The 2nd Summer School on Ibadism

IBADISM AND MUSLIM IDENTITY
IN THE GLOBAL ERA

October 8th - 12th 2018
Scuola di Procida per l’Alta Formazione
CONSERVATORIO DELLE ORFANE
Terra Murata
Procida (Napoli)

Organizers
Prof. Erilla Francesca - efrancesca@unior.it
Dott. Luca Bartoli - luca.bartoli@live.com
Introduction
The Summer Schools on Ibadism examine and present the fundamentals of Islam and Ibadism through a historical, juridical, literary and religious overview.

After decades in which secular views of politics and social relations have dominated the public sphere in Western countries as well as in many countries in Africa and the Middle East, we are currently witnessing a growing presence of religious discourses. Religion seems to play an increasingly prominent role in defining identities, binding communities, filling inter-social gaps, healing experiences of marginality, shaping notions of citizenship, and in negotiating rights. Moving from this complex and often conflicting landscape, the Summer Schools aim at discussing the essentials and the pacifistic dimension of Ibadism within the framework of North Africa and Middle East historical and geo-political context.

The main scope is to approach the Ibadi sources, to explore their richness and to understand their impact on the development of the Ibadi communities through time and space and their contribution to the Islamic and world’s heritage.

By studying Ibadism in its historical, theological and geopolitical context, we will provide the audience with a better understanding of this Islamic school and its alternative peaceful attitude starting from early Islam until today.

On September 3rd-10th 2017, a Summer School on “Ibadism: Understanding Diversity within Islam” was successfully held in Volos, Greece, by the Department of Inter-religious Studies of Volos Academy for Theological Studies, in cooperation with the School of Theology of Aristotle

---

1 Download of the Programme and Abstracts at the website [https://www.ibadistudies.org/index.php/summer-school/9-the-2nd-summer-school-on-ibadism](https://www.ibadistudies.org/index.php/summer-school/9-the-2nd-summer-school-on-ibadism)
The 2nd Summer School on Ibadism, titled “Ibadism and Muslim Identity in the Global Era” took place on Procida Island (Naples), Scuola di Procida per l’Alta Formazione, University of Naples “L’Orientale” on 8th-12th October 2018, as a joint initiative of the University “L’Orientale” of Naples, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and the College of Shar’ia Sciences of the Sultanate of Oman (see the website https://www.ibadistudies.org/index.php/summer-school). The 2nd Summer School on Ibadism aimed at exploring the interrelations among faith, culture and identity within contemporary Ibadism, from various perspectives: historical, anthropological, juridical and literary. It started analysing the Ibadi Nahda as a response to colonialism, when a number of Ibāḍī intellectuals saw in a revitalized Islam the potential to overcome backwardness and meet at eye level with the superior European powers. On the other hand, it explored as the contemporary globalized endeavours shape Muslim identity. It focused on the following questions: What is the link between Islam and identity? What exactly is a Muslim and/or an Ibāḍī Identity? And when/how is this type of identity created?

In particular, the 2nd Summer School on Ibadism addressed, in a comparative and multidisciplinary perspective, the following issues:

- Ibadism and globalization
- Ibadism in diaspora – Muslim/Ibāḍī identity in diaspora
- Re-reading the Ibāḍī sources today
- Specificities of Omani and Maghribi Ibadism.

Class Schedule

The classes of the Summer School were divided into a MORNING SESSION (from 9am to 1pm including a break) and an AFTERNOON SESSION (from 2.30pm to 5.30pm including a break).

In the MORNING SESSIONS we had mainly the keynote speeches followed by discussion and workshop.

In the AFTERNOON SESSIONS the students presented their own researches.

The professors, who participated in the Summer School, addressed in a comparative and multidisciplinary perspective, the following topics:

- **Angeliki Ziaka** (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), Redefining Ibadi Identity through Religious Discourse in the Time of Nahda
- **Nikos S. Panagiotou** (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), Public Diplomacy and Religion: A New Way to Promote Oman, Ibadi Identity and Approach
- **Roberto Tottoli** (University of Naples “L’Orientale”), Minorities within Islam
- **Daniela Pioppi** (University of Naples “L’Orientale”), The Sectarianization of the Middle East. Causes and Consequences
- **Ersilia Francesca** (University of Naples “L’Orientale”), Rereading of Classical Ibadi Sources during the Nahda (Reform) Period
Finally, **Sheikh Ziyad Al Mawali** (College of Islamic Law, Muscat), gave a very interesting and useful lecture on the Kulliat al-Shari‘a in Oman, titled *Globalizing Ibadism: E-learning Degrees at Sharia Institute*, focusing in particular on the on-line learning program.

On Friday October 12th, Soufien Mestaoui gave a presentation on the Association “Ibadica” (Paris).

The lectures were followed by a lively discussion and by a WORKSHOP in which the students analysed and discussed with the professors the readings related to the lecture’s topic, which have been distributed in advance.

In the Afternoon Sessions the students presented their own researches on Ibadism and on related issues. The professors, as well as the other students, commented and responded on them.

The students’ presentations focused on the following topics:

2. Luca BARTOLI (University of Naples “L’Orientale”), *Resistance and Colonialism: The Berber-Ibadis in Libya*
3. Gacem BEN YAHITAN (Jerba, Tunisia), *Rereading the Ibadi Sources Today*
4. Deborah IANNOTTI (University of Milan), *The Political Engagement of Muslim Minorities in MENA Region: Patterns of Inclusion*
5. Efstratios KARAKITSOS (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), *Islamic Arts. The case of Oman*
6. Vassiliki KERAMIDA (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), *Greek Educational Policy & Migration: The case of Muslims*
7. Elisabeth Kwan (University of Cambridge), *On Medieval Ibadi-Amazigh Architecture: A Cultural History of Funerary Mosques in the Mzab*
8. Khaled MEGHNINE (Utrecht University), *The Status of Modern Astronomical Calculations in Determining the Beginning & End of Ramadan within the Ibadi Community of the Mzab Valley: Between Theory and Practice*
9. Soufien MESTAOUI (Centre for Studies and Research on Ibadism –Ibadica, Paris), *Ibadi Diaspora in France through the Experiences of Djerban and Mizabi Communities*
10. Ioannis MYLONELIS (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), *The History of Research on Ibadi Studies*
11. Sara NIEDDU (University of Naples “L’Orientale”), *Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī (1801-1873): A Gold Digger*
12. Nicholas ROBERTS (University of Notre Dame, Indiana, U.S.A.), *Solemnities of the Origin: Toward a Genealogical History of Ibadi Islam*
13. Abdullah AL RUQAISHI (College of Shari‘a Sciences, Mascat, Sultanate of Oman), *Ibadism and Globalization*
Final Remarks

During the Summer School we facilitated discussion and exchange among young and senior scholars by providing an unburdened environment and guidance to think outside the box, find common grounds, and explore solutions using different approaches and different perspectives.

