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Social and urban dynamics in Baghdad during the Saljidūq period (mid. Vth/XIth-mid. VIth/XIIth c.)

Vanessa Van Renterghem

Abstract

Between the mid. Vth/XIth and the mid VIth/XIIth century, the domination of the Saljidūq sultans over the 'Abbāsid caliphate caused important social changes in Baghdad. Based mainly on Arabic chronicles and biographical dictionaries and making use of prosopography, this paper focuses on these social changes and on the consequences they had on the development of the city. In the first part it examines the impact of the madrasa-endowment policy, often considered as a characteristic of the period, on the three main madhāhib present in Baghdad, as well as the impact on Baghdadian Sufis of the numerous ribāt foundations. During the Saljidūq period, the main judicial, administrative and political positions in Baghdad were held by a certain number of lineages. The most influential of these families are here presented: newcomers such as the Dāmaghānī or families of local origin such as the Zaynabī. Both the Saljidūq and 'Abbāsid ruling elites were great patrons of building activity in Baghdad. They founded madrasa and ribāt-s endowments, but also private constructions, religious and public works. The second part of this paper focuses on the vigor of urban construction in Bagh-[172]dad at that time, different groups of patrons (Saljidūq or 'Abbāsid officials and Baghdadian civil elites, including women sponsors) being responsible for the urban development of different parts of the city. In fact, far from being in the ruined state sometimes
described by historians on travelers’ accounts, mainly based on the view of Ibn Djubayr, Baghdad appears as a dynamic city, still an important cosmopolite metropolis in the region.

Key words:
Baghdad - Saljuq sultans - Abbásid caliphate - madrasa - ribât - endowments - building activities - social history - urban history - prosopography

Baghdad: “this ancient city [...] is almost in ruins and only the prestige of its name has survived”. This severe assessment was made by the famous Andalusian traveler Ibn Djubayr 1, who visited the ‘Abbásid capital at the end of the viith/xiiith century (580 H./1180 CE 2). Disappointed by the Iraqi metropolis and its arrogant inhabitants, he described a city fallen into decadence, whose western bank was scattered with wasted land and ruins (kharāb). According to his account, Baghdad was at that time composed of seventeen small urban units separated from one another by these non built up areas. However, Ibn Djubayr also depicted a busy city, full of crowded markets and beautiful Friday-mosques as well as impressive palaces and gardens.

The number of travel accounts and first hand descriptions of Baghdad in Vth-VIth/XIth-XIIth centuries is so scarce 3 that the depiction of Ibn Djubayr often [173] has been considered to reflect the real condition of the city. Consequently, the conclusion has mainly been drawn that Baghdad was a ruined city, already on its way to decline at this time. In fact, the urban development of medieval Baghdad is commonly considered to have consisted of a long process of slow decline, between two periods

1 Ibn Djubayr, Riḥla, p. 217.
2 The dates are given with the year of the Hegirian calendar first followed by the corresponding year of the Christian calendar.
of more intense destruction: the civil war between the two sons of Hārūn al-Rashīd, al-Amīn and al-Ma’mūn, which led to the destruction of the Round city in 813 CE, and the devastating sack of the Mongol armies led by Hulegu in 1258 and then again by Tamerlane in 1401. In this view – the result of an a posteriori historical analysis –, the account of Ibn Djubayr only confirms the general opinion of the urban disintegration of Baghdad, reflecting the political decay of the ʿAbbāsid dynasty.

Indeed, a parallel has often been drawn between the urban development of Baghdad and the political situation of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate, seen as a descending curve leading from the “Golden Age” of the II<sup>nd</sup>/VIII<sup>th</sup> and III<sup>rd</sup>/IX<sup>th</sup> centuries through a period of decadence and loss of power, first under Buwayhid tutelage, then under the Salṭuqs and finally the fall of the dynasty in 1258, after the “parenthesis” constituted by the reign of the strong caliph al-Nāṣir (575-622/1180-1225) ⁴. If urban decline is regarded as a logical consequence of the political weakness of the caliphs, then the description of Ibn Djubayr can be considered a confirmation of the difficulties experienced by the VI<sup>th</sup>/XII<sup>th</sup>-century caliphs under Salṭuq rule.

Some remarks must however be made about this interpretation of Ibn Djubayr’s account. First of all, one isolated account is not enough to draw general conclusions about the condition of the city at that time. Secondly, the systematic parallel drawn between the political and urban situation must be questioned. Thirdly, it must be taken into consideration that there could be an aspect of cliché in Ibn Djubayr’s report, the decadence of cities often being lamented by Arab writers of the Medieval period, as a metaphor for the frailty of the human and earthly condition. In this context, it is necessary to compare this description with other contemporary accounts, in order to get a more nuanced picture of Baghdad in the VI<sup>th</sup>/XII<sup>th</sup>-century. Since very few travel accounts are available for the period and the archeological material is almost nonexistent, information must be collected from other kinds of sources, [174] namely chronicles and bibliographical dictionaries ⁵. Although their aim may not be

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⁵ A list of the main Arabic sources used for this study is provided at the end of the article. The material of the present discussion is taken from the conclusions of a PhD thesis under the direction of Pr. Françoise Micheau, presented in December 2004 at the University of Paris 1 – La Sorbonne; expected publication: Vanessa Van Renterghem, Les Élites bagdadiennes au temps des Salṭuquides, Paris, Les Indes Savantes, 2009. A prosopographical database has been built for the purpose of the research, gathering more than 2 600 biographical files of individuals mentioned by chronicles or dictionaries and having lived in or at least visited Baghdad between 447/1055 and 600/1203. Statistical data used here is taken from this database.
to describe the city of Baghdad, they still provide rich material
on the topography of Madīnāt al-Salām under Salādūq rule and on
the individuals responsible for its urban development 6.

