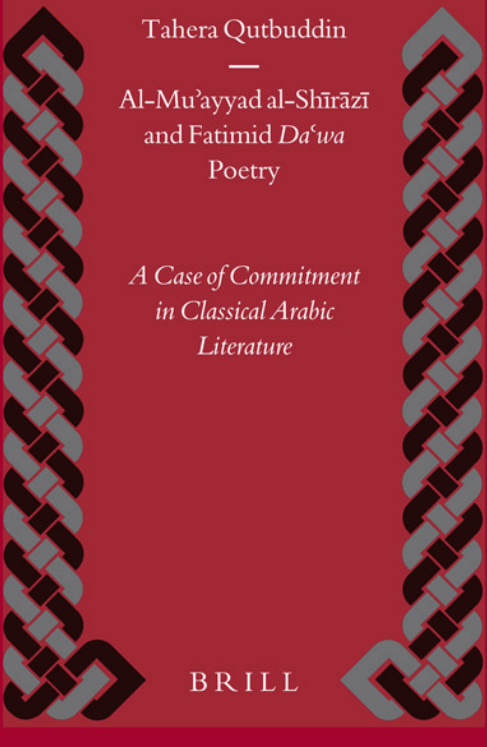




Tahera Qutbuddin

—

Al-Mu'ayyad al-Shīrāzī
and Fatimid *Da'wa*
Poetry

*A Case of Commitment
in Classical Arabic
Literature*

BRILL

AL-MU'AYYAD AL-SHĪRĀZĪ AND FATIMID *DA'WA* POETRY

ISLAMIC HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION

STUDIES AND TEXTS

EDITED BY

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AND
ROTRAUD WIELANDT

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AL-MU'AYYAD AL-SHĪRĀZĪ AND FATIMID *DA'WA* POETRY

A Case of Commitment in
Classical Arabic Literature

BY

TAHERA QUTBUDDIN



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To the cherished memory of my grandfather

“mu’ayyad-i aşghar”

Syedna Taher Saifuddin

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INTRODUCTION

Al-Muʿayyad al-Shīrāzī (386/87–470 H/996/97–1078 CE) was a medieval Arabic-Islamic scholar and poet committed to the Fatimid¹ religio-political ideology. He founded the tradition of Fatimid “*daʿwa*”² (religious mission) poetry that flourished after him for a thousand years and continues to be active to the present day.

Literature with an agenda is termed “committed literature” or “*littérature engagée*,”³ a committed or engaged author being one who believes in a particular social, political, religious, or other ideology and uses his or her literary production to convince society of its validity.⁴ Although committed literature is propaganda of sorts, it is a positive, refined, form, combining aesthetics with a message. Contrary to the creed of

¹ Some recent books on Fatimid history and its sources are: Paul Walker, *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and its Sources*, London, 2002; Heinz Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, trans. Michael Bonner, Leiden, 1996; idem, *Die Kalifen von Kairo. Die Fatimiden in Ägypten, 973–1074*, Munich, 2003; Michael Brett, *The Rise of the Fatimids, the World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the fourth century of the Hijra, tenth century CE*, Leiden & Boston, 2001; A.F. Sayyid, *al-Dawla al-fāṭimiyya fī miṣr, taḥṣīr jadīd*, 2nd ed., Cairo, 2000.

² For information on the Fatimid *daʿwa*, in addition to the sources listed in n. 1, see: M.K. Ḥusayn, *Ṭāʾifat al-ismāʿīliyya: Tārīkhuhā, nuṣūmuhā, ʿaqāʾiduhā*, Cairo, 1959; F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their history and doctrines*, Cambridge, 1990; idem, “The Ismaili Daʿwa outside the Fatimid Dawla,” in M. Barrucand, ed., *L’Égypte fatimide: son art et son histoire*, Paris, 1999, pp. 29–43; S.M. Stern, “Cairo as the Centre of the Ismāʿīlī Movement,” reprint in *Studies in Early Ismāʿīlism*, Leiden, 1983, pp. 234–56; A. Hamdani, “Evolution of the Organisational Structure of the Fāṭimī Daʿwah: The Yemeni and Persian Contribution,” *Arabian Studies* 3 (1976), pp. 85–114; Shainool Jiwa, “The Genesis of Ismāʿīlī Daʿwa Activities in the Yemen,” *Bulletin, British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* 15:1/2 (1988), pp. 50–63.

³ The term “*littérature engagée*” was coined by the French existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre in the mid-twentieth century. Sartre excluded poetry from his category, but later critics have generally argued for its inclusion.

⁴ For a detailed discussion of the aesthetics of committed literature and a critical examination of its Western types and texts, see James Engell, *The Committed Word: Literature and Public Values*, University Park, Penn., 1999; Charles Glicksburg, *The Literature of Commitment*, London, 1976; M. Adereth, *Commitment in Modern French Literature: Politics and Society in Péguy, Aragon and Sartre*, New York, 1968; W. Spiegelman, *The Didactic Muse: Scenes of Instruction in Contemporary American Poetry*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1989; and R. Montgomery, *The Reader’s Eye: Studies in Didactic Literary Theory from Dante to Tasso*, Berkeley, 1979. The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, contrary to most encyclopedias of world literature or literary theory, also provides a brief description of “*littérature engagée*.” <http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=49684> (accessed September 13, 2004.)

“art for art’s sake,” its supporters maintain that commitment adds to, rather than detracts from, the artistic value of a text. Indeed, the arguments in support of literary commitment are many, among them the social function it fulfills, the moral doctrine it expresses and makes plausible, the wisdom it imparts, and the reflection and right action it engenders in its readers.⁵ The 19th century Irish playwright Bernard Shaw ridiculed “the parrot-cry that art should never be didactic” (more, later, on didacticism, which shares with commitment its instructional feature) and defiantly proclaimed that “great art can never be anything else.”⁶ The 16th century French scholar Joseph Scaliger asserted that “imitation . . . is not the end of poetry, but is intermediate to that end. The end is the giving of instruction in pleasurable form, for poetry teaches, and does not simply amuse as some used to think.”⁷ The contemporary Arabist Stefan Sperl has remarked that “the didactic tone of the work [by the medieval Sufi poet Ibn al-Fārīd] does not in any way diminish its claim to full qasida status . . . for the imparting of insight and wisdom has been an integral aspect of the Arabic poetic endeavor from the earliest times. . . .”⁸ And Suzanne Stetkevych, another Arabist, has argued that “the functional aspect of [pre-Islamic] poetry, far from reducing it to a demeaned and servile status, endowed it with a value and power unknown to our Romantic and post-Romantic poetry, which is by comparison not merely chaste, but impotent.”⁹ A modern critic explains the concept of commitment in the following passage:

Commitment is the acceptance of an outlook on life, a *Weltanschauung*, which is “defended and illustrated” to the best of one’s ability in everything one undertakes. . . . A committed man is primarily a man who feels a sense of responsibility to his fellow men and who takes practical steps to help them. . . . Committed literature has no special themes,

⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre, in *Qu’est-ce que la littérature?* (1948), trans. as *What is Literature?* (1978), and André Gide, in *Littérature Engagée* (1950), among others, argued persuasively for the need for social and political commitment in literature.

⁶ Preface to *Pygmalion*, Penguin: London & New York, 2000, p. 9.

⁷ F.M. Padelford, *Select Translations from Scaliger’s Poetics*, New York, 1905, p. 2.

⁸ Stefan Sperl, “Qasida form and mystic path in 13th century Egypt: a poem by Ibn al-Fārīd,” in Sperl and Shackle, eds., *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, vol. 1: *Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings*, Leiden & New York, p. 74.

⁹ Suzanne Stetkevych, “Pre-Islamic Panegyric and the Poetics of Redemption: *Mufaddalīyah* 119 of ‘Alqamah and *Bānat Su‘ād* of Ka‘b ibn Zuhayr,” in S. Stetkevych (ed.), *Reorientations/Arabic and Persian Poetry*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994, pp. 1–2.

styles or methods—it is distinguished only by greater realism and by the author's attitude to life. These do not, by themselves, create a work of art, but they do enhance its quality. They help literature to make us aware of our true condition and to increase our sense of responsibility. In addition to providing aesthetic enjoyment, "littérature engagée" fulfills a "social function." Is not the blending of these two aspects characteristic of all great art?¹⁰

The works of the Existentialist-Communist philosopher Sartre, the Roman Catholic priest-poet Péguy, and the Marxist poet and dramatist Mayakovsky, are prime examples of committed European literature. Grounded in a specific historical context, the commitment and artistry found in these works is paralleled by the engagement and beauty found in many of the compositions of Arabic literature. Particularly in Arabic poetry, commitment has attained such currency in modern times that critics have coined for it the equivalent term "*iltizām*,"¹¹ and the writings of the Palestinian diaspora and Arab nationalist literature belong in this category. Earlier, pre-Islamic poetry served to record the heroic feats of a tribe and enhance its prestige. The verse of the first generation of Muslims contributed to the defense of the Prophet and the propagation of his new religion by praising him and satirizing his enemies. Shi'ite, Kharijite, and Sufi poetry had religious or religio-political agendas,¹² and Umayyad,

¹⁰ M. Adereth, *Commitment in Modern French Literature*, pp. 47, 50.

¹¹ The term "*iltizām*" was first used in about 1950. In 1953, the novelist and critic Suhayl Idrīs published the first issue of the literary journal *al-Ādāb*, in which he proclaimed the journal's advocacy of the concept of *iltizām* (Paul Starkey, "commitment," *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, eds. Julie Meisami and Paul Starkey, Routledge, London and New York, 1998, henceforth *EAL*, vol. 1, pp. 175–76). Other brief studies on the subject are: M.M. Badawi, "Commitment in contemporary Arabic literature," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* 14:4 (1972), pp. 859–79; and Verena Klemm, "Literary Commitment Approached through Reception Theory," Verena Klemm and Beatrice Gruendler (eds.), *Understanding Near Eastern Literatures*, Wiesbaden, 2000, pp. 145–54. Book length studies in Arabic on classical and modern Arabic committed poetry and prose include the following: (A) Broad surveys: Muḥammad 'Azzām, *Qaḍīyyat al-iltizām fī al-shi'r al-'arabī min al-'aṣr al-jāhili wa ḥattā 'aṣr al-inḥiṭāt*, Damascus, 1989; and Aḥmad Abū Ḥāqa, *al-Iltizām fī al-shi'r al-'arabī*, Beirut, 1979. (B) Monographs on early Islamic and Umayyad committed poetry: 'Abd al-Rahmān Khalīl, *Dawr al-shi'r fī ma'rakat al-da'wa al-islāmiyya ayyām al-rasūl*, Algiers, 1971; Maḥmūd Ḥasan Zaynī, *Dirāsāt fī adab al-da'wa al-islāmiyya*, Cairo, 1982; and Mayy Yūsuf Khulayf, *Qaḍīyyat al-iltizām fī al-shi'r al-umawī*, Cairo, 1989.

¹² Some studies on Arabic religious poetry are: G. von Grunebaum, "The Early Development of Islamic Religious Poetry," *JAOs* 60 (1940), pp. 21–29; J. Bellamy, "The Impact of Islam on Early Arabic Poetry," in A. Welch and P. Cachia (eds.), *Islam: Past Influence and Present Challenge*, 1979, pp. 141–67; F. Gabrieli, "Religious

Abbasid, and Fatimid court poetry sought to validate the legitimacy of caliphal authority.

Within these genres, a new development in literary commitment came with the poetic innovations of al-Muʿayyad al-Shīrāzī, chief missionary for the Fatimids in the fifth/eleventh century. The Fatimids were a Shiʿite-Ismaʿili Muslim dynasty who ruled North Africa and Egypt from the ninth through the early twelfth centuries. At that time, the Sunni Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad had become more or less a titular leader, with de facto power being wielded by the Buyid (or Buwayhid) sultan, and by local dynasties in the other lands of the Islamic empire that were nominally under the Abbasids: in Persia, by rulers from the same Buyid clan, and in Syria, by the Hamdanids. The Umayyad caliphate of Cordoba continued to be a separate entity quite distant from the central Islamic lands. The Buyids, Hamdanids, and Fatimids were all Shiʿite dynasties ruling mainly Sunni populations, but the Fatimids were distinct from the other two, for they challenged the validity of the Abbasid caliphate and claimed to be the sole legitimate rulers of the Islamic empire. They supported this claim by virtue of their superior lineage, maintaining direct descent from the Prophet Muḥammad through his daughter Fātima (hence their dynastic title) and her husband ʿAlī, Muḥammad’s cousin and appointed heir. Rather than mere temporal caliphs, they claimed to be spiritual Imams, with absolute religious and political authority.

The Fatimid Caliph-Imams had established a distinctive religio-political organization called the “*daʿwa*.” Literally, “*daʿwa*” means “call” or “mission.” In Qurʾānic usage, it denotes the call made to humankind by God, through His prophets, to believe in the true religion.¹³ This Qurʾānic sense is the one in which the Fatimids constituted their *daʿwa*, which was a well organized and highly secret institution for religious education and proselytization. The *daʿwa* was

Poetry in Early Islam,” in G. von Grunebaum (ed.), *Arabic Poetry, Theory and Development*, 1973, pp. 5–17; and P.F. Kennedy, “religious poetry,” *EAL*, vol. 2, pp. 649–51.

The religio-political verse of early Shiʿite and Kharijite movements in Umayyad and early Abbasid times is studied by S. Jayyusi, “Umayyad Poetry,” *CHAL*, vol. 1, pp. 387–432; and R. Rubinacci, “Political Poetry,” *CHAL*, vol. 1, pp. 185–201; see also W. Madelung, “The Hashimiyyat of al-Kumayt and Hashimi Shiʿism,” in his *Religious and Ethnic Movements in Medieval Islam*, 1992, article V; N.M. Maʿrūf, ed., *Diwān al-Khawārij: Shīʾuhum, khuṭabuhum, rasāʾiluhum*, Beirut, 1983; and ʿA.Ṭ. Ḥumayda, *Adab al-shīʿa ilā nihāyat al-qarn al-thānī al-hijrī*, Cairo, 1989.

¹³ E.g., Qurʾān 13:14: *lahū daʿwat al-ḥaqq*.

effective in winning souls for their cause, providing their followers with spiritual guidance, and, significantly for the medieval Islamic political scene, it was instrumental in the founding of their state. It continued to be active throughout the time of Fatimid hegemony and after its end. During the two centuries of rule, numerous missionaries (*dāʿī*) conducted the mission in Persia, the Levant, Yemen, India and elsewhere. A chief *dāʿī* (*dāʿī al-duʿāt*), who generally remained with the Caliph-Imam in the capital, supervised these *dāʿīs*.

Daʿwa is a form of commitment. It implies commitment on the part of the person who calls and asks for commitment from the one who responds. Literary commitment follows. Any person who was committed to the daʿwa—such as a *dāʿī*—and wrote or spoke to advance its cause, may be considered a committed daʿwa litterateur. There were many of these, such as the Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-Manṣūr in the fourth/tenth century with his sparkling orations, and earlier in the third/ninth century, if accepted as proto-Fatimids, the Ikhwān al-Safāʾ with the allegories they presented in their philosophical treatises. But the first committed daʿwa poet was al-Muʾayyad.

Al-Muʾayyad was one of the most illustrious of the chief *dāʿīs* and a veritable intellectual giant in the Fatimid daʿwa. An adherent of their religious creed, he was appointed *dāʿī* in his native Persia and there succeeded in converting the local Buyid ruler to the Fatimid cause. This success led the Abbasids to exert pressure on the Buyid sultan to turn over al-Muʾayyad to them. He consequently fled to the Cairene court of the Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-Mustaṣṣir bi-llāh.¹⁴ There, ironically, he suffered much humiliation at the hands of viziers, but he continued nevertheless to serve the daʿwa in various capacities. A few years after his arrival, he was appointed head of the Chancery. Next, he was sent as a special envoy to orchestrate a coalition to face the Saljuq-Abbasid threat. His diplomatic efforts led to the ex-Abbasid general al-Basāsīrī's conquest of the Abbasid capital, Baghdad, for the Fatimids. Following the victory, al-Mustaṣṣir raised al-Muʾayyad to the post of *dāʿī al-duʿāt* and simultaneously elevated him to the highest rank in the spiritual hierarchy, the one immediately following the Imam, called "*bāb al-abwāb*" (lit. "gate of gates,"

¹⁴ See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (henceforth *EI2*) article "al-Mustaṣṣir bi-llāh" by H.A.R. Gibb & P. Kraus, and the monograph *al-Imām al-Mustaṣṣir bi-llāh al-Fāṭimī* by ʿAbd al-Munʿim Mājid, [Cairo], 1960.

sometimes called “the *bāb*,” lit. “the Gate” leading to the Imam).¹⁵ He remained in this post and rank for the next twenty years until his death at the advanced age of eighty four.

Al-Muʿayyad was a gifted thinker, author, proselytizer, educator, diplomat, and poet. During his tenure as *dāʿī al-duʿāt*, he wrote and read out eight hundred weekly lectures on esoteric *daʿwa* topics, collected as the *Majālis Muʿayyadiyya*,¹⁶ which remain a living testimony to his knowledge and erudition. He also composed four short but dense treatises on similar subjects,¹⁷ a riveting, action-packed autobiography about his career in the *daʿwa*,¹⁸ a large number of prose prayers,¹⁹ and sixty-two magnificent poems.²⁰ He devoted his entire career to the service of the *daʿwa*, dedicating his talents—including his poetry—to advancing its cause.

Fatimid poetry²¹ before al-Muʿayyad was similar in its themes and

¹⁵ On the spiritual hierarchy of the Fatimid *daʿwa*, see A. Hamdani “Evolution of the Organisational Structure of the Faṭīmī Daʿwah.”

¹⁶ *Al-Majālis al-Muʿayyadiyya*: vol. 1, ed. Ḥātim Ḥamīd al-Dīn, Bombay, 1975; ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Beirut, 1974; vol. 2, ed. Ḥamīd al-Dīn, Oxford, 1986; vol. 3, ed. Ghālib, Beirut, 1984; vols. 4–8, mss. in Ṭayyibī *daʿwa* Library, Bombay (note: Ḥamīd al-Dīn’s eds. are more accurate). The Ṭayyibī *dāʿī* Ḥātim Muḥyī al-Dīn compiled a subject-based abridgement of the *Majālis*, titled *Ḍamīʿ al-ḥaqāʾiq*, ms., Ṭayyibī *daʿwa* library.

¹⁷ *Al-Masʿala wa al-jawāb*, *al-Masāʾil al-sabʿūn fī al-tawwīl*, *Sharḥ al-Maʿād*, and *al-Ibtidāʾ wa al-intihāʾ*. All mss. in Ṭayyibī *daʿwa* library.

¹⁸ *Al-Sira al-Muʿayyadiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn, Cairo, 1949 (older but more accurate ed.); ed. ʿArif Tāmīr titled *Mudhakkirāt dāʿī al-duʿāt*, Beirut, 1982.

¹⁹ *Al-Adʿya al-Muʿayyadiyya*, lithographic print titled *al-Tuhfa al-duʿāʾiyya al-fakhīma*, Bombay, 1412 H; lithographic print, Bombay, 1380 H, copied and ed. by Syedī Khuzaima Qutbuddin.

²⁰ *Dīwān*, ed. Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn, Cairo, 1949. Reprinted Beirut: Dār al-Muntaẓar, 1996. Partial translation (inaccurate and, without any apparent basis, Freudian) by Arthur Wormhoudt, *Selections from the Diwan of Muʿayyad al-Dīn Daʿa (sic) al-Duʿat*, William Penn College, 1994. Many *Dīwāns* are too large to allow comprehensive treatment. Fortunately, Muʿayyad’s, with its 62 poems, does permit a full study of all its material.

²¹ For information on Fatimid poets and poetry, see (in Arabic): M.K. Ḥusayn, *Fī adab miṣr al-fāṭimiyya*, Cairo, 1963 (sensitive to the Fatimid *tawwīl* tradition); ʿĀ. Tāmīr, *Tamīm al-fāṭimī ibn al-imām al-muʿizz li-dīn allāh al-fāṭimī: Shāʿir al-ḥubb wa al-ʿatīfa wa al-jamāl*, Beirut, 1982; M. al-Yaʿlāwī, ed., *al-Adab bi-ifrīqiyya fī al-ahd al-fāṭimī (296–365 H)*, Beirut, 1986 (excellent edition); idem, *Ibn Ḥanīʾ al-Maghribī al-Andalusī: shāʿir al-dawla al-fāṭimiyya*, Beirut, 1985; M.ʿA. Ḥasan, *Miṣr al-shāʿira fī al-ʿaṣr al-fāṭimī*, Cairo, 1983; Khidr Aḥmad ʿAṭāʾ Allāh, *Al-Ḥayāh al-fikriyya fī miṣr fī al-ʿaṣr al-fāṭimī*, Cairo, 1989, pp. 249–66; I.D. Jād al-Rabb, *Shāʿir al-dawla al-fāṭimiyya: Tamīm b. al-Muʿizz*, Cairo, 1991.

See (in European languages): F.M. Hunzai, *Shimmering Light: An Anthology of Ismaili Poetry*, ed. K. Kassam, London, 1996 (approximately half the book is Nizārī poetry); S.M. Stern, “Jaʿfar ibn Mansur al-Yaman: Poems on the Rebellion of Abū Yazīd,”

style to Abbasid court poetry. Its two most important earlier poets, Ibn Hānī' (d. c. 362/973) and Prince Tamīm (d. 374/984), had composed courtly panegyrics in praise of the Imam; these panegyrics were quite similar to the poems that their near contemporary Abbasid poets composed in praise of their own Caliph.²² Both the Abbasid and earlier Fatimid panegyrists had primarily political goals: to legitimize and propagate the patron's authority. Although the poems by Ibn Hānī' and Tamīm included theological motifs, these were relatively few and inconsistently used; those that predominated, as in Abbasid panegyrics, were tribal concepts of praise, such as generosity and courage.²³ Moreover, although Tamīm as a royal prince was exempt from concerns about employment, the state had engaged Ibn Hānī' as a panegyrist, which meant that his poetry conformed to the

reprint in *Studies in Early Ismailism*, pp. 146–52; Pieter Smoor, "Al-Mahdī's Tears: Impressions of Fāṭimid Court Poetry," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, eds. U. Vermeulen & D. De Smet, vol. 2, Leuven, 1998, pp. 139–6; idem, "The Master of the Century: Fāṭimid Poets in Cairo," in *Egypt and Syria*, vol. 1, 1995, pp. 139–6; idem, "Wine, Love and Praise for the Fāṭimid Imāms, The Enlightened of God," *ZDMG* 142/1 (1992), pp. 90–104; idem "The Poet's House: Fiction and Reality in the Works of the 'Fāṭimid' Poets," *Quaderni di studi Arabi* 10 (1992), pp. 45–62; idem, "Fāṭimid Poets and the 'Takhalluṣ' that Bridges the Nights of Time to the Imām of Time," *Der Islam* 68/1 (1991), pp. 232–62. Brief overviews of Fatimid Poetry in Western languages are: Y. Marquet, ed., *Poésie ésotérique ismailienne: La Tā'īyya de 'Amīr b. 'Amīr al-Baṣrī*, series: *Islam d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* 26, Paris, 1985, "Introduction," pp. 27–30; P. Smoor, "Fāṭimids," *EAL* vol. 1, pp. 224–26.

²² *Dīwān Muḥammad b. Hānī' al-Andalusī*, ed. M. al-Ya'lawī, Beirut, 1995 (see for example his poem that begins "qāmat tamīsu kamā tudāfī'u jadwālū," #83, pp. 318–26); *Dīwān al-Amīr Tamīm b. al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥasan al-A'zamī, Beirut, 1971.

²³ Compare the predominant motifs of generosity and courage in Ibn Hānī's poetry (*Ibn Hānī'*, pp. 329–32) with those that are predominantly ideological in al-Mu'ayyad's (cf. my section on "Motifs"). For the use of theological motifs in the poetry of Ibn Hānī' and Tamīm, see *Ibn Hānī'*, pp. 239–69, and *Shā'ir al-dawla al-fāṭimiyya*, pp. 80–99. Compare also Ibn Hānī's eight different princely patrons to al-Mu'ayyad's two Imam patrons (and two poems addressed to the Buyid prince, which were also for da'wa purposes); and compare Ibn Hānī's eight Qur'anic allusions to al-Mu'ayyad's more than three hundred. The poetry of Ibn Hānī' and Tamīm also contained innumerable verses on wine and love (cf. *Tamīm al-fāṭimī*, pp. 68–87, 153–176; *Shā'ir al-dawla al-fāṭimiyya*, pp. 103–46; *Ibn Hānī'*, pp. 217–18; "Wine, Love and Praise," pp. 90–104), whereas al-Mu'ayyad's was strictly chaste. For other differences between the poetry of Ibn Hānī' and Tamīm, and that of al-Mu'ayyad, see Ḥusayn, Introduction to al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, Cairo, 1949, pp. 159–65. Ibn Hānī's poems are included in the syllabus of the Ṭayyibī theological seminary, al-Jāmi'a al-Sayfiyya, under "(General) Arabic Literature," while a few poems by Tamīm are studied under "Fatimid Literature." However, Tamīm's *Dīwān* is not studied systematically at the Jāmi'a, unlike the *Dīwāns* of those whom I have specified as "Fatimid da'wa poets" in chapter 6.

panegyric convention of requesting financial remuneration from patrons.²⁴

Thus, Fatimid poetry had developed over a century along almost the same lines as Abbasid poetry. But the structure of the Fatimid court, which was the cultural environment for such verse, was not a facsimile of the Abbasid one. A major difference was the existence of the *da'wa*, whose primary purpose was otherworldly, although it did have a secondary, imperial purpose that buttressed the primary, religious mission of saving souls. The convergence of the poetic tradition and the *da'wa* in the verse of the *dā'ī*-poet al-Mu'ayyad would radically change the course of Fatimid poetry. Steeped as he was in the *da'wa*, it is logical to expect that the *da'wa* would fundamentally influence his poetic output. The question, then, is how his religious mission informed the aesthetic rules, motifs, structures, genres, motives, addressees, and aspirations of his poetry. And, furthermore, whether it is possible to discuss the artistic merit of his poems above and beyond their ideological mission.

In view of the pioneering nature of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry, it is surprising that scholars have only tentatively ventured into its domain. Al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* was edited in 1949 by Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-Miṣrī), who wrote a fairly lengthy introduction in which, after a biography of al-Mu'ayyad and a section on Fatimid doctrines culled from his *Dīwān* and elsewhere, he provided an eighteen-page "Glimpse at al-Mu'ayyad's Poetry."²⁵ Ḥusayn's study, though preliminary and largely descriptive, is perceptive and contains valuable data. He was also the first and last person to work on al-Mu'ayyad's poetic output until four decades later, when Pieter Smoor briefly discussed two of al-Mu'ayyad's odes.²⁶ Although cur-

²⁴ See for example, some verses expressing expectation of monetary reward in his *Dīwān* (# 83, vv. 94–96, p. 325).

²⁵ Influenced by the Romantic school in vogue in Egypt in the 1940s which regarded the expression of feelings to be the touchstone of literature, Ḥusayn divides al-Mu'ayyad's poetic output into two distinct sections: "*naẓm*" (didactic verse, referring to al-Mu'ayyad's disputational poems and the ideologically oriented panegyrics that constitute the larger part of the *Dīwān*), and "*shi'r*" (true poetry, referring to his relatively fewer love and nostalgia preludes and poignant description-of-self verses). The Egyptian scholar 'Aṭā' Allāh, in his survey of Fatimid thought, followed Ḥusayn's assessment of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry as didactic. (*Al-Ḥayāh al-fikriyya fī miṣr fī al-ʿaṣr al-fātimī*, pp. 252–53.)

²⁶ In one article, Smoor calls al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* "less a work of poetic art than . . . a metrical, rhyming continuation of the *Majālis*." (Wine, Love and Praise," p. 100). Elsewhere, he heads his survey of what he calls "the sometimes strange

sory evaluations of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry offered by other modern scholars have been positive,²⁷ Husayn, and, following him, Smoor, consider al-Mu'ayyad's poetry to be predominantly didactic and therefore lacking in artistic merit. Their negative assessment appears to stem from three misconceptions: they (a) confuse commitment with didacticism, (b) measure al-Mu'ayyad's poetry with the yardstick of Abbasid literature, and (c) lack an understanding of its da'wa function and an appreciation for its ideological "tāwīl"²⁸ context.

The issue of didacticism (*naẓm*),²⁹ which implies, according to most medieval and modern Arabic critics, a lack of literary value, should not be conflated with commitment (*iltizām*). If we accept Geert Van Gelder's definition of Arabic didactic poetry as "any text that is poetry in terms of its prosody (i.e. meter and rhyme) in which the typical poetic style (tropes, figures of speech, etc.) is deliberately avoided, for the sake of providing information on a particular branch of knowledge,"³⁰ we see that only two of al-Mu'ayyad's sixty-two poems possess the dual characteristics of this category.³¹ To be sure, instruction, the first integral part of didacticism, is also characteristic of committed literature (and of much of al-Mu'ayyad's poetic output),

poetry which the Fatimid belief inspired" with al-Mu'ayyad's "Thursday morning" ode. ("Master of the Century," pp. 140–41, al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, #61, pp. 314–15).

²⁷ Rubinacci describes al-Mu'ayyad as a poet who "above all others dedicated his energies to the propagation and glorification of the Fatimid creed," calling his *Dīwān* "one of the most remarkable of efforts to make poetry serve politico-religious ends," ("Political poetry," p. 200). And Marquet finds al-Mu'ayyad's poetry not without its lyrical moments and passages of beauty ("ils sont donc essentiellement lyriques, même lorsqu'ils font le panegyrique du calife, et témoignent d'une veine poétique," *Poésie ésotérique ismailienne*, p. 28).

²⁸ "Tāwīl" is the classical pronunciation. I have used this orthography in my book (instead of the relatively modern "ta'wīl") as it is the one adhered to by the Fatimids and later, through the centuries, by the Tayyibīs.

²⁹ See Wolfhart Heinrichs, "naẓm," *EAL*, vol. 2, pp. 585–86.

³⁰ G. Van Gelder, "Arabic Didactic Verse," in J.W. Drijvers & A.A. MacDonald, eds., *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, Leiden, 1995, p. 117. Other articles on the development of Arabic didactic poetry are "Didactic Verse" by Ṣ. Khulūṣī (severely critiqued by Van Gelder, *CHALRS LAP* pp. 498–509), and short surveys by G. Endress ("Das Lehrjeditich," *Grundriss der arabischen Philologie*, Bd. 2: *Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. H. Gätje, Wiesbaden, 1987, pp. 471–73) and Van Gelder, "Didactic poetry," *EAL*, vol. 1, pp. 193–94. A survey of didactic poetry in Western literature is S.J. Kahn, "Didactic Poetry," *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (eds. A. Preminger & T.V.F. Brogan, Princeton, New Jersey, 1993, pp. 292–95).

³¹ #1, pp. 191–98, & #2, pp. 199–206. Details are provided in the section on "Disputational Verse" in chapter 4.

but the near absence of poetic tropes, the second necessary feature of Arabic didactic verse, is not. The two spheres of didacticism and literary commitment overlap in their common trait of instruction, but they are not identical. One is belles-lettres, the other is not. Al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* is vastly more literary than, for example, the thousand-verse grammar text *al-Alfyya* by Ibn Mālik, which would consensually be placed in the category of didactic versification. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad's poems are not didactic. They are committed.

Regarding the next two issues, it is imprecise, in my opinion, to apply the criteria for evaluating Abbasid poetry ad hoc to Fatimid da'wa poetry. To paraphrase a fellow Arabist, the merit of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry is different.³² In order to produce a fair assessment, therefore, it is necessary to analyze its literary style in the context of its ideological setting, and to evaluate its effectiveness in achieving its particular goals. Al-Mu'ayyad's verse, although it had numerous features similar to Abbasid poetry, is grounded in its own distinct heritage, the Fatimid esoteric tradition. Because of its deep and complex subtext, the poetic text is multi-layered, yielding up to the audience only as much theological information as it has prior exposure to. Without an awareness of these subtle *tāwīl* nuances, it is difficult to appreciate its art fully. Moreover, his poetry was composed for its own clear aims, the propagation of the Fatimid da'wa. And without understanding this religio-political function, it is not possible to measure its success.

A double standard seems to operate that allows European literature to be both committed and artistic but does not allow Arabic—especially Fatimid, and particularly al-Mu'ayyad's—literature to be both, denying its aesthetic value because of its ideological engagement. When discussing the artistic merit of a poem, what is material is not the content of the ideas in that poem, but rather, the poetic style in which these ideas are expressed. Al-Mu'ayyad's poems, despite their theological substance, do not fail the test of being true poetry. Although scholars have argued interminably through the ages over what exactly constitutes poetic style, most accept certain core elements as essential, including mimesis, rhythm, language that aims to be powerfully persuasive, and abundant use of figures of speech such

³² Stefan Sperl, arguing for the aesthetic value of Miḥyār al-Daylamī's mannerist poetry. *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry: A Structural Analysis of Selected Texts (3rd century AH/9th century AD–5th century AH/11th century AD)*, Cambridge, 1989, p. 70.

as metaphor. These components are well integrated into al-Mu'ayyad's poems. The most striking aspect of his poetic technique is a blending of high literary style and Islamic faith motifs. Not only are his poems treatises of Fatimid dogma, they are also, as I hope to illustrate in this study, masterpieces of Arabic literature. The ideological content of the poems is irrelevant to their literary evaluation, or rather, it enhances their aesthetic value. The strength of al-Mu'ayyad's thought, the force of his arguments, cannot be separated from the literary qualities of his writing.³³

Al-Mu'ayyad's poetry disproves some of the criticisms leveled at Arabic literature that stereotype its praise poetry as lacking sincerity and substance. For al-Mu'ayyad was not a professional poet, and his verse differed from the Abbasid and earlier Fatimid model in its warm, sincere, and personal nature, and its lack of expectation of monetary reward. Its literary character, too, was distinct from that of the earlier poets in several important ways, chief among them being: (a) the predominance of theological motifs; (b) a focus on praising the Imam using these motifs; (c) the composition of distinctive preludes and closures to panegyric; (d) the production of original da'wa-oriented genres of poetry, such as *munājāt* to commune with God and disputational verse to reveal weaknesses in non-Fatimid doctrines; (e) special light-focused and Egypt-centered imagery; and (f) above all, the use of the unique form of *tāwīl*-based religious symbolism—metaphor, in fact, as manifestation, in the sense that what seems at first glance to be metaphor turns out upon closer acquaintance not to be metaphor at all but, rather, the theological reality of the Imam on a cosmic scale.

These features are discussed in detail in the following chapters, which demonstrate the fact that in contrast to the *dawla* (state) poetry of the earlier era, al-Mu'ayyad's poetry was truly "Fatimid da'wa poetry," the beginning of a dynamic literary tradition that flourished through the Fatimid-Ṭayyibī³⁴ da'wa for over nine and a half centuries and continues to thrive today.

³³ This last sentence is a paraphrase of Engells remarks on some 18th century English writers and poets, *The Committed Word*, p. 1.

³⁴ The Ṭayyibī da'wa and its poetry is discussed in detail in chapter 6.

Manuscript History of al-Mu'ayyad's Dīwān

Due to the absence of documented evidence, many questions remain unanswered about the collection and publication of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*. However, it is logical to hypothesize that al-Mu'ayyad's Yemenite student, the dā'ī-qāḍī Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī, brought al-Mu'ayyad's works with him when he returned to Sanaa after his five-year sojourn in Egypt with al-Mu'ayyad from 456/1064 to 461/1069. Lamak is probably the person who collected and published al-Mu'ayyad's poems, perhaps even in al-Mu'ayyad's lifetime, conceivably even with the poet's own collaboration. This hypothesis is borne out by the fact that in all the manuscripts, al-Mu'ayyad's poems are followed by an appendix containing a few poems by earlier Imams and da'wa luminaries,³⁵ the last of which is a panegyric on the Imams by someone named "Ibn Ḥammād"—this is probably Lamak himself.³⁶ The poem by Ibn Ḥammād is followed in all the manuscripts by a sentence saying "The *Dīwān* ends here," which is followed by another four poems by a poet who probably lived in the early Ṭayyibī period,³⁷ so it would appear that the *Dīwān* was fixed in the form that we have it today by the early twelfth century, that is, at the very beginning of the Ṭayyibī da'wa.³⁸

³⁵ The poets are: 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (four poems), three Fatimid Caliph-Imams al-Qā'im (one poem), al-Ḥākim (one poem), and al-Mustashīr (two poems), and an Alexandrian poet named al-Iskandarānī, who lived in the reign of al-'Azīz (r. 365–386/975–996), as is clear from his panegyric which names al-'Azīz as the *mamdūh* (one poem).

³⁶ The last verse of this poem is the poet's plea for the Imams' intercession, a signature verse in al-Mu'ayyad's tradition. The poet names himself as "Ibn Ḥammād," and also prays for "Abī Ḥammād," here in the position of the rhyme word.

³⁷ Al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Abī Yazīd. According to the Ṭayyibī theological compilation *Majmū' al-tarbiyya* (ms., vol. 1) by Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir (d. 584/1188), this was the name of the author of *R. al-Maṭbakh fī al-mabda' wa al-ma'ād*, who lived in the reign of al-Āmir (r. 495–524/1101–1130, cf. also Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, pp. 127, 145). The *Tuḥfat al-qulūb* (ms.) of the Ṭayyibī dā'ī Ḥatīm b. Ibrāhīm (r. 557–597/1162–1199) mentions a Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Abī Yazīd as being ranked 7th in the da'wa hierarchy of Ḥatīm's time.

³⁸ The *Dīwān* manuscripts all inexplicably leave out al-Mu'ayyad's panegyric for Abū Kālījār (#62 of *Dīwān* ed.). Al-Mu'ayyad's *Sīra* (pp. 48–54, full poem) cites this poem, as does the fifteenth century Ṭayyibī dā'ī Idrīs' *Uyūn al-akhbār wa funūn al-āthār* (vol. 6, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālīb, Beirut, 1984, p. 341, part of poem), so its exclusion from the *Dīwān* mss. was probably not a consciously formulated da'wa policy. Six poems from al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* are cited in full or in part by dā'ī Idrīs: *Uyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 6: pp. 325–328 (#7), p. 329 (#41), p. 341 (#62), pp. 356–358 (#17); vol. 7 (ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, titled *The Fatimids and Their Successors in Yaman*, London & New York, 2002), pp. 73–74 (#38), p. 75 (#60). The ordering of the *Dīwān* is arbitrary and does not appear to follow any particular pattern.

After Lamak's death in c. 491/1097–98, the Yemenite Ṭayyibī branch of the Fatimids preserved al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, and the *Dīwān* manuscripts that we have today all originate from the Ṭayyibī (Dā'ūdī Bohra) da'wa library.³⁹ The major portion of the Ṭayyibī library (along with the seat of the Tayyibī da'wa) moved to India in 946/1539, where it is currently housed in Mumbai and Surat under the jurisdiction of the Ṭayyibī dā'ī. The earliest *Dīwān* manuscript that I was able to locate is dated 1075 AH (1665 CE). Earlier ones in the library's possession were probably destroyed in various natural and man-made disasters through the ages. However, in time, manuscripts from the early Yemeni-Ṭayyibī period may indeed be recovered from personal collections in Yemen and, in addition to providing an even more accurate rendition of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry, they may provide hard evidence concerning the collection and publication of the *Dīwān*.

The Ḥusayn edition of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* is a fairly accurate, critical version.⁴⁰ The manuscripts he utilizes were all produced in the Ṭayyibī da'wa; the earliest dated manuscript among them is 1309 AH (1892 CE). In addition to the Ḥusayn edition, I was able to consult other, earlier manuscripts from the Ṭayyibī library, such as the seventeenth-century manuscript mentioned above (details of these manuscripts are provided in Appendix B). In several instances, my manuscripts contain variants from the edited version, and I have used these variants whenever the edited version appears to be inaccurate.

³⁹ The Ṭayyibīs today belong to several different denominations based on the line of dā'īs they consider legitimate; doctrinal differences are minimal. For the purposes of this study, the majority Dā'ūdī Bohra Ṭayyibī denomination is taken as the representative group.

⁴⁰ Note that Ḥusayn includes two poems in his edition that are not in the *Dīwān* manuscripts. One of these, #63, is an incorrect inclusion. This poem is not by al-Mu'ayyad at all, but is quoted by him in his *Majālis* and attributed to "one of the truthful, sincere ones . . ." (vol. 4, majlis 14). The other poem, #62, is by him, and he quotes it as his own composition in the *Sīra* (pp. 48–54).

CHAPTER ONE

AL-MU'AYYAD'S LIFE AND CAREER IN THE DA'WA

*I am Riḍwān,¹ the servant of
servants of Ma'add,²
I will never relinquish my
obedience to him*

أَنَا رِضْوَانُ عَبْدٍ عَبْدٍ مَعَدٍّ³
لَسْتُ عَنْ طَاعَتِي لَهُ أَتَخَلَّى

(Al-Mu'ayyad, *Dīwān*)⁴

I have reconstructed al-Mu'ayyad's biography in this chapter primarily using his *Dīwān*, positioning it against a summary background of information provided by his autobiography titled the *Sīra*,⁵ and other historical, documentary, and literary sources.⁶ The persona that will come through is “al-Mu'ayyad, the Fatimid dā'ī,” for his poetry was entirely informed by his feelings towards the da'wa. This biography, therefore (in addition to providing a contextual setting for the literary and functional analyses of al-Mu'ayyad's da'wa poetry), will demonstrate al-Mu'ayyad's intense involvement with the Fatimid

¹ Al-Mu'ayyad calls himself Riḍwān (name of the warden angel of Paradise) referring to his rank of bāb al-abwāb.

² Ma'add is al-Mustanṣir's given name.

³ I have read the second *-b-d* as *'ubd* in the plural (cf. Lane), meaning the best servant, or the most lowly servant, as in another verse by al-Mu'ayyad (#38, p. 281, v. 13), for I could not understand the meaning of the sentence when reading this word as *'abd* (sing., “servant”), which is the reading in the Ṭayyibī oral tradition.

⁴ #61, p. 315, v. 25.

⁵ Brief excerpts trans. by Joseph Lowry as “The Autobiography of al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn Hibat Allāh al-Shīrāzī (ca. 1000–1077),” in Dwight Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography and the Arabic Literary Tradition*, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 2001, pp. 132–144.

⁶ The early, primary sources for the study of al-Mu'ayyad's life I have evaluated in Appendix D. Modern studies include the following: V. Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission: The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*, London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003; idem, *Die Mission des fāṭimidischen Agenten al-Mu'ayyad fī d-dīn in Šīrāz*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang (Ph.d. thesis, Tübingen University) 1989; A. Hamdani, *The Sīra of al-Mu'ayyad fī'd-Dīn ash-Shīrāzī*, Ph.d. thesis, University of London, 1950; M.K. Ḥusayn, “Introduction” to his edition of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, pp. 17–86; J. Muscati and Kh.B. Moulvi, *Life and Lectures of the Grand Missionary al-Mu'ayyad-fī'd-dīn al-Shīrāzī*, Karachi: Ismailia Association, 1950, pp. 1–77; I. Poonawala, “Al-Mu'ayyad fī l-Dīn” *EI2*, vol. 7, pp. 270–71.

da'wa: the essential part the da'wa played in his life on the one hand, and his importance for its advancement on the other. For unlike the earlier Fatimid poets Ibn Hānī' and Tamīm, al-Mu'ayyad was a Fatimid dā'ī. His sun rose and fell on the Fatimid da'wa and the Fatimid Imam. The da'wa and the Imam deeply affected his personal and public life, engendering his happiness and pain, inspiring his actions and thoughts, and shaping his literary production. Indeed, the crux of al-Mu'ayyad's entire life and career was his profound involvement with the Fatimid da'wa and his intense relationship with the Fatimid Imam.

Al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* is important as a historical source because it provides data about his biography not found elsewhere.⁷ It gives a taste of the intrigues and inside workings of the Buyid and Fatimid courts, and provides information about inner workings of the da'wa organization, about which other sources provide almost no information. Most importantly, it gives us insight into what al-Mu'ayyad himself thought and felt about the events and people in his life, and in many instances, adds colorful detail to the drier, impersonal historical narrative.⁸ In short, it brings to life the events and people of al-Mu'ayyad's time.

It is possible to make a general division of the contents of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry according to five major periods of his life: his early life in Fars (386/87–429 H/996/97–1038 CE) is the first distinct period when he wrote long, disputational poems and others in praise of the Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-Zāhir.⁹ The second period is the time he lived at the court of the Buyid king, Abū Kālījār (429–436/37 H/1038–1045/46 CE), and the poems of this period contain praise of al-Mustanşir and Abū Kālījār, references to events in Fars that led to his being driven out of that country, and details of the hardships he faced on the road.¹⁰ The third period is the first decade he spent in the court of al-Mustanşir bi-llāh in Cairo (436/37–448

⁷ E.g., data about al-Mu'ayyad's date of birth, the nature of his appeal to the Imam for audience, and a probable reason for his exile to Jerusalem.

⁸ E.g., Al-Mu'ayyad's dealings with Abū Kālījār, his feelings during his exile, and his relations vis-à-vis the Imam.

⁹ Cf. #1, #4, #7, #12, #14, #51, #61.

¹⁰ Cf. #3, #15, #17, #40, #55.

H/1045/46–1056 CE), and the poems of this period contain praise of al-Mustanşir, descriptions of al-Mu'ayyad's sad condition away from Fars, and nostalgia towards his homeland.¹¹ The fourth period (448–450 H/1056–1058 CE) is the year he spent in Syria leading the Fatimid coalition against the Saljuq-Abbasid front, and the poems of this period reflect his situation in the arena of battle.¹² The fifth period (450–470 H/1058–1078 CE) is the year al-Mu'ayyad stayed in Jerusalem in exile, followed by two decades back in Cairo after his recall, and the poems of this period contain some praise of al-Mustanşir, *munājāt*, and descriptions of al-Mu'ayyad's sorry state of exile in Jerusalem.¹³ This chronological division will be followed here. The bases for dating individual poems are analyzed more fully in the appendix titled “Chronological Analysis of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*.”

*Fars: Lineage, Background and Early Life 386/87–429
(996/97–1038)*

Al-Mu'ayyad's full name was Abū Naşr¹⁴ Hibat Allāh b. Abī 'Imrān Mūsā b. Dā'ūd, all parts of which (except the Dā'ūd) are attested numerous times by the signature-verse in his *Dīwān*.¹⁵ His *nisba* is most often given as al-Shīrāzī, referring to the fact that he was a native of the city of Shiraz in the province of Fars in southwest Persia. Also added by some historians are al-A'jamī (the Persian),¹⁶

¹¹ Cf. #6, #16, #23, #24, #41, #54.

¹² Cf. #37.

¹³ Cf. #21, #29, #38.

¹⁴ The sources do not mention any children of al-Mu'ayyad, and since *naşr* (lit. victory) has been known to be used as a felicitous pseudo-filionic, al-Mu'ayyad's *kunya* “Abū Naşr” could indicate that he did not have sons. However, when “Naşr” in a *kunya* is not a real name, it is normally preceded by the definite article; even though, in the *Dīwān* edition, it has the definite article attached (“Abū al-Naşr” #55, p. 303, v. 5), in all my *Dīwān* manuscripts as well as the *Šīra* edition (p. 76) it does not (hence, “Abū Naşr”). Thus, the correct version of al-Mu'ayyad's *kunya* seems to be “Abū Naşr,” and the question of al-Mu'ayyad's offspring remains unanswered.

¹⁵ For details of these attestations, see “Closures.”

¹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), *Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wa al-ithbār bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa al-āthār*, known as *al-Khiṭaṭ al-Maqrīziyya*, Beirut, n.d., reprint of Cairo ed., 1853, vol. 1, p. 460.

Table A. Important Dates in al-Mu'ayyad's Life,¹⁷ 386/87–470 (996/97–1077).

Fars: Early Life 386/87–429 (996/97–1038)			
386/87	...	996/97	Birth, in Shiraz?
386	<i>Ramaḍān</i>	996	<i>Death of al-'Azīz & Succession of al-Ḥākīm</i>
411	<i>Shawwāl</i>	1021	<i>Death of al-Ḥākīm & Succession of al-Ẓāhir</i>
428	<i>Sha'bān</i>	1036	<i>Death of al-Ẓāhir & Succession of al-Mustaṣṣir</i>
Fars to Cairo: At the Buyid Court and Emigration 429–436/37 (1038–1045/46)			
429	1 Shawwāl	1038	Beginning of Sīra, Problems with Sunni scholars in Shiraz
429	almost 1 year stay	1038	Trip to Fasā, Instituted Da'wa Center
430 ff.	...	1039 ff.	Return to Shiraz, Abū Kālījār's Conversion, Problems Again
433	...	1042	Trip to Ahwaz, built mosque
...	7 months duration	...	Back in Shiraz, house arrest
...	1 month journey	...	Departure from Shiraz, through Jannāba to Ahwaz
435	7 months stay, till Sha'bān or later	1044	To Encampment of Numayrid al-Manṣūr
436	...	1045	To Mosul, through Kufa and Karbala
Cairo: At the Fatimid Court 436/37–448 (1045/46–1056)			
436/37	...	1045/46	Arrival in Cairo
439	Sha'bān	1048	First Audience with al-Mustaṣṣir
440	<i>Ḥumādā I</i>	1048	<i>Death of Abū Kālījār</i>
443	...	1051	Appointment to Dīwān al-Inshā'
446	Dhū al-ḥijja	1054	Ḥajj Pilgrimage to Mecca
447	<i>Ramaḍān</i>	1055	<i>al-Basāsīrī's expulsion & Ṭuḡhrīl's entrance into Baghdad</i>
Syria The Basāsīrī Episode 448–450 (1056–1058)			
448	Ṣafar	1056	Departure for Syria
448	<i>Shawwāl</i>	1056	<i>Sinjār Victory</i>
450	after Rabī' I	1058	Return to Cairo
450	after Rabī' I	1058	End of Sīra
Cairo: Al-Mu'ayyad Dā'ī al-Du'āt 450–470 (1058–1078)			
450	<i>8 Dhu al-Qa'da</i>	1058	<i>al-Basāsīrī's Entrance into Baghdad, Khufba for Fatimids</i>
450	1 Dhū al-Ḥijja	1058	Appointment as Bāb al-Abwāb & Dā'ī al-Du'āt
451	<i>8 Dhu al-Qa'da</i>	1059	<i>Ṭuḡhrīl Beg's Retaking of Baghdad for Abbasids</i>
453	after Ṣafar	1061	Exile to Jerusalem
454	bet. Rabī' I & Sha'bān	1062	Recall to Cairo & Reinstatement as Dā'ī al-Du'āt
456–61	...	1064–69	Lamak b. Mālīk's stay and study with al-Mu'ayyad
470	Shawwāl, first 10 days	1078	Death, Burial in Dār al-'Ilm

¹⁷ Plain text is used for dates and events directly related to al-Mu'ayyad, italics for those indirectly linked.

or al-Sulaymānī, the latter perhaps referring to an ancestral *nisba*.¹⁸ His titles (none of which are attested in the *Dīwān*, presumably for reasons of humility) were *ʿIṣmat al-mu'minīn*¹⁹ (Succor of the Believers) and *Ṣafīyy Amīr al-mu'minīn wa waliyyuhū*²⁰ (the Chosen of the Commander of the Faithful and his Elect), probably conferred on him late in life with his appointment as dā'ī al-du'āt. His earliest and most distinctive title,²¹ which was probably bestowed upon him at the time of his appointment as dā'ī of Fars,²² was "al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn," meaning "The One Aided [by God] in Religion," often shortened to "al-Mu'ayyad;" most authors call him "al-Mu'ayyad al-Shīrāzī."

¹⁸ *Jāmi' al-ḥaqā'iq*, vol. 2, p. 227: Hibat Allāh b. Mūsā b. Dā'ūd al-Sulaymānī; *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 6, p. 325. We do not know the names of al-Mu'ayyad's ancestors beyond his grandfather, but the fact that al-Mu'ayyad's father was named Mūsā, his grandfather Dā'ūd, and his brother ʿImrān, may be tentatively taken as an indication of the proliferation of the names of Qur'anic-Biblical prophets in al-Mu'ayyad's family, so Sulaymān could be an earlier ancestor. On the other hand, or perhaps in addition to being an ancestral *nisba*, "al-Sulaymānī" could be a reference to al-Mu'ayyad's spiritual *nisba* to the Prophet Solomon. Another similar sounding *nisba* that is attributed to al-Mu'ayyad by Ḥusayn ("Introduction" to al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, pp. 19–20) is "al-Salmānī." However, contrary to Ḥusayn's reading of the references he cites for this attribution, "Salmānī" is not actually used in these references as part of al-Mu'ayyad's nomenclature but rather as a description of him. Al-Khaṭṭāb (*Ghāyat al-mawālīd*, ms.) says al-Mu'ayyad was "Salmānī" with regard to his corresponding rank [of bāb], and a 19th century Ṭayyibī author (*ʿUyūn al-maʿārif*, ms.) claims that al-Mu'ayyad was "from the progeny of Salmān al-Fārisī," a claim which, in any case, has no other evidence to support it.

¹⁹ Al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh, *al-Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*, ed. ʿA. Mājid, Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-Miṣrī, n.d., #55 (p. 181) & #61 (p. 202). Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Irshād al-arīb il maʿrifat al-adīb*, known as *Muʿjam al-Udabāʾ*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth, New Delhi: Kitāb Bhavan, 1982, vol. 1, p. 204.

²⁰ *Sijillāt*, #5 (p. 181) & #61 (p. 202).

²¹ The earliest attestation of his title "al-Mu'ayyad" is in 436/437 (1045/46), thirteen years before his appointment as dā'ī al-du'āt, in a letter from Abū Kālījār to him (*Šīra*, p.76) written soon after he arrived in Egypt. Next, in 441 (1049) or 442 (1050), the Fatimid vizier Abū al-Barakāt al-Jarjārāʾī addresses him as "al-Mu'ayyad" (*ibid.*, p. 90). Still later, in 449 (1055), Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī addresses him as "al-Mu'ayyad" in the written debate between the two about the legality of vegetarianism (*Muʿjam al-Udabāʾ*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth, vol. 1, pp. 197 & 204). After his appointment as dā'ī al-du'āt in 450/1058, there are numerous attestations of his title "al-Mu'ayyad". E.g., the decree of his investiture as dā'ī al-du'āt (*ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 7, pp. 79–82) and two epistles of al-Mustanṣir (d. 487/1094, *Sijillāt*, #55, pp. 180–81, and #61, pp. 200–1, 461/1069).

²² Al-Mu'ayyad's first audience with the Imam in 439 (1048) might have provided an alternative occasion for the bestowing of the title "al-Mu'ayyad," except for the fact that al-Mu'ayyad himself provides us with a detailed description of the audience in which he does not mention the bestowing of a title (*Šīra*, p. 85).

Al-Mu'ayyad came from a family that had been actively involved in the Fatimid da'wa since before the establishment of the Fatimid empire in North Africa by al-Mahdī in 297 (909). We do not have more details about al-Mu'ayyad's forebears, whether they were originally from Fars, or had at some point chosen it as fertile ground for the da'wa. This dearth of information is not surprising considering the extreme secrecy observed regarding the activities of the da'wa and the identities of da'wa personnel, particularly in the pre-Mahdī period. We do know that al-Mu'ayyad's father, Mūsā b. Dā'ūd, was dā'ī for al-Ḥākim (d. 411/1021) in Fars,²³ and in his *Šīra*, al-Mu'ayyad mentions his father's high status and political power in Shiraz.²⁴

In his *Dīwān*, al-Mu'ayyad refers in five places to his forefathers' long service to the Fatimids.²⁵ In the following verses, he emphasizes his forefathers' sacrifices for the sake of the da'wa, calling the time before al-Mahdī's appearance "a time when fear was a still night," which gives us a glimpse into that dangerous epoch when anyone suspected of proselytizing for an anti-establishment cause faced lethal consequences:²⁶

As to the claims of my
forefathers,

there is no one who would
deny them.

وَحَقُّوْكَ أَبَائِي فَمَا

نُكَافِئُ لَهُ أَوْ جَا حَ د

²³ See Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 411/1020): *Mabāsīm al-bishārāt*, in *Majmū'at Rasā'il al-Kirmānī* (ed. M. Ghālib, Beirut, 1983) p. 125. Al-Kirmānī states that this letter was written to [a Fatimid dā'ī] Mūsā b. Dā'ūd in Fars, denying permission for Mūsā to appoint unilaterally his two sons in his place.

²⁴ Al-Mu'ayyad says the vizier himself would come to see his father, rather than the other way around (*Šīra*, p. 15), a sign of his father's importance.

²⁵ #4 (pp. 211–14, vv. 58–59), #11 (p. 232, v. 42), #40 (pp. 284–85, vv. 36–38), #41 (p. 287, vv. 29–30), #58 (p. 309, v. 24).

²⁶ #40, pp. 284–85, vv. 36–38. The Ṭayyibī dā'ī and historian Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn cites another two verses in the same vein by al-Mu'ayyad and endorses his claim: "His forefathers before him had been in the forefront of the da'wa towards the Imams of the Progeny of Muḥammad—upon them be peace—from the time of the concealment, until God made the sun of the caliphate rise from the West and the lands were lit up brightly by it; and on this [theme] the dā'ī al-Mu'ayyad says, addressing the Imam al-Mustaṣhir bi-Allāh, in a poem in which he says 'As for Ibn Mūsā and his forefathers, the abodes of their claims are flourishing, for they served you when an unfurling hand had not yet unfurled the banner of the conquests'" (*Uyūn*, vol. 6, p. 329, *Dīwān*, #41, p. 287, vv. 29–30).

[For] they served when
the Fatimids banners had
not yet been unfurled.

خدموا ولمَّا نُشِّرت²⁷
للفاطمِينَ مطَّارِد

They sacrificed their lives
for you
at a time when fear was a
still night.

وفلَّحُوا نفوسَهُمْ لَكُم
والخوفُ ليلٌ رَاكِد

Al-Mu'ayyad's claim about his forefathers' pre-empire services for the Fatimid da'wa is verified by al-Mustanşir in his decree of al-Mu'ayyad's investiture as dā'ī al-du'āt. The Imam writes:²⁸

... and you [O Mu'ayyad] come from a family of Godly dā'īs, who “spent [their money for the cause] since before the conquest, and fought”²⁹ before the first heralds of dawn; and they conducted the da'wa for the concealed Imams, forefathers of the Commander of the Faithful [al-Mustanşir], when no banner had yet been unfurled for them. And they undertook the establishment of the signposts of their religion when the world was injustice and darkness, following in the best path of piety and right-guidance, and taking the most protective of shields from godliness and appropriate action. You have followed in their traces, and have become the most beautiful of them in deeds, and the most elevated in glory on the occasions of obedience and nobility . . .

Al-Mu'ayyad's exact birth-date is not known from the historical sources, but we can use the four references to his age in the *Dīwān* to place it at 386 (996) or 387 (997).³⁰

He was probably born in Shiraz in Fars, and spent his boyhood years as well as the years of his youth and middle age there; in one verse, he refers to Shiraz as the abode in which “his body developed

²⁷ “*Lammā nushshirat* . . .” The Arabic is unusual: *lammā* (meaning “not yet”) requires the jussive, *lammā* (meaning “when”) requires a main clause, and *lamā* is unmetrical.

²⁸ *Uyūn*, vol. 7, p. 80. See also letter of al-Mu'ayyad's reinstatement as head of the da'wa, *ibid.*, p. 77.

²⁹ Qur'ān 57:10

³⁰ Ḥusayn incorrectly approximates al-Mu'ayyad's date of birth as 390/1000 (“Introduction” to al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, p. 21), and Hamdani correctly puts it around 387/997 (*The Sīra of al-Mu'ayyad*, p. 20). But, in fixing the year of al-Mu'ayyad's birth, both have relied on numbers supplied in a couple of al-Mu'ayyad's verses without dating the verses themselves carefully. My own calculation of al-Mu'ayyad's year of birth as 386/996 or 387/997, (and perhaps, although probably not, as early as 385/995), is based on the following references to his age in datable poems by him (details of dating of the poems in Appendix A):

as a child and became youthful.”³¹ His love for his homeland is well recorded in his poems, and his nostalgia for it is conjoined with yearning for the family and loved ones he left there. In the following verses, written after he has been parted from them forever, he expresses his longing for them and his desire to return to Shiraz:³²

<i>O companion, prepare the mounts for the journey, let us traverse these deserts towards Shiraz.</i>	أَيَا صَاحِبَ قَدَمٍ لِلرَّحِيلِ الرِّكَاثَا نُجُوبُ إِلَى شِيرَازَ هَذِي السَّيَاسَا
<i>Let us carry out our thoughts that come from our hearts quickly, and fulfill the wishes of [our] souls.</i>	نُقْضِي بِهَا أَفْكَارَنَا عَنْ قُلُوبِنَا سِرَاعًا وَنُقْضِي لِلنَّفُوسِ مَآرِبَا
<i>Let us renew the familiar time spent with our dear ones; it is dear to us that we visit the dear ones.</i>	نُجَدِّدُ عَهْدًا لِلْحَبَائِبِ إِنَّهُ حَبِيبٌ إِلَيْنَا أَنْ نَزُورَ الْحَبَائِبَا
<i>Patience has become broken of handles after today. Set out and throw excuses aside.</i>	غَدَا الصَّبْرُ بَعْدَ الْيَوْمِ مَنْقُصَمَ الْعُرَى فَسِرْ وَاطَّرِحْ عَنْكَ التَّعَلُّلَ جَانِبَا

Ahwaz was another town in Fars province where al-Mu'ayyad spent many months, perhaps a few times in his youth, and definitely for several periods in mid-life. About this town he writes the following:³³

<i>poem</i>	<i>year of poem's composition</i>	<i>al-Mu'ayyad's age (as cited in the poem)</i>	<i>hence, al-Mu'ayyad's year of birth</i>
#12, p. 235, v. 38	between 421/ 1030 & 427/1035	"close to forty" (~40)	between 381 & 387
#39, p. 282, v. 7	436/1046 or 437/1047	"after fifty" (~50)	between 386/996 & 387/997
#25, p. 261, quatrain 4	436/1046 or 437/1047	"passed half of a hundred" (~50)	between 386/996 & 387/997
#21, p. 253, v. 11	between 453/1061 and 454/1062	"completed sixty" (~64?)	before 394/1004 (~386/996?)

³¹ #15, p. 241, v. 23.

³² #37, p. 278, vv. 1-4.

³³ #15, p. 240. V. 2. Reference to Qur'ān 38:42.

*The heat of Ahwaz³⁴ was, for
me, coolness
and drink; her torment was,
for me, sweetness.*

كَانَ حَرُّ الْأَهْوَازِ عِنْدِي بَرْدًا
وَشَرَّابًا عَذَابُهُ لِي عَذْبًا

About al-Mu'ayyad's teachers we have no firm information whatsoever. His *Dīwān* contains no mention of teachers or early learning experiences. However, it is logical to assume that he acquired his formidable body of knowledge in the Fatimid tradition and his mastery of the Arabic language from his father, who was a *dā'ī* himself. It is also most likely that he received his training in *da'wa* work in his formative years as an aide to his father.

Al-Mu'ayyad was appointed *dā'ī* of Fars for the Fatimids probably some time during the reign of al-Zāhir (r. 411–427/1021–1035). The proselytizing nature of an early *ujūza* from his *Dīwān* (which names al-Zāhir as the Imam) seems to indicate that he was actively conducting the *da'wa* in al-Zāhir's reign.³⁵ A verse in another poem written during al-Zāhir's reign refers to al-Mu'ayyad's being vilified by his Sunni enemies at Abū Kālījār's court, and we can infer from this reference that he was already important enough to draw fire.³⁶ However, most of the panegyrics of al-Zāhir in al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* do not contain much historical information. One that does have a fleeting historical context is the poem that refers to Fatimid victories over the Abbasids in unnamed lands, probably composed sometime between 411 and 422 (1021–1031).³⁷

Upon al-Zāhir's death and the succession of the new Imam al-Mustaṣfir in 427 (1035), al-Mu'ayyad continued as *dā'ī* of Fars, gradually gaining in prominence. He wrote a poem in elegy for al-Zāhir and panegyric of al-Mustaṣfir that ends with three verses about the harm he was suffering at the hands of his enemies. This seems to indicate that by this time he had become a person of renown in Shiraz, and one who aroused jealousy and hatred among his competitors.³⁸

³⁴ The heat of Ahwaz was well known—the medieval geographer al-Muqaddasī comments upon it, saying the district of Arrajān (where Ahwaz was situated) in the province of Fars was “hell in the summer” (*Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī ma'rifat al-aqālīm*, ed. M.J. De Goeje, Leiden, 1906, p. 425).

³⁵ #1, pp. 191–98. Al-Zāhir is named in v. 151.

³⁶ #12, p. 235, v. 46.

³⁷ #14, p. 238, vv. 8–13.

³⁸ #7, vv. 47–48, p. 223.

*The Sunnis³⁹ have taken me
as an ill-omen
wherever I have stopped or
gone.*

*Whenever I pass by a group,
you would think me
—from their enmity of me—
the death of that group!*

فَلَقَدْ تَطَيَّرَ بِالنَّوَاصِبِ كُلِّهِمْ
أَنْنَى أَقَمْتُ وَسِرْتُ أَيَّ تَطَيَّرَ
فَتَخَالَنِي إِمَّا مَرَرْتُ بِمَعْشَرٍ
مِنْ بَعْضِهِمْ لِي حَتْفٌ ذَاكَ الْمَعْشَرِ

In another poem, even at this relatively early stage in his life, al-Mu'ayyad expressed the wish to immigrate to the Imam in Egypt.⁴⁰ In addition to his desire to behold the Imam, the enmity referred to in the above verses might be one of the possible reasons for this desire.

Fars to Cairo: At the Buyid⁴¹ Court 429–436/37 (1038–1045/46)

Al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography provides detailed information on the next phase of his life.⁴² I shall summarize the episodes that are described in the *Sīra* and, with reference to them, analyze the historical data gleaned from the *Dīwān*. The broad outline of al-Mu'ayyad's version of events is also unwittingly corroborated by a near-contemporary polemicist, Ibn al-Balkhī (b. 498/1105), in his *Fārsnāma*.⁴³

³⁹ Lit. "haters" (*nawāṣib*); in the Shi'ite context meaning haters of 'Alī.

⁴⁰ #12, v. 37, p. 234.

⁴¹ For information on the Buyid period, see John J. Donahue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty in Iraq 334 H/945 to 403 H/1012: Shaping Institutions for the Future*, Leiden, 2002; 'A.A. Faqīhī, *Āl-i Būya wa awḍā'-i zamān-i īshān* [Tehran], 1358 H [1939]; Ḥ. Munaymina, *Tārīkh al-dawla al-buwayhiyya al-siyāsī wa al-iqtisādī wa al-ijtimā'ī wa al-thaqāfī—muqātafat Fāris—334–447 H, 945–1055 AD*, Beirut, 1987; R. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society*, Princeton, 1980; J. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age*, Leiden, 1986, "Setting the Stage: The Early Buyid Era," pp. 31–102; Cl. Cahen, "Buwayhids or Būyids," *EI2*; Kāzīm Mūsawī, "Āl-i Būya," in *Dā'irat al-ma'ārif-i buẓurg-i Islāmī*, ed. Kāzīm Mūsawī Bujnūrdī, Tehran, 1374, vol. 1, pp. 629–46; and 'Abd Allāh Fayyād, "al-Buwayhiyyūn," in *Dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-Islāmiyya al-shi'iyya*, ed. Ḥasan al-Amīn, Beirut, 1975, vol. 10, pp. 34–52.

⁴² *Sīra*, pp. 3–79.

⁴³ Ibn al-Balkhī (b. 498/1105, *Fārsnāma*, ed. G. Le Strange & R.A. Nicholson, London, 1921, p. 119). He decries the fact that a certain "Sevener" dā'ī named Abū Naṣr b. 'Imrān (sic) had managed to sway Abū Kālījār to the Fatimid cause,

Al-Mu'ayyad's *Sīra* opens on 'Īd al-Fiṭr 429 H (July 1038) with complaints lodged by the local qāḍī and other Sunni scholars with the Daylamite Buyid king of Shiraz, Abū Kālījār,⁴⁴ against al-Mu'ayyad. The qāḍī claimed that al-Mu'ayyad was planning to establish the *khutba* in Shiraz for the Fatimid Caliph al-Mustanṣir. Abū Kālījār's vizier al-ʿĀdil Bahrām b. Māfannā, who was sympathetic towards al-Mu'ayyad, advised him to leave Shiraz temporarily in order to avoid reprisals. Al-Mu'ayyad said he would do so within a week. Meanwhile, he heard that Abū Kālījār was going to Ahwaz accompanied by his Daylamite soldiery among whom al-Mu'ayyad had a large following. Not thinking it safe to remain in Shiraz without them, he asked the vizier's permission to go too, but it was denied. So he secretly took off for Fasā (Arabic Basā), a town not far from Shiraz. The majority of Fasā's population was anti-Shi'ite, but there also were a fair number of people there from al-Mu'ayyad's Daylamite following. Al-Mu'ayyad spent almost a year in Fasā. In that time he built a da'wa assembly place, which was the first time one had ever been built there.

When summer came, Abū Kālījār returned to Shiraz, and al-Mu'ayyad felt it was safe to come back too. By a stroke of luck, one day al-Mu'ayyad happened to meet a boon-companion of the king and had the opportunity to explain his side of the story. The boon-companion related al-Mu'ayyad's explanation to the king and so started a series of messages back and forth, each more cordial than the last. Al-Mu'ayyad next sent a written missive to Abū Kālījār, who was duly impressed by its style. He commanded his vizier to summon al-Mu'ayyad and let him know that he could carry on his da'wa activities as long as he kept a low profile.

With the assurance of the king's benevolence, al-Mu'ayyad continued his operations as before. However, not wanting to be placed in a position in which he would have to show undue obeisance to Abū Kālījār, he hesitated about presenting himself at court. There was talk about this and al-Mu'ayyad felt compelled to make the required visit. He sought an opportunity and, when Abū Kālījār went hunting, paid homage to the king both on his way out and on

and expresses satisfaction that the Sunni qāḍī eventually managed to persuade Abū Kālījār to exile him. H. Bowen provides an analysis of the *Fārsnāma* in "The Last Buwayhids," *JRAS* (1929), pp. 215–45.

⁴⁴ See *EI2* entry "Abū Kālījār" by H. Bowen.

his return. The king expressed happiness at seeing him, and commanded him to attend court on a regular basis.

Abū Kālījār then decided to have al-Mu'ayyad engage in a written disputation with a number of Muslim scholars from different religious denominations on diverse religious topics, particularly *tāwīl*, and the sole right of the Fatimid Imams to explicate it.⁴⁵ The amīr perused these writings and, convinced of the validity of al-Mu'ayyad's beliefs, converted to the Fatimid religious ideology.⁴⁶

It should be noted here that the Buyids (and the Daylamites in general) were Shi'a, albeit of an amorphous kind, not specifically Zaydī, or Twelver, or Ismā'īlī. Some of the Buyids became this or that, but collectively, they did not commit to any one persuasion. The Buyids' nebulous Shi'ism facilitated al-Mu'ayyad's da'wa in Fars: he was not trying to convert the people away from a particular branch, but rather, he was giving shape to their undefined Shi'ism.⁴⁷

For some time after his conversion to the Fatimid *madhhab*, Abū Kālījār met with al-Mu'ayyad every Thursday evening for a private religion class.⁴⁸ The class began with recitation from the Qur'ān, followed by a chapter from al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's *Dā'īm al-Islām*,⁴⁹ and a general question-and-answer session, ending with a prayer for the long life of the Fatimid Imam.

⁴⁵ These debates are recorded in full in the *Sira* (pp. 16–42), summarized by Klemm in *Memoirs of a Mission*, pp. 26–29. Since the Buyids used Arabic in their administration and patronized Arabic literature, the language of al-Mu'ayyad's debates at the Buyid courts was Arabic.

⁴⁶ Cf. parallel instances of people in high places being converted to Ismā'īlism: the conversion of the Samanid governor of Rayy, Aḥmad b. 'Alī (r. 307/919–20 to 311/924) to Ismā'īlism by the dā'ī Abū Hātim al-Rāzī (reported by Niẓām al-Mulk, cf. Patricia Crone and Luke Treadwell, "A New Text on Ismailism at the Samanid Court," in Chase Robinson, ed., *Texts, Documents and Artefacts. Islamic Studies in Honour of D.S. Richards*, Leiden, 2003, pp. 37–67, see p. 64, n. 136); and the conversion of the Samanid amīr of Bukhara, Naṣr II b. Aḥmad (r. 301–331/914–943) by the dā'ī al-Nasafi (reported by the medieval writers al-Tha'alibī, Niẓām al-Mulk, and Ibn al-Nadīm, cf. *Ibid.*).

⁴⁷ On the religious persuasion of the Buyids, see Cahen, "Būyids," pp. 1350–57, Kraemer, *Humanism*, pp. 39–43, and Munaymina, *Tārīkh al-dawla al-buwayhiyya*, pp. 83–101.

⁴⁸ Local guides in Shiraz take tourists to see Abū Kālījār's palace and mention that this is the place where al-Mu'ayyad taught him.

⁴⁹ Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān b. Muḥammad (d. 363/974), *Kitāb Dā'īm al-Islām wa al-ḥalāl wa al-ḥarām wa al-qadāyā wa al-aḥkām 'an ahl bayt Rasūl Allāh 'alayh wa 'alayhim aḥṣal al-salām*, ed. Asaf Fyzee, Cairo, 2 vols., 1985. Trans. Fyzee, revised Ismail Poonawala, titled *The Pillars of Islam*, New Delhi, vol. 1: 2002, vol. 2: 2004.

It is probably during this period that al-Mu'ayyad wrote his first and only panegyric to Abū Kālījār. The *ʿUyūn* cites this poem and prefaces it with the following lines "... the dāʿī al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn (May God give his face freshness!) said, praising the king Abū Kālījār, when [the latter] looked at him with the eye of loving friendship, and raised him above those who hated him and publicized his importance."⁵⁰ The poem begins with a prayer for the king, and goes on to praise him as a supporter of the Fatimids:⁵¹

<i>King of kings,⁵² right hand of Muḥammad's progeny, refuge of all people, pillar of God's religion.</i>	ملكُ الملوكِ يمينُ آل محمد غوثُ العبادِ عمادُ دينِ الله
--	--

He goes on to excuse his own tardiness in presenting his services:⁵³

<i>I have wasted my past life, the time I did not devote myself to [your] service, being mistaken—</i>	ضيَّعتُ عمرًا قد تَقَضَّى لي ولم أَعْلَقُ بخدمته وإني سَاه
<i>[my] excuse is that I was terrified falsely by the violence of a wrathful confronter.</i>	والعذرُ أني كنتُ فيه مَفْزَعًا زُورًا يبطِشُهُ سَاخِطٌ جَاه
<i>Money is not my object, but rather, your continued, eternal existence is my abundant wealth—as long as I live—and my high rank.</i>	ما المالُ هَمِّي بل بقاؤُك سرمدًا موفورُ مالي ما بقيتُ وجاهي

⁵⁰ *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 6, pp. 340–41.

⁵¹ *Dīwān*, #51, p. 299, v. 12.

⁵² It is interesting to see that al-Mu'ayyad addresses Abū Kālījār as "Shāhanshāh" (king of kings, v. 11), presumably referring to Abū Kālījār's title "Shāhanshāh al-Mu'azzam" (See Wilferd Madelung, "The Assumption of the Title Shāhanshāh by the Buyids and 'the Reign of the Daylam (*Dawlat al-Daylam*)'," *JNES* 28 (1969), pp. 84–108. Also mentioned in another poem, *Dīwān*, #62, p. 318, v. 39). Other than calling the Abbasids caliphs, the Fatimids evidently did not mind using the titles of various kings and sultans, indicating a de facto recognition of the existing political order.

⁵³ *Dīwān*, #51, p. 299, vv. 16–18.

In the manner of the true teacher, al-Mu'ayyad next tried to wean Abū Kālījār from his drinking habits. This was particularly unpleasant for the king's former drinking-mates, among whom was one who had earlier embraced the Fatimid *madhhab* "not for God," according to al-Mu'ayyad, "and not through sincere belief."⁵⁴ This "turncoat" succeeded in planting doubt in the king's mind regarding his new-found religion, until, one day, remonstrating with the king, al-Mu'ayyad said something which truly upset Abū Kālījār: "I have done for you what even your father did not."⁵⁵ The turncoat and his party used this incident to blacken al-Mu'ayyad in the king's eyes. Abū Kālījār withdrew his support of al-Mu'ayyad, and suspended the Thursday religion classes.

Al-Mu'ayyad then wrote a long 153-verse *ujūza* addressed to Abū Kālījār in explanation. He said that his intention had not been disrespect to the memory of Abū Kālījār's father, but rather, he had meant that he, al-Mu'ayyad, was the one who had led Abū Kālījār to the path of salvation, something not even the latter's father had done. I shall translate the poem almost entirely here because, on the one hand, it captures the essence of al-Mu'ayyad's relations with Abū Kālījār, and on the other, it provides many historical details and interpersonal nuances. The poem is in the form of a letter: it begins with the name of God and a long *ṣalawāt* (vv. 1–15), then comes an "*ammā ba'du*" (now then . . .) verse. Next comes a section that characterizes the poet as a true servant of the Fatimids, and describes his enemies as "leaderless in religion" and "insincere" (vv. 16–30). In the following verses, al-Mu'ayyad alludes to Abū Kālījār's withdrawal of patronage:⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Sīra*, p. 44.

⁵⁵ *Sīra*, p. 46; cf. a later poem in praise of al-Mustanshir, where al-Mu'ayyad says about Abū Kālījār (#6, p. 220, v. 31):

*The Imam of the Age undertook for him
something that [even] parents do not
undertake.*

وَقَدْ قَامَ مِنْهُ إِمَامُ الزَّمَانِ
بِمَا لَا يَقُومُ بِهِ الْوَالِدَانِ

⁵⁶ #62, p. 317, vv. 31–33. Al-Mu'ayyad documents this poem with the events leading up to it in his *Sīra* (pp. 48–54).

⁵⁷ The *Sīra* contains "*lam ya'tifī*" which is the correct vocalization; the *Dīwān* ed. has "*lam ya'tafī*" which is inaccurate.

*I do not see the age being just to me,
when the Noble Station does not show me compassion.*
*Nothing has remained in my life, of sweetness
from the returning of that [previous] kindness and friendly reception,*
*the Noble Regard has not remained for me
the way it was, nor the remembered generosity.*

مَا أَن أَرَى الزَّمَانَ لِي بِالْمُنْصَفِ
وَالْمَوْقِفُ الْأَشْرَفُ لِي لَمْ يَعْطِفْ⁵⁷
وَلَمْ تُعَدِّدْ لِعَيْشِي الْحِلَاوَةَ
بَعُودَ ذَلِكَ الْبَرِّ وَالْحَفَاوَةَ
وَلَمْ يُعَدِّدْ لِي النَّظْرُ الشَّرِيفَ
كَمَا بَدَى وَالْكَرَمُ الْمَأْلُوفَ

Then al-Mu'ayyad addresses Abū Kālījār in a few verses of praise (vv. 34–44), among which are the following lines that assert that the amīr's allegiance is to the Fatimids, perhaps a subtle (or not so subtle) hint that he should break away from the Abbasids and formally declare allegiance to the Fatimids:⁵⁸

*I have taken our Shāhanshāh al-Mu'azzam
as refuge from the vicissitudes of Fate.*
*Abū Kālījār—"Neighbor of the Protector," [so-called] because
God is his guardian neighbor,
whose abode is in His courtyard and His sanctuary.*
*al-Marzubān,⁶⁰ for whom the Age is servant,
the "Noble Writers"⁶¹ are his army.*
*Muṣṭafā and his Progeny are his support,
truly, allegiance to them is his preparation [for the Hereafter].*

جَعَلْتُ شَاهِنشَاهَنَا الْمَعْظَمَ
مِنْ نَائِبَاتِ الدَّهْرِ لِي مَعْصَمًا
بَا⁵⁹ كَالِيجَارَ فَإِلَالُهُ جَارُهُ
وَفِي ذِرَاةٍ وَحِيدَةٍ دَارُهُ
الْمَرْزُبَانُ وَالزَّمَانُ عِبْدُهُ
كَمَا الْكَرَامُ الْكَاتِبُونَ جُنْدُهُ
وَالْمُصْطَفَى وَأُلُوهُ عِمَادُهُ
حَقًّا كَمَا وَلَاؤُهُمْ عِتَادُهُ

⁵⁸ #62, p. 318, vv. 39–42.

⁵⁹ We find "*Yā Kālījār*" (O Kālījār) in both the *Sīra* (p. 49) & *Dīwān* ed. (p. 309); this is probably a textual corruption of "*Bā Kālījār*," which, in Persian, is synonymous with the Arabic "Abū Kālījār."

⁶⁰ "Al-Marzubān," title as well as personal name, meaning "Guardian of the Border."

⁶¹ Reference to Qur'ān 82:11.

He next expresses pain at being treated cavalierly:⁶²

*Do you not see that I am
nothing but a radical
concerning you,
who is excessive in his love for
you, not a mere follower.*

*How is it then that my claim
has been nullified by you,
why is it that my words are
not heard?*

*Should an attendant like me
be wasted in this manner,
such that the arm of harm
stretches out towards him?*

هَلَا تَرَانِي فِيكَ إِلَّا غَالِيَا

يَفْرِطُ فِي حُبِّكَ لَا مُوَالِيَا

فَمَا لِحَقِّي عِنْدَكُمْ يُضَاعُ
وَمَا لِقَوْلِي صَارَ لَيْسَ يُسْمَعُ

أَعَادُمْ مِثْلِي يُضَاعُ هَكَذَا
كَيْمَا يَطْوُلَ نَحْوَهُ بَاعُ الْأَذَى

In the next few verses, he refers to rumors being bandied about within the assemblies of the anti-Fatimid lobby in Shiraz regarding his status with the king. He uses a poetic device—questions put into the mouths of anonymous people—to ask the king the question about which he himself was bewildered: why the change of heart?⁶³

*It became impossible for me
to remain in my seat due
to false rumors
which injured me throughout:*

*Someone said, “What is
happening?
Was he not elevated? Why has
his position been lowered?”*

*And someone said, “His sultan
became estranged
upon his disbelief becoming
manifest.”*

*And someone said, “A group
did not accept [him]
so they made his story sick
and ailing.”*

لَقَدْ نَبَا بِي مَقْعَدِي إِرْجَافَا

يُجْحِفُ بِي طَوْلَ الْمَدَى إِجْحَافَا

مِنْ قَائِلٍ يَقُولُ كَيْفَ شَأْنُهُ
أَمَّا عَلَا فَلِمَ هَوَى مَكَائِهِ

وَقَائِلٍ يَقُولُ قَدْ تَنَكَّرَا
سَلْطَانُهُ لَكُنْفَرُهُ إِذْ ظَهَرَ

وَقَائِلٍ يَقُولُ قَوْمٌ مَا رَضُوا
فَعَلَّلُوا قِصَصَهُ وَأَمْرَضُوا

⁶² #62, p. 318, vv. 45–47.

⁶³ #62, p. 318, vv. 48–51.

Then he refers to his enemies, Sunni radicals and the Fatimid turn-coat:⁶⁴

*Each [person] gloats over
me according to his whim,
one establishes and one
erases.*

كُلُّ بِنَا مِنْ حَيْثُ يَهْوَى يَشْمَتُ
فَبَعْضُهُمْ يَحْكُمُ وَبَعْضٌ يَثْبِتُ

*This one who stings me is from
the outside,
either a rancorous Sunni or
a Kharijite.*

هَذَا الَّذِي يُلْسَعُنِي مِنْ خَارِجٍ
مِنْ نَاصِبِي كَاشِحٍ وَخَارِجِيٍّ

*And indeed I have a weakness
from inside the house.
People ask each other, "What
crime has he committed?"*

وإِنِّي⁶⁵ مِنْ دَاخِلِ الْبَيْتِ ضَعْفَى
يَسْأَلُ عَنِّي الْبَعْضُ بَعْضًا مَا جَنَى

*I wish I knew what shortcoming
came from him,
that alienated from him the
one who shied away.*

يَالَيْتَ شِعْرِي مَا الَّذِي مِنْهُ بَدَرَ
مِنْ خَلَلٍ نَفَّرَ عَنْهُ مَنْ نَفَرَ

*Had not a friendly reception
received him—
what is it that has cut off the
association?"*

أَلَمْ يَكُنْ حَسَنُ الْقَبُولِ قَابِلَهُ
فَمَا الَّذِي قَدْ قَطَعَ الْمُعَامَلَةَ

In the following section, al-Mu'ayyad entreats compassion. He asks explicitly what it is he has done that has caused Abū Kālījār to turn away. Was it the misunderstanding early in their relationship? But that, he thought, had been resolved:⁶⁶

*I am enmeshed in this kind
[of talk],
so save me, indeed I [take
refuge] with God and
with you.*

إِنِّي لَفِي أَمْثَالِ هَذَا مُرْتَبِكٍ
فَنَجِّنِي إِنِّي بِاللَّهِ وَبِكَ

*O master of the lands,
compassion, compassion!
such that [my] enemies
turn away from me.*

يَا مَالِكَ الْأَفَاقِ عَطْفًا عَطْفًا
تُنْقِصِي بِهِ عَنِّي الْأَعْدَادِي عَطْفًا

⁶⁴ #62, p. 318, vv. 52–56.

⁶⁵ Read "wa inna" instead of the editor's vocalization of "wa anna."

⁶⁶ #62, p. 318, vv. 57–61.

If I have committed a crime,
you know,
and there is no turning away
from what you know.

إِنْ كُنْتُ اذْنَبْتُ فَأَنْتَ تَعْرِفُ
وَلَيْسَ مَا تَعْرِفُ عَنْهُ مَصْرُفُ

If my crime is what happened
at Basā,
have I not explained myself
—you were pleased—

إِنْ كَانَ ذَنْبِي مَا جَرَى بَيْسًا⁶⁷
أَلَمْ أُقِمِّ عَذْرِي فَطِبْتَ نَفْسًا

during our days with the
military
in the coastal palace over the
lookout?

حِلَالُ أَيَّامٍ لَنَا بِالْعَسْكَرِ
فِي الْجُلُوسِ الشَّاطِئِيِّ فَوْقَ الْمَنْظَرِ

Or was it his statement that he had done more for Abū Kālījār than his father? He refers to a parable about Alexander and his son, which he explicates in his *Sīra*, within the narration of the events leading up to his composition of this poem. The following is a summary of the parable:⁶⁸

Alexander had a beloved son whose instruction he entrusted to a learned man. When the son came of age, he disagreed with Alexander's views. Consequently, he would not stand up in respect for his father, but would do so for his teacher. Alexander berated the teacher for the son's lack of manners. The son defended his action on the grounds that Alexander had brought him into a troubled world for his own pleasure, whereas the teacher would help him get out of it. This was why he respected his teacher more than his father.

In the following verses, al-Mu'ayyad tells Abū Kālījār that being his teacher, he occupied the same high position vis-à-vis Abū Kālījār as the teacher of Alexander's son did vis-à-vis the latter. And if Abū Kālījār still found the remark in bad taste, al-Mu'ayyad asked him to forgive:⁶⁹

The parable cited about Alexander
and his son is a sign, so take it
to heart.

وَالْمَثَلُ الْمَضْرُوبُ بِالْأَسْكَدَرِ
وَبَابِئِنَّهُ عِلَامَةٌ⁷⁰ فَادْكُرْ

⁶⁷ Read "Bassā" with a *shadda* on the letter *s* for metrical accuracy; the actual name of the place in Arabic is "Basā" (Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Muḡam al-Buldān*, Beirut, n.d., vol. 1, p. 412).

⁶⁸ *Sīra*, pp. 46–47. The Graeco-Arabic gnomologia also refer to this incident. Cf. the anonymous text *Mukhtār min kalām al-ḥukāma' al-arba'a al-ākabir*, ed. Dimitri Gutas, in *Greek Wisdom Literature in Arabic Translation: A Study of the Graeco-Arabic Gnomologia*, New Haven, Conn., American Oriental Society, 1975, pp. 179–180, #50 & #50a.

⁶⁹ #62, pp. 318–19, vv. 62–66.

⁷⁰ Read "*alāmatur*" as predicate of "*al-mathal*," instead of "*alāmatur*" as vocalized by the editor.

*If I have said something in which
I have crossed the line of duty,
do not be angry at a duty
performed.*

إِذْ قُلْتُ مَا جَاوَزْتُ فِيهِ وَاجِبًا
فَلَا تَكُنْ مِنْ وَاجِبٍ مَغَاضِبًا

*And if you will accept [my]
apology
and grant forgiveness for what
caused your rancor*

وإِنَّهُ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَرْضَى الْمَعْذِرَةَ
وَتَقْتَضِي لِمَا نَقَمْتَ الْمَغْفِرَةَ

*then forgive, or else excuse
the teacher
if you think his mind has
become dull.*

فَاغْفِرْ وَإِلَّا فَاغْذُرِ الْمُعَلِّمَ
إِذَا رَأَيْتَ عَقْلَهُ مِنْ ثُلْمَا

*For I am, as you see, a
teacher,
and [if you will], there
is a disarray in my mind!*

وإِنِّي كَمَا تَرَى مُعَلِّمٌ
وَهَاكُمُ فِي الْعَقْلِ مِنِّي لَمَمٌ

In the next few verses, al-Mu'ayyad discusses another touchy topic: Abū Kālījār's declaration for the Fatimids. Al-Mu'ayyad had earlier suggested the idea of Abū Kālījār switching allegiance from the Abbasids to the Fatimids; he says Abū Kālījār had actually begun a correspondence with Cairo for this purpose. However, the Abbasid lobby had succeeded in making the king believe that in becoming a vassal of the Fatimids he would be exchanging his kingship for slavery. Al-Mu'ayyad tries to allay Abū Kālījār's fears saying that the latter's forefathers had also corresponded with the Fatimids and declared allegiance. It should be noted here that the Buyids, during most of their time in power, did not support the Fatimids; they garnered Shi'ite support by their professed Shi'ism, using it to shore up the Sunni Abbasid caliphate. However, 'Aḍud al-Dawla, the most powerful of the Buyid kings, had, in fact, corresponded with the Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-'Azīz for the purpose of switching allegiance.⁷¹ These are al-Mu'ayyad's verses referring to that correspondence:⁷²

*And if, because I said,
"Correspond with Egypt," you
hold a grudge against me
for that,*

وإن تكن إذ قلتُ كَاتِبُ مِصْرًا
تَحْمِلُ مِنْ ذَاكَ عَلَيَّ إِصْرًا

⁷¹ Cf. S. Jiwa, "Fāṭimid-Būyid Diplomacy during the Reign of al-'Azīz Billāh (365/975–386/996), *JIS* 3:1 (1992), pp. 57–71, a study on the correspondence between the Buyid 'Aḍud al-Dawla and the Fatimid Caliph al-'Azīz bi-Allāh.

⁷² #62, p. 319, vv. 67–75.

then your comprehensive justice
suffices me as arbiter
and I have nothing but
acceptance for what it
dictates.

فعدُّكَ الشَّامِلُ حَسْبِي مِنْ حَكَمٍ
وليس لي إلا الرضا بما حَكَمَ

Was it reprehensible speech,
or falsehood,
or was it a restricted,
forbidden [word]?

أَكْأَن قَوْلًا مُنْكَرًا أَوْ زُورًا
أو كَانَ حِجْرًا ذَاكُمُ مُحْجُورًا

Or did I have any purpose
other than goodness,
or a goal other than
pleasing you?

أَمْ كَانَ لِي غَيْرَ الصَّالِحِ مِنْ غَرَضٍ
أَمْ لِسِوَى رِضَاكَ فِيهِ مُعْتَرِضٌ

When I said, "Write to the
Presence of the son of Fāṭima,
and take the path of the
Hashemite in that,"

إِنْ قُلْتُ كَاتِبُ حَضْرَةِ ابْنِ فَاطِمٍ
وَأَسْأَلُكَ عَمَّا فِيهَا سَبِيلَ الْهَاشِمِيِّ

[so what], for 'Abbās is not
like al-Murtaḍā,⁷³
and the former's descendant
cannot be compared with
the latter's descendant.

فليس مثل المرتضى عباسُ
ولا ابْنُهُ إِلَى ابْنِهِ يُقْتَسَمُ

And, indeed, your forefathers
also corresponded [with him],
and manifested affection for
him and drew near.

وإن آبَاءَكَ أَيْضًا كَاتِبُونَ
وَأَظْهَرُوا الْوُدَّ لَهُ وَاقْتَرَبُوا

Especially when [your]
courtyard has shone forth
by a report from me raised
to Egypt

لَا سِيَّامًا وَرَبْعُهُ قَدْ أَشْرَقَا
بِخَبَرٍ مِنِّي إِلَى مِصْرَ ارْتَقَى

With which the Supreme
Opinion agreed—
may the arrangement of its
felicity forever remain
harmonious.

فِيمَا لَهُ الرَّأْيُ الْعَلِيُّ وَافْتَقَا
دَامَ نَظْرُكُمْ سَعْدُهُ مَتَسَقَا

Al-Mu'ayyad reminds Abū Kālījār that he had committed himself to such a correspondence, and that in fact, he had already begun exchanging letters with the Fatimids the previous year. He could not back away from it now.⁷⁴

⁷³ al-Murtaḍā: title of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.

⁷⁴ #62, p. 319, vv. 76–84.

*And that is the [affair] in
which you sent messengers
from the city of Ahwaz
last year,*

*and I had come to you for
instructions regarding them,
and you said, "You remain
the one who orders and
forbids,"*

*and your auspicious face was full
of jubilation
—what you are writing now is
the opposite of [your] earlier
[opinion]—*

*And I had said "[I hope for]
grace from a gracious God,
and approaching auspiciousness
of fortune for a king."*

*And you had said, "Part of this
we write
so that the cord of affection be
strengthened."*

*And now I await
their bringing back boundless
favours,*

*with an answer of goodly prayer
and appreciation of renewed
favours*

*[rendered] for the Progeny of
Ṭāhā⁷⁶ by their most
honorable helper*

*and a fresh face for the Age,
the king in whose kingdom the
star of the Daylam is rising
in the sky over [other] stars.*

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَتْ فِيهِ رُسُلًا
مِّنْ بَلَدِ الْأَهْوَازِ عَامًّا أَوَّلًا

وَجِئْتُ فِي بَابِهِمْ⁷⁵ مُسْتَأْمِرًا
فَقُلْتُ دِمَّتْ نَاهِيَا وَأَمْرًا

وَوَجْهُكَ الْمَيْمُونُ ذُو تَهْلِيلٍ
مَا تَكْتَبُ الْآنَ خِلَافُ الْأَوَّلِ

فَقُلْتُ فَضْلًا مِنْ إِلَهٍ مُّفْضِلٍ
وَيَمْنًا جَدًّا لِلْمَلِيكِ مُقْبِلٍ

وَقُلْتُ إِنْ بَعْضَ هَذَا نَكْتُبُ
عَمَّا بِهِ لِلْوُدِّ يَقْوَى السَّبَبُ

وَأِنِّي الْآنَ عَلَى انْتِظَارِ
لِعَوْدِهِمْ بِمُنْتَهَى الْإِيْثَارِ

وَبِالْجَوَابِ بِالدُّعَاءِ الصَّالِحِ
وَشُكْرٍ مَّجْدُودٍ مِّنَ الْمَنَائِحِ

لَأَلِ طَه مِنْ أَجَلٍ نَاصِرٍ

لَهُمْ وَوَجْهَهُ لِلزَّمَانِ نَاضِرٍ
الْمَلِكِ الصَّاعِدِ نَجْمُ الدِّيلِمِ
يُتْلِكُهُ فِي الْأَفْقِ فَوْقَ الْأُنْجَمِ

⁷⁵ I have used the *Sīra* version, "bābihimū," which is metrically correct, in contrast to *Dīwān* ed. version, "bābihī," which is metrically incorrect.

⁷⁶ Ṭāhā: name of the Prophet Muḥammad.

In the next three verses, al-Mu'ayyad describes Abū Kālījār's lack of warmth towards him now:⁷⁷

<i>If you consider this a transgression, then you have reached the utmost in punishment.</i>	فإنَّ عَدَدَتَ هَذِهِ جُنَايَةٌ ⁷⁸ فَقَدْ بَلَغْتَ فِي الْعِقَابِ الْغَايَةَ
<i>I see a descent instead of a rising, the smile is no longer that [same] smile, nor is the meeting [that same meeting].</i>	أَرَى نَزُولًا عَوْضًا عَنْ ارْتِقَا لَا الْبُشْرُ ذَاكَ الْبُشْرُ بِي وَلَا الْقَلْبُ
<i>The speech is no longer that [same] speech, nor is the attitude that [same] attitude.</i>	وَلَا الْكَلَامُ ذَلِكَ الْكَلَامُ وَلَا الْمَقَامُ ذَلِكَ الْمَقَامُ

In the next set of verses, al-Mu'ayyad recounts his services for Abū Kālījār in the past, and berates him for forgetting them. He says that he has led Abū Kālījār to the path of salvation (having guided him to the true Imams), a service not to be set aside lightly:⁷⁹

<i>Where are the services I have rendered in the past? —I had thought I had advanced my standing⁸⁰ by them.</i>	وَأَيْنَ مَا أَسْلَفْتُهُ مِنْ خِدَمٍ وَحِلَّتْ بِي قَدَمْتُ فِيهِ قَدَمِي
<i>All this has become completely forgotten as though [I] had never done [you] a good deed;</i>	أَصْبَحَ نَسِيًّا كُلُّهُ مَنْسِيًّا حَتَّى كَأَنَّا مَا صَنَعْنَا شَيْئًا

⁷⁷ #62, p. 318, vv. 85–87.

⁷⁸ The reading I have used here is “*jīnāya*,” without the definite particle “*al*,” which is the version given by *Sīra* ms. I have consulted. Ḥusayn’s edition of both the *Sīra*, and the *Dīwān* (which has added this poem from the *Sīra*; it is not present in the *Dīwān* mss.) has “*al-jīnāya*,” which does not make grammatical sense to me.

⁷⁹ #62, pp. 319–20, vv. 88–92.

⁸⁰ Lit. “put forward my foot.”

*It⁸¹ is not something which
should be squandered,
for its like is not sold in the
market;*

وليس ذاك بالذي يُضَاع
فمِثْلُهُ فِي السُّوقِ لَا يُبَاع

*Its source is from a solicitous,
sincere advisor,
a soul-brother giving it as a
gift.*

مصدرُهُ عَنْ مُشْفِقٍ نَصُوحٍ
جَادٍ بِهِ وَهُوَ شَقِيقُ الرُّوحِ

*No power will ward off
[hellfire] at a time when
it will ward [it] off,
and no riches will benefit on
the day it will benefit.*

لَا مَنَعَةٌ تَمْنَعُ حِينَ يَمْنَعُ
وَلَا غِنًى يَنْفَعُ يَوْمَ يَنْفَعُ

Then he argues with Abū Kālījār that all of his many and weighty services should not be disregarded because of a single act that has caused displeasure:⁸²

*Why have [all] my acts
become defective
because one characteristic
among them displeased
you?*

فَمَا لِأَعْمَالِي غَدَتْ مُخْتَلَّةٌ
مِنْ أَجْلِ أَنْ سَاءَتْكَ مِنْهَا خُلَّةٌ

*[And why have] the traces of
my good deeds become effaced
for one trait that is seen to
be unacceptable?*

وَحَسَنَاتِي قَدْ عَفَتْ أَثَارُهَا
لِخَصْلَةٍ مِنْهَا يُرَى إِنْكَارُهَا

Next, he reminds Abū Kālījār of the knowledge he has imparted to him, and the clarification that he has brought to his confusion regarding aspects of his religion. He implores the amīr not to deprive his mind of its spiritual nourishment (by resuming the Thursday evening classes?) and not to cast aside the teacher who has been responsible for it:⁸³

*Did I not speak in lucid
explanation,
bringing together the intellect
and the Qur'ān?*

أَلَمْ أَكُنْ أَنْطَقُ بِالْبَيَانِ
فِي الْجَمْعِ بَيْنَ الْعَقْلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ

⁸¹ "It" refers to al-Mu'ayyad's guiding Abū Kālījār to the Fatimid *madhhab*.

⁸² #62, p. 320, vv. 93–94.

⁸³ #62, p. 320, vv. 95–107.

*Was I not the clarification of
every darkness,
pitch-dark, of the confusing
aspects of religion?*

*Did I not always solve every
[secret] sign
from which the cleverest
people turn away unable?*

*I nourish minds with healing
knowledge
so that they obtain well-being
in the Returning.*

*Why have you deprived your
noble mind,
O intelligent person, of its
sublime nourishment?*

*Why did you not deprive the
body of what it desired?⁸⁴
For your depriving the mind of
its nourishment is injustice.*

*Do you disdain its benefit
because of my [potential]
harm,
depriving it from good because
of my evil?*

*How much weaponry have I
collected [to fight] desire,
and material, over a long
stretch of time.*

*Whom do you see, for your
abstracted intellect,
[to be] an advisor, a rightly-
informed guide?*

*[One who] makes it earn
strength from the Qur'ān
—the age will perish and it
will not,*

أَلَمْ أَكُنْ جَلَاءَ كُلِّ ظُلْمَةٍ
مِنْ مَشْكَلَاتِ الدِّينِ مُدْلِهَةً

أَلَمْ أَكُنْ أَحْلُلْ كُلَّ رَمَزٍ
عَنْهُ الدُّهَاءُ تَنْثِنِي بَعْجَزٍ

أَغْذُو الْعُقُولَ بِالْعُلُومِ الشَّافِيَةِ
لِكَيْ تَنْتَالَ فِي الْمَعَادِ الْعَافِيَةِ

فَلِمَ مَنَعْتَ عَقْلَكَ الشَّرِيفَا
يَا ذَا الْهُيْ غِذَاءَهُ اللَّطِيفَا

هَلَا مَنَعْتَ مَا اشْتَهَاهُ الْجِسْمُ
فَمَنْعَكَ الْعَقْلَ الْغِذَاءَ ظَلَمَ

أَصِرْتُ تَأْبِي نَفْعَهُ لَضَرِي
تَمْنَعُهُ الْخَيْرَ لِقَصْدِ شَرِي

كَمْ قَدْ جَمَعْتُ لِلْهَوَى مِنْ عُذَّةٍ
وَمِنْ عَتَادٍ بِأُمْتِدَادِ الْمُدَّةِ

فَمَنْ تَرَى لِعَقْلِكَ الْجُرْدُ
مِنْ مُرْشِدٍ هَادٍ لَهُ مَسْدَدُ

يُكْسِبُهُ عِزًّا مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ
يَفْتَقِي الزَّمَانُ وَهُوَ غَيْرُ فَاانِ

⁸⁴ Perhaps an allusion to Abū Kālījār's wine-drinking.

One who constructs glory for it as a paved [road], when [all other] glory will pass away like scattered rays.	وَيَعْقِدُ الْمَجْدَ لَهُ مُعَبَّدًا إِذَا مَضَى الْمَجْدُ شُعَاعًا بَدَدًا
Do not cast me aside, for I am that man— my earlier deeds prove this.	لَا تَطْرَحْنِي إِنِّي ذَاكَ الرَّجُلُ سَابِقُ أَثَارِي عَلَى هَذَا يَدُلُّ
Do not sell the proven truth of a thing that is well understood for a doubt that a distorter comes up with. ⁸⁵	وَلَا تَبِعْ تَحْقِيقَ شَيْءٍ يُعْرَفُ بشُبْهَةٍ يَأْتِي بِهَا مُحَرِّفُ

He goes on to enumerate his own qualities of unequalled knowledge, healing of souls, temperance, and continuous prayer. Al-Mu'ayyad, in fact, discusses his own noble qualities at length in various poems in the *Dīwān*, and these will be discussed in more detail later. In this poem he says:⁸⁶

O king of kings, O adornment of the age, do not cast me aside, for I am high of value.	يَا مَلِكَ الْمُلُوكِ يَا زَيْنَ الزَّمَنِ لَا تَطْرَحْنِي إِنِّي غَالِي الثَّمَنِ
I am the one, by the grace of the progeny of Aḥmad, whose hand is higher than any other hand in knowledge.	أَنَا الَّذِي مِنْ فَضْلِ آلِ أَحْمَدٍ فِي الْعِلْمِ تَعْلَوُ كُلُّ ذِي يَدٍ بِيَدِي
I give medical treatment for the well-being of the Returning, like Galen's medical treatment of bodies.	أَطِيبُ فِي مَصَالِحِ الْمَعَادِ مَا طَبَّ جَالِيْنُوسُ فِي الْأَجْسَادِ
Continence has whitened the first growth of my beard, and I remain in the [weighted] scale of its balance.	قَدْ شَبَّتْ مِنِّْي الْعِذَارُ الْعِفَّةُ مَا زِلْتُ مِنْ مِيزَانِهَا فِي الْكِفَّةِ

⁸⁵ Allusion to a Fatimid juridical precept which states that "doubt does not invalidate certainty," e.g., if a person is certain that he has performed ablution (*wuḍūʿ*), and wonders if he may perhaps have broken it by, say, passing wind, the ablution still remains valid. (*Daʿāʾim*, vol. 1, p. 102, *The Pillars*, vol. 1, p. 127).

⁸⁶ #62, pp. 320–21, vv. 108–14.

*No string or wind instrument has
aroused longing in my heart,
nor has wine crawled through
my veins.*

مَا شَاقَ قَلْبِي وَتَرٌّ أَوْ زَمْرُ
وَلَمْ تَدْبُ فِي عُرُوقِي خَمْرُ

*My habit, through the age, has
been prayer.
The hand of desire has never
held my reins.*

عِبَادَتِي كُلَّ الزَّمَانِ عَادَتِي
مَا مَلَكَتْ يَدُ الْهَوَى مَقَادَتِي

*I stubbornly resist repulsive
greed and avarice,
not for them is my nature,
ever since [my] nature has
existed.*

أَعَانِدُ الْحِرْصَ الْخَبِيثَ وَالطَّمْعَ
مَا لَهَا طَبْعِي مُذْ كَانَ الطَّبْعُ

He warns Abū Kālījār against paying heed to the jealous courtiers who accuse al-Muʿaḥḥad of speaking the speech of philosophers, and says that on the contrary, his speech is based simultaneously on the Qurʾān and rational thought. Indeed, in his prose work *al-Majālīs al-Muʿaḥḥadiyya*, al-Muʿaḥḥad argued forcefully for the necessity of the intrinsic connection between reason and the Shariʿa.⁸⁷ The following comments in this poem, as well as the *Majālīs* exposition, can be viewed in the context of the bad press philosophers had at this time in the Islamic world, being considered supporters of Greek rationalism versus dogmatic Islamic discourse. This is what al-Muʿaḥḥad says:⁸⁸

*Let not the words of the jealous
deceive you,
each a falsifier, sinner,
transgressor,*

فَلَا يُغَرِّكَ قَوْلُ الْحُسَدِ
مَنْ كُلُّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ مُعْتَدِ

*and the words of those of the
weak-minded who say
we speak the speech of
philosophers.*

وَقَوْلُ مَنْ يَقُولُ مِنْ أَهْلِ السَّفَهِ
إِنَّا نَقُولُ قَوْلَ أَهْلِ الْفَلَسَفَةِ

*Here they are, ask them, and you
will know
if they place any ladder in the
Qurʾān—⁸⁹*

وَهَاهُنَا فَاسْأَلْهُمْ لِيَتَعْلَمَا
هَلْ يَنْصَبُونَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ سُلَامًا

⁸⁷ *Al-Majālīs al-Muʿaḥḥadiyya*, vol. 1, majlis 1 & 2.

⁸⁸ #62, p. 321, vv. 115–22.

⁸⁹ Placing a “ladder in the Qurʾān” probably refers to the ladder of the intel-

<i>for a single tale or part of one that they narrate—according to the dictates of the intellect.</i>	لقصة واحدة أو دونها موجبات العقل يوردها
<i>How did they teach that which they did not know? Those who gave legal edicts about what they know not, did an injustice.</i>	فكيف ما لم يعلموه علموا جار الأولى أفترأ بما لم يعلموا
<i>O the weakness of what they built based on ignorance! Did they teach it to us and forget it themselves?</i>	يا ضَعْفَ ما بالجهل أسسوه أعلموناه وهم نسوه
<i>Verily, the Qur'ān, according to us, is the highest lineage and the philosopher has no participation in [our interpretation] of it.</i>	إن القرآن ⁹⁰ عندنا أسمى نسب والفلسفي ما له فيه تشب
<i>We join its excellence together with the intellect, and curb injustice with the sword of justice.</i>	نجمع بين فضله والعقل ونقمع الجور بسيف العدل

He promises Abū Kālījār that he will not regret being gracious to al-Mu'ayyad, for al-Mu'ayyad is a sincere man, and will serve him well as chancellor and preacher:⁹¹

<i>O king, this is a tale of the agony my breast holds close.</i>	يا أيها الهمام هذي قصة مما يضُم الصدر لي من غصة
<i>I have raised it [to you] wearing the clothes of verse.</i>	رفعتها تلبس لبس النظم
<i>The goal aimed for is my intention</i>	والغرض المقصود فيه همِّي

lect, which al-Mu'ayyad considers to be a means to get to a higher place and a higher meaning. (Cf. Lane "sullam": "A means to a thing because it leads to another thing as does the *sullam* upon which one ascends.")

⁹⁰ Use "takhyf al-hamza" here, with "Qurān" for "Qur'ān."

⁹¹ #62, p. 321–22, vv. 123–32.

*to atone for its demerits by
its length
and to evoke good opinion by
its acceptance.*

*So listen and do justice, for
the Age,
through you, has been just to
people and become purified
of its filth.*

*If you open the eye of
acceptance for me,
you will find that service is
my sole purpose.*

*The object of [everyone] other
than myself falls short of this.
Perhaps the alert will be
distinguished from the
negligent.*

*You have never found me to
be in the various aspects
of service
—other than this [affair]—
except assuredly deferential.*

*[I am] a courtier among the
body of courtiers,
I do not feel bashful among
them, and I do not exclude
[myself from them],*

*an insignificant chancellor, I do
not say Chancellor,
for the value of my writing is
moderate;*

*and a preacher when preachers
are mentioned,
[for] my sermon is not
disdained by the
prayer-niche.*

تَكْفِيرَ سَيِّئَاتِهَا بِطَوْلِهَا
وَبَعَثَ حُسْنَ الرَّأْيِ فِي قَبُولِهَا

فَاسْمَعْ وَأَنْصِفْ فَالْزَمَانُ أَنْصَفًا
فِيكَ الْوَرَى وَمَنْ قَذَاهُ قَدْ صَفَا

إِنَّكَ إِنْ فَتَحْتَ لِي عَيْنَ الرُّضَا
لَمْ تُلَفِّ إِلَّا خِدْمَةً لِي غَرَضًا

يَقْصُرُ عَنْهَا شَأْوُ مَنْ دُونِي عَسَى
تَمَيُّزُ الْيَقِظَانِ مِمَّنْ قَعَسَا

وَلَمْ تَجِدْنِي فِي وَجْهِهِ الْخِدْمَةِ
مِنْ غَيْرِ ذَا إِلَّا وَكَيْدَ الْحَرَمَةِ

حَاشِيَةً فِي زُمُرِ الْخَوَاشِي
لَا أَسْتَحِي فَيَهُمُ وَلَا أَحَاشِي

كُوَيْتِبَ مَا أَنْ أَقُولَ كَاتِبَ
فَلِنْ قَدَرَ كُتِبَتِي مِقَارِبَ

وَخَاطِبَ إِنْ ذُكِرَ الْخَطَابَ
مِنْ خَطْبَتِي لَا يَأْنِفُ الْحَرَابَ

Al-Mu'ayyad continues to describe his own qualities in five more verses, after which he goes on to complain that he has received harsh treatment for no reason. Nearing the end of the poem, al-Mu'ayyad tells Abū Kālījār that these verses are a cry from the

heart. He prays for Abū Kālījār's continued well-being, and ends the poem with praise of God and blessings upon the Prophet.

Unfortunately for al-Mu'ayyad, the poem did not have the desired effect. Abū Kālījār was not appeased. And around this time in 433 (1042) the vizier al-ʿĀdil died. Al-ʿĀdil, as we saw earlier, had been sympathetic to al-Mu'ayyad. He was replaced by Muhadhdhib al-Dawla, who was not. Al-Mu'ayyad then decided to leave Shiraz, and go away for a while to Ahwaz, where he owned a house. Clearly, there was significant support for al-Mu'ayyad in Ahwaz; we see him going back to it time and again.

In his usual style, al-Mu'ayyad did not sit around in Ahwaz waiting. In an area known as Qaṣr al-Ma'mūn, he found an abandoned maṣjid that had fallen into disrepair and set about repairing it with the help of his followers. At the perimeter of the prayer-niche on teakwood panels, he inscribed the names of the Fatimid Imams in golden letters.⁹² He mentions his repairing of the Ahwaz mosque in a poem composed a couple of years later in Najaf, on his journey from Fars to Egypt:⁹³

*The hand of Fate has emptied
of me a maṣjid whose base
is piety,⁹⁴
adorned by me for the Progeny
of the Messenger of God.*

وَعَظَّلَ مَنِّي مَسْجِدًا أُسَّهُ التَّقَى

لَا لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ بِيْ كَانَ حَالِيَا

On the first Friday after the repairs had been completed, al-Mu'ayyad had twenty muezzins give the call for prayer from the roof of the maṣjid in unison, and their *adhān* included the phrase regarded by Sunnis as a Shi'ite heresy: "Come to the best of deeds." He offered the *khutba* for the Shi'ite Fatimid Caliph-Imam.

The Sunni elite of Ahwaz were incensed, and the qāḍī of the city wrote to the Abbasids in Baghdad, asking for something to be done. The Abbasids responded by sending an emissary, Ibn al-Muslima (titled Ra'īs al-ru'asā', later promoted to the Abbasid vizierate) to the scene. Ibn al-Muslima was too scared of what the Daylamites

⁹² On this inscription, see Busse, *Chalif und Grosskönig*, pp. 125–27. Another, later example of a mosque where names of Fatimid Imams were similarly inscribed on wood panels is the mosque built by the Sulayhid queen al-Ḥurra al-Malika in Sanaa.

⁹³ #17, p. 245, v. 12.

⁹⁴ Reference to Qur'ān 9:108.

of Ahwaz might do to him to come there, so he stopped in Basra and wrote to Abū Kālījār asking for safe passage through Ahwaz to Shiraz. Al-Mu'ayyad decided to precede Ibn al-Muslima to Shiraz, to try and forestall his malice.

Once al-Mu'ayyad arrived in Shiraz, another disputation was forced upon him, this time oral.⁹⁵ His enemies hoped that al-Mu'ayyad would lose his temper with the well-respected old shaykh who was his opponent, and thus lose the respect of the audience. Things did not go as they wished, however, and al-Mu'ayyad easily defeated the shaykh. In spite of this, his situation with Abū Kālījār did not improve, and his enemies continued poisoning the king's ears against him.

At this time, Abū Kālījār received a letter from the Abbasids demanding that he turn al-Mu'ayyad over to Ibn al-Muslima. He came out on the side of the Abbasids and placed al-Mu'ayyad under house-arrest. Ibn al-Muslima then arrived in Shiraz. He demanded that al-Mu'ayyad forswear his allegiance to the Fatimids and al-Mu'ayyad refused.⁹⁶ For the next seven months, al-Mu'ayyad remained in Shiraz in a state of house-arrest. He describes these events and his sorry state in a poignant poem probably written during these uneasy times, and almost certainly not meant for public consumption. He intimates that Abū Kālījār is weak, but that he, al-Mu'ayyad, has no other option but to propitiate him (v. 20). He addresses an imaginary woman and "answers" the questions she puts to him about his sadly changed condition:⁹⁷

*I said, "The Umayyad"⁹⁸ dog
[Ibn Muslima] came
forward to oppose me,
and the sons of Ṣakhr flared
up to take revenge on me.*

*The person I had given myself
over to, handed me over,
and showed enmity to me by
deception's face.*

فقلت ائْتِرَى لِي مِنْ أُمَيَّةَ كَلْبُهَا

وَنَارَ لَنْيْلِ الثَّأْرِ مِّنِّي بَنُو صَخْرٍ

وَسَلَّمَنِي مَنْ كُنْتُ مُسْتَسْلِمًا لَهُ

وَأَظْهَرَ لِي الْعُدْوَانَ مِنْ صَفْحَةِ الْعَدْرِ

⁹⁵ See al-Mu'ayyad's synopsis of the debate in *Sīra*, pp. 57–60.

⁹⁶ Al-Mu'ayyad describes a dream reported at that time by a courtier—who was not even one of his own friends—in which 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib prayed for the destruction of al-Mu'ayyad's enemies (*Sīra*, pp. 66–67).

⁹⁷ #55, pp. 303–4, vv. 11–23.

⁹⁸ The obvious question that arises here is why al-Mu'ayyad says "Umayyad dog" rather than "Abbasid dog," and "the sons of Ṣakhr," again referring to the Umayyads

All [my] helpers turned
their backs on me,
gave me abandonment
instead of aid.

وَوَلَانِي الْأَعْوَانَ طَرًّا ظَهَرَهُمْ
وَأَوَّلُونِي الْخِذْلَانَ فِي مَوْقِعِ النِّصْرِ

All the Sunnis became
inflamed against me,
Shiraz heaved with them,
[with] the turmoil wrought
by the oppressors.

وَهَاجَ عَلَيَّ النَّاصِبُونَ بِأَسْرِهِمْ
تُمُوجُ بِهِمْ شِيرَازُ فَتُجَّ ذَوِي الْوَتَرِ

He brought the *tāghūt*⁹⁹ of
their religion from Baghdad,
and raised a clamor over me
with the cavalry of doubt,
polytheism and unbelief.

وَأَجْلَبَ مِنْ بَغْدَادَ طَاغُوتَ دِينِهِمْ
عَلَيَّ بِخَيْلِ الشُّكِّ وَالشُّرْكِ وَالْكَفْرِ

My blood began to boil, for
they made a votive offering
of my blood,
and their bowels began to boil,
from enmity for me,
like the boiling of a
cooking pot.

وَصَارَ دَمِي يَغْلِي لِنَذْرِهِمْ دَمِي
وَأَحْشَاؤُهُمْ تَغْلِي بُغْضِي غَلَى الْقِدْرِ

If [only] your eyes had seen
me when I was among them,
captive in the fetters of
abjectness and impotence
and imprisonment!

فَلَوْ لَاحْظَتْ عَيْنَاكَ إِذْ أَنَا فِيهِمْ
رَهِينٌ وَثَاقِ الذِّلِّ وَالْعِجْزِ وَالْأَسْرِ

rather than the Abbasids. The answer may be one of three things: (a) Perhaps al-Mu'ayyad makes a typological identification; from his point of view, there is not much difference between the two dynasties. (b) Perhaps he is being cautious; it may not be wise to attack the Abbasids head on—however, in an earlier poem, also composed in Fars, he does name the Abbasid Caliphs al-Tā'i' and al-Qādir (#14, p. 238, vv. 8 ff.), so why is he more cautious now? It may be that the time is more delicate. (c) Perhaps Ibn al-Muslima has Umayyad ancestry.

⁹⁹ In his *Majālis* (vol. 4, majlis 49), al-Mu'ayyad describes the *ṭawāghūt* (plural of *ṭāghūt*) as the enemies of the prophets and Imams, those who claim the spiritual stations of the prophets and Imams. He presents them as the *bāṭin* (inner meaning) of the idols (*asnām*) that take the outer form of God but are not God. Elsewhere (majlis 342) he defines them as the self-styled scholars who direct their students towards ignorance and invalidate the merit of knowledge and rationality; he asserts that these false scholars are the ones about whom God has informed us saying "God is the master of those who believe . . . as for those who disbelieve, their masters are the *ṭāghūt*, they take them from light to darknesses" (Qur'an 2:257). In a third place (majlis 50), he explains the derivation of *al-tāghūt* from *ṭughyān* (oppression, tyranny).

