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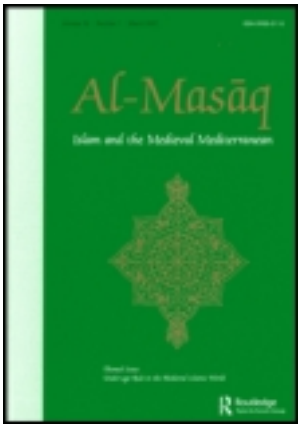

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Piracy as Statecraft: The Mediterranean Policies of the Fifth/Eleventh-Century Taifa of Denia

TRAVIS BRUCE

ABSTRACT *The taifa of Denia on the Iberian eastern seaboard was one of the most dynamic of the regional polities that emerged from the disintegrated Cordovan caliphate. Mujāhid al-ʻĀmirī based his state not only on its continental territories, but especially on the maritime networks that linked it with the Mediterranean. Commerce with Muslim and Christian ports played a role in Denia's success, but both Latin and Arabic sources emphasise its practice of piracy on a grand scale. In fact, Mujāhid al-ʻĀmirī built his state as a continuation of the maritime policies of the Cordovan caliphate under which the piracy of independent coastal communities was adopted and expanded into a state-sponsored* guerre de course. *Mujāhid's pursuance of this policy stemmed from his role in the erstwhile caliphate, but was also motivated by a combination of religious, political and economic factors. The legitimacy provided by his "jihād on the sea" helped to shore up his power at a time of political instability. This policy also provided the taifa's economic foundation for much of its history. In fact, the Mediterranean maritime lanes became as much an extension of Denia as its continental territories. Denia's piracy thus reflects a coherent form of statecraft, informing definitions of the medieval state and territoriality.*

Keywords: Taifa kingdoms; Denia, Alicante, Spain; Mujāhid al-ʻĀmirī, ruler of Denia; Piracy

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The question of piracy as a political tool in the medieval Mediterranean is not new. Historians analysing the early growth of Mediterranean port cities, such as Pisa, Genoa and Barcelona, have shown that the relationship between pirate-merchants and political authorities fundamentally shaped these maritime polities and ideas of territoriality on the high seas.[1] However, little work has been done on the

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[1] On the growth of Mediterranean ports in the Later Middle Ages, see for example: O.R. Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain. The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula, 900–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); S.A. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958–1528* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Caroline Press, 1996); G. Jehel, *Les Genois en Méditerranée occidentale (fin XI^{ème}-début XIV^{ème} siècle). Ebauche d'une stratégie pour un empire* (Paris: Université de Picardie, 1993); R.S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950–1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); S. Orvietani Busch, *Medieval Mediterranean Ports. The Catalan and Tuscan Coasts, 1100–1235* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); G. Petti Balbi, "Genova e il Mediterraneo occidentale

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political role of piracy in the Islamic Mediterranean.[2] This is due in part to a lack of dialogue between Islamicists, Latinists and Byzantinists. The linguistic divide between Arabic, Latin and Greek sources seems also to have deterred comparative work on the subject. The reason also lies in the fact that for much of early medieval history, Muslim piracy was carried out by independent maritime communities profiting from weak state control over coastal areas.[3] And so, while this piracy is often included in descriptions of the inter-religious struggle for control of the Mediterranean, it is seldom seen as an actual tool of statecraft.

Historians have raised the distinction between pirates and corsairs, between illicit and state-sanctioned maritime violence.[4] This distinction becomes clear towards the fourteenth century in the Christian West, reflecting efforts by maritime states to secure and control access to sea-lanes. However, it is not as clear for Islamic historians, especially in the Western Mediterranean. Muslim piracy was a dominant factor in the early medieval Mediterranean, but rulers were ambivalent to such activities for most of this time. In the Eastern Mediterranean, the struggle with Byzantium necessitated a more active role in naval affairs, but rulers in the West did not generally invest in naval infrastructures, and relied on conscription

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(*footnote continued*)
nei secoli XI–XII", *Comuni e memoria storica. Alle origini del comune di Genova (Atti del convegno di studi, Genova 24–26 settembre 2001)* (Genoa: Società ligure di storia patria, 2002), 503–26; M. Tangheroni, *Commercio e navigazione nel Medioevo* (Rome: Laterza, 1996); C. Violante, *Economia, società, istituzioni a Pisa nel Medioevo* (Bari: 1980); E. Sohmer Tai, "Honor among thieves: piracy, restitution and reprisal in Genoa, Venice and the Crown of Catalonia–Aragon (1339–1417)", PhD dissertation, University of Harvard, 1996; E. Sohmer Tai, "Marking water: piracy and property in the pre-modern west", Seascapes, Littoral Cultures, and Trans-Oceanic Exchanges, Washington D.C., 12–15 February 2003, http://www.historycooperative.org/[-]proceedings/seascapes/tai.html.

[2] On piracy in the medieval Muslim Mediterranean, see for example: P. Guichard, "Animation maritime et développement urbain des côtes de l'Espagne orientale et du Languedoc au X^{e} siècle", in *Occident et Orient au X^{e} siècle. Actes du IX^{e} congrès de la société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public (Dijon, 2–4 juin 1978)* (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1979), pp. 187–201; P. Guichard, "Les débuts de la piraterie andalouse en Méditerranée occidentale (798–813)", *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 35 (1983): 55–76; A.R. Lewis, *Naval Power and Trade in the Mediterranean; A.D. 500–1100* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951); J. Lirola Delgado, *El poder naval de al-Andalus en la época del Califato Omeya* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1993); Ch. Picard, *La mer et les musulmans d'Occident au Moyen Age* (Paris: Presse universitaires de France, 1997); Ch. Picard, "Retour sur la piraterie sarrasine d'al-Andalus contre le monde latin (Italie et Provence) au IX^{e} et X^{e} siècle", in *Quel mar che la terra inghirlanda. In ricordo di Marco Tangheroni*, ed. F. Cardini and M.L. Ceccarelli Lemut, 2 vols (Pisa: Pacini, 2007), 2: 577–596; Ph. Sénac, "Le califat de Cordoue et la Méditerranée occidentale au X^{e} siècle: le Fraxinet des Maures", *Castrum 7. Zones côtières littorales dans le monde méditerranéen au Moyen Âge: Défense, peuplement, mise en valeur. Rome, 23–26 octobre 1996* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 2001), pp. 113–126; D. Valérian, *Bougie, port maghrébin, 1067–1510* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 2006). We would like to thank Dominique Valérian for sending us a copy of his recent paper paralleling for the Later Middle Ages many of the points presented in this article: "La course et la piraterie en Méditerranée occidentale à la fin du Moyen Âge: entre activité économique et instrument politique", Stratégies de domination politiques et économiques dans la Méditerranée médiévale, Séminaire "Méditerranée medieval" UMR 8167 Orient – Méditerranée, Paris, 10 January 2009.

[3] Cf. P. Guichard, "Animation maritime", 187–201; P. Guichard, "Les débuts de la piraterie andalouse", 55–76.

