

The Fihrids and Early Arab Settlers in Eighth Century al-Andalus and Ifrīqiya

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Introduction

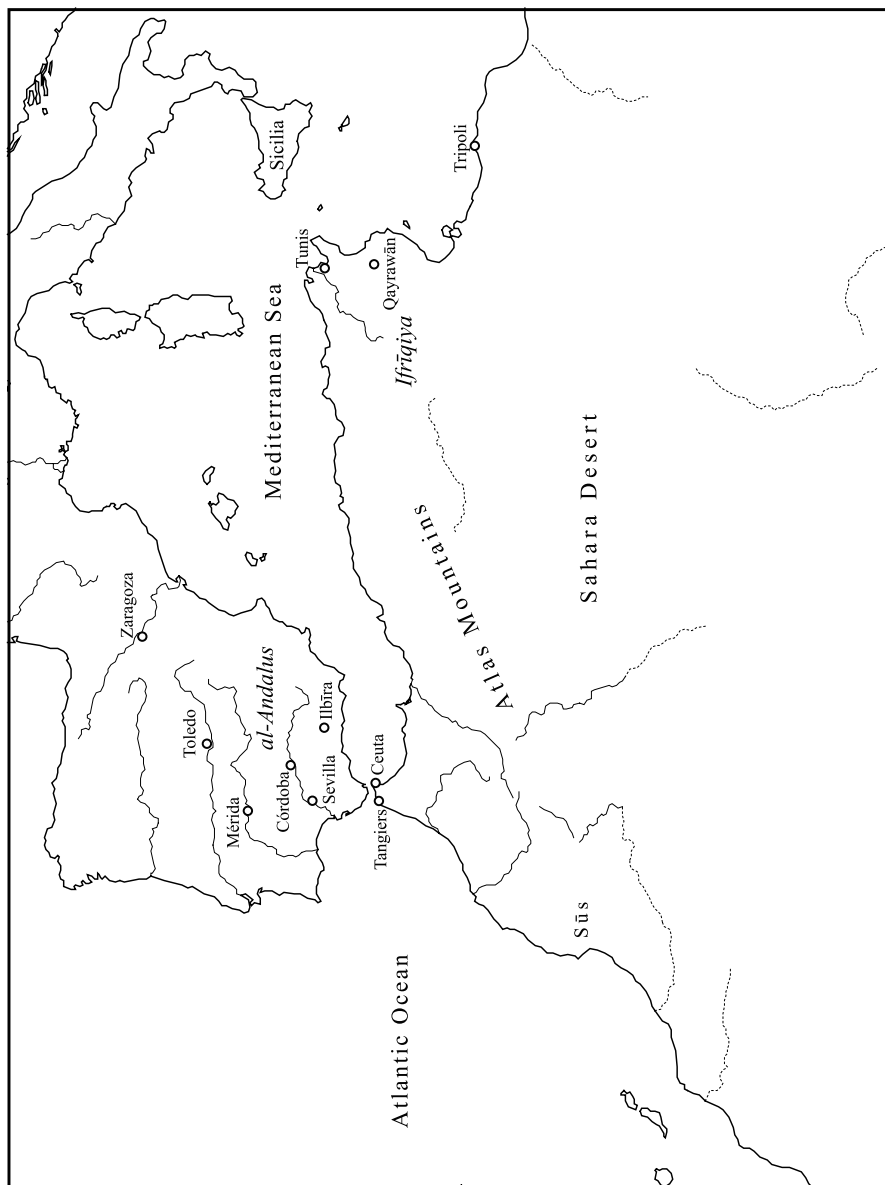
It was in AH 138/AD 756 that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I (r. 138/756–172/788) occupied Córdoba and set up the Umayyad Emirate in al-Andalus, a regime that would rule over the region until the early eleventh century AD. However, to what extent Umayyad rule actually penetrated the region is still in doubt. We know that at least during the eighth and ninth centuries, the Emirate was challenged by civil strife that occurred among the influential Arab leaders on its periphery, and that cases exist in which these leaders were allowed to monitor themselves in exchange for nominal recognition of the Córdoba regime.¹⁾

Therefore, when considering the characteristic features of the Umayyad Emirate’s rule over al-Andalus, it becomes necessary to focus on these regional powers instead of the central government in Córdoba. The aim of this paper is to examine the formation and character of these regional Arab powers after their conquest of al-Andalus in 92/711.

In the extant source materials describing them, these regional Arab powers are referred to as *ahl al-balad* or *baladiyūn* (“*balad*” meaning country), the terms literally translated as the people of that country, or local residents, but hereafter referred in this article as “early settlers,”²⁾ in order to distinguish them from the indigenous Latin and Visigothic peoples whom they conquered. Indeed, the term *ahl al-balad* implies the existence of those who came from outside of the *balad* (country), that is al-Andalus. Among these outsiders, we can find governors who were dispatched from North Africa or the Middle East and troops in the Syrian Army³⁾ who flowed in during the decade of the 740s, as well as ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I.

Those who rose up among these early settlers to positions of regional power were called *wujūh* (celebrities) by virtue of their outstanding roles in the conquest, family genealogies and personal wealth. The present ar-

al-Andalus and Ifrīqiya in the Eighth Century



ticle will focus on one of these *wujūh*, the well-documented Fihrid Family, in order to clarify the characteristics of the early settlers. This family is that of Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri, who grabbed the opportunity offered by the political upheaval going on during the transition from the Umayyad to the Abbasid Caliphate during the late 740s to establish a semi-autonomous regime as the governor of al-Andalus (130/747–138/756).