*I see the night destroying me
as its shadow stretches out,
and I believe the morning
may transport me from
my imprisonment [to the
grave].*

أرى الليل يُرديني إذا مَدَّ ظِلُّه
وأحسب من أسري بي الصبح قد يسري

*I wake up to fear and fall
asleep to pain,
I tread on live coals and
drown in a sea.*

أروح إلى خوفٍ وأغدو إلى جوى
وأحبط في جمر وأغرق في بحر

*I complain to one who is
not strong, and I put my
hopes
in one who increases my
troubles, [that he] deliver
me from my troubles.*

وأشكو إلى غير الحريز وأرتجي
ليكشف ضري من يضاعف في ضري

*The time I was in a part of
the night, dark
with perils, faced with [a
peril] that would split
asunder the hearts of rocks,*

وإذ أنا في قطع من الليل مُظلمٍ
خطاراً لها تنشق أفئدة الصخر

*you would have been amazed
if you saw the excellence
of my endurance,
and you would have shown
much amazement, no doubt,
at my patience!*

لاعجبت إذ صادفت حسن تئبتي
واكثرت لا شك التعجب من صبري

*For whosoever is in a condition
like my condition, if he
puts on the garment of decay,
has a vast excuse.*

ومن كان ذا حال كحالي فإنه
إذا ما اكتسى ثوب البلى واسع العذر

The poem continues as the woman asks al-Mu'ayyad why he does not leave Fars and go to Cairo, to his Imam. He answers her that he stays in Fars in obedience to the wishes of his Imam, in order to safeguard religion and protect his people. If his people were in the grip of hunger and poverty today, they would be completely lost tomorrow, if he, their succor, left. We see from these verses the debate taking place within al-Mu'ayyad's own mind: he finds it nearly impossible to stay on another moment in the hostile environment of Shiraz, but he tries to convince himself he must:¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ #55, p. 304, vv. 24–30.

*She said, "I see every two
days a plot
with which the days have
struck you, the striking of
a malicious man.*

فَقَالَتْ أَرَى فِي كُلِّ يَوْمَيْنِ خُطَّةً
رَمَتْكَ بِهَا الْأَيَّامُ رَمِي أَخِي غَمْر

*Yet you stay on, enduring
oppression like this,
and have liberal patience with
humiliation and servility.*

وَأَنْتَ مُقِيمٌ تَحْمِلُ الظُّئِمَ هَكَذَا
وَتُوسِّعُ جَلَدًا لِّلْمَهَانَةِ وَالصُّغْر

*Tell me then, what is the
meaning of your abiding in
these two,
and tell me (how amazing you
are!) what is the meaning of
your desisting from Egypt?"*

فَقُلْ لِّي مَا مَعْنَى قِيَامِكَ فِيهِمَا
وَقُلْ وَيْكَ مَا مَعْنَى قَعُودِكَ عَنْ مِصْر

*I said, "My abiding is in
obedience to and a
following of
the command of the elect
of God in creation and
command.*

فَقُلْتُ قِيَامِي طَاعَةٌ وَتَبَاعَةٌ
لِّأَمْرِ وَلِيِّ اللَّهِ فِي الْخَلْقِ وَالْأَمْرِ

*[It is] protection for religion,
in the cultivation of
whose abode*

وَحِفْظٌ لِّدِينٍ فِي عِمَارَةِ دَارِهِ

*I have been sorely tried, and
have made old [the garments
of] my new age.*

بُلِيْتُ وَأَبْلَيْتُ الْجَدِيدَ مِنَ الْعُمَر

*[It is] a protecting curtain that
I have drawn over a group
of defenseless people,
[for] they would be buried
before the grave if I were
to disappear into the grave.*

وَسِترٌ عَلَى قَوْمٍ ضِعَافٍ مَدَدْتُهُ
يُؤَارُونَ قَبْلَ الْقَبْرِ إِنْ غَبْتُ فِي الْقَبْرِ

*I draw near to my death,
being wasted tomorrow,
just as they are felled by
hunger and poverty today."*

أَقَارِبُ هُلُكِي بِالْإِضَاعَةِ فِي غَدٍ
كَمَا الْيَوْمَ هُمْ صَرَعَى الْمَجَاعَةِ وَالْفَقْرِ

In the next few verses, the woman tries to convince al-Mu'ayyad of the wisdom of leaving, saying his people would be happy knowing he was safe. But here, abruptly, he makes a final decision to stay in Fars:¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ #55, p. 304, vv. 31-34.

*She said, "If you leave in
safety,
they would be protected from
losing you,*

*[the former] is more suitable
and fitting than it being
a separation*

*until the Resurrection, in
which there is no meeting
until the Resurrection."*

*I said, "It is sufficient for me
that death hold my hand
for the sake of the love of
the sons of Tāhā, it is
sufficient honor for me.*

*I have pledged the sacrifice of
my life, a pledge I shall fulfill,
for the ones in whose [honor
was revealed] "They fulfill
their vows."¹⁰³*

فَقَالَتْ لِأَنْ تَنْأَى وَانْتَ مَسْلَمٌ

فَقَدْ أَمِنُوا أَنْ يَصْبَحُوا مِنْكَ فِي خَسَرٍ

أَحَقُّ وَأَوْلَى أَنْ يَكُونَ تَفَرُّقٌ¹⁰²

إِلَى الْحَشَرِ مَا فِيهِ تَلَاقٌ إِلَى الْحَشَرِ

فَقُلْتُ كَفَانِي أَنْ يَصَافِحَنِي الرَّدَى

بِحَبِّ بَنِي طَه كَفَانِي مِنْ فَخْرِ

نَذَرْتُ فِدَاءَ الرُّوحِ نَذْرًا أَفِي بِهِ

لِمَنْ فِيهِمْ قَدْ جَاءَ يُوفُّونَ بِالنَّذْرِ

After several verses in praise of the Imams, the poem ends with the following plea for succor and the hope that al-Mu'ayyad will find rest and repose in the protection of the Imam's palace:¹⁰⁴

*It is through you that Ibn Mūsā
asks God for deliverance
from captivity and from
confinement in the worst of
stopping places.*

*Entering shade in the courtyard
of His elect,
shady, and residing in security
in the refuge of the palace.*

بِكُمْ يَسْأَلُ اللَّهُ ابْنُ مُوسَى خَلَاصَهُ

مِنْ الْأَسْرِ فِي شَرِّ الْمَنَازِلِ وَالْحَصْرِ

لِيَدْخُلَ ظِلًّا فِي فِنَاءٍ وَلِيَّهِ

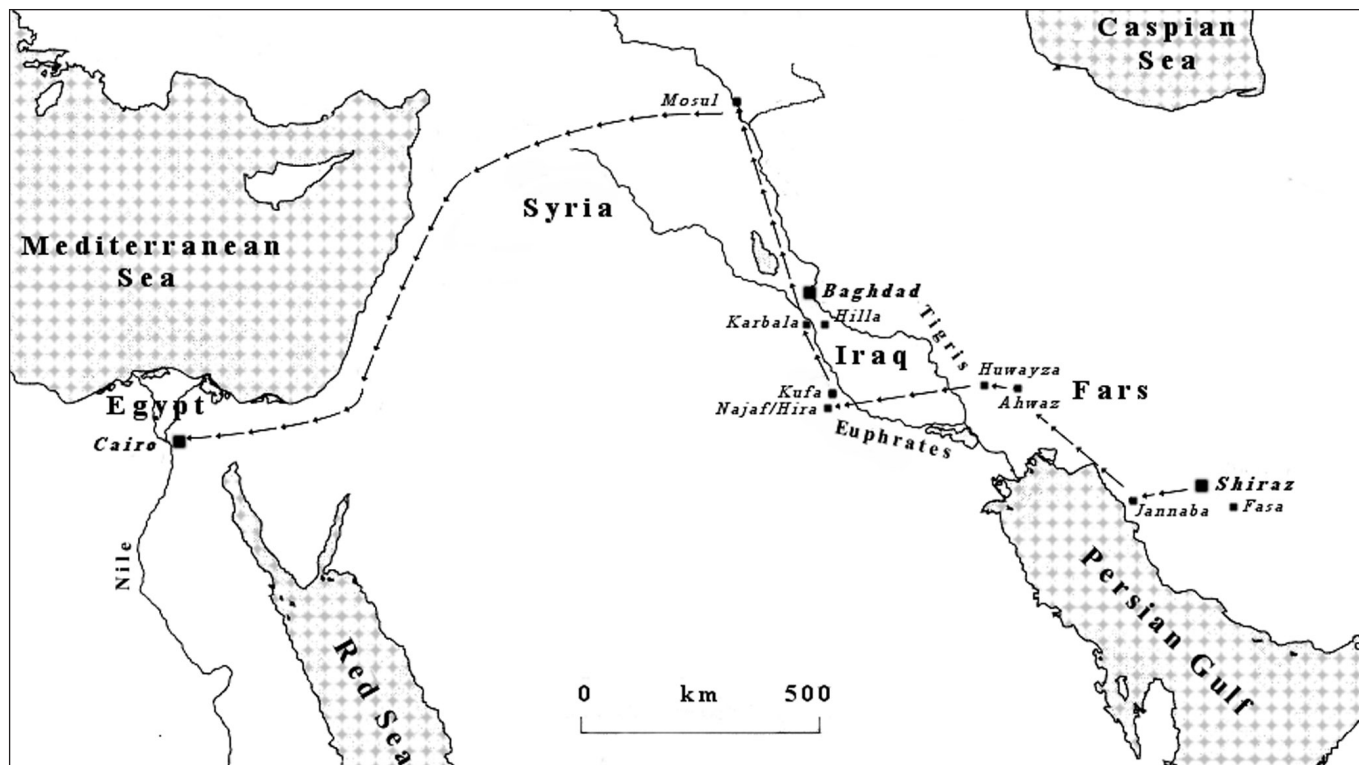
ظَلِيلًا وَيَثْوِي أَمِنًا فِي حِمَى الْقَصْرِ

While al-Mu'ayyad was still under house-arrest, Abū Kālījār left for Ahwaz with his army. As before, al-Mu'ayyad was fearful about remaining in Shiraz without his Daylamite supporters, but was denied

¹⁰² Read "tafaruq" (mss. 1-5) instead "tafawwuq" (ed.)

¹⁰³ Reference to Qur'ān 76:7.

¹⁰⁴ #55, p. 305, vv. 50-51.



Map A. Al-Mu'ayyad's Journey from Fars to Egypt.

the king's permission to travel with him. He decided to take off for Ahwaz on his own.

Al-Mu'ayyad left his beloved homeland Shiraz, not realizing that he would never see it again. Thus began one of the most physically severe times of his life: his journey took him through the wilderness and on untravelled roads, disguised and hiding from anyone who might recognize and denounce him. He narrowly escaped being caught in Jannāba and after a month's hard journey, finally arrived in Ahwaz.

Upon his arrival in Ahwaz, al-Mu'ayyad openly received visitors. Abū Kālījār had not yet arrived in Ahwaz, having stopped for a month at Sābūr, which was not far from Ahwaz. The qāḍī of Ahwaz wrote immediately to Abū Kālījār informing him of al-Mu'ayyad's arrival. Al-Mu'ayyad then received letters from his friends in the king's retinue at Sābūr. They warned him of the king's displeasure, and asked him to leave Ahwaz before the king's arrival.

Al-Mu'ayyad left Ahwaz for the not-too-distant Ḥilla area, the lands of the Mazyadid ruler of the Banū Asad. Al-Manṣūr b. al-Ḥusayn welcomed him warmly and there al-Mu'ayyad stayed for seven months, while al-Manṣūr tried to persuade Abū Kālījār to receive al-Mu'ayyad. Al-Manṣūr might have been successful, had it not so happened that the Buyid sultan of Baghdad Jalāl al-Dawla died in Sha'bān 435 (1044); Abū Kālījār hoped the Abbasids would name him the next sultan of Baghdad, and therefore decided firmly against allowing al-Mu'ayyad to come back. Nevertheless, having spent months in the desert lands, al-Mu'ayyad resolved to return to Ahwaz whether Abū Kālījār welcomed him or not. However, Abū Kālījār learnt about al-Mu'ayyad's intention and wrote to al-Manṣūr expressly forbidding al-Mu'ayyad's return.

At this time, word arrived that the prince of Mosul, the 'Uqaylid Qirwāsh b. al-Muqallad, had declared for the Fatimids. Al-Mu'ayyad then resolved to go to Mosul, visiting the shrines of 'Alī and al-Ḥusayn at Karbala and Najaf on the way. He composed two poems that expressed his hopes and fears at this uncertain time in his life. The following short piece, probably composed in Najaf, is addressed to 'Alī, asking him to wreak vengeance upon al-Mu'ayyad's oppressors:¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ #45, p. 291, vv. 1–8 (complete).

O Abū al-Ḥasan, equal of
the Warner¹⁰⁶—
if you had not existed he
would have had no equal.

أَبَا حَسَنِ يَا نَظِيرَ النَّذِيرِ
وَلَوْ لَا وَجُودُكَ فَاتَ النَّظِيرَا

O moon after that sun,
bright, that appeared
destroying the
darknesses.

وَيَا قَمَرًا بَعْدَ ذَاكَ السُّرَّاجِ
مُنِيرَا بَدَى لِلدِّيَاجِي مَبِيرَا

O performer of miracles,
who
shows us "grace and a
vast kingdom"¹⁰⁷

وَيَا صَاحِبَ الْيَنِّاتِ الَّذِي
يُزِينُنَا نَعِيمًا وَمُلْكًا كَبِيرَا

Protect your wronged
servant who
has come to you—O master
of the people—for protection;
who has been driven out of his
land for your sake,
and has traversed the
wildernesses towards you
poverty-stricken.

أَجِرْ عَبْدَكَ الْمُسْتَظَامَ الَّذِي
أَتَى بِكَ مَوْلَى الْوَرَى مُسْتَحِيرَا
وَأَخْرِجْ مِنْ أَرْضِهِ فَيْكُمُ
فَجَابَ الْبَرَارِي إِلَيْكُمْ فَقِيرَا

So be a helper for me, O elect
of God,
upon the oppressors, and be one
who aids.

فَكُنْ لِي مُعِينًا وَلِيَّ الْإِلَهِ
عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ وَكُنْ لِي نَصِيرَا

And lay in ruin the abode of
the tyrants, the unjust,
destroy the powerful among
them and the insignificant.

وَحَرِّبْ دِيَارَ الطُّغَاةِ الْبُغَاةِ
وَدَمِّرْ كِبِيرَهُمُ وَالصَّغِيرَا

O my God, I have sought
intercession through this
legatee,
so accept the intercession of my
intercessor, O All-Hearing
One, All-Seeing One!

إِلَهِي شَفَعْتُ بِهَذَا الْوَصِيِّ
فَشَفِّعْ شَفِيعِي السَّمِيعَ الْبَصِيرَا¹⁰⁸

In a second, much longer poem written in Najaf or Karbala, al-Mu'ayyad describes his visit to the shrines of 'Alī and al-Ḥusayn.

¹⁰⁶ "The Warner" refers to Prophet Muḥammad.

¹⁰⁷ Reference to Qur'ān 76:20.

¹⁰⁸ Perhaps "al-baṣīrā" is in the accusative as a *badal* from "ilāhī."

He says his exile has resulted in some good, for he has achieved a dear wish, a visit to the shrine of 'Alī:¹⁰⁹

*Even if I have received
wounds by exile, I
have achieved through it
some of the wishes I had
aspired to.*

لئن مَسَّنِي بِاللَّفْيِ قَرْحٌ فَإِنِّي
بَلَّغْتُ بِهِ فِي بَعْضِ هَمِّي الْأَمَانِيَا

*I have visited in Kufa a
domed shrine of glory
which, in truth, is religion
and this world as it is.*

فَقَدْ زُرْتُ فِي كُوفَانِ الْمَجْدِ قُبَّةً
هِيَ الدِّينُ وَالْدُنْيَا بِحَقِّ كَمَا هِيََا

*It is the shining-white domed
shrine, shrine of Haydar,
the legatee of the one whom
God sent as a guide.*

هِيَ الْقُبَّةُ الْبَيْضَاءُ قُبَّةُ حَايِدَرٍ
وَصِيِّ الَّذِي قَدْ أَرْسَلَ اللَّهُ هَادِيَا

[... praise of 'Alī]

*O how good is the circumam-
bulating around his grave!
I humbly, continually, pray
for God's blessings on him.*

فَوَاحِشًا بِذَا التَّطَوُّافِ حَوْلَ ضَرِيحِهِ
أُصَلِّيُ عَلَيْهِ فِي خُشُوعٍ تَوَالِيَا

*And O how good is the
placing of my cheek upon
its dust!
and how pleasing is my
bending down upon it
in dialogue!*

وَوَاحِدًا تَعْفِيرُ خَدِّي فَوَقَهُ
وَيَا طَيْبَ إِكْبَائِي عَلَيْهِ مُتَاجِرَا

*I converse privately and
complain of my oppressor
with burning [pain],
that makes tears flow down
my cheeks.*

أُنَاجِي وَأَشْكُو ظَالِمِي بِتَحَرُّقٍ
يُثِيرُ دُمُوعاً فَوْقَ خَدِّي جَوَارِيَا

And, he says, he has achieved another dear wish, a visit to the shrine of al-Ḥusayn. The remembrance of al-Ḥusayn's suffering makes his own troubles seem insignificant by comparison:¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ #17, p. 246, vv. 22–24, 27–29.

¹¹⁰ #17, p. 246, vv. 30–31.

*And I have visited the grave
of the pure one in the land
of Karbala,
may my life be sacrifice for the
one slain thirsty, parched!*

وَقَدْ زُرْتُ مَثْوَى الطُّهْرِ فِي أَرْضِ كَرْبَلَا

*For in what al-Ḥusayn, son of
Fāṭima, suffered in [those]
ten days
is consolation for the likes of
me, if I am to be consoled.¹¹¹*

فَدَتْ نَفْسِي الْمَقْتُولَ عَطْشَانَ صَادِيَا

فَفِي عَشْرِ مَا نَالَ الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ فَاطِمٍ

لِمِثْلِي مَسْأَلَةً لَّيْنٌ كُنْتُ سَالِيَا

In the next few verses, al-Mu'ayyad declares his resolution to go to his Imam in Cairo. He expects all his problems to come to an end with his arrival at the Imam's door (v. 41). We shall see in the next section how his hopes in this respect did not materialize.¹¹²

*I have [made] a firm
resolution—if God brings the
matter to completion,
the completion of the
resolution is sufficient healing
for the breast!*

وَلِي عَزْمَةٌ إِنْ تَمَّمَ اللَّهُ حَظَّ بَهَا

*alighting at the door of the
palace, fulfilling my heart's
desire,
and finding near the distant
comfort.*

كَفَانِي تِمَامُ الْعَزْمِ لِلصَّدْرِ شَافِيَا

حُلُولٌ بَبَابِ الْقَصْرِ يَقْضِي لُبَانَةً

*Then I shall find the star
of my happiness rising,
as I find the rising star of
ill-omen falling,*

لِنَفْسِي وَالْفَيْ نَائِي الْأُنْسِ دَانِيَا

فَأُوْنِسَ مِنْهُ نَجْمَ سَعْدِي طَالَعَا

كَمَا مِنْهُ أَلْفِي نَاجِمَ النُّجُوسِ هَاوِيَا

*at a door whose elevation
resides where Arcturus is,
certainly, rather, it is more
elevated than both Arcturus
and Spica Virginis,*

بَبَابِ ثَوَى حَيْثُ السَّمَاءُ عُلُوهُ

أَجَلٌ بَلْ غَدَا فَوْقَ السَّمَاءَيْنِ عَالِيَا

*belonging to the master of the
people al-Mustanṣir, the one
who uncovers darkness,
the quintessence of those who
walk the earth.*

لِمَوْلَى الْوَرَى الْمُسْتَنْصِرِ الْكَاشِفِ الدُّجَى

وَصَفْوَةٌ مِّنْ أَمْسَى عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مَاشِيَا

¹¹¹ I.e., consoled in my own grief.

¹¹² #17, pp. 246–47, vv. 32–36, 40–42.

[...praise of al-Mustanşir]

There [will be] no disappointment
from God's [giving of] comfort,
for I see

Him very favorable towards
my serious resolution.

So that I dust off all care at
his door,
and [there] end the remainder
of my days.

O you who gloat over [my] exile,
desist, for I have
attained through it honor
above [all] honor.

وَلَا يَأْسَ مِنْ رَوْحِ الْإِلَهِ بَأْنُ أَرَى

عَلَى جِدِّ عَزْمِي فِيهِ جِدًّا مَوَاتِيَا

فَأَتَقُضُ عَنِّي كُلُّ هَمٍّ بَبَابِهِ
وَأَخْتِمُ مِنْ أَيَّامِ عُمْرِي الْبَوَاقِيَا

فَيَا شَامِتًا بِنَفْسِي لِي كُفًّا إِنِّي
عَقَدْتُ بِهِ فَوْقَ الْمَعَالِي مَعَالِيَا

The last few verses are addressed to the Imams, and, perhaps because this poem is composed at the shrine of 'Alī, he addresses them as "the progeny of 'Alī." In these verses, al-Mu'ayyad fervently pleads for succor:¹¹³

O progeny of 'Alī, how many
times, O how many times,
because of allegiance to you,
have I been targeted, and how
many misfortunes have I
encountered!

How many deserts have I
traversed for your sake,
terrified,
and how many nights have I spent
having given up hope of life.

The face of my resolution has
never turned away from
allegiance to you—

how would I ever see my face
turning away from you,

when you are my pillar in my
Returning, and my
preparation,
and my place of hope,
that you give succor to
me, to one who hopes;

أَلَّ عَلَيَّ كَمْ وَكَمْ فِي وَلَائِكُمْ

فُصِّدْتُ وَكَمْ فِيكُمْ لَقِيتُ الدَّوَاهِيَا

وَكَمْ قَدْ طَوَيْتُ الْبَيْدَ فِيكُمْ مُرَوَّعًا

وَكَمْ بَتُّ مِنْ رُوحِي عَلَى الْيَأْسِ طَاوِيَا

فَلَمْ يُثْنِ وَجْهُ الْعِزِّ لِي عَنْ وَلَائِكُمْ

وَكَيفَ أَرَى عَنْكُمْ لَوْجَهِي ثَانِيَا

وَأَنْتُمْ عِمَادِي فِي مَعَادِي وَعُدَّتِي

وَمَثْوَى رَجَائِي كَيْ تُغِيثُون رَاجِيَا

¹¹³ #17, p. 247, vv. 43–51.

and you are the Book of
God that establishes the
rightly-guiding,
truthful person [within it],
and effaces from it the
errant liar.¹¹⁴

وَأَنْتُمْ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ يُثَبِّتُ رَاشِدًا

مُحَقِّقًا وَيَمْحُوُ مُبْطِلًا عَنْهُ غَاوِيًا

Give succor to a follower
who has plunged—due to
the violence of enemies,
for your love's sake—into a
raging sea of care.

أَغِيثُوا وَلِيًّا خَاصًّا فِي بَطْشَةِ الْعَدَى

بِحَبْكُمُ بِحَرٍّ مِنْ أَلْهَمٍ طَامِيًا

Free Ibn Mūsā from the
exhaustion of care and
passion,
for he has been crushed
by wearing the garment
of exhaustion.

وَفُكُّوا ابْنَ مُوسَى مِنْ ضَنْئِ الْهَمِّ وَالْجَوَى

فَقَدْ صَارَ مِنْ لُبْسِ الضَّنَّاءِ مُتَلَاثِيًا

Be an adversary to the
one that hurt him, for he
will then doubtless soon
encounter the abysses
[of Hell].

وَكُونُوا لِمَنْ آذَاهُ خَصْمًا فَإِنَّهُ

عَلَى عَجَلٍ لَا شَكَّ يَلْقَى الْمَهَاوِيَا

The peace of God be upon
you O progeny of Ahmad,
until the end of time, as
long as the stars appear,
moving.

عَلَيْكُمْ سَلَامُ اللَّهِ يَا آلَ أَحْمَدِ

مَدَى الدَّهْرِ مَا تَبْدُو النُّجُومُ سَوَارِيَا

When al-Mu'ayyad arrived at Mosul after his visit to the shrines, he found its ruler insincere and vacillating in his declaration of allegiance to the Fatimids. Al-Mu'ayyad could not turn back to Fars with Abū Kālījār unreceptive, so, having exhausted all possibilities in Iraq, he was left with no place to go but Cairo.

He says in his *Sīra* that if he had waited out the year in Mosul, it would have been possible for him to return to Fars, for his enemies were exposed as enemies of Abū Kālījār himself and executed, and the king regretted his treatment of his teacher. In the wake of these events, some months after his arrival in Cairo, al-Mu'ayyad wrote to Abū Kālījār, and the king responded with an invitation for

¹¹⁴ Reference to Qur'ān 13:39.

al-Mu'ayyad to return to Fars.¹¹⁵ As it happened, however, Abū Kālījār died soon after in 440 (1048), and was succeeded by his son Fūlād Sutūn who had no reason to want al-Mu'ayyad back. The door to Fars was closed forever.

*Cairo: At the Fatimid Court of al-Mustaṣṣir 436/37–448
(1045/46–1056)*

Al-Mu'ayyad arrived in Cairo in 436 (1045) or 437 (1046).¹¹⁶ We know from the *Dīwān* that he was approximately fifty years of age.¹¹⁷ His autobiography provides some information on the following twelve years of his life.¹¹⁸

Since he was a young boy, al-Mu'ayyad had wished to meet his Imam face to face. He says in one of his early poems:¹¹⁹

<i>I have a wish: to emigrate to you, [a wish] that I have wished ever since I was a boy.</i>	لِي فِي هَجْرَةٍ إِلَيْكَ تَمَنٍّ قَدْ تَمَنَيْتُهَا وَإِنِّي غَلام
--	--

However, he had probably not thought of immigrating to Cairo on a permanent basis, and when he did get there, he still hoped, as we shall see, to be able to return to Fars eventually. The reason for al-Mu'ayyad's intention to remain in Fars was two-fold. First, al-Mu'ayyad's family and people were in Fars; Fars was his homeland

¹¹⁵ Text of Abū Kālījār's letter to al-Mu'ayyad is recorded in *Šīra*, pp. 76–78.

¹¹⁶ I have calculated the date of al-Mu'ayyad's arrival in Cairo as follows: Al-Mu'ayyad was in Ḥilla, with the Mazyadid chief al-Manṣūr b. al-Ḥusayn when the Buyid Jalāl al-Dawla died (*Šīra*, p. 73) in Sha'bān 435 H ('Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, d. 630/1233, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī, Beirut, 1997, vol. 8, p. 41, events of the year 435 H), and he stayed there for a total of seven months. He went to Mosul from there and shortly thereafter to Cairo. The Fatimid vizier at the time of al-Mu'ayyad's arrival in Cairo was al-Falāḥī, who took office in 436 H (Ibn al-Ṣayrafi (d. 542/1147), *al-Ishāra ilā man nāla al-wizāra*, ed. A.F. Sayyid, Cairo, 1990, pp. 70–71). Therefore, al-Mu'ayyad probably arrived in Cairo sometime in the latter half of 436 H or the first half of 437 H. The next firm date we have is that of the death of al-Tustarī—whom al-Mu'ayyad met in Cairo (*Šīra*, pp. 81–84)—shortly before Sha'bān 439 H (*Itḥāz*, vol. 2, p. 195, month from *Šīra*, pp. 84–85).

¹¹⁷ #25, p. 261, quatrain 4, & #39, p. 282, v. 7.

¹¹⁸ *Šīra*, pp. 80–100.

¹¹⁹ #12, p. 234, v. 37. The poem is addressed to al-Ẓāhir.

and he had an immense love for it. Even though he had been driven out, he probably hoped the situation there would change in his favor, enabling him to return. Secondly, although he deeply revered his Imam, he was aware that the Imam was not the one who directly controlled the political state of affairs at his court and in his empire; the real power was wielded from behind the throne by al-Mustanşir's mother al-Sayyida Raşad, who appointed viziers¹²⁰ and other personnel of her choice.¹²¹ Al-Mu'ayyad was not sure that he would be able to function in such a politically charged atmosphere. Thus, he was in two conflicting states of mind when he came to Cairo. Early in his sojourn in Cairo, he writes about this in a letter to his brother:¹²²

... I am informing you O my brother—may God give comfort to your heart and grant you what pleases you in both worlds—that after suffering the appalling events you saw with your own eyes, ... I reached, with great difficulty, the Pure Door, vacillating between despair and hope ... hope because of a service whose like no one but me had rendered, ... and despair because I knew that the one sought was a sun concealed in a curtain, and the face of a day wearing a veil of clouds.

Immediately upon his arrival in Cairo, al-Mu'ayyad was taken to the palace. In his *Šira*, he movingly describes his reverent feelings as he entered that longed-for sanctuary and prostrated himself upon its dust. Unfortunately, he did not get to meet the Imam. He was first taken to the vizier al-Falāḥī, whom he says he liked immediately, and who assigned him a small house. The next day, having been told that actual power in Cairo was wielded by the Queen-Mother's favorite and her former (Jewish) slavemaster al-Tustarī, al-Mu'ayyad went to see him. Al-Tustarī received him smilingly and from the treasury, gave him clothes and gold. Then al-Mu'ayyad went to pay his respects to the qāḍī al-quḍāt/dā'ī al-du'at (great grandson of the

¹²⁰ Information on al-Mustanşir's viziers is provided by the medieval historian Ibn al-Şayrafī in *al-Ishāra*, pp. 69–100. Some biographies are also preserved in Maqrīzī's *K. al-Muqaffā al-kabīr*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ya'lāwī, Beirut, 1991 and Ibn Ḥajar's *Raf' al-īşr 'an quḍāt mişr*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar, Cairo, 1998. A useful modern study with charts and references is by Leila al-Imad, *The Fatimid Vizierate 969–1172*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1990.

¹²¹ Al-Mu'ayyad refers to this fact both in his *Šira* (p. 84) and *Dīwān* (#54, p. 302, v. 10.)

¹²² *Šira*, p. 80. Al-Mu'ayyad could have addressed this letter to his real brother, for we know that he had a brother from the reference in Kirmānī's *Mabāsīm al-bishārāt* (p. 125) to the two sons of Mūsā b. Dā'ūd, who was al-Mu'ayyad's father.

famous Fatimid qāḍī-dāʿī al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān) al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, who had been al-Muʿaḡyad's immediate supervisor when he was dāʿī of Fars. He was disappointed: he found al-Qāsim incompetent and sensed that the qāḍī considered him a rival.

When he arrived in Cairo, al-Muʿaḡyad's first and most heartfelt wish was to get an audience with the Imam, and he placed his hopes in al-Tustarī. In the weeks immediately following al-Muʿaḡyad's arrival in Cairo, al-Tustarī seemed favorably inclined towards him and promised him an audience with the Imam, but jealous courtiers slowly managed to turn al-Tustarī's favor into mistrust. Al-Muʿaḡyad was denied al-Tustarī's ear, and his stipend was greatly diminished. Finally, he asked permission to leave Cairo. He said to al-Tustarī that he had not come to Cairo for worldly gain, but rather, he had come seeking the Imam. If the Imam would not (or could not) grant him a look or a word, there was no point in his remaining there. These are his words to al-Tustarī as recorded by him in the *Sīra*.¹²³

O Shaykh, know that my land has not spit me out from its mouth except for being exposed in the service of the ʿAlawite [i.e. Fatimid] state, for fear from the Abbasid side, and escaping from a sedition whose malice almost killed me, and whose drowning almost overtook me—not because I was stung by the live coals of poverty and therefore took shelter in the antidote of profit and utility. There is no motive to this endeavor of mine except the motive of belief, and the person sought is none but the master of the palace, who is the Imam of the Age, not the viziers or intermediaries or aides.

In the wake of al-Muʿaḡyad's strong speech, al-Tustarī rudely denied him permission to leave Cairo. Things between them remained highly unpleasant until al-Tustarī was killed by Turkish soldiers in early 439 (1048).

Let us turn for a moment to the emotions, expectations and hopes intimated in al-Muʿaḡyad's *Dīwān* during his early months in Cairo. In one poem, perhaps one of the first after his arrival in Cairo, al-Muʿaḡyad expresses happiness that he has looked upon the face of his Imam, perhaps in a public setting like the Friday prayer. In this poem, al-Muʿaḡyad informs his loved ones that he has gained sanctuary and expresses relief that he has escaped his oppressors.¹²⁴

¹²³ *Sīra*, pp. 83–84.

¹²⁴ #41, pp. 286–87, vv. 16–20. It is, however, also possible to make a case for the poem's composition two years later in the latter half of 439 H, but the earlier dating seems to be the likelier one (details in Appendix A).

O give glad tidings in the
verdant lands of Fars
to a people whose courage
has fled¹²⁵

أَلَا بَشِّرَا فِي حِمَى فَارِسٍ
أُنَاسًا قَلْبُوبُهُمْ طَائِرَةٌ

because of the remoteness of
my visiting-place, who are
crumbling in crumbling ruins,
that I have escaped from
the oppressors
and have been given shade in
exchange for the midday heat,

لِبُعْدِ مَزَارِي عَنْهُمْ فَهُمْ
دَوَائِرُ فِي الدَّمَنِ الدَّائِرَةِ
بِأَنِّي نَجَوْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ
وَبُدِّلْتُ ظِلًّا عَنْ الْحَاجِرَةِ

I have immigrated to the
Imam of the Age
and have preceded my people
to Paradise,¹²⁶

وَهَاجَرْتُ نَحْوَ إِمَامِ الزَّمَانِ
وَسَابَقْتُ قَوْمِي إِلَى السَّاهِرَةِ

my soul grazes in [the celestial
garden] of al-Na'im
and my eye gazes upon its
Lord.¹²⁷

فَنَفْسِي سَارِحَةٌ فِي النَّعِيمِ
وَعَيْنِي إِلَى رَبِّهَا نَازِرَةٌ

On a sadder note, in another poem he laments the loss of his family, his land and his people. He consoles himself with the reminder that being in the Imam's presence is compensation for his loss, the Imam's family his own kin, and the Imam's servants his brothers:¹²⁸

Ransom for [al-Mustashir] be
a slave who has come
seeking protection
from the vicissitudes of a fate¹²⁹
that encompassed him in its enmity,

يَفْدِيهِ مَمْلُوكٌ أَتَى مُسْتَأْمِنًا

that drove him away from
his family and lands
without any crime. His crime
was his belief.

مَنْ صَرَفَ دَهْرَ عَمِّهِ عِدَائُهُ¹²⁹
فَأَزَاحَهُ عَنْ أَهْلِهِ وَدِيَارِهِ
مَنْ غَيْرَ جُرْمٍ جُرْمُهُ إِيْمَانُهُ

¹²⁵ Lit. a people whose hearts have flown away.

¹²⁶ *Sāhira*: a land which God will recreate on the day of resurrection, or the surface of the earth, because it produces plants or herbiage alike by night and day (Lane, s-h-r).

¹²⁷ Lit. favors. References to Qur'ān 5:65, 10:9, 22:56 & 75:23.

¹²⁸ #33, pp. 272-3, vv. 16-21.

¹²⁹ My reading is "ammahū 'udwānuhū" (vocalized as such in ms. #5), instead of the grammatically incorrect "ammuhū 'udwānuhū" (ed.: "even his uncle was his enemies," sic).

*Longing for his lands overpowers
him,
and strength¹³⁰ to renounce
his brothers forsakes him.*

فالشوقُ نحو دياره غَلَابُه
والصبرُ عن إخوانه خَوَانُه

*But the impregnable
neighborhood of our Master
is his neighborhood,
and the sanctuary of the
Presence of his noble self¹³¹*

وَجِوَارُ مَوْلَانَا الْمَنِيعُ جِوَارُه
وَحَرِيمُ حَضْرَتِهِ الْمُعْظَمُ شَانُه

*is the family of Ibn Mūsā when
his family is absent,
or [when] his homelands are
concealed from his pasturing
places,*

أَهْلُ ابْنِ مُوسَى إِنْ تَغَيَّبَ أَهْلُه
أَوْ غَابَ عَنْ أَوْطَانِه أَوْطَائِه

*and the servants of our Master
at his elevated door,
when he is absent from his
brothers, are his brothers.*

وَعَبِيدُ مَوْلَانَا بِسَامِي بَابِه
إِنْ غَابَ عَنْ إخوانه إخوانُه

Al-Mu'ayyad does not mention his home or his family anywhere in the *Sīra*, nor do we have any outside information about them. Verses like the above and those that follow here are our only source of information about his personal life. In the following verses, he expresses his sadness at losing his family and his people even more poignantly:¹³²

*I wept until weeping
itself began to weep
for me,
is it any wonder that
weeping should weep*

بَكَيتُ إِلَى أَنْ صَارَ يَبْكِي لِي الْبُكَاءُ
فَهَلْ عَجَبٌ أَنْ لِلْبُكَاءِ بُكَاءُ

*for our loved ones? we
are distanced from
our hearts
and our souls by their
distance.*

لَا حُبَابَنَا إِلَّا لَهُمْ عَنْ قُلُوبِنَا
وَأَرْوَاحِنَا فِي بُعْدِهِمْ بَعْدَاءُ

...

*May God watch over
those whose meeting
gladdened my heart,
for no meeting has gladdened
after that meeting.*

رَعَى اللَّهُ مَنْ كَمَّ سَرَ قَلْبِي لِقَاؤُهُ
وَمَا سَرَ مُنْذُ ذَاكَ اللَّقَاءِ لِقَاءُ

¹³⁰ Lit. "the patience to renounce."

¹³¹ The second hemistich could also be read as "the family of his noble Presence."

¹³² #13, p. 236, vv. 3-4, 7.

In another poem, al-Mu'ayyad asks the Imam for an audience:¹³³

<i>Stretch out your hand to me in meeting, then I will have obtained enough to be content.</i>	فَكُنْ بِاسْطِ الْكَفِّ لِي بِاللِّقَاءِ فَقَدْ نَلْتُ مِنْ بُلْغَتِي مَا كَفَانِي
---	---

After al-Tustarī died, al-Mu'ayyad approached the vizier al-Falāhī and asked him to procure an audience for him. Al-Falāhī was helpful, and was able to get him the desired audience in Sha'bān 439 (1048). At fifty-plus years of age, having wished for a meeting with the Imam all his life, having faced great hardship getting to Cairo, and having spent over two years in Cairo trying to get an audience,¹³⁴ al-Mu'ayyad finally achieved his heart's desire. In his *Sīra*, he describes the awe and joy he felt upon coming face to face with the Imam:¹³⁵

My eyes had barely fallen on him when awe took hold of me and reverence overcame me; and it appeared to me as though I was standing in front of the Messenger of God [Muḥammad] and the Commander of the Faithful [ʿAlī]—May God's blessings be upon them!—facing their faces. I tried, when I fell to the earth prostrating for the master of prostration and the one worthy of it, to make my tongue intercede with him in a goodly manner by its speech, and I found it bound by the tonguetiedness of awe, and isolated from the virtue of eloquent speech.

When I lifted my head from the prostration and gathered my clothes about me in order to sit, I saw a finger signaling me to rise for someone present in that place, and the Commander of the Faithful—May God perpetuate his kingdom!—frowned with his face at him in rebuke; I had not raised my head by [the signal] nor accorded it any value. I stayed in his Presence for an hour, my tongue not rising to speech nor finding the way to words, and each time those present tried to get me to speak, I increased in tonguetiedness and in storming up the steep hill of stammering, and he—May God perpetuate his kingdom!—kept saying, "Let him be till he calms down and becomes accustomed."

Then I arose, took his noble hand and kissed¹³⁶ it and placed it upon my eyes and breast, bade farewell and left.

Following this meeting, al-Mu'ayyad, with al-Falāhī's aid, had continuous access to the Imam for a couple of months.

¹³³ #6, p. 220, v. 26. Note that in this same poem, al-Mu'ayyad says he has met the Imam (v. 20), which probably refers to a public appearance in the mosque or in a royal procession, rather than the private audience he is seeking.

¹³⁴ Note that neither Nāṣir Khusrau nor Ḥasan Sabbāḥ during their years in Cairo were able to procure a private audience with al-Mustanṣir.

¹³⁵ *Sīra*, p. 85.

¹³⁶ Lit. "sipped," Arabic "*tarashshafṭuhā*."

In the last months of 439 (1048), the qāḍī al-Yāzūrī¹³⁷ who had succeeded al-Tustarī as the Queen-Mother's man, stopped al-Mu'ayyad's admittance to the Imam. Soon thereafter in Muḥarram 440 (1048) al-Yāzūrī had al-Falāḥī imprisoned and killed. Thus died the only vizier who had been, or would be, good to al-Mu'ayyad during his thirty years in Cairo. Al-Yāzūrī chose Abū al-Barakāt al-Jarjārā'ī—who was not favorably inclined towards al-Mu'ayyad—as the next vizier. Al-Mu'ayyad's position grew gradually more intolerable, for he had no access to the Imam and no function at court. He resolved once more to return to Fars. Then al-Qāsim was removed from the offices of the da'wa and the qaḍā', and al-Yāzūrī—who was Sunni!¹³⁸—took over both the offices. Abū al-Barakāt persuaded al-Mu'ayyad to postpone his departure, and asked him to prepare and write out the text of the weekly da'wa sermons (*majālis*) that al-Yāzūrī, as dā'ī al-du'āt, would read out to the da'wa followers. Al-Mu'ayyad accepted, and this state of affairs continued for more than a year. However, his relations with Abū al-Barakāt went from bad to worse and al-Mu'ayyad eventually cut off all contact with him. This situation persisted until Abū al-Barakāt was removed from office and imprisoned in 441 (1049).

For almost a year after that there was no vizier. Instead, al-Yāzūrī made 'Amīd al-Mulk the "*wāsiṭa*" (lit. intermediary, a degree below the office of vizier), until al-Yāzūrī himself took the office of vizier in 442 (1050). His new duties as vizier meant that he was too busy for even the reading of the da'wa *majālis*. Everyone (including al-Mu'ayyad himself) thought al-Mu'ayyad would be chosen to take over that duty, especially since he had been the one actually writing the *majālis* all this time anyway. Instead, al-Qāsim (the man who had been chief dā'ī and qāḍī himself at one point, and who been removed from that office presumably due to incompetence) was chosen to deputize for al-Yāzūrī.¹³⁹ Al-Mu'ayyad remonstrated with al-Yāzūrī

¹³⁷ For information on al-Yāzūrī, see 'Umar Ṣāliḥ al-Barghūthī, *al-Wazīr al-Yāzūrī*, [Cairo], n.d., and Michael Brett, "The Execution of al-Yāzūrī," *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras II*, pp. 15–27.

¹³⁸ *The Fatimid Vizierate*, p. 182, following Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), *al-Kāmil*, vol. 8, p. 149, events of the year 449 H.

¹³⁹ Al-Mu'ayyad does not say whether he continued to write the text of the *majālis* for al-Qāsim, but he probably did not, as al-Qāsim, having at one time been dā'ī al-du'āt, would be considered capable of writing his own.

over this matter, and al-Yāzūrī excused himself saying that there had been pressure from the Imam's family. Al-Yāzūrī kept promising al-Mu'ayyad better things, but he failed to deliver, until, one day, al-Mu'ayyad wrote him a sharp letter. One thing led to another, and al-Mu'ayyad stayed away from al-Yāzūrī for seven months.

In Dhu al-Qa'da 443 (1051), when the Fatimids, under the direction of al-Yāzūrī, crushed the revolt of the Banū Qurra in al-Buḥayra, al-Mu'ayyad's friends persuaded him to go with the crowds that rushed to congratulate him. Soon thereafter, rather than head of the da'wa, al-Yāzūrī ironically appointed al-Mu'ayyad head of the high state office of the chancery (Dīwān al-Inshā')¹⁴⁰ and increased his stipend. At some point thereafter, al-Yāzūrī sent al-Mu'ayyad a message reminding him of his own role in al-Mu'ayyad's greatly improved finances, "I took you from three hundred dīnārs (monthly?) in stipend to a thousand or more—why, then, do you not acknowledge [my favors] upon you?"¹⁴¹ and al-Mu'ayyad wrote back a furious reply:¹⁴²

If you knew the meaning of the words you spoke, you would restrain your tongue from them. For you have insulted the Sultan [al-Mustanṣir]—may God propagate his kingdom!—by them in the ugliest manner, by valuing my worth at his Presence at three hundred dīnārs, when, in his kingdom, there is no one who can compare to a fingernail from among my fingernails in his service, from the race of Easterner or Westerner. He possesses abundant wealth in his treasury for stipends, and I do not deny that you have taken me from little to much, and from no work to employment, but if you would recall that, then recall with it the place [the da'wa? the Imam's Presence?] from which you

¹⁴⁰ *Sīra* pp. 93–94. For information on the Fatimid Dīwān al-Inshā', see *Khiṭaṭ*, vol. 1, p. 402, & vol. 2, pp. 225–27; and Ibn al-Ṭuwayr (d. 617/1220), *Nuzhat al-muqlatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn*, ed. A.F. Sayyid, Cairo, 1992, p. 87. See also the *Mawādd al-bayān*, a partially extant manual of Fatimid chancery arts by a *kātib* in al-Mustanṣir's time named 'Alī b. Khalaf (active in 437/1046) who could have been al-Mu'ayyad's immediate predecessor in the Dīwān al-Inshā'; the *Mawādd* could have influenced al-Mu'ayyad's own chancery style. Facsimile ed., Frankfurt, 1986; ed. Ḥusayn 'Abd al-Laṭīf, Tripoli, Libya, 1982; text also available in *al-Mawrid*, ed. Ḥaṭīm Ṣāliḥ al-Dāmin: part 1 in 17:1 (1988): 143–00; part 1 in 17:1 (1988): 143–72; part 2 in 17:2 (1988): 131–57; part 3 in 17:3 (1988): 120–52; part 4 in 18:1 (1989): 142–62; part 5 in 18:2 (1989): 79–117; part 6 in 18:3 (1989): 111–51; part 7 (last extant part) in 19:1 (1990): 125–55. Brief articles on this text are: S.A. Bonebakker, "A Fatimid Manual for Secretaries," *Annali Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 37, new series, 27 (1977): 295–337; Abdel Hamid Saleh, "Une source de Qalqaṣandī, Mawādd al-bayān et son auteur, 'Alī b. Khalaf," *Arabica* 20 (1973): 192–200. I am grateful to Paul Walker for bringing this text to my notice.

¹⁴¹ *Sīra*, p. 93.

¹⁴² *Sīra*, pp. 93–94.

have cut me off—indeed, you have cut me off from [celestial] horizons, such that I have [exchanged those for] the horizons of one who is granted and denied, lowered and raised. Do not remind me of your favors to me regarding what you have granted, for what you have denied is greater.

Even after this exchange, al-Yāzūrī did not stop playing power games with al-Muʾayyad and, in fact, acknowledged to a kinsman his dislike of the dāʿī. He had al-Qāsim, until he became decrepit, continue to deputize in the *majālīs*, then appointed al-Qāsim's son to take over his father's duties. This deputation remained in effect until seven years later in 450 (1058), when al-Yāzūrī was killed on charges of embezzlement and al-Muʾayyad was appointed dāʿī al-duʿāt. We know that al-Yāzūrī knew in his heart of hearts that the Imam held al-Muʾayyad in the highest esteem and trusted him completely by the adjectives he himself used to describe al-Muʾayyad to al-Mustanṣir—“your dāʿī and trusted one (*thiqa*)”—in a message that he sent just prior to his execution.¹⁴³ While al-Yāzūrī was still alive, al-Muʾayyad's relationship with him remained volatile, and he did not cease asking permission—unsuccessfully—to return to Fars.

Al-Muʾayyad's first twelve years in Cairo were not happy, and he was dissatisfied with the treatment he received at the Imam's court. Time and again in his *Dīwān*, he gives voice to his disappointed hopes. He talks about the unparalleled services he had rendered to the Fatimids, and expresses deep hurt that a loyal servant like himself could be seemingly ignored by the Imam and left unprotected at the mercy of the viziers. In one poem, he complains bitterly of his potential not being utilized and (quoting the Umayyad poet al-ʿArjī), of being “wasted” by his patron.¹⁴⁴

*I made licit the sanctuary
of my blood for their sake,
and for their sake*

أَبَحْتُ حِمِي دَمِي فِيهِمْ وَفِيهِمْ

*I lost my youth and the
spring of my life.*

خَسِرْتُ شَبَابِي وَرَبِيعَ عُمْرِي

*For their sake I became a stranger
away from my homeland,
wandering the earth, desert
after desert.*

وَفِيهِمْ سِرْتُ عَنْ وَطَنِي غَرِيْبًا
أَجُوبُ الْأَرْضَ قَفْرًا بَعْدَ قَفْرٍ

¹⁴³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kutāb al-Muqaffā*, vol. 3, p. 407.

¹⁴⁴ #32, p. 271, vv. 1–10, complete.

And when I came to them, a
knowledgeable man, patiently
enduring
the good, when it comes to him,
as well as the bad,

speaking out and acting
for their fealty,
offering good counsel in secret
and [in] public,

"they wasted me, and what a
youth they wasted
for a day of adversity and the
closing of a breach."¹⁴⁵

If Fate had not diminished
my fortune,
they would not have denied
my fortune and my value.

Yes, they know I am one
who obeys Religion,
when other[s] obey long
robes and rags.

If they had unsheathed my
sword, they would have
seen it
splitting and cutting the
jugular veins of the
enemy;

and I would have
perfumed on the body
of Religion,
garments no perfumer
can perfume;

so that I relieve the
drought of Egypt—but
that is innovation,
when here is Joseph in the
land of Egypt!¹⁴⁷

فَلَمَّا جِئْتُهُمْ طَبَّاءَ عَرُوفًا

بِعُرْفٍ حِينَ يَأْتِيهِ وَنُكْرٌ

قَوُولًا فِي وَلَائِهِمْ فَعُولًا

بَذُولِ النَّصِيحِ فِي سِرٍّ وَجَهْرٍ

أَضَاعُونِي وَأَيَّ فَتًى أَضَاعُوا

لِيَوْمِ كَرِيهَةٍ وَسَدَادِ نَعْرِ

وَلَوْ لَمْ يُبْخَسِ الْمَقْدَارُ حَظِّي

إِذَا مَا أَنْكَرُوا حَظِّي وَقَدْرِي

بَلَى عَلِمُوا بِأَنِّي طَوْعٌ دِينٍ

وغيري طَوْعٌ جُبَّاتٍ¹⁴⁶ وَطَمَرٍ

فَلَوْ شَهِرُوا حَسَامِي شَاهِدُوهُ

لَا وَدَاجِ الْعَدَى يَفْرِي وَيَفْرِي

وَقَمْتُ مُطَرَّبًا فِي جِسْمِ دِينٍ

لِبَاسًا لَا يُطَرِّبُهُ الْمُطَرَّبِي

لَا كَشِفَ قَحْطَ مِصْرَ وَذَاكَ بَذْعٌ

وَهَذَا يَوْسُفٌ فِي أَرْضِ مِصْرَ

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *Dīwān al-ʿArjī riwāyat Abī al-Faṭḥ ʿUthmān b. Jinnī*, ed. Khidr al-Ṭāʾī & Rashid al-ʿUbaydī, Baghdad, [1956], p. 34.

¹⁴⁶ Read *jubbāt* (lit. long outer garments), rather than "*jabbāt*" (ed., not found in the lexicons).

¹⁴⁷ Refers to the Imam as Joseph and alludes to Joseph's Qurʾānic role as alleviator

In another poem, he portrays the humiliations endured at the hands of the viziers and other courtiers:¹⁴⁸

*I used to prey upon
lions in Fars,
and now sheep rise
up to prey upon me.*

قَدْ كُنْتُ أَفْتَرِسُ الْأُسُودَ بِفَارِسٍ
فَالآنَ تَنْهَضُ لِافْتِرَاسِي الشَّيْءُ

In yet another poem, he refers to the political power wielded by al-Mustanşir's mother. He addresses al-Mustanşir and alludes to the fact that al-Mustanşir suffers just as he does from this unfortunate situation:¹⁴⁹

*How the Age has cheated
you,
so that your pillars have
become demolished.*

أَنْلَى تَخَوَّنَكَ الزَّمَانُ
فَصِرْتُ مَهْدُودَ الدَّعَائِمِ

*I came to [you] in order to
enjoy [a life] of comfort
in your sanctuary with the
tender women,*

إِنِّي قَصَدْتُ لَكَى أُنْعَمَ
فِي حِمَاكَ مَعَ النِّوَاعِمِ

*but I found my back
broken, for
back-breaking catastrophes
landed [upon me] in
your courtyard.*

فَلَقِيتُ قَصَمَ الظُّهْرِ إِذْ
نَزَلَتْ بِسَاحَتِكَ الْفَوَاصِمِ

*I weep for you sadly, so
weep for me!
Both of us together are victims
of the terrors of the nights.*¹⁵⁰

أَبْكِيكَ شَجْوًا فَابْكِي
إِنَّمَا مَعًا عَرُضُ الْحَارِمِ

of the hardships of the drought of Egypt. This verse can probably be placed against the background of the famine in Egypt in 444 or 447 (rather than the Great Famine between 455 and 464, since the poem contains several verses of complaint which is characteristic of the poems of the former period, but uncharacteristic of the poems of the latter period).

¹⁴⁸ #8, p. 224, v. 9.

¹⁴⁹ #54, p. 302, vv. 7–10. See also al-Mu'ayyad's explicit reference to the fact that al-Mustanşir's mother had the power to appoint and dismiss high government officials (*Sīra*, p. 84): "... one of the noble ladies [al-Mustanşir's mother] (in whose official service the Jew [al-Tustarī] ostensibly was) ... was secretly in control of the whole kingdom, ... and this noble lady would put forward one man and push back another in what she wanted to do."

¹⁵⁰ *Maḥārīm* also means "blood-related women". Al-Mu'ayyad is punning on the word.

The Beginning of the Basāsīrī Episode

In 446 (1054), the Saljuq Ṭughril Beg¹⁵¹ took Rayy, the site of present-day Tehran, and there were reports of a Byzantine-Abbasid alliance against the Fatimids. Al-Mu'ayyad observed these events from his post in the Dīwān al-Inshā'. He asked al-Yāzūrī for permission to write to Ṭughril's vizier al-Kundurī, who was Persian, hoping to sway him towards the Fatimids. Al-Yāzūrī granted permission and al-Mu'ayyad wrote the letter, but the messenger did not get through, and the Saljuqs drew closer to Baghdad. Al-Mu'ayyad then wrote to Abū al-Hārith al-Basāsīrī,¹⁵² the Turkish general of Baghdad, trying to sway him towards the Fatimids. Again, the letters were lost. At this point al-Mu'ayyad went to Mecca to perform (probably for the first and only time) the *ḥajj* pilgrimage. Upon his return to Cairo, he wrote once more to al-Basāsīrī. Before the letters could reach al-Basāsīrī, however, Ṭughril entered Baghdad as the new sultan in 447/1055, drove al-Basāsīrī out, and impelled him to flee to Ḥilla. When al-Mu'ayyad's letters did arrive, therefore, al-Basāsīrī welcomed them heartily. He declared for the Fatimids on the condition that they supply him with money, horses, and weapons.

The supplies for al-Basāsīrī were readied. But to al-Mu'ayyad's dismay, al-Yāzūrī decided—perhaps because al-Mu'ayyad was bilingual and could therefore communicate effectively with the Persianate leaders—that al-Mu'ayyad was to escort the supplies and oversee the necessary military alliances in Syria. Al-Mu'ayyad refused, but was told by the vizier that the Imam himself had selected him. Incredulous, he replied that neither his job nor his training had prepared him to undertake a military expedition. Eventually, however, he capitulated. He wrote a note to the Imam describing his physical weakness and so on (he was then sixty-two or sixty-three years of age), and the Imam signed the note, acknowledging his cognizance of al-Mu'ayyad's reservations about leading the expedition.

Al-Mu'ayyad made ready to leave Cairo. He agreed—after expressing reservations—to change his simpler scholar's mode of dress for the more elaborate one of high court officials. In his final audience with the Imam before leaving, al-Mu'ayyad voiced disapproval of

¹⁵¹ See *EI2* article “Ṭughril (I) Beg” by C.E. Bosworth and “Saldjūkids” by R.E. Darley-Doran.

¹⁵² Cf. *EI2* article “al-Basāsīrī,” by M. Canard.

the choice of campsite imposed on his huge entourage (thinking the selection had originated with the vizier), as he considered it inconvenient because of its distance from the city. Al-Mustanşir responded that the location was his own personal choice. Al-Mu'ayyad immediately accepted the Imam's decision, speaking a line famous in Ṭayyibī lore for its indication of al-Mu'ayyad's obedience to the Imam, "*mā warā' hādha al-ikhtiyār ikhtiyār*" (there is no choice better other than [your] choice).¹⁵³ At this time, al-Mu'ayyad also found the opportunity to express his hurt and bewilderment at the way he had been treated at court, directly to the Imam. His most heartfelt complaint was the lack of access to the Imam:¹⁵⁴

Our Master—May God preserve your kingdom!—it was not the habit of your fathers and grandfathers—May God sanctify their souls and bless them!—to cut off the established practice (*rasm*) of their servants [appearing before them], or to change a ruling regarding [their appearing before them]. Why then do you cut off your servant's practice of presenting [himself] in this noble place and standing in this great station?

The Imam just smiled in reply. But in answer to al-Mu'ayyad's query about this particular mission, the Imam expressed confidence in victory. Al-Mu'ayyad was much heartened and left Cairo comforted and hopeful.

*Syria: The Basāsīrī Episode and the Conquest of Baghdad 448–450
(1056–1058)*

In Ṣafar 448¹⁵⁵ (1056), al-Mu'ayyad left Cairo with supplies and money for al-Basāsīrī, who was then in al-Raḥba in northeast Syria. He would spend the next two years in Syria, trying to bring its various princes together under the Fatimid banner, with the conquest of Baghdad as the ultimate goal.¹⁵⁶ Most of the material we have

¹⁵³ *Ṣīra*, p. 99.

¹⁵⁴ *Ṣīra*, p. 99.

¹⁵⁵ The date of al-Mu'ayyad's departure is obtained in the following manner: Al-Mu'ayyad was sent with supplies for al-Basāsīrī in 448 H (Ibn Muyassar, *al-Muntaqā min Akhbār Miṣr intaqāhu al-Maqrīzī*, ed. A.F. Sayyid, Cairo, 1981, p. 15), & al-Basāsīrī's decree of investiture dated Ṣafar 448 H (*Ṣīra*, p. 124).

¹⁵⁶ Note that it was at this time that al-Mu'ayyad corresponded with the Syrian Abū al-ʿAlā' al-Maʿarrī about the latter's vegetarianism (al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shūrāzī, *al-Majālīs al-Mu'ayyadīyya*, vol. 6, ms. in Ṭayyibī da'wa library, *majlis* 13; *Jāmiʿ al-ḥaqāʾiq*, vol. 2, *bāb* 3, fol. 228. See also *Rasā'il Abī al-ʿAlā' al-Maʿarrī*, ed.

on this period of his life is from the detailed, blow-by-blow description in the *Sīra*.¹⁵⁷ In addition, the *Sīra* has preserved a documentary record of the Basāsīrī episode through the numerous letters al-Mu'ayyad wrote to the Syrian princes and to the vizierate in Cairo. This information is corroborated and completed by several historical sources, chief among them *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh* by Ibn al-Athīr.¹⁵⁸

Syria was the buffer zone between the Fatimid and the Abbasid empires, a land ruled by princes who constantly vacillated between the Fatimids in the west and the Abbasids in the east. Here the Fatimid Basāsīrī-led forces grouped to combat the Saljuq Turkomans who after the fall of the Buyids represented the Abbasid caliphate; the military confrontation took place in the area where Syria meets Iraq. The Saljuq sultan Ṭughril Beg, who had control over Baghdad, was at this time in Rayy.

The Banū Kalb occupied the western strip of Syria including the towns of Tyre, Damascus, and Aleppo. The Mirdāsīd Thimāl b. Ṣālīḥ ruled Aleppo and had recently fallen out of favor with the Fatimids. Al-Yāzūrī instructed al-Mu'ayyad to induce three thousand of the Kalbites to come with him and to pass through Thimāl's lands without making contact with Thimāl. Al-Mu'ayyad did not think this a safe strategy. Instead, once he had reached Damascus, he decided to open communication channels. He wrote to Thimāl and was rewarded with a favorable reply.¹⁵⁹ Thimāl met him at Rūstān, a town near Ḥimṣ, halfway between Damascus and Aleppo, and together they proceeded to Aleppo. En route some of the chiefs of al-Basāsīrī's army received them at Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, and they all arrived together in Aleppo.

In Aleppo, al-Mu'ayyad took the oath for the Fatimids from al-Basāsīrī's chiefs and Thimāl. He was unsuccessful in his attempt to

Iḥsān 'Abbās, Beirut & Cairo, 1982.) Al-Mu'ayyad may have been trying through this correspondence to induce al-Ma'arrī to convert to Fatimidism, but al-Ma'arrī died before this could be achieved.

¹⁵⁷ *Sīra*, pp. 100–184 (end).

¹⁵⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 8, events of the years 448 H & 449 H. A study of Fatimid-Abbasid relations including the Basāsīrī episode is by Muḥammad Sālim b. Shadīd al-'Awfī titled *al-Ilāqāt al-siyāsiyya bayna al-dawla al-fāṭimiyya wa al-dawla al-'abbāsiyya fī al-'aṣr al-saljuqī*, Riyadh, 1982 (esp. 88–128). See also section titled "Der Da'ī al-Mu'ayyad und die Eroberung von Baghdad," in Heinz Halm, *Die Kalifen von Kairo. Die Fatimiden in Ägypten 973–1074*, Munich, 2003, pp. 383–95.

¹⁵⁹ Al-Mu'ayyad's dealings with Thimāl are later explicitly and officially praised by al-Mustanṣir (*siyill taqlīd*, 'Uyūn, vol. 7, p. 80, see App. E i).

win over the ruler of the lands east of Aleppo, the Numayrid Ibn Waththāb of Ḥarrān, but he did receive a letter expressing support from the ruler of Diyār Bakr in the north, the Marwānid Aḥmad b. Marwān. Thimāl and al-Basāsīrī's chiefs went with al-Mu'ayyad to meet al-Basāsīrī at al-Raḥba. Arriving at al-Raḥba, al-Mu'ayyad distributed the money sent from the Fatimid capital among the various tribes and leaders and had the Fatimid's diploma of al-Basāsīrī's investiture (*ahd*)¹⁶⁰ read out among them. Then al-Mu'ayyad was able to persuade the ruler of Ḥilla (south of Baghdad), the Mazyadid Dubays b. Mazyad, to join them. He also tried to win over the 'Uqaylid Quraysh b. Badrān, the ruler of Mosul (north of Baghdad and east of Aleppo), but without success.

Sometime during his first few months in Syria, al-Mu'ayyad wrote a fairly long poem that alludes in the last few lines to the complicated situation on the ground. The poem starts out with a combined nostalgia and old age motif (vv. 1–20), continues with praise of al-Mustaṣfir (vv. 21–39), and ends with the hope expressed for victory (vv. 40–48).

The last part of the poem is about Syria. The affair is involved and hard (vv. 39 & 46), and al-Mu'ayyad, at the time he is writing this, does not envisage easy victories. He has “driven the riding camels towards it,” towards victory over the Turkoman-Abbasid alliance, “from Egypt” (v. 40). He expresses his hope for the enemy to be vanquished (vv. 41–43). He retroactively casts a prayerful tone over the entire section with his final verse, in which he assures himself that God will make good the outcome (v. 47):¹⁶¹

*When—would that I knew!—will
the soul achieve its goal?
having driven riding camels
towards it from Egypt;*

*and cast the unclean enemy
into paths of destruction,
so that they perish, slain
and fleeing,*

مَتَى لَيْتَ شِعْرِي تُدْرِكُ النَّفْسُ سَوْلَهَا
وَقَدْ قَادَ مِنْ مِصْرٍ إِلَيْهِ الرِّكَاثَا

وَتُلْقِي الْعِدَى الْأَرْجَاسَ فِي سَبِيلِ الرَّدَى
يَتِيَهُونَ مَقْتُولَا طَرِيحًا وَهَارِبَا

¹⁶⁰ The text of the decree of al-Basāsīrī's investiture is recorded in the *Sīra* (pp. 122–24).

¹⁶¹ #37, p. 280, vv. 40–45.

*surrendering, fearing death
if present,
and frightened away, not
being safe from the sword,
by being absent.*

وَمُسْتَأْسِرًا يَخْشَى الْمَنِيَّةَ حَاضِرًا
وَمُسْتَنْفِرًا لَا يَأْمَنُ السَّيْفَ غَائِبًا

*There will the believers heal
their breasts!
Yes, there, and religion
will have been provoked
to anger for God.*

هُنَالِكَ يَشْفِي الْمُؤْمِنُونَ صُدُورَهُمْ
هَنَّاكَ وَيُضْحِي الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ غَاضِبًا

*Religion is a gift from the
greatest gift-giver,
so extol the gift and glorify
the gift-giver!*

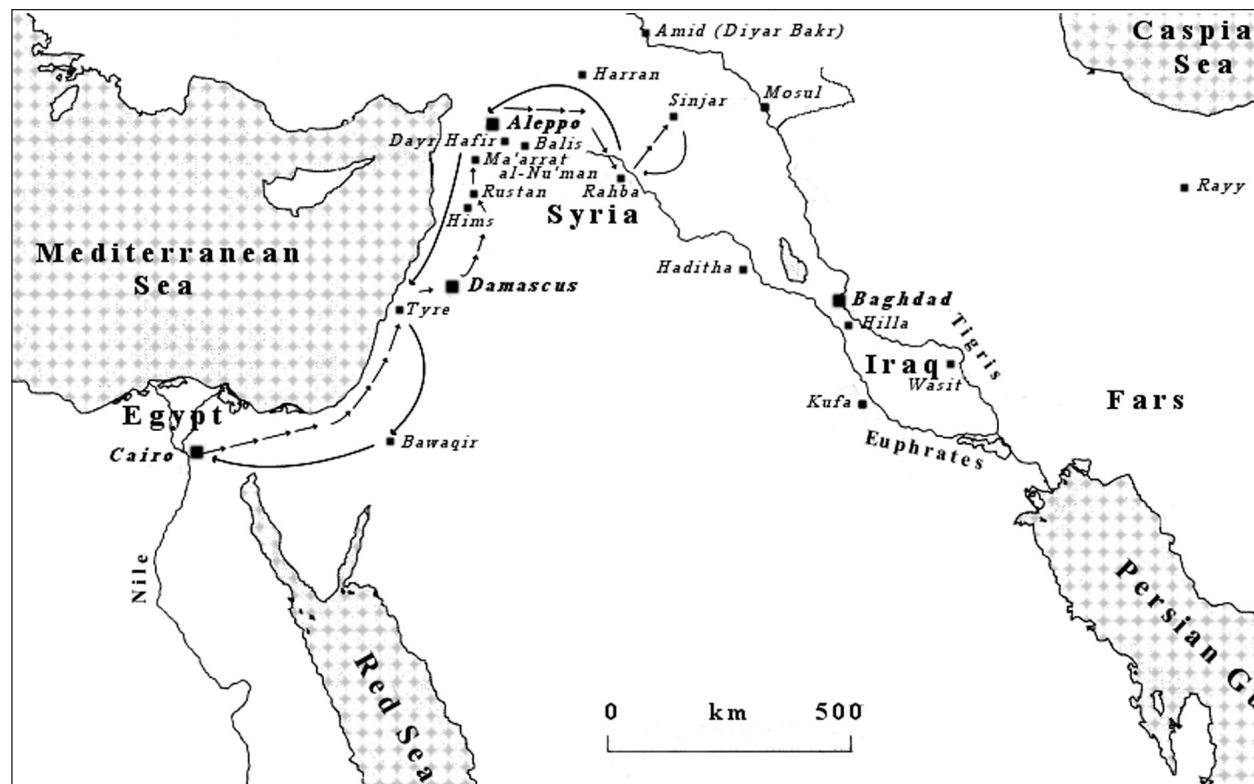
هُوَ الدِّينُ مُوَهَّبٌ لِأَعْظَمِ وَاهِبٍ
فَعَظَّمْهُ مُوَهِّبًا وَمَجِّدْهُ وَاهِبًا

*O Hibat Allāh b. Mūsā,
be assiduous
in gratitude to Him who,
because of [your religion],
bestowed all gifts upon you.*

وَكُنْ هَبَّةَ اللَّهِ بَنَ مُوسَى مُوَاطِبًا
عَلَى شُكْرِ مَنْ أَوْلَاكَ فِيهِ الْمَوَاهِبَا

When Ibn Badrān refused to join the Fatimid allies, they fought his Saljuq-backed army for Mosul. The battle took place in the plains of Sinjār, west of Mosul, in Shawwāl 448 (1056). The Fatimids achieved a resounding victory. In the wake of this victory, the rulers of Kufa and Wāsiṭ also delivered the *khuṭba* for the Fatimids. Upon Ibn Mazyad's persuasion, al-Basāsīrī pardoned Ibn Badrān, and Mosul was spared a sacking.

The Fatimid allies then returned to al-Raḥba, leaving their erstwhile enemy Ibn Badrān himself in charge of Mosul. After that, things began to fall apart. Angered at being done out of booty at Mosul, some of the tribes in al-Mu'ayyad's forces defected. Al-Mu'ayyad stayed for a year at al-Raḥba trying to put the alliance back together. He also wrote—unsuccessfully—to Ṭughril's vizier al-Kundurī, who, in fact, managed to sway many of al-Mu'ayyad's allies towards the Saljuqs. Then Ṭughril's brother, Ibrāhīm Īnāl, occupied Mosul in early 449 (1057). The Saljuqs were now on the offensive. Alarmed by their advance, al-Mu'ayyad retreated to Aleppo. He met al-Basāsīrī secretly at Dayr Ḥāfir (between Aleppo and Bālis) to rethink strategy. Upon his return to Aleppo, he found it in chaos; Thimāl had lost control over the town, and had sent to Egypt for a military general to take over from him. Al-Mu'ayyad was able to calm the town with a *khuṭba*.



Map B. Al-Mu'ayyad in Syria: The Basāsīrī Episode.

At that point, a major breakthrough occurred for the Fatimids: Ibrāhīm Īnāl sent a secret message to al-Basāsīrī declaring his support.¹⁶² Al-Mu'ayyad had been thinking of returning to Egypt for a while now, so when news came a little later that Ibrāhīm Īnāl had left Mosul, al-Mu'ayyad sent Ibn Badrān to reoccupy Mosul, and al-Basāsīrī to al-Raḥba. He promised al-Basāsīrī yearly supplies and money, and feeling he had done all he could possibly do, started on his return journey to Cairo.

Al-Mu'ayyad traveled south through Tyre, and when he reached Bawāqir, received a letter from Cairo with news of the deposition of the vizier al-Bābilī in Rabī' I 450 (1058) and the appointment of the new vizier al-Maghribī; al-Yāzūrī had been executed through al-Bābilī's machinations earlier that year. The new vizier ordered al-Mu'ayyad to return to Aleppo. Al-Mu'ayyad was bewildered; he did not understand why the vizier was trying to keep him away from Cairo. He decided to continue towards Egypt anyway. At Furqān, he received another letter from al-Maghribī with similar instructions. At this point he decided to leave the main route, and travelling through untravelled back roads, without anyone knowing his whereabouts, arrived at the gates of Cairo.

A poem by al-Mu'ayyad refers to the fact that the "tyrant" Ṭughril has been stopped in his tracks by al-Mu'ayyad's eloquent tongue. The subdued tone in the last few verses (13–17) indicates that it was probably not written in the first euphoric aftermath of the Sinjār victory, but in Cairo a few years after al-Mu'ayyad's in-house problems started up again. The following is its description of the furor that al-Mu'ayyad's powerful pen had created in Syria, a power that Ṭughril's sword could not match.¹⁶³

*How often have my feet striven
towards their own death
for the sake [of the Fatimids],
and how often, for their sake,
have I made licit my blood.*

وَكَمْ إِلَى حَتْفِهَا سَعَتْ قَدَمِي
فِيهِمْ وَكَمْ فِيهِمْ أَبْخَتْ دَمِي

*Kings' swords do not elevate
their glory the way I have
elevated it with my mouth.*

وَمَا سَيُوفُ الْمُلُوكُ رَافِعَةً
مَنْ مَجْدِهِمْ مَا رَفَعْتُهُ بِفَمِي

¹⁶² Ibrāhīm Īnāl's support for the Shi'ite Fatimids is rather surprising in view of the Saljuqs' general image as champions of orthodox Sunnism. It is possible that he flirted with the Fatimids because he was jealous of Ṭughril and wanted to be sultan himself.

¹⁶³ #29, p. 268, vv. 6–10, 12.

*Baghdad's eye has never
seen*

*dust like the dust raised
by my endeavors.*

*After stopping the hands of
a tyrant,
my pen clipped the nails of
his evil.*

*No torch burning forth from
a banner
is better known than my flag
and my banner.*

...

*Wounds inflicted by swords on
bodies
are not like the wounds
[inflicted upon] souls by my
words.*

وَعَيْنُ بَغْدَادَ مَا رَأَتْ أَبَدًا

نَقَعًا كَنَقَعَ أَثَرُهُ هِمَمِي

مِنْ بَعْدِ كَفِّي أَكْفَ طَاغِيَةٍ
قَلَمٍ أَظْفَارَ شَرِّهَا قَلَمِي

مَا قَبَسَ قَدْ أَضَاءَ مِنْ عَلَمٍ
أَشْهَرُ مِنْ رَأَيْتِي وَمِنْ عَلَمِي

وَمَا كُلُّومُ السِّيفِ فِي جُنْثٍ

مِثْلُ كُلُّومِ النِّفَوسِ مِنْ كَلَمِي

Under al-Mu'ayyad's direction, al-Basāsīrī and Ibn Badrān took Mosul a few months later, and al-Basāsīrī returned to al-Raḥba. Then Ibrāhīm Īnāl took off with Ṭughril's treasures and money, and Ṭughril followed him, leaving Baghdad undefended. Al-Basāsīrī availed himself of this opportunity and entered Baghdad in Dhu al-Qa'da 450 (1058). He delivered the *khutba* there for the Fatimids, and had the call to prayer performed with the Shi'ite formula, "Come to the best of deeds." The Abbasid palace was sacked, the Abbasid vizier Ibn al-Muslima was crucified, and the Abbasid Caliph al-Qā'im was placed under arrest at the fort of Ḥadītha on the Euphrates, which belonged to the Bedouin 'Uqaylid prince Muhārish. Largely through al-Mu'ayyad's efforts, Baghdad finally belonged to the Fatimids, and al-Mustanṣir was acknowledged master of most of the Islamic world.¹⁶⁴

Al-Mu'ayyad wrote the following poem upon al-Basāsīrī's entry into Baghdad. He describes the deposition and arrest of the Abbasid Caliph (vv. 4–5), and the crucifixion of the Abbasid vizier Ibn al-Muslima, who had been responsible for the ruthless crushing of the

¹⁶⁴ Cf. a poem by Nāṣir Khusrau with "religio-political intent," composed in celebration of the Basāsīrī victories (J. Meisami, "Poetic microcosms: The Persian qasida to the end of the twelfth century," in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, vol. 1, pp. 169–71, see p. 169).

Shi'ite uprising in Iraq (v. 6), and who had played a key part in driving al-Mu'ayyad out of Fars. Al-Mu'ayyad also records his own integral part in the Fatimid victory (vv. 3 & 7–10), saying that he has strengthened the hand of the Fatimids, whom he names “Banū Hārūn,” over the Abbasids, whom he names “Banū Hāmān.”¹⁶⁵

*My deeds are well-attested
in the forecourt of
[Salmān's] Iraq
and in his Fars and Kīrman.*

مَشْهُودٌ أَتَارِي بِصَاحْنِ عِرَاقِهِ
هَذَا وَفَارِسِهِ إِلَى كِيرْمَانِهِ

*A scowling day for the
son of 'Abbās, in which
he faced death in the flesh
in front of his eyes.*

وَعَبُوسٌ يَوْمٌ لِابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ بِهِ
لَا قَى الرَّدَى مُتَشَخَّصًا لِعَيَانِهِ

*He spent the night stumbling
in the tails of humiliation
exchanging his great
audience-hall for the narrow
confines of prison.*

إِذْ بَاتَ يَعْثُرُ فِي ذُيُولِ مَذَلَّةٍ
يَعْتَاضُ ضَيْقَ الْحَبْسِ عَنْ إِيْوَانِهِ

*He saw on the mast Ibn
al-Muslima, from whose
aggression the mouth of
Islam had screamed.*

وَرَأَى عَلَى الصَّارِي ابْنَ مُسْلِمَةَ الَّذِي
ضَجَّتْ فَمُ الْإِسْلَامِ مِنْ عُذْوَانِهِ

*May God water with buckets
of His mercy the earth
of the grave in which Abū
'Imrān¹⁶⁷ is buried.*

فَسَقَى إِلَهُ سِحَالٍ رَحْمَتَهُ تَرَى
قَمَرٍ ثَوَى فِيهِ أَبُو عِمْرَانِهِ

*For verily his son, O how
many difficult situations has
he stood firm in
with steadfastness of heart
and tongue,
raising the banners of the
Prophet and his progeny,
striking and piercing their
enemies.*

إِنَّ ابْنَهُ كَمْ مِنْ مَقَامٍ قَامَهُ
صَعْبًا بَثَّتْ جَنَانَهُ وَلِسَانَهُ
فِي رَفْعِ رَايَاتِ النَّبِيِّ وَآلِهِ
وَضِرَارِيهِ لِعِدَائِهِمْ وَطَعَانِهِ

¹⁶⁵ #38, p. 281, vv. 3–12; also quoted in *ʿUyūn*, vol. 7, p. 73.

¹⁶⁶ Read “*mashhūd*” (mss. 1–8), rather than “*mashhūr*” (ed.)

¹⁶⁷ Abū 'Imrān is al-Mu'ayyad's father.

*How greatly does he shore up
the strength of the sons of
[the Prophet's] Aaron,¹⁶⁸
and how greatly does he
demolish the edifice of the
sons of his Hāmān.¹⁶⁹*

وَلَكُمْ يَشُدُّ قُوَىٰ بَنِي هَارُونَ

وَلَكُمْ يَهْدِي بَنِي هَامَانَ

*Is there anyone on earth
in endeavors
like him, one who would
dare to run in his field?*

هَلْ فِي الْبَسِيطَةِ فِي مَسَاعِيهِ لَهُ

مِثْلُ فَيَنْغِي الْجَرِيِّ فِي مَيْدَانِهِ

*Unique in the age by his
religion and his allegiance
to the unique one, his master,
the Imam of the Age.*

فَرْدُ الزَّمَانِ بَدِينِهِ وَوَلَائِهِ

لِلْفَرْدِ مَوْلَاهُ إِمَامِ زَمَانِهِ

News of Baghdad's fall to the Fatimid allies was sent to Cairo. For some reason (financial difficulties in Cairo? the vizier's jealousy of al-Mu'ayyad's or al-Yāzūrī's role in the affair?), Cairo saw no victory celebrations. No money or supplies were sent to al-Basāsīrī, and the Abbasid Caliph was not disposed of. A year later, in Dhu al-Qa'da 451 (1059), Tughril drove al-Basāsīrī out of Baghdad and reinstated the Abbasid Caliph. Al-Basāsīrī was killed in a battle near Kufa in the following month. Reflecting on this turn of events, al-Mu'ayyad says:¹⁷⁰

... and even though what happened, happened—regarding loss after gain and overthrow of leaders—the impression of the Mustashirite da'wa, and the call of “Come to the best of deeds,” from the tops of *mi'dhanas* and minarets remained on pulpit heights in the land of the two Iraqs. “And God will complete his light despite the pagans' abhorrence”¹⁷¹ and He will fulfill His promise when He says “We have written in the Psalms after the Qur'ān that the earth will be inherited by My pious servants”¹⁷² if God Almighty wills.

¹⁶⁸ Aaron, Arabic “Hārūn,” was the legatee of the Prophet Moses, and al-Mu'ayyad alludes here to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, referring to Muḥammad's Hadith “‘Alī is to me as Aaron was to Moses.”

¹⁶⁹ Hāmān was the Pharaoh's vizier and Moses' enemy. The Fatimids believe the name “Pharaoh” applies in Muḥammad's epoch to Abū Bakr, and “Hāmān” to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Al-Mu'ayyad refers to the Abbasids, in their usurpation of the Fatimids' rights to the Caliphate, as spiritual progeny of 'Umar, who had challenged 'Alī's legal right to be Caliph of the Muslim community after Muḥammad.

¹⁷⁰ *Sīra*, pp. 183–84.

¹⁷¹ Qur'ān, 61:8.

¹⁷² Qur'ān, 21:105.

*Cairo: Al-Mu'ayyad Dā'ī al-Du'āt, Bāb al-Abwāb 450–470
(1058–1078)*

In early 450 (1058), al-Mu'ayyad returned from his two-year Syria sojourn having laid the foundation for the Fatimid *khutba* to be read in Baghdad later that year, the culmination of the Fatimid political dream. He did not, however, receive the hero's welcome he had expected; rather, his arrival was one of ignominy. This is probably because al-Mu'ayyad had returned in direct contradiction to the wishes of the vizier al-Maghribī, who had instructed him to remain in Syria. Perhaps the newly appointed vizier feared competition at home from the fiery Persian dā'ī. In any case, the victories in Syria and Iraq, and the man responsible for them, were not celebrated in Cairo, not upon his return, and not even when al-Basāsīrī actually entered the Abbasid capital under the Fatimid banner at the end of the year. Towards the end of his *Sīra*, al-Mu'ayyad sadly describes his return to Cairo:¹⁷³

Thus I entered [Cairo] like one vanquished, not one who has vanquished, one broken, not one who has broken, one defeated, not one who has defeated; and I received the opposite and inverse of what I had hoped for in terms of advancement and enhancement and elevation to the loftiness of the Pleiades.

Information about the next twenty years of al-Mu'ayyad's life is sparse, and has to be gleaned in bits and pieces from the various historical sources. Of these, the early twelfth-century Ṭayyibī work, the *Tuhfat al-qulūb*,¹⁷⁴ and the fifteenth-century Ṭayyibī compendium *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* are the two most complete sources. The *ʿUyūn* states that upon his return from Syria, al-Mu'ayyad continued to face trials and tribulations in Cairo. The severest of these trials was lack of access to the Imam. Towards the end of the year, when he could bear it no longer, he wrote a desperate note asking for a private audience.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ *Sīra*, p. 178. However, al-Mu'ayyad's efforts in Syria were later accorded official recognition by the Imam in his decree of investiture as dā'ī al-du'āt.

¹⁷⁴ Ḥatīm Muḥyī al-Dīn (d. 596/1199), *Tuhfat al-qulūb wa furjat al-makrūb*, ms.

¹⁷⁵ #60, p. 313, vv. 1–4 (complete); The *ʿUyūn* (vol. 7, p. 75). cites these verses prefaced by the following words: "...when [al-Mu'ayyad's] patience reached the end beyond which there is no [patience], and his trial reached its limit, he expounded to the Imam of his Age with the tongue of complaint, and wrote to him asking

*I swear that if you were to
crown me
with the crown of Khosroes,
King of the East,
and if you were to give me
[charge of] all the world's
affairs,
of those people who have
departed and those who
remain,
while saying, "We shall not
meet for another hour,"
I would rather, O my Master,
we meet.
For your keeping me away
for an hour
has grayed my heart along
with my head.*

أُقْسِمُ لَوْ أَنَّكَ تَوَجَّهْتَنِي
بِتَاجِ كِسْرَى مَلِكِ الْمَشْرِقِ
وَنَلَّيْتَنِي كُلَّ أُمُورِ الْوَرَى
مَنْ قَدْ مَضَى مِنْهُمْ وَمَنْ قَدْ بَقِيَ
وَقُلْتَ أَنْ لَا تَلْتَقِي سَاعَةً
أَجَبْتُ يَا مَوْلَايَ أَنْ تَلْتَقِي
لَأَنْ أَبْعَادَكَ لِي سَاعَةً
شَيْبَ فَوْدَيَّ مَعَ الْمَفْرِقِ

The Imam responded (for the first time ever) with openness and warmth. Al-Mu'ayyad received an eight-verse poem in reply that matched not only the meter and rhyme of his own, but also its love and regard. We can imagine that the words of praise and appreciation coming directly from the pen of his revered Imam must have been ones that he cherished for the rest of his life, and that sustained him through the many trials still to come. These are the reply-verses:¹⁷⁶

*O ḥujja,¹⁷⁷ famous among all
people,
O towering mountain of
knowledge, incapacitating
the aspiring climber.*

يَا حُجَّةَ مَشْهُورَةٍ فِي الْوَرَى
وَطَوْدَ عَلَمٍ أَعْجَزَ الْمُرْتَقِي

for a private dialogue with his Presence; he was profuse in his complaint to [the Imam] and included these verses in [the letter]." Cf. a similar set of verses written in somewhat similar circumstances by the poet Khalil b. Ishāq al-Tamīmī, when he was not permitted to see the Imam al-Mahdī during the latter's last illness (Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *Uyūn al-akhbār wa funūn al-āthar*, vol. 5, ed. M. al-Ya'lawī, Beirut, 1985, and titled *Tārīkh al-khulafā' al-fāṭimīyyīn bi al-Maghrib: al-Qism al-khāṣṣ min Kitāb Uyūn al-akhbār*, pp. 238–39).

¹⁷⁶ #60, p. 313, vv. 5–12 (complete), *Uyūn*, vol. 7, p. 75. The *Tuhfat al-qulūb* (ms) quotes these verses with some variants. V.1: *mā mīlḥuhā* instead of *mashhūratān*. V.3: *fa-mā ḥajamāka* instead of *wa lā ḥajabnāka*. V.7: *dawlatinā* instead of *dar'watīnā* (this is a significant difference). V.8: *sālīf al-dahr* instead of *sā'ir al-nās*. The order of the verses is also different.

¹⁷⁷ The opening address in the poem is "*ḥujja*" (lit. proof). There are twelve *ḥujjas*

Our doors were not locked
to you
except due to a hurtful,
disturbing cause,

and we have not veiled
ourselves from you from
loathing, so trust
in our affection, and return
to the worthier [path].¹⁷⁸

We were worried for your
heart if you heard it,
and our shunning was the
shunning of a concerned
parent.

Our followers have lost their
right guidance,
in the West, O companion,
and in the East.

So spread among them what
you will of our knowledge,
and be for them the
concerned father.

Even though you are the
last in our da'wa,
you have surpassed the
compass of the earlier [dā'īs].

Your like cannot be found
among those that have
gone
—among all people—nor
those that remain.

مَا غُلِّقَتْ دُورُكَ أَبَوَانَا
إِلَّا لَأَمْرِ مُؤَلِّمٍ مُقْلِقِ

وَلَا حَجَبْنَاكَ مَلَالًا فَثِقْ

بِمُودِنَا وَارْجِعْ إِلَى الْأَلْقِي

خُفْنَا عَلَى قَلْبِكَ مِنْ سَمْعِهِ
فَصَلِّدْنَا صَدُّ أَبٍ مُشْفِقِ

شَيَعْتُنَا قَدْ عَدِمُوا رُشْدَهُمْ
فِي الْعَرْبِ يَا صَاحِبَ الْمَشْرِقِ

فَانْشُرْ لَهُمْ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ عِلْمِنَا
وَكُنْ لَهُمْ كَالْوَالِدِ الْمُشْفِقِ

إِنْ كُنْتَ فِي دَعْوَتِنَا آخِرًا
فَقَدْ تَجَاوَزْتَ مَدَى السُّبْقِ

مِثْلُكَ لَا يَوْجَدُ فِيمَنْ مَضَى

مِنْ سَائِرِ النَّاسِ وَلَا مِنْ بَقِي

Ṭayyibī oral tradition interprets the latter half of this poem as an allusion to the forthcoming period of the Imam's concealment (*satr*), which will be explained in more detail in chapter 6; it also construes the command to spread the Imam's knowledge among his followers in the east and west (vv. 5–6) as instructions to pass on the

in the Fatimid spiritual hierarchy; in some contexts, the *bāb* is considered to be separate from and above the twelve, in other contexts, the highest rank among them. The rank of *ḥujja* is different from the *ḥujjat 'uzmā* ("highest proof") which is the title of the Imam-designate in his father's lifetime, and which is higher than the rank of the *bāb al-abwāb*.

¹⁷⁸ The worthier path of patience?

Imam's knowledge to the *da'wat al-satr* (the da'wa during the concealment of the Imam), which al-Mu'ayyad was to undertake through his tutelage of the Yemenite *qāḍī* Lamak. The poem's charge to al-Mu'ayyad to be the "father" of the Imam's followers (v. 6) refers to the role played among the Imam's followers by the high spiritual rank of *bāb al-abwāb* soon to be conferred on al-Mu'ayyad.

The Imam then received al-Mu'ayyad in private audience. There he was able to say all he had wished to say and received more than he had dreamed of: the highest of all honors possible in the Fatimid da'wa, the *rutba* (spiritual rank) of *bāb al-abwāb* in the da'wa hierarchy. It is interesting that the Imam granted the private audience on 1st Dhu al-ḥijja, 450H, just two weeks after al-Basāsīrī's taking of Baghdad for the Fatimids. Perhaps the appointment was in part recognition that al-Mu'ayyad's indefatigable and clever diplomatic efforts had made this victory possible. The following is what the *ʿUyūn* reports about the meeting:¹⁷⁹

... then he [al-Mu'ayyad]—May God be pleased with him!—entered the presence of his Imam—the highest of God's blessings and peace upon him and upon his pure fathers and his noble, awaited progeny! He addressed his master with that which he wished, and received from him more than he had hoped for or desired. The Commander of the Faithful raised his standing and elevated his glory, made high his honor and lifted his repute. He made him the *bāb* (lit. door) of his da'wa through which [his followers] could draw near to him, and the vessel of his knowledge, from which his secrets could be received. There was no-one—other than the highest *bāb* of the Imamate, the one worthy of it after his father¹⁸⁰—higher than him in repute, nor more elevated of stature near God's Elect—upon him be peace. He was his *ḥujja* after the highest *ḥujja*, and his *bāb*, under the highest, most elevated *bāb*.

Al-Mu'ayyad refers to his high rank of *bāb al-abwāb* in the following two verses. In a verse in this context, al-Mu'ayyad calls himself *Riḍwān*, the gatekeeper of heaven.¹⁸¹ In another poem written soon after his appointment, he compares himself to the Prophet's well-known Companion *Salmān al-Fārisī*, who is believed by the Fatimids to have been his *bāb al-abwāb*:¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ *ʿUyūn*, vol. 7, p. 76.

¹⁸⁰ I.e. the next Imam, the *ḥujjat ʿuzmā*.

¹⁸¹ #61, p. 315, v. 25.

¹⁸² #38, p. 281, vv. 1–2; also quoted in *ʿUyūn*, vol. 7, pp. 73–74.

If I had lived at the same time
as the Prophet Muḥammad,
I would not have fallen short
of his Salmān.

لَوْ كُنْتُ عَاصَرْتُ النَّبِيَّ مُحَمَّدًا
مَا كُنْتُ أَقْصَرُ عَنْ مَدَى سَلْمَانِهِ

He said, "You are from the
People of my House,"¹⁸³ publicly,
a statement that discloses
through the clarity of its
declaration.

وَلَقَالَ أَنْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي مُعَلَّنًا
قَوْلًا يُكْشِفُ عَنْ وَضُوحِ بَيَانِهِ

Al-Mustanṣir also appointed al-Mu'ayyad dā'ī al-du'āt. The *ʿUyūn* narrative continues in this regard as follows:¹⁸⁴

... and [al-Mustanṣir] placed the affairs of the dā'īs in all the provinces under [al-Mu'ayyad's] hand. It would be from him and by him that each of them would receive what he aimed at. And he made him the model for all the followers of his da'wa.

The terms bāb al-abwāb and dā'ī al-du'āt are not synonymous, though most contemporary scholars have assumed that they are.¹⁸⁵ The bāb al-abwāb (also called "the bāb," but not "a bāb"—the latter would also be used for a lower rank in the da'wa) was a *rutba* in the Fatimid esoteric hierarchy, the highest one next to the Imam. The hierarchy began with the Imam and continued through the bāb to the *ḥujja* to the dā'ī to the *mādhūn*¹⁸⁶ to the *mukāsir*. Just as da'wa operations were kept highly secret, the identity of the bāb al-abwāb was usually kept highly secret and he did not have any official function within the state in his capacity as bāb. The dā'ī al-du'āt, on the other hand, was not a *rutba* within the religious hierarchy, but the title of an official who performed a specific function in the state, parallel to the qāḍī al-quḍāt. The dā'ī al-du'āt was in charge of the da'wa ministry. He organized the da'wa activities at the capital, in this case Cairo, read the da'wa *majālis*, and supervised the dā'īs in other lands. At

¹⁸³ Hadith: "Salmān is of us, the people of the House" (*Salmānu minnā ahlā l-bayt*).

¹⁸⁴ *ʿUyūn*, vol. 7, p. 76. Note: the *ʿUyūn* does not use the administrative term "dā'ī al-du'āt." See also *Akhbār Miṣr*, p. 17; *Itḥāz*, vol. 2, p. 251.

¹⁸⁵ E.g., A. Hamdani (*The Sira*, pp. 108–10, esp. p. 110, n. 3), H. Halm (*The Fatimids and their Traditions of Learning*, London, 1997, p. 56) and A.F. Sayyid (*al-Dawla al-fāṭimiyya*, p. 276) all assume that the terms bāb al-abwāb and dā'ī al-du'āt are synonymous. Stern is more conservative in expressing an opinion and says "One is tempted to assume that the title of 'Chief Gate' is the theological counterpart of the official title of Chief Dā'ī; but it is better to speak with reserve on this obscure subject of the hierarchy of the da'wa." ("Cairo as the Centre," p. 236).

¹⁸⁶ Following the Ṭayyibī archaic pronunciation, rather than ma'dhūn".

times the *rutba* of bāb al-abwāb and the office of dā'ī al-du'āt were held by the same person, as in the case of al-Mu'ayyad, but at other times, they were held by two different people.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ Since the bāb al-abwāb and dā'ī al-du'āt both headed the da'wa in some capacity, it is easy to understand the source of the conflation of the two. However, there are several arguments for believing that the two terms denote two different functions, and that the bāb al-abwāb and the dā'ī al-du'āt were distinct and separate entities, even though these positions were filled by the same individual at certain times, as in the case of al-Mu'ayyad, and, after him, Badr al-Jamālī. My arguments follow:

1. The dā'ī al-du'āt was occasionally removed from office, as in the case of al-Mu'ayyad himself who was removed from the position of dā'ī al-du'āt and exiled for a year, then reinstated; even after his reinstatement, four viziers inexplicably bore the title of dā'ī al-du'āt (*al-Ishāra*, pp. 86–9). Similarly, in the case of al-Qāsim earlier (*Sira*, pp. 88, 91). However, the bāb al-abwāb was considered a spiritual rankholder possessing the faculty of “*isma*” or infallibility (‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd, *Ḍiyā’ al-albāb*, ms., chapter 26) and just as the Imam, once Imam, could never be removed from his rank, the bāb, once he became the bāb, would never be removed from his rank.
2. Al-Yāzūrī held the title of dā'ī al-du'āt for a while (*Al-Ishāra*, p. 73, *Iti'āz*, vol. 2, p. 212), and as a Sunni (*The Fatimid Vizierate*, p. 182, from Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 8, p. 148, events of the year 449 H), he cannot have been the bāb al-abwāb. Al-Yāzūrī's Sunni *madhhab* is also indicated by al-Mu'ayyad's use of the word *bid'a* (innovation) regarding al-Yāzūrī's dā'ī al-du'āt appointment, and his reference to al-Yāzūrī as *nakira* (unknown entity) in the da'wa (*Sira*, p. 88): “As for the da'wa, in which [al-Yāzūrī] is an unknown entity (“*nakira*,”) it is not permissible for him to be adorned with its necklace, for that would be an innovation (*bid'a*) and a repulsive thing (*shun'a*), a thing never witnessed or heard of.”
3. The dā'ī al-du'āt was a position in effect only during the time of Fatimid statehood. Al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 395), from the reign of al-Ḥākim, is the first person who held the title that I have located; it is interesting to note that he was also the first official Fatimid qādī al-quḍāt, a title previously used by the Abbasids for the chief judge of Baghdad (al-Maqrīzī, *Kutāb al-Muqaffā*, vol. 3, p. 620, biography #1253.). The bāb al-abwāb, however, was a rank that was part of the Fatimid spiritual hierarchy from the earliest times and continued after the death of the last (according to the Ṭayyibīs) Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-Āmir. The prophet Solomon was considered a bāb of the *mustaqarr* Imam (cf. *Al-Ad'ya al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, p. 5.) Salmān al-Fārisī was considered the bāb al-abwāb of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the rank of bāb is sometimes referred to in Fatimid-Ṭayyibī esoteric texts as “*al-rutba al-salmāniyya*.” The rank was held at the time of al-Āmir's death by Ibn Madyan (*Tuhfat al-qulūb*, ms., *Uyūn*, vol. 6, p. 251), and after him by Qāḍī Abū ‘Alī (*Tuhfat al-qulūb*, ms., *Uyūn*, vol. 6, p. 265). Moreover, within the time of Fatimid statehood, there were several bāb al-abwābs who are not known to have held the title of dā'ī al-du'āt, such as Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman (*Uyūn*, vol. 5, p. 78), Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (*Uyūn*, vol. 6, p. 281; ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd, *Ḍiyā’ al-albāb*, ms., chapter 26), and Badr al-Jamālī (*Sijillāt*, #21, p. 78; although he did hold the title of “Hādī du'āt al-mu'minīn,” *Akhbār Miṣr*, p. 45; *Iti'āz*, vol. 2, p. 319).
4. In their expositions on spiritual rankings, Fatimid and Ṭayyibī da'wa works refer only to the bāb al-abwāb; they never mention the term dā'ī al-du'āt. In contrast, non-Fatimid historical works only mention the dā'ī al-du'āt, and not the

A decree of investiture officially proclaiming al-Mu'ayyad dā'ī al-du'āt¹⁸⁸ was issued on the first of Dhū al-ḥijja 450 (9 February 1059) and was probably read out in the masjid soon thereafter.¹⁸⁹ The introduction contains high praise of al-Mu'ayyad and recognition of his unparalleled services to the Fatimid da'wa; it refers to the services rendered by al-Mu'ayyad's forefathers, to the services performed by al-Mu'ayyad himself in Fars, Kirman and Khuzistan, to his being driven out from his homeland because of his work for the Fatimids, and to the years of tribulation in Cairo; it addresses in detail his successful efforts against the Saljuqs. The second half contains official notification of al-Mu'ayyad's appointment as dā'ī al-du'āt, and enumerates his duties in his new office: he should guide the Fatimid followers in their religion and encourage them to follow the Shari'a, to perform the pilgrimage, and to visit the grave of the Prophet; he should oversee the dā'īs in the provinces, and collect the *zakāt* (alms-tax) and *fiṭr* (annual tax paid by each Fatimid follower) for the treasury.¹⁹⁰ Lastly, it instructs him to report to the vizier al-Maghribī.

Al-Mu'ayyad had a residence cum office—an apartment? a room?—at the Dār al-'Ilm, in al-Mu'ayyad's time, a free academy and library where scholars of science and medicine, as well as scholars of religion,

bāb al-abwāb. The identity of the bāb al-abwāb was kept highly secret, whereas the identity of the dā'ī al-du'āt was public knowledge, a fact confirmed by the lack of mention of the bāb al-abwāb in sources outside the da'wa. So the bāb al-abwāb was part of the esoteric hierarchy, whereas the dā'ī al-du'āt served a public function.

5. The fact that the dā'ī al-du'āt walked in the Fatimid ceremonial procession a few officials after the vizier, and immediately after the qādī al-quḍāt (*Nuzhat*, p. 110, *Khīṭat*, vol. 1, p. 391), means that he did so in his capacity as a state official who held a high, but not the highest, rank in the administration after the Caliph-Imam. This relatively lower processional ranking would be incompatible with the position of the bāb al-abwāb, who held the highest spiritual rank next to the Imam. The lower administrative ranking is also indicated by the Imam's instructions to the dā'ī al-du'āt to follow the orders of the vizier (cf. decree of al-Mu'ayyad's investiture, app. E i).

¹⁸⁸ The decree of al-Mu'ayyad's investiture as dā'ī al-du'āt is recorded in full in the *ʿUyūn* (vol. 7, pp. 79–82). Note that the edition inaccurately gives the date of the decree as 455; the correct year is 450, which is the year given in my *ʿUyūn* mss. The year 450 is also verified as the year of al-Mu'ayyad's appointment to the da'wa by Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, p. 18.

¹⁸⁹ Al-Yāzūrī's decree of investiture as dā'ī al-du'āt is recorded as being read out among the people (*Sira*, p. 88, *al-Ishāra*, p. 76), and the decree of investiture of 'Alī b. al-Qādī al-Nu'mān as qādī al-quḍāt was read out in the al-'Atīq mosque (cf. Halm, *The Fatimids*, p. 42, from Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Raf' al-īṣr*, published in al-Kindī, *Kitāb al-wulāt wa kitāb al-quḍāt*, ed. R. Guest, Leiden & London, 1912, p. 589).

¹⁹⁰ In general, the *fiṭr* tax was fixed at 3 1/3 dirhams per head per annum for Fatimid followers; the wealthy paid 33 1/3 dīnārs (*Nuzhat*, p. 112, *Khīṭat*, vol. 1, p. 391).

gathered and taught. Built by the third Egyptian Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-Ḥākim in 395 (1005),¹⁹¹ the Dār al-ʿIlm was located in a building adjoining the Royal Palace. Because of its physical proximity to the palace, from this time on until his death, al-Muʾayyad probably enjoyed a relatively high degree of access to the Imam. Besides, the fact that al-Muʾayyad lived in the Dār al-ʿIlm might be an indication that he lived alone, and that his family was not present in Cairo.

The most important qualification for becoming dāʿī al-duʿāt was learning, especially in the various branches of Fatimid knowledge.¹⁹² His salary was a hundred dīnārs per month or higher, possibly as much or more than a thousand dīnārs per month.¹⁹³ The dāʿī al-duʿāt was next in status to the qāḍī al-quḍāt, and his dress-code was

¹⁹¹ Halm suggests that since the Dār al-ʿIlm had been plundered in the Great Crisis (in 461/1069–70), the empty building was assigned to al-Muʾayyad as an office. (*The Fatimids*, p. 78; “Al-Azhar, Dār al-ʿIlm, al-Raṣad. Forschungs- und Lehranstalten der Fatimiden in Kairo,” in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, pp. 99–101, esp. p. 101). Note that the Dār al-ʿIlm was originally called the Dār al-Ḥikma (al-Muʾayyad’s poem #25, p. 263, quatrain 22, also has a reference to the “*Bayt al-ḥikam*.”) It was closed down four decades after al-Muʾayyad’s death in 513 (1119) by al-Afḍal, and reopened in a new location in 517 (1123). This “New Dār al-ʿIlm” had a different character than the original one: An Ismāʿīlī dāʿī was put in charge of it, and therefore, it became affiliated with the Fatimid daʿwa. For a detailed account of the Dār al-ʿIlm see Bärbel Köhler, *Die Wissenschaft unter den ägyptischen Fatimiden* (Hildesheim, Zurich, New York, 1994), pp. 56–64; Paul Walker, “Fatimid Institutions of Learning,” *JARCE* 34 (1997), pp. 179–200, esp. pp. 189–93; Halm, *The Fatimids*, pp. 71–78; and idem, “Al-Azhar, Dār al-ʿIlm, al-Raṣad,” pp. 99–101. A relevant primary source account is that of al-Maqrīzī in *Khūṭat*, vol. 1, pp. 458–60.

¹⁹² On the qualifications of the dāʿī, see Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī, *al-Risāla al-Mūjaza al-kāfiya fī ādāb al-duʿāt*, facsimile print in Klemm, *Die Mission*, Appendix II, pp. 205–77, summarized by Klemm in *Memoirs of a Mission*, pp. 117–27. Cited in the *Tuhfat al-qulūb*.

¹⁹³ The salary of the dāʿī al-duʿāt is reported by Ibn al-Tuwayr to be 100 dīnārs per month (*Nuzhat*, p. 84, *Itṭīʿāz*, vol. 3, p. 340.) This conflicts with al-Muʾayyad’s report that his salary was increased by al-Yāzūrī from 300 dīnārs to 1,000 dīnārs upon his appointment almost ten years earlier to the Dīwān al-Inshāʾ (*Sīra*, p. 93), a position lower than the dāʿī al-duʿāt. The difference in the two sums is not marginal. One explanation for the discrepancy could be that whereas Ibn al-Tuwayr reports a monthly salary, al-Muʾayyad could be reporting a yearly one; another could be that there were changes in the salary figures from time to time during the Fatimid period, that Ibn al-Tuwayr’s numbers are valid for only part of the Fatimid era and do not apply to al-Muʾayyad’s case. Cf. monthly salaries of some other state officials (*Nuzhat*, pp. 83–85): vizier 5,000 (sic) dīnārs, vizier’s sons and brothers 200–300 dīnārs each, *kātib al-dast* (Dīwān al-Inshāʾ) 150 dīnārs, qāḍī al-quḍāt 100 dīnārs, treasurer 100 dīnārs, bearer of the Caliph’s sword 70 dīnārs, *khaṭībs* of the various mosques 10–20 dīnārs each.

like the latter's and, presumably, like other "people of the pen." Ibn al-Ṭuwayr reports:¹⁹⁴

... as for the dā'ī al-du'āt, he followed the qāḍī al-quḍāt in rank, and he dressed in the same manner as him, in his robes and other [articles of apparel]. His qualification was that he be learned in all the *madhhabs* of the *ahl al-bayt*... and the jurists of the state would come to him...

Al-Mu'ayyad's duties as dā'ī al-du'āt included the taking of the Fatimid oath of allegiance (*ahd* or *mīthāq*) from new initiates,¹⁹⁵ and the reading of the da'wa *majālis*.¹⁹⁶ The *majālis* had been an ongoing practice since the establishment of the Fatimids in North Africa in (297/909).¹⁹⁷ Each *majlis* was composed prior to its reading, usually by the dā'ī al-du'āt himself as in the case of al-Mu'ayyad, or sometimes by a deputy, as we have seen in the case of al-Yāzūrī. The dā'ī al-du'āt presented it to the Imam, who read and signed it. The dā'ī al-du'āt then read it out to the Fatimid followers, possibly as though it were coming directly from the Imam, and at the very least, with the Imam's official approval of the contents. Ibn al-Ṭuwayr gives a description of the format of the *majlis*, which al-Maqrīzī quotes verbatim:¹⁹⁸

... the jurists among them agreed upon a booklet called '*majlis al-ḥikma*' that was read out every Monday and Thursday. It would be brought in a fair copy to the dā'ī al-du'āt, he would dispatch it to them and take it from them, and he would take it to the Caliph in these two days and read it to him if possible, and he would get [the

¹⁹⁴ *Nuzhat*, p. 110, and quoted from it in the *Khīṭaṭ*, vol. 1, p. 391.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. *Nuzhat*, p. 110, *al-Khīṭaṭ*, vol. 1, pp. 396–97. The text of the oath of allegiance is recorded in *al-Khīṭaṭ*. English trans. by H. Halm, "The Isma'īli oath of allegiance (*ahd*) and the 'sessions of wisdom' (*majālis al-ḥikma*) in Fatimid times," in F. Daftary, ed., *Mediaeval Isma'īli History and Thought*, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 91–116. Another minor duty of the dā'ī al-du'āt was supervising the distribution of the meat of the sacrificial animals at the Feast of the Sacrifice among the students of the Dār al-ʿIlm (*Nuzhat*, pp. 184–85); yet another duty was attending the 'Āshūrā' assembly of mourning (*ibid.*, p. 221).

¹⁹⁶ The da'wa *majālis* are discussed by Halm in *The Fatimids* (pp. 17–29) and Walker in "Fatimid Institutions" (pp. 182–86).

¹⁹⁷ E.g. al-Musabbihī says, "... In Rabīʿ I, I mean in the year 385 H, the qāḍī Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān sat on a chair in the palace to read [from] the branches of knowledge of the Progeny of the House [of Muḥammad] according to the customary manner that had been for him and his brother in Egypt and for his father in the Maghrib..." (*Khīṭaṭ*, vol. 1, p. 391).

¹⁹⁸ *Nuzhat*, pp. 111–12, *Khīṭaṭ*, vol. 1, p. 391.

Caliph's] signature on the outside. He would sit in the palace in order to read it to the believers in two places: on the chair of the da'wa in al-Īwān al-Kabīr for men, and in the audience-hall of the dā'ī for women, and it was among the greatest and vastest of structures. When he had completed reading it to the believers, men and women, they would come to him to kiss his hands, and he would touch their heads with the place of the signature, I mean the handwriting of the Caliph . . .

Al-Mu'ayyad's *majālīs* are collectively known as *al-Majālīs al-Mu'ayyadiyya*. They are eight hundred in number, preserved in full,¹⁹⁹ and may be categorized as a Fatimid *tāwīl* work containing esoteric exegesis of Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic Hadith.²⁰⁰ Al-Mu'ayyad was well-versed in the Fatimid *tāwīl* tradition and the works of its pioneering author al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, having translated one of the latter's two major *tāwīl* compendiums titled *Asās al-tāwīl* into Persian, with the title *Bunyād-ē tāwīl*.²⁰¹ The *majālīs* were generally held twice a week—Mondays and Thursdays, according to some historians, Thursdays and Fridays according to others.²⁰² It is possible that the *majālīs* were held on different days in different periods. Perhaps the Thursday *majlis* was for those who had reached the *tāwīl* level, and the other *majlis* was a general reading from the *Da'ā'im al-Islām* for those at the exoteric level.²⁰³ Admission to the higher level *majlis* was probably considered an honor; al-Mu'ayyad calls this admission a “*rutba*” (spiritual rank, verse 5 in the following poem), which would seem to indicate that there was some special significance attached to the *majlis* held on this day. Al-Mu'ayyad wrote a poem especially for the *majālīs*, addressed in greetings to the “morning of Thursday,” also an allusion to his Imam. It is possible that it was recited at one or more of the *majālīs* at which he presided.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ The *majālīs* al-Mu'ayyad wrote for al-Yāzūrī in the 440s H do not seem to have been preserved.

²⁰⁰ For a description of the themes of *al-Majālīs al-Mu'ayyadiyya* see 'Uyūn, vol. 7, p. 83, and the table of contents of the *Jāmi' al-ḥaqā'iq*.

²⁰¹ Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Asās al-tāwīl*, ed. 'A. Tāmīr, Beirut, 1960 (highly inaccurate ed.), *Bunyād-ē tāwīl* ms. in Institute of Ismā'īlī Studies, London, Zāhid 'Alī Collection, cat. no. B1/929.

²⁰² Ibn al-Ṭuwayr says the *majālīs* were held every Monday and Thursday (*Nuzhat*, p. 111); Maqrīzī also names Monday and Thursday quoting Ibn al-Ṭuwayr (*Khīṭaṭ*, vol. 1, p. 391, *Itti'āz*, vol. 3, p. 337) but elsewhere—quoting al-Musabbihī—he says that they were held on Thursdays and Fridays (*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 391, *Itti'āz*, vol. 2, p. 82.)

²⁰³ Al-Maqrīzī says in the *Itti'āz* (vol. 2, p. 175) that al-Zāhir (d. 427/1036) instructed his dā'īs to teach the people the *Da'ā'im* and another *fiqh* work.

²⁰⁴ #61, pp. 314–15, vv. 1–6 (vv. 1–5 are also trans. by Hunzai in *Shimmering Light*, p. 46).

*O Thursday morning, welcome!
May the One, the Protector,
increase your glory.*

*You are a venerable feast day
for the believers—
religion has united them
in you.*

*We pluck the fruits of the
paradise of 'Adn,²⁰⁵
each time Thursday comes
and goes,*

*from gardens whose streams
are flowing,
and in which Houris appear
in palaces.*

*Souls quench their thirst
from it, with a water
that is more healing than
the zulāl, and sweeter.*

*[This is] a rutba with which
we have been singled out
by the Lord of the Age,
the trustee of God Most High
and Exalted.*

يَا صَبَاحَ الْخَمِيسِ أَهْلًا وَسَهْلًا
زَادَكَ الْوَاحِدُ الْمَهْمِئِمْنَ فَضْلًا

أَنْتَ عِيدٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَتِيدٌ
جَمَعَ الدِّينَ مِنْهُمْ فَيْكَ شَمْلًا

نَحْنُ نَجْنِي ثِمَارَ حَنَاتِ عَدْنٍ
كُلَّمَا أَقْبَلَ الْخَمِيسُ وَوَلَّى

مِنْ رِيَاضٍ أَهْمَاهَا جَارِيَاتُ
وَهِيَ الْخُورُ فِي الْمَقَاصِرِ تُجَلَّى

تَتَرَوَى الْأَرْوَاحُ مِنْهَا بِمَاءٍ
هُوَ أَشْفَى مِنَ الزُّلَالِ وَأَخْلَى

رُتْبَةً خَصَّصْنَا بِهَا صَاحِبَ الْعَصْرِ

أَمِينُ الْإِلَهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

In one of his Persian poems, a contemporary Fatimid dā'ī, Nāṣir Khusrau praises al-Mu'ayyad's imparting of knowledge in his *majālis*.²⁰⁶

*Now you [O Nāṣir] are
happy that you resemble
men,*

*now you must glory over
[your] peers,*

*for, through Khwaja
Mu'ayyad,
God has opened the door
of wisdom for you.*

*It is not befitting that he
be anybody's disciple—
it is not befitting that
masters be disciples.*

کنون شادی که مانی مردمان را

کنون باید که فخر آری بر اقران

که کرد از خاطر خواجه ی مؤید

در حکمت گشاده بر تو یزدان

کسی را که ش به شاگردی نشاید

به شاگردی نشاید اوستادان

²⁰⁵ Reference to Qur'ān 37:41–49, 38:49–52.

²⁰⁶ *Dīvān-i ash'ār-i Nāṣir-i Khusrau*, eds. Taqavī & Taqizādeh, pp. 313–16, vv. 7–21. Not cited in Mīnovī & Muḥaqqiq ed. Tehran 1407H. Translation mine.

Whoever sees him on the
day of the *majlis*
sees a mind [deep] in
thought.²⁰⁷

The *Khwaja* has turned my
night into shining day
with proofs, shining like
the sun.

Natural death has become
insignificant for me
ever since he has given me
the water of life to taste.

I looked from the corner
of his eye
and saw the celestial sphere[s]
revolving beneath me.

He showed me both worlds,
manifest and hidden, present
together in my body.

I saw *Mālik* and *Rizvān*
together
in my breast, heaven and
Hell.²⁰⁸

He told me, "I am his
disciple,"—
signaling at that time towards
Rizvān.

I saw eight gates shut in one
place,
and seven gates open one
above the other.²⁰⁹

هر آنک او را ببینند روز مجلس

ببینند عقل را سرد در گریبان

شب من روز رخشان کرد خواجه

به برهان های چون خورشید رخشان

سوی من خوار شد مرگ طبیعی

از آن پس که مچشانید آب حیوان

ز گوشه ی منظر او بنگریدم

به زیر خویش دیدم چرخ گردان

مرا بنمود حاضر هر دو عالم

به یک جا در تنم پیدا و پنهان

به یک جا مالک و رضوان بدیدم

نشسته در برم (ش) فردوس و نیران

مرا گفتا که من شاگرد اویم

اشارت کرد آنگه سوی رضوان

بدیدم هشت در یکجا بسته

گشاده هفت در بر یکدگرشان

²⁰⁷ The description is either of al-Mu'ayyad's pre-dā'ī al-du'āt-ship teaching sessions in which Nāṣir himself participated, or his later, official *majālis*, which were not attended by Nāṣir.

²⁰⁸ Mālik is the gate-keeper of Hell, Rizvān (Arabic Riḍwān) the gatekeeper of Paradise. Here both refer to al-Mustanṣir.

²⁰⁹ Eight gates shut refer to the gates of Hell and seven gates open refer to the gates of Heaven.

"If you wish to enter through
any of these gates, first,"
he said, "you must have
permission²¹⁰ from him."

ز هر در کاندراو خواهی شد اول
مرا گفتا که از او بابت فرمان

I asked the Khwaja for an
explanation of this situation,
and he revealed to me the
beginning and end of the story.

پرسیدم ز خواجه شرح این حال
سَر قصه مرا بنمود و پایان

He said to me, "This is the Lord
of the Age,
whom God has chosen from
humans and jinnis."

مرا گفت این خداوند زمان است
که بگزیدش خدای از انس و از جان

I placed the elevation of Saturn,
underneath [his] command due
to this luminous sign.

به زیر پای فرمان بسپرم من
ازین پرنور اشارت اوج کیوان

Nāṣir also praises al-Mu'ayyad highly in his famous autobiographical poem "*Ay khwande basī ilm-o jahān gashte sarāsar*" ("O well-read and well-travelled one," in which he praises al-Mu'ayyad as the Imam's *darbān* (lit. gatekeeper = *bāb al-abwāb*) and a physician of the soul. He gives a sample of the kind of questions he asked al-Mu'ayyad in his role as teacher and prays for al-Mu'ayyad's continued intimacy with the Imam.²¹¹

Al-Mu'ayyad remained in the post of *dā'ī al-du'āt* from the time of his appointment in 450 (1058) until two months before his death in 470 (1077), with the exception of a one-year period from 453 (1061) to 454 (1062), in which the vizier Ibn al-Mudabbir exiled him.²¹² Al-Mu'ayyad was temporarily displaced from the *dā'ī al-du'āt*-

²¹⁰ Lit. *farmān*, edict.

²¹¹ *Divān Nāṣir Khusrāu*, ed. Mīnovī, #242, pp. 505–515, vv. 69–132, end, complete poem trans. and analyzed by Ivanow, *Problems in Nāṣir-i Khusrāu's Biography*, Bombay, 1956, chap. 8: "Khwaja Mu'ayyad," pp. 50–52; cited by Alice Hunsburger in *Nāṣir Khusrāu, The Ruby of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher*, London and New York, 2000, pp. 55–69; major portion also cited in *Memoirs of a Mission*, pp. 97–101). V. 11: "Al-Mu'ayyid" (one who gives aid) is a play on al-Mu'ayyad's title.

²¹² Ibn al-Ṣayrafi reports that the vizier Ibn al-Mudabbir exiled al-Mu'ayyad alongwith another of the vizier's political rivals to al-Shām and that both returned "after a period of time" (*al-Ishāra*, p. 86). I have established the dates of al-Mu'ayyad's exile as being between 453 (1061) and 454 (1062) in the following manner: Ibn al-Mudabbir occupied the post of vizier twice, once in 453 H, from Ṣafar to Ramaḍān, and another time in 455 H (*ibid.*, pp. 85–86); al-Mu'ayyad's exile must have been initiated during the first of these terms, since he returned from exile in 454 H.

ship, and this office was filled by the vizier. A poem al-Mu'ayyad wrote during his exile specifies "al-Quds" (Jerusalem, v. 9) as his place of exile,²¹³ and describes his sorry condition. It reflects the shock he must have felt at being sent away from Cairo in disgrace, just when he had thought his troubles were over. The poem is of the *munājāt* genre, being addressed to God and asking for help and deliverance. The physical hardships of travel al-Mu'ayyad was forced to endure at his relatively advanced age (vv. 6–8), the humiliation he had to suffer (vv. 9–10), and his hurt at being served thus after a lifetime of devoted service to the Fatimids (vv. 11–14) are described vividly. The poem ends with a heartrending appeal to God for deliverance (v. 15).²¹⁴

*O Lord You are the hope.
In whom else but You can I
put my hope.*

يَا رَبُّ أَنْتَ الْمُرْتَجَى
وَمَنْ سِوَاكَ أَرْتَجِي

*Who else but You opens
every locked door.*

أَمْ هَبْ لِي سِوَاكَ فَتَاتِحُ
لِكُلِّ بَابٍ مُرْتَجِ
أَصَابِحْتُ لَا أَذْهَبُ مِنْ

*I have become such that I
do not go
—due to my bewilderment—
and do not come;*

تَحِيٍّ بَرِيٍّ وَلَا أَجِي

*an old man whose body
is infirm,
in whose breast is a
sad heart,*

شَيْخًا ضَعِيفًا جَسَدُهُ
فِي صَدْرِهِ قَلْبٌ شَحِيحٌ

*who was attacked in his
place of safety by
something
that had never occurred
to his mind.*

أَتَنَاهُ فِي الْمَأْمَنِ مَا
فِي الْفَكَرِ لَمْ يَخْتَلِجْ

Evidence for the return date is an undated decree cited in the *ʿUyūn* (vol. 7, pp. 77–78) which, I believe (see basis p. 95n) was written upon al-Mu'ayyad's return from exile; this decree names Abū 'Abd Allāh [Dhū al-Kifāyatayn] as the current vizier, and Abū 'Abd Allāh held office between Rabī' I and Sha'bān of 454 H (*al-Ishāra*, p. 89).

²¹³ Tāmīr states that al-Mu'ayyad's place of exile was Ramla, a town quite close to Jerusalem (*Tārīkh al-Ismā'īliyya*, vol. 3, p. 215), but he does not give a basis for his choice.

²¹⁴ #21, p. 253, vv. 1–15 (complete).

who was disturbed from²¹⁵
his resting place
by oppression, without
having given offence

Taking—despite his weakness
of strength—
the difficult road,

his insides shaken up from
riding in howdahs²¹⁷

until he alighted at
Jerusalem,
a humiliated, embarrassed
person,

thrown into a masjid,
enduring with a hard-
pressed breast.

