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Knowledge as Persuasion in the Oratory of an Almohad Qadi:
Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Sulamī al-Aḡmātī

El conocimiento como persuasión en la oratoria de un cadí almohade:
Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Sulamī al-Aḡmātī

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Abstract

This article analyses the Almohad judge Ibn ‘Umar al-Sulamī al-Aḡmātī’s (d. 603/1206 or 1207) oration (*ḥuṭba*) against the philosophers. In the absence of any contemporaneous descriptions of the circumstances in which al-Sulamī composed and presumably delivered this *ḥuṭba*, I evaluate the historiographic evidence that contextualizes the sermon as part of what the Moroccan historian Muḥammad Ibn Šarīfa dubbed the “propaganda campaign” in which, at the instigation of Almohad Caliph al-Manšūr, the study of Graeco-Islamic philosophy and the “sciences of the Ancients” was prohibited and Ibn Rušd (Averroes) and his fellow travellers were relieved of their official positions. The article examines the biographical details of al-Sulamī’s life, career, and writings and attempts to reconstruct a portrait of his relations with the Almohad authorities and their religious policies. It then evaluates the data concerning the preservation and transmission of the text. Finally, it analyzes the *ḥuṭba* drawing upon Arabic discourse and rhetorical analysis and speech acts theory to illustrate al-Sulamī’s techniques of persuasion and to demonstrate how they articulated Almohad policies and ideology. The study seeks to shed light on how the Almohads deployed Arabic oratory as an instrument of propaganda and public persuasion during a transition in their official policies away from the previous patronage of the philosophers.

Keywords: Abū Ḥafṣ ibn ‘Umar al-Sulamī al-Aḡmātī; Ibn Rušd (Averroes); Almohads; Islamic philosophy; Islamic oratory; *ḥuṭba*; Islamic knowledge (*ilm*); Arabic rhetoric; *balāḡa*.

Resumen

El presente artículo analiza el sermón (*ḥuṭba*) contra los filósofos del juez almohade Ibn ‘Umar al-Sulamī al-Aḡmātī (m. 603/1206 o 1207). En ausencia de descripciones coetáneas de las circunstancias en las que al-Sulamī compuso y presumiblemente pronunció esta *ḥuṭba*, se evalúan las evidencias historiográficas que contextualizan el sermón en el marco de lo que el historiador marroquí Muḥammad Ibn Šarīfa denominó «la campaña de propaganda» en la que, por instigación del califa almohade al-Manšūr, se prohibió el estudio de la filosofía greco-islámica y las «ciencias de los Antiguos», e Ibn Rušd (Averroes) y sus compañeros de viaje fueron relevados de sus cargos oficiales. El artículo revisa los datos biográficos de la vida, la carrera y los escritos de al-Sulamī e intenta retratar sus relaciones con las autoridades almohades y su política religiosa. A continuación, se examinan los datos relativos a la preservación y transmisión del texto. Finalmente, se emplean el análisis del discurso y de la retórica árabe junto con las teorías sobre los actos de habla para interpretar la *ḥuṭba* con el fin de ilustrar las técnicas de persuasión utilizadas por al-Sulamī y demostrar cómo estas articulaban las políticas y la ideología almohades. El artículo pretende arrojar más luz sobre cómo los almohades utilizaban la oratoria árabe como instrumento de propagación y de persuasión dirigido al público durante un momento de transición cuando las políticas oficiales se alejaron del patrocinio oficial de los filósofos.

Palabras clave: Abū Ḥafṣ ibn ‘Umar al-Sulamī al-Aḡmātī; Ibn Rušd (Averroes); los almohades; filosofía musulmana; oratoria musulmana; *ḥuṭba*; conocimiento islámico (*ilm*); retórica árabe; *balāḡa*.

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Introduction¹

The circumstances surrounding Ibn Rušd al-Ḥafīd's (Averroes, d. 595/1198) public disgrace (*nakba*) and exile to Lucena have been the subject of numerous studies.² Josep Puig and Muḥammad Ibn Šarīfa were among the first scholars to draw attention to the "public roles" and the "propaganda campaign" (*ḥamla i 'lāmiyya*) that several prominent Almohad scholar-propagandists (*ṭalaba*),³ jurists (*fuqahā*), and literary figures waged against Ibn Rušd to persuade the public that the Cordovan philosopher and his colleagues should be condemned for deviating from religious orthodoxy.⁴ Among the propagandists connected to this campaign were two orators, the official court preacher of the Almohad capital in Seville Abū 'Alī b. Ḥaḡḡāḡ (d. 598/1201)⁵ and the celebrated judge (*qāḍī*), belletrist, and orator (*ḥaṭīb*) Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Sulamī al-Aḡmātī (d. 603/1206 or 1207), who served as judge of Seville in the period under consideration.⁶ Al-Sulamī composed and presumably delivered an oration (*ḥuṭba*) warning the people to avoid the study of Graeco-Arabic philosophy and other pre-Islamic "sciences of the Ancients" (*ulūm al-qudamā*), which has been preserved for posterity.

The *ḥuṭba* is preserved in the *Riḥla* (travelogue) of the Moroccan writer Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-'Abdarī (fl. 688/1289) and in the biographical notice that the Moroccan

biographer Ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Marrākuṣī (d. 703/1303) dedicated to al-Sulamī.⁷ Ibn 'Abd al-Malik introduced the *ḥuṭba* with a descriptive title, "an oration exhorting [the people] to cling to the Book (i.e. the Qur'an/Scripture) and the *Sunna* and to avoid philosophy and the sciences of the Ancients (*ḥuṭba fī al-ḥadd 'alā al-tamassuk bi-l-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna wa-taḡannub al-falsafa wa-'ulūm al-qudamā*)," while al-'Abdarī presented it without preamble in his description of Cairo, in which he condemned the Egyptian scholars for their obsession with Greek logic. The framing of the text by the two Moroccan authors writing a century after the events suggests that al-Sulamī's *ḥuṭba* had been copied and widely diffused and achieved a certain renown among Andalusī and Maghrebi 'ulamā' in their ongoing efforts to define and regulate the content of legitimate knowledge. Yet these texts only establish an indirect link between al-Sulamī's sermon and the events surrounding Ibn Rušd's trial because, as we shall see, the Moroccan biographer did not explicitly mention al-Sulamī or this *ḥuṭba* in his account of the Cordovan philosopher's public disgrace. Nor, for that matter, did al-Sulamī refer to Ibn Rušd by name in his oration.

Although several scholars have referred to al-Sulamī's *ḥuṭba* in passing in the course of discussing Ibn Rušd's ordeal,⁸ none has analyzed its content in detail. I believe that the *ḥuṭba* merits closer scrutiny not only for its literary value but also for the insights that it could provide into the cultural and historical context in which Ibn Rušd's condemnation transpired. According to Ibn 'Abd al-Malik, the climactic moment of the publicity campaign against Ibn Rušd occurred in 593/1197. Caliph Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb (r. 580-595/1184-1199), who by this time was known by the sobriquet, "al-Manṣūr" (the victorious by divine aid), following his victory over the Castilians in the battle of Alarcos in 591/1195, "ordered the *ṭalaba* of his council and the jurists (*fuqahā*) of his government to go to the congregation of the Muslims and explain to the people that Ibn Rušd had deviated from the true religion."⁹ Following the interventions of various members of the *ṭalaba* and *fuqahā*, they unanimously agreed that Ibn Rušd and his

¹ This article originated as a seminar paper, titled, "Al-Qāḍī Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Sulamī: A Case Study in the Competing Hierarchies of Knowledge during the Almohad Period", which was presented online by invitation at the Religious Pluralism Working Group of the Medieval Institute of the University of Notre Dame in April, 2022.

² Fricaud, "Le problème"; Serrano Ruano, "Explicit Cruelly"; Fierro, "Ibn Rušd's (Averroes) Disgrace"; Ibn Šarīfa, *Ibn Rušd*; Puig, "Averroes's Circle"; and Puig Montcada, "Averroes".

³ The *ṭalaba* were the corps of doctrinarian religious scholars created by Almohad Caliph 'Abd al-Mu'min to serve the ideological, religious, and political mission of the Mu'minid caliphate. They were divided between the "scholars in service of the court" (*ṭalabat al-ḥaḍar*) and "the Almohad scholars" (*ṭalabat al-Muwahḥidīn*), stationed throughout the empire. See Fricaud, "Les *talaba*".

⁴ Puig, "Averroes's Circle", p. 253; and Ibn Šarīfa, *Ibn Rušd*, pp. 79-85.

⁵ On Abū 'Alī b. Ḥaḡḡāḡ and his role in Ibn Rušd's public disgrace, see Ibn Šarīfa, *Ibn Rušd*, pp. 186-187.

⁶ There are diverging dates of al-Sulamī's death: either 13 Ġumādā II 603 (=15 January 1207), according to Ibn 'Abd al-Malik, or 25 Rabī' I 603 (=30 October 1206), according to his disciple Abū l-Rabī' Ibn Salīm. See El Hour, "Ibn 'Umar al-Sulamī", p. 527.

⁷ Ibn 'Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, pp. 227-228, al-'Abdarī, *Riḥla*, p. 289.

⁸ Ibn Šarīfa, *Ibn Rušd*, p. 81; Fricaud, "Le problème", pp. 183-184; and Fierro, "Ibn Rušd's (Averroes) Disgrace", p. 85.

⁹ Fierro, "Ibn Rušd's (Averroes) Disgrace", p. 84.

fellow philosopher the legal scholar Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ibrāhīm al-Uṣūlī (d. 612/1216) should be condemned for their religious deviation.¹⁰ Yet Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik’s account also hints that there was some disagreement regarding whether the study of philosophy should be banned altogether. Moreover, even the Almohad *ṭalaba* and jurists who condemned Ibn Ruṣd acknowledged that both he and al-Uṣūlī “were perfect in their knowledge” and that their teachings had benefitted many people.¹¹

Bearing the above in mind, this article will undertake a close reading of al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* to illustrate how he utilized oratory as an instrument of public persuasion and will attempt to reconstruct its historical, religious, and political context. The contextualization will take into account the changing Almohad policies regarding the study of philosophy and the interpretation of Islamic law, the circumstances surrounding Ibn Ruṣd’s ordeal, as well as other factors, including political rivalries involving al-Sulamī. These varying circumstances may explain why al-Sulamī had to appeal to a mixed audience consisting of the Almohad caliph, the Almohad *ṭalaba*, jurists, and other religious elites whose opinions varied regarding the legitimate sources of knowledge, and the general public, some of whom admired Ibn Ruṣd, al-Uṣūlī, and their associates and personally benefitted from their teachings.

The first part of this article will summarize the essential details of the life and career of Abū Ḥaḥṣ ‘Umar al-Sulamī al-Aġmātī and situate him within the religious, intellectual, and socio-political milieu of the Almohads, with special attention accorded to the fluctuations in Almohad policies regarding the patronage and study of Islamic Graeco-Arabic philosophy. The second part will analyze al-Sulamī’s famous *ḥuṭba* against the philosophers. After addressing the problems surrounding the text’s preservation and transmission, I will focus on its rhetorical features, the usage of key Almohad symbols, and the various techniques of persuasion (rational, emotional, etc.). In my conclusion, I will attempt to situate the sermon within the context of various possible tensions among the Almohad ‘*ulamā*’, which included, but were not restricted to, the dispute over Graeco-Arabic philosophy.

