about God in the "Creed" upholds the mystery of God's essence, the inscrutability of His will and wisdom, as bound up with His uniqueness:

> He punishes whom He wills; He shows mercy to whom He wills. He does not plead for reward or fear punishment. There is no right (*ḥaqq*) nor judgment (*ḥukm*) over Him, for every blessing from Him is a grace (*faḍl*), and every act of retribution from is an act of justice. "None shall question Him about what He does, but they shall be questioned."[598]

One may prove God's existence, absoluteness, oneness, knowledge, and justice by applying reason to the brute experience of the cosmos, but humankind depends on God's gracious revelation of the *sharī'a* for moral and ritual guidance.

Part III of the "Creed" – From Reason to Revelation (§§15-17)

In the last three chapters of "Creed," Ibn Tūmart discusses theological issues the knowledge of which is completely inaccessible to the unaided reason: the divine names (§15), the beatific vision (§16), and the verification of prophecy by miracles (§17). I want to reiterate at this point that, as Ibn Tūmart shifts to a fully positivist theology, he does not put reason aside. This subtle transition between autonomous reason and reason applied to scripture has led some, like Fletcher, to divide the "Creed" between its Andalusī, rationalist superstratum (§§1-11) and its Maghribī, positivist substratum (§§12-17). This misrepresentation stems from a misunderstanding of what Ibn Tūmart *partially* includes within the scope of rational theology (i.e. §§12-14), and presupposes that some of the material in §§15-17 are incompatible with Ibn

[598] D, 220. Ibn Tūmart cites Qur'ān 21:23.

Tūmart's larger project because it simply demands assent to statements found in revelation. If, per §§12-14, we agree that God's essence and attributes are in some sense beyond human reckoning, and that moral judgments derive from the *sharī'a* alone, then we must approach some credal topics as the *mujtahid* approaches the Law. How do we verify its transmission? How does this rule apply in general, and how is it mitigated by specific circumstances? Belief in revealed truths does not conflict with reason if reason indicates that the content of revealed truths are not available to humankind except through the positive content of revelation. Ibn Tūmart simply wants to emphasize that the intellect is not the source of revelation, even if it helps us to organize and interpret its content.

§15 – The Names of God

Ibn Tūmart's presentation of "God's most beautiful names" (*asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*) is characteristic of a positivist approach to scripture which is tempered by reason. Unlike the previous fourteen chapters, Ibn Tūmart does not cite scripture as a *demonstrandum* or to connect a rational inference with a scriptural point. Instead, he begins with a statement from revelation that demands assent and exposition: "He has the most beautiful names."[599] From this revealed truth, two laws of belief and practice follow:

(i) "The names of the Creator—may He be praised—are assigned by His permission. He is not named except in the way that He names Himself in His Book or in the mouth of His Prophet."

(ii) "No comparison (*qiyās*), derivation (*ishtiqāq*), or convention (*iṣṭilāḥ*) is possible with regard to His names."[600]

[599] D, 221. This sentence is identical to Qur'ān 92:7.
[600] D, 221.

At tension here are the practical command to restrict oneself to using God's names as set down in revelation—particularly in worship—and the task of interpreting the divine names. What do these names mean *with respect to God*? How does one predicate them *of God*? In §15, Ibn Tūmart briefly alludes to many topics current within Ash'arī literature on the divine names, particularly the works of al-Juwaynī, al-Ghazālī, and Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī.[601] The theological problems with which Ibn Tūmart concerns himself are not those which arise from *deviation* from God's revealed names. On the contrary, the application of normal human concepts of predication to God's restricted names can lead to theological errors: comparison, derivation, and convention. The negation of names conceived of as a comparison or analogy (*qiyās*) is consistent with what Ibn Tūmart says in earlier chapters of "Creed," as well as with his comments on rational analogy (*qiyās 'aqlī*) in "Proof that the Law is Not Established by the Intellect." He explains that:

> …[a] creature (*makhlūq*) may be called "wise" and "generous" according to his knowledge and generosity, [but] he is not comparable to the Creator… A creature may be called… "archer" and "killer" according to his [acts of] shooting and killing, [but] he is not comparable to the Creator… A creature may be called "Zayd" or "'Amr" when he is born; he does not have a name, so his name is agreed upon by convention (*fa-yaṣṭaliḥ 'alā ismihi*).[602]

Although it is difficult to see in translation, the three examples of names Ibn Tūmart gives are grammatically different. "Wise" (*faqīh*) and "generous" (*sakhīy*) are adjectives *wazn fa'īl*, one of types of true adjectives in Arabic. The adjectives refer to a quality or the presence of an attribute in the subject: "wise" = "due to his knowledge"; "generous" = "[due to] his generosity [or "honor"]." "Archer" (*rāmī*) and "killer" (*qātil*) are active participles (sing. *ism fā'il*). These names carry a verbal meaning that indicates the subject's participation in the activity of archery

[601] For a discussion of the literature on the divine names in the Muslim West, see Yousef Casewit, *The Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barrajān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 150-57; 308-14.
[602] D, 221.

or the act of killing. “Zayd” and “‘Amr” are proper names (sing. *ism al-ʻilm*) by which one calls particular beings according to convention. Proper names need not describe anything about the thing named.

Ibn Tūmart argues that, while God’s names include names from all of the above three categories, we do not use them of God in the same way that we use them of human beings or any other creature. Humans predicate many of God’s adjectival names of creatures, too; for example: “big/great” (*kabīr*), “rich” (*ghanī*), “living” (*ḥayy*), and “knowledgeable” (*ʻalīm*). However, if we predicated these names univocally of humans and God, we begin to compare God to limited creatures in ways that compromise His absolute existence. “Big/great” implies physical dimension; “rich” implies a surfeit of limited wealth; “living” implies birth and the possibility of death; “knowledgeable” implies that God knows in that way that humans know. Here, the findings of rational theology protect the theologian from the error of attributing resemblance to God (*tashbīh*) which arises from univocal predication.

Some of the active participles among the divine names belong to the class of equivocal names (e.g. *mu’min*, *mutakabbir*, and *qāhir*). However, participles like “Creator” (*khāliq* and *bāri’*) are not different from human names in the sense that we must predicate “creator” of human beings with a different intention (*maʻnā*) than when we predicate “Creator” of God. Instead, these active participles indicate actions, properly speaking, of which God alone is capable. On Ibn Tūmart’s view, “Creator” (the agent of the act denoted by the Arabic verbs *khalaqa* and *bara’a*) applies only to God because only He can create *ex nihilo* and *de novo*. If one predicates “creator” of a human being or any other creature, he does so equivocally, since the humans and creatures cannot create in the same sense that God creates.

The third category, proper names, differ from human proper names in both provenance and function. Ibn Tūmart rules out the possibility that God possesses proper names upon which human beings agree by convention, for conventionality suggests that there was a time at which God did not possess the names He gives Himself or that humans should refer to God by names that God does not enumerate in revelation. Even if we concede that all Arabic names were established by historical convention (as Ibn Tūmart does in "The Dearest Desire"), God's proper names are not applied to Him by *human* convention. Like every human language, Arabic is conventional. Yet God's predestination and complete foreknowledge allows us to infer that God chose what Arabic names He would give Himself in pre-eternity. Although God's proper names are a means of indicating God—of specifying a particular being—they may not be mere placeholders in the way that human proper names often are. There have been many Abrahams and Muḥammads throughout the course of human history, but their possession of these names does not entail that every Abraham is "a father of nations," or every Muḥammad "praiseworthy." Proper names, such as "God" (*Allāh*; *al-ilāh*)[603] and "Besought of all" (*al-ṣamad*), are neither conventional nor arbitrary, in the sense that these nouns describe God in some respect.

By examining the three material categories of names—adjectival, active participial, and proper—we arrive at three formal categories: equivocal, univocal, and exclusive. Although Ibn Tūmart is frustratingly terse in §15, the last few lines of the chapter offer us some insight into his understanding of the purpose of God's names beyond the *legal* prohibition of using names that God does not give Himself in revelation.

> A creature has no grasp of his Creator, so He calls Him by a name that He does not give to Himself in His Book. What He disavows of Himself in His Book, He disavows of

[603] It should be noted that, while Ibn Tūmart regards *Allāh*/*al-ilāh* as one of God's proper names, *Allāh*/*al-ilāh* is, historically, the generic Arabic term for "deity" or "god." Many Muslim authors before and after Ibn Tūmart would likely criticize his claim that *Allāh*/*al-ilāh* is a proper name in the sense that Zayd or 'Amr are proper names.

> Himself. What He affirms of Himself, He affirms it of Himself without exchange (*tabdīl*), resemblance (*tashbīh*), or qualification (*takyīf*)… He—may He be praised and exalted—said, "God has the most beautiful names. Call on Him by His names and stay away from those who pervert them. They shall receive their due for their misdeeds."[604]

There are two levels to the interpretation of the command, "stay away from those who pervert them." On the material level, one should avoid the company of those who worship God under names that He does not give Himself (i.e. one should not exchange God's names for others). On the formal level, one should avoid those who interpret God's names in a way that involves attributing resemblance or qualification to God. Ibn Tūmart does not delve into the meanings behind the divine names in §15. This omission stands out because the majority of the medieval literature on divine names asks what God's names mean with regard to His being and activity. One may be tempted to conclude from his assertion that "[a] creature has no grasp of his Creator" that Ibn Tūmart discourages speculation about the meaning of the divine names. As I have already discussed above (see §6), Ibn Tūmart consistently uses certain divine names when discussing a particular theological theme.

The lack of explicit mention of the attributive function of divine names, far from signaling condemnation, reflects the commonplaceness of literature, both *kalāmī* and mystical (*ṣūfī*/*'itibārī*), on the divine names in the fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth century. The immediate readership of *BIT* would have been familiar with al-Juwaynī's chapter on God's most beautiful names in his *Irshād*. In Ash'arī circles in the Islamic West, al-Ghazālī's *Sharḥ al-Maqṣad al-asnā fī sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā* and Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī's *al-Amad al-aqṣā fī sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā wa-l-ṣifāt al-'ulā* stood as a high benchmark of the *kalāmī* approach to the divine names. The *mu'tabir* mystic, Ibn Barrajān of Seville (d. 536/1141) authored a commentary on

[604] D, 221. Ibn Tūmart cites Qur'ān 7:180.

the divine names around the turn of the sixth/twelfth century. Although many scholars place Ibn Barrajān's work in the context of the introduction of al-Ghazālī's thought into al-Andalus, Yousef Casewit demonstrates that Ibn Barrajān's approach to mysticism and the divine names emerged instead out of a native tradition of speculation (*'itibār*) that began with Ibn Masarra (269-319/883-931).[605]

Ibn Tūmart's account of the divine names shares much with both commentary traditions. The Ash'arīs and Ibn Barrajān alike begin by investigating the act of naming (*tasmīya*) in general. Naming is not only a matter of grammar (*naḥw*), but also pertains to ontology. The divine names present particular challenges to the theologian insofar as God's distinct manner of being requires a distinct approach to predication that does not compromise His unity and uniqueness. Ibn Tūmart closely follows al-Juwaynī, whose position on the divine names may be described as the negation of the Mu'tazilī position. According to al-Juwaynī, the Mu'tazilīs err in treating the name (*ism*) and the act of naming (*tasmīya*), the attribute (*ṣifa*) and the attribution (*waṣf*), as identical. In doing so, they deny that God had names and the attributes these names intended in eternity.[606] Ibn Tūmart highlights the divine origin of God's names as a way of avoiding the Mu'tazilī view (or at least the Ash'arī account of their view) that the names of God do not reference anything about God in eternity. However, his comments on proper names is closer to Ibn al-'Arabī's view. Despite his association with the Ash'ariyya, Ibn al-'Arabī differs from al-Juwaynī on this issue. With regard to the temporally originated being (*al-muḥdath*), the

[605] See Yousef Casewit, *The Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barrajān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 22-25; and "Al-Ghazālī's Virtue Ethical Theory of the Divine Names: the Theological Underpinnings of the Doctrine of *Takhalluq* in *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā*," *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 4, no. 1-2 (2020), 155-200.
[606] Al-Juwaynī, *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief (=Irshād)*, trans. Paul Walker (Reading, UK: Garnet, 2000), 78.

name is always other than (*ghayruhu*) what is named. With regard to God, argues Ibn al-ʻArabī, we cannot say that His names are separate from Him, just as we cannot say that His attributes are separate from Him. Ibn al-ʻArabī takes a middle position: "We do not say that they are other things belonging to Him (*aghyār lahu*), nor are they He (*wa-lā anna-hā hiya huwa*)."[607]

Ibn Tūmart's division of names into adjectives, active participles, and proper names partially reflects al-Juwaynī's tripartite division of the divine names, which he claims to derive from al-Ashʻarī ("[o]ur chief") himself: names that indicate existence (*wujūd*), names that indicate action (*fiʻl*), and names that indicate an attribute (*ṣifa*).[608] Action and attribute correspond to active participle and adjective. Names indicating existence roughly corresponds to proper names insofar as proper names assert existence or specify the manner of existence. Al-Juwaynī concludes that all the divine names "are divided according to whether they signify the essence or the eternal attributes and what signifies actions or the negation of anything the Sanctified Creator is hallowed above."[609] Like al-Ashʻarī, al-Juwaynī does not allow for the affirmation of a name indicating action of God's essence.[610] Ibn Tūmart's consistent distinction between God's essence and action in *BIT* suggests that he agrees with them on this matter.

With regard to the meaning of the names, Ibn Tūmart seems to have one foot in Ashʻarism, and the other in mysticism. In §10, he gives the standard Ashʻarī list of attributes:

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[607] Abū Bakr b. al-ʻArabī, *al-Amad al-aqṣā fī sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā wa-l-ṣifāt al-ʻulā*, ed. ʻAbdallāh al-Tawrātī (Beirut: Dār al-Katāniyya, 2015), 1: 209-10.
[608] Al-Juwaynī, *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief (=Irshād)*, trans. Paul Walker (Reading, UK: Garnet, 2000), 79. Ibn al-ʻArabī follows a similar division: "specific essence" (*al-dhāt al-khāṣṣiyya*), "attributes" (*al-ṣifāt*), and "actions" (*al-afʻāl*). Abū Bakr b. al-ʻArabī, *al-Amad al-aqṣā fī sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā wa-l-ṣifāt al-ʻulā*, ed. ʻAbdallāh al-Tawrātī (Beirut: Dār al-Katāniyya, 2015), 1: 223.
[609] Al-Juwaynī, *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief (=Irshād)*, trans. Paul Walker (Reading, UK: Garnet, 2000), 80.
[610] Al-Juwaynī, *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief (=Irshād)*, trans. Paul Walker (Reading, UK: Garnet, 2000), 79-80.

living, knowing, capable, willing, hearing, seeing, and speaking.[611] Al-Juwaynī ascribes these same seven attributes to God at different places in *Irshād*, but qualifies God's life, knowledge, power, and will as eternal, indicating that God does not see, hear, or speak prior to creating the world.[612] Ibn al-'Arabī produces the same seven attributes, but adds two more: "existent" (*mawjūd*) and "marvelous" (*badī'*).[613] Al-Juwaynī's and Ibn al-'Arabī's exegesis of certain names that figure heavily in the "Creed" reflect their commitment to theological rationalism. For example, of the name "The Subduer" (*al-qahhār*), al-Juwaynī appears content with its conventional meaning.[614] In his commentary on "the One" (*al-wāḥid*), Ibn al-'Arabī simply gives its proper (*ḥaqīqī*) and derivative (*majāzī*) meanings. God is "one," in the proper sense of the word, because there is no multiplicity in Him (*lā yanthanī*). God is "one," in a derivative sense, because He has no peer (*naẓīr*) or partner (*sharīk*).[615]

On the whole, Ibn Tūmart's use of the divine names reflects this theological approach. Yet there are some instances that seem to nod toward mystical influences. In "That Which Originates in Time," he uses the combination "the One, the Subduer" (*al-wāḥid al-qahhār*) in reference to the human being's utter inability to imagine God's manner of being or mode.[616] Ibn al-'Arabī follows al-Juwaynī's interpretation of "the Subduer" as a reference to God's all-

[611] D, 219.
[612] Al-Juwaynī, *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief (=Irshād)*, trans. Paul Walker (Reading, UK: Garnet, 2000), 36-7 (power and knowledge), 37-42 (will), 42-5 (sight and hearing), 46 (qualification of eternity), 56-66 (speech).
[613] Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī, *al-Amad al-aqṣā fī sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā wa-l-ṣifāt al-'ulā*, ed. 'Abdallāh al-Tawrātī (Beirut: Dār al-Katāniyya, 2015), 1: 193.
[614] Al-Juwaynī, *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief (=Irshād)*, trans. Paul Walker (Reading, UK: Garnet, 2000), 82.
[615] Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī, *al-Amad al-aqṣā fī sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā wa-l-ṣifāt al-'ulā*, ed. 'Abdallāh al-Tawrātī (Beirut: Dār al-Katāniyya, 2015), 1: 313-4.
[616] D, 201. Although Ibn Tūmart uses other divine names in this passage, he uses the pair "the One, the Subduer" at the beginning and the end of this passage wherein he explain how God differs from all temporally originated beings (*al-muḥdathāt*).

encompassing power.[617] Al-Ghazālī gives the same interpretation with reference to God, adding the "counsel" that one should imitate God by subduing the passions.[618] Of the contemporary commentaries on the divine names, the author whose interpretation of "the Subduer" most resembles Ibn Tūmart's is Barrajān. For Ibn Barrajān, the name *al-qāhir* (a variant of *qahhār*) not only indicates God's power, but also that, unlike His creatures, He is not restricted or "subdued" (*maqhūr*).[619] The parallel is even stronger in their interpretation of "the One." Ibn Barrajān writes, "He is that which intellects do not reach (*lā tudrikuhu al-ʻuqūl*), nor do imaginations say how He is (*wa-lā tukayyifuhu al-awhām*).[620] Compare this to what Ibn Tūmart writes in "The Unification of the Creator," as well: "…imaginations do not conceive of Him (*lā tuṣawwiruhu al-awhām*) … nor do intellects establish how He is (*lā tukayyifuhu al-ʻuqūl*)…"[621] We cannot be certain that Ibn Tūmart read Ibn Barrajān, but the similarities in their usage of the divine names and their conceptual vocabulary (e.g. *takyīf*) suggest, at the very least, that Ibn Tūmart was familiar with the tradition of speculative theology in which Ibn Barrajān worked.

§16 – The Beatific Vision (al-ru'ya al-karīma)

§16 is a further example of how Ibn Tūmart adopts the Ashʻarī strategy of *bi-lā kayfa*/*min ghayr takyīf* to assent to a statement in revelation that cannot be demonstrated by reason alone, but nevertheless uses reason to qualify that to which he assents. At issue here is the "beatific

[617] Abū Bakr b. al-ʻArabī, *al-Amad al-aqṣā fī sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā wa-l-ṣifāt al-ʻulā*, ed. ʻAbdallāh al-Tawrātī (Beirut: Dār al-Katāniyya, 2015), 2: 366-72.
[618] Al-Ghazālī, *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*, trans. David B. Burrell and Nazih Daher (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2007 [1992].
[619] Ibn Barrajān, *Sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mizyadī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʻIlmiyya, 2010), 2: 158. See also D, 226: *jamīʻ al-khalā'iq maqhūrūn bi-qudratihi*.
[620] Ibn Barrajān, *Sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mizyadī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʻIlmiyya, 2010), 1: 81.
[621] D, 225.

vision" (*al-ru'ya*) of God which the Qur'ān and *sunna* say believers will experience in Paradise.[622] The Mu'tazila famously rejected the beatific vision because they understood the act of seeing God as corporealism and a violation of *tawḥīd*. The Ash'ariyya, by contrast, defended the *ru'ya* on the basis of scripture and through rational arguments. M. Saeed Sheikh identifies three syllogistic arguments typical of the Ash'arī approach to the beatific visions:

> (i) God can show us everything that exists.
> He exists.
> Therefore He can show Himself to us.
>
> (ii) He who sees things sees himself.
> God sees things.
> Therefore God sees Himself.
> He who sees Himself can make Himself seen.
> God sees Himself.
> Therefore He can make Himself seen.
>
> (iii) The highest good is realizable in the highest world.
> The beatific vision is the highest good.
> Therefore beatific vision [*sic*] is realizable in the highest world.[623]

These arguments do not explicitly rely on the principle of *bi-lā kayfa*, but rather assume that the question of the beatific vision can be settled through discursive reasoning. If we attempt to read these proofs as Ibn Tūmart might have read them, we see that they either lead to corporealism or to *bi-lā kayfa*. Argument (i) is grounded in God's omnipotence: "God *can* show us everything that exists." To say that God *cannot* show Himself implies limitation of His power. We now have two possibilities with which to contend: (i.a) God makes Himself visible by way of the normal human faculty of sight; (i.b) God makes Himself visible by means other than the normal human faculty of sight. (i.a) entails that God is a body; (i.b) requires us to say either that the *ru'ya* is

[622] See Qur'ān 75:22-23: "On that day, faces will be bright as they look at their Lord" (*wujūhun yawma'idhin nāḍiratun // ilā rabbihā nāẓiratun*).
[623] M. Saeed Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy* (London: Octagon Press, 1982), 24.

metaphorical or that we do not know how it will happen. Argument (ii) assumes that the act of sight, when applied to God, is comparable to human sight. "He who sees things sees himself" certainly applies to the human faculty of sight, which is tied to the human organs of sight, the eyes. But, in order for us to use this premise, we must predicate sight of God univocally. If God sees as humans see, then He possesses eyes and therefore is a body or has a body. If we predicate sight of God in an equivocal sense, we cannot say with any certainty how God sees. Since the premise implies that God sees as humans see, we must discard the premise. Argument (iii) leads to the same dilemma. Ibn Tūmart would likely agree that the beatific vision is the highest good and that it is realizable in the highest world, but this proof does not explain how the beatific vision will happen. Either the beatific vision will happen by means of normal human sight, in which case we must adopt a corporeal notion of God, or it will happen in some other way, *bi-lā kayfa*.

Ibn Tūmart says that "it is necessary to verify (*taṣdīq*) what is revealed (*wārida*) in the Law concerning the beatific vision." Reason nevertheless demands that one not treat the revealed fact of the beatific vision as evidence that God resembles His creatures in any respect:

> [God] is seen without resemblance (*tashbīh*) or qualification (*takyīf*). Sight does not reach Him in the sense (*bi-ma'nā*) [that He has] an end, restriction, connection, or separation, because it is impossible that the limits of originated beings be attributed to Him. Every particularity implies a defect, and [every] limit implies origination in time (*ḥadath*). This must necessarily be excluded from His glory…[624]

Ibn Tūmart likewise considers the Mu'tazilīs' rejection of the beatific vision on the grounds that it implies corporealism to be an error of equal gravity. Since the Qur'ān and *sunna* are explicit with regard to *ru'ya*, the theologian cannot deny it, no matter what obstacles its explanation presents. Some may interpret his citation of Q 6:101-3 as evidence of his rejection of the beatific

[624] D, 221.

vision: "Sight does not apprehend Him, though He sees all eyes" (*lā tudrikuhu al-abṣār wa-huwa yudrik al-abṣār*). Yet his initial statement that one *must* verify the beatific vision excludes this reading, as does his admission that scripture mentions the beatific vision.[625] The key phrase remains *min ghayr takyīf*, Ibn Tūmart's version of al-Ash'arī's *bi-lā kayfa*. He therefore takes the best of the Mu'tazilī and the Ash'arī positions without doing violence to reason or revelation. On the one hand, we will not see God by normal, physical means, because this would violate *tawḥīd*, a doctrine to which both reason and revelation attest. On the other hand, we cannot reject the beatific vision because revelation confirms it; one must assent to it, but he need not establish how it will happen (*min ghayr takyīf*). Ibn Tūmart's treatment of the *ru'ya* is surprisingly conservative in comparison to fifth/eleventh-century Ash'arī accounts. Although Ibn Tūmart eliminates the corporealism present in early Ash'arī applications of *bi-lā kayfa*, he does not (like al-Māturīdī, al-Bayhaqī, al-Juwaynī, and Fakhr al-dīn al-Rāzī) assert that verses regarding the beatific vision and other anthropomorphic verses (e.g. Qur'ān 68:42) hold particular metaphorical meanings.[626] Ibn Tūmart makes the more modest claim that Muslims are obliged to assent to the *ru'ya* insofar as the Qur'ān speaks of it, but that they are forbidden to conceive of it in a way that impugns God's unity and transcendence.

§17 – Verification of Prophecy by Miracles (mu'jizāt)

The final chapter of the "Creed" concerns the ways in which human beings approach the verification (*taṣdīq*) of prophecy. In many of previous chapters, Ibn Tūmart speaks of

[625] See Qur'ān 7:143, 75:22-3. On the *ḥadīth* attestations, see M. Saeed Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy* (London: Octagon Press, 1982), 23.
[626] On this trend in Ash'arī and Māturīdī *kalām*, see Aydogan Kars, *Unsaying God: Negative Theology in Medieval Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 220-28.

"verification" with regard to individual statements that we find in the Qur'ān and *sunna*. These secondary acts of verification, which seek to ascertain the manner in which such statements hold of reality or of God, require a prior act of verification that centers on the provenance of the entire *corpus* of revelation. How does one know that an individual, who claims to be a prophet, speaks for God? In line with Ash'arism, Ibn Tūmart concludes that the only way in which human beings can verify that a prophet has delivered a message from the one God is through the appearance of "a miracle by God's permission" (*mu'jiza bi-idhn Allāh*). "By necessity, the veracity of the messenger (*ṣidq al-rasūl*) is known by the appearance of extraordinary signs (*li-ẓuhūr al-āyāt al-khāriqa li-l-'āda*) [that occur] in accordance with what he claims (*'alā wafq da'wāhi*)."[627] Ibn Tūmart enumerates three ways in which a prophetic claimant might try to establish his veracity before his audience:

> (i) "He might offer ordinary acts (*al-af'āl al-mu'tāda*), such as eating, drinking and wearing clothes, and [then] claim that these are miraculous (*mu'jiza*). [In this case,] his claim is false (*baṭala da'wāhu*) because they lack any indication of his veracity, for no one is unable to perform these actions which he claims are a sign of his veracity."
>
> (ii) "He might also offer acts that he achieved through ruses and teaching (*al-af'āl al-latī yatawaṣṣal ilayhā bi-l-ḥīl wa-l-ta'līm*), such as writing, building, sewing, and other crafts. His claim that these are miraculous is false (*baṭala da'wāhu…*), since that which is achieved through ruses and teaching does not confirm (*lā yaṣiḥḥ*) [the existence of] a miracle belonging to the messenger."
>
> (iii) "He might also offer miraculous acts (*al-af'āl al-khāriqa li-l-'āda*), such as the parting of the sea, the turning of a staff into a snake, the raising of the dead, or the splitting of the moon as a miracle belonging to him (*mu'jizatan lahu*). [In this case,] he confirms his veracity, since the Creator alone—may He be praised—enables them and brings them about in accordance with [the messenger's] claim."[628]

Ibn Tūmart is concerned with distinguishing prophethood from all other forms of communicative authority, whether worldly or religious. In the first two examples, he excludes obvious cases of

[627] D, 222.
[628] D, 222.

pseudo-prophecy. Normal human actions do not set a prophetic claimant apart from others. Moreover, if a claimant were to assert that certain actions that are not "outside of the ordinary" (*khāriqa li-l-ʿāda*) are "miraculous" (*muʿjiza*; "causing wonder"), he would be lying. The same applies to the prophetic claimant who tries to persuade his audience by way of ruses and special knowledge. This example recalls a persistent human belief that individuals who possess knowledge of mathematics, the natural sciences, or the occult sciences, or who are adept in the arts and engineering derive this knowledge from God or the gods. We need only remember Thales of Miletus, the Ionian philosopher who used natural philosophy to predict the outcome of harvests, or the trope of the temple charlatan in ancient Greek and Roman narrative.[629] The Qur'ān devotes particular attention to the poets (sing. *shāʿir*) whose beautiful verses many considered evidence of divine inspiration.[630] The Qur'ānic story of Abraham's mocking of the idols in his native Ur likewise reflects an anxiety around temple charlatans. The young Abraham's derision centers around his observation that the idol that his father has sculpted does not eat when the boy offers him food—a nod to the practice of clandestinely removing food offered to the gods to imply that they had eaten it.[631] Verification of a prophet's claim to represent God requires a sign that breaks from the habitual course of human experience because only the one God can perform such acts on the prophet's behalf.

[629] On Thales, see Patricia F. O'Grady, *Thales of Miletus: The Beginnings of Western Science and Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2016), 15 (citing Aristotle, *Politics* 1259a6-23). For a sample of recent scholarship on ancient charlatans, see *Holy Men and Charlatans in the Ancient Novel*, ed. Stelios Panayotakis et al. (Eelde, NL: Barkhuis, 2015).

[630] In "The Prophets" (*sūrat al-anbiyāʾ*), the Meccans accuse Muḥammad of being no more than a poet who lends too much credence to his dreams: "Some say, 'Muddled dreams'; others, 'He has made it [the Qur'ān] up'; yet others, 'He is just a poet, let him show us a sign as previous messengers did.'" Qur'ān 21:6 (trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem).

[631] Qur'ān 37:83-98.

Ibn Tūmart's statement on the confirmation of prophecy by the appearance of miracles is consistent with the Ash'arī account, especially that of al-Juwaynī in his *Irshād*. Yet in §17, the full force of the Ash'arī requirement that miracles must accompany a prophet's message remains implicit. Al-Juwaynī spells out the exclusive role of miracles in establishing the veracity of a prophetic claimant:

> Someone might ask: Is it possible to ascribe a proof for the Prophet's veracity to something other than a miracle? We reply: That is not possible, since what is presumed a proof of the Prophet's veracity must be either an ordinary fact (*mu'tādan*) or a rupturing of the habitual order (*khāriqan li-l-'āda*). If it were a commonplace event, access to it would be the same for the pious and the profligate and it could not possibly constitute a proof. If it is a rupturing of the habitual order, it cannot constitute a proof unless it applies to the claim of a prophet (*da'wā al-nabī*), since all situations that involve the supernatural (*kull khāriq li-l-'āda*) can happen spontaneously as an act of God, the Exalted. When there is no doubt as to its being applied to the claim of prophecy, it constitutes a miracle, pure and simple.[632]

Ibn Tūmart's description of miracles not only reflects al-Juwaynī's in terms of its content, but also in its specific terminology. Unlike Ibn Tūmart, who draws our attention to the possibility of fraud, al-Juwaynī opposes the ordinary (*mu'tād*) to the extraordinary (*khāriq li-l-'āda*) in accordance with the law of parity. The criterion by which one establishes the veracity of a prophet is either miraculous or non-miraculous—*there is no third*. He excludes ordinary actions, a category that encompasses Ibn Tūmart's first two examples, on the grounds that they do not distinguish between the "pious" or the "profligate" in any meaningful way, as both groups are capable of such actions. The exclusion of even pious acts goes to the heart of the matter. Moral character is a necessary, but not a *sufficient* condition of prophethood. Ibn Tūmart excludes the first type of prophetic claimant because he falsely portrays his normal actions as miracles. He

[632] Al-Juwaynī, *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief (=Irshād)*, trans. Paul Walker (Reading, UK: Garnet, 2000), 180. al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā qawāṭi' al-adalla fī uṣūl al-i'tiqād*, ed. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Sā'iḥ (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-thaqāfiyya al-dīniyya, 2009), 262.

excludes the second because he seeks to create the impression of relationship with the divine through exceptional (though not extraordinary) knowledge and skill. In "The Discourse on Knowledge," Ibn Tūmart states that such dishonesty disqualifies someone from prophethood: "that which is necessary to deny of the messenger is lying, fraud, and adherence to falsehood."[633] But why are good or pious actions not sufficient to establish a prophet's veracity? After all, Ibn Tūmart also says that "that which is necessary to affirm of the messenger is veracity, trustworthiness, and adherence to the truth."[634]

In order to answer this question, we must remember the metaethical commitments from which both al-Juwaynī and Ibn Tūmart work. Ash'arī divine command theory rejects the attribution of moral good or piety to acts outside of the context of the *sharī'a*, since moral attributes do not inhere in things themselves. In "The Discourse on Knowledge," Ibn Tūmart allows for only a minimal moral sense based on the naïve human perception of advantage and disadvantage. A prophetic claimant cannot prove that he speaks for God solely by performing ordinary acts, which some might label "good" or "pious," because there is no revealed Law to which one can appeal to substantiate these labels. The necessary conditions of veracity, trustworthiness, and adherence to truth reflect the prophetic claimant's general disposition to assertoric truth and human advantage. These qualities may increase the likelihood of belief in the prophet's claim to speak for God in the absence of miracles, but do not constitute a proof of his particular relationship to God.

For Ibn Tūmart, God's confirmation of His messengers by miracles represents a gracious condescension to the human demand for evidence. "The concurrence of the miracle and the

[633] D, 183.
[634] D, 183.

[prophet's] claim can be perceived through the senses (*maḥsūsa*). There is no way to deny those things which have been perceived through the senses (*al-maḥsūsāt*), nor to render false what is known (*al-ma'lūmāt*; objects of knowledge)."[635] Like the intellect, the senses (*ḥawāss*) "compel" (*tuḍirr*) the individual to the extent that he cannot doubt the knowledge that he acquires through the senses. Ibn Tūmart includes "from the sensible" (*'an maḥsūs*) in his definition of concurrent reports (*akhbār mutawātira*) because he holds it to be impossible to receive transmitted knowledge (*naql*) except through the senses.[636] The same applies to the knowledge of miracles. God makes a sensible sign, which only He can perform, to appear in concurrence with a prophet's message in order to connect His unique capacity to the statement of the messenger. This concurrence not only renders what the messenger says "true" in the assertoric sense, but also provides his audience with sensible knowledge that cannot be denied. For example, Ibn Tūmart cites "the splitting of the moon" (*inshiqāq al-qamar*) as an example of such concurrence. The Qur'ān alludes to this miracle in "The Moon" (*sūrat al-qamar*): "The Hour draws near; the moon is split."[637] According to *ḥadīth* testimony, the moon split immediately after the Meccans asked Muḥammad for proof of his prophethood:

> • "Anas b. Mālik [reported] that the people of Mecca asked the Messenger of God…to show them a sign (*āya*), so he showed them the splitting of the moon" (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3637).
> • "Anas b. Mālik [reported] that the people of Mecca asked the Messenger of God…to show them a sign, so he showed them the moon split into two halves until they saw the mountain of Ḥirā' between them" (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3868).
> • "'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd said that the moon was split into two parts during the lifetime of God's Messenger… The mountain covered one of its parts and the other part was above the mountain. The Messenger of God…said, "Bear witness to this" (*Saḥīḥ Muslim* 2800c).

[635] D, 222.
[636] D, 69-70.
[637] Qur'ān 54:1 (trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem).

These examples meet Ibn Tūmart's criterion that "the Creator alone…enables these [miracles] and brings them about in accordance with [the messenger's] claim." When Ibn Tūmart says in the beginning of §17 that that the veracity of the prophet is known "by necessity" (*min ḍarūra*) from the concurrence of the prophet's claim (*da'wā*) and a sign (*āya*) from God, we must interpret this necessity, this "compulsion" (*ḍarūra*), in two respects. The necessity of the senses (*ḍarūrat al-ḥawāss*) compels the individual to accept the miraculous event to the point that he cannot doubt it. The necessity of the intellect (*ḍarūrat al-'aql*) compels the individual to connect the occurrence of the miracle to the prophet's statements and confirm his veracity, since the only being capable of such an extraordinary sign is the God whom Ibn Tūmart describes in §§2-14.

Fletcher argues that "the first part of the *Book of Ibn Tūmart*" (i.e. "The Dearest Desire") displays a bias against miracles that contradicts the centrality of miracles in §17 of the "Creed." She holds that the anti-miracle bias of the following passage from "The Dearest Desire" "goes far in the denial of miracles" and is "almost a certain sign that it is part of the material re-written in 579/1183." In her translation:

> As for the miracle, the way of knowledge of it is necessarily by factual evidence, because when we see the comparison and the concordance of the miracle to the propaganda [!] or message of the messenger, along with the fact that it is not an act which is possible for created beings to perform, it takes place as factual evidence which allows for no choice, as, for example, the yellowing of the fearful one from the contemplation of a lion, and his change of colour and the trembling of his limbs, and it is known by necessity from factual evidence that this trembling and yellowing are only from what he saw, since there is no choice in it. And analogous to this is the miracle, since we saw it to be in accord with the propaganda [!] of the messenger, and it is not in his power to tell us absolutely to believe in it, and there is no place for multiple transmission in the knowledge of the miracle, and as for its existence, it has been transmitted to us through multiple transmission and its existence differs from knowledge about it.[638]

[638] Madeleine Fletcher, "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 249-50. I disagree with Fletcher's translation of *da'wa* ("call"; "mission") as "propaganda" because of how it lends toward the characterization of Almohadism as, in principle, a political ideology.

