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Funded by



Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft
German Research Foundation

RomanIslam



Center for Comparative Empire
and Transcultural Studies

Workshop

Military Foundations, *ribāṭs*, and Urbanization



Caliphal castle of Gormaz, 355/966
Courtesy J. F. Esteban Barahona

PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS

February 1–2, 2024

RomanIslam – Center for Comparative Empire and
Transcultural Studies (Early Islam)

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Program

Thursday, February 1, 2024

AS, Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Hamburg

10:00 Registration

10:15 **Stefan Heidemann, Kurt Franz**
(RomanIslam Center, Universität Hamburg)
Introduction and Welcome

10:45 **Stefan Heidemann**
(RomanIslam Center, Universität Hamburg)
Military Foundations in the Early Islamic Empire in Comparison:
A Case Study of al-Raqqa

11:30 **Javier Francisco**
(Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg)
An Empire of Municipalities: The Military Character of
Spanish-American Settlements

12:15 Lunch Break

14:30 **Joan Negre**
(Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica, Tarragona)
Coastal Military Foundations and the Practice of *ribāṭ* beyond the City:
Defense and Islamization in the Far-flung Shores of Sharq al-Andalus

15:15 Coffee Break

15:45 **Peter Fibiger Bang · online**
(University of Copenhagen)
Empire, Garrison Cities and the Provincialization of Power



- 16:30 **Werner Schwartz**
(Georg-August-Universität Göttingen)
The Rustamid Imamate: Military History and Building Activity
- 17:15 **Stefan Heidemann, Kurt Franz**
(RomanIslam Center, Universität Hamburg)
Roundtable Discussion: Parameters of Comparison
- 19:30 Dinner

Regensburg, remains of the Porta Pretoria, 2nd c. · Courtesy Wikimedia



Friday, February 2, 2024

AS, Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Hamburg

9:00 Stefan Heidemann

(RomanIslam Center, Universität Hamburg)

Introduction to Day 2

9:30 Michaela Konrad

(Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg)

Aspects of the Impact of Roman Army Garrisons in the Frontier Provinces of the Roman Empire

10:15 Abdelkerim Chebli · online

(Université de Jendouba)

Le système de fortification en Ifrīqiya: *ribāṭ* et *murābiṭūn* en Haut Moyen Âge

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 Mehdy Shaddel

(Aga Khan University, London)

The End of the *miṣr* and the Birth of the Classical Islamic City: From the Coming of the Marwānids to the Foundation of Baghdad

12:15 Stefan Heidemann, Kurt Franz

(RomanIslam Center, Universität Hamburg)

Concluding Roundtable Discussion: Functions of Imperial Military Foundations in Comparison

13:00 End of the Workshop

13:30 Lunch

Abstracts and short profiles

Stefan Heidemann

RomanIslam Center, Universität Hamburg



Military Foundations in the Early Islamic Empire in Comparison: A Case Study of al-Raqqa

Abstract

The Macedonian, the Roman, the Islamic, and the Hispanic Empire had all in common that they shattered old kingdoms and empires with their decisive often numerically smaller military might. The first settlements in new regions were all military in nature. Their urban culture was transformative and influential until today.

During the Umayyad and Early 'Abbāsid period the Late Antique Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean still preserved their pre-Islamic structure and were only slowly changing their pattern. The Hellenistic traditions of city planning with rectangular insulae were continued but now adapted to the needs of a changing society. In the Islamic West the function of the Roman urban model had mostly lost its defining power. The region experienced two waves of conquering communities, the Visigoth and Vandals, and the Muslim armies.

The period of the Caliphs al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī in the 8th century was a time of intensive military colonization of the empire. Large new military capital cities for the Khurāsānian army were founded, most important among them, Madīnat al-Salām (Baghdad, Iraq), al-Muḥammadiyya (Rayy, Western Iran), al-Rāfiqa (al-Raqqa, Northern Mesopotamia), and al-‘Abbāsiyya (Ṭubna, North Africa). Al-Raqqa is the best archeologically explored among them. One of the main factors in the urban colonization of the newly conquered regions was the structure of the army and Islamic law. The conquering Muslim armies, whether they were tribally organized Arabs, Iranian or Central Asian infantry and horsemen, were the non-celibatarian in character, which led to polycentric even segregated cities. The absence of public property in Islamic law, might have contributed to the absence of public and communal spaces within the cities.

Profile

Prof. Dr. Stefan Heidemann (Islamic Studies) supervised, until 2019, the ERC-Advanced Grant Project, The Early Islamic Empire at Work – The View from the Regions Toward the Center. The project explains the development of the early Islamic Empire through the transformation of regions and their interaction with the caliphal center, as well as the center’s links with transregional elites. Through topics of administrative geography, regional and transregional elites, and regional economic resources, the ERC Project has developed new understandings of the distinction between regional and transregional developments and has provided a conceptual apparatus essential for transcending tendencies of contemporary “national” history writing in the Maghreb and Spain. The study of trade is essential to its research. The exchange of precious metals and slaves were of primary importance to North Africa and Spain.

Stefan Heidemann has published on the trade of silver from the Atlas with the Middle East, and on coin circulation in al-Andalus. He also initiated and directs the “Webinar Initiative in Islamic Material Culture” in which colleagues of LMU München, Universität Bonn, and New York University participate in the field of material culture through research-based teaching; he is also a co-PI in the Hamburger Cluster of Excellence “Understanding

Written Artifacts,” where he is active in the area of “Inscribing Spaces” (epigraphy).