[4] See E. Sohmer Tai's extensive discussion of the bibliography concerning corsairs and pirates in the later medieval Mediterranean in her "Honor among thieves", 3–6. I use the term piracy for the maritime violence practiced by vessels from Denia against ships and coastal communities largely because the term "privateering" seems anachronistic. While much of this activity was state-sponsored or approved, independent companies most likely carried out most of it.

and informal associations to supply their occasional needs.[5] This does not, however, mean that pirates acted illegally. Muslim jurists codified piracy as a form of *jihād*, licit as long as it was carried out according to the principles governing war with the *dār al-ḥarb*.[6] Pirates were thus acting as independent agents of the greater Islamic community, implicitly sanctioned by rulers whose ambiguous political authority was often justified in part by their own pursuance of *jihād* on other fronts.

The political attitude towards the sea began to change in al-Andalus beginning in the late third/ninth century. Viking attacks led to the development of naval infrastructures, and conflicts with the Fātimids in North Africa spilled over into the Mediterranean. With the declaration of the Umayyad caliphate in 316/929, ʻAbd al-Raḥmān III consciously worked to develop the naval resources at his disposal, building a fleet, ports and shipyards along the Iberian coast.[7] As Cordova extended its control over coastal territories, local elites became part of the Umayyad administrative structure.[8] The activities of independent pirates were now part of a larger programme of maritime war against both the Christians and the Shiite Fātimids.[9] Erstwhile pirates such as the Banū Rumāḥis indifferently led the Umayyad navy and their own privateering expeditions, without drawing a line between the two.[10] However, these organised expeditions, naval equivalents to the

[5] Cf. Ch. Picard, *La mer*, 7–29; J. Lirola Delgado, *El poder*, 113.

[6] I use the term *jihād* as defined by the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 2: 538a: "In law, according to general doctrine and in its historical tradition, the *ḏjihād* consists of military action with the object of the expansion of Islam and, if need be, of its defense". While maritime raids may not initially seem an effort to expand or defend Islam, Muslim jurists considered them as such and thus bound by the rules regulating *jihād*. M. Talbī, *L'Emirat Aghlabide (184–296/800–909). Histoire politique* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1966), pp. 534–535. Talbi cites Muḥammad b. Saḥnūn stating that ships known to conduct business with Muslims can only be taken in their own territorial waters, while the capture of other *Rūm* ships is licit at any time. In an earlier article, Talbi presents a *fatwa* determining how to properly divide up booty among members of a pirate company: "Intéret des oeuvres juridiques traitant de la guerre pour l'historien des armées médiévales ifrikiennes (d'après le *Kitāb al-Nawādir* d'Ibn Abī Zayd)", *Cahiers de Tunisie*, 15 (1956): 289–293. Ibn Abī Zayd includes these discussions of maritime raids by independent companies, i.e. piracy, in his chapter on jihād, in which no differentiation is made between piracy and other forms of war against non-Muslims. In the second discussion by Ibn Sahnūn cited by M. Talbī, the passage refers to أربع مراكب خرجت للغزو, or "four ships departing to carry out raids", hardly a military expedition, but still considered *jihād*: *Kitāb al-Nawādir wa-l-Ziyāda*, ed. ʻAbd al-Fattaḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥilw (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islami, 1999), 3: 172–173. We should note that H.S. Khalilieh cites legal decisions that disapproved of attacking Christian vessels during times of political tranquility, lest they lead to "frivolous military campaigns, the loss of life, and the interruption of overseas trade". H.S. Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law. An Introduction* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 135.

[7] Ch. Picard, *La mer*, 21–29; E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane* (hereafter *HEM*), vol. 3, *Le siècle du Califat de Cordoue* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1950), pp. 106–112.

[8] This is especially apparent in the port of Pechina, where local representatives were approved as governor by Cordova and the Banū Rumāḥis became some of the Umayyads' most important supporters, serving as governors and admirals of the fleet throughout the fourth/tenth century. See below.

[9] The Umayyad fleet attacked Fātimid and Christian targets notably in 319/931, 321/933, 328/940, 331/943, 334/945, 344/955 and 345/956: Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabas V*, ed. P. Chalmeta, F. Corriente and M. Subḥ (Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura, 1979), pp. 312, 323–324, 366–368; Al-ʻUdhrī, *Nusus ʻan al-Andalus. Fragmentos geografico-historicos de al-Masāsalik ilā gamīʻ al-mamālik*, ed. ʻA. al-A. al-Ahwānī (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid, 1965), pp. 81, 82; Abraham b. Daud, *Sefer ha-qabbalah (The Book of Tradition)*, ed. and English trans. G.D. Cohen (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967), p. 63; Ibn Khaldūn, *Histoire des Berbères et des dynasties musulmanes de l'Afrique septentrionale*, French trans. De Slane, ed. P. Casanova (Paris: Geuthner, 1978), t. 2, p. 542.

[10] Muḥammad b. Rumāḥis participated as a privateer in a naval expedition against the Fatimids in 319/931, along with eight other notables from Pechina. He became governor of the province of Ilbira in 328/940, and led a major caliphal expedition against the Frankish coasts as admiral of the fleet in 331/943

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yearly campaigns against the Christian north, did not change the nature of maritime violence fundamentally. They were not intended to conquer, merely increasing the prospects of profit by their injection of resources and military organisation, the difference being that caliphal approval was now explicit.

The fragmentation of al-Andalus into the taifa kingdoms at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century disrupted many of the basic political and economic structures of the fallen Umayyad caliphate.[11] The establishment of over 30 regional polities redirected resources from the centralising pressures of the Umayyad court, but also posed serious problems of legitimacy to those who inherited the *de facto* power.[12] As *amīr al-mu'minīn*, or "commander of the believers", the caliph was the sole recognisable representative of the Islamic community.[13] Without acknowledgement by the now non-existent caliph, any political power was illegitimate. The taifa rulers were thus given the opportunity to build their independent power bases into viable kingdoms, but were also faced with the inherent instability of their own political authority.

The taifa of Denia on the Iberian eastern seaboard was one of the most dynamic of the regional polities that emerged from the disintegrated Cordovan caliphate.[14] Mujāhid al-'Āmirī based his state not only on its continental territories, but especially on the maritime networks that linked it with the Mediterranean. Commerce with Muslim and Christian ports played a role in Denia's success, but both Latin and Arabic sources emphasise its practice of piracy on a grand scale. In fact, Mujāhid built his state as a continuation of the maritime policies of the Cordovan caliphate under which the piracy of independent coastal communities was adopted and expanded into a state-sponsored *guerre de course*. Mujāhid's pursuance of this policy stemmed from his role in the erstwhile caliphate, but was also motivated by a combination of religious, political and economic factors. The legitimacy provided by his maritime *jihād* helped to shore up his power at a time of political instability. This policy also provided the taifa's economic foundation for much of its history, and the Mediterranean maritime lanes became as much a fiscal extension of Denia as its continental territories.

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and 334/945. He was succeeded as *qā'id al-baḥr* by his son, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Rumāḥis, who went on to become one of the three most powerful men in the caliphate: Ibn Hayyān, *al-Muqtabas V*, 312–313; Al-'Udhrī, *Nusūs 'an al-Andalus*, 90; E. Lévi-Provençal, *HEM*, 3: 109.

