This article is aimed at analyzing the medieval and modern source material dealing with the history of Djerba under the Rustamid Imamate in an attempt to clarify the nature of both the historical and historiographical relationship between them. It will begin by discussing the available primary and secondary source material, including the historiographical challenges they present. An analysis of the textual and archeological evidence connecting the Rustamids and Djerba will follow. Next, it will attempt to synthesize the scattered bits of evidence available in the historical record in an effort to present a clearer picture of Djerba in the Rustamid period. On the basis of this textual and archeological evidence, it will be argued that Djerba was home to an ibāḍī community independent of the government in Tāhert for the majority—if not all—of that Imamate’s existence—distinguishing the island from the surrounding areas of the Djerid (in southern Tunisia), parts of Aghlabid Ifrīqiya and the Jebel Nafūsa. Furthermore, it will be shown that evidence suggests this independence was not only a political, but also a religious one.

Key words: Djerba; Ibāḍīs; Ibāḍiyya; Rustamids; Tunisia; Jebel Nafūsa.

Este ensayo analiza las fuentes de origen medieval y moderno sobre la historia de Ŷarba en el Imamato rustamí en un intento de aclara la naturaleza de la relación histórica e historiográfica entre ellos. Se empieza por discutir las fuentes primarias y secundarias disponibles, incluyendo los retos historiográficos que plantean y se presenta a continuación un análisis de las evidencias textuales y arqueológicas que conectan a los rustamíes con Ŷarba. Se intenta después sintetizar las piezas dispersas de la evidencia disponible en el registro histórico con el fin de presentar una imagen más clara de Ŷarba durante el periodo rustamí. Con base en esta evidencia textual y arqueológica, se argumentará que Ŷarba era hogar de una comunidad ibāḍī independiente del gobierno en Tāhert durante la mayor parte (si no en su totalidad) de la existencia del Imamato, distinguiendo así la isla de los alrededores del Ŷarid (en el sur de Túnez), partes de la Ifrīqiya Aglabí y el Ŷabal Nafūsa. Se muestra por último que la evidencia sugiere que esta independencia no era solamente política, sino religiosa.

Palabras clave: Ŷarba; ibāḍíes; Ibāḍiyya; rustamíes; Túnez; Ŷabal Nafūsa.
Introduction

Medieval and modern sources have long been in agreement that the island of Djerba, located off the southeast coast of modern Tunisia, was part of the Ibāḍī Rustamid Imāmate (779-909) of Tāhert for much of the Imāmate’s history. Unfortunately, the medieval sources failed to articulate the nature of the relationship between the island and the rest of the Imāmate. While some modern scholars have taken the scant references to Djerba in later (i.e. post-Rustamid) North African sources as evidence of that island’s total allegiance to the Rustamids, others have concluded that this allegiance was at best a ‘nominal’ one and that the Imāmate held little to no political control over the island. This article is aimed at analyzing the medieval and modern source material dealing with the history of Djerba under the Rustamid Imāmate in an attempt to clarify the nature of both the historical and historiographical relationship between them.

It will begin by discussing the available primary and secondary source material, including the historiographical challenges they present. An analysis of the textual and archeological evidence connecting the Rustamids and Djerba will follow. Next, it will attempt to synthesize the scattered bits of evidence available in the historical record in an effort to present a clearer picture of Djerba in the Rustamid period. On the basis of this textual and archeological evidence, it will be argued that Djerba was home to an Ibāḍī community independent of the government in Tāhert for the majority— if not all— of that Imāmate’s existence— distinguishing the island from the surrounding areas of the Djerid (in southern Tunisia), parts of Aghlabid Iftāqiya and the Jebel Nafūsa. Furthermore, it will be shown that evidence suggests this independence was not only a political, but also a religious one.

1 Research for this article was made possible through a generous grant from the American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS) in the summer of 2010. A version of the article was also presented at the 2011 International Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo, MI. I am very thankful for the comments and suggestions made by panel coordinator Doron Bauer and the other panel attendees. I would also like to thank Dr. Renata Holod for providing me with articles and information relating to the forthcoming second volume of the Jerba Studies archaeological survey (1995-2000).
Source Material

Medieval Non-Ibāḍī Sources

Any study of medieval North African history must in some way rely on the essential canon of medieval geographical works and historical chronicles. Although these sources do much in helping researchers understand the political and economic climate in which the Rustamid state developed, they do little to clarify the nature of Rustamid power outside of the immediate vicinity of the capital of Tāḥert. The history of Djerba in the Rustamid period, in particular, remains obscure in the well-known medieval Arabic works of al-Bakrī, Ibn Ḥawqal, al-Ya’qūbī, Ibn Khaldūn, Ibn Ḥadhārī and others. While their value is not to be discounted, these works provide disappointingly little information on Rustamids in Djerba. As a result, the present work draws heavily on Ibāḍī texts.

The Chronicle of Ibn Șaghīr

Studies on the Rustamid Imāmate cannot afford to ignore the extremely valuable historical chronicle contemporary with the Rustamids, Ibn Șaghīr’s History of the Rustamid Imāms (Kitāb Siyar al-A’imma al-Rustamīyīn). While it seems clear that he lived and wrote in Tāḥert at the end of the Rustamid Imāmate, little is known about this chronicle’s author. Various scholars have speculated as to Ibn Șaghīr’s religious allegiance but all agree that he was not himself an Ibāḍī. Although it is likely that the copy of the chronicle that has survived is incomplete, it is no doubt an extremely important non-Ibāḍī source for the study of Rustamid history. It focuses heavily on internal conflicts within the Rustamid state, which has even led some scholars to suggest that the primary purpose of the book was to record internal dissension rather than to provide an history of the Imāmate. Indeed, the chronicle is primarily concerned with events occurring in and around Tāḥert and makes only a few indirect refer-

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2 Ibn al-Șaghīr, Kitāb Siyar.
3 For a full discussion see ‘Tarjamat Ibn al-Șaghīr’ in Ibn al-Șaghīr, Kitāb Siyar, pp. 11-14.
4 Bahḥāz, al-Dawla al-Rustamiyya, p. 131.
ences to events farther east near Djerba. The source is also very problematic (and indispensable) because many of the accounts of internal conflicts within the Rustamid state differ substantially from those found in Ibāḍī sources. Not surprisingly, later Ibāḍī historians and chroniclers built upon the works of their Ibāḍī predecessors which resulted in a more or less standardized historical narrative. That the chronicle of Ibn Ṣaghrī, by far the earliest account of the Rustamids, differs in some respects from the later Ibāḍī works is therefore hardly surprising.

