the first time in print), and also that of Wā'il b. Ayyūb (who led the Basran Ibāḍīs after al-Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb) provide glimpses into the minds of key Ibāḍī scholars from the formative period. Two anonymous texts end the collection: a reply (*radd*) to the "people of uncertainty" (*ahl al-shakk*), who appear to be similar to the Murji'a, and a summary of a work describing ʿUthmān's misdeeds.

Textual clues from the various selections add credibility to the argument for dating these works to the early period: for example, Abū ʿUbayda's emphasis on communal *sunna* in his treatise on *zakāt* (pp. 120–46) lends credence to an early date for this text. Similarly, the terminology for referring to non-Ibāḍī Muslims, whom the Ibāḍīs considered less-than-full Muslims, is not yet standardized across these writings. By the third/ninth century most Ibāḍīs employed the concept of *nifāq* (hypocrisy) to describe the shortcomings of non-Ibāḍī Muslims (the notion of *kufr al-niʿma* (disbelief stemming from "ingratitude") does not appear in Ibāḍī writings until after the third/ninth century): its absence in the writings of Abū ʿUbayda and Abū Mawdūd makes a strong case for dating their work to the second/eighth century. Additionally, the *siyar* of Wā'il b. Ayyūb and Khalaf b. Ziyād use the language of *nifāq* alongside other methods of describing non-Ibāḍīs, suggesting that such terminology was in the process of being agreed upon. While none of these clues, in and of themselves, offer definitive proof for early composition, there are more instances that could be mentioned and the mounting weight of this evidence progressively convinces.

The manuscripts upon which the edition is based are Omani, and they date from the end of the seventeenth to the latter quarter of the nineteenth centuries. In other words, the manuscripts were produced at a time when Ibāḍism was thriving once again in Oman, and thus Ibāḍīs were concerned to preserve and study their "heritage". This period of time coincides with the beginnings of the Ibāḍī "renaissance" (*nahda*), and the extent to which *nahda*-era concerns may have driven the selection of which texts to preserve in the first place remains an open question. This is a matter for further research, as the edition herein reviewed is a classic (and expertly done) text-critical project and does not engage with newer methodologies in text technology or manuscript studies. As much as this reviewer hopes that Drs al-Salimi and Madelung will continue their text-critical editions of early Ibāḍī material, it is also hoped that the manuscripts be examined for what insights they may yield about the early *nahda* period in Oman.

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ALISON VACCA:
Non-Muslim Provinces under Early Islam: Islamic Rule and Iranian Legitimacy in Armenia and Caucasian Albania.
(Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization.) xvi, 270 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. £75. ISBN 978 1 107 18851 8.
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Alison Vacca's book is an erudite and thought-provoking engagement with the history and historiography of the Marwānid and early ʿAbbāsid North (Armenia, Albania, and Georgia), viewed through the lens of the "Iranian intermezzo" that characterized the caliphate's former Sasanian provinces in the late ninth–eleventh

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centuries CE following the fragmentation of ʿAbbāsid political power and the rise of local Iranian rulers. Navigating a remarkable range of sources, Vacca makes a strong case for including the North in (the study of) both the Iranian cultural sphere and the early caliphate, notions that scholarship frequently disregards in favour of tying the Christian-majority North to Byzantium.

The book's primary interest is historiographical, examining how ʿAbbāsid-era Arabic and Armenian sources on the caliphal North (8th–9th century) adapt the region's Sasanian (perhaps also Parthian) legacies to convey an impression of continuity from pre-Islamic to early ʿAbbāsid times. However, as these sources were mostly composed during the Iranian intermezzo, Vacca argues that they should be read as comments on that period rather than earlier eras. In particular, the (re-) emergence of a specifically Iranian idiom of power during the intermezzo that was shared by Muslim and Christian rulers alike heavily influenced Armenian and Arabic writings on the caliphal North.

The history of the northern provinces in the caliphal period is of secondary import, mostly because very few contemporary works are extant today. Nevertheless, the book addresses both historiographical and historical issues in each chapter, with the two levels not always clearly distinguished.