[11] On the taifa period see P. Scales, *The Fall of the Caliphate of Córdoba* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); D. Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain 1002–1086* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); E. Lévi-Provençal, *HEM*, vol. 2, *Le Califat de Cordoue* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1950), pp. 291–341; P. Guichard, B. Soravia, *Les Royaumes de taifas. Apogée culturelle et déclin politique des émirats andalous du XI^e siècle* (Paris: Geuthner, 2007).

[12] See F. Clément's study on political legitimacy during the taifa period: *Pouvoir et légitimité en Espagne musulmane à l'époque des* taifas *(V^e–XI^e siècle). L'imam fictif* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997).

[13] P. Crone's *God's Caliph. Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) provides the most recent review of caliphal power and political legitimacy, especially pp. 220–246.

[14] On Denia, see: M.J. Rubiera Mata, *La taifa de Denia* (Alicante: Instituto Juan Gil-Albert, 1985); R. Chabas Llorens, *Historia de la ciudad de Denia* (Denia, 1874); C. Sarnelli Cerqua, *Mujāhid al-'Āmirī "wa ibnuhu" Iqbāl al-dawla fī Dāniya wa Sardāniya wa jazr al-Balayār fi l-qarn al-khāmis al-hijra – al-ḥadā 'ashrā al-mīlādī* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qahira al-Hadītha, 1961); T. Bruce, "La taifa de Denia et la Méditerranée au XI^e siècle", PhD dissertation, Université de Toulouse II-le Mirail, 2009.

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A deliberate pursuit of piracy

Mujāhid is best known to Latin sources for his failed invasion of Sardinia in 405/1015.[15] Referred to as Musetto in the texts, he led 120 ships and a thousand cavalry against the island, and a twelfth-century Pisan epic poem, the *Liber Maiolichinus*, states that he conquered the plains from the mountains to the sea.[16] Mujāhid also established a beachhead on the Italian coast near Luni.[17] These conquests gave Mujāhid control over the maritime routes essential to the survival of the emerging ports of Pisa and Genoa. In fact, with the Balearic Islands and now Sardinia, Mujāhid controlled almost the entire maritime network for the Western Mediterranean.[18] The Pisan and Genoese reaction was thus rapid and efficient: in 406/1016 their combined fleets, acting with papal benediction, chased Mujāhid from the island, ending his plans of Mediterranean domination.[19]

The defeat did not, however, end the *guerre de course* that would become Denia's central activity in the following decades. Pisan sources note renewed, albeit smaller, attacks in 1019, 1021 and 1028.[20] A massive, though failed, raid was carried out against Narbonne in 1018, and during the 1020s Barcelona was forced to turn to a Norman mercenary for protection from Mujāhid's tribute-exacting expeditions.[21]

The same policies were also carried out under 'Alī, Mujāhid's son. 'Alī was perhaps more merchant-minded than his father, but he nevertheless continued to support maritime violence against the Christian West.[22] The Abbey of Lérins, off the coast of southern France, was repeatedly attacked, its monks later to be found

[15] Bernard Marangonis, *Annales pisani a. 1004–1175*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores*, t. 19, ed. K. Pertz (Hannover, 1866), p. 238; *Breviarium Pisanae Historiae. Chronica varia Pisana*, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, t. 6, ed. F. Ughello (Milan, 1725), p. 167; F. Novati, "Un nuovo testo degli *Annales Pisani antiquissimi* e le prime lotte di Pisa contro gli Arabi", in *Centenario della nascita di Michele Amari*, 2 vols. (Palermo: 1910), 2: 13; Ranieri Sardo, *Cronaca di Pisa*, ed. O. Banti (Rome: Instituto Storico Italiano, 1963), pp. 13–14; T. Bruce, "The politics of violence and trade: Denia and Pisa in the eleventh century", *Journal of Medieval History*, 32 (2006): 132–136.

[16] *Liber maiolichinus de gestis pisanorum illustribus*, ed. C. Calisse (Rome, 1904), p. 41.

[17] *Thietmari chronicon*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores*, t. 3, ed. G.H. Pertz (Hannover, 1839), p. 850.

[18] On the famous "route of the islands" see: al-Bakrī, *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale par Abou-Obeïd-el-Bekri*, ed. and French trans. M.G. de Slane (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1965), pp. 83, 168–169; T. Lewicki, "Les voies maritimes de la Méditerranée dans le haut Moyen Age d'après les sources arabes", in *La Navigazione mediterranea nell'alto Medioevo*, Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 25 (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1978), 2: 455; C. Courtois, "Les rapports entre l'Afrique et la Gaule au début du Moyen Age", *Cahiers de Tunisie*, 6 (1954): 135–140; O.R. Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain. The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula, 900–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 17; J.H. Pryor, *Geography, Technology, and War. Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649–1571* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 39, 91.

[19] The fourteenth-century Pisan chronicler Ranieri Sardo exaggeratedly claims that Benedict VIII sent legates to Pisa with the "vermilion banner" to preach the crusade, but Thietmar, the eleventh-century bishop of Merseburg, does write that he called out for Christians to chase away the Saracens raiding the coast: Ranieri Sardo, *Cronaca di Pisa*, 14; *Thietmari chronicon*, 851.

[20] *Annales pisani*, 238; *Breviarium Pisanae Historiae*, 167.

[21] *Ademari Cabannensis chronicon*, *Corpus Christianorum*, 129, ed. P. Bourgain (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 171, 174; T. Bruce, "An intercultural dialogue between the Muslim Taifa of Denia and the Christian county of Barcelona in the eleventh century", *Medieval Encounters*, 15 (2009): 11–13.

[22] Both Ibn Bassām and 'Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn al-Zīrī wrote that Denia's fall to Zaragoza was due to 'Alī's obsession with money and his negligence of military affairs: Ibn Bassām, *al-Dhakhīra fī maḥāsin ahl al-jazīra*, 4 vols, ed. I. 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2000), 4: 183–184; 'Abd Allāh b.

for sale in the markets of Denia.[23] Moreover, Muslim raids from Denia continued to plague Sardinia. Towards the middle of the century, Andalusī scholars sailing from Denia, one of whom was explicitly on *jihād*, were killed in armed conflicts around the island.[24] A Sard adaptation of the life of S. Saturno from the second half of the century includes a prayer for protection from Muslim attacks, while a life of S. Gavino transforms a local Roman martyr's story to one of Muslim persecution.[25] The Ligurian coasts were also subject to attack, since a Genoese charter from 1056 required foreigners to help survey the coasts and aid the city in case of Muslim aggression.[26]

'Alī's governor of the Balearic Islands, Mubashshar Nāṣir al-Dawla, pursued an equally aggressive campaign of piracy in the later half of the century. Barcelona had to cede fortifications along its coast in 1041 to help locals protect themselves against pirate attacks, and in 1069 the town of Elne on the southern French coast moved its church inland to avoid incursions from the Balearics.[27] Even after the fall of Denia to Zaragoza in 468/1076, Mubashshar continued what the famous Muslim historian Ibn Khaldūn called a "*jihād* on the sea", until he was ousted from power by the combined fleets of Pisa and Barcelona in 1115.[28]

Although other ports along the Iberian and North African coasts were also pirate havens, no other fifth/eleventh-century port is as closely associated with this *guerre de course*. A century later, the Muslim geographer Idrīsī wrote that Denia was the port of call for the fleets attacking Christian coasts, and that most of their ships were built there.[29] Indeed, both Mujāhid and 'Alī invested significant resources in their naval infrastructures, building arsenals and port facilities in Denia, along the coast and on Majorca. A map of Denia's continental conquests conspicuously coincides with the routes and regions that supplied the much-needed wood for maintaining such a fleet.[30] Piracy was thus central to the taifa of Denia, actively

(*footnote continued*)
Buluqqīn al-Zīrī, *Kitāb l-tibyān li l-āmīr 'Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn ākhir umarā' banī zīrī bi-Gharnāṭā*, ed. A.T. Ṭībī (Rabat: Manshurāt 'Ukaz, 1995), p. 103.