Medieval North African Ibāḍī Sources

In contrast to the sparse accounts found in most medieval non-Ibāḍī sources, a tremendous amount of information on the history of the Rustamids has been preserved in the chronicles, biographical dictionaries and religious treatises written by North African Ibāḍīs themselves. Like the historical narratives created by other Islamic sects, this body of literature represents what Elizabeth Savage has termed the result of a “cumulative process of tradition building.”

While the present author certainly agrees with Savage’s critical historiographical observations regarding the Ibāḍī historical and biographical corpus, this article cautiously assumes the veracity of much of the material provided by the Ibāḍī sources. The number of these major North African Ibāḍī sources used by scholars is more or less limited to a handful of works spanning several centuries: Abū Zakariyyā’s (d.471/1078) Kitāb Siyar al-A’immah wa-Akhbārihim, al-Shammākhī’s (d.928/1522) Kitāb al-Siyar, al-Darjīnī’s (d.670/1271) Kitāb Ṭabaqāt Mashāyikh al-Maghrib and the Sīrat Abī l-Rabī‘a al-Wisyānī. Perhaps one of the most important historiographical features of these and other, later Ibāḍī sources is their understanding of the de-

5 Savage, A Gateway to Hell, p. 2.
6 Abū Zakariyyā, Kitāb Siyar.
7 Al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar.
8 Al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Ṭabaqāt.
9 Unfortunately, the author was unable to obtain a copy of this work. A critical edition of it was published in 3 volumes by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture in Oman: al-Wisyānī, Siyar al-Wisyānī, edited by ‘Umar b. Luqmān Ḥammū Sulaymān Bū ‘Aṣhāna. Thank you to the anonymous reviewer who brought its publication to my attention.
Development of the institution of Ibāḍī Imāmate itself. Beginning in the 12th century and continuing up to the present day, the history and development of the Ibāḍi Imāmate in North Africa was conceptualized within various versions of a framework known as the Ibāḍi masālik al-dīn (stages of religion). This religious and historical framework for understanding the conditions of the Imāmate neatly categorized the ‘stages’ through which the Imāmate developed over time. The four traditional stages, as given by Ennami, are: Zuhūr (Manifestation), Difā’ (Defense), Shirā’ (Sacrifice) and Kitmān (Secrecy).  

Each of the stages represents a different kind of Imāmate corresponding to the circumstances in which an Ibāḍī community finds itself. Later historians were able to apply the different stages to various Ibāḍi leaders and create a line of Imāmates throughout history – seemingly free of religious and theoretical contradictions. An excellent study of the Ibāḍi Imāmate tradition by Adam Gaiser has identified some of the historiographical challenges and anachronistic issues presented by the masālik al-dīn framework, arguing that it is largely a result of the Ibāḍi ‘revitalization’ movement in the 19th century. More importantly for us here, Gaiser argues that the masālik al-dīn framework likely developed only after the fall of the Rustamids. The use of the framework in understanding political rule in the Rustamid period and the allegiance of the places like Djerba to the the Imāmate is therefore inappropriate.

Manuscript Evidence

In addition to printed source material, our understanding of medieval Ibāḍi history in North Africa is (or perhaps more appropriately, could be) enriched by the large number of Manuscripts held in either private or public libraries throughout Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Oman. Unfortunately, as Ennami noted nearly 40 years ago, a tremendous number of these Manuscripts remain in private hands and unaccessible to most researchers (particularly non-Ibāḍīs). The small number of Manuscripts used for this article came from al-Maktaba

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10 Ennami, Studies in Ibāḍism, p. 229.
13 Ennami, Studies in Ibāḍism, XIV.
Modern Studies

There is a large number of modern studies by both Ibāḍī and non-Ibāḍī historians on the Rustamids relevant to the subject of this article. Like their medieval predecessors, these scholars have largely been influenced by the traditional framework of the masālik al-dīn. Among the most important modern studies by Ibāḍī scholars that address the relationship of the Rustamids and Djerba are al-Bārūnī’s al-Azhār al-Riyāḍîyya,15 Djābirī’s Nizām al-‘Azzāba,16 Ibn Ya’qūb’s Tārikh Jazīrat Djerba,17 and Mu’ammad’s al-Ibāḍīyyah fī Mawkiḥ al-Tārikh.18 These and other authors likely had access to a variety of materials otherwise unavailable to non-Ibāḍī scholars and contain some information not found in the published primary sources.

As for the modern non-Ibāḍī scholars who have worked on Rustamid period history, the works of Tadeusz Lewicki are an essential reference point for any scholar interested in medieval Ibāḍīs in North Africa. Although Lewicki never conducted any studies specifically dedicated to Djerba, his published lecture on Ibāḍīs in medieval Tunisia is the main reference scholars have used in supporting the idea that Djerba was part of the Rustamid Imāmate.19 Ṭā’līb al-Rāziq’s al-Khawārij fī Bilād al-Maghrib20 presented an overview of the major Kharijite and Ibāḍī movements in North Africa in the Middle Ages. His book has influenced many modern historians writing in Arabic on the history of the Rustamids including Ibrāhīm Bahḥāz in his al-Dawla al-Rustamīya.21 In addition, numerous anthropological, geographical and archeological studies on the island have been pub-

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14 The author would like to thank the current owner of the Barouni Library, Sa‘īd al-Barouni, for his help in acquiring these and other manuscripts
15 Al-Barūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyāḍîyya.
16 Djābirī, Nizām al-‘Azzāba.
17 Sāfīm b. Ya’qūb, Tārikh Jazīra.
18 Mu’ammad, al-Ibāḍîyya.
19 Lewicki, “Les Ibâḍîtes en Tunisie”.
20 Ṭā’līb al-Rāziq, al-Khawārij.
21 Ibrāhīm Bahḥāz, al-Dawla al-Rustamīya.
lished but they have tended to focus on either the pre-Islamic or later Islamic and modern periods.