The Life and Career of Abū Ḥaḥṣ ibn ‘Umar al-Sulamī al-Aġmātī¹²

Abū Ḥaḥṣ ‘Umar b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar al-Sulamī al-Aġmātī was born in Aġmāt, Morocco circa 530/1135-6 and lived much of his life in Fez and Seville although his family originally came from Alcira (Jazīrat Šuqar) in the Iberian Peninsula. He was an eminent *qāḍī*, a celebrated poet, and a brilliant prose writer and orator. On his father’s side Ibn ‘Umar al-Sulamī hailed from a distinguished family who served in the judiciary under the Almoravids and continued to practice their profession under the Almohads, even gaining in prestige during al-Sulamī’s tenure.¹³ His father ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar al-Sulamī, a judge of Fez under the Almoravids, formed part of the delegation of notables who received the Almohad caliph ‘Abd al-Mu‘min (r. 524-558/1130-1163) during one of his visits to Fez, which, according to the scholar Rachid El Hour, attests to the distinguished position of the al-Sulamī family. Ibn ‘Umar al-Sulamī was still a youth when he accompanied his father on this visit, which suggests that his father had been grooming him to pursue a career as a judge. Certainly his education prepared him for this vocation since he transmitted *ḥadīth* and studied Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) under the direction of renowned scholars including his maternal grandfather ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī al-Laḥmī Sibṭ Abī ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-Barr, Abū Marwān ibn Masarra (d. 552/1157) and Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ramāma (d. 567/1172).¹⁴

As expected, upon his father’s death, Ibn ‘Umar al-Sulamī succeeded him as the judge of Fez at the ripe age of twenty. Subsequently, he was appointed *qāḍī* of Tilimsan but later returned to the qadiship in Fez.¹⁵ Al-Maqqarī preserves eyewitness testimonies of how the people of Tilimsan “deeply regretted his loss because they missed his cultural and moral refinement and his scholarly knowledge (*wa-faqada adabahu wa-ilmahu*).”¹⁶ According to Ibn al-Abbār, al-Sulamī was appointed *qāḍī* of Seville following the departure of the illustrious scholar and jurist

¹² For Ibn ‘Umar al-Sulamī’s biography I rely principally on Ibn ‘Abd al-Mālik al-Marrākūšī’s *Dayl*, vol. VIII, pp. 222-232 (no. 226); Ibn al-Abbār’s, *al-Takmila*, vol. III, pp. 310-311; al-Maqqarī’s *Azhār al-riyāḍ*, vol. II, pp. 359-373 and the article by El Hour, “Ibn ‘Umar al-Sulamī”.

¹³ El Hour, “Ibn ‘Umar al-Sulamī”, vol. V, p. 528.

¹⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Mālik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 222.

¹⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Mālik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 230.

¹⁶ al-Maqqarī, *Azhār al-riyāḍ*, vol. II, p. 372.

¹⁰ On al-Uṣūlī, see Puig, “Averroes’s Circle”, pp. 248-249.

¹¹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VI, p. 27.

Abū Muḥammad ibn Ḥawṭ Allāh (d. 612/1215),¹⁷ although he does not indicate when this occurred. Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī (d. 685/1286), the author of a biographical dictionary-cum-anthology of Andalusī poets,¹⁸ confirmed that it was Caliph Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf (r. 558-580/1163-1184) who appointed al-Sulamī *qāḍī* of Seville and that he remained in this position until his death on 5 Rabīʿ I, 603/10 October, 1206¹⁹ during the reign of al-Nāṣir (r. 589-611/1199-1213). This means that al-Sulamī was the judge of Seville at the same time that Ibn Ruṣd occupied the qadiship of Cordoba while his enemies were instigating the publicity campaign against him. Yet, as Ibn Šarīfa points out, there is no evidence that the two men ever met or that there was ever any relationship between them.²⁰

The appointment of al-Sulamī as judge of Seville was indicative of the confidence the Almohad authorities had placed in him. His appointment exemplifies what Rachid El Hour has identified as the Almohads' well-known strategy of the frequent relocation of judges and the appointment to key positions in the Andalusī judiciary of Maghribis whose loyalty to the Almohads was assured.²¹ Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī notes that al-Sulamī became one of the highest ranking figures among the Almohad elites, as indicated by his appointments to the offices of judge, prayer leader, and liturgical preacher (*ḥaṭīb*) in Fez.²²

His contemporaries among the religious scholars and poets praise al-Sulamī for his knowledge, erudition, justice, and probity as a judge²³ and extol his piety, moral rectitude, good manners, virtue, and extreme humility. Although he is not described explicitly as an ascetic (*zāhid*), his conduct hints at an inclination toward asceticism (*zuhd*).²⁴ For instance, he only wore white perfumed clothing, only rode a humble white donkey—as opposed to a noble horse—and was obsessive about the cleanliness and purity of his clothing and his house, which reportedly

“smelled like paradise.”²⁵ Such testimonies about his piety, purity, and humility evoke the “root paradigms” and symbolic actions²⁶ associated with the *Sunna* of Muḥammad and the early ascetics. The Islamic oratorical tradition developed a series of codes defining the ideal preacher based not only on Muḥammad's legendary eloquence (*balāḡa*) but also on his embodied praxis, character, ethics, affect, and gestures.²⁷ Hence the reports about al-Sulamī's character also provide important clues about the impact that his sermon might have had on his audience because they help establish his authority as an ideal preacher within the tradition of Arab-Islamic oratory.

Mention must also be made of two incidents that sullied al-Sulamī's reputation. According to Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī, some of al-Sulamī's enemies denounced him to Caliph al-Manṣūr for composing lascivious erotic poetry that “contravened [Islamic] sacred law” (*ḡayr ḥāfiẓ li-l-nāmūs al-šarʿi*). The second incident involved a nephew of al-Sulamī who was decapitated for having kidnapped and raped a woman. Al-Sulamī's belated attempt to intervene on his nephew's behalf not only failed; it provided grounds for his dismissal from his positions as prayer leader and orator in Fez. Caliph al-Manṣūr summoned him to the court at Marrakesh for interrogation, but subsequently absolved him, reinstating him in his positions and then appointing him judge over the Almohad capital of Seville. Ibn Saʿīd emphasized that al-Sulamī's “high standing was not diminished” (*wa-lā ṣaḡura šaʿnuhu*) by these events.²⁸

Regarding the literary facet of al-Sulamī's education and career, his biographers highlight his long-time devotion to and his extended studies with the grammarian Abū Bakr ibn Ṭāhir al-Ḥiddab (d. 542/1147), under whose direction he mastered the famous Arabic grammatical work, *Kitāb Sibawayhi* (The Book of Sibawayhi).²⁹ Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik considered al-Sulamī to be “an outstanding author (*kātib bārī*)” while al-Maqqarī, quoting Ibn al-

¹⁷ Ibn Ḥawṭ Allāh was born in Onda, Valencia, to a family of Catalan origin that followed the Zāhirī *madhhab*. He had been a student of Ibn Ruṣd although he later disavowed him and participated in his downfall. See Adang, “The Zahiris”, pp. 433-443 and Puig, “Averroes' Circle”, p. 253.

¹⁸ Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī, *al-Ġuṣūn al-yānīʿa*.

¹⁹ Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī, *al-Ġuṣūn al-yānīʿa*, p. 92; Ibn al-Abbār, *al-Takmila*, vol. III, pp. 310-311.

²⁰ Ibn Šarīfa, *Ibn Ruṣd*, p. 81.

²¹ El Hour, “Ibn ʿUmar al-Sulamī”, vol. V, p. 528.

²² Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī, *al-Ġuṣūn al-yānīʿa*, p. 91.

²³ al-Maqqarī, *Azhār al-riyāḍ*, vol. II, p. 371.

²⁴ See Kinberg, “What is Meant by *Zuhd*”.

²⁵ El Hour, “Ibn ʿUmar al-Sulamī”, vol. V, p. 529; Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī, *al-Ġuṣūn al-yānīʿa*, pp. 91-92; Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 231.

²⁶ Anthropologist Victor Turner coined the term “root actions” in his discussion of symbolic actions in *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*.

²⁷ Jones, *Power of Oratory*; and Jones, “Ibn ʿAbbad of Ronda's Sermon”, pp. 29-30.

²⁸ Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī, *al-Ġuṣūn al-yānīʿa*, p. 92 and El Hour, “Ibn ʿUmar al-Sulamī”, vol. V, p. 529.

²⁹ Ibn al-Abbār, *al-Takmila*, vol. III, p. 310; Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 222. On the impact of this work, see Baalbaki, *Legacy*.

Abbār, described him as one of the intellectual luminaries of his generation (*wa-kāna min ahl al-ma'rifa wa-l-yaqīn*) and “an excellent prose writer and poet (*adīb šā'ir muḡīd*)” whose foremost qualities were his cultural refinement and belles-lettres (*adab*) and the eloquence of his oratory and literary compositions (*faṣīḥ al-ḥaṭāba wa-l-kitāba*).³⁰

Al-Sulamī's biographers reproduce several specimens of his poetry and prose writings, which, apparently, were never assembled into a *dīwān*.³¹ According to Ibn 'Abd al-Malik, his prose writings covered diverse topics, including a biography of the Prophet Muḥammad,³² but the majority were works on asceticism (*zuhd*) and exhortatory sermons (*mawā'iz*).³³ Ibn 'Abd al-Malik characterized al-Sulamī's exhortatory sermon on the dangers of the mundane world as “segments of impeccable verse (*qīṭa' naẓm rā'iqa*) and passages of sublime prose (*wa-fuṣūl naṭr fā'iqa*),” yet he did not indicate whether al-Sulamī delivered it as a live performance and, if so, under what circumstances this might have occurred.³⁴

As noted, neither Ibn 'Abd al-Malik nor al-'Abdarī provided any information about the composition, delivery, or transmission of al-Sulamī's anti-philosophy *ḥuṭba*. The decontextualization of this *ḥuṭba* is further problematized because neither of the two sources that describe Ibn Ruṣd's ordeal, namely, Abū l-Ḥaḡḡāḡ ibn Ḡamr, who was the official Almohad chronicler during the reign of al-Manṣūr³⁵, nor Ibn 'Abd al-Malik mentions al-Sulamī by name among the Almohad *ṭalaba* and *fuqahā'* who intervened in the public campaign to condemn the philosophers. Moreover, the few details that al-Sulamī's biographers provide about his relations with the Almohad authorities do not connect him directly to the controversies surrounding the study and patronage of Graeco-Islamic philosophy or the condemnation of Ibn Ruṣd. What is more, nothing in Ibn Sa'īd al-Andalusī's account of the scandals involving al-Sulamī indicates that he composed the anti-philosophy *ḥuṭba* or any other writing specifically to rehabilitate himself with the Almohad authorities.

Al-Sulamī's Relations with the Almohad Leadership

The religious context of Almohadism is notoriously complex because of the “versatile, dynamic, and evolving character” of its ideology and the multiple religious currents that influenced the thought of the founder Ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130) and the successive Mu'minid caliphs, which included, but were not limited to Sufism, Graeco-Islamic philosophy, Zāhirism, Aṣ'arism, and possibly Ši'ism.³⁶ A variety of “Islams” coexisted throughout the Almohad period, some intersecting with each other in complementary ways, others contesting each other for pre-eminence in terms of official and/or social recognition. Still others, particularly Malikism, experienced alternating periods of persecution and favouritism depending on various circumstances.³⁷

Of particular relevance here is the evolution of the Almohads' stance toward Graeco-Arabic philosophy, which culminated in Caliph al-Manṣūr's official decree, composed by his court secretary in Marrakesh, Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Ayyāš, and issued in 593/1196 banning the study of philosophy and condemning the philosophers as “worse than Christians and Jews.”³⁸ The story is well known: the Almohad founder Ibn Tūmart's ideology was heavily influenced by the Sufi mysticism and Graeco-Islamic philosophy espoused in the works of al-Ġazālī (d. 505/1111) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), among others. Initially, the Mu'minid caliphs continued to promote the study of philosophy and patronize scholars such as the Sufi philosopher Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 585/1181), who was a member of the Almohad doctrinarian court scholars (*ṭalabat al-ḥaḍār*)³⁹ during the reigns of Caliph 'Abd al-Mu'min and his successor Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf.⁴⁰ Importantly, these court doctrinarians included men trained not only in the religious sciences but also in other fields of knowledge including medicine and Graeco-Arabic philosophy. As Michael Brett and Maribel Fierro have shown, the promotion of philosophy proved

³⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 223.