[23] *Vita s. Ysarno abbate s. Victoris*, in *Acta Sanctorum*, September, t. 6 (Paris, 1867), pp. 747–749.

[24] Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Kitāb al-ṣila*, 2 vols, ed. F. Codera (Madrid, 1882–3), 2: 369, n. 800; al-Humaydī, *Kitāb jadhwat al-muqtabis fī dhikr wulāt al-Andalus*, ed. M. Ibn Tawit al-Tany (Cairo: al-Maktaba l-Andalusiyya, 1953), p. 304, n. 697.

[25] B. Motzo, "S. Saturno di Cagliari", *Archivio storico sardo*, 16 (1926): 27; A. Canto, *Sa vitta et sa morte et passion de Sanctu Gavinu Prothu et Ɉanuariu*, ed. F. Alziator (Cagliari: Editrice sarda Fossataro, 1976), p. 31.

[26] *Codice diplomatico della Repubblica di Genova dal DCCCCLVIII al MCLXIII*, vol. 1, ed. C. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1936), doc. 3, p. 8.

[27] *España Sagrada*. t. 43. *De la Santa Iglesia de Gerona en su estado antiguo*, ed. E. Flórezi, A. Merino and J. de la Canal (Madrid, 1819), pp. 184–185 and appendix 30, p. 437; P. de Marca, *Marca hispanica sive limes hispanicus* (Paris, 1688) (re-ed. Barcelona: Editorial Base, 1998), col. 1148, CCLXXII.

[28] Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'ibar wa-dīwān al-mubtada' wa-al-khabar fī ayyām al-'arab wa-al-'ajam wa-al-barbar wa-man 'āṣarahum min dhawī l-ṣultān al-akbar*, 7 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1956–1961), 4: 355.

[29] Al-Himyarī, *La Péninsule ibérique au Moyen Age d'après le* Kitâb ar-Rawd al-mi'târ fi habar al-aktâr *d'Ibn 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyarî*, ed. and French trans. E. Lévi-Provençal (Leiden: Brill, 1938), pp. 76/95; Idrīsī, *Opus geographicum sive "Liber ad eorum delectationem qui terras peragrare studeant"*, ed. E. Cerulli, F. Gabrieli, G. Levi della Vida, L. Petech, and G. Tucci (Naples-Rome: Brill, 1971–1984), 5: 557.

[30] Denia's politics were also dictated by a desire to control the principal routes leading to its ports, but conquests around Cuenca and Baeza must have taken into account their proximity to inexhaustible sources of timber: Idrīsī, *Opus geographicum*, 5: 560; Al-Rāzī, "La Description de l'Espagne d'Ahmad

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pursued and supported by its rulers, and as such was integral to their management of state affairs, central even to their concept of their own state.

Legitimacy and the State

Mujāhid's entire personal and political education had formed him to be an elite member of the Umayyad power structure, and in the last years of the caliphate he was a major military and administrative figure in the *Sharq al-Andalus*, or eastern coastal provinces.[31] In this context, it is import to remember the *jihādist* mentality of the 'Āmirīd dynasty that dominated the weak Umayyad caliph Hishām II in the last quarter of the fourth/tenth century. To justify his almost unlimited power as *ḥājib*, al-Manṣūr had portrayed himself as a champion of the faith, conducting successful yearly raids against the Christian north.[32] His son, 'Abd al-Malik, continued this policy, while relying increasingly on his *Ṣaqāliba* client administrators to carry it out.[33] Mujāhid was among 'Abd al-Malik's most important agents, and as such was responsible in some way for the increase in naval attacks noted by Latin and Arabic sources towards the end of the caliphate.[34] He thus implicitly understood the importance of *jihād* in legitimising illicit power. Named from his birth as one who carried out holy war, Mujāhid's outlook was

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(*footnote continued*)
al-Rāzī", French trans. E. Lévi-Provençal, *Al-Andalus*, 18 (1953): 69; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'ibar*, 4: 158; 'Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn, *Tibyān*, 92.

[31] According to the anonymous *Dhikr bilād al-Andalus*, Mujāhid was raised and educated alongside al-Manṣūr's two sons, 'Abd al-Malik and 'Abd al-Raḥmān, where he learned literature, horse riding and archery: *Dhikr bilād al-Andalus (Descripción anónima de al-Andalus)*, 2 vols, ed. and Spanish trans. L. Molina (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto "Miguel Asín", 1983), pp. 217/229. Ibn 'Idhārī writes that Mujāhid was named as governor in the *Sharq al-Andalus* by al-Manṣūr himself, while Ibn Khaldūn, al-Qalqashandī and the anonymous chronicle of the *mulūk al-ṭawā'if* place him in the region before the outbreak of the *fitna* in 1009: Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-mughrib*, t. III, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane au XI^ème^ siècle. Texte arabe publié pour la première fois d'après un manuscrit de Fès*, ed. E. Lévi-Provençal (Paris: Geuthner, 1930), p. 155; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'ibar*, 4: 355; al-Qalqashandī, *Kitāb ṣubḥ al-'ashā fī kitābāt al-inshā'* (Cairo: Matabaʻat al-Amīriyya, 1915), 5: 256; *Chronique anonyme des mulūk al-ṭawā'if*, ed. E. Lévi-Provençal, published as an appendix to the *Bayān al-mughrib*, t. III (Paris: Geuthner, 1930), pp. 301–302.

[32] E. Lévi-Provençal, *HEM*, 2: 233; J.M. Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate. The Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy in al-Andalus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 2000), p. 100; Ph. Sénac, *Al-Mansûr. Le fléau de l'an mil* (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 2006), p. 105.

[33] E. Lévi-Provençal, *HEM*, 2: 283–290. The number of *fityān al-akbār*, or Slav officers, rose from 7 under al-Manṣūr to 26 under 'Abd al-Malīk: Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb ā'māl al-ā'lām*, partial ed. E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane extraite du* Kitāb aʻmāl al-āʻlām (Rabat: F. Moncho, 1934), p. 121. In the Andalusī historiographical context, *Ṣiqlābī* refers in general to a servile person of European origin, similar in origin to the English slave/Slav. As a collective plural, *Ṣaqāliba*, the term refers to the servile palatine and military officers who composed a major part of the caliphal administration in the latter half of the tenth/fourth century, and who would go on to form one of the factional blocks of power during the *fitna*. See the recent study by M. Méouak, Ṣaqāliba, *eunuques et esclaves à la conquête du pouvoir. Géographie et histoire des élites politiques «marginales» dans l'Espagne umayyade* (Helsinki: Academia scientiarum Fennica, 2004); D. Wasserstein, *Rise and Fall*, 24–25, 58–59; P. Scales, *The Fall*, 132–141.