Unfortunately, this era in the history of al-Andalus is not at all well documented; so in order to understand the situation that facilitated the rise of the Fihrids and their settlement in the region, we will take up the neighboring region of Ifrīqiya, which was intimately tied to al-Andalus as the staging ground for the latter’s conquest in the early eighth century and from that time on maintained close contact. Therefore, many families of the early settlers inhabited both regions. Furthermore, at about the same time as Yūsuf al-Fihri set up his regime in al-Andalus, a kinsman, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥabīb al-Fihri founded a de facto autonomous governorship in Ifrīqiya (127/745–137/755). In order to analyze the early settlers and Fihrids of al-Andalus, a comparison with Ifrīqiya will be significant.

Of the scarce research done to date on the early settlers, there is the noteworthy work of A. Dh. Ṭāha, who describes the settlers as occupying not only the urban areas of al-Andalus, but also its smaller towns, while offering a detailed account of how these invaders struggled to protect their conquest by resisting the governors dispatched by the caliphs and the Syrian armies.⁴⁾

The dominant understanding of the Fihrids and their regimes during the 740s and 50s places them in the context of an era of transition in the formation of an independent al-Andalus under the Umayyad Emirate.⁵⁾ It is true that both the Fihrids and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I of the Umayyads were founders of independent regimes. However, if one considers the reaction to outsiders on the part of early settlers, some of whom were Fihrids, we must regard those two as totally different kinds of regime. This is how the present article will depart from the conventional research by keeping the argument focused on the elements of instability threatening both the Fihrids and Umayyads during the early Arab settlement of al-Andalus.

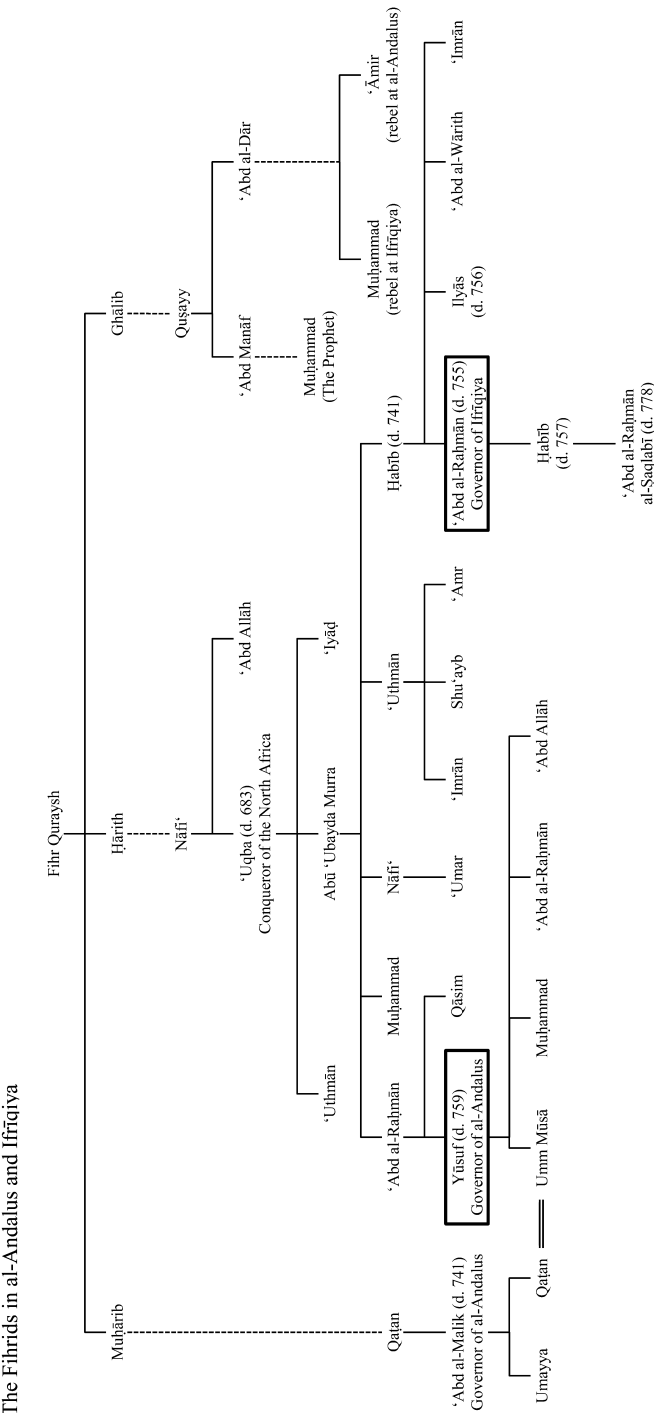
1. The Composition of the Fihrids

Fihir is another name of Quraysh, the ancestor of the Quraysh tribe of Mecca. Therefore, in a broad sense, the Fihrids would be a synonym for a Quraysh tribe, but some descendents of Fihir / Quraysh were described as *Qurashī*, not as *Fihri*. According to the eleventh century account by Ibn Ghālib quoted by al-Maqqarī (d. 1041/1631), those who became known in al-Andalus as “Fihriyūn” were the descendents of two sons of Fihir / Quraysh, Ḥārith and Muḥārib, who formed a large group among the Quraysh tribe residing in the region.⁶⁾ The best documented members of that group are the descendents of ‘Uqba b. Nāfi‘ (d. 63/683) from the Ḥārith lineage.

‘Uqba, who was a commander in the late seventh century North African conquest, appears frequently in the sources as a warrior of the jihad and the builder of al-Qayrawān, the capital of Ifrīqiya. Upon reaching the Atlantic Ocean after his expedition West, legend has ‘Uqba declaring with a sigh, “Oh God, if it were not for the uncrossable waters of this ocean, I would surge on defending Islam against the infidel,”⁷⁾ indicating his fame as a indefatigable warrior of the jihad in Islamic history. It was ‘Uqba’s reputation as a warrior that would greatly determine the social position gained by his descendents in Ifrīqiya and al-Andalus. Here are some examples.

