DJERBA AND THE LIMITS OF RUSTAMID POWER. CONSIDERING THE IBĀḌĪ COMMUNITY OF DJERBA UNDER THE RUSTAMID IMĀMS OF TĀHERT (779-909CE)

ŶARBA Y LOS LÍMITES DEL PODER RUSTAMÍ. LA COMUNIDAD IBĀḌI DE ŶARBA BAJO LOS IMĀMES RUSTAMÍES DE TĀHERT (779-909 D.C.)

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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 Tahert 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 *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; Ibāḍī*s*; Ibāḍiyya; Rustamids; Tunisia; Jebel Nafūsa.

Este ensayo analiza las fuentes de origen medieval y moderno sobre la historia de Ŷarba en el Imāmato rustamí en un intento de aclarar 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 período rustamí. Con base en esta evidencia textual y arqueológica, se argumentará que Ŷarba era hogar de una comunidad ibāḍí independiente del gobierno en Tāhert durante la mayor parte (si no en su totalidad) de la existencia del Imāmato, 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 [1]

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 Tahert 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 *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.

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 Tāhert. 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-Yaʿqūbī, Ibn Khaldūn, Ibn ʿIdhārī 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 Ṣaghīr

Studies on the Rustamid Imāmate cannot afford to ignore the extremely valuable historical chronicle contemporary with the Rustamids, Ibn Ṣaghīr's *History of the Rustamid Imāms* (*Kitāb Siyar al-Aʾimma al-Rustamīyīn*).[2] While it seems clear that he lived and wrote in Tāhert at the end of the Rustamid Imāmate, little is known about this chronicle's author. Various scholars have speculated as to Ibn Ṣaghīr's religious allegiance but all agree that he was not himself an Ibāḍī.[3] 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 suggests that the primary purpose of the book was to record internal dissension rather than to provide an history of the Imāmate.[4] Indeed, the chronicle is primarily concerned with events occurring in and around Tāhert and makes only a few indirect refer-

[2] Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, *Kitāb Siyar*.
[3] For a full discussion see *'Tarjamat Ibn al-Ṣaghīr'* in Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, *Kitāb Siyar*, pp. 11-14.
[4] Baḥḥāz, *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 Ṣaghīr, 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."[5]
While the present author certainly agrees with Savage's critical histo-
riographical observations regarding the Ibāḍī historical and biograph-
ical 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 Zakarīyā's
(d.471/1078) *Kitāb Siyar al-A'imma wa-Akhbārihim*,[6] al-Shammākhī's
(d.928/1522) *Kitāb al-Siyar*,[7] al-Darjīnī's (d.670/1271) *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt
Mashāyikh al-Maghrib*[8] and the *Sīrat Abī l-Rabī'a al-Wisyānī*.[9]

Perhaps one of the most important historiographical features of
these and other, later Ibāḍī sources is their understanding of the de-

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[5] Savage, *A Gateway to Hell*, p. 2.
[6] Abū Zakariyā, *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.

velopment 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 Ibāḍī Imāmate in North Africa was conceptual-
ized within various versions of a framework known as the Ibāḍī
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: *Ẓuhūr*
(Manifestation), *Difāʿ* (Defense), *Shirāʾ* (Sacrifice) and *Kitmān* (Se-
crecy). [10] 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 Ibāḍī leaders and create a line of Imāmates throughout his-
tory –seemingly free of religious and theoretical contradictions. An
excellent study of the Ibāḍī 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 Ibāḍī 'revitalization' movement in the 19th
century. [11] More importantly for us here, Gaiser argues that the *masālik
al-dīn* framework likely developed only after the fall of the Rusta-
mids. [12] 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 me-
dieval Ibāḍī history in North Africa is (or perhaps more appropri-
ately, 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, [13] 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 Ibāḍīsm*, p. 229.
[11] Gaiser, "The Ibāḍī 'stages of religion'".
[12] Gaiser, "The Ibāḍī 'stages of religion'", p. 211.
[13] Ennami, *Studies in Ibāḍīsm*, XIV.

al-Bārūnīyya in Djerba, digital copies of which were collected while
conducting research on the island in the summer of 2010. [14]