Brief summary of the history of Baghdad during the Vth/XIth and VIth/XIIth
centuries

At the time of the visit of Ibn Djubayr, Baghdad was still the
capital of the Abbāsid caliphate, and had been since its
foundation in 762 CE (except for the decades in which the
political and administrative center was transferred to the city
of Samarra, between 836 and 892 CE). In the first half of the
Vth/Xth century, the ‘Abbāsid caliphs were forced to acknowledge the
domination of the Shiite Buwayhid, military leaders originating
from the Daylam mountains (south of Caspian Sea) 7. In the middle
of the Vth/XIth century, the Salādūq Turcs coming from the Eastern
part of the dār al-islām ended the Buwayhid tutelage of the
‘Abbāsids. Taking advantage of the financial and military
weakness of the caliph al-Qā’im (422-467/1031-1075) and
emphasizing his devotion to Sunni Islam, the Turkish ruler Tughril Beg entered Baghdad in 447/1055 and established a new
political and military domination of the ‘Abbāsid caliphate 8.

Even if the Salādūq rulers were mainly absent from Baghdad, they
rapidly built a palatial complex. The city was ruled by a Salādūq
military dignitary, the [175] shīhna, representing the sultan in
the ‘Abbāsid capital and watching over his interests together
with Turkish and non-Turkish emirs. The administration was under
the responsibility of Persian civilians, and Salādūq rulers
patronized mystics, jurists and preachers loyal to their opinions
(Hanafite figh and ash’arite kalām). A certain number of Salādūq
officials settled, temporarily or not, in Baghdad. They left a
material imprint on the city with public buildings and private
residences. At the same time, the political change engendered by
the Salādūqs led to a social re-composition of the local elites,
in the intellectual and religious field as well as in the
administrative one. However, in the second third of the VIth/XIIth

6 To get an idea of the general features of the city and in order to identify
the main sites and monuments cited, refer to Map 1: “Main areas of Baghdad
during the Salādūq period”, based on the medieval texts.

7 On Buwayhid domination of Iraq, see John J. Donohue, The Buwayhid Dynasty in

8 The main outline of Salādūq history can be found in C.E. Bosworth,
“Salādūqid”, EI4, VII, p. 967-1012. For a more detailed account of the
Salādūqs of Iran, see J. A. Boyle (ed.), The Cambridge History of Iran, vol V:
The Saljuk and Mongol periods, Cambridge, 1968. The following summary of
Salādūq rule over Baghdad and its social consequences is built on the results
of my PhD research.
century a slow recovery of ʿAbbāsid authority took place, in the context of growing rivalries in between the members of the ʿSaljūq family. The ʿAbbāsid caliphs were able to gradually reconstitute an army and a structured administration, and to enforce their power on Baghdad and the Iraqi Sawād.

Even though ʿSaljūq power only came to an end in 590/1194, with the assassination of Tughril III, the city of Baghdad was no longer under direct ʿSaljūq rule at the time of the visit of Ibn Dijubayr, in 580/1180. In fact, the expulsion from Baghdad of the ʿshīḥna by the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Nāṣir in 547/1152 had already put an end to the direct influence of the Turkish rulers on the ʿAbbāsid capital. As a result, Baghdad was then spared from the fights of rival members of the ʿSaljūq family in search for caliphal recognition under the rule of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs al-Muqtāfī (530-555/1136-1160), al-Mustanṣird (555-566/1160-1170) and al-Mustadiʿ (566-575/1170-1180). At that time, the city was mainly safe from outside attacks and sieges (quite common in the first half of this century), and even though ʿayyārūn’s 9 and religious riots (fitna-s) were still going on, they were not as intense as during the previous century.

I. Social consequences of the ʿSaljūq domination of Baghdad

The period of ʿSaljūq domination of Iraq and the subsequent restoration of ʿAbbāsid power resulted in a thorough re-composition of the Baghdadian elites, which in most cases differed from those dominant during the Buwayhid period. The impact of this re-composition must be analyzed field by field to avoid generalizations.

[176] Within the juridical-religious field, the restoration of a Sunni power had different consequences depending on the activities and madḥhab-affiliation of the concerned ṣulamāʾ. Seen from Baghdad, the main social effect of the “Sunni revival” was the diminishing influence of Shiite religious elites. It is obvious that the Sunni policies of ʿSaljūq rulers constricted the public space available to the Shiite ṣulamāʾ. The Shiite population of Baghdad is continuously mentioned in the chronicles – mainly in relation with religious riots between them and the people of Sunni neighborhoods – but Shiite religious authorities are less and less present in the main (Sunni) sources of the period.10

9 ʿAyyārūn is the term used by medieval Arabic sources to designate groups of armed young men, more or less organized depending on the period, who were regularly robbing merchants and attempting to disturb public order.

10 Non-Muslim populations of Baghdad too (Nestorian and Jacobite Christians and Jews) are scarcely present in the chronicles. Baghdad was the residence of
I. 1. Institution of madrasas and re-composition of the fuqahā’ milieu

The Sunni environment underwent more striking changes between mid-V/IXth and mid-VI/VIIth century, but those changes affected the various madīḥāhib present in Baghdad in different ways. The main upheaval concerned the transmitters of religious law (fiqh), where the introduction of a new institution, the madrasa, devoted to the transmission of fiqh and offering stipends to the local and foreign mudarrisūn (fiqh teachers) led to a profound [177] transformation in their careers and presented different opportunities to the mudarrisūn of different madīḥāhib.

From the foundation of the first Baghdadian madrasa by the Persian vizier Nizām al-mulk in 459/1066 until the end of the VI/VIIth century, around thirty madrasas were built in the ŠAbbāṣid capital, 11 of which were devoted to Shafiite fiqh, 9 to the Hanbalite madīḥhab and 7 to Hanafite law; but the first Hanbalite madrasa was not founded before the beginning of the VI/VIIth century, when three Shafiite institutions and two

Nestorian catholico, but in the Nestorian clergymen were trained in North-Mesopotamian monasteries and religious schools. It remains difficult to determine whether the Saldūq domination changed anything in the life of this major Christian community of Baghdad. The main sources on the life of Iraqi Nestorian communities during the V-VIth-VIIth-XIIth centuries are two Christian chronicles in Arabic: Mārī ibn Sulayman’s and ‘Amr ibn Mattā’s (see the list of main Arabic sources). On Nestorian Christians in Baghdad during Medieval times, see Jean-Maurice Fiey, Chrétiens syriaques sous les Abbassides, surtout à Bagdad (749-1258), Louvain, 1980.


