

The Bodyguard of the Caliphs During the Umayyad and the Early Abbasid Periods

La custodia de los califas durante
el Califato omeya y el principio del Califato ‘abbāsī*

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During early Islam, the *ḥaras* was a government unit that was responsible for the personal security of the caliph. Since the reign of the first Umayyad Caliph, Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, the *ḥaras*, headed by a *ḥaras* chief, protected all caliphs. This paper will attempt to describe the functions of the *ḥaras* during the Umayyad and the early Abbasid caliphates by delineating the characteristics of the *ḥaras* chiefs under the different caliphs. As with other institutions during early Islam, accounts that refer to the *ḥaras* offer information about the men who headed it rather than about the institution itself, making it necessary to employ the method of prosopography in order to arrive at an adequate description of the institution. The majority of the *ḥaras* chiefs appear to have been *mawālī*, often entrusted with administrative offices in addition to heading the *ḥaras*. It seems that the *ḥaras* chiefs were responsible not only for protecting the caliphs, but also for carrying out executions. The establishment of the *ḥaras*, the qualifications of the *ḥaras* chiefs and the

Durante los principios del Islam el *ḥaras* fue una unidad del gobierno, responsable de la seguridad personal de los califas. Desde el reinado del primer califa omeya Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, el *ḥaras* que estaba bajo las ordenes de su jefe, custodió a todos los califas. El propósito de este artículo es describir el papel del *ḥaras* durante el periodo del Califato Omeya y el principio del Califato Abbāsī y describir las características de los jefes del *ḥaras* bajo los diferentes califas. Al igual que con otras instituciones durante el comienzo del Islam, la información relacionada con el *ḥaras* se basa en la vida y obra de los hombres que los encabezaban y no tanto en los datos específicos de la institución. Esto hace necesario el uso del método prosopográfico para conseguir una descripción adecuada de la institución. La mayoría de los dirigentes del *ḥaras* fueron *mawālī* y muchas veces eran responsables de las funciones administrativas, además de comandar el *ḥaras*. Sus dirigentes no solo eran responsables de la protección de los califas, sino también de ejecutar sus órdenes. Este

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weapons used by members of this body are also discussed. This significant institution has not yet received due attention in the literature. I hope to provide a useful outline and to open up a space for further research.

artículo explica también la creación del *ḥaras*, las cualidades de sus líderes y las armas que utilizaban. Este grupo tan importante ha recibido poca atención por parte de la investigación actual.

Key words: *Ḥaras*; *Ḥaras* Chiefs; *Ḥarasī*; *Mawlā*; Umayyad Period; Abbasid Period.

Palabras clave: *Ḥaras*; jefes del *ḥaras*; *ḥarasī*; *mawlā*; Califato omeya; Califato ‘abbāsi.

The *ḥaras* was a unit of bodyguards used by all the caliphs, beginning with Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān (r. 41-60/661-680). This paper aims to describe the *ḥaras* institution on the basis of an analysis of the data concerning the men at the head of this unit during the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods. The method of prosopography, showing that the *ḥaras* chiefs had much in common, will prove to be necessary in obtaining an adequate description of this early Islamic institution.

Classical Arabic literature abounds in accounts regarding the *ḥaras*; however this body has not received a thorough discussion. It is not mentioned in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* except for brief references in some entries.¹ Darādkeh’s article about the *shurṭa* and *ḥaras* during early Islam deals with both bodies, but does not discuss the *ḥaras* on its own.²

Some studies make some mention of the *ḥaras*. Hugh Kennedy devotes two pages in his *The Armies of the Caliphs* to the *shurṭa* and *ḥaras*, yet most of his discussion refers to the *shurṭa*.³ Studies on the *shurṭa* speak of the *ḥaras*, but typically give it only a few lines.⁴ Patricia Crone mentions the *ḥaras* in a footnote at the end of her *Slaves on Horses*.⁵ More to the point, the book contains a prosopographical index with bi-

¹ Nielsen, “*Shurṭa*,” in *EP*; Crone, “*Mawlā*,” in *EP*.

² Darādkeh, “*al-Ḥaras wa-l-shurṭa fī ṣadr al-Islām ilā nihāyat al-dawla al-umawiyya*,” pp. 69-95.

³ Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State*, pp. 13-14.

⁴ Rashid, *The Role of the Shurṭa in Early Islam*, pp. 151-55; Donner, “The Shurṭa in Early Umayyad Syria,” pp. 257-58; Ebstein, “*Shurṭa* Chiefs in Baṣra in the Umayyad Period: A Prosopographical Study,” pp. 117-18; Tyan, *Histoire de l’organisation judiciaire en pays d’Islam*, p. 593. See also: Donner, “The Articulation of Early Islamic State Structures,” xxiv-xxv. On a possible Byzantine and Persian origin of the *ḥaras* see: Rashid, *The Role of the Shurṭa*, pp. 7-13.

⁵ Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*, p. 248.

ographies of *ḥaras* chiefs during the early Abbasid period. *Ḥaras* chiefs of the Umayyad period, however, are rarely mentioned in available studies. Wadād al-Qāḏī discusses the *ḥaras* at several points in her article about security positions under the Umayyads, and she notes: “There is no independent, thorough study on the *ḥaras* in Umayyad times, but several studies on the *shurṭa* (usually translated as police) deal with them.”⁶

The Establishment of the *Ḥaras*

The use of the term ḥaras in primary sources

The *ḥaras* was institutionalized during the time of Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, but the term appears in the sources with reference to earlier periods as well. For instance, several men are said to have been in the *ḥaras* of the prophet Muḥammad in his expeditions.⁷ It is not certain that the term *ḥaras* was in fact used at the time of the prophet; even if it was used, it probably did not denote an organized body but rather groups of people who had volunteered to protect the prophet. It may be noted that some reports do create the impression that the *ḥaras* at the time of the prophet was indeed an organized institution.⁸ In contradistinction, the *ḥaras* at the time of Mu‘āwiya was undoubtedly a governmental body under the command of the caliph, which escorted and guarded him wherever he went.

The term *ḥaras* is also used with reference to the time of the rightly-guided caliphs (*al-khulafā’ al-rāshidūn*). Abū Bakr (r. 11-13/632-634) is said to have used his *ḥaras* to protect Medina from at-

⁶ Al-Qāḏī, “Security Positions under the Umayyads: The Story of ‘*Ma’bad al-Ṭuruq*” p. 264.

⁷ According to a tradition transmitted by ‘Ā’isha, the prophet had guards until verse 67 of *Sūrat al-Mā’ida* was revealed: *wa-llāh ya ‘ṣimuka mina l-nās*: Darādkeh, “al-Ḥaras wa-l-shurṭa,” p. 70. For a list of some of the men who are said to have been guards of the prophet see also: Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-bārī bi-sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, XV, p. 136.

⁸ For example, the reports according to which the members of the prophet’s *ḥaras* captured some men from Quraysh during the conquest of Mecca: al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, IV, p. 1559.

tack.⁹ Regarding ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 13-23/634-644), we are told that he did not have a *ḥaras*. When the captured Persian general al-Hurmuzān was brought to ‘Umar, the former asked where the caliph’s guards were. Realizing that ‘Umar had no guards, al-Hurmuzān concluded that ‘Umar must be a prophet.¹⁰ The purpose of this tradition, however, seems to have been the portrayal of ‘Umar in a positive manner, as a caliph who did not separate himself from the people. Due to the questionable historicity of reports of this kind, it is difficult to be certain that ‘Umar indeed did not have bodyguards.