Fletcher draws two conclusions from this passage. On an epistemological level, the direct knowledge of miracles is different from the concurrent transmission of *aḥādīth* about miracles the Prophet performed. Miracles compel those who experience them directly, just as their color involuntarily changes when they encounter a ferocious lion; but hearing or reading about the Prophet's miracles do not necessarily reproduce this experience of certainty. From this epistemological observation, she concludes that the passage's author means to say that "people should be free to believe in miracles or not."[639] Much of Fletcher's claim that significant portions of *BIT* underwent revision during the reign of Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf (from which MS A dates) rests on this apparent discrepancy between the account of miracles in "The Dearest Desire" and the "Creed." As I have stated elsewhere, her hypothesis supports the general revisionist claim that the transposition of the Almohad court from the Maghrib to al-Andalus required the Mu'minid dynasty to muffle the early Almohad movement's emphasis on Ibn Tūmart's miracles and mahdism to appeal to "the urban Andalusī attitude towards miracles."[640]

I argue that this passage from "The Dearest Desire" is entirely consistent with §17. I have cited Fletcher's translation in order to show how she misunderstands key points of Ibn Tūmart's argument, especially his use of technical terms derived from *fiqh*. Here is my translation of the same passage with the last sentence added:

> The way of knowledge (*ṭarīq al-'ilm*) of the miracle is the necessity of circumstantial indicators (*qarā'in al-aḥwāl*), because when we see the simultaneous connection (*muqārana*) of the miracle to and its concurrence (*muwāfaqatihā*) with the claim (*da'wā*) of the messenger, along with the fact that it is not an act [that is possible for] creatures [to perform]. [The miracle] occupies the rank of circumstantial indicators in which there is no choice; for example, when the coward turns yellow at the sight of a lion. From the circumstantial indicators, the change in his color and the trembling of his limbs, one

[639] Madeleine Fletcher, "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 250.
[640] Madeleine Fletcher, "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 250.

> knows by necessity that this trembling and yellowing are [the results] of what he saw (*inna-mā mimmā ra'āhu*), since he had no choice in this. In the same way, when we see a miracle that concurs with the messenger's claim (*muwāfaqatan li-da'wā al-rasūl*), which is not in his capacity, we know his veracity with certainty. There is no place for concurrent transmission (*lā majāla li-l-tawātur*) in knowing [the miracle itself] (*al-'ilm bi-hā*). The existence [of the miracle] has already been transmitted to us by concurrent transmission. [Knowledge of] the existence [of the miracle] is different from the knowledge of it. **As with repentance, punishment, the judgments [of the Law], and all that was given to the Messenger, its source is not concurrent transmission, but is rather known by divine inspiration (*waḥī*).**[641]

Contrary to Fletcher, who reads this passage as evidence that its author is indifferent or hostile to miracles, the argument presented here agrees with both §17 and Ibn Tūmart's overall epistemology. Witnessing a miracle produces circumstantial indicators in the mind of the witness which are similar to the yellowing and shaking of the coward who encounters a lion insofar as the witness' knowledge of the miracle is involuntary. Since he experiences the miracle through the senses, he cannot doubt what he senses. The latter half of the passage simply distinguishes betweenn our mediated knowledge of the existence of miracles (through the Qur'ān and *sunna*) and the immediate knowledge of the miracles on the part of the Prophet's contemporaries. Only direct witness to a miracle can have knowledge of the miracle (*al-'ilm bi-l-mu'jiza*). Later Muslims can only say, "We know the existence of miracle *x* because we have concurrent transmissions that person *p* witnessed this miracle." All Ibn Tūmart is saying is that the immediate knowledge of miracles constitutes an object of knowledge separate from transmitted reports of miracles and that the epistemological force of the latter depends on that of the latter. In the same way, Muḥammad's knowledge of repentance, punishment, the *sharī'a*, and all that was revealed to him came to him through divine inspiration (*waḥī*). Other Muslims cannot say that they know the content of revelation in the same way that Muḥmmad knew it because

[641] D, 40-41.

Muḥammad's "way" (*ṭarīq*) to this knowledge was communication from God through the angel Gabriel, whereas Muḥammad's report (*khabar*) is the way in which all other Muslims attain this knowledge. Far from denying the necessity of confirming the veracity of a prophet through the concurrence of a miracle with his message, the difference in the sources of knowledge requires us to establish an epistemic link between the statement and question and reality. In the case of prophecy, the miracle provides this link: only the God of the Qur'ān could produce the miracle that concurs with the claims of the Prophet who brought the Qur'ān. This search for a compelling (*ḍarūrī*) link between God and Prophet is no different from the search for concurrence in *ḥadīth* science, because concurrence is "the repetition and reception of reports until knowledge occurs in the soul with such force that no doubt attaches to it and it is not possible to reject it."[642]

Concluding Remarks

Questions regarding the historical provenance and doctrinal content of Ibn Tūmart's "Creed" and other theological writings have made it difficult to properly contextualize Almohad theology within Islamic intellectual history writ large, as well as to render an accurate description of the beliefs which Almohad Muslims held. The dating of texts like the "Creed" and "Spiritual Guide" in relation to the rest of *BIT* is of utmost importance because the answers we give affect how we tell the story of the Almohad movement as a distinct form of Islam. If we determine that we cannot reconcile the content and style of the "Creed" with the "Spiritual Guide," we must concur with Fletcher that the Almohads (likely for political reasons) revised Ibn Tūmart's Mu'tazilī-leaning doctrines in order to bring Almohadism closer to the strain of Ash'arism that had come

[642] D, 68.

to dominate in Iberia. If we determine that the "Section on Theology," though consistent with Ibn Tūmart's epistemological and legal writings, does not mesh with the *mahdī*-doctrine, we must conclude along with Fierro and Nagel that the theory of *imāma* we find in *BIT* was an later (and perhaps inauthentic) development Ibn Tūmart's teachings.

In my commentary on the "Creed," I have endeavored to show that Ibn Tūmart's proof of God's existence is consistent with the part of *BIT* that I have labelled "The Section on Knowledge" in both its content and terminology. Appealing to the epistemological foundation of these earlier chapters resolves many of the interpretive challenges which historians have encountered in reading the "Creed." The fact that Ibn Tūmart consistently appeals to Ash'arī concepts—theological, epistemological, ethical, and juridical—in the "Section on Knowledge" and the "Section on Theology" indicates that ascendancy of Ash'arī *kalām* within the Almohad movement long before the Almohad Caliphate's expansion into Northern Morocco and al-Andalus. In Appendix II, I address comments from Goldziher and Fletcher regarding Mu'tazilī doctrines in Ibn Tūmart's shorter theological compositions—above all, the "Spiritual Guide." There, I argue that Goldziher and Fletcher misconstrue certain phrases in the "Spiritual Guide" in ways that lead to the erroneous claims that Ibn Tūmart denied the divine attributes and that he taught pantheistic monism. I include in Appendix II a chart comparing statements from across the "Section on Theology" in Arabic and English. Using individual statements in the "Spiritual Guide" as an index of major theological topics, I show that, contrary to Goldziher and Fletcher, the "Spiritual Guide" and "Creed" are consistent with each other, as well as with the other four texts in the "Section on Theology." Moreover, there are many instances in which Ibn Tūmart uses phrases *verbatim* (or nearly so) in three or more texts to express the same idea. In light of

the internal consistency of the "Section on Theology," we should regard revisionist accounts of authorship based on alleged contradictions within Ibn Tūmart's theology to be implausible.

Another revisionist objection to Ibn Tūmart's having authored *BIT* as a whole is the absence of the *mahdī* doctrine from the "Creed" and the shorter theological texts. Indeed, if Ibn Tūmart's claim to be the infallible *imām* and acknowledged *mahdī* (*al-imām al-ma'ṣūm wa-l-mahdī al-ma'lūm*) was so central to Almohadism, we should expect it to appear in the text entitled "The Creed of the Almohads." Fletcher views the absence of any mention of the *mahdī* in the "Creed" and shorter theological texts as evidence that the Almohads suppressed the doctrine in order to sanitize their public doctrines for an urban, Andalusī audience.[643] Fierro argues that the opposite is the case. Since some Muslims in al-Andalus had become accustomed to mahdist thinking through the proliferation of mystical systems (e.g. that of Ibn Qasī), emphasis on the *mahdī* doctrine would have benefited the Mu'minid dynasty's expansion into Iberia, as well as their push for the elimination of legal difference (*ikhtilāf*) under a unified legal code for the empire based on the caliphs' succession to the *mahdī*.[644] Her timeline implies that the "Creed" and shorter theological works do not explicitly reference the *mahdī*-doctrine because the Almohads did not put much stock in it prior to their arrival in al-Andalus.

The text of *BIT* as it has come down to us frustrates both hypotheses. With regard to Fletcher's claim that the absence of mahdism from the creed is evidence that the Almohads suppressed the *mahdī* doctrine, the chapter that deals most explicitly with *imāma* and the *mahdī*, "On What Is Obligatory to Believe about the Imāmate," is in close proximity to the credal texts.

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[643] Madeleine Fletcher, "Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 243.
[644] Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphate and Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-mujtahid*", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (1999),247-48; Maribel Fierro, "Le mahdi Ibn Tûmart et al-Andalus: l'élaboration de la légitimité almohade," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 91-14 (July 2000), 107-24.

In MS Paris, "Imāmate" begins on the same folio on which "Exaltation of the Creator" ends and which contains the entirety of "The Witness of the Signs."[645] If later editors sought to suppress mahdism in *BIT*, they did a poor job. Fierro's hypothesis suffers from a similar lack of appreciation for the consistency of *BIT*. Even if she was correct in asserting that "Imāmate" represents a later Mu'minid development, the *mahdī*-doctrine appears in concert with the full Almohad teaching in a short text entitled, "The Rules upon which the Religious and Worldly Sciences are Established." In this text, Ibn Tūmart lists the major tenets of Almohadism regarding jurisprudence, theology, and mahdism in quick succession, indicating that each of these divisions are connected by more than coincidence.[646] Fierro herself recognizes that the rejection of *ikhtilāf*—the very reason she ascribes to the Mu'minid dynasty's promotion of mahdsim in al-Andalus—originated with Ibn Tūmart, prior to ascent of 'Abd al-Mu'min to the helm of the Almohad movement.[647]

I argue that, while the absence of the *mahdī*-doctrine from Ibn Tūmart's theological texts puts greater demands on the historian to show the compatibility of Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of God and theory of *imāma*, we should not put too much stock in the revisionists' *argumenta ex silentio*. It is far more plausible that Ibn Tūmart authored each text with a different purpose in mind. "That Which Originates in Time" and the "Creed," though brief in comparison to contemporary works like al-Juwaynī's *Irshād*, present metaphysical and theological doctrines in a protracted form and build cumulative arguments. The shorter texts perform two functions. First, they take a theological theme or group of themes and express them in short swaths of

[645] A, 62v.
[646] D, 237-39.
[647] Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphs," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (September 1999), 248.

rhyming prose (*saj'*) to facilitate memorization. For the sake of brevity, Ibn Tūmart likely eliminated the full arguments that led him to these theological positions. Second, these shorter texts act as indices to the longer texts and often using identical or nearly identical phrases. While the shorter texts omit arguments, each sentence refers to a section of the "Creed" or another of Ibn Tūmart's writings where one can read the full argument. If the *mahdī*-doctrine is absent from these texts, it may be simply be that Ibn Tūmart regarded mahdism as separate from the topics at hand.

The way in which Ibn Tūmart appropriates Ash'arism into his elaboration of Almohad Islam reveals a mind that was simultaneously revolutionary and atavistic. Revolutionary in the sense that the broader structure of Ibn Tūmart's proof of God's existence owes a great debt to Ibn Sīnā's cosmological proof and modal theory, along with their reception by Ash'arī *mutakallimūn* connected to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa*s. That Ibn Tūmart teaches *takfīr al-'awāmm* in the very first chapter of the "Creed" reveals his interest in the earlier, more radical brand of Ash'arism that was suppressed by the mid-eleventh century. In his treatment of the *ru'ya*, we see Ibn Tūmart synthesizing new and old Ash'arī approaches to *kalām* to reach a conclusion that belongs to neither historical iteration of that school. Unlike the early Ash'arīs, Ibn Tūmart does not regard the beatific vision as a theological claim that one can or should prove by way of reason because the human senses and intellect have no access to the elements at play in this claim apart froms revelation. Unlike the later Ash'arīs, with whom Ibn Tūmart shares the belief that reason is prophylactic, allowing the believer to accept the beatific vision without also accepting corporealism, he regards the allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of anthropomorphic verses in the Qur'ān and *sunna* as a theological excess.

The uniqueness of Ibn Tūmart's theology lies in the attention he pays to "the ways of knowledge" (*ṭuruq al-ʿilm*) in presenting the knowledge of God (*al-ʿilm bi-llāh*). He proceeds from the proof of God's existence, oneness, and transcendence (§§2-11) to an account God's justice and predestination (§§12-14) and a discussion of the ways in which reason does and does not figure into the understanding of positive revelation. From "Creed" §1 and texts like "On Worship," we see that the ways of knowledge are of personal significance within Almohad Islam because the manner in which one achieves genuine knowledge of a particular subject depends on the way (or combination of ways) human beings reach that knowledge. For Ibn Tūmart, one's attainment of knowledge in the appropriate way determines one's status *vis-à-vis* the Almohad community, as well as one's entrance into "the garden."

Chapter 6: The Infallible *Imām* and Acknowledged *Mahdī*

A significant portion of the historiography of the Almohad Caliphate centers on Ibn Tūmart's role as *imām* and *mahdī*, as well as the way in which 'Abd al-Mu'min and his successors appropriated *imāma* ("Islamic leadership") to legitimize their dynasty. The traditional, Almohad narrative runs as follows. After a sojourn in the East, during which time (ca. 501/1106) Ibn Tūmart performed the *ḥajj* pilgrimage, studied at the Baghdad Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* (particularly under al-Ghazālī), and studied under Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī in Alexandria, he returned to the Maghrib by way of Tunisia (510-11/1116-17). On the way to his native Morocco, Ibn Tūmart attracted many followers. Foremost among these was 'Abd al-Mu'min, a Zenāta tribesman whom Ibn Tūmart would one day name as his successor. Ibn Tūmart made a name for himself as a preacher, a teacher who participated in public debates, and an agitator who frequently criticized laxness in observance of the *sharī'a*—particularly the consumption of alcohol and immodest dress. He arrived in Marrakesh, the Almoravid capital, in 514/1120 where he attracted the suspicion of the *faqīh* Mālik b. Wuhayb, an advisor to the *amīr*, 'Alī b. Yūsuf. The *amīr* initially exiled Ibn Tūmart to nearby Aghmāt, but his continued agitation against the Almoravids provoked 'Alī b. Yūsuf to seek his arrest. Fearing imprisonment, Ibn Tūmart and his followers found refuge among Ibn Tūmart's Maṣmūda clansmen at the fortress (*ribāṭ*) of the Hargha tribe near his birthplace, Īgīllīz. During this time (515/1121), Ibn Tūmart communicated his doctrines to the nascent Almohad movement. The majority of the writings compiled in *BIT* derive from this period.

In the same year, Ibn Tūmart revealed that he was the awaited *mahdī*. In 517-18/1123-24, the Almohads relocated to Tīnmall where they massacred the village's inhabitants who refused to accept Ibn Tūmart as *imām* and *mahdī*. The fortress at Tīnmall became the headquarters of the

early Almohad movement, as well as their army's base of operations. From 518/1124 until his death in 524/1130, Ibn Tūmart consolidated his political and religious authority among the Maṣmūda and neighboring tribes and began a long war against the Almoravids. 'Abd al-Mu'min, whom Ibn Tūmart confirmed as his successor shortly before his death, concealed Ibn Tūmart's death for three years in order to protect Almohad cohesion. After decades of war with the Almoravids, 'Abd al-Mu'min conquered Marrakesh in 541/1147 and established Almohad dominion in the Maghrib.[648]

Recent historians have made some much needed revisions to this official version of Ibn Tūmart's biography. Although Ibn Tūmart probably studied at the Baghdad Niẓāmiyya, he likely arrived there years after al-Ghazālī had resigned from his post at the famous *madrasa* and departed Baghdad.[649] Doubts remain about the claim that he studied under al-Ṭurṭūshī in Alexandria, though it is not impossible. Although under Fāṭimid control, many Mālikī scholars relocated from Almoravid Spain to Alexandria in the late eleventh century.[650] Others have noted literary parallels between al-Baydhaq's description of Ibn Tūmart's career in *Akhbār al-Mahdī* and narratives about Muḥammad and other prophets in the Qur'ān and its commentary tradition.[651] In "Knowledge in Epistemology II," I describe Delfina Serrano Ruano's critique of the historicity of the accusations of corporealism (*tajsīm*) that the Almohads made against the Almoravids and the Mālikī school.

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[648] Maribel Fierro, "El *Mahdī* Ibn Tūmart: más allá de la biografía 'oficial'," 76-82.
[649] See Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity of and His Connection to the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, eds. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 755-59; Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 220. 77-81.
[650] See Paul E. Walker, "Fāṭimid Alexandria as an Entrepôt in the East–West Exchange of Islamic Scholarship,"*al-Masāq* 26, no. 1 (2014), 36-48.
[651] David Wasserstein, "A Jonah Theme in the Biography of Ibn Tūmart," in Farhad Daftary and J. W. Meri (eds.), *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam. Essays in Honor of Wilferd Madelung* (London: I. B. Tauris , 2003), 232-49.

Some like Maribel Fierro and Madeleine Fletcher have devoted considerable attention to the historical origins of Almohad doctrines regarding the *imām* and *mahdī*, as well as the veracity of the Mu'minid dynasty's claim to succession. Following Fletcher's hypothesis that Ibn Tūmart wrote only some of the texts collected in *BIT*, Fierro argues that texts dealing with the *imāma* and Ibn Tūmart's role as the *mahdī* originated after Ibn Tūmart's death. Based on her interpretation, it is unclear whether the historical Ibn Tūmart claimed to be the *mahdī*; the *mahdī*-doctrine likely arose out of 'Abd al-Mu'min's desire to disqualify competing claims to leadership of the Almohad movement and to provide the basis for sweeping legal reforms on the model of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s eighth-century *Treatise of the Companions* (*Risālat al-ṣaḥāba*).[652]

Fierro's revision of the official Almohad account of succession is beneficial to the reconstruction of the history of the Almohad Caliphate inasmuch as it inoculates us against the notion that the Mu'minid dynasty was the only path the early Almohad movement could have taken. As Mercedes García Arenal observes, both Almohad and non-Almohad sources attest to resistance to the Mu'minids *within* Almohad ranks. Our current picture of the Almohad movement adopts the pro-Mu'minid point of view, but we nevertheless catch glimpses of other continuations of Ibn Tūmart's unique brand of Islam, supported by his family members (*ahl al-dār*) and other members of his inner circle, that may have triumphed over the Mu'minid continuation had history taken a different turn. I readily concede that Almohadism, as we know it, is *Mu'minid* Almohadism. The compilation of *BIT* was itself a multi-generational project sponsored by the Mu'minids. While it is difficult to say with any degree of certainty that Ibn Tūmart declared 'Abd al-Mu'min his successor as *imām*, I take issue with Fierro's position that

[652] Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphs," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (September 1999), 246.

the Mu'minid dynasty manipulated *BIT* by fabricating texts regarding Ibn Tūmart's role as the *mahdī* and attributing them to him. Like Fletcher, Fierro bases her hypothesis on what she considers to be inconsistencies in *BIT*.

As I have endeavored to show throughout this dissertation, the doctrines expressed in *BIT* are coherent with one another. This coherence derives in no small part from the application of epistemological principles Ibn Tūmart lays out in "The Dearest Desire" and other knowledge texts. The texts that comprise what I call "The Section on Leadership," in particular "On the Necessity of Belief in the Imāmate," are no less consistent with Ibn Tūmart's epistemology in both language and content. The doctrines of *imāma* of the *mahdī* we find here are logical developments of Ibn Tūmart's rejection of differences in legal interpretations (*ikhtilāf*) and the Sunnī codification of these differences according to the principle, "Every qualified independent legal interpreter is correct" (*kull mujtahid muṣīb*; or simply *taṣwīb*). Even if the Mu'minids fabricated texts on leadership, their continuity with the rest of *BIT* indicates that appealing to the authority of an infallible *imām* to resolve the problem of legal difference is at least implicit in the sections of *BIT* Fierro believes Ibn Tūmart to have authored. Although the possibility remains that the Mu'minids authored "The Section on Leadership" with painstaking attention to its coherence with Ibn Tūmart's epistemological principles, it is more plausible that Ibn Tūmart authored these texts and disseminated the doctrines contained therein during his lifetime.

Contents of "The Section on Leadership"

The section of *BIT* that I will discuss in this chapter consists of twelve texts. These twelve texts form three groups based on their manner of attribution and content.

Table 15: Texts Comprising "The Section on Leadership"

Group 1 – Core Texts	• *Bāb fī 'ilm wujūb i'tiqād al-imāma* • *al-Qawā'id al-latī buniya 'alayhā 'ulūm al-dīn wa-dunyā* • *Ma'rifat aṣhāb al-fitan* • *Bāb fī bayān ṭawā'if* • *Bāb fī anna al-tawḥīd huwa asās al-dīn*
Group 2 - Epistles	• *Ma'rifat al-mahdī* (author unknown) • *Risālat Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (by 'Abd al-Mu'min) • *Risālat al-Mahdī* (by Ibn Tūmart) • *Min kalām Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (by 'Abd al-Mu'min)
Group 3 - *ḥadīth* compilations	• *Bāb wa-'an Ibn 'Abbās* • *Kitāb al-ghulūl* • *Bāb fī anna al-khamr dā' wa-laysa fīhā shifā'*

"The Section on Leadership" differs from "The Section on Knowledge" and "The Section on Theology" because of differences between mss. A and B and its copious use of *ḥadīth* compilation as a rhetorical device. "Knowledge of the Partisans of Strife" (*Ma'rifat aṣḥāb al-fitan*) and all of Group 2 are unique to B. With the exception of "The Epistle of the *Mahdī*" (*Risālat al-Mahdī*), the titles of the texts in Group 2 indicate that 'Abd al-Mu'min penned them. That the *ḥadīth* compilations in Group 3 are common to both manuscripts suggests that Ibn Tūmart compiled these thematic anthologies (sing. *mukhtaṣar*) of prophetic traditions during his lifetime.

This chapter will focus on the texts in Group 1 and Group 3. In the first part of the chapter, I will focus on the doctrine of *imāma*, the doctrine of the *mahdī*, and their interrelation. By separating the role of the *imām* from that of the *mahdī*, I hope to avoid confusion with regard to the origin of each doctrine within Ibn Tūmart's epistemology that we find in prior studies whose authors conflate the characteristics proper to the *imām* and those unique to the *mahdī*. Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of *imāma* stems from the radicalization of certain ideas in Sunnī

jurisprudence, especially the rejection of the principle of *kull mujtahid muṣīb*. In this respect, Ibn Tūmart's *imām* shares many qualities with Khārijī-Ibāḍī *imām*s and to the ṣūfī *quṭb* ("pole" or "axis"). His doctrine of the *mahdī* also emphasizes Fāṭimī lineage, a qualification common to many branches of Shī'ī Islam. Although Ibn Tūmart's descriptions of the *imām* and the *mahdī* find parallels across the spectrum of Islamic confessions, his notion of Islamic leadership is not a *bricolage*, but rather an original application of his epistemological principles to the practice of Islam. Ibn Tūmart establishes both doctrines on the basis of the Qur'ān and *sunna* as they were understood in his Sunnī context, he works with hermeneutic methods that Sunnī jurists and theologians developed, and he responds to what are, by and large, Sunnī problems.

In the second part of the chapter, I will discuss how Ibn Tūmart connects his roles as *imām* and *mahdī* to the expansion of the Almohad movement. His writings on religious "strife" (*fitna*; pl. *fitan*) reveal both the universalist and historically particular aspirations of the early Almohads. To accept Ibn Tūmart as *imām* and *mahdī* on the basis of his superior knowledge and providential guidance requires the individual Almohad to struggle until all human beings recognize Ibn Tūmart's temporal authority and dedicate themselves to the knowledge of God and Islam, which Ibn Tūmart posits as a necessary condition for the validity of worship and, ultimately, salvation. *BIT* expresses this universalist tendency within the immediate context of Ibn Tūmart's political and religious war against the Almoravids. By understanding this tension, we can begin to understand how the early Almohads transformed the Almoravid rulers from an enemy polity into the representatives of the Anti-Christ (*al-dajjāl*), a local conflict into an apocalyptic event.

Separating the *Imām* from the *Mahdī*

Much of the confusion surrounding *what* characteristics Ibn Tūmart attributes to the *imām* and the *mahdī* and *how* he arrives at these conclusions stems from Ibn Tūmart's historical claim to be both "the infallible Imām" (*al-imām al-ma'ṣūm*) and "the acknowledged Mahdī" (*al-mahdī al-ma'lūm*). Although there are some exceptions, the majority of Muslims believe that the *mahdī* who will come at the end of time will be an *imām* insofar as he will be an authoritative leader for all Muslims and establish justice in the world. Whether the *mahdī* is Jesus, a leader who will arise to help Jesus to defeat the Anti-Christ (*al-dajjāl*), or the twelfth *imām* emerging from his occultation, or simply a descendant of Muḥammad, he will be an *imām*. However, like most Muslims, Ibn Tūmart does not hold that every *imām* is a *mahdī*, since there have been many *imām*s from Adam to Muḥammad, and there have been many *imām*s after the Prophet's death. For the sake of proper analysis, we need to separate the concept of *imāma*—which is inclusive of all *imām*s—from that of the *mahdī*.

Definitions of Key Terms

Imām

The terms *imām* and *mahdī* have a variety of meanings in Islam. Within certain traditions, these terms carry specific connotations and are embedded within a web of corollary theological terms. In the most general sense, *Imām* (from the Arabic root *'-m-m*) means "a leader" or "a guide." The Qur'ān sometimes uses the word to describe anything that leads to a certain destination, such as a road or (Q 15:79) or a book (Q 17:71).[653] Although *imām* has gained a

[653] *EI3*, "*Imām* (technical term)" (Stijn Aerts).

positive connotation through its association with Islamic institutions, the term was originally neutral, denoting any leader, regardless of religious affiliation or moral character. As Ibn Tūmart notes in his description of Abū Bakr[654] (see below), one of the most common uses of the term in Islam is *imām ṣalāt al-jum'a*, "the leader of the Friday prayers." Such *imām*s may also oversee the maintenance of the local mosque in which they serve and offer services to his congregants. Medieval scholars typically give the honorific title to founders of legal and theological schools or to highly regarded scholars; for example, Imām Mālik b. Anas (the founder of the Mālikī *madhhab*), Imām al-Ash'arī (the founder of the Ash'arī school of theology), and Imām al-Ghazālī.

In this chapter we will focus on a particular meaning of *imām*: the *imām* of the Muslim community (*al-umma*, derived from the same triliteral root). Virtually all branches of Islam recognize the need for an *imām* who unites temporal leadership with the observance of Islam. Jurists and theologians refer to the concept of Islamic leadership as *imāma*. I frequently use *imāma* to refer to the overall juridico-theological account of the *imām*, his qualifications and functions. Although they are the same word in Arabic, I often refer to the office of *imāma* as the imāmate.

Mahdī

The term *mahdī* derives from the Arabic root *h-d-y*, as in *hudā*/*hidāya*, "divine guidance." The *mahdī*, then, is "the one whom God guides." Today, as in the early Islamic community, "Mahdī" is a common given name for boys. During the Prophet's lifetime and after his death, early Muslims began to speak of the *mahdī* as a messianic figure. The *mahdī* does not appear in

[654] D, 231.

the Qur'ān but comes up in several *aḥādīth*. Several early rulers and revolutionaries attempted to present themselves as the *mahdī*, such as the Umayyad Caliph, Sulaymān (r. 96-9/715-7) and the first 'Abbāsid Caliph, al-Ṣaffāḥ (r. 132-36/750-54). Several traditions predicted that the *mahdī* would come from the house of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) or, more narrowly, from the descendants of al-Ḥusayn, Muḥammad's grandson. The now extinct Mūsawī Shī'a considered the seventh *imām*, Mūsā al-Kāẓim, to have gone into occultation (*ghayba*) to return in the future as the awaited *mahdī*. Twelver Shī'a adopted a similar doctrine, but identified the *mahdī* with the twelfth *imām*, Muḥammad al-Mahdī. Some Sunnīs identify the *mahdī* with Jesus, who will return at the end of time (Q 43:61); other Sunnīs consider the *mahdī* to be a separate figure who will appear before or alongside Jesus.[655]

In the Maghribī context, the title *mahdī* is often given to reformers or renewers of Islam (sing. *mujaddid*). As García Arenal explains, in Sunnism "there was the idea that rather than a unique Mahdī who would appear before the End of Time, history would throw up at different critical periods certain 'Masters of the Hour' (*ṣāḥib al-sā'a*) who would save the community from temporary danger."[656] Many of the mahdist claimants that García Arenal examines in her study, *Messianism and Puritanical* reform were *mahdī*s of the reformist sort. While some contemporaries and later Muslims regarded Ibn Tūmart as a reformer, the *mahdī* doctrine he offers in *BIT* is clearly messianic and apocalyptic. This element of Ibn Tūmart's theology is evident in his frequent association of the *mahdī* with "the Hour" (*al-sā'a*).[657]

[655] *EI2*, "*al-Mahdī*" (Wilferd Madelung).
[656] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 20.
[657] See D, 229; 236.

Sacred History – "On the Knowledge of What is Necessary to Believe about the Imāmate"

Much of what Ibn Tūmart teaches about the roles of *imām* and *mahdī* appear in just one text, "On the Knowledge of What is Necessary to Believe about the Imāmate." He approaches the elaboration of the characteristics necessary for every *imām* by appealing to how aspects of Islamic leadership manifest themselves in sacred history. "Belief in the imāmate" (*i'tiqād al-imāma*) on the basis of "knowledge" (*'ilm*) is obligatory for all Muslims and is "one of the pillars of religion" (*wa-hiya rukn min arkān al-dīn*) because "no effort to establish the truth in this world is valid without the obligation to believe that the imāmate [exists] in every age until the final hour comes."[658] Ibn Tūmart justifies his claim that adherence to an *imām* (in the sense of leader of the *umma* or of the believers) is necessary in each age by appealing to the example of the Qur'ān:

> There is no age in which God's *imām*, the one who accomplishes the truth, is not on His earth, from Adam to Noah, and after them to Abraham. God—blessed is He—said, "…'I will make you a leader (*imāman*) for the people.' Abraham asked, 'What of my progeny?' He said, 'My covenant will not be extended to the unjust.'"[659]

Early in sacred history, God makes (*ja'ala*) the prophets Adam, Noah, and Abraham leaders (*a'ima*) for all people (*al-nās*). Adam and Noah symbolize the necessity of leadership inherent in human association: Adam is the progenitor of all human beings; Noah is the progenitor of postdiluvian humanity. In Abraham, however, we see an *imām* concerned with the passing of the imāmate, and indeed his covenant (*'ahd*) with God, to his descendants (*dhurriyya*). Within the context of *imāma*, the term covenant (*'ahd*) bears upon the perennial question of the *imām*'s investiture. Both Sunnīs and Shī'a understood *'ahd* (sometimes *naṣṣ*, "designation," in Shī'ī

[658] E, 297: … *wa-lā yaṣiḥḥ qiyām al-ḥaqq fī al-dunyā illā bi-wujūb i'tiqād al-imāma fī kull zaman ilā an taqūm al-sā'a*.
[659] E, 297; Ibn Tūmart cites Q 2:124.

theology) as the *imām*'s formal appointment of his successor, as opposed to "election" by the Muslim community (*ikhtiyār*).[660]

In "Imāmate," Ibn Tūmart describes succession in two ways. When speaking of Abū Bakr's succession to Muḥammad, and 'Umar's succession to Abū Bakr, he says that Muḥammad "chose him to lead [the Muslims] in prayer, and desired him to be their *imām* in their religion, preventing others from leading prayer" (*ikhtārahu la-hum al-rasūl li-l-ṣalāh wa-raḍiyahua la-hum imāman fī dīnihim wa-mana'a siwāhu min al-ṣalāh*).[661] Of 'Umar, Ibn Tūmart simply says that "he nobly persevered in the truth" (*qāma bi-l-ḥaqq aḥsan al-qiyām*), without any reference to designation by Abū Bakr or election by the community of believers.[662] Ibn Tūmart omits any reference to election-by-community, a procedure recognized by Sunnī and Ibāḍī theologians. The two options—designation by a previous *imām* and "persevering in the truth"—reflect the direct covenantal relationship we observe between God and Abraham in the Qur'ān. No one designated or elected Abraham; God singled him out as *imām* independent of a community. 'Umar's perseverance in the truth suggests that God favored him with the qualities necessary to gain recognition as the rightful *imām* and Caliph. Ibn Tūmart's description stands in contrast to the traditional Sunnī account, according to which Abū Bakr designated him his successor in 50/634. This focus on 'Umar as a *qā'im*, rather than as an appointed or elected successor, preempts Ibn Tūmart's own claims to *imāma* and *mahdī*-hood. No one designated Ibn Tūmart to be his successor. Rather, Ibn Tūmart "rose up" (*qāma*) as "the one who perseveres in the truth" (*al-qā'im bi-l-ḥaqq*) according to God's will.[663] The possibility that God may directly appoint an

[660] *EI2*, "Imāma" (Madelung).
[661] D, 231.
[662] D, 232.
[663] D, 229.

imām after the death of the Prophet goes against most Sunnī, Shī'ī, and Ibāḍī theories which limit the identification of the *imām* to designation and election.[664]

Ibn Tūmart understands God's reply to Abraham in both epistemological and moral terms. "The *imām* must be safeguarded against (*ma'ṣuman min*) falsehood (*al-bāṭil*) in order for him to destroy falsehood, because falsehood does not destroy falsehood." He continues to enumerate the things against which the *imām*s must be safeguarded (*ma'ṣūm*) in order to protect his infallibility (*'iṣma*) as a leader: (i) falsehood, (ii) error (*ḍalāl*), (iii) corruption (*fasād*), (iv) temptations/strife (*fitan*), (v) tyranny (*jawr*), (vi) legal and doctrinal innovation (*bida'*), (vii) lying (*kadhb*), (viii) acting out of ignorance (*al-'amal bi-l-jahl*), and (ix) injustice/darkness (*ẓulma*).[665] Since the *imām*'s role is to remove these nine things from the world, he cannot be characterized by any of them. We should note that many of these epistemological and moral terms (i.e. *bāṭil*, *ḍalāl*, and *jahl*) first appear in Ibn Tūmart's definitions of knowledge and ignorance in "The Dearest Desire." As I show in Chapter 3, ignorance (*jahl*) is one's moral disposition away from the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) toward falsehood (*bāṭil*). Falsehood, which Ibn Tūmart understands as theoretical or assertoric falsehood, is bound up with error (*ḍalāl*), or practical falsehood. The *imām* cannot destroy falsehood and its consequences by participating in them, but must instead embody the contrary of falsehood:

> Instead, its contrary (*bi-ḍiddihi*), the truth (*al-ḥaqq*), gets rid of [falsehood]. Only something's contrary gets rid of it. Only light (*nūr*) gets rid of darkness; only guidance (*hudā*) gets rid of error; only justice (*'adl*) gets rid of tyranny; only obedience (*ṭā'a*) gets rid of disobedience; only agreement (*ittifāq*) gets rid of difference (*ikhtilāf*).[666]

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[664] Ibn Tūmart's emphasis on *qiyām* agrees with the Zaydī Shī'ī doctrine according to which any member of the *ahl al-bayt* may become *imām* by "rising up" (*khurūj*) to fight against injustice. This rising up necessarily excludes formal designation and election. Ibn Tūmart does not, however, specify membership in the *ahl al-bayt* as a requirement (which would exclude Abū Bakr and 'Umar). *EI2*, "Imāma" (Madelung).
[665] D, 229.
[666] D, 229-30.

In all that he does, the *imām* is "the one who accomplishes truth on [God's] earth" (*al-qā'im bi-l-ḥaqq fī arḍihi*). Knowledge (*'ilm*) is one's moral disposition toward the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) and away from falsehood. Theoretical or assertoric truth (*ḥaqq* or *ḥaqīqa*) is connected to one's receptivity to divine guidance (*hudā*/*hidāya*), which Ibn Tūmart associates with "light" (*nūr*) in "The Dearest Desire."

