Shared Sanctity: Some Notes on *Ahl al-Bayt* Shrines in the Early Ṭālibid Genealogies*

Teresa Bernheimer
University of Oxford

This article examines some of the earliest literary evidence for *Ahl al-Bayt* shrines, contained in the so-called Ṭālibid genealogies. First written in the mid- to late-9th century, nearly contemporaneously with the development of the earliest shrines themselves, these sources were often written by (and perhaps mainly for) the *Ahl al-Bayt* themselves, providing a picture that the family itself sought to preserve and convey. According to these sources, by the end of the 9th century there clearly were burial places of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and especially of the ʿAlid family, that were visited. Such sites were associated with a number of ʿAlids who were not Shiʿite imams, but "regular" members of the family; thus they were not places of pilgrimage for the Shiʿa only, but sites of veneration that could be shared and even developed regardless of sectarian affiliation. The sites, moreover, became focal points for the *Ahl al-Bayt*, many of whom settled around them, and came to benefit from their *waqf* arrangements and the pilgrimage "traffic" around them. Over all, the paper argues that the appearance of—or increased attention to—the *Ahl al-Bayt* shrines from the 9th century onwards had little to do with Shiʿism or Shiʿite patronage; instead, it may be seen as consistent with the wider development of the socio-religious rise of the *Ahl al-Bayt*: the development of "ʿAlidism".

To this day, the ubiquity of mausolea and shrines in all parts of the Islamic world is striking to any traveller: from the Taj Mahal in Agra, to the grand structures in Bukhara and Samarqand, to the famous Mamluk and Ayyubid

shrines in Jerusalem, Damascus and Cairo, to the many smaller places of worship elsewhere: in many ways, different kinds of funerary buildings have become a quintessentially Islamic sight over a vast geographic and cultural area. Yet, the relative scarcity of funerary buildings dating to the first three centuries of Islam has long puzzled scholars especially of Islamic art. Should we assume that funerary buildings of the first three centuries of Islam did not survive, or did they never exist? Where did the building types originate?[1] In what ways did the disapproval of some Islamic scholars of the building over graves influence social praxis?[2] How do we account for the relatively sudden appearance of shrines and tombs after the ninth century?

Some of the earliest surviving examples of Islamic funerary architecture are sites attributed to the *Ahl al-Bayt*, the family of the Prophet Muḥammad, often equated with Shiʿism. In his famous 1966 article on "The earliest Islamic commemorative structures", Oleg Grabar suggests that Shiʿism and secular glorification were "the two factors which first caused the growth of mausoleums", and these two factors "remained throughout as the main source of memorial constructions".[3] Indeed, the role of Shiʿism and Shiʿite dynasties played in the development and formulation of Islamic funerary and commemorative architecture remains central to the discussion on the origins and early development of Islamic shrines.[4] Amongst those arguing against placing too great an emphasis on the influence of Shiʿite dynasties is Christopher Taylor: ". . . it is doubtful", he says, "that the genesis of

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[1] For a summary discussion of the origins of the mausoleum in Islam, which excludes Iran as a possible place of origin, see Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, pp. 253-330; for a list of the earliest Islamic funerary buildings, see Yūsuf Rāġib, "Les premiers monuments funéraires de l'Islam", *Annales Islamologiques* 9 (1970), pp. 21-36.

[2] Recent scholarship suggests that the importance of the levelling of graves (*taswiyat al-qubūr*) and the disapproval of built tomb structures in Islam has been overstated in earlier scholarship. See for instance Thomas Leisten, *Architektur für Tote* (Berlin, 1998), pp. 10-12; idem, "Between Orthodoxy and Exegesis: Some Aspects of Attitudes in the Sharīʿa Toward Funerary Architecture, *Muqarnas* 7 (1990), pp. 12-22; and Leor Halevi, *Muḥammad's Grave. Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society* (New York, 2007), pp. 187-196.

[3] Oleg Grabar, "The Earliest Islamic Commemorative Structures", *Ars Orientalis* VI (1966), p. 46.

[4] See Christopher Taylor, "Reevaluating the Shiʿi Role in the Development of Monumental Islamic Funerary Architecture: The Case of Egypt", *Muqarnas* 9 (1992), pp. 1-10.

monumental commemorative and funerary architecture in Egypt owes itself primarily to Shi'i inspiration."[5] Taylor's research has focused mostly on medieval Egypt and Syria, where the rule and patronage of the Fāṭimid dynasty may well present a special case. Yet even here, the shrines to members of the Prophet's family can be shown to have had universal appeal. He suggests that one should understand the cult of Muslim saints as part of the larger and long-standing phenomenon of the veneration of the dead in the Middle East. Taylor emphasizes that the visitation of graves (*ziyāra*) is a central aspect of this continuing tradition.[6]

