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**The Shrine of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad  
& the Shrine of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī in ‘Aqra:  
Mapping the multiple orientations of two  
Qādirī Sufi shrines in Iraq**

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**MA**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of PhD Theology and Religious Studies

School of Critical Studies

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## Abstract

This thesis charts the stakeholder communities, physical environment and daily life of two little studied Qādiriyya Sufi shrines associated with Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (1077 – 1165 AD), a 12<sup>th</sup> century Ḥanbalī Muslim theologian and the posthumous founder of one of the oldest Sufi orders in Islam. The first shrine is based in Baghdad and houses his burial chamber; and the second shrine, on the outskirts of the city of ‘Aqra in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, is that of his son Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (died 1206 AD). The latter was also known for lecturing in Ḥanbalī theology in the region, and venerated for this as well as his association with Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.

Driven by the research question “What shapes the identity orientations of these two Qādiriyya Sufi shrines in modern times?” the findings presented here are the result of field research carried out between November 2009 and February 2014. This field research revealed a complex context in which the two shrines existed and interacted, influenced by both Sufi and non-Sufi stakeholders who identified with and accessed these shrines to satisfy a variety of spiritual and practical needs, which in turn influenced the way each considered and viewed the two shrines from a number of orientations. These overlapping orientations include the Qādirī Sufi entity and the resting place of its patron saint; the orthodox Sunnī mosque with its muftī-imams, who are employed by the Iraqi government;<sup>1</sup> the local Shī‘a community’s neighbourhood saint’s shrine and its destination for spiritual and practical aid; and the local provider of welfare to the poor of the city (soup kitchen, funeral parlour and electricity-generation amongst other services). The research findings also revealed a continuously changing and adapting Qādirī Sufi scene not immune from the national and regional socio-religio-political environments in which the two shrines exist: a non-Sufi national political class vying to influence and manipulate these shrines for their own purposes; and powerful national sectarian factions jostling to do the same.

The mixture of stakeholders using and associating with the two shrines were found to be influential shapers of these entities, both physically and spiritually. Through encountering and interacting with each other, most stakeholders contributed to maintaining and rejuvenating the two shrines, but some also sought to adapt and change them driven by their particular orientation’s perspective.

---

<sup>1</sup> Muftī is a theologian licensed by the government to give religious edicts, fatwas.







The Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Baghdad.



The Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, 'Aqra.



## Contents

<b>Dedication .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Acknowledgments .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Author's Declaration .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Ethical considerations and declaration of author's personal interest .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Transliterations, abbreviations, glossary and dating style .....</b>	<b>19</b>
- Transliteration system .....	19
- Jīlānī family name spellings .....	20
- Other people's names .....	20
- Common Arabic words in English .....	20
- Abbreviations .....	21
- Glossary .....	22
- Dating style.....	24
<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>25</b>
- The locations and dates of the field-research .....	26
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>28</b>
- The Conceptual Framework for this thesis.....	32
- Synopsis of thesis structure .....	37
<b>Chapter 1:</b>	
<b>Historical review of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, his son Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz and the Qādiriyya Sufi Order in Baghdad and in 'Aqra .....</b>	<b>38</b>
- The aim of this chapter .....	38
- Introduction .....	38
A. The True Personality of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir .....	40
A.1 His books .....	43
A.2 His biographers .....	46
A.3 His significance .....	47
B. Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī .....	52

C. The Qādiriyya Sufi Order .....	54
C.1 The Qādiriyya Sufi Order in Iraq .....	56
C.2 The Qādiriyya Sufi Order in Baghdad .....	58
C.3 The Qādiriyya Sufi Order in Kurdistan Iraq .....	63
D. The Gailani Family of Baghdad .....	64
E. Confirming the two Jilānī shrines' Sufi status .....	73
E.1 Werbner's key analytical concepts of Sufi shrine-focused orders .....	74
1- The "Sacred division of labour" .....	76
2- The "Sacred exchanges between places and persons" .....	81
3- The "Sacred region" .....	83
4- The "Sacred indexical events" .....	86
E.2 Belief's role in shaping the Sufi identities of the two Qādirī shrines .....	87
- Conclusion .....	88

## Chapter 2:

<b>Mapping the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī in Baghdad .....</b>	<b>90</b>
- The aim of this chapter .....	90
- Sources and methodology .....	91
- How the shrine complex is managed .....	94
A- A brief history of the shrine complex .....	96
B- The location of the shrine .....	102
C- The spaces of the complex and the activities that take place in them .....	107
C.1- The main entrances to the complex .....	108
C.2- The three minarets .....	111
C.3- The clock tower and its pigeon nests .....	114
C.4- The central court and its platforms .....	115
C.5- The main shrine .....	117
C.6- The burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and its suite of rooms .....	122
C.7- The Qur'āns Room .....	139
C.8- Other features of the double portico .....	140
C.9- The Mālikī Mosque prayer hall (J) .....	142
C.10- The Ḥanafī Mosque prayer hall (I) .....	145
C.11- The Shāfi'ī mosque prayer hall (K) .....	152
C.12- Women's new prayer hall (M) .....	153
C.13- The new function hall (L) .....	157
C.14- The shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār and Shaikh Ṣāliḥ (B) .....	159

C.15- Building area (N) – Gailani family burial rooms and Staff and followers' accommodation .....	168
C.16- The Baqcha – Burial ground (Z) .....	170
C.17- Funeral Parlour – <i>Meghaisil</i> (Y) .....	175
C.18- Accommodation for pilgrims (P) .....	178
C.19- Toilet and ablutions facilities (O) .....	178
C.20- The new extension and its various public spaces and lodging quarters surrounding the central courtyard (F) .....	179
C.21- The Qādiriyya Library (G) .....	182
C.22- Gailani family reception rooms (F closest to L) .....	192
C.23- The shrine's local Qādirī dhikr circle's takkia (H) .....	198
C.24- Kitchen for pilgrims and staff (E) .....	199
C.25- Toilet and ablutions facility (O) by staff kitchen (E) area .....	200
C.26- The new subterranean retail area (R) .....	201
C.27- Administrative offices of the Qādirī Waqf (S and U) .....	202
C.28- The Soup Kitchen (T) .....	205
C.29- Fenced green for sheep offerings (V) .....	209
C.30- Comments on the epigraphy on site .....	209
C.31- Comment on the consequences of the expansion of the site .....	210
D- The Shrine and its neighbourhood .....	211
D.1- Takkiat al-Ṭayyār .....	211
D.2- Takkiat Ābū-Khumra .....	213
D.3- Ḥusaīniyyat al-Aḥmadī .....	217
D.4- Al-Khulānī Mosque .....	220
D.5- Al-Madrassa al-Qādiriyya (now an independent, non-Sufi, government-run religious educational institution) .....	223
- Final remarks .....	224

### **Chapter 3:**

#### **Mapping the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jīlānī in 'Aqra – a preliminary**

<b>investigation .....</b>	<b>226</b>
- The aims of this chapter .....	226
- Sources and methodology .....	226
- How the shrine complex is managed .....	228
A- Location of the Shrine .....	230
B- Buildings and spaces .....	232

B.1- Building (A) – Ablutions, electricity rooms, and burial ground ....	236
B.2- Building (B) – Shrine, residential quarter and cave .....	240
B.3- Building (B) - The cave .....	242
B.4- Building (B) - The shrine .....	244
B.5- Building (B) - The living quarters .....	268
B.6- Building (C) – the Takkia, the mosque/prayer hall and the Library	272
B.7- Building (C) - The courtyard .....	274
B.8- Building (C) - The prayer hall / mosque room .....	277
B.9- Building (C) - The library room .....	283
B.10- Building (C) - The reception rooms .....	289
B.11- Building (C) - The upper floor reception rooms .....	290
B.12- Building (D) – residence of the custodian and his family .....	296
B.13- Building (E) – female guests’ reception room and food Preparation quarter .....	298
B.13.1- Kitchen activities and meal preparation .....	302
B.14- Ablutions and toilet facilities throughout the site .....	302
B.15- Carpets and the carpeting of floor spaces .....	303
B.16- Clocks around the site .....	303
C- Dress .....	303
D- The profile of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s shrine users / stakeholders .....	304
E- The Wūlīānī children on site .....	304
F- Variations and influences in the ritual activities of the Wūlīāniyya Sufi Order .....	304
G- How conventional is the Wūlīāniyya as a Qādirī Sufi order? .....	305
H- Influences of transnational forces on the site .....	306
I- The Wūlīāniyya takkia in Rovia .....	307
- Concluding remarks .....	312

#### **Chapter 4:**

<b>The Festival Calendar at the two Jīlānī shrines .....</b>	<b>313</b>
- Aim of this chapter .....	313
- Limits of this chapter .....	313
A- The festivities held at the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad .....	314
A.1- Mawlid al-Nabī .....	314
A.2- Mawlūd Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir .....	318

A.3- The Fasting Month of Ramaḍān .....	334
A.4- Muḥarram and ‘Āshūrā .....	335
A.4.1- Territory-marking and bridge-building – The Jīlānī Shrine and The Shī‘a .....	339
B- The festivities held at the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī in ‘Aqra	342
B.1- Documenting the ‘Īd al-Āḍḥa celebrations on 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2010 .....	343
- Concluding remarks .....	348

## **Chapter 5:**

### **The impact of the politico-religious establishment on the two shrines: The Ba‘th**

<b>regime era and its post-2003 Sunnī Salafist legacy .....</b>	<b>350</b>
- Aim of this chapter .....	350
- A brief word on the study of the modern history of Iraq .....	351
A- The impact of the Ba‘th regime on the Qādiriyya in Baghdad.....	353
A.1- The ruling Ba‘th Party and religion .....	353
A.2- Saddam Hussein and religion .....	361
A.2.1- Saddam Hussein and the Great National Faith Campaign .....	364
A.2.2- Mosque building and shrine renovations in Saddam Hussein’s name .....	369
A.3- The Ba‘th and Sufism .....	371
A.3.1- The Kasnazāniyya and the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir .....	373
A.3.2- Two Sufi takkias seek al-Dūrī’s help against the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir .....	375
A.3.3- The custodians of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and the Ba‘th regime .....	376
A.4- Saddam Hussein and the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī	379
A.4.1- The consequences .....	381
A.4.2- Lobbying the government against the demolition project	382
B- The current challenges facing the Qādirī shrines with regard to the rise of religious Salafism in the country .....	385
B.1- A Jihādī Salafist agitation .....	385
B.2- The people and Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s resting place .....	386
B.3- Facing Salafism on a daily basis .....	388



B.4- In defence of Sufi practices .....	390
B.5- <i>Mawlid</i> festivities at the Shrine .....	394
B.6- A daily tug-of-war .....	398
B.7- The Jīlānī saint in Kurdistan .....	402
B.8- An incomplete story .....	404
B.9- A much more complicated reality .....	404
- Concluding remarks .....	405
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>407</b>
- Introduction .....	407
- Reflections on the limitations of Pnina Werbner's analytical method for the comparative assessment of Sufi cults .....	407
- Reflections on gender .....	410
- Expressing Qādirī Sufi identity beyond the organised orders in Iraq .....	411
- Answering the thesis's main research question .....	412
<b>References .....</b>	<b>417</b>

**Dedicated to**

Sayyid Yūsuf Ḍīā' al-Dīn  
ibn Maḥmūd Ḥusām al-Dīn  
Al-Gailani

&

Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ḍahīr al-Dīn  
ibn 'Abd-Āllah Mū'ayad  
Al-Gailani

**For steering the ship through unprecedented times**



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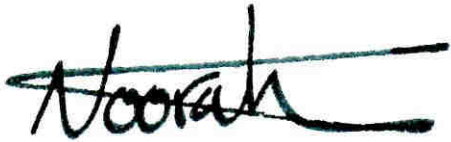
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**Author's Declaration**

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Noorah', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Noorah Al-Gailani MA

5 August 2016

## **Ethical considerations and declaration of author's personal interest**

### **A brief description of the field research element of the project:**

The field research for this thesis project covers two Sufi shrines, one in the capital Baghdad – the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani [al-Jīlānī], and one in the Kurdish city of ‘Aqra in northern Iraq – the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani [al-Jīlānī]. Both shrines are affiliated to the same Sufi order – the Qādiriyya; and both are owned and managed by the one religious endowment trust – al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya – the Qādiriyya Endowments.

### **Field research format:**

The field research was conducted with the permission of the custodians of al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya, which was secured before commencement of the project in 2009. The field research involved visiting these two shrines, observing their activities and festivities, and interviewing their caretakers and users. It also included visits and interviews at a number of Sufi and Shī‘ī establishments near these shrines. The material collected includes hand-written interview notes, photography and film of the buildings and the public festivities conducted in them, and film and audio-recordings of Sufi dhikr circles (remembrance sessions open to the public) and Friday prayers and sermons.

### **The ethical issues considered:**

#### **1 – Formal written consent for participation in interviews:**

In assessment of cultural norms and the political situation in the country at the time of conducting the research, it was judged inappropriate to present interview-consent forms and request participants' signatures. From the cultural perspective, it is not common in Iraq to request ordinary people's written consent for matters relating to their participation in interviews or research activities of a cultural nature. Requesting written names and signatures is generally preserved for exceptional matters that relate to dealing with public bodies (health, education, food rationing, financial transactions, legal matters, etc.). From the political perspective, the period in which the field research took place (November 2009 - February 2014) was a turbulent period characterised by sectarian competition, and

discrimination and reprisals between the Sunnī and the Shīʿa populations of Iraq.

Requesting written names and signatures would have been viewed with suspicion.

## **2 – Personal association with the subject:**

The saints buried in both shrines being studied in this project are commonly believed to be the paternal ancestors of both my father and my mother. My late father, my paternal and maternal grandparents and great-grandparents are buried in the shrine in Baghdad. The current custodians of the religious endowments trust – al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya – that holds authority over the two shrines are my blood relatives. Being mindful of the need to ensure academic impartiality, I have endeavoured to carefully monitor my engagement with this project, both from the field research perspective and my personal conduct in carrying it, and from the perspective of the use and interpretation of the primary material acquired through it. I have also endeavoured to do the same when using published academic material relevant to this project.

## Transliterations, abbreviations, glossary and dating style

### Transliteration system

The International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) transliteration system is used for the Arabic words that appear in this thesis:

أ = Ā, ā

ب = B, b

ت = T, t

ث = Th, th

ج = J, j

ح = H, h

خ = Kh, kh

د = D, d

ذ = Dh, dh

ر = R, r

ز = Z, z

س = S, s

ش = Sh, sh

ص = Ṣ, ṣ

ض = Ḍ, ḍ

ط = Ṭ, ṭ

ظ = Ḍ, ḍ

ع = ʿ

غ = Gh, gh

ف = F, f



ك = K, k

گ = G, g (for words of Farsi origin that form part of the Iraqi Arabic dialect)

ل = L, l

م = M, m

ن = N, n

ه = H, h

و = W, w

ي = Y, y

ة = A, a

ال = Al-, al-

### **Jīlānī family name spellings**

The form of spelling Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s surname “al-Jīlānī” in English will be used to refer to him when not directly quoting an Iraqi Arabic source, verbal or written. In these sources the name is usually spelt (الجيلاني) and pronounced al-Gailani or al-Gilani. The majority of the Gailani family in Baghdad, descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and the custodians of the shrine and its endowments, spell their surnames in English using “Al-Gailani” format, with a smaller number spelling it “Al-Gaylani,” and a few “Al-Gillani.” I have used the former spelling when referring to the Gailani family and the latter two spellings only where I have evidence that the person concerned uses it.

### **Other people’s names**

For famous figures such as Saddam Hussein, and for Arab academics who have works published in English, I have used their own preferred way or the commonly accepted way of spelling their names in English.

### **Common Arabic words in English**

Some common Arabic words and terms have been spelt as they appear in general English-printed media such as:

Allah

Baghdad

Medina

Mecca

Mosul (Iraq)

Muhammad

Ninety-Nine names of Allah

Sayyid (title of a descendant of Prophet Muhammad)

Shaikh

Sufi

Sultan

### Abbreviations

‘Aqra shrine /

the shrine in ‘Aqra

= the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī in ‘Aqra. Also commonly known as Takkiat Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Gailani.

Baghdad shrine /

Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad /

the shrine in Baghdad /

the shrine

= the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad.

Jīlānī shrines, the

= the two shrines that are the focus of this thesis.

Naqīb al-Āshrāf / the Naqīb /

the Niqāba

= the post of Naqīb Āshrāf Baghdad (see glossary below) and post holders carrying the title “Naqīb al-Āshrāf.”

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir /

‘Abd al-Qādir

= Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.

Qādirī / Qādiriyya	= The Qādiriyya Sufi Order and those belonging and affiliated to it.
Qādiriyya Endowments	= Āl-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya, also known as Dīwān al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya. The endowments trust responsible for the two Qādirī shrines in Baghdad and ‘Aqra and related endowed lands and properties. Its headquarters, the Dīwān, is at the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad.
Takkiat al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Gailani	= The shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī in ‘Aqra.
<b>Glossary</b>	
Cage	= see grille.
Community / community of the shrine	= community here refers to the leadership, staff and Qādirī Sufi users of either of the two Jīlānī shrines being discussed.
Dhikr	= Sufi remembrance, devotional rituals and ceremonies, termed in classical Sufi studies as Samā‘.
Gailani / Gaylani / Gailani family	= spelling variations for the surname Jīlānī, generally used by people claiming blood descent from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. Here, these spellings are used to name members of the Gailani family in Baghdad.
God	= in this thesis the term God is used to mean Allah.
Grille	= the metal cage-like structure encasing the tomb of a saintly figure in a shrine.

Al-Ḥaḍra al-Qādiriyya	= Ḥaḍra meaning presence, this term is a commonly used name in Baghdad to refer to the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.
Identity	<p>= the term is used in this thesis to refer to the sum of personal and group qualities, beliefs and associations that distinguish each type of stakeholder group / community who are associated with each of the two Jīlānī shrines.</p> <p>= it is also used in an interchangeable manner to refer to the Jīlānī shrines’ orientations from the perspectives of its stakeholders / users.</p>
Kishwaniya	= the booth for depositing footwear at a mosque’s prayer space.
Mawlūd	= Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s death-anniversary annual celebrations that take place over a two week period around the eve of the Mawlūd on 11 Rabī‘ al-Thānī. Misunderstood by most Iraqis today as being his birth date. This misunderstanding may have arisen in local minds due to both the term Mawlūd, being derived from “mīlād” that means birth-day, and from the latter term’s association with the celebration of Prophet Muhammad’s annual birth, as opposed to death, anniversary.
Mīlād / Mawlid al-Nabī	= Annual anniversary of Prophet Muhammad’s birth and associated festivities.
Muqarnas	= architectural decoration, usually in brick or in stucco, that resembles bee hive-style mouldings, usually covering the interior surfaces of domes, alcoves, and upper corners transitioning from wall to ceiling surfaces.
Naqīb Āshrāf Baghdad	= the superintendent or marshal of the noble descendants of Prophet Muhammad’s grandsons Ḥasan and Ḥusāin. A formal religious position endorsed and regulated by the

Ottomans. The position in Baghdad was held by members of the Gailani family from 1534 to 1960.

Orientation	= in this thesis it refers to the multiple orientations of the two Jīlānī shrines as defined by the various stakeholders through the latter's beliefs, attitudes and interests in these two shrines.
Place	= the physical geometric portion of space found in the environment of architecture, open and closed / exterior and interior, and used for human activity. Also, the geographical location and locality of an entity.
Shahāda	= the Muslim profession of faith: "There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah".
Space	= in this thesis, it is interchangeable with place from the geometrical-dimensions perspective, and includes areas within a site (place where human activities are carried out). Also used to denote larger areas where sociological boundaries overlap: social, religious and economic areas of belonging and activity.
Stakeholders	= all those who believe they have a stake in either shrine, including individuals, organised groups and institutions of government. See Introduction, diagram 2(B).
Turba	= a sundried or baked clay disc from the soil of Kerbelā' – where Imam Ḥusān is believed to have been martyred and where his shrine stands today – used by the Shī'a sect in performing their daily prayers, where it is positioned on the floor for the forehead to rest on at prostration.

### **Dating style**

Unless stated to be otherwise, all dates are in the Christian Gregorian calendar.

## Preface

When this research journey began the motivation behind it was an interest in Islamic Art and material culture, and a desire to understand the contexts in which it was produced, especially that art which carries Sufi mystical connotations, and which ranged from monumental architecture and illuminated and illustrated manuscripts, to humble garments, charms and talismans. From this background stems the interest in documenting the physical presence and the communities of two Qādirī Sufi shrines in Iraq: the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 1165) in Baghdad and the shrine of his son Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī (d. 1206) in ‘Aqra. The aim is to explore these two shrines’ identities as expressed through their material culture and associated traditions; these being the physical environments and the rituals and practices performed within them, to gain an understanding of the dynamics and circumstances that influenced the shaping of these physical environments and rituals, and identify the peculiarities of their contexts and orientations as Sufi entities.

As Iraq has largely been inaccessible to academics from the West over the past four decades, there is very little academic material written about these two shrines, which has meant that the material gathered through field research for this project has become the primary source of information for this thesis. As a result, the main focus of this thesis has become the time period of the field research, a very short span between November 2009 and February 2014, with the aid of some post-field research contact and correspondence, and some contextual written sources that cover the earlier periods of the two shrines’ modern histories (mainly late 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries). As part of the documentation effort, brief investigations have been carried out into the backgrounds of the various communities that use and associate with the two shrines, and into the various religious and political environments in which the two shrines exist and function, and are affected by.

The two terms, place and space, have been used interchangeably in this study. They denote the spheres of activity that have been created and shaped by people associated with the two Jīlānī shrines. They apply to the two Jīlānī shrines as physical entities with architectural structures and as sacred zones of human activity with religious and cultural influences. The two terms, place and space, are also used when referring to the two shrines as being interconnected bodies that interact with each other despite the vast distances that separate them. Finally, the two terms are used when exploring how each shrine interacts

with the wider geographical sphere in which it is situated. This latter form of interaction includes the religio- and socio-political spheres of influence and systems that operate within it.

The first field research visit to the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad threw up the issue of the presence of unexpected stakeholders, mainly the Shīʿa community, but also an officially appointed senior imam with strong Salafist opinions and his followers. The presence of these stakeholders drew attention to the issue of the identity of the shrine. Is it a Sufi shrine? If it is so, how do these users / stakeholders justify their presence in this Sufi place given the differing religious and ideological beliefs they hold? Moreover, how do the Qādirī Sufis of this shrine interact with and accommodate the demands of these non-Sufi – if not anti-Sufi – stakeholders, without sacrificing their own needs and expectations of this place? Because of this phenomenon, the identities of both the Sufi shrines and their users and stakeholders are implicitly explored through the mapping of the two Jīlānī entities and their communities. Therefore, the term ‘identity’, as it is used in this thesis, refers to the multiple orientations of these shrines as defined by the various stakeholders through their beliefs, attitudes and interests in them.

### **The locations and dates of the field-research:**

In Baghdad, the Shrine of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī is a large complex situated on the eastern side of the River Tigris in the neighbourhood of Bāb al-Shaikh. It includes, in addition to the shrine (the burial chamber of the saint), five prayer halls, accommodation for Sufis, library, soup kitchen, funeral parlour, family burial chambers and a graveyard, courtyards, administration building and a number of other ancillary facilities.

In ʿAqra in the Kurdish region in the north of Iraq, the shrine of Shaikh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Jīlānī is nestled in a mountain enclave called Galī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, perched above the old town of ʿAqra. The complex comprises a Sufi lodge, courtyard, prayer hall, library, residence for the caretakers, orchard and a number of ancillary buildings.

Both shrines are owned by the Qādiriyya Endowments – al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya – based in Baghdad at the shrine of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir, and managed by his descendants, the Gailani family, and their agents in ʿAqra, the Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya Sufi Order and Wūlānī family.

The dates of the field research trips to Baghdad were:

- 14 – 20 November 2009
- 18 – 25 November 2010
- 12 – 24 March 2011
- 9 December 2011 – 4 January 2012
- 15 – 28 February 2013
- 8 – 22 February 2014

The dates of the field research trips to 'Aqra were:

- 12 – 13 November 2009
- 13 – 17 November 2010
- 20 – 24 December 2011



## Introduction

In April 2004, five years before embarking on this thesis project and a year after the fall of Baghdad in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, I visited the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jīlānī after a twelve-year absence. In that period of absence, profound change had taken place in the physical aspects of the historic site, its architecture and the ancient neighbourhood in which it stood. Its main summertime prayers courtyard and half of its 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings had been swept away to make way for a tremendous enlargement of the site’s footprint. Half-completed modern concrete buildings stood waiting to be finished, for the 2003 invasion of the country had interrupted the government of the day and its grand plans for the shrine’s site. This expansion had scattered the shrine’s facilities over a large area. The library lost its prominent position overlooking the central summertime prayers courtyard in return for huge halls in an obscure corner of the expanded site. The soup kitchen and its queues of local men, women and children carrying their pots were banished across Gailani Street, a dual carriageway road, to a new purpose-built building opposite the shrine. The same happened to the administrative offices of the shrine and its endowments trust. These dramatic physical changes to the shrine complex and its immediate neighbourhood altered the dynamics of social interaction within each and between both.

Having observed that this dramatic change had taken place in only a span of a decade, it drew attention to a three-fold need for action to secure an understanding of the shrine as a nationally and internationally important Sufi place of worship. Firstly it was necessary to document the shrine complex’s physical environment, its religious and social activities and the communities it serves as they stand today. Secondly it was important to investigate the need for, and causes behind, the change it experienced during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the first of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Finally it was vital to explore how, despite all the physical changes and their ramifications on the use of the shrine complex’s facilities, the shrine still seemed to preserve its Qādirī Sufi identity and practices while manoeuvring round, and dealing with, the evolving religio-political scene in today’s Iraq.

This thesis project started in 2009 with an initial visit to the two Jīlānī shrines, that of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad and that of his son Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz in ‘Aqra. The shrine in ‘Aqra was included in this study as it formed an integral part of the same Qādirī endowment trust, the al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya, that manages both Jīlānī shrines and determines their Qādirī Sufi religious affiliations; and also because of the interconnectedness and inter-dependence of both shrines as well as their Sufi communities.

The purpose of the 2009 field investigation was to start to map and document the physical environments of the two shrines, and their users and activities. This initial investigation revealed a complex set of users, some unexpected from a variety of orientations, who had a stake in the Baghdad shrine imposing multiple orientations or identities on it, depending on which stakeholder-perspective was being used to orient the shrine.

The Baghdad shrine in particular, seemed to represent different things for different users, well beyond a typical Sufi milieu and its supporters. In addition to the Sufi saint's burial chamber, a *takkia* for lodging Qādirī Sufi shaikhs and their followers, and associated rituals and festivities, this shrine was also seen as an orthodox Sunnī Ḥanafī Friday mosque with three government-employed imams authorised to give fatwas (religious edicts). It was also seen as a significant local provider of welfare to one of the poorest ethnically and religiously mixed districts of the inner city of Baghdad, with a soup kitchen, a funeral parlour, and an endowments establishment that financed and oversaw this welfare provision, including supplying the homes of the poor with free electricity. In addition to all the above, it is seen by the local Shī'a community and its womenfolk as a place of daily visitation, where a local powerful saint who answers prayers and has the ability to intercede with God on their behalf.

These Muslim users had such varied beliefs that it might seem impossible for them to agree to share a religious space with one another, other than in Mecca and Medina, which they would be obliged to share when on pilgrimage. Therefore, unlikely as it might seem, disparate groups of users or stakeholders of this shrine, such as the Sunnis and the Shī'a of the Bāb al-Shaikh neighbourhood and adjacent districts, and the Sufis and Sunnī Salafīs of this city, were all found to be crossing each other's paths within this Jīlānī shrine complex on a daily basis. The field research revealed that these encounters were made possible by a combination of factors. The first factor is the continued tradition of religious tolerance within the shrine that stemmed from previous eras, still enabled and maintained by the Gailani family's long oversight of the shrine and its engagement with the non-Sufi communities that make up the shrine's geographical locality. The second factor is the custodians' ability to steer the shrine through the changing religio-political scene in the country at large. As stakeholders, the Gailani custodians identify the shrine as being a Qādirī Sufi place and the place where the Qādiriyya Sufi Order was first established. They acknowledge that other stakeholders view it from different orientations, but see these orientations / identities as subordinate and circumstantial to theirs. They were found to

regularly engage in affirming and asserting the shrine's Sufi identity through its calendar of religious rituals, events and festivities.

The field research also revealed two other types of stakeholders laying claims of self-interest on the shrine in Baghdad and holding their own perceptions of it. The first is the political establishment with its governmental bodies that oversee civic life and religious organisation within the country, previously dominated by the Arab nationalist Ba'ath Party and the presidency of Saddam Hussein; and currently dominated by a Shī'a led sectarian government that consists of government ministries and departments distributed proportionately according to ethnic group, religious sect and political affiliation. In both eras, the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad was and is still seen to be a symbol of Sunnī orthodoxy to be reckoned with, and where possible to be manipulated and exploited to serve political and religious agendas and goals. The second type of stakeholder laying claims of self-interest in the shrine is the Sunnī Salafist movement in Iraq, which currently dominates the governmental body Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī, which is responsible for both regulating and overseeing the Sunnī endowments sector across the country and for ensuring the propagation of the Islamic faith according to the Sunnī tradition.<sup>2</sup> This stakeholder was found to be engaged in attempting to reform the shrine in Baghdad by ridding it of its Sufi associations, as well as using it as a tool in its sectarian rivalries with the Shī'a sect and its politico-religious establishments.

On the other hand, in the Kurdish city of 'Aqra, the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz was found to have a quite different set of orientations. It is a Kurdish Qādirī Sufi shrine uncommonly owned by a religious entity based in Baghdad (the Qādiriyya Endowments and its Gailani custodians). It is the only populist saintly shrine in 'Aqra, which is a renowned Islamically orthodox city in the region with no organised Sufi groups or takkias. Like most Sufi shrines in Iraq, it consists of a saintly burial chamber, a Sufi takkia with lodging rooms, prayer hall, courtyard, library room, and private accommodation for the leading caretaker-shaikh's family. Its users, or stakeholders, are mainly Kurds, including Qādirī Sufi groups in the region, local residents of the city, and the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya Sufi Order who currently occupy the shrine.

This 'Aqra shrine is the focus of collaboration between two independent Qādirī Sufi entities' leaderships: the Gailani custodians of the Qādiriyya Endowments in Baghdad (the

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<sup>2</sup> Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī is the equivalent to a government ministry of religious affairs in other Muslim countries, but here specifically for Sunnī sect affairs.

owner entity) and the independent Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya Sufi Order of Rovia, who lodge at, and manage, the shrine on the custodians' behalf.

The Kurdish region's religio-political scene differs from that of Baghdad. 'Aqra's Sunnī conservatism and the Kurdish region's independence movement give a different set of orientations for this shrine. It has had to navigate inter-Kurdish rivalries during the 1980s and 1990s, and today it has to deal with the rise in Islamic fundamentalism within the region. The Wūlāniyya Sufi Order's close association with the shrine in Baghdad has also meant its exposure and involvement in the religio-political scene there too. All these aspects or facets of both Jīlānī shrines' orientations, or identities, will be explored in this thesis.

The main research question that has driven this study arose from the early encounters described above, and can be formulated in this manner: "What shapes the identity orientations of these two Qādiriyya Sufi shrines in modern times?" The field research investigation also brought up a number of related research questions, the four key ones that help answer the main thesis question are:

Q1: The two Qādirī shrines, though owned by the same charitable entity, the Qādiriyya Endowments, are found to be markedly different in physical size, material wealth, extent of Sufi activities and range of audiences. How do their Sufi leaders and communities express their Qādiriyya Sufism within the spaces of each of these two shrines?

Q2: Different types of people with different needs were observed accessing these Qādirī shrines. With regard to the shrine in Baghdad in particular, these include many from non-Sufi backgrounds and with a variety of non-Sufi needs. Who are these users, what claims do they make upon these shrines, and how does each of the two shrines meet their needs?

Q3: The Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad is situated in a densely populated old neighbourhood of the city that includes other Islamic religious institutions, Sufi and non-Sufi. What is the relationship between them, and how do they interact and influence each other?

Q4: The field research revealed a dynamic engagement between the Sufi leadership of the two Qādirī shrines and the religio-political scene and establishment in their regions. How do these two shrines and their communities interact with the non-Sufi environments that surround them, and what is the impact of this interaction on the two shrines and how they express their Sufi identities?

### **The Conceptual Framework for this thesis:**

The research objective is to map and document the two shrines and their users to understand what shapes and orients their identities as Qādirī Sufi institutions. The methodology used is qualitative, based on field investigations of the two shrines. The investigation's approach is inductive, starting with a few preconceived ideas about the two shrines' histories and historical socio-religious and cultural contexts, but no confirmed factual knowledge of their current status and contexts.

The findings revealed that the two shrines are paradigms of reality, subjective and individually constructed. These realities are socially formed, shaped by a number of variable factors including current socio-religious, political and economic forces, as well as historic, ethnic and cultural contexts.

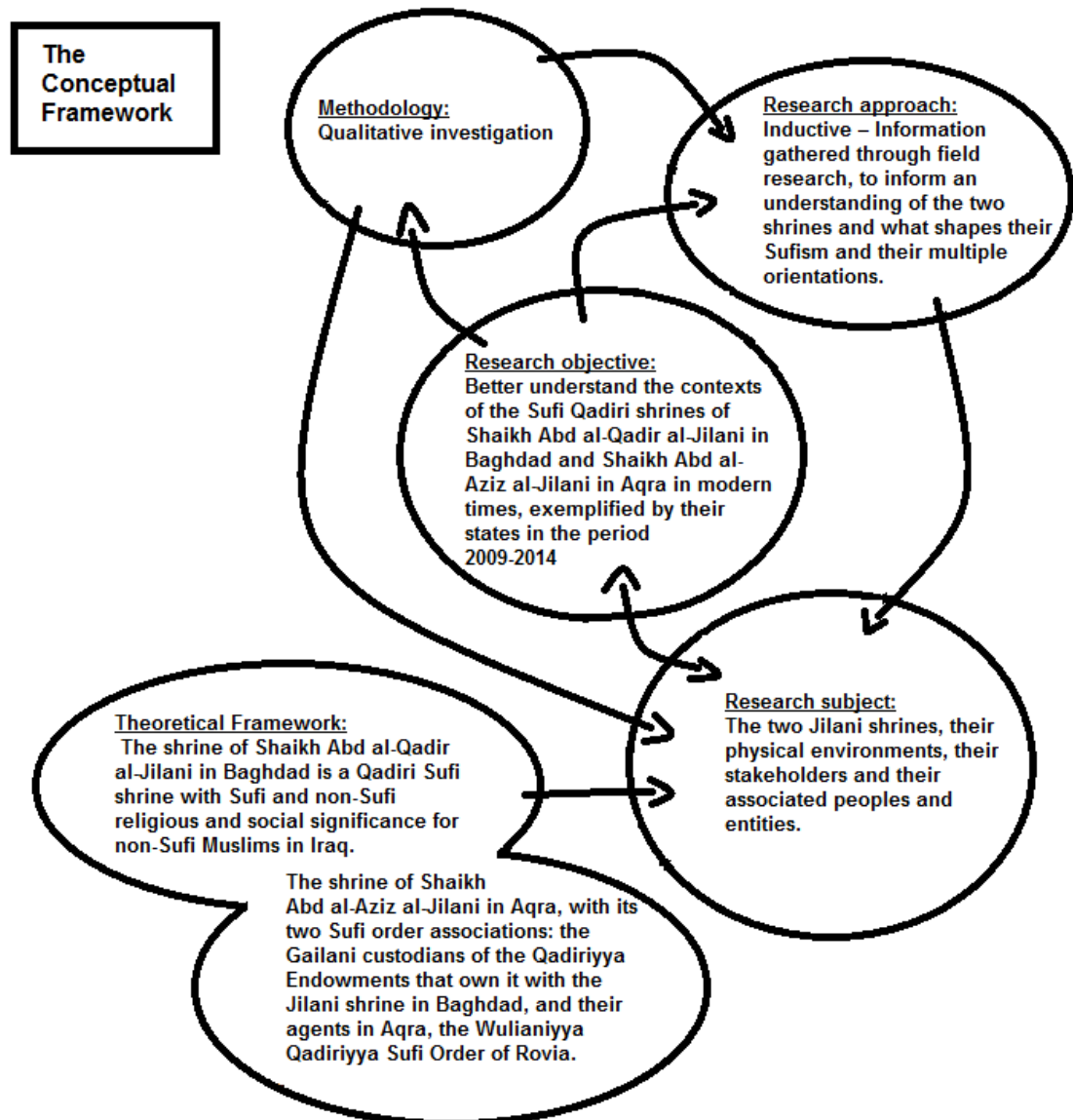
Therefore, the theoretical framework for this project consists of two segments, the first of which concerns the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad: even though a Sufi shrine is also more than that for the non-Sufi and the non-Sunnī Muslims accessing it from within Iraq. As has been alluded to earlier, the Baghdad shrine was found to have multiple orientations or identities linked to the various groups associated with it: the Sufis, non-Sufi Sunnīs, the Shī'a, the religious establishment in power, the political system and civic government. Added to these are also the foreign pilgrims; and the Gailani family, which holds custodianship of the two Jīlānī shrines.

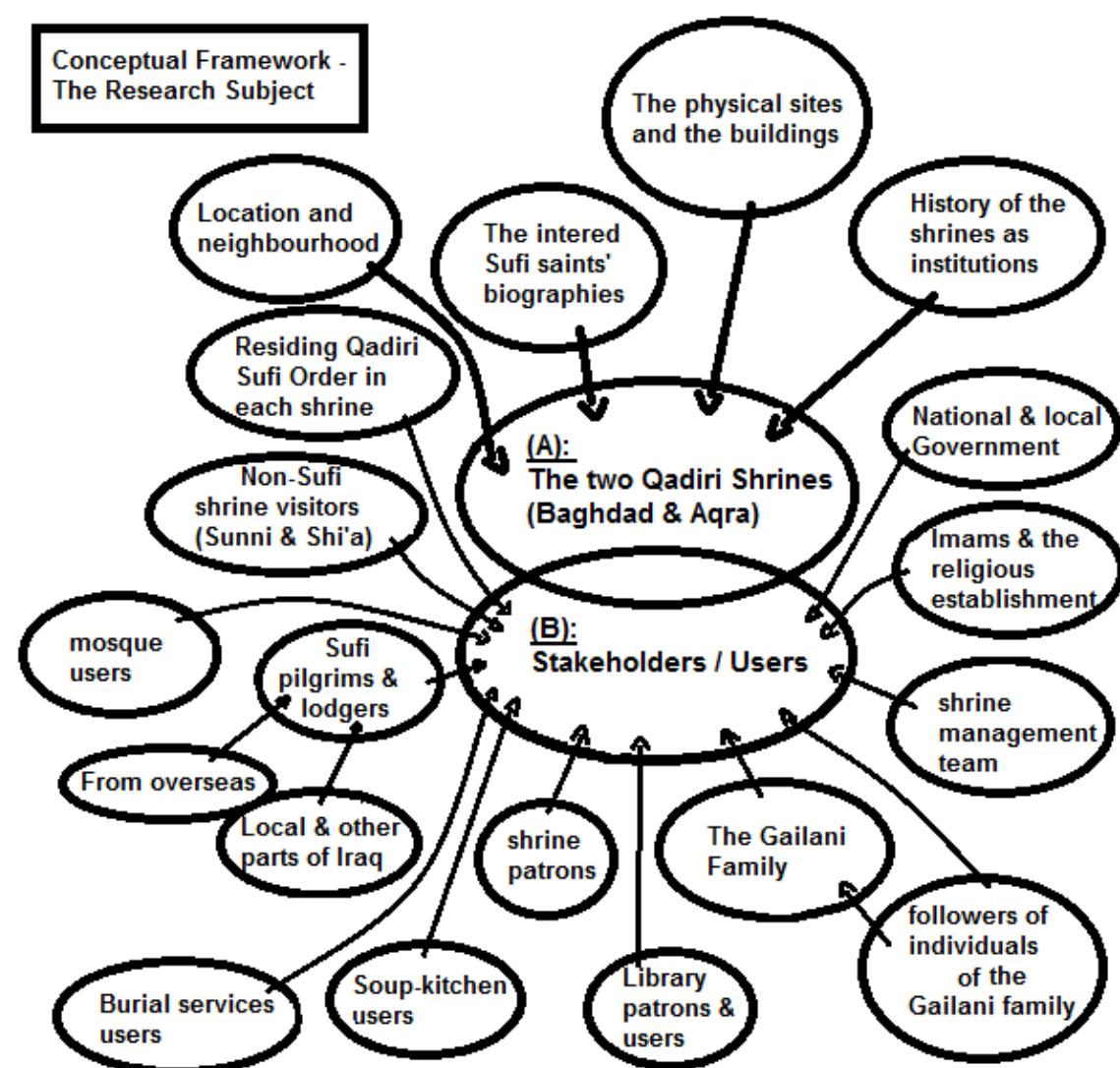
The second segment of this theoretical framework is the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jīlānī in 'Aqra, which has dual Qādirī Sufi associations. First, the owner body of the shrine: the Qādiriyya Endowments and the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad; and second, the owner-body's agents: the independent Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya Sufi Order of Rovia, who administer the shrine and the Qādiriyya endowments in the region, while occupying it as an independent Qādirī Sufi Order.

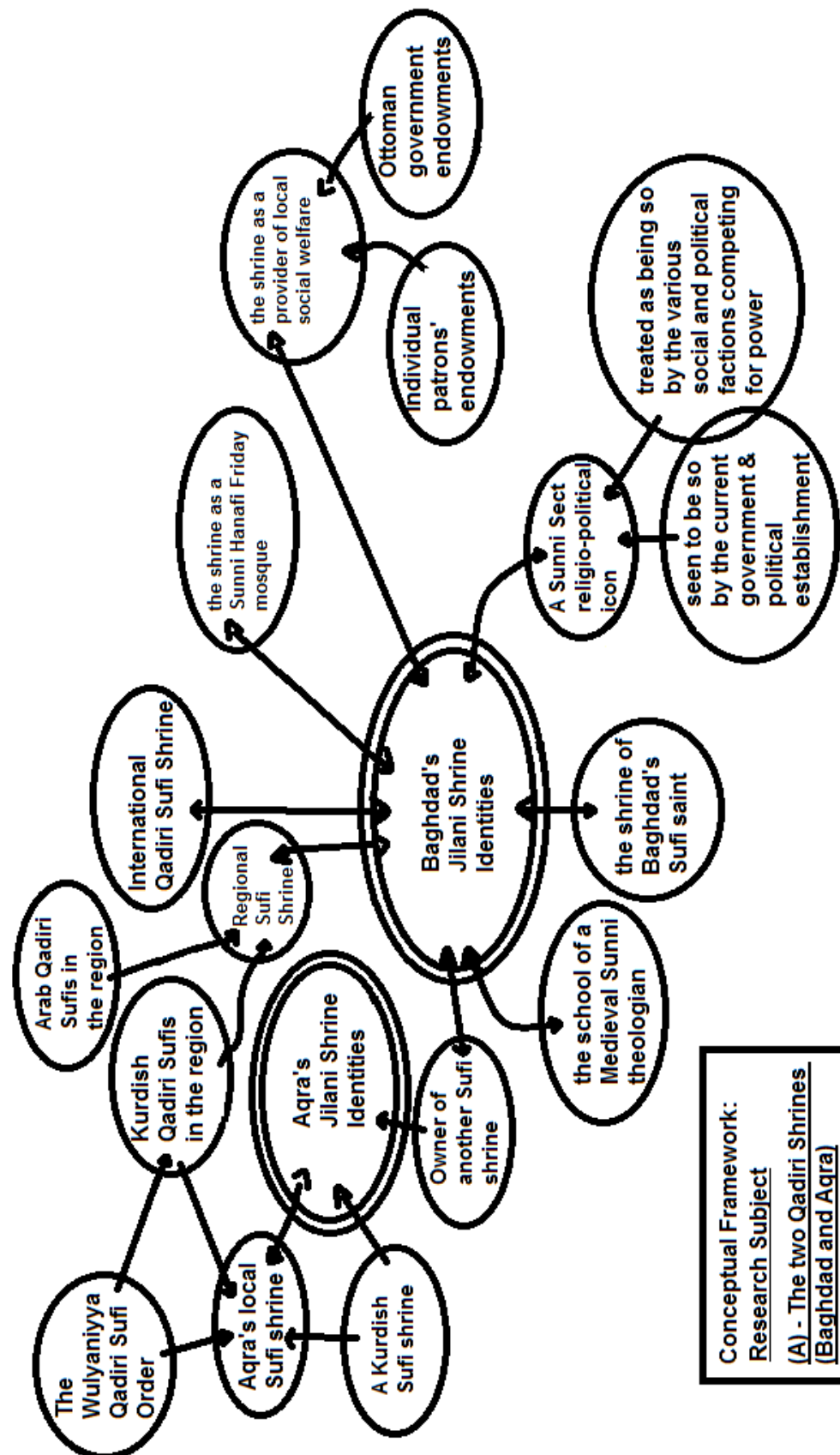
Central to this argument is detailing the physical presence of the two shrines and the social and historical significance of the saintly figures interred in them, and the users and their motivations. See below diagrams 1, 2, 2(A) and 2(B) for a visualisation of the conceptual framework:

### **Diagram 1:**

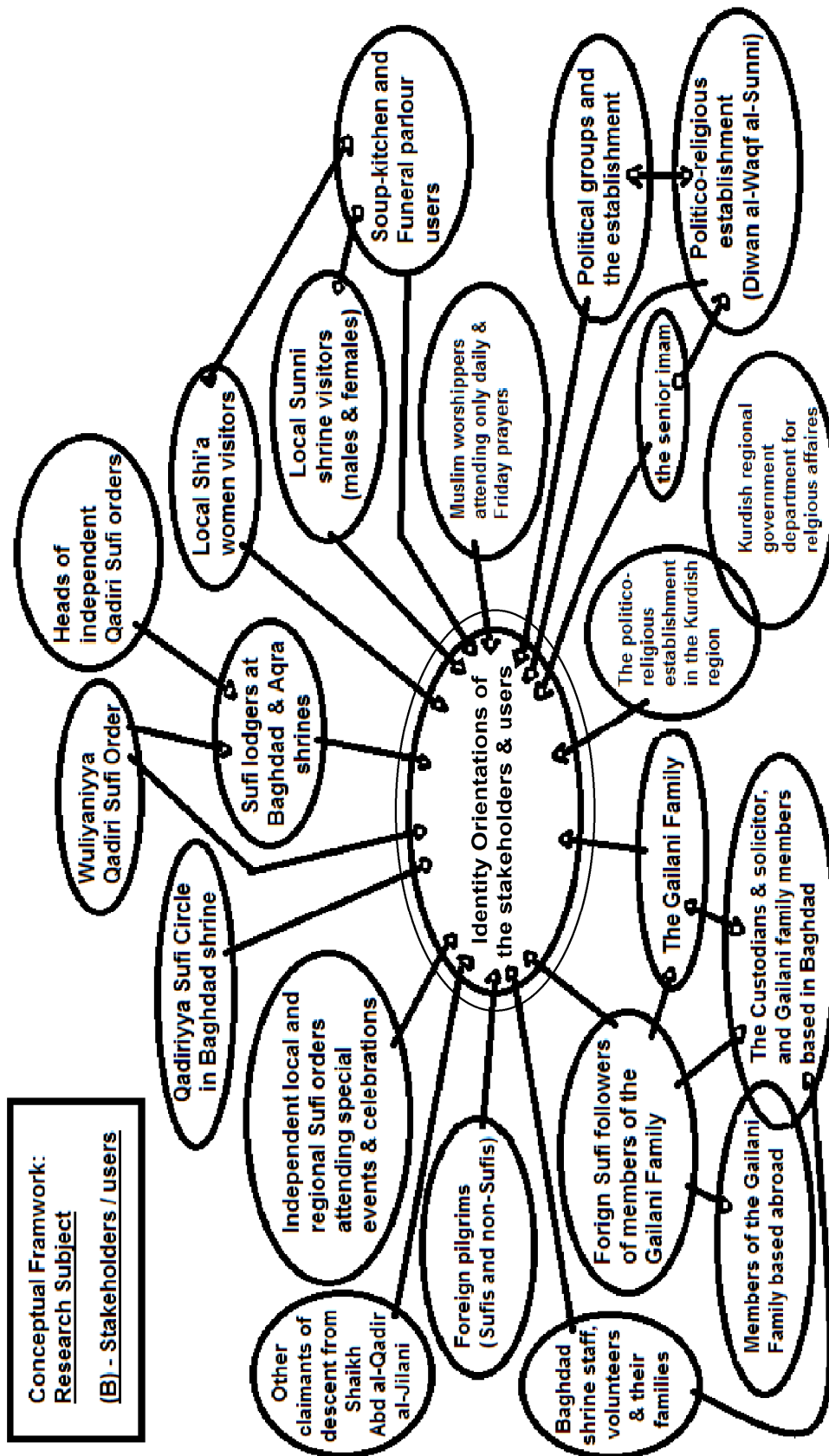
#### **The Conceptual Framework**



**Diagram 2:****Conceptual Framework - The Research Subject – (the two Jilānī shrines and their stakeholders)**

**Diagram 2(A):****Conceptual Framework – Research Subject:****(A) – The two Qādiri Shrines (Baghdad and 'Aqra)**



**Diagram 2(B):****Conceptual Framework – Research Subject:****(B) – Stakeholders / users**

## Synopsis of Thesis Structure

Chapters 1 offers a brief historical reviews of the personalities of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and his son Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and their significance; of the formation of the Qādirī Sufi Order and its presence in Iraq; and of the custodians’ family association with the two shrines. It also tests the two shrines’ claims to be Sufi entities and places of worship.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 map and explore the two Jīlānī shrines, their physical environments, the variety of stakeholders associating with them, the activities and festivities that take place within them, and the other religious entities that share their spheres of influence and audiences within their localities and neighbourhoods. These chapters demonstrate the multiple orientations associated with these shrines through their physical features and their users.

Chapter 5 looks at the two shrines’ relationships with the non-Sufi world – the politico-religious environment in their regions of the country in the near past – focussing mainly on the period of Ba‘th Party rule and the post-Ba‘th period – up to the present. The chapter attempts to explore how religion and Sufism have fared in these two eras; how Sufism, like religion, has been manipulated for political reasons; and how the two Jīlānī shrines have coped with the interference of the political and religious establishment in their affairs.

The thesis concludes with a summary review of the findings, an assessment of the Qādirī Sufi scene as it was found in Baghdad and ‘Aqra, and presents answers to the key questions that were posed for this thesis as part of its conceptual framework.

## Chapter 1

### **Historical review of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, his son Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and the Qādiriyya Sufi Order in Baghdad and in ‘Aqra**

#### **The aim of this chapter:**

The aim of this chapter is two fold: first, to present an historical overview of what is known about the two saintly personalities buried in the two Jīlānī shrines, how Qādirī Sufism posthumously emerged, and who are the key Qādirī Sufi communities associated with them in Iraq today; second, to confirm the two shrines’ claims to be Sufi institutions with Sufi communities.

The overview of the two saintly figures includes both their historical personalities and their popular appeal, and the significance in which they are held in Iraq today. This section is followed by a summary of the formation of the Sufi Order that bears Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s name, the Qādiriyya, and a brief history of its presence in Baghdad and in the Kurdish region of Iraq. As the two shrines are under the custodianship of the Gailani family in Baghdad, a brief historical overview of this family and its relationship with these two shrines is presented here too.

The final section of this chapter tests the claims of the two Jīlānī shrines to being active Sufi places of worship, through applying Prof. Pnina Werbner’s analytical method for the comparative assessment of Sufi cults and Sufi shrine-focussed orders.

#### **Introduction:**

As the field work for this thesis began in Baghdad and ‘Aqra in 2009, I was reminded of how, for many followers of Sufism there, and especially those affiliated with the Qādiriyya Sufi Order (whether initiates or merely sympathisers), Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī is fondly known as Quṭb<sup>3</sup> Baghdad (the Pole of Baghdad); the most powerful of Sufi saints, favoured by divine grace, and divinely enabled to intercede and act in all times and all places, including the present day and beyond. This delight in the saint’s unique power to act regardless of time or place, unlike all other saints, including those who have attained

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<sup>3</sup> For a brief definition of the meaning of Quṭb in Sufism, see Esposito, John L. (editor). “Quṭb.” *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p.257.

the position of Quṭb, was excitedly expressed to me by a small group of elderly women sitting in their favourite spot on the carpeted floor of his shrine opposite the threshold into his burial chamber. These merry local women were explaining his importance to both the city and to themselves personally.

For the common folk there Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is affectionately addressed as Ābū Ṣāliḥ (the father of Ṣāliḥ, after one of his sons);<sup>4</sup> a rather unexpected epithet given that his oldest son is known historically to be named Muhammad. Many stories, legends and myths are still told and retold about him, and a number of supernatural powers are still attributed to him;<sup>5</sup> as is also the case in many parts of the Islamic World where Qādirī groups exist. Several academics have noted, analysed and critiqued this phenomenon, including such scholars as J. Spencer Trimingham,<sup>6</sup> Jacqueline Chabbi<sup>7</sup> and Jamil M. Abun-Nasr.<sup>8</sup>

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is also known in Iraq as Ābū al-Qubqāb (he who bears / owns the wooden clog), an agnomen that refers to a fantastical incident in his lifetime when he was preaching one day in Baghdad and stopped suddenly in mid flow only to take off a wooden clog he was wearing, raise it in his hand and toss it up in the air where it promptly vanished. The story goes that the clog was thrown in response to a distressed woman in India, who at that moment had called out for Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s help, begging his aid against a sinner who was attempting to molest her. It is said that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s wooden clog, there and then, fell upon the man’s head and the woman and her honour were saved.<sup>9</sup> Because of this legendary reputation for miraculous powers, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, as a Sufi walī – friend of God – is still considered to be a powerful saint with the ability to inflict punishment upon sinners. The colloquial term commonly used in Iraq to describe

<sup>4</sup> Field research findings in Baghdad and at the Jīlānī shrine, between 2009 and 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Informal interviews with visitors to the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad.

<sup>6</sup> Trimingham, J. Spencer. *The Sufi Orders in Islam*. London: Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 40-44.

<sup>7</sup> Chabbi, Jacqueline. “Abd al-Kadir al-Djilani personage historique: Quelques Elements de Biographie” *Studia Islamica*, no.38 (1973), pp.75-106.

<sup>8</sup> Abūn-Nasr, Jamil M. *Muslim Communities of Grace, the Sufi Brotherhoods in Islamic Religious life*. London: Hurst & Co., 2007, pp.94-96.

<sup>9</sup> An oral folk tale told frequently amongst the lovers of the saint in Baghdad. Other versions of it are also known, including one recorded by the 18<sup>th</sup> century German traveller Karsten Niebuhr on a visit to the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, when a small group of dervishes there told him it. Niebuhr’s version involves a caravan of merchants on the way to Baghdad and robbers who loot them on the road. They beseech the saint’s aid, and it comes in the form of a clog followed by its pair. When they reach Baghdad, the merchants return the clogs to the saint, thank him, and spread the word about the experience of being saved by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s God-inspired power. Jawād, Muṣṭafā (translator). “Baghdad fī riḥlat Nībūr” (Baghdad in Niebuhr’s travelogue), in *Baghdad bi-āqlām al-raḥāla* (Baghdad in the writings of travellers). London: Alwarrak Publishing Ltd., 2007, pp.18-20. This chapter was originally published in *Majalat Sūmar*, vol.20 (1964).

his ability to avenge is “yeshawir” (pronounced ye-shaw-wer) – he who has the ability to signal or wreak vengeance – from the Arabic word “ishāra” – signal or sign.<sup>10</sup>

### A. The True Personality of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir:

As has been argued and demonstrated by a number of modern scholars, from D. S. Margoliouth<sup>11</sup> to Jacqueline Chabbi, the Qādiriyya Sufi Order’s eponymous founder, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (470 – 562 AH / 1077 – 1165 AD), was an Ḥanbalī theologian and teacher, popular preacher and Sufi shaikh, who made of Baghdad his abode and final resting place.<sup>12</sup> In English, his name has been spelt in many different forms including: ‘Abd Al-Kadir Al-Djīlānī;<sup>13</sup> ‘Abd-Al-Qāder Jīlānī;<sup>14</sup> ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī,<sup>15</sup> to name a few. He is known as Muḥyī al-Dīn (the reviver of religion) ‘Abd al-Qādir Ābū Muhammad ibn Ābū Ṣāliḥ Mūsā Jangī Dūst (or Jangidost).<sup>16</sup> He was born in northern Iran, in Nīf (also spelt Naif or Nayf), a village in the province of Gīlān (pronounced Jīlān by the Arabs), south-west of the Caspian Sea.<sup>17</sup>

In 1095, at the age of 18, he travelled to Baghdad to further his religious studies, and was tutored by several prominent scholars in the traditional religious sciences, including Ḥadīth (Prophet’s traditions), kalām (theology), and fiqh (jurisprudence) according to the Ḥanbalī School of Jurisprudence. He was tutored in the subject of Ḥanbalī law by Ābū al-Wafā’ ibn ‘Aqīl (died 1121) and the judge Ābū Sa’īd al-Mubārak al-Mukharimī (1054 - 1119);<sup>18</sup> on the subject of Arabic philology by Ābū Zakarīā Yaḥyā ibn ‘Alī al-Tabrīzī (died 1109); and on Sufism by Ābū al-Khayr Ḥammād al-Dabbās, who was also his spiritual mentor.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Informal conversations with female visitors to the shrine in Baghdad, and with other inhabitants of the city.

<sup>11</sup> Margoliouth, D. S. “Contributions to the Biography of ‘Abd al-Kadir of Jilan.” In *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*. London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, April 1907, pp.267-310.

<sup>12</sup> Braune, W. “‘Abd Al-Kadir Al-DJīlānī”. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol.1. Leiden: Brill, 1960, pp.69-70.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence, B. “‘Abd-al-Qāder Jīlānī”. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. New York: Columbia University, 1985, pp.132-133. Accessed on 2 February 2015. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abd-al-qader-jilani>

<sup>15</sup> O'Donnell, Patrick S. “Al-Jīlānī, ‘Abd al-Qādir,” in *The Biographical Encyclopaedia of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman. London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2006, vol.2, pp.10-12.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid; and (Lawrence 1985, 132-133).

<sup>17</sup> (Braune, “‘Abd Al-Kadir Al-DJīlānī,” 69-70). Another village by the name of “Bushtīr” has also been named as being the place of his birth according to Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (1179-1229) in his encyclopaedic book *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*. See Zaidān, Yūsuf Muhammad Ṭaha. *‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Bāz Āllāh al-Ashḥab* (‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, God’s Gray Falcon). Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1991, pp.35-36.

<sup>18</sup> Al-Durūbī, Ibrāhīm bin ‘Abd al-Ghanī. *Al-Mukhtasar fī Tārīkh Shaikh al-Islam sayyidna ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani wa āwladuh* (Concise history of the Shaikh of Islam our sayyid ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani and his descendants). Baghdad: 1956; re-published by Ṭāhir ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Qādirī al-Gailani in Pakistan: Karachi, 1975, p.39.

<sup>19</sup> (Braune, “‘Abd Al-Kadir Al-DJīlānī,” 69-70) and (O'Donnell, “Al-Jīlānī ...,” 10-12).

In addition to the scholars mentioned above other authorities in the subjects of Ḥadīth and of Ḥanbalī jurisprudence have been listed as being amongst those whose lectures and religious gatherings Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir attended during his formative years in Baghdad. These have been listed in several medieval hagiographical works such as al-Tādifī’s “Qalā’id al-Jawāhir fī Manāqib al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir”, written in 1543.<sup>20</sup> Once he completed his studies and his Sufī mentoring under al-Dabbās, he received the Sufi khirqa (investiture cloak of Sufism) from his tutor the judge Ābū Sa‘īd al-Mukharimī.<sup>21</sup>

The next 25 years were spent wandering the deserts of Iraq as an ascetic; and in 1127 Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir returned to Baghdad and began an active preaching career that propelled him to prominence. Around 1132 he was offered his former tutor al-Mukharimī’s madrasa (theological school) to run and teach in. This madrasa had been the first of its kind in Baghdad for followers of the Ḥanbalī school of jurisprudence, and had been established by al-Mukharimī himself.<sup>22</sup> In 1134 the school was extended and a ribāt (Sufi hospice or lodge) was added to the complex to accommodate Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and his family, and his students.<sup>23</sup> As a theologian and a muftī (jurist), ‘Abd al-Qādir taught in this school Qur’ānic studies, Ḥadīth and jurisprudence. He also held preaching sessions in both the school and the ribāt; and as his audiences grew, and the school could no longer hold them all, he resorted to preaching in the open air, on Wednesdays and on Fridays, outside the walls of Baghdad.<sup>24</sup> His career spanned some 40 years and ended with his death in 1165 AD.<sup>25</sup> He was buried in his school, and his son ‘Abd al-Wahāb (died 1197) succeeded him as the tutor of the madrasa.<sup>26</sup>

In his chapter on the Qādiriyya Order,<sup>27</sup> Khaliq Ahmad Nizami describes the social and political scene in Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Baghdad. It was an era dominated by the political fragmentation of the Abbasid Empire, which saw the rise of local ruling dynasties, such as the Turkic Seljuks in Iran, Iraq and the Levant, under a weak Abbasid Caliph.<sup>28</sup> In this fragmented political environment, society indulged in materialism and let morality slip.

<sup>20</sup> At-Tādifī, Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā. *Necklaces of Gems (Qalā’id al-Jawāhir)*, a biography of the crown of the saints, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. Translated by Muhtar Holland. Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, 1998, pp.13-14.

<sup>21</sup> (Braune, “‘Abd Al-Kadir Al-DJīlānī,” 69-70).

<sup>22</sup> Schimmel, Annemarie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1975, p. 247.

<sup>23</sup> Knysh, Alexander. *Islamic Mysticism, a short history*. Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp.179-183.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace...*, 87).

<sup>27</sup> Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad. “The Qādiriyyah Order,” in *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1991, pp.6-26.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.7.

This socio-political environment also saw a proliferation of rival religious sects and militant movements, some anti-establishment and some backed by the ruling classes.<sup>29</sup> During this period, the Sufi movement expanded and flourished as a representation of the ascetic and mystical dimension of Islam; and with it emerged the need to define and harmonise its relationship with the orthodox dimension of Islam – the Islamic Sharī‘a and its boundaries.<sup>30</sup> It was in such an environment that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir lived and practiced his theological and Sufi disciplines. He considered it a religious obligation to be concerned for the welfare of society – especially for the weak and vulnerable – and regarded the service of mankind a spiritual duty.<sup>31</sup> D. S. Margoliouth, in his article on the biographers of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir,<sup>32</sup> interestingly compared Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s particular class of theologians – and their concerns and endeavours for Baghdadi society – to that of religious organisations in modern European cities such as the City Mission or the Salvation Army and the like.<sup>33</sup> He gives an example of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s stand regarding the care for the vulnerable in society, as quoted by one of his hagiographers, al-Shaṭanawfī, who states that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s thesis with regard to the distribution of alms amongst the poor is that alms should be “given equally to both the deserving and the undeserving”.<sup>34</sup>

Through studying Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s own writings and what has been written about him, Khaliq Ahmad Nizami also describes him as having been an exceptionally eloquent and charismatic man, with an ability to arouse his listeners’ spiritual self-awareness, and liberate them from their preoccupation with life’s materialism.<sup>35</sup> Nizami points out that, as ‘Abd al-Qādir was both a classically trained orthodox Ḥanbalī jurist and a Sufi, he was in a unique position to bond Sunnī orthodoxy with Sufism, saying:

“...he [‘Abd al-Qādir] looked upon the Sharī‘a as a sine qua non for all spiritual advancement and culture. This approach not only bridged the gulf between the jurists (faqihis) and the mystics (Sufis) but also created a balance

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> (Braune, “‘Abd Al-Kadir Al-DJīlānī,” 69-70).

<sup>31</sup> (Nizami, “The Qādiriyah Order,” 21).

<sup>32</sup> (Margoliouth, “Contributions to ...,” 273).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. Examples of such city missions in the UK can be found in Vickers, John A. *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland*. Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2000. Two examples of city missions are the Mission Alongside the Poor (pp.240-41), and the Leysian Mission in London (pp.204-205).

<sup>34</sup> (Margoliouth, “Contributions to ...,” 274).

<sup>35</sup> (Nizami, “The Qādiriyah Order,” 6).

between varying degrees of emphasis laid on the spirit and the letter of Islamic Law.”<sup>36</sup>

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s own approach enabled jurisprudence and Sufism to complement each other; as he explored one juxtaposed to the other. He understood the purpose of Sufism to be “...showing people the way of God...”<sup>37</sup> And Nizami goes on to explain how Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s understanding of who God is, guided his life and work:

“Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s spirituality had its roots in his concept and experience of God. For him God was neither a theological myth nor a logical abstraction of unity but an all-embracing personality present in man’s ethical, intellectual, and aesthetic experience.”<sup>38</sup>

Alexander Knysh describes Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Sufism as having been distinguished from other Sufi thinkers for being free from “metaphysical speculations”.<sup>39</sup> He further explains that ‘Abd al-Qādir’s piety was simple and inward looking, encouraging his followers to seek and achieve “self-improvement” by attaining a harmony between their thoughts and their deeds. For ‘Abd al-Qādir, taking up the “greater Jihad” against the lower self – the ego in one’s self – was to be encouraged, being convinced that the worshipper’s ego was the barrier that prevented him from experiencing God’s grace.<sup>40</sup> ‘Abd al-Qādir’s simple and accessible speech appealed to the non-Sufis amongst his listeners;<sup>41</sup> and with his increasing habit of preaching to the masses in the open air, a new era of mystical communication dawned that attracted thousands of people to him. It also lead more and more Sufi shaikhs to emulate him by leaving their traditional zāwiya and small groups of followers, to take up addressing a wider public and larger gatherings.<sup>42</sup>

### A.1 His books:

As for evidence of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s writings, several works have been attributed to his authorship in various biographical and hagiographical references, with some listing up

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pp.6-7. “sine qua non” meaning “without which it could not be”, where the Sharī‘a is seen as indispensable and essential to Sufism.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p.7.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, pp.14-16.

