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Prayer, Mosque, and Pilgrimage: Mapping Shīʿī Sectarian Identity in 2nd/8th Century Kūfa*

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Abstract

I propose a narrative for the emergence of sectarian consciousness rooted in distinctive ritual practice and geographical space. This differs from recent studies of early Imāmī Shīʿism which tend to focus on historical struggles for political power or theological disputes about religious authority (i.e., the imāmate). I conclude that an observable proto-Imāmī identity began to crystallize in early 2nd/8th century Kūfa. In an urban environment characterized by a growing correlation between communal identity and ritual practice, the Imāmīs carved out distinctive sacred spaces in Kūfa, frequenting a set of revered mosques and avoiding others associated with hostile elements. Over time, Imāmīs increasingly emphasized smaller pilgrimages (*ziyārāt*) to shrines and other locations of historical and religious significance (e.g., ʿAlī's shrine and al-Ḥusayn's grave in Karbalāʾ). By the early 5th/11th century, participation in large processions to holy sites constituted a clear public declaration of communal loyalty.

Keywords

Shiʿism, Zaydism, Ithna Ashari, Kufa, mosque, *ziyāra*, ritual law

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Most studies on the emergence of Shīʿism privilege the role of theology and emphasize the importance of rival historical claims regarding Muḥammad's succession.[1] The notion of imāmate (*imāma*) holds a special significance as Shīʿī groups differed over the identity of the legitimate heir to the Prophet as well as the scope and nature of his authority. With respect to Imāmī Shīʿism,[2] much of the foundation for this mode of analysis was laid by Marshall Hodgson,[3] and developed in the careful and erudite studies of Wilferd Madelung[4] and Etan

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1) It may reasonably be argued that these two elements were so closely intertwined in the first few centuries that any distinction between them is largely artificial.

2) There is a considerable problem in terminology when dealing with the early Shīʿī community. It is generally maintained that the earliest Shīʿa consisted of three major divisions: the Kaysāniyya, the Zaydiyya, and a third group alternatively known as either the Rawāfiḍa (a polemical name) or the Imāmiyya. The latter traced the imāmate exclusively through Ḥusaynid ʿAlids and generally acknowledged the leadership of Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 117/735) and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765). They differed, however, on theological aspects of the imāmate including (amongst other issues) the scope of the Imām's knowledge, his method of appointment, and the nature of his relationship to God. In the era following the imāmate of al-Ṣādiq, a number of parties broke away to form their own sects, most notably the Ismāʿīliyya and the Nāwūsiyya (both around 148/765) and the Wāqifiyya (around 183/799). Kohlberg notes that the name "Imāmiyya" (in combination with "Qaṭʿiyya") was used in reference to the generality of those Shīʿa who held to the Ḥusaynid line eventually affirmed by the sect currently known as the Ithnā ʿAshariyya (Twelvers). In the course of this essay, I follow Kohlberg's formulation, using "Imāmī" to denote "the earliest manifestation of the sect that we today refer to as the Imāmī-Twelvers." In the 2nd/8th century, this term included those sects (e.g., the Wāqifiyya) who had not yet broken off to form independent groups and it should not be taken as referring *exclusively* to the antecedents of the modern Imāmī-Twelver community. See Etan Kohlberg, "From Imāmiyya to Ithnā-ʿAshariyya," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39 (1976), 521-34 and *idem*, "Early Attestations of the term ʿIthnā ʿAshariyya," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 24 (2000), 343-57.

3) Marshall Hodgson, "How did the early Shīʿa become sectarian?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75 (1955), 1-13 and *EI*^{2}, s.v. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (*idem*). Hodgson notes the growth in stature of the figure of the Imām in the late 1st/7th and early 2nd/8th century as both a legal and a theological authority. Specifically, he examines the difficulties faced by al-Ṣādiq in controlling the flow of extremist (*ghulāt*) ideas amongst his followers in Kūfa but emphasizes the importance of these same ideas in the development of a distinct Shīʿī identity. This approach is in sharp contrast to that of earlier scholars who concentrated almost exclusively on the issue of succession. See, for example, Dwight Donaldson, *The Shi'ite Religion* (London: Luzak, 1933).

4) *EI*^{2}, s.vv. Imāma (W. Madelung), Shīʿa (*idem*), along with *idem*, *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965) and *The Succession to Muḥammad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Madelung primarily focuses on the role of theological and political disputes in shaping the contours of early

Kohlberg.[5] In a similar vein, Maria Dakake published an important monograph which emphasized the centrality of *walāya* (charismatic allegiance or—alternatively—attachment) in the creation of an early 2nd/8th century Shīʿī identity.[6] Complementary views were offered by Amir-Moezzi,[7] who concentrated on the mystical and esoteric aspects of Imāmī Shīʿism, and Hossein Modarressi,[8] who highlighted its deep-rooted rationalist tendencies. Other studies have emphasized the role of Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 117/735) and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) in laying the foundations for the Imāmī community. Ron Buckley, for example, links al-Ṣādiq's increasing interest in articulating both (a) a coherent doctrine of the imāmate and (b) a concrete ritual and legal edifice to the political aftermath of the ʿAbbāsid revolution (132/750).[9] Overall, there is a general scholarly consensus that the outlines of a distinct Imāmī communal identity[10] were in place during the lifetime of al-Ṣādiq.[11]

Shīʿism. A similar approach is adopted by Josef van Ess in *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, 5 vols. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991) through a detailed analysis of the emergence of a multiplicity of Kūfan Shīʿī theological circles (see e.g., 1:387-93 on the school of al-Ṣādiq's companion Hishām b. al-Ḥakam) and an examination of important controversies associated with the imāmate (see e.g., 1:377-82 on the designation of the Imām along with his infallibility; 1:274-78 on his political responsibilities; and 1:278-85 on his knowledge).

5) Etan Kohlberg, "Imām and Community in the Pre-*Ghayba* Period," in *Authority and Political Culture in Shīʿism*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 25-53.

6) Maria Dakake, *The Charismatic Community* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). A similar perspective emphasizing the early importance of *walāya* is found in Joseph Eliash, "On the Genesis and Development of the Twelver-Shīʿī Three-tenet *Shahādah*," *Der Islam* 47 (1971), 265-77.

7) Muḥammad ʿAlī Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shīʿism*, trans. David Streight (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

8) Hossein Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1933); *idem*, *Tradition and Survival* (Oxford: One World, 2003), vol. 1.

9) Ron Buckley, "On the Origins of Shīʿī Ḥadīth," *The Muslim World* 88 (1998), 165-84; *idem*, "Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq as a Source of Shīʿī Traditions," *The Islamic Quarterly* 43 (1999), 37-58.

10) When I speak of the emergence of an "Imāmī communal identity", I am not referring to a fully developed sectarian group or a formal law school. I am primarily concerned with the point at which a particular group of Muslims began to perceive themselves as 'unique' or 'different.'