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 arti-
cle. 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 ad-
dress the relationship of the Rustamids and Djerba are al-Bārūnī's
al-Azhār al-Riyāḍiyya, [15] *Djābirī's Niẓām al-'Azzāba*, [16] Ibn Yaʿqūb's
Tārīkh Jazīrat Djerba, [17] and Muʿammar's *al-Ibāḍīyyah fī Mawkib
al-Tārīkh*. [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 Rus-
tamid 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 Tu-
nisia is the main reference scholars have used in supporting the idea
that Djerba was part of the Rustamid Imāmate. [19] ʿAbd al-Rāziq's
al-Khawārij fī Bilād al-Maghrib [20] presented an overview of the ma-
jor 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 Baḥḥāz 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, Saʿid
al-Barouni, for his help in acquiring these and other manuscripts
[15] Al-Barūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*.
[16] Djābiri, *Niẓām al-'Azzāba*.
[17] Salīm b. Yaʿqūb, *Tārīkh Jarba*.
[18] Muʿammar, *al-Ibāḍīya*.
[19] Lewicki, "Les Ibāḍītes en Tunisie".
[20] ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *al-Khawārij*.
[21] Ibrāhīm Baḥḥāz, *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)* [22] 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. [23] 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. [24]

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 Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān. [25] Sources are then silent, however, as to the history of the island during the period between its conquest and the so-called 'Kharijite Rebellion'

[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.
[25] Djābirī, *Niẓām al-ʿAzzāba*, p. 17; Abū Rās, *Mu'nis al-aḥibba*, p. 40; Muʿammar, *al-Ibāḍīyya*, v. 2, p. 217.

in the middle of the 8th century CE. Secondary sources mention 757/140 as the date for the 'conquest' of Djerba by the Ibāḍīya. [26] Indeed, evidence drawn from pottery on the island suggests a much more gradual migration of Ibāḍīs or conversion to Ibāḍī Islam. [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-Ashaʿath in 770/154, those loyal to Abū l-Khattāb opted to move westward in search of safety. [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, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam, was elected Imām. [29]

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' (ḥamalat al-ʿilm), a group of missionaries trained in al-Baṣra and then sent back to the Maghrib to propagate the Ibāḍī madhhab. [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 [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. [32] Although

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[26] El Ghali, *Les états kharidjites*; Prévost uses the same date citing El Ghali in her article "L'influence de l'État rustumide" (p. 68 y 114).

[27] Holod and Cirelli, *Islamic Pottery from Jerba*, p. 177.

[28] Abū l-Naṣr, *A History of the Maghrib*, pp. 37-41; See also "Thawarāt al-Khawārij al-Ibāḍīya" in ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *al-Khawārij*, pp. 82-107.

[29] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 81; al-Barūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, p. 137; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 40; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 43.

[30] Lewicki, "al-Ibāḍīya", in *EI²*.

[31] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 82; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 42; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 43; Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 26.

[32] Salīm b. Yaʿqūb, *Tārīkh Jarba*, p. 77; al-Barūnī, *Jazīrat Djerba fī Mawkib al-Tārīkh*, p. 12 (published online in PDF format at: http://www.elbarounia.com); Muʿammar, *al-Ibāḍīyya*, v. 2, p. 619.

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 Imām, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam (r.788-824/171-208), that the inhabitants of Djerba would have had some sort of relationship with the Imāmate.

The Imāmate of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (788-824/ 171-208)

Unlike the reign of his father, the Imāmate of ʿAbd 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 Imāmate appeared at the beginning of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's reign in 788/170-1. Prior to his death, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān designated six men as candidates for the Imāmate.[33] Not surprisingly, the inclusion of the Imām's own son among the candidates and his subsequent election led to some opposition. While Ibāḍī sources implied that ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was simply the best candidate, Ibn Ṣaghīr considered his reign as the transformation of the office of the Imāmate into that of a hereditary kingship.[34]

The leader of the opposition to ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's election was another of the candidates for Imām, Yazīd b. Fundīn. During the *majlis* in which ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was elected, Yazīd agreed to support his election on the condition that he rely upon the advice and agree-

[33] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 85; al-Barūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīyya*, p. 150; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 46; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 51.
[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 *Yazīdīya*[38] by Ibāḍī historians for their denial of the Imām's rule but known as the *al-Mistāwa* or *Maḥbūbīn* 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 Imāmate 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, Aflaḥ.[42] In any case, for centuries afterward the Ibāḍīs of Djerba were

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[35] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 87; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, p. 152; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 47; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 53.

[36] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 87; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, p. 152; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 47.

[37] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 89; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, p. 155; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 51; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 53.

[38] Lewicki, "al-Nukkār", in *EI²*; "Siyāsat Banī Rustam al-dākhiliyya" in ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *al-Khawārij*, pp. 154-160.

[39] Interestingly, one of the towns in Djerba still bears the name *Maḥbūbīn* today.