[34] Ibn al-Khaṭīb singles out Mujāhid, along with Khayrān, for his essential role both before and after the *fitna*: *Kitāb ā'māl al-ā'lām*, 121. In 1006, a Byzantine delegation presented 'Abd al-Malīk with Andalusī sailors taken prisoner off the coast of Sardinia, while Pisan sources note attacks by Saracen and "Spanish" fleets (*stolus de Ispania*) in 1004 and 1012: Ibn Bassām, *al-Dhakhīra*, 4: 63–64; *Annales pisani*, 238; *Breviarium Pisanae Historiae*, 167.

fundamentally different from that of his fellow taifa rulers on the Iberian coast.[35] The taifas of Tortosa, Valencia and Almería were equally well situated and equipped at the beginning of the century, but their rulers had served as palatine administrators before the collapse of the caliphate.[36] They were not *mujahidin*, and they based their states on an administrative logic that in many ways still looked towards Cordova and withdrew from the sea.

Mujāhid, on the other hand, saw Denia from the beginning as a frontier polity, existing on the perpetual wave of *jihād*. In 404/1013, only three years after the fall of Cordova, Mujāhid declared a new caliphate in Denia, under the puppet figure of ʻAbd Allāh al-Muʻayṭī.[37] He then set off on the conquest of the Mediterranean maritime routes, taking first the Balearic Islands, then Sardinia. Under the caliphal legitimacy of al-Muʻayṭī's Umayyad name, Mujāhid was thus constructing a state based on the expansion of Islam across the sea, an act for which his contemporaries consistently praised him before Allāh. On returning from his failure in Sardinia, Mujāhid expelled his rebellious caliph, but did not bother to replace him.[38] This did not, however, prevent him from continuing his maritime *jihād*, and in fact may have pushed him to pursue it. Without the legitimacy afforded by his puppet caliph, Mujāhid had to justify his own power through the most efficient means he knew. In leading his perpetual *guerre de course* against the Christians, the ruler of Denia was borrowing from the political strategies of al-Manṣūr. ʻAlī, Mujāhid's son, is better known for his greed and mercantile activities, but he too understood the link between piracy and his own political power, and maintained his father's corsair policies until his fall in 468/1076.

Economics

Piracy also contributed to the taifa's economic foundation for much of its history. Denia was among the most affluent of the taifa courts, its rulers' patronage among the most generous, and it was famous for its poets and religious scholars.[39] At the

[35] Mujāhid's full name, as given by al-Humaydī, was Mujāhid b. ʻAbd Allāh al-ʻĀmirī Abū l-Jaysh. Thus, while his *ism*, Mujāhid, named him as one who carried out *jihād*, his *kunya*, Abū al-Jaysh, or "father of the army", equally designated him for military glory: al-Humaydī, *Kitāb jadhwat al-muqtabis*, n. 859, p. 352.

[36] Almeria served as the home port for the caliphal fleet, while Tortosa was home to caliphal shipyards established by ʻAbd al-Raḥmān III in 944: Ch. Picard, *La mer*, 25–29; E. Lévi-Provençal, *Inscriptions arabes d'Espagne*, 2 vols (Leiden-Paris: Brill, 1931), 1: 83. Valencia's port was less well-developed, but its urban structures, as demonstrated by the few *'ulamā'* born and operating there in the later fourth/tenth century, surpassed Denia's at the beginning of the *fitna*: P. Guichard, "Le peuplement de la région de Valence aux deux premiers siècles de la domination musulmane", *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 5 (1969): 109. Muẓaffar and Mubārak of Valencia served as palatine administrators before being placed in charge of the Valencian irrigation networks: Ibn Bassām, *al-Dhakhīra*, 3: 15, 18. Labīb and Khayrān, respectively rulers of Tortosa and Almeria, were both eunuchs, whose names may indicate non-military service: E. Lévi-Provençal, *HEM*, 2: 125–126.

[37] Ibn ʻIdhārī, *Bayān*, 116; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb āʻmāl al-āʻlām*, 252–253; Ibn Bassām, *al-Dhakhīra*, 1: 42–43.

[38] Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb āʻmāl al-āʻlām*, 253; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʻibar*, 4: 354; Ibn Ḥazm, *Ǧamharat ansāb al-ʻarab*, ed. A.M. Hārūn (Cairo: Dār al-Maʻārif, 1971), p. 115.

[39] On Denia's court, see: C. Sarnelli Cerqa, "La vita intelletuale a Denia alla corte di Muǧâhid al-ʻÂmirî", *Scritti in onore di Laura Veccia Vaglieri*, *Annali dell'Istituto universitario orientale di Napoli*, new series, 14 (Naples: Instituto universitario orientale di Napoli, 1964), pp. 1–26; M.J. Rubiera Mata, *La taifa de Denia*, 115–153.

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beginning of the century, Denia was little more than a convenient anchorage, but Mujāhid and ʿAlī built it into a regional capital, with suitable fortifications and urban structures.[40] Mujāhid also maintained a significant military presence, augmented by mercenary forces bought from the Catalans.[41] Taxation provided some of the means for these programmes vital to the state, and the taifa rulers are infamous in Arabic sources for their abusive fiscal policies.[42] For most of Mujāhid's reign, however, booty was the state's primary source of income, and taxation only became more important under ʿAlī.

While high seas attacks appeal more to modern ideas of piracy, human captives acquired through raids were the primary booty of early medieval Islamic pirates.[43] In the fourth/tenth century, Ibn Hawqal noted the importance of Pechina, the principal Andalusī port for piracy in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries, in supplying slaves to the rest of the Islamic world.[44] It is difficult to quantify the importance of human booty for Denia, but a number of the taifa's officials were enfranchised clients.[45] Moreover, Ibn al-Khaṭīb notes that after Mujāhid's invasion of Sardinia, the market was so flooded with slaves it was impossible to get a good price for them.[46] Mujāhid and ʿAlī may not have been directly active in Denia's slave markets, but they could exercise control over them. In 1046, in fact, ʿAlī granted the Barcelonan count Ramon Berenguer I's request that captured monks from the abbey of Lérins on sale in Denia be freed.[47] The slave traffic running through Denia was no doubt lucrative for Mujāhid and ʿAlī, who would have

[40] J.A. Gisbert Santonja, V. Burguera Sanmateu, J. Bolufer i Marques, *La cerámica de Daniya – Dénia – Alfares y ajuares domésticos de los siglos XII–XIII* (Madrid: Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1992); J.A. Gisbert, "*Dâniya* y la Vila de Denia. En torno al urbanismo de una ciudad medieval", in *Urbanismo medieval del país valenciano*, ed. R. Azuar, S. Gutiérrez, F. Valdés (Madrid: Polifemo, 1993), pp. 63–104.