**Archeological Evidence**

A handful of the over 250 religious structures in Djerba also help in augmenting the information in the written source material dealing with the Rustamid period. A recent, exhaustive survey of the mosques of Djerba by Riadh El Mrabet entitled *Mudawwanat Masājid Djerba (Corpus des Mosquées de Jerba)* is a particularly useful tool for integrating the archeological record with the traditional written narratives. The architectural landscape of Djerba is fascinatingly diverse, containing innovative structures designed to serve simultaneously religious and defensive functions. This diversity, coupled with constant restorations and continued use of many of the mosques over the centuries, make dating them extremely difficult. Nevertheless, it is possible that some of the structures date originally to the Rustamid period and are therefore useful to the subject of this article. The *Jerba Studies* archaeological survey of the island conducted from 1995-2000 has also produced valuable information concerning Rustamid era Djerba. The forthcoming second volume of the study dealing with the Early Medieval/Early Islamic era will be an indispensable tool for historians of the island.

**Islam in Djerba and the Founding of the Rustamid Imāmate of Tāhert**

Djerba is traditionally considered to have entered the fold of Islam in 667-8/47 during the Caliphate of Mu’āwiya b. Abī Sufyān. Sources are then silent, however, as to the history of the island during the period between its conquest and the so-called ‘Kharijite Rebellion’

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22 El Mrabet, *Mudawwanat Masājid Djerba*.
23 El Mrabet, “al-Qīma”.
24 Drine, Fentress and Holod (ed.), *An Island through Time*. Volume two was still in press and the time of writing.
in the middle of the 8th century CE. Secondary sources mention 757/140 as the date for the ‘conquest’ of Djerba by the Ibāḍīya.\textsuperscript{26} Indeed, evidence drawn from pottery on the island suggests a much more gradual migration of Ibāḍīs or conversion to Ibāḍī Islam.\textsuperscript{27} In any event, among the political outcomes of these rebellions, in which many Ibāḍī groups took part, was the short-lived Ibāḍī Imāmate in Jebel Nafūsa under the Imām Abū l-Khattāb. Following the fall of this Imāmate at the hands of the Abbasid general Ibn al-Asha’āth in 770/154, those loyal to Abū l-Khattāb opted to move westward in search of safety.\textsuperscript{28} Either just before or just after they settled upon the site of the city of Tāhert, Abū l-Khattāb’s former governor in the city of Kairouan, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam, was elected Imām.\textsuperscript{29}

\textit{The Imāmate of Ibn Rustam (161-171/779-788)}

Ibn Rustam was a likely choice for a variety of factors. He was one of the original Ibāḍī ‘Bearers of the Knowledge’ (\textit{hamalat al-‘ilm}), a group of missionaries trained in al-Baṣra and then sent back to the Maghrib to propagate the Ibāḍī \textit{madhhab}.\textsuperscript{30} In addition to religious training, he possessed practical political experience gained while serving as governor of Kairouan. Ibāḍī and non-Ibāḍī sources also made much of his Persian background which translated to him having no tribal allegiance in North Africa\textsuperscript{31} – a useful characteristic in a region often so divided by tribal affiliations.

Following the founding of the Rustamid Imāmate in Tāhert, some historians claim that Djerba was among the first places in North Africa to ally itself with the new Ibāḍī state under Ibn Rustam.\textsuperscript{32} Although

\begin{itemize}
\item[26] El Ghali, \textit{Les états kharidjites}; Prévost uses the same date citing El Ghali in her article “L’influence de l’État rustumide” (p. 68 y 114).
\item[27] Holod and Cirelli, \textit{Islamic Pottery from Jerba}, p. 177.
\item[30] Lewicki, “al-Ibādiya”, in \textit{EF}.
\end{itemize}
some sort of nominal allegiance in the region is plausible given that the island’s inhabitants may have been Ibāḍīs, it must be admitted that there is no evidence to support this claim. Indeed, there is little evidence to point to the population even having been Ibāḍī in this early period. If the accounts describing the founding of Tāhert and its construction spanning several years are taken into consideration, it is doubtful that much was done in the way of state-building outside of the immediate area of Tāhert during this period. It is much more likely that it was under the second Rustamid Imam, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Ṭāhān b. Rustam (r.788-824/171-208), that the inhabitants of Djerba would have had some sort of relationship with the Imamate.

The Imamate of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (788-824/171-208)

Unlike the reign of his father, the Imamate of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb appears in the sources as plagued by numerous political, social and religious opposition movements resulting from his various attempts at expansion and establishing political control. Ultimately, many of these movements found supporters in Djerba.

The Emergence of al-Nukkār

The first of the opposition movements to the Rustamid Imamate appeared at the beginning of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s reign in 788/170-1. Prior to his death, ‘Abd al-Rahmān designated six men as candidates for the Imamate.33 Not surprisingly, the inclusion of the Imam’s own son among the candidates and his subsequent election led to some opposition. While Ibāḍī sources implied that ‘Abd al-Wahhāb was simply the best candidate, Ibn Ṣaghīr considered his reign as the transformation of the office of the Imamate into that of a hereditary kingship.34 The leader of the opposition to ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s election was another of the candidates for Imam, Yazīd b. Fundīn. During the majlis in which ‘Abd al-Wahhāb was elected, Yazīd agreed to support his election on the condition that he rely upon the advice and agree-

34 Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, Kitāb Siyar, p. 44.

ment of the shūra council members, as his father was said to have done.\(^{35}\) Supporters of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb responded to Ibn Fundīn that they knew of no conditions for the Imām except that he must rule by the Quʾrān and the sunna of the Prophet.\(^{36}\) This managed to quiet the opposition and ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was subsequently elected Imām.

Afterward, however, Yazīd continued to oppose the Imām and eventually went so far as to openly deny the legitimacy of his rule on the grounds that he did not fulfill the aforementioned condition. Along with a substantial number of followers, Yazīd left Tāhert and took up residence in the surrounding mountains.\(^{37}\) This group, pejoratively dubbed the Nukkār or the Yazīdiya\(^{38}\) by Ibāḍī historians for their denial of the Imām’s rule but known as the al-Mistāwa or Mahbūbīn among their supporters,\(^{39}\) continued to be influential throughout the Rustamid period and afterward.\(^{40}\) That the Nukkār represented a serious challenge to the Rustamid Imām is clear because the Ibāḍī sources went to great lengths to explain a series of exchanges between Tāhert and the Ibāḍī communities in the mashriq aimed at legitimating ʿAbd al-Wahhāb’s rule.\(^{41}\) Although Ibāḍī sources imply that the movement was more or less limited to the capital and the surrounding areas, later events described in the same sources demonstrate that it had supporters elsewhere.