Stefan Heidemann is also co-director of the Center for Advanced Study “RomanIslam – Center for Comparative Empire and Transcultural Studies”, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), which brings together scholars from a wide range of disciplines working on Romanization and Islamication in Late Antiquity with a focus, though not exclusive, on the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa during the first millennium CE. The overall purpose of the Center is to explore new approaches to Romanization and Islamication in this period and set the scholarly debate on a new footing through diverse scientific activities such as this workshop on Military Foundations, *ribāṭs*, and Urbanization.

al-Raqqa (al-Rāfiqa), city wall, 8th c. © Stefan Heidemann



Javier Francisco

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



An Empire of Municipalities: The Military Character of Spanish-American Settlements

Abstract

The Spanish Empire has been rightly described as an ‘empire of municipalities’ (Espinosa, Elliott). Indeed, it was by far the most urbanized empire in the Americas amongst its European rivals though its strategy of creating different kinds of settlements depended on the local pre-Columbian and imperial conditions. When applicable, the Spanish would use existing urban structures and erect cities next or on top of indigenous settlements (this was the case in e.g. Tlaxcala, the Triple Alliance, the Andean core regions). In other regions urban infrastructure was less pronounced (e.g. in Taino, Calusa and Pueblo territory) or non-existent (e.g. in the lands of the Caribs, the Lucayans and the Apache). Then, the Spanish would found settlements from scratch. In any case, their settlements usually followed Castilian/Spanish custom with a uniform check board layout including a central plaza, cabildo, temple, political seat (governor’s house or palace) and defensive structures.

Following the example of conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages, the crown continued its strategy to use cities as beacons of political, military, judicial, economic and religious penetration in order to radiate into

large, uncontrolled territories. They, alongside mission settlements, were responsible for hispanicization and evangelization of the indigenous population as well as maintaining order and balance between key institutions such as viceroyalties, audiencias, gobernaciones, cabildos, archdioceses. Militarily, it was up to the settlements to secure the borders against indigenous or European intrusions. We can thus approach the military character of Spanish-American settlements and how they were embedded in the imperial security architecture with a preliminary typology: 1. military cities/forts founded by military agents, financially dependent on subsidiaries and with the sole goal to deter and to protect (e.g. San Agustín); 2. military cities/presidios established by military and administrative agents in regions with sovereign indigenous polities in order to protect, observe, mediate and encourage colonization (e.g. in the northern parts of New Spain); 3. frontier settlements which were municipalities with a strong military character due to their exposure to constant indigenous attacks (e.g. Santa Fé de Nuevo México); and 4. cities with a small population and a disproportionate large military personnel due to their geopolitical importance (e.g. La Habana).

Profile

Javier Francisco is a historian for European imperial history and its socio-ecological repercussions. Among his research interests are: the ecological impact of land-use, historical biodiversity assessment (terrestrial and maritime), global processes of transfer of knowledge, indigenous and local agency, imperial conflicts and social transformations. Additionally, his inter- and transdisciplinary cooperation includes projects related to post-imperial power asymmetries, ecological legacies and sustainability. His cooperation partners worked for the GiZ (development cooperation agency), Fraunhofer Institut and ScientistForFuture. His academic career stages include: the University of Tübingen (master's degree), the Freie Universität Berlin (PhD), Columbia University and Colegio de México (Visiting Scholar), the Max-Weber Kolleg in Erfurt and the University of Freiburg. He has conducted archival work in Buenos Aires, Paris, Sevilla, Den Haag and Vatican City.



Notable publications include: *Imperial Methuselah: A New Theoretical Approach on Europe's Rule in the Americas*. (expected: 2024) *Die spanisch-amerikanische Jesuitenuniversität in Córdoba, Argentinien. Transatlantische Verflechtungen und gesellschaftliche Verankerung in der Kolonialzeit*. wbg Academic, Stuttgart: 2018, "The Two Faces of the Same Coin: Star Trek's Federation and the Terran Empire," in: Sturgis, Amy; Strand, Emily (eds.). *Star Trek: Essays Exploring the Final Frontier*. Vernon Press, Wilmington: 2023 and "Conceptual Framework For Biodiversity Assessments in Global Value Chains," in: *Sustainability*, vol. 11/7: 2019. With: Stephanie Maier and Jan P. Lindner.

La Habana, main Spanish fortification in the Americas, 17th c. · Atlas Beudeker, courtesy Wikimedia



Joan Negre

Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica, Tarragona



Coastal Military Foundations and the Practice of *ribāṭ* beyond the City: Defense and Islamization in the Far-flung Shores of Sharq al-Andalus

Abstract

This communication analyses the fortification program developed on the northern coasts of Sharq al-Andalus within the framework of the process of dissemination and institutionalization of the practice of *ribāṭ* and *jihād* in early al-Andalus. The domains of Madina Tortosa, established since the 9th century as the furthestmost border of Western Dār al-Islām, present unique and certainly complex characteristics that we believe modulate different material expressions of both defensive and offensive armed spirituality. In this sense, if anything can be inferred from the archaeological and written sources, it is that the practices linked to those institutions were not performed in a chaotic and disorderly manner but were planned meticulously. The evidence clearly supports this theory, in the form of a series of fortifications and defensive enclosures that were built along the coast in the late 8th and very early 9th centuries that were capable of housing volunteer troops (*murābiṭūn*, *mujāhidūn*, *muṭṭawwiʿa* and *baḥriyyūn*) and accommodating regular troops (*ḡund*, *ḥasham* and *maḥshūdūn*) who would have reinforced these positions in times of need. *Ḥuṣūn* and *marābiṭ*, as mentioned by the sources, facilitated the permanent surveillance of the

Tortosa's main maritime and land communication networks and were the material expression of the practices that would lead to the effective consolidation of an Islamic territory in the making.

