

Jihād and the Caliphate before Hishām

The Doctrine of *Jihād*

More than any polity that had existed before it, the early Muslim caliphate was an ideological state, that is, a state directed toward a single, unified ideological goal. In general, the caliphate's ideology was the religion of Islam or the submission to God's will, as revealed in the Qur'ān to the Prophet Muhammad. Whether or not the Qur'ān contains clear prescriptions for an Islamic state, it is certain that the Prophet himself did in fact establish a charismatic polity based both on the enlightenment of God given to him by revelation, and on his own personal leadership. The sole official purpose of this polity was to teach and transmit the ideology of Islam.¹ After the Prophet's death, the caliphal state carried on this purpose, finding clear ideological expression for it in the doctrine of *jihād*, the struggle to establish God's rule in the earth through a continuous military effort against the non-Muslims until they either embraced Islam or agreed to pay tribute (*jizya*) on their persons in exchange for protection.² The idea of *jihād* was derived from the Qur'ān itself and had been applied by the Prophet Muḥammad perhaps as early as Ramaḍān 1/March 623.³ From that time forward, for more than a century and almost to the end of the Umayyad caliphate, despite a few interruptions, the policy of *jihād* was applied unswervingly. Indeed, the policy of *jihād* constituted one of the main ideological underpinnings for the institution of the caliphate from the beginning; since the struggle to expand Islam's realm had been continuous from the time of the Prophet, there was an obvious need for a central political and military leadership to control and coordinate that effort.

The emphasis put on *jihād* from the earliest times is one of the best attested facts of early Muslim history and therefore has been less challenged by doubts that have been raised by certain scholars about the value of the Muslim historical corpus, than have other

aspects of the received tradition. This is because the existence of the *jihād* is abundantly evidenced from many sources, including contemporary ones, both Muslim and Christian. Therefore, the early *jihād* is evidenced not by the elaboration of its theoretical doctrine in 'Abbāsīd and later legal texts so much as in the historical record. In fact, the earliest reference to the Prophet Muḥammad in a non-Muslim source, the *Doctrina Iacobi nuper baptizati* of c. 13/634, already mentions the military aspect of his teaching.⁴ The *jihād* is also emphasized by the Armenian pseudo-Sebēos, who wrote shortly after 40/661.⁵ Of course, the *jihād* also enjoys prominent display in the Arabic Muslim sources. Although the Muslim wars of conquest in the caliphal period are not always referred to in the sources using the term *jihād*,⁶ they are, nevertheless, plentifully documented.

Above all, the doctrine of the *jihād* is clearly spelt out in the Qur'ān. Muslims are required to go out to fight in God's path against unbelievers⁷ or, to make monetary contributions to the war effort.⁸ Such contributions are a loan to God that God will repay manyfold.⁹ Only those who either fight or spend in God's path are the truly sincere.¹⁰ Those holding back are threatened with both divine and worldly punishments and denounced as hypocrites.¹¹ From this, we can conclude that we have here an example of mass mobilization with universal conscription.¹² Fighting in God's path is portrayed as a commercial exchange by which the believers purchase paradise by sacrificing themselves.¹³ Great rewards in the afterlife are specified for those killed. It is believed that they will go straight to paradise without any further reckoning of their doings in their worldly life.¹⁴ Others who fight are also promised rewards in the hereafter, while shares of the booty are laid out for them if they prove victorious.¹⁵ Of this booty, the troops should get four-fifths of the total.¹⁶

The purposes of the *jihād* are also laid down clearly in the Qur'ān. At first, *jihād* is ordained to be waged defensively, so that the worship of God may be pursued freely in the earth.¹⁷ Then, it is also enjoined in retaliation against those who fight against the Muslims¹⁸ or have driven the believers out of home and family.¹⁹ But, it eventually takes on a more general definition. Muslims should fight those opposing them until all religion is devoted to God alone.²⁰ Indeed, God sent Muḥammad so that the religion of truth would triumph over all [other] religion.²¹ Opponents are usually characterized as oppressors both in the Qur'ān and in the historical tradition, which often refers to an opposing monarch as a tyrant (*tāghiyā*).²² Therefore, wars against them are wars of liberation.

When those opposing cease their opposition, their desire for peace must be accepted.²³ However, this concession eventually is

only made in consideration of a payment (*jizya*), which symbolizes their submission.²⁴ Presumably, this payment then belongs to the reward of the Muslim fighters, who should receive four-fifths of it.²⁵ *Jizya* should only be taken from peoples of the book, Jews, Christians, Sabeans, and perhaps Zoroastrians,²⁶ while idolaters may be slain wherever they are found and must be fought unless they accept Islam.²⁷ On the other hand, non-Muslims are not to be forced to embrace Islam.²⁸ Muslims are not to fight against one another.²⁹

The Qur'ān even advises the Muslims on military tactics. Especially, they are not to flinch or become weak when the fighting gets rough, but to endure patiently.³⁰ They should fight in a solid battle formation (*saff*).³¹ This verse suggests the use of military tactics quite different from those of the stereotypical raiding traditions of nomadic Arab tribes. The causes for the near defeat at the Battle of Uhud in 3/625 are analyzed in some detail.³² But the emphasis is most strongly on ideological commitment to fighting in God's path, a doctrine highlighted by the repeated promises of otherworldly rewards.³³

The second main source of Islamic religious and legal practice, the *ḥadīth* traditions attributed to the Prophet, supports what the Qur'ān says on the *jihād*. Even though the authenticity of their attribution to the Prophet has been challenged by some Western scholars, it is hardly disputable that the *ḥadīth* corpus is relevant to the reign of Hishām, at which time much of it must have been in circulation, and at least beginning to be recorded in writing, if indeed that process was not already considerably advanced. Certainly, as the *ḥadīth* represents what the Islamic community chose to remember about the Prophet's words and deeds, it also must reflect, on the whole, the norms of that community, at least by the end of Umayyad rule. Also, the tone of the *ḥadīth* concerned with *jihād* certainly fits what is known of the *jihād* of the Umayyad period better than it does that of the 'Abbāsids.