2 In the period under study, the word dars (“lesson”) meant a fiqh-transmission session and mudarris (“professor, teacher”) a fiqh transmitter. The madrasa was then the “site where fiqh-transmission, dars, takes place” and the term must not be translated by “school” which is its modern meaning.

3 These different opportunities are reflected in the proportion of local scholars among the madrasa teachers. See Figure 1: “Local and foreign fiqh teachers in Baghdad in the Saldūq period, according to the madīḥhab”.

4 25 of these madrasas can be roughly localized in the different areas of Baghdad: 23 on the West bank of the city and only two on the East bank. See Map 2: “Madrasas founded in Baghdad during the Saldūq period (hypothetical localization) “.

5 This madrasa was founded by the Hanbalite qādir Abū Saʿd al-Maḥarrī (d. 513/1119) (Ibn al-Diḏawī, Muntazam, vol. 18, p. 173, notice 4259; Ibn Rāḏiḏ, Dhayl, vol. 3, p. 137, notice 67). It was later known as ‘Abd al-Qādir’s madrasa since the famous ascetic ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Dālānī taught there from 528/1133 to his death in 561/1165.
Hanafite ones already existed. In consequence, for about one century, Hanbalite fiqh was mainly transmitted outside of madrasas, in private houses and shops, mosques, oratories, and other public places, some families like the Banū l-Farrāʾ playing an important role in its transmission. It was only in the second half of the VIth/VIIth century that the Hanbalite jurists of Baghdad enjoyed a network of madrasas comparable to Shafiite and Hanafite ones. Furthermore, the Hanbalite madrasas were sometimes so small that their waqf-s were insufficient to provide for their maintenance, which in its turn could lead to the ruin of the establishment. [178] The spread of madrasas thus had a lighter and delayed impact on the Baghdadian Hanbalite milieu. At the time of effective Saljūq domination of Iraq, the Hanbalite madhhab kept its very local character: Hanbalism, in number, was the second ranked law school of Baghdad after Shafiism, but was distinguished by the fact that its members to a large extent originated from Baghdad and not from other areas of the dār al-islām.

The situation was different for the other madhāhib. The Hanafites, slightly inferior in number, enjoyed the support of the Saljūq rulers. As a result, a solid network of Hanafite madrasas had been established by Saljūq official already by the second half of the VIth/VIIth century. Teaching positions in these establishments were mainly held by local Hanafites, and in

16 At least nine male members of this Hanbalite family are known for the VIth/VIIth-XIIth centuries; the most famous ones are the gāḥī Abū Yaʿlā ibn al-Farrāʾ (d. 458/1066) (Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, Tabaqāt, vol. 2, p. 166-195) and his son Abū l-Ḥusayn Muhammad, known as Ibn Abī Yaʿlā (d. 526/1131), author of the Tabaqāt al-ḥanābila (Ibn Radjab, Dhayl, vol. 3, p. 147, notice 76).

17 Six Hanbalite madrasas were founded in Baghdad during those decades, compared to only one Hanafite and three Shafiite establishments.

18 For example: in 560/1165, the madrasa founded by the pro-Hanbalite vizier Ibn Hubayra at Bāb al-Asrār was closed and abandoned because of insufficient resources coming from the waqf (Sibt ibn al-Diawzi, Mirʾāt, Hyderabad, p. 240-44). The next year, another small Hanbalite institution, the madrasa built by Ibn al-Šamḥāl (d. 561/1166), official of the ʿAbdāsīd ʿl-wān, had to close due to bad administration of the waqf (Ibn al-Nābdīḏar, Dhayl, vol. 20, p. 36, notice 1144); etc.

19 Out of the 872 specialists of fiqh whose biographies are included in the database, 399 were Shafiites, 262 Hanbalites and 211 Hanafites. Among the Hanbalites, 190 (72,5%) were Baghdadians by birth and residence; this proportion is much lower among the Hanafites (86 Baghdadians, that is 40,8%) and above all Shafiites (104 Baghdadians, that is 26,1%). Compare with the data of Figure 1.

20 For example the madrasa founded right after the Niẓāmiyya by Abū Saʿd al-mustawfī (d. 494/1101), accountant of sultan Malikshāh, next to the mausoleum (mashhad) of Abū Ḥanīfa on the Eastern bank of Baghdad (Sibt ibn al-Diawzi, Mirʾāt, Mekka, vol. 1, p. 379), and the institution built by Tarkān Khāṭūn, wife of sultan Malikshāh, at the end of the VIth/VIIth century (Ibn al-Diawzi, Muntazam, vol. 17, p. 81).

21 Baghdadians by birth and residence represented 40% of the Hanafite fuqahāī present in Baghdad, but 76% of the 17 identified Hanafite madrasa-teachers (muḍarrisūn) for the period. See Figure 1.
particular by two families that monopolized the most prestigious mudarrisūn-positions: the Hashemite Zaynabī 22 and the Lamghānī 23. In fact, the Hanafite madrasa network proved efficient, since the proportion of local Hanafites in Baghdad was [179] higher in the second half of the VI/ZHI century than ever before 24. Baghdadian madrasas were attractive to non-Baghdadian Hanafite fuqahāʾ, but the arrival of immigrants was not threatening for the local jurists, whose position was strengthened during the Salāṭiq period.

The Shafiite fuqahāʾ of Baghdad also enjoyed a solid network of madrasas, and the madrasa became soon the main place of transmission of Shafiite law 25. Before the end of the VI/ZHI century, ten Shafiite madrasas had been founded in Baghdad, first by Salāṭiq 26 and then by ʿAbbāsid 27 dignitaries. However, the first madrasa founded in Baghdad, the Nizāmiyya, was of such outstanding importance that there was no possible balance between the Shafiite institutions of the city. All Shafiite mudarrisūn wished to teach at the Nizāmiyya, but would in general get their first position in a smaller madrasa, which they would abandon in the case of promotion to a bigger one.