This is the reward of one who
has completed
sixty years,

being for Muṣṭafā's progeny
like the clear morning

in the East and the West,²¹⁸
carrying out the da'wa
with convincing proofs,

plunging into the sea
of annihilation
for their love's sake, into
the depths.

O Lord, clear our night
with the morning of deliverance!

أَزْعَجَ فِي مَهَادِهِ²¹⁶
ظَلَمًا بِبِلَا تَحْرُجْ

مَيَّالًا عَلَى ضَعْفِ الْقُوَى
مِنْهُ بَصَافِ الْمَذْرَجِ
مُقَلِّقًا لَ الْأَحْشَاءِ مِنْ
مَسِيرِهِ فِي الْحَدَجِ
حَتَّى تَوَى فِي قُدْسِ
مَسْتَوَى الْمَهْدِ إِنْ الْمَحْرَجِ

مُطْرَحًا فِي مَسْجِدِ
لَقَى بِصَدْرِ حَاسِرِ
هَذَا جَزَاء مَنْ قَضَى

سِتِّينَهَا مِنْ حَجَّجِ
وَهَوَّوْا لَ الْمَصْطَفَى
مِثْلَ الْمَبَاحِ الْأَبْلَجِ
فِي شَرْفِهَا وَغَرْبِهَا
يَدْعُو بِشَيْءٍ فِي الْحَجَّجِ

يَخْرُوضُ فِي بَحْرِ الرَّدَى
بُحْرًا فِي اللَّحَجِ

يَا رَبَّنَا اكْشِفْ لَيْلَنَا
هَذَا بِصُحْبِ الْفَرَجِ

Another poem that al-Mu'ayyad probably wrote at this time contains less shock and hurt and more censure, being directed at the person responsible for al-Mu'ayyad's exile, the vizier Ibn al-Mudabbir. In it, al-Mu'ayyad challenges the vizier (without naming him) to find

²¹⁵ Or "in his resting-place" (*Dīwān* ed. "fī," mss. 1 & 4 "fī," mss. 2, 3 contain "an.")

²¹⁶ Read "mihādihī" rather than mahādihī (ed.)

²¹⁷ Or "saddles."

²¹⁸ Lit. "In its East and West."

anybody who could replace al-Mu'ayyad by the side of the Imam (v. 13). One clue gleaned from this poem in solving the mystery of al-Mu'ayyad's exile is the justification offered by Ibn al-Mudabbir for his removal of al-Mu'ayyad from the office of dā'ī al-du'āt: that al-Mu'ayyad "stuttered" in his sermons (v. 9).²¹⁹ We do not know whether physical stuttering is meant, or that, according to the vizier, al-Mu'ayyad was just ineffective in his *majālis* delivery. Be that as it may, al-Mu'ayyad defends himself well, citing his sixty-year record as a dā'ī par excellence, a dā'ī who has made his mark felt—through word and through deed—in Egypt and Syria, in the Ḥijāz, in Yemen, in Fars and in Iraq, even as far away as Sind (vv. 1–2). The poem shows that al-Mu'ayyad was well aware of his own worth (vv. 1–16) and not about to let anyone cow him (vv. 14–16). The poem ends with four verses asking God for help and deliverance (vv. 17–20). An interesting point to note here is the fact that neither in this poem nor in the previous one does al-Mu'ayyad directly address the Imam. There is no plea for succor addressed to the Imam, and no verses in praise of the Imam. This absence indicates that al-Mu'ayyad had realized it was unrealistic to expect the Imam to override the vizier and take direct action in al-Mu'ayyad's favor; his best option was to tackle the vizier directly, and to put his hopes in God. This is the poem:²²⁰

*Egypt and Syria have come
to know,
and the area of the Ḥijāz and
the land of Yemen,
and Fars before them and Iraq
upto Sind—both their inhabited
places and their ruins—
that I am a sword for the
progeny of the Prophet,
polished with the water of
eloquence.*

لَقَدْ عَلِمَتْ مِصْرُهَا وَالشَّامُ
وَقَطْرُ الْحِجَازِ وَأَرْضُ الْيَمَنِ
وَفَارِسُ مَنْ قَبْلَهَا وَالْعِرَاقُ
إِلَى السِّنْدِ عُمَرَانَهَا وَالْهُدَمُنُ
بِأَنِّي سَافِيٌ لَّالِ الْبَنِي
صَقِيلٌ صُقِلْتُ بِمَاءِ اللَّسَنِ

²¹⁹ This hypothesis is supported by the coupling of the sentence referring to al-Mu'ayyad's being returned to the pulpit, with the exoneration of any blame attaching to him (al-Mustanṣir's letter reinstating al-Mu'ayyad as dā'ī al-du'āt, *ʿUyūn*, vol. 7, pp. 77–79.

²²⁰ #20, p. 251, vv. 1–16.

*How many jeweled words
have I strung together
in verse,
and pearls have I scattered
in prose, priceless.*

*I have praised the Prophet
and the Progeny of the
Prophet
until I have struck the flint
of minds.*

*Many a covering of ignorance
have I removed,
and many a soul have I
breathed into the body.*

*How many wounds have I
made with [the sword of]
right guidance,
and how many shields of
error have I ripped apart.*

*There is no torch with
a flame above it
more famous than my
flame, in [this] age.*

*So, O accuser of the khaṭīb
of the Prophet
and the Progeny of the
Prophet, of the disease
of stuttering,*

*O exiler of a scholar,
a speaker
who shoots his two arrows
into every art,²²²*

*who comes to them with
the offering of souls,
just as animals are driven as
offering to the House—*

فَكَمٌ مِنْ جَوَاهِرٍ لَفْظٍ تَطَلُّمْتُ

وَدُرٌّ تَنَثَّرْتُ عِندِمِ النَّثْمَنِ

مَدَحْتُ النَّبِيَّ وَآلَ النَّبِيِّ

إِلَى أَنْ قَدَحْتُ زِنَادَ الْفِطَاسِ

فَكَمٌ مِنْ غِشَاوَةِ جَهْلٍ كَشَفْتُ

وَرُوحٍ تَفَخَّخْتُ فِي بَدَنِ²²¹

وَكَمْ فَتْكَةً بِرَشَادٍ فَتَكْتُ

وَكَمْ قَدْ هَتَكْتُ لِعَلَى جُنَنِ

فَمَا عَلِمَ فَوْقَهُ شُعْلَةٌ

بِأَشْهَرٍ مِنْ شُعْلَتِي فِي الزَّمَنِ

فَلَيَا رَامِيًا لِحَطِيبِ النَّبِيِّ

وَآلِ النَّبِيِّ بِدَاءِ اللَّكَنِ

وَيَا نَافِيًا عَالِمًا نَاطِقًا

بِسَهْمَيْهِ يَضْرِبُ فِي كُلِّ فَنٍّ

يَحْيِي أَلْيَهُمْ بِهِذِي الْقُلُوبِ

كَمَا سَيِّقُ لِلْبَيْتِ هَذِي الْبُذُنِ

²²¹ Variant reading: *al-badan*.

²²² I.e. actively participates in every art.

*when, from their door, no
circumambulator has
been exiled*

*from among [the people] of
polytheism who
circumambulate
the house of idols!*

*When you have driven me
from the sanctuary of the
Imam,*

*with whom will you fill my
place by his side?!*

*May you be congratulated—
for the arrows that you
have shot,
you have struck with them
al-Husayn and al-Hasan!*

*And Fāṭima and the legatee [‘Alī],
about whom*

*God has made fall into
dissension those he has
made fall into dissension.*

*They will be [your] adversaries
on the day judgment is passed,
when each person is responsible
for his deeds.*

وَلَمْ يُنْفَ عَنْ بَابِهِمْ طَائِفٌ

مِنَ الشُّرَكَ طَافَ بَيْتِ الْوَتْنِ

إِذَا ذُذِّنْتَنِي عَنْ حَرِيمِ الْإِمَامِ

تُسَلِّدُ مَسَدِي عَنْهُ بِمَنْ

لِيَهْنِكَ أَنْ سِيَّهَامًا رَمَيْتَ

أَصَبْتَ الْحُسَيْنَ بِهَا وَالْحَسَنَ

وفاطمة والوصي الذي

به فتن الله مَنْ قَدْ فَتَنَ

هُمْ الْخَصْمُ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ

وَكُلُّ بِأَعْمَالِهِ مُرْتَبَنَ

In another poem—either written in Jerusalem or shortly after his return—al-Mu’ayyad upbraids a certain “them” (probably the vizier and his lackeys) for their arrogance, and for forgetting that they had been al-Mu’ayyad’s subordinates.²²³

*Woe to a Fate whose dealings
are upside-down,
so that feet are over heads.*

*It would have been right
that they become ashamed
when reminded of the day
when they were my servants.*

نَبَأًا لِلذَّهْرِ صُرُوفُهُ انْتَكَسَتْ

حَتَّى عَلَتْ أَرْجُلٌ عَلَى الْقَمَمِ

وَكَانَ مِنْ حَقِّهِمْ لَوْ احْتَشَمُوا

إِنْ ذُكِّرُوا يَوْمَ كَوْنِهِمْ حَشَمِي

²²³ #29, p. 268, vv. 13–15. We know that Ibn al-Anbārī, who became vizier three years later in 457 (1065), had been a deputy for al-Mu’ayyad in the *Dīwān al-Inshā’* (*al-Ishāra*, p. 91). It might be that he too played a part in al-Mu’ayyad’s troubles.

*It is still near to that time, and
people are not blind
to what they saw when they
were my attendants.*

فَالْعَمَلُ دَانَ وَمَا الْأَنْعَامُ عَمَوْا
عَمَّا رَأَوْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ مَخْدَمِي

Ibn al-Mudabbir was removed from office a few months later, and in mid-454 (1062), three short-termed viziers later, al-Mustanṣir recalled al-Mu'ayyad to Cairo. An epistle from the Imam to al-Mu'ayyad exonerates the latter of all blame, and reinstates him as head of the da'wa.²²⁴ It describes the Imam's honoring of al-Mu'ayyad upon his return, by bestowing upon him the Imam's own robes and one of his own mounts. The epistle also refers to al-Mu'ayyad's past services as dā'ī al-du'āt, especially to his propagation of Fatimid learning and beliefs. It expresses regret for al-Mu'ayyad's exile, saying this had been against the Imam's personal wishes, and that he had himself ordered al-Mu'ayyad's return and reinstatement. It ends with instructions to al-Mu'ayyad to follow the counsel of the vizier Abū 'Abd Allāh [al-Ḥusayn b. Sadīd al-Dawla Dhū al-Kifāyatayn]. This epistle contains information about al-Mu'ayyad's exile and about the Imam's personal opinion about al-Mu'ayyad himself not found elsewhere.²²⁵

One question that remains is why two viziers bore the title of dā'ī al-du'āt, albeit for a few months each, even after al-Mu'ayyad's return from exile and reinstatement in the office of the da'wa.²²⁶ The answer may lie in the unstable political atmosphere in Cairo at this time, such that even after al-Mu'ayyad's return to Cairo, his position at court remained precarious for a while, and the viziers who considered him a political rival were able to vie with him for charge of official da'wa affairs. In any case, al-Mu'ayyad henceforth seems to have retired

²²⁴ *ʿUyūn* (vol. 7, pp. 77–79). This letter is undated; it is placed in the *ʿUyūn* at the time of al-Mu'ayyad's appointment as dā'ī al-du'āt; however, it is better placed at the time of al-Mu'ayyad's return from his Jerusalem exile because the letter contains (a) instructions to al-Mu'ayyad to follow the orders of the vizier Abū 'Abd Allāh [al-Ḥusayn b. Sadīd al-Dawla Dhū al-Kifāyatayn], who held office from Rabī' I or Rajab to Sha'bān, 454 H (*al-Ishāra*, p. 89), four years after al-Mu'ayyad had become dā'ī al-du'āt in Dhu al-ḥijja 450 H, (b) a reference to al-Mu'ayyad's past supervision of the da'wa and his educational and propagational work in that capacity, (c) a reference to his being put in charge of the da'wa after his return, (d) an explanation for his exile, and (e) a reference his being brought back to the Imam's "door."

²²⁵ My study is the first to use this important source in the reconstruction of al-Mu'ayyad's life.

²²⁶ Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Karīm (455/1063, *al-Ishāra*, p. 88), Ibn Abī Kudayna (455–464, *ibid.*, pp. 89–90), and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, (*Rafʿ al-ʿisr*, biography #56, pp. 135–37).

completely from active politics, and devoted himself solely to da'wa affairs. Perhaps it was the Imam's intention that he do so all along.

After his return from exile, al-Mu'ayyad resumed supervision of the da'wa in other lands, paying special attention to Yemen and India; Fatimid dā'īs everywhere reported to him.²²⁷ The *ʿUyūn* reports that letters from the dā'īs in the provinces would come to al-Mu'ayyad, that he would present them to the Imam and, with the Imam's permission, reply to them. It praises al-Mu'ayyad's handling of the da'wa, saying that at his hands "... the da'wa became well-established in all the lands... and well-organized..."²²⁸

The next important piece of information we have from these years is al-Mu'ayyad's five-year training of the Yemenite Ṣulayḥid chief qāḍī Lamak b. Mālīk al-Ḥammādī. The Ṣulayḥid sultan 'Alī b. Muḥammad, a political vassal and spiritual follower of the Fatimids, had sent Lamak to Cairo in 456 (1064) as an emissary.²²⁹ Lamak remained in Cairo for five years. Whenever he asked the Imam permission for Sultan 'Alī to go on the *ḥajj* pilgrimage and thence to come to Cairo (and for himself to return to Yemen with the Imam's answer), he would be told, "How is it that he asks permission, when

²²⁷ We have some records of al-Mu'ayyad's supervision of the dā'īs, especially in Yemen and India: (a) Al-Mu'ayyad trained the Yemenite qāḍī-dā'ī Lamak b. Mālīk (discussed in detail next in this chapter). (b) An official epistle by al-Mustanṣir (*al-Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*, #61, pp. 200–2) to the Ṣulayḥid sultan of Yemen, [al-Malik al-Mukarram] Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad, refers him to the "dā'ī al-du'āt al-Mu'ayyad" in his query in the matter of a dā'ī then stationed in Yemen named Shahriyār b. al-Ḥasan. Al-Mukarram had sent Shahriyār as envoy to Cairo, where he had become personally acquainted with al-Mu'ayyad, and had later returned to Yemen (cf. I. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature*, Malibu, Calif., 1977, pp. 125–6). (c) Another official epistle by al-Mustanṣir to al-Mukarram's wife and successor, the Ṣulayḥid queen al-Ḥurra al-Malika, sent with Lamak and dated Jumādā II 461 H (*Sijillāt*, #55, pp. 180–81), mentions an earlier epistle written to her by al-Mustanṣir's "dā'ī al-du'āt al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn," without describing its contents or context. (d) An Indian Ṭayyibī scholar, Khawj b. Malak (d. c. 1021/1612), reports that a certain Bālamnāth and Rūpnāth from Dhōngām in the Deccan region of India, traveled to Egypt; at al-Mu'ayyad's hands, they converted to Islam and became followers of the Fatimid *madhhab* (no date given, presumably between 450 H to 470 H), after which they returned to India (*Sitt Rasā'il*, abridged by 'Abd 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Qādir as *Majmū' al-rasā'il al-sitt fī dhikr du'āt al-hind*, ms., vol. 2, pt. 1, chap. 1).

²²⁸ *ʿUyūn*, vol. 7, p. 84.

²²⁹ *ʿUyūn*, vol. 7, pp. 127–131. For Lamak's embassy to Egypt, see Samer Traboulsi, "Lamak ibn Mālīk al-Ḥammādī and Sulayhid-Fatimid Relations," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 30 (2000), pp. 221–27; Abbas Hamdani, "The Dā'ī Ḥātim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī (d. 596 H/1199 AD) and his Book *Tuḥfat al-qulūb*," *Oriens* 23–24 (1970–71), pp. 258–300.

winter is almost here?"²³⁰ This question is interpreted by the Ṭayyibīs as a reference to the impending concealment of the Imam. Lamak was housed with al-Mu'ayyad in the Dār al-'Ilm, and studied with him for that entire period of time. Towards the end of his stay there, he was also given the honor of direct instruction from the Imam. Details of al-Mu'ayyad's tutelage of Lamak are reported by the Ṭayyibī dā'ī Ḥātīm b. Ibrāhīm in the *Tuhfat al-qulūb*:²³¹

... until five years passed [for Lamak] in the pure abode [i.e. Cairo] ... and during the period of his stay, the noble qādī was never parted from Sayyidunā al-Mu'ayyad—may God elevate both their souls—rather, [he was always] in front of him, asking him, taking [knowledge] from him, and writing down what he learnt from him, until he had grasped all that [al-Mu'ayyad himself] had ...

The Ṣulayḥid sultan was killed in late 459 (1067), and Lamak remained in Cairo for five months afterwards, receiving condolence visits from official delegations called by al-Mustanshir from all parts of the Fatimid empire.²³² In 461²³³ (1069), he returned to Yemen, where he passed on al-Mu'ayyad's learning to his own son Yaḥyā b. Lamak (d. 520/1126), who, in turn, taught the first Ṭayyibī dā'ī, Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā (d. 546/1151).²³⁴ Al-Mu'ayyad thus formed the link between the Fatimids of Egypt and the Ṭayyibīs of Yemen and India, and for that, he is considered the spiritual father of the Ṭayyibī-Fatimid da'wa.

Meanwhile, in the ten years following al-Mu'ayyad's return from exile, Cairo was passing through great hardship. Between 454 (1062) and 459 (1067) there was the Turkish uprising in Egypt, and then came the Great Famine between the years 455 (1063) and 464 (1072). We do not have any specific information about al-Mu'ayyad during these two five-year periods of fear and hunger in the Fatimid capital,

²³⁰ *Uyūn*, vol. 7, p. 129.

²³¹ *Tuhfat al-qulūb*, p. 162; quoted from the *Tuhfat* in the *Uyūn* (vol. 7, p. 129), and relevant excerpts from it by S.M. Stern, "The Succession to the Fatimid Imam al-Āmir, the Claims of the Later Fatimids to the Imamate, and the Rise of Ṭayyibī Ismailism," *Oriens* 4 (1951), pp. 193–255, see pp. 234–35.

²³² *Uyūn*, vol. 7, p. 130. The Ṭayyibīs stress the importance of the Imam's actions in ensuring that all his subjects knew of Lamak's Cairo sojourn and his connection with al-Mu'ayyad, therefore validating the passage of the Imam's knowledge through al-Mu'ayyad and Lamak to the Ṭayyibī da'wa.

²³³ Date from an epistle dated Jumādā II 461 H, sent to al-Ḥurra al-Malika in Yemen from al-Mustanshir in Cairo with Lamak b. Mālik upon his return and others of his delegation. (*al-Sijillāt*, #55, p. 181)

²³⁴ *Tuhfat*, pp. 164–66, quoted in Stern, "The Succession," p. 236.

but it is certain that he must have felt their effects in the Dār al-‘Ilm. Not unconnected to the chaos in the capital, and probably partly what caused it, was the high turnover in the vizierate in this period. There were no less than nineteen viziers who took office (five of these more than once) in the sixteen years between the death of al-Yāzūrī in 450 (1058), and the arrival in 466 (1073) of the man who would restore order to the capital, the Fatimid governor of Acre, Badr [al-Jamālī] al-Mustaṣṣir. Badr was immediately appointed commander of the armies, and he fulfilled the role of vizier from this time onwards. Four years later in Sha‘bān 470 (1077)—two months before al-Mu‘ayyad’s death—Badr was also given the title of *Hādī du‘āt al-mu‘minīn* (Guide for the Dā‘īs of the Believers).²³⁵ Al-Mu‘ayyad might have been too ill just before his death to continue with the practical duties of dā‘ī al-du‘āt.

Al-Mu‘ayyad died in the first ten days of Shawwāl of the year 470²³⁶ (1078) at eighty-three or eighty-four years of age. He was accorded the singular honor of his funeral prayers being conducted by the Imam al-Mustaṣṣir.²³⁷ He was buried in his place of residence, the Dār al-‘Ilm.²³⁸

Al-Mu‘ayyad was one of the most important personages in the long history of the Fatimid da‘wa. Religiously, intellectually, and politically, he was tremendously influential during his time and had even more impact after his death, his teachings being revered through the centuries. His life, however, was a hard one—perhaps harder than the lives of many Fatimid dā‘īs. He faced trials at every stage, first

²³⁵ *Akhbār Miṣr*, p. 45; *Iti‘āz*, vol. 2, p. 319. *al-Sijillāt*, #21, p. 78: this undated epistle addressed to the Ṣulayḥid queen al-Ḥurra al-Malika also refers to Badr as “the bāb of our da‘wa” (*bāb da‘watīnā*).

²³⁶ *‘Uyūn*, vol. 7, pp. 152–53; al-Mu‘ayyad’s year of death is given in the edition of Ṭayyibī work *al-Azhār* (ms.) as 490 H (p. 246), but this seems to be a copyist dotting error, where *tis‘īn* (ninety), which has similar orthography, is written instead of *sab‘īn* (seventy).

²³⁷ *‘Uyūn*, vol. 7, p. 152.

²³⁸ *Khiṭāt*, vol. 1, p. 460; *‘Uyūn*, vol. 7, p. 153. Al-Mu‘ayyad’s burial in the Dār al-‘Ilm, instead of the cemetery, is not as unusual as it may initially seem. Some state officials appear to have been buried in their place of residence and then moved elsewhere. The qāḍī al-quḍāt Muḥammad b. Nu‘mān (d. 388) was buried in “his abode” (*fī dārīhī*) and later transported to the Qarāfa cemetery (al-Maqrīzī, *Iti‘āz*, vol. 2, p. 21). The vizier Ja‘far b. al-Furāt (d. 391) was also buried in his house and later transported to Medina (*Ibid.*, p. 42). What is unusual in al-Mu‘ayyad’s case is the fact that the sources do not mention his body being moved elsewhere, so the reason for his burial in the Dār al-‘Ilm is unclear.

in Fars, and then after his arrival at al-Mustansir's court in Cairo. These trials were both physical—wandering the wilderness in flight from the Abbasids, and psychological—surviving the apparent lack of sympathy from his own Imam. This last was the far more severe one. We have seen, however, how al-Mu'ayyad stood up to these trials, not wavering for an instant in his loyalty to the Imam, and to the end of his days, not swerving from the service of the Fatimid Imam. In fact, the stoic manner in which he came through these trials is perhaps the very reason for his importance in the Fatimid da'wa.

As portrayed in his poetry, al-Mu'ayyad's relationship with his Imam underwent major changes over the course of his life. He remained a devoted servant of the Imam throughout, but his tone of address towards the Imam reflected different attitudes at different times. In Fars, early in his life, al-Mu'ayyad's praise of the Imam, whom he had not met, was impersonal, and he used mostly religious and theological motifs in panegyric. Later, after 429/1038, when his situation in Fars became difficult, he constantly looked to the Imam for succor, and to the Imam's court as refuge. After his arrival in Egypt at the Imam's court, his poems expressed the shock he must have felt at the unexpectedly cool treatment he received, and many of the poems composed in this period contained a strong tone of complaint; he continued, however, to praise the Imam. Finally, back from Syria and even during his exile and after, his poetry bore a tone of resignation to the situation at the Imam's court, and often appealed directly to God for succor.

The Imam's volatile dealings with al-Mu'ayyad may be considered in the light of trial by fire. The two darkest times in al-Mu'ayyad's life vis-à-vis the Imam were followed by the two most bounteous dispensations from him. Soon after the Imam withheld recognition of al-Mu'ayyad's role in the conquest of Baghdad, he appointed him to the ranks of *bāb al-abwāb* and *dā'ī al-du'āt*. And in the wake of al-Mu'ayyad's exile to Jerusalem, the Imam published an official decree in which he acknowledged at great length al-Mu'ayyad's value and services for the Fatimid da'wa and reinstated him as head of the da'wa. Moreover, as the Imam explicitly stated in this decree, al-Mu'ayyad's humiliations at court were not of his choosing. In fact, the Imam offered an explanation for his distant treatment of al-Mu'ayyad in his answer-poem ("O *ḥujja* . . ."), expressing his awareness of and sadness about al-Mu'ayyad's distressed state at his court,

and clarifying that circumstances within his own household had prevented him from taking action to alleviate al-Mu'ayyad's pain.

Most significantly for our purposes, it is almost certain that al-Mu'ayyad himself saw his hardships as a test. This is evident from the following verse in his *Dīwān*, which conveys the essence of al-Mu'ayyad: his poetry and his pain, the sorrows he met with forbearance, and the setbacks he overcame with faith. He says:²³⁹

<i>I have become gold for the sun of right guidance,²⁴⁰ and far be it from fire to consume gold!</i>	وَأَصْبَحْتُ تَبَرًّا لِّشَّمْسِ الْهَدَى وَعَنِيَّاتٍ أَنْ تَأْكُلَ لَّهَارُ تَبَرًّا
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The Fatimid philosophy behind this verse can be explained further in the words of an earlier dā'ī:²⁴¹

The hardship with which [believers] are afflicted in this world is the lighter punishment. There is no way other than purification. Have you seen impure gold? Is there any way other than purification by fire, so that impurities burn off and pure gold remains? Such is the example of believers.

And the greater the faith, the harsher the trials. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad was “purified” stage by stage in the fire of his trials, until he became as pure gold in his allegiance to the da'wa and the Imam. He now challenged his enemies to do their worst—he was not going to be shaken in his faith. “Far be it for fire to consume gold!”

²³⁹ #26, p. 265, v. 13.

²⁴⁰ The “sun of right guidance” is a reference to the rightly-guiding, luminous Imam.

²⁴¹ Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (363/974), *Kitāb al-Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt*, p. 73.

CHAPTER TWO

AL-MU'AYYAD'S POETIC STYLE: TRADITION AND INNOVATION

[He is] an Imam, the light
from whose forehead
aids the sun,
just as the generosity of his
two hands aids the
rain-clouds.

إِمَامٌ يُمِدُّ الشَّمْسَ نُورُ جَبِينِهِ
كَمَا جُوذُ كَفِّهِ يُمِدُّ الْعَوْدِيَا

(Al-Mu'ayyad, *Dīwān*)¹

Al-Mu'ayyad's poetic style followed Arabic literary custom in many respects, employing aesthetic techniques of the classical tradition that medieval critics considered beautiful and included in the canonical “*‘amūd al-shi‘r*” (foundation of poetry).² Some of the traditional elements in his *Dīwān* are the employment of classical meters and forms, conventional yet potent metaphors, similes, and personifications, and the *badī‘*-type wordplay especially popular in his time, such as paronomasia, antithesis, anticipation of rhyme word, and particularly aptly used poetic repetition. Other traditional elements that he used less often (and therefore not discussed in detail here) are metonymy, rhetorical address, and parallelism. Hyperbole is nearly absent, probably due to al-Mu'ayyad's devotion to existential, as well as poetic, truth.³ But how innovative was al-Mu'ayyad's poetry stylistically and wherein exactly does his innovation lie?

A few of the original features of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* are a couple of Persianisms, one of the earliest attestations of the strophic

¹ #17, p. 246, v. 38.

² The most explicit presentation of the notion of ‘*amūd al-shi‘r*’ is the one by al-Marzūqī (d. 421/1030) who enumerates seven characteristics of ‘*amūd al-shi‘r*’. Cf. entry by Wolhart Heinrichs on “‘*amūd al-shi‘r*’” in the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, vol. 1, p. 89.

³ Examples are: metonymy: #11, p. 231, v. 21; rhetorical address: #17, p. 245, v. 1; parallelism: #11, p. 231, v. 26. An example of hyperbole is #4, p. 211, v. 15. What is often seemingly hyperbole, has its grounding in *tāwīl* or *haqīqa*, and is considered in Fatimid theology to be reality.

poem in Arabic literature,⁴ a poem in the form of a letter,⁵ and creatively used poetic dialogue and rhetorical questioning. However, al-Mu'ayyad's chief innovation was his utilization of unique stylistic features that made his poetry distinctively Fatimid da'wa poetry.

Formal Aspects

Length

Al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* contains 62 poems totaling 1096 verses.⁶ The poems vary between a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 156 verses. The majority contain between 10 and 70 verses, falling within the average range for *qaṣīda* length in al-Mu'ayyad's time: twenty-eight poems (45%) are medium length, containing between 25 and 70 verses, and 20 poems (32%) are short, containing between 10 and 24 verses. A few poems are short (11 poems, or 18%, are between 4 and 9 verses), and a few poems are long (3 poems, or 5%, are between 153 and 156 verses: two disputational and one "letter" poem). There are no poems that are between 70 and 150 verses.⁷

Form

Most poems in al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* are odes (*qaṣīda*), several are short pieces (*qif'a*), and one is a strophic or stanzaic poem (poem 25) with four lines per verse (*murabba'*). This is one of the earliest instances in Arabic poetry of strophic verse, perhaps the third after the strophic poems of Abū Nuwās in the late eighth century, and Tamīm b. al-Mu'izz in the tenth.

⁴ #25, pp. 261–64. For an overview of Arabic stanzaic poetry, see G. Schoeler, "Musammaṭ," *EI2*, vol. 7, pp. 660–62.

⁵ #62, pp. 316–22.

⁶ The *Dīwān* edition contains 63 poems; however, #63 is actually not of al-Mu'ayyad's composition, and #62 of the edition, which is not present in the mss. copies of the *Dīwān*, is al-Mu'ayyad's. Details on p. 13 n. 40.

⁷ I have rounded off the percentages to the nearest percentage point. Forty-eight poems or 77% of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* are of average length, between 10 and 70 verses. In contrast, the poems of Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī generally went up to 80 verses; Ibn al-Rūmī is an exception with his 100 to 300 verse panegyrics.

Rhyme

- Most poems (59, both odes and short pieces) in al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, are in monorhyme, with a rhyme scheme of *aa*, *ba*, *ca*. Three are *muzdawija* poems with a rhyme scheme of *aa*, *bb*, *cc*. (All three are *ujūza* poems in the *raǧaz* meter; two of these are disputational poems, and the third is a "letter" poem.)⁸ The strophic poem has a rhyme scheme of *aaaa*, *bbba*, *cccc*.
- Al-Mu'ayyad utilizes relatively easy rhyme consonants (*rawī*) such as *r*, *t*, *d*, *n*, *b*, *m*, *ʿayn*, and *l* in his longer poems. There are no very difficult rhyme consonants such as *ḍ* in his *Dīwān*. However, short pieces use some relatively difficult ones such as *f*, *s*, *ḥ*, *h*, and *q*.
- Most of the rhymes in the *Dīwān* (60 poems) are *muṭlaq* ("loose") rhymes; two are *muqayyad* ("fettered") rhymes, one in *l* (poem 4, long), and one in *m* (poem 54, short).
- The two hemistichs of the opening verse usually rhyme ("taṣrīṣ," 55 poems). They do not rhyme in a few (7 poems), of which most (5 poems) are short (4 to 15 vv.) and two are longer (20, 27 vv.)
- None of the poems have a *radīf*, or recurrent word or phrase, following the rhyme word. Three short poems (poems 27, 38, 48) do contain repeated third-person pronoun suffixes in the accusative or genitive case following the rhyme word (*waṣl*, e.g., *tūqīduhā*, *salmānīhī*).

Meter

The classic *qaṣīda* meters are the ones favored by al-Mu'ayyad. Almost three-quarters of his *Dīwān* is in the following four meters (in descending order of quantity), two of which are complex and two simple meters:

- *kāmil* 15 poems: 11 medium length, 2 short, 1 very short, complex meter; according to the medieval critic al-Qarṭājannī, has "purity and flow."⁹
- *mutaqārib* 12 poems: 8 medium length, 3 short, 1 very short, simple meter; according al-Qarṭājannī, has "softness and ease."
- *ṭawīl* 10 poems: 6 medium length, 1 short, 3 very short, complex meter; according al-Qarṭājannī, has "magnificence and strength."

⁸ Al-Mu'ayyad deliberately uses the *ujūza* form here; for in the *Sira* (p. 48) he prefaces a *muzdawija* poem by calling it a "*qaṣīda musammaṭa*."

⁹ Ḥāzīm al-Qarṭājannī, *Minhāj al-bulaghā' wa sirāj al-udabā'*, ed. M.Ḥ b. al-Khūja, Tunis, 1966, p. 269.

- *khafīf* 8 poems: 5 medium length, 2 short, 1 very short, simple meter; according to al-Qarṭājannī, has “purity and elegance.”

Other meters that al-Muʿayyad uses in the *Dīwān* are: *rajaz* (6 poems, three very long: two disputational, and one “letter,” no medium length ones, one short, one very short), *sarīʿ* (3 poems), *munsariḥ* (3 poems), *basīṭ* (2 poems), *wāfir* (3 poems). Al-Muʿayyad does not ever use the meters *mutadāarak*, *maḍīd*, *muṭṭadab*, *mujtathth*, *muḍārīʿ*, *hazaj* and *ramal*.

Genre

The principal genre in al-Muʿayyad’s *Dīwān* is praise poetry. Other genres include *munājāt*, disputational-heresiographical verse, and verses describing the poet’s condition and stature. These genres are discussed in detail in later chapters.

Miscellaneous

- An interesting side feature of al-Muʿayyad’s *Dīwān* is that hemistichs within poems are sometimes identical with opening lines (*maṭlaʿ*) of other poems. In some cases, as is established through my chronological analysis (Appendix A), al-Muʿayyad first composed these lines within the poem, and then, probably thinking they were strong enough to use as opening lines, did so.¹⁰ In other cases, it seems to be the other way around, where he incorporated the opening line of one of his poems into the body of another poem.¹¹
- In keeping with the norm for classical Arabic poetry, the praise section in al-Muʿayyad’s poetry is relatively prosaic compared with the more stylized preludes.¹²

¹⁰ #13, p. 237, v. 19 is similar to *maṭlaʿ* of #19, p. 249 (*majdun samā fa-hwa li’s-samāʿi samā*).

¹¹ #12, p. 234, v. 21 is *maṭlaʿ* of #14, p. 238 (*qad ʿazza dīnu l-lāhi bi’z-zāhirī*). There is a third set where it is more difficult to ascertain whether the *maṭlaʿ* or the line within the poem was composed first: #18, p. 248, v. 10, is *maṭlaʿ* of #17 (*nasīma ṣ-ṣabā almin bi-fārisa ghādiyyā*), p. 245.

¹² Stetkevych, *Reorientations*, pp. 34–35.

Imagery

Metaphor as Manifestation:

Religious Symbolism and the "mathal-mamthūl" Creed

The most interesting aspect of al-Mu'ayyad's figurative images and one that sets them apart from those of other poets is that in most cases, although seemingly figurative, they are actually not figurative at all, but rather, the reality of the Imam's metaphysical identity as perceived by Fatimid theology. For example, when the Imam is called the "Straight Path" or the "Ka'ba," he is not merely compared to it, but is presented as its actual manifestation. This use of symbolism draws upon the Fatimid esoteric (*tāwīl*) tradition,¹³ and combines it with established classical Arabic poetic motifs. Even stock metaphors—such as the luminous moon—usually have a *tāwīl* subtext. This special use of symbolism gains aesthetically from the customary usage of metaphor as a literary trope, but goes beyond into the realm of theology. *Tāwīl* symbolism characterizes Fatimid da'wa poetry, and it is what sets it apart from other poetic traditions.

The Fatimids believed that the Qur'an and the religious practice of Islam embodied in the Sharī'a have both a literal meaning (*ẓāhir*) and a deeper meaning (*tāwīl*).¹⁴ This is the creed of the *mathal* and *mamthūl* (a neologism) in Fatimid theology.¹⁵ The *mathal* is the symbol for the *mamthūl*, e.g., the Ka'ba is the symbol for the Imam. The *mathal* (Ka'ba) carries heavy religious weight, but the *mamthūl*

¹³ For a brief discussion of Twelver Shi'ite *tāwīl*, see David Pinault, *The Shi'ites: Ritual and Popular Piety in a Muslim Community*, New York, 1992, chap. 3: "Shi'ite Ta'wīl," pp. 27–46, and chap. 4: "Variations on the Esoteric Tradition in Poetry and Theosophy," pp. 47–52.

¹⁴ With regard to the Sharī'a, both the exoteric rites of worship and the esoteric meaning thereof are considered to be equally valid (Cf. al-Qādī al-Nu'mān, *Tāwīl al-da'ā'im*, ed. 'A. Tāmīr, Beirut, 1995—see, for example, vol. 1, p. 120).

¹⁵ Al-Nu'mān in his *Asās* uses (at least once) the common passive participle form "*mumaththal*" instead of the uncommon form "*mamthūl*" (*dhikr Adam*, Jāmi'a lithograph, p. 53, the Tāmīr ed. has *mamthūl*, and a second ms. has *mumaththal* in the original text, corrected in the margin to *mamthūl*). Kirmānī's *K. al-Maṣābīḥ* also uses the term *mumaththalāt* (ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Beirut, 1996, *al-maqāla al-thāniya*, *al-miṣbāḥ al-sādis*, p. 56), and Paul Walker observed to me that some mss. contain *mumaththalāt*, while others contain *mamthūlāt*. It is possible that the text was amended by a reader based on the fact that *mamthūl* is the commonly used term in the Ṭayyibī tradition. Al-Mu'ayyad as well as later, Ṭayyibī authors, as far as I can tell, use only the term "*mamthūl*."

(Imam) is superior, since it is the basis for the reverence accorded to the *mathal*.¹⁶ In divine consideration, the *mamthūl* is first (hence the name of the genre “*tāwīl*,” the term being a derivative of *awwal*, Arabic “first”), and the *mathal* is enunciated later to denote it. The *mathal* is a changeable entity, the *mamthūl* a steady reality. This *mathal-mamthūl* creed forms the basis of the Fatimid *tāwīl* system, where, in the words of another Fatimid dā’ī Nāṣir Khusrau (d. c. 1072), the “sensible” is “an indication of the intelligible,” and the “visible world the sign of spiritual creation.”¹⁷ Al-Qāḍī al-Nu’mān (d. 363/974), an early Fatimid author, expounds upon the *mathal-mamthūl* creed in his books *Asās al-tāwīl* (Foundation of Tāwīl) and *Tāwīl al-Da’ā’im* (Tāwīl of the Pillars [of Islam]), and al-Mu’ayyad had intimate knowledge of al-Nu’mān’s work, having translated the *Asās al-tāwīl* into Persian. A century later, Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. c. 411–412/1021) devotes a section in his *Kitāb al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma* to proving the necessity of *tāwīl*.¹⁸ Al-Mu’ayyad’s own magnum opus, the eight-volume *Majālis Mu’ayyadiyya*, is also an important source for Fatimid *tāwīl* doctrines, and at various places therein he expounds upon the concept of *tāwīl* and the significance of the *mamthūl*. The following excerpt from his *Majālis* indicates his reasoning about the role of *mathal* and *mamthūl*.¹⁹

The House towards which the *ḥajj* is performed is the *qibla* of those who pray the ritual prayer. God made great its worth and commanded [those who pray] to face towards it during their ritual prayer. He—May He be exalted!—said: “Wherever you may be, turn your faces towards it,” (Qur’ān 2:144). But the facing of the human being—who has life and speech—towards an inanimate house—that neither senses nor thinks—is indeed a calamity! It is a place of remembrance “for one who has a heart” (Qur’ān 50:37). The [explanation] is that the person who performs the ritual prayer, with regard to his body, is dust that will dissolve into dust. This [fact] dictated that its *qibla* be that into which it will dissolve, and that is dust. With regard to his soul, it is a substance (*jawhar*) that can receive the traces of prophecy and the Book. This [fact] dictated that its *qibla* be that into which it will

¹⁶ See, e.g., *Majālis Mu’ayyadiyya*, vol. 1, majlis 4, p. 15: “These ten [days of Dhu al-ḥijja] have an honorable *mamthūl*, because of whose honor, honor is accorded to the *mathal*.”

¹⁷ *Khūwān al-Ikhwān*, ed. ‘Alī Qavīm, Tehran, 1957, pp. 28, 157, quoted by Julie Meisami, in “Symbolic Structure in a poem by Nāṣir-i Khusrau,” *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* 31 (1993), pp. 103–17, see p. 108.

¹⁸ *K. al-Maṣābīḥ*, pp. 51–56, *al-maqala al-thāniya, al-miṣbāḥ al-sādis*.

¹⁹ *Majālis Mu’ayyadiyya*, vol. 1, majlis 4, pp. 15–6.

dissolve, and that is prophecy and the Book. Consequently, when [the human being] faces the *qibla*, it is as though he faces the corporeal (*kathif*) with his corporeal [body], and the sublime (*laṭīf*) with his sublime [soul]; he faces with his corporeal [body] that into which it will dissolve, and with his sublime [soul] that towards which is its return. Whosoever prays the ritual prayer with this belief, the arrow of his endeavor hits the mark and the star of his felicity shines. Whosoever strays from it, as God Almighty said in His Book, is “striving [without benefit], tiring [himself].” (Qurʾān 88:3)

In addition to its application to the person of the Imam, the Fatimid Ṭayyibī *mathal-mamthūl* creed is applied to other persons and concepts. The *mamthūl* could be, for example, the Prophet, ʿAlī, ranks (*ḥudūd*) in the Fatimid religious hierarchy, or the believers. It could be a *mamthūl* with a negative complexion such as an enemy of the Imam, or it could be a concept (e.g., knowledge is the *mamthūl* for water). Moreover, there could be several *mamthūls* for a single *mathal*—in other words, several esoteric aspects for one exoteric doctrine in different contexts.

Coming to Fatimid daʿwa poetry, one may ask the question, where does imagery end and theology begin? In other words, how is calling the Imam “God’s sword” (standard metaphor) different from calling him “God’s House” (*mathal-mamthūl* metaphor)? A standard metaphor has a topic, an analogue, and an aspect of comparison. The topic is compared to the analogue in terms of some quality the latter is universally known to possess in abundance, the topic being raised to the level of the analogue.²⁰ In the case of calling the Imam (topic) “God’s sword” (analogue), the aspect of comparison is the annihilation of God’s enemies by both. The sword is universally acknowledged as something that annihilates enemies, and God’s sword annihilates God’s enemies; by comparison of the Imam to it, he is portrayed as annihilating God’s enemies too.

The *mathal-mamthūl* creed has shades of imagery, but is distinct from it in at least three important ways, which together form a touchstone for differentiation. First, rather than being an archetype and its aspirant, there is a certain equivalence between *mathal* and *mamthūl* in the *mathal-mamthūl* creed. The *mamthūl* is himself the reality of the *mathal*. The word “living” or “real” is often used by al-Muʿayyad to emphasize the Imam and the dāʿī’s living *mamthūl*

²⁰ The simile may be inverted for hyperbolic emphasis, but this is not relevant to our discussion.

nature. Second, the generally accepted roles of the topic and the analogue are reversed, the eternal and unchanging *mamthūl* (analogue) being considered the real reality (*ḥaqīqa*), and the transitory and changing *mathal* (topic), the figurative (*majāz*).²¹ Third, the *mathal-mamthūl* metaphor, as opposed to poetic imagery, always has a basis in theology. It draws on notions propounded by the Qurʾān and Prophetic Hadith such as the straight path and on legal precepts such as the *ḥajj* pilgrimage; it alludes to accepted doctrines within the Fatimid belief system, while the simile or metaphor refers to personal or literary experience. Thus, the standard simile or metaphor²² that our poet uses portrays the Imam and Dāʿī's good moral and physical attributes in a poetic manner, while the *mathal-mamthūl* metaphor represents his theological reality as the human embodiment of religious objects and concepts.

Al-Muʾayyad employs the symbolism of the *mathal* and the *mamthūl* extensively in his *Dīwān*. He also uses the two terms *mathal* and *mamthūl* explicitly, saying the Qurʾān's exoteric linguistic expression conceals a deeper meaning:²³

*What the Almighty said
in the Book
is a symbol, beneath which
there is someone symbolized.*

وَالَّذِي قَالَ فِي الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَى
مَثَلٌ ذَاكَ تَحْتَهُ مَمْتُوثٌ

And elsewhere, after discussing the Straight Path, he says:²⁴

*Strive towards the sanctuary
of its symbolized one rather
than the symbol—
these are bees' probosces and
that is like honey.*

اقْصِدْ حِمَى مَمْتُوثِهِ دُونَ الْمَثَلِ
ذَا إِبْرُ النَّحْلِ وَهَذَا كَالْعَسَلِ

²¹ *Majālis Muʾayyadīyya*, vol. 1, majlis 3, pp. 12–13.

²² I use the terms “simile” and “metaphor” here loosely to denote “figurative speech” without really distinguishing between the two, for the distinction is not relevant to the discussion at hand. Moreover, the two terms mean something different in the Arabic and English literary traditions. In English literature, a simile has a topic, an analogue and a particle of comparison, e.g., “Zayd is like a lion.” If the particle is absent, it becomes a metaphor, e.g. “Zayd is a lion.” In the Arabic tradition, however, even this latter example is considered a simile (*tashbīḥ*, albeit a *tashbīḥ balīgh* vs. the former *tashbīḥ ṣarīḥ*). A metaphor (*istiʿāra*) is one where not only the particle, but also the topic is absent, e.g. “I saw a lion,” meaning Zayd, and it is based upon borrowing or comparison.

²³ #5, p. 217, v. 48.

²⁴ #2, p. 203, v. 80.

The *mathal-mamthūl* based image that al-Mu'ayyad employs in his poetry is not of uniform provenance, but rather, may be broadly categorized into three types, where the Imam is seen as:

- (a) the spiritual counterpart of various religious objects (e.g. House of God),
- (b) the physical embodiment of various theological concepts (e.g. Straight Path), or
- (c) the metaphysical quintessence of a seemingly non-religious object (e.g. moon); to the uninitiated, this last one usually seems to be a straight stock metaphor.

The Imam as the spiritual, living *mamthūl* of physical religious objects (the first of our three categories) is seen most clearly in al-Mu'ayyad's portrayal of him as the "House of God" (*Bayt Allāh*), a favorite praise theme in his *Dīwān*. The Imam as the House of God is seen not in terms of incarnation (*ḥulūl*), but rather, as the receiver of God's divine guidance, and the transmitter of this guidance to humankind. Al-Mu'ayyad calls the Imam the "*Bayt Allāh*"²⁵ and the "Ka'ba for the living" towards whom the *ḥajj* is performed,²⁶ the "*qibla* of Truth,"²⁷ and the "*qibla* for souls" towards whom all *qiblas* in East and West face;²⁸ he says he turns his face towards the Imam's command²⁹ (just as in prayer he turns his face towards the physical Ka'ba). He adds that the Imam is the reality of the various holy places within the Bayt Allāh sanctuary: the *rukn*, the *ḥijr*[-*Ismā'īl*], the *maqām* and *al-Ṣafa'*.³⁰ Extending the Bayt Allāh symbolism, he calls the Imam's courtyard and the Imam's person the "Secure City" (*al-balad al-amīn*)³¹ and the "Secure Sanctuary" (*al-ḥaram al-āmin*).³² The Imam is also the "Sacred Month"³³ [of the pilgrimage, Dhū al-ḥijja] and the "Noble Month"³⁴ [of Ramaḍān], and he is "Mt. Sinai" (*jabal al-Ṭūr*) upon which God manifested Himself in response to Moses' appeal

²⁵ #2, p. 204, v. 103; #20, p. 251, v. 11; #47, p. 295, v. 4.

²⁶ #10, p. 229, vv. 16–17; #59, p. 311, v. 38; #61, p. 314, v. 7.

²⁷ #10, p. 229, v. 16; #46, p. 292, v. 2, #49, p. 297, v. 3.

²⁸ #4, p. 213, v. 51.

²⁹ #11, p. 231, v. 35.

³⁰ #12, p. 234, v. 23; #25, p. 264, quatrain 31; #52, p. 300, v. 8; #47, p. 295, v. 5.

³¹ #8, p. 225, v. 27; #12, p. 233, v. 14; #14, p. 239, v. 30; #52, p. 300, v. 8.

³² #3, p. 208, v. 32; #19, p. 249, v. 5; #12, p. 234, v. 23.

³³ #12, p. 233, v. 14.

³⁴ #8, p. 225, v. 32.

for a vision, for it is from the Imam that we hear God's communications (*najwā*).³⁵ The following is an example of the "House of God" symbolism, found in verses addressing the Imam al-Mustanṣir:³⁶

O mightiest qibla of Truth, and noblest Ka'ba for the living. If the ḥajj pilgrimage is performed owards the inanimate House, then it is all the more fittingly [performed] towards you.	يَا قِبْلَةَ الْحَقِّ الْأَعَزَّ وَكَعْبَةَ الْحَيِّ الْأَجَلَا إِنْ حُجَّ لِلْبَيْتِ الْجَمَادِ فَنَحْوَكُمْ أَوْلَى وَأَوْلَى
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Moreover, the Imam is presented by al-Mu'ayyad in his poetry as the living *mamthūl* of the Qur'ān and other revealed books: he is the "companion" of the Qur'ān,³⁷ he is himself the "Speaking Qur'ān"³⁸ and as in the following verse, he is himself the "living Wise Remembrance":³⁹

He is the living Wise Remembrance, whose proofs have been established in the Wise Remembrance.	هُوَ الذِّكْرُ الْحَكِيمُ الْحَيُّ قَامَتْ دَلَائِلُهُ مِنْ الذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ
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He is also David's "Book of Psalms" (*al-zubur*, pl. of *zabūr*).⁴⁰ This particular revealed book is probably singled out for mention because of its grounding in the Qur'ānic verse that connects the Qur'ān and the Psalms, the two being seen as *mathals* for the Prophet and his legatee 'Alī, respectively.⁴¹ The Imam would be considered the inheritor of both these legacies.

Al-Mu'ayyad also describes the Imam as the *mamthūl* and personification of abstract theological concepts (our second category). For example, the Imam's person is itself the "True Da'wa" (*da'wat*

³⁵ #3, p. 209, v. 42. Reference to Qur'ān 19:52.

³⁶ #10, p. 229, vv. 16–17.

³⁷ #25, p. 263, quatrain 28.

³⁸ #3, p. 209, v. 56.

³⁹ #52, p. 300, v. 7.

⁴⁰ #25, p. 264, quatrain 31 (translated elsewhere in book; see Index.)

⁴¹ Qur'ān 21:105. For an exposition of this idea, see dā'ī Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn, *al-Risāla al-Ramaḍāniyya: Balāgh al-du'āt al-fāṭimiyyīn*, Bombay, 1375, pp. 130–32.

al-ḥaqq).⁴² He is God's "Strong Handle" (*al-ʿurwa al-wuthqā*),⁴³ the "Ark of Salvation" (*saḡīnat al-naǧāt*),⁴⁴ and, being descended from 'Alī, the paradisiacal spring of "al-Kawthar",⁴⁵ he is the "Pen" (*al-qalam*) and "Tablet" (*al-lawḥ*) for religion,⁴⁶ the "Word" (*al-kalima*) [of God] received by Adam,⁴⁷ and the "Holy Spirit" (*rūḥ al-quds*).⁴⁸ He is the "Straight Path" (*al-ṣīrāt al-mustaǧīm*) [to heaven], as in the following verse praising the Imams:⁴⁹

*They are protection from
blindness and a Straight Path
for us and a cool shade.*

هُم أَمَانٌ مِنَ الْعَمَىٰ وَصِرَاطٌ
مُسْتَقِيمٌ لَنَا وَظِلٌّ ظَلِيلٌ

He is the "Divine Scale" (*al-mīzān*) that weighs the deeds of people on Judgment Day:⁵⁰

*[He is] the one made
victorious by God
(Mustaṣīr bi-llāh) who
assumed [authority] by
His right
among the people, hence he
is the Scale for [God's]
justice.*

مُسْتَنْصِرٌ بِاللَّهِ قَامَ بِحَقِّهِ
فِي الْخَلْقِ فَهُوَ لِقِسْطِهِ مِيزَانُهُ

He is the embodiment of "hellfire" (*al-nār*) for Unbelievers, and of "Paradise" (*al-janna*) for believers:⁵¹

*[He is] an Imam who is
himself hellfire for those
who harbor enmity,
just as he is Paradise for
[his] followers*

أَمَامٌ هُوَ النَّارُ لِلْكَاشِحِينَ
كَمَّا أَنَّهُ لِلْمُؤَالِمِينَ جَنَّةٌ

⁴² #3, p. 208, v. 31 (translated elsewhere in the book; see Index); reference to Qur'ān 13:14, "*lahū da'wat al-ḥaqq*" (The True da'wa is [God's]).

⁴³ #46, p. 292, v. 4.

⁴⁴ #2, p. 200, vv. 24–35.

⁴⁵ #7, p. 222, v. 33. Reference to Qur'ān 108:1; 'Alī is believed to be the *mamthūl* of the spring of al-Kawthar that was given by God to the Prophet.

⁴⁶ #19, p. 249, v. 6.

⁴⁷ #19, p. 249, v. 7.

⁴⁸ #37, p. 279, v. 28.

⁴⁹ #5, p. 217, v. 55; see also #37, p. 279, v. 23. And they are also guides to the Straight Path, #52, p. 300, v. 1.

⁵⁰ #33, p. 272, v. 10; see also #46, p. 292, v. 3. Cf. Meisami, "Symbolic Structure," pp. 105–6 for a discussion of the Fatimid/Isma'īlī *tawīl* concept of the *mīzān*.

⁵¹ #22, p. 254, v. 2. See also #41, p. 288, v. 19.

An example of what seems at first glance to be a stock metaphor in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry (third category) is his calling the Imam the "full moon" when the aspect of comparison is the luminosity of both. The moon is acknowledged by all to be luminous, and comparing the Imam to it portrays him as luminous too. However, this comparison goes beyond physical luminosity, and in the context of Fatimid cosmological metaphysics and spiritual hierarchical stations, has deeper *tāwīl* allusions. In Fatimid cosmology, the Imam is considered the *mamthūl* of the moon because he gives guidance where the moon gives light, light being a symbol of divine knowledge and an important motif in Fatimid Ṭayyibī literature. In the case in which al-Mu'ayyad compares the Imam to the crescent moon (*hilāl*), he is alluding to the cosmic cycles discussed in Fatimid eschatology, where the coming out of concealment (*ẓuhūr*) of the Imam signals the coming of light and enlightenment. He is also referring to the Fatimid doctrine of preferring the sighting of the "real crescent moon," i.e., following the practice of the Imam, with regard to fixing the beginning and end of Ramadan using the astrological calendar.⁵² The following verse is an example of the crescent moon allusion:⁵³

*The crescent moon that
has appeared through
the darkness
is the Imam of the age,
a shield from hellfire.*

هِلَالٌ بَدَى مِنْ حِلَالِ الدُّجْنَةِ
إِمَامٌ زَمَانٍ مِنَ النَّارِ حُجْنَةٍ

In this verse, the stock metaphor is turned into a specialized metaphor for the listener who is aware of the deeper symbolism. The second hemistich connects the Imam to the moon, the Imam who, through the divine light he emanates, illuminates our dark souls and saves them from the dark abyss of Hell and its fire.

Imagery of Light

Al-Mu'ayyad uses the image of light in almost all his poems. He compares the Imam to the sun, the full moon, the stars, the lamp,

⁵² Cf. Daniel De Smet, "Comment déterminer le debut et la fin du jeune de Ramadan? Un Point de discorde entre Sunnites et Ismaéliens en Egypte fatimide," *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, eds. U. Vermeulen and D. De Smet, Leuven, 1995, pp. 71–84.

⁵³ #22, p. 254, v. 1.

and to the brightness of day. He portrays the Imam as luminous—one who reflects God's light, and is, in fact, the source of all light. He also compares his own soul—the soul of the Imam's *bāb*—to a lamp. The image of light is one that has been used quite commonly in all kinds of poetry.⁵⁴ However, al-Mu'ayyad employs it in the uniquely Fatimid *tāwīl* mode in which light is a metaphor for divine knowledge and right guidance.

Al-Mu'ayyad uses the concept of the abundant sea—water being another well-known *mathal* for knowledge—to bridge and connect the two concepts of light and knowledge. He strengthens the connection between light and knowledge some verses later by first comparing the Imam to the shining Pleiades (*thurayyā*) and then comparing him to the sea with regard to his knowledge.⁵⁵

[He is] the fore-noon sun,
the sea [of knowledge]
for the mind and
intellect,

a sun that has appeared
from the shining moon.⁵⁶

The earth has become
luminous by its light,
and auspicious.

...

You are the Pleiades and
the [rest of] the people
are like the earth,
and you are the utmost
object of pride for anyone
who would be proud.

شَمْسُ الضُّحَى بَحْرُ النَّهْيِ وَالْحَجَا

شَمْسٌ بَدَتْ مِنْ قَمَرٍ زَاهِرٍ

أَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِأَنْوَارِهَا

وَأَصْبَحَتْ مَيْمُونَةَ الطَّائِرِ

أَنْتَ الثُّرَيَّا وَالْوَرَى كَالثُّرَى

وَأَنْتَ قُصْوَى مَفْخَرِ الْفَاجِرِ

⁵⁴ The association of sovereignty and light in the Arabic tradition is noted by Sperl (*Mannerism*, p. 17), who claims that the Abbasid Caliph ranks in this context with Pharaoh and Le Roi Soleil.

⁵⁵ #14, pp. 238, 239, vv. 3–4, 27–28. Other light images: #2, p. 202, vv. 60–61, p. 204, v. 106, p. 205, v. 141; #3, p. 210, v. 57; #4, p. 213, vv. 48, 50, 54, p. 214, v. 61; #5, p. 215, v. 14; #7, p. 221, v. 4; #10, p. 229, v. 18; #11, p. 230, v. 4, p. 231, vv. 26, 36; #12, p. 233, v. 4, p. 234, v. 23; #15, p. 240, v. 28; #17, p. 245, v. 38; #21, p. 253, v. 12; #22, p. 254, v. 1; #23, p. 258, v. 39; #24, p. 260, v. 24; #26, p. 256, v. 13; #30, p. 269, v. 2; #33, p. 272, v. 12; #34, p. 275, v. 31; #37, p. 279, vv. 22, 35; #45, p. 291, v. 2; #52, p. 300, v. 11; #55, p. 305, v. 48; #58, p. 309, v. 25; #62, p. 317, v. 34, p. 320, v. 153.

⁵⁶ His father, al-Ḥākim?

*Your knowledge is the sea,
and the knowledge possessed
by all the world
is like a drop from your
overflowing sea.*

عِلْمُكَ بَحْرٌ وَعِلْمُ الْوَرَى
كَقَطْرَةٍ مِنْ بَحْرِكَ الرَّاحِرِ

Another Fatimid touch to the otherwise common imagery of light is the link established between the Imam and the celestial realm, the original realm of Light. In this vein, al-Mu'ayyad addresses al-Mustansir as an auspicious star that shines from the celestial world. Also in this verse (and elsewhere in the *Dīwān*), he portrays the Imam as the crescent moon. This portrayal refers to the Fatimid practice of beginning and ending the Ramaḍān fast according to the fixed astronomical calendar, rather than the sighting of the new moon, which was the practice in most other Muslim denominations. The Imam, being the one who proclaims the beginning and end of the month, is himself the new moon:⁵⁷

[O] *Abū Tamīm*, [O]
auspicious star, shining
from
the celestial realm, or a
crescent moon that has
become manifest.

أَبَا تَمِيمٍ نَحْمَ سَعْدٍ لَاحٍ مِنْ
عَالَمٍ قُدْسٍ أَوْ هِلَالٍ قَدْ أَهْلَ

An unusual metaphor, and one that is quoted often in the Ṭayyibī tradition, is al-Mu'ayyad's depicting the sun as being sustained by the light from the Imam's forehead. This is not merely poetic hyperbole, but refers to the Fatimid belief that the Imam is the reason for the creation of the earth,⁵⁸ and that he spiritually aids all creation:⁵⁹

[He is] an Imam, the light
from whose forehead aids
the sun,
just as the generosity of his
two hands aids the rain-clouds.

إِمَامٌ يُمِدُّ الشَّمْسَ نُورُ جَبِينِهِ
كَمَا جُوْدُ كَفْيِهِ يُمِدُّ الْعَوَادِيَا

Another image of light is one that incorporates an eschatological Prophetic Hadith. Muḥammad is believed to have referred to the

⁵⁷ #4, p. 214, v. 61.

⁵⁸ Cf. a verse by Ibn Hānī: "He is the cause for [the creation of] this world" (*huwa 'illatu d-dunyā wa man khuliqat lahū*) *Dīwān Muḥammad b. Hānī*, #1, v. 36, p. 18.

⁵⁹ #17, p. 246, v. 38. Similar imagery in #37, p. 279, v. 35. The second hemistich is similar to the reversal of simile (for hyperbole purposes) popular in Abbasid poetry.

coming of the Mahdī by saying that in three hundred years, the sun would rise from the West.⁶⁰ In the following verse, al-Mu'ayyad addresses the Imam al-Zāhir as “the peerless sun that has risen from the West,” referring to his descent from al-Mahdī and his inheriting the Imamate from him:⁶¹

*O peerless sun that has
risen from its West,
and one about whose [coming]
the peerless Prophet gave us
glad tidings.*

يَا خَيْرَ شَمْسٍ طَلَعَتْ مِنْ غَرْبِهَا
وَمَنْ بِهِ بَشَّرَنَا خَيْرُ الرُّسُلِ

Egyptian Images

An interesting aspect of al-Mu'ayyad's imagery is his figurative use of Egyptian motifs such as the Nile.⁶² In a poignant simile, he compares the Imam to that flowing river and portrays himself as thirsty at its very banks, which indicates how desperate he was for the first few years after his arrival in Egypt, with no access to the Imam and no overt function in the da'wa. His repetition of the word “Nile” further accentuates the irony of his thirst, by emphasizing the presence of abundant, yet unavailable, water:⁶³

*What a strange tale
it is,
parable of a servant and
master.*

عَجَبًا لَهَا مِنْ قِصَّةٍ
مَثَلًا لِمَمْلُوكٍ وَمَوْلَى

*A Nile flowing copiously—
and I,
thirsty at the banks of the
Nile, slain.*

نِيلٌ يَفِيضُ وَإِنَّا
ظَمَأَى بِشَطْطِ النَّيْلِ قَتْلَى

⁶⁰ Al-Qādī al-Nu'mān, *Kūtab al-Majālis wa al-Musāyārāt*, ed. al-Ḥabīb al-Faqqī et al., Beirut, reprint 1996, p. 477; *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 5, p. 50; al-Tirmidhī, vol. 9, p. 34.

⁶¹ #4, p. 213, v. 48.

⁶² The metaphorical use of Egyptian images in the poetry of the Fatimid and Ayyubid eras is described by A.S. Muḥammad in *al-Shakḥiyya al-miṣriyya fī al-adabayn al-fāṭimī wa al-ayyūbī*, Cairo, 1992, pp. 288–90. For use of the Nile motif in Egyptian prose and poetry through the centuries, see Ni'māt Aḥmad Fu'ād, *al-Nīl fī al-adab al-miṣrī*, Cairo, 1962.

⁶³ #10, p. 229, vv. 24–25.

He also portrays the Imam as the crocodile protecting the banks of the Nile (here probably Egypt or the da'wa or both). The crocodile is an unusual animal to compare one's patron to, in the sense that more often than not, it carries negative connotations. In this context, however, al-Mu'ayyad portrays one of the crocodile's most obvious negative qualities, its ferocious, predatory nature, as good. The Imam fiercely and relentlessly safeguards Egypt and the da'wa, killing all those who would ravish it, just as the crocodile may be thought of as killing all those who dare to defile the sacred waters of the Nile:⁶⁴

*Then I saw a Nile, copiously
flowing, its crocodile
hard at work guarding the
sanctity of the Nile.*

فَرَأَيْتُ نَيْلًا فَائِضًا تَمْسَاحُهُ
مُتَشَمِّرٌ يَحْمِي حَرِيمَ النَّيْلِ

Al-Mu'ayyad places this verse in the center of a strongly worded complaint poem, which makes it remarkable for its sudden praise. It is clear that al-Mu'ayyad never loses sight of his overarching goal of praising the Imam, and never relinquishes his loyalty to the Imam, even, or especially, in his most difficult situations at the Imam's court.

Al-Mu'ayyad uses another Egyptian image that is also a Qur'anic and Biblical one. In a poem in which he complains to al-Mustanṣir about the shabby treatment he received at court, he alludes to the political turmoil in Egypt, calling it the "drought of Egypt." He says he would relieve this drought, but then stops himself in mid-stride, saying that even speaking in this manner is heresy, for here is Joseph—the Imam—in the land of Egypt. Egypt seems to refer to the physical country of Egypt, as well as to the spiritual da'wa of the Fatimid Caliph-Imam housed there. In this verse too, the key word "Egypt" is repeated in a *radd al-ʿajuz*:⁶⁵

*So that I relieve the drought
of Egypt—but that is
innovation!
For here is Joseph in the land
of Egypt.*

لَأُكْشِفَ قَحْطَ مِصْرَ وَذَلِكَ بِدُعٍ
وَهَذَا يُوسُفُ فِي أَرْضِ مِصْرَ

⁶⁴ #24, p. 259, v. 11.

⁶⁵ #32, p. 271, v. 10.

*Conventional Imagery: A Reflection of Life in the Eleventh Century
Islamic World*

Although some of the metaphors in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry that I have taken to be conventional imagery could in fact have a *tāwīl* subtext that I am unaware of, it is clear that in addition to abundant Fatimid da'wa imagery, he does employ conventional poetic imagery too. He mostly uses the "new" type, which is based on comparison, but from time to time he also uses the "old" type, which is based on imaginary ascription.⁶⁶ There is very little garden imagery in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry, but otherwise he does use the poetic imagery that his Abbasid contemporaries favored: pearls for tears, moon for beauty, sapling for the upright stature of youth, falcon and raven for white and black hair, rain-clouds for generosity, lion for courage, night for hardship, and day for deliverance.

Al-Mu'ayyad's poetic imagery reflects the social and political customs of his time, and he often uses the imagery of war and weaponry. War was a common aspect of eleventh century political life, and towards the end of his life, al-Mu'ayyad acquired firsthand experience of it during the year he spent spearheading the Fatimid Basāsīrī-led alliance against the Saljuq-Abbasid front. In one verse, probably composed before his battle sojourn in Syria, he likens the white hair of old age to an army encampment. By using the phrase "army of old age," he perhaps means to evoke the white tents of the encampment and compare his white hair to their spreading compass:⁶⁷

*Passion is a disgrace to
me, when this,
the army of old age, has
encamped on my head.*

فَقَبِيحٌ بِي التَّصَايِي وَهَذَا
عَسْكَرُ الشَّيْبِ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي نَزُولُ

In another verse, he compares himself to a sword that has been polished (and thus sharpened) by the water of eloquence. He is a sword because he annihilates the Imam's enemies by means of his exposition, verbal and written, in debate and through teaching. His arguments

⁶⁶ The concept of the "old" and "new" metaphor has been suggested by Wolfhart Heinrichs in *The Hand of the Northwind: Opinions on Metaphor and the Early Meaning of Isti'āra in Arabic Poetics*, Wiesbaden, 1977; and in "Isti'ārah and Badī' and their Terminological Relationship in Early Arabic Literary Criticism," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften* 1 (1984), pp. 180–211.

⁶⁷ #5, p. 215, v. 12.

are substantial, but it is the eloquence of his exposition that cuts down the arguments of adversaries, just as the sharpness of a sword makes it a potent weapon. Parallels have frequently been drawn between the pen and the sword, but the artistry of al-Mu'ayyad's verse is evident in its application of the "water of eloquence" to polish the sword. Egypt, he says, and Syria, the Hījāz, and Yemen, Fars, and Iraq, even Sind, all know the following:⁶⁸

*I am a sword for the
progeny of the Prophet,
polished by the water of
eloquence.*

بَأَنِّي سَيْفٌ لِّآلِ النَّبِيِّ
صَقِيلٌ صُقِلْتُ بِمَاءِ اللِّسَنِ

Another reality of eleventh century life—especially life in the Fatimid capital, Cairo—was the pomp and splendor of the court. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad frequently employs the imagery of jewels, pearls and gold. Garments are also a common analogue. Using a popular comparison, he often likens his poems to strings of pearls. In the following verse, he praises the Fatimids as the best of all people, and compares them to jewels among creation, praising his Imam of the Age, al-Mustanṣir, as the best of the Fatimids, and the centerpiece of the necklace.⁶⁹

*They are the progeny of
Muṣṭafā, whose necklace is
of the jewel[s] (and substance)
of all creatures,
and behold Ma'add in relation
to it—the centerpiece of the
necklace.*

بَنُو الْمُصْطَفَى مِنْ جَوْهَرِ الْخَلْقِ عَقْدُهُ
وَهَآكَ مَعْدَأًا مِنْهُ وَاسِطَةُ الْعَقْدِ

The application of the word "jawhar" is particularly interesting here because of its double meaning of jewel and, as used in the vocabulary of the philosophers, substance. Fatimid theology states that the Imam is the essence of all creation, and therefore the Imam is both the jewel and the substance of creation.

⁶⁸ #20, p. 251, v. 3. Other weapon images: #6, p. 219, v. 4; #7, p. 223, v. 42; #15, p. 242, v. 44; #16, p. 244, v. 22; #22, p. 254, v. 1; #23, p. 258, v. 45, 50–51; #25, p. 261, quatrain 5, vv. 9–10; #39, p. 282, v. 15; #41, p. 286, v. 15; #50, p. 298, v. 3.

⁶⁹ #18, p. 248, v. 4. Other jewelry images: #6, p. 219, v. 9; #11, p. 230, v. 5; #15, p. 242, v. 49; #20, p. 251, v. 4; #26, p. 256, v. 13; #31, p. 270, v. 5; #40, p. 284, v. 28; #62, p. 317, v. 38.

Al-Mu'ayyad uses the theme of the palace figuratively to praise the lofty moral qualities of the Imam. In an extended simile, he describes that palace as having been built from the traits of goodness, justice, and auspiciousness:⁷⁰

*A palace, whose position
surpasses in loftiness the
two bright stars of Ursa
Minor.*

*Its dwellers dwell in the
highest heavens.*

*Justice is its courtyard,
shining with piety
and noble traits, and its
roof is generosity.*

*God's protection, always
encompassing
those whom its [buttress]
protects, is its buttress.*

*A palace whose enemy
burns in Hellfire,
for whose friend Paradise
yearns.*

*It is inhabited by God's
face and His side,
Muḥammad's true tongue
and his heart.*

قَصْرٌ يَفُوقُ الْفَرْقَدَيْنِ مَكَائُهُ

سَكَنَ السَّمَوَاتِ الْعُلَا سُكَّائُهُ

الْعَدْلُ سَاحَتُهُ الْمُضِيئَةُ بِالتَّقَى
وَالْمَكْرُمَاتِ وَسَقْفُهُ إِحْسَانُهُ

وَحِيطَاةُ اللَّهِ الْمُحِيطَةُ دَائِمًا
بِجَمِيعٍ مَنْ تَحْتَوِيهِمْ حِيطَاتُهُ

قَصْرٌ بِهِ يَصْلَى السَّعِيرَ عَدُوُّهُ
وَالِى الْوَلِىِّ لَهُ تَحِىنٌ جَنَائُهُ

قَدْ حَلَّهٗ وَجْهُهُ الْإِلَهِ وَجَنَّبُهُ
وَلِسَانٌ صِدْقِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَجَنَائُهُ

Personifications

Al-Mu'ayyad often utilizes metaphorical personifications in his poetry. Most often, he personifies fate, and, to a slightly lesser extent, night, exile, and death. As is plain from the objects personified, al-Mu'ayyad's personifications all come in the context of complaint. They serve as a punching bag that allows him to vent the frustrations he could not relieve otherwise: God, or the Imam, cannot be reproached, for

⁷⁰ #33, p. 272, vv. 1–5, ff. Other palace images: #48, p. 296, vv. 1–2. Ḥusayn notes that unlike Nāṣir's work, everything in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry is connected with belief, even his description of the Imam's palace; there is no mention of state activities like royal processions or assemblies. (Introduction to the *Dīwān*, p. 176).

that would be heresy, so fate is rebuked as the cause of all al-Mu'ayyad's woes. Al-Mu'ayyad endows fate with hands that oppress, condemns it as despotic, and accuses it of plotting his downfall. He also personifies grace and learning, picturing them as weeping, if he (by implication, possessor of these qualities in abundance) were to die or be humiliated:⁷¹

*Grace and learning will
weep over me if
the despotic hand of Fate hurls
me at the target [of death].*

سَيِّئِي عَلَيَّ الْفَضْلُ وَالْعِلْمُ إِن رَمَتْ
بِمِثْلِي يَدُ الدَّعْرِ الْعُسُوفِ الْمَرَامِيَا

Al-Mu'ayyad pictures death as a lion stalking him. The paronomasia in the last line between the two passive participles “*mulqan*” and “*mulqam*” further enhances the effectiveness of the simile:⁷²

*I see with my very eyes
death stretching its arms
out for me
like a lion intent upon
attacking its prey.*

أَعْيُنٍ حَتَفِي بِأَسْطَلِي ذِرَاعَهُ

كَمَا رَامَ فَتَكًا بِالْفَرِيسَةِ ضَاعِمٌ

*Hour after hour, I expect
to be
thrown into its canines,
devoured in its maw.*

وَأَرْقُبُ أَنِّي سَاعَةً بَعْدَ سَاعَةٍ

لَأَنْثِيَابِهِ مُلْقًى وَلِلْفَمِّ مُلْقَمٌ

More complete analysis of two significant aspects of al-Mu'ayyad's imagery is saved for the discussion of genres in which these images most commonly occur: al-Mu'ayyad's frequent comparison of the Imam to the prophets (“praise-poetry” chapter), and the expression of his deepest emotions of pain, anxiety, and sorrow in some of the most touching images in Arabic literature (“Other Genres” chapter, verses describing the poet's condition and stature).

⁷¹ #17, p. 245, v. 9. Other Fate personifications: #6, p. 219, v. 3; #15, p. 240, v. 8; #16, p. 243, v. 4 ff.; #25, p. 261, quatrain 1, v. 1; #31, p. 27, vv. 2–3; #34, p. 274, v. 4; #40, p. 283, vv. 10–13; #51, p. 299, v. 9; #56, p. 306, v. 6.

⁷² #34, p. 274, vv. 8–9. Other death personifications: #11, p. 231, v. 22; #25, p. 261, quatrain 1, v. 2.

Wordplay

Like most "new" (*muḥdath*) poets, al-Mu'ayyad frequently uses *badī'*-style wordplay in his poetry.⁷³ He commonly uses paronomasia (*jinās*) and antithesis (*tibāq*), also poetic repetition (*takrār*) and anticipation of rhyme word (*radd al-ʿajuz ʿalā al-ṣadr*). Thus, wordplay characterizes al-Mu'ayyad's poetry, although the degree of its utilization is by no means uniform; some poems contain a high volume of the above figures of speech, others much less, and a few almost none.

Badī' tropes are utilized in poetry or literary prose more for rhythmic cadence and pleasing resonance than for conjuring up images. In the case of paronomasia, rhythm and resonance arise from the similar sound of two or more words. In the case of antithesis, they arise from a contrastive echoing of an earlier word. Very often, al-Mu'ayyad combines two or three of these tropes in one verse, as in the following verse in which he combines paronomasia, antithesis, and *radd al-ʿajuz*. Since they are based on the sound of the original Arabic word, some of these tropes are not evident in the translation, but are clear in the accompanying original Arabic verse:⁷⁴

*The loss of a bosom friend
was enough [misfortune]
for me,
after him, I remain as one
who perished.*

كَفَانِي فَقْدُ الْوَلِيِّ الْحَمِيمِ
وَمِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَنَا بَاقٍ كَفَانِي

⁷³ The frequent use of wordplay tropes characterizes the new "*badī'*" style in Arabic poetry, of which Abū Tammām is the most prominent proponent. Heinrichs defines the new poetry as that in which *badī'* becomes a principle of art rather than an instrument of it (W. Heinrichs, "Literary Theory," p. 25). Note that S. Stetkevych argues that *badī'* refers to a general style of thought—Muʿtazilite *kalām* dialectic—rather than to wordplay tropes ("Toward a Redefinition of "Badī'" Poetry," *JAL* 12 (1981), pp. 1–29); this idea is questioned by Heinrichs in "Paired Metaphors in Muḥdath Poetry," *Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies*, 1 (1986), pp. 1–22, see pp. 2–3. Another study on *badī'* in Arabic poetry is by M.M. Badawi, who argues that *badī'* can be "a clue to the total meaning of a poem and an essential element in its structure." ("The Function of Rhetoric in Medieval Arabic Poetry: Abū Tammām's Ode on Amorium," *JAL* 9, 1978, pp. 43–56, see p. 46.) The excessive employment of figures of speech was also part of the debate over "natural" versus "artificial" poetry, and M. Ajami discusses this issue in *The Neckveins of Winter: The Controversy over Natural and Artificial Poetry in Medieval Arabic Literary Criticism*, Leiden, 1984.

⁷⁴ #6, p. 219, v. 11.

Paronomasia

One of al-Mu'ayyad's most famous opening lines with a beautiful paronomasia pair is the following in which the Imam's glory is compared favorably with the glory of the sky.⁷⁵

<i>A glory that is elevated (samā)</i> <i>such that it is a sky (samā⁷⁶)</i> <i>for the sky (samā⁷⁶),</i> <i>Abū Tamīm, by his crown</i> <i>distinguished.</i>	مَجْدُ سَمَاءٍ فَهُوَ لِلْسَّمَاءِ سَمَاءٌ أَبُو تَمِيمٍ بِتَاجِهِ⁷⁶ وَسَمَاءٌ
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Al-Mu'ayyad usually employs the standard two terms in each paronomasia set. Sometimes, he employs three terms, or, in a single verse, more than one paronomasia set. An interesting and surprisingly unaffected verse is one in which he employs two paronomasia sets and combines them with two *radd al-ʿajuz* tropes:⁷⁷

<i>Until when will I be wearied</i> <i>(ʿanānī) by weariness (ʿanā⁷⁸)</i> <i>of passion for you,</i> <i>my body, emaciated by</i> <i>passion (hawā) for you, is</i> <i>air (hawā⁷⁹).</i>	إِلَى كَمْ عَنَانِي مِنْ هَوَاكَ عَنَاءُ فَجَسَمِي نُحُولًا فِي هَوَاكَ هَوَاءُ
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In his poetry, al-Mu'ayyad utilizes different types of paronomasia such as complete paronomasia (*jīnās tāmm*), incomplete paronomasia (*jīnās nāqis*), and paronomasia of derivation (*jīnās al-ishtiqāq*).⁷⁸ Sometimes he uses a combination of more than one type of paronomasia, such as in the following verse, in which he utilizes both *jīnās al-ishtiqāq* (*mulūk, mamālīk*) and *jīnās nāqis* (*mulūk, malāʾīk*):⁷⁹

<i>The kings of the world</i> <i>are all slaves</i> <i>for you, and the angels are servants.</i>	فَمُلُوكُ الْوَرَى الْمَمَالِيكُ طُرًّا لَكُمْ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ الْخُدَّامُ
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Punning on the name of the patron was a popular medieval paronomasia form, and al-Mu'ayyad's patron had a name that lent itself well to this trope. Al-Mu'ayyad puns upon his patron's name "Ma'add" with

⁷⁵ #19, p. 249, v. 1.

⁷⁶ The Ṭayyibī oral transmission is *bimajdihī* rather than *bitājihī*; the mss. all contain *bitājihī*.

⁷⁷ #13, p. 236, v. 1.

⁷⁸ For a categorization of different types of paronomasia, see W. Heinrichs, "Tadjnīs," *EI2*, vol. 10, pp. 67–70.

⁷⁹ #12, p. 234, v. 30.

the word “*maʿād*” (returning), or the word “*udda*” (preparation). Note that “*Maʿadd*” and “*udda*” are derived from the same root (ʿ-d-d); the root of the word “*maʿād*” is different (ʿ-w-d), but the two same letters in both (ʿ and d), combined with the same letter (m) at the beginning, give it a similar sound. Thus, al-Muʿayyad often portrays the Imam Maʿadd as his preparation (*udda*) for the Hereafter, or as his intercessor in the “Returning” (*maʿād*), as in the following verse:⁸⁰

<i>Maʿadd, O my intercessor</i> <i>in the Returning,</i> <i>the most sufficing helper,</i> <i>and the most complete help.</i>	مَعَدُّ أَيَّاشَانِعِي فِي الْمَعَادِ وَأَكْفَى مُعِينٍ وَأَوْفَى مُعَانٍ⁸¹
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He puns upon his patron’s title “al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh” (the one who seeks victory from God) with its derivatives of *naṣr* (victory), *naṣīr* (victory-giving) and *manṣūr* (the one made victorious [by God]).⁸²

Al-Muʿayyad also puns upon names and titles of other patrons. Al-Mustanṣir’s father, ‘Alī al-Zāhir li-iʿzāz dīni ‘llāh, also had a name as well as a title that could be capitalized upon for the purpose of paronomasia (“*alyā*,” loftiness, “*zāhir*,” manifest).⁸³ Al-Zāhir’s father too had such a fruitful paronomasia-producing title, al-Ḥākim bi-amri ‘llāh (*ḥakkamahu ‘l-lāhu*, i.e., God gave him command).⁸⁴ So did the progenitor of the Fatimid dynasty, al-Mahdī bi-llāh, as the following example demonstrates (“*hādī*,” rightly guiding, “al-Mahdī,” his title, “*fi l-mahdī*,” in the cradle):⁸⁵

<i>May my life [be ransom]</i> <i>for the guide of the</i> <i>world from among the</i> <i>sons of al-Mahdī,</i> <i>Imam of the Age, who has</i> <i>been given command in</i> <i>the cradle.</i>	بِنَفْسِي هَادِي الْخَلْقِ مِنْ وَلَدِ الْمَهْدِي إِمَامُ زَمَانٍ أُوتِيَ الْحُكْمَ فِي الْمَهْدِ
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⁸⁰ #6, p. 220, v. 24.

⁸¹ The ed. vocalizes the two words *muʿīn* and *muʿān* as *maʿīn* and *maʿān*. I have chosen to vocalize with a *ḍamma* instead of a *fatha* on the -m- in both, because a) mss. 2 & 7 vocalize them as such, and none of the mss. vocalize with a *fatha*, and b) the meaning of the edition vocalizations—cold water, and a place where one is seen—does not seem to fit the context.

⁸² See, for example, #8, p. 225, v. 22.

⁸³ #4, p. 212, v. 46, #14, p. 238, v. 1.

⁸⁴ #35, p. 238, v. 1.

⁸⁵ #18, p. 248, v. 1. The long vowel in the second “*mahdī*” comes from its being the rhyme word.

Al-Mu'ayyad also puns upon the titles of the Buyid king in Fars: Abū Kālījār (*al-ilāhu jāruhū*, i.e., God is his protecting neighbor), and al-Marzubān (*al-zamānu 'abduhū*, i.e., Time is his slave).⁸⁶ As is typical in classical Arabic poetry, many of these name-pun paronomasias are in the opening line of the poem and introduce the patron as the possessor of some quality inherent in the lexical meaning of his name or title.

Antithesis

Other than a *munājāt* and one praise section of a poem, al-Mu'ayyad most often utilizes antithesis in his panegyric preludes (love, nostalgia for homeland, old age and youth, censure of Fate).⁸⁷ Some of his preludes contain antithetical pairs in numerous verses, thus constituting an extended antithetical structure.⁸⁸ This extended structure over several verses almost always consists of consecutive pairs (up to four pairs in a single verse)⁸⁹ of good versus bad: wealth vs. poverty, honor vs. ignominy, ease vs. hardship:⁹⁰

*Is youthful passion
appropriate after [the
onset] of old age
and a figure that sways
upon rising?*

أَيُّجُمْلُ بَعْدَ الْمَشَيْبِ التَّصَايِي

وَقَدْ يَمِيدُ لَدَى الْإِثْصَابِ

*And hair that imitates the
feathers of a falcon in
whiteness,*

وَشَعْرٌ حَكَى رَيْشَ بَازٍ بَيَاضًا

*Which, before, used to be
like the feathers of a
raven?*

وَمِنْ قَبْلُ كَانَ كَرِيشِ الْغُرَابِ

⁸⁶ #62, p. 318, vv. 40, 41.

⁸⁷ Antithesis in praise section (exception to the rule) in #61; *munājāt* with antithesis: #26.

⁸⁸ #8 (translated elsewhere in book; see Index), and #11, 37, 58, & 59 have antithetical pairs in almost all verses of the prelude. The preludes in poems # 3, 15, 55 also have a significant number of antithetical pairs. Regarding extensive antithesis, Stetkevych argues that Manichean dualism permeated the Abbasid poetic imagination, and that this was reflected in their extensive use of antithesis (*Abū Tammām*, p. 8).

⁸⁹ For e.g. two terms vs. two terms: #7, v. 15, #8, vv. 1–3, 19, 39, #12, v. 9, 11, #34, v. 23, #59, v. 2, #62, v. 101; three terms vs. three terms: #59, v. 23.

⁹⁰ #11, p. 230, vv. 1–5.

<i>And a face that now wears yellow which used to be embroidered with the redness of youth?</i>	وَوَجْهٌ غَدَا لَا بَسًّا صُفْرَةً وَكَانَ مُوشَّشًا بِحُمْرِ الشَّبَابِ
<i>And two eyes that were like two stars, except that they have become [smothered] in mist?</i>	وَعَيْنَيْنِ قَدْ كَانَتَا كَوَكَبَيْنِ سِوَى أَنَّهُمَا حَصُولا فِي ضَبَابِ
<i>And strung pearls contained in a mouth, that because of their dispersion have become disarrayed?</i>	وَدُرٌّ نَظِيرٌ حَاقُواهَا فَمُ غَدَتْ مِنْ تَنَاقُطِهَا فِي اضْطِرَابِ

Some of al-Mu'ayyad's antithetical pairs convey comprehensiveness or universality by saying "a thing and its opposite," meaning every person or thing in the genre. An example is found in the following verse, in which "old and young" conveys in absolute terms the sense of each and every person:⁹¹

<i>Destroy the homes of the oppressive tyrants and ruin their old and young.</i>	وَحَرِّبْ دِيَارَ الطُّغَاةِ الْبُعَاةِ وَدَمِّرْ كَبِيرَهُمْ وَالصَّغِيرَا
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The antithetical pairs honor-ignominy, life-death, Imam's follower-enemy, and pairs involving time or place, occur fairly often in al-Mu'ayyad's poems,⁹² but his most common pairs are light-darkness and body-soul. In the following verse, he combines the two:⁹³

<i>Your body gets nourishment from the fruit of the earth, your soul from a light that dispels darkness.</i>	فَجِسْمُكَ مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ يَغْتَذِي وَنَفْسُكَ مِنْ نَوْرٍ يُجَلِّي الْغَيَاهِبَا
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Poetic Repetition

Al-Mu'ayyad uses poetic repetition (*takrār*) fairly frequently in his poetry. The recurrent word or phrase usually occurs at the beginning

⁹¹ #45, p. 291, v. 7. See also #41, p. 286, v. 2.

⁹² Examples of antithetical pairs in al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* are: honor-ignominy: #5, #9, #12, #24; life-death: #23, #26, #34, #59; [Imam's] follower-enemy: #3, #59, #61, pairs involving time or place: #35, #37, #39, #55, #56.

⁹³ #37, p. 278, v. 16. Other light-darkness pairs are found in #12, #15, #19, #34, #48, #55, #57, #58, #62; body-soul: #2, #3, #37, #41, #59, #62.

of consecutive verses, numbering as few as two, or as many as nine. One of the most effective uses of poetic repetition in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry comes in the following plea-for-succor verses:⁹⁴

O sons of Muṣṭafā, it is
in you, in you,
that the sorrowful seeks
asylum in calamities.

يَا بَنِي الْمُصْطَفَى إِلَيْكُمْ إِلَيْكُمْ
فِي الْمَلَمَّاتِ يَفْزَعُ الْمَكْرُوبُ

O sons of Muṣṭafā, it is
from you, from you,
that wishes of our hearts
are sought.

يَا بَنِي الْمُصْطَفَى لَدَيْكُمْ لَدَيْكُمْ
أَمَلٌ فِي نُفُوسِنَا مَطْلُوبُ

You, you are the succor
whenever
sins ruin the sinner
among us.

أَنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ الْغِيَاثُ إِذَا مَا
أَوْبَقَتْ ذَا الذُّنُوبِ مِتًّا الذُّنُوبُ

You, you are the succor
whenever
death approaches and the
time comes to depart.

أَنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ الْغِيَاثُ إِذَا مَا
حَانَ حَينٌ لَنَا وَأَنْ مَغِيبُ

Repetition is the predominant trope in two of al-Mu'ayyad's poems and occurs regularly in three sections: the praise section, plea for succor closures, and the poet's description of himself. In the praise section, al-Mu'ayyad repeats various terms: a pronoun referring to the Imam, such as *huwa* or *hum*; a noun having to do with the Imam, either explicitly naming him, as in "Imam," or referring to him, as in *al-mawālī* (the masters), or *ghuṣn* (branch). He uses the word *salām* (lit. "well-being," a term of greeting) in an extended repetition, and rhetorical questions such as *wa man dhā* (Who is it that . . . ?), and *wa hal siwāhu* (Is there someone other than him, who . . . ?)⁹⁵ In the plea-for-succor closures, as in the praise section, he often repeats pronouns such as *antum*, *ilaykum*, or *ladaykum*, and refers to the Imams, or he repeats a direct address to them such as *yā bani l-Muṣṭafā* (O Sons of Muṣṭafā).⁹⁶ In the poet's description of himself as a grieved

⁹⁴ #3, p. 209, vv. 44–47. These verses are analyzed more fully in my chap. on "Praise," where the complete poem containing them is stylistically analyzed.

⁹⁵ *Hum*: #4, p. 212, vv. 23–24; *huwa*: #37, p. 279, vv. 34–35; *Imam*: #22, pp. 254, vv. 2–9, #59, p. 311, vv. 31–34; *al-mawālī*: #3, pp. 208–9, vv. 34–36; *ghuṣn*: #7, p. 221, vv. 1, 3–4; *salām*: #41, p. 286, 287, vv. 1–9, 21–22; *wa man dhā*: #37, p. 279, vv. 38–39; *wa hal siwāhu*: *ibid.*, vv. 36–37.

⁹⁶ *Antum*: #3, p. 209, vv. 46–47, *ilaykum*: *ibid.*, v. 44; *ladaykum*: *ibid.*, v. 45; *yā bani l-Muṣṭafā*: *ibid.*, vv. 44–45.

and repentant man, he repeats the verb-noun *āhi* (Alas!) expressing sorrow, and the plea *aghithnī* (Help me!) within the following rhetorical questions: *alastu l-ladhī* (Am I not the one who . . .?), *ma -'tidhārī* (What is my excuse, when . . .?), *lima* (Why did I . . .?), and *alam akun* (Was I not the one who . . .?).⁹⁷

The repetition serves to give structural unity and add emphasis. The following set of verses is an example of repetition serving to emphasize the idea that the Imam is the one and only person who has a certain lofty quality:⁹⁸

*They are the ones in whom
our Lord manifested
Himself*

*to His creation, May He be
exalted, May He be
elevated and glorified.*

هُمُ الْأُولَىٰ بِهِمْ تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّنَا

لِخَلْقِهِ سُبْحَانَهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

*They are the ones whose
grandfather is the best
of the Messengers.*

*They are the ones whose
religion is the best of
religions.*

هُمُ الْأُولَىٰ جَدُّهُمْ خَيْرُ الرُّسُلِ

هُمُ الْأُولَىٰ مِلَّةُهُمْ خَيْرُ الْمِلَلِ

In another kind of repetitional emphasis, the repeated word is a simile-topic purported to be more real than the analogue, usually in the Fatimid *tāwīl* mode or, at times, poetic hyperbole. An example is the repetition and parallel placement of the simile-topic “he” in two continuous verses, followed by two different simile-analogues: “He is the sun that gives the sun of this world its light” (*tāwīl*), and “He is the night, hiding whosoever wishes it” (hyperbole).⁹⁹

Elsewhere, a verbal noun is used twice in the sense of an imperative in plea or command. In the following verse, the repetition (*ʿatfan* ‘*atfan*) is combined with a paronomasia and a *radd al-ʿajuz*:¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ *Āhi*: #3, p. 208, vv. 24–25; *aghithnī*: #39, p. 282, v. 14; *alastu l-ladhī*: #33, p. 275, vv. 20–21; *ma -'tidhārī*: #3, p. 208, vv. 30–32; *lima*: #3, p. 208, vv. 26–27; *alam akun*: #62, p. 320, vv. 95–97.

⁹⁸ #4, p. 212, vv. 23–24. Another e.g. is #3, p. 209, vv. 46–47 (translated elsewhere in book; see Index)

⁹⁹ #37, p. 279, vv. 34–35.

¹⁰⁰ #62, p. 318, v. 58. See also #61, p. 314, v. 20.

O possessor of the remotest
parts of the earth,
sympathy! sympathy!
because of which [my]
enemies turn their sides
away from me.

يَا مَالِكَ الْآفَاقِ عَطَفَا عَطَفَا
تُثْنِي بِهِ عَلَيَّ الْأَعَادِي عَطَفَا

At times, the repetition recalls something familiar and juxtaposes it with something unfamiliar, such as repetition of the word “body” in al-Mu’ayyad’s line “[My] body is not the body that you had encountered.”¹⁰¹ Sometimes, the repetition gives more information about the exact nature of an action, the repeated word being used as a springboard for the extra information (*ta‘mīm* followed by *takhṣīs*):¹⁰²

Help me, O Commander
of the Faithful, with
strength,
such that I defend myself
and fight,
fight a Fate whose doings
have broken my resolution.
O how much unease has its
troubles [given] my heart!

أَعْنِي أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِقُوَّةٍ
أَذْفَعُ عَنْ نَفْسِي بِهَا وَأَنَاضِلُ
أَنَاضِلُ دَهْرًا هَدَّ عَزَمِي صَرْفُهُ
فَكَمْ ذَا لِقَلْبِي مِنْ أَذَاهُ بَلَابِلُ

Radd al-‘ajuz ‘alā al-ṣadr

Al-Mu’ayyad employs *radd al-‘ajuz ‘alā al-ṣadr* less often than paronomasia and antithesis, but still, fairly frequently. The first term of *radd al-‘ajuz* in al-Mu’ayyad’s poems occurs at various places in the verse: often it is the first word in the first hemistich (the *radd al-‘ajuz* praised by the medieval critics), sometimes it is in the body of the first hemistich, and in a few cases it occurs in the second hemistich. Moreover, the *radd al-‘ajuz* is often an exact repetition of a word with the same meaning. However, it is sometimes a quasi-*radd al-‘ajuz*, with the rhyme word being a paronomasia counterpart of the first term, either a derivative or the same word with a different meaning. An example of the latter is the following verse in which al-Mu’ayyad addresses a “plotter” (*ṣāhib al-kayd*), probably the Abbasid

¹⁰¹ #8, p. 224, v. 10. Another e.g. is #62, p. 319, v. 87.

¹⁰² #59, p. 312, vv. 45–46. Other e.g. are: verb: #3, pp. 207–8, vv. 12, 14; #55, p. 303, vv. 7–8; noun: #3, p. 303, vv. 15–16, 19.

vizier, where the first word of the first hemistich, the noun "knot" (*uqdatun*), is repeated in the rhyme word in the form of its imperfect verb (*ta'qiduhā*):¹⁰³

*A knot that God has untied
by his power
in a manner you had not
reckoned with—have you
come to knot it [again]?¹⁰⁴*

أَعْقَدَهُ حَلَّهَا الْبَارِي بِقُدْرَتِهِ
مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ تَحْتَسِبْ قَدْ جِئْتَ تَعْقِدُهَا

Similar to his use of extended antithesis and repetitions, a few of al-Mu'ayyad's poems contain extended *radd al-ʿajuz* in several near-consecutive verses. The most obvious example of this is a poem in which more than half the verses contain a *radd al-ʿajuz*. I have endeavored to stick to the original Arabic word order in the translation of the following set of verses, placing the final Arabic word in final position in the translation, in order to convey a sense of the *radd al-ʿajuz*. The listener can anticipate the rhyme word before actually hearing it, since it has been used earlier in the verse, and since the verse semantically begs it:¹⁰⁴

*I yearn towards my water
and pasture among them,
for no pasture has been
good after them, or water.*

أَحِنُّ إِلَى مَائِي وَمَرْعَائِي مِنْهُمْ
فَمَا طَابَ مَرْعَى بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ وَمَاءُ

*And there is no joy, after
their separation, in joy,
and there is no comfort
or pleasure in comfort.*

وَمَا فِي سُرُورٍ مُنْذُ بَانُوا مَسَرَّةً
وَمَا فِي رَخَاءٍ لَدَّةٍ وَرَخَاءُ

...

*Allegiance to you, Our
Master, is my pillar and
my preparation;
of no avail, other than it,
is any allegiance.*

وَلَاؤُكَ مَوْلَانَا عِمَادِي وَعُدَّتِي
فَمَا نَافِعٌ مِمَّنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ وَلَاءُ

*When the Banner of Praise
adorns its people,
you, for the praiseworthy
Banner, are the banner.*

إِذَا مَالِ لَوَاءِ الْحَمْدِ زَيْنَ أَهْلِهِ
فَأَنْتَ لِمَحْمُودِ اللَّوَاءِ لِلْوَاءِ

¹⁰³ #47, p. 295, v. 2.

¹⁰⁴ #13, pp. 236–37, vv. 5–6, 16–19. Ḥusayn judges these verses to be affected (Introduction to *Dīwān*, pp. 180–81); I find them, on the contrary, quite effective.

And when light rescues
the people from
darkness—

for the signposts of light,
you are the light.

The earth prides itself
because of you over
the sky;
for the people who [live]
above the sky, you are
the sky.

وإن خَلَّصَ النَّاسَ الضِّيَاءُ مِنَ الدُّجَى

فَأَنْتَ لِأَعْلَامِ الضِّيَاءِ ضِيَاءُ

تُبَاهِي بِكَ الْأَرْضُ السَّمَاءَ حَقِيقَةً

فَأَنْتَ لِمَنْ فَوْقَ السَّمَاءِ سَمَاءُ

A later verse containing a *radd al-ʿajuz* trope equates this trope with “*badīʿ*,”¹⁰⁵ al-Muʿayyad says (addressing the Imam’s enemy):¹⁰⁶

Mention of you is a
defamation of defamation;
whosoever wants
something novel (*badīʿ*),
then [here it is:] a mention
that is a defamation of
defamation.

و ذَكَرُكَ هَجْوٌ لِلْهَجَاءِ فَمَنْ يُرَدُّ

بَدِيعًا فَذِكْرُ¹⁰⁷ اللِّهْجَاءِ هَجَاءُ

This usage of the term “*badīʿ*” to describe extravagant usage of *radd al-ʿajuz* is significant. Perhaps al-Muʿayyad’s extensive application of *radd al-ʿajuz* in this poem was an experiment with, or a conscious adaptation of, the so-called “*ṣanʿa*” technique in which a poet would use a large number of wordplay devices.

Miscellaneous Style Issues

Persianisms

Al-Muʿayyad was Persian and he lived in Fars for fifty years. However, although he did translate an Arabic prose text into his native language, he is not known to have composed poetry in it.¹⁰⁸ Even while

¹⁰⁵ As Ḥusayn has noted in the “Introduction” to al-Muʿayyad’s *Dīwān*, p. 180.

¹⁰⁶ #13, p. 237, v. 28.

¹⁰⁷ I have followed my mss. here, all of which contain *dhikrun*; the ed. contains *dhikrā* / *dhikrī*.

¹⁰⁸ Ivanow conjectures that al-Muʿayyad possibly wrote poetry in Persian and that “the mysterious poet Ahwāzī referred to by Nāṣir” (*Dīwān Nāṣir-i Khusrau*, Mīnovī

living in Fars, he composed his panegyrics in Arabic. He composed his many poems in praise of the Arabic-speaking Fatimids in Arabic, as he also did the two in praise of the Persian-speaking Buyid prince. The Buyids, unlike the Samanids and Ghaznavids, did not favor Persian poetry.¹⁰⁹ Al-Mu'ayyad's poetry is thus a part of the Arabic rather than the Persian literary heritage, though it is influenced by the former and influences it in turn. However, since Persian was his mother tongue, it would be reasonable for us to expect some Persian influence in his poetry. In fact, there is very little. An obvious poetic device to look for would be the *radīf*, a preferred Persian rhyme part, but al-Mu'ayyad does not favor it. He does use Abū Kālījār's Persian title Shāhanshāh (King of kings) in two verses, but this can hardly be called a Persianism.¹¹⁰ I could locate just two definite instances of Persian influence on al-Mu'ayyad's poetry: the use of a Persian word "bass" (enough) in an Arabicized form "bassī" (I have had enough!):¹¹¹

O [my] people, I have had
enough from my life, I
have had enough!

يَا قَوْمَ بَسِّي مِنْ حَيَاتِي بَسِّي

He also used the signature-verse "*takhalluṣ*," a Persian literary feature, in a large number of his poems.¹¹²

Poetic Dialogue

An interesting feature especially prominent in four of al-Mu'ayyad's poems is the occurrence of remarkably creative poetic dialogue.¹¹³ This dialogue takes place between the poet persona, i.e., al-Mu'ayyad himself, and an imaginary interlocutor who is addressed as a former beloved, usually in the masculine gender,¹¹⁴ but once in the feminine.

ed., #187, p. 297, v. 5) may in fact be al-Mu'ayyad in his young days (Ivanow, *Problems in Nāṣir-i Khusrāu's Biography*, p. 51), but there is no evidence to support this claim.

¹⁰⁹ Busse, *Chalīf und Grosskönig*, p. 609. See also the brief overview of Arabic literature during the Buyid period by J. Meisami, "The Būyid period (334–440/945–1048)," in *EAL*, vol. 1, pp. 7–8.

¹¹⁰ #51, p. 299, v. 11, and also in #62, p. 318, v. 39.

¹¹¹ #35, p. 276, v. 6.

¹¹² Discussed in detail in chapter 2, under "closures."

¹¹³ #4, p. 211, vv. 1–14 ff.; #5, p. 215, vv. 1–12 ff.; #15, pp. 240–41, vv. 9–18; & #55, pp. 303, vv. 1–34 ff. (trans. elsewhere in book; see Index).

¹¹⁴ Three poems; addressing the female beloved in the masculine gender was a common practice in Arabic poetry.

The dialogues are lengthy, in one case taking up almost three-quarters of a fifty-one verse poem. These verses form an integral part of the poem, as they are a framework for the expression of the poet's thoughts and concerns. In one poem, the poetic dialogue is used to express al-Mu'ayyad's reasons for taking a particular course of action, namely, his remaining in Fars in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Perhaps the advantage in using poetic dialogue rather than straightforward narrative was that it made al-Mu'ayyad seem uncomplaining, as one forced to tell his painful story. In all four poems, the dialogue is grounded in nostalgia—for the poet's family and homeland, and for the strong, powerful youth that he once was. Since these dialogues express al-Mu'ayyad's grief and frustration, they are highly charged with emotion, and since these emotions are expressed in poignant imagery, these dialogues are some of the most touching verses in all of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry.

In all four poems, the dialogue is placed in the preludes, rather than in the main, praise body of the poem: thrice in love preludes and once in a yearning for homeland prelude. It leads up to the poet persona's exposition of either the Imam's praise,¹¹⁵ or his own religious beliefs.¹¹⁶ The dialogue is structured in the form of "He said . . . I said . . ." At times the poem opens with the dialogue,¹¹⁷ and at other times the opening line lays a foundation for the dialogue by introducing the interlocutor.¹¹⁸

The dialogues are composed either of numerous short exchanges¹¹⁹ or fewer, longer ones, of which the following long dialogue in a love prelude is an example. The imagery in the dialogue is quite dramatic and it contains a large quantity of paronomasia. Al-Mu'ayyad uses the dialogue as a stepping board to a *fakhr* segment in which he extols his moral qualities and beliefs. The poem opens with the dialogue:¹²⁰

*He said: "Ask him, you
two, was he consoled
when he left?
And find out what Fate
did with him:*

قَالَ سَلَاهُ هَلْ سَلَا لَمَّا رَحَلَ
وَاسْتَخِيرَا عَمَّا بِهِ الدَّهْرُ فَعَلَّ

¹¹⁵ #15, #55.

¹¹⁶ #4, #5.

¹¹⁷ #4, #5.

¹¹⁸ #15, 55.

¹¹⁹ A lengthy short-exchange type has been translated earlier, pp. 44–48 #55, pp. 303, vv. 1–34 ff.

¹²⁰ #4, p. 211, vv. 1–14.

- Did his heart empty of
our love?
Or is his heart steadfast
upon those declarations?¹²¹
- Do you see him, O
companion, awakened
from love?
[Did] patience join¹²²
with him when he
separated?
- Or did he take refuge
from love in distance,
that then betrayed him,
and this remained?
- Whoever nursed a disease
with a disease and
cured [it]?!
- Or treated a wound with
a wound and healed [it]?!
- Grant that love threw him
into a line of action
in which many a brave
hero has become obsolete.
- Then why was he intent
upon separation, kindling
flames
upon flames of longing in
his entrails?
- When [love] would not
have cut him off in
what he united,
and would not have
denied him if he had
asked."
- Then I said—[my] eye[s]
pouring forth tears,
like a spring whose water
has streamed out—
- وهَلْ تَخَلَّى عَنْ هَوَانَا قَلْبُهُ
أَمْ قَلْبُهُ بَاقٍ عَلَى تِلْكَ الْجَمَلِ
تَرَاهُ يَا صَاحِبَ صَحَا عَنْ الْمَوَى
وَالصَّبْرُ قَدْ وَاصَلَهُ لَمَّا فَصَلَ
أَمْ اسْتَجَارَ بِالسَّوَى مِنَ الْمَوَى
فَشَقَمَهُ هَذَا وَهَذَا لَمْ يَزَلْ
مَنْ ذَا أَسَا الدَّاءَ بِدَاءٍ فَأَنْجَلَى
أَمْ عَالَجَ الْجُرْحَ بِجُرْحٍ فَأَنْدَمَلَ
هَبِ الْمَوَى هَوَى بِهِ فِي خُطَّةٍ
كَمْ مِنْ شَجَاعٍ بَطَلٍ فِيهَا بَطَلُ
فَلِمَ تَوَخَّى الْبَيْنَ يُذَكِّي شُعَلَا
لِلشُّوْقِ فِي أَحْشَائِهِ فَوْقَ شُعَلِ
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ يَقْطَعُهُ مَهْمَا وَصَلَ
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ يَمْنَعُهُ إِذَا سَأَلَ
فَقُلْتُ وَالْعَيْنُ تُفَيِّضُ عَبْرَةً
كَمِثْلِ عَيْنٍ مَأْزُهَا قَدْ انْهَمَلَ

¹²¹ Lit. "those sentences."

¹²² Note the use of the word "*wāṣalahū*" with its double meaning of to connect with, and to have sexual intercourse with a woman. Thus, the beloved asks whether the lover has taken patience to bed in lieu of the beloved.

"God is your Reckoner,
you have inflamed me
after hoariness has
descended upon my head.

Your stringing me in the
pearl-string of your lovers
has made me
learn the composition of love
poetry in my old age.

This, when, for good sense
and piety,
I have always been cited
as a model.

What would I [be doing]—
if not for you—with this
rhapsodizing
in my poetry, and reminiscing
about the trace of an
encampment and ruins?!

With my honor having
been pure,
[and] no error or idle talk
having come my way. . . ."

حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ لَقَدْ هَيَّجْتَنِي

بَعْدَ مَشَيْبٍ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي قَدْ نَزَلَ

نَظْمُكَ لِي فِي سِلْكَ حَبِّكَ غَدَا

مُعَلِّمِي فِي كِبَرِي نَظْمَ الْغَزَلِ

وَلَمْ أَزَلْ فِي الرُّشْدِ وَالتَّقْوَى مَعَا

يُضَنِّرُ بِي فِي ذِي الْأَقَالِيمِ الْمَثَلِ

مَا أَنَا لَوْلَاكَ وَذَا التَّشْيِيبِ فِي

شِعْرِي وَذِكْرِي رَسْمَ دَارٍ وَطَلَلِ

مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَدْ كَانَ عِرْضِي طَاهِرًا

لَمْ يَعْتَرِضْ لِي خَطَأٌ وَلَا خَطَلٌ

Rhetorical Questions

Al-Mu'ayyad's disputational poems contain some real, theological questions posed to non-Fatimid denominations.¹²³ However, most of the questions in the other genres of his *Dīwān* are rhetorical, used purely as a stylistic device. An assertion the poet wants to make is rendered more forceful when it is posed as a question, because it involves the audience in discerning its validity.

The most common type of rhetorical question in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry is one with an obvious yes or no answer; if the question is positive, the answer is negative, and if the question is negative, the answer is positive. The following is an example of a question to which the audience must answer no.¹²⁴

¹²³ E.g., #1, p.195, v. 83.

¹²⁴ #34, p. 275, v. 24. Most rhetorical questions in the *Dīwān* anticipate a short

*Is one who gives guidance
in difficult matters, and
whose guidance is followed,
like one who is an animal,
deaf and dumb?*¹²⁵

أَمَّنْ هُوَ يَهْدِي فِي الْخُطُوبِ وَيُتَّبَعُ
كَمَنْ هُوَ حَيَوَانٌ أَصَمٌّ وَأَبْكَمُّ

There are a few other types of rhetorical questions in the *Dīwān*. One is the "Would that I knew . . . !" (*layta shi'rī*) type,¹²⁷ which is preceded by the question word "when" (*matā*), or followed by the question words "who" (*man*), "how" (*kayfā*), or "what" (*mā*). All but one of these verses are composed in a desolate tone of voice and refer either to the loss of the poet's family and homeland, or to his hardships in Fars and Egypt. The following verse bemoans the state of his followers in Fars after his departure. The poetic repetition of the question "Would that I knew . . . !" accentuates the pathetic tone.¹²⁸

*Would that I knew who
will succor their cries
for help,
when they complain of the
outrages of adversities?!*

فَيَا لَيْتَ شِعْرِي مَنْ يُعِثُّ صَرِيحَهُمْ
إِذَا مَا شَكَّوْا لِلْحَادِثَاتِ الْعَوَادِيَا

*And would that I knew
how [my] enemies obtained
their wishes in separating the
united among us?!*

وَيَا لَيْتَ شِعْرِي كَيْفَ قَدْ أَدْرَكَ الْعَدَى
بَتَفْرِيقِ ذَاتِ الْبَيْنِ فِينَا الْمَبَاغِيَا

A third type is the rhetorical question that exhorts to action. In a poem composed in response to the desecration of Mūsā al-Kāẓim's grave by the Abbasids in Baghdad, al-Mu'ayyad uses a series of rhetorical questions to exhort the Shī'ā of Iraq to rise up against the Abbasids and take revenge. Among these questions, he asks: "Will

and clear answer: "No!" e.g., #37, p. 279, vv. 36-39; "None!" #3, p. 208, vv. 30-32; "Nowhere!" #26, p. 265, v. 6; "Nobody!" #20, p. 251, v. 13; #24, p. 259, vv. 1-4; #25, p. 261, quatrain 1, vv. 1-2. If the question is negated the answer is "Yes!" #15, p. 241, v. 22; #58, p. 309, vv. 22-24; #62, p. 318, v. 56.

¹²⁵ I have followed the readings of mss. 1-5 & 7-8, which contain *yuhṭadā* (whose guidance is followed; ms. 6 contains *wa ihtadā* with *hamzat qaf*, this is grammatically incorrect, and were we to read *wa ḥṭadā* it would become metrically incorrect). the ed. has *yuḡṭadā* (one whose example is imitated).

¹²⁶ Reference to Qur'an 10:35.

¹²⁷ #17, p. 246, vv. 17-18; #22, p. 254, v. 16; #37, p. 278, vv. 5-6; #59, p. 312, v. 47; #62, p. 318, v. 55.

¹²⁸ #17, p. 246, vv. 17-18.

you tolerate disgrace when your . . . arm is not short (i.e. you have power)? Will the sanctity of the Prophet's Progeny be rent when even a small boy from among you is present on the earth?"¹²⁹

A fourth type is the rhetorical question that is a challenge. In a poem in which al-Mu'ayyad confronts the Fatimid vizier who had engineered his exile to Jerusalem, he defies him to find somebody who can take his place at the Imam's side by asking:¹³⁰

*If you drive me away from
the sanctuary of the Imam
With whom will you fill my
place by his side?*

إِذَا دُذِّنْتَنِي عَنْ حَرِيمِ الْإِمَامِ
تَسُودُ مَسَلَدِي عَنْهُ بِمَنْ

A fifth type is the rhetorical question that enhances the sadness expressed. Rather than couching an idea in a bluntly stated negative, the poet arouses the pity of the audience and underlines his sorry state in old age and infirmity by way of the rhetorical question, "Who is there for a body that is emaciated with pain?"¹³¹

A sixth type is the rhetorical question in which the poet chastises himself for his worldly desires. These questions are set in a theological mold, with the poet asking, for example, "Why do I preoccupy myself with my dark body, when I am as dusty earth in it?"¹³²

A seventh type is the rhetorical question that follows on the heels of an imperative address to the audience to ask a question. One poem contains several verses in the form of questions that enumerate al-Mu'ayyad's services for the Fatimids in Fars, of which the following is the opening question:¹³³ "Ask Fars about my station—who battled there?"

In the *Dīwān*, al-Mu'ayyad often combines rhetorical questions with poetic repetition. Thus, several consecutive verses begin with the same question word, such as the "Would that I knew . . ." verses cited earlier. When the rhetorical questions are combined with repetition, they are often simultaneously combined with parallelism; thus, the questions are repeatedly posed in a parallel sentence structure.

¹²⁹ #23, p. 257, vv. 28–29.

¹³⁰ #20, p. 251, v. 13.

¹³¹ #24, p. 259, v. 1; see also following verses 2–4, and #25, p. 261, quatrain 1, vv. 1–2.

¹³² #3, p. 208, v. 27. See also similar rhetorical questions that precede and follow this verse, vv. 26–32; (translated elsewhere in book; see Index).

¹³³ #40, p. 284, vv. 23–27.

Several questions are posed in a parallel structure in the following verse, in which the poet uses these questions to express his bewilderment and desperate straits:¹³⁴

Who do I place my
hope in? And who is
my confidant?
How is the road? And
where is the escape?

فَمَنْ ذَا أَرْجَى وَمَنْ لِي الْمُنْجَى
وكيف السبيل وأين المفرُّ

Qur'ānic and Other Allusions

Within the corpus of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry, his disputational poetry contains the largest volume of Qur'ānic allusions, but almost every poem in his *Dīwān* has incorporated into it at least one, and usually several, Qur'ānic verses.¹³⁵ This is not surprising in light of what we know of al-Mu'ayyad's religion-oriented career and thought, and his insistence on rational *tāwīl* being grounded in Qur'ānic exegesis. In one poem, he explicitly claims that his religion consists of a synchronization of rationality (*'aql*) and the Qur'ān.¹³⁶

The allusions to Qur'ānic verses in al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* take three forms: either a complete Qur'ānic verse is cited exactly as it occurs in the Qur'ān (rare),¹³⁷ or the verse is alluded to without the exact sentence structure and grammatical forms (more common),¹³⁸ or a phrase from a Qur'ānic verse is incorporated (most common). Qur'ānic phraseology such as "*al-ʿurwa al-wuthqā*" (the firm handle)¹³⁹ and "*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*" (the Straight Path)¹⁴⁰ is an intrinsic part of al-Mu'ayyad's poetic vocabulary. Al-Mu'ayyad sometimes explicitly cites his Qur'ānic reference.¹⁴¹ In his disputational poetry, where Qur'ānic citation is most common, he challenges those Muslims who do not accept a hidden meaning (*bāṭin* or *tāwīl*) in the Qur'ān, by citing a Qur'ānic verse and questioning his non-Fatimid audience if they can

¹³⁴ #58, p. 309, v. 19. See also #40, p. 284, vv. 23–29; #37, p. 278, vv. 36–37, 38–39.

¹³⁵ See index of Qur'ānic quotations in *Dīwān* ed., pp. 355–60.

¹³⁶ #62, p. 320, v. 95.

¹³⁷ For e.g., #5, p. 218, v. 60 (Qur'ān 13:14); #58, p. 308, v. 12 (Qur'ān 94:5,6).

¹³⁸ For e.g., #4, p. 212, v. 29 (Qur'ān 2:210); #23, p. 258, v. 60 (Qur'ān 35:29).

¹³⁹ Qur'ān 2:256

¹⁴⁰ Qur'ān 1:5

¹⁴¹ For e.g., #12, p. 234, vv. 25–27.

explain its intent solely through the overt meaning (*zāhir*). One example is the following verse, in which a non-Fatimid theological interpretation of the Qur'ānic verse "Upon that day faces shall be radiant, gazing upon their Lord"¹⁴² is presented as a prelude to its refutation later in the poem:¹⁴³

*Like the person who
said, "Fresh faces,"
he said, "[This refers to]
those who look upon
God's reward."*

كَمِثْلِ مَنْ قَالَ وَجُوهٌ نَاضِرَةٌ
قَالَ إِلَى ثَوَابِ رَبِّي نَاضِرَةٌ

In al-Mu'ayyad's panegyrics, he praises the Imam as the *mamthūl* (symbolized) of various Qur'ānic concepts, as well as the provider of aid to the prophets, in this respect citing details from the Qur'ānic tales of the prophets.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, he interprets various Qur'ānic verses according to Fatimid belief and connects them in some way to the Imam. An example is a verse in which al-Mu'ayyad takes the Qur'ānic verse "We shall advance upon what work they have done, and make it a scattered dust,"¹⁴⁵ and applies it to those Muslims who do not accord allegiance to the Fatimid Imam:¹⁴⁶

*The endeavor of the person
who prayed and gave
zakāt-alms, and who did
not answer
the da'wa of the Fatimid
Imam, is dust motes.*

وَسَعَى الَّذِي صَلَّى وَزَكَّى وَلَمْ يُجِبْ
بِإِذْنِ الْأَمَامِ الْفَاطِمِيِّ هَبَاءٌ

He probably takes this interpretation from a passage ascribed by al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān to the Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq in which al-Ṣādiq declares that God does not accept prayer or fasting or the *hajj* pilgrimage except from those who bear allegiance to the Imam.¹⁴⁷

Al-Mu'ayyad interprets a large number of Qur'ānic verses that according to the Sunnis are universally applicable to all Muslims, as referring particularly to the Imam, as in the following verses from a praise poem for the Imams:¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Qur'an 75:22-23, trans. Arberry.

¹⁴³ #1, p. 192, v. 30.

¹⁴⁴ For e.g., #11, p. 231, vv. 27-31; #19, p. 249, vv. 7-11.

¹⁴⁵ Qur'an 25:23, trans. Arberry.

¹⁴⁶ #13, p. 237, v. 22.

¹⁴⁷ *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 74-75, *The Pillars*, p. 71.

¹⁴⁸ #55, p. 304, vv. 34-35. "They fulfill their pledges" (Qur'an 76:7) is part of

*I have pledged to offer
my life as ransom, a
pledge I will fulfill
for those in whose [praise]
came "They fulfill their
pledges"*

*In their [acclamation]
came the most shining
praise from "Did there
come . . . ?"*

*The sons of Murtaḍā and
Muṣṭafā, the shining leaders.*

نَذَرْتُ فِدَاءَ الرُّوحِ نَذْرًا أَفِي بِهِ

لِمَنْ فِيهِمْ قَدْ جَاءَ يُؤْفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ

وَفِيهِمْ أَغْرُ الْمَدْحِ مِنْ هَلْ أَتَى

بَنِي الْمُرْتَضَى وَالْمُصْطَفَى السَّادَةِ الْعُرَّ

Three of the praise preludes (love, yearning for homeland, and old age and youth) are relatively bare of Qur'ānic allusions.¹⁴⁹ However, al-Mu'ayyad uses Qur'ānic vocabulary extensively in the censure of Fate preludes, as well as in the similarly homiletic verses that describe his beliefs.¹⁵⁰

Fewer than Qur'ānic allusions but still significant in number, are Hadith allusions;¹⁵¹ in one case, al-Mu'ayyad even combines a Hadith allusion with a Qur'ānic one.¹⁵² The Hadiths he cites generally refer to issues validating the Imamate.¹⁵³ Among these is an allusion to the Hadith's description of the "Straight Path" as being sharper than a sword and thinner than a single hair; in this allusion, similar to his challenging use of Qur'ānic allusions in the disputational poetry, al-Mu'ayyad belligerently asks the literalists the real meaning of the Path.¹⁵⁴ In another Hadith allusion, al-Mu'ayyad condemns the Sunnis for lack of fealty to Muḥammad's successors, 'Alī and the Imams, referring to the report that Muḥammad had said: "I leave behind two weighty objects among you, the Book of God and my Progeny. So long as you cling to them you shall not go astray. Indeed, the two shall not be separated until they meet me at the Pool [of Kawthar in Paradise] like these (and he joined together his two index fingers)".¹⁵⁵

the *sūra* named "Did there come" (Qur'ān *sūra* 76). Note the triple paronomasia in the two verses.