To begin with we know of three sons of ‘Uqba, Abū ‘Ubayda, ‘Uthmān and ‘Iyād, of whom ‘Iyād took part in the conquest of al-Andalus and consequently won fame as a *wujūh*.⁸⁾ He was known for his magnanimity and unselfishness for not demanding his fair share when booty was apportioned, and was described as one of the few second-generation Muslims, *al-Tābi‘ūn*, to reside in al-Andalus.

Two sons of Abū ‘Ubayda, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī ‘Ubayda and Ḥabīb b. Abī ‘Ubayda, also took part in the conquest and rose to the status of *wujūh*. While ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī ‘Ubayda returned to Ifrīqiya after the expedition,⁹⁾ Ḥabīb b. Abī ‘Ubayda remained behind with Mūsā b. Nuṣayr’s son ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the second governor of al-Andalus, as his “*wazīr*,”¹⁰⁾ when Mūsā departed for his victory march into Syria. It was this same ‘Abd al-‘Azīz who after wedding a Visigothic princess was assassinated in 97/716 by a group of Arab conquerors for parading around like the king of al-Andalus. Many of the sources name Ḥabīb b. Abī ‘Ubayda as the leader of the assassins and according to two (Ibn al-Qūṭīya and Ibn ‘Idhārī), was under the orders of Caliph Sulaymān.¹¹⁾



After the incident Ḥabīb returned to Ifrīqiya and was ordered by the present governor ‘Ubayd Allāh b. al-Ḥabḥāb on military expeditions to Sūs (southern Morocco) and Sicilia.¹²⁾ It was during the Sicilia expedition, in 122/740, when the Berber insurrection occurred under the leadership of the Khawārij faction, that ‘Ubayd Allāh called Ḥabīb home with his ahl Ifrīqiya cohorts to attack Maysara, the leader of the uprising.¹³⁾ It has been claimed that the moment for the Maysara to rise up was provided by Ḥabīb’s absence,¹⁴⁾ which attests to his indispensable military importance for Ifrīqiya. Ḥabīb’s son ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri and his nephew Yūsuf al-Fihri would establish semi-autonomous regimes in Ifrīqiya and al-Andalus, respectively.

However, ‘Uqba’s descendents are not the only Fihrids appearing in the sources, for there is coverage of Muḥārīb’s line of descent, as well: for example, ‘Abd al-Malik b. Qaṭan, the governor of al-Andalus between 114/732–116/734 and during 123/741. His initial appointment came upon the death of the former governor at the Battle of Tours-Poitiers, then he was dismissed by the governor of Ifrīqiya until the Berber uprising presented him with an opportunity to regain the governorship.¹⁵⁾

One ‘Udhra b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Fihri is also recorded as replacing al-Andalus governor ‘Anbasa b. Suḥaym after his death in battle in 107/725–6,¹⁶⁾ but from what branch of the Fihrids he hailed is unknown. While these two latter Fihrid governors were not descendents of ‘Uqba, the sources infer that they were intimately affiliated to them. For example, Yūsuf al-Fihri arranged for his daughter Umm Mūsā to marry Qaṭan b. ‘Abd al-Malik, the son of Ibn Qaṭan¹⁷⁾; and after Yūsuf al-Fihri was elected governor, he constructed a mosque at the site where Ibn Qaṭan had been executed by crucifixion and ordered that the place no longer be called *Maṣlab Ibn Qaṭan*. In this case, the sources refer to Yūsuf al-Fihri as “the son of his uncle” (*ibn ‘amm*),¹⁸⁾ the same term use in describing the relationship between Ibn Qaṭan and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri, the governor of Ifrīqiya.¹⁹⁾ While the two were not blood-related cousins, we can assume that they perceived themselves as closely related in terms of extended family affiliation. It is also reported that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri attempted to take revenge for the murder of Ibn Qaṭan.²⁰⁾

The connection between al-Andalus Governor ‘Udhra and the descendents of ‘Uqba is not clear; however, his son Hishām b. ‘Udhra was, like Ibn Qaṭan, intimate with the descendents of ‘Uqba.²¹⁾ Under al-Andalus Governor Yūsuf al-Fihri, he served as the prefect of Toledo, and later, cooperated in Yūsuf al-Fihri’s attempts to regain his governorship

that had been usurped by the Umayyad Emirate. They, too, are described as an “*ibn ‘amm*” duo.²²⁾

Although the two main Fihrid lines of descent were widely separated in terms of genealogy, many of the descendents of the Ibn Qaṭan family of the Muḥārib line and those of the ‘Uqba b. Nāfi’ family of the Ḥārith line both were considered members of the same Fihrid family, due to the paucity of Quraysh tribal members. Furthermore, Ibn Qaṭan’s gestures towards the descendents of ‘Uqba, warrior of the jihad, as extended family helped him improve his position within early Arab settler society, and it was also very advantageous for ‘Uqba’s descendents to be looked upon as “kin” by such a prestigious and powerful Quraysh family. Thus these two Quraysh tribal lines attempted to deepen their relationship by way of intermarriage and so on.

2. The Power Base of the Fihrids

First, in terms of wealth, the Fihrids, as leading conquerors of both Ifrīqiya and al-Andalus, had no doubt been entitled to the spoils of war and received their fair share of booty, captives and the like. The same was no doubt also true, if on a smaller scale, during the expeditions to Sūs, Sicilia and the crossing of the Pyrenees.²³⁾

The sources mention here and there that the Fihrids were also in possession of privately owned land. In the case of Ifrīqiya Governor ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri, al-Raqīq states,²⁴⁾

[After killing his brother, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri, Ilyās b. Ḥabīb] returned to al-Qayrawān and heard some disturbing news about [his brother’s son] Ḥabīb, to the effect that he had colluded with members of the uprising at his father’s large private holdings (*diyā’*).