The Summer School proved the importance of the studies on Ibadism within the general framework of Islamic studies. Indeed, a thorough analysis of Ibâḍî material may add a new dimension not only to the image of the movement but to the whole history of Islam. Moreover, new ideas and methodologies came out from the exchanges of idea and experiences among scholars (young and senior) working on different fields.

**In the final session of the Summer School** it was underlined as by studying Ibadism in its historical, theological and geopolitical context, we will provide the audience not only with a better understanding of this school but also of the whole Islamic world. The possibility of creating a permanent network for scholars working on Ibadism was explored. Soufien Mestaoui suggested to create a mailing list to share information and to circulate news on initiatives related to Ibâḍî studies.

As far as the next Summer School, the topics suggested are as following:

1. The study of early Ibâḍî sources;
2. Ibadi literary sources within the history of the *madhhab*;
3. Ibâḏî Press activities.

Participants also suggested to organize workshop on special subject within the Summer School (for example workshop on translation of Ibâḏî sources).

During the Summer School we ensured the quality of the debate by emphasizing mutual respect and self-reflection. We believed that learning is about shared experience, active participation and social encounters.

The Organizers

Ersilia Francesca
Angeliki Ziaka
The 2nd Summer School on Ibadism
IBADISM AND MUSLIM IDENTITY IN THE GLOBAL ERA
Scuola di Procida per l’Alta Formazione
Conservatorio delle Orfane
Terra Murata - Procida
8th-12th October 2018

PROGRAMME

MONDAY OCTOBER 8th
MORNING SESSION
9.30-10.00 Welcome and Introduction to the 2nd Summer School on Ibadism
Elda Morlicchio, Rector of the University of Naples “L’Orientale”
Michele Bernardini, Dean of the Department Asia, Africa and Mediterranean
Ersilia Francesca, University of Naples “L’Orientale”

10.00-11.30 Keynote speech and discussion
Angeliki Ziaka (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), Redefining Ibadi Identity through Religious Discourse in the Time of Nahda

11.30-12.00 Coffee Break

12.00-13.00 Discussing Ibadi Sources
Angeliki Ziaka (moderator) – Students’ analysis and discussion on the readings related to the keynote speech topic

13.00-14.00 Lunch Break

AFTERNOON SESSION – 14.00-17.00
Students Presentations (30 min presentation + 15 min discussion)
Elisabeth Kwan, On Medieval Ibadi-Amazigh Architecture: A Cultural History of Funerary Mosques in the Mzab
Luca Bartoli, Resistance and Colonialism: The Berber-Ibadis in Libya
16.00-16.30 Coffee Break
Efstratios Karakitsos, Islamic Arts. The case of Oman
Dinner

TUESDAY OCTOBER 9th
MORNING SESSION
9.30-11.00 Keynote speech and discussion
Nikos S. Panagiotou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), Public Diplomacy and Religion: A New Way to Promote Oman, Ibadi Identity and Approach

11.00-11.30 Coffee Break

11.30-13.00 Keynote speech
Roberto Tottoli (University of Naples “L’Orientale”), Minorities within Islam
13.00- 14.00 Lunch Break

AFTERNOON SESSION 14.00-17.00

14.00-15.00 Discussing Ibadi Sources
Nikos S. Panagiotou (moderator) – Students’ analysis and discussion on the readings related to the keynote speech topic

15.00-15.30 Coffee Break

15.30- 17.00 Students Presentation
Deborah Iannotti, The Political Engagement of Muslim Minorities in MENA Region: Patterns of Inclusion
Nicholas Roberts, Solemnities of the Origin: Toward a Genealogical History of Ibadi Islam

Dinner

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 10th
MORNING SESSION
9.30-11.00 Keynote speech and discussion
Daniela Pioppi (University of Naples “L’Orientale”), The Sectarianization of the Middle East. Causes and Consequences

11.00-11.30 Coffee Break

11.30-13.00 Keynote speech and discussion
Ersilia Francesca (University of Naples “L’Orientale”), Rereading of Classical Ibadi Sources during the Nahda (Reform) Period

13.00-14.00 Lunch

AFTERNOON SESSION 14.00-17.00
14.00-15.00 Discussing Ibadi Sources
Ersilia Francesca (moderator) – Students’ analysis and discussion on the readings related to the keynote speech topic

15.00-15.30 Coffee Break

15.30-17.00 Students Presentation
Sara Nieddu, Rifāʿa Rāfīʿ al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (1801-1873): A Gold Digger
Vassiliki Keramida, Greek Educational Policy & Migration: The case of Muslims

Dinner

THURSDAY OCTOBER 11th
MORNING SESSION
9.30-11.00 Keynote speech and discussion
Ziyad al-Malawi (College of Shari’a Sciences, Mascat, Sultanate of Oman), Globalizing Ibadism: E-learning Degrees at Sharia Institute

11.00-11.30 Coffee Break

11.30-13.00 Students Presentation
Gacem Ben Yahiaten, Rereading the Ibadi Sources Today
Salah Bahmani, Ibadism in Mzab during and after the Events of 2013-2015

13.00- 14.00 Lunch Break

AFTERNOON SESSION 14.00-17.30
Students Presentation
Soufien Mestaoui, Ibadic Diaspora in France through the Experiences of Djerban and Mizabi Communities
Ioannis Mylonelis, The History of Research on Ibadi Studies

15.00-15.30 Coffee Break

Khaled Meghnine, The Status of Modern Astronomical Calculations in Determining the Beginning & End of Ramadan within the Ibadi Community of the Mzab Valley: Between Theory and Practice

Dinner

FRIDAY OCTOBER 12th
9.30-13.00

Abdulllah Al Ruqaishi (College of Shari’a Sciences, Mascat, Sultanate of Oman), Ibadism and Globalization
Soufien Mestaoui, The Association “Ibadica” (Paris)

11.00-11.30 Coffee Break
General Discussion – Conclusion

Lunch

Guided excursion on the island of Procida

Dinner
Starting from the late 18th century, Ibadi scholarship had experienced a revival in both Oman and the Maghrib. By the late 19th century, a significant development took place within the Ibadi revivalist movement: from a religious and literary renaissance, the movement shifted to a political engagement seeking to find a common ground with other Muslims in the common battle against colonial and imperial power. Ibadi reformers, in particular Muhammad Atfayyash in the Mzab and Nur al-Din al-Salimi in Oman, developed the ideas of a neo-Ibadism which is favorable to interaction with the other Muslim schools and of a pan-Ibadism which aims at strengthening the relationships within the Ibadi communities and at developing a common ground for reforming the movement.

Ibadi reformers’ contribution in restoring religious principles of rationalism had a forceful brunt in founding contemporary Ibadism and projecting its cultural renaissance. The foundational aspect of the works by the Ibadi reformers can mainly be seen in the synthesis of Ibadi and Sunni principles, in the legal reform and in the defence of rational and religious liberty. Their struggle resulted in an unprecedented scale of re-thinking and renewal in the school, which has represented a momentous contribution today in Ibadi reclaiming their intellectual identity within the Muslim world.

