The Mountains, the Mosque, & the Red City: #Abd Al-Mu#min and the Almohad Legacy in Marrakesh

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Abstract

My dissertation examines twelfth-century Marrakesh in a moment of transition between two dynasties of Berber origin, the Almoravids (1040-1147) and the Almohads (1121-1269). I argue that it was under the first Almohad caliph, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, that Marrakesh developed into a thriving metropolis that attempted to translate a seminomadic, tribal past into an architectural vernacular on an imperial scale. In tracing this transition, I examine the Almohad capital city as an urban space anchored through two architectural monuments. The first chapter looks at the sites and rituals of the royal quarter, known as Tamarrakusht, which clearly defined a space along a north-south axis in which the dynasty and the local populace interacted. Within this space, the Almohads utilize the landscape as a backdrop to those ceremonies that confirm their past as Masmuda Berbers, and manipulate the topography to position themselves in an act of perpetual motion going to and coming from the nearby Atlas Mountains that serve as their ethnic homeland. The second chapter focuses on the primary extant monument of the dynasty, the Kutubiyya mosque, which I argue is reflective of Almohad concerns about asserting their dominance over and difference from the prior Almoravid dynasty. More than mere triumphalism, however, the Kutubiyya employs the architectural precedents of the Islamic West to express the spiritual precision that defined the Almohad movement. The third and final chapter examines another monument, the mosque at Tinmal, a mountain village that became a dynastic necropolis and pilgrimage site. I argue that Tinmal activates the surrounding landscape with the resonance of an ethnic homeland, developing the connection between identity and place to explore the Almohads' sectarian identity and its role in their imperial self-concept.

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Introduction

Unpacking the Legacy of Ibn Tumart and the Almohads

The contributions of the Almohad era (1121-1269) to the history of architecture and urbanism in the Islamic West resist ready analysis. The partial nature of both written and physical sources create a biased record that can be difficult to work around, while more extensive scholarship on the surrounding regions and dynastic actors have created an uneven comparative model. This study aims to redress this imbalance by approaching the architecture of the Almohad period through a holistic, interdisciplinary approach that contextualizes the city of Marrakesh, the dynastic capital, through its relationship to artistic and ritual precedents. Furthermore, I argue that particular sectarian and ethnic dimensions of the dynasty's identity can be found encoded through their architecture's relationship to the surrounding landscape, establishing a new model through which to understand Marrakesh's role in the urban history of the Maghrib.

My intention in focusing this study on Marrakesh has been to develop this model where it is most legible in time and space. As a city that was founded a mere eighty-five years prior to Almohad involvement in the urban fabric, Marrakesh reveals its twelfth-century constructions with relative clarity when compared to denser, older, multilayered cities such as Seville or Fez. It also served as the political capital of the dynasty that developed from the Almohad movement, the Muʾminids, thereby receiving greater patronage as the site of dynastic propaganda and authoritative narration.[1] I have also chosen to focus on the period of transition between the city as an Almoravid capital and its tenure under the first three Muʾminid caliphs—ʿAbd al-Muʾmin (d. 1163), Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf (d. 1184), and Abu Yusuf Yaʿqub al-Manṣur (d. 1199)—who

[1] I explain the differentiation between my use of "Almohad" versus "Muʾminid" on page 10.

represent the most internally consistent and cohesive reigns of the era, before succession struggles and various rebellions threw the caliphate into disarray. My analysis of Almohad Marrakesh is confined to a particular moment in the life of the city, one that reflects a similar moment in the life of the dynasty in which questions of origins and heritage are paramount. As such, this study examines the urban program and the rituals expressed therein that reference, confirm, or reenact this heritage.

I begin by looking at those sites in which the Muʾminid elite interacted with the Marrakesh public. Though many of these sites are no longer extant, they can be reconstructed through descriptions from primary sources, archaeological evidence, travelogues, and toponomies. This approach establishes a distinct quarter connected to and yet separate from the walled medina, establishing a tangential relationship to the wider urban project. The rituals and ceremonies that enlivened these spaces combine references to a recognizable program of expressing imperial authority in the western Mediterranean with a distinct awareness of the Berber customs underlying Almohad society. The result is a built environment that engages multivalent identities in order to occupy an interstitial space both culturally and spatially. This project is underpinned by the Muʾminids complex understanding and subtle manipulation of the surrounding landscape of the Haouz Basin in which Marrakesh is situated, and the Atlas Mountains towards the south, which craft a dramatic staging ground that magnified the Almohad *raison d'être*. Their expansion of the city traces an visual and topographical axis between the Atlas Mountains and Marrakesh, anchored through the construction of two congregational mosques.

The second chapter examines Marrakesh's defining monument under the Muʾminids, the Kutubiyya mosque, constructed in 1147 immediately after the conquest of the city. Despite its

significance as the first major dynastic monument, its confused history of construction and the anomalous plan featuring two prayer halls have frustrated scholarly analysis of the mosque, while its minimal and hierarchical ornamental program has been interpreted in light of the spiritual asceticism which characterized the Almohad movement. This chapter attempts to weave these two interpretive threads together by applying the same logic and clarity that defines the mosque's ornamental program to the site's odd arrangement, contextualizing its adjusted qibla direction in light of juridical and astronomical debates concerning how to calculate the direction of prayer. In doing so, a concentrated directionality emerges from the site in both its spatial and ornamental organization, highlighting a visual axis that will be continued in the rest of the urban program of Muʾminid royal space.

The relationship between landscape and identity is further explored in the third and final portion of this study, which discusses the remote mountain village of Tinmal as the active element which imbues the Atlas Mountains with their significance. Comparing the formal similarities between the mosque at Tinmal and the Kutubiyya establishes a tangible link between the two, while the village mosque's relationship to the surrounding mountainous landscape provides a sharp contrast. The village's place in the Almohad ethos, as well as the caliphal rituals surrounding the site, honor and reflect the movement's origins in the Atlas, and help ease the transition from religious movement to dynastic empire by providing the caliphate with a touchstone to reenact their origins as Masmuda Berbers.

This approach, examining Muʾminid architecture in the wider context of its urban and natural landscape, grants a new agency to the constructions of Almohad Marrakesh in the latter half of the twelfth century. Significantly, this agency reveals the interplay of identities woven through Muʾminid projections of authority on a physical, architectural, and geographic scale—

regional and local, Mediterranean and Berber, Muslim and Almohad. Marrakesh can thus be integrated into the longer history of architecture and urbanism in the Islamic west as an active participant rather than a passive recipient of cultural norms.

THE DOCTRINE OF IBN TUMART

Before embarking on a discussion of twelfth-century Marrakesh, we must first turn to the figure who stands at the heart of the Almohad movement, Muhammad Ibn Tumart (d. 1130). Born in 1080 to the Hargha tribe, a subsidiary of the larger Masmuda tribe that occupied the High Atlas and Anti-Atlas Mountains in the southwest part of what is today Morocco, Ibn Tumart's early life is characterized by a marked propensity for religious learning and pious devotion.[2] Like other scholars and religious figures before him, Ibn Tumart undertook a journey in pursuit of greater spiritual education (*ṭalab al-ʿilm*) that led him to the intellectual spheres of Córdoba, Alexandria, and Baghdad. His religious education and later teachings have linked him to Baghdadi theologian al-Ghazali (d. 1111), though historians as early as the twelfth-century have doubted or rejected this thesis on the basis of logical infeasibility, al-Ghazali having retired from public life well before Ibn Tumart could have reached Baghdad.[3] Some scholars have even suggested that Ibn Tumart never left the Maghrib, but that his apocryphal journey instead reflects

[2] According to Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Tumart purportedly spent long nights in the mosque reading by the light of a solitary candle. Ibn Khaldun, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar wa Dīwān al-Mubtadaʾ wa al-Khabar fī Ayyām al-ʿArab wa al-ʿAjam wa al-Barbar* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani, 1956—), 8:465.
[3] Ambrosio Huici Miranda, *Historia Política del imperio almohade* (Tetuan: Editora Marroquí, 1956), 1:29-32; Frank Griffel, "Ibn Tumart's rational proof for God's existence and his unity and his connection to the Niẓamiyya Madrasa in Baghdad," in *Los almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, ed. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 2:753-6.

a legitimizing narrative that establishes his religious education and spiritual authority.[4] Regardless, al-Ghazali clearly served as a great influence on the philosophical notions of the young Maghribi scholar, who built upon al-Ghazali's concept of *ḥisba* (literally, "reckoning"), the enjoinder upon all Muslims to promote what is good and condemn what is evil.[5] Combined with an ascetic strain and a highly developed sense of social justice, Ibn Tumart took this concept even further, developing what Vincent Cornell has called "a theology of moral and political imperatives," requiring not only the promotion of what is good, but decisive action against juridical sophistry.[6]

Two major threads of Ibn Tumart's philosophy that are particularly relevant for this study emerge from this insistence on personal action. The first is the importance of logic and understanding in personal salvation, for simple acceptance of his *ʿaqīda* ("creed" or "dogma") was not enough to guarantee full admission into the Almohad version of Islam. Ibn Tumart's doctrine was based on a revival of extreme monotheism, a belief in God's eternal Oneness, or *tawḥīd*, which prompted his followers to call themselves the *muwaḥḥidūn*, the true monthotheists, or Almohads. But beyond the well-known profession of faith that there is no God but God, Ibn Tumart pressed for full comprehension of the principles that underlined this monotheism, a particular challenge for the remote communities to which he preached, who had little access to comprehensive religious education. He saw the religious education of the masses as the duty of the elite, and hoped to replace local practice (*maʿrūf*, or "conventions") with a "more universal understanding of the Shariʿa and its sources, the Qur'an and Sunna, given

[4] Maribel Fierro, "La religion," *El retroceso territorial de al-Andalus: Almoràvides y almohades, siglos XI al XIII*, ed. by M.J. Viguera (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1997), 443.
[5] Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 451-459.
[6] Vincent Cornell, "Understanding is the Mother of Ability: Responsibility and Action in the Doctrine of Ibn Tūmart," *Studia Islamica* 66 (1987): 73.

integrity and coherence by his…opinion of the sources' meaning."[7] In pursuit of this effort, Ibn Tumart and his followers crafted two versions of the Almohad *ʿaqīda*—the first a simple profession of faith following the Qur'anic example, and another that served as a philosophical proof for the intellectual elite.[8] While establishing a hierarchy of intellectual capability, the two creeds also illustrate the spectrum of the Almohad public, revealing a particular care that the movement's core principles were widely accessible and comprehensible. To this end, Ibn Tumart preached in both Arabic and Berber dialects, while his key works were also written in both vernaculars.[9] This emphasis on a clear hierarchy and comprehensible logic would become a integral part of Almohad society, permeating visual culture as much as the social fabric of the later caliphate.

The second element of Ibn Tumart's doctrine that informs this study is his focus on communal unity, a quality that is often attributed to Ibn Tumart's Berber heritage and the practical realities of daily life in a primarily rural, harsh environment. The villages that populated the Atlas and Anti-Atlas were small and close-knit, dependent on subsistence agriculture and herding that was labor-intensive and necessarily communal.[10] Just as the villages lived and died by their ability to work together, so too would Ibn Tumart's band of religious reformers survive by a shared sense of moral authority and the imperative to spread the Almohad doctrine far and wide. This implied, at least during Ibn Tumart's lifetime, that all those who refused to accept the tenets of Almohadism posed a threat to the movement's unity, and Ibn Tumart likens twelfth-

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[7] Amira Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 250.
[8] Dominique Urboy, *Penseurs d'al-Andalus: la vie intellectuelle à Cordoue et Seville au temps des empires berbères* (Toulouse: Editions du CNRS, 1990), 97.
[9] Anonymous, *Kitāb al-ḥulal al-mawshiyya fī dhikr al-akhbār al-marrākushiyya* (Tunis: Maṭbaʿat al-Taqaddum al-Islāmiyya, 1979), 109.
[10] Allen J. Fromherz, *The Almohads: The Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 20.

century Christians, Jews, and even dissenting Muslims to the early communities of the seventh-century Hijaz who doubted the Prophet Muhammad.[11] It is this tendency which has often led scholars to couch the aesthetics of the Almohad era in explicitly religious rhetoric; certainly the Almohad habit of whitewashing mosques as part of a ritual purification gives credence to this theory, while the geometric and hierarchical ornamental schema emphasized their dogmatic differences from the lavish floral motifs favored by their Almoravid predecessors.[12]

But this insistence on a cohesive community can also be related to the notion of *ʿaṣabiyya*. Alternately translated as "tribal solidarity," "esprit de corps," "clannishness," and even "nationalism," the term resists any simple definition that does not carry colonial or racialized overtones. It is perhaps most generally described as a commonality fostering ties of loyalty within a group, with the implication that the group faces some sort of external threat.[13] For the early Almohads, this threat is embodied by their Almoravid predecessors (1040-1147), whose adherence to Maliki doctrine and a perceived anthropomorphism of the divine provided the ideal counterpart against which to rally.[14] Ibn Tumart, conscious of the potential power of a united Berber community and keenly aware of the complex political network connecting the various tribes and clans, based the structure of his nascent movement on the notion of *ʿaṣabiyya*. A disciplined monotheism and hierarchical organization was supported by the incorporation of Berber customs on a formalized scale, institutions like the *āsmās*, a communal meal used to confirm tribal alliances, and the *agrao*, a tribal council of elders upon which Ibn Tumart would base his Council of Ten, a group of his most trusted disciples from among a variety of Maghribi

[11] Amira Bennison, "Almohad *tawḥīd* and its implications for religious difference," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2, no. 2 (2010): 203.
[12] Fromherz, *The Almohads*, 44.
[13] Sénén García, "The Masmuda Berbers and Ibn Tumart: an Ethnographic Interpretation of the Rise of the Almohad Movement," *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 18, no. 1 (1990), 3.
[14] Cornell, "Understanding is the Mother of Ability," 82.

tribal backgrounds.[15] He also employed a ritual known as the *tamyīz* ("distinction"), a fluctuating category of social organization that most usually referred to battle tactics, but could also refer to the killing of disloyal tribal members.[16]

These related themes of Ibn Tumart's doctrine, logic and unity, center around the charismatic figure of the spiritual leader himself. Declared the *mahdī* in 1121 (a messianic figure responsible for reviving the true faith and ushering in an era of righteous peace before the end of days), Ibn Tumart's public persona became imbued with an air of infallibility, heightened by his allusions to signs in the Hadith prophesying his arrival.[17] More than just a religious figure, the role of the *mahdī* bore active military and political dimensions as well, neatly embodying the doctrine of social action and personal responsibility developed in the early days of Ibn Tumart's proselytizing. The implications of conflating the movement with its central figure would, perhaps unsurprisingly, have lasting consequences as the movement moved beyond its founder's tenure.

FROM "ALMOHAD" TO "MUʾMINID"

As part of Ibn Tumart's insistence on active promotion of Almohadism, his followers carried out a program of *jihād* (holy war), primarily targeted against the Almoravids, that drew them out of their mountain refuge in a series of raids on surrounding territories. Though these raids were successful when focused on the smaller, isolated Almoravid fortresses in the Atlas foothills, the Almohads were markedly outmatched on the open plain. When they launched a direct attack on

[15] These customs, as well as the notion of *ʿaṣabiyya*, are explored further in Chapter One, "Marrakesh's Almoravid Foundations and the Almohad Response."
[16] Fromherz, *The Almohads*, 96-97.
[17] *Kitāb al-Ḥulal al-Mawshīyya*, 107; Huici Miranda, *Historia política*, 1:61-64; Ali Ibn Abī Zarʿ, *al-Anīs al-Muṭrib bi Rawḍ al-Qirṭās fī Akhbār Mulūk al-Maghrib wa Taʾrīkh Madīnat Fās*, ed. by Abdelwahab Benmansour (Rabat: Imprimerie Royale, 1999), 226-227.

Marrakesh in 1130, the Almohads were caught between the city's standing army and the Almoravid contingents that arrived as reinforcements, a disastrous defeat which saw many leading Almohad commanders slain.[18] Shortly afterwards, Ibn Tumart disappeared from public life, leaving a vacuum at the very heart of the movement he began. His hagiography, written by Almohad disciple and contemporary al-Baydhaq (d. after 1164), describes this time as a period of seclusion or occultation, in which the *mahdī* communed only with his sister, Zaynab, and one of his closest confidants, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin.[19] Other sources, less intimately connected with the movement's mythmaking, say that Ibn Tumart died in 1130, and that the period of occultation was intended as a buffer in which to refocus the Almohads' efforts around a successor.[20] Three years later, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin was declared the new leader of the Almohads, securing the loyalty of the Council of Ten and taking responsibility for overhauling the Almohads' military strategies. He redirected their efforts towards alienating the Almoravids from their allies through the gradual conquest of the Atlas and Rif mountain ranges, bringing the rest of the Maghrib into the Almohad fold before returning to Marrakesh in 1147, this time successfully taking control of the city.

ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's ascension to leadership of the Almohad movement was by no means a natural transition. As shall be explored throughout this dissertation, he faced a number of obstacles, both in the early days of consolidating his authority and throughout his reign, which underscored the inherent instability of the model established under Ibn Tumart. Crafted so intently on the cult of personality, the movement threatened to collapse with each passing

[18] Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 69.
[19] ʿAli al-Ṣanhājī al-Baydhaq, *Kitāb akhbār al-Mahdī Ibn Tūmart*, ed. by Abd al-Ḥamīd Hajiyāt (Algiers: al-Sharika al-Waṭaniyya li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 1975), 77.
[20] ʿAbd al-Raḥman Ibn Khaldun, *Histoire des Berbères*, trans. W. MacGuckin de Slane, 4 vols, (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1925-6), 2:173.

generation, and part of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's agenda as the Almohad leader was to reframe its social hierarchy from an elected leadership based on religious and ethno-political ties to one of hereditary rule. Shifting the balance of power not only from the collective Almohad elite, which primarily consisted of Masmuda tribesmen, to his own Zenata lineage was contentious in the extreme, requiring a delicate negotiation between the spiritual and religious needs of the Almohad community, and the political and military demands of empire. As I demonstrate over the course of this study, the development of Marrakesh under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin reflects this tension and creates an environment that constantly reaffirms his connections to Ibn Tumart and the early days of the Almohads.

It is precisely this tension, and the negotiation thereof, that necessitates a scholarly distinction between the term "Almohad," as referring to Ibn Tumart's religious doctrine and its followers, and "Muʾminid," as pertains to the dynastic efforts of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin and his successors. I do not mean to intend that the two spheres are entirely separate, which would be a contemporary sematic fallacy, but rather to highlight the two as operational modes of communicating identity. The medieval sources maintain the use of term *al-muwaḥḥid* to describe any and all elements of dynastic activity, but this has perhaps been one of the fundamental causes for reading the material of this era in almost exclusively religious terms. ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's architectural and ritual programs make direct appeals to this religious identity, certainly, but are set apart from it by that very appeal, revealing an anxiety surrounding his caliphate's continued authority. Moreover, in the final decades of the dynasty's reign in the Maghrib, the role of Almohadism in the imperial self-concept is diminished, and even rejected outright at one point in a desperate attempt to avoid the factionalism plaguing the empire.[21] Thus,

[21] Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 116.

rather than conflating these two modes together, I attempt to distinguish between them in order to better explore the key moment of transition in the latter half of the twelfth century. The Almohad movement and Muʾminid dynasty are intimately linked, but the complex, fluctuating relationship between them requires their consideration as distinct motives.

SOME HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONCERNS

THE ARCHITECTURAL RECORD AND THE POSTCOLONIAL LEGACY

One of the primary challenges in addressing Muʾminid architecture is the partial nature of the material record, as many of the dynasty's monuments have been destroyed or else adapted and renovated to such a degree that the original structures are difficult to discern. This is particularly true for the Muʾminid monuments on the Iberian Peninsula, where the post-Reconquista patterns of conversion have obscured the subtle ornamental hierarchies, striking whitewash, and simple materiality that is so characteristic of the dynasty's architecture, as we shall see in the discussion of the Kutubiyya and Tinmal mosques (Chapters Two and Three, respectively). The Great Mosque of Seville, for example, constructed under the reign of the second Muʾminid caliph ʿAbu Yaʿqub Yusuf (d. 1184), was converted to a cathedral in 1248. After an earthquake damaged the structure in the fifteenth century, the Muʾminid structure was demolished to make way for a Gothic cathedral in its stead.[22] The North African material, on the other hand, escaped the wave of conversion, but has faced issues of preservation and neglect in the intervening centuries. The constructions in Rabat were almost completely abandoned after the fall of the Almohads in 1269,

[22] Walter Matthew Gallichan, *The Story of Seville* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1925), 85.

leaving the congregational mosque unfinished, while the Muʾminid royal quarter in Marrakesh was gradually subsumed into the urban sprawl. Remote sites such as Tinmal faded into political obscurity with only local communities and visiting pilgrims to serve as caretakers.

The positive perspective on this neglect is that the program of Muʾminid urban involvement remains comparatively legible through a combination of archaeological excavation and survey studies. In the 1920s, the French duo of Henri Basset and Henri Terrasse undertook a monographic study of Almohad architecture in North Africa, bringing to light a number of sites that are still considered hallmarks of the genre, such the mosque at Tinmal and the minaret of the Kutubiyya mosque(s).[23] Terrasse even went so far as to publish a brief history of Morocco, in which he explores how Morocco's unique geographic and social structure combined to make it both insular and unified as a region.[24] While the study compiled by Basset and Terrasse was and is a useful compendium, it remains largely descriptive, in the vein of their contemporary K. A. C. Creswell, and offers little in the way of analysis. Leopoldo Torres Balbás was next to take up the study of the two Berber dynasties, publishing a volume on the production of the Almohads, the Nasrids, and the "Mudéjar" as part of a larger collection on the arts of Spain in 1949, as well as a more focused volume on the Almoravids and Almohads in 1955.[25] His work continued that of his predecessors, categorizing Almoravid and Almohad ornament and structural elements into a number of features including T-shaped hypostyle mosques, horseshoe arches, *muqarnas* domes, and carved wooden ceilings. In his smaller, more focused volume, he conflates both dynasties in

[23] Henri Basset and Henri Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et fortresses almohades* (Paris; Maisonneuve & Larose, 2001).
[24] Henri Terrasse, *History of Morocco*, trans. by Hilary Tee (Casablanca: Éditions Atlantides, 1952).
[25] Leopoldo Torres Balbás, *Arte almohade. Arte nazarí. Arte mudéjar* (Madrid: Editorial Plus-Ultra, 1949); Leopoldo Torres Balbás, *Artes almoravide y almohade* (Madris: Instituto de Estudios Africanos, Instituto Diego Velázquez, del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1955).

his discussion of their artistic production, which is organized typologically rather than chronologically. The result is that Almoravid and Almohad examples appear side by side, the Qarawiyyin mosque in Fez compared with the Kutubiyya in Marrakesh, occluding any meaningful distinction between the two save that the former, in his words at least, adopts a fuller interpretation of *ṭāʿifa* (referring to the "petty kingships" of al-Andalus) ornamental decoration while the latter remains "simple and austere" in response.

Thus the scholarship of the first half of the twentieth century remained largely descriptive and with little meaningful analysis. The two dynasties were treated as monolithic entities that were "seduced" by Andalusi idioms (in the case of the Almoravids) or else remained static throughout their tenure (as with the Almohads). More recently, scholars such as Mariam Rosser-Owen, Glaire Anderson, Cynthia Robinson, Jessica Streit, and Amira Bennison have called for a more contextualized analysis of both of these periods. Rosser-Owen and Anderson have recognized the disciplinary boundaries that have sidelined the contributions of both dynasties, noting that the Maghrib is consistently placed at the periphery, whether one is examining the Islamic heartland, the Mediterranean, or al-Andalus.[26] Robinson, Streit, and Bennison have brought nuanced and sophisticated approaches to the Maghribi material, drawing on understudied textual sources and new methodological approaches to highlight the heretofore unacknowledged contributions of the Almoravid and Almohad dynasties. Their works form an integral part of this study, which situates the architecture of the Muʾminid dynasty in dialogue with western Islamic precedents as understood through the lens of a distinctly Maghribi populace.

[26] Mariam Rosser-Owen, "Andalusia Spolia in Medieval Morocco: 'Architectural Politics, Political Architecture,'" *Medieval Encounters* 20 (2014), 153-155; Glaire Anderson, "Early Mosque Architecture in al-Andalus and the Maghreb," *Cambridge History of World Religious Architecture* (forthcoming), 15.

THE PROBLEM OF BERBER IDENTITY AND ETHNICITY

One of the chief characteristics connecting the Almoravids, who came from the Sanhaja confederation, and the Almohads, who came from the Masmuda, is their awareness of their identity as Berbers and the steps they take in addressing that identity. Politically, socially, and linguistically, a sense of tribal and ethnic identity pervades the sources chronicling the rise and fall of the Almoravid and Almohad empires, indicating a contemporary medieval acknowledgement of these communities as distinct categories of belonging by the end of the eleventh century. As noted by Helena de Felipe, the category of "Berber" coalesced into a coherent identity (as distinct from Andalusi or Arab) some time between the collapse of the caliphate in Cordoba at the beginning of the century and the arrival of the Almoravids on the Iberian Peninsula in 1086. The civil war (*fitna*) which had splintered the caliphate into competing factions (*ṭāʾifa*, pl. *ṭawāʾif*) was blamed on the Berber mercenaries that had formed the bulk of the Umayyad army, sowing discord among various political entities through their own tribal vendettas.[27] The resulting friction was couched in terms of Andalusi versus Maghribi, Arab versus Berber, and though this dichotomy is vastly oversimplified, it indicates a constructed difference in their narrative self-fashionings that had tangible consequences. The tribal structures that had formed that basis of Maghribi society had been eclipsed by the urban network of al-Andalus to such a degree that when the Almoravid emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin (d. 1106) arrived in Seville, the king of Seville lamented to him: "Among us, the Arabs of al-

[27] Helena de Felipe, "From the Maghreb to al-Andalus: Berbers in a Medieval Islamic Society," *North African Mosaic: A Cultural Reappraisal of Ethnic and Religious Minorities*, ed. by Nabil Boudraa and Joseph Krause, 162.

Andalus, tribes are lost, unity is divided, and genealogies have been altered…we are become a people with neither kinship nor family."[28]

For the Almoravids and Almohads, who relied upon tribal structures in the development of their respective movements, their ethnic identity was something that now needed to be contended with, especially with the expansion of their empires and the incorporation of heterogeneous groups (including other tribal confederations). A key element in this struggle was the concept of *aṣabiyya*, which acted as a binding force among clan groups. In the case of the Almoravids, whose elite was formed from the Sanhaja tribe that controlled the region south of the Atlas Mountains, *aṣabiyya* was so deeply woven into the political structures shaping their empire that they failed to establish local loyalties or incorporate other tribal elites.[29] By contrast, while *aṣabiyya* helped to structure the Almohad social hierarchies in fundamental and complex ways, the role of Almohadism superseded any specific clan loyalties, at least in theory. According to the *Kitāb al-Ansāb* ("The Book of Genealogies") that was compiled during the height of the Almohad era, one's fate was not determined by ancestry or tribal relationships, but rather through personal action and piety, reflecting Ibn Tumart's doctrinal emphasis on individual responsibility. It argued for the abandonment of names and ancestries according to Qur'anic principles, and yet the text's primary purpose is to collect and organize the Maghribi tribes according to their contributions to the Almohad cause. The *Kitāb al-Ansāb* consequently

[28] *Kitāb al-Ḥulal al-Mawshīyya*, 45-46.
[29] See Amira Bennison, "Tribal Identities and the Formation of the Almohad Élite: the Salutory Tale of Ibn ʿAṭiyya," *Biografías magrebíes: identidades y grupos religiosos, sociales y políticos en el Magreb medieval*, ed. by Mohamed Meouak (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (2012) 249-250; Ronald Messier, "Rethinking the Almoravids, Rethinking Ibn Khaldun," *Journal of North African Studies* 6, no. 1 (2001), 75.

encodes tribal structures into the profession of faith, essentially expanding the notion of *aṣabiyya* to encompass all those who profess themselves Almohads.[30]

Despite its role as a key element in the Almohad ethos, the role of *aṣabiyya* and its implications for tribal identity are difficult to assess directly due to a number of academic and practical factors. Most significantly is the problem of written sources; the majority of extant texts detailing the rise of the Almohads and the reign of the Muʾminid caliphate are written in Arabic, and thus express a bias that overlooks the role of Berber cultures and languages in Almohad society. Primary sources from the period include Ibn Sahib al-Salat's *Tārikh al-mann bil-imāma ʿala al-mustaḍʿafīn* ("The History of the Favor of the Imamate Upon the Oppressed") and Al-Baydhaq's *Kitab Akhbar al-Mahdi ibn Tumart wa ibtidaʾ dawlat al-muwaḥḥidin* ("The Book of the Affairs of the Mahdi Ibn Tumart and the Beginning of the Almohad Empire"). Ibn Sahib al-Salat (d. 1198), who served the Muʾminid court during the reign of Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf, was of Andalusi origin and wrote his text in Arabic. Al-Baydhaq, who was a contemporary and acolyte of Ibn Tumart's, spoke a Berber dialect as his first language, but again, wrote his text in Arabic, likely for its formal qualities and wide-ranging fluency. Yet elements of Berber dialect can be traced in the text through various colloquial phrases that do not appear Arabic in origin, or have distinctly Maghribi connotations.[31] Al-Marrakushi's (d. 1224) *Kitāb al-Muʿjib fī akhbār al-Maghrib* ("The Admirable Book on the Accounts of the Maghrib"), written during a period of dynastic conflict within the empire, is more critical of the Muʾminids and Ibn Tumart, though the author explicitly professes his personal Almohadism and respect for the Masmuda.

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[30] Fromherz, *The Almohads*, 89-91.
[31] A. Huici Miranda, "Al-Baydhak," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, accessed April 18, 2018, <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prodı.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1311>. For a full discussion of Berber languages in this period, see Mohamed Meouak, *La langue berbère au Maghreb médiéval: textes, contextes, analyses* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015).

Later authors covered the period from a chronological distance—Ibn Khaldun most obviously, but also Ibn Sammak's (d. after 1381) *Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya fī dhikr al-akhbār al-marrākushiyya* ("The Raiment of Many Colors in Recalling the Matters of Marrakesh"), Ibn Idhari's (d. after 1312) *Bayān al-mughrib fī akhbār al-Andalus wa al-Maghrib* ("An Illustration of that which is Wonderous Concerning Al-Andalus and the Maghrib"), and Ibn Abi Zarʿ's *Al-Anīs al-Muṭrib bi Rawḍ al-Qirṭās fī Akhbār al-Mulūk al-Maghrib wa Taʾrīkh Madīnat Fās* ("The intimacy and delights of the Gardens of Paper recounting the Events of the Kings of Morocco and the History of the City of Fez"). Despite these authors' Maghribi origins, their writing is decidedly influenced by a process of "de-Almohadization" that was part of the Marinid effort to distance themselves from both the movement and its hierarchical social structures. This involved relocating the capital city from Marrakesh to Fez, and abandoning tribal rhetoric as an organizing principle.

The integral role of Berber society—and specifically Masmuda practices—in crafting an Almohad identity is undeniable, but tracing this role through the material record is difficult at best, given the societal preference for temporary or vernacular structures and a general aversion to urban space. If *aṣabiyya* provides the framework for organizing Almohad society, the role of the city and urban collectivity threatens to undermine this organization, as seen in the above quote from the king of Seville. This study examines the tension posed by the very concept of a capital city for a dynasty whose ethnic and sectarian identity was intimately tied to its non-urban origins, and the subtle yet sophisticated manipulation of topography and space used to negotiate this tension. As I will argue, the Muʾminid approach to the urban project of Marrakesh created a city that neither abandoned their *aṣabiyya* nor gave into it, but rather held it in stasis.

THE SPREAD OF ISLAM AND URBANISM IN THE MAGHRIB

In order to understand the significance of Almohad Marrakech and the roles ethnicity and landscape played in its conception, we have to understand the trajectory of urban development in North Africa, a process in which the Berbers appear to have been excluded until the eleventh century. Urban growth in the Maghrib took a different trajectory than in Mesopotamia, Iberia, and much of the rest of the Mediterranean. Many cities in the Mediterranean basin were established over Roman foundations, taking advantage of a preexisting fabric that was then allowed to develop organically as centralized Roman rule fractured and dissipated, a phenomenon well-documented on the Iberian Peninsula at sites such as Zaragoza and Mérida.[32] In the Maghrib, however, particularly in what is today Morocco, these foundations were few in number. Rome abandoned North Africa in 285 CE, having established only two coastal entrepots at Ceuta and Tangier and only one inland center at Volubilis.[33] These urban establishments continued to be inhabited, but they never served as social or political centers for the region, and it was not until the Islamic conquests of the eighth century that North Africa experienced urban growth on a larger scale. Settlements established by Arab invaders in the eighth century were organized around the requirements for a primarily Muslim audience—a centrally located great mosque, a hierarchically organized market, public baths, a gubernatorial complex, and a wall system.[34]

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[32] Michael Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain and its Cities* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 244-249.
[33] Hugh Kennedy, "Inherited Cities," *The City in the Islamic World*, ed. by Salma K. Jayyusi, Renata Holod, Antillio Petruccioli, and André Raymond (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008), 111.
[34] These characteristics defined what mid-century scholars called "the Islamic city" prototype. Much has since been written overturning this concept, which was rooted in the access made available to scholars through the colonial project, skewing the data towards what in actuality was

Maghribi cities, such as Qayrawan and Fez, also functioned as frontier zones during the initial expansion of Islam throughout the eighth century, serving as points from which Arab-Muslim invaders could control the surrounding region. However, few Moroccan cities ever fully developed into the *madīnas* that signified fully-fledged urban metropolises. Under the hegemony of the Idrisids (788-974), a dynasty founded by the Iraqi exile Idris I (r. 788-791), the early medieval period in the region was characterized by urban centers, such as Nakur and Basra, that revolved around agricultural production and the ability to control the crop surplus.[35] While political and military activity was evident at these sites, the hierarchy established by a centrally organized agrarian model meant that power was often diffuse and reliant on client ties with the local populations.

It was not until the rise of the so-called Berber dynasties that this model begins to change. Starting with the Almoravids in the late eleventh century, there was a distinct shift toward an urban model that functioned as part of a socio-political system rather than as an isolated consolidation of agricultural production.[36] This phenomenon can be attributed to a number of changes in the wider Mediterranean sphere—including the growing importance of long-distance trade that passed through the region, a power vacuum created by the fragmentation of the Andalusi Umayyad caliphal empire in the early eleventh century, and the diminished hegemony of the Fatimid and Abbasid caliphates to the east in the twelfth century. Various Berber communities had been frustrated with the persistent tradition in North Africa that authority was

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a North African type. For more on this, see André Raymond, "Islamic City, Arab City: Orientalist myths and recent views," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21, no. 1 (1994), 3-18; and Janet Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City—Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no. 2 (1987), 155-176.

[35] James L. Boone, et al., "Archaeological and Historical Approaches to Complex Societies: The Islamic States of Medieval Morocco," *American Anthropologist* 92 (1990), 631.

[36] Ibid.

to be derived only from a shared ancestry with the Prophet Muhammad—which effectively marginalized them since they could claim no such ties. This led to disaffection couched in almost exclusively ethnic terms and inspired a soteriological narrative in which the Berbers were the restorers of a faith betrayed by the Arabs.[37] The movements that propelled both the Almoravids and the Almohads to power built upon this rhetoric to establish collective feeling. The growing emphasis on connectivity would appear to correlate to the work of archaeologists like Charles Redman, who suggest that a distinctive sociopolitical context for the foundation of cities in the medieval Maghrib emerged under the Almoravid and Almohad dynasties. Access to and control of long-distance trade, which invariably passed through the Mediterranean network of coastal entrepots, had become an increasingly important factor in establishing regional hegemony, and in the extreme west of the Maghrib (in what is today Morocco), trading was dominated by the lucrative gold market.[38] Bridging Sub-Saharan Africa with the Mediterranean, the region was uniquely positioned to establish a gold monopoly, providing the Islamic world and much of Europe with its gold supply. The trans-Saharan caravan routes convened at Sijilmasa, a semi-mythological city described as the African El Dorado; by controlling Sijilmasa, one could fund an empire and establish a certain economic authority over regional rivals like the *ṭāʾifa* states and Fatimid Cairo.[39] However, Sijilmasa's wealth also lent it a certain independence, and while dynasties sought to control the city, their direct interference was rarely tolerated. Instead, this

[37] Helena de Felipe, "From the Maghrib to al-Andalus," 152; Ignacio Sánchez, "Ethnic disaffection and dynastic legitimacy in the early Almohad period: Ibn Tumart's *translatio studii et imperii*," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2 (2010), 177.
[38] James L. Boone, et al., "Archaeological and Historical Approaches to Complex Societies: The Islamic States of Medieval Morocco," *American Anthropologist* 92 (1990), 631; See also Charles Redman, *Qsar es-Seghir: an archaeological view of medieval life* (Orlando: Academic Press, 1986).
[39] Ronald A. Messier and James A. Miller, *The Last Civilized Place: Sijilmasa and its Saharan destiny* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 19, 109-116.

control was mediated by establishing a capital city just over the Atlas Mountains—Marrakesh, a new model of urbanism in the Maghrib.

Chapter One

Marrakesh's Almoravid Foundations and the Almohad Response

"If one were to say that Marrakesh is perfect, it is not due to the perfection of one of its parts, but of its whole."

- attrib. ʿAbd al-Waḥid al-Marrakushi (d. after 1224)

This quote, attributed to the thirteenth-century historian and native of the city al-Marrakushi, perhaps best encapsulates the Almohad approach to urban development, yet also the difficulty in defining and analyzing those elements that made up their contribution to Marrakesh. A direct analysis of the medieval city is hampered by the layers of destruction, renovation, and rebuilding that cover the area. Little of the original Almohad plan remains extant, as successive generations of rulers and governors added to and adapted the quarter for their own purposes. But through an analysis of historical records in conjunction with archaeological surveys, we can begin to reconstruct the organizational schema of the twelfth century. What emerges is a directed response to the Almoravid city, defined by the walled madina, through the expansion of Marrakesh towards the southwest. Featuring not only a fortified palace and royal quarter (collectively known as Tamarrakusht, the feminine form of "Marrakesh"), but a large esplanade and expansive walled garden as well, the early Almohad constructions all follow a topographical incline into the Atlas foothills outside the city. This urban expansion formed a dramatic and effective staging ground for expressions of caliphal authority for ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's nascent dynasty. This chapter explores how these sites negotiated the relationship between the public and the elite in a clear and directed manner, engaging the existing framework (both urban and topographical) to express a new imperial identity and attitude about the capital city. It reveals a particular concern for how Marrakesh was to function within the empire and what the city meant

to the Muʾminids, expressing a tension toward urban space intimately related to the dynasty's sectarian identity as Masmuda Berbers.

THE CITY'S FOUNDATIONS

Before addressing the Muʾminids' development of Marrakesh's southwestern quarter, it is first necessary to consider this development in comparison to the Almoravid urban fabric, particularly with respect to the choices made in the siting and organization of the city. Founded in 1062 by the Almoravid emir Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar (d. 1087), Marrakesh is situated in a low-lying basin known as the Haouz, which extends northwards from the slopes of the High Atlas Mountains. The wide, semicircular basin sits approximately fifteen-hundred feet above sea level, gently sloping down towards the Wadi Tensift, which borders Marrakesh to the north, approximately three miles from the present-day city limits (fig. 1.1).[40] The river begins as a mountain spring collecting snow runoff near the Tizi-n-Tichka pass before flowing south and towards the west, eventually emptying out into the Atlantic Ocean over a course of nearly 250 kilometers. A number of smaller tributaries feed into the Tensift—the Ourika, the Chichaoua, and the N'Fiss—which also originate as mountain streams, creating a delicate network of waterways spreading out from the mountains into the Haouz below. However, the inconsistent nature of these wadis—their water flow is irregular at best, and the Tensift often dries up completely during the long summers—posed a challenge to large-scale development in the region. Rainfall in the Haouz is rare, and snowmelt from the mountains permeates only the uppermost layers of the soil, making

[40] C. Edmund Bosworth, ed., "Marrakesh," *Historic Cities of the Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 319. A bridge dating to the Almohad era crosses the Tansift along the current route to Casablanca.

long-term agricultural efforts beyond seasonal herding extremely difficult.[41] Moreover, while the Atlas remains snow-capped eight months out of the year, the Haouz vacillates between mild winters and extreme summers, with temperatures regularly exceeding 50°C, adding to the already harsh conditions.

Despite these deterrents, the Haouz basin was of great strategic importance to the Almoravids during their consolidation south of the Atlas and their expansion northwards. In 1058, the Almoravids—then led by founder and Maliki theologian Abdullah Ibn Yasin (d. 1059) and the chief of the Lamtuna tribe, Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar—negotiated a truce with the Masmuda tribes to cross through the treacherous Atlas Mountain passes, the Masmuda homeland.[42] The two groups looked to make common cause against the Zenata Berbers who controlled Fez and were effectively the guardians into the central Maghrib. To establish their foothold in the Haouz, the Almoravid force laid siege to Aghmat, a commercial center located in the Atlas foothills along the Wadi Ourika. The town was likely the most substantial settlement in the region prior to the founding of Marrakesh, and though archaeological excavations have yet to reveal the extent of this town's pre-Almoravid built fabric, historical sources confirm that it was large enough and wealthy enough to attract migrants from al-Andalus and Ifriqiyya fleeing political upheaval, as well as a substantial Jewish population.[43] The siege was short, and settled through negotiations with the local nobles representing the two branches of the Masmuda that occupied Aghmat, the Warika (from which the nearby wadi takes its name) and the Haylana. There followed a period of about a decade marked by intense negotiations in which it became clear that the Almoravids

[41] Ibid.
[42] Amira K. Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 32.
[43] Ibid. The excavations in question have been spearheaded by Jean-Pierre Van Staevel, Ronald Messier, and Abdullah Fili. Their work has uncovered the remains of an Almoravid-era palace, a hammam, and congregational mosque.

intended to settle in Aghmat, not merely garrison their troops there, putting a substantial strain on the town's infrastructure and resources. Sometime between 1062 and 1072, the effort became too much to sustain and the local representatives of the Warika and Haylana asked the Almoravids to settle elsewhere.

Naturally such a request must have been phrased more politely, and as it forms part of the foundation legend of Marrakesh, medieval historians have mythologized the transition from one city to the other, transforming it into a divinely ordained moment reminiscent of the Prophet Muhammad's move to Medina. Having confessed to Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar that Aghmat could no longer sustain the Almoravid forces, the local tribes offered him a plot of land between the tribes' territories and apparently uninhabited except for "a few ostriches and colocynth plants, and therefore suitable for desert nomads."[44] Ibn ʿIdhari dates the foundation of Marrakesh to 1070, and depicts Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar as toiling alongside the common laborer to erect his fortress referred to as the Qasr al-Hajar ("the Stone Castle"), but a far more intriguing and unusual figure is his wife Zaynab.[45] Described by Ibn ʿIdhari as a sorceress in league with the jinn, it is more likely that she was a wealthy widow of independent means, who married Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar as part of the consolidation between Almoravid forces and the Aghmat elite.[46] In 1071, before leaving Marrakesh to combat insurrection in Sijilmasa, and perhaps having some premonition of his own death, Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar divorced Zaynab and left Marrakesh in the hands of his cousin and second-in-command Yusuf ibn Tashfin (d. 1106) on the condition that he marry Zaynab after the legal waiting period had passed.[47] Thus, the wealth of a prominent

[44] Ibid, 34.
[45] Ibn ʿIdhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib fī akhbār al-Andalus wa al-Maghrib*, ed. by Abdallah Muhammad ʿAlī, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīya, 2009), 4:17.
[46] Ibid., 4: 16.
[47] Ibid., 4: 18.

woman with local ties was put into the hands of the Almoravid emir who would outline much of the urban fabric of pre-Almohad Marrakesh.