<sup>39</sup> (Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism ...*, 181)

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> (Nizami, “The Qādiriyyah Order,” 11).



to 25 titles.<sup>43</sup> But of these, only a few can currently be reliably considered as being the works of the Shaikh. Those reasonably attributed to him include “al-Ghunya li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaq” which translates as the “Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth”<sup>44</sup> or “That which is indispensable for the seekers of God’s path.”<sup>45</sup> The Ghunya is a handbook<sup>46</sup> or ethico-legal manual<sup>47</sup> written for Sunnī Muslims, listing and describing – from an Ḥanbalī theological perspective – the moral, ethical and social duties to be practiced by the Muslim believer.<sup>48</sup> The book is divided into several sections that deal with various aspects of jurisprudence and tenets of the faith. It also includes a section on the seventy-three sects of Islam – a “heresiographical” section on the non-orthodox or deviant sects in Islam.<sup>49</sup> The book concludes with a short account on Sufism.<sup>50</sup>

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s second reliably attributed title is “Futūḥ al-Ghaib” which translates as the “Revelations from the invisible world”<sup>51</sup> or “Revelations of the Unseen”<sup>52</sup> – a collection of seventy-eight “maqālāt” (utterances or discourses) that were verbally delivered by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and transcribed, compiled and published by his son ‘Abd al-Razzāq.<sup>53</sup> Considered to be a literary work in Sufism,<sup>54</sup> the discourses cover issues that relate to Islamic doctrines and Sufism<sup>55</sup> such as fear and hope; seeking to draw near to God; the conditions of the nafs – the self; and the stages of the seeker’s state.<sup>56</sup> This book also includes a biographical description of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s life believed to have been composed by his son.<sup>57</sup>

His third book is “al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī wa al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī”<sup>58</sup> translated as “Revelation from the Lord and the outflow of his mercy”<sup>59</sup> or “The Sublime Revelation”.<sup>60</sup> It includes

<sup>43</sup> Al-Muftī, Nūrī Muhammad Sabrī. *Maktabat al-Madrasa al-Qādiriyya al-‘Āmma, mū’asisahā al-Sayyid al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani* (The public library of the Qādiriyya Madrasa, founded by the Sayyid Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani). Baghdad: Al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya, 1982, pp.20-23.

<sup>44</sup> (O’Donnell, “Al-JĪLĀNĪ ...,” 11).

<sup>45</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace*..., 90).

<sup>46</sup> (Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism* ..., 181).

<sup>47</sup> (Margoliouth, “Contributions to ...,” 271).

<sup>48</sup> Laoust, H. “Ḥanābila,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition. Leiden: Brill, Vol.3, p.160.

<sup>49</sup> (Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism* ..., 181).

<sup>50</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace*..., 90).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p.89.

<sup>52</sup> (O’Donnell, “Al-JĪLĀNĪ ...,” 11).

<sup>53</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace* ..., 89).

<sup>54</sup> Gilani, Abdul Qadir. *Futuh al-Ghaib* (The revelations of the unseen). Translated by Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad. New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan. 1979, pp.vii-viii.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, and (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace* ..., 89).

<sup>56</sup> Al-Jīlānī, ‘Abd al-Qādir. *Revelations of the Unseen (Futūḥ al Ghaib), A collection of seventy-eight discourses*. Translated by Muhtar Holland. Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, 1992.

<sup>57</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace* ..., 89).

<sup>58</sup> Al-Jīlānī, ‘Abd al-Qādir. *Al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī wa al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī* (The divine inspiration and the merciful emanation). Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1998.

sixty-two discourses or sermons delivered by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir between 3<sup>rd</sup> Shawāl 545 Hijra and the end of Rajab 546 Hijra<sup>61</sup> (between January and November 1151).<sup>62</sup> Muhtar Holland, in his translation of the book, quotes D. S. Margoliouth’s evaluation of it, which sums up its qualities:

“... The sermons included in [this work] are some of the very best in Muslim literature, the spirit which they breathe is one of charity and philanthropy: the preacher would like to ‘close the gates of Hell and open those of Paradise to all mankind’. He employs Sufi technicalities very rarely, and none that would occasion the ordinary reader much difficulty ...”.<sup>63</sup>

“Jalā’ al-Khāṭir min kalām al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir”<sup>64</sup> – also known as “Jalā’ al-Khāṭir fī al-Bāṭin wa al-Zāhir”<sup>65</sup> – is the fourth title by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and has been translated into English by Muhtar Holland as “The Removal of Cares”.<sup>66</sup> It is another collection of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s sermons and discourses, and includes forty-five of them, which were delivered during 1152, following in date of delivery those published in “al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī wa al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī”, with a few overlapping with those in al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī. Their delivery was spread over a ten-week period between 9<sup>th</sup> Rajab and 14<sup>th</sup> Ramadan 546 Hijra.<sup>67</sup>

“Sirr al-Āsrār wa Muḥḥir al-Ānwār fī-mā yaḥtāj ilaihi al-Ābrār”, known in English as “The Secret of Secrets”<sup>68</sup> and “The Book of the Secret of Secrets and the Manifestation of Lights”<sup>69</sup> is the fifth title authored by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Considered to be a classical literary work of Sufism, it consists of twenty-four sections exploring a variety of aspects of

<sup>59</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace ...*, 89).

<sup>60</sup> Al-Jīlānī, ‘Abd al-Qādir. *The Sublime Revelation (Al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī)*, A collection of sixty-two discourses. Translated by Muhtar Holland. Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, 1992.

<sup>61</sup> (Al-Jīlānī, *Al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī ...*, 1998, 31 and 293).

<sup>62</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace...*, 89).

<sup>63</sup> (Al-Jīlānī, *Sublime revelation ...*, 1992, 468).

<sup>64</sup> Al-Sāmarā’ī, Yūnis al-Shaikh Ibrāhīm. *Al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani, ḥayyātuh wa athāruh* (The Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani, his life and legacy). Baghdad: Al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya, 1982, p.16.

<sup>65</sup> Abd Al-Raḥīm, Muhammad. *Al-‘Arif bi-lāh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, sīratuh wa karāmatuh* (The Learned in God ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, his biography and his miraculous deeds). Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1996, p.64.

<sup>66</sup> Al-Jīlānī, ‘Abd al-Qādir. *The Removal of Cares (Jalā’ Al-Khawāṭir)*, A collection of forty-five discourses. Translated by Muhtar Holland. Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, 1997.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, pp. xi-xxiii.

<sup>68</sup> Al-Jīlānī, ‘Abd al-Qādir. *The Secret of Secrets*. Translated by Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti. Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1992.

<sup>69</sup> Al-Jīlānī, ‘Abd al-Qādir. *The Book of the Secret of Secrets and the Manifestation of Lights* (Kitab Sirr al-Asrar wa Mazhar al-Anwar). Translated by Muhtar Holland. Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, 2000.

the realities of faith, and the external and internal paths a believer has to take on his spiritual journey towards God.<sup>70</sup>

The Florida based Qādirī publisher al-Baz Publishing Inc. has also published in English two other titles whose authorship is attributed to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. The first is “Fifteen Letters (Khamsata ‘Ashara Maktūban)” that was originally written in Farsi and translated into Arabic during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>71</sup> The second title is “Utterances of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (Malfuzat)”,<sup>72</sup> which in the Arabic editions of “al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī wa al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī” are added to the end of the sixty-second discourse, as a continuation of it, even though it seems not have belonged to it.<sup>73</sup>

## A.2 His biographers:

Several early authors and chroniclers have written about or mentioned Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in their writings;<sup>74</sup> but the most influential early pro-‘Abd al-Qādir texts are three. The first is “Bahjat al-Āsrār wa Ma‘ādin al-Ānwār fī Manūqib al-Quṭub al-Rabbānī Muḥiyy al-Dīn Ābī Muhammad ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī author of Futūḥ al-Ghaib”, written by Nūr ad-Dīn Ābū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī bin Yūsif al-Shaṭanawfī (1249 – 1314),<sup>75</sup> which is an extensive source of information, though ultimately a misleading hagiographical work. In this biography, al-Shaṭanawfī indiscriminately collected unreliable and at times exaggerated and fantastical information and anecdotes that resulted in obscuring the true character of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, while contributing to his legendary profile as a Sufi saint with miraculous and supernatural powers. Several other writers that followed al-Shaṭanawfī derived much of their information from his account.<sup>76</sup>

The second is “Tā’rīkh al-Islām al-Kabīr”,<sup>77</sup> from roughly the same period as al-Shaṭanawfī, but a more reliable and realistic account of the life of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Written by Muhammad bin Aḥmad bin ‘Uthmān bin Qayūm Ābū ‘Abd-Āllah Shams al-

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p. v-vii; and (Al-Jīlānī, 1992, *Secret of secrets*, v-vii).

<sup>71</sup> Al-Jīlānī, ‘Abd al-Qādir. *Fifteen Letters (Khamsata ‘Ashara Maktūban)*. Translated by Muhtar Holland. Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, 1997, pp. xi-xii. Holland accessed a manuscript copy of this title that is housed in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin and refers to other copies held in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

<sup>72</sup> Al-Jīlānī, ‘Abd al-Qādir. *Utterances of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (Malfūzāt)*. Translated by Muhtar Holland. Texas: Al-Baz Publishing, 1992.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, pp. xiii-xiv; and (Al-Jīlānī, *Al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī* ..., 1998; 259-308).

<sup>74</sup> (Margoliouth, “Contributions to ...,” 267-268).

<sup>75</sup> (Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism* ..., 179-183). Knysh spells the surname of this biographer as ‘Shattanawfī’.

<sup>76</sup> (Braune, “‘Abd Al-Kadir Al-Djīlānī,” 69-70).

<sup>77</sup> (Lawrence, “‘Abd-al-Qādir Jīlānī,” 132-133); an updated online version was accessed on 4 March 2014, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abd-al-qader-jilani>

Dīn al-Dhahabī (1274 – 1348),<sup>78</sup> it devotes a substantial section to the life of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, quoting reliable sources that were contemporary to the Shaikh, and rendering his life’s account useful for study in conjunction with his writings, gaining a more rounded understanding of the Sufi theologian’s character and his work.<sup>79</sup>

The third relatively early biographical account of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s life is “Qalā’id al-Jawāhir fī Manāqib al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir” written by al-Shaikh Muhammad bin Yaḥyā al-Tādifī in 1543.<sup>80</sup> In this biography al-Tādifī (died 1556) explains the sources of his information as including, in addition to the various texts he had access to, testimonies from ‘*trustworthy sources*’ – accounts from contemporary descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, whom he met and interviewed, and from his personal recollections of earlier encounters with Qādirī Sufis; for his father was one of them, and al-Tādifī met others through accompanying him.<sup>81</sup> In this hagiographical work al-Tādifī also included the biographies of some forty-three āwliya’ (saintly personages) who had highly praised Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir for his values, including some well known figures such as Shaikh Aḥmad al-Rīfā’ī, Shaikh ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī, and Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s own teacher Ḥammād al-Dabbās.<sup>82</sup>

The field research in Baghdad revealed that these three biographies and a number of others are still in use by both Sufis and local scholars and historians of today and largely taken at face value with little or no critical analysis or historical contextualisation.

### A.3 His significance:

Modern European historians and scholars of Sufism such as D. S. Margoliouth and J. Spencer Trimingham have sought to understand the widespread phenomenon of venerating Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir as a Sufi saint – *walī* – and the formation of a Sufi order – *ṭarīqa* – in his name after his death.<sup>83</sup> These Western scholars have also searched for and debated the circumstances and reasons behind the phenomenon of the special place Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir holds above all the other Sufi and saintly personalities in Islam, a phenomenon that has spread across cultures and geographical territories from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to modern

<sup>78</sup> (Margoliouth, “Contributions to ...,” 267-310).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p.271.

<sup>80</sup> (At-Tādifī, *Necklaces of Gems* ..., xvii-xx).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. xix.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. v and pp. xix-xxi.

<sup>83</sup> (Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders* ..., 41 and 233).

times.<sup>84</sup> Trimingham reasons that the Qādiriyya Sufi order's formation by personages – including the sons and followers of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir – inspired by him who were active after his death was as a result of "... his reputation for soundness [which] was used by others who were responsible for such developments as paved the way for ordinary people to participate in the insights and experiences of Sufis."<sup>85</sup>

Jacqueline Chabbi in her article "Abd al-Kadir al-Djilani personage historique: Quelques Elements de Biographie" gives another opinion on why Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and his personality became the representative of mediation between orthodox Islam and mystical Islam from the 12<sup>th</sup> century and over the following two centuries.<sup>86</sup> She explains that Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir saw, with approval, Sufis shaikhs and their initiated disciples as a relatively autonomous socio-religious category with special needs and exemptions from general rules that apply to ordinary Muslims. He accepted that Sufis can live off their mysticism as a legitimate source of livelihood; and in certain circumstances even permits them to live off mendicancy. Chabbi believes that this differentiation of Sufis as a category that has both spiritual and socio-economic privileges provided a sustainable route for the organising of Sufi orders. She explains the importance of this differentiation, for in contrast to these Sufis, orthodox religious figures would not have been able to sustain themselves on incomes from their religious activities (teaching, preaching, etc.) alone, and would have had to concurrently earn a living from market-oriented professions. Finally, she points out that even though Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir sanctioned "Sufi livelihoods", he did not explain how this type of livelihood is shaped. It was the succeeding generations of Sufis who did so.

Jamil M. Abūn-Nasr in his book "Muslim Communities of Grace" also explores the reasons behind the rise of the Qādiriyya order.<sup>87</sup> He first points out that 'Abd al-Qādir in his lifetime had been acknowledged by his followers as being the genuine alternative spiritual guide to that of the state's institutionalised religious authority, which was supported by the Abbasid Caliph.<sup>88</sup> 'Abd al-Qādir's intellectual legacy combined with his followers' ambitions lead to them reproducing his prayers and sermons, and the various sets of rules ascribed to 'Abd al-Qādir, for the execution of their group's mystical

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<sup>84</sup> (Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism ...*, 183) and Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Islamic Spirituality, Manifestations*. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1991, vol.2, pp.6-8.

<sup>85</sup> (Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders ...*, 41).

<sup>86</sup> (Chabbi, "Abd al-Kadir al-Djilani personage historique...", 102-106).

<sup>87</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace...*)

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, pp.82-83.

practices.<sup>89</sup> Abūn-Nasr ascribes to ‘Abd al-Razzāq, one of the sons of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, laying the foundation of his father’s *ṭarīqa* through asserting his father’s unsurpassed spiritual authority, which in turn affirmed Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s legendary founding of the Qādiriyya Sufi Order.<sup>90</sup> ‘Abd al-Razzāq (died 1206) was a contemporary of the Sufi shaikh ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī, but unlike Suhrawardī, he sought to preserve the independence of Sufism from Caliphal authority; and for that reason he laid the foundation for the legend that celebrated Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī as the founder of an independent Sufi *tariqa* – the Qādiriyya.<sup>91</sup>

By the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s legends of *karāmāt* (miracles) and *wilāyya* (friendship of God) were fully formed and secured.<sup>92</sup> Abūn-Nasr further explains that it is the combination of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s *baraka* (grace) – having the power to save people from their sins – and his observance of *Sharī‘a* that attracted so many Muslims to join the Qādiriyya Order.<sup>93</sup> These followers’ Sufi beliefs and spiritual practices were firm accompaniments to the mainstream practices of Islamic orthodox worship.<sup>94</sup> Due to these circumstances, the Qādiriyya Order became universal in its spread across the Islamic world. However, despite being so widely spread, each branch of the Order was very much regionalised in character, existed, and functioned independently from the other branches.<sup>95</sup>

During the first two centuries following the death of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, his grave and school became a shrine and pilgrimage destination for his followers, and this has continued throughout the past 900 years and until the present day.<sup>96</sup> An annual *Mawlid* celebration, to commemorate the date of his death (called ‘*Urs* in the Indian Subcontinent), is held on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of Rabī‘ al-Thānī (the 4<sup>th</sup> month of the Hijra calendar) and takes place at his shrine in Baghdad and at major headquarters of branches of the Qādiriyya Sufi Order across the Islamic world.<sup>97</sup> According to al-Durūbī this annual *Mawlid* celebration was first introduced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn ibn Walī al-Dīn ibn Shams al-Dīn al-Gailani (d. 1664) who was the custodian of the shrine

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p.84.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p.88.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p.84.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p.85.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> (Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders ...*, 233).

<sup>96</sup> (Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism ...*, 183) and (Nasr, *Islamic Spirituality...*, 182).

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

at the time; while his father (d. 1618) had been the first to permit and facilitate the lodging and feeding of Sufi pilgrims coming from afar.<sup>98</sup>

During the field research period for this thesis, a number of modern works in Arabic about Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and his writings, authored by Iraqis, were found deposited at the shrine’s library. Some of these works were published theses written by postgraduate students at Iraqi universities, and some were works of local scholars. Although the majority reiterate older works, including both those written in other parts of the Arab world and those published in the West, a number are republications of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s own works with new revisions and commentaries. These Iraqi publications illustrate a continued interest in the Shaikh and his works amongst researchers in the country; and a continued interest in purchasing these publications by the public.

Of these recent Iraqi publications one stands out as being a new departure in the polemical revision of the identity and origins of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, with the aim of confirming not only his Arab ethnicity but also proving his local Iraqi birth and identity. This work is written by a Jamāl-al-Dīn Fāliḥ Nuṣaif Jāsim Aḥmad al-Ḥijīyya al-Gīlānī (of no familial association with the custodians of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir), who believes that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is wrongly linked to Gīlān and the region of Ṭabristān on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea in Iran, and has dedicated several of his writings to refuting this link.<sup>99</sup> This agenda-driven work misinterprets historical accounts and narratives, and wilfully omits some. He dismisses the validity of contemporary and early Muslim historians’ references to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and refers to a number of unpublished manuscript copies, attributed to a small number of modern Iraqi historians and held in private hands, in arguing his case.

Upon reviewing this book, and comparing it with several verbal statements expressed by a number of interviewees during the field research period, it seems that the reason behind this need to prove a local origin for Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qadir is due to an Iraqi Arab Sunnī sense of nationalism and a need to distance Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir from any association

<sup>98</sup> (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī Tārīkh* ..., 148-149).

<sup>99</sup> Al-Gīlānī, Jamāl-al-Dīn Fāliḥ Nuṣaif Jāsim Aḥmad al-Ḥijīyya. *Jughrāfiyyat al-Bāz al-Ashhab, qirā thāniyya fī sīrat al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani wa taḥqīq wilādatuh wifq manhaj al-baḥth al-ilmā – dirāsa tārikhiyya* (The Geography of the Gray Hawk, a second reading of the biography of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, and investigating the place of his birth following scientific research methodology – an historical study). Morocco, Fez: al-Munazama al-Maghribiyya lil-Tarbiyya wa al-Thaqāfa wa al-‘Ulūm, 2014 (fourth reprint), pp.24-30. An online edition was accessed on 26 April 2014: <http://www.aljlees.com/books/13/889597655.pdf>

with Iran or an Iranian link or origin. This drive seems to have been triggered by the Iraqi Ba‘th Party in the late 1960s when it is alleged that the then President Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr and his government approached the Iranian government requesting the repatriation of the remains of the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd to Baghdad (al-Rashīd is the founder of the Round City of Baghdad, and is buried in the shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad, Iran). According to this allegation, the Iranian response to this request was a counter request for the repatriation of the remains of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in return for al-Rashīd. This response prompted the Iraqi government to order the historian Muṣṭafā Jawād (died December 1969) to investigate the authenticity of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Iranian origins. Jawād is said to have obliged by refuting the legitimacy of the Iranian-origins claim through declaring that all the historical sources that claim it to be so are weak. With that, the matter was closed, and no repatriation took place between the two countries.<sup>100</sup>

Whether this account is true or not, the fact that it is known amongst locals in Baghdad, and peddled on a number of Arabic internet websites and blogs, and is published in a book written in Iraq post the 2003 invasion illustrates the persistence of what seems to be an Arabist racist stance that seeks to Arabise historical Muslim religious personalities to give them legitimacy and worthiness of holding religious leadership positions in Arab society. It also draws attention to a noticeable rise in Arab tribal and townspeople’s claims to descent from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī within various parts of Iraq. It was noted during the field research that, amongst others, a number of tribesmen belonging to clans of the al-Ne‘aim (in Iraq pronounced al Nu‘aim) tribe, whose claim to descent from Prophet Muhammad through his grandson Imam Ḥusayn is well known, were claiming to be descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir too. They were eager to refute all historical sources that state that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir came from Gīlān in Iran, by offering alternative interpretations to his place of birth, all within the modern borders and the Arab parts of the state of Iraq. This phenomenon deserves further research to determine the reasons behind this adjustment in ancestral identities and its possible impact on Sufism in Iraq, as the al-Ne‘aim clans are traditionally followers of the Rifā‘iyya Sufi Order.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p.87. In addition, two other less known versions of this story were recorded. One came from the imam of the Shrine of Shaikh Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī who claimed that Iran had requested Imam Ḥusayn in return for Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd. The second version, given by the elderly wife of an Iraqi diplomat who had served in Iran during the monarchy period, stated that it was in Prime Minister Nūrī Sa‘īd’s time that the Iranian government first opened the subject, by offering to repatriate Caliph al-Rashīd in return for one of the Shī‘a imams in Iraq. According to this account, Nūrī Sa‘īd is said to have refused the request saying “let Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd stay where he is, so that he reminds them of us;” with “us” here referring to the Arabs conquering and ruling Iran as a province of their empire. Until reliable documentary evidence is found, all three versions of this story need to be treated with scepticism, with the latter two as urban myths.



## B. Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī

Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī – also known as al-Shaikh Ābū Bakr ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Ābī Šālih ibn ‘Abd-Āllah – is one of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s eleven named sons. He was born in 1137 (27<sup>th</sup> Shawāl 532 Hijra) and died in 1206 (Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> Rabī‘ al-Āwal 604 Hijra).<sup>101</sup> Very little is known about him, and the majority of references to him seem to have originated from only one or two sources. Al-Durūbī tells us, though he does not state his sources, that Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was educated by his father as well as studying under Ibn Mansur ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muhammad al-Qazāz and others. He then engaged in lecturing and giving guidance, and had a number of students graduate under his guidance.<sup>102</sup> Al-Durūbī then tells us that ‘Abd al-‘Azīz emigrated to Ḥīyāl, a village in Sinjār in c. 1184; participated in the campaigns against the Crusaders in the Levant, and was at the recapture of Ashqelon (‘Aşqalān), on the coast in Palestine, by Saladin’s army in 1187. After visiting Jerusalem, he returned to Ḥīyāl where he died in 1206.

In his description, it seems that Al-Durūbī has fallen into some confusion with identifying the location of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s place of burial, for he mistakes Ḥīyāl for ‘Aqra and states that they refer to the same place with the former name being the older one for the town. However, within the same entry, he also states that Ḥīyāl is a town in Sinjār. Nevertheless he does confirm a little further on in the entry that he means the shrine in ‘Aqra, by noting the shrine’s endowments there being attached to, and managed by, the al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya – the Qādiriyya Endowments – in Baghdad. Finally, al-Durūbī states that the current Gailani family in Baghdad, who manages the al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya and the shrine and mosque of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī are the descendants of this Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. This thesis is concerned with the shrine located in ‘Aqra, the town situated some 130 miles to the north-east of Sinjār, and some 51 miles to the north-east of Mosul (Mount Sinjār is 79 miles to the west of Mosul).<sup>103</sup>

Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz is also mentioned by one contemporary historian who had also met him. He is Ibn al-Mustawfī Sharaf al-Dīn Ābū al-Barakāt al-Mubārak bin Āḥmad al-

<sup>101</sup> (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī Tārīkh* ..., 108); and (Al-Sāmarā’ī, *Al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir* ..., 34-35).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> There are at least three known burial places attributed to Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz; two in Iraq, in Sinjar and in ‘Aqra, and one in north-west Syria in the governorate of Ḥasaka. For the geographical locations of Sinjar and ‘Aqra see *Globetrotter Travel Map Iraq*. London: New Holland Publishers, 2009; and see the United Nations’ “Iraq” map no. 3835 Rev.6, dated July 2014; accessed 11 June 2016: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/iraq.pdf>

Lakhmī al-Irbilī (better known as Ibn al-Mustawfī), an influential native of Erbil who lived between 1167/9 and 1239 and wrote a key work on the history of the city of Erbil (Irbil).<sup>104</sup> He describes Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz as having been one of those who had a zāwiya (Sufi lodge) and who withdrew from life for spiritual reasons, though he was outwardly religious too. A shrewd man but at times gloomy, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz learned and transmitted Ḥadīth and was heard in Irbil, which he visited on a number of occasions, as well as other cities in the region. Al-Mustawfī tells that he himself had met and attended Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s lectures in Irbil; and enumerates the figures Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz studied under as Ābū al-Waqt ‘Abd al-Āwal, Ābū al-Ḥasan Muhammad ibn Ṣurmā and Ābū al-Faḍil Muhammad bin ‘Umar al-Ārmūrī. Al-Mustawfī also mentions that Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz lived for a while on the outskirts of Sinjār; but, unfortunately, he does not state the year or place of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s death.

With regard to his shrine in ‘Aqra, commonly known as Takkiat al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Gailani, it consists of a saint’s burial chamber and a Sufi takkia and associated ancillary buildings, and a small graveyard and cave. The shrine complex is managed, on behalf of the Qādiriyya Endowments, by the Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya Sufi Order, an independent Kurdish Sufi group (described in more detail below and in chapters 3, 4 and 5).<sup>105</sup> As far as can be established, there is no published written history of this shrine, how it came to be there and when the saint’s burial place was turned into a place of pilgrimage and then into a Sufi takkia. The fragmentary anecdotal information, based on oral-transmission and collective memory garnered from the interviews conducted for this project is too basic and too recent to be adequate. Field research time and circumstances did not afford access to the relevant part of the administrative archives of the Qādiriyya Endowments in Baghdad nor to the municipality archives in ‘Aqra.

For the stakeholders and users of this shrine and Sufi takkia, the significance of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and the importance of his place of burial and associated Qādirī Sufi takkia complex seem to be inextricably intertwined with both the Sunnī-orthodox and the Sufi

<sup>104</sup> Ibn al-Mustawfī, Sharaf al-Dīn Abī al-Barakāt bin Āḥmad al-Lakhmī al-Irbilī. “Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlī” in *Tārīkh ‘Irbil, al-musammā Nabāhat al-balad al-khāmīl bi-man waradahu min al-āmāthil* (The History of Erbil that is called the awakened languid town through the arrival of those who are exemplary men). Baghdad: Dar al-Rashid lil-Nashr, 1980, p.95 and 112-116. The ancient city of Irbil, also spelt Arbil and Erbil, is also named Hewler / Hawlair by the Kurds today.

<sup>105</sup> Currently the Qādiriyya Endowments in Baghdad owns the ‘Aqra shrine and owns a number of properties and agricultural land within the Kurdish region that have been variously endowed to the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad and to this shrine. On behalf of this administration, a wakīl – an agent – residing within the Kurdish region is employed to run the shrine and the associated properties, a role currently held by the Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya Sufi Order.

beliefs and practices of the mainly Kurdish Qādirī followers associated with them. In several interviews with the Wūlīānī Sufi shaikhs and their khalīfas (Sufi deputies), they expressed this significance, with each, in their own way, giving a similar answer that can be summed up as follows:

In general, the significance of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was twofold; firstly being the son of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, described by the manager as being the son of “ra’īs al-awliā’” – the master of all the saints – in reference to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. The second point was that Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was a “mujāhid” – a warrior – in God’s cause. The interviewees invariably mentioned that Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz came to this region after having participated in Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Āyyūbī’s (Saladin) campaigns against the Crusaders, where he played a role in the freeing of ‘Asqalān – Ashqelon in Palestine – from their hands. They also explained that he worshipped God, and rejected worldliness, and came to this area to dedicate himself to devotional seclusion in the cave below his burial chamber. One of the khalīfas also added that they are attached to Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz because he was an ‘Ālim – an accomplished religious scholar – and that it was God’s command to follow true scholars.

The takkia manager also explained that Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was a symbol of impartiality and that his takkia represented a neutral ground. It had both in the past played an important role in inter-community relations and reconciliation, especially between the different faith groups in the old town of ‘Aqra (Muslims, Christians and Jews), and between the different Kurdish clans that live in and around the modern city today. He told the story of the old Jewish community in ‘Aqra and how their women used to visit the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz seeking the saint’s intercession with God; and that even after their mass-migration to Israel, a small number continued to return to visit the city and the shrine whenever they could.<sup>106</sup>

### **C. The Qādiriyya Sufi Order:**

As has been stated earlier, the Qādiriyya Sufi order appears to have emerged in Iraq and Syria during the 13<sup>th</sup> century; and seems to have been first organised by posthumous followers of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, who were inspired by his life and legacy, which had gained legendary qualities soon after his death, resulting in his adoption as the Order’s

<sup>106</sup> These visits seem to have taken place during the 1990s and 2000s, when the Kurdish region became semi-autonomous in the aftermath of Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf War of 1990-1991.

founder and patron saint.<sup>107</sup> The Order's identity was consolidated during the 14<sup>th</sup> century; and from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards it spread far and wide throughout the Islamic world, from western and Sub-Saharan Africa, through the Middle East and parts of the Balkans and the Caucasus, to the Indian Subcontinent, Central Asia, China and Southeast Asia.<sup>108</sup>

Attempting to survey the presence of the Qādiriyya order's branches and offshoots around the world has proved both a great challenge and an overwhelming experience. The challenge was the absence of any comprehensive scholarly work that deals with the phenomena of the Qādiriyya Sufi movement. Most of the information is fragmentary and scattered in numerous works that belong to several disciplines in addition to Sufism studies; from social and political histories of Islamic states and regions, to social and anthropological studies of Muslim communities.

Recent scholarly works written in Arabic on the subject of Sufi brotherhoods in general and the Qādiriyya in particular, were found to be mainly concerned with reproducing earlier hagiographical information relating to the history of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and what Qādiriyya Sufism stands for. Also examined were books written in Arabic, by and for Sufis that focussed on modern Sufism. These were found to concentrate on Qādirī Sufī leaders and their personalities but not the histories of the orders they led. Both of these types of Arabic books tended to lack critical analysis, and some only briefly described the various regional Qādiriyya branches while covering the biographies of their figureheads. The lack of use of field research, coupled with inadequate referencing of sources of information has made many of these works difficult to assess for accuracy.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming impression gained when attempting to research the spread of the various Qādiriyya branches and offshoots in today's Islamic world is that of an almost universal dissemination of the Order, even though its numbers in many places are comparatively small. This present dissemination extends from Mauritania and the Senegal on the western coast of Africa across both North and Sub-Saharan Africa, into the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus; beyond that into Central Asia, China and the Indian Subcontinent; from South Africa and Tanzania on the east coast of Africa to Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea on the Red Sea; and all the way east across the Indian Ocean to Southeast Asia. The enormity of the task rendered the attempt to survey this spread, beyond what has already been attempted by scholars like Trimingham and Abun-Nasr,

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<sup>107</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace...*, 82-83).

<sup>108</sup> (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary ...*, 251).

impossible for the purposes of this thesis. Therefore, the subject is limited here to contextualising the two Jīlānī shrines – the one in Baghdad and the one in ‘Aqra – through briefly describing the presence of the Qādiriyya Order in Iraq today, and the independent branches of this Order within the vicinity of the two Jīlānī shrines.

### C.1 The Qādiriyya Sufi Order in Iraq:

It seems that the Qādiriyya order first took shape in Iraq at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>109</sup> and was generally centred in Baghdad around the school and shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.<sup>110</sup> It also seems that the Order largely remained in the hands of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s descendants, with a number of his sons and grandsons teaching *fiqh* (Sunnī theology) and *Ḥadīth* (Prophet Muhammad’s traditions).<sup>111</sup> The Mongol invasion in 1258, and the fall of Baghdad, appears not to have disrupted the school and shrine, despite many hagiographical sources claiming otherwise; nor did the Safavid invasion of 1508 AD destroy it. This is evidenced by the survival of its 14<sup>th</sup> century conical dome that stood over the Shaikh’s tomb (not dissimilar to the one that still stands over the burial of Shaikh Shihāb al-Dīn ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī), until Sultan Sulaymān al-Qānūnī (ruled 1520 – 1566) ordered the refurbishment of the shrine in 1534, which included the removal of this dilapidated dome and the construction of a new one in its place.<sup>112</sup>

It seems that ‘Abd al-Qādir’s descendants continued to be responsible for his school post the Mongol invasions;<sup>113</sup> but written sources dry up for the period between 1287 and the end of the Iranian Safavid occupation of Baghdad.<sup>114</sup> In 1534, when the Ottomans recaptured the city from the Safavids, and Sultan Sulaymān al-Qānūnī ordered the renovation of the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, he also bestowed the post of Naqīb al-

<sup>109</sup> (Trimingham, *Sufi Orders ...*, 43).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities ...*, 88); and Al-Gailani, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maḥaḍ. *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani* (History of the Mosque of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani). Baghdad: Dar al-Shu‘ūn al-Thaqāfiyya al-‘Aāma, 1994, pp.6 – 11.

<sup>112</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ ...*, 10-11, 16-17 and 30-35). Al-Gailani cites the work of Ahmad bin ‘Abd-Āllah al-Baghdādī (died 1691) titled *‘Uyūn ākhbār al-ā‘yān mimman maḍā fī sālif al-‘uṣūr wa al-Azmān* (also know as *Tārīkh al-Ghurābī*) who describes what Sultan Sulaymān found and what he ordered be done at the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. In addition, al-Gailani argues in some detail the dates and styles of the 14<sup>th</sup> century domes on these two shrines and the domes preceding them. He also describes his documentation of the refurbishment of the burial chamber that took place in the 1950s, in which the grave was excavated by removing up to a meter or so of the soil above it. This revealed a long grave covered with hexagonal ceramic tiles of the type found in the Seljuk period. Below them was a layer of large square bricks, which had been laid directly onto the original earth of the burial. For Al-Gailani, the survival of these hexagonal ceramic tiles indicated that the Safavids did not dig up or disturb the burial, even if they had abused the building surrounding it.

<sup>113</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities ...*, 88); and (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ ...*, 6 – 11).

<sup>114</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ ...*, 10).

Āshrāf of Baghdad (the marshal of the nobility – those claiming descent from Prophet Muhammad)<sup>115</sup> upon one of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s descendants, Sayyid Zain al-Dīn ibn Sharaf al-Dīn al-Gailani (mentioned in more detail later).<sup>116</sup> By doing so, the Sultan signalled that the Qādiriyya Sufi Order and its representatives, the Gailani (Jīlānī) family in Baghdad, were his allies.<sup>117</sup> Sultan Murād IV (ruled 1623 – 1640)<sup>118</sup> also ordered the restoration of the shrine in 1638 after the second Safavid occupation of the city in 1623.<sup>119</sup> Over the centuries, the site grew in size and in functions. In addition to the Sufi takkia and shrine aspect of it, the Ḥanbalī school side of its operation evolved into a Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence and the mosque part of the site grew in importance too. This Jīlānī shrine is mapped and explored in detail in chapters 2 and 4; and the position of the descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad is addressed in more detail later, and in chapters 2 and 5.

Over the centuries many Qādirī takkias or zāwiyas were established in various parts of Iraq. Some of these are mentioned in a variety of historical accounts, but there has been no dedicated work written about the presence of the Qādiriyya as a whole in the country. In modern times, fifty of these Qādirī groups have been listed in an Arabic title concerned with the history of the shrine of shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.<sup>120</sup> The custodians of the Jīlānī shrine first published this book in the 1970s. The list includes nine takkias in Baghdad other than the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir; one in the town of Za‘farāniya near Baghdad and one in Kan‘ān; one in Balad near Sāmarrā’ and two in Sāmarrā’ itself; two in Mendilī near the Iranian borders; seven in Kirkuk; and two in Mosul. In the Kurdish region twenty are listed, including five in Erbil, two in Dehok, one in Sulaymaniyya, one in ‘Aqra (Akre) north-west of Erbil and eleven in various other parts of the region within Iraq. All fifty listed are named after the Sufi shaikhs who led them, but none of the entries mention when these takkias were first set up, or give any explicit confirmation that they were still active at the time of writing the book.<sup>121</sup> During the field research period for this project several substantial Iraqi Qādirī Sufi groups were recorded present at the Mawlūd festivities held in the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir including a few of those listed in al-Sāmarrā’ī’s book. These groups include the Qādiriyya Brīfkāniyya; the Qādiriyya Qara-Chīwariyya; the Ṣūlī Qādirīs; the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya; the Kasnazāniyya; and Shaikh

<sup>115</sup> Havemann, A. “Nakīb al-Ashrāf,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition*, Vol.7. Leiden: Brill, 1993, pp.296-297.

<sup>116</sup> (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fi Tārīkh ...*, 98-100).

<sup>117</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities ...*, 88-89).

<sup>118</sup> Bosworth, Clifford Edmund. *The new Islamic dynasties, a chronological and genealogical manual*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996 and 2004, p239.

<sup>119</sup> (Abūn-Nasr, *Muslim Communities ...*, 88-89).

<sup>120</sup> (Al-Sāmarrā’ī, *Al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir ...*, 1982, 63-68).

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

Kākā Rashīd Dāra Khūrmā al-Ārbīlī al-Barzinjī's group. All these Sufi groups are Kurdish and are led by the Barzinjī family of tribal shaikhs. Smaller Arab Qādirī groups were also noted, including local groups from various districts in Baghdad, as well as at least one group from the Dīālā province situated to the north-east of Baghdad.

## C.2 The Qādiriyya Sufi Order in Baghdad:

This field research revealed the existence of at least six autonomous and independent Qādirī groups active in the district of Bāb al-Shaikh where the Jīlānī shrine stands. Each has evolved differently, and demonstrates the variety of Sufi-order formations and histories that can be found in one locality.

The first of these six is the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. For its history, a small number of Arabic works have been published in Iraq. All belong to 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the majority covering this history from the leaders' and religious post-holders' perspectives, and consisting of short biographical descriptions of its Gailani family benefactors, its religious tutors, imams and muftis, and its prominent Sufi lodgers.<sup>122</sup> Some of these works also give brief descriptions of when the shrine was first built and when its library was established. However, none explore the customs and rituals practiced in it, nor describe the characteristics of the various communities that access it. The exceptions to the above types of works are three; two titles dedicated to covering the shrine's library and its important manuscript collection;<sup>123</sup> and one academic work documenting the architectural history of the shrine, exploring how each architectural space evolved up to the early 1990s.<sup>124</sup>

The 2009–2014 field-research period revealed the complexity of this shrine's physical spaces that are accessible to multiple stakeholders, permitting a variety of functions and rituals for a variety of users and audiences. The physical spaces encompass a burial chamber for the saintly figurehead, a Sufi establishment with lodges for its followers; a soup kitchen for the local poor and for the community of the shrine; a fully functioning mosque with multiple prayer halls, three minarets and ablution facilities; family burial chambers, a graveyard and a funeral parlour; a modern encyclopaedic public library with a

<sup>122</sup> These Arabic titles are used as references in the various chapters of this thesis; see the bibliography list.

<sup>123</sup> Rā'ūf, 'Imād 'Abd al-Salām. *Al-Āthār al-Khaṭiyya fī al-Maktaba al-Qādiriyya fī Jāmi' al-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir Al-Gailani bi-Baghdad* (The manuscripts of the Qādiriyya Library in the Mosque of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani in Baghdad). Baghdad: Idārat al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya, 1974-1980, in five volumes; and (Al-Muftī, *Maktabat al-Madrasa...*).

<sup>124</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi' ...*).

multi-lingual stock and an Oriental manuscript collection; and last but not least, an endowment portfolio of agricultural lands and commercial properties to support all the above, managed by a team of employees led by custodians belonging to the Gailani family. This family's role in the shrine will be addressed in more detail later.

The complex stakeholder and audience base includes people from different classes, ethnicities, professions, educational attainment and religious affiliations, interacting with each other at various times of the day and seasons of the year. These stakeholders include shrine management and staff; Sufi and non-Sufi users, Sunnī and Shī'a; those coming in for worship; for religious advice and edicts from its imams; for access to the shrine's soup kitchen; for use of its funeral parlour; or for access to its free public library. The shrine also receives a large number of foreign pilgrims, especially from the Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia; a long tradition that has left its mark on both the shrine's buildings and on the neighbourhood of Bāb al-Shaikh.

At this Jīlānī shrine resides al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya (the Qādiriyya Circle). It is led by Shaikh Muhammad Najīb Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya, a graduate theologian from the University of Baghdad who inherited his leadership position from his father (see chapter 5 for more about this group and its Sufi beliefs). The group has its own lodge at the shrine, and conducts weekly dhikr circles after the Friday noon prayers, as well as on religious festival days and other special occasions, in which worshippers, visitors and pilgrims are invited to participate. As a Sufi order, they also meet at their master's home where a small takkia is attached. The majority of the group's members are blood relatives and members of their extended families, though it also has members who are neither.

The second Qādirī establishment in the district of Bāb al-Shaikh is Takkiat al-Shaikh Ḥasan al-Ṭayyār. This takkia backs on to the shrine's outer boundary wall on the northeast side and within the old Bāb al-Shaikh neighbourhood. At the time of carrying out the research for this thesis, very few academically reliable published sources were accessible regarding its origins, except for one that documents its architectural features as a takkia that originated in the Ottoman period.<sup>125</sup> Recorded Ṭayyār family lore states that the founder of the takkia was a descendant of Imam 'Alī's son Ja'far al-Ṭayyār, hence their family name, and a contemporary of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, whom he had met while on

<sup>125</sup> Al-Durājī, Ḥamīd Muhammad Ḥasan. *Al-Rubṭ wa al-takāyyā al-Baghdadiyya fī al-'ahid al-'Uthmānī, takhṭīṭahā wa 'imāretihā, 941 – 1336 hijrī / 1534 – 1917 milādī* (The ribats and takkias of Baghdad during the Ottoman period, their layouts and their architecture, 941 – 1336 H / 1534 – 1917 AD). Baghdad: Dār al-Sh'ūn al-Thaqāfiyya al-'Aāma, 2001, pp.103-106.



Hajj to Mecca, or perhaps Medina. Shaikh Ḥasan Al-Ṭayyār, or even his father, settled in the Bāb al-Shaikh neighbourhood in Baghdad after emigrating from the Ḥijāz in Arabia. He set up his takkia here, and his descendants have followed in his footsteps up to the present. The current building was first established sometime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has been re-built on the same foundations / layout during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In comparison to the Shrine adjacent to it, it is a humble but charming building based on traditional Baghdadi house design, with an open central courtyard surrounded by suites of rooms. This takkia also houses four Sufi burials, those of the founder, his son, his grandson and his great-grandson. No death dates are recorded on their tombstones, rendering it difficult to verify the claim to the early age of the takkia. A local history book focussing on this area of Baghdad covers the story of this takkia through quoting a publication authored by a member of the Ṭayyār family who was also the caretaker of the building.<sup>126</sup> Although it has not been possible to verify the various claims, the custodians of the Jīlānī shrine praised the Ṭayyār takkia, its work and its Qādirī leaders. This takkia's relationship with the Jīlānī shrine is addressed in chapters 2 and 5.

The third Qādirī takkia is al-Takkia al-Bandanīyya, named after its founder Shaikh 'Alī al-Bandanījī (died 1773), who is buried in one of its chambers. It was built in 1744, and includes a small mosque, lodging rooms, a library, a garden, and family burial chambers. Shaikh 'Alī endowed it as a family-managed religious property for the benefit of students seeking religious knowledge, to lodge in and study. Several prominent jurists graduated from it during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām al-Shawāf, who was appointed as a mudaris – religious instructor – and a wā'iz – preacher – at the Jīlānī shrine after he had completed his studies there at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At this takkia is also buried the Qādirī Sufi scholar Shaikh 'Īsā al-Bandanījī (d. 1866) who was kin to Shaikh 'Alī, and the Sufi tutor of members of the Gailani family.<sup>127</sup>

Although today the Bandanījī takkia no longer trains religious scholars, it still functions as a takkia with twice-weekly dhikr circles on Mondays and Thursdays. Its caretakers cook and distribute to the local neighbourhood harīsa – a type of porridge cooked with lamb – during the fasting month of Ramaḍān and on festival days. The takkia permits those with

<sup>126</sup> Al-Ṭā'ī, Jamīl. *Mawsū'at tārikh maḥalāt Baghdad wa 'usaruhā, al-jānib al-sharqī 1638 – 1958, Maḥalat Bāb al-Shaikh al-'ulā* (The encyclopaedia of the history of Baghdad's neighbourhoods and their families, the eastern side, from 1638 to 1958, the original Bāb al-Shaikh neighbourhood). Baghdad: (no publisher named), 2004, pp.138-140 and 161-163.

<sup>127</sup> Al-Khaṭāb, Rajā' Ḥusain Ḥusnī. *'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb, ḥayāuh al-khāsa wa āra'uh al-sīasiyya wa 'ilāqātuh bi-mu'āsirih* ('Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb, his private life and his political opinions and his relationship with his contemporaries). Baghdad: al-Maktaba al-'Ālamiyya, 1984, p.9.

limited incomes within the neighbourhood to hold their funerals in the takkia free of charge. It also makes available some of the spaces in the takkia for marriage ceremonies.

The fourth establishment was formerly known as a takkia, but now is known as a mosque, though still functioning as a takkia too. It is the Mosque of Shaikh Āḥmad al-Makkī. According to various stone plaques on the walls of the mosque and the accounts of its current caretakers, Al-Makkī, Āḥmad bin ‘Alī bin Āḥmad, was a Qādirī Sufi and Ḥanbalī jurist who, with his brother Muhammad, left the Ḥijāz for Baghdad in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. He belonged to the al-Shība clan in Arabia and was titled al-Shībī. His kin then were sādins – caretakers – of the Ka‘ba in Mecca.<sup>128</sup> No date is known for his time of death, but he is buried within the takkia and his burial is still prominently marked. According to an article about Sufi establishments in Baghdad, the male line of al-Makkī in Baghdad seems to have died out in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, though there are still female descendants living in the area. Subsequently the building became derelict and was under the threat of being sold and demolished.<sup>129</sup> The current caretakers and a group from the community took it upon themselves to save the takkia; and in the 1990s the local Sufi community and the neighbourhood came together to pay for the reconstruction of the building as a small mosque with aid from the government.

The Shaikh Āḥmad al-Makkī Mosque was re-launched in 1999 by the Qādirī Shaikh ‘Abd al-Karīm Bīāra al-Mudaris, who was the most prominent Qādirī and Naqshbandī Sufi scholar of his time in Iraq, and the Muftī al-Diyār al-‘Irāqiyya – the official muftī of the Republic of Iraq – and the president of several religious entities in the country. Bīāra lodged at the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir until his death in 2005; and apparently, he agreed to support the reconstruction of the takkia as a mosque on the condition that the community pledged not to hold any Friday midday prayers or sermons in it, but join the congregation at the Jīlānī shrine. The community agreed, and to demonstrate their commitment asked Bīāra to choose an imam for them to appoint.

From a conversation with the imam of the mosque, it seems that the location of the now converted takkia, which is situated directly across the junction of Kifāḥ Street and Gailani Street, near the opposite corner of that junction where the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir stands, was threatening to fragment the community of worshippers. The imam said that

<sup>128</sup> Field visit and interviews with the caretakers and the imam of the mosque on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

<sup>129</sup> Al-Ālūsī, ‘Ādil Kāmil. “Al-Rubuṭ al-Baghdadiyya fī al-tārīkh wa al-khuṭaṭ” (Baghdadi hospices in history and in historical maps). In *Al-Mawrid*, vol.7, issue 1 (1978). Baghdad: Ministry of Information, p.116.

Bīāra was concerned that the worshippers living on their side of the junction might find it easier simply to attend at the closer mosque than to cross over to the bigger shrine. Although quite proud of his mosque's pledge and honouring it, and of his selection for appointment as imam, the imam gently expressed his resignation at not being able to preach in the mosque he is appointed to – an uncommon situation. However, he did acknowledge that he was given opportunities to preach Friday sermons at another mosque.

Located at the top end of a commercial street specialising in car spare parts and repairs businesses, the prayer congregation during the day is very mixed, with both Sunnis and Shī'a praying side by side, each freely following their own prayer customs.

The fifth and last of the independent Qādirī groups within the vicinity of the Jīlānī shrine is al-Takkia al-Kasnazāniyya. This takkia belongs to the Kasnazāniyya Sufi Order – whose proper name is al-Ṭarīqa al-ʿAlīyya al-Qādiriyya al-Kasnazāniyya - a Kurdish Qādirī order by origin, leadership and majority membership, though not exclusively Kurdish by any means. It is named after the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sufi saint Shaikh ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shāh al-Kasnazān (1819 – 1899 AD),<sup>130</sup> who belonged to the Barzinjī family of tribal shaikhs of south-east Kurdistan Iraq, centred on the city of Sulaymāniyya.<sup>131</sup> Although its headquarters are still in the city of Sulaymāniyya,<sup>132</sup> this independent Qādirī order, unlike the orders described above, is spread in other Sunnī parts of Arab Iraq, as well as having a presence in the Kurdish region of western Iran, with a network of branch takkias and a large following. The main Kasnazāniyya Order's relationship with the Shrine of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir is addressed in chapter 5.

With regard to this local Kasnazāniyya takkia in the Bāb al-Shaikh neighbourhood, it seems to have been more recently established in comparison with the other three Qādirī takkias; and seems more populist in its nature, and possibly less orthodox in its practices, as was subtly indicated in several interviews with attendants at the Jīlānī Shrine. From observing their representatives at the Shrine during field research in February 2013, this

<sup>130</sup> Husayn, Jamāl Nasār and Fatoohi, Louay [sic]. *Al-Ṭarīq ʿilā al-Ṭarīqa, dālīl taʾrīfī bi-al-Ṭarīqa al-ʿAlīyya al-Qādiriyya al-Kasnazāniyya* (The way to the Way: An introductory guide to the Kasnazāniyya Qādirī Order). Amman: al-Ahlīyya, 1997, pp.78-84. Written on behalf of the current leader of the Kasnazāniyya Order Shaikh Muhammad al-Kasnazān, Fatoohi holds a PhD in historical astronomy from Durham University, is one of Shaikh Muhammad's khalīfas.

<sup>131</sup> Bruinessen, Martin van. "The Qadiriyya and the lineages of Qadiri shaykhs among the Kurds." In *The Qadiriyya Order*, edited by Thiery Zarcone, Ekrem Isin and Arthur Buehler. *Journal of the History of Sufism*, vol.1-2. Istanbul: Simurgh Press, 2000, pp. 134-138.

<sup>132</sup> A brief visit to view the location of the takkia in Sulaymāniyya took place on 11 October 2009. Also see (Bruinessen, "Qadiriyya and the lineages of Qadiri shaykhs...", 138).

takkia seemed to have a number of young members who demonstrated an eagerness to recruit new adherents through mixing with the pilgrims at the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, both locals and foreigners, and both male and female.<sup>133</sup>

Like the al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya and al-Makkī Mosque congregations, members of the other three local takkias also visit the Jīlānī shrine, attend the daily prayers, and participate in the various public festivities that take place at it. All expressed a direct affinity with the Shrine and upheld Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir as their chief Sufi saint.

### **C.3 The Qādiriyya Sufi Order in Kurdistan Iraq:**

As was mentioned above, the presence of several independent Kurdish Qādirī Sufi orders has been noted in publications and observed through the field research. In the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq, several prominent tribal confederations belong to the Qādiriyya Sufi Order. The Barzinjīs – those of the Barzinja family – seem to have been Qādirīs since at least the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, with their main centres being in the south-eastern region focussed around Sulaymāniyya.<sup>134</sup> The Ṭalabānīs are another Kurdish clan following the Qādiriyya. Their earliest affiliation to the order dates back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and their main centre is around the city of Kirkuk.<sup>135</sup> In addition to the Barzinjī shaikhs and the Ṭalabānīs, Bruinessen mentions the Qādirī descendants of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn Brīfkānī (1791-1851) who are based in the district of ‘Amādiyya, and who have also established themselves in the city of Duhok.<sup>136</sup>

Of these numerous Qādirī Barzinjī groups, as has been alluded to earlier, the Sufi order named al-Ṭarīqa al-‘Aliyya al-Qādiriyya al-Wūlīāniyya has a special relationship with the Qādiriyya Endowments in Baghdad, acting as their agents in the Kurdish region and running the Jīlānī shrine in ‘Aqra on their behalf. The Wūlīāniyya Order is based in the village of Rovia (to the north-west of Erbil and on the road to the city of ‘Aqra) around the Sufi shrine and takkia of Shaikh Ismā‘īl al-Wūlīānī (died c. 1737), which they own and manage, and where the order’s current leaders’ fathers and grandfathers are buried.

<sup>133</sup> It was not possible to visit this takkia, but a brief meeting with its caretakers took place in the Jīlānī shrine in February 2013. It was also possible to observe their efforts at recruiting members of a South African Qādirī Sufi Order, with the intention of establishing a branch of the Kasnazāniyya in South Africa. An unabashed effort that seemed to be, in character, driven more by overt missionary zeal, than by subtle Sufi guidance.

<sup>134</sup> (Bruinessen, “Qadiriyya and the lineages of Qadiri shaykhs...,” 132-134).

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, pp.139-141.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

Given that the Barzinjīs in general are centred in the villages round Sulaymāniyya, their presence northeast of Erbil is somewhat unexpected. According to the Wūlīānīs, Shaikh Ismā‘īl settled in the village of Rovia and established his takkia there. When he died, he was buried next to what is believed to be the grave of one, or possibly two, of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s descendants. Ismā‘īl’s descendants continued to maintain the takkia, which still stands today, and consists of a number of buildings round a central courtyard, with a small mosque, a graveyard and a large domed burial chamber that contains the graves of Shaikh Ismā‘īl and a number of the former leaders of the Wūlīāniyya Order, and what is locally believed to be the grave of Muhammad al-Hatāk, the son of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.<sup>137</sup> This shrine is explored in more detail in chapters 3, and the Wūlīānī Order’s special relationship with the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad is addressed in more detail in chapter 5.

The Wūlīāniyya Sufi Order is a substantial order with a number of takkias in various parts of the Kurdish region in Iraq. Around Rovia and ‘Aqra are some 80 villages with initiated khalīfas – deputies – belonging to the order. Their followers here are mainly from the Kurdish Gorān clans and the Herkī clans. They also have a takkia in Erbil, and until the fall of Mosul to the insurgency movement termed ISIS (or ISIL) in 2014, one in Mosul too, which was the base at which the head of the order resided. Outwith Iraq, the Wūlīāniyya have established two takkias in Turkey, in Istanbul. Also, since taking charge of managing the Shrine of shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī in ‘Aqra on behalf of Baghdad, they have enlarged the site considerably, and run it as a fully functioning takkia with daily and Friday prayers, dhikr circles, lodgings for Sufi visitors, and spiritual retreats for their khalīfas.

#### **D. The Gailani Family of Baghdad:**

Even though many groups in various parts of Iraq and the Arab and Islamic worlds today claim descent from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, this section is concerned with the Gailani family that holds custodianship of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad, and upon whom the Ottoman Sultan Sulaymān al-Qānunī invested Naqābat al-Āshrāf of

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<sup>137</sup> Field visit to the shrine of Ismā‘īl al-Wūlīānī in Rovia and interviews with its caretakers on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011. Also, Al-Kasnazān, Nehru al-Shaikh Muhammad (editor). “Mashru‘ naṣīb al-ḥula al-dhabīyya” (The Golden Ornament installation project). *Al-Kasnazān*. Vol.2 (Summer 2007), pp. 18-19. Published by Al-Tārīqa al-‘Aliyya al-Qādiriyya al-Kasnazāniyya.

Baghdad in 1535;<sup>138</sup> an office held by members of this family until it was abandoned in 1960.

According to written sources the first Jīlānī to hold the position of Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad was Shaikh Zain al-Dīn ibn Muhammad Sharaf al-Dīn ibn Shams al-Dīn ibn Muhammad Ābī-al-Ṭaib al-Gailani, (died c. 1573), whose lineage from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is believed to be through the latter’s son Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and grandson Muhammad al-Hatāk.<sup>139</sup> Known as Shaikh Zain al-Dīn al-Kabīr – the senior – he is distinguished from others of similar name by being the paternal grandson of the owner of Bustān al-Khas.

Bustān al-Khas is a large orchard and agricultural land, then outwith the gate of the old city of Baghdad (a large district of inner Baghdad today), on the eastern side of the Tigris and to the south of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Bustān al-Khas was endowed in 1497<sup>140</sup> as a “waqf dhurī” (family trust) by Shaikh Shams al-Dīn ibn Muhammad Ābī-al-Ṭaib al-Gailani (1453 – c.1507) to his descendants in perpetuity. Large parts of this waqf remained in existence until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the Iraqi government dissolved what remained of the endowment and repossessed the land for civic development purposes.<sup>141</sup> Separately from this family endowment, Shaikh Shams al-Dīn had also been in charge of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and its endowments. The separate custodianships of both endowments, Shaikh Shams al-Dīn’s Bustān al-Khas and the endowments of the Jīlānī shrine, were then held first by Shams al-Dīn’s son, Muhammad Sharaf al-Dīn, and then by his son’s son, Zain al-Dīn al-Kabīr.

The current Gailani family in Baghdad distinguishes itself from other claimants of Jīlānī descent by this specific family endowment coupled with a much larger one endowed in 1570 by Shaikh Zain al-Dīn al-Kabīr himself.<sup>142</sup> This second endowment consists of agricultural and marshlands, villages and waterways in the Dīālā region and properties in Baghdad; and still exists to the present. Today, if a bearer of the surname (الگيلاني) claiming Jīlānī descent was entitled to income from these two particular family endowments by virtue of his / her paternal blood lineage, he / she is recognised as a blood relative.

<sup>138</sup> (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fi Tārīkh* ..., 100)

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, pp.132 – 137.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, pp138 – 148 for Shaikh Zain al-Dīn’s endowment.

Once invested in the Gailanis, the post of Naqābat al-Āshrāf alternated between direct descendants of Shaikh Zain al-Dīn al-Kabīr and descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī’s other son Shaikh ‘Abd al-Razzāq,<sup>143</sup> with both branches residing in Baghdad and intermarrying. ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Salām Ra’ūf attempted to list these post holders in chronological order,<sup>144</sup> recording twenty-two names, including those appointed Naqīb beyond the book’s period of coverage. However, the list is incomplete, as there is an unaccounted-for gap between 1664 and 1690; and the last person to hold the post is not mentioned. Ra’ūf also attempted to group the Naqībs according to their paternal ancestral branch: descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Razzāq ibn Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and descendants of Shaikh Zain al-Dīn al-Kabīr and his ancestor Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.

The branch that descended from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Razzāq fizzled out in 1842 – at least for the Naqāba purposes – with the death of the childless Sayyid Maḥmūd ibn Zakariyya al-Naqīb (1768-1842).<sup>145</sup> Family lore states that at Maḥmūd ibn Zakariyya’s death, the custodianship of the shrine went to Maḥmūd’s niece Zainab bint Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Gailani (c.1795 – 1882); and the Naqābat al-Āshrāf was invested in Sayyid ‘Alī ibn Salmān ibn Muṣṭafā (c.1810 – 1872) a descendant of Shaikh Zain al-Dīn al-Kabīr. When Zainab, a Qādirī Sufi of recognised spiritual seniority,<sup>146</sup> resisted pressure to relinquish the custodianship of the endowments to Sayyid ‘Alī al-Naqīb – considering that it would not be easy for her as a woman to function effectively within the male dominated sphere of farming – she was persuaded to accept Sayyid ‘Alī’s offer of marriage in return for the custodianship. Sayyid ‘Alī took the much older and already widowed Zainab as a second wife in 1843, and she bore him in 1845 her only son Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb (first prime minister of modern Iraq). According to this family lore, the bubonic plague of 1830-1 reduced the Gailani family to single figures, causing an extraordinary shortage of male members with age and competence to manage the Jīlānī shrine and its

<sup>143</sup> It has not yet been possible to obtain a lineage chain for the Baghdadi descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Razzāq, nor a source, hagiographical or otherwise, that tells of this Baghdad-based line.

<sup>144</sup> Rā’ūf, ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Salām. *Al-Usar al-Hākima wa Rijāl al-‘Idāra wa al-Qaḍā’ fī al-‘Irāq fī al-‘Uhūd al-Mutā’khira 656-1335 H / 1258-1918 M* (The ruling families and the men of administration and law in Iraq in recent eras 656-1335 Hijra / 1258-1918 AD). Baghdad: Jāmi‘at Baghdad, Kulīyat al-Tarbiyya al-Ulā, 1992, pp. 90-93.

<sup>145</sup> (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī Tārīkh* ..., 150-168).

<sup>146</sup> Her name appears in at least two Qādirī Sufi chains of transmission included in initiation certificates issued by her son, Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb, where he states that he received his own Qādirī Sufi initiation from her. These two certificates form part of the Jīlānī shrine’s Qādiriyya Library manuscript collection.

endowments, hence Zainab's appointment to the custodianship. Both of Zainab's parents had been Gailanis, as had 'Alī's.<sup>147</sup>

As for the custodianship of the Qādiriyya Endowments, this appointment is secured through gaining majority nominations from within the family. The nominated name is presented to a judicial court judge responsible for confirming such appointments. Suitable candidates need not be the sons of former post holders, but need to demonstrate eligibility by Gailani lineage, and suitability by seniority and capabilities. If more than one member competes for the post and no majority nominations are secured, the judicial court judge will determine who is most suitable after requesting the rivals present themselves in a court session. The judge's decision is final. The distinction between the two posts, that of custodian and that of Naqīb al-Āshrāf, was played out within the Gailani family, with a number of its members holding one or the other position, and a few being able to hold both at the same time.<sup>148</sup> In later periods the custodians were employed in pairs, and in some cases, there was also employed a "nāzīr" (superintendent or overseer) to support or check the custodians' management of the endowments. These roles were paid positions, and were held by members of the family. No definitive list of custodians and nāzīrs has been compiled as yet.

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, records exist for key figures in the family who had played a recognised religious, social and political role in the affairs of the city of Baghdad, and had an acknowledged influence on followers of the Qādiriyya Sufi Order in Iraq, India and Afghanistan. Such records include a number of modern works that deal with the religious, political and social histories of Baghdad from the Ottoman period onwards. Five examples that provide individual biographical descriptions are worthy of highlight here. Two are works on social history by the Iraqi historian Ibrāhīm al-Durūbī, the first being exclusively concerned with the Gailani family,<sup>149</sup> and the second concerned with Baghdad's literary salons.<sup>150</sup> The third is on the prominent families of Baghdad during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century written by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Suhrawardī, a contemporary of theirs.<sup>151</sup> The fourth is a history of the learned families of Baghdad during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and

<sup>147</sup> Interview with Rājiḥa Al-Gailani on 31 August 2012. Also see (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fi Tārīkh ...*, 489) for Zainab's birth, two marriages and child bearing details.

<sup>148</sup> Discussion with the shrine's solicitor on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

<sup>149</sup> (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fi Tārīkh ...*)

<sup>150</sup> Al-Durūbī, Ibrāhīm bin 'Abd al-Ghanī. *al-Baghdadiun, Akhbarahum wa Majalisahum* (The Baghdadis, their news and their salons). Baghdad: 1958.

<sup>151</sup> Suhrawardī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥilmī al-'Abāsī. *Tārīkh būūtāt Baghdād fī al-qirn al-thālith 'ashar lil-hijra* (History of the houses of Baghdad in the 13<sup>th</sup> century of Hijra). Baghdad: Maktab al-Jawād, 1996, pp. 45-46, 69-75 and 108-109.



first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, written by Muhammad Sa'īd Al-Rāwī, a learned religious figurehead of the time.<sup>152</sup> The fifth title is a biographical work by Mier Basri<sup>153</sup> in which he names all those figureheads involved in the political scene in Iraq during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It includes several entries relating to members of the Gailani family who held political and governmental positions, including prime ministers, courtiers, members of “Majlis al-Ā'yān” (the notables' assembly, or upper assembly, of the parliament during the monarchy period), lawmakers and diplomats.

Critical works by Western academics are very few. They include such works as Hanna Battatu's on “*The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq ...*”<sup>154</sup> in which he dedicates a chapter to the “Sādah” social class to which the Gailanis belong. Butrus Abu-Manneh wrote about one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman governors of Baghdad, Najīb Pāshā, and his relationship with Sayyid 'Alī al-Naqīb (d. 1872);<sup>155</sup> and Pierre-Jean Luizard wrote about Sayyid 'Alī's son Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb (1845 – 1927) and his religious and political role in Iraq during the British colonial period.<sup>156</sup> In Arabic, the Iraqi academic Rajā' al-Khaṭāb wrote the only known biographical volume on Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb. He became the first prime minister of the newly established Iraq under British Mandate in 1920 and then the first two cabinets of the Iraqi monarchy period between 1921 and 1922. In this short biographical work, al-Khaṭāb attempts to portray and contextualise the Naqīb's views and works from the social, religious and political perspectives.<sup>157</sup>

For academic works on Iraq and its political scene during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Gailani personality that has attracted the most attention is the controversial political figure Rashīd 'Ālī Al-Gaylani (1892 – 1965),<sup>158</sup> who became prime minister of Iraq several times

<sup>152</sup> Al-Rāwī, Muhammad Sa'īd. *Tārīkh al-'Usar al-'Ilmiyya fī Baghdad* (History of the learned families of Baghdad), edited by 'Imād 'Abd al-Salām Ra'ūf. Baghdad: Dār al-Sh'ūn al-Thaqāfiyya al-Āma, 1997, pp. 306-344.

<sup>153</sup> Basri, Meir. *Ā'lām al-Sīāsa fī al-'Irāq al-Ḥadīth* (Eminent figures in politics in modern Iraq) in two volumes. London: Dār al-Hikma, 2004.

<sup>154</sup> Battatu, Hanna. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978, pp. 153-210.

<sup>155</sup> Ābū-Manneh, Butrus. “The Wālī Nejīb Pāshā and the Qadiri Order in Iraq” In *The Qadiriyya Order*, edited by Thierry Zarcone, Ekrem Isin and Arthur Buehler. *Journal of the History of Sufism*, vol.1-2. Istanbul: Simurgh Press, 2000, pp.115-122.

<sup>156</sup> Luizard, Pierre-Jean. “‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Gaylānī chef de confédération soufie et de gouvernement.” In *The Qadiriyya Order*, edited by Thierry Zarcone, Ekrem Isin and Arthur Buehler. *Journal of the History of Sufism*, vol.1-2. Istanbul: Simurgh Press, 2000, pp.123-130.

<sup>157</sup> (Al-Khaṭāb, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb...).

<sup>158</sup> Sluglett, Peter. “Rashīd 'Ālī al-Gaylānī.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Edited by P. Bearman and others. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed 30 May 2016  
[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/rashid-ali-al-gaylani-SIM\\_6239](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/rashid-ali-al-gaylani-SIM_6239). His

between 1933 and 1941. His political role and legacy are alluded to by most political and historical studies dealing with Iraq's monarchy period, British-Iraqi relations, and with Iraq's position during the Second World War.