In other words, it seems that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri’s land had been utilized by his son as an important staging ground for recruiting troops. Exactly where they were located is unclear, however.

Al-Andalus Governor Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri also was in possession of *diyā’* located on the outskirts of Ilbīra (in the vicinity of present day Granada), where he had resided before his accession²⁵⁾ and from where he attempted to regain his position after being ousted by the Umayyad Emirate.

At some time in their emergence, the Fihrids had also managed to

acquire an army of *mawālī* from their exploits. For example, in his battle with the Umayyad Emirate on the outskirts of Córdoba, Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri had deployed a unit consisting of Berber *mawālī*.²⁶⁾ Also in his struggle against the Umayyads after he was deposed, Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri launched an attack on Sevilla, where a joust was held between the two camps. On that occasion as well, it is said that Berber men from the Fihrid *mawālī* (*rajul min mawālī Fihri min al-Barbar*) showed up to participate.²⁷⁾ The Fihrid *mawālī* seemed to have consisted of Berbers apparently obtained during the family’s military expeditions in North Africa. Given the fact that the overwhelming bulk of the troops enlisted for the conquest of al-Andalus were made up of Berbers sub-scripted in North Africa, rather than Arabs from the Orient, the importance of Berber *mawālī* to the rise of the Fihrids cannot be underestimated. Al-Andalus Fihrid Governor Ibn Qaṭan also owned *mawālī*, as attested to by the Berbers who took his corpse away from the cross where he was executed on after his dismissal from office.²⁸⁾

As for the Fihrids of Ifrīqiya, when Ilyās, the younger brother of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri, jousted with the leader of the rebels army of Tunis, he was joined by one of his brother’s *mawālī*.²⁹⁾ On the importance of *mawālī* for the Ifrīqiya Fihrids, during their internecine conflict, al-Raḥīq states,³⁰⁾

[The son of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri] Ḥabīb said to [his uncle Ilyās, who had killed his father], “Why do we kill off our respective *mawālī* and vassals (*ṣanā’i-nā*) in this struggle? Are they not the fort (*ḥiṣn*) that protects us? So let you and I duel, one killing the other and assured of surviving in peace and security. If you kill me, you merely send me to my father’s side. If I kill you, my rebellion will have been a success.”

In addition to such economic and military wherewithal, the genealogical pedigree stemming from the fame of their ancestor ‘Uqba b. Nāfi’, the hero of the jihad, also allowed the Fihrids to attain the status of *wujūh* among the early Arab settlers.³¹⁾ According to al-Balādhurī,³²⁾

‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥabīb al-Fihri rose up in rebellion against him (Ifrīqiya Governor Ḥanzala b. Ṣafwān). He was beloved [*muḥabbab*] throughout the region on account of the exploits of his ancestor ‘Uqba b. Nāfi’. Then he seized the region and drove Ḥanzala out.

Al-Andalus Governor Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri was regarded in the same way.³³⁾

His ancestor was ‘Uqba b. Nāfi‘, who became the ruler of Ifrīqiya, built al-Qayrawān, fighting honorably and contributing so much according to God’s Will. This [Fihrid] family (*bayt*) earned its celebrity (*nabāha*) in ruling over Ifrīqiya and al-Andalus.

The fame of their ancestor ‘Uqba b. Nāfi‘ helped the Fihrids to become the most prominent family both in al-Andalus and Ifrīqiya.

3. The Fihrids among the Other Early Settlers

As shown in the previous section, the Fihrids stood among the early Arab settlers as one of their most powerful families, and as such, were put in a position to gather their support and represent their interests in times of crisis, like upon the loss of a governor in battle.

For example, in 107/726, when al-Andalus Governor ‘Anbasa b. Suḥaym was killed during an expedition to southern France, it was a Fihrid, ‘Udhra b. ‘Abd Allāh, who was elected to replace him by the early settlers.³⁴⁾ In 122/740, when the Berbers revolted in Tangiers and threatened to spread to al-Andalus, and when the present governor, ‘Uqba b. al-Ḥajjāj, seemed incapable of stopping it, the settlers drove him out the following year and replaced him with another Fihrid, Ibn Qaṭan.³⁵⁾ This seemed to have been the last straw, since ‘Uqba b. al-Ḥajjāj had already earned the settlers’ rancor by increasing their taxes.³⁶⁾

Here we can observe a pattern among the early settlers of replacing governors appointed from the outside with Fihrids whenever they felt threatened by social crisis and instability.

The pattern continued after the arrival in Ifrīqiya of the approximately 30,000 Syrian troops who had been dispatched to pacify the Berber rebels, marking the beginning of serious friction with the early Arab settlers. Again, it was the Fihrids who stepped forward to represent the interests of the early settlers. The following episode that occurred between the Syrians and Fihrid Ḥabīb b. Abī ‘Ubayda is indicative.³⁷⁾

Upon the arrival [of the Syrian vanguard] in al-Qayrawān, Commander Balj b. Bishr announced, “Inhabitants of al-Qayrawān, do not dare close your doors to any Syrian soldier in search of quarters.” This or-

der angered the people of al-Qayrawān. Then the Arabs of Ifrīqiya sent a letter to Ḥabīb b. Abī ‘Ubayda, who had already met the Berber forces. In addition to informing Ḥabīb of Balj’s order, the letter read, “You are now involved in fighting one enemy, while another has arrived here and is trying to turn our houses into their barracks.” Ḥabīb then sent a message to Kulthūm b. ‘Iyāḍ (the Syrian supreme commander), which read, “Your stupid nephew (Balj) has said this and that to our local residents (*ahl balad-nā*), and now is it time for him and his forces to leave, lest he hold the reins over us (*ḥawwala-nā a’innat al-khayl ilay-ka*).” Kulthūm answered Ḥabīb’s letter with an apology.