¹⁴⁹ An example is #55 (pp. 303–5) which contains no Qur'ānic allusions in the love prelude, but a large quantity in the following praise section.

¹⁵⁰ For e.g., #9, p. 227, vv. 17, 23, 28; #26, p. 265, v. 15; #30, p. 269, vv. 1–2.

¹⁵¹ See index of Hadith quotations in *Dīwān* ed., pp. 361–64.

¹⁵² #4, p. 212, vv. 36–40.

¹⁵³ For e.g., #4, p. 212, v. 48.

¹⁵⁴ For e.g., #2, p. 203, v. 78.

¹⁵⁵ #4, p. 212, v. 36. Note the paronomasia and antithesis in the verse.

If they had clung to
the two weighty objects
when the two were left
behind, that which
became weighty for them
would have become light.

لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ بِالثَّقَلَيْنِ اسْتَمْسَكُوا
إِذْ ثَرَكَا خَفَّ عَلَيْهِمَا ثَقُلٌ

In one poem, al-Muʿayyad alludes to the Hadith of Ghadīr Khumm, in which the Shiʿa believe Muḥammad designated ʿAlī as his successor.¹⁵⁶ Elsewhere, al-Muʿayyad exalts his own rank of *bāb al-abwāb* by comparing himself to the Prophet's Companion Salmān, and citing the Prophet's declaration about Salmān, "You are from the people of my house (*anta min ahli bayti*)," implying that he too is of the Prophet's *ahl al-bayt*.¹⁵⁷

There are five allusions in the *Dīwān* to sayings of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. Two of these allusions refer to ʿAlī's homiletic sayings, while three come in the context of praise of ʿAlī. In one pair of verses, al-Muʿayyad eulogizes ʿAlī's asceticism and knowledge by explicitly using phrases from the sayings ascribed to ʿAlī:¹⁵⁸

Shall I forget our master
ʿAlī's address
to his world: "Seduce another,
I am not one to be
seduced."¹⁵⁹

أَنْسَى لِمَوْلَانَا عَلِيٍّ حِطَابَهُ
لِدُنْيَاهُ غُرِّي الْغَيْرِ لَسْتُ بِمُغْتَرٍّ

And the announcement,
"Ask me before you lose
me externally,
so that I reveal the deep
secret contained in the
Divine Mystery."¹⁶⁰

وَقَوْلَ سَلُونِي قَبْلَ فَقْدِي ظَاهِرًا
لَأُظْهِرَ مَا فِي الْغَيْبِ مِنْ غَامِضِ السِّرِّ

¹⁵⁶ #9, p. 227, vv. 27–28. "Whosoever's master (*mawlā*) I am, this ʿAlī is his master. O Lord, aid those who aid him, forsake those who forsake him, and make Truth turn with him wheresoever he turns." Cf. Al Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār fi fadaʾil al-aʾimma al-aḥbār*, Beirut, 1994, vol. 1, pp. 99–110.

¹⁵⁷ #38, p. 281, vv. 1–2 (translated elsewhere in book; see Index).

¹⁵⁸ #55, p. 305, vv. 41–42.

¹⁵⁹ *Nahj al-Balāgha (al-Muʿjam al-mufahras)*, short sayings #77; *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 433.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, sermon #189, Abū Maṣṣūr al-Thaʿālibī, *al-Iʿjāz wa al-ijāz*, p. 32, al-Ṣaffār, *al-Baṣāʾir*, p. 31.

Al-Mu'ayyad also alludes to verses of poetry from the classical Arabic corpus.¹⁶¹ He quotes verbatim a verse by al-Mutanabbī, prefacing the quoted verse by acknowledging (albeit without naming him) the poetic standing of its author, who is "one whose merit poets do not deny."¹⁶² Elsewhere, he quotes verbatim a verse by the Qurashite ghazal poet al-'Arjī, and here, he incorporates the verse into his own poem without reference to its original composer; this was a fairly common practice when dealing with well-known verses such as the one he cited.¹⁶³ In a few other poetry allusions, al-Mu'ayyad favors partial incorporation of themes and vocabulary. One such incorporation is a verse in which he describes himself by contiguously using the rhyme words (in the form of paronomasia and internal rhyme) of four consecutive verses by Muslim b. al-Walīd.¹⁶⁴

[I am] repudiated, a
fugitive, alone, isolated,
devoid of a loving,
well-wishing friend.

طريدٌ شريرٌ فريدٌ وحيدٌ
فقيدٌ لآلفٍ وديدٌ يُرِيدُ

In another partial incorporation of a verse by al-Mutanabbī, al-Mu'ayyad declares that Egypt and Syria, the Ḥijāz and Yemen, Fars, Iraq and Sind, all know him as a sword for the Prophet's progeny.¹⁶⁵ Elsewhere, he recycles Bashshār's double-simile that compares together dust raised in battle and combatants' swords to shooting stars in the night.¹⁶⁶

It is clear from this examination of al-Mu'ayyad's artistry that he was a master of Arabic literary style with a strong command of the classical techniques of poetry and a powerful mode of expression. Al-Mu'ayyad's poetry was an aesthetic product of his time, indeed, a consummate product. But more significantly, it carried a theologically grounded spark of artistic originality that would kindle into

¹⁶¹ Ḥusayn has discussed in brief the influence of the Arabic poets on al-Mu'ayyad's verse, and most of the poetry allusions noted in the following paragraph have been remarked upon by him. (Introduction to *Dīwān*, three-page chap. on "The Influence of the Ancient [Poets] on [al-Mu'ayyad's Poetry]," pp. 176–79.)

¹⁶² #8, p. 225, vv. 16–17.

¹⁶³ #32, p. 271, v. 5.

¹⁶⁴ #58, p. 309, v. 16.

¹⁶⁵ #20, p. 251, vv. 1–3.

¹⁶⁶ #15, p. 242, v. 44 (not noted by Ḥusayn).

existence a dynamic tradition of Fatimid da‘wa poetry. This originality is visible in numerous stylistic features: the distinctive use of light-images and Egypt-images, a profusion of Qur’anic allusions in a Fatimid exegetical context, allusions to Prophetic Hadiths and sayings of ‘Alī, and most importantly, the special and striking use of metaphor as manifestation, based on the Fatimid *tāwīl* (esoteric) tradition. Thus, in addition to being stylistically remarkable, al-Mu‘ayyad’s poetry also contained some distinctive characteristics that made it uniquely Fatimid da‘wa poetry.

CHAPTER THREE

PRAISE OF THE IMAM

Anything other than praise of
you is frivolity of speech.
Praise of you is religion,
excellence, and intelligence.

وغيرُ مديحكَ لَهُوَ الحَدِيثُ
ومدحكُ دِينٌ وَفَضْلٌ وَفِطْنَةٌ

(Al-Mu'ayyad, *Dīwān*)¹

We have some indication of what al-Mu'ayyad thought poetry ideally ought to be from a *mu'āraḍa* poem with which he challenged a poem by the earlier poet-prince Tamīm.² Tamīm had composed a thirty-one verse ode in praise of his brother, the Caliph-Imam al-'Azīz, out of which just over half (sixteen verses) was *ghazal*, the imagery erotic, the vocabulary flippant, and the focus on the corporeal beloved. Associating these elements with serious praise of the Imam was sacrilegious to al-Mu'ayyad, and he showed his disapproval in his *mu'āraḍa*. This *mu'āraḍa* begins, without preamble, in praise of the Caliph-Imam al-Mustanṣir. Its themes are theological, its language sober, and its focus squarely on the *mamdūh*. Towards the end, al-Mu'ayyad openly declares his intent to challenge Tamīm, throwing down the gauntlet by saying that he would continue to praise the Imam when “another praised the blushing of a cheek.”³ Here, just

¹ #22, p. 255, v. 21.

² #22, pp. 254–55. This poem is in the same rhyme and meter as Tamīm's: *Dīwān al-Amīr Tamīm*, pp. 440–42. Cf. comments on these two poems by Smoor, “Wine, Love and Praise,” pp. 94–101; and Husayn, in his introduction to al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* (1949), pp. 162–65. Al-Mu'ayyad probably objected to Tamīm's approach to praise of the Imam as exemplified in his other panegyrics too; for as Smoor has shown in various articles, Tamīm very often connected in the same verse erotic descriptions of female body parts or wine motifs with praise of the Imam. (“Fāṭimid Poets,” p. 243; “Master of the Century” p. 155; and “Wine, Love and Praise,” p. 107). Cf. brief survey articles on “Mu'āraḍa,” by A. Schippers in *EL2*, vol. 7, p. 261; and by G. Van Gelder in *EAL*, vol. 2, p. 534.

³ Al-Mu'ayyad then goes on to name his *mu'āraḍ*, calling his own poem an “answer” (*jawāb*)—again picking up on Tamīm's language—“for the son of al-Mu'izz;” he ends by quoting the opening hemistich (*maṭla'*) of Tamīm's poem.

before the end of his ode, al-Mu'ayyad asserts that the only justification for poetry composition is something that is the very essence of religion and rationality (see verse above): praise of the Imam.

It is clear from what al-Mu'ayyad says in this ode that his ideal poem was the panegyric composed in praise of the Imam and centered solely on him. Hence, it is but natural that his principal genre would be praise poetry, and that it would be wholly focused on the Imam. The majority of the poems in al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* are, in fact, panegyrics for the Fatimid Imams al-Zāhir (some) and al-Mustanşir (the largest part),⁴ although sometimes al-Mu'ayyad praises all the Imams collectively, following up the collective praise with praise of their successor, the Imam of the Age.

Al-Mu'ayyad's near contemporary Abbasid panegyrists praised their patrons essentially as secular kings, rather than religious leaders—their praise motifs were primarily the heroic pre-Islamic motifs of generosity and martial valor.⁵ They also used conventional elements

⁴ All but one of al-Mu'ayyad's panegyrics were written for the Fatimid Imams in general and these two Imams in particular; the exception is his praise poem for the prospective Fatimid convert and ally, the Buyid king Abū Kālījār (#51, p. 299). Furthermore, almost all his poems, whatever their genre, have some verses in praise of the Imam; the exception is a couple of his *munājāt*.

⁵ M.M. Badawi considers the pre-Islamic tribal motifs of courage, martial valor, hospitality, munificence, justness and resoluteness to be the defining themes of Islamic praise poetry, including Abbasid praise poetry. He calls "the recipe for the Islamic panegyric . . . basically the same as for the pre-Islamic, but with some Islamic ingredients added" ("Abbasid Poetry and its Antecedents," *CHALABI*, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 146–66, see 151–52). Compare, for example, al-Mu'ayyad's religious approach, to Abū Tammām's praise of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'taṣim as martial hero (cf. S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the 'Abbāsīd Age*, Leiden, 1991, pp. 131–33).

The praise of the Fatimid Imam in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry may also be contrasted with the praise poetry written for the Abbasid caliphs in the thematic frame proposed by S. Sperl ("Islamic Kingship and Arabic Panegyric Poetry in the Early Ninth Century," *JAL* 8 1972, pp. 20–35, see esp. pp. 20–35). He outlines three aspects of the caliphate that were highlighted by the Abbasid panegyrists: virtue, divine sanction, and mythic power: 1) The Abbasid court poets focused on the pre-Islamic virtues of resolution, generosity and hospitality—having transferred them to an imperialist context—as some of the key formulae in their panegyrics. The praise of the Imam in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry, however, has only passing reference to these old tribal virtues. 2) Insignia motifs like the [Prophet's] cloak, and the scepter, representing the divine sanction of Islam, that were a predominant element in Abbasid panegyric, are considered insignificant and therefore ignored altogether in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry. The divine sanction aspect, however, was also represented in Abbasid poetry by emphasizing the Caliph's Prophetic lineage, and this aspect is accorded considerable importance in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry with regard to the Fatimid Imam; it is discussed in detail further in this chapter. 3) The Abbasid panegyrists praised the Caliph's mythic power in the ancient Near Eastern kingship mode, refer-

(such as the love prelude and a petition for financial remuneration) to introduce and close the praise. Their ideological (if not poetic) sincerity was questionable, since, if not paid, they often turned around and grossly slandered the very princes they had but recently praised to the skies.

Al-Mu'ayyad's poetry does have elements that tie it to Badawī's category of "Secondary or Umayyad/Abbasid *Qaṣīda*:"⁶ 1) It had a literary and craftsmanly function rather than a ritual and mythical one. 2) It was partly a product of literary experience, that contained allusions—albeit limited ones—to the "Primary *Qaṣīda*," and also, in this case, to Fatimid prose works; (nevertheless, al-Mu'ayyad's primary, historical experience also formed a major source of his literary inspiration.) 3) It was chiefly panegyric rather than polythematic; (then again, in contrast to the norm for the "Secondary *Qaṣīda*," hyperbole was consciously avoided in it, and sincerity was an important feature.) 4) *Rajaz* was used for a serious, didactic purpose, rather than being neglected as a lowly form.

Some motifs and the affirmation of the religious authority of the *mamdūh* in al-Mu'ayyad's praise poetry are also similar to those of Abbasid non-courtly, religious panegyrics that praised variously the Prophet and 'Alī. But there are significant differences. One obvious difference is that praise of the Prophet and 'Alī was praise of *mamdūhs* long passed away, while al-Mu'ayyad's praise of al-Zāhir and al-Mustanṣir was praise of living Imams who competed for political and religious authority with the other major contemporary power (the Abbasids) in the Islamic world. Abbasid religious praise poetry thus had a much more subdued political agenda, if any, than al-Mu'ayyad's.

ring to his soteriological nature and attributing the prosperity of the realm to the divinely inspired righteousness of the Caliph. This aspect is partially present in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry, with the salvation-giving power of the Imam focused upon; material prosperity of the realm, although touched upon, is not an important theme.

In *Mannerism*, pp. 14–27), Sperl enumerates some more dominant themes in Abbasid praise poetry: the association of sovereignty and light, the sacred marriage (*hieros gamos*) of the monarch to the caliphate, and the double nature of kingship reflected in benevolence and anger. In al-Mu'ayyad's poetry too, the light metaphor is very important, but it is placed within a Fatimid cosmological frame; the *hieros gamos* theme is absent; and the theme of the benevolence and anger of the Imam towards his followers and his enemies also occurs.

⁶ Badawī, "Abbasid Poetry and its Antecedents," pp. 149–52.

Another major difference was in the symbolic under-pinning of the two, for Abbasid religious poetry harked back to the tradition of Ka'b b. Zuhayr⁷ and al-Kumayt,⁸ while al-Mu'ayyad's motifs evoked a long heritage of Fatimid theological exposition.

In this manner, al-Mu'ayyad's poetry partially conformed to the poetic conventions of his time. However, he used mostly different motifs and structures. Why did he do so? And what was the nature of the difference?

Unlike those of his Abbasid counterparts, al-Mu'ayyad's panegyrics originated in his sincere belief in the praiseworthiness of his *mamdūh*. His poetic focus on the Imam entailed a particularly da'wa-oriented choice of theological motif and structure. The concept of the Imamate, which lay at the very core of Fatimid belief, was central to his praise-poetry, and the moral and theological qualities of the Imam formed its dominant themes. Additionally, the deliberately patterned⁹ pre-ludes and closures to his panegyrics revolved around a theologically structured pivot: the persona of the Imam.

Motifs: Fatimid Concepts of the Imamate

The Imam is generally accepted to be the supreme leader of the Muslim community.¹⁰ The Sunnis consider the Imamate to be largely a secular office,¹¹ but even so, until the end of the Ottoman empire

⁷ *Qaṣīdat al-Burda: Sharḥ Abī al-Barakāt ibn al-Anbārī*, ed. Maḥmūd Ḥasan Zaynī, Jeddah, 1980.

⁸ *Al-Qaṣā'id al-Hāshimīyyāt*, comm. Ṣ.ʿA. Ṣāliḥ, Beirut, 1982.

⁹ The reason for the formalism of the courtly panegyric poem, according to Sperl (*Mannerism*, p. 26), is that it is a formal testimony of the legitimacy of political—and, in our case, religious—authority; and, he says, the panegyric, “like any liturgy . . . follows a preordained, impersonal pattern.” Al-Mu'ayyad's panegyric poetry might not have been commonly meant for ritual court recitation, but it did provide formal legitimation for the Imam's religio-political jurisdiction, and this was one of the factors that would seem to have contributed to its largely formulaic nature.

¹⁰ For a detailed exposition of the Imamate according to the various Muslim denominations, see W. Madelung, “Imāma,” *EI2*, vol. 3, pp. 1163–69.

¹¹ This is a very general statement that needs qualification: P. Crone and M. Hinds have proved, using early epistolary evidence, that the Islamic caliphate immediately following the Prophet was considered by the entire Muslim community to have sole religious and legal authority. (*God's Caliph: Religious authority in the first centuries of Islam*, Cambridge, 1986). The retroactively “official” Sunni version, largely restricting the Caliph's authority to secular matters, was formulated much later during the “Sunnī

in the early twentieth century, they held it to be essential. The Shi'ā regard the Imamate as eternally essential, and—contrary to the Sunni viewpoint—to be a continuation of the Prophet's role in both its secular and spiritual aspects. They consider the spiritual aspect, in fact, to be the more important one—in other words, whether the Imam wielded actual political power or not was immaterial, for he would always be the highest spiritual authority in any age. They restrict the Imamate to the family of the Prophet, but differ among themselves as to the identity and lineage of the Imam. The Shi'ite Fatimids believe the Imamate continued in a direct line of descent from the Prophet through his daughter Fāṭima (hence their dynastic title, the Fatimids) and her husband, the Prophet's legate 'Alī. Their views on the identity of the Imam and the nature of the Imamate are clearly stated by their chief dā'ī, al-Mu'ayyad, in his poetry.

The Imamate themes utilized in al-Mu'ayyad's praise of the Imam were not new, and had formed an essential part of Fatimid doctrine right from its inception. Earlier Fatimid dā'īs like al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān¹² (d. 363/974) and Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī¹³ (d. 411/1020) had elucidated these themes at great length in their theological prose works. The importance of al-Mu'ayyad in this respect, however, lies in the fact that he was the first person to render these themes systematically into poetry.¹⁴ The poetic medium he employed probably performed

Revival" under the Saljuqs in the sixth/late eleventh century epitomized in the works of al-Māwardī and al-Ghazālī, and later, Ibn Taymiyya.

¹² Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān b. Muḥammad 1) *Kitāb al-Ḥimma fī ādāb atbā' al-a'imma* (a manual for the correct behavior of the Fatimid follower vis-à-vis the Imam), ed. M.K. Ḥusayn, Cairo, [1950s] (best ed.); ed. M. Ghālib, Beirut, 1985; ed. M.Sh. 'A. al-Yamanī al-Harāzī, Beirut, 1996; selections trans. into English by J. Muscati & Kh.B. Moulvi titled *Code of Conduct for the Followers of the Imam*, Karachi, 1950. 2) *Da'ā'im al-Islām* (Fatimid jurisprudence work). Trans. into English as *The Pillars of Islam*. See especially vol. 1, chapter 1, titled *Kitāb al-walāya*, pp. 20–78 (1991 ed.). 3) *Tawīl al-Da'ā'im*, 2 vols., ed. M.Ḥ. al-A'zamī, Cairo, 2nd ed., 1982 (best ed.), ed. 'A. Tāmīr, Beirut, 1995; ed. M.'A. al-Ghaffār, n.d., n.p., and incorrectly titled *Da'ā'im al-Islām*.

¹³ Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 411/1020), *al-Maṣābiḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, ed. M. Ghālib, Beirut reprint, 1996, pp. 61–end; its Imamate doctrine is summarized by S. Makarem in *The Doctrine of the Ismailis*, Beirut, 1972, pp. 37–39. See also an early Tayyibī work on Fatimid ideology by the dā'ī 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 612/1215), *Tāj al-aqā'id wa ma'dīn al-fawā'id*, ed. 'Arif Tāmīr, 1982, doctrine nos. 32–43, pp. 65–82; English paraphrase by W. Ivanow titled *A Creed of the Fatimids*, Bombay, 1936, pp. 37–44.

¹⁴ A large part of the contents of al-Mu'ayyad's *Majālis* is devoted to Imamate motifs, which have been collected in a separate chapter in the *Jāmi' al-ḥaqā'iq*, vol. 1, chap. 6.

a mnemonic function, poetry being easier to memorize and disseminate than prose, and it enabled al-Mu'ayyad to reach a wider audience. The poetic rendering of the ideological themes made them aesthetically and emotionally more appealing to a lay person than an abstract, theological exposition.

Subtly yet powerfully, al-Mu'ayyad portrays the nature of the Imamate according to the Fatimids and depicts the essence of the True Imam's identity, authority, and role.¹⁵ Fatimid ideology completely permeates al-Mu'ayyad's praise imagery, and his poetry cannot be studied intelligibly without reference to it. Indeed, there are several, ever-deepening layers of esotericism in al-Mu'ayyad's poems, and the audience perceives a particular layer based on its own level of acquaintance with Fatimid cosmological symbolism. Either explicitly or by allusion, al-Mu'ayyad's poetic motifs touch upon almost every point made in the corpus of Fatimid doctrinal works about the Imamate. His *Dīwān* thus forms a reference base for Fatimid doctrine regarding the Imamate, and since the Imamate was central to Fatimid belief, it forms a reference base for the entire Fatimid belief system.

Al-Mu'ayyad praises the Imam in his role as Imam—in other words, he does not describe the personal characteristics and virtues of the Imams al-Ẓāhir or al-Mustanṣir, but rather, enumerates their theological qualities, the qualities that any Imam must possess to be a True Imam.¹⁶ To his end, he employs Fatimid cosmological symbolism, such that the majority of his praise motifs are esoteric personifications and Fatimid dogmatic allusions. According to Fatimid theology, each Imam is a different individual, but the qualities that make him the Imam are the same; these are the qualities al-Mu'ayyad usually praises. For example, he describes the Imam's descent from the Prophet, his guidance towards the right path and his leading followers to salvation—all characteristics that emphasize the Imam's "Imam-ness." Thus, all the theological epithets applied to al-Ẓāhir or al-Mustanṣir could also be applied to all the other Imams, as well as to the Prophet Muḥammad and 'Alī.

I have earlier discussed al-Mu'ayyad's most significant praise theme

¹⁵ Cf. Husayn's analysis of some of the Imamate motifs in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry in his Introduction to the *Dīwān*, pp. 69–89.

¹⁶ This approach is similar to the Abbasid poets' portrayal of their Caliph as the ideal Caliph. Cf. Sperl, "Islamic Kingship," p. 34.

in which various theological objects and concepts symbolize the Imam, who is the *mamthūl*. The following is an analysis of eight other important motif groups in al-Muʿayyad's praise of the Imam.

Descent from the Prophet Muḥammad and His Legatee ʿAlī, and the Concept of the Continuity of the Imamate (tasalsul) and Explicit Designation (naṣṣ)

According to Fatimid belief, the Imamate was a continuous chain (*silsila*) stretching from the beginning of time to the end of time, from one Imam to the next, father to son. Expounding on one of their deep doctrines, Fatimid philosophical works state that when the real or "*mustaqarr*" Imam is in physical concealment, a deputy or "*mustawdaʿ*" prophet—or, towards the end of the cycle in the Ṭayyibī daʿwa, a *dāʿī muṭlaq*—has authority vested in him to conduct the daʿwa on behalf of the Imam. All the Qurʾānic prophets were *mustawdaʿ* Imams representing the concealed *mustaqarr* Imams, except Abraham, who was simultaneously a prophet and *mustaqarr* Imam, and Muḥammad, his descendent through the *mustaqarr* line of Ismāʿīl. In a number of places in his *Dīwān*, al-Muʿayyad lays emphasis on this concept of the continuity (*tasalsul*) of the Imamate although without explicit mention of the term itself. He says, for example, that power and wisdom are passed down from father to son within the Imamate,¹⁷ that the *Imām al-ẓamān* is the central pearl in the pearl string of the Prophet's progeny,¹⁸ and that whosoever follows the Imam has followed all the prophets.¹⁹ In addition to his special descent, the Imam must also be explicitly designated (*naṣṣ*) by the preceding Imam, his father;²⁰ using the actual term, al-Muʿayyad praises al-Mustanṣir, saying "The *naṣṣ* of the Imamate has come to him."²¹

Furthermore, the world could not be empty of the physical presence of an Imam for even a split second of time. Thus, al-Muʿayyad says that the Imam's daʿwa is always established,²² and that the stars

¹⁷ #14, p. 239, v. 20; #25, p. 263, quatrain 26.

¹⁸ #18, p. 248, v. 4.

¹⁹ #46, p. 294, v. 41.

²⁰ The Nizārīs believe that the Imamate can also pass from grandfather to grandson.

²¹ #13, p. 237, v. 30.

²² #2, p. 206, v. 143.

and skies attest to the validity of his Imamate.²³ He says there is an Imam present in every age²⁴ who represents all the prophets and Imams who precede him,²⁵ being heir to the “harvest” of their accumulated spiritual heritage.²⁶

The genealogy of the Fatimid Imams was an important aspect of their identity as Imams. They claimed direct descent from Muḥammad, through his daughter Fāṭima and his legatee ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, in a single line of male Imams.²⁷ This line of descent was intrinsic to the Imam’s legitimacy and was a source of uniqueness and great honor. Due to the importance of this aspect of the Imam’s identity, al-Mu’ayyad focuses on the Imam’s lineage, constantly addressing or describing him as descendent of the Prophet Muḥammad. He calls the Imam the Prophet’s son or male offspring (*najl*,²⁸ *ibn*,²⁹ or *salīl*³⁰) and a branch (*far*³¹ or *ghuṣn*³²) from the Prophet’s tree-roots (*aṣl*).³³ He calls the Imams collectively the progeny of the Prophet (*āl*,³⁴ *banūn*,³⁵ or *‘itra*³⁶). He sometimes says the Imam’s genealogy (*nisba*)³⁷ goes back to

²³ #13, p. 237, vv. 32–33; reference to Qur’ān 41:53.

²⁴ #2, p. 205, v. 138.

²⁵ #3, p. 209, v. 53, #4, p. 213, v. 44.

²⁶ #41, p. 287, v. 9; cf. comments by Ḥusayn, *al-Hayāh al-fikriyya*, p. 167.

²⁷ Their dynastic title, the “Fatimids,” simultaneously denotes descent from all three. Al-Mu’ayyad uses this term in his poetry, calling al-Mustanṣir “the Fatimid Imam” (“al-Imām al-fāṭimī,” #13, p. 237, v. 22; #59, p. 311, v. 30), and the Imams collectively the “Fatimids” (*al-fāṭimiyyūn/īn*, #4, p. 213, v. 43; #28, p. 267, v. 11). He also calls them the “Alawites” (*al-‘alawiyyūn/īn*) and their state the “Alawite State” (*al-dawla al-‘alawiyya*) at various places in his *Sīra*, especially in his dialogue with the Fatimid viziers (p. 83) and his letters to the Syrian princes (e.g., p. 166), but this term does not occur in his *Dīwān*.

There have been numerous studies on the genealogy of the Fatimids. See, e.g. Halm, *The Fatimids*, pp. 3–8 (supports the Fatimid claim); A. Hamdani & F. De Blois, “A Re-examination of al-Mahdī’s Letter to the Yemenites on the Genealogy of the Fatimid Caliphs,” *JRAS* 2 (1982), pp. 173–207; H. Hamdani, *On the Genealogy of the Fatimid Caliphs*, Cairo, 1958.

²⁸ #16, p. 243, v. 11; #61, p. 314, v. 9.

²⁹ #8, p. 225, v. 25; #14, p. 239, v. 17; #23, p. 258, v. 57; #24, p. 260, v. 19; #59, p. 312, v. 40.

³⁰ #9, p. 227, v. 26.

³¹ #16, p. 243, v. 13.

³² #7, p. 221, v. 5.

³³ #16, p. 243, v. 13.

³⁴ #12, p. 233, vv. 12–13; #12, p. 234, v. 45; #25, p. 263, quatrain 26; # 27, p. 266, vv. 7; #28, p. 267, v. 12; #58, p. 309, v. 25; #62, p. 322, v. 151.

³⁵ #3, p. 208, v. 33; #47, p. 295, v. 5; #55, p. 304, vv. 33, 35, 45, 48.

³⁶ #27, p. 266, v. 5.

³⁷ #16, p. 243, v. 18.

Muḥammad, and at other times he reverses the formula, calling the Prophet the Imam's progenitor, literally grandfather (*jadd*)³⁸ or father (*ab*).³⁹ Using similar terms of relationship, he also reiterates that the Imam is descended from 'Alī and Fāṭima.⁴⁰ Very often, he mentions all three together:⁴¹

*His grandfather is al-Muṣṭafā,*⁴²
his father 'Alī,
his mother is the best of
*women, al-Batūl.*⁴³

جَدُّهُ الْمُصْطَفَى أَبُوهُ عَلِيٌّ
 أُمُّهُ صَفْوَةُ النِّسَاءِ الْبَتُولُ

The Abbasids contested this claim vigorously, for if the Fatimids' claim of direct descent from the Prophet were accepted, it would invalidate the legitimacy of their own claim to the Islamic caliphate, which was based on a far more distant kinship.⁴⁴ In his *Dīwān*, al-Mu'ayyad indirectly refers to the Abbasids' claim while maintaining the Fatimids' superiority through their descent from 'Alī, asking rhetorically whether the son of al-'Abbās (the Prophet Muḥammad's uncle) could be compared with 'Alī's son.⁴⁵

Referring to the Fatimids belief in the *mustaqarr* Imam rank of the forefathers of the Prophet and 'Alī, al-Mu'ayyad claims the Imam descended from Ma'add and 'Adnān⁴⁶ in addition to Abū Ṭālib.⁴⁷

³⁸ #4, p. 212, v. 24; #5, p. 217, v. 57; #10, p. 228, v. 13; #12, p. 234, v. 33; #18, p. 248, v. 4; #40, p. 284, v. 30; #61, p. 314, v. 10.

³⁹ #7, pp. 221–22, v. 21.

⁴⁰ *Progeny of 'Alī*: #3, p. 208, v. 33; #5, p. 217, v. 57; #7, pp. 221–22, vv. 5, 30, 33; #9, p. 227, v. 26; #16, p. 243, v. 18; #19, p. 249, v. 14; #33, p. 272, v. 6; #37, p. 279, v. 33; #38, p. 281, v. 10; #40, p. 284, v. 30; #48, p. 296, v. 9; #52, p. 300, v. 2; #52, p. 300, v. 15; #55, p. 304, v. 35; #59, p. 312, v. 40; #61, p. 314, vv. 10, 11; #62, p. 319, v. 72. *Progeny of Fāṭima*: #2, p. 206, v. 147 #29, v. 2; #5, p. 217, v. 57; #7, p. 222, v. 30; #29, p. 267, v. 2; #41, p. 288, v. 22; #48, p. 296, v. 9; #62, p. 319, v. 71.

⁴¹ #5, p. 217, v. 57.

⁴² "Al-Muṣṭafā," epithet of the Prophet, lit. the Chosen One.

⁴³ "Al-Batūl," epithet of Fāṭima, lit. a woman detached from worldly things and devoted to God (Lane).

⁴⁴ In Rabī' II 402/1011, the Abbasid Caliph al-Qādir published a referendum refuting the descent of the Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-Ḥākim and his forefathers from 'Alī (and Fāṭima), reviling their moral character and religious beliefs, and cursing them. He required all the scholars in Baghdad and Basra to sign it. The text of the referendum, along with the names of a large number of its signatories, is provided by the twelfth century Abbasid historian Ibn al-Jawzī in *al-Muntaẓam fī tārikh al-mulūk wa al-umam*, Hyderabad Deccan, 1358 [= 1939], vol. 7, pp. 255–56.

⁴⁵ #62, p. 319, v. 72, addressing Abū Kālījār.

⁴⁶ #33, p. 272, v. 9.

⁴⁷ #14, p. 238, v. 13 (vis-à-vis the Banū al-'Abbās).

Referring to other genealogical issues material to the continuity of the Imamate, he mentions the Imam's son-ship from his immediate forebears a number of times: he refers to al-Zāhir as the son of al-Ḥākim,⁴⁸ to al-Mustanṣir as the son of al-Zāhir;⁴⁹ and to al-Mustanṣir again as the descendent of al-Mahdī, the first Fatimid Imam of the period of *ẓuhūr* (the period when the Imam is manifest among the people).⁵⁰ Finally, he calls the present Imam the descendent of all past Imams.⁵¹

These references to genealogy also indirectly confer onto the Imam the qualities of his illustrious forebears. Praise of the Prophet, 'Alī, or Fāṭima, is, by association, also praise of the Imam. Muḥammad's moral superiority over mankind, his role as guide (*hādī*), his special relationship with God,⁵² 'Alī's role as legate⁵³ and cup-bearer of the Kawthar (*sāqī al-kawthar*),⁵⁴ Fāṭima's being "mistress of all the women in the world"⁵⁵—all reflect glory on their descendant, the present Imam. This conferral of qualities is sometimes quite explicitly brought out in the genealogical reference itself, as in the following verse:⁵⁶

<i>How can the glorious deeds of the son of 'Alī be concealed, when 'Alī denotes allegiance.</i>	كَيْفَ تَخْفَى مَنَاقِبُ ابْنِ عَلِيٍّ وَعَلِيٍّ عَلَيَّ الْوَلَايَةِ دَلَالِ
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And in these two:⁵⁷

<i>Your grandfather is the best of [the people], and your father is next to him in might and true nobility,</i>	فَجَدُّكَ خَيْرُهُمْ وَأَبُوكَ تَلَوُّ لَهُ فِي الْعِزِّ وَالشَّرَفِ الصَّمِيمِ
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⁴⁸ #4, p. 213, v. 46; #14, p. 238, v. 2.

⁴⁹ #2, p. 206, v. 147.

⁵⁰ #18, p. 248, v. 1.

⁵¹ #16, p. 243, v. 14; see also #1, p. 198, v. 151.

⁵² #40, p. 284, v. 30.

⁵³ #9, p. 227, v. 26.

⁵⁴ #7, pp. 222, v. 33.

⁵⁵ #5, p. 217, v. 57; reference to Prophetic Hadith "O Fāṭima, my life be ransom for yours, you are the mistress (= best) of all the women in the world."

⁵⁶ #61, p. 314, v. 11.

⁵⁷ #52, p. 300, vv. 15–16.

and you are the third⁵⁸ in
every [avenue of] pride,
this being required by the
straight religion.

وإنك ثالثٌ في كُلِّ فخرٍ
وذلك مُقتَضَى السَّيِّدِينَ الْقَوَّيْمِ

Al-Muʿayyad also directly compares the Imam to Muḥammad and ʿAlī and praises the Imam as the inheritor of their greatness. Muḥammad and ʿAlī, says al-Muʿayyad, are to be seen in their descendant the Imam.⁵⁹ The Imam is the heart,⁶⁰ tongue⁶¹ and eye⁶² of the Prophet Muḥammad and the seal of his glory.⁶³ When you see the Imam in prayer, you see the Prophet in prayer, and when the Imam delivers sermons, the Prophet is doing so. The divine moral qualities (*khalāʾiq lāhūtiyya*) of the Prophet are manifest in the Imam.⁶⁴ The Imam is also ʿAlī's right hand, his sword and his spear.⁶⁵ When the Imam is in battle, ʿAlī is in battle, and when the Imam is on the pulpit, ʿAlī is explicating the divine secrets.⁶⁶ The Imam's light originates from ʿAlī's light.⁶⁷ The Imam is ʿAlī's companion in loftiness,⁶⁸ his representative in glory.⁶⁹ A group of verses dwells at length on this comparison between al-Mustanʿir and his forefathers Muḥammad and ʿAlī.⁷⁰

You meet the Prophet
al-Muṣṭafā when you
meet him,
[in terms of] divine moral
qualities and characteristics;

وَلَقَى النَّبِيَّ الْمُصْطَفَىٰ إِنَّ لَقِيَّتَهُ
خَلَائِقَ لَاهُوتِيَّةٍ وَضُرَائِبَا

⁵⁸ Reference to Qurʾān 36:14 (*“idh arsalnā ilayhimu -thnayni fakadhdhabūhumā fa-ʿazzaznā bi-thālithin,”* “Strike for them a similitude—the inhabitants of the city, when the Envoys came to it; when We sent unto them two men, but they cried them lies, so We sent a third as a reinforcement,” trans. Arberry).

⁵⁹ #58, p. 309, v. 29.

⁶⁰ #14, p. 239, v. 25; #33, p. 272, v. 5.

⁶¹ #33, p. 272, v. 5.

⁶² #14, p. 239, v. 25.

⁶³ #19, p. 249, v. 13.

⁶⁴ #37, p. 279, vv. 29–30.

⁶⁵ #33, p. 272, v. 6.

⁶⁶ #37, p. 279, vv. 31–33.

⁶⁷ #33, p. 272, v. 7.

⁶⁸ #4, p. 213, v. 47.

⁶⁹ #6, p. 220, v. 27.

⁷⁰ #37, p. 279, vv. 29–33.

*you see—when you see him
praying—the Prophet
praying,*

*and you think he is—when
he rises to preach—[the
Prophet] preaching.*

*And if you have not
witnessed the battle-stances
of Haydar,⁷¹*

*and do not know how he
turned away [whole]
battalions,*

*[if] you have not seen him
upon the pulpits preaching,
explicating wondrous things
from the divine secret[s],*

*then witness Ma'add,⁷² his
pure son, [for] you will
find him*

*a companion to him in
elevation, and a representative
[for him] in glory.*

تَرَى مِنْهُ إِنْ صَلَّى النَّبِيَّ مُصَلِّيًا

وَتَحْسَبُهُ إِذْ قَامَ يَخْطُبُ خَاطِبًا

وَإِنْ كُنْتَ لَمْ تَشْهَدْ مَقَامَاتِ حَايِدَرٍ

وَلَمْ تَدْرِ أَيْ كَانِ يُنْبِي الْكُتَّابَا

وَلَمْ تُرَهُ فَوْقَ الْمَنَابِرِ خَاطِبًا

يُبَيِّنُ مِنْ غَيْبِ الْأُمُورِ عَجَائِبَا

فشَاهِدْ مَعَدًّا نَجَلَهُ الطُّهْرَ تَلَقَّاهُ

لَهُ فِي الْعُلَى خِدْنًا وَفِي الْمَجْدِ نَائِبَا

The Imam's Servitude to and Representation of God

In accordance with Fatimid theology, which considers the Imam to be a human being and one of God's creatures, al-Mu'ayyad refers to the Imam's bowing to God in constant prayer⁷³ and his excellence of servitude to Him:⁷⁴

*He is the best of God's
servants among His servants*

هُوَ فِي عِبَادِ اللَّهِ عَيْنُ عِبَادِهِ

However, since Fatimid theology also considers the Imam to be a very special creature of God—the representative of God on earth, who forms the communication channel between God and humankind—al-Mu'ayyad constantly emphasizes this representation. Commensurate with the similarity of the function of parts of the body, for the body

⁷¹ Haydar is a name of 'Alī.

⁷² Ma'add is al-Mustanşir's given name.

⁷³ #4, p. 213, v. 42, #16, p. 243, v. 15.

⁷⁴ #38, p. 281, v. 13.

as a whole, al-Mu'ayyad perceives the Imam as fulfilling various functions within the da'wa. In this way, al-Mu'ayyad presents the anthropomorphic Qur'ānic attributes of God as referring in a *tāwīl* contex to the person of the Imam.⁷⁵ Thus, al-Mu'ayyad depicts the Imam as being the intended meaning of the Qur'ānic phrases denoting God's face, side, hands, and eyes, as in the following verse:⁷⁶

*Your face is the shining
face of God,
and your light is like a
veil from His light;*

فَوَجْهُكَ وَجْهُهُ الْإِلَهِ الْمُنِيرُ
وَنُورُكَ مِنْ نُورِهِ كَالْحِجَابِ

*your hands are God's
outstretched hands,
and you are His side
without doubt.*

يَدَاكَ يَدَا اللَّهِ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ
وَأَنْتَ لَهُ الْجَنْبُ غَيْرَ ارْتِيَابِ

On a similar plane, al-Mu'ayyad presents the Imam as "God's proof" (*ḥujja*,⁷⁷ *burhān*⁷⁸) on earth, standing in place of God for His servants, and "His sword."⁷⁹ The shade of God's mercy is extended through him.⁸⁰ He is God's "elect" (*walī*),⁸¹ "chosen" (*saḥwa*),⁸² and "trustee" (*amīn*).⁸³ He is a touchstone for God's pleasure or displeasure, mercy and ease from God being the Imam's satisfaction, and eclipses and earthquakes indicative of the Imam's anger.⁸⁴ God manifests Himself (*tajallī*) to humankind through the person of the Imam.⁸⁵ And, as al-Mu'ayyad states in the following verse, the Imam is the soul's link to God:⁸⁶

⁷⁵ For a discussion on the question of anthropomorphism in Islam, see J. Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, Berlin & New York, 1991–1997.

⁷⁶ #11, p. 231, vv. 36–37. See also the following verses: Imam God's face: #11, p. 231, v. 36; #33, p. 272, v. 5; #41, p. 287, v. 10; #59, p. 312, v. 39. Imam God's side: #11, p. 231, v. 37; #33, p. 272, v. 5; #59, p. 312, v. 39. Imam God's hands: #11, p. 231, v. 37. Imam God's eyes: #61, p. 314, v. 7.

⁷⁷ #36, p. 277, v. 4; #48, p. 296, v. 4; #37, p. 279, v. 25, v. 26; #61, p. 314, v. 7.

⁷⁸ #11, p. 231, v. 38.

⁷⁹ #11, p. 231, v. 38.

⁸⁰ #3, p. 209, v. 41.

⁸¹ #11, p. 231, v. 34; #12, p. 234, v. 36; #23, p. 257, v. 38; #36, p. 277, v. 7; #48, p. 296, v. 4; #49, p. 297, v. 4; #55, p. 305, v. 48; #61, p. 314, v. 9.

⁸² #12, p. 233, v. 13.

⁸³ #61, p. 314, v. 6.

⁸⁴ #59, p. 311, v. 36.

⁸⁵ #4, p. 212, v. 23.

⁸⁶ #58, p. 311, v. 29; see also #59, p. 311, v. 29.

[My soul] has—through
the Progeny of Ṭāhā—
a means [to come]
to God. Oh what
marvelous means they are!

وإنَّ لَهُا مِنْ آلِ طه وَسِيلةٌ
إلى اللهِ يا لِّلَّهِ تِلْكَ الوَسائِلُ

The Imam's Attributes and Functions

The Fatimid tradition accords great importance to knowledge and learning⁸⁷ and considers them essential attributes of the Imam, which is clear from the prominence al-Mu'ayyad gives to this aspect of the Imam's persona. The Imam, says al-Mu'ayyad, possesses knowledge (*ʿilm*),⁸⁸ wisdom (*ḥikma*),⁸⁹ and good sense (*rushd*).⁹⁰ He is characterized by intelligence (*ḥijā*),⁹¹ thoughtfulness (*fikr*)⁹² and understanding (*fahm*).⁹³ The Imam's knowledge appeals not to the superstitious but to the rational faculty in humans.⁹⁴ With God's permission, it heals diseased souls.⁹⁵ It is so vast that it can be compared to a sea:⁹⁶

Your knowledge is a sea,
and the knowledge
[possessed by all] the people
is like a drop from your
overflowing sea.

عِلْمُكَ بَحْرٌ وَعِلْمُ الْوَرَى
كَقَطْرَةٍ مِنْ بَحْرِكَ الرَّاحِرِ

Al-Mu'ayyad claims that the Imam's knowledge is greater proof (of his legitimacy, among other things) than the proof of Moses' staff. It is victorious and just like Moses' staff it conquers the magicians. Just as Moses made springs of water burst forth from the desert with his staff, the Imam's knowledge brings forth the water of life:⁹⁷

⁸⁷ For a detailed exposition of the Fatimids' tradition of learning, see Halm, *The Fatimids and their Traditions of Learning*.

⁸⁸ #13, v. 30; #2, p. 204, v. 109; #5, p. 218, v. 58; #12, p. 234, v. 22; #25, p. 264, quatrain 28; #62, p. 322, v. 153.

⁸⁹ See next paragraph for details and references.

⁹⁰ #15, p. 241, v. 26.

⁹¹ #62, p. 322, v. 153.

⁹² #25, p. 264, quatrain 29.

⁹³ #25, p. 264, quatrain 27; #62, p. 322, v. 153.

⁹⁴ #7, p. 222, v. 36.

⁹⁵ #13, p. 237, v. 30; #19, p. 240, v. 4. The early Ismāʿīlī neoplatonists, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ (Pure Brethren), also emphasized the idea of divine knowledge as the cure for souls diseased with ignorance (see my article, "Healing the Soul: Perspectives of Medieval Muslim Writers," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 2, 1995, pt. 2, pp. 62–87, esp. pp. 67–70).

⁹⁶ #14, p. 239, v. 28.

⁹⁷ #7, p. 222, vv. 34–36.

*The proof of your
knowledge is above
the proof of the Staff:
in every instance it
conquers the magicians;*

*it makes the water of life
spring forth, when
life did not spring forth
from [the Staff].*

*It is clear intellectuality, not
a superstitious fable
narrated—that which is
witnessed is not like
reported [tradition].*

بُرْهَانُ عِلْمِكَ فَوْقَ بُرْهَانِ الْعَصَا

فِي كُلِّ حِينٍ غَالِبٌ لِمُسَحَّرٍ

وَمُفَجَّرُ مَاءِ الْحَيَاةِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ

مِنْ وَقَعَهَا الْحَيَوَانُ بِالْمُتَفَجَّرِ

وَعِيَانٌ عَقْلٍ لَا حَدِيثُ خُرَافَةٍ

يُرَوَّى وَلَيْسَ مُشَاهَدٌ كَالْمُخْبَرِ

He says that like Jesus the Imam has been given wisdom in the cradle,⁹⁸ but his wisdom also cures dumbness for which even Jesus was not reputed.⁹⁹ Wisdom can be gained by the seeker only from his house,¹⁰⁰ for his share of wisdom is the essence (*zubad*, i.e. *bāṭin* or inner knowledge) of the Sharī'a, while others have from it only ephemeral foam (*zabad*, referring to *ẓāhir* or exoteric knowledge).¹⁰¹ The details of all things (*daqā'iq*)¹⁰² are contained in his knowledge, for he has been singled out for knowledge,¹⁰³ and wisdom has been passed down to him in the line of the Prophet, father to son.¹⁰⁴ He is master of the inner knowledge (*tāwīl*).¹⁰⁵ He revivifies the dead from ignorance with his wisdom and generosity.¹⁰⁶ The following verses elucidate a large number of the above knowledge related themes:¹⁰⁷

*God will not extinguish
the light of the mind,
certainly not! And He will not
kindle the fire of ignorance.*

مَا اللَّهُ بِالْمُطْفِئِ نَوْرِ الْعَقْلِ

كَأَنَّ لَا الْمَوْقِدِ نَارَ الْجَهْلِ

⁹⁸ #18, p. 248, v. 1.

⁹⁹ #25, p. 263, quatrain 22.

¹⁰⁰ #18, p. 248, v. 1; #25, p. 263, quatrain 21, reference to the historical Bayt al-Ḥikma (also called the Dār al-ʿIlm) in Cairo built by the Imam al-Ḥākim.

¹⁰¹ #25, p. 263, quatrain 33–34.

¹⁰² #25, p. 263, quatrain 25.

¹⁰³ #57, p. 307, v. 5.

¹⁰⁴ #25, p. 263, quatrain 26.

¹⁰⁵ #2, p. 204, v. 104.

¹⁰⁶ #2, p. 204, v. 110; #3, pp. 208, 209, vv. 35, 54; #17, p. 246, v. 39; #25, p. 262, quatrain 15.

¹⁰⁷ #2, p. 204, vv. 102–10.

So strive towards the
sanctuary of a
safeguarding house
that is surrounded by good
fortune and auspiciousness—

whose Revelation is
strengthened by *tāwīl*,
and whose Law is
adorned by reason,

who wrests souls from
their darkness
and extracts fruits from
their coverings—¹⁰⁸

and you will see suns
of perspicuity, shining,
and a favor that is specific
and general, abundant,

and a wisdom that cures
breasts, brilliant,
and a mercy that revivifies
hearts, abounding.

[Strive towards] the refuge
of the Prophet and the
legatee Haydara
and the pure, purified progeny,

[it is] a spring of knowledge
whose water slakes
extreme thirst,
and everything other than
their word is but an echo;

[they are] the resurrectors
of dead bones
by great, overflowing favors.

فَاسْتَعُوا إِلَى حَرِيمٍ بَيَّتِ آمِنٍ

قَدْ حُفَّ بِالسَّعْدِ وَالْمَيَامِنِ

تَنْزِيلُهُ أَيْدٍ بِالتَّوِيلِ
وَشَرْعُهُ زِيْنٌ بِالْمَعْقُولِ

يَسْتَخْلِصُ الْأَرْوَاحَ مِنْ ظَلَامِهَا
وَيُخْرِجُ الثَّمَارَ مِنْ أَكْمَامِهَا

تَرَوْا شُمُوسًا لِلْبَيَانِ بَارِغَةً
وِنِعْمَةً خَصَّصَتْ وَعَمَّتْ سَابِغَةً

وَحِكْمَةً تَشْفِي الصُّدُورَ بَارِغَةً
وَرَحْمَةً تُحْيِي الْقُلُوبَ وَاسِغَةً

حَمَى النَّبِيَّ وَالْوَصِيَّ حَيْدَرَةً

وَالْعَتَرَةَ الطَّاهِرَةَ الْمُطَهَّرَةَ

مَنْهَلٍ عِلْمٍ مَأْوُهُ يَشْفِي الصَّدَى

وَمَا عَدَا قَوْلِهِمْ فَهَوَ الصَّدَى

الْمُنْشِرُونَ مَيِّتَ الْعِظَامِ

بِالْمِنَنِ الْفَائِضَةِ الْعِظَامِ

Al-Mu'ayyad declares that the Imam teaches his followers and gives them right guidance: he extracts treasures of meanings (*ma'ānī*), removes doubt,¹⁰⁹ and explains the realities (*ḥaqā'iq*) of religion;¹¹⁰ he establishes Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) and nullifies Falsehood (*al-bāṭil*);¹¹¹ with the

¹⁰⁸ Reference to Qur'ān 41:47.

¹⁰⁹ #2, p. 205, v. 142; #3, p. 210, v. 59; #5, p. 217, v. 56.

¹¹⁰ #12, p. 234, v. 24; #25, p. 263, quatrain 25.

¹¹¹ #4, p. 213, v. 55; #14, p. 239, v. 31; #48, p. 296, v. 7; #59, p. 311, v. 37.

eloquent exposition of the Imams Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn and Jaʿfar al-Šādiq, he removes the confusion created by the founders of two Sunni law schools al-Shāfiʿī and Mālik;¹¹² he explicates the Qurʾān,¹¹³ having knowledge of its ambiguous verses.¹¹⁴ He shows what is legally permissible (*ḥalāl*) and what is prohibited (*ḥarām*).¹¹⁵ He is the one who orders (*āmīr*) the good and forbids (*nāḥī*) the evil.¹¹⁶

On a metaphysical plane, the Imam's foundation (*asās*) is upon the First Intellect (*ʿaql*) and the Universal Soul (*naḥs*), and therefore he is elevated in both body (*kathīf*) and soul (*laṭīf*).¹¹⁷ He is created from God's light (*nūr*),¹¹⁸ and is of a special matter (*tīna*) that gives rise to the souls of the believers, as in the following verse addressing the Imam:¹¹⁹

*Your bodies give rise
to the matter
from which our souls
are sprouted.*

إِنَّ أَجْسَادَكُمْ لَنَاشِئَةُ الطُّلُوعِ
الَّذِي شُقِّقَ مِنْهُ مِنَّا الْقُلُوبُ

Al-Muʿaḥḥad professes that the Imam is the true path (*maslak*) of the soul¹²⁰ and the praiseworthy station (*al-maqām al-maḥmūd*).¹²¹ He is pure (*tāhir*, *ṭayyib*, *zākī*),¹²² the best of all people (*khayr al-anām*,¹²³ *khayr al-warāʾ*).¹²⁴ At death, he rises beyond this world beyond the domain of Jupiter and Saturn. When believers die, their souls go to him.¹²⁵

¹¹² #7, p. 222, v. 28. Al-Muʿaḥḥad probably singles out Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn and Jaʿfar al-Šādiq for mention because their piety and veracity are acknowledged by the entire Muslim community and the Twelver Shiʿite Jaʿfarī school of law trace their roots to Jaʿfar al-Šādiq. The other Imam of this standing, Jaʿfar's father Muḥammad al-Bāqir, is not mentioned; such an omission—here, probably due to the dictates of meter—would be surprising in a prose work.

¹¹³ #33, p. 272, v. 15.

¹¹⁴ #6, p. 220, v. 28.

¹¹⁵ #16, p. 243, v. 14.

¹¹⁶ #14, p. 239, v. 29.

¹¹⁷ #16, pp. 243–44, vv. 18–19. The First Intellect and the Universal Soul are believed in Fatimid dogma to spiritually aid and inspire the Imam. Therefore, whatever he does is based upon the foundation of their aid and inspiration.

¹¹⁸ #25, p. 265, quatrain 32.

¹¹⁹ #3, p. 209, v. 50.

¹²⁰ #55, p. 305, v. 40.

¹²¹ #61, p. 314, v. 7. Reference to Qurʾān 17:79.

¹²² #4, p. 213, vv. 42r, 46; #7, p. 221, v. 1; #16, p. 243, v. 16; #28, p. 267, v. 11, #36, p. 277, v. 4; #37, p. 279, v. 21; #62, p. 322, v. 151.

¹²³ #8, p. 225, v. 21; #61, p. 314, v. 7.

¹²⁴ #9, p. 227, v. 23.

¹²⁵ #12, p. 234, v. 17, #59, p. 312, v. 42.

He is the essence (*ṣafwa*) of all good people (*al-abrār*),¹²⁶ of all those who walk the earth,¹²⁷ the reason for (*ghāya*, *niḥāya*) all creation:¹²⁸

[The Imams] are the
reason for every person
whom God created,
the end of His creation,
and [its] well-being.

هُم نِهَآيَاتُ كُلِّ مَن بَرَّ اللَّهَ
وِغَايَاتُ خَلْقِهِ وَالسَّلامُ

In the closures to his panegyrics especially, al-Mu'ayyad emphasizes the Imam's role as succor for his followers in this world and the next. He uses a large number of near synonyms to describe the Imam in this capacity: the Imam is the refuge (*ʿiṣma*) of good sense and Truth from perdition and error;¹²⁹ the preparation (*ʿudda*) for the Return—for that time of difficulty when sons and property are of no avail;¹³⁰ the provision (*ʿatād*) and the pillar (*ʿimād*) for the Hereafter;¹³¹ the succor (*ghiyāth*, *ghawth*) for the sinner at the time of death;¹³² the protection (*maljaʿ*) and safety (*manjā*) for his servants;¹³³ the shelter (*maʿādh*) from the evil of humans and jinnis.¹³⁴ He is the one who gives victory (*nāṣir*).¹³⁵ He is the treasure (*dhukhr*) in both the worlds,¹³⁶ the sanctuary (*mustajār*),¹³⁷ and the safe haven (*amān*, *maʿman*)¹³⁸ for the soul—the one who steadies the Believer when he stumbles (*muqīl al-ʿathra*).¹³⁹ He is the hope (*murtajā*)¹⁴⁰ and the shield (*junna*) from hellfire,¹⁴¹ the cool shade (*ẓill ẓalīl*),¹⁴² and the one to whom a sorrowful person can pour out his troubles (*mushtakā al-ḥuẓn*).¹⁴³ He is

¹²⁶ #14, p. 239, v. 29.

¹²⁷ #17, p. 246, v. 36; #49, p. 297, v. 2; #62, p. 322, v. 151.

¹²⁸ #12, p. 233, v. 16.

¹²⁹ #2, p. 205, v. 125; #28, p. 267, v. 12; #36, p. 277, v. 5; #59, p. 312, v. 42.

¹³⁰ #2, p. 206, v. 148; #3, p. 208, v. 33; #4, p. 213, v. 49; #7, p. 221, v. 16; #18, p. 248, v. 2; #39, p. 282, v. 16; #48, p. 296, v. 5; #55, p. 304, v. 37.

¹³¹ #7, p. 221, v. 16.

¹³² #3, p. 209, vv. 46–47; #14, p. 239, v. 23.

¹³³ #14, p. 239, v. 24.

¹³⁴ #22, p. 254, v. 3.

¹³⁵ #23, p. 257, v. 38.

¹³⁶ #36, p. 277, v. 11; #39, p. 282, v. 16; #48, p. 296, v. 5.

¹³⁷ #3, p. 209, v. 38; #39, p. 282, v. 16.

¹³⁸ #4, p. 213, v. 49; #22, p. 254, v. 12; #55, p. 305, v. 39.

¹³⁹ #14, p. 239, v. 25.

¹⁴⁰ #4, p. 213, v. 52; #5, p. 217, v. 55; #7, p. 221, v. 16; #9, p. 227, v. 24.

¹⁴¹ #22, p. 254, v. 1.

¹⁴² #9, p. 227, v. 25.

¹⁴³ #55, p. 305, v. 39.

the intercessor (*shāfiʿ*) at the Return.¹⁴⁴ His prayer (*duʿāʾ*) dispels cares,¹⁴⁵ and his opinion is the one sought in times of danger. The following verses address the Imam as refuge:¹⁴⁶

O rain cloud for the one who puts his hopes in him, O succor for him, his sanctuary-granting neighbor from his oppressive Fate.	يَا غَیْثَ رَاجِئِهِ وَيَا غَوَّثَهُ وَجَارَهُ مِنْ دَفَرِهِ الْجَائِرِ
O protection for the weak and safety for them, O steadier of the stumbler when he stumbles.	يَا مُلْجَأَ الضَّعْفَى وَمَنْجَاهَهُمْ وَيَا مُقَيِّلَا عَثْرَةَ الْعَاثِرِ

Al-Muʿayyad depicts the Imam as the true Islamic ruler: he undertakes the welfare (*ṣalāḥ*) of all people,¹⁴⁷ saves souls, and is responsible for the salvation of mankind.¹⁴⁸ He is the leader (*al-sayyid*),¹⁴⁹ the high-minded king (*humām*),¹⁵⁰ and the master of the people (*mālik al-riqāb*, lit. necks).¹⁵¹ He is the caretaker for the true creed,¹⁵² and the protector of the Kaʿba.¹⁵³ The Imam leads in Sharīʿa rites, in prayer, fasting and alms-giving (*zakāt*)¹⁵⁴ and he makes certain the mandatory religious duty (*farḍ*) and the Tradition (*sunna*) are kept alive.¹⁵⁵ The Imam protects God's religion¹⁵⁶ and strengthens it.¹⁵⁷ He destroys idols¹⁵⁸ and kills tyrants, striking them with shame and ignominy and his striking is actually God's striking.¹⁵⁹

¹⁴⁴ #6, p. 220, v. 24.

¹⁴⁵ #37, p. 279, v. 37; see also #10, p. 228, v. 11.

¹⁴⁶ #14, p. 239, vv. 23–24.

¹⁴⁷ #22, p. 254, v. 8.

¹⁴⁸ #2, p. 204, v. 105; #13, p. 236, v. 12; #25, p. 264, quatrain 29; #49, p. 297, v. 5.

¹⁴⁹ #59, p. 311, v. 37.

¹⁵⁰ #22, p. 254, v. 9.

¹⁵¹ #11, p. 231, v. 34.

¹⁵² #25, p. 264, quatrain 27, line 54.

¹⁵³ #24, p. 260, v. 20.

¹⁵⁴ #2, p. 205, v. 140.

¹⁵⁵ #22, p. 254, v. 5.

¹⁵⁶ #48, p. 296, v. 9.

¹⁵⁷ #12, p. 234, v. 21.

¹⁵⁸ #12, p. 234, v. 21.

¹⁵⁹ #19, p. 250, v. 18. See also #7, p. 222, vv. 21–27; #14, p. 238, v. 7; #22, p. 254, v. 6; #61, p. 314, v. 7.

*You struck your enviers
with ignominy, and it
was not
you that struck, but rather,
God struck.*¹⁶⁰

رَمَيْتَ بِالْحِزْبِ حَاسِدِيكَ وَمَا
رَمَيْتَ لَكِنَّمَا إِلَهُ رَمَى

Al-Mu'ayyad asserts that the Imam also has all the attributes of a good human being: he is characterized by auspiciousness (*yumn*)¹⁶¹ and felicity (*sa'd*, *sa'āda*).¹⁶² He possesses generosity (*jūd*,¹⁶³ *karam*,¹⁶⁴ *ihsān*,¹⁶⁵ *nadā*,¹⁶⁶ *mann*,¹⁶⁷ *ni'ma*)¹⁶⁸ and nobility (*majd*),¹⁶⁹ glory (*fakhr*),¹⁷⁰ high merit (*fadl*),¹⁷¹ and superiority (*taf'dīl*).¹⁷² He has justice (*adl*)¹⁷³ and mercy (*rahma*). He has high consequence (*sha'n*),¹⁷⁴ and victory (*fath*), divine aid (*naṣr*),¹⁷⁵ and might (*'izz*),¹⁷⁶ such that all people, even kings, are his servants.¹⁷⁷ He has honor (*sharaf*)¹⁷⁸ and goodness (*birr*),¹⁷⁹ forbearance (*hilm*)¹⁸⁰ and all lofty traits (*ma'ālī*,¹⁸¹ *makrūmāt*)¹⁸²

¹⁶⁰ Reference to Qur'ān 8:17.

¹⁶¹ #2, p. 204, v. 103; #18, p. 248, v. 5; #58, p. 309, v. 26.

¹⁶² #2, p. 204, v. 103; #4, p. 214, v. 61; #5, p. 218, v. 58; #7, p. 221, v. 14; #9, p. 227, v. 22; #10, p. 228, v. 10; #12, p. 234, v. 18; #13, p. 236, v. 11; #15, p. 241, vv. 26, 28; #18, p. 248, v. 3; #24, p. 260, v. 20; #52, p. 300, v. 4.

¹⁶³ #17, p. 246, v. 38–39; #25, p. 265, quatrain 31.

¹⁶⁴ #2, p. 204, v. 110; #19, p. 249, v. 2; #62, p. 322, v. 151.

¹⁶⁵ #33, p. 272, v. 2.

¹⁶⁶ #49, p. 297, v. 4.

¹⁶⁷ #22, p. 254, v. 11; #22, p. 254, v. 12.

¹⁶⁸ #4, p. 213, v. 58; #7, p. 222, vv. 37–39; #13, p. 237, v. 23; #16, p. 243, v. 10; #58, p. 309, v. 21.

¹⁶⁹ #3, p. 208, v. 34; #4, p. 213, v. 44; #5, p. 218, v. 58; #6, p. 220, v. 22; #7, p. 221, v. 6; #10, p. 228, v. 12; #11, p. 231, v. 34; #19, p. 249, vv. 1, 13; #25, p. 264, quatrain 30; #59, p. 311, v. 37.

¹⁷⁰ #4, p. 213, v. 43; v. 24; #12, p. 234, v. 28; #14, p. 239, v. 27.

¹⁷¹ #4, p. 213, v. 43; #22, p. 254, v. 4; #25, p. 264, quatrain 30; #62, p. 322, v. 152.

¹⁷² #5, p. 217, v. 53.

¹⁷³ #4, p. 213, v. 46; #16, p. 243, v. 7; #25, p. 264, quatrain 30; #33, p. 272, v. 2; #48, p. 296, v. 1; #62, p. 322, v. 152.

¹⁷⁴ #7, p. 222, v. 20.

¹⁷⁵ #58, p. 309, v. 26.

¹⁷⁶ #13, p. 236, v. 13; #13, p. 237, v. 20; #14, p. 239, vv. 19–20; #52, p. 300, vv. 15–16.

¹⁷⁷ #12, p. 234, v. 30; #16, p. 244, v. 20; #33, p. 272, v. 11; #13, p. 236, v. 9.

¹⁷⁸ #14, p. 239, v. 21; #17, p. 246, v. 37; #19, p. 249, v. 2; #52, p. 300, vv. 15–16.

¹⁷⁹ #14, p. 239, v. 29; #25, p. 264, quatrain 29; #62, p. 322, v. 151.

¹⁸⁰ #25, p. 264, quatrain 27.

¹⁸¹ #4, p. 212, v. 27.

¹⁸² #33, p. 272, v. 2.

‘uluww,¹⁸³ *manāqib*¹⁸⁴). He has piety (*taqwā*),¹⁸⁵ probity (*ṣidq*),¹⁸⁶ and Right (*ḥaqq*).¹⁸⁷

The Imam's Role vis-à-vis the Prophets,¹⁸⁸ and His Similarity to Jesus

Referring to the role of the Imams as *mustaqarr*, or real Imams, al-Mu‘ayyad praises them as the benefactors of the prophets who are *mustawda‘*, their deputies. The Imams, he says, gave the prophets the strength to perform their miraculous tasks: Adam, says al-Mu‘ayyad, received the Imam [as the Word] of his Lord and took refuge in him, thus being saved.¹⁸⁹ It was because of the Imam that Noah’s ark floated,¹⁹⁰ Shem attained glory,¹⁹¹ Abraham was saved from the flames,¹⁹² Moses was able to vanquish (Pharoah) with his staff, and the sea parted for him.¹⁹³ It was because of the Imam that David was endowed with finality in judgment (*faṣl al-khiṭāb*),¹⁹⁴ Solomon’s kingdom was strengthened,¹⁹⁵ and Jesus raised the dead.¹⁹⁶ In one set of verses, he attributes the miracles of several prophets recorded by the Qur’ān to the representative of all the Imams, al-Mustanṣir.¹⁹⁷

*Adam received him [al-Mustanṣir]
from his Lord,
thus repenting and meeting
with a good Returning.*

تَلَقَّاهُ آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ
فَتَابَ وَصَادَفَ حُسْنَ الْمَأْبِ

¹⁸³ #17, p. 246, v. 35; #27, p. 266, v. 5; #33, p. 272, v. 1.

¹⁸⁴ #61, p. 314, v. 11.

¹⁸⁵ #14, p. 239, v. 22; #33, p. 272, v. 2.

¹⁸⁶ #25, p. 264, quatrain 27; #48, p. 296, v. 2.

¹⁸⁷ #25, p. 264, quatrain 27; #48, p. 296, v. 2; #59, p. 312, v. 42; #62, p. 322, v. 152.

¹⁸⁸ The stories of the prophets in al-Mu‘ayyad’s *Dīwān* are discussed by Ḥusayn in his Introduction to the *Dīwān*, pp. 134–50.

¹⁸⁹ #11, p. 231, v. 27; #12, p. 234, v. 31; #19, p. 249, v. 7.

¹⁹⁰ #11, p. 231, v. 28; #12, p. 234, v. 31; #19, p. 249, v. 8.

¹⁹¹ #12, p. 234, v. 31.

¹⁹² #11, p. 231, v. 29; #19, p. 249, v. 9.

¹⁹³ #7, p. 222, v. 34; #11, p. 231, v. 30; #19, p. 249, v. 10.

¹⁹⁴ #11, p. 231, v. 31; #19, p. 249, v. 11.

¹⁹⁵ #11, p. 231, v. 31.

¹⁹⁶ #11, p. 231, v. 32. Al-Mu‘ayyad also calls the Imam “Joseph in the land of Egypt,” #32, p. 271, v. 10.

¹⁹⁷ #11, p. 231, vv. 27–32; all the verses contain allusions to the Qur’ānic narratives of the prophets.

*Next, when the water
raged, through him did
God set forth [Noah's]
ark in the billows.*

فَلَمَّا طَغَى الْمَاءُ أَجْرَى بِهِ
سَفِينَتُهُ رَبُّهَا فِي الْعُجْبَابِ

*Just as it was said
“Be!” and
the fire became safety
through him, and coolness,
after flaming up.*

كَمَا قِيلَ كُونِي فَكَأَنْتَ سَلَامًا
وَبَرْدًا بِهِ النَّارُ بَعْدَ الْتِهَابِ

*And through him did
the Staff conquer those
who disobeyed,
so that all difficulties
yielded for Moses.*

وَمِنْهُ الْعَصَا قَهَرَتْ مَنْ عَصَى
فَلَأَنْتَ لِمُوسَى جَمِيعُ الصُّعَابِ

*Solomon's kingdom became
strengthened through him,
and David was granted
finality in judgment.*

وَشُدَّ بِهِ لِسُلَيْمَانَ مُلْكُ
وَأُوْتِيَ دَاوُدُ فَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ

*Through him did the Spirit
[Jesus] return the spirit
of life
to those whose life (lit.
spirit) was seized, after
the seizing.*

بِهِ الرُّوحُ رَدَّدَ رُوحَ الْحَيَاةِ
لِمُنْتَهَبِ الرُّوحِ بَعْدَ انْتِهَابِ

Al-Mu'ayyad singles out Jesus for a large number of comparisons with the Imam al-Mustanşir.¹⁹⁸ This attention is presumably because of the very young age of both Jesus (just born) and al-Mustanşir (seven years) at the time of their accession to prophethood and the Imamate, respectively. Another reason might be the large number of Coptic Christians in Egypt, who would be an indirect target audience for al-Mu'ayyad's proselytizing efforts.¹⁹⁹ Al-Mu'ayyad also compares the Imam to the men who propagated the faith of Jesus, such as Simon Peter²⁰⁰ and [John] the Baptist.²⁰¹ More significantly and voluminously, however, al-Mu'ayyad depicts al-Mustanşir as the Qur'anic Jesus, for, he says, al-Mustanşir obtained the Imamate as a child and—presumably a *tāwīl* allusion—talked to people as a new-

¹⁹⁸ Cf. comments on al-Mu'ayyad's comparison of al-Mustanşir to Jesus in Smoor, "Master of the Century," pp. 142–45.

¹⁹⁹ See discussion of this issue in chap. on "Motivation."

²⁰⁰ #25, p. 262, quatrain 16.

²⁰¹ #25, p. 262, quatrain 20.

born.²⁰² In fact, he goes further and portrays al-Mustanʿir as superior to Jesus, for although Jesus brought the dead to life and cured the blind, al-Mustanʿir brought dead souls to life and cured the spiritually blind through knowledge.²⁰³ The following is a set of verses that dwells on the Jesus comparison in its various aspects:²⁰⁴

*Many a friend, a hypocrite
like the enemy*

—*I do not see except as a
misguiding enemy!*—

*came to me bewildered,
and said in [his]
ignorance:*

*“I do not see a likeness
to the Messiah among
[all] the people.*

*“For verily, Jesus spoke with
God in the cradle
as an infant, and spoke with
people in middle-age.”*

*I said: “This, the master of
the world Maʿadd,
obtained the kingdom and
the Imamate as a child.”*

*He said: “Jesus openly
revivified the dead.”*

*I said: “Slowly, O you who
lack understanding, slowly!*

*“Verily, this is the master
of the world Maʿadd,
he revivifies those who die of
ignorance, through
knowledge.”*

*He said: “Jesus cured the
blind.” I said: “My master
Maʿadd removes blindness
if it appears.”*

وَصَدِيقٍ مِثْلَ الْعَدُوِّ مُدَاجٍ

لَا أَرَاهُ إِلَّا عَصِيًّا مُضِيًّا

جَاءَنِي حَائِرًا فَقَالَ بِجَهْلٍ

مَا أَرَى لِلْمَسِيحِ فِي النَّاسِ شَكْلًا

إِنَّ عِيسَى قَدْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهَ فِي الْمَهْدِ

صَبِيًّا وَكَلَّمَ النَّاسَ كَهْلًا

قُلْتُ هَذَا مَوْلَى الْأَنْعَامِ مَعْدٌ

قَدْ حَوَى الْمُلْكَ وَالْإِمَامَةَ طِفْلًا

قَالَ عِيسَى أَحْيَى الْمَوَاتِ جَهَارًا

قُلْتُ مَهْلًا يَا نَاقِصَ الْفَهْمِ مَهْلًا

إِنَّ هَذَا مَوْلَى الْأَنْعَامِ مَعْدٌ

هُوَ يُحْيِي بِالْعِلْمِ مَنْ مَاتَ جَهْلًا

قَالَ عِيسَى أَبْرَأَ الْعَمَى قُلْتُ مَوْلَايَ

مَعْدٌ يَحْلُو الْعَمَى إِنْ تَحَلَّى

²⁰² #15, p. 241, vv. 36–37; reference to Qurʾān 19:29–33.

²⁰³ #61, p. 315, vv. 13–22.

²⁰⁴ #61, p. 315, vv. 16–24. Cf. comments on this set of verses by Smoor in “Master of the Century,” p. 144.

He said: "Enough! You have
answered me with an esoteric
answer
in which you have expounded
rationally to me."

Then he turned away from me
acknowledging the merit
of the Imam of right guidance,
and I went forth proudly.

قَالَ حَسْبِيَ أَجَبْتَنِي بِحَوَابٍ

بِطَائِفٍ بَيَّنَّتْ لِي فِيهِ عَقْلًا

ثُمَّ وَلَّى عَنِّي مُقِرًّا بِفَضْلٍ

لِإِمَامٍ الْمُدَى وَرُحْتُ مُدْلًا

The Qur'ān's Praise of the Imam

Al-Mu'ayyad refers time and again to the Fatimid belief that the Qur'ān praises the Imams and offers proof of their legitimacy. Some *sūras*, he says, like the "*sūrat hal atā*," are specifically for their glorification,²⁰⁵ especially the verses in it that refer to those who "fulfill their vows" (*yūfūna bi al-nadhr*).²⁰⁶ He adds that God swears oaths by them, for God's swearing oaths by the "setting-places of the stars" (*mawāqī' al-nujūm*)²⁰⁷ and "the star" (*wa al-naǧm*)²⁰⁸ refers to the Imams. They are the "favor" (*al-na'im*) bestowed by God upon the people and for whom God will make people accountable on the Day of Judgment.²⁰⁹ They are praised in the Qur'ān as the "third" (*thālith*) in might and honor (after Muḥammad and 'Alī).²¹⁰ They are the ones for whose legitimacy the Revelation offers proofs.²¹¹ They are the ones meant by the Qur'anic verse "Obey God, obey the Prophet and those in command amongst you" (*aṭī'u llāha wa aṭī'u r-rasūla wa ulī l-amri minkum*).²¹² They are also the ones meant in the

²⁰⁵ Qur'ān, *sūra* 76. #4, p. 212, v. 27; #55, p. 304, v. 35. G. van den Berg identifies this *sūra* as a common theme in the minstrel poetry of the Ismā'īlīs of Badakhshan (she mistakenly construes it as "*sūra-yi al-aṭā*." No such *sūra* exists; the error is probably due to the Persianate pronunciation in the Central Asian region. Moreover, as she remarks elsewhere, the "h" is often dropped in orthography by the people of this region, which is probably the basis for the inaccuracy in their pronunciation, and, therefore, in her transcription (*Minstrel Poetry from the Pamir Mountains: A Study on the Songs and Poems of the Ismā'īlīs of Badakhshan*, Ph.d. thesis, University of Leiden, 1997, pp. 265, 268).

²⁰⁶ Qur'ān 76:7. #55, p. 304, v. 34.

²⁰⁷ Qur'ān 56:75. #12, p. 234, vv. 25–26.

²⁰⁸ Qur'ān 53:1. #55, p. 304, v. 36.

²⁰⁹ Qur'ān 102:8. #52, p. 300, v. 10.

²¹⁰ Qur'ān 36:14. #52, p. 300, vv. 15–16.

²¹¹ #59, p. 312, v. 39.

²¹² Qur'ān 4:59. #2, p. 205, vv. 125–38.

Qur'anic verse, "You are the best community that has been brought forth for the people" (*kuntum khayra ummatin ukhrijat li n-nās*).²¹³ In the following verses of poetry, al-Mu'ayyad says the Imams are the ones meant by the Qur'anic verse, "[O Muḥammad,] you are but a Warner, and for every community there is a guide" (*innamā anta mundhirun wa li-kulli qaṣmin hādīn*).²¹⁴

*His grandfather is the
Warner whom God sent
to the people, a refuge of
right understanding.*

*and it was [the Imam's]
forefathers that God meant
when He,
Most High, said: "For every
community there is a guide."*

جَدُّهُ الْمُنْذِرُ الَّذِي بَعَثَ اللَّهُ
إِلَى الْخَلْقِ عَصْمَةً لِلرَّشَادِ
وَلِأَبَائِهِ عَنْهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ قَالَ
تَعَالَى لِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

The Imam's titles

In his use of titles for the Fatimid Imam, al-Mu'ayyad focuses on the Imam's role as religious leader. In terms of quantity, he most commonly uses the title of "*Imām*," with all its variations and modifications, including "*Imām al-ẓamān*" (Imam of the Age, i.e. the present Imam).²¹⁵ One of al-Mu'ayyad's many verses that refer to al-Mustanṣir as the Imam is the following:²¹⁶

*...for I have met the
Imam of the Age,
and that has never ceased to
be my utmost wish.*

فَأُنِيتُ لِقَائِ إِمَامِ الزَّمَانِ
وَمَا زَالَ ذَلِكَ قَصْرَى الْأَمَانِ

²¹³ Qur'ān 3:110. #4, p. 213, v. 41.

²¹⁴ Qur'ān 13:7. #36, p. 277, vv. 5–6.

²¹⁵ *Imām/a'imma* (#5, p. 218, v. 60; #6, p. 220, v. 22; #7, p. 221, v. 1; #12, p. 234, v. 20; #13, p. 236, vv. 9–11; #15, p. 241, v. 35; #17, p. 246, v. 38; #22, p. 254, vv. 1–9; #36, p. 277, v. 4; #37, p. 279, v. 27; #58, p. 309, v. 25; #61, p. 314, v. 9; #62, p. 322, v. 152.) *Imām al-ẓamān* (#6, p. 220, vv. 20, 31; #22, p. 254, v. 1; #23, p. 258, v. 57; #55, p. 301, v. 4; #38, p. 281, v. 11; #41, p. 288, v. 19.) *Imām al-ʿaṣr* (#8, p. 225, v. 23.) *Imām al-hudā* (#2, p. 205, v. 125; #9, p. 227, v. 24; #22, p. 254, vv. 9, 12.) *Imām ḥaqq*: #16, p. 243, v. 7). *Imām al-walāʾ* (#48, p. 296, v. 7).

²¹⁶ #6, p. 220, v. 20.

Several times, al-Mu'ayyad uses the Imam's titles "*Mawlā*" (Master, pl. *mawālī*),²¹⁷ "*Waliyy Allāh*" (God's Elect),²¹⁸ and "*Amīr al-mu'minīn*" (Commander of the Faithful).²¹⁹ Twice each he uses "*Ulū al-amr*" (the People in Command), "*Āl al-'abā*" (Progeny of the Cloak),²²⁰ and *Ṣāhib al-ʿaṣr* (Lord of the Age).²²¹ The title "*Khalīfat Allāh*" (God's Caliph)²²² is less commonly used in the Fatimid theological tradition, perhaps because it comes to have a secular tone, and al-Mu'ayyad only uses it once in his *Dīwān*.

In addition to titles of spiritual leadership, al-Mu'ayyad's poetry also mentions a fair number of the Imam's genealogical titles, such as "*al-Itra al-ṭāhira*," (the Pure Progeny)²²³ "*Āl Muḥammad*," (Progeny of Muḥammad),²²⁴ "*Āl Ṭāhā*" (Progeny of Ṭāhā),²²⁵ "*Ibn Rasūl Allāh*" (Descendant of the Messenger of God),²²⁶ and "*Ahl al-bayt*" (People of the House).²²⁷

The Regard and Acts Mandatory upon Mankind vis-à-vis the Imam

Since, in Fatimid belief, the Imam is held to be the one who communicates God's will to the people, allegiance (*walāʾ*, *walāya*) and obedience (*ṭāʿa*) to him are considered allegiance and obedience to

²¹⁷ #3, pp. 208–9, vv. 34–36, 48; #3, p. 207, vv. 57, 58; #4, p. 213, v. 45; v. 24; #12, p. 234, v. 20; #13, p. 236, v. 9; #16, p. 243, v. 12, v. 16, 17; #17, p. 246, v. 36; #18, p. 248, v. 5; #28, p. 267, v. 11; #36, p. 277, v. 4; #52, p. 300, v. 2, v. 3; #60, p. 313, v. 3. *Note*: the follower is also called by the same term *mawlā/mawālī*: #11, p. 231, v. 24; #18, p. 248, v. 5; #59, p. 312, v. 43.

²¹⁸ #11, p. 231, v. 34; #12, p. 234, v. 36; #23, p. 257, v. 38; #36, p. 277, v. 7; #48, p. 296, v. 4; #49, p. 297, v. 4; #55, p. 305, v. 48; #61, p. 314, v. 9.

#22, p. 254, v. 15; #58, p. 309, v. 30.

²¹⁹ #4, p. 213, v. 49; #13, p. 236, v. 10; #37, p. 279, v. 22; #59, p. 312, v. 45.

²²⁰ #9, p. 227, v. 231; #40, p. 284, v. 29. Reference to Qurʾān 33:33, the "Purification" verse, believed by the Shiʿa to have been revealed regarding Muḥammad, ʿAlī, Fāṭima, Hasan, and Ḥusayn, and their progeny the Imams, cf. al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Daʿāʾim*, vol. 1, p. 37, *The Pillars*, p. 39.

²²¹ Poem 55, p. 305, v. 48 & #61, p. 314, v. 6. Smoor describes the use of the term *ṣāhib al-ʿaṣr* in the poetry of various Fatimid poets. He inaccurately translates it, however, as "Master of the Century" (cf. art. by that title).

²²² #19, p. 249, v. 3. Cf. usage of this title in early Islam, and its implications, in Crone & Hinds, *God's Caliph*.

²²³ #4, p. 213, v. 39; v. 24; #12, p. 234, v. 26; #41, p. 287, v. 1.

#51, p. 299, vv. 11, 12.

²²⁴ #59, p. 311, v. 29.

²²⁵ #14, p. 239, v. 17; #59, p. 312, v. 40.

²²⁶ #5, p. 217, v. 54.

God, and therefore mandatory for all people. Time and again, al-Mu'ayyad emphasizes the essentiality—in order to attain salvation—of allegiance to the Imam: allegiance to the Imam gives salvation,²²⁸ it suffices in the Hereafter, it protects from an evil reckoning,²²⁹ The rope (*ḥabl*) of allegiance is the one to cling to, for it is the refuge and preparation for the time [of Judgment] when nothing else is of any avail.²³⁰ Allegiance to the Imam is the best kind of wealth,²³¹ it is a sign of pure birth,²³² and it validates the Believer's proclamation of God's unity (*tawḥīd*).²³³ It is also the source of honor and might (*ʿizz*), with which the poet has pride in connecting himself.²³⁴ And, as in the following verse, the Imam's *walā'* purifies souls of base defects:²³⁵

*Allegiance to al-Mustaṣir
bi-llāh
cleanses the soul of every
shortcoming.*

وَلَا يَأْتِي مُسْتَضِيرٌ بِالْإِلَهِ
مُطَهَّرَةُ النَّفْسِ مِنْ كُلِّ هُجْنَةٍ

Al-Mu'ayyad conjoins allegiance to the Imam with absolute disassociation (*tabarru'*) from the Imam's enemies.²³⁶

*I have categorically
disassociated myself from
all the [Imam's] enemies,
and have clung to the rope
of allegiance.*

قَدْ تَبَرَّأْتُ مِنْ جَمِيعِ الْأَعَادِي
وَبَحَبَلُ الْوَلَا جَعَلْتُ اعْتَصَامِي

In a disputational poem, al-Mu'ayyad says unconditional obedience to the Imam is mandatory (*mafrūda*). He explicates the third part of the Qur'ānic verse "Obey God, obey the Prophet and those in command amongst you" to mean the Imams, rather than commanders, governors or jurists, which is the Sunni interpretation.²³⁷

²²⁸ #22, p. 254, v. 13.

²²⁹ #11, p. 231, v. 24.

²³⁰ #13, p. 236, v. 16; #36, p. 277, v. 2; #48, p. 296, v. 6.

²³¹ #55, p. 304, v. 38.

²³² #27, p. 266, v. 6.

²³³ #33, p. 272, v. 14.

²³⁴ #11, p. 232, v. 41.

²³⁵ #22, p. 254, v. 10.

²³⁶ #48, p. 296, v. 6.

²³⁷ Qur'ān 4:59. #2, p. 205, vv. 125–38; #4, p. 214, v. 59. Sunni interpretation related by al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'±m*, vol. 1, pp. 23–24.

Also incumbent upon all mankind vis-à-vis the Imam—according to al-Muʿaḥḥad—is love (*ḥubb*,²³⁸ *wadād*),²³⁹ service (*khidma*),²⁴⁰ gratitude (*shukr*)²⁴¹ and complete sacrifice (*fidāʾ*).²⁴² Even the angels, he says, are the Imam's legions and his servants.²⁴³ They prostrate themselves before him (*sujjadan*) as they prostrated themselves before Adam.²⁴⁴ The Age (*al-zamān*) and Fate (*al-dahr*) bow to him,²⁴⁵ and all the world is in awe of him.²⁴⁶

The Condition of the Imam's Followers and Enemies in This World and the Next

Al-Muʿaḥḥad portrays the Imam's followers as the only people who are rightly guided and will therefore gain salvation.²⁴⁷ The people of allegiance (*ahl al-walāʾ*), he says, are the ones whose prayer and fasting are accepted,²⁴⁸ who have might²⁴⁹ and felicity,²⁵⁰ and whose hearts are at ease (*nafs muṭmaʾinna*).²⁵¹ The people who recognize the true Imam are the ones who will die having gained God's acceptance (*marḍiyyan*),²⁵² whose faces will be fresh [on the Last Day],²⁵³ who will be given to drink from the Pool (*ḥawḍ*) [of Kawthar],²⁵⁴ and who will have comfort in Paradise.²⁵⁵ In the following verse, al-Muʿaḥḥad calls the Imams the ladder by which a believer ascends to Paradise:²⁵⁶

²³⁸ #12, p. 233, v. 12; #49, p. 297, v. 1.

²³⁹ #36, p. 277, v. 1.

²⁴⁰ #13, p. 237, v. 36.

²⁴¹ #12, p. 233, v. 15; #58, p. 309, v. 21.

²⁴² #4, p. 213, vv. 41, 58; #18, p. 248, v. 8; #33, p. 272, v. 16; #39, p. 282, v. 14; #40, p. 285, v. 38; #55, p. 305, vv. 47–48; #59, p. 312, v. 44.

²⁴³ #12, p. 234, v. 30; #16, p. 244, v. 21.

²⁴⁴ Reference to Qurʾān, 3:113, etc.

²⁴⁵ #7, p. 222, v. 22, #37, p. 279, v. 39.

²⁴⁶ #8, p. 225, v. 21; #59, p. 311, vv. 31–36.

²⁴⁷ #22, p. 254, v. 13; #49, p. 297, v. 5.

²⁴⁸ #12, p. 234, v. 36; #40, p. 285, v. 39.

²⁴⁹ #16, p. 243, v. 7.

²⁵⁰ #18, p. 248, v. 5; #52, p. 300, v. 4.

²⁵¹ Reference to Qurʾān 89:28. #22, p. 254, v. 11.

²⁵² Reference to Qurʾān 89:28. #2, p. 205, v. 139.

²⁵³ Reference to Qurʾān 75:22, 76:11, 83:24. #41, p. 287, v. 10.

²⁵⁴ #61, p. 314, v. 13.

²⁵⁵ #59, p. 312, v. 43.

²⁵⁶ #57, p. 307, v. 6.

[The Imams] are a ladder
by which one can ascend
to the heavens,
therefore, whosoever comes
to them in submission,
will be safe.

أَوْ سُلَامًا يُرْتَقَى نَحْوَ السَّمَاءِ بِهِمْ
فَمَنْ أَتَى لَهُمْ مُسْتَسْلِمًا سَلِمًا

He calls the Imam's enemies pagans by referring to a Prophetic Hadith which says that the death of those who die rejecting the Imam is pagan death.²⁵⁷ Extrapolating from a Qur'anic verse which calls those who deny the prophethood of Muḥammad mindless cattle, al-Mu'ayyad compares those who deny the Imamate of the Imam to cattle (*an'ām*), for they do not have the sense to look beyond this life and attempt to be saved by following the Rightful Imam.²⁵⁸

If it were not for you,
I would not have been
distinguished from the
group, who,
in their ignorance [of you],
are like cattle, no, rather,
they are even more erring.²⁵⁹

لَوْلَاكَ مَا مَيَّزْتُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ هُمْ
فِي الْجَهْلِ كَالْأَنْعَامِ لَا بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ

Al-Mu'ayyad threatens the people who actively oppose the Imam with ruination in this world and damnation in the next. He calls them "tyrants" (*ẓālimīn*),²⁶⁰ "hypocrites" (*ahl al-nifāq*),²⁶¹ and "errant" (*fi ḍilla*). He says they consider the licit, illicit, and the illicit, licit, and are empty of knowledge and religion.²⁶² He terms them "idol worshipers"²⁶³ and the "Progeny of Hāmān"²⁶⁴ and compares them to Satan (Jibt, Ṭāghūt).²⁶⁵ He says that any good deeds they have performed will be blown away on Judgment Day like dust motes,²⁶⁶ and that their prayer and fasting will be of no avail.²⁶⁷ They will

²⁵⁷ #2, p. 205, v. 139, #3, p. 210, v. 61. The Hadith is quoted in al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 25, 27, *The Pillars*, p. 36.

²⁵⁸ #4, p. 213, v. 53. See also #12, p. 233, v. 15; #19, p. 250, v. 17.

²⁵⁹ Reference to Qur'ān 25:44.

²⁶⁰ #4, p. 213, v. 57.

²⁶¹ #48, p. 296, v. 8.

²⁶² #48, p. 296, v. 12.

²⁶³ #48, p. 296, v. 12.

²⁶⁴ #38, p. 281, v. 10; Hāmān is the name of Pharaoh's vizier.

²⁶⁵ #48 p. 296, vv. 10–17.

²⁶⁶ Reference to Qur'ān 25:23. *Dīwān*, poem, 13, p. 237, v. 16.

²⁶⁷ #10, p. 228, vv. 14–15.

undergo the tortures of the Chains (*salāsīl*) and the Fetters (*aghlāl*).²⁶⁸ They will all burn in Hell.²⁶⁹ Al-Mu'ayyad contrasts the blissful condition of the Imam's followers with the doomed condition of the Imam's enemies.²⁷⁰

*He who truly gives [his]
allegiance to [the Imam]
is saved,
and damnation for him who
harbors malice and rancor!*

نَحَا مَنْ تَوَلَّاهُ صِدْقَ الْوَلَاءِ
وَوَيْلٌ لِمُضْمِرٍ غِلٍّ وَإِحْسَنَةٍ

Preludes

Although eight panegyrics in the *Dīwān* begin directly with praise of the Imam, most of al-Mu'ayyad's praise-poems lead up to the praise with a prelude that lays the foundation for the praise. He uses six types of preludes: 1) nostalgia or yearning for the homeland (*al-ḥanīn ilā al-waṭan*, seven poems).²⁷¹ Reversing the traditional progression, he also uses the nostalgia theme as closure rather than prelude in three praise-poems;²⁷² 2) love (*nasīb*, four poems);²⁷³ 3) old age and youth (*al-shayb wa al-shabāb*, three poems);²⁷⁴ 4) censure of Fate (*shakwā min al-dahr*, two poems);²⁷⁵ 5) impersonal self-praise, in which the poet praises himself in his capacity as a Believer (*fakhr*, one poem);²⁷⁶ and

²⁶⁸ Reference to Qur'ān 13:5, 34:33, 36:8, 40:71, 76:4. #59, p. 312, v. 43.

²⁶⁹ #22, p. 254, v. 14; see also #33, p. 272, v. 4.

²⁷⁰ #22, p. 254, v. 13.

²⁷¹ *Dīwān*, poems 6, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17 & 37. On *ḥanīn*, see A. Arazī, "al-ḥanīn ilā al-waṭan Entre la Gāhiliyya et l'Islam: Le Bedouin et le citadin reconciliés," *ZDMG* 143 (1993), pp. 287–327.

²⁷² #18, p. 248; #33, pp. 272–73; #52, p. 300.

²⁷³ #5 (disputational), p. 215, vv. 1–14; #9, pp. 226–27, vv. 1–21; #15, pp. 240–41, vv. 1–26; #55, p. 303, vv. 1–33. In addition, there is one short *nasīb* piece (*qif'a*) in the *Dīwān* (#50, p. 298, vv. 1–4 end). For an exposition of the *nasīb* theme in Arabic poetry, see Jaroslav Stetkevych, *The Zephyrs of Najd: The Poetics of Nostalgia in the Classical Arabic Nasīb*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1993; and article by R. Jacobi, "Nasīb" *EI*², vol. 7, pp. 978–83.

²⁷⁴ *Dīwān*, poems 3, 11, 25. The old age and youth theme was a motif that was present in the pre-Islamic *nasīb* (cf. Jacobi, *Studien*, p. 41f) and occasionally entirely replaces the *nasīb*. Later, old age became a popular theme of the strophe. For an exposition of the old age and youth theme in Arabic poetry, see article by A. Arazī, "al-Shayb wa'l-Shabāb" *EI*², vol. 9, pp. 383–89.

²⁷⁵ *Dīwān*, poems 58 & 59.

²⁷⁶ #12, p. 233, vv. 1–11.

6) greeting to the morning of Thursday, the day of the Fatimid *majlis*²⁷⁷ (due to their meager attestation, these last two will not be analyzed in detail). The classical prelude describing the poet's journey to the *mamdūh* (*al-rahīl*)—which had dwindled by al-Mu'ayyad's time anyway—is totally absent in his poetry, although, using the theme of the *rahīl*, he states in some of his closure (rather than prelude) sections that he has survived great hardship and come from afar to his refuge, the Imam.²⁷⁸ In addition to its use in the panegyric, al-Mu'ayyad twice uses preludes in other genres of poetry as well. He prefaces one disputational poem by a *nasīb* prelude,²⁷⁹ and, in the "letter" poem that explains his actions to Abū Kālījār, he uses praise itself as prelude and as closure. Some of al-Mu'ayyad's praise-preludes are thematically mixed; motifs of *nasīb* and Fate intermingle with those of yearning and old age, and I have classified these mixed preludes according to their dominant theme.

Scholars of Abbasid poetry have observed that, in the Abbasid panegyric, an antithetical structure of binary opposition exists between its prelude ("strophe") and the main praise section ("antistrophe"), moving from affliction in the prelude to redemption in the praise.²⁸⁰ Transition verses (*takhalluṣ*) between the two sections are instrumental in the opposition, for they explicitly confirm the antithetical paradigm. Al-Mu'ayyad, a contemporary of the Abbasid poets, also employs certain traditional preludes in this manner: his preludes of nostalgia, old age, and Fate, fit closely into the antithetical strophe-antistrophe paradigm—the negative aspects of the prelude bring out the positive qualities of the *mamdūh*. The darker the harsh side of the prelude, the stronger the reader's perception of the *mamdūh*'s greatness. In this context, al-Mu'ayyad portrays the Imam as consolation for loss of homeland and family, as refuge in the Hereafter, and protection from the vicissitudes of Fate.

With regard to the love prelude, on the other hand, scholars of the Abbasid panegyric have noted that an inherent parallelism exists between the prelude and the praise section, such that both the beloved

²⁷⁷ #61, p. 314, vv. 1–5.

²⁷⁸ #8, p. 225, v. 26.

²⁷⁹ #5, p. 215.

²⁸⁰ Sperl, *Mannerism*, pp. 19–27, and "Islamic Kingship," pp. 25–33. He calls the prelude "strophe" and the praise section "antistrophe."

and the *mamdūh* are depicted as recipients of the poet's regard—a parallelism that enables the poet to criticize the royal *mamdūh* indirectly through his criticism of the fickle beloved.²⁸¹ However, al-Mu'ayyad's four love preludes only partially fit into the negative Abbasid paradigm. They do contain some indirect parallel criticism of the *mamdūh* (especially for "turning away"), but, on the whole, they are positive. Rather than dwell on the fickleness of the beloved, al-Mu'ayyad focuses upon his love for the beloved and his pain at separation, and he tries to convince the beloved to take him back into favor. Instead of negating the eulogy of the Imam, the equivalence between the two sections of al-Mu'ayyad's panegyric emphasizes it. Rather than depicting the Imam as being opposite in nature to the beloved, he depicts him as the true beloved. Thus, while al-Mu'ayyad's Nostalgia, Old Age, and Fate preludes lay an antithetical substructure for the praise, his *nasīb* anticipates the praise.

The preludes reflect al-Mu'ayyad's historical reality: on the run from the Abbasids in Fars, without access to the Imam in Cairo, overseeing battles in Syria, in exile in Jerusalem. They also reflect his somber emotions at these times: pain at separation, grief upon being distanced from homeland and family, sorrow upon loss of youth and vigor, repentance from sins, and frustration at trials and tribulations. The persona that is portrayed most clearly to the audience in these preludes is that of the poet himself.

In conformity with standard poetic practice, al-Mu'ayyad's preludes are more stylized than his praise. According to modern scholars, the poet artistically established himself in the prelude, showing off his skill and raising the value of the poem as a work of art, without obscuring its official purpose.²⁸² Similarly, al-Mu'ayyad's praise uses relatively simpler language and is impersonal and ideological, while the language of the prelude is ornate, and the imagery very personal.

²⁸¹ J. Meisami, "Uses of the *Qas̄da*: Thematic and Structural Patterns in a Poem of Bashshār," *JAL* 16 (1985), pp. 40–60; and *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1987, pp. 24–28.

²⁸² Cf. T. Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst: Eine Untersuchung ihrer Struktur und Entwicklung am Beispiel der Onagerepisode*, Wiesbaden, 1992, vol. 1, p. 267; and J. Bencheikh, *Poétique arabe: Précédée de essai sur les voies d'une création*, Paris, 1989, pp. 128–35.

*Yearning towards the Homeland (al-ḥanīn ilā al-waṭan):
The Imam as Consolation*

Al-Muʿayyad had been happy in his fifty years in Fars. He was materially comfortable, spiritually at peace, well loved and respected among his followers, and, most importantly, he had a large degree of autonomy and a well-defined and fulfilling function in the Fatimid daʿwa. Ironically, these fortunate circumstances were reversed when he arrived in Egypt, the seat of the Fatimid caliphate. The powerful viziers were jealous of him and made sure he did not get the ear of the Imam. His family and friends were far away, his finances were insecure, and, worst of all, he had no overt function, either at al-Mustanṣir's court or in the daʿwa, for many long years.

It is no wonder, then, that al-Muʿayyad remembered Fars, its people, and the years he had spent there with them, with fondness and longing. He often gave voice to his feelings in his verse, recalling the glad years he had spent in Fars, expressing grief at his separation from the homeland, family and friends, and consoling himself with the presence of the Imam and the ultimately saving nature of his own allegiance to him. His nostalgic themes were not an empty formality comprising blind following of the poetic tradition but were instead deeply rooted in his own historical reality.

The extended span of the yearning or nostalgia preludes denotes the importance to the poet of this theme. Four of the seven nostalgia preludes each comprise roughly half the entire poem (18 verses out of 33, 19 out of 33, 20 out of 47, and 21 out of 51). The other three are shorter but still substantial (6 verses out of 26, 6 again out of 36, and 9 out of 27). In one prelude, al-Muʿayyad explicitly uses the word “ḥanīn” (yearning) in its verbal form:²⁸³

*I yearn towards my watering
ground and pasture among
them,
for no pasture has been good
after them, nor watering
ground.*

أَحِنُّ إِلَى مَائِي وَمَرْعَائِي مِنْهُمْ
فَمَا طَابَ مَرْعَى بَعْدَ ذَاكَ وَمَاءُ

The nostalgia preludes are replete with images of loss, separation and hardship, weeping and tears, humiliation and darkness, complaint

²⁸³ #13, p. 236, v. 5.

and longing. The vocabulary is correspondingly morose, and the word “*ghurba*” (exile from the homeland) and its derivatives constantly recur. The names of al-Mu’ayyad’s dearly beloved homeland—Fars, Shiraz, Ahwaz—also occur frequently. It is as though he finds comfort even in speaking their names—the names of the places evoke memories of happy times spent there. In keeping with the introverted nature of his preludes, however, al-Mu’ayyad does not describe Fars’ natural beauty or geographical contours. The focus is on the poet’s feelings about his separation.

Al-Mu’ayyad’s themes of nostalgia contain a quantity of self-praise (*fakhr*). He recounts in them his past achievements and laments his present ignominy: He had been the sword—now sheathed—that had destroyed enemies and revived followers.²⁸⁴ He had been the succor of his people.²⁸⁵ He had adorned with his presence the Ahwaz masjid that was now empty of him.²⁸⁶ In Fars, he had preyed upon lions, but in Egypt, even sheep rose up to prey upon him.²⁸⁷ He had been brave and courageous in the pursuit of greatness, but had now fallen from the heights of the Pleiades to the lowly Earth.²⁸⁸ He says merit and knowledge would weep for him if the hand of Fate struck him a fatal blow.²⁸⁹

Al-Mu’ayyad compares himself to the Prophet’s Companion Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, whom the third Sunni Caliph ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān had exiled from Medina. ‘Uthmān had sent Abū Dharr away because of the latter’s outspokenness against the corruption of ‘Uthmān’s regime and—according to the Shi‘a—because of his open preference for ‘Alī. Al-Mu’ayyad says he, too, because of his endeavors on the behalf of the Rightful Imams, has been exiled by their enemies Ibn al-Muslima and the Abbasids.²⁹⁰

Al-Mu’ayyad begins five of his seven nostalgia preludes with direct address, immediately bringing in a personal note. His addressees are Exile, the morning breeze, Fate, and one or two—probably imaginary—companions. He vilifies Exile, entreats the zephyr to convey the poet’s greeting to his loved ones, reproaches Fate, beseeches his

²⁸⁴ #17, p. 245, v. 13.

²⁸⁵ #17, pp. 245–46, vv. 15–17.

²⁸⁶ #17, p. 245, v. 12.

²⁸⁷ #8, p. 224, v. 9.

²⁸⁸ #8, p. 220, vv. 16–17.

²⁸⁹ #17, p. 245, v. 9.

²⁹⁰ #17, p. 246, v. 21.

two companions to greet the abodes of the poet's loved ones, and instructs his solitary companion to prepare the mounts for the poet's journey back to Shiraz. He uses the third grammatical person in two preludes, but semantically, they too are in the form of direct address, with which al-Mu'ayyad extends a welcoming greeting (*ahlan*) to his loved ones.

Al-Mu'ayyad follows the nostalgia preludes by one or more transition verses that form the thematic bridge from nostalgia to praise of the Imam and in which he presents the Imam as solace. He says the Imam is consolation for loss of family,²⁹¹ and that allegiance to him removes all hardship.²⁹² The Imam heals al-Mu'ayyad's grieving heart,²⁹³ gives comfort and felicity,²⁹⁴ and his very meeting makes al-Mu'ayyad happy.²⁹⁵ The Imam raises souls to angelic realms.²⁹⁶

The following is a moving *hanīn* prelude that contains all the features discussed above—length, powerful images and poignant vocabulary, *fakhr*, direct address in first verse, and verses of transition seeking consolation in the Imam:²⁹⁷

Alas for [my] going into exile! You are the worst illness!	يَا لِلتَّغْرُبِ أَنْتَ بِئْسَ الدَّاءُ
For your wealth is poverty, and [your] giving is hardship.	فَغِنَاكَ فَقْرٌ وَالْعَطَاءُ عَنَاءُ
[Your] honor is ignominy, and felicity misfortune, [your] ease is hardship, and survival, annihilation.	وَالْعِزُّ ذُلٌّ وَالسَّعَادَةُ شِقْوَةٌ وَالْيُسْرُ عُسْرٌ وَالْبَقَاءُ فَنَاءُ
[Your] beneficence, [even] if it does come one day, is abomination— why not, when your conditions are all abominable!	وَالْعُرْفُ مِنْكَ التُّكْرُ إِنْ يَوْمًا أَتَى أَنْتَى وَحَالُكَ كُلُّهَا نَكْرَاءُ

²⁹¹ #10, #16.

²⁹² #8.

²⁹³ #13.

²⁹⁴ #17.

²⁹⁵ #6.

²⁹⁶ #37.

²⁹⁷ #8, p. 224, vv. 1–20.

O the exile by which I
have gone far into a
land, in a span
less than that in which
a griffon went far in
its flight,²⁹⁸

and [O] the distance—
the width of the wide
earth is less than it—
that I have traversed, such
that the wilderness
mourned for me!

You made me lose my
way in the land, rather,
you cast me
into the open sea; I do not
have any hope of being saved.

I poured out the water of
the eye when you caused
to vanish from me
the splendor of youth, for
from it the water receded.²⁹⁹

You tore me into pieces
with ignominy
completely;
and ignominy [is such
that] in its fire
strangers burn.

I used to prey upon
lions in Fars,
and now sheep rise up
to prey upon me!

How many a long hand³⁰⁰
did I shorten there,
and [now] an amputated
hand encroaches
upon me!

يَا غُرْبَةً أَغْرَبْتُ مِنْهَا فِي مَدَى

مِنْ دُونِهِ قَدْ أَغْرَبْتُ عَنْقَاءُ

وَمَسَافَةً عَرْضُ الْبَسِيطَةِ دُونَهَا

قَطَعْتُهَا فَارْتَلَيْتُ لِي الْبَيْدَاءُ

أَضَلَّتْنِي فِي الْأَرْضِ بَلْ أَلْقَيْتَنِي

فِي الْيَمِّ مَا لِي فِي النِّجَاءِ رَجَاءُ

وَسَفَحْتَ مَاءَ الْعَيْنِ إِذْ فَوَّتَنِي

رَوْقَ الشَّجَابِ فَمِنْهُ غِيْضُ الْمَاءِ

مَزَقْتَنِي بِالذِّلِّ كُلِّ مُمَزَّقٍ

وَالذِّلُّ يَصْلَى نَارَهُ الْغُرَبَاءُ

قَدْ كُنْتُ أَفْتَرِسُ الْأَسْوَدَ بِفَارِسٍ

فَإِلَّا أَنْ تَنْهَضَ لِأَفْتَرَاسِي الشَّاءُ

كَمْ مِنْ يَدٍ طَوَّلْتَنِي هُنَاكَ قَصَرْتُهَا

وَعَدَدْتُ تُحْيِيْنِي يَدٌ جَزَاءُ

²⁹⁸ “aghrabtu” may also be read as “gone West.” The “‘anqā’ mughrib” is “a certain great bird that goes far in its flight; in this verse, “going far” has a negative connotation: “‘ārat bihī al-‘anqā’” means “calamity or misfortune carried him off.” (Lane gh-r-b).

²⁹⁹ Referring to the water of the face, meaning beauty and freshness.

³⁰⁰ Long hand-power.

Who will inform my family,
due to whose distance
the insides are cut up
from pain,

what a sigh is in the
depths of my heart,
from which the massive
rock splits apart!

The body is not the body
that you once met,
nor the form
the [same] form, or
the appearance the
[same] appearance.

Verily, I have borne heavy
afflictions after you
—the dusty earth would not
be able to carry them—

from every engenderer of an
injury whose injury is
unretaliable;
there is no ruling regarding
injury caused by the
dumb beast!

I have become, from agony,
severed of bonds
from agony's long making
a habit of me;

intoning, all my time, a verse
composed by
one whose merit is not denied
by poets.³⁰¹

“My complaint about missing
disease is because it
existed when I had
limbs.”³⁰²

مَنْ مُبْلِغُ أَهْلِي الَّذِينَ لِبُعْدِهِمْ
مِنْ حَسْرَةٍ تَقْطَعُ الْإِحْتِاءُ

مَا فِي صَمِيمِ الْقَلْبِ لِي مِنْ زَفَرَةٍ
تَنْشَقُّ عَنْهَا الصَّخْرَةُ الصَّمَاءُ

مَا الْجِسْمُ جِسْمٌ كُنْتُمْ لَأَقْيَتُمْ
وَالشَّكْلُ شَكْلٌ وَالرُّوَاءُ رُوءًا

إِنِّي حَمَلْتُ ثِقَالَ هَمٍّ بَعْدَكُمْ
لَا تَسْتَثْقِلُ بِحَمْلِهِ الْعَبْرَاءُ

مِنْ كُلِّ ذِي جُرْحٍ جُبارٍ جُرْحُهُ
لَا حُكْمَ فِيمَا تَجْرَحُ الْعَجَمَاءُ

فَعَدَوْتُ بِاللَّوَاءِ مَفْضُومَ الْعُرَى
مِنْ طُولِ مَا تَعْتَادُنِي اللَّوَاءُ

مُتَرَنِّمًا دَهْرِي بِبَيْتٍ قَالَهُ
مَنْ لَيْسَ يُنْكِرُ فَضْلَهُ الشُّعْرَاءُ

وَشَكَايَتِي فَقَدْ السَّقَامَ لِأَنَّهُ
قَدْ كَانَ لَمَّا كَانَ لِي أَعْضَاءُ

³⁰¹ Refers to al-Mutanabbī.

³⁰² This verse is by al-Mutanabbī, *Diwān al-Mutanabbī*, ed Karam al-Bustānī, Beirut, n.d., p. 125, v. 4; it is also quoted in a *duʿāʾ* that the Ṭayyibīs recite in Ramaḍān.

*Severance by the Age,
for the love of
Muḥammad's progeny,
is union, and the illness
of calamities is medicine;
and the meeting of every
hardship is made easy,
and felicity for me, by
our Imam, is ahead.*

قَطَّعُ الزَّمَانَ بِحُبِّ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
وَصَوَّلُ دَاءِ النَّائِبَاتِ دَوَاءُ
وَلِقَاءُ كُلِّ شَدِيدَةٍ مُسْتَسْهَلُ
وَالسَّعْدُ لِي بِإِمَامِنَا تَلَقَاءُ

Love Themes (nasīb): The Imam as the True Beloved

Al-Mu'ayyad was not a man to pursue idle romance. Rather, as he himself proclaims in his poetry, he was the epitome of chastity and asceticism:³⁰³

*My habit, through the
age, has been prayer;
the hand of desire has
never held my reins.*

عَبَادَتِي كُلَّ الزَّمَانِ عَادَتِي
مَا مَلَكَتْ يَدُ الْهَوَى مَقَادَتِي

Contrary to his nostalgia preludes, therefore al-Mu'ayyad's four *nasīb* preludes were not based on a historical reality, and the beloved in them was a fictitious character created to fulfill a role. It is not surprising, then, that the love preludes lack the emotional intensity and the personal touch of the *ḥanīn* preludes. The focus of al-Mu'ayyad's *nasīb* prelude is on the poet himself rather than the beloved. Contrary to the standard *nasīb*, al-Mu'ayyad does not name or describe the beloved (either physically or otherwise), overtly mention the ruins of the beloved's encampment (*atlāl*),³⁰⁴ or sketch the persona of a reproaching woman (*ʿādhila*). He pictures instead his sorrowful condition and his forbearance in the face of loss and sadness. His operative words are desire (*hawā*), longing (*shawq*), tears (*ʿabra*, *damʿ*), pain (*shajw*), distance (*bayn*), union (*waṣl*), and separation (*firāq*).

Since they obviously lack sincerity in terms of romantic love, al-Mu'ayyad's love preludes could be called empty of meaning, except for the way the poet subtly manipulates the character of the beloved to portray the beloved Imam, the cherished homeland, and the poet's

³⁰³ #62, p. 321, v. 113.

³⁰⁴ The motif of ruins is also used as a metaphorical substratum in an old age and youth prelude (see next section).

own preoccupation with the Hereafter. Furthermore, in one love prelude, he masterfully conjures up an imaginary woman who asks about the poet's condition, which enables him to talk about his persecution at the hands of the Buyid courtiers and the Abbasid emissary.³⁰⁵ Also, the extensive length of the *nasīb* preludes and their proportion to the whole poem approximately corresponds to the extensive length and proportion of the *ḥanīn* preludes. This is yet another indication that the poet did not intend merely to bow to convention—al-Mu'ayyad was not one to squander words frivolously—but meant them to carry a serious message, a real message concerning life and religion. All of these aspects raise the love preludes from the level of the mundane to the heights of poetic artistry.

A special feature used in all but one of the four love preludes was poetic dialogue. The protagonists in the dialogue scene are always the poet and the beloved, and al-Mu'ayyad employs a question and answer routine to express his sad feelings and sorry condition. It is as though the woman draws out his replies in spite of himself—he does not really want to complain, but she insists that he tell her his tale.

One love prelude is curiously akin to the *ḥanīn* prelude (or is it actually a *ḥanīn* prelude dressed as a love prelude?)³⁰⁶ Here, al-Mu'ayyad uses direct address—the only *nasīb* prelude to do so, another indication of its *ḥanīn* import—to address the “comforter of the heart” (*anīs al-fu'ād*). Then he describes the ease he had felt in his homeland, even when the hot desert winds blew and the fields were infertile saltlands. He goes on to transcribe a conversation between himself and the beloved that ends with the beloved bidding the poet farewell, and the poet left with no reply to give her but the tears of his eyes and the burning of his heart. The following three verses are the cue that tells us the beloved is actually the homeland: the beloved might be dear to al-Mu'ayyad's heart, but he has the courage to leave her and go away if she turns against him; in fact his love for her has turned to hatred, for she has gone over to the Sunni enemy.³⁰⁷

*Do you think, just because I
cannot bear to be far from you,
that I cannot go forth in
the earth?*

أَتَرَى إِذْ لَمْ اسْتَطِعْ مِنْكَ صَبْرًا
أَفْلا أَسْتَطِيعُ فِي الْأَرْضِ ضَرْبًا

³⁰⁵ #55.

³⁰⁶ #15.

³⁰⁷ #15, p. 241, vv. 22–24.

Even though Shiraz is
my home, from which
my body developed as a
child and became youthful,
my hatred for her is
justified—for she is a nest
for the old hawk³⁰⁹ and
for the black, filthy one,³¹⁰
in [Sunnite] enmity.

إِنْ تَكُنْ لِي شِيرَازُ دَارًا وَمِنْهَا
نَشَأَ الْجِسْمُ لِي وَلَيْدًا وَشَبًّا³⁰⁸
فَحَقِّيقْ مَقْتِي لَهَا فَهِيَ غُشٌّ
لِعَتِيقٍ وَأَذْلَمِ الرَّجْسِ نُصَبًا

Two love preludes have several elements of the old age and youth motif.³¹¹ One prefaces a praise section, and the other a disputational poem, with a few verses of praise at the end. The former, after describing in detail the troubles al-Mu'ayyad faced at home, moves to the praise section with the statement that facing death for the sake of the Imams is a source of pride for him. The transition of the latter prelude is in keeping with the didactic nature of the poem, whereby the poet moves to his homiletic themes by saying that love does not befit someone upon whose head the army of old age has descended. Rather, he should reflect on the Hereafter.

In one love prelude, al-Mu'ayyad expresses grief and bewilderment at the beloved's turning away, which is a description of his sorry state after being separated from the beloved. He also expresses the conviction that the beloved will come back to him because there is no one like al-Mu'ayyad in his love for the beloved, and because the beloved had once loved al-Mu'ayyad just as much as al-Mu'ayyad loved him. All these themes are directed towards the *mamdūh*, the Imam al-Mustanṣir, in a subtle complaint for al-Mu'ayyad's lack of access to him. They remind the Imam of al-Mu'ayyad's love and past services and plead for reinstatement. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that the *nasīb* moves to the praise section by overtly identifying the felicitous nature of the beloved with the felicitous nature of the Imam—the beloved, says al-Mu'ayyad, is the one who makes the star of felicity rise and the star of inauspiciousness set, just as the felicity of the Imam removes all inauspiciousness. This is the prelude:³¹²

³⁰⁸ "Shabbā" following the mss. Ed. has "shaybā."

³⁰⁹ "Al-'atīq" refers to Abū Bakr (colophon in ms. 6).

³¹⁰ "Al-adlam al-rjīs" refers to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (colophon in ms. 6).

³¹¹ #5, 55.

³¹² #9, pp. 226–227, vv. 1–22.

*Separation from my³¹³
beloved has become
impossible,
he tightens the saddles
intending departure.*

*Alas for a heart,
between which
and joy, ever since it
became bent, there has
been an obstruction.*

*May I be ransom for the
one who, by the
perfection of beauty,
has little by little possessed
my heart.*

*When he saw me surrender
as a prisoner
he became miserly with
[his] meeting[s].*

*And he left behind—from
the sighs of separation—
my consolation snatched
away, and my blade dull,*

*my heart upon the fuelled fire,
my sleep little, my night long,*

*my tears pouring like the
pouring of the rain-cloud,
my longing robust, and
my body ailing.*

*Ask him, you two, why he
preferred distance,
thereby pouring upon me
pernicious torture,*

*and giving me up to grief
and lament,
and leaving my eye kohl-
darkened with stinging,*

*and making me bear—from
the agony of longing
and the pain of separation—
a heavy burden.*

غَدَا الْبَيْنُ مِنْ جَبْنَا مُسْتَحِيلًا

يَشُدُّ الرَّحَالَ يُرِيدُ الرَّحِيلًا

فَلَهْفِي عَلَى مُهَجَةٍ بَيْنَهَا

وَبَيْنَ الْمَسَرَّةِ مُذْ حَالَ حِيلًا

فَدَيْتُ الَّذِي بِكَمَالِ الْجَمَالِ

تَمَلَّكَ قَلْبِي قَلِيلًا قَلِيلًا

فَلَمَّا رَأَيْتَنِي مُسْتَأْسِرًا

غَدَا بِاللِقَاءِ عَلَيْنَا بَخِيلًا

وَعَادَرَ مِنْ زَفَرَاتِ الْفِرَاقِ

عَزَائِي سَالِيًا وَحَدَّيْ كُلِّيًا

وَقَلْبِي عَلَى النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُودِ

وَنَوْمِي قَلِيلًا وَلَيْلِي طَوِيلًا

وَدَمْعِي بَصْبُ كَصَوْبِ الْعَمَامِ

وَشَوْقِي صَحِيحًا وَجِسْمِي عَلِيلًا

سَأَلُهُ لِمَ إِذَا اسْتَحَبَّ الْبَعَادَ

فَصَبَّبَ عَلَيَّ الْعَذَابَ الْوَبِيلَ

وَأَسْلَمَنِي لِلْأَمْسَى وَالنَّحِيبِ

وَعَادَرَ بِالشَّوْكِ طَرْفِي كَحِيلًا

وَحَمَلَنِي مِنْ جَوَى الْأَشْتِيَاقِ

وَشَجَوُ التَّقَرُّقِ ثَقْلًا ثَقِيلًا

³¹³ Lit. "our beloved" (*hibbinā*).

*If the mountains had
been made to bear part
of what I bear,
you would see the mountains
a slipping heap of sand.*³¹⁴

*Was I not sincere in my
affection for him?
Then it is not justice if he
wants to turn away from me.*

*And it is not justice if he
continues to avoid me,
for where will he find
my like?*

*And he would, and I would—
from too much desire—
imitate Buthayna and Jamīl.*

*Even if he had wished that
I give up my life,
I would have been generous
with it, and seized the
opportunity to give it up.*

*He turned away, and did
not heed [his] compact
with me,
May God protect that
wearyed[-of-me] beloved!*³¹⁵

*He will stretch the reins of
desire towards me,
even if [it be] after a
while, so goodly
patience!*³¹⁶

*And his cutting off will
become a union,
and he will become tender . . .
close . . . easy of union.*

فَلَوْ حُمِّلَتْ بَعْضَ مَا فِي الْجِبَالِ

رَأَيْتَ الْجِبَالَ كَثِيبًا مَهِيلًا

أَمَا كُنْتَ أُمَحِضُ وَدِّيَ لَهُ

فَلَا عَذْلَ إِنْ رَامَ عَنِّي عُذُولًا

وَلَا عَذْلَ إِنْ ظَلَّ لِي هَاجِرًا

وَأَنْتَى يُصَادِفُ مِثْلِي عَدِيلًا

وَكَانَ وَكُنْتُ بِفِرْطِ الْهَوَى

يُحَاكِي بَيْئًا وَأُحْكِي جَمِيلًا

وَلَوْ مِنْ حَيَاتِي رَامَ التُّزُولَ

لَجِدْتُ بِهَا وَاعْتَنَمْتُ التُّزُولَ

تَوَلَّى وَلَمْ يَرْعَ لِي ذِمَّةً

رَعَى اللَّهُ ذَاكَ الْحَبِيبَ الْمَلُوءَ

سَيِّئِي إِلَى عِنَانِ الْهَوَى

وَلَوْ بَعْدَ حِينٍ فَصَبْرًا جَمِيلًا

وَتُمْسِي قَطِيعَتُهُ وَصُلَّةً

وَيُمْسِي عَطُوفًا قَرِيبًا وَصُلَا

³¹⁴ Reference to Qur'ān 73:14, where it says the mountains will become such on Judgment Day.

³¹⁵ Cf. the Arabic verse which contains a paronomasia pair ("lam yar'a" and "ra'a").