There are also less obvious sources for brief descriptions of encounters and interactions with members of the family. These include diaries and biographical works of British diplomats serving in Iraq, and travelogues that describe Baghdad and visits to the Jīlānī shrine. One example of the latter is a charming travel account by the Indian Ḥydarābād Nawāb Ḥamīd Yār Jung Bahādur, who visited Baghdad in 1907 with his father Afsar-ul-Mulk Bahādur, the Commander-in-Chief of the Niẓām of Ḥydarābād and the Deccan.<sup>159</sup> Lodging with the Gailani family and exploring the city and countryside with their assistance, he describes their social life and their interests. An example of the former type of material is the personal letters of Miss Gertrude Bell, the British political officer who played a key role in the creation of Iraq and its government during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bell was first introduced to the family on a trip to Baghdad in April 1909. Her interactions with several male members are described in private letters to her parents.<sup>160</sup> Through such sources, one can gain a glimpse of the overlap between the family's social and political life in Baghdad.

Other than the above types of works, there has been no dedicated social anthropological research concerning the family and its role in Baghdadi society; nor have there been any critical studies of the relationship between the family and the shrine it takes care of. Even though this thesis's focus is on the shrine and its stakeholders, one group of which are the Gailani custodians; it is not possible to provide an anthropological study of the Gailani family without dedicated field research for this purpose. Nevertheless, the thesis will attempt to begin this effort through documenting the religious and administrative roles played by the current custodians of the shrine, and as part of the process of forming a better understanding of the shrine's identity. This exploration will also include the Gailani custodians' interaction with the political systems in the country, and their interaction with

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father and his stepmother, who was Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb's sister, were the great-grandson and great-great-granddaughter of two brothers. His mother was the daughter of a local farmer and gang master working for the Qādiriyya Endowments in the Dīālā province.

<sup>159</sup> Bahādur, the Nawāb Ḥamīd Yār Jung. "Riḥla 'ilā Baghdād" (A trip to Baghdad). In *Baghdād bi-Āqlām al-Raḥāla* (Baghdad by travellers' pens). London: Alwarrak Publishing Ltd., 2007, pp.180-240.

<sup>160</sup> See Newcastle University's dedicated website to Gertrude Bell's archive, which holds full transcriptions of her letters (accessed 1 June 2016): <http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/letters.php> Examples of these letters include those dated: 14/4/1909 (the first time Bell met Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb); 17/10/1921 (Bell's interaction with two of the Naqīb's sons); and 9/11/1921 (Bell invited to the Naqīb's house to attend his appointment as prime minister by King Faisal).

other forms of Islam practiced in the city – the non-Sufi Sunnīs, the Salafist movement and the Shī‘a sect.

Of the family’s direct involvement in the management of the shrine, almost nothing has been independently recorded; and access to the administrative archive of the shrine was not possible at the time of conducting this research. However, it is known that at least since Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb’s time as custodian of both the Shrine’s endowments and the family endowments of Shaikh Shams al-Dīn and Shaikh Zain al-Dīn (1898 – 1927), a number of his older sons and some of his nephews were employed by him to manage the agricultural lands associated with these endowments. Having produced thirteen sons, he believed that putting them to work would save them from a life of decadence. Family lore states that Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb used to repeat a poetic verse by the 9<sup>th</sup> century Abbasid poet Ābū al-‘Atāhiyya, which stated: “spare time, youth and wealth are corrupting to a person, and how corrupting.” The Naqīb used to also say to his sons “work; don’t show off with decayed bones.” The decayed bones referred to here are those of their ancestor Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.<sup>161</sup> But as no other posts in the city were seen to be socially suitable for them; they were made agents of these endowments and sent to the provinces to oversee the management of their agricultural lands. In addition, at least one of his sons taught Arabic at the shrine’s al-Madrassa al-Qādiriyya (the religious seminary on site), and contributed Friday sermons. Of the younger sons, two studied law and became judges in the judicial system in the city. A number of them became members of Majlis al-Ā‘yān, representing regions that had Qadiriyya and Gailani family endowments lands. After ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb’s death, two of his sons and one of his daughters’ sons,<sup>162</sup> in succession, became the Naqībs of the Ashrāf of Baghdad.

With regard to the educational attainments of members of the family, in general and up to the 1930s at least, all males received religious tuition at the hands of tutors based in the shrine and its Qādiriyya seminary as part of their education. Some also read, tutored by their fathers and other Sufi shaikhs. Al-Durūbī names the subjects and the tutors of several members of the family.<sup>163</sup> From the second half of the 1920s boys and girls in the family also attended state run primary schooling, as well as secondary and higher education, in addition to their religious education at the shrine, and at home for the girls. Most of those

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Rājiḥa Al-Gailani, 19 January 2016. The poetic verse as uttered by the Naqīb is (ان الفراغ والشباب والجدّة مفسدة للمرء اي مفسدة).

<sup>162</sup> Of the seven daughters of Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān four married, and these four married their paternal first cousins, three of whom were brothers.

<sup>163</sup> (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fi Tārīkh* ...).

who attended the government-provided school system also went on to study at university level, and obtained a variety of secular degrees that enabled them to seek careers in government and in a number of other sectors.

As for religious careers, at least from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a number of family members had their own Qādirī Sufi followers, and held regular audiences in reception rooms allocated to each of them at the shrine. The sons of those holding the Naqābat al-Āshrāf also deputised and represented their fathers both at home and abroad. At least one of Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb’s daughters, Fāṭima (the mother of Sayyid Ibrāhīm the last Gailani to become Naqīb), was an initiated Qādirī by her father and was given permission to give the ṭarīqa (initiation) to female seekers on his behalf.

A small number also travelled to, and settled in, Afghanistan and the Indian Subcontinent. The best known of those to Western academics is Sayyid Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-Naqīb (1862-1941) who settled in Afghanistan.<sup>164</sup> He married into Afghani families and fathered two sons, ‘Alī (1923-1964) and Āḥmad (1932 - ). The latter is the politically active Pir Sayyid Āḥmad al-Gailani, a Qādirī Sufi spiritual leader amongst the Pashtun, who led a coalition of the Afghan resistance against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Even though this branch is of the Baghdad-rooted family, it is independent of the shrine in Baghdad, and has no exchange of influence with it. The family in Baghdad has little contact with the descendants of Sayyid Ḥasan, mainly due to the instability of Afghanistan in the last four decades coupled with the peculiarities of the Ba‘th regime period in Iraq. Both conspired to keep the two sides apart and prevented visits, intermarriages and migration by either side to the other, a situation that continues to the present day.

In comparison to Afghanistan, more members of the family in Baghdad have been able to travel and settle in India / Pakistan since at least the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Amongst those is Sayyid Ṭāhir ‘Alā’ al-Dīn (1932 – 1991)<sup>165</sup> the son of Sayyid Maḥmūd Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Naqīb and the grandson of Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb. At the invitation of a number of Qādirī followers from Pakistan, Sayyid Ṭāhir immigrated there in the 1950s. After establishing himself in Quetta, he married Munawar the daughter of Aḥmad Yār Khān (1902 – 1979) the Khān of Kalāt in Baluchistan, and sired three sons and

<sup>164</sup> Malikyar, Helena and Tarzi, Amin. “The Jilānī Family in Afghanistan.” In *The Qadiriyya Order*, edited by Thierry Zarcone, Ekrem Isin and Arthur Buehler. *Journal of the History of Sufism*, vol.1-2. Istanbul: Simurgh Press, 2000, pp.93-102. Three errors appear in the article with regard to names and associations of individuals.

<sup>165</sup> Sayyid Ṭāhir ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Gailani is my father’s youngest brother.

three daughters. In the early 1980s, he was invited to become the spiritual patron of Minhaj-ul-Quran International by its founder Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri (1951 - ). At his death in 1991, and in response to their father's followers' request, Sayyid Ṭāhir 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Gailani (commonly spelt there as Gillani) was interred in Lahore, in a purpose-built shrine adjacent to Minhaj-ul-Quran International's university and mosque, on Shah Jilani Road in Township, Lahore. His sons: Maḥmūd, 'Abd al-Qādir and Muhammad carry on their father's patronage, and have Qādirī Sufi followers in Karachi, Lahore and Quetta within Pakistan, and in various parts of the UK where Minhaj-ul-Quran has branches. Like the Afghani Gailanis mentioned above, this branch of the family is autonomous, with no intermarriages, exchanges in financing or religious leadership with the family in Baghdad. However, unlike the Afghanis, this Gailani branch's Qādirī followers regularly visit the shrine in Baghdad in organised groups and participate in its various festivities.

Beyond the Indian Subcontinent, in more recent decades, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, a member of the Gailani family has been able to establish himself as a leading Qādirī Sufi figurehead. He is Sayyid 'Afīf al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Maṣṣūr ibn Ṣafā' al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb. More popularly known as Shaikh Afeefuddin Al-Jailani, he has founded Darul Jailani International in Kuala Lumpur, and has a programme of public religious engagements that includes an itinerary in Singapore. Unlike the Gailani branches in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Sayyid 'Afīf al-Dīn maintains contact and an exchange of influence with his siblings and relatives in Baghdad. One of his younger brothers, Sayyid Khālīd al-Gailani, was appointed in September 2014 as second custodian to the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī succeeding Sayyid Āḥmad Ḍafar ibn Maḥmūd Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Naqīb (1925 – 2014); and a second brother, Sayyid Hāshim al-Gailani (also popularly known as Hāshimulddin), has established followings amongst Qādirī Asians in the UK, India, Pakistan and South Africa. These three siblings and their Qādirī followers and networks are closely associated with each other and with the shrine in Baghdad, influencing it financially, while being influenced by it from the religious leadership perspective, though no formal centralised leadership structure or hierarchy exists between them.<sup>166</sup>

Lastly, and in the present, there are those individuals in the family with no formal Sufi status, roles or followers, both those who reside in Baghdad and those who have in the last

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<sup>166</sup> Several conversations conducted with Sayyid Khālīd and Sayyid Hāshim in Baghdad during the field research period. Their followers offer donations to the shrine and pay for the making of bespoke drapes for Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and his two sons' burials at the Baghdad shrine amongst other contributions.

three decades migrated to various parts of the world including the UK, USA, Canada, the Persian Gulf and Jordan. Those currently living in Baghdad lead private lives that do not involve much contact with the Shrine and its weekly programme of activities, though still have strong family links with the custodians. Those who have left the country were mainly driven by the need to seek professional opportunities and careers made difficult to attain within Iraq during both the Ba‘th regime and the post-Ba‘th periods, chiefly because of being politically considered to be part of “al-‘Ahd al-Bā‘id” (the ancient regime).<sup>167</sup> Both those still in Baghdad and those who live abroad lead middle-class lives, with careers in the sciences, business and commerce, education, academia and various other white-collar professions. Their secular professions and their migration patterns conform to those of other middle class Iraqi families seeking opportunities within the country and those seeking them in less oppressive, wealthier and more technologically advanced parts of the world. It might have been expected that more would consider a move to Pakistan, where their distinguished lineage would help in attracting favour and job opportunities amongst Qādiriyya sympathisers, but this has not been the case. Lastly, most, if not all, are practising Sunnī Ḥanaḥī Muslims, however the majority do not live Sufi lives, do not have organised groups of followers, and do not preside over Qādiriyya Sufi rituals or festivities.

To conclude this section, it is important to note that the Gailani family’s social and political position and influence has been very much bound with the endorsement and support of the rulers of the land, the Ottoman Empire. When that Empire collapsed the political and social scene in Iraq changed, and the Gailani family was not able to proactively influence this change or control where it stands within it. Chapter 5 of this thesis looks at how the Gailani family interacted with the political system in recent decades, to give an idea of how both the ruling system of the country and the custodians of the shrine played, and continue to play, a significant role in determining how the shrine’s Sufi identity is expressed and how its rituals and practices are performed and delivered.

### **E. Confirming the two Jīlānī shrines’ Sufi status**

Many saintly shrines exist in Iraq, and shrine-based worship is both common within the Sunnī and the Shī‘a traditions. Many of these shrines are associated with Sufi brotherhoods and their figureheads, from Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī and al-Junaīd al-Baghdadī, to

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<sup>167</sup> “Al-‘Ahd al-Bā‘id” is a phrase much used since the 1958 republican revolution in Iraq to refer to the upper social classes and political establishment in the country prior to the revolution – a bygone age of elitism and exploitation according to the revolutionaries.

Āḥmad al-Rifā'ī and Abu Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī. The two Jīlānī shrines being mapped and explored in this thesis are believed to be Sufi in identity and main orientation. The key stakeholders of these two Jīlānī shrines, being the Gailani custodians of the Qādiriyya Endowments in Baghdad and their Wūlīānī agents in 'Aqra, believe themselves to be Sufis managing Sufi entities following a Sufi ethos and for Sufi aims. As the aim of this thesis is to map and explore the multiple orientations associated with these two Jīlānī shrines, as discovered through the field investigations, there is a need to confirm the main stakeholders' claim of their being primarily Sufi entities. For this purpose, Professor Pnina Werbner's analytical method for the comparative assessment of Sufi cults<sup>168</sup> is borrowed and applied to the findings as an assessment tool to test the extent to which these Jīlānī shrines, and the Qādirī Sufi orders associated with them, meet the four key concepts identified in the method, to confirm their status as Sufi entities.

Werbner's method focuses specifically on assessing Sufi practice in terms of group organisation and place-associated rituals, as opposed to belief and mystical philosophy. Although this method was set up to differentiate Sufi groups from Salafist groups, it promises to be equally useful in comparing Sufi groups against each other, to gain a better understanding of their identities and what dynamics influence these identities. To achieve this aim – the comparative assessment of the two Jīlānī shrines and associated Sufi orders – this section will first briefly explain the four analytical concepts used in Werbner's method, and then will give a summary comparison between the two orders against each of the analytical concepts, using the field findings.

### **E.1 Werbner's key analytical concepts of Sufi shrine-focussed orders:**

In her paper "Transnationalism and Regional Cults: The Dialectics of Sufism in a Plurivocal Muslim World," the Sufism scholar and Professor Emerita of Social Anthropology Pnina Werbner recognises the importance of understanding the organisational aspects of Sufi movements, especially the way their place-based activities are managed and delivered – what she succinctly terms "their sociological and economic dimensions,"<sup>169</sup> – in achieving a better appreciation of the spiritual aspects (the beliefs and the literary aspects) of these movements.<sup>170</sup> Werbner identifies four areas of activity, or

<sup>168</sup> Werbner, Pnina. "Transnationalism and Regional Cults, The Dialectics of Sufism in a Plurivocal Muslim World." In *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism*, edited by Lloyd Ridgeon. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp.282-300.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, pp.282-300.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, p.299.

“symbolic complexes”, as being common between all Sufi orders, regardless of their cultural and regional differences, and regardless of their age, size, dissemination and ethnic profiles. These symbolic complexes, which she also terms as “key dimensions of Sufi cult comparison”, are:

- 1- The “*Sacred division of labour*,”<sup>171</sup> where religious leadership and management roles within the organised Sufi order sustain its activities and membership, as well as expand it, through the recruitment of members that disseminate the order beyond the immediate locality of its home base ensuring its survival and growth.
- 2- The “*Sacred exchanges between places and persons*,”<sup>172</sup> where the followers and groups associated with the Sufi order generate wealth and volunteer their labour for the benefit of the sacred place and in return for blessings. The sacred place in turn uses this wealth and labour to help those in need amongst its followers as well as to sustain its activities and promote its growth. This sacred exchange and redistribution of wealth amongst the order’s community was described by Werbner in a lecture she gave on this subject, as being a redistributive moral economy.<sup>173</sup>
- 3- The “*Sacred region*,”<sup>174</sup> which comprises the spiritual realm that a Sufi saint presides over and a worldly region that he influences. It includes the sacred focal places that an order associates with, which can be local to it or regional and trans-regional, where it has spiritual influence and practical presence through groups of devotees in Sufi branch formations. This sacred region includes such worldly spaces as the Sufi patron saint’s shrine, sacred locations associated with him, the living Sufi saint’s takkia, and the local branches of an order. The sacred region acts as a focal point and destination for the devotees, who seek, as individuals and as part of local branches of the order, to support the focal sacred region across and despite regional boundaries and national borders.
- 4- The “*Sacred indexical events*,”<sup>175</sup> which include the coming together of groups associated with the sacred space and the order to participate in collective rituals and celebrate festivals that take place on a regular base such as dhikr circles, religious

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid, p.283-284.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Werbner’s reflection in her lecture on the subject given at the University of Glasgow on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

<sup>174</sup> (Werbner, “*Transnationalism and ...*,” 283-284).

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.



calendar festivities and anniversaries of Sufi saints. Sacred indexical events also include the programme of visitations that living Sufi saints and masters of orders do to associated groups and branches. All these types of events and the opportunities they provide for the periodic meeting together of followers contribute to sustaining associations amongst the pilgrims, and between the pilgrims and their spiritual leadership. They also help rejuvenate membership in groups, establishing new connections and branching out into new territories.

One of Werbner's initial purposes for this set of analytical concepts was to enable the differentiation between Sufi groups on the one hand and non-Sufi groups, who may have similar spiritual practices but are fundamentally different if not opposed to Sufism, on the other hand. Examples for these non-Sufi religious entities can be seen in South Asian Islamic fundamentalist groups and in Salafism.<sup>176</sup> In addition to this important purpose, this set of analytical concepts can also be a useful tool to guide comparison between groups within Sufism. They can help discern where these comparable groups conform to the expectations of the analytical concepts and where they have exceptional peculiarities caused by a composition of dynamics within the environment they operate. For this second use of these analytical concepts, the following reflections will juxtapose the two Jīlānī shrines to summarise some of their key similarities and differences in relation to each of the four analytical concepts, which will help determine and confirm their main stakeholders' claim that they are Sufi identities.

### **1- The "Sacred division of labour"**

For the Wūlāniyya Sufi order, the keenness of the religious leadership of the order to expand the order beyond its home takkia at the shrine of Shaikh Ismā'īl al-Wūlānī in the village of Rovia has seen them over the past sixty years succeed in establishing takkias beyond the Kurdish region and as far as Istanbul. Their success can largely be attributed to their method of organising their religious structure and chain of responsibilities for the practical management of spiritual activities and the spiritual nurturing of their disciples.

An example of this sacred division of labour is the careful selection of khalīfas and preparing them for their roles as religious mentors. One of the khalīfas interviewed for this

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

project recounted the events that led to him becoming a khalīfa in 2010.<sup>177</sup> Shaikh Mu‘taṣim ibn Shaikh Sa‘īd al-Wūlīānī (died in November 2014), the leader of the Wūlīāniyya had prayed to God for guidance in appointing a Turk the position of khalīfa in one of their two takkias in Istanbul. God’s reply came in a dream in which Prophet Muhammad instructed Shaikh Mu‘taṣim not to appoint the Turk for Istanbul but instead to appoint seven Iraqis as khalīfas for the order within Iraq. The interviewee khalīfa was one of those seven chosen by the Prophet. Shaikh Mu‘taṣim held a Mawlūd ceremony and announced God’s will and Prophet Muhammad’s instructions, and gave the khalīfa ijaza (certificate of deputation) to the seven chosen khalīfas. The presence of God’s will and the Prophet’s instructions in guiding the leadership of the order in its choices, puts the leadership beyond any possible argumentation regarding these choices, and depersonalises the cause of any disappointment that may be felt by other would-be khalīfas who were overlooked on this occasion. Each of the khalīfas in the order has a personal spiritual connection to the leader, and has responsibility for the spiritual wellbeing of forty dervishes within the order. This leadership structure creates a wide management network that is not hampered by a steep hierarchy.

Initiation of individual members into the Wūlīāniyya order depends on an oral ritual that is conducted solely in the Kurdish language unless the initiate is not a Kurd, when it is conducted in Arabic. It comprises of an oath uttered by the shaikh or the khalīfa and repeated by the initiate in which the chain of Sufi transmission – starting with the prophet and concluding with the father of the current leader of the order – is acknowledged; promises of loyalty to following the way of the Prophet and the Wūlīāniyya Sufi order are made; instructions on the content of the Wūlīānī wīrd (litanies uttered after each daily prayer); and finally prayers to God seeking blessings for the initiate. When this last element is conducted, the shaikh or khalīfa puts his left hand on the bowed head of the initiate. The whole ritual is conducted while sitting on the floor, on their knees with their legs folded beneath them, face to face, with the knees of the initiate touching those of the shaikh or khalīfa, hands clasped in a handshake.

The leadership of the Wūlīāniyya Sufi Order is also able to accommodate flexibility in worship practices. This is especially apparent in their two takkias in Istanbul, whose worship practices are markedly different from those of their Kurdish followers in Iraq.

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<sup>177</sup> This interviewee khalīfa gave a brief description of his career: Born in 1980; at the age of sixteen he received the Sufi ṭarīqa; he studied for a law degree; joined the army and became an officer; in 2010 he was chosen for the Sufi khalīfa; at present he works as an officer of a police station and studies for a law degree; he carries out his khalīfa duties in the evenings at a takkia in a village within the Kurdish region.

Two filmed visitations of Shaikh Mu‘taṣim to one of these takkias in 2010 were made available for this study. The dhikr practices were very different in arrangement and in content. Several musical instruments were used; and whirling was performed at one stage of the dhikr session.

The Gailani custodians of the shrine in Baghdad have a very different view of their religious role as Sufi leaders. They prefer not to have to supervise their khalīfas, but expect them to immediately become autonomous leaders of Qādirī groups and takkias. However, they do expect of their khalīfas to promote Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Sufism and to encourage their followers to grow in number and to make visitations to the shrine in Baghdad if possible. They also expect the bond of loyalty to be honoured when support is needed, whether financial, logistical or moral. One example for the test of loyalty that came from the recent past is described in chapter 5, when the then custodian of the shrine in Baghdad called for the urgent help of his Pakistani followers to raise a campaign to make a new silver grille / cage for Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s burial chamber. This silver grille was to replace diplomatically the unsolicited and unwelcome imposition of a new gold-plated brass grille that had been presented by the Kasnazānī Qādiriyya Sufi Order, and was considered by the then custodian as a means of imposing patronage upon the shrine and an attempt to interfere with its management.

When the current custodians were asked why they were not able to follow up on their khalīfas, the reasons given were quite practical. Most of their followers are from the Indian Subcontinent, and it was not physically possible for them to oversee, in any meaningful way, the spiritual needs of their followers and khalīfas given the decades of restricted travel that Iraq saw during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even so, the full time secular professional careers (law and diplomacy) that the custodians led before retirement would have also played a major role in preventing them from dedicating quality time to developing shaikh-khalīfa and shaikh-murīd bonds in the conventional Sufi way. That said, since the change of regime in 2003, the custodians have been able to regularly travel to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to visit their followers and engage in itineraries of audiences and other related events. This increase in interaction with the followers in their home towns seems to have increased the influence and spiritual authority of the custodians, and one of them has been requested recently, by members of the Bangladeshi ruling

establishment, to help with mediation to address a number of issues relating to the Qādiriyya Sufi order in Dhaka and its organisation and leadership.<sup>178</sup>

As mentioned earlier, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, members of the custodians' family represented the head of the Gailani family on regular itinerant visits to India and Afghanistan to maintain links with their followers and establish new groups of followers, with a small number settling there permanently. Today, descendants of these members lead their own autonomous Qādirī groups based in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Malaysia, as well as in the UK, with some maintaining a cordial link with the custodians in Baghdad. These Gailani family members include a younger generation that left Iraq at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to establish Qādirī followings of their own in India, Malaysia and in England. This younger generation have maintained closer links with the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad and play a noticeable role in its management.

With regard to initiations, the custodians of the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir have a different initiation ritual for initiates into the Qādiriyya and as khalīfas of the custodians. Both types of initiates are first taken through an oral oath recitation ritual not too dissimilar in essence to the one given by the Wūlīānīs, and are then given a written initiation certificate. The one issued for ordinary initiates – those not seeking khilāfa – are in the form of a twenty-one page booklet in Arabic entitled *al-Shajara al-Qādiriyya al-Sharīfa*<sup>179</sup> (The Noble Qādiriyya Tree), “tree” here referring to the Sufi chain of transmission. The booklet contains a statement by the custodian bestowing the initiation upon the named person. It gives the Qādiriyya silsila (tree of Sufi transmission) to which the custodian belongs and gives the initiate a brief description of the beliefs of the Qādiriyya and what is expected of him regarding his faith and conduct. It tells him of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir as a role model to be followed, and describes his character as a Sufi quoting relevant sayings of his. It then describes the ideal Sufi, the characteristics he must nurture and those he must avoid to secure God’s blessings. This section is followed by prayers for the initiate. The last few pages describe the blood lineage of the custodian issuing the certificate; and conclude with Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s *al-Khamriyya* poem and the Qādirī wīrd.

<sup>178</sup> Conversation with the custodian on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2015.

<sup>179</sup> It was possible to obtain three different copies of this booklet that were issued respectively by three custodians. The content is the same except for the Sufi order lineage and the blood lineage of the individual custodian, which depended on who initiated him into the order, and from which branch of the family he was descended.

The differing initiation rituals need further research, especially in comparison with other Qādirī Sufi orders' practices, to determine how common or unique aspects of these initiation rituals are. But as a preliminary reflection, it seems that both regionality versus internationality on the one hand, and literacy, or the lack of it, on the other hand, may have had a role in each of the rituals developing in a different direction. The fact that a substantial number of those seeking ṭarīqa and khilāfa from the custodians in Baghdad come from abroad may contribute as a factor to explain the need for a written document that confirms the truthfulness of the claim of having been initiated into, or given khilāfa of, the Qādiriyya order in none other than the shrine of the very founder of the Order. In addition, holding and reading the printed Qādirī certificate has a durable emotional impact when in the ownership of the disciple, reminding him of the gravity of the responsibility he has taken upon himself to live up to the expected standards of conduct stated within it.

Over the five-year research period, a number of initiations were observed in the shrine in Baghdad. These were mainly for Indian and Pakistani seekers, including both those seeking initiation into the Qādiriyya order and those seeking khilāfa. The custodians in the shrine sometimes felt particularly pressured by requests for khilāfa, and expressed their scepticism with regard to the genuineness of some of these seekers' quests, since, once interviewed, they were found to have worldly ambitions as well as Sufi ones, and were hoping to gain with their khilāfa status earthly religious power and authority.<sup>180</sup> The custodians explained that for such worldly Sufi seekers the written certificate was used to legitimise their claims to spiritual authority to those whom they sought as followers and the resources that come with them.<sup>181</sup> On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013 a Pakistani female minister of government was observed approaching the custodian with her entourage, as he entered the burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir with a number of his own guests. After brief introductions, she asked the custodian to grant her khilāfa. She presented him with a small gift, a box containing a few hairs, which she claimed were of Prophet Muhammad. The custodian privately commented upon this encounter expressing his realisation that this was a woman of the world who was seeking more power.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Conversation with the custodian on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

<sup>181</sup> It seems that not only in modern times are the certificates issued by the shrine in Baghdad important for those who seek them. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Alfred Le Chatelier (1855 – 1929), the French officer and scholar, wrote in his book on the Muslim brotherhoods of the Ḥijāz that Algerian Qādirīs making visitations to the Qādirī shrine in Baghdad had acquired visitation certificates signed by the head of the Qādiriyya there. Once these Algerians returned to their homeland the French colonial authorities confiscated the certificates, for they considered the holders having become emissaries of the head of the Qādiriyya in Ottoman-ruled Baghdad. Le Chatelier, *Alfred. Les Confréries Muselmanes du Hedjaz*. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1887, pp.36 – 40.

<sup>182</sup> Observation of the event, followed by a brief conversation with the custodian on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013.

For the regionally oriented Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya Order, the enduring oral initiation ritual indicates a lack of need for the initiation to be evidenced with a written document, due to the closeness of the tribal networks amongst the Kurds within Iraq, who are able to verify a person's religious and mystical claims and credentials. But this oral initiation ritual was not found to be any less profound in its emotional impact upon the initiate. The special intimacy of the ceremony. The prolonged holding of hands, the touching knees of the shaikh and of the seeker and the closeness of their faces is overwhelming in its own way. The profound effect of the experience was evident in the repeated stumbling of the initiate as he uttered the words of the oath after the shaikh, simple words said in pairs, but powerful enough to overwhelm the disciple.

It is worth noting here that although the custodians of the shrine in Baghdad have traditionally issued written Sufi initiation and khilāfa certificates, none of them seems to have themselves received certificates for their own initiations at the hands of their fathers and uncles. Their family's verbal endorsements were seen to be enough evidence to confirm their Sufi initiations' status.

The field research findings presented in this thesis and the exploration above confirm that the geographical spread and size of the Sufi entity, from a membership perspective, plays a major part in shaping the sacred hierarchy and the methods it adopts to maximise organisational effectiveness.

## **2- The “Sacred exchanges between places and persons”**

Even though both shrines have endowments that generate income to support the two sites, the growing aspirations of both shrines and the growing expectations of their followers and their users, coupled with the increasing needs of the impoverished neighbourhoods in which they are situated – especially so for the shrine in Baghdad – means that there is a continuous need for help and support from followers and associated Qādirī groups.

The shrine in 'Aqra receives a disproportionate amount of volunteer labour in comparison to the shrine in Baghdad. In 'Aqra the extended family of the takkia manager, the khalīfas and the dervishes of the Wūlāniyya order are expected to volunteer their help on a regular basis. The help provided encompasses a wide range of services from cooking and cleaning

duties to site repairs and construction work. This is in addition to the various religious duties and commitments.

For the shrine in Baghdad the main contributions sought by the custodians and the management team of the complex is financial, to pay for the soup kitchen, the lighting fixtures and other furnishings that suffer regular wear and tear; to pay for building conservation, restoration and refurbishment works; to pay for the needs of the library; and to meet various costs associated with the large religious events on its calendar. Donations of money, supplies and materials are managed by the administration of the endowments trust. A number of Qādirī patrons who regularly support the shrine, are permitted to become involved in overseeing the delivery of the projects they are sponsoring. Several examples of this type of patronage were recorded during the field research period including the leader of a South African Qādirī group who annually pays for, and oversees the cooking of, the food to be distributed to the inhabitants of Bāb al-Shaikh during the Mawlūd of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. His community’s contribution is particularly remarkable. Even during the worst years of the international economic sanctions on Iraq, during the second half of the 1990s, he came every year to purchase the meat for the soup kitchen and to participate in the Mawlūd; and continued to do the same during the civil war period between 2005 and 2007.

Individual and spontaneous giving by many of the pilgrims at the Mawlūd of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir was witnessed. Many pressed souvenir badges in each other’s hands. Many gave out money, sweets, coloured bangles, rosary beads, garments, and henna tubes to the locals loitering around in the central courtyard of the shrine. All of these commodities had either been brought by the pilgrims from abroad or purchased by them in the local markets of Baghdad. A number of Pakistani pilgrims were observed distributing new cotton garments and woollen shawls amongst the locals in Bāb al-Shaikh. When investigated, the reason behind bringing clothes to distribute in Baghdad was the awareness of the Pakistanis that the shrine was located in a poor neighbourhood, and their realisation that the locals would appreciate the garments.

Street begging is common in the area surrounding the shrine in Baghdad, and especially so on festive days. The rather outrageous persistence of these beggars is legendary, so much so, that the old term “mugādī Bāb al-Shaikh” (the beggars of Bāb al-Shaikh) is still used in vernacular Iraqi Arabic to denote an individual whose pestering is relentless. The pilgrims become the prime target of the beggars during the Mawlūd of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. The

staff and the imams were seen constantly calling upon the pilgrims to refrain from giving the beggars money, but to no avail. The emotionally charged pleas that are repeatedly uttered by the beggars invoked Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s name, thereby obliging the pilgrims to respond by pressing money into their hands.

In addition to the foreign pilgrims’ giving during the Mawlūd, local businesses and their proprietors carried out free distributions in a similar fashion. Shopkeepers brought boxes of biscuits, cakes and other types of confectionery for distribution in the shrine’s courtyard. This local benevolence also takes place at the Mawlid al-Nabī festivities and during the fasting month of Ramadan. Most of these local business owners were not Qādirī Sufis, but felt moved to give as a gesture of thanksgiving for the prosperity of their businesses, many of which depend on the shrine and the visitations it attracts.

However, the best historic account given by members of the Gailani family, and repeated by a number of the older staff, as an example of selfless individual voluntary labour offered for the sake of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir was that of an Indian woman from Hyderabad in the Deccan. In the early 1940s this Hyderabadī lady wrote to the then custodian of the shrine in Baghdad to explain that she had promised Shaikh ‘Abd al Qādir that if he interceded on her behalf with God and she bore a son, she would send the son to work for him in Baghdad for seven years and for no return. She explained in her letter that her son had just finished his training as an electrician and that it was time for her to fulfil her promise. The young son, who had turned up with the letter, became the shrine’s electrician as had been promised. His skills were invaluable to the shrine in general, and in particular with regard to the shrine’s landmark Indian clock for which there had been no expert in the city with the knowledge to maintain and repair it.

### **3- The “Sacred region”**

Two very different sacred regions encompass the two Qādirī shrines. Even though the ‘Aqra shrine, as a Sufī sacred space, is the only establishment associated with the city, the Wūlīāniyya order’s sacred region is much wider and encompasses not only this shrine and their ancestor’s shrine in Rovia, but also numerous takkias in villages and small towns within the western half of the Kurdish region and beyond that in Mosul. Added to these is the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad, which they consider to fall within their sacred region. As well as receiving their followers at the two shrines and takkia under their care, annually the order’s leaders and khalīfas organise themselves into a group that



sets off on a ḥamla (campaign) in which they visit communities within their area of influence in Kurdistan to teach the faith and hold dhikr circles.

As the Wūlīānīs are also part of the Kurdish Barzinjī family of tribal shaikhs, they have close spiritual bonds with other Barzinjī Qādirī groups such as the Kasnazāniyya, the Brīfkāniyya and the Qara Chīwāriyya. These Qādirī groups also manage sacred Sufi spaces that are open to the Wūlīāniyya followers for worship and visitation. This overlap between Kurdish Sufi groups' sacred spaces creates a large region of influence that not only covers large parts of Kurdistan in Iraq, but also spills over into the Kurdish region in north-west Iran where Qādirī Sufi groups and takkias are established too.

The neighbourhood in Baghdad where the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir is situated can be described as a multi-layered sacred region with a number of populist religious sites and groups that are not all Sufi, but their users are users of Sufi sacred spaces too. This sacred region surrounding the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir includes four other Qādirī Sufi takkias with saintly burials, a Rifā'ī Sufi takkia and shrine, a Shī'ī shrine and several places of worship, some of which are mentioned above, and others will be addressed in chapter 2. Many of the users in each of these religious establishments also visit the others for a variety of needs, and by doing so they override the conventional Islamic sectarian boundaries between communities in the city and create an overall sacred region.

Traditionally the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir has accommodated the needs of Shī'ī visitors, especially the womenfolk. In this respect and from a Shī'ī user's perspective, the significance of the shrine's sacred space is not a Sufi one, but is more that of a Muslim saintly figure with a reputation for aiding needs and fulfilling wishes. Two common terms were heard being used in describing who the saintly figure is. One is "min āhl Allah" (he who is of God's people – a saint); and the second is "min āl al-bait" (he who is from the Prophet's family).

From a women's folk religion perspective, the saintly Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir is a powerful succour of last resort. When every saintly figure within Shī'ism has been sought for help but to no avail, a Shī'ī woman would turn to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir to dare him to prove to her that he is truly the "master of succours" through fulfilling her wish. This demand is addressed audibly in his burial chamber as she stands pointing at him with her index finger. The demand is uttered in rhyme in which the woman tells the saint: "I have come to turn the carpets; you are a Sunnī and I am a Shī'iyya; I want my wish this afternoon; and I vow

to bring you khuṭār-wa-āhliyya [*a type of confectionary*];<sup>183</sup> or she may say: “Ābū Ṣāliḥ, I am a Shī‘iyya and you are a Sunnī; give me my wish;” and a variation on this rhyme: “O Turner or Carpets, give the Shī‘iyya her wish.” It was not possible to definitively determine the symbolism of turning carpets – the term “galāb” in Arabic here means the male person who turns carpets over. Galāb is the vernacular pronunciation for qalāb and muqalib (he who changes or turns things); and for Muslims, and in Sufism, muqalib al-aḥwāl (the changer of states) is God. However, women were observed turning the corners of the carpets inwards themselves, as they walked by and heading towards the entrance of the burial chamber. The female attendants would wait for a short while before re-placing the turned up carpet corners to their original position.

As will be illustrated in chapters 2, 4 and 5, the Baghdad shrine as a sacred space, not only has a local and regional reach, but also an international one, with pilgrims seeking visitation embarking on long and costly journeys from far flung corners of the world, including such cities as Durban in South Africa, Birmingham in the UK, and Dhaka in Bangladesh, in addition to large numbers from India and Pakistan. Those coming from India and Pakistan during the Mawlūd season brought with them flags, banners and souvenirs designed specifically for the occasion. The subjects illustrated on these bespoke designed artefacts were montages of images of their sacred Indian Subcontinent Sufi shrines combined with images of the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad and the Prophet’s mosque in Medina. These flags, banners and souvenirs summed up in a visual manner the identities of these Qādirīs who marked their sacred territory as being that which is between three corners of Islam’s worldly realm: their home, Baghdad and Medina.

Finally, as is illustrated in the following chapters, both the sacred sphere of influence of the shrine in Baghdad and the sacred region of ‘Aqra encompass spheres of local and national political influences, where regional and central governments hold political and economic control and the ability to interfere in, and have an impact upon, these sacred spheres and regions, their communities and their material assets, as well as their religio-political affiliations and allegiances.

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<sup>183</sup> The phrase “khuṭār-wa-āhliyya” means “visitors and relatives” a type of mixed sweets purchased by weight and includes boiled sweets, sugar-coated almonds, candy, toffees and chocolates, and other types of confection. If the wish is fulfilled, the woman would return with her promised sweets. She either would distribute them amongst the other visitors, or if she is intending to give the sweets out on a festival day, may scatter the sweets over the visitors’ heads. The tradition of distributing khuṭār-wa-āhliyya sweets at saintly figures’ shrines in Iraq has been briefly documented in al-Ḥijjiyya, ‘Azīz Jāsim. “al-Nudhūr al-Baghdadiyya” (Baghdadi vows). *Majalat al-Turāth al-Sha‘bī* (year 1, volume 2, October 1969). Baghdad: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa al-I‘lām, p.4.

#### 4- The “Sacred indexical events”

The two Jīlānī shrines’ ritual practices and events, and their festivities are described in the following chapters, and demonstrate active sacred calendars that attract participation from far and wide, and meet a number of religious obligations. These indexical events include the daily prayers, the weekly dhikr circles, the fasting month of Ramadan’s daily programme of activities, the Prophet’s annual Mawlid anniversary and Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s annual Mawlūd anniversary, and a number of other religious events associated with the Islamic calendar. The participants in these sacred events come from a variety of backgrounds, ethnically, economically, and socially, and, in the case of Baghdad, from different sectarian persuasions too. For the Sufis at both shrines the indexical events are an integral part of their devotional calendar and the main opportunity to express their identities and group affiliations in a public manner beyond their Sufi circles.

The field research interviews conducted amongst local women groups attending the shrine in Baghdad on sacred event days revealed that many were first introduced to the shrine through such events, when they accompanied relatives or friends as spectators. With repeated exposure to these events, and finding them agreeable, such women became fond of and attached to the shrine from an emotional and spiritual perspective, though none were initiated Sufis. In contrast, a sceptic Indian woman was introduced to the shrine by her Chishtī Sufi husband a few years ago, when they were travelling through Iraq to Saudi Arabia to perform the ‘Umra (the lesser pilgrimage to Mecca). She found solace here and decided to come back again in subsequent years. She compared between the two spiritual experiences on that journey. When they arrived at Mecca to perform the ‘Umra, she became disappointed, for she felt that God had no time to hear her. There were too many people there, and all were seeking his attention. However on the way back from ‘Umra, she felt Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir to be the opposite and able to hear her. Since then she has made repeated visits to the shrine.

In conclusion, the findings of the above comparison exercise confirms the Sufi Order identity and status of both Jīlānī shrines in accordance with Pnina Werbner’s examination approach, which has focussed on assessing their physical spaces, and their organisational and worship practices.

## E.2 Belief's role in shaping the Sufi identities of the two Qādirī shrines

Even though the two Jīlānī shrines have proved their Sufi cult credentials with the help of Werbner's analytical method, and without the need to test their Sufi cult beliefs and philosophy; nevertheless, it would be prudent here, to complete the exploration of their Sufi identities, to recapitulate how each entity, represented by its religious leadership, defines itself with regard to its beliefs. When interviewing these leaders during the early stages of the field research period, each were asked to describe what the Qādiriyya Sufi Order meant to them in Islamic theological terms. Both started their definition of their Sufism as being a spiritual path to nurture the self in compliance with the Islamic Sharī'a and in following the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad's Sunna and the example of his family and his followers.

Both appear to have felt obliged – though not requested to do so – to point out that they were the followers of the spiritual paths of true Islamic Sufism, which is to be differentiated from other forms of Sufism, by its emphasis on being rooted within the Islamic Sharī'a and Sunna. Those “other” types of Sufism, as they understood them, were described as being those non-orthodox groups that call their beliefs and worship practices Sufi, but are not Sharī'a-compliant. Such groups, though none were named as examples, were termed different because they not only held beliefs that were outwith the boundaries of the Sharī'a, but also practiced unorthodox rituals that smacked of polytheism, in particular with regard to the perception and status with which they held their saints and leaders. Chapter 5 presents some of these core Sharī'a-compliant beliefs that Qādirīs espouse, which are demonstrated by the arguments presented by the theologically trained Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya and by the Qur'ānic studies tutor Shaikh 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Janābī.

In addition, the religious leadership of the shrine in Baghdad were conscious of the saint's theological background being that of a leading Ḥanbalī scholar of his time as well as a Sufi, and acknowledged and exploited this association with orthodox Islam in emphasising their conformity to it, even though they were followers of the Ḥanafīyya and not the Ḥanbalīyya school of jurisprudence. As for the Wūlīāniyya Sufi Order in 'Aqra, they too were also conscious of their affiliation to the orthodox Shāfi'ī School of jurisprudence.

At the two Qādiriyya shrines Sunnī mosque activities are also accommodated on a daily bases. Both the takkia in 'Aqra and the shrine in Baghdad hold the formal daily and Friday

prayers in dedicated mosque spaces built for this purpose. Both have classically composed Friday sermons delivered. In the case of 'Aqra, the Friday sermon is delivered by the chief khalifa of the Wūlāniyya Order; and in the case of Baghdad, classically trained imams are appointed specifically to lead the prayers and deliver the sermons. But having said this, and as is mentioned in chapter 5, not all the imams in the shrine in Baghdad have felt comfortable with all Sufi and populist religious practices associated with shrine visitation, and this has led, as is the case in the current era, to confrontations between the imams and the Sufi leadership at the shrine. Nevertheless, the users of the two shrines, including those practising shrine visitations were also found to be attending the orthodox daily and Friday prayers. These users also include members of the Shī'a sect, represented by the females of that community's regular participation in the daily prayers in the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad, and the shrine's unorthodox provision of turbas for these females' use in their prayers in accordance with their sect's customs.

For the shrine in Baghdad, the historical records covering the past two centuries reveal an impressive tradition of employing various prominent Sunnī orthodox scholars to the service of the shrine, from imams and preachers to theology teachers. These prestigious appointments also included the Ottoman government-appointed Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī muftīs of Baghdad, who had the privilege of preaching at the shrine. These historical records also reveal that at least one significant case of a confrontation between an orthodox scholar appointed to the shrine and the head of the Qādiriyya Sufi Order there exists. This was the dramatic collision between the distinguished early modern Salafi scholar Ābū al-Thaṇā' al-Ālūsī (1802 – 1854), who was appointed preacher to the Jīlānī shrine, and the custodian Sayyid Maḥmūd ibn Zakariyya al-Gailani who was also the Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad<sup>184</sup> in the 1830s (see chapter 5, p.390, footnote 588). This collision resulted in Ābū al-Thaṇā' al-Ālūsī being imprisoned at the Jīlānī shrine on the orders of the Ottoman Walī of Baghdad 'Alī Riḍā Pāsha (in post 1831 – 1842), for some months. Al-Ālūsī wrote two accounts of his ordeal, which have been quoted at length by al-Durūbī.<sup>185</sup>

## Conclusion

More than 800 years separate the present communities that associate with the two Jīlānī shaikhs and their lives and times. In those interim centuries, the two shrines attributed to them have become places of worship and social intercourse. Nevertheless, the

<sup>184</sup> (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī Tārīkh* ..., 158 – 161).

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

personalities of these two saints and their hagiographies still resonate with people today for a variety of reasons, ranging from wanting to discern their true biographies from the fantastical ones, serving religious reform and religio-political agendas, to seeking spiritual inspiration and role models to follow on the Sufi footpath, exemplified by the multitude of independent Qādirī Sufi orders and establishments some of them present in Iraq today. Also for the Qādiriyya in Iraq, some of the descendants of these two Jīlānī saints have also been privileged by Ottoman patronage and support, enabling them to not only manage the two shrines and associated endowment trusts, but also maintain a privileged social and religious standing within Iraqi society for several centuries.

The current claim to being Sufi institutions by these two saint's shrines is confirmed through the application of Prof. Pnina Werbner's analytical method, which demonstrates an active scene of interaction between the local Sufi community and the larger Sufi world that not only benefits the rejuvenation of Qādiriyya Sufism but also benefits the non-Sufi neighbourhoods and localities associated with these two shrines.

## Chapter 2

### Mapping the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad

#### The aim of this chapter:

Mapping the physical environment in which the stakeholders of the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad express themselves and fulfil their roles and needs is the aim of this chapter. The purpose of this mapping is to create a record of the physical environment of the shrine as it stands at the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; an environment that has been created and reshaped by generations of stakeholders. This documentation will help better understand how Qādirī Sufis express their Sufism at this Jīlānī shrine, through the shaping of its material culture, and how this material culture is accessed and used by the non-Sufi stakeholders too. This documentation will also be a resource for future analytical research.

The mapping covers both the Jīlānī shrine’s location, site parameters, buildings and interior spaces. These physical spaces are seen as integral to meeting the needs of the stakeholder communities accessing and using it. The chapter also explores the shrine’s relationship with five other religious entities within its neighbourhood, with which it interacts and by which it is affected.

As the field research took place over a five-year period between 2009 and 2014, it became apparent that frequent change took place at the shrine. Some change were in the details, and may be termed improvements, but others were in reaction to changes in local and national public life. Many of the interviewees were aware of the amount of change that took place in the Shrine’s life, and were able to share their memories of how things had been done in previous decades, while explaining why they were being done in a particular way in the present. For this reason, a brief introductory section in this chapter will survey what information is available on the life of the shrine through already published academic research and archival material. It will then describe the architectural environment of the shrine – its various interior and exterior spaces and their characteristics; and how they are used. Following that, the chapter explores the community dynamics within the neighbourhood and their relation to the shrine, exemplified by two independent Sufi takkias and two Shī‘a places of worship with which the shrine engages.

Although some of the rituals conducted within the shrine are described in this chapter, the main Sufi festivities and celebrations are explored separately in chapter 4, in combination with those festivities conducted in the Jīlānī shrine in ‘Aqra.

### Sources and methodology:

Nearly all histories of the city of Baghdad and its monuments produced since the 16<sup>th</sup> century refer to the presence of the shrine, though without much detail about its extent or the activities carried out in it. A number of travellers’ accounts of the city, produced during the Ottoman period, also mention the shrine’s presence, the general quality of its architecture, and, occasionally, its caretakers and other personages associated with it. More recent sources in Arabic include modern works covering the history of Baghdad’s Ottoman architecture, the history of Sufism in the city, and a variety of biographical works, especially memoirs, and journalistic coverage of life in the city. There is also the archival material generated by various government bodies associated with urban development planning in the city; the archives of the General Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage in the Ministry of Culture and Information; and the archives of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, to name but a few.<sup>186</sup> A small number of the earlier sources have been used in this chapter where appropriate; but, regarding the more recent material mentioned above, most of it was inaccessible during the period of research due to the unstable political environment negatively affecting access to governmental archives.

As for publications dedicated to the history of the shrine, beyond what appears in biographies of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, there are few, all of which were written during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, by a small number of authors, some closely associated with the shrine. These publications<sup>187</sup> include the work of Shaikh Hāshim al-Ā‘zamī who was a preacher at the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and the imam of the Ābū Hanīfa shrine and mosque, “*Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani wa Madrasatuh al-‘Imiyya*” (History of the Mosque of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and its religious college) in 1971. Between 1974 and 1980, ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Salām Rā’ūf published the five volumes of “*Al-Āthār al-Khaṭiyya fī al-Maktaba al-Qādiriyya fī Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir Al-Gailani bi-Baghdad*” (The manuscripts of the Qādiriyya Library in the Mosque of Shaikh ‘Abd al-

<sup>186</sup> Despite several attempts at accessing the Ministry of Religious Endowments’ archives; the archives of the Governorate of Baghdad; and the National Library in Baghdad; restrictions in access proved difficult to overcome. Current political tensions in the city and amongst governmental departments meant that access to papers relating to the Ba‘thist era – the government of Saddam Ḥusain’s time – was denied for ideological reasons.

<sup>187</sup> See the reference list for full reference details for these titles.



Qādir al-Gailani in Baghdad). In 1982 the librarian of the Qādiriyya Public library, Nūrī Muhammad Šabrī al-Muftī wrote “*Maktabat al-Madrasa al-Qādiriyya*” (The library of the Qādiriyya School). In that same year Yūnus al-Shaikh Ibrāhim Al-Samarā’ī wrote a guide to the mosque entitled “*Al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani Qadasa Allahu Sirrahu, Hayyātuh wa Athāruh*” (The Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani God glorify his mystery, his life and his legacies). Despite the title, half the book is dedicated to describing the shrine complex and its history. Finally, the most recent of these titles is by the Islamic art historian ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maḥaḍ Al-Gailani, titled “*Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani*” (History of the Mosque of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani), published in 1994, in which he focuses on the history of the site’s architecture.

Therefore, the main source of information for this chapter has been largely restricted to direct observation in the field with hand written notes and film, photography and audio recordings.<sup>188</sup> This field research material covers site inspections, recordings of rituals and ceremonies, and interviews with staff and users.<sup>189</sup> The field-research was conducted through six short visits between 2009 and 2014: (14–20 November 2009; 18–25 November 2010; 12–24 March 2011; 9 December 2011 – 4 January 2012; 15–28 February 2013; and 8–22 February 2014).

The key people interviewed<sup>190</sup>, some several times during the repeated visits, are:

- *Mutawālī al-Awqāf al-Qādiriyya* - the custodian of the shrine and the religious endowments associated with it. Two cousins of the Gailani family hold this position concurrently.
- *Muḥāmī al-Awqāf al-Qādiriyya* - the solicitor and advocate of the shrine and the religious endowments associated with it. He is also a Gailani and a cousin of the custodians.
- *Mudīr al-’Idāra* – administrative manager of the shrine’s and the endowments’ staff. Trained as a teacher of the English language, he first became a librarian at the shrine before moving into the administrative side of its management.

<sup>188</sup> Almost all of the interviews were conducted with no use of audio or visual recording equipment, but hand written notes were recorded. All images taken of interviewees were with their verbal permission and understanding that they may be used for this thesis.

<sup>189</sup> All the images and drawings in this chapter that have no credit references have been taken or created specifically for this thesis. All archival images that have no credit references were created by, and belonged to, my late father ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maḥaḍ Al-Gailani (1927 - 1999), and were passed down to me after his death.

<sup>190</sup> Some are salaried staff employed by the shrine, but others are associated with the shrine though independent of its management structure.

- Qur'ān scholar and tutor, and Sufi lodger at the shrine. Traditionally trained in theology under religious tutors. See chapter 5 for his role in responding to Salafism and its criticism of celebrating the anniversary of Prophet Muhammad's birth – the Mawlid, or in Iraqi vernacular Arabic the Mawlūd.
- *Shaikh al-Halaqa al-Qādiriyya* – the head of the local Qādirī dhikr circle in the shrine. A Qādirī Sufi brought up in the tradition by his father who ran the dhikr circle before him. He holds a BA in Fiqh – Jurisprudence – from the University of Baghdad.
- *Mudīr al-Maktaba al-Qādiriyya* – manager of the Qādiriyya Library at the shrine. He was trained to run the library under his brother, who was formerly the manager of the library.
- *Mū'adhin* – the mosque's mū'adhin (prayer caller)
- *Sādin 1* – gatekeeper of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's burial chamber.
- *Sādin 2* – gatekeeper of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's burial chamber.
- *Sādin 3* and the deputy *Mū'adhin* – gatekeeper of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's burial chamber and the deputy of the mosque's mū'adhin.
- *Khādima 1 and Khādima 2* – attendants responsible for the surveillance of the women visitors to the shrine's prayer hall and the cleaning of the burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. These two sisters started in different careers, but ended up working together at the shrine. Their mother before them worked in a similar position at the shrine.
- *Khādīm 1* – attendant responsible for various daily duties in the shrine complex, including helping with burial prayers.
- *Khādīm 2* (also *qārī' maqām*) – attendant and reciter of religious eulogies.
- The *kishwāniyya* attendant – responsible for the footwear left by visitors when entering the shrine
- Chief cook of the Soup Kitchen.
- Funeral parlour and shrine graveyard manager.
- A number of local elderly men who pass their time at the shrine, and run errands for the staff and visitors in return for tips.
- Anonymous interviewees amongst the local female visitors to the shrine.
- South African Qādirī patrons of the shrine, from Durban and from Pretoria.
- A Pakistani Qādirī patron of the shrine from Faisalabad and members of his family.
- Pakistani pilgrims from Karachi.
- Anonymous interviewees amongst the Indian female pilgrims.

- Anonymous interviewees amongst the British Asian pilgrims, including visitors from Blackburn, Wakefield, and Bradford.
- Members of the Gailani family associated with, and involved in, the Shrine's activities, including the sons and daughters of former custodians.
- Managers, attendants and members of local religious establishments within the Bāb al-Shaikh quarter.
- Shop keepers and stall holders located immediately outside the shrine.

From the number of staff posts and visitors' countries of origin, the great variety of both shrine activities and types of visitors it caters for can be appreciated.

### **How the shrine complex is managed:**

The shrine and its endowments are run through a management structure that consists of eight departments, namely the shrine's administrative department, the legal department, the land surveying department, the agricultural lands department, the built properties department, the Dīāla district agricultural lands department, the endowment of 'Ātika Khātūn department, and the computers department.<sup>191</sup>

The administrative structure is headed jointly by two custodians from the Gailani family,<sup>192</sup> the mutawālī āwal and the mutawālī thānī – first custodian and second custodian – with equal authority and no distinction in rank other than the first is usually the elder, already serving at the time of the appointment of the second. They oversee some eighty-four salaried employees based at the Qadiri endowments offices and the shrine complex in Baghdad. There are also other commissioned persons associated with the endowments, including agricultural-land agents and the agents of the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in 'Aqra.<sup>193</sup>

The shrine's administrative department directly manages all 84 staff, and includes four sections: the shrine administration office, the soup kitchen, the library, and the shrine complex. The main office is managed by three administrative staff and five workers; the soup kitchen has 10 staff; the library has 12 including three cleaners and two guards; and

<sup>191</sup> Interview with the administrative manager of the shrine on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011, supported by printed copies of the administrative structure and areas of responsibilities.

<sup>192</sup> The custodians in post during the period covered by this research project were paternal first cousins and maternal second cousins. Both are retired civil servants; the first was a diplomat and ambassador and the second a senior lawyer in a public organisation. Interviews with the custodians between 2009 and 2012.

<sup>193</sup> Interview with the administrative manager on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

the shrine has 3 imams, 2 mū'adhins, 4 sādins, 4 qāri's, 2 electricians, 1 plumber, 15 attendants, 4 guards, 3 ablution facilities cleaners, 3 kishwāniyya attendants. Four of the staff in these posts carry out combined duties, such as the two mū'adhins, one of whom is also a sādin, while the other is also a kishwāniyya attendant. The shrine's administrative department also oversees the work of the funeral parlour, though the proprietors there are not on the payroll; and the guards of the Force for Facilities Protection (F.B.S.), which is assigned to the shrine complex by the government.<sup>194</sup>

The variety of areas of activity that the management structure oversees and facilitates can be summed up as follows:<sup>195</sup>

- The shrine as a Sunnī mosque with imam led five daily prayers, Friday noon congregational prayers and sermon, the fasting month of Ramaḍān's worship programme, and funerary prayers.
- The shrine as a Muslim saintly figure's resting place with demand for access by members of the public on a daily basis throughout the year.
- The shrine as a Qādirī Sufi centre with Sufi users and lodgers present with emotional attachments to the saintly figure interred in it, practising Sufi rituals and holding Sufi festivals.
- The shrine as a place of charitable work, with some of its endowments restricted specifically to benefitting the poor, such as the soup kitchen; and a space for the benefit of the public as represented in its free encyclopaedic public library.
- The shrine as a Gailani family concern, with intertwined social and religious histories, with social identity and status; and with a not insignificant proportion of its religious endowments dedicated to the work of the shrine by individual members of the family since at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid. Similar forces are assigned to the other major shrines in Baghdad, such as the Ābū Hanīfa Mosque and shrine, and the Kaẓimain Shrine.

<sup>195</sup> Summary of field research findings.

### A- A brief history of the shrine complex:

The shrine and mosque of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī evolved over the centuries from a Ḥanbalī theological college and a hospice for followers and students of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, to a mother-shrine of the Qādiriyya Sufi Order around the world, where its posthumous founding patron saint is buried.<sup>196</sup> It is situated on the east side of the river Tigris within the walls of the old city (see map below). The neighbourhood that surrounds it was historically known as Bāb al-Azaj, but today is known as Bāb al-Shaikh, after Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and his shrine.



1- The south-east corner of the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in the 1950s.<sup>197</sup>



2- The north-west corner of the of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in the 1950s<sup>198</sup>

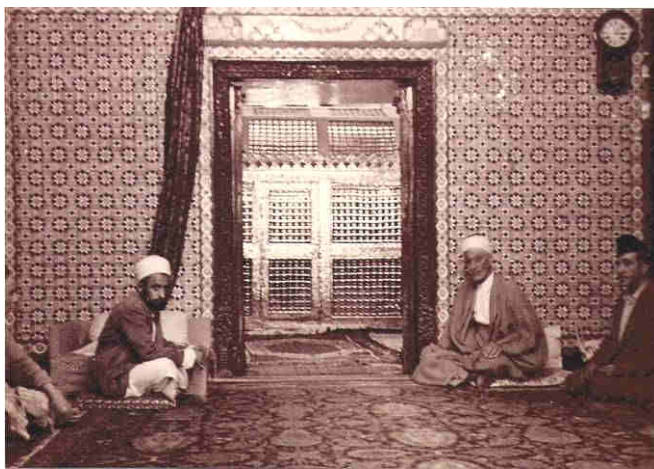
<sup>196</sup> Al-Ā‘zamī, al-Shaikh Hāshim. *Tārīkh Jām‘i al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani wa madrasatuh al-‘ilmiyya* (The history of the mosque of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani and its theological school) Baghdad: 1971, pp.7-11 and 67-69.

<sup>197</sup> Image taken by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maḥaḍ Al-Gailani.

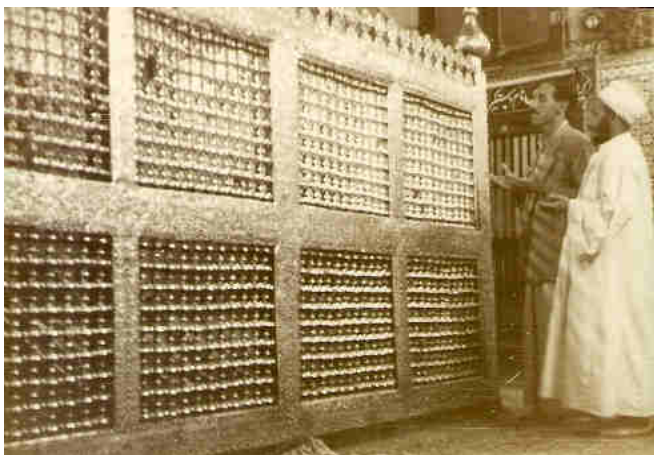
<sup>198</sup> Ibid.



3- The shrine's central courtyard as it was in the early 1990s.<sup>199</sup>



4- Attendants sit either side of the entrance into the burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, 1950s.<sup>200</sup>



5- The grave of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir covered by a silver grille or cage. This old silver cage now covers the grave of the Sufi saint al-Junāīd al-Baghdādī<sup>201</sup>.

<sup>199</sup> Image taken by Lamia Al-Gailani, and reproduced here with her permission.

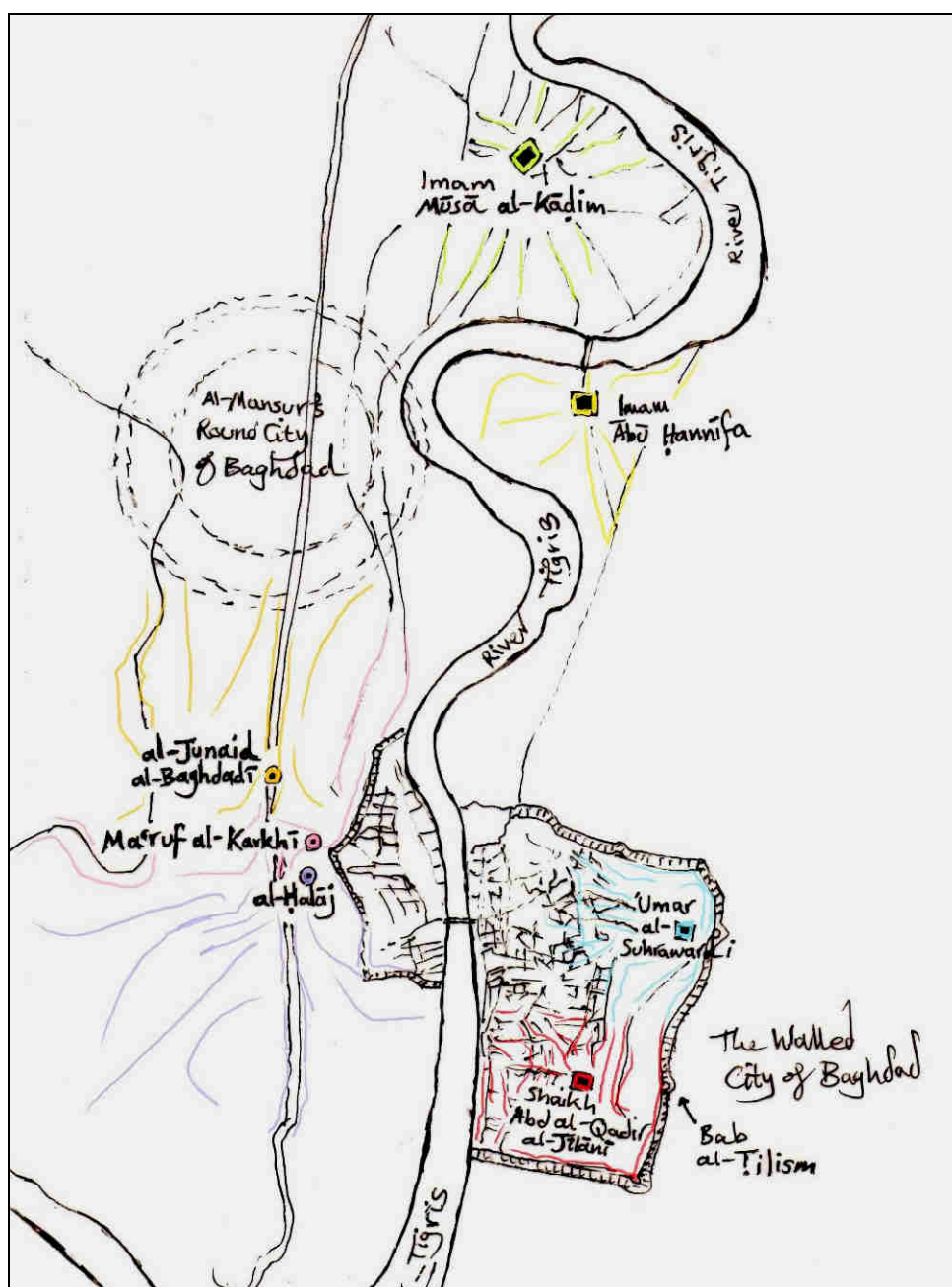
<sup>200</sup> Image taken by 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Mahāḍ Al-Gailani.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.



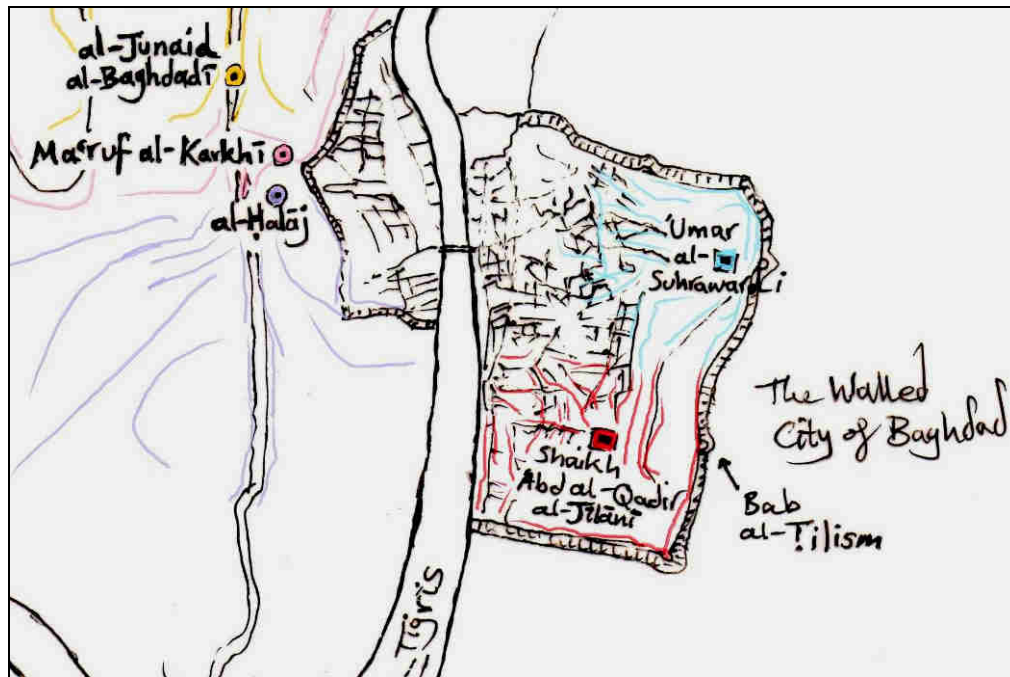


6- An Indian delegation arrives in procession bearing embroidered covers for the grave of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. 1950s.<sup>202</sup>



<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

7- Baghdad at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>203</sup> Within the walls of Baghdad are the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir marked in red, and the shrine of Shihāb al-Dīn ‘Ūmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234)<sup>204</sup> marked in blue. At the top half of map marked in yellow is the Shrine of Ābū Ḥanīfa al-Nu‘mān (d. 767)<sup>205</sup> and in green the twin shrine of Imam Mūsa al-Kaẓim (d. 799) and Imam Muhammad al-Jawād (d. 834).<sup>206</sup> The Abbasid Caliph al-Manṣūr’s Round City marked with dotted lines.