Immediately following this incident, when the Syrian troops joined Ḥabīb’s forces in the field against the Berbers, the following transpired.³⁸⁾

Even after joining Ḥabīb’s vanguard, Balj continued his disdainful and arrogant attitude. Balj stood before the troops and openly insulted Ḥabīb, saying, “We hold reins over him (*yuḥawwal a’innat al-khayl ilay-nā*)!” ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥabīb stood up and said, “Listen, son of Balj’s mother! If you have something against Ḥabīb, now is the time to do something about it!” Then he turned to the crowd and yelled “Man your weapons!”, to which the Ifrīqiyans gathered on one side and the Egyptians³⁹⁾ joined them, while the Syrians gathered opposite them, all with swords drawn....

No matter what the outcome may have been, what is clear is the strong bond that was formed between the Fihrids and the early Arab settlers of Ifrīqiya against outsiders, whether Syrian reinforcements or Berber rebels.

The same was apparently the case in al-Andalus, as well, for after the pacification forces led by Kulthūm were soundly defeated by the Berbers, Balj, who had managed to survive, fled to al-Andalus, crucified its Fihrid governor, Ibn Qaṭan, and announced his own governorship, thus instigating a war of resistance with the early Arab settlers there, who were led by none other than the sons of Ibn Qaṭan, Umayya b. ‘Abd al-Malik and Qaṭan b. ‘Abd al-Malik, joined by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri, who had also fled to al-Andalus after the defeat at the hand of the Berber rebels. After Balj took Córdoba, the Fihrids fled north and began re-

cruiting early settlers in Toledo, Zaragoza and Narbonne, ultimately raising an army twice the size of the Syrian forces.⁴⁰⁾

The role of the Fihrids as representatives of the early settlers was also evident at the time when the family established semi-autonomous political regimes in al-Andalus and Ifrīqiya with the support of local settlers.

It was in 126/744 that a large contingent of the Syrian forces occupying al-Qayrawān returned home in the wake of civil strife following the assassination of Caliph Walīd II. At that time ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri was in Tunis trying to win the support of the early Arab settlers there to his cause. He was successful, raised an army and marched on to al-Qayrawān, which the Syrian-appointed governor, Ḥanzala b. Ṣafwān, abandoned without a fight.⁴¹⁾

The case of al-Andalus was a little more complicated than what happened in Ifrīqiya, in that the settlers’ war of resistance against the Syrian occupation forces was accompanied by a tribal struggle within the Syrian army between the “Qays” and “Yaman.” According to al-Maqqarī quoting the ninth century al-Andalus historian al-Rāzī,⁴²⁾ the Syrian military strongman al-Ṣumayl b. Ḥātim nominated Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri due to his Qurashī ancestry, resulting in the people of al-Andalus (*ahl al-Andalus*) and the two tribal factions forming a consensus behind one more Fihrid descendant.

However, being Fihrid regimes did not guarantee a priori that the settlers would continue to support them. In the case of Ifrīqiya there was the rebellion led by ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr al-Ṣadafī, leader of the Tunisians (*ahl Tūnis*),⁴³⁾ one led by Ibn ‘Aṭṭāf al-Azdī, leader of the coastal Arabs (*‘Arab al-Sāḥil*),⁴⁴⁾ and another led by Muḥammad b. ‘Amr, a Qurashī with the Sanhaja Berbers.⁴⁵⁾ The situation in al-Andalus was marked by the uprising of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alqama al-Lakhmī in Narbonne⁴⁶⁾ and another led by the brother of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr, ‘Āmir al-‘Abdarī in the vicinity of Zaragoza.⁴⁷⁾

Such disturbances were all caused by rival *wujūh* among the early settlers, Muḥammad b. ‘Amr and ‘Āmir al-‘Abdarī being considered the most powerful among them, by virtue of their Qurashī ancestry, stemming from the brother of Muṣ‘ab b. ‘Umayr who bore the Prophet Muḥammad’s standard at such famous battles as Badr and Uḥud.⁴⁸⁾ This was a lineage that was equal to even the descendants of ‘Uqba b. Nāfi‘, not only in pedigree, but also family wealth. ‘Āmir al-‘Abdarī was the owner of large estates (*munya*) on the outskirts of Córdoba, and built a canal (*qanāt ‘Āmir*) there. When trouble arose between him and Yūsuf b.

‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri, ‘Āmir is said to have turned his *munya* into a fort resembling a walled city (*madīna*).⁴⁹⁾
al-Akḥbār al-Majmū‘a states,⁵⁰⁾

[After Syrian commander al-Ṣumayl, who nominated Yūsuf, left Córdoba to become the prefect of Zaragoza,] Yūsuf’s power and influence waned, to the extent that he could barely maintain a guard (*ḥasham*) of 50 horsemen. The *ahl al-Andalus* mocked him. Yūsuf was well aware of ‘Āmir’s machinations kept him under surveillance, attempting to arrest him. Yūsuf, however, had acted cowardly, not wanting to do battle with ‘Āmir before al-Ṣumayl’s return.

The fact that there were *wujūh* powerful enough to frighten the Fihrids both economically and militarily is important for understanding the latter’s position among the early Arab settlers, as far from absolute, and closer to precarious.