I do not wish to question the authenticity or historicity of these narratives here, but rather to use them to underscore the process of negotiation that brought the Almoravids into the Haouz. Amira Bennison has rightly pointed out that the role of the Masmuda tribes, personified through the role of Zaynab, indicate that the Almoravid empire was won through alliance as much as military conquest, undermining the notion of an exaggeratedly violent regime that Almohad and post-Almohad historians painted.[48] But these narratives also inextricably tie the Masmuda to the founding of Marrakesh, despite the Lamtuna origins of Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar, Yusuf ibn Tashfin, and the Almoravids more generally. The siting of Marrakesh embeds the city within Masmuda, not Lamtuna, territory; though ostensibly on unoccupied land, its location between two Masmuda tribes and its proximity to the more established Aghmat, also a Masmuda stronghold, predicate a relationship between Marrakesh and the tribe. It was in all likelihood Zaynab's fortune which contributed to Marrakesh's earliest foundations, and her appearance in Maghribi histories as an active political partner to both her Almoravid husbands accentuates her connection to this transitional moment for the nascent empire.[49] Furthermore, scholars such as Allen Fromherz have gone so far as to characterize Zaynab's involvement with the construction of Marrakesh as indicative of a connection in the Almoravid mindset between the medina and decadent femininity, exemplified through Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar's concerns that Zaynab would not survive his desert campaigns due to the harsh climate.[50] There is an evident discomfort with the concept

[48] Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 33.
[49] Ibn ʿIdhārī, *Al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, 16-19; Ibn Abī Zar *Rawḍ al-Qirṭās*, 170; Ibn Khaldūn, *Histoire des Berbères*, 2:71.
[50] Allen Fromherz, *The Near West: Medieval North Africa, Latin Europe and the Mediterranean in the Second Axial Age* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 132.

of permanent settlement for the early Almoravids, one that is negotiated through their affiliation with the local Masmuda.

This reliance is evident in the physical form of early Marrakesh, which appears to have been little more than an exaggerated campsite under Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar, despite the construction of the Qasr al-Hajar, though Jacques Meunié's excavations suggest that even this structure should be attributed to Yusuf ibn Tashfin.[51] Following Lamtuna custom, most of early Marrakesh was populated by tents and surrounded by temporary, low-lying fortifications. Meanwhile, the Atlas-dwelling Masmuda erected mud-brick houses, creating a combination of temporary and vernacular architecture. As described by Ronald Messier, "It was a curious juxtaposition of the semi-sedentary becoming nomadic and the semi-nomadic becoming sedentary."[52] As the empire consolidated, the Almoravids established a more permanent presence in Marrakesh; Yusuf ibn Tashfin built a congregational mosque with a rammed earth minaret (*masjid ṣawmaʿat al-ṭūb*) in the city's northeastern quarter, creating a duo-centric urban plan with the Qasr al-Hajar in the southwest, but the majority of the private dwellings remained ephemeral or rudimentary (fig. 1.2).[53] The result was a diffuse town with little by way of a formal plan, possibly due to the Almoravids' limited urban experience, which may have favored a haphazard and practical approach, albeit couched in pious logic. By separating the two centers of power—the Qasr al-Hajar earthly, the mosque divine—the Almoravids put themselves on public display in the act of processing from one center to the other, positioning themselves as the first among equals rather

[51] Gaston Deverdun, *Marrakech des origines à 1912* (Rabat: Éditions Techniques Nord-Africaines, 1959), 57.
[52] Ronald Messier, "Rethinking the Almoravids, Rethinking Ibn Khaldun," *The Journal of North African Studies* 6:1 (2001), 62.
[53] Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 290; Mehdi Ghouirgate, *L'order almohade* (Toulouse: Presses Universities du Mirail, 2014), 96-97.

than as the guardians of a mysterious higher power.[54] This allowed the Almoravids to at least pretend to lay claim to the egalitarian principles woven through Berber clan relationships, and may have had its roots in the ideology espoused under the second Rightly-Guided caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab (r. 634-644), who warned against abandoning tribal traditions in favor of permanent settlement during the early Islamic expansion campaigns.[55] The Arabs who settled in early Kufa and Basra under ʿUmar were instructed that "no one [build] more than three rooms for himself and do not let anyone build higher houses than the other."[56] While this practice ostensibly maintained communal unity—an integral component for the early Islamic campaigns in which an Arab minority was thinly spread across the Arabian Peninsula and Levant—it had the secondary effect of setting the faithful apart from the conquered through their building practices, establishing an innate "foreignness" between the conquered and the conquerors. It is possible that a similar dynamic emerged in the early stages of Almoravid Marrakesh, albeit along tribal lines, with the area around the Qasr al-Hajar reserved for those with Lamtuna affiliation.[57] However, this relationship was not static and, as shall be explored below, Ibn Tumart would later take issue with the easy accessibility of the Almoravids to Marrakesh's general public.

What is clear is that early Marrakesh exhibited a haphazard plan at best, marked by respective governmental and religious centers, but little else by way of an urban design. This would change under Yusuf ibn Tashfin's son and successor, ʿAli ibn Yusuf (d. 1145), who sponsored the construction of the elaborate Masjid al-Siqaya ("The Mosque of the Fountain," so

[54] Ghouirgate, *L'Ordre almohade*, 98.
[55] Amira Bennison, *The Great Caliphs* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 60-61.
[56] Al-Ṭabarī, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-rusūl wa al-mulūk)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985-2007), 13:68.
[57] Amira K. Bennison, "Power and the City in the Islamic West from the Umayyads to the Almohads," in *Cities in the Pre-Modern Islamic World: The Urban Impact of Religion, State and Society*, ed. Amira K. Bennison and Alison L. Gascoigne (London: Routledge, 2007), 80.

named for the elaborate marble basin in its courtyard) in the center of the walled city in addition to a host of other monuments throughout Marrakesh. The son of an Iberian Christian concubine raised in the city of Ceuta, ʿAli ibn Yusuf's non-nomadic origins have opened the gates to speculation over Andalusi and Abbasid influences in the projects that bear his name, and certainly the remains of sites like the Qubbat al-Barudiyyin reveal a stylistic affiliation with both Cordoba and Baghdad, as will be discussed in the next chapter.[58] But for our purposes here, one of ʿAli ibn Yusuf's most significant contributions to Marrakesh was to turn Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar's temporary fortifications into more substantial, permanent ones. The anonymous *Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya* (c. 1381) attributes this act to the suggestion of one Ibn Rushd al-Jadd (d. 1126), grandfather to the more famous Andalusi polymath, who had recently escaped an embattled Granada and had witnessed firsthand the effectiveness of monumental city walls in protecting the city during siege.[59] The esteemed jurist's visit to Marrakesh coincided with an imminent threat to the Almoravid capital: Ibn Tumart and his band of followers had set their eyes on the city.

It is curiously ironic that a hallmark of Sanhaja architecture—inasmuch as one can define it—can be tied to an external threat, rather than to an effort at reconstituting elements of a familiar style in a new urban landscape. While there is little extant architectural evidence from the medieval pre-Sahara and Sahara, it is generally accepted that the rammed-earth *qaṣaba*s and

[58] For more on the ornamental references, chiefly of *muqarnas* and vegetal motifs, in Almoravid architecture, and their relationship to Iberian and Abbasid structures, see Yasser Tabbaa, "The Muqarnas Dome: Its Origin and Meaning," *Muqarnas* 3: 1 (1985): 61-74; and, more recently, Cynthia Robinson, "Power, Light, Intra-Confessional Discontent, and the Almoravids," in *Envisioning Islamic Art & Architecture: Essays in Honor of Renata Holod*, ed. David J. Roxburgh (Leiden and Boston: Brill 2014), 22-45.

[59] Delfina Serrano, "Ibn Rushd al-Jadd (d. 520-1126), *Islamic Legal Thought: A Compendium of Muslim Jurists* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 307-308; Monica Rius, *La Alquibla en al-Andalus y al-Magrib al-Aqsa* (Barcelona: Institut "Millas Vallicrosa" d'Historia de la Cienca Arab, 2000), 149-150. The *Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya* is now thought to have been written by Ibn Sammak.

*qṣar*s that litter southern Morocco have their roots in pre-Islamic antiquity, and thereby might have served as precedents for Almoravid settlement.[60] Al-Bakri (d. after 1295) also describes Saharan cities like Azuggi and Awdaghust that would have been familiar to the Almoravids as towns large enough for several mosques and having high walls, as befitting the preferences for the Zenata Berbers and Arab merchants who settled there.[61] Without wishing to make a direct comparison with any one particular site, it should be enough to emphasize here that such sites are built for fortification; the constant threat of attack, and the need to protect valuable infrastructural resources, necessitated the clear boundaries established by wall systems. That Marrakesh remained unwalled for so long, despite the Almoravid exposure to these urban and architectural typologies, is remarkable, and can perhaps only be answered in light of the later Almohad developments.

Thus, it was not until sometime after 1126 that a wall system was constructed to fully circumscribe Marrakesh's boundaries, by then incorporating a number of ʿAli ibn Yusuf's contributions, which included elite residences, private gardens, and a water system. The walls were constructed from the same red-hued mud-brick pisé, in what was likely a similar mode of construction to Yusuf ibn Tashfin's rammed-earth minaret, a locally available material that facilitated their rapid construction, completed within just eight months. They ran in a nine-kilometer circumference around the city, and were two meters deep on average along their length, expanding out into a series of towers between eight and fourteen meters deep at regular intervals. Their height, just over six meters tall, was exaggerated by a large ditch that would have rimmed the exterior. These elements combined to give the city a sense of impregnability, of a

[60] See Henri Terrasse, *Kasbas Berbères de l'Atlas et des Oasis* (Paris: Éditions des Horizons de France, 1938).
[61] Al-Bakri, *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale*, trans. by M. de Slane (Paris: 1859), 348.

fortified citadel again reminiscent of the Atlas and pre-Saharan *qṣar*s in its trapezoidal shape and use of locally available materials. Although little of the Almoravid urban fabric remains thanks to the systematic program of closure or destruction that marked the Almohad transition after 1147, it is reasonable to assume that the Almoravid city was largely contained within these walls. Their construction during the rise of Ibn Tumart and his movement, and the increasingly grave threat that that posed to the Almoravid capital, points to a city with little extra-urban development, and certainly none with any imperial associations. Regardless of the dual polarities established through the location of the Qasr al-Hajar and Yusuf ibn Tashfin's mosque, and later the Masjid al-Siqaya in ʿAli ibn Yusuf's reign, the Almoravids no longer had the space and distance required to make a performance of moving between these sites thanks to an increased pressure of urban density.

This resulted in an issue of accessibility, and the challenge of maintaining authority in light of it, for the Almoravid emir and his court. The casualness of the Almoravids' visibility put on display how far the Almoravids had come from their Saharan nomadic origins, a fact exploited by Ibn Tumart as he began to criticize the Almoravid dynasty in his rise to power. Having cultivated a following in Fez based on his promotion of al-Ghazali and a form of Ashʿarism, considered heretical to the Almoravid Maliki jurists, Ibn Tumart arrived in Marrakesh with his coterie sometime after 1120, setting himself up outside the same *masjid al-sawmaʿat al-ṭūb* (rather than the more lavish Masjid al-Siqaya), to preach publicly.[62] His speeches and teachings proved so popular that they attracted large crowds, blocking street traffic and further exacerbating the relationship with the Almoravid elite. Things came to a head when, trying to navigate the crowds attracted to the Mahdi's teachings, ʿAli ibn Yusuf's sister was publicly

[62] Vincent Cornell, "Understanding is the Mother of Ability," 83.

assaulted for moving about the city unveiled, Ibn Tumart himself pulling her from her horse. Her dress was in keeping with Lamtuna customs, part of a more general Sanhaja trend in which it was more common for the men to adopt the face veil and for women to move around bareheaded, thought to confuse desert spirits and dissuade them from attacking.[63] This tradition was apparently so offensive to those of non-Sanhaja origin. A similar anecdote from al-Baydhaq tells us that Ibn Tumart was then brought before ʿAli ibn Yusuf facing charges of inciting the public to violence. Upon being received by the Almoravid emir and told to kneel before him, Ibn Tumart asked, "Where is the emir? I see [only] veiled slave girls!"[64]

Ibn Tumart's disdain for the customs that upended gender norms for the majority of the Berber clans and Arab families that occupied the Maghrib al-Aqṣa points to his particular concern over the concept of innovation (*bidʿa*), which he saw everywhere from Maghribi juridical circles to the Almoravid court. In the same interview mentioned above with ʿAli ibn Yusuf, in answer to the charges against him, Ibn Tumart replied:

> "What has reached you about me, O Prince? For I am a *faqīr* (mendicant) seeking Heaven and not the material world. I have no desire for it other than to command good and to forbid evil. But you are foremost among those who commit evil, and therefore you must answer for it. It is thus obligatory for you to revive the Sunna and *destroy innovation. Evil acts have become clearly visible in your domain and innovation has become widespread."*[65]

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[63] T. Ledwicki, "Lamtūna," *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, accessed 12 September 2017, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/lamtuna-SIM_4639?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=lamtuna>; W. Björkman, "Lithām," *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, accessed 12 September 2017, <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4672>.

[64] Abū Bakr al-Ṣanhājī al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-Mahdī Ibn Tūmart wa bidāyat dawlat al-Muwaḥḥidīn* (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr lil-Ṭibāʿa wa'l-Wirāqa, 1971), 27.

[65] Ibn Abī Zarʿ al-Fasī, *al-Anīs al-muṭrib bi rawḍ al-Qirṭās fī akhbār mulūk al-maghrib wa tārīkh madīnat Fās* (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr, 1973), 174. Emphasis my own.

The cost of innovation is equated with evil acts, according to Ibn Tumart, intimately connected with social ills and spiritual failure. The notion of *bidʿa* was abhorrent to Ibn Tumart, and constituted the crux of a religious philosophy that focused on knowledge (*ʿilm*) of the Sunna over opinion (*ẓann*) about the law, the latter of which was understood to refer to the Maliki jurists of the Maghrib. In Ibn Tumart's view, the region's scholars had become increasingly sectarian, more aware of their peers' legal opinions than the law as outlined in the Qur'an, and subject to lines of reasoning more in keeping with that of Greek philosophers than of the Prophet Muhammad. Ibn Tumart aimed to restrict interpretations of the law to those major sources of hadith that could be readily agreed upon. When the occasion for contradictory opinions arose, Ibn Tumart accepted only those Hadith and *akhbār* ("reports") where more than one authority confirmed each stage of the transmission.[66] By this method, the Mahdi intended to avoid the pitfalls of excessive *bidʿa*, and it is in this context that a move towards sedentary urbanism should be viewed as an innovation that abandoned those very ethnic roots upon which the Almoravids gained their power. This is not to say that other forces were not in play; the Almohad faithful were not drawn into righteous battle through their anger at the Almoravids abandoning their nomadic habits. Ibn Tumart's rhetoric built upon inter-tribal tensions, wealth inequality, and a desire for social reform to spur his followers to revolution. But the city of Marrakesh revealed a propagandistic weakness for the Almoravids by putting on public display the decadence and complacency associated with an urban governorship.

Later in the fourteenth century, the noted historian Ibn Khaldun would use the rise and fall of the Almoravids (and the Almohads) to formulate his model of dynastic development and change, which focuses on the principle of *aṣabiyya*. In its pre-Islamic connotations, the term had

[66] Cornell, "Understanding is the Mother of Ability," 92.

an ambiguous meaning that reflected the sort of blind allegiance to a clan group that threatened any supra-tribal collective, and therefore was condemned by the Prophet Muhammad as a danger to the early Islamic community: "He is not one of us who calls for *aṣabiyya*, he is not one of us who fights for *aṣabiyya*, and he is not one of us who dies for *aṣabiyya*."[67] But Ibn Khaldun recognized the power of *aṣabiyya* as a call to action, applicable not only on the level of tribal clan relationships but, when properly defined, capable of establishing pan-tribal solidarity. *Aṣabiyya*, however, is also an agent of change, inherently unstable and dialectical in nature thanks to entropy in political energy.[68] This instability can be loosely associated with the transition from a nomadic existence to a more sedentary life, one of the characteristics required of a move towards consolidated kingship and political authority, according to Ibn Khaldun. In his words: "This is because, when royal authority is obtained by tribes and groups, [they] are forced to take possession of cities for two reasons. One of them is that royal authority causes them to tranquility, restfulness and relaxation, and to try to provide the aspects of civilization which were missing in the desert. The second is that rivals and enemies can be expected to attack the realm, and one must protect oneself against them."[69] Yet elsewhere, the historian also admits that towns are hotbeds of a seductive decadence that eats away at *aṣabiyya* through their incorporation of a heterogenous population.[70] Thus, while a necessary part of imperial practice, urban projects reflect the paradox of *aṣabiyya* on such a grand scale.

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[67] Abu Dawud al-Sijistani, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, ed. Shuʾayb al-Arnwʿūṭ, 7 vols. (Dar al-Risālah al-ʿĀlimiyyah, 2009) 7:441.
[68] M. Akif Kayapinar, "Ibn Khaldūn's Concept of 'Assabiyya': An Alternative Tool for Understanding Long-Term Politics?," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 36:3/4 (2008), 401.
[69] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: an Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. by N.J. Dawood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 264.
[70] Ibid., 146-147.

It is this context in which we must situate the anecdote between Ibn Tumart and ʿAli ibn Yusuf, and understand what "innovations" Ibn Tumart was warning against. While he was almost certainly referring to jurisprudential debates, I would like to suggest that his precaution against *bidʿa* should also be applied to the Almoravid "decline" into sedentary urbanism. By making themselves so immediately accessible as to be assaulted by a street crowd, the Almoravids put their sedentary habits on display, and notably at odds with those habits that marked them as Saharan (and therefore nomadic), such as the male face veil. The city walls, despite recalling architectural methods from the Atlas and pre-Sahara, nevertheless enclosed the Almoravid court in a manner alien to the ethos upon which they rose to power. While Ibn Khaldun's theory of dynastic trajectory, and the role *aṣabiyya* and urbanism play in that model, would not be formalized until much later, it speaks to a cultural awareness in the Maghrib of a tension between authority based on ethnic ties and urban space in the ambition to long term political power. By the reign of ʿAli ibn Yusuf, the Almoravids' relationship with their capital city had developed beyond the temporary encampment established by Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar into an urban center that bore the hallmarks of more established cities in the Maghrib such as Fez, which were notably founded along paradigms that meant to recreate Prophetic experiences and connect to an Arab heritage, rather than a Berber tribal one.[71] The decadence and moral laxity that Ibn Khaldun so famously associated with sedentary habits was on full display for Ibn Tumart at his audience with the Almoravid emir, and would prove a cautionary example for ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's urban project after 1147. The desert origins of the Sanhaja provided little by way of an architectural precedent through which to maintain their connections to *ʿaṣabiyya* in a public, imperial, and

[71] See Simon O'Meara, "The Foundation Legend of Fez and Other Islamic Cities in Light of the Life of the Prophet," in *Cities in the Pre-Modern Islamic World: The urban impact of religion, state and society*, ed. Amira K. Bennison and Alison L. Gascoigne (New York: Routledge, 2007), 27-41.

urban context. But this was not the case for the Masmuda and the nascent Almohad movement, whose tradition of built architecture was part of their ethnic heritage and therefore could transition more easily into an urbanized setting. Yet perhaps wary of the pitfalls associated with the city, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin would develop a program, continued under his son and grandson, of suburban expansion along a directed axis, creating a tangential relationship with the walled center of Marrakesh.

The physical, legal, and theoretical implications of building beyond the city walls must be understood in dialogue with the walls' flexible ambiguity as a threshold, a space of demarcation and exclusion as well as inhabitance and enclosure. Their organizational importance was such that numerous legal texts were devoted to governing their construction, particularly between the tenth and twelfth centuries: Muhammad ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Zubayri's (d. 989) *Kitāb al-Abniya* ("The Book of Buildings"), ʿIsa ibn Musa ibn Ahmad ibn al-Imam's (d. 991 or 997) *Kitāb al-Qiḍāʾ wa nafy al-ḍarar ʿan al-afniya wa al-ṭuruq wa al-judur wa al-mabānī wa al-saḥāt wa al-shajar wa al-jāmiʿ* ("The Book of Judgment and Elimination of Harm Regarding Public Spaces, Streets, Walls, Buildings, Courtyards, Trees, and Mosques"), and even Ibn Rushd al-Jadd's *Kitāb al-Qaḍāʾ wa al-araḍīn wa al-dūr* ("The Book of Jurisdiction, Terrain, and Houses"), in addition to compilations of legal rulings from various jurists.[72] These texts developed a discourse that defined the role of walls through questions of ownership, privacy, maintenance and responsibility, revealing an awareness of the spatial dimensions of societal order. Part of the Almohad mission was to remake that social order in light of Ibn Tumart's teachings, and ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's approach to doing so can be seen reflected in the organizational schema of early Muʾminid urban planning. The entirety of Tamarrakusht would be constructed outside the

[72] Simon O'Meara, *Space and Muslim Urban Life: At the Limits of the Labyrinth of Fez* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), 30-33.

original Almoravid circumference, following a south-facing orientation that took advantage of a slight but steady incline into the Haouz foothills. This resulted in a royal quarter that slightly overlooked the original city, what the *Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya* describes as the "lower city," hinting at the impression of physical dominance that Tamarrakusht must have exerted.[73] This highly directed, tangential program of urban development created a clear distinction between Almohad rule and the city's Almoravid past, occupying a space that was neither inside Marrakesh nor definitively outside of it, but rather indicative of an ambivalent relationship to urbanism, mediated through specific points of contact where the imperial narrative could be tightly controlled.

THE MUʾMINID CITY: TAMARRAKUSHT, THE *RAḤBA*, AND THE AGDAL GARDEN

Muʾminid patronage of sites outside the city walls encouraged urban growth and settlement to extend beyond the restrictive boundary set by the Almoravid fortifications. It has been well established that Marrakesh prospered from the very beginning of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's reign, and enjoyed relative peace as the majority of Almohad campaigns were concentrated on consolidating their foothold in al-Andalus and into Ifriqiya.[74] The city's expansion reveals an engagement with its physical borders, typified by its ramparts even as the city grew beyond them, on a regular basis, and therefore implies how effective and visible these liminal points of

[73] *Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya fī dhikr al-akhbār al-marrākushiyya*, ed. Bashīr al-Fawratī (Tunis: al-Taqaddum al-Islamiyya, 1911), 108.
[74] ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Makhdūlī, "Min al-masāʾil al-taʿmīr wa al-istʿamāl al-majāl fī al-ahdīn al-murābitī wa al-mūwaḥḥidī," *Marrākesh: Min al-tāʾsīs ilā ākhir al-ʿaṣr al-mūwaḥḥidī* (Al-Muhammadiyya: Maṭbaʿa Fiḍāla, 1989), 78-84. Quoted in Jessica Streit, "Monumental Austerity,: The Meanings and Aesthetic Development of Almohad Friday Mosques" (PhD. dissertation, Cornell University, 2013), 54, note 175.

contact between the Muʾminid elite and the general public must have been. The remainder of this chapter will examine this point of contact with the aim of understanding just how they were used to enhance and define the Muʾminids' role as a distinctly Maghribi dynasty of Masmuda origin, maintaining and renewing their connection to both an Almohad and a wider Islamic past.

Even though Abu Yaʾqub Yusuf is often given credit for bringing the Almohad city to its most elaborate and sophisticated heights, historical accounts confirm that he was largely building upon the foundations established by ʿAbd al-Muʾmin. The *Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya* attests that the construction of the congregational mosque known as the Kutubiyya occurred during his reign, as did the construction of a palace directly through the mosque's qibla axis, connected by a covered passageway (*sabāṭ*).[75] The congregational mosque, and all it represented, was thus physically tied to the architectural personification of the new caliphate, and though the new royal quarter lay outside the city walls, it was tangentially connected to them first and foremost through the *sabāt*. Tamarrakusht then extended along the southwestern edge of the city, and though little of this area remains extant from the twelfth century, historical records, place names, and archeological evidence can help to reconstruct the quarter's form. The fourteenth-century Syrian historian Ibn Fadl Allah al-ʿUmari (d. 1349), working from the descriptions of Ibn Saʿid al-Maghribi (d. 1213), described the quarter as featuring high walls and monumental gates enclosing a series of caliphal palaces featuring rather fantastical descriptors such as the "Crystal Palace" (*dār al-ballūr*), the "Palace of Aromatic Basil" (*dār al-rayhān*), and the "Water Palace" (*dār al-māʾ*).[76] Given al-ʿUmari's secondhand information and the lack of extant material through which to understand this description, it is impossible to fully reconstruct how these

[75] *Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya*, 108.
[76] Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār: l'Afrique moins l'Egypte*, ed. and trans. M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes (Paris: Geuthner, 1927), 181.

palaces fit into the space, and certainly their presence and lavish description seems to dispel the theory of a Muʾminid cautious ambivalence toward sedentary luxury. But, as Bennison has pointed out, these palaces were likely residences for members of the courtly elite, a "fortified enclave of luxurious residences and green spaces that was essentially the private domain of the Muʾminids."[77] What I am more concerned with here are those sites of public interaction, which shaped the public image and reputation of the Muʾminid dynasty as they established themselves beyond their initial Almohad origins. With this in mind, we now turn to those monumental gates that delineated entry into Tamarrakusht and the liminal space effected by the transition from a more chaotic public navigation into a highly ordered and mediated space.

Marrakesh's city walls have been expanded since the mid-twelfth century to encompass the entirety of the medieval and early modern city, in the process destroying most of the architectural remnants of the Muʾminid royal quarter. However, at least one of the quarter's gates remains, and it may be possible to locate others. Bab Agnaou was built immediately after the conquest of the city in 1147, and highlights what would have been the principal entrance into Tamarrakusht through intricate geometric and floriated decoration, Qurʾanic inscription, and polychromic stone and brick (fig. 1.3).[78] Its name comes from a later nineteenth-century corruption of *qanā* (meaning "canal" or "waterway"), referring to a basin constructed in front of the gate, likely during the Saʿadian era (1549-1659). But al-ʿUmari's account confirms that this gate was meant for the general public (*al-umma*) during Muʾminid rule of the city.[79] The elite entrance, reserved for the Muʾminid court, was known as the "The Gate of Lords" (*Bāb al-Sāda*), and lead directly from the royal quarter through an extramural necropolis and into the *raḥba*, a large open

[77] Bennison, "Power and the City in the Islamic West from the Umayyads to the Almohads," 85.
[78] Gaston Deverdun, *Marrakech des origines à 1912* (Rabat: Éditions Techniques Nord-Africaines, 1959), 229.
[79] al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, 184-185; Deverdun, *Marrakech*, 230.

esplanade of great ceremonial importance. Al-ʿUmari tells us that a long chain was strung along the gate, forcing entrants to dismount before entering, a practice recalling that of the Andalusi Umayyads at Madinat al-Zahraʿ, or Idrisid-period Fez, where wooden beams blocked the streets leading to shrines "in order to force riders to dismount in the presence of the sacred."[80] Unfortunately, despite its importance, Bab al-Sada is no longer extant, and its precise location has been a topic of some debate. The historian and Arabist Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes, who translated al-ʿUmari's text in the 1920s, speculated that the gate could be found at or near the "The Gate of Pennants" (*Bāb al-Bunūd*). However, he draws upon al-ʿUmari in conjunction with Saʿadian-era authors, who wrote using names and terms more consistent with the sixteenth century than the twelfth. His analysis of al-ʿUmari's description is unable to move past the Saʿadian architectural and ceremonial framework, despite disagreeing with his contemporary Pierre de Cénival for similar reasons.[81] But the Bab al-Bunud is also no longer extant, or has since been renamed. Yet I believe we may locate it at the modern-day gate, Bab al-Robb, a synonymic title that also recalls a royal gate, and which aligns with the royal axis directly south of the Bab Agnaou (fig. 1.4).

By locating these gates, even only theoretically, within the city's urban fabric, we can begin to outline how the Almohad expansion connected to the Marrakesh madina. Tamarrakusht, with its enclosed palaces and restricted access, would have been directly south along the qibla axis from the Kutubiyya mosque, following from the *sabāt* that granted private movement between the two to the caliph and his retinue. The Bab Agnaou confirms this positioning by forming the western entrance into the vicinity, and the Bab al-Sada forming the southern one that

[80] Bennison, "Power and the City in the Islamic West from the Umayyads to the Almohads," 86.
[81] Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes, "Quelques passages du *Masalik El Absar* relatifs au Maroc," in *Mémorial Henri Basset: nouvelles études nord-africaines et orientales* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1928), 271-273.

concentrated the Muʾminid nexus of power in the southwestern corner of the city. This positions the *raḥba*, also known as the *mechouar*, further south along this directed alignment, extending the Muʾminid locus for public engagement through this multifunctional space that put the Muʾminids' intellectual, political, and military accomplishments on display (figs. 1.5 and 1.6). The former term, *raḥba*, refers to a large open courtyard or esplanade, defined by its enclosure and yet emphasizing the expansiveness (or perhaps emptiness) within. The concept of the *raḥba* was well-known already in al-Andalus as the space in front of city gates, set aside for temporary markets and public announcements or gatherings.[82] The latter term, *mechouar*, is more difficult to define precisely, but likely comes as a Francophone corruption of the Arabic *mashwāra*, which refers to a consultation, or counsel, and which may enlighten us as to the space's use in the Muʾminid pageant of ceremony.

Rather than receiving visitors within the lavish palace complex, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin instead engaged with both local and foreign audiences here, setting up the same red tent he carried into battle under a domed qubba near the northern palatial end of the *raḥba* near the Bab al-Sada.[83] Known as the *Qubba al-Khilāfa* ("The Dome of the Caliphate"), from this raised platform the Muʾminid caliph could preside over the entirety of the *raḥba* as a microcosm of the world he had created and the power he wielded. The space housed a menagerie of wild animals for courtly sport and spectacle, as well as a madrasa and library for the intellectual. The latter were occasionally recruited into the court if they passed scholarly muster, and al-Marrakushi notes that the Muʾminid caliphs were known for inviting speculative philosophers to come to Marrakesh

[82] Leopoldo Torres Balbás, *Ciudades hispano-musulmanas*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Dirección General de Relaciones Culturales, Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura, 1971), 1:295-301.
[83] Bennison, "Power and the City in the Islamic West from the Umayyads to the Almohads," 86. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *al-Muʾjib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib*, ed. Reinhardt Pjeter Anne Dozy (Leiden: Brill, 1881), Ar. text 263. This location is also confirmed by al-ʿUmarī, 182.

and publicly debate religious matters with their own Almohad scholars. These courtly intellectuals were divided into two classes: the *ṭalabat al-ḥaḍar* ("scholars of presence") and the *ṭalabat al-muwaḥḥidīn* (literally, "Almohad scholars"). The former, the *ṭalabat al-ḥaḍar*, were part of the caliphal retinue, traveling with the Muʾminid caliph as part of his peripatetic court or otherwise residing within the imperial capital. The latter, the *ṭalabat al-muwaḥḥidīn*, were recruited as part of the imperial project, stationed across the Maghrib, al-Andalus, and Ifriqiya as representatives of Almohadism in service to local governors.[84] The dynamic between the two emphasizes the tension in the relationship between the caliphate and the urban network across the empire. They also highlight a sense of guardianship over Almohadism, capable of being represented by the *ṭalabat al-muwaḥḥidīn* who remained settled in one place, but truly embodied through the concept of a caliphate in motion. While the Masmuda may not have been nomadic in the same sense as the Almoravid Sanhaja, considering their tradition of a built architecture, in their reflexive rhetoric we do not see them placing themselves on the settled or urban end of the civilizational spectrum.

The importance of the Muʾminid dynasty's heritage as transhumant members of the Masmuda is echoed throughout the ceremonial pageants and processions that were performed in the *raḥba*. It was here that ʿAbd al-Muʾmin held the annual review of the troops (*jumūʿ*) stationed in Marrakesh, as well as the ritual gathering of tribal representatives from the High Atlas (*ʿumūm*). The two ceremonies are described in tandem with one another—indeed, al-Marrakushi uses the term *sanfān al-muwaḥḥidīn* (literally, "the two classes of the Almohads")—and it is possible to view this rhetoric as describing the two sources of Almohad might, the legitimacy of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's dynastic ambitions, and their role as caretakers of the original

[84] Emile Fricaud, "Les *Ṭalaba* dans la Société Almohade (le temps de Averròes)," *Al-Qanṭara* 18: 2 (1997), 348, 349-351.

Almohad movement.[85] The strictly organized hierarchy of Almohad society was on full display in these ceremonies, and it is notable how closely this organization mirrors that of the Berber communities that it drew upon, albeit with distinct and strategic differences. Though the Arabic sources are vague and often contradictory as to the precise makeup of each category, certain statements can be made as to their general composition. The basic structure appears to have roots in Almohad military organization, though by the height of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's reign, these roles had become more multifunctional.[86] At the top of this hierarchy (after the Mahdi and the caliph) was the Council of Ten (*ahl al-jamāʿa*), which, after serving as Ibn Tumart's trusted inner circle, then became ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's de facto cabinet. Ibn al-Baydhaq and Ibn Sahib al-Salat then name "the Fifty" (*ahl al-khamsīn*) as the next most elite group, which seems to form a representative body of the tribes loyal to the Almohad cause.[87] They included members of the Hargha, Ganfisa, Haskura, Gadmiwa, and Hintata tribes, all of which were subsidiaries of the Masmuda tribal confederation, as well as the Sanhaja and the *qabāʾil* (literally, "tribes"). These latter two reflect the degree to which Ibn Tumart was willing to open admittance into the movement in its formative stages. Despite their ostensible allegiance to the Almoravids, at least some members of the Sanhaja were convinced by the Mahdi's arguments and were admitted as tribal representatives to the *Ahl al-Khamsīn*. The *qabāʾil* appear to be a more heterogeneous group, and are named by Ibn al-Qaṭṭan as *ghurāba* ("strangers" or "foreigners"), which likely indicates that they were not members of the Masmuda (indeed, at least three members of this

[85] Al-Marrākushī, *al-Muʾjib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib*, 425.
[86] J. F. P. Hopkins, "The Almohade Hierarchy," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies University of London* 16:1 (1954): 93.
[87] Ibid., 96.

category came from Lamtuna, Zenata, and Gazula confederations).[88] While neither of these groups were admitted to the inner circle of the Council of Ten, they must have been politically significant enough to be incorporated into the Fifty, and therefore had a nominal say in Almohad affairs. In the parades through the *raḥba*, these groups were then followed by the other Almohad tribes, the various branches of the military, as well as the *ṭalabat al-ḥaḍar* whose privilege it was to provide the Muʾminid caliph with readings from the Qur'an and Ibn Tumart's *Kitāb al-aʿazz ma yuṭlab* in his imperial tours and military excursions.[89]

In between the *Ahl al-Khamsīn* and the rest of the tribes was placed the family of Ibn Tumart.[90] Their position within the caliphal hierarchy is both surprising and understandable. The family of Ibn Tumart, his immediate relatives and those pledged to them, are listed as the first among the tribes, and in one sense this grants them pride of place among the various groups, leading the procession into the *raḥba* for the annual review. But this also demotes the Mahdi's family from the head of the Almohad movement, placing them instead under the direct authority of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin and the later Muʾminid caliphs, which acts both as a boost to Muʾminid legitimacy and simultaneously reminds both Ibn Tumart's family and the Marrakesh public just who holds the power in the new Almohad state. ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's authority had already been challenged on two occasions by the middle of the 1150s. Both of these rebellions had come from Ibn Tumart's own brothers, who objected to ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's attempt to establish a hereditary caliphate after he named his son as his successor.[91] Ibn Tumart had famously chastised the

[88] Ibid. Scholars like Hopkins have attributed the fluctuations in the sources between which tribes belonged to the *ahl al-khamsīn* and how many members they had to the fact that such lists represent the changes and shifts over time between one Muʾminid caliph and another.
[89] Ibid., 107-108.
[90] Al-Marrākushī, *al-Muʾjib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib*, 426.
[91] Abū Bakr ibn ʿAlī al-Ṣanhājī al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-Mahdī ibn Tūmart*, 85; Roger LeTourneau, "Du movement almohade a la dynastie muʾminide: La révolte des frères d'Ibn

Almoravid caliph ʿAli ibn Yusuf at court for pretending to the caliphate, which Ibn Tumart decreed was "for God alone." Hence ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's pretension to the same office assuredly drew criticism from those who would have maintained Ibn Tumart's practice of awarding authority based on merit.[92] Historical sources from the period paint ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's succession as ordained by Ibn Tumart and sanctioned by the Council of Ten, Ibn Tumart's closest followers and councilors. However, as the majority of these sources were sponsored for or by the Muʾminid dynasty, their reliability on this particular matter is called into question.[93]

ʿAbd al-Muʾmin was of the Zenata confederation, based in the Rif Mountains in the north of Morocco, while the majority of Almohad support came from Ibn Tumart's tribe, the Masmuda, making the former's ascension to leadership both anomalous and contentious. Al-Baydhaq, Ibn Tumart's biographer, notes that the charismatic leader called the Almohads together and announced that he was departing the earth, but had left instructions for the next three years to be carried out under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin.[94] By comparison, Ibn Khaldun notes that the transition was much more fraught, with Ibn Tumart dying unexpectedly and the Council of Ten keeping it a secret for three years while deciding how to proceed. According to him, the support of the Masmuda could only be obtained by appealing to a prominent Masmuda shaykh, Abu Hafṣ ʿUmar (d.1175).[95] ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's authority over the Almohad forces was accepted long enough for the movement to take Marrakesh and push the Almoravids into dispersal and exile,

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Tumart de 1153 à 1156," *Mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie de l'Occident muṣūlman. Tom. II: Hommage à Georges Marçais*, ed. René Crozet (Algiers: Imprimerie Officielle, 1957), 112-113.

[92] Cornell, "Understanding is the Mother of Ability," 83.

[93] These court-sponsored sources include Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāt's *Tārīkh al-mann bi'l-imāma*, ʿAbd al-Wāhid al-Marrākushī's *al-Muʾjib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib*, and the anonymous *Kitāb al-Ḥulal al-mawshiyya*.

[94] Évariste Lévi-Provençal, *Documents inédits d'histoire almohade* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1928), French text, 131; Arabic text, 81.

[95] Amira K. Bennison, "The Almohads and the Qurʾān of Uthmān: The Legacy of the Umayyads of Cordoba in the Twelfth Century Maghrib," *Al-Masaq* 19:2 (2007): 143.

but by 1153, Ibn Tumart's brothers had rallied enough support to stage a coup. It failed largely due to the muezzin spoiling their attempt to take the Muʾminid treasury. The brothers were exiled to al-Andalus.[96] But in 1156, after ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's announcement of his succession, the brothers again rebelled, and when their movement again failed, they were executed for their crimes. Thus, while ʿAbd al-Muʾmin was successful in fending off a direct challenge from Ibn Tumart's family, such incidences illustrate how vulnerable and tenuous his hold over the various Almohad factions actually was. He would continue to be plagued by questions of legitimacy, to the point that he felt it necessary to undertake a ritual confirmation of alliances known as the *tamyīz*. The process formalized alliances through the communal meal (*asmās*) and tribal council (*agrao*), but it was also used to cull those disloyal to the group, and had been used to great effect by Ibn Tumart.[97] ʿAbd al-Muʾmin performed a second sort of *tamyīz* called the *iʿtirāf* ("recognition" or "acknowledgement"), in which the names of those suspected dissidents were distributed among the Almohad territories, and who were then systematically arrested and executed.[98] He also circulated a letter in the same year in which his son's appointment to the caliphate is cast as the informed decision of the Almohad *ṭalaba* and tribal shaykhs.[99] In a demonstration of pious deference and communal agreement, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin approached the council to inform them that a delegation from Ifriqiya had requested that his son come and serve as their regional governor. Instead, the council elected him as ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's successor,

[96] See the next chapter for an account of this attempt. Évariste Lévi-Provençal, trans. and ed., *Documents*, French text, 196; Arabic text, 119.
[97] Allen J. Fromherz, *The Almohads*, 96-99.
[98] al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-Mahdī ibn Tūmart*, 112.
[99] Evariste Lévi-Provençal, "Un recueil des lettres officielles almohades. Introduction et étude diplomatique. Analyse et commentaire historique," *Hespéris* 28 (1941): 36.

absolving the latter from the onus of dynasty building and simultaneously solving the problem of who was to take on the caliphal mantle.[100]

These events serve to illustrate just precisely what was at stake in the early days of the Muʾminid caliphate in Marrakesh, and we can understand the space of the *raḥba* as directly addressing these concerns. For ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, who struggled not only to maintain his legitimacy as Ibn Tumart's heir, but also to establish the dynastic interests of his own family, the need to reinforce a social hierarchy that could balance the Almohads' spiritual origins and the Muʾminid dynastic project was paramount. Though he had politically secured his position among the Almohad elite, removing his rivals and establishing his confirmation by Ibn Tumart as well as the Council of Ten, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's tenure was inherently unstable and based on the cult of his personal charisma and success rather than hereditary position. As he was responsible for the military and territorial success of the empire, he was reluctant to leave the survival of his family to chance and watch tribal divisions destroy all that he had accomplished.[101] As the center of public dynastic interaction, the *raḥba* expressed both the anxiety and the ambition surrounding this position, creating a space in which the Muʾminid caliph could repeatedly play the part of a semi-nomadic (or at least, non-urban-dwelling) military leader of the tribes. The *qubba* at the northern end of the enclosure would have called attention to the red tent beneath it, where the Muʾminid caliph could observe the rituals of allegiance accorded to him and in which the social hierarchy of the Almohad movement was reinforced. Extending directly outward from the royal quarter, Tamarrakusht, the *raḥba* occupies a liminal space between urban and suburban, outside the city walls and yet tangential to them. According to Bennison, this spatial organization was the solution to the Muʾminids' need to "create an appropriate urban environment for the elite that

[100] Ibid., 35.
[101] Bennison, "The Almohads and the Qurʾān of Uthmān," 144.

reflected their power"—perhaps recalling the Mahdi's anger at the easy accessibility of the Almoravid caliph—and the need to communicate this power at designated points of interaction.[102] What emerges is a tangential, linear suburb directly connected to the city through the qibla of the new congregational mosque, the second Kutubiyya prayer hall. The *sabāṭ* connects the latter to the royal palace and Tamarrakusht, and Tamarrakusht in turn is connected to the *raḥba* through the Bab al-Sada, the Bab al-Bunud, and the Bab al-Robb. Here, I distinguish between the royal quarter as a network of palaces and elite residences and the *raḥba* as a site of public engagement, but nevertheless the two should be considered as in tandem with one another in their presentation of caliphal authority. While Tamarrakusht was a site restricted to elite access, the caliph's movement both to and from it was a highly mediated affair, and there are no longer accounts of such casual encounters with the Muʾminid caliph as we see with the Almoravid emir.[103]

This axis extended further with the creation and patronage of a walled garden known as the Agdal, constructed just to the south of the *raḥba* and which further enhanced the complex interplay of urban space and imperial ceremonial. Established by ʿAbd al-Muʾmin in 1157, the large suburban garden measured a little over 1000 square meters, which was only slightly smaller than the walled medina (fig. 1.7).[104] The Agdal garden was so named after a Berber term meaning "meadow enclosed by a stone wall," referring to the impression of the verdant green

[102] Bennison, "Power and the City in the Islamic West," 91.
[103] This impression is undoubtedly encouraged by the strong bias in the sources against the Almoravids, but the fact that such encounters do not appear even in post-Almohad material is a considerable one.
[104] Julio Navarro, Fidel Garrido, and José M. Torres, "Agua, arquitectura y poder en una capital del Islam: la finca real del Agdal de Marrakech (ss. XII-XX)," *Arqueología de la Arquitectura* 10 (2013): 7.

landscape surrounded by high walls and framed by the rising Atlas Mountains.[105] The term itself is a technical one that implies a space used for seasonal herding, meant to regulate resource consumption and to preserve a plot of land for grazing in the late summer when resources were at their scarcest. The concept was developed among Masmuda herdsmen in the Atlas Mountains who strictly regulated access to and use of *agdāl* enclosures via intertribal councils. Since herding patterns often crossed other tribal territories, these councils may also have functioned as de facto political alliances.[106] It is tempting to view this association with the monumental garden south of Marrakesh, but as has been shown by Julio Navarro, Fidel Garrido, and José Torres in their recent survey and study of the Agdal, no medieval source actually uses the term *agdāl* to describe the garden and its earliest reference only appears in a French 1867 plan of the site.[107] Instead, Almohad-era sources refer to it simply as al-Buḥayra, "the lake," referring to the large reservoir that occupied the southern end of the space (fig. 1.8).[108] Though other suburban estates belonging to members of the Almohad elite are also referenced as *baḥāʾir*, they are always accompanied by qualifying information such as their location, their owners, or other common features in order to identify them, whereas the imperial Buhayra does not require such

[105] Mohammed El Faïz, "The Garden Strategy of the Almohad Sultans and Their Successors (1157-1900)," in *Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity*, ed. by Michel Conan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 95.
[106] Abbey Stockstill, "Atlas Mountains," *Dumbarton Oaks Middle East Garden Traditions*, accessed 28 October 2017, <https://www.doaks.org/resources/middle-east-garden-traditions/introduction/atlas-mountains>; for a more in-depth analysis of the *agdāl* as a agropastoral practice, see P. Domínguez Gregorio, "Vers l'éco-anthropologie. Une approche multidisciplinaire de l'agdal pastoral du Yagour (haut atlas de Marrakech)" (PhD diss., Universitat Autònima de Barcelona, 2011).
[107] Julio Navarro, Fidel Garrido, and José M. Torres, "The Agdāl of Marrakesh (12th to 20th centuries): An Agricultural Space for the Benefit and Enjoyment of the Caliphs and Sultans," *Muqarnas* (forthcoming): 1.
[108] *Ḥulal al-mawshiyya*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār and Abd al-Qādir Zamāma (Casablanca: Dār al-Rashād al-Ḥadītha, 1979), 150; al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, 181.

qualifiers.[109] But the fact that the term *agdāl* eventually was applied to the garden is not insignificant, as Navarro and his team suggest that the notions of enclosure and restriction were part of the site's function from its inception. They note that the concept of the *agdāl* carries with it the notion of interdiction (*ʿurf*) in a religious and legal sense, and is referred to as *ḥarām* ("forbidden" or "sacrosanct") by Atlas Berber populations.[110] I suggest that the term *agdāl* becomes associated with the garden thanks to the ceremonies and rituals that enlivened it, as shall be explored below, and for clarity's sake, will continue to refer to the garden as the Agdal throughout.