³¹ El Hour, “Ibn 'Umar al-Sulamī”, vol. V, p. 530.

³² The work entitled *al-Siyar al-nabawiyya* is no longer extant. El Hour, “Ibn 'Umar al-Sulamī”, vol. V, p. 529.

³³ Ibn 'Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 224.

³⁴ Ibn 'Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 224.

³⁵ Ibn Ḡamr's chronicle has not survived, however Ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Marrākuṣī cited it extensively in *Al-Dayl*. On the relationship between the two texts, see Fricaud, “Le problème”. For Ibn Ḡamr's biography, see Ibn Šarīfa, “Abū l-Ḥaḡḡāḡ Yūsuf b. Ḡamr”.

³⁶ On the various currents that influenced Almohadism, see Buresi, “Berber Rule”.

³⁷ On the Almohads' policies regarding the Malikis, see Bū Laṭīf, *Fuqahā'*, p. 187; Fierro, “Revolución y tradición”; and Fierro, “Legal Policies”.

³⁸ See Ibn 'Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VI, pp. 26-28; Ser-rano Ruano, “Explicit Cruelty”, pp. 223-224; and Stroumsa, “Philosophes almohades”.

³⁹ See note 3, above.

⁴⁰ On this relationship see Conrad, *World of Ibn Tufayl*; and Fierro, “Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy*”.

particularly useful to the early Mu'minids because it allowed them to perpetuate the memory of Ibn Tūmart's charismatic Mahdism, on account of his own instruction in rational philosophy.⁴¹

At the same time, the official training and patronage of philosophers offered 'Abd al-Mu'min a means to counterbalance the Almohad tribal shaykhs who derived their authority and influence from their proximity to the Almohad founder Ibn Tūmart.⁴² For this reason, the caliph's son Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf was taught rational philosophy by Ibn Ṭufayl and patronized the composition of Ibn Ṭufayl's acclaimed philosophical treatise, *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. In 563/1168, Ibn Ṭufayl introduced his younger protégé Ibn Rušd to Caliph Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf who subsequently appointed Ibn Rušd *qāḍī* of the Almohad capital Seville and commissioned his commentaries on Aristotle's works. In 577/1182, this same caliph appointed Ibn Rušd to be his private physician and named him *qāḍī* of Cordoba.⁴³

As noted, few details in the biographies of Ibn 'Umar al-Sulamī connect him directly to the Almohad rulers, apart from his appointments to various positions and the aforementioned denunciations to Caliph al-Manšūr regarding al-Sulamī's licentious poetry and the scandal involving his nephew. Yet one of al-Sulamī's most famous poems was a panegyric he dedicated to Caliph Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf, which extols his wisdom and patronage of the sciences. The poem is preserved in later sources such as al-Maqqarī's *Azhār al-riyāḍ* and Ibn al-Qāḍī's *Ġaḍwat al-iqtibās*. Although al-Maqqarī qualifies it as "one of [al-Sulamī's] famous verse compositions (*min mašhūr naẓmihi*)," neither he nor Ibn al-Qāḍī specifies the occasion on which al-Sulamī composed the poem.⁴⁴

In the key verses presented here, al-Sulamī extols the caliph as a luminous guarantor of ultimate knowledge:

...His heart is laid open by the dazzling glow of knowledge (*fu'ādu bi-ḍiyā' al-'ilm munšarih*)
And his face is marked with the beauty of light (*wa-waḡhuhu bi-ḡamāl al-nūr mawsūm*),
And the palm of his hand pours forth with goodness (*wa-kaffuhu baṭnuhā bi-l-ḥayr munhamir*)...

⁴¹ Brett, "Lamp of the Almohads"; Fierro, "Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy*."

⁴² Brett, "Lamp of the Almohads", pp. 20-21; Fierro, "Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy*", pp. 11-12.

⁴³ Fierro, "Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy*", pp. 11-12; Fierro, "Ibn Rušd's (Averroes) 'Disgrace'".

⁴⁴ al-Maqqarī, *Azhār al-riyāḍ*, vol. II, pp. 361-362; Ibn al-Qāḍī, *Ġaḍwat al-iqtibās*, pp. 496-497.

Knowledge is his [highest] value and reason his natural disposition (*al-'ilm qīmatuhu wa-l-ḥilm šīmatuhu*).⁴⁵

Al-Sulamī's location of the seat of knowledge in the caliph's innermost heart (*fu'ād*) and his characterization of his heart as glowing or illuminated by knowledge evokes the conception of knowledge as first envisaged by Ibn Tūmart, who believed that "knowledge appears in the believer's heart as a light that allows man to establish the essence of things."⁴⁶ The subsequent verses convey the image that the caliph's countenance "is marked with the beauty of light" (*wa-waḡhuhu bi-ḡamāl al-nūr mawsūm*) because it is overflowing with knowledge, which is his most characteristic virtue. As Michael Brett has explained, early Almohad propagandists such as the chronicler al-Bayḍāq associated the symbolism of supreme knowledge (*'ilm*) and light (*nūr*) with Ibn Tūmart, dubbing him "the light of knowledge" (*nūr al-'ilm*) whom God enjoined to guide the faithful back to the divine light. Hence the concepts of *'ilm* and *nūr* are also connected to the key symbol of guidance (*hudā*), from which Ibn Tūmart's messianic epithet "al-Mahdī" is derived. Al-Bayḍāq's hagiographic image of Caliph 'Abd al-Mu'min as the "lamp of the Almohads" (*Sirāḡ al-Muwahhīdīn*)⁴⁷ and "the light of guidance" (*nūr al-hidāya*) perpetuates the symbolic nexus of knowledge, light, and guidance, both spiritual and political.⁴⁸

Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf fostered the symbolic connection between knowledge, light, and guidance not only by cultivating knowledge in his own right and constructing a self-image of a "philosopher-king" but also by promoting himself as the great patron of the seekers of knowledge, including the philosophers Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Rušd, among many others.⁴⁹ Al-Sulamī celebrated Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf's largesse as a patron of knowledge in the following verses:

His roots, self, and tents gave without restraint to the seekers of knowledge whatever they wanted of his service in terms of wealth, power, guidance, and learning (*tābat arūmutuhu wa-l-naḥs wa-l-ḥiyam li-tālibī al-'ilm mā šā'ū bi-ḥidmatihī ḡinan wa-'izz wa-iršād wa-ta'līm*)

⁴⁵ al-Maqqarī, *Azhār al-riyāḍ*, vol. II, p. 362.

⁴⁶ Fierro, "Legal Policies", p. 229.

⁴⁷ Lévi-Provençal, *Documents inédits*, text 56, trans. pp. 86-87; Brett, "Lamp of the Almohads", p. 12.

⁴⁸ Brett, "Lamp of the Almohads", p. 12.

⁴⁹ Brett, "Lamp of the Almohads", pp. 18-20.

The rainclouds of the sciences pour forth upon them from his magnanimity... (*suḥub al-'ulūm 'alayhim min samāḥatihi tahmī...*).⁵⁰

These verses reflect a capacious understanding of the concept of knowledge of the various sciences rather than a narrow definition of the Islamic religious sciences. This is suggested in the verse that extols Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf for giving “without restraint to the seekers of knowledge” and for extending his magnanimity to all “seekers of knowledge” and to all fields of knowledge. Thus al-Sulamī's poem fulfilled the socio-political and cultural expectations of the classical Arabic panegyric genre by appealing to the preferences and priorities of the ruling class.⁵¹ In so doing, he expressed the *zeitgeist* of the Almohad court at a time when the study of philosophy was in vogue among the elites, received official patronage, and was instrumental in legitimizing the sovereign's claims to be the supreme guide in doctrinal and state matters.⁵²

The reign of Caliph al-Manṣūr witnessed several significant policy changes that affected Islamic religious and legal practices and education—including the study and patronage of philosophy—as well as important changes in the ruler's own religious orientation. Regarding the latter, according to the Almohad chronicler 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākuṣī (d. 647/1250), the caliph became a strict ascetic after two members of the Mu'minid clan, his own brother, Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Raṣīd and his paternal uncle Abū l-Rabī Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Mu'min, attempted a rebellion against him. When Caliph al-Manṣūr received confirmation of this he ordered the detention and execution of both men in the year 583/1187, “after which he adopted asceticism, leading an austere harsh life in terms of his manner of dress and alimentation (*wa-aḥḥara ba'da dālīka zuhdan wa-taqaṣṣufan wa-ḥuṣūnata malbas wa-ma'kul*).”⁵³ The caliph's predilection toward asceticism had wider social implications as well. According to 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākuṣī, following the caliph's adoption of asceticism,

the fame of the men of piety, the ascetic recluses, and the scholars of *ḥadīṭ* spread (*intaṣara fī ayyāmihi li-l-ṣālīhīn wa-l-mutabattalīn wa-ahl 'ilm al-ḥadīṭ ṣīṭun*) and their social status magnified vis-à-vis the

caliph and the rest of the people. The caliph would invite them to visit him and write to them asking for their prayers.⁵⁴

The elevated social status of the ascetics and men of piety might have some bearing on the biographer Ibn 'Abd al-Malik's statement that most of al-Sulamī's prose compositions were exhortatory sermons (*mawā'iz*) or other genres of ascetic writings.⁵⁵ The aforementioned biographical descriptions of al-Sulamī's pious, humble demeanor further evince an alignment with the caliph's ascetic proclivities.

As for the changes in Caliph al-Manṣūr's religious, legal, and educational policies, these may be subsumed under the rubric of what the chronicler al-Marrākuṣī described as “Caliph Abū Yūsuf's demand to adhere only to the Book (=the Qur'an) and the Sunna” (*da'wat Abī Yūsuf ilā l-aḥd bi-l-Kitāb wa-l-sunna*). According to al-Marrākuṣī, this *da'wa* called for banning Maliki legal texts that employed the science of individual reasoning (*ilm al-ra'y*) and analogical deduction (*qiyās*) in the interpretation of the law, promoting instead the study of *ḥadīṭ*, officially endorsing the literalist (*ẓāhirī*) approach to Qur'anic and *Ḥadīṭ* studies, and favouring *Ẓāhirī* scholars and jurists to the detriment of the Malikis. “[The caliph's] goal, in short, was to efface the Maliki *madhhab* and eradicate it from the Maghreb once and for all and to encourage the people toward the apparent meaning of the Qur'an (*wa-kāna qaṣdahu... ḥamla l-nās 'alā l-ẓāhir min al-Qur'ān wa-l-Ḥadīṭ*).” Importantly, al-Marrākuṣī presents al-Manṣūr's purge of Maliki texts and the promotion of *Ẓāhirism* as the fulfillment of the policy goals of his caliphal predecessors.⁵⁶

Al-Marrākuṣī does not indicate the date of these events, yet other sources reveal that they occurred shortly after the Almohad victory over the Castilians at the battle of Alarcos in 591/1195. By this time Caliph al-Manṣūr felt sufficiently empowered to order the public burning of many canonical Maliki works and threatened to “severely punish anyone who did not abandon the science of *ra'y*.”⁵⁷ While al-Marrākuṣī did not refer to the caliphal decree banning the study of philosophy and the sciences of the Ancients in the passage

⁵⁴ al-Marrākuṣī, *Al-Mu'ḡib*, p. 278.

⁵⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 224.

⁵⁶ al-Marrākuṣī, *Al-Mu'ḡib*, p. 279. Various scholars caution that post-Almohad reports of the so-called Almohad inquisition against the Malikis have been exaggerated. For instance, Adang, “The *Ẓāhiris*” and Fierro, “Legal Policies”.

⁵⁷ Bū Laṭīf, *Fuqāḥā*, pp. 183-184.

⁵⁰ al-Maqqarī, *Azhār al-riyāḍ*, vol. II, p. 362.

⁵¹ On the role of Almohad panegyrists, see Garulo, “Los panegíricos”.

⁵² Brett, “Lamp of the Almohads”, p. 21.