These elements would, in turn, reinforce the visibility of Muslim power in the periphery, while at the same time consolidating the presence of the new state and facilitating the dissemination of a series of norms, customs, traditions and economic patterns that would lay the foundations for a profound transformation of the Iberian Peninsula society. However, these fortified enclosures were not the only material expression of *ribāṭ* and *jihād*. The founding, in the early 9th century, of the Ribāṭ Kashkī at the mouth of the Ebro is extremely illustrative and only reinforces the sacralised and institutionalised character that these practices adopted. This institution was founded with the aim of centralising military and commercial activities and supporting other constructions linked to these activities that had been built previously. We can conclude that the spread of spiritual and military expressions relating to early Islamic institutions on the Tortosa coasts led progressively to the control and increase in enclaves aimed at consolidating and establishing this type of practice in the territory.

This fortified complex network, aimed intentionally at expanding Islam and stabilising an unstable and dangerous border area, was first of all linked almost exclusively to its military and religious functions, the *raison d'être* of those centres themselves. However, from the very beginning, the local reality had a profound influence on the scope of such constructions, which, in order to ensure their continuity and self-sufficiency, were immersed from very early on in a wide range of commercial, economic and administrative dynamics.

The Emirate's hillfort in Tossal de la Vila, Castellón, Spain © Joan Negre Pérez



A scenario that would see the far-flung shores of the Sharq al-Andalus provided the ideal conditions for early settlement in a similar way to contemporary experiences in Ifriqiya. By recognising their influence in the process of Islamisation on the margins of this new world in expansion, we can extract the keys to understanding the important role these practices played in the genesis of a new Islamic society in the Western Mediterranean.

Profile

Joan Negre is a Research Associate at the Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology based in Tarragona, and a member of the Laboratory of Archaeology and Architecture of the City. He is also the director of the Gandia Museum of Archaeology and Head of Gandia City Council's Archaeology and Heritage Service. He earned his PhD in 2013 at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, where he defended his doctoral thesis: an exhaustive historical and archaeological study of the Andalusí period in the region of Tortosa. He held various teaching positions at the university in the Department of Antiquity and Middle Ages Sciences, before moving to the Austral Centre for Scientific Research at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council in Argentina, where he was awarded two consecutive postdoctoral fellowships. His research focuses on two principal areas: the archaeology and history of the medieval Islamic world, and the spatial analysis of historical phenomena. He studies socioenvironmental dialectics by investigating human occupation strategies and their spatial signatures, a line of work consolidated through several long-term research residencies at the Università degli Studi di Siena in Italy.

Since 2019, he has been directing the archaeological projects at the emirate hillfort in Tossal de la Vila, Castellón, Spain, together with the team at Castelló Regional Council's Archaeological and Prehistorical Research Service, and the Islamic fortress of Bairén, Valencia, Spain. He currently forms part of the research projects ArqMUNIA (Prestigious architectures in almunias: Transmission of models from Antiquity to the Renaissance) and EnALFE (Between al-Andalus and Feudalism: Territorial powers and the development of early medieval defence systems in the northeastern Iberian Peninsula).

Peter Fibiger Bang

University of Copenhagen

**Empire, Garrison Cities and the Provincialization of Power****Abstract**

The history of both the Islamic and the Roman empire can be written as one of provincial take-over of the empires and gradual regional fragmentation. The stationing of the armies, often in connection with urban foundations around the provinces, were an important element in this process. Provincial armies quickly began to recruit from the conquered territories. In the Islamic caliphate, this seems relatively quickly to have led to fragmentation. A similar trend is certainly visible in the Roman case, especially from the civil wars of the third century CE onwards, where imperial power tended to break up into regional courts. Overall, however, the process seems to have operated at a slower pace. If this was so, this paper will suggest, in dialogue with the work of Chris Wickham and Keith Hopkins, it was more a result of chance than deliberate institutional design. When Augustus decided to station the major part of the legions in camps along the Rhine and the Danube, the army was situated in some of the poorest regions of the realm. The professional soldiers could not be maintained on the resources extracted from their region alone, they came to depend on the transfer of taxes from the more affluent parts of the empire. The Muslim garrison cities, on the other hand, were regularly placed in command of rich provincial hinterlands and could therefore more