Like much of the Muʾminid constructions in and around Marrakesh, the garden would be preserved, adapted, and expanded in the later centuries, most extensively during the Saʿadian era when Marrakesh was again an imperial capital. At its greatest extent, it measured nearly 500 hectares, though increased urban development has today reduced it to around 340 hectares.[111] A large rectangular enclosure, the garden was divided into smaller rectangular divisions that organized plants by type, with borders of myrtles, black elderberries, and trellises of roses, sweetbriar and jasmine demarcating the boundaries. An orange grove was located near the garden's massive reservoir in order to best take advantage of the water, and dispersed throughout the rest of the garden were other enclosures housing fig, palm, almond, and walnut trees, many

[109] Navarro, et. al., "The Agdāl of Marrākesh," 8. It should be noted that another famous Marrakesh *buhayra* was that artificial lake that gave the Battle of Buhayra its name. A pivotal encounter between the Almoravids and the early Almohad forces in 1130, the name likely refers to the lake belonging to ʿAli ibn Yusuf's palace, located to the east of the walled medina and later razed to make way for the Kutubiyya mosque. For more on the Battle of Buhayra, see Chapter Three, "Tinmal and the Atlas Mountains: A Dynastic Lynchpin."
[110] Navarro, et. al., "The Agdāl of Marrākesh," 1-2.
[111] Ibid., 6-7.

of which were imported from as far away as Egypt.[112] The majority of the garden, however, was planted with groves of olives. The garden was both an ornamental and agricultural space, and the annual revenue from the harvest was recorded as roughly 30,000 dinars, an enormous sum considering the cheap cost of produce.

The operation was so complex that something akin to a parks and recreation department was established in order to maintain and streamline the process of the gardens' finance and upkeep, employing contractors, town planners, gardeners, and hydraulic engineers.[113] As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Haouz basin was by no means a fertile plain, and ʾAbd al-Muʾmin and his successors, as well as later dynasties, would spend a great deal of effort in collecting and managing the city's water resources. In Marrakesh's early days, the Almoravids had built a series of *khettaras* (or *qanā*), channels that tap into the subterranean water table, in order to bring water into the city, chiefly to fill their extensive mosque and palace fountains. While sufficient for the elite and military encampments, the amount of water provided by these channels was not enough to sponsor large-scale urban growth, and thus limited Marrakesh's ability to expand. Under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, a network of canals supplemented the *khettaras*, diverting snow and rain runoff from the Atlas streams into Marrakesh. As Paul Pascon has noted, the scope of such a large scale project would not have been possible without the Almohads' political control of the mountain terrain, as well as the Masmuda's familiarity with the practice of consolidating water resources. Such an option was simply not available to the Almoravids, who faced incursions from the nascent Almohad movement and were separated from their ethnic

[112] Muhammad El Faïz, "The Garden Strategy of the Almohad Sultans and Their Successors (1157-1900)," 103.
[113] Ibid., 100.

power base in the Sahara, and therefore could not support such large civic projects.[114] Soon after the conquest of Marrakesh, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin undertook the expansion of the Almoravids' established collection of *khettaras*, supplemented by a number of above ground channels that diverted water from the seasonal wadis in the Atlas foothills. Known as *seguias*, these channels nearly tripled the area of arable land in and around Marrakesh, from 5000 to 15,000 hectares.[115] The most significant of these was known as the Tasoultant, the "royal channel," which diverted water from the Wadi Ourika north of Aghmat into the city along a narrow, 25-kilometer long channel to feed the Agdal garden in addition to numerous other estates in the surrounding area (fig. 1.9).[116] Through such channels, the Muʾminid administration brought life-giving water from the Atlas into the Haouz, sustaining the city because of their tribal connections to the region, rather than fighting the tension between urban and nomadic.

Runoff from both the *seguias* and the *khettaras* emptied into a large reservoir within the garden known as the *ṣahrīj al-manzeh* ("the park basin") measuring 208 meters long (north to south) and 181 meters wide (east to west) and located in the southern third of the garden. Capable of retaining nearly 83,000 cubic meters of water, the reservoir was an invaluable part of sustaining the city and its surrounding area during the dry season.[117] Because the garden followed an incline from north to south, with the basin aligned along this orthogonal axis, the reservoir was able to irrigate the surrounding grounds through gravitational channels, taking advantage of the natural topography. While the southern end of the basin was even with the ground level, its northern end reached a height of 4.2 meters above ground level, requiring the

[114] Paul Pascon, *Le Haouz de Marrakech*, 2 vols. (Rabat, 1977), 1:374-376.
[115] Julio Navarro, et al., "The Agdāl of Marrakesh," 16.
[116] El Faïz, "The Garden Strategy of the Almohad Sultans," 97.
[117] Navarro, et. al., "The Agdāl of Marrakesh," 53.

reinforcement of cuboid buttresses to counteract the thrust of the water mass.[118] Like most Almohad-era constructions in the city, the basin's retaining walls are constructed out of a mixture of pisé, lime and gravel, and are roughly 5.6 meters thick, forming an upper walkway along the pool's edge. On the east and west, evidence can be seen of a lower walkway as well, with staircases providing access to the basin at the four corners and at the center of each side.[119]

In addition to providing irrigation water for the city's agricultural efforts, the Agdal basin also supplied the city's drinking water and was used for swimming and military naval exercises.[120] In order to further utilize the space for public rituals and imperial ceremonies, the second Muʾminid caliph Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf (d. 1184) constructed a large pavilion known as the Dar al-Hanaʾ ("The Pavilion of Well-Being") from which to preside over such events. Muʾminid court chronicler ʿAbd al-Malik b. Sahib al-Salat describes one such festival to which the tribal delegations and foreign dignitaries had been invited:

> On Friday, 22 Rabiʿ II [January 2, 1171], after the Friday prayers, the Commander of the Faithful left for the *buḥayra* [walled garden designed around a large pool] on the outskirts of the city of Marrakesh, and he held a feast for those delegations who had arrived that lasted 15 days. Each day more than 3,000 men entered, greeted the caliph and received his blessing, and moved towards the channel that was filled with the *robb* [a sweet wine diluted with water] that was customary then.[121]

From the Dar al-Hanaʾ, located at the southern end of the reservoir and at the garden's topographical height, Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf could look out not only over those gathered within the garden, but over the entirety of the Muʾminid royal quarter and Marrakesh itself. This vantage point also served as the ideal location from which to stage processions into the *raḥba* or as a

[118] Ibid., 54.
[119] Ibid., 55-56.
[120] Deverdun, *Marrakech*, 197.
[121] Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāt, *Tārīkh al-Mann bi al-Imāma ʿala al-mustaḍʿafīn*, quoted in El Faïz, "The Garden Strategy of the Almohad Sultans and Their Successors (1157-1900)," 103.

gathering place before embarking on expeditions elsewhere, and even under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin these ceremonies were an elaborately orchestrated affair, complete with drums and the white banners of the Almohad faithful. A significant component of these parades was the dual procession of two Qur'ans preceding the caliph wherever he went, one purportedly having belonged to the third *rashidūn* ("rightly-guided") Sunni caliph ʿUthman and another that had been Ibn Tumart's personal *muṣḥaf*. References to the use of these Qur'ans appear throughout sources describing the Almohad period, including Ibn Sahib al-Salat's *Tārīkh al-mann bi'l-imāma* and al-Marrakushi's *Muʿjib fī talkhīs akhbār al-Maghrib*, as well as subsequent works like Ibn Marzuq's *Musnad*, the *Ḥulal al-mawshiyya*, and al-Maqqara's *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, indicating their importance in Muʾminid ceremonial. Though none specifically mention their appearance within the Agdal (for the reasons discussed above), given their prominence in other ceremonial practices it is reasonable to assume that they also appeared in these ceremonies.

The grand orthogonal axis created by the gardens, *raḥba*, and Tamarrakusht encouraged processions—both military and religious, but always with a political dimension—between the three spaces, and activated their potential for staging the Muʾminid self-concept as an imperial force that paradoxically retained its non-urban sectarian identity. Surrounded by the verdant gardens filled with aromatics and groves of trees, made possible through the extensive hydraulic network, and situated directly in between the urban center and the Atlas Mountains, the Muʾminid caliph positioned himself as an intermediary between the imperial capital and the dynasty's spiritual and ethnic homeland. The large open spaces, enclosed by walls but definitively outside the nexus of urban density, provided the staging ground for exhibitions of caliphal authority in a sort of formalized ruralism that negotiated the challenge of urbanizing a community that had been resistant to large-scale settlement while maintaining the pastoral habits

of that community. While these spaces leave much to be desired as architectural monuments—either thanks to poor preservation or else through the scant use of built architecture—as public staging grounds, they were enlivened through the religious, military, and political ceremonies that defined the Muʾminid presence in the city.

PRECEDENT AND PERSONALIZATION IN MUʾMINID CEREMONIAL

The pageantry of the rituals did not spring fully formed in the early days of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's reign, but rather drew on precedents from the Islamic West that connected the Muʾminid caliphate and the Almohad movement to a long history of Islamic authority. As a nascent dynasty with little experience in the traditions of imperial projection, the Muʾminids were faced with the question of how to express their connection to the Almohad movement and its origins in tribal politics on a much grander scale. The Almoravid example, which largely looked to Abbasid protocols for its architectural references, had already been dismissed as unacceptable by Ibn Tumart, and was therefore not only discarded but necessarily needed to be directly rebutted. This was accomplished by ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's rejection, abandonment, and closure of Almoravid sites within Marrakesh, underscored by the considerable attention paid to developing a new quarter outside the original walls of the madina. As ʿAbd al-Muʾmin focused on transitioning the eschatological religious movement of Almohadism into a sustainable and functioning empire, the architecture and urban space of this new quarter needed to concentrate the communication of power on the figure of the Muʾminid caliph as the key figure in this transition. To do so, the Muʾminids (primarily ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, but with Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf building off of his example),

looked to a ceremonial and ritual vernacular already well established in the Maghrib—that of the Spanish Umayyad caliphate.

The connection between the tenth-century Iberian caliphate and the twelfth-century Muʾminids has been well established by scholars such as Bennison, Jessica Streit, Maribel Fierro and Pascal Buresi, whose work is integral to the present study.[122] As one of the most significant political and cultural touchstones in the medieval Islamic west (the other, of course, being the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt), the Umayyads exerted an exceptional amount of influence on the art and architecture of the region, perhaps even more so in hindsight as part of cultural memory than in their heyday.[123] Their influence can be felt in the region's approaches to both architecture and landscape, but should be understood in light of twelfth-century political and social concerns. Moreover, those components of the Muʾminid adaptations that were changed should be highlighted as conscious departures from the past, whether building upon them, refocusing them for a new audience, or deliberately underscoring their differences. By communicating the new regime's power through a recognizable vernacular, the Muʾminids could be sure that they were being understood by both the local populace as well as foreign dignitaries, but through subtle additions to such ceremonies or by adapting their staging, the Muʾminids further communicated the ethno-social undercurrent of their caliphate, as shall be discussed below.

Returning to the site of the *raḥba* and the caliphal *qubba*, the primary locus of interaction between the figure of the Muʾminid caliph and the public, we see an immediate reference to Umayyad practice in the use of the red tent to signal the presence of the caliph. The Umayyads had been known to use similar pavilions, also featuring red tents, when gathering or reviewing

[122] For specific works, refer to the bibliography of this dissertation.
[123] See Cynthia Robinson, "Ubi Sunt: Memory and Nostalgia in Taifa Court Culture," *Muqarnas* 15 (1998): 20-31; D. Fairchild Ruggles, "The Islamic Landscape: Place and Memory," *Islamic Gardens & Landscapes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 3-12.

their armies, establishing a martial association with the structure.[124] The Umayyads were likely drawing on the example of the Prophet Muhammad who reportedly received a delegation from the Thaqif in a red tent as well, but under the Umayyads, the connotation of reception is shifted to one of review, from diplomacy to military action.[125] Even if the caliph himself was not present, the red tent became a stand-in for his person, reflective of his caliphal authority. Andalusi historian and pro-Umayyad commentator Abu Marwan Ibn Ḥayyan (d. 1076) noted that on one occasion during the reign of al-Ḥakam II (d. 976), the caliph sent a red tent with his military commander Ghalib ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān on an expedition to the Maghrib as a marker of his authority, to "manifest prestige [of the Umayyad caliphate] and enrage the heart of the enemy."[126] That the Umayyad presence in the Maghrib was largely defined by their struggle against the Fatimids for regional hegemony, marked by internecine struggle among the multitudinous factions that served as religio-political proxies for the two larger empires, only further underscores the tent's martial associations for a Maghribi audience.[127]

But in the Umayyad oeuvre, the caliph's role as a military leader was only one aspect of his rulership, and not even necessarily the primary one. In the Muʾminid program, however, the caliph's role as the head of the Almohad forces was paramount, reflecting the peripatetic habits of the Muʾminid court, its origins in a religious movement based on *jihād*, and an ambivalence toward the built environment. Sources hint at the fact that the Muʾminid *qubba*, in Marrakesh as well as in other imperial capitals like Seville and Rabat, was likely the temporary structure of the

[124] Bennison, "The Almohads and the Qurʾān of Uthmān," 147-148.
[125] Ibid., 149.
[126] Abū Marwān b. Khalaf b. Ḥusayn ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqatabas: al-juzʾ al-khamīs*, ed. Pedro Chalmeta Gendrón (Madrid: al-Maʿhad al-Isbānī al-Arabī lil-Thaqāfa, 1979), 257.
[127] For an overview of these struggles, which he describes as "monotonous, contradictory, and hard to follow," see Evariste Lévi-Provençal's *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane*, 2 vols. (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1950), 2:79.

red tent; Ibn Abi Zarʿ notes that such a tent was where ʿAbd al-Muʾmin received the *bayʿa* of the Berber tribes, and Ibn Sahib al-Salat describes Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf's first campaign to al-Andalus as featuring a large red pavilion in the field.[128] The tent's appearance in the *raḥba* and its role in the ceremonies that took place there further emphasize the military nature of the Muʾminid caliphate and, as Bennison notes, the "dedication of their military power to religious ends was constantly reiterated by the performance of prayer and Qur'anic recitation."[129] In the context of Marrakesh's urban history and the Muʾminid response to the Almoravid approach to urbanism, the use of temporary structures as a symbol for caliphal authority must furthermore be understood as a direct rebuttal of the Almoravids' descent into sedentary habits. By using a symbol of nomadic movement and martial prowess in such a public location where ceremonies visibly staged the hierarchy of Almohad society in microcosm, the Muʾminid caliph preserved the moment of transition into urban decadence so feared in Ibn Khaldun's narrative philosophy. Having reached the peak of its righteous authority and *aṣabiyya*, the Almohad movement (as encapsulated in the figure of the Muʾminid caliph) had not yet descended into the tranquil seduction of sedentary life. Repeated not only at the outset of military excursions, but annually as part of the necessary sociopolitical negotiations that maintained the Almohads' tribal confederation, these ceremonies reinforced the position of tension occupied by the Muʾminid caliph.

Yet another element from the Umayyad program of ceremonial appears in the very structure of the parades through the Muʾminid city, that of processing behind the two Qur'anic codices as an expression of caliphal piety and authority. As mentioned briefly above, the

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[128] Ibn Abī Zarʿ, *Rawḍ al-qirṭās*, 237; Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāt, *Tārīkh al-Mann bi'l-Imama ʿala al-mustaḍʿafīn bi-an jaʿalahum al-wārithīn*, ed. Abd al-Hadī al-Tāzī (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus lil-ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr, 1987), 530.
[129] Bennison, "The Almohads and the Qurʾān of Uthmān," 149.

Muʾminid caliph was preceded by the *maṣāḥif* of both ʿUthman and Ibn Tumart in a direct appropriation and adaptation of Umayyad practice. For the Umayyads, the use of the Qur'an in an imperial context signaled their entry into the contest for regional hegemony in the Islamic West, for which their primary opponents were the Shiʿi Fatimids. The use of the Qur'an of ʿUthman in public ceremony was part of a dialectic program of propaganda that emphasized the Umayyads' staunch support of Sunni orthodoxy and the Maliki tradition, as well as recalling their Levantine heritage and prerogative of the "Banū Umayya" to lead the Islamic faithful before all others.[130] Part of this role was the public reading from the codex, which was housed in the *maqṣūra* constructed as part of al-Hakam II's expansion of the Great Mosque in Cordoba.[131] By the second half of the twelfth century, however, it had made its way into the Almohad treasury, though the sources differ on whether it came into their possession under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin or Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf.[132] It then became a regular feature in the reports of Muʾminid processions, and al-Marrakushi describes these parades as follows:

> And this volume [of the Qur'an] we have mentioned was from the copies of ʿUthman—may God be satisfied with him—which came to [the Almohads] from the treasure stores of the Banu Umayya. They carried it in front of them wherever they went upon a red she-camel [adorned] with precious trappings and a splendid brocade of great cost…Behind the camel came a mule similarly adorned carrying another copy [of the Qur'an] said to be written by Ibn Tumart, smaller than the Qur'an of ʿUthman and ornamented with silver.[133]

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[130] Maribel Fierro, "Sobre la adopción del título califal por ʿAbd al-Rahman III," *Sharq al-Andalus* 6 (1989): 33-42.

[131] Ibn Marzūq, *El Musnad: Hechos memorables de abu'l Hasan Sultan de los Benimerines*, ed. and trans. Maria J. Viguera (Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura, 1977), 377.

[132] Al-Marrakushi reports that the Qur'an was part of a treaty negotiation with the King of Sicily during the reign of Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf, but the author of the *Ḥulal al-mawshiyya* attributes its acquisition to ʿAbd al-Muʾmin. I am inclined to follow the author of the *Ḥulal al-mawshiyya* in light of its earlier transmission. See Bennison, "The Almohads and the Qur'ān of ʿUthmān," 150-151.

[133] Al-Marrākushī, *al-Muʾjib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib*, 326. This description is confirmed by Ibn Saḥib al-Salāt's contemporaneous account, *Tārīkh al-mann bi'l-imāma*, 467-468.

Bennison has extensively discussed the significance of ʿUthman's codex in Muʾminid ceremonial as a symbol of caliphal legitimacy, drawing connections between ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's dynasty and the Spanish Umayyads. She argues that the codex was part of a concerted effort on behalf of the Muʾminid dynasty to accord it the kind of religious legitimacy enjoyed by the Umayyads at the height of their power.[134] However, it is important to consider the significance of Ibn Tumart's *muṣḥaf* in these processions, which often coincided with military victories.

Upon initial inspection, it would appear that Ibn Tumart's *muṣḥaf* is accorded a secondary place, following after ʿUthman's, and their decorative materials would corroborate this claim. ʿUthman's codex is enclosed in a gold and silver case and famously adorned with a number of jewels, including a large ruby in the shape of a horse's hoof.[135] In contrast, Ibn Tumart's is much simpler, covered only by a gold-plated silver. Even their modes of transport seem to suggest this imbalance; ʿUthman is accorded a red she-camel, while Ibn Tumart is placed on a mule. However, I would suggest that this arrangement could also be symbolic of Almohad religious claims, particularly Ibn Tumart's status as the *mahdī*, the eschatological figure prophesied to restore Islam to its true principles and rule before the end of the world. As a reformist movement, Almohadism revolved around the character of the *mahdī*, his asceticism and his doctrinal focus on knowledge over interpretation.[136] The two Qur'ans were very visual reminders of Ibn Tumart's criticisms of the Maliki school and their Almoravid patrons, whom he believed had strayed too far from the sources of true knowledge, and of the source of his and his chosen successor's roles as redemptive spiritual guides. That his *muṣḥaf* follows that of ʿUthman is in accordance with his role as a reformer and the *mahdī*, literally the second coming of communal

[134] Bennison, "The Almohads and the Qur'ān of ʿUthmān," 151-152.
[135] Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib min al-Andalus al-raṭib* (Beirut: Dar Ṣadir, 1968), 1:611.
[136] Cornell, "Understanding is the Mother of Ability," 93.

salvation. One could even compare the order with that of the *ʿumūm* ceremony, in which the Muʾminid caliphs are "announced" by the family of ʿUmar al-Sanhaji; similarly, though the ʿUthmanic codex is the Qur'anic standard, it is superseded by that of Ibn Tumart in his role as the *mahdī*.

What is clear is that the precedent set by the Umayyads loomed large in the cultural memory of the Maghrib as the chief example of what it meant to establish an empire based on religious authority. Indeed, in their most expressive modes of communicating authority and stability, the Umayyads were largely playing to a Maghribi audience in an attempt to dissuade them from supporting the Fatimid cause.[137] In a belated sort of reciprocity, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's early dynastic efforts were largely concentrated on communicating a similar if updated form of authority to the Andalusi and Arab factions that populated the wider Maghrib and the Iberian Peninsula. This required a delicate negotiation between the Almohads' Berber background and a more widely understood imperial vernacular, perhaps most expediently expressed through the construction of an Arab genealogy. Al-Baydhaq records two lineages for ʿAbd al-Muʾmin that tie him to the Islamic heartland and to the significant figures of early Islam (at least, in the Maghribi conception of such a history).[138] Of the two, the more widely circulated one connected him on his father's side to Qays b. ʿAylan b. Mudar b. Nizar b. Maʿadd b. ʿAdnan, the progenitor of the Banu Qays that governed northern Syria and formed a major political bloc under the first Umayyad caliphate (661-740), and from whom the Spanish Umayyads traced their own lineage. Promoted in later sources like the *Ḥulal al-mawshiyya* and al-Marrakushi's *Muʾjib*, this ancestry granted ʿAbd al-Muʾmin a legitimate claim to the caliphate, which required an agnatic

[137] Janina Safran, "Ceremony and Submission: the symbolic representation and recognition of legitimacy in tenth-century al-Andalus," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 58:3 (1999): 191-201.
[138] Evariste Lévi-Provençal, *Documents inédits*, French text, 32-35; Arabic text, 21-23.

connection to the Prophet Muhammad according to the commonly accepted doctrine in the Islamic West. As outlined by the eleventh-century jurist and theologian Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), the caliphate was the sole province to the "descendants of Fihr ibn Malik [a direct ancestor of the Prophet and progenitor of the Banu Quraysh]…and for this we rely on the word of the Messenger of God, who said that the imams or chiefs will be of the tribe of Quraysh."[139] While ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's ancestry is indirectly connected to the Prophet Muhammad, the Banu Qays and the Banu Quraysh did share a common ancestor in Muʿadd b. ʿAdnan, thus providing ʿAbd al-Muʾmin a legitimate channel through which to push his caliphal claims (fig. 1.10). As a propagandistic tactic, the promotion of this lineage appears to have been successful, having won over the Banu Hilal and Banu Sulaym, two prominent Arab tribes that had settled in Ifriqiya and who would go on to form an important branch of the Almohad military.[140]

Al-Baydhaq also provides ʿAbd al-Muʾmin with a Qurayshi ancestry by tracing his mother's ancestry to the figure of Gannuna, the daughter of Idris II (d. 828), who professed direct descent from the Prophet Muhammad through his daughter Fatima.[141] However, as has been noted by both Fierro and Bennison, cognatic or matrilineal chains of ancestry in pursuit of sharifian claims were considered weak or suspect, with the exception of connections through Fatima.[142] Why, then, does al-Baydhaq include this second genealogy, which is left unacknowledged in later accounts of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's ancestry? It is likely because Ibn Tūmart also claimed sharifian authority through the same figure, which bolstered his position as the

[139] Cited in Maribel Fierro, "Las genealogías de ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, primer califa almohada," *Al-Qanṭara* 24:1 (2003): 79.
[140] Ibid., 96-97.
[141] Ibid., 84-85.
[142] Ibid., 84-85; Bennison, "The Almohads and the Qur'ān of ʿUthmān," 146.

maḥdī through genealogical connections as well as spiritual ones.[143] By connecting himself to the Idrisids, who were credited for converting the Maghrib to Islam in the late eighth century, and through them to the Prophet Muhammad, Ibn Tumart was fulfilling one of the characteristics by which the *maḥdī* should be recognized. Though he never claims the title for himself, in his discourse on the principles of Almohadism, *Aʿazz mā yuṭlab* ("The Greatest Thing to Be Desired"), Ibn Tumart describes the nature of the *maḥdī*'s nobility as twofold; he must exhibit both an acquired nobility (*ḥasab*) as well as an inherited nobility, or in other words, genealogy (*nasab*).[144] Conveniently, Ibn Tumart appears to have fulfilled both of those requirements, the former through his establishment of the Almohad movement, and the latter through his connection to Fatima.[145] I would like to suggest here that ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's claim to a common ancestor has less to do with claiming a connection to the Prophet Muhammad and creating an Arab ancestry—which had been accomplished through his patrilineal line albeit on a less grand scale—than with bolstering his position in relation to Ibn Tumart and the Masmuda.

Much like the ceremonies that took place in the *raḥba* and Agdal, this secondary genealogy of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's was designed to confirm and strengthen ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's claim not only to the caliphate but also to rulership over a potentially fractious confederation of Berber tribes, the majority of which was formed from a tribe different than his own. ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's ties to the Zenata threatened to undermine his authority among the Masmuda and, as we have already seen, nearly succeeded in doing so in the early days of his leadership. Ibn Tumart's doctrinal emphasis focused on a pan-tribal form of *aṣabiyya* that superseded internecine conflicts

[143] Lévi-Provençal, *Documents inédits*, French text, 30-31; Arabic text, 21.
[144] Muḥammad Ibn Tūmart, *Kitāb Aʿazz mā yuṭlab (Le livre de Ibn Toumert. Mahdi des Almohades)*, ed. I. Goldziher (Alger: P. Fontanta, 1903), Arabic text 240-254.
[145] Mercedes García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform: Maḥdīs of the Muslim West*, trans. by Martin Beagles (Brill: Boston, 2006), 182.

through subscription to the Almohad ideology, but after his death, it was put under great stress as the result of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's transition to leadership. In order to maintain the momentum the Almohads had achieved, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin needed to justify his authority not only to the larger social groups of Ifriqiya and the Maghrib—as represented by his Qayshi ancestry—but back to Ibn Tumart and the Masmuda as well. Rather than taking his Qurayshi lineage at face value, we must understand it in this particular context as part of maintaining that connection to the *maḥdī*. ʿAbd al-Muʾmin had formally rejected his Zenata ties to become the adoptive son of Ibn Tumart through his marriage to Safiyya b. Abu Imran, the daughter of one of Ibn Tumart's earliest companions from Tinmal.[146] As Streit has argued, these dual lineages allowed ʿAbd al-Muʾmin to "present himself as the heir to whoever was politically expedient, regardless of contradictions," thereby maintaining the delicate balance by which he had come to power in the first place.[147] But rather than viewing one genealogy as superseding the other after his ascent to the caliphate, as has been suggested elsewhere, the promotion of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's Qaysi ancestry is more likely reflective of a later program of "de-Almohadization" by later authors and copyists, who viewed Ibn Tumart as an eccentric character to be avoided at all costs.[148]

Moreover, as Maya Shatzmiller has argued, the practice of Berber groups creating Arab genealogies for themselves was a fairly common practice by the twelfth century. In both al-Andalus and the Maghrib, dating as far back as the days of the eighth-century early Islamic expansion, various Berber vassals to both the Umayyads and the Fatimids would construct an

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[146] Heather J. Empey, "The Mothers of Caliph's Sons: Women as Spoils of War during the Early Almohad Period," in *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History*, ed. Matthew S. Gorden and Kathryn A. Hain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 146-147; Fromherz, *Almohads: Rise of An Islamic Empire*, 102; Madeleine Fletcher, "The Anthropological Context of Almohad History," *Hespéris-Tamuda* 26 (1988): 45.
[147] Streit, "Monumental Austerity," 126.
[148] Emile Fricaud, "Les ṭ*alaba* dans la société almohade, 332-333.

Arab lineage as part of an expanded or heightened political role at court.[149] Moreover, with the emergence of the Idrisid dynasty, who claimed a sharifian ancestry of their own and who would vacillate between Umayyad and Fatimid allegiance in the course of their tumultuous hold over the region, the role of an Arab/Prophetic genealogy became simply another trope in the royal expression of legitimacy. The Almoravids had claimed a Himyaritic lineage (i.e. from southern Arabia or Yemen) not only for Yusuf ibn Tashfin and his family, but also for the entire Sanhaja confederation as part of their assumption of power, and while the Muʾminids' lineages are not quite so exaggerated, this underscores the widespread use of such genealogies in the discourse of power.[150] This calls into question just how emphatic these lineages were meant to be if their use was so common as to be expected, and coincidentally calls attention to variations within the norm, such as ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's dual genealogies that not only connected him to the Umayyads, but back to Ibn Tumart as well. That this latter lineage disappears in later manuscript recensions reflects more upon their post-Almohad authors than on the early Muʾminid purpose in composing them in the first place.

Taken in conjunction with the ceremonial practices that were also adapted under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, a subtle yet effective program of caliphal propaganda begins to emerge, one that "deployed all the material, ideological and symbolic resources at his disposal, regardless of mutual contradictions."[151] At least in the short term, under his reign as well as that of his son and grandson, such a program should be considered effective, as all three figures were successfully able to contribute to the expansion and enrichment of the empire, particularly with respect to

[149] Maya Shatzmiller, *The Berbers and the Islamic State* (Princeton, N.J.: Marcus Weiner, 2000), 17-27.
[150] Bennison, "The Almohads and the Qur'ān of ʿUthmān," 145.
[151] Pascal Buresi, "D'une péninsule à l'autre: Cordoue, ʿUṯmān (644-656), et les arabs à l'époque almohade (XII^{e}-XIII^{e} siècle)," *Al-Qanṭara* 31:1 (2010): 7.

Marrakesh.[152] They constructed a new lockable royal market adjacent to Tamarrakusht, encouraging the burgeoning trading economy that filtered through the city, and a hospital within the madina dedicated as a charitable foundation, where Abu Yusuf Yaʿqub al-Mansur "ordered perfumed and fruit bearing trees to be planted within and installed flowing water to all the rooms in addition to four pools in the center, of which one was made out of white marble."[153] These endeavors highlighted the Muʾminid commitment to their capital city while their formal public engagements maintained an authoritative distance from the public and densest part of the city, thereby avoiding the pitfalls that the Almoravid example had so vividly demonstrated. By doing so, they could maintain the prestige and authority expected of the caliphal title, qualities that were confirmed through the mediated visibility of the caliphal personage and confirmed through the urban fabric of the Muʾminid royal quarter.

The concept of religious and political authority requiring such mediation, particularly within the confines or urban life, taps into a much wider pattern of rulership evidenced throughout the Islamic world in which the transition from a ruling Islamic minority to a larger Muslim majority necessitated new paradigms for expressing that eliteness.[154] This problem has been discussed in the context of the Abbasid move to Samarra, the Fatimid development of al-Qahira, and of course the Umayyad construction of Madinat al-Zahraʿ.[155] While a direct reference to the Abbasids would have been rejected due to their connection with the Almoravids,

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[152] Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 91-92.
[153] Ibid., 316, 321-322; al-Marrākushī, *al-Muʾjib*, 364-365.
[154] Jere Bacharach, "Administrative complexes, palaces and citadels: changes in the loci of medieval Muslim rule," in *The Ottoman City and its Parts: Urban Structure and Social Order*, ed. I. Bierman, R. Abou-El-Haj, and D. Preziosi (Rochelle, NY: Caratzas, 1991), 111-128.
[155] Ibid.; Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 39-44; D. F. Ruggles, "The Mirador in Abbasid and Hispano-Umayyad Garden Typology," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990): 73-82; D. F. Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, & Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 54-55.

both the Fatimids and the Umayyads set precedents in the Maghrib for manipulating urban space to frame the figure of the caliph in ways that projected his authoritative difference into the landscape. For the Umayyads, this meant a remove from Cordoba to the caliphal city of Madinat al-Zahraʿ, where the suburban complex could create controlled axial vistas through topographical manipulation, "bypassing the established power based long-standing associations of the older city, which…already had an existence independent of whichever king inhabited it."[156] Likewise, the Fatimids also sought to turn seclusion to their advantage with an urban *tabula rasa*, establishing al-Qahira as the physical manifestation of Ismaiʾili cosmology, which contrasted with the majority Sunni population of commercial Fustat.[157] However, both Madinat al-Zahraʿ and al-Qahira functioned as codependent spheres with the older, more established cities they had ostensibly broken away from. Neither city was completely self-sufficient, but rather grew out of a pre-existing relationship with Cordoba and Fustat, respectively, creating a sense of continuity and an "integrated relationship between the ruler and the ruled" that would persist in the Islamic West.[158]

The Muʾminid expansion of Marrakesh adapts this paradigm, retaining the elements of ceremony and ritual that drew attention to the caliph and defined the Almohad version of the caliphate. But rather than using this program as a bridge between the public, as embodied by the existing urban fabric, and the caliph, encapsulated in a new imperial city, the Muʾminid approach relocates those ceremonies to an adjacent (albeit new) city quarter, developing a constructed site to serve as the stage. This in turn shifts the caliphal locus elsewhere, for as has been discussed above, the Muʾminid royal quarter functioned more as a site for public interaction with the caliph

[156] Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, & Vision*, 92.
[157] Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City*, 39-42.
[158] Bennison, "Power and the City in the Islamic West," 91.

rather than for the caliph's exclusion. Given the north-south axis that governed the space, and the continually reenacted procession along this axis, we must consider the visual potential that this directed focus encourages. Set against the backdrop of the Atlas, Muʾminid ceremonial continually depicts the caliph as bringing salvation and religious knowledge down from the mountains, resonating with the local populace as reinforcing the dynasty's Berber origins therein. This is the key to understanding the southwestern expansion of Marrakesh, particularly as it was conceived under the first three Muʾminid rulers. Rather than engaging directly with the city, carving space out of the urban density of the madina for palaces, fortresses and other built structures, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's urban vision was more about creating these staging grounds that mediated public contact with the Almohad elite. In some ways, this is yet another reaction to Ibn Tumart's criticism of the Almoravids; the informality with which the Almoravids had treated their exposure to the public reflected, at least to Ibn Tumart, the degree to which they were susceptible to corruption and decadence. The Muʾminid program is, by comparison, much more highly mediated, putting the Almohad elite at a remove except in those arenas in which everything around them confirms the narrative of their origin and rise to power. This is, of course, the ideal for any imperial dynasty seeking to visually project its authority, but the real innovation of the Muʾminid project was to use recognizable ritual programs and signifiers—such as those adapted from Umayyad al-Andalus—in a setting that simultaneously recalled their own heritage as Masmuda Berbers and their connection to Ibn Tūmart.

The topographical axis, as well as the ceremonies that traversed it, were anchored into the landscape through the construction of two mosques, one within the city and another nestled into the Atlas Mountains. On the northern end of the spectrum, the new Almohad congregational mosque—the Kutubiyya—negotiated the space between the earlier Almoravid foundations of

Marrakesh and the new Almohad expansion of the city. Triumphalist and responsive in nature, this new mosque reflects the Muʾminids concern with distinguishing themselves as separate from their immediate predecessors, as well as independent from other caliphates such as the Abbasids, through its adjustment of the qibla direction. The mosque is also indicative of the Muʾminids sensitivity towards the intellectual and scientific debates of the day, and the building's unusual construction history openly displays the process through which these debates were negotiated. Through these processes, the Kutubiyya is revealed to be both locally relevant and regionally participatory. On the southern end of the axis, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin sponsored the construction of a new mosque to serve as both a shrine to Ibn Tumart and a dynastic necropolis for his ancestors in Tinmal. Though not visible from Marrakesh, the site activates the landscape surrounding the capital city as a reminder of Almohad origins, authority, and legitimacy. Echoing the Kutubiyya through its ornamental scheme, the Tinmal mosque's smaller size compresses the visual field, resulting in a more opulent and luxurious prayer hall. Its role as a pilgrimage site also works to extend the program of ritual and ceremony established within Marrakesh into the Atlas, thereby creating a cycle through which the Muʾminid caliphate can continually reenact the moment of their ascent to power. The two mosques respond to their respective landscapes with opposing senses of scale and proportion, creating a delicate urban balance through which the Muʾminids can express a dynastic identity that speaks on both a local and regional scale.

Chapter Two:

The Mosque in the Bookseller's Market: The *Masjid al-Jamiʿ al-Kutubiyya*

Not far from the throng of people flooding through the Jemaa al-Fna square stands the congregational Friday mosque, the Masjid al-Jamiʿ al-Kutubiyya, or the Kutubiyya mosque. While the building expands out in a long, low, single-storied structure, the site's minaret stands watch over the city (fig. 2.1). Dwarfing the surrounding urban landscape, today as much as it would have in the twelfth century, the Kutubiyya minaret serves as a beacon in the maze of the urban sprawl, both physically and as chief center of religious, scholarly and public life in Almohad Marrakesh. The monument takes its name not from any ruler or patron, but from the bookseller's market that sprouted along the eastern wall, which emphasizes the urban identity of the Kutubiyya as the city's principle Friday mosque. As shall be explored in this chapter, this relationship is reflected in the very nature and execution of the Kutubiyya's architecture, and is indicative of the Almohads' close association with their dynastic capital.

The Kutubiyya, as the oldest Friday mosque in Marrakesh and one of the earliest extant mosques in the Maghrib al-Aqsa ("the Far West," referring to the western part of North Africa that incorporates what is today Morocco and Algeria), is certainly deserving of study, particularly given the opportunity for examining the mosque's relationship within the urban context of an "Islamic" city. Marrakesh's foundation by the Almoravids in 1062 turned a small rural communal center into a major dynastic settlement centered (ideologically if not physically) around a congregational mosque that spoke to the local religio-political powers that be.[159] Though the city would be completely renovated under the reign of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, the central

[159] Ronald A. Messier, *The Almoravids and the Meanings of Jihad* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 180.

role of the congregational mosque within the urban complex would prove foundational to the very concept of the "Islamic" city as described by William Marçais in 1928.[160] This impression was compounded by the selection bias of French colonial-era scholars, who primarily worked in North Africa, and Marçais' intellectual successors such as Jacques Berque and Roger LeTourneau further developed the concept, primarily through the study of Fez.[161] While the concept of the "Islamic" city has been rightly criticized by contemporary scholars such as Janet Abu-Lughod, the role of the Friday mosque within the city, particularly in the Maghrib al-Aqsa, remains paramount.

Despite the early twentieth-century interest in North African urbanism, however, little scholarly attention has been paid to the architectural contributions of the Almohads to Marrakesh general, and to the Kutubiyya in particular. Built in the middle of the twelfth century, the mosque is unique in its plan, with two prayer halls wedged apart by the site's monumental minaret (fig. 2.2). Only the latter prayer hall remains extant today, though the earlier structure was excavated and published in the 1920s under Jacques Meunié, Henri Terrasse, and Gaston Deverdun, all of whose work remains invaluable for its thorough description of the site. Explanations for the expansion and arrangement of the two prayer halls have ranged from focusing on the adjusted qibla direction to a rapidly expanding population in Marrakesh, but none have appeared conclusive or have investigated much further than a formalist reading of the site and the official narratives given us by the sources. This chapter aims to deepen our understanding of the Kutubiyya by situating its construction within the larger intellectual and legal conversations happening in the twelfth-century Maghrib around the role of the

[160] William Marçais, "L'Islamisme et la vie urbaine," *L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lêttres, Comptes Rendus* (Paris: January-March 1928), 86-100.
[161] Janet Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City—History Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19:2 (1987), 159-160.

congregational mosque in the collective urban experience as well as the dynasty's religio-political agenda.

Construction on the complex began almost immediately after ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's conquest of Marrakesh, following the closure and demolishment of the major Almoravid mosque built by ʿAli ibn Yusuf, known as the Masjid al-Siqaya.[162] One cannot mention the Almohads' building program without also addressing the systematic attention given to their predecessors' monuments. Despite having been founded under the Almoravids, the city of Marrakesh bears the stamp of the Almohads so distinctly because of the nearly wholesale destruction of the Almoravid constructions after the conquest of the city. Those buildings that were not destroyed were often whitewashed and stripped of any finery considered overly ostentatious. Certainly, the luxurious fountain that defined ʿAli ibn Yusuf's mosque has since disappeared, and the only artifact that appears to have survived from the Almoravid mosque is the intricately-carved, wooden minbar that he commissioned from Córdoba in 1137, which was relocated to the Kutubiyya and installed there until the late twentieth century.[163] The mosque itself was closed and left to ruin, ostensibly for the sin of a faulty qibla direction, though the accuracy of this assessment must be questioned in light of the variety of qibla orientations in the Maghrib, as well as the complicated relationship the Almohads had with North African Malikism.[164]

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[162] The literal translation of *siqāya*, which more often refers to irrigation or a water source, may refer to the expansive underground network of channels that fed other fountains around the city, including one of the only Almoravid monuments left in the city, the Qubba al-Barudiyyin. See Messier, *The Almoravids and the Meanings of Jihad* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 123. See also Yasser Tabbaa, "Andalusian Roots and Abbasid Homage in the Qubbat al-Barudiyyin in Marrakesh," *Muqarnas* 25 (2008), 133-146.

[163] Jonathan M. Bloom, et al., *The Minbar from the Kutubiyya Mosque* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 3-4.

[164] Jacques Meunié, Henri Terrasse, Gaston Deverdun, *Nouvelles Recherches archéologiques à Marrakech* (Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1957), 44.

With the effacement of Almoravid architectural reminders, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin was then free to exercise his own impression on the new capital city, beginning with a new congregational mosque to serve as the centerpiece of imperial Almohadism. Construction on the Kutubiyya broke ground in 1147, over the remains of the destroyed Almoravid palace built by ʿAli ibn Yusuf. Indeed, the northern exterior wall of the mosque's current iteration is likely reused from this prior construction, and excavations in the 1920s by Jacques Meunié suggest that it may even have been the site of ʿAli ibn Yusuf's funerary enclosure (fig. 2.3).[165] Approximately 80 meters wide, east to west, and 60 meters long, north to south, the original Kutubiyya follows a Maghribi precedent typified by the congregational mosques at Qayrawan, Córdoba and Fez for a single-storied hypostyle hall with a courtyard for ablutions positioned axially opposite the qibla wall. The typology dictates a T-shape plan, with a larger central aisle typically positioned down the mihrab axis and another transversely crossing along the qibla wall. The type had already been employed under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's patronage at the mosque in Taza, founded only five years earlier to mark the Almohad movement's presence at a strategic crossroads in the Rif.[166] At the Kutubiyya, this layout is further elaborated into three wider central aisles along the mihrab axis, with seven smaller aisles to either side (for a total of seventeen longitudinal aisles). The eastern and western walls contained four entrances each, with three of those entrances opening directly into the prayer hall while the fourth opened onto the courtyard. The north wall of the original prayer hall, though no longer extant, contained a single public entrance along the central mihrab axis, while the southern wall contained two entrances for private use by the imam, caliph and caliphal retinue.

[165] Gaston Deverdun, *Marrakech: Des origines á 1912* (Casablanca: Éditions Frontispice, 2004), 1: 172.
[166] ibid., 173.