God's reply to Abraham makes more sense in light of Ibn Tūmart's presentation of the infallibility of the *imām* with relation to falsehood and moral error. Not all of Abraham's descendants will take part in God's covenant nor assume the imāmate after him. Their commitment to injustice excludes both. He is emphatic that the *imām*'s being safeguarded against falsehood and injustice "is the meaning of His statement—may He be praised and exalted—'I will make you a leader for the people…'"[667] In this passage, Ibn Tūmart not only anticipates a doctrine of election (*ikhtiyār*), but also the exclusion of candidates for the imāmate, even the descendants of a major prophet, on epistemological-moral grounds. As we shall see, Ibn Tūmart dissociates prophetic lineage from the imāmate. Epistemic and moral infallibility are the necessary conditions for *imāma*. Although the imāmate can and sometimes does coincide with genealogical descent, it is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for the imāmate, as many Shī'a profess. The absence of the condition of lineage is noteworthy if we consider that Ibn Tūmart, on the basis of the *sunna*, holds that the *mahdī* will not only be of Qurayshī descent, but will also have a specifically Fāṭimī lineage.[668]

[667] D, 229.
[668] D, 293.

The Divine Command (al-amr/amr Allāh)

Ibn Tūmart speaks of the authority of the *imām*s in terms of receiving "the command" (*al-amr*), "God's command," and "the command of the *mahdī*."[669] This cosmological *amr* finds a close parallel in the Ismā'īlī Shī'ī notion of "the divine command" (*al-amr al-ilāhī*). Shlomo Pines' study of the function of this idea in the *Kuzari* by the Andalusī Jewish philosopher, Judah Halevi (1075-1141), strongly suggests that this Ismā'īlī doctrine circulated well outside of the Fāṭimid sphere of influence. Halevi uses the term *al-amr al-ilāhī* to denote divine influence in favor of the Jewish people that is transmitted in a hereditary way from one generation to another.[670] The divine command accounts for the continuity of the Jewish people from Adam and the Hebrew prophets to the present day. Pines identifies a similar use of the term in *Kitāb al-Kashf* by the Ismā'īlī theologian, Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman (d. early 4th/10th c.):

> This is from the discourse of the Commander of the Faithful [i.e 'Alī]…The *amr* of God is continuous from the first of his prophets and the imāms of His religion to the last one. (If one) obeys the last of them, it is as if he had obeyed the first of them, (and this) because of the continuity of the *amr* of God from the first one to those who (came) after him, till the last one; and the obedience of him who has obeyed the first one will guide and lead him to the last one. What is meant is the *amr* of God that He establishes (*yuqīm*) in every *qā'im* who is of them in his period of time (*'aṣr*).[671]

With the exception of its hereditary transmission, Ibn Tūmart understands the *amr* to function in much the same way as Ja'far and Halevi present it. The command will pass to an *imām* "in every age" (*fī kull zamān min al-azmān*) in order to guarantee the continuity of religion (*al-dīn*) over time. This continuity not only refers to the relationship between a deceased *imām* and the community of which his successor takes charge, but also to the relationship of the *imām* to God's

[669] Excluding other uses of *amr*, D, 230 (x5); 231 (x3); 232 (x1); 233 (x2); 234 (x5); 235 (x3); 236 (x2).
[670] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 154.
[671] Cited from Shlomo Pines, "Shi'ite Terms and Conceptions in Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980), 174.

sovereign will.[672] In the passage from *al-Kashf*, Ja‘far speaks of the individual Muslim’s obedience to the *imām* of his age as obedience to all other *imām*s, as well as to God. Ibn Tūmart likewise understands the succession of the *imām*s in terms of perfect representation or vicariousness. With respect to the *mahdī*, he affirms that obedience and deference shown to the *mahdī* is equivalent to showing obedience and deference to God and Muḥammad.[673] This concept would have been appealing to Ibn Tūmart inasmuch as his epistemological project in *BIT* revolves around the elimination of difference (*ikhtilāf*) in the *sharī‘a* and other religious doctrines.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to identify where and in what form Ibn Tūmart would have encountered the concept of *amr* given its close association with the Ismā‘īlīs. Pines offers convincing evidence of the presence of *al-amr al-ilāhī* in the recensions of *The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* (*al-Risāla al-Jāmi‘a*) that circulated among Muslim and Jewish Neoplatonists in al-Andalus.[674] García Arenal argues that this concept needs to be studied in the context of ṣūfism.[675] It is possible that the idea of *amr* existed independently of Ismā‘īlism and ṣūfism before each tradition appropriated it. Even if *al-amr al-ilāhī* originated in Ismā‘īlī circles, the suspicion toward Shī‘ism in the Maghrib and al-Andalus on the part of the Sunnī authorities meant that Ismā‘īlī concepts needed to be absorbed into mystical or philosophical discourses in order to gain traction.[676]

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[672] D, 229.
[673] D, 234-5.
[674] Shlomo Pines, “Shi‘ite Terms and Conceptions in Judah Halevi’s *Kuzari*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980), 174-7. [See *al-Risāla al-Jāmi‘a* II.4.]
[675] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 155.
[676] Sarah Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and Its History in Islamic Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 102-11.

Infallibility (ʻiṣma) and Consistency (ittifāq)

Among the nine things from which the *imām* must be safeguarded, we see many juridical categories: corruption, strife, tyranny, innovation, and acting out of ignorance. Corruption and tyranny pertain to the abuse of authority, both legal and political, for worldly gain. One of the *aḥādīth* Ibn Tūmart cites in "Creed" §1 relates how Muḥammad advised Muʻādh against abusing the legally-mandated collection of alms (*zakāh*) by taking what was most dear to the converts to Islam whom Muʻādh would encounter in Yemen.[677] Strife (*fitna*), innovation (*bidaʻ*), and acting out of ignorance (*al-ʻamal bi-l-jahl*) cut deeper for Ibn Tūmart insofar as they reflect indifference to the integrity of God's revealed law. Each of these describe the way in which a jurist might deviate from the one truth (*ḥaqq wāḥid*) of divine Law. In "Imāmate," the way in which the *imām* eliminates legal difference (*ikhtilāf*) is by pursuing "agreement" or "consistency" (*ittifāq*) with regard to the Law. He stipulates that the only way in which the Islamic community can achieve such agreement is "by having [all] affairs depend on the one who is most worthy of command" (*bi-stināḍ al-umūr ilā awlā al-amr*).[678] Dominique Urvoy understands Ibn Tūmart's emphasis on the *imām*'s infallibility in practical matters as redolent of earlier Khārijī-Ibāḍī theories of *imāma*. The primary function of the *imām* in these communities is to guarantee the unity of action. Such a guarantee requires that the communities acknowledge on a dogmatic level that each *imām* is invested with absolute authority and that his decisions are infallible.[679] Urvoy's thesis is appealing for two reasons. The Khārijī-Ibāḍī model of *imāma* resembles Almohad *imāma* in another important respect: the personal character and competence of the *imām*, rather

[677] D, 213.
[678] D, 298.
[679] Dominique Urvoy, "La Pensée d'Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 27 (1974), 38-9.

than his genealogy, enables him to assume the office. There is likewise a potential historical connection between the two. Khārijī-Ibāḍī missionaries were the first to bring Islam to the more remote regions of Morocco and West Africa. Until the widespread Sunnification of North and West Africa under the Almoravids, the later Almohads, and the Marīnids, many Muslims adhered to local Khārijī-Ibāḍī traditions—even if they did not always recognize them as such.[680]

Urvoy's Khārijī-Ibāḍī thesis nevertheless neglects how Ibn Tūmart applies the epistemological principle of "the truth is one" (*al-ḥaqq wāḥid*) to *ijtihād*. As Urvoy himself notes, the Khārijī-Ibāḍī model "a été la cause de l'instabilité continuelle des étas ḫāriğites, de leur faiblesse et de leur disparition."[681] The *imām*'s absolute authority could ensure unity in action, but, without appealing to a stable, external standard, the prescribed action could change from *imām* to *imām*, or even within the tenure of a single *imām*. Ibn Tūmart's theory of *imāma* not only requires unity of action in the sense that, at any given time, the whole community abides by one legal standard, but also requires *consistency* in the action prescribed. As he says in "The Dearest Desire":

> There is much confusion surrounding this rule ["the truth is one"]…They say, "Every qualified legal interpreter is correct" (*kull mujtahid muṣīb*). And so they turn this saying into a ladder to the destruction of the Law (*hadm al-sharī'a*), derive judgements from source other than those upon which they depend (*isnād al-aḥkām [ilā] ghayr mustanadihā*), and take truths out of their proper context (*aks al-ḥaqā'iq 'an mawdū'ihā*). They make the permissible forbidden, the forbidden permissible.[682]

The *imām* has the authority to bring about unity of action, but the consistency of action does not depend on the individual *imām*. He must apply himself to the interpretation of the Law (*ijtihād*) with the express purpose of ascertaining the *one* solution the *sharī'a* stipulates for any given

[680] On the role of Khārijism in the Islamization of West Africa, see Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* (London: Longman, 1984), 6; 34.
[681] Dominique Urvoy, "La Pensée d'Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 27 (1974), 39.
[682] D, 51.

legal situation. Almohad *imāma* differs from prominent Sunnī models, too. In *Fadā'iḥ al-bāṭiniyya*, al-Ghazālī lays out a theory of *imāma* in opposition to Ismā'īlī doctrine of *ta'līm*. The Ismā'īlī *imām*s possessed the authority to instruct (*yu'allim*) their followers in matters of doctrine and divine Law. Their teachings were held to be infallible by dint of their descent from the Prophet and special access to God. Al-Ghazālī likewise considers knowledge (*'ilm*) an important qualification for *imāma*. However, in contrast with the Shī'ī view, he deflates this qualification by arguing that the *imām* need not have personal knowledge; it is sufficient that he appeal to a body of qualified scholars when legal and doctrinal questions arise.[683] The uniqueness of Ibn Tūmart's theory rests in the way it unites executive authority (i.e. unity of action) and the scholarly authority (i.e. consistency of action) in one person. Consistency of action requires the *imām* to seek out the one truth in every circumstance, yet this truth does not derive from privileged access to God, but rather from the correct application of reason to the study of the sources of Islamic doctrine and Law.

Obedience (ṭā'a) to the Caliph

David and Jesus embody the *imām*'s authority as a political administrator and model of moral conduct.

> Then, after Abraham, [came] the prophets up until David, whom God made an *imām* on the earth. He made him a Caliph and commanded him to judge among the people according to the truth and not to follow desire. He commanded the people to obey him, to follow his *sunna*, to carry out his command, to accept his judgment, to emulate his action[s], and to derive knowledge from him. God did not make anyone the establisher of truth (*qā'iman bi-l-ḥaqq*) on the earth but he who was to be obeyed according to God's command. God did not send any messenger to the nations of old but he who was to be obeyed by God's permission.

[683] Al-Ghazālī, *Fadā'iḥ al-bāṭiniyya*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Badawī (Kuwait: Mu'assasa Dār al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya, 1964), 191.

> Then the command [came] to Jesus, too, whom God sent out as a prophet and *imām* to establish the truth. The apostles followed him and carried out his command. This is the habit (*ʿāda*) and *sunna* of God with respect to those who were previously forsaken.[684]

David represents a new phase of *imāma* in sacred history. He is not only a prophet and a leader for the people, but also a caliph, a judge, a teacher, and an exemplar to be emulated. His designation as caliph (*khalīfa*) reflects his authority in both religious and political matters. That God commanded David to judge among the people "according to the truth" rather than his desire (*hawā*) reflects Ibn Tūmart's commitment to the principle "the truth is one" in legal reasoning and administration. In "The Dearest Desire," Ibn Tūmart reduces all deviations from this principle to the jurist's attempt to satisfy his desires (*ahwāʾ*). Even if this desire is licit or well-meaning (as in the case of *maṣlaḥa*, "public benefit"), engaging in *ijtihād* in view of any goal other than the one correct judgment (*ḥukm*) places the recommendation of the individual above God's command. In Ibn Tūmart's view, the caliphal authority (*khilāfa*) properly belongs to the individual God designates to interpret His command and ensure that it is carried out. From the perspective of the people (*qawm*), the coincidence of divine designation and human competence demands obedience (*ṭāʿa*). Disobedience (*maʿṣiyya*) to the caliph in worldly affairs indicates separation from the community God has ordained through his installation as *imām*. Ibn Tūmart also sees in David the first example of one whose *sunna* is to be followed. From his later comments on Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, and ʿUmar, we can infer that he intends *sunna* in the same sense that Muslims apply the term to the Prophet and his Companions.[685] As *imām* and caliph,

[684] D, 230.
[685] See D, 230-31.

David's conduct and thought are such that the people should look to it as a source of the *sharī'a*, a supplement to and embodied commentary on revelation.

The imāmate passed from David, the caliph, to Jesus. Although a prophet, Jesus does not wield political authority over an entire people. As in the New Testament, the Qur'ān portrays Jesus in conflict with the Banū Isrā'īl, the descendants of the very people who rendered (or were obliged to render) obedience to David. Ibn Tūmart highlights the voluntary nature of the apostles' (*al-ḥawāriyyūn*) adherence to Jesus' teachings and moral guidance. The juxtaposition of David, a political leader, and Jesus, a prophet without political authority, allows Ibn Tūmart to offer a meditation on the connection of worldly power to *imāma* throughout the course of sacred history: "This is the habit and *sunna* of God with respect to those who were previously forsaken." On one level, every time God sends out a prophet and *imām* to a community, He does so in order to provide human beings with a source of divine guidance, especially if they have never had or have abandoned this guidance. On another level, Ibn Tūmart seeks to account for the differences in *imām*s with regard to the realization of a political state. David (as well as Muḥammad and the Rāshidūn Caliphs) brought the imāmate to fruition through the exercise of political power. Yet an *imām* like Jesus is no less an *imām* if he does not exercise political power—if the community to which God sends him is "forsaken." His *imāma*, though temporally limited, manifested itself in the way it draws disciples to follow and emulate him voluntarily.

The Column (al-'umda)

In *imām*s like Jesus, Ibn Tūmart finds evidence of the cosmological significance of the *imām*'s existence in every age (*fī kull zamān*).

> This pillar by which the heavens and the earth are supported is necessary in the rest of the ages in this world. He is the *imām* when this pillar is removed and the firmament collapses from above; when the truth is made to follow the desires of the people, the heavens and earth will decay; when the command of the *imām* becomes lost, is disobeyed, is fought against, is contradicted, is neglected, is obstructed, and did not return to him, or is tyrannized without him by word deed, opinion, speculation, governance, taking, giving, command, or prohibition, or is dispensed with in [even] a fine point, or is avoided in [something as small as] a mustard seed, or his way, path, *sunna*, habit, conduct, wisdom, knowledge, governance, opinion, intention, and caution are contradicted; when one does not agreed with that to which he calls [him] and he is contradicted in [even] the smallest of matters, his commands (*umūr*) are not fulfilled in the greatest or smallest of matters; when one does not defer to his knowledge in the most subtle points or the most obvious points and attributes the command to him in only some respect, all (*al-kull*) disclaim association from the command that belongs to him, without impediment or narrowness (*min ghayr ḥaraj wa-lā ḍayq*), without accusation or bad opinion; when any one of these occurs, his command is obstructed, the pillar is removed, and the firmament falls upon the earth.[686]

In every age, the *imām* is one of the columns that hold the heavens in their place above the earth. Humanity, insofar as the majority reject or are ignorant of the *imām* and, by extension, God's will, is at perpetual risk of initiating a cosmic collapse in which the column of *imāma* will disappear and the firmament will fall upon the earth. I believe that Ibn Tūmart writes these words with their literal sense in mind. The sheer existence of the *imām* in some part of the world, whether at the helm of a major polity or at the center a small community of believers, ensures the world's continued existence. This insurance is not only cosmological, but epistemological. In every age, God grants humanity a leader who possesses certain knowledge of God and God's Law. The vast majority of humankind may not avail themselves of this teacher, but his very presence demonstrates that God extends His covenant (*'ahd*) and reveals Himself throughout history.

Some scholars have pointed to parallels between Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of the column and the ṣūfī doctrine of the "axis" (*quṭb*). Tilman Nagel and Vincent Cornell draw comparisons

[686] D, 230.

between "Imāmate" and the teachings of ʻAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (470-561/1077/8-1166). Al-Jīlānī's *quṭb* is "el garante de la continuidad del cosmos, conocedor de la actuación occulta del decreto divino que, simultáneamente, es la verdadera ley, a la que toda criatura está sometida."[687] The *quṭb* as a personified cosmological principle traces back to the mystic, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's (133/43-255/750/60-869). The *quṭb* is the central saint (*walī*) among the community of the living *awliyā'*. God uses these saints as the means of manifesting "the prophetic evidence" (Pr. *burhān-i nabavī*) after the death of the Muḥammad. Through their piety, wisdom, and performance of miracles (*karāmāt*), they continue to attest to the veracity of the Prophet and of Islam in the presence of those to whom Islam is unknown.[688] Others, like García Arenal, see parallels between Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of *imāma* and that of his contemporary and fellow mahdist claimant, Abū al-Qāsim b. Qasī. García Arenal concedes that the eastern doctrine of the *quṭb* was indeed current in the Islamic west, but she sees a deeper resemblance between Ibn Tūmart and the mystical doctrines of "light" (*nūr*) then is common in al-Andalus. I agree with her attribution of Ibn Tūmart's "light of knowledge" (*nūr al-ʻilm*) to the influence of al-Ghazālī's *Niche of Lights*.[689] However, with regard to *imāma*, I believe Ibn Tūmart's "Imāmate" may have drawn influence from western developments of "the Muḥammadan light" (*al-nūr al-muḥammadī*) which she discusses in relation to Ibn al-ʻArīf and Ibn Qasī.[690]

[687] Tilman Nagel, "La destrucción de la ciencia de la *šarīʻa*," *Al-Qanṭara* 17 (1997), 303. Nagel does not provide citations for al-Jīlānī's doctrine of the *quṭb*. See also See Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 163.
[688] Al-Tirmidhī's doctrine is preserved in ʻAlī b. ʻUthmān al-Hujwīrī, *The* Kashf al-Maḥjúb*: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Ṣúfism*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (Leiden: Brill, 1911), 213-6.
[689] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 180-81.
[690] On the evolution of the *nūr Muḥammadī*, see Khalil Andani, "Metaphysics of Muhammad: The Nur Muhammad from Imam Jaʻfar al-Sadiq (d. 148/765) to Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (d. 672/1274)," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 8, no. 2 (2020), 99-175.

The Muḥammadan light is a mystical development of earlier theological speculation regarding Muḥammad's pre-existence based on certain *aḥādīth*. The influence of the Muḥammadan light on Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of *imāma* is historically promising because of its early attestation and prevalence in al-Andalus. The Muḥammadan light was so well known that the Mozarab Christian author, Eulogio of Córdoba (d. 857), could argue against it in surprising detail.[691] Ibn Tūmart's understanding of the *imām* as a column (*'umda*) is grounded in the earlier doctrine of Muḥammad's pre-existence insofar as all *imām*s, regardless of the extent of their influence on the world, instantiate the Prophet's qualities. The manner in which Ibn Tūmart describes this instantiation goes beyond the usual formal relationship of an individual to its species (e.g., Socrates *instantiates* the form "human"). Through his pre- or post-figuration of Islam's Prophet, each *imām* participates in the pre-existent Muḥammad, the ideal prophet, caliph, and *imām*.

The pre-existence of Muḥammad is well attested in contemporary Sunnī sources. In the Islamic West, the most famous of these is al-Qāḍī al-'Iyāḍ's (d. 544/1149) *al-Shifā' bi-ta'rīf ḥuqūq al-muṣṭafā* (*The Healing by the Recognition of the Rights of the Chosen One*). This compilation of *ḥadīth* and sources of the Prophet's biography contains several famous traditions regarding the pre-existence of Muḥammad:

> 386 – [Abū Hurayra] said, "Oh Messenger of God, when did you come to possess prophecy (*matā wajabat la-ka al-nubuwwa*)?" The Prophet responded, "When Adam was between the spirit (*al-rūḥ*) and the body (*al-jasad*)." […]
>
> 392- From Ibn 'Abbās: "When God created Adam, he caused me to descend in his backbone (*fī ṣulbihi*) to the earth. He caused me to be in Noah's heart on the ark. He cast me into the fire inside the heart of Abraham. Then, He continued to transfer me in noble

[691] Eulogio de Córdoba, *Memoriale Sanctorum*, ed. A. Ruiz, in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Turnhout: Brepols, 1851), 88-90. Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 129-30.

> hearts to pure wombs until he brought me out from between my parents; they never engaged in fornication."[692]

The Prophet's pre-existence also appears in early Islamic poetry. A famous convert, Ḥasan b. Thābit (d. 1st/6th c.), described Muḥammad as "one who brought light and truth in the darkness," a possible allusion to Q 5:15 and "The Light Verse" (Q 24:35).[693] Ibn Thābit associates the pre-existent Muḥammad with God's separation of light from darkness in the creation of the world, as John the Evangelist (John 1:1-14) posits Christ as the *logos* which God speaks to create light in Gen. 1:3-4. Between the third/ninth and eighth/fourteenth centuries, mystical thinkers from Sunnī and Shī'ī backgrounds developed these traditions surrounding Muḥammad's pre-existence into a cosmological principle. Twelver Shī'ī *aḥādīth* speak of "a column of light" that appears upon the birth of each new *imām*. As Muhammad Ali Amir-Moezzi explains, this column serves to connect the *imām* to God. Whenever the *imām* seeks guidance, "he looks into this light and acquires knowledge of it." Although the Twelvers consider the *imām*s superior to other prophets in this respect, they are not superior to Muḥammad because, in an ontological sense, the *imām*s derive from Muḥammad's "primordial light."[694] Ṣūfīs also used the term "column" (*'amūd*) to Muḥammad's pre-existent light (*al-nūr al-muḥammadī*). In his *tafsīr* on "The Light Verse," Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896) says that God created the *nūr muḥammadī* before all things. This "column" (*'amūd*) of light existed alone with God one million years before the creation of the

[692] Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ b. Mūsā, *al-Shifā' bi-ta'rīf ḥuqūq al-muṣṭafā*, ed. 'Abduh 'Alī Kūshak (Dubai: Jā'izat Dubay al-Dawliyya li-l-Qur'ān al-Karīm, 2013), 215-16.
[693] Anne Marie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 134.
[694] Muhammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 58 (n. 297-300).

world, bowing down to its creator in worship. When God created Adam, He created him from Muḥammad's light, as He did with the rest of the prophets.[695]

The light of Muḥammad figures prominently in the work of two of Ibn Tūmart's near contemporaries: al-Ghazālī and Ibn Qasī. As I argue in Chapter 3, the role light plays in Ibn Tūmart's theory of knowledge resembles the dual epistemological-cosmological function light plays in al-Ghazālī's *The Niche of Lights*. Al-Ghazālī describes the highest form of knowledge that shines forth from "the world of dominion" (*'ālam al-malakūt*) as a "characteristic found in the holy prophetic spirit" (*al-khāṣṣiyya tūjad li-l-rūḥ al-qudsī al-nabawwī*); through this prophetic spirit "many types of knowledge are poured forth upon creatures." God names Muḥammad "a light-giving lamp" (*sirāj munīr*) in Q 33:46 in order to signal that the light of the other prophets, as well as that of the scholars (*'ulamā'*), ultimately descends from Muḥammad's light. [696]

Ibn Qasī, himself a mahdist claimant, left behind the mystical treatise *Khal' al-na'alayn wa-iqtibās al-nūr min mawḍi' al-qadamayn* (*The Doffing of the Sandals and the Acquisition of the Light from the Place Where Two Feet Stand*). The title refers to God's commanding Moses to remove his sandals before the presence of the burning bush (Q 20:12; Exod. 3:5). It may also allude to a passage in al-Ghazālī's *The Niche of Lights* in which he interprets the doffing of one's sandals as the process whereby one strips away consideration of both this world and the hereafter in order to turn one's face toward "the One, the Real" (*al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq*). Both the visible and the invisible world, this world and the hereafter, are merely "accidents of the luminous human

[695] Anne Marie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 136. See Sahl b. 'Abdallāh al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Tustarī*, trans. Annabel Keeler and Ali Keeler (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2011), 138. Sahl b. 'Abdallāh al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm*, ed. Ṭaha 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd and Ḥasan Muḥammad 'Alī (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥaram li-l-Turāth, 2004), 205-07.
[696] Al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, trans. David Buchman (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 13.

substance" (*ʻaraḍān li-l-jawhar al-nūrānī al-basharī*)—the purified human intellect—that can be removed and put on like shoes.[697] Ibn Qasī devotes an entire chapter to "The Muḥammadan Essences" (*al-muḥammadiyyāt*). He identifies "the Holy Spirit" (*rūḥ al-muqaddas*), a cosmological principle of creation, as "the Muḥammadan spirit, the primordial, steadfast light, and the first existent alongside [God]" (*al-rūḥ al-muḥammadī wa-l-nūr al-aqdam al-ṣamadī wa-l-mawjūd al-awwal maʻahu*).[698] Ibn Qasī sets himself the task of explicating the *ḥadīth* "I [i.e. Muḥammad] was a prophet when Adam was between the water and the clay," a weak (*ḍaʻīf*) version of the tradition al-Qāḍī al-ʻIyāḍ includes in his *al-Shifāʼ*.[699] He understands Muḥammad's precedence to Adam, not only in terms of prophethood or *imāma*, but primarily in ontological terms. Muḥammad is the Holy Spirit through which God brought Adam. Adam includes both the temporal Adam and "the Adamic reality" (*al-ḥaqīqa al-ādamiyya*), which Ibn Qasī associates with the Pen (*al-qalam*) with which God writes upon the Tablet (*al-lawḥ*). God caused (*jaʻala*) the Muḥammadan spirit to move the Pen over the Tablet to determine the path all creation will take.[700]

Muḥammad's precedence also determines his interpretation of Q 2:30: "I am making a viceregent on the earth." Ibn Qasī distinguishes between "human leadership" (*al-imāma al-bashariyya*) and "the holy message" (*al-bishāra al-qudsiyya*).[701] The former pertains to Adam's *imāma*, which is "corporeal" (*jismāniyya*) or worldly leadership. The holy message indicates "spiritual" (*al-rūḥāniyya*) leadership, the *imāma* God manifests through Muḥammad. "Adam was in external existence (*fī wujūd al-ẓāhir*), appearing as the *imām al-qāʼim*, the column (*al-ʻamūd*)

[697] Al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, trans. David Buchman (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 13.
[698] Ibn Qasī, *Khalʻ al-naʻalayn*, ed. Fawzī al-Jabr (Damascus: Dār Nīnawā, 2017), 157.
[699] Ibn Qasī, *Khalʻ al-naʻalayn*, ed. Fawzī al-Jabr (Damascus: Dār Nīnawā, 2017), 157-58.
[700] Ibn Qasī, *Khalʻ al-naʻalayn*, ed. Fawzī al-Jabr (Damascus: Dār Nīnawā, 2017), 158-59.
[701] Ibn Qasī, *Khalʻ al-naʻalayn*, ed. Fawzī al-Jabr (Damascus: Dār Nīnawā, 2017), 159.

that is present and exists to glorify by bowing and prostration until the spirit of truth and light appears which fulfills and establishes (*aqāma*) the column of truth (*'amūd al-ḥaqq*), the Chosen One, Muḥammad."[702] Adam represents human leadership prior to the perfection of human spirituality through the appearance of Muḥammad and the message of Islam. Spiritual *imāma* guides corporeal *imāma* to its proper end. Most contemporary readers would have recognized the term *imām al-qā'im* as an allusion to the *mahdī*. Ibn Qasī intimates that the *mahdī* will be one who reorients human leadership toward Islam, the worldly manifestation of the pre-existent light of Muḥammad. Although Ibn Tūmart almost certainly did not read *Khal' al-na'alayn*, the motif of the *'amūd* in Ibn Qasī suggests that Ibn Tūmart's conception of *imāma* as a column (*'umda*) drew on the same mystical traditions that influenced Ibn Qasī.

Muḥammad, the Chosen

Then, the divine command (*al-amr*) passed to Muḥammad, the Chosen (*al-Muṣṭafā*). God "made Muḥammad the *imām* of the God-fearing in his age and the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds to the entirety of creation (*ilā kāffat al-khalq ajma'īn*); [Muḥammad] set God's religion above all religion (*aẓhara dīnahu 'alā al-dīn kullihi*)."[703] Muḥammad represents the pinnacle of *imāma* on earth. For Ibn Tūmart, the previous *imām*s manifested his qualities only partially and were sent to limited segments of humanity. Although Muḥammad spent most of his prophetic career among the Arabs and neighboring peoples, God initiated the global spread of Islam through Muḥammad and his Companions. That the Qur'ān and the *sunna* of Muḥammad are directed to all creation attests to the universalist dimension of *imāma*. Ibn Tūmart's belief in

[702] Ibn Qasī, *Khal' al-na'alayn*, ed. Fawzī al-Jabr (Damascus: Dār Nīnawā, 2017), 161.
[703] D, 231.

himself as the *mahdī* (an apocalyptic *imām*) is founded on the belief that the *mahdī* will fully instantiate the Muḥammadan ideal. This universalist approach to the message of Islam (that is, Islam as Ibn Tūmart understood it) is a fundamental aspect of Almohad *imāma* and is evident in the way that the early Almohads portrayed their mission as the conversion, not only of unbelievers, but also of all monotheists and non-Almohad *Muslims* to a form of Islam wherein Ibn Tūmart was its center.[704]

Ibn Tūmart's presentation of Muḥammad contains many features reminiscent of ṣūfī literature on the Prophet's physical qualities and moral perfections:

> His Companions obeyed him completely, supported him completely, and honored him completely… They submitted to by listening (*bi-l-sama'*) to and obeying (*wa-l-ṭā'a*) [him] on the smallest and greatest [matters] with the utmost humility and compliance, and the greatest of the Companions honored and blessed him in all of their affairs. He did not clear the phlegm from his throat without them rushing to it and touching it to their faces. When he performed ablutions, they would fight over the water from his ablutions. There [was] not a hair on his head that they would not have glorified and exalted![705]

Annemarie Schimmel has surveyed a range of ṣūfī literature and popular poetry centering on Muḥammad's physicality. Abū 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī (209-279/824-892), author of one of Sunnism's six canonical *ḥadīth* collections, also published a collection of traditions dealing with Muḥammad's appearance and personal conduct: *al-Shamā'il al-muḥammadiyya wa-l-faḍā'il al-muṣṭafawiyya* (*The Muḥammadan Traits and the Virtues of the Chosen*). Al-Tirmidhī's collection had a profound impact on Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's major work on the Prophet's biography, *al-Shifā' fī ta'rīf ḥuqūq al-muṣṭafā*. Written around the time of the early Almohad movement, *al-Shifā'* was

[704] Bennison notes that the invading Almohads often treated Muslims in cities who refused to submit to 'Abd al-Mu'min as unbelievers. They went so far as to purify the mosques belonging to these populations. See Amira K. Bennison, "Almohad *tawḥīd* and Its Implications for Religious Difference," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2, no. 2 (June 2010), 212-14; *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 88.
[705] D, 231.

widely read throughout al-Andalus and the Maghrib. This genre often focuses on the Prophet's physique, his aquiline nose, his curly hair, and the light complexion of his skin. Almohad historians like al-Baydhaq drew upon collections like *al-Shamā'il* and *al-Shifā'* to demonstrate the similarity of Ibn Tūmart's appearance to Muḥammad's.

Muslims called these Muḥammadan features "ornaments" (sing. *ḥilya*). One *ḥadīth* attributes salvific power to such ornaments: "For him who sees my *ḥilya* after my death it is as if he had seen me myself, and he who sees it, longing for me, for him God will make Hellfire prohibited, and he will not be resurrected naked at Doomsday."[706] Like the above passage from *BIT*, some of these *aḥādīth* and the devotional poetry they inspired speak of abnormalities particular to Muḥammad's body. Muḥammad is reported to have had a "fleshy protuberance" on his back the size of an egg. Later Muslims called this mark "the seal of the Prophet" (*khatm al-rasūl*) and believed that it confirmed his status as the last of the prophets, "the seal of the Prophets" (*khātam al-nabiyyīn*).[707] Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī retells a popular legend in which Muḥammad's sweat, which possessed an unnaturally sweet fragrance, produced "the first fragrant rose" when drops of it fell to the earth.[708] Ibn Tūmart's assertion that the Companions would fight over the Prophet's phlegm, ablution water, and fallen hairs makes sense in this tradition. The reverence (*tabarruk*) shown to Muḥammad's (otherwise grotesque) bodily remnants underscores the grace God shows to humankind by bringing the *imām* of the age—in the fullness of his being—into the world.

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[706] Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 46. [check page #] [hadith #?]
[707] Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 44.
[708] Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 45.

Muḥammad also perfects the *imām* as an object of obedience (*ṭā'a*). Ibn Tūmart likewise detects this aspect of *imāma* in David (political obedience) and Jesus (voluntary obedience), but the manner in which he describes the early Muslims' orientation to Muḥammad is of a different magnitude:

> If he spoke or gave a command, they did not oppose him on any matter; what he offered them, they accepted; what he forbade them, they refrained from it, and they yielded [to him] in that. They believed (*i'taqadū*) that hurrying to satisfy him was hurrying to satisfy God. They believed that what he loved, God loved. They believed that obedience to him was obedience to God. That was his way with them and their particular way and manner with him (*wa-ṣifātihim wa-ḥālahum ma'ahu*).[709]

God commanded David's people to obey the king's commands and judgments as if they were God's own commands and judgments. Jesus' disciples voluntarily emulated their teacher. Yet, Ibn Tūmart describes the manner in which the Companions deferred to Muḥammad in all things as a combination of political and voluntary obedience. Moreover, Ibn Tūmart's Muḥammad enjoys a closeness to God that he does not attribute to other *imām*s beside the *mahdī*. He makes no distinction between obedience to the Prophet and obedience to God. This closeness to God fully manifests the *imām* as a source of law and object of emulation that had only existed in David and Jesus in a more limited way. What Muḥammad loved is identical to what God loves; his conduct and habit, down to the smallest detail, carries legal and moral weight that demands remembrance and exposition. The interaction of Muḥammad and the Companions perfects the *imām* as the establisher of a *sunna*. Ibn Tūmart's attention to the *imām* as a source of *sunna* is crucial to his understanding of the role of the *imām-mahdī*. Ibn Tūmart holds that the *mahdī* will himself establish a *sunna*, but this is not a new *sunna*, but rather the re-establishment of Muḥammad's through the example of a living person. His deference to Muḥammad is evident in

[709] D, 231.

his emphasis on *ḥadīth* in his presentation of revealed knowledge in *BIT*. The promise of a new *sunna* with the appearance of the *mahdī* nevertheless poses certain challenges for the historian who must reconcile the revivalist, past-oriented position Ibn Tūmart takes in "Imāmate" and Almohad practices that appear to abrogate some Muslim rituals, such as the *ḥajj*, in favor of rituals that recenter Islam around Ibn Tūmart, such as the pilgrimage to Tīnmall.[710]

Abū Bakr, ʻUmar, and Beyond

The way in which Muslims describe the succession to the Prophet and the reigns of the four, rightly-guided (*rāshidūn*) caliphs reveals their basic denominational commitments. Historians of the Almohad period have unsurprisingly looked to Ibn Tūmart's approach to the *rāshidūn* caliphs in order to assess his commitment (or lack thereof) to a form of Sunnism, Shīʻism, or Khārijism because each of these groups holds particular opinions about the succession to Muḥammad. The designation of the first four caliphs—Abū Bakr, ʻUmar, ʻUthmān, and ʻAlī—as "rightly-guided" is a Sunnī doctrine. The precursors to the Shīʻa and the Khawārij-Ibāḍiyya distinguished themselves from the broader *umma* quite early on. Although they would eventually develop unique legal and theological discourses, their primary reasons for dissociation were related to the succession and the moral conduct of the successors. Shīʻa regard ʻAlī as Muḥammad's true successor. They believe he appointed ʻAlī as his *mawlā* ("client" or "lord") at the Pond of Khumm (*ghadīr khumm*) in 10/632. On this basis, they reject the three other *rāshidūn* caliphs as illegitimate. The Khārijīs (a group of whom would evolve into the Ibāḍīs) originally fought on ʻAlī's side against Muʻāwiyya I in the First Fitna (656-7)

[710] I will address the pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) to Tīnmall in the Conclusion.

precipitated by the murder of ʻUthmān (644). Muʻāwiyya, a relative of the murdered caliph, entered into conflict with the ʻAlīds over their delay in bringing ʻUthmān's assassins and their associates to justice. At the Battle of Ṣiffīn 37/656, Muʻāwiyya surrendered to ʻAlī on the condition that they would enter into arbitration. The Khārijīs "went out of" (*kharajū min*) ʻAlī's camp after ʻAlī agreed to arbitration. They believed ʻUthmān and other members of his clan, the Banū Umayya, had deviated from Islam and were therefore undeserving of arbitration. The Khārijīs and the Ibāḍīs regard Abū Bakr and ʻUmar to be legitimate successors to the Prophet and "rightly guided." They divide ʻUthmān's caliphate "into a six-year period of righteous rule and six-years of unrighteous rule." They likewise reject ʻAlī because of his actions at Ṣiffīn and his later opposition to the Khārijī movement.[711]

Ibn Tūmart explicitly identifies Abū Bakr and ʻUmar as Muḥammad's successors. Of the former, he writes:

> Then Abū Bakr was *imām* after him, a caliph over all of God's servants and a guarantor (*amīnan*) of his religion. In this, he went to the greatest lengths (*fa-badhala al-majhūd*). The Muslims listened to him and obeyed him, as the Messenger had selected him for them to [lead them] in prayer and desired him to be their *imām* in their religion. He excluded all others (*siwāhu*) from [leading] prayer… The *imām* is to be followed in his actions and words as he is followed during prayer. This [includes] his judgment over the spoils (*fay'*), booty, property, and rights. That judgment belongs to every *imām*, prophet, and messenger, as well as to Abū Bakr and the caliphs after the Messenger… [The Companions] recognized Abū Bakr's right and venerated him greatly according to what God has deemed right (*wa-ʻaẓẓamūhu iʻẓāman li-ḥaqq Allāh*).[712]

Abū Bakr represents the beginning of the post-Prophetic order, a time in which Muslims, despite the loss of Muḥammad, continued the religion and the way of life he had established in relative peace. The Companions and the growing Muslim community recognized his liturgical role as prayer-leader—one of the primary meanings of *imām*—as well as his supreme authority with

[711] Valerie J. Hoffman, *The Essentials of Ibāḍī Islam* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 7-10.
[712] D, 232.

regard to doctrine, moral conduct, and administration. Ibn Tūmart's focus on the historically sensitive issue of the distribution of property, land, and slaves in this passage reflects the importance of *jihād* and its aftermath to the Almohad movement.