[41] Al-Muʿtadid b. Abbād of Seville chastised ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz of Valencia, Ibn Mundhir of Zaragoza, Aḥmad ʿAḍud al-Dawla of Alpuente and Mujāhid for their use Christian mercenaries. In his conflicts with Mujāhid, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz employed Castilians through relations via his mother, but both Ibn Mundhir and Mujāhid maintained particularly close relations with Barcelona. Pierre Bonnassie has pointed out that the Catalans consistently sided with the Slav taifas to advance their interests along the coast, and a 1058 treaty between Denia and Barcelona implies relations that predate the treaty itself. In addition, coins from Denia mentioned in Catalan documents and discovered in the region suggest economic relations: Ibn Bassām, *al-Dhakhīra*, 1: 480; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb āʿmāl al-āʿlām*, 225; P. Bonnassie, *La Catalogne du milieu du X^e à la fin du XI^e siècle: croissance et mutations d'une société* (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 1975), p. 351. For discussion of the 1058 treaty and Denia's economic and diplomatic relations with Barcelona, see T. Bruce, "An intercultural dialogue", 1–34.

[42] See, for example: A.-L. Prémare, P. Guichard, "Croissance urbaine et société rurale à Valence au début de l'époque des royaumes de taifas (XI^e siècle de J.-C.). Traduction et commentaire d'un texte d'Ibn Hayyân", *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 31 (1981): 15–30; M. Barceló, "'Rodes que giren dins el foc de l'infern' o per a què servia la moneda dels taifes?", *Actas del VI encuentro de estudios numismáticos: La producción y circulación de moneda en* Sharq al-Andalus *durante las primeras taifas (404–478/1013–1085)*, *Gaceta numismatica*, 105/106 (1992): 15–23.

[43] P. Guichard, "Animation maritime", 190, 194.

[44] Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-ārd (Opus Geographicum)*, B.G.A., ed. J.H. Kramers (Leiden: Brill, 1967), p. 110 (*La Configuration de la Terre [Kitāb sūrat al-arḍ]*, 2 vols, French trans. J.H. Kramers and G. Wiet [Paris: Maisonneuve, 1964], 1: 109). Pechina's port, Almería, would continue as the leading maritime installation along the Eastern seaboard throughout the period in question.

[45] Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿibar*, 4: 355; ʿAbd Allāh b. Buluqqīn, *Tibyān*, 106; Ibn al-Abbār, *Kitāb al-ḥulla l-siyarāʾ*, 2 vols., ed. H. Monés (Cairo: al-Sharika al-ʿArabiyya, 1964), 2: 149–150; M.J. Rubiera Mata, *La taifa de Denia*, 104.

[46] Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb āʿmāl al-āʿlām*, 251.

[47] *Vita s. Ysarno abbate s. Victoris*, 748.

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received one-fifth of the booty as their legal share of spoils, as well as taxes imposed on goods and people entering and exiting their port.[48]

The reinforced presence of the Christian port cities in the Western Mediterranean seems to have increasingly limited booty as a source of state revenue, however. Pisan action against Muslim beachheads interfering with maritime commerce began as early as 1006 in the straits of Calabria, and their ability to oust Mujāhid from Sardinia points to their growing strength.[49] In 1035, the Pisans raided the North African port of Annaba (Hippo), also famous as a pirate haven, and two decades later attacked Palermo, bringing home enough loot to begin construction on their new cathedral.[50] The Mediterranean maritime lanes were no longer the domain of Muslim navies, and navigation became increasingly difficult. Biographies of Muslim scholars show numerous attacks on the high seas, and over the course of the century jurists began counselling against travelling by boat for the pilgrimage to Mecca.[51] In the second half of the century, the poet Abū al-'Arab Muṣ'ab al-Ṣiqillī refused an invitation to come to Seville from Sicily on the grounds that "the sea belongs to the *Rūm*, and the ships sailing on it run a great risk".[52] This does not mean that Islamic piracy ceased, but it would have been increasingly difficult for privateering to reliably provide for the needs of Denia's court in this context. As a result, Mujāhid and 'Alī turned to taxation and monetary emissions to supplement declining revenues.

Ibn Ḥazm, the intransigent Ẓāhirī jurist known for his vehement attacks on the *mulūk al-ṭawā'if*, wrote that the taifa rulers' monetary emissions merely served to better extort their subjects through illegitimate taxes to finance their armies and reinforce their authority.[53] By issuing their own money, and demonetising older and foreign coins, taifa rulers could demand fiscal payments in specie whose monetary value they could easily manipulate.[54] Alberto Canto has shown that the perforation commonly observed in Umayyad, taifal and Fātimid coins in al-Andalus was probably a means of demonetisation.[55] Taxes could be collected in kind, or with already circulating coins, but by controlling monetary production taifa rulers were able to extract more revenue from their subjects.

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[48] D. Valérian, "La course", 8. Islamic jurists note that even expeditions without explicit authorisation to penetrate enemy lands must give the ruler his legal share of booty in order to keep their four-fifths: H. Laoust, *Le précis de droit d'Ibn Qudāma* (Beirut: Institut Français d'Etudes Arabes de Damas, 1950), p. 279; A. Ben Shemesh, *Taxation in Islam*, 3 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 2: 52–53.

[49] *Annales pisani*, 238; *Breviarium Pisanae Historiae*, 167.

[50] *Annales pisani*, 238; *Breviarium Pisanae Historiae*, 167; al-Bakrī, *Description*, 55.

[51] Al-Ḥumaydī, *Kitāb jadhwat al-muqtabis fī dhikr wulāt al-Andalus*, ed. I. al-Abyārī (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Andalusiyya, 1989), p. 274, n. 332; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Kitāb al-ṣila*, ed. I. al-Abyārī (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Andalusiyya, 1989), p. 351, n. 520, p. 548, n. 809, p. 719, n. 1028; V. Lagardère, *Histoire et société en Occident musulman au Moyen Âge. Analyse du* Mi'yâr *d'al-Wanšarîsî* (Madrid: Casa de Velazquez, 1995), pp. 29, 63.

[52] H. Pérès, *La poésie andalouse en arabe classique au XI^e siècle* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1953), p. 216.

[53] M. Barceló, "'Rodes que giren dins el foc de l'infern'", 199; Ibn Ḥazm, "Un codice inexplorado del cordobes Ibn Hazm", ed. and Spanish trans. M. Asín Palacios, *Al-Andalus*, 2 (1934): 35/38.

[54] Rulers also charged for monetising metal from coins. E. Lévi-Provençal notes rates of 1.75% for gold and 3% for silver in fourteenth-century Fez, and considers that rates would have been similar during the Early Middle Ages: *HEM*, 3: 42.

[55] A. Canto García, "Perforations in coins of the Andalusian Umayyad Caliphate: a form of demonetization?", in *Problems of Medieval Coinage in the Iberian Area*, *2*, ed. M. Gomes Marques and M. Crusafont i Sabater (Avilés: Sociedad Numismatica Avilesina, 1986), pp. 356–357.