It is in this context that the shrines of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and in particular the shrines of the 'Alids, Muḥammad's descendants through his daughter Fāṭima and his cousin 'Alī, need further attention. Two recent studies have looked at some of these shrines and examined their origin and relationship with Shi'ism: Whilst James Allan's work focuses on the art and architecture of the shrines of the Twelver Shi'ite Imāms in Iraq and Iran and emphasizes the Shi'ite character of the sites, Stephennie Mulder examines the shrines of the 'Alids in medieval Syria and suggests that they often served as unique spaces of inter-sectarian exchange and devotion.[7] This paper contributes to the discussion by evaluating some of the earliest literary evidence for *Ahl al-Bayt* shrines, contained in the so-called Ṭālibid genealogies. It argues that the appearance of and increased attention to 'Alid shrines from the ninth century onwards had little to do with Shi'ism or Shi'ite patronage, but may be seen as consistent with the wider development of the rise of

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[5] Taylor, "Reevaluating the Shi'i Role", p. 1. Grabar's arguments and their influence on later scholarship were eloquently summarized by Taylor. Taylor's point is developed in the work of Joseph Meri on the cult of saints in medieval Syria. He highlights the sacred aspects of shrines and pilgrimage among Muslims, Jews, and Christians, and stresses the sharing of a fundamental set of rituals around the veneration of saints; see Josef Meri, *The Cult of Saints Among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford, 2002), especially pp. 120-213, and 284; idem, "The Etiquette of Devotion in the Islamic Cult of Saints", in James Howard-Johnston and Paul Anthony Hayward (eds.), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1999), p. 265.

[6] Christopher Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in late Medieval Egypt* (Leiden, 1999); and Taylor, "Reevaluating the Shi'i Role", p. 8.

[7] James Allan, *The Art and Architecture of Twelver Shi'ism: Iraq, Iran and the Indian Sub-Continent* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 5-39; and Stephennie Mulder, *The Shrines of the 'Alids in Medieval Syria: Sunnis, Shi'is, and the Architecture of Coexistence* (Edinburgh, forthcoming).

the descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad as a social class, independent of sectarian affiliation. Contrary to the view of Ibn Taymiyya, who fiercely condemned the visitation of tombs and termed it a heretical innovation (*bidʿa*) of the Shiʿite Buyids, the veneration of ʿAlid saints was a Sunni cult in as much as it was a Shiʿite one;[8] indeed, there was little specifically Shiʿite about the reverence for the family of the Prophet.[9] Rather than a sign for the spread of Shiʿism, the emergence and visitation of ʿAlid shrines were an expression of what may best be termed "ʿAlidism"—the non-sectarian reverence of the Prophet's descendants.[10]

The Ṭālibid genealogies are of particular relevance as they began to be written in the mid- to late-ninth century, and are thus contemporaneous with a proliferation of shrines associated with the descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad. Based mostly on locally collected registers, these works especially emphasize which lineages continued and which ones died out. Their primary intent was to delineate who did and who did not belong to the family of the Prophet, and was thus entitled to certain privileges; their purpose was to consolidate and legitimize the family's standing as a distinct and distinguished social group.[11] Even though these sources are primarily interested in the discussion of genealogical questions, real or imagined, and do not provide extensive information on the shrines, they nonetheless offer some of the earliest references to burial places of

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[8] Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad b. Taymiyya* (Riyadh, 1991), vol. 27, pp. 151 and 393; quoted in Meri, *Cult of Saints*, pp. 273-274; Meri, "Etiquette of Devotion", pp. 273-279.

[9] Kazuo Morimoto has recently drawn attention to a highly interesting group of Sunni traditions on the Prophet's family. Recommending the good treatment of the ʿAlids in a variety of ways, these "edifying stories" were transmitted across sectarian boundaries, and show that "at the level of the day-to-day practice of believers, there has been no significant difference between the behaviors that advocates of the special treatment of the *sayyid/sharīf*s in either sect have promoted." See Kazuo Morimoto, "How to behave towards *sayyids* and *sharīf*s. A trans-sectarian tradition of dream accounts", in Kazuo Morimoto (ed.), *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: The Living Link to the Prophet* (London/New York, 2012), pp. 15-36 (at p. 17).

[10] F. E. Peters recently used the term with the slightly different meaning of "simple loyalty to the house of ʿAli". He similarly juxtaposes the term ʿAlidism with Shiʿism. See F. E. Peters, *The Monotheists. Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Conflict and Competition* (Princeton, 2005), p. 285.

[11] See Teresa Bernheimer, *The ʿAlids: The First Family of Islam, 750-1200* (Edinburgh, forthcoming).