The Ibadi reformist discourse attested the central role played by the drive for identity and cultural authenticity. The problem with colonialism was essentially cultural. Its main evil laid in the propagation of moral and ethical models which ran contrary to the teaching of Islam. Undermining Islamic culture had in turn engendered the economic and political marginalization of Muslims. Ibadi reformers created an intellectual medium – in the form of a large number of texts – wherein they set an example for independent religious thinking and activism.

The legacy of the Ibadi heritage in Basra in the first centuries of Islam was of immediate relevance to the articulation of a reform programme. The backgrounds, ideas and modes of operation of the first Ibadi imams were tapped into the reformist discourse.

Due to their ability to articulate their political program effectively, the writings by the Ibadi reformers disseminated their ideas far and wide within the Ibadi communities placing their arguments at the centre of intellectual and political debate.

Suggested Readings:

- Amal Gazal, “Cross regional network of Ibadi Islam”, 2014
- Ersilia Francesca “Ijtihād and Ibāḍī Reform Movement in North Africa: Shaykh Muḥammad Aṭfayyish’s “re”-interpretation of Kitāb al-Nīl” (2017)
- Ersilia Francesca, “Religion and Politics in Contemporary Omani Ibadism” (2017)
The focus of work at College of Shari’a Sciences is to highlight the role of the faculty in the areas of teaching, scientific research and community service, and to encourage development and innovation in these areas. Institute teaches Shari’a sciences as a specialty for the preparation of a generation that is aware of the requirements of contemporary life, and offers solutions on the basis of religious facts, and plays a key role in building the spiritual and cultural community in Oman.

In this context, the Institute of Sharia Sciences has launched a new program in Bachelor of Islamic Studies, through what is known as “system of distance education” which represents a unique initiative at the level of higher education institutions in the Sultanate. Within this program, students, from inside or outside the Sultanate, get adequate study in Shari’a sciences without having to commit to daily attend study halls.

The Institute has opened the door of registration in the program through its electronic network. Thus opening new and plenty of room to enhance the study of Shari’a sciences.
Nikos S. Panagiotou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

Public Diplomacy and Religion: A new way to promote Oman and Ibadi identity and approach

The lecture aims to discuss media public diplomacy initiatives, and how it can be used in order to promote Oman and Ibadi identity and approach. We will cover issues related to soft power, strategic communication, public image of countries. The participants will be engaged in order to produce prototype public diplomacy communication campaigns. As thus the lecture will have a “theoretical” and practical part and approach.

Theoretical part:

- Public Diplomacy, Soft Power
- Strategic Communication
- Global Mass Media and Religion
- Current practices of Public Diplomacy initiatives

Practical part:

Based on the theory and examples presented the students will form groups in order to produce ideas of how to promote Oman and Ibadi identity/approach through public diplomacy initiatives

Suggested Readings:

- Matt Armstrong (2009) Social Media as Public Diplomacy
Daniela Pioppi (University of Naples “L’Orientale”)

Sectarianization of the Middle East. Causes and Consequences

As the Middle East descends ever deeper into violence and chaos, 'sectarianism' has become a catch-all explanation for the region's troubles. The turmoil is attributed to 'ancient sectarian differences', putatively primordial forces that make violent conflict intractable. In media, policy but also academic discussions, sectarianism has come to possess trans-historical causal power.

The lecture examines the current sectarianization of the Middle East by looking at (1) its conceptualization; (2) its preconditions (unequal modernization, instrumentalization of identity in regime-building processes); (3) the initial trigger of sectarianization or the US invasion of Iraq in 2003; and (4) the impact of the Arab uprisings.

The final aim of the lecture is to challenge the use of ‘sectarianism’ as a short-cut explanation for the region’s impasse focusing also on how various conflicts in the Middle East have morphed from non-sectarian (or cross-sectarian) and nonviolent movements into sectarian wars.

Suggested Readings:
- Hinnebusch, R., “The Sectarian Revolution in the Middle East” (2016)
Roberto Tottoli (University of Naples “L’Orientale”)

Minorities within Islam

The lecture will discuss the theoretical framework in the definition of minorities in Islam, through the review of differences and alternative visions in Sunni and Imami Shi’i perceptions. An analysis of the terminology in use in heresiography will be discussed in the realm of historical religious studies with a specific attention to the questions of meaning, uses and circulation of words and concepts related to the concept of minority. Finally, a critical discussion of the historical divisions and definitions of minority groups in Islamic history till modern times will further highlight the questions of definition and self-perception of the Islamic communities.

Suggested Readings:

Much has been written about the period of the *nahḍa*, the cultural, ethnic, and religious revival that took place in the Arab world in the late 19th early 20th century. Little, however, is known about the role and contribution of the Ibāḍīs to this movement. In this paper, after an introductory theoretical approach to our subject, we will present the productive role played by the Ibāḍī *nahḍa* in awakening the Ibāḍī community, and the way in which it helped form Ibāḍī identity through religious discourse during the time of the *nahḍa*. We aim 1) to improve our understanding of the role of the Ibāḍī religious discourse that evolved within the communities of Oman, East Africa (centered in Zanzibar), and North Africa, and provide further insights into the reconsideration of Ibāḍī identity; 2) to explore the impact of this reconsideration and redefinition on the Ibāḍīs’ relationship with the rest of the Muslim world, especially the Sunnī, and the interplay with the colonial powers of that time, as well as the effect of the religious discourse’s political critique in Oman; and 3) to enhance our knowledge of the way in which Ibāḍī religious discourse has redefined and reshaped the Ibāḍī identity. We employ the historical, critical method and interpretation in our presentation of the religious discourse, its use, and its political impact.

For this reason, we begin our exploration with the early *nahḍa* period (late 17th century) in Oman, i.e. when all the necessary religious and political conditions began to take shape during the period of reconstruction of the Imamate under the Yaʿāruba, which gradually led the Ibāḍīs to the collective demands of the *nahḍa*, while also strengthening their sense of constituting a unique ethnic and religious group. Beginning in Oman, with the existing Imamate as a center of religious leadership, we move, where the history and literature (i.e., the correspondence and the legal and theological works) of the era permit to do this, to the activities and communications with the Ibāḍī communities in the East African archipelago and North Africa, in order to identify the ways in which the Omani Ibāḍī *nahḍa* was disseminated to their fraternal communities. These communities, firmly tied to their religious faith, operated in ‘parallel worlds’ with different politics, ethnicities, and, to a certain degree, cultural identities and understandings.

Suggested Readings:

STUDENTS’ PRESENTATIONS

Salah Bahmani (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris)

*Ibadism in Mzab during and after the events of 2013-2015*

**Brief presentation of the events:**
The events of Ghardaïa point to a series of clashes between two communities, Arabs (Sunnis) and Mozabites (Ibadites), in the department of Ghardaïa in Algeria.

These events began in the end of 2013 and left more than 40 dead, hundreds wounded and thousands of homes and businesses looted and ransacked.