11) Patricia Crone places the emergence of Imāmī Shīʿism in the lifetime of al-Kāẓim (Patricia Crone, *God's Rule* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2004] 114-15), while

While recent scholarship offers valuable insights into the importance of theology in the formative period of Shīʿism (beginning in the 2nd/8th century), it overlooks the concrete manner in which that theology impacted the everyday lives of Muslims. Specifically, theological differences were manifest in observable preferences and/or behavior patterns such as the use of a distinctive dress or the performance of prayer in an idiosyncratic manner. This is evident in early sources that detail the breadth of ritual diversity in cities like Kūfa, and identify mosques (and other sacred spaces) as holding special significance for particular religious communities. Unfortunately, little work has been done to aggregate (and analyze) this evidence in a meaningful and systematic manner.[12] This study helps fill this void by examining early sectarianism through the lens of public ritual. Such an approach yields two primary benefits. Firstly, it

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Hodgson (Hodgson, "Sectarian," 13) and Madelung (*EI*², s.v. Shīʿa) prefer that of al-Ṣādiq. The earliest dating comes from Modarressi, who suggests that the Imāmīs were an "independent political, legal, and theological school" by 132/749 (Modarressi, *Crisis*, 4). This implies that differentiation may have taken place *before* 132/749, possibly during the imāmate of al-Bāqir. See also Modarressi, *An Introduction to Shīʿī Law* (London: Ithaca Press, 1984). Arzani Lalani (*Early Shīʿī Thought* [London: I. B. Tauris, 2000]) also emphasizes al-Bāqir's role in articulating theological tenets and rituals distinct to the early Shīʿa, albeit without singling out the Imāmī community. Kohlberg, who acknowledges a circle of followers who gathered around al-Ṣādiq, differentiates them from the "Twelvers" through the use of the term "Imāmī" (see footnote 2). Similar views are also ascribed to Buckley (see footnote 9) and Douglas Crow ("The Death of Al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī and Early Shīʿī Views of the Imāmate," *Al-Serat* 12 (1986), 71-116). On the whole, there is broad agreement that a nascent Imāmī community had coalesced by the time of al-Ṣādiq. The insularity of this group and its central doctrinal beliefs/rituals, however, remain an open issue.

12) Lalani's list of ritual practices specific to the early Shīʿī followers of al-Bāqir includes aspects of purity law, dietary law, and the form of the prayer. Although she notes that "the reason for the establishment of the *madhhab ahl al-bayt*, the Shīʿī school of thought *[sic]*, appears to have been related…to the sphere of religious practice," she does not expand upon this point in any detail (Lalani, 114). Buckley also stresses the importance of ritual law in differentiating the Imāmī community from the larger Kūfan population through al-Ṣādiq's articulation of "a more systematic Shīʿī doctrinal and religio-legal elaboration" (Buckley, "Ḥadīth," 184). His focus, however, remains on competing theories of the imāmate as opposed to the role of ritual in facilitating the formation of communal boundaries. Modarressi comes closest to addressing the issue by (a) emphasizing the importance of ritual practice and (b) mapping the location of distinctly Imāmī mosques (Modarressi, *Tradition*, 1:202-4).

provides insight into the mechanisms of identity formation, suggesting that the performance of rituals in distinct sacred spaces was critical to ascertaining an individual's communal membership. Secondly, it serves as a useful check on the results of previous studies that rested primarily on theological evidence drawn from heresiographical texts. As the propensity for theological sources to be distorted by back-projection is well-known, a confirmation of their conclusions by a different set of texts is especially valuable.

This essay centers on the emergence of an Imāmī community in the southern Iraqi city of Kūfa[13] from the 2nd/8th to the 5th/11th century. The first section focuses on the role of ritual practice in determining a figure's veracity as a source of religious knowledge. The second section discusses the gradual appropriation of mosques and shrines by sectarian groups and the centrality of sacred space to the forging of increasingly insular communal boundaries. The third and final section examines the rise of public processions and pilgrimages (sg. *ziyāra*, pl. *ziyārāt*) that combined ritual and space in a highly public affirmation of group membership.

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13) Kūfa was distinguished from other cities in the 2nd/8th century by its unique social and religious diversity. It was the birthplace of—at least—two groups eventually subsumed into a mature Sunnism: a school of Kūfan traditionists, and the *ahl al-raʾy*. In addition, it is mentioned as the home base of a range of Shīʿī groups including the Zaydīs and the Imāmīs. For more on the general history of Kūfa, see *EI*^{2}, s.v. Kūfa (Hichem Djait) and *idem*, *Al-Kūfa: naissance de la ville islamique* (Paris: Editions G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1986). For the city's role in the development of Sunnism, see Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950) and the competing positions advanced by Melchert in "How Ḥanafism Came to Originate in Kūfa and Traditionism in Medina," *Islamic Law and Society* 6 (1999), 318-47 and Nurit Tsafrir in *The History of an Islamic School of Law* (Cambridge: Islamic Legal Studies Program at Harvard law School, 2004), 17-27. For an early discussion of this topic, see ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 142/760?), *Risālat al-ṣaḥāba*, published in *al-Adab al-ṣaghīr wa'l-adab al-kabīr wa risālat al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. Yūsuf Abū Ḥalqah (Beirut: Maktabat al-Bayyān, 1960), 166-9. For Kūfa's prominence in Shīʿī communal history, see the first volume of Modarressi's *Tradition* and Cornelis van Arendonk's *Les débuts de l'imāmat zaidite au Yémen*, trans. Jacques Ryckmans (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), both of which discuss seminal Shīʿī scholars of Kūfan origin. In addition to the city's importance in the compilation of Imāmī traditions, Buckley ("Ḥadīth," 296) emphasizes the impact of the distance between the Imāms in Medina and their Kūfan followers in the promulgation of extremist notions of the imāmate (*idem*, "Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq," 44-9).

I. Observation and Assessment

In the 2nd/8th century, Kūfa was home to a number of rival groups that advocated often contradictory views on basic questions related to ritual practice. The most famous dispute concerned the status of alcoholic beverages derived from substances other than grapes, with a number of prominent authorities, including Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) and Muḥammad al-Shaybānī (d. 189/806), arguing for permissibility.[14] Other differences centered on the structure of the daily prayer, particularly the recitation of the *basmalah*[15] and the performance of the *qunūt*.[16] At an early stage, it is likely that individuals were free to choose from a range of practices, all of which were considered equally valid. In time, however, ritual form became a visible marker of an individual's membership in a sectarian community. The Imāmīs, for example, were distinguished by their recitation of an audible *basmalah* and the insertion of the *qunūt* in the second cycle of every prayer.[17]

The use of ritual as a public affirmation of sectarian allegiance emerged as early as the 2nd/8th century as evidenced by numerous sources that stress its role in evaluating the reliability of legal authorities. In his *Sunan*, for example, al-Dārimī (d. 255/869) preserves a series of accounts that acknowledge the centrality of traditions (*ḥadīth*) in the establishment of proper "religion" (*dīn*) and emphasize the need for a systematic verification of their veracity.[18] Specifically, he cites the opinion of the Baṣran scholar Muḥammad b. Sīrīn

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14) Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, *Kitāb al-āthār* (Karachi: Idārat al-Qurʾān waʾl-ʿulūm al-Islāmiyya, 1998), 1:182-6.

15) The *basmalah* is the use of the phrase "In the name of God, the Beneficent the Merciful" at the start of the Qurʾānic recitation in every cycle of the daily prayer. Those who affirmed the *basmalah* were further divided regarding its audible or silent recitation.

16) An invocation addressed to God (often on behalf of a group of people) or a curse against an enemy, recited by raising both hands in supplication at a point in the prayer after the Qurʾānic recitation.

17) Lalani dates the use of these rituals as identity markers to the lifetime of either al-Bāqir or al-Ṣādiq (Lalani, 122-5).

18) ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Faḍl al-Dārimī (d. 255/869), *Sunan al-Dārimī*, 2 vols., ed. Fawwāz Aḥmad Zamarlī and Khālid al-Sabʿ al-ʿAlīmī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Arabī, 1987), 1:124-5.