Ibn Tūmart leaves no doubt with regard to Abū Bakr's right of succession. Muḥammad chose Abū Bakr to be *imām* and caliph "over all of God's servants," he exercised the right of judgment (*ḥukm*) proper to all *imāms*, prophets, and messengers, and the Prophet's Companions recognized this right. This list excludes the basic Shī'ī opinion because it implies that 'Alī, as one of the Companions, recognized Abū Bakr's caliphate as legitimate. At this point, the above account agrees with the Sunnī and Khārijī-Ibāḍī accounts of the succession.

Of 'Umar and his successors, he says:

> Then, after him, [came] 'Umar. He nobly persevered in the truth, and [the Muslims] nobly persevered in their obedience to him, as has been established from the descriptions and reports of him. They believed that obedience to him was obedience to God and obedience to the Messenger with all of the sincerity, love, truth, and goodness of friendship, and with peaceful, obedient, generous, and consenting hearts, free of denial, arrogance, doubt, conjecture, or fraud; without restriction or hindrance[713] in how he judged and in what he decided, nor in what he commanded and prohibited, until death came to him. He died and he was pleased with them. Then the command [passed] again, until the period of the prophetic caliphate (*muddat khilāfat al-nubuwwa*) came to an end, thirty years after the Chosen, God's blessing and peace be upon him.[714]

Ibn Tūmart views 'Umar's reign as the high point of the post-Prophetic era. Not only did the Muslim community maintain Islam through their adherence to the *imām*, but they did so gladly. His description of their "hearts" (*qulūb*), when read through his epistemology, indicates that this period was felicitous because the early Muslims avoided the moral dispositions of doubt, conjecture, and fraud that lead to falsehood and the corruption of Islam. Ibn Tūmart's brief

[713] Reading *ḥajr* instead of *jurḥ*.
[714] D, 232.

description of the succession to *'Umar*, however, raises some questions pertinent to understanding his position on the Rāshidūn.

Ibn Tūmart measures "the period of the prophetic caliphate" at thirty years, the sum of the caliphates of Abū Bakr (11-13/632-4), 'Umar (13-23/634-44), 'Uthmān (23-35/644-56), 'Alī (35-40/656-661), and Ḥasan (40-41/661). His dating of the caliphate at thirty years, the completion of which requires the inclusion of Ḥasan's brief reign before his death at Karbalā', as well as his phrasing, suggest that he is alluding to a *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad predicts the caliphate's demise: "The prophetic caliphate (*khilāfat al-nubuwwa*) will last for thirty years, then God will give dominion [or "kingship"] to whom He wills."[715] Ibn Tūmart accepts all four of the Rāshidūn, a typically Sunnī view. Yet the lack of explicit reference to 'Uthmān and 'Alī is puzzling. Several scholars have noted this discrepancy.[716] Bourouiba makes very little of the omission because his belief that the prophetic caliphate lasted thirty years implies acceptance of 'Uthmān's and 'Alī's legitimacy. Urvoy and Cornell interpret this passage as evidence that Ibn Tūmart held a position similar to that of the Khārijīs-Ibāḍīs. Cornell hypothesizes that Ibn Tūmart might have excluded 'Uthmān and 'Alī from the list of *imām*s to dissociate himself from Shī'ism, a common accusation made against Ibn Tūmart and the Almohads. Urvoy goes further, arguing that the Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of *imāma* strongly resembles the Khārijī model. Coupled with Ibn Tūmart's acceptance of *aḥādīth* narrated by 'Ā'isha, whose probity (*'adāla*) the Shī'a reject, the omission of 'Uthmān and 'Alī indicates that Ibn Tūmart adopted elements of Khārijism.

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[715] *Sunan Abī Dāwud*, 4647.
[716] Rachid Bourouiba, "La Doctrine almohade," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 13-14 (1973), 150; Dominique Urvoy, "La Pensée d'Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 27 (1974), 38; Vincent Cornell, "Understanding Is the Mother of Ability: Responsibility and Action in the Doctrine of Ibn Tūmart," *Studia Islamica* 66 (1987), 102.

I have already discussed my disagreement with Urvoy's Khārijī thesis on the grounds that it does not account for Ibn Tūmart's emphasis on the ontologically correct solution in *ijtihād* (see above). Cornell's and Urvoy's arguments suffice to show that Ibn Tūmart was not a Shī'ī or even inspired by Shī'ism in an exclusive sense, but their gravitation toward Khārijism is too hasty. Ibn Tūmart may not mention 'Uthmān and 'Alī by name, but his dating of the first Caliphate leaves no doubt as to his acceptance of both. Moreover, both Sunnīs and Ibāḍīs accept 'Ā'isha's testimony in the field of *ḥadīth* criticism. At best, the omission of the names of these two Rāshidūn Caliphs could be seen as a concession to Khārijī-Ibāḍī populations within the Almohad sphere of influence who, despite Almoravid pressure, had not converted to Mālikī Sunnism, the majority *madhhab* in today's North and West Africa. What is more likely is that, though Ibn Tūmart holds a Sunnī view with regard to their legitimacy, he does not go into detail about 'Uthmān and 'Alī because, unlike Abū Bakr and 'Umar, their troubled reigns represented a decline in *imāma*. Although the period of the prophetic caliphate lasted thirty years, the utopian qualities he attributes to the first two caliphs seem to have departed with 'Umar.

After the Rāshidūn

Ibn Tūmart characterizes the Umayyad Caliphate and what followed it as a time of great strife (*fitna*) and deviation from Islam. Muslims commonly use term *fitna*, which sometimes denotes individual temptation, to describe the period of civil wars that marred 'Alī's caliphate and the early Umayyad Caliphate. Of particular concern to Ibn Tūmart is how these *fitan* led to fragmentation within the *umma*:

> Then, after that, differences (*afrāq*), desires (*ahwā'*), and an inclination toward disagreement (*ikhtilāf*), denying hearts (*qulūb munkira*), and a scarcity in obedience.

> Desire was followed, and the world was pursued. There was admiration for the opinion for anyone who had an opinion (*i'jāb kull dhī ra'ī bi-ra'īhi*), but what attention (*sam'*) or obedience was there with this admiration? What agreement (*ittifāq*) or conjunction (*ijtimā'*) was there with this difference and this inclination? What righteousness (*inṣāf*) or religion was there with the desire that was followed? What harmony (*ta'alluf*) or good (*khayr*) or love (*mawadda*) was there with the contrariety of hearts and the splitting of the paths (*tafarruq al-subul*).[717]

Ibn Tūmart employs many of the same terms that he did in his description of 'Umar's caliphate in order to emphasize the extent to which post-Rāshidūn Muslims subverted Islam by breaking off into various sects. Again, Ibn Tūmart homes in on the question of juridical difference (*ikhtilāf*). In this history of decline, Muslims begin to admire opinion (*ra'y*), rather than seeking out the ontologically correct meaning latent in the corpus of revelation (*sam'*) and rendering obedience to it. Ibn Tūmart echoes early Islamic polemical literature against the "companions of opinion" (*ahl al-ra'y*). Given his commitment to a fallibilist model of *ijithād*, such esteem for and tolerance of personal legal opinion in the administration of the *sharī'a* constitutes, so to speak, the original sin of the post-Rāshidūn community. More than anywhere else in *BIT*, here we see how closely Ibn Tūmart connects knowledge, community, and *imāma*. If either one of these decays or fractures, so do the others.

The tumultuous centuries between the end of the prophetic caliphate and the appearance of the *mahdī* forms a continuum between the ideal Muslim *umma* that Muḥammad bequeathed to Abū Bakr and the Companions and the complete inversion of the *umma*. The human and conceptual constituents of the Islamic community do not disappear all at once, but rather are gradually replaced and overtaken by their opposites.[718]

[717] D, 233.
[718] D, 232-33.

Table 16: Signs of Decline

Departure (*dhahāb*)	**Appearance (*ẓuhūr*)**
The Scholars (*al-'ulamā'*)	The Ignorant (*al-juhhāl*)
The Righteous (*al-ṣāliḥūn*)	Refuse (*ḥuthāla*)
Guarantors (*umanā'*)	Traitors (*khawna*)
The *imām*s (*al-ayimma*)	The Innovators (*al-mubtadi'a*)
The Truthful (*al-ṣādiqūn*)	The Anti-Christs (*al-dajjālūn*)
The People of the Truths (*ahl al-ḥaqā'iq*)	The People of Change, Contrast, Confusion, and Forgery (*ahl al-tabdīl wa-l-taghyīr wa-l-talbīs wa-l-tadlīs*)

The above pairs reflect the centrality of moral disposition to Ibn Tūmart's definition of knowledge and, by extensions, correct belief (*īmān*) and correct worship (*'ibāda*). There is an overwhelming sense that the disunity the post-*rāshidūn* community arose out of adherence to leaders other than the rightful *imām*s (*ayimma*)[719] and guarantors (*umanā'*) designated by the Prophets: the ignorant, the traitors, and the innovators. The moral turpitude of these new leaders, which Ibn Tūmart attributes to their pursuit of "conflicting desires" (*ahwā' mukhtalifa*) over and above the pursuit of "truth" (*ḥaqq*) and "the fear of God" (*taqwā*), led to epistemic failure with regard to the most important elements of Islam.[720] Among these foundational tenets, Ibn Tūmart includes the belief in the ontologically correct answer in *ijtihād* (i.e., fallibilism) and belief in the authority of the *imām* in every age. What is important to note here is that Ibn Tūmart does not claim that ignorant and immoral individuals did not exist during the thirty years of the prophetic caliphate. On the contrary, he understands the Muslim *umma* to have always harbored the potential for decline and sectarianism. Ibn Tūmart considers Muḥammad to be the perfect *imām*, the leader in the fullest sense, but he was still limited by historical circumstances. Islam emerged into the world in opposition to the beliefs and practices of the Prophet's native Mecca; this

[719] Ibn Tūmart uses an accepted, albeit uncommon, variant plural form of *imām*, *ayimma*, rather than the standard *a'imma*. Both Ṭālibī and Abū al-'Azm preserve this reading. See D, 233 and E, 301.
[720] D, 233.

struggle would occupy him for most of his prophetic career. Under the Rāshidūn, the *umma* continued to exist alongside non-Muslims and non-monotheists. Within its own ranks, many were still trying to spell out and conform their lives to the basic tenets of the faith. Ibn Tūmart's omission of 'Uthmān's and 'Alī's names reflects the extent to which the struggle to fulfill Islam permeated the community. Their caliphates were legitimate, but the potential for corruption existed at the highest echelons of the caliphate and affected two of the Prophet's closest Companions.

Ibn Tūmart's opposition of "the truthful" (*al-ṣādiqūn*) and "the Anti-Christs" (*al-dajjālūn*) imbues his account of hiero-history with a sense of apocalyptic urgency. In his description of the historical continuum between the prophetic age and the coming of the *mahdī*, he transitions from human, political terms, to cosmological and epistemological terms.

> The command (*al-amr*) extended over that [time] and remained. There was no protector (*al-nāṣir*) nor one who might establish the truth (*al-qā'im bi-l-ḥaqq*). The people of falsehood (*ahl al-bāṭil*) prevailed and conquered until they brought falsehood and tyranny to its utmost summit (*ilā sha'w al-maṭālib*).The command likewise [remained] during the [time of their] conquest and victory until the age (*zamān*) of the Supported, the Victorious, the Establisher of the Truth (*al-mu'ayyad al-manṣūr al-qā'im bi-l-ḥaqq*) after its disappearance (*ba'd dhahābihi*) and its destruction (*inhidāmihi*), the one who will support God's religion after its murder and obstruction (*ba'd imātatihi wa-ta'ṭīlihi*), the one who will establish justice (*al-qā'im bi-l-'adl*) in this world until [justice] fills it, the one who will manifest the truths (*al-muẓhir li-l-ḥaqā'iq*) after their denial and effacement, and the eradication and obliteration of the traces of knowledge. God will bring him forward in the age in which the darkness is at its blackest moment, in which falsehoods violently clash, in which all ignorance gathers together, in which the truths are mixed up, in which the lights are inverted and smothered, in which opinions (*al-ārā'*) undistinguished and disordered, in which the refuse roam wherever and hold sway, in which the savages are set loose with disregard…until these perils and dangers become rooted in hearts, and they become so habitual to the point that the only one who can have power over them is he who will upturn hearts by confronting (*muqallib al-qulūb ma'a al-iqbāl 'alā*) the transitory honors [of the world] and those who pursue corrupt ends.[721]

[721] D, 233.

The *mahdī* will appear in the age in which cosmological and epistemological darkness (*ẓalamāt*, *abāṭīl*, *jahālāt*) reach their pinnacle and threaten to overtake cosmological and epistemological light (*anwār*, *ḥaqā'iq*). In this moment, Ibn Tūmart's definitions of knowledge and ignorance, which apply to human beings regardless of historical moment, play an explanatory role in sacred history. The *mahdī* will come into history in order to combat epistemological darkness in a particularly human way, but which will nevertheless have repercussions in a cosmic sense. This scandalous confluence of the general and the specific in the person of the *mahdī* is perhaps the most misunderstood element of Ibn Tūmart's account of *imāma*. All previous *imām*s reveal aspects of an ideal *imām*, whose fullness is revealed in two persons: Muḥammad and the *mahdī*. Despite the hierohistorical uniqueness and chosen-ness (*iṣṭifā'*) of these two individuals, which one must attribute to divine providence, they prepare themselves for this divinely ordained mission by normal human means. In Ibn Tūmart's case, the primary mode of preparation is the acquisition of knowledge and the contemplation of the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired in general. The *mahdī* will accomplish his mission by raising others up by imparting necessary knowledge to them, as well as by showing how this knowledge makes moral demands upon them and validates the acts of worship they render to God.

The Awaited Mahdī

Ibn Tūmart alludes to the particular history of the Almohad movement in "Imāmate" and, in particular, their struggle against the Almoravid Empire and the Mālikī *'ulamā'*. The decadence that characterizes the age between the Rāshidūn Caliphate and the coming of the *mahdī* will persist "until the ornament of this world (*ẓukhruf al-dunyā*) becomes religion (*dīnan*), ignorance

becomes knowledge, falsehood becomes truth, the forbidden becomes the obligatory (*wa-l-munkar ma'rūfan*), and tyranny becomes justice; this opposition will have firmly rooted and established rules (*qawā'id*), and the root-principles of falsehood (*uṣūl al-bāṭil*) will be affirmed and their branches (*furū'uhu*) will ascend."[722] This passage echoes the narrative common to Almohad historians like al-Baydhaq and al-Marrākushī. Ibn Tūmart began his career as an itinerant scholar and preacher who railed against the jurisprudential and theological errors of the Mālikī establishment. Chief among these errors was, as the Almohads perceived it, the inordinate attention given to the study of *furū'* manuals (books of case law and legal precedent) at the expense of rigorous examination of the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and sacred scripture. Ibn Tūmart connected this inversion in the study of the law to the Almoravids' lax attitude toward the enforcement of the *sharī'a*.

The tolerance of the consumption of alcohol greatly incensed Ibn Tūmart. It should come as no surprise that "The Section on Leadership" includes a text (*Bāb fī anna al-khamr dā' wa-laysa fīhā shifā'*); its title alludes to the medicinal use of alcohol (whether as a topical anti-septic or imbibed), a practice some legal schools permitted.[723] Ibn Tūmart exaggerates the historical toleration of the production, selling, and consumption of alcohol in the Maghrib by accusing the Almoravid rulers of making "the forbidden obligatory" (*al-munkar ma'rūfan*), an allusion to the Qur'ānic principle of "enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong" (*al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa-l-nahī 'an al-munkar*).[724] Although the Qur'ān does not elaborate upon this duty, *al-amr wa-l-nahī*

[722] D, 223-4.
[723] D, 347-57. See also Nurdeen Deuraseh, "Is Imbibing al-Khamr (Intoxicating Drink) for Medical Purposes Permissible by Islamic Law?" *Arab Law Quarterly* 18, no. 3-4 (2003), 355-64.
[724] See Q 3:110, 114; 7:157; 9:71, 112; 22:41; 31:17. The standard treatment of this concept remains Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010 [2000]). Cook mentions Ibn Tūmart's application of this concept on 389; 458-59; 591-92.

formed an important topic in Shī'ī (Twelver and Zaydī) and Ibāḍī literature on *imāma*. The Mu'tazila counted it among their five principles. The early Ash'arīs paid little attention to this principle, but, perhaps through the influence of the Mu'tazila, al-Ghazālī devotes an entire chapter of his *Revival* to commanding the right and forbidding the wrong.[725] By Ibn Tūmart's time, many Sunnīs regarded commanding the right and forbidding the wrong to be one of the main duties of Muslim political authorities. As Delfina Serrano has argued, we have good reason to doubt the traditional Almohad portrayal of the Almoravids as negligent in the enforcement of the *sharī'a*, especially the laws related to the market and public spaces (*al-ḥisba*). Regardless, Ibn Tūmart implicates the Almoravid Empire in his telling of sacred history as the villains whose corruption of the religious sciences and the lived practice of Islam necessitates the coming of the *mahdī*.

The *mahdī* will come "in the age of estrangement (*fī zamān al-ghurba*) … and God will distinguish him (*khaṣṣaṣahu Allāh*) with the meanings of divine guidance (*ma'ānī al-hidāya*) he will entrust to him (*bi-mā awda'a fīhi*)."[726] The term estrangement has two valences here. In the most literal sense, the root *gh-r-b* denotes the west, as in *al-maghrib*: the west, the place of the setting sun, Morocco (*al-Maghrib al-aqṣā*; "the Far West"). There are *aḥādīth* which state that the *mahdī* will appear on the day when the sun rises in the west: "The hour will not come until you have observed ten signs (*āyāt*): [i] the sun rising from where it sets in the West (*ṭulū' al-shams min maghribihā*)…"[727] Some interpreted this to mean that the *mahdī* would come from the Far West (*al-maghrib al-aqṣā*).[728] Ibn Tūmart hints at this when he says, "the light [of

[725] *EI2*, "al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar" (Michael Cook).
[726] D, 234.
[727] *Jamī' al-Tirmidhī* 2183.
[728] See James Darmesteter, *The Mahdi, Past and Present* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1885), 46 (n. 42). The early Fāṭimid movement, which began in North Africa, deployed this *ḥadīth* to show their legitimacy to Sunnīs.

knowledge] will rise [like the sun] in this world with his appearance" (*wa-yashruq nūruhu fī al-dunyā bi-ẓuhūrihi*).[729]

The eastern traditionist, Abū ʻAbdallāh Nuʻaym al-Marwazī (d. 228/843), compiled several prophetic and non-prophetic *aḥādīth* on eschatology call *al-Fitan*. In the sections on the *mahdī*, he includes reports which state that the *mahdī* will appear when armies march from the Maghrib to Egypt.[730] Other traditions claim that al-Sufyānī, an Anti-Christ figure in Islamic eschatology, will not appear until "the people of the Maghrib" appear in the east. Al-Marwazī includes many traditions that identify the people of the Maghrib with "the Berbers," who will come to the East as an invading army.[731] Al-Marwazī's compilation does not definitively specify whether the people of the Maghrib will serve the *mahdī*, or whether their attack on the East will constitute a punishment for unfaithful Muslims in the Islamic heartland. The post-Almohad traditionist, Abū ʻAbdallāh al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272) emphatically states that the *mahdī* will appear in Morocco: "It has been narrated in a *ḥadīth* attributed to Ibn Masʻūd and other Companions that the [the *mahdī*] will emerge in the last age out of the Far West (*al-maghrib al-aqṣā*)." Al-Qurṭubī even specifies that he will come from "the Massa region among the mountains of Morocco."[732] Serrano and Cassassas have recently identified pro-Almohad elements within al-Qurṭubī's works. It is possible that some of the *mahdī* traditions which he cites in fact originated within Almohad circles. However, his compilation attests to the popularity of the opinion that the *mahdī* would arise in the West during and, perhaps, *before* the Almohad period.

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[729] D, 234.
[730] Abū ʻAbdallāh Nuʻaym al-Marwazī, *al-Fitan*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2003), 205-06.
[731] Abū ʻAbdallāh Nuʻaym al-Marwazī, *al-Fitan*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2003), 155-64 ; 169.
[732] Abū ʻAbdallāh al-Qurṭubī, *al-Tadhkira*, 1206.

Ibn Tūmart also alludes to a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet Muḥammad says, "Islam began as a stranger and shall return to being a stranger just as it began" (*bada'a al-islām gharīban wa-sa-ya'ūd gharīban kamā bada'a*).[733] We find this tradition in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (145-46), *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (3986-88), and *Jamī' al-Tirmidhī* (2629). All say that the Prophet added the exhortation, "…so give glad tidings to strangers" (*fa-ṭūbā li-l-ghurbā'*). Maribel Fierro has documented how medieval Andalusī and Maghribī thinkers interpreted this tradition. Legal scholars, such as Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī and al-Ṭurṭūshī, deployed the discourse of estrangement to describe the people's resistance to religious knowledge and the correct administration of the *sharī'a*. These scholars were "strangers" (*ghurabā'*) insofar as they suffered reprobation for condemning what they perceived to be legal innovation (*bida'*).[734] Ṣūfīs developed a pietistic discourse around estrangement by dint of their renunciation of this world for the hereafter. Although this discourse originated in the East with al-Ajurrī and Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī, many of Ibn Tūmart's contemporaries embraced the identity of the stranger. In al-Andalus and the Maghrib, this estrangement was not only a spiritual alienation. Prominent mystics like Ibn Barrajān, Ibn Qasī, and al-Ṭalamankī were accused of heresy (*zandaqa*). Ibn Barrajān died in an Almoravid prison and Ibn Qasī was assassinated by former supporters for collaborating with Christian Portugal against the Almohads.[735] Fierro argues that Ibn Tūmart deploys estrangement in a way reminiscent of Ibn al-'Arabī and al-Ṭurṭūshī. He is not so much concerned with spiritual alienation as with eliminating legal innovations and other abuses of the *sharī'a*. However,

[733] Cited from Maribel Fierro, "Spiritual Alienation and Political Activism: The *ghurabā'* in al-Andalus during the Sixth/Twelfth Century," *Arabica* 47, no. 2 (2000), 232.
[734] Cited from Maribel Fierro, "Spiritual Alienation and Political Activism: The *ghurabā'* in al-Andalus during the Sixth/Twelfth Century," *Arabica* 47, no. 2 (2000), 240-45.
[735] Cited from Maribel Fierro, "Spiritual Alienation and Political Activism: The *ghurabā'* in al-Andalus during the Sixth/Twelfth Century," *Arabica* 47, no. 2 (2000), 254-57. On the eastern origin of estrangement, see Joel Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1992 [1986]), 25; 192; 220.

whereas the jurists spoke of estrangement as a perennial state in which pious scholars find themselves, Ibn Tūmart radicalizes estrangement from true Islam by making it the defining characteristic of the last age.[736]

Ibn Tūmart subsumes the *mahdī*'s mission under the term "promise" (*wa'd*), referring to God's specification of the *mahdī* "by the meanings of divine guidance he has entrusted to him (*awda'a fīhi*).[737] This promise is nothing less than the restoration of the legal, epistemological, and moral order that God has ordained:

> His promise consists in overturning the state of affairs (*al-umūr*) from their normal courses (*'an 'ādātihi*) and their destruction by destroying the rules which undergird them. With God's permission, he will bring [the state of affairs] to the truth, until they are organized according to the example of divine guidance (*sunan al-hudā*) and made straight through deference to piety (*'alā minhāj al-taqwā*). Falsehood will be destroyed by its rules (*min qawā'idihi*) and its branches will be destroyed along with it. The truth will be established from its root and, with its establishment, its branches will also be established. Knowledge will appear from its source and its light will rise like the sun in this world with his appearance, until the world is filled with justice, as it had been filled with injustice and tyranny. [All this will happen] according to what his Lord has promised…[738]

Ibn Tūmart characterizes the *mahdī*'s mission as a three-part process corresponding to his own career as a public preacher. The *mahdī* will begin as an activist who protests the state of affairs that obtain in the world. Through his example (*sunna*) he will draw others to a life of piety (*taqwā*). Ibn Tūmart recognizes that the injustices of world, particularly transgression of the *sharī'a*, do not arise in a vacuum. Rather, he attributes the chaos of the age of estrangement to rules (*qawā'id*) of legal interpretation grounded in falsehood (*al-bāṭil*). In order to reverse this state of affairs, the *mahdī* must enlighten the people by instructing them in the identification of

[736] Cited from Maribel Fierro, "Spiritual Alienation and Political Activism: The *ghurabā'* in al-Andalus during the Sixth/Twelfth Century," *Arabica* 47, no. 2 (2000), 246-48.
[737] D, 234.
[738] D, 234.

root-principles (*uṣūl*) in revelation and the proper derivation of "branch" judgments (*furū'*) in order to implement divine law in the world.

The complete eradication of injustice, tyranny, and other immoral behavior requires enlightenment that is both radical and popular in nature.[739] The universalist goal that Ibn Tūmart spells out here distinguishes the *mahdī* from Muḥammad in terms of historical efficacy. Although Muḥammad possesses the fullness of *imāma*, his historical efficacy as a leader was limited to Arabia and its immediate surroundings. The *mahdī* will also embody the fullness of *imāma*, but, in contrast to Muḥammad, he will realize the message of Islam on a global scale. "This is was God—may He be exalted—promised to the *mahdī*; He promised the truth upon which there is no difference and obedience to him will be pure and unblemished—the like of the obedience [that will be rendered to the *mahdī*] has not been seen before nor will be seen after."[740] The *mahdī*'s imāmate will not differ from Muḥammad's in its essence or message but will bring the universalism of Islam to fruition.

[739] I disagree with Tilman Nagel, who regards Ibn Tūmart's embrace of *takfīr al-'awāmm* as evidence that Ibn Tūmart's concern for the masses was a merely legalistic one. That is, only the Almohad elite concerned itself with knowledge of God—and, therefore, salvation. The masses received enough teaching to allow them to observe Islamic law and ritual practices as Ibn Tūmart understood them, but (per Nagel) it is doubtful that they reached the level of theological reasoning necessary to merit salvation as Ibn Tūmart stipulates in "Creed" §1. I believe that Nagel's assessment is problematic in that it discounts both Ibn Tūmart's avowed missionary impulse (as in "On Worship") and other historical accounts of the Almohad Caliphate pursuing missionary work among the elites and the masses alike. Although Ibn Tūmart resembles the earlier Mu'tazilī and Ash'arī proponents of *takfīr al-'awāmm*, he does not appear to share their opinion that, because the masses are permanently limited with regard to their knowledge of God, they will not attain salvation. Instead, Ibn Tūmart radicalizes the basic premise of *takfīr al-'awāmm*—namely that one must know God in order to reach salvation—in order to fuel his project of popular enlightenment. See Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 40-41.

[740] D, 234.

The Necessary Beliefs

Ibn Tūmart's sacred history of *imāma* culminates in a concrete list of obligatory beliefs a Muslim must hold of the *imām* (*wājib*) and a corollary list of all the beliefs and practices that should be rejected (*bu'd*; literally, "at a distance").[741]

Table 17: What Muslims Must Believe about the mahdī

Obligatory	**Rejected**
1. Knowledge of the *mahdī* 2. Adherence (*sam'*) to his teachings and obedience to him 3. Following him and emulating his actions 4. Absolute (*'alā al-kāffa*) belief (*īmān*) in him and assenting (*taṣdīq*) to him 5. Submission (*taslīm*) to him 6. Accepting his judgment 7. Compliance in everything that he determines 8. Deference (*rujū'*) to his knowledge 9. Following his path (*sabīlahu*) 10. Adherence to his command 11. Submitting all matters to him	1. Turning away from him 2. Disobedience 3. Disputing him 4. Doubting him 5. Conjecture about him 6. Betrayal of him 7. Disdain for him 8. Neglecting his command 9. Making light of his right (*istikhfāf bi-ḥaqqihi*) 10. Denying his commands 11. Obscuring his statement 12. Interpretation (*ta'wīl*) that is not his 13. A path (*sabīl*) that is not his 14. Acting without his *sunna*

This litany of duties and prohibitions incumbent upon the Almohad point to the absolute authority Ibn Tūmart attributes to himself as the *mahdī*. The Almohad must not only follow his commands and emulate his example, but he must also surrender his mind to the *mahdī*'s mind. Under this rubric, the personal interpretation of a point of law or of a verse in the Qur'ān (*ta'wīl*) could undermine the absolute loyalty he must render to the *mahdī*. Ibn Tūmart further clarifies

[741] D, 234.

the duties of obedience (*ṭā'a*) and deference (*rujū'*) to his knowledge. Obedience is "obligatory in secret and in public, in what is manifest (*al-ẓāhir*) and what is hidden (*al-bāṭin*), in matters of religion and the world (*fī al-dīn wa-l-dunyā*)."[742] The claim that the *mahdī*'s authority extends beyond religion into secular affairs separates Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of *imāma* from that of many contemporary Sunnī theorists. In a recent essay on the *dīn–dunyā* distinction in medieval Islamic typologies of knowledge, Rushain Abbasi shows that the prevalent opinion of scholars of the *sunna* and prophetic biography was that, while Muḥammad exercised absolute authority in religion, his authority in worldly affairs was limited to certain spheres.[743]

Ibn Tūmart also specifies seven issues on which the Almohads must defer to his judgment: (i) God, (ii) creation (*al-makhlūq*), (iii) property, (iv) knowledge, (v) the Qur'ān, (vi) the *sunna*, and (vii) divine guidance (*al-hidāya*). Deference to the *mahdī* is required to resolve all questions, great or small. He argues that, if one does not seek the *mahdī*'s judgment in the most mundane affairs, the entire structure of obedience and deference will collapse: "With the destruction of the lower, the higher will be destroyed; the path to the least is the path to the most."[744] The apparent insignificance of a command does not change the fact that "the command

[742] D, 235.
[743] On the distinction between *dīn* and *dunyā*, see Rushain Abbasi, "Did Premodern Muslims Distinguish the Religious and the Secular? The *Dīn–Dunyā* Binary in Medieval Islamic Thought," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 31, no. 2 (2020), 185-225.
[744] D, 235.

of the *mahdī* is the command of God;" to refuse deference and obedience in any matter corrupts the integrity of the law.

In the treatise's conclusion, Ibn Tūmart makes explicit what is at stake in accepting the *mahdī*:

> His *sunna* is the *sunna* of God and of His messenger. His command is the command of God and of His messenger… He knows God better than all others and He is closer to God than all others. On him were the heavens and the earth founded, and by him was all darkness illumined; through him will all falsehoods be refuted, and through him will all knowledge be manifested. By agreement with him, happiness will be achieved, and by obedience to him, blessing will be achieved. In the people's vying for what he loves, they will vie for what God and His messenger love.[745]

The Tūmartian *mahdī* is a perfect representation of both God and the Prophet Muḥammad. In him, there remains no separation between what God and the Prophet desire for humankind and what the *mahdī* commands and teaches. In this way, Ibn Tūmart offers a solution to the problem of *ikhtilāf* and sectarianism precipitated by Muḥammad's death without simultaneously claiming that what he commands and teaches is different from what is present in the Qur'ān and *sunna*. Although many of Ibn Tūmart's historical contemporaries criticized his doctrine of *imāma* as a departure from Islam, Ibn Tūmart never claimed that his leadership necessitated the abrogation of the body of revelation particular to Islam. On the contrary, he sought to inculcate in his followers the knowledge necessary to interpret the Qur'ān and *sunna* and return Islam to its prophetic roots. "*Imāma* is a column of religion, and its columns are absolute (*'alā al-iṭlāq*) in all ages. It is the religion of the pious predecessors (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) and the nations that preceded Abraham."[746] His insistence that belief in the *imām* and *mahdī* "is firmly established by the texts

[745] D, 234-5.
[746] D, 236.

of the Qur'ān, the decisive commands of the Law, and the demonstration of knowledge" (*thabata bi-thubūt nuṣūṣ al-kitāb wa-qawāṭi' al-shar' wa-bayān al-'ilm*) reflects the great attention he pays to the root-principles (*uṣūl*), in the sense of "source texts," in the epistemological chapters of *BIT*. However, Ibn Tūmart is not unique in claiming that his expression of Islam correctly reconstitutes the *umma* of the Prophet Muḥammad according to the Qur'ān, *sunna*, and the practice of the predecessors (*al-salaf*). With few exceptions, revivalist movements of all stripes make the same claims, from the Fāṭimid Caliphate to today's Salafist movement.

Identifying which of these groups most accurately constitutes Islam stands outside of the historian's purview. A more appropriate (and perhaps more illuminating) question is, "In any given restorationist movement, which of its doctrines and practices encounter the most resistance from other Muslims?" In the Almohad case, contemporary Muslims did not reject the doctrine of *imāma per se* (since most forms of Islam view *imāma* as necessary), but rather Ibn Tūmart's claim that the *mahdī* possesses the right to create new *sunna* on behalf of God and Muḥammad. It is clear from *BIT* that the *mahdī* will adjudicate according to the same Islam that Muḥammad brought centuries before. This originalism notwithstanding, the Sunnī model of post-Prophetic Islam manifests a certain anxiety around the collection and interpretation of *aḥādīth* in order to extend the *sharī'a* to every aspect of human life. This anxiety stems from the recognition that the extant body of prophetic traditions falls short of this totalizing ideal because new legal questions arise that may not find precedent in the *sunna*. The typical Sunnī solution to this problem is to apply analogy (*qiyās*) and other forms of legal inference, but, given Ibn Tūmart's limited acceptance of analogy, the fulfillment of the *sharī'a* in terms of total applicability to human life ultimately requires a living source of *sunna*—a new Muḥammad. Yet, from a Sunnī standpoint, the standard against which one must verify the identity of a new Muḥammad is the historically

imperfect record of the old Muḥammad, the Qur'ān and the *sunna*. Regardless of his claim to agree with the Prophet in every way, Ibn Tūmart's mahdism, when seen from outside, harbors the potential for innovation and deviation insofar as the *sunna* of the *mahdī* appears to transgress the boundaries of Muḥammad's *sunna*.