The establishment of the ḥaras by Mu‘āwiya

Most accounts concerning the establishment of the *ḥaras* have it that Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān founded the body following an attempted assassination.¹¹ After this event, Mu‘āwiya built a *maqṣūra* (a guarded room for the caliph inside the mosque) that was surrounded by *ḥaras* members at the time of prayer.¹² Other accounts concerning this assassination attempt give more details about the behavior of the *ḥaras* inside the mosque. Al-Dīnawarī remarks that only the *ḥaras* members and the most trusted men were allowed to enter the *maqṣūra*. When Mu‘āwiya was praying, ten members of his *ḥaras* stood behind him armed with swords and clubs (*‘umud*).¹³

Several other accounts agree that the *ḥaras* was institutionalized during the time of Mu‘āwiya. According to al-Ya‘qūbī, Mu‘āwiya was the first to establish the *ḥaras*, the *shuraṭ* (pl. of *shurṭa*), and the

⁹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, V, p. 188 Darādkeh, “al-Ḥaras wa-l-shurṭa,” p. 71.

¹⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, first series V, pp. 2557-58 (English translation: *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, XVIII, p. 138).

¹¹ Darādkeh, “al-Ḥaras wa-l-shurṭa,” p. 89; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, p. 93.

¹² Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, VI, p. 10. See also: al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, first series VI, pp. 3464-65 (English translation: XVII, p. 223), where it is said that after the assassination attempt, Mu‘āwiya established the *maqṣūrāt* (pl. of *maqṣūra*), *ḥaras al-layl* (night guard), and ordered the *shurṭa* to protect him when he was praying. However, it seems more likely that the *ḥaras* members rather than the *shurṭa* were responsible for the caliph’s personal safety inside the mosque, as can be seen in other reports (see below, note 66). For more on the *maqṣūra* see: Pedersen, “Masjdīd,” in *EP*.

¹³ Al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhhbār al-ṭiwāl*, pp. 198-99.

bawwābūn (pl. of *bawwāb* – door keeper), and the first to have people walk in front of him with lances in formal processions.¹⁴ Further, Mu‘āwiya’s *ḥaras* chief – Muslim Abū ‘Abd Allāh, a *mawlā* of Khuzā‘a – is said to have been the first person to be put in charge of this body.¹⁵ Al-Ṭabarī gives the name of Mu‘āwiya’s *ḥaras* chief: al-Mukhtār or Abū l-Mukhāriq according to another version (both of whom were *mawālī*), and afterwards remarks that Mu‘āwiya was the founder of the *ḥaras*.¹⁶

Reports concerning the establishment of the *ḥaras* belong to the genre of *awā’il*, and are therefore problematic, since they aim to place the origins of this body in a historical event.¹⁷ It is therefore noteworthy that some reports indicate that Mu‘āwiya used bodyguards even before the attempt on his life. Thus, in one report he is said to have been with a guard (*ḥarasī*) before he was attacked.¹⁸ There are also reports according to which the *ḥaras* chief, Nuṣayr Abū Mūsā, refused to go with Mu‘āwiya to the battle of Ṣiffīn.¹⁹ These reports, where the *ḥaras* is present in the background, should be considered reliable with regard to this body; in all likelihood Mu‘āwiya already had bodyguards before the assassination attempt. It seems plausible, nevertheless, that the *ḥaras* was indeed institutionalized at the time of Mu‘āwiya, though not necessarily as a direct result of the attack on him.

The ḥaras of Ziyād b. Abīhi

Some traditions ascribed the founding of the *ḥaras* to Ziyād b. Abīhi, the governor of Iraq and the eastern provinces of the Umayyad caliphate under Mu‘āwiya. According to al-Ṭabarī, Ziyād was the first to have people walk in front of him in formal processions carrying lances

¹⁴ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta’rīkh al-Ya‘qūbī*, II, p. 232.

¹⁵ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, LVIII, p. 150.

¹⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, second series I, p. 205 (English translation: XVIII, p. 216). See also: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XXXIII, p. 32.

¹⁷ On the *awā’il* see: Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study*, pp. 104-8. See also: Donner, “The Shurta in Early Umayyad Syria,” p. 248.

¹⁸ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, LIX, pp. 143-44.

¹⁹ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān wa-anbā’ abnā’ al-zamān*, V, p. 319. Nuṣayr Abū Mūsā “had been in the immediate entourage of Mu‘āwiya”: Lévi-Provençal, “Mūsā b. Nuṣayr,” in *EF*.

(*hirāb*) and clubs (*'umud*). He also established the *ḥaras* as a cavalry unit (*rābiṭa*) of 500 men. Ziyād appointed Shaybān of the Banū Sa'd as head of the *rābiṭa*, which was stationed beside the mosque.²⁰ Al-Ṭabarī's report implies that the *rābiṭa* was a part of the *ḥaras*. However, a report in another source describes the *rābiṭa* as a unit separate from the *ḥaras*, which consisted of 500 men and was under the command of Shaybān.²¹

Shaybān b. 'Abd al-Shams belonged to the Banū Sa'd b. Zayd Manāt b. Tamīm. He was killed by the *Khawārij* with seven of his sons while guarding the mosque (*jāmi'*) of Baṣra.²² In the aforementioned accounts, he is said to have headed either the *ḥaras* or the *rābiṭa*, and in other accounts he is referred to as a *shurṭa* chief, which seems mistaken.²³ Balj b. Nushba, who belonged to the same group of Tamīm, is said to have been the deputy (*khalīfa*) of Ziyād's chief of the *ḥaras*.²⁴ One would expect Balj to have replaced Shaybān and the two of them to have commanded the same body, but whether this was the *ḥaras* or the *rābiṭa* remains unclear.

²⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, second series I, p. 79 (English translation: XVIII, p. 85). For more on the *rābiṭa* as a cavalry unit see: Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, s.v. "r.b.ṭ." One of the functions of the *rābiṭa* was to fight groups of the *Khawārij*, and the founder of this unit was Ziyād b. Abīhi: Athamina, "Non-Arab Regiments and Private Militias during the Umayyad Period," p. 373. In some reports Ziyād is said to have been the founder of both the *ḥaras* and the *'asas* (a night patrol unit): al-'Askarī, *al-Awā'il*, p. 204; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fi šinā'at al-inshā'*, I, p. 473. According to other reports, Abū Bakr or 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb established this unit. For more on the *'asas* see: Bearman *et al.*, "'Asas," in *EP*; Darādkeh, "al-Ḥaras wa-l-shurṭa," pp. 71-72; Ebstein, "*Shurṭa* Chiefs in Baṣra," p. 114.

²¹ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, IVa, p. 192. See also: Ebstein, "*Shurṭa* Chiefs in Baṣra," pp. 113-14. *Wa-kāna Ziyād awwal mani ttakhadha l-ḥaras wa-ttakhadha l-thiyāba l-Ziyādiyya wa-awwal man mushiya bayna yadayhi bi-l-ḥirāb wa-l-a'mida. Wa-ttakhadha Ziyād rābiṭa 'iddatuhum khams mi'a wa-wallā amrahum Shaybān ṣāhib maqbarat Shaybān min Banī Sa'd. fa-kānū lā yabraḥūna l-masjid* (Ziyād was the first to establish the *ḥaras* and to have men wear the "Ziyād" clothes (it is not clear if this was the uniform of the *ḥaras* members). He was the first in front of whom people walked with lances and clubs. Ziyād established a cavalry unit, which included 500 men, and appointed Shaybān of the Banū Sa'd, the owner of *maqbarat Shaybān*, in charge of them. They did not leave the mosque). The *ḥaras* members do not seem to have had qualifications relating them to cavalry units. However, an account of the formal processions of the caliph Hishām might give a different impression: *wa-kāna fi mawkiḥ Hishām thamānī mi'at fāris wa-(!)arba' mi'a mina l-shurṭa wa-arba' mi'a mina l-ḥaras* (There were 800 horsemen in Hishām's procession: 400 from the *shurṭa* and 400 from the *ḥaras*): al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, VIb, p. 27.