Most hypostyle halls employ columns to delineate this arrangement, and the abiding influence and authoritarian connotations of Roman architecture provided no shortage of columns and capitals available for reuse in the early Islamic mosques that proliferated throughout North Africa from the eighth century AD onwards. Both congregational mosques at Qayrawan and Córdoba employed Roman spoliated columns to great effect, and at least in the case of Qayrawan, an entire industry was developed to remove and reshape columns from the Roman and Byzantine remains of Hadrumetum, Sufetula and Djaloula (fig. 2.4).[167] And yet, because supply of columns was not nearly as great as that of al-Andalus or the eastern Mediterranean, Maghribi mosques were faced with a different choice in building materials. Mosques in the extreme west of the Maghrib seem to have developed along a different trajectory, employing brick piers rather than spoliated columns in a manner akin to the Abbasid mosques of Samarra or the mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo. This pattern appears even in the earliest extant congregational mosque in the region, at the Qarawiyyin in Fez, founded under the Idrisids in 857, where archaeological work has revealed piers to have supported the structure in its first phase, though the mosque today employs columns.[168] However, as Mariam Rosser-Owen has convincingly argued, this pattern and particularly the use of brick likely emerged as the result of convenience along the trans-Saharan trade routes rather than an imported model from the Islamic east.[169]

The Kutubiyya thus follows in the local tradition by employing brick piers to support its hypostyle hall, a tradition emphasized through the extensive use of such local building materials. Brick not only formed the columns of the prayer hall, but each of the walls (with the exception of

[167] Georges Marçais, *L'Architecture Musulmane d'Occident: Tunisie, Algérie, Maroc, Espagne et Sicile* (Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1954), 8.
[168] Henri Terrasse, *La Mosquée al-Qaraouiyin à Fés: avec une étude de Gaston Deverdun sur les inscriptions historiques de la mosquée* (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1968), 9-10.
[169] Mariam Rosser-Owen, "Andalusia Spolia in Medieval Morocco," 168.

the north wall) as well, outlining each of the mosque's entrances and the mihrab. The brick itself was composed of pisé and roughly cut stone, often small pebbles or bits of rubble used to grant the pisé heft and stability (fig. 2.5).[170] This technique, while by no means specific to the region, incorporated locally available and easily handled materials, providing cheap and plentiful material with which to build. Because of its ease and availability, it was a popular choice for construction, only surpassed by stone in the eastern part of North Africa known in the medieval period as Ifriqiya.[171] But whereas comparable sites such as Qayrawan sought to belie the locality of their construction through certain architectural references, the Kutubiyya fully embraced it. The bricks were formed using a local clay as the pisé, which gave them a distinctive reddish color, highly mutable through changes in the quality of the light. Within the mosque itself, these bricks were covered in plaster before being whitewashed, creating a clean, light interior (fig. 2.6).

This stripped-back interior creates the ideal backdrop for an ornamental program with a clear and focused hierarchy executed in a subtle study of texture that draws the eye towards the central aisle of the mosque to frame the mihrab niche. Beginning with the arches, most of the mosque employs simple horseshoe shapes that end just above a pair of engaged columns, one each on the eastern and western sides of the piers. These columns are topped by stucco capitals featuring a variety of vegetal motifs (see fig. 2.7). However, the closer one moves toward the qibla wall and the mihrab, the more elaborate these themes grow. The transept immediately preceding the qibla wall is highlighted by a row of polylobed arches which, in addition to highlighting the area preserved for the caliph and his retinue, create a sense of depth across the transept. This effect is deepened thanks to a series of small windows with *mashrabiyya* screens that line the upper

[170] Basset and Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 87.
[171] Anderson, "Early Mosque Architecture in al-Andalus and the Maghreb," 14.

reaches of the qibla wall, bringing shafts of light into the space between the row of polylobed arches and the wall. The arches are elaborated into lambrequin forms along the longitudinal arches that cross the qibla transept (fig. 2.8), as in the arch that frames the mihrab in the central aisle. Though the materiality and color of these forms remains the same, the delicate shift from a simple horseshoe to a lambrequin arch guides the eye toward the center and southern end of the mosque, culminating in three elaborate lambrequin arches framing the mihrab (two on either side and one to the front, fig. 2.9). The mosque's ceiling also reflects this ornamental hierarchy, reserving muqarnas domes for the qibla transept and mihrab while employing flat-pitched wooden ceilings elsewhere within the space. Five muqarnas domes fill the qibla transept: a square dome on each extreme lateral end, a rectangular dome with doubled "cap" on each side (fig. 2.10), and another square dome directly before the mihrab niche. Each of these domes is modified to fill the space, as noted by Basset and Terrasse in their study of the Kutubiyya, and yet they retain a sense of symmetry and internal logic.[172] Pronounced ribs that line the individual cells emphasize this geometry, creating an aesthetic that, as described by Jessica Streit, recalls "a garment that has been stitched together with its seams showing."[173]

This program culminates at the Kutubiyya's mihrab, which is formulated as a domed chamber with a small arched entry framed by a large panel of *alfiz*, a sort of architectonic rectangular panel of molding that encloses the outer edge of an arch, a common feature of western Islamic architectural ornament (fig. 2.11). The arched entry features two concentric blind, scalloped arches encased within the *alfiz*, with two scalloped motifs occupying each corner. The *alfiz* in turn is framed by a band of geometric stucco, which is topped by a row of

[172] Henri Basset and Henri Terrasse, "Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades (suite)," *Hespéris* 6 (1926), 160-161.
[173] Streit, "Monumental Austerity," 57.

five polylobed arches, alternating between blind and screened in a floral *mashrabiyya*, with another row of geometric stucco above before the muqarnas dome begins. The mihrab itself is an octagonal room, with each wall panel framed in a blind stuccoed lambrequin arch growing out of miniature columns and a band of geometric, eight-pointed stars above them (see fig. 2.12). The *muqarnas* dome within the mihrab features the same delineated ribbing as the other domes within the mosque, culminating in a ribbed, eight-pointed star that, thanks to its curvature, appears simultaneously floral and geometric (see fig. 2.13).

The mihrab is also highlighted through the only examples of non-local architectural material within the mosque, two sets of marble columns presumably spoliated from an undetermined Umayyad site in al-Andalus, arranged so that four columns line the interior of the mihrab niche while another flanks either side of the *alfiz* panel that frames it (see fig. 2.14). Given the extreme difficulty of transporting these columns from their locus on the Iberian Peninsula to the Almohad capital, their use must be considered as highly charged with symbolic and reverential meaning. The itinerant nature of the Muʾminid court, which included communications with ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's son based in Seville, would have provided the ideal vehicle for transporting these trophies, but even then, the columns' weight and the overland route across the Maghrib and the Middle Atlas to the capital made such transport no easy feat.[174] It is far more likely that these columns were directly sourced from more local Almoravid sites (see the discussion of the Kutubiyya minbar, below). But their Andalusi and Umayyad origin brings a note of continuity and legitimacy to the mosque in addition to the triumphalist message communicated through the Almoravid elements of the site.

[174] Rosser-Owen, "Andalusi Spolia," 157.

THE TWO KUTUBIYYAS

The reality of the Kutubiyya complex is that it is, in fact, the site of two mosques, built at an angle with one another during the latter half of the twelfth century. Though the exact dates are uncertain (to my knowledge, there is no recorded date of completion at the extant complex), the contemporary texts reveal a rough timeline of construction. Built on the site of ʿAli ibn Yusuf's palace as noted above, which had been destroyed in the Almohad takeover of Marrakesh, the first Kutubiyya broke ground in 1147, and was completed by 1157. That same year, it seems construction began on a 'second Kutubiyya' adjacent to the first, with enough of the structure completed by 1158 for prayers to be performed there, though not fully completed until 1161 at the earliest. The second Kutubiyya was accessed through the qibla wall of the first, reorienting the new qibla from 154° to 159°. Although though the first iteration of the mosque is no longer extant, visitors to the site can still see the brick piers and back wall that outline how the two would have aligned (fig. 2.15).[175] The result was an oddly angled complex with two individual mosques separated by a thin wedge of space, with each adjoining a corner of the minaret that stands between the two, the first at its southeast corner and the second at its northeast.

Why then did ʿAbd al-Muʾmin decide to build two mosques next to one another within the same decade? The explanation for such an odd expansion of the mosque is murky at best, for authors of the period merely comment on the second mosque's existence, never its logic. In the twelfth-century text known as the *Kitāb al-Istibṣār* (The Book of Insight), considered an updated adaptation of al-Bakri's geography, the author notes the coexistence of the two structures, at least until the end of the twelfth century: "And then the Caliph and Imam [ʿAbd al-Muʾmin]

[175] Michael E. Bonine, "The Sacred Direction and City Structure: A Preliminary Analysis of the Islamic Cities of Morocco," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990), 52.

constructed there a great congregational mosque, which he then enlarged with one similar to it, towards the qibla where the palace once was, and between them was raised the most grand minaret, of which there had been none like it [before] in Islam."[176] With the later addition, the Kutubiyya complex nearly doubled in size and, while not precisely symmetrical, nevertheless retained the sense of spatial unity and focus that became so characteristic of Almohad mosques.

QIBLA ORIENTATION

As noted above, the most popular explanation of the Kutubiyya's disordered construction history and unusual arrangement and expansion is that the second version of the mosque was built to correct a faulty qibla orientation. This theory, first proposed in 1925 by scholars Henri Terrasse and Henri Basset in a series of articles for the journal *Hespéris*, used as its primary evidence the angular arrangement of the two prayer halls.[177] This theory was then promoted by their colleagues George Marçais and Gaston Deverdun, yet modern scholars have rightly pointed out that such an explanation fails to contend with the fact that the new arrangement directs the qibla further away from Mecca than the original.[178] Following the Great Circle Route (i.e. the shortest distance to Mecca), which is how scholars have traditionally addressed the topic of qibla orientation, qiblas in Marrakesh should follow a 91° azimuth; when construction began on the

[176] *Kitāb al-Istibṣār fī ajāʾib al-amsār*, ed. ʿAbd al-Hamid and Saʾid Zaghlul (Casablanca: Dār al-Nashr al-Maghribīya, 1985), 209. On the relationship between al-Bakri and the *Kitāb al-Istibṣār*, see Nehemia Levtzion, "The Twelfth-Century Anonymous Kitab al-Istibṣār: A History of a Text," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 24 (1979): 201-217.
[177] Henri Basset and Henri Terrasse, "Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades. II. Les deux Kotobiya," in *Hesperis* 4 (1924), 201.
[178] Deverdun, *Marrakech*, 181. Marçais, *L'architecture musulmane d'occident: Tunisie, Algérie, Maroc, Espagne et Sicilie* (Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1955), 205; Streit, "Monumental Austerity," 53; Bonine, "Sacred Direction," 50-72.

first Kutubiyya, it was oriented to 154° before being adjusted in the second structure to 159° (fig. 2.16).

Deviations from the mathematically precise qibla direction were not unusual in the medieval period, particularly so in Egypt, Ifriqiya, and the Maghrib al-Aqṣa, where examples of variant qiblas have widely noted. The Kutubiyya is thus not especially remarkable for this deviation, though a satisfactory response to the phenomenon is necessary. Scholarly attempts to justify this variation have, thus far, focused on retrofitting the qibla orientation to the urban structure of the surrounding environs. Terrasse, in a response to a query from George Sarton concerning the proliferation of inaccurate qiblas in medieval Islamic mosques, posited that the variation was due to the spatial restrictions posed by existing urban plans.[179] In the case of Fez and Marrakesh, Terrasse explains, those mosques with similar orientation fall under a dynastic (epochal) pattern; mosques were oriented coherently within dynastic production, with variations arising from the changeover between ruling powers.[180] Though overly simplistic, Terrasse's theory is not entirely without merit; an archaeological examination over the *longue durée* of Islamic architecture in the Maghrib al-Aqsa reveals that two coherent trends correlate to Maghribi dynastic lines.

The contemporary region of Morocco houses mosques with a wide variety of qibla directions, with the majority of sites falling between 150° to 120°.[181] It is not until the early seventeenth century under the Alawite dynasty (r. 1631-present) that qiblas in Morocco begin to be orientated closer to the 91° azimuth. Even then, there is some distinction between those sites that were renovated by the dynasty or established in cities with preexisting religious foundations, and those that were constructed in new dynastic urban centers. Of the thirteen extant Alawite

[179] Henri Terrasse, et. al., "Notes and Correspondences," *Isis* 24:1 (1935), 110.
[180] Ibid. 110.
[181] Bonine, "The Sacred Direction and City Structure," 52.

constructions surveyed by Michael Bonine in his 1990 study of Moroccan qiblas, only six fall within 15° of the "correct" qibla direction.[182] The great mosques of Essaouira and Ouazzane were not built until the eighteenth century after the foundation of these two cities, and the two mausoleums sponsored by the dynasty, that of Moulay Ismaʿil in Meknes and Idris I in Moulay Idris, became the primary impetus for their towns' urban growth. Bonine takes this information to point to an inherent connection between qibla direction and city structure, that spatial restrictions and urban morphology surrounding new religious foundations inhibited them from, or were more significant factors than, a correct orientation.[183] And yet, such a statement is undermined by the evidence: the two mosques with the closest approximate qibla direction to the "correct" orientation are the nineteenth-century Ben Youssef Mosque in Marrakesh (built upon the foundations of the Almoravid Masjid al-Siqaya) and the eighteenth-century Er-Rsif (Rasif) Mosque in Fez, both of which were constructed in areas with a preexisting structure of dense urban settlement. A mathematically accurate (or perhaps, mathematically determined) qibla direction does not appear to be a major concern for the construction of Maghribi religious sites until well into the eighteenth century, and even then occurring over a significant period of time and applied only inconsistently.

The most consistent qibla orientation is instead to be found among the Muʾminid sites, all of which fall around 150°, with the exception of the mosque at Salé, which was built upon Almoravid foundations under the reign of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's grandson, Abu Yusuf Yaʿqub al-Mansur (d. 1199), and thus follows that mosque's orientation.[184] This extreme azimuth directs

[182] Ibid., 54-55.
[183] Ibid., 70.
[184] I suspect that the Salé mosque's qibla follows the Almoravid direction for two reasons. Firstly, its late date of construction puts it at a chronological remove from the below concerns over a precise qibla direction, particularly with regards to the early Muʾminid efforts to

the qibla almost due south, an extreme deviation from the mathematical qibla. As most of these sites occur in cities that were constructed or significantly renovated during or around the time of the mosques' foundations, Bonine's claim that erroneous qibla directions result from urban pressure and topography must be amended. Particularly in Marrakesh, where ʿAbd al-Muʾmin spared no expense to erase the reminders of the Almoravid city, the orientation of the mosque's qibla could not have been hampered by the petty constraints of the urban fabric. This invites an alternative explanation not only for how the Maghribi qibla was determined, but also how we as scholars define the qibla in the medieval period, what fell under the acceptable interpretations for the qibla, and how these interpretations were historically understood.

Bonine's study follows in the footsteps of scholars such as David A. King, who have primarily focused on qibla direction as a function of astronomical and mathematical science in the medieval Islamic world. The intellectual corpus that developed around accurately measuring the qibla direction incorporated both observational knowledge (i.e. the rising and setting of the sun, the position of fixed stars, etc.) and mathematical calculations, recorded in geometrical tables (*zīj*) that employed and adapted Greek formulae such as the analemma and Theorem of Menelaus.[185] This practice appears to have reached a peak during the fourteenth century with Syrian, Iranian, and Central Asian astronomers developing sophisticated treatises that outlined their methodologies for spherical geometry. The most sophisticated of these is a set of tables by

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distinguish themselves from their Almoravid predecessors. Secondly, as Rabat eclipsed Salé under al-Mansur, the Salé mosque waned in importance, ignored in favor of the new mosque being built across the river, today known as the Hassan mosque. For more on the Salé mosque, see Ismaïl Alaoui, *Salé: Cité Millenaire* (Rabat: Editions Eclat, 1997), 45-50. For a brief discussion of the Hassan mosque, see the conclusion of this dissertation.

[185] David A. King, "Astronomical Alignments in Medieval Islamic Religious Architecture," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 385 (1982), 304; A.J. Wensinck and D.A. King, "Ḳibla," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, accessed June 28, 2016, http://dx.doi.org.exp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0513.

al-Khalili (d. 1375), a Syrian astronomer connected with the Great Mosque in Damascus, who ingeniously developed a series of auxiliary functions to a well-established method for spherical geometry to calculate the qibla for the latitudes and longitudes of the known Islamic world, totaling over 3,000 entries.[186]

Within this text, al-Khalili specifically endorses the trigonometric method developed by Abu ʿAli al-Marrakushi (d. 1281-82, also commonly referred to as Abu al-Hasan), an astronomer of Maghribi origin who compiled his work in Cairo at the end of the thirteenth century.[187] This serves as an important counterpoint to the impression of the Maghrib as an intellectual backwater. Although he was heavily influenced by Andalusian astronomers, we can at least date one Maghribi astronomer, Abu al-ʿAbbas Ibn Isḥaq al-Tamimi al-Tunisi (d. 1222), to Marrakesh during the reign of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin and Abū Yaʾqub Yusuf.[188] While other astronomical schools were more prolific (again, al-Andalus is the most relevant example here), scholars in the Maghrib al-Aqṣa were not unaware of the scientific conversations of the day. In contradiction to certain theories put forward by scholars such as Terrasse, its practitioners were entirely capable of calculating a mathematically accurate qibla. And yet, the profusion of erratic qibla directions within the regional sphere, as chronicled by both Bonine and his scholarly predecessors, indicates a different understanding of how the qibla was determined, at least when it came to the orientation of religious sites. While the scientific discussion developed increasingly sophisticated solutions to defining a precise geographic calculation, their application in a heuristic scale was impractical, a point seized upon by the Maliki *fuqahāʾ*, for whom it was

[186] David A. King "al-Khalīlī's Auxiliary Tables for Solving Problems of Spherical Geometry," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 4 (1973), 99.
[187] David A. King, "Al-Khalīlī's Qibla Table," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 34:2 (1975), 99.
[188] Julio Samso, "An Outline of the History of Maghribi Zijes from the End of the Thirteenth Century," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 29:2 (1998), 93. It is worth noting that biographical dictionaries cite the astronomer as being better known as Ibn al-Kimād.

essential that the average practitioner be able to easily carry out their spiritual practice.[189] This emphasis on pragmatism could be derived from the Qur'an, where it was said: "And strive for God with the truest endeavor. He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any difficulty in your religion."[190]

For many of the Maghribi *fuqahāʾ*, ease of practice and local traditions (i.e. *jiha*, "general direction") were more significant factors in determining the qibla direction than mathematical geographic accuracy (*samt*, "azimuth"), though these factors were not always mutually exclusive. Maghribi jurists had established a hierarchy of qibla orientations as early as the twelfth century, with each class of qibla orientations based on the method of orientation employed.[191] The most reliable, authoritative qiblas are based on sight or familiarity with the Kaʿba and its surrounding environs, and thus are limited to the cities of Mecca and Medina. From there, the hierarchy falls to those directions dictated by consensus of the imams, following traditional models such as the Great Mosques in Jerusalem and Qayrawān, and on the Qur'an or hadith, the most reliable authorities of transmission. The final categories are reliant on independent interpretation of legal sources based on reasoning (*ijtihād*), or alternatively on precedent or imitation (*taqlīd*). Both methods come with addenda that complicate how they are understood. *Ijtihād*, which results from an investigation of both the law and natural observation, is ranked higher than *taqlīd*, though it is not necessary for the *mujtahidīn* to come to a consensus with regards to their findings. Ibn al-Bannaʾ (d. 1321), a Marrakeshi astronomer as well as a jurist, explains that despite this lack of consensus, the *mujtahidīn* are right in their intent to truth,

[189] Mònica Rius, *La Alquibla en al-Andalus y al-Magrib al-Aqṣà* (Barcelona: Institut Millás Vallicrosa d'Història de la Ciència Àrab, 2000), 257.
[190] Qur'an 22:78.
[191] Rius, *La Alquibla en al-Andalus y al-Maghrib al-Aqṣa*, 83.

which is more important than the result of their analysis.[192] *Taqlīd*, on the other hand, encourages qibla orientation based on precedent, and urges Muslims, in the absence of any better authority, to pray in the same direction as the nearest mosque. However, the twelfth-century Almoravid-era jurist Abu ʿAli al-Mittij criticized the legitimacy of this method because of the evidence he had seen in the Maghrib al-Aqṣa. Originally from Aghmat, though he likely wrote from Ceuta or Tangier, al-Mittiji argued that Maghribi mosques had derived their south-facing orientations from bad *taqlīd*. Considering that he writes before the foundation of ʿAli ibn Yusuf's mosque, and refers to Marrakesh not by name but simply as the *madīnat al-sulṭān*, we can infer that he is referring to some other precedent.[193]

As has been mentioned, the southerly orientation of the Kutubiyya's qibla, as well as other Muʾminid qiblas, was not an isolated occurrence, and appeared widespread in both the Maghrib and al-Andalus. The Great Mosque of Córdoba, founded by the Andalusi Umayyad dynasty, proved an influential force in the architectural memory for those who sought to legitimize themselves through continuity with this dynasty that ostensibly brought Islam to the Maghrib and al-Andalus. The horseshoe arches, parallel gables over arcades perpendicular to the qibla wall, and the foresting effect of the colonnaded hypostyle prayer hall are all survivals of a Levantine typology reinterpreted on the Iberian Peninsula and then reiterated throughout the medieval

[192] Ibid., 84. It is worth noting that despite Ibn al-Bannāʾ's promotion of *ijtihād*, with respect to mosques he supported an orientation "of agreement," presumably between local jurists and imams. This differed from his contemporaries, namely al-Maṣmūdī, who favored using popular astronomical methods (folk astronomy, etc.) as the means of determining a mosque's qibla. See H. Rénaud, "Ibn al-Bannā' de Marrakech, ṣûfî et mathematician (XIIIe-XIVe s. s. J.C.)," *Hespéris* 25 (1938): 13-42.

[193] Mònica Rius, "La orientación de las mezquitas según el *Kitāb dalā'il al-qibla* de al-Mattīyī (s.XII)," *From Baghdad to Barcelona*, ed. by J. Casulleras and J. Samsó (Barcelona: Instituto Millas Vallicrosa, 1996), 787-790.

Islamic West.[194] The direction of the qibla, in particular, which was also oriented due south in a temporal interpretation of the Great Mosque at Damascus, recalls "a historical link between the mosque founded during the original conquest and the 'new' mosque built after the reestablishment of the Umayyad caliphate of al-Andalus."[195] The Qarawiyyin (c. 857, with Almoravid expansions between 1134 and 1143) and Andalusian (c. 859-860) mosques in Fez would also follow this precedent, as would the Kutubiyya in the middle of the twelfth century. But for these major mosques to all be blindly constructed on the basis of one politically symbolic reference to Damascus at the best, or on a faulty *taqlīd* at worst, is an overly simplistic and largely unsatisfying assumption.

Instead, it may be more productive to examine the underlying logic of these similarities in orientation, a methodological interpretation rather than a political one. This is not to say that qibla orientation does not carry political weight; on the contrary, justifications for changing the qibla were highly charged (as shall be explored below), but such changes still needed an acceptable juridical reasoning to support them. The Great Mosque in Damascus, as well as other mosques in early Islamic Syria, were oriented using the rising point (*maṭlaʿ*, pl. *maṭāliʿ*) of the star Suhayl al-Wazn, commonly known today as Canopus (fig. 2.17).[196] The second-brightest star in the sky, Suhayl al-Wazn is so named for its hovering visibility along the horizon in the northern hemisphere, with a northern limit of visibility along latitude 37°18', roughly equivalent

[194] Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Revival of Early Islamic Architecture by the Umayyads of Spain," *The Medieval Mediterranean: Cross Cultural Contacts*, ed. by Marilyn J. Chiat and Kathryn L. Reyerson (St. Cloud, MN: North Star Press, 1988), 35.
[195] Naha Khoury, "The Meaning of the Great Mosque of Cordoba in the Tenth Century," *Muqarnas* 13 (1996), 84.
[196] David A. King, "The Sacred Direction in Islam: A Study of the Interaction of Religion and Science in the Middle Ages," *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 10 (1985), 320.

with Mediterranean cities like Seville and Agrigento. [197] This appears to be in accordance with the Kaʿba itself, whose major axis was aligned with the local *maṭlaʿ* of Suhayl, thus granting legitimacy to using the star as a general rule for finding the qibla in terms of *jiha* (i.e. general direction) rather than *samt* (i.e. astronomical accuracy).[198] Through this process, mosques would then be aligned parallel to a specific wall of the Kaʿba, following a sacred geographical organization by which the world was divided into sectors around the Kaʿba, with each region of the Islamic world corresponding to a particular sector.[199] Is it possible that this rule applies to those south-facing mosques in the Maghrib and al-Andalus as well? Certainly, it appears to be the case for Cordoba. Despite a number of retrospective explanations, dating from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries, of the astronomical calculus used to derive Cordoba's near due-south qibla (approximately 152°), only a historical anecdote provides a reasonable explanation. According to Ahmad ibn Faris al-Munajjim, the court astrologer to al-Hakam II in the latter part of the tenth century, this Umayyad caliph requested that ibn Faris climb a mountain near Fuengirola to check whether Suhayl was visible from its peak before embarking upon his elaborate expansion of the Cordoba mosque.[200] Though it was determined that the star was, in fact, not visible from the site, as later confirmed by Ibn Rushd (also known as Averroes, d. 1198), it was determined that, in the absence of the star's visibility, using the rising point of the sunrise at the summer solstice as the perpendicular axis would yield an approximate orientation

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[197] Richard Hinckley Allen, *Star Names, Their Lore and Meaning* (New York: Dover Publications, 1963), 67-72.
[198] David A. King, "Astronomical Alignments in Medieval Islamic Religious Architecture," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 385 (1982): 306.
[199] Gerald S. Hakins and David A. King, "On the Orientation of the Kaʿba," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 13 (1982), 102.
[200] "A New Andalusian Astronomical Source from the Fourth/Tenth Century: the *Mukhtaṣar min al-anwāʾ* of Aḥmad ibn Fāris*," De Bagdad a Barcelona*, J. Casulleras and J. Samso (1996), 769-780. Cited in Rius, *La Alquibla*, 115.

towards Suhayl, and thus an acceptable qibla. Though other Andalusi mosques would deviate from this pattern—significantly, al-Hakam's mosque at Madinat al-Zahraʾ, which boasts an astronomically derived qibla, as well as the mosque of the Palace of Comares at the Alhambra in Granada—the majority would follow the example set at Cordoba, which the *fuqahāʾ* fiercely defended.[201]

By comparison, the wide variety of qibla directions in the Maghrib al-Aqṣa appears at odds with the relative ease with which Suhayl could be used as a calculation toward the *jiha*, as well as a respective wealth of astronomical and legal treatises concerning the qibla. However, those larger and more prestigious institutional mosques, such as the Qarawiyyin and Andalusian mosques, can definitely be shown to face Suhayl as a directional guide, and when applied to the Kutubiyya, the case becomes even more convincing. In Marrakesh, Suhayl rises at approximately 158°, within a mere 1° variation from the second iteration of the Kutubiyya's qibla, whose angular adjustment now becomes clear. Following in the tradition and *taqlīd* of regional qiblas, the Muʾminids employed a method that was both widely accepted by the religious elite and easily accessible to their Muslim followers. More than mere participation in received wisdom, however, the frenzy of architectural activity between 1157 and 1158 reveals a particular concern on behalf of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin with an accurate qibla orientation as a means for distancing his nascent dynasty from its Almoravid predecessors. In an archaeological plan reconstructed from the remains of the minaret at ʿAli ibn Yusuf's mosque in Marrakesh, Deverdun and Charles Allain attested that the Almoravid construction would have been oriented at 110°, significantly further to the east and closer to the astronomically accurate qibla than any

[201] Monica Rius, "Finding the Sacred Direction: Medieval Books on the Qibla," *Cosmology Across Cultures (ASP Conference Series)* 409 (2009), 180.

precedent in the Maghrib al-Aqsa (fig. 2.18).[202] Together with the mosque at Salé, whose foundations were subsequently built over, the mosque of ʿAli ibn Yusuf points to the Almoravids as having built the earliest east-facing mosques in the region, a practice that would not be picked up again until the Marinids (r. 1244-1465) in the fourteenth century.[203] This change was likely a contentious one, as evidenced by ʿAli ibn Yusuf's invitation to a number of jurists to come to Marrakesh and consult on the appropriate direction for the orientation of the mosque. Among those respected guests was the *qāḍī* of Cordoba, Ibn Rushd al-Jadd. It was he who recommended that ʿAli ibn Yusuf orient his mosque toward the east, in imitation of the mosque at Qayrawan and following the qibla of the Companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*), using the point of the sunrise at the winter solstice.[204]

This change of qibla direction in the Almoravid capital would become one of the chief reasons Marrakesh was deemed impure upon the Almohad takeover of the city, and one that had to be immediately addressed before ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's forces would enter the city. According to al-Baydhaq:

> And for three days no one was allowed to enter Marrakesh, and no one was allowed to leave it, and they [the Almohads] debated amongst themselves about living there, so the jurists went and said to them, "Why are you not dwelling there? And the Almohads said to them "The Mahdī [Ibn Tūmart] forbore from doing so, especially because of the easternization of its mosques away from the correct qibla, which is not crooked. For there is to be no deviation amongst the community of Muhammad, peace be upon him.[205]

The question of urban purity was of such great importance that, not only was it necessary to build a new place of worship, but also destroy any prior architecture that might invalidate

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[202] Gaston Deverdun and Charles Allain, "Le minaret de la mosquée 'Ben Youssef' a Marrakech," *Hespéris-Tamuda* 2 (1961), 129-133.
[203] Rius, *La Alquibla en al-Andalus y al-Maghrib al-Aqṣa*, 126.
[204] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Tājūrī, *Risāla fī ittijāh al-qibla bi-baʿḍ al-buldān*, ms. 6999 Bibliothèque al-Hassaniya de Rabat, 23-24.
[205] al-Baydhaq, *Akhbār al-Mahdī ibn Tūmart*, 66.

Almohad efforts. Though there are precious few details about ʿAli ibn Yusuf's mosque that do not reflect an Almohad bias against it, the archaeology reveals at least one measure by which it could have been deemed objectionable: its east-facing qibla. By returning to the Suhayl method of determining the direction of prayer, already established at the preeminent spiritual center of Fez, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin would have ensured the legitimacy and validity of his and his followers' prayers. It is then no great leap to attribute the rapid re-orientation of the Kutubiyya, coming barely a decade after the city's conquest, to the concern over a more accurate, legitimate qibla. While not unique in the Maghrib al-Aqsa, or even in the rest of the Islamic world more broadly, the importance of determining the qibla in the Almohad era would have a profound effect on the rest of the Muʾminid dynasty's architecture and urban development, as shall be discussed in the next chapter. The Suhayl method was applied consistently across the Mu'minids' Maghribi constructions, from Tinmal in the south to Rabat in the north (with the exception of Salé, noted above), a uniformity not seen again in the region until the nineteenth century under the Alawites. Far more than simply following a received wisdom from the Abbasid east, or via models in Cordoba and Fez, the decision to turn toward Suhayl carried a sense of return to regional tradition, given the political context in which it occurred. Rather than relying on esoteric (and what Almohad jurists may have considered unreliable) knowledge, the Muʾminid qibla employed a well-established popular astronomical method accessible to believers of all social strata.

One *Madīna*, One *Jāmiʿ*

Having established a reasonable cause for the Kutubiyya's change in qibla direction, we must now turn to the manner in which it was adjusted and expanded. By building a new prayer hall in

an angular direction out from the qibla wall of the first construction, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin created a unique architecture that poses a number of questions for architectural historians. Chief among these is whether or not the second structure was considered a "second" congregational mosque, a separate entity from the first prayer hall, which would have gone against local convention as well as Maliki juridical precedent. Contemporaneous sources are ambiguous in their description, referring to the expansion simply as "another [one] like the first [mosque]" when they do refer to it at all.[206] Archaeological evidence is similarly ambiguous, though it does confirm that the two halls coexisted at least until the seventeenth century, after which the earlier mosque was either demolished or left to fall into a state of disrepair. According to the archaeological excavations undertaken by Jacques Meunié and Henri Terrasse, the two prayer halls were connected via the "hinge" of the minaret, which then extended out into a triangular colonnaded walkway, creating a single enclosure that encompassed the two buildings (fig. 2.2). The minaret itself appears to have been integrated into both buildings, as stones integral to its foundation were part of a "blocage" that extended out behind the southeast qibla wall of the first prayer hall (fig. 2.19). Meunié and Terrasse take this as evidence that "the intention of the builders of the minaret was to keep the first mosque; had they thought to demolish it [in the near future], they would not have built the prototype and most beautiful of the Almohad minarets with this indelible outgrowth."[207] This theory is bolstered by the discovery of whitewash remnants on the exterior of the "blocage," which likely indicates that it was intended as an exterior surface, rather than as mere constructive material.

Meunié and Terrasse emphasize that the evidence above is all the more striking as it disrupts what they consider to be the hallmark of Muʾminid architecture: its unity, symmetry, and

[206] Basset and Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 104.
[207] Meunié, et al., *Recherches archéologiques à Marrakech*, 44.

architectural order. The plan of the original building displays a strictly hierarchical system of proportion in its spatial organization, concentrating on the central axis and qibla wall. The T-type hall is made up of seventeen bays in length, approximately 80 meters in total from the exterior, with each longitudinal bay measuring 4.2 meters in width, except for the central bay, which measures 5.6 meters wide. Perpendicularly, we find eleven latitudinal bays each measuring approximately 4.2 meters wide, except for the southernmost bay along the qibla wall, which measure 4.9 meters, for a total of 60 meters total from the exterior.[208] A courtyard (*ṣaḥn*) is situated along the north wall, measuring the length of the nine longitudinal central bays, including the larger central one, and four latitudinal bays in width, for a total of 45 by 24 meters. The outermost eight longitudinal bays, four on each side of the courtyard, are thus extended out towards the north to complete the rectangular arrangement and form annexes to either side. Proportionally, the total length of the longitudinal naves is equal to six times the width of the large transverse nave along the qibla wall, around 36 meters, while the courtyard takes up roughly one-fifth of the prayer hall's total footprint. The result is a space that places particular emphasis on the central and transversal aisles, the T-part of the plan, and the total space would have ostensibly been large enough to hold its congregation (at least upon ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's initial conquest of Marrakesh) without losing the sense of direction towards the central axes and the mihrab.

This symmetrical spatial arrangement poses specific challenges in the event of expanding the space, as Meunié and Terrasse suggest was the impetus for the construction of the second prayer hall, leaving aside momentarily the issue of the qibla direction. If the major requirement of a congregational mosque is that it provide enough room to support the city's faithful inhabitants,

[208] The difference between the width of the bays and the total dimensions of the building accounts for the space afforded the supporting piers.

then a rapid development and expansion of the city's population necessitates a similar expansion for the for the prayer hall, an issue which has been well established and addressed in regional precedents. Yet again, Cordoba is the most immediate example; the original eighth-century structure was deemed insufficient to house Cordoba's growing population, and the hall was subsequently expanded to accommodate them, a phenomenon which repeated itself throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. The first expansion under ʿAbd al-Raḥman II in 836 pushed back the qibla wall by seven latitudinal bays, while the second expansion under al-Hakam II in the middle of the tenth century added a further twelve bays southwards in the same direction, as well as revamping the courtyard and minaret. This created a prayer hall that was extremely narrow, with the directional gaze oriented through a lavish ornamental program, including a stunning mihrab and maqsura, rather than through spatial markers. The symmetry of the building was further compromised under al-Mansur's expansion between 987 and 988, which added eight longitudinal bays toward the east and adjusted the courtyard accordingly to maintain a rectangular structure. This, however, threw the centrality of the mihrab completely off-balance, creating the mystifying effect of forested arches and columns that would become the mosque's signature.

Had this method been employed at the Kutubiyya, the symmetrical and proportional organization of the building would have become lost in the awkward dimensions of an overlong building. What is more, the stone wall that runs along the exterior of the qibla aisle, a remnant of ʿAli ibn Yūsuf's palace, could not have supported additional bays to either side without retrofitting the wall with additional stone, a prospect which appears unlikely given the Kutubiyya's strict hierarchical order. Whereas mud brick, sandstone, and plaster form the lateral and back (northern) walls of the prayer hall, the qibla wall is highlighted through stone, which

forms the support for five domes that would have crowned the area directly in front of the mihrab.[209] Expansion to either side, or even through the qibla wall, would have necessitated the destruction of this particular wall. Furthermore, the system of cisterns that runs under the first prayer hall's courtyard, originally belonging to the Almoravid palace, also limited the expansion of the mosque to the north (fig. 2.20). In order to move the courtyard and ablutions fountain back, the cisterns would need to have been excavated and removed. Expanding the building in this manner would thus have been both labor-intensive and inefficient, not to mention that it would have avoided addressing the problem of qibla direction.

It would also appear that there was a specific emphasis placed on employing parts of the Almoravid structure in the Almohad prayer hall, one that would have precluded the removal of either the stone qibla wall or the cisterns. In light of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's attention to the closure or destruction the city's Almoravid monuments, the reuse of Almoravid elements in such highly charged places within the Kutubiyya is deserving of attention. In addition to the cisterns and wall from ʿAli ibn Yusuf's palace, the mosque also houses an elaborately carved wooden minbar taken from the Masjid al-Siqaya for which it had been made in Cordoba at the height of Almoravid power (fig. 2.21).[210] The fine craftsmanship and rich detail with which it had been constructed made it a highly prized object, and it was evidently one of the aesthetic marvels of its day, exemplary of its patron's wealth and access to luxury-imported resources. The minbar was then placed next to the mihrab in the first Kutubiyya, a highly charged place of honor for an object associated with a deposed dynasty whose influence nevertheless still posed a threat to the nascent reign of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin. And yet, this is precisely why objects like the minbar, and even remnants of the Almoravid palace like the wall and cisterns, were maintained and

[209] Meunié et al., *Recherches archéologiques à Marrakech*, 173.
[210] Bloom, *The Minbar from the Kutubiyya Mosque*, 3.

reoriented in a new visual context. The mihrab, as an object intentionally removed from one space and reinstalled in another, carries relatively conspicuous triumphalist connotations, but the palatial remnants are less clear. Following Anthony Cutler's distinction between "use" and "reuse," the employment of the stone wall and the cisterns would fall into the former category, as objects incorporated into something new with a view to a need in the present.[211] However, they also subtly set the stage for the minbar, particularly the stone surface serving as the qibla wall, and thus carry some ideological weight. In the absence of sources that discuss such references, this theory is perhaps speculative at best, but it may help to highlight why the Kutubiyya's earlier incarnation was not simply demolished upon the recognition of its "inaccurate qibla," or else expanded and adjusted following regional precedent.

How then can we interpret the Kutubiyya's second iteration in relation to the first? Were they considered two separate active prayer spaces, and if so, how was this justified in light of the popular dictum in the Islamic West of having only one congregational mosque per city? The problem posed by the concept of the *masjid al-jamiʿ* was tied up in the legal issue of defining the boundaries of the city and providing for its spiritual needs, a debate rapidly brought to the fore with the foundation and expansion of urban settlements throughout the Islamic world, though specific issues were raised with the new settlements in the eighth-century Maghrib. Fez, for example, from its inception functioned as a bifurcated city, the eastern and western halves of the city separated by the Wadi Bou Khareb, which posed challenges to the practicalities of daily life. According to al-Jaznaiʾi's fourteenth-century history of Fez, *Zahrat al-Ās* (The Myrtle Flower), Idris II paid careful attention to the ability of each riverbank to support its inhabitants, inquiring

[211] Anthony Cutler, "Use or Reuse? Theoretical and Practical Attitudes toward Objects in the Early Middle Ages," *Ideologie e pratiche del reimpiego nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1999), 1055-1083.

as to air quality, soil, prevailing winds, water conditions, and defensibility.[212] Only afterwards was the layout of the city confirmed in 809, with each bank receiving a number of gates and walls, though notably not as a singular enclosure. Idris II then sponsored two congregational mosques: the right bank, the *ʿUdwat al-Andalus* ("the Andalusi riverbank"), housed the *Masjid al-Ashyākh* (the Mosque of the Shaykhs), while the left bank, the *ʿUdwat al-Qarawiyyin* ("The Qarawiyyin riverbank") had the *Masjid al-Shurafa* (the Mosque of the Sharifs), which was attached to the royal residence. Levi-Provençal, however, has convincingly argued that Fez was founded in two parts: the first, *Madīnat Fas*, founded under Idris I in 789 along the river's right bank, the second, functioning as a royal enclosure, sponsored by Idris II along the left bank.[213] *Madīnat Fas* was likely the site of an earlier Berber trading settlement, while Idris II's royal quarter, *al-ʿAliyya*, was the site of the city's administrative functions.[214] Both the apocryphal legends surrounding Fez's foundations, as well as the scholarly explorations of the topic, suggest that the two banks of the river Bou Khareb were considered as separate urban entities from the very beginning, informed by their topography and the ease with which its Muslim inhabitants could attend Friday prayer. In fact, the concurrent presence of two congregational mosques was not considered a legally divisive issue until twelfth-century renovations in Fez under the Almoravid emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin, which saw the construction of a new wall that encircled the city and a bridge that linked both banks of the river, effectively creating one *madīna*. Until that point, it appears that Maliki jurists would permit a second *masjid al-jamiʿ* in the event of excessive difficulty for its attendants, such as in this case, where the river proved difficult to

[212] Akel Ismaʾil Kahera, *Reading the Islamic City: Discursive Practices and Legal Judgment* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 12.
[213] Évariste Levi-Provençal, "La fondation de Fès," *Annales de l'Institut des Etudes Orientales* 4 (1938), 23-52.
[214] M. García-Arenal and E. Manzano Moreno, "Idrīssisme et villes idrīssides," *Studia Islamica* 82 (1995), 18-19.

cross for regular prayers, on the basis of the principle "necessity knows no law" [*al-darūrat ṭubiḥ al-maḥzūrat*].[215] According to legend, the earlier Idrisid mosques had been replaced by ninth-century structures sponsored by Maryam al-Fihri, who built the Andalusian mosque on the right embankment, and her sister Fatima, who built the Qarawiyyin mosque on the left.[216] While it is unlikely that the two mosques were intended as *masājid al-jāmiʿ* given their foundations as feminine charitable endeavors, successive additions and expansions to both mosques may have sponsored a sort of rivalry between them, leading to their eventual status as congregational mosques.[217] This rivalry may have been the incentive behind Yusuf ibn Tashfin's enclosure of both banks. However, the debate was still legally questioned on a regular basis into the sixteenth century, when the Qarawiyyin mosque's role as a university and library, as well as its historical proximity to the sultan's residence and Idris II's sepulchral mosque, granted it supremacy over its sister.[218]

The juridical opinions on the role of the *masjid al-jamiʿ* and its relationship to the *madīna*, both as theoretical concepts and in their practical applications, had a relative consensus on the proscription of two or more concurrent congregational places of Friday worship within the same city. This consensus has its source in the hadith transmitted by ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar (d. 693), who declared that the Prophet never accepted more than one mosque in a city, which was then interpreted by some Maliki scholars such as Ibn Jallab (d. 988) and ʿAbd al-Wahāb (d. 1030) as referring to the role of the Friday prayer (*ṣalāt al-jumʿa*) in bringing together the Muslim

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[215] Kahera, *Reading the Islamic City*, 17.
[216] The al-Fihri sisters were the daughters of a wealthy merchant family that had emigrated from Qayrawan in Tunisia (hence the name of the mosque in Fez). See Suad Joseph, ed., *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures: Economics, Education, Mobility and Space* (Boston: Brill, 2004).
[217] Chafik T. Benchekroun, "Les Idrissides: L'histoire contre son histoire," *Al-Masāq* 23:3 (2011), 186.
[218] Kahera, *Reading the Islamic City*, 18.

community in a cohesive group in an act of collective experience. This definition is directly related to the Hanafi notion of *al-miṣr al-jāmiʿ*, "the all-embracing town," which Baber Johansen describes as "the idea—seemingly implied in the term—that a town should be a comprehensive social and political entity embracing various groups, rallying different factions into one community and uniting them under one leadership."[219] Developed between the late eighth century and the early ninth century, the notion precedes that of *jāmiʿ* being used to refer to the Friday mosque by nearly one hundred years, and was likely concurrent with the urbanization of what is today Iraq.[220]

In its original application, it regulated the creation of new municipal entities and a politico-religious center in larger settlements, though as these cities grew and developed a suburban fabric in addition to a more densely populated center, the concept was refined and broken down into hierarchical categories.[221] Many of the outlying suburbs or townships (*arbāḍ*) would have had their own congregational mosques prior to their larger incorporation, and the question of what role these earlier mosques were to play was directly related to the expanding quarter's political dimensions. Each weekly *khuṭba* ("sermon") held in the Friday mosque declared the town's allegiance, both through its dedication to a specific ruler and the associated power of the collective adult male population affirming this loyalty. The *khuṭba* was therefore a powerful signal magnified through the architectural medium of the *masjid al-jamiʿ* to communicate

[219] Baber Johansen, "The All-Embracing Town and its Mosques," *Revue de l'Occident muscleman et de la Méditerranée* 32 (1981), 141.
[220] Oleg Grabar, "The Architecture of the Middle Eastern City from Past to Present: The Case of the Mosque," in *Middle Eastern Cities*, ed. I. Lapidus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 38.
[221] Johansen, "The All-Embracing Town and its Mosques," 144-145.

legitimacy and authority.[222] However, there was a diminishing rate of returns, so to speak, with the presence of multiple *masājid al-jamiʿ* that were the products of urban expansion, like the aforementioned case in Fez. In smaller, less politically poignant cities, the number of Friday mosques was an irrelevant question so long as the needs of the community were being met. For example, the anonymous author of the *Kitāb al-Istibṣār* notes that nine *khuṭba*s were said in twelfth-century Meknes, describing it in actuality as four different cities (*mudun*) with a number of satellite villages (*qurā*) and fortresses (*ḥuṣūn*), all of which possessed their own attendant *masjid al-jamiʿ*.[223] Such a plurality suggests that the profusion of congregational mosques was acceptable in cities where urban allegiance, expressed through the *khuṭba*, was not a significant question for its rulers. Such was the case in Fez, and similar issues can be attributed to Marrakesh in the transition from an Almoravid city to an Almohad one.