"Imāmate" differs from many of the texts that precede it inasmuch as it sets out an explicit exhortation to *jihād*, in terms of both missionarism and military action. Toward the end of the treatise, Ibn Tūmart writes:

> Every devout believer (*kull mutadayyin*) is to write out this message (*tadhkira*), to meditate (*yatadhakkar*) upon it every day, morning and night, to seize upon its meanings, to act in accordance with what it requires, to call [others] to it (*yad'uw ilayhā*), to spread it, to desire it, to favor it, to avail himself of it in this world and the next, and to attain happiness and blessings (*al-sa'āda wa-l-baraka*) by it.[747]

The command that every believer should make a copy of "Imāmate" for himself recalls God's commanding Moses to write down a song and teach it to the sons of Israel so that "it may be a witness on my behalf against the sons of Israel."[748] The Talmudic sage "Rava"[749] interpreted this verse (along with the "second scroll" in Deut. 17:18) to mean that every Jewish male is dutybound to make a copy of the Torah for himself, even if he inherits one from his father.[750] Almohadism promises the believer who would accept Ibn Tūmart as *imām* and *mahdī* happiness in both this world and in the hereafter, but this acceptance entails more than private devotion and study. Each Almohad must engage in missionary work in order to disseminate Ibn Tūmart's doctrines. The command "to desire it, to favor it" presupposes the exclusivity of Almohadism

[747] D, 236.
[748] Deut. 21:19 (Jerusalem Bible); the song is contained in Deut. 32:1-43.
[749] The nickname of Abba ben Yosef bar Ḥama of Ctesiphon (280-352).
[750] *Talmud Bavli*, Sanhedrin 21b.

over and against other religions and other forms of Islam. Adherence to the *mahdī* doctrine makes a sharp distinction between friend and enemy that cannot be dissolved:

> Taking *sunna* from the *imām* in matters great and small [is religion] …This is the meaning [of religion] in all past nations (*al-umam al-sālifa*) until the hour arrives. There has never been a prophet who has not had disciples and companions that take *sunna* from him and follow his command. All of this has been made evident in religion; it is clear (*wāḍiḥ*) [and] cannot be doubted. Nor will anyone deny (*yukadhdhib*) this except an unbeliever (*kāfir*), a denier (*jāḥid*), a hypocrite (*munāfiq*), a deviator (*zā'igh*), an innovator (*mubtadi'*), a renegade (*māriq*), a profligate (*fājir*), an adulterer (*fāsiq*), or a despicable and contemptible man (*aw radhl aw nadhl*) who does not believe in God or the last day. This is God's *sunna* with respect to those who had been forsaken. You will not find change or substitution in God's *sunna*…The command of the *mahdī* is an obligation (*amr al-mahdī ḥatm*), *whoever opposes him is to be killed*. There is no way for the denier to deny this, nor any ruse by which the deviator [may escape this].[751]

Ibn Tūmart splits humankind into two camps: the "ally" (*walī*) and the "enemy" (*'aduw*). Ibn Tūmart's "admonition and counsel" (*waṣīya wa-naṣīḥa*) will necessarily be accepted by all who are called to be friends and rejected by all who will show themselves to be enemies. Through the Almohad message, "God will make use of the beloved, the companions, the allies, and the supporters; he has made [this message] a column to support their religion and to suppress their enemies" (*nafa'a Allāh bi-hā al-aḥbāb wa-l-aṣḥāb wa-l-awliyā' wa-l-anṣār wa-ja'alahā lahum 'umda fī dīnihim wa-muqmi'a li-a'dā'ihim*).[752] Ibn Tūmart declares all those who refuse to accept him as a source of *sunna* unbelievers. His claim that human beings will necessarily (*yajib an*) separate into friend and enemy does not merely refer to legal obligation (*wujūb*), but instead points us back to the modal necessity that prevails in his "Creed."[753] Although the Almohads will, on a human level, experience this struggle as a voluntary war, Ibn Tūmart indicates that, on the divine level, the final struggle between the partisans of the *mahdī* and his enemies will make

[751] D, 236 (emphasis mine).
[752] D, 235.
[753] See especially D, 220 (§13).

God's inscrutable election of some and damnation of others manifest in the last age of the world. In appealing to predestination, Ibn Tūmart defines his militant *jihād* as inevitable, and the enmity of the "unbelievers"—the criterion for their dehumanization—as divinely ordained.

The *Mahdī* Doctrine in Revelation

Outside of "Imāmate," the majority of Ibn Tūmart's writings that touch on the topic of the *mahdī* and the duty of opposing the Almoravids consist in thematically arranged *ḥadīth* collections. The goal of these collections is twofold. The first half of the collection entitled "Chapter: That *Tawḥīd* is the Foundation of Religion" gathers *aḥādīth* that support much of what Ibn Tūmart says about knowledge, belief, and worship in his epistemological and theological writings. The latter half of this compilation details the signs by which Muslims will be able to recognize the *mahdī*, as well as the *mahdī*'s enemies. In other writings, such as "Knowledge of the Partisans of Strife" and "Chapter on the Explanation of the Sects," Ibn Tūmart cites prophetic traditions to associate the Almoravids with the enemies of Islām who would rise prior to the end times. These compilations are important to understanding the history of the early Almohad movement because they offer insight into how Ibn Tūmart and his missionaries polemicized the Almoravids and the Mālikī authorities by immanentizing Sunnī apocalyptic traditions. We find two elements in these compilations that are not fully represented in "Imāmate": belief in Ibn Tūmart's descent from Muḥammad through 'Alī and Fāṭima and the connection of "the age of estrangement" (*zamān al-ghurba*) to the Almoravids' (alleged) profession of corporealism (*tajsīm*).

The Characteristics of the Mahdī

In MS Rabat, we find the short text, "Knowledge of the *Mahdī*," a brief list of the six characteristics that the awaited *mahdī* must possess.

> The *mahdī*—may God be pleased with him— [will be known] by six things: (i) way of thinking (*ḥasab*), (ii) descent (*nasab*), (iii) the age (*al-zamān*), (iv) the place (*al-makān*), (v) the statement (*al-qawl*), and (vi) the action (*al-fi'l*).
>
> The way of thinking will be of the party of the monotheists (*ḥizb al-muwaḥḥidī*). In descent, he will be of the progeny of Fāṭima. He will come in the last age. The place will the place in which he was raised (*al-makān al-ladhī qama min-hu*). As for the statement, he said, "I am the *mahdī*," and he was sincere in his statement. As for his action, he will conquer (*yaftaḥ*) this world, the East and the West.[754]

This list was likely authored after Ibn Tūmart declared himself to be the *mahdī* (515/1121). No attempt is made to connect these six requirements to the Qur'ān and *sunna*, but they reveal some beliefs the Almohads held about Ibn Tūmart that he does not make explicit in "Imāmate." One example of this is the stipulation that the *mahdī* will appear in the same place that he was raised. For the Almohads, this not only meant the Maghrib or the Sūs region, but specifically the lands inhabited by the Hargha tribe. The fifth and the six criteria speak to the lived experience of the early Almohad movement. Al-Baydhaq and others[755] recount the celebration that accompanied Ibn Tūmart's declaration that he was the *mahdī* and the oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) each of his followers swore to him. The period between the *bay'a* and 'Abd al-Mu'min's entry into Marrakesh was marked by violence. The Almohads sustained a slow, grueling war against the Almoravids from Tīnmall (taken violently in 518/1124), and many of them lost their lives in the

[754] D, 254.
[755] Amira K. Bennison, *The Almoravid and the Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 67 (n. 19).

"purge" (*tamyīz*) in which Almohad elites removed allegedly hesitant members from their ranks (c. 523/1129).[756]

The second qualification, Fāṭimid descent, stands out because of its theological significance to Sunnī and Shī'ī beliefs surrounding *imāma* and mahdism. Abū al-'Azm observes that, on the same page of MS Rabat, there is a marginal note in another hand that includes Ibn Tūmart's genealogy.[757] The anonymous authors of *Kitāb al-ansāb* (*The Book of Lineages*) and *al-Ḥulal al-mawshiyya* and Ibn al-Qaṭṭān also offer genealogies, not all of which agree with one another.

Table 18: Comparison of Ibn Tūmart's Genealogies

MS Rabat	***Kitāb al-Ansāb* A**	***Kitāb al-Ansāb* B**	***Al-Ḥulal al-mawshiyya***	**Ibn al-Qaṭṭān A**	**Ibn al-Qaṭṭān B**	**Ibn al-Qaṭṭān C**
The names of the *mahdī*—may God be pleased with him—[are] Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Hūd b. Khālid b.	From a transmission that has been verified by [Ibn Tūmart's] relatives and others: Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Wagallīd b. Yāmṣal b. Ḥamza b. 'Īsā b. 'Ubaydallāh b. Idrīs b. Idrīs b. 'Abdallāh b. Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b.	As for what some believe his lineage to be—may God be pleased with him: Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Hūd b. Khālid b. Tamām b. 'Adnān b. Ṣafwān b. Jābir b. Yaḥyā b.	His lineage: Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Hūd b. Khālid b. Tamām b. 'Adnān b. Ṣafwān b. Sufyān b. Jābir b. Yaḥyā b. Ribāḥ b. Yasār b. al-'Abbās b. Muḥammad b. al-	He is Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Hūd b. Khālid b. Tamām b. 'Adnān b. Sufyān b. Ṣafwān b. Jābir b. 'Aṭā' b. Rabāḥ b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib—	There is another like this up to 'Adnān, but the rest of the lineage is: 'Adnān b. Ṣafwān b. Jābir b. Yaḥyā b. 'Aṭā' b. Rabāḥ b. Yasār b. al-'Abbās b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī	It is also said that he—may God be pleased with him—is Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Wajallīd b. Yāmṣal b. Ḥamza b. 'Īsā b. Idrīs b. Idrīs b. 'Abdallāh b. Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī

[756] Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 90.
[757] E, 400 (n. 2); MS Rabat, 124.

Tamām b. ‘Adnān b. Ṣafwān b. Jābir b. Yaḥyā b. ‘Aṭā’ b. Yasār b. ‘Abbās b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib—may God be pleased with him. E, 400 (n. 2); MS Rabat 124.	Fāṭima, daughter of the Messenger of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him. This is his correct lineage (*hādhā nasabuhu al-ṣaḥīḥ*). *Kitāb al-ansāb*, 12.	Ribāḥ b. ‘Aṭā b. Yasār b. al-‘Abbās b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Fāṭima, daughter of the Messenger of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him. *Kitāb al-ansāb*, 13.	Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib—may God be pleased with him. *Al-Ḥulal al-mawshiyya*, 103.	may God (exalted) be pleased with them. *Naẓm al-jumān*, 87.	Ṭālib—may God (exalted) be pleased with him. *Naẓm al-jumān*, 87-8.	Ṭālib—may God be pleased with them. *Naẓm al-jumān*, 88.

Table 18 (continued)

All of the proposed genealogies trace his descent back to the Prophet through his daughter Fāṭima and his cousin ‘Alī. Many of the *aḥādīth* Ibn Tūmart cites show Muḥammad affirming that the awaited *mahdī* will be a member of his household:

> • From Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī… “The Prophet said… ‘The *mahdī* is from me.’” (*Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 4285)
> • In a *ḥadīth* of ‘Abdallāh… “The Prophet said… ‘In the *mahdī* is a man from the people of my house (*min ahl baytī*) whose name will be my name.’” (~*Jamī‘ al-Tirmidhī*, 2231)
> • In a *ḥadīth* of ‘Alī in which he mentions his son al-Ḥasan saying, “A man will come from his loins who will be named after your Prophet and resemble him in his character

(*al-khulq*), but not his physical constitution (*khalq*), who will fill the earth with justice." (*Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 4290)
• In a *ḥadīth* of Umm Salama: the Prophet said… "The *mahdī* will be of my family (*'itratī*) from the descendants of Fāṭima." (*Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 4284)[758]

The genealogies that have reached us demonstrate that the Almohads held Fāṭimid lineage to be an important qualification for the *mahdī*. If we are correct in attributing the compilations in "The Section on Leadership" to Ibn Tūmart, the above *ḥadīth* indicate that he believed himself to have descended from the Prophet, or (at the very least) led others to believe so. Putting the truth of these claims aside, we see that the genealogies fall into one of two categories: a purely Arab lineage and an Idrīsid-Amazigh lineage. The similarity between the Arab lineage given in *Kitāb al-ansāb* and the Arab lineages in Ibn al-Qaṭṭān (d. 1231), *al-Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya*, and MS Rabat suggests that this genealogy circulated as early as the late sixth/twelfth century. The *Kitāb al-ansāb* is unique in its strong insistence that the Idrīsid-Amazigh lineage is correct (*al-ṣaḥīḥ*) because it is based on the oral testimony of Ibn Tūmart's family members. Sources also attribute two Arab lineages to Ibn Tūmart's successor, 'Abd al-Mu'min. One lineage is Qurayshī and connects 'Abd al-Mu'min, a Zanāta tribesman, to Ibn Tūmart, a Maṣmūda, via cognatic links. The Caliph likely wanted to strengthen his links to Ibn Tūmart to bolster his succession claim among Maṣmūda Imazighen who considered him to be a foreigner. The second lineage is Qaysī. Fierro argues that the second genealogy arose later during the Mu'minid dynasty's encounter with Arab tribes like the Banū Hilāl and the Banū Sulaym who had come to predominate in Ifrīqiya. It is indeed possible that the Almohads emphasized Ibn Tūmart's Idrīsid-Amazigh lineage in the Moroccan heartland, where the memory of the Idrīsid dynasty was still strong and inter-Maṣmūda relations were necessary to consolidate power during the conquest of Marrakesh

[758] D, 293.

and Fez. The Mu'minids might have deployed his Arab genealogy, which I believe arose at a later date, to establish Ibn Tūmart's prestige in central North Africa or Iberia, where old Arab families controlled local institutions such as the judiciary.[759]

As with her general approach to Almohad documents, Fierro interprets Ibn Tūmart's and 'Abd al-Mu'min's genealogies in *Kitāb al-ansāb* as mere political instruments. Fromherz argues that, although parts of these genealogies are likely imagined, it is unlikely that they are the intentional forgeries. Fromherz doubts that the genealogies as we know them are historically accurate, but he contends that there are a number of possible ways Ibn Tūmart may have obtained this prestigious lineage. On the one hand, it is possible that Ibn Tūmart acquired his names "later in his life out of fame and associations, and the need to have his legitimacy bestowed by a lineage that stretched back to the prophet."[760] On the other hand, there remains the possibility that Ibn Tūmart indeed had Arab ancestors, whether tribesman associated with the Idrīsid dynasty or Arabs who settled in the Sūs after the Hilālian invasion.[761] Perhaps these Arab ancestors possessed sharīfian blood, perhaps not.[762] We must remember that Ibn Tūmart and his family existed in a tribal system that privileged certain genealogies. Even if Ibn Tūmart's genealogies tend toward the legendary, it is quite plausible that he *inherited* these ideas about his background from his extended family.

From a theological perspective, we must be careful to distinguish Ibn Tūmart's role as *imām* from his role as *mahdī* when assessing his genealogy. As he indicates in "Imāmate,"

[759] Maribel Fierro, "Las genealogías de 'Abd al-Mu'min, primer califa almohade," *al-Qanṭara* 24, no.1 (2003), 78-9, 85, 95.
[760] Allen Fromherz, *The Almohads* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 23.
[761] Allen Fromherz, *The Almohads* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 25-6.
[762] Fierro even admits that an Idrīsid connection is historically possible; Maribel Fierro, "Las genealogías de 'Abd al-Mu'min, primer califa almohade," *al-Qanṭara* 24, no.1 (2003), 85.

lineage is not a requirement of *imāma*. However, the *aḥādīth* Ibn Tūmart cites indicate that the *mahdī* must be (i) from the house of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*), (ii) descended from the Prophet through Fāṭima, and (iii) must bear the name "Muḥammad." By distinguishing the prerequisites of *imāma* from the characteristics of the *mahdī*, we can avoid misattributing Shī'ī influence to this aspect of his doctrine of *imāma*. In fact, despite his own claim to a Fāṭimī lineage, Ibn Tūmart's doctrine of *imāma* relies far less on lineage than contemporary Sunnī models in that he does not even require that a potential *imām* be of Qurayshī descent![763] The emphasis that Twelver and Ismā'īlī imamologies put on Fāṭimī descent not only does not figure into Ibn Tūmart's understanding of *imāma*, he also limits the historical importance of the *ahl al-bayt* to their natural potential for giving birth to the *mahdī*. These aspects of *BIT* evince the care Ibn Tūmart took in dissociating himself and Almohadism from comparisons to the Shī'a.

The Almoravids: Corporealists (Mujassimūn) and Anti-Christs (al-Dajjālūn)

Ibn Tūmart directly associates his local enemies, the Almoravids, with the tyrannical anti-Christs that will appear at the end of time in one text: "An Explanation of the Sects of the Falsifiers, the Veilers, and the Corporealists, and their Identifying Signs." Aside from H. T. Norris' partial annotated translation, this chapter of *BIT* has received only passing attention in the scholarship. "Sects" is part local history and part *ḥadīth* compilation. Ibn Tūmart references local customs associated with the Almoravid and other Ṣanhāja Imazighen (some of which are less than savory) in an attempt to show how the Almoravids fulfill several predictions Muḥammad made about the end times. He describes the Almoravids as having originated in a

[763] Patricia Crone, *God's Rule and Government in Islam: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 224-26.

place called Kākudam.[764] Norris notes that Kākudam was the name Arab geographers gave to the vast swath of land that corresponds to modern day Mauritania, Mali, and even Niger. Kākudam was regarded as the homeland of *mulaththimūn* Imazighen, such as the Ṣanhāja and the Tuareg, whose men wore veils (*lithām*).[765] Ibn Tūmart is alluding to the emergence of the Almoravid tribesmen from Ṣanhāja groups that migrated between the Maghrib and the Gambia. Even after their settlement around Marrakesh, the Almoravid Empire maintained a political and mercantile presence in Sub-Saharan West Africa.[766] The mere mention of Kākudam likely connoted "foreigner" or "invader" to the Maṣmūda and other Amazigh tribes dwelling in the Atlas.

Ibn Tūmart divides these signs" (*'alāmāt*) into three categories: (i) five signs visible before their arrival in the Maghrib, (ii) seven signs visible after their conquest of the Maghrib, and (iii) eight signs that appeared later.[767]

Table 19: Signs of the Mujassimūn *and* Dajjālūn

(i) Before conquest	(ii) After conquest	(iii) Later signs
1. Barefoot 2. Scantily clad 3. Living off slaves and dependents (*al-'āla*) 4. Herded wild sheep and cows 5. Ignorant of God's command (*amr Allāh*)	1. Their coming is a sign of the end times 2. They are kings (*mulūk*) 3. They dwell in tall buildings 4. Give birth by slave women and concubines 5. They are deaf (*ṣumm*) 6. They are dumb (*bukm*) 7. They are untrustworthy/incapable of enforcing Islamic law	1. They hold whips "like the tails of cows." 2. They flog people 3. Their women wear their hair in plaits that resemble the humps of Bactrian camels 4. Their womenfolk go around "naked" 5. They err from the truth and divine guidance

[764] D, 242; H. T. Norris, and Ibn Tūmart, "'The Evil Deeds of the *mujassimūn* from Kākudam,' Selections from Ibn Tūmart's *A'azz mā yuṭlab*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2011), 156.
[765] H. T. Norris, and Ibn Tūmart, "'The Evil Deeds of the *mujassimūn* from Kākudam,' Selections from Ibn Tūmart's *A'azz mā yuṭlab*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2011), 156 (n. 4).
[766] On the Almoravids in West Africa, see Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* (London: Longman, 1984), 6-8, 19-43.
[767] Quoted translations from H. T. Norris, and Ibn Tūmart, "'The Evil Deeds of the *mujassimūn* from Kākudam,' Selections from Ibn Tūmart's *A'azz mā yuṭlab*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2011), 156-7.

		6. They err and cause other to err 7. They "go forth in the morning resentful" 8. They "depart, at a later hour, with a curse and with condemnation."

Table 19 (continued)

Ibn Tūmart proceeds to show how some of these characteristics are omens of the end times and that others reflect the immoral behavior and beliefs that the Prophet enjoined Muslims to oppose. In one *ḥadīth*, the angel Gabriel appears to Muḥammad and asks him to tell him of the signs of the end times (*al-sā'a*). Muḥammad responds, "… when the slave girl begets her master…and when the barefoot and naked are the leaders of the people… when those who are shepherds of [black] sheep vye [sic] with one another in the building of [lofty] mansions."[768] Ibn Tūmart connects these vague prophecies to Ṣanhāja attire and professions with which his local audience would have been familiar. Other Almoravid practices went against the *sunna* in a more obvious way. Most Almohad sources tell how Ibn Tūmart publicly condemned the Ṣanhāja practice of men veiling their faces and women exposing their hair and faces. The *amīr* took an interest in Ibn Tūmart after he accosted his sister for riding in the streets uncovered.[769] In "Sects," he cites two traditions that show the Prophet's opposition to gender inversion:

> • "Oppose the Jews, oppose the polytheists, the Zoroastrians, and also the corporealists (*al-mujassimūn*) who are among the infidels. They wear women's attire in that they cover their faces with a veil (*al-lithām wa'l-niqāb*), and their womenfolk resemble their menfolk in uncovering themselves, their faces unveiled, not wearing any head covering whatsoever (*al-riqāb*)."

[768] H. T. Norris, and Ibn Tūmart, "'The Evil Deeds of the *mujassimūn* from Kākudam,' Selections from Ibn Tūmart's *A'azz mā yuṭlab*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2011), 157; D, 242.
[769] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 166.

> • Resemblance to the male gender is prohibited, according to what Ibn ʻAbbās narrated… "The Messenger of God, may the blessings and peace of God be upon him, cursed the *mutashābihūn*: women who dress like men and men who dress like women. The curse is applicable to all. All of that is forbidden and unlawful."[770]

These *aḥādīth* may in part explain why the Almohads consistently accused the Almoravids of corporealism (*tajsīm*). Beyond the simplistic interpretation (i.e., the inversion of Arab gender norms is evidence of corporealism), Ibn Tūmart may have seen these customs, especially the male Ṣanhāja's use of the *lithām* veil to cover his mouth, as remnants of pre-Islamic religion.[771] The first *ḥadīth* suggests that a similar practice may have existed in pre-Islamic Arabia in connection to a polytheist community.

Other characteristics reflect Ibn Tūmart's epistemology. He interprets the Prophet's prediction—"When you behold that the barefoot, the naked, and the deaf and dumb (*al-ṣumm wa'l-bukm*) are the kings of the earth, this is one of its portents."[772]—in terms of the Almoravids' legitimacy as custodians of Islam. They are deaf and dumb "in the sense that they are deaf to the Truth and do not pay heed to it, they are dumb to the Truth and neither ascribe to it or command it."[773] The terms *ṣumm* and *bukm* likewise appear in the short text, "The Rules upon which Knowledge of Religion is Founded" in connection to the "kings" (*mulūk*) who will conquer alongside the Anti-Christ at the end of time: "Deaf and dumb kings will conquer this world; the Anti-Christs (*al-dajjālūn*) will conquer this world."[774] The designation of the Almoravids as *mulūk* alludes to an opposition prevalent in *ḥadīth* literature between the Caliphate (*khilāfa*) and

[770] H. T. Norris, and Ibn Tūmart, "'The Evil Deeds of the *mujassimūn* from Kākudam,' Selections from Ibn Tūmart's *A'azz mā yuṭlab*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2011), 161; D, 247.
[771] *EI2*, "Lithām" (W. Björkman).
[772] H. T. Norris, and Ibn Tūmart, "'The Evil Deeds of the *mujassimūn* from Kākudam,' Selections from Ibn Tūmart's *A'azz mā yuṭlab*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2011), 158; D, 244.
[773] H. T. Norris, and Ibn Tūmart, "'The Evil Deeds of the *mujassimūn* from Kākudam,' Selections from Ibn Tūmart's *A'azz mā yuṭlab*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2011), 156; D, 242.
[774] D, 238.

kingship (*mulk*). Although some medieval scholars, such as al-Ṭurṭūshī, regarded kingship (especially Muslim kingship) as an acceptable form of political authority (*sulṭa*), Ibn Tūmart understands kingship as an impediment to the realization of the Caliphate and the proper administration of the *sharī'a* under a central, divinely-guided authority. He frequently associates the Almoravids with falsehood (*bāṭil*) and error (*ḍalāl*), the theoretical and practical contraries of truth (*ḥaqq*).[775] The Almoravids' ignorance of God's command renders them unfit to rule. In the Islamic context, one of the ruler's primary responsibilities is to appoint judges and ensure that the *sharī'a* is observed and properly adjudicated. He cites a *ḥadīth* that attributes the *mujassimūn*'s opposition to the truth to their support of legal judgments (*aḥkām*) that agree with their whims (*mā wāfaqa ahwā'ahum*).[776]

In *BIT*, the Almoravids emerge as the inversion of Islam under the true *imām*, he who receives the command (*al-amr*) from God and is the guarantor (*āmin*/*mu'min*) of continuity of Islam in the post-Prophetic era.

> A bedouin Arab asked the Messenger of God… about the Hour. The Messenger of God…said, "When the trust has been lost (*ḍī'at al-amāna*) then expect the Hour's arrival." [The Bedouin] asked, "How will it be lost?" He replied, "When the command (*al-amr*) has been ascribed to those to whom it does not rightfully belong (*ilā ghayr ahlihi*), then expect the Hour."[777]

The Almohad has a two-fold duty to oppose the Almoravids. He must oppose them because they tolerate and even encourage violations of the Law, as well as theological aberrations like corporealism. In these respects, they fall short of the basic requirements of Muslim kingship. In a more apocalyptic vein, the Almoravids have completely lost the trust (*amāna*) necessary to

[775] For example, see D, 245-46.
[776] D, 245; H. T. Norris, and Ibn Tūmart, "'The Evil Deeds of the *mujassimūn* from Kākudam,' Selections from Ibn Tūmart's *A'azz mā yuṭlab*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2011), 160.
[777] H. T. Norris, and Ibn Tūmart, "'The Evil Deeds of the *mujassimūn* from Kākudam,' Selections from Ibn Tūmart's *A'azz mā yuṭlab*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2011), 158.

ensure continuity with the original Muslim community. The fact that the command (*al-amr*), that is, the worldly authority that God confers, has come to those who are unworthy is a sign, not only that the hour is at hand, but that one has a duty to oppose those who have usurped the divine command. Ibn Tūmart seals the enmity between the Almohads and the Almoravids by declaring, on the authority of Q 9:123, that it is "an obligation (*wujūb*) to wage *jihād* against them because of [their] unbelief (*kufr*), corporealism (*tajsīm*), and denial of the truth (*inkār al-ḥaqq*), as well as [their] declaring the blood, property, and possessions of Muslims licit (*istiḥlāl damā' al-muslimīn wa-amwālihim wa-a'rāḍihim*)… 'Oh you who believe, fight the disbelievers who are in your midst and let them find you stand firm.'"[778]

The Caliphate (al-khilāfa)

Ibn Tūmart also cites a number of *aḥādīth* which indicate that he considers the caliphate (*khilāfa*) an intrinsic component of *mahdī*-hood. In "Imāmate" he speaks of David as a caliph (*khalīfa*) because he was able to institute a theocratic state in Israel and bring the Banū Isrā'īl under the authority granted to him by God. Ibn Tūmart takes care to show that the realization of the caliphate is not necessary in every case. He uses Jesus as an example of an *imām* that is worthy of the caliphate, but who manifests his imāmate by attracting voluntary disciples (*ḥawāriyyūn*) to him because of the great historical opposition to the realization of his political authority during his lifetime.

The traditions Ibn Tūmart cites in "Chapter: That *Tawḥīd* is the Foundation of Religion" make it clear that the establishment of the caliphate is necessary for the *mahdī*.

[778] D, 247

> • From Jābir b. ʻAbdallāh… "At the end of my community (*ummatī*), there will be a caliph (*khalīfatun*) who will freely distribute wealth without counting it at all."[779]
>
> • From Abū Saʻīd al-Khudrī and Jābri b. ʻAbdallāh… "In the last age, there will be a caliph who will divide the wealth without counting it."[780]
>
> • From Ḥudhayfa… "If you do not find a caliph in those days, then flee until you die, even if you die holding the trunk of a tree."[781]

Ibn Tūmart's clear association of the caliphate with the role of the *mahdī* in this collection of *ḥadīth* concerning the end times and the characteristics of the *mahdī* runs counter to the thesis put forward by Montgomery Watt, Fletcher, and Fierro, who separate Ibn Tūmart's mahdism from the caliphal aspirations of the Mu'minid dynasty. Montgomery Watt argues that Ibn Tūmart's mahdism "does not seem to have been intended as the basis for legal reforms, but to have been mainly to meet the need of Berbers for a divinely inspired and supported leader."[782] Fierro herself recognizes that Montgomery Watt's and Fletcher's position goes too far because it neglects Ibn Tūmart's consistent rejection of the Sunnī principle of "every qualified legal interpreter is correct" (*kull mujtahid muṣīb*) in *BIT*. Fierro nevertheless sees Ibn Tūmart's fallibilist position on *ijtihād* as less radical than the Mu'minid dynasty's "obsession with the existence of *ikhtilāf* and the need to put an end to it."[783] As I have argued (see Chapter 4), the Mu'minid obsession with *ikhtilāf* is not a later development of Ibn Tūmart's rejection of *kull mujtahid muṣīb*, but rather reflects Ibn Tūmart's own obsession with juridical difference throughout *BIT*. Contra Fierro, Ibn Tūmart's mahdism, which is predicated on the elimination of

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[779]D, 293; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2913a.
[780] D, 293; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2913/2914a.
[781] D, 294; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 4247.
[782] William Montgomery Watt, "Philosophy and Theology under the Almohads," in *Actas del primer congreso de estudios árabes e islámicos (Córdoba, 1962)* (Madrid: 1964), 103. See also Madeleine Fletcher, "Ibn Tūmart's Teachers," 325-26; and Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphs," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (September 1999), 230-01.
[783] Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphs," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (September 1999), 248.

ikhtilāf in matters of both law and theology, necessitates caliphal authority. It is possible that the Mu'minids pursued some policies (such as *rapprochement* with Mālikism) that Ibn Tūmart did not spell out in his writings or oral teachings, but the realization of the caliphate of the *mahdī* appears to have been integral to Almohad mahdism prior to Mu'minid ascendancy.[784]

Conclusion

Ibn Tūmart's doctrines of *imāma* and mahdism share some common elements with a variety of historical Islamic sects and theological movements. However, my goal in the preceding analysis of his writings has been to show how his elaborations of both concepts emerged within the context of Sunnī concerns prevalent in the Maghrib and al-Andalus. His intellectual debt to his Ash'arī-Shāfi'ī teachers at the Baghdad Niẓāmiyya also informed this development, though perhaps in ways they could not have anticipated. More research is needed to determine the continued presence of non-Sunnī (e.g. Ibāḍī, Ismā'īlī, Mūsawī, Zaydī, etc.) communities and ideas in the Far Maghrib during the fifth-sixth/eleventh-twelfth centuries. To be sure, Shī'ī and Khārijī-Ibāḍī Muslims once maintained a significant presence in the High Atlas and Moroccan Sahara, but the policy of Sunnification that the Almoravids and later dynasties pursued all but erased their scholarly and textual traditions from the documentary record.[785] In light of this, further work is needed to develop a method that satisfactorily accounts for the possible oral transmission of these doctrines and religious practices after Sunnification.

[784] On the Almohad stance toward Mālikism after Ibn Tūmart's death, see Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphs," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (September 1999), 233-39.
[785] See Wilferd Madelung, "Some Notes on Non-Ismā'īlī Shī'ism in the Maghrib," *Studia Islamica* 44 (1976), 87-97.

It is possible that Ibn Tūmart encountered Shīʿī and Ibāḍī ideas during his lifetime, whether directly or through Sunnī polemics and heresiographies. Some of these ideas may have even helped him to articulate his own doctrines of *imāma* and mahdism. Regardless, close attention to the overall argument of *BIT* indicates that Ibn Tūmart developed his epistemology and doctrine of *imāma* as an explicit response to Sunnī problems—in particular, the difference in legal judgments (*ikhtilāf*) and the plurality of accepted legal and theological schools (*madhāhib*). What does this Sunnī-centric element of *BIT* mean for the future of the study of Ibn Tūmart and Almohadism? In the first place, we must refrain from identifying Ibn Tūmart's teachings (in whole or in part) with extant schools or sects in a way that occludes the originality of Almohadism. One may look for parallels between his doctrine of *imāma* and Shīʿī and Ibāḍī doctrines, but these similarities are always qualified by major differences, which prevent us from concluding Almohadism is, in reality, an offshoot of the Shīʿa or the Ibāḍiyya. Secondly, the Sunnī orientation of Ibn Tūmart's polemics reveals that Ibn Tūmart, though indebted to *uṣūlī* jurisprudence and hermeneutics, rejected the majoritarian and conciliatory spirit that defines the project of Sunnism. Even in the case of Ashʿarism, the school with which Ibn Tūmart shares the most, his radicalism on questions such as *ikhtilāf*, *imāma*, and *takfīr al-ʿawāmm* demonstrate that forcing Ibn Tūmart into a pre-existing mold creates obstacles to understanding *BIT* and other Almohad texts on their own terms.

With regard to *imāma* and mahdism, we can avoid such scholastic pigeonholing by appreciating how Ibn Tūmart distinguishes between the role and qualifications of the *imām*, on the one hand, and those proper to the *mahdī*, on the other. In doing so, we can eliminate many previous hypotheses concerning Ibn Tūmart's affiliation with the Shīʿa and the Ibāḍiyya, especially those which conflate the successional requirements of the *mahdī* with those of the

*imām*s in general. Though latent throughout *BIT*, further work is needed to explicate the traces of ascetical and ṣūfī ideas, such as the "column" (*ʿumda*), that serve important functions in "Imāmate."

As a conclusion, I want to offer a summary of the major aspects of *imāma* and mahdism present in *BIT*.

I. *Imāma*

a. *al-amr*: The divine command passes from *imām* to *imām* according to God's will. From Adam until the end of time, God provides humankind an *imām* to bear witness to the truth of religion, to lead the people around him, and to provide continuity between *imāms*. *Imāma* is a covenant (*ʿahd*) between God and the *imām*. The community (*umma*) does not elect the *imām*, but a previous *imām* can designate his successor, though this is not necessary in all cases. If the previous *imām* does not designate a successor, the next *imām* may manifest his authority by "persevering in the truth" (*al-qiyām bi-l-ḥaqq*).

b. Infallibility (*ʿiṣma*): The *imām* is infallible in the sense that he is safeguarded against nine defects: (i) falsehood, (ii) error, (iii) corruption, (iv) temptations/strife (*fitan*), (v) tyranny, (vi) innovation (*bidaʿ*), (vii) lying, (viii) acting out of ignorance (*al-ʿamal bi-l-jahl*), (ix) injustice. If one who claims the imāmate suffers from any of these defects, he lacks infallibility and is not the *imām*. Several of these defects relate to the definition of knowledge and principles of jurisprudence Ibn Tūmart elaborates earlier in *BIT*. Falsehood (*bāṭil*) is epistemic failure and error (*ḍalāl*) is moral failure; both falsehood

and error contribute to ignorance (*jahl*) the contrary of knowledge (*ʿilm*). Ibn Tūmart's rejection of legal difference (*ikhtilāf*) leads him to posit that there is one ontologically correct judgment to every legal question. To accept any other judgment leads to legal innovation and action out of ignorance.

c. *Sunna*, Obedience (*ṭāʿa*), and the Caliphate (*khilāfa*): Human beings have a duty to render obedience to the *imām* in religious and moral affairs. Some *imām*s will draw many under their authority, whereas other *imām*s will have a smaller group of disciples. All *imām*s are a source of *sunna* (i.e. the revelation of God's will through their commands and personal conduct), though some *imām*s produce *sunna* in the fuller sense (e.g. David, Jesus, Muḥammad, and the *mahdī*), whereas others support the *sunna* of their predecessors (e.g. Abū Bakr and ʿUmar). Based on evidence from *ḥadīth*, Ibn Tūmart considers the caliphate (*khilāfa*) an intrinsic component of *imāma*. Because of historical limitations, not all *imām*s are required to establish a caliphate in the sense of a political state on the earth. However, each *imām* carries within himself the potential to establish such a caliphate.

d. Column (*ʿumda*): The *imām* is a column in two senses. He supports the structure of religion that God has revealed to humankind through the prophets. He is also a column in a cosmological and spiritual sense. It is likely that Ibn Tūmart derived this teaching from ṣūfī traditions concerning the "axis" (*quṭb*) and the pre-existent, Muḥammadan light which exists in all of the prophets and *imām*s (al-Tustarī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Qasī). He may also have encountered similar Shīʿī (especially Ismāʿīlī-Fāṭimid) doctrines in a mediated

form. Although this mystical interpretation of the column is only latent in *BIT*, the fact that ṣūfīs use the column and the axis to express spiritual continuity between the *imām*s through sacred history meshes well with Ibn Tūmart's concept of "the command" (*al-amr*) and his belief that there is one ontologically correct solution to every question.

e. Descent (*nasab*): Unlike the Shī'a and the Sunnīs, Ibn Tūmart does not list descent from the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*), whether broadly Qurayshī or more specifically Fāṭimī, as a necessary condition of *imāma*. Although this position resembles that of Khārijism-Ibāḍism, Ibn Tūmart affirms the legitimacy of all four Rāshidūn Caliphs (as well as the brief interregnum of al-Ḥasan).