The opposition that was waged against the Fihrid regimes by the early settlers stems in part from the ambiguity that lay in the legitimacy of Fihrid governorships. While there is no doubt that after the Fihrids took de facto control over such strongholds as al-Qayrawān and Córdoba, their positions were recognized by the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties,⁵¹⁾ but such recognition was made ex post facto of regimes that were gained within the political vacuum created amongst the confusion and civil strife going on at the higher level of the transition from the Umayyad to Abbasid Caliphate. For example, ‘Āmir al-‘Abdarī rose in rebellion at Zaragoza with a written confirmation (*sijill*) from Abbasid Caliph al-Manṣūr of his appointment as governor of al-Andalus.⁵²⁾ The antagonism against the Fihrid governors was also the product of the Fihrids preparing for a “dynasty” of their own in the form of hereditary succession to the governorship.⁵³⁾

In other words, it is important to understand that among the early Arab settlers of eighth century Ifrīqiya and al-Andalus, the Fihrids were by no means unrivaled in terms of wealth, power and pedigree. As Ṭāha points out, the early Arab settlers put the highest priority in maintaining their existing rights as conquerors; and in the process of achieving that aim, the Fihrids were allowed to become their representatives and leaders, but whenever the Fihrids proved useless in achieving that aim, they were met with resistance from those same settlers.⁵⁴⁾

4. Early Settlers and the Umayyad Emirate in al-Andalus

The ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I regime of 138/756, which marked the Umayyad family’s occupation of Córdoba, was made possible by not only that family and its *mawālī*, but also the Syrian army.⁵⁵⁾ While the Syrians were obliged to serve in the army, they were exempt from the ‘*ushur* tax by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I.⁵⁶⁾ Although the Syrian troops had revolted often before and during the formation of the Emirate within the context of intertribal conflict between the Qays and Yaman, from the second half of the regime of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I, revolts became fewer and farther between, as their rivalry with the early Arab settlers heated up.

Even al-Ṣumayl b. Ḥātim, who had supported Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri during his governorship, never participated in the latter’s rebellion against ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I. Also, when Yūsuf led his revolt from Mérida to Sevilla, the city’s early Arab settlers (*ahl al-balad*) supported his cause, but the Syrian army chose to rally around the city’s Umayyad prefect.⁵⁷⁾

The early settlers were not happy with the Umayyads and their *mawālī*, either, as shown best by *al-Akḥbār al-Majmū‘a*’s description of Yūsuf upon his return to Córdoba after surrendering to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I at Ilbīra.⁵⁸⁾

The Umayyads and their *mawālī* keep streaming in [from the Orient], while in Córdoba, the Hāshim Family, the Fihrids and other Quraysh families, their *mawālī* and reputable non-Quraysh families (*buyūtāt*) had attained high social status (*rif‘a wa-manāzil*) during Yūsuf’s governorship. However, [with arrival of the Umayyads and their *mawālī*,] they were all stripped of their social position. This is why they flocked to Yūsuf, told him about the changes which had occurred in the situation, and urged him to reconsider what he had done (surrendered to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I).

This is one of the reasons why the early Arab settlers would rise in revolt time and again during the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I, under the leadership of the Fihrids. First Yūsuf, then after his assassination during his flight to Toledo from an unsuccessful Sevilla campaign, his son Muḥammad revolted around Toledo in 169/785–6⁵⁹⁾ and his brother Qāsim in 171/787–8 (location unknown).⁶⁰⁾ Other Fihrid-led revolts included that of Hishām b. ‘Udhra, the son of former al-Andalus governor ‘Udhra b.

‘Abd Allāh, which Yūsuf was trying to join when assassinated.⁶¹⁾ Given the fact that Hishām had been the prefect of Toledo, we can safely assume that he maintained his control over that city, even after the Umayyad occupation of Córdoba. His resistance continued until 147/764–5.⁶²⁾ Finally, it was in 162/778–9 that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥabīb b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣaqlabī, the grandson of former Ifrīqiya governor ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri, launched an invasion of al-Andalus after being promised its governorship by the Abbasid Caliph al-Manṣūr.⁶³⁾

However, the Fihrids were not the only *wujūh* family to offer resistance to the Umayyad Emirate, as seen in ‘Uthmān b. Ḥamza al-‘Umarī of Toledo, the descendent of second Caliph ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb⁶⁴⁾ and al-Ḥusayn b. Yaḥyā al-Anṣārī and Sulaymān b. Yaḥzān al-A‘rābī of Zaragoza in 165/781–2, Ḥusayn being the descendent of Sa‘d b. ‘Ubāda, a leader of Anṣār who cooperated with the Prophet Muḥammad.⁶⁵⁾

The anti-Umayyad revolts of the early Arab settlers tended to concentrate in Mérida, Toledo, Zaragoza and other locations along the east coast of al-Andalus. On the other hand, such revolts are not found in the south of al-Andalus, where the Syrian army had received grants of land in 125/743, at Ilbīra, Jaén, Beja and Tudmīr (near present day Murcia).⁶⁶⁾ This means that the authority of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I was not effective in any place where the Syrian army was not garrisoned. As a matter of fact, the early Arab settlers continued to control significant parts of al-Andalus throughout the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I.

Conclusion

The early settlers who had participated in the Arab invasion of the Iberian Peninsula took possession of the land and moveable property in al-Andalus, becoming its ruling class, during which time those spoils and the social position of their new owners were threatened by the presence of “outsiders,” like the Syrian Army. One important group of players in the frequent crises that arose was the Fihrids, an Arab *wujūh* family of aristocratic descent. Even after Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri, a governor of al-Andalus, was killed, the *wujūhs* among the early Arab settlers, including the Fihrids, continued to revolt against the Umayyad emirate of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I,⁶⁷⁾ in places like Toledo and Zaragoza up through the 780s, when they were pacified.

However, it would be a mistake to assume that the Umayyad Emirate thoroughly brought early Arab settler society under its control, for dur-

ing the reign of the second emir Hishām I (172/788–180/796), in Zaragoza, the sons of al-Ḥusayn b. Yaḥyā al-Anṣārī and Sulaymān b. Yaḥzān al-A‘rābī were still trying to take that city back and in Toledo, the early settlers supported the revolt of Hishām I’s brother Sulaymān.⁶⁸⁾ The early Arab settlers continued to survive in the more remote areas of al-Andalus outside the grasp of the Umayyads.