members of the Prophet's family. They include references to sites associated with 'Alids who are not known to have played any significant religious or political role. As both material and literary evidence for Islamic shrines are scarce for the first three centuries of Islam, this early material is of much value. Moreover, similar to the increased interest and emergence of *Ahl al-Bayt* shrines from the ninth century onwards, the proliferation of this literature is itself reflective of the rise of the 'Alids as "the first family of Islam".
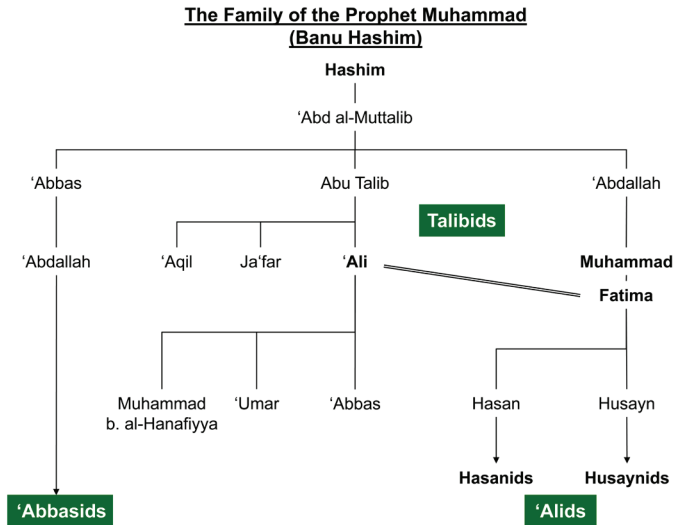
'Alidism

As I have described in more detail elsewhere, the emergence of the 'Alid family as a distinct and distinguished social group was intimately connected with the rise and decline of the 'Abbāsid caliphate.[12] Until the 'Abbāsid Revolution of 750, the "family of the Prophet" had generally included all of the Banū Hāshim; the movement that brought the 'Abbāsids to power had called for "the chosen one from the family of Muḥammad" (*al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad*)", generally understood to be a Hāshimite.[13] Of course, some of the movement's supporters, and certainly most of the 'Alids themselves, had expected the revolution to enthrone a closer relative of the Prophet than an 'Abbāsid—preferably an actual descendant of the Prophet, a Ḥasanid or Ḥusaynid.[14] When this was not the case, and a number 'Alid revolts in the years and decades after the Revolution were unsuccessful, the 'Alids began to delineate more precisely who was included in the

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[12] For a detailed discussion, see Bernheimer, *The 'Alids* (forthcoming).

[13] See P. Crone, "On the Meaning of the 'Abbāsid call to al-Riḍā", in C. E. Bosworth (ed.), *The Islamic World. Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 95-111; On Hāshimite Shi'ism, see W. Madelung, "The Hāshimiyyāt of al-Kumayt and Hāshimī Shi'ism", *Studia Islamica* 70 (1989), pp. 5-26.

[14] The first serious challenge to the 'Abbāsids came in 145/762-3 with the uprising of two Ḥasanid brothers, Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and Ibrāhīm. The 'Abbāsid caliph al-Manṣūr not only violently confronted the rebels but also persecuted and imprisoned a number of other 'Alids. The tenth-century litterateur al-Mas'ūdī (d. 346/956) writes of this event: "it caused a split between the descendants of 'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and the family of Abū Ṭālib; prior to this, their cause was one (*wa kāna qabla dhālika amruhum wāḥid*)"; see al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/954 or 356), *Murūj al-Dhahab* (Beirut, 1966-1979), vol. IV, p. 22. For a list of 'Alid rebellions, see Teresa Bernheimer, *A Social History of the 'Alid Family from the 8th to the 11th century* (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford 2006), Appendix I: 'Alid Revolts.

**The Family of the Prophet Muhammad
(Banu Hashim)**

Hashim
|
'Abd al-Muttalib

'Abbas   Abu Talib   'Abdallah

Talibids

'Abdallah   'Aqil   Ja'far   'Ali   Muhammad

Fatima

Muhammad   'Umar   'Abbas   Hasan   Husayn
b. al-Hanafiyya

Hasanids   Husaynids

'Abbasids   'Alids

FAMILY TREE

Ahl al-Bayt.[15] In very general terms, it was the distinctiveness from their 'Abbāsid cousins that was at the centre of this new self-definition—'Abbāsids versus Ṭālibids.[16]

Moreover, whilst the rise of the 'Abbāsids to the caliphate marked the starting point for a clearer definition on part of the 'Alids of the true "family of the Prophet" (*Ahl al-Bayt*), the decline of 'Abbāsid power from the ninth century onwards gave the 'Alids the opportunity to re-position themselves as the Prophet's legitimate heirs, genealogically, politically, as well as socially. Indeed, there were various ways in which the 'Alids' sense of a distinct and distinguished group took shape particularly in this period of "'Abbāsid decline":[17] many 'Alids left the Ḥijāz and settled especially in

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[15] Of course the definition of who belongs to the *Ahl al-Bayt* very much depended on the context, and on who did the defining; see for example M. Sharon, "People of the House", *EQur'ān*; for an excellent discussion of the related question of who qualifies as a *sharīf*, see C. van Arendonck/W. A. Graham, "sharīf", *EI2.*

[16] I focus on the 'Alids (rather than the wider kinship group of the Ṭālibids) to emphasize that at the centre of the emergence of this Islamic aristocracy were indeed the descendants of 'Alī, first and foremost his offspring from the marriage with Fāṭima, the Ḥasanids and Ḥusaynids.