(d. 110/728)[19] who advocated "examining men" before according them any authority in religious matters.[20] Similar sentiments were ascribed to Muḥammad b. Sīrīn's brother Anas (d. 120/738) from Baṣra,[21] al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim (d. 105/724) from Khurāsān,[22] Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī (d. 96/714) from Kūfa,[23] and Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) from Medina.[24] The widespread regional distribution of such calls for "examination" strongly suggests that the idea was common to traditionist sentiment in general.

Once the need for an "examination" of transmitters and legal authorities was established, it was necessary to ascertain its actual form. Al-Dārimī addresses this concern in a series of traditions which describe the investigative efforts of late 1st/7th and early 2nd/8th century religious scholars and students. In one such account, Ibrāhīm al-Nakhāʿī recalls that "if they [previous generations] wanted to narrate [traditions] from a man, then they would follow him, examining his prayer, his practice (*sunna*), and his appearance. [Only then]

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19) A Baṣran traditionist of high reputation famed for his interpretation of dreams. See *EI*[2], s.v. Ibn Sīrīn (T. Fahd).

20) al-Dārimī, 1:124-5. Variants of these traditions citing Muḥammad b. Sīrīn are found in numerous works, including: one account in Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/875), *Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, 5 vols., ed. Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, 1955-6), 1:14; four accounts in Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/938), *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa'l-taʿdīl*, 4 vols., (Ḥaydarābād: Maṭbaʿat Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿarif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1941-53), 2:15; two accounts in Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463/1071), *al-Tamhīd*, ed. Muṣṭafā b. Aḥmad al-ʿAlawī and Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Kabīr al-Bakrī (Lahore: al-Maktaba al-Qudsiyya, 1983), 1:46; one account in Sulaymān b. Khalaf b. Saʿd (d. 474/1081), *al-Taʿdīl wa'l-tajrīḥ*, 3 vols., ed. Aḥmad Labzār (Rabat: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa'l-Shuʿūn al-Islāmiyya, 1991), 1:267. These traditions are implicitly referencing Q49:6 ["O you who believe, if an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look carefully (*tabayyanū*) into it, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done"].

21) Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 2:15-6. Anas b. Sīrīn was a prominent Baṣran traditionist. See al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341), *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fi asmāʾ al-rijāl*, 35 vols., ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1992), 3:346.

22) Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 2:15. Like Anas and Muḥammad b. Sīrīn, al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim enjoyed a high standing in traditionist circles. For his life, see al-Mizzī, 13:291.

23) Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, 1:47. Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd b. Qays al-Nakhaʿī was one of the leading legal authorities in Kūfa at the end of 1st/7th century. See al-Mizzī, 2:233 and *EI*[2], s.v. al-Nakhaʿī (Lecomte).

24) Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, 1:47. See also al-Mizzī, 27:91 and *EI*[2], s.v. Mālik b. Anas (Joseph Schacht).

would they transmit from him." [25] Variants of this tradition in other sources substitute the word '*sima*' (form) for '*sunna*', thereby emphasizing the particular importance of the form and manner of an individual's prayer.[26] That an opinion virtually identical to that of Ibrāhīm al-Nakhāʿī in Kūfa was ascribed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728)[27] in Baṣra indicates (once again) that such a sentiment was prevalent in a number of important Muslim urban centers.[28] The issue is discussed in unambiguous terms in the following tradition quoting the Baṣran scholar, Abū al-ʿĀliya Rufayʿ b. Mihrān (d. 90/708): [29]

> We would follow the man from whom we wanted to transmit [traditions] to observe him when he prayed. If he knew how to perform [the prayer] expertly, we would sit down with him and say, "He must be correct in other matters." But if he performed [the prayer] incorrectly, we would move away from him and say, "He is wrong in other matters."[30]

These accounts demonstrate that scholars in the late 1st/7th and early 2nd/8th century equated "proper religion" with ritual practice.[31] In fact,

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25) al-Dārimī, 1:124.

26) For variants of this account which include the term *sima*, see: Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, 1:47; Sulaymān b. Khalaf, 1:268; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) in both (a) *Kitāb al-kifāya fī ʿilm al-riwāya* (Ḥaydarābād: Idārat Jamʿīyat Dāʾirāt al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1938), 1:157 and (b) *al-Jāmiʿ li-akhlāq al-rāwī*, 2 vols., ed. Maḥmūd al-Ṭaḥḥān (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Maʿārif, 1983), 1:128. A number of variants are also cited by Ibn Abī Ḥātim (2:16), including a hybrid which combines the words *sunna* and *sima* into a single formulation. A similar text is quoted in the biographical entry on Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī by Abū Nuʿaym Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 429/1038), *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, 10 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1932-8), 2:224. The use of "appearance" in these texts may refer to disputes over the permissibility of praying in certain clothes (and other forms of dress).

27) al-Mizzī, 6:95; *EI*², s.v. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (H. Ritter).

28) al-Dārimī, 1:124.

29) al-Mizzī, 9:214.

30) al-Dārimī, 1:124.

31) In addition to its utility in assessing an individual's veracity, ritual law steadily acquired a political significance. The following anecdote from al-Kīndī's (d. 349/961), *Wulāt Miṣr*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1959), 238, emphasizes the importance of enforcing a specific ritual regimen in the 3rd/9th century Muslim world.

> During his appointment as chief of the police (*shurṭa*), Azjūr prohibited women from the bath houses, cemeteries, female prisons, and loud weeping [for the dead]. He also

they affirmed the veracity of individual transmitters primarily by observing them in the mosque rather than questioning them on theological matters such as God's justice or the imāmate.[32]

An echo of this tendency is preserved in *rijāl* works in which men holding problematic theological beliefs are nonetheless confirmed as upright authorities based solely on ritual form. A typical example

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prohibited the audible recitation of the *basmalah* in prayers at the Friday Mosque (*al-masjid al-jāmiʿ*). He ordered al-Ḥasan b. al-Rabīʿ, the Imām of the Friday Mosque, to abandon it [i.e., the audible *basmalah*]. That was in Rajab of the year 253. The people of Miṣr had continually recited [the *basmalah*] audibly in the Friday Mosque since the coming of Islam until its prohibition by Azjūr. The people in the Friday Mosque were forced to complete rows [in the prayers, a task] for which he sent a foreign man with the *kunya* of Abū Dawuh̲ (?). He would push people forward from the back of the mosque with a whip and order those [lit: the people] in study circles to orient their faces to the *qibla* before the *iqāma* [the second call announcing the immediate start of prayer] of the prayer… He [also] ordered that the *tarāwīḥ* prayers [supererogatory prayers performed by Sunnīs exclusively in Ramaḍān] in the month of Ramaḍān be performed in five sets. The people of Miṣr had continually prayed six sets of *tarāwīḥ* until Azjūr made it five in the month of Ramaḍān of the year 253. Azjūr [also] ordered the recitation of the *tathwīb* [the phrase 'prayer is better than sleep'] in the [morning] call to prayer and had the call to prayer performed at the rear of the mosque.

By this point, ritual practice in Egypt (the setting for the account) was an important arena for conflict between the Mālikī and the Shāfiʿī schools of law. The measures above appear directed against the Shāfiʿīs, forcefully denying them the latitude to perform (in public) distinctive Shāfiʿī practices such as the audible recitation of the *basmalah* in audible prayer cycles. Thanks to Lennart Sundelin for this reference.