²² Ibn Durayd, *al-Ishtiqāq*, p. 253. See also: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IVa, p. 149.

²³ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, XI, M. al-Firdaws al-'Azam (ed.), p. 483. In *Futūḥ al-buldān* he is called the *shurṭa* chief of Ziyād's son: al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 504. This confusion between the *ḥaras* and *shurṭa* bodies is discussed below.

²⁴ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IVa, p. 178.

Characteristics of the *Ḥaras* and the *Ḥaras* Chiefs

The following sections attempt a review of the characteristics of the *ḥaras*, based on information gathered regarding the *ḥaras* chiefs. The method employed is that of prosopography,²⁵ i.e. a study of a group of individuals with common background characteristics. Questions of interest about this group include their genealogy, social origins, economic position, offices held by them, the position of their descendants, political connections, etc. The group discussed here is that of the *ḥaras* chiefs of the caliphs during the first two centuries of Islam. Accounts regarding the *ḥaras* typically do not elaborate on the functions of the institution itself, but rather relate to the *ḥaras* chiefs. Hence, a review of the characteristics of the *ḥaras* institution would be inadequate without a discussion of the men who headed it.²⁶

There are naturally some deficiencies in the data, which should be considered. The sources offer abundant data regarding some *ḥaras* chiefs, whereas information about others is lacking. Several *ḥaras* chiefs appear only a few times in the sources, sometimes even without a name. There is a risk that the *ḥaras* chiefs about whom the reports provide sufficient information do not represent the entire group. Nevertheless, an examination of the various *ḥaras* chiefs may shed light on the characteristics of the *ḥaras* institution.

The evidence used here is taken from an online database titled “The Prosopography of Early Islamic Administration.” This project aims to record biographical information from the primary sources about people who played a role in administration and politics during the early Islamic period.²⁷

²⁵ On the method of prosopography, see: Stone, “Prosopography,” pp. 107-40.

²⁶ See also: Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, xi: “The Islamic historians are more interested in individuals and groups of individuals rather than institutions... This in turn makes the writing of history heavily prosopographical.” On the necessity of prosopography in studying Islamic history see also: Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, pp. 16-17.

²⁷ *The Jerusalem Prosopography Project: The Prosopography of Early Islamic Administration*, at: www.micro5.msc.huji.ac.il:81/JPP/v3. See also: Lecker, “The Prosopography of Early Islamic Administration,” pp. 529-33.

Mawālī

Most of the *ḥaras* chiefs who served during the Umayyad period were *mawālī* (pl. of *mawlā*).²⁸ The bodyguards who were *mawālī* were most likely *mawālī* in the sense of non-Arab clients, freedmen.²⁹ One report explicitly states that ‘Amr b. Muḥājir, who was the *ḥaras* chief of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (r. 99-101/717-720), was a *mawlā* ‘*atāqa* (freed slave) of Asmā’ bint Yazīd al-Anṣariyya.³⁰ There are accounts according to which Yazīd b. Abī Muslim, who was appointed governor of North Africa by Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 101-105/720-724), returned the *mawālī* of Mūsā b. Nuṣayr to slavery and used them as his *ḥaras*, which indicates that they had been freed slaves.³¹ The fact that the *ḥaras* was headed by *mawālī* suggests that the members of this body were *mawālī* as well.³²

‘Amr b. Muḥājir was the only *ḥaras* chief who was a *mawlā* of the *Anṣār*. Since ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was the governor of Medina before his appointment as caliph and had close relations with some of the *Anṣār*,³³ it seems reasonable that a *mawlā* of theirs should have been selected as his *ḥaras* chief.

²⁸ *Ḥaras* chiefs who were *mawālī* include: Muslim Abū ‘Abd Allāh, al-Mukhtār or Abū l-Mukhāriq (see p. 319), Sa‘īd b. Zayd (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XXI, p. 95), ‘Adī Abū ‘Ayyāsh (on whom see Appendix 1, where the *ḥaras* chiefs are organized according to chronological order. The numbering used is given in parentheses), Abū l-Zu‘ayzi‘a (2), al-Rayyān b. Khālīd and Khālīd b. al-Rayyān (3), ‘Amr b. Muḥājir (4), al-Rabī‘ b. Ziyād (5), Ghaylān b. Abī Ma‘shar (6), Qīṭrī, Sallām, and Siqlāb (al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta’rīkh*, II, pp. 334, 335, 346-47).

²⁹ On the various meanings of *mawlā* see: Crone, “Mawlā,” in *EP*; Landau Tasseron, “Alliances in Islam,” p. 25; Hasson, “Les mawali dans l’armée musulmane sous les premiers Umayyades,” pp. 176-213.

³⁰ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XLVI, p. 402. On ‘Amr b. Muḥājir see Appendix 4.

³¹ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta’rīkh*, II, p. 313: *wa-akhadha mawāliya Mūsā b. Nuṣayr fa-wasama aydiyahum wa-raddahum ilā l-riqq wa-stakhdama ‘āmmatahum fī ḥarasihī* (he (Yazīd) took the *mawālī* of Mūsā b. Nuṣayr, branded their hands, returned them to slavery, and used them as his *ḥaras*). See also: Ibn ‘Idhārī, *Kitāb al-bayān al-mughrib fī akhbār al-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*, I, pp. 48-49; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 324; Robinson, “Neck-Sealing in Early Islam,” p. 422.

³² See also: Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, p. 32.

³³ Cobb, “‘Umar (II) b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz,” in *EP*. When ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was the governor of Medina he appointed a man from the *Anṣār* named Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. ‘Amr b. Ḥazm as *qāḍī*. During ‘Umar’s caliphate, Abū Bakr was the governor of Medina. Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, LXVI, pp. 44-45. See also: Lecker, “‘Amr ibn Ḥazm al-Anṣārī and Qur’ān 2,256: ‘No Compulsion Is There in Religion,’” pp. 60-61.

The reason for choosing *mawālī* to head the *ḥaras* was their unconditional loyalty to the caliph. The caliph wanted the most trustworthy men, and naturally it was his *mawālī* who were closest to him, as against Arab tribesmen whose loyalty was principally to their tribes. A reference to the *mawālī*'s loyalty and obedience can be found in a report stating that Mu‘āwiya wrote to Ziyād b. Abīhi complaining about his relatives. In response, Ziyād advised him to rely more on his *mawālī* since they were more helpful, more willing to forgive, and more grateful.³⁴

The *mawālī* held several offices during the Umayyad period.³⁵ According to Ziyād b. Abīhi, it is better that the men in charge of the *kharāj* (tax, especially land tax) should be non-Arabs who are more proficient in these matters.³⁶ The chamberlains (*ḥujjāb*) of the prophet and of the caliphs were reported to have been mostly *mawālī* as well.³⁷ However, the chamberlains were largely *mawālī* of the caliph, whereas the *ḥaras* chiefs were occasionally the caliph's *mawālī*, but not necessarily.³⁸

Qualifications of the ḥaras chiefs

Several *ḥaras* chiefs held additional offices, such as responsibility for the *khātam* (seal), *ḥijāba*, and *dīwān al-rasā'il* (office of correspondence).³⁹ Some held administrative positions before their appointment as *ḥaras* chiefs.⁴⁰ Some positions were security related, like the *ḥijāba*,

³⁴ *‘Alayka bi-l-mawālī fa-innahum anṣar wa-aghfar wa-ashkar*: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IVa, p. 23; Athamina, "Non-Arab Regiments," p. 374; Kister, "The Battle of the Harra: Some Socio-Economic Aspects," p. 44. As for the loyalty of the *ḥaras* chief, Ziyād b. Abīhi is also reported to have claimed that the *ḥaras* chief should be an aged man, who is chaste, reliable, and free from blame: *wa-yanbaghī an yakūna ṣāhibu l-ḥaras musinnan ‘aḥfān ma‘mūnan lā yuḥ‘anu ‘alayhi*: al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, p. 235.