According to the *ḥadīth*, waging *jihād* in God's path is specifically defined as a duty which every able-bodied Muslim [male] must either perform or try to perform. In particular, a Muslim must respond to the call to arms if called upon.³⁴ The Prophet is said to have drawn up a list of all male Muslims for military purposes,³⁵ suggesting universal conscription, or at least the possibility of it. However, spending to support the *jihād* effort is equated with actual participation.³⁶ Certain other nonmilitary types of *jihād* are also acknowledged by the *ḥadīth*. Thus, performing the pilgrimage to Makka is equated with performing the war *jihād*.³⁷ The women's *jihād* is the pilgrimage,³⁸ though women may also go out to the *jihād*

with the men in noncombatant roles with equal spiritual reward implied, but without shares in the spoil.³⁹ Building a mosque to transmit the knowledge and religion of Islam is called the best kind of *jihād*.⁴⁰ Finally, in a tradition which spiritualizes and dematerializes the concept, the true fighter in God's path (*mujāhid*) is described as he who struggles against himself by himself.⁴¹ A noncanonical tradition even calls this the greater *jihād* in comparison to the military one, which is lesser.⁴² However, the overwhelming majority of *ḥadīths* refer to the military struggle when they use the term *jihād*.

Other *ḥadīths* state that the reward of going forth to fight in God's path is either paradise if one is killed or dies, spiritual reward for the effort and hardship involved, or spoil that is won from the enemy.⁴³ But the greatest reward is paradise for martyrs, that is, those killed while struggling in God's path, about which there are many *ḥadīths*.⁴⁴ These include the famous *ḥadīth* that paradise is in the shadow of swords.⁴⁵ Dying as a martyr completely wipes out one's sins.⁴⁶ Other *ḥadīths*, however, suggest that the moral state of the martyr at death also determines his degree in paradise.⁴⁷ Both a warrior in *jihād* who dies later in bed or a person who migrates for the sake of God and dies peacefully can also be considered martyrs.⁴⁸ Boring military duties such as garrison and guard duty also bring great spiritual rewards even if they involve no fighting.⁴⁹ A Muslim who dies from plague,⁵⁰ abdominal disease, drowning, or a collapsing building, also dies a martyr.⁵¹ Other versions add to this list those who are burnt alive, fall off a mountain, or are eaten by carnivorous beasts, and women who die as virgins, when pregnant, or in childbirth.⁵²

Jihād is the third most important duty of a Muslim after regular worship and filial piety,⁵³ or the second after regular worship.⁵⁴ Elsewhere, however, it is considered the very best work.⁵⁵ Holding back and cowardice are reprovved.⁵⁶ *Jihād* is to be waged only to exalt God's word; other motives either detract from an effort or disqualify it from being real *jihād*.⁵⁷

As for unbelievers, they must be combatted until they accept God's unity, the cardinal tenet of Islam.⁵⁸ Such people do not necessarily have to be Muslims, however, but can keep their religions if they are people of the book. Other traditions suggest, though, that the struggle must be kept up until they also perform *ṣalāh* (Islamic worship) and pay *zakāh* (a tax paid only by Muslims).⁵⁹ Polytheists should not be left in Arabia.⁶⁰ In other versions, Christians and Jews also should not be left there.⁶¹ Opponents should be invited to embrace Islam before the Muslims launch any assault.⁶² Another version adds that they should be given the choice between Islam,

payment of the *jizya*, or fighting.⁶³ Treaties or agreements must be scrupulously observed.⁶⁴ Moral limits are to be observed in warfare, including avoidance of killing noncombatants such as the elderly, women, and children and of destroying fruit trees, livestock, and buildings.⁶⁵ These limitations are further elaborated in the Islamic law.⁶⁶ Extensive rules are also established in the *ḥadīth* for dividing the spoil, with one-fifth going to the government, as outlined in the Qur'ān.⁶⁷

As in the Qur'ān, tactical advice is also given in the *ḥadīth*. The Muslims should fight in close ranks. They should be patient and persistent.⁶⁸ They must avoid trying to grab the spoils prematurely,⁶⁹ which was a serious temptation for medieval armies. Troops should make sure they have adequate provisions.⁷⁰ They must also, at all times, obey their commanding officer, unless he orders something in contravention to the divine law.⁷¹ Thus, the individual free-for-all of bedouin raiding was out; disciplined, committed order was in.

In general, the impression of the *jihād* that one gets from the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* is of a highly motivated mass ideology directed toward a single goal. Indeed, the ideology of Islam anticipated modern ideologies in its mass appeal and means of creating enthusiasm. This enthusiasm was probably contagious and did not strictly rely either on promises of paradise or expectations of worldly gain, though both of these were present to help ignite the movement at the first, and both continued to play a role. Nothing that had gone before had ever resembled the Muslim mobilization methods, especially as far as the Arabs were concerned. No wonder the non-Muslim empires of the time were outclassed and tended to be easily dominated and defeated for over a century.