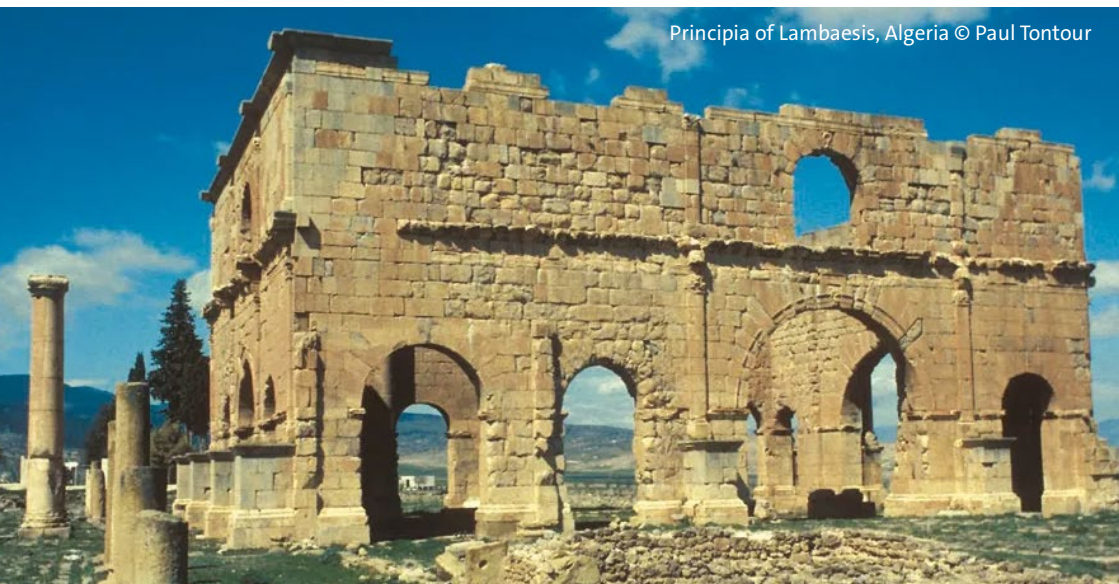
easily act independently and sever their ties to the imperial court. Or rather, this hypothesis is what this paper will pose as a question to our workshop.

Profile

Prof. Dr. Peter Fibiger Bang is Professor at the SAXO-Institute (History) at the University of Copenhagen. His research is situated at the interface of Roman history, comparative sociology, and world history. Over the last two decades he has been a leading force behind the rise of comparative studies in Roman history. His work has developed from a focus on the economy to include questions of state-formation, imperial universalism, the character of power and the shape of world history. He has been a regular contributor to the recent Stanford project resulting in two volumes comparing the Roman and Han Chinese empires. Parallel to these efforts, Bang organized an international network exploring comparisons between Rome and the Mughal, Ottoman and other tributary empires.

Selected publications include: "Empire, Civilization, and Trade. The Roman Experience in World History", in: K. Kristiansen, T. Lindkvist, J. Myrdal, eds., *Trade and Civilisation. Economic Networks and Cultural Ties, from Prehistory to the Early Modern Era*, Cambridge University Press, 494-514, (2018), *Imperier fra Oldtid til Nutid*, Columbus, (2017), and "Tributary Empires and the New Fiscal Sociology: Some Comparative Reflections," in: A. Monson & W. Scheidel, eds., *Fiscal Regimes and the Political Economy of Premodern States*, Cambridge University Press, 537-556, (2015).

Principia of Lambaesis, Algeria © Paul Tontour



Werner Schwartz

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen



The Rustamid Imamate: Military History and Building Activities

Abstract

The first two short-lived Ibādī imamates in Tripolitania (757 to 761 and 771 to 772) were successful in mobilizing Berber (sc. Amazigh) tribes to fight the Abbasid armies. For some time they even blocked the main route leading from Egypt to Ifriqiya. But according to our sources they were unable to create a stable administration, neither civil nor military. No building activity is reported in our sources.

A major change came about when a religious and military leader of Iranian origin, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam with his followers moved to Tāhart, a town in the central Maghrib that existed in pre-Islamic times. Supported by Berber tribes he established himself around 778 as Ibādī imam and ruler. In the proximity of the old town of Tāhart they created a new settlement which came to be known by the same name. This new Tāhart served as centre and seat of the Rustamid dynasty until its destruction in 296/909 as a result of the Fatimid conquest.

Besides mosques and palaces, fortifications in and around Tāhart are mentioned in written sources, giving very little detail. Only minor traces could be identified. In al-Rujbān (halfway between Nālūt and Gharyān in Libya), remnants of a mosque are attributed by local tradition to ‘Abd al-Wahhāb,

the second Rustamid imam (788 – 824). This is about all we know today of Rustamid archaeological evidence on the ground.

Imam ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam with his fighters is said to have participated together with Berber contingents of troops under commanders of their own in the siege of Ṭubna even before the founding of Tāhart. If true, this is his only confrontation with Abbasid troupes. While no military action is reported for him, there is no doubt that he was a military leader. His son and successor as imam, ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb is described as the most powerful of the Rustamids. His authority extended from Tlemcen in the west to Tripolitania in the east. In direct confrontation with the Abbasids he laid siege to Tripoli. All his other military actions relate to conflicts among tribes and fractions in and around Tāhart. Neither during his reign nor during that of his successors do we hear of Ribāṭs established to defend the realm of Islam against the infidels. The reason may well be seen in the fact that Rustamid power did not extend to the Mediterranean shore.

The same is true for all the later Rustamid rulers. All their military exploits seem to have been limited to the region of Tāhart. No expansion of their realm is reported. However, the town of Tāhart and whoever was its master at a certain time, had military importance for all tribes in the area and for passing caravans of traders and pilgrims who sought Tāhart’s protection from rapacious tribesmen.