³⁵ See also: Ḥusayn, "The Participation of non-Arab Elements in the Umayyad Army and Administration," p. 274.

³⁶ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, p. 234.

³⁷ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, pp. 258-59.

³⁸ See also: Crone, "Mawālī," in *EP*: "The *ḥaras*, or palace-guard, of the caliphs and their governors also seems usually to have been composed of and headed by *mawālī*, though not necessarily *mawālī* of the employer."

³⁹ Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, p. 35; Ebstein, "Shurṭa Chiefs in Baṣra," p. 117. Such were Abū l-Zu‘ayzi‘a (2), al-Rabī‘ b. Ziyād (5), al-Naḍr b. ‘Amr (7), Asad b. ‘Abd Allāh (8), ‘Uthmān b. Nahīk (9), and Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ṭūsī (10).

⁴⁰ For example, Abū l-Zu‘ayzi‘a (2) and ‘Amr b. Muḥājir (4).

while others seem strictly administrative and unconnected to any security job. It may be inferred that the qualifications required of a *ḥaras* chief were not merely military skills, physical strength, and loyalty to the caliph, but also administrative capabilities.⁴¹

The loyalty of the *ḥaras* chiefs to the caliph and their intimate relationship with him enabled them to secure various administrative positions for themselves, which likewise demanded loyalty and a close relation with the caliph. Perhaps their non-Arab background and the administrative traditions to which they were accustomed enabled them to occupy these positions.

Unlike the *ḥaras* chiefs who served the Umayyads, several *ḥaras* chiefs were promoted to the rank of governors during the early Abbasid period.⁴² Moreover, the *ḥaras* chiefs during the early Abbasid period were occasionally in charge of the army and sometimes of the *khazā'in* (state treasury).⁴³ The appointment of *ḥaras* chiefs during the early Abbasid period as governors also suggests that the *ḥaras* chiefs may have had skills that were not necessarily related to matters of security.

Several times a relative of the *ḥaras* chief succeeded him as head of the *ḥaras*.⁴⁴ It would seem that a person related to the *ḥaras* chief had quite a good chance of succeeding him. According to some reports, certain *ḥaras* chiefs were *ḥadīth* transmitters,⁴⁵ but their knowledge of *ḥadīth* was not ostensibly related to their security job.

⁴¹ See also Wadād al-Qāḍī's reconstruction of the biography of Ma'bad b. Khālid al-Jadālī, whose first job was as a *ḥarasī* under the governor of Kūfa. She concludes that the guards also had qualifications that were unrelated to physical strength: "Ma'bad's story shows that even a guard – certainly a chief guard – may be asked to undertake missions that require extensive knowledge of the territory in which he serves, including knowledge of its political and tribal landscape, and have the courage to carry out difficult, delicate, and possibly unsavory assignments:" al-Qāḍī, "Security Positions," p. 281.

⁴² For example: Abū l-'Abbās al-Tūsī (10), Shabīb b. Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba (12), 'Alī b. 'Īsā b. Māhān (Sourdel, "Ibn Māhān, 'Alī b. 'Īsā b. Māhān," in *EP*; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, p. 178), and Harthama b. A'yan (Pellat, "Harthama b. A'yan," in *EP*; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, p. 177).

⁴³ Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, p. 248.

⁴⁴ See Appendix 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 10.

⁴⁵ Like 'Amr b. Muhājir (4) and Abū l-Zu'ayzi'a (2): Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh*, XLVI, p. 402, XX, p. 88.

Weapons used by the ḥaras

The reports concerning the establishment of the *ḥaras* mention the weapons *ḥirāb* and *‘umud*. *‘Umud* or a *‘mida* (pl. of *‘amūd*) were clubs or maces, possibly made of iron,⁴⁶ and *ḥirāb* (pl. of *ḥarba*) were short spears or lances that were considered a symbol of authority. The Negus, or the ruler of Ethiopia, allegedly granted the prophet a lance (*‘anaza*, syn. of *ḥarba*), and people used to walk in front of him with it. After the prophet’s death, the caliphs are said to have inherited this lance and to have had people walk in front of them carrying it. Reportedly, the prophet fought Ubayy b. Khalaf with the lance he received from the Negus during the battle of Uḥud.⁴⁷ It seems however that the *ḥirāb* and *‘umud* were not the weapons borne by the members of the *ḥaras* during formal processions; rather, the *shurṭa* members used to carry them.⁴⁸

Concerning the weapons of the *ḥaras* chiefs, the most commonly used was the sword.⁴⁹ Receiving a sword occasionally symbolized appointment to this position.⁵⁰ Sometimes the *ḥaras* chiefs used chains

⁴⁶ Crone, “The Significance of Wooden Weapons in Al-Mukhtār’s Revolt and the ‘Abbasid Revolution,” p. 177; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, s.v. “‘.m.d”; Ebstein, “*Shurṭa* Chiefs in Baṣra,” p. 109.

⁴⁷ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, IV, pp. 218-19; Darādkeh, “al-Ḥaras wa-l-shurṭa,” pp. 70-71; for more on the *ḥarba* as a symbol of authority and the custom of walking in front of the caliph with the *ḥarba* see: Sourdel, “*Khalīfa*,” in *EP*; Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, p. 176; Ebstein, “*Shurṭa* Chiefs in Baṣra,” p. 109.

⁴⁸ Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, pp. 13, 176; Ebstein, “*Shurṭa* Chiefs in Baṣra,” p. 109; Crone, “The Significance of Wooden Weapons,” p. 177. Darādkeh and Morony remark that the *ḥaras* members walked in front of the caliph with *‘umud* and *ḥirāb*: Darādkeh, “al-Ḥaras wa-l-shurṭa,” p. 89; Morony, *Iraq*, p. 93. In some accounts the *ḥaras* members used the *ḥarba* as a standard weapon, and in others the *ḥaras* members in the mosque held *‘umud*: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XI, p. 431; al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akḥbār al-ṭiwāl*, p. 199.

⁴⁹ Swords are explicitly mentioned in the reports concerning Abū l-Zu‘ayzi‘a (2), Khālid b. al-Rayyān (3), and ‘Uthmān b. Nahk (8). The sword was a significant and symbolic weapon in Islam. The name *sayf* (sword) was used as an honorific title already at the time of the prophet. Sometimes the sword itself was given a name, like Dhū l-Faqār – ‘Alī’s sword, which was allegedly given to him by the prophet: Elgood, “Arms and armour,” in *EP*. There are several words in Arabic indicating different types of swords, as well as terms signifying the different parts of the sword, which also emphasizes its cultural importance. The significance of the sword is also illustrated in poetry, and several verses praise the virtues of this weapon. For more on swords in Islam see: Hoyland and Gilmour, *Medieval Islamic Swords and Swordmaking: Kindi’s treatise “On swords and their kinds”*.

⁵⁰ Like the appointment of ‘Amr b. Muḥājir (4).