Not only the teachings embodied in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, but even the structure of the communal worship required of Muslims five times a day reflected the military commitment and helped to maintain the enthusiasm for the *jihād*. Except perhaps for details, the structure of this worship must be early and therefore reinforces our evidence from the Qur'ān about the paramount importance of the *jihād* in earliest Islam. Muslim males assemble in the mosques; females stay at home. The men line up for worship in rows, as if in a battle formation. Being in the first row is considered more meritorious than the back rows, as in battle.⁷² The word used for row in worship is *ṣaff*; exactly this word is used in the Qur'ān for a battle rank or formation.⁷³ During worship services, absolute obedience to the leader (*imām*) is required, as well as the imitation of all his actions in unison. Just as the pews in a church are sometimes said to

represent the benches of the oarsmen in a galley, all pulling in unison, so the rows in the mosque represent the Muslim battle ranks in the struggle to establish God's rule in the earth. According to Jandora, the communal worship "must have inculcated discipline and teamwork, as does modern close order drill."⁷⁴

In addition to the worship itself, the physical layout of the early mosque building reflects the military mission of the *jihād*, as well. The earliest known mosques were large, much larger than most later ones, even though the number of Muslims at the beginning was less than later on. Probably, the mosques in each city were designed to accommodate all the Muslim fighters located there. Thus, the great mosque in al-Kūfa was over one hundred meters square,⁷⁵ enclosing a space of over ten thousand square meters, enough to accommodate nearly twenty thousand worshipers closely packed together. Such a number would represent at least a substantial proportion, if not all, of the troops stationed at al-Kūfa when that city was founded.⁷⁶ Therefore, it would appear that attendance at mosque was mandatory, which conforms to the military image, just as close-order drills are also mandatory.

Furthermore, there was at first only one central mosque in each military settlement.⁷⁷ This kept the troops in the same place, bringing all the tribes and clans together for communal worship, rather than allowing them their own separate mosques.⁷⁸ That there was originally only one congregational mosque in each place is suggested by the Shī'ī tradition still in force to this day, which says that Friday worship was only to be held in one place of worship in each locale. Among Sunnīs, the same is suggested by the designation of one great mosque in each city as the *masjid jāmi'*, or the congregational mosque for worship on Friday (*al-jum'a*), as in India. Having only one major mosque in a settlement enabled it also to function as mobilization center and parade ground. Additionally, the mosque could provide a military redoubt if necessary, much like a fortified Roman camp, which also tended to be square or rectangular, like the early mosque. Indeed, the fact that the original mosque of al-Kūfa was surrounded by a trench rather than a wall perhaps suggests a military purpose of basic fortification, particularly in view of the use of the trench in defending al-Madīna in 5/627.⁷⁹ The exhortations of the Friday sermon to self-sacrifice in God's path were paralleled on the battlefield by the *quṣṣās* and *qurrā'*. Their role was to encourage the troops to seek the reward of paradise by either winning or else dying as martyrs, and they recited Qur'ānic verses to that effect in a loud voice.⁸⁰ Finally, the early mosque was always associated with the house of the *amīr* or governor, who, as military

commander, most naturally had to be available to his troops at a moment's notice.⁸¹

Actually, a number of interesting parallels exist between the mosque-governor's palace complexes in al-Kūfa, al-Baṣra, and Jerusalem on the one hand, and Roman legionary fortresses of the imperial period on the other. Just as governor's palace and mosque were joined in the early Muslim cities, the Roman commander's palace, called the *praetorium*, was directly adjacent to a building for the assembly and review of the troops, called the *principia*.⁸²

The *principia* consisted of a very large enclosed courtyard surrounded by a colonnade, like the early mosques. The courtyard might be covered with gravel, as in the early mosques.⁸³ On the side adjacent to the commander's palace stood a basilica with three naves that ran the width of the courtyard; this is analogous to the covered part of the mosque near the *miḥrāb*.⁸⁴ Its space was just large enough for most of the troops to crowd together in it, just as the early mosques were able to hold most, if not all, of the troops of the locale. In both cases, the dimensions of the building might be on the order of one hundred meters square.⁸⁵ In the *principia*, the troops were assembled to hear edifying speeches, and it was there that the commander dispensed justice, just as in the early mosques.⁸⁶ In both cases, it was the military commander who spoke to the troops from a raised platform (*tribunal*) or pulpit (*minbar*). Also, the troops would be assembled to swear allegiance to new rulers in just such places.⁸⁷ The religious symbols of the Roman legion were stored in its *principia*, where some religious ceremonies also probably took place. In addition, the treasury of the troops was kept in the *principia*, as apparently was the case with the earliest Muslim mosques.⁸⁸ The Roman and the Muslim troops probably received their pay respectively in the *principia* and mosque, as well. Likewise, the mosque was the religious center of the city. While there is no evidence that the Muslim complexes were inspired by Roman models, the parallels do at least point to probable shared military functions.

Beyond worship and mosque, the Muslim troops in the former lands of the Roman and Persian empires, from the beginning were quartered in new military camp cities called *amṣār* or were assigned quarters in existing towns that performed the same function. Such cities kept the troops together in a strange and possibly hostile environment, so that they could respond immediately to any emergencies. Significantly, 'Umar is said to have commanded that these cities be located so that no water separated any of them from Arabia.⁸⁹ This was clearly a military consideration, as the Muslim Arabs, especially the Madīnan leadership, did not consider them-

selves adept at seafaring and, in particular, lacked control of the sea until 34/655, at least in the case of the Mediterranean. Thus, al-Kūfa and al-Baṣra were situated on the south side of the Euphrates, al-Fuṣṭāṭ on the east side of the Nile, and the Syrian military camps in cities by the desert, rather than the coast. Indeed, none of the cities was on a coastline.