[17] The most succinct discussion remains Hugh Kennedy, "The Decline and Fall of the First Muslim Empire", *Der Islam* 81 (2009), pp. 3-30.

the Islamic East to become one of the local elites of their cities;[18] the 'Alids' marriage patterns became increasingly restrictive, so that 'Alids were to marry only other 'Alids;[19] the office of the *niqāba*, the headship of the 'Alid family, was introduced and quickly spread all over the Islamic world;[20] and genealogical works of the Ṭālibids, thus excluding explicitly the 'Abbāsid branch of the Banū Hāshim, began to be written in the middle of the ninth century. All of this points to the strengthening of an 'Alid identity, the currency of which was genealogy, not religion; indeed, whether Sunni or Shiʿite, the important matter was to be, or to claim to be, a descendant of the Prophet.

It was also at this time that 'Alid shrines, if not first built, received new attention. One well-known example is the construction around the tomb of Fāṭima, sister of 'Alī al-Riḍā (d. 203/818), in Qum, thought to be one of the earliest Muslim shrines in continuous use.[21] Grabar tentatively dated it to the second half of the ninth century, emphasizing the difficulty of determining the precise structure of the tomb.[22] But whatever the structures, both Sunnis and Shiʿites were involved in developing the shrines of the *Ahl al-Bayt*: the most famous sites are perhaps the shrine at the supposed graves of 'Alī and Ḥusayn at Najaf and Karbalāʾ, re-commissioned

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[18] Teresa Bernheimer, "The Rise of *Sayyid*s and *Sādāt*: The Case of the āl Zubāra in 9th-11th Century Nishapur," *Studia Islamica* 100-101 (2005), pp. 43-69.

[19] Teresa Bernheimer, "Genealogy, Marriage, and the Drawing of Boundaries among the 'Alids (eight-twelfth centuries)", in Kazuo Morimoro (ed.), *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: The Living Link to the Prophet* (London/New York, 2012), pp. 191-233.

[20] With the office of the *niqāba*, it was clear that the 'Alids had developed a self-consciousness as a group, and that they were considered to be distinct from the rest of society by others as well. For the spread of the *niqāba*, see Kazuo Morimoto, "A Preliminary Study on the Diffusion of the *Niqābat al-Ṭālibīyīn*: Towards an Understanding of the Early Dispersal of *Sayyids*", in Hidemitsu Kuroki (ed.), *The Influence of Human Mobility in Muslim Societies* (London, 2003), pp. 3-42.

[21] Richard Ettinghausen suggested that it may be the oldest surviving burial place in the Muslim world; see Richard Ettinghausen, "The Man-Made Setting", in Bernard Lewis (ed.), *The World of Islam* (London, 1992), pp. 57-88.

[22] Grabar, "Commemorative Structures", p. 15. Regarding the historicity of the accounts of Fāṭima's death in Qum, see Takamitsu Shimamoto, "Some reflections on the origin of Qum: Myth and History", *Orient* 27 (1991), pp. 101-2, and Andreas Drechsler, *Geschichte der Stadt Qum im Mittelalter (605-1305)* (Berlin, 1999), pp. 129-131.

by the Zaydī ruler Muḥammad b. Zayd (d. 287/900)[23] after al-Mutawakkil's destruction half a century earlier; and the shrine of ʿAlī al-Riḍā at Mashhad, which received patronage from the Sunni Sāmānids as well as the Ghaznavids and a number of Sunni rulers after them.[24] Some of the less known *Ahl al-Bayt* shrines are first mentioned in the Ṭālibid genealogies; let us now turn to examine these sources in more detail.

Ṭālibid Genealogies and ʿAlid Shrines

As Kazuo Morimoto has shown in various studies, the early Ṭālibid genealogies are an intriguing group of works: based on family (or local) registers, they were mostly written between the ninth and the eleventh century by genealogists (the *nassāba*) who were predominantly themselves ʿAlids or Ṭālibids.[25] They cover the genealogical information on the different branches of the family of the Prophet (usually in full for the first few generations, then only selectively), and give some (usually little) historical information on certain family members. The best known and most widely used of these works is the *ʿUmdat al-Ṭālib* by the famous Imamī genealogist Ibn ʿInaba (d. 828/1424-5),[26] but a number of earlier genealogies survive, among them the *Sirr al-Silsila* of Abū Naṣr al-Bukhārī (d. mid-tenth century).[27] Al-Bukhārī's *Sirr al-Silsila* is particularly interesting because of its early date, the author's (and redactors') wide and eclectic use of sources, and the relatively rich information on the state and location of each lineage. Al-Bukhārī

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[23] Ibn Isfandyār (fl. 1210-1216), *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān* (Tehran, 1941), vol. I, p. 95; Abū Isḥāq al-Ṣābiʾ (d. 384/994), *al-Muntazaʿ min Kitāb al-Tājī* (Baghdad, 1977), pp. 47-8; and Wilferd Madelung, "Abū Isḥāq al-Ṣābiʾ on the ʿAlids of Ṭabaristān and Gīlān", *JNES* 26 (1967), p. 29, for further references.

[24] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ʾl-Taʾrīkh* (Beirut, 1965-67), vol. IX, p. 139; for a thorough examination of the history and patronage of the shrine at Mashhad, see May Farhat, *Islamic Piety and Dynastic Legitimacy: The Case of the Shrine of ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā in Mashhad (10th-17th century) (Iran)* (unpublished dissertation Harvard University, 2002). For the shrines of the imāms in Iraq and Iran more generally, see Allan, *The Art and Architecture of Twelver Shiʿism*, pp. 5-39.