32) This is not to say that theological views were irrelevant, but rather to suggest that in the late 1st/7th and early 2nd/8th century ritual practice was useful shorthand in ascertaining an individual's communal self-identification. This dynamic changed in later centuries with a decline in anecdotes of scholars being followed to the mosque and a rise in systematic norms for evaluating transmitter veracity. In the comprehensive *rijāl* works that began emerging in the 3rd/9th century, Sunnī traditionists were classified into one of three groups. The first allowed transmission by any figure with a reputation for honesty regardless of his/her theological beliefs so long as these did not include proselytizing or "extremism." The second accepted traditions narrated by individuals with problematic beliefs as long as they did not consider lying permissible. The third required independent verification of any and all traditions related by transmitters who held suspect views or were known "innovators." This framework can be found in (amongst other works) al-Dhahabī's (d. 748/1348) *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, 4 vols., ed. Ṣidqī Jamīl al-ʿAṭṭār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1990) where the author differentiates between "extremist" and "non-extremist" Shīʿa based on their cursing of early Companions (*Mīzān*, 1:29-30).

is the famous Kūfan jurist-traditionist Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʿmash (d. 148/765).[33] The Sunnī biographical literature affirms his authority in obligatory acts of worship (*farāʾiḍ*), citing his rulings on topics ranging from ritual purity[34] and prayer[35] to the correct timing for the start and end of the fast in Ramaḍān.[36] Moreover, all of his students and colleagues praise his devotion to proper ritual practice as well as his piety. Wakīʿ b. Jarrāḥ (d. 196/811) recalls that al-Aʿmash never failed to perform a prayer at the proper time,[37] while al-Mughīra b. Miqsam (d. 132/750) notes that "when Ibrāhīm (al-Nakhāʿī) died, we frequented al-Aʿmash regarding the obligatory acts of worship." [38] This reverence resonates throughout the early sources despite echoes of al-Aʿmash's possible Shīʿī inclinations. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿIjlī (d. 261/874) observes that, although al-Aʿmash "was a scholar of the obligatory acts of worship," he "harbored Shīʿism within."[39] Writing five centuries later, al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) appears puzzled by this contradiction and follows al-ʿIjlī's claim with the assertion that al-Aʿmash was "a leader of the Sunna."[40]

The Imāmī biographical literature is notably silent regarding al-Aʿmash's communal affiliation. Although he is not described as an Imāmī (or even a Shīʿa), a number of anecdotes suggest that he held views similar to those prevalent in the wider Kūfan Shīʿī community. In one such account, he is visited on his death bed by a group of prominent proto-Sunnī scholars,[41] including Ibn Abī Layla (d. 148/765) and Abū Ḥanīfa, who ask him to disavow traditions

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33) al-Mizzī, 12:76-91; al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-islām*, 40 vols., ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1987), (yrs. 141-60):161-7.

34) al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh* (yrs. 141-60):164.

35) Ibid., 9:162 and 166.

36) Ibid., 9:164.

37) al-Mizzī, 12:86.

38) Ibid., 12:85.

39) al-ʿIjlī (d. 261/874), *Taʾrīkh al-thiqāt*, ed. ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī al-Qalʿajī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1984), 205.

40) al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh* (yrs. 141-60):162.

41) Like the term "Imāmī", "proto-Sunnī" refers to an amalgamation of groups at a very initial stage of differentiation that subsequently coalesced into sectarian schools of law.

in praise of ʿAlī and the family of the Prophet.[42] He adamantly refuses. The jurists then deliver a series of warnings, beseeching al-Aʿmash to consider the consequences of refusal for his soul in the afterlife, before departing in frustration. We are left with a portrait of a man who held immense authority in ritual law within proto-Sunnī Kūfan circles while adhering to beliefs resonant with early Kūfan Shīʿism. In a testament to the integral importance of practice in the construction of sectarian identity, it was al-Aʿmash's ritual which confirmed his place in the broader proto-Sunnī (and, in particular, Kūfan traditionist) community.

Similar patterns emerge for an entire category of early 2nd/8th century Kūfan authorities and transmitters. The most famous of these were accepted as upright and trustworthy in the Sunnī biographical literature but accused of a nebulous "Shīʿism" that consisted of (a) backing the political claims of ʿAlid contenders and (b) elevating ʿAlī and his family above the other Companions. Many of these men were labeled "Batrī" Zaydīs and adhered to ritual law positions distinctive to the larger proto-Sunnī Kūfan community.[43] Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa (d. 137/755), for example, endorsed the practice of wiping leather socks in the performance of the ritual ablution (a Kūfan traditionist opinion) and was said to indulge in an occasional glass of *nabīdh* (as allowed by the Kūfan *ahl al-raʾy*).[44] He enjoyed a good reputation amongst early Sunnī scholars who relied on him for guidance in ritual law.[45] This was in spite of his well-documented transmission of traditions which lowered the rank of Abū Bakr and

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42) al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-rijāl*, 12 vols. (Qumm: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1989-), 5:297-8. These traditions included the assertion that ʿAlī would intercede alongside the Prophet on the Day of Judgment as well as evidence supporting his claims for succession. While there is a possibility that these texts were polemically ascribed to al-Aʿmash by later Shīʿī sources, it is significant to note that they align with al-ʿIjlī's view of his Shīʿī tendencies.

43) For the Batrīs, see Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim*, 49-50; *EI²* supplement, s.vv. Batriyya (*idem*); Zaydiyya (*idem*). For the portrayal of the Batrīs in the broad biographical literature as well as their historical significance in Kūfa and the development of Zaydism, see Najam Haider, *The Birth of Sectarian Identity in 2nd/8th century Kūfa* (Pd. D. Thesis, Princeton University, 2007), 368-403.

44) al-Tustarī, 6:402.

45) al-Mizzī, 10:136-8.

ʿUmar as well as his endorsement of the murder of ʿUthmān.[46] Like al-Aʿmash, Sālim's high standing resulted from his ritual law positions which aligned with the Kūfan proto-Sunnīs as opposed to his theological views, some of which inclined towards the Shīʿa. This conclusion is supported by the Imāmī biographical literature which dismisses Sālim as a "Batrī" and condemns his persistent questioning of al-Ṣādiq.[47] Similar examples include al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba (d. 113/731)[48] and al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ (d. 168/785)[49] who are described as holding "Shīʿī" beliefs, while performing rituals in a manner consistent with the larger Kūfan proto-Sunnī community. Both men were confirmed as proto-Sunnī legal authorities; al-Ḥakam was a member of the traditionist movement and al-Ḥasan was linked to the *ahl al-raʾy*.

Early 2nd/8th century Kūfa was home to a wide range of ritual practices increasingly associated with specific religious communities. In such an environment, the decision to perform the prayer in a particular fashion constituted a public affirmation of communal loyalty. This is most evident in those traditions in which outward ritual practice serves as the primary criterion for ascertaining an individual's reliability as a source for religious knowledge. The biographical literature goes even further, overlooking the problematic beliefs of legal authorities so long as they remained faithful to an acceptable ritual form.

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46) al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh* (yrs. 121-40):435.

47) al-Tustarī, 4:597-5.

48) al-Ḥakam's Shīʿism is characterized in all the Sunnī biographical sources as subtle and concealed, yet the Imāmī sources consider him a typical Sunnī traditionist scholar. For the Sunnī perspective, see al-Mizzī, 7:114-20 and al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh* (yrs. 101-20):345-7. For the Imāmī perspective, see al-Tustarī, 3:613.