⁵³ al-Marrākuṣī, *Al-Mu'ḡib*, pp. 277-278.

describing “the caliph’s *da’wa* to adhere only to the Book and the Sunna,” I believe that it may also be related to al-Manṣūr’s “*da’wa*” to purify Islam. Not only were the measures taken against philosophy, Ibn Ruṣd, and other philosophers set in motion in the years immediately following the Alarcos victory. They were also justified, at least partly, by the same ideological call to “cling only to the Qur’an and the Sunna,” with the similar result of consigning books on philosophy and logic to the flames.⁵⁸ I say “partly” because, as various scholars have demonstrated, the circumstances that led to Ibn Ruṣd’s ordeal were due as much, if not more, to personal enmities and petty rivalries of his enemies than to theological differences.⁵⁹

Of relevance here is that Caliph al-Manṣūr’s reformist *da’wa* coincided with the interests of Ibn Ruṣd’s enemies. In the year following the caliph’s victory at Alarcos in 591/1195, al-Manṣūr ordered his court secretary ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ayyāṣ (d. 612/1215) to issue a royal decree banning the study of philosophy and denouncing the philosophers as “worse than Christians and Jews,” since like the Jews and Christians they conspired against the Muslims and Islam in secret. This decree was disseminated throughout the lands under Almohad control.⁶⁰ At some point during this period the caliph also “requested from the *ṭalaba* and the jurists of his council a declaration” reasserting his position as the guardian of Islam empowered to censure those who strayed from the true religion by seeking knowledge from sources not grounded in the Qur’an and the Sunna.⁶¹ Henceforth a propaganda campaign was set in motion to persuade the general public, elites and masses alike, that Ibn Ruṣd and his ilk merited condemnation because of their deviation from the Qur’an and the Sunna.

The cultural agents who participated in this campaign included jurists, preachers, poets, and prose writers.⁶² According to the Almohad chronicler Ibn Ġamr and the biographer Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, in 593/1197, “The caliph ordered the *ṭalaba* of his council and the jurists (*fuqahā*) of his government to go to the congregational mosque [in

Cordoba] and explain to the people that Ibn Ruṣd was a heretic (*bi-annahū maraqa min al-dīn*).⁶³ The first person to intervene was the *qāḍī* Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. Marwān, who articulated a rational argument comparing philosophy to fire, “which can be used for good or for bad; when the useful aspect of philosophy is superior to the bad, it is acceptable to take advantage of it; but when the bad is superior to the good, then philosophy should not be used.”⁶⁴ Yet Ibn Marwān’s more measured approach was undercut by the Almohad court preacher of Seville, Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan b. Ḥaḡḡāḡ, who “rushed to speak (*ibtadara l-kalām*) and he informed the people of what he had been ordered to say about this (*wa-‘arrafa al-nās bi-mā umira bihi*), that they (i.e., Ibn Ruṣd, the legal scholar and philosopher Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ibrāhīm al-Uṣūlī, among others)⁶⁵ had committed heresy against the true religion and violated the dogmas of the true believers (*annahum maraqū min al-dīn wa-ḥālafū ‘aqā’id al-mu’minīn*).⁶⁶ In the end, the Almohad officials agreed to condemn Ibn Ruṣd and al-Uṣūlī, although even some of them acknowledged that both men “were perfect in their knowledge” and “had benefitted many with their pedagogy and their teachings.”⁶⁷

Puig and Ibn Šarīfa consider Ibn Ḥaḡḡāḡ’s intervention to have been decisive in securing the unanimous condemnation of Ibn Ruṣd and the other philosophers.⁶⁸ This is because, as the Almohad court preacher in Seville, Ibn Ḥaḡḡāḡ was the official spokesman of the State.⁶⁹ Ironically, despite Ibn Ḥaḡḡāḡ’s prominent role in the assembly, apparently there is no record of what he said beyond Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik’s statement that he “informed the people of *what he had been ordered to say*.” Moreover, even though Ibn Ḥaḡḡāḡ was the court preacher, Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik does not qualify his speech as a *ḥuṭba* or state that he preached (*ḥaṭaba*). Whatever its form, Ibn Ḥaḡḡāḡ’s “speech” (*kalām*) carried weight because of the inherent authority of his position as official court preacher, which was among the most highly influential positions in the Almohad administration.

⁵⁸ Fierro, “Ibn Ruṣd’s (Averroes) ‘Disgrace’”, p. 84; Fricaud, “Le problème”, pp. 185-187.

⁵⁹ Puig, “Averroes’s Circle”, p. 251; Fierro, “Ibn Ruṣd’s (Averroes) ‘Disgrace’”, pp. 78-79.

⁶⁰ Serrano Ruano, “Explicit Cruelty”, p. 223, citing Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VI, pp. 26-28. Caliph al-Manṣūr also wrote a letter ordering the public burning of the books of philosophy. See Fierro, “Religious Dissent”, p. 472.

⁶¹ Serrano Ruano, “Explicit Cruelty”, p. 223.

⁶² Puig, “Averroes’s Circle”, pp. 251-255; Ibn Šarīfa, *Ibn Ruṣd*, pp. 79-85.

⁶³ Fierro, “Ibn Ruṣd’s (Averroes) ‘Disgrace’”, p. 84.

⁶⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VI, p. 26; Fierro, “Ibn Ruṣd’s (Averroes) ‘Disgrace’”, p. 85.

⁶⁵ Other philosophers condemned in the inquisition (*miḥna*) include Abū l-Rabī‘ al-Kafīf, Abū l-‘Abbās al-Qarrābī, and Abū Ġa‘far al-Dahabī. Urvoy, *Averroes*, p. 199.

⁶⁶ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VI, p. 26.

⁶⁷ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VI, p. 26.

⁶⁸ Puig, “Averroes’ Circle”, 251; Ibn Šarīfa, *Ibn Ruṣd*, pp. 186-187.

⁶⁹ Ibn Šarīfa, *Ibn Ruṣd*, p. 186.

Besides the aforementioned judge Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. Marwān and Ibn al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ, no other individuals are singled out by name by the Almohad chronicler Ibn Ḡamr or Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik among those who intervened in the anti-philosophy disputation in the Great Mosque of Cordoba. Yet Ibn Ḡamr referred to an indeterminate number of “writings” (*al-kitābāt*) documenting the accusations against the philosophers which were “read aloud” in the assembly and whose objectives and meanings were expounded.⁷⁰ Muḥammad ibn Šarīfa and Maribel Fierro posit that al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* may have been one of these writings,⁷¹ but based on Ibn Ḡamr and Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik’s accounts, one cannot confirm whether he composed his *ḥuṭba* specifically for this occasion. However, an indirect connection with these events may be established insofar as al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* “exhorting [the people] to cling to the Book and the Sunna and to avoid philosophy and the sciences of the Ancients” echoes the language of the caliph’s “*da’wa* to adhere only to the Book and the Sunna.” Given al-Sulamī’s acclaimed oratorical eloquence and his position as judge of Seville at the time of these events, it seems unlikely that he would have not participated in some capacity at some stage in the propaganda campaign, if only to maintain his good standing with Caliph al-Manšūr. As will be recalled, the caliph appointed al-Sulamī judge of Seville following his absolution from the accusations of sexual immorality.

Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Sulamī’s *Ḥuṭba* Against the Philosophers

Al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* is preserved in Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik’s biographical dictionary, *Al-Dayl wa-l-takmila*, and in al-‘Abdarī’s *Rihla*. According to Ibn Šarīfa, the editor of *Al-Dayl*, al-‘Abdarī and Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik had been close friends ever since they had studied with the same professors in Marrakesh⁷². Ibn Šarīfa confirms that al-‘Abdarī was *already well acquainted* with Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik’s biographical dictionary when he journeyed from Morocco to Cairo in 688/1289 because he extolled its merits there and transmitted the text to Egyptian scholars.⁷³ This suggests that al-‘Abdarī may have copied al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* from *Al-Dayl*.

Significantly, both men also shared a keen interest in Arabic homiletics. Ibn Šarīfa identified many scholars with whom Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik studied in Marrakesh, Fez, Granada, and elsewhere, who included professional exhortatory preachers (*wu‘āz*) whose preaching sessions he frequented and described in some detail.⁷⁴ This likely explains why Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik chose to preserve two of al-Sulamī’s sermons in his biographical notice. While neither Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik nor the editor Ibn Šarīfa indicates from whom Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik transmitted al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba*, he may have copied it from one of his teachers who specialized in oratory. The absence of any commentary on the paths of transmission of al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* or of any historical contextualization is unfortunate because when Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik presented fragments of three of al-Sulamī’s poems, he briefly described the circumstances of the composition or identified the person to whom the poem was dedicated.⁷⁵

For his part, ‘Alī Ibrāhīm Kurdī, the editor of the *Rihla*, indicates that al-‘Abdarī was a prose writer (*adīb*) and scholar whose motivations for embarking on his journey were both religious (to visit Mecca and Medina) and intellectual: Al-‘Abdarī longed to study with the best scholars, to gather from them specimens from all fields of knowledge but especially “Arabic belles-letters (*al-adab al-‘arabī*), its prose and its poetry, its orations (*ḥuṭabihi*) and its letters,” and to memorize the works of their “eloquent men and orators” (*fuṣaḥā wa-ḥuṭabā’ihim*).⁷⁶ If, indeed, al-‘Abdarī copied al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* from Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, this would explain why he also omits any reference to the original Almohad context. Al-‘Abdarī simply stated, “And among the speech of the outstanding, peerless jurist and judge Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar al-Sulamī...are the following words.”⁷⁷ Yet, significantly, al-‘Abdarī inserted al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* in a chapter describing his journey to Cairo in 688/1289, in which he lambasted the Cairenes for the dilapidated condition of their mosques⁷⁸ and especially for their obsession with logic (*ināyat ahl al-Qāhira bi-l-manṭiq*) and for “prostrating themselves before the science of logic” (*wa-ikbābihim ‘alā ilm al-manṭiq*), “submerg[ing] themselves in the seas of the error of philosophy” (*gariqat fī buḥūr ḍalāl al-falsafa*).⁷⁹

⁷⁰ Ibn Šarīfa, *Ibn Rušd*, p. 81; Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VI, p. 25.

⁷¹ Ibn Šarīfa, *Ibn Rušd*, p. 81; Fierro, “Ibn Rushd’s (Averroes) ‘Disgrace’”, p. 85.

⁷² al-‘Abdarī, *Rihla*, p. 8.

⁷³ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, pp. 40, 42.

⁷⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, pp. 21-23.

⁷⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, pp. 223-224.

⁷⁶ al-‘Abdarī, *Rihla*, pp. 8, 10.

⁷⁷ al-‘Abdarī, *Rihla*, p. 286.

⁷⁸ al-‘Abdarī, *Rihla*, pp. 280-281.

⁷⁹ al-‘Abdarī, *Rihla*, p. 286.