³¹⁶ Perhaps a reference to al-Mu'ayyad's hope of returning someday to Fars.

When, would that I knew, will
[I] attain union with you,
such that I meet my
wishes in union?

مَتَى لَأَيْتَ شِعْرِي إِلَيْكَ الْوُصُولُ
فَالْقَى إِلَى طَلِبَاتِي وَصُولًا

If you have resolved upon
locking us [out],
[then] intend to lock out
felicity [from] us!

إِذَا مَا عَزَمْتَ إِلَيْنَا الْقُفُولَ
تَوَخَّ السُّعُودَ إِلَيْنَا قُفُولًا

[For] your rising makes
the star of felicity rise,
and compels the star of
inauspiciousness to set.

طُلُوعُكَ يُطْلِعُ نَجْمَ السُّعُودِ
وَيُلْزِمُ نَجْمَ النُّحُوسِ الْأُفُولَ

Just as the felicity of the
Elect of the Age
removes inauspiciousness
and exiles sterility.

كَمَا أَنَّ سَعْدَ وَلِيِّ الزَّمَانِ
يُزِيلُ النُّحُوسَ وَيَنْفِي الْحُولَ

*Old Age and Youth (al-shayb wa al-shabāb): The Imam as
Refuge in the Hereafter*

All three of al-Mu'ayyad's old age and youth (*al-shayb wa al-shabāb*) preludes are from poems written in his last years in Fars before his arrival in Egypt,³¹⁷ when he was between forty and fifty years old—not young by the standards of his time, but certainly not aged. In fact, his vigor is attested to by his decisive actions and intellectual productivity then and for decades following. Should we, in that case, look for a catalyst beyond physical old age in his choice of the old age motif? Or is it just a literary device?

It is certain that al-Mu'ayyad composed these old age preludes at a watershed period in his life: Fars, where he had spent long, comfortable years, was turning hostile—al-Mu'ayyad was no longer welcomed by the king or the majority of the populace, and he eventually had to flee for his life. These disturbing events probably cast al-Mu'ayyad deep into contemplation of the transitory nature of human existence. His contemplation most likely played a role in his utilization of this particular introductory motif—old age and youth—in three panegyrics written at this time.

In these preludes, al-Mu'ayyad uses predictably grim vocabulary such as death and destruction, tears and remorse. His imagery is

³¹⁷ See Appendix A.

correspondingly portentous: a bent stature, the loss of physical beauty and strength, the onset of the somber evening of a man's life span, the inexorable progression of man's years towards annihilation . . . and then the angel of death and the grave. When he talks about his hair turning white—the commonest motif of the old age prelude—he might even be referring to actual fact; his hair may have begun turning white just about this time, in response to the effects of aging and traumatic upheavals.

A special feature of these preludes is their significant amount of homiletic content, which is a logical follow-up to the theme of old age. Al-Mu'ayyad sheds a negative light on the corporeal world, with all its vagaries and intransigencies. Significantly enough, he calls the corporeal world a "house of exile" (*dār ghurba*), which is the same term he uses for his physical exile from Fars. He denounces the world as a house of trouble and pain, imperfection and vice.³¹⁸ He emphasizes its transient nature and the inevitability of death.³¹⁹ Thus, says al-Mu'ayyad, advising himself and the reader, intelligence dictates that we prepare ourselves for the eternal Hereafter, rather than immersing ourselves in this illusory world.

The transitions between the old age preludes and the praise of the Imam give a special Fatimid touch to an otherwise familiar theme. One such transition (following up on the theme of the impending arrival of the Day of Judgment at the end of the prelude) says the Imam's allegiance will suffice in the Hereafter and protect from a deleterious reckoning.³²⁰ Another transition takes an admonishing tone where the poet exhorts himself to put aside desire, for he has no excuse not to do so, his fields of allegiance to the Imam being fertile.³²¹ The third old age prelude is followed by a long eleven-verse *ḥanīn* section (with all the characteristics of al-Mu'ayyad's other *ḥanīn* preludes), which, in turn, is followed by the praise section. What is especially worthy of note here is the sharp but smooth transition from old age to *ḥanīn*: Weep for your own imminent death (says al-Mu'ayyad towards the end of the old age section), for no-one will weep for you. They will say (and here begins the *ḥanīn* section)

³¹⁸ #3.

³¹⁹ #11.

³²⁰ #11, p. 231, v. 24.

³²¹ #3, p. 208, vv. 30–32.

that a stranger (*gharīb*) has died. The following are the transition verses:³²²

Weep, for there is no one
who will weep over you,
on the morning you finish
your appointed time;
they will say a stranger
has died,
alone, with unbroken
sighs.

O mercy for strangers!
[The star of] their felicity
has set.
They have become strangers,
and it has become a
stranger—
each has parted from his
homeland.

أَبَيْكَ فَلَا بَاكِـيَ لَكَ
غَدَاةَ تَقْضِي أَجَلَـكَ
قَالُوا غَرِيبٌ قَدْ هَلَكَ
فَرْدًا يَزْفِرَاتٍ تَنـي
يَا رَحْمَةً لِلْغُرَبَا
سَعَدَهُمْ قَدْ غَرَبَا
فَاعْتَرَبُوا وَاعْتَرَبَا
فَارَقَ كُلُّ وَطَنَا

Then follow nine more verses of *hanīn*, transitioning into the praise section with the poet instructing himself to hold on to the Messiah of the world, the Imam.³²³

One of these old age and youth preludes has *nasīb* and *aṭlāl* overtones metaphorically superimposed on the old age and youth motif.³²⁴ Another contains an overt *nasīb* resonance.³²⁵ It mentions the word “passion” (*al-taṣābī*, lit. behaving like passionate youths) in the first verse, linking it in a rhetorical question to old age: ‘Is passion appropriate after [the onset of] old age?’ Eighteen verses of old age themes follow with no mention of love, and suddenly al-Mu’ayyad comes back to it full circle at the end of the prelude, making the same connection as before between the gross incompatibility of passion and old age: “Leave behaving like a passionate youth to passionate youths . . . and prepare provisions!”³²⁶

³²² #25, p. 262, quatrains 9–10 (marked as vv. 17–20 in ed.).

³²³ #25, p. 262, quatrain 15.

³²⁴ *Dīwān*, #3, p. 207, v. 1 (translated elsewhere in book; see Index).

³²⁵ #11, pp. 230–31.

³²⁶ A complete old age prelude translated pp. 200–204.

Censure of Fate (al-shakwā min al-dahr): The Imam as Protection from Its Vicissitudes

Al-Mu'ayyad's two Fate preludes both begin with the word "Fate" (*al-dahr*). One addresses Fate directly in the second person, and the other refers to it in the third person. Both preludes censure Fate and, in a strong tone of complaint, enumerate the tribulations visited by Fate upon the poet. In one, al-Mu'ayyad recounts his complaints in general terms, and, in the other, he lodges more specific complaints: the loss of people who were his sanctuary, the death of a dear friend, the instability of the poet's life, the malice of his compatriots towards him, and his having to move from place to place in search of protection. The transition from censure prelude to praise comes in a by now familiar manner: al-Mu'ayyad portrays the Imam as his benefactor, his protection from the vicissitudes of Fate, and the means (*wasīla*) to obtain closeness to God.

Al-Mu'ayyad's Fate preludes overlap in time with yet another type of prelude—old age—but although one Fate prelude utilizes the old age prelude terms, "old age" and "I wander," they differ from the old age preludes in their lack of a homiletic content.

Al-Mu'ayyad's Fate preludes are akin to the *ḥanīn* preludes in their melancholy imagery, their vocabulary of darkness, pain, night and tears (one of them even contains the *ḥanīn* word "stranger" or "*gharīb*"),³²⁷ and their address to Fate. However, they differ from the *ḥanīn* preludes in numerous subtle ways: 1) the tone of the Fate prelude is more strident than that of the *ḥanīn* preludes, Fate being portrayed as the cause for all al-Mu'ayyad's misfortunes, and loudly and harshly reproached; 2) they do not contain any self praise (*fakhr*); 3) the loss of family, friends, and home is nowhere alluded to; and 4) the names of Fars, Shiraz, or Ahwaz do not make an appearance anywhere in the poems. These differences are not surprising, considering the fact that the censure preludes cannot contain historically real nostalgia: Both the censure preludes were written in Fars during al-Mu'ayyad's last few months or years there, before his exile became a reality. They truthfully reflect al-Mu'ayyad's sufferings during that turbulent time, but exile is not yet one of them. They depict

³²⁷ #58, p. 308, v. 15.

al-Mu'ayyad's situation in Fars at a time when things had just begun to go wrong for him.

The features discussed above are visible in the following prelude:³²⁸

O Fate, how much [more]
of this injury and
prejudice!

أَيَا ذَهْرُكُمْ هَذَا الْأَذَى وَالتَّحَامُلُ

Is there some revenge [to
be paid off] between
you³²⁹ and me?

أَيُّنَكَ يَا هَذَا وَيُنِّي طَوَائِلُ

You toss me about
between encampment
and journeying,
thus you neither let me
live nor kill me.

تُرَدِّدُنِي مَا بَيْنَ حِلٍّ وَرَحْلَةٍ

Disasters have extended
their hands towards me,
and dangers have opened
wide their mouths for me.

فَلَا أَنْتَ مُحْيِي لِي وَلَا أَنْتَ قَاتِلُ³³⁰

لَقَدْ بَسَطَتْ فِي الرَّزَايَا أَكْفُهَا

وَقَدْ فَعَّرَتْ أَفْوَاهَهَا لِي الْعَوَائِلُ

...

I wander in the lands,
and comfort has
abandoned me,

أَهَاجِرُ فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَالْأَنْسُ هَاجِرِي

I continually travel in the
night, and pain follows
[my footsteps].³³¹

أَوَاصِلُ سَيْرًا وَالْجَوَى لِي مُوَاصِلُ

In this way the pleasantness
of youth and its day
have passed,
and old age, which was about
to arrive, has arrived.

عَلَى ذَا مَضَى طَيْبُ الشَّبَابِ وَيَوْمُهُ

وَقَدْ نَزَلَ الشَّيْبُ الَّذِي هُوَ نَازِلُ

³²⁸ #59, pp. 310–11, vv. 1–3, 11–13, 21–22, 26–29.

³²⁹ This verse begins with a derogatory address “yā hādhā,” lit. “Hey, you!” by which the poet tries to reduce the formidableness of Fate and indicate its insignificance to him.

³³⁰ *Qātil*, mss. 1 & 6; ed. has *qā'il* which does not seem to have any meaning in the context, esp. considering that the first term of the phrase “You are neither this nor that” is *muhyī* (to let live, revivify).

³³¹ Cf. the two sets of paronomasia in the original Arabic verse (*uhājiru/hājirī* and *uwāṣilu/muwaṣilū*).

*I had none but one
comforter³³² in the
[whole] world,
who stayed by my side
through hardship and
ease, a protector,*

*The turns of Fate severed
his ropes from me,
and verily it laid for me
the snares of mishaps,*
...

*[I take] refuge [with You],
My God! There is no
blame upon You,
and You do not obstruct
contact with loved ones!*

*There is no complaint
except from Fate, for,
in truth, [it is] from it that
these vilenesses originate.*
...

*Fate holds rule over my
body, whose lord it is,
indeed, so let it obtain
from it what it is going
to obtain!*

*My soul has conquered
the highest peak, so
whenever [Fate] tries to
grasp it with baseness, it
is unable to do so;*

*for it has a station from
the World of Sanctity,
and a status below which
all other statuses lie,*

*and it has, through
Muḥammad's Progeny, a
means to come close
to God; O how wonderful
are those means!*

وما كان لي في الأرض إلا مُؤانسٌ

يُصَاحِبُنِي فِي الْعُسْرِ وَالْيُسْرِ كَافِلٌ

فَبَتَّتْ صُرُوفُ الدَّهْرِ عَنِّي حَبَالَهُ
فَقَدْ نَصَبَتْ لِلْحَادِثَاتِ حَبَائِلُ

مَعَاذًا إِلَهِي مَا عَلَيْكَ مَلَامَةٌ

وَمَا أَنْتَ عَنْ عَهْدِ الْأَحِبَّةِ حَائِلٌ

وَلَا مُشْتَكِي إِلَّا مِنَ الدَّهْرِ إِنَّهُ
لَتَصْدُرُ حَقًّا عَنْهُ هَذِي الرَّدَائِلُ

لَهُ الْحُكْمُ فِي جِسْمِي الَّذِي هُوَ رَبُّهُ
أَلَا فَلْيَنْزِلْ مِنْهُ الَّذِي هُوَ نَائِلٌ

وَنَفْسِي لَهَا أَعْلَى الذُّرَى فَمَتَى ابْتَعَى

تَنَاوَلَهَا بِالْخَسْفِ أَعْيَى التَّنَاوُلِ

فَإِنَّ لَهَا مِنْ عَالَمِ الْقُدْسِ مَرَكَزًا
وَمَتَرْلَةً تُنْحَطُّ عَنْهَا الْمَنَازِلُ

وإنَّ لَهَا مِنْ آلِ طَهٍ وَسِيلَةً

إِلَى اللَّهِ يَا لِلَّهِ تِلْكَ الْوَسَائِلُ

³³² Al-Mu'ayyad's brother?

Closures

Abbasid panegyrics usually contain a few verses at the end that refer to financial remuneration.³³³ Al-Mu'ayyad's poem has no such final reference, for his purpose in praising the Imam was not monetary reward, but religious merit and the pleasure of the Imam. Unlike his opening verses, therefore, the verses that conclude al-Mu'ayyad's panegyrics do not conform to the traditional patterns of classical Arabic poetry; they close the "speech act" by establishing a connection different than the Abbasid poet's connection with the *mamdūh*, a connection related to the Imam in his role as holy and spiritual—rather than rich and temporal—leader. Thus, towards the end, al-Mu'ayyad's praise turns into a plea for succor that implores aid from the Imam in this world and the next. He follows with one or two verses of blessings invoked upon the Imam, and then signs off.

I have called al-Mu'ayyad's concluding verses "closures" and divided them into three major segments: 1) plea for succor to the Imam (*iltijā'*); 2) prayer for the Imam using a specialized term "*ṣalawāt*" (blessing) and/or "*salām*" (wish of wellbeing, interpreted in the sense of greeting); and 3) signature-verse (*takhalluṣ*). A fourth optional segment of al-Mu'ayyad's closures is yearning for the homeland (three poems, more commonly used as a prelude). Additionally, just once or twice each, al-Mu'ayyad uses some supplementary closure segments: congratulations (*tahnī'a*) upon some happy occasion,³³⁴ threats to the enemy,³³⁵ a *mu'ārada* cue,³³⁶ expressions of gratitude (*shukr*) to the Imam,³³⁷ and declarations of willingness to sacrifice life and family for the Imam (*fidā'*).³³⁸

The complete closure was formed by one of the three major segments (*iltijā'*, *ṣalawāt*, *takhalluṣ*) or a combination thereof, generally in the above order, but sometimes reversed. The closure segments are

³³³ Cf. Beatrice Gruendler, *Medieval Arabic Praise Poetry: Ibn al-Rūmī and the patron's redemption*, London & New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003, pp. 56–59, 233–265. She terms this section the "metastrophe," and argues it lays out an "ethics of patronage."

³³⁴ #8, p. 225, vv. 32–33 end.

³³⁵ #24, p. 260, vv. 21–28 end.

³³⁶ #22, p. 255, vv. 20–22 end; discussed earlier, pp. 143–44.

³³⁷ #7, p. 222–23, vv. 37–39, #59, p. 312, v. 44.

³³⁸ #4, p. 41, v. 58; #33, p. 272, v. 16; #39, p. 282, v. 14; #40, p. 285, v. 38; #55, p. 305, vv. 47–48; #59, p. 312, v. 44.

relatively short. They do not always follow a particular sequence; if we were to see a verse or a set of verses out of context, it would not be possible for us to ascertain whether they formed the final verses of the poem; we would be able to place them, however, somewhere towards the end of the poem.

The first two closure segments (*iltijāʿ*, *ṣalawāt*) are distinctly Fatimid in nature and contain allusions to Fatimid dogmatic motifs: the Imam's role as refuge and savior of the world in the former, and the Imam being part of a continuous chain of divinely appointed Imams in the latter. Earlier Fatimid poets had used these two segments from time to time, but al-Muʾayyad was the first to make them a distinct and visible part of his poems.

Plea for Succor to the Imam (iltijāʿ)

Al-Muʾayyad's life was both physically and psychologically severe. Some of his troubles were external and came from the direction of professed enemies of the Fatimid state, but the majority were internal, and seemed to originate from the throne of the Fatimid caliphate itself. Despite this, al-Muʾayyad never ceased to look for deliverance to his beloved Imam. Even when the Imam himself was the one to whom al-Muʾayyad complained, he was still portrayed as the one holding al-Muʾayyad's redemption in his hand. Al-Muʾayyad appealed to the Imam—and no one else save God—for relief. He used his poetry to convey his distress and the details of his sorry condition to the Imam, and one of the ways in which he did this was by including in it a large quantity of verses that begged the Imam (or all the Imams collectively) for succor (*iltijāʿ*).

Al-Muʾayyad's plea for succor takes several forms. In one poem, he begs the Imam to give him the strength to defend himself against malicious Fate.³³⁹ In another poem, he asks the Imam for permission to emigrate from Fars to Egypt.³⁴⁰ Later in Cairo, he tells the Imam that he has come to the Imam's door having faced great hardship and having escaped from those who would seek to end his life.³⁴¹ He entreats the Imam for mercy:³⁴²

³³⁹ #59, p. 312, vv. 35–46.

³⁴⁰ #12, pp. 234–35, vv. 36–39.

³⁴¹ #16, p. 244, vv. 22–26.

³⁴² #41, p. 287, v. 28.

[Your] servant has come to
your door seeking the rain
from the abundant clouds
of your mercy.

أَتَى الْعَبْدُ بِأَبْكَ مُسْتَمْطِراً
سَحَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ الْغَامِرَةِ

Al-Mu'ayyad often mixes pleas for help with complaint about his treatment at the Imam's court.³⁴³ In one poem, he asks the Imam to deliver him from pain and grief, and to avenge him on those who caused him harm.³⁴⁴ Elsewhere, he laments the Imam's distancing of himself from his worthy followers:³⁴⁵

Would that I knew when the
[Imam's] emergence will
take place,
with the master of the world
removing every hardship.

مَتَى لَيْتَ شِعْرِي يَكُونُ الظُّهُورُ
فَيَكْشِفَ مَوْلَى الْوَرَى كُلَّ مُحَنَةٍ

Another of al-Mu'ayyad's *iltijā'* segments is on an eschatological plane, in which he implores the Imam for succor in the Hereafter. These *iltijā'* verses are more ideological and less personal than the previous kind. He says, addressing the Imam: "the grief-stricken take sanctuary in you," and "all heart's desires are sought from you;" "you are the refuge at the time of death, at a time when sins overburden the sinner;"³⁴⁶ "stretch out your hand to me, you are my intercessor at the time of my Return."³⁴⁷

There are fifteen *iltijā'* segments in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry. The *iltijā'* segment usually contains between two and three verses, sometimes four. They most often occur towards the end of the poem, and therefore, may be placed within the final, closure section. They are followed by at least one other segment of the closure, and thus do not occur as the final verse ever, except once, when conjoined with the signature-verse.³⁴⁸ One short poem (*qif'a*) addressed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib is in its entirety a plea for succor.³⁴⁹

Al-Mu'ayyad's *iltijā'* segments are packed with near synonyms of succor and refuge. Images of trouble and hardship are also liberally

³⁴³ #8, p. 225, vv. 26–30, #10, p. 229, vv. 20–25.

³⁴⁴ #17, p. 247, vv. 43–50.

³⁴⁵ #22, p. 254, v. 16; *iltijā'* continues on p. 255, vv. 17–19.

³⁴⁶ #3, p. 209, vv. 44–47.

³⁴⁷ #6, p. 220, vv. 24–26.

³⁴⁸ #17, #33, #55.

³⁴⁹ #45, p. 291, vv. 1–8.

sprinkled within the *iltijāʾ*. Fairly common is the image of the beseecher as a mendicant seeking alms, in which the poet arouses the compassion of the Imam by saying he is a mendicant at the Imam's door.³⁵⁰ Also, al-Muʿayyad sometimes combines a motif of yearning (*ḥanīn*) with the *iltijāʾ*.³⁵¹

When the praise section employs the grammatical second person, the direct address helps to ensure a smooth transition into the *iltijāʾ* closure segment. Usually, however, the *mamdūḥ* is first described (praise section) and then addressed in a plea for succor, which denotes a progression from the ideological to the personal.³⁵² Indirect reference to the Imam's role as succor is uncommon, and the sentence structure of the *iltijāʾ* segment is usually in the vocative, either in the imperative form asking for aid ("Help me! Give me aid! Take my hand!"), or as a statement reiterative of the Imam's role of succor (You are the sanctuary! You are the succor!").

In the following typical *iltijāʾ* segment, al-Muʿayyad addresses the Imam as succor in the Hereafter, begs him for sanctuary in this world, and pleads with him for an audience:³⁵³

*Maʿadd! O my intercessor
in the Returning!
The most sufficing of helpers,
and the best place of help.*

مَعَدُّ أَيَّاشَافِعِي فِي الْمَعَادِ
وَأَكْفَى مُعِينٍ وَأَوْفَى مُعَانٍ³⁵⁴

*Give me sanctuary, for
the Age has seared me for
[my love of] you,
and one who expends his life
for you is not like one who
is feeble.*

أَجِرْنِي فَفِيكَ كَوَانِي الزَّمَانُ
وَمَا بَادِلُ فِيكَ نَفْسًا كَوَانِي

Blessing and Prayer for the Imam (ṣalawāt and salām)

The *ṣalawāt* (blessings) formula is theologically significant in Fatimid doctrine. Its origin is in the Qurʾānic injunction to believers to recite

³⁵⁰ #16, p. 244, vv. 22–26, #41, p. 287, v. 28.

³⁵¹ #33, pp. 272, vv. 16–21.

³⁵² Cf. G. van Gelder, "The Abstracted Self in Arabic Poetry" *JAL* 14 (1983), pp. 22–30, see esp. p. 27.

³⁵³ #6, p. 220, vv. 24–25 (v. 26 translated elsewhere in book; see Index).

³⁵⁴ *Muʿīn* and *muʿān*, as vocalized in ms. 2 & 7; ed. has *maʿīn* and *maʿān*, which do not seem to fit the context.

ṣalawāt.³⁵⁵ Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān relates a Hadith where the Prophet, upon the revelation of the Qur’ānic verse mandating it, is believed to have taught Muslims that the *ṣalawāt* should be invoked as follows: “May God bless (*ṣallā ‘alā*) Muḥammad and the progeny of Muḥammad,” meaning that the *ṣalawāt* should be invoked upon the Progeny of the Prophet as well as upon the Prophet himself. If, Nu‘mān continues, the *ṣalawāt* is invoked solely upon the Prophet as is very often the case in Sunni practice, it is incomplete and unacceptable, just as praying only two *rak‘as* instead of three in the *maghrib* ritual prayer would be incomplete and unacceptable.³⁵⁶

Nineteen of the sixty-two poems in al-Mu‘ayyad’s *Dīwān* contain this specialized Fatimid blessing for the Imam. The poems use the terms *ṣalawāt*³⁵⁷ or *salām*³⁵⁸ or both:³⁵⁹ usually the *ṣalawāt* formula is used along with the *salām*, sometimes just the *ṣalawāt*, and rarely just the *salām*. These terms do not all literally mean exactly the same thing, but they all fill the same poetic slot of prayer for the patron’s well-being. The *ṣalawāt* segment is often conjoined with prayer for the patron’s long life and his kingdom’s felicitous continuance, a common motif in classical Arabic poetry.³⁶⁰

Derivatives of the term “*salām*” are often used in non-Fatimid poetry,³⁶¹ but the term “*ṣalawāt*” appears to be limited to poetry

³⁵⁵ Qur’ān 33:56.

³⁵⁶ *Da‘ā’im*, vol. 1, pp. 28–29, in chap. on “The mandatory nature of the [invocation] of the *ṣalawāt* upon Muḥammad and the progeny of Muḥammad.” *The Pillars*, pp. 38–49. All the Shi‘ite denominations conform to this version of the *ṣalawāt* formula. The Sunnis too, do not reject it, but their use of it is sporadic; earlier Sunni works use it more often than later ones, and the modern Sunni practice is commonly to use just the first half.

³⁵⁷ 11 poems: #2, p. 206, v. 149; #3, p. 209, vv. 52–53; #4, p. 214, vv. 62–63; #7, p. 221, vv. 12–13, p. 223, v. 40; #8, p. 225, v. 31; #10, p. 229, v. 26; #12, p. 235, v. 40; #14, p. 239, v. 33; #16, p. 244, vv. 15 & 27; #40, p. 285, vv. 41–42; #62, p. 316, vv. 3–14, p. 322, vv. 150–51.

³⁵⁸ 6 poems: #5, p. 218, v. 63; #11, p. 232, v. 43; #17, p. 247, v. 51; #41, pp. 287–88, vv. 1–9, 21–22; #55, p. 305, v. 49; #58, p. 309, vv. 25 & 30. An art. on “*Salām*,” is by C. Van Arendonk-[D. Gimaret], *EI*², vol. 8, pp. 915–18; it discusses the Qur’ānic usage of the term, its usage in the ritual prayer, and its usage as the greeting in Islam.

³⁵⁹ 2 poems: #1, p. 198, v. 152; #34, p. 275, v. 32.

³⁶⁰ Medieval critics like Ibn Rashīq noted that optative phrases (*du‘ā’*) are appropriate and effective in the concluding line of poems for princes (*al-‘Umda*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, Beirut, 1972, p. 241). See also Ibn al-Rūmī’s prayers for his patron in his poems that include invocations for the patron’s long life, ease of life, and a blessed afterlife (Gruendler, *Medieval Arabic Praise Poetry*, pp. 61–63).

³⁶¹ E.g. in the poetry of Abū Tammām (Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, pp. 133, 367–68).

composed by poets who are followers of the Fatimid *madhhab*. Ibn Hānīʿ began to use this blessing, and the *ṣalawāt* formula occurs twice in his *Dīwān*, though as part of the praise section rather than the closure.³⁶² Next, Tamīm used it, employing it fairly often in his poetry, and almost always as the last verse.³⁶³ About a hundred years later, al-Muʿayyad established this usage even further.

Al-Muʿayyad’s *ṣalawāt* segment is usually one verse, sometimes two, and occasionally more than two. It sometimes occurs at the very end of his poems, but usually falls very near—rather than at—the end. In rare instances, it occurs at the beginning or in the middle of the poem; in these, the *ṣalawāt* is used as a launching pad for praise of the Imam.

The blessing is invoked either upon all the Imams, or upon the Imam of the Age (*Imām al-zamān*) as being the representative of them all. Sometimes, it singles him out for special mention after naming the Imams collectively. The following verse invokes God’s *salām* upon all the Imams:³⁶⁴

Upon you be God’s
greeting of peace,
O progeny of Aḥmad,
for the duration of [all]
time, as long as the stars
appear, moving.

عَلَيْكُمْ سَلَامُ اللَّهِ يَا آلَ أَحْمَدِ
مَدَى الدَّهْرِ مَا تَبْدُو النُّجُومُ سَوَارِيَا

One of al-Muʿayyad’s most famous poems may even be named a “*salām* poem,” as its first nine verses begin with the word “*salām*.”³⁶⁵ Al-Muʿayyad invokes a greeting of peace upon the “Pure Progeny” (*ʿitra ṭāhira*), then upon each of the prophets by name in a separate verse (starting with Adam, and continuing through Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus to Muḥammad), followed by ʿAlī and his progeny, followed by al-Muʿayyad’s *Imām al-zamān* al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh whom he greets as the one who possesses the harvest (*maḥṣul*) of the accumulated spiritual heritage of all the prophets and Imams.

Al-Muʿayyad usually expresses the *ṣalawāt* in the optative mood (“May God bless the Imam!”) using the third-person verb “*ṣallā*.” Less

³⁶² *Dīwān Muḥammad b. Hānīʿ*, #75, p. 261, v. 42, #91, v. 173, p. 357.

³⁶³ *Dīwān Tamīm*, #15, p. 64, #3, p. 106, #12, p. 115, and elsewhere.

³⁶⁴ #17, p. 247, v. 51.

³⁶⁵ #41, pp. 287–88.

common forms are the optative form of the verb “*khaṣṣa*” (*khaṣṣakum bi ṣ-ṣalawāt*, May God single you out for his blessing), the imperative verb addressing the Fatimid followers “*ṣallū ‘alayhim*” (Pray for *ṣalawāt* upon them), and the nominative sentence implying a continuing state of affairs (*ṣalawāt* upon them). One *ṣalawāt* verse in optative form, invoking God’s blessing upon al-Mustanṣir is as follows:³⁶⁶

*O God’s elect, may God
bless you
as long as the dove coos
plaintively.*

يَا وَلِيَّ الْإِلَهِ صَلِّ عَلَىٰ عَلَيْكَ اللَّهُ
مَا غَرَّدَتْ بِشَجْوٍ حَمَامٌ

Al-Mu’ayyad often joins a “forever” or an “as long as” phrase to the blessing using the conjunction “*mā*” (“as long as,” e.g. May God bless you as long as . . .). This “as long as” phrase always refers to something good, auspicious, and inevitable that is expected to happen continuously till the end of time, such as the stars shining, the rain falling, or the dove cooing. The following verse uses rainfall—the most common referent by far—in its “as long as” phrase:³⁶⁷

*My God bless you, as
long as
the sky waters the earth
with heavy downpour[s].*

صَلِّ عَلَىٰ عَلَيْكَ اللَّهُ مَا
سَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ الْأَرْضَ وَبُلَا

Sometimes, al-Mu’ayyad uses praise motifs in his *ṣalawāt* formulae. These motifs are ideological and similar to the motifs of the praise section. The following verse invokes *salām* on al-Mustanṣir, praising him as the sun of Muḥammad’s progeny:³⁶⁸

*Greetings of peace upon
the sun from among the
Messenger’s progeny,
an Imam through whom
creation and command
are established.*

سَلَامٌ عَلَى شَمْسِ آلِ الرَّسُولِ
إِمَامٍ بِهِ قَامَ خَلْقٌ وَأَمْرٌ

³⁶⁶ #12, p. 235, v. 40.

³⁶⁷ #10, p. 229, v. 26.

³⁶⁸ #58, p. 309, v. 25.

The Poet's Signature-Verse (takhalluṣ)

A distinctive feature of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry—although not in itself a *da'wa* feature—is his use, towards the end of the poem, of the signature-verse (*takhalluṣ*), which contains some form of al-Mu'ayyad's name and says something in a homiletic mode to or about him. This is a very early attestation of the *takhalluṣ* in Arabic poetry. Later, it was used occasionally by some poets, but never really became a visible feature in Arabic poetry. In al-Mu'ayyad's time, the *takhalluṣ* was used sporadically in Persian poetry, and it was to become a consistent feature in it later on. Al-Mu'ayyad must have been familiar with the Persian literary heritage, and this is one of the overt ways in which its influence makes itself felt on his Arabic poetry.

Al-Mu'ayyad uses the *takhalluṣ* in about half his poems (twenty-five of sixty-two). Most of his poems that do contain a *takhalluṣ* are panegyrics and disputational poems; an elegy and some description-of-self poems also have one. The *munājāt* is the only genre in al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* completely devoid of this particular closure segment. The *takhalluṣ* is very often the last segment in a poem's closure, and it consists of one (and sometimes two or more) verses. It uses either the third grammatical person or the vocative in the second grammatical person. The first person is rarely used, and only in cases where the *takhalluṣ* runs into more than one line.

Unlike the practice of composers of Persian, and later, also Turkish and Urdu poetry, al-Mu'ayyad's *takhalluṣ* is not a pen-name. Instead, al-Mu'ayyad uses different combinations of the various parts of his own name to "sign off" his poems. These, in order of quantity, are: Ibn Mūsā (lineage, patronymic, fifteen attestations),³⁶⁹ Ibn Abī 'Imrān (lineage using father's filionymic or *kunya*, four attestations),³⁷⁰ Hibat Allāh (given name or *ism*, four attestations),³⁷¹ Hibat Allāh b. Mūsā (combination of given name and lineage, one attestation),³⁷² Abū Naṣr (filionymic, one attestation).³⁷³ The last one, Abū Naṣr, actually occurs in the beginning section of a poem within the *ḥanīn/nasīb* prelude rather than at the end and is therefore not strictly a *takhalluṣ*; the poem contains a second, regular *takhalluṣ* at the end.

³⁶⁹ *Dīwān*, poems 1, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 17, 23, 25, 33, 41, 52, 55, 58, 59.

³⁷⁰ *Dīwān*, poems 2, 4, 14, 38.

³⁷¹ *Dīwān*, poems 3, 9, 12, 15.

³⁷² #37.

³⁷³ #55.

It is interesting to note that al-Mu'ayyad does not use his title (*laqab*, al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn) as *takhalluṣ* at all, even though it was what he was best known by. If the purpose of the *takhalluṣ* was to identify the poet for the reader, signing off as “al-Mu'ayyad” would have been logical. However, he probably avoids calling himself by it for reasons of humility; “al-Mu'ayyad” (the Aided, Victorious One) might be considered a presumptuous name to call oneself.

Al-Mu'ayyad's poetry contains one attestation of a different kind of *takhalluṣ*: the word “Riḍwān,”³⁷⁴ the name of the angel who is the gatekeeper of heaven, signifying al-Mu'ayyad's position of *bāb al-abwāb* in the Fatimid *da'wa* hierarchy. But although this attestation does occur in the very last verse of the poem, it should probably not be categorized as a *takhalluṣ* at all, for it does not seem to be a declaration of the poet's identity as much as a notification of his rank.

Al-Mu'ayyad adapts the *takhalluṣ* verse to serve various poetic purposes:³⁷⁵ to declare his servitude to the Imam, and his willingness to face hardship for the Imam's sake,³⁷⁶ to extol his verse and explain his motivation for composing poetry,³⁷⁷ to appeal to the Imam for succor³⁷⁸ and reiterate his forefathers' services in the cause of the Fatimid *da'wa*,³⁷⁹ to express the yearning he felt towards his homeland

³⁷⁴ #61.

³⁷⁵ Other motifs used just once each in the *takhalluṣ* are: *fakhr*: he has forbearance (#5), exhorts himself to patience: God will deliver (#37), *fidā'*: (followed by *iltijā'* #59).

³⁷⁶ He says in this vein that he does not care about the enemies' insults and blows in the Imam's cause and for the Imam's love (#5, vv. 63–67, #12, vv. 42–46, poem 15, vv. 49–52), and that he is comforted in his love for the Imam, for it is his best trade (#23, v. 59, #25, quatrain 33).

³⁷⁷ He says in this vein that his verses are snares for seekers of guidance, and strike the innermost heart of the enemy (#2, vv. 150–56), that his praise is inadequate (#4, vv. 64–65, #14, vv. 34–35), his song a sincere servant, its utmost wish is prayer and service (#13, v. 36), and his poem a beautiful bride whose mirror has been polished with his literary skills (#25, quatrain 33); he says further that in praising the Imam poetry is his slave and he is free (#58, v. 30).

³⁷⁸ He says in this vein that he depends upon the Imams, for they will suffice in the Hereafter (#9, v. 31), that the Imam is his succor (#12, v. 45), and that he has been targeted for his love of the Imam, yet has never turned his face away from him, for the Imam is his pillar now and in the Hereafter, and he begs for succor, to be saved from pain and grief (completely integrated with *iltijā'* closure segment, #17, vv. 43–50, signature in v. 49), asks God for deliverance in the Imam's name (#55, vv. 50–51) he is certain that he will triumph in the end (#3, v. 62).

³⁷⁹ He says in this vein that his forefathers constantly served the Imam, they were raised in the shade of the Imam's favors (#4, vv. 58–60, signature in v. 64), were the Imam's best servants (#11, v. 41), the abodes of their rights are flourishing (#41, vv. 28–30).

(*ḥanān*) and give voice to his melancholy temporal situation.³⁸⁰ Since the content is varied, the imagery and vocabulary are varied too, although he often employs gnomic phraseology. The following verses are an example of al-Muʿaḥḥad's signature verses:³⁸¹

Ibn Abī ʿImrān has

[composed] panegyrics

for you,

*luminous, ornamented with
jewels and fine clothes.*

لَا بُنْ أَبِي عِمْرَانَ فَيَكُم مَدَحُ

غَرَاءُ تَزْرِي بِالْحُلَى وَالْحُلُلُ

But incapacity and

inadequacy are his utmost

limit, except that

*what he composes is the
effort of one who has
little [to offer].*

وَالْعَجْزُ وَالتَّقْصِيرُ قُصْرَاهُ سَوَى

أَنَّ الَّذِي يَقُولُهُ جَهْدُ الْمُقِلِّ

Literary Analysis of One Praise Poem: "O Progeny of Muṣṭafā"

The following panegyric in praise of all the Fatimid Imams (and especially their heir, al-Mustanṣir) is a striking example of al-Muʿaḥḥad's unique literary style. In poetic form, it presents his ideology, his feelings, and his own personal combination of tradition and innovation. Its language is simple but its imagery powerful. It is a typical sample that contains most of the elements present in his many praise poems: the old age and youth prelude with a Fatimid twist, the theological praise full of Fatimid Imamate motifs, and all the various closure segments (*iltijāʾ*, *ṣalawāt*, *takhalluṣ*) that al-Muʿaḥḥad innovates or develops in a special manner.

Poem³⁸² and Translation

1. *Old age has effaced the
sign of youth
and the scout of death
has drawn near to me:*

قَدْ مَحَى آيَةَ الشَّبَابِ الْمَشِيبُ

وَدَنَا لِلْحِمَامِ مِنْهُي الرَّقِيبُ

³⁸⁰ He says in this vein that the Imam's family is his family (#33, v. 20), and elsewhere that his family's only recourse is silent sorrow, while his friend is God (#52, vv. 18–19).

³⁸¹ #4, p. 214, vv. 64–65 end.

³⁸² #3, pp. 207–210. I have numbered the verses here for the sake of the following extended analysis. Vv. 24–26 & 28–29 have also been trans. by Hunzai in *Shimmering Light*, p. 45.

2. *frailty of body, laxness
of bones, and a color
in which yellowness and
pallor have appeared,*
ضَعْفُ جَسْمٍ وَوَهْنُ عَظْمٍ وَلَوْنٌ
قَدْ بَدَتْ فِيهِ صُفْرَةٌ وَشُحُوبٌ
3. *a beauty and splendor
which I have been
stripped of,
by whose stripping pleasure
in life is stripped away!*
وَجَمَالٌ سُـلِبَتْهُ وَبَهَاءٌ
طَيِّبٌ عَاشَ بِسَلْبِهِ مَسْلُوبٌ
4. *a blackness, in exchange
for which I have been
given whiteness—
[the whiteness] seems
pitch-black to the eye.*
وَسَوَادٌ بَدَّلْتُ مِنْهُ بَيَاضًا
هُوَ فِي الْعَيْنِ أَسْوَدٌ غَرِيبٌ
5. *All these are clear proofs,
evident, that departure
is near.*
كُلُّ هَٰذَا بَيِّنَاتٌ لِلْيَمِينَاتِ
وَاضِحَاتٌ أَنَّ الرَّحِيلَ قَرِيبٌ
6. *Do I seem to you the
one I was of old
or another? For my
affair is strange!*
أَتَرَانِي ذَاكَ الَّذِي كُنْتُ قَدِّمًا
أَمْ سِوَاهُ فَإِنَّ شَأْنِي عَجِيبٌ
7. *Where—if I am who
I was—is my trunk,
fresh, bright, and my
succulent branch?*
أَيْنَ مِنِّي إِنْ كُنْتُ مَنْ كُنْتُ عُوْدٌ
نَاضِرٌ زَاهِرٌ وَعُصْنٌ رَطِيبٌ
8. *beauty of stature and
word and look,
seizing every heart,
plundering,*
وَجَمَالٌ فِي الْقَدِّ وَالْفُظِّ وَاللَّحْظِ
خَلَّوْبٌ لِكُلِّ قَلْبٍ نَهْوَْبٌ
9. *a hand continually
extending powerfully—
how many mishaps have
stretched their reins [to
gallop] away from it!*
وَيَدٌ لَمْ تَزَلْ تُطْوِلُ بِبَأْسٍ
كَمْ ثَنَى دُونَهَا الْعِنَانَ الْخُطُوبِ
10. *a tongue, in the arena
of verse and prose,
dallying with every new
meaning,*
وَلِسَانٌ فِي حَلَبَةِ النَّظْمِ وَالنَّثْرِ
بَابْكَارٍ كُلِّ مَعْنَى لَعُوبِ
11. *a heart that would
confront death fighting,
and that would face
the wrathful lion.*
وَجَنَانٌ يَلْقَى الْمَنَايَا كِفَاحًا
وَيُلَاقِي الضَّرْعَامَ وَهُوَ غَضُوبٌ

12. *Indeed, all that has
turned away and passed,
all that is left to me is
flowing tears,* قَدْ تَوَلَّى جَمِيعُهُ وَتَقَضَّى
فَقْصَارَايَ مِنْهُ دَمْعٌ صَبِيبٌ
13. *and a heart that burns
from grief,
afflicted by the misfortunes
of its fate.* وَفُؤَادٌ مِنْ حَسْرَةٍ يَتَقَلَّى
وَهُوَ مِنْ صَرْفِ دَهْرِهِ مَنكُوبٌ
14. *It has turned away—
no sorcerer will now be
of benefit,
It has passed—no
physician will now avail.* قَدْ تَوَلَّى فَلَيْسَ يَنْفَعُ رَاقٍ
وَتَقَضَّى فَلَيْسَ يُغْنِي طَبِيبٌ
15. *I am in an abode of
exile, it is fitting,
nothing to wonder about,
if the stranger is
humbled in it;* أَنَا فِي دَارٍ غُرَبَاءَ وَحَقِيقٌ
غَيْرُ بَدْعٍ إِنْ ذَلَّ فِيهَا الْغَرِيبُ
16. *an abode of strain and
trial and tribulation,
its goodness, through
all time, is adulterated
with harm,* دَارٌ جُهْدٍ وَمِحْنَةٍ وَبَلَاءٍ
بِالْأَذَى طَيِّبُهَا الزَّمَانُ مَشْهُوبٌ
17. *its beneficence is
harshness, its sweetness
bitter, obscene
its deed, all its
promises false,* عُرْفُهَا التُّكْرُ حُلُوُّهَا الْمُرُّ فَحَشٌ
فِعْلُهَا كُلُّ وَعْدِهَا مَكْدُوبٌ
18. *its honor ignominy,
its generosity miserliness,
hardship
its ease, all its affairs
upside down;* عِزُّهَا الذُّلُّ جُودُهَا الْبُخْلُ عُسْرٌ
يُسْرُهَا كُلُّ شَأْنِهَا مَقْلُوبٌ
19. *an abode of vice—the
body is assembled
from it,
so [the body], like [the
abode], is shame
and vices.* دَارٌ عَيْبٍ تَرَكَّبَ الْجِسْمُ مِنْهَا
فَهِيَ وَشَيْنٌ كَمِثْلِهَا وَعَيْبٌ
20. *[The body's] concern,
as long as it remains,
is eating and drinking,
and its range carousal
and pleasure and perfume.* هُمُّهُ مَا يَدُومُ أَكْلٌ وَشُرْبٌ
وَمَدَاهُ قَصْفٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَطِيبٌ

21. *Aged, it has acquired
all kinds of defects
that are disgraceful,
which do not age
[even] by its aging:*
شَائِبٌ قَدْ حَوَى نَقَائِصَ شَتَّى
فَاضِحَاتٍ بِشَيْبِهِ مَا تَشِيبُ
22. *ambitious desire whose
knot is stout, strong,
and cravings whose
garments are ever
fresh, new.*
طَمَعًا عَقْدُهُ قَوِيٌّ وَثِيقٌ
وَمُنَى لُبْسُهَا طَرِيٌّ قَشِيبٌ
23. *It persists in its
intoxication, while death
is a snare set up for
its annihilation.*
يَتَمَادَى فِي سُكْرِهِ وَالْمَنَايَا
شَرَكٌ لَاخِثِرَامِهِ مَنُصُوبٌ
24. *Alas for the eagerness of
desire! Indeed my mind
is oppressed by desire,
vanquished.*
أَهْ مِنْ شِرَّةِ الْهَوَى إِنَّ عَقْلِي
مُسْتَضَامٌ مِنَ الْهَوَى مَغْلُوبٌ
25. *Alas for myself! For it
is my tyranny that is
[oppressing] myself,
blame and censure do
not bypass me:*
أَهْ مِنِّْي فَالظُّلْمُ مِنِّْي لِنَفْسِي
مَا عَذَابِي عَذْلٌ وَلَا تَتَرِيبُ
26. *Why did I squander my
life in error,
when my domain of
rectitude is vast?*
لِمَ ضَيَّعْتُ فِي الْعَوَايَةِ عُمْرِي
وَمَحَالِي مِنَ الرَّشَادِ رَحِيبٌ
27. *Why do I become
preoccupied with my
dark body,
when I am as dusty
earth by it?*
لِمَ اُغْنَى بِمُظْلِمِ الْجَسْمِ مِنِّْي
وَكَأَنِّي بِهِ تُرَابٌ تَرِيبُ
28. *And [why do] I
squander the light
through which I am
connected to the noble
ones, the ones brought
nigh [to God]?!*
وَأَضِيعُ النُّورَ الَّذِي أَنَا مِنْهُ
لِلْكَرَامِ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ نَسِيبٌ
29. *Is the debaser of a
precious pearl,
aggrandizer
of a lowly, insignificant
shell, intelligent?*
أَمْ ذُلٌّ دُرًّا نَفِيسًا مُعَزٌّ
صَدْفًا هَيِّنًا حَسِيسًا أَرِيبٌ

30. *[Blame and censure]
do not bypass me for
what happened. Is
there a field
of allegiance fruitful
like my field?* مَا عَدَانِي مِمَّا بَدَأَ جَنَابُ
كَجَنَائِي مِنَ الْوَلَاءِ خَصِيبُ
31. *What is my excuse,
when the True Da'wa
is a person
in whose lap I was
born and raised?* مَا اعْتَذَارِي وَدَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ شَخْصُ
أَنَا مَوْلُودُ حِجْرِهِ وَالرَّيْبُ
32. *What is my excuse,
when the refuge-giving
sanctuary is my
house?—
whoever does not take
shelter in it faces terror.* مَا اعْتَذَارِي وَمَنْزِلِي الْحَرَمُ الْآمِنُ
مَنْ لَمْ يَلْجُذْ بِهِ مَرْغُوبُ
وَبَنُو أَحْمَدَ الرِّضَى وَعَلِيٌّ
33. *The sons of Ahmad and
'Alī, with whom
[God is] well-pleased,
are my preparation for
the Returning when
I return;* عُنْدِي لِلْمَأَابِ حِينُ أُوْؤُبُ
34. *masters who are the
purest in branch and
in root,
all glory is earned from
their glory;* الْمَوَالِي الْأَزْكَوْنَ فَرْعًا وَأَصْلًا
كُلُّ مَجْدٍ مِنْ مَجْدِهِمْ مَكْسُوبُ
35. *masters who are the
revivifiers of decayed
bones,
those, by remembering
whom, intractable
camels become docile;* الْمَوَالِي مُحْيِي الْعِظَامِ الْبَوَالِي³⁸³
مَنْ لَذِكْرَاهُمْ تَذِلُّ الصُّعُوبُ
36. *masters, to whom from
the past ages
and the remaining,
all return,* الْمَوَالِي مِنَ الْقُرُونِ الْخَوَالِي
وَالْبَوَاقِي كُلُّ إِلَيْهِمْ يَثُوبُ³⁸⁴

³⁸³ Ed. has "muhyū," but mss. all have "muhyī," perhaps in the accusative as *ikhtisāṣ*?

³⁸⁴ The mss. have "yathūbū," ed. "ya'ūbū," with footnoted variant "yathūbū," same meaning.

37. *then they distribute
heaven and hellfire
among them,
for each [person] has
his deserved lot;*
38. *they are the refuge
when there is no [other]
refuge-giver,
and the ones who answer
the hapless when there
is no [other] answerer,*
39. *the trustworthy guides,
shelter for followers
whenever a blistering hot
day casts its shadow;*
40. *the seas, the full moons
that have never
encountered diminishing
from waning, and that
have never been
marred by setting;*
41. *[it is] from them that
the shadow of God's
mercy is extended
and the water of right
guidance is poured forth;*
42. *[they are] Mount Sinai
from which we hear the
dialogue of God
in ourselves, and the
divine secrets become
apparent;*
43. *the [paradisiacal]
springs of nectar from
which we drink,
while the erring one is
continually drinking
boiling water.*
44. *O sons of Muṣṭafā, [it is]
in you, in you,
that the sorrowful seeks
asylum in calamities.*
- يَقْسِمُونَ الْجَنَانَ وَالنَّارَ فِيهِمْ
فَلِكُلِّ نَصِيبُهُ الْمَوْجُوبُ
وَهُمُ الْمُسْتَجَارُ إِذْ لَا مُجِيرُ
وَمُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرِّ إِذْ لَا مُجِيبُ
الْهُدَاةُ الثَّقَاتُ حِرْزُ الْمَوَالِينِ
إِذَا مَا أَظْلَلْ يَوْمٌ عَصِيبُ
الْبُحُورِ الْبُدُورُ لَمْ تَلْقَ نَقْصًا
مِنْ تَضُوبٍ وَلَمْ يَشِنْهَا غُرُوبُ
مِنْهُمْ ظِلُّ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ مَمْدُودُ
وَمَاءُ الْهُدَى بِهِمْ مَسْكُوبُ
جَبَلُ الطُّورِ مِنْهُ نَسْمَعُ نَجْوَى اللَّهِ
فِينَا وَعَنْهُ تَبْدُو الْعُيُوبُ
وَعُيُُونُ الرَّحِيقِ تَشْرَبُ مِنْهَا
وَأَخْوِ الْعَيِّ لِلْحَمِيمِ شَرُوبُ
يَا بَنِي الْمُصْطَفَى إِلَيْكُمْ إِلَيْكُمْ
فِي الْمَلَمَّاتِ يَفْزَعُ الْمَكْرُوبُ

45. *O sons of Muṣṭafā, [it is]
from you, from you,
that wishes of our
hearts are sought.*
يَا بَنِي الْمُصْطَفَى لَدَيْكُمْ لَدَيْكُمْ
أَمَلٌ فِي نُفُوسِنَا مَطْلُوبُ
46. *You, you are the
succor whenever
sins ruin the sinner
among us.*
أَنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ الْغِيَاثُ إِذَا مَا
أَوْبَقَتْ ذَا الذُّنُوبِ مِنَّا الذُّنُوبُ
47. *You, you are the
succor whenever
death approaches and the
time comes to depart.*
أَنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ الْغِيَاثُ إِذَا مَا
حَانَ حَيْنٌ لَنَا وَأَنْ مَغِيبُ
48. *O my masters, how
do I praise you,
when the utmost limit
of my praise is
jumbled speech?!—*
يَا مَوَالِيَ كَيْفَ أَثْنِي عَلَيْكُمْ
وَقُصَارَايَ مِنْ ثَنَائِي لُغُوبُ
49. *you have been created
from clay, and we
have been created
from it,
it is apparent however,
that we are degrees
in it;*
قَدْ خُلِقْتُمْ مِنْ طِينَةٍ وَخُلِقْنَا
نَحْنُ مِنْهَا لَكِنْ بَدَأَ تَرْتِيبُ³⁸⁵
50. *your bodies originate
from the clay
from which our
souls sprout.*
إِنَّ أَجْسَامَكُمْ لَنَاشِئَةُ الطِّينِ
الَّذِي شَقَّ مِنْهُ مِنَّا الْقُلُوبُ
51. *My excuse, if I am
not capable of praising
[this group of] people,
[is that] this is a love-
prelude to the Dīwān
of their praise.*
فَعَذِيرِي إِنْ لَمْ أَطِيقْ مَدْحَ قَوْمِ
ذَا لَدِيَّوَانِ مَدْحِهِمْ تَشْوِيبُ
52. *May the God of creation
[shower] blessings
upon them,
as long as the rain-shower
pours down from the
cloud;*
وَعَلَيْهِمْ صَلَّى إِلَهُ الْبَرَآيَا
مَا هَمَى مِنْ سَحَابَةٍ شُرُوبُ

³⁸⁵ The Tayyibī liturgical version is: “*naḥnu minhā lākin binā tatribū*,” trans.: “We are from it, but we are earthy.”

53. *and upon the one who
commands their
heritage,
and represents the guides
from among them;*
وَعَلَى مَنْ يَلِي الْوَرَاثَةَ مِنْهُمْ
وَمَنْابَ الْهُدَاةِ مِنْهُمْ يَنْوُبُ
54. *the Imam who revivifies
the one whom he
calls—
felicitations to the one
who answers him!*
الْإِمَامُ الْمُحْيِي لِمَنْ قَدْ دَعَاهُ
فَهَنِيئًا لِمَنْ لَهُ يَسْتَجِيبُ
55. *[He is] the best
shepherd, whatever he
guards is safe,
and that which he does
not look after, is looked
after by the wolf.*
خَيْرُ رَاعٍ مُسَلَّمٌ مَا رَعَاهُ
وَالَّذِي مَا رَعَى رَعَاهُ الذِّئْبُ
56. *[He is] the Book that
speaks Right and
Truth,
through whom the
concealed becomes
uncovered.*
وَالْكِتَابُ النُّطُوقُ بِالْحَقِّ وَالصِّدْقِ
وَعَنهُ يُكْشَفُ الْمَخْجُوبُ
57. *[He is] the Imam
Mustanşir the just,
our master,
lamp in the darkness,
the one with high
lineage and excellent
personal qualities.*
الْإِمَامُ الْمُسْتَنْصِرُ الْعَدْلُ مَوْلَانَا
سِرَاجُ الدُّجَى التَّسْيِبُ الْحَسِبُ
58. *He is a master for whom
[all] masters are slaves,
like bees among whom
there is a king-bee;*
ذَاكَ مَوْلَى لَهُ الْمَوَالِي عِبِيدُ
مِثْلَ نَحْلٍ خَالَهَا يَعْسُوبُ
59. *He explicates the religion
of right guidance, and
removes
from it the confusion-
casting pitch-darkness
of doubt.*
وَهُوَ يَجْلُو دِينَ الْهُدَى وَيُجَلِّي
عَنِهَبَ الشَّكِّ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ مُرِيبُ
60. *[His] follower has the
most winning divining-
arrow of [true] religion
like the arrow that
hits the mark,*
لِلْمُؤَالِي الْقِدْحُ الْمُغْلَى مِنَ الدِّينِ
كَمَا السَّهْمُ فِي التُّجَاهِ الْمَصِيبُ

61. *and as for his adversary,
his religion is pagan,
he does not have any
share in the gardens
of Eden.*
62. *Hibat Allāh, if the turn
of Fate is your enemy
then you are despoiled
by it,*
63. *and by the sword of
harshness, by every
scoundrel,
[you are] struck in
every condition,*
64. *but you are the one
who [will] come out
dominant, so goodly
patience!
[For] indeed the one
who is patient in
tribulations is noble.*

وَمُعَادِيهِ دِينُهُ جَاهِلِيٌّ
مَا لَهُ فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ نَصِيبٌ

هَبَّةَ اللَّهِ إِنْ يَكُنْ لَكَ حَرْبًا
صَرْفُ دَهْرٍ فَأَنْتَ مِنْهُ حَرِيبٌ

وَبَسِيفِ الْجَفَاءِ مِنْ كُلِّ وَعْدٍ
أَنْتَ فِي كُلِّ حَالَةٍ مَضْرُوبٌ

فَلَأَنْتَ الْأَعْلَى فَصَبْرًا جَمِيلًا
إِنَّ ذَا الصَّبْرِ فِي الْبَلَاءِ نَجِيبٌ

Date of the Poem's Composition

This poem was probably composed by al-Mu'ayyad between 434 and 436/7 (1043–1046/47), when he was exiled from his homeland Fars and fleeing to Egypt (for details of dating, see Appendix A). Al-Mu'ayyad was then about fifty years of age. He was in a difficult stage of his life: his family and friends had been left behind in Shiraz, the hard work he had put into the conversion of the Buyid king seemed to be coming undone, and he was constantly having to move from place to place, buffeted by the winds of psychological uncertainty and physical danger. It was in this painful frame of mind that he composed this poem.

Formal Aspects

- form *Qaṣīda* or ode
genre *Madīḥ* or panegyric.
structure Polythematic, in three major parts. Note that the second part (praise) runs into the third (closure), and is not completely distinct from it. The three parts are a) a prelude of combined old age and youth (*al-shayb wa al-shabāb*) and

- censure of this world (vv. 1–14, 15–32); b) praise of the Imams (vv. 33–43); and c) a three-segment closure including: i) plea for succor (*iltijāʿ*); (vv. 44–47)—praise continued (vv. 48–51); ii) blessings on the Prophet and his progeny (*ṣalawāt*, vv. 52–53)—praise continued (vv. 54–61); iii) signature-verse (*takhalluṣ*, vv. 62–64).
- length Sixty-four lines. This is fairly long for al-Muʿaḡyad, although he does have some other praise-poems approximately the same length or just slightly shorter. Only his disputational poems are longer, numbering upto a hundred and fifty-six verses.
- rhyme Monorhyme in “b” with “ī” or “ū” as the penultimate long rhyming vowel (*ridf*); the rhyme is “loose” (*mutlaq*) in “ū.” The complete rhyme is therefore “ū/ībū,” a fairly easy and productive rhyme, that permitted the poet to extend his poem to 64 lines.
- meter *Khafīf* (*fāʿilātun mustafʿilun fāʿilātun*), a fairly well attested meter in classical Arabic literature in general, and in praise-poetry in particular, although not as popular as the *ṭawīl* or *kāmil* meters; used in six other poems in al-Muʿaḡyad’s *Dīwān*. According to a medieval critic, this meter has “purity and elegance.”³⁸⁶

Analysis

1) *Prelude: Old Age and Youth (al-shayb wa al-shabāh) Combined with Censure of This World (vv. 1–14, 15–32)*

Al-Muʿaḡyad does follow his predecessors in his adoption of the theme of old age and youth, but as mentioned earlier, his is not a blind pursuit of tradition. Rather, he adds his own special touch to the traditional elements of the theme. On a factual plane, the sad sentiments expressed in the prelude reflect the poet’s historical reality. He is on the wrong side of fifty, certainly not to be called a “youth” any more. And the forced exile from his beloved homeland is a watershed in his life: the glad associations of youth, a life of relative ease and felicity including financial self-sufficiency, being surrounded by family and friends, respected by all, fulfilled and successful in work, seem to be left sharply behind him. The future, at this point, seems

³⁸⁶ Al-Qarṭājannī, *Minhāj al-bulaghāʿ*, p. 269.

bleak. And the actual danger to his very life in the present is not a minor factor, which contributes to the overall grim tone of the prelude; he is hunted far and wide by the Abbasid-directed Buyid administration, his description and that of his purportedly heinous deeds is circulated in large cities and small towns alike; death seems but a stone's throw away.

On a literary plane, an underlying metaphorical substratum of the pre-Islamic *aṭlāl* topos of the *nasīb*, very cleverly interwoven with the surface theme of old age and youth, distinguishes this prelude from the ordinary. The opening verse is particularly ingenuous:

*Old age has effaced the
sign of youth
and the scout of death has
drawn near to me*

قَدْ مَحَى آيَةَ الشَّابِّ الْمَشِيبُ
وَدَنَا لِلْحِمَامِ مِنْ نِي الرَّقِيبِ

The use of the verb “effaced” (*maḥā*) and the object-noun “sign” (*āya*) immediately evokes the image of the beloved's encampment, its signs gradually effaced by the desert winds. The cruel wind is old age, which, blowing, has effaced the very signs of youth. The second hemistich deepens the *nasīb* allusion by its use of the word “scout” (*raqīb*). The feared guardian watching the beloved's tent to ensure her chastity and almost catching up with her lover forms the evoked undertone to death's scout drawing close to the old man. Al-Mu'ayyad intensifies the sad tone by employing long, drawn out syllables in this verse. Almost all the words in the verse contain a long vowel: *maḥā*, *āya*, *shabāb*, *mashīb*, *danā*, *ḥimām*, *raqīb*. The structure of the old age and youth verses, with a sad juxtaposition of current hardships and past glories, further emphasizes the double imagery. One effect of this two-layered verse is that it evokes memories of loved ones left behind, and happy times past. A fainter *raḥīl* underpinning can also be detected in the metaphor of the galloping mounts stretching their reins to get away from the poet's powerful hand (v. 9), followed by that of the latter's confrontation with the wrathful lion (v. 11), and, later, in the image of the intractable camels of hardship becoming docile by the poet's remembrance of the Imam (v. 35).

Typical elements of the old age and youth theme that al-Mu'ayyad employs in this poem are: white hair (v. 4), weakness of body and loss of strength (v. 2), the loss of beauty and freshness (vv. 3, 7–8), a recounting of the poet's former vigor and vitality in the time of his youth in Fars (vv. 6–14), tears and a sad heart (vv. 12–13), and a preoccupation with the imminent arrival of death (using various

terms: *himām* v. 1, *rahīl* v. 6). These he pulls together and wraps up in a sad refrain: youth with all its happy associations “has turned away” (*qad tawallā*, vv. 12, 14); the terminating particle (*qad*) puts weight on the past tense of the verb (*tawallā*), emphasizing the fact that youth is past and gone forever, and the repetition of the phrase adds a finality to this sad fact.

The old age and youth theme leads into a connected censure of the world section that echoes the themes of the *zuhdiyya* (ascetic poem).³⁸⁷ In this section, al-Mu’ayyad condemns the corporeal world for its lack of pure goodness. The first few verses focus on the world’s adulterated nature, and al-Mu’ayyad emphasizes this nature in verses seventeen and eighteen by structural and lexical parallelism and by four antithetical pairs, one following on the heels of the other (*‘urf-nukr*, *hulw-murr*, *‘izz-dhull*, *jūd-bukhl*) and asserting that everything good in the world is tainted with evil. Next, al-Mu’ayyad describes the material body as being assembled from the degenerate world, and therefore, itself degenerate; he names and metaphorically depicts some of its vices: ambitious desire whose knot is stout and strong, and cravings whose garments are ever fresh and new (v. 21).

An interesting twist to the censure section is its use of the terms “exile” (*ghurba*) and “stranger/the exiled” (*gharīb*) in the opening line of the section (v. 15), which is reminiscent of the vocabulary of nostalgia that al-Mu’ayyad was so fond of and used in the preludes. On the obvious plane, he upbraids the corporeal world for being an “abode of exile” for the human soul, and this interpretation is borne out by the ensuing philosophical verses that explicitly refer to the body and soul. On a more personal plane, he alludes to his own physical exile from his homeland Fars, and the unsatisfactory nature of the world is seen reflected in the microcosm of his own historical reality.

The censure section is well integrated into the theme of old age and youth. In a reference to the decaying body, the poet again returns to the term “old age,” in an emphatic paronomasia construction using three different grammatical forms of this word (active participle “*shā’ib*,” verbal noun “*shayb*,” and imperfect verb “*tashīb*,” v. 21). Moreover, the imagery of death permeates the entire section, forming a strong bond with the theme of old age and youth. Next, he uses

³⁸⁷ For a characterization of the *zuhdiyya* canon, see Sperl, *Mannerism*, p. 72, and A. Hamori, chap. on “Ascetic Poetry,” *CHALABI*, pp. 265–74.

the actual term “death” (*manāyā*), metaphorically referring to it as a snare set up for the body’s annihilation (v. 23), and a few verses later, he calls the body a lowly shell, that the soul (being the pearl) will ultimately discard (v. 29).

The personal lament about old age and youth becomes more philosophical in the censure segment. However, there is still a perceptible personal note to this censure in that the description of the corrupt world and the base body (vv. 15–23) gives way to remorse and self-reproach (vv. 24–32). The repetitive use of the melancholy cry “*āhi*” (vv. 24–25) brings in a very personal note of pain to the expressed cosmic philosophical view, as do the three parallel rhetorical questions, “Why did I squander my life in error . . . ?” (v. 26), “Why do I preoccupy myself with my dark body . . . ?” (v. 27), and “[Why] do I squander [my] light . . . ?” (v. 28). These three questions are followed by another more generally framed question that asks whether the person is intelligent who debases a precious pearl (the soul) and aggrandizes the insignificant shell (the body, v. 29).

This combination of philosophy and personal self-reproach is carried over into the last few verses of the prelude, which form a smooth transition to the praise section. The philosophy here becomes specifically Fatimid/Ismā‘īlī, with al-Mu‘ayyad introducing the Imam into the picture as the only refuge from damnation and the personification of the Safe Sanctuary (*haram āmin*) of the da‘wa. The style of rhetorical questioning is also carried forward into these verses, as is the self-reproach, with al-Mu‘ayyad asking himself what his excuse for squandering his life could be, when his field of allegiance to the Imam was fruitful (v. 30), when he had been born and raised in the lap of the da‘wa (v. 31), and when the refuge-giving sanctuary was his abode (v. 32). In a final question, al-Mu‘ayyad asks himself what his excuse for his negligence could be when the Imams were his preparation for the Return to the Hereafter, v. 33). This verse introduces the recipients of the upcoming praise as the progeny of Muḥammad and ‘Alī.

2) Praise of (All) the Fatimid Imams (vv. 33–43)

The praise section of the poem is completely ideological in nature and conforms to the Fatimid belief system that regards the Imam as the pivotal point of creation. A large number of the Imamate motifs discussed earlier are employed here: The Imams are the progeny of Muḥammad and ‘Alī (v. 33) and the pinnacle of nobility (v. 34). They are the revivifiers of dead bones by the life-giving water

of divine knowledge (v. 35), and the ones to whom all people from centuries past and future return (v. 36). They are distributors of heaven and hellfire (v. 37), succor in the Hereafter when there is no other succor (v. 38), and trustworthy guides (v. 39). They are the extended shade of God's mercy (v. 41), Mount Sinai, from whom God's dialogue is heard (v. 42), and the springs of paradisiacal nectar (v. 43). Al-Mu'ayyad presents this ideology through figurative imagery alluding to Qur'ānic images: God's dialogue heard from Mt. Sinai (v. 42, Qur'ān 52:19); the followers of the Imams drinking paradisiacal springs of nectar in the Hereafter (Qur'ān 83:25), while the errant unbeliever is forced to drink boiling water continuously (v. 43, Qur'ān 6:70, etc.)

Badī', or the use of rhetorical devices that concentrate on the sound of the words, is favored in this section, in contrast to the preceding one, where imagery was paramount. The praise begins with three verses that open with the word "masters" (*mawālī*) to denote the Imams, and, right from the start, the repetition and parallel occurrence of this term serves to emphasize the Imams' elevated status, which puts them on a higher plane vis-à-vis mankind. Al-Mu'ayyad also plays on the sound of the word *mawālī* to bring in an extended three word paronomasia construction (*mawālī* vv. 34, 35, 36, *bawālī* v. 35, and *khawālī* v. 36). In this same set of parallel verses, he makes an antithetical contrast between past and present centuries (*khawālī*, *bawāqī*, v. 36), and, in the next verse, between heaven and hellfire (*jīnān*, *nār*, v. 37). In another verse, structural parallelism can be observed between the latter halves of the two hemistichs (*idh lā muḡīrū*, *idh lā muḡībū*, v. 38).

In this poem and elsewhere in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry, we see his use of the antithetical strophe/antistrophe frame in which he contrasts the prelude with the main section. Al-Mu'ayyad uses the prelude to lay a contrasting foundation for what comes after: its segments (old age and youth, and censure of the world) underline the unpredictably cruel nature of this world, followed by the panegyric verses which portray the Imam as the succor (vv. 35, 38). The prelude underscores the inevitability of death, and the first segment of the closure section depicts the Imam as the refuge in the Hereafter (v. 47). In this manner, the prelude is turned around in the main praise section.

This praise section is relatively short, just ten verses. However, the praise continues into the closure section, with two sections interpolated between the three closure segments.

3) *Closure* (vv. 44–64)3 a) Plea for Succor (*iltijāʿ*, vv. 44–47)

The praise section is followed by the closure, beginning with a plea for succor (*iltijāʿ*) segment. The move into the closure segment is sharply denoted with a change of grammatical person (*iltijāt*), the third person of the praise (*al-mawālī* v. 34, *hum* v. 38, and so on) giving way to direct address in the second person (*yā banī al-Muṣṭafā* v. 44, *antum* v. 46) and the vocative particle (*yā* vv. 44, 45).

The move is also denoted by the suddenly imploring tone of the verses, as compared to the somewhat distant ideological tone of the previous praise. However, even in these plea for succor verses, the relatively impersonal “we” (referring to all Fatimid followers) is used rather than the completely personal “I,” and the refuge sought is more eschatological in character than immediate. This is in keeping with al-Muʿayyad’s stage of life at the time: he had not yet met the Imam, and although he revered al-Mustanṣir as Imam, the latter was still a distant figure. In contrast, in his later poetry, al-Muʿayyad portrays the Imam as the sole author of relief in his harsh present, and uses specific historical references to ground the plea in that context.

Al-Muʿayyad renders the plea for succor highly effective by the poetic repetition of the “you” words in each of the four verses of this segment. He declares to the Imams that it is only to them that he looks for refuge in difficulty (“it is in you, in you, that the sorrowful seeks asylum” v. 44), it is only with them that he places his hopes (“it is from you, from you that wishes of our heart are sought,” v. 45), that it is them and only them who are the refuge for the sinner (“you, you are the succor whenever sins ruin the sinner,” v. 46), and that it is them and only them who are the haven at the time of death (“you, you are the succor whenever death approaches,” v. 47). The concentrated effect is intensified by the earlier repetition of the address in the first two verses of the segment (*yā banī al-Muṣṭafā* vv. 44, 45), and later, that of the word “succor” in the last two verses (*ghiyāth*, vv. 46, 47), as well as by the structural parallelism inherent in the first hemistich of each of these latter two.

The constant repetition also has the effect of making the verses highly stylized, distinguishing them yet further from the previous prelude and praise sections. This stylized effect is heightened by the

double paronomasia (*ḥāna-ḥayn*, *ḥāna-āna*, v. 47) in the last verse of the segment.

Praise continued (vv. 48–51)

The next few verses in the poem are again in praise of the Imams, but they continue gracefully on from the plea-for-succor closure segment, and may even be considered part of the latter. The direct address continues, as does the more personal tone within an eschatological frame. However, the stylized repetition of the plea for succor segment is replaced with the ideological-metaphorical turn of phrase of the praise section: “how do I praise you,” says the poet, “when the utmost limit of my praise is jumbled speech” (v. 48), “for we [all your followers] are degrees below you in creation, your bodies having been created from the clay that our souls sprout from” (vv. 49–50); “all I can say is,” he continues, “that this is a love-prelude to the *Dīwān* of your praise” (v. 51).

The many shifts of grammatical person (*iltifāt*) within this segment indicate frequent shifts from the personal to the impersonal tone and vice versa: from “we” to “I” when switching from the eschatological plea for succor verses to a description of the poet’s own praise-poetry (vv. 47–48), then from “I” to “we” in the next two metaphysical-content verses (vv. 49–50), and again from “we” back to “I” in the continuation of description in his praise-poetry.

3 b) Blessings on the Prophet and his Progeny (*ṣalawāt*, vv. 52–53)

The plea for succor and praise is succeeded by two verses invoking God’s blessing (*ṣalawāt*) upon the Imams (v. 52). Al-Mu’ayyad uses the pronoun “*hum*” (them), following from his earlier mention (v. 33) of the “Progeny of Aḥmad and ‘Alī.” In keeping with Fatimid practice, however, the pronoun presumably encompasses the Prophet Muḥammad and his legatee ‘Alī, along with the eighteen Imams in their line. The *ṣalawāt* goes on to expressly include the present Imam al-Mustanṣir, who is the one who “commands their heritage,” and “replaces the guides among them” (v. 53). This usage reflects the Fatimid belief that the *ṣalawāt* should be invoked upon the Prophet as well as the progeny of the Prophet; if it were invoked solely upon the Prophet, it would be considered incomplete and unacceptable.

The hysteron-proton (*taqdīm wa ta’khīr*) placing of the prepositional phrase which includes the pronoun “them” before the verb, helps to

transition smoothly from praise to *ṣalawāt*. The poet has been praising the Imams, and therefore it is logical that he first mention them and then invoke the blessing. The placing also emphasizes the identity of the persons upon whom the blessing is invoked—the Imams who have all the qualities he has been praising. These qualities are recalled to the listener's mind at this time near the end of the poem.

The *ṣalawāt* is formulaic. It is in the optative mood in this specific poem ("May God bless . . .") and employs a perfect form verb in the third person (*ṣallā*). This is a common method, although, as discussed earlier, not exclusive. Further, as is often the case in al-Mu'ayyad's other poems (as well as in his prose, and in the prose and poetry of other Fatimid authors), the *ṣalawāt* invocation "May God bless them," comes attached to a "forever" phrase, to wit, "as long as the rain-shower pours down from the clouds" (v. 52). This particular image is typical of the "forever phrases" in Fatimid works, and is chosen because of its auspicious connotations, namely, God's mercy, which nourishes life and growth without distinction. The particular description of God as "the God of creation" is also carefully selected, for the same God who created the world is the one who preserves and nourishes it. Al-Mu'ayyad's prayer to Him is: May He keep showering blessings upon the Imams as long as His rain clouds bring life-giving water to His creation—in other words, forever and ever. By mentioning the rain cloud, al-Mu'ayyad could also be alluding to the Imam, as the person who showers God's mercy and favors upon His creatures. In contrast to the popular usage of the rain metaphor for encouraging the patron's generosity, there is no reference to monetary generosity here or elsewhere in Fatimid *da'wa* poetry.

Praise continued (vv. 54–61)

In the next seven verses, al-Mu'ayyad singles out for praise his Imam of the Age al-Mustanṣir. These praise verses come as a follow-up to the *ṣalawāt* invoked upon him. They are once again to a large extent ideological, describing the Imam as the bringer of life (v. 54), the Speaking Book (v. 56), the one with the highest lineage (v. 57), and the one who removes doubt (v. 59).

More general figurative images of the Imam are a lamp in the darkness (v. 57), the king-bee (v. 58), and the best shepherd (v. 53). The shepherd metaphor is made especially interesting by the ironic use in the second hemistich of the word "looked after" (*ra'ā*), which is coupled with the image of the wolf. Whoever is not looked after

by the Imam is “looked after” by the wolf; in other words, whoever does not take advantage of the salvation-guaranteeing care of the kind shepherd, the Imam, faces damnation in the jowls of the hellhound.

Al-Mu’ayyad reinforces the ideological nature of the praise by referring to al-Mustanşir several times by his religious title “Imam” (vv. 54, 57), and as the “Master” (*mawlā*, vv. 57, 58). He does not use for this purpose any secular title such as “Caliph. During the course of the praise (v. 57), however, he does mention the Imam by his regnal title “al-Mustanşir,” which is here preceded by the word “Imam,” and followed by the word “Our Master.”

Towards the very end of the praise, al-Mu’ayyad further deepens the religious tone by remarking upon the favorable condition of the Imam’s follower and the hopeless state of his enemy. The follower has the “highest divining arrow” in religion (v. 60), and the enemy’s religion is pagan, with no chance of that religion delivering him to heaven (v. 61). This follower and enemy motif, reflecting the Qur’ānic “promise and threat” theme (*wa’d* and *wa’id*), is of fairly frequent occurrence at the end of al-Mu’ayyad’s praise poems, and becomes standard—although not mandatory like the *ṣalawāt*—in later Fatimid and Ṭayyibī poetry.

3 c) Signature-Verse (*takhalluṣ*, vv. 62–64)

The poem ends with a signature-verse (*takhalluṣ*, v. 62) followed by two verses in which the poet exhorts himself to patience (vv. 63–64). As noted earlier, the signature-verse was a relatively new phenomenon in Arabic poetry at this time, and its usage by al-Mu’ayyad is probably a Persian import. In this poem, he uses his given name Hibat Allāh rather than his title al-Mu’ayyad, presumably, as I mentioned earlier, for reasons of humility.

The poet begins these two signature verses by addressing himself. The vocative particle “*yā*” has been dropped but is implied, and this implication is made clear by the explicit second person pronouns (*laka*, *anta*) that occur in the verse. Therefore, the addressee must be vocalized in the accusative (Hibata l’lāhi), and not, as the editor has done, in the nominative.

Al-Mu’ayyad ends his poem with a gnomic statement on the following sad but stoic note: O Hibat Allāh, you are despoiled by Fate (v. 62) and struck by the harsh sword of every scoundrel (v. 63), but have patience! Goodly patience! For you will come out on top (v. 64). Thus, in the closure, he has brought us full circle, with an echo of

both the melancholy old age prelude and the hopeful praise and plea-for-succor sections.³⁸⁸ The signature-verses pick up the sorrowful threads of the poet's historical reality and interweave it with the hopeful ones that reflect al-Mu'ayyad's faith in his Imam as refuge. He leaves the listener with this thought: the recourse of the sad yet hopeful man is patience.

Praise of the Imam was clearly al-Mu'ayyad's principal poetic genre. In his panegyrics, he employed mainly theological Imamate motifs, traditional preludes to panegyric with a Fatimid touch, and special Fatimid closure segments, crafted together in an aesthetically creative manner. Many of al-Mu'ayyad's praise themes are present in the corpus of classical Arabic poetry, but the manner in which al-Mu'ayyad uses them is different. In the classical tradition, the same concepts are poetic hyperbole, whereas in al-Mu'ayyad's poems they are theological reality (*ḥaqīqa*). The ideology propounded by these concepts was obviously deeply meaningful to al-Mu'ayyad, the Fatimid dā'ī; he would probably have regarded his *tāwīl* metaphors as infinitely more effective in their praise of the Imam than empty exaggeration, for the propounding of the Imamate themes granted the audience a rare glimpse into the otherwise unportrayably weighty stature of the Imam; a stature, according to Fatimid doctrine, far beyond the mortal grandeur and kingship praised by court panegyrists who had no option other than hyperbolic imagery. In this way, al-Mu'ayyad's poems are a summa for Fatimid dogma. On account of their praise-of-Imam-focused choice of genre, theological motifs and Imam-centered patterning of prelude, praise, and closure, they may be described as Fatimid da'wa poems.

³⁸⁸ Cf. comments by Hamori on the non-linear structuring of a poem, with devices that "cut across the line sequence" ("Examples of Convention in the Poetry of Abū Nuwās," *Studia Islamica* 30, 1969, pp. 5–26, see esp. p. 15).

CHAPTER FOUR

OTHER GENRES

O [my] Lord, I complain of
the wretchedness of my
condition
endlessly, and I sincerely
supplicate you,
in order that you bestow
[upon me] a glance
which suffices me [in] the
oppression of the nights.

يَا رَبِّ أَشْكُو سُوءَ حَالِي
أَبَدًا وَأَخْلِصُ فِي ابْتِهَالِي
كَيْمًا تَجُودَ بِنَظَرَةٍ
أُكْفَى بِهَا ضَمِيمَ اللَّيَالِي

(Al-Mu'ayyad, *Dīwān*)¹

Al-Mu'ayyad was not a man to squander his talents in frivolous pursuits. Accordingly, his *Dīwān* contains not a single poem that could be considered in the least bit frivolous. For example, there is no poem dedicated solely to invective (*hijā'*); even where sporadic *hijā'* of the Imam's enemies does occur, the criticism is about ideological beliefs—unlike the norm for this genre—rather than personal shortcomings. Another common medieval genre of poetry predictably absent from al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* is love poetry (*ghazal*) and when he employs the love prelude in a few poems, he employs it primarily to highlight the Imam's role as true beloved. We can fully expect that al-Mu'ayyad's poetry would comprise solely of serious genres, genres that would serve his purpose of achieving salvation (for self and others). What bears examining, though, is the features that make these serious genres aesthetically meritorious and those that highlight their *da'wa* nature.

In addition to praise poetry, al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* contains three² major genres: an original genre of poetry composed to commune with

¹ #28, p. 267, vv. 1–2.

² A fourth genre in the *Dīwān*, that of the “letter poem,” is attested by just one poem in the form of a letter to Abū Kālījār in explanation of al-Mu'ayyad's words and actions, asking the Buyid king to resume his allegiance to the Fatimid state and *da'wa* and to reinstate their *dā'i* (himself) in the amīr's favor (#62, pp. 316–322).

God (*munājāt*),³ a second genre with a disputational-heresiographical bent focused on the need for rational thinking and, subsequently, for *tāwīl* and its explicator, and a third genre of poems describing the poet's temporal condition and spiritual stature. Other than some of his disputational verse, these genres are clearly artistic, with a large quantity of metaphorical imagery and poetic innovation. Furthermore, they are all genres that deal with the weighty spiritual issues of belief and prayer, and are, consequently Fatimid *da'wa* poetry.

Munājāt: *Communion with God*

The term "*munājāt*" is the verbal noun of the form III verb *nājā*, meaning "to hold a secret conversation with someone, to whisper something to someone, or to confide in someone." All these meanings have the sense of intimate communion. The Qur'ān uses derivatives of *nājā* (but not the term *munājāt*) eighteen times in several different contexts: tete-à-tetes among Muslims (most common usage),⁴ dialogues between a Muslim and the Prophet Muḥammad,⁵ and a private conversation between Moses and God; the Qur'ān says about Moses: "We [God] called him from the right side of Mount Sinai, and drew him close in private conversation (*wa qarrabnāhu najjyyā*)."⁶ This last Qur'ānic usage is picked up in Arabic religious literature, where the term "*munājāt*" denotes a literary genre, namely, that of communion with God, supplication, or extempore prayer (in contrast to the ritual prayer, *al-ṣalāh*). The term *munājāt* is generally reserved for poetry, while prose *munājāt* are commonly termed "*du'ā*"⁷ (lit. invocation). Muslims use *munājāts* and *du'ā*'s composed by pious people as private liturgy in popular devotional practice.⁸

³ *Munājāt*, in the singular form, is transcribed in Arabic with a final *tā' marbūṭa*, and in Persian with a *tā' maftūḥa*. (The term sometimes occurs with a *tā' maftūḥa* in Arabic works too, but this is a Persianism). The Arabic pausal form pronunciation is *munājāh*. In the plural form, in both Arabic and Persian, it is transcribed with a final *tā' maftūḥa*.

⁴ Qur'ān 4:114, 9:78, 17:47, 20:62, 21:3, 43:80, 58:7–10.

⁵ Qur'ān 58:12–13.

⁶ Qur'ān 19:22.

⁷ For a discussion of the scope and practice of the *du'ā*', see article by L. Gardet on "Du'ā," *EI*², vol. 2, pp. 617–18. For a study of Sufi *du'ā*', see A. Schimmel, "Some Aspects of Mystical Prayer in Islam," *Die Welt des Islam*, n.s. 2 (1952), pp. 112–25.

⁸ For a study of this kind of private liturgical use of the *munājāt*, see C. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions: A Study of Prayer-Manuals in Common Use*, London, 1961.

The Shi'a, especially in the Indian subcontinent, also use the term *munājāt* to include supplicatory poetry addressing the Prophet and his family, especially 'Alī and the present Imam.⁹ The Twelver Shi'a in India, the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs, and the Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlīs of India and Yemen, all use the term *munājāt* for such poetry.¹⁰ The Ṭayyibīs, however, more often call these "*istighāthiyya*" or "*iltijā'iyya*" (plea for succor) verses, and generally reserve the term *munājāt* for poetry composed to commune with God.¹¹

Al-Mu'ayyad uses the term *munājāt* to mean a genre of prose or poetry composed to commune with God. In his *Majālis Mu'ayyadiyya*, he quotes both prose and poetry prayers composed by anonymous authors before him and refers to them by the term *munājāt*.¹² In one of his poems, he also employs the active participle *munājīyan* and the verb *unājī* (but not the verbal noun *munājāt*, which is the technical term for the genre) within a description of his visit to 'Alī's shrine, in the context of private communion with 'Alī.¹³

⁹ It is interesting to note that a *Dīwān* of the Lebanese born Australian Christian, immigrant poet, Charbel Bani, which contains direct address "conversational" poetry with 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, is titled *Munājāt 'Alī* (Sydney, 1992; trans. into English by N. Mourad et al, Merrylands, New South Wales, Australia, 1992, titled *In praise of 'Alī*).

¹⁰ In the Twelver Shi'ite tradition of India, poems addressed in a plea for succor to the Imams are popularly known as *munājāt*, and titles of popular compilations of such "*munājāt*" addressed to 'Alī, or the Imam, contain the actual term, e.g. *Maqbūl faryād-i nawha va munājāt*, Hyderabad, n.d. An Iranian Twelver Shi'ite popular compilation of *munājāt*, also contains a few poems addressed to Muḥammad and to 'Alī, and some poems in their praise which are in the third person; these are probably random inclusions (*Naghma-yi āsmānī: majmū'a-yi munājāthā-yi Dhabihī az Rādyo Irān*, Tehran, n.d.) The term is reserved for communion with God in the clerical version of Iranian Twelver-Shi'ism.

In the Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlī tradition, the term *munājāt* has been used in the manual of prayer, *Ṣaḥīfat al-Ṣalāh* (Bombay, 1409H, pp. 356, 434) to introduce supplicatory verses addressed respectively to the Imams and 'Alī. This might indicate that this usage was at one time more common than it is now.

¹¹ The term "*munājāt*" has also been used in modern times for poetry that communes with the corporeal beloved, i.e., *nasīb* and *ghazal*, although not consistently enough to constitute a sub-genre (cf. the modern compilation of medieval love poems titled *Munājāt al-ḥabīb fī al-ghazal wa al-nasīb*, by B. Ramaḍān, Beirut, 1327H). Another modern usage of the term is to mean communication with the spirit world ("*munājāt al-arwāḥ*") through a psychic medium (cf. discussion of this topic in Y.T. al-Bustānī, *Bahjat al-afrāḥ fī munājāt al-arwāḥ*, Cairo, 1919).

¹² These are collected in the *Ḥamīd al-ḥaqā'iq* (ch. 15, fols. 525 ff.) in a separate chapter, alongside exhortations and sermons. Some of these may be found in *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, vol. 4, majlis 14, 22, 24, 25, 43.

¹³ #17, p. 246, vv. 28–29.

Verses addressing the Imam in supplication have been discussed earlier in the section on plea-for-succor closures. This chapter contains an analysis of al-Mu'ayyad's poems that were composed to commune with God.

Development of the munājāt Genre in Prose and Poetry

The medieval literary critics do not include the *munājāt* genre in their discussions of the various genres of Arabic poetry. This neglect is probably due to a combination of various factors, among them the late development of the genre, its religious character, and its peripheral nature in terms of popularity. Nevertheless, the genre is quite visible within the corpus of medieval Arabic literary texts, and the following paragraphs outline some of its important milestones, in poetry as well as prose.

The Qur'ān contains a large number of short supplications to God that are made by various prophets and believers,¹⁴ and the Hadith compilations contain many short *du'ā*'s of the Prophet (d. 11/632).¹⁵ 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) is believed to have composed a large number of prose *munājāt*,¹⁶ as is his son, the second Shi'ite Imam, al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680),¹⁷ and his grandson, the third Imam, Zayn al-Ābidīn 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 95/714). Those written by the latter are some of the earliest lengthy Arabic prose *munājāt* of relatively certain authenticity, and they include prayers that Zayn al-Ābidīn

¹⁴ For *du'ā*'s prayed in the Qur'ān by various prophets and by the believers, see A. Farid (ed. & trans.), *Prayers of Muḥammad* (Karachi, 1959, in original Arabic with English translation), and A.M.Q. al-Rifā'ī (ed.), *al-Ad'ya wa al-adhkār al-ma'thūra 'an al-nabī al-mukhtār* (n.d., n.p., popular edition, pp. 33–40).

¹⁵ For *du'ā*'s believed to have been composed by the Prophet culled from early Hadith compilations of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dā'ūd, etc., see *Prayers of Muḥammad* and *al-Ad'ya wa al-adhkār*.

¹⁶ For *du'ā*'s believed to have been composed by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, see *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-'alawiyya al-mubāraka* (Beirut, n.d.); *Nahj al-balāgha* (compiled by al-Sharīf al-Radī, commentary by M. 'Abduh, analysis of sources for individual sermons, etc., by Ḥ. al-A'lamī, Beirut, 1993, pp. 155, 253–55, 290–91, 444–45, 448, etc.); and *al-Munājāt al-ilāhiyyāt* (lithographic print, [Tehran?], 1381H, with interlinear Persian translation).

¹⁷ For *du'ā*'s believed to have been composed by al-Ḥusayn, the martyr of Karbala, see his supplication on the day of 'Āshūrā', beginning: "O God, You are my support in every trouble"—*allāhumma anta thiqatī fī kullī karbīn*, and his *du'ā*'s for each day of the week recorded in the Ṭayyibī tradition, in a manual of daily morning supplications, titled *Ghamām al-raḥma* (Bombay 1365H, pp. 256–57, 94–98, 114–15, 135–40, 154–61, 175–80, 197–202, 221–225).

composed on various religious occasions (such as his prayer on the day of 'Arafa), times of human need (such as his prayer for rain during drought), or more generally to praise God and ask for forgiveness of sins; they are collected in the *Ṣaḥīfa Sajjādiyya*,¹⁸ and the term *munājāt* is used in them in the sense of private communion with God.¹⁹ In the Fatimid tradition, two and a half centuries after the Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the Imam al-Muʿizz (d. 365/975) composed some prose *munājāt*,²⁰ thus it was a genre known to and used by the Fatimids before al-Muʿayyad.

Over the next several centuries after Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the genre became closely identified with Sufism.²¹ The Sufi prose *munājāt* focused on God's unveiling of Himself to His servant, and the annihilation (*fanāʾ*) of the servant in the path of union with his Creator. The Sufi master al-Junayd (d. 298/910) is said to have composed a book by the title *Kitāb al-Munājāt* (The Book of Munājāt).²² The Sufi martyr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922) is believed to have uttered several brief prose (and a couple of very short poetic) expressions primarily on union with God collected anonymously within the framework of biographical reports in a slim volume titled *Kitāb akhbār al-Ḥallāj* or *Munājayāt al-Ḥallāj*.²³ A hundred years later, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1014) composed *al-Ishārāt al-ilāhiyya* (Divine Signs), a work

¹⁸ ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-kāmila al-sajjādiyya*, published in a large number of editions, including the one in Beirut, 1992; trans. into English alongside the original Arabic by W. Chittick, titled *The Psalms of Islam*, Oxford, 1988. Fifteen prayers in the *Ṣaḥīfa* are termed *munājāt*, the rest are termed *duʿāʾ*; the fifteen "*munājāt*" are also translated into Persian by M. Shujāʿī, titled *Dar yāfti az munājāt-i khams ʿashara: dast-i duʿāʾ, chashm-i umūd*, [Tehran,]1366H

¹⁹ *Al-Ṣaḥīfa al-sajjādiyya, duʿāʾ yawm ʿArafa*, p. 180.

²⁰ See one such *munājāt* by al-Muʿizz in M.S. Guyard, *Fragments relatifs a la doctrine des Ismaʿīlīs*, Paris, 1874, text pp. 48–53, French trans. and notes, pp. 168–82; and one in L. Massignon, *Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam*, Paris, 1929, p. 217.

²¹ There are some brief studies of the *munājāt* genre, and these focus exclusively on Sufi *munājāt*. See, for example, articles by A.J. Arberry, "The Divine Colloquy in Islam" (*BJRL* 39/1, 1956, pp. 20–44); and the two-paragraph article by C.E. Bosworth, "Munādjāt" (*EI2*, vol. 7, p. 557). Other brief studies of *munājāt* occur within studies of Sufism, like C.E. Farah's section on "Literature of Divine Converse," in his chap. on "The Prose Literature of Sufism" (*CHALRLSAP*, pp. 67–68); and A. Schimmel's chap. on "Free Prayer" in her book *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975, pp. 155–67).

²² See article on him by A.J. Arberry, "al-Djunayd," *EI2*, vol. 2, p. 600.

²³ Anon., *Kitāb akhbār al-Ḥallāj aw munājayāt al-Ḥallāj*, eds. L. Massignon and P. Kraus, Köln, 1999, first published 1936.

largely influenced by Sufi ideas, roughly half of which is prose *munājāt*.²⁴ Another half century after that, the Sufi ‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī (d. 481/1089) composed his Persian work, the *Munājāt*.²⁵ All in all, the prose *munājāt* genre had become fairly well known by al-Mu‘ayyad’s time.

Al-Mu‘ayyad (who died, as we know, in 470/1078) composed prose *munājāt* (termed *du‘ā*’) which were collected (perhaps by Lamak?) in his *Ad‘iya Mu‘ayyadiyya*.²⁶ The compilation also contains several *du‘ā*’s composed by anonymous da‘wa authors, and these might have been quite early, even as early as the Umayyad period.²⁷ Al-Mu‘ayyad’s prose *munājāt* are distinct from those in the Sufi style but somewhat similar in content to the *Ṣaḥīfa Sajjadiyya*. They praise God, and contain prayers that implore the intercession of the progeny of Muḥammad for the forgiveness of sins. They are also different from al-Mu‘ayyad’s own poetry *munājāt* in their highly esoteric nature and their heavy use of cosmic symbolism.

In Arabic poetry, the earliest attestations of *munājāt* are the few ascribed to the very same figures who composed the earliest prose *munājāt*, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib²⁸ and his grandson Zayn al-‘Ābidīn.²⁹

²⁴ Abū Hayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Ishārāt al-ilāhiyya*, ed. W. al-Qādī, Beirut, 1973. For an analysis of the contents of the book, and an evaluation of its Sufi outlook, see al-Qādī’s introduction, pp. 11–22. Also edited earlier by ‘A. al-Badawī (Cairo, 1950), who calls the *Ishārāt* a pioneering work in its genre, and one with tremendous influence on later Sufi *munājāt* (Introduction, pp. 1–t).

²⁵ See article on him by S. De Beaurecueil, “al-Anṣārī al-Harawī” (*EI2*, vol. 1, pp. 515–16), and a translation of his *munājāt* into English by W. Thackston, titled *Intimate Conversations* (New York, 1978); and earlier by A.J. Arberry, titled “Anṣārī’s Prayers and Counsels” (*Islamic Culture* 10, 1936, pp. 369–89).

²⁶ Al-Mu‘ayyad, *al-Ad‘iya al-Mu‘ayyadiyya*, lithographic print, Bombay, 1380H; another lithographic print titled *al-Tuḥfa al-du‘ā’iyya al-fakhīma*, Bombay, 1412H.

²⁷ These *du‘ā*’s by anonymous authors are quoted by al-Mu‘ayyad in the *Majālis*: *al-Ad‘iya*, #1, in *al-Majālis*, vol. 4, majlis 25; #6 in vol. 6, majlis 12; #10 in vol. 4, majlis 43; #18 in vol. 4, majlis 14; #19 in vol. 4, majlis 24; #20 in vol. 4, majlis 22.

²⁸ In the Tayyibī tradition, two *munājāt* attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib are: “*yā dha l-ma‘ālī ‘alayka mu‘tamaḍī*” (O You of elevated actions upon You is my support), and “*wa kam li llāhi min ḥuṣn ḥaṣṣiyyī*” (How many a mysterious benevolence does God grant!) (*Khazā’in barakāt al-du‘ā’*, popularly known as “*bihār nī ḥafṭī*,” in Bohra Gujarati meaning “manual for late-night prayer,” Bombay, 1389H, pp. 9–10, 91–92). In the Twelver Shi‘ite tradition, a *munājāt* attributed to ‘Alī is “*laka l-ḥamdu yā dha l-jūdī wa l-majdī wa l-‘ulā*,” (All praise is for You, O [God] of generosity and nobility and elevation), (cf. Āghā Buzurg al-Tīhrānī, *al-Dharī‘a ilā taṣānīf al-shī‘a*, Beirut, 2nd ed., 1983, vol. 22, pp. 237–38, under “*munājāt*”); the *munājāt* is quoted in full in *Naghma-yi āsmānī*, pp. 122–24.

²⁹ In the Tayyibī tradition, a *munājāt* attributed to Zayn al-‘Ābidīn is “*yā man ilayhi l-mushṭakā*” (*Khazā’in barakāt al-du‘ā’*, pp. 34–35).

However, according to many scholars, the attribution of these *munājāt* cannot be positively confirmed. Next we have a *munājāt* poem composed by a proto-Fatimid, possibly from the Umayyad period (ended 132/750), and quoted by al-Muʿayyad in his *Majālis*.³⁰ Parts of Sufi poetry, beginning in the eighth century with the poems (also of uncertain authenticity) of Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya (d. 185/801) have some of the characteristics of the *munājāt* genre. Unlike Sufi prose supplications, however, most Sufi poetry is not written in direct address (an essential element of the *munājāt* genre), but in the third grammatical person, and it follows the descriptive *ghazal* tradition, with the divine beloved taking the place of the corporeal one; hence, it cannot be categorized as true *munājāt*.³¹ Thus, al-Muʿayyad is the first to whom we can, with any degree of certainty, ascribe Arabic poems from the *munājāt* genre.

The earliest Persian *munājāt* poems were written by poets contemporary with, or a little later than al-Muʿayyad. One is the above-mentioned author of the *Munājāt*, Anṣārī (d. 481/1089), who included snippets of poetry *munājāt* within his prose; another is al-Muʿayyad's contemporary Fatimid dāʿī Nāṣir Khusrau (d. c. 481/1088), who included a short set of *munājāt* verses at the end of his long didactic poem, the *Rawshanāʾī Nāmeḥ*;³² a third is the founder of the Nizārī state, Ḥasan Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124).³³ Hence, as with Arabic *munājāt*, there is no definite attestation of Persian *munājāt* before al-Muʿayyad, and we can state with caution, barring any new findings, that al-Muʿayyad seems to have been the first to compose poetic *munājāt* consistently as a genre in any language in the Islamic world.

³⁰ *Al-Majālis al-Muʿayyadiyya*, vol. 4, majlis 14. Al-Muʿayyad says he is quoting a *munājāt* by "one of the truthful, sincere ones, who composed a *munājāt* at a time of dissemination and fear, and a period of the stretching of hands of one of the oppressors (named as the Umayyads in the poem, v. 8) upon the people of the daʿwa, in oppression and tyranny". The opening line is "[O] my God, hopelessness has surrounded us from every side / and every path has become narrow for us" (*ilāhī aḥāṭa l-yaʿsu min kullī jānibī / binā wa binā dāqat jamāʿ-u l-madhāhibī*). The poem is incorrectly included in al-Muʿayyad's *Dīvān* ed. by Husayn, #63, p. 323).

³¹ For a survey of the major poets and trends in Sufi poetry, see A. Schimmel, *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam*, New York, 1982; and M. Lings, chap. on "Mystical Poetry," in *CHALABI*, pp. 235–64. A study of the poetry of the famous Sufi Ibn al-Fāriḍ is by Th. Emil Homerin, *Umar Ibn al-Fāriḍ: Sufi Verse, Saintly Life*, New York, 2000.

³² Nāṣir Khusrau, *Rawshanāʾīnameḥ* (appended to Nāṣir's *Dīvān*) eds. Taqīzādeh & Miṇovī, Tehran, 1368H, p. 542.

³³ For a translation and analysis of Nāṣir's, Ḥasan's and ʿAṭṭār's *munājāt*, see Van den Berg, *Minstrel Poetry*, chapter on "Prayer-Poems: Munājāt and Duʿāʾ," pp. 287–300.

Later, the genre became more prolific, although never as popular as praise-poetry. The Ṭayyibīs continued the composition of *munājāt* in al-Muʿayyad’s tradition.³⁴ In addition, the modern Shiʿite bibliographical work *al-Dharīʿa* contains notations of some later *munājāt* poems in Arabic and several more in Persian.³⁵ *Munājāt* poetry also began to be composed in the other, new languages that Muslims used, such as Urdu, Sindhi, and Pashto in the Indian subcontinent.³⁶ Arab Christians, too, utilize the term for prose and poetry composed to commune with God.³⁷

Analysis of al-Muʿayyad’s munājāt Poems Composed to Commune with God

Al-Muʿayyad’s *Dīwān* contains six *munājāt* altogether, which comprises about ten percent of his *Dīwān*: four complete poems from the *munājāt* genre,³⁸ a short-piece *munājāt*,³⁹ and a *munājāt* which comprises the last four verses of a twenty-verse poem.⁴⁰

³⁴ Cf. compilations of poetry *munājāt* composed by the Ṭayyibī dāʿī T. Sayf al-Dīn (d. 1385/1965, *Majmūʿat al-Munājāt al-sharīfa al-ramaḍāniyya*, Dubai, 1411 H) and the current dāʿī M. Burhān al-Dīn (b. 1334/1915, *al-Munājāt al-sharīfa al-ramaḍāniyya*, Dubai, 1410 H).

³⁵ *Al-Dharīʿa*, vol. 22, pp. 234–42. Also see collection of poetry (and some prose) *munājāt* in *Naghma-yi āsmānī*; mostly Persian, some Arabic; contains *munājāt* of medieval poets like Anṣārī and Saʿdī, and modern ones like ʿAbbās Shahrī and Muḥammad Jaʿfar Irānpūr. Some other Persian *munājāt* collections are: Mīrzā Abū al-Ḥasan Hamadānī Ṭūṭī, *Munājāt-nāmeḥ kḥamsat ʿashar yā kitāb-i dūstī bā khudā* ([Tehran]: Sharq, [1920]; Raḥīm Kārg, ed., *Chalchirāgh-i ashk: Munājāt-o madāʾih-o marāthī-ye ahl al-bayt*, [Tehran]: Mashʿar, [1958]).

³⁶ In Urdu, for e.g. the *munājāt* of the poets Jōsh Malihābādī (in Faḍl-i ʿAbbās (ed.), *Intikhāb-i Kullīyyāt-i Jōsh*, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 168–77), Aḥmad Farāz, *Jānān Jānān*, Hyderabad, 1993, pp. 16–17, Maqbūl Karīmī, *Munājāt-i Maqbūl Karīmī*, Allahabad: Asrār-i Karīmī Press, [1970], pp. 89–152.

³⁷ E.g. the Lebanese Maronite bishop Kh.A. Āṣāf’s translation of Saint Augustine’s writings (Beirut, 1867), where he uses the term *munājāt* for Augustine’s supplications to God (Introduction, p. 4, & pt. 2, p. 4 ff.); and the Syriac Christian J. Shulhūt’s *Kitāb al-Najwā fī al-sināʿa wa al-ʿilm wa al-dīn* (Beirut, 1903), where he says his introduction and conclusion are “on *munājāt* with God” (*fī munājāt Allāh*) and the four parts in between are “on *munājāt* with the soul” (*fī munājāt al-naḥs*, p. 7). Cf. also the *munājāt* of ʿAlī Shēr Navāʾī in Chagatay (trans. into Persian, German and Russian, Tashkent, 1991).

³⁸ #21, p. 253, 15 verses; #26, p. 265, 15 verses; #27, p. 266, 13 verses; #28, p. 267, 14 verses.

³⁹ #43, p. 289, 6 verses. Two more short pieces (#49, p. 297, 5 verses; #53, p. 301, 5 verses) reiterate al-Muʿayyad’s love for the Prophet and ʿAlī and their progeny, and assert that his hope lies in them. These, with their sense of supplication, have a flavor of the *munājāt* genre, but not being in direct address, nor directly supplicatory, they cannot be termed *munājāt*.

⁴⁰ Written in challenge to the vizier who was responsible for his exile. #20, p. 252, vv. 17–20, end.

Al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* poems have eight features that are common to all *munājāt*, prose and poetry, earlier and later, Arabic and Persian, Sufi (except for direct address), Twelver Shi'ite, and Fatimid, and they may be said to define the genre:

- Direct address to God
- Spontaneous, personal style
- Plea for forgiveness of sins
- Appeal for succor
- Invocation of the names of Muḥammad and his progeny
- Vocabulary dominated by terms of pathos and complaint
- Poignant imagery
- Qur'ān and Hadith quotations

In his *munājāt*, al-Mu'ayyad addresses God directly, pleading with Him in various ways, begging, informing, and describing his pitiful condition. The *munājāt* poems all begin with direct address in the second person: "O my God" (*ilāhī*, three poems), "O my Lord" (*yā rabbi*, two poems), and more unusually, "O You Who see the spreading of the mosquito's wing" (*ya man yarā madda l-ba'ūḍi janāḥahā*, one poem). He explicitly uses the vocative "*yā*" as the first word in three and implicitly in the other three. He personalizes the address, using the personal pronoun explicitly in three (*ilāhī*) and in a truncated form in another two (*rabbi*). The following is an opening verse of a *munājāt* addressing God directly:⁴¹

[O] my God, I hope
for salvation,
by the vast mercy of the
One Who grants it.

إِلَهِي أَنِّي لَأَرْجُو النِّجَاةَ
بِوَأْسِعِ رَحْمَةٍ وَهَائِبَةٍ

Not only do they begin with direct address to God, but the *munājāt* poems are entirely in direct address, and the vocative particle (*yā*) and the expressions "My Lord," "My God" and the like recur after every few verses in the poems. The imperative form of verbs is often used in supplication, such as "End our night!" (*ikshif laylanā*), "Give me ease!" (*yassin*), "Be generous with . . . !" (*jud bi- . . .*), "Grant me . . . !" (*ummun 'alayya*).

The formal aspects of the *munājāt* all convey a sense of spontaneity. The length of al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* is shorter than that of both his

⁴¹ #27, p. 266, v. 1.

praise-poetry and his disputational verse: the four complete poems range from thirteen to fifteen verses, the short piece six verses, and the *munājāt* included in another poem, four verses. This brevity gives the impression of probable composition in one sitting. The rhymes, despite the shortness of the *munājāt*, are all relatively simple ones (*l* –two, *n*, *r*, *b*, *j* –one each), reinforcing the feeling of spontaneity, as does the fact that in four of the six poems, the *maṭlaʿ* (opening verse) is without *taṣrīʿ* (rhyming of the two hemistichs); this feature seems to make the *munājāt* more occasional pieces rather than deliberated-upon odes. His preferred meter is *mutaqārib*, (three *munājāt*, followed by two in *kāmil* and one in *rajaz*), which a medieval critic said has “softness and simplicity” as well as “continuity and uninterrupted sequence.”⁴² The use of the *mutaqārib* meter thus confers an impression of extemporaneity. Moreover, all three of these meters are “simple,” having a single repeated *tafʿīla* (metrical foot), which also contributes to the feeling of spontaneity.

Al-Muʾayyad also exploits the spontaneous, conversational possibilities of some other syntactical devices. He uses the conditional for the purpose of reasoning, for explaining to God why He should forgive the poet: If I, he says, with my paltry, insignificant strength, were to have my enemy in my control, I would still forgive him. And I am not an enemy. You with Your omnipotence are more worthy of generosity.⁴³ In addition, as in the following verses, he uses the rhetorical question to emphasize the poet’s dependence on God for all his hopes:⁴⁴

*I see something like
a barrier
between the answer and
the plea.*

وَأَرَى كَمِثْلِ السَّدِّ مَا
بَيْنَ الْجَابَةِ وَالسُّؤَالِ

*If You turn away the
hand that
I have stretched out towards
You, O Sublime One,*

فَلَمَّا رَدَدْتَ يَدًا إِلَيْكَ
مَدَدْتُهَا يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ

*do I have any other lord
[to go] towards whom I
can fasten my saddles?*

أَسْـَٔلُكَ لِي رَبًّا أُشُدُّ
إِلَيْهِ يَا أَمْلِي رَحَالِي

⁴² *Sabāṭa wa suhūla*, and *ḥusn al-ittirād*; al-Qarṭājannī, *Minhāj al-bulaghāʾ*, pp. 268–69.

⁴³ #26, p. 265, vv. 4–8.

⁴⁴ #28, p. 267, vv. 4–7.

Will you make sorry with
the answer,
like me, like the iniquity of
my deeds?

أَتَسِيءُ رَبِّ إِبْجَابَةً
مِثْلِي كَسُوْنِي فِي فَعَالِي

A plea for forgiveness of sins is a common theme, and often carried over a number of verses.⁴⁵ Al-Mu'ayyad does not, however, describe or recount his individual sins, but mentions them as a large, umbrella category. He begs God to pardon his sins, even though he is most unworthy and of no significance, for granting pardon is what God is worthy of. In the following two verses, he asks God for forgiveness and clemency:⁴⁶

Your pardon is not too narrow
[to encompass] my sins,
even though they have the
weight of mountains.

مَا ضَاقَ عَفْوُكَ عَنْ ذُنُوبِي
لَوْ حَوَتْ ثِقَلُ الْجِبَالِ

Far be it from Your forbearance
to become slight⁴⁷
at my weighty transgressions!

حَاشَا لِحِلْمِكَ أَنْ يَخِفَّ
لَدَى خَطَايَايَ الْثِقَالِ

Asking for aid and succor is also a recurring motif in the *munājāt*. The succor al-Mu'ayyad requests is either this-worldly, in the context of the poet's many troubles, or eschatological, in a plea for salvation. In making his plea effective, the poet recounts why he should be granted God's aid: his proclamation of the unity of God; his love for the true Imams—the progeny of Muḥammad—and the trials and tribulations he has faced in their cause. He says in one such plea:⁴⁸

So forgiveness, O my God!
For I am a man
who has "entered the city
from its door,"⁴⁹

فَعَفْوْ رَا إِلَهِي فَإِنِّي أَمْرُؤُ
دَخَلْتُ الْمَدِينَةَ مِنْ بَابِهَا

⁴⁵ For a discussion of the role of repentance in Muslim worship and the concept and vocabulary of sinning in Muslim prayer manuals, as well as of God's forgiving nature, and traditional petitions for forgiveness, see *Muslim Devotions*, pp. 173–203.

⁴⁶ #28, p. 267, vv. 8–9.

⁴⁷ Lit., to become light.

⁴⁸ #27, p. 266, vv. 9–10.

⁴⁹ Refers to a Prophetic Hadith which says: "I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī is its door. Whosoever wishes [to enter] the city must enter through the door." (*anā madīnatu l-ʿilmi wa ʿaliyyun bābuhā wa-man arāda l-madīnata faʿl-yadkhul biʿl-bāb*).

And I have fought well in
God's cause,
and have offered my life
for its lords.

وَجَاهَدْتُ فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ الْجِهَادِ
وَجُودْتُ بِنَفْسِي لِأَرْبَابِي

He also asks God to punish the Imams' enemies soon and severely with hellfire. The same poem continues:⁵⁰

And punish their enemies,
the followers
of their divining arrows and
graven images.

وَعَذِّبْ عُدَّتَهُمُ التَّابِعِينَ
لِأَزْلَامِهِمْ وَلَا نَصْرَ لِبَاهِيَا

And cut out their garments
from hellfire,⁵¹
and indeed, the time to cut
its garments has arrived.

وَقَطِّعْ مِنَ النَّارِ أَثْوَابَهُمْ
فَقَدْ آنَ تَقْطِيعُ أَثْوَابِهَا

For Your hellfire, O my Lord,
is deserving of them,
and they, O my God, are
deserving of it!

فَنَارُكَ يَا رَبِّ أَوْلَى بِهِمْ
وَهُمْ يَا إِلَهِي أَوْلَى بِهَا

Asking for wishes to be granted, either general or specific, is not a theme that occurs in al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt*. Pleading for an "answer" (*ijāba*), however, is a fairly common one; so is imploring a "look" (*naẓra*), that, al-Mu'ayyad says, would suffice him in the oppression of the nights and revivify him into eternal life.⁵²

Grant me a look that
I become alive by,
as it was of old in the first age.

أُمْنُنْ عَلَيَّ بِنَظْرَةٍ أَحْيَا بِهَا
كَانَتْ قَدِيمًا فِي الزَّمَانِ الْأَوَّلِ

Invocation of the names of the Imams and appealing for their intercession is a well-known Shi'ite motif⁵³ that takes its legitimacy from the Qur'ānic verse "O believers, fear God, and seek the means to come to him (*al-wasīla*)."⁵⁴ The Fatimids placed great importance on this invocation. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's *Kitāb al-Himma* expounds on this motif, quoting a saying of the Imam Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 148/765):⁵⁵

⁵⁰ #27, p. 266, vv. 11–13, end.

⁵¹ Reference to Qur'an 22:19.

⁵² #43, p. 289, v. 6, end; "the first age" refers to the time of first creation, before the original sin, and before the creation of the heavens and earth.

⁵³ See also Schimmel's comments on the importance to all Muslims, including Sunnis, of invoking the name of the Prophet Muḥammad (*Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*, Edinburgh, 1994, p. 146).

⁵⁴ Qur'an 5:35, trans. Arberry; see also Qur'an 17:57.

⁵⁵ K. *al-Himma*, Ḥusayn ed., p. 51, *Code of Conduct* (Eng. trans.), p. 42.

We are the doors to God, and the means [to get near to] Him for His servants: whosoever seeks nearness through us gets near; whosoever seeks intercession from us, his intercession is successful; whosoever begs mercy through us gains mercy; and whosoever turns away from us has gone astray.

Al-Mu'ayyad invokes the names of Muḥammad and his progeny in almost all his *munājāt* and seeks from God the success of their intercession for himself. He uses the term "*tawassul*" (lit. seeking a means of coming near to God, here, through the Imams) explicitly in this context in one poem.⁵⁶

The vocabulary of the *munājāt* reflects its poignant contents. Forgiveness (*ʿafw*, *ghafr*) is a common word, as are words related to its theme, such as sins and errors (*dhunūb*, *khaṭāyā*). Words conveying the poet's troubles and his distressed condition also recur, such as night(s) (*layl*, *layālī*) and care (*hamm*), heat (*ḥarr*) and its antonym, shade (*zilāl*), hardship (*ʿusr*) and its antonym, ease (*yusr*), weeping (*abkī*) and complaint (*ashkū*), grief (*ḥazan*), injury (lit. injured person, *mustaḍām*) and troubles (*miḥan*). Words used to convey the positive pleas of the *munājāt* are mercy (*raḥma*), salvation (*najāt*), hope (*amal*, *rajāʾ*), plea (*daʿwā*, *suʿāl*) and answer (*ijāba*).

The imagery is not abundant, but it is moving and powerful where it does occur: a mendicant stretching out his hand for alms;⁵⁷ the poet constantly prostrating himself before God during the day and continuously weeping and complaining in the darkness of the night;⁵⁸ the roaring sea of God's strength (*qudra*), which has swamped the poet's ship from anchoring or from setting forth;⁵⁹ al-Mu'ayyad having become pure gold for the sun of right guidance (Imam) and the futility of fire trying to consume pure gold.⁶⁰ In the following verse, personified night strikes the poet with all kinds of hardships:⁶¹

[O] my God, verily, for the
Progeny of the Prophet,
the nights have struck me
with their sufferings.

إِلهِي إِنِّي بِأَلْسِنَةِ
دَهْشَتِي اللَّيْلِ بِأَوْصَالِهَا

⁵⁶ #28, p. 267, v. 11.

⁵⁷ #28, p. 257, v. 5.

⁵⁸ #20, p. 252, v. 18.

⁵⁹ #26, p. 265, v. 6.

⁶⁰ #26, p. 265, vv. 12–13.

⁶¹ #27, p. 266, vv. 7–8.

*How they have made me
swallow of their bitter drink!⁶²
and how they have wearied
me by raising up their
banner[s]!⁶³*

فَكَمْ جَرَعْتَنِي مِنْ صَابِهَا
وَكَمْ أَنْصَبْتَنِي بَنَاتِهَا

From time to time in his *munājāt*, al-Mu'ayyad alludes to Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic Hadiths just as he does in his other genres. In one verse, he quotes a verse from the Qur'ān verbatim, "Verily, with hardship comes ease" (*inna ma'a al-ʿusri yusra*),⁶⁴ prefacing this with a plea for ease. Another time, he alludes to the Hadith "I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī is its door" (*anā madīnat al-ʿilmi wa ʿaliyyun bābuhā*).⁶⁵

In addition to these eight features of *munājāt* that apply universally to the genre, there are two more features that are relevant to our discussion of al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* in particular. First, praise of the Imams, which occurs in almost all al-Mu'ayyad's poems regardless of their genre, is relatively light here. It occurs only in the context of the poet's invoking their names and declaring his love for them. Thus, there are one or two verses in some *munājāt* that contain praise of the Imam in passing,⁶⁶ and none in others.⁶⁷ The longest praise section in al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* is the following five verses:⁶⁸

*...for I have gained sanctity,
O Sublime One,
through [salvation's] maṣjid
and pulpit:
the prophet of right guidance
and his legatee,⁶⁹ who,
when war bares its fangs,
his sharp sword smites necks,
like fire's burning of its logs.*

فَأِنِّي تَحَرَّمْتُ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ
مَسْجِدَهَا وَمِحْطَهَا رَأْبَهَا
نَبِيٍّ أَمْدَى وَالْوَصِيِّ الَّذِي
إِذَا افْتَرَّتِ الْحَرْبُ عَنْ نَابِهَا
تَلَفَّحَ صَارِمُهُ بِالْطَّلَبِ
تَلَفَّحَ نَكَارٍ بِأَفْصَحِهَا

⁶² *Ṣāb*: a bitter tree, or the milky juice extracted from it (cf., Lane, ṣ-w-b); could also be taken from *ṣaʿb* (ṣ-ʿ-b), with the hamza dropped to form *ṣāb* for poetic need, meaning "full [cup]."

⁶³ *bi-tiṣābiḥa*: *tiṣāb tanṣāb* does not occur in any of the many lexicons I have looked at; could be 1) *qiyāsī tafʿāl/tifʿāl* form of *naṣaba*, or 2) *tanāṣīb*: banners, back-formation to singular.

⁶⁴ #26, p. 265, v. 15, Qur'ān, 94:5–6.

⁶⁵ #27, p. 266, v. 9, Hadith cited in *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, 1: 89–90.

⁶⁶ #26, v. 11, #27, vv. 3–4, #28, v. 12.

⁶⁷ *Diwān*, poems 20, 21, 43.

⁶⁸ #27, p. 266, vv. 2–6.

⁶⁹ I.e., the maṣjid and pulpit of salvation are the prophet and his legatee. Grammatically, the latter two terms are in apposition (*badal*) to the former pair.

*And his progeny,⁷⁰ a progeny
that has become elevated
in its lineage and its good
character.*

وَعَتَرَتْهُ عَتَرَةٌ قَدْ عَلَتْ
بَأَنْسِهَا وَأُحْسِهَا

*Allegiance to them, for the
people of allegiance,
is a sign of purity of line.*

وَلَا يَبْلُغُهُمْ لِرَجَالِ الْوَلَاءِ
عَلَامَةٌ طُهُرٍ لِأَنْسِهَا

Second, the contents of four out of al-Mu'ayyad's six *munājāt* do not refer to any particular time or series of events. Two *munājāt*, however, are clearly grounded in a historical context, both were composed during his yearlong exile in Jerusalem. The first historically grounded *munājāt*⁷¹ contains a number of images that refer to the poet's temporal reality: his old, infirm body shaken in howdahs and thrown into the corner of a masjid in Jerusalem, after having spent all sixty years of his life in the service of the Fatimid da'wa. Al-Mu'ayyad expresses shock at the unexpected pain and humiliation forced on him by this exile, and he asks God to end his night and usher in the morning of deliverance. The second historically grounded *munājāt*⁷² is part of another poem, and the historical connection (a challenge to the Fatimid vizier who was responsible for al-Mu'ayyad's exile) is established in the sixteen verses preceding the four *munājāt* verses. The *munājāt* itself has no historical reference; al-Mu'ayyad turns away completely from the vizier, and addresses God in an impassioned plea for aid and deliverance.

Since al-Mu'ayyad's two historically grounded *munājāt* were both composed during his Jerusalem exile, it is possible that all his *munājāt* were composed either just around this time or a little later, during the last stage of his life between exile in 453/1061 and death in 470/1078.

The following is a complete *munājāt* from al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, which displays all the features discussed above:⁷³

[O] my God, I have called upon
You in private and in public,
O master of the kingdom
in creation and command!⁷⁴

إِلَهِي دَعَوْتُكَ سِرًّا وَجَهْرًا
أَيَا مَالِكِ الْمُلْكِ خَلَقًا وَأَمْرًا

⁷⁰ Grammatically, conjoined with (*maṭīf 'alā*) the prophet and his legate.

⁷¹ #21, p. 253.

⁷² #20, p. 252, vv. 17–20, end.

⁷³ #26, p. 265, vv. 1–15, complete.

⁷⁴ Cf. Majālis Mu'ayyadiyya, vol. 1, majlis II: *khalq* is *dār al-dunyā*; *amr* is *dār al-ibādā*.