The prestige of the Nizāmiyya was such that it attracted fuqahāʾ from other regions of the dār al-islām - and in particular the Salāṭiq Orient. As a result, an important proportion of Shafiite fuqahāʾ present in Baghdad were visitors or immigrants. More than


23 This family originated from the mountains of Khūrāsān and settled in Baghdad during the second half of the VI/ZHI century. Out of the lineage’s five members known in this period, three were teaching in Hanafite madrasas: Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 527/1133) at the madrasa of Saʿāda (Ibn al-Nadīdīr, Dhayl, vol. 16, p. 52, notice 31), and his two nephews Abū Yūsuf Ismāʿīl (d. 536/1142) and Abū Abdallāh Muḥammad (d. 554/1159) respectively at Abū Ḥanīfa’s masghad (al-Qurashi, Djawāhir, vol. 1, p. 413, notice 338) and at the Tutuqshīyya (Ibn al-Dubaylā, Dhayl, vol. 2, p. 39, notice 248). Members of this family were also active as legal witnesses (shāhid, pl. shuhūd).

24 More than half of the Hanafite fuqahāʾ (40 out of 71, that is 56,3%) living in Baghdad who died during the second half of the VI/ZHI century were of local origin, compared to only one third during the preceding century.

25 Activities other than dars, in particular popular preaching or waʿiz, often took place in the Shafiite madrasas of Baghdad.

26 Besides the Nizāmiyya madrasa, one can mention the Tādiyya, founded in 480/1087 by Tādi ʿal-mulk al-mustawfī (m. 485/1092), rival of Nizām al-mulk at the Salāṭiq court (Ibn al-Diawzī, Muntazam, vol. 16, p. 267-71).

half of foreign fuqahā’ who settled in Baghdad between the middle of the V/I\textsuperscript{th} and the end of the VI/I\textsuperscript{I}th century were Shafiite \textsuperscript{28}, and the same proportion of Shafiite madrasa-teachers were outsiders. The competition of foreign Shafiite scholars attracted by the great renown of the Nizāmiyya made the situation for local Shafiites more difficult, despite the support of powerful Saldjūq and 'Abbāsid officials. In consequence, local Shafiite families encountered difficulties to monopolize the madrasa-positions. In conclusion, the introduction of madrasa-institutions in Baghdad implied \textsuperscript{180} different consequences for the three main macāhib of Baghdad, and the concept of “Sunni revival” traditionally ascribed to the Saldjūq period must be reconsidered taking these differences into account.

I. 2. The Baghdadian mystic scene and the development of ribāṭ

The Saldjūq period also witnessed the foundation of many “Sufi-convents” (ribāṭ, khānqāh) in Baghdad. Some of these institutions already existed before the middle of the V/I\textsuperscript{th} century, but their number increased dramatically during the following century \textsuperscript{29}. These institutions were mainly dedicated to the lodging of ascetics, and were hosting Sufi ceremonies such as dhikr and samā’; but they could also be used as a shelter by non-Sufi travelers and by disgraced or retired officials. Wa’z-preaching sessions regularly took place in these institutions, as well as hadāth transmission, since the Sufis were able to come and go freely from their ribāṭ, despite the misleading connotations of the translation of “ribāṭ” as “convent”. The most prestigious ribāṭ-s of Baghdad were also used as burial places for both Sufis and political dignitaries.

The main ribāṭ-s of Baghdad were consequently deeply integrated in urban life. The most important ones in the Saldjūq period were the Zawzanī \textsuperscript{30} and the Bistāmī \textsuperscript{31} ribāṭ-s on the Western bank, and

\textsuperscript{28} In total, 97 foreign fuqahā’ permanently came to Baghdad during this period, of which 55 were Shafiite, 21 Hanafite and 21 Hanbalite.

\textsuperscript{29} About thirty ribāṭ or khānqāh are mentioned by the sources for this period, the immense majority having been founded in the VI/I\textsuperscript{I}th century. See V. Van Renterghem, Les élites bagdadiennes, table 3-5. 21 of them can be localized inside the city: 6 on the West bank and 15 on the East bank. See Map 3: “Ribāṭ-s founded in Baghdad during the Saldjūq period (hypothetical localization) ”.

\textsuperscript{30} Situated in front of al-Mansūr-mosque, this old ribāṭ is regularly mentioned in the chronicle of Ibn al-Diawī. It was known under the name of its Shaykh, Abū l-Hasan al-Zawzanī (d. 451/1059) (Muntazam, vol. 16, p. 59, notice 3367).

\textsuperscript{31} Overlooking the Tigris on Nahr ʿĪsā, this ribāṭ was founded by Abū l-Ghanā’īm Ibn al-Maḥlibān (d. after 452/1060) but was known under the name of its Shaykh, Abū l-Hasan al-Bistāmī (d. 493/1100) (Ibn al-Diawī, Muntazam, vol. 17, p. 57, notice 3696; Ibn al-Nadīdīr, Dhayl, vol. 18, p. 130, notice 673).
the ribāt-s of Abū Sa’d the Sufi 32 and of the khādim Bahrūz 33 on the Eastern bank. In fact, while almost all madrasas built during the Saldjūq period were located on the Eastern bank [181] of Baghdad, close to the caliphal quarters, ribāt-s and khānqāh were situated on both banks of the city.

The Sufi establishments were led by an individual holding the title of “Shaykh of the ribāt”. It is not easy to understand how and by whom this Shaykh was appointed. In some cases, officials or rich sponsors founded a ribāt explicitly designated for a famous mystic, who would then naturally become Shaykh of the establishment. After the death of this first Shaykh, a son or a close disciple could succeed him, but in most cases, the appointment of a Sufi to the position of “Shaykh of ribāt” is not clearly described by the sources.