Subsequently, al-ʿAbdarī presented al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* as a literary response to a poem that his Cairene teacher Šaraf al-Dīn al-Dimyāṭī (d. 705/1306) had composed, which began, “And there is no knowledge except in a Book and a Sunna. And there is no ignorance except in scholastic theology and logic” (*wa-mā l-ʿilmu illā fī Kitābin wa-Sunnatin, wa-mā l-ḡahlu illā fī kalāmin wa-mantiq*).⁸⁰ Al-ʿAbdarī’s presentation of al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* in an analogous dispute in Cairo between the enthusiasts of Greek logic and philosophy and his fellow defenders of “the Book and the Sunna” suggests that it was commonly understood that al-Sulamī had composed his sermon within the context of the Almohad campaign against the philosophers and the sciences of the Ancients, rather than for some other occasion.⁸¹

Turning now to the analysis of the *ḥuṭba*, the text exemplifies how the Almohads consciously deployed oratory as an instrument of propaganda to further their religious and political goals, whether to consolidate the dynastic claims of the current ruler, to project an official image of his persona and ideology, or to disseminate and impose his doctrines and policies.⁸² According to Linda G. Jones, the Almohads introduced several changes in the liturgical formula and legal conditions of the liturgical and ceremonial *ḥuṭbas*. These innovations were so distinctive that the Almohad chroniclers themselves referred to the altered genre as “the Almohad sermon” (*al-ḥuṭba al-Muwaḥḥidiyya*) or “the well-known sermon” (*al-ḥuṭba al-maʿlūma*).⁸³ Yet the Almohads also inherited an Arab-Islamic tradition in which orators (*ḥuṭabāʾ*) were authority figures. Typically, the court orator and mosque preacher were appointed by the ruler, the chief judge, or other high official. The orator was expected to be an exemplary model to be emulated because he practiced what he preached and his behaviour both on and off the pulpit was above reproach.⁸⁴ Arabic rhetoricians such as Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih of Cordoba (d. 328/940) affirmed that orations were the preferred medium used to address the general public on momentous occasions.⁸⁵ Because the Arabic oratorical

tradition developed specific rhetorical devices and embellishments to enhance the *ḥuṭba*’s impact and persuasive power,⁸⁶ political and religious leaders institutionalized the *ḥuṭba*’s use in their efforts to persuade or exhort their addressees to alter their opinion or behaviour.⁸⁷

In what follows I apply discourse and speech theory analysis to al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* in order to elucidate its intended appeal and techniques of persuasion. K. W. Mortensen defines persuasion as “a process that aims to change or reform attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or behaviours towards a predetermined outcome through voluntary compliance.”⁸⁸ Since it will not be possible to assess audience reception in the absence of any description of the circumstances in which the oration might have been delivered, I will limit my comments to identifying the principal persuasive strategies, rhetorical devices, linguistic embellishments, and speech acts, drawing upon the scholarship on classical Arabic rhetoric⁸⁹ and recent studies on the persuasion strategies of religious oratory.⁹⁰ I will assess the type of appeal these devices were intended to provoke and discuss the main ideological and theological messages in light of the aforementioned Almohad policy changes.

Al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* occupies thirty-five lines in the printed edition of Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik’s *Al-Dayl*⁹¹ and is structured as follows:

- Line 1: the doxological formula of praise to God (*taḥmīd*)⁹²
- Lines 1-2: a direct address to the audience followed by an enjoinder to heed God’s guidance
- Lines 2-5: the main body of the sermon introducing the central theme, the warning to beware of the false knowledge of “the Ancients”, and the admonition to seek guidance and knowledge from the prophets
- Lines 6-12: contrasts between true knowledge found only in the Qurʾān and the Sunna, and the harmful sciences of the Ancients

⁸⁰ al-ʿAbdarī, *Rihla*, p. 286.

⁸¹ Such as to rehabilitate himself with the Almohad authorities following the accusations of immorality.

⁸² Jones, “Preaching of the Almohads”, p. 87.

⁸³ Ibn Idārī, *Al-Bayān al-muḡrib. Qism al-Muwaḥḥidīn*, p. 116; Jones, “Preaching of the Almohads”, pp. 88-90.

⁸⁴ Jones, *Power of Oratory*, pp. 51-70.

⁸⁵ Jones, *Power of Oratory*, p. 39; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *Al-Iqd al-farīd*, vol. IV, p. 54.

⁸⁶ Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oratory*, pp. 91-164.

⁸⁷ See Jones, *Power of Oratory*, pp. 131-145; and Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oratory*, pp. 333-368.

⁸⁸ Mortensen, *Maximum Influence*, p. 7.

⁸⁹ Especially Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric*; Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oratory*, pp. 91-164; and Hasanah, “Rhetoric”.

⁹⁰ Abu Rumman, “Persuasive Strategies”; Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oratory*, pp. 167-206.

⁹¹ The analysis is based on Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik’s text since al-ʿAbdarī’s version is incomplete. I will indicate in footnotes relevant variations between the two versions.

⁹² Missing from al-ʿAbdarī, *Rihla*, p. 286.

- Lines 13-23: extended praise of the Qur'an as the source of true knowledge, wisdom, and guidance, and praise of Muḥammad as the best prophet
- Lines 24-32: poetic verses mentioning the concept of reason, together with embellishments of the above themes
- Lines 33-35: a final prayer regarding guidance, knowledge, and wisdom from the Qur'an and the Prophet⁹³

The structural analysis reveals that in the first third of the sermon (lines 1-12), al-Sulamī polemicizes against the sciences of the Ancients by contrasting their fallacies and dangers with the Qur'an and the Sunna, which he presents as the only true sources of knowledge, wisdom, and guidance. The majority of the sermon (lines 13-23, 28-35) focuses on extolling the virtues of Scripture and the Prophet's Sunna, thereby nullifying any claims of the sciences of the Ancients to be alternative or complementary sources of knowledge and wisdom. The poetic verses in lines 24-27 seemingly allude to philosophical concepts.

The sermon begins in the following manner:

Praise be to God and peace be with His worshippers whom He elected. Servants of God: the [true] religion is the good counsel, so take it as a pure clear unadulterated thing, the *guidance of God for He is the right guidance*. And whoever follows in the footsteps of the Messengers of God, *he is rightly guided*.

*Al-ḥamdu li-Llāh wa-salām ʿalā ʿubbādihi allaḏīna iṣṭafā. ʿUbbāda Allāh al-dīnu al-naṣīḥa, fa-ḥudūhā maḥḍatan ṣarīḥatan, hady Allāh, fa-huwa al-hudā wa-man ittabaʿa rusul Allāh ihtadā*⁹⁴ (lines 1-2).

A striking feature of the beginning of al-Sulamī's *ḥuṭba* is that it does not follow the traditional structure of a liturgical or ceremonial oration, which typically began with the doxological formula of praise to God (*taḥmīd*), followed by the utterance of the Muslim testimony of faith (*ṣahāda*) and the *taṣliya* or blessings upon the Prophet. This liturgical prologue culminates with a transition phrase such as, "*ammā ba'd*" (now then) to signal that the preacher will begin to address the audience directly with words such as, "O people" (*ayyuhā l-nās*) or as al-Sulamī stated, "Servants of God" (*ʿubbād Allāh*). Such vocatives are used to engage the audience and capture their attention. The initial direct address usually takes the form of an exhortation (*wa'z*), an enjoinder (*waṣīya*), or

instructions to heed the orator's advice or warning.⁹⁵ As noted, the Almohads mandated the insertion of various innovative elements into the *ḥuṭba*'s liturgical formulas. These included, alongside the obligatory Almohad creedal statements attesting to Ibn Tūmart's status as the "infallible Mahdī" and his noble genealogy, extensive blessings upon the Mahdī and the successive Mu'minid caliphs, whose epithets attested to their appropriation of the title of the "Rightly Guided Caliphs" (*al-ḥulafā' al-rāšidīn*) during the reign of al-Nāṣir (r. 595-611/1199-1213) and their claims to be the heirs of the divinely elected prophets, being rightly guided by their prophetic illumination and acquiring knowledge from their prophetic lights.⁹⁶ None of these elements appears in either Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik or al-ʿAbdarī's versions of al-Sulamī's *ḥuṭba*. Instead, only Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik presents a minimalist opening liturgical doxology followed immediately by the greeting and direct exhortation to adhere to a "pure, clear unadulterated" form of Islam, which al-Sulamī defines as "the guidance of God" and he considers only those who follow the messengers of God to be "rightly guided". Al-Sulamī's enjoinder echoes Caliph al-Manṣūr's directive to "adhere only to the Book and the Sunna" and faithfully reflects the importance of the notion of right guidance (*hudā*) in Almohad ideology.

Al-Sulamī's oration may have dispensed with the prefatory ritual elements of the "well-known Almohad *ḥuṭba*" because it was not a canonical sermon (*ḥuṭba ṣar'iyya*) delivered obligatorily for the Friday communal worship and other prescribed occasions.⁹⁷ Alternatively, the version preserved by Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik and copied by al-ʿAbdarī could have been altered during what historian Émile Fricaud called the process of "de-Almohadization" undertaken by post-Almohad Maghrebi authors.⁹⁸ This would explain why the introduction of the *ḥuṭba* appears to be truncated.

One of the defining characteristics that distinguishes argument from persuasion is that with argument "the speaker admits the existence of opposing claims and attempts to justify why his claims deserve to be adopted, whereas the

⁹⁵ Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oration*, pp. 64-90, and Jones, *Power of Oratory*, pp. 71-86.

⁹⁶ ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākuṣī's meticulous description of how the Almohads celebrated the Friday *ḥuṭba* reproduces the text of a typical sermon. See al-Marrākuṣī, *Al-Mu'ḡib*, pp. 344-345.

⁹⁷ Hasanah, "Rhetoric", pp. 249-250.

⁹⁸ Fricaud, "Les *ṭalaba*", p. 332.

⁹³ Missing from al-ʿAbdarī's, *Riḥla*.

⁹⁴ Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 226.

persuader tries to convince the addressee to take his/her claims for granted because there are no other claims that are worth adopting other than his or hers.”⁹⁹ Al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* accords with the latter since, as noted in the previous discussion of the events surrounding Ibn Ruṣd’s public disgrace, there may have been lingering doubts among some of the Cordovan philosopher’s enemies regarding whether the study of philosophy should be banned altogether. The aforementioned *qāḍī* Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. Marwān’s argument that philosophy had beneficial and harmful properties introduces such a nuance. Hence al-Sulamī may have sought to appeal to all sectors of society, but especially to convince the supporters of Ibn Ruṣd and al-Uṣūlī who had “benefitted from their teachings” and applauded the “perfection” of their religious and juridical knowledge,¹⁰⁰ that the philosophers as a whole should be condemned.

One can readily appreciate in the opening lines al-Sulamī’s strategies of persuasion. He employed rhetoric (*balāḡa*) and various stylistic embellishments (*al-badī*) to clarify his intended meaning and “to achieve a ‘beautiful’ and sublime style in order to influence the text receiver.”¹⁰¹ For instance, the linguistic embellishment of rhyme assonance (*muwāzana*)¹⁰² is achieved through the agreement in the final long vowel “ā” (ا) of the words *iṣṭafā* (he elected), *al-hudā* (the guidance), and *ihtadā* (he was guided) and the agreement of the last two syllables (حَة) in the words *al-naṣīḥa* (counsel, admonition, advice) and *ṣarīḥa* (pure, unadulterated, clear). Other clauses employ consonant assonance (*saḡ*), which is achieved when two or more metrically balanced clauses end in the same rhyme consonant.¹⁰³ Al-Sulamī also used alliteration by pronouncing several words beginning with the letter “h” (ه) in close succession: *ḥady Allāh fa-huwa al-hudā* (the guidance of God for He is the right guidance). Significantly, al-Sulamī deployed linguistic embellishments that suggest sameness (assonance and alliteration) to focalize the listener’s attention on a key theme of the sermon, namely that true guidance (*al-hudā*) comes only from God and that only those who obey God’s messengers are truly guided (*ihtadā*) toward Him.

Having begun the sermon by equating true guidance solely with the Qur’an and the Sunna,

al-Sulamī then proceeded to discredit philosophy and the philosophers as a viable alternative or even complementary source of guidance and knowledge. Toward this end al-Sulamī deployed the semantic embellishments of antithesis (*tibāq*) and paronomasia (*ḡinās*) to portray them as false, incoherent, delusional, and deceptive and to underscore that true knowledge emanates from God through His prophets:

So beware of the Ancients and what they have produced/innovated/invented! For verily, from their own reason they have spoken [i.e., of things of their own fabrication rather than based on the word of God]. They have brought forth out of falsehood each wonder, while the innermost secrets are concealed from their hearts. And [true guidance is] the prophets and their lights—not the ignoramuses and their delusions—from them one should take lessons and through them the object of desire is attained. “He is the Knower of the unseen and He does not disclose [His knowledge of] the unseen to anyone except to those whom He has approved as a messenger.”¹⁰⁴ “Religion in the sight of God is submission/Islam”¹⁰⁵ and (true) knowledge is the Book of God and the Sunna of Muḥammad, peace be upon him.