49) Although the Sunnī biographical literature emphasizes al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ's reliability, it concentrates primarily on two controversial opinions: (a) his view that the Friday prayer was not mandatory and (b) his endorsement of armed insurrection. Although these views were condemned by later Sunnī scholars, they did not result in al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ's marginalization. Al-Dhahabī, for example, placed him amongst the leading jurists of the Kūfan *ahl al-raʾy*. The Imāmī literature stresses that al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ was not part of the Imāmī community, labeling him a "Batrī" Zaydī. For the Sunnī perspective, see al-Mizzī, 6:177-91, and al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh* (yrs. 161-70):131-6, with the latter strongly affirming al-Ḥasan's juristic authority. For the Imāmī perspective, see al-Tustarī, 3:264-6.

II. The Demarcation of Sacred Space—Mosques

In addition to its role in determining the affiliations and reliability of religious authorities, practice also contributed to the demarcation and appropriation of sacred space. This connection is apparent in the following account related by a student of the prominent Kūfan jurist Sharīk b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 177/793):

> In our presence a man asked Sharīk, "What is your opinion regarding a man whose door is located near a mosque where the *qunūt* is not performed while behind that mosque is another mosque where the *qunūt* is performed?" He responded, "He should go to the mosque where the *qunūt* is performed." He then asked, "What is your opinion regarding a man who affirms the *qunūt* but forgets to perform it?" He responded, "He should perform two prostrations of forgetfulness." He continued, "What is your opinion regarding a man who rejects the *qunūt* but forgets and performs it?" He laughed and said, "This man forgets and thereby hits the mark!"[50]

Sharīk's response suggests the confluence of ritual and mosque in the middle 2nd/8th century as well as its increasing association with communal (particularly Shīʿī) identity. The Imāmīs were singular in their insertion of the *qunūt* in all of the daily prayers and likely frequented those mosques where it was regularly performed.[51] This was a conscious choice which involved a degree of hardship or, at the very least, annoyance as the Imāmī population was not exclusively concentrated around appropriate mosques. The hypothetical supplicant discussed by Sharīk, for example, is instructed to bypass his neighborhood mosque to reach another in which the prayer is conducted in a proper fashion.

Imāmī literature abounds with evidence for the demarcation of Kūfan sacred space into mosques which were "blessed" and others which were "accursed."[52] The former included Masjid Ghanī, Masjid

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50) Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, ed. al-Sayyid Mahdī al-Rajjāʾī (Qumm: al-Muʿāwiniyya al-Thaqafiyya, 1992), 2:46-7.

51) Lalani, 124-5.

52) Al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), *al-Amālī* (Qumm: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1993), 168-9. A similar tradition is found in Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Thaqafī al-Kūfī (d. 283/896), *al-Ghārāt*, 2 vols., ed. al-Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn (Tehran: Anjumān Āthār Millī, 1975), 3:482-3. While ʿAlī is the most commonly mentioned authority for this account, a number of variants cite either al-Bāqir or al-Ṣādiq. See al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl min al-Kāfī*, 8 vols., ed. ʿAlī Akbar al-Ghaffārī (Tehran: Dār al-Kūtub al-Islāmiyya, 1983), 3:489-90; Ibn Bābawayh

Suhayl, Masjid Juʿfī, and Masjid al-Ḥamrā (also known as Masjid Yūnus).[53] The importance of each location was rooted in a combination of historical and religious factors. Masjid Ghanī was founded by "a believer" and was prophesized as being home to the gardens and springs of heaven,[54] while al-Bāqir emphasized that "every prophet who God sent" had performed prayers in Masjid Suhayl.[55] Masjid Juʿfī was a gathering place for Bedouin and appears in later traditions as one of the locations in which the hidden Imām would perform his prayers.[56] The significance of Masjid al-Ḥamrāʾ was tied to its construction over the tomb of the Prophet Yūnus, endowing the land with special blessing (*baraka*).[57] A fifth mosque, the Masjid Banī Kāhil (also known as the Masjid of the Commander of the Faithful) was revered as a location where ʿAlī led the *fajr* prayers and performed the *qunūt*.[58] Masjid Bāhila and Masjid Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣūḥān b. Ḥujr al-ʿAbdī[59] were also honored by

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(d. 381/991), *Kitāb al-khiṣāl*, ed. ʿAlī Akbar al-Ghaffārī (Tehran: Maktabat al-Ṣadūq, 1969), 300-1, where the text has Masjid al-Khamrāʾ in place of Masjid al-Ḥamrāʾ; Ibn al-Mashhadī (d. 594/1198), *al-Mazār al-kabīr*, ed. Jawād al-Qayyūmī (Qumm: Muʾassasat al-Āfāq, 1998), 119.

53) al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī,* 168-9 and an important variant in Ibn al-Mashhadī, 117-8. An abbreviated list of these mosques appears in al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022), *Kitāb al-mazār* (Qumm: Madrasat al-Imām al-Mahdī, 1988), 88. Many accounts also include Masjid al-Sahla (also called Masjid Banī Ẓafar), which will be discussed below as one of the "Mosques of the two Kūfas." For details about the location and namesakes of both the "blessed" and "accursed" mosques, see footnotes 1 and 2 in Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, 301, along with the sources listed below.

54) Ibn al-Mashhadī, 118-9.

55) al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 10 vols., ed. Ḥasan al-Mūsawī (Tehran: Dār al-Kūtub al-Islamiyya, 1970), 6:31, where the mosque is characterized as the "dwelling place of the prophets, successors, and those who do good." See also Ibn al-Mashhadī, 113.

56) For a typical story, see Warrām b. Abī Farrās (d. 605/1208), *Tanbīh al-khawāṭir*, 2 vols. (Tehran: n.p., 1956-7), 303-5. Ibn al-Mashhadī mentions that this mosque was no longer frequented by the Juʿfī tribe in the 6th/12th century (Ibn al-Mashhadī, 119).

57) al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 168-9; al-Kūfī, 3:484.

58) Ibn al-Mashhadī, 120-1.

59) Abū Ṭalḥa Ṣāʿṣaʿa b. Ṣūḥān b. Ḥujr al-ʿAbdī (d. before 60/680) fought on ʿAlī's side at the Battle of the Camel. He was famed as a *khaṭīb* and narrated a small number of traditions from ʿAlī and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās. A district in Kūfa was named after him, and he is said to have died during the reign of Muʿāwiya. See Muḥammad b. Saʿd (d. 230/845), *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, 11 vols., ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad ʿUmar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2001), 8:340-1; al-Mizzī, 13:167.

the Imāmī community and associated with unique sets of prayers and invocations.[60]

In addition to these seven mosques, two other Kūfan locations (Masjid al-Sahla and the "Big Masjid" known as the Masjid al-Kūfa but different from the Friday Mosque) were hailed as places of cosmological importance.[61] Masjid al-Sahla possessed a green stone bearing the marks of all past prophets[62] and was said to have been personally visited by Idrīs (Enoch), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), and Dāwūd (David).[63] The sources identify Masjid al-Kūfa as the main Shīʿī mosque for the entire city and emphasize its importance through an anecdote about the Prophet's ascent to heaven (*miʿrāj*).[64] In the account, as the Prophet is being carried by Jibrāʾīl (Gabriel), he is informed that they are passing above Masjid al-Kūfa where every prophet or servant of God had performed prayers. Muḥammad asks for and is granted the same privilege. The narrator—al-Ṣādiq—observes that "an obligatory prayer within it is equivalent to a thousand prayers [outside it] and a supererogatory prayer in it is equivalent to five hundred prayers [outside it],"[65] with variant accounts increasing the rewards to a greater (*ḥajj*) and lesser (*ʿumra*) pilgrimage, respectively.[66] This mosque was further exalted as being home to people who would be granted intercession on the Day of Judgment,[67] the location

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60) Ibn al-Mashhadī, 119 for Masjid Bāhila; Ibn al-Mashhadī, 142-6 for Masjid Ṣaʿṣaʿa.