All Rustamid rulers were called imam. This denoted their role as leader of the Ibāḍīte sect, a branch of the Kharijīs. Probably the majority of tribes of the surrounding areas that recognised the imam as their leader can be regarded as Ibāḍīs as well. With the decline of Rustamid power the attractiveness of loyalty to the Ibāḍīyya will have declined accordingly. At times it is possible to determine which creed a tribe followed; at other times we are left in the dark. It is even more difficult to find out whether religious affiliation was the cause of a conflict or at least whether it formed the background of the warring parties. In a few cases we see the other Kharijīte branch active in the Maghreb, the Ṣufriyya opposing the Ibāḍīyya.

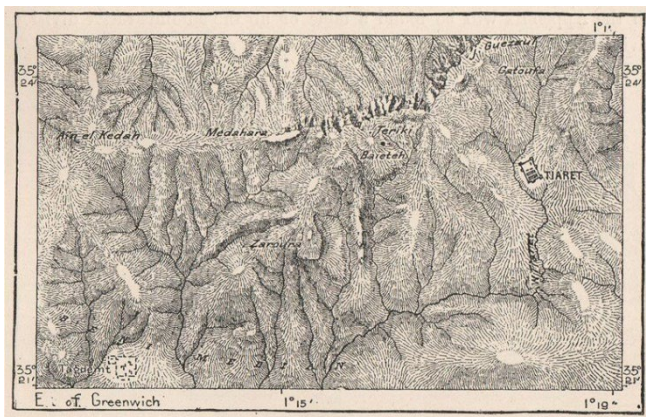
Looking at the inhabitants of Tāhart itself, it is certain that they were of multiple ethnic origin and had diverse religious background. For most of the time they were living peacefully together. Learned Muslims among them had a habit of discussing questions of theology and law across sectarian lines.

Profile

Dr. Werner Schwartz is an independent scholar with an extensive professional experience. He studied medieval and modern history, Islamic studies and philosophy at the Universities of Bonn, Vienna, and Cairo, earning his M.A. in 1975 and his Ph.D. in 1983, both from the University of Bonn.

From 1976 to 1984, Dr. Schwartz actively participated in research projects in Bonn and Sanaa subsequently. Between 1984 and 1986, he underwent librarian's training in Göttingen and Cologne and then served as the curator of oriental collections at the Göttingen University Library from 1986 to 2015. Since 2015, he has pursued independent research, focusing mainly on Islamic history, Ibadi history, history of science and technology, and manuscript studies.

Notable among Dr. Schwartz's publications are "Die Anfänge der Ibaditen in Nordafrika" in 1983, "Kitāb fihi bad' al-islām wa-sharā'i' addīn / Ibn Sallām al-Ibādī" (1986), co-edited with Sālim b. Ya'qūb and "Die Erhaltung marokkanischer Handschriften" (1996-2004), published in "Bibliothek, Forschung und Praxis" in 2005 (with R. van Issem) and "History before Islam: A Manuscript of Ibn Khaldūn" published in "'Ulūm al-makḥṭūṭ" in 2018. Among the most recent works are the edition of "Eine Chronik der Rustamiden" by Ibn al-Ṣaghīr in 2022, (a new edition with German translation) and his upcoming contribution titled "al-Samḥ oder al-Masīḥ? Zur Frage einer christlichen Gemeinde in Tāhart im 3./9. Jahrhundert" in the publication "Teachers and Students: Reflections on Learning in Near and Middle Eastern Cultures."



Élisée Reclus
1885, fig. 155:
“Tiaret and
Tagdemt, Scale
1:100.000”.

Michaela Konrad

Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg

**Aspects of the Impact of Roman Army Garrisons in the Frontier Provinces of the Roman Empire****Abstract**

The Rome army not only played an important role in the expansion of the empire, they were also, especially in the Roman imperial period, instruments of and safeguarding Roman rule and culture in the territories conquered by Rome and subsequently established as Roman provinces. In addition, there were important functions in securing and controlling the border area and inland zones, but also in the infrastructural development of the provinces. In Rome a fundamental distinction was made between the legions reserved exclusively for Roman citizens and the auxiliary units raised in the provinces. The two types of troops also differed significantly in terms of size: a legion, including its staff and administrative personnel, comprised around 6,000 men. Auxiliary units, on the other hand, a maximum of 1000 men. This distinction is relevant in many respects, but particularly when it comes to the question of the opportunities for targeted cultural transfer associated with the stationing of troops. It is self-explanatory that the larger civilian units, which generally came from the Mediterranean, played a central role in this. Characteristically, they were often found in the west, but probably also in the east of the empire, in places where more or less direct contact with the

local population was possible. Subdivisions were often detached to civilian locations in the province with police and control functions. Often, but not necessarily, the legionary sites not only had camp suburbs, but also purely civilian, urbanized parallel settlements that took over central functions for the provincial population. With populations in the five-digit range, these double settlements (legionary camp, suburbs, civilian town) reached previously unknown dimensions, especially in the north-west provinces, and were without doubt nuclei of Roman life.

The auxiliary units were different. They were generally stationed close to or on the frontier and also had suburbs, which were central meeting places, e.g. as market places.

Two models are to be pursued within the framework of the workshop. Firstly, the development of places after the withdrawal of the troops and, associated with this, the question of whether and to what extent the military genesis had a lasting effect. Secondly, and here the Orient provinces in particular should be considered, the question of what happens when troops are stationed in or near an existing civilian settlement.