Fa-ıyyākum wa-l-qudamā wa-mā aḥḍatū, fa-innahum ‘an ‘uqūlihim ḥaddatū. Ataw min al-iftirā bi-kulli uḡūba wa-qulūbihim ‘an al-asrār mahḡūba. Al-anbiyā wa-nūruhum, lā al-aḡbiyā wa-ḡurūruhum, ‘anhum yutalaqqā wa bihim yudraku al-sūl). “‘Ālimu l-ḡayb fa-lā yuḡhiru ‘alā ḡaybihi aḥḍadan illā man irtaḍā min rasūl”. “Al-dīn ‘indā Allāh al-islām”, wa-l-ilm Kitāb Allāh wa-sunnatu Muḥammadin ‘alayhi al-salām.¹⁰⁶ (lines 2-6).

In the passages above al-Sulamī makes effective use of multiple antithesis by deploying various pairs of theologically evocative antonyms. The initial exhortation, *fa-ıyyākum wa-l-qudamā* wa-mā aḥḍatū is particularly striking because of the antithetical relationship established between that which is old, “the Ancients”, and their act of bringing forth something novel or innovating. The verb, *aḥḍata*, means both to produce or bring something forth and to be novel or to innovate. Given the religio-political context and objectives of this sermon, al-Sulamī possibly intended to evoke the idea of religious innovation (*bid‘a*). Interestingly, *aḥḍata* has other negative

⁹⁹ Abu Rumman, “Persuasive Strategies”, p. 249.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Ḍayl*, vol. VI, p. 26.

¹⁰¹ Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric*, p. 240.

¹⁰² Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric*, pp. 259-261; Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oration*, p. 99.

¹⁰³ Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oration*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁰⁴ Qur’an 27 (al-Ḡinn):2-27.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Qur’an 3 (Āl Imrān):19. Both the essential meaning of *islām* as “submission to God” and the historical religion of Islam are possible interpretations.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Ḍayl*, vol. VIII, p. 227; al-‘Abdārī, *Riḥla*, p. 289.

connotations, including voiding one's bowels, committing fornication, and causing or doing something evil,¹⁰⁷ thus associating it with filth and immorality, which will become germane later in the sermon.

Al-Sulamī effectively used parallelism (*izdiwāḡ*) in the form of parallelistic grammatical structures in which the items of each paired clause feature lexical embellishments designed to polemicize against the Ancients and underscore the theological apposition between them and the prophets. Thus, in the first parallelism, *ataw min al-iftirā' bi-kulli u'ḡūba wa-qulūbuhim 'an al-asrār maḡḡūba* (They have brought forth out of falsehood each wonder, while the innermost secrets are concealed from their hearts), assonance is achieved by the agreement of the last two syllables ending in the short vowel "a" (جوبة) in the words *u'ḡūba* (wonder) and *maḡḡūba* (concealed). Here al-Sulamī alludes to the hypocrisy of the Ancients who claim to marvel the people by disseminating knowledge that they do not possess: since "the innermost secrets are concealed from their hearts" they are in reality ignorant. Yet in the second parallelistic clause, *al-anbiyā' wa-nūruhum, lā al-aḡbiyā' wa-ḡurūruhum* (And the prophets and their lights—not the ignoramuses and their delusions) al-Sulamī exposes their ignorance in unambiguous terms. This parallelism derives its rhetorical force from the use of three lexical embellishments: incomplete *ḡinās* (paronomasia), final vowel assonance, and final consonant rhyme (*saḡ*). In Arabic rhetorical theory incomplete *ḡinās* occurs when "two lexical items are different from each other in one letter only,"¹⁰⁸ as seen in the words "prophets" (الأنبياء) and "ignoramuses" (الأغبياء). The polemical intent of using the invective pun, *al-aḡbiyā'*, which rhymes with prophets (*al-anbiyā'*), rather than more neutral terms such as "the Ancients" (*al-qudamā'*) or "the philosophers" (*al-falāsifa*) is obvious. The lexical proximity between *al-anbiyā'* and *al-aḡbiyā'* highlights the theological chasm between them. The same polemical effect is achieved through the consonant rhyme in the words, *nūruhum* (their light) and *ḡurūruhum* (their delusions), which contrasts the prophets who illuminate the path to divine truth with the philosopher-"ignoramuses" who delude the people with their falsehoods.

In the final parallelistic clause in the introduction, "*al-dīn 'indā Allāh al-islām, wa-l-*

'ilm Kitāb Allāh wa-sunnatu Muḡammadin 'alayhi al-salām" (Religion in the sight of God is Islam" (Qur'an 3:19) and (true) knowledge is the Book of God and the Sunna of Muḡammad, peace be upon him," consonant assonance is achieved through the agreement of the last syllable, *lām* (لام) in the words, *al-islām* and *al-salām*. The rhetorical and theological power of this parallelism are mutually reinforcing because the resulting rhymed prose originates in the first clause with an authoritative statement from the Qur'an that explicitly refers to God and Islam, while the second clause introduces the key concept of knowledge (*'ilm*), simultaneously circumscribing its definition to "the Book of God and the Sunna of Muḡammad."

Of course, the recitation of Qur'anic verses fulfils the norms and expectations of the *ḡuṭba* genre. According to the Sevillian rhetorician Abū l-Qāsim al-Kalā'ī (d. 542/1148):¹⁰⁹

[The *ḡaṭīb*] should adorn (*yuwaṣṣiḡha*) his sermons with verses from the Qur'an, for this is the most beneficial saying that the orator could include... because it is the sound warning and the fully realized proof, the dazzling judgment, the guide to the true path, and the deliverer from error. "No falsehoods can approach it from before or behind it: it is sent down by One full of wisdom, worthy of all praise" (Qur'an 41:42).¹¹⁰

Toward the end of his sermon al-Sulamī quoted this same Qur'anic verse. Al-Sulamī's recitation of Qur'an 26:26-29, "He is the Knower of the unseen and He does not disclose the unseen to anyone except to those whom He has approved as a messenger" demonstrates his skill in choosing verses that are congruent with the theme of the *ḡuṭba*'s initial exhortation (*maw'iza*)¹¹¹ to "take the true religion as good counsel" and seek divine guidance by only following the Qur'an and the footsteps of Muḡammad. From both a rhetorical and a religio-political point of view this Qur'anic verse also harmonizes with the goals of the Almohad propaganda campaign of religious purification.

Taken together, the first two parallelistic clauses in the introductory part of al-Sulamī's *ḡuṭba* denigrate the claims of the philosophers to be able to guide people toward ultimate knowledge. They ridicule the Ancients by calling them imbeciles and

¹⁰⁷ Cowan (ed.), *Hans Wehr Dictionary*, p. 189; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 528.

¹⁰⁸ Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric*, p. 263.

¹⁰⁹ On Kalā'ī, see Soravia, "Un traité andalou".

¹¹⁰ Kalā'ī, *Iḡkām*, p. 169.

¹¹¹ According to Ibn al-'Aṭṭār (d. 724/1324), the Syrian author of a manual for liturgical preachers. See Ibn al-'Aṭṭār, *Adāb al-ḡaṭīb*, p. 128.

their knowledge delusional, while the third clause culminates with a powerful assertive speech act, declaring the “logical” conclusion that authentic truth and knowledge are found only in the Qur’an and the Sunna. Structurally, it forms a chiasmus by harmonizing with and reinforcing the message of the initial direct address, “the [true] religion is the good counsel...” As John Searle explained in his theory of speech acts, “the point or purpose” of an assertive statement “is to commit the speaker... to the truth of the expressed proposition.” Speakers use assertives to declare how things are in the world and represent reality as it truly is, which is clearly al-Sulamī’s aim here.¹¹² The grammatical structure of the two nominal sentences that constitute his final parallelism, “*al-dīn ‘indā Allāh al-islām, wa-l-ilm Kitāb Allāh wa-sunnatu Muḥammad ‘alayhi al-salām*” (Religion in the sight of God is Islam and knowledge is the Book of God and the Sunna of Muḥammad...), is apparently simple, yet in fact it creates a powerful polemic against the Ancients. Because the two clauses refer to God and the Qur’an, the use of the simple present tense evokes a timeless quality akin to what Tarif Khalidi referred to as “the eternal present tense” in reference to Qur’anic language.¹¹³ In this way al-Sulamī debunks the claims of the sciences of the Ancients by contrasting them with the eternal truth and knowledge of the Book of God and the Sunna.

Whereas ridicule is a dominant rhetorical device in this first part of the sermon, in the subsequent passages (lines 6-12), al-Sulamī adopted a discursive strategy emphasizing the danger and harm provoked by the sciences of the Ancients and associating them with filth and moral corruption. Against these he juxtaposed the Qur’an and the Prophet’s Sunna, now explicitly identified with the key symbols of knowledge (*ilm*) and wisdom (*ḥikma*), which cause no harm, teach knowledge and wisdom, and purify souls:

No one is harmed who confines oneself to the two of them. No one is ignorant after the two of them. The best prophet of the best community “purifies them and teaches them Scripture and Wisdom” (Qur’an 62 [al-Ġum’a]:2). May God be pleased with them because He sent to them a messenger from among them.... And they believed in what was revealed to Muḥammad and it is the truth from their Lord, who guided them toward proximity to Him and he shortened for them the path to Him...

¹¹² Searle, *Expression*, pp. 2-3.

¹¹³ Khalidi, *The Qur’an*, pp. xvi-xvii.

For those noble souls, sincere hearts, and erudite minds have not suffered harm from the ancient sciences that were averted from them. He purified them from the filth and pollution and He said, “you are the best community that has come from the people” (Qur’an 3 [Āl ‘Imrām]:110).

Mā ḍarra man waqafa ‘indahumā, mā ḡahila ba’dahumā. Ḥayr nabiyyin min ḥayr umma “yuzakkīhim wa-yu’allimuhum al-Kitāb wa-l-ḥikma; raḍiyā Allāh **‘anhum** id ba’āta fīhim rasūlan **minhum**... *fā-āmanū bi-mā nuzila ‘alā Muḥammad wa-huwa al-ḥaqq min rabbihim*,¹¹⁴ *dallahum min qurb ‘alayhi wa-iḥṭasara lahum al-ṭarīq ilayhi...*” (lines 6-9).

*Fa-mā ḍarra tilka l-nufūs al-karīma wa-l-qulūb al-salīma wa-l-albāb al-‘alīma mā zuwiya ‘alayhā min al-‘ulūm al-qadīma. Naqqāhum min al-awḍār wa-l-adnās. Wa-qāla: “kuntum ḥayra ummatin uḥriḡat li-l-nās”*¹¹⁵ (lines 10-12).

The lexical items highlighted in bold represent the semantic and linguistic embellishments al-Sulamī employs to persuade his audience. As with the previous passages, the predominant rhetorical device is the dual parallelistic structure whose cohesion is achieved through the use of vocal or consonantal assonance of the final syllables of the last lexical item in each paired phrase: *humā* in *‘indahumā* (to the two of them) and *ba’dahumā* (after the two of them); *-ma* in *umma* (community) and *al-ḥikma* (wisdom); *-hum* in **‘anhum** (with them) and *minhum* (from among them); *-īma* in *al-karīma* (the noble), *al-salīma* (sincere), *al-‘alīma* (erudite, learned), and *al-qadīma* (ancient); and *nās* in *al-adnās* (filth, pollution) and *al-nās* (people). As various scholars have noted, the use of rhythmic speech can produce a powerful emotional, psychological, or cognitive impact upon the audience because its aesthetic qualities elicit pleasure and enhance memorization and because of the way it “connects ideas and creates structural parallelisms of meaning.”¹¹⁶

Yet, in the two clauses that treat the theme of harm, al-Sulamī employs additional linguistic embellishments to create maximum impact. Thus, in the first, there is parallelism in the two initial propositions constituted by the identically grammatical negative verbal phrases, “No one is harmed (*mā ḍarra*) who confines oneself to the two of them (*‘indahumā*)” and “no one is ignorant

¹¹⁴ The passage underlined is missing in al-‘Abdārī’s *Rihla*.