61) There is a degree of confusion in identifying these two mosques. Clear evidence for the centrality of Masjid al-Sahla and Masjid al-Kūfa amongst the early Imāmīs, however, is affirmed by al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, who places both at the center of a wider religious program for visiting the city (al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Mazār*, 88).

62) al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 168-9; al-Kūfī, 3:482-3; Ibn al-Mashhadī, 134-5.

63) Ibn al-Mashhadī, 118-9 and 132-6, with special invocations and further historical details on 136-43. A tradition ascribed to ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sajjād (the fourth Imām—d. 95/713) states that "God extends the lifetime of the supplicant of two prayer cycles in Masjid al-Sahla by two years" (al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Mazār*, 14).

64) al-Kulaynī, 3:491-1; al-Barqī, 1:128; Ibn al-Mashhadī, 122-3 and 131. The parallels in the descriptions of these mosques to that of Masjid al-Aqṣā of Jerusalem (in other accounts of the *miʿrāj*) are striking.

65) For an account that does not mention the magnitude of the reward earned, see al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:32.

66) al-Kulaynī, 3:491; al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:32; Ibn al-Mashhadī, 122 and 130.

67) Ibn al-Mashhadī, 125-6. For a comprehensive set of traditions regarding the importance of this mosque, see al-Kulaynī, 3:494-5 and Ibn al-Mashhadī, 121-31.

of numerous heavenly gardens,[68] and the secret resting place of Nūḥ's ark, Mūsā's cane, and Sulaymān's signet ring.[69]

These mosques were part and parcel of a broad network of sacred spaces frequented primarily by the nascent Imāmī community. While many of the traditions explaining their importance were attributed to either the Prophet or ʿAlī, a comparison of variant accounts suggests that they were originally ascribed to al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq.[70] It was during the lifetimes of these important Imāms (i.e., the late 1st/7th to the mid 2nd/8th century) that such texts gained wide circulation, endowing certain spaces with a religious pedigree that significantly elevated their status for the emerging community. It is hardly surprising that the prayer leaders in these mosques are described as conducting prayers in a distinctively Imāmī manner.[71]

The same traditions which identify "blessed mosques" mention others where ʿAlī prohibited his followers from offering prayers (the so-called "accursed mosques"). These include Masjid al-Ashʿath b. Qays,[72] Masjid Jarīr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Bajalī (also known as Masjid Nimār), Masjid Simāk b. Makhrama,[73] Masjid Shabath b. Ribʿī,[74] and Masjid Taym.[75] Three of these mosques were associated with historical figures reviled by the Imāmīs. Al-Ashʿath b. Qays (d. 40/

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68) al-Barqī, 1:128; Ibn al-Mashhadī, 127-8.

69) Ibn al-Mashhadī, 127 and 129.

70) For accounts that cite al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq in place of ʿAlī, see Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, 300-1; al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:39; al-Kūfī, 2:483-4.

71) Modarressi, *Tradition*, vol. 1, 204.

72) By the 6th/12th century, this mosque no longer existed. Some claimed that it originally stood between Masjid al-Kūfa and Masjid al-Sahla but that only a part of its wall had survived, while others equated it with the extant Masjid al-Jawāshin (Ibn al-Mashhadī, 120).

73) In the 6th/12th century, this mosque was located near the market of the blacksmiths and had been renamed Masjid al-Ḥawāfir (Ibn al-Mashhadī, 120).

74) Shabath b. Ribʿī (d. 80/699) supported both ʿUthmān and ʿAlī before siding with the Khawārij. He eventually repented of turning against ʿAlī and—after the murder of al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī—joined Mukhtār, who placed him in charge of the *shurṭa* in Kūfa. See Ibn Saʿd, 8:335 as well as footnote 2 in Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, 301. In the 6th/12th century, this mosque was located in the markets at the end of a road called *Darb al-Ḥajjāj* (Ibn al-Mashhadī, 120).

75) Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, 301-2; al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:39; al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Mazār*, 88.

661) fought with ʿAlī in the Battle of Siffīn before pressuring him to (a) accept arbitration and (b) appoint Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī as one of the arbiters. The Imāmī sources claim that he turned to Khārijism in his later years.[76] Jarīr b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Jābir al-Bajalī (d. 51-6/671-6) was a Companion entrusted by ʿAlī to carry a letter to Muʿāwiya but who secretly pledged loyalty to the Umayyads and worked on their behalf.[77] Simāk b. Makhrama b. Ḥumayn al-Asadī (d. mid to late 1st/7th century) lived in an area of Kūfa known for the pro-ʿUthmān beliefs of its inhabitants (as late as the 4th/10th century) where he built a mosque in which ʿAlī famously refused to offer prayers.[78] In addition, four of these mosques (Masjid al-ʿAshʿath, Masjid Jarīr, Masjid Simāk, and Masjid Shabath) achieved notoriety when, according to al-Bāqir, "they were renovated… in celebration of the murder of al-Ḥusayn."[79] Given the circumstances, it is highly unlikely that any Imāmī would venture into such locations. According to an early tradition, ʿAlī avoided the fifth mosque (Masjid Taym) largely because its population (drawn from the Banū Taym) "would not pray with him out of enmity and hatred."[80] Two additional hostile spaces mentioned in the Imāmī sources were Masjid Thaqīf and a second Masjid al-Ḥamrā'[81] allegedly built on the grave of "one of the pharaohs."[82]

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76) Al-Ashʿath b. Qays al-Kindī was also a Companion and participated in the *ridda* (apostasy) revolts after the death of the Prophet. He was eventually pardoned and took part in the conquests of Syria. See Ibn Saʿd, 6:236-7; *EI*[2], s.v. al-Ashʿath (Reckendorf); al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, (yrs. 11-40):609. For Shīʿī characterizations of his Khārijism, see footnote 1 in Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, 301.

77) This view is most noticeable in Ibn Saʿd, 6:288-301 and especially 300-1. See also footnote 1 in Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, 301.

78) al-Iṣbahānī (d. 356/967), *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 31 vols., ed. Ibrāhīm Ibyārī (Cairo: Dār al-Shaʿb 1969-79), 11:4037.

79) Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, 302; al-Kulaynī, 3:490; Ibn al-Mashhadī, 118-9. The reference here is to the murder of al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 61/680).

80) Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, 301-2. The fact that Abū Bakr was a member of the Banū Taym likely contributed to the clan's animosity.

81) al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī,* 168-9, with variants in al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:39; Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, 300-1; al-Kūfī, 3:482-3.

82) al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī,* 168-9; Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, 300-1; al-Kūfī, 3:482-3; Ibn al-Mashhadī, 118-9. Ibn al-Mashhadī identifies this location with the marketplace of the carpenters in 6th/12th century Kūfa (Ibn al-Mashhadī, 120).