*O You who dispatches us
however he chooses,
in life and in death, in
congregation [after death]
and in resurrection.*

*[O] my God, I have fastened
the saddles of hope
towards You, so pardon,
my God, and forgiveness!*

*[O] my God, if I were to
have power over the enemy,
I would stretch out a veil of
pardon over him.*

*And what is my value among
[Your] servants,
such that I have the power
of benefiting another or
harming him!*

*And wherefrom such strength
for me, [for] the sea of
[God's strength]
has swamped my ship
while anchored and
while on course!*

*Then if someone like me,
with my littleness,
and my being the littlest
of the little in value,*

*can be generous with pardon
if I have power [over my
enemy],
then You are more worthy,
and [yet] more worthy,
of generosity!*

*[Moreover,] I am not an
enemy, for I have laid open,
[my] heart,⁷⁵ by Your Right,
O [my] Lord, for religion.*

وَيَا مَنْ يُصَرِّفُنَا كَيْفَ شَاءَ
حَيَاةً وَمَوْتًا وَحَشَرًا وَنَشَرًا

إِلَهِي شَدَدْتُ رَحَالَ الرَّجَاءِ
إِلَيْكَ فَعَفُّوا إِلَهِي وَغَفْرًا

إِلَهِي لَوْ أَنَّي مَلَكَتُ الْعَدُوَّ
مَدَدْتُ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْعَفْوِ سِتْرًا

وَمَا قَدَرُ مِثْلِي بَيْنَ الْعَبِيدِ
فَأَمْلِكْ نَفْعًا لِعِبْرِي وَضُرًّا

وَمِنْ أَيْنَ لِي قُدْرَةٌ بِحُرِّهَا

تَعْظُمُ طَرَسُيَ لِفُلْكَي وَمَجْرَى

فَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْلِي عَلَى قَلْتِي
وَكُونِي أَقْلَ الْأَقْلَيْنِ قَدْرًا

أَمْنُ بَعْفُو إِذَا مَا قَدَرْتُ

فَأَيْتُكَ بِالْمَنْ أَحْرَى وَأَحْرَى

وَلَسْتُ عَدُوًّا فَإِنِّي شَرَحْتُ

وَحَقَّقْتُ يَا رَبِّ لِلدِّينِ صَدْرًا

⁷⁵ Lit. breast.

*And the proclamation of my
Lord's unity, has become,
in my insides,
the concealed secret of its
secrets.*

وتوحيدُ ربيَ بينَ الحشا

غَدَا سِرّاً أُسْرَارِهِ الْمُسْتَسِرّاً

*And I have turned my face
towards the progeny of the
Messenger
in allegiance, and I have
turned my back to the
malicious one.*

وَوَلَّيْتُ وَجْهِي لآلِ الرَسُولِ

وَلَاءٌ وَوَلَّيْتُ ذَا الْبُغْضِ ظَهْرًا

*Then what do I care about
hellfire? The long hands
of my right understanding
make hellfire's hand short!*

فَمَالِي وَلِلنَّارِ طُولَى يَدَيَّ

رَشَادِي تَرُدُّ يَدَ النَّارِ قُصْرًا

*I have become pure gold for
the sun of right guidance,
and fire dare not consume
pure gold!*

وَأَصْبَحْتُ تَبْرًا لِشَمْسِ الْهُدَى

وَهَيْهَاتَ أَنْ تَأْكُلَ النَّارُ تَبْرًا

*[O] my God, my intention
is good,
so be generous with that which
is good as an abode!*

إِلَهِي لَقَدْ حَسُنَتْ نِيَّتِي

فَجُدْ بِالَّتِي حَسُنَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا

*And give me ease from
my hardship,
for indeed You have said,
"Verily, with hardship
comes ease."⁷⁶*

وَيَسِّرْ لِي الْيُسْرَ مِنْ عُسْرَتِي

فَقَدْ قُلْتَ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

Thus, we see that al-Muʿayyad contributed to the development of a new genre in Arabic poetry. Moreover, in the Ṭayyibī daʿwa, his own *munājāt* are still used in liturgy and prayer today.

Disputational-Heresiographical Verse

Al-Muʿayyad was a master of the art of disputation (*munāẓara*) that was popular in the medieval Islamic world, and he had participated in at least two religious-sectarian disputations while in attendance at

⁷⁶ Reference to Qurʾān 94:5, 6.

Abū Kālījār's court in Shiraz. He recorded these disputations verbatim in his *Sīra*, in which he states that he won Abū Kālījār's conversion to the Fatimid *madhhab* through a written disputation, and confounded his enemies at the king's court by crushing his opponent in a verbal one.⁷⁷

Three of al-Mu'ayyad's long poems resemble the theological *munāẓara* in their dogmatic content and combative style.⁷⁸ The poems are ideological, containing specifics of Fatimid and non-Fatimid theological beliefs, and they are polemical, condemning non-Fatimid Muslims for the irrationality of their beliefs. Two are didactic,⁷⁹ providing information on Fatimid doctrine and being almost devoid of rhetorical tropes. Al-Mu'ayyad takes on the role of the belligerent questioner in these poems; the opponent upon whom the onus of defense falls is the non-Fatimid Muslim community at large, specifically the religious scholars among them. Contrary to a real disputation, however, the opponent's voice is controlled by the poet.

⁷⁷ Al-Mu'ayyad says in his *Sīra* (p. 15) that several disputations took place between himself and scholars at Abū Kālījār's court. He records in it the details of two: 1) The complete text of a written disputation between al-Mu'ayyad and a Sunni pro-Abbasid scholar called al-Khurāsānī in Shiraz between 430/1039 and 433/1042; main topic: the necessity of *tāwīl* and the sole right of the Fatimid Imams to explicate the *tāwīl* (pp. 16–42). Abū Kālījār converted to the Fatimid *madhhab* in its wake (p. 43). 2) The contents of a much shorter verbal disputation between al-Mu'ayyad and a Zaydī shaykh from the line of descent of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in Shiraz between 433/1042 and 435/1044; (pp. 57–60); main topics: necessity of *tāwīl*, and moon-sighting for Ramaḍān fasting. Cf. remarks on these disputations by Klemm (*Die Mission*, pp. 14–16, 22).

⁷⁸ *Dīwān*, poems 1 (pp. 191–98), 2 (pp. 199–206), & 5 (pp. 215–18). Studies on disputation in the Islamic world include: E. Wagner's survey article, "Munāẓara," *EI2*, vol. 7, pp. 565–68; and J. van Ess' earlier article, "Disputationspraxis in der islamischen Theologie. Eine vorläufige Skizze," *Revue des études islamiques* 44 (1976), pp. 23–60. The history of the disputation in Fatimid tradition is discussed briefly by Walker in his recent art. "Fatimid Institutions," sub-chapter on "The Munāẓarāt," pp. 180–82. The *Kitāb al-Munāẓarāt* of Ibn al-Haytham (trans. as *The Advent of the Fatimids* by W. Madelung and P. Walker, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000) is not relevant for this issue despite its name, as it deals with discussions between the followers of the Imam rather than scholarly debates. It should also be noted that al-Mu'ayyad's disputational poems bear very little resemblance to the medieval literary debate poems (also called *munāẓara*) between objects such as the rose and the narcissus, or the pen and the sword (some studies of these can be found in *Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East: Forms and Types of Literary Debates in Semitic and Related Literature*, eds. G.J. Reinink and H.L.J. Vanstiphout, Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1991).

⁷⁹ References for didactic poetry are provided in the "Introduction."

Development of the Disputational Verse Genre

In contrast to the *munājjāt*, al-Mu'ayyad's disputational verse continues and modifies an existing tradition of heresiographical poetry. In the classical Arabic literary corpus, there are some attestations of heresiographical poems before al-Mu'ayyad.⁸⁰ Two authors of early polemical poetry are the Twelver Shi'ite Ma'dān al-A'mā al-Shumayṭī (2nd/8th century), who wrote a long poem on Shi'ite sects and the supremacy of the Shumayṭī denomination,⁸¹ and the Mu'tazilite Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir (d. 210/825), who also used verse to convey sectarian arguments.⁸² The proto-Fatimid encyclopedia of the sciences, the tenth-century *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, contains a long didactic *urjūza*⁸³ similar to al-Mu'ayyad's disputational verse in two ways: it expounds upon the necessity of someone leading the *da'wa* (*dhū da'wa*) in every age, and it contains questions about the true meaning of Qur'ānic verses such as the letters at the beginning of some *sūras* and the stories of the prophets. Unlike al-Mu'ayyad's disputational poetry, however, the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* poem also contains verses on *ḥaqā'iq* topics.

Within the historical Fatimid tradition before al-Mu'ayyad, some didactic poetry is attested to, but, contrary to al-Mu'ayyad's, none of it is on specific ideological issues. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (fourth/tenth century), the first Fatimid dā'ī to compose didactic poetry, wrote four *urjūza muzdawijas*, two of which are extant: on the question of the Imamate and Alī's rightful succession to the Prophet, the largely

⁸⁰ Cf. J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vols. v and vi. Other "theological" poets are Ṣafwān al-Anṣārī (Mu'tazilite, lived 2nd–3rd/8th–9th centuries, see art. by W. Heinrichs in *EF*², vol. 8, pp. 818–19), and Thābit Quṭna (Murji'ite, d. 110/728), whose theological poem is in *al-Aghānī* (Bulaq ed., vol. xiv, p. 270, German trans. by G. van Vloten (*ZDMG* 45, 1891), pp. 162–62).

⁸¹ A few verses from Ma'dān's poem are cited at three different places by al-Jāhīz in *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* (ed. 'A.M. Hārūn, 5th ed., Cairo, 1985, pt. 1, p. 23, pt. 3, pp. 75, 356), who says that one of these (p. 356) is a long poem about the "Ghālīya, the Rāfiḍa, the Taymiyya, and the Zaydiyya." Cf. Khulūṣī, "Didactic Verse," p. 506, and *GAS*, vol. ii, p. 454; see also reconstruction of his poem by C. Pellat in *Oriens* 16 (1963), pp. 99–109, and additions by J. van Ess, *Der Islam* 47 (1971), pp. 245–51.

⁸² Al-Jāhīz, *K. al-Hayawān*, ed. 'A.M. Hārūn, Cairo, 1965–69, pt. 6, pp. 284–97, commentary (interrupted by digressions), pt. 6, pp. 297–443. See also a set of verses by Bishr with brief critique in 'A. Balba', *Adab al-Mu'tazila ilā nihāyat al-qam al-rābi' al-hijrī*, Cairo, 1959, pp. 355–56. Van Gelder considers Bishr's poems a borderline case between the literary and the didactic ("Arabic Didactic Verse," p. 112, and note 19).

⁸³ Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, Beirut, n.d., vol. 4, pp. 139–44, in *Risāla* 6 of pt. 4.

historical, somewhat polemical, *al-Uḥjūza al-Mukhtāra*,⁸⁴ and the legal manual *al-Uḥjūza al-Muntakhaba*.⁸⁵ His two lost *uḥjūzas* were historical.⁸⁶ The *Dīwān* of another dāʿī who lived almost a hundred years later, al-Ḥusayn b. ʿĀmir (d.c. early 5th/11th century), also contains two didactic poems:⁸⁷ one is a long, largely historical, partly ideological, somewhat polemical *uḥjūza muzdawija*, describing the epochs of the six major prophets and all the Imams, up to, and focusing on the poet's Imam of the Age, al-Ḥākim (d. 411/1021),⁸⁸ a second didactic poem in his *Dīwān* is historical in content and strophic in form. Al-Muʿayyad was probably aware of these poems, and it is quite possible that he was influenced by them. Two of al-Muʿayyad's contemporary dāʿīs also composed didactic poems, albeit without a polemical slant: Nāṣir Khusrau (d.c. 481/1088) composed a long didactic Persian *masnavī* on *ḥaqāʾiq* topics, the *Rawshanāʾināmeḥ*,⁸⁹ and a Syrian dāʿī named Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥasan al-Ṣūrī (d. 490/1097)—who, after al-Mustanṣir's death in 487/1094 probably declared allegiance to Nizār—composed a *ḥaqīqa* treatise in *uḥjūza muzdawija* form, titled *al-Qaṣīda al-Ṣūrīyya*.⁹⁰ After al-Muʿayyad, didactic *uḥjūzas* proliferated in the Fatimid-Ṭayyibī tradition.⁹¹

⁸⁴ Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *al-Uḥjūza al-Mukhtāra*. 2375 verses, ed. I.K. Poonawala, Montreal & Beirut, 1970; studied by T. Nagel in "Die 'Uḥjūza al-Muḥtāra des Qaḍī an-Nuʿmān," *Die Welt des Islam* 15 (1974), pp. 96–128.

⁸⁵ Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *al-Uḥjūza al-Muntakhaba*, ms., see Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, pp. 53–54.

⁸⁶ Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Dhāt al-mīnan fī Sīrat al-Imām al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh al-Fāṭimī*, and *Dhāt al-mīhan fī Sīrat Makhḥad al-Dajjāl al-Māriq Abī Yazīd al-Khārījī*, see Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismāʿīlī Literature*, p. 58.

⁸⁷ Al-Ḥusayn b. ʿĀmir, *Dīwān*. ms. Ṭayyibī daʿwa library, copied by Yūsuf b. Mulla ʿAbd al-Walī b. Mullā Dāʾūd b. Ibrāhīm in Sidhpūr, 1270H, very brief biobibliographical information in Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismāʿīlī Literature*, pp. 92–93. Synopsis of the poem's contents in Majdū's *Fihrist*, pp. 44–45.

⁸⁸ Also describing the poet's journey to Mecca.

⁸⁹ Nāṣir Khusrau, *Rawshanāʾināmeḥ*, pp. 511–42. J. Rypka describes the *Rawshanāʾināmeḥ* as "a didactic poem of an ethical nature that puts forward a cosmographical-metaphysical system based on the philosophy of Aristotle in the light of Avicenna and al-Fārābī, but with the addition of Sūfī features." (*History of Iranian Literature*, Dordrecht, 1968, p. 189).

⁹⁰ Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥasan al-Ṣūrī, *al-Qaṣīda al-Ṣūrīyya*, ed. ʿA. Tāmīr, Damascus, 1955. For biographical information on this dāʿī, see M. Ghālib, *Aʿlām al-Ismāʿīliyya*, Beirut, 1964, pp. 482–83.

⁹¹ An example of a didactic *uḥjūza* composed after al-Muʿayyad before the beginning of the Ṭayyibī daʿwa is Abū Firās (d. 5th/11th century, Nizārī), *al-Qaṣīda al-Shāfiyya* (ed. ʿA. Tāmīr, Beirut, 1967). Ṭayyibī daʿwa poets are discussed in detail in chap. 6.

Purpose and method of al-Mu'ayyad's disputational verse

The primary purpose of al-Mu'ayyad's disputational poems seems to have been conversion, and their polemical and ideological elements come together in a powerful proselytizing package. As we know from his statements in the *Šīra*, al-Mu'ayyad addressed his prose disputations to this purpose and it seems likely that the poetry version had a similar goal. Further, he composed all three of his disputational poems in Fars, where the most energetic of his direct proselytizing activities took place,⁹² and the content of the poems makes it almost certain that their primary audience was the larger Muslim community of Fars who were potential converts to the Fatimid da'wa. Al-Mu'ayyad calls his disputational verses "snares" for "seekers of guidance."⁹³

A second, pragmatic purpose these poems served was to defend al-Mu'ayyad and the Fatimid da'wa to Abū Kālījār against accusations of unorthodox beliefs, such as the abrogation of the Sharī'a and the raising of 'Alī's status above Muḥammad's. These were beliefs held by the Ibāḥiyya and the Ghulāt [Shi'a], two groups al-Mu'ayyad names and denounces towards the end of his first disputational poem.⁹⁴ It should be noted that in a poem-letter to Abū Kālījār, al-Mu'ayyad explicitly defends himself against accusations of a (presumably agnostic) philosophical approach,⁹⁵ and it seems likely that the disputational verses too are a response to real accusations made against him about being a Rāfiḍī.⁹⁶ He uses his poetry to disassociate himself from

⁹² After his arrival in Egypt, and especially after his appointment as dā'ī al-du'āt, his direct da'wa activities were focused on the religious education of the Fatimid followers in the capital, and his proselytizing activities, although far from over, were carried out indirectly through the network of dā'īs that he supervised in other lands. For a discussion of Ismā'īlism as the state religion in the Fatimid Empire, and a missionary movement outside it, see Stern, "Cairo as the Centre," pp. 234–56.

⁹³ #2, p. 206, vv. 150–52. Cf. similar didactic questioning in Nāṣir's poetry (trans. Schimmel, *Make a Shield*, p. 33).

⁹⁴ #1, p. 197, vv. 139–140. See al-Mu'ayyad's refutation of the Ibāḥiyya in *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, vol. 1, *majlis* 65. In #5, p. 218, v. 66, he denies being a Rāfiḍī. Note that in his *Majālis*, al-Mu'ayyad defines *rafiḍ* as *ghuluww* (1:39, pp. 184–85). See al-Mu'ayyad's refutation of the Ghulāt in *ibid.*, 1:17–18, 30–40, 65–67 & 93. Al-Mu'ayyad does not give any details of their beliefs, unlike his manner of dealing with the Sunnis, the literalists in general, and the Mu'tazilites.

⁹⁵ #62, p. 321, v. 116; *Šīra*, p. 52. See al-Mu'ayyad's refutation of the philosophers in *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, 1:1 & 15, 2:5, 3:40–43, 6:41; *Jāmi' al-ḥaqā'iq*, vol. 2, chap. 12, fols. 192–99, 287–91.

⁹⁶ This contention is supported by the contents of an open letter (*risāla*) included in al-Mu'ayyad's *Majālis*, written according to the *Majālis* by a Fatimid "dā'ī in the East," complaints about whom reached "the king" along with accusations of various

these groups and their beliefs, and he lays out his position vis-à-vis the Shari‘a, reiterating that the people of his *madhhab* undertake both aspects of divine worship: knowledge (‘ilm, referring here mainly to *tāwīl*) and practice (‘amal) of the Shari‘a with the Prophet as their guide.⁹⁷

A third purpose these poems probably served was to assert the supremacy of the Fatimid belief system to those who already subscribed to it. The conviction Fatimid followers had in the validity of their own belief system would be strengthened when their dā‘ī could show them the flaws inherent in all others.

The method employed by al-Mu‘ayyad in these poems was the one generally used by Fatimid dā‘īs to gain converts:⁹⁸ *tashkīk* (doubt-creating) questions. The dā‘ī would approach an individual of some social standing in a community, sound out his latent promise, and impress this person with his own learning and piety. Then he would ask the potential convert about specific tenets of his beliefs and gradually create doubts in his mind by pointing out specific reasons for their non-viability; in other words, poking holes in them, tenet by tenet. When the potential convert questioned the dā‘ī about the true beliefs, the dā‘ī would answer broadly, expounding on the righteousness of those true Imams who were the sole communicators of divine learning to mankind, and the explicators of the inner meaning of the Qur‘ān. Finally—and only after the potential convert had sworn allegiance to the Fatimid Imam of the Age—the dā‘ī would begin gradually to reveal the esoteric Fatimid interpretation. Al-Mu‘ayyad’s disputational poems are replete with *tashkīk* questions. The following verses (detailing the Qur‘ānic verses about God offering the Trusteeship,

things: atheism, exaggeration of ‘Alī’s status, and of following the path of the philosophers (*al-Majālis al-Mu‘ayyadiyya*, vol. 3, ed. M. Ghālib, Beirut, 1984, *majlis* 38). This dā‘ī and king could very well be al-Mu‘ayyad and Abū Kālījār, for he was indeed accused of these things as we also know from al-Mu‘ayyad’s poem-letter to Abū Kālījār in his *Sira* (#62, p. 321, v. 116; *Sira*, p. 52).

⁹⁷ #1, pp. 197–98, vv. 132–47, esp. 134 & 143.

⁹⁸ Details of the method used by the Fatimid dā‘īs to proselytize is noted by al-Maqrīzī in *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. 1, pp. 391–96. An important record of a historical case of conversion is that of the Ibn al-Haytham, later to become a Fatimid dā‘ī himself, in his memoirs (*Kiṭāb al-Munāẓarāt*, ed. and transl. by Wilferd Madelung and Paul Walker as *The Advent of the Fatimids: A Contemporary Shi‘i Witness*, I.B. Tauris, 2000). Another case is the conversion of an Iraqi in the period preceding the appearance of the Mahdi by the dā‘ī Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ (by Heinz Halm in *The Empire of the Mahdi*, pp. 26–30, from al-Ṭabarī 3:2124–2127). Al-Mu‘ayyad in his *Majālis* explains how a dā‘ī (himself?) converted a scholar through *tashkīk* questions and rational answers (vol. 1, *majlis* 13–14).

“*al-amāna*,” to the sky, earth and mountains) give a clear picture of al-Mu’ayyad’s “they said . . . I said” questioning style:⁹⁹

*They denied that He presented
the trusteeship
to the skies,¹⁰⁰ as He made
clear.*

وَأَنْكَرُوا أَنْ عَرَضَ الْأَمَانَةَ
عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ كَمَا أَبَانَهُ

*They said: “It is an inanimate
body, it cannot be charged,
and a just person disdains
such an act;*

قَالُوا جَمَادٌ هِيَ لَا تُكَلَّفُ
وَمِثْلَ هَذَا الْفِعْلِ يَأْبَى الْمُنْصِفُ

*He had meant the people
of the sky
and it was to them He alluded
by the name ‘sky’.”*

وَأَمَّا أَهْلَ السَّمَاءِ قَدْ عَنَى
وَعَنْهُمْ بِاسْمِ السَّمَاءِ قَدْ كُنَى

*And after that the earth and
the mountains—
they said about [these two,
something] similar to that
[earlier] assertion.*

وَبَعْدَ ذَلِكَ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ
بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقَوْلِ فَيُحَالُوا

*Nothing has prevented the
Merciful from explaining;
[is it that] they could talk and
He could not?*

مَا مَنَعَ الرَّحْمَانَ أَنْ يُبَيِّنَهُ
أَمْكَنَهُمْ قَوْلٌ وَلَمَّا أَمْكَنَهُ

*They were ignorant of the
wisdom of the Book,
and each person gave
judgment in it by whim.*

قَدْ جَهِلُوا مِنَ الْكِتَابِ الْحِكْمَا
وَفِيهِ كُلُّ بِالْمَوَى تَحَكُّمًا

*They thought they had
patched one rent,
they fell into an [even]
greater ordeal.*

فَحِينَ ظَنُّوا أَنَّ خَرَفًا رَفَعُوا
فِي مُحَنَّةٍ أَعْظَمَ مِنْهُ وَقَعُوا

*We said to them, “The
people of the sky, who
are they?”
Their assertion, “Angels,”
is acceptable.*

قُلْنَا لَهُمْ أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ مَنْ هُمْ
فَقَوُّهُمْ مَلَأَتْكَ يُسَلِّمُ

⁹⁹ #1, pp. 192–93, vv. 32–43.

¹⁰⁰ The reference is to Qur’ān 33:72.

We said, "And the people of
the earth?" They said,
"The people"—
correct, insofar as analogy
dictates.

That is done with, and the
"mountains" remain—
are its people the hyenas
and the ibexes?

If changing the Book were
rational,
then refuting it would be even
more deserving of merit.

O how weak they are, and
how weak is that which
they have fabricated!
And how feeble is that, which
by their opinion, they have
interpreted.

قُلْنَا فَأَهْلُ الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا النَّاسُ

صَحَّ إِلَى حَيْثُ انْتَهَى الْقِيَاسُ

قَدْ مَرَّ ذَا وَبَقِيَ الْجِبَالُ
أَهْلُهَا الضَّبَابُ وَالْأَوْعَالُ

إِنْ كَانَ تَبْدِيلُ الْكِتَابِ عَقْلًا
فَدَفْعُهُ أَكْثَرُ مِنْهُ فَضْلًا

يَا ضَعْفَهُمْ وَضَعْفَ مَا تَقُولُوا

وَسُخْفَ مَا بِرَأْيِهِمْ تَأْوَلُّوا

Formal Aspects, Style, and Specialized Terminology

As mentioned earlier, two¹⁰¹ of al-Mu'ayyad's three disputational poems adhere closely to the norm for the Arabic didactic poem, and this adherence is manifested in a number of ways:

1. The poems provide information on theological issues and are thus instructional.
2. They are almost devoid of poetic tropes.
3. The poems are in *ujūza muzdawija*, the preferred meter and rhyme for didactic poetry.¹⁰²
4. They are long when compared to the rest of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, 152 and 156 verses respectively (although far shorter than some other Arabic didactic poems, which are thousands of verses long).
5. Enjambment (*taḍmīn*) is a common feature in these poems; the

¹⁰¹ #1 (pp. 191–98) & 2 (pp. 199–206).

¹⁰² For studies on the *rajaz* meter, see D. Frolov, "The Place of Rajaz in the History of Arabic Verse," *JAL* 28 (1997), pp. 242–90; and M. Ullmann, *Untersuchungen zur Ragazpoesie: Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*, Wiesbaden, 1966. A study of the *muzdawija* is G. von Grunebaum's art. "On the Origin and Early Development of Arabic Muzdawij Poetry," *JNES* 3 (1944), pp. 9–13. A short, recent survey is by W. Stoetzer, "muzdawija," *EAL*, vol. 2, pp. 567–68.

individual verses of poetry are frequently not grammatically independent but run on through the second or even the third verse.
6. Just as a theological prose treatise would, they begin with praise of God.

The third poem is more difficult to categorize, since it contains elements of what Wolfhart Heinrichs calls both “genuine” and “didactic” poetry, viz., an instructive agenda and good literary style.¹⁰³ This veering away from the unambiguously didactic towards the literary is manifested in the following features:

1. The poem has a monorhyme in “l” and is in the *khafīf* meter.¹⁰⁴
2. It contains a fair amount of imagery and tropes.¹⁰⁵
3. It has a *nasīb* prelude, which is unusual indeed in a didactic poem.
4. The poem is shorter than the other two, 67 verses, a relative brevity that is to be expected considering the more difficult rhyme and meter
5. It has no enjambment.

All three poems, however, are brought together by some common stylistic features. First, the various segments of the poems follow a narrative structure that logically develops the argument through a large number of verses. Each verse is directly based on the preceding ones. The following segment is a sample of al-Mu’ayyad’s logical style:¹⁰⁶

What do you think nūn is, O companion, and kāf ? —all creation is a pearl and they are shells.¹⁰⁸	ما النُّونُ يَا صَاحِبَ تَرَى وَالْكَافُ فَالْخَلْقُ ذُرٌّ وَهُمْ أَصْـذَافُ
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¹⁰³ #5 (pp. 215–18). W. Heinrichs, “Literary Theory: The Problem of its Efficiency,” *Arabic Poetry: Theory and Development*, ed. G.E. von Grunebaum, Wiesbaden, 1973, pp. 18–69, esp. p. 27; and his art., “naẓm,” *EAL*, vol. 2, pp. 585–86.

¹⁰⁴ This is not by itself a decisive factor, for although the *rajaz* meter and *muzdawija* form are preferred for didactic poetry, others are also attested to, e.g., a 115-line poem in monorhyme by al-Suyūṭī summarizing his history in the *basīṭ* meter, *Tārīkh al-khulafāʾ*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, Beirut, 1988, pp. 588–9 (Cf. Van Gelder, “Arabic Didactic Verse,” p. 110 and n. 16.; see also Khulūṣī, “Didactic Verse,” pp. 500–501).

¹⁰⁵ E.g.: paronomasia (*unthā wa khunthā*, v. 29), antithesis (*ṭulūʿuhā wa l-ufūlu*, v. 33; *mā danā, mā ʿalā*, v. 36; personification (*ʿajābat ḥuzūnuhā wa s-suhūlu*, v. 61, hyperbole (... *min jafāʾin minhu l-jibālu tazūlu*, v. 5), poetic dialogue (vv. 8–11).

¹⁰⁶ #2, pp. 199–200, vv. 10–18.

¹⁰⁷ Truncated form of *ṣāhib*.

¹⁰⁸ *kāf* and *nūn* put together form the word “*kun*”, referring to their creative force in the Qurʾānic notion of “*kūn fayakūn*” (36:87 and elsewhere).

Verily, anyone who thinks
they are [simply] letters
of the alphabet
deserves all kinds of ridicule
from the person of
intelligence.

Are the protector[s] of the earth
and the sky,
O blind men, two letters from
the alphabet?

Understand, O my people,
what the two letters are—
verily, the salvation of man
is by cognition.

The generator of the world
is not like the generated,
indeed not, and the carrier is
not like the carried.

And *kāf* and *nām*—through
them
the workmanship of God
became ordered and
clove together,

from them Existence becomes
joined together
for him who is the observer,
the existing.

How could they be from
that which is lifeless,
when from them are the
sources of life?!

They are majestic, so be
assiduous in looking
and extract the pearls from
the depths of the sea.

إِنَّ الَّذِي ظَنَّهُمَا حَرْفَيْنِ هِجَا

مُسْتَوْجِبٌ مِنْ ذِي الْحِجَا كُلِّ هِجَا

هَلْ كَافِلٌ بِالْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاءِ

يَا عُمَيُّ حَرْفَانِ مِنَ الْهِجَاءِ

تَفَهُمُوا يَا قَوْمُ مَا الْحَرْفَانِ

إِنَّ نَجَاةَ الْمَرْءِ بِالْعِلْمِ حَرْفَانِ

مَا فَاعِلُ الْعَالَمِ كَالْمُعْمُولِ

كَـلَا وَلَا الْحَامِلُ كَالْمَحْمُولِ

وَالْكَافُ وَالنُّونُ اللَّذَانِ انْتِظَمَا

صُنِعَ الْإِلَهِ مِنْهُمَا وَالنَّحْمَا

وَعَنْهُمَا يَأْتِلِفُ الْوُجُودُ

لِمَنْ هُوَ الْمَشَاهِدُ الْمَوْجُودُ

أَنْتَى يَكُونَانِ مِنَ الْمَوَاتِ

وَعَنْهُمَا مَتَابِعُ الْحَيَاةِ

هُمَا عَظِيمَانِ فَجِدُّوا فِي النَّظَرِ

وَاسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْ لُحَّةِ الْبَحْرِ الدُّرَرِ

Second, al-Mu'ayyad frequently uses direct address in his disputational poems. His addressee is invariably the Muslim “community” (*umma*)¹⁰⁹ or “people” (*qawm*).¹¹⁰ He usually follows the address by an

¹⁰⁹ #1, p. 197, v. 122.

¹¹⁰ #1, p. 195, v. 81.

exhortation to think rationally (such as “O [my people] . . . ponder over the fig and the olive . . . and why there came from our Lord an oath by them”)¹¹¹ or to follow the guidance of the Imam.¹¹² As in the following verse, he sometimes follows the address with a descriptive denouncing phrase:¹¹³

*O you community that has
lost its perspicuity of meaning
since it made its blind its guide.*

يَا أُمَّةٌ قَدْ عَدِمَتْ تَبَيَّانَهَا
إِذْ جَعَلَتْ دَلِيلَهَا عُمْيَانَهَا

Third, the vocabulary in all three poems is quite specialized. Al-Mu’ayyad employs the technical terminology of philosophers and theologians.¹¹⁴ The terms *hāmūl* (carrier), *maḥmūl* (carried),¹¹⁵ *fā’il* (agent) and *maf’ūl* (patent)¹¹⁶ are philosophical. The terms *tanzīl* (Revelation, referring to the outer, literal meaning), *tāwīl* (inner meaning),¹¹⁷ *tawḥīd* (proclaiming the unity of God), *tashbīḥ* (anthropomorphism),¹¹⁸ *al-lawḥ* (the Tablet) and *al-qalam* (the Pen)¹¹⁹ are theological. Al-Mu’ayyad also uses some distinctive Fatimid terms (also used in other genres), such as *mathal* (signifier), *mamthūl* (signified),¹²⁰ *al-ḥudūd* (people holding ranks in the Fatimid religious hierarchy),¹²¹ and various terms referring to the Imams such as *ahl al-dhikr* (People of the Remembrance, i.e., Qur’ān)¹²² and *al-‘itra al-ṭāhira* (the Pure Progeny).¹²³ Qur’ānic terms and allusions are more numerous in these poems than in other genres.

Rational Thinking, the Need for tāwīl and Its Explicator

In his disputational poetry, al-Mu’ayyad delineates three bases of the “true” (Fatimid) ideology:

¹¹¹ #1, p. 195, vv. 81–84.

¹¹² E.g. #2, p. 204, vv. 103–4.

¹¹³ #2, p. 204, v. 101. See also #1, p. 122, v. 44.

¹¹⁴ Š. Khulūṣī considers the use of dogmatic terminology to be a characteristic of Shi’ite verse (*Shi’ism and its Influence on Arabic Literature*, Ph.d. thesis, University of London, SOAS, 1947).

¹¹⁵ #2, p. 199, v. 14; #5, p. 217, v. 38.

¹¹⁶ #2, p. 199, v. 14, #5, p. 217, vv. 38–39.

¹¹⁷ #2, p. 204, v. 1–4.

¹¹⁸ #2, p. 201, v. 53.

¹¹⁹ #2, p. 201, v. 54.

¹²⁰ #2, p. 203, v. 80.

¹²¹ #2, p. 205, v. 124.

¹²² #2, p. 202, v. 70. Cf. *Da’ā’im*, vol. 1, p. 28, *The Pillars*, p. 30.

¹²³ #2, p. 204, v. 108.

- the integral position of reason in religion,
- hence the need for *tāwīl* in interpreting the Qurʾān rationally,
- therefore the need for its explicator, viz., the Imam, who is the divine guide.¹²⁴

In his poetic exposition of religion, al-Muʾayyad accords prime importance to reason. This is clearest in his first two disputational poems, in which he praises the intellect (*al-ʿaql*) and rational thinking and condemns blind imitation (*taghlīd*).¹²⁵ He argues that the human being created by God is a thinking creature, exalted above the rest of creation because of his intellect; therefore, to say that God's religion has nothing to do with the intellect is absurd.¹²⁶

Closely tied in with the idea of the rationality of religion is the notion of deeper meaning or *tāwīl*, the main elements of which have been discussed earlier. Throughout his life, *tāwīl* was the cornerstone of al-Muʾayyad's exposition of religion and a key component of his proselytizing strategy. The need for *tāwīl*—and the sole right of the Fatimid Imam to explicate the *tāwīl*—was the subject of al-Muʾayyad's written disputation in Fars mentioned earlier,¹²⁷ and it was visited time and again in his *Majālis* later in Egypt. In his disputational verse, al-Muʾayyad argues that religious dogma and law are based on reason, and *tāwīl* makes rational sense of this seemingly irrational dogma and law.¹²⁸

*His Revelation is strengthened
by Inner Meaning,
and His Law is adorned by
reason.*

تَنْزِيلُهُ أَيْدٍ بِالْأَوَّلِ
وَشَرْعُهُ زِيٌّ نَ بِالْمَعْنَى

But if dogma and law are apparently irrational, as al-Muʾayyad states, the question may be asked: Why did God use unclear language in the first place? Why confuse the believers? An earlier Fatimid thinker

¹²⁴ The Imam is perceived as a guide who explicates the *tāwīl* in other Shiʿite denominations as well. Cf. M.A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shiʿism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam*, English trans. by D. Streight, Albany, New York, 1994.

¹²⁵ A verse specifically on this is the following: #2, p. 202, v. 63 (translated elsewhere in book; see Index).

¹²⁶ See, for e.g., #2, p. 203, vv. 89–92.

¹²⁷ *Sīra*, pp. 16–42, see also Chapter 1: “Al-Muʾayyad's Life.”

¹²⁸ #2, p. 204, v. 104. Al-Muʾayyad argues that the Sharīʿa is based on reason in a number of places in his *Majālis* (E.g., *al-Majālis al-Muʾayyadiyya*, vol. 1, majlis 1, vol. 5, majlis 40).

whom al-Mu'ayyad would probably endorse, Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī, explained the rationale of Qur'ānic *tāwīl* by comparing it to the hidden efficacies of natural objects:¹²⁹

Since the cause of natural compositions and of the *Qur'ān* derive from a single source and since natural compositions come in a form whose utility is both readily apparent and concealed, the Scripture will be likewise. Just as knowing the usefulness of natural objects often requires the expertise of scientists (e.g. mathematicians, engineers, astronomers), so too the *Qur'ān*. Even the unambiguous (*muḥkama*) verses contain concealed knowledge (*al-ʿulūm al-khafiya*).

In his *Majālis*, al-Mu'ayyad, addressed the question of the need for *tāwīl* from yet another angle. He equated *tāwīl* with “*al-ghayb*” (hidden, eschatological truths), and conditioned the veracity of Muḥammad's message upon the necessity for *tāwīl*.¹³⁰

“If [Muḥammad] had summoned the [people] to something that is hidden (*ghayb*) from the senses and hidden from the intellect, his summons (*daʿwa*) would be invalid . . . Those who believe in the hidden truths are the ones who accept the Qur'ān's *tāwīl*, which is alluded to in the Qur'ān and for which the Qur'ān was revealed . . . Thus, the guidance of the Message is towards something whose vision is hidden from sensory perception, but whose proof is witnessed by the intellect.”

In these disputational poems, al-Mu'ayyad addresses various literalist Muslim denominations that insist on a solely exoteric interpretation of the Qur'ān while rejecting its inner meaning or *tāwīl*, and he challenges them to explain what he perceives as irrationalities in their dogmatic tenets. He denounces them for blindly accepting irrationalities in religious matters that they would never accept in worldly affairs. He also addresses the Mu'tazilites, who accepted the concept of *tāwīl* but not the need for a guide. He accuses both the literalists and the Mu'tazilites of usurping the right of the Prophet's family, of going astray and blindly following their errant leaders without using their own reason. Their belief, he says, is closer to anthropomorphism than to the proclamation of God's unity (*tawḥīd*).¹³¹

¹²⁹ Paraphrased by Paul Walker, *Early philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī*, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 129, 114–33.

¹³⁰ *Majālis*, vol. 1, majlis 46, pp. 216–218. See also majlis 16, p. 68.

¹³¹ #1, p. 193, v. 45. Since al-Mu'ayyad elsewhere discusses two ways of likening God to His creation, the intellectual and the visual, the two terms *tashbīh* and *tamthīl* could possibly be in reference to these two respectively.

*Their tawhīd is comparison
and personification,
They do not have any road
to right guidance.*

تَوَحِيدُهَا التَّشْبِيهُ وَالْتِمَثِيلُ
مَا إِنَّ لَهَا نَحْوَ الْهَدَى سَبِيلُ

Al-Muʾayyad illustrates the defective *tawhīd* of the two groups by citing their interpretation of the Qurʾanic “*ruʾya*” (lit. seeing) of God, the literalists believing in physical seeing of God and the Muʿtazilites in intellectual cognition of Him. Al-Muʾayyad states that both are wrong, that God can neither be seen by the eye nor perceived by the mind. Like the eye, the mind is a tool, and each perceives its own kind. God is neither like the mind nor the eye, and therefore He is beyond mental comprehension just as He is beyond visual perception. Thus, both groups, he says, are anthropomorphists.¹³²

In his first two disputational poems, al-Muʾayyad discusses specific irrationalities in non-Fatimid Muslim theological beliefs, some of which were hotly debated issues at the time.¹³³ In addition to the seeing (*ruʾya*) of God,¹³⁴ he addresses the following issues: the origin of Good (*al-khayr*) and Evil (*al-sharr*);¹³⁵ the identity of the letters *kāf* and *nūn*;¹³⁶ as well as the nature of God’s Throne (*al-ʿarsh*),¹³⁷ His Chair (*al-kursī*),¹³⁸ the Cockerel of the Throne (*ḍik al-ʿarsh*),¹³⁹ the Scales (*al-mīzān*),¹⁴⁰

¹³² See #2, p. 201, vv. 46–53. This set of verses is prefaced by a long discussion about the duality present in everything created—two Paradises, two seas, two ships, two drownings—referring to the physical and spiritual in each of these (vv. 19–40). This aspect of al-Muʾayyad’s *tāwīl* exposition on the outer meaning (*ẓāhir*) of created things and concepts and their inner meaning (*bāṭin*) is further discussed in his *Majālis*, e.g. the Qurʾanic idea of two Paradises (Qurʾān 34:15, 55:54, 62, etc., *al-Majālis al-Muʾayyadiyya* vol. 6, majlis 83, *Jāmiʿ al-ḥaqāʾiq*, vol. 2, chap. 10, fols. 79–80), and the two seas (Qurʾān 25:53, etc., *al-Majālis al-Muʾayyadiyya* vol. 4, majlis 9, *Jāmiʿ al-ḥaqāʾiq*, vol. 2, chap. 11, fols. 166–68).

¹³³ Analysis of several of these issues can be found in Ḥusayn’s Introduction to al-Muʾayyad’s *Dīwān*, pp. 109–22. Some *Majālis* references are provided, and the positions of the various theological groups are discussed in detail.

¹³⁴ #1, pp. 191–92, vv. 15–16; #2, p. 201, vv. 41–53.

¹³⁵ #1, p. 192, vv. 17–18.

¹³⁶ #2, pp. 199–200, vv. 10–18. See Ḥusayn, *al-Hayāh al-fikriyya*, pp. 165–66, for a short analysis of these verses.

¹³⁷ #1, p. 192, vv. 23–29; #2, p. 202, vv. 63–70. See al-Muʾayyad’s *tāwīl* exposition on the Throne in *al-Majālis al-Muʾayyadiyya*, vol. 4, majlis 48; *Jāmiʿ al-ḥaqāʾiq*, vol. 2, chap. 13, fols. 28–31.

¹³⁸ #2, p. 202, vv. 71–76.

¹³⁹ #2, pp. 203–4, vv. 93–100.

¹⁴⁰ #2, p. 203, vv. 81–92. See al-Muʾayyad’s *tāwīl* exposition on the Straight Path in *al-Majālis al-Muʾayyadiyya* vol. 3, majlis 42; *Jāmiʿ al-ḥaqāʾiq*, vol. 2, chap. 13, fols. 292–93.

the [Straight] Path (*al-sirāt*),¹⁴¹ and the Trusteeship (*al-amāna*).¹⁴² He also questions the Qurʾān's swearing of oaths by insignificant objects such as the fig and the olive¹⁴³ and the seemingly unintelligible unconnected letters that open some *sūras*.¹⁴⁴ He outlines the different positions taken by different groups on these issues and brings out the defects in each. He does not usually name the groups here (except in a couple of cases)¹⁴⁵ but uses the phrase "And somebody said . . ." (*wa [rubba] qā'ilin . . .*).¹⁴⁶

Another aspect of the literalists' belief that al-Muʾayyad questions is the solely exoteric interpretation of the Qurʾānic tales of the prophets.¹⁴⁷ He attributes the absurdity of the literalists' beliefs in this aspect, too, to their ignoring the Imam's guidance. He devotes a large part of his first disputational poem to specifics of these tales, and why they cannot be taken at face value. The prophets, he says, are God's chosen from among all other human beings, and it is therefore unreasonable to attribute to them traits that cannot—by any stretch of imagination—be considered noble or good among human beings. Among the seemingly ignoble Qurʾānic traits of the prophets are Adam's gluttony,¹⁴⁸ Abraham's calling the sun his Lord,¹⁴⁹ Lot's offering his daughters sexually to his people,¹⁵⁰ David's annexing a poor man's single ewe to his own already large flock,¹⁵¹ Joseph's desire for Potiphar's wife,¹⁵² and Muḥammad's coveting of Zayd's wife.¹⁵³ Al-Muʾayyad rebukes the literalists for their blind belief in

¹⁴¹ #2, pp. 202–3, vv. 77–80.

¹⁴² #1, pp. 192–92, vv. 32–43. See al-Muʾayyad's *tawīl* exposition on the Trusteeship in *al-Majālis al-Muʾayyadiyya* vol. 5. majlis 15; *Jāmiʿ al-ḥaqāʾiq*, vol. 2, chap. 13, fol. 279.

¹⁴³ #1, p. 195, vv. 82–89. See al-Muʾayyad's exposition on these in the *Majālis*, vol. 1, majlis 15 & 16.

¹⁴⁴ #1, pp. 195–96, vv. 92–99

¹⁴⁵ Al-Muʾayyad does name Abū Ḥanīfā and al-Shāfiʿī in one didactic poem, saying that their [teaching] does not benefit like the teaching of the Imams (#1, p. 196, v. 101). Elsewhere, in a panegyric for the Imam, he says the Imams remove the confusion created by Mālik and al-Shāfiʿī, and by the Muʿtazilites (#7, p. 222, vv. 28–29).

¹⁴⁶ E.g. #1, p. 192, vv. 19–23, #2, p. 201, vv. 41, 43.

¹⁴⁷ These stories are analyzed by Ḥusayn in his Introduction to al-Muʾayyad's *Dīwān*, pp. 134–52.

¹⁴⁸ #1, p. 193, vv. 47–56. Adams' gluttony (*biṭna*) refers to his eating of the wheat grain or the fig tree named immediately after, vv. 50–51.

¹⁴⁹ #1, p. 194, vv. 57–62.

¹⁵⁰ #1, p. 194, vv. 63–67.

¹⁵¹ #1, p. 194, vv. 68–72.

¹⁵² #1, p. 194, vv. 73–75.

¹⁵³ #1, pp. 194–95, vv. 76–80.

these tales, which make nonsense of the goodness of religion and the bringers of religion. He says that according to the literalists' beliefs, the prophets are degenerate.¹⁵⁴ He asserts that the prophets are, in fact, above such baseness,¹⁵⁵ and that the tales have an inner meaning to them, which is the one intended.¹⁵⁶ The following verses discuss the lack of rationality in the exoteric interpretation of Abraham's story, the accepting of which would mean believing that Abraham committed the unforgivable sin of idolatry:¹⁵⁷

*Abraham's case is even more
shocking
according to you, and his
idolatry even more atrocious:*

*his saying about the star,
"This is my lord,"¹⁵⁸
and [the same] about the full
moon when it appeared
in the pole,*

*and his considering the sun
a supreme lord
because of its being the
brightest among them.*

*How lowly, then, is his
intelligence and his
religious path,
for God does not forgive
being assigned partners.¹⁵⁹*

*If idolatry is not considered
reprehensible in him,
then another is more worthy
of being excused for idolatry.*

*Verily, the Qur'ān is light
and right guidance
and word of Truth, of which
your share is the echo.*

وَشَإِنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فَهَوَّ أَفْطَلُ

لَدَيْكُمْ وَشِرْكُهُ لَأَمْتَنُ

وَقَوْلُهُ لِلتَّجْمِ هَذَا رَبِّي

وَالْبَدْرِ لَمَّا أَنْ بَدَا فِي الْقُطْبِ

وَجَعَلَهُ لِلشَّمْسِ رَبًّا أَكْبَرَ

لِكَوْنِهَا مِنْ يَبْنِيْنِ أَنْوَرَا

أَهْوُونَ إِذَنْ يَعْقِلِيهِ وَمَذْهَبِيهِ

فَاللَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ

إِنْ كَانَ مِنْهُ الشِّرْكُ لَا يُسْتَنْكَرُ

فَعَيْبَرُهُ فِي الشِّرْكِ مِنْهُ أَعْدَرُ

إِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ¹⁶⁰ لَهُ وَ نُورٌ وَهُدًى

وَقَوْلٌ حَقٌّ حَظُّكُمْ مِنْهُ الصَّدَى

¹⁵⁴ #1, p. 193, v. 46.

¹⁵⁵ E.g. #1, p. 194, vv. 71, 74.

¹⁵⁶ E.g. #1, p. 194, vv. 88–89, p. 195, v. 84.

¹⁵⁷ #1, p. 194, vv. 57–62.

¹⁵⁸ Reference to Qur'ān 6:76–79.

¹⁵⁹ Reference to Qur'ān 4:48, 4:116.

¹⁶⁰ All mss. contain *inna l-qurāna la-hwa nūrun* (mss. 2, 5–7 vocalize both *inna* and *al-qurāna*, and mss. 1, 3, 4, 8 vocalize just *al-qurāna*); the editor vocalizes it as *in-i*, both are metrically feasible, but my reading seems to make more semantic sense,

In the third disputational poem, al-Mu'ayyad names and refutes the primary beliefs of three groups: those who believe the soul does not survive death (*ahl al-talāshī*—whose beliefs, he says, lead to atheism (*muntahāhumu t-taʿīlu*);¹⁶¹ those who believe in the transmigration of souls (*ahl al-naskh wa al-faskh*);¹⁶² and those “who are the greatest in number” (the Sunnis), and who claim they are the ones who will taste the joys of Paradise, when, in fact, they have followed leaders who have led them to perdition referring to Abū Bakr “their ignorant, tyrannical shaykh” and ‘Umar “his deceiving satan.”¹⁶³ He outlines the key doctrine of each of the three groups, then goes on to argue against it, addressing each group in turn. In refuting the atheists, he proves the existence of a Creator in the following manner:¹⁶⁴

O you who foolishly claim
annihilation,
that which you claim is
an agent against you.

Do you think all these created
things
are without rhyme or reason,
not having any point for
[its] Creator?

أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّعِي التَّلَاشِي حُمُقًا¹⁶⁵
ذَا الَّذِي تَدَّعِي عَلَيْكَ وَكَفِيلُ
أَتَرَى هَذِهِ الصَّنَائِعَ طُرًّا
عَبَثًا مَا لِصَانِعٍ مَحْضُورُ

for reading it as *in* would mean considering it either a negation (the *la-* would be left unaccounted for) or an apocopated version of *inna* (not necessary, as *inna* itself fits the meter).

¹⁶¹ #5, p. 215, v. 15, pp. 216–17, vv. 31–40. See al-Mu'ayyad's refutation of the atheists (*al-muʿaṭṭila*), including his refutation of the arguments cited by Ibn al-Rāwandī in his *al-Risāla al-ẓumurruda*, in *al-Majālis al-Muʿayyadiyya* (vol. 5, majlis 5, 12–22, 49 & 71; *Ĵāmiʿ al-ḥaqāʾiq*, vol. 2, chap. 12, fols. 199–223); ed., trans. into German, and analyzed by P. Kraus in “Beiträge zur islamischen Ketzergeschichte: das *Kutāb az-ẓumurrud* des Ibn al-Rāwandī,” in *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 14 (1933), pp. 93–129; recently analyzed by D. De Smet in “Al-Muʿayyad fī d-Dīn as-Šīrāzī et la polémique ismaélienne contre les <<Brahmanes>> d'Ibn al-Rāwandī,” in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*.

¹⁶² #5, p. 216, vv. 16–19, p. 217, vv. 41–48. See al-Mu'ayyad's refutation of those who believe in the transmigration of souls (*ahl al-tanāsukh*) in *al-Majālis al-Muʿayyadiyya*, vol. 4, majlis 9 & 20; *Ĵāmiʿ al-ḥaqāʾiq*, vol. 2, chap. 11, fols. 165–70.

¹⁶³ #5, p. 216, vv. 20–30; & #1, p. 197, v. 140 where he denounces them without referring to their specific beliefs. See al-Mu'ayyad's refutation of the literalists in *al-Majālis al-Muʿayyadiyya*, vol. 1, majlis 3, 13, 92, vol. 2, majlis 14, 21; *Ĵāmiʿ al-ḥaqāʾiq*, vol. 2, chap. 13, fols. 315–39.

¹⁶⁴ #5, pp. 216–17, vv. 31–38.

¹⁶⁵ Ed. has incorrectly vocalized “*ḥumaqan*” which is metrically faulty; the correct reading is “*ḥumqan*.”

The movements of the
celestial bodies—tell me,
what are they?

Why do they rise and set?

Do they have free agency
in their orbit or not?
[If not], then it is possible
that they orbit through
some other [agency].

If you say, “This is their
action by their choice,”
the mind will reject what
you claim.

For in the drawing nigh of
water and
the rising high of fire is an
example for us.

And if you say, “That is
without [their] choosing,”
I say, “Each is directed,
carried.”

And if this is so, [the existence
of] the Carrier is proven,
and of the Kind, Glorious
Doer.

حَرَكَاتُ الْأَجْرَامِ قُلْ لِي لَمَّاذَا

وَلَمَّاذَا طُلُّوْعُهَا وَالْأَفْوُؤُ

أَلْهَآ فِي مَجَالِهَا الْفَعْلُ أَمْ لَا
فَبِعِزِّهِ إِذَا يَجُوزُ تَجُوزُ

إِنْ تَقُلْ ذَلِكَ فَعُلُوهَا بِاخْتِيَارٍ
أَنْكَرْتَ مِنْكَ مَا ادَّعَيْتَ الْعُقُولُ

إِنْ فِيمَا ذَكَرْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ وَالنَّارِ
عَلَى مَا عَلَا لَنَا التَّمَثِيلُ

وَلَيْنِ قُلْتَ ذَلِكَ غَيْرُ اخْتِيَارٍ
قُلْتَ كُلُّ مَدْبُورٌ مَحْمُولُ

فَإِذَا كَانَ هَكَذَا ثَبَتَ الْحَامِلُ
وَالْفَاعِلُ اللَّطِيفُ الْجَلِيلُ

An integral part of al-Muʿayyad’s philosophy of rationality in religion was the concept of divine guidance. Reason alone is not sufficient, he says. Just as the perfectly healthy eye needs an outside source of light to see like the sun, moon, stars, or fire, the mind, too, requires an outside source of guidance in order to perceive:¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ #1, p. 191, vv. 5–9. See also #2, p. 204, v. 106, where al-Muʿayyad calls the Imams “shining suns of elucidation.” Al-Muʿayyad often compares the mind needing an outside source of guidance with the eye’s need for an outside light to see in his *Majālis* too (e.g. *al-Majālis al-Muʿayyadiyya*, vol. 5, majlis 15, 17, 34; *majlis* 17 pub. Kraus in “Beitrage,” p. 97.) Another analogy al-Muʿayyad puts forward is that reason is potentially present in human beings like the potential presence of fire in flint, and it needs someone to strike the spark to bring it to actuality. This “someone” is the prophets (*ibid.*, 5:17).

Al-Muʿayyad also refutes the Muʿtazilites by name in his *Majālis*, who, although they accord importance to reason, do so to the extent of excluding the necessity of divine guidance (*al-Majālis al-Muʿayyadiyya*, vol. 3, majlis 46–48, 5:15; *Jāmiʿ al-haqāʾiq*, vol. 2, chap. 13, fols. 241–75, 302–10).

[There is] many a beholder
with his eyes who does
not see

and many a perceiver with
his heart who does not
understand.

There are [certain] conditions
for a man to see,
one who forswears them
stumbles around in darkness:

these are that there be a sun
or a moon
or flames; or not—and then
seeing does not suffice.

Similarly, the intellect,
upon reflection
by itself, is in the realm
of bewilderment;

except by a helping light
from outside,
at which time it ascends in
the degrees of ascent.

كَمْ نَاطِلٍ بِعَيْنِهِ لَا يُبْصِرُ

و مُبْصِرٍ بِالْقَلْبِ لَا يَسْتَبْصِرُ

و نَظَرُ الْمَرْءِ لَهُ شَرَائِطُ

تَارِكُهَا فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ خَائِبُ

و تِلْكَ أَنْ يُوجَدَ شَمْسٌ أَوْ قَمَرٌ

أَوْ شَعْلٌ أَوْ لَا فَلَا يُغْنِي النَّظَرُ

كَذَلِكَ الْعَقْلُ لَدَى التَّبَصُّرِ

بِذَاتِهِ فِي حَيِّزِ التَّحْيُّرِ

إِلَّا بِنُورٍ عَاضِدٍ مِنْ خَارِجٍ

فَعِنْدَهُ يَعْزُجُ فِي الْمَعَارِجِ

The idea of the need for a divinely guiding light underpins the recurring light metaphor in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry in general and his disputational poems in particular, where he equates light with divine knowledge. The source of divine knowledge, he says, is the Prophet, his legatee, and their progeny, the true Imams. They are the ones whose teaching makes religious dogma and religious law rationally clear to the human mind. They are the ones whose guiding light illuminates the Straight Path. Those who do not follow them go astray. The following verses are an example of al-Mu'ayyad's metaphorical usage of light for divine guidance:¹⁶⁷

O the straying of the
riffraff, the rabble,
from the places upon which
the rays are thrown in religion,

by the shining stars and the
crescent moons,
the guides of Truth, the suns
of the Faith.

و يَا ضَلَالَ الْهَمَجِ الرَّعَاعِ

فِي الدِّينِ عَنْ مَطَارِحِ الشُّعَاعِ

لِأَنْجُومِ الزُّهَرِ وَ لِأَهْلِةِ

أَدْلَةِ الْحَقِّ شُمُوسِ الْمِلَّةِ

¹⁶⁷ #2, p. 202, vv. 60–61.

In these disputational poems, which were considered open *ẓāhir* works addressed to a non-initiated audience, al-Muʿayyad never lays out his own position on particular issues. In his prose *Majālis*, which were restricted to an initiated audience, he explicates the *tāwīl* of each specific point. In the poems, he simply provides a single, general response to the specific irrationalities that he lists: there is an inner meaning (*tāwīl*) to the Qurʾānic verses; most people, because they do not acknowledge the *tāwīl* or the true Imams who explicate the *tāwīl*, flounder in the confusing sea of arbitrary opinion.¹⁶⁸ In the following poem, al-Muʿayyad states that the unconnected alphabetical letters in the beginning of some Qurʾānic *sūras* are not mere decoration but have been revealed by God in order that their meaning be understood; their meanings have been locked up, and the keys are with the Imams. He goes on to declare the generally contradictory nature of the outward meanings of the Qurʾān, their actual harmony not being understood except by learning the inner meanings from the Imams:¹⁶⁹

*In the letters in the beginnings
of the sūras,
cut off from each other, is a place
of reflection for people.*

*Like kāf hāʾ yā ʿayn šād,
the sūra,
How many meanings are
hidden below it.*

*They have been mentioned
to be known, not to be
not known;
if its knowledge were
impossible, invalid would be*

*its occurrence in the perfect¹⁷¹
Book.*

*This is a reminder for people
of intelligence:*

وَفِي حُرُوفٍ فِي أَوَائِلِ السُّورِ

مُقَطَّعَاتٍ لِلْإِنَامِ مُعْتَبَرُ

كَكَهْ يَعْصِ السُّورَةُ¹⁷⁰
فَكَمْ مَعَانٍ تَحْتَهَا مَسْتُورَةُ

جَاءَتْ لَأَنْ تُعْلَمَ لَا أَنْ تُجْهَلَ

لَوْ اسْتَخَالَ عِلْمُهَا لَبَطَلَا

إِثْبَاتُهَا فِي مُحْكَمِ الْكِتَابِ

ذَلِكَ ذِكْرِي لِأَوَّلِي الْأَلْبَابِ

¹⁶⁸ #1, p. 195, vv. 88–91, #2, p. 204, vv. 101–10.

¹⁶⁹ #1, pp. 195–96, vv. 92–113.

¹⁷⁰ Qurʾān 19:1. For correct meter, this has to be read *ka-kāfa hā yā ʿayna šād as-sūra*.

¹⁷¹ “*Muḥkam al-Kitāb*” could also refer to the “clear” verses (*āyāt muḥkamāt*) of the Qurʾān, as opposed to the “ambiguous” (*mutashābih*).

*Many a meaning is enveloped
in words,
like light enveloped in
darkness;*

*preserved like the preservation
of grain in husks,
in a fortress that is among
the most protected of
fortresses.*

*But then, the gate of
meanings is locked,
and most people are unaware
of them.*

*Its key is in the hands
of keepers
by whom God has guarded
His knowledge.*

*In order that the whole world
take refuge in them,
they have been selected for
this light¹⁷³ by their Lord.*

*Abū Hanīfa and al-Shāfiʿī
are not
of benefit, like the benefit
given by the [Imams].*

*Those are the upright people,
the progeny of Muṣṭafā,
And they are the ones by
whom Marwa gained honor
and Ṣafā*

*They are the shining full
moons and stars,
the source of right guidance
and knowledge.*

*They are the reliable people, the
ones who remove confusion,
saviors for people from
every perplexity.*

وَرُبَّ مَعْنَى ضَمَّةٌ كَلَامٌ
كَمِثْلِ نُورٍ ضَمَّةٌ ظَلَامٌ

بَاقٍ بَقَاءَ الْحَبِّ فِي السَّنَابِلِ
فِي مَعْقِلٍ مِنْ أَحْرَزِ الْمَعَاقِلِ

وَأَتَمَّ أَبْوَابِ الْمَعَانِي مَقْفَلٌ
وَأَكْثَرُ الْأَنَامِ عَنْهَا غَفْلٌ

مِفْتَاحُهُ أَضْحَى بِأَيْدِي خَزَنَةٍ
بِهِمْ إِلَهِي عِلْمُهُ قَدْ خَزَنَةٌ

كَيْمَا يَلْزُقُ¹⁷² الْخَلْقُ طُرّاً بِهِمْ
خُصُّوا بِهَذَا النُّورِ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ

فَمَا أَبْوُ حَنِيفَةٍ وَالشَّافِعِي
حَيْثُ هُمْ قَدْ تَفَعَّلُوا بِبَنَافِعِ

أَوْلَئِكَ الْأَبْرَارُ آلُ الْمُصْطَفَى
وَمَنْ بِهِمْ مَرْوَةٌ عَزَّتْ وَالصَّفَا

هُمُ الْبُدُورُ وَالنُّجُومُ اللَّامِعُ
وَاللَّهُدَى وَالْعُلُومُ الْمَنْبَغُ

هُمُ الثَّقَاتُ وَالنُّفَاةُ لِلشُّبَّةِ
وَالْمُنْقِذُونَ النَّاسَ مِنْ كُلِّ عَمَةٍ

¹⁷² All mss. (1–8) contain “yalūdhī”; the ed. contains “yalūd,” which does not seem to have any meaning that I could find.

¹⁷³ The word “light” is used interchangeably with “knowledge” from the previous verse.

*It is to them we have listened
and them we have obeyed,
for they have substituted for
us security after fear,*

*hence no difficulty is a
difficulty for us,
through them we have been
protected from every
perplexing dilemma.*

*They have guided us to the
roads of reason,
and taught us the knowledge
of this Book*

*free from the defect of
contradiction,
safe from the plunging of every
plunger [into false discourse];*

*congruent, harmonious of
meaning,
as God said about this [issue]*

*—rousing us to
contemplation
and shaking us to shake up
these thoughts—*

*[that] if it was from someone
other than God
they would have found
differences unending.¹⁷⁴*

*If we were to hold valid
the outward meaning
of the words
in this, we would be
submitting them to
argument,*

*for in the differences of
the Qurʾān, are a
multitude
of all sorts of assertions
[espoused] by all sorts
of groups.*

لَهُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَلَهُمْ أَطَعْنَا
فَبَدَّلُونَا بَعْدَ خَوْفٍ أَمْنًا

فَمَا عَلَيْنَا مُشْكِلٌ بِمُشْكِلٍ
بِهِمْ كُفَيْتُنَا كُلَّ خَطْبٍ مُعْضِلٍ

وَأَرْشَدُونَا سُبُلَ الصَّوَابِ
وَعَلَّمُونَا عَلِيمَ ذَا الْكِتَابِ

مُبَرَّرًا مِنْ هُجْنَةِ التَّنَاقُضِ
مُسْلِمًا مِنْ خَوْضِ كُلِّ خَائِضٍ

مُتَّفِقًا مُتَّسِقًا مَعْنَاهُ
كَمَنْثِلٍ مَا فِي ذَاكَ قَالَ اللَّهُ

بَعَثْنَا لَنَا مِنْهُ عَلَى التَّدْبِيرِ
وَهَزَمَ لَهُ زِيْ هَذَا الْفِكْرِ

لَوْ أَنَّهُ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ
لَوَجَدُوا خُلْفًا بِلَا تَنَاهِي

وَإِنْ أَجْرُنَا ظَاهَرَ الْكَلَامِ

فِي ذَاكَ أَسْأَلَمْنَاهُ لِلْخَصَامِ

فَفِي اخْتِلَافَاتِ الْقُرْآنِ كَثْرَةٌ

مِنْ كُلِّ قَوْلٍ مَعَ كُلِّ زُمْرَةٍ

¹⁷⁴ Reference to Qurʾān 4:82.

Poetry Describing the Poet's Condition and Stature

Al-Mu'ayyad's poems contain a large number of verses in which he expounds upon his high spiritual station and sad temporal state, giving us an insight into his own perception of his historical situation and into what he considered to be his own character. These verses in description of the poet's condition and stature do not actually form a genre, but rather, are included within poems of different genres. They do, however, form a prominent element in the *Dīwān*, and sometimes make up half, or even three quarters of a praise poem; they also constitute the sole theme of several short pieces. These verses are some of the most poignant and poetic verses in al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, and effectively demonstrate that his poetry has aesthetic value in addition to its acknowledged theological worth. They also give us a glimpse into the mind of this great dā'ī, and describe to us in his own words who and what he was.¹⁷⁵

Pathos

At one point in his da'wa career, al-Mu'ayyad had worked as a *kātib* in the Fatimid Secretariat. However, his poetry is different from that of—for example—al-Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād, who was also a *kātib* and Shi'ite. Charles Pellat calls the latter “a highly accomplished rhymers and nothing more” because, although some of his lines “bear the stamp of practiced craftsmanship, it is difficult to detect in [his *Dīwān*] any signs of genuine feeling, either religious or poetic.”¹⁷⁶ The genuine feeling in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry—both the religious and the poetic—is hard to miss. His reverent love for his Imam comes through clearly, as does the pain and pathos of his personal life.

As we know from his biography, al-Mu'ayyad's life was a hard one. This sadness is reflected in his poetry. His poems are warm, passionate, filled with life and strength. Bitterness surfaces in them every so often, and pathos comes through in the words, the meanings, and the cadence itself. The pain in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry is not poetic convention but real pain. His grief-stricken poetic persona is, in fact, a reflection of his actual historical persona.

¹⁷⁵ Some of the verses and ideas discussed in this chapter have been presented earlier under other rubrics. In this section, their inclusion for the second time is specifically from the point of view of al-Mu'ayyad's poetic presentation of the pathos in his life and his station.

¹⁷⁶ *CHALABL*, p. 111.

It is likely that al-Mu'ayyad's plaint verses were a permissible medium for making his complaints known to the Imam. They also probably served a cathartic purpose, allowing him to cleanse his emotions through his poetry as was not possible through his physical reality.

Through his verses, we see how each new day of al-Mu'ayyad's life showed him a new depth of pain; his grief kept changing in nature and building, taking on new dimensions at every stage. During al-Mu'ayyad's last troubled days in Fars, he expressed pain over lost youth, and despair over finding the strength to face his many enemies. He composed the following poem at the end of this period, when he was escaping from one haven to another, alone and hunted, facing indescribable odds, attempting to elude the long hand of the Abbasids:¹⁷⁷

*I am in a darkness of
gloom
that has enveloped me.
No morning urges it on.*

*Nothing that turns in it,
turns for me
with benefit, rather with
that which harms.*

*Nothing that rises from
it rises
with beneficence, rather
it is, through the age[s],
detestable.*

*My share of it is
long toil,
and my abode at the
sea of its gain is land.*

وَإِنِّي فِي ظُلْمَةٍ مِنْ ظُلَامٍ
تَكَتَّفَنِي لَيْسَ يَحْدُوهُ فَجْرٌ

فَمَا دَائِرٌ مِنْهُ لِي دَائِرٌ¹⁷⁸
بِمَا فِيهِ نَفْعٌ سِوَى مَا يَضُرُّ

وَمَا طَالَعٌ مِنْهُ لِي طَالَعٌ
بُعُورٌ وَلَكِنَّهُ الدَّهْرُ نُكْرٌ

نَصِيبِي مِنْهُ الْعَنَاءُ الطَّوِيلُ
وَمَثْوَايَ مِنْ بَحْرٍ جَدْوَاهُ بَرٌ

¹⁷⁷ #58, pp. 308–9, vv. 6–19. Note the large number of poetic images and word-play devices employed in these verses. E.g., imagery: vv. 6, 9, 10, 11, 15; internal rhyme: vv. 11, 16; antithesis: vv. 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14; paronomasia: vv. 13, 15, 17; rhetorical questions: v. 19; parallelism: vv. 7–8, 10, 11, 19. See also: #3, pp. 207–8 (old age and youth prelude); #34, p. 274, vv. 8–14; #45, p. 291, vv. 4–5; #55, pp. 303–5 (dialogue, translated elsewhere in book; see Index); #56, p. 306 (on exile); #59, pp. 310–11, vv. 1–29 (Fate).

¹⁷⁸ I have followed my mss. (all) which contain “*dā’irun*” and “*ṭālī’un*” (next verse) in the nominative case. The ed. has accusative case, which is grammatically problematic.

*My companion is torture,
my fortune distress.
My cloak is empty of the
comforts of life.*

*With restraint thrown off,
I wander the wildernesses
in which wild beasts roam.
I do not find stability.*

*Was it not said "With
hardship comes ease"?¹⁷⁹
Then why has ease deceived
me with hardship?*

*I conceal anguish, but
flowing tears
divulge my secret, so that
no secret remains.*

*And I conceal, but the
secret
that I hide from the people is
well known to the people.*

*Because I am a stranger, my
heart is plundered.
The nights attack it with
[yet another] night.*

*Repudiated, a fugitive, alone,
isolated,
devoid of a loving, well-
wishing friend.*

*I am in an assembly of
enemies,
insolent, how much rancor
they harbor for me!*

*They are devils who are
bent upon hostility.
How much cunning follows
cunning!*

قَرِينِي عَذَابٌ وَجَدِّي اكْتِنَابٌ
وَبُرْدِي مِنْ رَعْدِ الْعَيْشِ صِفْرٌ

خَلَيْتُ عِندَارِي أَحْوَبُ الْبَرَارِي
بِهَا الْوَحْشُ جَارِي فَلَا أَسْتَقِرُّ

أَمَّا قِيلَ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا
فَلِمَ خَانَنِي لِي مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرٌ

أَسِرُّ الْجَوَى وَالذُّمُّوعُ الْجَوَارِي
تَنْمُ بِسِرِّي فَلِمَ يَبْقَ سِرٌّ

وَإِنِّي أَسِرُّ وَسِرِّي الَّذِي
أَكَاتَمْتُهُ النَّاسَ لِلنَّاسِ جَهْرٌ

لَأَنِّي غَرِيبٌ فُؤَادِي حَرِيبٌ
عَلَيْهِ اللَّيَالِي بَلِيلٌ تُكْرَرُ

طَرِيدٌ شَرِيدٌ فَرِيدٌ وَحِيدٌ
فَقِيدٌ لِأَلْفٍ وَدِيدٍ يَبِيرُ

وَإِنِّي فِي مَحْفَلٍ مِنْ عُدَاةٍ
عُتَاةٍ فَكَمْ مِنْهُمْ فِي غَمْرٍ

طَوَاغَيْتُ قَدْ لَهَجُوا بِالْعِنَادِ
فَكَمْ مِنْهُمْ يَتَّبِعُ الْمَكْرَ مَكْرٌ

¹⁷⁹ Reference to Qur'an 94:5, 6. Al-Mu'ayyad repeats the phrase "Along with hardship comes ease," to echo the Qur'an's repetition of it.

*Whom should I put my
hopes in? And who is
my confidant?
How goes the road? And
where is the escape?*

فَمَنْ ذَا أَرْجَى وَمَنْ لِي الْمُنَجَّى
وَكَيْفَ السَّبِيلُ وَأَيْنَ الْمَفْرُ

The above verses are carefully crafted to convey—in a seamless and seemingly spontaneous manner—al-Mu’ayyad’s pain. His vocabulary conveys grief (ʿusr, ‘adhāb, iktī’āb, ‘anā’, zulma, jawā, dumū’); the imagery is also predominantly that of distress (v. 6: darkness without morning; v. 13: flowing tears exposing inner pain; v. 15: wave after wave of night); parallel rhetorical questions emphasize the poet’s helpless situation (v. 19: Whom should I put my hopes in? Who is my confidant? How goes the road? Where is the escape?); and also in this interrogative frame, al-Mu’ayyad quotes the Qur’ānic verses that promise ease after hardship, asking rhetorically why his hardship never turns into ease (v. 12). He provides graphic descriptions of his unhappy situation wandering the wilderness where—literally—wild beasts roam (v. 11).

Upon al-Mu’ayyad’s arrival in Cairo, he had expected the worst of his troubles to be over. But they had barely begun. As we can observe through his plaint verses, the pain no longer came just from the outside, from the direction of the enemy. It had become internal—the hurtful actions now originated in the name of the Imam himself. In one poem, al-Mu’ayyad describes his sad condition in Cairo:¹⁸⁰

*My face is not the face
that [you] knew.
It used to be agleam, now it
has become darkness.¹⁸¹*

مَا صُورَتِي الصُّورَةُ الَّتِي عُمِدَتْ
كَانَتْ ضِيَاءً فَابْدَلَتْ ظُلُمًا

*When the bird flies, I tremble.
When the phantom appears,
I crawl inside in pain.*

فَالطَّيْرُ إِنْ طَارَ صِرْتُ مُرْتَجِفًا
وَالطُّفَيْفُ إِنْ طَافَ أَنْزَوِي أَلْمَا

*[My] soul, if “Come!” is said
to me, is subdued.
The eye—from wakefulness—
flows blood.*

وَالنَّفْسُ إِنْ قِيلَ لِي أَبْ حَمِدَتْ¹⁸²
وَالطَّرْفُ مِنْ يَقْظَةٍ يَسِيلُ دَمًا

¹⁸⁰ #19, p. 250, vv. 24–28.

¹⁸¹ Lit., darknesses.

¹⁸² My trans. is based on the vocalization “in qīla liya ub” of ms. 7. Ed. has “āb(a),

*Any one of my troubles—
if I had pressed it
upon iron's heart, it would
crumble.*

وَبَعْضُ بُلُوَايَ لَوْ زَحَمْتُ بِهِ
سِرَّ حَدِيدٍ لَرَّاحَ مُنْهَدِمًا

*Patience is the ultimate
recourse of the youth—
one patient person
is patient willingly, and
another by compulsion.*

وَالصَّبْرُ قُصْرَى الْفَتَى فَمُضْطَرٌّ
يَصْبِرُ طَوْعًا وَصَابِرٌ رَغَمًا

In these verses, al-Mu'ayyad conveys the pathos of his situation by comparing it to happier times in Fars. He addresses his loved ones far away, saying that they would not recognize him now, his countenance having lost its earlier radiance (v. 24). He paints a remarkably expressive picture of his broken spirit—at the mercy of the malicious viziers, with no access to the Imam and no overt function at court—with two graphic images: when the bird flies, he trembles; when the phantom moves, he crawls inside in pain (v. 25). He has borne so many startling rebukes, that now, even when something most insignificant and completely unrelated to him happens, he imagines another thunderbolt falling on his head. In the next verse (v. 26), he communicates his subdued resignation at his unhappy situation—his soul's fire is put out (lit. meaning of *khamidat*) just by being addressed; he also expresses his forced acceptance of the sad situation—there is no recourse other than patience (v. 28). The personification of iron (v. 27), with its heart crumbling from the weight of even one of al-Mu'ayyad's troubles, is an effective one, which conveys the force of al-Mu'ayyad's troubles and his stoic bearing of them. The eye flowing blood (v. 26) is a classic and gory image of anguish that is meant to unsettle.

The poems of this period are al-Mu'ayyad's bitterest ones. In another poem, he conveys his bitterness, as well as his disillusionment and bewilderment, through a powerfully moving image:¹⁸³

*What a strange tale it is,
parable of a servant and
master.*

عَجَبًا لَهَا مِنْ قِصَّةٍ
مَثَلًا لِمَلُوكٍ وَمَوْلَى

and notes that the meter is incorrect like this, that this is how he found it in the mss., and suggests "*qīla āba lī*," instead of "*qīla lī āba*." Note too that of mss. 1–7, all have "*alif-b*" without a madda on the *alif*.

¹⁸³ #10, p. 229, vv. 24–25.

*A Nile flowing copiously—
and I,
thirsty at the banks of the
Nile, slain.*

نِيلٌ يَنْفِيضُ وَإِنَّا
ظَمْأَى بِشَطِّ النَّيْلِ قَتَلَى

After al-Mu'ayyad's victorious but defiant return from Syria, he continued to be barred from the Imam's presence, until, when his patience was exhausted, he wrote the Imam a letter containing a few verses in passionate appeal. He expressed the depth of his pain at being kept away continually from the Imam—the grievous hurt suffered by his emotions at the separation, and in an uncontrollable physical response, the whitening of his hair (like the dulling of his radiant countenance earlier):¹⁸⁴

*Your keeping me away
for an hour
has grayed my heart along
with my head.*

لَأَنَّ إِبْعَادَكَ لِي سَاعَةً
شَبَّيْبَ فَوْدَيَّ مَعَ الْمَفْرِقِ

The Imam answered al-Mu'ayyad's desperate plea, granted him private audience, and appointed him *dā'ī al-du'āt* and *bāb al-abwāb*. Al-Mu'ayyad's situation, however, took a grim turn once again, when he was removed from his position as head of the *da'wa* and exiled to Jerusalem for a year. In the poems of this period of exile, rather than remonstrating with the Imam, al-Mu'ayyad addresses only God (in the form of *munājāt*) in prayer and entreaty. He has given up hope of tangible succor from the Imam. The bitterness has gone. The complaints are over. All that remains is sadness—deep, all-consuming sadness. In one such *munājāt*, al-Mu'ayyad asks God for deliverance, describing himself in the following sorrowful manner:¹⁸⁵

*[I am] an old man whose
body is infirm,
in whose breast is a sad heart,
Who was [attacked] in his place
of safety by that
which had not even occurred
to the mind.*

شَيْخًا ضَعِيفًا جِسْمُهُ
فِي صَدْرِهِ قَلْبٌ شَحِيحٌ
أَتَاهُ فِي الْمَأْمَنِ مَا
فِي الْفِكْرِ لَمْ يَخْتَلِجْ

Most of al-Mu'ayyad's plaint verses, as we have seen, are personal and historical. A few, however, are theological and eschatological in

¹⁸⁴ #60, p. 313, v. 4. All four verses translated elsewhere in book; see Index.

¹⁸⁵ #21, p. 253, vv. 4–5. Complete poem translated pp. 90–91.

tone. In the following verses, al-Mu'ayyad lauds death as his escape from the world of darkness to the world of light:¹⁸⁶

*I have become weary of
this life, knowing
that being is in my
non-being.*

سَمِئْتُ هَذَا الْحَيَاةَ مَعْرِفَةً
مِنْنِي بِأَنَّ الْوُجُودَ فِي عَدَمِي

*Death is my sweet basil,
so that I pass through by it
to the sanctuary of light from
the world of darkness.*

رَيْحَانَتِي الْمَوْتُ كَيْ أَشُقَّ بِهِ
إِلَى حِمَى النُّورِ عَالَمِ الظُّلَمِ

Al-Mu'ayyad's plaint poetry harmonizes two seemingly paradoxical states of mind. On the one hand, we discern the troubles and pain that led to bewilderment and loss of hope. He had hoped for, if not anticipated, a worthy reward for his services and unsurpassed achievements in the cause of the Fatimid da'wa. During the larger part of his life, his hopes were not realized. On the other hand, we glimpse patience, courage, and acceptance. For, as he says often in his verse, the Imam is his (ultimate and spiritual, if not immediate and physical) hope. We do not see al-Mu'ayyad's poetic persona at any time turning away from his Imam. He swallows his tears and continues to serve the da'wa. It is enough for him that he serves his Imam. This is portrayed clearly in a poem he composed during his early years in Cairo, when his position at court was inconsequential, his finances weak, and hardest of all to bear, his access to the Imam's presence had been stopped by a powerful courtier a few months earlier. In the first few verses of the poem, al-Mu'ayyad conveys the deep humiliation of his state, then goes on to proclaim that nothing will change his love for the Imam:¹⁸⁷

*Tell the son of 'Abbās:
"May you be congratulated,
that I—
in the very place that I took
pride and strength from—
am the most humiliated
person.*

قُلْ لَابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ لِيَهْنِكَ إِنِّي
حَيْثُ اعْتَزَلْتُ بِهِ أَذَلُّ ذَلِيلٍ

...

¹⁸⁶ #29, p. 268, vv. 16–17. See also #2, p. 206, v. 156; #3, p. 208, vv. 24–32; and #29, p. 268, vv. 14–15.

¹⁸⁷ #24, p. 259, vv. 6, 12–16. Similar in content are #5, v. 66; #7, p. 223, v. 49; #12, p. 235, v. 46, #15, p. 242, vv. 49–52; #34, pp. 274–75, vv. 16–19; #55, pp. 304, vv. 33, 38.

*Do not be sorry if killing me
has eluded you—
indeed, by the sword of
ignominy, I am most
wickedly killed.*

*The impact of incapacity is
stronger on a youth
than his being killed by a
polished blade.”*

*That is how it is; but all of
this is insignificant
for love of the family of
Revelation and Inspiration*

*Even though I be cut into
pieces, this would not strike
the sharp edge of my
allegiance for them
with bluntness.*

*My resolution would not turn
away from my love for
them, nor would I
follow a tribe other than
their tribe.*

لَا تَأْسَفُوا إِن كَانَ قَتَلِي فَاتَّكُمُ
إِنِّي بِسَيْفِ الذَّلِّ شَرُّ قَتِيلٍ

وَقَعُ الضَّنَى لِأَشَدُّ وَقَعًا بِالْفَتَى
مِنْ قَتْلِهِ بِالصَّارِمِ الْمَصْقُولِ

هَذَا كَذَا وَجَمِيعَ ذَلِكَ هَيْنَ
فِي حُبِّ أَهْلِ الْوَحْيِ وَالتَّزْيِيلِ

لَوْ أَنَّنِي قُطِعْتُ إِرْبًا مَا رَمَى
حَدًّا¹⁸⁸ الْوَلَا مِنْنِي لَهُمْ بِفُلُولِ

وَلَمَّا ثَنَى عَنْ حُبِّهِمْ عَزَمِي وَلَا
شَايَعْتُ غَيْرَ قَبِيلِهِمْ بِقَبِيلِ

Al-Mu'ayyad's pathos expressed in these verses is profound and real. Building on earlier verses in which he had boasted of the strength of his anticipated support from the Fatimid Imam,¹⁸⁹ he addresses the Abbasid Caliph conceding defeat—he has been shamefully humiliated in the bosom of the presence he had proudly claimed was his ultimate safe haven (v. 6). The image of being killed by the sword of ignominy (*sayf al-dhull*), and the comparison to the lesser impact of being physically killed (v. 13), effectively conveys the depth of al-Mu'ayyad's despair at al-Mustansir's court. However, his morale is bolstered by a deep conviction in the absolute saving nature of the true Imam. Carrying the sword image further, he declares that even if he is cut to pieces by this sword of ignominy in the very presence of the Imam, he will never turn away from loving and following the Imam (vv. 14–16).

¹⁸⁸ I have vocalized the word with a fatha: “*ḥadda*,” i.e., direct object of “*ramā*,” from ms. 6; ed. “*ḥaddu*.”

¹⁸⁹ E.g., #55, p. 305, v. 51.

Personality

Al-Mu'ayyad was a man who knew his own worth and was not bashful about letting others know it. The numerous verses in which he describes his mettle depict four aspects of his character and deeds: high spiritual station, beliefs, moral virtues, and services—including sermons and poetry—for the Fatimid da'wa.

One of the most unusual aspects of these *fakhr* verses, and the most interesting from a theological point of view, is their portrayal of the poet's spiritual station. We know that al-Mu'ayyad was the *bāb al-abwāb* of the Imam al-Mustanṣir Billāh, and second to none but him in the Fatimid spiritual hierarchy. The identity of the personages within this hierarchy was usually kept highly secret, and this record is one of the few instances in which historical data is available regarding the identity of the *bāb*. The *bāb* held a high religious station. Just how high this station was is made clear in al-Mu'ayyad's verses. In one verse, he calls himself *Riḍwān*, the gatekeeper of heaven.¹⁹⁰ In another, he compares himself to the Prophet's Companion *Salmān al-Fārisī*, who, according to Fatimid belief, was the *bāb* of the Prophet, and whom, says al-Mu'ayyad, the Prophet included in his family, the People of the House (*ahl al-bayt*).¹⁹¹ Furthermore, in the following verse, al-Mu'ayyad calls himself an angel:¹⁹²

*I am a human being in
countenance, my reality
is an angel. This is established
for the man of perception.*

أَنَا آدَمِيٌّ فِي الرُّوَاءِ حَقِيقَتِي
مَلَكٌ تَعَنَّيَنَّ ذَاكَ لِلْمُسْتَبْصِرِ

In yet another verse, he says his pasture is above the heavens, and he has a place—because of his love for the Imam—in the highest assembly (*al-malā' al-a'lā*):¹⁹³

*My pasture—because of them—
is above the heavens,
and I have a place and a time
in the highest assembly.*

وَلِي مِنْهُمْ فَوْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ مَسَرَّحٌ
وَفِي الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى مَقَامٌ وَمَوْسِمٌ

Using the Qur'ānic light-verse analogy with Fatimid *tawwīl* signification, al-Mu'ayyad compares his soul to a lamp shining forth in a glass.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ #61, p. 315, v. 25.

¹⁹¹ #38, p. 281, vv. 1–2.

¹⁹² #7, p. 223, v. 43. See also #12, p. 233, v. 3.

¹⁹³ #34, p. 275, v. 22.

¹⁹⁴ #30, p. 269, vv. 1–2. Reference to Qur'ān 24:35. He says elsewhere that his soul is illuminated with Divine Light, #12, p. 233, v. 4.

In a comparison which may not sound complimentary to an untrained ear, but has a most positive significance in Fatimid theology, he says he herds souls towards the Imams, just as sacrificial animals are herded towards the Ka'ba.¹⁹⁵ In several verses, he says he is the best of the Imam's servants,¹⁹⁶ and in one instance, he challenges the vizier to fill his place at the Imam's side with anyone else.¹⁹⁷ In the ultimate statement of challenge, he says that in his allegiance to the Imam, he has become pure gold; hellfire cannot touch him now.¹⁹⁸

Al-Mu'ayyad's religious ideology is prominent throughout his *Dīwān*. There are several short pieces, however, in which he explains it explicitly and with specific details. Al-Mu'ayyad probably composed these verses in Fars, where he had to defend his religion against accusations of extremism (*rafīdī*), Mu'tazilism, and philosophizing. He accomplishes this defense in two ways: first, by denying holding unorthodox beliefs, and second, by stating the beliefs he does hold. Thus, in one poem, he says he is "Sunnī"—i.e., he follows the practice (*sunna*) of the Prophet. He is not a *rāfīdī*, for *rāfīdīs*, according to him, are those who consider 'Alī to be God, or to be of higher rank than the Prophet (he also calls them *ghulāt*).¹⁹⁹ Elsewhere, he states he is not a dualist Mu'tazilite; he believes both good and evil originate with God. He categorically disassociates himself (*barā'a*) from the so-called Sunnis—whom he calls "haters [of 'Alī]" (*nāṣibī*)—and their caliphs, to whom he alludes without naming names.²⁰⁰ In another poem, he says his religion is based not on philosophy but on the Qur'ān.²⁰¹ In yet another poem he says his love for the Prophet and his progeny will win him salvation.²⁰² In a *munājjāt*, he says the proclamation of God's unity (*tawhīd*) is the secret of his innermost self.²⁰³ The following is a short piece in which al-Mu'ayyad proclaims many of his beliefs:²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁵ #20, p. 251, v. 10.

¹⁹⁶ #38, p. 281, v. 13; #61, p. 315, v. 25.

¹⁹⁷ #20, p. 251, v. 13.

¹⁹⁸ #26, p. 265, vv. 12–13.

¹⁹⁹ #5, p. 218, v. 66; #42, vv. 1–7, end. For more on al-Mu'ayyad's views on *Rāfīdī* belief see "Disputational Poetry."

²⁰⁰ #44, vv. 1–10.

²⁰¹ #62, p. 320, v. 95, p. 321, v. 121.

²⁰² #49, p. 279, vv. 1–5.

²⁰³ #26, p. 265, v. 10.

²⁰⁴ #42, p. 288, vv. 1–7 complete.

*O interrogator who asks
me about myself,
know that I am a Sunnite man.*

*I love the Companions of the
Prophet of right guidance.
My religion is based upon
their love.*

*Our pure Ṣiddīq and Fārūq²⁰⁵
are like the pupil of the eye
in my eye.*

*I disassociate myself from the one
who said through his ignorance,
“I am a man to whom a
jinn appears.”²⁰⁶*

*And I curse the tall, black
one,²⁰⁷
for Ṣaḥḥāka did not cease to
commit adultery in the past.*

*Leave me be from rafḍ and
its people.*

*I have disassociated myself
from them. Leave me be!*

*This is the path of right
guidance, none else—
if you want right guidance,
then follow me!*

يَا سَائِلًا تَسْأَلُنِي عَنِّي

أَعْلَمُ بِأَنْفِي رَجُلٌ سُنِّيٌّ

أَحِبُّ أَصْحَابَ نَبِيِّ الْهُدَى

دِينِي عَلَى حُبِّهِمْ مَبْنِي

صِدِّيقُنَا الطُّهْرُ وَفَارُوقُنَا

مِثْلُ سَوَادِ الْعَيْنِ فِي عَيْنِي

أَبْرَأُ مِمَّنْ قَالَ مِنْ جَهْلِهِ

إِنِّي أَمْرُؤٌ يَغْرُضُ لِي جَنِّي

وَأَلْعَنُ الْأَذْلَمَ إِذْ لَمْ تَزَلْ

صَهَّاءَكَةَ فِيمَا مَضَى تَزْنِي

دَعْنِي مِنَ الرَّفْضِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ

إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِنْهُمْ دَعْنِي

هَذَا طَرِيقُ الرُّشْدِ لَا غَيْرُهُ

إِنْ كُنْتَ تَبْغِي الرُّشْدَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي

Al-Muʿayyad was an upright, godfearing man according to the historical sources. He himself enumerates his virtues in his poems: contentment, lack of greed, and sufficiency with the wealth of spirit and religion;²⁰⁸ continence (no music or wine, no illicit passion);²⁰⁹ purity

²⁰⁵ The Shiʿa believe the titles Ṣiddīq and Fārūq belong to ʿAlī and his son Ḥasan, and by Sunnis to belong to Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.

²⁰⁶ Refers to Abū Bakr.

²⁰⁷ Refers to ʿUmar. Cf. #15, p. 241, v. 24 “*al-adlam al-rjṣ*”—ms. 6 says this refers to ʿUmar. See also #44, p. 290, vv. 1–2 in which al-Muʿayyad disassociates himself (*barāʿa*) from “*Hubal*,” “*Adlam*” and “*Naʿthal*.” The last is a well-known epithet of ʿUthmān, so the two before it therefore refer to Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. Ms. 2 states that *al-adlam* refers to “the one signified by the [pagan idol] *al-Lāt*” (*al-lāt al-maʿnavī*). Ṣaḥḥāka, according to it, is the name of the original Adlam’s mother. Majlisī’s *Biḥār al-anwār* (ed. al-ʿAlawī, Beirut, n.d. vol. 31, pp. 99–100) says Ṣaḥḥāka (sic) was the name of ʿUmar’s grandmother, a well-known adulteress.

²⁰⁸ #12, p. 233, vv. 6–7; #62, p. 321, v. 114.

²⁰⁹ #62, pp. 320–21, vv. 111–12.

of word and deed;²¹⁰ integrity and trustworthiness;²¹¹ honor and might;²¹² good sense, right guidance, and the healing of souls;²¹³ knowledge and erudition;²¹⁴ piety and sincerity in the worship of God;²¹⁵ courage and the heart of a lion;²¹⁶ good intentions,²¹⁷ felicity,²¹⁸ nobility,²¹⁹ and graciousness;²²⁰ forbearance and patience in hardship.²²¹ All his virtues, he says, are by the grace of the Imam.²²² The following is a set of verses in which al-Mu'ayyad vaunts his many high qualities:²²³

*Pens have entailed my
felicity,
and the days have decreed
good fortune.*

قَدْ حَرَتْ بِالسُّعُودِ لِي الْأَقْلَامُ
وَقَضَتْ بِالْمَسَاعِدِ الْأَيَّامُ

*I have awakened with regard to
the right ways of my religion
to those things to which
[other] people are asleep.*

وَتَنَبَّهْتُ فِي مَرَاشِدِ دِينِي
لَأُمُورٍ قَدْ نَامَ عَنْهَا الْأَنَامُ

*My countenance is a body, and
the harvest of my body
is an angel, momentous affairs²²⁴
are under [whose authority].*

فَرُؤَايَ جِسْمٌ وَمَحْضُورٌ جِسْمِي
مَلَكَ دُونَهُ الْخُطُوبُ الْجِسَامُ

*My heart shines with the light
of my Lord
when the souls of [other] people
are enveloped by darkness.*

وَقُرْأَدِي بِنُورِ رَبِّي مُضِيءٌ
حِينَ يَغْشَى نُفُوسَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَامُ

²¹⁰ #12, p. 233, v. 5.

²¹¹ #7, p. 223, v. 42.

²¹² #34, p. 275, v. 20.

²¹³ #26, p. 265, vv. 12–13; #34, p. 275, vv. 20–25; #62, p. 320, v. 110.

²¹⁴ #7, p. 223, vv. 41–49; #17, p. 245, v. 9; #62, p. 320, v. 109; #34, p. 275, vv. 20–25.

²¹⁵ #39, p. 282, v. 3; #34, p. 275, vv. 20–25; #62, p. 321, v. 112.

²¹⁶ #4, pp. 211–12, vv. 15–16; #6, p. 220, v. 16; #7, p. 223, v. 44.

²¹⁷ #26, p. 265, v. 14.

²¹⁸ #12, p. 233, v. 1.

²¹⁹ #40, p. 284, v. 16.

²²⁰ #17, p. 245, v. 9.

²²¹ #7, p. 223, v. 44; #17, p. 246, v. 19.

²²² #7, p. 223, v. 41.

²²³ #12, p. 233, vv. 1–7; theological in tone, explains his station. See also #7, p. 223, vv. 41–49 end; #62, p. 320, vv. 93–98, pp. 320–21, vv. 109–14 (translated elsewhere in book, see Index); #34, p. 275, vv. 20–25.

²²⁴ Alternative translation: weighty mishaps come upon him.

*My words are refined, and
my deeds
are in a fortress unapproach-
able by blemish.*

وَمَقَالِي مُهَذَّبٌ وَفَعَالِي
مِنْ مَعْيِبٍ²²⁵ لَفِي حِمَى لَا يُرَامُ

*My avarice is dead, and thus,
my resolution is alive,
arising from it, [my] tongue
is a sharp sword.*

مَطْمَعِي مَيِّتٌ فَعَزَمِي حَيٌّ
قَائِمٌ مِنْهُ وَاللِّسَانُ حُصَامٌ

*Wealth of the soul is my
preparation, and wealth of
religion.
Annihilation cannot harm me.*

وَعَنَى النَّفْسِ عُدَّتِي وَعَنَى الدِّينِ
فَمَا أَنْ يَضُرَّني الْإِغْدَامُ

In several places in his *Dīwān*, al-Muʿayyad recounts his weighty services for the Fatimids in Fars and later. He says there is no one in the East whose services for the Fatimids parallel his.²²⁶ He has raised the banners of the Fatimids and guided the people to their rightful cause. The lands of Fars and Syria, the Ḥijāz, Iraq, Egypt, and even those as far away as Sind and India, know him as a sword for the Prophet's progeny.²²⁷ He has destroyed the enemies of the Fatimids and openly established the Fatimid daʿwa in the very house of the Abbasids.²²⁸ He has promulgated allegiance to them through word and deed.²²⁹ He has protected the stronghold of religion.²³⁰ In doing this, he has not cared about himself, about insults or invective, about devastation or death.²³¹ He has even given up family and friends, home and homeland, and has wandered the wilderness, solely for the Fatimid cause.²³² He has been a sincere supporter, one who always offers good counsel.²³³ Moreover, his forefathers before him spent their lives advancing the Fatimid daʿwa, even prior to the establishment of their state.²³⁴ In one poem, after stating that he has

²²⁵ My vocalization is “maʿib,” meaning fault, or fault-finding, following ms. 6; ed. *muʿib*, which is probably incorrect as there does not seem to be a Form IV verb for ʿ-y-b (Lane).

²²⁶ #10, p. 229, vv. 21–22.

²²⁷ #38, vv. 10–13; #20, p. 251, vv. 1–16 translated elsewhere in Book; see Index.

²²⁸ #38, vv. 10–13; #41, p. 287, vv. 21–27; #24, p. 260, v. 24; # 16, p. 244, vv. 23–26.

²²⁹ #32, p. 271, v. 4.

²³⁰ #40, p. 284, v. 25.

²³¹ #12, p. 235, vv. 45–46; #15, p. 242, vv. 50–51.

²³² #32, p. 271, vv. 1–2.

²³³ #32, p. 271, v. 4.

²³⁴ #11, p. 232, v. 42, #40, pp. 284–85, vv. 36–38, #41, p. 287, vv. 29–30.

suffered all he has suffered in Fars only because of his services for the Fatimids, al-Mu'ayyad enumerates some of these services:²³⁵

Ask Fars about my standing—	سَلْ عَنْ مَقَامِي فَارِسًا
Who used to battle there?	مَنْ كَانَ ثُمَّ يُجَاهِدُ
Who promulgated the religion of right guidance	مَنْ مَعْلِنٌ دِينَ الْهُدَى
when its light was dying?	وَالنُّورُ مِنْهُ خَامِدُ
Who protected its sanctuary when a violator would have ravaged it?	مَنْ مَانِعٌ مِنْهُ الْحِمَى حِينَ اسْتَبَاحَ مُحَادِدُ
Who herded when there was no herder?	مَنْ سَلَّاقٌ إِذْ لَا سَلَّاقُ
Who led when there was no leader?	مَنْ قَادٌ إِذْ لَا قَائِدُ
Who is it whose deeds are considered good	مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي حُسِّنَتْ لَهُ
by witnesses?	عِنْدَ الشُّهُودِ مَشَاهِدُ

Among the most important services al-Mu'ayyad has rendered to the Fatimid cause are, according to him, his words. He proudly recounts the power of his prose and poetry,²³⁶ but also acknowledges his inability to praise the Imams as they should be praised.²³⁷ The poem below describes the potency of his sermons:²³⁸

Who is it whose sermons became	مَنْ ذَا لَهُ خُطْبٌ غَدَتْ
like peerless pearls?—	كَالْكُدْرٍ وَهِيَ فَرَائِدُ
The Cloaked Progeny ²³⁹ are revealed by them.	يَجْلُو بِهَا آلُ الْعَبَا
They are snares for hearts.	هِيَ لِلْقُلُوبِ مَصَائِدُ

In the same manner as his sermons, al-Mu'ayyad considers his poems to be part of his services for the Fatimid da'wa. He says his poetry, which is “a bride whose mirror has been polished by the brightness

²³⁵ #40, p. 284, vv. 23–27.

²³⁶ #1, p. 198, vv. 150–51.

²³⁷ #4, p. 214, vv. 65–66.

²³⁸ #40, p. 284, vv. 28–29.

²³⁹ “Cloaked progeny” (*Āl al-ʿabāʾ*) refers to those praised in the “Purification” verse in the Qurʾān (33:33) believed by the Fatimids to mean Muḥammad, ʿAlī, Fāṭima, and the Fatimid Imams.

of the poet's composition"²⁴⁰ removes the enveloping covers of ignorance.²⁴¹ He says his tongue is a sword that by composing the praise of the Imams, wounds their enemies.²⁴²

In addition to his panegyrics, the three other major genres of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry are clearly both da'wa-oriented and artistic. The *munājāt* poetry he composed to commune with God is the first certain authentic attestation of its kind in the classical Arabic corpus, and although its direct influence on non-Ṭayyibī *munājāt* remains to be explored, the presence of this brand-new genre in al-Mu'ayyad's oeuvre indicates his innovative artistry. His disputational poetry (which focuses on the need for rational thinking, *tāwīl*, and its explicator) is not simply didactic, since one of the three poems of this genre does use rhetorical tropes and stylistic devices. Finally, his verses describing his temporal condition and spiritual stature are some of the most poignant verses of Arabic poetry, beautifully crafted to convey his pathos and personality. More significantly, al-Mu'ayyad employed these genres for a religious mission purpose: to commune with God, establish the truth of the Fatimid *madhhab*, and convey his own high spiritual station—all impulses unmistakably grounded in the service of the Fatimid da'wa.

²⁴⁰ #25, p. 264, couplet 34, vv. 67–68.

²⁴¹ #20, p. 251, vv. 4–7 (translated elsewhere in book; see Index).

²⁴² #2, p. 206, vv. 151–54; (translated elsewhere in book; see Index); #12, p. 233, v. 6, p. 235, vv. 43–44; #15, p. 242, v. 49.

CHAPTER FIVE

AL-MU'AYYAD'S MOTIVATION AND AUDIENCE

*Ibn Mūsā's poetry is a
true servant, a warrior,
truly, its utmost [aim] is
service and prayer.¹*

تَشِيدُ ابْنِ مُوسَى عَبْدُ صِدْقٍ مُجَاهِدٌ
قُصَّارَاهُ حَقًّا خِدْمَةً وَدُعَاءً

(Al-Mu'ayyad, *Dīwān*)²

In a letter to a Syrian prince, al-Mu'ayyad writes that upon the Abbasids' desecration of Mūsā al-Kāzīm's grave and the massacre of the Baghdad Shi'a, he had composed a poem that was recited in the caliphal palace in Cairo which had arisen from the burning anguish of his heart even though "he was not a poet nor an aspiring one."³ It would appear from al-Mu'ayyad's remarks that he considered his poetry to be on a different plane than the poetry of a professional poet.⁴ It would further appear that producing the kind of poetry that was ordinarily recited in court circles was not routine for al-Mu'ayyad.

Al-Mu'ayyad's contemporary panegyrists were usually professional court poets who were paid for their art by their patrons, either in the form of a regular stipend or a reward in cash or kind for individual panegyrics. In Fatimid Egypt, too, we have records of poets being treated as a body of professionals in the service of the state, the rank and file receiving a monthly allowance of five dinars, which was augmented by prizes collected on special occasions.⁵

In contrast, the Fatimid state did not employ al-Mu'ayyad as a poet, so in that professional sense, he cannot be called a poet at all.

¹ Alternative translation by changing vocalization and referents: [This is] the poetry of Ibn Mūsā a true servant, a warrior, truly, his utmost aim is service and prayer.

² #13, p. 237, v. 36.

³ *Sīra*, pp. 166–67. The poem is #23, pp. 256–58.

⁴ Perhaps al-Mu'ayyad also refers to the truthfulness and sincerity of his poetry—no falsehoods, poetically and existentially, and very little hyperbole. By this count, his poetry may not be considered by some to be poetry at all. Cf. also Abū al-'Alā's introduction to the *Luzūmīyyāt*, where he says his poems, because they contain truths, are not poetry (*Luzūm mā lā yalzam: al-Luzūmīyyāt*, vol. 1, Beirut, 1961, p. 5).

⁵ Cf. S.M. Ayyad, "Regional Literature: Egypt," in *CHALABI*, pp. 412–41, see p. 437; from 'Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī al-Kātib, *Khariḍat al-qasr wa jaridat al-'asr: "Qism shu'arā' miṣr,"* eds. A. Amīn, Sh. Ḍayf, and I. 'Abbās, Cairo, 1951, vol. 2, p. 83.

Moreover, he never mentions a monetary reward. As such, he fits into neither the paradigm of the professional court poet, nor the other traditional paradigms of his time, such as Sufi or ghazal poet. Why then did he write, and for whom did he write? Al-Mu'ayyad himself answers this in his poems where he tells us that his ultimate purpose in composing poetry is to further the cause of the Fatimid da'wa—to serve it through his pen, as he served it through his tongue, and to serve it through his verse as he served it through his prose. And obviously, his audience was not the usual court elite. Rather, it was composed of God and the Imam, and those political leaders, scholars and lay-people who were connected in some way with the Fatimid da'wa: its friends, foes, followers, or potential converts. Some of this material—several verses and their contextual background—has been discussed in earlier chapters from the perspectives of biography, genre, and style. However, its reiteration in summary form here is necessary for the categorization of al-Mu'ayyad's motives and audience.

Motives

Discussing motivation is a difficult business as it is usually based on speculation. However, in the case of al-Mu'ayyad's motives we are on firmer ground, since he himself enumerates many of his aims poetically: to educate Fatimid followers, to proselytize, to earn religious merit, to commune with God, and so on. In addition to these explicit motives, we can deduce from the content of some of his verses a few additional motives—some are similar to the ones expressed, and others seem to stem from an emotional stimulus. Grouping all these motives into categories, we can state that al-Mu'ayyad's poems sprang from three major motivational impulses: religio-political, purely religious, and emotional. It is important to note, however, that the distinction made here between the religious and the religio-political is modern, for in the vocabulary of a Fatimid dā'ī, "religio-political" would be considered identical with "religious" motives—al-Mu'ayyad believes the Fatimid *madhhab* to be the only true path leading to God, and anything that furthers its cause in any way is of religious merit.

The strongly predominant category in al-Mu'ayyad's poetry is the religio-political. This is not surprising in the light of what we have seen of al-Mu'ayyad's career and aspirations. In this category, al-Mu'ayyad combines a wish for reward in the Hereafter with a desire to further the interests of the Fatimid state and the Fatimid da'wa. The poems coming from a purely religious impulse are addressed to God for for-

givenness of sins and for aid. The verses arising from an emotional motivation describe al-Mu'ayyad's sad state; although numerous, these verses do not form complete poems, but usually appear as the introductory or concluding section of a religio-politically motivated panegyric. Although placed under specific rubrics here, the categorization of poems is far from exclusive. Even though one aim may be predominant in a poem, a combination of aims has usually led to its composition.

Religio-Political Motivation

To Provide Religious Education for Fatimid Followers

Al-Mu'ayyad was basically a teacher. His forte was the dissemination of Fatimid doctrine. Just as his prose *majālis* played an important role in the religious education of the followers of the Fatimids, so did his poetry, albeit in a less systematized fashion. Speaking to this instructional motive in one of his poems, al-Mu'ayyad makes the claim that his poetry contains knowledge, wisdom and right guidance.⁶

*This is poetry in which there
is knowledge and wisdom,
which contains the light of
right guidance, whichever
way you look [at it].*

وَهَآكَ قَرِيبًا فِيهِ عِلْمٌ وَحِكْمَةٌ
وَفِيهِ ضِيَاءُ الرُّشْدِ أَتَى تَأْمَلُنَا

We know for a fact that al-Mu'ayyad's poetry was read for religious knowledge by the followers of the Fatimid *madhhab* of his time, especially and most intensively by those actively involved in the Fatimid *da'wa*. His poetry was known to al-Mu'ayyad's contemporaneous *dā'ī* of Khurasan, Nāṣir Khusrau, who, in his own famous Persian autobiographical poem, calls al-Mu'ayyad's poetry the "scale of meaning":⁷

*He [al-Mu'ayyad] is a teacher
and a physician [of the
soul], one aided by God.
In fact he is an example and
illustration of wisdom and
knowledge.*

استاد و طبیب است و مؤید ز خداوند
بل کز حکم و علم مثال است و مصوّر

⁶ #46, p. 294, v. 49. In another poem (#20, p. 251, vv. 3–8) he says his prose and poetry in praise of the Imams has struck the sparks of intelligence, uncovered lids of ignorance, and blown souls into bodies.

⁷ *Dīvān Nāṣir-i Khusrau*, Mīnovī, ed., p. 514, #242, vv. 111–113; my trans. This complete poem has been translated by Ivanow in *Problems in Nasir-i Khusraw's Biography* (vv. 110–12 on pp. 33–34); a large portion is cited in Ivanow's translation in Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission*, pp. 97–101.

آباد بر آن شهر که وی باشد دربانش
 May that city flourish whose gatekeeper he is!
 آباد بر آن کشتی کو باشد دل‌لنگر
 May that ship flourish whose anchor he is!
 ای معنی را نظم خرد سنج تو می‌زان
 O you, whose wisdom-weighing poetry is a scale for meaning!
 ای حکمت را نثر تو بر بسته به مسطر
 O you, whose prose serves as a model for wisdom!

Al-Mu'ayyad's panegyrics for the Imam were an especially important tool for religious education. The essence of the Fatimid *madh-hab* was knowledge of the *Imam al-zamān's* identity, his nature, and his qualities, and al-Mu'ayyad's panegyrics comprehensively explicated these, being replete with ideological and esoteric motifs about the Imam and Imamate. The following verses in praise of al-Mustanşir are a sample:⁸

هو الذکر الحکیم الحی قامت
 He is the living Wise
 دلائله من الذکر الحکیم
 Remembrance whose
 proofs are established from
 the Wise Remembrance.⁹
 هو البلد الأمين علیه دلت
 He is the Secure City—
 towards him point
 المعانی الرکن منه والخطیم
 the meanings of its Pillar
 and ḥaṭīm.¹⁰
 ورحمة ربنا فینا تجلت
 And [he is] our Lord's
 mercy manifest amongst us,
 grace from a Merciful Lord.
 وذاک الفضل من رب رحیم
 The question about the Boon
 will be about none other
 than him,
 وليس سواه یسأل عن نعیم¹¹
 when the question about the
 Boon is posed.¹²
 إذا وقع السؤال عن التعمیم

⁸ #52, p. 300, vv. 7–10.

⁹ "The Wise Remembrance" refers to the Qur'ān, cf. Qur'ān 3:58.

¹⁰ Ḥaṭīm refers to the *Ḥijr Ismā'īl*.

¹¹ For easier translation, this hemistich may be rearranged as follows: "*lā yus'alu 'an na'imin siwāhu*." In the poem, *siwāhu* has been placed earlier for reasons of meter as well as emphasis.

¹² Reference to Qur'ān 102:8.

Al-Mu'ayyad's homiletic verses, a number of which introduce his panegyrics, are also probably written in part from the motive of religious education. They denounce the fickle nature of this world, warn about the swift approach of death, and advise preparation for the Hereafter. The following verses are an example:¹³

Whosoever knows Fate will
not be deceived
into coming towards it for
water, like the gleam of
a mirage.

وَمَنْ عَرَفَ الدَّهْرَ لَمْ يَغْتَرِرْ

لَهُ بِإِيَابِ كُلِّ مِيعِ السَّرَابِ

He will not spend his days
opening wide
his mouth for its carrion
like dogs.

وَلَمْ يَقْضِ أَيَّامَهُ فَاغِرًا

لَمِيَّتِهِ فَاهُ مِثْلَ الْكِلَابِ

Suffice it as an admonition
for the people of reflection:
a Time that is hasty of hand
in overthrowing.

كَفَى عِبْرَةً لِدَوِي الْإِعْتِبَارِ

زَمَانٌ يَخِيفُ¹⁴ إِذَا بِانْقِلَابِ

It showed us in a brief
span
amazing misadventures from
among every good deed
it did

أَبَانَ لَنَا فِي سَيْرِ الْمَدَى

مِنَ الصُّنْعِ فِي كُلِّ خَطْبٍ عَجَابِ

with all the people of might
that it deceived
and their canine[s]—
it blunted sharpened
canines.

بِكُلِّ ذَوِي عِزَّةٍ غَرَّهُمْ

وَنَابَ لَهُمْ فَلَّ مُحْدُوْدٌ نَابِ

...

Similarly, the tent-rope of
Age [is proceeding] towards
severance,
and the life span of the youth
in it towards being cut off.

كَذَا سَبَبُ الدَّهْرِ نَحْوَ أَثْبَاتِ

وَعُمُرُ الْفَتَى فِيهِ نَحْوُ انْقِصَابِ

¹³ #11, pp. 230–31, vv. 9–13, 17–21. See also #37, pp. 278–79, vv. 9–20, followed by praise of al-Mustanşir, vv. 21 ff.

¹⁴ Read “*yakhiffu*” following *Dīwān* mss. 1–8; ed. contains “*yuhiffu*,” which does not seem to fit into the context here.

*His days, whether they brought
prosperity or were repugnant,
pass away just so, like the
passing of rain-clouds.¹⁵*

وَأَيَّامُهُ سَاعَدَتْ أَمْ نَسَبَتْ
تَمُرُّ كَذَلِكَ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ

*So do not depend upon
[life], when you
see its sun showing signs of
imminent setting.*

فَلَا تَرْكَنْ إِلَى يَمِينِهِ وَأَنْتَ
تَرَى شَمْسَهُ آذَنْتَ بِالْغِيَابِ

*Leave acting as a passionate
youth to passionate
youngsters,
and the loosening of reins
to youths.*

وَحَلِّ التَّصَايِي لَأَهْلِ الصَّبَا
وَحَلِّ الْعِزَارِ لَأَهْلِ الشُّبَابِ

*Prepare provisions, for
indeed the raven
will caw shortly with
[tidings of]
separation . . .*

وَهَيَّ لَكَ الزَّادَ إِنَّ الْغُرَابَ
سَيَنْعَبُ عَنْكَ كَثْبٌ بِاغْتِرَابِ

To Proselytize for the Fatimid da'wa

As a dā'ī, al-Mu'ayyad's primary mission was proselytizing on behalf of the Fatimid da'wa. He achieved this through private dialogue and public debate, through oral communication and written missives. His poetry, especially his disputational verse, also played a part in his proselytizing activities. Through his poems, al-Mu'ayyad tried to indirectly and subtly convince every person in the Islamic world of the righteousness of the Fatimids' claim to the Imamate. In one disputational *urjūza*, he calls his poems "snares" (*maṣā'id*) for the seeker of guidance:¹⁶

*Ibn Abī 'Imrān has, about
the masters,
verse like large and small
pearls strung together.*

لَا بُنَّ أَبِي عِمْرَانَ فِي الْمَوَالِي
نَظْمٌ كَنَظْمِ الدُّرِّ وَاللَّالِي

*Issues that are gathered
into odes,
odes—but they are snares!*

مَسَائِلُ تَجْمَعُهَا قَصَائِدُ
قَصَائِدُ لَكِنَّهَا مَصَائِدُ

¹⁵ Reference to a saying attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib: *Inna l-furṣata tamurru marra s-saḥābi, fa-ntahizū furāṣa l-khayr* (*Nahj al-balāgha*, chap. on *al-ḥikam* #20, p. 630; Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-farḍ*, vol. 2, p. 414).

¹⁶ #2, p. 206, vv. 150–52; v. 150 also trans. by Hunzai in *Shimmering Light*, p. 48.

*Snares for the desirous, the
seeker of right guidance,
calamities for every insolent
one, aggressor.*

مَصَائِدُ لِرَاغِبٍ مُسْتَرْشِدٍ
مَصَائِبُ لِكُلِّ عَاتٍ مُعْتَدٍ

As we have seen earlier, al-Mu'ayyad's disputational poems addressed Muslims of different sectarian and philosophical orientations—Sunnis, Mu'tazilites, Rāfiḍites, *ghulāt* Shi'a—with the purpose of conversion. They contained doubt-creating (*tashkīk*) questions that aimed to create misgivings in the minds of people belonging to various non-Fatimid denominations about their own beliefs. They may also have served, in addition, to show al-Mu'ayyad's own followers the absurdities inherent in other groups' beliefs, thereby reassuring them that they were right and others were wrong. All three of his disputational poems were probably written before he reached Egypt, and their immediate addressees would therefore have been the people of Fars—the Buyids, the Sunni 'ulamā' and the Daylamites. The following verses are an example of al-Mu'ayyad's disputational, proselytizing poetry:¹⁷

*What is the Throne and
the Chair, O speculative
thinkers?*

مَا الْعَرْشُ وَالْكُرْسِيُّ يَا أَهْلَ النَّظَرِ

*I want a rational [answer],
not copying of reports.*

عَقْلًا أُرِيدُ لَيْسَ تَقْلِيدَ الْخَبَرِ

*What is the Throne? And
the Throne, from what
was it created?*

مَا الْعَرْشُ ثُمَّ الْعَرْشُ مِمَّاذَا خُلِقَ

*—say ye, for how many
throats have become choked
by this water!—*

قُولُوا فَكَمْ خَلِقَ بِذَا الْمَاءِ شَرِقَ

*Especially since it carries
the Merciful,¹⁸*

لَا سِيَّمًا إِذْ يَحْمِلُ الرَّحْمَانَا

*whosoever denies this
repudiates the Qur'ān.*

مَنْ رَدَّ هَذَا دَفَعَ الْقُرْآنَا

*If the Lord of the Throne
were carried by it,
He would be weak according
to those who would have
Him carried;*

إِنْ كَانَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ مَحْمُولًا لَهُ

كَأَنَّ ضَعِيفًا عِنْدَ مَنْ أَقْلَهُ

¹⁷ #2, p. 202, vv. 63–70.

¹⁸ Reference to Qur'ān 20:5.

and if the Lord were the
carrier of that,
then if you name it the
"Throne" you have spoken
falsehood.

وإن يَكُ الرَّبُّ لِذَاكَ حَامِلًا
فَالْعَرْشُ إِذْ سَمَّيْتَ قُلْتَ بَاطِلًا

For the "Throne" is that
which carries, not that
which is carried
—this characterization is
much more appropriate
to the carrier.

فَالْعَرْشُ مَا يَحْمِلُ لَا مَا يُحْمَلُ
ذَا النُّعْتُ بِالْحَامِلِ جِدًّا أَجْمَلُ

This is repugnant, and that
is even more repugnant.
This is absurd, and that is
even more absurd.

هَذَا شَنِيعٌ مِنْهُ هَذَا أَشْنَعُ
وَذَا فَظٌ شَنِيعٌ مِنْهُ هَذَا أَفْظُ

The Remembrance is protected
by the people of the
Remembrance,¹⁹
and Truth is in the hands
of the people of authority.

وَالذِّكْرُ مَحْفُوظٌ بِأَهْلِ الذِّكْرِ
وَالْحَقُّ فِي أَيْدِي وُلَاةِ الْأُمَرِ

Al-Mu'ayyad's poetic efforts to convert the Buyid king to the Fatimid *madhhab*, and to induce him to become a political ally of Egypt, are evident in two of his poems. A panegyric, written at an early stage of al-Mu'ayyad's relationship with Abū Kālījār, very cleverly introduces the subject of a potential future Fatimid alliance by calling Abū Kālījār the "right hand of the Progeny of Muḥammad."²⁰ As the *Šīra* tells us, Abū Kālījār did convert shortly thereafter.²¹ A long poem of explanation and apology written upon al-Mu'ayyad's estrangement from the king openly broaches the subject of declaring for the Fatimids, saying that Abū Kālījār's forefathers had also corresponded with Egypt; it reproaches the king for his desertion and explains to him al-Mu'ayyad's actions and motives. Al-Mu'ayyad says the poem contains his story, wearing the garments of verse, and he asks the king for its acceptance and for speedy justice.²²

When al-Mu'ayyad immigrated to Egypt and some years later

¹⁹ "The people of the Remembrance" (*Ahl al-dhikr*) refers to the Imams.

²⁰ #51, p. 299, v. 12.

²¹ *Šīra*, p. 43.

²² #62, pp. 316–22.

became *dā'ī al-du'āt*, he proselytized in a more indirect fashion through the *dā'īs* he supervised in various regions of the world. It is possible that these *dā'īs* might have used al-Mu'ayyad's poetry as part of their proselytizing materials. Al-Mu'ayyad's panegyrics for the Imams thus also proselytized, albeit in a more indirect manner. The very motifs stressing the "Imam-ness" of the Fatimid Imams—utilized for the purpose of religious education when addressed to Fatimid followers—were probably also useful as proselytizing material for any non-Fatimid Muslims who might read these poems. Those panegyrics composed in Egypt might have been motivated in part as an attempt to proselytize among the large Coptic Christian community there, since they contain a number of verses extolling al-Mustanşir's greatness over Jesus.

To Combat the Enemies of the Imam and da'wa and Struggle Against Their Evil (jihād)

Al-Mu'ayyad was not a military man. His involvement in the Basāsīrī-Saljuq war was at the diplomatic rather than the tactical level. But he waged another kind of battle against the Abbasids, the battle of the word. His sermons, speeches, and letters all served this purpose, as did his poetry. Indeed, *jihād*, or combating the Imam's enemies, was an explicit goal of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry. He claims in a panegyric for al-Mustanşir that his verse strikes the hearts of the Fatimids' enemies, and that he is in the fray of *jihād*:²³

*Hibat Allāh—into the very
hearts of enemies—
bores a hole with words
of verse.*

هَيْبَةُ اللَّهِ فِي قُلُوبِ الْأَعْدَائِ
بَنْظَائِمِ الْأَلْفَاظِ يَنْقُبُ نُقْبًا

*He is in the fray of jihād;
through the age,
he confronts the tyrants,
group after group.*

هُوَ فِي حَوْمَةِ الْجِهَادِ مَدَى الدَّهْرِ
يُلَاقِي الطُّغَاةَ حَزْبًا فَحَزْبًا

In some of his poetry, al-Mu'ayyad directly challenges the enemies of the Fatimids. In one such short piece, he warns a "plotter" (*sāhib al-kayd*) against trying to destroy the House of God (*Bayt Allāh*).²⁴ In

²³ #15, p. 242, vv. 49–50. See also similar sentiments expressed in #29, p. 268, v. 7, and in #12, p. 235, vv. 43–44.