**The Ibadite question during the events:**
The confessional question was present in this conflict even if, in my opinion, it is not the provocative element. The causes of this conflict are more political and social than confessional. Some political actors in Algeria during these events gave a religious dimension to this conflict in order to hide the political and social crisis that affects Algeria as a whole.

During these events Ibadism as a madhab was discussed nationwide. It has been discussed in the media, the press and social networks. It seems that a good number of Algerians discovers for the first time a branch of Islam different from Sunnism. This discovery has aroused curiosity among some and discontent among others. This discontent, as expressed in social networks, is due to several reasons according to its authors, among which: 1. The Algerians are all Sunnis and they have never known other madhab besides Sunnism; 2. The Ibadites are kharidjites who hate Sunnis and do not recognize the Sunnah of the Prophet; 3. To recognize Ibadism is to divide the Algerians and sow discord among them. This hostile attitude towards the Ibadites manifested itself openly during a march in Ghardaïa where the demonstrators chanted "ilaha illa allah, al- ibadi 'adou Allah "(Ibadi is the enemy of God). This march was filmed and broadcast in social networks.

On the other hand, reconciling voices who speak in the media to denounce these hostilities towards the Mozabites and demonstrate that the Ibadites are Muslims like the others. Some of them even believe that Ibadism is a branch of the Sunnism and so the Ibadites are Sunnis! This last position, which is a relatively old position, was a source of disagreement between the Ibadites themselves; some are happy with this ranking that brings them closer or equal to Sunni Muslims, and some people think it a contempt for the Ibadis because it suggests that the Sunnis are superior or even worse a denial of the fundamental principles of the Ibadism that are completely different from Sunni principles.

In my speech I will address the following points:
Malikite-Ibadite conflict?

How the Mozabites want to define themselves: Ibadite, Salafists, Koranists, Muslims, Mozabites simply (the laity)?
How was Ibadism perceived by the Mozabites, by the authorities, by the M'zab Arabs during and after the conflict?

The role of the notables (the wise), young people, deputies, azzaba .. etc. in the events..

Ibadism in the Algerian and international press during the events.

Religious tendencies in the Mzab and their positions towards the conflict.

The claim of formalization of Ibadism in the Algerian constitution.

Political movements at the Mzab during the events (FFS, RCD, MAM, RND ..) and the Ibadi cause.

Ibadi intellectual production around events

The mzar is a society in flux?

Is Ibadism in on trial of globalization?
Luca Bartoli (University of Naples “L’Orientale”)

Resistance and Colonialism: the Berber-Ibadis in Libya

The role of the Berbers during the Italian colonization has been characterized by a lively socio-political activity that, until then, has never played a central role in their activities of protest and identification. The Italian arrival, who have colonized the North African country for almost thirty years, has radically changed the lifestyle of the native population that was forced to abandon the one imposed by the Ottoman Empire in order to accept the Italian one, arrived in North Africa after the victory in the Italian-Turkish war of 1911-12. After the first years of the Italian presence in Libya, which has been characterized by continuous wars with the Ottomans first and then with the locals, they allocated themselves setting the basis for a long and strong colonial policy that would totally change the local population’s life.

Until the Ottoman presence in Libya, the figure of Suleyman al-Baruni was very important for the whole region: after accepting a place in the Turkish parliament, he has always struggled for the autonomy of his region. The Ibadi matrix, indeed, would be very central in the scholar’s life because he has long struggled to obtain more rights for himself and his compatriots, who were also Ibadi. In addition to his cultural role, al-Baruni was important for his region because he was among those who allowed the birth of the Tripolitanian Republic in 1918. The example of the Republic, however, immediately passed in the background because, the Italian authorities, after a year, in 1919, established the “Statuto Libico” and thanks to it many rights and advantages would be granted by the population.

Taking into consideration the active participation of the indigenous population, their requests and subsequent rights obtained with the granting of the “Statuto Libico”, can we see Berbers as real political exponents in the colonized Libya? There are many doubts about it because their most important exponent, Sulayman al-Baruni, has attracted on himself many questions: did he really believe in the unity and in the birth of a real Berber state entity? Did he simply act to centralize his figure in the political scene of the colonized Libya? Can the Tripolitanian Republic be seen like an Ibadi political experiment?

Starting from this questions it will be analysed the Berber-Ibadi nationalism. This movement was born in North Africa between the end of XIX century and the beginning of XX and became important in Jebel Nefusa and in the other Ibadi regions – Mzab in Algeria and Jerba Island in Tunisia. The Berber-Ibadi nationalism was an integral part of the Naḥda movement and it would be supported by the panibadi ideologies.
The purpose of my study is to tackle the issue of re-reading the ibadi sources today. And since these sources are rich and large I restrict the study to two aspects or topics characterizing ibadism, which are *masalik addin* (stages of religion) and *siyar alibadhiyyah* (biographies). NB the latter is a wider concept. I choose these two topics because they are controversial and ignored by many ibadis themselves! Besides some non-ibadi intellectuals disdain them and show disgust towards them?!

So the first question is how to make people acknowledged about these issues. Then the second question is how to convince intellectuals (Ibadis and non Ibadis) to study such issues from different perspectives and objectively. Thus one has to adapt the terminology related to the issues to the present; otherwise it would be a mere “reinvention of the wheel” rather than a meaningful and fruitful study!

The problem is that re-reading such issues is not an easy job since Ibadi references are not easily attained, let alone the special language used by Ibadi scholars. In so many cases, this special language can be deciphered only by experts. Another problem which impedes the research activity is that there is not a compromise between scholars about certain facts and concepts either in *masalik addin* or in *assiyar* which causes uncertainty and even doubt.

As for the approach used in the study concerning the *siyar* (precisely the *siyar of maghrib*), it consists of briefly introducing, applying and comparing the content of books of *siyar* to contemporary understanding of them. The notion of *sirah* per se is not well understood nor clear to many people! Concerning the matter of *Masalik addin*, it is a approached in the same way i.e through comparison and application. The procedure followed in the study consists also of collecting authentic and up-to-date relevant statements given by scholars who are still alive (either in Tunis like Dr Farhat Jaabiri or in Djerba like Mr Sassi Ben Yahiaten)

The study leads to the conclusion that some areas in ibadi culture are not easily discussed and studied. We can also predict that once ibadi resources are read and re-read a lot will be added to the Islamic culture and to human culture as a whole. Moreover it will save us from a lot of misconceptions or fallacies concerning *shari‘a* of Islam.