(*silsila*, pl. *salāsila*) as an instrument of torture.⁵¹ Other reports state that the *ḥaras* members used whips (*sawṭ*, pl. *siyāṭ*).⁵²

Confusion between the terms ḥaras and shurṭa

Several *ḥaras* chiefs are referred to in the sources as *shurṭa* chiefs,⁵³ and it seems that there is some confusion between the two terms.⁵⁴ What is more, the term *shurṭa* (pl. *shurāṭ*) has occasionally been translated in modern studies as bodyguard.⁵⁵ The *ḥaras* and the *shurṭa* were related, since both bodies dealt with security, but their functions were distinct. The *shurṭa* was in charge of maintaining public order and security, while the *ḥaras* was responsible for the personal safety of the caliph. The distinction can be seen quite clearly in the origin of the men who headed the *ḥaras* and the *shurṭa*: the Umayyad *ḥaras* chiefs were mainly *mawālī*, whereas most *shurṭa* chiefs were Arab tribesmen.⁵⁶

⁵¹ As mentioned regarding Abū l-Zu‘ayzi‘a (2) and Sa‘īd b. Ghaylān (6).

⁵² Ibn al-‘Adīm, *Bughyat al-ṭalab fī ta‘rīkh Ḥalab*, V, p. 2322; al-Ṣan‘ānī, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, IX, p. 331.

⁵³ See reports on Abū l-Zu‘ayzi‘a (2), ‘Amr b. Muhājir (4), Sa‘īd b. Ghaylān (6), and al-Naḍr b. ‘Amr (7). Likewise, verses composed by ‘Umayr b. al-Ḥubāb (on whom see: Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, pp. 107-8) describe how he managed to escape from the *shurṭa* of al-Rayyān b. Khālīd, who was in fact responsible for the *ḥaras* (3). ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī l-Sā‘ib, the *ḥaras* chief of Umayya b. ‘Abd Allāh, who was the governor of Khurāsān during the caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik, is referred to in the same report once as Umayya’s *ḥaras* chief and once as his *shurṭa* chief: al-Ṭabarī, *Ta‘rīkh*, second series II, pp. 1028-30 (English translation: XXII, pp. 172-74). Kaysān Abū ‘Amra, the *ḥaras* chief of al-Mukhtār b. Abī ‘Ubayd (d. 67/687), is referred to in another source as his *shurṭa* chief: al-Jumāhī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu‘arā’*, II, p. 632.

⁵⁴ As mentioned in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*: “The *ṣāhib al-shurṭa* appears often in the early centuries as the head of the ruler’s personal bodyguard, a function whose title and role is confused with that of the *ḥaras*”: Nielsen, “*Shurṭa*,” in *EF*. On the confusion between the two institutions see also: Rashid, *The Role of the Shurṭa*, p. 153.

⁵⁵ Dodge translates the title *Kitāb shurāṭ al-khulafā’* from the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm as: “Bodyguards of the Caliphs.” The title *Kitāb ‘ummal al-shurāṭ li-umarā’ al-‘Irāq* is translated as: “Officers of the Bodyguards of the Governors of al-‘Irāq”: Ibn al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, I, p. 218; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist li-Ibn al-Nadīm*, p. 146. See also: Elad, “Community of Believers of ‘Holy Men’ and ‘Saints’ or Community of Muslims? The Rise and Development of Early Muslim Historiography,” pp. 297-98. Wellhausen explains *shurṭa* as “einer Art Gensdarmarie.” See also the English translation: “a kind of body-guard”: Wellhausen, *Das Arabische Reich und sein Sturz*, p. 80; Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, p. 127. See also: Donner, “The Shurṭa in Early Umayyad Syria,” p. 257.

⁵⁶ Donner, “The Shurṭa in Early Umayyad Syria,” p. 258; Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, p. 13; Ebstein, “*Shurṭa* Chiefs in Baṣra,” p. 117.

Some reports note that a certain person functioned as a *ḥaras* chief, while others say that the same person was a *ḥājib* (chamberlain) of the caliph, which can also be explained as a result of confusion between the two terms.⁵⁷ It is perhaps possible that there is no contradiction between the reports, and that these people held the two positions simultaneously.

Characteristics of the ḥaras

Since the time of Mu‘āwīya b. Abī Sufyān, each caliph had a *ḥaras*, led by a *ḥaras* chief, who escorted him. There was only one *ḥaras* chief at a time. When the sources remark that a certain caliph had more than one, it is because different people functioned at different times. It seems that the caliph himself appointed and dismissed his *ḥaras* chief, which is another indication of their close relations. Occasionally a *ḥaras* chief functioned under more than one caliph.⁵⁸ Thus, several times a new caliph did not choose a new *ḥaras* chief, but rather employed the one already in command. The continuity of the *ḥaras* is also evident from the fact that it was a body that functioned during both the Umayyad and Abbasid periods.

Regarding the numbers provided by the sources,⁵⁹ the report concerning the establishment of the *ḥaras* by Ziyād notes that the *ḥaras* comprised 500 men. However, as previously mentioned, this report is ambiguous, because it is not clear whether this unit was the *ḥaras* or the *rābiṭa*. The *ḥaras* of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz consisted of 300 men,⁶⁰ and the formal procession of Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik included 400 *ḥaras* members.⁶¹ A report regarding al-Mahdī remarks that he took 500 men from the *Anṣār* (i.e. descendants of the *Anṣār*) and made them his *ḥaras*.⁶² The salary of the *ḥaras* chief is not dis-

⁵⁷ See for example reports concerning Aḥmad b. Hishām (11), Siqlāb and Qitrī (al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta’riḫ*, II, pp. 334, 346-47; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, p. 258).

⁵⁸ Such as Khālīd b. al-Rayyān (3), who served under three caliphs, and Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ṭūsī (10) who served under two.

⁵⁹ Regarding typological numbers and numbers in general given in the Muslim sources see: Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, xii-xiii, pp. 19-21; Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, pp. 198-200.

⁶⁰ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’riḫ*, XLV, p. 220.

⁶¹ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, VIb, p. 27.

⁶² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’riḫ*, third series I, p. 484 (English translation: XXIX, p. 195).

cussed in detail in the sources, but some reports refer briefly to this issue.⁶³

Numerous reports discuss the *ḥaras* chiefs of governors as opposed to caliphs.⁶⁴ There are also reports of *quḍāt* (pl. of *qāḍī*) who had a *ḥaras*.⁶⁵ Not all governors, nor all of the *quḍāt*, are said in the sources to have employed a *ḥaras*, but it may be assumed that nearly all governors and possibly other officials as well had a *ḥaras* guarding them.

The ḥaras in the mosque

Reports on the establishment of the *ḥaras* mention that its members were stationed inside the mosque in order to protect the caliph while praying. Other reports describe the actions of the *ḥaras* members inside the mosque, such as expelling people from it for various reasons.⁶⁶ Perhaps some of the *ḥaras* members were charged with keeping the mosque safe and protecting the caliph when he was there, but it is dif-

⁶³ ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz gave ‘Amr b. Muḥājir a monthly salary of ten or twenty *dīnārs* (4). In a report that describes the marriage of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. al-Walīd (the son of the Caliph al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik) and Umm Ḥakīm, ‘Abd al-Malik, who was ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s grandfather, ordered to give the *ḥaras* members ten *dīnārs* each: Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-aghānī*, XVI, p. 298. The salary of the *ḥaras* chief of Hārūn al-Rashīd was 300,000 *dirhams* per year: Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-absār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, IX, p. 190.