²⁴ #47, p. 295, vv. 1–8, complete.

another poem, he exults over the Abbasids upon a victory achieved by the Fatimids in the reign of al-Zāhir.²⁵ In a third poem, written upon a North African prince's switching allegiance to the Abbasids, he threatens the Abbasid vizier responsible, Ibn al-Muslima, with ruination, contemptuously calling him "Ibn Dimna"²⁶ (the cunning jackal of *Kalīla wa Dimna* fame?) The following are some verses from this poem:²⁷

<i>Ibn Dimna, when he saw us sleeping, began strutting about in [his] cowardice in the clothes of a springing attacker.</i>	قَامَ ابْنُ دِمْنَةَ إِذْ رَأَانَا نَوْمًا يَخْتَالُ جُبْنًا فِي ثِيَابِ صَوُولِ
<i>His unguardedness caused him to forget my proximity to him and his [potential] death accompanied by wailing and lamenting.</i>	أَنَسَتْهُ غِرَّتُهُ مَجَاوِرَتِي لَهُ وَعَرَامَهُ فِي رَتْنَةٍ وَعَوِيلِ
<i>He fears my taking him unawares, [my] grabbing his throat in a company of Daylamites, lions of battles, and Jīlānites.</i>	يَخْشَى مُعَافَصَتِي بِأَخْذِ خُنَاقِهِ فِي دَيْلَمِ أَسَدِ الْهَيَاجِ وَجِيلِ
<i>I am a shooting star made to be hurled at him, if he meets me, it will make an unequivocal example of him.</i>	إِنِّي شِهَابٌ قَدْ أَعِدَّ لِرَجْمِهِ إِنْ يَلْقَانِي ²⁸ يُنْكِلُهُ كُلُّ نَكْوَلِ
<i>I will pounce down upon him from Egypt, suddenly, like Death, who will surprise him without [first sending] a messenger.</i>	أَنْفَضُ ²⁹ مِنْ مِصْرٍ عَلَيْهِ فَجَاءُ كَالْمَوْتِ يَفْجَأُهُ بِغَيْرِ رَسُولِ

²⁵ #14, p. 238, vv. 8–16.

²⁶ "Dimna" also means "dung" (Lane, *d-m-n*), and al-Mu'ayyad could have that meaning in mind in addition to the cunning jackal.

²⁷ #24, p. 260, vv. 21–28, end.

²⁸ Mss. 1–7 have "yalqanī;" ed. has "yalqahū" in the text, and "yalqanī" as a variant.

²⁹ Mss. 1, 2, 4 & 6 have "anqaddu" (i.e. to pounce down). Mss. 3, 5, 7 & 8 have "anfaddu" i.e. to be opened or scattered. The first seems to fit better into the context of the verse.

*I will night-march with a lion's
heart for battle with him,
and make him taste a calamity
like the calamity [which befell]
the elephant.³⁰*

أَسْرِيْ بِقَلْبِ غَضَنْفَرٍ لِلْقَائِمِ
وَأَذِيْقُهُ بِأَسَاكَبِ الْفِيلِ

*I will punish him, as is
my habit
regarding him, and I will
hand him over to the worst
resting-place,*

وَأَسُوْمُهُ سَوْمَ الْعَذَابِ كَعَادَتِيْ
فِيهِ وَأُسَلِّمُهُ لِشَرِّ مَقِيلِ

*gaining the upper hand—by
the auspiciousness of our
Master—for
his destruction, and God is
my guardian in this
[endeavor].*

مُسْتَظْهِرًا بِسُعُوْدِ مَوْلَانَا عَلَى
تَدْمِيْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ فِيهِ وَكِيلِيْ

In some ways, the *jihād* import of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry also stems from its conversion aspect, for when al-Mu'ayyad succeeded in converting non-Fatimids to the Fatimid *madhhab*, he struck a direct blow at the main rivals of the Fatimids, the Abbasids. The potentially serious political consequences for the Abbasids of conversion to the Fatimid da'wa are seen most vividly in the case of Abū Kālījār in Fars, where poetry, as we have seen, played a visible part in al-Mu'ayyad's relations with the Buyid king. The case of al-Basāsīrī and the Syrian princes in their alliance with the Fatimids against the Saljuq-Abbasid front is similar, although not identical. We have no evidence to suggest that al-Basāsīrī or the Syrians converted, or even considered converting, to the Fatimid *madhhab*, but what they did do was transfer political allegiance from the Abbasids to the Fatimids. Al-Mu'ayyad engineered this switch, and his poetry may have played a small part in his efforts to this end. A panegyric for al-Mustanşir which al-Mu'ayyad composed in Syria perhaps helped to convince the vacillating Syrian princes to sign on and remain loyal to the Fatimid-Basāsīrī coalition against the Saljuq-Abbasid bloc.³¹

Al-Mu'ayyad's disputational poetry also played a *jihād* role in the Fatimid da'wa. We have just seen, in a piece from a disputational poem, the kind of arguments al-Mu'ayyad used to establish the righteousness of the Fatimid Imamate. He claims in another disputational

³⁰ Reference to Qur'an *sūra* 105. Alternative translation: "and make him taste a might like the might of the elephant."

³¹ #37, pp. 278–80, homiletic verses, vv. 9–20, praise verses, vv. 21–39.

uḥḥūza that he strikes the innermost heart of the Fatimids' enemies by his proofs:³²

*I reach, in the innermost
heart of the hater,
by words, a place that spears
cannot reach,*

*with shining proofs
like stars,
far removed from loose and
false talk.*

أَبْلُغُ مِنْ صَمِيمِ قَلْبِ الْقَالِي
بِالْقَوْلِ مَا لَا تَبْلُغُ الْعَوَالِي
بِحُجَجٍ مُنِيرَةٍ كَالشُّهُبِ
بَعِيدَةٍ مِنَ الْخَنَا وَالْكَذِبِ

To Engage in a Dialogue with al-Mustanṣir

Al-Mu'ayyad longed to be close to his revered Imam. His *Dīwān* contains a large number of verses to this end—verses that engage al-Mustanṣir in direct or indirect dialogue. Things that could not be said directly due to limited access or reasons of protocol were probably more easily expressed in verse. Conclusive evidence that al-Mu'ayyad's poems were, in fact, effective in conveying his complaints and thoughts to the Imam can be found in the Imam's reply poem to al-Mu'ayyad's plea-for-audience poem (discussed earlier), where the Imam reassured al-Mu'ayyad that "We have not veiled ourselves from you from loathing, so trust in our affection."

A large number of al-Mu'ayyad's verses reiterate the value of his services for the Fatimid da'wa. In one of his poems, he says he has established the true religion in Fars and defended it; his sermons eulogizing the Prophet's Progeny have snared hearts.³³ In another poem, he says he has established the Fatimid da'wa in Abbasid lands striking a back-breaking blow to the Imam's enemies; his forefathers have served the Fatimids since before the conquests.³⁴ Al-Mustanṣir, in fact, did accord these services recognition, and it is quite possible that the verses were a catalyst of sorts—for al-Mustanṣir's praise of al-Mu'ayyad's services is very much a reflection of al-Mu'ayyad's own claims in his poetry and uses almost identical phraseology: In a poem, al-Mustanṣir called al-Mu'ayyad "a towering mountain of knowledge";³⁵ in the decree of his investiture as dā'ī al-du'āt, he enumerated al-Mu'ayyad's own and his forefathers' services for the

³² #2, p. 206, vv. 153–54.

³³ #40, p. 284, vv. 23–30.

³⁴ #41, p. 287, vv. 21–30; vv. 29–30.

³⁵ #60, p. 313.

Fatimids and the sufferings he was forced to endure as a consequence of his loyalty to them;³⁶ and in the epistle recalling him from his Jerusalem exile, al-Mustanşir paid special tribute to his propagation of Fatimid beliefs.³⁷

In a Fatimid manual of correct behavior for the followers of the Imam, al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān instructs the Believer—from a saying attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib—to inform the Imam about himself, so that the Imam may make use of him in his da'wa if he so wills.³⁸ Accordingly, al-Mu'ayyad informs al-Mustanşir in poetry of his high character, his knowledge, his courage, and his willingness to sacrifice his all for the Fatimid da'wa. At a very early stage in his relationship with al-Mustanşir, upon the death of al-Zāhir, he wrote the following verses at the end of an elegy for him. It is worth noting that, true to character, al-Mu'ayyad begins the enumeration of his own qualities by saying that all his achievements are due to the Imam:³⁹

*I am the son of Mūsā, your
lowly servant, who,
because of you, trails the hem
of a proud gait among the people.*

*Knowledge is my sword, and
right behavior.
Discretion is my armor and
trustworthiness my helmet.*

*I am a human being in
appearance, my reality
is an angel—this is seen by
the person of perspicuity.*

*My body is a [patient] bearer
of all misfortunes,
but in the body I have a
lion's heart.*

*No attack by any attacker has
ever terrified me, and
the forces of my forbearance
have never weakened due to
the might of a powerful man.*

إِنِّي ابْنُ مُوسَى عَبْدُكَ الْقَنِ الَّذِي
بِكَ فِي الْأَنْفَامِ أَجْرُ ذَيْلٍ تَبَحُّثِرِ

الْعِلْمُ سَيْفِي وَالرَّشَادُ مَطْلَبِي
وَالسُّتْرُ دِرْعِي وَالْأَمَانَةُ مَغْفَرِي

أَنَا آدَمِيٌّ فِي الرُّوَاءِ حَقِيقَتِي
مَلَكٌ تَعَيْنَ ذَاكَ لِلْمُسْتَبْصِرِ

جِسْمِي حُمُولٌ لِلنَّوَائِبِ كُلِّهَا
لَكِنِّي فِي الْجِسْمِ قَلْبَ غَضَنْفَرِ

مَا رَاعَنِي مِنْ صَائِلٍ صَوْلٌ وَلَا
ضَعُفَتْ قُوَى جَلْدِي لِأَبْسِ مُسَيِّطِرِ

³⁶ 'Uyūn, vol. 7, pp. 79–81.

³⁷ 'Uyūn, vol. 7, fols. 77–78.

³⁸ Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Kitāb al-Himma*, p. 51, *Code of Conduct*, p. 42.

³⁹ #7, p. 223, vv. 41–46, 49, end.

*My appearance blinds the
enemies of the Progeny
of 'Alī,
and reports of me deafen them
in every province.*

يُعْمِي عُدَاةَ بَنِي عَلِيٍّ مَنْظَرِي
وَيُصِمُّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ صُنْعٍ مَخْبَرِي

...

*It is acceptable to me to suffer
harm for God,
and to be cruelly treated, for I
do not think about the harm.*

قَدْ طَابَ لِي فِي اللَّهِ أَنْ أُؤْذَى وَأَنْ
أُجْفَى فَمَا أَنَا بِالْأَذَى بِمُفَكَّرٍ

Al-Mu'ayyad also used his poetry to inform the Imam about his situation vis-à-vis the Buyid authorities and to justify his actions. Klemm maintains that al-Mu'ayyad composed the larger portion of his *Sīra* from this very motive.⁴⁰ In a poem written during al-Mu'ayyad's last turbulent months in Fars, he informs the Imam about the difficulties of his situation and explains why it is becoming impossible for him to remain there, indirectly asking for permission to immigrate to Cairo.⁴¹

Some of al-Mu'ayyad's poems were written as occasional poems, as congratulatory or condolence poems addressed to the Imam, on various happy or sad occasions. Al-Mu'ayyad's *ʿĪd al-ḥijra* congratulation ode⁴² and his ode upon al-Mustanṣir's nomination as heir⁴³ were vehicles for carrying al-Mu'ayyad's well-wishes directly to the Imam. His elegy for al-Zāhir⁴⁴ was a means of conveying condolence wishes to the new Imam.

A striking aspect of al-Mu'ayyad's dialogue with al-Mustanṣir is the presence of numerous verses of complaint at his undeservedly cold treatment at the Imam's court. These verses of complaint are almost always framed by reverent praise. This praise would indicate that although al-Mu'ayyad was bitter at al-Mustanṣir's seeming indifference, his veneration and love for the Imam were never in

⁴⁰ *Memoirs of a Mission*, p. 107.

⁴¹ #55, pp. 303–305, 51 verses, complete. Another poem in which al-Mu'ayyad informs the Imam of the difficulties of his situation in Fars that led to his fleeing is #16, p. 244, vv. 22–26. For a request for permission to emigrate, see also #12, pp. 234–35, vv. 36–39 (early, direct request), #15, p. 241, v. 26 (later, indirect request), #59, p. 312, vv. 47–48 (later, indirect request).

⁴² #22, pp. 254–55.

⁴³ #4, pp. 211–14.

⁴⁴ #7, pp. 221–23.

question. As mentioned earlier, he begs the Imam in his poetry for an audience, implores succor, and complains about the Imam's leaving him unprotected at the mercy of the viziers and courtiers. Almost all of al-Mu'ayyad's verses of this nature were composed during his first twelve years in Cairo before he become *dā'ī al-du'āt*. In one poem al-Mu'ayyad sadly questions his Imam as to how it could be possible that his nights are spent in a state of terror within the Imam's "Secure City":⁴⁵

*I have come to you, O son
of Muḥammad's daughter,
appealing for help, struck by
calamity.*

إِنِّي أَتَيْتُكَ يَا بِنْتَ مُحَمَّدٍ
مُسْتَعْدِيًا مَسْتَشْفِيًا الضَّرَاءُ

*Do I spend the night in the
"Secure City"⁴⁶ in terror,
when your sanctuary is
protection from the vicissitude
of the Age?*

أَبَيْتُ فِي الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ مُرَوَّعًا
وَحِمَاكَ مِنْ صَرْفِ الزَّمَانِ وَقَاءُ

*Do I endure harshness for your
sake in the East,
and when I come West to
you, then harshness [again]?*

أَيْنَالْنِي فِيكَ الْجَفَاءُ مُشَرِّقًا
وَإِذَا أَغْرَبْتُ نَحْوَكُمْ فَجَفَاءُ

*According to earned honors
from you, I am
among the first, and in share
of favors [I am] behind.*

إِنِّي بِمُكْتَسَبِ الْفَضَائِلِ مِنْكُمْ
فِي السَّابِقِينَ وَفِي الْحَظِّ وَظٍ وَرَاءُ

*Does one sincere in love
resemble a hypocrite?
Are the dead and the living
the same?*⁴⁷

هَلْ صَادِقٌ فِي الْحُبِّ يُشَبِّهُ مَاذَقَا
هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الْأَمْوَاتُ وَالْأَحْيَاءُ

⁴⁵ #8, p. 225, vv. 26–30. Other poems with similar complaint content are #10, pp. 228–29, vv. 19–25 (vv. 24–25); #32, p. 271, vv. 1–10, complete; #54, p. 302, vv. 1–10, complete (vv. 7–10). Poems begging the Imam for an audience are #6, p. 220, v. 26, and #60, p. 313, vv. 1–4, complete.

⁴⁶ The "Secure City" (*al-balad al-amīn*) refers to Mecca, where no bloodshed is permitted, and even animals may not be killed. In Fatimid dogma, the Secure City symbolizes the Imam himself.

⁴⁷ Reference to Qur'an 35:22.

To Challenge Adversaries in the Fatimid Court, Establishing Himself as a Key Personage in the Fatimid da'wa

Al-Mu'ayyad had a large number of adversaries in the Fatimid court. Many of the viziers and other courtiers were jealous of his fame, and considered him a political rival. They tried in various ways to curb al-Mu'ayyad's power, and to limit his access to the Imam. Al-Mu'ayyad used his poetry to challenge them time and again. The manner in which he accomplished this was by enumerating his high qualities of knowledge, continence, piety, high-mindedness, discretion, trustworthiness, courage, and forbearance and his unparalleled services for the Fatimid da'wa. In a couple of the "challenge" poems, al-Mu'ayyad addresses his exiler, the vizier Ibn al-Mudabbir, without actually naming him. He dares the vizier to find someone to replace him by the side of the Imam.⁴⁸

Purely Religious Motivation

To Earn Religious Merit

One of al-Mu'ayyad's most clearly expressed goals in his composition of poetry is the earning of religious merit. Towards the end of a panegyric for al-Mustanşir (composed as a *mu'āraḍa* to Tamīm's praise-poem for al-ʿAzīz as discussed earlier), he states distinctly what exactly it is he wishes to write in his poetry and why: What does al-Mu'ayyad wish to write? Praise of his Imam. Why? Because poetry written in praise of the Imam is the only poetry that is religion (*dīn*), merit (*faḍl*), and intelligence (*fiṭna*); it provides the only legitimate justification for composing poetry. These are the verses:⁴⁹

*My tongue will praise
your merit,
when others praise the
blush of a cheek.*

*Anything other than your
praise is frivolity of speech.
Praise of you is religion,
excellence, and intelligence.*

سَيَنْعَتُ فَضْلَكَ مِنِّْي اللِّسَانُ
إِذَا نَعَتَ الْغَيْرُ تَوَرِيدَ وَجْهِنَا
وَعَيْرُ مَدِيحِكَ لَهُوَ الْحَدِيثُ
وَمَدْحُكَ دِينٌ وَفَضْلٌ وَفِطْنَةٌ

⁴⁸ #20, p. 251, vv. 1–16; #29, p. 268, 1–17, complete; #47, vv. 13–17 only. Other poems are more general in their address, cf. #38, p. 281, 1–13, complete; vv. 3–13, end.

⁴⁹ #22, p. 255, vv. 20–21.

The following are the first few praise verses from the same poem. They extol the spiritual and religious qualities of the Imam, and they demonstrate what kind of verse, according to al-Mu'ayyad, earned religious merit:⁵⁰

*The crescent moon that has
appeared through the darkness
is the Imam of the age, a shield
from hellfire.*

هِلَالٌ بَدَا مِنْ خِلَالِ الدُّجْنَةِ
إِمَامٌ زَمَانٍ مِنَ النَّارِ جُنَّةٌ

*An Imam who is hellfire for
secret enemies,
as he is Paradise for [his]
followers.*

إِمَامٌ هُوَ النَّارُ لِلْكَاشِحِينَ
كَمَا أَنَّهُ لِلْمُؤَلِّينَ جَنَّةٌ

*An Imam through whom the
people of allegiance have
sought refuge
from the evil of men and the
evil of jinn.⁵¹*

إِمَامٌ بِهِ عَاذَ أَهْلُ الْوَلَاءِ
مِنْ شَرِّ نَاسٍ وَمِنْ شَرِّ جِنَّةٍ

*An Imam whose
grace and favors are declared
by unborn children.*

إِمَامٌ يُعَبِّرُ عَمَّا لَهُ
مِنْ الْفَضْلِ وَالْمَأْتِرَاتِ الْأَجْنَةِ

*An Imam whose habit is
seen always
[to be] the upholding of a
mandatory religious duty
and the revivification of a
Tradition.*

إِمَامٌ يُرَى دَائِبًا دَائِبُهُ
إِقَامَةٌ فَرَضٍ وَاحْتِيَاءُ سُنَّةٍ

To Save Souls

Al-Mu'ayyad claims that his poetry saves souls, presumably by educating the people as to the Imam's identity and his qualities. In one poem, he says that he has blown souls into bodies with his prose and poetry written in praise of the Imams.⁵² In another poem, he says he heals souls for the well-being of the Return to the Hereafter.⁵³ Elsewhere, he says that the salvation of souls is in his wise sayings:⁵⁴

⁵⁰ #22, p. 254, vv. 1–5.

⁵¹ Reference to Qur'an sūra 114.

⁵² #20, p. 251, v. 6.

⁵³ #62, p. 320, v. 110.

⁵⁴ #29, p. 268, v. 11.

Verily, the salvation of souls
is in my apothegms,
and the intellect is my arbiter
in what I bring forth.

إِنَّ نَجَاةَ النُّفُوسِ فِي حِكْمِي
وَالْعَقْلُ فِيمَا أَسْوَفُهُ حَكْمِي

To Pray and Commune with God

In his numerous *munājāts*, al-Mu'ayyad addresses God directly and prays for forgiveness of sins, for salvation, for succor, and aid. He begs God to accept the intercession of the Imams on his behalf. These poems were probably not meant for public perusal—rather, they seem to be a private dialogue between al-Mu'ayyad and God. The following are some sample verses from one of his *munājāt*:⁵⁵

O [my] Lord, I complain of
the wretchedness of my
condition
endlessly, and I sincerely
supplicate you,

يَا رَبِّ أَشْكُو سُوءَ حَالِي

in order that you bestow
[upon me] a glance
which suffices me⁵⁶ [in] the
oppression of the nights.

أَبَدًا وَأُخْلِصُ فِي ابْتِهَالِي
كَفَّيَ بِهَا ضَمِيمَ اللَّيَالِي

So that the scorching of the
midday heat,
alongwith its oppression, turn
into the coolness of shade.

فَيَعُودَ لِي حَرُّ الْحَجْرِ
بِضَائِمِهَا بَرْدُ الظِّلِّ

I see something like a
barrier
between the answer and the
petition.

وَأَرَى كَمِثْلِ السَّدِّ مَا
بَيْنَ الْإِجَابَةِ وَالسُّؤَالِ

If you turn away the hand
I have stretched out to You,
O Sublime One,

فَلَمَّا رَدَدْتَ يَدًا إِلَيْكَ
مَدَدْتُهَا يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ

do I have any lord other
than You,
to [go towards] whom I can
fasten—O my Hope!—
my saddles?

أَسِوَاكَ لِي رَبُّ أَشْهُدُ
إِلَيْهِ يَا أَمْلِي رَحَالِي

...

⁵⁵ #28, p. 267, vv. 1–6, 10–14.

⁵⁶ Arabic *ukfā bihā* in the passive voice.

Indeed, I will continue to pray
to You,
[O my] Lord, as long as my
human shape remains.

And I will seek intercession
through the Pure Ones,
the Fatimids, the masters—

Progeny of the Prophet
Muṣṭafā,
sanctuaries of salvation from
error,

a group, by the rope of whose
allegiance,
my ropes have been connected,
ever since they existed

—so that You unfasten the
knots of my cares,
graciously, [like] the unfastening
of the [camel's] hobbling-rope.

إِنِّي عَلَى دَعْوَاكَ رَبِّ
أَقِيمُ مَا يَنْقِي خِيَالِي

وَتَوْسُّلِي بِالطَّاهِرِينَ
الْفَاطِمِيِّينَ الْمَوْلِي

آلِ النَّبِيِّ الْمَصْطَفَى
عِصَمِ النَّجَاةِ مِنَ الضَّلَالِ

قَوْمٍ بِحَبْلِ وَلَائِهِمْ
مُذَلَّمٌ تَزَلَّ عَلِقَتْ حَبَالِي

حَتَّى تُحِلَّ عُقُودَ هَمِّي
مُنْعِمًا حَلَّ الْعُقَالِ

*To Commune with Muḥammad, 'Alī, and the Imams, and Beg
Them for Succor*

Al-Mu'ayyad's poetry contains a large number of verses that address Muḥammad, 'Alī, and all the Imams, begging for succor, pleading for intercession with God on his behalf (*shafā'a*), and appealing for vengeance to be wreaked upon his foes. They are named "*iltijā'iyya*" or refuge-seeking verses in the Ṭayyibī tradition. The following is a sample:⁵⁷

If my throat chokes
one day,
and the path of salvation
becomes narrow, I will call
out, "O Progeny of Aḥmad!"

Help me! Help me! O son of
Muḥammad's uncle.

Take my hand, O my master!
My life is sacrifice for you.

فَإِنْ ضَاقَ بِي يَوْمًا خُنْفَايَ وَضَاقَ بِي
سَبِيلُ النَّجَا نَادَيْتُ يَا آلَ أَحْمَدَا

أَعِثْنِي أَغِثْنِي يَا ابْنَ عَمِّ مُحَمَّدٍ
فَخُذْ بِيَدِي مَوْلَايَ رُوحِي لَكَ الْفِدَا

⁵⁷ #39, p. 282, vv. 13–14, 16. Other *iltijā'iyya* verses addressed to the Imams in the *Diwān* are: #3, p. 209, vv. 44–47; #17, p. 247, vv. 43–50; #31, p. 270, vv. 11–16; #45, p. 291, vv. 1–8, complete; #49, p. 297, vv. 1–5, complete. *Iltijā'iyya* verses addressed to the *Imam al-ẓamān*, al-Mustanṣir, are: #41, p. 287, v. 28; #59, p. 312, vv. 45–46.

...

*They are the treasure in both
the worlds—there is no
treasure other than them,
they are my refuge today, they
are my provision [for]
tomorrow.*

هُمُ الذُّخْرُ فِي الدَّارَيْنِ لَا ذُخْرَ غَيْرُهُمْ
هُمُ مُسْتَجَارِي الْيَوْمِ هُمْ عُدَّتِي غَدًا

Emotional Motivation

To Vent Grief and Frustration

Al-Mu'ayyad faced many trials in his life. He spent months fleeing from his enemies in Fars and upon reaching the Fatimid court in Cairo he faced even more humiliation and disappointment. In a large number of melancholy verses, his poetry portrays the grief he felt. These verses are often addressed to his family and friends in Fars and express pain at being separated from them. It is conceivable that al-Mu'ayyad could have actually sent some of his poems to his family with any letters he may have written. In the following verses at the end of a panegyric for al-Mustanşir, al-Mu'ayyad informs them about his grievously changed condition and tells them how much he misses them. We can only imagine the distress of al-Mu'ayyad's family upon receiving such news, far away and with no way of sending comfort:⁵⁸

*[O you two companions,]
tell our loved ones, "Your
man in exile
in the West complains to you
of longing.*

قُولَا لِأَحِبَّائِنَا غَرِيبِكُمْ

*O you [God?] who deposited
with me my sorrowful heart,
just as their separation gave my
body as a deposit to illness.*

بِالْعَرْبِ يَشْكُو إِلَيْكُمْ الْقَرَمَا

يَا مُودِعِي قَلْبِي الْلَهْفَ كَمَا
أَوْدَعَ جِسْمِي فِرَاقُهُمْ سَقَمًا

*I complain to God of the
subjugation of a Time
that transgressed against me by
distancing me from you.*

أَشْكُو إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ سَطَا زَمَنِ
عَلَيَّ بِالْبُعْدِ عَنْكُمْ اجْتَرَمًا

⁵⁸ #19, p. 250, vv. 19–23.

*Ever since I have been away
from your courtyard, I have
been,*

*without doubt, the target of
destruction's arrow.*

*Sleep has shunned my eyelids
after you*

*and wrested my tears so that
they flow endlessly.*

إِنِّي مُذْ زِلْتُ عَنْ فِنَائِكُمْ

عُرْضَةُ سَهْمِ الْفَنَاءِ لَا جَرَمًا

جَفَا جُفُونِي الرُّقَادُ بَعْدَكُمْ

وَبَزَزَ دُمْعِي فَدُمْرُهُ انْسَحَمَا

To Console Self and Loved Ones

In other description-of-self verses, al-Mu'ayyad attempts to console himself and his loved ones with the thought that the Imam's beneficence makes up for every agony. In one poem, he comforts his family, friends, and followers in Fars by saying they should be happy he has reached Paradise, to wit, the presence of his Imam.⁵⁹ Elsewhere al-Mu'ayyad consoles himself, telling himself that God is his comforter⁶⁰ and al-Mustanşir his all—his treasure, his family, his property, his support, and his preparation.⁶¹

*Even though I am alone
away from my lands
and evicted from my old
and new possessions,*

*Ma'add is my treasure, my
family, my property,
my support, my preparation,
my provisions.*

وَلَيْنَ كُنْتُ عَنْ بِلَادِي فَرِيدًا

وَطَرِيدًا لِطَارِفِي وَتِلَادِي

فَمَعَدُّ دُخْرِي وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي

وَعِمَادِي وَعُودَتِي وَعَتَادِي

Very often, both the melancholy and the resigned come together—expressions of grief followed by consolation—as a long prelude to praise verses of al-Mustanşir. Here, the grief is expressed in the traditional “*al-shayb wa al-shabāb*” (old age and youth) or “*al-ḥanīn ilā al-waṭan*” (nostalgia for homeland) motifs, and the consolatory verses form the transition to the praise section. In the following poem, al-Mu'ayyad upbraids Fate for separating him from his loved ones, then says he finds comfort in the courtyard of his Imam.⁶²

⁵⁹ #41, p. 287, vv. 16–20.

⁶⁰ See #52, p. 300, vv. 18–19.

⁶¹ #36, p. 277, vv. 10–11.

⁶² #16, p. 243, vv. 3–6, & 9; see also #3, pp. 207–10, #6, pp. 219–20, #15, pp. 240–242, #17, pp. 245–47, #18, p. 248, esp. v. 9.

The tears of my eye,
after them,
pour down in the courtyard
of my cheek.

The body, from prolonged
grief
and longing, is on the verge
of fading away.

My Lord will be your
Reckoner O Time—
is what you did to us
permissible?

You have scattered the
union of our happiness
after the union had been
gathered together.

...

In the courtyard of our
master Ma'add
I console myself, forgetting
the courtyard of [the rest
of] the world.

وَدُمُّ رَوْعٍ عَيْنِي بَعْدَهُمْ
فِي صَاحْنٍ خَدِّي تَسْتَهْلُ

وَالْجِسْمُ مِنْ طَوْلِ الضَّنَا
وَالشَّوْقُ يُوشِكُ يَضُمَحِلُّ

رَبِّي حَسْبِيكَ يَا زَمَانُ
أَمَا فَعَلْتَ بِنَا يَحِلُّ

فَرَّقْتَ شَمْلَ سُورِنَا
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَدْ ضُمَّ شَمْلُ

بِفِنَاءِ مَوْلَانَا مَعْدُ
عَنْ فِنَاءِ الْخَلْقِ أَسْلُو

Al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt*, too, may be said to arise from a personal and emotional impulse, for they express his grief, and pray to God for succor.

Audience Contemporary to the Poet

From three disparate pieces of evidence, it is quite clear that al-Mu'ayyad's poetry was not meant for a court audience. First, a few of al-Mu'ayyad's panegyrics do indeed have an official tone to them and not much personal content.⁶³ These were likely to have been recited in court. But in the vast majority of his panegyrics, praise of the Imam is juxtaposed with a description of al-Mu'ayyad's own sorry state and complaints to the Imam, thus more suited, it seems, for private perusal rather than public performance. Second, as discussed earlier in this chapter, from al-Mu'ayyad's remarks in the *Sīra*

⁶³ E.g. #22, pp. 254–55; #41, pp. 286–87; #61, pp. 314–15.

which mention as an unusual occurrence the recitation in court of a poem he had composed, it seems that it was not indeed, usual practice for his poetry to be recited in court.⁶⁴ Third, neither medieval anthologists nor historians cite al-Mu'ayyad's poetry in their work—they evidently do not consider him a “poet” in the accepted sense of the word. Anthologies such as the *Kharīdat al-qaṣr*, which have sections on the poets of Egypt, and which include a large number of courtiers and even some qāḍīs in their roster, do not include al-Mu'ayyad.⁶⁵ And except for the Ṭayyibī dā'ī Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, historians of the Fatimid caliphate—such as al-Maqrīzī—who usually intersperse their political narrative with snippets from poetry written by court poets, do not cite al-Mu'ayyad's, even though al-Mu'ayyad wrote a number of verses that could have met their narrative needs.⁶⁶

So if al-Mu'ayyad did not write for the court elite, for whom did he write? We have established that al-Mu'ayyad's primary motivation in writing poetry was to further the cause of the Fatimid da'wa. So it is logical to assume that the bulk of his contemporary audience would have been composed of people who had some existing or potential relation with the Fatimid da'wa, viz., the Fatimid Imam, and men and women who were either followers, enemies, or possible converts to the Fatimid da'wa. This assumption is verified in part by statements that al-Mu'ayyad himself made in his poetry about the function served by his poems, and in part by outside sources.

The two Imams contemporaneous to al-Mu'ayyad—al-Zāhir until his death in 427 (1035), and, after him al-Mustanṣir—were important addressees for much of his poetry. Al-Mustanṣir was the audience for a large number of al-Mu'ayyad's poems, whether as the one praised (*mamdūh*), refuge, consoler, one complained to, or the beloved, both in formal and ideological praise, or personal and emotional appeal. We know that the Imam actually perused some of al-Mu'ayyad's poems, such as the famous plea-for-audience poem.⁶⁷ Others may or may not have been. However, it is possible that even

⁶⁴ *Sira*, pp. 166–67. #23, pp. 256–58.

⁶⁵ Al-'Imād al-Isfahānī al-Kātib, *Kharīdat al-qaṣr wa jarīdat al-'aṣr*: “*Qism shu'arā' miṣr*,” eds. A. Amīn, Sh. Ḍayf, and I. 'Abbās, 2 vols., Cairo, 1951. Note that Tamīm is not included either.

⁶⁶ E.g. *Itti'āz*, v. 1, p. 97 contains verses by Ibn Hānī' written upon the conquest of Egypt in the reign of al-Mu'izz.

⁶⁷ #60, p. 313; *Uyūn* vol. 7, pp. 75–76.

for poems that were not physically sent to the Imam, the Imam was still meant to be the primary audience, albeit in a spiritual, rather than a physical manner. Al-Mu'ayyad probably felt comforted in addressing his Imam, in the belief that the Imam spiritually heard the pleas of his followers.

The followers of the Fatimid *da'wa* in Fars, Egypt and elsewhere formed an important bloc of al-Mu'ayyad's contemporary audience. They read or heard al-Mu'ayyad's panegyrics for the Imam and perhaps some of his disputational poetry and self-praise verse too. Those followers who were *dā'īs* themselves were probably the ones most interested in reading al-Mu'ayyad's verse, as evidenced by Nāṣir Khusrau's high praise.⁶⁸ Additionally, they would be the most qualified to understand the many subtle ideological nuances and references. Some of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry might have been recited in the *da'wa majālis* in Egypt and elsewhere.

The enemies of the Fatimid state and *da'wa* formed another important segment of al-Mu'ayyad's contemporary audience. As we have seen earlier, al-Mu'ayyad says his poetry strikes the hearts of the Fatimids' enemies. These were the people who openly opposed the Fatimids from among the political leaders and scholars of the time, and, time and again in his poetry, al-Mu'ayyad threatened them with a bloody downfall in this world and damnation in the next. The Abbasid Caliph and his vizier Ibn al-Muslima were at the receiving end of virulent challenge-poems,⁶⁹ and the Sunni 'ulamā' of Fars were also indirect addressees.⁷⁰

Al-Mu'ayyad, as we have seen, calls his poems snares for seekers of guidance. Thus, the scholars, political leaders, and lay-people, who were neutral (neither followers nor enemies of the Fatimids) and therefore possible converts to the Fatimid cause, formed one more section of al-Mu'ayyad's contemporary audience—his disputational poetry was directed primarily towards them. The populace of Fars was especially important in this respect, for in keeping with the fact that most of the Fatimids' post-*zuhūr* proselytizing seems to have been conducted away from their own capital city, most of al-Mu'ayyad's direct proselytizing activities were actually carried out in Fars before

⁶⁸ *Divān Nāṣir-i Khusrau*, ed. Mīnovī, p. 511, #242, vv. 111–113.

⁶⁹ See #14, pp. 238–39; #24, pp. 259–60; #47, p. 295.

⁷⁰ See #42, p. 288; #44, p. 290.

he arrived in Egypt. Al-Mu'ayyad directly used his poetry to convert the Buyid king Abū Kālījār to the Fatimid da'wa and gain a political ally for the Fatimid state.

In contrast to al-Mu'ayyad's religio-politically motivated poetry, his religiously and personally motivated poetry had a different and much more private audience. His *munājāt* and his pleas to the Imams for succor were spiritually addressed to God, and to Muḥammad, 'Alī and the Imams. They were probably not meant for publication. His description-of-self verses were addressed, and perhaps even sent, to his family and close friends in Fars. Another smaller part of al-Mu'ayyad's audience were Fatimid court officials, whom he addressed in challenging self-praise poems. The vizier Ibn al-Mudabbir, responsible for al-Mu'ayyad's exile to Jerusalem, was one such addressee.⁷¹

Both al-Mu'ayyad's motivation for composing poetry and his contemporary audience were inextricably attached to the Fatimid da'wa. His overarching goal was to serve the Fatimid da'wa, and his motivation, although sometimes emotional or purely religious, was primarily religio-political: to provide religious education, proselytize, save souls, wage *jihād*, and engage in a dialogue with the Imam. His audience was also connected in some way to the Fatimid da'wa, comprising (after God), of the Imam, Fatimid followers, da'wa enemies, and possible converts. Thus, the nature of al-Mu'ayyad's motivation and the identity of his contemporary audience are significant factors in our classification of his *Dīwān* as Fatimid da'wa poetry.

⁷¹ #20, p. 251, #29, p. 268.

CHAPTER SIX

AL-MU'AYYAD'S POETRY IN THE ṬAYYIBĪ DA'WA

He . . . had attained the rank of the *bāb*, which is the first of the ranks of immunity from error (*ʿiṣma*). Therefore, his speech is the speech of one immune from error (*maʿṣūm*), and the speech of one immune from error could never have any unsoundness creep into it.

(early Ṭayyibī text)¹

Soon after al-Muʿayyad's death, the Fatimid state in Egypt came to an end. However, in its Mustaʿlian branch, the Fatimid daʿwa continued in Yemen and India.² When al-Mustaṣṣir's grandson the Caliph-Imam al-Āmir died in 524/1130, four decades before the official end at the hands of the Ayyubids of the Fatimid state in Egypt, the Ṣulayḥid queen al-Ḥurra al-Malika was the Fatimid dāʿī³ of Yemen. Under her leadership, the Yemenite and Indian followers of the Fatimid daʿwa broke away from the overlordship of al-Āmir's cousin al-Ḥāfiẓ in Egypt and pledged allegiance to the deceased

¹ ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd, *Ḍiyāʾ al-albāb*, ms., chapter 26. This text is specifically about al-Kirmānī, an earlier *bāb*, but the doctrine expressed in it about the *bāb*'s *ʿiṣma* applies equally to al-Muʿayyad.

² After the death of al-Mustaṣṣir, the Mustaʿlian Fatimids adhered to the Imamate of his son al-Mustaʿlī, who was also the next Caliph of Egypt. They were concentrated mostly in Egypt, Yemen and India. The Indian subcontinent, or the *jaẓīras* of al-Hind and al-Sind, had been generally administered from Cairo, but were under the direct supervision of the Yemenī daʿwa. One of the reasons for this may be the way the trade routes were structured. Abraham Udovitch explains that “almost all travelers from Fustat to India passed via Aden” (“Fatimid Cairo: Crossroads of World Trade—From Spain to India,” in *L'Égypte fatimide*, pp. 29–43, see p. 686).

The Nizārī Fatimids adhered to the Imamate of al-Mustaʿlī's brother Nizār, who was executed by the state, and whose followers believed that the Imamate continued in his line. They were concentrated mostly in Persia and Syria.

³ Al-Ḥurra al-Malika is more commonly referred to as a *ḥujja*, a rank sometimes used synonymously with the rank of dāʿī to mean *dāʿī al-jaẓīra* (dāʿī of the region), and sometimes used as a rank above the dāʿī when dāʿī means *dāʿī al-balāgh* or *al-dāʿī al-muṭlaq*. I have preferred to refer to her in the text here as a dāʿī to indicate that she was the one in active charge of the Fatimid daʿwa in Yemen. She is known as the mother of the Ṭayyibī dāʿīs.

Caliph-Imam's concealed infant son al-Ṭayyib (and to the concealed Imams in his line after him).⁴ Henceforward, they were known as "Ṭayyibīs." The Fatimid-Ṭayyibī da'wa, also called the "*da'wat al-satr*" (the da'wa during the concealment of the Imam), commenced with its central administration in Yemen and a strong Indian following. In place of the concealed Imams, a continuous series of vicegerents of the concealed Imams led the da'wa. Called *dā'ī al-satr* (dā'ī during the concealment of the Imam) or *al-dā'ī al-muṭlaq* (dā'ī with absolute authority), they reigned with a full spiritual and temporal mandate. Four centuries later in 946/1539, the 24th dā'ī transferred the command center of the Ṭayyibī da'wa to India, where it has remained to the present day. Today, there are several Ṭayyibī denominations, which differ over the line of dā'īs they consider legitimate. The vast majority belong to the Dā'ūdī Bohra Ṭayyibī denomination,⁵ which is taken to be the representative group for the

⁴ References to the birth of al-Ṭayyib, his appointment (*naṣṣ*) to the Imamate by his father al-Āmir, and his subsequent disappearance, are found in a 6th/12th c. Syrian chronicle titled *al-Bustān al-jāmī' li jamī' tawārīkh ahl al-zamān* (by 'Imād al-Dīn Abū Ḥāmid al-Isfahānī, ed. Cl. Cahen, 'Une Chronique syrienne du VI^e/XII^e siècle,' *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 7–8, 1937–1938, pp. 113–58, see pp. 121–22, events of the Hijri year 524), and in Ibn Muyassar's (d. 677/1278) *Akhbār Miṣr (Al-Muntaqā min Akhbār Miṣr intaqāhu al-Maqrīzī*, pp. 109–10), probably from the lost chronicle of Ibn Muḥannak (d. 549/1154). Two Yemeni da'wa sources are Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir's (d. 584/1188) *Majmū' al-tarbiyya* (ms), and Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn's (d. 872/1468) *Uyūn al-akhbār wa funūn al-āthār* (vol. 7 pp. 254–57), in which is recorded the "episode of auspicious tidings [of the birth of al-Ṭayyib and his appointment to the Imamate]" (*siḥill al-bishāra*) written by al-Āmir to al-Ḥurra al-Malika.

⁵ For information about the history and faith of the Dā'ūdī Bohras, see T. Sayf al-Dīn, *al-Rasā'il al-Ramaḍāniyya*, 48 vols., Bombay, 1912–1963. Each *Risāla* contains, among other things, detailed information about da'wa activities during its year of publication. For information about the Ṭayyibī da'wa in India, see esp. the *Rasā'il* of the years 1375, *Balāgh al-du'āt al-fāṭimiyyīn*, pp. 198–end; and 1376, *Amthāl sidrat al-muntahā*, pp. 233–end. For information about the Ṭayyibī da'wa in Yemen, see Bazat Saifiyah Qutbuddin, *The Political History of the Ṭayyibī-Isma'ili Da'wa in Yemen c. 524–832/1130–1429*, Ph.d. thesis, Oxford University, 1997. See also my forthcoming article on the Dā'ūdī Bohras, and another by B.S. Qutbuddin, in Farhad Daftary, ed., *Modern Isma'ili History and Thought*. The Dā'ūdī Bohra Ṭayyibīs have preserved the largest collection of Fatimid and Ṭayyibī manuscripts in the world. Other Ṭayyibī denominations are the Sulaymānī Bohras and the 'Alawī (commonly known as "Alīyya" and pronounced "Alyā") Bohras. The status of al-Mu'ayyad's works in the latter communities is difficult to ascertain, as information about their activities is hard to obtain. Furthermore, the minority groups—except for the Sulaymānīs in Yemen—do not have a strong Arabic tradition, and therefore do not seem to have given much consequence to al-Mu'ayyad's Arabic writings. Sulaymānī Bohras number about seventy thousand in Yemen and four thousand in India. Alyā Bohras number about five thousand in India. The disagreement

purposes of this study, and “Ṭayyibīs” in this book refers to the Dā'ūdī Bohra Ṭayyibīs. At present, under the dā'iship of the fifty-second incumbent Sayyidnā Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn,⁶ the Fatimid-Ṭayyibī da'wa is flourishing in religious vigor, traditional learning, and literary production. Its followers number over a million practicing men, women and children worldwide, with the majority in India and Pakistan, and a large minority in Yemen. They consider themselves the inheritors of the (Arabic) Fatimid legacy.

Al-Mu'ayyad was instrumental in the transmission of the learning of the Fatimid da'wa to the Ṭayyibī da'wa. This transmission took place in two ways. Firstly, al-Mu'ayyad, who was the doyen of Fatimid learning, had tutored the Fatimid-Ṣulayḥid Qāḍī of Yemen, Lamak b. Mālik (d.c. 491/1097–98), who had taught his own son the Qāḍī Yaḥyā (d. 520/1126), who, in turn, had been the teacher of Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā al-Wāḍi'ī (d. 546/1151), the first Ṭayyibī dā'ī in Yemen; the transmission of Fatimid learning continued thenceforward from dā'ī to dā'ī. Secondly, Lamak probably took back with him to Yemen al-Mu'ayyad's magnum opus *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, his poetry, and his other Arabic works. These works came to be regarded as being among the most influential works in the Ṭayyibī library: the *Majālis* had a special position in Ṭayyibī learning, and the *Dīwān* was kept alive in the Ṭayyibī tradition. Al-Mu'ayyad thus came to be considered the father of the Ṭayyibī da'wa.⁷

within the various Bohra sects arises from their recognition of separate lines of legitimate dā'īs; doctrinal differences are minimal. For more information about the Bohras, see M. Abdulhussein, “Bohras,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, New York and Oxford, 1995, vol. 1, pp. 224–26; S. Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat: Preliminary Studies in their History and Social Organization*, New Delhi, 2nd ed., 1985; and M. Boivin, “Institutions et production normative chez les Ismaïliens d'Asie du Sind,” *SI* 88 (1998), pp. 141–79, see esp. diagram of the twelve Ismā'īlī divisions existing today, p. 176. See also my forthcoming article on the Sulaymānī and 'Alīyya Bohras in *Modern Ismaili History and Thought*.

⁶ See M. Abdulhussein, “Burhānuddīn, Sayyidnā Muḥammad,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, vol. 1, pp. 237–38. Note that the Ṭayyibī dā'ī is known both within the community and without as “the Sayyidnā” (usually written “Syedna”).

⁷ A role similar to that played by al-Mu'ayyad in the Ṭayyibī da'wa was played in the Nizārī one by Nāṣir Khusrau, a Fatimid dā'ī who refers in his poetry to his “teacher” (*ustād*) al-Mu'ayyad (*Dīwān*, ed. Mīnovī, p. 514 #242, v. 111). Nāṣir died c. 481/1088, six years before al-Mustaṣṣir (d. 487/1094), and therefore, could not have taken sides in the Musta'li-Nizār schism that occurred upon al-Mustaṣṣir's death. However, since Nāṣir had composed a great many theological works in Persian, he played a more important role in the Nizārī da'wa than the Musta'lian-

The high esteem in which al-Mu'ayyad is held in the Ṭayyibī da'wa is illustrated by the following reverent description of him, written by the early Ṭayyibī dā'ī, Ḥātim Muḥyī al-Dīn b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī (d. 596/1199):⁸

... al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (May God elevate his soul and bestow upon us his intercession and intimacy!) dā'ī al-du'āt, ark of salvation, one for whose [high station] his master testified by these verses: "O you *ḥujja* . . ." (the "reply" verses quoted earlier).⁹ This is the testimony of our master al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh (God's blessings upon him and his progeny) for him, his preferment of him over all the people of his time, and his lifting of all restrictions (*iṭlāq*) from him in all the seven climes. He did not place any hand above his hand.

Al-Mu'ayyad's lofty position within the Ṭayyibī da'wa is well established, and because of the reverence accorded to the poet, we would expect his poetry to be revered. But what about the utility of the poetry and its literary influence? Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn believes that his poetry had no literary value at all and his verses were cited solely as evidentiary verses for belief issues.¹⁰ Is this an accurate assessment? Indeed, what was the function of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* within the Ṭayyibī da'wa, and was it influential poetically?

In the Persian Fatimid tradition, the poetry of al-Mu'ayyad's student Nāṣir Khusrau appears to have been heavily influenced by al-Mu'ayyad's da'wa poetry, particularly in terms of its *tāwīl* significance.¹¹ Julie Meisami notes that Nāṣir's qaṣīdas "expound various aspects of Isma'ili thought and beliefs, often in a complex symbolic language informed by the principles of allegorical exegesis (*ta'wīl*), and feature structures based on Isma'ili number symbolism." She goes on to note

Ṭayyibī da'wa, since the majority of Nizār's followers were in Persian speaking lands.

The role of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry in the Nizārī tradition is also minimal, if at all present; the Persian tradition is stronger than the Arabic, and the Nizārīs do not seem to have preserved many Fatimid Arabic works. Nāṣir Khusrau's Persian poetry in the Nizārī (Central and South Asian) tradition occupies the place of al-Mu'ayyad's in the Ṭayyibī one.

⁸ *Tuḥfat al-qulūb*, fol. 117.

⁹ #60, p. 313, vv. 5–8.

¹⁰ Introduction to *Dīwān*, p. 176.

¹¹ Cf. Nāṣir's *Dīwān* and translations of selections by Annemarie Schimmel, *Make a Shield from Wisdom: Selected Verses from Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Dīwān*, London and New York, 2001, first published 1993; and by Peter Lamborn Wilson and Gholam-Reza Aavani, *Nasir-i Khusraw: Forty Poems from the Dīwān*, Tehran, 1977. Selections translated also by Hunsburger in *Nasir Khusraw, Ruby of Badakhshan*.

that (like al-Mu'ayyad), he "rejects both the profession of the court poet, and court poetry and its conventions . . . His poetry has a higher purpose, the praise of religion, of the Prophet's family, i.e., the Fatimids, and of knowledge."¹²

In the Arabic tradition, in the last few decades of Fatimid (Ḥāfiẓī) rule in Egypt, poets like 'Umāra al-Yamanī seem to have reverted to the earlier *dawla* poetry mode, that included a sprinkling of Fatimid theological motifs within its themes.¹³ This is because many of the Fatimid state poets, earlier than al-Mu'ayyad as well as later, were not of the Fatimid persuasion, much less dā'īs—'Umāra was possibly Sunni. Later, Ayyubid poets were influenced to a certain extent by Fatimid poetry, intermittently using Fatimid ideological motifs in their praise odes.¹⁴

It is in the Ṭayyibī da'wa, however, that al-Mu'ayyad's poetry has been most influential. Here, it is considered to be sacred poetry, a degree in importance below the Qur'ān, Hadith and the Sayings of the Imams. Its reading is believed to impart not only religious knowledge, but also divine grace or "*baraka*." As a result, it has been utilized for almost a thousand years in Ṭayyibī ritual liturgy and religious education. Furthermore, the literary and functional characteristics of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry (particularly the predominance of theological motifs and the use of the *tāwīl mathal-mamthūl* metaphor), are plainly manifest in the poetry of the Ṭayyibī da'wa. The Ṭayyibīs have continued to hold al-Mu'ayyad's poetry as a literary model, and have developed his Fatimid da'wa poetry tradition into the Fatimid-Ṭayyibī da'wa poetry tradition.

Function in Ṭayyibī Ritual Liturgy

At some point early in Ṭayyibī history, al-Mu'ayyad's poems were incorporated into its liturgy and today they are solemnly chanted in

¹² Julie Meisami, "The Persian Qasida to the End of the 12th Century: Nāṣir-i Khusrau and the homiletic qasida," *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, vol. 1, pp. 164–65.

¹³ Cf. 'Aṭā' Allāh, *Al-Ḥayāh al-fikriyya fī miṣr fī al-ʿaṣr al-fāṭimī*, pp. 252–53. See egs. of 'Umāra's use of Fatimid theological motifs in his praise of the Fatimid-Ḥāfiẓī Caliph-Imam in his *Dīwān*, vol. 1, "Introduction," pp. 23–26.

¹⁴ Ḥusayn, *al-Ḥayāh al-fikriyya*, pp. 162–72; *Dīrāsāt fī al-shiʿr fī ʿaṣr al-ayyūbiyyīn*, Cairo, 1957, chap. on "Athar al-ʿaqā'id al-fāṭimiyya fī shiʿr ahl al-sunna," pp. 35–49.

daʿwa assemblies and as part of the individual's private prayer ritual.¹⁵ These chants have specific melodies. For each individual poem, the melody depends upon the meter, and usually there are one or two melodies that are used to chant poems in any particular meter. The chanting may be either individual or collective.

The majority of the Ṭayyibīs today are of Indian origin and do not know more than a few words of Arabic. Only the scholars in the community actually understand the Arabic poems. However, since the sacred nature of this literature within the Ṭayyibī tradition means that its recitation is believed to impart divine grace to both the reciter and the listener even if they do not understand the meaning of the words, they are chanted with great reverence by layperson and scholar alike. In fact, the very term “*qaṣīda*” in Ṭayyibī terminology denotes sacred Arabic poetry, usually that in praise of the dāʿī or Imam.¹⁶ Many of the Ṭayyibīs, including those who do not know Arabic, have these verses memorized (especially the plea-for-succor or *iltijāʾiyya* verses) and recite them as part of their daily prayer ritual.

The verses from al-Muʾayyad's *Dīwān* that are regularly used in Ṭayyibī ritual come from his *munājāt* poems, plea-for-succor (*iltijāʾ*) verses, and a number of panegyrics. These poems are all generic in nature, and could be an expression of the prayers, pleas, and praises of any person holding Fatimid-Ṭayyibī beliefs. In this way, they are ideally suited for liturgical purposes. Al-Muʾayyad's description-of-self and disputational verses are not suitable for use in liturgy: the description-of-self verses are particular to al-Muʾayyad's individual historical situation, and his disputational verses are addressed in challenge to non-Fatimid Muslims.

The following are the different purposes for which various genres of al-Muʾayyad's poems are used in Ṭayyibī ritual liturgy.

¹⁵ Regarding the liturgical use of Arabic poems in the Ṭayyibī community, Sperl and Shackle remark that “among the Ismāʿīlī Bohra community, the recitation of qasidas for purposes of religious edification and glorification of the Imam remains to this day an important aspect of their communal worship, and represents a special, hitherto little studied chapter in the history of the qasida genre.” (“Introduction,” *Qasida Poetry*, vol. 2, p. 38.)

¹⁶ Cf. similar reverent attitude to poems in praise of the Prophet in other languages like Malay (H.M.B. Lubis, “The ‘Qasida’ in Malay,” *Qasida Poetry*, vol. 1, p. 363); cf. also remarks on the sacred nature and liturgical use of Arabic in India and other peripheral areas of Islam (A. Schimmel, “Epilogue,” *Qasida Poetry*, vol. 1, p. 485).

Munājāt

Four of al-Mu'ayyad's six *munājāt* are used for “*ihyā' al-layl*” (lit. “keeping the night alive”), as a means to pray and commune with God in the deep of the night (*ilāhiya dāqa 'alayya l-khunāqū, ilāhī da'awtuḳa sirran wa jahra, ilāhiya innī la'arju n-naḳāta, yā rabbi ashkū sū'a ḥālī*).¹⁷ All five *munājāt* are included in a Ṭayyibī manual titled *Khazā'in barakāt al-du'ā'*, which contains instructions for supererogatory ritual prayers (*ṣalāt al-taṭawwu'*) meant to be recited in the deep of the night.¹⁸ The manual generally contains prose *du'ās* and poetry—*munājāt*, *iltijā'īyya* verses and panegyrics—taken from various Fatimid-Ṭayyibī sources.¹⁹ The verses are included in the *du'ā's* that are the prose counterpart of the poetry *munājāt*, which are meant to be recited after each of the *taṭawwu'* prayers. Al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* are included with the *du'ās* that come after the five *taṭawwu'* prayers for forgiveness of sins (*maghfirat al-dhunūb*), granting of wishes (*qaḍā' al-ḥawā'ij*), removal of grief and cares (*kashf al-hamm wa al-ghamm*), light in the grave (*nūr al-qabr*), and the twelve-*rak'a* late night prayer (*al-tahajjud*).²⁰

The manual is used by Ṭayyibīs most intensively during the month of Ramaḍān when they pray late in the night, either alone at home or in a maṣjid congregation. *Laylat al-qadr* is the most important of the nights of Ramaḍān, and almost every single Ṭayyibī, everywhere in the world, attends one of the small or large congregational gatherings convened on this night. Al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt*, along with the other poems in the manual, are chanted collectively in the congregation led by a designated clergyman. The following is one of the shorter *munājāt* that is used as liturgy:²¹

¹⁷ #20 (p. 252, vv. 17–20, end), #26 (p. 265, 15 verses), #27 (p. 266, 13 verses), and #28 (p. 267, 14 verses) are recited in Ṭayyibī liturgy. #21 (p. 253, 15 verses) and #43 (p. 289, 6 verses) are not. Also used for liturgy is the *munājāt*-like short poem #53 (p. 301, 5 verses). Many of al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* have been translated earlier in this study. See Index.

¹⁸ Bombay, 1389. The deep of the night is the preferred time, but these *taṭawwu'* prayers may be prayed at any other prayer-time as well, and the *du'ās* may be recited at any time during the night or day.

¹⁹ E.g. *du'ā's* from *al-Ṣahīfa al-kāmila al-sajjādiyya* of the Imam 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn; *du'ā's* from *al-Ad'iya al-Mu'ayyadiyya*; *du'ā's* composed by the previous Ṭayyibī dā'ī Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn (d. 1385/1965), and a couple of *munājāt* attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (one of these <*yā dha l-ma'ālī 'alayka mu'tamadī*> cited partially in *al-Ṣahīfa al-'Alawiyya* pp. 160–61).

²⁰ *Khazā'in barakāt al-du'ā'*, pp. 35–36, 51, 68–70, 82–83, 93–95.

²¹ #20, p. 252, vv. 17–20.

O my God, my throat
is choked
and I have no strength left
[to face] trials;
I shall lay my cheek on the
ground before you in the
day,
and complain and weep
when night becomes dark—
perhaps in pity you will
deliver me from cares
and remove my sorrows.
O my God, grant asylum to
your wronged servant
by your grace, you are the
one worthy of bestowing
grace.

إلهي ضاقَ عَلَيَّ الحَنَاقُ
وَلَمْ تَبْقَ لِي طَاقَةٌ بِالمَحَنِ
سَأَفْرِشُ خَدِّي لَدَيْكَ النَّهَارَ
وَأَشْكُو وَأَبْكِي إِذَا اللَّيْلُ حَنَّ
عَسَى أَنْ تُفَرِّجَ عَنِّي الهمُومَ
حَنَانًا وَتُزِيلَ عَنِّي الحَزْنَ
إلهي أَجِرْ عَبْدَكَ المُسْتَغْنَمَ
بِمَنِّكَ إِنَّكَ أَهْلُ المِنَّةِ

Itijā'

Ṭayyibī liturgy uses three sets of al-Mu'ayyad's plea-for-succor (*iltijā' iyya*) verses. Two are pieces from larger poems, and the third is a complete short poem. The first piece is made up of six verses from the closure section of a long panegyric, in which al-Mu'ayyad addresses the Imams and begs them for succor (*yā banī l-muṣṭafā*).²² The Ṭayyibī prayer manual *Khazā'in* includes this piece along with the *taṭawwuf* prayer for the granting of wishes (*qadā' al-hawā'ij*).²³ This same set of verses is also chanted from time to time in various da'wa religious assemblies (called "*majlis*") convened for commemorative or celebratory purposes. The components of the *majlis* are many and varied, integral among them Qur'ān recitation and the chanting of religious poems. Al-Mu'ayyad's poems often form part of the ritual liturgy.

The second piece is made up of three verses from the last part of a description-of-self poem, and in it, al-Mu'ayyad asks the Imams and 'Alī for aid (*idhā²⁴ dāqa bī*).²⁵ It is recited at the beginning of

²² #3, p. 209, vv. 44–50, 52.

²³ *Khazā'in barakāt al-du'ā*, pp. 51–52.

²⁴ "*Idhā*" is the current Bohra version, meaning the same as the original "*fa'in*" (cf. all Dīwān mss. and ed.) The change was probably deemed appropriate because a conjunction (here, the *fā'*) is not needed when these verses are recited without their preceding ones of the original poem.

²⁵ #39, p. 282, vv. 13–14, 16.

every Ṭayyibī “*waʿz*,” a special kind of long sermon, that, incidentally, also stems from al-Muʿayyad’s oeuvre—his *Majālis Muʿayyadīyya* is the template for the *waʿz*.²⁶ The beginning of the *waʿz* is in Arabic and formulaic—praise of God, blessings upon the Prophet and his progeny, and verses of *iltijāʾ*—after which the actual discourse begins. Among the *iltijāʾ* verses that are always recited in the beginning section are al-Muʿayyad’s.

The third *iltijāʾiyya* poem used in Ṭayyibī liturgy is an eight-verse short poem addressed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in which al-Muʿayyad begs ‘Alī for succor and asks God to accept ‘Alī’s intercession on his behalf (*abā ḥasanin*).²⁷ A person or persons in the audience chants this poem before the start of every non-Muḥarram *waʿz*²⁸ and before the start of shorter sermons—called “*bayān*”—within various daʿwa *majālis*. Ṭayyibīs who visit ‘Alī’s shrine at Najaf also chant this poem as part of their shrine visiting ritual (called by them “*ziyārat*”).

Madīḥ and salām

Three of al-Muʿayyad’s panegyrics are a regular part of Ṭayyibī liturgy. Even though they were originally written as praise poems specifically for the Imam al-Mustanṣir, the primary addressees in the liturgy of today are the concealed Imam of the Age (*Imām al-zamān*) as represented by his dāʿī; the recitation of the verse containing al-Mustanṣir’s name is followed by a repeat recitation of the same verse with the dāʿī’s name (Burhān al-Dīn) substituted for al-Mustanṣir’s.

The first of these panegyrics is a poem containing greetings of peace (*salām*) to the prophets and Imams. It begins with a greeting to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, then Muḥammad, ‘Alī and their progeny, and then al-Muʿayyad’s *Imām al-zamān* al-Mustanṣir. It also contains some verses in praise of al-Mustanṣir, some description-of-self verses, and a plea-for-succor verse. The greeting and succor

²⁶ The *waʿz* is a three to four hour sermon of commemoration or celebration with a highly ritualized format. It is usually attended by a wide audience, often numbering in the tens of thousands, and in Muḥarram, up to two and three hundred thousand. The priest, or *wāʿiz*, sits on a throne-like dais. Its contents are theology, history, philosophy, and words of wisdom. The climax is the narrative of Ḥusayn’s martyrdom at Karbala. The sermon is extemporaneous, although Arabic texts (called *awrāq*, lit., pages) are used. The language is what is called the “*lisān al-daʿwa*,” the Bohra rendering of Gujarati.

²⁷ #45, p. 291, vv. 1–8, complete.

²⁸ An elegy for Ḥusayn is recited in its place in the Muḥarram *waʿz*.

parts of this poem are recited in Ṭayyibī liturgy at many and varied occasions, although there is no fixed liturgical ritual in which they are employed:²⁹

*Greetings of peace to the
Pure Progeny.
Welcome to their shining
lights!*

*Greetings, in the beginning,
to Adam,
father of all people, nomads
and town-dwellers.*

*Greetings to the one who,
by his flood,
overtook the oppressors with
devastation.*

*Greetings to the one to
whom came safety
in that morning in which the
flames engulfed him.*

*Greetings to the one who,
with his staff, vanquished
the tyrannical, Pharaonic,
seditious ones.*

*Greetings to the Spirit, Jesus,
due to whose mission
Nazareth gained honor.*

*Greetings to Muṣṭafā Aḥmad,
master of intercession in the
Hereafter.*

*Greetings to Murtaḍā
Haydar,
and his sons, the shining stars.*

سَلامٌ عَلَى الْعِثْرَةِ الطَّاهِرَةِ
وَأَهْلِهَا بِأَنْوَارِهَا الزَّاهِرَةِ

سَلامٌ بِبَدِيٍّ عَلَى آدَمَ
أَبِي الْخَلْقِ بَادِيٍّ بِهِ وَالْحَاضِرَةِ

سَلامٌ عَلَى مَنْ بَطُوفَانِهِ
أُدِيرَتْ³⁰ عَلَى مَنْ بَغَى الدَّائِرَةَ

سَلامٌ عَلَى مَنْ أَتَاهُ السَّلامُ
غَدَاةً أَحْفَّتْ بِهِ النَّائِرَةُ

سَلامٌ عَلَى قَاهِرٍ بِالْعَصَا
عُصَاةً فَفَرَّاعَةً³¹ جَائِرَةَ

سَلامٌ عَلَى الرُّوحِ عِيسَى الَّذِي
بِمَبْعَثِهِ شَرُفَتْ نَاصِرَةُ

سَلامٌ عَلَى الْمُصْطَفَى أَحْمَدَ
وَلِيِّ الشُّفَاعَةِ فِي الْآخِرَةِ

سَلامٌ عَلَى الْمُتَرْضَى حَايِدَرٍ
وَأَبْنَائِهِ الْأَنْجُمِ الزَّاهِرَةِ

²⁹ #41, pp. 286–87, vv. 1–10, 21–22, 28; vv. 1–12 also trans. by Hunzai in *Shimmering Light*, p. 44.

³⁰ “*Udirat*” in passive voice in ms. 5, ed., and Ṭayyibī liturgy; “*adāra*” in active voice in all other mss.

³¹ Read “*uṣātan farā’inatan*” following mss. 1, 2 & 6 (which vocalize both words with a *tanwīn-fatḥa*) and Ṭayyibī liturgical recitation. Ms. 7 vocalizes it with a *tanwīn-ḍamma*, which is not grammatically possible. The other mss. (2–5) do not vocalize it at all. The editor vocalizes it as a genitive construction, viz. “*uṣāta farā’inatin*.” Grammatically, the first reading seems most appropriate.

Greetings to you, for their
harvest
is with you, O master of
Cairo!

سَلامٌ عَلَيْكَ فَمَحْصُـوْلُهُمْ
لَدَيْكَ أَيُّهَا صَاحِبُ الْقَاهِرَةِ

May my soul [be ransom] for
al-Mustanşir—
the armies of heaven are his
victory-givers.

بِنَفْسِي مُسْتَنْصِرًا بِالْإِلَهِ
جُنُودُ السَّمَاءِ لَهُ نَاصِرَةٌ

Greetings to you, O son of
the Messenger's daughter,
greetings, whose garments are
magnificent.³²

عَلَيْكَ السَّلامُ ابْنُ بِنْتِ الرِّسُولِ
سَلامٌ مَلَابِسُهُ فَاحِشَةٌ

Greetings to you, the greetings
of a man
who has made back-breaking
calamities descend upon
your enemies.

عَلَيْكَ السَّلامُ سَلامُ امْرِئٍ
أَحْلَلَ بِأَعْدَاكَ الْفَاقِرَةَ

[Your] servant has come to
your door, seeking rain
from the abundant clouds of
your mercy.

أَتَى الْعَبْدُ بِأَبْكَ مُسْتَمْطِرًا³³
سَحَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ الْغَامِرَةَ

The second poem is a panegyric for al-Mustanşir written in the form of an address of welcome to the morning of Thursday, the day the *da'wa majālis* were held in Fatimid Cairo (*yā ṣabāḥa l-khamīsi*).³⁴ In this poem, al-Mu'ayyad extols and gives thanks for the fruits of the Imams' learning tasted by their followers every Thursday morning. This poem is often recited by Ṭayyibīs on Thursdays in a *majlis* if there is one, or privately at home by individuals. Every Thursday morning during his *dā'ī*-ship, the *dā'ī* Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn³⁵ read and explicated al-Mu'ayyad's *Majālis* (over a period of twenty years, he read all eight hundred) to a large audience of Ṭayyibīs; al-Mu'ayyad's "Thursday morning" ode was chanted collectively at the end of every session.³⁶

³² The order of this verse and the next (21 & 22) is reversed in the liturgy, probably because the verses following them (v. 23 ff.) continue in terms of grammatical person from v. 21 rather than v. 22.

³³ The Ṭayyibī liturgical version is "*mustamṭiran*" (ms. 5—all other mss. and ed. have "*mustaṭṭihan*.")

³⁴ #61, pp. 314–15, vv. 1–1, 25.

³⁵ A brief art. on this *dā'ī* is by S. Toorawa, "Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn," *ET*².

³⁶ He completed the reading in twenty years, from 1347 H to 1367 H. Cf. Ṭāhir

The third poem is a panegyric written by al-Mu'ayyad probably on the occasion of *ʿĪd al-ḥiṭr (ḥilālun badā)*.³⁷ Its first verse refers to the appearance of the crescent moon, saying that the *Imām al-ẓamān* is himself the crescent moon,³⁸ and all its twenty-two verses are in praise of al-Mustanṣir. The first eight verses after the *maṭlaʿ* begin with the word “Imam.” This poem is chanted in full by Ṭayyibīs during the celebratory *majlis* they hold on the first day of every lunar month, opening the month with the Imam’s name being considered auspicious.

“Qāfiya” Competition

Four verses are used by Ṭayyibīs to begin the Arabic-verse memorization competition “*qāfiya*” (lit. rhyme) that is commonly held in their student circles. The name is derived from the nature of the competition, in which each of the two participating teams chants a verse beginning with the rhyme-letter of the previous team’s verse. The purpose of this competition is to sing the praises of the Imams, and to provide aid and incentive in the memorization of daʿwa poetry. The dāʿī himself sometimes presides.

The four beginning verses are not part of the actual competition, but instead, they open the competition with formulaic praise. The first of these opening verses (by an anonymous poet) seeks refuge from Satan in God (*istiʿādhā*). This verse is followed by three verses by al-Muʿayyad from two different *rajaz* poems. In these verses, he takes the name of God (*basmala*) and prays for blessings to be showered upon the Prophet and his progeny (*salawāt*). These are the four verses:

I seek refuge in God from

Satan,

the refuge-seeking of one who
*is sincere in his Belief.*³⁹

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ

مَعَاذَ مَنْ أَخْلَصَ فِي الْإِيمَانِ

Sayf al-Dīn, in two of his annual Ramaḍān treatises *al-Risāla al-Ramaḍāniyya* of the years 1347 H (pp. 171–72) and 1367 H (pp. 337–38), titled respectively *Ẓubdatu burhāni ṣ-ṣidqi l-wāḍiḥ* and *Takbīru sakīnati faṭḥin mubīn*. He then began reading the *Majālis* for a second time, continuing until his death in 1385 (1965).

³⁷ #22, pp. 254–55.

³⁸ The Fatimids began and completed the Ramaḍān fast according to a set lunar calendar, and not by the sighting of the moon (cf. *Nuḥḥat*, pp. 176–77), as do the Ṭayyibīs today.

³⁹ By an anonymous poet.

In Your name, O God, O Merciful One, O Benevolent One, the tongue begins. ⁴⁰	بِاسْمِكَ يَا اللَّهُ يَا رَحْمَانُ وَيَا رَحِيمُ يَبْدَأُ اللِّسَانُ
We have taken Muṣṭafā and his progeny as our role- models, And through them, no doubt, we have found right guidance. ⁴¹	بِالْمُصْطَفَى وَالْأَهْلِ أَقْتَدَيْنَا ثُمَّ بِهِمْ لَا حَرَمَ اهْتَدَيْنَا
May our Lord bless them and give them peace, just as, through them, He has delivered us from blindness. ⁴²	صَلَّى عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّنَا وَسَلَّمَا كَمَا بِهِمْ أَنْقَذَنَا مِنَ الْعَمَى

Function in Ṭayyibī Religious Education

Al-Mu'ayyad's works have been used in the religious education system of the Fatimid-Ṭayyibīs for many centuries, probably ever since they were brought to Yemen by Lamak during the lifetime of al-Mu'ayyad himself. Al-Mu'ayyad's prose works, especially the *Majālis*, and to a lesser extent the *Ṣīra*, have been studied continuously. His poems are taught in da'wa schools, seminaries and classes, and quoted extensively in da'wa lectures and sermons. In education, the use of his works is primarily doctrinal, rather than literary.⁴³

Al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* is named in two of the five records of the Ṭayyibī religious studies curriculum pursued from the tenth (sixteenth) to the thirteenth (eighteenth) centuries:⁴⁴ the dā'ī Nūr

⁴⁰ # 62, p. 316, v. 1.

⁴¹ #1, p. 198, v. 145.

⁴² #1, p. 198, v. 152. This verse is in the singular in the *Dīwān* ("ṣallā 'alayhi . . . kamā bihī . . ." referring to al-Ẓāhir), but the Ṭayyibī liturgical version is in the plural, referring to all the Imams.

⁴³ Cf. Similar doctrinal approach to the study of Arabic poetry in Indonesia (B. Arps, "To Propagate Morals through Popular Music: The Indonesian Qasidah Mod'ren," *Qasida Poetry*, vol. 1, p. 389).

⁴⁴ Asaf Fyzee, "The Study of the Literature of the Fatimid Da'wa," in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of H.R. Gibb*, ed. G. Makdisi, Leiden, 1965, pp. 232-49. Following are the five courses whose records Fyzee discusses:

- followed by an Indian scholar, Ḥasan b. Nūḥ (d. 939/1533), who went to Yemen to study with the dā'ī (*Kitāb al-Azhār*, vol. 1, in 'A. 'Awwā, ed., *Muntakhabāt Ismā'īliyya*, Damascus, 1958, pp. 188-99).

Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn (d. 1130/1718) taught it to his students. The dāʿī Ṭayyib Zayn al-Dīn (d. 1252/1821) also prescribed it as part of the course to be generally followed by students of Ṭayyibī theology. It is categorized in this course as a *ẓāhiri* or exoteric work (placed between the works on grammar and Hadith and those on law and history), which is a possible reason for its not being registered in the other three records, for these only provide detailed information about esoteric works, merely noting in a limited and cursory manner the exoteric works studied. But because al-Muʿayyad's *Dīwān* was categorized as an exoteric work, it was presumably studied by a relatively large number of students. And within the *Dīwāns* to be studied, al-Muʿayyad's is considered one of the essential *Dīwāns* to be taught to all students (along with those of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and the dāʿī 'Alī b. Muḥammad), while others required special permission, perhaps being considered more difficult (like those of Tamīm, al-Khaṭṭāb, and 'Abd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn).

Today, al-Muʿayyad's *Dīwān* forms an important part of Ṭayyibī religious studies. At the academic level, it is taught in various private tutorials and in classes held with the dāʿī's permission. It also forms an integral part of the curriculum in the da'wa seminary al-Jāmi'a al-Sayfiyya, which is located in Surat (India) and is the largest and most important Ṭayyibī religious-education institution in modern times.⁴⁵ Three to seven poems are taught each year in the eleven-

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- recommended by the Yemenite dāʿī Ḥasan b. Idrīs (d. 918/1512) for Ṭayyibī students in a written answer to an Indian scholar, Miṣṣān Shamʿūn (*Masā'il Miṣṣān Shamʿūn*, ms. in Ṭayyibī da'wa library).
 - followed by Shaykh Luqmānjī b. Ḥabīb Allāh (d. 1173/1760) and his fellow students, studying with the dāʿī Nūr Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn (d. 1130/1718) in 1123 (1711), (*Risālat Shaykh Luqmānjī b. Ḥabīb Allāh*, ms. in Ṭayyibī da'wa library).
 - followed in the education of a son of the dāʿī Ismāʿīl Badr al-Dīn II (d. 1150/1737), (*al-Majālis al-Sayfiyya*, ms. in Ṭayyibī da'wa library).
 - prescribed by the dāʿī Ṭayyib Zayn al-Dīn (d. 1252/1837) for Ṭayyibī students (*Risālat Sayyidīnā Ṭayyib Zayn al-Dīn*, cited in full in the original Arabic in "The Study," pp. 246–48).

⁴⁵ The Jāmi'a Sayfiyya was founded by the 34th dāʿī Ismāʿīl Badr al-Dīn (d. 1085/1674) in Jamnagar in the form of religion classes. It was given a more formal structure and named the Dars-i Sayfī by the 43rd dāʿī 'Abd 'Alī Sayf al-Dīn (d. 1232/1817) in Surat. It was later expanded and reorganized along the lines of a contemporary university and named the Jāmi'a Sayfiyya by the 51st dāʿī Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn (d. 1385/1965); the number of students at the time of his demise was 326 (316 men, 10 women). It was expanded further and a branch opened in Karachi by the present—52nd—dāʿī Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn. The students today num-

year course, totaling forty-six of the *Dīwān*'s sixty-two poems (about seventy-five percent). Among these, the poems used in Ṭayyibī liturgy discussed earlier are all studied and often memorized. Two are studied twice, once in a junior year and again towards the end of the course.

At the non-academic level, poems by al-Mu'ayyad are widely quoted in public lectures and sermons. His famous plea-for-audience poem along with its poem-answer is explicated at least once during the annual Muḥarram sermons, as is the verse in which he claims to be on par with the Prophet's Companion Salmān.⁴⁶ The first verse of his panegyric on al-Zāhir <*qad 'azza dīn-u l-lāhi bi'z-ẓāhīn*> is quoted whenever al-Zāhir is mentioned in a sermon, and the first verse of one of his panegyrics on al-Mustanṣir <*majdun samā fah'wa li's-samā'-i samā*> is quoted whenever al-Mustanṣir is mentioned.⁴⁷ The "Thursday morning" poem is often expounded upon in any sermon that happens to fall on a Thursday.⁴⁸

Influence on Ṭayyibī Poetry

The Ṭayyibīs call their poetic heritage the "*adab-i fāṭimī*" (Fatimid literature) tradition,⁴⁹ which, along with the myriad cases of incorporation (*taḍmīn*) of his verses, confirms that they have consciously emulated the poetic tradition established by al-Mu'ayyad and continue to do so. Moreover, although much work remains to be done on Ṭayyibī poetry, the only two studies so far do indeed bear out the connection.⁵⁰ A positive link may thus be established between the Fatimid and Ṭayyibī da'wa poetry traditions.

ber a total of 595 (374 men, 221 women). Its graduates form a large part of the da'wa administration and religious-education system.

⁴⁶ #60, p. 313; *Uyūn*, vol. 7, pp. 73–74, #38, p. 281, v. 1.

⁴⁷ #14, p. 238, v. 1. #19, p. 249, v. 1.

⁴⁸ #61, pp. 314–15.

⁴⁹ Cf. title of an anthology of selections from the prose and poetry by the Ṭayyibī dā'ī Tahir Sayf al-dīn: *Barakāt nashr al-adab al-fāṭimī* (Bombay: Jāmi'a Sayfiyya publication, 1978), and title of an anthology of Fatimid-Ṭayyibī poetry: *Nasīm rawḍat al-adab al-fāṭimī* (Bombay: Jāmi'a Sayfiyya publication, [1960]).

⁵⁰ On the poetry composed by the dā'ī 'Alī b. Muḥammad (Yemen, d. 612/1215): Rabab Hamiduddin, *The Qaṣīdah of the Ṭayyibī Da'wah and the Dīwān of Syedna 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Walīd (d. 612/1215)*, Ph.D. thesis, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2000. On the poetry of dā'ī 'Abd 'Alī Sayf al-Dīn (India, d. 1232/1817): Abdeali Qutbuddin, *The Meaning of Love in the Poetry of Syedna Abdeali Saifuddin: A 13th/18th Century Arabic Poet in India*, MA thesis, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1995.

All the important poets in the Ṭayyibī tradition have been influenced by the Fatimid da'wa poetry tradition founded by al-Mu'ayyad. Many of Ṭayyibī poets are, like al-Mu'ayyad, either dā'īs themselves, or highly ranked members of the Ṭayyibī da'wa spiritual hierarchy. There are numerous instances of individual verses that show direct influence of theme (Imam-dā'ī focus), genre (praise focus, *munājāt*), vocabulary (Fatimid theological terms), imagery (light, Egypt), structure (some preludes, all closures), and, above all, a similar theological and *tāwīl* underpinning. The motivating impulses (religious education, merit in the Hereafter) are similar, as is the audience (Ṭayyibī followers, God, Imam and dā'ī) and the function (ritual liturgy, religious education).

Only two major changes have come to al-Mu'ayyad's Fatimid da'wa poetry tradition upon the concealment of the Imam: the addition of a new and significant object of praise in the person of the dā'ī, and, due to the inward focus of the da'wa in the absence of a state and of ambitions for one, the redundancy of proselytization;⁵¹ except for a couple of poetic heresiographical refutations of seceding groups such as the Zaydīs, the genre of disputational poetry focused on proselytization is generally absent in Ṭayyibī poetry.⁵²

When taken individually, many of the motifs used by the Ṭayyibī poets—and indeed, by al-Mu'ayyad before them—are seen to be those common to the Shi'ite and sometimes even the non-Shi'ite corpus of Arabic poetry. It is only when they are used in a systematic manner, infused with the *tāwīl* ethos, and combined with the other distinctive features of Fatimid da'wa poetry, that they may be said to be characteristic of the Fatimid-Ṭayyibī da'wa poetic tradition.

⁵¹ Cf. B.S. Qutbuddin, *The Political History of the Fāṭimid-Ṭayyibī Da'wa in Yemen*, chap. on "Politics of Survival," pp. 198–222.

⁵² An example is the *urjūza* by al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan (d. 823/1420, Yemen), titled *Qaṣīda Fī al-Radd 'alā al-Zaydiyya* (lost? *Biobibliography*, p. 168). Examples of Ṭayyibī authors of non-disputational didactic *urjūzas* (in chronological order) are 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 554/1159, *ma'dhūn* of 2nd dā'ī), *al-Qaṣīda al-Tis'uniyya fī ithbāt imāmat Mawlānā al-Imām al-Ṭayyib* (ms., *Biobibliography*, p. 140), Ḥatīm b. Ibrāhīm (d. 596/1199, 3rd dā'ī), *Qaṣīda mutadammīna li-uṣūl al-ma'ānī wa mubayyina li-uṣūl al-wujūd allatī 'alayhā al-mabānī* (lost? *Biobibliography*, p. 154), 'Alī b. Ḥanzala (d. 626/1229, 6th dā'ī), *Simt al-ḥaqā'iq* (ed. 'A. al-'Azzāwī, Damascus, 1953), al-Ḥasan b. Dā'ūd (d. 11th/17th century), *Urjūza Fī Asmā' al-du'āt* (in his *Dīwān*, ms., *Biobibliography*, p. 189), and 'Abd al-Qādir Ḥakīm al-Dīn (d. 1142/1730, *ma'dhūn* of 38th dā'ī), *Urjūza Fī Bayān mā fī al-sunna min sunan al-ṣalāh wa al-ṣiyām* (in his *Dīwān*, ms., *Biobibliography*, p. 198).

The following examples of poetry composed through the centuries in the Ṭayyibī da'wa demonstrate the continuity of the Fatimid da'wa poetry tradition. Note that many of the *Dīwāns* culled for this analysis remain in manuscript form and are preserved in the Ṭayyibī da'wa library.

In Yemen, half a century after al-Mu'ayyad's death, we find that the *Dīwān* of the first Ṭayyibī *mādhūn* (a rank in the spiritual hierarchy immediately following *dā'ī*) named al-Khaṭṭāb b. al-Ḥasan (d. 533/1138) displays elements of the Fatimid da'wa poetic tradition. In the following verse from al-Khaṭṭāb's well-known elegy for the Ṣulayḥid queen al-Ḥurra al-Malika (his milk-sister) he picks up on the recurring motif of light in al-Mu'ayyad's poems.⁵³

Our mistress! O you, who,
by the radiance of her light
has removed the many
darknesses from our eyes.

أَمُولَاتُنَا يَا مَنْ بِيَاهِرِ نُورِهَا
تَجَلَّى عَنَّا أَبْصَارَنَا الظُّلُمَاتُ

And in the following opening verse, al-Khaṭṭāb bemoans his stay in this corporeal world.⁵⁴

I am tired of my long stay
in the abode of the senses,
my imprisonment and torture
in it, my troubles.

مَلَلْتُ بِدَارِ الْحِسِّ طُولَ تَوَائِي
وَسِجْنِي وَتَعَذُّبِي بِهِ أَوْ بَلَائِي

This is strikingly similar to al-Mu'ayyad's lines.⁵⁵

My soul—by God!—is
tired of my self,
and—by God!—my comfort
from life is little.

مَلَلْتُ وَأَيْمُ اللَّهِ نَفْسِي نَفْسِي
وَقَلَّ وَاللَّهِ بَعِثِي أُنْسِي

O how good will be the day
I am set in my grave,
for that will be the day of
my escape from my prison.

يَا حَبْدَا يَوْمَ حُلُولِي رَمْسِي
فَذَاكَ يَوْمَ مُخْلَصِي مِنْ حَبْسِي

Like al-Mu'ayyad, al-Khaṭṭāb has portrayed his disillusionment with the physical world in a combined theological-personal tone. He has

⁵³ *Dīwān al-Khaṭṭāb*, titled “*al-Sultān al-Khaṭṭāb: Ḥayātuhū wa shī'ruhū*,” ed. Ismail Q. [Poonawala], 2nd ed., Beirut, 1999, p. 225; see my chap. on “Motifs.”

⁵⁴ *Dīwān al-Khaṭṭāb*, p. 212.

⁵⁵ *Dīwān al-Mu'ayyad*, #35, p. 276, vv. 1, 3.

also copied al-Mu'ayyad's opening phrase "My soul is tired" (*mallat nafsī* vs. *malaltu*) and his word "prison" (*ḥabs* vs. *sijn*).

Fifty years later came an important milestone in the history of Ṭayyibī da'wa poetry with the advent of the literary brilliance of the fifth Ṭayyibī dā'ī 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 612/1215),⁵⁶ the themes and style of whose poetry adhered closely to al-Mu'ayyad's. In addition to reinvigorating the Fatimid da'wa poetry tradition, 'Alī b. Muḥammad added an important element to its panegyric configuration, viz., praise for the Imam's vicegerent, the Dā'ī of the Age, in the very mold of al-Mu'ayyad's praise for the Imam of the Age. Just as al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* had come to form a summa for Fatimid belief regarding the Imam, 'Alī b. Muḥammad's *Dīwān* came to form a summa for Ṭayyibī belief regarding the dā'ī, and his poetry as well as his prose works became immensely significant for Ṭayyibī literature and doctrine.

The following are some verses by 'Alī b. Muḥammad very famous in the Ṭayyibī heritage establishing the high position of the dā'ī al-muṭlaq. In terms he had used elsewhere (and al-Mu'ayyad had used before him) to praise the Imam, 'Alī b. Muḥammad (before he himself became dā'ī) praised the dā'ī Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm. The *tawīl* index that is the hallmark of al-Mu'ayyad's Fatimid da'wa poetry is clearly observable here, as are the same *mathal-mamthūl* metaphors (e.g., Ka'ba = Imam/dā'ī) that al-Mu'ayyad used so persistently:⁵⁷

O proof of God, O

peerless one,

O Ka'ba towards whom

worshippers pray.

يَا حُجَّةَ اللَّهِ يَا مَنْ لَا نَظِيرَ لَهُ

يَا كَعْبَةَ نُحْوَهَا صَلَّى الْمُصَلِّينَا⁵⁸

⁵⁶ An article on 'Alī b. Muḥammad's presentation of early Ṭayyibī doctrine is by Binyamin Abrahamov, "An Ismā'īlī Epistemology: The Case of al-Dā'ī al-Muṭlaq 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 41/2 (1996), pp. 263–73. Selected poems have been published in various collections by the Ṭayyibī da'wa institutions in Mumbai and Surat, e.g., an anthology of Fatimid-Ṭayyibī literature titled *Nasīm rawḍat al-adab al-fāṭimī*, Mumbai, Jāmi'a Sayfiyya publication, 1380. A study of his poetry is Hamiduddin, *The Qasīdah of the Ṭayyibī Dā'wah*.

⁵⁷ *Nasīm rawḍat al-adab al-fāṭimī*, p. 63. The opening line of the poem is "līm lā nuḡibu 'ala t-tahqīqi dā'inā * bihī wa naḏ'ūhu bi t-ghaybi t-ladhī finā". And he goes on to explicitly emphasize the absolute representation of the Imam by the Dā'ī in the verse "We do not say that the Imam is concealed * when you, O mercy of the Merciful, are our Dā'ī".

⁵⁸ The mss. have *muṣallīnā*, but *muṣallūnā* in the nominative is grammatically correct. Perhaps *muṣallīnā* is an early corruption of the text by a copier who was unaware of the rules of metrics permitting an *ūnā/inā* rhyme.

<i>O Ḥatīm of goodness! O lamp for this Yemen! You have established [your] proofs over all creation.</i>	يَا حَاتِمَ الْحَيِّرِ يَا بُرَّاسَ ذِي يَمَنِ عَلَى الْخَلَائِقِ أَوْضَحْتَ الْبَرَاهِينَا
<i>The divine secret is you, the secret of the divine secret is you, and there is nothing for the divine secret other than you—admission suffices us!</i>	الْغَيْبُ أَنْتَ وَغَيْبُ الْغَيْبِ أَنْتَ وَمَا لِلْغَيْبِ غَيْرُكَ وَالْإِقْرَارُ يَكْفِينَا
<i>Religion is you, the meaning of religion is you, and there is nothing for religion other than you, so make all of us religion!</i>	الِدِّينُ أَنْتَ وَمَعْنَى الدِّينِ أَنْتَ وَمَا لِلدِّينِ غَيْرُكَ فَاجْعَلْ كُلَّنَا دِينًا
<i>Truth is you, the house of Truth is you, and there is nothing for Truth other than you, so take note how you expound to us!</i>	الْحَقُّ أَنْتَ وَبَيْتُ الْحَقِّ أَنْتَ وَمَا لِلْحَقِّ غَيْرُكَ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ تُفْتِيْنَا

In the above verses, we see examples of all three types of *mathal-mamthūl* metaphor used earlier by al-Mu'ayyad: the dā'ī is the Ka'ba towards whom worshippers bend down in ritual prayer (first type, the spiritual counterpart of a religious object); he is the divine secret, religion and Truth (second type, the physical embodiment of theological concepts); and he is the lamp of Yemen, the one who establishes God's proofs on earth (third type, the metaphysical quintessence of a seemingly non-religious object).

In another poem, 'Alī b. Muḥammad uses Jesus as referent, stating that just like Jesus, the Imam al-Ṭayyib too gives life to the dead and sight to the blind. This comparison is in the line of al-Mu'ayyad's frequent comparisons of his Imam al-Mustanṣir to Jesus.⁵⁹ The *tāwīl* index here is indicated by the use of the words "ignorance" and "error" in the context of death and blindness—the reality of life and of sight, according to the Ṭayyibī Dā'ī, is knowledge and wisdom.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ See "Motifs" section.

⁶⁰ *Nasīm rawḍat*, p. 60. The opening line of the poem is "*Nuhūdu l-maṭāyā hayyaja d-danīfa ṣ-ṣabbā * wa ṣabba minā l-ajfāni admu'uhū ṣabbā*".

*He revivifies with God's
permission those dead
from ignorance
and he gives sight to those blind
from error when he cures.*

وَيُحْيِي بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مَوْتَى جَهَالَةٍ
وَيُبْرِئُ عُمَيَّانَ الضَّلَالَةِ إِنَّ طَبَّاءَ

In another set of verses, 'Alī b. Muḥammad praises the Imam al-Ṭayyib and his descendents, using several *mathal-mamthūl* metaphors connected with *hajj* rites and several other key Fatimid-Ṭayyibī beliefs earlier propounded by al-Mu'ayyad in his poetry, such as the reality of the Imams as ships of salvation, springs of God's knowledge, and temples of light:⁶¹

*[They are] the origins of
the Old House, of
Ẓamzam,
Minā, Marwa, Ṣafā and
the Mash'ar,*

وَمَنَابِتُ الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ وَ زَمْزَمٍ
وَمِنًى وَمَرْوَةَ وَالصَّفَا وَالْمَشْعَرِ

*Those who suckled the milk
of revelation, brought up
in the lap
of Gabriel the Trusted, sāqīs
at the spring of Kawthar,*

رُضْعَاءُ دُرِّ الْوَحْيِ نُشَأُ حُجْرِ جِبْرِيلَ
الْأَمِينِ سُقَاةُ نَهْرِ الْكَوْثَرِ

*Descendents of prophethood
and legacy, those who
have obtained
the honor of the Imamate
and the luminous station,*

خَلَفُ النُّبُوَّةِ وَالْوَصَايَةِ حَائِزِي
شَرَفِ الْإِمَامَةِ وَالْمَقَامِ الْأَنْوَرِ

*Ships of salvation, signposts
of tawhīd, banners
of right guidance, intercessors
on the day of resurrection,*

سُفُنُ النِّجَاةِ مَعَالِمُ التَّوْحِيدِ أَعْلَامُ
الْهُدَى شُفْعَاءُ يَوْمِ الْمَحْشَرِ

*God's proofs for people, His
witnesses
among them, springs of His
gushing knowledge*

حُجَجُ الْإِلَهِ عَلَى الْوَرَى شُهَدَاؤُهُ
فِيهِمْ مَعَادِنُ عِلْمِهِ الْمُتَفَجِّرِ

*Companions of the Book of
God, the strong handle of
His religion,
descending places for His
flowing holiness*

قُرَرْنَا كِتَابِ اللَّهِ غُرُورُهُ دِينِهِ
الْوُثْقَى مَهَابِطُ قُدْسِهِ الْمُتَعَجَّرِ

⁶¹ Nasīm rawḍat, p. 65.

Temples of light, so
magnificent that
the majesty of their worth is
not comprehended by
thought.

وَهَيَاكِلُ النُّورِ الَّتِي عَظُمَتْ فَلَمْ
تُدْرَكَ جَلَالَةُ قَدْرِهَا بِتَفَكُّرٍ

‘Alī b. Muḥammad’s son, the eighth Ṭayyibī dā‘ī al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī (d. 667/1268), also composed poetry in the Fatimid-Ṭayyibī da‘wa tradition. Addressing the Imams in a verse used in ritual liturgy by the Ṭayyibīs to this day, he says:⁶²

Because of your love, our
[good] deeds if accepted
are accepted,
and sins if forgiven are
forgiven the sinner.

بِحُبِّكُمْ تُقْبَلُ الْأَعْمَالُ إِنْ قُبِلَتْ
وَيُغْفَرُ الذَّنْبُ لِلْعَاصِيْنَ إِنْ غُفِرَا

The motif (Imam’s love is reason for God’s acceptance of a believer’s deeds, fasts and ritual prayer) and vocabulary (*tuqbalu*) replicate those in al-Mu‘ayyad’s verse addressing the Imam al-Zāhir.⁶³

O elect of God, O you
because of whom
our prayers and fasts
are accepted.

يَا وَلِيَّ الْإِلَهِ يَا مَنْ بِهِ تُقْبَلُ
مِمَّنَّا صَاحَاتُنَا وَالصَّيَّامُ

The next *Dīwān* in the Ṭayyibī da‘wa, towards the end of the Yemen period, is that of ‘Abd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn (d. 886/1481), *mādhūn* of the twentieth dā‘ī and a nephew of the nineteenth, Sayyidnā Idrīs. His *Dīwān* again exhibits signs of al-Mu‘ayyad’s poetic influence, as in these verses:⁶⁴

⁶² *Dīwān* ‘Alī b. Muḥammad (sic). This verse is from a poem by dā‘ī al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad which is transcribed at the end of his father’s *Dīwān*, where the poem is explicitly introduced as al-Ḥusayn’s. Perhaps the fact that the poem is in ‘Alī b. Muḥammad’s *Dīwān* is the reason this verse and the section containing it are ascribed to him, rather than to al-Ḥusayn, in the Ṭayyibī manual of prayer, the *biḥār nī ḥafī* (*Khazā‘in barakāt al-du‘ā*), p. 100).

⁶³ #12, p. 234, v. 36.

⁶⁴ *Dīwān* ‘Abd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn, ms. in Ṭayyibī da‘wa library, 1327 H, copied by Mulla Ghulām ‘Abbās b. Mulla Amīr al-Dīn, p. 12. Note that this *Dīwān* contains 29 poems in praise of the Prophet in the form of a “*rawda*”: 28 poems each begin and end in one of the 28 letters of the alphabet (*maḥbūk al-ṭarāfayn*), and one more, beginning and ending in *lām-alif*. Many of these poems contain a love prelude, and the true beloved is asserted to be the Prophet. Cf. Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p. 176, and Zayn al-Dīn, *Risāla*, cited in Fyzee, “Study of the Literature,” p. 247.

God's prophet Adam
received, when
his foot slipped, words from
his Lord.

تَلَقَّى نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ آدَمُ إِذْ هَفَّتْ
بِهِ قَدَمٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ

The proof of Muḥammad's
excellence became manifest
in it,
that in him is salvation
from perishing.

تَجَلَّى بِهِ بُرْهَانٌ فَضْلٍ مُحَمَّدٍ
وَأَنَّ بِهِ الْمُنَجَّى مِنَ الْهَلَكَاتِ

Here, the motif (the word of God received by Adam = Prophet Muḥammad/Imam), the vocabulary (*talaqqā*, *Ādam*, *kalima*, *naḡā*), and the Qur'anic allusion (Qur'an 2:37) and interpretation reproduce those in al-Mu'ayyad's verse addressing the Imam al-Mustanṣir⁶⁵

The one whom Adam
received and was saved—
Verily, you are that word.

وَمَنْ تَلَقَّاهُ آدَمُ فَفَنَجَا
إِنَّكَ قَدْ كُنْتَ ذَلِكَ الْكَلِمَا

After the transfer of the Tayyibī da'wa headquarters to India, the first Arabic *dīwān* comes two centuries later, from the pen of the thirty-eighth dā'ī's *mādhūn* 'Abd al-Qādir Ḥakīm al-Dīn (d. 1142/1730). Not surprisingly, given the intense adherence to al-Mu'ayyad's tradition by past Tayyibī poets, Ḥakīm al-Dīn's poetry also deliberately emulates al-Mu'ayyad's. For example, in the opening line of a poem, he says:⁶⁶

May God give victory to the
party of our master 'Alī!

اللَّهُ يُنْصِرُ حِزْبَ مَوْلَانَا عَلِيٍّ

This nearly duplicates al-Mu'ayyad's line:⁶⁷

May God give victory to the
banner of al-Mustanṣir!

اللَّهُ يُنْصِرُ رَايَةَ الْمُسْتَنْصِرِ

In another poem by Ḥakīm al-Dīn, eighteen consecutive verses begin with "Greetings of peace upon . . ." the Tayyibī dā'īs,⁶⁸ which meticulously imitates al-Mu'ayyad's "*salām*" poem, in which nine consecutive verses begin with "Greetings of peace upon . . ." the prophets and Imams.

⁶⁵ #19, p. 249, v. 7.

⁶⁶ *Dīwān 'Abd al-Qādir Ḥakīm al-Dīn*, ms., Tayyibī da'wa library.

⁶⁷ #7, p. 221, v. 1.

⁶⁸ *Dīwān 'Abd al-Qādir Ḥakīm al-Dīn*, maṭla': *salāmum 'alā sādātīn fī l-yaman*.

The reign of the forty-third Ṭayyibī dā'ī 'Abd 'Alī Sayf al-Dīn (d. 1232/1817) saw an intense focus on regaining mastery over the Arabic language. He and the many scholars in his reign composed much poetry and a large number of prose works in Arabic, triggering a veritable renaissance in Ṭayyibī da'wa literature. The scholars of his age called him "*Mu'ayyad-i aṣghar*" (al-Mu'ayyad the Younger), in homage to his learning and erudition. His *Dīwān* closely emulates al-Mu'ayyad's. In the following verse, he addresses the Imam of the Age begging his favor:⁶⁹

*I came with your pure
door as my objective,
seeking the rain of favor, so
be one who rains [it] down.*

أَتَيْتُ قَصْدًا بِأَبْكَ الطَّاهِرَا
مُسْتَمْطِرَ الْفَضْلِ فَكُنْ مَاطِرَا

This verse paraphrases al-Mu'ayyad's verse addressing the Imam al-Mustanṣir:⁷⁰

*[Your] servant has come
to your door, seeking rain
from the abundant clouds of
your mercy.*

أَتَى الْعَبْدُ بِأَبْكَ مُسْتَمْطِرَا
سَحَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ الْعَامِرَا

In another verse, Sayf al-Dīn addresses the Imam of the Age in a plea for succor:

*Help me, help me, O my
Imam and my support!
Take my hand by your
benevolence, for I stumble.*

أُعْثِي أُعْثِي يَا إِمَامِي وَعُمْدَتِي
وَاخْذْ بِيَدِي لُطْفًا فَإِنِّي عَائِرُ

Here, the two opening phrases of both hemistichs are identical to the ones in al-Mu'ayyad's verse addressing 'Alī:⁷¹

*Help me, help me, O son of
the prophet's uncle!
Take my hand O my master,
may my life be ransom for
yours.*

أُعْثِي أُعْثِي يَا بَنَ عَمِّ مُحَمَّدٍ
فَاخْذْ بِيَدِي مُوَلَايَ رَوْحِي لَكَ الْفِدَا

⁶⁹ *Dīwān 'Abd 'Alī Sayf al-Dīn*, ms. Note that the favor sought is not monetary (he is, after all, addressing a concealed Imam), but rather, spiritual. A study of the poetry of this dā'ī, is Abdeali Qutbuddin, *The Meaning of Love in the Poetry of Syedna Abdeali Saifuddin*.

⁷⁰ #41, p. 287, v. 28.

⁷¹ #39, p. 282, v. 14.

The next Ṭayyibī *Dīwān* is that of the forty-seventh dā'ī 'Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn (d. 1302/1885). Its focus, like that of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, is on praising the Imam and dā'ī, and though short, it clearly shows al-Mu'ayyad's poetic influence, as in the following verse:⁷²

[*They are*] the True Imams, أئِمَّةُ الْحَقِّ أَرْبَابُ الْكَمَالِ غَدَوْا
the lords of perfection,
who have become
the ends for the people, and لِلْخَلْقِ غَايَا وَفِي تَكْوِينِهِمْ عَلَا
reasons for their creation.

The theme in this verse (Imam purpose of creation) is the same as that of al-Mu'ayyad's verse:⁷³

[*The Imams*] are God's هُمْ نِهَائِيَّاتُ كُلِّ مَنْ بَرَأَ اللَّهُ
purpose for [creating] every
person He has created,
the end[s] of His creation وَغَايَاتُ خَلْقِهِ وَالسَّلَامُ
and [its] well-being

Like al-Mu'ayyad's *ṣalawāt* (invoking blessings) closures, the *ṣalawāt*-verse is a constant segment of closure in Najm al-Dīn's poetry and in all Ṭayyibī poetry. In the following verse, Najm al-Dīn, invokes *ṣalawāt* on the Prophet and his progeny:⁷⁴

[*May*] the most exalted *salām* أَجْلَ سَلَامٍ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ صَلُّوْتهُ
from Allah and His *ṣalawāt*
[*be showered*] upon the shining عَلَى الْغُرَرِ الْأَطْهَارِ مِنْ آلِ أَحْمَدِ
pure ones from the progeny
of Aḥmad.

'Abd 'Alī 'Imād al-Dīn, dā'ī Najm al-Dīn's *mukāsir* (a rank in the spiritual hierarchy following the *mādhūn*) and designated successor⁷⁵ was an eminent scholar and the mentor of three dā'īs; he composed poetry in praise of the Imam and dā'ī in the Fatimid-Ṭayyibī da'wa poetry tradition, in Arabic and in the Indian languages Gujarati and Urdu. In a 171-verse Arabic *qaṣīda*, 'Imād al-Dīn juxtaposes a long *nasīb* section chastising a fickle beloved with praise of his dā'ī Najm al-Dīn as the true and loyal beloved, following al-Mu'ayyad's posi-

⁷² *Dīwān 'Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn*, ms.

⁷³ #12, p. 233, v. 16.

⁷⁴ *Dīwān 'Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn*.

⁷⁵ 'Imād al-Dīn died in 1271/1854 before he could become dā'ī.

tioning of the Imam as the true beloved. His motifs too are taken from al-Mu'ayyad's *tāwīl* tradition (Imam/dā'ī = sustainer of da'wa; person holding high da'wa rank = angel):

<i>If the True da'wa is sustained through him, it is sustained, without doubt, in the truest manner.</i>	وَلَوْ أَنَّ دَعْوَةَ الْحَقِّ قَامَتْ بِهِ قَامَتْ بِغَيْرِ الشَّكِّ حَقٌّ قِيَامَهَا
<i>For he is its sustainer, and among the sayings [of the Arabs] is: "Nothing sustains a thing like its sustainer."</i>	فَهُوَ الْقَوَامُ لَهَا وَمِنْ أَقْوَالِهِمْ مَا قَامَ بِالشَّيْءِ مِثْلُ قَوَامِهَا
<i>[Being] in a rutba whose consequence is the consequence of the angels, so it brought forth what it could of exaltation [of the angels].</i>	فِي رَتْبَةٍ قَدَرُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ قَدَرُهَا فَأَتَتْ مَا اسْتَطَاعَتْهُ مِنْ إِعْظَامِهَا

In a lyrical Bohra Gujarati (*lisān al-da'wa*) panegyric often recited in Ṭayyibī liturgy today, 'Imād al-Dīn again praises the da'ī with Fatimid-Ṭayyibī theological motifs (dā'ī calls towards Imam, he is part of the divine mission, the master, the beloved). In fact, in addition to panegyrics in Arabic, many praise poems composed in *lisān al-da'wa* as well as Urdu are influenced by the da'wa poetry tradition:

<i>You are a rose and tulip in the garden of the Imam of the Age.</i>	تیس باغ امام الزمان نا گل لالہ چھو
<i>You are a branch of the tree of the divine, eternal knowledge.</i>	انے فیضی ازل ناد رخت ناتیس دالا چھو
...	
<i>This 'Abd 'Alī is a servant, and you the master.</i>	آ عبد علی جھے غلام نے تیس مولیٰ چھو
<i>You are the beloved of all the believers.</i>	تیس سگلا مؤمن مرد نامن والا چھو

In modern times, the *Dīwān* of the fifty-first Ṭayyibī dā'ī Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn (d. 1385/1965) is one of the best reflections of al-Mu'ayyad's poetic heritage. In Bohra Gujarati, he has been called *Mu'ayyad sī mu'ayyad* or "the one aided by al-Mu'ayyad." In his "Poem on the

Intellect” (*qaṣīdat al-ʿaql*), he uses al-Muʿayyad’s extended simile (translated earlier)⁷⁶ stating that the intellect needs an outside source of light (divine knowledge) to perceive, just as the eye needs an outside source of light to see.⁷⁷

*The intellect is the most
sublime jewel in the
human being,
gleaming in his soul like
the sun.*

العَقْلُ فِي الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْلَى الْجَوَاهِرِ

مُتَلَالِيٌّ فِي نَفْسِهِ كَالْأَزْهَرِ

*The intellect in the human
being is in need of
light that illuminates from
the shining station.*

العَقْلُ فِي الْإِنْسَانِ مُحْتَاجٌ إِلَى

نُورٍ يُبَيِّرُ مِنَ الْمَقَامِ الْأَزْهَرِ

*Like the eye, until it is
coupled with light, with
a brilliance that illumines
darkness, it does not see.*

كَالْعَيْنِ مَا لَمْ يَقْتَرِنْهَا النُّورُ مِنْ

ضَوْءٍ يُنَوِّرُ ظُلْمَةً لَمْ تُبْصِرْ

*By the brilliance of the sun
of revelation—may its light
shine forth!—*

بُضِيَاءِ شَمْسِ الْوَحْيِ أَشْرَقَ نُورُهَا

*O human being, illuminate
your intellect.*

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ عَقْلَكَ نَوِّرْ

Sayf al-Dīn begins another poem in praise of the dāʿī Ḥatīm Muḥyī al-Dīn by exhorting the East wind to convey greetings to him in Yemen.⁷⁸

*O East wind, betake yourself
to the courtyard of the
Ḥatīm of generosity,
the sea of magnanimity, the
fulfiller of hopes, the
granter of wishes.*

نَسِيمَ الصَّبَا يَمِّمْ ذَرَى حَاتِمِ الْجَدْوَى

خَضَمَ النَّدَى مُعْطِي الْمُنَى مُسْعِفِ الرَّجْوَى

*Convey my greetings to
him, laying
your cheek in the dust of
that abode.*

وَبَلِّغْ تَحِيَّاتِي إِلَيْهِ مُعَفَّرًا

لِخَدِّكَ ذُلًا فِي ثَرَى ذَلِكَ الْمَثْوَى

⁷⁶ #1, p. 191, vv. 6–9.

⁷⁷ *Diwān Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn*, titled *Jawāhir al-balāgha al-ladunniyya*, Dubai, 1414 H, vol. 1, p. 400.

⁷⁸ *Diwān Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn*, vol. 2, p. 386. And numerous poems by him begin with “greetings of peace” (*salām*), like al-Muʿayyad’s poem #41, p. 286, v. 1: “Greetings of peace to the Pure Progeny.”

This opening paraphrases one of al-Mu'ayyad's, in a poem that begins by exhorting the East wind to convey the poet's greetings to his loved ones in Fars:⁷⁹

*O East wind, go to Fars
in the morning,
And convey my greetings
to the good people I love.*

نَسِيمَ الصَّبَا أَلِمَّ بِفَارِسَ غَدِيَا
وَأَبْلَغَ سَلَامِي أَهْلَ وَدْيِ الْأَزَاكِيا

In a verse that uses Egypt-centered imagery like that of al-Mu'ayyad's, Sayf al-Dīn declares:⁸⁰

*They are the Fatimids, the
river of whose knowledge
is the Nile, the Nile of Truth;
their da'wa is Egypt.*

هُمُ الْفَاتِمِيُّونَ الْاَوَّلَى نَهْرُ عِلْمِهِمْ
هُوَ النَّيْلُ نَيْلُ الْحَقِّ دَعْوَتُهُمْ مِصْرُ

Based on al-Mu'ayyad's earlier usage, Egypt had come to symbolize in subsequent Ṭayyibī poetry the sanctuary of the da'wa, and the Nile, the knowledge of the Imams. Interestingly, the earlier Fatimid capitals of al-Mahdiyya and al-Manṣūriyya, as well as the lands of the Maghrib ruled by them, did not become significant da'wa symbols, perhaps because of al-Mu'ayyad's role in founding da'wa poetry, and the fact that he lived in the Egyptian phase of Fatimid hegemony. The fact that Egypt is the burial place of all the pre-concealment Fatimid Imams may also play a role in this symbolization.

Sayf al-Dīn also composed a large number of *munājāt* in al-Mu'ayyad's tradition.⁸¹ The following are the opening lines of one such *munājāt*:

*O listener of prayers,
O one in whom are [our]
hopes,*

يَا سَامِعَ الدَّعَوَاتِ
يَا وَلِيَّ الرَّغَبَاتِ

⁷⁹ #17, p. 245, v. 1.

⁸⁰ *Dīwān Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn*, vol. 1, p. 394.

⁸¹ The composition of *munājāt* poetry in the Ṭayyibī tradition appears to have been sporadic upto the time of Sayf al-Dīn's dā'ī-ship. An early poet to compose at least one *munājāt* is Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Abī Yazīd, who probably lived in the sixth/twelfth century (for more information on his identity, see my Introduction, n. 37; his *munājāt* is included in the *Dīwān* of the fifth dā'ī 'Alī b. Muḥammad, towards the end. Sayf al-Dīn's father, the 49th dā'ī Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn also composed at least one *munājāt* (in the treatise composed in his name, *Ḍiyā' sirāj al-ʿuqūl*, being the *Risāla Ramaḍāniyya* of 1313 H., ms.).

*Giver of every petition.
Solver of difficulties.*

...

*O Lord forgive my sins
and erase my bad deeds
from me.*

مُعْطِي كُلِّ سُؤَالٍ
كَاشِفِ الْكُرْبَاتِ

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي
وَامْحُ عَنِّي سَيِّئَاتِي

Translated next is a substantial portion of Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn's sixty-one verse *qaṣīda* in praise of the Imams. This *qaṣīda* exhibits many of the diverse features of Fatimid da'wa poetry, and thus is a prime example of Ṭayyibī poetry composed under the influence of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*.⁸²

1. *The radiant, magnanimous
sons of Muṣṭafā are our
masters.*

*Because of them, our
exalted [banners] have
shone forth in all the
worlds.*

بَنُو الْمُصْطَفَى الْكَرَامُ مَوْلَانَا

بِهِمْ لَأَلَاتُ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ مَعَالِينَا

2. *They are the joy of
al-Murtaḍā's heart,
and sweet basil for
al-Muṣṭafā.*

وَالْمُرْتَضَى كَانُوا سُرُورَ قُودِهِ

وَالْمُصْطَفَى الْمُخْتَارِ كَانُوا رِيَاحِينَا

3. *Their father, the pure
'Alī al-Murtaḍā is
the one who
prompted Gabriel when
he faltered.*

أَبُوهُمْ عَلِيُّ الْمُرْتَضَى الطُّهْرُ مَنْ أَتَى

يُلْقِنُ جِبْرِيلًا إِذَا عَاسَى تَلْقَيْنَا

4. *They are the Fatimids,
whose clay has sprouted
from the Light, the Divine
Light—what a fragrant
clay it is!*

هُمْ الْفَاطِمِيُّونَ الْأُولَى اشْتَقَّ طِينُهُمْ

مِنَ النُّورِ نَوْرَ اللَّهِ أَطْيَبَ بِهِ طِينَنَا

5. *They were not brought
into existence but as
temples of His light,
and they were not created
but as sultans for the
people.*

فَلَمْ يُبْدَعُوا إِلَّا هَيَاكِلَ نُورِهِ

وَلَمْ يُخْلَقُوا لِلْخَلْقِ إِلَّا سَلَاطِينَا

⁸² *Dīwān Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn*, vol. 2, pp. 365–69. I have numbered the verses here for the sake of the following extended analysis.

6. *They did not become
manifest as anything but
pulpits of Truth,
and they were naught for
religion but wise men.*
7. *They are the elect of God,
they are His chosen.
Their enemies, without a
doubt, are devils.*
8. *They are the reason for
[all] beings; their Lord
brought all these beings
into being for them.*
9. *They are God Almighty's
proofs,
and the Lord of the
people is not wanting
a proof from among
them at any time.*
10. *They are the companions
of the Remembrance
they explicated
its meanings clearly,
distinctly, and lucidly.*
11. *They laid out straight
paths of Truth,
and they made just laws
for religion.*
12. *None but those who
discern their light
—for they are God's
light—are human
beings.*
13. *Their followers will have
a great triumph, for
the [Lord] of the Throne
will make their scales
weight.*
14. *Their friend will gain
their Paradise of Eden,
and will be rewarded and
awarded its sloe-eyed,
virgin houris.*
- وَلَمْ يَظْهَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ إِلَّا مَنَابِرًا
وَلَمْ يُصْبِحُوا لِلدِّينِ إِلَّا أَسَاطِينَا
هُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ اللَّهِ هُمْ اصْفِيَاؤُهُ
وَكَانَتْ عِدَاهُمْ لَا مِرَاءَ شَيَاطِينَا
هُمْ عَلَّةُ الْأَكْوَانِ كَوْنَ رَبُّهُمْ
لَهُمْ هَذِهِ الْأَكْوَانُ أَجْمَعَ تَكْوِينَا
هُمْ حُجَجُ اللَّهِ الْجَلِيلِ وَلَمْ يُحَلِّ
رَبُّ الْوَرَى مِنْ حُجَّةٍ مِنْهُمْ حِينَا
هُمْ قُرَنَاءُ الذِّكْرِ قَدْ يَتَّبِعُونَ لَهُ
الْمَعَانِي إِيضًا حَالًا جَلِيلًا وَتَبِينَا
هُمْ أَنَّهُجُوا لِلْحَقِّ طُرُقًا قَوِيمَةً
وَهُمْ قَنَنُوا لِلدِّينِ عَدْلًا قَوَانِينَا
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ إِلَّا الْمُؤْنَسُونَ لِنُورِهِمْ
لِأَنَّهُمْ نُورُ الْإِلَهِ أَنَا سِينَا
لِشِعَتِهِمْ فَوَزَّ عَظِيمٌ إِذَا لَهُمْ
يُثْقَلُ ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ الْمَوَازِينَا
وَلِيَّهُمْ يَحْطَى بِجَنَّاتِ عَدْنِهِمْ
وَيُحِبِّي وَيُعْطَى حُورَهَا الْخَرْدَ الْعِينَا

15. *Their enemies will burn,
because of what they
harbored
of enmity for them,
shortly in Hell.*
16. *Among them is Imam
Ṭayyib, who came
as an heir
to the treasures of
twenty forefathers who
went before.*
17. *His virtues—their
diffusion is redolent
among the people,
its fragrance is stronger
than rose or jasmine.*
18. *And among them is
God's elect, the
Ṭayyib of our Age,
who increased the
might and splendor
of God's religion.*
19. *He fortified the breach of
of the pure Fatimid
daʿwa,
by making streams [of
knowledge] flow.*
20. *What a Godly sun he is!
The rays of its light
that flow revivify us to
real life.*
21. *And what a Godly
master he is, a patron,
giving favor,
he endows us with his
complete, shining
benefactions.*
22. *The Imam of the Age,
the best guide and
steersman.
To God he calls us, to
Truth he guides us.*
- سَيُصْلَىٰ أَعَادِيَهُمْ بِمَا أَضْمَرُوهُ مِنْ
عَدَاوَتِهِمْ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ بَسِجْنًا
وَمِنْهُمْ إِمَامٌ طَيِّبٌ جَاءَ وَارِثًا
ذَخَائِرَ آبَاءٍ مَضَوْا قَبْلُ عَشْرِينَ
فَضَائِلُهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ يَعْبِقُ نَشْرُهَا
الَّذِي فَاقَ وَرَدًا فِي شَذَاهُ وَنَشْرِنَا
وَمِنْهُمْ وَلِيُّ اللَّهِ طَيِّبٌ عَصَرْنَا
الَّذِي زَادَ دِينَ اللَّهِ عِزًّا وَتَزِينًا
وَحَصَّنَ ثَغَرَ الدَّعْوَةِ الْفَاتِمِيَّةِ
الزُّكِّيَّةِ إِذْ أَسْرَى الْفُيُوضَاتِ تَحْصِينًا
فَلِلَّهِ مِنْ شَمْسٍ أَشِعَّةٌ ضَوْئُهَا
السَّوَارِي بِمَحْيَانَا الْحَقِيقِيِّ تُحْيِينَا
وَلِلَّهِ مَوْلَى مُنْعَمٍ مُتَفَضِّلٌ
بِإِنْعَامِهِ الْعُرِّ السَّوَابِغِ يُؤْنِسُنَا
إِمَامٌ زَمَانٍ خَيْرٌ هَادٍ وَمُرْتَدٍ
إِلَى اللَّهِ يَدْعُونَا إِلَى الْحَقِّ يَهْدِينَا

...

45. *O proof of God, O
favor [of God]
upon His creation, O
Ka'ba for those who
pray!*
- أَيَا حُجَّةَ لِلَّهِ يَا نِعْمَةَ لَهُ
عَلَى خَلْقِهِ يَا كَعْبَةَ لِلْمُصَلِّينَا
46. *I am Sayf al-Dīn Ṭāhir,
your servant, who
has come to you, O son
of al-Muṣṭafā, a
supplicant.*
- أَنَا سَيْفُ دِينَ طَاهِرٌ عَبْدُكَ الَّذِي
أَتَاكَ أَيَا بْنَ الْمُصْطَفَى الطُّهْرِ مَسْكِينَا
47. *Help us [O] elect of God,
we are your servants,
for whom one glance
from the eye of your
kindness will suffice.*
- أَعِثَّنَا وَلِيَّ اللَّهِ نَحْنُ عِبِيدُكَ
الْأُولَى نَظْرَةً مِنْ لَحِظٍ لَطْفِكَ تُكْفِينَا
- ...
52. *Make long, O my God,
the life span of Burhān
al-Dīn
who has acquired myriad
luminous and excellent
qualities.*
- وَطَوَّلْ إِلَهِي عُمُرَ بُرْهَانَ دِينِكَ
الَّذِي حَارَ مِنْ غُرِّ الشُّؤُونِ أَفَاقِينَا
- ...
55. *Muḥammad, the one praised
among all the people;
the mention of his name
suffices us the
description of his glory.*
- مُحَمَّدُ الْمَحْمُودُ فِي الْخَلْقِ كُلِّهِمْ
وَذِكْرُ اسْمِهِ عَنْ وَصْفِ عَلَيَّاهُ يُغْنِينَا
56. *We express gratitude to
our master, the [Imam]
of the Age,
the one who revivifies
and regenerates us.*
- فَنَشْكُرُ مَوْلَانَا وَصَاحِبَ عَصْرِنَا
الَّذِي هُوَ مُحْيِيُنَا أَمْتِنَانَا وَمُنْشِيُنَا
57. *Our Lord, let me and my
noble children
remain forever in the
flowerbeds of your favor.*
- أَيَا رَبَّنَا اجْعَلْنِي وَأَبْنَائِي السُّرَى
مَدَى الدَّهْرِ فِي رَوْضَاتِ نِعْمَاكَ بَاقِينَا
- ...
61. *May the God of the
world bless Ṭāhā and
his sanguine progeny
as long as rain revivifies
gardens.*
- وَصَلَّى عَلَى طَهٍ وَعَثَرَتِ الرَّضَى
إِلَهُ الْوَرَى مَا الْغَيْثُ أَحْيَى الْبَسَاتِينَا

Sayf al-Dīn's poem is unmistakably grounded in the Fatimid *tāwīl* tradition. The Imam is portrayed as the companion of the Qur'ān (v. 10), as a sun that bestows eternal life (v. 20), and as the Ka'ba for those who pray (v. 45); his clay is said to be from the Divine Light (vv. 4, 5). The consistent employment of this kind of imagery of light (vv. 1, 4, 5, 12, 20, 52) is also true to the style of Fatimid da'wa poetry. Note, in addition, the absence of poetic hyperbole in the poem, and the absence of an expression of the expectation of monetary reward—all the poet seeks is a kind glance from his Imam (v. 47).