II. The *Mahdī*

a. *Imāma*: The *mahdī* is the *imām* of the endtimes (*fī ākhir al-zamān*). He must fulfill the same requirements of *imāma*, as well as several additional requirements.

b. Fāṭimī Descent: In accordance with the *sunna*, the *mahdī* will descend from the Prophet through al-Ḥasan, the son of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet. Almohad sources ascribe two lineages two Ibn Tūmart, both of which lead back to 'Alī and Fāṭima through al-Ḥasan. The earlier lineage, which the Almohad *Kitāb al-ansab* asserts is correct, traces Ibn Tūmart's lineage to the Moroccan Idrīsid dynasty (based in Fez) through Arab intermarriage with Maṣmūda tribesman.

c. Knowledge (*'ilm*) and Teaching (*ta'līm*): The *mahdī* possesses perfect knowledge. This requirement differs from Sunnī elaborations of the imāmate (like that of al-Ghazālī), which understands the *imām*'s deference to the consensus of living scholars (*'ulamā'*) as sufficient. The *mahdī* must instruct his followers in divine unity (*tawḥīd*) in order to render their acts of worship (*'ibāda*) and belief (*īmān*) valid. Salvation in this world and the next is incumbent upon correct worship and belief.[786] Instruction (*ta'līm*) does not function according to the Shī'ī model insofar as the content of Almohad doctrine is not predicated upon esoteric knowledge the *mahdī* acquires through his special relationship to God, but rather upon knowledge derived from the intellect and the exposition of positive revelation (i.e. the Qur'ān, the *sunna*, and the consensus of the Companions).

d. *Ijtihād* and *Sunna*: The *mahdī* will identify the ontologically correct answer to a given question through the application of independent legal reasoning (*ijtihād*) to positive revelation. Like some *imām*s before him, the *mahdī* will produce *sunna*. This *sunna* will not alter or add to the religion (*dīn*) of the Prophet, but rather will clarify the religion the Prophet revealed to humankind by removing corruptions in the body of the *sunna*. All Muslims are required to defer to the *imām* (*rujū' ilayhi*) in all matters, whether legal or theological, in order to ensure that incorrect doctrines and practices do not corrupt the unity and continuity of the tradition the *mahdī* will restore.

[786] See "Creed" §1, D, 213-14.

e. From “the Far West”: Based on *ḥadīth* evidence and popular tradition, the *mahdī* will arise in the Far West (*al-Maghrib al-aqṣā*), which today corresponds to Morocco.

f. *Jihād*: All Muslims are required to emigrate to the *mahdī* (*hijra*) in order to assist him and “the party of the monotheists” (*ḥizb al-muwaḥḥidī*) in a militant struggle against the Anti-Christs (*al-dajjālūn*). In the Almohad context, this struggle pertains to the Almohads’ *jihād* against the Almoravids in the lands surrounding their capital at Marrakesh, as well as to the expansion of the Almohad Caliphate into other parts of North Africa and Iberia following the defeat of the Almoravids in 541/1147.

Conclusion

In this dissertation I have endeavored to exposit Ibn Tūmart's thought and to show the conceptual consistency of the writings collected in *The Book of Ibn Tūmart*. This posthumous compilation carries its readers from fundamental epistemological questions—particularly those relevant to the believer confronted with the revelation of the Qur'ān and the *sunna*—to theology, the nature of the Muslim community and its leadership, and the individual's responsibilities with regard to missionarism (*da'wa*) and militant *jihād* under the banner of Ibn Tūmart and the Almohads. Although Almohadism was short lived, this unique expression of Islam had a profound impact on Morocco, its place of origin, as well as on its wider Mediterranean and African context. No historian doubts the political significance of the Almohad Caliphate, which at its height dominated North Africa and wielded diplomatic and cultural influence well outside of its core territories. In expositing *BIT*, the texts that best reflect the mind and motives of Almohadism's founder, I seek to critique the notion still prevalent in Almohad historiography that the doctrinal underpinnings of Almohadism were secondary to (or devised to support) the Mu'minid dynasty's imperial aspirations. Ibn Tūmart's claim to be the infallible *imām*, possessed of exclusively correct knowledge of God and His Law, and the awaited *mahdī*, the latter-day successor to Muḥammad, was the impetus for, rather than the result of, the Almohads' political goals.

I want to conclude this study of Ibn Tūmart's writings by considering the uniqueness of Almohad Islam, especially in its rejection of Sunnī models of law and authority, as well as the failure of Almohadism to maintain its religious character apart from the Almohad state. *BIT* testifies to the fact that Ibn Tūmart intended nothing short of a total reorientation of Islam

according to rationalist epistemological principles. From the principle of the unity of truth, he pursued a strict version of fallibilism in *ijtihād*. Infallibilism—the notion that every qualified *mujtahid* judges correctly—encourages cohesion and peace among the Sunnī legal schools, regardless of the different interpretations (*ikhtilāfāt*) each proposes. By establishing knowledge (*'ilm*) as a distinct form of cognition which precedes belief (*īmān*) and sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*) in the epistemological order, he made *takfīr al-'awāmm* and other tendencies toward religious conflict central to Almohadism.

The militancy of the early Almohad movement must be read in light of the Almohads' belief that knowledge was a prerequisite for valid worship (*'ibāda*) and, ultimately, salvation (*najāh*). Accordingly, all non-Almohads would be viewed either as ignorant people in need of the enlightenment that Ibn Tūmart promised or as the enemies of this enlightenment project. As *imām* and *mahdī*, Ibn Tūmart was uniquely equipped to judge and teach with infallibility (*'iṣma*), pointing to the restoration of the unity of legal and doctrinal knowledge which he believed to exist during the Prophet's lifetime. Ibn Tūmart's uncompromising positions on law, doctrine, and leadership were irreconcilable with Sunnism's majoritarian outlook.

Almohadism as a Religion: Ritual and Reform

The Almohads adopted many policies that set them apart from their Sunnī predecessors both politically and ritually. Extant sources offer brief glimpses into the practices that emerged during 'Abd al-Mu'min's reign (527-58/1133-1163). The Almohads distinguished themselves by minting square coins, changing the formula of the call to prayer and the Friday *khuṭba*, and

emphasizing the Tamazight language in religious education and worship.[787] Pascal Burési has published several studies on conventions and rituals associated with the Almohad court, such as the *ṭalaba* system, the veneration of the Qur'ān of 'Uthmān, and the pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) to Ibn Tūmart's tomb at Tīnmall. Although Burési consistently mischaracterizes Ibn Tūmart's doctrine as the result of eclectic borrowing, rather than as the mindful appropriation of earlier Islamic doctrines, his detailed studies of sources concerning Almohad practices reveal the extent to which 'Abd al-Mu'min sought to build a repertoire of religious and political rituals to rival those instituted by the Prophet and the *Rāshidūn* caliphs.[788]

The *ziyāra* is the most iconic Almohad ritual, both in scale of participation and its purpose of re-orienting the Islamic world toward the West. 'Abd al-Mu'min's open letter to the Almohads dated 8 *shawwāl* 552/13 November 1157 provides exact details of the first *ziyāra* conducted during the month of Ramaḍān in the same year. Beginning in Marrakesh, the *ziyāra* went through Taroudant, Īgīllīz (Ibn Tūmart's birthplace), and terminated at Ibn Tūmart's grave in Tīnmall.[789] On the way to Tīnmall, 'Abd al-Mu'min's retinue picked up pilgrims from different tribes, both notables and commoners. Many of the rituals associated with the *ziyāra*, such as circumambulation of key sites and the recitation of the Qur'ān and praise poetry (*madḥ*), mirror those associated with the *ḥajj* pilgrimage and Mawlid. Burési shows that certain elements

[787] Mercedes García Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform: Mahdīs of the Muslim West* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 157-58.
[788] See Pascal Burési, "Une relique almohade: l'utilization du coran (attribué à 'Uṯmān b. 'Affān [644-656]) de la Grande mosquée de Cordoue," *Lieux de cultes: aires votives, temples, églises, mosques SEMPAM* (2005), 273-280. "Les cultes rendus à la tombe du Mahdî Ibn Tûmart à Tinmâl (XIIe-XIIIe S.)," *Compte-rendu des Séances de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, jan.-mar. 2008* (2010), 391-438; "L'organization du pouvoir politique almohade" in *Las Navas de Tolosa: miradas cruzadas*, ed. Patrice Créssier and Vicente Salvatierra (Jaén: Universidad de Jaén, 2014), 105-18; and Pascal Burési and Hicham El Aallaoui, *Governing the Empire: Provincial Administration in the Almohad Caliphate 1224-69* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).
[789] Pascal Burési, "Les cultes rendus à la tombe du Mahdî Ibn Tûmart à Tinmâl (XIIe-XIIIe S.)," *Compte-rendu des Séances de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, jan.-mar. 2008* (2010), 391-92.

of the pilgrimage carried an eschatological message. The custodians of Tīnmall maintained magnificent gardens around Ibn Tūmart's tomb that prefigured the gardens of Paradise. The journey from Īgīllīz to Tīnmall effaced "the separation between the world (*dunya*) and the beyond (*dīn*, *āḫira*)."[790] Many wonders (*'ajā'ib*) were associated with the *ziyāra*. 'Abd al-Mu'min mentions that the laborers tasked with restoring Ibn Tūmart's cave near Īgīllīz received stigmata of light on their hands from prolonged contact with that space.[791]

The *ziyāra* also benefitted the political and missionary aims of the Almohad state. During this time, 'Abd al-Mu'min appointed officials, granted pardons, and had tribal leaders renew the *bay'a* (oath of allegiance) in the presence of Ibn Tūmart's tomb. In tandem with the religious and political ceremonies, the caliph instructed those present in Almohad doctrine.[792] Burési notes that the first *ziyāra* came after a series of revolts against the Almohads across Morocco, including an attempted *coup* by Ibn Tūmart's brothers in Marrakesh while the caliph was on campaign in Bougie. 'Abd al-Mu'min resolved these revolts through a bloody purge (*i'tirāf*), itself reminiscent of Ibn Tūmart's *tamyīz*, which took thousands of lives in Morocco alone.[793] Through its reaffirmation of 'Abd al-Mu'min's claim to the imāmate through his unique relationship to Ibn Tūmart, which granted him both worldly and other-worldly authority, the *ziyāra* represented a return to stability after years of war, expansion, and infighting. The *ziyāra* remained central to the Almohad state and popular Almohad piety. A caliphal necropolis was established alongside

[790] Pascal Burési, "Les cultes rendus à la tombe du Mahdî Ibn Tûmart à Tinmâl (XIIe-XIIIe S.)," *Compte-rendu des Séances de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, jan.-mar. 2008* (2010), 413-14 [my translation].
[791] Pascal Burési, "Les cultes rendus à la tombe du Mahdî Ibn Tûmart à Tinmâl (XIIe-XIIIe S.)," *Compte-rendu des Séances de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, jan.-mar. 2008* (2010), 414.
[792] Pascal Burési, "Les cultes rendus à la tombe du Mahdî Ibn Tûmart à Tinmâl (XIIe-XIIIe S.)," *Compte-rendu des Séances de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, jan.-mar. 2008* (2010), 411.
[793] Pascal Burési, "Les cultes rendus à la tombe du Mahdî Ibn Tûmart à Tinmâl (XIIe-XIIIe S.)," *Compte-rendu des Séances de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, jan.-mar. 2008* (2010), 404-05. See also Joel Kraemer, *Maimonides: The Life and World of One of Civilization's Greatest Minds* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 97-98.

Ibn Tūmart's tomb. Later caliphs participated in the *ziyāra* to demonstrate the continuity of the Mu'minid dynasty. Although belief in Ibn Tūmart's *mahdī*-hood declined, true believers and those who venerated Ibn Tūmart as a saint (*walī*) continued to visit Tīnmall well after the Almohad Caliphate's demise in 668/1269.[794]

Other ritual innovations included the veneration of the *Muṣḥaf* of 'Uthmān, the third *Rāshidūn* caliph, ritually prescribed prayer in Tamazight (*tāṣallīt al-islām*), and the reading of Ibn Tūmart's writings during public worship. Medieval historians believed that 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, the founder of Umayyad Caliphate in Córdoba, carried the *muṣḥaf* ("a copy of the Qur'ān") with him on his long journey from Damascus to Spain after the 'Abbāsids assumed control of the Islamic East. Whether or not the *muṣḥaf* belonged to 'Uthmān, it occupied a prominent place in the Mosque of Córdoba and was used in ritual prayers attended by the Umayyad court. In 553/1158, the *muṣḥaf* was transferred to the Quṭubiyya Mosque in Marrakesh. Many Muslims in Iberia and the Maghrib believed that the codex was imbued with *baraka* ("blessing" or "spiritual power"). A cult of veneration quickly sprang up around the *muṣḥaf*. Burési notes that, rather than leaving the book in a single location, the *muṣḥaf* travelled with the caliphal army and was even carried into battle. For the Almohads, the *muṣḥaf* of 'Uthmān served as a symbol of caliphal legitimacy uniting them to the memory of the *Rāshidūn* Caliphate and the Umayyad Caliphates of Damascus and Córdoba.[795]

The use of Tamazight in prayer (*ṣalāh*) and in education was perhaps one of the most significant ways in which the Almohads distinguished their daily practice of Islam from its

[794] Pascal Burési, "Les cultes rendus à la tombe du Mahdî Ibn Tûmart à Tinmâl (XIIe-XIIIe S.)," *Compte-rendu des Séances de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, jan.-mar. 2008* (2010), 392.
[795] Pascal Burési, "Une relique almohade: l'utilization du coran (attribué à 'Uṯmān b. 'Affān [644-656]) de la Grande mosquée de Cordoue," *Lieux de cultes: aires votives, temples, églises, mosques SEMPAM* (2005), 273-280.

existing forms. The Almohad practices surrounding mosque prayers are recorded in Ibn ʻIdhārī's *al-Bayān al-mughrib* and al-Shāṭibī's (720-90/1320-88) *al-Iʻtiṣām*, a compendium of innovations (*bidaʻ*) in Islamic law and theology. According to their accounts, the Almohads changed the Arabic formula of the call to prayer (*ādhān*) and repeated the call to prayer in Tamazight. They called *ṣalāh* "*tāṣallīt al-islām*" (Ar. *ṣalāt al-islām*) and "*tqām tāṣallīt*" (Ar. *iqamat al-ṣalāh*).[796] The second call to prayer in the vernacular resembles an early Islamic practice called *tathwīb* in which the *muʼadhdhin* repeated himself after the *imām* had begun prayers.[797] In light of some of the old Tamazight terms[798] Ibn ʻIdhārī and al-Shāṭibī include from the call to prayer, it appears that the Almohads exhorted Muslims to perform ritual ablutions (Ar. *wuḍūʼ*) before all five daily prayers. Al-Shāṭibī also notes that, from the very beginning of the movement, the Almohads included another supererogatory prayer (*duʻāʼ*) after the prescribed prayers. The added *duʻāʼ* may refer to one of Ibn Tūmart's lost writings, *al-Aḥzāb al-sabaʻ* ("The Seven Sections"), which Ibn al-Qaṭṭān mentions. He says that Ibn Tūmart composed a cycle of seven texts in Tamazight to be read during daily prayers, one for each day of the week.[799]

The most famous reform the early Almohads pursued was the abolishment of the *dhimma*, the Qur'ānic policy that allows the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*) to maintain their religious practices by paying a head tax (*jizya*) to the Muslim authorities. Although there is some debate as to the extent of the *dhimma*'s abolishment across Almohad territory, it is clear that the

[796] Muḥammad b. ʻIdhārī, *al-Bayān al-mughrib fī ikhtiṣār akhbār al-mulūk al-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*, ed. Bashshār ʻAwwād Maʻrūf and Maḥmūd Bashshār ʻAwwād (Tunis: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2013), 3: 406-07. Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm al-Shāṭibī, *al-Iʻtiṣam*, ed. Abū ʻUbayda Mashhūr ibn Salmān (al-Manama: Maktabat al-Tawḥīd, 2000), 2: 73-74.
[797] Maribel Fierro, "Prácticas religiosas" in María Jesús Viguera Molíns, *El Retroceso territorial de al-Andalus: Almorávids y Almohades siglos XI al XIII* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe S.A., 1997), 515. Maribel Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphate and Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-mujtahid,*" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (1999), 227.
[798] The term in question is *nārdī* (in Ibn ʻIdhārī) and *mārdī* (al-Shāṭibī).
[799] Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, *Naẓm al-jumān* (Beirut: Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1990), 129.

early Almohads forced many Jews and Christians to convert to Almohad Islam. Their only alternatives were exile or death. Ibn Tūmart and ‘Abd al-Mu’min were particularly fond of a *ḥadīth* (included in *BIT*) that includes a blanket condemnation of Jews, Zoroastrians, polytheists, and corporealists.[800] Amira K. Bennison argues that the abolishment of the *dhimma* and aggression against North Africa’s Jewish and Christian communities helped to justify the “more shocking” policy of violence against other Muslims who resisted Almohad Islam. The early Almohads’ violence against other Muslims earned them the opprobrium of Sunnī scholars residing in the East who considered their actions a capital sin.[801] The abolishment of the *dhimma* destroyed already weak native Christian communities of North Africa and dispersed the sizable Jewish population.[802] While many Jews chose exile, some converted to Islam and remained within Almohad lands. Even as belief in Almohadism waned, the caliphs maintained the policy against Jews and, according to al-Marrākushī, added a dress code to distinguish Jewish converts and their descendants from other Muslims. Despite the fact that the Almohads required all Jewish converts to attend daily prayers and to educate their children in the Qur’ān, al-Marrākushī suggests that crypto-Judaism was common.[803]

Although the bibliography[804] on the Almohad view of the *dhimma* is rather expansive, more work is required to understand how the early Almohads approached relations with non-

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[800] D, 142-54.
[801] Amira K. Bennison, “Almohad *tawḥīd* and its Implications for Religious Difference,” *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2 (2) June 2010, 209-10.
[802] Jean-Pierre Molénat, “Sur le role des almohades dans la fin du christianisme local au Maghreb et en al-Andalus,” *al-Qantara* 18, no. 2 (1997), 394-404.
[803] ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *al-Mu‘jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-maghrib* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 2006), 223-24.
[804] See, for example, Monserrat Abumalham, “La conversión según formularios notariales andalusíes: valoración de la legalidad de la conversión de Maimónides,” *Miscelánea de estudios árabes y hebraicos* 34, no. 2 (1985), 71-84; Esperanza Alfonso, *Islamic Culture through Jewish Eyes: al-Andalus from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century* (London: Routledge, 2008), 52-82; Amira K. Bennison, “Almohad *tawḥīd* and its Implications for Religious Difference,” *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2 (2) June 2010, 195-216; Jean-Pierre Molénat, “Sur le role des almohades dans la fin du christianisme local au Maghreb et en al-Andalus,” *al-Qantara* 18, no. 2 (1997), 389-413;

Almohad Muslims. Sunnī Muslims and syncretistic Imazighen constituted the majority of the victims of Almohad violence. Amira K. Bennison shows that Almohad *jihād* was tempered by the legal restrictions on *jihād* mentioned in the Qur'ān and *sunna*. The Almohads acted violently toward cities that refused to capitulate to their demands but were comparatively benign to the residents of cities whose leaders avoided military engagement by agreeing to the Almohads' offer of *amān*, a pledge of security. The exact terms of these capitulations and the legal reasoning behind them require further exploration, but it appears that the Almohads did not pursue the same harsh policies against religious minorities and other Muslims in cities that accepted the *amān* they did in cities that resisted.[805] In al-Andalus, 'Abd al-Mu'min offered notables who immediately capitulated positions in the Almohad state in exchange for their land.[806] It is quite possible that the ritual of the *amān* and the inclusion of those who surrendered peaceably in the Almohad state reflects an ordered (rather than opportunistic) interpretation of the laws of *jihād* on Tūmartian principles.

Among the greatest educational reforms 'Abd al-Mu'min introduced was the foundation of the *ṭalaba* ("the students"). The *ṭalaba* began with the small circle of students around Ibn Tūmart, which included 'Abd al-Mu'min and the historian al-Baydhaq. Originally centered around the court in Marrakesh, the caliph charged the *ṭalaba* with studying the Qur'ān and *sunna*, as well as with the dissemination of Ibn Tūmart's writings. Ibn al-Qaṭṭān mentions that

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Salomon Munk, "Notice sur Joseph ben-Iehuda ou Abou'hadjâdj Yousouf ben-Ya'hya al-Sabti al-Maghrebi, disciple de Maïmonide," *Journal Asiatique* 14 (1842), 5-70; Moises Orfali, "Maimónides ante el problema de las conversions simuladas: tolerancia y 'halajá'" in *Sobre la vida y obra de Maimónides*, ed. Jesús Peláez de Rosal (Córdoba: Ediciones de Almendro, 1991), 375-93; Judit Targarona Borrás, "Moisés Ben Maimón bajo el poder almohade" in *Maimónides y su época*, ed. Carlos del Valle, Santiago García Jalón and Juan Pedro Monferrer (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales, 2007), 45-59.

[805] Amira K. Bennison, "Almohad *tawḥīd* and its Implications for Religious Difference," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2 (2) June 2010, 208; 211-13.

[806] Amira K. Bennison, *The Almoravid and the Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 77-78.

‘Abd al-Mu’min summoned boys from prominent families of recently conquered cities in North Africa and al-Andalus to be instructed by the *ṭalaba*.[807] Al-Marrākushī mentions two sorts of *ṭalaba*: the *ṭalabat al-ḥadar* (“students of the presence”) and the *ṭalabat al-muwaḥḥidīn* (“the students of the Almohads). There is some debate as to the role of each group. The name *ṭalabat al-ḥadar* suggests that these scholars resided in the “presence” of the caliph, whereas as the *ṭalabat al-muwaḥḥidīn* served as missionaries in towns and cities across the empire. Based on al-Marrākushī and Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh, Lawrence Conrad argues that the Almohads distinguished between the two groups of *ṭalaba* according to their origin. The *ṭalabat al-muwaḥḥidīn* were Almohads of Maṣmūda origin devoted to studying and memorizing the Qur’ān, *sunna*, and the works of Ibn Tūmart. The *ṭalabat al-ḥadar*, by contrast, was made up of scholars from urban centers of learning across the Almohad empire. Both groups regularly gathered to participate in colloquia (*majālis*) and scholarly debates (*munāẓarāt*) convened by the caliphs.[808] We should remember that the compiler of *BIT* credits the genesis of Ibn Tūmart’s teachings to his debates against Mālikī scholars and the colloquia he held to impart his doctrines to his closest students. From this perspective, the public scholarship of the Almohad *ṭalaba* was a ritual re-enactment of Ibn Tūmart’s career. The *ḥuffāẓ* (“the memorizers”) were another group tasked with the spread of Almohadism. Unlike other *ḥuffāẓ*, those Muslims who successfully memorized the Qur’ān, the Almohad *ḥuffāẓ* memorized the works of Ibn Tūmart prior to their being compiled in *BIT*. The *ḥuffāẓ* were not scholars, but rather served in the Almohad military. By training these devout

[807] Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, *Naẓm al-jumān* (Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1990), 173-174.
[808] Lawrence I. Conrad, “An Andalusian Physician at the Court of the Muwaḥḥids: Some Notes on the Public Career of Ibn Ṭufayl,” *al-Qantara* 16, no. 1 (1995), 8-11.

soldiers as missionaries, the Almohads were able to spread Ibn Tūmart's doctrines to every locale in which they maintained a military presence.[809]

The Decline of Almohadism and the Almohad Caliphate

How successful was Almohadism as a distinct form of Islam? Although the Almohad Caliphate lasted until the mid-seventh/thirteenth century, Almohadism as a religion had begun to decline by the end of the sixth/twelfth century. The triumphalist form of Almohadism that we see during the reigns of 'Abd al-Mu'min and Yūsuf presented Ibn Tūmart's doctrines and the Caliphate as a seamless fabric. The close relationship of Almohadism and the Almohad state unraveled under al-Manṣūr and his successors. Belief in Ibn Tūmart as *imām* and *mahdī*, the cornerstone of the early Almohad movement, persisted among some notables and commoners, but the caliphs themselves began to doubt Ibn Tūmart's infallibility and their own right as successor *imām*s to adjudicate and teach with the same authority. This doubt remained somewhat private under al-Manṣūr, who pursued policies that reoriented Almohad Islam toward Sunnism. However, al-Ma'mūn's public repudiation of Ibn Tūmart's *mahdī*-hood in 626/1228 officially ended the Almohad state's adherence to Almohadism in favor of a complete return to Sunnism. In the end, many of the Almohad rituals that the Mu'minid and Ḥafṣid dynasties preserved pertained to the administration of the state and its various offices, rather than to worship (*'ibāda*) and the veneration of Ibn Tūmart.[810]

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[809] Amira K. Bennison, *The Almoravid and the Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 81.

[810] The vast majority of the Almohad rituals and functions Ibn Khaldūn records pertains to the administration of the state and court life, rather than to religious practice. See Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 136 (royal authority); 182-83 (*amīr al-mu'minīn*); 195 (*wizāra*); 196-97 (doorkeeper); 199-200 (tax collector); 207-8 (police); 211 (the admiralty); 218 (the mint). A notable exception is

In 1964 W. Montgomery Watt published a short paper on the reasons for the decline of the Almohad Caliphate. Watt's presentation of Almohad doctrine reflects the historiographical consensus of his time. Like Huici Miranda and Le Tourneau, Watt uses sociological models to deflate the significance of particular doctrines, emphasizing instead the role religion plays in social mobilization. For him, *BIT* is a "hotch potch" that would require "an intellectual genius" to find coherence in it. As a consequence, Watt deems the content of Almohadism less important than the charisma with which Ibn Tūmart delivered his message to the Maṣmūda tribes he sought to rally to his cause. Despite Watt's failure to see the radical character of Ibn Tūmart's thought, he grasps the element of Almohad Islam that explains its rise and collapse: *newness*. Ibn Tūmart presented himself, not only as the restorer of Islam as the Prophet had received it and lived it centuries before, but also as the recapitulation of Muḥammad. Ibn Tūmart perceived the observance of Islam around him as so degraded that he, as the *imām* and *mahdī*, had the duty to bring humankind out of *jahliyya* once again. What distinguished this age of ignorance from the polytheism that had dominated the Arabian Peninsula prior to Islam was that this *jahliyya* existed alongside Islam and even coopted its message. Watt underscores the relationship of the Muḥammad-parallels in Ibn Tūmart's biography to the Almohads' expectation that their leader would initiate a new *hijra* that would recenter this Islamic world around Morocco.

Watt identifies the Almohads' failure to attract new converts as the reason for the failure of the Almohad movement. While I agree with this general assessment, Watt's commitment to the Weberian typology of the charismatic leader (and its correlate, the routinization of charisma)

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the removal of the *maqṣūra*, the enclosure in which the ruler and his household prayed, from mosques. Ibn Khaldūn attributes this change along with the eschewal of the *ṭirāz* vestments and large tents and houses to Ibn Tūmart's teachings on asceticism (*zuhd*). See Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 220 (*ṭirāz*); 221 (large dwellings); 222 (*maqṣūra*).

limits his horizon. As Hussein Fancy observes in the conclusion to *The Mercenary Mediterranean*—a political theological meditation in its own right—the Weberian approach to religion presupposes that social cohesion is the primary (and perhaps sole) function of religion.[811] If we accept this presupposition, we will fail to recognize religious motives that transcend the function of social cohesion, since religious motives are nothing more than social motives dressed up so as to participate in the pageant of charisma and its routinization. More than this, religious concepts will boil down to nothing more than an arbitrary script of social regulation that can be easily exchanged for another script.

Yet this is not what we see in the Almohad movement or in other religious movements that must overcome significant disadvantages in order to survive. Almohad history is replete with moments in which individual Almohads chose allegiance to this particular expression of Islam when it was most at odds with the basic desire for personal security and social cohesion. I do not doubt that the Almohad Caliphate, like any political entity, often acted upon motives that were more political than religious. At the same time, we should no longer reduce the explanation of the Almohad period to the political machinations of elites and the alleged need of the masses (especially the Amazigh masses) for a charismatic leader. Alongside political motives, we see the Almohads acting upon their religious commitments—sometimes to their political detriment. Religious commitments also stirred opposition to the Almohad state, both among Muslims outside of the Almohad movement and within the Almohad leadership.

We must reevaluate Watt's thesis in light of a serious engagement with Ibn Tūmart's thought. Adherence to these ideas demanded the separation of this new form of Islam from all

[811] Hussein Fancy, *The Mercenary Mediterranean: Sovereignty, Religion, and Violence in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 145-49.

others and, simultaneously, the eventual absorption of all Muslims, actual and potential, into the Almohad community. The paucity of converts to Almohadism indeed explains the decline of Almohadism, both in its religious and political expressions. The tension between the particularity of Almohadism and its universalist pretensions plagued the development of the *ṭalaba*, the body of scholars charged with the education of missionaries and, quite significantly, the sons of the caliphs. I argue that we must understand the decline of Almohadism in light of decisions made, not by Ya'qūb al-Manṣūr or al-Ma'mūn, but rather by the first two caliphs. As opposed to the later caliphs, there is no historical evidence that impugns 'Abd al-Mu'min's and Yūsuf's belief in the *mahdī* and their authority to rule in his stead. By all accounts, both men expended great effort and resources in order to promulgate Almohadism across their newfound empire. They were, so to speak, "true believers." Regardless of their commitment to this new, radical expression of Islam, these two caliphs made several concessions to established Sunnī institutions in North Africa and Iberia that would ultimately frustrate the viability of the Almohad message. Despite early efforts to convert conquered populations to Almohadism (and annihilate its detractors), the Almohads failed to win and catechize enough converts to tip the scales against Sunnism, particularly in al-Andalus. Some of the converts they did win over later returned to Sunnism.

An interesting case of a prominent *ṭālib* accepting then rejecting Almohadism is that of Abū Bakr b. Maymūn al-'Abdarī (d. 567/1171). I cite al-'Abdarī's *Sharḥ kitāb al-'ilm*, the sole surviving commentary on Ibn Tūmart's "The Dearest Desire," earlier in this dissertation. Judging from unique quotations of 'Abd al-Mu'min in the commentary, the author worked in close proximity to the caliph in Marrakesh. Born in Córdoba, he studied under the greatest scholars of his age, including Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī and Abū al-Walīd b. Rushd al-Jadd. He made a name

for himself in the fields of hermeneutics, law, grammar, and poetry. Al-‘Abdarī and his sons were members of the *ṭalabat al-ḥadar*. While it is hard to determine the extent of al‘Abdarī’s commitment to Almohadism, he seems to hold Ibn Tūmart and ‘Abd al-Mu’min in high regard in his commentary, referring to both as *imām*. His affiliation with the *ṭalaba* came to an abrupt end after he composed a poem ridiculing his colleague, Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Mun‘im b. Muḥammad b. Tīsīt, an Almohad from a Maṣmūda background. According to al-Suyūṭī, ‘Abd al-Mu’min expelled al-‘Abdarī from the *majlis* and discouraged al-‘Abdarī’s own sons from studying under him.[812] Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh adds that the caliph commissioned the poet Abū ‘Abdallāh b. Sahl al-Yakī to write a poem ridiculing al-‘Abdarī that was recited during the public meeting of the *ṭalaba* at which al-‘Abdarī was dismissed from the *ṭalaba*.[813]

One other work attributed to al-‘Abdarī has come down to us: a commentary on al-Juwaynī’s *Irshād*. Although the date of the text has not been determined, al-‘Abdarī’s position on *imāma* and infallibility (*‘iṣma*) stands out within the Almohad context: “To whomever makes infallibility a requirement for the *imām*s, such as those among the *imāmiyya* [i.e. Shī‘a], we say that the intellect does not judge this to be the case, nor does the Law indicate it.”[814] If al-‘Abdarī wrote this commentary prior to taking a position at the Almohad court in Marrakesh, it is possible that he either repented of his comment on the infallibility of the *imām* or simply concealed his Sunnism. However, if he wrote the commentary *after* the caliph expelled him from the *ṭalaba*, we have a case of a prominent Almohad scholar publicly repudiating the foundational

[812] ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu‘āh fī ṭabaqāt al-lughawiyyīn wa-l-nuḥāh*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Maṭba‘a ‘Īsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1964), 1: 147-48.
[813] ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh, *Al-Mann bi-l-imāma*, ed. ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Tāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1987 [1964]), 159-60.
[814] Abū Bakr b. Maymūn [al-‘Abdarī], *Sharḥ al-Irshād*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqqā (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Anjlū al-Maṣriyya, 1987), 672-73.

tenet of Almohadism in favor of a Sunnī view of *imāma*. Both possibilities reflect the Almohad Caliphate's failure to convert scholars whom they patronized to their view and to keep them converted.

Many of the *ṭalaba* who participated in the study and propagation of Ibn Tūmart's writings, as well as in *mudhākarāt* in the Caliph's presence, appear never to have accepted the core tenets of Almohad Islam. The Caliphs designated scions of prominent political and scholarly families to the local *ṭalaba* and to the *ṭalabat al-ḥadar* in the capitals at Marrakesh and Seville. It is possible that they hoped to convert these gentlemen to Almohadism by placing them in close proximity to the caliphal family and Almohad elders (*shuyūkh*). Yūsuf seems to have been satisfied to bring philosophers like Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Rushd into his entourage in order to fulfill a kingly ideal of intellectual patronage. Not a few have pondered these two philosophers' relationship to the Almohad state and to Ibn Tūmart. Some brand them "Almohad" thinkers in the substantial sense that their works reflect Ibn Tūmart's doctrines.[815] Yet, if we compare Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* and Ibn Rushd's Islamic writings (e.g. *Faṣl al-maqāl* and *Kashf 'an manāhij al-adilla wa-'aqā'id al-milla*), we see two thinkers whose basic assumptions about Islam and human nature are at odds with Ibn Tūmart's vision.

Born in Guadix in 510/1116, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ṭufayl was a physician and philosopher educated in Seville and Córdoba prior to the rise of the Almohads in al-Andalus. In 542/1147, just after the Almohads captured Marrakesh, Ibn Ṭufayl relocated to Marrakesh where

[815] A proponent of this view is Marc Geoffroy. See Marc Geoffroy, "L'almohadisme théologique d'Averroès (Ibn Rushd)," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littérature du Moyen Âge* 66 (1999), 9-47. I agree with Sarah Stroumsa that the association of these philosophers with Almohad theology is inaccurate and largely stems from the efforts of historians like al-Marrākushī to aggrandize the intellectual achievements of the Almohad caliphs and the members of their courts. See Sarah Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and Its History in Islamic Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 128; 146-47.

he was appointed a member of the *ṭalabat al-ḥadar*. In addition to participating in court debates, he also served as personal physician to Yūsuf and likely used his influence to bring the younger philosopher, Ibn Rushd, to the caliph's attention.[816]

Ibn Ṭufayl's philosophical narrative, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* (literally, "Living, son of Awake") tells the story of a man who spends the first fifty years of his life on a desert island in the Indian Ocean. The protagonist, Ḥayy, discovers the major truths of philosophy, from the natural sciences to metaphysics, without language, teachers, or texts. In his fiftieth year, a young man named Absāl arrives on his island seeking to live as a hermit and to devote himself to the contemplation of the divine. Upon learning Absāl's language, Ḥayy teaches Absāl much of what he has learned. Rather than seeing Ḥayy as a philosopher, Absāl understands Ḥayy to have hit upon esoteric truths contained in his own religion, which, from Ibn Ṭufayl's description, sounds much like Islam. Ḥayy accompanies Absāl back to the island kingdom where he grew up in order to instruct others. Absāl's childhood friend and ruler of the island, Salāmān, initially welcomes them, but grows irritated with Ḥayy after he learns that the feral man reduces the positive doctrines and laws of their prophetic religion to symbols intended to convey deeper truths. Unwilling to disabuse Salāmān and the literalists of their beliefs, Ḥayy and Absāl quietly make their way back to the desert island where they live out the rest of their days in contemplation.

The political climax of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* raises general questions about philosophy's relationship to positive religion. However, when read in light of Ibn Tūmart's emphasis on knowledge and popular enlightenment, Ibn Ṭufayl's story comes across as a critique of the Almohad project. Upon learning of Absāl's religion (*milla*), Ḥayy adopts an attitude to it that is

[816] *EI3*, "Ibn Ṭufayl" (Taneli Kukkonen). See also, Lawrence I. Conrad, "An Andalusian Physician at the Court of the *Muwaḥḥid*s. Some notes on the Public Career of Ibn Ṭufayl" *al-Qantara* 16, no. 1 (1995), 3-13.

in some respects reminiscent of Ibn Tūmart's attitude to Islam. Ḥayy accepts Absāl's religion because, at least in a symbolic way, its doctrines and laws agree with what Ḥayy knows by reason.[817] Ḥayy nevertheless takes issue with the literalist approach some take to this prophet's message because it leads them to accept corporealism (*tajsīm*) and predicate things of God's essence which God transcends (*huwa manazzih 'an-hā*). Moreover, Ḥayy, who has never lived among other humans, does not understand why the prophet who brought this religion to Absāl's people felt the need to legislate human behavior so exhaustively, since the moral principles of the revealed law are self-evident to Ḥayy.[818] Ḥayy begins to teach Absāl's coreligionists out of a deeply felt duty to lead them away from corporealism, legalism, and an undue focus on the letter of their prophet's message. His short stint in human society shows him that the vast majority of humans beings are incapable of comporting themselves morally without laws to restrain them, let alone of attaining the deeper truths hidden in their religious tradition.[819] The notion that the enlightenment of the masses with regard to theology and law runs counter to human nature underlies Ḥayy's defeat in the marketplace of ideas and subsequent return to his island with Absāl, his sole pupil of any promise. The political ending of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* evinces its author's deep skepticism toward the Almohad project inasmuch as its push to educate the masses fails to appreciate the intellectual and moral limitations present in most human beings.