The role of the mosque in performing urban unity was a key point of city development, a particularly important issue for a ruler such as ʿAbd al-Muʾmin in his early reign. The care taken to either close or demolish Marrakesh's Almoravid mosques highlights this fact, but we must also extend such logic to the city's Almohad constructions as well. It has been suggested that one of the reasons for maintaining the earlier, inaccurate prayer hall was to better separate the Almohad caliph from his detractors within the city. While many former Almoravid supporters had acceded to his victory, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin still faced dissent from within Almohad ranks, putting down two rebellions stemming from Ibn Tumart's brothers in the 1150s.[224] Certainly the heterogeneous makeup of mid-century Marrakesh, both political and ethnic in nature, would

[222] Amira Bennison, "Sectarianism in the Landscape: The Transfer of the *Khuṭba* of Fes from the Mosque of the Shurafāʾ to the Qarawiyyīn Mosque in 933 (321 AH)," *The Maghreb Review* 40 (1) (2015), 12.
[223] Saad Zaghloul Abdel-Hamid, ed., *Kitāb al-Istibṣār fī Ajāʾib al-Amṣār* (Alexandria: Imprimerie Université d'Alexandrie, 1958), 187-188.
[224] Meunié, *Recherches Archéologiques*, 42; Streit, "Monumental Austerity," 97-101.

cause tension within the city walls, but whether this would be enough to endorse a second prayer hall within the same madina, let alone the same site, seems unlikely.

Not only do the arguments for having only one mosque per city stress the importance of gathering and community, but the concept of an all-embracing ideology was integral to the preaching of Ibn Tumart as well. He knew that the Almohad movement would never survive on the basis of tribal affiliations alone, and thus structurally integrated a hierarchy of loyalty based around his charismatic personality and subscription to the Almohad principles of *tawḥīd* (unity).[225] This was a key philosophy for the Almohads, and therefore the responsibility of the Muʾminids in promoting it. The concept of *tawhīd* would later be promoted in historical accounts of the Great Mosque in Seville, built by ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's son and successor Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf. The Almohad historian Ibn Sahib al-Salat (d. 1203) describes the new mosque in Seville in terms of its expansiveness, directly contrasting it with the early ninth-century Ibn ʿAdabbas mosque, which had purportedly become too cramped for the city's growing population.[226] His description uses the mosques as metaphors for the spiritual unity and coherence embodied in the Almohad project as compared to the civil strife and discord of pre-Almohad Andalusi society, thereby linking the architecture to the notion of *tawhīd*.[227] Such metaphors may recall ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's reign and the construction of the Kutubiyya. Given the great importance of community not only for the movement itself, but for ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's transition into the role of the caliph as well, using the dual prayer halls as a way to divide the dynasty's supporters from its dissenters would have been counterproductive.

[225] Allen J. Fromherz, *The Almohads*, 91.
[226] Ibn Ṣāhib al-Ṣalāt, *Taʾrīkh al-Mann bi al-Imama*, 510.
[227] Bennison, "Sectarianism in the Landscape," 20.

The only attested example of such a division between communities in an Almohad imperial city is in Rabat, where the urban relationship with the older preexisting settlement of Salé recalls that of bifurcated Fez. Originally established by ʿAbd al-Muʾmin in 1150 as a port from which to launch invasions to the Iberian Peninsula, Rabat's early form consisted of a walled fort that enclosed a palace and congregational mosque, and a series of reservoirs that stored fresh water from the ʿAyn Ghabula spring nearly ten miles away.[228] Meanwhile, Salé continued to function more or less independently, with its own *masjid al-jamiʿ*, though recent scholarship by Mohammed Es-Semmar suggests that the urban structure of the two cities requires us to consider them as linked.[229] As part of the construction efforts undertaken by ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's successors, some by Abū Yaʿqub Yusuf but even more actively under Abu Yusuf Yaʿqub al-Mansur (d. 1199), the two cities grew towards one another thanks to the almost constant traffic between them. It was under the latter caliph that the Great Mosque of Salé was completely rebuilt (though unfortunately no longer remains extant) in 1196, shortly followed by the construction of a new, more permanent bridge over the Bou Regreg and the completion of Rabat's city walls along the southeastern and southwestern borders in 1197.[230] By this point, another *masjid al-jamiʿ* was under way that, as planned, would have been the largest mosque in the world at the time (see fig. 2.22). The presence of two congregational mosques in such close proximity, both sponsored by Abu Yusuf Yaʿqub al-Mansur, would appear to undercut the assumption that urban conglomerations under the Muʾminid dynasty gathered for their Friday prayers at a single site. Indeed, Mehdi Ghouirgate has noted that the Bou Regreg could have

[228]Janet Abu-Lughod, *Rabat: Urban Apartheid in Morocco* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 54.
[229] Mohammed Es-Semmar, "Le tissue urbain de la ville de Ribāṭ al-Fatḥ, de ses origins au XX^{e} siècle," *Bulletins d'archéologie marocaine* 19 (2002): 363-379.
[230] Abu-Lughod, *Rabat*, 56-57.

formed a natural, softer boundary so that "the Almohad authorities were separated from the mass of the governed," implying that despite the bridge linking the two cities, Rabat remained the exclusive enclave for the Muʾminid court and Almohad faithful.[231]

But the crucial point is that this mosque was never finished. With Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur's sudden death in Marrakesh in 1199, the construction on the mosque in Rabat ground to a halt.[232] Damaged by the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, the full extent even of what had been completed in the twelfth century can never be realized, but with its eighteen transversal bays and three courtyards, it easily could have housed the populations of both Rabat and Salé.[233] Its positioning between the two cities—on the highest point along the river and equidistant from Rabat's southernmost gate, Bab al-Ruwah, and Salé's northernmost gate, the Bab Sabta—suggests that this was precisely its function, to unify both sides of the Bou Regreg.[234] Further strengthening this unification are the placement of Rabat's walls along the landed city boundaries, leaving open the northern side of the city that faced Salé, and the construction of the bridge as a link between the two. But unlike Fez, where the walled unification of two riverbanks threw the two congregational mosques into competition, the construction of the Hassan Mosque would have likely superseded the earlier (smaller) mosques of both Rabat and Salé had it been completed.

This case serves to demonstrate that, despite a partial and haphazard architectural record, the chronology of construction in the Muʾminid city reveals a preference for a single *masjid al-jamiʿ* to serve as the communal site of Friday prayers. Rabat, facing the issues inherent to urban expansion faced by many cities in the Islamic world, addressed that expansion through the

[231] Mehdi Ghouirgate, *L'Ordre almohade*, 361.
[232] Abu-Lughod, *Rabat*, 57.
[233] Amira Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 322.
[234] Ghouirgate, *L'Ordre almohade*, 360.

intended construction of a new and grander space, emphasizing the singularity (and therefore, unity) of the Almohad philosophy. For a city as culturally significant as Marrakesh, then, we cannot assume that Kutubiyya's division of space reflected a corresponding division of political classes. Instead, the function of the earlier mosque in relation to the second is likely far more mundane. Given that textual and archaeological evidence confirms that the two coexisted at least through the end of the Almohad era, I suggest that the original prayer hall was used for storage, lectures, or another communal function that may have been related to the mosque, but was not part of the prayer ritual. The original hall's inaccurate qibla would have unacceptable for the spiritual precision demanded by the early days of the Almohads in Marrakesh, but by maintaining it after the transition to the new hall, the structure retained the triumphalist and symbolic elements appropriated from the earlier Almoravid structure. ʿAbd al-Muʾmin and his successors were experts at reusing those elements of a site that best fit their architectural vision, and the Kutubiyya is no different. While the initial wave of construction took advantage of the remaining wall and cistern system from the Almoravid palace, the second wave may have taken the same approach to the earlier building, incorporating it into the new one as a productive and functional part of the site.

THE MINARET

The other major component of the Kutubiyya, and deserving of individual consideration, is the monumental minaret that bridged the two prayer halls both physically and chronologically. It is the dominating feature of the Marrakesh skyline, as much today as in the twelfth century, thanks to a stipulation under the French Protectorate that no building in the city should be taller

than the height of a palm tree so as to preserve the medieval character of the madina. The structure, much like the mosque, developed out of an architectural typology already present in the Maghrib and al-Andalus, though in Marrakesh it became monumentalized and imbued with a formal and ornamental order, a concept that would become more concrete through experimentation in other Almohad cities like Seville and Rabat. As perhaps the most recognizable architectural typology promoted during the Almohad era, the minaret was both a highly ideological signifier of Almohad and Muʾminid dominance, and an exceedingly practical structure intimately involved with the daily life of the city.

As has been mentioned, the current minaret occupies a corner of space between the two prayer halls of the Kutubiyya, abutting the southeast corner of the earlier prayer hall and the northeast corner of the latter (see fig. 2.23). Built sometime between 1154 and 1157, it appears to have replaced a curious earlier architectural element that had served at least temporarily as the point from which the muezzin had issued the call to prayer. In his excavation of the first prayer hall, Meunié exposed evidence of a small, elevated room attached to the southern wall that had been adapted from ʿAli ibn Yusuf's palace.[235] The structure contained two entrances: one from the exterior that Meunié proposes dates to after the Almohad conquest of the city, and another from the level below that appears to have been connected to the Almoravid fortress. Described by Meunié as the "gate" of ʿAli ibn Yusuf, the structure contained a ramp that wound clockwise around a large, solid core (Meunié only describes it as a "massif") into the interior of the eastern wall at the southern corner.[236] Though no longer extant, a nineteenth-century engraving from the travels of the Spanish spy and explorer ʿAli Bey el-ʿAbassi shows a three- or four-story crenellated tower rising about the roof of the first prayer hall directly next to the current

[235] Deverdun, *Marrakech*, 179.
[236] Meunié, *Recherches archéologiques*, 31.

Kutubiyya minaret (see fig. 2.24). The engraving is far from precise, considerably foreshortening what would be the northern wall of the second prayer hall and adding arched windows in the Gothic style to the mosque, but it does confirm the presence of a quadrangular tower extending above the roof of the earlier prayer hall. Meunié believes the height of the tower may have been exaggerated, particularly with comparison to the existing minaret, but the evidence for a preexisting tower does provide a significant precedent for the extant one, and points to an additional link in the frenzied chain of the Kutubiyya's construction history.[237] Contemporary evidence also confirms the existence of another tower serving as the minaret prior to the current one's construction. Al-Baydhaq recalls an episode when, during the Banu Amghar's rebellion against ʿAbd al-Muʾmin led by Ibn Tūmart's brothers in 1153 the clan conspired to take the city by forcing Marrakesh's governor, ʿUmar ibn Tafragin, to hand over the keys to the treasury. He refuses their demands and is promptly murdered, but not before the muezzin, who was climbing the tower to issue the call to prayer, catches his attackers in the act and is able to sound the alarm before they escape.[238] Given that this episode occurs in 1154, much too soon for the Kutubiyya's minaret to have been completely constructed, it is likely that the tower (*ṣawmaʿa*) to which Ibn Baydhaq refers is this earlier structure incorporated from the Almoravid palace.

Yet again we see evidence of the practical attitude taken toward the Kutubiyya, where the reuse of available materials coincides with symbolic meaning. By adapting the gate of ʿAli ibn Yusuf as a place from which to issue the call to prayer, the first Kutubiyya was granted an immediate solution for its public role within the city as a marker of spiritual gathering and religious triumphalism. However, in keeping with the transition from the first prayer hall to the

[237] Ibid.
[238] Lévi-Provençal, trans. and ed., *Documents inédits*, French text, 196; Arabic text, 119.

second, so too was the tower rebuilt and refined in a second iteration that followed the adjusted qibla direction of the newer mosque. This later minaret can be reliably attributed to ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's reign following the historical evidence attested in the *Kitāb al-Istibṣār* as well as the archaeological evidence uncovered by Meunié. According to an eighteenth-century source, establishing the foundations of the minaret alone took over a year due to concerns about alluvial soil forming an unstable base.[239] ʿAli ibn ʿAtiyya, a former Almoravid secretary who had found a place in ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's court, was placed in charge of overseeing the tower's initial construction, hiring engineers from al-Andalus with experience in building upon such temperamental soil. Once the base, making up the lower half of the minaret, had been formed, it was left for a full year in order to settle into the foundations, providing a more stable base for the resultant tower. Deverdun sees the evidence of the minaret's quality foundations in the fact that it has remained standing since its twelfth-century establishment, despite a major earthquake in 1719 that damaged much of the city's infrastructure.[240]

Measuring 56.4 meters tall from its base to the height of its first row of crenellations, and 12.8 meters along each face, the body of the tower was built out of a combination of rubble, stone, brick and a type of mortar, likely a similar pisé solution as that applied to the walls of the prayer hall.[241] Each face was worked into a different ornamental scheme of arcatures framing either one or two windows in each register, of which there were three on the northwest and southeast faces (i.e. those facing the older prayer hall and toward the qibla wall, respectively), and four on the northeast and southwest faces (those facing the main square outside the mosque

[239] Sidi Muhammad bin al-Hājj Ibrāhīm al-Zarhūnī, *La Rihla du marabout de Tasaft: notes sur l'histoire de l'Atlas* (Paris: P. Geithner, 1940), 194-195.
[240] Deverdun, *Marrakech*, 190. Deverdun also notes that the technique of letting the tower's base settle for a year was possibly adopted from the construction of ʿAli ibn Yusuf's minaret at the *masjid al-siqāya*, which ʿAli ibn ʿAtiyya likely witnessed.
[241] Ibid., 189;

and across the width of the mosque, respectively). Layered recesses of blind polylobed and lambrequin arches set within rectangular panels of *alfiz* create a hierarchy of depth along each face, with the lower levels receiving merely one or two layered recesses while the topmost registers receive four or five, creating a complex concentration of ornamental arcades. Along with a band of turquoise-blue and white geometric *zellīj* tilework encircling the top of the tower, these arcatures make up the majority of the minaret's geometric ornamentation, crafted from brick and establishing a textural aesthetic for each of the tower faces. This would appear to reflect the preference for highly ordered geometric ornament (and a general lack of color) present within the mosque's ornamental program, and most scholarship on the Kutubiyya has extrapolated its understanding of the mosque's ornament to that of the tower (when it is addressed at all). However, to do so would be to neglect the evidence, though admittedly sparse, of floral and epigraphic motifs painted within the arcatures' interstices.

In a 1932 collection of essays on Almohad architecture, Henri Terrasse documented the remnants of these motifs within the mosques' arcatures, primarily located in the space immediately under the *alfiz* and within the medallions formed by the polylobed arches.[242] The epigraphic inscriptions are short and do not vary widely beyond *al-ʿizza li'llāh* ("Glory be to God" and *al-mulk li'llāh* ("Sovereignty belongs to God"). But Terrasse notes two distinct calligraphic styles of Kufic—one he describes as "fat, flattened" (fig. 2.25), and the other as "thin, elongated" (fig. 2.26).[243] Which script is employed is determined by the spatial concerns of its location, and each script is truncated or elongated in order to fill the space. The former, "fatter" form of Kufic is largely employed within the interstitial space between the tops of arches and the enclosing *alfiz*, the eulogies' *alif*s and *lām*s shortened to be of equivalent heights as the

[242] Basset and Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 132-137.
[243] Ibid., 132.

*hā*s and *ʿayn*s, with decorative quatrefoils in between the phrase's two words. Though the letters end in slightly curved, bevelled edges, they do not exhibit any floriation. This script, according to Terrasse, is related to that of Almohad-era illuminated Qur'ans as well as the monumental epigraphy evident in Marrakesh's city gates, such as the Bab Agnaou. The latter, more elongated form of Kufic is more unusual. Primarily used within painted medallions, the eulogies using this script feature elongated *lām*s and *ālif*s that reach toward each other to meet near the center of each epigraphic phrase. The *ʿayn*s are also notable for their open medial form which, although comparatively common throughout the eastern part of the Islamic world, is exceedingly rare in the Maghrib. The floriated *lām*s and *ālif*s are also unusual, and Terrasse sees this as prefiguring the more elegant epigraphy of the Marinid era. Whether this is, in fact, the case is difficult to determine; the examples of the script within the minaret are few, and to my knowledge, there are no comparative examples of the form within the Maghrib itself. But the simultaneous use of two different scripts within the same monument speaks to a certain blending of ornamental traditions, a willingness to experiment with script and form, that is often missing from analyses of Muʾminid dynastic architecture.

This willingness is also present in the minaret's painted floral and vegetal ornament, which is again used to fill those recessed spaces underneath the arcatures and the tower's blind arches, though occasionally within the band of the arch itself. The schemes are quite simple, with registers of scrollwork coming away from a central stalk, which Terrasse terms a "tree of life" pattern. The hyper-stylized buds and leaves that flow out from the center are varied in symmetry, with more centralized scrollwork creating mirrored panels of foliation while those buds that fill the lobes of arches show little concern for matching up with their companions on the opposite side. It is possible that these motifs stem from Almoravid precedents, as may be suggested by the

architectonic elements of the Qubba al-Barudiyyin or, as a stylistically closer example of painted floral ornament, the minbar from the Great Mosque of Algiers (c. 1097), where there is also evidence of experimenting with relative symmetry in ornamental design. The minbar employs a variety of vegetal motifs within its panels respective panels, and the lack of a central stalk from which each frond would emanate creates an effect of haphazard naturalism. However, this effect is not replicated in the Kutubiyya minaret where such asymmetry is highlighted by the central stalk, undermining any such attempt at a naturalistic effect.[244] Despite this, Terrasse argues that the tower's combination of varied floral and vegetal motifs, in concert with the epigraphic inscriptions with which they are interwoven, result in a balance of space unprecedented in the history of western Islamic art, "a rare impression of clarity and plentitude."[245]

The balance achieved by the minaret's painted decor must also be attributed to its subtle yet effective color scheme. Scrollwork and epigraphy is picked out in yellow and set within a field of red, a combination which would have added depth to the tower's façade. The brick and pisé that make up the minaret's structure as well as its decorative *alfiz* panels possess their own natural red tint, one which changes with the variable quality of light throughout the day. In the early morning, the minaret glows ochre as the sun rises, shifting to orange in the height of the afternoon, and fading to a dusky pink at sunset (see fig. 2.28). Little of the tower's painted decoration remains; indeed, the remnants documented by Terrasse are no longer present save for a wash of red paint in the recessed portions of interlace on a northeast façade. However, one can imagine the effect that such polychromy could have elicited, reflecting and enhancing the natural color of the stone and pisé. Contemporary sources do not discuss the minaret's construction beyond the briefest details, but the sophistication, clarity, and balance of the decorative scheme

[244] Ibid., 135.
[245] Ibid., 136.

reveal an awareness of the tower's aesthetic relationship to its own materiality as well as how that materiality would function within the local landscape through its manipulation of the light.

The ornamental registers of *alfiz* do not line up with one another, but rather appear to follow the six superimposed chambers that make up the interior of the minaret (fig. 2.29), with each face's windows opening into the internal ramp that winds its way around the height of the tower. This ramp, measuring 1.5 meters wide, is covered by a vaulted ceiling that follows the slope of the ramp itself, and wraps in a counterclockwise direction around the interior chambers. The arcature windows bring light into the interior, and are frequently positioned opposite the chamber entrances so that the light extends into the heart of the tower. Each of these rooms is covered by a cupola of variant richness, the simplest in the lowest room, and more elaborate at the top (figs. 2.30 and 2.31).

There has been some debate with regards to the minaret's chronology as to whether or not it was built under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, thanks to a report in Ibn Abi Zarʿ's *Rawḍ al-Qirṭās* that "in 1195…the celebrated sultan Yaʾqub al-Manṣur *raised* the minaret," which was then transmitted by later scholars and visitors to Marrakesh.[246] However, given the archaeological and conflicting historical evidence, this assertion must be reexamined. Deverdun reconciles this conflict by suggesting that the later date given for the minaret actually refers to its "lantern" (ʿ*amūd*) the two story extension built on top of the minaret (fig. 2.32). Measuring 6.8 meters per side, the quadrangular structure features a domed roof and a spire of three brass globes along the top and added an extra 20.6 meters (from base to the top of the spire) to the minaret's already estimable height. In its exterior ornamental program, the lantern adapts the motifs of the minaret's base to a scale befitting the addition's smaller proportions. Each face features a band of *alfiz* with a

[246] Ibid., 188. Emphasis my own.

geometric, eight-pointed star pattern around the lower, left and right edges, and a band of the same turquoise-blue and white *zellīj* tile across the top, framing a recessed panel of interlacing, polylobed bell arches constructed out of carved brick. The interstitial space between these arches would have been painted red, possibly with some yellow ornamental decoration like that documented by Terrasse, though today only remnants of the red paint remain and only along the northwestern face, which was spared from overzealous restoration in the 1980s (fig. 2.33).[247] Each face also possesses two horseshoe-arched windows at the height of the second story, which is accessed from the ground floor of the lantern by a flight of stairs on the northwest side.

THE MONUMENTALIZATION OF A FORM

In both structure and ornament, the Kutubiyya minaret builds upon the typologies and innovations of its predecessors within Ifriqiya, al-Andalus, and the Maghrib to create a monumentalized version of the form that would remain prevalent throughout the region well into the twentieth century. The aim of this section is to determine how the tower pulled together the disparate elements of regional precedent and more local creativity to develop a form that was at once both familiar and original.

The widespread popularity in the region of a single cuboid tower, structurally distinct from yet positioned in relation to the prayer hall, arrived early in the ninth century as part of the Aghlabid renovation of the Great Mosque of Qayrawan. Built by Ziyadat Allah (d. 838) in 836, the minaret was axially positioned across from the qibla wall, though notably not encompassed

[247] J. Gallotti, "Le Lanternon Du Minaret de La Koutoubia a Marrakech (1194-1197 J.C.)," *Hespéris* 3 (1923), 40. On the restoration of the Kutubiyya, see Frank van Kerckhove, *Inspection technique du minaret de la Koutoubia à Marrakech* (Paris: UNESCO, 1983).

within the walls surrounding the *ṣaḥn* (fig. 2.34), a feature which Jonathan Bloom attributes to following the Abbasid prototypes at Samara and Baghdad.[248] Though featuring an elaborate stone dome replete with decorative niches and ornamental panels on its interior, the exterior by contrast is characterized by a "brutal simplicity" that rejects the delicacy of the interior's aesthetic.[249] Rather than looking to Baghdad for the exterior's model, Alexandre Lézine has convincingly argued that the Aghlabids looked more locally, basing the building's structure on that of the Roman lighthouse at nearby Salakta, employing slightly battered walls that grants the tower its fortified appearance.[250] If the minaret's early role was as an icon of Islamic triumphalism, as a symbolic marker of the *masjid al-jāmiʿ* (Bloom's exploration of the minaret's development suggests that this is indeed the case), then the influence of the lighthouse in early Maghribi minarets underscores the tower's role as a beacon, particularly amongst urban sprawl and extreme landscapes. By this I do not mean to suggest that the Qayrawan minaret directly appropriates the Salakta's use of light within the tower itself, though this will be important to consider within the context of the Kutubiyya's lantern, but rather that the lighthouse's role as a long-distance signifier can be understood to amplify the minaret's function in addressing its urban audience.

The minaret's adoption in ninth-century Qayrawan granted the minaret an early arrival in the region, but it was not widespread until nearly a century later, and largely due to the powerful cultural relationship between Cordoba and the Maghrib. The Aghlabid model had been associated with Abbasid hegemony, at least in terms of a political statement if not a stylistic one.

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[248] Jonathan Bloom, *The Minaret* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 123. Though the minaret today is set within the lateral walls, archaeological and architectural evidence suggests that these are post-Aghlabid constructions.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Alexandre Lézine, *Madhiya: Recherches d'archéologie islamique* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1965), 103.

The many religious sects that peppered inland North Africa—from smaller regional actors such as the Midrarids in Sijilmasa to more hegemonic forces like the Fatimids in Mahdiya—therefore asserted their independence through the notable lack a minaret.[251] But it is possible that the Fatimids' very rejection of the minaret, ostensibly on grounds of its religious impiety, was part of the impetus that shifted the tower's association with the Abbasids into a more general association with Sunni Islam. This is evident in the Spanish Umayyad use of a minaret in the tenth-century expansion of the Great Mosque of Cordoba, sponsored by ʿAbd al-Raḥman between 951 and 958 (fig. 2.35). Positioned slightly right of the entrance into the courtyard (fig. 2.36), the Cordoban tower (*ṣawmaʿa*) measured 8.5 meters square and 47 meters tall, a grand scale befitting ʿAbd al-Raḥman's recent declaration of the new Umayyad caliphate.[252] Rather than employing the battered walls of Qayrawan, the minaret instead featured an impressively cuboid shape with two independent spiral staircases winding around a central solid shaft, notably topped by a lantern with gold and silver finials much like that of the Kutubiyya. In the tenth century, the lantern was an innovation, likely developed out of a local Spanish practice, but no extant prototypes exist to confirm this theory.[253] The Cordoba tower's decorative program is also predictive of what would happen at the Kutubiyya nearly two hundred years later, marking the establishment of another caliphate independent of the Abbasids. With *alfiz* panels framing paired and triplet windows and alternating voussoirs, as well as the stepped merlons that crowned the upper story of the tower's main column, it is clear that the precedent set by the

[251] Bloom, *The Minaret*, 132, 138-141. Recent excavations have confirmed the lack of any monumental minaret at Sijilmasa, see Ronald Messier and James Miller, *The Last Civilized Place: Sijilmasa and its Saharan Destiny* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 75-79.
[252] Félix Hernández-Giménez, *El Alminar de ʿAbd al-Rahmān III en la mezquita mayor de Cordoba: genesis y repercusiones* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra, 1975), 9-125.
[253] Bloom, *The Minaret*, 148.

Cordoba minaret was a powerful one, no doubt supported by the dynasty's political influence within the region and its caliphal claims.

Around the same time that the Cordoba tower was being constructed, ʿAbd al-Raḥman III also sponsored the construction of two minarets in Fez, albeit indirectly, one each for the Andalusian and the Qarawiyyin mosques. The latter appears to have been associated with the city's Zenata emir at the time, Ahmad b. Abu Bakr b. Ahmad b. Abu Saʿid b. ʿUthman b. Saʿid, a client of the Umayyad caliphate charged with defending the city of Fez from Fatimid influence.[254] Similar in form to the Cordoba minaret, with its vertical tower topped by a small dome and a spire of concentric globes, the Qarawiyyin's minaret features only one internal staircase and reaches to only half the height of the larger, caliphal construction. The Andalusian minaret also follows this model, adapting the Spanish form to a more modest budget, built in 956 and sponsored by the city's Umayyad governor. And yet both sites deviate from the norm in the unusual positioning of the minaret in relation to the qibla wall; the Cordoban and Qayrawān models dictated a minaret axially opposite the qibla aisle, yet both the Qarawiyyin and the Andalusian minarets are positioned either to the left or right of the *ṣaḥn*, throwing the alignment of mihrab and minaret off balance. The implication of this change is twofold: firstly, it highlights that what was communicated between Cordoba and Fez was the form of the minaret, rather than its spatial relationship to the mosque, confirmed in the inscription above the door leading into the Andalusian mosque's minaret.[255] Secondly, it raises the question of the conflict between urban space and construction, and the role of political hegemony in negotiating this tension. Within the Maghrib, as has been discussed above, the phenomenon of variant qiblas has been explained in

[254] Henri Terrasse, *La Mosquée al-Qaraouiyin a Fès* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968), 12.
[255] Henri Terrasse, *La Mosquée des Andalous à Fès* (Paris: Les Éditions d'art et d'histoire, 1942), 8.

terms of spatial constraints on dense urban spaces, and while this explanation does not necessarily hold for the early examples of Maghribi mosques, it is possible that it could have affected the placement of the minaret. Both the Qarawiyyin and the Andalusian minarets are positioned near entrances along what appears to have been a main street, as evidenced by the awkward angular arrangement of the walls around these entrances (fig. 2.37). Thus not only does the minaret become a beacon of Islamic gathering, but at least in Fez, it also marks the point of access to this gathering within the maze of the city.

Elsewhere in the Maghrib, the pressures of urban density were not quite as intense as Fez, and the positioning of the minaret on axis with the mihrab was maintained. In the fortified city of Qalʿa Beni Hammad, in what is today Algeria, the 13-bay *masjid al-jamiʿ* features a 20-meter-tall minaret opposite the qibla wall, the oldest of its kind in Algeria after that of the Sidi Boumerouane mosque in Annaba. While the latter conforms to the battered, three-tiered model from Qayrawan, the former possesses the vertical sides, paired windows, polylobed arches and decorative registers of the Cordoba model. The Hammadids' (c. 1008-1152) rejection of Fatimid suzerainty likely explains the presence of the early eleventh-century minaret as well as its conformity to the Spanish Umayyad model, but in the execution of the style, the Qalʿa Beni Hammad minaret developed an ornamental and structural program that would, in turn, appear to have inspired some of the techniques at the Kutubiyya. This is most evident in the Algerian tower's use of superimposed rooms that served as the central column around which a spiral staircase covered by barrel vaulting was wound.[256] Such an organization of space does not appear anywhere else in the Maghrib until the construction of the Kutubiyya and, considering that ʿAbd al-Muʾmin and his army were garrisoned at the Qalʿa Beni Hammad in early 1152, it is

[256] Édouard Michaux-Bellaire, *La Kalaa des Beni Hammad: une capitale berbère de l'Afrique du Nord au XI siècle* (Paris: Leroux, 1909), 80-82.

not unreasonable to assume that Marrakesh's minaret was at least partly inspired by the Algerian tower. Another source of inspiration may have been the Qalʿa tower's deeply incised registers of ornament filled with polychrome tilework along the minaret's southern face (i.e. the face directed towards the *ṣaḥn* and mihrab), whose archaeological fragments reveal to have been decorated in shades of red, yellow, white and turquoise.[257] A final element of the Algerian tower worth consideration is its context within the landscape. D. F. Ruggles has written on the powerful effect of perspective within the Qalʿa Beni Hammad's palaces, manipulated to grant the occupant specific sightlines over the surrounding region, reminiscent of similar techniques amongst the Spanish Umayyad palaces like Madinat al-Zahra.[258] Oriented along the southern slope of Mt. Taqarbust within the Honda Mountains, the Qalʿa Beni Hammad reaches 550 meters above sea level at its lowest point, and nearly 1400 meters above sea level at its highest, a steep variation which lends itself to such visual manipulation.[259] The mosque's southerly orientation, perhaps incidentally, takes advantage of this, placing the minaret at the highest point of the structure, looking over the *ṣaḥn* and prayer hall and exaggerating the minaret's already impressive height (see fig. 2.38). Sources detailing ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's conquest of the city focus on the bloody nature of the attack and the city's consequent burning, but it is not unreasonable to assume that the prominent visibility of the mosque's minaret may have had an effect on ʿAbd al-Muʾmin before he returned to Marrakesh to renovate the Kutubiyya.[260]

Taking the Kutubiyya minaret in the context of the most prevalent examples within the region, a nuanced version of the tower begins to emerge. Clearly, as far as a formalist typology

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[257] Ibid., plates XII and XIII.
[258] See D. Fairchild Ruggles, "Vision and power at the Qala Bani Hammad in Islamic North Africa," *Journal of Garden History* 14 (1994): 28-41.
[259] Ibid., 29.
[260] For a brief description of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's conquest of the city, see Ibn Khaldun, *Histoire des Berbères*, trans. de Slane (Paris: Geuthner, 1927), 189-190.

is concerned, the minaret at Cordoba served as the regional model, directly or indirectly, for any dynasty north of the Atlas Mountains that wished to declare its allegiance to the Spanish Umayyad caliphate, however temporary that allegiance may have been. The diffuse and tenuous nature of this influence, however, inspired a number of local adaptations that subtly shifted the minaret's spatial and structural organization, creating a landscape of towers that may have resembled one another, yet remained distinct upon closer examination. The Kutubiyya minaret was clearly part of this architectural conversation, and its construction after ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's wave of conquests across the Maghrib and into Ifriqiya and al-Andalus reveals how these disparate elements came together in a new, monumentalized form. Structurally, the superimposed chambers of the Qalʾa Beni Hammad minaret must have influenced the Kutubiyya tower's, which the latter example elaborates into an ornamental hierarchy that reflected the program established within the mosque itself. Even Almoravid innovations, such as the ramp from ʿAli ibn Yusuf's palace, were adapted for the new minaret as a practical development that facilitated the *adhān*. Yet for a city still as young as Marrakesh was in the 1150s, barely one hundred years after its initial settlement under Yusuf ibn Tashfin, it is the relationship between the minaret and its urban surroundings that best illustrates the shift away from the Cordoban minaret to something else. Unlike Fez, whose urban density had likely dictated the placement of its two minarets in the eleventh century, Marrakesh was still comparatively underdeveloped, including the space around the mosque considering its history as a royal palace. When construction broke ground on the construction of the Kutubiyya minaret, there was nothing forcing its placement anywhere except in the center of the wall opposite the mihrab. Now, it could be argued that, given the minaret's chronology as between the construction of the first prayer hall and the second, the concern was that it was unclear which wall was to be understood

as being opposite the qibla: the remaining stone wall of the Almoravid palace, or the wall behind the cisterns of the first prayer hall?

Certainly this is how Bloom explains the minaret's placement to the eastern wall, and concerns over preserving the Almoravid wall as well as the religious ramifications of placing the minaret behind a mihrab are worth considering.[261] Anxiety over the possibility of the minaret becoming a focus for worship dictated that a minaret be diametrically opposed to the direction of prayer.[262] But a brief examination of another Almohad minaret, built roughly concurrently with that of the Kutubiyya's, reveals this concern to be secondary at best. In Tinmal, in honor of Ibn Tumart, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin sponsored the construction of a smaller mosque to serve as something of a dynastic necropolis, as we shall see in the third chapter. There, in what is, to my knowledge, a unique innovation in the Maghrib and elsewhere, the minaret was placed directly behind the mihrab as an external tower block encasing the prayer niche. However, as Bloom points out, the tower itself is not particularly tall, barely extending beyond the height of the prayer hall's roof, and perhaps removing any temptation for the minaret to become an object of worship.[263] Rather, it is the effect of the minaret upon the surrounding landscape that is more visually striking, for the Tinmal mosque is situated on a small promontory within the valley overlooking the town. The minaret directly facing the descent becomes the most visible feature upon the approach. This is the opposite technique from what we see at the Qalʿa Beni Hammad mosque, but it may have more to do with each tower's respective heights. In the case of the Kutubiyya, by moving the minaret to the eastern side of the complex between both prayer halls, the tower is placed in the ideal location to be seen from within the medina, directly across from the main square that

[261] Bloom, *The Minaret*, 172.
[262] Ibid., 82, 169.
[263] Ibid., 170.

housed Marrakesh's primary market and staged public announcements. Much like the manner in which Fez's minarets marked the entrances to the mosque amidst the urban sprawl, the Kutubiyya tower highlights the way into the mosque, but on a grander and more monumental scale.

This urban context also emphasizes the "forward-facing" role of the minaret, not only in issuing the *adhan* in both Arabic and Berber dialects, but in keeping time through marking lunar and solar phases as well as seasonal changes in an official capacity. The Mamluk historian al-ʿUmari notes that, in his journey through Marrakesh in the 1340s, the Kutubiyya housed a large water clock (*mangāna*) near the entrance to the mosque, approximately fifty cubits in the air.[264] At this height, the only possible contender for the clock's location must have been the Kutubiyya minaret. Each hour of the day, a weight of about one hundred drachmas would fall, propelled by a water wheel, and striking a bell whose sound could be heard throughout the city.[265] By the time of al-ʿUmari's visit, the clock was no longer functional, and as it is the only account of such a clock in Marrakesh, dating the clock's installation is a difficult task. Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes, who translated al-ʿUmari's account into French in 1927, notes that the clock in Marrakesh was likely inspired by the more famous (and still extant) clock at the Bou Inaniya madrasa in Fez (fig. 2.39).[266] Built in 1357 under the Marinid sultan Abu ʿInan Faris (d. 1358), the clock was the responsibility of the timekeeper (*muwaqqit*), Abu al-Hassan b. ʿAli Ahmad Tlemsani, who had built a similar clock in Tlemcen in 1308.[267] However, considering that the clock's construction postdates al-ʿUmari's visit through Marrakesh, it is unlikely that the

[264] Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Kitāb Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, 178.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Ibid.
[267] Antonio Fernández-Puertas, "Clepsidras y horolzgios musulmanes," *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* 55 (2006), 164.

Kutubiyya's clock could have been modeled after this one. A more timely example may have also come from Fez in the form of the water clock installed within the Qarawiyyin's minaret in 1286 by the local *ʿulamāʾ* and *muwaqqit* at the behest of the Marinid sultan Abu Yusuf Yaʿqub ibn ʿAbd al-Haqq (d. 1286).[268] And yet, the question remains as to who the Kutubiyya clock's patron must have been. The Marinid dynasty shunned Marrakesh as a capital, and thus as a locus of architectural patronage, choosing instead to focus their efforts on Fez as both a holy city and one with historical importance. In the vacuum created after the fall of Muʾminid rule in Marrakesh in 1269, we are left with few natural options for the water clock's patronage, and it must be considered whether the clock was built for a Muʾminid patron.

Regardless of the clock's origins, it is clear that the Kutubiyya minaret was a prominent feature of urban life, both in scale and function. More than simply adopting elements from other regional precedents, the structure embraced innovations both structural and ornamental to create a monumental landmark that reflected a new relationship between the mosque and the city. While the triumphalist and righteous connotations of the early Islamic tower, as reflected in the Qayrawān and Cordoba examples may remain, the Kutubiyya minaret was also engaged with the public role of the mosque as a gathering place, signaling the entrance to the mosque to a distance that extended far outside the city's boundaries. Much like the mosque itself, the tower was responsive to the changing social and political needs of Marrakesh's royal and intellectual elite, incorporating and adapting innovative elements like the ramp and superimposed chambers to facilitate this role.

[268] ʿAbd al-Ḥādī al-Tāzī, *Jāmiʿ al-Qarawiyyin: al-Masjid wa al-Jāmiʿa bi madīnat Fās* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1972), 322.

CONCLUSIONS

When ʿAbd al-Muʾmin sponsored the construction of the Kutubiyya in the middle of the twelfth century, it was both a gesture emblematic of a new religio-political order and a monument sensitive of and responsive to the way in which regional precedents could inform and support his imperial identity. As the central monument that served as the first and chief point of contact between Marrakesh's inhabitants and the caliph's Almohad court, the Kutubiyya needed to inhabit this identity in a clear and legible manner, but the manifestation of this need was both subtle and obscured over time. By contextualizing its construction within a rapidly shifting environment, we can better understand how a site like the Kutubiyya reflected this shift through its architectural adaptation and innovation. The mosque takes the basic framework of a T-plan hypostyle hall, common throughout the Maghrib and al-Andalus, but rather than disguising this plan through ornament and color, the Kutubiyya highlights it through an ornamental program sophisticated in its use of texture instead of color or materiality to create a hierarchy of forms. I would argue that this is less of an explicit rejection of sites like Cordoba or Qayrawan than a meditation upon them, on how such sites create focus and direction. The Kutubiyya's program, which is also incorporated into the minaret's superimposed chambers, uses its hierarchy to draw the eye toward the most symbolically charged point within the space, namely the mihrab, though the qibla transept which would have housed the Muʾminid elite is also given an embellished treatment.

Because its ornamental elements are comparatively stripped back, the structural elements of the site are brought to the fore, particularly those anomalies whose explanations time and neglect have obscured, such as the mosque's dual prayer halls and the minaret's placement and

monumentality. I have argued here that the former is the result of the chaotic nature of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's early decades in Marrakesh, set against the intellectual debate over what the qibla actually is and what methods were viable for determining it. Using Suhayl al-Wazn as a point of orientation actually references the earlier Maghribi mosques in Fez, simultaneously establishing continuity with the "true" Islamic faith and rejecting the esoteric methods favored by movement's Almoravid competitors and predecessors. The unusual arrangement of the two prayer halls, and the maintenance of the earlier one, must be considered in light of how the mosque was to function within an urban collective, namely as a place of gathering and unity. With a marked proclivity to reuse and adapt existing architectural elements—the Almoravid palace wall, tower and minbar, for example—ʿAbd al-Muʾmin and his advisors also maintained the earlier hall, despite its incorrect qibla, by most probably adapting its purpose from prayer to something more commonplace, such as lecturing space or storage, thereby not wasting the architectural effort already expended while also retaining the space's communal unity and legal legitimacy.

These themes of adaptive reuse and directed vision would become key components of the Muʾminid urban project. By appropriating imperial vernacular elements, established by such regional cultural giants as the Spanish Umayyads and Idrisids, and refining them within the context of Marrakesh's own models (and the ostensibly poor example set by the Almoravids), the Muʾminids created a monument that was both legible yet innovative. It reinforced those tenets of Almohadism that ʿAbd al-Muʾmin sought to identify himself and his dynasty with, such as an exoteric understanding of Islam that incorporated existing Maghribi or Berber custom, which is underscored by the Muʾminid use of urban space. The Kutubiyya also played a central role as a point of negotiation between Marrakesh's public and the Muʾminid elite by creating a

public staging ground for these visual statements. Its counterpart in the Atlas, Tinmal, will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Three

Tinmal and the Atlas Mountains: The Dynastic Lynchpin

It is impossible to fully understand the complex interplay of architecture, ceremony, and the landscape present in Marrakesh without addressing what the landscape signified to ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's dynastic self-concept and the Almohad ethos at large. The Atlas Mountains, the historic homeland of the Masmuda who made up the Almohad base, rimmed the city, serving as a constant reminder of the movement's recent past. The magnitude of this presence is exemplified in the early Muʾminid patronage of Tinmal, the tiny mountain village from the Almohads launched their first attacks on Marrakesh. Located approximately seventy-five kilometers southeast of the capital, Tinmal (also known as Tinmallal) had become Ibn Tumart's refuge after his expulsion from Marrakesh following that disastrous confrontation with the Almoravid emir Ali ibn Yusuf in 1120.[269] From here, he would develop his early following into a fervent movement based around his doctrine of morality and his own personal charisma. Abd al-Muʾmin, too, had a strong connection to Tinmal as the site of his confirmation as Ibn Tumart's successor, making the site a natural focus for dynastic involvement. These narratives are interwoven to create a site that collected and reflected the Muʾminids identity as Almohads, even as the empire expanded and its leaders publicly distanced themselves from Ibn Tumart's teachings. Couched in an explicitly ethnic rhetorical context, the Muʾminid connection to Tinmal becomes part of the performance of their Masmuda heritage, a way to maintain the tension between urban and rural, Muʾminid empire and Almohad movement, that was introduced at the end of the first chapter.

[269] See page 32 of Chapter One for a detailed account of this interaction.