Even following the defeat of Yazīd and his followers in Tāhert, the Nukkār movement continued to gain supporters throughout the region. Although it is uncertain when, some Ibāḍīs of Djerba may have allied themselves in one way or another with the movement during the reign of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb or that of his son and successor, Aflāḥ.\(^{42}\) In any case, for centuries afterward the Ibāḍīs of Djerba were

\(^{35}\) Abū Zakarīyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 87; al-Bārūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyādhiya, p. 152; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Tabaqāt, p. 47; al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 53.

\(^{36}\) Abū Zakarīyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 87; al-Bārūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyādhiya, p. 152; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Tabaqāt, p. 47.


\(^{39}\) Interestingly, one of the towns in Djerba still bears the name Mahbūbīn today.

\(^{40}\) The Nukkārīya refers to a much different group in Ibn Ṣaghīr. He made no mention of Yazīd b. Fundīn, See Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, Kitāb Siyar, p. 37, fn.33.

\(^{41}\) Abū Zakarīyā, Kitāb Siyar, pp. 89-90; al-Bārūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyādhiya, p. 159; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Tabaqāt, pp. 49-50; al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, pp. 54-55.

divided between the Wahhīya (those traditionally loyal to the Rustamid Imāms) and the Nukkār.

ʻAbd al-Wahhāb in Jebel Nafūsa

Djerba next appears in the historical record in one of the more curious stories in the Imāmate of ʻAbd al-Wahhāb—that of his attempted hajj journey undertaken after having suppressed the revolt of Yazīd b. Fundīn. While en route to the east, the Imām passed first through Jebel Dummar (today in western Libya) where the Ibāḍī community pledged allegiance to him and he appointed a ‘governor’ (ʻāmil). From there he continued to Jebel Nafūsa where he was welcomed by its inhabitants and apparently acknowledged as Imām. It is during this trip that the Rustamid Imāmate’s sphere of influence appears to have expanded substantially—perhaps extending so far as to include the island of Djerba. The Ibāḍī sheikhs of Nafūsa ultimately decided that the Imām should not complete the hajj pilgrimage for fear of his being captured by the Abbasids. So, instead of completing the hajj, ʻAbd al-Wahhāb remained in Jebel Nafūsa for seven years, during which time he taught and established a strong connection between the Imāmate and the Ibāḍīs in the region. Ibāḍī historians did not mention who was left in charge of Tahert during the Imām’s absence and it can only be assumed that either the Imām’s son Aflaḥ or some sort of shūra council was ruling in his place. In any case, the Imām’s extended stay in Jebel Nafūsa did much to solidify the connection between the eastern provinces and the capital.

During his time there, the Imām and his followers in Jebel Nafūsa besieged the nearby city of Tripoli which was at that time under the control of the Aghlabids centered in northern Ifrīqiya (Tunisia). Following the death of the Aghlabid leader Ibrāhīm b. al-Aghlab (r.800-812), ʻAbd al-Wahhāb and the governor of Tripoli, ʻAbdallāh b.

43 Lewicki, “Les subdivisions de l’Ibāḍīyya”.
47 Bahjāz, al-Dawla al-Rustamīyya, p. 119.
Ibrāhīm, agreed that the city and coastline would remain under the Aghlabid control while the surrounding countryside was from then onward to be under the control of the Rustamids.48 Somewhat problematic is the conspicuous absence of this account in several sources. Abū Zakariyā and al-Darjīnī, for example, said only that the siege was unsuccessful and did not mention it again.49 Likewise, Ibn Ṣaghīr mentioned the siege but provided no details.50 Regardless of the outcome of the siege, its being mentioned in various sources serves as evidence of 'Abd al-Wahhāb’s prolonged presence in the area.

With Nafūsā and the surrounding areas under control of Rustamid allies, the Imām began his journey back to Tāhert. Upon his departure, the people of Nafūsā asked him to appoint a governor over them. When asked who they would prefer, the people not surprisingly nominated al-Samh b. Abī al-Khattāb, the son of the former Imām of Jebel Nafūsā. 'Abd al-Wahhāb hesitated at first, but ultimately agreed to his appointment and began his journey westward.51 With the appointment of this and other governors,52 Jebel Nafūsā and the surrounding territories nominally entered the realm of the Rustamid Imāmate.

It is in the account of 'Abd al-Wahhāb’s return journey that the only direct (late) medieval textual reference is made to Djerba as part of the Rustamid Imāmate. Al-Shammākhī wrote:

And ['Abd al-Wahhāb’s] governor to Sert and Qusṭaliya was Zaqūn b. Amīr. He sent Qatān b. Salma al-Zawāghī to Qābis and he besieged it. The environs of Qābis, Maṭmāta, Zanzafa, Dumar and Zawāgha, and others were under his control, and thus Djerba.53

From this passage, numerous scholars have gone so far as to claim that Djerba was under the wing of the Rustamid Imāmate from this time forward. Indeed, it is from this passage that Lewicki marked the beginning of Rustamid rule in Djerba, though he offered no explanation

49 Abū Zakariyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 116; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Ṭabaqāt, p. 67.
50 Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, Kitāb Siyar, p. 39.
51 Abū Zakariyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 119; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Ṭabaqāt, p. 67; al-Barūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyāḍīyya, p. 198; al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, pp. 72-73.
52 Other authors do not mention names, but do mention that several governors are appointed. See Abū Zakariyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 119; al-Bārūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyāḍīyya, p. 197; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Ṭabaqāt, p. 68.
53 Al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 69.
as to the extent of such rule.\textsuperscript{54} In his many lists of governors under the Rustamid Imāms, al-Shammākhī never specified the name of the Rustamid governor in Djerba and the implication in the passage above is that Djerba is included in the ‘province’ of Qābis and its environs. In her article on Rustamid influence in southern Tunisia, Virginie Prévost accepted al-Shammākhī’s account, arguing the Rustamid representative Qaṭān b. Salma al-Zawāghī governed the island.\textsuperscript{55} The way in which Djerba is tacked on at the end of the list of locations under his control, however, is curious. It certainly seems unlikely that one representative could have effectively governed such a large area. Perhaps that is because the Rustamid representative did little more than collect zakāt. Indeed, it is more than likely that Djerba was not ‘governed’ at all.