Consequently it is urgent that anyone- who is interested in Ibadhism - re-read Ibadi sources and not be enslaved by the classical reading of sources. It is also crucial that Ibadi *siyar* be introduced to others so as to eliminate misunderstanding and conflict between schools or *madhab* in Islam and between religions. Besides, it is undeniable that Ibadi school culture and heritage are intentionally marginalized and targeted so they need to be saved before they withdraw and perish!!
Deborah S. Iannotti (University of Milan)

The political engagement of Muslim minorities in MENA region: Patterns of inclusion

My research activities are concentrated in studying the Middle Eastern minorities and their relationship with the State, especially in their political representation and their loyalty towards the harbouring polity. The Mena Region has always played as a strategically critical and historically significant region of humanity: it has been the home of many diverse people, religions and cultures. From the 7th century on, the image of a basically monolithic religious terrain from the Sahara and Morocco in the west to southern Asia and the Indus valley in the east grew into an indelible stereotype. It became customary to see this geographic expanse as inhabited by Muslims alone. It became customary as well to see the area from North Africa to the Persian Gulf as inhabited virtually exclusively by Arabs speaking the Arabic tongue and overwhelmingly Muslim in faith. From the glorious times of the Rashidun period through the last days of the Ottoman Empire, the Mena region was characterised by a vivid mosaic of governmental experiences where tribes’ ties and feudal loyalties had merged with the need of power centralisation. With the advent of the Statehood experience tribal interests went on juxtaposed with nationalist aspirations. Conversely to the European idea of territorial nationalism, Middle Eastern people have articulated their collective identities and political lives around varying levels of community solidarity opted in clan, ethnic or tribal bonding. Nationalism indeed, intended as a rigorous doctrine that establishes a criterion of peoplehood to legitimise power and social structures, was largely inapplicable in the Middle East. Although the use of the term “minority” suggests a literally a numeric inferiority, in this investigation refers to the situation of only particular people which possess certain qualitative traits that juxtapose to the predominant power-holders in the Middle Eastern Region.

The Debate around Minorities and their relationship with the State

What drives a religious or ethnic group towards political activism, is a delicate and complex dynamic movement, which could positively starts from the awareness of an ethnic community of his role as The political potential that Minorities had and still have when it comes to analyse the region chronically instabilities, has made problematic to research with objectivity; is Sectarianism the real cause to region instability? Or is it a too simplifying justification as a result of what Edward Said identified as naïve Orientalistic views? Even if Political Scientist turned their eyes and efforts towards a “political science -approach”, the Middle Eastern region has always been the subject to a “society cantered approach”. Indeed, the roles of tribalism,
sectarianism, regionalism and “primordial” sentiments, have contributed to the idea that the State is an arena of engendered conflict or an instrument of family, sect or class domination.

In this climax of turmoil and “weak state” narrative, my focus is on the multiple path that the various Middle Eastern Minorities (especially the heterodox Muslim ones) took in order to assimilate in the grammar of statehood while advancing their political instances and demands through the legitimate means in the Weberian bureaucracy model: party politics.
Efstratios Karakitsos

Islamic Arts. The Case of Oman

In this presentation we are going to have a general overview of Islamic Arts, mainly Ceramic art. We will investigate the Central Islam (wider eastern Mediterranean, Levant, Near East) and Omani-Ibadi regions.

At the beginning we will make an introduction to the Islam’s birth conditions, in order to get a taste of the wealth of the traditions Islam inherited, incorporated or let grow in. Philosophical, political ideas and forms of arts are digested in the multi-ethnic mosaic of Central Islam during the first centuries. The terminology of “Islamic Arts” worries the scholars – mostly the Western. This seems to happen mainly because of the double nature of Islam as a religion and state and at the same time because of the differentiation of Western scholars with Islam scholars, in analyzing categories and ideas. For example, the West pays attention to painting while it is not such a favorable art for the Muslims. Beyond that, we will just accept the diversity in arts observed in the different regions of Islam thanks to its unique characteristics (for example the Tolerance itself). Furthermore a particular love towards the Speech of God, either recited or written. For that reason, we will make an attempt to examine Islamic Arts as an extension of the sacredness of the Script.

The word of God written down in the Holy Quran has a magnificent value for the faithful. There is a great beauty and an iconic poetry in the sacred texts. This tradition will continue until our days. Such examples can be found in the first centuries of Central Islam’s Qurans and some in Oman. We see that the influences in Oman exist, nevertheless we cannot see them. For that reason we are going to demonstrate some later manuscripts of the 18th.

The sacred script is written on other surfaces too. Beyond parchment have been put in wood, metal, clay, architecture walls, mihrabs, almost everywhere. It’s the most famous form of art which sometimes is un-iconic or geometric while others it shows clear images of this world or beyond.

We will observe a short history of ceramics evolution in the big centers of the wider eastern Mediterranean, Crescent Moon and Persian territories and we will see some examples of iconic and non-iconic art. Subsequently we will search for corresponding examples of Oman’s territory which come from archaeological surveys.

Ultimately we will refer to the Oman’s centrality in the world trade routes, the influences and exchanges with East and especially the Chinese. In the 16th century, the use of ceramic Chinese bowls (Ming dynasty) that are decorated in Omani mihrabs is observed. There is a possibility that this happened generally because of the Tolerance way of Islam but also because of the Omani-Ibadi particularity to maintain their own style and identity which has never stopped blending in with others from the BC till today. We believe that these particular characteristics will continue to live and be renewed because the Western hegemony of the world trading routes seems to reach its peak, when at the same time we can objectively witness the emergence
of China (and other powers like India, Russia, Iran, Turkey) all over the world and the multi-split of the western world order. Regarding Ibadis and Chinese, we see already steps of joint sovereignty and economic compounds in the East Africa while we cannot ignore what the new dynamics that OBOR (One Belt One Road) initiative will bring to the new shaped multipolar international scene.
Migrants and refugees seeking for a better life with their entry into Europe are neither an unprecedented nor a temporary phenomenon. In Greece, the large influx of migrants from Muslim countries began in the 1970s, but in recent years there has been a significant increase associated with the overall economic and political situation in the Islamic countries. Nowadays, first and second generation Muslims who live in Greece are already organized in communities according to their nationality and religious doctrine and at the same time a new reality has been created due to the recent migratory flow.

The existence of different ethnic and religious groups with different needs within the same country created many issues to be addressed about the whole process of integrating immigrants and refugees into their new environment, without neglecting the changes taking place in the host country. Issues such as language, education, social acceptance and integration had to be addressed.

Migrant and refugee education is a burning issue as it is directly linked to family integration and harmonious cohabitation with indigenous peoples. The attendance of immigrant children in Greek schools raises critical issues concerning the management of diversity and the provision of equal opportunities. A prerequisite for the smooth integration of migrants in the host country is the education of the children.

Until the 1980s, the Greek state did not pay much attention to education policy for migrants as small numbers did not create a particular situation which needed immediate treatment. During the 1980s, the rise of immigrants shaped a new reality that the education system had to deal with. In recent years migratory waves from the Islamic countries have completely changed the landscape in educational policy as new and completely different needs have been created.

The overwhelming majority of newcomers in Greece are Muslims and the characteristics of their religious identity are obvious. Continuous migratory flows are constantly changing the data, but we can say that in Greece the students, who origin from Islamic countries, are divided into two major categories with different needs and different cultural and social backgrounds: pupils who were born in Greece or came to the country at an early age and new entrants. Then many and different parameters, such as family existence, social ties and work status, affect the student's relationship with education.