The book comprises seven chapters, organized thematically rather than chronologically, and opens with a short but important preface on "Situating places, people, and dates". Chapter 1 lays out the book's premises and the common thread running through all chapters, asking whether the parallels between Sasanian and caliphal rule in the North represent real, perceived, or constructed continuity. Two related mnemohistorical trends are identified in the sources: forgetting Byzantium and (re-)remembering Iran.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on administrative geography. Chapter 2 demonstrates that it was (the legacy of) Sasanian rather than Byzantine administrative precedent that defined the description of the caliphal North in the Arabic geographical tradition and elsewhere. Chapter 3 examines the North's frontier status, arguing that it was above all a literary paradigm intended to delineate the caliphate from its neighbours. Muslim sources accordingly depicted the North as an integral part of the Islamic Empire. Here, too, Arabic and Persian works fell back on Iranian frames of reference, while the Byzantine legacy disappeared almost completely from the post-ninth-century CE Islamic tradition.

Chapters 4–6 address different aspects of caliphal rule in the North. Chapter 4 discusses the titles, responsibilities, and social composition of three levels of local leadership: the governors, the "Princes", and the nobility. This system of provincial administration and the dynamics between the different tiers are presented in ʿAbbāsid-era Armenian and Arabic sources as another inheritance from the Sasanian period.

Chapter 5 shifts the focus from local to imperial policy, looking specifically at caliphal "mechanisms of rule" (p. 41) in the North and comparing them to depictions of Sasanian and Byzantine governance. Investigating imperial approaches to religious and political elites as well as the general population, Vacca concludes that caliphal rule in the region was largely decentralized, allowing for significant local autonomy. Again, the Byzantine legacy as transmitted in ʿAbbāsid-era sources is negligible, caliphal policies being portrayed as continuing the norms of Sasanian rule.

Chapter 6 tackles two complex issues: the authenticity of the Arabic conquest treaties, and the taxation system of the caliphal north. The Marwānid reforms of the late seventh century CE signified a major change for the northern provinces, which had previously occupied the status of tributary vassals and enjoyed

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considerable independence. Marwānid centralization policies were met with pronounced resistance on the part of local elites and should thus be taken as evidence for actual discontinuity.

Chapter 7 concludes the book with a re-evaluation of the Sasanian heritage encountered thus far. Based on a discussion of the Arsacid heritage in the north and a comparison with the Sāmānids in the east, whose rule invoked Parthian rather than Sasanian legacies, Vacca suggests a "Parthian intermezzo" alongside/instead of an Iranian intermezzo founded on Sasanian precedents.

Alison Vacca presents a well-argued and insightful study that not only reassesses some of the Iranian intermezzo's defining characteristics, but also reintegrates the northern provinces into the history and historiography of the Islamic Empire. Her analysis demonstrates the potency of ideas, identities, and legacies across religious, political, ethnic, and linguistic divides in the early Islamic period, the diversity of which scholarship has too often failed to recognize. Perhaps most importantly, it emphasizes the necessity of differentiating between history and memory while simultaneously elucidating the difficulties of doing so, a dilemma that all historians face but do not always acknowledge.

However, the book's very erudition occasionally makes it difficult to access for non-specialists of northern histories and literatures. The author's reasoning that providing a coherent historical overview of the North would have created bias by choosing one narrative (e.g. the Arabic) over another (e.g. the Armenian) is understandable, but the reader is consequently left floundering at times. Those unfamiliar with one or more of the many languages and alphabets that appear in the book (Armenian, Arabic, Syriac, Georgian, Greek, (Middle) Persian, Parthian, Aramaic) will also occasionally struggle to follow the etymological explications.

While the author's arguments concerning the reference to Iranian legacies in ʿAbbāsid-era works are well made, she says relatively little about how this process actually worked. Regarding the specific Arabic terms for Northern nobility, for instance, Vacca argues that they "serve to cue readers into their ties to Iranian power and draw on pre-Islamic models of the social structure not just in Armenia and Albania, but in the broader Iranian *oikoumene*" (p. 136). But was this a conscious process of adaptation? Did the author-compilers of the Arabic sources use these terms expressly to make the connection to Iranian legacies (and if so, why and how?), or did they just take up vocabulary that was already in use?

These reservations do not detract from the book's merits, however. The author has produced a rich and engaging study of the North and Islamicate historiography that is sure to renew Islamicist interest in this region and further interdisciplinary approaches to the history of the early Islamic Empire.

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