Unique though it may be, al-Shammākhī’s reference is not the only link between Djerba and the Rustamids. In his three volume work on the history of the Ibāḍīs, ‘Alī Yahyā Mu‘ammār wrote that Djerba had a governor under the Rustamids who would gather the taxes and zakāt and then distribute them on the island, rather than sending them on to Tāhert.\textsuperscript{56} It is possible that he was referring to the governor of Qābis, but in the absence of any evidence the idea that a Rustamid representative was appointed on Djerba seems unlikely.

\textit{Archaeological Links}

Another piece of evidence linking Djerba to a Rustamid governor in the same period is one of the earliest mosques of Djerba still in existence, \textit{Jāmi‘ al-Tajdīt}. In his \textit{Mu‘nis al-\textit{Ahībba}}, Muḥammad Abū Rās (d. 1807) wrote this passage regarding the mosque:

Originaly, its pronunciation was “al-jāmi‘ al-jadīd.” It was built at the beginning of the third century [AH]. The prince of the city of Tāhert ordered its construction at the hands of his governor in Djerba.\textsuperscript{57}

If the structure was built at the beginning of the third century, that would mean it was constructed during the reign of either ‘Abd al-
Wahhāb (r.788-824/171-208) or his son and successor, Aflaḥ (r.824-873/208-258). It is only under ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, though, that we have a textual reference to a Rustamid representative in charge of Djerba. Therefore, if the structure does date to this early period, it would be more likely that the mosque was built at the end of the reign of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb than at the beginning of his son’s Imāmate. Abū Rās did not, however, mention his source and the author is unaware of any text which might support this early date.

Riyadh El Mrabet, who conducted an archeological survey of the mosques of Djerba, attributed the mosque’s early dating to local oral tradition. According to his report, while some of the structure of the Tajdīt mosque could be as old as the third/ninth century, it is difficult to be certain because of successive periods of reconstruction. Any accurate dating of the mosque through excavation would be difficult given that it is still in use to the present day. It is possible, though, that this mosque represents an archeological record of the Rustamids in Djerba.

Another possible connection between Djerba and Tāhert is evidence left by the island’s pottery sherds. In their study of pottery in the early Islamic era, R. Holod and E. Cirelli noted that forms found in Djerba dating from the 8th century “have parallels in Tāhert, where they occur in the earliest phases of the town.” The presence of these sherds should not be taken as definitive proof of any political relationship between the two. Indeed, the possibility of this contact between Tāhert and Djerba in the early Rustamid period, however, did not prevent the study from concluding that it is not until the tenth century that any significant transformation in the pottery record occurred. Rather, evidence points to the relative isolation of Djerba in the Rustamid period.

The Limits of Rustamid Authority

In any event, it appears that it was under ʿAbd al-Wahhāb that the limits of the Rustamid Imāmate reached their apex. Naturally, deter-

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58 Mrabet, Mudawwana, pp. 82-87.
59 Holod and Cirelli, Islamic Pottery from Jerba, p. 177.
60 Holod and Cirelli, Islamic Pottery from Jerba, p. 181.
mining the limits of the Rustamid Imāmate in any period is not practical. Indeed, applying a modern concept of territorial boundaries to a polity existing in eighth century North Africa would be decidedly anachronistic. As Bahḥāz noted, it would be more precise to think of the ‘borders’ of the Rustamid authority as extremely flexible throughout its existence, constantly expanding and contracting. At the same time, his claim that the borders of the Imāmate might be more accurately drawn according to religious (as opposed to political or military) allegiance is hardly convincing and problematic given that his argument is based largely on later interpretations of the masālik al-dīn. The claim that some regions/tribes were only nominally allied to the Rustamids on the basis of religion seems accurate and the idea has been suggested by other scholars, as well. For example, in explaining the territorial limits of the Rustamid Imāmate, M. Talbi wrote:

The Tahart principality had fluid frontiers, more human than geographical ones. It was little urbanised, and had no limes or frontier march supported by a line of powerful fortresses. The Imām’s territory had no other frontiers except those of the tribes which considered themselves Ibāḍī, and consequently recognised his authority, and this ultimately on the spiritual rather than the temporal level.

Talbi was perhaps correct in his distinction between a ‘spiritual’ and ‘temporal’ allegiance. However, it would certainly be incorrect to assume that ‘spiritual’ allegiances of the tribes could be used as the basis for drawing a political map of the Imāmate. That recognizing the Imām was a ‘consequence’ of being Ibāḍī was in no way the case for numerous Ibāḍī tribes in the Rustamid period who opposed the Imāmate. Indeed, this was particularly true for this history of Djerba. Savage argued that the term ‘state’ was wholly inappropriate to the Rustamids because the allegiance to the Rustamids was determined by tribal leadership. In this view, the Rustamids Imāms themselves were not responsible for the effective spread of their influence because the decision was ultimately left up to the tribes. This, however, seems inconsistent with the account of al-Shammākhī men-

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61 Ibrāhīm Bahḥāz, al-Dawla al-Rustamiyya, p. 108.
64 Talbi, “Rustamids”, in EF.
65 Savage, A Gateway to Hell, p. 56.
tioned above in which 'Abd al-Wahhāb sends his representative to besiege Qābis, not to mention the attempted siege of Tripoli. Indeed, the appointment of governors to a given region or city is the basis of Savage’s map of the extent of Rustamid rule. A final complication is the idea, offered originally by Talbi but developed by Prévost, that many cities in the region would have been under the control of both the Rustamids and the Aghlabids, with the former receiving taxes from the Ibāḍīs in the towns. In the case of Djerba, however, there is no evidence to suggest that the Aghlabids held any political control over Djerba at any time. Considering the evidence presented in the medieval Ibāḍī sources and Ibn Ṣaghīr, it seems accurate to say that the Rustamids under 'Abd al-Wahhāb claimed the political and religious allegiance of Tāhert, its environs, the Djerid, Jebel Nafūsa, Tripolitania (save Tripoli). In Djerba, however, the connection with Tāhert remains ambiguous at best.