[40] The *Nukārrīya* refers to a much different group in Ibn Ṣaghīr. He made no mention of Yazīd b. Fundīn, See Ibn Ṣaghīr, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 37, fn33.

[41] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, pp. 89-90; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, p. 159; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, pp. 49-50; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, pp. 54-55.

[42] Ḥasān, "Ḥawl al-jathūr al-ʾijtimāʿīya", p. 7.

divided between the *Wahbīya* (those traditionally loyal to the Rusta-
mid Imāms) [43] and the *Nukkār.*

'Abd al-Wahhāb in Jebel Nafūsa

Djerba next appears in the historical record in one of the more
curious stories in the Imāmate of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb –that of his at-
tempted *ḥajj* 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'
(*ʿāmil*). [44] From there he continued to Jebel Nafūsa where he was
welcomed by its inhabitants and apparently acknowledged as Imām. [45]
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 ulti-
mately decided that the Imām should not complete the *ḥajj* pilgrimage
for fear of his being captured by the Abbasids. So, instead of complet-
ing the *ḥajj*, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb remained in Jebel Nafūsa for seven
years, [46] during which time he taught and established a strong con-
nection between the Imāmate and the Ibāḍīs in the region. Ibāḍī
historians did not mention who was left in charge of Tāhert 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. [47] 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). Fol-
lowing the death of the Aghlabid leader Ibrāhīm b. al-Aghlab (r.800-
812), ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and the governor of Tripoli, ʿAbdallāh b.

[43] Lewicki, "Les subdivisions de l'Ibāḍīyya".
[44] Abū Zakariyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 114; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, p. 189; al-
Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 65.
[45] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 114; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, pp. 189-190;
al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 66; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 67.
[46] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 116; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, p. 192; al-
Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 66; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 67.
[47] Baḥḥāz, *al-Dawla al-Rustamīya*, 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 Zakarīyā 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 ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's prolonged presence in the area.

With Nafūsa and the surrounding areas under control of Rustamid allies, the Imām began his journey back to Tāhert. Upon his departure, the people of Nafūsa asked him to appoint a governor over them. When asked who they would prefer, the people not surprisingly nominated al-Samḥ b. Abī al-Khattāb, the son of the former Imām of Jebel Nafūsa. ʿAbd 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 Nafūsa and the surrounding territories nominally entered the realm of the Rustamid Imāmate.

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

> And [ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's] governor to Sert and Qusṭaliya was Zaqūn b. Amīr. He sent Qatʿān b. Salma al-Zawāghī to Qābīs and he besieged it. The environs of Qābīs, Maṭmāṭa, 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

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[48] Al-Barūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīyya*, p. 196; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, pp. 67-69.

[49] Abū Zakariyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 116; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 67.

[50] Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 39.

[51] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 119; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 67; al-Barūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, 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 Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 119; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīyya*, p. 197; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 68.

[53] Al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 69.

as to the extent of such rule.[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 Qatʿān b. Salma al-Zawāghī governed the island.[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, ʿAlī Yaḥyā Muʿammar 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.[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.

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, *Jāmiʿ al-Tajdīt*. In his *Muʾnis al-Aḥibba*, Muḥammad Abū Rās (d. 1807) wrote this passage regarding the mosque:

> Originally, its pronunciation was "al-jāmiʿ 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.[57]

If the structure was built at the beginning of the third century, that would mean it was constructed during the reign of either ʿAbd al-

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[54] Lewicki, "Les Ibāḍītes en Ṭunisie", p. 9.
[55] Prévost, "L'influence de l'État rustumide", p. 116.
[56] Muʿammar, *al-Ibāḍīya*, v. 2, p. 620.
[57] Abū Rās, *Muʾnis al-aḥibba*, p. 97.

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 wich 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.[58] 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."[59] The pressence 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.[60]

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 decid-
edly anachronistic. As Baḥḥāz 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.[61] 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.[62] The claim that some regions/tribes were only nom-
inally allied to the Rustamids on the basis of religion seems accurate
and the idea has been suggested by other scholars, as well.[63] 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. [64]

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 recogniz-
ing 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 deter-
mined by tribal leadership.[65] In this view, the Rustamids Imāms
themselves were not responsible for the effective spread of their influ-
ence because the decision was ultimately left up to the tribes. This,
however, seems inconsistent with the account of al-Shammākhī men-

[61] Ibrāhīm Baḥḥāz, *al-Dawla al-Rustamīya*, p. 108.
[62] Ibrāhīm Baḥḥāz, *al-Dawla al-Rustamīya*, pp. 101-103.
[63] Muʿammar, *al-Ibāḍīya*, v 2. p. 620.
[64] Talbi, "Rustamids", in *EI²*.
[65] Savage, *A Gateway to Hell*, p. 56.

tioned above in which ʿAbd 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.[66] 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.[67] 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, is seems accurate to say that the Rustamids under ʿAbd 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.[68] 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.[69] Likely having feared a move toward total independence under hereditary rule, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb rejected his nomination.[70] 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.[71] Responding in kind, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb appointed his own governor in Jebel Nafūsa, Abū l-Ḥasan Ayyūb b. al-ʿAbbās. Following that governor's death soon

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[66] Savage, *A Gateway to Hell*, p. 62.