Ibn Rushd presents a similar objection to Almohadism in his *Decisive Treatise* (*Faṣl al-maqāl*). Born into an old Cordovan family, Abū Walīd Muḥammad b. Rushd came to

[817] Ibn Ṭufayl, *Hayy ben Yoqdhān: roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofaïl [Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*], ed. Léon Gauthier, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), 144-45.
[818] Ibn Ṭufayl, *Hayy ben Yoqdhān: roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofaïl [Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*], ed. Léon Gauthier, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), 146-47.
[819] Ibn Ṭufayl, *Hayy ben Yoqdhān: roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofaïl [Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*], ed. Léon Gauthier, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), 148-55.

prominence as a philosopher, physician, and jurist. Although his commentaries on the *corpus Aristotelicum* remain his greatest achievement, he also served as the chief judge of Córdoba and Seville at the behest of Yūsuf and was a member of the *ṭalabat al-ḥaḍar*. Between 1178-81, Ibn Rushd composed several works that engage with Islamic theology: *The Decisive Treatise*, *Kashf ʻan manāhij al-adilla wa-ʻaqāʼid al-milla*, and *Tahāfut al-tahāfut*, his detailed refutation of al-Ghazālī's *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*.

The Decisive Treatise Determining the Connection between the Law and Wisdom[820] is written in the style of a legal *responsum* (*fatwā*).[821] The question Ibn Rushd sets for himself is "whether reflection upon philosophy (*al-falsafa*) and the sciences of logic (*ʻulūm al-manṭiq*) is permitted (*mubāḥ*), prohibited (*maḥẓūr*), or commanded (*maʼmūr*)—and this as a recommendation (*nadb*) or as an obligation (*wujūb*)—by the Law (*bi-l-sharʻ*)."[822] Ibn Rushd's invocation of Islamic legal qualifications (e.g. commanded, prohibited, etc.) signals that he intends to engage in a consideration of philosophy and logic from the perspective of Islamic Law. The way in which he defines "the activity of philosophy" (*fiʻl al-falsafa*) ingratiates him to an Almohad audience. In *Decisive Treatise*, "the activity of philosophy is nothing more than reflection upon existing things (*al-naẓar fi-l-mawjūdāt*)…insofar as they are an indication of the Artisan (*min jihat dalālatihā ʻalā al-ṣāniʻ*). His language recalls that of Ibn Tūmart in "Worship" and "The Discourse on Knowledge," wherein he states that "reasoning about the evidence of God's acts (*al-ʻaql bi-shahādat al-afʻāl*) according to [the principle that] an act requires an agent

[820] The full title in Arabic is *Faṣl al-maqāl wa-taqrīr mā bayn al-sharīʻa wa-l-ḥikma min al-ittiṣāl*.
[821] There is no evidence that Ibn Rushd is responding to a question put to him by a specific petitioner (*al-mustaftī*) as is customary in the issuance of a *fatwā*. It is possible that he merely plays on the literary convention of the *fatwā* for rhetorical purposes.
[822] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn Rushd, *The Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 1.

is the way to knowledge of God."[823] Early in the text, Ibn Rushd concludes, in evident agreement with Ibn Tūmart, that the Law obliges reflection upon existing things in order to arrive at demonstrative knowledge of God.[824]

Ibn Rushd departs from the Almohad view when he clarifies that such reflection is *not* obligatory for all Muslims, but only for those who possess "innate intelligence" (*dhakā' al-faṭra*) and "Law-based justice and moral virtue" (*al-'adāla al-shar'iyya wa-l-faḍīla al-khulqiyya*).[825] Ibn Rushd shares Ibn Ṭufayl's low estimation of human intellectual and moral capacities, a position which is consistent with philosophical ethics in the Islamic world.[826] When read against the Almohad soteriology, Ibn Rushd appears to criticize Ibn Tūmart's belief that worship and salvation demand knowledge of God on the grounds that it ignores the limitations of human nature. Ibn Rushd repeatedly emphasizes that "not all people have natures such as to accept demonstrations or dialectical arguments, let alone demonstrative arguments," going so far as to accuse al-Ghazālī—a major influence on Ibn Tūmart—of corrupting Muslims by trying to increase their knowledge of God beyond their innate capacities.[827] Without many leaps in logic, one could easily apply this accusation to Ibn Tūmart!

To remedy what he considers the deleterious effects of presenting rational arguments to those who cannot understand them (a venture he associates with *kalām*), Ibn Rushd proposes a three-tiered approach to scriptural interpretation (*ta'wīl*). The first group are the multitude (*al-jumhūr*) who have no aptitude for dialectical theology or philosophy. One must interpret

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[823] D, 210 ("Worship"). See also, D, 182 ("The Discourse on Knowledge").
[824] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn Rushd, *The Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 2-3.
[825] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn Rushd, *The Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 6; 9-10.
[826] See Roy Jackson, *What Is Islamic Philosophy?* (London: Routledge, 2014), 62.
[827] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn Rushd, *The Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 22-24.

scripture for them in a rhetorical way. The second group pursue only dialectical interpretations of the Qur'ān. The third and final group can interpret the meaning of scripture by way of demonstration. Ibn Rushd considers the second group, the *mutakallimūn*, to be the greatest source of factionalism within Islam because, even though their interpretations of scripture rest on dialectical and sophistical reasoning, they are wont to declare other Muslims unbelievers.[828] In his vision for Islam, the vast majority of believers would accept the literal meaning of scripture (*al-ẓāhir*), whereas as tiny minority well versed in the demonstrative argument will engage in "sound interpretation" (*al-ta'wīl al-ṣaḥīḥ*) amongst themselves, never divulging the fruit of their study to the multitude.[829]

Ibn Rushd's model of *ta'wīl* stands in stark contrast to Ibn Tūmart's.[830] His belief that the *sharī'a* commands all Muslims, the elites and the masses, to pursue knowledge of God's unity and transcendence entails the public interpretation of Qur'ānic verses the literal meaning of which indicates that God has a body or resembles His creatures in any way. By advocating for a literal reading of the Qur'ān for the overwhelming majority of Muslims, Ibn Rushd tacitly accepts corporealism (*tajsīm*). The philosopher also makes certain assumptions about Islamic legal theory in *Decisive Treatise* that go against other explicit teachings in *BIT*. Notable among these are his use of the Sunnī principle of infallibilism in *ijtihād* to further his argument, as well

[828] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn Rushd, *The Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 29-32.
[829] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn Rushd, *The Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 27-29.
[830] See Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 40; 119-20. Nagel argues that Ibn Rushd's doctrine of the double truth (*zweifache Wahrheit*) is evidence of Ibn Tūmart's influence on the philosopher. I disagree with Nagel's assessment that Ibn Tūmart presented his teachings in a two-tier fashion: one for the elites, and one for the masses. To the contrary, *BIT* consistently highlights the need for enlightening all human beings by giving them saving knowledge of God and His Law. Moreover, that "the truth is one" (*al-ḥaqq wāḥid*) is the major epistemological commitment behind Ibn Tūmart's project shows that the Almohad movement was opposed to double-truth or *bāṭinī* approaches to Islam.

as a form of legal analogy (*qiyās shar'ī*) that falls outside of the limits Ibn Tūmart sets out in *BIT*.[831]

In the conclusion to *Decisive Treatise*, Ibn Rushd praises the "triumphant rule" (*al-amr al-ghālib*) of the Almohads because they have pursued "a middle method" by calling their subjects to a level of interpretation above those who practice *taqlīd*, but beneath "the turbulence of the dialectical theologians."[832] All praise aside, Ibn Rushd's *fatwā* opposes many doctrines characteristic of the Almohads. Sarah Stroumsa argues that historians have mischaracterized the relationship between the Almohad Caliphate and philosophy. The Almohads certainly patronized philosophers, and even appointed them to significant political offices, but philosophy *qua* philosophy was not "an item on the Almohads' educational agenda."[833] While historians like al-Marrākushī emphasized Yūsuf's philosophical leanings (sometimes to the point of embellishment), other Almohad sources reveal greater ambivalence to philosophy on the part of Almohad scholars. On the one hand, the Almohad *ṭālib* 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ṭāhir (d. 574/1178) looked to the language of Platonic political philosophy to characterize Ibn Tūmart's movement as "the virtuous city" (*al-madīna al-fāḍila*) made famous in the Islamic world by al-Fārābī.[834] On

[831] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn Rushd, *The Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 17-18.
[832] Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn Rushd, *The Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 33.
[833] Sarah Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and Its History in Islamic Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 134.
[834] Sarah Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and Its History in Islamic Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 135. Ibn al-Qaṭṭān preserves Ibn Ṭāhir's treatise on Ibn Tūmart in *Naẓm al-jumān*. See Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan b. al-Qaṭṭān, *Naẓm a-jumān li-tartīb mā salafa min akhbār al-zamān*, ed. Maḥmūd 'Alī Makkī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990), 101-22. See also Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 143-44.

the other hand, Almohad scholars often treated philosophy as extraneous to their mission, if not dangerous.[835]

Stroumsa and others observe that the Almohad push for popular enlightenment exerted a more tangible influence on the Jewish philosopher, Moses Maimonides. Born in Almoravid Córdoba in 1138, Maimonides and his family relocated to Fez sometime between 1148-60 after the conquering Almohads abolished the *dhimma* for Jews and Christians in much of al-Andalus. Fez was, ironically, the greatest center of Almohad Islam outside of Marrakesh, a fact which forced Maimonides to live as a public Muslim and crypto-Jew.[836] The young philosopher would have encountered Ibn Tūmart's teachings in local mosques and schools. Maimonides shares many presuppositions about the intellectual capacity of the multitude with Ibn Ṭufayl, Ibn Rushd, and the rest of the *falāsifa*. However, his commitment to rooting out corporealism in the Jewish community resembles Ibn Tūmart's incorporation of *tawḥīd* into his project of popular enlightenment.[837] Maimonides devotes much of the first part of *The Guide of the Perplexed* to the interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of passages in the Torah that suggest that God is a body. In the first book *Mishneh Torah*, "The Book of Knowledge" (*Sefer ha-madda'*), Maimonides uses simplified philosophical arguments to demonstrate to a popular audience that God is neither a body nor a force within a body.[838] Ralph Lerner argues that *Mishneh Torah* is not only (as its

[835] On the perceived dangers of philosophy in the Almohad period, see Stroumsa's commentary on Ibn Abī 'Uṣaybi'a's entry on the Almohad physician, Abū Bakr b. Zuhr: Sarah Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and Its History in Islamic Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 132-34.
[836] On Maimonides' early life, education, and crypto-Judaism, see Joel Kraemer, *Maimonides: The Life and World of One of Civilization's Greatest Minds* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 35-37; 83-98.
[837] Sarah Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and Its History in Islamic Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 145-46; 148-49.
[838] In *Sefer ha-madda'*, the first three commands (*mitzvōt*) Maimonides presents are "to know that there is a God/Primary Being (*matzui rishōn*)," "not to think that there is another god beside Him," and "to unify Him." Many of his arguments reflect the influence of Ibn Sīnā and later Ash'arism. See Moses Maimonides, *Sefer Mishneh Torah* (Haifa: Yeshivat Or Vishua, 2015), 34-35. For Maimonides' discussion of coporealist terms in the Hebrew Bible, see Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 1: 21-175 (I, 1-70).

title indicates) a "repetition of the Torah" in the sense that it offers the reader a sense of the principles that unite the Torah as a whole, but also "a curriculum unto itself."[839] For Lerner, Maimonides' *oeuvre* represents a challenge to the prevailing view among philosophers that the intellectual limitations of the multitudes are insurmountable.[840] Although Ibn Tūmart's pro-enlightenment stance failed to take root among Muslim philosophers, it experienced an unexpected afterlife in the scholarly and popular writings composed by Maimonides' disciples, from Languedoc to Yemen.

The greatest blow to Almohad Islam was the skepticism of the caliphs toward Ibn Tūmart's claim to be the *imām* and *mahdī*. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, al-Marrākushī reports three instances in which Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb al-Manṣūr expressed his lack of belief in Ibn Tūmart's claims and the model of the caliphate his father and grandfather had bequeathed to him. Although al-Manṣūr did not publicly renounce the *mahdī*-doctrine, it is likely that his thoroughly Sunnī education prevented him from accepting Ibn Tūmart's infallibility, as well as his own authority, as successor to Ibn Tūmart and 'Abd al-Mu'min, to adjudicate and teach infallibly for the Almohad community. Al-Manṣūr's opinion of Ibn Tūmart was, however, ambivalent. Although he personally rejected the Almohad view of Ibn Tūmart's authority, he appealed to Ibn Tūmart's emphasis on the study of source texts (*uṣūl*) in promoting educational reforms during his reign. He nudged the Almohad Caliphate toward Sunnism, but nevertheless agreed with Ibn Tūmart that the Mālikī *madhhab* depended too much on legal precedent (*furū'*). Like his

[839] Ralph Lerner, *Maimonides' Empire of Light: Popular Enlightenment in an Age of Belief* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 32; 37. Lerner's view of *Mishneh Torah* appears to be influenced by Leo Strauss' "Notes on Maimonides' *Book of Knowledge*" in Leo Strauss, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 192-204.
[840] Ralph Lerner, *Maimonides' Empire of Light: Popular Enlightenment in an Age of Belief* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 5-6.

predecessors, al-Manṣūr confiscated and burned several popular *fiqh* manuals after having the quotations from the Qur'ān and *aḥādīth* excised from their pages.[841]

The caliph al-Ma'mūn officially severed the Almohad state's connection to Almohadism in 1230 shortly after assuming power. Al-Ma'mūn removed any mention of Ibn Tūmart and infallibility from the Friday sermon (*khuṭba*), the mint (*sikka*), and state documents. He likewise declared that there was no *mahdī* except Jesus, the son of Mary, a reference to a popular Sunnī opinion that associates the Qur'ānic Jesus with the *mahdī* who will come at the end of time. Al-Ma'mūn explicitly attributed his rejection of Almohadism to the influence of his predecessor, al-Manṣūr. This comment suggests that an anti-mahdist faction had existed within the highest ranks of the Almohad state decades prior to al-Ma'mūn's reign.[842]

Summary and New Directions

The Almohad Caliphate did not live up to every expectation that Ibn Tūmart laid out in *BIT*. Regardless, this Islamic movement stands as striking example of a political empire, the motivation for which and the legitimacy of which derived from a set of doctrines that were both rationalist and messianic in nature. In order to appreciate the role that ideas played in Almohad movement, we must rehabilitate *BIT* as a document that, in many respects, grants us privileged access to Almohadism and to the mind of its founder. Ibn Tūmart cannot lay claim to the same scholarly legacy as al-Shāfi'ī, al-Juwaynī, or al-Ghazālī, but his teachings found a foothold in the

[841] 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *al-Mu'jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-maghrib* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2006), 202-03.
[842] Muḥammad b. 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-mughrib fī ikhtiṣār akhbār al-mulūk al-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*, ed. Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf and Maḥmūd Bashshār 'Awwād (Tunis: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2013), 3: 406-07. Tilman Nagel, *Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 154.

world outside of schools and intellectual circles that many ideas never do. The urgency present in Ibn Tūmart's writings stem from his willingness to posit unique solutions to the major questions raised by the greatest minds in the early centuries of Islam.

The question of *BIT*'s authorship and the coherence of its contents matters because we cannot accurately interpret the way in which the Almohads put Ibn Tūmart's ideas into practice (or resisted doing so!) without first knowing what those ideas were. Nor can we make informed judgments about the policies 'Abd al-Mu'min and predecessors pursued without differentiating between those ideas which pre-date 'Abd al-Mu'min's reign and those which came after. The primary example of this problem in the literature is the question of the origin of the *mahdī*-doctrine within Almohadism. Fierro argues that 'Abd al-Mu'min introduced mahdism into Almohad doctrine in order accommodate the mystico-apocalyptic sensibilities of Andalusī Muslims, such as the community of *murīdūn* around Ibn Qasī. Yet if we date the *mahdī*-doctrine to 524/1130 at the latest, we see that the reverse is true: 'Abd al-Mu'min and Yūsuf made many religious concessions to Sunnīs, above all Andalusīs and Hilālian Arab tribesmen in Ifrīqiyya, that helped to stabilize the new empire.[843] These concessions deferred conversion from Sunnism to Almohad Islam. On this reading, the early Almohad caliphs did not adopt mahdism to make their ideology more appealing to conquered peoples, but rather toned down their pre-existing mahdism to secure political benefits that ultimately endangered Almohadism.

The style of *BIT*, as well as the editorial and material elements of the two extant manuscripts, demand further analysis in order to "prove" Ibn Tūmart's authorship of *BIT* and to settle lingering questions about the compilation's provenance and its function within Almohad

[843] See Amira K. Bennison, *The Almoravid and the Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 131-33.

religious practice. I have limited myself to the more modest goals of showing that (a) contra the revisionists, there is no evidence in text (such as internal contradiction) to support the hypothesis that the contents of *BIT* were adapted to facilitate Almohad expansion into al-Andalus, and that, owing to *BIT*'s internal consistency, (b) we have no plausible reason to doubt the traditional ascription of these writings to Ibn Tūmart. *BIT* bears witness to the core doctrines that Ibn Tūmart expounded for the early Almohad community, as well as to the religious and intellectual crises out of which they emerged. This posthumous compilation renders a coherent description of a new form of Islam, from the most basic points of epistemology to their consequences for jurisprudence, theology, leadership, and *jihād*. I argue that Ibn Tūmart did not pick and choose elements of various Islamic movements (as many have suggested), but instead arrived at atypical conclusions after revisiting the foundational questions of Islam.

The discrepancies between Almohadism and Sunnism are all the more startling because, as I have attempted to show, many of Ibn Tūmart's ideas were not importations from Shī'ism or Ibāḍism, but rather new takes on Sunnī sources arrived at through new applications of Sunnī methodologies. His commitment to strict rationalism in Law and theology led him to resurrect ideas such as *takfīr al-'awāmm* and infallibilism in *ijtihād*. Although these doctrines had been common among Mu'tazilī and Ash'arī *mutakallimūn* in previous centuries, they had, by Ibn Tūmart's lifetime, fallen into disfavor. His emphasis on uniformity in belief and praxis pushed him toward the mahdist idea in order to combat the conciliatory spirit of majoritarian Sunnism which he believed served only to defer the realization of genuine Islam. In this way, the Almohad *mahdī* is counterintuitively both a natural and a supernatural messiah: natural, in the sense that he achieved knowledge through study, rather than divine inspiration; supernatural, in

the sense that God ordained his study, imāmate, and *mahdī*-hood from eternity, accomplishing all three through the secondary causes Ibn Tūmart enumerates in his "Creed."

This study of *BIT* is not an end, but rather a beginning, a revisiting of a neglected source. It is my hope that what I have presented here will prompt historians of the Almohad period to reconsider the sources that have come down to us in light of the radical nature of Ibn Tūmart's thought. Many aspects of the Almohad movement and its reception in the wider Islamic (and non-Islamic) world require further study. A firm grasp of the theological concepts at play in *BIT* will open up the meaning of the Almohad epistolary. This body of official correspondence has expanded since E. Lévi-Provençal published some early epistles housed at the Escorial.[844] These documents are not only valuable for fleshing out Almohad political history, but also preserve the rich conceptual vocabulary the Almohads used to describe themselves and their relationship to Ibn Tūmart. The epistolary also reveals the way in which later Almohad caliphs negotiated their relationship to the legacy of Ibn Tūmart and ʻAbd al-Mu'min while simultaneously rejecting significant aspects of that legacy.

The Almohad caliphs and their entourages were not the only ones who struggled with Ibn Tūmart's claims to infallibility and exclusive authority to interpret Islam. Later commentators on Ibn Tūmart's, the majority of whom came from former Almohad lands, sought to rehabilitate Ibn Tūmart within Sunnī circles by downplaying his mahdism and emphasizing the Ashʻarī and Ṣūfī elements in *BIT*. Muḥammad b. ʻAbbād al-Rundī (733-92/1333-90) and Abū ʻAbdallāh al-Sakūnī (7th/13th c.) both produced commentaries on Ibn Tūmart's "Spiritual Guide" (*al-*

[844] The epistles were originally published in É. Lévi-Provençal, *Extraits des historiens arabes du Maroc* (Rabat: Dār al-Amān, 1923 [2013]); *Documents inédits d'histoire almohade* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1928); and *Majmūʻat rasā'il al-Muwaḥḥidiyya* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-dīniyya, 2010 [1941]). The most complete edition of the epistles were published by Aḥmad ʻAzāwī. See *al-Rasā'il al-Muwaḥḥidiyya*, ed. Aḥmad ʻAzāwī, 2 vol. (Kénitra: Jāmiʻat Ibn Ṭufayl, 1995).

murshida).[845] If the historian depended on al-Rundī, he would arrive at the conclusion that Ibn Tūmart was a spiritual master and profound poet. Reading al-Sakūnī, he would see in Ibn Tūmart an orthodox Ash'arī reformer who wanted to bring *kalām* to a popular audience. Since most of the commentary tradition exists in manuscripts, the reception history of *BIT* remains an open and pressing question. The directness and, often, *beauty* of Ibn Tūmart's prose made an impression on later scholars, but the mahdism and brutal nature of the early Almohad movement lurked in the background. In the later epistolary and commentary traditions we find interpretative strategies geared toward neutralizing the mahdist tendencies at the heart of Almohad Islam.[846] As Yūsuf Iḥnana notes the Almohad Caliphate's most enduring contribution to North African Islam was a pervasive reticence toward the totalizing vision of *imāma* we find in *BIT*.[847] Particular attention must be given to Ibn Tūmart's reception in Ḥafṣid Tunisia, the successor state to the Almohad Caliphate. Although the anglophone bibliography[848] on the Ḥafṣids is slowly growing, little attention has been given to the ways in which Ḥafṣid scholars dealt with Ibn Tūmart's more radical teachings while trying to appropriate the caliphal legacy of the Almohads for the Ḥafṣid dynasty.

[845] They are (respectively) *al-Durra al-mushīda fī sharḥ al-Murshida* (MS Tunis, Dār al-kutub, 14559 and 16359 ; MS Rabat, Bibliothèque Nationale, 1059 k) and *Sharḥ al-Murshida* (MS Tunis, Dār al-kutub, 11273 and MS Fez, Quaraouiyine). For Iḥnāna's edition of the latter, see Chapter 2.

[846] This anti-mahdism is in many ways similar to the neutralization Gershom Scholem identifies in the Ḥasidic reception of Lurianic Kabbalah after the followers of the messianic pretender, Shabbatai Tzvi (1626-76), radicalized Jewish mysticism in a way that scandalized world Judaism. See Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1962), 329; "The Neutralization of the Messianic Element in Early Hasidism" in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 176-202.

[847] Yūsuf Iḥnāna, *Tatawwur al-madhhab al-ash'arī fi-l-gharb al-islāmī* (Rabat: Manshūrāt wazārat al-awfāq wa-l-shu'ūn al-islāmiyya, 2003), 91-92; 100; 138; 169.

[848] A recent effort to show continuity between the scholarly culture of Almohad al-Andalus and Ḥafṣid Tunisia is Ramzi Rouighi, *The Making of a Mediterranean Emirate: Ifrīqiyā and Its Andalusis 1200-1400* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). Rouighi makes very little of Almohad Islam (as opposed to the Almohad state) within the context of Ḥafṣid historiography.

For historians of the wider Islamic world, the value of Ibn Tūmart's writings rest in the attention they pay to marginal legal and theological opinions that had fallen into obscurity by the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century. Ibn Tūmart reveals that there is still much we do not know about the formative centuries of *kalām*, especially about the scholars who coalesced into the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa*s at Nishapur and Baghdad. Underneath Ibn Tūmart, as well as al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī, we hear the voices of scholars like Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī (d. 418/1028). He and other lesser known scholars influenced the students of the Niẓāmiyya by preserving minoritarian views, such as fallibilism in *ijtihād*, that later generations considered a danger to peace between Sunnī *madhāhib*.

The story of the Almohad movement and of its founder is an uncommon one within the history of ideas. In it we see consequences of Islamic rationalism play out, not in the periphery of the academy or in the service of a pre-existing order, but instead in a struggle against the current to found a movement that was both new and universal in its claims. In order to recover the intellectual production that sustained Almohadism, we must take seriously the notion that religious belief, theology, and jurisprudence can motivate such a movement, rather than serve as an apology for a *status quo*. Nor was Almohadism simply an ideology, the efficacy of which depended more on the charisma of its ideologues and the political fruits it yielded. For Ibn Tūmart, knowledge was the basis of salvation in this world and the next. In a deeper sense, Ibn Tūmart identified knowledge, both that revealed in the Qur'ān and what one could glean from the structure of the human intellect, with salvation itself. Such knowledge would indeed be "the dearest thing one can desire."[849] Only after confronting the allure and apocalyptic urgency that knowledge held for Ibn Tūmart and the Almohads can we appreciate their actions, the upheaval

[849] D, 29.

and violence they pursued in order to realize the perceived benefits of this saving knowledge in their world.

APPENDIX I – "The Creed of the Almohads"

[D, 213]

"The Creed of the Almohads" – *ʻAqīdat al-muwaḥḥidīn*

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Praise be to God, as it is due to Him.

I speak well of Him, just as He spoke well of Himself.

May His prayers be upon Muḥammad and his family.

§1 – On the Merit of *tawḥīd*, its Necessity, and the First Thing Needed to Attain It

[A *ḥadīth* narrated by] Ḥumrān, a client of ʻUthmān b. ʻAffān, [who received it] from ʻUthmān b. ʻAffān: "The Messenger of God—God's blessing and peace be upon him—said, 'Whoever dies knowing that there is no god but God enters the garden.'"[850] [There is another *ḥadīth*] from Ibn ʻUmar, who heard it from the Prophet—God's blessing and peace be upon him: "He said, 'The structure of Islam is built upon five things: the unification of God (*tawḥīd*), the performance of prayers, the giving of alms, fasting during Ramaḍān, and the *ḥajj*.'"[851]

[There is another *ḥadīth*] from Ibn ʻAbbās: "The Messenger of God—God's blessing and peace be upon him—sent Muʻādh to Yemen. He said, 'Present yourself to the People of the Book and let the first thing to which you call them be the worship of God (*ʻibādat Allāh*). If they know God, then tell them that God imposed the five prayers upon them, day and night. And if they do

*All translations from the Qur'ān are adapted from N.J. Dawood's translation.

[850] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1:43.
[851] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1:19.

this, then tell them that God has imposed alms upon them. You shall take from their possessions and distribute [them] to the poor among them. If they obey, take from them, but avoid their most prized possessions.'"[852] In an [D, 214] alternate narration [of the same *ḥadīth*, Muḥammad says], "Fear the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no veil between him and God."[853]

From this it is established that worship (*'ibāda*) is not valid except through belief (*īmān*) and sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*). Belief and sincerity [are achieved] by knowledge, knowledge by study, study by the will, the will by desire and fear, desire and fear by the promise and the threat, the promise and the threat by the Law, the Law by the faithfulness of the messenger, the faithfulness of the messenger by the appearance of the miracle by God's permission[854]—may He be praised.

§2

By intellectual necessity one knows the existence of the Creator—may He be praised. Necessity is that which is not open to doubt and which is impossible for a rational individual to reject. This necessity has three divisions: necessary, possible, and impossible. The necessary is that for which being is unavoidable, such as the need for an action to have an agent. The possible is that which possibly exists and possibly does not exist, such as rainfall. The impossible is that for which being is impossible, such as the joining together of two contraries. This necessity is independently [present] in the minds of all rational individuals. It is established in their minds that an action must have an agent and that there is no doubt about the existence of said agent. Therefore God—may He be praised and exalted—indicated this in His Book, saying, "Is God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, to be doubted?"[855] The Creator—may He be exalted—

[852] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1:31.
[853] *Saḥiḥ al-Bukhārī*, 46:9.
[854] This is a reference to "Creed" §17.
[855] Qur'ān 14:10.

of the heavens and the earth tells us that there is no doubt as to His existence. That from which doubt is omitted necessarily exists. From this, it is known and established that the Creator—may He be praised—is known by intellectual necessity.

§3

From his own origination in time, the human being knows the existence of his Creator, for he knows that he exists after he was not, as He—may He be exalted—said, "I brought you into being when you were nothing before."[856] For he knows that he was created from lowly water, as He—may He be exalted—said, "Let man reflect on that from which he is created. He is created from seminal fluid…"[857] The human being necessarily knows that the water from which he was created is according to one attribute in which there is no difference, composition [D, 215], formation, bone, flesh, hearing, or sight. Then, all of these attributes came to exist after not having existed. Once he knows of their origination, he knows that they must have a Creator who created them, as He—may He be exalted—said, "We first created man from a piece of clay, then placed him, a living seed, in a secure enclosure. We made the seed a clot of blood, and the clot a lump of flesh. We fashioned this into bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, bring forth another creation. Blessed be God, the noblest of creators."[858]

§4

From one act, he knows the existence of the Creator—may He be praised—as well from the second and the third [act] *ad infinitum*. The existence of the Creator—may He be praised—is known by way of the heavens and the earth and all created things, just as He is known from the

[856] Qur'ān 19:9.
[857] Qur'ān 86:5-6.
[858] Qur'ān 23:12-14.

origination of one movement in time, since [this motion] necessarily requires an agent, its existence being impossible without an agent. Whatever is necessary for one act in terms of [its] need for a creator is necessary for all acts. Everything, the existence of which is known after it was not, is necessarily originated in time. He necessarily knows of the origination in time of the night, the day, human beings, riding animals, livestock, birds, wild beasts, predators, and other species that exist after they were not. For if the origination in time of one body is known, then the origination in time of all other bodies is [also] known in their extension in space, mutability, possibility, particularity, origination in time, and the need for an agent. God informs [us] of their creation in His Book; He says, "In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of night and day; in the ships that sail the ocean with cargoes beneficial to men; in the water which God sends down from the sky and with which He revives the earth after its death, dispersing over it all manner of beasts; in the disposal of the winds, and in the clouds that are driven between sky and earth: surely in these are signs for rational men."[859] [D, 216]

§5

If one knows that [all of these] exist after they were not, [then] one knows that a creature cannot be a creator, since there are three divisions of created beings: rational animals, non-rational animals, and inanimate things. If one were to gather [all] rational animals so that they could put back one finger after its disappearance, they would not be able to do so. If the rational animal is incapable, then the non-rational animal is [likewise] incapable. If the rational animal and the non-rational animal are incapable, then the inanimate thing is even further [from such capability]. From this it is known that God is the Creator of all things, as God—may He be

[859] Qur'ān 2:164.

praised and exalted—said, "God is the Creator of all things, and of all things He is the Guardian."[860]

§6

If one knows that God is the Creator of all things, [then] one knows that He does not resemble anything, for a thing does not resemble anything except that which is of its genus. It is impossible that the Creator—may He be praise—be of the genus "creatures." If He were of their genus, His deficiency would not be like their deficiency; for were His deficiency like their deficiency, it would be impossible for the existence of acts [to derive] from Him. We necessarily observe the existence of acts, and to negate them at the same time that they exist is absurd. Thus from this it is known that the Creator—may He be praised—does not resemble any created being, as God—may He be praised and exalted—said, "Is He, then, who has created, like him who cannot create? Will you not take heed?"[861]

§7

If one knows the negation of resemblance between God and the created being, then one knows the existence of the Creator—may He be exalted—in an absolute way, because everything that necessarily has a beginning and an end, limitation and specification, necessarily has extension in space, mutability, possibility, particularity, origination in time, and the need for a creator. The Creator—may He be praised—does not have a beginning, since everything that has a beginning necessarily has a "before." Everything that has a "before" has an "after." [D, 217] Everything that has an "after" has a limit. Everything that has a limit originates in time.

[860] Qur'ān 39:62. (N.J. Dawood).
[861] Qur'ān 16:17.

Everything that originates in time needs a creator. The Creator—may He be praised—is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden. He is knowledgeable of all things, the First without beginning, the Last without end. The Manifest is without limitation, and the Hidden is without specification.

If [all] intellects were gathered together so that they could identify how a creature's sight, hearing, or intellectual faculty [comes to be], they would be unable to do so, even though is a creature [like them]. If they are incapable of identifying how that which is created [comes to be], then [they are likewise incapable of] identifying how that which is not of genus "creature" or what does not lend itself to intelligible comparison [comes to be]. There is nothing like Him that [can be] compared to Him, as He—may He be exalted—said, "Nothing can be compared to Him. He alone hears and sees all."[862]

The imagination does not reach Him, nor does the intellect apprehend how He is. The Chosen One[863]—may God bless him and grant him peace—said, "I cannot count Your praises, for You have praised Yourself" in order to alert us to the denial of resemblance and the identification of how [He comes to be], and to have us acknowledge the loftiness and majesty that belongs to the Opulent, the Praiseworthy. This is the utmost wisdom—may God bless him and grant him peace.[864]

§8

Intellects have a limit at which they stop and which they cannot exceed. This is the inability to ascertain modality. They have no place nor application beyond this except [the

[862] Qur'ān 42:11.
[863] The Prophet Muḥammad.
[864] *Al-Muwaṭṭā'* 15:503; *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* 48: 124.

affirmation of] corporealism or the rejection of [God's] attributes. The knowledgeable know Him by His acts and reject the assignation of modality to His majesty because [the assignation of modality] leads to [the affirmation of] corporealism and the rejection of [God's] attributes. This is absurd, and everything that leads to the absurd is absurd. Actions bear witness to the existence of the Creator, who alone is capable.

In response to the ambiguous verses in the Qur'ān[865] that may persuade someone of [God's] resemblance [to created beings] or [which suggest] modality, such as the Throne Verse, the *ḥadīth* of Descent, and other ambiguous verses in the Law, one must believe them since they have come down along with [verses] that reject resemblance and modality. Only someone with a deviant heart follows the ambiguous verses in the Law [by themselves], as God—may He be exalted—said, "Those whose hearts are deviant will follow the ambiguous part, so as to create strife by seeking to interpret it. But no one knows its interpretation except God. Those who are well-grounded in knowledge say: 'We believe in it: it is all from our Lord.'"[866] He—may He be exalted—said that the deviant ones follow what is ambiguous out of a desire for strife and a desire to interpret it. He censures them for this. [D, 218] He [likewise] said that those who are well-grounded in knowledge say, "We believe in it: it is all from our Lord." Follow them it that.

The Messenger of God—may God bless him and grant him peace—cautioned those who followed what was ambiguous. It has been narrated from 'Ā'isha—may God be pleased with her—that she said, "The Messenger of God—may God bless him and grant him peace—was asked about this verse. [He responded,] 'It is He who sent down the Book to you; there are clear verses in it which are the Mother of the Book. Other verses are ambiguous. Those whose hearts

[865] *Al-mutashābihāt*.
[866] Qur'ān 3:7.

are deviant will follow the ambiguous part, so as to create strife by seeking to interpret it. But no one knows its interpretation except God. Those who are well-grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in it: it is all from our Lord."' The Messenger of God—may God bless him and grant him peace—[also] said, 'If you see those who follow what is ambiguous, these are the one whom God has name. Beware them!'"[867]

One does not conceive [of anything] in the imagination except that which falls within these ten limits: before/after, above/below, right/left, in front of/behind, and all/some. All that falls within these [limits] necessarily originates in time and has the need for a creator. The Creator—may He be praised—is Lofty and Worthy of Praise.

§9

If one knows that His existence is absolute, one knows that no one else is with Him in His domain. If another were with Him, He would fall within the limits of temporally originated beings, because the other independent being would necessarily exist separately. The Creator—may He be praised—is neither connected to or separate from anything. If connection or separation were attributed to Him, He would necessarily be created. It is impossible for the Creator to be created because it is impossible to overturn truths. From this one knows that He is one God and that there is no second [god] with Him in His domain, as He—may He be exalted—said, "You shall not serve two gods, for He is but one God. Fear none but me."[868]

[867] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 4547.
[868] Qur'ān 16:51.

§10

If one knows that God is unique in His oneness according to what is necessary for Him with regard to power and glory, then one [also] knows the impossibility of imperfection in Him, because the Creator is Living, Knowing, Capable, Willing, Hearing, Seeing, and Speaking, without [us having to] ascertain [His] modality. If imperfection were attributed to Him, then the existence of [His] acts would be impossible, because it is impossible that one who is ignorant or incapable or asleep or dead be the Creator. The whole world testifies to the Lofty, the Praiseworthy, because of what it contains—[D, 219] particularity, formation, agreement, difference, capacity, organization, laws, and certainty—such that He—may He be praised and exalted—is capable of all that He desires: "The Lord shall accomplish what He will";[869] "[He is] Living, Eternal. Neither sleep nor slumber overtakes Him";[870] "[He] has knowledge of the hidden and the manifest";[871] "Nothing on earth or in heaven is hidden from God";[872] "He has knowledge of all that land and sea contain: every leaf that falls is known to Him;[873] "not an atom's weight in the heavens or the earth escapes Him, nor anything smaller or greater but is recorded in His Book";[874] "God encompasses all things with His knowledge";[875] "[He] keeps strict count of all things";[876] "Shall He who has created all things not know them all? Gracious and All-knowing is He."[877]

[869] Qur'ān 11:107/85:16.
[870] Qur'ān 2:225.
[871] Qur'ān 6:73.
[872] Qur'ān 3:5.
[873] Qur'ān 6:59.
[874] Qur'ān 34:3.
[875] Qur'ān 65:12.
[876] Qur'ān 34:3.
[877] Qur'ān 67:14.