Inside these camp cities, the troops were organized on clan lines into regiments which were then grouped into larger divisions. These camp cities became the metropolises of Islam and served both as bases for military activity and as administrative centers for the collection of taxes supporting the military activity, precisely the dual functions over which the caliphs presided.⁹⁰ Indeed, these two functions, the struggle to make God's religion victorious over all, and the necessity of funding that struggle, also dictated the structure of the caliphal state itself. Despite their geographical extent and the sophisticated urban populations they contained, the Rāshidūn and Umayyad caliphates were rather simple affairs. Their institutions consisted largely of the citizen army of able-bodied adult male Muslims, and a tax-gathering apparatus to provide material support for the army. The caliph presided absolutely over both as supreme military commander, albeit one who rarely took the field himself.

In view of its ideology, the simplicity of its functions directed by its ideology, and the actual course of its history, it makes sense to designate the early Islamic state through Umayyad times *the jihād state* par excellence. From 2/623–122/740, for a period of over a century with only three interruptions (35–40/656–61, 64–73/683–92, 99–101/718–20), the Muslim state was more or less engaged in hostilities against all those who did not have a specific treaty with it. Although in the first few years, the Muslims had to be careful not to provoke opponents they could not yet afford to face, the policy gradually changed with the victories in the Prophet's own lifetime. From 9/631 at the latest, the Muslim polity was engaged in a struggle with all who would not offer submission to it.⁹¹

Other examples of the policy of perpetual war until domination is achieved exist in history, of course. The Assyrians, like the Romans under the republic, used to take to the field every year against someone.⁹² Frequently, if a treaty did not exist, a state of war was assumed. Even the United States and its allies in modern times have preferred a policy of obtaining the unconditional surrender of the enemy where possible, as in the Second World War. But perhaps never before or since was such a campaign waged on so many fronts simultaneously for so long a period as happened in the case

of the early Muslim state. This could scarcely have occurred without the ideological motivation provided by Islam, however much other factors may have played a role as well.

An Outline of the History of the Jihād State 2–132/623–750⁹³

The history of the *jihād* state of the Prophet and the early caliphs, to the end of the Umayyad dynasty, may be conveniently divided into eight periods: four expansions each followed by a hiatus, the last of which was to become final. The first expansion lasted 2–35/623–56. It accomplished the original establishment of the state at al-Madīna, followed by the subjugation of Arabia and then the Fertile Crescent lands of Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and Iran. This expansion was ended by the first civil war or *fitna*, which lasted 35–40/656–61. During this time, all conquests were stopped and a truce was concluded with the Byzantines.

The second expansion then came 40–63/661–83. In this period, most of Tunisia and Khurāsān came under more permanent control and settlement, although afterwards, Tunisia was lost again for a few years. This expansion was ended by the second civil war of 63–73/683–92, during which all conquests were again suspended and another truce was concluded with the Byzantines.

The third wave of expansion lasted 73–99/692–718 and witnessed the conquest of North Africa, Spain, Transoxiana, and Sind. This time, the Muslim expansion was thwarted by the external defeat of 98–99/717–18 inflicted by the Byzantines at Constantinople, rather than internal discord. The succeeding hiatus of 99–101/718–20 consisted of a voluntary cessation of hostilities ordered by the caliph ‘Umar II in view of that defeat. Such a voluntary lull was unprecedented.

Soon, though, the caliphate embarked on yet another expansion, the fourth, 101–122/720–40, which is the main subject of this book. This attempted expansion was a failure on nearly all fronts. It was finally and decisively stopped by the outbreak of the great Berber revolt in North Africa in 122/740, which led to the permanent end of Muslim political unity and contributed to the subsequent collapse of the dynasty in 132/750. The period 122–32/740–50 constitutes the fourth and final interruption in the expansion policy, caused by military exhaustion and the third civil war of 126–32/744–50. As the unity of the state was destroyed with the end of the

Umayyads, the 'Abbāsids were never able to resume the universal *jihād* on all fronts, nor indeed, to expand the boundaries of the caliphate much at all. Therefore, I have not considered the 'Abbāsids' attempts to campaign against the non-Muslims, principally the Byzantines, as a resumption of the same kind of *jihād* that was practiced in the early and Umayyad periods.

Although the point should not be pushed too far, lest it produce a periodization that is too schematic, the ebb and flow of expansions followed by hiatuses form a kind of rhythm in early Muslim history. The first expansion lasted for twenty-three solar years, the second for twenty-two, the third for twenty-six, and the fourth for twenty, periods of strikingly similar length. Each of the first three were ushered in by a completely new regime. First was the primitive state of the Prophet and the early caliphs, which was nondynastic, followed by the Sufyānids, followed by the wholly different rule of their cousins, the Marwānids. Only the fourth expansion saw a continuation of the same Marwānid ruling group that had dominated the third. This successful carryover of the third expansion's overseers into the fourth period was perhaps a factor in the violent destruction of the Marwānids in the disastrous civil wars that followed the fourth and final expansion, for they faithfully kept to the outmoded policy of expansion on all fronts for too long.

Like the expansions, the hiatuses tended to follow certain patterns. The first hiatus was caused by a civil war and lasted for five years. The second was also caused by a civil war and lasted for nine years. The third was caused by an external defeat and lasted for only two years, while the fourth was caused by external defeats, led to a civil war, and lasted for ten or more years.⁹⁴ With the exception of the first hiatus, each break followed on the heels of a severe defeat or humiliation inflicted by the Byzantines. Thus, the second followed the disastrous destruction of the fleet retreating from Constantinople in 58/678, as well as the Mardaite campaigns in Syria. The third came after the disastrous defeat of 98–99/717–18 at Constantinople. And the fourth followed the serious defeat at Akroinon in 122/740, which came on top of the numerous other military disasters of Hishām's reign. The coincidence of military disasters with political change in the caliphate certainly suggests that the prestige of the *jihād* state was, to an important extent, bound up with military success, any cessation of which tended to bring change, among other consequences.