Some Sufi families succeeded in monopolizing Shaykh-positions in the main Baghdadian ribāt-s and the vi/ixth century witnessed the consolidation of Sufi lineages from which most Baghdadian mystics originated 34. The Mḥanī family, who hailed from Khurāsān, directed the Bistāmī ribāt 35. In addition to occupying the leading position within Abū Sa’d’s ribāt, the Nišābūrī family temporarily took control of the Zawzanī ribāt in the first half of the vi/ixth century 36. Its members had good political connections 37, and they were the first Baghdadian mystics to be entitled Shaykh al-shuyūkh 38. But the most successful Sufi

32 Also known under the name of ribāt of the Shaykh al-Shuyūkh, at Nahr Mu’allā, it was first directed by Abū Sa’d al-Nišābūrī (d. around 477-79/1084-86) (Ibn al-Djawayī, Muntazam, vol. 16, p. 235, notice 3533).
33 Founded in 502/1108 by Bahrūz al-Ghiyāthī (d. 540/1145), khādim of Saldjūq sultan Masʿūd, this ribāt was situated next to the Nizāmiyya madrasa, in Bāb al-Marāṭib area, south of the caliphal palaces (Ibn al-Djawayī, Muntazam, vol. 16, p. 46, notice 416. See also the mentions in the chronicle for the Hārijian years 502, 510, 521, 544, 547; Sibt ibn al-Djawayī, Mirʿāt, Hyderabad, p. 186).
34 One third of the mystics present in Baghdad at that time can be traced to five important families. “Isolated” Sufis, not linked to those lineages, were less and less numerous in the vi/ixth century.
35 Three members of this family are known for the period. They directed the Bistāmī ribāt during the vi/ixth century, probably after the death of its first Shaykh, Abū ʿl-Ḥasan al-Bistāmī, in 493/1100.
36 This ribāt was then ruled by Abū ʿl-Barakāt ʿIsmāʿīl al-Nišābūrī (d. 541/1146), son of Abū Sa’d (Ibn al-Djawayī, Muntazam, vol. 18, p. 50, notice 4122).
37 Abū Sa’d was close to the Abāṣid caliph as well as to the Saldjūq sultan (Ibn al-ʿAthīr, Ṭāmil, vol. 8, p. 412-14; Ibn al-ʿImād, Shadhārat, vol. 5, p. 344); Abū ʿl-Barakāt had a very good relationship with the powerful vizier al-Zaynaḥ (Ibn al-Djawayī, Muntazam, vol. 18, p. 8-10) and his son ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (d. 580/1184) with vizier Ibn Raʾīs al-ruʿasāt; the latter was sent as ambassador to Salāḥ al-dīn by the Abāṣid caliph (Ibn al-ʿAthīr, Ṭāmil, vol. 16, p. 52-62 and vol. 11, p. 509).
38 The sources do not provide any details either about the way this title was given, nor about the rights and duties to which the person holding it would be entitled. For the period under study, in Baghdad, the title of Shaykh al-shuyūkh seems to have been mainly honorific, and no evidence proves that
lineage in VI\textsuperscript{th}/XI\textsuperscript{th}-century Baghdad was the Suhrawardī, a family that originated from the mountains to the north of the Iranian region \cite{182} of Djiābāl. As the nephew of the Shaykh of the ribāṭ of Saʿāda, on the bank of the Tigris \cite{35}, Abū l-Nadjīb al-Suhrawardī came to Baghdad to study at the Nizāmiyya madrasa and started his career as a popular preacher (wāʾiz), with the support of Saldiūq officials. He fell into political disgrace during the decline of Saldiūq power in Iraq, and started a Sufi career that finally made him Shaykh of a ribāṭ named after him \cite{40}. His nephew and disciple Abū MuḥammadʿUmar was also trained in waʾz and fiqh; he had a very successful career in Baghdad, and at the end of his life, he was Shaykh of four Baghdadian ribāṭ-s \cite{41}. His career could be compared to the one of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Djlānī, another immigrant who had come to the ʿAbbāsid capital in 489/1096 for religious studies, and who initially became renowned for his waʾz activities. ʿAbd al-Qādir settled in the city, married a local woman and left three sons, one of which had a career as a Hanbalite mudarris \cite{42}.

These four families have a certain number of features in common: their Oriental origin, the protection of Saldiūq officials, the association between fiqh, waʾz and Sufi activities, and finally a slow but solid establishment on the Baghdadian scene, even after the collapse of their Saldiūq patrons.

I. 3. Influential lineages of judges in Saldiūq Baghdad

Another sphere that experienced social change due to the rise of Saldiūq power was judicial administration, where Hanafite and sometimes Shafiite fuqahāʾ could strive for prestigious careers, while the Hanbalites had to reduce their career expectations. The position of qādī (judge) and, even more so, the one of qādī l-quḍāṭ (chief judge) guaranteed a high social status, but

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item Abū Hafs ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 532/1137) (Ibn al-Nadīḏiār, Dhayl, vol. 20, p. 116, notice 1268).
\item Al-Ḥāṣirī’s ribāṭ in al-Marzibānīyya, the Zawzanī and Bistānī ribāṭ-s, and the ribāṭ of al-Maʿmūnīyya. Abū MuḥammadʿUmar died at the age of more than 100 years, at the end of the VI\textsuperscript{th}/XI\textsuperscript{th} or the beginning of the VII\textsuperscript{th}/XII\textsuperscript{th} century (Ibn al-Nadīḏiār, Dhayl, vol. 20, p. 111, notice 1260).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
also opened up opportunities for quick fortune-making. In the Sālīdīq period, two families involved in Hanafite fiqh, the Dāmghānī and the Zaynabī, dominated the Baghdadian juridical. The Dāmghānī were newcomers in Baghdad. [183] Their social rise was enabled due to their adherence to the Hanafite madhhab, favored by the Sālīdīq rulers 43. They then established their status by the systematic use of nepotism and alliances with important Hanafite families such as the Simnānī. They finally managed to maintain their influential rank in the 'Abbāsid political sphere 44. The Zaynabī, on the other hand, were an old Baghdadian family, known for its Hashemite ascendancy. They held the position of representative (naqīb) of Baghdadian Hashemite lineages (ashrāf) during the Buwayhid period 45. Under Sālīdīq rule, they kept this position but also worked as judges and qādī 1-quadāt 46. About fifteen members of the family are mentioned in biographical sources: many of them were naqīb, two became qādī 1-quadāt and one was appointed vizier 47. Just as the Dāmghānī, the Zaynabī used matrimonial alliances with powerful families linked to Sālīdīq power to reinforce their own position in the 'Abbāsid entourage. They suffered from the decline of Sālīdīq power, and, even though it was still present in Baghdad, the family seems less powerful in the second half of the viiĩ/viĩ century.