The two categories above have very different characteristics. Students who are already living in the country are generally integrated into the community and usually their needs are not different from those of students of others religions. Special school structures are becoming less and less attractive to them as their primary need appears to be full integration into Greek society.

Of particular interest is the educational policy created by the migratory problem that has been affecting the whole of Europe in recent years. The influx of thousands of students from Islamic countries, of different ages
and without any knowledge of the Greek language, created a new reality that had to be dealt with directly and effectively. At the same time, the Greek state had to create educational structures, not only for underage, but also for adults who are forced to live in the country. The learning of the Greek language was imperative. After the second year of coordinated efforts of various structures of the Greek state, the implementation of the new educational policy for Muslim refugees of different ages seems to have positive results.

Throughout this effort, the specific characteristics of the religious identity of immigrants play an important role, as they create several individual parameters that the Greek state should take into account. We have always to keep in mind that in order for the applied model to succeed, it should be acceptable not only by the immigrants but by the wider community as well. The Greek society, which is characterized by a high percentage of religious homogeneity, must also adapt to the new reality.
Context
Approximately 600 km south of Algiers, beyond the original Roman limes and at the northern edge of the Sahara, lies the valley of the Mzab, the urban oasis settlement of the Banu Mzab. They are a tribal confederation of primarily indigenous Amazigh (Berber) who practice Ibadism, a school of Islam which spread to North Africa in 7th century AD. About 0.2% of Muslims today are Ibadi. Five fortified towns developed in the Mzab between 1000 and 1400 AD, and at least a dozen extra-mural funerary mosques (also known as musallas, or places of saint veneration) exist in their cemeteries. Places to venerate saints are generally proscribed in Islam, while also widespread. Frequently gathering places for women, they may be the only public places sanctioned as such in the Mzab today.

This research will focus on a single building type in a specific cultural environment, as a means to investigate the broader historical interactions of society and space. Medieval North Africa has a rich history of multiculturalism and religious syncretism, and within this, a history of conflict and confluence between cultures, religions, and tribes. This research will explore the history of how the Banu Mzab related with those who were – perhaps fluidly – ‘with them’ and ‘against them’, both internally and externally. What, if anything, was ‘constant’ in their history?

Research question
What are the social factors which contributed to the development of Ibadi-Amazigh architecture in the Mzab in the medieval Maghrib? Specifically, how did the forms of funerary mosques develop; were there social values or needs related to their expression; were there specific people, ideas, practices, or events involved; and did these mosques perform specific roles related to social conflict or cohesion? Did funerary mosques necessarily develop, and did they have a supportive role in the continued endurance of these desert communities? How did varying notions, practices, and places related to death develop and relate to the structure of their life?

Objectives
The objective of this PhD is to formulate a social architectural history of Ibadi Amazigh, focussing on the medieval development of funerary mosques in the Mzab.

Methodology
First, I will review the available literature to develop an understanding of current knowledge in relevant fields: Ibadi and Amazigh social and urban history in the Mzab and in the Maghrib; Ibadi/Islamic and Amazigh funerary practices, women and space; funerary sanctuaries in the Mzab, existing and any defunct; related fiqh. Second, with the permission of the Office for the Protection and Promotion of the Mzab Valley (OPVM), I will aim to conduct research in the Mzab. Within any private libraries accessible in the Mzab, I will seek: documents on the people, activities, and places which may construct a medieval urban history; documents
related to notions of death and funerary practices, and; any historical records on specific funerals and funerary
mosque building. I will also aim to survey the funerary mosques, looking at both its architectural history (form
and use), and
the history of the deceased person for which each commemorates. While I have some knowledge of Arabic, I
will require translation assistance or translation technology. The sourcing of potential documents in a perhaps
protective but literate community will form part of this research: the confirmation of existing libraries, their
holdings, and accessibility. This research will also review current methodologies in architectural history. It is
reasonable to anticipate that over several hundred years, a physical building may have been destroyed, altered,
reconstructed, or inaccessible; the subject of the 'building' will necessarily need to be clarified and specified.
Where the physical building is now in ruins, archaeological methods may need to be employed.
Khaled Meghnine (Utrecht University)

The status of modern astronomical calculations in determining the beginning & end of Ramadan within the Ibadi community of the Mzab Valley between theory and practice.

Problem description:
With the development of modern astronomy (celestial mechanics) and particularly the latest contributions of Muslim and non-Muslim astronomers and amateurs in the end of the 20th century which resulted in solving the old moon sight problem allowing the possibility to predict with high accuracy the beginning of new lunar months as per the traditional moon sight criteria.
The question I address in this paper is: What role play the available astronomical calculations of moon sight in both the local Ibadi jurisprudence and the starting dates decided by the main Ibadi institutions in the Mzab valley from 2000 to 2018.

Introduction:

Historical overview on the moonsight calculations:

Muslim calendar which dictates the important religious dates (Hadj, Ramadan, Eid Fitr) is based on the observation/understanding of astronomical phenomenon. i.e lunar calendar.
The lunar month corresponds to the period in which the moon completes a rotation around Earth. This has been marked, in different civilizations, as the period from the first sight of the moon crescent until the following one. Moon sight thus became a necessary part of deciding the Muslim calendar, more particularly due to the tradition of the prophet himself.

During the Islamic civilization era, Muslim astronomers have developed criteria suggested by previous civilizations (Babylonian, Indian, Persian..) in order to predict the possibility of moon sight. However, those criteria remained geometrical and while they could be used to predict the impossible cases of moon sight, they remained for centuries unprecise and below the desired level of accuracy.

It was until the beginning of the 20th century that this subject regained momentum (in the west) especially after the modern development of celestial mechanics. The last 3 decades of the 20th century have seen more important and original theoretical works backed by large observations campaigns which allowed the fine tuning of the astronomical models resulting in a highly accurate moonsight predictions from any given location in the globe.

Methods and materials (data):
To address the main question of the paper, I have used the following method.
First, to review the main opinions that the jurisconsults of the Mzab valley have adopted regarding the lunar calendar, and more specifically the criteria of deciding the starting dates of Ramadan and Shawwal. And check to what extent those theoretical criteria are followed in practice (based on the data).
Second, to review the data gathered from different sources (mainly the International Crescent Observation Project and other local sources) from 2000 to 2018 which compiles the astronomical data, observation reports, and actual starting and ending dates of Ramadan during this period.

It is important to note that the data showed a significant difference of starting dates between reformists and conservatives. For this reason, I have considered the main jurisconsults on which rely those two movements: Sheikh Tfyaech for conservatives, and Sheikh Beyoud for reformists.

**Results and discussions:**

**Jurisprudence:**

While the mainstream view among the Muslim scholars is the necessity of actual moon sight. The below are statements of the above-mentioned Ibadi sheikhs about astronomical calculations:

Sheikh Mhamed Tfyaech (1821-1914): while not clearly stating that the astronomical calculations could be used to decide the starting months, Tfyaech includes the ‘use of calculations of the stars’ as a possible meaning of the prophets ‘estimation’ hadith: ‘Whenever you sight the new moon (of the month of Ramadan) observe fast, and when you sight it (the new moon of Shawwal) break it, and if the sky is cloudy for you, then estimate for it.’