Note

- 1) Cf. E. Manzano Moreno, *La Frontera de al-Andalus en época de los Omeyas* (Madrid, 1991), pp. 387–9.
- 2) This is the term first used by A. Dh. Ṭāha, *The Muslim Conquest and Settlement of North Africa and Spain* (London, 1989, pp. 115–8) to translate *ahl al-balad*. In historical sources, *ahl al-Andalus* and *ahl Ifrīqiya* are used as synonyms for *ahl al-balad*.
- 3) The regiments (*jund*) stationed all over Syria were during the late Umayyad era made up of the best trained soldiers and deployed to pacify revolts and keep the peace in areas of unrest. The largest influx of these troops into al-Andalus and Ifrīqiya occurred as the result of the Berber revolt of 122/740.
- 4) Ṭāha, *The Muslim Conquest and Settlement*.
- 5) H. Djaīt, “Note sur le statut de la province d’al-Andalus de la conquête à l’instauration de l’émirat omayyade (93-138/711–756),” *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 16, 1968, pp. 7-11; P. Guichard, *Al-Andalus: Estructura antropológica de una sociedad islámica en Occidente* (Barcelona, 1976), pp. 526–34.
- 6) al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭib min Ghuṣn al-Andalus al-Raṭīb*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 290–1. In the same place, al-Maqqarī also mentions that those who were known as *Qurashiyūn* in al-Andalus were the Umayyads. The terminology is due to the influence wielded by the descendants of both ‘Uqba b. Nāfi’ and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I in al-Andalus.
- 7) Ibn ‘Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib fi Akhbār al-Andalus wa’l-Maghrib*, ed. É. Lévi-Provençal & G. S. Colin, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1948–51), vol. 1, p. 27.
- 8) al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭib*, vol. 1, pp. 287–8; vol. 3, p. 10; al-Raḥīq, *Ta’rikh Ifrīqiya wa’l-Maghrib*, ed. A. A. al-Zaydān & I. U. A. Mūsā (Beirut, 1990), p. 44; al-Ḥimyarī, *al-Rawḍ al-Miṭār fi Khabar al-Aqṭār*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut, 1975), p. 33.
- 9) al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭib*, vol. 3, p. 25.
- 10) Ibn ‘Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 23.
- 11) Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-Akhbār-hā*, ed. C. C. Torrey (New Haven, 1922), pp. 211–3; al-Raḥīq, *Ta’rikh Ifrīqiya*, pp. 54, 59–60; Ibn al-Qūṭīya, *Ta’rikh Iftitāḥ al-Andalus*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī (Cairo, 1982), p. 36; Anonymous, *al-Akhbār al-Majmū’a*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī (Cairo, 1989), pp. 27–9; Anonymous, *Fatho-l-Andaluṣi (Dhikr Fath al-Andalus wa-Umarā’-hā)*, ed. Joaquín de González (Algier, 1889), pp. 22–3; Ibn ‘Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 1, p. 47; vol. 2, pp. 23–5.

- 12) Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, p. 217; al-Raḳīq, *Ta'rikh Ifriqiya*, pp. 72-3; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 1, p. 51.
- 13) al-Raḳīq, *Ta'rikh Ifriqiya*, p. 74; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 1, p. 53.
- 14) al-Raḳīq, *Ta'rikh Ifriqiya*, p. 73.
- 15) Ibn al-Qūṭīya, *Ta'rikh Ifritāḥ al-Andalus*, p. 39; Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 35; Anonymous, *Fath al-Andalus*, pp. 29-30; al-Raḳīq, *Ta'rikh Ifriqiya*, p. 75; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 1, p. 54; vol. 2, p. 30; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. 1, pp. 19-20; Anonymous, *Chronica Muzarabica*, in Juan Gil ed., *Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabicorum*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1973), vol. 1, p. 45.
- 16) Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 27; Anonymous, *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 39.
- 17) Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 70.
- 18) al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. 3, p. 19. cf. Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 45.
- 19) al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. 3, p. 21. The same term is used to describe the relationship between Yūsuf al-Fihri and 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fihri (Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 46), but in this case the two were actually cousins.
- 20) Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, p. 221.
- 21) al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. 3, pp. 17-8; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi al-Ta'rikh*, ed. C. J. Tornberg (Beirut, 1965-6), vol. 5, p. 527. The name Hishām b. 'Urwa al-Fihri is very well documented: cf. Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, pp. 84, 91-2, 95; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 53; Anonymous, *Fath al-Andalus*, p. 61. However, similarities in Arabic script and the existence of 'Udhra, 'Urwa and 'Uzra in the various manuscripts suggest that 'Urwa is a misspelling of 'Udhra: cf. al-Maqqarī, *al-Nafḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. 3, p. 17, n. 3; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 53, n. 1. Since the name of Hishām's father appears in an eighth century Latin source (Anonymous, *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 39) as Hodera, the correct spelling is 'Udhra.
- 22) Anonymous, *Fath al-Andalus*, p. 61; Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 84.
- 23) For example, on expeditions to Sūs and Sicilia, the Fihrid Ḥabīb b. Abī 'Ubayda is said to have obtained much silver and gold (*dhahab wa-fidḍa*), as well as captives (*sabī*). al-Raḳīq, *Ta'rikh Ifriqiya*, p. 72.
- 24) al-Raḳīq, *Ta'rikh Ifriqiya*, p. 99
- 25) Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭa fi Akhhbār Gharnāṭā*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh 'Inān, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1973-8), vol. 4, p. 340.
- 26) Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, pp. 81-2.
- 27) Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 90.
- 28) Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 45; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. 3, p. 19.
- 29) al-Raḳīq, *Ta'rikh Ifriqiya*, p. 91.
- 30) al-Raḳīq, *Ta'rikh Ifriqiya*, p. 101.
- 31) As the result of his fame, during the thirteenth century 'Uqba's grave