[67] Prévost, "L'influence de l'État rustumide", p. 119.

[68] Lewicki, "Les subdivisions de l'Ibāḍīya", pp. 71-82.

[69] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 119; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyāḍhīyya*, p. 200; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 68; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 91.

[70] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 120; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyāḍhīyya*, p. 201; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 69; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 92.

[71] Al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyāḍhīya*, p. 202; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 70; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 93.

thereafter, he appointed Abū ʿUbayda ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Janāwanī.[72] 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. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (824-873/ 208-258)

Following the death of his father in 824/208, Aflaḥ b. ʿAbd 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,[73] 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,[74] known for his political acumen, religious knowledge, bravery in battle, and poetry.[75]

Hearing of Aflaḥ's election, Abū ʿUbayda al-Janāwanī wrote to the Imām requesting permission to resume fighting Khalaf and his followers in an attempt to either bring the *Khalafīya* under the control of the Rustamids or destroy the movement altogether.[76] Numerous failed attempts at diplomacy ultimately led to a series of violent encounters between the *Khalafīya* 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*.[77] 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 Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 123; al-Barūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyāḍhīyya*, p. 205; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 70; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 93.

[73] Al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, 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-Riyāḍhīyya*, 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. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb*.

[76] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 128; al-Barūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyāḍhīya*, p. 217; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, 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. Ḥasan went so far as to argue that these movement represented a struggle between an aristocratic elite (the Rustamids) and democratic movements struggling for independence,[78] while ʿAbd al-Rāziq argued that the tribal affiliation influenced the birth of the *Nukkār* movement.[79] 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 ʿUbadya's death, he was replaced by Al-ʿAbbās b. Ayyūb as governor of Jebel Nafūsa.[80] Al-ʿAbbās continued to fight the *Khalafīya*, and was eventually successful in defeating them. Khalaf himself was killed,[81] while his son and supporters fled north and "withdraw to Djerba and take refuge there."[82] There, they found considerable support among the Zawāgha tribe and remained under their protection through the remainder of Aflaḥ'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 Aflaḥ's death in 873/258, he was succeeded by his son Abū Bakr because his oldest son, Abū l-Yuqẓān Muḥammad b. Aflaḥ, was at that time a prisoner of the Abbasids in Baghdad.[83] Upon his return to Tāhert, Abū l-Yuqẓān succeeded in taking

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[78] Hasān, "Ḥawl al-jathūr al-'ijtimāʿīya", p. 5.

[79] ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *al-Khawārij*, p. 156.

[80] Ibāḍī sources have Khalaf defeated and killed by *both* Abū ʿUbayda and al-ʿAbbās. It seems more likely that Khalaf suffered a defeat to Abū ʿUbayda but was not actually killed until his final battle with al-ʿAbbās. See ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *al-Khawārij*, pp. 165-166.

[81] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 136; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, p. 228; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 76; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 112.

[82] Abū Zakarīā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 136.

[83] Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 59.

control.[84] During Abū l-Yuqẓān's some-twenty years in power, noth-
ing 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 pro-
vided military assistance to help quell internal dissension.[85] 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 con-
trol following his death.

When Imām Abū l-Yuqẓān died in 895/281, his son Abū Ḥātim
(r. 895/281-896/282 and 900/286-906/294) assumed the Imāmate
without being elected by a *shūra* council –apparently much to the
chagrin of the some influential parties in the Rustamid court.[86] After
less than a year in power, Abū Ḥātim was ousted and his uncle Yaʿqūb
b. al-Aflaḥ was invited to Tāhert to be elected Imām in 896/282.[87]
Further internal decisions eventually led Yaʿqūb to flee the city and
Abū Ḥātim reentered Tāhert as Imām for the second time.[88]

From Tāhert, Yaʿqūb b. al-Aflaḥ fled east to take refuge with the
Zawāgha. It will be recalled that it was among the Zawāgha that
Khalafiyya 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-Rāziq to argue that it was actually he that was behind the
next *Khalafīya* uprising against the governor of Jebel Nafūsa, Abū
Manṣūr Ilyās al-Nafūsī.[89] No mention of Yaʿqūb is made in the ac-
counts 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,[90] Abū Manṣūr Ilyās, Rustamid gov-

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[84] Al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyāḍhīya*, p. 290; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 83; al-
Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 141; Ibn-Ṣaghīr, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 74.