⁶⁴ For example: Janāb b. Marthad was the *ḥaras* chief of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Marwān, the governor of Egypt (al-Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā l-kabīr*, III, p. 72); Yazīd b. Abī Ziyād headed the *ḥaras* of Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīra (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, second series II, p. 983); ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī l-Sā’ib al-Laythī was in command of the *ḥaras* of Umayya b. ‘Abd Allāh, the governor of Khurāsān (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, second series II, pp. 1028-30); ‘Abd Allāh b. Dīnār was the *ḥaras* chief of ‘Adī b. Arṭā (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, second series II, p. 1384); Dāwūd al-Barbarī led the *ḥaras* of Khālīd al-Qasrī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, second series III, p. 1650); Abū Muslim’s *ḥaras* chief was named Abū Iṣḥāq Khālīd b. ‘Uthmān (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, third series I, p. 116).

⁶⁵ See for example: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XX, p. 216; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā: al-qism al-mutammim li-tābi’i ahl al-Madīna wa-man ba’dahum*, p. 125; Wakī’, *Akhbār al-quḍāt*, I, pp. 145, 213-14. Additionally, some rebels possessed a *ḥaras*. Al-Mukhtār b. Abī ‘Ubayd’s *ḥaras* was led by a *mawlā* of ‘Urayna named Kaysān Abū ‘Amra (see also note 53): Hawting, “al-Mukhtār b. Abī ‘Ubayd,” in *EP*.

⁶⁶ See for example: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, VII, M. al-Firdaws al-‘Azīm (ed.), p. 522; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-ta’rīkh*, IV, p. 262; al-Kindī, *Wulāt Miṣr*, p. 83; al-Samhūdī, *Waḳā’ al-waḳā’ bi-akhbār dār al-Muṣtaḳā’*, II, p. 284-285; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḳ li-Ibn Abī Shayba*, XII, p. 574.

difficult to ascertain whether they indeed belonged to the body under the command of the *ḥaras* chief of the caliph, or were a separate unit responsible for maintaining order in the mosque.

Functions of the ḥaras

The main function of the *ḥaras* was to guard the caliph and to prevent his exposure to any kind of danger. Even when the caliph was in a private meeting, his *ḥaras* chief was with him to guard him, armed with a sword. An anecdote about ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz shows how the *ḥaras* protected the caliph and escorted him: when ‘Umar became caliph, he walked at night with a *ḥaras* member (*ḥarasī*) to the mosque. ‘Umar entered the mosque, and because of the darkness he bumped into a sleeping man. The man lifted his head and said: “Are you crazy?” The *ḥaras* member intended to harm him, but ‘Umar told him that the man was simply asking him a question and that he had answered by telling him that he was not crazy.⁶⁷ Although all this might not have occurred at all, the background details are trustworthy: the caliph was escorted by his *ḥaras* at all times.

In addition to protecting the caliph, the *ḥaras* carried out executions at his orders.⁶⁸ Several reports demonstrate how the *ḥaras* members dealt with opponents of the caliph. For instance, the *ḥaras* had a central role during the *bay‘a* (oath of allegiance) to Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiya (r. 60-64/680-683).⁶⁹ Reportedly, Mu‘āwiya threatened the men who refused to pledge the *bay‘a* to Yazīd, and he forced them to accept his son’s appointment as his heir apparent. Mu‘āwiya summoned his *ḥaras* chief and ordered him to place two *ḥaras* members next to each of the men present during his speech. Had any of them said anything

⁶⁷ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XLV, p. 206. Another anecdote about ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz also says that the *ḥaras* members accompanied the caliph to the mosque: Ibn ‘Abd Rabbīhi, *al-‘Iqd al-farīd*, II, p. 269.

⁶⁸ See also: Darādkeh, “al-Ḥaras wa-l-shurṭa,” p. 81. *Ḥaras* chiefs ordered to perform executions include Abū l-Zu‘ayzī‘a (2), ‘Uthmān b. Nahīk (9), ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī l-‘Abbās al-Tūsī (10) and Aḥmad b. Hishām (11). Several reports describe how al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī (born 41/661) ordered his *ḥaras* to perform executions: Morony, *Iraq*, p. 93; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, VI, p. 488; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, II, p. 38; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, LXXIV, p. 233.

⁶⁹ On the *bay‘a* to Yazīd see: Marsham, *Rituals of Islamic Monarchy: Accession and Succession in the First Muslim Empire*, pp. 90-92.

in opposition to Mu‘āwiya, the *ḥaras* member would have killed him with his sword.⁷⁰ In another report, Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiya sent some of his *ḥaras* members to ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr to ascertain that the latter was obedient to him. The *ḥaras* members were supposed to either receive ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr’s *bay‘a*, or bring him in chains to the caliph.⁷¹

Apart from these main functions of the *ḥaras*, there were others, such as prison supervision.⁷² It is possible that the latter was under the control of the *ḥaras* chiefs, but there is not enough in the sources to determine whether this was a permanent role of the *ḥaras* or only the responsibility of several specific *ḥaras* chiefs. The sources also discuss various tasks assigned to the *ḥaras* chiefs and the *ḥaras* members, which were not necessarily related to the personal security of the ruler,⁷³ such as performing duties related to intelligence,⁷⁴ or deporting various people on the ruler’s order.⁷⁵

Summary

Since the time of Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, every caliph was guarded by his *ḥaras* at all times. Not only were caliphs protected by bodyguards, but also governors and several other officials, which is an indication of the importance of this body. Scholars have remarked that nearly all the *ḥaras* chiefs of the Umayyad caliphs were *mawālī*, and the confusion between the *ḥaras* and the *shurṭa* has been pointed out

⁷⁰ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, pp. 355-56.

⁷¹ Al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhhbār al-ṭiwāl*, p. 241.

⁷² See reports concerning al-Rayyān b. Khālid (3), Sa‘īd b. Ghaylān (6), and Aḥmad b. Hishām (11). In addition Janāb b. Marthad (see note 64) and his men struck and jailed whoever behaved in a rude manner towards ‘Abd al-‘Azīz: *fa-kāna l-rajul idhā aghlaḏa li-‘Abd al-‘Azīz wa-kharaja tanāwalahu Janāb wa-man ma’ahu fa-ḏarabūhu wa-ḥabasūhu*: al-Kindī, *Wulāt Miṣr*, p. 71.

⁷³ A report about Mu‘āwiya mentions that before his death he summoned al-Daḥḥāk b. Qays, his *shurṭa* chief, and Muslim b. ‘Uqba, his *ḥaras* chief, and asked them both to give Yazīd his will: al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhhbār al-ṭiwāl*, pp. 208-9; Darādkeh, “al-Ḥaras wal-shurṭa,” p. 85.

⁷⁴ Abū Muslim sent his *ḥaras* chief Abū Ishāq to al-Manṣūr to check al-Manṣūr’s opinions before he went to meet him: al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, third series I, p. 107 (English translation: XXVIII, p. 30).

⁷⁵ Al-Mughīra b. Shu‘ba (governor 41-50/661-670) ordered Ma‘bad, a member of his *ḥaras*, to deport Ziyād b. Abīhi from Kūfa: al-Qāḏī, “Security Positions,” pp. 265-66.

as well. Some studies have mentioned that the *ḥaras* chiefs had responsibilities in addition to protecting the caliph's life, such as responsibility for the official seal. It may be supposed that their non-Arab background and administrative skills enabled them to secure such positions. During the early Abbasid period, some *ḥaras* chiefs were promoted to the office of governors, perhaps implying that the qualifications for the *ḥaras* position were not merely security related.

Besides the primary duty of protecting the caliphs, the *ḥaras* chiefs also performed executions and were active in suppressing political opposition. Naturally, the *ḥaras* chiefs had close relations with the caliph. According to some reports it was the caliph himself who appointed or dismissed his *ḥaras* chief; on several occasions a relative of a *ḥaras* chief succeeded him in the position. A prosopographical study of the *ḥaras* chiefs shows that they had much in common, and this fact contributes to our knowledge of the *ḥaras*, a significant institution during early Islam.