Muslim authors such as Ibn Ḥayyān and al-Ṭurṭushī also describe this as the primary fiscal policy of the most powerful taifa states over the course of the century, and Denia under ʿAlī was no exception.[56] However, apart from sporadic mintings between 402/1011–2 and 406/1015–6, Denia did not begin to produce its own coins until the last years of Mujāhid's reign, towards 435/1043–4, and significant production began only under ʿAlī.[57] Mintings were intermittent, and specimens are not extant for 444–5/1052–4, 451–4/1059–63, 456/1063–4 and 458–66/1065–74, but Denia was one of the most prolific of the taifas producing money.[58] Felix Retamero enumerates 144 total extent pieces for Denia, 120 of which were minted by ʿAlī.[59] He also notes that almost 25% of the Denia coins are perforated.[60] In his study of the numismatic collection of the national archaeological museum in Madrid, Alberto Canto shows that only coins from ʿAbbādid Seville have similar perforation rates, while those from other taifas are between 0 and 9%.[61] As mentioned above, perforation was most likely a means of demonetisation intended to force a taifa's subjects to exchange their money for legal specie for the payment of fiscal debts. Felix Retamero thus concludes that from 435/1043–4, "the structure of [Denia's] financing depended in large part on a conscious policy of [monetary] production".[62] While additional factors also help explain Denia's monetary production beginning in the 430s/1040s, the move to finance their court through taxation and monetary emissions underlines the essential contribution of booty before that time.[63]

[56] Ibn Bassām, *al-Dhakhīra*, 3: 15–19; A.-L. Prémare, P. Guichard, "Croissance urbaine", *passim*; Al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Sirāj al-mulūk*, ed. J. al-Bayātī (London: Riyāḍ al Rayyis lil-Kutub wa-l-Nashr, 1990), p. 370; V. Lagardère, "Structures étatiques et communautés rurales: les impositions légales et illégales en al-Andalus et au Maghreb (XI^{e}–XV^{e})", *Studia islamica*, 80 (1994): 60.

[57] Between 402/1011–2 and 406/1015–6, Mujāhid issued coins from a mint in Alūṭa, whose location has yet to be identified. Carrying first the name of Hishām II, then al-Muʿaytī, the coins were probably intended to help finance Mujāhid's invasion of Sardinia: A. Vives y Escudero, *Monedas de las dinastías arábigo-españolas* (Madrid, 1893), ns. 711–712, 819–820; A. Prieto y Vives, *Los reyes de taifas. Estudio histórico-numismático de los musulmanes españoles en el siglo V de la Hégira (XI de J. C.)* (Madrid: Impr. de E. Maestre, 1926), ns. 134a, 134b, 135–137; G.C. Miles, *The Coinage of the Umayyads of Spain* (New York: The American Numismatic Society, 1950), ns. 347, 350; G.C. Miles, *Coins of the Spanish Mulūk al-Tawā'if* (New York: The American Numismatic Society, 1954), n. 159; A. Canto García, T. b. H. Ibrāhīm, "Suplemento a las monedas de los Reinos de Taifas", *Los Reyes de Taifas* (Madrid: UAM Ediciones, 2003), n. 80. Felix Retamero has argued that the coins were also intended to establish the dynastic succession between al-Muʿaytī and his son, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān: F. Retamero, "La formalización del poder en la monedas de los *mulūk* de Denia (siglo V H./XI D.C.)", *al-Qantara*, 27 (2006): 417–445. ʿAlī's brother, Hasan, minted coins between 430/1038 and 432/1041, perhaps as an act of rebellion against his father's decision to include ʿAlī in the dynastic succession: A. Vives y Escudero, *Monedas*, ns. 1323–1325; A. Prieto y Vives, *Los reyes*, ns. 198–205. The coins minted by Mujāhid in the last year of his reign bore the names of both his sons: A. Vives y Escudero, *Monedas*, ns. 1296–1300; A. Prieto y Vives, *Los reyes*, ns. 207–208; G.C. Miles, *Coins of the Spanish Mulūk al-Tawā'if*, n. 266.

[58] A. Vives y Escudero, *Monedas*, ns. 1304–22; A. Prieto y Vives, *Los reyes*, ns. 209–216; G.C. Miles, *Coins of the Spanish Mulūk al-Tawā'if*, ns. 267–291.

[59] F. Retamero, "Aproximació", 87, 104.

[60] F. Retamero, "Aproximació", 103. A high rate of perforation, and so demonetisation, may mean that Denia's monetary production was higher than extent coins lead to believe. Alberto Canto notes that perforation rates around 30% for ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III's earliest and rarest mintings indicate a "selective program of demonetization and recasting of coins": A. Canto García, "Perforations", 357.

[61] A. Canto García, "Perforations", 355.

[62] F. Retamero, "Aproximació", 103.

[63] F. Clément, P. Guichard and F. Retamero have also demonstrated the importance of monetary production as a legitimising factor for the taifa rulers: F. Clément, "L'apport de la numismatique pour

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Piracy and territoriality

The rise of privateering, as opposed to piracy, among Western Mediterranean ports in the Later Middle Ages indicates an ambitious desire to extend political power over sea lanes. Emily Sohmer Tai has argued that in their attempts to monopolise maritime violence and protect economic interests, ports like Pisa, Genoa and Barcelona were in fact territorialising those waters.[64] While letters of marque or similar authorisations are not extant for the fifth/eleventh century, Denia's rulers certainly used piracy as a political tool. Mujāhid and 'Alī's use of piracy foreshadowed later efforts by their Mediterranean counterparts, and should be similarly interpreted. In fact, while the dynamic nature of maritime territoriality is perhaps inconsistent with the more stable and contiguous lands formally subject to political power that emerged in the Later Middle Ages, it coincides closely with Denia's fragmented peninsular holdings.

Medieval Islamic political theory recognised only the frontier between *dār al-Islam* and *dār al-ḥarb*, and there could be no political boundaries within the Islamic world, unified as it must be under the unique leadership of the caliph-imām.[65] In reality, distinct polities did exist, although their boundaries were more zones of transition in which the flow of taxes gradually changed

(*footnote continued*)
l'étude des taifas andalouses du V^e^/XI^e^ siècle", *Archéologie islamique*, 4 (1994): 57–86; F. Clément, *Pouvoir*, 230–235, 260–272; P. Guichard, "Quelques réflexions sur le monnayage des premières taifas andalouses (1009/400–1059/451)", *II Jarique de numismàtica hispano-àrabe*, (Lerida: Institut d'Estudis Ilerdencs de la Diputació de Lleida, 1990), pp. 155–161; F. Retamero, "Aproximació", *passim*.

[64] E. Sohmer Tai, "Marking water", *passim*. Sohmer articulates her premise around Max Weber's idea of the state as a "compulsory organization with a territorial basis" and a monopoly of force: M. Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, English trans. of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 54–57. While Sohmer's work inspired much of this article, J.E. Thomson has argued that state monopolisation of force dates from only as recently as the nineteenth century and so has only limited applicability to pre-modern states: *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[65] A. Bazzana, P. Guichard, Ph. Sénac, "La frontière dans l'Espagne medieval", *Castrum 4. Frontière et peuplement dans le monde méditerranéen au Moyen Age*, ed. J.-M. Poisson (Rome-Madrid: Ecole française de Rome-Casa de Velazquez, 1992), pp. 35–59. The standard view is that the state, as a Western concept, did not exist in medieval Islam, and that political power existed only as a service to the community of believers or tool for the implementation of religion: A. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam. An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory: the Jurists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. XIV; F. Clément, *Pouvoir*, 22; H.A.R. Gibb, "Some consideration on the Sunni theory of the caliphate", *Studies on the Civilisation of Islam*, eds. S.J. Shaw and W.R. Polk (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 141. Patricia Crone reiterates the idea that from the beginning the *umma* was concomitantly a congregation and a political organisation whose members were both believers and citizens ruled by the Prophet: P. Crone, *God's Rule*, 13. Bertrand Badie writes that while the medieval European political model allowed for a political space of power that was autonomous from the religious, in the Islamic world distinct political space had no meaning: B. Badie, *Les deux Etats. Pouvoir et société en Occident et en terre d'Islam*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Seuil, 1997), pp. 19, 21 and *passim*. Nevertheless, in light of political realities, and the fragmentation of the Islamic world beginning in the fourth/tenth century, Islamic jurists began to nuance this view, justifying the existence of distinct political power (although without denying the at least symbolic supremacy of the caliph-imām): cf. Al-Māwardī, *Les Statuts gouvernementaux*, French trans. E. Fagnan (Algiers: Typ. A. Jourdan, 1915); H.A.R. Gibb, "Al-Mawardi's theory of the caliphate", *Studies on the Civilisation of Islam*, 151–65; L. Marlow, "Kings, prophets and the 'Ulamā' in mediaeval Islamic advice literature", *Studia Islamica*, 81 (1995): 101–120; P. Crone, *God's Rule*, 232–249.