Ibn Tumart's arrival in Tinmal marks a significant shift in his biography, transforming from an ascetic itinerant preacher into an eschatological figure at the head of a religio-political movement.[270] Until this point, Ibn Tumart had primarily considered himself a reformer, seeking to correct what he saw as a lax interpretation of Islam among Maghribi Muslims. This was a responsibility he laid at the feet of the Almoravids, whom he considered neglectful stewards of Maghribi society's spiritual wellbeing.[271] When they proved at first unamenable, and then antagonistic to his suggestions, Ibn Tumart used the following he had gathered to take advantage of anti-Almoravid sentiment among the Berber tribes. Fleeing potential retribution for his refusal to stop preaching his doctrine, Ibn Tumart escaped into the Atlas Mountains, returning to the mountain village of his youth, Igiliz, where he was proclaimed as the Mahdi by his followers in 1121.[272] There, he retreated to cave for several days before a received a revelation from God, emerging transformed by the light of prophecy and recognized as a holy man by his retinue, clearly a calque on the story of the Prophet Muhammad's revelations in the cave of Hira.[273] The exact location of Igiliz has been the subject of much scholarly debate as the medieval sources are vague as to its precise location and there are few material remains to definitively confirm any specific site as the birthplace of the Almohad founder. Of the most recent theories put forth, Allen Fromherz has suggested the modern-day village of Igli as a likely candidate based on the nearby presence of a cave considered *ḥaram* among the locals, in addition to a geographic

[270] Amira Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 66.
[271] Michael Brett, "The Lamp of the Almohads: Illumination as a political idea in twelfth-century Morocco," in Brett, *Ibn Khaldun and the Medieval Maghrib* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 1999), 7.
[272] ʿAlī ibn Abī Zarʿ, *Rawḍ al-Qirṭās*, 226-227; *Al-Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya*, 107.
[273] Allen Fromherz, "The Almohad Mecca: Locating Igli and the cave of Ibn Tūmart," *Al-Qantara* 26 (2005), 179; Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 252.

analysis of surviving sources.[274] Jean-Pierre van Staëvel and Abdallah Filli have rejected this theory in favor of a site near the Assif N'wargen, a wadi situated in the central part of the Anti-Atlas Mountains, based on archaeological excavations of what they propose is a *ribāṭ* (a fortified frontier settlement) established by Ibn Tūmart after his declaration as the Mahdi.[275] Both scholars take their sites' respective proximities to Tarudant, the walled city on whose road the sources locate Igiliz, as evidence of their theories, and refer to local traditions in which Ibn Tumart's name is invoked. But despite its significance as the site of the Mahdi's revelations, the Moroccan "Mecca" as it is commonly referred to, Igiliz is soon eclipsed in favor of Tinmal.

By 1124, the movement had relocated to Tinmal, a favorable change for a number of reasons. In part, this move reflected the growing ranks of the Almohads, expanding through the various tribal networks to include leaders from among the Zanata and Sanhaja in addition to the members of Ibn Tumart's own tribal confederation. Withdrawing deeper into the Atlas Mountains granted the Almohads a more centralized location for tribal gatherings, and Tinmal itself was more easily defended from external threats.[276] Accessible via a single narrow mountain pass, the village sits at the entrance of a high plain on the northwestern bank of the wadi Nfis, opposite a steep escarpment known today as the Taourirt-n'Tidaf. These natural boundaries meant that Tinmal had little need for defensive walls, a fact confirmed by archaeological evidence, while lookouts could be posted along the Taourirt-n'Tidaf to monitor the mountain pass from Marrakesh, a common practice among the Berber villages of the region that remained

[274] Fromherz, "The Almohad Mecca," 185-186.
[275] See Jean-Pierre van Staëvel and Abdallah Fili, "'Wa-waṣalnā ʿalā barakat Allāh ilā Īgīlīz': à propos de la localisation d'Īgīlīz-des-Harga, l'ḥiṣn du Mahdī Ibn Tūmart," *Al-Qanṭara* 27:1 (2006): 155-197.
[276] Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 67.

in practice well into the early twentieth century.[277] From this hidden and defended location, the possibility of a more concentrated opposition to the Almoravids became feasible, and they became the focus of Ibn Tumart's eschatological prognostications. He cast the Almoravids as the harbingers of the end of days, alluded to in the Hadith as "men of dubious manhood who ride upon their saddles and dismount at the mosque doors, their women cloaked but with heads bare like the humps of emaciated camels."[278] This apocalyptical imagery was further emphasized through Ibn Tumart's conscious mirroring of the life of the Prophet, mapping the move to Tinmal on the narrative of Muhammad's relocation to Medina, and performing a culling of the unfaithful (*tamyīz*) similar to the Prophet's expulsion of the Jewish tribes from Medina, albeit significantly more violent. According to Ibn al-Qattan (d. 1231), when a local branch of the Masmuda known as the Hazmira al-Jbal became dissatisfied with the Mahdi's presence, they expressed their displeasure by attending his lectures fully armed. Ibn Tumart chastised them for this and the Hazmira appeared repentant, but upon arriving to the next lecture without their weapons, they were duly slaughtered on the Mahdi's orders. Ibn al-Qattan numbers the slain at fifteen thousand men, and though likely an exaggerated sum, it expresses the profound effect of the *tamyīz* on the Almohad faithful.[279]

Removing the Hazmira from their regional hold on Tinmal resulted in the fundamental restructuring of the village's tribal composition, exchanging a homogenous group's ancestral claim for a comparatively heterogenous collection of tribes united under the banner of

[277] Basset and Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 37. Terrasse and Basset note that evidence of similar practices can be found at the Qala Beni Hammad, as well as in the Gouraya region of Algeria.

[278] Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, ed. by Ahmad Muhammad Shakir (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, 1995), 6: 490-492; Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 66.

[279] Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, *Naẓm al-jumān li-tartīb mā salad min akhbār al-zamān*, ed. by Mahmud Ali Makki (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990), 139-140. This narrative is echoed in

Almohadism. The term *ahl al-Tinmāl*, which begins to appear in the sources following this event, thus refers not to a specific genealogical group, but rather to the collection of peoples established at Tinmal by Ibn Tumart.[280] It was this community that formed the basis for his Council of Ten, whose hierarchy formed a coalition that ostensibly transcended tribal affiliation to build a new network of belonging based on loyalty to the Mahdi. However, as J.F.P. Hopkins has pointed out, this does not mean that Berber social organization was elided in favor of Almohadism, but rather that the Almohad hierarchy was shaped by and based upon such network patterns, creating a new model from the same essential mold, a point to which I will return later.[281]

From Tinmal, the Almohads were strategically placed to begin military offensives against the Almoravids by the middle of the 1120s, conducting raids into the Haouz as well as other Atlantic plains regions under Almoravid sway. These campaigns were framed in the context of divinely sanctioned *jihād*, led on at least nine occasions by the Mahdi himself, who was strategic enough to play to his forces' strengths. Raids on Almoravid vassals were couched in conversion rhetoric, though their practical benefits were to disrupt Almoravid trade and tax collection channels. The material wealth generated from military successes advertised the righteousness of the Almohad cause, persuading Almoravid subsidiaries to convert in the hopes of sharing in the wealth. In facing the Almoravid forces themselves, Ibn Tumart counseled his army to draw their enemies into their home terrain, telling them "Do not go down towards the plain, but let the enemy climb

[280] Yassir Benhima, "Du *tamyīz* à l'*iʿtirāf*: usages et legitimation du massacre au début de l'époque almohads," *Annales Islamologiques* 43 (2010), 139. Benhima also notes that this origin is likely why we do not find a history of the *ahl al-Tinmāl* in Abd al-Karīm b. Muhammad al-Samʿānī's (d. 1166) dictionary of ethnic names, *Kitāb al-Ansab* (*The Book of Genealogy*).

[281] J.F.P. Hopkins, "The Almohade Hierarchy," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 16:1 (1954), 93.

up to meet you!"[282] This tactic was strategic on two levels, one military, the other ideological. On the military hand, by drawing an Almoravid army that was more comfortable fighting in open terrain into the treacherous mountain passes, the Almohad tribes who were more familiar with the territory were easily able to pick off any concentrated offense. Ideologically, this strategy positioned the Almohads as righteous defenders of their homeland, underscoring Qur'anic justifications for *jihād*: "Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being overthrown, because they were wronged, and indeed God has to power [to grant them] their victory. They are those who have been evicted from their homes without right, except that they say our Lord is God."[283] In the case of the Almohads, the latter half of this verse may be amended to include the profession of Ibn Tumart as the Mahdi. The wisdom of these tactics was proven by the Almohads' mistake in 1130 to engage with the Almoravids on their own territory, when Ibn Tumart's forces laid siege to Marrakesh, putting the city's recent wall system to the test. Known as the Battle of Buhayra, the battle was a disastrous rout for the Almohad movement, resulting in heavy losses that were only compounded by Ibn Tumart's death soon after.[284]

It is a testament to the effectiveness of Abd al-Muʾmin's leadership that the Almohad movement did not simply collapse following two such blows one after the other. Instead he played for time, using the next three years to secure his own leadership while professing to be in communication with Mahdi during the latter's occultation (*ghayba*).[285] Though his extensive campaigns kept him circulating amongst the various Atlantic mountain ranges, Abd al-Muʾmin regularly returned to Tinmal, gradually bringing the rest of the Atlas tribes into the Almohad fold

[282] Lévi-Provençal, *Documents inédits*, 122.
[283] Fromherz, *The Almohads*, 62-65; Qur'an 22:39-40.
[284] Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 69-70.
[285] Ibid., 70. Bennison notes that the sources' use of the term *ghayba* to describe this period points to likely Shi'i influences on Almohad theology

while securing the goodwill of the Masmuda majority (of which Abd al-Muʾmin was not a member). The combination of military success with political savvy placed Abd al-Muʾmin at the head of a unified force destined for victory, at least in the descriptions of the Arabic sources.[286] By the time the Almohads laid siege to Marrakesh for the second time in 1147, Almoravid support had been reduced to the immediate environs of the Haouz, cut off from their Saharan base and alienated amongst the Atlas tribes.

Tinmal's place in the development of Almohadism's religious, ethnic, and political dimensions cannot be underestimated; as the site of Ibn Tumart's tomb, it naturally became a point of veneration among the faithful, and its Medinan associations were magnified through the conscious conflation of major events between the Prophet and the Mahdi. But the direction of prayer is not associated with the site of Muhammad's exile; rather, it is connected with the site of his birth, of his familial connections. As the debate surrounding the location of Igiliz reminds us, Ibn Tumart was not born in Tinmal. Why then, does this remote mountain village become the site so intimately associated with the early Almohad movement? What I would like to suggest in the rest of this chapter is that Tinmal was a more significant site for the relationship between Ibn Tumart and his successor. It was in Tinmal that the Council of Ten was formed, of which Abd al-Muʾmin was a member, and it was in Tinmal that Almohadism became a distinct movement with political and military dimensions, no longer the reformist movement that it once was. Moreover, Abd al-Muʾmin's ascension to leadership was intimately connected to his understanding of the complex tribal negotiations that were signified in Tinmal's location and the creation of the *ahl al-Tinmal*. Even after relocating the central administration of his new empire to Marrakesh, Abd al-Muʾmin maintained and patronized Tinmal as a site of great significance, to the point that

[286] Ibid., 71.

scholars have conceived each site as having bifurcated functions—Marrakesh as a political capital, Tinmal as a spiritual one.[287] As I will argue below, the two should not be considered so much as separate capitals, but as interrelated ones, with Tinmal allowing Abd al-Muʾmin and the Muʾminid dynasty to continue occupying the difficult transitional space between spiritual reform and the practical realities of running an empire. Moreover, it is Tinmal (and, by extension, the Atlas Mountains) which inculcate the program of religio-political performance in Marrakesh with the tangible resonances of the dynasty's identity as an ethnically Berber and uniquely North African movement. By consistently referring back to its own origins and site specificity, Tinmal imbues the surrounding landscape, so emphatically present in Tamarrakusht, with the power and authority of a distinct moment in time.

THE MOSQUE AT TINMAL: ECHOES OF THE KUTUBIYYA

Commissioned by ʿAbd al-Muʾmin between 1153 and 1154, in the narrow margin between the construction of the first and second Kutubiyya prayer halls, the mosque at Tinmal follows the plan of the former, albeit in miniature. Featuring nine bays instead of the Kutubiyya's seventeen, it follows the T-shaped hypostyle form characteristic of the Maghribi style, with a wider central aisle and qibla transept (fig. 3.1). These dimensions result in a mosque that is roughly square in form, measuring 48 meters wide along its east-west axis, and 43 meters long north to south. The qibla is oriented at approximately 157°, giving it a southerly orientation that, again, corresponds to its counterpart in Marrakesh.[288] This orientation in the upper 150s positions further connects

[287] See Maribel Fierro, "Algunas reflexiones sobre el poder itinerant almohade," *e-Spania* (2009), accessed January 22, 2016, http://e-spania.revues.org/18653.
[288] Bonine, "The Sacred Direction and City Structure, 52.

the Tinmal mosque more closely to the second iteration of the Kutubiyya, oriented at 159°, accounting for the variation necessitated by Tinmal's position to the southeast (fig. 3.2). A small courtyard, measuring five bays wide and four bays long, is enveloped by the mosque walls and stands adjacent to the northern elevation, opposite the qibla transept. Eight entrances are located around the mosque, with three on the eastern and western sides, one axially positioned across from the qibla, and another opening into a small passage that abuts the mihrab block on its eastern side and opens into the qibla transept (fig. 3.1). The Tinmal mosque employs the same kind of reddish sandstone brick as the Kutubiyya, and would have once been covered in a layer of plaster, though much of this has disappeared in the centuries since its construction due to neglect and decay.[289] The remaining evidence of this plaster appliqué can be found in the underlying spandrels of the qibla transept, which is the only aisle to have maintained its wooden beamed ceiling, though it has likely been renovated and replaced on numerous occasions. The plaster ornamentation that remains, however, is of a similar elegant quality as that of the Kutubiyya, with lambrequin horseshoe arches featuring spandrels with interlaced scrollwork and a muqarnas dome directly before the mihrab (figs. 3.3 and 3.4). Indeed, it is likely that the same craftsmen were employed at both sites, with a selected elite sent to Tinmal as part of the pious endowment and patronage of Ibn Tumart's tomb, further underscoring the link between the two sites.[290]

In the centuries following the Almohad era, Tinmal fell into obscurity as a minor village in the Atlas hinterland, overshadowed by the Hintata Berber clans who then dominated the

[289] Terrasse and Basset, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 43-46.
[290] Christian Ewert, "El registro ornamental almohada y su relevancia," in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, edited by Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and L. Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 225.

intertribal political scene, and who moved eastwards into the Draa Valley.[291] This geopolitical shift has had the fortunate consequence of sheltering Tinmal from the program of "de-Almohadization" that occurred as part of the Marinid transition. Well into the Saʿadian era, local Atlas shaykhs claimed Almohad ancestry, and there were reports dating just prior to the Protectorate period of ritual activity at the site, though the name of Ibn Tumart had faded from association by that point.[292] The mosque itself appears to have suffered from its lack of patronage, as attested by the semi-ruined state Henri Terrasse and Henri Basset described early in their 1932 series for *Hespéris*. However, excavations in the 1970s and 1980s, led by Christian Ewert and J.P. Wisshak, uncovered much of the mosque's former glory, incorporating water management and environmental analysis into its ground plan and earning the site a tentative place on the UNESCO World Heritage lists in 1995.[293] Their work also established the mosque's northern elevation, where a three-sided ambulatory enclosed the mosque courtyard. Ewert connects this to archaizing typologies from palatial architecture, such as the palace of Ukhaidir (c. 755) in Iraq and the Salón Rico at Madinat al-Zahraʾ, in which a three-sided enclosure or iwan protects a distinct inner space.[294] Given the prevalence of Umayyad references in Muʾminid ceremony and rhetoric (as discussed in the previous chapters), as well as the rejection of Abbasid affiliation (as typified by the qibla discussion in the Kutubiyya chapter), it is unlikely that Ukhaidir would serve as a direct reference. Even the gesture to Madinat al-Zahraʾ must be qualified, as a formal comparison does not entail a functional one, particularly between the

[291] Basset and Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 33; Aomar Boum and Thomas K. Park, *Historical Dictionary of Morocco* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 230.
[292] Luis del Marmol Carvajal, *L'Afrique de Marmol*, translated by Nicholas Perrol, sieur d'Ablancourt (Paris: L. Billain, 1667), 2:355; Ghouirgate, *L'Ordre almohade*, 440-441.
[293] Basset and Terrasse's *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades* is the definitive record of their survey, while Ewert and Wesshak published numerous essays and monographs on their work
[294] Christian Ewert, *The Mosque at Tinmal (Morocco) and some new aspects of Islamic architectural typology* (London: Proceedings of the British Academy, 1986), 117.

sacred (mosque) and the profane (palace). Ewert acknowledges as much, focusing instead on the spatial schematics and the quadratic organization created by the use of the iwan to demarcate the inner "sanctum" of the mosque's most ritually charged point.[295] This, he argues, is evident of an indirect "diaphanous image of a heavenly palace in Paradise…[here] intensified to monumental three-dimensionality."[296]

While this thesis is presented as a very tentative one, it is compelling in its insistence on the process of intensification, of creating emphasis not through direct appropriation or reference, but through the compaction of space. Perhaps describing Tinmal as an earthly paradise is an over-simplification—and certainly heretical by Almohad standards—but for a site that was so important to Almohadism's formative years, the notion that Tinmal may occupy some extraordinary quality is not out of the question. Grounding this quality is the mosque's ornamental, architectural, and spatial affinities with the Kutubiyya, which can be organized into three categories. The first, ornamental intensification, is the most straightforward, as the formal similarities between the two prayer halls can be easily established. The second focuses on the appearance and placement of the minaret; while not immediately apparent in a formal comparison, the two minarets do establish a visual link between the sites through their functionality, as will be explored below. Finally, the mosques' larger topographical context must be considered for, as has been noted in previous chapters, Muʾminid constructions are intimately tied to their siting, manipulating and taking advantage of the surrounding landscape to heighten the built environment's ritual context. Taken as a whole, these elements mark out the mosque at Tinmal as a spiritually and rhetorically significant site without undermining the Kutubiyya's status as the *masjid al-jamiʿ* of their political capital.

[295] Ibid., 122-131.
[296] Ibid., 135.

ORNAMENTAL INTENSIFICATION

The ornamental similarities between the Kutubiyya and the mosque at Tinmal are so strikingly similar that a direct comparison appears almost redundant; it has been well established that the decorative program under the Muʾminids was markedly consistent across its architectural contributions, so such a similarity is not surprising.[297] Because of this consistency, however, subtle shifts in proportion and scale are thrown into heightened clarity, which explains why a mosque like the one in such a remote location as Tinmal appears comparatively luxurious. Both the Kutubiyya and Tinmal mosques feature the same hierarchy of ornamental forms, but the Tinmal site's more intimate scale effects a more intense, opulent scheme, despite the use of similar cheap and locally available materials as those employed at the mosque in Marrakesh.

As scholars like Terrasse, Basset, and Ewert have pointed out, Almohad ornament is built upon forms well-established by their regional predecessors, employing a combination of vegetal palmettes and geometric strapwork that defines the area around the mihrab, a strategy that would again be employed in the construction of the Kutubiyya's second hall.[298] The aisles are defined by pointed horseshoe arches, while lambrequin arches frame the qibla transept, as well as the bays immediately preceding the mihrab and along the lateral aisles. These bays also feature additional ornamentation via a narrow band of *sebka* lining the undersides of the archways (fig. 3.4). Ewert has compared these bands of *sebka*, which feature an intricately carved schematic

[297] Abigail Balbale, "Bridging Seas of Sand and Water: the Berber Dynasties of the Islamic Far West," in *A Companion to Islamic Art & Architecture*, ed. by Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 1:368.

[298] Basset and Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 53; Christian Ewert, "El registro ornamental almohada y su relevencia," 225.

vegetal design, to a capital from the Aljafería in Zaragoza, which features interlaced bands of vegetation emerging out from the upper third of the capital (fig. 3.5). In the Almohad aesthetic, this vegetation becomes abstracted to its most essential form in the interlacing scrollwork that covers the faces of the Giralda minaret (built c. 1184) in Seville, divided into panels that shift the visual focus from the *sebka* itself to the overall textural impression created by the technique's framed repetition (fig. 3.6). At Tinmal, the bands of *sebka* appear to fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum presented by Ewert, hyper-stylized into arabesque curls, narrow along their lengths and widening toward the ends. Set agains the flat plaster background, which only appears to highlight the *sebka*'s plasticity, these vegetal bands echo the curvilinear lines of the lambrequin arches. Ewert calls this the vegetalization of architectectonic structures, floriating the lines that bound the most sacred part of the space. He reconciles this vegetal ornament with the overwhelming preference for geometric design elsewhere in the mosque by noting that "the conceptual unity of these two tendencies [the geometric and the vegetal] that seem contradictory…was achieved by subjecting the vegetabilized arches to the strict discipline of the geometric frame."[299]

Enclosed within this space is the mihrab, where the densest ornamental program is concentrated, predictably echoing a similar façade at the Kutubiyya. Divided into three registers, the program is centered around the mihrab arch itself, a rounded ogival arch encircled by another, blind ogival arch that features a scalloped edge. Were the two circles delineated by these arches completed, they would share a single point at their bases at the center of the opening doorframe (fig. 3.7).[300] The mihrab is encased by a rectangular panel of *alfiz*, with two small floral depressions in each of the upper corners, and this panel is in turn encased by a band of

[299] Ewert, "El registro ornamental almohada y su relevencia," 228.
[300] Streit, "Monumental Austerity, 63.

polygon-and-star interlaced strapwork. The next register above features seven small arches in a narrow row, alternating between four slender, blind, pointed lambrequin arches and three wider rounded arches (now bricked up, though the one on the far right bears evidence of a *mashrabiyya* screen). The final, uppermost register features another band of interlaced polygon-and-star strapwork before the muqarnas dome begins.

Comparing this façade to that of the second Kutubiyya mihrab, the proportional scales of the two mosques are thrown into high relief. Like Tinmal, the prayer hall of the second Kutubiyya also features three registers of ornament: a horseshoe arch encased by successive blind arches, an *alfiz* panel with two floral indentations in the upper corners, and a surrounding band of polygon-and-star strapwork; a register of alternating blind and open arches with *mashrabiyya* screens; and a final upper band of interlaced geometric strapwork. However, the textural effect of each program is moderated by their scale in relation to the façade and to the rest of the building. For example, at Tinmal, in the band of geometric strapwork that encloses the mihrab *alfiz* panel in the lowest register, the artists employed a program of eight-pointed stars, exclusively, alternating a complete star with two that are combined to create a polygon with five points at either end. On the lateral sides of the band, these polygons surround an eight-pointed star that has been flattened, while the same shape on the lintel band is elongated into a lozenge. At the Kutubiyya, the same portion of the ornamental program employs a combination of eight- and six-pointed stars, with the eight-pointed stars at both of the upper corners and in the centers of each band, while the six-pointed stars are flanked by polygons to extend across the surface between each of the eight-pointed stars. Oddly enough, this pattern is reversed between the two mosques in the uppermost register of geometric strapwork. The Tinmal mosque features two eight-pointed stars on either side of the six-pointed star and polygon combination. Meanwhile the Kutubiyya's

mihrab façade is topped with a band of strapwork featuring exclusively eight-pointed stars, some paired and extended into polygonal shapes, others elongated into lozenges. The register of windows in both mosques feature lambrequin arches, but the Kutubiyya lacks the rounded windows of Tinmal, and features only five of these arches rather than the latter's seven. The two *mashrabiyya* screens of the Kutubiyya are clearly vegetal in form, featuring buds and unfurling leaves, but the small portion left of Tinmal's screen in the window on the right indicates a purely geometric schematic (fig. 3.8).

The presence of a more geometrically-focused decorative scheme is not entirely surprising considering its secondary function as a memorial to Ibn Tumart. Many scholars before me have elaborated on the connection between the philosophical leanings of the Almohad founder and the cultural production of an iconography defined by geometric rationalism and logic, a connection only emphasized by the dynastic sponsorship of meditative Sufi practices.[301] As Madeleine Fletcher has discussed, the concept of *tawḥīd* ("unity") which formed the basis of Almohad theology developed out of the debate amongst Islamic philosophers surrounding the divisibility of God into his divine attributes (*sifāt*).[302] Already centuries old by the time Ibn Tumart was born, this argument was a chief point of contention between the Ash'arites and Muʿtazilites of twelfth-century Baghdad. The former insisted upon the *sifāt* as an integral yet separate part of God, a neoplatonic mode of existence beyond human understanding, while the latter rejected this theory as heretical, accusing the Ash'arites of assigning anthropomorphic attributes to God and thereby denying the essential indivisibility, or *tawḥīd*, of God. Ibn Tumart's philosophy walks a fine line between these two positions, avoiding using the term *sifāt* but recognizing the qualities

[301] Balbale, "Bridging Seas of Sand and Water," 268.
[302] Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic," *Numen* 38:1 (1991), 115.

described by them, and yet enjoining his followers to understand and accept *tawḥid* as the core theological principle of Almohadism. Fletcher find the reconciliation of this philosophical tension in the expression of ecstatic Sufi exercises, particularly the trance state (*ittisāl*) in which the self is subsumed and made one with God, which also had its roots in neoplatonism, albeit in the sense of a pantheistic model of God where there can be no distinction between the Creator and His creation.[303] Indeed, Ibn Tumart appears to support this conception when he describes God in his collection of credal statements (*murshida*) as both the first and the last, "neither determined by by the intelligence nor represented by the imagination nor attained by thought nor conceived of by reason."[304] This Aristotelean notion of a God knowable only through abstract philosophical language expressed through logic reconciles the apparent paradox of mysticism and scientific thought contained in the Almohad theology.

One can only understand *tawḥīd* if one understands and follows the principles of logic, making logic—and its expression thereof—an essential element of belief. In this context, the practice of geometry takes on a philosophical quality as the physical expression of logical thought, and when extended to its application within the Almohad mosque, becomes a visual performance of logic in pursuit of *tawhīd* as professed by the Mahdi. In a reflective capacity, as an observer of geometric ornament, the viewer engages with the meditation of repetitive forms in a process likened to the Sufi practice of *dhikr*, in which God is invoked through repetitive phrases of praise.[305] Jessica Streit has described this program in the Almohad context as a "rightly-guided aesthetic," viewing the comparative openness of the geometric ornament in the

[303] Ibid., 118.
[304] Muhammad Ibn Tumart, *Le livre Mohammed Ibn Toumert, mahdi des Almohades*, ed. by I. Goldziher (Algiers: P. Fontana, 1903), quoted in Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd," 121.
[305] Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Topkapi Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities,1995), 122.

Kutubiyya and Tinmal mosques as an invitation to abstracted meditation.[306] Though she notes that such an interpretation was unlikely to have been meant for the average Almohad mosque-goer, the intense focus on hierarchical ornament in conjunction with the austerity found elsewhere in the space lends itself to such a reading of the site. For Streit, this program is part and parcel of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's attempt to align himself with Ibn Tumart by building sites that recall the spiritual teachings and practices of the Almohad movement, underscoring the Muʾminids' political legitimacy while simultaneously performing his duty as a religious leader.[307] I am inclined to agree with this analysis, though I argue that a more direct yet subtle connection is being made between the political and the religious, Marrakesh and Tinmal; neither is mutually exclusive, but they do operate on a spectrum of intensity.

To return to the ornamental treatment of the mihrab, we must recall the timeline of construction connecting the two sites; the mosque in Tinmal was built in 1153, before the construction of the second prayer hall, but *after* the construction of the first, positioning the earlier hall as the likely instigator of an organized and consistent ornamental program. Though the site is no longer extant, Terrasse and Basset proposed a reliable reconstruction of the mihrab based on the archaeological evidence which is revealing in its similarities to the Tinmal façade (fig. 3.9).[308] Unlike the second prayer hall's program, the first Kutubiyya features rounded windows in its second register that appear later at Tinmal. The same program of eight-pointed stars (some extended into polygons or flattened into lozenges) is used in a similar manner as the Tinmal mosque well, though in the first Kutubiyya this band extends around the mihrab alfiz and the register of windows. We find coordinating bands of alternating eight- and six-pointed stars

[306] Streit, "Monumental Austerity," 120-128.
[307] Ibid., 130-131.
[308] Terrasse and Basset, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 188.

along the upper register as well, though the Kutubiyya's features an extended polygon on either side. Most revealingly, the first Kutubiyya's mihrab opening also featured encased rounded ogival arches whose completed circles would have met at the same lower point, just as at Tinmal. The differences between the two mosques are thrown into greater relief given their similarity. Like the second iteration, the first Kutubiyya prayer hall features only five windows across its second register. Where Tinmal's blind rounded ogival arch is scalloped, the first Kutubiyya's corresponding arch is plain. Thus, the overall effect of Tinmal's program is clearly meant to recall that of the imperial mosque in Marrakesh, but rather than being more austere as a reflection of Ibn Tumart's asceticism, it is in fact more intense, stronger in both its proportional luxuriousness and its hierarchy. Obviously the construction of the second Kutubiyya renders this connection weaker, but what I would like to suggest is that the architectural connection between Marrakesh and Tinmal's respective mosques was already underway by the time of the second prayer hall's construction. The importance of such an intense visual connection as that established by their ornamental programs is only further emphasized when we compare the external architecture, namely their minarets.

THE MINARET BLOCK AND ITS TOPOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

One of the most unusual and significant elements of the Tinmal mosque is undoubtedly its minaret, an experimental typology in which the tower encloses the area directly behind the mihrab, thereby creating a singular mihrab/minaret block. If the role of the minaret is to serve as a visual correlation to the auditory call to prayer, as explored in the chapter on the Kutubiyya, then the placement of Tinmal's minaret further imbues the structure with spiritual resonance. But

how this resonance connects the site to the Kutubiyya, and what this means for Tinmal's role within the Muʾminid self-concept, deserves further attention.

The block itself is constructed out of the same red sandstone as the rest of the mosque, and features three blind arcatures approximately midway up the southern face (fig. 3.10). Two small ogival windows grant light to the interior, one in the centermost arcature, and the other directly above it. The row of arcatures continues on the eastern and western sides of the minaret, with one on either face, and four steps on the eastern side lead to two narrow doorways below the blind arcature on that side. The entrance on the right (north) leads into the prayer hall proper, emerging to the east of the mihrab and likely intended for the imam and Muʾminid caliph, while the the entrance to the left (south) leads to a three-story staircase that opens onto the minaret roof. At its current height of approximately 15 meters tall, the minaret barely reaches above the roof of the mosque, and the archaeological evidence suggests that it was never much more than a meter taller at the time of its construction.[309] This means that the minaret, though clearly visible from the village of Tinmal, was obscured from view at any point within the mosque itself, including the open courtyard.

The debate surrounding the Tinmal minaret's placement, unique within in the Maghrib and unusual in the extreme with respect to the Islamic world at large, has been couched in terms of regional precedent and spiritual anxiety. In his book on the evolution of the minaret, Jonathan Bloom suggests that the architectural elevation of the *adhan* inadvertently risked turning the minaret into a focus for worship, thereby leading the faithful into idolatry.[310] And yet, religious architecture necessitated height as a marker of spiritual context, at least in the early stages of

[309] Christian Ewert and Jens-Peter Wisshak, *Forschungen zur almohadischen Moschee. II: Die Moschee von Tinmal* (Mainz: Philipp von Labern, 1984), 17.
[310] Bloom, *The Minaret*, 82.

Islamic architectural development that Bloom cites as the source for the anxiety surrounding the minaret's placement. In his view, the late Antique architectural traditions that influence early Islamic forms were largely horizontal in plan, reserving height for religious sites (first Roman temples, and then later Byzantine and early Christian churches), punctuating the built landscape and orientating the faithful.[311] Like Ewert, Bloom notes that this dichotomy is not as strict as it may seem, citing the fluidity in the central Islamic world between palatial and religious forms, particularly under the Abbasids, who favored domed audience chambers such as those at the Dar al-Khalifa in Baghdad or the Balkuwara palace in Samarra. However, these palatial spaces were largely about size rather than height, the celestial domes covering a grand space rather than indicating a narrow verticality.[312] The comparatively narrow proportions of the Maghribi minaret are indelibly tied to the religious associations of the mosque, and it is these associations that dictated its positioning opposite the qibla wall. In this manner, the minaret still functionally symbolized the locus for gathering the faithful to prayer while avoiding any unintended enticement into idolatry.

These implications of height and placement make the Tinmal minaret all the more notable for its apparent snub of convention. No other minaret in the Maghrib had ever been located directly behind the mihrab niche, so neatly combining the call to prayer from the tower with the focus of its execution.[313] Terrasse and Basset found a parallel in a small tower at Salé that is likely the only remaining evidence of a small mosque and which they attribute to the Almohad era based on a formal analysis (fig. 3.11)[314] But without any definitive evidence of an Almohad construction, I am reluctant to consider this site as an appropriate comparison. Ewert again cites

[311] Ibid., 84.
[312] Ibid., 89-90.
[313] Ewert, *The Mosque at Tinmal (Morocco)*, 122.
[314] Basset and Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 51-52.

palatial architecture, referring to the Umayyad desert palaces and citing a small mihrab tower in the oratory of Khirbat al-Mafjar, while Lucien Golvin and David Hill add the Sidi Ramdan mosque in Algiers to the comparison, though the mosque they cite must now be destroyed, as the current mosque bears no resemblance to the plan at Tinmal.[315] How then to explain this singular aberration, not only within the context of regional precedence, but within the strict hierarchical organizational scheme developed under the early Muʾminid program? Once established, first on a minor scale at Taza and later on a monumental and official scale at the Kutubiyya, very little about the Muʾminid style changes. The notable exception appears at Tinmal. Bloom sees the Tinmal minaret as an experiment gone wrong, a brief dalliance with a unified mihrab and minaret that is quickly abandoned in favor of the monumental form exhibited in Marrakesh.[316] However, given the importance of Tinmal as a site of historic and ritual meaning, even the Muʾminid tendency to adapt and reuse existing materials would not have inhibited them from correcting the Tinmal plan, should there actually have been any such objection. Instead, the minaret/mihrab block remains extant, and as such, it should be considered as a cogent element of the Muʿminid ethos.

Rather, I suggest that this unique arrangement reflect's Tinmal's status as a new pilgrimage site and spiritual locus for the Almohads, especially when considered in dialogue with the Kutubiyya. Whereas the latter's minaret occupies a far more conventional position on the eastern corner of the mosque (and between the first and second iterations of the prayer hall), the Tinmal minaret's position emphasizes the intense focus, centrality, and symmetry of the mosque's plan as a whole. As noted above, the ornamental program of both mosques draws the eye toward the

[315] Ewert, *The Mosque at Tinmal (Morocco)*, 132, footnote 1; Lucien Golvin and David Hill, *Islamic Architecture in North Africa: A Photographic Survey* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 128.
[316] Bloom, *The Minaret*, 169.

mihrab, establishing a clear visual hierarchy in an otherwise sparsely decorated space. This hierarchy is, in turn, echoed in the centrality of the Tinmal minaret (if not its height) and reflects the very purpose of a remote mountain mosque in the first place. Tinmal is not only a monument to the Almohads' founder and spiritual leader, but a shrine and mausoleum to the same, adding a significant dimension to the mosque's function.[317] Ibn Tumart's tomb is now lost, either no longer extant or else destroyed by the Marinids during their hold over the region in the thirteenth century, however a description of the site exists thanks to al-Idrisi and the fourteenth-century Mamluk scholar Badr al-Din al-Zarkashi (d. 1392).[318] According to the former, the tomb took the form of a simple qubba without any gilding or ornament located near the Tinmal mosque, and though a more specific location is not given in the contemporary accounts, Terrasse and Basset were inclined to place the tomb in the open land immediately south of the qibla wall.[319] After the construction of the mosque, Abd al-Muʾmin moved Ibn Tumart's tomb here, presumably from the cave in Igliz where he had originally been interred. By moving the Mahdi's tomb from its original resting place to the site of his new mosque, Abd al-Muʾmin effectively redirected the focus of Almohad pilgrimage and worship, creating a new holy site that could be credited to the nascent dynastic movement. Al-Zarkashi's account presents a stranger interpretation of Ibn Tumart's burial, in which the Mahdi is laid to rest within the confines of the mosque itself, followed by the tombs of Abd al-Muʾmin, Abu Yaqub Yusuf, and Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur upon their deaths, creating a dynastic necropolis at the holiest Almohad site.[320] Regardless of the tombs' precise location, it seems clear that their were located in or near the qibla wall of the

[317] Basset and Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 27.
[318] Ibid., 25.
[319] ibid., 25, footnote 3; al-Idrisi, *description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne*, trans. by R. Dozy and M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1866), 74.
[320] Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Luʾluʾ al-Zarkashi, *Chronique des Almohades & des Hafçides attribuée à Zerkechi*, trans. Edmond Fagnan (Paris: A. Brahim, 1895), 15.

mosque, and thus directly underneath the mosque's minaret. This privileged positioning establishes a spiritual connection between the tombs, the minaret, and the Almohad faithful who visited and worshipped there.

The practice of placing the dead behind the qibla wall is not entirely unheard of in the Maghribi tradition though, to my knowledge, the implications of this placement at Tinmal has gone unremarked upon. The Almoravids did the same thing at the Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez, and again later at Tlemcen, placing the funerary annex behind the qibla wall with three doors opening into the prayer hall.[321] From here, the imam would stand in the first of these three doors when leading the funerary prayer, directing the prayers quite literally over the dead.[322] For all the resistance to Almoravid patterns in Almohad architecture, it is not out of the question to assume that a similar treatment would be given to the most significant figures of the era, and which may help explain or at least grant nuance to the Tinmal minaret/mihrab block. Following the thoughts of Guy Petherbridge:

> "Monuments and public buildings do not…exist in isolation, but play a particular symbolic role in a total spatial and hierarchic system of building and decorative forms, serving to reinforce political and social structure and religious belief…To consider monumental architecture without [its] associated complexes is to create an unbalanced and perhaps erroneous impression of the nature and development of Islamic architecture and its relationship to the society that formed it."[323]

Though Petherbridge is referring to the relationship between domestic and religious sites, his appeal to spatial and hierarchical systems as part of an interconnected whole is just as applicable to Tinmal, where preservation is haphazard at best and where continual occupation has since

[321] Henri Terrasse, *La Mosquée al-Qaraouiyin à Fès*, 22.
[322] Al-Jaznāʾī, *Janā al-zahrat al-ās fī bināʾ madīnat Fās*, edited by Abd al-Wahhab b. Mansur (Rabat: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Malakiyya, 1991), 78.
[323] Guy T. Petherbridge, "The House and Society," in *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning*, ed. George Mitchell (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978), 193.

erased any evidence of a simple qubba such as that marking Ibn Tumart's grave. The intense symmetry and focus of collapsing the space reserved for the call *to* prayer with the focus *of* it acts in a similar manner as the doors of the Qarawiyyin, though on a more subtle scale that connects distinct constructions rather than parts of a complex. The Tinmal minaret calls the Almohad faithful to the locus of their spiritual beliefs, to the very body of their founder and guide. In this case, the mihrab/minaret block is not a distraction from prayer, but rather a funnel for it, concentrating and directing prayer on an architectural scale both internally and externally. This is the distinction between the Kutubiyya's minaret and Tinmal's: the former, although massive in scale, serves a far more traditional function within the spatial hierarchy of the mosque. By comparison, the latter is more intimate, speaking directly to Tinmal's populace of villagers, caretakers, and pilgrims.

Their respective heights must also be understood in terms of their local topographical contexts, which further emphasize the juxtaposition between the imperial mosque on the plains and the pilgrimage site in the mountains. In the early days of Tinmal's role as a base for the Almohad movement, its remoteness was a strategic advantage, easily defended by a smaller force familiar with its terrain. The mosque constructed under Abd al-Muʾmin's reign uses the site's topography to to highlight its importance both within the Muʾminid architectural landscape as much as the village itself. Built on the extreme western border of Tinmal, the mosque lies upstream of the Wadi Nfis at its narrowest point. It occupies the highest point on the right bank of the wadi, constructed on a platform of earth just wide enough to contain the mosque. On the northeast side, there is a 3.8 meter gap between the mosque wall and the end of the platform, while on the southeast (the qibla side), the gap is approximately 7 meters. On the mosque's southwest side, facing the far side of the village and the enclosing mountains (the site opposite

the mountain pass into Tinmal, essentially), a deep ravine threatens the stability of the foundations, necessitating a retaining wall constructed out of rammed earth and stone. A passage of 8.4 meters in width passes between the mosque and this retaining wall so as to provide the maximum amount of stability to the mosque itself. On the northwest side, opposite the qibla wall, the mosque abuts the mountainside, which begins almost immediately, the platform ending less than 4 meters away from the mosque's central axial entrance.[324]

The mosque at Tinmal is thus positioned to overlook the entirety of the valley occupied by the village and, in the opinion of Terrasse and Basset, likely maintained Tinmal's defensive associations as a lookout point.[325] Local sources claim instead that the chief lookout village was on the opposite summit, as mentioned above, but Terrasse and Basset's suggestion emphasize the sightlines into the valley below presented when standing on the mosque's northeastern and southeastern faces. As Bloom notes in his discussion of the minaret, the mosque dominates the surrounding landscape through its position on the uppermost part of the western slope, and from the village below, the impression of height and fortitude is exaggerated even further.[326] The minaret, which barely extends above the line of the roof, appears taller from the valley below, in greater contrast to the rest of the building. This technique is related to a similar topographical manipulation that appeared at the Qala Beni Hammad in Algeria, where the mosque is placed on a slope and the placement of its minaret organized so as to appear taller in relation to the surrounding landscape. However, whereas the earlier tower follows the more conventional placement on the wall opposite the qibla, the Tinmal mosque fronts its mihrab, making it the defining exterior feature of the site.

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[324] Terrasse and Basset, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 42, footnote 1.
[325] Ibid., 41-42.
[326] Bloom, *The Minaret*, 169-170.

What I wish to highlight here is the relationship between the minaret and its surrounding environs in order to question how we might relate the positioning of the minaret to its purpose within a populated space, a line of investigation in which topography must play an integral role. The mosque at Tinmal is a small, rural site, but it is nevertheless the defining monument of the village thanks to its concentrated mihrab/minaret block and its positioning within the valley. It draws the eye to its high vantage point, while the relatively short height of the minaret emphasizes the proportionality and geometric cohesion of the mosque itself. We must also imagine a small qubba entering into this view which, from the perspective of the rest of the village as well as the route entering into Tinmal, would have been visually associated with the minaret. The tower would have called the faithful not only to the mosque, but to Ibn Tumart's tomb as well, conflating the space between them. By comparison, the Kutubiyya is situated adjacent to the central hub of medieval Marrakesh, across from the Jmaa El Fna and at the base of the Muʾminid extension of the city. Topographically, the Kutubiyya is at the lowest point of this extension, with the full length of Tamarrakusht and the Agdal garden extending outwards and upwards from it. Within this landscape, the Kutubiyya minaret rises above everything, dwarfing the surrounding buildings and visible from several miles outside the city. The urban minaret acts as a beacon, a visual focal point that indicates sacred space amongst a dense built environment, and its height responds to its topographical context to further enhance this spiritual and urban role.

CALIPHAL BURIALS AND PILGRIMAGE

The formal comparisons between the Kutubiyya and Tinmal establish a clear link between the two sites, one exaggerated by the extreme variations in their surrounding geography. The wide, open plain of the Haouz basin lends itself to expansive vistas and large-scale manipulation of the urban topography, as seen in the previous chapter; Tinmal's visual field is more constricted, but the changes in elevation allow for a density to the field, populated not only by the mosque but by Ibn Tumart's qubba as well. But this connection would be an empty one without a concentrated and active acknowledgement of this link in the form of imperial patronage, and that is precisely what occurs under the reign of Abd al-Muʾmin, as well as those of his son and grandson. Tinmal becomes not only a site commemorating the founder of the Almohad movement, but a dynastic necropolis as well, complete with all of the attendant ceremonies and rituals implied by the designation.

In his examination of Almohad funerary practices, Mehdi Ghouirgate argues that the location of caliphal burials is related to each ruler's political capital and the circumstances surrounding his death (fig. 3.12).[327] Abd al-Muʾmin, having successfully navigated the movement's transition from religious zealotry to political body, expanding the Almohad territory well into Ifriqiya and the Iberian Peninsula, died in 1163 on the verge of embarking on yet another expedition into al-Andalus. His son, Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf, continued his father's project of territorial expansion while quelling any internal discontent, both of which were concentrated in al-Andalus. He died in 1184 after a failed siege of the Portuguese city of Santarém (*Shantarīn* in the Arabic sources) during which, in an attempt to split his troops and attack Lisbon simultaneously, the caliph's

[327] Ghouirgate, *L'ordre almohade*, 404-405.

orders became confused into a retreat. In the ensuing confusion, Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf was wounded by a crossbow bolt and died of his wounds a few days later. While European accounts of the siege depict this as an unambiguous victory, the Arabic sources are more measured, noting that the caliph was wounded while in his own tent on the battlefield, thereby fulfilling his duty as a military leader.[328] Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur, though he died from natural causes in 1199, had spent most of his career as caliph pushing back the encroaching forces of the Reconquista, most significantly at the Battle of Alarcos (*al-Arak*) in 1195 in which he defeated Alfonso VIII of Castile and destroyed the Castilian military reserve that wouldn't recover for over a decade.[329] The remaining Muʾminid caliphs died under less auspicious circumstances: Muhammad al-Nasir (d. 1199) never recovered from the disastrous defeat at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, while both Abu Muhammad Abd Allah al-ʿAdil (d.1227) and Abd al-Wahid (d. 1224) were assassinated by internal Almohad factions.[330] Of all the Muʾminid caliphs, only the first three are buried at Tinmal, perhaps reflecting the circumstances around their death, but also part of a larger confluence of trends connecting Marrakesh and Tinmal.