[25] For a most thorough study of the works see Kazuo Morimoto, "The Formation and Development of the Science of Ṭālibid Genealogies in the 10th and 11th century Middle East", *Oriente Moderno* 18, n.s. (1999), pp. 541-570.

[26] B. Scarcia Amoretti, "Ibn ʿInaba", *EI2*.

[27] Ibn ʿInaba, *ʿUmdat al-Ṭālib fī Ansāb Āl Abī Ṭālib* (Najaf, 1961), new edition Mahdī al-Rajāʾī (Qum, 2004).

is frequently quoted by later genealogists, such as Ibn ʿInaba, and thought to be very reliable. As regards the information on shrines, his knowledge (or interest) is not as detailed as one would wish—clearly al-Bukhārī was a genealogist, not an architectural historian. Nonetheless, some relevant information regarding the existence of known burial sites, the increasing importance of the shrines for the ʿAlids and the wider Muslim community, and the vocabulary used to describe them can be gleaned from al-Bukhārī's *Sirr al-Silsila* and some of the later genealogies. Let us deal first with the question of vocabulary.

Thomas Leisten points out that none of the surviving inscriptions on mausolea or shrines before the 7th/13th century use the word *qabr*. He moreover emphasizes that the terminology employed to distinguish between different types of early funerary architecture was far from clearly defined also in the literary material—*qubba, turba, mashhad*, or more rarely *masjid* and *qabr* were used relatively interchangeably.[28] The geographer al-Muqaddasī in the *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm*, for instance, speaks of the graves (*qabr*) of ʿAlī and Ḥusayn in Iraq, at a time when there were monumental structures in place, some of which al-Muqaddasī himself describes.[29]

The evidence from al-Bukhārī's *Sirr* confirms a certain fluidity regarding terminology. He uses the words *qabr* (grave) and *mashhad* (shrine or tomb, usually for a martyr/saint) when mentioning the places where ʿAlids were buried,[30] and it is certainly questionable whether the use of the word *qabr* as opposed to *mashhad* implied that there was no noteworthy architectural structure extant. In fact, there certainly were structures in some of the places al-Bukhārī refers to as *qabr*. For instance, he speaks of the *qabr* of Muḥammad al-Jawād in the Maqābir Quraysh in Baghdad—as we know from other authors, by the early tenth century this shrine had seen various kinds of building activity.[31]

Nonetheless, there appears to be a certain difference between the terms. Al-Bukhārī uses *mashhad* three times to describe the burial place of an ʿAlid: he mentions a *mashhad* in Amul, of one Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. Hārūn (b. Isḥāq b. al-Ḥasan b. Zayd b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī), who was killed sometime

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[28] Leisten, *Architektur für Tote*, pp. 67-70; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, pp. 262-272.
[29] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm* (Leiden, 1906), p. 130.
[30] Al-Bukhārī, *Sirr al-Silsila*, pp. 23 and 55 (Balājird—should read Talājird?); p. 38 (Baghdād, *Maqābir Quraysh*); p. 89 (Karbalāʾ); p. 37 (Marw); p. 36 (Nīshāpūr, *Maqābir al-Ḥīra*); pp. 46-47 (Baghdād), p. 51 (Miṣr, *lā yuʿarrifu qabruhu*).
[31] See for instance Ibn Isfandyār, *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, vol. I, p. 95.

in the late 2nd/8th century by Rāfiʿ b. al-Layth, "and his tomb is well-known (*mashhaduhu ẓāhir*), may it be blessed and its visitation".[32] The two other instances of the term *mashhad* are the tomb of one al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbdallāh, who died in Rayy in 319/930 (*mashhaduhu ẓāhir yuzāru*),[33] and the tomb of the Ḥasanid ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, who was killed in Vāramīn in the Jibāl in the reign of the caliph al-Mahdī (r. 775-785).[34] In all three cases, he says that the *mashhad* is well-known (*ẓāhir*) and mentions the term in connection with visitation (*ziyāra*). There is no mention of *ziyāra* when he uses the term *qabr*, and only once does he say that a *qabr* is well-known.[35] Admittedly, the sample is rather small, and in the absence of further evidence one may only tentatively suggest that the vocabulary choice does indicate some sort of distinction.

What is clear, however, is that all three ʿAlids buried in a *mashhad* are not known to have been of particular importance to the Shiʿa. They are not known to have played any significant historical role, nor do they appear in the early Shiʿite visitation guides.[36] These three tombs, and perhaps also the sites described as *qabr*, are thus some of the first recorded examples of shrines to venerate "regular" members of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (i.e. not shrines

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[32] Al-Bukhārī, *Sirr al-Silsila*, p. 26. For the lineage of the ʿAlid, see the early genealogy of Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAqīqī (d. 277/891), *Kitāb al-Muʿaqqibīn min Wuld al-Imām Amīr al-Muʾminīn* (Qum, 2001), p. 74, or Shaykh al-Sharaf al-ʿUbaydalī (d. 435/1043), *Tahdhīb al-Ansāb wa-Nihāyat al-Aʿqāb* (Qum, 1413/1992-93), p. 145. The uprising of al-Rāfiʿ b. Layth in the year 190/805 is given in al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-Rusul wa-ʾl-Mulūk* (Leiden, 1879-1901), vol. III, pp. 707-709.