The presence of "blessed and accursed" mosques in 2nd/8th century Kūfa suggests a clear partitioning of sacred space. While it is possible that some Kūfan *masjids* (e.g., the Friday mosque) were frequented by broad segments of the population, the Imāmī community clearly endowed certain mosques with special historical or religious significance.[83] In light of the evidence for differences in ritual law (e.g., the *qunūt*), these spaces were likely arenas for the performance of communal identity. Venturing into Masjid Juʿfī, a worshipper could expect to hear a distinctive *adhān* (call to prayer),[84] followed by a prayer that took a specifically Shīʿī form.[85]

III. The Merging of Ritual and Space—Pilgrimage

The emergence of a communal boundary separating Imāmīs from the broader Kūfan population was increasingly embodied in a practice that combined ritual with space, namely, the performance of pilgrimages to sites of religious importance.

The centrality of this practice is evident in the growth of an entire genre of literature (with titles such as *Kitāb al-mazār*) which provide pilgrims with itineraries and instructions for location-specific

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83) Although much of this section focuses on the identification of mosques frequented by Imāmīs, there are also accounts which associate specific non-Imāmī Kūfans with particular mosques. For a typical example in which al-Aʿmash is noted as frequenting "Masjid Banī Ḥarām min Banī Saʿd," see Ibn Saʿd, 8:46.

84) There are important differences between the Sunnī and Shīʿī law schools regarding the proper form of the call to prayer (*adhān*). The most prominent concerns the Shīʿī use of the phrase "Hurry to the best of works," a practice ascribed to the Prophet, confirmed by ʿAlī, and supported by subsequent Imāms. Amongst Sunnī juristic circles, there are additional disagreements regarding the use of the phrase "Prayer is better than sleep" (referred to as *tathwīb*) before the dawn prayer. For the Imāmī view, see al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Muqniʿa* (Qumm: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1992), 102; Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh* (Qumm: n.p., 1992), 1:283-4 and 288; al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 2:59-69. For the Sunnī view, see Ibn Qudāma (d. 620/1223), *al-Mughnī*, 15 vols., ed. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī *et al*, (Cairo, n.p., 1986), 2:61. In the 16th century, the Ṣafawids institutionalized a number of new Imāmī ritual practices including the insertion of a confirmation of ʿAlī's *wilāya* within the *adhān*. For this issue, see Liyakat Takim, "From *Bidʿa* to *Sunna*: The *Wilāya* of ʿAlī in the Shīʿī *Adhān*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120 (2000), 166-77.

85) For a summary of these differences, see Lalani, 119-26.

prayers and invocations. Moreover, juristic works include a section on shrines often immediately following chapters dealing with the *ḥajj*. Additional evidence for the role of pilgrimage in the construction of an Imāmī identity is found in traditions that list the outward "signs" of group membership. In a typical example, the eleventh Imām Ḥasan al-Askarī (d. 260/874) asserts that "[t]here are five signs of a believer: fifty-one cycles of prayer, the pilgrimage to al-Ḥusayn's tomb forty days after the anniversary of his death, the wearing of a ring on the right hand, the sprinkling of dust on the forehead, and the audible recitation of the *basmalah*."[86] The inclusion of pilgrimage in lists of the primary rituals of Imāmī Shīʿism testifies to its growing significance through the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries.

Pilgrimage manuals generally begin with a discussion of shrines and places of import in the vicinity of Mecca and Medina. These are not simply tombs of religious figures or locations where the Prophet stayed or recited a prayer; rather they are venues of notable significance to the Imāmī community. Special mention, for example, is made of a mosque built near Ghadīr Khumm where it is believed that the Prophet appointed ʿAlī as his successor.[87] Both al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāẓim (d. 184/800) emphasize the location's role in the historical narrative of succession at the heart of Imāmī identity. The former explains that it is "recommended to perform prayers in the Masjid Ghadīr Khumm because the Prophet established (*aqāma*) the Commander of the Faithful in it and it is the location where God made the truth manifest,"[88] while the latter instructs his followers to "pray in it, for in the prayer is a good benefit, my father [al-Ṣādiq] having commanded it."[89]

It was in Kūfa and its surrounding areas, however, that the centrality of pilgrimage was most evident. There are multitudes of accounts which emphasize the sanctity of the Kūfan mosques mentioned above, particularly Masjid al-Kūfa and Masjid al-Sahla. These venues

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86) al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Mazār*, 53; al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:52.

87) For the importance of this location and the accounts associated with it, see *EI*², s.v. Ghadīr Khumm (L. Veccia Vaglierī); Dakake, 33-48.

88) al-Kulaynī, 4:566-7; al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:18.

89) Ibid.

were included in broad itineraries which instructed adherents in the proper methods of pilgrimage. Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022), for example, directs pilgrims returning from a visit to ʿAlī's grave to stay at Masjid al-Kūfa for an extended period before proceeding to Masjid al-Sahla, Masjid Ghanī, and Masjid al-Ḥamrāʾ.[90] Al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) recommends a visit to the Euphrates, quoting al-Ṣādiq's observation that "I do not think anyone experiences the water of the Euphrates without developing a love for us—the Family of the Prophet,"[91] before describing the merits of the usual set of Kūfan mosques. In his pilgrimage manual, the 6th/12th century Imāmī Ibn al-Mashhadī recounts detailed prayers for a wide array of Kūfan mosques and places them in a hierarchy of importance.[92]

The tombs of ʿAlī (on the outskirts of the city) and al-Ḥusayn (at the battlefield of Karbalāʾ roughly fifty miles away) were revered as especially sacred locations, and every member of the community with the means and opportunity was expected to visit them. Although ʿAlī's grave was often incorporated into discussions of the broader importance of Kūfan holy sites, its special distinction was reflected in regular city delegations that would travel the short distance in a public procession.[93] This often took place during the festival commemorating Ghadīr Khumm on the 10th of Dhū al-Ḥijja. The defining importance of the pilgrimage in assessing communal identity is reflected in the case of Hibat Allāh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Kātib (d. early 5th/11th century), popularly known as Ibn Barniyya. The Imāmī biographical sources recount his belief in thirteen Imāms (the twelve in the standard Imāmī genealogy together with Zayd b. ʿAlī) and note that he frequented the circles of a prominent Kūfan Zaydī scholar.[94] On the basis of this description, we would expect

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90) al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Mazār*, 88. The same text emphasizes the importance of the Kūfan mosques by enjoining pilgrims to visit them before proceeding to the grave of ʿAlī, especially if they fear that they will not have the opportunity to do so afterwards.

91) al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:39.

92) Ibn al-Mashhadī, 111-80 where the location of each *masjid* within Kūfa proper is described along with appropriate invocations.

93) al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:21 and 6:39 along with al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Mazār*, 88.

94) Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Najāshī (d. 449/1058), *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, ed. Muḥammad Jawād al-Nāʾīnī (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwāʾ 1988), 2:408-9; Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ḥillī

a condemnation of Ibn Barniyya for his heterodox belief in Zayd's imāmate.[95] The eventual consensus of the school, however, confirmed his Imāmism, citing his acceptance of those Imāms explicitly rejected by the Zaydīs for their failure to engage in armed uprising (e.g., the fourth Imām ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sajjād).[96] This is startling. If Ibn Barniyya held a theological belief (i.e., the acceptance of thirteen Imāms) that fell outside the purview of Imāmī doctrine, how could he be considered a proper Imāmī? Part of the answer may lie in al-Najāshī's biographical entry, which states that "this man participated in many pilgrimages. The last pilgrimage where he was present amongst us was in the year 400 on the day of Ghadīr at the tomb of the Commander of the Faithful."[97] This public act of pilgrimage constituted an affirmation of communal identity strong enough to overcome a dramatic departure from Imāmī theological doctrine. The case of Ibn Barniyya testifies to the importance of participation in annual synchronized processions which represented singular occasions when large groups of Imāmīs could assert their loyalties as a group.[98]

The shrine of al-Ḥusayn in Karbalāʾ evoked a similar resonance as a center for communal ritual in 2nd/8th century Kūfa. Located at a distance that made daily visits from Kūfa difficult, it was close enough to serve as a semi-regular site for lesser pilgrimages. The multitudes of accounts that enjoin believers to visit the site emphasize its place at the very heart of communal identity. In most of these texts, Kūfan Imāmīs visit Medina, where they are questioned by

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(d. 740/1340), *Kitāb al-rijāl*, (Tehran: Dānishgāh, 1963), 366. Al-Najāshī identifies his Zaydī teacher as Abū al-Ḥusayn b. Shayba al-ʿAlawī.

95) One Imāmī authority does condemn him as weak in *ḥadīth* transmission (Ibn Dāwūd, 366) but others appear to reserve judgment and do not offer a clear opinion regarding his reliability (al-Najāshī, 2:408-9).

96) al-Tustarī, 10:499.

97) al-Najāshī, 2:408.

98) While smaller gathering in mosques for daily prayers or individualized pilgrimages to holy sites carried significance, the processions allowed individuals to be counted as part and parcel of a cohesive community. Similar dynamics are apparent in processions in the modern period in South Asia (amongst both Muslims and Hindus) and were particularly conspicuous in the millions of pilgrims who gathered in Karbalāʾ for the first commemoration of ʿĀshūrāʾ after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

either al-Bāqir or al-Ṣādiq about the frequency of pilgrimages to Karbalāʾ. In one instance, al-Ṣādiq observes that "our Shīʿa [in Kūfa] allow a year or two to pass during which most of them do not visit al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib."[99] He notes that they would be surprised in the afterlife by a diminished reward and by being kept at a distance from the Prophet. In another tradition, al-Ṣādiq asks a Kūfan visitor (identified as ʿAbd Allāh b. Ṭalḥa al-Nahdī) if he has ever visited Karbalāʾ (yes) and then interrogates him as to the regularity of those visits. [100] When al-Ṣādiq learns of the infrequency with which al-Nahdī (along with the larger Imāmī Kūfan community) undertook the journey to Karbalāʾ, he laments that the act is not intended as a burden, for it garners a reward equal to a greater and lesser pilgrimage. In a third account, al-Bāqir—upon being informed that the travel time between Kūfa and Karbalāʾ is "a little over a day"—observes that if he resided so close to al-Ḥusayn, he would visit often.[101] Each of these traditions places the pilgrimage from Kūfa to Karbalāʾ at the heart of Imāmī identity, as Imāms implore their followers to visit the shrine regularly. Some texts go so far as to make pilgrimage a foundational requirement of faith itself. In a typical example, al-Ṣādiq forcefully asserts:

> If one of you performs the *ḥajj* in the course of your lifetime and does not visit al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, then you have departed from one of the claims (*ḥuqūq*) of God and the Messenger of God, because the claim of al-Ḥusayn is a mandatory duty from God Exalted and Mighty and obligatory upon every Muslim.[102]

Here the act of pilgrimage is elevated to a core tenet of faith and integrated into a larger set of ritual acts central to the lived experience of the Imāmī community.[103]

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99) al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:45.

100) Ibid., 6:21.

101) Ibid., 6:46.

102) al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Mazār*, 26.

103) Ibn Qulūyahʾs (d. 367/978-9) *Kāmil al-ziyārāt* [ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī al-Tabrīzī (Najaf: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Murtaḍawiyya, 1937-8], a collection of traditions outlining the virtues and benefits of a pilgrimage to Karbalāʾ, epitomizes the centrality of the practice to Imāmī identity.

IV. Conclusion

In *Distinction*, his seminal study of 20th century France, Pierre Bourdieu emphasizes the importance of practice and place in the formation of identity, linking cultural preferences (i.e., taste) to the creation of boundaries which—in turn—partition French society into discernable classes.[104] Specifically, he argues that social divisions are facilitated by (and extenuated through) adherence to a set of observable behaviors consciously adopted by individual members of a group (e.g., an economic class). The emergence of group identity is tied to the public performance of distinctive actions in locations appropriated by (and specific to) a new social group. This relationship of ritual and space is not static. Over time, locations acquire an elevated importance rooted in the historical experience of the community as a whole. The process creates a situation in which the very act of visiting a sacred space to perform a set of ritual actions becomes a public affirmation of identity. Locations originally chosen for reasons of comfort or safety acquire a charismatic authority in their own right. Seen in this light, pilgrimage sites, shrines, or festival grounds are unambiguous indicators of a demarcated group identity.

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104) Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 482-4. In *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond (Cambridge: Polity in association with Basil Blackwell, 1991), Bourdieu expands his analysis to include modern revolutionary movements and their appropriation of language in the assertion of identity. Bourdieu authored numerous works which apply his theoretical framework to topics ranging from political action in Algeria to the development of a European artistic aesthetic. See also Kevin Hetherington, *Expressions of Identity* (London: Sage, 1998), 19 and 37. Bourdieu's work has provided the methodological framework for numerous modern studies on identity. Some (e.g., Gabriele Marranci, *Jihad Beyond Islam* [Oxford: Berg, 2006] and Arnold Eisen, *Rethinking Modern Judaism* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998]) apply his methods to religious communities and emphasize the role of ritual in creating boundaries for emergent communities. Others (e.g., Dru Gladney's *Dislocating China* [London: C. Hurst & Company, 2004] and Maris Gilette's *Between Mecca and Beijing* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000]) focus on visible differences amongst social groups that consciously set themselves apart from broader society. The development of a "punk" subculture has received particular attention in a series of studies that include Tricia Henry, *Break all rules!* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989) and Alan O'Conner, "Punk Subculture in Mexico and the Anti-Globalization Movement," *New Political Science* 25 (2003) 43-54. For a detailed summary of the current state of the field, see Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London: Routledge, 2004).

The ideas set forth by Bourdieu resonate strongly with the emergence of Imāmī Shīʿism in Kūfa. For members of the nascent community, adherence to distinct ritual forms (e.g., a daily prayer including the audible *basmalah* and the *qunūt*) was a public declaration that carried significant weight. In many cases, it was central to the "examination" which determined an individual's reputation as a source of religious knowledge. As opposed to questioning authorities about theological beliefs, the earliest sources depict them being followed into mosques and observed in prayer to ascertain their reliability. Such behavior speaks strongly for the functional importance of ritual in the broader Kūfan religious milieu. Over the course of the 2nd/8th century, there was an increasing correlation between ritual practice and mosque as the early Imāmī community appropriated certain locations as their own. This was reflected in a wide range of traditions in circulation during the lifetime of al-Ṣādiq (although ascribed to ʿAlī) wherein certain spaces were deemed friendly and "sacred" while others were characterized as hostile and "accursed." In subsequent decades, these mosques, together with sites of particular religious resonance (e.g., ʿAlī's tomb and the battlefield at Karbalāʾ), became focal points for pilgrimage, a practice that combined performative ritual and sacred space. The authority of such public proclamations of communal identity was such that, by the end of the 4th/10th century (at the latest) mere participation was deemed sufficient to override even the most problematic of theological beliefs.