In addition, all troop types have further aspects in common: due to the aim to offer the troops a basic Roman lifestyle at each garrison, the Roman army sites were from the beginning on crystallization points of Roman culture, which can be clearly retraced archaeologically in the material relics. The regular payment of the troops led to an intensification of the local economy, the establishment of regional and over-regional economic networks as well as co-operation with local groups.

A general religious transfer can be observed with the troops, which related to the entire Roman pantheon. Especially the imperial cult played an important role in the area of the troops. Its establishment in the provinces was one of the most important loyalty-building measures.

Finally, Roman military veterans played an important role in the settlement, population and social history of the provinces. As Roman citizens, they often acquired land in the neighborhood of their garrisons and thus represented a steadily growing proportion of the population in the provinces, especially in the border regions. They also exercised increasing political influence, as they often served as members of the municipal committees (*ordo decurionum*) after their discharge, even assuming the office of mayor (*duumviri*).

Profile

Michaela Konrad studied Archaeology of the Roman Provinces, Prehistory and Ancient History at the Universities of Munich and Freiburg. Since 2007 she is Full Professor for the Archaeology of the Roman Provinces at the University of Bamberg (Germany). She has conducted many excavations and surveys in Syria and specializes in the specific culture and transcultural processes within Roman border zones, also in the north-west provinces of the Roman Empire. She is full member of the German Archaeological Institute and member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Austrian Archaeological Institute at the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Notable publications include "The Roman Cemetery of Bregenz-Brigantium I" (1997), "The Late Roman Limes in Syria" (2000), "The excavations under the Niedermünster at Regensburg II. Buildings and finds of the Roman period. Evaluation" (2005) and "Emesa between Clientele Empire and Province" (2014).

Carnuntum, Reconstruction of the early imperial legionary camp



Abdelkerim Chebli

(Université de Jendouba)



Le système de fortifications en Ifrīqiya: *ribāṭ* et *murābiṭūn* en Haut Moyen Age / The Fortification System in Ifrīqiya: *ribāṭ* and *murābiṭūn* in the High Middle Ages

Abstract

Following study of the origins of the Islamic city, the foundation of military *Ribāṭs* and its presence of *Murābiṭūn* can be regarded as a driving force for the colonization and Islamization, including the foundations of cities in the Sahel, hinterland of the *Miṣr* (garrison city) of *Qayrawān*. The legal collections of *Nawāzil* (occurrences), as we find them in the encyclopedias of *Nawādir* by Ibn Abī Zayd, the *Jāmiʿ* by al-Burzulī, and the *Miʿyār* by al-Wansharīsī are indispensable sources for the historian, providing a wealth of information concerning the state organization, the society and daily life of men. Here are of particular concern the *dīwān al-jund*, the register and military administration, and the system of fortifications. The instrument of the *fatwa* as legal advice in civil and religious matters in Islam can be generally compared to its counterpart in Roman law, *Jus Respondendi*. The *Nawāzil* place Ifrīqiya in its Mediterranean environment and focus on its relationship with the *Dār al-Ḥarb*, the regions beyond the reach of Islamic law. I have selected the *Nawāzil* concerning the military and the fortification, which are scattered throughout the Malikite legal sources.

1. The development of the legal concept of Ribāt

Maliki sources are considered among the first to use the term *rabaṭ*. They mention “Ṭarsūs, Alexandria, and the Sahel of Africa.” The term *ribāt* is attached to the frontier region, the *thaghr*, and remained attached to it. The persistence in the state of ‘*ribāt*’ means according to the legal scholars, to remain in the *jihād* and guarding oneself. There are obstacles to prevent the right understanding of the legal concept of *ribāt*, because *rabaṭ* is a location for the *jihād*, and if *jihād* is also understood as an act of worship, then *rabaṭ* is rather a military institution. The *qaṣr*, the fortification, of a *rabaṭ* the place of residence of the *murābiṭūn*. However, in a *ribāt* they do not perform the ritual prayers and it is not permissible for them to fast and pray in congregation, The legal framework of *rabaṭ* and the condition of residence are defined according to the Malikī scholars: “In a village or an outpost where people stay stationed for six months; if there are connected houses and a market, then let its people congregate, otherwise not.”

Nawāzil encourage military activity and organize the legal and religious framework for soldiers. *Murābiṭūn* are considered to be in a state of war and therefore in a state of travel (non-resident). They pray *qaṣr* (meaning in a shortened manner), and are exempt from fasting and collective prayer on Fridays. Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī in his Book of Prayers, specifies the duration of residence in the duty of guarding the *thaghr*: “In a village or port, a *murābiṭ* will station himself for six months.” Such a situation never attracts ascetics and the religiously faithful. This is opposite to the hypothesis the *Rabaṭ*’s have a religious function as J. Chebbi and N. Jelloul di. Jelloul seem to confuse religious and other military terms such as, *abdāl* – *qaṣr* – *ribāt*.

2. The *ribāṭs* of Ifrīqiya and the defence system

The *ribāṭs* of Ifrīqiya, as part of a defensive system, were subject to meticulous regulation supervised by the *dīwān al-jund*, with the possibility of private intervention by volunteers or the religious elite; for example the *Qaṣr* of Ibn al-Ja’d and the *Qaṣr* of Sahl al-Qubriyānī in the 3rd / 0th century. The state is considered to be primarily responsible for the construction, restoration and maintenance of the forts. The administration of each *rabaṭ* was regarded as independent from the rest of the *rabaṭ* in managing its belongings and equipment (weapons, supplies etc.), at least during the period

of Sahnūn's (d. 240/854) term as qāḍī (judge) in the middle of the 3rd/9th century.