- would become the object of *ziyāra*. Ibn al-Abbār, *al-Ḥulla al-Siyarā*, ed. Ḥusayn Mu'nis, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1963), vol. 2, p. 323.
- 32) al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1968), p. 232.
- 33) al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭib*, vol. 3, p. 25. While not a descendent of 'Uqba, a Latin source of the same period classifies Ibn Qaṭan as "*ex nobili familia*." Anonymous, *Chronica Muzarabica*, pp. 43–4.
- 34) Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 27; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭib*, vol. 3, p. 18.
- 35) Ibn al-Qūṭīya, *Ta'riḫ Iftitāḥ al-Andalus*, p. 39; Anonymous, *al-Akḥbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 35; Anonymous, *Fath al-Andalus*, pp. 29–30; al-Raḳīq, *Ta'riḫ Ifrīqiya*, p. 75; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 1, p. 54; vol. 2, p. 30; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭib*, vol. 3, pp. 19–20; Anonymous, *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 45.
- 36) Ṭāha, *The Muslim Conquest and Settlement*, p. 197.
- 37) al-Raḳīq, *Ta'riḫ Ifrīqiya*, pp. 76–7. cf. Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 1, p. 54.
- 38) al-Raḳīq, *Ta'riḫ Ifrīqiya*, p. 77. cf. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, p. 219; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 1, p. 55.
- 39) The army led by Kulthūm stopped in Egypt and Tripoli along the way to recruit troops. al-Raḳīq, *Ta'riḫ Ifrīqiya*, p. 76; Anonymous, *al-Akḥbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 36.
- 40) Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, p. 220; Anonymous, *al-Akḥbār al-Majmū'a*, pp. 44, 46; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 32; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭib*, vol. 1, pp. 236–7; vol. 3, p. 21; Anonymous, *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 47.
- 41) Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, p. 223.
- 42) al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭib*, vol. 3, p. 25.
- 43) al-Raḳīq, *Ta'riḫ Ifrīqiya*, pp. 90–1. Ibn 'Idhārī, who quotes al-Raḳīq, describes his name as 'Urwa b. al-Walīd. cf. Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 1, pp. 60–1.
- 44) al-Raḳīq, *Ta'riḫ Ifrīqiya*, pp. 88–9; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 1, p. 61.
- 45) Ibn al-Abbār, *al-Ḥulla al-Siyarā*, vol. 2, p. 344.
- 46) Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 38; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭib*, vol. 3, p. 26. He was a collaborator with Ibn Qaṭan's two sons in their efforts against the Syrian Army, leading a contingent of early settlers from Narbonne.
- 47) Ibn al-Qūṭīya, *Ta'riḫ Iftitāḥ al-Andalus*, p. 46; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansāb al-'Arab*, ed. A. M. Hārūn (Cairo, n.d.), p. 126; Anonymous, *al-Akḥbār al-Majmū'a*, pp. 63–4; Ibn al-Abbār, *al-Ḥulla al-Siyarā*, vol. 2, pp. 344–5; Anonymous, *Fath al-Andalus*, p. 46; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, pp. 38, 42; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭib*, vol. 3, p. 26.
- 48) Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansāb al-'Arab*, p. 126; Anonymous, *al-Akḥbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 63.
- 49) Anonymous, *al-Akḥbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 63.
- 50) Anonymous, *al-Akḥbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 63.

- 51) al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 232; al-Raḳīq, *Ta'rikh Ifrīqiya*, p. 95; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 1, pp. 60, 64.
- 52) Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansāb al-'Arab*, p. 126; Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 63; Ibn al-Abbār, *al-Hulla al-Siyarā'*, vol. 2, pp. 344-5.
- 53) Guichard, *Al-Andalus*, pp. 542-3.
- 54) Ṭāha, *The Muslim Conquest and Settlement*, p. 187.
- 55) Ṭāha, *The Muslim Conquest and Settlement*, p. 248.
- 56) Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāta fī Akhhbār Gharnāṭā*, vol. 4, pp. 104-5.
- 57) Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 88.
- 58) Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 87.
- 59) Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 57; Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 105.
- 60) Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 58.
- 61) Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 91; Anonymous, *Fath al-Andalus*, pp. 60-1; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 50.
- 62) Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 95; Anonymous, *Fath al-Andalus*, pp. 61-2, 63; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 53.
- 63) Anonymous, *Fath al-Andalus*, p. 67; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, pp. 55-6.
- 64) Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansāb al-'Arab*, pp. 153-4; Anonymous, *Fath al-Andalus*, p. 61; Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, p. 92; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 53. In the printed version of *al-Bayān al-Mughrib* the name Hishām appears instead of 'Uthmān. However, 'Uthmān appears in some manuscripts used for the critical edition, so 'Uthmān is probably correct (cf. Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 53, n. 3) and was confused with another anti-Umayyad leader, Hishām b. 'Udhra.
- 65) Ibn al-Qūṭīya, *Ta'rikh Iftitāḥ al-Andalus*, p. 54; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansāb al-'Arab*, p. 365; Anonymous, *Fath al-Andalus*, p. 67; Anonymous, *al-Akhhbār al-Majmū'a*, pp. 102-3; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 56. The other leader of the Zaragoza revolt, Sulaymān b. Yaḳzān al-A'rābī, is described in almost all of the sources as member of the Kalb Family. However, only Ibn al-Qūṭīya referred to him as Muṭarrif b. al-A'rābī, a descendent of the fourth caliph 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. If this is indeed the case, then this leader also had roots in the noble Arab genealogy.
- 66) Ṭāha, *The Muslim Conquest and Settlement*, pp. 132-150.
- 67) In Ifrīqiya, as well, frequent revolts by early Arab settlers would occur in resistance to the "outsiders" of the Aghlabid Emirate. (cf. Ibn al-Abbār, *al-Hulla al-Siyarā'*, vol. 1, p. 102.)
- 68) Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. 2, p. 62.