§11

If one knows necessity of His existence from eternity, then one knows the impossibility of His changing from that which is necessary for Him with respect to His power and glory, since it is impossible to overturn truths. If the necessary were to become possible, or the possible impossible, then what is known would be rendered false. From this, one knows the necessity of God's permanence. He does not cease nor will He cease to be knowledgeable of all the beings that originate in time according to their characteristics, the differences of their genera, the arrangement of their times, and their number before their actual existence. The All-Seeing predestines them from eternity and they emerge through His wisdom in accordance with His capacity. They occur according to His capacity, and [it is] an arrangement that cannot be disrupted or figured out.

§12

Everything that His decree and predestination precedes is necessary and inevitable. The Creator—may He be praised—causes all created beings that issue from His decree and predestination to emerge in the manner in which He predestines them from eternity, without increase, omission, or change in what was predestined, or alteration in what was determined. He causes them to exist without intermediary or obstacle. He has no associate in their origination or partner in His causing them to exist. He causes their origination from nothing that was with Him in the beginning. He is perfect beyond any likeness or object of comparison in existence. He devises [created beings] so that they may point to His capability and His choice. He subjugates them [D, 220] so that they may point to His wisdom and His governance. He created the heavens

and the earth and He was not incapable of their creation. On the contrary, [their creation] was His command. If He wills something by saying, "Be!", then it is so.

§13

Everything the existence of which emerged after its non-existence is among the classes of creatures within the Creator's dominion—may He be praised—[and] proceeds from His decree and predestination. The rations are divided up, the steps set down in writing, the souls are numbered, and the times allotted. Nothing comes after its time appointed time nor precedes it. No one dies without completing the life allotted to him. No one exceeds what was predestined for him. All was made clear when He created him; everything was anticipated when He predestined him. By the creation of Paradise, He will make things easy [see Q 92:7]; by the creation of Hell, He will ease some toward difficulty. The happy man will be happy in his mother's womb; the wretch will be a wretch in his mother's womb. All of this is in accordance with His decree and predestination. Not one thing will fall outside of His governance—not one atom will move—for nothing is above [that atom] in the darkness of the earth but that it is in accordance with His decree and predestination. Everything is with Him to the extent that "He knows the hidden and the manifest. He is the Supreme, the Most High."[878]

§14

The Creator—may He be praised—is unique in terms of justice and goodness. He guides and misleads; He strengthens and weaken. No one provides order except Him. There is no sovereign except Him. Injustice and enmity are only attributed to someone upon whom prohibition and judgment [fall]. Whenever one transgresses the limits of the Sovereign and

[878] Qur'ān 13:9.

implicates himself in what does not concern him, injustice and enmity are attributed to him, since something being forbidden him is with his [i.e. the human being's] domain, and a judgment being rendered of him within his action. The Creator—may He be exalted—has no prohibition upon Him in His judgments, nor is any judgment rendered of Him in His actions. He is unique in sovereignty, oneness, domain and divinity. In His domain, He does what He desires and judges in His creation what He wills. He punishes whom He wills; He shows mercy to whom He wills. He does not plead for reward or fear punishment. There is no right nor judgment over Him, for every blessing from Him is a grace, and every act of retribution from is an act of justice. "None shall question Him about what He does, but they shall be questioned."[879] [D, 221]

§15 – On the Names of God—may He be exalted

He has the most beautiful names.[880] "He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden. He has knowledge of all things."[881] "He is God, beside whom there is no other god. He is the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, the Giver of Peace, the Keeper of the Faith, the Guardian, the Mighty One, the All-Powerful, the Most High."[882] He is the High, the Powerful, the Great,[883] the Exalted, the Lofty, the Praiseworthy, the Living, the Enduring, the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. "He is God, the Creator, the Originator, the Modeller. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth give glory to Him. He is the Mighty, the Wise."[884]

[879] Qur'ān 21:23.
[880] See Qur'ān 20:8.
[881] Qur'ān 57:3.
[882] Qur'ān 59: 23.
[883] See Qur'ān 31:30 and 22:62.
[884] Qur'ān 59:24.

The Creator's names—may He be praised—are assigned by His permission. He is not named except in the way that He names Himself in His Book or in the mouth of His Prophet. No comparison, derivation, or convention is possible with regard to His names. A creature may be called "wise" and "generous" according to his knowledge and generosity, [but] he is not comparable to the Creator—may He be praised. A creature may be called "archer" and "killer" according to his [acts of] shooting and killing, [but] he is not comparable to the Creator—may He be praised. A creature may be called "Zayd" or "'Amr" when he is born; he does not have a name, so his name is agreed upon by convention. A creature has no grasp of his Creator, so He calls Him by a name that He does not give to Himself in His Book. What He disavows of Himself in His Book, He disavows of Himself. What He affirms of Himself, He affirms it of Himself without exchange, resemblance, or qualification. He calls Himself by His most beautiful names and is called by them, as He—may He be praised and exalted—said, "God has the most beautiful names. Call on Him by His names and stay away from those who pervert them. They shall receive their due for their misdeeds."[885]

§16

What is said about the beatific vision in the Law must be verified by that which is seen without resemblance or qualification. Sight does not reach Him in the sense [that He has] an end, restriction, connection, or separation, because it is impossible that the limits of originated beings be attributed to Him. Every particularity implies a defect, and [every] limit implies origination in time. This must necessarily be excluded from His glory—may He be praised. [He is] one, [D, 222] without comparison. "He begot none nor was He begotten. He has no equal."[886] "Creator of

[885] Qur'ān 7:180.
[886] Qur'ān 112:3-4.

the heavens and the earth. How should He have a son when He has no consort? He created all things, and He has knowledge of all things. Such is God, your Lord. There is no God but Him, the Creator of all things. Therefore serve Him. Of all things He is the Guardian. No mortal eyes can see Him, though He sees all eyes. He is the Benign and All-Aware."[887]

§17 – On the Verification of the Messenger by Miracles

By necessity, one knows the veracity of the messenger by the appearance of extraordinary signs [that occur] in accordance with what he claims. Evidence of this is that whoever claims the message must offer [one] of three divisions [of acts]:

He might offer ordinary acts, such as eating, drinking and wearing clothes, and [then] claim that these are miraculous. [In this case,] his claim is false because they lack any indication of his veracity, for no one is unable to perform these actions which he claims are a sign of his veracity.

He might also offer acts that he achieved through ruses and teaching, such as writing, building, sewing, and other crafts. His claim that these are miraculous is false, since that which is achieved through ruses and teaching does not confirm [the existence of] a miracle belonging to the messenger.

He might also offer miraculous acts, such as the parting of the sea, the turning of a staff into a snake, the raising of the dead, or the splitting of the moon as a miracle belonging to him. [In this case,] he confirms his veracity, since the Creator alone—may He be praised—enables them and brings them about in accordance with [the messenger's] claim. The agreement of the

[887] Qur'ān 6:101-03.

miracle and the claim can be perceived through the senses, and there is no way to deny those things which have been perceived through the senses, nor to render false what is known.

Among the Prophet's miracles—may God bless him and grant him peace—was the Qur'ān. "The faithful spirit has brought it down"[888] "in clear Arabic speech,"[889] for God made it a sign of His veracity. God—may He be praised and exalted—said, "If you doubt what We have revealed to Our Servant, produce a single chapter comparable to it. Call upon your idols to assist you, if what you say is true."[890] When they could not offer anything like what He offered, [Muḥammad's] veracity was known by necessity. God sent all people a messenger, a warning, one who invoked God with His permission, a radiant lamp. He sent him out of kindness and mercy. He allocated knowledge and fear to him; He distinguished him with intelligence and wisdom; He guided him to the noblest virtues. [D, 223]

He attained the message, explained the Law, guided [others] to faithfulness, and brought certainty from His Lord after the perfection of religion and the completion of the blessing—may God bless him, his family, his Companion, the Emigrants, the Helpers, and those who follow them obediently until the Day of Judgment. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds.

This completes "The Creed." Praise be to God for His assistance.

May God bless Muḥammad, His Prophet and Servant.

[888] Q 26:193.
[889] Q 26:195.
[890] Q 2:23.

APPENDIX II – Comparison of Texts from "The Section on Theology"

Fletcher identifies two points in the "Creed" which she believes contradicts the shorter "Spiritual Guide" (*al-murshida*). She believes that the "Spiritual Guide" teaches *ta'ṭīl* (the denial of God's attributes), a doctrine the extreme form of which is associated with the Mu'tazila. The "Creed," by contrast, affirms the divine attributes as the Ash'ariyya did.[891] Citing Ignác Goldziher's early work on *BIT*, Fletcher also attributes "pantheistic monism" to the "Spiritual Guide."[892]

She bases her first argument on three pieces of evidence. (i) Ibn Tūmart does not affirm or deny God's attributes (*ṣifāt*) in the "Spiritual Guide," but instead speaks "only of God's names." (ii) Ibn Tūmart twice cites Q 42:9 ("There is nothing like Him.") in the "Spiritual Guide." The Mu'tazila cited this verse to justify their denial of reified attributes (*ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*) of God. (iii) In a *fatwā* condemning "The Spiritual Guide," Ibn Taymiyya identifies Ibn Tūmart as a Mu'tazilī on the basis of his choice of the name *al-muwaḥḥidūn* for his followers. The Mu'tazila often uses this epithet, as well as *ahl al-tawḥīd*, to refer to themselves. The "Spiritual Guide" is a theological poem. It is conceivable that, for reasons of brevity or meter, Ibn Tūmart did not feel it necessary to present the doctrine of divine attributes. The omission of God's attributes is not sufficient to prove that this poem teaches *ta'ṭīl*, and the brief mention that "He has the most beautiful names," even when coupled with this omission, does not suggest a Mu'tazilī leaning. I agree with Fletcher that, in comparison to classical Ash'arism, the "Spiritual Guide" has a stronger commitment to *tanzīh* (God's transcendence). However, "Creed" §§6-8 share this commitment. In addition to this, Ibn Tūmart gives a list in §10 of seven divine attributes—life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, sight, and speech—that are commonly used by

[891] Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic," *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 114-17.
[892] Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic," *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 117-19.

Niẓāmiyya Ash‘arīs like al-Juwaynī.[893] Although he does not call these “attributes” (*ṣifāt*) outright, he uses the verb “to have *x* attributed to” (*ittaṣafa bi-*) with reference to God: “…were defects attributed [to God], the existence of acts would not be possible of Him” (*law ittaṣafa bi-l-naqā’iṣ li-sthiḥāl min-hu wujūd al-af‘āl*). The defects that that Ibn Tūmart does not want to *attribute* to God are ignorance, incapacity, sleep, and death—contraries of knowledge, power, hearing/sight, and life.[894] His language here leaves little doubt he sees these seven qualities as God positive attributes.

Her appeal to Q 42:9 is likewise inconclusive. Although the Mu‘tazila saw this verse as evidence of *ta‘ṭīl*, many Ash‘arī theologians cite the same verse in other contexts, but do not concede that it implies the rejection of God’s attributes.[895] Ibn Taymiyya’s reasoning in his *fatwā* is identical to Fletcher’s: the “Spiritual Guide” neither affirms nor denies God’s attributes; therefore, the “Spiritual Guide” denies God’s attributes; the Mu‘tazila deny God’s attributes; therefore, the “Spiritual Guide” teaches Mu‘tazilism.[896] Fletcher admits that Ibn Taymiyya exaggerates in his attribution of *ta‘ṭīl* to the “Spiritual Guide” because Ibn Tūmart “grants God individual qualities which he specifies.”[897] Despite her acknowledgement of the weakness of Ibn Taymiyya as a source, and, by extension, the weakness of her own argument, she simultaneously concludes that “the identification of the Almohad *tawhid* with the negation of the attributes is clearly an inadequate understanding of the issue” and that “[while] Ibn Tumart’s *murshida*

[893] See §15 above.
[894] D, 218.
[895] Al-Juwaynī, *al-‘Aqīda al-niẓāmiyya fī arkān al-islām*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya li-l-Turāth, 1992), 24-34. See also, Yūsuf Iḥnāna, *Taṭawwur al-madhhab al-Ash‘arī fī al-gharb al-islāmī* (Rabat: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-l-Shu’ūn, 2003), 14; 105; 250. According to Iḥnāna, the Ash‘arīs understood this verse as a rejection of *tashbīh*, God’s resemblance to His creatures.
[896] Henri Laoust, “Une Fetwà d’Ibn Taymiya sur Ibn Tūmart”, *Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale* 59 (1959), 164.
[897] Madeleine Fletcher, “The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic,” *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 116.

appears to hold a moderate Mu'tazilite position on the attributes, the *'aqīda* clearly takes the Ash'arite position."[898] The moderate Mu'tazilī position Fletcher identifies—denying God's attributes while affirming certain qualities of Him—sounds quite similar to Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī's own position on *ta'ṭīl*.[899] George Makdisi has cautioned scholars against making neat distinctions between Mu'tazilism and Ash'arism. The majority of the texts we use to identify the tenets of each school (e.g. al-Juwaynī and Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī) stem from a later period of Ash'arism that had a vested interest in presenting Mu'tazilism as radical. By emphasizing (even *exaggerating*) the radicalness of Mu'tazilī positions, later Ash'arīs established links with the Shāfi'ī and Ḥanafī legal schools by portraying themselves as a "moderate" in comparison.[900] This propagandistic function of Ash'arī literature often meant that later Ash'arīs criticized Mu'tazilī-adjacent views that earlier Ash'arīs (including al-Ash'arī himself!) held. This element of Ash'arī historiography means that we cannot determine the confessional affinities of someone like Ibn Tūmart solely by appealing to this standard, ahistorical model of the Mu'tazilī-Ash'arī opposition. Nor can we accept the assessment of an author like Ibn Taymiyya, whose knowledge of *kalām* likely depended on later Ash'arī sources, without proper contextualization.

Fletcher also believes that the "The Unification of the Creator"[901] expresses "pantheistic monism." The passage one which she bases her claim is, in her translation: "He is unique in all eternity; nothing coexists with Him; nothing exists outside of Him [*laysa ma'ahu shay' ghayruhu*], neither land nor sky, neither light nor shadows…"[902] From this rendering, we see that

[898] Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic," *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 117.
[899] See Kees Wagtendonk, "Images in Islam. Discussion of a Paradox," in *Effigies Dei: Essays on the History of Religion*, ed. Dirk van der Plas (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 115-16.
[900] George Makdisi, "Ash'arī and Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History II," *Studia Islamica* 18 (1963), 373-9.
[901] Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic," *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 117. Fletcher identifies this text as the *murshida* ("The Spiritual Guide"). Some scholars refer to both texts as *murshida*, but Fletcher does not clearly distinguish between these two texts.
[902] Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic," *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 117-18.

Fletcher understands pantheistic monism in a strong sense: everything that exists *is* God; nothing exists outside of God. She also argues that the pantheistic monism appears in the "Creed," albeit in a much less explicit way. She interprets Ibn Tūmart's distinction of between created beings, who are by definition qualified by the ten terms (e.g. before/after, in front of/behind, etc.), and God, who is absolute and unqualified, as suggestive of pantheism.[903] On her interpretation, the human intellect divides up the world into separate entities because it can only apprehend things within the confines of the ten terms. If the intellect could surpass these limitations, it would understand that these individuals entities are God, "who is the whole and everything."[904] She perceives the suppression of pantheistic monism in the "Creed" as further evidence that the "Spiritual Guide" and shorter texts reflect Ibn Tūmart's original thought, whereas the "Creed" reflects the Almohads' need to rationalize Ibn Tūmart for the Andalusī context.

Fletcher mistranslates the short passage from "The Unification of the Creator" upon which she builds her case for pantheistic monism in Ibn Tūmart. A more accurate translation is: "[He] is one in His eternity; there is nothing other than He alongside Him [in His eternity], nor any being except Him [in His eternity]…" (*wāḥid fī azaliyyatihi laysa ma'ahu shay' ghayruhu wa-lā mawjūd siwāhu*).[905] This statement is not an affirmation of pantheistic monism, but is rather a rejection of the Aristotelian point of view which holds that the heavens and the earth exist eternally alongside God. Ibn Tūmart simply says that God is the sole being that exists in eternity and that, prior to creation, there was nothing with Him. "Creed" §8 does not suggest pantheism; there, Ibn Tūmart makes a real distinction between creatures *qua* qualified beings and God, the absolute being (*mawjūd 'alā al-iṭlāq*). This radical ontological gulf between temporally

[903] See D, 217-18 ("Creed" §8).
[904] Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic," *Numen* 38, no. 1 (1991), 119.
[905] D, 225: line 10.

created beings and God permeates the argument of the "Creed" (e.g. §§5-10, §§12-3) and the rest of the theological texts. It is likely that Fletcher bases her translation on Goldziher's: "Einzig ist er in seiner Ewigkeit, neben ihn existiert kein Ding, das nicht Er ist, kein Wesen ausser ihm."[906] Goldziher likewise sees "eine unverkennbare pantheistische Nuance." Both Goldziher and Fletcher find pantheism in the text because they overdetermine the meaning of "other than He" (*ghayruhu*) and "except Him" (*siwāhu*) in the direction of ontological identity. Moreover, they neglect that these qualifications do not apply to God in general, but rather to His existence in eternity. Nothing exists with Him *in eternity*, in the sense that, prior to His creation of the cosmos from nothing, He was the sole existent in pre-eternity. In "That Which Originates in Time," Ibn Tūmart describes God's existence in eternity using nearly identical phrasing: *laysa ma'ahu shay' ghayruhu wa-lā mawjūd siwāhu fī azaliyyatihi wāḥid*.[907] By placing "He is one is His eternity" (*fī azaliyyatihi wāḥid*) at the end of the phrase, Ibn Tūmart signals in a more explicit way that the qualifier "nothing exists alongside Him, nor any being except Him" refers to God's existence in eternity, rather than His existence in general. By neglecting the phrase "in His eternity," Goldziher and Fletcher arrive at a wholly different statement that is consistent with pantheism: "nothing exists outside of Him." Since her interpretation of "The Unification of the Creator" is grounded in a misunderstanding of the text, Fletcher cannot argue that later Almohads manipulated the "Creed" by suppressing Ibn Tūmart's original pantheistic monism because there is no evidence that he ever professed such a doctrine in the first place.

Ibn Tūmart's association with al-Ghazālī raises the question as to whether Ibn Tūmart taught monotheism or monism. In his study on monism in the works of al-Ghazālī, Alexander

[906] Ignác Goldziher, "Materialien zur Kenntnis der Almohadenbewegung in Nordafrika," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 41, no. 1 (1886), 73.
[907] D, 201.

Treiger distinguishes between monotheism and monism in the following way. Monotheism is the view that "God is the *one* of the totality of existents which is the source of existence for the rest of existents." Monism is the view that "God is the *only* existent in existence and the world, considered in itself, is 'sheer non-existence' (*'adam maḥḍ*)." The monotheist holds that all existents outside of God are real; the monist, by contrast, hold that all things outside of God exist in a virtual way, since God is the only real existent.[908] Treiger concludes that al-Ghazālī expresses both views in his *Niche of Lights*, a work which I argue exerted a profound influence on Ibn Tūmart's epistemology.[909] Based on the "Creed," as well as "On the Objects of Knowledge" and "That Which Originates in Time," I believe that Ibn Tūmart consistently teaches monotheism. He treats the distinction between Creator and creature as a *real*, rather than a virtual, distinction. His condemnation of God's resemblance (*tashbīh*) to His creatures and affirmation of God's absolute transcendence (*tanzīh*) is a cornerstone, not only of his theology, but of his understanding of revelation in terms of Ash'arī Divine Command Theory. Monism would complicate his understanding of hermeneutics and, moreover, would be difficult to reconcile with his metaphysics. The many traces of ṣūfism and other mystical traditions in *BIT*—especially those which resemble *The Niche of Lights*—indicates that future research into Ibn Tūmart's theology must account for his historical and conceptual relationship to Islamic mysticism, East and West. Until then, the possibility remains that Ibn Tūmart, like al-Ghazālī, taught monotheism and monism in different contexts.

[908] Alexander Treiger, "Monism and Monotheism in al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-anwār*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2007), 1.
[909] Alexander Treiger, "Monism and Monotheism in al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-anwār*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2007), 14.

The table below seeks to graphically demonstrate the consistency within "The Section on Theology." Centered around the text of the "Spiritual Guide," the table shows that Ibn Tūmart repeats each of his major theological points across texts, often *verbatim*. The shorter texts are cited "page #: line #" in Ṭālibī's edition. The "Creed" is cited according to section (§). "That Which Originates in Time" is cited "page #: line #" in Ṭālibī's edition.

Table 20: Comparison of Texts in "The Section on Theology"

	"The Spiritual Guide" المرشدة	"The Creed of the Almohads" عقيدة الموحدين	"The Unity of the Creator" توحيد الباري	"Praise for the Creator" تسبيح الباري	"The Witness of the Signs" شهادة الدلالات	"That Which Originates in Time" المحدث
1	١-٢: وجب على كل مكلف أن يعلم أن الله ... واحد في ملكه 1-2: Every legally responsible individual has the obligation to know that God is one in His domain.	ف ٩: علم أنه ليس معه غيره في ملكه §9: …it is known that nothing else is with Him in His domain.	١٠: ليس معه شيء غيره 10: There is nothing else with Him. ١٣: انفرد في الأزل بالوحدانية والملك والألوهية 13: He is unique in eternity with respect to oneness, domain, and divinity.			٢٠١، ٦-٧: ليس معه شيء غيره ولا موجود سواه في أزليته واحد، واحد في الأزل D, 201, 6-7: There is nothing else with Him, nor is there any entity except Him in His one eternity, [for He is] eternally one.
2	٢-٣: خلق العالم بأسره... 2-3: He created the	ف ٥: فعلم بهذا أن الله خلق كل شيء §5: …from this it is known that	١٣-١٤: ليس معه مدبر في الخلق 13-14: There was no other	٤: سبحان من قيد الخلق 4: Praise be to Him who bound	٦: مدبر لجميع الكائنات 6: …He arranges	٢٠١، ١١-١٤: هو الذي ارتفعت السبع الشداد بقدرته واستقرت الصم الشوامخ بإذنه واستقلت الأرضون بحوله وقوته وانقادت

	world in its entirety…	God created everything…	arranger with Him in creation.	creation together!	all beings…	الخلائق لقضائه وقدره وسخرت الأفلاك بتدبيره واستسلمت الخلائق لحكمه D, 201, 11-13, …He by whose power the seven heavens were raised, by whose permission the ears of the haughty were stoppered, by whose might and power the lands were separated, to whose predestination and decree the creatures yield, by whose governance the heavenly spheres are restrained, to whose judgment all creatures submit.
3	٣-٤: جميع الخلائق مقهورون بقدرته لا تتحرك ذرة إلا بإذنه 3-4: All creatures are conquered by His power; not an atom moves	ف ١٠: لا يعزب عنه مثقال ذرة في السموات ولا في الأرض §10: Not an atom's weight in the heavens or the earth escapes Him.			٥: بأنه عالم بجميع المعلومات 5: …that He knows all objects of knowledge.	

	without His permission.					
4	٤: موجود قبل الخلق 4: …existing before all creation…	ف ٧: ليس له بداية §7: He has no beginning…	٤: أول لا يتقيد بالقبلية 4: [He is] the First; He is not restricted by priority.			
5	٤-٥: ليس له قبل ولا بعد ولا فوق ولا تحت... 4-5: He has no before or after, no above or below…	ف ٨: لا يتصور في الوهم لا من تقيد بهذه الحدود العشرة وهي قبل وبعد وفوق وتحت... §8: One does not conceive [of anything] in the imagination except that which falls within these ten limits: before/after, above/below …	٤: أول لا يتقيد بالقبلية آخر لا يتقيد بالبعدية 4: [He is] the First; He is not restricted by priority. [He is] the Last; He is not restricted by posteriority.			٢٠١، ١٤-١٧: لا تتوهم له الوسطية هو العلي العظيم لا تتوهم له الطرفية هو الصمد القدوس لي تتوهم الجرمية هو الحي القيوم لا تتوهم له الشفعية هو القوي العزيز لا تتوهم له المثلية هو الكبير المتعال لا تتوهم له الأينية هو عالم الغيوب لا تتوهم له الكيفية D, 201, 14-17: One does not imagine that He has intermediateness—He is Lofty and Magnificent. One does not imagine that He has partialness—He is the Besought of all, the Holy One. One does not imagine that He has corporeality—He is Living and Eternal. One

						does not imagine that He has duality—He is Powerful and Mighty. One does not imagine that He has locality—He know what is hidden. One does not imagine that He has modality…
6	٦-٧: لا يتخصص في الذهن ولا يتمثل في العين لا يتصور في الوهم ولا يتكيف في العقل ولا يلحقه الأوهام والأفكار ليس كمثله شيء وهو السميع البصير 6-7: He is not specified in the mind nor represented in the eye; He is not conceived in the imagination nor qualified in the intellect. Imaginations do not reach Him—there is none like	ف ٨: للعقول حد تقف عنده لا تتعداه ... §8: Intellects have a limit at which they stop and which they cannot exceed.	٥-٦: لا تحده الأذهان ولا تصوره الأوهام ولا يلحقه الأفكار ولا تكيفه العقول 5-6: Minds do not define Him; imagination do not convceive of Him; thoughts do not reach Him; intellects do not qualify Him.	٦-٨: ولا تحيط به الإدراكات وحذر من تجاوز المحدودات وتعدى المعقولات إلى القول بالتكييفات والقطع بالتخييلات 6-8: Perceptions do not encompass Him. Caution should be taken, lest these limitations be exceeded and those things which are intelligible be exceeded	٢: لا تحيط به الإدراكات 2: Perceptions do not encompass Him. ١٢: جل عن التكييفات 12: May He be exalted above all qualification.	

	Him, the All-hearing and All-seeing.			by one who puts qualifications [of God] into speech, and makes his imaginings into a definitive statement.		
7	٨: ليس معه مدبر في الخلق ولا له شريك في الملك 8: There was no other arranger with Him in creation, nor any partner with Him in His domain.	ف ٩: ليس معه ثان في ملكه §9: There is no second [person] with Him in His domain. ف ١٢: ليس له شريك في إنشائها §12: He has no partner in their origination. ف ١٤: لا مدبر سواه لا مالك غيره §14: There is no arranger except Him, no possessor other than Him.	١٣-١٤: ليس معه مدبر في الخلق ولا شريك في الملك 13-14: There was no other arranger with Him in creation, nor any partner with Him in His domain.	٢: ودبر الأزمان بالنور والظلمات 2: He arranged the times by light and darkness.		٢٠١، ٥: إنما هو إله واحد ليس معه ثان ولا ثالث D, 201, 5: Rather, He is one God; there is no second or third with Him.
8	٨-٩: حي قيوم لا تأخذه سنة ولا نوم	ف ١٠: حي قيوم لا تأخذه سنة ولا نوم	٩: وله الحياة والبقاء			٢٠١، ١٥-١٦: هو الحي القيوم لا تتوهم له الشفعية

	8-9: [He is] Living and Eternal. Neither sleep nor slumber overtake Him.	§10: He is Living and Eternal. Neither sleep nor slumber overtake Him.	9: He has life and permanence.			D, 201, 15-16: [He is] Living and Eternal. One cannot imagine that He has duality.
9	٩-١٢: عالم الغيب والشهادة لا يخفى عليه شيء في الأرض ولا في السماء يعلم ما في البر والبحر وما تسقط من ورقة إلا يعلمها ولا حبة في ظلمات الأرض ولا رطب ولا يابس إلا في كتاب مبين أحاط بكل شيء علما وأحصى كل شيء عددا 9-12: He knows the hidden and the manifest; nothing on earth or in heaven is hidden from Him. He knows what is on land and in the sea; not a leaf falls without His knowing it; there is no seed in the	ف ١٠: عالم الغيب والشهادة لا يخفى عليه شيء في الأرض ولا في السماء يعلم ما في البر والبحر وما يسقط من ورقة إلا يعلمها لا يعزب عنه مثقال ذرة في السموات ولا في الأرض ولا أصغر من ذلك ولا أكبر أحاط بكل شيء علما وأحصى كل شيء عددا §10: He knows the hidden and the manifest; nothing on earth or in heaven is hidden from Him. He knows what is on land and in the sea; not a leaf falls without His knowing it; not an atom’s weight in the	٧: ولا يتصف بالجهل 7: Ignorance is not attributed to Him.		٥: بأنه عالم بجميع المعلومات ٨: بأنه لا تخفى عليه الخفيات 5: …that He knows all objects of knowledge.	٢٠١، ١٧: هو عالم الغيوب لا تتوهم له الكيفية سبحانه هو الله الواحد القهار D, 201, 17: He knows what is hidden. One should not imagine that He has qualification—praised be to Him! He is God, the One, the Subduer.

	shadow of the earth, nor moistness nor dryness without them being contained in his clear Book. He encompasses everything in His knowledge and enumerates all things by number.	heavens or the earth escapes Him, nor anything smaller or greater than that. He encompasses everything in His knowledge and enumerates all things by number.				
10	١٢-١٣: فعال لما يريد قادر على ما يشاء له الملك والغناء وله العزة والبقاء 12-13: He does whatever He desires; He is capable of whatever He wills. He has the domain and opulence; He has glory and permanence.	ف ١٠: بأنه تبارك وتعالى قادر على ما يشاء فعال لما يريد §10: …that He—may He be praised and exalted—is capable of whatever He wills; He does whatever He desires.	٨: وله العزة 8: He has the glory. ٩: وله الحياة والبقاء 9: He has life and permanence. ١٥: يفعل في ملكه ما يريد 15: He does whatever He desires in His domain.			
11	١٣: وله الحكم والقضاء 13: He has judgment	ف ١٢: وجميع المخلوقات صادرة عن قضائه وقدره §12: All creatures	١٤: له الحكم والقضاء 14: He has judgment			

	and predestination.	emerge from his predestination and decree. ف ١٤: ويحكم في خلقه ما يشاء §14: He judges however He wills within His creation.	and predestination.			
12	١٣: وله الأسماء الحسنى 13: He has the most beautiful Names.	ف ١٥: له الأسماء الحسنى §15: He has the most beautiful Names.	١٠: له الأسماء الحسنى 10: He has the most beautiful Names.			
13	١٣-١٥: لا دافع لما قضى ولا مانع لما أعطى لا يرجو ثوابا ولا يخاف عقابا ليس عليه حق ولا عليه حكم 13-15: He is not opposed when He predestines; He is not hindered when He gives … He does not plead for reward or fear punishment. There is no right or	ف ١٢: أوجدها لا بواسطة ولا علة ... §12: He causes them to exist without intermediary or obstacle… ف ١٤: والباري سبحانه لا حجر عليه في أحكامه ولا حكم عليه في أفعاله ... لا يرجو ثوابا ولا يخاف عقابا ليس	١٥-١٦: لا دافع لما قضى ولا مانع لما أعطى ... لا يرجو ثوابا ولا يخاف عقابا 15-16: He is not opposed when He predestines; He is not hindered when He gives … He does not plead for reward or fear punishment.			١٩٧، ١٦-١٩: وجملة الموانع المانعة من كمال المحدث ضربان: أحدهما الموانع من الإدراك والثاني الموانع من الأفعال فالموانع من الإدراك كالعمى والصمم وغير ذلك من الآفات والموانع من الأفعال كالعجز والجهل D, 197, 16-19: All of the impediments to the perfection of the being that originates in time are of two sorts: first, the impediments with respect to

	judgment over Him.	عليه حق ولا عليه حكم ... §12: He causes them to exist without intermediary or obstacle… §14: The Creator—may He be exalted—has no prohibition upon Him in His judgments, nor is any judgment rendered of Him in His actions… He does not plead for reward or fear punishment. There is no right or judgment over Him…	١٧: ليس عليه حق ولا عليه حكم 18: There is no right or judgment over Him.			perception; second, the impediments with respect to actions. The impediments to perception are like blindness, deafness, and all similar defects. Impediments to actions are like inability and ignorance.
14	١٥: فكل نعمة منه فضل وكل نقمة منه عدل 15: Every blessing from Him is a merit, and every	ف ١٤: فكل نعمة منه فضل وكل نقمة منه عدل §14: Every blessing from Him is a merit, and	١٧-١٨: فكل نعمة منه فضل وكل نقمة منه عدل 17-18: Every blessing from Him is			

	retribution from Him is justice.	every retribution from Him is justice.	a merit, and every retribution from Him is justice.			
15	١٥-١٧: لا يسأل عما يفعل وهم يسألون ... 15-17: He will not be asked about what He does, but they will be asked…	ف ١٤: لا يسأل عما يفعل وهم يسألون §14: He will not be asked about what He does, but they will be asked…	١٨: لا يسأل عما يفعل وهم يسألون 18: He will not be asked about what He does, but they will be asked…			
16	١٧: ودبر الزمان 17: …and He arranges time…	ف ١٣: والآجال محدودة لا يستأخر عن أجله §13: The appointed times have been allotted. Nothing comes after its appointed time.		٢: دبر الزمان بالنور والظلمات 2: He arranges time by light and darkness.		
17	١٧-١٨: لا يتقيد بالزمان ولا يتخصص بالمكان لا يلحقه وهم ولا يكيفه العقل ليس كمثله شيء وهو السميع البصير 17-18: He is neither restricted by time nor	ف ٧: ليس له مثل يقاس عليه هو كما قال تعالى (ليس كمثله شيء وهو السميع البصير) لا يلحقه الوهم ولا يكيفه العقل §7: There is nothing like Him that can be compared	٥-٦: لا تحده الأذهان ولا تصوره الأوهام ولا يلحقه الأفكار ولا تكيفه العقول 5-6: Minds do not define Him, nor do	٦-٨: وما لا تبلغه الدلالات ولا تحيط به الإدراكات وحذر من تجاوز المحدودات وتعدى المعقولات إلى القول بالتكييفات والقطع بالتخييلات	٩: بأنه لا يشبه المخلوقات 9: …that creatures do not	

	specified by place. The imagination does not reach him, and the intellect does not qualify him. There is none like Him; He is the All-hearing and All-seeing.	to Him. He—may He be exalted—said, “There is none like Him. He is te All-hearing and all-seeing.” The imagination does not reach Him, and the intellect does not qualify Him.	imagination s conceive Him. Thoughts do not reach Him, nor do intellects qualify Him.	6-8: [With] whatever indications do not reach him, and whatever perceptions do not encompass Him, caution should be taken, lest these limitations be exceeded and those things which are intelligible be exceeded by one who puts qualificatio ns [of God] into speech, and makes his own imaginings into a definitive statement.	resemble Him.	

Appendix III – Classification of the Sciences

The outline below is based on Ibn Tūmart's division of the sciences in "The Discourse on Knowledge," D, 179-83.

["The Divisions of Knowledge" (*taqāsīm al-ʿilm*)]

A. Knowledge of Religion
    a. Knowledge of God
        i. Necessary
            1. Existence
                a. Negation of Resemblance
            2. Oneness
                a. Negation of Association
            3. Perfection
                a. Negation of Defects
        ii. Possible
            1. Causing the World to Exist
            2. Causing the World's Non-Being after Its Existence
            3. Causing the World to Return to Existence after Its Non-Being
        iii. Impossible
            1. Resemblance
                a. Restriction in Time
                b. Restriction in Place
                c. Restriction in Genus
            2. Association
                a. Continuity
                b. Separation
                c. Inherence of Accident in Subject
            3. Defects
                a. Whatever Hinders Action
                b. Whatever Hinders Awareness
                c. Whatever Hinders Speech
    b. Knowledge of the Messengers
        i. What Necessitates Verification of the Messenger
            1. Truthfulness
            2. Trustworthiness
            3. Pursuit of the Truth in His Words and Deeds
        ii. What Necessitates Rejection of the Messenger
            1. Lying
            2. Deceit
            3. Pursuit of What Is False in His Words and Deeds
        iii. What is Permitted of the Messenger
            1. Whatever is Permitted of Humankind

c. Knowledge of the Message
    i. Revelation
        1. Command
        2. Prohibition
        3. Report
    ii. Obligation (Accords with Revelation)
        1. Belief
        2. Fear of God
        3. Piety
    iii. Recompense (Accords with Obligation)
        1. Reckoning
        2. Reward
        3. Penalty

B. Knowledge of the World
    a. What Is Advantageous
    b. What Is Disadvantageous
    c. What Sustains Life

C. Knowledge Connected to Both Religion and World
    a. Language
    b. Expression
    c. Calculation

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