3. The military architecture of Rabaṭ

The coastal cities were subjected to a system fortification and protection of the coasts of Ifrīqiya. These forts were characterized by an almost uniform pattern, which we find in almost all of the cities. They were square shaped and each of them was surrounded by round towers, and a lighthouse was built on one of them being higher, overlooking the entire surrounding area and watching the sea. In its construction on ashlar masonry of local *opus africanum* type. The technique consists of erecting pillars of vertical blocks with alternating with horizontal blocks filled in with smaller blocks or bricks in between.

The majority of *rabaṭs* were in different stages of dilapidation today. The *rabaṭ* of Sousse can be considered as an example of the mentioned developments. The *rabaṭ* is a small, square-shaped castle with a side length of 38 m built with polished rock stones. Its outer walls are interspersed with circular towers at the corners. Thus, we conclude that the *rabaṭ* of Sousse, as a model of military architecture, is characterized by its lack of any decoration and an extensive use of pillars and longitudinal barrel vaults. It is the oldest landmark in the city. Such military monuments were also distinguished by their simplicity and by their almost lack of Islamic inscriptions, in contrast to contemporary religious architecture, for example the rich decoration that we find in the congregational mosque of Qayrawān.

4 . The *ribāṭs* of Ifrīqiya and the Control of Maritime Activities in the Mediterranean

We return to the function of the *ribāṭ* in preventing naval Byzantine invasions, especially from Sicily. *Nawāzil* sources provide evidence of transregional economic activity, as well as of the defense of Ifrīqiya's coasts against Rūm (Byzantium), seasonal summer and winter raids (*ṣawā'if* and *shawāṭi*). The activity of the coastal centers, like the rest of the African coastal port communities, was not limited to the war effort, but rather witnessed intense economic activity at the local and external levels. We confine ourselves by referring to the frequency and diversity of trade between the ports of the African coast, mainly Mahdīya, Sfax, and Sousse, and between southern

Europe, especially Sicily, and the East, especially Alexandria. The issues of dealing with the Byzantines are highlighted in Saḥnūn's works and the issues attributed to him in the *Nawādir* and elsewhere.

The issues of dealing with the Byzantines were repeated several times: "The Roman boat anchored on the Muslim coast with wine for sale and other things" The *Nawādir* also deal with the question of sharing the booty among the *murābiṭūn*, or in particular the questions of exchanging currencies from the beyond the Islamic jurisdiction (*dār al-ḥarb*).

And yet the *Nawāzil* of Ibn Abī Zayd prove that under the authority of Saḥnūn, "the people from beyond the Islamic jurisdiction (*ḥarbīyūn*) entered [the Islamic realm] on the condition that they were have in safe-conduct (*amān*) until they leave (...) they will be safe" and that "the Roman ships at sea asked for safety (*amān*) and they gave them safety (...) and brought them back to safety." Note that security must be recorded/documented (*amān musajjal*) and testified by witnesses.

Conclusion

The books of *Nawāzil* detail the systems for dealing with the 'people from beyond the Islamic jurisdiction (*ḥarbīyūn* from the *dār al-ḥarb*)," and the control of the activity of African coastal ports. The legal scholars were unique in raising the issues of reconstruction of the Ifriqiyān coast, settlement and exploitation, while its indigenous people remained there, as confirmed by the use of phrases "the 'Ulug of our people (*dhimmīs*)" or "from our country," "our free people (*aḥrār nā*)" and "their clients (*mawālī*)."

Profile

Dr. Abdelkerim Cheblis academic journey includes a Bachelor of Arts in Tunisia (1990), a Teaching Diploma in History from the Faculty of Arts in Sousse (1995), and a Ph.D. in Medieval History (2004) from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Tunisia.

Dr. Chebli actively participated in scholarly activities, such as editing and studying manuscripts, particularly the work of Ibn al-Dabbagh al-Qairawani (1996-97). He has also compiled Maliki legal opinions relevant to African cities during the medieval era (1997-99).

In terms of publications, Dr. Chebli's notable work includes the book "Al-Asrār Al-Jaliyah fi Al-Manāqib Al-Dhahmāniyyah" by Ibn al-Dabbāgh al-Qairawāni, published by Contrast Publishing House in Tunisia in 2015. Professionally, he has been involved in projects related to the history of Tunisian cities, contributing to the Center for Economic and Social Studies and Research in Tunisia (CERES) (1997-98) and the National Heritage Institute (1998-99). Dr. Chebli has also taught at Azad Free Islamic University (2004-2007) and at the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Damascus and Raqqa (2005-2011). Since 2011, he serves as an Assistant Professor at the Higher Institute of Humanities in Jendouba, specializing in Medieval History.