**The ‘Khalafīya’**

Another of the more serious opposition movements to find supporters in Djerba and was the ‘Khalafīya’ Ibāḍī movement, named after its leader, Khalaf b. al-Samḥ. Following the death of the Rustamid governor of Jebel Nafūsa, a large number of people there took it upon themselves to appoint his son Khalaf as governor. Likely having feared a move toward total independence under hereditary rule, 'Abd al-Wahhāb rejected his nomination. After a series of letters and a final, rejected appeal to the Ibāḍī communities in the east, Khalaf’s supporters eventually decided to ignore the orders from the distant Rustamid capital and elect Khalaf as Imām. Responding in kind, 'Abd al-Wahhāb appointed his own governor in Jebel Nafūsa, Abū I-Ḥasan Ayyūb b. al-‘Abbās. Following that governor’s death soon

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66 Savage, A Gateway to Hell, p. 62.
70 Abū Zakariyā, Kitāb Sīyar, p. 120; al-Bārūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyādhiyya, p. 201; al-Darjānī, Kitāb Ṭabaqāt, p. 69; al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Sīyar, p. 92.
thereafter, he appointed Abū 'Ubayda 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Janāwanī. It seems that from this point onward, the Khalafiyya were centered in the eastern region of Jebel Nafūsa, while the western half remained loyal to the Rustamid governor. As will become clear, the Khalafiyya were also gaining support in Djerba.

The Imāmate of Aflaḥ b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb (824-873/208-258)

Following the death of his father in 824/208, Aflaḥ b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb was elected Imām. Ibāḍī sources claim that his election was carried out for fear of the reigns of power falling into the hands of any other group, though it seems clear that by this time the office of Imām had become hereditary. This Imām appeared as an exemplary figure in Ibāḍī sources, known for his political acumen, religious knowledge, bravery in battle, and poetry.

Hearing of Aflaḥ’s election, Abū 'Ubayda al-Janāwanī wrote to the Imām requesting permission to resume fighting Khalaf and his followers in an attempt to either bring the Khalafiyya under the control of the Rustamids or destroy the movement altogether. Numerous failed attempts at diplomacy ultimately led to a series of violent encounters between the Khalafiyya and the Rustamid forces lasting several years. In his account of one of the battles, al-Shammākhī made reference to a man fighting with Khalaf who had previously been allied with the Nukkār. It is likely that many of Khalaf’s supporters were part of the original Nukkār movement in the east. Indeed, both movements seem to have been more interested in opposing Rustamid rule, in general, rather than having specific theological differences with them.

72 Abū Zakariyyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 123; al-Barūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyādhiyya, p. 205; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Tabaqāt, p. 70; al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 93.
73 Al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Tabaqāt, p. 72; al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 105.
74 See al-Bārūnī’s discussion of Aflaḥ in which he draws on a number of medieval sources (al-Bārūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyādhiyya, pp. 239-249).
75 A wonderful example of the Imām’s poetry praising the importance of education has been preserved in a Manuscript from the al-Barūnīyya library in Djerba entitled Qaṣīdat al-imām Aflaḥ b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb.
76 Abū Zakariyyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 128; al-Barūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyādhiyya, p. 217; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Tabaqāt, p. 72; al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 95.
77 Al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 97.

While some historians have read later Ibāḍī legal and theological arguments into these opposition movements, it is much more convincing that their motives were not wholly religious in nature. Hasan went so far as to argue that these movements represented a struggle between an aristocratic elite (the Rustamids) and democratic movements struggling for independence, while ’Abd al-Rāziq argued that the tribal affiliation influenced the birth of the Nukkār movement. The validity of such arguments, however, is equally as dubious as a purely religious explanation for the appearance of opposition. It seems more appropriate to attribute the Nukkār and the Khalafīya to a combination of religious, geographical, political and social circumstances.

Following Abū ’Ubadya’s death, he was replaced by Al-‘Abbās b. Ayyūb as governor of Jebel Nafūsa. Al-‘Abbās continued to fight the Khalafīya, and was eventually successful in defeating them. Khalaf himself was killed, while his son and supporters fled north and “withdraw to Djerba and take refuge there.” There, they found considerable support among the Zawāgha tribe and remained under their protection through the remainder of Aflah’s reign. After the defeat of the Khalafīya, the whole of Jebel Nafūsa nominally returned to the ‘control’ of the Rustamids.

Djerba under the Later Imāms of Tāhert 873-909/258-297

Following the Imām Aflah’s death in 873/258, he was succeeded by his son Abū Bakr because his oldest son, Abū l-Yuqzān Muḥammad b. Aflah, was at that time a prisoner of the Abbasids in Baghdad. Upon his return to Tāhert, Abū l-Yuqzān succeeded in taking

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78 Hasān, “Ḥawl al-jathūr al-’ijtimāʾiya”, p. 5.
79 ‘Abd al-Rāziq, al-Khawārij, p. 156.
80 Ibāḍī sources have Khalaf defeated and killed by both Abū ’Ubayda and al-‘Abbās. It seems more likely that Khalaf suffered a defeat to Abū ’Ubayda but was not actually killed until his final battle with al-‘Abbās. See ’Abd al-Rāziq, al-Khawārij, pp. 165-166.
81 Abū Zakarīyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 136; al-Bārūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyādiyya, p. 228; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Tabaqāt, p. 76; al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 112.
82 Abū Zakarīyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 136.
83 Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, Kitāb Siyar, p. 59.
control. During Abū l-Yuqzān’s some-twenty years in power, nothing is mentioned regarding Djerba or the Khalafīya. Ibn Ṣaghīr did mention a correspondence between the Imām and Jebel Nafūsa, though, in which latter renewed their support for the Imām and provided military assistance to help quell internal dissension. That events in eastern provinces do not take center stage in the historical account is likely due more to the important internal unrest which was developing in the Rustamid court itself and would spiral out of control following his death.

When Imām Abū l-Yuqzān died in 895/281, his son Abū Ḥātim (r. 895/281-896/282 and 900/286-906/294) assumed the Imāmāte without being elected by a shūra council—apparently much to the chagrin of the some influential parties in the Rustamid court. After less than a year in power, Abū Ḥātim was ousted and his uncle Yaʿqūb b. al-Aflāḥ was invited to Tāhert to be elected Imām in 896/282. Further internal decisions eventually led Yaʿqūb to flee the city and Abū Ḥātim reentered Tāhert as Imām for the second time.