Indeed, each hiatus brought or attempted to bring a new regime to power. In the first hiatus, 'Alī, though a Qurashī himself, presided over an attempt to overthrow the Quraysh and establish a more

broadly based government centered in Iraq. In the second, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr attempted to revive the fortunes of the old believers of the Ḥijāz, but faced a more dangerous revolutionary rival in al-Mukhtār in Iraq. In the third, 'Umar II, though an Umayyad, completely reversed the policies of his house, also signalling a more broadly based regime in his appointments. His rule forms a clear break in the Marwānid regime between the third and fourth expansions. In the fourth hiatus, Yazīd III enunciated a radical program for a limited caliphate which was swept away by his rivals.

Generally, the movements that emerged in the hiatuses were characterized by a tendency to try new policies that included a broader sharing of power. They were mostly led by a parade of failed revolutionaries, who often left behind them sweet memories and pure reputations, whether deserved or not, that the execrated Umayyads did not enjoy. In the first hiatus, 'Alī became the first hero of Islam after the Prophet, a status he retains today among both Sunnīs and Shī'īs. Though 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr left only a mixed memory, al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, whose slaying just before the second civil war helped to precipitate that strife, also became an everlasting hero and martyr among nearly all the Muslims. In the third hiatus, 'Umar II was the only Umayyad to achieve such wide approval that he is often called "the fifth of the rightly guided caliphs," even to this day. Significantly, it was improbably reported that he was poisoned,⁹⁵ so that he too became a martyr in the cause of righteousness. The fourth hiatus produced no permanent heroes of like stature; perhaps they were precluded by the founding of the 'Abbāsīd regime, which censored such attempts. However, to some extent Zayd b. 'Alī, who led an abortive Shī'ī revolt in al-Kūfa in 122/740, just before the fourth hiatus, fulfills the role of hero-martyr for his time and is venerated to this day, especially among the Zaydī Shī'a of Yaman.

Thus, this eightfold periodization of early Muslim history turns out not only to be of relevance to the military campaigns, but also to the internal history of the caliphate. Now it behooves us examine each of these periods in greater detail.

The Madīnan State and the First Expansion 2–35/623–56

The first stage of expansion, which I have dated 2–35/623–56 according to the initiation and cessation of external military cam-

paigns, may be conveniently referred to as the period of the Madīnan state, for the capital remained at al-Madīna throughout this period. From 1/622, when the Prophet moved to al-Madīna, the Muslim state immediately began to take shape. While it remained virtually a city-state until the Muslims defeated the siege of 5/627, it then went from strength to strength and quickly became a large territorial state in western Arabia. Although the Prophet's conquest of Arabia is often contrasted with the early caliphs' conquests outside of Arabia immediately after his death in 11/632, the actual picture is not so clear cut. By 11/632, the Prophet had only yet certainly been able to subdue western Arabia; great areas of the north, east, and south continued to escape his control. However, at the same time, the Prophet had already initiated a military thrust toward Byzantine Syria to the northwest with several campaigns, one of which, the Mu'ta expedition, is said to have met and fought the Byzantines east of the Dead Sea, 850 kilometers north-northwest of al-Madīna, as early as the year 8/629.⁹⁶

The Prophet's death in 11/632, though it required the new political arrangement of the caliphate, did not at all interrupt the sending of military expeditions against the non-Muslims on all sides. The expedition which the Prophet had prepared to send to Syria was sent out under the same commander without delay. Therefore, no distinction in policies need be drawn between those of the Prophet and his immediate successors, the first three Rāshidūn caliphs, Abū Bakr, 'Umar I, and 'Uthmān (11–35/632–56). However, it was under these rulers that the early *jihād* achieved its greatest success by bringing the present Islamic heartland of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Iran under Muslim control. These early conquests were achieved mostly in the reign of 'Umar I (13–23/634–44) and were entirely made at the expense of the Sāsānian Persian and Byzantine empires. The first was swallowed whole by the Muslim caliphate, while the second was shorn of its disaffected and alien Near Eastern provinces. Significantly as well, control of the Mediterranean Sea was wrested from the Byzantines at Dhāt al-Şawārī in 34/655, a feat which put those opponents of the Muslims on the defensive until 58–65/678–85, for the defense of the Byzantine capital of Constantinople ultimately depended upon naval forces.

These early Muslim conquests were greatly facilitated by the quick collapse of the previous non-Muslim regimes, which were apparently not popular with most of their subjects, at least not in the areas taken over by the Muslims. Nevertheless, the conquests were not easy but involved numerous battles and took years to complete.

Once Muslim rule was established, however, it faced little active resistance from the inhabitants. Partly, this was because the Muslims literally stepped into the shoes of the territories' earlier rulers, whose subjects had long ago become accustomed to submit peacefully to distant and often alien rulers. This was especially true of the large peasant populations of the great river valleys and plains, such as the Aramaeans of Iraq and Syria, and the Copts of Egypt. It was principally mountain peoples who maintained long, fervent, and sometimes permanent opposition, such as the inhabitants of the Lebanon and Amanus Mountains,⁹⁷ the Armenians, the Berbers, and the inhabitants of Zābulistān near modern Kabul, many of these never having been digested by an imperial system before.