Sheikh Beyoud Brahimi (1899 – 1981): In his tafsir, states that no moonsight report should be accepted if contradicting astronomical calculations.

**Data analysis:**

The main parts of the gathered data are:

1. Moon set, moon rise, and conjunctions data.
2. Moonsight observations in Mzab valley reported in ICOP (Islamic Crescent Observation project) from 2000 to 2018.
   b. Beni Isguen religious council (halka).
   c. Ghardaia conservative religious council (Halka).
   d. Ghardaia reformist religious council (halka).

**Data review and discussion:**

The data reviewed showed the main remarks:

1. Reformists completely follow the official calendar. The official calendar shows about 45% offset from the astronomical calculations. Which means that in about 45% of the cases, the moon was reported to be seen while it was scientifically impossible to be seen.

2. Beni Isguen mosque, although not always following the official calendar, shows a very close result, 40% of the cases reported are off the astronomical calculations.

3. The conservatives of Ghardaia have only a 13% offset from astronomical calculations.
Discussion:

1. While the aforementioned opinion of sheikh Beyoud encourages the consideration of astronomical calculations in the acceptance criteria of moon sight. It is almost surprising to find that the reformist scholars/councils of the Mzab valley give little or no importance to those calculations. In fact, this doesn’t mean that they refuse to take them into account, but this only reflects the influence of other factors (ideological and political). The reformist trend to unify with the rest of the Muslim community explains this situation.

2. For the mosque of Beni Isguen, the general trend is almost similar to the reformist.

3. The Conservatives, while showing high compatibility with scientific criteria, it is important to note that in some cases while astronomical calculations showed possible sight, the conservatives rejected the possibility due to cloudy sky in the Mzab or similar situations which is in contradiction with the position of Sheikh Tfyach.
Soufien Mestaoui (Centre for Studies and Research on Ibadism –Ibadica, Paris)

The Ibadi Diaspora in France through the experiences of Djerban and Mizabi communities

In this presentation, we shall describe and analyze the reality of the Ibādi diaspora in France over the last three generations, on the basis of two data: the migratory strategies at work since the 60s, and the changes that Ibādi communities have experienced in their relationship with the society in which they are integrated. As a matter of fact, a new rationale has emerged in regard to their willingness to maintain the unity of their families, and to the practice of their rite which governs their daily life, a rite that is gradually moving towards becoming an European Ibādi cultural phenomenon, with all the stakes and problematics this might involve. The community institutions, which have fully grasped the challenge of investing in the educational and social field as well as in the preservation of their traditions and their rite, offer services aimed to enshrine the religious identity, the culture and the citizenship of the young Ibādis born in France.

The Ibādis’ immigration in France is relatively recent, and this applies for both, the Djerbans and Mizabis. It is part of the migratory wave from the Maghreb in the 60s.

The first Djerban immigrants occupied laborer jobs and later on, they gradually invested almost the whole trade field, to the extent that they were then representing roughly half of the Tunisian traders in Paris. This configuration seems all the more natural as the Djerbans and the Mizabis have been known, since the medieval age, for their keen sense of business all around the Mediterranean basin. Thanks to their adoption of marginal merchant communities’ specific strategies, they gradually moved into the retail trade by investing all life cycle stages of various commodities, from producer to customer.

Emigration has been, for ages, a tradition in the eyes of the natives of Djerba and the Mzab. This phenomenon, well documented through the studies carried out about its impact on the social and family life there, rests on a very strong intergenerational cohesion based on agnatic principles, which is vital for the creation of commercial investments.

This propensity to trade was also analyzed as a component of the Ibādi faith whose ethics encourages success, honesty and toil. The parallel has often been made with the ethics of Protestantism as advanced by Max Weber. Moreover, it is the result of their willingness to be autonomous and independent of any political power. The independence of Tunisia and Algeria enhanced the expansion of the Ibādi diasporic network beyond the Mediterranean.

This immigration was seen and lived as a transitory and temporary situation for the simple reason that it was just “for the needs of trade”, and that the goal was ultimately to return to the homeland. Incidentally, this rationality was widely shared by all the immigrants from the Maghreb.

Only the males emigrated, leaving their wives and their children in their homelands. Accordingly, as they had to abide by their local customs, they had to periodically return to their families striving to keep them attached
to their endogamous context (with a few exceptions such as the Djerban family “Baḥḥār” settled in Cairo, during the modern period). Life outside their environment, especially in the cities, would be seen as a source of temptations that might imply deviation from the community values; the stakes are all the more important as Ibāḍism is a minority current, connoted negatively by the other Muslims. A community-based social grouping emerged in the very heart of their place of immigration; its dynamic was to perpetuate the social, cultural and cultic life relative to their original microcosm; worship and social encounters are held within a normative premise called Dār al-Jamā’a (home of the community).

This social grouping is reinforced by the ibāḍi scholars’ writings (ʿulāmas) who were themselves for the most part traders. A large body of jurisprudential literature has standardized the concepts of "dwelling", "travel" and "residence", being so far controversial issues tightly related to the believers’ daily ritual practice; such standards will shape the Ibādis’ behavior.
During the stage of systematization of the Oriental Studies starting in the 19th c., Ibadism became marginalized. Furthermore, Ibadism suffered from being misunderstood by other Islamic schools. Early Islamic heresiographical works, due to their nature, considered Ibadism to be one of the extremist divisions of the Kharijite (Khawarij) movement. These approaches influenced both Muslim and non-Muslim researchers who tried to understand Ibadism, because several researchers considered heresiographic literature as the main source for understanding Islam. Due to the reproduction of stereotypical ideas about Ibadism, it became difficult to distinguish between actual Ibadi doctrine and the superstructure of opinion and especially to see Ibadism and Ibadis independent of the Kharijites. The two primary approaches to Ibadis that dominated Western Oriental studies appeared in the mid-19th century. The first consisted in an attempt to understand Ibadism through the translated texts, whilst the second involved the compilation of bibliographic lists of Ibadi literature, most of which focused on historical works. The middle of the nineteenth century witnessed the expansion of European colonization in the Near East, which produced explorers’ accounts of the places they visited. During this period, travelers’ reports, politician’s writings and scholars’ works on geography, politics and social life spread and proliferated. The general historical framework of the literature on Ibadi history was expanded and enriched. At the beginning of the 20th century, the development of interdisciplinary, historical and philological studies promoted the study of Islamic theology and jurisprudence. The comparisons between different Islamic groups led researchers to write books and articles on heresiography and the history of Islamic theology. Given the growing interest of international scholars in Ibāḍī studies, Ibāḍī theology will certainly play a prominent role in future scholarship.
The purpose of this work is to examine the role of the Nahda literary movement as cultural vanguard of the proper political nationalism in the Arab world and how the work of Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī (1801-1873) reflects, in its content, this recovered national awareness.