From Tāhert, Yaʿqūb b. al-Aflāḥ fled east to take refuge with the Zawāgha. It will be recalled that it was among the Zawāgha that Khalafīya also found support and protection against the Rustamid forces of Jebel Nafūsa. This combined with Yaʿqūb also having gone to the Zawāgha for refuge following his being ousted from Tāhert, led ʿAbd al-Rāzīq to argue that it was actually he that was behind the next Khalafīya uprising against the governor of Jebel Nafūsa, Abū Maṣūr Ilyās al-Nafūsī. No mention of Yaʿqūb is made in the accounts of the next Khalafīya uprising, though, and its date is unclear in the sources.

Sources remain silent as to events in Djerba until the reign of Abū Ḥātim. During his second reign, Abū Maṣūr Ilyās, Rustamid gov-

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85 Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, Kitāb Siyar, p. 75; see also al-Barūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyāḍīya, p. 291.
90 Abū Zakariyā (Kitāb Siyar, p. 151) wrote that Abū Maṣūr pursues Ibn Khalaf “at the end of the Rustamid state” and has it take place under the reign of Abū Ḥātim;
ernor of Jebel Nafūsa since end of Aflah’s reign, took the final steps toward putting down the Khalafīya movement. He began by entering into talks with the movement’s Zawāgha supporters in Djerba. Addressing the Zawāgha, Abū Manṣūr offered three choices:

O people of Zawāgha, you have three choices and you must choose one of them. The first is you leave the grounds of Arīsa [near Tripoli], enter Djerba, fortify yourself there and protect your leader [Ibn Khalaf]. The second is that you write to Tāhert and a request the appointment of a governor over you so that you may be independent of the power of Nafūsa -and that would mean their shame. The third is that you give me Khalaf’s son so that I may take him as a prisoner of war to Nafūsa. I assure you that they will not harm him.

The tribe remained loyal, however, and a battle ensued resulting in the remaining Khalafīya fleeing to island of Djerba itself. Ibn Khalaf, the assumed leader of the movement at this point, was placed in a fortress under the protection of a man from the Zawāgha. That Djerba served as a place of refuge for the Khalafīya points to its independence. It is difficult to believe that, had there been a Rustamid governor effectively controlling Djerba, the Khalafīya would have been able to flee to the island. Instead, the inhabitants of Djerba seem to have chosen to remain neutral, being home not only to Khalafīya but also Nukkār and Wahbiyya. This is made all the more apparent by the deal made later between Abū Manṣūr and the Zawāgha of Djerba.

Rather than attempt an attack on the island—which would have been more or less impossible because there was, at that time, no way to easily enter the island by land—Abū Manṣūr sent a hundred dinārs along with a messenger in an attempt to convince the man protecting Ibn Khalaf to hand him over. This ultimately proved effective, and Ibāḍī sources have the Zawāgha man say, “Leave, prince, for the

M. Hassan, editor of the al-Shammākhī’s Kitāb al-Siyar, argued that this would have occurred before the death of Imām Abū al-Yuqzān in 281/895. See al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 147 fn.8.

91 Abū Zakariyyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 150.
92 Abū Zakariyyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 151; variations in al-Barūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyādhiyya, p. 331; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Tabaqāt, p. 85; al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 147.
93 Abū Zakariyyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 152; al-Bārūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyādhiyya, p. 331; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Tabaqāt, p. 86; al-Shammākhī (Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 147) notes only that Ibn Khalaf was placed in “some of the fortresses” of Djerba.
women of Zawāgha have been widowed by your hand!”. 95 Grumbling all the way, the Khalafīya leader was then taken to Jebel Nafūsa where he was temporarily imprisoned until he acknowledged his mistakes and returned to the fold of the Rustamid Imāmate.

The Battle of Mānū

Following the death of Abū Manṣūr Ilyās, Abū Ḥātim appointed Aflāh b. al-ʿAbbās as governor of Nafūsa. 96 It was under this governor that whatever control the Rustamids held over Jebel Nafūsa and the eastern provinces disintegrated. In 896/283, an Aghlabid army was heading southeast from Kairouan toward Tripoli which necessitated their passing through Rustamid territory. After strong debates, Aflāh b. al-ʿAbbās led a pro-Rustamid force out to engage the Aghlabids near a fort called ‘Mānū.’ The outcome was disastrous. The Rustamid supporters were defeated, leading to the death or capture of most of them. 97 The Aghlabid army then moved from Mānū to nearby Qanṣrāra, where they killed and captured hundreds more. 98 From there, the Aghlabid army proceeded to wipe out what was left of Rustamid power in the east. The catastrophe at Mānū marked the end of Rustamid rule in the eastern provinces. Although Djerba apparently remained untouched during the Aghlabid campaign in the south, there is little doubt that what little influence the Rustamids may have had over the region until then ended following disaster at Mānū.

The Surrender of Tāhert

After the catastrophe at Mānū, the Rustamid state took another difficult blow when Imām Abū Ḥātim was assassinated in Tāhert in 906/294. The Imāmate passed to al-Yuqẓān b. Abī l-Yuqẓān Muḥam-

95 Abū Zakariyyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 153; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Ṭabaqāt, p. 86.
96 Al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 199.
97 Abū Zakariyyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 157; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Ṭabaqāt, p. 88; al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, pp. 207-208.
98 Abū Zakariyyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 159; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Ṭabaqāt, p. 90; al-Shammākhī, Kitāb al-Siyar, p. 207.
Djerba following the Fatimid Conquest

Although events in Djerba following the fall of Tāhert to the Fatimids are largely beyond the scope of this article, certain events contemporary with and immediately following the Fatimid conquest shed light on the history of the island at the end of the Rustamid period.

During the last years of the Rustamid Imāmate, internal and external pressures were weighing heavily on the ability of the Imāms to exercise any sort of control over their distant provinces. It was in these latter years that one of the most important figures in Djerbian Ibāḍīsm moved to the island from Jebel Nafūsā, Abū Miswar al-Yahrasānī. Farhat Djaabiri argued that Abū Miswar, whose dates are unknown, completed his education in Jebel Nafūsā and moved to Djerba sometime before the Battle of Mānū in 896/283. It seems logical that Abū Miswar moved (or fled?) from Jebel Nafūsā to Djerba right around the time of the battle.