The First Civil War and the First Hiatus 35–40/656–61

It was not, however, external opposition that stopped the smooth outward rhythm of the first wave of Muslim expansion. Rather, opposition to the ruling Quraysh tribe, which was also split in itself, coupled with dissatisfaction caused by pay differentials in the army and other inequities, led to a revolution in al-Madīna which overthrew the government, killing the third caliph 'Uthmān (24–35/644–56) in the process. The revolutionaries were not, however, able to establish their rule in Syria, so that a civil war developed between the Iraqi and Syrian army groups. The latter was victorious, but only after the fourth caliph, 'Alī (35–40/656–61), had also been slain by an assassin. These disturbances are known as the First *Fitna* or civil war, which was exactly coterminous with the period of 'Alī's caliphate.

Owing to the civil war, military campaigns against non-Muslims immediately ceased on all fronts for the duration of the strife. On the Syrian front, the Umayyad governor even concluded a pact with the defeated Byzantine empire by which the Muslims were required to pay tribute to the Byzantines in exchange for a truce.⁹⁸ This constituted the first hiatus or temporary cessation of the external *jihād*, and was especially humiliating because the Muslims had to pay tribute to a non-Muslim potentate, a situation that was not supposed to occur.⁹⁹

Out of the civil war emerged the basic geographical, political, and religious splits that would continue throughout the history of the Umayyad caliphate. Aside from the Umayyads themselves,

ensconced in their Syrian stronghold, these included the unreconciled supporters of 'Alī's caliphate, called the Shī'a, who were most strongly centered in al-Kūfa, the *khawārij*, or rebels, who were prominent in eastern Arabia, al-Baṣra and al-Mawṣil, and the Zubayrids, who supported the family and relatives of the first caliph, Abū Bakr (11–13/632–34). The Umayyads naturally depended on the Syrian Arab army units to support their rule. The Shī'a found a following among the dissatisfied Yaman Arabs of al-Kūfa. The *khawārij* increasingly came to be drawn from the eastern Arab nomad groups of the Tamīm and the Rabī'a, especially the latter. These groups had largely been excluded even from local power. The Zubayrids had considerable local support in al-Baṣra and more in the Ḥijāz, the original homeland of Islam.

The Sufyānid Umayyad State and the Second Expansion 40–63/661–683

The Syrian victors moved the capital to Damascus, the center of their province. The new rulers were of the Umayyad family, which was bitterly attacked by the other parties because its members had fought the Prophet and resisted Islam until the conquest of Makka in 8/630, when all remaining pagan Qurashīs became Muslims. As they were descendants of Abū Sufyān, the Prophet's former nemesis, they are known as the Sufyānids, and their rule is coterminous with the second wave of Muslim expansion.

The new caliph, Mu'āwiya (40–60/661–80), lacked legitimacy because he had taken power by force against much opposition and because the office of the caliphate in general, and the Sufyānid caliphate in particular, lacked deep roots. Mu'āwiya tried to compensate for this in several ways. First, he attempted to accord himself legitimacy by continuing the development of the claim that he was God's chosen deputy who must be obeyed.¹⁰⁰ To help establish Islamic credentials, he gave attention to the reconstruction of several mosques.¹⁰¹ He also tried to improve the organization of the Muslim troops in the military cities such as al-Kūfa and al-Baṣra. More importantly, he sought mildly to reconcile all of his opponents to his rule by relying on personal ties with the Arab tribal chiefs. He did not seek vengeance for what had occurred in the civil war, so that irreconcilable opponents such as Qays b. Sa'd b. 'Ubāda were able to die peacefully in their beds. Such policies gave him a reputation for generosity and crafty forbearance.¹⁰² On the other

hand, he kept a tight grip on all offices, bestowing most to members of his immediate family and dependents, or on Syrian army commanders. This lack of equitable distribution of offices, as it was perceived in the other provinces, especially Iraq, remained a serious grievance.

Most crucially, though, Mu'āwiya resumed the military offensive on all fronts, attacking North Africa, East Khurāsān, and especially the Byzantines. Although achieving few new permanent conquests, these campaigns produced a great deal of booty that kept the army supplied and in good spirits. Of the areas involved, North Africa, where a new forward military city of al-Qayrawān was established around 50/670, was the most notable new territorial accession. While much of North Africa had previously been nominally Byzantine, it contained great masses of unsubdued Berbers who resisted fiercely for decades. Naturally, it was the previously Byzantine areas, mostly in Tunisia, where the Muslims first established themselves, but even here their presence was strongly contested and the conquest was not completed, as Byzantine Carthage held out. Rather, the reverse happened; with the death of the conqueror 'Uqba b. Nāfi' al-Fihri about 62/682, the whole territory was lost. Thus, the second wave of Muslim expansion on the North African front ended in defeat.¹⁰³

The situation in Khurāsān offered similar contrasts between the early successes of the first expansion and the difficulties faced by the second. Areas that had been under the Sāsānians had fallen easily in the first expansion, but the small Hephthalite principalities, further east, now put up a furious resistance.¹⁰⁴ As a result, the Muslim frontier was not advanced by the second expansion in Central Asia either. However, Marw was turned into a major Muslim military city like al-Qayrawān by the transfer of a reported fifty thousand troops and their families to it in 51/671. Unlike al-Qayrawān, which was later lost, the new settlement at Marw was not lost again to non-Muslims under the Umayyads.