¹¹⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 227; al-‘Abdārī, *Rihla*, p. 287.

¹¹⁶ See Stewart, “*Saj’*”, pp. 108-113; Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oration*, pp. 93-103; and Jones, *Power of Oratory*, pp. 94-98.

(*mā ḡahila*) after the two of them (*ba’dahumā*). Each of these final lexical items is grammatically parallel since they are both prepositions and both semantically parallel since the dual possessive pronouns allude in each case to the Qur’an and the Sunna. Semantically, al-Sulamī effectively uses implied comparison because the phrases prompt the listener to infer by analogy that the sciences of the Ancients *do* provoke harm and *do* foment ignorance. The intention is to engage the audience by leading them toward the desired conclusion.

As for the second phrase in which the verb “to harm” (*ḍarra*) appears, al-Sulamī employs repetition of the same initial negative verbal phrase, *fa-mā ḍarra* (for they have not suffered harm) as a mnemonic device to reinforce the gravity of the utterance. The sensation of danger is further enhanced by the succession of four grammatically parallel nominal phrases in the same rhyming pattern due to the vocal assonance of their respective adjectives, which end in *-īma*: *al-nufūs al-karīma*, *al-qulūb al-salīma*, *al-albāb al-‘alīma*, *al-‘ulūm al-qadīma*. By enumerating the individual’s “noble soul”, “sincere heart”, and “erudite mind” al-Sulamī emphasizes and personalizes the multiple toxic effects of the ancient sciences.

It is interesting to observe how Qur’anic recitation works in tandem with these rhetorical devices to persuade the intended audience about the moral dangers of philosophy and the ancient sciences. Both *mā ḍarra* phrases mention Muḥammad “purifying” or “cleansing” the believers and both culminate with the recitation of Qur’anic verses, Qur’an 62:2 and 3:110, respectively. Al-Sulamī and his more erudite listeners would know that Sunni exegesis traditionally interprets the verb, *yuzakkīhim* (he purified them) in Qur’an 62:2 to mean that Muḥammad “purified [the Arabs] of idolatry” (*ṣirk*).¹¹⁷ Thus by reciting this verse directly after his polemical references to the falsehoods and delusions of the Ancients, al-Sulamī employed implied comparison again to encourage the audience to associate the ancient teachings with idolatry.

Rhetorically, the recitation of Qur’an 62:2, “he purifies them and teaches them Scripture and Wisdom,” is an appropriate choice for the theme of this *ḥuṭba* because it explicitly states that the Prophet “teaches” (*wa-yu‘allimuhum*) and

therefore associates Muḥammad with knowledge (*ilm*). Moreover, whereas previously in the sermon al-Sulamī affirmed that true “knowledge is the Book (=the Qur’an) and the Sunna of Muḥammad” (line 6), here (lines 7-8) he has chosen a verse that pairs “the Book and Wisdom” (*al-Kitāb wa-l-ḥikma*). This is significant because it suggests that al-Sulamī was following the longstanding hermeneutical tradition, going back to the Palestinian jurist Muḥammad al-Šāfi‘ī (d. 204/820), which argued that in the Qur’anic pair *al-Kitāb wa-l-ḥikma*, the latter term refers to Muḥammad’s Sunna.¹¹⁸ For instance, the influential Andalusī Qur’anic exegete Ibn ‘Aṭīyya (d. 542/1147) affirmed this in his commentary, stating matter-of-factly that “*al-ḥikma* is the Sunna, which is his (=Muḥammad’s) [authoritative] speech” (“*al-ḥikma*”: *al-sunna allatī hiya lisānuhu*).¹¹⁹ Thus, by quoting this verse in the second part of a parallelistic structure in which the final words of the paired phrases ended with the syllable “-ma” (“*Ḥayr nabīyyin min ḥayr umma, yuzakkīhim wa-yu‘allimuhum al-Kitāb wa-l-ḥikma*”), al-Sulamī did not merely seek to achieve a desired rhyme. Invoking scriptural authority legitimated his identification of Muḥammad’s Sunna with the Qur’anic concept of wisdom in opposition to philosophical wisdom and in furtherance of Caliph al-Manṣūr’s decree to adhere only to the Book and the Sunna.

Even more important than the aesthetic value of this parallelistic structure is the theological message that identifies the Prophet Muḥammad as a “purifier” of the believers, a “teacher” of the Qur’an, and the recipient and transmitter of divine Wisdom. As various scholars, including Saqīb Hussain, Nicolai Sinai, Joseph Lowry, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, explain, *ḥikma* is a contested polysemic term that has been claimed equally by the ‘ulamā’, the Sufis, the *mutakallimūn* theologians, and Muslim peripatetic philosophers.¹²⁰ Of relevance here is the complex relationship between the Greek-derived term *falsafa* and the Qur’anic term *ḥikma*: some early Muslim philosophers treated the terms as virtually synonymous, while others drew a clearer distinction between the two, considering *ḥikma*

¹¹⁷ See Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Al-Muḥarrir al-waḡīz*, online version: <https://shamela.ws/book/23632/2553> [date of consultation: 20/05/2024].

¹¹⁸ See Lowry, “Early Islamic Exegesis”, pp. 143-144 and 148; and Sinai, *Key Terms*, pp. 289-301. My thanks to the reviewer who brought these studies to my attention.

¹¹⁹ Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Al-Muḥarrir al-waḡīz*, online version: <https://shamela.ws/book/23632/2553>

¹²⁰ See Hussain, “Wisdom”; Lowry, “Early Islamic Exegesis”; Sinai, *Key Terms*; and Nasr, “The Qur’ān”.

to have “issued from the niche of prophecy.”¹²¹ In light of these debates, al-Sulamī may have sought to define his position identifying Muḥammad’s Sunna as the source of *ḥikma*, in keeping with al-Manṣūr’s *da’wa*.

The implied contrast between the Qur’an and Wisdom/Sunna and the harmful sciences of the Ancients in the first *mā ḍarra* phrase is made explicit and further intensified in the second where al-Sulamī explains that Muḥammad cleansed the believers from filth. This is because the verbal phrase *yuzakkīhim* (he purified them) in Qur’an 62:2 has other metaphorical meanings, such as to justify, make righteous or vindicate someone, or to vouch for their integrity or uprightness.¹²² Conversely, the second *mā ḍarra* clause, *naqqāhum min al-awḍār wa-l-adnās*, disambiguates al-Sulamī’s intended meaning since the verb used here, *naqqāhum*, specifically means to purify, clean, cleanse, or remove something that is bad, while the predicate consists of two near synonyms, *al-awḍār wa-l-adnās*, both of which mean filth, dirt, or squalor, except that the term *al-adnās* also has ethical connotations of defilement, pollution, and desecration.¹²³ Hence the association between philosophy and filth is clear because al-Sulamī explicitly mentions the ancient sciences immediately prior to this sentence: “For those noble souls... have not suffered harm from the ancient sciences (*al-‘ulūm al-qadīma*) that were averted from them. He purified them from the filth and pollution (*naqqāhum min al-awḍār wa-l-adnās*).” The aim of employing the imagery of filth and pollution here is to elicit disgust toward the philosophers and the sciences of the Ancients. As the anthropologist Mary Douglas famously argued, associating religious others with filth, pollution, and impurity serves to construct and maintain boundaries between communities by arousing revulsion and disgust toward the Other.¹²⁴

Having juxtaposed the falsity, ignorance, moral corruption, and filth of the sciences of the Ancients with the truth, wisdom, and knowledge of the Book and the Sunna in the first part of the sermon (lines 1-12), in the second part (lines 12-35) al-Sulamī shifts the focus of attention toward God, the Qur’an, and the Prophet, praising their

virtues and associating them symbiotically with the core concepts of guidance, knowledge, and wisdom. Toward this end, he begins with a series of affirmations about the Qur’an and the Prophet (lines 12-23), followed by nine verses of didactic poetry (lines 24-32), culminating in a final prayer (lines 33-35).

Regarding lines 12-23, after reciting the Qur’anic verse, “...you are the best community that has come from the people” (Qur’an 3:110) (line 12), al-Sulamī confirmed that Muḥammad’s community “attained this goal through him...” (*wa-l-qaṣd alladī bihi waṣālū...*) (lines 13-14).¹²⁵ He then declared:

Their Book is the greatest Book that was revealed, and their prophet is the noblest prophet who was sent, the lord of humanity, the quintessence of perfection, the best of creation without exception, he was sent to complete/perfect the noble qualities. For he was a seal of all the prophets, he was a guide for all the people and he was a judge over them. The Book was revealed to him “with the truth as a confirmation of the previous Scriptures and a supreme authority over them” (Qur’an 5 [al-Mā’ida]:48). It (the Book) is “the cure and the mercy” (cf. Qur’an 17 [al-Isrā’]:82) and in it is found the totality of knowledge and wisdom; infallible in its arrangement, mighty in its description. “No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it” (Qur’an 41 [Fussilat]:42): a manifest victorious proof and an everlasting enduring miracle; for it is to prophecy and messengership a seal and through it (=the Book or Him=God) the existing world is judged/governed/ restrained [from wrongdoing]. *Kitābuhum a’ẓam kitāb unẓila*, *wa-nabiyuhum akram nabī ursila*, *sayyid al-anām*, *libnat al-tamām*, *ḥayr al-barīya ‘alā l-aḥlāq*, *bu’īta li-yatamamma makārima al-aḥlāq*. *Fa-kāna li-l-anbiyā’ ḥātīman*, *wa-li-kāffati al-nās ḥādīyan* *wa-‘alayhim ḥākīman*. *Unẓila al-Kitāb bi-l-ḥaqq ilayhi*, “*muṣaddiqan li-mā bayna yadayhi min al-Kitāb wa-muḥayminan ‘alayhi*”. *Huwa al-ṣifā’ wa-l-raḥma*, *wa-fīhi al-‘ilm kulluhu wa-l-ḥikma*. “*Lā ya tīhi al-bāṭil min bayna yadayhi wa-lā min ḥalfihi*”, *ḥuḡḡatun bāhiratun qāhira wa-mu’ḡizatun bāqiyatun dā’ima*, *id hiya li-l-nubuwwa wa-l-risāla ḥātīma*, *bihi tuḥkamū al-dunyā al-qā’ima*¹²⁶ (lines 15-21).

The above passages demonstrate al-Sulamī’s effectiveness in reinforcing the messages in the first part of the *ḥuṭba* regarding the Qur’an and the Sunna. He established cohesion thematically by

¹²¹ A translation of the saying, “*yanba’u al-ḥikma min miškāt al-nubuwwa*”. Cited in Naṣr, “The Qur’ān”.

¹²² Cowan (ed.), *Hans Wehr Dictionary*, p. 441.

¹²³ Cowan (ed.), *Hans Wehr Dictionary*, p. 339.

¹²⁴ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*.

¹²⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 228; missing in al-‘Abdarī’s *Riḥla*.

¹²⁶ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 228; al-‘Abdarī, *Riḥla*, p. 287. The underlined text is missing.

reiterating the key Almohad leitmotifs identifying Muḥammad as the “guide” (*hādī*) to whom God revealed the Book, which is the only infallible source of ultimate truth (*al-ḥaqq*) and contains “the totality of knowledge” (*al-ilm kulluhu*) and wisdom (*al-ḥikma*). The lexical items highlighted in bold above illustrate al-Sulamī’s use of parallelistic grammatical structures, consonant and vocal assonance, and eloquent rhythmic word arrangements to adorn and lend cohesion to his speech, making it more effective and persuasive to the audience.¹²⁷ Al-Sulamī’s emphatic utterances about the Book’s singular status and content, followed by the Qur’anic declaration that “no falsehood” can be attributed to it, possibly intended to evoke his previous disparagement of the “falsities” of the sciences of the Ancients.