Other families such as the Thaqafī, the Banū l-Muslima, the Banū Dijāhīr and the Banū Sadaqa succeeded in establishing dominant positions in the judicial, administrative and political milieus respectively. On the whole, the ju-[184]dicical and political spheres of Baghdad during that period were dominated by a limited

43 The first well-known member of the Dāmghānī lineage, Abū ʿAbdallāh (d. 478/1095), had settled in Baghdad during the Buwayhid period, but his career actually started with the decision of Sālīdīq vizier Amīr al-mulk al-Kundurī to appoint a Hanafite qādī 1-quadāt in 447/1056. He kept this position until his death, and had become very rich in-between (Ibn al-Djawiṣī, Muntazam, vol. 16, p. 249, notice 3547; al-Bundārī, Taʿīkh Baghdad, folio 46 r margin; al-Qurashi, Dirawahīr, vol. 2, p. 96, notice 290).

44 Around twenty descendants of Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Dāmghānī are known through the end of the viiĩ/viĩ century, belonging to five generations. They include many qādī-s, four qādī 1-quadāt and some dignitaries of the ʿAbbāsid state (nāʾib of the vizier, nāẓir of the waqf-s, etc.).

45 See John Donohue, The Buwayhid Dynasty in Iraq, op. cit., p. 305-306.

46 The most important member of the Zaynabī family in the viiĩ/viĩ century was Abū ʿl-Fawāris Tirād al-Zaynabī, naqīb of the Hashemites, of the ʿAbbāsids and naqīb al-nugābā (chief-naqīb). He was held in high favor by the ʿAbbāsid caliphs and played a political role between them and the Sālīdīq sultans. Abū ʿl-Fawāris died in 491/1098 (Ibn al-Djawiṣī, Muntazam, vol. 17, p. 43, notice 3675; Ibn al-Dīmīyatī, Dhayl, vol. 21, p. 97, notice 90; Sibt ibn al-Djawiṣī, Mīrāt, Mekka, vol. 1, p. 315; al-Qurashi, Dirawahīr, vol. 2, p. 261, notice 674).

number of lineages combining inherited prestige, material
fortune, political influence and alliances with other powerful
families.

The majority of these rich and influential lineages – and other
important individuals linked with the 'Abbāsid court or involved
in commercial activities – lived on the Eastern bank of Baghdad,
with a predilection for the shore of the Tigris, where most of
the aristocratic residences were concentrated \(^4\). Many Baghdadian
public or community institutions such as ribāt-s, madrasas or
khāngāhs, but also hospitals, mosques and city-walls, were
founded by those wealthy elites, who were the main actors behind
the urban dynamics during this period.

II. A dynamic city, with diversified building activities

The physical characteristics of Baghdad during the Saljūq period
remain the same as in the previous centuries: the dichotomy
between the two banks, a division reinforced by the difficulty of
crossing the Tigris, a wide and impetuous stream; the
discontinuity of the urban landscape, divided into many
independent and unequally developed districts; the lack of solid
building material such as wood and stone and the fragility of the
main building material: mud bricks, easily destroyed by floods or
fires. This last point is important in order to get a different
perspective on the role of the wastelands (kharāb, kharāba)
described by Ibn Džubayr. In fact, the reuse of building
materials was very common, and the sight of workmen carrying
bricks, beams or other parts of collapsed edifices to the
building site of a new palace or mosque was not unusual. In this
way, the presence of ruined areas in the city was also,
paradoxically, a guarantee of future construction activity. In
addition, the madrasas and ribāt-s founded in the Saljūq period
had a waqf attached to them, involving the construction of
markets, baths and houses, a testimony to the intensity of public
and private building activity in Baghdad during the Saljūq
period.

The historiographical sources provide us with many accounts of
such construction: the development of urban districts, the
construction of palaces, markets, mosques and fortifications, the
digging and maintenance of canals, the renovation of old
buildings, etc. \(^45\) The patron of the work is often indicat-

\(^4\) See the description of those areas by Ibn 'Agīl (second half of the 9th/xi
century) (English translation in George Makdisi, History and Politics, op. cit.).

\(^45\) See V. Van Renterghem, Les élites bagdadiennes, table 15-1, listing more than
one hundred works taking place in Baghdad at that time; the foundation of 32
ribāt-s and 27 madrasas must be added.
[185]ed: 66 persons are mentioned as patrons in this period, of whom 15 can be identified as members of the Salājuq entourage, 29 as coming from the ‘Abbāsid milieu, and 18 as Baghdadian residents who did not belong to any of these groups. These three groups, which also included a certain number of women, were not active at exactly the same time. Most of the foundations of the second half of the 10th century were done by Salājuq officials, while ‘Abbāsid dignitaries were responsible for half of the construction activity during the next century, and Baghdadian non-dignitaries assumed an ever growing role. Due to social differences between the three categories of patrons, they promoted the development of different areas of the city.

II. 1. The Salājuq foundations in Baghdad

The Salājuq sultans did not really intend to settle in Baghdad, preferring the Iranian cities that offered a more pleasant climate and were closer to the central provinces of their empire. Nevertheless, Salājuq sultans and high dignitaries left their mark on the city through a great number of foundations mainly dating from the decades following the recognition of their power by the ‘Abbāsid caliph. The sultan's representative in Baghdad (shihna) was in charge of building works ordered by the sultans ('imāra).

The Salājuq sultans chose to develop an area situated on the Eastern bank, to the north of the caliphal district surrounding the ‘Abbāsid palaces (Dār al-Khīlāfa). During his first stay in Baghdad in 448/1056, Tughril Beg had founded an urban settlement called “City of Tughril” (Madinat Tughril), surrounded by walls and including independent markets and even a Friday-mosque (djāmi'). The building material was taken from demolished construction sites on the Western bank. He also founded a palace, known by the Baghdadians as Dār al-Mamlaka. This palace was fortified in 449/1057, under threat of the arrival of the Shiite emir al-Basāṣīrī. The project was led by the Salājuq vizier 'Amīd al-mulk al-Kundurī, who requisitioned the whole population of the city for this task. Two Baghdadian hospitals were renovated.

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50 For an illustration of the spatial repartition of constructions patronized by these different groups, see Map 4: “Urban constructions and endowments in Baghdad during the Salājuq period”.