Certainly Ghouirgate is on the right track in his argument that the dynastic necropolis at Tinmal was reserved for those caliphs who died having brought military and political honor to the Almohad movement and the Muʾminid family, but their burials depend on two other factors

[328] Ibn Idhārī al-Marrākushī, "Al-Bayan al-Mugrib fi ijtisār Ajbār Mulik al-Andalus wa al-Magrib," in *Colección de crónicas árabes*, ed. Ambrosio Huici Miranda (Tetuán: Editora Marroquí, 1952-1955), 2:39-41; Ambrosio Huici Miranda, ed. and trans., "El Anónimo de Madrid y Copenhague, Téxto árabe y traducción," *Annales del Instituto General y Técnico de Valencia* 2 (1917):9-10.

[329] James F. Powers, "On the Cutting Edge: the besieged town on the Luso-Hispanic frontier in the twelfth century," in *The Medieval City Under Siege*, ed. by Michael Wolfe and Ivy A. Corfis (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 1995), 33.

[330] Ghouirgate, *L'ordre almohade*, 405. It should be noted that Muʾminid burials do not reflect the *location* of the caliph's death. Abd al-Muʾmin, Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf, and al-Mansur all died in different locales (fig. 3.12), while later caliphs died in or around Marrakesh, yet were not relocated to Tinmal. Therefore, we can dismiss location of death as a primary factor in where they were buried.

that should not be overlooked. The first is the role that an easy succession plays in the ceremonial honors accorded the previous ruler, without which the funerary rites were often neglected in favor of the struggle for the consolidation of power. The rigid hierarchy of Almohad society meant that power and authority was largely invested within the personality of the caliph, and upon each royal death, the viability of the Muʾminid imperial project was thrown into peril. It was therefore imperative that the new caliph begin to make his mark immediately, whether through military campaigns or political negotiations, and the textual sources reflect this in the comparative dearth of information on royal funerals.[331] Very little information is reported on the preparation of the body of the deceased, instead focusing on the role the new caliph plays in presiding over the burial as both head of state and head of the caliphal family. According to Ibn Sahib al-Salat, Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf actually performed the funerary prayers for his brother, Abu Ibrahim Ismail (d. 1174) and escorted the body to the cemetery, acting as the imam and the "prince of the faithful" in presiding over the ceremony.[332] The caliph also performed the rites for significant dignitaries, scholars, and other notable figures who had served the Muʾminid dynasty, underscoring both the narrative focus on the caliph's role in these ceremonies and the relative normalcy of this role in royal burials, and thereby removing any special importance from them.[333]

Far more significant was the recognition and acceptance of the new ruler, not a straightforward process thanks to the aforementioned emphasis within the Almohad movement for leadership based on qualification rather than primogeniture. As evidenced by Abd al-Muʾmin's struggles in the early half of his reign, this was hardly a smooth process, and the risk

[331] Ibid., 413-415.
[332] Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāt, *Tārīkh al-mann bi'l-imāma*, 222.
[333] Ghouirgate, *L'ordre almohade*, 414.

for a factional breakup of the existing bureaucracy was an ever-present concern in times of transition. Despite publicly circulating letters denoting his first-born son Muhammad as his successor, upon Abd al-Muʾmin's death, another of Abd al-Muʾmin's sons who served as his father's advisor, Umar b. Abd al-Muʾmin (fl. 1163), said that his father's dying wishes were to suppress the announcement of Muhammad's name from the *khutba* (sermon at the Friday prayer) and to name Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf as his heir. It was reported that Muhammad was unfit to rule being "addicted to wine, feeble in mind, very capricious and cowardly; besides which, he suffered, it is said, from a sort of leprosy."[334] In just six weeks, Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf was recalled from his post as governor of Seville and, with his brother's support, gained the allegiance of the military and a number of Almohad shaykhs, effectively eliminating Muhammad's claim to the throne.[335] This would be considered a relative success story, and few historians pause to consider Muhammad's tenure among the Muʾminid caliphs. Likewise, the anxiety over succession is present in an anecdote from Abu Yusuf Yaʿqub al-Mansur's reign, in which his father visits him in a dream to admonish his son for torturing his own brother and uncle, who had tried to seize power from al-Mansur, a rather ironic reprimand considering Abu Yaqub Yusuf's own history.[336] While the transition between al-Mansur and his son, Muhammad al-Nasir was comparatively stable, thereafter the Muʾminid succession is chaotic and fractured, al-Nasir leaving his ten-year-old son in charge, who was soon usurped by his great uncle. The dynasty never recovered its

[334] Ibn Khallikan, *Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary*, trans. by William MacGuckin de Slane (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2010), 4: 474.

[335] Ambrosia Huici Miranda, *Historia Política del Imperio Almohada* (Tetuán: Editora Marroquí, 1956), 1: 219-220. Other of Abd al-Muʾmin's sons opposed Abu Yaqub Yusuf's ascension to the throne, but were eliminated in one form or another. His brother Ali, who served as governor of Fez, mysteriously died on the return journey from burying Abd al-Muʾmin at Tinmal, while Abd Allah, governor of Bijaya in Algeria, was poisoned. Abu Yaqub Yusuf refrained from assuming the caliphal title of *amīr al-muʾminīn* until 1168, after these threats had faded.

[336] Ibn ʿIdhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib* (1985), 233.

stability from this point onwards, a change which can be arguably reflected in the absence of any later Muʾminid tombs at Tinmal.

Concurrent with this trend towards familial entropy, the latter half of the Muʾminid era also exhibits a move away from its affiliation with Ibn Tūmart. By 1229, Idris al-Maʾmun (r. 1226-1232) openly rejected the idea of Ibn Tumart as the Mahdi, removing all references to him in imperial coinage and public statements. Bennison suggests that this was likely a political gambit intended to appease al-Maʾmun's supporters in al-Andalus, who were supporting him against a claim from his nephew Abu Zakariya Yahya, though it undermined the societal structure that bound the Almohads together.[337] Subscription to the Almohad ideology, even if only nominally, encouraged a pan-tribal unity, which disappeared as a result of al-Maʾmun's decree. He also undertook of sort of *tamyīz*, which particularly affected members of the Hintata tribe, the descendants of Abu Hafs ʿUmar, the companion of Ibn Tumart who had been integral to facilitating Abd al-Muʾmin's rise to power. They were, at the time, serving as the governors of Ifriqiya, and al-Maʾmun's decree gave them enough support to secede and found their own dynasty, known as the Hafsids, in Tunis.[338] Al-Maʾmun's son, Abd al-Wahid al-Rashid (r. 1232-1242), restored the Almohad doctrine, but the damage had already been done, and al-Rashid was forced to abandon Marrakesh for Sijilmasa due to a revolt of two subsidiary tribes, the Khult and the Haskura, who objected to al-Rashid's military dependance on Christian mercenaries.[339] It may be argued that such internal divisions were inevitable, but I would like to suggest here that in the particular case of Almohad hierarchy, the cult of personality was so strong that even a brief deviance from it was enough to splinter the various Berber groups into contentious factions,

[337] Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 116.
[338] Pascal Buresi and Hicham El Aallaoui, *Governing the Empire: Provincial Administration in the Almohad Caliphate (1224-1269)*, trans. Travis Bruce (Boston: Brill, 2013), 75-76.
[339] Ibid., 80-81.

each with their own claim on various parts of the empire. It was during this period that Tinmal's governorship fell outside of the caliphal purview, when an appointment (*taqdīm*) was issued for a governor to be sent to Tinmal to "watch over its interests and take the care of their management" because of the "holy tombs found there in abundance and because the reunion of the seats of guidance and of the caliphate distinguish it with innumerable glorious titles."[340] Notably within this particular *taqdīm*, the appointee is not identified as one of the Almohads (*al-muwaḥḥidīn*), but rather as a member of the Unity party (*hizb al-tawḥīd*), a subtle distinction that perhaps reflects the increasingly fractured and ideologically empty nature of the later Muʾminid administration.

This rather incidental treatment of the dynastic necropolis, as well as the Mahdi's tomb, poses a sharp contrast to the era under consideration here, when Abd al-Muʾmin and his immediate successors patronized Tinmal as part of an active process to affiliate themselves with Ibn Tumart. The Muʾminid caliph undertook regular pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) to Tinmal as early as 1157, when Abd al-Muʾmin visited the Mahdi's tomb in order to receive its *baraka* ("blessing"). A letter written by court secretary Abu ʿAqil Atiyya b. Atiyya (d. 1158) describes this pilgrimage in an account that was circulated at least twice during his reign. Undertaken so that the royal retinue would arrive in the Atlas on the first day of Ramadan, the pilgrimage featured ritual recitations of the Qur'an, using the *maṣaḥif* of Ibn Tumart and ʿUthman for the readings, which took place day and night, publicly and privately, within the new mosque, whose "beautification and planned developments" had been completed by this time.[341] Remarkably, given the

[340] Ibid., 344.

[341] Pascal Buresi, "Les cultes rendus à la tombe du mahdî Ibn Tûmart à Tinmâl (XIIe-XIIIe S.)," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 152:1 (2008), 427; Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Maqqarī al-Tilimsānī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb wa*

importance of the site and the intense rhetoric surrounding the sanctity of Ibn Tumart's burial very little space is given to the actual account of the rituals at the mosque and tomb. Instead, a much greater emphasis is placed on the number of tribes that the caliph meets with along his journey, reestablishing alliances and hearing grievances.[342] The public performance of pious devotion to the movement's founder in inextricably connected to the negotiation of the Berber societal structures that made up the foundation of the movement's forces. By circulating the letter throughout the empire, these negotiations are confirmed on a much broader scale while simultaneously making a very public statement to audiences in al-Andalus and Ifriqiya about the spiritual preferences of this new political player. Even Ibn Sahib al-Salat, writing while serving Ibn Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur, hints that the pilgrimage to Tinmal was intended as a display of caliphal authority and grandiosity, describing the passage undertaken with a delegation from al-Andalus, who were "relentlessly tormented by fatigue and cold."[343] The difficult journey from Marrakesh to Tinmal becomes part of this process, a form of ritual separation from the earthly, profane, political sphere epitomized by the capital in the Haouz basin, into the more enlightened, spiritual realm of Tinmal.

AṢABIYYA AND THE *WAṬAN*

What I have tried to illustrate here is that, beyond the formal similarities between the Kutubiyya and Tinmal, there also existed a ritual practice that can be characterized by its relationship with the landscape. The extreme remoteness of Tinmal, the variation between its

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dhikr wazīrihā Lisān al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, ed. Muhammad Muḥyī al-Dīn Abd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: Dār al-Kitab al-ʿArabī, 1968), 1:614-615.

[342] Buresi, "Les cultes rendus," 392-393.

[343] Ibn Sahib al-Salat, *Tārīkh al-mann bi'l-imāma*, 150; Ghouirgate, *L'ordre almohade*, 426.

mountainous environs and the open plain of Marrakesh, and the risks associated with the journey between the two are described as definitive and impressive elements of the caliphal progresses. What is more, this landscape is intimately associated with the source of Almohad might and Muʾminid authority, namely the approval and allegiance of the Berber tribes. As has been shown in both the previous chapter and here, the Masmuda clans that formed the heart of the Almohad movement were as instrumental in the development of Marrakesh as an urban metropolis as they were in bringing Ibn Tumart's vision for the Maghrib into reality. As an outsider negotiating the political transition into the leadership of such a group, Abd al-Muʾmin must have been aware of the concessions he needed to make in order to secure said leadership, an awareness perhaps passed to his son and grandson as well. We see this in his dual genealogies, which grant him a Qurayshi ancestry legitimizing his caliphal title as well as a maternal lineage relating him to Ibn Tumart and the Masmuda, as well as his use of the Berber language along with Arabic in the call to prayer and the composition of Almohad religious and educational texts.[344] The importance of Berber cultural norms—modes of communication, negotiation, and societal structure—is a fact commonly accepted amongst modern historians of the era, and has been extensively discussed by many scholars before me.[345] As Bennison has described it, "Ibn Tumart [and] Abd al-Muʾmin

[344] Maribel Fierro, "Las genealogías de ʿAbd al-Muʾmin," 77-107; Anonymous, *Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya*, 109.

[345] See Ignacio Sánchez, "Ethnic disaffection and dynastic legitimacy in the early Almohad period: Ibn Tūmart's *translatio studii et imperii*," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2:2 (2010): 175-193; Amira Bennison, "Tribal Identities and the Formation of the Almohad Élite: the Salutary tale of Ibn ʿAṭiyya," *Biografías magrebíes: identidades y grupos religiosos, sociales, y políticos en el Magreb medieval*, ed. Mohamed Meouak (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigationes Científicas, 2012), 237-263; Miguel Angel Manzano Rodriguez, "Sociedad, lianes, y cohesion tribal en el Magreb bajomedieval: considerations sober las teorias de Ibn Haldun," *Biografías magrebíes*, 264-284; Allen J. Fromherz, "Writing History as a Political Act: Ibn Khaldun, ʿasabiyya, and legitimacy," *The Articulation of Power in Medieval Iberia and the Maghrib*, ed. Amira Bennison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 47-57; J.F.P. Hopkins, "The

actively moulded [sic] a new hierarchy that both subsumed previous tribal identities by creating a new supra-tribal religious identity and used them by adapting the tribal council form into new Almohad councils and using tribal groups as military units."[346]

Scholars such as Pascal Buresi, Manuela Marín, and Maribel Fierro have suggested that the hallmark of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's caliphate was its peripatetic nature, with various capitals serving different purposes: Marrakesh was a political center, Tinmal was the spiritual one, Seville an artistic or intellectual capital, and later under Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur, Rabat served as a military capital.[347] While this may be true for the Muʾminid elite, the same cannot be said for the Almohad forces (both military and political), whose Masmuda constituents retained control and administrated from the High Atlas Mountains south of Marrakesh. Because of this connection, regular contact between the caliphate and the Atlas clans was absolutely vital. It was the Masmuda who facilitated the development of greater water resources into Marrakesh, and it was they who provided the agricultural precedent for a garden such as the Agdal. In response, the Masmuda were repaid with the honor of housing not only Ibn Tumart's tomb, but the tombs of the earliest Muʾminid caliphs, those who did their part to further Ibn Tumart's religious agenda. I suggest here that this relationship is evocative of a deeper one between the notion of place and that of tribal or social unity, the concept of *aṣabiyya*, tying the cohesion of the Almohad movement and Muʾminid dynastic project to their awareness of and association with the Atlas Mountains. Even before ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's patronage throughout the 1150s, Tinmal held a

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Almohade Hierarchy," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 16:1 (1964): 93-112; Ghouirgate, *L'order almohade*, 227-231.

[346] Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 130.

[347] Maribel Fierro, "Algunas reflexiones sobre el poder itinerante almohade," 1-12; Manuela Marin, "El califa almohade, una presencia activa y benéfica," in *Los Almohades: Problemas y Perspectivas*, 451-476; Pascal Buresi, "D'une península à l'autre: Cordoue, ʿUṯmān (644-656) et les arabes à l'époque almohade (XIIe-XIIIe siècle)," *Al-Qanṭara* 31:1 (2010): 7-29.

special reverence amongst the Almohads and their followers, but following the development of the site as a new dynastic *dār al-hijra*, the village was imbued with the mythos of the Almohad identity. These references to their Berber heritage can be found encoded through Marrakesh's relationship to the surrounding landscape of the Haouz basin in which it is situated, and the Atlas Mountains that hover over the city towards the south, a constant reminder of Almohad spiritual and ethnic origins. This intersection of place and identity can be defined through the notion of the *waṭan*, the homeland, a physical and social space of belonging that, as scholars such as Zayde Antrim have argued, anthropomorphizes the landscape and establishes an inextricable link between land and body.[348] Though one's *waṭan* is mutable, some connection is necessary for survival, for without it one has no community, no legitimacy, and no ties to a meaningful existence. *Waṭan* and *aṣabiyya* therefore form parallel categories of belonging, one physical and the other cultural, but each with severe consequences for those who abandon them.

Tinmal should thus be understood as the touchstone or lynchpin that physically connects the Muʾminid dynasty to its Masmuda past (even if such a past is appropriated through imperial propaganda), acting as the key to the Almohad *waṭan* and imbuing the Atlas Mountains with such connotations. Through the active patronage and awareness of this site, and by publicly performing this connection through the ceremonial links between the village and Marrakesh, the caliph and his successors continually renewed their own origin story. These associations, in turn, inform the role the Atlas Mountains play in the staging grounds of Marrakesh's urban topography, particularly that surrounding Tamarrakusht and the Agdal garden. The mountains' ever-present insistence on a tribal or ethnically-based past serve as a continual reminder of

[348] Zayde Antrim, *Routes & Realms: The Power of Place in the Early Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 16.

Muʾminid authority, and as long as the dynasty remained in Marrakesh, this reminder could be replayed over and over again.

Conclusions

The Muʾminid Urban Model and Its Limits

Over the course of this study, I have aimed to ground the analysis of Almohad architecture in the context of its religious, intellectual, social, and ethnic environment in order to illustrate the complex identity this architecture projected to its twelfth-century audience. The development and expansion of Marrakesh as the center of Muʾminid dynastic authority is particularly responsible for expressing this identity, namely through the interplay of built architecture, staged open-air spaces, and the surrounding natural environment. While the individual monuments of the period resist a direct formal approach in their evaluation, expanding our view outwards to gain a view of how they interacted with one another on a grander urban scale highlights the subtle sophistication of Muʾminid urban planning. Utilizing specific architectural and ceremonial references to the larger western Islamic past—such as the use of specifically Umayyad ceremonies and objects—to express their own sectarian identity. The result was a new imperial idiom that reflected an engaged entrance onto the Mediterranean stage, granting agency to both elements of their heritage.

The Muʾminid city confirms the dynasty's authority to rule by echoing Almohad hierarchy through highly mediated spaces of public engagement. Rather than engaging directly with the city, carving space out of the urban density of the medina for palaces, fortresses and other built structures, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's urban vision was more about creating these staging grounds that mediated public contact with the Almohad elite. In some ways, this is yet another reaction to Ibn Tumart's criticism of the Almoravids; in his days preaching in Marrakesh before his exile, he had been shocked to find easy access to the Almoravid emir as he sat in the mosque

or wandered the souk. The informality with which the Almoravids had treated their exposure to the public reflected, at least to Ibn Tumart, the degree to which they were susceptible to corruption and decadence. The Almohad program is, by comparison, much more highly mediated, putting the Almohad elite at a remove except in those arenas in which everything around them confirms the narrative of their origin and rise to power. This is, of course, the ideal for any imperial dynasty seeking to visually project its power, but the real innovation of the Almohad project was to use recognizable ritual programs and signifiers—such as those adapted from Umayyad Cordoba—in a setting that simultaneously recalled their own heritage as Masmuda Berbers, namely the surrounding natural landscape. By "externalizing the ceremonial" in extramural spaces like the *raḥba* and the Agdal garden, the Almohads occupied a peri-urban space in which the Atlas mountains could be consistently referenced through the topography without getting lost in the urban sprawl, thus creating a clear vernacular for a distinctly Maghribi empire.

For a dynasty that identified so strongly with its origins in a transhumant, mountainous community, the importance of the landscape in signaling this identity cannot be understated. The immediate presence of the mountains as viewed from within the city brings this reminder of the homeland to the fore, creating the backdrop for the extended ceremonial program within the Almohad expansion of Marrakesh. Aligned as these sites were along the slope leading upwards out of the Haouz basin in which the city rested, they expressed a physical dominance over Marrakesh and mediated the transition from mountain to plain. The sort of formalized ruralism created through the cultivation and celebration of spaces like the Agdal garden and the *raḥba* take advantage of this, particularly with the references made to the Almohad caliphate's authority over the Berber tribes that subscribed to the movement. This proclivity for crafting

staged open spaces for displays of imperial authority, rather than enclosing those displays within a roofed architecture, also may have been an attempt to negotiate the challenge of urbanizing a community that had been resistant to large-scale settlement while maintaining the pastoral habits of that community.

The significance of the landscape in the Muʾminid urban plan is thrown into sharp relief when compared with two of the other major urban centers that received royal patronage. In al-Andalus, the Muʾminids turned their focus to Seville, which had been conquered under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's forces in the late 1140s. The city is often described as another Almohad capital, and in some senses this description is accurate.[349] Seville was already a wealthy agricultural and administrative center by the time of the Almohads' arrival, and under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, its status as such only increased. He ordered the construction of a garrison to house a large coalition of Almohad troops, requiring the demolition of part of the city walls and the relocation and compensation of a number of local families, much to their chagrin.[350] In the struggle to establish the Almohad presence in al-Andalus, which evinced a near-constant military presence and threat of attack to the city, Seville suffered a population dip as established Andalusis fled either the Christian forces or their new Almohad administration. ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's involvement with the city never extended much further than providing for the Almohad garrison, leaving the task to his successor. Under Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf, the city was revivified through a program of expansion on a similar scale to that of his father's in Marrakesh. Directed by the engineer Ahmad b. Basso (d. after 1188), laborers rebuilt the city walls and began construction on a new congregational mosque to replace the existing Umayyad mosque under the pretense of its small size being insufficient for Seville's expected population boom.

[349] Fierro, "Algunas reflexiones sobre el poder itinerant almohade."
[350] Ibn ʿIdhari, *Bayān al-Mughrib*, 4:170.

The Great Mosque of Seville, like the mosques of Marrakesh and Tinmal before it, followed a single-storied hypostyle plan and was completed by 1176, though the first Friday prayer was not held there till 1182.[351] Its ablution fountain and courtyard required the redirection of Seville's existing under-ground sewer system (which was connected to pre-Islamic Roman waterworks), which took four years alone to complete. The mosque itself was destroyed during a sixteenth-century earthquake, which prompted the construction of a Gothic cathedral in its place, but its courtyard, now known as the Patio de las Naranjas (The Orange Patio), and its monumental minaret, today called the Giralda, remain extant. Like at the Kutubiyya, the Seville minaret is axially positioned at the northeast corner of where the mosque would have stood, and features the same superimposed chambers. The external ornamental scheme has been added to and manipulated into a Baroque adaptation of the Almohad geometric and floriated forms, and the trio of finials topping the minaret has been exchanged for a cross.

Despite these layers of subsequent intervention, the mosque of Seville is significant in this study for its wider relationship to the city, particularly the areas of Muʾminid origin. The new mosque was placed on the periphery of the existing city, next to ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's garrison, in keeping with the tangential relationship between Tamarrakusht and Marrakesh.[352] Ibn Sahib al-Salat also tells us that the mosque was connected to a palace structure, today called the Alcazar (a corruption of *al-qaṣr*, "the castle") via a *sabāṭ*, though this walkway led not along the qibla axis, but rather toward the left of the mihrab and slightly southeast of the direction of prayer.[353] The physical connection between the mosque and the palace, employed not just in the Muʾminid capital but in al-Andalus as well, moves the process of sanctifying the Almohad caliph

[351] Ibn Sahib al-Salat, *al-Mann bi'l-imāma*, 389.
[352] Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, 316.
[353] Ibn Sahib al-Salat, *Al-Mann bi'l-imama*, 387.

from a localized identity to standard practice.[354] The caliph is visibly associated with the gubernatorial and spiritual centers within the urban space, but set at a remove from the general population by occupying the fringes of the walled city itself. Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf also sponsored the expansion and renovation of the city's water management beyond those works necessary for bringing water to the new mosque. Designed by the same Ibn Hajj Yaʿsh who had designed the system of *khettaras* and *seguias* in Marrakesh, these new waterworks directed runoff channels for floodwaters into the Guadalquivir River that bordered the southwestern edge of the city. He also designed bridges across the river to facilitate traffic and ease of movement between the urban center and the satellite estates that populated the region around Seville. Water was brought into the city "for the noble and common man to drink," and on its way, irrigated a *buḥayra* and its surrounding gardens along the palace's southeastern axis.[355]

These projects recall the urban plan established in Marrakesh, codifying the Muʾminid program of development into a systematic approach to urban space. However, while Tamarrakusht had the advantage of forming a sharp distinction between the original, Almoravid-era medina, the same royal quarter in Seville struggled against a densely packed, preexisting urban fabric. As mentioned above, the existing Andalusi population was not exactly favorably disposed to the Almohad presence in the city, and even during Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf's reign, there were a number of rebellions and internecine conflict that would have hampered the subtle ideological program established by the Muʾminid urban plan. It also lacked the topographical resonance of the Atlas Mountains that activates the kind of imperial program seen in Marrakesh.

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[354] Ghouirgate, *L'Ordre almohade*, 368.
[355] Ibn Sahib al-Salat, *al-Mann bi'l-imama*, 165-166; Magdalena Valor Piechotta and Miguel Angel Tabales Rodriquez, "Urbanismo y arquitectura almohades en Sevilla. Caracteres y especifidad," *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 1: 189-222.

Despite a series of small peaks to the east of the city, the royal quarter is neither directed towards it nor significantly impacted through its relationship to the plain. Even if it had been, it is doubtful that the ceremonies performed in Marrakesh would have had quite the same impact on the city's primarily Arab-Andalusi population (or at least, one that did not primarily identify with Masmuda customs, even if they were of Berber descent).

The confusion and difficulty of imposing this plan within a more established urban space was removed in the case of the other recipient of Muʾminid patronage, the new coastal city of Rabat. Its full name in the Arabic source—*Ribāṭ al-Fatḥ*, or "the fortified enclave of conquest"—refers to its location at the mouth of the Bou Regreg River, which flows inland from the Atlantic Ocean, and from which the Almohads would launch expeditions to al-Andalus. Though the city itself had Roman origins as a trading post, it had long since been abandoned for its "sister city" of Salé on the opposite bank of the river. During the Almoravid era, a fortified *ribāṭ* belonging to the Barghawata tribe was situated there, intended for devout pilgrims who pledged themselves to the mission of *jihād* in all of its forms. It is perhaps this connotation that inspired Rabat's establishment in 1151 under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, who chose the site as a fortified port for launching campaigns into al-Andalus.[356] Originally named al-Mahdiyya in honor of Ibn Tumart, the city's name was changed under Abu Yusuf Yaʿqub al-Mansur in celebration of the Almohad victory at Alarcos in 1195. It was he who ordered a monumental new congregational mosque to be constructed, though it was destined to never be completed.

The mosque, today referred to as the Hassan mosque (though the name is not contemporary to the Almohad era), would have been the largest mosque in the Islamic West in

[356] Ibn Hawqal, *Configuration de la Terre (Kitāb Ṣurat al-arḍ)*, ed. by J.H Kramers and G. Wiet (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1964), 2 vols, 1:56.

its day.[357] Measuring 183 by 139 meters, the mosque exaggerates the T-shaped plan employed in other Muʾminid mosques, featuring three qibla transepts as well as two long courtyards to either side of the central mihrab aisle in addition to the primary courtyard at the northern end of the building. Rather that using plaster and brick to develop the hypostyle hall, the Hassan mosque employs stone and marble to fashion large, cylindrical drums that make up the hall's columns. The mosque's minaret, proportionally enlarged so as to befit the mosque's grand scale, is axially positioned at the north end of the prayer hall directly opposite what would have been the mihrab. It is difficult to gauge the building's proportions given its ruined state, but the exaggerated elements of the hall's plan, its luxurious materiality, and the sheer scale of the partial minaret speak to the impression intended.

In the larger context of Rabat's urban space, the mosque forms one of two major landmarks along the city's eastern border. Built inland along the left bank of the Bou Regreg, the mosque sits atop a raised platform that elevates it even further above the surrounding landscape. The next highest point in the city is the walled *qaṣaba* at the mouth of the river, fortified behind high walls and monumental gates that recall those surrounding Tamarrakusht. Within the *qaṣaba*, Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf had added a cistern to secure a supply of fresh water and a small garden within the walls, as well as building up the northern and western ramparts of the quarter.[358] He also laid the foundations for a medina, a project completed under Abu Yaʿqub Yusuf al-Mansur, in between the *qaṣaba* and the site of the future Hassan mosque. Although the *Kitāb al-Istibṣār* also notes the construction under these two caliphs of a *buḥayra* and caliphal palace, the precise

[357] Jacques Caillé, *La mosquée de Hassan à Rabat* (Rabat: Hautes-Études Marocaines, 1954), 29.
[358] Moulay Driss Sedra, "La ville de Rabat au VI^{e}/XII^{e} siècles: le projet d'une nouvelle capital de l'Empire Almohade?" *Al-Andalus Maghrib* 15 (2008), 299.

locations of these constructions is unknown.[359] What is evident, however, is that the directional focus present in the Almohad capital is absent in Rabat; the fortified *qaṣaba*, the commercial medina, and the mosque are aligned along the north-south axis, but there is no evident directionality present between them. The direction of prayer is focused southwards, predictably, but the dynasty's constructions appear primarily along the northern coast. Moreover, the presence of the medina breaks up the intentional distancing of the Almohad elite from the general public, disrupting the controlled area of pageantry available for the kinds of imperial ceremonies "designed for the passage of troops through the city, because it is located in a place that they must cross in order to reach Marrakesh, the capital of the Empire."[360]

Scholars like Jessica Streit and Moulay Driss Sedra have argued that the architectural monumentality and patronage granted to Rabat from its foundations under ʿAbd al-Muʾmin onward reflect the Muʾminids' intentions to relocate the central capital from Marrakesh to the Atlantic coast. Sedra understands this shift to reflect the tension between the caliphate and the Masmuda shaykhs, who were too close for comfort with the capital in Marrakesh. He argues that this relocation would have been made official had not the caliphs been somewhat continually distracted by a variety of rebellions and military campaigns.[361] Whether or not this was to be the case falls outside the purview of this argument, but it does perhaps assist in explaining why Rabat was almost completely abandoned following its fall to the Marinids in 1248. Lacking the cohesive directionality of Marrakesh, Rabat fails to entwine the city with the Almohads' societal manipulation of ethnic ties and politics. Although moving the capital to Rabat would have potentially solved the tension between the Muʾminids and the entropic effects of tribal divisions,

[359] *Kitāb al-Istibṣār*, 140.
[360] Caillé, *La ville de Rabat*, 72.
[361] Sedra, "La ville de Rabat," 301-302.

it would also have removed a source of urban authority that confirmed the dynasty's place as the leaders of a distinctly Berber population.

The intensity with which the Muʾminid layout of Marrakesh can be felt is best indicated in the city's afterlife. Though it would lose its status as a capital city by 1269, Marrakesh would continue to be an active and populous city, and notably one where resistance movements and rebellions, almost always expressed in ethnic rhetoric, took root from the thirteenth century through the twentieth. The Marinids moved the capital to Fez, but established the custom of sending a prince from the royal family to serve as the region's governor, pointing to the town's significance despite its reduced status. Even then, the Masmuda and Hintata exerted considerable influence on the city's governorship, becoming practically independent from Marinid interference.[362] When the Saadians took control of Marrakesh in 1525 and made it their new capital city, they renovated and built up the area which had once formed Tamarrakusht, taking advantage of the topographical incline towards the south and undoubtedly the powerful associations embedded within the quarter. The Bab Agnaou became the monumental entrance into the Saadian royal quarter, which was marked by the construction of an elaborate new palace known as Al-Badiʿ ("The Incomparable").[363] Commissioned by Ahmad al-Mansur (d. 1603) and built between 1578 and 1594, the palace eschewed the highly local materiality preferred by the Muʾminids in favor of fine, imported material like gold-leaf, onyx, ivory, and Carrera marble. They also constructed a dynastic necropolis near the Muʾminid *raḥba*, and renovated and expanded the suburban estates surrounding the Agdal garden.[364] While these constructions have obscured much of the original Almohad plan, they speak to the powerful associations

[362] P. de Cenival, "Marrākush," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, accessed April 25, 2018, <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prodı.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0690>.
[363] Deverdun, *Marrakech*, 384.
[364] Navarro, et. al., "The Agdāl of Marrākesh," 19-20.

Tamarrakusht had within the city. The relationship between the topography, which granted these royal quarters a physical dominance over the medina, and a dynasty's role within the city becomes inseparable.

By approaching the urban project in this way, the Almohads became integrated into the socio-religious life of the city, creating an urban space whose *genius loci* was inseparable from the dynasty itself. Other, smaller mosques would proliferate throughout the city, but the Kutubiyya alone escaped the systematic destruction reserved for a competitor's monuments as Marrakesh changed hands. Though the Almohad esplanade no longer exists, both the Saadians in the sixteenth century and the Alaouites in the nineteenth century would build their palaces along the southern axis behind the Kutubiyya, taking advantage of the sightlines and prestige associated with the area. This speaks to the powerful associations embedded in ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's Marrakesh, that the foundations laid in the middle of the twelfth century would be embraced and serve as the model for the city's continual growth.

IMAGES

CHAPTER ONE: Marrakesh's Almoravid Foundations And The Almohad Response

Fig. 1.1 – *Survey map of Marrakesh and its environs*, from the *Carte du Maroc au 50,000* (Rabat, 1951)

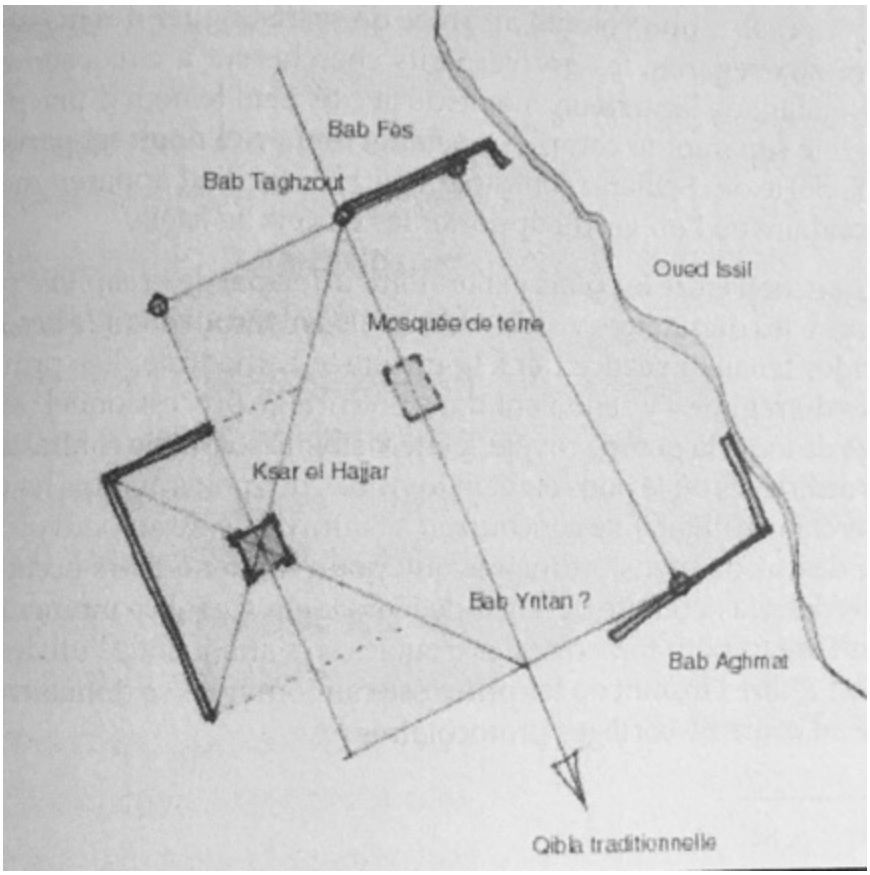

Fig. 1.2 – *Early plan of Marrakesh*, Quentin Wilbaux, *La Médina de Marrakech: Formations des espaces urbains d'une ancienne capital du Maroc* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002), 231.


Fig. 1.3 – *Bāb Agnaou*, image courtesy of Archnet.

Fig. 1.4 – *Bab al-Robb*, photo author's own.

Fig. 1.5 – *Proposed map of Almohad Marrakesh*, based off Gaudefroy-Demombynes' edition and translation of al-ʿUmarī's *Masālik El Abṣār fi Mamālik El Amṣār: l'Afrique moins l'Egypte* (Paris: Geuthner, 1927), opp. 181.

Fig. 1.6 – *Postcard of the Mechouar Gate in Marrakesh, c. early 20th century*, Delcampe, item #296266502

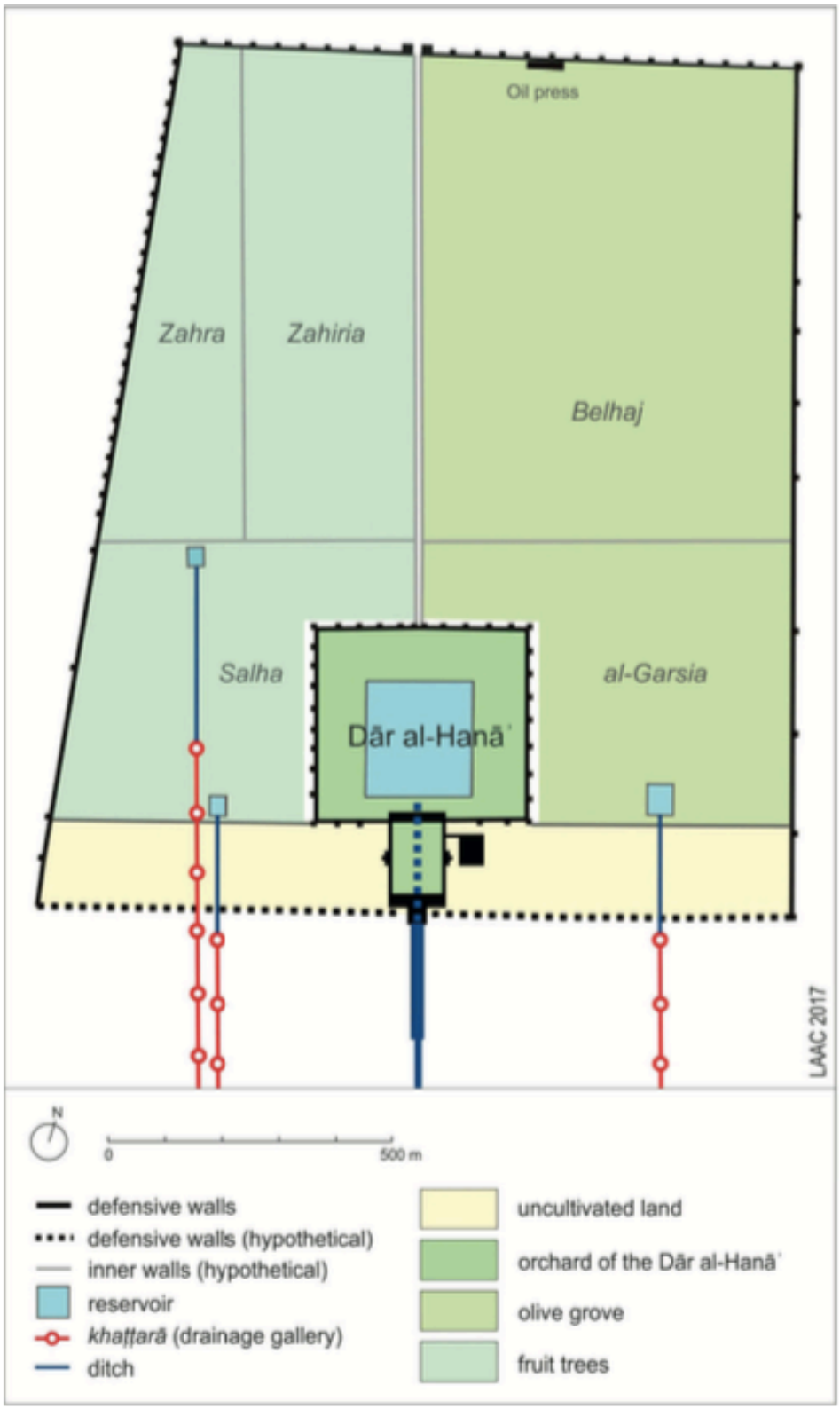

Fig. 1.7 – *Hypothetical reconstruction of the estate during the Almohad period*, Julio Navarro et. al., The Agdāl of Marrakesh (12th to 20th centuries): An Agricultural Space for the Benefit and Enjoyment of the Caliphs and Sultans," *Muqarnas* (forthcoming), 31.

Fig. 1.8 – *The Agdal basin*, photo courtesy of Mohammad El Faïz.

Fig. 1.9 – *The Agdal basin*, photo courtesy of Mohammad El Faïz, , "The Garden Strategy of the Almohad Sultans and Their Successors (1157-1900)*, Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity*, ed. by Michel Conan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 97.

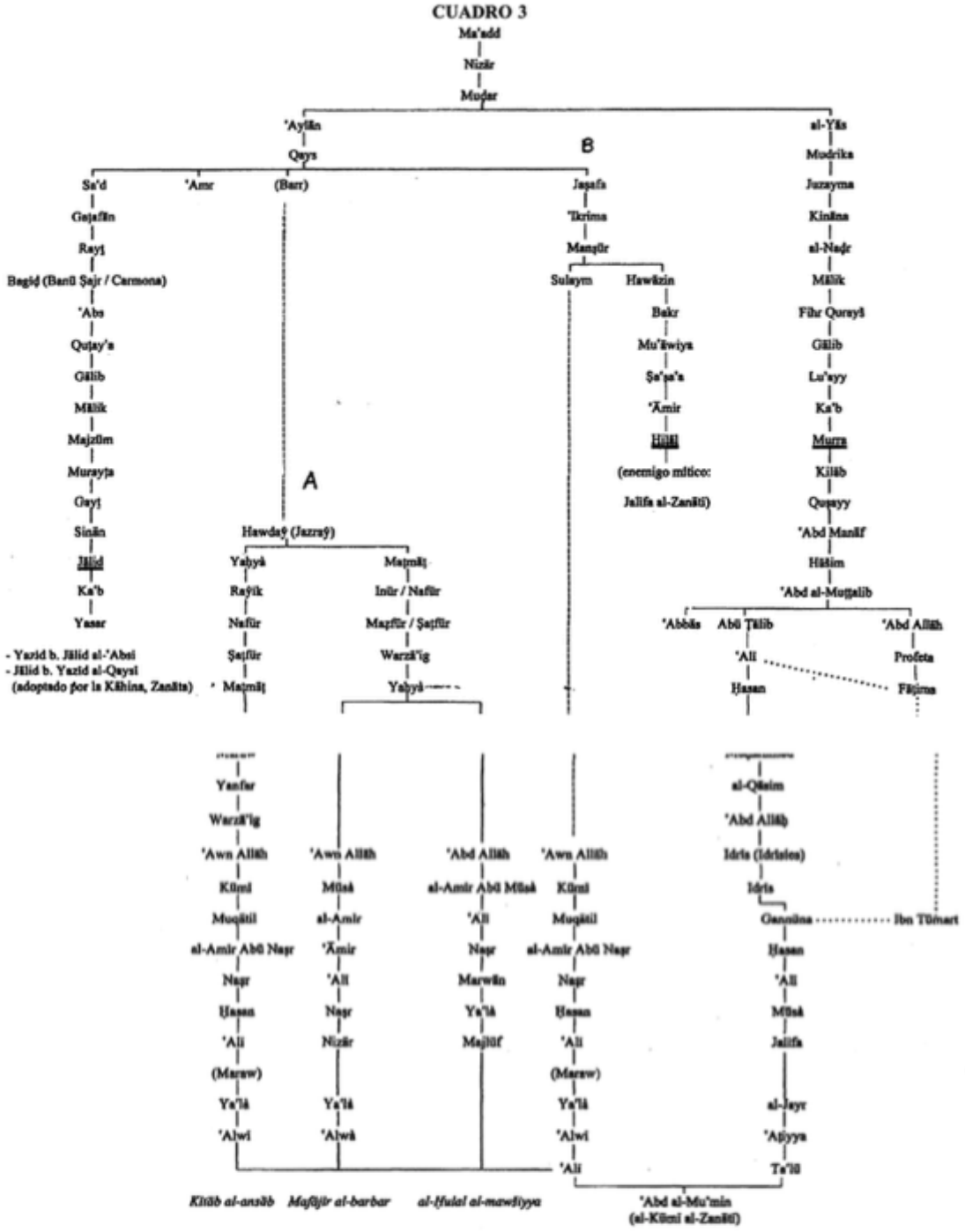

Fig. 1.10 – *Genealogical table showing the dual lineages of ʿAbd al-Muʾmin*, Maribel Fierro, "Las genealogías de ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, primer califa almohada," *Al-Qanṭara* 24:1 (2003), 92-93.