The predominance of Fatimid theological motifs that we have seen earlier in al-Mu'ayyad's poems is evident in this poem. Among the Imamate motifs observed in this poem are the many references to the Imam's descent from the Prophet, and from 'Alī and Fāṭima (vv. 1–4). Sayf al-Dīn also makes several references to the continuity of the Imamate, and calls al-Ṭayyib the heir of the twenty Imams who preceded him (v. 16). Other Imamate motifs he uses are the numerous allusions to the Imam's titles [such as Imam (vv. 16, 22), God's elect (*awliyā'*, v. 7, v. 18), God's chosen (*asfiyā'*, v. 7), Fatimids (v. 4), master (*mawlā*, vv. 1, 21, 56); and God's proof (*ḥujja*, v. 9)]. He recounts the Imam's functions such as guiding (v. 22), making the Truth manifest (v. 6), giving knowledge (v. 21), protecting religion (v. 19), explicating the Qur'ān (v. 10), and bestowing favors (v. 21). He describes the Imam's qualities such as justice (v. 11), wisdom (v. 6), knowledge (vv. 11, 19), and moral virtues (v. 17). Sayf al-Dīn's verses that state that the Imam's followers win Paradise (v. 14) and their enemies burn in Hell (v. 15) are also reminiscent of al-Mu'ayyad's verses in the same vein. Other characteristics of Fatimid da'wa poetry displayed in this poem are the use of Qur'ānic allusions (v. 13), expressions of gratitude (v. 56) and servitude (v. 46) to the Imam, and the uniquely Fatimid closures to praise: plea for succor (vv. 45–47), the signature-verse (v. 45), and blessings upon the Prophet and his progeny (*ṣalawāt*, v. 61). Finally, and also in the Fatimid da'wa poetry style, the poem is completely focused on praise of the Imam.

Ṭāhīr Sayf al-Dīn's son Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn (b. 1333/1915) is the current Ṭayyibī dā'ī of the Age, and a living exponent of poetry in al-Mu'ayyad's Fatimid da'wa tradition. In the following verse, he uses al-Mu'ayyad's *tāwīl* motif (Imam/Imam's da'wa = ark of salvation):⁸³

⁸³ *Dīwān Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn*, named *Abhā zuḥūr riḡāḍ al-'ilm*, 1418 H, Mumbai,

*This—his da'wa—is his
ark, which
the most worthy dā'īs set
in motion according
to his wishes.*

وَدَعَوْتُهُ هَذِي سَفِينَتُهُ الَّتِي
كَمَا شَاءَ يُجَرِّبُهَا الدَّعَاةُ الْأَفَاضِلُ

In another poem, Burhān al-Dīn expounds al-Mu'ayyad's Qur'anic *tāwīl* interpretation of God's rope (*ḥabl*) to mean the Imam.⁸⁴

*He is the rope, God's rope,
so cling to it!
You will win and be saved
from the darkness of
perdition.*

هُوَ الْحَبْلُ حَبْلُ اللَّهِ فَاعْتَصِمُوا بِهِ
تَفُوزُوا وَتَنْجُوا مِنْ ظُلَامِ الْمَغَاتِبِ

Burhān al-Dīn's *mādhūn*, Khuzayma Quṭb al-Dīn (b. 1385/1940) is also an eloquent poet in the Ṭayyibī da'wa tradition. In the following verse, he declares his indebtedness for right guidance to his dā'ī (and father) Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn:

*By our Master, hallowed in
[the Paradise of] al-Na'im,
I have received guidance
towards the Straight Path.*

بِمَوْلَانَا الْمُقَدَّسِ فِي النَّعِيمِ
هُدًى لَدَيْتُ إِلَى الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ

And to his Dā'ī of the Age (and brother) Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn:

*By the Dā'ī of the Age, the
one with great merit,
I have received guidance
towards the Straight Path.*

بِدَاعِي الْعَصْرِ ذِي الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ
هُدًى لَدَيْتُ إِلَى الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ

Both verses reproduce al-Mu'ayyad's verse in which he declares his indebtedness for right guidance to Imam al-Mustanṣir:⁸⁵

*By our Master al-Ma'add,
Abī Tamīm,
I have received guidance
towards the Straight Path.*

بِمَوْلَانَا الْمَعْدُ أَبِي تَمِيمِ
هُدًى لَدَيْتُ إِلَى الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ

p. 54. From al-Mu'ayyad's poem #2, p. 200, vv. 24–35. Cf., Hadith of the Prophet "mathalu ahli bayti fikum ka-safīnati nūḥin man rakibahā najā wa man takhallafa 'anhā gharaq," *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 28, 80, *The Pillars*, p. 37.

⁸⁴ *Dīwān Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn*, p. 7. From al-Mu'ayyad's poem #2, p. 200, v. 31.

⁸⁵ #52, p. 300, v. 1.

Table B. Salient Features of Fatimid-Ṭayyibī Daʿwa Poetry.

<i>life of poet</i>	<i>poetic style</i>	<i>praise of Imam and dāʿī</i>	<i>other genres</i>	<i>motivation</i>	<i>audience</i>	<i>many poems also include</i>
• intense involvement with daʿwa • most major poets dāʿīs or other rank holders in daʿwa hierarchy • daʿwa important for poet, and poet important for daʿwa	• metaphor as manifestation (<i>mathal-mamthūl</i> metaphor): many seemingly figurative images are not figurative at all but considered to be real and true, where Imam or dāʿī is seen as spiritual counterpart of religious objects like Kaʿba, physical embodiment of theological concepts like Straight Path, or metaphysical quintessence of cosmological bodies like moon. • hyperbole virtually absent; even motifs that seem hyperbolic usually have <i>tāwīl</i> context • frequent allusions to Qurʾānic verses and concepts, as well as Hadith • Egyptian images such as the river Nile utilized extensively, usually symbolizing knowledge or grace of Imam • Images of light utilized extensively, usually signifying divine knowledge of Imam or dāʿī • conformation to some parameters of Badawī’s “secondary or Umayyad/Abbasid qasida” category, rather than “primary or pre-Islamic” one¹	• predominant genre praise for Imam and dāʿī • clear grounding in Fatimid theology • praise motifs from Fatimid <i>tāwīl</i> tradition • preludes to panegyric utilized in special Fatimid way: yearning towards the homeland, old age and youth, love, and censure of Fate all preludes anticipating praise, where Imam is seen variously as consolation for loss of loved ones, refuge in the Hereafter, true beloved, and protector from vicissitudes of Fate • special Fatimid closures to panegyric: blessings (<i>salawāt</i>) invoked upon Prophet and progeny, plea for succor verses (<i>iltijāʾ</i>) addressed to Imam, occasional signature-verse (<i>takhallus</i>), and in Ṭayyibī poetry, prayer for long life (<i>tūl al-ʿumr</i>) of dāʿī • poems originate in poet’s sincere belief in praiseworthiness of patron (<i>mamdūh</i>) based on theological grounds	• <i>munājāt</i> genre used to commune with God • disputational or instructional verse	• rendering service for Fatimid-Ṭayyibī daʿwa • religio-political: to provide religious education, proselytize, wage verbal holy war, engage in dialogue with Imam or dāʿī • religious: to earn religious merit, save souls, pray and commune with God • no expectation expressed of monetary reward from patron, contrary to norm for medieval Arabic panegyrists	• Imam or dāʿī • Fatimid followers • daʿwa enemies • possible converts • God	• statement of poet’s servitude (<i>ʿubūdiyya</i>) to Imam or dāʿī • statement offering poet’s life as ransom (<i>fidāʾ</i>) for life of Imam or dāʿī • plea for Imam’s emergence (<i>zuhūr</i>) from concealment (<i>satr</i>)² • homiletic material

¹ Badawī, “Abbasid Poetry and its Antecedents,” pp. 149–152. Details provided here on p. 145.

² Including a verse by al-Muʾayyad (#22, p. 254, v. 16), who, although living in the formal *zuhūr* period, was often excluded from the presence of the Imam.

It is clear from this examination of Ṭayyibī poetry that al-Mu'ayyad's poetry played a nuclear role in its formulation. Al-Mu'ayyad's poetry was fundamentally different from the poetry of the Abbasid poets as well as the earlier Fatimid poets, as it was permeated with the tenets of the Fatimid *tāwīl* canon and displayed radical innovations in genre, motif, style, motivation, and target audience. It came to be held as a doctrinal and stylistic model by the post-Fatimid Ṭayyibīs, who continued to use his poetry for liturgy and religious education and to compose ardently in its mold. Ṭayyibī poetry displays literary and functional da'wa characteristics and, most significantly, a deep *tāwīl* grounding, similar to the da'wa characteristics and *tāwīl* grounding of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry.

Al-Mu'ayyad, being the *bāb al-abwāb* of the Imam, was believed to be immune from error (*maṣūm*), and, as such, in a position of spiritual authority in the Ṭayyibī da'wa. His speech was considered, and is still considered to be, the final word. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad's poems are a *summa* for Fatimid dogma. They are a succinct exposition of the identity and characteristics of the Imam, allegiance to whom forms the heart of Fatimid-Ṭayyibī belief. They have become a part of official Fatimid-Ṭayyibī theology, and have fortified the beliefs of Fatimid-Ṭayyibīs through the centuries. Even individual verses of his poetry, let alone a full poem, or the complete *Dīwān*, have influenced millions of minds, and continue to do so today. A verse by the Ṭayyibī dā'ī Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn in praise of the dā'īs traces the source of the dā'īs' blessings (*barakāt*), and consequently all blessings in the Ṭayyibī da'wa, to al-Mu'ayyad.⁸⁶

*They are dā'īs who have
been aided by the flow
of al-Mu'ayyad al-Shīrāzī's
blessings.*

مِنْ دَعَاةٍ قَدْ أَيْدَتْهُمْ سَوَارِي
بَرَكَاتِ الْمُوَيْدِ الشُّرَازِيِّ

Al-Mu'ayyad's poetry is considered one of his many blessings for the Ṭayyibī da'wa. Father of the Ṭayyibī da'wa, progenitor of Ṭayyibī learning, author of the *Majālis Mu'ayyadiyya* and hence originator of Ṭayyibī *wa'z majālis*, al-Mu'ayyad was also the founder of the vibrant "Fatimid da'wa poetry" tradition that has been revered and emulated by the Ṭayyibīs for over nine and a half centuries and continues to be significant today.

⁸⁶ *Dīwān Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn*, vol. 1, p. 423.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF AL-MU'AYYAD'S *DĪWĀN*

This appendix contains a poem-by-poem chronological analysis (dating and locating) of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*. The analysis is based mostly on internal evidence from the poems themselves: references to the poet's age, to historical events and persons, and to recent happenings in the poet's life. This appendix should therefore be read in conjunction with the chapter on al-Mu'ayyad's biography. In addition, there is some external evidence that helps in the dating: a few of the poems are cited along with their contextual information within the *Sīra* (one poem)¹ and the *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* (six poems and one snippet).²

We have very little historical information about al-Mu'ayyad's life before 429 (1038), and the dating of poems before this date is correspondingly imprecise. The case is similar after 450 (1058), although we have more information about this period than about the first forty years. Most *munājāt* are also hard to date, since they contain no historical references. However, considering the tone of resignation they bear, we can tentatively put them all in the last part of al-Mu'ayyad's life, between 450 and 470 (1056–1078). Another factor that supports this dating is that the only precisely dated *munājāt* is a section at the end of a poem definitely composed in this period, in 453/54 (1061/62) in Jerusalem. The possible dating implications of al-Mu'ayyad's use of the signature-verse (*takhalluṣ*) should also be considered. It seems that most of the poems that contain a signature-verse were composed in Fars or within a few years after his arrival in Egypt in 436/37 (1045/46), but this too is a tentative hypothesis.³

¹ *Sīra*, pp. 48–54 (#62, pp. 316–22).

² *ʿUyūn*, vol. 6, pp. 318–20 (*Dīwān*, #14, pp. 238–39), pp. 325–28 (#7, pp. 221–3), p. 329 (#41, p. 286, vv. 29–30), p. 341 (#51, p. 299), pp. 356–59 (#17, pp. 245–48), vol. 7, fol. 35v. (#38, p. 281), fol. 36v. (#60, p. 313).

³ Cf. definitely dated poems that contain a signature-verse in the Fars period: #1, #3, #4, #7, #12, #13, #14, #15, #17; and in the early Egypt period: #6 & #9. Tentatively dated poems that contain a signature-verse in the Fars period: #2 & #5. There is no signature-verse in any of the definitely dated later poems.

Poem-by-Poem Dating and Locating of the Dīwān⁴

- Poem 1* حمدا لرب قاهر السلطان فرد مليك باهر اليرهان
 place Fars
 date before 427 (1035)
 basis contains prayer for al-Zāhir (d. 427/1035, vv. 151–52)
 contents disputational *urjūza*, 153 verses (pp. 191–98)
- Poem 2* بديع شكر ووسيع حمد لمبدع الكاف الرفيع الحمد
 date between 429 (1038) and 436 (1045)?
 place Fars?
 basis composed at the time the problems that led to al-Muʿayyad's exile started: reference to someone who is threatening him (vv. 155–56), al-Mustaṣṣir mentioned (vv. 146 & 148), similar style as poem 1
 contents disputational *urjūza*, 156 verses (pp. 199–206)
- Poem 3* قد محآ آية الشباب المشيب ودنا للحمام مني الرقيب
 place Fars
 date between 434 and 436/37 (1043–1046/47)?
 basis al-Mustaṣṣir mentioned (v. 57), al-Muʿayyad mentions that he is in a “house of exile” (*dār ghurba*, v. 15), probably referring to both this corporeal world and his exile from Shiraz; mentions that his goal is the “safe sanctuary” [of the Imam's court, v. 34], that Fate is his enemy (v. 62) and that he is attacked by scoundrels (v. 63). The tone of complaint is absent, and the praise of the Imam is impersonal.
 contents praise of Imams, “old age and youth” prelude, 64 verses (pp. 207–10)
- Poem 4* قال سلاه هل سلا لما رحل واستخيرا عما به الدهر فعل
 place Fars
 date 1st Shawwāl, ʿĪd al-ḥiṭr? between 421 and 427 (1030–1035)
 basis upon birth of al-Mustaṣṣir? or appointment of al-Mustaṣṣir as heir? mentions both al-Zāhir (v. 45) and al-Mustaṣṣir (v. 60), but al-Mustaṣṣir is mentioned only by his first name Maʿadd (v. 60) and not by his regnal title,⁵ and the focus is on al-Zāhir, there being sixteen verses in praise of al-Zāhir, and two in praise of al-Mustaṣṣir; praises Imam as “a crescent moon” (v. 4)
 contents praise of Imams, particularly al-Zāhir, 65 verses (pp. 211–14)

⁴ Question marks next to a place or date indicate that these are tentative. Page numbers indicate location in edition.

⁵ However, al-Mustaṣṣir is mentioned by his first name Maʿadd in other poems too (e.g. #6, p. 220, v. 24 & #7, p. 221, vv. 13 & 16, #9, p. 227, v. 24) that are clearly written by al-Muʿayyad in Egypt during al-Mustaṣṣir's reign.

- Poem 5* قال والرحل للسرى محمول حق منك النوى وجد الرحيل
 place Fars?
 date between 429 and 433 (1038–1042)?
 basis disputational tone similar to poem 1, which is definitely in Fars before 427 (1035), says there is an Imam from the House of the Prophet in Egypt (v. 56), refers to insults by enemies (v. 65) which could indicate that things are heating up for al-Mu'ayyad in Fars, says he is called a "Rāfiḍī" (v. 66) which fits well into the context of the events that eventually led to al-Mu'ayyad being expelled from Fars, refers to the Imam's da'wa being established in the Byzantine lands and in India (v. 62)—any chronological relevance?
 contents disputational, "old age and youth" prelude, 67 verses (pp. 215–18)
- Poem 6* ألا حياً أيها الصاحبان مغاني يا طيبها من مغان
 place Egypt
 date between 436/37 and Sha'bān 439 (1045/46–1048)
 basis greetings to Fars (vv. 1–2), details about his journey to Egypt (vv. 11–14), he has met the *Imam al-zamān* (v. 20), mentions al-Mustaṣfir by his first name Ma'add (v. 24), asks Imam for audience (v. 26, first audience in Sha'bān 439/1048). Alludes to Abū Kālījār, that the Imam had done for him that which even parents cannot do (vv. 29–32; *Sīra*, p. 46, and *Dīwān*, poem 62, vv. 62–66)
 contents nostalgia for homeland and description of self, 33 verses (pp. 219–20)
- Poem 7* الله ينصر راية المستنصر بالله مولانا الإمام الأطهر
 place Fars
 date 427 (1035)
 basis elegy of al-Zāhir (vv. 3–12), prayer for long life of his successor al-Mustaṣfir (v. 12)
 EXTERNAL the 'Uyūn al-akhbār⁶ says al-Mu'ayyad wrote this poem upon
 EVIDENCE: receiving the news of al-Zāhir's demise and al-Mustaṣfir's accession
 contents elegy of al-Zāhir, praise of al-Mustaṣfir, 49 verses (pp. 221–23)
- Poem 8* يا للتغرب أنت ببئس الداء فغنناك فقر والعطاء عناء
 place Egypt
 date Ramaḍān, between 436/37 and 448 (1045/46–1056)
 basis his noble condition in Fars and his humiliated state away from his homeland (*al-ghurba*) with his family far away (vv.

⁶ Vol. 6, p. 325.

- 1–14), complaint to Imam saying the poet has come to him having borne much hardship (v. 280), and it is not right that one like him would receive nothing but coldness from the Imam (vv. 27–30), congratulations on the coming of “the noble month” (v. 32, Ramaḍān?)
- contents description of self, complaint to al-Mustaṣṣir, 33 verses (pp. 224–25)
- Poem 9* غدى البين من حبا مستحيا يشد الرحال يريد الرحلا
 place Egypt
 date between 436/37 and 448 (1045/46–1056)?
 basis *nasīb* in tone of reproach to the beloved who has turned away (vv. 1–21) with a transition verse to the praise of al-Mustaṣṣir revealing the Imam as the true beloved (v. 22), Ma‘add (v. 24)
 contents *nasīb*, praise of al-Mustaṣṣir, 31 verses (pp. 226–27)
- Poem 10* اهلا بأهل وادنا اهلا بذكرهم وسهلا
 place Egypt
 date between 436/37 and 448 (1045/46–1056)?
 basis mentions al-Mustaṣṣir (vv. 18–9), loss of family and homeland (v. 6), uses tone of complaint in address of Imam (vv. 20–25), especially where he says he is thirsty at the bank of the Nile (v. 25)
 contents description of self, complaint to al-Mustaṣṣir, 26 verses (pp. 228–29)
- Poem 11* أجمل بعد المشيب التصابي وقد يميد لدى الإنتصاب
 date between 427 and 435 (1036–1044)
 basis mentions al-Mustaṣṣir (v. 34), praise of Imam impersonal and no tone of complaint (vv. 24–43)
 contents praise of al-Mustaṣṣir, “old age and youth” introduction, 43 verses (pp. 230–32)
- Poem 12* قد جرت بالسعود لي الاقلام وقضت بالمساعد الايام
 place Fars
 date 426 (1034) or 427 (1035)
 basis expresses wish to emigrate to the Imam (v. 37), addresses al-Zāhir as the Imam (without elegiac content, therefore before al-Zāhir’s death, v. 21) and praises al-Mustaṣṣir using his first name Ma‘add (vv. 19–20) without using his title, therefore it could be composed any time between al-Zāhir’s nomination of al-Mustaṣṣir as heir in 421/1030 (date from al-Maqrīzī, *Itti‘āz al-ḥunafā’*, vol. 2, p. 179) until al-Zāhir’s death in 427 (1035). Since it mentions al-Mu‘ayyad’s age as “almost forty” (v. 38), it is probably composed in 426 (1034) or 427 (1035)⁷
 contents praise of al-Zāhir and al-Mustaṣṣir, 46 verses (pp. 233–35)

⁷ Cf. discussion on al-Mu‘ayyad’s birthdate in chap. 1.

- Poem 13* الى كم عناني من هواك عناء فحسبي نحولا في هواك هواء
 place from Fars to Egypt?
 date between 435 and 436/37 (1044–1045/46)?
 basis longing for his homeland and his loved ones (vv. 4–7), no tone of complaint to Imam in praise (vv. 11–36)
 contents praise of al-Mustanṣir, 36 verses (pp. 236–73)
- Poem 14* قد عز دين الله بالظاهر مولى الانام الباطن الظاهر
 place Fars
 date between 411 and 422 (1021–1031)
 basis mentions al-Zāhir as son of al-Ḥākim (v. 2), therefore probably composed soon after al-Ḥākim's death in 411 (1021) upon a particular victory over Abbasid-controlled lands (vv. 8–13), mentions the Abbasids al-Tā'i' (d. 381/991) and al-Qādir (d. 422/1031, v. 11), therefore written during the time period that overlapped in the reigns of the Fatimid al-Zāhir and the Abbasid al-Qādir, between 411 and 422 (1021–1031)
 contents praise of al-Zāhir, 35 verses (pp. 238–39)
- Poem 15* يا انيس الفؤاد بعدا وقربا لم يذر لي الفراق عقلا وقلبا
 place from Fars to Egypt
 date 436/37 (1045/46)
 basis soon after the death of al-Zāhir in Sha'bān 428/1036 (v. 28); he is going to the Imam (v. 25), he does not want to return to Shiraz (v. 23), and mentions his past stay in Ahwaz (v. 2), the Imam is still portrayed as his succor; there is no tone of complaint in the poet's address to him
 contents praise of al-Mustanṣir, "old age and youth" introduction, 52 verses (pp. 240–42)
- Poem 16* اهلا بمن حلوا الفؤاد وان هم بالشرق حلوا
 place Egypt
 date 436/37–438 (1045/46–1046)?
 basis says the Imam is his consolation for loss of family and homeland (v. 9), that he has escaped from his enemies and reached the door of his Imam (vv. 22–25)
 contents praise of al-Mustanṣir, nostalgia towards homeland introduction, 27 verses (pp. 243–44)
- Poem 17* نسيم الصبا المم بفارس غاديا وابلغ سلامي اهل ودي الازاكيا
 place Kufa (Najaf)
 date 436/37 (1045/46)
 basis mentions his visit to the shrines of 'Alī and al-Ḥusayn (vv. 23 & 30), says he is setting a course for Egypt (vv. 32–33)

EXTERNAL

EVIDENCE: the *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*⁸ says al-Muʿaḡyad wrote this poem in Kufa
 contents description of self, description of visit to Najaf and Karbala, nostalgia for homeland introduction, 51 verses (pp. 245–47)

Poem 18 بنفسي هادي الخلق من ولد المهدي إمام زمان أوتي الحكم في المهدي
 place Egypt
 date in or soon after 436–37 (1045/46)
 basis mentions al-Mustaṣṣir (v. 2), says the Imam is his consolation for loss of family and homeland (v. 9), a hemistich of another verse (v. 10) is the same as the opening line of a poem (no. 17) definitely written in Kufa on the way to Egypt.
 contents praise of al-Mustaṣṣir and plea to him for succor, 10 verses (p. 248)

Poem 19 مجد سما فهو للسماء سما ابو تميم بتاجه وسما
 place Egypt
 date between 436/37 and 448 (1045/46–1056)
 basis mentions al-Mustaṣṣir (v. 1), description of al-Muʿaḡyad's sad state away from his homeland in the West (vv. 19–29)
 contents praise of al-Mustaṣṣir, description of self, 28 verses (pp. 249–50)

Poem 20 لقد علمت مصرها والشام وقطر الحجاز وارض اليمن
 place Jerusalem
 date between 453 and mid-454 (1061–1062)
 basis says Egypt, Syria, the Ḥijāz, Yemen, Fars and Iraq all know him (vv. 1–3), challenge to his exiler (vv. 10–14), implication that al-Muʿaḡyad has an important position at court (v. 13)
 contents *fakhr* and challenge to his exiler, the vizier Ibn al-Mudabbir, *munājāt*, 20 verses (pp. 251–52)

Poem 21 يا رب انت المرتضى ومن سواك ارتضى
 place Jerusalem
 date between 453 and mid-454 (1061–1062)
 basis mentions his exile in Jerusalem, which was between 453 and mid-454 (1061–1062), (v. 9), that he has passed sixty years of age (v. 11)
 contents *munājāt*, 15 verses (p. 253)

⁸ Vol. 6, p. 356.

- Poem 22* هلال بدى من خلال الدجنة امام زمان من النار جنة
 place Egypt?
 date ʿĪd al-Fīṭr, 1 Shawwāl, after 427 (1035)
 basis mentions al-Mustaṣṣir (v. 10)
 contents praise of al-Mustaṣṣir, 22 verses (pp. 254–55)
- Poem 23* الا ما لهذي السما لا تمور وما للجبال ترى لا تسير
 place Egypt
 date 443 (1051)
 basis condemns the desecration of Mūsā al-Kāẓim’s grave in Baghdad by the Abbasids (v. 12) and the massacre of the Shi’a there (v. 14), mentions al-Mustaṣṣir (v. 38)
 contents upon the desecration of Mūsā al-Kāẓim’s grave in Baghdad by the Abbasids, 60 verses (pp. 256–58)
- Poem 24* من ذا لجسم بالجوى مهزول وعن الكرى في طرفه معزول
 place Egypt
 date 440 (1048)
 basis addresses the Abbasid Caliph and says he should not be sorry al-Muʿayyad escaped him, for he has been slain by the sword of humiliation (v. 12), he went to his Imam (vv. 10–11), says the Abbasid vizier “Ibn Dimna” (i.e. Ibn al-Muslima) has succeeded in Qayrawān (vv. 17–19)—the reference is to Muʿizz b. Bādīs’ switching of the *khutba* in Qayrawān from the Fatimids to the Abbasids in 440 (1048)⁹
 contents description of self, 28 verses (pp. 259–60)
- Poem 25* من ذا لشيوخ للفنا حنانه دهر فانحننا
 place from Fars to Egypt
 date 436/37 (1045/46)
 basis talks of being driven out of his home, which happened just before his arrival in Egypt in 436/37 (1045/46) (couplet 12), tells himself to go to al-Mustaṣṣir’s sanctuary (couplet 21), mentions he has passed fifty years of age (couplet 4),
 contents description of self, 34 couplets (pp. 261–64)
- Poem 26* الهى دعوتك سرا وجهرا ايا مالک الملک خلقا وامرا
 place Jerusalem? Egypt?
 date between 453 and 470 (1061–1078)?
 basis tone of resignation, no other historical references that help in dating
 contents *munājāt*, 15 verses (p. 265)

⁹ Cf. *al-Kāmil*, vol. 8, p. 86. Ḥusayn notes the year of this occurrence to be 443 H, but gives no reference (*Dīwān*, notes, p. 332).

- Poem 27* الهني اني لارجو النجاة بواسع رحمة وهامي
 place Egypt?
 date between 450 and 470 (1058–1078)?
 basis says he has done *jihād* for God (v. 10)
 contents *munājāt*, 13 verses (p. 266)
- Poem 28* يا رب اشكو سوء حالي ابدا واخلص في ابتهالي
 place Egypt?
 date between 450 and 470 (1058–1078)?
 basis no historical references that help in dating
 contents *munājāt*, 15 verses (p. 267)
- Poem 29* اقسم بالله لا شريك له وان هذا لاعظم القسم
 place Jerusalem? Egypt?
 date soon after 450 (1058)
 basis mentions Baghdad victory and stopping of Ṭughril (vv. 7–10)
 contents description of self, 17 verses (p. 268)
- Poem 30* ونفس حلاها نقش توحيد ربها فنعم الحلي التاج والقرط والشنف
 place ?
 date ?
 basis contains no historical references
 contents ideological, 8 verses (p. 269)
- Poem 31* يا صاحبي جعلتما مماليقي في امان
 place Egypt or Jerusalem
 date between 436/37 and 470 (1045/46–1078)
 basis bitter tone, says even his enemies would weep for him if they knew his condition (vv. 2–6), no explicit mention of the Imam, succor is Muḥammad and ‘Alī (vv. 10–15)
 contents description of self, 16 verses (p. 270)
- Poem 32* ابحث همي دمي فيهم وفيهم خسرت شبيبتي وربيع عمري
 place Egypt
 date probably around 444 H or 447 H
 basis (a) he has lost his homeland in the cause of the Fatimids (v. 2), and he has come to them a loyal servant (vv. 3–4), that they “wasted” him (v. 5), if they had unsheathed his sword against the enemy they would see how sharp it was (v. 8)
 (b) the poem also refers to the “famine of Egypt” (v. 10), probably the one in 444 or 447 H, rather than the Great Famine between 455 and 464, for the poems of the latter period are mostly devoid of complaint, whereas the poems of the former period do contain several verses of complaint.
 contents description of self, 10 verses (p. 271)

- Poem 33* قصر يفوق الفرقدين مكانه سكن السماوات العلى مكانه
 place Egypt
 date very soon after arrival in 436/37 (1045/46)?
 basis he has been exiled from his homeland (v. 17), the sanctuary of the Imam's Presence is his family (vv. 19–20), the Imam's servants are his brothers (v. 21)—tone is still hopeful
 contents praise of al-Mustanşir, 21 verses (pp. 272–73)
- Poem 34* الا يا بني طه بنفسي انتم فؤادي بكم مغرى وقلبي مغرم
 place Ḥīra (Najaf)
 date Muḥarram 436/37 (1045/46)
 basis Muḥarram (v. 10), there is no going forth from Ḥīra (v. 12),¹⁰ says his enemies have driven him from the beautiful garden (Shiraz) where they live (v. 27), no tone of complaint in the verses that refer to his allegiance to the Imams (vv. 16–32)
 contents description of self, 33 verses (pp. 274–75)
- Poem 35* ملت وایم الله نفسي نفسي وقل والله يعيش أنسي
 place ?
 date ?
 basis no historical references except his tone of disgust with his life and with this world
 contents description of self, 6 verses (p. 276)
- Poem 36* بمعد هديت طرق معادي وله قد منحت صفو وداد
 place from Fars to Egypt?
 date between 435 and 436/37 (1044–1045/46)?
 basis mentions al-Mustanşir (vv. 1 & 4), says he continues to face physical hardships for the Imam (v. 9), that he has been turned out of his homeland (v. 10), and the Imam is his solace, his family, his property, his everything (v. 11)
 contents description of self, 11 verses (p. 277)
- Poem 37* ايا صاح قدم للرحيل الركائب بنحوب الى شيراز هذي السباسب
 place Syria
 date between Šafar 448 and Shawwāl 449 (1056–1057)
 basis mentions al-Mustanşir (v. 21), wonders when his wish will materialize, the wish towards which he has driven his camels from Egypt (v. 40) when he will vanquish the enemy (v. 41)

¹⁰ The *Sira* (p. 74) mentions that al-Mu'ayyad went to Ḥīra to visit the shrines of 'Alī and al-Ḥusayn. This word (ḥ-y-r-a) in the first hemistich of v. 12 can also be read as (*ḥayra*) meaning confusion. I prefer to read Ḥīra, as a paronomasia between *ḥayra* in the first hemistich and Ḥīra in the second.

contents	praise of al-Mustanşir, description of self introduction, 47 verses (pp. 278–80)
<i>Poem 38</i>	لو كنت عاصرت النبي محمدا ما كنت اقصر عن مدى سلمانه
place	Egypt
date	Dhu al-qa‘da 450 (1058)
basis	mentions the defeat of the Abbasids (vv. 4–5), and the crucifixion of Ibn al-Muslima (v. 6)
EXTERNAL EVIDENCE:	the <i>‘Uyūn al-akhbār</i> ¹¹ cites this poem upon al-Basāsīrī’s entry into Baghdad in Dhu al-qa‘da 450 H
contents	<i>fakhr</i> , 13 verses (p. 281)
<i>Poem 39</i>	رضيت من العيش المرير المنكدا وصيرت جسم الحرص مني مصفدا
place	Kufa (Najaf)?
date	436/37 (1045/46)?
basis	asks ‘Alī specifically, for succor (v. 16), probably composed in Najaf enroute from Fars to Egypt, a short time before his arrival in Egypt in 436/1046 and 437/1047. Says he has completed fifty years of age (v. 7).
contents	description of self, 16 verses (p. 282)
<i>Poem 40</i>	طرفني بدمعي جائد والقلب هم هامد
place	from Fars to Egypt
date	between 435 and 436/37 (1044–1045/46)?
basis	describes his sorry condition (vv. 1–16), mentions al-Mustanşir (v. 30), and says he is resolved to go to him (v. 33)
contents	description of self, 42 verses (pp. 283–85)
<i>Poem 41</i>	سلام على العترة الطاهرة واهلا بانوارها الزاهرة
place	Egypt,
date	a) soon after 436/37 (1045/46), or b) soon after Sha‘bān 439 (1048)
basis	mentions al-Mustanşir (v. 10), says he has emigrated to his protection (v. 41), says his eye has “looked upon the face of its Lord” (v. 20) = actual audience with the Imam, or a “looking” in a public setting.
contents	long <i>salām</i> upon prophets and Imams, praise of al-Mustanşir, description of self, 33 verses (pp. 286–87)
<i>Poem 42</i>	يا سائلا تسألني عني اعلم بالني رجل سني
place	Fars?
date	before 436 (1045)?

¹¹ Vol. 7, fol. 35v.

basis says he is Sunni in the real sense of the word (v. 1), probably in response to accusations while in Fars—he would have been less likely to need to defend himself in this way in the Shi‘ite Fatimid court

contents defense of his creed, 7 verses (p. 288)

Poem 43 يا من يرى مد البعوض جناحها في ظلمة الليل البهيم الاليل

place Jerusalem? Cairo?

date after 453 (1061)?

contents *munājāt*, 6 verses (p. 289)

Poem 44 برئت من المبل الاول ومن ادم بعده احوال

place Fars?

date before 436 (1045)?

basis mentions dissimulation (*tasathur*) as his creed (v. 4), and that he is not a Mu‘tazilite nor a Rāfiḍite (v. 9), fits better into the context of answering the accusations of the Sunni scholars of Fars, than into the context of Shi‘ite Fatimid-ruled Egypt.

contents defense of his creed, 10 verses (p. 290)

Poem 45 ابا حسن يا نظير النذير ولولا وجودك فات النظر

place Kufa?

date 436/37 (1045/46)?

basis is a plea for succor to ‘Alī (all verses), fits best into the context of al-Mu‘ayyad’s visit to ‘Alī’s shrine on his way to Egypt, says he has been pushed out of his land (v. 5)

contents plea for succor to ‘Alī, 8 verses (p. 291)

Poem 46 هلم الى الارض المقدسة التي بساحتها سكاكها امنوا الموت

place Mecca?,

date Dhu al-Ḥijja 446 (1054)?

basis al-Mu‘ayyad performed the Ḥajj in 446 (1054), and since the opening verses (vv. 1–8) state that the real *Bayt Allāh* is the Prophet and the Imams, it is possible this poem was composed around the time of his Ḥajj pilgrimage

contents praise of Imam (*tāwīl* of the *Bayt Allāh*), 50 verses (pp. 292–94)

Poem 47 يا صاحب الكيد كد ما شئت مجتهدا فالله يطفئ نارا انت توقدها

place ?

date ?

basis addressed to a “plotter” (*ṣāhib al-kayd*) who is trying to destroy the *Bayt Allāh*—possibly referring to a specific historic event, when the Abbasids took over sponsorship of Mecca from the Fatimids? Or addressed to Ibn al-Muslima and his attempt to force al-Mu‘ayyad and his followers to switch their allegiance from the Fatimids to the Abbasids?

contents challenge to an unspecified enemy—Abbasid?, 8 verses (p. 295)

- Poem 48* ظهر العدل في محل امام و بدى في ضرائع الانعام
 place Fars?
 date before 435 H?
 basis mentions al-Mustanşir (v. 3), refers to Abbasids as a group who try to claim the Fatimids' right (v. 10), no mention of hardships in journey or loss of homeland, and no complaint to Imam
 contents praise of al-Mustanşir, 17 verses (p. 296)
- Poem 49* حسبي حبي لاحمد وعلي حرزا لروحي اذا دن اجلي
 place ?
 date after 427 (1035)
 basis mentions al-Mustanşir (vv. 2–3), no historical references
 contents description of creed, with praise of al-Mustanşir, 5 verses (p. 297)
- Poem 50* لقد راحوا بقلبي يوم راحوا فبعدهم حمى دمعى مباح
 place ?
 date ?
 contents *nasīb*, 4 verses (p. 298)
- Poem 51* لحظتك حيث حللت عين الله من أمر في الخافقين وناهي
 place Shiraz
 date between 430 and 433 (1039–1042)
 basis mentions Abū Kālījār by his title “Shāhanshāh” (v. 11), apologizes to him for not having presented himself in his service sooner (vv. 16–17)
 EXTERNAL EVIDENCE: The *‘Uyūn al-akhbār*¹² places this poem at the time of Abū Kālījār's first months of benevolent interest in al-Mu'ayyad
 contents praise of Abū Kālījār, 18 verses (p. 299)
- Poem 52* مولانا المعدي تميم هديت الى الصراط المستقيم
 place Egypt?
 date Rajab, 436 (1045) or soon thereafter?
 basis mentions al-Mustanşir (vv. 1–3), speaks of losing his family and community (vv. 17–8), no other historical reference, mentions the month being Rajab (v. 11)
 contents praise of al-Mustanşir, 19 verses (p. 300)

¹² Vol. 6, p. 341.

- Poem 53* حسي الله وحده وعليه توكله
 place Jerusalem? Egypt?
 date between 453 and 454 (1061–1062)?
 basis says Muḥammad, ‘Alī, Fāṭima, the Imams and the Imam al-zamān are his support in his—specific?—hardship (v. 5)
 contents *munājāt*, 5 verses (p. 301)
- Poem 54* اني امتطيت ركائب الامل ضاحكة المباسم
 place Egypt
 date soon after 436/37 (1045/46)
 basis says he came to [Cairo] thinking he would be treated well there, but instead his back was broken there (vv. 8–9)
 contents description of self with description of situation in al-Mustanṣir’s court, 10 verses (p. 302)
- Poem 55* رأني وصبح الشيب اسفر من شعري وليل الاسى والهم جن على فكري
 place Fars, Shiraz?
 date between 433 and 435 (1042–1044)
 basis mentions the uproar against him in Shiraz (v. 14), Ibn al-Muslima’s arrival in the area (v. 15), that he is a captive (v. 17), his wish to leave for Egypt, but permission not granted from there (vv. 26–7), mentions al-Mustanṣir (v. 48); probably written during the seven months of his house-arrest in Shiraz between 433 and 435 (1042–1044)
 contents description of self, 51 verses (p. 305)
- Poem 56* خليلي طال البين فينا فمزقت يد البين في صدري قميص عزائي
 place from Shiraz to Ahwaz?
 date between 434 and 435 (1043–1044)
 basis mentions parting from family (v. 3), wandering through the wilderness (vv. 4–5), that he is parted from his homeland (v. 6)
 contents description of self, 51 verses (p. 306)
- Poem 57* يا امة جعلت طاغوتها الحكما لاغرو ان تجهلين العلم والحكما
 place Fars? Egypt? Syria?
 date anytime, or (a) 433 (1042)? (b) between 448 and 450 (1056–1058)
 basis castigates the Muslim community for following an idol (*Ṭāghūt*—the Abbasid Caliph? v. 1), therefore fits well into a general, non-specific, or two specific contexts: (a) in the wake of Ibn al-Muslima’s arrival in Fars, and (b) al-Mu’ayyad’s persuasion of the Syrian princes to follow the Fatimids instead of the Abbasids
 contents defense of creed, 6 verses (p. 307)

- Poem 58* تكاليف ذا الدهر عسر ويسر واحواله هي حلو ومر
 place Shiraz to Ahwaz? Jerusalem?
 date between 433 and 435 (1042–1044)? between 453 and 454 (1061–1062)?
 basis says he traverses the wilderness, has no stability (v. 11), that he is far from his homeland (v. 15), and in a company of enemies (vv. 17–18), that the Imam gave him his dearest wish (v. 22, made him *ḥujja*/dāʿī? or bāb al-abwāb? granted him audience?), mentions al-Mustaṣṣir (v. 26)
 contents description of self, 31 verses (pp. 308–9)
- Poem 59* ايا دهر كم هذا الاذى والتحامل ابيّنك يا هذا وبيني طوائف
 place Shiraz to Ahwaz, second time? Fars to Egypt?
 date between 433 and 435 (1042–1044)?
 basis he wanders in the lands (vv. 9–11), mentions one comforter who has died—the Buyid vizier al-ʿĀdil (d. 433/1042)? a brother or close friend?—expresses his wish to go to his Imam (v. 47)
 contents description of self, 53 verses (pp. 310–12)
- Poem 60* أقسم لو أنك توجتني بتاج كسرى ملك المشرق
 place Egypt
 dates soon after Rabīʿ I 450 (1058)
 basis pleads for private audience with al-Mustaṣṣir (vv. 1–4, complete)—fits well into context of the weeks following al-Muʿayyad's return from Syria
 EXTERNAL 'Uyūn al-akḥbār¹³ places this poem upon al-Muʿayyad's arrival
 EVIDENCE: in Cairo from his Syria sojourn in 450 H
 contents plea for audience with al-Mustaṣṣir, 4 verses (p. 313)
- Poem 61* يا صباح الخميس اهلا وسهلا زادك الواحد المهيم من فضلا
 place Egypt
 date between 450 and 470 (1058–1078), except 453–454 (1061–1062)
 basis the poem is addressed to Thursday morning (v. 1), refers to fruits of paradise received by [the Fatimid followers] every Thursday (v. 3), in the context of the Thursday *majālis*
 contents praise of al-Mustaṣṣir, 35 verses (pp. 314–15)

¹³ Vol. 7, fol. 36v. Tāmir incorrectly places this poem at the time of Muʿayyad's arrival in Cairo in 436/37 (*Tārīkh al-dawla al-fāṭimiyya*, vol. 3, p. 210).

<i>Poem 62</i>	باسمك يا الله يا رحمن ويا رحيم يبدأ اللسان
place	Shiraz
date	433 (1042)
basis	justification for his actions vis-à-vis Abū Kālījār until al-Mu'ayyad's first trip to Ahwaz (vv. 45–148)
EXTERNAL	<i>Šīra</i> (pp. 47–54) places this poem just before his first trip to
EVIDENCE:	Ahwaz around the time the Buyid vizier al-ʿĀdil died in 433 (1042)
contents	apology and explanation to Abū Kālījār, 153 verses (pp. 316–22)
<i>Poem 63</i>	الهي احاط الياس من كل جانب بنا وبنا ضاقت جميع المذاهب
NOTE	this poem is not by al-Mu'ayyad; it is quoted by him in the <i>Majālis Mu'ayyadiyya</i> ¹⁴ and attributed there to another person

¹⁴ Vol. 4, majlis 14.

APPENDIX B

MANUSCRIPTS OF AL-MU'AYYAD'S *DĪWĀN*

The following are the earliest extant manuscripts of the *Dīwān* that I have been able to locate. They are from the Dā'ūdī Bohra da'wa libraries in Mumbai and Surat, and these libraries house the largest and most valuable collection of Fatimid-Ismā'īlī manuscripts in the world. Produced in the Ṭayyibī da'wa, a large number of later manuscripts of the *Dīwān* are in circulation: in the collections of individuals within the Bohra community and scholars interested in Ismā'īlī literature, and a handful in world libraries: in the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London (dated 1309 AH), and in the Dār al-Kutub, Cairo, both of which have been used by the editor of the *Dīwān* (n.d.), as well as in The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London (dated 1390 AH).¹

Contents and Arrangement

- All my mss. are arranged randomly, but in the same order, except ms. 6 (1390/1970) which is arranged alphabetically. In mss. 2 and 7, one poem is placed differently than the edition or the other mss. (*ra'atnī wa ṣubḥu sh-shaybi asfara min shi'rī*—poem 55 of the *Dīwān* edition) is between (*ayā ṣāḥi qaddim li r-raḥīli r-rakā'ibā*—no. 37 in *Dīwān* edition) and (*law kuntu 'āṣartu n-nabiyya muḥammadan*—no. 38 in *Dīwān* edition).
- None of the mss. contain poem 62 of the *Dīwān* edition (*bismika yā allāhu yā raḥmānū*) which is by al-Mu'ayyad; it has been added by the editor from the *Sīra* (pp. 47–54). It is possible that this poem is not included in the *Dīwān* as it is a “letter” poem to Abū Kālījār that pleads with him to reconsider his position and reinstate al-Mu'ayyad to favor.

¹ For details of some other mss. in individual collections, see Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p. 107.

- None of the mss. contain poem 63 of the *Dīwān* edition (*ilahī aḥāṭa l-ya'su min kullī jānibī*), which is *not* by al-Mu'ayyad; it has been added by the editor from *Ĵāmī' al-ḥaqā'iq* (vol. 2, chap. 15); it is attributed by al-Mu'ayyad in his *Majālis* (vol. 4, *majlis* 14) to an anonymous author.
- All mss. contain at the end between fifteen and seventeen *qaṣīdas* and short pieces by other poets:² 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (4), al-Qā'im (2), al-'Azīz (1), al-Ḥākīm (1), al-Mustanṣir (1), al-Iskandarānī (1 poem that includes a 15-verse tree), Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Abī Yazīd (4), Ibn al-Ḥammād (1), and anonymous (2); these are not included by the editor.

The Manuscripts

A *Dated Manuscripts*

1) 1075/1665

copyist	not named
place	n.p.—Jamnagar? (written during dā'ī-ship of 34th Ṭayyibī dā'ī, Ismā'īl Badr al-Dīn who resided in Jamnagar)
location	Ṭayyibī da'wa library, Mumbai
comments	some comments in Gujarati, script either Arabic or Gujarati

2) 1120/1708

copyist	not named; names the owner on the final page as Shaykh Dā'ūd b. Shaykh Rāj
place	n.p.—Jamnagar? (written during dā'ī-ship of 36th Ṭayyibī dā'ī, Mūsā Kalīm al-Dīn who resided in Jamnagar)
location	Ṭayyibī da'wa library, Mumbai
comments	a) large handwriting, approximately five verses per page b) contains some interlinear grammatical commentary in Arabic c) very similar to ms. 7 d) contains some interlinear lexical commentary in Arabic

3) 1177/1764

copyist	Mūsā b. Nūrkhān b. Ibrāhīmjī
place	n.p.—Ujjain? (written during dā'ī-ship of 40th dā'ī Hibat Allāh al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn b. dā'ī Ibrāhīm Wajḥ al-Dīn, who resided in Ujjain)
location	Ṭayyibī da'wa library, Mumbai
comments	fragile, pages brown

² Details of poets provided on p. 12n.

4) 1286/1869

copyist 'Abd 'Alī b. Mulla 'Alī bhai Pātharyā
 place Surat, Gujarat
 location Ṭayyibī da'wa library, Mumbai
 comments red outlining of pages and red vertical dividing lines between hemistichs

5) 1340/1922

copyist Hibat [Allāh?] b. Qāsim b. Aḥsan [Ḥasan?] b. al-Marī(?)
 place Zanzibar
 location Ṭayyibī da'wa library, Mumbai
 comments a) written in at least two, maybe three different hands
 b) contains some lexical commentary in Arabic-script Gujarati
 c) partially vocalized

6) 1390/1970

copyist Mulla Quddūs Ḥusayn b. Mulla Muḥammad 'Alī b. Mulla Sulṭān 'Alī b. Mulla Sharaf 'Alī
 place Burhānpūr, Madhya Pradesh
 location The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, ms. 516 (Ar)
 comments a) copyist from a dissident group—writes “in the time of the nonexistent dā'ir” (*fī 'aṣr al-dā'ir al-ma'dūm*)
 b) contains interlinear Arabic-script Gujarati translation, very literal
 c) arranged alphabetically (all other mss. have a random arrangement). Note: poems containing a pronoun suffixed to the rhyme word are arranged under h and not under their rhyme letter.
 d) Has prefixed two outside verses to the first poem: the first verse is by an anonymous poet, the second verse is the opening verse of another poem by al-Mu'ayyad that is not in the mss. of the *Dīwān* but has been added by the editor from the *Sīra* (#62, v. 1, p. 316); the verses are the first two of the four verses that are recited at the beginning of the Ṭayyibī “*qāfiya* competition.”

B *Undated Manuscripts*

7) date 1100s? 1200s?

copyist not named
 place n.p.
 location Ṭayyibī da'wa library, Mumbai
 comments a) contains some interlinear lexical commentary in Arabic-script Gujarati
 b) contains some interlinear grammatical commentary in Arabic

- c) large handwriting, approximately seven verses per page
- d) similar to ms. 2

8) date	1100s? 1200s? paper visually very old
copyist	not named
place	n.p.
location	Ṭayyibī daʿwa library, Mumbai
comments	good handwriting

أَقِمْ لَوَانِكَ تَوَجَّهْتَنِي بِتَاجِ كِسْرَى كَلِّ الشَّرَفِ

وَنَلَّتَنِي كُلَّ امْرِئٍ أَوَّلَتْ مِنْ قَدَحِي مَنْ مَنَ قَدَحِي

وَقُلْتُ لَنْ أَلْتَقِيَ سَاعَةً أَحْبَبْتُ أَيْمُولَايَ لَنْ تَلْقَى

لَا نِ الْبَعَادُكَ أَيْ سَاعَةً شَيْبَ فَوَدَيْ مَعِيَ الْفَرَقُ

يَا حُجَّةُ

يَا حُجَّةُ مَشْهُورَةٌ فِي الْوَدَى وَطَنْ دَعَا عَجْرَ الْمَرْثَةِ

مَا عُلِقَتْ دُونَكَ ابْنُ أَبْنَاءِ إِلَّا لِأَمْرِ مَوْلَى مَقْلُوبٍ

وَلَا حُجْبًا لِمَا لَافَتْ بَوْدَنَا وَإِذْ جِئَ إِلَى الْإِلَاقِ

خُضَا عَلَى قَلْبِكَ مِنْ نَصْدٍ نَاصِدٍ مَشْفِقٍ

شَيْعَتُنَا قَدْ عَدَّوْا فِي الْغَرْبِ بِأَصْحَابِ وَفِي الشَّرَفِ

APPENDIX C

AL-MU'AYYAD'S WORKS

Al-Mu'ayyad was the author of a large number of works on *tāwīl* and translated an earlier *tāwīl* work into Persian. The work he is best known for, *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, is from the *tāwīl* category. He also authored four short treatises in the *ḥaqīqa* group, a *Šīra*, sixty-two poems collected in his *Dīwān*, and a large number of prose *du'ās*.

Most of al-Mu'ayyad's works are preserved in the collections of the Ṭayyibī da'wa in Mumbai and Surat. The Persian translation is not, presumably because of the Arabic orientation of the Ṭayyibī da'wa. Some manuscripts produced in the Ṭayyibī da'wa are currently part of the collections of The Institute of Ismaili Studies in London.¹

Bibliographical studies that contain a list of al-Mu'ayyad's works are the following:

- a) al-Majdū' (d. 1183 or 1184/1769 or 1770), *Fahrasat al-kutub wa al-rasā'il wa li-man hiya min al-'ulamā' wa al-a'imma wa al-ḥudūd wa al-afāḍil*, popularly known as *Fihrist al-Majdū'* ed. Alinaqi Monzavi, Tehran, 1966 (contains useful synopses of contents of works). Pp. 41–44, 88, 173–75, 202–203, 204.
- b) Wladimir Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, Tehran, 1963. Pp. 45–47, nos. 160–69. This supersedes his earlier work *A Guide to Ismaili Literature*, London, 1933 (Pp. 47–49, nos. 154–65), and is based, in the main, on an incomplete ms. of al-Majdū's *Fihrist*.
- c) Ismail Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature*, Malibu, California, 1977 (most recent and complete; some bibliographical details are inaccurate). Pp. 103–109.
- d) Verena Klemm, "Appendix 1: The Works of al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī," in *Memoirs of a Mission*, pp. 113–116.

¹ Cf. Adam Gacek, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies*, London, 1984, vol. 1; Delia Cortese, *Ismaili and Other Arabic Manuscripts: A Descriptive Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies*, London, 2000; idem, *Arabic Ismaili Manuscripts: The Ṣāhid 'Alī Collection in the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies*, London, 2003.

The ensuing pages contain a list of al-Mu'ayyad's works of certain authorship, followed by a list of works ascribed to him incorrectly by modern scholars; I have included details of my basis for authentication. I have also listed publishing or manuscript information, a brief synopsis of the contents of the works, and details of abridgements and studies on these works. My study is more complete than the earlier ones by Majdū^c, Ivanow, and Poonawala; a more recent list, that in Klemm's *Memoirs*, is based in part on my study of al-Mu'ayyad's works presented in the earlier, dissertation version of this book.

Works of Certain Authorship²

I have divided the eleven works that are established as al-Mu'ayyad's into five categories (in order of number of works in each category): I) Literature (poetry and prose), II) *Tāwīl*, III) *Ḥaqīqa*, IV) History, and V) Translation.

IA *Literature: Poetry*

1. *Dīwān*

PUBLISHING Ed. Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn, Cairo, 1949; reprint: Beirut, 1996.
DETAILS:

CONTENTS: 62³ *qaṣīdās* of varying lengths between 4 and 153 verses, with Fatimid religious motifs predominant across the various genres of panegyric, elegy, *munājāt*, and description of self.

STUDIES: M.K. Ḥusayn, Introduction to his edition of al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān* (Cairo, 1949), pp. 69–191.

IB *Literature: Prose*

i) *Du'ās*

2. *al-Ad'iya al-Mu'ayyadiyya*

PUBLISHING a) Lithographic print, Bombay, 1380 H, copied by the current
DETAILS: *mādhūn*, Syedi Khuzayma Quṭb al-Dīn, b) lithographic print titled *al-Tuḥfa al-du'ā'iyya al-fakhīma*, Bombay, 1412 H.

² Out of these, there is one *tāwīl* work (*al-Masā'il al-sab'un fī al-tāwīl*, #7) that is not established beyond doubt as al-Mu'ayyad's, but is in all likelihood his.

³ #63 in *Dīwān* is actually not of al-Mu'ayyad's composition, but quoted by him in the *Majālīs*, and attributed to "one of the truthful, sincere ones . . ." (vol. 4, majlis 14).

- CONTENTS: 29 *du'ās* of varying lengths between one and 23 pages (a). Prayers addressed to God, on various religious feast days such as the day of 'Arafa, and others more general. Motifs mostly Fatimid esoteric in nature.
- AUTHENTICATION: a) Some are of al-Mu'ayyad's authorship, and are quoted and attributed to al-Mu'ayyad in later works.⁴
b) Some are not by al-Mu'ayyad, and are quoted and explicitly attributed to an anonymous author, "one of the truthful ones" (*ba'd al-sādiqīn*) by al-Mu'ayyad himself at various places in his *Majālis*.⁵
- COMMENTS: Not listed by any modern bibliography

3. *al-Musabbah al-sab'*

- PUBLISHING: Seven *du'ās* included in a) *Ghamām al-raḥma* (Bohra manual for daily prayers, including prayers for the seven days of the week), Bombay, n.d., b) *Ṣaḥīfat al-ṣalāt al-yamaniyya*, ms., Ṭayyibī da'wa library, and c) collected separately, ms. (*Biobibliography*, p. 109, no. 16).
- DETAILS:
- CONTENTS: 7 *du'ās* for the 7 days of the week.
- AUTHENTICATION: Attributed to al-Mu'ayyad in all the above sources

ii) *Correspondence*

4. *With Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī*

- PUBLISHING: a) *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, vol. 6, *majālis* 13–18.
- DETAILS: b) *Kitāb Irshād al-arīb ilā ma'rīfat al-adīb* (known as *Mu'jam al-Uḍabā'*) by Yāqūt al-Rūmī (1179–1229), ed. D.S. Margoliouth, New Delhi, 1982, vol. 1, pp. 178–214. Includes al-Ma'arrī's responses.
c) Abridged version with commentary in *Ĵāmi' al-ḥaqā'iq* by the Ṭayyibī dā'ī Ḥatīm b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī, vol. 2, chap. 13, pp. 227–41.
d) *Kitāb al-Azhār* by Ḥasan b. Nūḥ al-Bharūchī (939/1533), vol. 3, ms. in Ṭayyibī da'wa library.
- CONTENTS: Debate on the invalidity of vegetarianism and God's merciful nature. Al-Ma'arrī was a "humane" vegetarian.

⁴ *Al-Ad'ya al-Mu'ayyadiyya: du'ā' #2*, quoted in *Kitāb Maḥāṭih al-kunūz* or *Maḥāṭih al-ni'ma* by the Ṭayyibī dā'ī Ḥatīm b. Ibrāhīm (*Fihrist*, p. 272); #17 in *Risāla al-Nukhab al-multaqi'a* by the later counter-dā'ī Sulaymān b. Ḥasan, chap. 2 (*Fihrist*, p. 156); #25 in *Kitāb Diyā' al-naṣā'ir wa zubdat al-sarā'ir* by the Ṭayyibī dā'ī Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *mas'ala* #6 (*Fihrist*, pp. 239–41).

⁵ *Al-Ad'ya al-Mu'ayyadiyya: du'ā' #1* in *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyya* vol. 4, *majlis* 25, #6, in vol. 6, *majlis* 12; *du'ā' #10* in vol. 4, *majlis* 43; #18 in vol. 4, *majlis* 14; #19 in vol. 4, *majlis* 24; #20 in vol. 4, *majlis* 22.

- STUDIES: a) Iḥsān ‘Abbās, *Rasā’il Abī al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī*, vol. 1, Beirut & Cairo, 1982, pp. 83–98, text of *Rasā’il* pp. 99–140.
- TRANSLATIONS: English, D.S. Margoliouth, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1902), pp. 289–332.

II *Tāwīl*

5. *al-Majālis al-Mu’ayyadiyya (major work)*

- PUBLISHING Vol. 1, ed. Ḥatīm Ḥamīd al-Dīn, Bombay, 1975; ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Beirut, 1974; vol. 2, ed. Ḥamīd al-Dīn, Oxford, 1986; vol. 3, ed. Ghālib, Beirut, 1984; vols. 4–8, mss. in Ṭayyibī da‘wa library, Bombay (note: Ḥamīd al-Dīn’s eds. are more accurate).
- DETAILS:
- CONTENTS: 800 *majālis* in 8 vols. of 100 *majālis* each, called *al-mi’a al-ūlā*, *al-mi’a al-thāniya*, and so on, on various topics of the Fatimid esoteric sciences, with esoteric (*tāwīl*) interpretation of Qur’ānic verses and Ḥadīth.
- ABRIDGEMENTS: a) *Jāmi’ al-ḥaqā’iq*, abridgement of the complete *Majālis Mu’ayyadiyya* in 2 parts by the Ṭayyibī dā’ī Ḥatīm b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥamidī arranged according to topic (vol. 1 ms. in Ṭayyibī da‘wa library, copyist not named, n.d., n.p.; vol. 2 ms. in Ṭayyibī da‘wa library, copyist not named, 1358, n.p.)
- b) An additional abridgement by the same dā’ī of the first volume (*al-Mi’a al-ūlā*) of the *Majālis*, follows the arrangement of the original *Majālis* and only omits al-Mu’ayyad’s formulaic introductions and conclusions (*al-Majālis al-Mu’ayyadiyya li al-Mu’ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Abd al-Nāṣir, Cairo, 1975).
- TRANSLATIONS: Vol. 1, parts of *majlis* 1–20 trans. by Jawad Muscati and Khan Bahadur Moulvi, titled *Life and Lectures of the Grand Missionary al-Mu’ayyad-fid-dīn al-Shirazi*, Karachi, 1950.

6. *al-Mas’ala wa al-jawāb*

- MANUSCRIPT Ms. in Ṭayyibī da‘wa library, copyist ‘Alī b. Luqmānjī b.
- DETAILS: Aḥmad Sakhī Rokariyā of Dohnūj, n.p., 1309, 2 vols.
- AUTHENTICATION: a) al-Mu’ayyad is named as the author in the text of the ms.⁶
- b) excerpts are quoted in the following works and ascribed to al-Mu’ayyad therein: (i) *Majmū’ al-ḥaqā’iq*, by an anonymous Ṭayyibī author,⁷ and (ii) *Majmū’ al-tarbiya* by the

⁶ The line immediately preceding the text of the work reads: “*min kitāb al-mas’ala wa al-jawāb li-sayyidīnā al-mu’ayyad fī al-dīn a’la allāhu qudsahū.*”

⁷ Chap. 7, *Fihrist*, p. 260.

Ṭayyibī *mādhūn* Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir al-Ḥārithī (d. 548/1188).⁸ Note that Abbas Hamdani considers this work of al-Muʿayyad to be of doubtful authorship,⁹ perhaps because Ivanow ascribes it to Kirmānī or ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī.¹⁰

COMMENTS:

A colophon on the title page of the ms. ascribes *al-Masʿala* to al-Muʿayyad or to the Yemenite dāʿī ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī (d. 459/1076).¹¹ The writer of the colophon is probably confusing this work with another work that has a similar title, viz., *al-Masāʿil al-sabʿūn fī al-tāwīl* (see next work in list).

7. *al-Masāʿil al-sabʿūn fī al-tāwīl*

MANUSCRIPT

Ms. in Ṭayyibī daʿwa library, copyist Aḥmad b. Mulla ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Sunbulī, 1339, Baula, Nasik District, Maharashtra, India.

DETAILS:

AUTHENTICATION:

This work is probably by al-Muʿayyad, because although the author's name is not mentioned in the ms. copy, the formulaic opening *ṣalawāt* paragraph of the text names only al-Muʿayyad's Imam of the Age (*Imām al-zamān*) al-Mustaṣṣir specifically among the Imams. Note that Poonawala mentions that a ms. of this work is in a private collection, and the work is ascribed therein to al-Muʿayyad or ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī.

III *Ḥaqīqa* (Short treatises)

8. *Sharḥ al-Maʿād* (or *Kitāb al-Maʿād*, or *Risālat al-Maʿād*)

MANUSCRIPT

Ms. in Ṭayyibī daʿwa library, copyist not named, n.d., but copied during dāʿī-ship of the 48th Ṭayyibī dāʿī ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Ḥusām al-Dīn, who was dāʿī from 1302/1885 to 1308/1891, n.p.

DETAILS:

CONTENTS:

ḥaqīqa topics

AUTHENTICATION:

the ms. does not name an author, but excerpts are quoted in i) *Kitāb Ḍiyāʾ al-albāb* by the 5th Ṭayyibī dāʿī ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 612/1215) that names al-Muʿayyad as the author of *Kitāb al-Maʿād*,¹² ii) *Kitāb Ḍiyāʾ*

⁸ *Fihrist*, p. 130.

⁹ "The Fatimid Daʿī Al-Muʿayyad," p. 46.

¹⁰ *Ismailī Literature*, pp. 47–48, no. 170.

¹¹ The colophon reads: "*kitāb al-masʿala wa al-jawāb mim mā suʿila ʿanhu fa-ajāb al-dāʿī ʿalī ibn muḥammad al-ṣulayḥī aw sayyidinā al-muʿayyad fī al-dīn al-shūrāzī ʿla allāhu qudsahū.*"

¹² Ms. in Ṭayyibī daʿwa library, n.d., n.p., Question #13, p. 128 ff.: "*mā dhakara sayyidunā al-muʿayyad fī kitāb maʿādihī ḥaythu qāla . . .*"

al-baṣāʾir wa ḡubda al-sarāʾir by the 19th Ṭayyibī dāʿī Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn (d. 872/1468),¹³ and iii) *Majmūʿ al-ḥaqāʾiq* by an anonymous Ṭayyibī author.¹⁴

9. *al-Ibtidāʾ wa al-intihāʾ*

MANUSCRIPT

- DETAILS: Ms. in Ṭayyibī daʿwa library.
 CONTENTS: *ḥaqīqa* topics
 AUTHENTICATION: excerpt quoted in *Kitāb Ḍiyāʾ al-albāb* and ascribed to al-Muʾayyad by the 5th Ṭayyibī dāʿī ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 612/1215).¹⁵
 COMMENTS: There are two other Ṭayyibī-Fatimid works titled *al-Ibtidāʾ wa al-intihāʾ*: one is ascribed to Mufaḍḍal b. ʿAmr, a Companion of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, as narrated by Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Naḍr al-Qānīʿi,¹⁶ and the second is ascribed to dāʿī Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn.¹⁷

IV History

10. *al-Sīra al-Muʾayyadīyya*

- PUBLISHING: Ed. Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn, Cairo, 1949 (older but more accurate ed.); ed. ʿĀrif Tāmīr titled *Mudhakkirāt dāʿī al-duʿāt*, Beirut, 1982.
 DETAILS:
 CONTENTS: A political autobiography of al-Muʾayyad's career as a dāʿī in the service of the Fatimids, first in Fars and later in Cairo, including his sojourn in Syria during the Basāsīrī expedition. It starts in 429/1038 when al-Muʾayyad was age forty-three and ends in 450/1058 when he was age sixty-four. It seems to have been written at a single point in time—in Syria?—rather than as a diary of daily events (mentions al-Yāzūrī—vizier from 442 to 450—as the current vizier, *Sīra*, pp. 86–87). There is a ten-page section at the end that begins with a new *Bismillāh*; this seems to have been added later, soon after al-Muʾayyad's return to Cairo from Syria, that chronicles the Baghdad victory and details of al-Muʾayyad's return.
 STUDIES: a) Verena Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission: The Ismailī Scholar, Statesman and Poet al-Muʾayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī* (London & New York, 2003).

¹³ Question #8, from *Fihrist*, p. 242.

¹⁴ Chaps. 5 & 6, from *Fihrist*, pp. 259–60.

¹⁵ Ms. in Ṭayyibī daʿwa library, question #4, pp. 42–43: “*dhakara sayyidunā al-muʾayyad aʿlā allāhu qudsahū fi kitāb al-ibtidāʾ wa al-intihāʾ* . . .”

¹⁶ Ms. in Ṭayyibī daʿwa library, copyist ʿAbd al-Qayyūm b. Shaykh Raḥmat Allāh Aurangabadi, 1344 H, Jamnagar.

¹⁷ *Al-Fihrist*, p. 269.

- b) Verena Klemm, *Die Mission des fātimidischen Agenten al-Muʿayyad fī d-dīn in Šīrāz* (Frankfurt, 1991).
 c) Abbas Hamdani, *The Sira of al-Muʿayyad fī d-Dīn ash-Shīrāzī* (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1950).
 d) Brief introduction and excerpt trans. Joeseeph Lowry in Dwight Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2001), pp. 132–44.

V Translation

11. *Bunyād-i tāwīl*

MANUSCRIPT	Ms. in The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, Zāhid ʿAlī Collection, cat. no. B1/929.
DETAILS:	
CONTENTS:	Persian translation of <i>Asās al-tāwīl</i> by al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān b. Muḥammad (d. 363/974). Fatimid esoteric (<i>tāwīl</i>) interpretation of the stories of the prophets in the Qurʾān.
AUTHENTICATION:	a) The copyist's opening paragraph names al-Muʿayyad as the translator. ¹⁸ b) The opening line of the text quotes al-Muʿayyad praising the book. ¹⁹ c) The translator's (al-Muʿayyad's) introduction names his Imam of the Age al-Mustaṣṣir as having suggested the Persian translation. ²⁰ Note that Ivanow incorrectly considers this to be a very late Indian translation, based on the style. ²¹

Incorrect Ascriptions

There are several works that have been incorrectly ascribed to al-Muʿayyad by modern scholars. These may be divided into three categories: A) Extracts from al-Muʿayyad's works named as independent works, B) works definitely by other authors, and C) works probably by other authors:

¹⁸ “*hādhā kitāb asās al-tāwīl al-mutarjam biʾl-fārisī tarjamahā sayyidunā al-muʿayyad al-shīrāzī aʾlā allāhu qudsahū wa razaganā shafāʾatahū wa unsahū*”

¹⁹ “*wa qāla sayyidunā al-muʿayyad fī faḍl hādhā al-kitāb inna man katabahū aḥaqqu an yaktubahū biʾl-tibr.*”

²⁰ “*in kitābī ast tarjama karda-ash banda-i khudāwand-i zamān . . . bi-farmān-i khudāwand-i khwāsh va ān rāh jūyān al-mustaṣṣir bi-allāh amīr al-muʾminīn ṣalavāt allāh ʿalayhi va ʿalā ābāʾihī al-tāhīrīn va abnāʾihī al-akramīn.*”

²¹ *Ismaili Literature*, p. 47, no. 69.

A *Extracts Mistakenly Named by Bibliographers as Independent Works*i) *al-Maqāmāt al-ithnā ‘ashara li yawm ‘Arafa wa huwa du‘ā’ al-balāgh*

- COMMENTS: a) Citation from Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, says there is a ms. in a private collection.
 b) Probably from *al-Ad‘iya al-Mu‘ayyadīyya*; there is a *du‘ā’ yawm ‘Arafa* in *al-Ad‘iya*, no. 24.

ii) *Jāmi‘ al-ḥaqā’iq fī tahrīm al-luḥūm wa al-albān*

- COMMENTS: a) Citation from Ivanow, *Guide*, no. 160; not named in his *Ismaili Literature*.
 b) Probably an excerpt from the *Jāmi‘ al-ḥaqā’iq* containing al-Mu‘ayyad’s debate with al-Ma‘arrī regarding the invalidity of vegetarianism.

iii) *Munājāt li-Sayyidinā al-Mu‘ayyad*

- COMMENTS: a) Citation from Poonawala, *Biobibliography* p. 108, no. 6.
 b) probably from *al-Ad‘iya al-Mu‘ayyadīyya*.

B *Works Definitely by Other Authors*iv) *Risālat al-Shajara fī takrīr dawr al-satr*

- COMMENTS: Poonawala lists this as al-Mu‘ayyad’s work and mentions a ms. in a private collection (p. 109, no. 13). It is actually two different works that he has conflated as one; and neither is by al-Mu‘ayyad. Note that Majdū‘ does not mention any of these three works.

The first work is titled *Kitāb al-Shajara*

PUBLISHING Ms. in Ṭayyibī da‘wa library

DETAILS:

- AUTHENTICATION: This work is probably not by al-Mu‘ayyad, as a) the ms. names the dā‘ī Abū Tammām (1st half of 6/12th century or earlier) as the author, b) the *ṣalawāt* formula in the text names the Imam al-Ṭayyib, who was born four decades after al-Mu‘ayyad’s demise, and c) the *Kitāb Ḍiyā’ al-albāb* by the 5th Ṭayyibī dā‘ī ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 612/1215)²² quotes in a number of places excerpts from the “*Kitāb al-Shajara* of Abū Tammām.”²³

²² Ms. in Ṭayyibī da‘wa library, n.d., n.p.

²³ On the *Kitāb al-Shajara* of Abū Tammām, see Paul Walker, “Abū Tammām

However, this *Kūtāb al-Shajara* appears to be an abridgement, and although Abū Tammām himself was the author of the original version, it is possible, although unlikely, that al-Mu'ayyad was the author of this abridgement.

The second work is titled *Risāla fī Takrīr dawr al-kashf wa al-satr*

PUBLISHING Ms. in Ṭayyibī da'wa library, copyist Muḥammad b. Mulla

DETAILS: Naẓār 'Alī Lakkārshāh, 1347.

AUTHENTICATION: The author of this work is the 8th Ṭayyibī dā'ī al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 667/1268). Poonawala probably confuses al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī's title, Mu'ayyid (with an *i* instead of an *a*) al-Dīn, with al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn. The opening lines of the *Risāla* name the author along with his title: Mu'ayyid al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. 'Alī.²⁴

v) *Nahj al-'ibāda*

COMMENTS: Poonawala lists this book under al-Mu'ayyad's works, and states that a ms. is extant in a private collection, but he does not explain his basis for ascribing it to al-Mu'ayyad (*Biobibliography*, p. 109, no. 15). Ivanow lists it under the works of al-Mu'ayyad with a question mark next to it (*Guide*, no. 163, *Ismaili Literature*, no. 167). Majdū' does not list it at all.

PUBLISHING Ms. in Ṭayyibī da'wa library, copyist not named, n.d.,

DETAILS: acquired by da'wa library during the dā'ī-ship of the 47th Ṭayyibī dā'ī 'Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn (d. 1302/1885).

AUTHENTICATION: The style of writing in this work is straightforward and without rhyming prose (*saḡ'*), unlike al-Mu'ayyad's. The author is not named in the text of the ms., nor is there any historical reference in the text or the margins of the ms.

vi) *Nahj al-hidāya li al-muhtadīn*

COMMENTS: Poonawala lists it under al-Mu'ayyad's works (*Biobibliography*, p. 108, no. 5). Al-Majdū' does not mention it. Ivanow mentions it in his *Ismaili Literature* (no. 167), as a possible title, instead of *Nahj al-'Ibāda* (above, no. v)

and the his *Kūtāb al-Shajara*: A New Ismaili Treatise from Tenth-Century Khurasan," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114:3 (1994), pp. 343–52.

²⁴ "*Risāla fī takrīr dawr al-kashf ta'līf sayyidīnā wa mawlānā mu'ayyid al-dīn ḥusayn ibn 'alī ibn muḥammad ibn al-walīd a'la allāhu qudsahū wa razaqanā shaf'atahū wa unsahū.*"

- PUBLISHING: Ms. in Ṭayyibī daʿwa library, copyist ʿAbd al-Qādir b. Yaḥyā Kaparwanjī, 1224, n.p.
 DETAILS:
 AUTHENTICATION: This work is not of al-Muʿayyad’s authorship, but rather, it is a book that quotes extensively from al-Muʿayyad’s *Majālis*.²⁵

vii) *al-Īdāḥ wa al-tabṣīr fī yawm al-ghadīr*

- AUTHENTICATION: Ivanow incorrectly ascribes this poem to al-Muʿayyad (*Guide*, no. 158, *Ismaili Literature*, no. 167A); al-Majdūʿ correctly ascribes it to the 8th Ṭayyibī dāʿī al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 667/1268), whose title, Muʿayyid al-Dīn, is similar to al-Muʿayyad’s own, al-Muʿayyad fī al-Dīn (*Fihrist*, p. 152).

viii) *al-Iskandariyya, also called Dhāt al-dawḥa, a qaṣīda*

- AUTHENTICATION: Ivanow incorrectly ascribes this work to al-Muʿayyad (*Guide*, no. 161, *Ismaili Literature*, no. 166, *Biobibliography*, p. 319); it is quoted in all mss. of al-Muʿayyad’s *Dūwān* among the seventeen poems by other poets, ascribed to an unknown poet called al-Iskandarānī or al-Iskandarī, who was one of the poets of al-ʿAzīz in the 2nd half of the fourth century (cf. M.K. Ḥusayn, *al-Ḥayāḥ al-fikriyya*, p. 163).

C Works Probably by Other Authors

- ix) *al-Majālis al-Mustanṣiriyya* (*Guide*, no. 155; *Ismaili Literature*, no. 163, *Fihrist*, p. 136, *Biobibliography*, p. 319, Cortese, *Ismaili and Other Manuscripts*, pp. 44–45). This is probably identical with the work—probably incorrectly—ascribed to Badr al-Jamālī or the qāḍī al-Malījī. Muḥammad ʿIzb, in his ed. of the work (Cairo, 1992), appears to have mistranscribed al-Malījī as al-Malaṭī. Previously ed. Muḥammad Kāmīl Ḥusayn, Cairo, n.d.

²⁵ For e.g. a) towards the end of the book, it quotes a chap. from the *Majālis Muʿayyadiyya*: “faṣl min al-majlis al-rābiʿ wa al-khamsīn min al-miʿa al-khāmisa min majālis sayyidinā al-muʿayyad fī al-dīn qaddasa allāhu rūḥahū,” b) and the lines at the beginning of the text refer to an unnamed author, and state that this work is based on the words of al-Muʿayyad: “kitāb nahj al-hidāya li-baʿḍ aṣḥāb al-yamīn al-sākinīna bi-ṭūrī sīnīn wa huwa min kalām dāʿī al-duʿāt al-muʿayyad fī al-dīn ḥibat allāh ibn mūsā al-sulaymānī qaddasa allāhu rūḥahū wa nawwara ḍarīḥahū.”

x) *Tāwīl al-arwāḥ* (*Guide*, no. 162, *Ismaili Literature*, no. 165, *Biobibliography*, p. 109, no. 18 from Ivanow).

xi) *al-Mabda' wa al-ma'ād* (probably identical to the *Risāla al-Mabda' wa al-ma'ād* by the Ṭayyibī dā'ī al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, or al-Mu'ayyad's *Sharḥ al-Ma'ād*. *Biobibliography*, p. 108, no. 11).

xii) *al-Masā'il sa'ala 'anhā al-amīr Abū Ḥimyar Saba' b. Aḥmad li al-dā'ī al-Mu'ayyad al-Shūrāzī* (probably identical to al-Mu'ayyad's *al-Masā'il al-sab'ūn fī al-tāwīl* or *al-Mas'ala wa al-jawāb*. *Biobibliography*, p. 108, no. 12).

xiii) *Risāla fī Dhikr faḍl al-nabī* (*Biobibliography*, p. 109, no. 19; no source or mss. mentioned).

APPENDIX D

HISTORICAL SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF AL-MU'AYYAD'S LIFE

The most detailed source of evidence we have of al-Mu'ayyad's career as a Fatimid dā'ī is his autobiography *al-Ṣira al-Mu'ayyadiyya*.¹ The *Ṣira* begins during al-Mu'ayyad's dā'ī-ship in Fars, in the year 429/1038, and ends in the year 450/1058, upon al-Mu'ayyad's return to Cairo from Syria. It contains detailed information about al-Mu'ayyad's conversion of Abū Kālījār, and about the ensuing events that led to al-Mu'ayyad's flight to Egypt via Iraq and Syria. It contains data about his relationships with the various viziers at al-Mustanṣir's court, and offers an inside glimpse into Fatimid court politics. The Basāsīrī episode is related in great detail, mostly in the form of al-Mu'ayyad's correspondence with the Syrian princes and the Fatimid viziers within a narrative frame. It is worth noting that the *Ṣira* does *not* contain any information about al-Mu'ayyad's personal life, his family, his friends, or his home. The collection of his prose *du'ā's*, *al-Ad'ya al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, may also be culled for al-Mu'ayyad's perception of the difficulties in his life.²

Documentary evidence (decrees, epistles and correspondence) about al-Mu'ayyad's career is gleaned from four sources:

- two epistles in the compendium of al-Mustanṣir's official epistles to Yemen, *al-Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*,³ that refer the addressees to al-Mu'ayyad in his capacity as dā'ī al-du'āt.

¹ al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ṣira al-Mu'ayyadiyya*, ed. M.K. Ḥusayn, Cairo, 1949. It has also been edited by 'A. Tāmīr under the title *Mudhakkirāt dā'ī al-du'āt*, Beirut, 1983. The more accurate Ḥusayn edition is used here.

² Eg. #13, p. 133 "*wa hāriban min ḥaṭfiḥ bi-ḥaṭfiḥ*."

³ Al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh al-Fāṭimī, *al-Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*, ed. 'A. Mājid, Cairo, n.d. The two epistles are #55, pp. 180–81, addressed to al-Ḥurra al-Malika al-Sayyida b. Aḥmad, the Ṣulayhid queen of Yemen; and #61, pp. 200–1, to her husband [al-Malik al-Mukarram] Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad.

- two epistles of al-Mustanṣir recorded in the *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*⁴ of the Ṭayyibī dāʿī Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn—the decree of al-Muʿayyad’s investiture as dāʿī al-duʿāt,⁵ and a letter to him at the time of his recall from exile and reinstatement as daʿwa head.⁶ They contain detailed information about his titles and duties, and his services for the Fatimid daʿwa.
- the lengthy correspondence between al-Muʿayyad and the Syrian princes preserved in the *Sīra*.⁷
- al-Muʿayyad’s correspondence with Abu al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī regarding the invalidity of vegetarianism recorded in al-Muʿayyad’s *Majālis*,⁸ and in Yāqūt’s (d. 627/1230) *Muʿjam al-Udabāʾ*.⁹

Other contemporary or near-contemporary sources in chronological order are as follows:

- two poems¹⁰ of another Persian Fatimid dāʿī, Naṣir Khusrau (394/1004–after 460/1068, possibly 481/1088). Naṣir came to Cairo in 439 (1047), a year or two after al-Muʿayyad, and spent two and a half years there,¹¹ during which time he probably studied with al-Muʿayyad. In his poems, he calls al-Muʿayyad his teacher, extolling his knowledge and praising his prose and poetry.

⁴ Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 7, ed. Ayman Fuʾād Sayyid, titled *The Fatimids and Their Successors in Yaman*, London & New York, 2002.

⁵ *ʿUyūn*, vol. 7, pp. 79–82.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78.

⁷ *Sīra*, pp. 101–69.

⁸ *Al-Majālis al-Muʿayyadīyya*, vol. 6, majlis 13–17.

⁹ Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Irshād al-arīb ilā maʿrifat al-adīb*, popularly known as *Muʿjam al-Udabāʾ*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth, New Delhi, 1982, vol. 1, pp. 178–214, entry on Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī; I. ʿAbbās, ed., *Rasāʾil Abī al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī*, Beirut & Cairo, 1982, pp. 83–140.

¹⁰ The first poem “*Cherā Khāmosh bāshī ay sukhandān*,” in *Divān Nāṣir Khusrau*, eds. Taqavī & Taqīzādeh, Tehran, 1339 H, pp. 313–16, vv. 7–21. Vv. 11–20 of the poem have been rendered into English in a free translation by Hunzai in *Shimmering Light*, pp. 62–63. The second poem “*Ay khwande basī ilm-o jahān gashte sarāsar*,” in *Divān Nāṣir-i Khusrau*, eds. M. Mīnovī & M. Muḥaqqiq, Tehran, 1407 H, pp. 505–515, vv. 69–132 (end); trans. by W. Ivanow in *Problems in Nasir-Khusraw’s Biography*, Bombay, 1956, pp. 22–36 (the first edition of his book was published under the title *Nasir-i Khusraw and Ismailism*, Leiden & Bombay, 1948); also partially trans. by A. Schimmel in *Make a Shield from Wisdom: Selected Verses from Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s Divān*, London, 1993, pp. 45–52.

¹¹ Nāṣir’s dates of arrival and departure from Cairo from his *Safarnāmeḥ*, ed. Nader Vazirpur, Tehran, 3rd ed., 1977, pp. 49, 79; English trans. by W. Thackston titled *Nāṣir-e Khosraw’s Book of Travels (Safarnāma)*, Albany, New York, 1986, pp. 40 & 63.

- *al-Ishāra ilā man nāla al-wizāra*,¹² a biographical work on the Fatimid viziers in Egypt by a Secretary of the Fatimid Dīwān al-Inshā' during the last years of Fatimid rule, Ibn al-Ṣayrafi (463–542/1071–1147). It has three short pieces of information about al-Mu'ayyad within the biographies.
- the *Fārsnāma*¹³ of the otherwise unknown Persian historian Ibn al-Balkhī (b. 498/1105) contains a political and geographical history of the Persian province of Fars, beginning with the early Persian kings and continuing through the Islamic conquest to the author's time. It provides a polemical account of al-Mu'ayyad's conversion of Abū Kālījār and his forced departure from Fars, that corroborates the broad outlines of the *Sīra*'s version.

Later sources, in chronological order, are the following:

- the *Nuzhat al-muqlatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn*¹⁴ of the Sunni Egyptian historian Ibn al-Ṭuwayr (524–617/1130–1220) who worked in the Fatimid Secretariat and later in the Ayyubid one, is a source that provides a description of the institutions, rituals and treasures of the Fatimids of Egypt. Within these are described the function and duties of the dā'ī al-du'āt—albeit without specific reference to al-Mu'ayyad—paying special attention to the *majālis al-hikma*.
- the *Tuhfat al-qulūb*¹⁵ of the Yemenite Ṭayyibī dā'ī Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī (d. 596/1199) is a partially esoteric work on the function of the da'wa and the role and qualifications of the dā'ī. It records the history of the Fatimid da'wa in Yemen in detail, and

¹² Ibn al-Ṣayrafi, *al-Ishāra ilā man nāla al-wizāra*, ed. A.F. Sayyid, Cairo, 1990.

¹³ Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, eds. G. Le Strange & R.A. Nicholson, London, 1921, p. 119.

¹⁴ Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, *Nuzhat al-muqlatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn*, ed. A.F. al-Sayyid, Cairo, 1992.

¹⁵ Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī, *Tuhfat al-qulūb wa furjat al-makrūb*, ms. in Ṭayyibī da'wa library, copyist Muḥammad Ḥusayn b. Sulaymānjī b. Ja'far, 1145 H. Excerpt in S.M. Stern, "The Succession to the Fatimid Imam al-Āmir, the Claims of the Later Fatimids to the Imamate, and the Rise of Ṭayyibī Ismailism," *Oriens* 4 (1951), pp. 193–255 (excerpt pp. 234–35). Studies on the *Tuhfat al-qulūb* include: A. Hamdani, "The Dā'ī Ḥātim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī (d. 596 H/1199 AD) and his Book *Tuhfat al-qulūb*," and "The Ṭayyibī-Fāṭimid Community of the Yaman at the Time of the Ayyubid Conquest of Southern Arabia," *Arabian Studies* 7 (1985), pp. 151–160.

within this context, it describes Lamak b. Mālik's sojourn in Egypt, and his tutelage under al-Mu'ayyad.

- the *Akhbār Miṣr*¹⁶ of the Ayyubid historian Ibn Muyassar (d. 677/1278) is in the form of annals from 439 to 553 (1047–1158), and encompasses the rule of the last few Fatimid Caliph-Imams beginning with al-Mustanṣir (and some years from the reigns of the earlier Fatimids at the end). It contains two short pieces of information specifically about al-Mu'ayyad, and much information about Fatimid politics in al-Mustanṣir's time in general.
- *al-Khiṭaṭ*¹⁷ and *Itti'āz al-hunafā'*¹⁸ of the Mamluk historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) are two of our most important extant sources of Fatimid history. *Al-Khiṭaṭ* contains a non-chronological geographical, social and political history of Egypt. It provides detailed information regarding the da'wa *majālis* and activities and the dā'ī al-du'āt's position, and one short piece of information specifically about al-Mu'ayyad. The *Itti'āz* is in the form of annals from 296 to 487 (908–1094) encompassing the reign of all the Fatimid caliphs upto and including al-Mustanṣir. It provides snippets of information about da'wa personnel and activities from the beginning of the Fatimid dynasty in the Maghrib, a political history of al-Mu'ayyad's time, and one short piece of information specifically about al-Mu'ayyad.
- the final two volumes of the seven-volume compendium of Fatimid history, the *Uyūn al-Akhbār*¹⁹ of the Yemenite Ṭayyibī dā'ī Idrīs 'Imād al-dīn (d. 872/1468) contain the longest and most detailed account we have of al-Mu'ayyad's life. Their main source is al-Mu'ayyad's *Sīra*, but volume seven also provides information about the last twenty years of al-Mu'ayyad's life after the *Sīra* ends that

¹⁶ Ibn Muyassar, *al-Muntaqā min akhbār Miṣr intaqāhu al-Maqrīzī*, ed. A.F. al-Sayyid, Cairo, 1981, abridged by al-Maqrīzī (814/1441).

¹⁷ al-Maqrīzī, *Kūṭāb al-Mawā'iz wa al-i'tibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa al-āthār*, known as *al-Khiṭaṭ al-Maqrīziyya*, 2 vols., Beirut, n.d., reprint of Cairo ed., 1853. Partial ed. (upto vol. 1, p. 322 of Cairo ed.), ed. Gaston Wiet, *Memoires de l'IFAO*, nos. 30, 33, 46, 49 & 53. Indices to *al-Khiṭaṭ* prepared by A. A. Harīdī, *Fihrist Khīṭaṭ Miṣr: Fihris Taḥlīlī li-kitābay Ibn Duqmāq wa al-Maqrīzī 'an Miṣr (Kūṭāb al-Intiṣār, Kūṭāb al-Khiṭaṭ)*, 3 vols., Cairo, 1983–1984.

¹⁸ al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz al-hunafā' bi-akhbār al-a'imma al-fāṭimiyyīn al-khulafā'*, 2 vols., ed. Muḥammad Ḥilmī, Cairo, 1967–1971.

¹⁹ Idrīs 'Imād al-dīn, *Uyūn al-Akhbār wa funūn al-āthār*, vol. 6, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālīb, Beirut, 1984; vol. 7, ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, titled *The Fatimids and Their Successors in Yaman*, London & New York, 2002.

is not found elsewhere, including the text of al-Mu'ayyad's investiture as dā'ī al-du'āt, and al-Mustanşir's epistle to al-Mu'ayyad upon the latter's recall from exile (details provided earlier).

- *Sitt Rasā'il*²⁰ of an Indian Ṭayyibī scholar Khawj b. Malak Kapadwanjī (d. c. 1021/1612) contains a history of the Fatimid-Ṭayyibī da'wa in India upto the author's time. It contains a snippet of information within this context specifically regarding al-Mu'ayyad and the Indian da'wa.

²⁰ Khawj b. Malak, *Sitt Rasā'il*, abridged by 'Abd al-ʿAlī b. 'Abd al-Qādir as *Majmū' al-Rasā'il al-sitt fī dhikr du'āt al-hind*, ms. in Ṭayyibī da'wa library.

APPENDIX E

سجل تقليد المؤيد في الدين الشيرازي في الدعوة سنة ٤٥٠ (I)
(Text)¹

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

من عبد الله ووليه معدّ أبي تميم المستنصر بالله أمير المؤمنين إلى الشيخ الجليل داعي
الدعاة المؤيد في الدين عصمة المؤمنين هبة الله بن موسى، سلّمه الله تعالى وحفظه وأعانه.
سلام عليك فإن أمير المؤمنين يحمد إليك الله الذي لا إله إلا هو ويسأله أن يُصلي
على جده محمد خاتم النبيين وسيد المرسلين، صلى الله عليه وعلى آله الطاهرين الأئمة
المهديين وسلم تسليماً.

أما بعد: فالحمد لله الذي أيد أمير المؤمنين بنصره وبالمؤمنين الذين وضعوا في مهد
الولاء، ورضعوا ألبان الوفاء، وصدقوا ما عاهدوا الله عليه " [٢٣:٣٣] في طاعة أئمتهم
البررة الأتقياء، وانتظموا في سلك الصابرين معهم في البأساء والضراء. يحمده أمير المؤمنين
حمد الشاكرين أن سدّ خلل دعوته "بقوم يحبهم ويجبونه أذلة على المؤمنين أعزة على
الكافرين" [٥:٥٤]، فَهُمْ فِي طَاعَةِ أئمتهم ماضٍ العزائم، يجاهدون في سبيل الله ولا يخافون
لومة لائم، ويسأله أن يصلي على جده محمد الذي أرسله "شاهداً ومبشراً ونذيراً وداعياً
إلى الله بإذنه وسراجاً منيراً" [٤٦:٣٣]، وشرف أهل بيته بقوله: "إنما يريد الله ليذهب عنكم
الرجس أهل البيت ويطهركم تطهيراً" [٣٣:٣٣]. وعلى أبيه علي بن أبي طالب المكين
مكناً، المبين برهانا، القائم منه مقام هارون من موسى عليهما السلام حيث يقول "سَنَشُدُّ
عَضْدَكَ بِأَخِيكَ وَنَجْعَلَ لَكُمَا سُلْطَانًا" [٣٥:٢٨]. وعلى الأئمة من ذريته الذين وضعهم الله
للقسط ميزانا، وعلمهم بيان ما نزل على رسوله قرآناً.

¹ From 'Imād al-Dīn, 'Uyūn vol. 7, ed. A.F. Sayyid, pp. 79–82, with corrections made by Paul Walker on the basis of several additional mss.

APPENDIX E

(I) THE DECREE OF AL-MU'AYYAD'S INVESTITURE AS DĀ'Ī AL-DU'ĀT (450/1058)

(Translation)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

From God's servant and elect, Ma'add Abū Tamīm al-Mustaṣir Billāh, Commander of the Faithful, to the venerable shaykh, dā'ī al-du'āt, al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn, Succor of the Believers, Hibat Allāh b. Mūsā (May God safeguard, protect and aid him!)

Peace be upon you. The Commander of the Faithful praises to you God, there is no god but He, and asks Him to [shower] blessings upon his grandfather Muḥammad, the seal of the prophets, chief of the messengers. May God bless him and his pure progeny, the rightly guided Imams.

Now then. [All] praise for God who aided the Commander of the Faithful with His aid and with the believers, who were placed in the cradle of allegiance, suckled the milk of loyalty, "fulfilled their pledge to God" (Qur'ān 33:23) in obeying their good, pious Imams, and were threaded in the necklace-string of those who stoically bear with the [Imams] calamities and troubles. The Commander of the Faithful praises Him, the praising of those who are grateful that He filled the gap in His da'wa with a people "whom He loves and who love Him, humble with believers, mighty [in the face of] unbelievers" (Qur'ān 5:54). In obeying their Imams, they are firm of resolve, striving in the path of God without fearing the blame of any blamer.

He asks Him to [shower] blessings upon his grandfather Muḥammad, whom He sent "a witness, a giver of good tidings, a warner, a dā'ī towards God with His permission, and a bright lamp" (Qur'ān 33:46); and honored the people of his house with His words "Indeed, God wills that He remove all impurity from you, [O] people of the house, and purify you completely" (Qur'ān 33:33). And upon his father 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, established of stature, clear of proof. And upon the Imams from ['Alī's] line whom God has placed as a scale for justice, whom "He has taught the exposition" (Qur'ān 55:2) of that which He sent down to Muḥammad as the Qur'ān.

وإنك لتنتمي إلى صالح دعاة "أنفقوا من قبل الفتح، وقاتلوا" [١٠:٥٧] قبل وضوح تبشير الصبح، ودعوا إلى الأئمة المستورين آباء أمير المؤمنين، عليهم السلام، ولما نُشر لهم عَلم، وأقاموا معالم دينهم والدنيا ظُلم وظُلم، يَسْتُنُون من التقى والرشاد بأرضى سُنّة، ويستجنون من الستر والسداد بأوفى جُنّة. وجئت على آثارهم فكنت أحسنهم آثارا، وأرفعهم في مقامات الطاعة والمجد فخارا، وكان منك بفارس وكرمان وخوزستان في رفع أعلام المؤمنين ما أقام العالمين على قدم، وتناول ذكر هول مقامك كل لسان وفم، حتى دهمك من الأمر ما نفذك عن الأوطان، فشقت جيب الأرض مهاجراً إلى باب إمام الزمان، ولبثت سنين في جنح ليل الامتحان، ثم نذبت إلى الجهة التركمانية والاصطلاء بحرّ نارها، وقذفت من الأخطار في لجج بحارها، تقلبك أكف الأمواج تيارها فسُستَ الأمر في منصرفك سياسة حمت حريم ما صحبك من العدد والأموال، من أن يمسه طيف من شيطان الاضطراب والاحتلال، حتى بلغ هديها محله تحت أروقة الأسنة والنصال. ثم اقتنصت ثمّالا بشرك الإيناس بعد النفور، واستخلصته لله فأويت به إلى الظل من الحرور، ثم حصنت في وجه التركمانية ردما، ورجمت شياطينهم برأيك وحسن تدبيرك رجما، وما زلت ترسل عليهم من كنانة الله تعالى سهما، حتى أتى الله بنيانهم من القواعد فهدمه هدمًا، بالكسرة التي كسرت حدتهم، وابلت جدتهم، والفتكة التي نقصت عدتهم، وأفنت عدتهم، فأصبحوا في أثوابها خاسرين. ثم عرجت على حلب فكشفت بها الغماء، وسكنت الفتنة الصماء، إلى أن سلس منها القياد، ونيل فيها المراد، فدخلها عسكر أمير المؤمنين بسلام آمنين تلقاهم وجوه البشر، وتصافحهم أكف البر. وظهر من خلوص طاعة أهلها بتلطفك في ليلة الحريق، ما حادهم على اتباع أمثلك فيه حسن التوفيق. ورجعت إلى باب أمير المؤمنين ولمقامك غرر وحجول من حسن الذكر، ولك بحضرة إمامك كنف مأهول من الرضى والشكر.

ولما مثلت ببابه وعرف محاسن آثارك يفوح، ولسان أفعالك بخاص نصحك يبوح، رأى، والله يوفقه، أن يسدد بك خلل دعوة طال عهدها بأمين عليها مؤتمن. ولما تعلق يدها بلسن في علومها لقن؛ فألقى مقاليدها منك إلى دائن دين الحق، ناطق فيها بلسان

You come from a family of godly dā'īs who “spent [their money for the cause] since before the conquest, and fought” (Qur’ān 57:10) before the first heralds of dawn. They did da’wa for the concealed Imams, forefathers of the Commander of the Faithful, when no banner had yet been unfurled for them, and undertook the establishment of the signs of their religion when the world was [full of] injustice and darkness; pursuing the best path of piety and right-guidance, and taking the most protecting of shields from godliness and appropriate action. You have followed in their traces and become the most beautiful of them in deeds, and the most elevated of glory in the occasions of obedience and nobility.

You raised the banners of the Commander of the Faithful in Fars, Kirman and Khuzistan such that the worlds were made to stand up [and take notice]. Each tongue and mouth discussed the report of your terrifyingly powerful stature. Until the affair suddenly became such that it tore you apart from [your] homelands, so you traversed the bosom of the earth immigrating to the door of the Commander of the Faithful. [There,] you spent years in the dark night of trial.

Then you were sent to the Turkomans [where you] scorched yourself at the heat of their fire, and were pelted with dangers in the depths of their seas, the hands of the waves tossing you about in their current. You conducted the affair in your journey in a manner that protected the sanctum of the equipment and supplies that accompanied you from the touch of the specter of riot and disorder, until “the sacrificial animal reached its altar” under the colonnades of spearheads and swordblades. Then you snared Thimāl with the net of friendliness after [previous] alienation, and you chose him for God and brought him to the shade after constant heat. Then you fortified [our allies] in the face of the Turkomans, and struck the [latter’s] fiends with the lightning-bolts of your [sound] opinion and good planning, and continuously discharged arrows against them from God’s quiver, until God came and demolished the foundations of their edifice, with a breaking that broke their fury and decayed their freshness, and a blow that cut their numbers and wiped out their supplies, so that they became lost. Then you verged to Aleppo, removed the confusion there and subdued the massive sedition, until it became tractable in being led and the hope in it was fulfilled; the Commander of the Faithful’s army entered it safely, in peace, greeted by happy faces, clasped by well-wishing hands; the sincerity of its people’s obedience became manifest, due to your gentle [handling] of the Night of the Fire, that encouraged them to follow the likes of you [among the Fatimid officials] in whom there is good, God-given success.

You returned to the door of the Commander of the Faithful with your stature, from good reports, having white blazes and feet, and yourself having an inhabited shelter in the Presence of your Imam of approval and appreciation. When you presented yourself at his door, the fragrance of your beautiful deeds emanating, the tongue of your acts revealing your sincere counsel, he thought (May God guide him!) to fill by you the gap in a da’wa that has [waited] a long time [for] a reliable [person] to be entrusted with it, and whose [i.e. the da’wa’s] hand has not become attached to an eloquent person, quick of grasp in its branches of knowledge. By giving its keys to you, he has given them to one who believes in the religion of Right, who speaks in it with the tongue of Truth; he made you the

الصدق، وجعلك وجهتها التي يوليها جميع الخلق، وبابها للمؤمنين بحضرته والغائبين في الغرب والشرق.

فتول ما ولاكه أمير المؤمنين بعزمة مثلك ممن قويت عزائمه، وثبتت على سطح أرض البصيرة دعائمه، فاجعل لإصلاح ما فسد من أمرها أكثر علاقة من قلبك، ولما تعتل من جسمها أوفى نصيب من طبك، واعلم أن موضوع الحكم الدينية على الأوامر والنواهي الشرعية، ككون موضوع القوى الروحانية على الأشكال الجسمانية، فمن أحسست منه فتورا في الشريعة، فاعلم أنه سبة شنيعة على الشيعة، وامح من ديوان الاستجابة اسمه، واقطع من مجالس الدعوة أثره ورسمه، واحتم على المؤمنين أن يحافظوا على الجُمع والجماعات، ويشمروا للقيام بكلف الطاعات، ويحجوا إلى بيت الله الحرام، ويزوروا قبر نبيه جدنا محمد عليه أفضل الصلاة والسلام، فإن أمير المؤمنين يتكلف ما لا خفاء به من الإنفاق لقواصد بيت الله الحرام من جميع الآفاق، حتى يبلغ نحوه تحت ظلال الأمانة أهل الخلاف والوفاق، فأی عذر لأهل ولائه إذا قام غيرهم بفرض الحج وتقاعدوا، وتخفف سواهم وتناقلوا، أليس ذلك مما يوجه إليهم في دينهم الظنة، ويطرق عليهم لفساد اعتقادهم المحنة، ويصور لنواقص العقول أن قضية دينهم تقتضي ذلك والله يشهد أنهم لكاذبون، وفي مذهب الافتراء على أئمة الحق الذين نزههم الله عن الباطل ذاهبون.

ورتب الدعاة في الجزائر ترتيباً تعمر به مراتب العبادة، وتحضر معه رياض الإفادة والاستفادة، وليكن من تقيمه "القوي الأمين" [٢٦:٢٨] "وقليل ما هم" [٢٤:٣٨]، وأحذر الضعيف الخون "وسواء مماتهم ومحياتهم" [٢١:٤٥]، فإن أعوزك ذلك، وهو مُعَوِّزٌ لا شك، فليكن المندوب أميناً ولا يكن خوناً. وأقبل على أرض منقوصة من أطرافها، مشمولة الخراب من أكنافها، لتهتز وتربو بصوب ماء إرشادك، وحמיד مقام من سعيك واجتهادك. وتغنم تثقيل ميزانك بأجر من تدعوهم إلى الله من المتغنمين "ومن أحسن قولاً من دعا إلى الله وعمل صالحاً وقال إنني من المسلمين" [١٥:٤١]. وارفع إلى بيت المال ما يجتمع عندك من الفطر والزكوات والأعمال رفع المؤدي الأمانة، المطهر من دنس الخيانة، وارجع إلى رأي الوزير الأجل الكامل الأوحد صفى أمير المؤمنين وخالصته أي الفرج

objective towards which all the world turns, and its door (*bāb*) for the believers, [those] in his Presence and those absent in the West and the East.

So take charge of what the Commander of the Faithful has put you in charge of, with the resolution of someone like you, someone whose resolutions are strong and whose pillars are established on the surface of the earth of inner perception. Dedicate the better part of your heart's devotion to the betterment of the corrupt among its affairs, and the most abundant portion of your thought to [the cure of] the diseased in its body.

Know that the placement of religious wisdom is in the mold of Revelational commands and prohibitions, like the placement of the spiritual faculties in the mold of corporeal forms; so in whomsoever you sense slackness regarding the Sharī'a, know that he is a vile dishonor upon [the name of] the Shī'a. Efface his name from the register of the people who have answered, and cut his trace from the assemblies of the da'wa. Impress upon the believers that they must observe the Jum'a and communal prayers, gird themselves for undertaking the formalities of the acts of obedience, go on pilgrimage to the Sacred House of God, visit the grave of His Prophet, our forebear Muḥammad (Upon him be blessings and peace!) For the Commander of the Faithful undertakes the expenditure of [an amount], for which is no concealing, for the pilgrims of the Sacred House of God from all the remote regions, so that the people of disagreement and agreement reach it under the shade of security. What is the excuse of the people of allegiance when others undertake the religious duty of the pilgrimage and they desist, when [others] are swift to it and they find it burdensome? Is it not something that directs suspicion at them about their religion, and that brings disapprobation upon them for the corruptness of their belief, and a conception to the defective in mind that their religion requires this? God bears witness that they are liars and are travelling in the path of slandering the True Imams whom God has freed from falsehood.

Organize the dā'īs in the provinces in a manner by which you make the ranks of worship flourish and the flower-beds of giving and receiving [knowledge] bloom. Let the one you appoint be "the strong, the trustworthy" (Qur'ān 28:26), "and they are few" (Qur'ān 38:24), and beware of the weak, the treacherous, for their "dying and living is equal" (Qur'ān 45:21); and if you lack [someone like] this, for he is undoubtedly rare, then let the deputed [dā'ī] be trustworthy and not treacherous.

Give your attention to an earth that is shrinking from its borders and whose sides encompass desolation, so that it rejoices and grows with the raining of the water of your right guidance, and the praiseworthiness of your effort and endeavor. You will gain weight in your scale [of good deeds] with any one [person] that you call to God from among the distressed, "and who is more beauteous in word than he who did da'wa towards God, and good deeds, and said, 'Verily, I am from among the Muslims'" (Qur'ān, 41:15).

Submit to the treasury what accumulates with you from the *fiṭr* taxes and the alms-tax and the districts as one who fulfills the trust, who is purified from the filth of treachery.

Depend upon the counsel of the vizier, the Most Honorable, the Perfect, the Unique, the Chosen of the Commander of the Faithful and his Own,

محمد بن جعفر أمتع الله به وأيده وعصمه فيما يشير به من صالح خدمتك، فهو ولي التصرف و التصريف، ويده زمام الجليل من الأعمال واللطف.

هذا عهد أمير المؤمنين إليك فأوله منك عهد القبول، وأمثله لك فكن في تمثيلها عند المرجو فيك والمأمول. واسلك في شعب الذين يؤنسون رشدهم من كتاب الله سبحانه وإلى امثال أمره يأنسون إذ يقول تعالى ذكره "كونوا ربانيين بما كنتم تعلمون الكتاب وبما كنتم تدرسون" [٧٩:٣].

والله تعالى يجعلك لطاعته وطاعة وليه في أرضه محررا، ويجعل غراس آمالك في دينك وتقواك مثمرا، ويرسل رياح توفيقه ومعونته وحسن تسديده نشرا، ويقضي لك بسعادة العقبى في "يوم تجد كل نفس ما عملت من خير محضرا" [٣٠:٣] إن شاء الله، والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

وكتب غرة ذي الحجة من سنة خمسين وأربعمائة. والحمد لله كما هو أهله، وصلى الله على رسوله سيدنا محمد النبي وآله الطاهرين، وسلم تسليما وحسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل.

Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar [al-Maghribī] (May God gratify [the Commander of the Faithful] by him, and aid him and protect him in what he advises [you] for the good of your service!) for he is the one in charge of issuance and alteration, and in his hand is the rein of the great among the agencies and the small.

This is the compact of the Commander of the Faithful with you, so evince toward it the compact of acceptance. I have set it up for you, so be in its undertaking as is expected of you and hoped for, and step in the paths of those who find their guidance from the Book of God Almighty, and who are accustomed to complying with His command; for He, whose repute is most high, says, “Be you wise, godly masters, because you have been teaching the book, and studying” (Qurʾān 3:79).

May God Most High make you consecrated for His obedience and the obedience of His elect on His earth. May He make the sapling of [His elect’s] hopes in your religion and piety fruit-bearing. May He send [you] the winds, blowing, of His help and aid and good direction. May He ordain for you the felicity of the afterlife “on a day every soul finds what good deeds it has done brought forward,” (Qurʾān 3:30) if God Most High wills.

Peace upon you, and God’s mercy and blessings.

Written on the first day of Dhū al-Ḥijja of the year four hundred and fifty.

All praise is for God as He is worthy of it. May God bless His Messenger, our master Muḥammad the Prophet and his pure Progeny, and keep them. “Sufficient for us is God, and [He is] the best trustee.” (Qurʾān 3:173)

APPENDIX E

(II) سجل تقليد ثان سنة ٤٥٤

(Text)²

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله ناصر المحققين من عبادته المحققين، وجاعل العاقبة للمتقين المتعلقين بحبل أوليائه الموفقين، يحمد أمير المؤمنين حمد الوجلين من خيفته المشفقين، ويسأله أن يصلي على جده أشرف المفوهين بتنزيله المنطقيين، محمد المُنَاجِيهِ رَبُّهُ بقوله "وَأَعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ" [٩٩:١٥]، وعلى أخيه ووصيه وابن عمه سُلَمِ النجاة للمرتقين، علي بن أبي طالب روح الحياة للمستنشقين، وعلى الأئمة من ذريتهما المُسَوِّرِينَ لشرف الإمامة المُطَوِّقِينَ.

وبعد: فَإِنَّكَ نَازِلٌ مِنْ حَضْرَةِ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَنْزِلَةً مِثْلَكَ مِنْ خَدَمِ أَوْلِيَّتِكَ لِأَوَّلِيَّتِهِ، وَلَيْلُ التَّقِيَّةِ مُرْخٍ ذَيْلَ سِدُولِهِ، فَاتَّبِعُوا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ حِينَ ضَلَّ مِنْ ضَلٍّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ، وَكَانُوا خُلَصَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَخْفُونَ نَحْوَ تَلْبِيَةِ دَعَائِهِمْ، إِذَا الْمُتَاقِلُونَ تَتَاقَلَوْا وَكَانُوا مِنْ عَنَتِهِمُ الْآيَةُ "لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَاتَلَ أُولَئِكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةٍ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ وَقَاتَلُوا" [٥٧:١٠]، وَجِئْتُ عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ فَكُنْتُ أَنْتَ أَقْدَمُهُمْ فِي خِدْمَةِ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَدَمًا، وَأَرْفَعُهُمْ فِي رَفْعِ أَعْلَامِ دَعْوَتِهِ عِلْمًا، وَظَهَرَ مِنْ آثَارِكَ قَبْلَ هِجْرَتِكَ إِلَى بَابِ الْإِمَامَةِ وَبَعْدَهَا مَا كَتَبَ بِأَقْلَامِ الْفَخْرِ عَلَى جَبِينِ الدَّهْرِ، فَتَبْلِجْ مِنْ حَسَنِ الْمَسَاعِي تَبْلِجَ الْفَجْرِ.

وتوليت الدعوة الهادية فشفيت النفوس بشافي بيانك، وأضاء نجم الاستبصار من مطلع لسانك، ودلت على ما عندنا أهل بيت النبوة من شرف العلوم، وترجمت عن

² From 'Imād al-Dīn, 'Uyūn vol. 7, ed. A.F. Sayyid, pp. 77–79, with corrections made by Paul Walker on the basis of several additional mss.

APPENDIX E

(II) THE EPISTLE OF AL-MU'AYYAD'S RECALL FROM EXILE AND REINSTATEMENT AS DĀ'Ī AL-DU'ĀT (454/1062)

(Translation)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

[All] praise to God, the One who aids those who help truth come into its own from among his truth-establishing servants; who reserves the Hereafter for the pious ones, those who cleave to the rope of His elects, those to whom He has granted success. The Commander of the Faithful praises Him, the praising of those who are vigilant from fear of Him, apprehensive. He asks Him to [shower] blessings upon his grandfather, the most honored of the eloquent speakers and bringers of His revelation, Muḥammad, whom God addressed in private dialogue, with His words “Worship God until conviction comes to you” (Qurʾān 15:99). And upon his brother, his legatee, his cousin, the ladder of salvation for those who would climb, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, the spirit of life for those who would breathe. And upon the Imams from their line, who are [adorned with] the bracelets and necklace of the honor of the Imamate.

And then. You occupy at the Presence of the Commander of the Faithful the position of those like you, of servants from among your predecessors for his [the Imam's] predecessors, when the night of *taqīyya*³ lets down the hem of its veils. They followed the path of right-guidance when those who went astray went astray from it; they were the sincerest of the believers, those who are swift to answer the [Imams'] call, when those who hung back hung back; and they were among those to whom referred the verse: “Those who spent [their money] before the conquest and fought are not the same, they are higher in rank than those who spent afterwards and fought” (Qurʾān 57:10). You have come in their traces and become the most senior of them all in the service of the Commander of the Faithful, and the highest of them in raising the banners of his daʿwa. Such of your actions became manifest, before your immigration to the door of the Imamate and after it, that they are written with pens of pride upon the forehead of the age, so that it shines like the morning from the beauty of [your] endeavors.

You took charge of the rightly guiding daʿwa, healing souls with your healing discourse, the star of inner perception shining bright from the rising point of your tongue. You furnished proof of what is with us, the People

³ Lit. “dissimulation,” referring to the Fatimid practice of concealing their beliefs for fear of reprisal.

كوننا تراجمة سر الله المكتوم، وأذنت في الناس بالحج إلى دعوتنا يأتون رجالاً وركبانا وعلى كل ضامر، واقتنصت بشرَك الإيمان لنا كل قلب نافر.

فحين أسعدت طوائر سهامك بالإصابة، وألقى إليك الناس السلم بالاستجابة، جرت المقادير من صرفك بما لم يكن أمير المؤمنين له مريداً، واتبع ذلك من إبعادك بما كان من موافقة غرضه بعيداً، فجرى الأمر على ما قال الله تعالى: "هنالك ابتلي المؤمنون وزلزلوا زلزالاً شديداً" [١١:٣٣].

وكنت على خلف المكان من أمير المؤمنين في أشرف مكان، تأوي إلى ركن من رعايته وحميد سعائته من أشد الأركان. فحين بلغ كتاب امتحان المؤمنين فيك أجله، واستوفى مهله، أمر أمير المؤمنين بإعادتك إلى بابه، وإعادة سيف البصيرة منك إلى غماده وقربه، وإرقائك إلى منبر الله في إرقائك إليه سريرة، ولم يترك لك صغيرة من الذنب ولا كبيرة، وتوليك الدعوة الهادية إليه وبحضرته وعلى البسيطة شرقاً وغرباً، بعداً وقرباً، وتشريفك من خاص ملابسه التي خيطة بمباشرة بشرته وملامسة نمرقه ما تعرج به من المجد في أعلى أفقه، وحملك من خواص مراكبه على ما تتخذ معه قمم الأفلاك مركباً، وتنال منه في ميدان السعادة مسرحاً ومسرباً، فعُدْ إلى ما عودك أمير المؤمنين من العوائد، وافتح على المؤمنين أبواب الفوائد، واقدح بالعلوم الهادية أنواراً قد خبت، واروْ بسماء الإرشاد مزارع نفوس إلى سقيها قد صبت. لتكون كما قال الله تعالى: "وترى الأرض هامدة فإذا أنزلنا عليها الماء اهتزت وربت." [٥:٢٢]

وتمثل ما يمثله لك الوزير الأجل السيد الأفضل الواحد الكامل أبو عبد الله، أمتع الله به أمير المؤمنين وعضده، ووفقه به وأيده؛ فإنه على لسان أمير المؤمنين يترجم، ويبيده ينقض ويرم، وما قاله هو المقول، وما يفعله فهو المفعول.

والله تعالى يحقق لأمر المؤمنين فيك أملاً، ويجعل أبيات عراصه على يديك ذللاً، ولا يضيع أجر عملك إنه لا يضيع أجر من أحسن عملاً. وصلى الله على رسوله سيدنا محمد وآله وسلم تسليماً.

of the House of prophecy, of the honor of knowledge, and you expounded upon our being the interpreters of God's hidden secret. You "proclaimed among the people the pilgrimage" to our da'wa, "they come walking and riding on every lean mount," (Qur'ān 22:27). You snared each fleeing heart with the net of belief.

Now, when your flying arrows were fortunate and hit the mark, and the people extended [the greeting of] peace to you in answer, the fates decreed that you be turned away, a thing that the Commander of the Faithful did not wish. Then followed your banishment, which was far from being in conformity with his aim. Affairs came to pass as God Almighty said, "the believers were put to the test and were convulsed in a hard convulsion" (Qur'ān 33:11).

You were, in representing the Commander of the Faithful, in the most honored place, taking shelter at the strongest prop of his regard and praise-worthy effort. So when the contract of the believers' test reached its time in you and completed its term, the Commander of the Faithful commanded that you be brought back to his door; that the sword of inner perception through you be returned to its sheathe and scabbard; that you be raised to a pulpit for God—in your being raised to which is a secret—without any blame, small or big, being laid upon you; that you be put in charge of the rightly guiding da'wa towards him, and in his Presence and on [all] the earth, east and west, near and far; that you be honored by his special garments that were stitched in order to touch his skin and come into contact with his saddle cushion, which raises it in the highest sphere of glory; that you be carried upon one of his special mounts, one with which you take the heights of the celestial spheres as mount, and by which you obtain pasture and river-bed in the field of felicity.

So return to the advantages to which the Commander of the Faithful has habituated you. Open the doors of benefit for the believers. Strike with rightly-guiding knowledge the sparks of lights that have died out. Quench with the water of instruction the crops of souls that have become athirst towards irrigation, so that this becomes as God Most High has said "And you see the earth lifeless, then, when we sent water to it, it rejoiced and grew" (Qur'ān, 22:5).

And follow what the Vizier, the most Honorable, the Eminent Leader, the Unique, the Perfect, Abū 'Abd Allāh [al-Ḥusayn b. Sadīd al-Dawla Dhū al-Kifāyatayn] (May God gratify the Commander of the Faithful by him, and assist him and give [the Commander of the Faithful] success through him and aid him!) quotes for you, for he interprets upon the tongue of the Commander of the Faithful, and by [the Commander of the Faithful's] hand repeats and confirms. What he says is the said [word], and what he does is the done [deed].

May God Most High fulfill the Commander of the Faithful's hope in you! [May He] make the households of his courtyards submissive at your hands! [May He] not squander the reward of your deeds, "Verily, He does not squander the reward of one who does good deeds" (Qur'ān 3:171, 9:120, 11:115, 12:90)! May God bless his Messenger, our master Muḥammad and his Progeny and keep them.

GLOSSARY

FATIMID AND ṬAYYIBĪ TERMS

<i>bāb al-abwāb</i>	highest rank in the religious hierarchy next to the Imam.
<i>bāṭin</i>	inner meaning of Qurʾānic verses or Sharīʿa precepts.
<i>bayān</i>	religious discourse delivered to gathered people of the Ṭayyibī community.
<i>dāʿī</i>	rank in the religious hierarchy, sometimes synonymous with “ <i>ḥujja</i> ” and at other times with “ <i>al-dāʿī al-muṭlaq</i> ”
<i>dāʿī al-duʿāt</i>	title of an official in the Fatimid state who organized daʿwa activities and supervised dāʿīs in other lands.
<i>al-dāʿī al-muṭlaq</i>	vicegerent of the Imam during the latter’s concealment, and a rank in the religious hierarchy following that of the “ <i>ḥujja</i> .”
<i>Dāʿūdī Bohra</i>	(commonly called just “Bohra”); lit. “trader”; the majority Ṭayyibī denomination.
<i>daʿwa</i>	religious mission, called by its followers “ <i>al-daʿwa al-hādiya</i> ” (the rightly-guiding daʿwa) or “ <i>daʿwat al-ḥaqq</i> ” (the true daʿwa).
<i>ḥaqīqa</i> (pl. <i>ḥaqāʾiq</i>)	metaphysical cosmography.
<i>ḥujja</i>	rank in the religious hierarchy, following that of the “ <i>bāb al-abwāb</i> .”
<i>Imām al-zamān</i>	the living Imam of the Fatimid/Ṭayyibī daʿwa in a particular Age.
<i>iltijāʾ</i>	plea for succor to the Imam (or to Muḥammad, ʿAlī or Fātima), very often in verse form, mostly towards the end of a poem.
<i>al-Jāmiʿa al-Sayfiyya</i>	(commonly known just as “Jāmiʿa”); Scholarly academy of the Ṭayyibīs, located in Surat, with a branch in Karachi.
<i>mādhūn</i>	rank in the religious hierarchy following that of “ <i>al-dāʿī al-muṭlaq</i> .”
<i>majlis</i> (pl. <i>majālis</i>)	1) religious discourse, 2) written text of the discourse, and 3) in the Ṭayyibī daʿwa, a religious assembly convened for a commemorative or celebratory purpose, usually without a sermon.
<i>mathal</i>	physical object—or theological concept—with religious significance, that contains an inner meaning (“ <i>tāwīl</i> ”).
<i>mamthūl</i>	person denoted by the mathal [q.v.]: spiritual counterpart of the physical religious object, or physical embodiment of the theological concept.
<i>munājāt</i>	poem that communes directly with God, often asking for forgiveness of sins.
<i>naṣṣ</i>	explicit designation by the Imam—or <i>dāʿī al-muṭlaq</i> —of his successor.
<i>qāfiya</i>	verse memorization competition in the Ṭayyibī daʿwa.
<i>satr</i>	“concealment” of the Imam, and the period thereof, beginning with the concealment of the twenty-first Imam al-Ṭayyib who went into concealment in 524/1130.
<i>tāwīl</i>	allegorical interpretation of the Qurʾān and Sharīʿa; similar to “ <i>bāṭin</i> ” [q.v.]
<i>wāʿz</i>	in the Ṭayyibī daʿwa, a three to four hour religious sermon delivered to a large assembly, by a preacher who is seated on a raised dais called “ <i>takht</i> ” (lit. “throne;”) the climax is the recitation of Ḥusayn’s martyrdom at Karbala.
<i>zāhir</i>	exoteric meaning of the Qurʾān and Sharīʿa.
<i>ziyārat</i>	visit to the shrine of a spiritual leader.

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