On the Byzantine front in Anatolia, the Muslims opposed an ancient, organized empire, but one which had also, by now, become mostly united in language and powered by a highly charged Orthodox Christian ideology that was far from losing its vitality. Nevertheless, the Muslims continued to put much emphasis on campaigns against the Byzantines, attacking the Aegean and the vicinity of Constantinople by sea while campaigning in Anatolia by land. To facilitate the sea campaign, Rhodes was occupied as the Muslims' main forward base in 52–53/672–73.¹⁰⁵ The Muslims also raided the area near Constantinople from a further base at Kyzikos, but the

idea that a "siege of Constantinople" took place is a great exaggeration.¹⁰⁶

Although the sources are obscure, these campaigns ended disastrously with the destruction of much of the Muslim fleet, so that Muslim seaborne campaigns ceased from 58/678.¹⁰⁷ Apparently the Muslims had lost control of the sea, for in about the same year, the Byzantines launched a furious seaborne counteroffensive in Syria, where they could rely on local Christian support, and carried on a war there in the Umayyads' own metropole until 65/685.¹⁰⁸ This compelled Yazīd I (60–64/680–83) to suspend all offensive operations and concentrate on the fight in Syria. The Muslims were forced to demolish their base in Rhodes and withdraw from there, as well.¹⁰⁹ These setbacks cannot have enhanced the prestige of Mu'āwiya and his son and successor Yazīd I, especially among the Syrian troops upon whom they depended. It suggests, to some extent, that Mu'āwiya's reign, usually considered a success, should be reevaluated as I now propose to reevaluate the reign of Hishām, and that Yazīd I stepped into a difficult if not impossible situation much like what befell al-Walīd II after Hishām.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the second expansion is the coordinated effort to plant permanent new military cities beyond the Fertile Crescent, thus overturning 'Umar I's command not to let water separate the *amsār* from the capital. In the space of three years, new cities were successively founded at al-Qayrawān, Marw, and Rhodes, indicating a planned permanent occupation of the surrounding territory in each case. Each new base was populated with troops and their families, incentives being given to encourage recruitment for these distant frontiers.¹¹⁰ This represented a definite step forward, even if it did not really bear fruit until the period of the third expansion.

The Second Hiatus and the Second Civil War 63–73/683–92

Even though the external campaigns of the second expansion continued until 63/683, the death of Mu'āwiya and the accession of Yazīd I in 61/680 brought growing disaffection and strife. The atmosphere was poisoned for the Sufyānids almost immediately by the revolt and death of the Prophet's grandson al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, which undoubtedly disturbed many, especially the Iraqis. The unpopularity of the regime meant that all the tendencies that had

emerged in the first civil war and subsequently been repressed or masked under Mu'āwiyā's regime of conciliation now burst forth afresh.

The second civil war commenced with the revolt of al-Madīna, the old capital city. Although the rebels were rather easily defeated, the deaths of so many prominent Muslims from early Muslim families added another shock to the death of al-Ḥusayn.¹¹¹ This was followed almost immediately by Yazīd I's own death, which led to disarray in the Syrian camp and the end of Sufyānid rule.

Meanwhile, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, representing the Qurashī "old believers,"¹¹² established a backward-looking anticaliphate that remained stubbornly rooted in Arabia. Nevertheless, at first he enjoyed wide support or acquiescence, if only because he offered an alternative to the discredited Sufyānid regime. He even received some recognition in Syria in the confusion following the death of Yazīd I. But another branch of the Umayyad family, the Marwānids, asserted their claims to represent the Umayyad cause and to be considered God's deputies in 64/684. Their claimant, Marwān I (64–65/684–85), was only Mu'āwiyā's second cousin, while he was the first cousin of the third caliph, 'Uthmān. Therefore, his claims were considered flimsy, even inside the Umayyad house. But, then, no one's claims were very strong, so that his chances were as good as others if he could drum up enough support, which he started to do in Syria. He then decisively defeated his Syrian opponents at Marj Rāhiṭ in 64/684, establishing the first basis for Marwānid rule. At the same time, Egypt was recovered from Ibn al-Zubayr, who had been acknowledged there as caliph briefly. Shortly thereafter, the Zubayrid regime became bogged down fighting a major Shī'ī revolution that was directed against it in the Iraqi metropolis of al-Kūfa (65–67/685–687).

Even after securing much of Syria and recovering Egypt, the Umayyads' circumstances were still quite serious. But the Marwān I's son and successor in Syria, 'Abd al-Malik (65–86/685–705), though at first seeming to dispose fewer resources than some of his opponents, was eventually able to defeat all of them and establish the Marwānid caliphate on a firm basis. To cover himself, he signed a ten-year truce with the Byzantines that required him to pay three hundred sixty-five thousand gold pieces, one thousand slaves, and one thousand horses per annum, an onerous and completely humiliating pact. In return, the Byzantines withdrew twelve thousand Mardaites (native Syrian Christian fighters) to Byzantine Armenia (Armenia IV).¹¹³ How 'Abd al-Malik could have afforded this burden and still had enough cash to pay armies big enough to defeat

his various opponents is unclear. Some of the wealth probably had been hoarded up from campaigns of the Sufyānid period; perhaps the possession of the wealthy province of Egypt was another important factor. In any case, once free of possible Byzantine interference, he was able gradually to recover Iraq and Arabia, finishing off his opponents in both Arabia and Khurāsān in 73/692.¹¹⁴

The Marwānid Umayyad State and the Third Expansion 73–99/692–718

The most immediate need of the Marwānid regime was to establish some ideological justification for itself once it had prevailed against all its Muslim opponents in the civil war. Although the ideology of Islam itself was already well established, the Marwānids were still very insecure, both internally and externally. In particular, they had suffered a bad scare from the great Byzantine counteroffensive and Mardaite war of 58–65/678–85. That had been the first time that any of the defeated peoples had come back to challenge the Muslims' dominance. Most disturbingly, the native Christian majority in Syria had proven unreliable. While the native Christians did not generally rise against the Syrian Muslims, the possibility that such a rising could occur was brought dramatically to the Marwānids attention by the Mardaite incursions.