The *ribāṭ* of Monastir, Tunisia © Habib M'henni



Mehdy Shaddel

(Aga Khan University, London)



The End of the *miṣr* and the Birth of the Classical Islamic City: From the Coming of the Marwānids to the Foundation of Baghdad

Abstract

This contribution wishes to make a case for the impact of the fiscal regime on the urban structure of military cantonments in early Islam. The establishment of the *dīwān* in the wake of the Muslim conquests of the early seventh century roughly divided the inhabitants of the Caliphate into two categories: the conquered who paid tribute in the form of taxes and the conquerors who repeated the benefits in the form of stipends (*‘aṭā*) and rations (*rizq*) which they doled out to themselves. To all intents and purposes, the conquerors constituted a hereditary military caste, but over the course of time problems started to plague the system. The first problem was that payments to the conquerors assumed the form of a pension, rather than remuneration in exchange for services rendered, and consequently the government at times found it difficult to enforce service. This talk contends that the Umayyad government attempted to solve this problem in Iraq by following an inflationary policy that resulted in the loss of the real value of the *‘aṭā*, all the while refusing to adjust the rates for inflation. Bringing to light hitherto-neglected literary and papyrological evidence, I will argue that this was followed by the semi-professionalisation of the civil service and the army, whereby bureaucrats received a standard salary, in cash and on top of their

‘*aṭā*’, called *rizq* (not to be confused with rations) and the soldiery received bonuses while on tours of duty. These developments were simultaneous with the closing down of the mints at Kufa and Basra and the foundation of a new mint at Wasit, which attest to a change in the old system and the loss of Kufa and Basra’s erstwhile status. This, the talk suggests, marked the first important step in the transition of these two cities from military encampments to cities proper: agricultural development in the hinterlands of these two cities seem to proliferate at this time, as do references to guilds and professions within them. The second milestone was the Abbasid revolution and the changes it brought about in the nature of the fiscal regime and the army. Producing new evidence for a total overhaul of the fiscal regime by the Abbasids (papyrological and literary, in the form of Christian and Muslim Arabic sources, Syriac chronicles, and even apocalypses, and from Egypt, Syria, northern Mesopotamia, Iraq, and Khurasan), I show that they totally dispensed with the old system of military pay with its ‘*aṭā*’ and *rizq* payments, and inaugurated a fully professional army and bureaucracy that was paid a standard salary, in cash, that was also called *rizq*. These developments eventually resulted in a drastic change in the urban landscape of the *amṣār*: with Kufa and Basra (and eventually Wasit) having lost their original significance as cantonments, they were allowed to grow more organically and they eventually developed in a fashion more similar to the late antique cities of their surroundings. With the introduction of the professional Abbasid armies, new cities that were built to house them (most famously Baghdad) were of a wholly different character. Early Basra, Kufa, and Fustat were tribal settlements with grazing grounds but with no room for artisans and their shops; handicrafts were all imported from their administrative hinterlands for them. Baghdad, on the contrary, was divided into quarters arranged per military unit, but also with sufficient space for guilds and businesses to thrive within its boundaries. Thus, I should like to conclude, Marwanid reforms and the Abbasid revolution ushered in the transition from the early Islamic city, which had more in common with the Roman *colonia* in terms of its military function, to the classical Islamic city, which shared many characteristics with the late-Roman city in the Levant and North Africa and with the Sasanian *shahrastān* in the Iranian plateau.



Profile

Mehdy Shaddel is a scholar of Near Eastern history specialising in Islamic origins and the socio-economic, political, and religious history of the early Muslim empire. At its core, his work blends together philology with theoretical and comparative insights to address broader interdisciplinary themes such as apocalypticism and eschatology and comparative empires and state formation, with early Islam usually as a case-study. His publications have appeared in such venues as *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, *Arabica*, *Der Islam*, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, and *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*. He is currently working on a monograph, tentatively entitled *The Sufyanids and the Beginnings of the Second Muslim Civil War, 660-684 CE*, and editions and translations of the *Kitāb al-wuzarā' wa-l-kuttāb* of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdūs al-Jahshiyārī (with Robert G. Hoyland) and (with Samuel J. Noble) the Arabic versions of the pseudonymous anti-Jewish tractate *Doctrina Iacobi nuper baptizati*.

The Round City of Baghdad, modern reconstruction





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Information and Abstracts

<https://www.romanislam.uni-hamburg.de/events-news/workshops/military-foundations.html>



The workshop wants to challenge the ongoing discourse on the origins of the 'Islamic' city. It looks at military settlements and the presence of garrisons as a driving force of colonialization as well as the proliferation of Islamic civilization. Using a comparative approach to Empire Studies, the workshop aims at looking at cases of military city foundations in empires that were likewise founded by conquering military elites promoting at the same time a salvation religion, i.e., the Roman and Hispanic empires.

Often underrated—although frequently noted—is the role of the military in the increasing urbanization of the early Islamic Empire. The foundation of cities as military hubs (sg. *miṣr*), encampments (sg. *mu'askar*), or garrison cities (sg. *madīna*, *ḥiṣn*, *ribāṭ*) may be taken into account as a driving force of urbanization.

Comparatively, the foundation of cities in foreign lands is a feature of imperial expansion. Such cities serve as agents of the empire's civilization, culture, and its (salvation) religion. While other urban foundations may be in opposition to the empire, even these would largely do so on political and religious terms created by that empire. Disregarding traditional chronologies, and looking from a phenomenological point of view, three empires of western Eurasian origins offer themselves for comparison: the Roman Empire, and the Hispanic Empire in the Americas.

The workshop wants to explore in a comparative mode how military structures affected imperial urban foundations and the cultures of empires.