Fig. 2.1: *View of the Kutubiyya minaret from the Jemaa al-Fna*. Photo author's own.

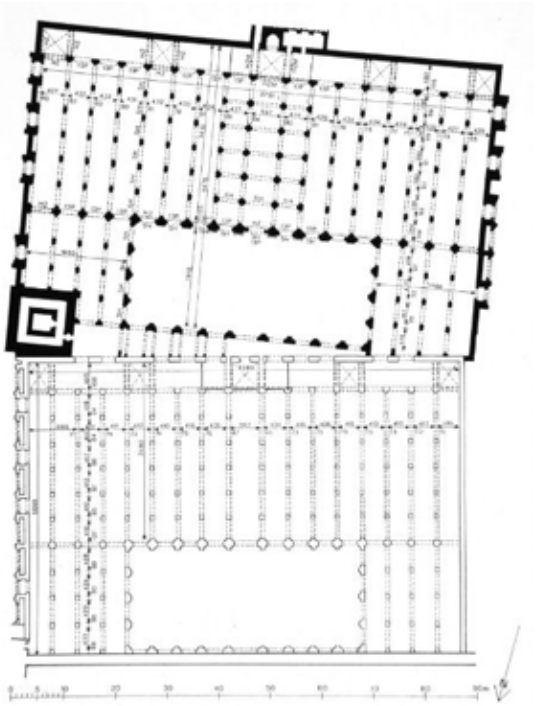

Fig. 2.2: *Ground plan of the Kutubiyya Mosque (excavated and extant)*. Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images and Slides Colelction d2007.06008.

Fig. 2.3: *Northern exterior wall of the extant Kutubiyya (formerly the qibla wall of the first prayer hall and part of the Almoravid palace)*. Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images & Slides Collection 2000.03100.

Fig. 2.4: *Great Mosque of Qayrawan, interior view of columns*. ARTstor Slide Gallery

Fig. 2.5: *Eastern entrance to the second Kutubiyya prayer hall*. Photo author's own.

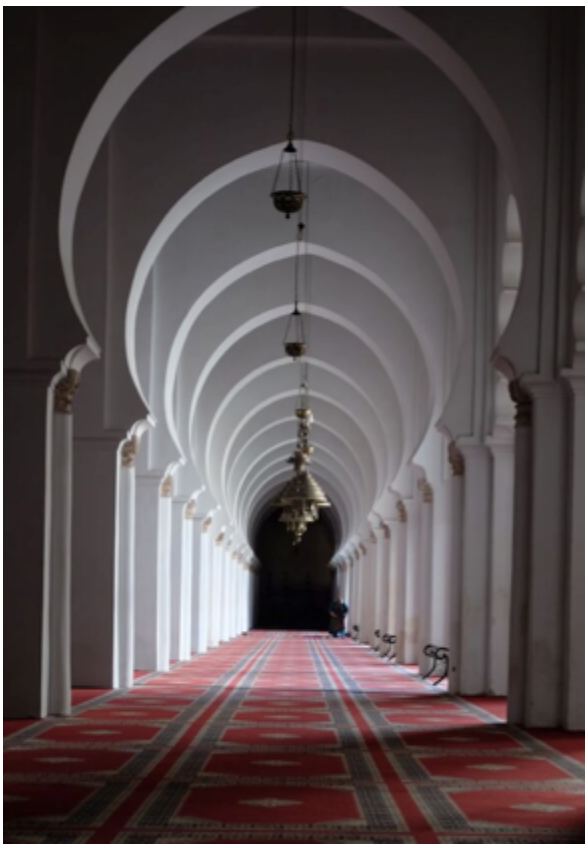

Fig. 2.6: *Interior of the second prayer hall, looking west across the transept directly in front of the courtyard*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.7: *Engaged column with stucco capital in the second Kutubiyya prayer hall*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.8: *View of the qibla transept in the second prayer hall*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.9: *Lambrequin arch framing the mihrab in the second prayer hall.* Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.10: *Lateral qibla transept muqarnas dome*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.11: *Kutubiyya mihrab*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.12: *Mihrab interior*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.13: *Mihrab dome*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.14: *Mihrab columns*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.15: Yann Arthus-Bertrand. *Aerial View of the Kutubiyya Mosque*. Taken from Jonathan Bloom, *The Minbar from the Kutubiyya Mosque* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), ii.

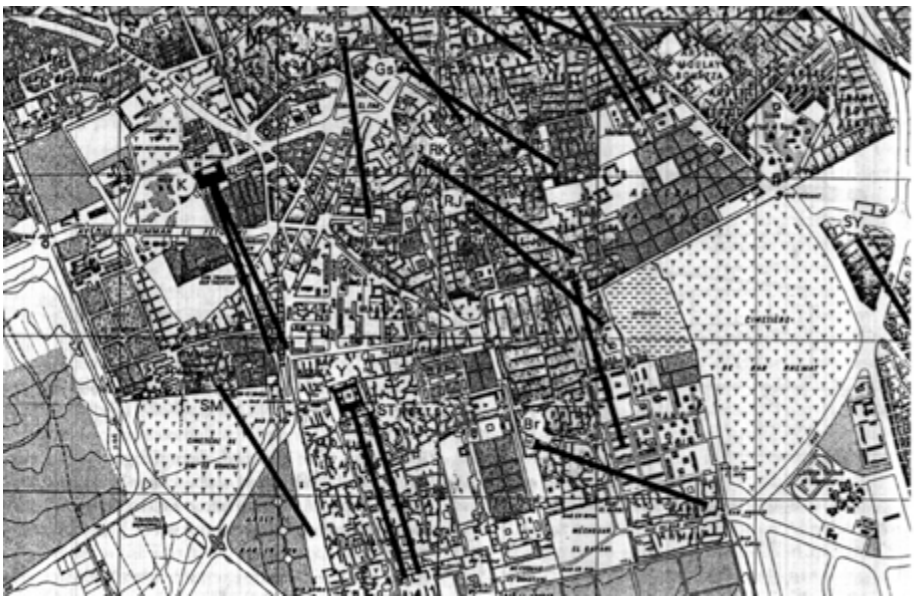

Fig. 2.16: *Map with various qiblas in Marrakesh (The Kutubiyya is marked by a 'K', showing the earlier and later orientations (right and left, respectively)*. Taken from Michael Bonine, "Sacred Direction and City Structure: A Preliminary Analysis of the Islamic Cities of Morocco," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990), 63.

Fig. 2.17: *Detail from a celestial globe in the Smithsonian (NMAH 330,781), showing the constellation Argo Navis, or* ṣūrat al-safīna*, of which the star Suhayl al-Wazn is a part*. Taken from Emilie Savage-Smith, *Islamicate Celestial Globes: Their History Construction and* Use (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985), 212.

Fig. 2.18: *Hypothetical reconstruction of ʿAlī ibn Yūsuf's mosque in Marrakesh*. Taken from Deverdun and Allain, "Le minaret almoravide de la mosquée Ben Youssef à Marrakech," *Hespéris Tamuda* 2 (1961), plate 3.

Fig. 2.19: *Photograph showing the integration of the northern arcade with the base of the minaret*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.20: *Aerial View showing cistern excavation*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.21: *Minbar from the Kutubiyya Mosque*. Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images and Slides Collection 1993.06926.

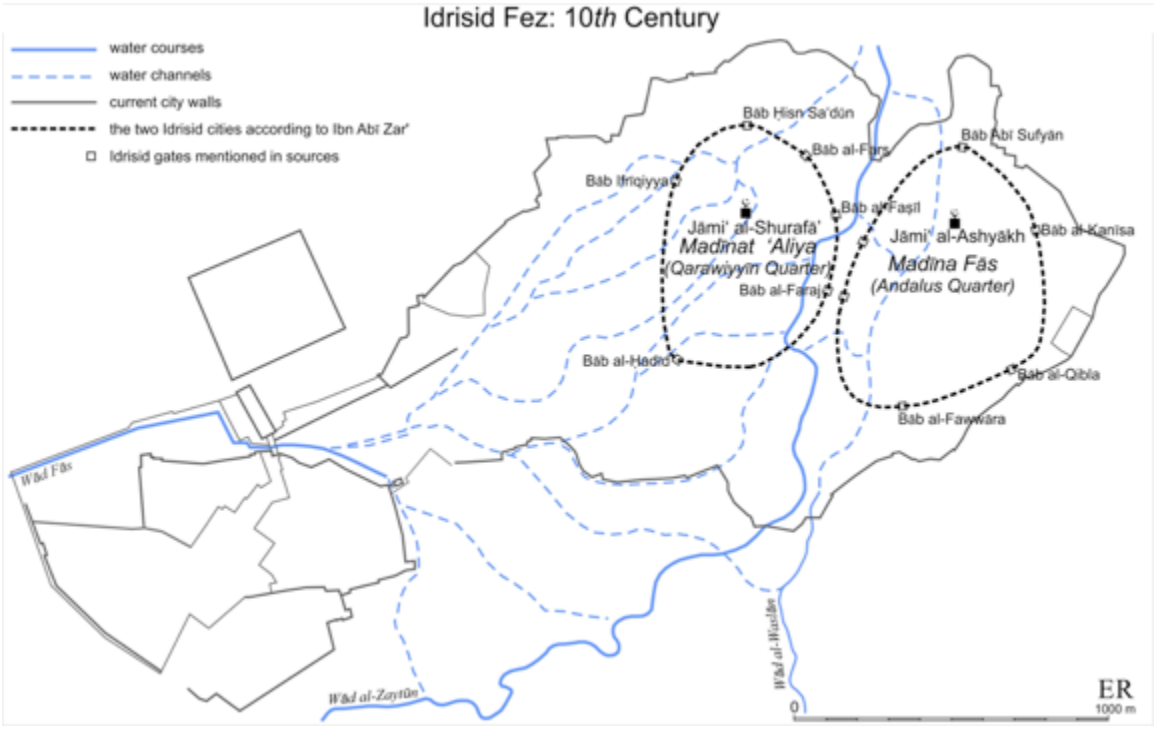

Fig. 2.22: *Map of Idrisid Fez*. Image courtesy of Eric Ross.

Fig. 2.23: *The Kutubiyya mosque and minaret from the southeast*. Photo author's own.

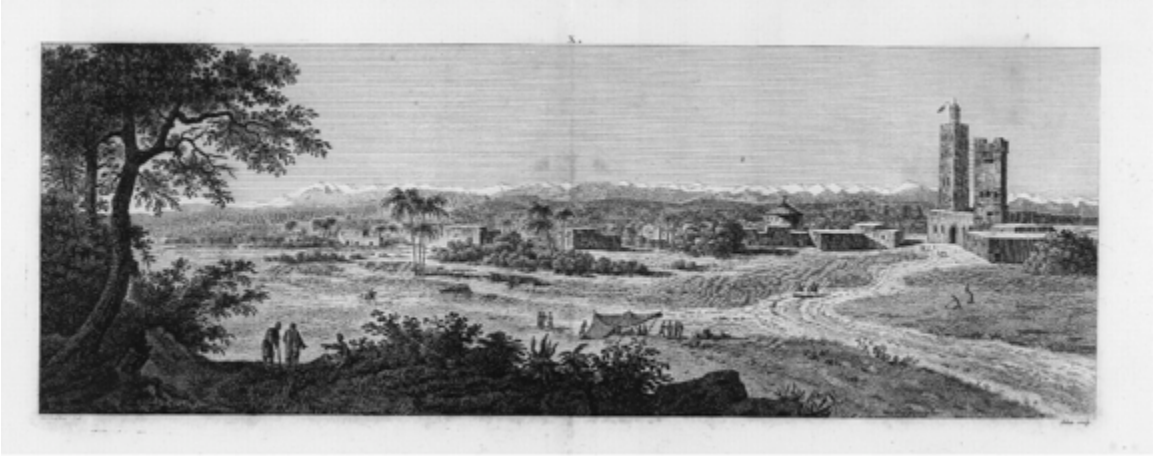

Fig. 2.24: Jacob Adam. *View of the Atlas Mountain Range*. Engraving. Reproduced in *Illustrations de Voyages d'Ali Bey El Abbassi en Afrique et en Asie pendant les années 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806 et 1807*. Paris: Didot, 1814.

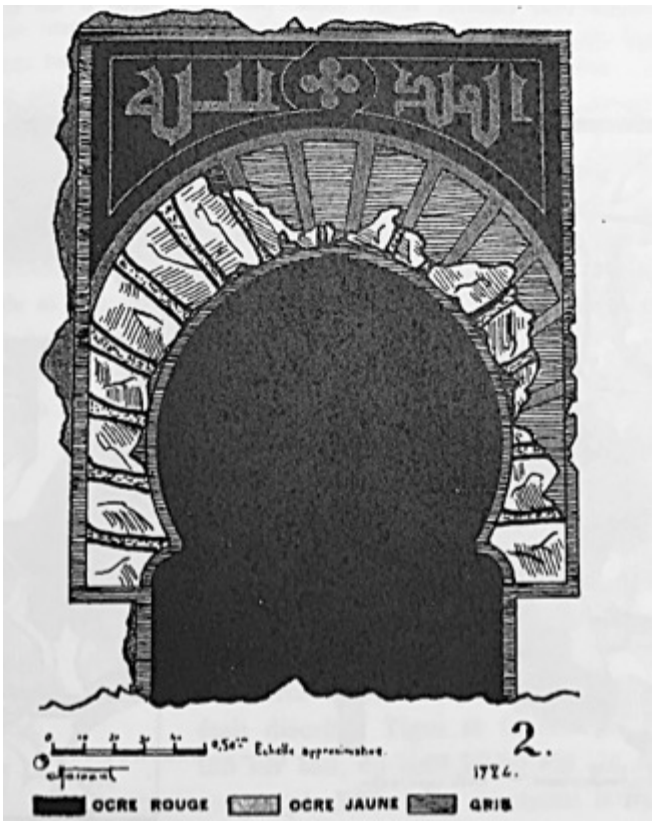

Fig. 2.25: *Kufic inscription from the southeast face of the Kutubiyya minaret*. Taken from Henri Basset and Henri Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades* (Paris: Maissonneuve et Larose, 2001), 123.

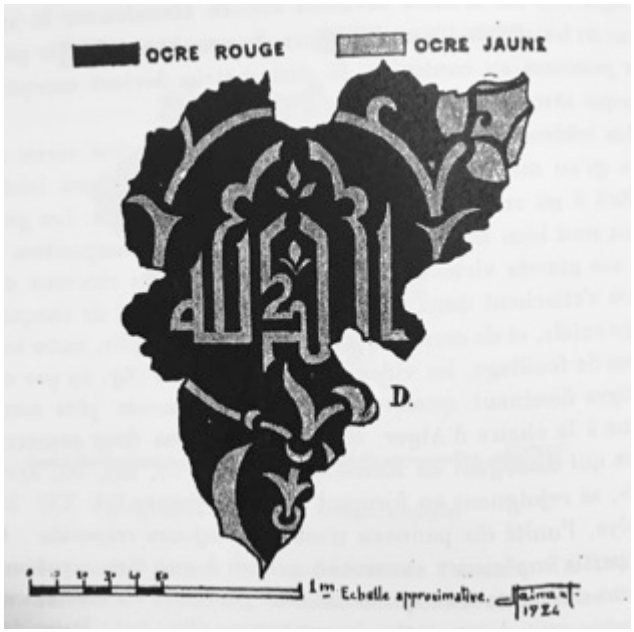

Fig. 2.26: *Kufic inscription from the southwest face of the Kutubiyya minaret*. Taken from Basset and Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 136.

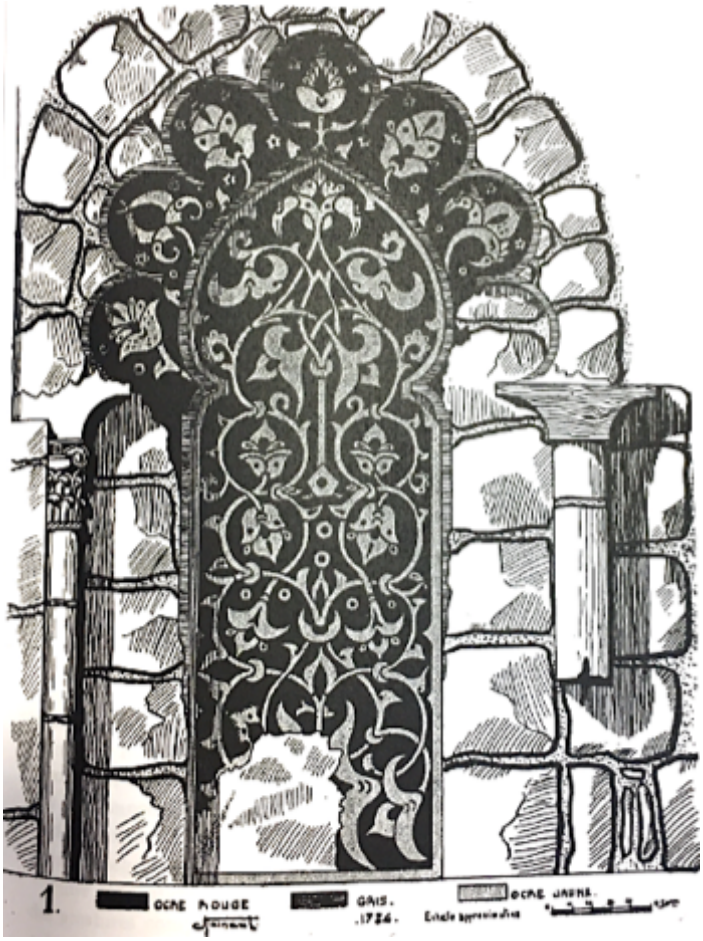

Fig. 2.27: *Southeast face of the Kutubiyya minaret, upper level*. Taken from Basset and Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, 115.

Fig. 2.28: *The Kutubiyya minaret at dawn (left) and dusk (right)*. Photos author's own.

Fig. 2.29: *Staggered* alfiz *registers on the northeast and southeast faces*. Photos author's own.

Fig. 2.30: *Dome of uppermost chamber within the minaret*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.31: *Uppermost chamber within the minaret*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.32: *Kutubiyya lanternon*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.33: *Residual red paint within the interstitial spaces of the arcature.* Photo author's own.

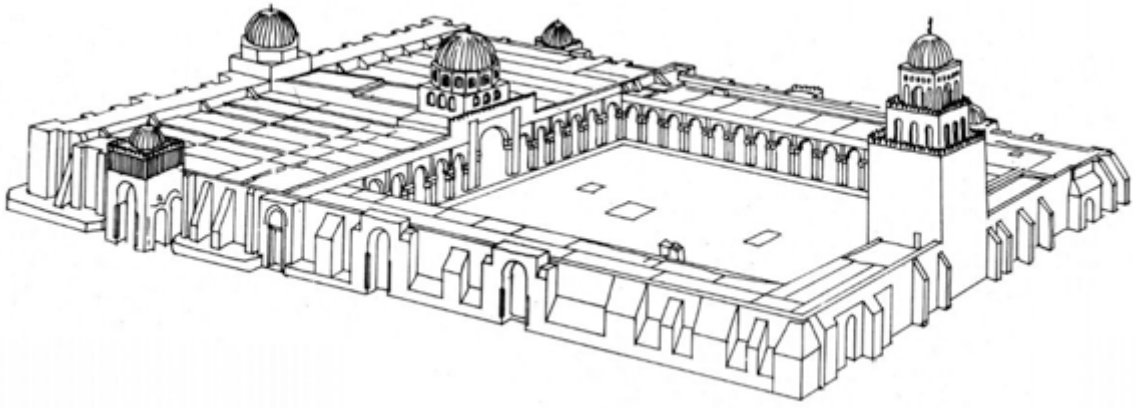

Fig. 2.34: *Axonometric projection of the Great Mosque of Qayrawān*. Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images & Slides Collection 1995.22416.

Fig. 2.35: *Minaret at the Great Mosque of Cordoba*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 2.36: *Plan of the Great Mosque of Cordoba*. Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images & Slides Colelction 2003.00875.

Fig. 2.37: *Urban fabric around the Qarawiyyin Mosque*. Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images & Slides Collection, 1994.06580.

Fig. 2.38: *Congregational mosque of Qalʿa Beni Hammad*. Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images & Slides Collection, d2010.20434.

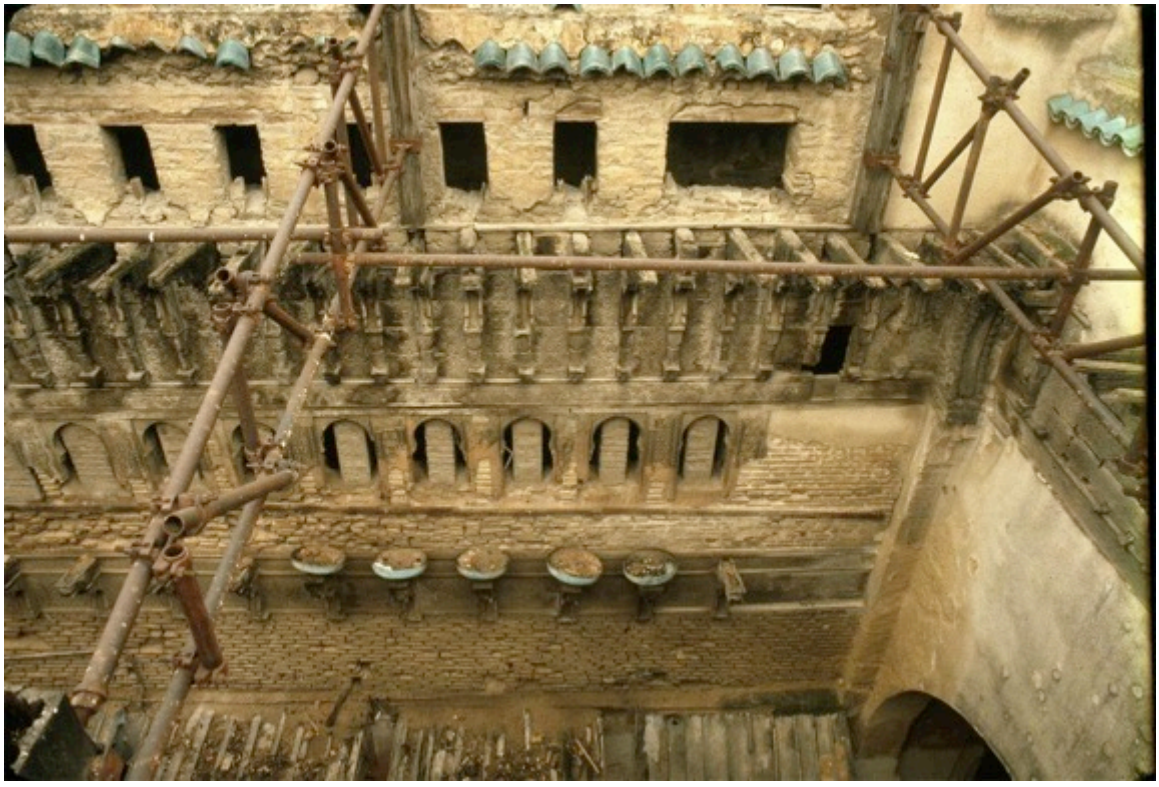

Fig. 2.39: *Water clock of the Bou ʿInaniyya madrasa*. Photo courtesy of Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom.

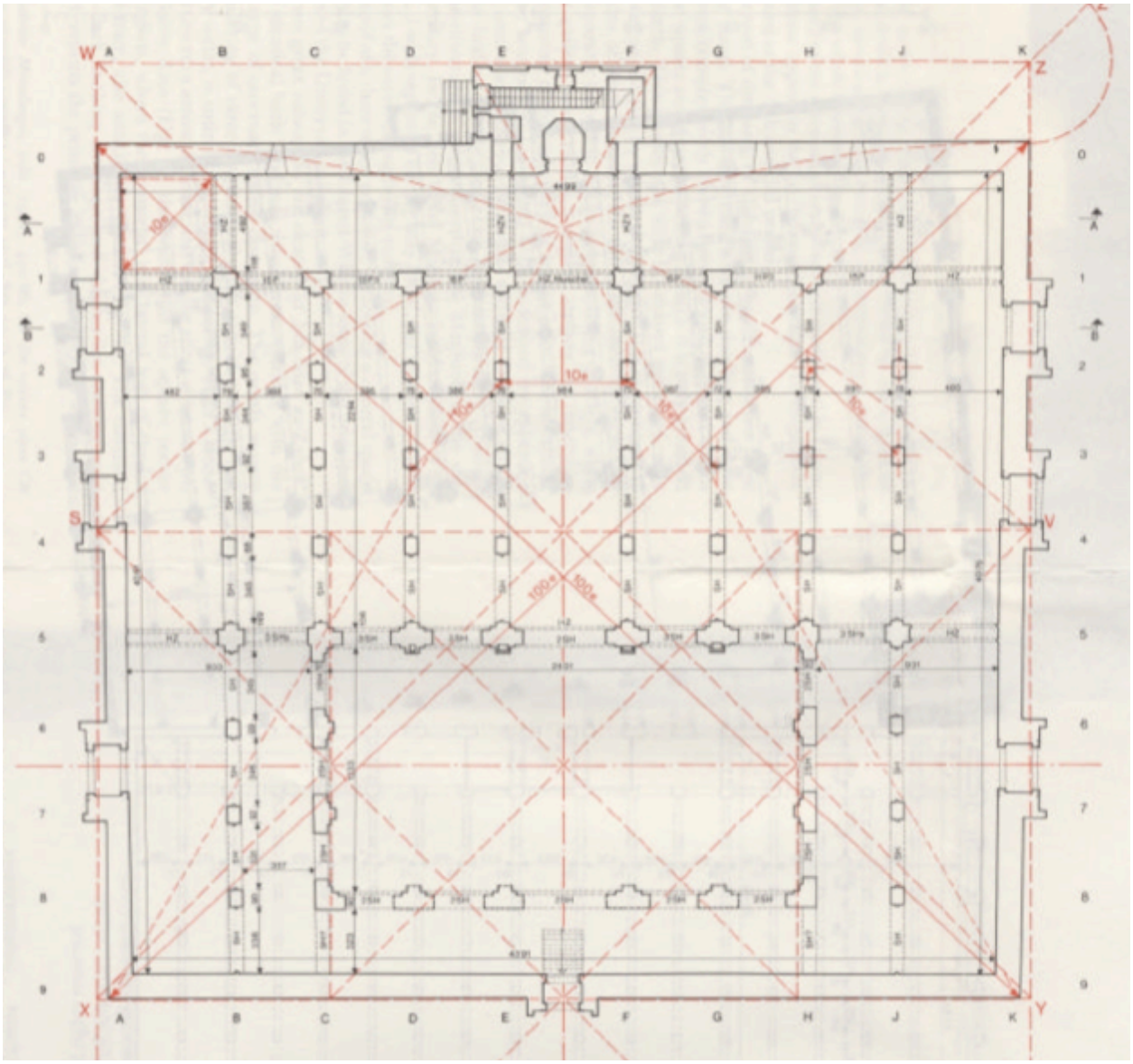

Fig. 3.1 – *Plan of Tinmal mosque with geometric scheme*, from Christian Ewert, *The Mosque at Tinmal (Morocco) and Some New Aspects of Islamic Architectural Typology* (London: Proceedings of the British Academy, 1986), fig. 1.

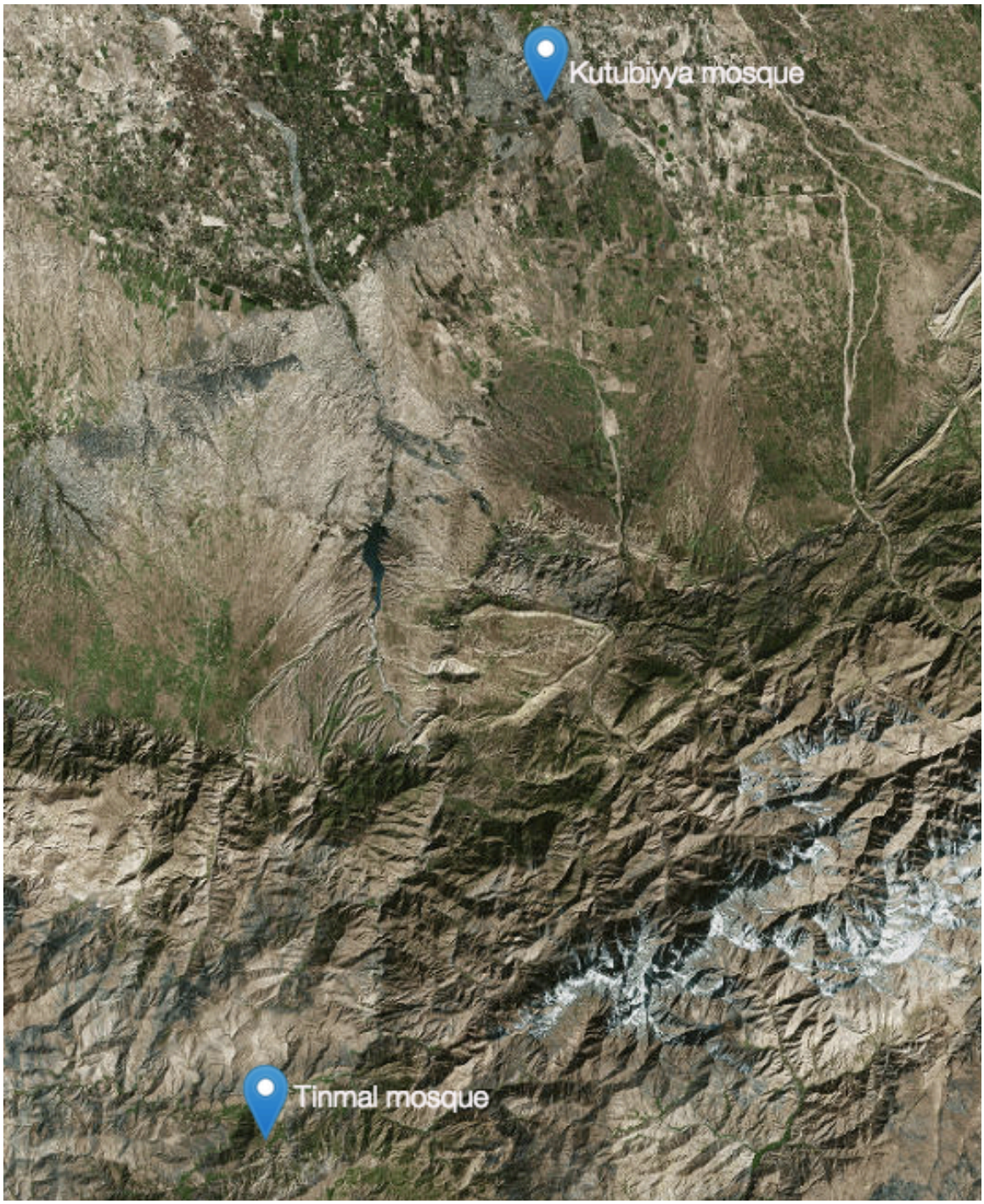

Fig. 3.2 – Google Maps, 2017. “Map showing the locations of the Kutubiyya and Tinmal mosques.” *Google*. Accessed March 23, 2017.

Fig. 3.3 – Abbey Stockstill, 2015. *Ornamental programs around the mihrab at the Kutubiyya (left) and Tinmal (right)*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 3.4 – Abbey Stockstill, 2014. *Sebka strapwork underneath arches surrounding mihrab, Tinmal*. Photo author's own.

Fig. 3.5 – Christian Ewert, 2005. *Alabaster capital from Zaragoza, Aljafería*, in "El reigstro ornamental almohade y su relevencia," in *Los almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, ed. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 242.

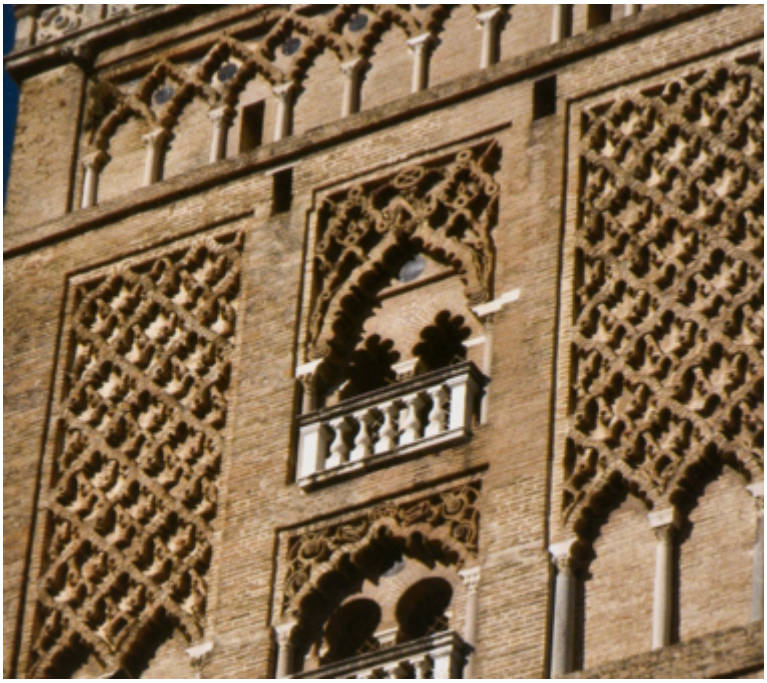

Fig. 3.6 – *Sebka interlace on the façade of the Giralda in Seville*, Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images & Slides Collection, d2011.05336.

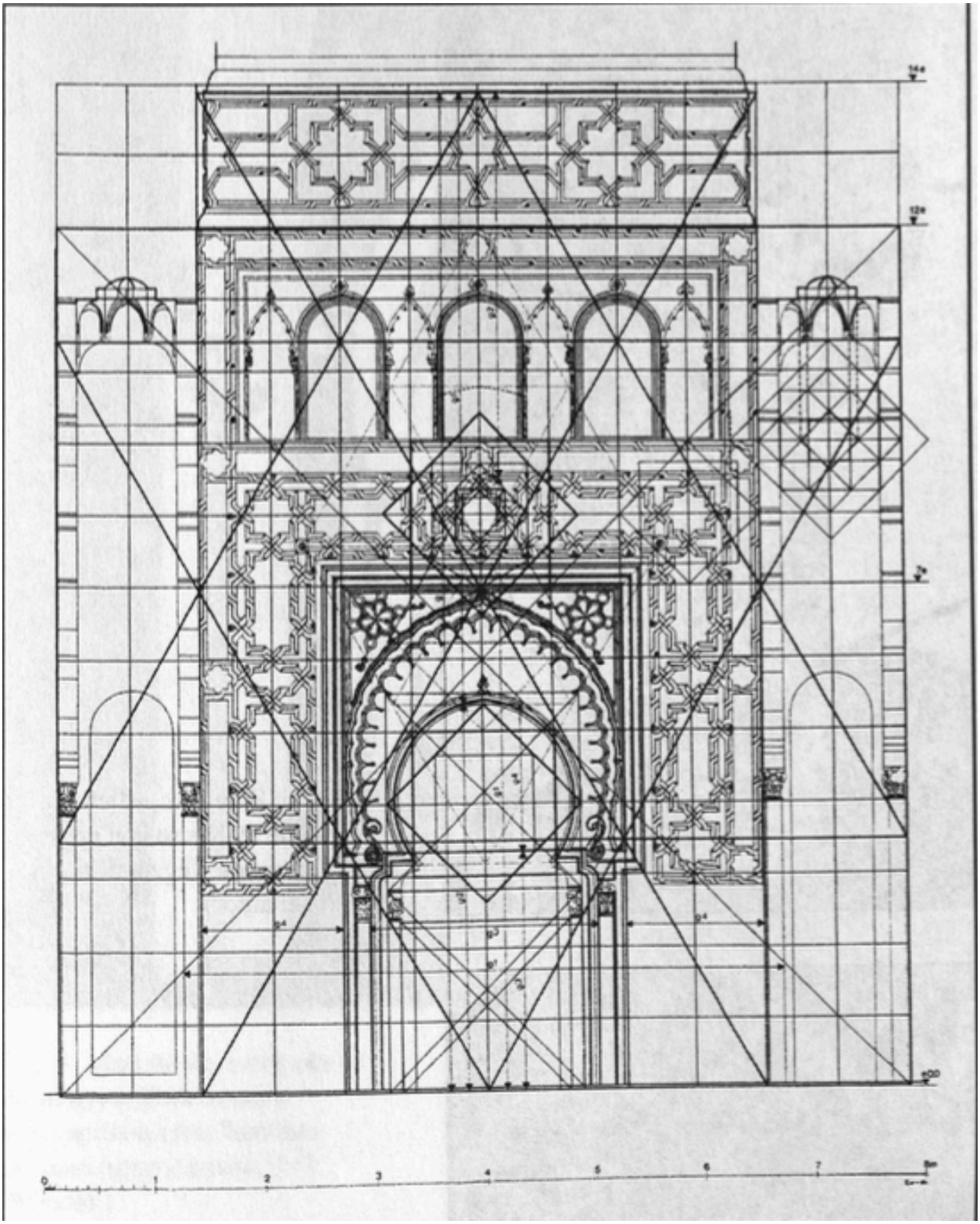

Fig. 3.7 – *Mihrab façade with geometric schematics, Tinmal*. Christian Ewert, "El registro ornamental almohade y su relevencia," in *Los almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, ed. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luis Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 241.

Fig. 3.8 – Abbey Stockstill, 2014. *Mashribiyya screens in the mihrabs of the Kutubiyya (above) and Tinmal (below)*. Photos author's own.

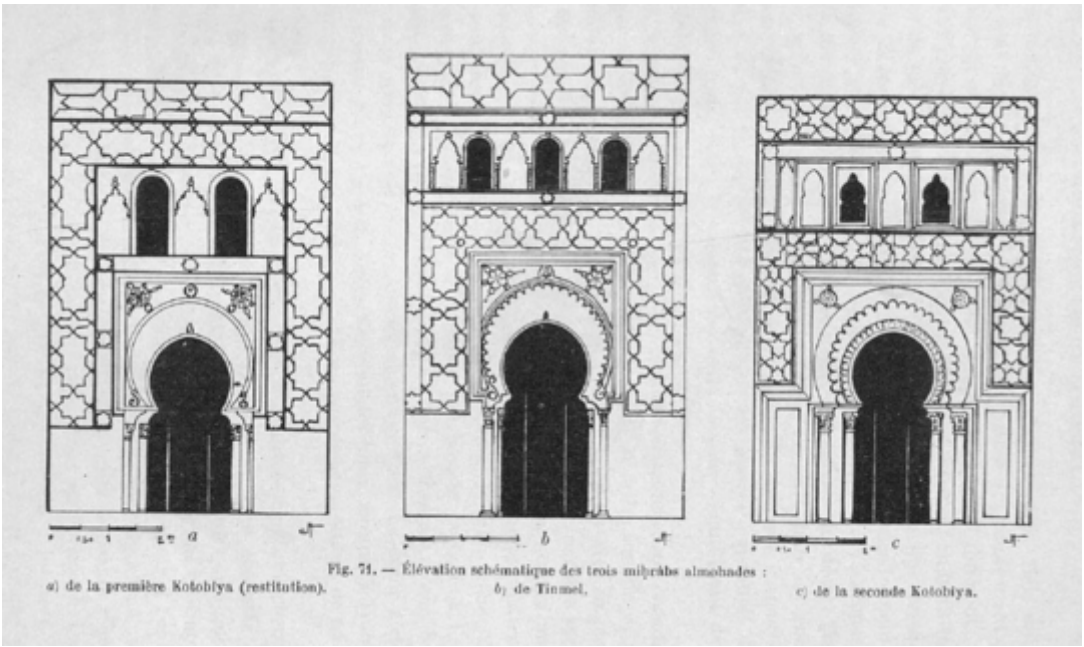

Fig. 71. — Élévation schématique des trois mihrâbs almohades :
a) de la première Kotobiya (restitution). b) de Tinmel. c) de la seconde Kotobiya.

Fig. 3.9 – *Schematic elevation of the three mihrabs from the first Kutubiyya (left), Tinmal (center), and the second Kutubiyya (right)*. Henri Terrasse and Henri Basset, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades* (Paris: Larose, 1932), 188-189, fig. 171.

Fig. 3.10 – Abbey Stockstill, 2014. *Oblique view of Tinmal minaret/mihrab block*. Photo author's own.

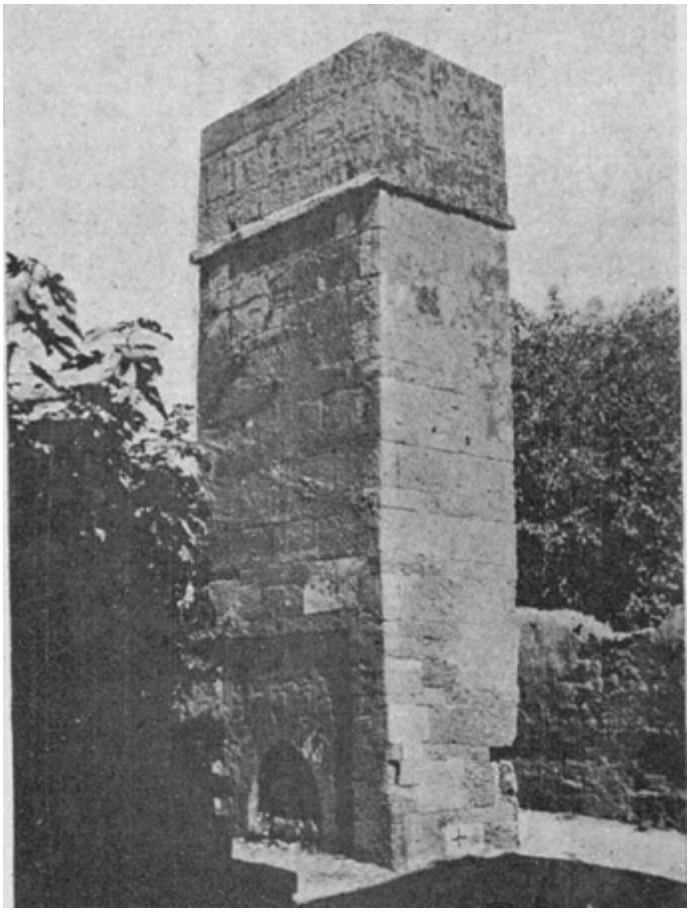

Fig. 3.11 – *Minaret over a mihrab, from the side of the mihrab, Salé.* Terrasse and Basset*, Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades* (Paris: Larose, 1932), 52, fig. 10.

Caliphs	Location of Death	Location of Burial	Political Circumstances
Abd al-Muʾmin (d. 1163)	Salé	Tinmal	About to lead an expedition to al-Andalus
Abu Yaqub Yusuf (d. 1184)	Santarem	Tinmal	Death before the walls of Santarem during siege
Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur (d. 1199)	Marrakesh	Tinmal	Basking in the success of Alarcos
Muhammad al-Nasir (d. 1213)	Marrakesh	Unknown	After the defeat at Las Navas de Tolosa
Abd al-Wahid (d. 1224)	Marrakesh	Unknown	Politically and militarily inactive
Abd Allah al-ʿAdil (d. 1227)	Marrakesh	Unknown	Assassinated by the Almohads
Idris al-Maʾmun (d. 1232)	Banks of the Wadi al-ʿAbīd (central Morocco, near the Middle Atlas)	Unknown	Assassinated by the Almohads
Yaḥya b. al-Naṣir (d. 1236)	Near Taza	No burial	Unable to take over Ceuta and Meknes
Abu Muhammad al-Rashid Abd al-Wahid (d. 1242)	Marrakesh	Unknown	Assassinated after being deprived of any political or military support
Abu al-Hasan al-Sayid al-Mutadid (d. 1248)	Mountain near Tlemcen	Al-ʿUbayd, near Tlemcen, in a tomb next to mausoleum of Abu Madyan (Sufi mystic, d. 1198)	Violent death following military defeat
Abu Hafs Umar al-Murtada (d. 1266)	Near Azemmour (on the Atlantic coast of Morocco)	Tomb on the Dukkala plains in northern Morocco	Executed after being deposed
Abu Dabbus (d. 1269)	Tadla (central Morocco)	Unknown	Violent death subsequent to his defeat by the Marinids

Fig. 3.12 – *The circumstances of the deaths and burials of the Muʾminid caliphs*. After Mehdi Ghouirgate, *L'ordre almohade* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2014), 405, table 13.

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