To maximize the sermon’s aesthetic appeal and impact and facilitate the retention of his message, al-Sulamī recited a short didactic poem composed of nine verses (lines 24–32). In the first verse he invited his audience to listen and be receptive to guidance: “*ḥaḍā kalāmūn li-l-hudā ḡāmī‘u / fa-ṣḡi ilayhi ayyuhā al-sāmī‘u*” (This is a speech assembled for the sake of guidance, so listen to it O hearer). He then stated:

The Revelation/Law is for the rational mind a guide
for the one who unites/reconciles [them]. /
Between the two of them its proof is decisive
The Revelation/Law is for the rational mind without
doubt / like the sun is for the eye, resplendent,
luminous
The Revelation/Law is followed; whoever is lost
is guided by it, and the rational mind/reason/
intellect is the follower
The rational/intelligent [person] is not guided toward
his goal/purpose/intention except by that which
the lawgiver/revealer prescribes/establishes
for him...
This Book of God guides humanity / Each [branch
of true] knowledge has its/His resplendent light
Knowledge and Wisdom are concealed in it (=the
Revelation/Law) / entirely, and it is the
inimitable, the decisive
And he (= Muḥammad) is from God and there is not
above him [any other] guide to God or intercessor
*Al-ṣar‘u li-l-‘aqlī hudām man yasil / baynahumā
burhānuhu qāfi‘u*
*Al-ṣar‘u li-l-‘aqlī bi-lā miryātīn / ka-l-šams li-l-‘ayni
sannām sāfi‘u*
*Al-ṣar‘u maṭbū‘un bihi yahtadī / man ḍalla, wa-l-
‘aqlu lahu tābi‘u*

¹²⁷ Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric*, pp. 49–50.

*Lā yahtadī al-‘āqilu fī qaṣḍihi / illā bi-mā sanna
lahu al-ṣarī‘u*

*Ḥaḍā kitābu Allah yahdī al-warā / li-kulli ‘ilmīn
nūruhu al-sāfi‘u* (lines 24–29)...

*Wa-l-‘ilmu wa-l-ḥikmatu fī tayyihī / aḡma‘ wa-huwa
al-muḡizu al-ṣādī‘u*

*Wa-huwa min Allāh fa-mā fawqahu / ḥādī ilā Allāh
wa-lā ṣāfi‘u* (lines 31–32)¹²⁸

While Arabic orators often recited poetry in non-liturgical political orations and exhortatory sermons, the Almohads were particularly fond of employing didactic poetry to educate and transmit their ideology to the general public.¹²⁹ The rhyme and meter of poetry facilitated memorization and enhanced its emotional impact, while the “semi-sacred authority and proverbial force of poetry” enabled an orator like al-Sulamī to strengthen his argument by endorsing and building upon his previous affirmations.¹³⁰ In this regard, the most striking feature of al-Sulamī’s didactic poem is his introduction of the concepts of *al-ṣar‘* and *al-‘aql* and his use of repetition to underscore the relationship between them. The term *ṣar‘* is a cognate of *ṣarī‘a*, meaning the divinely revealed law, a system of laws, and the sum total of a prophetic religion¹³¹. Interestingly, Ibn Ruṣd frequently used the terms *ṣarī‘a* and *ṣar‘* interchangeably to refer to the Qur’an.¹³² As for the term *‘aql*, meaning understanding, intelligence, intellect, or reason, it occurs most often in the Qur’an as a form I verb in affirmations that God’s signs are manifest for “those who understand” (*ya‘qulūna*).¹³³ *‘Aql* is the Arabic translation of the Greek term, *nous*, used in Aristotelian theories of the active and passive intellect.¹³⁴ The term possibly also resonated with scholars involved in the recurring rivalry between the Malikis who defended the use of *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) and *ra’y* (individual sound judgement based on reason) as legitimate sources of Islamic law, and the Zāhirīs who, as mentioned, rejected them and were favoured in Caliph al-Manṣūr’s *da‘wa* “to adhere only to the Book and the Sunna.”

¹²⁸ Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 228; al-‘Abdarī, *Rihla*, p. 288.

¹²⁹ On Almohad didactic poetry, see Fierro, “The ‘Bestsellers’”, pp. 48–51.

¹³⁰ On poetry in orations, see Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oration*, pp. 8, 135–139.

¹³¹ Calder, “Sharī‘a”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., IX, pp. 321–328.

¹³² According to Sarrió, “The Philosopher”, pp. 51–52.

¹³³ Qur’an 2:174, 6:33, 22:47, 39:44, among many others.

¹³⁴ Rahman, “‘Aql”.

Bearing this in mind, al-Sulamī may have been deploying the poetic device of double-meaning (*īhām* or *tawriya*)¹³⁵ in lines 24 to 27 to appeal both to the general audience and to scholars of diverse intellectual persuasions: At its most basic level, the verses in lines 24 to 27 affirm that any rational human being is guided by God's revelation, divine law, and scripture. Yet al-Sulamī's insistence that "The rational/intelligent [person] is **not guided** toward his goal/purpose/intention except by that which the lawgiver prescribes/establishes for him (*lā yahtadī al-'āqilu fī qaṣḍihi / illā bi-mā sanna lahu al-šārī'u*) (line 26) may have targeted the debaters of philosophy in particular. Since *al-šārī'* could mean both Islamic law and the Qur'an, *al-šārī'* is traditionally identified with Muḥammad as the transmitter and exemplar of the Law¹³⁶, while the verb *sanna* (to establish or prescribe) is etymologically related to the term Sunna, one can see how al-Sulamī's didactic poem employed double-meaning and polysemy to reinforce his core message that guidance toward the truth, wisdom, and knowledge comes only from the Book and the Sunna.

This, indeed, is the message of the final lines of his poem: "This Book of God guides humanity" (*ḥadā kitāb Allah yahdī al-warā*), "Knowledge and wisdom are concealed in it entirely" (*wa-l-'ilm wa-l-ḥikma fī tayyihī / aḡma*) "and he (=Muḥammad) is from God and there is not above him [any other] guide to God or intercessor" (*...hādīn ilā Allāh wa-lā šāfi'u*). These verses pave the way for the concluding prayer, which al-Sulamī expressed in inclusive language:

God has made him (Muḥammad) an intercessor *for us*, a defender *of us*, a beneficial guide *for us*, the means by which *we* are ranked in faith, the content of which is lofty. He brought understanding *to us* through him (Muḥammad) and knowledge through his [(=Muḥammad's) transmission of] His miraculous signs/verses (=the Qur'an). And He has made *us* among those the rust/filth/sin of whose hearts was cleansed by the light from his heart and he saw that He ennobled him and adorned him with grace....

Ġa'alahu Allāh fīnā šāfi'an, wa-'annā dāfi'an, wa-lanā hādīyan nāfi'an wa-li-daraḡatinā bi-l-imān bihi wa-bi-mā taḍammanahu rāfi'an, wa-ātānā fīhi fahm'an wa-bi-ayātihi 'ilm'an. Wa-ḡa'alanā mimman inḡalā bi-nūrihi 'an qalbihi raynahu, wa-ra'à annahu šarafahu wa-zayyanahu (lines 33-35).¹³⁷

This exceptional use of the rhetorical device of inclusive language¹³⁸ is particularly effective in ending the *ḥuṭba* because through it al-Sulamī establishes a direct link between his contemporary audience and the timeless truths of Islamic mythology concerning God, the Qur'an, and Muḥammad. By explicitly reconnecting the identity and destiny of the preacher and his audience with the original beneficiaries of Muḥammad's guidance, intercession, and purification, al-Sulamī subtly reminded his audience that they have no need of other sources of wisdom and knowledge, including—especially—from the sciences of the Ancients.

Conclusion

The precise circumstances in which Ibn 'Umar al-Sulamī composed his *ḥuṭba* against the philosophers may never be established with absolute certainty in the absence of contemporaneous reports connecting the sermon explicitly to Ibn Ruṣd's inquisition or to Caliph al-Manṣūr's campaign against the philosophers. The texts preserved by Ibn 'Abd al-Malik and al-'Abdarī date to over a century after Ibn Ruṣd's ordeal. Both authors omitted any reference to the original Almohad context and neither furnished information about the paths of transmission of the *ḥuṭba*. Nevertheless, they coincided in relating al-Sulamī's *ḥuṭba* to the condemnation of philosophy and the sciences of the Ancients. Significantly, Ibn 'Abd al-Malik described the sermon as enjoining "*wa-taḡannub al-falsafa wa-'ulūm al-quḍamā*" (to avoid philosophy and the sciences of the Ancients) even though the word "philosophy" (*al-falsafa*) does not appear in al-Sulamī's text. Meanwhile, al-'Abdarī presented the text to defend seeking knowledge only from "the Book and the Sunna" against those Cairene scholars whose obsession with Greek logic and philosophy had—in his opinion—led them to neglect the mosques.

This suggests that al-Sulamī's *ḥuṭba* was transmitted and preserved for posterity as an emblematic instrument of persuasion in the scholarly debates between those who defended adhering only to the Qur'an and the Sunna and those intellectuals, theologians, and jurists who admitted the use of other sources of knowledge in the search for ultimate truth or the interpretation of Islamic law. For this reason, al-Sulamī's repetition of the core themes throughout the

¹³⁵ Khanjari, "Īhām".

¹³⁶ Rahman, "Akī".

¹³⁷ Ibn 'Abd al-Malik, *Dayl*, vol. VIII, p. 228; missing

from al-'Abdarī's *Rihla*,

¹³⁸ Jones, *Power of Oratory*, pp. 100-101.

sermon delimiting true knowledge (*ilm*) and wisdom (*ḥikma*) to “the Book and the Sunna” and identifying the Qur’an as the guidance (*al-hady/al-hudā*) and Muḥammad as the guide (*al-hādī*) that illuminates the path to God could have resonated not only with participants in the disputes over philosophy. Al-Sulamī may also have targeted contending Maliki and Zāhirī scholars, given that al-Manṣūr’s *da’wa* to purify Islam by favouring the literalist (*zāhirī*) interpretation of the Qur’an and the Sunna over certain Maliki writings, had been issued in close proximity to the decree against the philosophers. His sermon may also have furnished proof of his own orthodoxy and moral probity vis-à-vis his enemies.

Al-Sulamī’s *ḥuṭba* sheds light on how the Almohad elites employed Arabic oratory as an instrument of propaganda and persuasion in their political and intellectual disputes over the concept of knowledge. Al-Sulamī made adept use of numerous Arabic rhetorical devices: grammatical, linguistic, and semantic parallelistic phrases, eloquently balanced and bound together by final consonant or vocal assonance; linguistic embellishments such as assonance and alliteration; and semantic embellishments such as antithesis, paronomasia, double-meaning, repetition, and polysemy. The proliferation of these elements throughout the sermon suggests that the text was originally delivered or intended to be delivered as an oral performance. The insertion of didactic poetry also points to the *ḥuṭba*’s orality. Al-Sulamī’s judicious selection of Qur’anic verses provided scriptural authority echoing the key leitmotifs of Almohad ideology and the goals of al-Manṣūr’s *da’wa*. Finally, al-Sulamī employed rational argumentation in his use of emphatic and assertive statements as persuasive techniques to convey the timeless, eternal, uncontested truth that the Qur’an and the Sunna are the only valid sources of knowledge, wisdom, and guidance. Yet when speaking of or alluding to the sciences of the Ancients, al-Sulamī resorted to emotional appeals to intensify his impact. This was especially so in the first part of the sermon (lines 2-12), where he strategically provoked incrementally negative emotions of ridicule, fear, and disgust toward the ancient sciences as a polemical strategy to discredit them as alternative vehicles of wisdom and knowledge. Yet by reciting didactic verses to explain the correct relationship between *ṣar’* (Islamic law/Scripture) and *‘aql* (reason/intelligence), al-Sulamī seemingly sought to elicit a positive

emotional response to his understanding of *‘aql* in detriment to philosophical (or other) interpretations of the concept.

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