8- The graves of five key Sufis of Abbasid Baghdad, still extant:<sup>207</sup> the shrine of Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī (d. 815) in pink;<sup>208</sup> the shrine of al-Junāid al-Baghdādī (d. 910) in orange;<sup>209</sup> the shrine of Manṣūr al-Ḥalāj (d. 922) in purple;<sup>210</sup> and on the right of the Tigris, in red: Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī; and in blue ‘Ūmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234).<sup>211</sup>

The earliest references to the site of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s shrine are included in the biographies of the Ḥanbalī theologian and judge Ābū Sa‘īd al-Mubārak al-Mukharimī (1054 – 1119), the judge of Bāb al-Azaj quarter of Baghdad, where he built his Ḥanbalī

<sup>203</sup> (Jawād, “Baghdad fī riḥlat Nībūr,” 73).

<sup>204</sup> Jassim, Sabah M. *Religious Sites in Iraq*. Baghdad: Iraq Tourism Board, 1992, pp. 27-28.

<sup>205</sup> (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary* ..., 4-5).

<sup>206</sup> (Jassim, *Religious Sites* ..., 16-21).

<sup>207</sup> Jawād, Muṣṭafā and Sūsa, Āḥmad, and Makiyya, Muḥammad, and M‘arūf, Nājī. *Baghdad*. Baghdad: Niqābat al-Muhandisīn al-‘Irāqīyyn and Gulbenkian Foundation, 1961, p.73.

<sup>208</sup> Nicholson, R.A.; Austin, R.W.J. “Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Leiden: Brill Online, 2015. Accessed 4 May 2015: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/maruf-al-karkhi-SIM\\_4975](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/maruf-al-karkhi-SIM_4975)

<sup>209</sup> Leaman, Oliver (editor). *The Biographical Encyclopaedia of Islamic Philosophy* (vol.2). London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2006, pp.15-18.

<sup>210</sup> (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary* ..., 105-106).

<sup>211</sup> (Jassim, *Religious Sites* ..., 27-28).



theological college;<sup>212</sup> and in the biographies of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, al-Mukharimī’s student, who was subsequently given the college to live and teach in.<sup>213</sup> Al-Mukharimī built the college sometime between the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, and taught in it until his death in 1119.<sup>214</sup> Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir was then given the college in 1133 to carry forward its teaching work; and very soon after he rebuilt and enlarged it, adding a ‘ribāṭ’ (lodge or hospice) to accommodate his family and followers.<sup>215</sup> He then spent the next thirty-two years teaching and preaching in it and in the ribāṭ associated with it. When he died in 1165, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir was buried in the college’s portico, which became the nucleus of the subsequent shrine.<sup>216</sup>

Descriptions of the shrine complex after shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s death and until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century do not reveal much of what it looked like or of what it comprised.<sup>217</sup> Nevertheless, we are told that the college and hospice passed into the care of his son ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (1128 – 1196), who taught in it following in the footsteps of his Ḥanbalī father. The school was then seized from him for a time and passed into the hands of Ābū al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Jawzī (1114 – 1200), the famous Ḥanbalī jurist and historian, but then returned to ‘Abd al-Wahhāb after the demise of his political adversary.<sup>218</sup>

It seems that the college and hospice were then passed on to another two of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s sons, and then to a number of his grandsons. It appears to have survived the Mongol invasion of Baghdad in 1258, and continued to be in the hands of the Shaikh’s descendants until after 1287 when the last known reference confirming the continued presence of members of the family in the college was produced.<sup>219</sup> No primary written records tell us what happened to the site during the Ilkhanid (1256 – 1353)<sup>220</sup> and Jalayirid

<sup>212</sup> Makdisi, George. “Muslim institutions of learning in eleventh-century Baghdad.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (Vol.24, No.1, 1961). London: University of London, 1961, pp.1-56; and Ibn Rajab. *Dhail ‘ala tabaqat al-hanabila*. Edited by H. Laoust and S.Dahhan. Damascus: Institut Francais de Damas, 1951, vol.1, pp. 199-205.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid; and (Margoliouth, “Contributions to the Biography ...,” 267-310).

<sup>214</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh* ..., 4-5).

<sup>215</sup> Ibid. And (Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism* ..., 179-183).

<sup>216</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh* ..., 4-5).

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, pp.4-6.

<sup>218</sup> (Al-Muftī, *Maktabat al-Madrasa* ..., 23-25). It seems that Ibn al-Jawzī was involved in political intrigue and rivalry that involved members of the Caliph’s court and the sons of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, which led to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s son ‘Abd al-Salam being imprisoned and the seizure of the school to al-Jawzī’s benefit. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, Abī al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. *Ṭabaqāt Aṣḥāb al-Imām Āḥmad* (Biographies of Imām Āḥmad’s followers), manuscript no. 9627, vol.2, held in Maktabat al-Āwqāf al-‘Āma (the Endowments Public Library – a government institution in Baghdad). Baghdad: Maktabat al-Āwqāf al-‘Āma, (no date recorded), pp.195-325. This work is also known as Ibn Rajab’s *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*.

<sup>219</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh* ..., 8-13).

<sup>220</sup> (Bosworth, *New Islamic* ..., 250-251).

(1340 – 1432)<sup>221</sup> periods. Nor are there any known contemporary records of what happened to the site during the two Safavid periods of occupation, the first between 1508 and 1523, and then between 1529 and 1534 when the Ottoman Sultan Sulaymān al-Qānūnī captured Baghdad.<sup>222</sup>

However, there is a widely disseminated tradition that has been published in various books, but with no early referencing, that the site had been damaged during the Safavid invasions, and that it, along with the shrine of Ābū Ḥanīfa, was used as stables for the Safavid authority's mules.<sup>223</sup> Sultan Sulaymān's renovations of the shrine and the construction of a new dome on it are mentioned in the *Suleymān-nāme* by Fethullah Arifi Celebi (d. 1561/2). The chronicle states that the Sultan, seeing that the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir had become derelict, ordered the construction of a high dome and the building of a hospice for the poor, the widows and those living in the area.<sup>224</sup> In the *Seyāhatnāme* Āawliyā Chelebī (Evliya Celebi, 1611 - 1682) is also reported to have noted that Sultan Sulaymān ordered the construction of a high dome, mosque, takkia and other buildings for the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, as well as setting up endowments for it.<sup>225</sup>

Throughout the Ottoman period in Iraq, which extended for several hundred years and until the fall of Iraq to the British in 1917, the site and its shrine, and the Gailani family, as custodians of the shrine, continued to receive patronage from the Ottoman Sultans and their various wālīs (governors) of the province of Baghdad.<sup>226</sup> Excluding the position of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's grave, the position of his son 'Abd al-Jabbār's grave and the base of the minaret nearest to these two burial sites, which was constructed in 1498, the oldest parts still standing on site today belong to the sixteenth century.<sup>227</sup> They are the two main domes on the site, the one positioned over the burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, and the other over the main prayer hall, better known as Jāmi' al-Ḥanafīyya (the Ḥanafīyya Mosque). Analysis of historical records and various architectural inscriptions on site

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, pp.267-268.

<sup>222</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi' al-Shaikh* ..., 8-13).

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, and al-Rūzbānī, Muhammad Jamīl (translator and editor). *Baghdad al-Janna al-‘Āmira, mu‘arab min: 1- Āwliā Chalabī “Sīāhatnāma”, 2- Qāmūs al-Ā‘lām “Baghdad”* (Baghdad the prosperous garden, translated into Arabic from: 1- Evliya Celebi's "Seyahatname-si," 2- [authored by Şemseddin Sami Frashēri] Kamūs-ul Ā‘lām [Biographical Encyclopaedia] "Baghdad"). Baghdad: al-Majma' al-‘Ilmī, 1998, pp.16-17, 22. This book contains a translation into Arabic of a chapter in volume 5 of the work concerning Baghdad in Evliya Celebi's Seyahatname.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid, and for the chronicle in general see Atil, Esin, *Suleymanname, The Illustrated History of Suleyman the Magnificent*, H. N. Abrams, New York, 1986.

<sup>225</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi' al-Shaikh* ..., 11-13) and Al-‘Azzāwī, ‘Abbās, *Tārīkh al-‘Irāq bain Ihtilālain* (History of Iraq between two occupations). Baghdad: no publisher named, 1953, vol.4, p.32.

<sup>226</sup> Official documents in the shrine's archives, dedicatory inscriptions installed on several walls on buildings around the site, and all the main books referred to in this chapter.

<sup>227</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi' al-Shaikh* ..., 16-17).

indicate that they were both built in 1534 or soon after on the instructions of the Ottoman Sultan Sulaymān al-Qānūnī.<sup>228</sup>

The alterations, changes and additions made during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, up to the early 1990s have been critically documented by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maḥaḍ Al-Gailani in his book on the architectural history of the shrine.<sup>229</sup> The more recent changes, since the mid-1990s and until today, have not been documented or published, but the field research reveals their dramatic impact on the way the shrine is accessed, managed and used. The causes behind these recent changes to the fabric of the site are addressed in detail in chapter 5, but is also alluded to under the relevant sections below.

### **B- The location of the shrine:**

The shrine stands within the Bāb al-Shaikh quarter on the eastern side of the river Tigris which runs through the city from the north west to south-east. The site and complex is oriented in a south westerly direction so that the burial of shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (marked ‘A’ in the map below) and the prayer halls adjacent to it face the “qibla” – the direction for prayer towards Mecca in Saudi Arabia. The shrine today stands at the junction of Gailani Street and Kifāḥ street, with its complex divided into two compounds, one either side of Gailani Street; with the main shrine and adjacent burial ground on one side, and the administrative offices of the shrine and its endowments and the soup kitchen on the other. Kifāḥ Street borders the main shrine on its south west side, and the labyrinths of Bāb al-Shaikh’s old neighbourhood surround it on all four sides. This neighbourhood includes the districts of al-Ṣadriyya, ‘Agid al-Gailani, ‘Agid al-Ākrād, and Faḍwat ‘Arab. The administrative building and soup kitchen (marked ‘S’, ‘T’, ‘U’ and ‘V’ in the map below), located on the other side of Gailani Street, back on to the Faḍwat ‘Arab district of Bāb al-Shaikh.

The whole quarter of Bāb al-Shaikh lies between Al-Khulānī Square to the south-east of the River Tigris and the Expressway to the north-east, within the walls of the old city of Baghdad and its south-east corner. The quarter is currently a poor working-class part of the city, with a Shī‘a majority population and a sizable Sunnī minority.<sup>230</sup> Its main thoroughfare, Kifāḥ Street, is a long commercial street that starts at Bāb al-Shaikh quarter,

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, pp.35-37 and 53-62.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Interviews with a number of the attendants working at the shrine, who live within the neighbourhood; and several expeditions into the various alleyway clusters within the different parts of the neighbourhood.

where the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir dominates the corner of the street, and runs north-westwards ending at al-Faḍil Square and quarter. The Kifāḥ Street area specialises in a variety of trades including the sale and wholesale of equipment, spare parts for motor vehicles and similar commodities, a large food market, a money-changing district, electronics sales businesses, and many other enterprises.

Various Sunnī and Shī‘a communities inhabit the labyrinth of alleyways that branch off either side of Kifāḥ Street; and within these alleyways exist a considerable number of small mosques, shrines and other worship spaces. Four such grassroots’ entities that have associations with the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qadir have already been mentioned in chapter 1 – these being the independent Qādirī takkias of al-Ṭayyār, al-Bandanījiyya, al-Kasnazāniyya and the mosque of Āḥmad al-Makkī. In addition to these Qādirī groups, the shrine is also obliged to engage with non-Qādirī Sufi groups and with Shī‘a religious establishments, as they cater for a complex population within the quarter of Bāb al-Shaikh, which includes a not insignificant proportion of people choosing to ignore sectarian sensibilities and accessing and engaging with these various religious establishments for a variety of needs. This custom of engagement will be explored through examining how these different people access the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qadir, and how the shrine engages with different religious entities in the quarter. For this latter type of engagement, five examples of neighbouring religious entities, two of which are Sufi, two Shī‘a and one governmental, will be explored to illustrate how they have affected, and have been affected by, the Shrine.



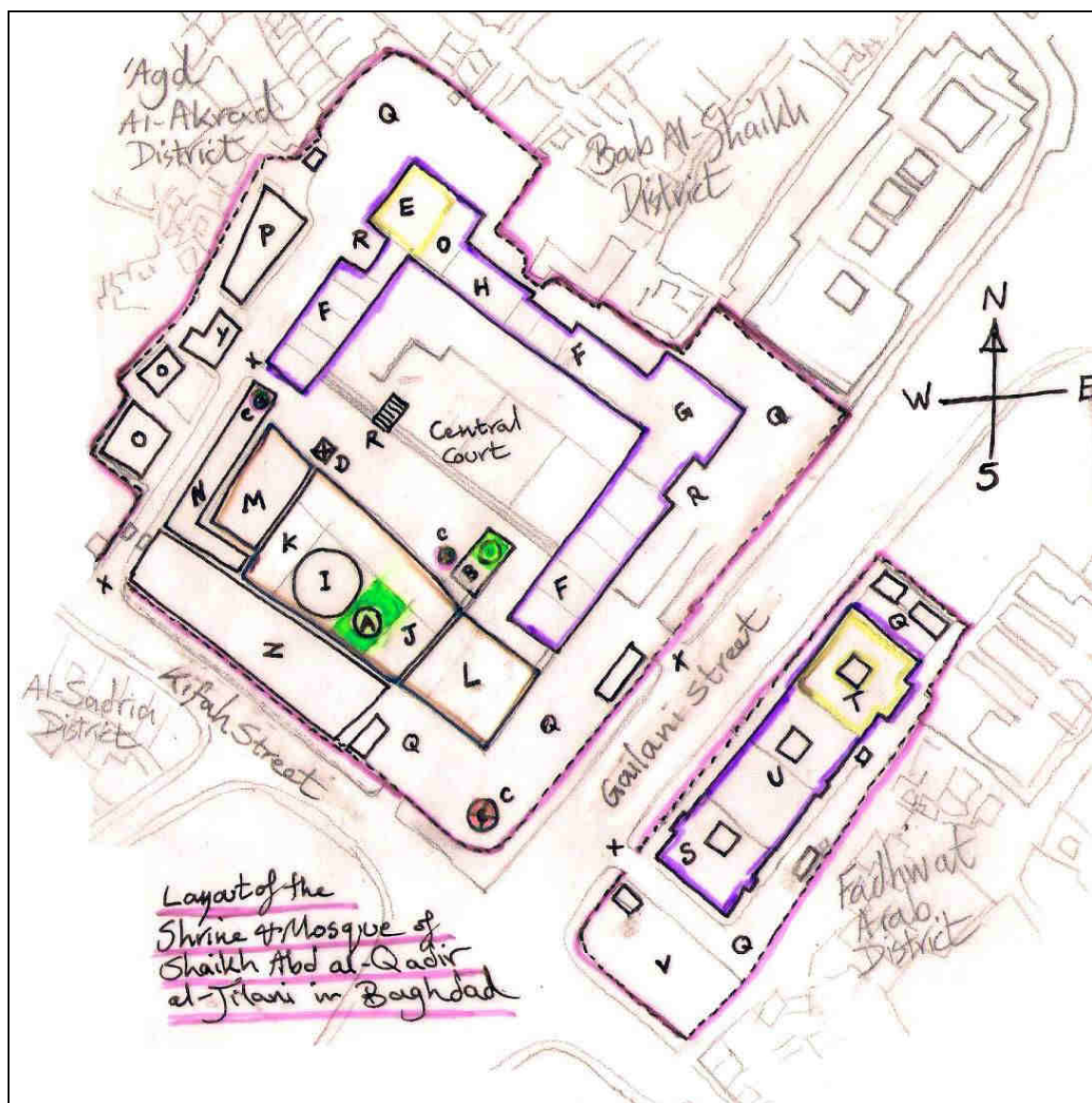
9- Bāb al-Shaikh quarter from atop the shrine’s minaret looking north over ‘Agid al-Ākrād neighbourhood.



*10- An alleyway at the back of shrine in Bāb al-Shaikh on its north-eastern side.*



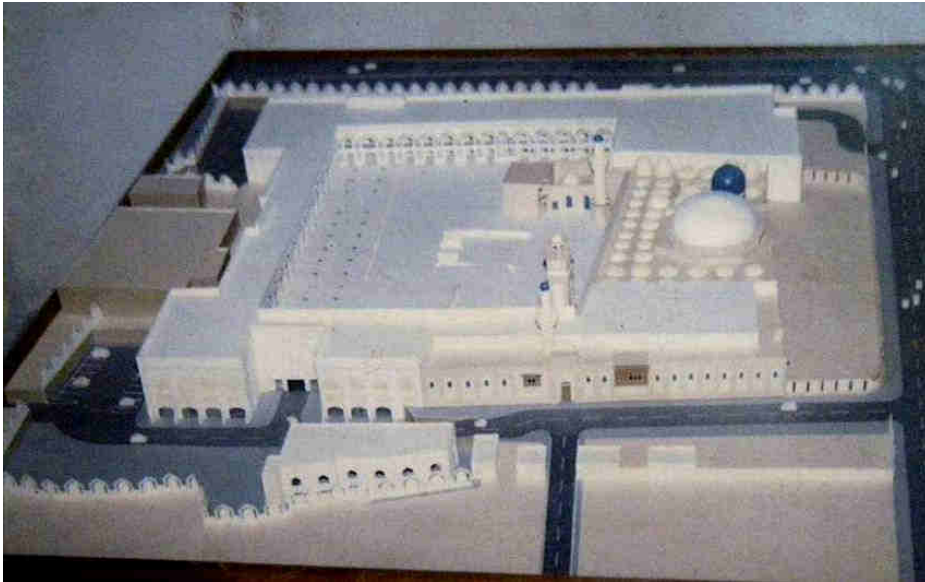
*11- Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir from Kifāḥ Street on its south-western side.*



12- Layout of the site of the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir.<sup>231</sup> In green (A) burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir; (B) burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār and Shaikh Ṣāliḥ, two of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's sons.

<sup>231</sup> This diagram was prepared with the aid of a satellite image of the site as seen on the Google Maps website, accessed 1 October 2012:  
<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Baghdad,+Iraq/@33.335993,44.4082671,159m/data=.3m1.1e3.4m2.3m1.1s0x15577f67a0a74193:0x9deda9d2a3b16f2c> The image was consulted in the process of drawing the diagram to ensure that the buildings being illustrated were in realistic proportion to each other.

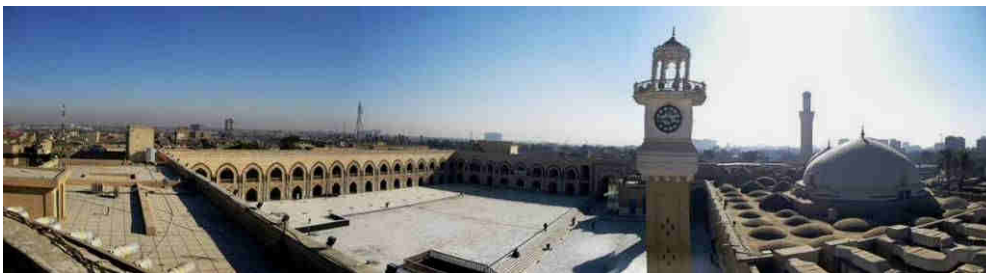




*13- Model of the shrine complex. The multi-domed tan-coloured building on the right is the historical building, with its blue and white domes.*



*14- Shrine façade on Gailani Street. On the previous image, this street runs horizontally at the top of the model.*



*15- View of the shrine from atop the minaret of Sayyid Salmān al-Naqīb above the north-western entrance to the site, looking towards the east.*



*16- View of the shrine complex from the south-eastern side, with the older brick buildings of the shrine standing to the left.*

### **C- The spaces of the complex and the activities that take place in them:**

The shrine's wide range of activities is reflected in the variety of buildings and spaces created on its site. These are, as marked on the diagram above:

- Central courtyard with lower and upper platforms
- (A) Burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir
- (B) Burial chamber for two of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's sons, 'Abd al-Jabbār and Ṣāliḥ
- (C) Free-standing minarets
- (D) Clock tower
- (E) Kitchen for staff and visitors
- (F, H, N and P) Accommodation suites / cells for the shrine's visitors, workers and devotees, as well as branches of the Qādiriyya Sufi order associated with the shrine
- (G) Library
- (I, J, K, L and M) Mosque and several prayer halls
- (N) Burial chambers for several of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's descendants in several parts of the complex
- (O) Ablutions facilities in several parts of the complex
- (Q) Car parking
- (R) Retail area under the central court and new extension – still to be occupied
- (S) Offices of the al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya – the headquarters of the Qādiriyya endowments
- (T) Soup Kitchen
- (L and U) Social functions hall
- (V) Green for the grazing of sheep offered for the soup kitchen
- (X) Main entrances to the complex



- (Y) Facility for preparing bodies for burial / funeral parlour
- (Z) Burial ground

These various parts have evolved over the centuries, and continue to change today. The most recent major development began in the mid-1990s and was officially declared complete in 2009; but observations over the four years' period of this research project show a continuous effort to alter spaces to meet changing demands, correct mistakes, refurbish worn-out fittings, and use the dedicated gifts of furnishings presented by pilgrims to the shrine. Therefore, the descriptions below are of the observations recorded of the scene as it stood in the period between the close of 2009 and the opening of 2014.

### **C.1- The main entrances to the complex:**

There are several entrances to the shrine, spread around three of the site's sides, though not all are in current use for security reasons. Of the two that are in use – one is on Gailani Street (the south-east entrance) and one off Kifāh Street (the north-east entrance) – with the latter being the most accessible for visitors. This entrance is reached through an alleyway off the main road (this entrance and the other functioning external entrance are marked 'x' on the map). An arched yellow brick gate with embossed brass covered wooden doors lets visitors into the shrine, where they first come face to face with its impressive clock tower and, beyond it, the spread of the open central courtyard. Above this entrance stands one of the shrine's minarets, which is better viewed from the courtyard than from the alleyway.



*17- North west entrance.*

Above the doorway of this entrance is a set of epigraphic ceramic tiles inscribed with two verses of a poem attributed to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and titled al-Baziyya, al-Baz – the gray hawk or falcon – being one of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s epithets. The two verses, the fifth and the twelfth lines of the poem,<sup>232</sup> state that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is of those men whose companions never experience doubt or fear of the uncertainties of time; and that although the suns of earlier men have faded, his will for ever remain high in its orbit. These two verses are also repeated on the internal façade of this entrance, the side facing the central courtyard.



18- Knocking on Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s door – the north-western entrance.

In a typical hour of observation at this entrance, numerous women were seen reaching up for the brass knocker, knocking on the open door, and then entering the shrine. Some lingered a few moments while they uttered inaudible words. Observing the facial expressions of others entering or leaving while someone was knocking, some seemed indifferent, some looked on with curiosity as they passed by, while yet others seemed to register disapproval; but no one interrupted the act.

A number of local children and elderly women often loiter by this entrance, sitting on the pavement or just inside the courtyard. Some beg, some sell little prayer booklets, and some pass the time people-watching.

<sup>232</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh* ..., 96-97).

The second entrance, that which faces Gailani Street, is situated on the opposite side of the site. It would have been the main entrance to the shrine but for the defensive concrete blocks that have been positioned in front of it to prevent insurgency attacks, an issue that arose following the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The pink and cream coloured marble that covers this façade is carved with inscriptions that include a repeat band of the Shahāda, and segments of the Qur'ānic chapter 20 spread in sections across the façade. These verses, starting with 20:39, are arranged in an anti-clockwise order round the building to its rear and along the opposite side of the site ending with the south-east entrance. They refer to the story of the Biblical prophet Moses and his brother Aaron and their encounters with the ruler of Egypt.



19- New entrance on Gailani Street.

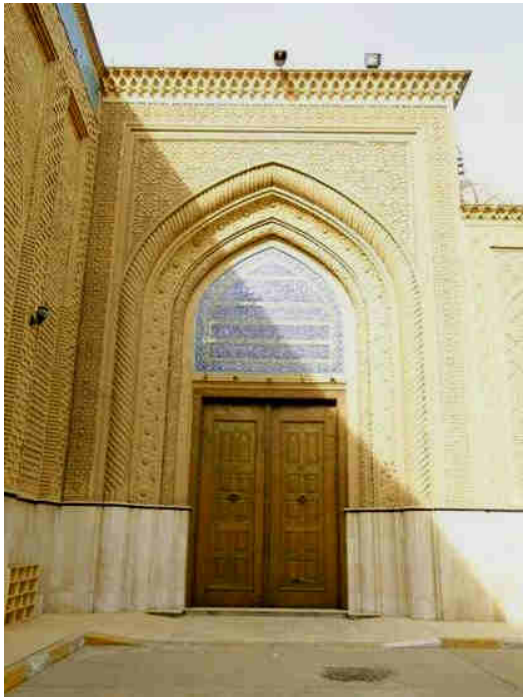
This new entrance, and the façade to either side of it, conceals an older main entrance, which is similar in design to the Kifāh Street gateway. This older entrance, situated between building (B) and (J) is now redundant as a gateway, but is used at busy times as a short-cut passageway within the courtyard between the older buildings and the new extension. Above this gate is a large panel of glazed tiles bearing two inscriptions spread over four rows. The first is a set of three Qur'ānic verses (10:62-64)<sup>233</sup> in which God describes his āwliā' – his friends – as being those who will not experience fear or be sad, they are those who believe and who avoid wrongdoing, they will be rewarded both in this life and in the hereafter. Below these verses are two poetic verses attributed to Shaikh

<sup>233</sup> Pickthall, Mohammad Marmaduke. *The meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*. New Delhi: Islamic Book Service Ltd., 2011, p.162.

‘Abd al-Qādir, which invite the seeker to come to the saint’s door when other avenues have become narrow, for God has chosen to bestow upon this saint the gift of answering needs.



20- *The original main entrance on old Gailani Street.*

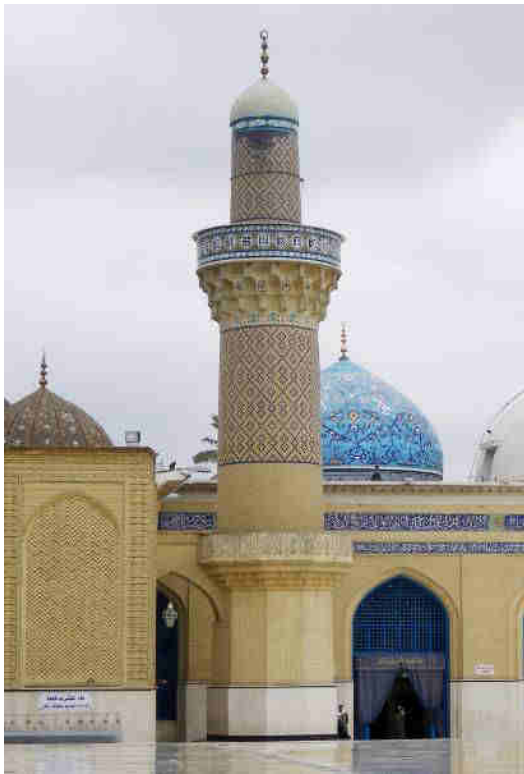


21- *Original main entrance with the ceramic tiled inscription above the brass covered doors.*

### **C.2- The three minarets:**

Two yellow brick minarets grace the central courtyard of the shrine, and a third cast in reinforced concrete stands alone at the junction of Kifāḥ Street and Gailani Street. Constructed at very different historical periods, the older brick minarets have each been partly rebuilt in the past – a common necessity for this type of brick tower. The oldest is situated closest to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s burial chamber; and stands in the corner of the central court, near the burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Jabbār, the son of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (marked B on the map). The earliest inscription on its decagonal-shaped base states that, at least that part of it was constructed in 1498. The balcony of the minaret is

decorated with coloured glazed bricks forming a row of eight-pointed stars, each holding one of God's Ninety Nine names.



22- *The oldest minaret.*

The second oldest minaret is the smaller one located above the north-west entrance. Named “Manārat Sayyid Salmān al-Naqīb” – the minaret of Sayyid Salmān al-Naqīb – it was first built in 1877 by Sayyid Salmān, the older brother of Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb; in office 1872-1897.<sup>234</sup> Three bands of inscriptions decorate its cylindrical body. The first consists of a repeated phrase “yā-Āllah, yā-Muhammad” – Oh God, Oh Muhammad. The second consists of a chain of eight-pointed stars, each containing one of three of God's ninety-nine names – yā-Ḥakam; yā-‘Alīm, and yā-Satār – Oh Merciful, Oh Wise, and Oh All-Knowing – along with yā-Madad – Oh Supporter – which is a term used when calling upon the divine creator or the holy man for help. The third inscription is a Qur’ānic quotation, part of verse 35:10,<sup>235</sup> in which God tells his worshippers that to him ascends the good word, and the good deed raises it.

<sup>234</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh ...*, 192 – 133).

<sup>235</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 312); though, I do not entirely agree with Pickthall's translation for the part of the verse quoted on the minaret. After consulting a number of “tafsīr” works – commentaries on the Qur’ān – in Arabic, I understand this part of the verse to mean: to God ascends the believers' good words – those words offered in prayer and thanksgiving, and the raising of these words is achieved through the believers' good works and deeds. With this meaning in mind, this verse seems to be aptly chosen for a minaret which represents the call to prayer and exaltation, for the verse reminds the faithful that for these good words to ascend to him they need good deeds to raise or elevate them to him.



23- *The minaret of Sayyid Salmān al-Naqīb.*

The third minaret is an enormous tower outside the complex but inside the boundaries of the site. It is part of a recent expansion of the site that began in the late 1990s under the patronage of the Ba‘th government; and matches in finish the new façade on Gailani Street.



24- *The external minaret.*



In former days the two older minarets were ascended by the *mū'adhins* for every one of the five daily prayers. Since the introduction of electricity and loudspeakers, and their installation on the minarets, the call to prayer is done using a microphone installed in the *Ḥanafī* prayer hall. The amplified booming voices travel across the whole district of *Bāb al-Shaikh*. Nevertheless, it is still possible to climb the minarets, and, on at least one occasion, the deputy *mū'adhin* had to call for the prayers from the top one of the minarets when there was an electrical power cut in the district – a not uncommon occurrence.

### **C.3- The clock tower and its pigeon nests:**

The locals more popularly call it *manārat al-sā'a* – the clock minaret. Built in 1899, three epigraphic ceramic plaques are embedded on its walls recording the patronage of the Ottoman Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II (ruled 1876 – 1909), and name the initiator of the building as being Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maḥaḍ al-Qādirī the Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad. In Ottoman Turkish the Naqīb al-Āshrāf describes himself as the carer for his grandfather's shrine in his lofty capital Baghdad. The other two inscriptions on the tower are the *Ṭughrā'* – an elaborate calligraphic emblem - of Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II; and the acknowledgement of his patronage.

The clock's Indian face with Roman numerals records its manufacturer's name: Marks & Co. Ltd., Bombay & Poona. Above the faces of the clock and under the white domed wooden canopy hang its bells. At the time of the field research visit the clock had been out of action for some years, due to damage it suffered from nearby insurgency activity and explosions post the 2003 invasion.<sup>236</sup>

Inside the base of the clock tower pigeons are encouraged to nest, with shelves erected to hold pigeon nesting baskets. These are cared for by some of the attendants in the shrine. An Indian Sufi lady-hermit who lodges on site helps with feeding the pigeons that flock into the central courtyard.

At the base of the tower, on the side that faces the north-west entrance, a street bookseller is permitted to display his religious material. The popular books and pamphlets are similar

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<sup>236</sup> Interview with the deputy *mū'adhin* at the shrine on 24 November 2010. Due to the current unstable situation in Iraq no longer are there any experienced clock smiths able to fix the clock.

to what is sold on other street stalls in the surrounding area, but they also include popular Qādirī titles such as *al-Fīūdāt al-Rabāniyya*,<sup>237</sup> and a few of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s books.



25- The clock tower

#### C.4- The central court and its platforms:

Like most traditional buildings in Baghdad, the Shrine’s buildings are arranged around a large central courtyard, with their doors and windows looking into it. This enormous space dominates the site and dwarfs the one and two storey buildings that surround it. It consists of two large marble covered platforms: the lower one occupies approximately one third of the area and lies adjacent to the older buildings on site, those of the main domed brick building of the shrine and the wing that contains Shaikh ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s burial chamber; the higher one, almost twice the size, is elevated by some eight steps, and is bordered by the new extension’s two-storey marble-faced building. The two external entrances mentioned above lead into this courtyard.

Beneath the higher platform of the courtyard lies a large basement space that extends under the buildings on this side of the platform too.

<sup>237</sup> Al-Qādirī, al-Ḥāj Ismā‘īl ibn al-Sayyid Muhammad Sa‘īd. *Al-Fīūdāt al-Rabāniyya fī al-Ma‘āthir wa al-Āwrād al-Qādiriyya* (Divine Emanations in the historical exploits and the prayers of the Qādiriyya). Baghdad: (no publisher’s name or date of publication).





26- *The central courtyard.*



27- *Drinking-water facility in the central courtyard.*

The vastness of the central courtyard offers the staff a considerable challenge to keep clean, given Iraq's constantly dusty atmosphere with not infrequent dust and sand storms.

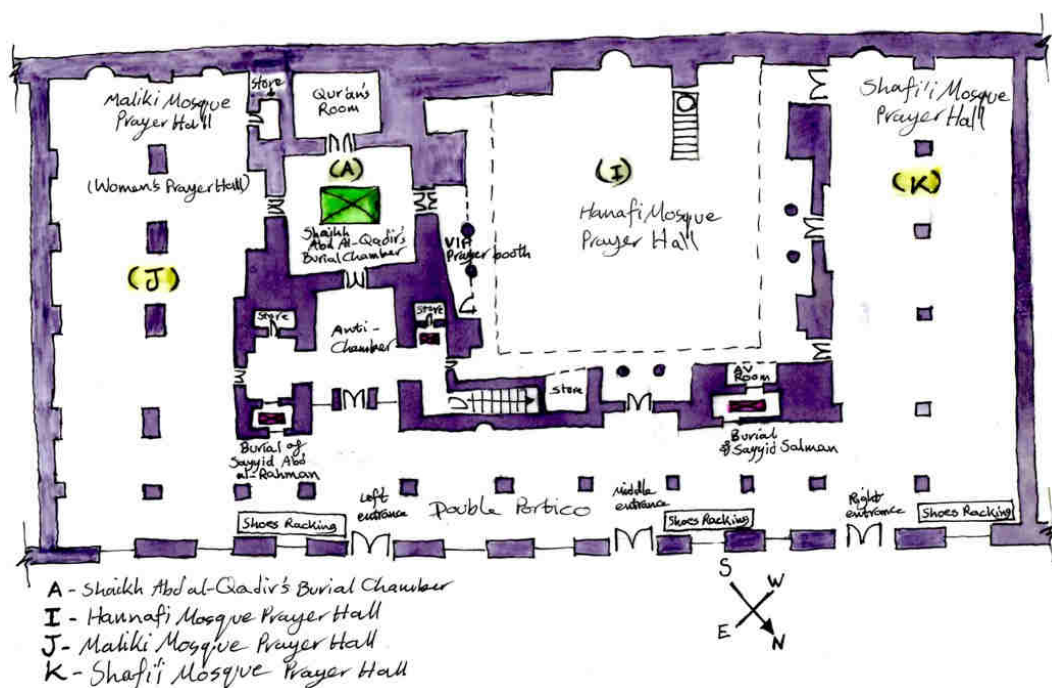
Nevertheless, the space afforded by the courtyard is particularly appreciated during three annual events: Mawlid al-Nabī, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's Mawlūd and during the fasting month of Ramḍān. As thousands flock to participate in the festivities and the worship, the prayer halls overflow into the courtyard, creating an informal, festive atmosphere.

Independent Qādirī Sufī groups visiting the shrine on these festive occasions are permitted to hold their own dhikr circles in various corners of the courtyard.

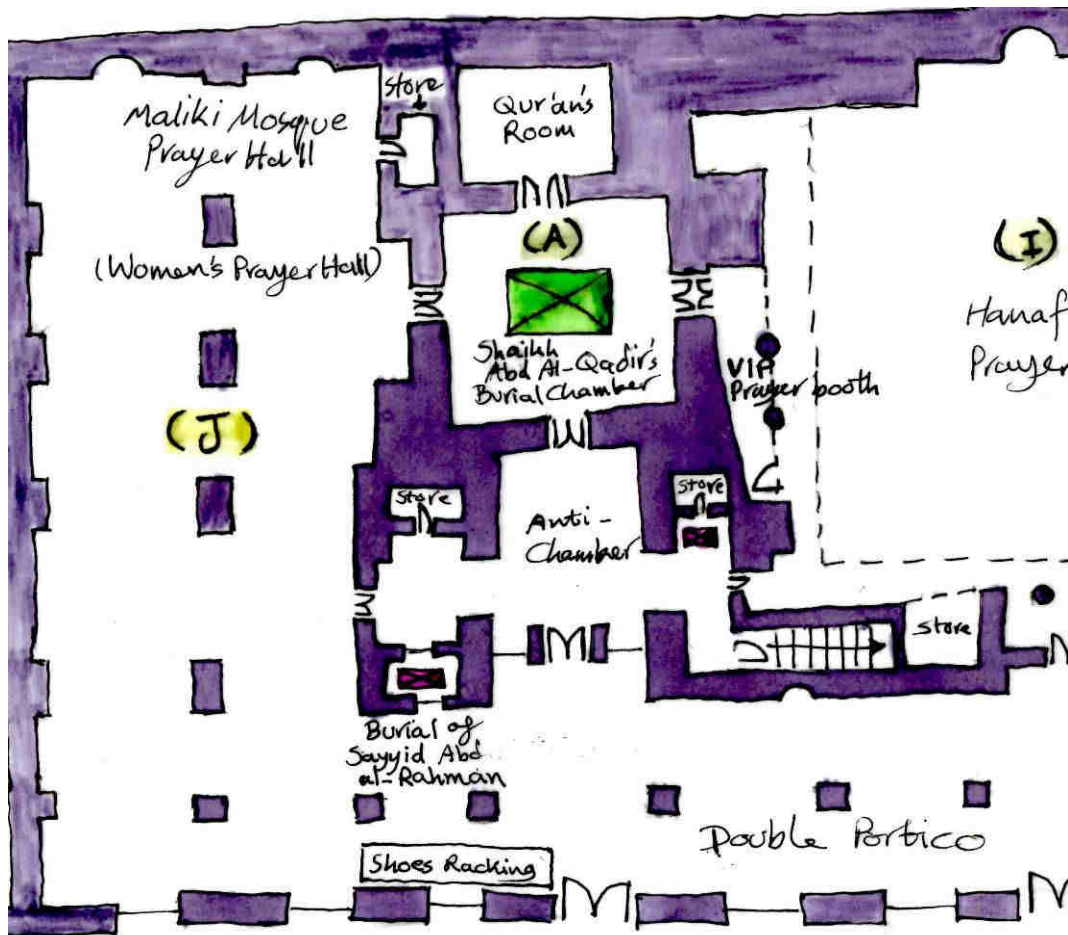
At the start of the Mawlūd festivities season in 2014, a number of incidents of targeted muggings and robberies took place in Baghdad's hotels against foreign pilgrims to the shrine. As a result, the custodians decided to permit all overseas visitors to stay in the shrine. Large metal-framed communal marquees were set up in rows on the upper platform of the central courtyard to accommodate these pilgrims.

It was also observed that the local public health authority in Baghdad made use of the shrine's courtyard as a publicly accessible location to set up a mobile vaccination clinic when they carried out their annual infant vaccination campaigns. The oldest minaret on site became the base for the mobile clinic, as women and children flocked in from the surrounding neighbourhoods

### C.5- The main shrine:



28- The main shrine with its chief burial chamber (A), the three prayer halls (I, J and K).



- A - Shaikh Abd al-Qadir's Burial Chamber  
 I - Hannafi Mosque Prayer Hall  
 J - Maliki Mosque Prayer Hall

28A- Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's burial chamber and the suite of rooms associated with it.

Over the years this substantial rectangular building gradually grew round the small burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. Its main spaces consist of the burial chamber's suite of rooms, three prayer halls and a double portico.

The wide yellow brick façade of the building, that which faces the central courtyard, is adorned with two impressive bands of blue ceramic tiles that bear Arabic calligraphic inscriptions. The façade was renovated in 1864 after the reconstruction of the double portico it faces – an event that is commemorated in the lower of the two inscriptions. This inscription describes the renovations and names the Shrine's custodian who carried out the works, who was also the Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad; and names his two Ottoman patrons, Sultan 'Abd al-'Azīz (ruled 1861 – 1876)<sup>238</sup> and the governor of Baghdad, the Ottoman vizier, Muhammad Nāmiq Pāshā. The inscription band above this dedication was installed

<sup>238</sup> (Bosworth, *New Islamic ...*, 240).

a hundred years later following further renovations carried out to the building in 1965. It consists of the Qur'ānic verses (13:17 – 31), which tell of how God separates the good from the bad in humanity and how he differentiates between them, describing the deeds and beliefs of those who will be saved and rewarded.<sup>239</sup>



29- *The two bands of inscriptions on the front of the main building of the shrine.*

The double portico behind this façade extends along the length of the building and down the left (J) and right (K) sides of it; encompassing the burial chamber (A) and the main prayer hall (I) known as the Ḥanafī Mosque. This double portico is used as a space for prayer when the other three prayer spaces are full or closed. It is also a space for male worshippers to gather for meditation or rest during opening hours.

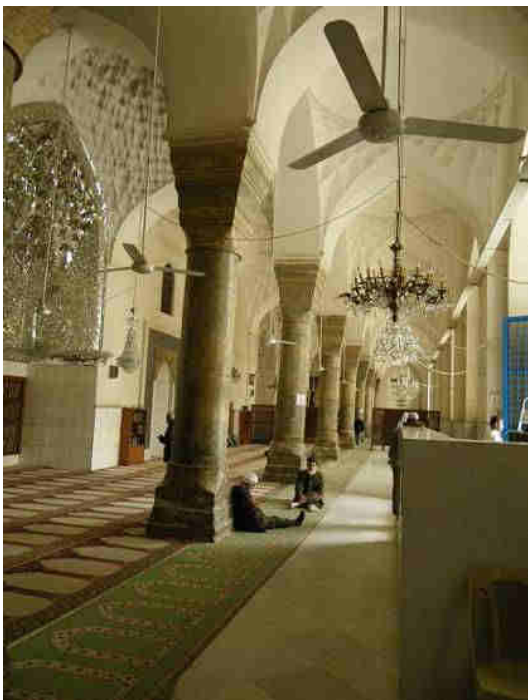
The closest entrance that leads to the location of burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (A) within the building is the one situated at the left end of the façade near the oldest minaret on site. Across the double portico from this entrance stand the Indian carved wooden doors of the burial chamber’s suite of rooms, which will be referred to later.

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<sup>239</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 184-185).



*30- Left entrance into the main building of the shrine complex.*



*31- The double portico.*

All the floor spaces in this building are paved with marble tiles and covered with machine made carpets. The floor coverings in the prayer spaces are designed with rows of prayer-

niche design compartments. Those covering the floors of the burial chamber suite of rooms are plain or multi-patterned, but not of the prayer-niche design type.<sup>240</sup>

All the walls' dados are lined with marble panels up to head height. Crystal chandeliers of various sizes, styles and dates adorn all spaces. Ceiling fans and an air-conditioning system are used for cooling the shrine during the hot months.

Sound amplification and television screens are installed on the walls of the various spaces to broadcast the Friday sermon and any large events where there is an overflow of worshippers and participants beyond the space of the Ḥanafī prayer hall. Excluded from receiving this sound amplification and visual broadcasting is the burial chamber's suite of rooms. Clocks and digital prayer-times' panels, and wooden bookcases for Qur'āns are also installed across the building, excluding the burial chamber's rooms.

Once through the left entrance of the main building, immediately to the left is the kishwāniyya, a supervised booth with racks for depositing footwear upon entry into the building. It is one of three in this building, each positioned at one of the three entrances to it. Further left beyond the kishwāniyya is the left double portico, better known as the Mālikī or Mālikīyya mosque prayer hall, which will be described in more detail further on.<sup>241</sup> Ahead in front of the entrance is the first set of carved doors leading into Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's burial chamber suite of rooms. The dome and arch above this entrance are lavishly decorated with plaster-cast muqarnas patterns, parts of which are covered with faceted mirror mosaics.

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<sup>240</sup> In the four field research visits conducted, the machine-made carpets in this suite of rooms had changed in pattern and colour several times, indicating heavy wear and tear and a continuous need for replacement. This was confirmed by one of the attendants for the chamber, who was interviewed regarding the upkeep of the rooms.

<sup>241</sup> Mālikī is the name of one of the four Sunnī schools of jurisprudence, the others being the Ḥanafī, Shāfi'ī and Ḥanbalī schools. See entries for these four schools of jurisprudence in (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary ...*, 285).





32- Women taking their footwear off at the *kishwāniyya*.



33- The main entrance into the burial chamber's suite of rooms.

#### **C.6- The burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and its suite of rooms:**

The intricately carved wooden frame and pair of doors that lead into the antechamber carry two inscriptions. The first is in the centre of the upper frame, and tells the reader to enter in peace reassured, and states the date of its installation: Rajab 1277 Hijra (January 1861). The second inscription is a set of five poetic verses spread across the top of the double doors, with the first half of each verse on the right door and the second half on the left door. Of unknown authorship, the poem states<sup>242</sup> that this door was made by order of the

<sup>242</sup> No published interpretation of the verses has been found. This summary translation is my understanding of what the poem means to say.

descendant of the Prophet, who is named '*Defeater of the army of polytheists*' – meaning Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir whose other name is Muḥīy al-Dīn, Reviver of the Faith. It then goes on to describe the door as being positioned in one of the gardens of eternity – Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's shrine – where one witnesses miracles plain and hidden. It then states that this place is built by his grandson (meaning descendant) who obtained lofty favour from the divine. The descendant is described as a Pīr who is a Banner for al-Bāz (the gray falcon, i.e. Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir) and a worshipper of the Merciful – God – from whom he obtained esoteric knowledge. The last verse calls upon the followers of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir to seek salvation by them – Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and the Pīr – for the Day of Judgement and in this world. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maḥaḍ Al-Gailani<sup>243</sup> surmises that these poetic verses could have been composed in Arabic by an Indian Qādirī, due to the use of an Urdu word, Pīr, to indicate the high rank of the Sufi saint, in the fourth verse, as this term is not used amongst non-Urdu speaking Sufis in Iraq. The carved decoration on the rest of the door and its frame is also of Indian style.<sup>244</sup>



34- The wooden double door leading into the burial chamber's suite of rooms.

At certain times of the day the burial chamber suite is closed to the visitors, though the rest of the shrine remains open, to allow the attendants some rest time.

<sup>243</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi' al-Shaikh* ..., 44-46).

<sup>244</sup> Ibid ...





35- *The five poetic verses carved on the double door.*

On the mirror-mosaic decorated wall above the double door of the antechamber is positioned a large arch-shaped plaque inscribed in Arabic with an invocation that consists of greetings and prayers to Prophet Muhammad and to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and to the followers of the Prophet. The inscription states:

“In the name of God and prayer and greeting upon our lord Muhammad the messenger of God; peace be upon you imam of this place, peace be upon you Ṣulṭān al-Āwliā’ [sovereign of the saints], peace be upon you Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, and God’s mercy and blessings; may God reward you the best of rewards on our behalf, as He does to men of knowledge on behalf of their people; and God’s prayers upon our lord Muhammad and upon his kin and companions”.

Two windows with vertical brass bars and wooden shutters stand either side of the double doors and behind both is situated an antechamber that leads into the burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. This antechamber is a rectangular space with several recesses, and with several doors on its four sides that lead off into six other spaces surrounding it, including the burial chamber itself.

The antechamber’s upper walls and domed ceilings are lavishly covered with muqarnas and mosaics of faceted mirrors. Three small rooms are situated in three of its corners; two – one either side of the opposite wall to the entrance - are small storage spaces used to keep cleaning and perfuming materials for use in the burial chamber; the third is to the left of the entrance into the antechamber and is the burial chamber of Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān

al-Naqīb.<sup>245</sup> This small burial chamber has another door opposite the one on the antechamber side. The second door opens into the double portico and the kishwāniyya. Above this door is a marble panel recording Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb’s death with four poetic verses of praise.



36- The antechamber looking towards the Ḥanafī prayer hall.



37- A raised alcove and a storage room on the right side of the antechamber.

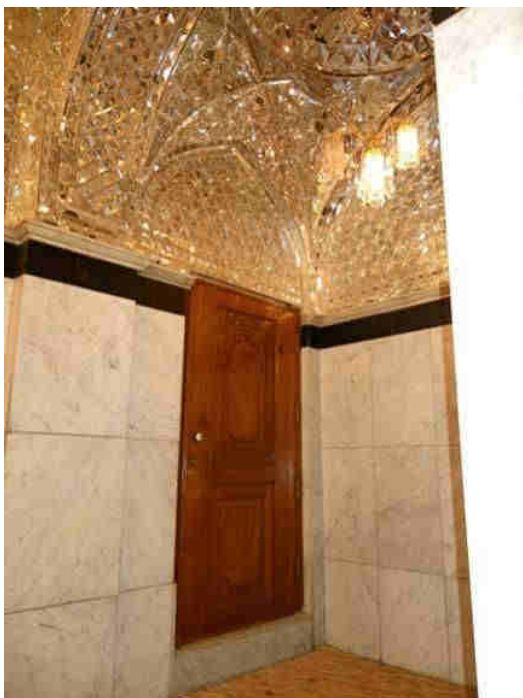
<sup>245</sup> (Al-Muftī, *Maktabat al-Madrasa* ..., 32-34); and Tripp, Charles. *A History of Iraq*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.45.

A blue tiled epigraphic panel on the side wall of the alcove on the right side (image 37) marks the burial place of Shaikh Zain al-Dīn al-Kabīr under the raised platform of the alcove.



*38- The burial chamber of Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb, situated to the left of the entrance to the antechamber. In 2011 his grave had drapes with bespoke embroidered covers that bear his name.*

In the fourth corner of the antechamber is a door concealing a staircase that leads to the balcony of the main Ḥanafī prayer hall. Two other side entrances lead out into the adjacent spaces, the one to the left leads into the Mālīkī prayer hall, and the one to the right (next to that leading to the balcony mentioned above), leads into the Ḥanafī prayer hall. These doors are usually kept locked, unless needed for crowd control and the circulation of large numbers of visitors on special days.



39- The door behind which is a staircase that leads to the balcony in the Ḥanafī prayer hall.

The second set of heavily carved wooden doors, directly opposite the first set, lead into the burial chamber. On the side walls and the wall above this doorway from the antechamber's side are three rows of epigraphy, two carved in marble and gilded on a cobalt blue-coloured background and one applied in gold-coloured lettering on the black marble band that borders the dado of the walls. The gold on blue epigraphy extends over the side walls either side of the double door as well as above it, and describes the former restorations of four Ottoman Sultans, including Sultan Sulaymān al-Qānūnī and Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II (1876-1909), and the names of two of the shrine's custodians, who were also the Naqībs of the Ashrāf of Baghdad, and who oversaw some of these restorations. The third row of gold on blue inscriptions lies above the previous two, and is in the form of a narrow band of cartouches listing the blood lineage of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, and the date of the carving of the inscription being 1318 Hijra (1899 / 1900).

The gold-coloured inscription on the black marble is restricted to the central wall where the door is positioned. This inscription consists of three sections: in the centre and immediately above the door frame is the last poetic verse of the Khamriyya poem that is attributed to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, and in which he says: my famed name is 'Abd al-Qādir and my grandfather is the Possessor of Prime Perfection (meaning Prophet Muhammad).<sup>246</sup>

<sup>246</sup> The Khamriyya poem is described and referenced later as part of the inscriptions that adorn the interiors of the burial chamber.

To the right of this verse is an inscription introducing the framed family tree of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir from his father’s and mother’s side that hangs below it. The family lineage links Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir to Prophet Muhammad’s grandsons Ḥasan and Ḥusain, to the first through the paternal line and to the second through the maternal line.<sup>247</sup> On the left side, the inscription introduces Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Sufi silsila – the mystical line of transmission – which is also a framed text that hangs below. This silsila starts with God, the Angel Gabriel and Prophet Muhammad followed by Imam ‘Alī, from whom it branches out into two paths: one branch through his son Imam Ḥusain and five of his descendants, ending with Imam ‘Alī al-Riḍā; and one through the Sufis Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ḥabīb al-‘Ajamī and Dāwud al-Ṭā’ī. Both paths meet up again with Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī and then descend to Sarī al-Saqāṭī, al-Junaīd al-Baghdādī, Ābū Bakr al-Shiblī, ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Tamīmī, Ābū al-Faraj al-Ṭarṭūsī, Ābū al-Ḥasan al-Hakārī, Ābū Sa‘īd al-Mubārīk al-Mukhrīmī, arriving at Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.<sup>248</sup>

As for the double door itself, like the one leading into the antechamber, it also has inscriptions carved on it and on its frame. At the centre of the top frame, the inscription states that this is the burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and gives the date of his death, and the date of erecting the door, which is the same as the previous set. Two poetic verses are carved into the top part of the double door, the first half of each verse is on the right door and the second half is on the left door. By an unnamed poet, the verses tell the visitor that this is the gate of granting wishes, if he has come to seek the Shaikh’s help; Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir will become his intercessor on the Day of Judgement; for Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is the best of intercessors for those seeking God’s blessing; and on the promised day the Shaikh will intercede for the forgiveness of sins.

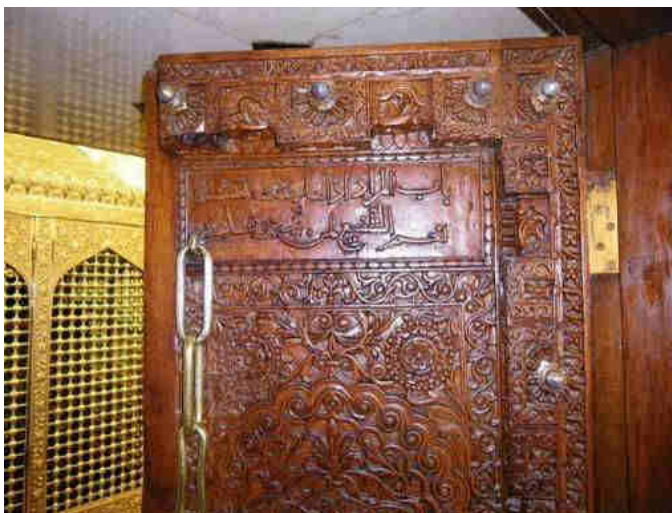
<sup>247</sup> Though this lineage is accepted by all those claiming descent from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, there is no evidence that he himself claimed such descent, nor is there evidence that any of those known of his sons did so either. From probing a number of people to comment on this claim of descent while conducting the field research, it became apparent that in general, Sunnīs in Iraq accepted this claim but Shī‘īs dismissed it. Those dismissing it cited the lack of evidence transmitted by the Shaikh himself or by those contemporary to him who have mentioned him in their writing.

<sup>248</sup> This Sufi Qādiriyya silsila appears in a number of books associated with the Shrine and its history including (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fi Tārīkh ...*, 53-55 and 58-60).





*40- The antechamber and the open doors into the burial chamber.*



*41- The main double door into the burial chamber, with part of the poetic verse on its right door.*

The burial chamber itself is a square space with four sets of double doors, one in the centre of each of its four sides. The space is surmounted by a cupola that is covered with faceted mirrors and two sets of Qur'ānic inscriptions on ceramic tiles that describe the entity of God. In the centre of the cupola is the first half of the Light Verse, verse 35 of chapter

24,<sup>249</sup> in which God is described as being the light of the heavens and earth, a light that resembles that which emanates from a crystal lamp filled with unlit oil extracted from a holy olive tree. The remainder of the verse has been left out, most probably because it goes beyond describing the entity of God, which is the focus of the texts on the cupola. The second inscription is in a band round the base of the cupola, and consists of the Throne Verse, verse 255 of chapter 2 in the Qur'ān,<sup>250</sup> This band of inscription also holds the name of the calligrapher, 'Abd al-Jabbār, and the year of installation 1318 Hijra (1900).



42- *The burial chamber's cupola.*

The exterior blue dome that caps the cupola above the burial chamber is covered with arabesque decorated ceramic tiling. It also holds a band of Qur'ānic inscriptions surrounding the cylindrical body on which the dome rests. The inscriptions consist of verses 255 and 256 of chapter 2,<sup>251</sup> the Throne Verse and the one that follows it, followed by verses 180-182 of chapter 37.<sup>252</sup> These verses focus on describing God's entity, on the non-compulsion in religion, and a reiteration of God's might and acknowledgement of His messengers.

<sup>249</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 256).

<sup>250</sup> Ibid, p.57.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid, p.57.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid, p.324.



43- The burial chamber's blue dome from the outside, with its glazed tiles decorated with arabesque designs and a Qur'ānic inscription.

The dado part of the interior walls of the burial chamber is covered with white marble slabs and bordered with a black marble strip. Like the cupola, the walls above the dado are covered with faceted mirrors in endless arabesque patterns. On the black marble band that separates the dado from the upper walls, an applied gold-coloured poetic inscription in relief runs round the room in a counter-clock direction. The poem, *al-Khamriyya* – the Wine Ode – is attributed to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, in which he describes his Sufi state and status.<sup>253</sup> The last verse of this poem is inscribed outwith the room, above the main door leading into the burial chamber from the antechamber's side.

<sup>253</sup> This poem is also known as al-Ghawthiyya. This version of it has some verses missing and others arranged in a different order to other existing versions of it. The modern Egyptian academic Dr. Yūsuf Zaidān, whose Ph.D. degree was on the Qādiriyya Sufi Order, critically examined the poetry attributed to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, both from a linguistic and from a Sufi theological perspective, and published a book of the ten poems he positively authenticated through his study. This poem, the Khamriyya, is one of the ten, and is described as being the most popular and important to Qādirī Sufis, who have imbued it with magical qualities, and use it in various practices. See Zaidān, Yūsuf. *Dīwān 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī* (the Divan [collection of poems] of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī). Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1989, pp.27, 145-155. Another edition of the Khamriyya appears in the second last section of the Qādiriyya certificate (ijāza) that is issued by the custodians of the Shrine to their Sufi murīds (followers). Four versions of this certificate were obtained while conducting the field research for this thesis. The most popularly accessible version of this poem is found in a popular 19<sup>th</sup> century Qādirī manual (Al-Qādirī, *Al-Fīṭṭāṭ al-Rabāniyya* ..., 50-52). This title has also been translated by Muhtar Holland as *Emanations of Lordly Grace, a treasury of Qādirī prayers and wisdom*; and published by Al-Baz Publishing, Florida, in 2000.





44- Part of the *al-Khamriyya* poem applied to the black marble border that encircles the dado of the burial chamber. The eight-pointed star gives the name of the calligrapher *Talāl* who produced the inscriptions and installed them.

The centre of the room is dominated by a large silver cage that encloses the grave of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir on which is placed a draped wooden chest. The silver cage frame has arched windows covered with grilles on all of its sides, with a set of two solid narrow doors at one of its shorter sides, the side at which Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s feet rest. The silver sheets that cover the frame of the cage are embossed with chains of roses – the symbol of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir according to Qādirī folklore – and its base is framed by coloured marble skirting, inlaid with multi-coloured stones depicting roses. The cage is crowned with a bevelled canopy that is surrounded by a sequence of silver leaf-shaped finials, each embossed with one of the Ninety Nine Names of God. Below this band of finials is a frieze inscribed with seven Qur’ānic verses from chapter 10 (Yūnus: verses 62-68)<sup>254</sup>, which starts from the side that faces the main entrance to the burial chamber and runs clockwise round the cage. These verses describe the Friends of God – *āwālī’ā Allah* – and what God promises them. This cage is relatively new, and the third to be installed on the grave since 1640.<sup>255</sup> It was made in Pakistan and erected in 1987. On its doors, in two

<sup>254</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 162).

<sup>255</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi’ al-Shaikh ...*, 20-28). The earliest reference to a cage encasing this tomb was of that installed by the Ottoman Sultan Murād IV in 1640. This cage survived to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and was then covered with embossed silver sheets in 1904, to strengthen and improve its worn state, and then subsequently removed in 1983 to allow for a gold-plated brass and aluminium cage that had been presented by the Kasnazānī Qādirī Kurds. This second cage was removed three years later, in 1987, and replaced with the current silver cage. See chapter 5 for the circumstances behind the replacement of the original Ottoman cage. When the first cage mentioned here was removed in 1983, it was presented to the shrine of Shaikh al-Junāid al-Baghdādī, the 9<sup>th</sup> century Sufi saint (see image no.6 above for location of al-Junāid’s grave) where it is installed at present (viewed on a field visit on 17/11/2009). The second cage, the gold plated brass cage, was sent to ‘Aqra in 1987 to cover the tomb of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Āzīz al-Jīlānī where it still stands today.

separate cartouches, is inscribed in English and in Arabic that the cage is a gift from the Muslims of Pakistan.

As may be seen in the image below, a grilled gate on either side of the cage partitions the men's access to the space from the women's, giving the men 2/3 of the space. The door of the cage is on the women's side.



*45- The silver cage encasing the draped wooden box that stands above the grave of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir.*

Inside the cage, the drapes covering the wooden chest that encases the grave are heavily embroidered velvets with gilded and silver threads, custom made for the grave and presented annually as pious offerings by groups of pilgrims from the Indian Subcontinent. The covers positioned on the tomb during the field research period for this thesis had embroidered renditions of the silver cage of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir depicted on their sides; each rendition was flanked by depictions of the al-Ka'ba in Mecca and the Prophet's mosque in Medina. Inscriptions were also present, including Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's name and titles, poetic verses attributed to him, and greetings upon the Prophet Muhammad. The polished wooden chest itself is of plain teak wood panels with bevelled edges and frames.



46- *The embroidered covers on the tomb of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. Paper money is dropped into the cage through its grilles as offerings to the saint by visitors.*



47- *Detail on the cover of the tomb, embroidered with a depiction of the silver grille that stands upon Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's tomb.*

The tradition of presenting drapes made specially for the grave of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir seems to have a long history, with references to covers being periodically donated by prominent figureheads such as the Nizāms of Ḥaydarabād in the Deccan, India, the last two of whom sent one every year accompanied by other gifts.<sup>256</sup> The three Mawlūds attended for this research project showed continuity in this tradition. Mainly made in India, these especially made covers were presented to the custodians on arrival at the shrine. As there were several being presented, the custodians would have the grave dressed with each of

<sup>256</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi' al-Shaikh* ..., 147-150).

them for a few days while the festive season is on, and then decide which one would be left on the grave for the remainder of the year, or until another important one was presented to the shrine. The extra covers are kept, and subsequently gifted to Qādirī Sufī groups and the like to drape their own saints' graves. One was seen draping one of the Qādirī Wūlīānī shaikhs' graves at the Shrine of Shaikh Ismā'īl al-Wūlīānī in Rovia in 2011; and one was placed on Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz in 'Aqra.

Individual followers of the Qādiriyya also sought to obtain of these covers, or parts of them, to be used on special occasions, especially at religious and rites of passage events, considering them to be blessed by having been placed on the saint's grave. During the Mawlūd, when the doors of the silver cage on Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's grave are opened to perform the ceremonies of dressing the grave with new covers, some visitors present their own covers to be placed on the grave for a few minutes to be blessed. These textiles are then removed and taken back to their communities. These fabrics are much smaller in comparison to the drapes intended for the grave of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. Pilgrims were also seen presented prayer rugs to be placed briefly on the grave for blessing during this period. One Sufi lady related that her family had a piece of one of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's covers, which had been held in the family for many years and brought out only on special occasions and when they held their own Mawlūd celebrations.

Above the drapes of the grave are a number of other items. In the four corners and mid-points on each of the sides are positioned silver covered weights, shaped as domed finials, to hold the drapes in place over the wooden casing. At the top end, furthest away from the doors of the cage is a green velvet turban, embroidered with Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's name, marking the location of his head. Next to the turban and towards the centre of the draped casing is a small padlocked wooden chest decorated with brass studs, above which is a large silver helmet-shaped crown and a smaller simpler tiara-like crown; and next to it is placed a smaller, also padlocked, silver casket with a barrel-shaped lid, decorated with coloured precious and semi-precious stones. The large crown, not referred to in any of the written sources, seems to be of Indian / Pakistani manufacture. The front area is inscribed with the names of God, Muhammad, 'Alī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan and Ḥusāin surrounding a central oval decoration inlaid with eleven precious and semi-precious stones. On either side of this central decoration is a line of inscription; the one to the left states "Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir

Jīlānī may God be well pleased with him”.<sup>257</sup> Below this is a broad band inscribed with the Islamic proclamation – al-Shahāda – “there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah”. Eleven leaf-shaped finials fan out from the outer edge of the crown. On the largest one, which is centred at the top front of the crown is written “Şultān Muḥyī al-Dīn God’s Sword”, and on all the other leaves are inscribed similar titles or attributes of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in the Urdu language.<sup>258</sup> The helmet of the crown is decorated with an embossed floral arabesque ornament.



48- Various items positioned above the draped wooden casing of the tomb.

The smaller crown, silver with some gilding, had an unrecognisable inscription on its lower half. This crown was positioned here only temporarily, as it was subsequently found to have been positioned on the burial of Shaikh Şālih, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qadir’s son.

There were no written references to the padlocked and studded wooden chest, and it was not possible to view its contents. The small silver casket inlaid with stones is referred to in ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maḥaḍ Al-Gailani’s book on the history of the shrine, though no information is given on its manufacture or date. However, the barrel-shaped lid has a plaque decorated with an Ottoman Ṭughrā’ – a royal emblem of an Ottoman sultan. Here too it was not possible to read it or view the contents of the casket. Al-Gailani states that the box contained a Qur’ān bound with diamond-encrusted gold covers, known as the Ānwar Pāshā Qur’ān; and publishes a photograph showing it being handled by two custodians during the 1950s.<sup>259</sup> This Qur’ān was presented as a gift by Ānwar Pāshā on

<sup>257</sup> I was able to examine the large crown very briefly on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011; but was not able to write down all the inscriptions on it, as the object was being moved in the middle of the changing of drapes ceremony, the only time access to the inside of the cage was possible.