Appendix: The *Ḥaras* Chiefs of the Caliphs in Chronological Order

1. 'Adī Abū 'Ayyāsh al-Ḥimyarī and his son Ibn Abī 'Ayyāsh al-Alhānī: 'Adī Abū 'Ayyāsh, a *mawlā* of Ḥimyar, was the *ḥaras* chief of the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65-86/685-705).⁷⁶ His son, Ibn Abī 'Ayyāsh al-Alhānī, was the *ḥaras* chief of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 99-101/717-720).⁷⁷

2. Sālim Abū l-Zu'ayzi'a al-Barbarī: Abū l-Zu'ayzi'a was a *mawlā* of the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān and his *ḥaras* chief after Abū 'Ayyāsh al-Ḥimyarī.⁷⁸ He was also in charge of 'Abd al-Malik's *dīwān al-rasā'il*,⁷⁹ and prior to his appointment as *ḥaras* chief, according to one version, he had been a *kātib* (secretary) of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam

⁷⁶ Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, XL, p. 159.

⁷⁷ Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, LXVIII, p. 40; Ibn al-'Adīm, *Bughyat al-ṭalab*, X, p. 4705. In one source, 'Adī Abū 'Ayyāsh is named Abū 'Ayyāsh al-Kahānī (al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, p. 280), but the name al-Kahānī is a miswriting of al-Alhānī. Abū 'Ayyāsh al-Kahānī is thus actually 'Adī Abū 'Ayyāsh al-Alhānī, the father of Ibn Abī 'Ayyāsh al-Alhānī.

⁷⁸ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, p. 280.

⁷⁹ Al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-wuzarā' wa-l-kuttāb*, p. 35; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, second series II, p. 838 (English translation: XXI, p. 215).

(r. 64-65/684-685).⁸⁰ Abū l-Zu‘ayzi‘a executed ‘Amr b. Sa‘īd al-Ashdaq using either a chain (*silsila*) or a sword.⁸¹ In one account regarding this execution, he is referred to as ‘Abd al-Malik’s *shurṭa* chief.⁸²

3. Al-Rayyān b. Khālīd and his son Khālīd b. al-Rayyān: Al-Rayyān b. Khālīd was a *mawlā* and a *ḥaras* chief of the Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān. He was responsible for supervising the prisoner ‘Umayr b. al-Ḥubāb al-Sulamī, who eventually managed to escape.⁸³ Khālīd b. al-Rayyān, a *mawlā* of Banū Muḥārib,⁸⁴ succeeded his father as ‘Abd al-Malik’s *ḥaras* chief. Khālīd also headed the *ḥaras* of al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 86-96/705-715) and Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 96-99/715-717). When ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz became caliph, he dismissed Khālīd and ordered him to lay down his sword, because the latter is reported to have said that had he received an order to kill him he would have done so. Khālīd’s successor, ‘Amr b. Muḥājir, allegedly took Khālīd’s sword when he was appointed ‘Umar’s *ḥaras* chief.⁸⁵

4. ‘Amr b. Muḥājir: ‘Amr b. Muḥājir b. Dīnār b. Abī Muslim, a *mawlā* of Asmā’ bint Yazīd al-Anṣāriyya,⁸⁶ was appointed *ḥaras* chief of the Caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz following the dismissal of Khālīd b. al-Rayyān.⁸⁷ Some reports state that he was in charge

⁸⁰ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XX, p. 88; al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-wuzarā’*, p. 33.

⁸¹ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IVb, p. 141. ‘Amr b. Sa‘īd al-Ashdaq was an Umayyad governor who stirred up a revolt in Damascus asserting his right to the caliphate. The Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik, who was his cousin, had him killed: Zetterstéen, “‘Amr b. Sa‘īd b. al-‘Aṣṣ b. Umayya al-Umawī, known as al-Ashdaq,” in *EP*.

⁸² Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IVb, p. 145.

⁸³ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, p. 314. For more on al-Rayyān b. Khālīd see: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XVIII, p. 274.

⁸⁴ His father, al-Rayyān b. Khālīd, is also said in one report to have been a *mawlā* of Banū Muḥārib: Khalīfā b. Khayyāt, *Ta’rīkh Khalīfā b. Khayyāt*, p. 299.

⁸⁵ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XVI, pp. 28-29; Ibn al-‘Adīm, *Bughyat al-ṭalab*, VII, pp. 3028-29. According to a different version, the Caliph dismissed Khālīd b. al-Rayyān since he saw him wearing one of his (‘Umar’s) robes (*jubba*): Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XLVI, p. 405. Similar to Khālīd’s dismissal was the dismissal of al-Ja‘d b. Qays from the *shurṭa*, after Ziyād ordered him to throw down his *ḥarba*: Darādkeh, “al-Ḥaras wa-l-shurṭa,” p. 99.

⁸⁶ Asmā’ bint Yazīd b. al-Sakan was a member of the Banū ‘Abd al-Ashhal, a clan of the Aws tribe: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, LXIX, p. 31.

⁸⁷ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XVI, pp. 28-29. According to other reports he was appointed after the dismissal of Ibn Abī ‘Ayyāsh: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, LXVIII, p. 40. Another report has it that Abū l-‘Abbās al-Hilālī headed the *ḥaras* of ‘Umar: Ibn ‘Abd Rabbīhi, *al-Iqd*, V, p. 179.

of ‘Umar’s *shurṭa*.⁸⁸ During the caliphate of al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik, ‘Amr was in charge of the state treasury (*bayt al-māl*).⁸⁹ Reportedly, one of the reasons for ‘Amr b. Muhājir’s appointment as *ḥaras* chief was his Anṣārī origin. His monthly salary was ten or twenty *dīnārs*.⁹⁰

5. Al-Rabī‘ b. Ziyād b. Sābūr: Al-Rabī‘ b. Ziyād b. Sābūr, a *mawlā* of al-Ḥarīsh (a Qays ‘Aylān tribe), was responsible for the *dīwān al-rasā’il*, the *khātām*, the *ḥijāba* and the *ḥaras* of the Caliph Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 105-125/724-743). He was appointed *ḥaras* chief after Hishām dismissed his *mawlā* Nuṣayr.⁹¹

6. Ghaylān b. Abī Ma‘shar: Ghaylān b. Abī Ma‘shar, a *mawlā* of al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik, is said in one report to have been the *ḥaras* chief of both Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 101-105/720-724) and al-Walīd b. Yazīd (r. 125-126/743-744).⁹² However, it seems more likely that the *ḥaras* of these two caliphs was headed by two different men: Ghaylān Abū Sa‘īd the *ḥaras* chief of Yazīd, and his son, Sa‘īd b. Ghaylān, the *ḥaras* chief of al-Walīd.⁹³ Al-Walīd ordered Sa‘īd b. Ghaylān to torture the former governor Khālīd b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Qasrī (d. 126/743-744) in order to extract tax money from him. Sa‘īd b. Ghaylān tortured him with chains (*salāsīl*) and eventually imprisoned him on the order of al-Walīd.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XLVI, 402; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā’ al-rijāl*, XXII, p. 252.

⁸⁹ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, II, p. 269.

⁹⁰ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XLVI, p. 405.

⁹¹ Ibn al-‘Adīm, *Bughyat al-ṭalab*, VIII, p. 3590; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, second series III, p. 1649 (English translation: XXV, p. 179); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, VIIb, p. 4 (where Nuṣayr is named Naṣr); Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, LXII, p. 108 (where he is named Naḍīr. These two names are only differentiated by the diacritics). See also: Khālīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta’rīkh*, p. 362 (where he is referred to once as al-Rabī‘ b. Shābūr, and once as al-Rabī‘ b. Ziyād).