52 According to al-Bundārī, this mosque still existed in the first half of the 12th century (Zubda, p. 12-15).

and markets, khans and dwellings were built in the Shiite area of al-Karīkh. At that time, the Saljuq chose to settle on the Eastern bank in order to be in the neighborhood of the 'Abbāsid court, without being too close, and also because the main Shiite-populated areas were on the other bank. In addition, the Eastern bank of Baghdad was easier to reach coming from the Oriental Saljuq lands; in order to get to the Western bank, the Saljuq armies would have had to cross the Tigris, an operation that was sometimes difficult or even impossible.

Malikshāh, successor of Tughril Beg, pursued the urban strategy of his predecessor by patronizing construction activity in the same area. He was in particular responsible for the construction of a new Friday-mosque, the Djiāmi al-Sultan, in 485/1092, around which he had sumptuous residencies built for his major dignitaries: the vizier Nizām al-mulk, his rival Tādi al-mulk and the main emirs. High-ranked, wealthy Saljuq officials followed his example in financing both private and public buildings in the area. Some examples are the first Baghdadian madrasas, most of them situated in the neighborhood of Dār al-Mamlaka, built by Saljuq Persian vizier Nizām al-mulk (madrasa Nizāmiyya, 457-59/1065-67), the 'amīd and mustawfī Abū Sa'id (mashhad of Abū Ḥanīfa, 459/1067), the shīna Bahrūz (ribat Bahrūz, 502/1108), the mustawfī Tādi al-mulk (madrasa Tādiyya, 480/1087) and other Saljuq dignitaries. These buildings would turn out to be more resistant than the sultan’s constructions, which were to be destroyed by the 'Abbāsid caliphs in quest of reaffirmation of their power, or by the fires and floods that were so common in Baghdad at that time. The last Saljuq sultan demonstrating a real will for urban development was Muḥammad ibn Malikshāh, who built a new palace, Dār al-Sultāniyya, inaugurated in 509/1115. It burnt six years later and sulṭān Maḥmūd ordered the erection of a new palace, the last important sultanian construction in Baghdad.

54 The Bīmāristān built by the Buwayhid ruler 'Adud al-dawla and the one of Bāb Muḥawwal, both situated on the Western bank (Ibn al-Djawzī, Muntazam, vol. 16, p. 62).
55 Ibn al-Djawzī, ibid. The aim was less to develop this area than to confine its Shiite population by providing sufficient resources for the autonomy of this district.
57 Unlike the others, this madrasa was situated to the south of the caliphal palace, on the shore of the Tigris.
58 Before the years 530/1135, Saljuq officials founded six of the ten first Baghdadian madrasas and some of the most important ribāts of the city.
II. 2. The ‘Abbāsid re-conquest of the city

Even under the height of Saljūq power, the ‘Abbāsid caliphs always made their own urban policy. In this context, al-Qā’im rebuilt the turba of their own urban policy. In this context, al-Qā’im rebuilt the turba of the Baghdadian ascetic Ma’rūf al-Karkhī in 459/1066 61, and al-Muqtadī (467-487/1075-1094) developed many deserted areas of the Eastern bank 62 and reconstructed the ‘Abbāsid palace’s mosque, Dīāmī’ al-Qasr, in 475/1082 63. Al-Mustazhir (487-512/1094-1118) built the walls (sūr) surrounding the main areas next to the caliphal palaces 64 and ordered the destruction of some private residences of disgraced officials. His successor al-Mustarshīd (512-529/1118-1135) built a new palace, named al-Muthammina, to replace the collapsing Tādi, on the shore of the Tigris. This operation was completed in 518/1124 65. These construction projects were very expensive and could only be undertaken with public money 66 or with the help of private donations 67. Some Saljūq residences were destroyed in order to use the material for building new fortifications 68.

[188] After the middle of the VIth/XIIth century, when the political situation was stabilized and Baghdad was no longer threatened by Saljūq raids, the ‘Abbāsid caliphs started to build civil edifices again, including leisure kiosks (kīshk) in Turkish style 69, two new palaces (one at Bāb al-Gharaba, north of the

63 The reconstruction of the minaret was completed in 479/1086 and the new mosque was inaugurated in 494/1100 (Ibn al-Djawzī, Muntazam, vol. 16, p. 222-225).
64 The construction started in 488/1095 (Ibn al-Djawzī, Muntazam, vol. 17, p. 15-18). The wall protected the caliphal district and the surrounding dwellings from outside attacks, but it also isolated these areas from the rest of Baghdad, and in particular from the sultanian quarters in the north. Repeatedly damaged and reconstructed during Medieval and Ottoman periods, this city-wall figures on XIXth century maps of Baghdad; some traces of it are still visible in today’s Baghdad. See Map 1.
66 This often implied exceptional taxation (see for example Ibn al-Djawzī, Muntazam, vol. 17, p. 15-18) that was sometimes denounced as unjust by Baghdadian jurists (ibid., 217-221).
68 In 527/1133, al-Mustarshīd ordered Bustān al-ʿAmīd to be destroyed and to use its bricks to reinforce the city wall. The following year, the old residence of Nizzām al-mulk was destroyed and its furniture transferred to Dār al-Khilāfa (Ibn al-Djawzī, Muntazam, vol. 17, p. 275-277 and 284).
69 Two expensive kiosks were built for the caliph al-Mustanṣīr and his vizier in 558/1163, and one in 571/1175 under the reign of al-Mustādi, near the Sultan’s mosque on the Eastern bank (Ibn al-Djawzī, Muntazam, vol. 18, p. 155 and 218-224).
Ḥarīm ⁷⁰, and one in front of the makhzan ⁷¹) and a large masjid in the old Sultanian district ⁷². In this period, 'Abbāsid construction in the areas situated north of the caliphal districts, once a Saldiq neighborhood, were the symbol of the end of Saldiq influence on Baghdad.

II. 3. Civilian elites and urban development

Private patrons also played an important part in the urban development of Baghdad. Out of the 66 individuals mentioned by the sources as responsible for building activities, twelve were high-ranked 'Abbāsid officials ⁷³, all wealthy and influential, whose constructions were mainly situated in the caliphal districts ⁷⁴, close to their residences and places of work ⁷⁵. Their fortune allowed them to make long-term endowments ⁷⁶, based on solid waqf-s, a guarantee for a sustainable prominence after the death of the founder.