[85] Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 75; see also al-Barūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyāḍhīya*,
p. 291.

[86] Al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyāḍhīya*, p. 318; Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 89; al-
Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 199.

[87] Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 96; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyāḍhīya*, p. 324.

[88] Ibn al-Ṣaghīr, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 101; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyāḍhīya*, p. 327.

[89] ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *al-Khawārij*, p. 180.

[90] Abū Zakarīyā (*Kitāb Siyar*, p. 151) wrote that Abū Manṣūr 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 Aflaḥ's reign,[91] took the final steps
toward putting down the *Khalafīya* movement. He began by entering
into talks with the movement's Zawāgha supporters in Djerba. Ad-
dressing 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 wri-
> te 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.[92]

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.[93] 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 *dinār*s
along with a messenger in an attempt to convince the man protecting
Ibn Khalaf to hand him over.[94] This ultimately proved effective, and
Ibāḍī sources have the Zawāgha man say, "Leave, prince, for the

M. Ḥassan, editor of the al-Shammākhī's *Kitāb al-Siyar,* argued that this would to have
occurred before the death of Imām Abū al-Yuqẓān in 281/895. See al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb
al-Siyar*, p. 147 fn.8.

    [91] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 150.

    [92] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 151; variations in al-Barūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*,
p. 331; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 85; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 147.

    [93] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 152; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, p. 331; al-
Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 86; al-Shammākhī (*Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 147) notes only that Ibn
Khalaf was placed in "some of the fortresses" of Djerba.

    [94] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 153; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, p. 331; al-
Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 86.

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 Aflaḥ 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, Aflaḥ 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 an 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 Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 153; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 86.
[96] Al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 199.
[97] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 157; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 88; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, pp. 207-208.
[98] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 159; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 90; al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 207.

mad (r.906/294-909/297). [99] Early Ibāḍī sources left little information about this Imām. It was under his reign the Rustamid Imāmate met its anticlimactic and humiliating end, when members of his own family invited Fatimid general Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Shīʿī into the city in 909/297. [100]

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 Nafūsa, Abū Miswar al-Yahrasānī. Farhat Djaabiri argued that Abū Miswar, whose dates are unknown, completed his education in Jebel Nafūsa and moved to Djerba sometime before the Battle of Mānū in 896/283. [101] It seems logical that Abū Miswar moved (or fled?) from Jebel Nafūsa 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 *Wahbīya* there. The Abū Miswar school and mosque, known as *al-Jāmiʿ al-Kabīr*, was mentioned in several sources [102] and the structure itself remains to the present day. [103] 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

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[99] Ibrāhīm Baḥḥāz, *al-Dawla al-Rustamīya*, p. 127; ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *al-Khawārij*, p. 181.

[100] Abū Zakarīyā, *Kitāb Siyar*, p. 170; al-Bārūnī, *al-Azhār al-Riyādhīya*, p. 345; al-Darjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt*, p. 94.

[101] Djaabiri, *Nizām al-ʿAzzāba*, p. 157.

[102] Abū Rās, *Muʾnis 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 *Khalafīya* 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

> Ibadites 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 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam (779-788/ 161-171). Instead, evidence points to Djerba acknowledging the Rustamid Imāmate during the reign of ʿAbd 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 ʿAbd 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 ʿAbd al-Wahhāb appointed governors to various cities in

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[104] Djaabiri, *Malāmiḥ*.
[105] Prévost, "La renaissance des ibāḍites".
[106] Brett, "The Arab conquest", p. 524.

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-Jāmiʿ al-Tajdīt* 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 Khalafīya movement appeared near the end of the reign of ʿʿAbd 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 Aflaḥ b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb **(**824-873/ 208-258), Djerba was certainly home to a large number of *Khalafīya* 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-ʿAbbās b. Ayyūb. While later Ibāḍī sources tell us that the Rustamid control was relatively stable under Imām Aflaḥ, it is certainly clear that the Imāmate exercised no control over Djerba because the *Khalafīya* 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 Aflaḥ b. ʿAbd 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 Manṣūr 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 ʿAbd 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 Tāhert, 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 ʿAbd 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, ʿAbd 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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