⁹² Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, XLVIII, p. 213. Two different versions of his name are given in this account: Ghaylān b. Abī Ma‘shar and Ghaylān Khatan Abī Ma‘shar. The version with “ibn” instead of Khatan seems preferable. In another source, he is named Ghaylān Khatan Abī Ma‘n (Khālīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta’rīkh*, p. 262), but Ma‘n could be a miswriting of Ma‘shar. According to another version, Abū Mālīk al-Saksakī was Yazīd’s *ḥaras* chief: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, LXVII, p. 199.

⁹³ Sa‘īd b. Ghaylān: al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akḥbār al-tiwāl*, p. 319. He is referred to in this source as his *shurṭa* chief. Ghaylān Abū Sa‘īd: Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, *al-Iqd*, 1987, V, p. 187.

⁹⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, second series III, p. 1821 (English translation: XXVI, p. 176); al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akḥbār al-tiwāl*, p. 319. On Khālīd b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Qasrī see: Hawting, “Khālīd b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Qasrī,” in *EP*. In al-Ṭabarī’s report al-Walīd’s *ḥaras* chief is referred to simply as Ghaylān, but al-Dīnawarī, describing the same event, names him Sa‘īd b. Ghaylān.

7. Al-Naḍr b. ‘Amr al-Muqrā’ī l-Ḥimyarī: Al-Naḍr b. ‘Amr was responsible for the *kharāj* (tax, especially land tax), *jund* (soldier enlistment), and *al-khātam al-ṣagīr* (lesser seal) together with the *ḥaras* of Yazīd b. al-Walīd (r. 126/744).⁹⁵

8. Asad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Khuzā’ī: Asad (sometimes called Asīd) b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Khuzā’ī was the *ḥaras* chief of the first Abbasid Caliph, Abū l-‘Abbās al-Saffāḥ (r. 132-136/749-754). He was also in charge of the *khātam*.⁹⁶ Al-Ya‘qūbī remarks that Asad b. ‘Abd Allāh’s son, Abū Bakr b. Asad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Khuzā’ī, was the *ḥaras* chief of Abū l-‘Abbās al-Saffāḥ.⁹⁷ Perhaps both Asad b. ‘Abd Allāh and his son who succeeded him headed Abū l-‘Abbās’s *ḥaras*.

9. ‘Uthmān b. Nahīk: ‘Uthmān b. Nahīk was appointed by the Caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136-158/754-775) to head his *ḥaras*. He was also responsible for the *khātam*.⁹⁸ Prior to his appointment as *ḥaras* chief, ‘Uthmān b. Nahīk took part in the killing of Yazīd b. ‘Umar b. Hubayra during the siege of Wāsiṭ.⁹⁹ When he headed the *ḥaras* of al-Manṣūr, his *ḥaras* had an important role in the assassination of Abū Muslim, the leader of the revolutionary Abbasid movement in Khurāsān.¹⁰⁰ ‘Uthmān b. Nahīk was killed in the year 141/758, and after his death al-Manṣūr appointed his brother, ‘Īsā b. Nahīk, as *ḥaras* chief. Following ‘Īsā’s death, al-Manṣūr appointed Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ṭūsī to head the *ḥaras*.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, LXII, pp. 77-78 (where according to one report he is said to have headed Yazīd’s *shurṭa* as well); Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta’rīkh*, p. 371; al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-wuzarā’*, p. 69; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, second series II, p. 839 (English translation: XXI, p. 217); Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, p. 148.

⁹⁶ Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta’rīkh*, p. 415; see also: al-‘Askarī, *al-Awā’il*, p. 179.

⁹⁷ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta’rīkh*, II, p. 361. For more on Asad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Khuzā’ī see: Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, pp. 175-76.

⁹⁸ Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta’rīkh*, p. 436; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, third series I, p. 65 (English translation: XXVII, p. 188).

⁹⁹ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, III, p. 146. On Yazīd b. ‘Umar b. Hubayra’s death see also: Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, pp. 550-51; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, p. 107. One account regarding this event notes that when Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr gave ‘Uthmān the order to kill Yazīd, he said that a man of Arab origin should perform the execution: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, III, p. 153.

¹⁰⁰ On Abū Muslim see: Moscati, “Abū Muslim,” in *EP*. On his assassination see: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, III, pp. 205-6.

¹⁰¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, V, pp. 129-30; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, III, p. 236; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, third series I, p. 131 (English translation: XXVIII, pp. 64-65). For more on ‘Uthmān b. Nahīk see: Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, p. 189.

10. Abū l-‘Abbās al-Faḍl b. Sulaymān al-Ṭūsī and his son ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī l-‘Abbās al-Ṭūsī: Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ṭūsī was responsible for both the *ḥaras* and the *khātām* of al-Manṣūr.¹⁰² Abū l-‘Abbās was the *ḥaras* chief of al-Mahdī (r. 158-169/775-785) as well, and during the year 165/781 or 166/782 al-Mahdī appointed him governor of Khurāsān.¹⁰³ ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī l-‘Abbās al-Ṭūsī, his son, succeeded his father as *ḥaras* chief of al-Mahdī, and was ordered by the Caliph to execute ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī ‘Ubayd Allāh, who was accused of heresy.¹⁰⁴

11. Aḥmad b. Hishām: Aḥmad b. Hishām was the *ḥaras* chief of the Caliph al-Ma’mūn (r. 197-218/813-833). Al-Ma’mūn ordered Aḥmad b. Hishām to execute one of his *mawālī* for writing insulting verses, but eventually he was pardoned.¹⁰⁵ In another report, Yaḥyā b. Khāqān was imprisoned under the supervision of Aḥmad b. Hishām.¹⁰⁶ Aḥmad b. Hishām is also reported to have been al-Ma’mūn’s *ḥājib*.¹⁰⁷

12. Shabīb b. Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba: Shabīb b. Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba was the *ḥaras* chief of the Caliph al-Ma’mūn. Al-Ma’mūn later appointed him governor of Qūmis, and Harthama b. A‘yan was appointed *ḥaras* chief in his stead. Command of the *ḥaras* was later placed in the hands of ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. Salāma al-Ṭahlāzī,¹⁰⁸ a relative of Harthama, and after him ‘Alī b. Hishām headed the *ḥaras*. Eventually, al-Ma’mūn executed ‘Alī b. Hishām and appointed ‘Ujayf b. ‘Anbasa as *ḥaras* chief.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta’rīkh*, p. 436; al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-wuzarā’*, p. 124. He was also in charge of the seal during the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashīd: al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-wuzarā’*, p. 177.

¹⁰³ Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta’rīkh*, p. 438; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, third series I, p. 517 (English translation: XXIX, p. 234).

¹⁰⁴ Al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-wuzarā’*, p. 154; Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta’rīkh*, p. 443. Abū ‘Ubayd Allāh, his father, was one of the viziers of al-Mahdī. See: Moscati, “Abū ‘Ubayd Allāh,” in *EF*. For more on Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ṭūsī and ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī l-‘Abbās al-Ṭūsī see: Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, p. 174.

¹⁰⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā*, IV, pp. 345-46.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Ḥamdūn, *al-Tadhkira al-ḥamdūniyya*, p. 302.

¹⁰⁷ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta’rīkh*, II, p. 470.

¹⁰⁸ The *nisba* al-Ṭahlāzī, which I have found only in this source, is probably written erroneously.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta’rīkh*, II, 470; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, pp. 178, 188-89.

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