[189] Eighteen other patrons were Baghdadians with no links to the 'Abbāsid milieu; they were mainly muḥaddithūn, fuqahā’, wu‘āz or Sufis, and two wealthy Hanbalite merchants. Except for the two last ones, the financial situation of these patrons is not known. Their religious or mystic activities were not particularly lucrative, but they could have had access to private wealth or political support allowing them to finance their endowments. In any case, they founded eight madrasas, seven ribāt-s and six masjid-s (the waqf-s of three of them including books), almost all situated on the Eastern bank ⁷⁷. As a result, instead of counterbalancing the 'Abbāsid and Saldiq tendency to

⁷⁰ Built in 559/1164 by al-Mustandjīd (Ibn al-Djawzī, Muntazam, vol. 18, p. 159-160). The yearly caliphal reception gathering most of the famous Baghdadian Sufis and 'ulamā’ took place in this palace.
⁷² Built three years later by the same caliph, and bestowed to Hanbalite preachers (Ibn al-Djawzī, Muntazam, vol. 18, p. 235-242).
⁷³ Among them are: six viziers, three ustādh al-dār, one sāḥib al-makhzan, three kuttāb and two khuddām, founders of seven madrasas, four ribāt-s, a school (maktab) for orphans and a masjid.
⁷⁴ Twelve out of their sixteen foundations; the four others (mainly ribāt-s) were on the Western bank.
⁷⁵ Eleven of those twelve persons were living on the Eastern bank, in the vicinity of Dār al-Khilāfa.
⁷⁶ For example, the endowments of the vizier Fakhr al-dawla Ibn al-Muttalib (a madrasa and a ribāt on the Western bank, a Friday-mosque and a khāngāh on the Eastern one) were still functioning one century after their foundation in the years 570’/1175’ according to Sibt ibn al-Djawzī (Mīr’at, Hyderabad, p. 371).
⁷⁷ It must be noted that half of those private patrons were Hanbalite, six being responsible of the foundation of madrasas dedicated to their madhhab, which was less supported by the political spheres than the Hanafite and Shafiite ones.
develop the Eastern bank of the city, these private foundations
mainly reinforced it. Nevertheless, it is important to note that
by these endowments, inhabitants of Baghdad were contributing to
the dynamism of their city.

II. 4. Female patrons in Saldjūq Baghdad

Eight of the 66 founders of Baghdadian institutions were women,
mainly mothers, wives or concubines of ʿAbbāsid caliphs or
Saldjūq sultans 78. They founded four madrasas and five ribāt-s,
two of which were dedicated to female ascetics. For instance, the
favorite concubine of ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Mustadiʿ, Banafsha
(“violet”, in Turkish), bought the old palace of the vizier
Ibn Djahīr on the shore of the Tigris, in Bāb al-Azadī, and
turned it into a Hanbalite madrasa in 570/1175. She endowed it
with a waqf financed by the income of a village she owned 79.
Three years later, she founded a ribāt dedicated to Sufi-women,
on the Eastern bank, and entrusted it to the sister of the Sufi
Abū Bakr, Shaykh of the Zawzanī ribāt 80. Banafsha also
financially supported Hanbalite ʿulama”, in a variety of ways,
such as donating the dowry of [190] Ibn al-Djawzī’s daughter and
paying for the wedding, which took place in her own palace 81.

These kinds of patronage activities are testimonies to the wealth
and influence acquired by some women in Vth-VIth/XIth-XIIth-century
Baghdad. But it also shows the need for the financial support of
activities not supported by male patrons. It could also be
considered a way for women, in particular those not belonging to
the political spheres, to leave a sustainable mark on the city.

Conclusion: urban dynamics of Baghdad in the Vth-VIth/XIth-XIIth centuries

Far from being the ruined and devastated city that Ibn Djubayr’s
description could lead us to imagine, Baghdad, in the period of
Saldjūq domination and at the time of the ʿAbbāsid revival, was a

78 Must be added to this list two women that did not belong to the political
entourage but were involved in the transmission of traditional knowledge:
Fāṭima bint al-Ḥusayn al-Kāzī (d. 521/1127), muḥadditha and wāʿiza, founder of
a ribāt for women (Ibn al-Djawzī, Muntazam, vol. 17, p. 247; Sibt
ibn al-Djawzī, Mirʿāt, Hyderabad, p. 126), and Shuhda bint al-Abī (d. 574/1178), skilled in calligraphy and ḥadīth, who had contacts with the
ʿAbbāsid milieu and made a ribāt of her private house next to the Dār
al-Khilāfa (Ibn al-Djawzī, Muntazam, vol. 18, p. 254, notice 4329;
Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, vol. 2, p. 447, notice 297; Sibt ibn al-Djawzī, Mirʿāt,
Hyderabad, p. 351).
79 Ibn al-Djawzī, Muntazam, vol. 18, p. 211-215; Sibt ibn al-Djawzī, Mirʿāt,
Hyderabad, p. 326-333.
dynamic city. Even if it was continuously exposed to destruction caused by war, attacks, riots, fires, floods of the Tigris and other kinds of natural or human depredations, it also witnessed intense building activity that led to the development, on the Eastern bank around the caliphal districts, of the aristocratic part of Baghdad at that time. Baghdad was thus a city in permanent evolution as the result of the urban foundations endowed by the Saltājāqs and 'Abbāsid officials, and by some wealthy private individuals concerned with the development of traditional and mystical activities who wished to leave a long-term mark on their city and community. Culturally, the production of traditional knowledge was particularly active at that time, as proved for example by the numerous works produced by Baghdadian Hanbalite scholars such as Ibn 'Aqīl or Ibn al-Djawzī. During that period, often considered as a time of urban decline, Baghdad appears through the contemporary sources to have been a cosmopolitan city that remained attractive for travelers coming from different areas of the dār al-islām, in spite of the growing competition of other Muslim metropolises such as Isfahan, Cairo, Damascus or Aleppo.

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