<sup>258</sup> The grammar and spelling of some of the Arabic epithets and words that appear on the crown is typical of Urdu. A version of the eleven titles of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir appears in (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī Tārīkh* ..., 56).

<sup>259</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi’ al-Shaikh* ..., 18-19 and 21).



behalf of the mother of the Ottoman Sultan Muhammad Rashād (Mehmed V) during the First World War.<sup>260</sup> It was on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May 1916, and upon the Pāshā's return to Baghdad from the south of Iraq where he had won a battle over the British at Kūt – known to the British as the Siege of Kūt-al-‘Amāra between 7 December 1915 and 29 April 1916 and the First Battle of Kūt – when he presented this Qur’ān to the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. On that same day, he presented a similar one to the shrine of Imam Ābū Ḥanīfa al-Nu‘mān; and a third to the shrine of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzim (see map – image no.7 – above for location of these shrines marked in yellow in north Baghdad).<sup>261</sup> Baghdad subsequently fell to the British on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1917, and a few weeks after the Second Battle of Kūt.<sup>262</sup>

Above the casket and from the centre of the silver cage's roof hangs a small gilded chandelier fitted with electric light-bulbs. This chandelier is believed to have been a gift of Sultan ‘Abd al-Majīd II's mother. Her husband, Sultan ‘Abd al-‘Āzīz had ruled between 1861 and 1876.<sup>263</sup> Also fixed onto the bevelled edges of the cage roof are small florescent lighting tubes.

The burial chamber is lit by a combination of several crystal chandeliers and florescent lighting tubes. There are two large candlesticks and four smaller ones positioned in the corners of the chamber, all without candles. The two large candlesticks bear dedicatory inscriptions naming the Ottoman Sultan ‘Abd al-Majīd I (ruled 1839 – 1861) and dating the gift to the year 1847 AD.<sup>264</sup>

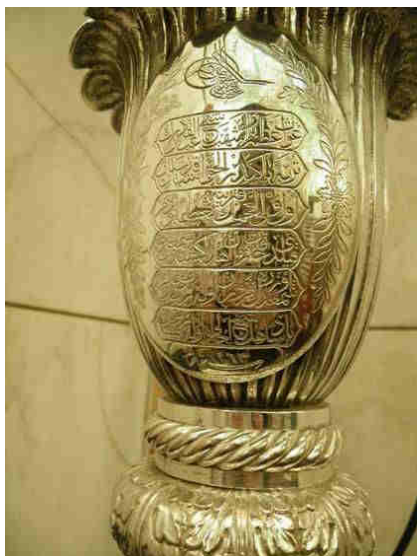
<sup>260</sup> Ibid, p.18; and Al-Wardī, ‘Alī. *Lamaḥāt ‘Ijtimā’iyya min Tārīkh al-‘Irāq al-Ḥadīth* (Social Aspects of Iraqi Modern History), in 8 volumes. Baghdad: the author, between 1969 and 1979; reprinted in Qum, Iran by Āmīr printing press in the 1990s; vol. 4, pp.287-288. And Al-‘Alāf, ‘Abd al-Karīm, *Baghdad al-Qadīma, kitāb muṣawwar ḍama ṣafaḥāt maṭwiyya ‘an al-ḥāla al-‘ijtimā’iyya wa al-tārīkhīyya wa al-iqtisādiyya wa al-sīyāsīyya min ‘ahid al-wālī Midḥat Pāshā ‘ilā ‘ahid al-iḥtilāl al-barīṭānī* (Old Baghdad: photographic book that includes folded [forgotten] pages about the social and historical and economic and political conditions from the era of the governor Midḥat Pāshā to the era of British occupation). Beirut: Dār al-‘Arabiyya lil-mawsū‘āt, 1999, p.275. Even though the latter two titles do not mention the Ottoman sultan's mother, both al-Wardī and al-‘Alāf confirm that Ānwar Pāshā (also spelt Enver Pasha) was the minister of war in the Ottoman government and deputy leader of the Ottoman army; and that he did visit the three shrines and present his golden gifts.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Barker, A. J. *The First Iraq War, 1914-1918: Britain's Mesopotamian Campaign*. New York: Enigma Books, 2009, pp.299-316. This book was first published in the UK in 1967 with the title: *The Neglected War*.

<sup>263</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh ...*, 151).

<sup>264</sup> Ibid. Similar ones were also presented to Imam Ābū Ḥanīfa's shrine.



49- One of the pair of large silver candlesticks gifted to the shrine by the Ottoman Sultan 'Abd al-Majīd I in 1847.

In a small alcove, hidden by two small wooden doors, and situated above the door that links the burial chamber to the Ḥanafī prayer hall (I), is positioned a container holding hair of Prophet Muhammad. These are said to be two strands, fixed to a piece of amber and mounted under a glass casing; and are only brought out for viewing by the public on the anniversary of the Prophet's birthday.<sup>265</sup>

Upon stepping into the burial chamber, visitors may be seen lifting their hands in prayer before moving further inward to stand up against the cage, touch the grille and continue their prayers. Female visitors enter through the door that links the burial chamber with the Mālikī prayer hall; while the males come through the burial antechamber. Visitors wishing to stay in the space for any prolonged period are permitted to sit on the floor, as long as they do not obstruct access for others. Many take this opportunity; some bringing with them religious tracts to read; others praying silently. The atmosphere in this space is generally quiet even when busy. At Mawlūd times, organised groups of Indian Subcontinent visitors are permitted to chant prayers and benedictions within the chamber. Women seeking blessing from the Shaikh sometimes distribute sweets to other visitors and the attendants of the burial chamber in thanksgiving. Money, usually in paper form, is dropped into the cage as a donation to the shrine.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid, pp.42-43. And interviews with attendants at the shrine on 24/11/2010. It was not possible to see these hairs, as they were strictly inaccessible other than on the annual anniversary of the Prophet's birthday.

The burial chamber has a distinctive smell through the use of concentrated Oriental perfumes and incense. In addition to the attendants fumigating and perfuming the space as part of their cleaning tasks, Indian Subcontinent visitors bring their own perfumes to the burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. To prevent the silver cage being stained, visitors who wish to perfume the grave are asked to empty their perfume into a spraying bottle, which is then used by them to spray directly at the burial covers through the grille of the cage. Some visitors were also observed perfuming the thresholds of the chamber’s wooden doors. This act of perfuming, as understood by the attendants of the chamber, is an act of bearing gifts to the beloved, who is not only to be dressed in beautiful garments – the grave’s textile drapes – but also to be perfumed with the best of essences.

Delegations of Sufi visitors entering the chamber were observed standing together to offer a collective prayer for the saint. This was audible, and led by a senior figure in the group who offered his prayers on their behalf, which they confirmed intermittently by uttering “āmīn” (amen). The custodians of the shrine would also on occasion come into the chamber with their guests to offer prayers for the saint and seek blessings for their visitors.

### **C.7- The Qur’āns Room:**

At the rear of the burial chamber is located an inner room reserved for storing large numbers of Qur’āns of various sizes and editions. The door directly opposite the entrance to the burial chamber leads into this room, which is about half the size of the burial chamber. Several cupboards and bookcases of various sizes line the walls. On the white marble tiled wall under this window is marked out the outlines of a prayer niche, indicating the direction for prayer towards Mecca.

These books are mainly gifts presented to the shrine; but sometimes they are discarded Qur’āns left anonymously about the building, which are then gathered and kept in this room. The attendant responsible for dealing with abandoned Qur’āns explained the possible reason for such an act. When a Qur’ān is damaged or no longer needed, some people did not know of any way of disposing of it that did not expose them to the possibility of committing an act of heresy, given that the book is holy as it contains the words of God. Leaving unwanted copies at places of worship was their solution to disposing of them without the risk of offending God or being accused of maliciously defiling the sacred book; and as places of worship have many such books, they would know how to dispose of them.



For the shrine, those damaged copies of the Qur'ān that are suitable for repair are attended to; and those beyond repair are disposed of in an appropriate manner. Although the traditional convention at the shrine seems to have been the careful burning of the texts in 'a clean fire' and the disposal of the ashes as the best solution to prevent defiling it;<sup>266</sup> this seems no longer to be the case, as the act of burning has taken on new symbolism in the minds of people in recent times. The option used at present is to seal the unwanted copies in sacks that are dropped into the middle of the river Tigris at a certain location.<sup>267</sup>



50- One side of the Qur'āns' Room.

Members of the Gailani family active in the shrine ordered the production of presentation copies of the Qur'ān for the benefit of the shrine. These gilded hardcover copies, printed in Syria, are presented to benefactors and important visitors to the shrine.

### C.8- Other features of the double portico:

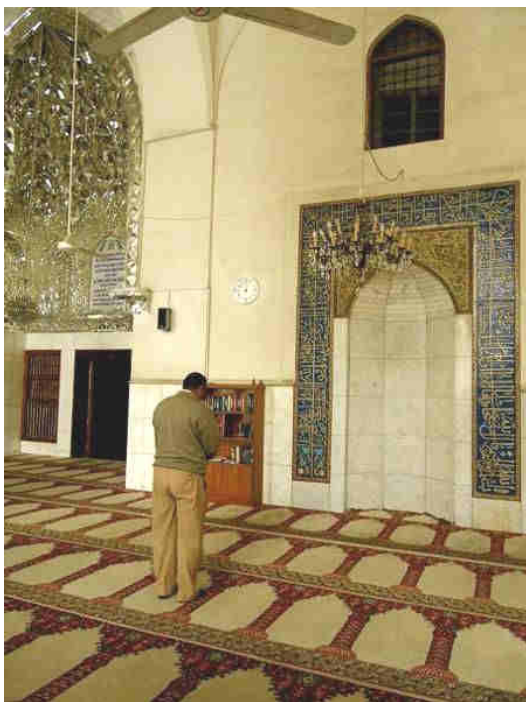
Along the main double portico of the shrine are other features of note. To the left of the entrance into the antechamber is a grilled double-door into the burial chamber of Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb (see image 32 above); and immediately to the right of that entrance comes a relief-carved marble prayer niche with a gold-coloured carved inscription on a blue background. The inscription is composed of three Qur'ānic verses, the first is (29: 45), and the second and third are (17: 78-79).<sup>268</sup> The three verses call upon

<sup>266</sup> Discussion with the solicitor of the shrine.

<sup>267</sup> Inspection of the room and dialogue with the attendant responsible for it.

<sup>268</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 287 and 209). It is interesting to note that there is no indication in the inscription that the two verses following 29:45 are from a different part of the Qur'ān.

worshippers to engage in recitation and prayer as they prevent sin and evil doing; and remind worshippers that praying in the night and near the time of dawn brings special rewards. This niche originally stood in the Ḥanafī prayer hall. It was removed and stored sometime between 1903 and 1911. In 1970 it was repaired and installed in the double portico.<sup>269</sup>



51- The prayer niche in the double portico.

Further to the right beyond the prayer niche lies a small storage room, then comes the main entrance doors to the main prayer hall, the Ḥanafī (or Ḥanafiyya) mosque or prayer hall (described below). Further along the same wall and beyond these double doors is the burial chamber of Sayyid ‘Alī al-Naqīb, the father of Sayyid Salmān and Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb. The tomb is encased in a wooden box and draped with plain green velvet covers. Above the door on the portico side is a ceramic-tiled panel identifying the burial, the date of his demise in the Hijra calendar (1<sup>st</sup> June 1872), and praising him for his lifetime’s work in serving his ancestor’s shrine, his Qādirī affiliation and his position as the Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad.

<sup>269</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh* ..., 64-68).



52- *The burial chamber of Sayyid ‘Alī al-Naqīb.*

### **C.9- The Mālīkī Mosque prayer hall (J):**

This prayer hall is at right angles to the main double portico and runs to the left of it. It consists of two main areas divided by large arches and their supporting walls that bear the weight of the multi-domed roof. Along the right wall of this space are three doorways. The first and nearest leads into the antechamber; the second leads into the burial chamber; and the third into a small storage room. Ahead at the far end of the prayer space are two non-identical prayer niches made of carved brick, and decorated in relief with geometric arabesque patterns. On either side of the prayer niches are bookcases filled with various editions of the Qur’ān. The floor is covered with rows of prayer-niche designed carpets, laid down but not permanently fixed to the floor. The walls are covered with marble up to head height, but otherwise are generally bare, apart from clocks, television screens and loud speakers. However, on the wall that backs onto the burial chamber, either side and above its door are installed three large plastic plaques. The one above the door is similar in design and inscription to the one above the door leading into the antechamber from the double portico side, with greetings and prayers offered to Prophet Muhammad and to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. The plaque to the right of this door lists Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Sufi lineage; and the one to the left of the door lists his blood lineage.



53- The Mālikī mosque prayer hall with its carved brick prayer niches.



54- The door into the burial chamber from the Mālikī prayer hall.

This hall is reserved for use by female worshippers, from which they can gain direct access to the burial chamber of shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Supervised by female attendants, the Mālikī prayer hall receives female visitors and their children throughout the day. Women congregate to pray, to ‘visit Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’, to thank him for successful intercessions and distribute sweets in acknowledgement, and to socialise with other female visitors. A number explained that they also periodically visited other shrines in the city and beyond; and that these visits to the mosques and shrines of saintly figures were seen as

a spiritual recreational activity in the main, but on occasion, they were to seek the intercession of the saint.

The female visitors come from varying social and religious backgrounds, with a noticeable number being local Shī'ī women. For them, a small number of turbas for prayer are made available on request from the attendant. In the Shī'ī custom of conducting the daily prayers, the turba is used to place in the position where the forehead touches the ground when prostrating, enabling the Shī'ī worshipper to only ever touch the holy soil of Kerbela with his or her forehead whenever and wherever their prayer is conducted.<sup>270</sup>

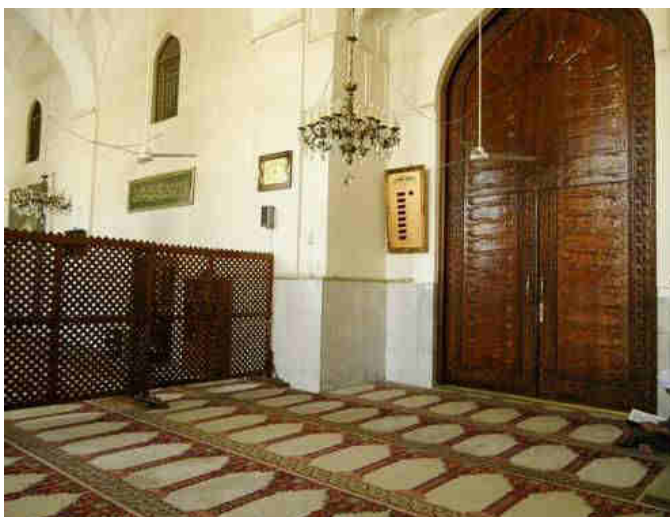
A number of requests for intercession were observed within the burial chamber over the period of research. An elderly lady spoke to the saint audibly explaining her pain and worry about a gravely unwell daughter and the predicament she was in as an elderly mother trying her best to help her daughter. The emotional tone of her dialogue moved a number of the other visitors so much so that for a few minutes they were distracted by her, and gently, though indirectly expressed audibly their feelings for her and uttered prayers on her behalf. The attendants in the burial chamber and the attendants in the women's prayer hall frequently deal with people in distress; and attempt to listen, give advice and assurance as they see fit. As the staff are warned against behaving in any way that might be construed as heretical (see chapter 5 regarding the tensions between Sufism and Salafism at the shrine), they decline any requests for help in healing the sick, or producing charms and potions and the like. Insistent visitors are advised to visit the Takkia of Ābū Khumra, a local Rifā'ī Sufī takkia nearby (details further below).

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<sup>270</sup> Accommodating the use of the turba was also observed in another Gailani family mosque in Baghdad. It is the Mosque of Sayyid Salmān al-Naqīb (1834 – 1898). He built this small mosque in the nearby district of Sinag in 1884, and provided with it a *Sabīl-Khāna* – drinking water fountain – free of charge for the locals' benefit. In 1895 he endowed this mosque with a substantial portfolio of commercial properties as assets to maintain the mosque's functions and employees. In the 1980s, and in response to demographic changes in the commercial district, the then Gailani custodian of this mosque ordered the provision of a wooden box containing a large number of Karbalā' turba clay tablets for use by the local worshippers, now largely Shī'ī workers and business owners in the district. The box still stood with its well-used contents in the main prayer hall of the mosque when inspected on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2011. For information on the Mosque of Sayyid Salmān al-Naqīb see Rā'ūf, 'Imād 'Abd al-Salām. *Ma'ālim Baghdad fī al-Qurūn al-Mutā'khira fī daw' al-waqfiyāt wa al-i'lāmāt wa al-hujaj al-shar'iya al-mahfūza fī ārshif wizarat al-āwqāf bi-Baghdad* (Baghdad's landmarks in recent centuries as referred to in the endowments and notices preserved in the archive of the Ministry of Endowments in Baghdad). Baghdad: Bait al-Hikma, 2000, p.268; and (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī Tārīkh Shaikh ...*, 291-298).

### C.10- The Ḥanafī Mosque prayer hall (I):

This recently refurbished space is the oldest of the existing prayer halls. It is square with several exits to adjacent spaces. The main entrance is through a set of large double doors on the double portico side of the main building. This pair of doors is carved in relief with a repeat pattern that consists of Saddam Hussein's signature, which is formed of his first name only, altered slightly to accommodate the Iraqi flag in place of the letter "m" in his name. This pair of doors was installed as part of the refurbishment of the prayer hall under the patronage of Saddam Hussein in 2001. The date commemorating this refurbishment is inscribed on the external tiling of the large white dome above this hall (this uninvited patronage of the shrine is addressed in chapter 5). Saddam Hussein modified the original Iraqi flag in the early 1990s by inserting the phrase "Āllahu-Ākbar" – God is Great – in his own handwriting between the three green stars in the centre field of the flag. On the right side of the double doors, the motif of Saddam's signature is depicted with three loops in descending size terminating with a long stroke that underlines them. The motif is depicted in a reverse and upside-down orientation, rendering it obscure. A similar but more overt example of this signature appears above the main entrance to the recently rebuilt shrine of the Sufī saint Shaikh Ma'rūf al-Karkhī on the western side of the river Tigris in Baghdad.<sup>271</sup>



55- The main doorway into the Ḥanafī prayer hall.

<sup>271</sup> A field visit to Karkhī's shrine was carried out on 17 November 2009, where the signature was observed to be still in place, and photographically documented.





56- Detail of the carved decoration on the double doors of entrance into the Ḥanafī prayer hall.

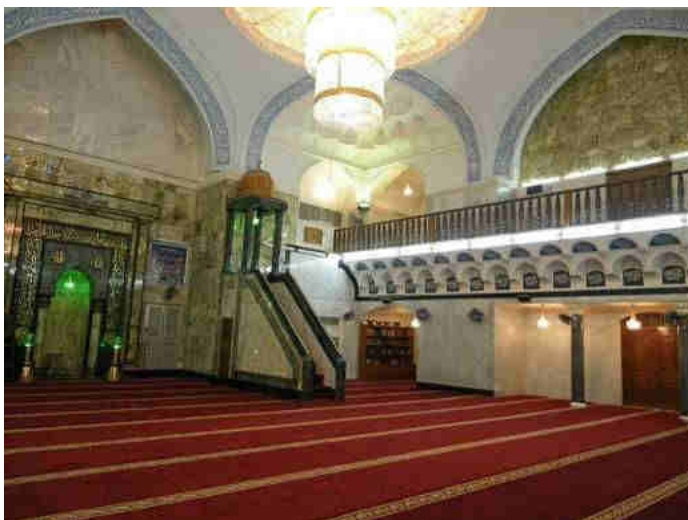
On the right side of the hall are three doors that join it with the Shāfi'ī prayer hall; and on the left side, one door links it to the antechamber and one to the burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir.

Internally the hall is surrounded by a balcony on three of its sides, excluding the side that holds the prayer niche and pulpit. A staircase accessed from the antechamber leads up to this balcony. The iconic white dome of the shrine surmounts the prayer space. This dome was constructed by the famous Ottoman architect Sinan under the orders of the Ottoman Sultan Sulaymān the Magnificent.<sup>272</sup> The interior decoration of the dome was radically changed, as part of the early 2000s works, covering it with relief-cast stucco patterns painted in pastel colours, and bands of Qur'ānic inscriptions at its centre and round its outer edge. The inscription in the centre of the dome is the Throne verse (2:255);<sup>273</sup> and the inscription in the outer calligraphic band is (59:22-24).<sup>274</sup> From the centre of the dome is suspended a large multi-tiered crystal chandelier decorated with projecting light-fixtures in the form of the Iraqi flag, and featuring on its base, in coloured crystal beads, the Shahāda.

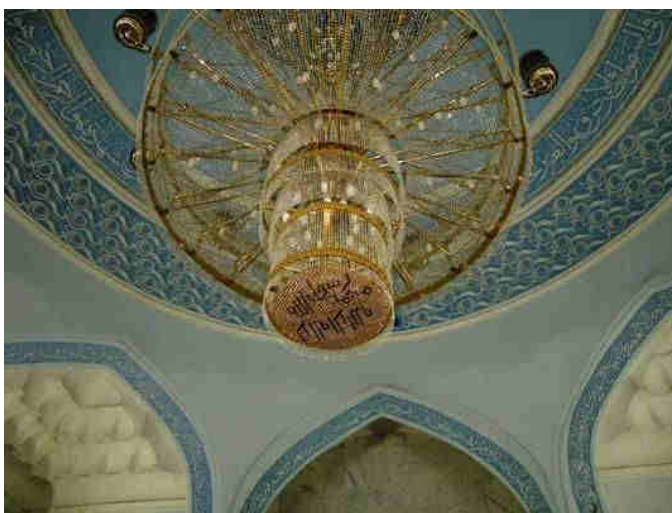
<sup>272</sup> (Al-Ā'zamī, *Tārīkh Jāmi' al-Shaikh* ..., 70-71); and (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi' al-Shaikh* ..., 60-62). For a description of Sinan's role and achievements in Ottoman architecture, see Petersen, Andrew. *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996, pp.258-260.

<sup>273</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of* ..., 57).

<sup>274</sup> Ibid, pp.394-395.



57- The Ḥanafī prayer hall.



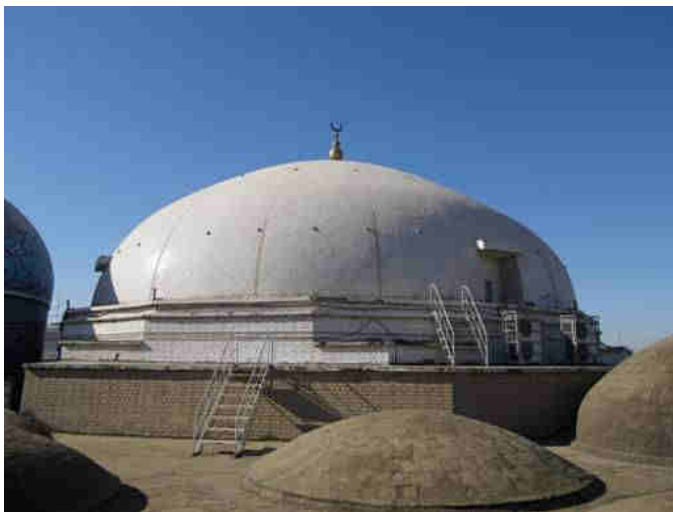
58- The chandelier with the Shahāda inscribed at its base.



60- Friday prayers in the Ḥanafī prayer hall.



The exterior of Sinan's dome, which is built from brick and originally coated with whitewashed plaster, has been covered with plain white ceramic tiles. In one of the original four window openings, which have been converted to accommodate air vents, is an inscription commemorating the "development" of the dome by Saddam Hussein in 2001. The inscription also lists the names of the four civil engineers and architect responsible for the work.



61- The exterior of the dome of the Ḥanafī prayer hall.



62- The patronage inscription that names and dates Saddam Hussein's refurbishment of the dome.

Beneath the dome are eight arches that surround the hall on its four sides and four corners. These are also decorated with Qur'ānic inscriptions. Each arch's inscriptions stand alone

from the other arches. The verses chosen are mostly concerned with the importance of keeping prayers for believers, and the rewards believers would receive for keeping faith. One describes God and his domain; and one describes the Prophet's role in God's eyes.<sup>275</sup> The numbers of chapters and verses, starting with the arch above the prayer niche and moving from right to left in direction, are: (8:3-4), (22:41), (31:16), (4:103), (10:62-64), (43:84-85), (33:45-47), (24:36 and the first half of verse 37). These verses seem to have been chosen for two reasons: some of them refer to the importance of prayers for those who believe; while the others declare God's authority over his creation. One refers to God's friends – *āwliā'* – and the rewards they will receive from God in both this life and the hereafter.

Only one verse seems to be deliberately quoted incomplete, as the sense of this particular verse would change from being benign to becoming threatening in tone if quoted in full. This verse, (24:37), is positioned on the corner arch to the right of the prayer niche, where "the fear of the Day of Judgement" has been omitted as the reason for faithful men's commitment to avoid being distracted through the cares of earning a living from remembering God.



63- The side of the *Ḥanafī* prayer hall that has the main entrance.

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<sup>275</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 256).

The walls are covered with marble up to the top of the arches. The 99 Names of God are listed in gilded lettering in the cavities of the three arches on the three sides of the hall that do not have the prayer niche. The base of the balcony's platform is covered with muqarnas decoration that consists of three rows of small arches, two of which repeat the names of God's (Allah) and the Prophet's (Muhammad). The floor is covered with rows of machine-made prayer-hall type carpets, but with no niche patterns on them.

The pulpit and prayer niche wall are the focus of the hall, and both are decorated with coloured marble. The prayer niche is decorated with inscriptions: the two roundels above its arch state “Āllahu Ākbar” and the band of gold-on-black coloured text that surrounds the arch is that of the first half of the Qur’ānic verse (2:144), in which God tells the Prophet that he has guided him to turning his face towards the Holy Mosque in Mecca for prayer, and guides believers to do so from wherever they are.<sup>276</sup> Above this inscription is positioned the “Shahāda”. The last four of God's Ninety-Nine Names – “al-Bāqī; al-Wārith; al-Rashīd and al-Ṣabūr” (the Eternal; the Inheritor; the Leader and the Very Patient) – are positioned above the Shahāda.<sup>277</sup> In front of the prayer niche are placed two large brass candlestick bases that have been converted into electric light lamps; and in the centre of the niche is a draped Qur’ān stand and a prayer mat.

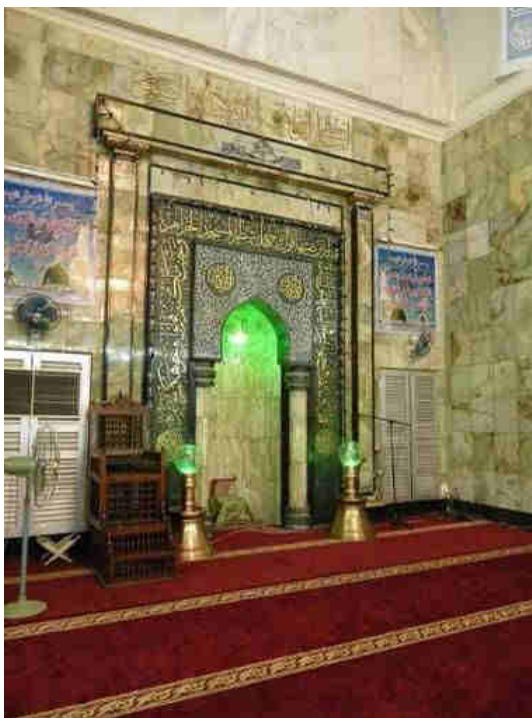
The pulpit is situated to the right of the prayer niche and projects into the room with its staircase and high canopied platform. It is decorated with vegetal arabesque carvings on its sides, and has only two identical inscriptions, one on each side of the base of the canopied platform, which state “In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful”. To the left of the prayer niche is situated another type of pulpit, a high wooden chair with two steps. Portable low wooden partitions, in the shape of a simple white ladder, are positioned about three meters away from the prayer niche to create an enclosure for the imam and the mū’adhin at busy times.

Under the balcony on the left side of the hall is a maqṣūra – partitioned compartment with a wooden grille, reserved for the use of the custodian of the shrine and his guests. This compartment leads into the burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir to the left of the hall. The partitioned area is a continuation of the main hall, and lacks any special furnishings. Two chairs and a coffee table have been positioned in one corner for those who cannot

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, pp. 45-46.

<sup>277</sup> Gardet, L. “Al-Asmā’ Al-Ḥusnā” (The most Beautiful Names). In *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol.1. Leiden: Brill, 1960, pp.714-717. The remainder of the 99 Names, divided into three groups, are displayed in rows on the upper parts of the three other walls of the prayer hall.

prostrate themselves on the ground in performing their prayers. Two other large recesses branch off the main space of the hall, at the top end of it, both holding large bookcases of Qur'āns, and the one to the right of the hall leading into the Shāfi'ī prayer hall.



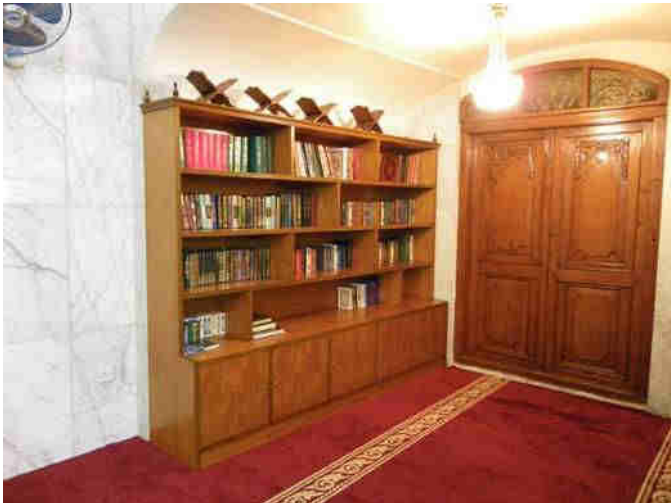
64- The prayer niche in the Ḥanafī prayer hall. The electrified brass candlestick-bases stand either side; and the portable wooden pulpit or preacher's seat to the left.



65- The pulpit.



66- The maqṣūra – compartment – on the left side of the Ḥanafī prayer hall and adjacent to the burial chamber.



67- One of the recesses in the Ḥanafī prayer hall with a door leading out into the Shāfiʿī prayer hall.

Being the main prayer hall in the building, the five daily prayers and the Friday sermon are held in it. It is also used to hold the weekly Sufi dhikr circle that is conducted by the shrines al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya; and for the dhikr circles held during the Mawlūd festivities. The space is strictly the preserve of men, in keeping with the custom of segregating men and women in mosque spaces. The only way for women to observe the events taking place within this hall is through the video link that is broadcast on the television screens installed in the other prayer halls on site. The balcony is accessible to a few select women, usually the kin of the custodians' guests, members of the Gailani family and their female associates.

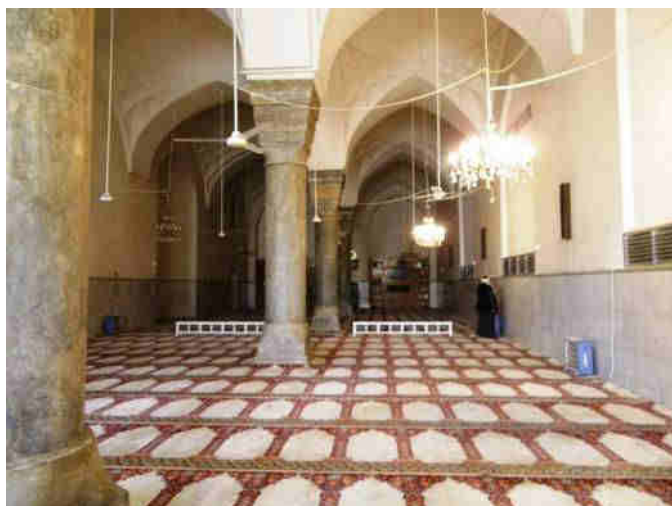
#### **C.11- The Shāfiʿī mosque prayer hall (K):**

The least decorated of the three prayer halls adjacent to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's burial chamber, it is situated at right angles to the double portico of the building, almost mirroring the Mālikī prayer hall that is situated to the left of the burial chamber. It consists

of two large aisles divided by a row of marble columns. The aisles are domed like those of the Mālikī prayer hall described above, but lack decorated prayer niches at the far ends. Three doors on its left wall lead into the main Ḥanafī prayer hall. It is also carpeted, lit and furnished in a similar manner to the Mālikī hall.



68- *The corner of the building where the double portico joins with the Shāfiʿī prayer hall to the right.*



69- *The Shāfiʿī prayer hall. The low white wooden partitions half way up the hall are there to discourage worshippers from drifting into the unlit area beyond.*

This hall is usually used for the Friday noon prayers and on festive days when all prayer halls in the shrine are needed to accommodate worshippers. This space is also used to lay out the food for the Ramaḍān ifṭār – the breaking of the fast at sunset – for male worshippers, which takes place every evening during the fasting month of Ramaḍān. The females have a similar arrangement elsewhere on site.

#### **C.12- Women's new prayer hall (M):**

So labelled by two plaques one on either side of its entrance. This hall is divided into three long aisles by rows of marble-covered arched columns. The interior surface decoration of



the upper parts of the columns and arches, and the cupola shaped ceilings at the centre of each group of four columns, consist of stucco relief mouldings and decoration. The prayer niche stands on the far wall opposite the entrance and in the central aisle of the hall. Three religious inscriptions adorn the prayer niche, with the top being the last phrase of the Qur'ānic verse (4:103) in which God announces to the believers that prayers are to be held at defined times.<sup>278</sup> Below this inscription is the Shahāda and below this second inscription, and positioned beneath the pointed arch of the prayer niche, is the phrase “Āllah-u Ākbar”. A large television screen is positioned in front of the prayer niche, with two smaller ones along the wall on either side of the niche and at the top of the left and right aisles. These screens are used for the live broadcast of the Friday sermon being preached in the main prayer hall of the shrine – the Ḥanafī hall (I). On both sides of the entrance to the hall are booths furnished with wooden racks for depositing footwear.



70- Exterior of the new women's prayer hall.



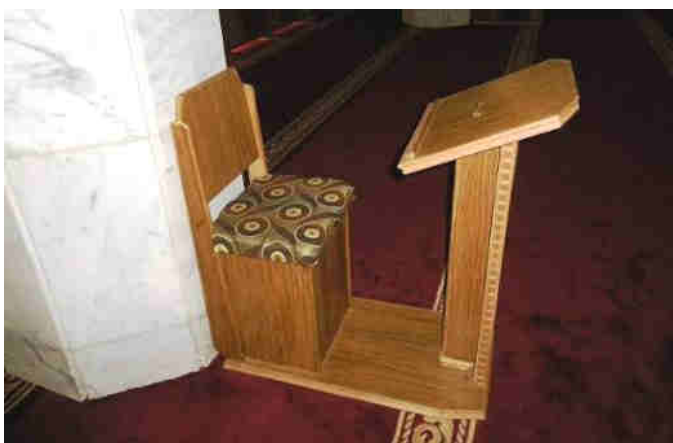
71- Interior of the new women's prayer hall.

<sup>278</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 89).



*72- Video screen in front of the prayer niche in the new women's prayer hall.*

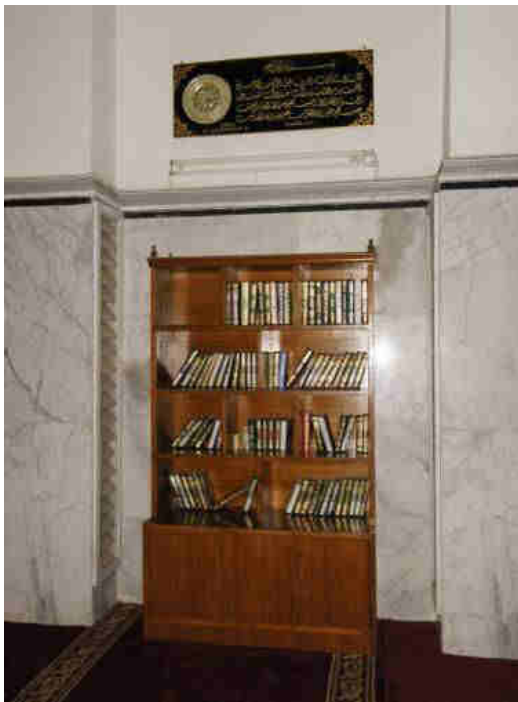
This hall also has three portable wooden seats with fixed sloping rests in front of them that seem to be specially designed for worshippers who cannot reach the floor in prayer due to health and mobility issues (image 73). The design of the fixed sloping supports attached to each of the seats includes a small arched bracket positioned in the centre of the sloping surface of the rest. This bracket's design and position indicates that the seats were originally designed for use in a Shī'ī place of worship, where a turba might be placed where the user would be able to touch it with their forehead during prayer. It is worth noting here that these seats do not appear in any of the other prayer halls in the shrine, even though the turba does in the Mālikī prayer hall.



*73- One of the special chairs with sloping rests for those who cannot kneel on the floor to conduct their prayers.*



A bookcase full of Qur'āns stands on one side; and in one corner a small table holds an incense burner. Above it is one of five black and gold plaques consisting of a gilt-coloured clock and an inscription of the Qur'ānic Fātiḥa (chapter 1) and the name of the donor. The space is usually only used on Fridays by female worshippers, as their usual place in the Mālikī prayer hall is taken up by the overflow of male worshippers from the Ḥanafī prayer hall. It is also used during the Mawlūd period to accommodate pilgrims who cannot afford to stay in hotels.



74- Qur'ān bookcase in one of the five shallow niches in the hall.



75- Incense burner and tray positioned with a prayer rug in the new women's prayer hall.

### C.13- The new function hall (L):

The most recent addition to the complex is this hall, which forms part of the large extension to the site. It has the layout of a prayer hall, with a prayer niche, a portable wooden pulpit and a preaching chair, as well as shelving for Qur'āns. Its floor is completely covered with lined rows of red carpet fitted in parallel with the wall containing the prayer niche. The hall's marble decorated walls and stucco decorated ceiling and cupola incorporate a number of prayer-related Qur'ānic inscriptions, the Shahāda, and the Ninety-Nine names of Allah.<sup>279</sup>

The inscription on the wall of the prayer niche consists of the first five words of the Qur'ānic verse (24:35), which describes God as being the light of the skies and the earth. The inscriptions on the two arches that frame the prayer niche consist of verse (4:103) and verse (17:78), both of which describe the importance of conducting the daily prayers for the believers. On the side wall to the right of the prayer niche wall is inscribed the Throne Verse (2:255), which describes God's identity and power. On the ceiling, in two facing rows of illuminated panels, is listed the Ninety Nine names of Allah; and in a band that encircles the cupola are the three last verses of Chapter 59, which instructs the believers to respond to the call to the Friday prayers by abandoning any other engagements and business. The arabesque decoration of the cupola holds the word Āllah and the Shahāda.

The hall lacks a kishwāniyya, necessitating the installation of unsupervised pigeonholes for shoes outside its entrance. The large size of the space, with no columns dividing it into isles, renders it more flexible in accommodating a variety of public events.

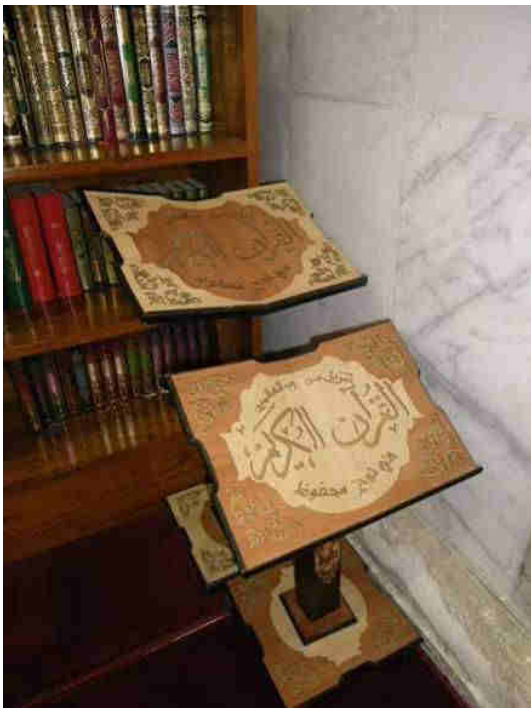


76- New function hall.

<sup>279</sup> For the Qur'ānic verses see (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*).



77- Prayer niche in new function hall.



78- Qur'āns and book rests are available for worshippers.



79- One of four identical marble arches, two on either side of the prayer niche, inscribed with the first five words of the Qur'ānic verse (24:35).



80- Illuminated inscription band listing the Ninety-Nine Name of God decorates the ceiling.

#### C.14- The shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Jabbār and Shaikh Ṣāliḥ (B):

This shrine consists of a suite of two burial chambers that house the graves of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Jabbār and Shaikh Ṣāliḥ, two of the many sons of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Very little is known about the biographies of these two men, but Shaikh ‘Abd al-Jabbār was mentioned by a number of historians including al-Tādifī (died 1555) in his biography of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir “Qalā’id al-Jawāhir”.<sup>280</sup> In it al-Tādifī records that ‘Abd al-Jabbār was educated

<sup>280</sup> (At-Tādifī, *Necklaces of Gems* ..., 179-180).

by his father and a number of key theologians and Sufis. He then joined the Sufis of his time and led an ascetic's life. He was also known for his exceptional calligraphic skills. His younger and better-known brother 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Jīlānī studied under his guidance for a short while, but there is no reference to 'Abd al-Jabbār as having been a transmitter of his father's sayings or writings.<sup>281</sup> He died in 1180 and was buried in his father's hospice in Baghdad.<sup>282</sup> Other writers who have very briefly mentioned him in their works include the 13<sup>th</sup> century historians Muhammad bin Sa'īd bin al-Dubaythī and Nūr ad-Dīn Ābū al-Ḥasan Alī Bin Yūsif al-Shaṭanawfī.<sup>283</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Iraqi historian Ibrāhīm al-Durūbī mentions Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār's birth as being on 19<sup>th</sup> Ramaḍān 522 Hijra (16 September 1128) in his book on the history of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and his descendants in Baghdad; and mentions that the dome above 'Abd al-Jabbār's burial chamber was first constructed in 1498.<sup>284</sup>

As for Shaikh Ṣāliḥ, even less is known about him. No birth or death dates are available, but his name is listed amongst the twelve sons and one daughter known from amongst numerous siblings.<sup>285</sup> His original burial place is documented as having been on the west side of Baghdad in the cemetery known after the Sufi saint Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, where Shaikh Ṣāliḥ had a domed burial shrine that received regular visitors.<sup>286</sup> This area of the cemetery was demolished to allow for development, and in 1998 Shaikh Ṣāliḥ's remains were reinterred at Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's shrine in a small room adjacent to that of his brother Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār.<sup>287</sup> Despite this serious lack of information about Shaikh Ṣāliḥ, it is his name that is associated with Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, who is popularly known in Baghdad as Ābū-Ṣāliḥ (the father of Ṣāliḥ) and not Ābū-Muhammad, which should have been his epithet as dictated by Iraqi and Arab custom, since Muhammad is the eldest of

<sup>281</sup> Ohlander, Erik S. "'Abd al-Jabbār b. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.'" *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*. Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Kramer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Brill Online, 2015. Accessed 9 June 2015: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/abd-al-jabbar-b-abd-al-qadir-al-jilani-COM\\_22588](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/abd-al-jabbar-b-abd-al-qadir-al-jilani-COM_22588)

<sup>282</sup> (At-Tādifi, *Necklaces of Gems* ..., 179-180).

<sup>283</sup> (Ohlander, "'Abd al-Jabbār ...").

<sup>284</sup> (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī* ..., 109). Like most 20<sup>th</sup> century sources in Arabic, this most comprehensive of titles on this subject has no detailed referencing to the sources accessed for specific information, though there is a general listing of all sources used at the end of the publication; for this reason, it is not possible to determine from where Al-Durūbī got these particular details.

<sup>285</sup> There seem to be no known historical sources that list Shaikh Ṣāliḥ's name amongst the few known sons of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. However, his name does appear in some modern editions of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's works such as in the appendixes attached to *Futūḥ al-Ghaib* (Revelations of the Unseen). Edited by Aḥmad Farīd al-Miziādī. Cairo: Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī Press and Bookshop, (no date), p.148; and a few modern biographical descriptions of his life.

<sup>286</sup> Al-Shaikhli, Muhammad Ra'ūf al-Sayyid Ṭaha. *Al-Mu'jam al-Jughrāfī li-madīnat Baghdad al-qadīma bain 1270 hijrī wa 1360 hijrī* (Geographical dictionary for the old city of Baghdad between 1270 Hijra and 1360 Hijra [1853-1941 AD]). Baghdad: Basra Press, 1977, p.45.

<sup>287</sup> Al-Gailani, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maḥaḍ. Unpublished research notes dated 23 April 1998. And interview with the administrative manager of the shrine complex on 24 March 2011.

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s sons according to most if not all his earliest biographers.<sup>288</sup> One possible explanation for the adoption of this epithet is that “Ābū Ṣāliḥ” is also common to both his father, Ābū Ṣāliḥ Mūsā Jangī-Dost, and one of his famous grandsons, Ābū Ṣāliḥ Naṣr ibn ‘Abd al-Razzāq ibn Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, who became the leading judge of his time in Baghdad. It is not uncommon in Iraq to call a person by his father’s epithet, referring to him as being ‘the son of so and so’, i.e. ibn Ābū Ṣāliḥ. With time the ‘ibn’ may have been dropped or forgotten, and he became popularly known as Ābū Ṣāliḥ. Local visitors to the shrine often address him as Ābū-Ṣāliḥ when praying to him; and the expression “‘aynī, hadha Ābū-Ṣāliḥ.” – My dear, this is Ābū-Ṣāliḥ. – meaning this is the Ābū-Ṣāliḥ whose saintly might is unmatched, is often heard.



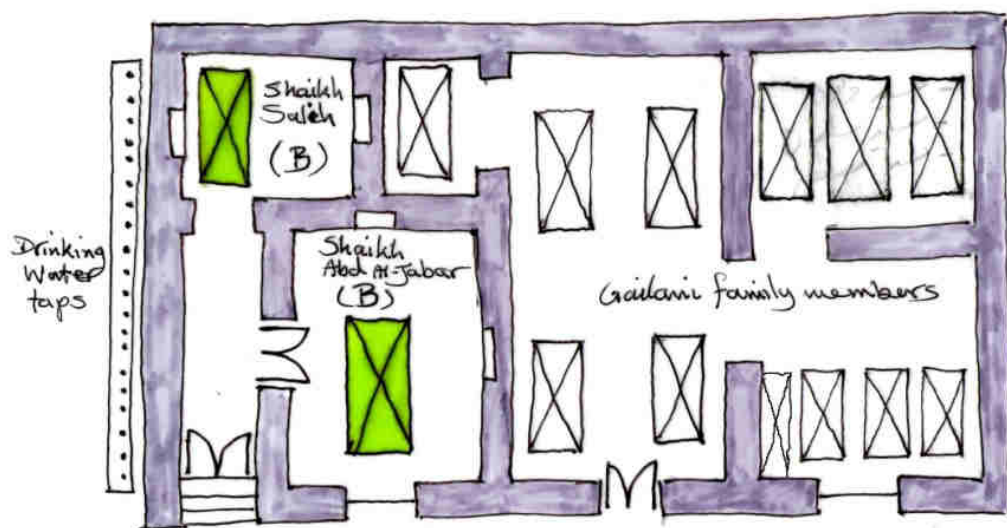
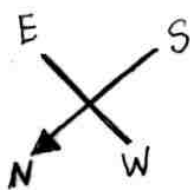
81- *The burial chambers of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Jabbār and Shaikh Ṣāliḥ.*

<sup>288</sup> For references to the epithets of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s father and grandson see (At-Tādifi, *Necklaces of ...*, 8 and 188).





82- Through the grilled window, 'Abd al-Jabbār's tomb can be seen draped with a maroon cover and flanked by two flower stands.



(B)- The burial chambers of Shaikh Abd al-Jabbar ibn Shaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and Shaikh Salih ibn Shaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani

83- The layout of the two suites of burial rooms where 'Abd al-Jabbār and Ṣāliḥ are buried.

This suite of burial chambers looks out onto the main courtyard of the mosque complex adjacent to the oldest of the shrine's minarets. It is adorned by a dome, decorated from the

outside with glazed and unglazed bricks, and on the inside, excluding Ṣāliḥ's burial chamber, with cut and faceted mirrors in a similar fashion to the upper walls, ceiling and dome of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's burial chamber, though with no inscriptions in the centre of the dome or on any of the walls. The upper walls and ceiling of Shaikh Ṣāliḥ's chamber are decorated with multi-colour painted arabesque patterns on plasterwork. All the lower parts of the walls are covered with marble slabs; and the marble floors are covered with machine-made fitted carpets. Crystal chandeliers hang from the ceilings and the centre of the dome, and light fixtures are positioned on the walls.

Both graves are encased in wooden boxes and covered with bespoke velvet "sitir" covers, each embroidered with the relevant name and titles of the occupant using gold-coloured thread. The name of the community presenting the sitir covers in 2011 was embroidered on the back of 'Abd al-Jabbār's covers, and stated that they were the servants of the Arkān Riḍā Academy, Mumbai, India.<sup>289</sup> Positioned above the covers of 'Abd al-Jabbār's tomb is a crowned turban. The crown is of silver sheet with embossed and gilded decoration consisting of a large 'boteh' (Paisley pattern) motif with the names of Allah and Muhammad in small roundels embossed on its lower and wider part, and surrounded by scrolling stems of flowers and leaves decoration. On this occasion, the turban below the crown is made up of the same fabric as the tomb's cover, and is embroidered at the front with a circular Arabic inscription stating "Yā shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī shā' li-llāh" (O' Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī something for God's sake), an invocation for Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's benefaction or intercession. It is a particularly interesting invocation, as it is not requested of the saintly occupant of this tomb, which the embroidered cover has been made specifically for; but it seeks the intercession of his father who holds superior Sufi saintly powers, which are acknowledged by his two epithets "Ghawth al-Thaqalain" and "Ghaith al-Kawnain" that have been acknowledged in the embroidered inscription on the front side of the sitir cover and below the position of the turban.

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<sup>289</sup> Riza Academy in Mumbai is associated with the Barelwī movement established there by Ahmad Riḍā Khān Barelwī (1856-1021 AD). Called by themselves "Ahl-i Sunnat wa Jama'at", the movement is predominantly Qādirī, though Naqshbandīs and other Sufi orders are members of it too. Sanyal, Usha. "Barelwīs." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*. Brill Online, 2012, accessed on 1 October 2012: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/barelwis-COM\\_23995](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/barelwis-COM_23995) .





84- The burial chamber and draped tomb of Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār.



85- The turban and crown positioned on Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār's tomb.



86- Back of the tomb cover draping Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār

The full inscription of the dedication embroidered on the front of the cover states “*Ḥadrat al-shaikh al-sayyid 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Qādirī ibn ghawth al-thaqalain wa ghaith al-kawnain al-imām Abī Muhammad 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥusainī al-Gailānī raḍā*

*Allah ta'ālā 'anhumā*" (the honourable shaikh sayyid 'Abd al-Jabbār the Qādirī son of the succour of the two weighty things [the Qur'an and the Prophet's offspring] and the benefactor of the two worlds [the world of humans and the world of spirits], the Imam Abī Muhammad 'Abd al-Qādir, the Ḥasanī [descendant of Imam Ḥasan], the Ḥusaīnī [descendant of Imam Ḥusaīn], the Gailānī [from Gailān], may God be pleased with both of them). This inscription sums up the significance of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir for those who believe in him, both through his spiritual attainments and his claimed blood lineage, which is being linked here to both Imam Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusaīn, the grandsons of the Prophet. On the back of this tomb cover is embroidered the name of the Indian patrons who commissioned the drape: "we are of the servants of al-Jīlānī, Ārkān Riḍā Ākīdamī, Mumbai, India."

On two of the walls in each of the chambers are shallow recesses. The two in 'Abd al-Jabbār's chamber are covered with cut-mirror decoration; one holding an arrangement of artificial flowers and the other a framed and glazed relic in the form of an aquatic animal's skull, locally believed to be that of the serpent that 'Abd al-Jabbār killed in a miraculously heroic act to save a village from its menace.<sup>290</sup> However, this particular skull is not that of a serpent, but seems to be of a crocodile of the Gharial (or Gavial) type found in Northern India and Southeast Asia.<sup>291</sup> Older photographs of the chamber that date back to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, show this skull displayed unframed on a plain white plastered wall.



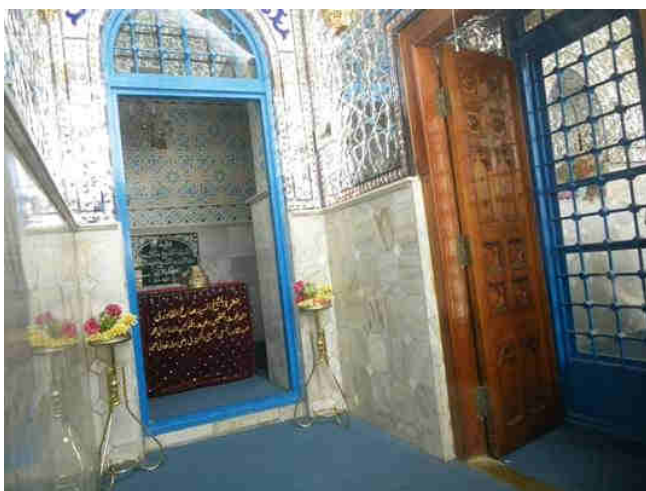
87- *The Gavial skull housed in a wooden showcase. The holes in the wood are for ventilation.*

<sup>290</sup> This folk tale needs to be further researched to determine when it first appeared.

<sup>291</sup> Brochu, Christopher A. "Crocodilian Snouts in Space and Time: Phylogenetic Approaches toward Adaptive Radiation" in *American Zoologist*, Vol.41, No.3 (June 2001): pp. 564-585.

On Shaikh Ṣāliḥ's tomb is positioned a silver crown, similar in design but smaller in size to that on Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār's, but there is no turban. In addition to the velvet covers that are decorated with the gilded inscription naming Shaikh Ṣāliḥ, an additional red textile has been spread over the tomb. It is decorated with the Shī'ī family tree of Prophet Muhammad and the twelve imams of Āl al-Bait growing out of a bulbous vase; below which is printed four short Qur'ānic chapters starting with the phrase "Say ..." – chapters 109, 112, 113 and 114 – the former two containing definitions of what Muslim believe, and the latter two holding protective invocations.<sup>292</sup> This white on red printed textile seems to be of Indian Subcontinent origin too, as the names of the Twelve Shī'ī imams of the Āl al-Bait tree are all written with no "al-" proceeding their epithets, rendering such imams as Muhammad al-Bāqir "Muhammad Bāqir", Ja'far al-Ṣādiq "Ja'far Ṣādiq", and Mūsā al-Kāẓim "Mūsā Kāẓim", etc., which is a grammatical corruption of their names. The unusual presence of this textile was not explained by the attendants helping with access beyond stating that it was a gift from a devotee.<sup>293</sup> Above this red and white textile, and just behind the silver crown is positioned a copy of the Qur'ān with a multi-coloured hardback cover. On the wall, at Shaikh Ṣāliḥ's feet a black plaque also states that this is his resting place. Artificial flowers are placed above the grave on the red textile, on the ledge of the wall recess nearest to the tomb, and on metal floor-stands either side of the arched opening leading to it.

The drapes on these tombs are changed from time to time, though not as frequently as those of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's, largely depending on gifts of drapes presented specifically for them, or driven by the need for replacements to refresh the space.



88- The burial chamber of Shaikh Ṣāliḥ, to the left of Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār's.

<sup>292</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 452 and 454-455).

<sup>293</sup> The inspection of these two burial chambers took place on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2011.



89- A silver and gilt crown is positioned on the tomb of Shaikh Ṣāliḥ.



90- The red textile on Shaikh Ṣāliḥ's tomb. A Qur'ān and a small vase with artificial flowers are positioned on it.

The exterior façade of this building is decorated with a band of Qur'ānic inscriptions along the upper edge of the wall and just below the parapet. The inscriptions are verses 9 and 10 of Chapter 10 – titled “Jonah” – in which God describes the condition of the faithful in the hereafter.<sup>294</sup> Below this epigraphic band and above the arched window of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s chamber is a carved and painted brick decoration with two crescent moons and stars and

<sup>294</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 157-158).

baroque style vegetal decorative elements.<sup>295</sup> The sign above the entrance door to this suite states that this is the burial of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Jabbār and Shaikh Ṣāliḥ, and quotes the Qur’ānic verse (10:62) in which God states that the Friends of God have nothing to fear or to regret.<sup>296</sup>

To the right of this suite is another suite of burial chambers housing the graves of eleven members of the Gailani family, including sons and daughters of Sayyids Salmān and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb; with the latest burial having taken place in the late 1970s.

### **C.15- Building area (N) – Gailani family burial rooms and Staff and followers’ accommodation:**

Along the south-west corner of the site and parallel to the side and back of the new women’s prayer hall (M) is a two-storey, L-shaped, building that comprises a set of eleven combined burial chambers and lodging rooms on the ground level and a similar number of lodging rooms on the upper level. A large number of the rooms in this section are allocated to the shrine’s staff and dependants, and a number to Qādirī Sufis.

At the junction of the two sides of the L-shaped building on the ground floor is a set of toilets, and adjacent to it is a suite comprising two rooms and a bathroom, occupied by an elderly Indian Sufi woman, the only female Qādirī mystic on site. Unable to speak Arabic, her story was interpreted by one of the shrine’s attendants who spoke Hindi.<sup>297</sup> Many years ago she was employed at the Embassy of India in Baghdad; and while still working there she converted to Islam from Hinduism under the tutelage of Bābā Ghulām, an Indian Qādirī Sufi who was living in the shrine at the time, and became one of his followers. She stayed on in Baghdad after the end of her work at the embassy. Unmarried and with no family in Iraq, the shrine has become her home. Outside her small humble space is stacked a large pile of sacks filled with pigeon-feed, which she uses to feed the pigeons in the central courtyard. Indian women visiting the shrine congregate round her, seeking blessings. From the moneys donated to her by her visitors she buys the pigeon feed for the wild birds flocking into the shrine.

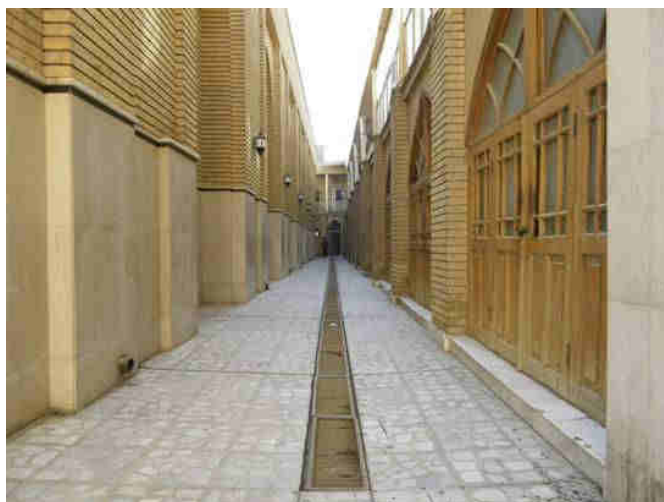
<sup>295</sup> An examination of early 20<sup>th</sup> century photographs that feature this façade shows no such emblem existing above this arched window. Although the symbolism associated with this emblem has not been ascertained yet; it is believed that it originally belonged to an older prayer niche of the Ḥanafīyya prayer hall, which was relocated into the double portico, and this element became redundant, and repositioned here.

<sup>296</sup> “Lo. verily the friends of Allah are (those) on whom fear (cometh) not, nor do they grieve”. (Pickthall, *Meaning of...*, 162).

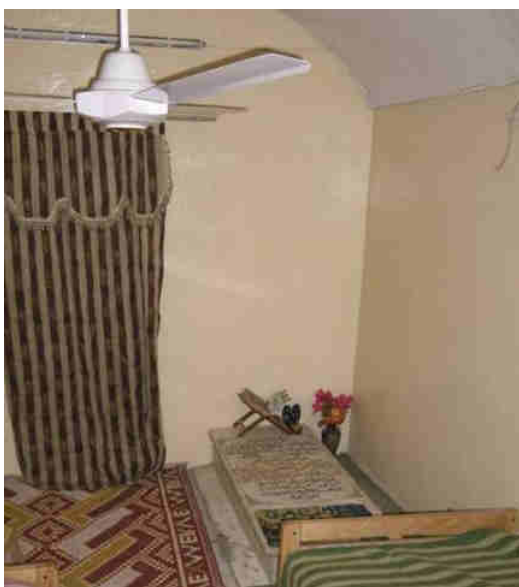
<sup>297</sup> Interview with the Indian Sufi woman on 29 December 2011.



The tombs in the ground floor rooms are reserved for members of the Gailani family and their spouses. The staff occupants have homes elsewhere in the city, and use the rooms allocated to them, including these family burial rooms, when they are on duty. Some of the Sufi lodgers live permanently in the shrine, while others hold their allocated rooms for when they come to visit it. A member of the Gailani family who has fallen upon hard times occupies one other room.



91- The walkway to the right of the new women's prayer hall leading to the burial ground.



92- One of the burial chambers on the ground floor. The vaulted room is also used as accommodation for staff. A folded blue prayer rug, a Qur'ān on a bookstand and a vase with artificial flowers are positioned on the marble-covered grave of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maḥaḍ Al-Gailani (d. 1999), the author of "Tārīkh Jāmi' al-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani."

### C.16- The Baqcha – Burial ground (Z):

“*Baqcha*” is a word of Farsi origin – *bāgh-che* – denoting a small orchard, and in old Baghdadi dialect refers to a very small garden or orchard,<sup>298</sup> usually in the form of a garden in the middle of a courtyard surrounded by buildings. Here it refers to the small walled burial ground that lies along the south-west wall of the shrine. No written historical reference describes it in any detail, nor are there any proper listings of who were buried in it. However, scattered in several historical references are the names of various important historical figures that have been buried there over the centuries. Two such titles include the 18<sup>th</sup> century historical work “*Gulshan Khulafā*” (The Rose Garden of Caliphs), written in Turkish by the Baghdadi author Murtaḍa Afendī Naẓmī-Zāda, in which he lists four 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman wālīs (governors) as having been buried in this graveyard. Three were wālīs of the Wilaya of Baghdad and one was the wālī of the Wilaya of Diyarbakir in south-east Turkey on the river Tigris and near the border with Syria.<sup>299</sup> The second title is the 20<sup>th</sup> century work “*al-Baghdādīūn, Akhbārahum wa Majālisahum*” (The Baghdadis, their news and their salons) by Ibrāhīm al-Durūbī, in which he mentions a number of important figures buried here, amongst whom are the 19<sup>th</sup> century Muftī of Baghdad (the head jurist of the city) Shaikh Ṣabghat-Āllah al-Ḥaydarī (died 1854) and the prominent Mosul poet ‘Abd al-Bāqī al-‘Umarī (died 1861).<sup>300</sup>

This burial ground seems at one point to have extended into the northeast and south-west sides of the site of the shrine. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Al-Gailani describes the south-eastern side as having had several 19<sup>th</sup> century burials belonging to the Gailani family, and names a few of them.<sup>301</sup> It was subsequently built over when the Mālīkī prayer hall (J) was first extended; and then next to it a Qādirī school building was constructed, which in turn was replaced by what is now the new function hall (L). When the school building was

<sup>298</sup> Al-Ḥanafī, Shaikh Jalāl. *Mu‘jam al-Lughā al-‘Amīyya al-Baghdādīyya* (Lexicon of colloquial Baghdadi language). Baghdad: Dar al-Ḥurriyya li-al-Ṭibā‘a, 1978, vol. 1, p. 570.

<sup>299</sup> Naẓmī-Zāda, Murtaḍa Afendī. *Gulshan Khulafā* (The Rose Garden of Caliphs). Najaf: al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Irāqī, 1971 (noted by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maḥaḍ Al-Gailani in his unpublished research note-cards with no page numbers). The wālīs are: the wazīr (vizier) Ārsalān Pāshā Naghāy-Zāda (died 1650); Ḥusayn Pāshā (died 1651); Muṣṭafā Pāshā Bambūgh (died 1663); and Diarbakir’s wālī Muhammad Pasha who was executed in 1700.

<sup>300</sup> Al-Durūbī, Ibrāhīm bin ‘Abd al-Ghanī. *al-Baghdādīūn, Akhbārahum wa Majālisahum* (The Baghdadis, their news and their salons). Baghdad: 1958, pp.35-37 and 42-43.

<sup>301</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh* ..., 102-104).

constructed, its ground floor was built higher than the ground level to allow for the enclosure of these graves in semi-basement chambers.<sup>302</sup>

The current caretaker of the burial ground, who is also the manager of the funeral parlour (Y) facility (and will be referred to in more detail further on), inventoried the 304 legible names on the graves.<sup>303</sup> Of these names only one belongs to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the remainder belonging to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and a few to the 21<sup>st</sup>. Several prominent Baghdadi family names appear amongst these 304, including members of the Gailani family and a number of Kurdish families; but the most prominent burial that currently stands there is that of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century former prime-minister of Iraq, ‘Abd al-Meḥsin al-Sa‘dūn (1879-1929).<sup>304</sup> Above his grave stands an impressive domed pavilion with a bronze memorial column standing in the centre below its canopy. From examining the list of burial names, many of the burials are not of Qādirī Sufis, but of the wider community associated with them. On inspecting the graveyard, a small number of graves that belonged to foreigners were observed too. These included that of a 55-year-old Indonesian diplomat based at the Indonesian embassy in Baghdad who passed away here in 1950, and a 22-year-old Indian Muslim from Mumbai who died in Basra and was brought to Baghdad for burial in 1998.

An in-depth study of who are now, and have been, buried in this graveyard, and the inscriptions on their graves would be invaluable to acquiring a better understanding of what it means for Iraqis to be buried at the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid ...

<sup>303</sup> The caretaker permitted access to copy his hand-written inventory. The list contains the full names of 304 of those buried, and their dates of birth (where mentioned) and death; but there was no location system used to identify the positions of these within the graveyard, or a note of how many remaining graves that are unknown. The caretaker explained that although the burial ground was full and formally closed, “no cemetery turns away a dead person”, and he can find space if requested or instructed by the custodians.

<sup>304</sup> Ghareeb, Edmund A. *Historical Dictionary of Iraq*. Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2004, pp.201-202.