After arriving to the island, he quickly set about founding a mosque and school for the benefit of the Wahbiyya there. The Abū Miswar school and mosque, known as al-Jāmi’ al-Kabīr, was mentioned in several sources and the structure itself remains to the present day. The majority of the island at the time of Abū Miswar’s arrival were tied to the Khalafīya and the Nukkār, which points to the large amount of support for these movements at the end of the Rustamid period. In the last decade of the Rustamid Imāmate, Djerba

100 Abū Zakariyyā, Kitāb Siyar, p. 170; al-Bārūnī, al-Azhār al-Riyādhiyya, p. 345; al-Darjīnī, Kitāb Tābaqāt, p. 94.
102 Abū Rās, Mu’nis al-aḥibba, p. 89.
103 Mrabet, Mudawwana, pp. 98-106.
appears to have served as a place of refuge for these Ibāḍī groups. Furthermore, rather than remaining in continual conflict with one another, under Abū Miswar the scholars of the Wahbiyya, the Khalafiyya and the Nukkār engaged in debates and studied alongside one another.¹⁰⁴ This tolerant atmosphere in the last days of the Rustamids would allow for the ‘intellectual renaissance’ of Ibāḍī thought later in the century.¹⁰⁵

Conclusions

In discussing the rise of Islam in the Maghreb, Michael Brett concluded that the Ibāḍites in the Djerid and the Jebel Nafūsa...could not be described as subjects [of the Rustamids]. They were becoming identical with the Berber peoples of the region, an ethnic group for whom the preachings of the revolutionaries were turning into the articles of a distinct and separate faith.¹⁰⁶

As has been demonstrated above, Djerba in many ways fits Brett’s description of its neighbors under the Rustamids. Yet, in other ways, it seems unique from the experiences of Jebel Nafūsa and the Djerid. Through an analysis and synthesis of the evidence presented above, certain conclusions can be drawn that help clarify the relationship between the island and the Imāmate.

Given the absence of any shred of textual or archeological evidence, it is unlikely that Djerba professed even a nominal allegiance to the Rustamid Imāmate during the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam (779-788/ 161-171). Instead, evidence points to Djerba acknowledging the Rustamid Imāmate during the reign of 'Abd al-Wahhāb (788-824/ 171-208), and then only after the siege of Aghlabid Tripoli. Al-Shammākhī wrote that the siege of Tripoli ended with the death of Ibrāhīm b. al-Aghlab (r.800-12) and that 'Abd al-Wahhāb began his return journey to Tāhert shortly thereafter. It is likely, then, that Djerba became affiliated with the Rustamid Imāmate in or around 812 when 'Abd al-Wahhāb appointed governors to various cities in

¹⁰⁴ Djaabiri, Malāmīh.
¹⁰⁵ Prévost, “La renaissance des ibāḍites”.
southern Tunisia. It seems clear, however, that there was never a Rustamid representative on Djerba but that the island was considered under the control of the governor of distant Qābis. Practically speaking, this amounted to a continued period of independence. If accurate, though, the oral tradition of al-‘Jāmi’ al-Tajdīḥ having been built by a Rustamid ‘governor’ at the beginning of the 3rd/9th century could provide a tangible connection between the Imāmate and Djerba. This is particularly problematic, however, because this tradition was not documented until the 19th century— that is, a thousand years after the event in question. Far more convincing are the results of the Jerba Studies archaeological survey that suggest a Djerba relatively disconnected from the mainland in the Rustamid era. As we have seen, these findings are largely consistent with the textual evidence.

When the Khalafiyah movement appeared near the end of the reign of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, it is possible that it found supporters in Djerba from an early time due to the large number of Zawāghī and Nafūsī families on the island. By the reign of Aflāḥ b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (824-873/208-258), Djerba was certainly home to a large number of Khalafīyah supporters because it was to Djerba and the surrounding area that the movement’s supporters fled following their defeat by the Rustamid governor of Jebel Nafūsa, al-‘Abbās b. Ayyūb. While later Ibāḍī sources tell us that the Rustamid control was relatively stable under Imām Aflāḥ, it is certainly clear that the Imāmate exercised no control over Djerba because the Khalafīyah were able to seek refuge there for the remainder of his reign. Furthermore, there exists no evidence for a Rustamid governor having been responsible for the island from this period onwards. It is likely, therefore, that it was during the reign of Aflāḥ b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb that the Rustamids ceased to have any connection with the island. In the reign of Abū Ḥātim (r.281/895-282/896 and 286/900-294/906), Djerba reappeared in the historical record as openly independent when the governor of Jebel Nafūsa, Abū Mašūr Ilyās, had to bribe the Zawāgha of Djerba to hand over Ibn Khalaf to the Rustamid forces.

A comparison with nearby Jebel Nafūsa, would give the impression that this was simply the way that Rustamid ‘governorates’ operated. With the exception of the seven years spent by Imām ‘Abd al-Wahhāb in Jebel Nafūsa, these eastern provinces operated more or less independently of the Rustamid Imāms. While taxes and tribute were likely given to Imāms from Jebel Nafūsa throughout some
if not most of the Rustamid period, it was the governors of Jebel Nafūsa—not the Rustamid Imāms—who exercised real control over the province. That Djerba remained more or less independent of Tāḥert, whether under the control of a Rustamid governor and formally acknowledging the Imāmate or not, is thus not surprising. Yet Djerba differed from its neighbors in one important way: this independence was not only political. Rather, the continued presence of various religious opposition movements to Rustamid rule from the end of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s reign onwards points to a religious independence, complicating a claim of even nominal ‘spiritual’ allegiance to the Rustamid Imāms in Djerba on the basis of tribal Ibāḍī connections. What emerges from the scattered historical record is a religiously and politically independent Djerba throughout most of the Rustamid period. It was only under the second Imām, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, that the Rustamid Imāmate may have had any relationship with the island—and even that is doubtful. For the remainder of the Imāmate’s history, Djerba must be considered outside the Rustamid sphere of influence.

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