The historical period analyzed is between the second half of the XVIII and the beginnings of XIX century. It concerns the history of North Africa and in particular of Egypt starting from 1798 Napoleon military campaign, analyzing the role of this event as a mean of shearing knowledge between the two shores of the Mediterranean, following the rise of power of Muḥammad ‘Alī(1769 –1849) in 1805 and his dynasty, the construction of Suez Canal and the British protectorate until the formal independence on 1922.

After the decay of the Mamluk and the take-over of Muḥammad ‘Alī starts in Egypt a work of reform that leads to a new interest in the field of instruction and culture. The issues related to western technical sciences are deepened by sending missions of eminent scholars to the most important european institution. Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī, in this framework, was the religious chief of a study mission that would stay in Paris several years (1826-1831).

Before approaching al-Ṭahṭāwī’s masterpiece Taḥliṣ al-ibrīz fī talḥiṣ bāriz (1834 (الإبريز في تلخيص باريز (1834) this study tries to enquire the problem of identity, considering how it is possible to define an Arab national one. This is followed by an analysis about which type of country would be the most suitable for Arab people according to the claims of rising nationalist movements.

They find their cultural roots in the assumptions of the Arab literary Renaissance movement (Nahḍa), which promote a feeling of identification between the self and the national community. It owns traits of cultural nationalism whose first aim is to bring out this sense of cohesion through the promotion of a national language and literature into an attempt of introducing innovative elements preserving traditional roots.

Subsequently, the main types of nationalist tendencies are displayed: panarabism, regionalism, Arabism, Ottomanism and Pharaonism and the evolution of nationalist thinking in Egypt.

Following this path, I tried to analyze the deep relationship between language and the development of socio-cultural identity. Language is defined as the key to recognizing the belonging to the national community. Particular emphasis is put in identifying meaningful words like Umma and Waṭan, respectively community and homeland, and analyzing their role and function in Islamic tradition explaining how an important figure of the Nahḍa literary trend like Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī brought new meaning to these terms bringing them in line with the European paradigm of nation and community. Into this work I would enquire not only the diachronical evolution of the meaning of a term like Waṭan into an Islamic tradition but also how the author try to convey, by using this w-ṭ-n root, elements belonging to an european context.

The last section of the work has as its main subject Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī’s masterpiece “Taḥliṣ alibrīz fī talḥiṣ bāriz” (1834), the evaluation of its genesis, its literary genre, its main themes,
underlying motives and the analysis of the author’s representation of a western country, France, its laws and institutions, his work of discovering and refinement.

The final aim of the work was to demonstrate the connection between Nahḍa values and the development of national consciousness. Such a connection is particularly true in the Egyptian case as seen in al-Ṭahṭāwī’s work.
Nicholas Roberts (University of Notre Dame, Indiana, U.S.A.)

“Solemnities of the origin”: Toward a genealogical history of Ibadi Islam

As it stands now, this paper is a sort of think-piece – a conceptual agenda, if you will – for a much larger project I hope to work on in the future. The final project might make two interventions. First, it might lend a new narrative for Ibadism’s emergence that transcends the idea of Khariji origins. In so doing, it might secondly reflect upon the weaknesses of historical methodology seeking to define “origins” of any sort. I welcome any comments and critique, especially on source material, future directions for the work, and where I might just be wrong. I especially welcome comments on how to find the right balance between my theoretical framework (which I think overwhelms the paper right now) and my historical analysis (in which it is presently lacking).

The problem is this: Every non-Ibadi historian I have read places Ibadi origins with the Khawarij; however, every Ibadi historian I have read contests this claim. Granted, Ibadi historians might contest this claim for political/cultural reasons (not wanting to be associated with the violent/aggressive connotations of the Khariji label), but I argue that it is also worth tracing the formation of the Ibadi in a genealogical sense to uncover the tangled web of ideas that characterized early Islam. I therefore inquire: How might our narrative of Ibadism’s emergence change if we rid ourselves of the idea of “origins” (a faulty idea for any historian) and instead use a genealogical approach for studying how ideas change over time, and even strive to see continuity as change? I seek to suggest that, rather than placing the “origins” of Ibadism with the Khawarij, we might open our historical gaze to seeing how Ibadism developed (“originated”) as part and parcel of the “crucible” of early Islam, drawing upon long-refined Arab customs like shura and bay’a.

If we accept that the earliest formative writings of the group of Muslims who came to be known as the Ibadiyya were in fact polemics against the Khawarij, then, I argue, it makes little sense to speak of the Khariji origins of Ibadism. The Khariji-origins narrative might be true in the simplest sense, in that persons such as Ibn Ibadh were “Khariji” before leaving the movement – but this strikes me as a rather superficial foundation for understanding a very complicated period of history. The Khariji origins-narrative packages a very complicated history into something too neat and tidy. Ibadi historians note that even the idea of a coherent Khawarij movement (from which Ibadism ostensibly originated) is a late invention and, in fact, there were rather many different types of Muslim groups operating under what we now call the Khawarij movement.

The title of this work comes from Foucault, who argued: “What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.” So what I am interested in pursuing more in this work is the dissension of things, the disparities in how Muslims viewed what it meant to be Muslim and to do islām which ultimately led to the different madhāhib, including the Ibadi. I suggest that such an approach provides a more detailed picture of this very complicated history than simply

stating that one group originated in another and being done with the story – especially when the Ibadi themselves do not buy into this narrative. My advisors have instructed me to dig into the works of major early Muslim historians, such as Al-Masūdī, Al-Ṭabarī, and perhaps even Ibn Khaldūn, to see how they presented the idea of a Khariji movement, and to see how they placed the Ibadi within this time period. I also need to dig deeper into early Ibadi historians to see how their own narratives might differ. Lastly, I plan to engage more with the writings of Ibadism’s earliest members.

In the piece, I point out that some of the defining concepts of Ibadi political theology – such as *shura*, *bayʿa*, and the heavy emphasis on egalitarianism – are pre-Islamic concepts, and I note how seeing this continuity in Ibadi political theology with pre-Islamic Arab history complicates the notion that Ibadism originated with Kharijism (since these concepts existed before the Khawarij). Wilkinson goes further than any other historian to acknowledge this: “Although their message was universal,” he says, “in fact Ibāḍī notions of a Muslim polity were essentially a translation into Islamic terms of traditional concepts of tribal authority, inherently opposed to the centralized power of Empire.”

Thus, while there might indeed be some similarities between the Khariji and the Ibadi, the persistence to define the origins of Ibadism as lying with the Khawarij precludes historians from taking a deeper look at the polygenetic crucible of Islam and Arab society in Late Antiquity. This project is not the subject of my dissertation, but it is something I think often about.

All of my training as an historian is in modern world/Islamic history, and so in some ways I am out of my league here. For these reasons I welcome your rigorous engagement and criticism of the work as it stands now, and insights for its future development.

---