Thus, the Marwānid caliphate set itself to respond to the Christian counterthrust on ideological as well as military fronts. Until the time of 'Abd al-Malik, Byzantine gold coins had continued to be the coin of the realm. These were now replaced by an independent Islamic coinage. First, one with the caliph's picture emphasized his role as spiritual and military head of the Muslim community. That was replaced a short time later by an imageless epigraphic series with statements of Islamic religious creed adapted from the Qur'ān. Concomitant with the new coins was the inscription of the Muslim testimony of the faith in Greek on papyrus sheets exported to the Byzantines. Also, the caliph decreed the replacement of Greek with Arabic as the official chancery language used in Syria and Egypt. Furthermore, Christian religious processions and the display of crosses were restricted, and a great mosque expansion and construction program, including inscriptions apparently directed against the Christians, was undertaken. These steps will be more fully discussed in the context of ideology in chapter 5 below, but for the moment we must note that they began to be adopted immedi-

ately after the Mardaite war and thus were probably connected with it.

The ideological measures were not aimed only at the Christians, of course. They were also, perhaps mainly, aimed at the numerous Muslim opponents of the Umayyads. The Umayyad victories in both the first and second civil wars had been military, not ideological; their opponents were repressed, but far from eliminated. Rather, it was the opposite. Greater repression simply led to a more deeply felt opposition, one that continued to break forth in frequent if poorly organized violence. To meet this, with ideological measures largely unavailing, the Marwānids used ever-increasing force, especially in Iraq. This policy has become attached to the name of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī, the longtime governor of the East (75–95/694–714). Syrian troops were quartered in a newly established garrison town, Wāsiṭ, halfway between the old garrison cities of al-Kūfa and al-Baṣra. The Iraqi population was largely demobilized and dropped from the military rolls. Iraqis could only obtain a military stipend by going out to remote and dangerous frontier provinces such as Khurāsān, Sijistān, and Sind. The Marwānids constantly sought to expend the excess energy of the Muslim troops in external military campaigns.

Thus, on the military front, the Marwānid regime in the third expansion renewed the great early conquests of the first expansion. Although fighting continued throughout the entire twenty-six-year period, especially on the Byzantine front, the most dramatic Marwānid conquests were accomplished in the reign of al-Walīd I (86–96/705–715), a period of only ten years, as North Africa, Spain, Transoxiana, and Sind joined the empire as new and quickly subdued provinces. These conquests, at last, seemed to bring back the magic of the first Muslim conquests, brought in great wealth, did credit to the *jihād* policy, especially in the eyes of the troops, and had much to do with the stubborn continuation of that policy under Yazīd II and Hishām in the period of the fourth expansion.

While many of the earlier Muslim campaigns had been difficult, some of the great conquests of the third expansion seemed quite easy, especially at first. Around the same time that the Byzantines were finally being driven out of North Africa (79/698), the Berbers, who had furiously resisted the Muslims for forty years, suddenly embraced Islam, and even provided the caliphate with troops for further expeditions. This appears, in large part, to have owed to the tolerant policy of the governors Ḥassān b. al-Nu'mān and Mūsā b. Nuṣayr, who, unlike their counterparts elsewhere in the caliphate, enrolled the non-Arabs in the army in units of their own.¹¹⁵ This

policy was probably dictated by the small numbers of Arabs in North Africa and the impossibility of making headway against the Berbers any other way. But whatever its motivation, it was most effective in spreading Islam. It also planted the seeds of the future disruption of the unity of the caliphate under Hishām, as we shall see.

The most immediate result of the accession of North Africa to the caliphate, however, was the conquest of Spain, where an unpopular Visigothic aristocracy ruled over a Hispano-Roman population. In such a situation, the kingdom fell after a year's campaigning during which time the king was killed.¹¹⁶ Continuing military operations were required, but the situation was under control. At almost the same time, nearly seven thousand kilometers away, at the other end of the realm, the kingdom of Sind, where a Brahmin Hindu king ruled over a largely Buddhist population, was also falling to the Muslims. Here, as in Spain, when the king was killed after a few battles, the kingdom fell.¹¹⁷ Interestingly, both the targets were counterpoised at extreme opposite ends of the caliphate, and getting to them involved some leapfrogging past poorer areas yet unsubdued in North Africa and Makrān. This suggests that the motive in targetting them may have had more to do with financial rather than other considerations. Like Sāsānian Iran and the Near Eastern and North African Byzantine provinces taken over in the first expansion, these two kingdoms were relatively organized, urbanized states in lands that had been civilized for centuries.¹¹⁸ This not only made them attractive targets because of the amounts of booty that could be expected, but also meant that they tended to collapse as soon as their centralized leadership, personified by their kings, had been overthrown.

By the end of al-Walīd I's reign in 96/715, the easier conquests of Spain and Sind were essentially complete. Indeed, in one other theater, Transoxiana, the famous general Qutayba b. Muslim had been slogging away against great resistance from the local princes, who, because of their lack of prior assimilation into a single empire, had to be reduced one by one. Nevertheless, considerable wealth was obtained as the entire area was subdued. However, that this type of campaigning was disliked by the soldiers is strongly suggested by the precipitateness with which Qutayba's army mutinied against him and murdered him.¹¹⁹ Perhaps forewarned by Qutayba's fate, Yazīd b. al-Muhallab undertook only the mopping up of a small area previously bypassed in Jurjān and Ṭabaristān in 98/716-7 rather than attempt a new extension of the outer bounds of the caliphate. But this campaign too proved difficult.