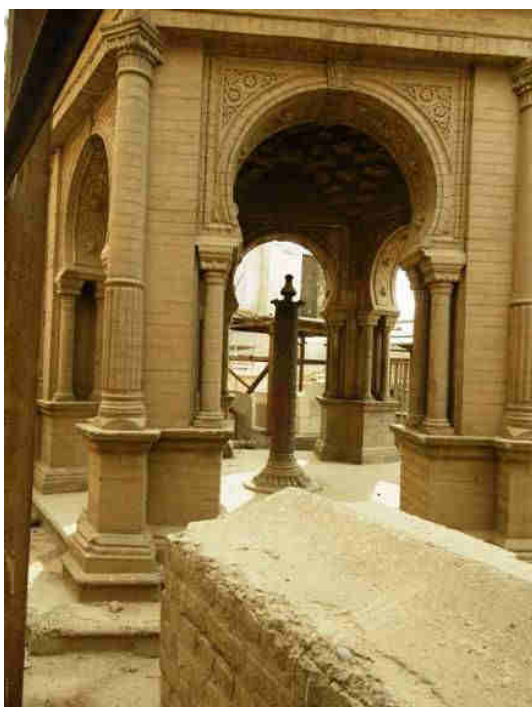
93- *The closed white metal gates lead into the shrine's burial ground (Z).*



94- *View of the burial ground from the roof of the shrine. Kifāḥ Street runs adjacent to its boundary wall.*



95- *The burial ground of the shrine.*



96- *the monument above the grave of Prime Minister 'Abd al-Meḥsin al-Sa 'dūn who headed four governments between 1922 and 1929.*



97- The grave of Shaikh 'Abd al-Karīm Muhammad Bīāra. He died in 2005 at the age of 103 in his lodging room at the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir.



98- The grave of the young Indian man.



99- The grave of the Indonesian diplomat.

#### C.17- Funeral Parlour – *Meghaisil* (Y):

The original location of this service was in the north-west corner of the shrine's burial ground. It was relocated outside the burial ground sometime in the 1990s, and now stands opposite the north-west entrance to the shrine, between the women's public toilets on the left and the pilgrims' accommodation building (P) on the right. The parlour consists of a small hallway and three rooms distributed either side of it. To the left are an office, reception room and a store; and to the right is the *meghaisil* – the washroom or body-preparation room.<sup>305</sup>

The *meghaisil* space is a tiled room, with ceramic tiles on the walls and marble tiles on the floor. The floor is on two levels, with the higher half accommodating two marble covered, table high, platforms, especially designed for the washing and preparation of the corpses, and a set of taps above a tiled trough on the far side of this area. The tiled walls are generally bare except for a range of wall hooks to hang cloths, towels, and traditional knitted *lifāh* for scrubbing the skin.<sup>306</sup> On one wall, above the marble platforms are hung

<sup>305</sup> *meghaisil* derives from *maghsal* – a place for washing, *ghasil* being the term for wash in Arabic. Meghaisil – meaning a small washing place – in the Iraqi Arabic dialect refers to the space used to wash and prepare the bodies of the deceased for burial; the equivalent of a funeral parlour in the West. Bodies are washed with traditional olive-oil soap then moved to a second platform to be shrouded. Plain white cotton cloth is used for this, three pieces for men, five for women.

<sup>306</sup> The Iraqi *lifā* is not to be confused with the loofah plant that is also used for scrubbing the skin. The *lifā* can be knitted from a variety of fibres, both natural and synthetic.

a clock and six religious posters with calligraphic inscriptions and images of holy places in Islam.



*100- The funeral parlour building.*



*101- The interior of the meghaisil room.*

The funeral parlour is a family run business by the undertaker, his wife and son. The undertaker's wife and her female assistant attend to female corpses, while the father and the son to male ones. On the façade of the parlour is a large sign announcing that the place is for the washing of the bodies of dead men and women; and that they are able to conduct this washing service at the deceased's home too; and lists the names and mobile phone numbers for the father and the son.

The facility, and its supply of water and electricity, is provided by the shrine free; and the undertaker's family run it and earn their living from providing the funerary service. The charges they levy are modest, with each body washed and wrapped for burial costing a



fixed price of 50,000 Iraqi Dinars, the equivalent of £50.00.<sup>307</sup> The *meghaisil* has a small number of wooden coffins to hire for a nominal charge, for the transportation of the prepared body to a cemetery.<sup>308</sup> Some of these coffins have inscribed on them the names of the donors who had endowed them to the shrine's funeral parlour.

Once a body has been washed and shrouded, it is positioned in the wooden coffin and taken out of the parlour. Some take the coffin into the shrine's courtyard and go into the prayer halls to conduct a short funerary prayer before setting off with the coffin to a cemetery in the city or beyond.



102- A family carries their coffin out of the shrine complex to be buried elsewhere.



103- A coffin placed on the especially designed windowsill in the shrine courtyard while the mourners entered the shrine's prayer hall to perform their noon prayers.

<sup>307</sup> An average taxi journey in Baghdad cost 8,000 Iraqi Dinars.

<sup>308</sup> The undertaker's son explained that most people buried the deceased's shrouded body in the grave without the use of a coffin. However, the Gailani family buries its deceased using wooden coffins, which he believed was a less common preference in Baghdadi society.



104- On the blue grille above the windowsill in the courtyard is fixed a brass plaque that describes the steps of a funeral prayer, which consists of four sections.

### C.18- Accommodation for pilgrims (P):

This is a yellow brick-faced modern building. It stands opposite the new extension to the site, on its north-west side; and comprises of two floors of accommodation rooms and related bathroom and toilet facilities for pilgrims. The ground floor is lower than the street adjacent to it by several steps. It currently houses a number of the staff in the shrine too.



105- The pilgrims' accommodation building (P) situated opposite the north-west side of the shrine and next to the funeral parlour.

### C.19- Toilet and ablutions facilities (O):

These two neighbouring buildings are the main public toilet and ablutions facilities in the complex, one for the males and one for the females. They are positioned outside the south-west entrance of the shrine. Each has eastern toilet cubicles, wash-handbasins, taps-and-troughs areas for ritual ablutions associated with the daily prayers.



106- *The toilet and ablutions facilities outside the north-west entrance to the shrine.*

## **C.20- The new extension and its various public spaces and lodging quarters surrounding the central courtyard (F):**

This is the most recent major construction on the site, which more than doubled its footprint. The extension was formally opened in 2009,<sup>309</sup> but the finishing touches were still in progress in 2012 when the field research for this thesis was being conducted. The expansion of the site and the construction of this modern building was initiated by Saddam Hussein, and carried out and paid for by the Iraqi government (see chapter 5).

The two-storey three-sided building surrounds the upper platform of the courtyard, which is some nine steps higher than the older section of the courtyard, and faces the main shrine in a south-westerly direction. Constructed with modern building techniques and materials, including reinforced concrete casting faced with carved marble slabs, it consists of three floors: a subterranean level, designed to be a retail centre; a ground floor; and an upper floor. From the outer side of the building vehicle access (X) and car-parking space (Q) surround it, as well as entrances (R) to the subterranean retail level.

This building houses a large number of accommodation and reception rooms for visitors and various Qādirī Sufī groups (F), rooms for the shrine's library (G), a kitchen (E) and ablutions facilities (O), spread over sixty-seven separate arched and domed interior spaces. These various spaces will be described in more detail under separate headings below.

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<sup>309</sup> The official website of the shrine: <http://www.sheikh-algailani.com/index.php?page=10> accessed on 11/06/2012.





*107- The new extension facing the shrine from across the central courtyard.*



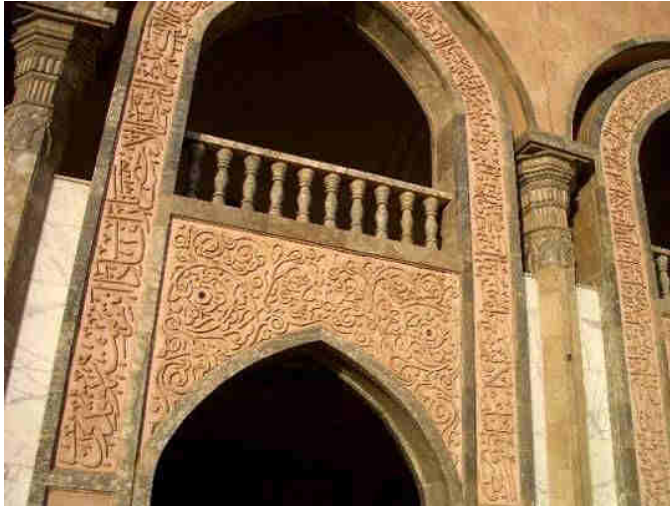
*108- A ground floor corridor with rooms lined on one side facing the central courtyard.*

The marble decorated external façades of this building, both looking onto the central courtyard, and looking out onto the car-parking and main and side streets, are dominated by carved religious epigraphic decoration, including Qur'ānic verses and repeats of a selection of religious quotations.

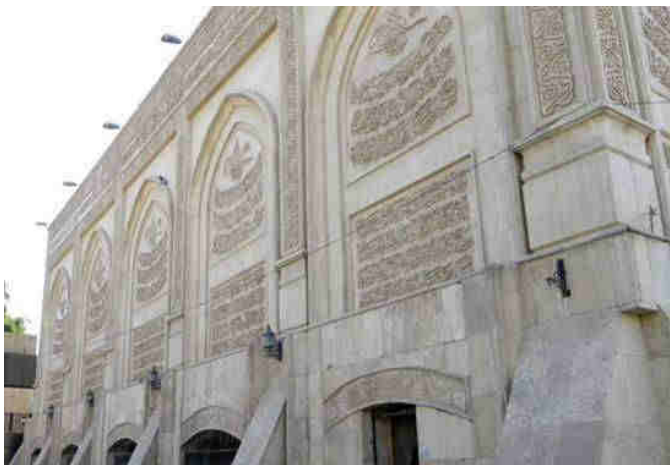
The largest sets of Qur'ānic verses running on the façade that faces the courtyard are those of Chapter 36 (Sūrat Yā-Sīn) followed by the first fifty verses of Chapter 18 (Sūrat al-Kahaf), in an anti-clockwise direction, starting at the first arch on the side where Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār's burial chamber is, and working their way round all the arches, ending near the clock-tower.

The Qur'ānic verses running on the external façades that face the main streets and neighbourhood behind the shrine are those of Chapter 20 (Sūrat Ṭāhā). These verses are positioned in an anti-clockwise direction too, but in blocks of three and four lines in the centre of each arch on the façade. This chapter is incomplete for some reason, as it starts with the last part of verse 39 on the façade that faces Gailani Street. In addition, along this side of the building, several verses between 20:40 and 20:48 are incomplete or missing. Above these arches and above all those facing onto the courtyard, just below the parapet, is

a continuous band repeating two phrases: the al-Shahāda, followed by *Ṣalā Allahu ta'ālā 'alayhi wa salam* (God Almighty's prayers and peace be upon him).



*109- Qur'ānic inscriptions from chapter 18 have been carved onto the cladding of the arches.*



*110- Part of the rear external façade of the shrine facing the Bāb al-Shaikh neighbourhood.*

In addition to the Qur'ānic chapters and religious inscriptions described above, a large number of other individual Qur'ānic verses and benedictory inscriptions adorn the walls and inner arches of the new main entrances to the shrine. The arched parts of the iron boundary fencing, the iron gates and the iron doors leading into halls and rooms also have the al-Shahāda decorating them.



*111- The iron gates of the main entrance.*

### **C.21- The Qādiriyya Library (G):**

This encyclopaedic multi-lingual public library occupies a large section of the building round the northeast corner. It is housed on two floors; and in addition to the main spaces of the library in the corner marked (G) in image no. 9, it stretches into the five adjacent rooms to the left and one to the right. These spaces are internally linked to the main hall (G) on each floor.

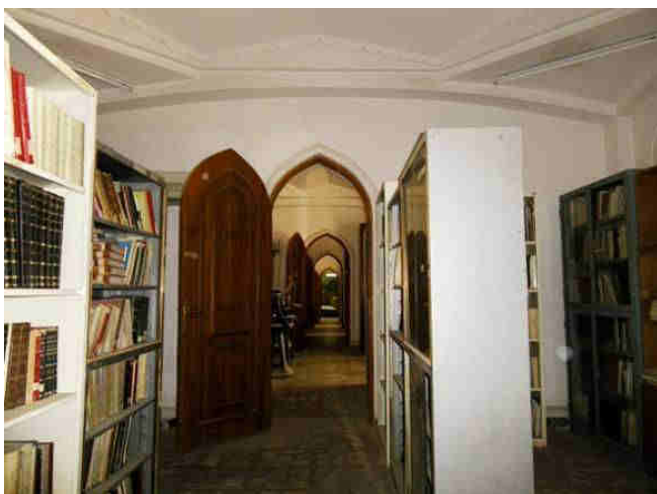
The library is simply arranged according to subject area, and within each area, books are arranged alphabetically by title. Two manual search systems are available for readers: a card-index system with author, title and subject search options; and a set of 38 hand-written and ring-bound bibliographical lists covering the key subjects in the library and a few others that are not covered by the index-cards system, such as listings of books according to each of the foreign languages present in the library (Urdu, Farsi, etc.). Accession-registers are kept for acquisitions, which once registered are catalogued and numbered using a system adapted to meet the library's needs.



112- The corner occupied by the library at the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir.



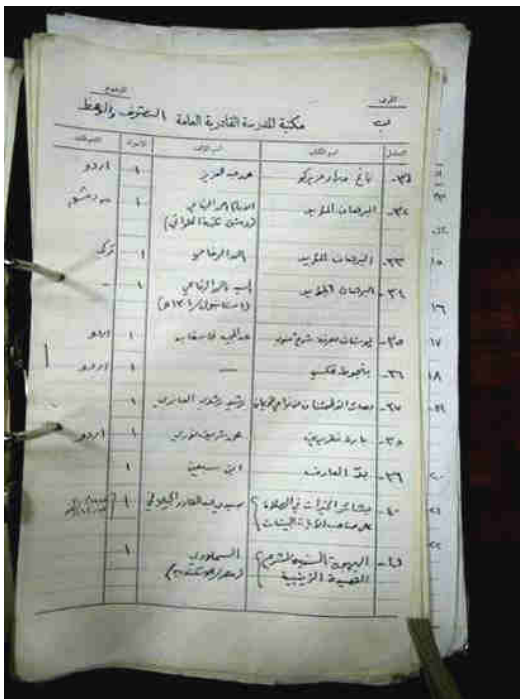
113- A view of the multi-domed ground-floor reading hall in the library.



114- The chain of library rooms adjacent to the main library hall.



115- The library's manual index-cards system.



116- The bibliographical lists ring-bound into subject areas to ease browsing.

The earliest reference to the survival of the library of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's school and hospice, beyond his life, is documented by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (1179 – 1229 AD) in his *Mu'ajam al-'Udabā'*. Al-Ḥamawī states that the linguist Ābū al-Ḥasan 'Alī bin 'Asākir al-Baṭā'ihī (1096 – 1176 AD) endowed his books to the school of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir; as did Ābū al-Ḥasan Murtaḍā al-Ḥārithī al-Maqdisī (died 1176 AD).<sup>310</sup> Rā'ūf goes on to explain that the library suffered from the calamities that befell Baghdad in the subsequent

<sup>310</sup> (Rā'ūf, *Al-Āthār al-Khaṭīyya* ..., 23).



centuries and until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when it was resurrected again, and the current library's history begins.<sup>311</sup>

The present library's collection of books was first brought together when a large group of manuscripts belonging to Sayyid 'Alī al-Qādirī<sup>312</sup> (died 1872 AD), the Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad (Superintendent of the Nobles, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, in Baghdad) and the custodian of the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and its endowments, was donated by him to the Qādiriyya School at the shrine, as a religious endowment.<sup>313</sup> His son Sayyid Salmān (1843-1897 AD) expanded this library when he succeeded him as Naqīb and custodian. When Sayyid Salmān died, his brother Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1845 – 1927 AD) succeeded him in the same position, and endowed his library to the Qādiriyya School too, which included 800 manuscripts and 4,000 printed volumes.<sup>314</sup> All three libraries were subsequently relocated from the Qādiriyya School rooms to dedicated rooms at the main shrine in 1954 when it was first opened to the public as the Qādiriyya Public Library.<sup>315</sup>

Rā'ūf explains that since its opening as a public library, the acquisition of books began in earnest both through purchasing current publications and through inviting persons or institutions with collections of books to donate them to the shrine. Several libraries of religious institutions in Baghdad were offered as endowments. These included such theological schools' libraries as that of the late Khātūniyya School (a 19<sup>th</sup> century seminary set up by 'Ātika Khātūn, a member of the Gailani family and the wife of Maḥmūd ibn Zakariyya the Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad); the library of the Qiblāniyya Mosque's School (an 18<sup>th</sup> century school attached to a much older mosque in Baghdad); the al-Faḍil Mosque's school library (an 18<sup>th</sup> century library in a 14<sup>th</sup> century mosque); and the library of the Khidīr Beg Mosque's School (both belonging to the 18th century).<sup>316</sup>

In addition to these institutional donations, personal libraries of Baghdadi figureheads were presented as religious endowments too. These include chief jurists and imams of mosques,

<sup>311</sup> Ibid. All the modern Arabic books and articles that mention the library of the shrine repeat the claims that the library was sacked when the Mongols invaded Baghdad in 1258, then destroyed a second time when the Safavid Shah Ismail concord the city in 1508, and destroyed a third time when Baghdad flooded in 1830. However, none of these claims has been referenced, and no contemporary references to any of these calamities have yet been found to specifically refer to the loss or destruction of the library at the shrine.

<sup>312</sup> Sayyid 'Alī ibn Sayyid Salmān ibn Sayyid Muṣṭaffā Al-Gailani, also known as 'Alī al-Naqīb.

<sup>313</sup> (Al-Muftī, *Maktabat al-Madrasa* ..., 29-30).

<sup>314</sup> (Rā'ūf, *Al-Āthār al-Khaṭiyya* ..., 24).

<sup>315</sup> Ibid, p.25

<sup>316</sup> Ibid, p. 27-29; and (Al-Muftī, *Maktabat al-Madrasa* ..., 37-39).

judges and lawyers, men of letters, senior civil servants and the military; and several members of the Gailani family.<sup>317</sup> The current count for the contents of the library is approximately 86,000 printed volumes and at least 2,500 manuscripts.<sup>318</sup>

In addition to a large number of Qādirī works, including those by or attributed to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, the subjects held cover almost every field of knowledge, from the arts and humanities to the sciences, including theology and civil and religious law, Sufism, linguistics, literature and poetry, history and geography, philosophy, politics and social sciences, general science, medicine and mathematics, business studies, etc. The library also has collections of journals and newspapers and significant collections in several foreign languages.<sup>319</sup>

The manuscripts are also varied in their subjects, and in addition to copies of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s works and biographies, they include Qur’ān and Ḥadīth books and related disciplines; Arabic language and literature; theology and mysticism; logic, rhetoric and disputations; history and biographical works; geography; astronomy and astrology; divination; mathematics and geometry; mechanics, physics and chemistry; medicine, pharmacology and zoology. A five volume catalogue of these manuscripts was compiled by the historian ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Salām Rā’ūf between 1974 and 1980.<sup>320</sup> And amongst its many treasures, for example, is a gilded Qur’ān, in two volumes, personally copied by the Mughal Indian prince Dara Shikoh (1615 – 1659 AD) who was a Qādirī and the son of Emperor Shah Jahan. He dedicated these two volumes to the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad.<sup>321</sup> The library also contains a collection of manuscript documents and certificates relating to the Qādirī Sufi Order, its leaders in Baghdad and its endowments in Iraq.<sup>322</sup> It includes a number of Ottoman Sultanī edicts bestowing medals upon the Naqībs of Baghdad and decrees exempting Qādirī endowment agricultural lands from taxation.

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid, pp. 39-41.

<sup>318</sup> Interview with the chief librarian on 17 December 2011.

<sup>319</sup> Inspections of the library and its catalogues between 2009 and 2012.

<sup>320</sup> (Rā’ūf, *Al-Āthār al-Khaṭīyya* ..., 1-5).

<sup>321</sup> Ibid, vol. 1, pp. 50-52.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid, vol. 4, pp.293-400.



*117- The manuscript collection display cabinets. To reduce the damaging effects of light, the cases are draped when not being viewed.*

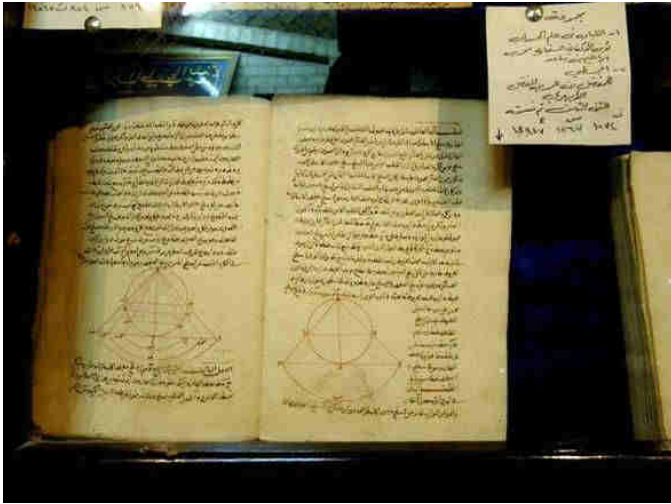


*118- Each book on display has a hand written label identifying it.*



*119- The second of a large two-volume gilded Qur'ān, gifted to the shrine by the Sardār 'Abd-Āllah Khān al-Kuẓa'ī al-Dūrānī, the ruler of Kashmīr (ruled 1795 – 1806 AD) who was a follower of the Qādiriyya.*





120- A single volume containing two copied works in mathematics and astronomy, the first by Ibn al-Kafānī (died 1348 AD), and the second by al-Mufaḍal bin 'Amr al-Abharī (13<sup>th</sup> century AD). The two pages shown here explain how to read the skies using the astrolabe.



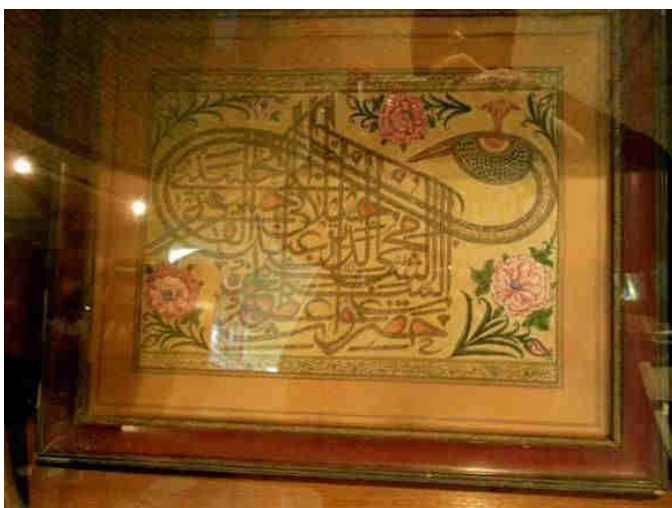
121- A Qādirī Sufī certificate from the Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad Sayyid Salmān (died 1897 AD) to Rajab ibn 'Abd al-Rahīm al-Kābūlī al-Makkī, a follower from Kābūl in Afghanistan, dated 1884 AD. The gilded certificate in scroll format is 306 cm long and 28 cm wide.

Finally, the library also holds an historical collection of framed calligraphic works with mainly Qādirī subjects, from poetic verses and invocations to emblems and calligrams. There are also calligraphic works of Qur'ānic quotations and supplications to the Prophet; a small collection of framed textiles embroidered with benedictory inscriptions; and carved and lacquered wooden bookstands. Most of these artworks belong to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>323</sup> The older and more fragile are displayed in glass-fronted cabinets, but most are hung on the walls of the library.

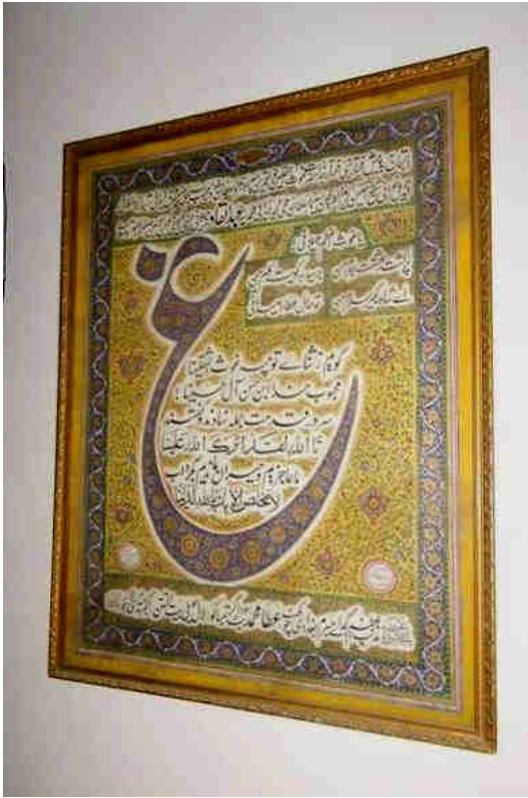
<sup>323</sup> Inspections of the library's contents carried out between 2009 and 2012.



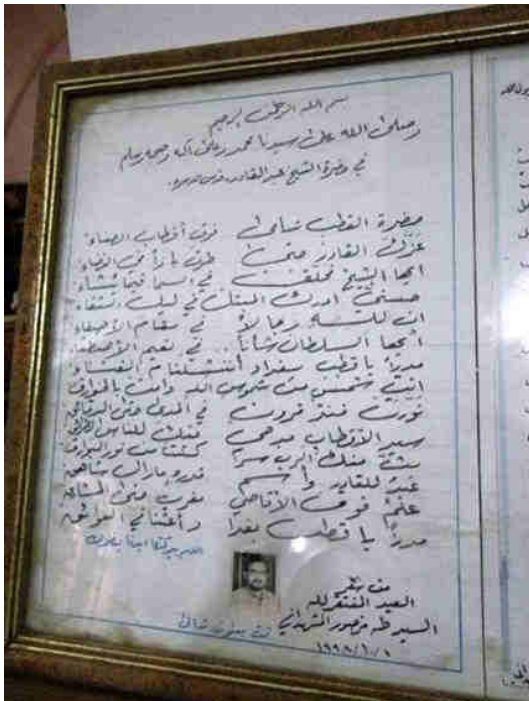
122- A variety of calligraphic works held by the library. The framed photographic portraits are of three members of the Gailani family who held the post of Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.



123- One of a pair of calligraphic renditions of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's name and titles formed in the shape of a Ṭughrā' – Ottoman-style emblem – that ends with a peacock's head. It was written by the calligrapher Mirzā Muhammad 'Alī ibn Mirzā Ghulām Rasūl Khaūshnaūīs al-Kashmīrī in 1925.



124- Calligraphic work written in Urdu, in praise of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. The Arabic letter 'ghain', for 'ghawth' (succour or aid) dominates the work. Ghawth is one of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's epithets.



125- One of two poems dedicated to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir in Arabic, composed in 1998 by an Iraqi poet, Ṭaha Manşūr al-Mashhadānī. The poet's photograph is inserted at the bottom of the work next to his name.



126- A certificate produced by the head of the Rabbāb 'a clan in 1994 that states the clan's descent from Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī through his son 'Abd al-Razzāq, and through them from Prophet Muhammad's daughter Fāṭima.

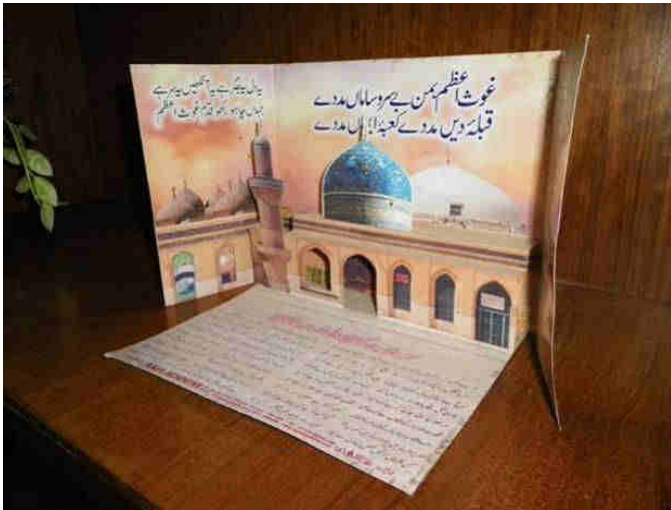


127- The clock displays the name of the donor and his family beneath an invocation to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir for his intercession.





128- A small painting of the shrine by a member of the Gailani family dated 1976.



129- A pop-up card of the shrine with poetic verses and prayers to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, produced by Reza Academy in Mumbai; the same Qādirī institution that made the tomb covers for Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār and his brother's burial chambers mentioned above.

## C.22- Gailani family reception rooms (F closest to L):

Adjacent to the library on the ground floor, along the south-east side of the new extension to the site, are a series of rooms that form the formal reception rooms of the Gailani family in the shrine. These consist of two large reception rooms, two smaller spaces for sleeping, a kitchenette, bathroom and toilet.

Internally linked to each other, the first of the large reception rooms is furnished in a modern oriental divan-style layout, with a series of armless sofas lining three sides of the room and a pair of armchairs dominating the far end of the room where the window is. An

arrangement of small coffee tables is positioned in the centre of the room. The floor is covered with a modern fitted carpet, and the window is draped with elaborately designed curtains. The walls are hung with a variety of framed works of art, photographic portraits and other objects.



*130- The reception room of the Gailani family.*

Between the two armchairs stands on a pole the flag of the Qādirī Order – more popularly known as the flag of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir – which is made of a dark green velvet textile decorated with embroidered inscriptions in gilded thread. The ‘shahāda’ statement dominates the upper centre of the flag. Below it is a zoomorphic calligraphic emblem of the falcon that represents Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. In each corner of the flag is positioned the name of one of the four Rāshidūn Caliphs (Ābū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī).



131- The shrine's flag of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir; dark green velvet with gilded calligraphic embroidery. The bird here represents Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir whose epithet is al-Bāz al-Āshhab – the gray falcon.

Next to the armchair on the left of the window, and behind it, is positioned on a pole the Iraqi flag, and further left on the wall is hung a framed velvet embroidery with a calligraphic rendition of the Qur'ānic verse (1:2) – Praise be to God Lord of the Universe. To the side of the armchair on the right is positioned another pole upon which is hung a jade-green embroidered silk stole, with two Arabic / Urdu inscriptions, on the left “Peace be upon you O Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī”, and on the right “Aid us O Jilani falcon, auspicious Ghawthiyya<sup>324</sup> anniversary”. At the bottom of the first inscription is a blue and black dome representing the one on Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's burial chamber, and the one at the bottom of the second inscription is white and representing the large white dome of the shrine above the Ḥanafī prayer hall. On the wall to the right of the stole is hung another embroidered calligraphic panel with the inscription “O Living One, O Self-Existent” – calling upon God using two of His attributes.<sup>325</sup>

<sup>324</sup> 'Ghawthiyya' from 'Ghawth' – succour – one of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's epithets. The use of Ghawth and the second half of the inscription that contains it is ungrammatical in Arabic and seems peculiar to Urdu.

<sup>325</sup> Al-Ḥayy, the Living One, and al-Qayyūm, the Self-Existent are two of God's 99 Names.



*132- The silk stole with the embroidered inscriptions is hung on a pole and positioned to the right of the window.*

The other walls in the room are also adorned with framed works and other objects. These include two swords; a metal finial for a processional ‘alam (standard);<sup>326</sup> the family tree of one of the Gailanis; photographic portraits of members of the family; images of the shrine before its expansion; and calligraphic works.

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<sup>326</sup> A calligraphical inscription in the tear-shaped base is the first phrase of the Quranic verse (24:35).





133- A fretted steel finial for a processional standard (‘alam).



134- Archival images of the shrine's original library before its demolition to allow for the expansion of the site.



135- Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb and a number of his sons and grandsons.



136- A genealogical tree for a branch of the custodians' family.



137- A framed depiction of the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir woven in piled carpet. The Urdu inscription at the top names the shrine, and the English inscription at the bottom promotes the website of a sibling of one of the custodians, who has a following in Pakistan and in the UK.

### C.23- The shrine's local Qādirī dhikr circle's takkia (H):

Located on the ground floor and to the left of the Qādiriyya Library, this room is dedicated for the use of the local Qādirī Sufi dhikr circle in the shrine, known as al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya. The floor is covered with rows of machine-made carpets with the repeat pattern of the prayer-niche. On the sides of the room, these carpets are overlaid with thin cotton-stuffed mattresses covered with piled and flat hand-woven rugs. A small stand for stacking shoes is positioned on the floor to the left of the door.



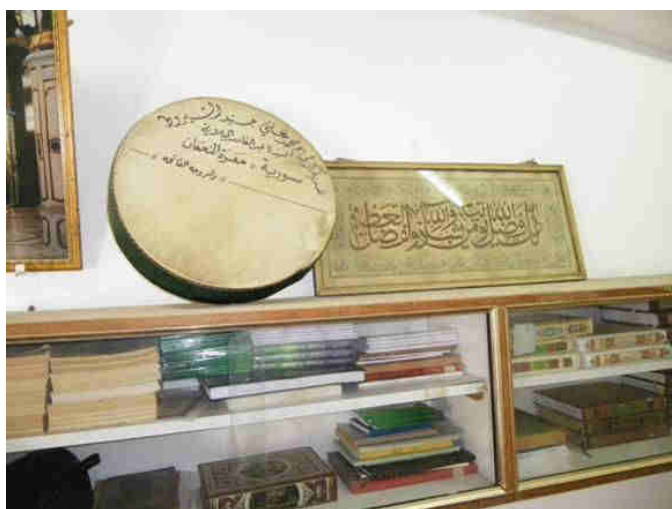
138- The lodging room of al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya at the shrine.

The whitewashed walls are adorned with various framed images and a small corner-shaped set of shelves for books. In the four corners of the room are hung the names of the four Rāshidūn Caliphs: Ābū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī. On the main wall facing the entrance is hung a large calligraphic inscription of the ‘shahāda’ and under it are three photographic portraits. The one in the centre is of the current shaikh of the al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya; to the right of it is of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Karīm Bīāra al-Mudaris – the leading Qādirī Sufi and theologian mentioned in chapter 1, and whose grave is illustrated in this chapter. The third is of a yet to be identified shaikh. On the walls hang several items: a calligraphic rendition of the whole Qur’ān in minuscule script; a photograph of the al-Ka’ba and the al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf Mosque in Mecca; a calligraphic work of the Qur’ānic verse (62:4),<sup>327</sup> in which God tells of his bounty and granting it to whomsoever He may wish; and a calligraphic piece with a phrase from the Qur’ānic verse (48:10) in which God

<sup>327</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 399).

states that his hand is above all hands.<sup>328</sup> A photograph of Prophet Muhammad's burial chamber in Medina hangs next to a tambourine inscribed with a dedication to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir by a Syrian named al-Hāj Muhammad 'Alī Junaīd al-Shayrūt from Ma'arat al-Nu'mān in Syria.

The room has a shallow domed ceiling and walls decorated with stucco arches. Only one armchair stands in the room for the use of Shaikh Najīb; and a small cabinet is set in front of it for holding books and other belongings.



139- The tambourine dedicated to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir by the Syrian follower from Ma'arat al-Nu'mān.

#### C.24- Kitchen for pilgrims and staff (E):

There are two kitchens at the shrine, one for daily use by staff and pilgrims, and one dedicated to producing the traditional soup and other dishes that the shrine distributes daily to the poor and the locals as part of its charitable purposes. This staff and pilgrims kitchen facility, located in the far north-west corner of the site comprises of a modern cooking space and a refectory. Outside its entrance is a partitioned seating area with dining tables and chairs, and multi-tapped hot and cold drinking-water dispensing-cabinets. In this self-catering kitchen, the food preparation is carried out by both staff and pilgrims.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid, p.365.



*140- Pilgrims' and staff kitchen.*



*141- The dining space in the portico in front of the entrance to the kitchen.*

#### **C.25- Toilet and ablutions facility (O) by staff kitchen (E) area**

On both floors of the new extension are located public toilet and ablutions facilities, in addition to the en-suite private toilets and bathrooms in each of the lodging spaces in this building.



*142- An example of the toilet and ablutions facilities on site.*



**C.26- The new subterranean retail area (R):**

Under the new extension is a basement space created to accommodate retail units for a folkloric shopping centre. This part of the building is still to be completed and opened to the public.



*143- The subterranean retail area that forms part of the new extension to the site.*



*144- View of the main walkway into the space.*

**C.27- Administrative offices of the Qādirī Waqf (S and U):**

The Office of the Endowments of the Qādirī Shrine is situated on the south-east side of the shrine and across Gailani Street. Its building is part of the new extension project, and is built on part of the Faḍwat ‘Arab neighbourhood that was repossessed by the government for this purpose. The one storey building comprises of three courtyards (S, U and T), each surrounded by a variety of rooms. The first courtyard (S) is the administrative offices of the shrine and its endowments. The second courtyard (U) holds function halls and rooms available for hire to conduct funeral and memorial receptions and the like. The third courtyard (T) is the Qādirī endowments soup kitchen.



*145- The administration building for the shrine and its religious endowments, which also includes the soup kitchen.*



*146- The entrance into the administrative offices.*

The main endowment office (S) is arranged in an open-plan style, with four smaller offices attached to it. The main open-plan space is divided in half, with the employees' desks in a row facing into the room, and in front of them a reception area for visitors and people coming to follow up on business matters. The four smaller offices, two at either end of the main office space, include the offices of the two custodians, the documents room and the strong room.



*147- The main office of the Qādiriyya Endowments.*





148- Seating area for business visitors and the employees' desks behind.

On the various walls in the offices of the Qādirī Endowments are hung framed images of the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, scenes of the pilgrimage in Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. A number of clocks adorn the walls. Some have dedications to the shrine in Baghdad inscribed on them, indicating that they were gifts from Qādirī followers. A pole with an embroidered green silk flag stands between the two custodians' offices. The embroidered inscription on it is that of the 'Shahāda'. The custodians' offices are also adorned with similar framed works; and in one there are also photographs of the custodian's formal visits to Qādirī communities in Bangladesh.



149- An embroidered green satin flag bearing the words of the Shahāda is hung on a pole with a star and crescent finial.

### C.28- The Soup Kitchen (T):

The soup kitchen occupies the third courtyard in the administration building. It consists of a cooking space, several food stores, abattoir, a dishwashing room, and a staff reception room. The courtyard is also used for food preparation. The building has two entrances, one at the front of the building facing Gailani Street, which is not in current use; and the second at the back of the building, looking out onto a car-parking space. At this back entrance is set up a queuing barrier system sheltered from the elements by a canopy for people to queue for soup at the windows of the cooking space in the kitchen, a window for the females and a window for the males.



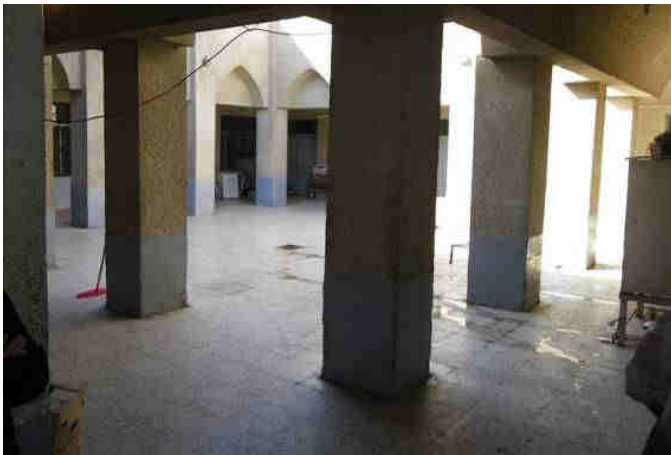
150- Front façade of the soup kitchen. With its title “Maṭbakh al-Khairāt” – the beneficence kitchen, more popularly known as the shorba-khāna – soup-kitchen.



151- The back entrance to the soup kitchen.

The main cooking space is more basic and on a larger scale than the staff / pilgrims kitchen.

The main dish that is cooked every day of the year except for special times such as the fasting month of Ramaḍān, the annual anniversary of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Mawlūd, is a lamb and rice soup, popularly know as ‘shorbat al-Shaikh’ – the Shaikh’s soup. In Ramaḍān, the break-fast meal at sunset is lentil soup; and in the Mawlūd of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir the daily dish is ‘tīman Hunūd’ – Indian rice – an Afghani lamb Biryānī with spices especially brought from the Indian Subcontinent. Other special occasions include when a benefactor or a member of the public sponsors or requests a specific dish be made and distributed amongst the poor, which he / she pays for in agreement with the shrine’s kitchen administration. The daily pot of soup cooked contains 50 kilograms lamb and 25 kilograms rice – one pot per day is served. The average Indian rice pot contains 50 kilograms lamb, 39 kilograms rice, 5 kilograms onions and the spices. Twelve pots of Indian rice per day are served during the two-week period of the Mawlūd festival, one of which is cooked with chicken, and contains 50 chickens in place of the lamb.



*152- The courtyard of the soup kitchen with the various stores and cooking spaces surrounding it.*

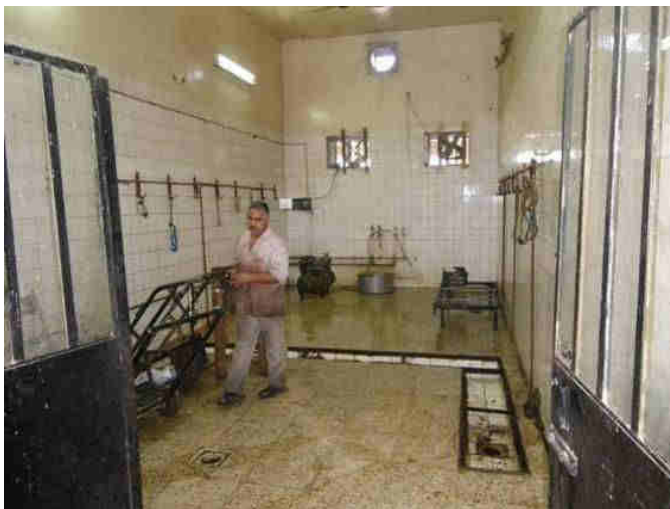


*153- The main cooking space in the kitchen with its large cooking pots and gas flames.*



*154- Preparing the daily lamb and rice soup the kitchen is famous for. The large pot of uncooked rice to the right of the image is there to give out to the public if the soup ran out while there were still people queuing.*

The butchery room or abattoir is especially designed for its function. Large tanks for ice blocks to cool the chopped meat are also present. The sheep's fleece and offal are sold and the money raised is used to purchase other ingredients for the kitchen.



*155- The butchery room.*



*156- The staff room in the soup kitchen.*

The food stores are stocked with the essential foodstuffs needed for the preparation of the daily soup, which is purchased mainly with a budget provided by the shrine's endowment income. The butchered meat is stored in freezers. Other ingredients, mainly donated by the public, such as grain and pulses are also stored. These are mainly donated by the public. The kitchen also receives on occasion donations of goods and clothing to be distributed to the poor. These are also stored until they are distributed. A separate storage space is dedicated to stacks of cooking oils and ghee; the large cooking pots; and the gas canisters used to fuel the cooking.



*157- The rice and meat store; with stacks of rice bags placed on pallet.*



### C.29- Fenced green for sheep offerings (V):

Part of the administrative building is a small green fenced off for the purpose of keeping live sheep offerings received or purchased by the shrine for use in the soup-kitchen. A few small date palms are dotted around and offer a little shade to the animals. Water troughs and wide metal basins for animal feed are located at the far end of the green.



*158- The sheep stock offered to the shrine for the Mawlūd of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in March 2012. Over 120 sheep were donated and slaughtered for the occasion.*

### C.30- Comments on the epigraphy on site:

As has been detailed throughout this chapter a substantial number of inscriptions appear within the shrine and mosque compound. Their content give rise to the following three observations, which deserve more study and analysis in any investigation that compares this shrine with others elsewhere within Iraq, and beyond, to better understand their significance:

- 1- The majority are Qur’ānic verses, with a number repeatedly used to such an extent that it sometimes seems excessive, such as the Shahāda and verses 10:62-66, which refer to God’s friends, the āwliā’, one of whom is Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. This gives the impression that the shrine is eager to reassure the observer that this is indeed an orthodox Islamic space, grounded in the Qur’ān.
- 2- With the exception of a few spaces such as the burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, the library and the Mawlūd banners, there seem to be no explicitly Sufi inscriptions, whether poetic or in prose anywhere on site. Yet the shrine’s Qādirī

dhikr circle litany and its Mawlūd recitations have ample references to Sufi concepts.

- 3- Despite the shrine being a Sunnī Ḥanafī place of worship, there was no epigraphic presence for the four Rāshidūn Caliphs: Ābū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, other than in the four corners of Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya's lodging room and on the dark green velvet flag of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir, which hangs in pride of place in the Gailani family reception room.

No explanation was given for these observations by the staff of the shrine. Nevertheless this phenomenon was also observed at other Sufi shrines in the city including, Shaikh Maʿrūf al-Karkhī, al-Junaīd al-Baghdadī and Ābū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī.

### **C.31- Comment on the consequences of the expansion of the site**

Before the expansion of the shrine, the juxtaposition of the library opposite the main entrance into the double portico and the burial chamber of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir on the one hand, and next to the burial chambers of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Jabbār and Shaikh Ṣāliḥ on the other hand, meant it was situated in the middle of a busy thoroughfare accessible to passers by on their way to other parts of the shrine. The old soup kitchen's position opposite the clock tower and in relation to the main burial chamber and other spaces in the shrine meant that those coming mainly for the soup kitchen were ever aware that it was part of an active Sufi shrine and that they could perform a brief visitation or prayer on their way. It also made the non-soup kitchen visitors aware of the shrine's benevolent activity and of the reality of the neighbourhood in which it is situated. The importance of these juxtapositions also applied to the administrative offices of the shrine and endowments, which were also located around the old central courtyard, with the staff being able to both perform their duties and engage with the daily life of the shrine.

These three areas of the life of this shrine, the library, the soup kitchen and the administrative offices, have been particularly negatively affected by the expansion of the shrine and their relocation into the new buildings. Even though these new areas are much more spacious and modern in fabric and furnishings, their new locations have disconnected them from each other and from the main spaces in the shrine. The expansion has resulted in concealing the library and its display of gilded manuscripts from visitors to the shrine and detaching its staff from the shrine's activities. It resulted in banishing the needy with

their pots and pans from sight, as they were considered unsightly by government officials wishing to falsely promote a perfect image of a prosperous Iraqi nation under Ba‘th Party rule. Making it more arduous for the soup kitchen users to combine a visitation, or to perform a prayer, on the way to collecting food. The expnation also resulted in isolating the senior management team from direct oversight of the shrine’s activities, affecting the quality of their supervisory roles and ability to respond to arising needs quickly and efficiently.

#### **D- The Shrine and its neighbourhood:**

Although the shrine has a national and international audience base, it is also a local entity that interacts with other locally based community organisations and reacts to local issues common to the inhabitants of the district of Bāb al-Shaikh. Through examining five other religious establishments in the neighbourhood, this section will present examples of how the shrine interacts with each of them, what drives this interaction and how both sides engage with each other. The first two are independent Sufi takkias, one of which has already been introduced in chapter 1. The second two are Shī‘a places of worship; and the last is a public religious school run by central government.

##### **D.1- Takkiat al-Ṭayyār:**

As has been briefly mentioned in chapter one, the founder of this independent Qādirī takkia is Shaikh Ḥasan ibn al-‘Abbās al-Ṭayyār,<sup>329</sup> believed to be a contemporary and follower of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Mecca in 1150 AD. Ṭayyār family lore states that Shaikh Ḥasan accompanied Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir back to Baghdad, where he settled with his family in the neighbourhood adjacent to the school of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.<sup>330</sup>

The current takkia, which backs onto the middle of the northeastern wall of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, is a one-storey building with a central courtyard with a small garden dominated by a fountain and a large lush tree. The takkia’s rooms surround this courtyard, with their doors and windows opening onto it.

The al-Ṭayyār takkia serves a group of followers, and offers accommodation to some, especially college students coming from outside Baghdad. It also offers hospitality to

<sup>329</sup> (Al-Durājī, *Al-Rubṭ wa al-takāyyā* ..., 103-106).

<sup>330</sup> (Al-Ṭā‘ī, *Mawsū‘at tārīkh* ..., 138-140 and 161-164).



foreign Qādirī pilgrims on visits to the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Three of the takkia’s rooms contain four Sufi graves, those of the heads of the order. The takkia is managed by descendants of Shaikh Ḥasan al-Ṭayyār as a religious endowment. The followers conduct Sufi dhikr recitation sessions weekly; and on special occasions, they attend the events held at the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.<sup>331</sup>



159- *Front façade of the Takkia of Shaikh Ḥasan al-Ṭayyār, with a small external garden in front of it.*



160- *Internal courtyard and garden in the centre of the takkia surrounded by its various reception rooms.*

<sup>331</sup> Interview with one of the caretakers at the takkia on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2012.



161- The largest of the three rooms that hold tombs in the takkia. The grave in the background belongs to Shaikh ‘Abd-Allah al-Akbar ibn ‘Abd al-Nabī ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭayyār; and the grave in the foreground belongs to his grandson Shaikh Muhammad ibn Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd-Allah al-Ṭayyār.

## D.2- Takkiat Ābū-Khumra:

This takkia is also very near to the outer wall of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir on its northeast side, and only two lanes away from Takkiat al-Ṭayyār. Though currently it is a Rifā‘iyya Sufi takkia, it also claims to follow the Qādiriyya order. According to family lore, Shaikh Muhammad Ābū-Khumra al-Hindī, better known as Ābū-Khumra, founded the takkia sometime during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>332</sup> He was a Qādirī Sufī, and in his takkia he taught the teachings of the Qādiriyya Sufi order to the Indian Subcontinent pilgrims of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s shrine in the Hindi and Urdu languages – hence the epithet al-Hindī.<sup>333</sup> At some point during the lives of his descendants, the takkia became a Rifā‘ī one.

Currently, the takkia is run by members of the Ābū-Khumra family, who offer a range of spiritual services, including folk medicine and healing, divination and other similar practices that involve the preparation of talismans and the like using the Qur’ān and other religious textual materials.<sup>334</sup> A disproportionate number of women visit this takkia, where

<sup>332</sup> The four references consulted conflict in the exact names of Shaikh Ābū-Khumra and give no dates for his birth or death, or exact date for his takkia’s establishment; nonetheless, one dates its foundation to 1700 without referencing its sources: Al-Warid, Bāqir Āmīn. *Hawādith Baghdad fī Ithna-‘Ashara Qirn* (Twelve centuries of events in Baghdad). Baghdad: Maktabat al-Nahḍa, 1989, p.212; and one dates it to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, based on its architectural features and interviews with the then caretaker: (Al-Durājī, *Al-Rubṭ wa al-takāyyā* ..., 99-102).

<sup>333</sup> (Al-Durājī, *Al-Rubṭ wa al-takāyyā* ..., 99-102); and (Al-Ṭā’ī, *Mawsū‘at tārīkh* ..., 103-106).

<sup>334</sup> Field visit on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011; and interviews with a number of the workers at the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, including the custodian, the solicitor and the female workers responsible for the female prayer halls in the shrine.

the grave of Ābū-Khumra is one of the focuses of their visits, since a number of ‘karāmāt’ – divinely guided or inspired miracles – are attributed to him, including one that gained him his other epithet: Ābū-Khumra, the Father of Yeast (yeast associated with baking bread).<sup>335</sup> As with Takkiat al-Ṭayyār, reliable written sources relating to Ābū-Khumra’s identity and biography are difficult to find.

As briefly mentioned earlier, women, who come to the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir seeking assistance with issues concerning untreatable or unidentified ailments, or with so-called spirit-possession experiences, are tactfully advised by attendants to visit Ābū-Khumra’s takkia where such assistance may be obtained.<sup>336</sup> The takkia also conducts various Rifā‘ī Sufi rituals including dhikr ceremonies, Mawlūd ceremonies, and various prayers.<sup>337</sup>

The grave of Ābū-Khumra is peculiarly submerged in water within a subterranean tiled burial chamber that stretches underneath the paved lane that leads to the takkia. The reason for the presence of water seems to be caused by the high water table in this area. Some visitors were observed bringing their own empty plastic water bottles and dipping them into the water at the foot of the steps leading down into the half-submerged burial chamber, presumably for use in curing illnesses.<sup>338</sup> Female visitors were also observed coming into the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir after having been at the takkia of Ābū-Khumra bearing with them water bottles from there, with the purpose of having the water blessed by visiting Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. These visitors are asked not to open their bottles within the burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir nor within the prayer halls, for fear of both water spillage and being seen to be endorsing unorthodox rituals.

According to the few written sources available, the takkia of Ābū-Khumra seems to have been threatened with demolition on a number of occasions during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly to allow for the widening of streets in the area.<sup>339</sup> One reference, which is concerned with religious buildings in the Baghdad district of al-Ā‘ẓamiyya, where a takkia that belongs to the Ābū-Khumra family is situated, mentions an anecdote relating to their takkia by the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Accordingly, in 1920, when one of the streets next to the

<sup>335</sup> (Al-Durājī, *Al-Rubṭ wa al-takāyyā* ..., 99-102); and (Al-Ṭā’ī, *Mawsū‘at tārikh* ..., 103-106).

<sup>336</sup> Several sessions of observing the female visitors at the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and several interviews conducted with the female attendants who supervise the areas accessed by female visitors between 2010 and 2012.

<sup>337</sup> Field visit on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011 ...

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

<sup>339</sup> (Al-Durājī, *Al-Rubṭ wa al-takāyyā* ..., 99-102); and (Al-Ṭā’ī, *Mawsū‘at tārikh* ..., 148).

shrine was being widened the part of the takkia that contained the burial chamber of Ābū-Khumra became in the way. To rescue the burial from demolition, the Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad, who at the time was both the custodian of the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and the Prime Minister of Iraq under British Mandate, ensured the preservation of the burial chamber of Ābū-Khumra by building a vault above it strong enough to bear the weight of the street above, and by creating an alternative entrance into it from within the adjacent takkia.<sup>340</sup> Subsequent decades brought with them repeated resurfacing of the lanes around the area of the takkia, where most of the houses in the neighbourhood became lower than the streets level, including that of Ābū-Khumra. Then in the 1970s, yet another new lane was cut through the area and another part of Ābū-Khumra’s takkia was demolished to make way for it. But since the grave of Ābū-Khumra was by then so much lower than the street, it was again spared.<sup>341</sup> A third attempt at demolishing it came in the late 1990s, brought about by a desire to substantially expand the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir on behalf of the government. The issue of this demolition attempt and its consequences is addressed in chapter 5 of this thesis.



162- The stairwell leading down into the burial chamber of Ābū-Khumra al-Hindī. The two tiled panels above the stairwell bear Qur’ānic quotations.

<sup>340</sup> Al-Ā‘zamī, al-Shaikh Hāshim. *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Imām al-Ā‘zam wa masājid al-Ā‘zamiyya* (The history of the Mosque of Great Imam [Imam Ābū Ḥanīfa al-Nu‘mān] and al-Ā‘zamiyya’s mosques), vol.2. Baghdad: (no publisher name given), 1965, p.178.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.



163- The half-submerged tomb of Ābū-Khumra standing in the centre of the burial chamber. A small candle and artificial flowers and chains of leaves decorate the tomb and chamber.



164- The main reception room and prayer hall of the takkia of Ābū-Khumra.



165- A group of women dressed in black cloaks consulting one of Ābū-Khumra's descendants on personal matters.



### D.3- Ḥusaīniyyat<sup>342</sup> al-Aḥmadī:

This Shī'ī Ḥusaīniyya is situated in 'Agid al-Ākrād (the Kurds' quarter) of Bāb al-Shaikh neighbourhood, and lies to the north-west side of the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, in the midst of a warren of alleyways. Its founder is al-Hājj Aḥmad Muhammad al-Aḥmadī al-Faylī after whom it is named. Two signs date the opening of the Ḥusaīniyya to sometime in the 1930s.<sup>343</sup> The Ḥusaīniyya's main users are Shī'a Faylī Kurds, understood to have originally come from Badra and Jaṣān villages near the Iraqi-Iranian border in southern Iraq, who live within the quarter now named after them.

Made up of three converted houses that were gradually acquired by the establishment, it consists of a large reception hall lined with sofas, and a smaller prayer hall lined with prayer carpets. Ablutions facilities and a kitchen are also included, as well as a small cultural centre that consists of a library and terminals for internet access. The space is decorated with a variety of calligraphic and pictorial works relating to the imams and the tenets of the Shī'ī sect, including Qur'ānic quotations, Ḥadīth sayings of Prophet Muhammad and various poetic verses.<sup>344</sup> The main activities of the Ḥusaīniyya, in addition to daily prayers, include conducting a variety of religious ceremonies and festivities associated with the lives of the twelve Shī'ī imams, including the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusaīn; and conducting funerals.

With regard to its relationship with the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, for a number of years during the 1990s and until the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Ḥusaīniyya became dependent on the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir to supplement its inadequate supply of electricity from the national grid. The custodians of the shrine saw it prudent to support the Ḥusaīniyya given the mixed neighbourhood both were situated in, with a rise in its Shī'ī population. This electricity was supplied free of charge from the Qādirī shrine's own generators, which had been set up and paid for from the Qādiriyya endowments' resources to tackle its own lack of electricity supply. This serious shortage of electricity was caused by the First Gulf War of 1990 and the damage it inflicted on the national grid's infrastructure and power generating plants, and the central government's subsequent

<sup>342</sup> Ḥusaīniyya is a Shī'a sect prayer house named after Imam Ḥusaīn the grandson of Prophet Muhammad; see (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary* ..., 120).

<sup>343</sup> The information obtained for this establishment is based solely on the field visit and observations documented by photography and through interviewing the attendant there, which was conducted on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012. No published information on the history of the Ḥusaīniyya has been secured yet.

<sup>344</sup> Field visit and interview with the attendant at the Ḥusaīniyyat al-Āḥmadī on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012.

inability to remedy the damage throughout the following decade.<sup>345</sup> The Ḥusaīniyya, being a small community worship place catering for a poor neighbourhood, did not have the resources to cover their deficit in electricity, and so approached the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir for assistance.<sup>346</sup>

The Qādirī shrine’s supply of electricity to the Ḥusaīniyya led some one thousand homes in the ‘Agid al-Ākrād and Old Bāb al-Shaikh quarters of the Bāb al-Shaikh neighbourhood, which lie between the two establishments, to clandestinely hook onto the electric cable running across from the shrine to the Ḥusaīniyya and illicitly draw free electricity.<sup>347</sup> As the predominantly Shī‘ī neighbourhood suffered badly from the economic situation in the 1990s, the shrine did not disconnect the cable and stop the abuse. However, after 2003, the government’s electricity board threatened to disconnect the Qādirī shrine from the national grid if it did not reduce its consumption of the national grid’s electricity to its allocated quantity. This threat forced the shrine to reduce the amount of electricity it fed to the Ḥusaīniyya and the neighbourhood from its own generators so that it could meet its own needs. The shrine eventually decided to disconnect the Ḥusaīniyya, but to continue supplying the one thousand homes with a fixed amount of free electricity per house as a supplement to what they received from the national grid. This supply was regulated through setting up an electric-switchboard that linked these houses properly to the shrine’s generators.<sup>348</sup> At the time of conducting this field research, the Ḥusaīniyya still had an unsolved problem with their electricity supply and were still hopeful of persuading the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir to re-establish a supply to them.<sup>349</sup>



166- The main entrance and façade of Ḥusaīniyyat al-Aḥmadī, draped in black for the month of Muḥarram and its commemorations of the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusaīn.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid, and interview with the custodian of the Shrine of ‘Abd al-Qādir on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Interview with the custodian of the shrine on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid.

<sup>349</sup> Field visit on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012, and direct request from the attendant at the Ḥusaīniyya to me to pass on their request to the custodian of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, explaining that it would be good for community relations between the Sunnīs and the Shī‘a in the area if the shrine was seen to be supporting the Ḥusaīniyya with its needs as it catered for the community.



167- The reception hall of the *Husaīniyyat al-Āḥmadī*, where various ceremonies are conducted, including funerals.



168- The prayer area within the *Husaīniyya*, with the walls and prayer niche draped in black for *Muharram's* ceremonies.





169- The cultural centre room at the Ḥusāniyya, where computer terminals provide access to the internet, and a library of Shī'ī theology and literature is made available to users.

#### D.4- Al-Khulānī Mosque:

This is a large Shī'ī mosque situated along the extension of Gailani Street at the al-Khulānī Roundabout, a stone's throw south of the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. The mosque's history is not very clear, with various confused and conflicting claims regarding the identity of the key religious figure, or figures, buried there. While historical references state that it is the burial place of the Sunnī Ḥanbalī scholar 'Abd al-'Azīz Ghulām al-Khalāl (died c. 973 AD), who was the student of Ābū-Bakr al-Khalāl (died c. 923 AD), hence his epithet Ghulām al-Khalāl – servant of al-Khalāl, Shī'a traditions claim the tomb to be that of the deputy of the occulted twelfth Imam al-Mahdī, Ābū Ja'afar Muhammad ibn 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd, known as Imam Muhammad al-Khulānī.<sup>350</sup>

No dates for the construction of the current mosque's building are available at present, but the historical records confirm that this mosque was under the custody of descendants of 'Abd al-'Azīz Ghulām al-Khalāl up to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. When the male line of the family ended during the first half of the century, the role of custodian was handed to a

<sup>350</sup> Al-Rāwī, Muhammad Sa'īd. *Khair al-Zād fī tārikh masājīd wa jawāmi' Baghdād* (The best of provisions in the history of Baghdad's prostration spaces and mosques), edited by 'Imād 'Abd al-Salām Ra'ūf. Baghdad: Markaz al-Buḥūth wa al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyya, Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī, 2006, pp.166-170; and (Al-Durūbī, *al-Baghdādūn, Akhbārahūm ...*, 80).

female member of the Āl al-Khalāl family, a Mariam Khātūn, who was married to an ‘Abd-Allah al-Gailani, a kinsman of the family that manages the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. When Mariam Khātūn died, her son Muhammad al-Gailani inherited the custodianship of the then al-Khalāl Mosque, which he later proved to be incapable of holding and managing. In the early 1950s, apparently tempted by a lucrative offer, he was persuaded to sell his custodianship to a Shī‘a group, who were eager to take over the mosque to run in accordance with Shī‘ī tradition regarding the identity of the religious personality buried there as being al-Khulānī.<sup>351</sup>

Nevertheless, and in a not dissimilar relationship to that with the Ḥusaīniyya described above, the al-Khulānī mosque’s main interaction with the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir revolves round the shrine supplying the al-Khulānī mosque with electricity from its generators. But in this instance, al-Khulānī was still drawing free electricity from the shrine at the time of conducting the field research for this thesis.<sup>352</sup> From the point of view of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, it seems that in addition to the prudence of supporting a local Shī‘a mosque, they were mindful of the al-Khulānī not having endowments significant enough to enable it to be self-sufficient.



*170- Viewed from the minaret at the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, the al-Khulānī Mosque’s blue-green dome can be seen in the distance.*

<sup>351</sup> Ibid; and interview with the solicitor of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir on 15 February 2014, who confirmed the narrative above, and the familial association between Muhammad al-Gailani and them.

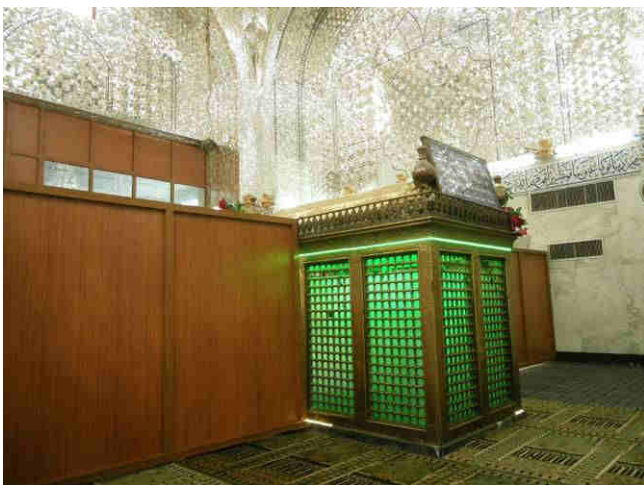
<sup>352</sup> Interview with the manager of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir who oversees the electricity distribution to the neighbourhood and to the al-Khulānī.



171- The al-Khulānī Mosque from al-Khulānī Roundabout that links Gailani Street with the Sinag district of Baghdad.



172 – The courtyard façade of the burial chamber of the al-Khulānī mosque.



173- The interior of the burial chamber of the al-Khulānī mosque. A wooden partition segregates the women from the men for purposes of the Zīāra – visitation.

**D.5- Al-Madrassa al-Qādiriyya (now an independent, non-Sufi, government-run religious educational institution):**

Immediately adjacent to the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, this is physically the closest of all the above Bāb al-Shaikh neighbourhood religious institutions, but at the same time, it is the furthest from it in terms of engagement and association, despite its misleading name.

The current al-Madrassa al-Qādiriyya – The Qādiriyya School – is a Sunnī religious high school that stands on Gailani Street next to the complex of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s shrine and opposite the Qādiriyya Endowments and soup kitchen building. Run by the governmental department Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī – the office for the management of Sunnī sect endowments – the school focuses on preparing students of religion at high-school level for studying Islamic law and jurisprudence at university level, in order to eventually become imams and preachers in mosques around the country. Currently, this school has no affiliation with the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir or its endowments despite the name it carries.<sup>353</sup> Originally, the school was located within the shrine’s complex and run by the Qādiriyya Endowments as a traditional religious school with its own style of teaching and curriculum. But in the 1974 it was taken over by the government and run by the then Ministry of Endowments.<sup>354</sup>

When the Qādiriyya School was still part of the shrine, the custodians employed leading religious tutors and theologians to teach Qur’ān recitation and interpretation, Prophet Muhammad’s Ḥadīth traditions, jurisprudence, and Sufism.<sup>355</sup> At least thirty-three of its prominent lecturers and instructors have been named in various historical accounts of the shrine. Amongst these thirty-three are four from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, ten from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and eleven from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>356</sup>

The government’s takeover of the school is discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

<sup>353</sup> Interview with the solicitor of the Qādiriyya Endowments on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Three of these titles are: (Al-Ā’zamī, *Tārīkh Jāmi’ al-Shaikh* ..., 114 and 118-133); (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī Tārīkh* ..., 92-93); and (Al-Samarā’ī, *Al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir* ..., 68-70).