[33] Al-Bukhārī, *Sirr al-Silsila*, p. 80; he is al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlī [b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī].

[34] Al-Bukhārī, *Sirr al-Silsila*, p. 22.

[35] Al-Bukhārī, *Sirr al-Silsila*, p. 47 (the grave of al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar in Baghdad, who died there is the reign of al-Muʿtamid, r. 870-892).

[36] One of the earliest extant visitation guides is Qūlawayh al-Qummī (d. 368/978 or 369/979), *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* (Beirut, 1418/1997); see Meri, "ziyāra", *EI2*. Works such as the *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* show that, at least in the early period, "official" Shiʿite pilgrimage was associated especially with the imāms of the Imāmiyya, not the family of the Prophet in general. In comparison with the later Sunni cemetery guides, such as al-Harawī's (d. 611/1214) *Kitāb al-Ishārāt*, the Shiʿite works mainly contain litanies and traditions to be said at the sites. As Marco Schöller says, "we learn nothing of the actual location and shape of the shrines dealt with, and epitaphs are not quoted or alluded to. For the study of Islamic funerary epigraphy they [the Shiʿī works] are therefore without any serious value"; see Werner Diem and Marco Schöller, *The Living and the Dead in Islam: Studies in Arabic Epitaphs* (Wiesbaden, 2004), vol. II, p. 298.

to the Shiʿite imāms), which came to be so ubiquitous all over the Islamic world.

Many of these sites had a complex and multifaceted history: as al-Bukhārī and other genealogists say, patrons of varying affiliations structures tried to associate themselves with supposed burial sites of the Prophet's family, and at times commissioned structures around them. One example is the grave of Muḥammad al-Dībāj in Jurjān: when one of the Zaydī rulers of Ṭabaristān, Muḥammad b. Zayd b. Ismāʿīl, died on campaign in Jurjān in 287/900, his headless torso (*badan*) was buried in the grave (*qabr*) of Muḥammad al-Dībāj, another ʿAlid rebel who had died there a century earlier.[37] According to the local historian al-Qummī (fl. 378/988), a proper structure (*turba*) was erected only on the orders of the Būyid *wazīr* al-Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād (d. 381/991) in 374/984.[38]

Another intriguing example of diverse patronage is the burial place of the Ḥasanid ʿAbd al-Aẓīm b. ʿAbdallāh in Rayy, a well-known pilgrimage site still today. According to al-Bukhārī, ʿAbd al-Aẓīm was buried in the *masjid al-shajara*, the only ʿAlid he mentions to have been buried in a mosque.[39] Ibn Qūlawayh al-Qummī (d. 368/978) includes the shrine in his *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, one of the earliest pilgrimage guides for the Shiʿa, which suggests that the tomb of ʿAbd al-Aẓīm was already of some importance by the tenth century. This inclusion is indeed noteworthy, as together with the shrine of Fāṭima bt. Mūsā in Qum, this is the only shrine of an ʿAlid—who was not an imām—mentioned in the book.[40] Still, the shrine was an important site not just for the Shiʿa: as the twelfth-century scholar al-Qazwīnī reports, the Saljūq vizier Majd al-Mulk Asʿad b. Muḥammad b. Mūsā (d. 492/1099) ordered the construction of a mausoleum for ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm.

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[37] Al-Bukhārī, *Sirr al-Silsila*, p. 27. His head was sent to the Sāmānid *amīr* in Bukhārā. For the tomb of Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Dībāj, a son of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, known as *qabr al-dāʿī*, see al-Sahmī (d. 427/1035), *Taʾrīkh Jurjān* (Beirut, 1981), p. 360, no. 620; also p. 248, no. 388; Ibn Funduq, *Lubāb*, p. 254. For al-Dībāj's revolt in Mecca and Medina in 200/815, see al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. III, pp. 989-995, and other references in Bernheimer, *Social History*, Appendix I: ʿAlid Revolts, p. 174.

[38] Al-Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qum* (Tehran, 1982), pp. 223-224; Leisten, *Architektur für Tote*, p. 33.

[39] Al-Bukhārī, *Sirr al-Silsila*, p. 24; al-ʿUmarī (d. 450/1058), *al-Majdī fī Ansāb al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, (Qum, 1409), p. 219 (*qabr*); Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), *al-Shajara al-mubāraka fī Ansāb al-Ṭālibiyya* (Qum, 1410), p. 78 (*mashhaduhu bihā* [Rayy] *maʿrūf wa-mashhūr*).

[40] See Ibn Qūlawayh al-Qummī, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* (Beirut, 1418/1997), pp. 536-537; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, pp. 157-161; and J. Meri, "ziyāra", *EI2*.