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direction.[66] Fifth/eleventh-century al-Andalus was thus divided between a number of polities whose actual lands are almost impossible to discern.[67] Henri Terrasse mentioned "castles that were fortified, lost, retaken and sometimes even exchanged" as signs of the taifas' territorial instability and lack of borders, but this should not be confused with undefined territory.[68] Throughout its history, the taifa of Denia was constantly evolving, incorporating and ceding sites that despite their distance were crucial to its port and communications with the markets of the interior. Note, for example, that Denia's fall began when al-Muqtadir b. Hūd of Zaragoza asked to annex some of its fortifications hundreds of kilometres away from both cities, most likely near Alpuente.[69] Ibn Hūd only attacked when 'Alī ordered his governors (*'ummāl*) to maintain their allegiance and defend themselves. Likewise, Denia held Baeza and Segura, both near Jaén, juxtaposing and overlapping fortifications held by the taifas of Granada, Toledo and probably Almería.[70] Nevertheless, the diplomatic negotiations and military actions involved with the loss of these sites indicate that they were under Denia's domain despite their dispersion.

During a conflict between the taifas of Almeria and Granada, Ibn Ṣumādiḥ wrote to 'Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn that "territories can only be held by building and occupying [fortifications]".[71] While these sites (*ḥuṣūn*) could serve defensive purposes, numerous studies have shown that their primary purpose was administrative and fiscal, and that rather than through borders, territories were perceived through networks of *ḥuṣūn*.[72] It is noteworthy that the word used by Ibn Bassām for Denia's governors in charge of its fortifications, *'ummāl*, is most often associated with fiscal responsibilities.[73] In the absence of clear political borders, the taifa states can be seen as zones of fiscal authority enforced by military coercion. In fact, Pierre Guichard has argued that tribute was the defining link between the state and local communities in al-Andalus.[74] I would argue that a state's territory can be defined by its ability to extract revenue, and it is sovereign in those areas from which it can collect revenue without having to forward it on to a higher

[66] R.W. Brauer, *Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 85, n. 6 (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1995), p. 5. Dominique Valérian has argued that tribal loyalties as evidenced by *bay'a* oaths and the attribution of *'iqṭā'* contributed to the delineation of political space in later medieval North Africa: "Frontières et territoire dans le Maghreb de la fin du Moyen Age: les marches occidentals du sultanat hafside", *Correspondances*, 73 (2002–2003): 3–8.

[67] P. Guichard, B. Soravia, *Les Royaumes des taifas*, 87–89.

[68] H. Terrasse, "Caractères généraux des émirats espagnols au XI[e] siècle", *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 2 (1966): 195.

[69] Ibn Bassām, *al-Dhakhīra*, 4: 184.

[70] 'Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn, *Tibyān*, 92, 106; Ibn al-Abbār, *Kitāb l-ḥulla al-siyarā'*, 2: 149–150.

[71] 'Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn, *Tibyān*, 112.

[72] See, for example: A. Bazzana, P. Cressier, P. Guichard, *Les Châteaux ruraux d'al-Andalus. Histoire et archéologie des* husûn *du Sud-Est de l'Espagne* (Madrid: Casa de Velazquez, 1988); A. Bazzana, *Maisons d'al-Andalus. Habitat médiéval et structures du peuplement dans l'Espagne orientale*, 2 vols (Madrid: Casa de Velazquez, 1992), 2: 314–315 and *passim*. R. Azuar Ruiz has argued that a wave of fortification building in fifth/eleventh-century *Sharq al-Andalus* was connected to an intensified fiscalisation of the area: "Fortificaciones de taifas en el *Šarq* al-Andalus", *Castillos y territorio en al-Andalus*, ed. A. Malpica (Granada: Athos-Pérgamos, 1998), pp. 123–128.

[73] "'*Āmil*", *EI*[2], I: 435.

[74] P. Guichard, *Les Musulmans de Valence et la Reconquête (XI[e]–XIII[e] siècles)*, 2 vols (Damascus: Institut Français d'Etudes Arabes de Damas, 1990/1), p. 20.

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power.[75] In the case of Denia, where the majority of its financial resources came from piracy on maritime lanes, those lanes should then be viewed as a dynamic extension of its fiscal territory, especially given Denia's dominance of those lanes in the first years of its existence.[76] Of course, Denia's ships were not collecting taxes, but how much do they differ from tax-collecting military expeditions sent by rulers to uncooperative zones that they clearly considered under their authority?[77] Denia, the Balearic Islands and, for a time, Sardinia were the focal points for Mujāhid's Western Mediterranean network, while his ships can be seen as the *ḥuṣūn* through which he exercised his state's fiscal policy.

"Marking water" is how Emily Sohmer Tai described the territorialisation of the Mediterranean sea lanes. This fittingly evokes the shifting and ephemeral nature of maritime territory. Barcelona, Genoa and Pisa's corsair policies are perhaps more easily perceived as state policy, given extant documents and the fact that those polities coincide more readily with modern ideas of the state. Nevertheless, Mujāhid and 'Alī's pursuit of piracy was a coherent form of statecraft, one that defined, legitimised and financed their state. Denia's political space was in fact carried aboard the ships launched from its ports.

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[75] Other factors can of course be used to complete this, such as the authority to name and revoke judges.
[76] Denia controlled the first legs of the principal route between al-Andalus and the Central Mediterranean. Al-Idrīsī describes this route as proceeding from Denia to Ibiza to Majorca and then Sardinia, and ships from Barcelona followed the same path through the Balearics: *Opus geographicum*, 5: 582. The famous traveller Ibn Jubayr followed this same route during his pilgrimage in 578/1183, and specifies that his ship followed the coast from Ceuta to Denia before turning towards the Balearics: Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla (The Travels of Ibn Ǧubayr)*, 2nd ed., ed. W. Wright and M.J. De Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1907), pp. 35, 364.
[77] See, for example, the tax-gathering expedition led by Yūsuf b. Abī Muḥammad, *'āmil* of Ifrīqiya, in 379: Ibn 'Idhārī, *Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord et de l'Espagne musulmane intitulée* Kitāb al-bayān al-mughrib, t. I, *Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord de la conquête au XI^e siècle*, ed. G.S. Colin and E. Lévi-Provençal (Leiden: Brill, 1948), p. 245.