174- *The Qādiriyya School.*

### **Final remarks**

In concluding this mapping of the shrine's physical environment, its daily life, and its local and interactions, it becomes apparent that it is many things to many people: a local saint's shrine and an international saint's pilgrimage destination; a space for Sufi lodging and rituals; a local mosque for daily prayers and a Friday mosque with politically active imams; an icon for the Sunnī sect and a target for the sectarian rivalries in the city. It is also an historic site with monumental architecture and continued use since its first construction as a Ḥanbalī theological seminary by the district's judge Ābū Sa'īd al-Mubārak al-Mukharrimī sometime at the turn of the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD.

The people who choose to identify with this shrine come from many backgrounds and contexts: the locals of the shrine's mixed neighbourhood; Qādirī Sufi orders and branches from various parts of the country; and foreign Qādirīs from far-flung places. In addition to these, there is a great mix of townspeople and tribesmen who believe in their descent from Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, and for this reason associate with his place of rest.

Expressing Sufi Qādirī identity and the presence of Sufi-explicit expressions is found and experienced through the framed Qādirī Sufi chain of descent – al-silsila al-Qādiriyya – placed at the entrance of the burial chamber, and the Sufi poetry adorning its inner walls; the Friday Sufi dhikr circle and dhikr circles on other occasions; the participation of Sufi groups in the Mawlūd celebrations; and the provision of lodging for Sufis shaikhs.

A number of seasonal festivities are held at this shrine every year, including the Mawlūd of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, the Mawlid al-Nabī, the fasting month of Ramaḍān and its 'Īd

festivities, the annual pilgrimage ʿĪd festivities, and a number of other key dates in the Islamic religious calendar. These festivities will be explored in chapter 4 of this thesis together with those held in the Jīlānī shrine in ʿAqra.

### Chapter 3

#### **Mapping the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī in ‘Aqra – a preliminary investigation**

##### **The aims of this chapter:**

With a similar aim to the previous chapter, this chapter explores and maps the comparatively small Qādirī Sufi shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī, popularly known as Takkiat al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz in ‘Aqra. The takkia is located within the Kurdish region of Iraq, on the outskirts of the city of ‘Aqra. This chapter records the presence of this shrine, its physical environment and its communities, aiding an understanding of its identity as a Kurdish Qādirī Sufi place of worship that has a special relationship with the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad.

In a similar approach to chapter 2, though largely based on information gathered during a much shorter period of field research between November 2009 and December 2011, this chapter introduces the Jīlānī shrine’s architectural spaces and the activities that take place within them. It then explores the communities it serves and the Wūlīānī Qādirī caretakers’ own heritage exemplified by their nearby family shrine, the shrine of Shaikh Ismā‘īl al-Wūlīānī in the village of Rovia.

##### **Sources and methodology:**

While the information for chapter 2, concerning the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad, was brought together from a variety of written sources (historical, archival, art-historical, travellers’ accounts, and journalistic), as well as that gathered through the field-research, most of the information in this chapter is primary source material, collected in the field during three short research visits to the shrine. As far as can be established this shrine has not been researched or documented, in historical or anthropological contexts, in either Arabic, English or Kurdish until now.

Being aware of these shortcomings, with information largely dependent on oral testimony, a number of approaches have been used to verify the accuracy of information and the reliability and reasonableness of objective and subjective information. These approaches included, in addition to direct observation of activities and events, the recording of

information using photography, film and note-taking, the repeated asking of non-leading questions regarding specific topics of perception and opinion, each time from a slightly different angle, to enable comparison between answers and to clarify and determine accuracy of information, and to confirm understandings being expressed.

Nevertheless, because of the nature of primary source material, its veracity cannot be ascertained in a similar way to information, which can be tested and supported with supplementary textual evidence. To help mitigate the shortcomings of this piece of research, the repeated visits conducted covered the same ground each time, which provided opportunities to confirm accurate interpretations, correct misunderstandings, and weed out misinformation.

The research visits were conducted on 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009, 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010, and on 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> December 2011.<sup>357</sup> In addition to inspecting the site, photographing and filming spaces and events, interviews were conducted with several people attending the site. These interviews were informal with no audio recording at the request of the interviewees, though they were happy to be photographed. All the interviews were conducted in the presence of others, who spontaneously contributed as they felt moved to do so (a social norm that was accommodated to avoid offending the non-interviewees). Female interviewees expressed their wish that their images not be published on the internet, for which my assurances were given. All male interviewees spoke, read and wrote Arabic, but only as a second language, and at intermediary level (secondary school level). Almost all the female interviewees spoke no Arabic. Those few women who spoke some Arabic found it difficult to find the vocabulary they needed quickly enough to express themselves with satisfaction. Finally, being dependant on help in translating what was being said sometimes limited the depth of discussion; but on the whole, interviewees were keen to help answer the questions as far as they could and to express their views as clearly as possible. The key people interviewed were:

- Manager of the shrine and takkia (the agent of the Qādiriyya endowments in Baghdad).
- Manager's oldest brother and his deputy.
- Manager's older brother and a volunteer helper.
- Manager's nephew.
- Chief khalīfa of the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya, based in 'Aqra and Rovia.

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<sup>357</sup> Time and security issues in the region influenced the length of each field research visit. The first visit was mainly spent in assessing the possibilities of conducting research and the receptability of the community.



- Local khalīfa 1 – local Qādirī Wūlīānī khalīfa based in Kelek Kabāt.
- Local khalīfa 2 – local Qādirī Wūlīānī khalīfa based in Kelek Kabāt
- Manager's sister – a Sufi initiate, and in charge of feeding the pilgrims and guests.
- Manager's wife – assistant and deputy to Manager's sister.
- Erbilī Sufi woman, a devotee of the Wūlīāniyya, who was present at the takkia on a spiritual retreat.
- A number of female helpers, guests and other female relatives attending the shrine.
- Shaikh Mu'taṣim ibn al-Shaikh Sa'īd al-Barzinjī al-Wūlīānī, the head of the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya Sufi order (died in November 2014).

### **How the shrine complex is managed:**

As this shrine and its endowments are far from the centre of Iraq, where most of the other Qādirī endowments are situated, the custodians of Idārat al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya – al-Qādiriyya Endowments Administration – and of the shrine in Baghdad employed wakīls (agents) to run this shrine on their behalf. These agents are the leaders of the independent Qādirī Sufi order al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādiriyya al-Wūlīāniyya, which was founded by the Kurdish Sufi saint Shaikh Ismā'īl al-Wūlīānī (died 1737) son of Shaikh Muhammad al-Nodehī in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and has a presence in the area in the village of Rovia, where the shrine and takkia of Ismā'īl al-Wūlīānī is situated.

The agency of the Wūlīāniyya order commenced in the 1960s, with the appointment of the then leader of the Wūlīāniyya order, al-Shaikh Sa'īd 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Bābā Rasūl al-Barzinjī al-Wūlīānī. After his death, his youngest son was appointed as agent and he holds the position at present. Under the stewardship of the Wūlīānīs, the shrine in 'Aqra has gradually grown, both physically and spiritually, into an active Qādirī Sufi place of worship. Although the named agent within the Wūlīānī family is effectively an employee of the Qādiriyya endowments in Baghdad, he is also a Sufi and a tribal shaikh in his own right; and his administrative role is intertwined with his religious role and standing within his community. In this chapter, he is referred to as the takkia manager.

The takkia manager resides on site with his family. He is the brother of the recently deceased Shaikh Mu'taṣim ibn al-Shaikh Sa'īd al-Wūlīānī (1961 – 2014), the leader of the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya order. Shaikh Mu'taṣim was still alive when the field research for this chapter was conducted. The Wūlīāniyya order has followers in several villages, towns and cities within the Kurdish region, a takkia in Mosul (until it fell to the insurgency group

ISIL – the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – in 2014) within Iraq, and other takkias in Syria and Turkey.<sup>358</sup> It is important to note here that the Wūlīāniyya Qādirī Sufi order came to manage this shrine as a fully-fledged order with its own rituals and worship customs.

In addition to the manager of the takkia, the shrine employs a number of other staff, some salaried and others volunteers. This staff includes a solicitor, an accountant, and a clerk whose duties include following up legal and official matters. Two of the takkia manager's brothers deputise for him and carry out other duties when required on a voluntary base. A number of people who are on a 15-day rota carry out the maintenance and cleaning of the takkia. They stay at the takkia for the duration of their rota, to attend to its various functions during the daytime and in the evenings. Dervishes – ascetic Sufis – associated with the takkia also take part in working for the takkia. Of the 15 paid staff there are three responsible for the preparation and serving of tea to visitors; two drivers responsible for the takkia's shopping; one person responsible for overseeing the shopping and other requirements of the takkia; a khalīfa – Sufi steward – who is in charge of the dervishes' needs and their spiritual guidance, and for delivering the Friday sermon and other teaching activities at the takkia; and two mū'adhins responsible for the call to daily prayers.

In addition to the persons listed above, a number of women are also involved in the running of the shrine complex. These include the wife and sisters of the takkia manager, who have a hierarchy amongst themselves, with the eldest of the sisters being the most senior person. With regard to the non-family duties of these women, they are responsible for the daily food preparation in the takkia, as well as the food preparation for all special events. Other women and girls who come to serve the takkia on a rota similar to that for the men support them. The younger women are responsible for the cleaning of the female quarters and for washing clothes. The takkia manager's sisters and wife also offer formal hospitality to females visiting the shrine, and to females seeking spiritual healing. The sisters are initiated into the Sufi order by their father and are licensed to give spiritual guidance, counselling offer prayers on behalf of female devotees and guests.

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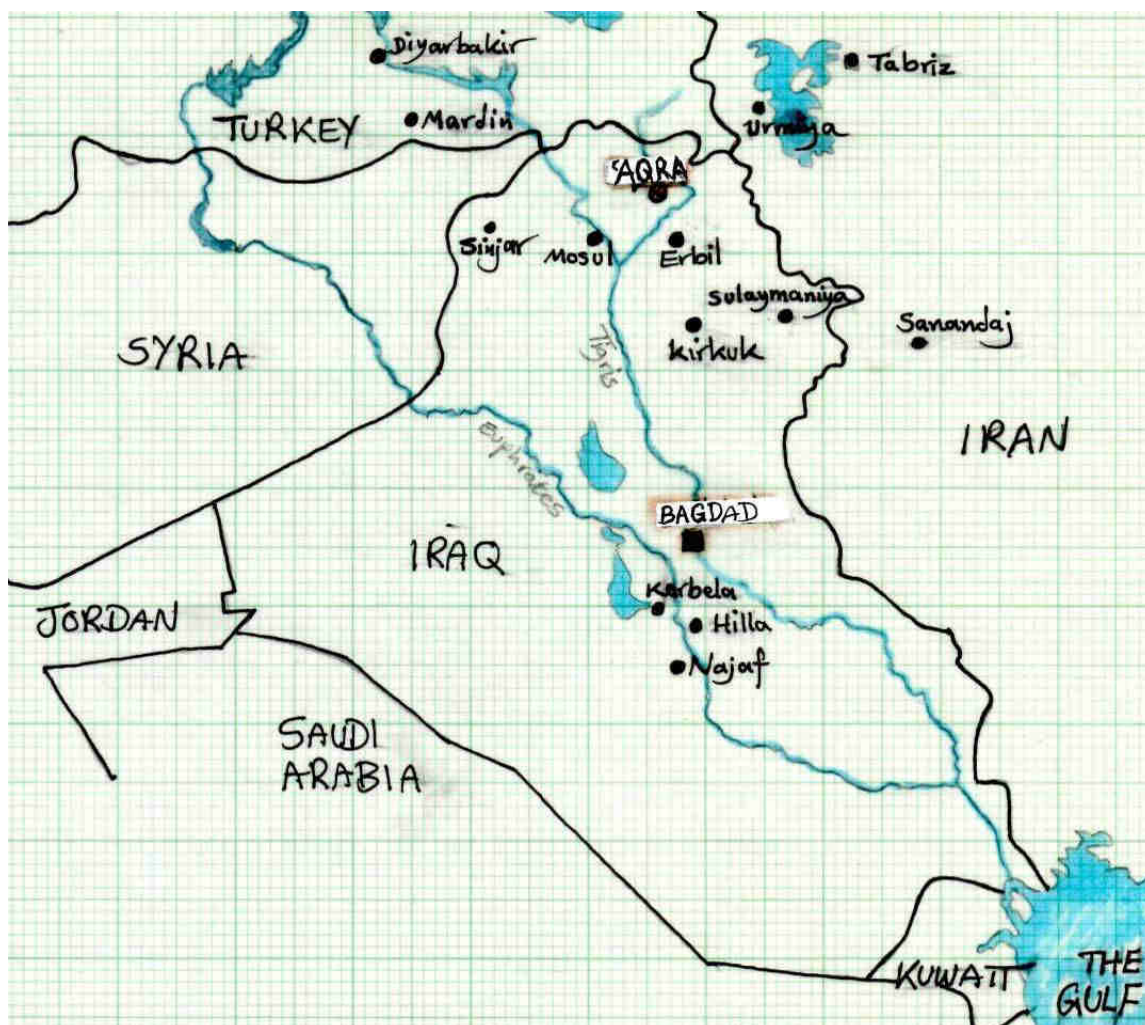
<sup>358</sup> In addition to some 80 takkias in as many villages in Kurdistan Iraq, this order had, until the militant group ISIL (or ISIS) took over these parts of Iraq and Syria, several takkias in Mosul and Ruṭba in Iraq, and in Ḥasaka, Lādhīqia and Raqqa in Syria, and in Istanbul in Turkey.

### **A- Location of the Shrine:**

The Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī lies on the northwestern edge of ‘Aqra, a Kurdish town in mountainous northern Iraq, and the administrative headquarters of the district named after it. The district of ‘Aqra forms part of Duhok Governorate in the federal region of Kurdistan. The shrine is situated in one of ‘Aqra’s mountain enclaves named after Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz – Galī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. The site, which is topographically higher than the town, nestles high up the mountainside and just below its rim. The dead-end road that leads up to the site continues into the enclave and runs adjacent to the left wall of the mountain up to the back of the site, ending at the steps of building (E) – the females’ quarter and kitchens on site – marked on the illustration of the layout of the site on the following page. The enclave’s and site’s cardinal orientation is south-west to north-east, with its entrance area (A), to the south-west, and its furthest building (E), to the north-east. The population of ‘Aqra today is predominantly Kurdish Muslim with an Assyrian Christian minority. The total population of the city centre and the 16 villages linked to it was just over 39,000 in 2008.<sup>359</sup> Even though the area of the shrine is secluded with no immediate neighbours, ‘Aqra’s escalating expansion in the last two decades has brought homes on to the once isolated road, and at present, more and more homes are being built along this road, and before long will reach the boundary of the site.

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<sup>359</sup> CAPNI – Christian Aid Program – Nohadra – Iraq; accessed on 1 July 2011: [www.capiraq.org/maps/data4/Aqrah.pdf](http://www.capiraq.org/maps/data4/Aqrah.pdf)



1- Map of Iraq showing 'Aqra in the north – north west of Erbil and north-east of Mosul.<sup>360</sup>



2- A view of the old-town part of the city of 'Aqra (Akre), with houses built on the sides of the mountain. This photograph was taken from the road that skirts the town on its western boundary, and leads to the shrine above it.

<sup>360</sup> This diagram is based on *Philip's Concise World Atlas*. London: George Philip Ltd., 1995, pp.64-5.

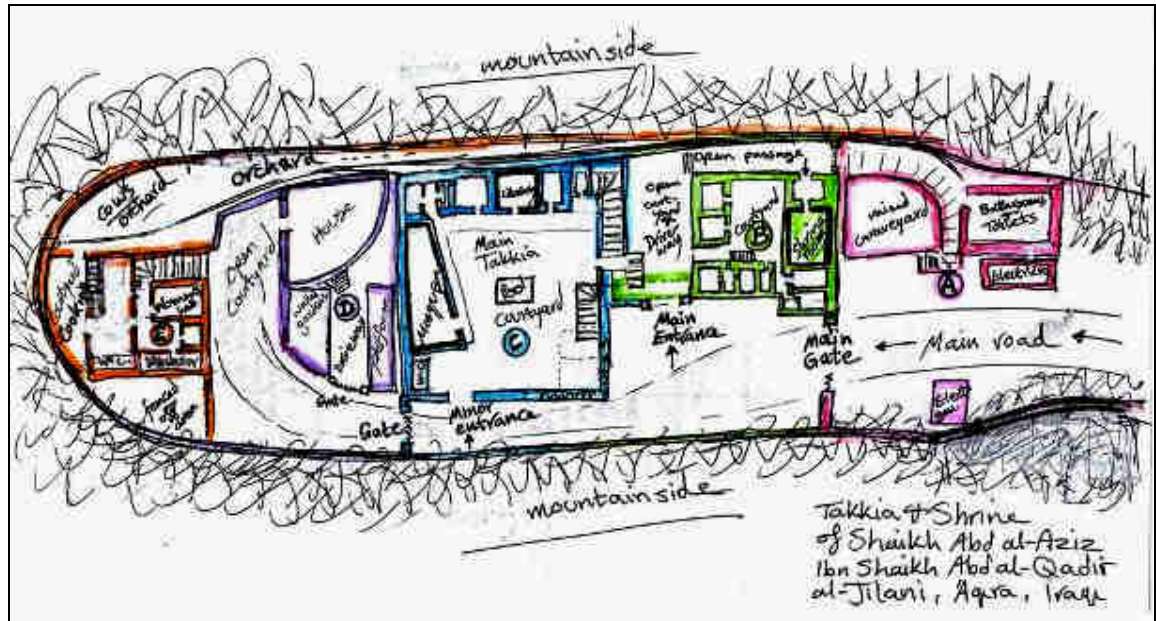
### **B- Buildings and spaces:**

The four main buildings of the complex are built one adjacent to the other with semi-enclosed open spaces separating them from each other, on an upwardly sloping site, making the ground floor of the second building (C) in line with the upper floor of the first building (B). Building (D)'s driveway and open platform are on the same level as that of the upper floor of building (C), while its ground floor, being built much higher than that of the driveway, rises above the upper floor of building (C). Building (E)'s single level with a walled roof is higher than the ground floor of building (D). Two of the buildings, (B) and (C), have more traditional Middle Eastern layouts, with an open courtyard in the centre of each building, surrounded by rooms looking on to it. Buildings (D) and (E) are the most recent, and follow a modern style of architecture that does not include a central courtyard. All the buildings are on the right hand side of the site, backing onto the mountain wall. An small orchard occupies a narrow strip of land on the same side of the mountain, but positioned slightly higher up on the mountain wall.



3- *The shrine and takkia of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz, 'Aqra in December 2011.*

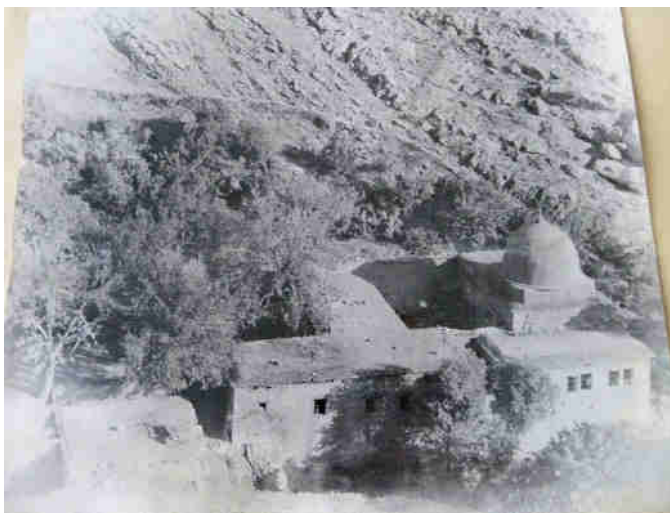




4- Illustrative sketch of the layout of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz's takkia and shrine complex, 'Aqra, November 2010. (A) Graveyard and ablutions / toilet facility and electricity generator room outside the main entrance gate. (B) Shrine building, consisting of two-floors and including the burial chamber and antechamber, accommodation rooms, kitchen and toilets, offices and open courtyard. (C) Main Takkia building with prayer hall / mosque, library, reception rooms, accommodation rooms, ablutions / toilet facilities and an open courtyard. An upper floor with reception rooms and balcony lines the courtyard on one side. (D) three-story residence of the takkia manager's extended family, with a raised garden, gated driveway and open platform. (E) includes the female guests' reception rooms, the main kitchens and food preparation areas for the shrine, ablutions / toilet facilities, a small orchard and a cattle shed for cows, sheep, chickens, etc.







5- The shrine before the 1960s, with building (B) to the right.<sup>361</sup>



6- The shrine before 1990<sup>362</sup>.

All the current buildings belong to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, except for the domed burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, and all but it are flat roofed. Most if not all the buildings are built of reinforced cement structures plastered with gypsum. Marble-chip tiles are used to cover most of the floors of the internal spaces and cement is used to cover the flooring for most of the external spaces including the driveways running adjacent buildings (C), (D) and (E). Excluding the doors to the shrine rooms, most of the internal and external doors and window-frames are of painted iron, but those in buildings (D) and (E) are of double glazed aluminium frames. All the buildings are supplied with electricity for lighting, mostly by florescent light tubes. Excluding the toilets and ablution spaces, almost all spaces have ceiling fans for cooling. In addition, all ablutions / toilets and cooking spaces have tapped water supplied to them.

<sup>361</sup> Copy of photograph reproduced with permission of the Qādiriyya endowments and the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Baghdad, November 2010.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.



### **B.1- Building (A) – Ablutions, electricity rooms, and burial ground:**

Visitors approaching the site first come across the electricity room and the external ablutions / toilets facility, and a small raised and walled burial ground adjacent to it (building A), all of which are situated outside the main gate of the site and to its right. The burial ground, on its left side, is adjacent to the outer wall of the shrine chamber and antechamber in building (B), higher than the road and at the same level as the toilet room. The set of stairs that leads to the toilets branches out to the left, and becomes a staggered / stepped footpath that skirts round the back of the burial ground and leads to the entrance of the shrine rooms adjacent to it and situated at the back of building (B).



*7- The main road leading to the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al- ‘Azīz (the dome of his burial chamber is seen here beyond the cemetery in the foreground) as photographed on 13 November 2009. The white building on the right is the ablutions / toilet facility on site (A).*



*8- The main gate of the site with its green flags. To the right of the image, the side of building (B) can be seen, and in the foreground bottom right a corner of the burial ground.*



*9- The ablutions / toilet facility to the right of the main gate and next to the burial ground.*

The burial ground can be accessed from the rear through a metal gate situated half way up the staggered footpath. The burials do not seem to be very old, with most dated headstones bearing 20<sup>th</sup> century dates, with one as recent as 2007. None of the burials were of the al-Wūlīānī family or their relatives (they bury their members in a family cemetery in Rovia, a village on the way to ‘Aqra from the direction of Mosul, and where they come from).

Several trees and bushes are planted amongst the graves and adjacent to the wall and windows of the shrine chambers. Some of the branches of these trees and bushes have strips of coloured textiles tied to them in the traditional manner found on holy trees in other parts of the Middle East.

Amongst the graves is that of the former Afghani caretaker of the shrine, Sultan Maḥmūd Khān, who had been sent by the Qādiriyya endowments in Baghdad to take care of the shrine sometime in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The understanding is that Maḥmūd Khān had been a prominent figure in his society in Afghanistan, and had suffered a calamitous adversity, probably one that involved the death of someone, and had fled the country seeking sanctuary at the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad. To protect him from his adversaries and conceal his location indefinitely, he was sent to live in the then isolated mountainous region of the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz in ‘Aqra. He became its caretaker until his death in 1964. According to the Wūlīānīs, there was no Sufi order present at the shrine, nor were there any Sufi public rituals such as dhikr circles. But the shrine did have an oven for the making of bread, which was given out free to the shepherds and farmers who passed by the shrine to the other side of the mountain where their flocks and fields were situated. After Maḥmūd Khān’s death the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya order were invited to take charge of the shrine on behalf of the al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya in Baghdad. This is the story of Sultān Maḥmūd Khān as known to the Wūlīānīs. Time and circumstances in both ‘Aqra and Baghdad did not allow for further investigation of this story. However, it is reasonable to assume that the ‘Aqra shrine was already being taken care of locally when Maḥmūd Khān was first sent there. The presence of endowed properties and land, coupled with the presence of an oven for baking and distributing bread would indicate the presence of a community taking care of the endowed assets and thereafter facilitating the activity once Maḥmūd Khān arrived. The Wūlīānīs confirmed knowing of his presence there before they succeeded him in managing the shrine.



*10- The burial ground and adjacent to it on the left is building (B).*



*11- The small cemetery's residents are not listed in any archive, but the takkia manager explained that a number of the locals associated with the shrine are buried here.*



*12- The staggered footpath that skirts round the back of the burial ground and leads up to the main door to the shrine rooms.*



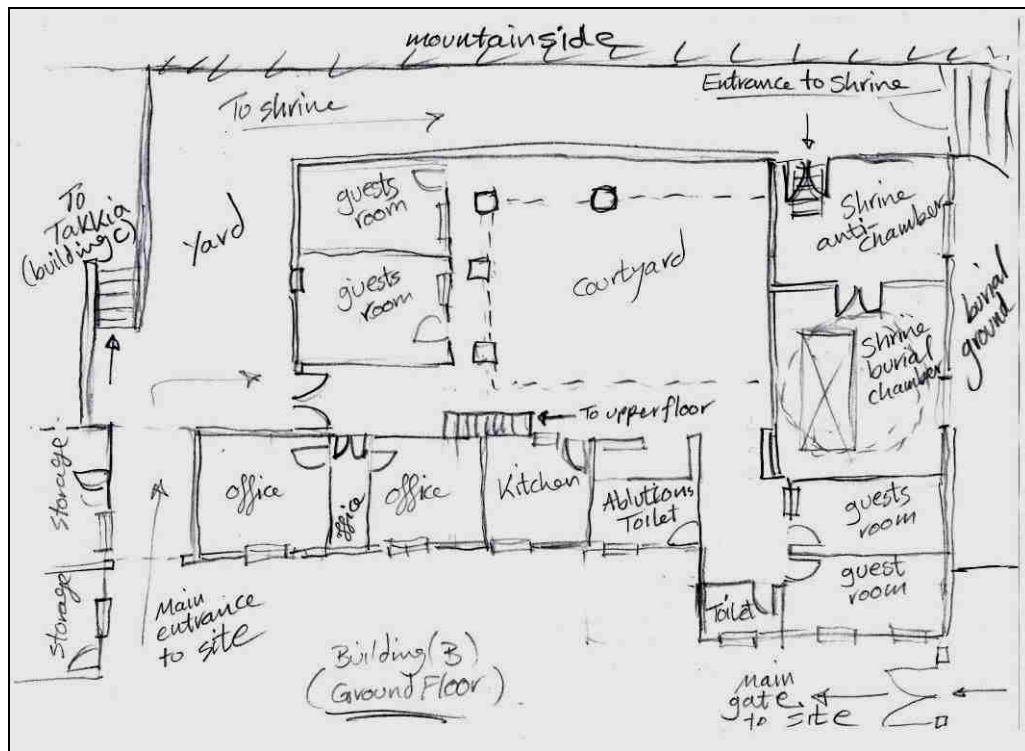
*13- The the top of the staggered footpath and the wooden door into the shrine's chambers.*

## **B.2- Building (B) – Shrine, residential quarter and cave:**

Next, also on the right-hand side is the oldest of the buildings on site, which includes the shrine rooms and a courtyarded residence, with a basement and an upper floor. This building is constructed from reinforced concrete and cement blocks. There are no



architectural decorative elements, except for the entrance arch of building (B) and the dome of the shrine, no other arches or domes are present on site.



14- Approximate layout of building (B) showing the shrine's burial chamber(right) and the main entrance to the building (left).



15- The façade of building (B) as seen on approaching the site from beyond the main gates.

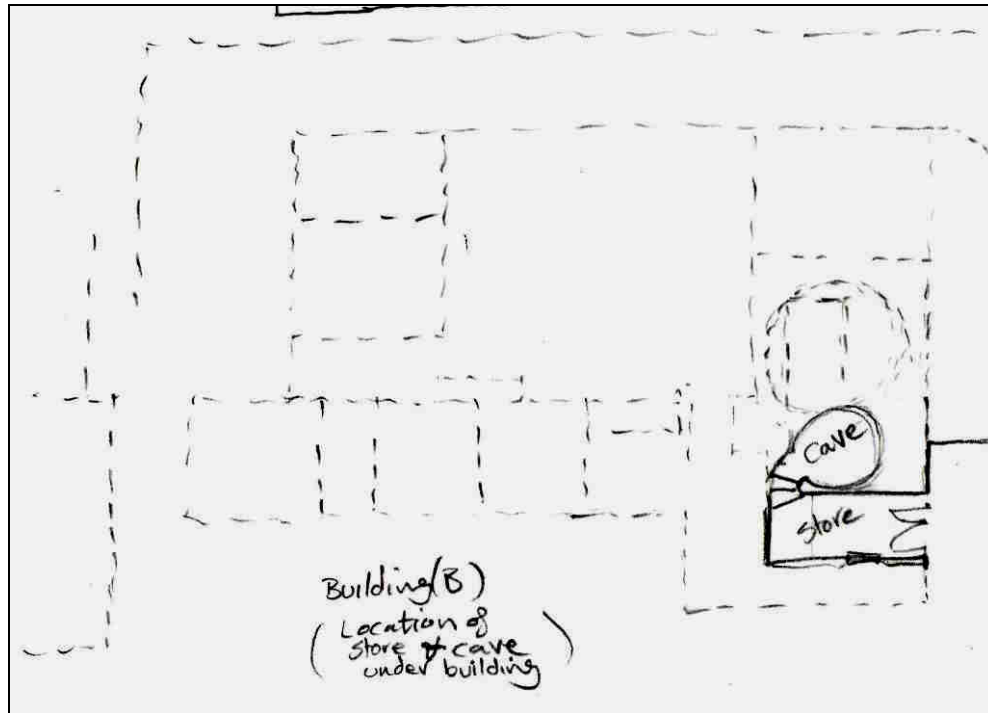


16- The main entrance to the takkia and to building (B). The inscription above the arch reads “*al-Takkia al-Qādiriyya wa Marqad al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Gailani, qadasa Allah siruh al-‘Aḍīm*” – The Qādiriyya Takkia and the abode of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Gailani, may God sanctify his great mystery.

### **B.3- Building (B) - The cave:**

The basement rooms are accessed outwith the residence, through three different entrances located in the front elevation of the building. One of these subterranean spaces is a cave, which is believed to have been used by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Aziz for his spiritual practices (meditation and seclusion). See diagram below. The entrance to the cave is situated at the far corner of a long, narrow storage room. Through a low rectangular opening in that corner, and down two steps, the space opens up into a small cavity in the stone face of the mountain. The floor has been flattened, but the walls of the cave are rough stone. The cave’s ceiling is too low to allow an average person to stand straight. From looking at the building and the depth of the cave, it would seem to have once had a direct opening onto street level, but the construction of building (B) has concealed this. The location of the cave is slightly to the right of the burial chamber above it, not directly under it. The bare cave has no electricity or air ventilation supplied to it, though it felt dry, clean and odourless.





17- Approximate location of the cave on the right side of the building (B).

The store is heavily used suggesting that the cave itself is little accessed, and visitors are not encouraged to ask to see it, though the takkia manager considered it important as a holy space in which Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz had prayed and meditated.



18- The entrance to the store that gives access to the cave.



19- *Three steps lead into the cave, which has a flattened floor.*



20- *Rear of building (B).*

#### **B.4- Building (B) - The shrine:**

The shrine rooms consist of a burial chamber and an antechamber. There is only one entrance to these rooms, through an external door at the back of building (B). The narrow wooden double doors open into a small room, a rectangular antechamber, approximately half the size of the next room, the burial chamber. This antechamber has a window on the left looking out onto the burial ground. This set of rooms is lower than the footpath by

three steps. The floor of the antechamber is covered with patterned tiling, and its walls are white plastered with the lower half painted in glossy cream.



*21- Footpath behind the building leading to the shrine rooms.*



*22- The entrance into the shrine rooms. The calligraphic inscription above the door is that of the Qur'ānic chapter 112 (Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ).<sup>363</sup>*

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<sup>363</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 454).



23- *Looking into the antechamber.*

Apart from a selection of framed works of calligraphy and two clocks hanging on the walls, the room is unfurnished. The bareness of the antechamber focuses the visitor's attention on the items hung on the walls of the small space. In the main, they consist of religious inscriptions, with two images of the Prophet's mosque in Medina and one imaginary representation of the shrine in 'Aqra. Having surveyed all the works hung here (individual descriptions to follow), their function seems to be twofold: first, to confirm to the visitor that this place is an Islamic space that believes in what the Qur'ān says, acknowledges God's supremacy and Prophet Muhammad's superiority; and second to protect the place, for the artworks inscribed with the Qur'ānic Throne Verse (2:255)<sup>364</sup> and chapter (113)<sup>365</sup> are believed to have protective qualities and talismanic powers. Many of these items will have been presented to the shrine as gifts by followers, as marks of religious self-expression and gesture of respect and care for the beatification of the beloved saint's resting place.

On the wall to the right of the entrance door of the antechamber is a black and white print of the first part of the Qur'ānic verse (3:103) which urges the believers to join in holding fast to God's cord or rope and not be divided, remembering God's blessings in bringing them together.<sup>366</sup>

<sup>364</sup> Ibid, p.57.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid, pp.454-455.

<sup>366</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 70).



24- The antechamber with its double-door leading into the burial chamber.



25- The Qur'ānic verse (3:103)

On the next wall there are nine objects, the first of which is a coloured calligraphic print of the names of God and Prophet Muhammad. Suspended from the lower right part of the frame is a plastic gilt medallion in the shape of a ship with sails. This ship represents the Shī'ī "Safīnat al-Najāt" – the Ship of Salvation – which names the twelve Imams of the Shī'a sect in Islam. The Throne verse (2:255) is quoted on two of the sails, but a third sail is missing from this medallion. Next is a clock with a pendulum, to the left of which hangs a lengthy inscription in Kurdish, describing Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jīlānī. It tells of his participation in battles against the Crusaders in Palestine, followed by his lineage, tracing it back to Imam Ḥasan, the Prophet's grandson. A second clock is suspended next to this inscription and above the right corner of the double-door leading into the burial chamber. In the centre above the double door of the burial chamber is another Shī'ī calligraphic inscription headed with the names of the Prophet's family, with a prayer seeking refuge in God's perfect words from human mischief and two Qur'ānic verses, one of which is the



Throne verse. On the left side of the double-door hangs a gilt-framed calligraphic rendition of Sūrat al-Falaq (Qur'ān 113) printed in gold on the surface of the glass, which is backed with a black background. Next to this hangs an illustration of the Prophet's mosque in Medina, which has been printed in colour on a metallic sheet. And the last of the objects on this wall is a framed machine made textile, printed in shades of brown, gray and black on a cream background, with an arabesque border decoration and the Throne verse.



26- The names of Allah (right) and Prophet Muhammad (left).



27- Safīnat al-Najāt with the names of the twelve imams on the body of the ship and the Throne verse on the sails.



28- The clock with the name of the Prophet Muhammad.



29- The Prophet's mosque in Medina



30- The Shī'ī rendition of the Throne verse





31- The biography of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz



32- Sūrat al-Falaq.



33- The Throne Verse on carpet.

On the third wall of the antechamber hangs an embossed metallic calligraphic rendition of the name of God – Allah, which is hung on the right side of the window on that wall. On the left side of the window hangs a black and white print of the Ninety-Nine names of God. This is the only framed picture in this room that has a signature on it. The signature states that this print “... is my gift to our uncle Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Barzinjī [sic]<sup>367</sup> with my greetings, your son al-Sayyid ‘Alī al-Sayyid Ḥamīd al-Rāwī, printed by Studio Usāma”. It seems that al-Rāwī, an Iraqi Arab as indicated by his surname - being from Rāwā, a town on the Euphrates in western-central Iraq, has confused Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī’s identity with his Barzinjī caretakers’ tribal affiliations. On the windowsill are positioned a selection of Qur’ānic texts, including complete copies of the Qur’ān and shorter extracts. There are also copies of secondary-school textbooks on Islamic religious education.



34- The name of God ‘Allah’.



35- The list of God’s Ninety-Nine Names.

<sup>367</sup> Although not common, a number of instances were noted where Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī’s surname is confused with the surname of the Wūlāniyya and their Qādirī and tribal affiliations. It was especially noticed in the media, where non-Sufi journalists wrongly presume that caretakers of holy places are always descendants of the holy figures interred in them.

On the fourth wall, to the left of the main entrance door to the shrine's antechamber, hang four framed images. The first is a coloured rendition of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. The second is a gilt calligraphic work on glass of the Qur'ānic chapter Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ (Qur'ān 112). The third wall hanging is a framed velvet embroidery with gold, pearl and coloured beads, depicting an idealised structure of the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz with a large dome and two minarets above a densely columned building. A clock has been inserted above the dome in this embroidery, and below the columned structure are two lines of calligraphy in gold beading stating that this is the resting place – marqad – of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Gailani [sic]. The last framed calligraphy is another embossed gilt metalwork, stating that Muhammad is the Prophet of God.



36- *The Prophet's mosque in Medina.*



37- *Inscription stating Muhammad is God's messenger.*



38- The embroidery with the inserted clock depicting an imaginary shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al- 'Azīz al-Jīlānī.



39- *Sūrat al-Ikhlās*

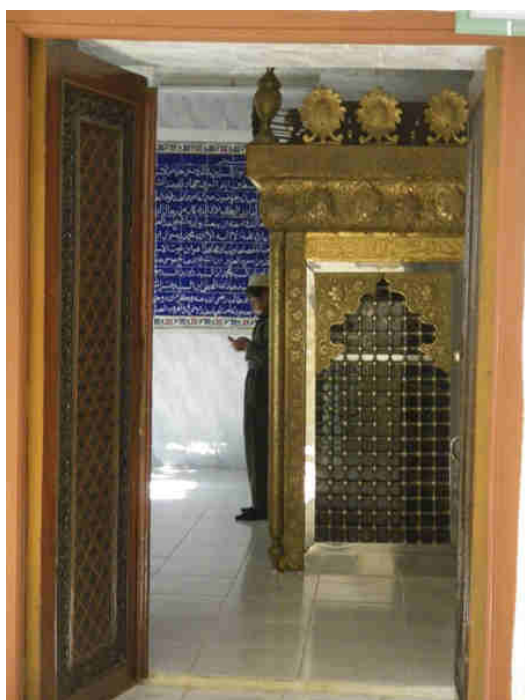
The double-door leading into the burial chamber is made of Indian teak. It is very similar to ones installed in the Mosque and Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad and was in fact, brought to 'Aqra from Baghdad for use in Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz's shrine.<sup>368</sup>

<sup>368</sup> The origin of this door as being from the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad is confirmed in (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi' al-Shaikh ...*, 77).





40- *Inside the burial chamber.*



41- *The gilded cage that covers the tomb of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jīlānī.*



42- The windowsill of the burial chamber, where several editions of the *Qur'ān* and other prayer books are made available for visitors to use, with a large *sibḥa* or *misbaḥa* – a string of prayer beads.

The threshold of the burial chamber is slightly lower than the floor of the room. The space has been recently redecorated, with marble slabs covering the floor, and ceramic tiling covering the walls. The interior of the dome is plastered with a textured plaster, and painted pink and purple with a dark blue-green four-pointed star in the centre. Suspended from the dome is a simple chandelier and four individual light fixtures. Below the dome lies the encased tomb of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz. The gilt-metal cage structure surrounds a wooden chest positioned over the upper tomb (built above ground level to mark the position of the burial, the body being buried beneath that structure and below the floor of the room). The current metal cage was positioned over the tomb in 1987,<sup>369</sup> but before that was positioned on the tomb of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad (see chapter2, footnote 255, and chapter 5, A.3.1) on the tomb of. This cage is thought to have been crafted somewhere in Iran.

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<sup>369</sup> Ibid, p.28.



43- *The gilded-brass cage that encases Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s tomb.*

The metal cage is made of a wooden structure covered with decorated gilt brass sheets and aluminium silver grille screens, its interior lined with teak panelling. The embossed decoration consists of stylised Islamic floral motifs, similar to those that appear in Iranian miniature paintings and carpets, and calligraphic inscriptions of Qur’ānic verses and the names of Allah, Prophet Muhammad and his family – excluding Imam Ḥasan, which seems to have been lost in the adjustment of the cage to fit the space. The Qur’ānic verses on the top frame of the cage are of the whole of chapter (76), *Sūrat al-Insān*, followed by the Throne verse. The line of verses below that consists of six verses from *Sūrat Yūnis* (10:62 – 67). Each of these verses is separated from the next by one of the names of God, Muhammad, ‘Alī, Fāṭima and Ḥusāin, with the twice-repeated use of Muhammad, ‘Alī and Fāṭima. The calligraphic panel above the double door of the cage consists of a prayer for Prophet Muhammad, his family and his followers.





44- Inside the cage is seen the draped tomb.

Inside, the metal cage is a draped wooden tomb. The drapes consist of embroidered silk velvet coverings, originally made for, and presented as gifts to, the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad, by devotees from the Indian Subcontinent (Pakistan and India). Some of these are then sent to the shrine in ‘Aqra for use on the tomb of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. The takkia manager, the local custodian – explained that he usually brought covers back from Baghdad after the annual festivities of the Mawlūd of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, if there were surplus ones presented to the shrine there. These covers are usually embroidered with gold and silver covered threads. The embroidered details include the names and titles of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, God, Prophet Muhammad, his family – Fāṭima, Ḥasan and Ḥusān, and the four caliphs – Ābū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī. Floral arabesque patterns are also used to create borders and divide the space into compartments for the calligraphic inscriptions mentioned above. In addition to the covers draping the wooden box, an embroidered turban is positioned at the top end of the box, where the head of the saint is laid. This turban is rather exaggerated in size to signify the sainthood of the shaikh. On the floor, between the wooden box and the metal cage are laid prayer rugs and other small decorative textiles.

As the cage has an open grille, people tend to drop offerings of money and sweets into the cage, as well as spray perfumes onto the covered tomb. To prevent the theft of the money that has been dropped in, glass sheets have been fixed inside of each of the grilles, up to chest height, permitting people to drop in offerings but not remove them. The metal cage’s

small double-door is kept locked. The inside of the cage is lined with wood panelling, and lit with florescent tube lights. The canopy of the cage is also lit with small light bulbs fixed on it, and larger lights on its corners.



45- On the floor of the cage near its corner is paper money that has been dropped through the small area at the top of the arch that has been left unglazed.

The ceramic walls of the burial chamber are bare except for a large blue and white ceramic tiled text panel that describes Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and his deeds. It tells that this is the burial place of the shaikh, who was a “mujaḥhid” and a “thā’ir” – a warrior and an avenger – of Muslim lands against the Crusaders, and that he had participated in the liberation of ‘Asqalān – Ashkelon – in Palestine. His blood lineage is then given, which ends with Prophet Muhammad through his grandson Imam Ḥasan. This is followed by a brief reference to his settling in the town of Ḥīyāl, the ‘Aqra of today,<sup>370</sup> after he returned from his “jihād” against the “Faranj” – his campaign against the French – in the wars against the Crusaders in 690 Hijra (1291). Unfortunately, this date is inaccurately copied. Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz did not settle in the area until 580 Hijra (1184) after his return from the Crusades,<sup>371</sup> and died in 604 Hijra (1207).

<sup>370</sup> This is a misidentification. It is a well known fact that Ḥīyāl is not ‘Aqra. Ḥīyāl is near Jabal Sinjār to the west of the city of Mosul in the direction of the nearby Syrian border, while ‘Aqra is to the north-east of Mosul and is comparatively near the Iranian borders.

<sup>371</sup> (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī ...*, 108); and (Al-Sāmarā’ī, *Al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir...*, 34-35). The author of this text may have confused the date of the final expulsion of the Crusader presence in the Holy Land, which was at the hands of the Mamluks in 1291, with Saladin’s earlier campaigns.



46- *The ceramic tiled text panel by the tomb.*

The only other object hanging on the walls is a clock, positioned on the same wall as the text panel, that facing the entrance to the burial chamber. On the windowsill there are a number of copies of the Quran in different editions, with a few religious education books, a book stand, large set of rosary beads – misbaha – and a textile with the Throne verse printed on it. There were also two framed calligraphic works that seemed to be awaiting hanging. One is the names of God and Muhammad, and the other a verse from the Qur'ān. The tiled floor is usually covered with fitted carpet during the cold months and left bare during the hot months. Prayer rugs are also used in this space.

Dangling from the chandelier that hangs in the centre of the dome are strips of cloth that have been tossed up by female visitors seeking the Shaikh's advocacy in solving their problems or granting their wishes and prayers. The local custodian expressed his concern regarding these rags, as they sometimes fall on to the lights that adorn the canopy of the cage, and become a fire hazard.



47- *The rags caught up on the chandelier of the burial chamber.*

At present there is no door leading into the shrine room directly from within the courtyard of building (B). The only entrance to the shrine room is situated at the rear of the building, which backs onto the mountain. Looking at the construction of the side wall of the shrine room from within the courtyard, there is evidence of the presence of previous openings that have been blocked and plastered. These openings were closed off to isolate the courtyard and its other rooms once it became the private living quarters of Shaikh Sa'id's family in the 1960s. Since 2009, a new residence – building (D) – for the Shaikh Sa'id's son Wuria has been built, and the family no longer live in this building.

The shrine rooms in building (B) – including the antechamber and the burial chamber – are kept locked unless there is a request to visit them, which is usually granted promptly; or it is one of the regular days of visitation, such as Thursdays and Fridays of every week, when women come to the shrine with their requests and vows; or the special days of visitation associated with annual religious festivals. These special days include the two 'Īd festivals; Mawlid al-Nabī; Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī's Mawlūd celebrations; Laylat al-Niṣif min Sha'bān - the holy night of mid-Sha'bān in which it is commonly believed that God would especially answer prayers for forgiveness and grant prayers for sustenance and blessings;<sup>372</sup> and Laylat al-Qadr – the night in which the first revelations of the Qur'ān were transmitted to the Prophet during the closing days of the fasting month of

<sup>372</sup> The night of mid-Sha'bān (eighth month of Islamic calendar) falls on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, and is known as Laylat al-Barā'a – the night of innocence – in which God offers forgiveness for sin. Visitors to this takkia, and to the shrine in Baghdad, spend the night in vigil, reading the Qur'ān and offering prayers and supplications. The next day is spent in fasting.

Ramaḍān.<sup>373</sup> The burial chamber is also visited on other important occasions such as the birth of a child when the family might come to seek blessings for it.

Out of respect for the saint's holiness, footwear is taken off outside the main entrance to the shrine rooms. Upon entering the burial chamber, most devotees would stand at the foot of the cage and recite a small prayer or the first chapter of the Qur'ān. Then they would walk round the tomb and its gilded cage in an anti-clockwise direction, starting at the saint's feet and working round to his head and then round to the direction of his face (which faces the qibla, facing in the direction of Mecca) and the centre door of the cage on this side and then back to where the saint's feet are, while continuing to utter supplications to God and to the saint. Some might take a copy of one of the Qur'āns from the windowsill and sit on the floor against one of the walls to read a few pages before replacing it. Once a devotee has finished his visitation he would usually walk backwards out of the room to avoid giving his back to the saint. Some devotees drop money into the cage through its grilles while reciting their prayers or just before leaving the room. Most visitors to the tomb touch and stroke the cage as they walk round it, lean in to whisper their prayers through its grilles, and to kiss the frames, corners and door. This physical contact with the saint's tomb is born out of love for the saint and is believed to transfer the energy and *baraka*<sup>374</sup> – blessings – of God and his saint to the devotee. Signs of wear are evident on the cage, especially the tarnishing and fading of the gilding on the copper sheeting that covers the main structure and its corners. On the way out of the chamber, some visitors kiss the wooden door of the chamber and its frame too, for it is considered to be the doorway to the saint, both physically and metaphorically.<sup>375</sup>

<sup>373</sup> Laylat al-Qādir – the Night of Power or Destiny – in which Angel Gabriel revealed the first verses of the Qur'ān to Prophet Muhammad – is celebrated on 27<sup>th</sup> Ramaḍān. Chapter 97 in the Qur'ān is named after it. See (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 446).

<sup>374</sup> For baraka and popular religion see (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary ...*, 37 and 249).

<sup>375</sup> Al-Ḥafnī, 'Abd al-Mun'im, Al-Mawsū'a al-Ṣūfiyya: al-kitāb al-shāmil li-ā'lām al-taṣawūf wa al-munkirīn 'alaih, wa ṭuruq wa lughat al-ṣūfiyya wa muṣṭalaḥātihim mimma yusta'jam ma'nāh 'alā ghairihim (The Sufis' Encyclopaedia: a compendium of the leaders of Sufism and those who reject it; and the orders and language of Sufism; and their expressions that are unfamiliar to those who are not of them). Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 2006, p.827.



48- Removing footwear before entering the shrine.



49- Reciting prayers of supplication at the foot of the saint's tomb.



50- Walking round the tomb in an anti-clockwise fashion while reciting prayers and verses from the Quran.





51- A visitor reads aloud a chapter from the *Quran*.



52- Inside the cage money has been inserted by visitors as donations to the shrine.

Two small prayer mats were available for people to use in the autumn of 2010. Some of the male visitors used these to pray two ruk‘as – prostrations – as a greeting to the saint, positioning themselves in the traditional direction of the qibla. A few visitors were observed sitting in quiet meditation in the antechamber, with a misbaḥa in their hands.



Important guests visiting the shrine are accompanied into the shrine chamber by one the takkia manager's men (a khalifa or one of his brothers if not himself) – or female relatives if the guest is a female - as a gesture of hospitality and a mark of respect, and they will pray with the guest at the tomb.

On special nights, such as Laylat al-Qadr and Laylat al Barā'a, the Qādirī Sufis enter the shrine as a group led by their shaikh to offer their prayers at the tomb. And those of the Qādirī Sufis who enter the forty day spiritual retreat - *khalwa*<sup>376</sup> - at the takkia, visit the tomb at the start of the khalwa period and then again at the end of it, but this time with a *ḥalaqat dhikr*<sup>377</sup> – a circle of remembrance reciters – who recite prayers and litanies in remembrance of God and thanksgiving for the completion of the khalwa and associated worship duties.

As mentioned above, some female visitors to the shrine chamber have a habit of tossing textile scraps or rags over the gilded cage with the aim of having them caught by the chandelier above it.<sup>378</sup> This type of popular religion, was tolerated, though the shrine's attendants regularly removed the pieces of cloth that fell onto the cage's roof or were tied onto the grilles of the cage.

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<sup>376</sup> (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary* ..., 169-70).

<sup>377</sup> Ibid, p.67.

<sup>378</sup> This custom is known all over the Middle East and other parts of South and Central Asia, with textile scraps tied not only to the cages and grilles of saints' tombs but also to bushes and trees considered sacred or blessed, as seen in the burial ground adjacent to the shrine rooms here. See also Dafni, Amots. "Why Are Rags Tied to the Sacred Trees of the Holy Land?" In *Economic Botany*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (Winter, 2002). New York: Springer on behalf of New York Botanical Garden Press, pp.315-327. Also see Lymer, Kenneth. "Rags and Rock Art: The Landscapes of Holy Site Pilgrimage in the Republic of Kazakhstan." In *World Archaeology*, Vol. 36, No.1, The Object of Dedication (March 2004), Taylor & Francis Ltd., pp.158-172. In addition, see Grinsell, L. V. "Some Sacred Trees and Rag-Bushes in Cyprus." In *Folklore*, Vol. 101, No. 2 (1990), Taylor & Francis Ltd., on behalf of Folklore Enterprises Ltd., pp.227-8.



53- *The rags hanging from the chandelier.*

Returning to the antechamber, this room which every visitor has to pass through to reach the tomb of Shaikh ‘Abd al ‘Aziz, houses the largest number of framed works of any space within the site. Nearly all of these are Arabic calligraphic works, and all are of a religious nature. The only text in Kurdish displayed on site is hung here in the form of a brief biographical description of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Even though the question about the noticeable absence of inscriptions in Kurdish was not asked; from observing the other activities that were carried out within the male-dominated spheres in the shrine, it was obvious that the Arabic language, being the language of the faith and its book, dominated the religious rituals, which included the call to prayer, the daily obligatory prayers and the litanies that followed each, and the weekly dhikr litany and poetry. Kurdish was used in delivering the Friday sermon and in one-to-one communications between the shaikhs, khalifas and their followers and guests, and in the initiation ritual of a murīd (Sufi disciple). But this was not the case in the females’ quarter where, except for the daily obligatory prayers recited in Arabic, all their activities were carried out in Kurdish.

Qur’ānic verses, the name of Prophet Muhammad, and the names of God are only to be expected in such a religious and holy space. They demonstrate the fundamental Islamic beliefs adhered to by the shrine, the one God, the prophethood of Muhammad, and the divine origin of the Qur’ān; and assure the visitor that this is not a place of polytheism or idolatry but a place that acknowledges God’s unity and his Prophet’s message.

The 'rope' verse from Sūrat Āl 'Umrān (3:103) is the first to come upon when entering the antechamber. It calls the believers to take refuge in God's religion – God's rope – all together, not fall into disunity, and recall His blessings upon them.<sup>379</sup> The Falaq chapter (113:1-5) is one of the two protective chapters in the Qur'ān,<sup>380</sup> and the Iklās chapter (112:1-4) describes God's core identity and uniqueness and is considered to be the equivalent of a third of the Qur'ān in its meaning.<sup>381</sup> These verses also greet the visitor as he / she comes to enter the outer door of the shrine rooms, where they are inscribed on the external wall above the door. The Throne verse (2:255) is also a refuge verse. It describes God's throne or domain, and his power and will over creation's destiny.<sup>382</sup> The Ninety Nine Names of God that describe his attributes are displayed here to represent Him. Muslims recite these names in their supplications,<sup>383</sup> and many popular books describe how and when to use each name as aids in life.<sup>384</sup>

As for the two Shī'ī objects, the Safīnat al-Najāt (Ship of Salvation) wall hanging, and the calligraphic work of the Throne verse above the inner door to the burial chamber, these are harder to explain if considering the identity of the Qādirī Sufis from a sectarian angle only, for the Qādiriyya Sufi order is a Sunnī order. Some, like the Qaidiriyya Wūlāniyya follow the Sunnī Shāfi'ī School of jurisprudence, while others, such as the Qādirī order at the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad, are followers of the Sunnī Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence. However, the presence of these Shī'ī objects became more understandable when the attendants of the shrine were asked what they thought of the Prophet's family – Āhl al-Bayt which includes the Prophet, his daughter Fatima, her husband Ālī and her two sons Ḥasan and Ḥusain,<sup>385</sup> and the nine descendants of Ḥusain that make up with him and his brother and father the twelve imams of the al-Ithnā-ʿAshariyya branch of the Shī'a sect in Islam.<sup>386</sup> In response, the takkia manager explained that for them, as Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and his son Shaikh 'Abd al-ʿAzīz were descendants of the Prophet through his grandson al-Ḥasan, it was only natural to respect all Āhl al-Bayt, including the twelve imams venerated by the Shī'a. He also pointed out that Imam Ālī, the first of the twelve

<sup>379</sup> (Picthall, *Meaning of ....*, 70).

<sup>380</sup> Ibid, pp.454-455.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid, p.454.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid, p.57.

<sup>383</sup> (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary ...*, 229).

<sup>384</sup> For an example of this genre of Islamic literature see Friedlander, Shems. *Ninety-Nine Names of Allah*. London: Wildwood House Ltd., 1978.

<sup>385</sup> (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary ...*, 9).

<sup>386</sup> Ibid, p.152 and pp.292-3.

imams was also one of the four Rāshidūn caliphs – the Rightly Guided Caliphs – who are loved and respected by the Sunnis.<sup>387</sup>

As for the cage that encases the tomb of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, which had been originally made for his father’s tomb, the significance of the Qur’ānic inscription that runs round the four sides of its upper part and consists of the whole of Sūrat al-Insān (chapter 76), lies in its representation of the end of man’s time in this life and what he will be dealt in the hereafter, judged by his conduct in this life. This chapter is also known as al-Dahr – the Time – chapter.<sup>388</sup> Its use here associates the saint with the rewards promised in the chapter. At the end of the inscription of chapter 76 is attached the Throne verse previously mentioned, which states God’s ultimate will in shaping man’s destiny, and here, Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, and before him his father, is an example of what God has chosen for him. The six verses from Sūrat Yūnis (10:62–67) that occupy the lower row of text round the four sides of the cage are as appropriate as those of Sūrat al-Insān if not more so. In these verses God tells man that His awliā’ (God’s friends) – two of which are Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and his father – have nothing to fear and they will not experience sadness because of their belief and piety, going on to promise the good tidings in both this life and the hereafter.<sup>389</sup>

It is interesting to note that there were no Sufi quotes, poetic or otherwise, anywhere on site, unlike at Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s shrine in Baghdad where verses of his poetry line the walls of his burial chamber.

The embroidered velvet textiles that drape the tomb inside the cage have been discussed from the design and context perspectives in chapter 2, as they were originally made and presented to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s shrine in Baghdad before being brought for use in ‘Aqra. But their presence here is particularly important, as it demonstrates the care and attention devoted to this shrine and its continuous close association with the one in Baghdad.

The repetition in the use and display of the same Qur’ānic verses, chapters and the names of God and the Prophet, in both the shrine rooms and elsewhere in the site, is considered normal and acceptable if not actively encouraged as frequent remembrance is advised by

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid, p.267.

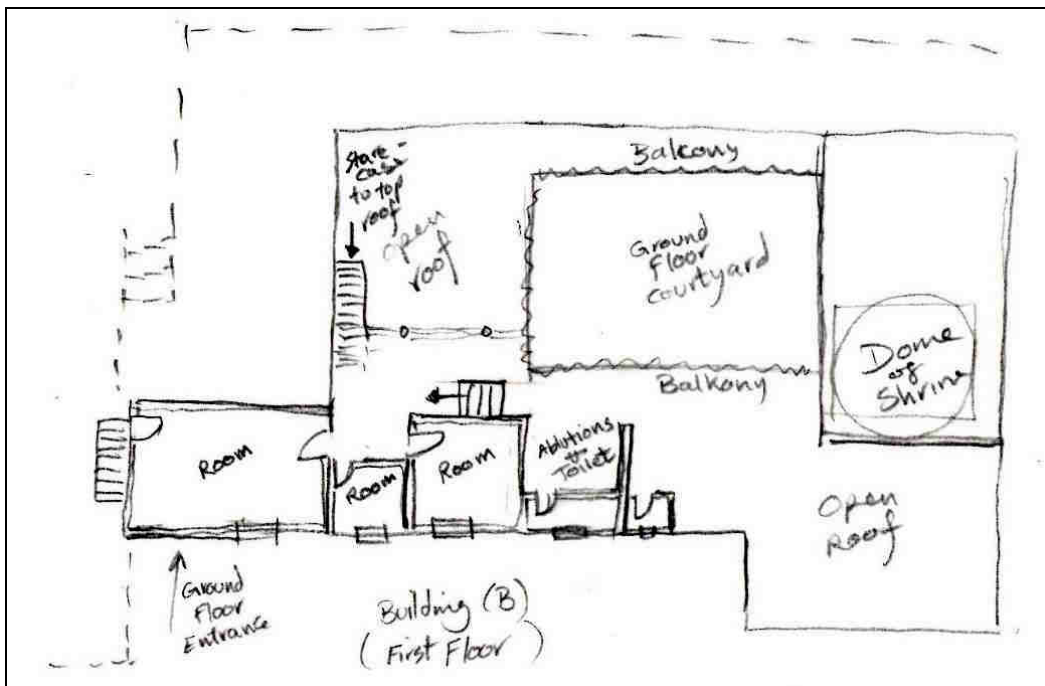
<sup>388</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 423).

<sup>389</sup> Ibid. p.162.

the Prophet in some of his ḥadīth.<sup>390</sup> These multiple inscriptions also echo the repetitions normally practiced in the dhikr circles, in the daily prayers and in the litanies.

### B.5- Building (B) - The living quarters:

In addition to the shrine rooms that occupy half of one side of building (B), two other rooms adjacent to the shrine make up the rest of the right side of the building (B). These two along with seven other rooms on the ground floor, and four on the upper floor, comprise the living quarters of building (B). All except for the two shrine rooms look into the courtyard in the centre of the building as well as having windows looking outwards. One room, situated above the main entrance to the complex on the left side of the façade of building, is accessible from both sides; from the upper floor in building (B) and via a staircase in the courtyard of building (C).



54- Illustrative sketch of the layout of the upper floor in building (B).

<sup>390</sup> (Al-Ḥafnī, *Al-Mawsūʿa al-Ṣūfiyya* ..., 974-978).



*55- The main entrance through the arch in building (B) and the yard into which it opens.*



*56- The yard between buildings (B) and (C). To the right of the tree is a staircase leading onto the courtyard of building (C).*

When I visited the shrine in the autumn of 1990, Shaikh Sa'īd's extended family were still living in these quarters; and the entrance to the shrine was, as it is now, from the back of the building. Currently, these rooms are partly used as accommodation for dervishes and visitors, and one wing – to the right of the entrance leading into the courtyard of building (B) – which consists of three rooms adjacent to each other, now accommodates the administrative offices of the takkia manager and the Qādirī waqf in 'Aqra.

When standing in the courtyard and facing the domed shrine wall, it is impossible not to notice a keyhole-shaped opening – about two feet high – in the lower part of the burial chamber's wall. This opening is covered by a simple wooden frame of chicken-wire mesh. Looking into it, a cavity with what seems to be rubble can be seen. This cavity is unexpectedly large, indicating that the wall of the burial chamber on this side is quite thick

(approximately 0.5m if not more). The framed chicken-wire mesh is hinged so that the cavity may be accessed for ritualistic practices at certain times of the year. One of the rituals – during the 'Īd celebrations – involves placing pure earth, brought from a location in the mountain nearby, inside the cavity along with a long handed ladle which farmers then use to take scoops of the earth to scatter on their farms, to invoke good fortune - Baraka.



*57- Entering building (B) and its courtyard.*



*58- The small opening in the wall of the burial chamber where pure earth is placed on special occasions.*





59- A ladle can be seen in the bottom corner of the image on the right, in preparation for the *ʿĪd al-Aḍḥa* – the pilgrimage festival - celebrations in November 2010.

In both the 1990 and 2009 visits to the shrine, the sparse furnishings of the rooms in this quarter were noticed. The floors of the accommodation rooms are covered with machine-made fitted carpets of a light colour and small pattern. Against the walls of each room are laid long stretches of cotton-filled mattresses for sitting on. These mattresses are about 8cm thick and are covered with a patterned furniture textile – of the type used to cover sofas and the like. Cushions to lean on are provided, though they are fewer in quantity than the length of seating mattresses available in any given room, indicating that not all sitters required them. Simple light weight cotton curtains adorned the windows. Rooms used for sleeping in also had bedding piled up in one corner, consisting of cotton-covered mattresses, pillows and blankets. The plain plastered walls of these rooms were mostly bare. The offices of the Qādirī Waqf in this building were furnished with modern western style furniture. A computer had been introduced recently, and was being used by the administrator and the accountant, but no internet access was available. The office of the takkia manager, the local custodian, had a large green velvet flag on its pole standing in one corner of the room, and several framed pictures on the walls.



60- *The central courtyard of building (B).*

Between buildings (B) and (C) is a yard. At the back of it and to the right branches out the footpath / walkway that leads to the entrance of the shrine rooms in building (B) and beyond it to the burial ground. About a third of the yard is covered with corrugated iron, while a large tree dominates the uncovered part. A small staircase on the left side of the yard leads into the courtyard of building (C). Paved with cement, it is large enough to hold a few cars, which may be driven into it through the main arched entrance to the takkia.

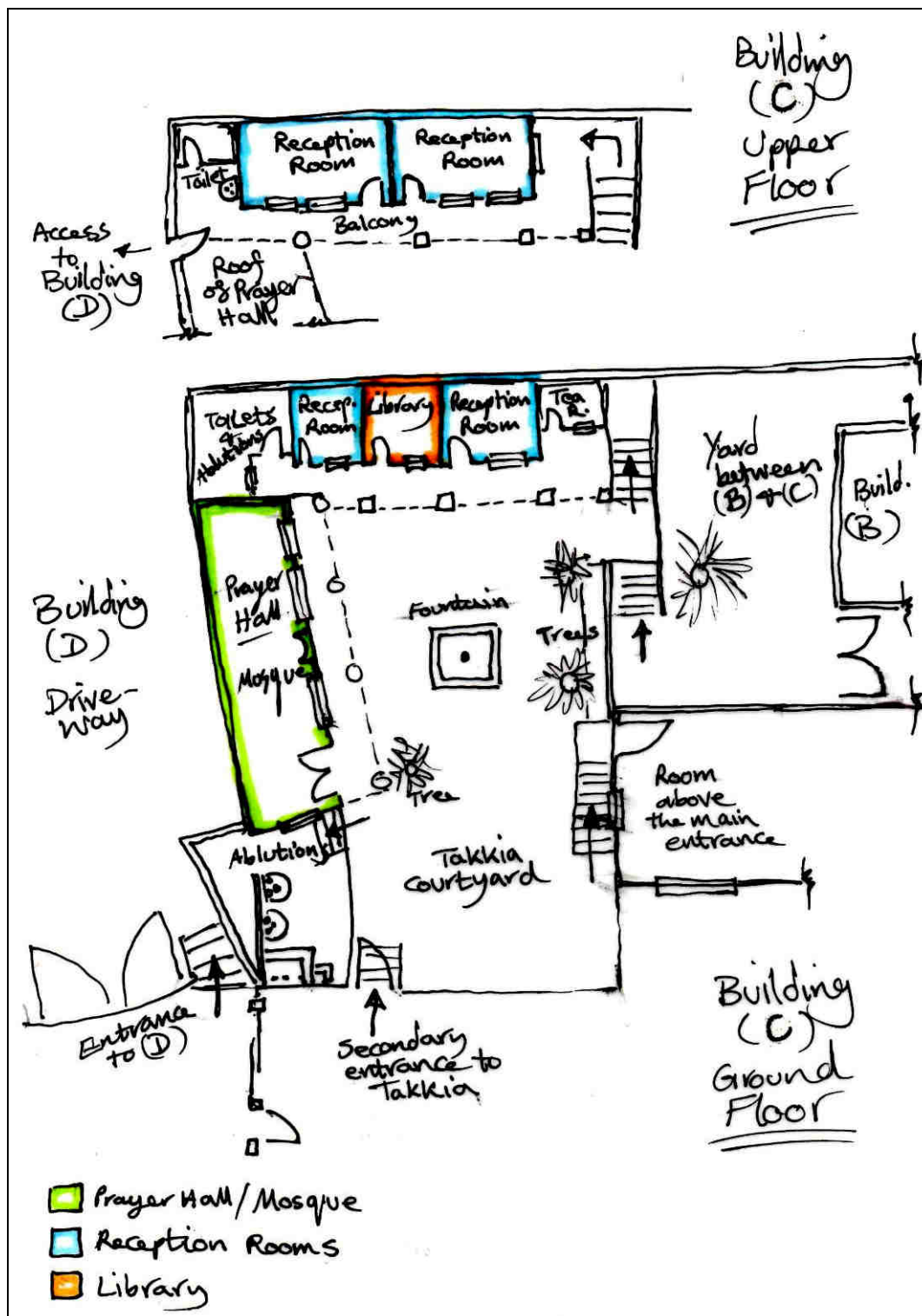


61- *A view of the burial chamber dome from the upper floor.*

#### **B.6- Building (C) – the Takkia, the mosque / prayer hall and the library:**

Situated at the centre of the site, this building is the hub of Sufi worship at the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī for the followers of the Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya Sufi order. It consists of an open courtyard, surrounded by buildings on three of its sides, with the fourth looking out onto the dead-end road that gives access to the site. Three external access

points lead into building (C). One is to the right of the courtyard linking it with building (B); the second is on the front side of the complex from the road; and the third is to the left of the building, through its upper floor, which links it to building (D) – the residence of the takkia manager's family.