Whatever the political context may have been, this was an important gesture of Sunni patronage, again showing the potentially inter-sectarian nature of such shrines.[41]

The third point emphasized in the genealogies is the fact that the areas around the shrines became focal points for members of the family of the Prophet. The role played by the ʿAlids themselves in this development has been discussed in some detail by May Farhat, in her work on the shrine of ʿAlī al-Riḍā at Mashhad. She suggests that "the main impulse for the survival of the shrine was linked to a class of *sayyid*s, descendants of the Prophet, who assumed the shrine's charismatic tradition, and appealed to a wide constituency, unfettered by ethnic and sectarian divisions".[42]

A similar situation is to be envisaged at a number of other places as well. The area around the shrines of the Twelver imāms in Baghdad, for instance, seem to have been so populated by ʿAlids that they required their own *naqīb* (syndic or registrar): the early eleventh-century genealogist Shaykh al-Sharaf al-ʿUbaydalī (d. 435/1043) has some references to the "Maqābir Quraysh" in Baghdad as a place where certain lineages had settled, and even held the *niqāba*.[43] For the city of Qum, the site of another major shrine complex, the local historian al-Qummī records a book of monthly wages (*kitāb-i mushāhara*) in 371/981, from which the ʿAlids were entitled to a pension (*waẓīfa*) of 30 *mann* of bread and 10 silver *dirham*s.[44]

Much economic activity took place at certain shrines, and towns and cities grew around them. Ibn Isfanyār, for instance, mentions the building of houses and shops in Sāmarrā, the site of the ʿAskariyya shrine, on the order of ʿAḍud al-Dawla: the Būyid is said to have "surrounded these holy places

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[41] ʿAbd al-Jalīl b. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Qazwīnī (fl. 1189), *Kitāb al-Naqḍ* (Tehran, 1371/1952), p. 220; W. Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran* (Princeton, 1984), p. 127; Sheila Blair, *The Monumental Inscriptions from Early Islamic Iran and Transoxania* (Leiden, 1992), p. 185; Leisten, *Architektur für Tote*, pp. 240-241.

[42] Farhat, *Islamic Piety*, p. iii, and Introduction, p. 1.

[43] Al-ʿUbaydalī (d. 435/1043), *Tahdhīb al-Ansāb*; pp. 98 (*naqīb*), 140, 206 (Maqābir Quraysh as a place where ʿAlids lived); Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, *al-Muntaqila al-Ṭālibiyya*, note p. 58. For a similar use of the *mashhad* of al-Riḍā, see al-Marwazī, *al-Fakhrī*, pp. 20, 22, 80. Eventually this became of course the actual name of the city.

[44] Al-Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qum*, p. 220; see Ann Lambton, "An Account of the *Tārīkhi Qum*", *BSOAS* 12 (1948), p. 596. For an excellent discussion of the history of the shrine, see Hossein Modarressi Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Turbat-i pākān: āthār va bināhā-yi qadīm-i maḥdūdah-i kunūnī-i dār al-muʾminīn-i Qum*, 2 vols. (Qum, 1976).

with houses and bazaars [...]".[45] Associated with the shrine at Karbalā' is a story told by Ibn al-Jawzī: When the Būyid vizier al-Dabbī died in 398/1007, he had wanted to be buried in the *mashhad* complex; with the help of one Ḥanafī shaykh Abū Bakr al-Khwārazmī, his son offered the *naqīb* of the 'Alids, who was in charge of such matters, 500 Maghribī *dinār*s for a *turba* in the complex.[46] The *naqīb* allegedly declined the payment graciously, but agreed that the vizier could be buried in the *mashhad* complex and even escorted the coffin personally to the grave site. Even if formally declined in this case, money was clearly to be made around the shrines. So much so, in fact, that another genealogist, Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqī urged the *naqīb* to ensure that the poor members of the family (*sādāt*) find employment and work, "so that there is no need for them to go begging around our mosques [...]".[47]

Conclusion

Whilst the recording of burial sites was not a priority for the authors of Ṭālibid genealogies, these sources nonetheless provide some new and exciting information on the development of Islamic funerary sites, particularly on 'Alid shrines. The examination of al-Bukhārī's *Sirr al-Silsila*, one of the earliest extant genealogies, shows that by the end of the ninth century there clearly were burial places of the 'Alid family that were visited. Many of the 'Alids mentioned were not Shi'ite imāms, but "regular" members of the family. The work, thus, gives some of the earliest references to the type of places that came to be venerated all over the Islamic world: shrines to local saints, who more often than not were outfitted with a Prophetic genealogy.

Moreover, the vocabulary to describe the burial sites of 'Alids was fluid, though not entirely interchangeable. Though this needs to be further investigated, the use of the simple *qabr* (grave) did not necessarily mean that there was no structure in place, whilst the term *mashhad* may indicate

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[45] E. G. Brown, *An Abridged Translation of the History of Ṭabaristān* (Leiden and London, 1905), p. 158. James Allan also gives the example of Mazar-e Sharif, which received patronage for the shrine as well as a bazaar with shops and a bath-house under the Timurids. See Allan, *The Art and Architecture of Twelver Shi'ism*, p. 38.

[46] Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* (Hyderabad, 1357-1359), vol. VII, p. 249; cited in Terry Allen, "The Tombs of the 'Abbāsid Caliphs in Baghdād", *BSOAS* 46 (1983), p. 425.

[47] Ibn Funduq, *Lubāb*, p. 722.

some sort of pilgrimage activity. The sites, moreover, were by no means places of pilgrimage for the Shiʿa only, but places of veneration for members of the family of the Prophet that could be shared, at least at times, regardless of religious affiliation, and they were frequently developed by both Sunni and Shiʿite patrons. Finally, the shrines became major focal points for the descendants of the Prophet, many of whom settled in the areas around them, and benefited from and contributed to the economic activity associated with the sites.

It must be emphasized again, however, that the information in the Ṭālibid genealogies regarding shrines and funerary sites is by no means exhaustive. One example is the mausoleum of the Zaydī ʿAlid Ḥasan b. Zayd at Amul. According to Ibn Isfandyār, al-Ḥasan b. Zayd ordered the building of the monument before his own death in 270/884 to deceive his enemies. Al-Bukhārī and the later genealogists do not mention a tomb or any building activity, even though they preserve lengthy accounts on Ḥasan b. Zayd, including the circumstances of his death.[48]

Thus, one puzzling question is why the existence of tombs and shrines is so rarely discussed, in the genealogies as well as in other types of Islamic historiography. Indeed, there are other, perhaps more obvious works where such information is similarly lacking. Al-Iṣfahānī's *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn* comes to mind, a work that recounts a long list of members of the family of the Prophet who were slain. Save two references on the destruction of the sites in Iraq by al-Mutawakkil and the tomb of Mūsā al-Kāẓim in Baghdad, al-Iṣfahānī hardly mentions a grave.[49] This is curious, especially in view of the great amount of information given about the places of death, or funerals, in the *Maqātil* as well as many of the other early histories: we are frequently told who prayed over a body or who lead the funerary procession, but rarely is there any mention of the grave, or any funerary construction.[50]

Not all eventual shrines, of course, were set among designated grave sites. Leisten has drawn attention to the common practice of house burials, of which little has thus far been written. Some of the well-known ʿAlids of

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[48] Ibn Isfandyār, *Tārīkh-e Ṭabaristān*, p. 27; Leisten, *Architektur für Tote*, p. 102.

[49] See al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, pp. 597-599, for the destruction of the gave of al-Ḥusayn at Karbalāʾ; p. 505, for the funeral and grave (*qabr*) of Mūsā al-Kāẓim in the Maqābir Quraysh in Baghdad, where one gets the sense that there was no great structure there (he describes the location of the grave in relation to another grave, of one ʿĪsā b. ʿAbdallāh al-Nawfalī).

[50] See Halevi, *Muḥammad's Grave*, for references on funerary processions and rites.

the Būyid period were buried at home (sometimes before being transferred to a shrine or cemetery later on):[51] the 'Askariyya complex at Sāmarrā, for instance, is said to have been the site of a house burial which eventually became a shrine.[52] Yet, whatever its original site or structure, and whether or not recorded in the literature, the burial places of many member of the *Ahl al-Bayt* did come to matter, as their special blessings (*barakāt*) were thought to be transmitted to those visiting heir tombs and shrines; on account of their blood relationship to the Prophet, these 'Alids could act as intercessors, even beyond their lifetime.[53]

[51] See for example Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, vol. VII, p. 247 (Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥusayn b. Mūsā al-Mūsawī, *naqīb* in Baghdad 394/1003-4), Leisten, *Architektur für Tote*, p. 122; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, vol. VII, p. 283 (Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *naqīb*, died in 406/1014), Leisten, *Architektur für Tote*, p. 123; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, vol. VIII, p. 126 ('Alī b. al-Ḥusayn Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *naqīb*, died in 436/1044-5), Leisten, *Architektur für Tote*, p. 126; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, vol. X, p. 247 (Abū 'Abdallāh Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Ḥusaynī, *naqīb*, died in 569/1173), Leisten, *Architektur für Tote*, p. 137.

[52] Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh* (Leiden, 1883), p. 615; Leisten, *Architektur für Tote*, p. 253. One report by al-Bukhārī suggests that there were places where one did not want to be buried, and that were rather unacceptable: during the rule of the 'Alid Ḥasan b. Zayd (d. 270/884) in Ṭabaristān, another 'Alid called Ibn Khāla al-Ḥasan al-'Aqīqī was governor of Sāriya for the 'Abbasids (*labasa al-sawād wa-khataba al-Khurāsāniyya*). Al-Ḥasan b. Zayd eventually captured him and killed him, and buried him in the cemetery of the Jews in Sāriya (*fī maqābir al-Yahūd bi-Sāriya*)— clearly to be understood as a punishment; see al-Bukhārī, *Sirr al-Silsila*, p. 27. The 'Alid was Ibn Khāla al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ṣaghīr b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-'Aqīqī.

[53] For some examples, see for instance, Valerie J. Hoffmann, "S̲h̲afā'a", *EQur'ān.*