62- Illustrative sketch of the layout of building (C).

**B.7- Building (C) - The courtyard:**

Three trees and a square water fountain grace the slab-paved courtyard. On the right side is a small staircase that leads to a retreat room in building (B), and further along from the staircase is a built-in concrete bench for sitting on; next to it is the opening that links the two buildings (C) and (B). A row of five rooms and a staircase that leads up to the upper floor line the furthest side of the courtyard. These rooms include two reception rooms with a library in between, and at the far left corner, an ablutions / toilet room. On the left side of the courtyard is the prayer-hall / mosque and next to it, nearest to the front left corner, is another ablutions / toilet facility. At the front of the courtyard is a small entrance flanked, on either side, by a low wall that allows a clear view into and out of the courtyard.

The upper floor rooms line one side of the courtyard. A balconied walkway leads to two large reception rooms, one next to the other, followed by a toilet / bathroom. On the far left corner of that floor is a door leading into the driveway of building (D).



*63- The courtyard of the takkia (C). The small staircase in the foreground leads to a room in building (B) which is used to accommodate Sufis on spiritual retreat – khalwa.*



*64- The prayer hall. In the background, beyond the takkia, a part of the upper floor of building (D) appears.*

In general, the takkia space (building C) is an exclusively male space. The courtyard is the centre of the life of the complex with many activities taking place in it. Male visitors to the shrine will gather there to converse and drink tea with the residents and staff. And Sufis on spiritual retreat at the shrine complex will spend some of their contemplation time in the courtyard.

When the prayer hall is full of worshippers, the overflow will line up in the courtyard; and the imam who leads the prayers, ends up standing in front of them in the courtyard. When there is no congregation, some individual worshippers will choose to conduct their daily prayers in the courtyard on small prayer rugs made available for such use.



*65- The mid-day prayer on the second day of 'Īd al-Aḍḥa in November 2010.*



Both the weekly dhikr circles and those held on special religious occasions are held there, with the reciters, tambourine players and devotees sitting round the edges of the courtyard on rugs or mats laid out for the event. On special occasions, the participants will stand for the dhikr round a group of Qādirī dervishes and their khalifas who will conduct the ritual Sufī samā'. This ritual samā' involves the dervishes standing in a circle to one side of the centre of the courtyard, and moving rhythmically to the sound of the reciters singing the chants and drummers beating on daff-drums and a small kettle-type drum. The samā' movement involves bowing forwards and backwards with a slight rocking motion to the left and the right while tossing their heads backwards and forwards, and at the same time chanting God's names and other phrases and poetic verses in praise of God and the Prophet.



66- *The second half of a weekly Thursday dhikr session in the courtyard of the takkia.*



67- *Dhikr session on the second day of 'Īd al-Āḍḥā in November 2010.*

The courtyard is also used for serving meals for male visitors, especially on festive days when the numbers are too large to be accommodated in the reception rooms that surround the courtyard. The food is brought over from the women's quarter in building (E) on trays, which are then laid down on the covered floor. Depending on numbers, the guests sit in threes and fours round each tray to have their meal. After the meal tea is served, but this is made nearby in a small room looking out onto the courtyard and situated next to the staircase leading to the upper floor of takkia.



68- Preparing trays of food for the 'Īd al-Āḍḥā festival in November 2010.

#### **B.8- Building (C) - The prayer hall / mosque room:**

The prayer hall or mosque room is a long and relatively narrow rectangular space, with the qibla wall facing into the courtyard at an angle. The hall is simply furnished with five rows of plain green strips of fitted carpet with geometric patterned borders, machine made and purposely designed for use in this prayer hall. The geometric border pattern includes cartouches with reversed inscriptions, a error on the manufacturer's part. The repeated text in Kurdish reads "Awqāf Akre" – the endowments of 'Aqra. These carpets are laid to cover the hall in lines parallel to the qibla wall. The prayer niche on the qibla wall consists of a framed arch with a recess. The frame is covered with white marble slabs and the recess with black. Above the arch is written a phrase from a Qur'ānic verse (2: 144) which



commands the believer to turn his face towards the sacred mosque in Mecca for prayer.<sup>391</sup>

At the foot of the arched recess are two prayer rugs positioned one on top of the other. The top one is a machine made rug, black and yellow in colour, depicting the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The lower one is a hand woven Kurdish woollen prayer rug / textile, with a plain chequered pattern in blue and red. Both the qibla wall and the wall to its right are dominated by large windows rendering the hall bright and light. All walls are covered to waist level with large ceramic tiles, and the remainder white-washed plaster. The ceiling is covered with pre-fabricated panelling into which lighting fixtures are inserted. Ceiling fans and air-conditioning units are also installed. Two small wooden bookcases holding copies of the Qur'ān, small book stands for recitation, an electronic time panel that tells the times of the daily prayers, and a round wall clock are the only other furnishing in the space. Finally, there is no sound amplification system used, nor are there any loud speakers, except for a portable one with a number of microphones and a loud speaker.



69- *The ablutions facility by the prayer hall in building (C). The open white metal door to the left is the second entrance to the courtyard on the front elevation of building (C).*

<sup>391</sup> See (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 45-46).



70- The prayer hall / mosque room in building (C).



71- The black and white marble covered mihrab – prayer niche.



72- A Thursday dhikr session in the prayer hall in November 2009. The man in the foreground on the left is beating a tambourine.

The prayer hall / mosque that looks out onto the courtyard of building (C) is used to conduct the five daily prayers and the same rituals as the courtyard except for the tea and meals. When the call to prayer is announced by one of the *mū'adhin*, the worshippers gather in the prayer hall and stand in rows to perform their prayers according to the *Sunnī Shafi'i* tradition. After completing the obligatory prostrations of the prayer, they recite the daily *Qādirī Wūlīānī wīrd* – litany while seated on the floor of the hall.

The *takkia* manager and the chief *khalifas* in the *Wūlīāniyya* order described their *wīrd* as consisting of the following utterances in sequence: “*Subhān Allah*” – Glory to God – 33 times; “*al-Ḥamdu lil-lāh*” – praise be to God- 33 times; “*Allahu Akbar*” – God is Great – 33 times; “*Lā Illāh illā Allah*” – there is no god but God / Allah – 100 times; “*Allah*” 300 times; “*Dā'im*” – the Ever Lasting – 50 times.

When the weekly *dhikr* circles are held on Thursday afternoon, the presiding *shaikh* and his *khalīfa* occupy a position in front of the prayer niche, with their backs to it. The musicians – four or five of them – stand on the periphery of the circle of people who form the centre of the space. Inside this large circle is a smaller circle of *dervishes* who take off their turbans and let loose their waist length hair, to toss forwards and backwards as they sway with the chanting and the beating of the *daffs* and drums. The *dhikr* session starts

slow and builds up to a frantic rhythmic swaying and rocking. This is then followed by an address and prayers given by the senior khalifas, which are delivered with the devotees sitting down on the floor of the hall. Once the first half of dhikr ceremony – the formal half – is concluded, the attendees line up to greet and shake hands with each other in an orderly fashion, and then stand in line to shake the hands of the presiding shaikh, usually the takkia manager or whoever he asks to stand on his behalf in his absence. Once the devotees leave the prayer hall they will rest in the courtyard and then a second session of chanting while seated on the ground takes place, before ending the dhikr circle and departing.



*73- The dervishes in the centre of the circle sway backwards and forwards, while the tambourine beaters play and chant the litany.*



*74- The kettle-drum beater and his assitan.*



75- *The second half of the dhikr session with devotees sitting to hear an address and prayers from the khalīfa.*



76- *The devotees greeting each other round the room.*

The qibla arch – the prayer niche – is the focal point in the hall. The inscription above it, a sentence from the Qur’ānic verse (2:144), in which God tells Prophet Muhammad that He will redirect his face in prayer towards a qibla that will please the Prophet, the direction of the sacred mosque in Mecca; an event that changed the Islamic qibla from the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem to the Ka’ba in Mecca.<sup>392</sup> The positioning of this verse is most appropriate and complements the function of the prayer niche, reminding worshippers that they are not merely facing a prayer niche, but Mecca beyond it. At the foot of the niche is a small prayer rug with an illustration of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Jerusalem had been the first qibla Muslims directed their faces towards in prayer in Prophet

<sup>392</sup> (Picthall, *Meaning of ....*, 45-46).

Muhammad's time, up until a few months after his migration from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD.<sup>393</sup>

### **B.9- Building (C) - The library room:**

The small library room is situated in the middle of the row of rooms lining the far side of the courtyard. It contains some 261 titles, many of which are multi-volume. Most are in Arabic, but a substantial number are in Kurdish too. Only thirteen titles are in English. The subjects are mainly religious, including a large number of Sufi titles, comprising works by and about Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, and a large number of key classical texts on Sufism and some modern ones too; books on fiqh; on ḥadīth; on Qur'ānic studies and prayers; on Islamic religious history, including histories of the Prophet's companions and histories of Kurdish tribes and Sufi orders; and books on Arabic and on Kurdish poetry. There was also a small number of Shī'ī titles.<sup>394</sup>



77- The library room in building (C)

<sup>393</sup> Machine made prayer rugs have a variety of images on them, but the most common ones are those that depict the Ka'ba in Mecca, or a twin image of the Ka'ba and the Prophet's mosque in Medina, however some have all three, including the Dome of the Rock, and some like the one being used here, the Dome of the Rock alone. Having said that, is the choice of this prayer rug deliberate, given Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz's historical association with Palestine? It was not possible to ask this question at the time.

<sup>394</sup> The contents of the Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz Shrine's library up to November 2010 have been listed.





78- The library room.



79- The left side wall of the library room with various framed objects.

On the walls of the library are hung framed texts and other objects. On the left wall are hung a number of items including a framed page from the Qur'ān is hung in the highest position. The text is the second page of “Du‘a’ Khatm al-Qur’ān” – the prayer for concluding the recitation of the Qur’ān.<sup>395</sup> Below this is the family tree of Shaikh Mu‘taṣim ibn al-Shaikh Sa‘īd al-Barzinjī (Shaikh Mu‘taṣim al-Wūlīānī, died November 2014), the recently deceased head of the Qādirī order known as al-Ṭarīqa al-‘Aliyya al-Qādiriyya al-Wūlīāniyya. The tree also states that he is responsible for guidance and spiritual leadership of the takkia of Shaikh Ismā‘īl al-Wūlīānī in Rovia and the takkia of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī in ‘Aqra.<sup>396</sup> Adjacent to this tree is a lengthy text, in white on black, giving a brief biography of Shaikh Ismā‘īl al-Wūlīānī, the patron saint of the al-Ṭarīqa al-‘Aliyya al-Qādiriyya al-Wūlīāniyya, including his spiritual masters, his itinerary

<sup>395</sup> This page is not an integral part of the Qur’ān’s chapters and verses, but an addition to the end of the Qur’ān. Not all Qur’ān editions contain it, but it is not infrequently found either.

<sup>396</sup> This family tree is a blood lineage tree that traces back the al-Wūlīānīs to the Prophet Muhammad. It is not a Sufi silsila – chain of spiritual descent, but does state that Shaikh Mu‘taṣim is the spiritual leader of this branch of Qādirī Sufism in Nineveh, ‘Aqra and Rovia, and their branches in Kirkuk, Heshezienī, Qatwa and Erbil.



as a Sufi, his definition of Sufism, his position amongst the awlīā', the Sufi saints, and his miraculous deeds. This work is signed and dated by the calligrapher, 'Abd al-Rahmān Darwīsh Jawhar, who wrote it on 18 Sha'bān 1406 Hijra (1985 AD). The text also names the person who commissioned the work and gifted it as Satār 'Abd Allah Āḥmad al-Barzinjī, of Kirkuk. Above this framed text is a coloured print depicting an open book whose pages are inscribed with the Qur'ānic chapter no.36, entitled Yā Sīn.<sup>397</sup>

Next on this wall, and adjacent to both the biography of Shaikh Ismā'īl and the Qur'ānic chapter is a calligraphic inscription in black on white of the family lineage of Sayyid Yūsif al-Gaylani, a descendant of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jīlānī and the honorary head of the Gailani family in Baghdad, who was the former Custodian of the Awqāf al-Qādiriyya in Baghdad, to which the shrine in 'Aqra belongs, and was the custodian who invited the then leader of the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya order to become the agent for the shrine in 1964. And finally, adjacent to this framed text is a clock with a glass encased pendulum and a Chinese / Japanese sword mounted on a wooden base.<sup>398</sup>

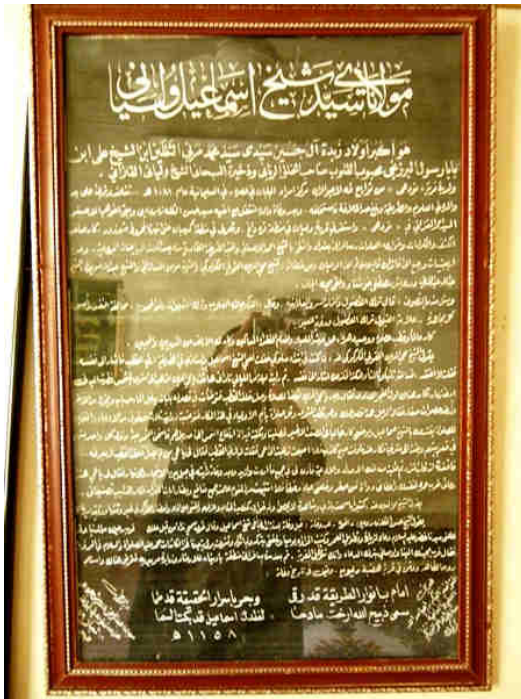


80- The family lineage of Shaikh Mu'taṣim al-Wūlīānī.<sup>399</sup>

<sup>397</sup> This special chapter is usually read at the deathbed and in mourning ceremonies. See (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 315-318).

<sup>398</sup> On the 2011 visit this sword was found to have been removed from the library.

<sup>399</sup> The tree is hand painted using ink and watercolours. The Wūlīānī family trace their descent back to Prophet Muhammad through his grandson al-Ḥusain. At the top-centre of the tree is Shaikh Mu'taṣim (red-petal flower) and his five sons (green leaves above the red flower). The takkia manager is named on a pink three-petal flower on the lower left side of Shaikh Mu'taṣim's name.



81- Biographical description of Shaikh Ismā'il al-Wūlīān.



82- The family lineage of Sayyid Yūsif al-Gaylani.

On the right wall are hung two items. A framed coloured photograph of Saladin's spare white marble tomb, that had been a gift from the German Emperor William II in 1903 on a his visit to Damascus, but never used to replace the wooden one that still stands on his tomb.<sup>400</sup> The second is a gilt-thread embroidered hanging / banner calling upon Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. The embroidered inscriptions read "Al-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-

<sup>400</sup> This photograph was a gift to the shrine, and was misunderstood to be the tomb that stood over Saladin's grave. Interviews with staff at the shrine in November 2010.

Gailani, Yā Ghawth al-Ā‘zam, Yā Quṭub Baghdad, Yā Bāz al-Āshhab” – Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani, O Greatest Succour, O Cardinal Pole of Baghdad, O Grey Falcon.”<sup>401</sup>



83- The left wall in the library room.



84- Saladin's spare white marble tomb in his mausoleum in Damascus.



85- Embroidered wall hanging calling upon Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.

<sup>401</sup> Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī has a number of titles and epithets including the three being invoked on this embroidery. See a list of them in (Al-Jīlānī, *Utterances* ..., 129-131.

Other than the bookcase and the items hung on the walls, the room has no furniture, except for a plastic chair, a coffee table, and a machine made medallion-patterned carpet spread over a plain machine made fitted carpet; the window is dressed with a light curtain, and a prayer rug lies folded on the side for use when needed.

Although the library is too small to accommodate more than two or three people at the same time, the collection of books is a resource available for use by all the followers of the *ṭarīqa*, especially the *khalifas* and those who serve the shrine and *takkia*. The management of the library seems to be shared by the *takkia* manager, his brothers and other members of the *takkia*. No cataloguing system was used, and no borrowing records were kept. But the *takkia* manager explained that they intended to enlarge the library in content and in space; and were also in the process of looking into the possibility of setting up a religious Sufi school at the *takkia*. When surveying the library, it was noted that a percentage of the books seem to have been presented as gifts by the authors or the communities representing them. These tended to be titles about the other Sufi groups in the Kurdish region of Iraq, or other branches of the Qādiriyya order in the region.

As for the framed calligraphic works and images on the walls, the library's collection seem to be more personal to the shrine's caretakers than any of the other wall hangings in all other parts of the complex. From their content and context, they represent and confirm the Wūlīānī family's social status, identity and place in their society, as well as their association with the shrine. The three key texts hanging on the wall that define this relationship are the family tree of Shaikh Mu'taṣim, the current leader of the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya order; the biographical description of Shaikh Ismā'īl al-Wūlīānī, the founder of the order and the Wulianis' ancestor; and the family lineage of the late Sayyid Yūsif al-Gaylani (1907 – 1996), the former Custodian of the Administration of the al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya and an honorary head of the Gailani family. It was he who chose to approach the *takkia* manager's father, out of all the other Kurdish Qādirī orders in the region, in the 1960s, to take charge of managing the shrine on his behalf.<sup>402</sup> The presence of these texts and their juxtaposition with each other and the other wall hangings in the library room is an indication of the special place it holds in the *takkia*, both intellectually and socially.

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<sup>402</sup> For a list of the key Kurdish Qādiriyya Sufi orders and *takkias* see (Al-Sāmarā'ī, *Al-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir* ..., 63-68).

### B.10- Building (C) - The reception rooms:<sup>403</sup>

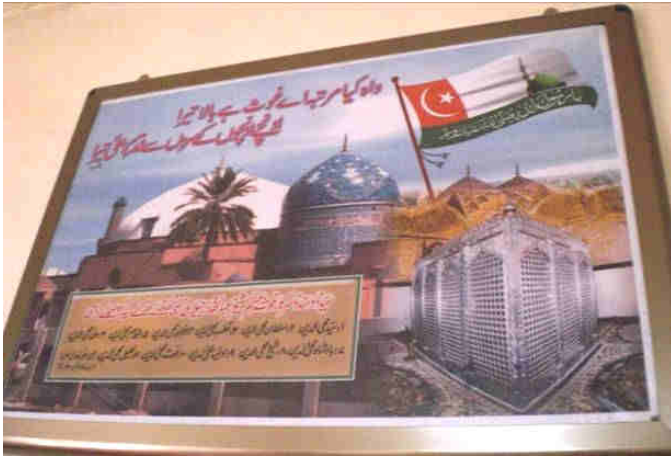
Two other rooms on the ground floor flank the library room. They too are sparsely furnished. Their floors are covered with machine woven fitted carpets over which are spread an assortment of machine woven rugs. Textile-covered cotton mattresses are laid down round the sides of the rooms for sitting on. Their windows are framed with light curtains. The walls of the reception room to the right of the library are covered with fitted carpet up to hip level. And on its left wall hangs a framed coloured photograph of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī’s shrine in Baghdad. The image is of Pakistani production, and is a montage of an exterior view of the shrine’s domes, an interior shot of the burial chamber and its silver cage, a composite flat of the star and crescent of the Pakistani flag but in white on red, not white on green; an image of the dome and minaret of the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina, and an inscription in Arabic that reads “O Prophet of God, God prays upon you”, and at the lower left a rectangular box with an Urdu inscription naming Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s titles. A round clock hangs nearby. On the wall opposite the entrance to the room, hang two framed pictures, one a gilded rendition of the Ka‘aba in Mecca, and the other a gilded calligraphic work of the Qur’ānic verse “And He it is Who accepteth repentance from His bondmen, and pardoneth the evil deeds, and knoweth what you do.” (Chapter 42, verse 25).<sup>404</sup>



86- *The reception room to the right of the library.*

<sup>403</sup> Of the two on the ground floor, only the one to the right of the library was accessible.

<sup>404</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 346).



87- *The print – a montage of images from the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad, produced in Pakistan.*

### **B.11- Building (C) - The upper floor reception rooms:**

The two reception rooms on the upper floor are each double the size of those on the ground floor. The one on the right is furnished with western-style fully-upholstered divan-sofas and glass-topped, metal framed, coffee tables. All four sides of the room are lined with the sofas. The windows have venetian blinds and the floor is covered with a machine-made fitted carpet.

The walls are bare except for two framed images on the left wall by the entrance to the room. The first is a coloured print of a calligraphic rendition of the Throne verse in the Qur'ān (2:255). The second is a coloured poster – a photographic collage celebrating Prophet Muhammad's birthday. It depicts the Prophet's mosque in Medina and the gilded metal grille in front of his tomb, his seal impression, the blue dome of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī's burial chamber at his shrine in Baghdad, and the dome and minarets of the shrine of Āḥmad Reza Khan Bareilwi (1856 – 1921), an Indian Qādirī saint.<sup>405</sup> The inscriptions on the image include greetings to the Prophet on the anniversary of his birth, a prophetic ḥadīth, written in Urdu, describing the value of visiting saints' shrines, and the name, address and phone numbers of the poster's publishers, Reza Academy in Mumbai, India. These same two framed images are also hung in the second reception room on this floor, but their positioning is different, with the Throne verse positioned on the left wall, almost diagonally opposite the entrance to the room, and the Prophet's birthday poster on

<sup>405</sup> Āḥmad Reza Khan Bareilwi, known to his followers as Imam Āḥmad Riḍa al-Qādirī, is the patron saint of the Aḥl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā'a, also known as the Bareilwis; founded in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. See (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary ...*, 10 and 37); and see Nuri, Imam Muhammad Mustafa Rida al-Qādirī al-Barkatī. *Al-Malfūz al-Sharīf, Anecdotes of Imam al-Akbar Shaykh al-Islam wal-Muslimin Arīfe-Billah Imam Aḥmad Rida al-Qādirī Muhaddith Bareillwi*. Durban: Barkatur-Raza Publications, 2007, pp.xxiv-xlix.



the right wall just by the entrance to the room. This second reception room has no furniture at all and no floor seating mattresses either. The floor is covered with an array of oriental-type designed carpets, some hand and some machine-made, laid overlapping each other over a plain machine-made fitted carpet. The ceilings of both these reception rooms are decorated with embossed plasterwork, with recessed ceiling light-fittings. Both rooms have wooden doors of teak panelling.



*88- The staircase to the right leads from the courtyard to the upper floor and the balcony. Next to the staircase is the tea making room and a drinking-water cooling machine.*



*89- The takkia's two large reception rooms look down upon the courtyard.*





90- Reception room on the right.



91- Reception room on the left.



92- Pakistani Qādirī Sufi poster in commemoration of Prophet Muhammad's Mawlid.

In addition to the reception rooms in the takkia – building (C) – there are two other quarters with reception rooms – (B) and (E). All these rooms are mainly used for hospitality, to accommodate guests, and to hold spiritual guidance sessions and dhikr circles. The sparse furnishings in these spaces give them maximum flexibility in use and allows for quick cleaning and turnover. During crowded events such as the midday prayers for the ‘Īd festivities or the Mawlid al-Nabī commemorations and other special events, these rooms are also used as prayer rooms to accommodate the overflow of people from the prayer hall and the courtyard.

The reception rooms on the upper floor of the takkia (building C) are usually used for more formal hospitality, to welcome officials from the local government in the city, district and region, and other outsiders. The two pictures already described in these rooms, being Qādirī symbols, would confirm to any guests that the allegiance of this shrine and its inhabitants is to both the Sunna<sup>406</sup> of Prophet Muhammad and to the Ṭarīqa<sup>407</sup> of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. The smaller black and white onion-shaped dome of the shrine of Āḥmad Reza Khān Bareilwi in Bareilly in India in the bottom left corner of the poster would most probably not be understood by non-Indian-Subcontinent Qādirīs, as he is not

<sup>406</sup> For a definition of Sunna see (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary ...*, 305-307).

<sup>407</sup> Ṭarīqa is the way or path of a spiritual teacher or master. See *ibid*, p.315.

known in Iraq, but could show that this poster is a gift from the Subcontinent's Qādirīs to the shrine in 'Aqra, a sign of the universality of the ṭarīqa's followers.

As for the reception rooms in building (B), these were, up to the end of 2009, part of the manager's family residence, and his father's before him. Since the completion of building (D) – the new residence – these rooms are now available as accommodation for pilgrims to the shrine. Dervishes and khalifas in the Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya Sufi order use the rooms for their khalwa, which usually lasts 40 days. The takkia at the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz is considered to be the main takkia of the Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya, despite there being the shrine and takkia of the founder of their branch of the Qādiriyya, Shaikh Ismā'īl al-Wūlānī in the village of Rovia. Because of this, each khalīfa in this Sufi order is expected to do one khalwa a year at the takkia of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz. One of the preferred times for conducting the khalwa is during the fasting month of Ramaḍān plus ten days before it. The spiritual wellbeing and development of those khalifas partaking in khalwa is the responsibility of the senior or chief khalīfa in the Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya order, who attends to them at the takkia.



93- One of the takkia manager's sisters-in-law and her unwell son in the reception room in building (B), when it was still the residence of the Wūlānī family in 2009.

The reception rooms in the women's quarters in building (E) offer hospitality to female guests, where they are welcomed by the females in the takkia manager's family. Female guests come to visit for a variety of reasons. In addition to socialising with the women in the manager's family, they also come seeking advice on a variety of issues, including religious matters, marital relations, and health. Some female guests ask for therapeutic prayers to be recited over them or their children. These are conducted by two of the manager's sisters, who have taken their Sufi vows – the ṭarīqa – from their father who has also given them permission to perform such healing prayers. And for these healing prayers

they use a family relic to aid the prayers, a wooden rod which belonged to Shaikh Ismā'īl al-Wūlīānī, the founder of their family and their Qādirī branch of Sufism. Shaikh Ismā'īl's rod is covered in stitched green satin cloth and is about 70cm long. The manager's eldest sister or his wife use it to gently stroke the patient seeking their help while reciting Qur'ānic verses from chapters 1, 113 and 114, and supplications and invocations to God. If the guests want to speak to or consult with the takkia manager or any of the khalifas, then those men would be asked to come to see the ladies in the females' reception room.

Although it is not very common for Kurdish Sufi women to go on retreats at takkias, a small number do come to the takkia of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz. One who was present in November 2011, was an elderly Kurdish lady from Erbil. She had been introduced to the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya order through attending events at a takkia in Erbil. She liked them and began to visit the shrine in 'Aqra many years ago where she was initiated into the ṭarīqa by the takkia manager's father, Shaikh Sa'id. Her children had emigrated to northern Europe (Sweden or Holland) some years before, so, after her husband passed away, she had joined them for some months, before returning to live on her own in Erbil. Her retreat at the takkia was for about fifteen days commencing before the 'Īd al-Āḍḥā and due to conclude after it. During that period she spent all her time in the women's quarter in building (E), sleeping in the smaller reception room and sitting, meditating or socialising in the larger reception room. She would also go to the cooking yard to chat with the women preparing the food there. On the whole, her retreat seemed more informal than the men's khalwas.

The female reception rooms were also the place where meals were served. At meal times, large opaque plastic sheets, coloured and patterned, would be laid out on the floor in front of the seating mattresses at one corner of the room. Plates of food would be placed on the sheet, along with cutlery and a bowl at each guest's place. The main dishes are placed in the centre of the sheet, with several dishes of each food type appropriate in number to the number of guests. The guests would sit on the floor and on the mattresses round the plastic sheeting and serve themselves.

The large reception room in the females' quarters is also the space where the women conduct their dhikr sessions. The Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya order has female Sufi khalifas, especially in the villages, who are responsible for leading the female dhikr circles. At the Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz shrine, the leader of the dhikr circle is one of takkia manager's older sisters. She plays the daff and recites the chants, as well as leading the Sufi samā' ritual.

This ritual is performed in the same way as the male one, however, the women vary some of their hand gestures and also the way they move inside the circle. Unlike the male dhikr circles, the female circle's litany, poetry and chant is mainly in Kurdish with only a few Arabic phrases.



94- *The ladies' dhikr session on the second day of 'Īd al-Āḍḥā in November 2011 in the female reception room in building (E).*

The five obligatory daily prayers are also conducted in the female reception rooms by the staff and guests. The prayers are performed in the centre of the room facing the qibla, but are not led by any lady; and unlike the men's prayers, no collective recitation of the wird is conducted. However, some of the ladies, generally the older ones, did their own recitations of the litany quietly and individually aided by misbahas.

#### **B.12- Building (D) – residence of the custodian and his family:**

This is the private residence of the takkia manager's extended family. It is a modern building with a private driveway and terraced garden. It has three other access points in addition to the gated driveway in front of the house. These three are one from the upper floor of the takkia – building (C) and two from the side and rear of the left side of the house which looks onto the yard that separates building (D) from (E). The terraced garden is walled, and on a level with the yard to its left but higher than the driveway to its right. The façade of the house is dressed with slabs of marble and stone, its windows are double glazed with tinted glass and its main and back doors are of wooden panelling with glass inserts. In the driveway, and backing on to the wall of the takkia's prayer hall / mosque is

a wide raised platform about two feet high used by the shaikh to give audience to his followers on special occasions (as in image 96).<sup>408</sup>

Outside the gated driveway of building (D) is another set of gates that control access to the remainder of the main road that leads to and enters the site. Beyond these outer gates, the road skirts round the site of the shrine terminating in an open yard between buildings (D) and (E). This cement-paved yard is a wide flat space that can accommodate a number of cars.



95- *Building (D), the residence of the takkia manager's extended family.*



96- *The driveway / forecourt of building (D) with the platform on the left.*

<sup>408</sup> Interviewing the takkia manager on 15/11/2010 regarding accessing the media, he explained that they had no television or radio on site in respect for Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz's presence and the holiness of the shrine. I was not invited into this building, so do not know what it looks like inside or how it is furnished.

**B.13- Building (E) – female guests' reception room and food preparation quarter:**

This is the furthest building on site, and not visible until one passes the terraced garden of building (D). It is the females' quarter of the shrine complex and includes reception rooms and cooking facilities.<sup>409</sup> The building is higher than the yard in front of it, and is accessed through a flight of stairs and walkway to the right of the building. The entrance door opens into an L-shaped lobby, on to which several rooms and spaces open.

The first room to the left of the wood-panelled entrance door is the large female-guests' reception room. This space is sparsely furnished with a fitted carpet for floor covering, textile-covered cotton mattresses for sitting on, and matching cushions. The walls are tiled to a height of four or five feet then plastered and white-washed. The windows are draped with thick green curtains. The walls are bare but for the wall to the left of the door into the room, where there is a mural painted on glazed ceramic tiles depicting the Ka'ba in Mecca and behind it in the background, the dome and minarets of the Prophet's mosque in Medina. Above it is a large clock. This tiled image has been plastered into the wall above the tiling. The windows and the door are made of double-glazed frames.

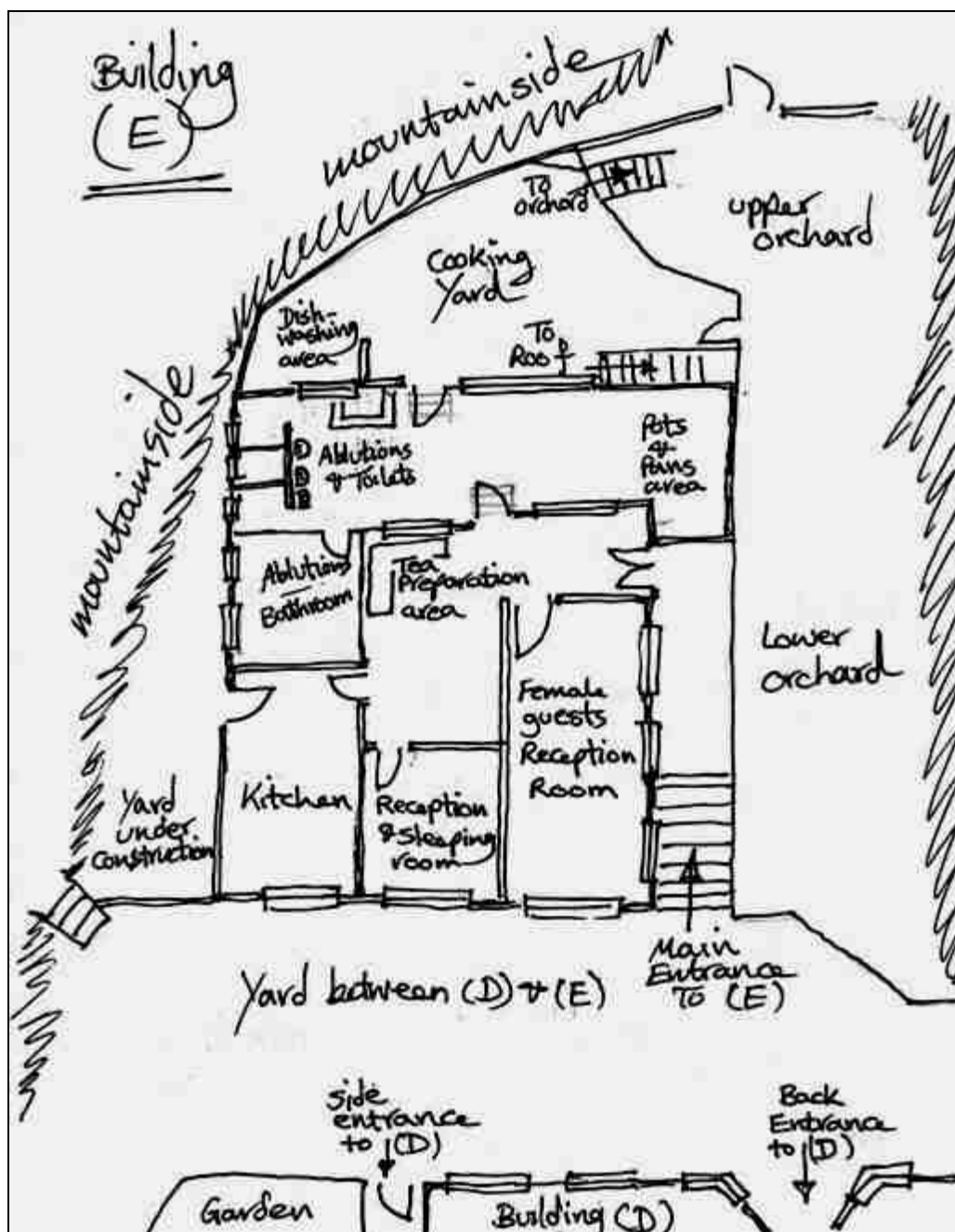
A second smaller reception room is similarly furnished, but also has bedding.<sup>410</sup> This bedding consists of cotton-filled mattresses and high-density sponge / foam mattresses covered with patterned cotton along with sheets, pillows and blankets.

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<sup>409</sup> The tasks of cooking are carried out by females in this takkia. These females include the takkia manager's family members and devotees who are on a rota to help at the takkia.

<sup>410</sup> No pictures were hung on the walls of this room.





97- Illustrative sketch of the layout of building (E)

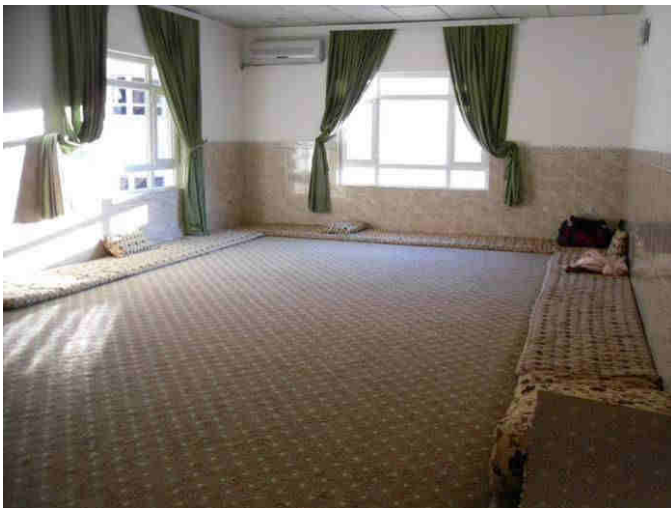
Opposite these two reception rooms, at the middle corner of the L-shaped lobby is a tea-preparation. The internal kitchen room is large and furnished with modern aluminium kitchen cupboards and worktops, as well as a cooker, fridges and freezers. In addition to this kitchen space, there is a food preparation yard at the rear of the building where cooking also takes place.

Between the L-shaped lobby area and the external cooking yard is a hallway with bathroom and ablution facilities at one end of it, storage space for cooking equipment at the other. All internal spaces, including the kitchen, lobby and hallway are paved with

marble-chip floor tiles, and their walls are covered with ceramic tiling. The cooking yard is a walled space, semi-roofed with corrugated iron. The sides of the yard above the boundary walls are open to the elements, and in the two corners on the right side are metal doors leading into the orchard that occupies a long, narrow strip behind the buildings of the site. In the left corner of the cooking yard are a pair of taps and a defined space for washing large pots and pans and other utensils. On the right is a metal staircase leading to the half walled and half fenced roof. On the roof, in addition to the water tanks and space for spreading food stuffs for drying / preserving, there are metal bed-frames for sleeping on during the hot summer months.<sup>411</sup>



98- *Building (E).*



99- *The main female guests' reception room in building (E).*

<sup>411</sup> It is a traditional habit in Kurdish communities to sleep on the flat roofs of their homes during the summer months. A range of metal-framed beds are used for this purpose. The bedding is taken onto the roof daily and spread on to these beds for sleeping on at night, then packed away in the morning.



100- *The small ceramic-tiled mural of the Kabbah in Mecca.*



101- *The cooking yard at the back of building (E).*



102- *The cooking yard at the back of building (E).*



*103- Preparing to serve food for the 'Īd al-Āḍḥā festival in November 2011.*

#### **B.13.1- Kitchen activities and meal preparation:**

Both cooking spaces mentioned above are used for the shrine's food preparation. The takkia manager's older sister is responsible for managing this. Aided by the shrine's drivers, she supervises shopping for food supplies and decides the menu and the quantities needed. Lunch is cooked daily, with an expectation that there will be, in addition to the residents and workers, visitors to the shrine. The lunch time meal mainly consists of a vegetable and tomato stew, white rice, stewed or roasted red meat or chicken, salad and naan-bread. Water accompanies the meal, and tea – black with sugar – is served in small istikan glasses after the meal. For the men, the food is taken in large round trays to them at the takkia, where, if the weather is pleasant, they eat in the open courtyard, but if cold, in the rooms surrounding it.

The fenced roof of the building is used to dry food ingredients for use out of season. Leftover bread is dried and reused as animal fodder for the cows and sheep that are kept at the back of the building.

#### **B.14- Ablutions and toilet facilities throughout the site:**

The toilets are typical of the traditional eastern type found in religious buildings in general. The ablutions spaces are designed to facilitate conducting the ritual ablutions for the daily prayers.

### **B.15- Carpets and the carpeting of floor spaces:**

Carpets, whether of the fitted type or the Oriental rug type, are usually laid during the cold months and packed away during the hot months. But a few spaces are permanently covered with them such as prayer hall. The other spaces have their floor coverings removed during the hot months, and synthetic-woven mats are used to line the floor below seating mattresses. These tiled floors are swept and washed daily, keeping them clean for people to walk on barefoot and small prayer rugs are used for conducting the prayers. At Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz's shrine complex, footwear is taken off and left on the side or at the threshold before entering any internal space, except for the toilets. Spare plastic slippers and flip-flop type footwear are left by the ablutions and toilet areas for use by guests.

### **B.16- Clocks around the site:**

As has been noted, every internal space has at least one clock hung on the wall, with some having more than one. These are integral to the use of the spaces, both to determine when the five daily prayer-times are, and for the use of those who do not wear watches. Many men and all the women I observed at the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz did not wear watches or keep time-pieces about themselves.<sup>412</sup>

### **C- Dress:**

The males dressed in traditional Kurdish garments, with nothing to distinguish them from non-Sufis. Until some of them removed their turbans at dhikr circles it was impossible to detect who was a dervish, because of the way in which they concealed their hair under the turban. The females dressed in traditional multi-layered Kurdish dresses and head coverings. These garments were generally dark in colour for older women, but brighter and multi-coloured for the younger ones. A significant number of older women wore white cotton head coverings, while the younger ones wore thin black ones. None of the women wore the Islamic hijāb or the niqāb. Children, both girls and boys, wore western children's clothes.

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<sup>412</sup> For the women, this may well be for practical reasons, as they frequently use water in their daily chores, as well as needing to conduct the five ablution rituals for the daily prayers. These rituals involve washing the hand and arm up to the elbows.

#### **D- The profile of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s shrine users / stakeholders:**

In addition to the initiated Qādirī Sufis of the Wūlāniyya Order, the majority of the visitors to the shrine are Qādirī followers and devotees from within the Kurdistan region. The locals from ‘Aqra also visit the shrine. Young and old, male and female, children and babies, are all to be found amongst them. Visitors from beyond the Kurdish region have been restricted due to the current instability in the country and difficulties in travelling. Nevertheless, Arab followers of the Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya order, from Mosul and other cities, do travel to visit the shrine on special religious occasions. The takkia manager mentioned that they have witnessed a rise in Pakistani Qādirī visitors in recent years; and over the years have even had visitors from Israel. Those coming from Israel would be ‘Aqra Jews who emigrated to Israel in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **E- The Wūlānī children on site:**

Restrictions in time prevented observing and interviewing the children on site. These children included the takkia manager’s sons and daughters and a number of his nieces and nephews. Most were of primary school age, and were seen going or coming back from the local government-run school. Some of them helped with various errands round the site, especially within the women’s quarter. The boys and the youngest of the girls were allowed to wander into the main courtyard of the takkia, and attend the dhikr circles as observers.

#### **F- Variations and influences in the ritual activities of the Wūlāniyya Sufi Order:**

Although modernity has been embraced for practical reasons, from the installation of electric microphones to better project sound during rituals, to permitting the use of photography and film by participants if they wished to do so (film and photographs would be shared on social media and on YouTube), the individual Sufi rituals themselves seem to have not changed in content in the recent past. However, there is flexibility in the length and order of rituals from a time-management perspective depending on circumstances.

That said, when comparing Wūlānī Sufi ritual practices in ‘Aqra with those that the Wūlāniyya took part in in Baghdad, it was observed that, despite there having been a general consistency in practice, the Wūlānī dervishes’ excesses in expressing ecstasy and

performing *Ḍarb al-Dirbāsha*<sup>413</sup> (the practice of self piercing with sharp metal objects such as skewers, swords, or daggers, to demonstrate strength of faith), though permitted in ʿAqra, were restricted and banned respectively by the leadership of the Wūlāniyya order when in Baghdad. This was in recognition of and respect for the objection to such practices by the Gailani custodians in Baghdad.

### G- How conventional is the Wūlāniyya as a Qādirī Sufi order?

From interviews and interactions with both Sufis and historians of Sufism in Baghdad, seeking their opinions on the various Sufi orders present at events in the shrine in Baghdad, the general opinion seems to be that the Wūlāniyya are a well respected traditional Qādirī order that is based on the Sharīʿa. The hierarchy within the order, the relationship between the shaikh and his khalīfas and with the initiated followers is similar to other recognised Qādirī groups in the country.

Two of the khalīfas explained their roles and their programme of worship. Each had a spiritual responsibility for forty dervishes (initiated ascetic Sufis), whom they oversaw with regard to their programme of worship. This programme of worship was delivered in the local takkia that the khalīfa was responsible for, and consisted of the recitation of the daily litanies and remembrances after each of the daily prayers; Sharīʿa studies according to the Shāfiʿī school of jurisprudence every evening; dhikr circles on the Monday and the Thursday of every week, which take place after the ʿishāʾ (night time) prayers; the study of Sufi ādāb wa ākhlāq (manners and moral conduct) twice every month; and the study of the Islamic ʿaqīda (creed) according to Ābu al-Ḥasan al-Āshʿarī once every month. Each khalīfa, as part of his personal annual spiritual training, attends a forty day khalwa at the shrine of Shaikh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz in ʿAqra, which they refer to as “al-takkia al-raʾīsiyya” the chief takkia for the order. They also teach individual followers and initiates the recitation of the Qurʾān; and train nominees for the office of preaching and religious instruction.

The khalīfas reflected on their roles as khalīfas and explained that they felt their main roles were to enlighten people with kind words and the example of good deeds; to invite them to pray and fast; and to guide them to follow the Sunna of the Prophet (the Prophet’s ways).

<sup>413</sup> In this term, *ḍarb* – an Arabic word – denotes the act of striking or stabbing; and *Dirbāsha* – believed to be an Indian Hindi word – denotes a skewer or such like metal object for piercing. *Ḍarb al-Dirbāsha* is the Iraqi term for the Sufi practice of ritual self piercing in the stomach, cheeks and other parts of the body by some Sufis at dhikr sessions and Sufi festivities. Other Sufi groups in the country also practice forms of it. Although mainly associated in Iraq with the Rifāʿī Sufi order, this practice has also been adopted by some Qādirī branches, mainly the Kasnazāniyya. See also (Bruinessen, “Qādiriyya and the lineages ...,” 131-149).



They also spoke about their own beliefs, and that a core part of these was the love of the Prophet and his family (Āl al-Bait) and all the Prophet's companions and Sufi masters. They believed that their enemies were "al-nafs al-āmāra bi-al-sū" (the self within that tempts evil doing), Satan, and the unbelievers; but, with regard to the latter, they hastily clarified that they did not harbour any personal hatred for unbelievers, but believed that fighting them was permitted, though not the instigation of jihād against them.<sup>414</sup>

The order's dhikr litanies are primarily praise offered to God and eulogies of Prophet Muhammad. The mention of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and his praise follows in third place. And after Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, though to a much lesser extent, comes praise and thanksgiving for Shaikh Isma'īl al-Wūlānī along with a number of other Sufi saintly figures, their current master and his father.<sup>415</sup> Although the dhikr's rhythmic style was different to that recited in Baghdad, it was of a similar nature. The chanting was mainly in Arabic, but also included some chants and phrases in Kurdish.

Chapter 5 addresses aspects of the Wūlāniyya order's encounters with local Kurdish politics and with Islamic fundamentalism in the region and in Baghdad.

## **H- Influences of transnational forces on the site:**

The stability that the Kurdish region has experienced over the past 15 - 20 years in comparison to other parts of Iraq seems to have benefitted the Wūlāniyya Sufi order and both their takkia in Rovia and the takkia of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz in 'Aqra. This is evident from the number of buildings they have been able to construct on both sites during this period. It is presumed that the buildings in 'Aqra were paid for from the income of the endowments associated with them, but the Rovia takkia would have been financed by the Wūlānīs and their followers alone.

The autonomy of the Kurdish region in Iraq has permitted a much freer movement between it and the Kurdish regions of Turkey and Iran. The takkia in 'Aqra receives Qādirī visitors from across the borders in Turkey. The Wūlānīs also have contacts with Qādirīs in Sanandaj in Iran, and travel there from time to time. Shaikh Mu'taṣim, despite his

<sup>414</sup> It was difficult to analyse this last, seemingly conflicted statement, due to restrictions in expressiveness in Arabic and the availability of time for the interview; but the impression formed at the time of the interview in November 2010 was that they believed in peaceful living and did not understand the concept of jihād as being the active seeking of confrontation with the unbelievers.

<sup>415</sup> Three different dhikr circles were observed for this research project in 'Aqra, with audio and video recordings of various parts of them.

relatively short period of leadership, and as a result of his occasional need to visit Istanbul for medical treatment, was also able to establish a following there and two associated takkias.<sup>416</sup>

The takkia manager in 'Aqra is keen for the takkia to be visited by the Pakistani and Indian Qādirīs coming to the shrine in Baghdad, and has been actively encouraging these visits by facilitating travel and access to the Kurdish region from the Arab side of Iraq. In a conversation with him about the possible consequences of encouraging large numbers of foreign visitors considering the limited resources of the takkia and the, possibly controversial, nature of some of its rituals, the takkia manager demonstrated his awareness of the possible implications, but felt that only good could come out of expanding the visitor numbers and profiles. To this end, he had plans to further expand the site by flattening a part of the mountain opposite the takkia's entrance in order to create better access and parking space for motor vehicles, which has been a major obstacle to accessing the shrine. To secure the support of the local authorities in the city for such expansion works, the takkia manager has been lobbying various figureheads in the city, including its mayor. He was able to secure the inclusion of the shrine in the various tourism promotion publications that the city has produced and is investigating creating a website for the shrine and a Facebook page too.

When asked why it was so important for Baghdad's visiting Asian pilgrims to come to 'Aqra, the takkia manager cited the significance of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz, not only as a son of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī but also as a warrior of Islam, a participant in Saladin's war against the Crusades, and as a teacher of the faith.

To conclude, for the Wūlāniyya, Sufism is not only a family affair but a tribal one too, both inseparably intertwined. However, this Sufi-tribal identity is not, or rather is no longer, closed and self-satisfied, for the Wūlānīs are keen to set up branches in other parts of the country and beyond.

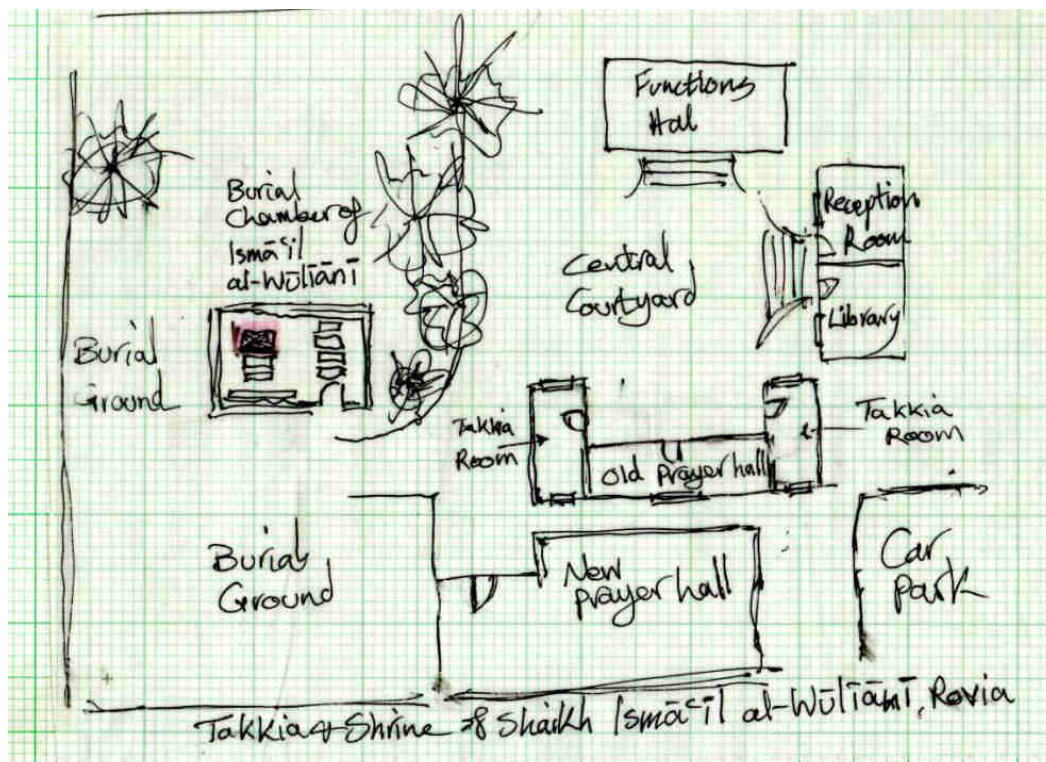
### **I- The Wūlāniyya takkia in Roj:**

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<sup>416</sup> It was not possible to obtain the exact names or locations of the two Istanbul takkias, but two DVDs with recordings of ceremonies there filmed in October 2010 were provided. The details of the ceremonies were markedly different to those conducted in 'Aqra and Baghdad. The followers there spoke no Arabic or Kurdish, but a large part of their dhikr was in Arabic.

Unlike the Gailani family in Baghdad and its binary relationship with the Jīlānī shrine there, the Wūlīānī family's association with the Jīlānī shrine in 'Aqra is a relatively recent one, that only goes back one generation to the 1960s, to that of the current manager's father's time, for the Wūlīānīs' binary relationship is with their ancestor's shrine, the shrine of Shaikh Ismā'īl al-Wūlīānī in the village of Rovia.

The shrine and takkia of Shaikh Ismā'īl al-Wūlīānī, the founder of the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya order is located off the main road that passes through the village of Rovia on the way from Erbil to 'Aqra. Based round a central courtyard, the shrine complex consists of an old single-storey takkia with two reception rooms and a prayer hall; along with three newer buildings that include a mosque, a functions hall, a library and reception room. The site also includes a graveyard with a domed square building that contains the tombs of Shaikh Ismā'īl al-Wūlīānī and a number of his descendants who held leadership of the order. Adjacent to Shaikh Ismā'īl's tomb is said to be the tomb of Muhammad al-Hatāk,<sup>417</sup> the son of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.



117- A rough sketch of the takkia and shrine of Shaikh Ismā'īl al-Wūlīānī in Rovia. His burial chamber is on the left of the site within a family burial ground.

<sup>417</sup> There is no historical record documenting the presence of this burial. It may be Wūlīānī lore, though more investigation is needed to determine the probability of the claim.

Unlike the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz in ‘Aqra, the takkia and shrine of Ismā‘īl al-Wūlīānī is a private property owned by the Wūlīānī family, and has no endowed properties. The Rovia takkia is managed by a paternal uncle of the Jīlānī takkia manager in ‘Aqra, and its upkeep is paid for by contributions from the Wūlīānī family themselves and their followers.

One of Shaikh Mu‘taṣim’s sisters lives in a house next door to this takkia. They moved back to Rovia in 2009. They had lived in Mosul, but the unsettled situation in the city made them decide to return to Kurdistan. Although she and her husband are not involved in the running the takkia next door, her home is open to visitors of the takkia on a daily basis, offering hospitality and cooking for them too. Such visitors are usually followers of the Wūlīāniyya order and travel to visit the takkia from different parts of the Kurdish region.

The takkia has a similar weekly religious programme of prayers and dhikr, but the major festivals are now generally celebrated at ‘Aqra.

The graveyard holds the tombs of the Wūlīānī family and a number of their khalīfas and associates. The domed burial chamber holds in addition to the tomb of Shaikh Ismā‘īl, a number of other tombs, four of which have draped wooden caskets installed above them. One of these is that of the father of Shaikh Mu‘taṣim, Shaikh Sa‘īd al-Wūlīānī. Another of these tombs is draped with an old tomb cover from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s shrine in Baghdad. Made of black velvet embroidered with the names of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and his shrine, it covers the tomb of Shaikh Mu‘taṣim’s uncle. It is not an uncommon custom for Qādirī groups to request a gift of one of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s old tomb-covers for use on the tombs of their local Qādirī shaikhs, a request with which the shrine in Baghdad happily complies.

The gilded cage above the tomb of Shaikh Ismā‘īl was commissioned recently by the head of the Kasnazāniyya Qādirī Sufī order. Adjacent to his tomb is the green tiled burial place believed to be that of Muhammad al-Hatāk. Next to it is that of Shaikh Ismā‘īl’s son Shaikh Yaḥyā; and next to him is an unmarked grave. Wūlīānī family lore states that Shaikh Ismā‘īl asked to be buried in Rovia to be next to Muhammad al-Hatāk.



118- The main road from Erbil to 'Aqra as it passes through Rovia. On the right, and in the distance is the white dome of Shaikh Ismā'īl al-Wūlīānī's shrine.



119- The burial chamber of Shaikh Ismā'īl. A gilded cage covers his tomb. At the foot of the small double door of the cage is believed to be the tomb of Shaikh Muhammad al-Hatāk the son of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jīlānī.



120- The grave of Muhammad al-Hatāk, with the tomb of Ismā'īl al-Wūlīānī to the left and Ismā'īl's son Yahyā on the right.





121- The flag of the Wūlīāniyya Qādirī order, which stands in the corner of the burial chamber.



122- The Wūlīāniyya takkia in Rovia. The old buildings of the takkia facing the central courtyard.



123- One of the old takkia building's rooms. Tambourines for dhikr recitations rest against the wall.



124- One of the newer buildings at the Wūlāniyya takkia. It contains a library room and a reception hall.

### Concluding remarks

The elevated location and secluded spaces of the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlānī, away from the crowded inner city of ‘Aqra, provide the perfect place for spiritual retreat. Being mainly a local shrine for the tribal Sufi communities in the region, it has a humble spiritual atmosphere with functional architecture that is clean, plain and simple. The agency of the Wūlāniyya shaikhs and their Sufi followers, their aspirations for the shrine, and their ambitions for their own Sufi order’s growth, seem to have been the driving force for the shrine’s growth in the past 50 years.

Qādirī Sufi identity is expressed at this Jīlānī shrine through a range of practices, rituals and festivities that are conducted by the initiated Sufis of the Wūlāniyya order, lead by their shaikhs and supervised by their khalīfas. The daily life of this Jīlānī shrine is actively supported by the female relatives of the Wūlāniyya shaikhs. This support forms an integral part of the women’s social and religious duties towards their community, their guests and the shrine that they support and through which they gain social recognition.

Further reflections on the festivals held at this shrine are presented in chapter 4, in a comparison exercise with the festivities held at the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad, to help gain a better understanding of the variety in Qādirī Sufi expression through these two shrines’ ceremonies.



## Chapter 4

### The Festival Calendar at the two Jīlānī shrines

#### The aim of this chapter:

As has been illustrated through the application of Pnina Werbner's analytical method (chapter 1), the two Jīlānī shrines sustained their Sufism through indexical events that rejuvenated their followers and ensured a redistribution of wealth and support. The aim of this chapter is to present examples of these events to illustrate how the two shrines provide the physical space and the spiritual environment for Qādirī Sufism to express itself and fulfil part of its religious obligations. It will also present an example of how the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad responds and interacts with its local Shī'a community's own religious calendar and sect-specific commemorations.

#### The limits of this chapter:

The mapping exercise for the two Jīlānī shrines was aimed at establishing an overview of what these entities consist of, what they represent and what shapes their various orientations. Because of the brief period of field research and the potential extent of the project, these factors prevented any investment of time in detailed documentation of the individual elements of each ritual and ceremony conducted within the various spaces at the two shrines. Therefore, the following is an overview of examples of a small number of key annual celebrations that were noted through direct observation or through interviews conducted during the research period between November 2009 and February 2014.

It is important to note that as the field research lacked team effort, it was not possible to document festival elements that took place simultaneously, and a judgement had to be made as to which of the elements was to be observed and recorded. Repeated attendance of some of the festivals enabled more coverage of elements that had been neglected on previous occasions, but by no means was this comprehensively achieved.

Finally, many of the tasks and activities involved in delivering a festival at either of the two Jīlānī shrines were also tasks and activities that are conducted at other times of the year and for other rituals and practices. For this reason, it is important to take account of the descriptions in chapters 2 and 3 in association with this chapter, especially concerning the

use of physical spaces, the division of labour and the participation of various stakeholders associated with the two shrine.

Lastly, it is important to note that very few of the regular shrine activities that take place out of season are suspended during festival times. These include daily and Friday prayers, weekly dhikr, visitations, funeral prayers and burials, access to the soup kitchen and the Qādiriyya Library, and the administrative activities of the Qādiriyya Endowments. Nevertheless, some are altered to accommodate the particular festive period's needs.

## **A- The festivities held at the Shrine of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad:**

### **A.1- Mawlid al-Nabī:**

This is the largest festival in the local Sunnī calendar in Baghdad, taking place on 12<sup>th</sup> Rabīʿ al-Āwal. Tens of thousands descend upon the shrines of Imam Ābū Ḥanīfa al-Nuʿmān and Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. As for the latter, Qādirī groups from other parts of Iraq come to participate too, including those from the Kurdish region. Although it was not possible to attend a Mawlid al-Nabī festivity as part of the field research for this project, the fame of the festivity at the shrine of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir is undoubted, with ample evidence from journalistic and media coverage, including the live broadcast of the events on various television channels. The celebrations include a Mawlid ceremony in which poetic eulogies are sung to the accompaniment of tambourines. The well-known Burda poem of al-Būṣīrī is sung as part of this celebration.<sup>418</sup>

In February 2013 two of the Mawlid reciters at the Jīlānī shrine gave a thirty-minute version of the Mawlid dhikr ceremony for the benefit of this research project, to give an idea of the main elements that it consists of, their sequence, and the musical modes used. This example consisted of nine segments. It starts with two short recitations from the Qurʾān; the first from Sūrat al-Āḥzāb verses (33:45-48),<sup>419</sup> which tell of Prophet Muhammad being sent as a witness and a herald; and the second is the whole of chapter 93, Sūrat al-Ḍuḥā,<sup>420</sup> in which God reminds the Prophet of how He bestowed upon him his blessings. Then, with the accompaniment of a tambourine, the anthem recitations follow. Two anthems were in classical Arabic, the first of which was a mixed selection of 10

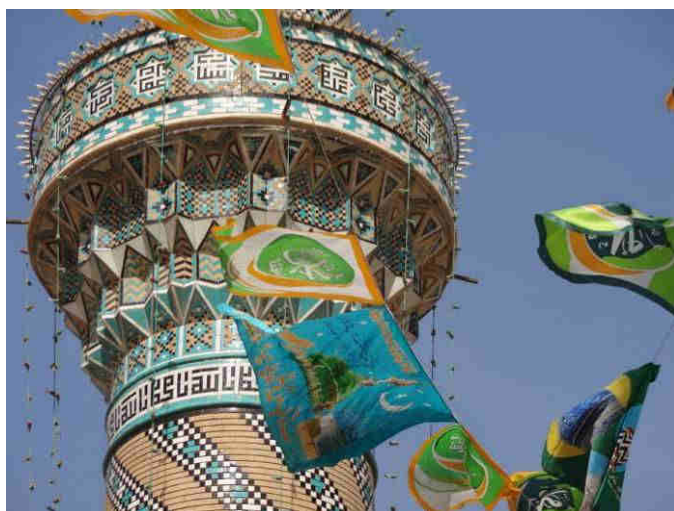
<sup>418</sup> Interviews with the administrative manager and with a number of the attendants who participate in the singing of the Mawlid chants at the shrine.

<sup>419</sup> (Pickthall, *Meaning of ...*, 305)

<sup>420</sup> Ibid, pp. 442-443.

verses from al-Būṣīrī's al-Burda poem. These were followed by two in Baghdadi dialect, one in classical Arabic, and a final one in Baghdadi dialect. All the anthems were in praise of the Prophet, encouraging the believer to love and appreciate him as a gift from God. The musical mode changed from one anthem to the other, following the styles of the Iraqi Maqām musical genre. The dhikr then concluded with an invitation from the reciters to their audience to silently join in reciting the Sūrat al-Fātiḥa, the concluding collective silent prayer to every Sufi ritual observed at both Jīlānī shrines.

The shrine complex is decorated for this occasion. Chains of white and coloured lights are stretched across the façades of the buildings and round the minarets, and bunting is stretched across the courtyard. This bunting is made up of alternating flags, between Iraqi-printed orange and green flags bearing the term “Muhammad Qudwatanā” (Muhammad is our role model) and flags printed in Pakistan, or in India, that depict a montage of the green dome of the Prophet's mosque in Medina and the blue dome of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir's shrine. The orange and green flags are Iraqi, displaying the motto of a post-2003 Sunnī religious campaign to inspire people to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet. This bunting was left in place after the conclusion of the Mawlid al-Nabī celebrations and until after the Mawlūd of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.



*1- Chains of Mawlid al-Nabī bunting stretched between the minaret of Sayyid Salmān al-Naqīb and the clock tower.*

In addition to the locals attending the Mawlid al-Nabī, participants from the Indian Subcontinent were also present. This is evidenced not only by the bunting, but also by various posters and banners hung on the walls of the shrine. These include montages of the burials of Prophet Muhammad, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and Aḥmad Raḍa Khān Barelwī

(1856 – 1921) the founder of the Barelwī movement in India and Pakistan.<sup>421</sup> Many of Aḥmad Raḍa Khān's followers are Qādirīs and a number of them annually attend the shrine in Baghdad, mainly for the Mawlūd of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, but as evident from these posters and other banners noted on site, they have been interested in supporting the shrine at the Mawlid al-Nabī celebrations too.



2- *Mawlid al-Nabī poster depicting a montage of the Prophet's mosque in Medina and the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad. In the bottom left corner is depicted the dome and minarets of the shrine of Aḥmad Raḍa Khān Barelwī.*

Among the other posters that were displayed for the occasion in 2013 was a chart showing a detailed layout of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. This large poster had been published by Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī, the Iraqi governmental department responsible for overseeing Sunnī endowments and religious affairs, and for propagating the faith. The presence of the Medina diagram on its own, without a similar one for Mecca, and at such a time of the year, was rather unexpected. For such detailed drawings would only be useful for display during the weeks preceding the pilgrimage season, when those intending to go on the Ḥajj can familiarise themselves with the site of Prophet Muhammad's burial and his mosque's layout, which they will visit as part of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

<sup>421</sup> (Sanyal, "Barelwis," ...)



3A- Detailed diagram of the layout of the Prophet's mosque in Medina, including structural drawings of his tomb. Photographed on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013 during the Mawlūd of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir season.

From time to time, Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī presents posters and leaflets for display and distribution nationally, including the shrine. Two such examples noted during the field research period were a flier in the shape of a double-domed building with two minarets that promoted endowing assets for the benefit of society through the Dīwān's endowments investment department, which administers religious endowments on behalf of the public. The second is a poster praising, or perhaps justifying, the special place that Prophet Muhammad's wife 'Ā'isha, the daughter of Caliph Ābū Bakr al-Ṣidīq, holds in Islam. This poster quotes the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, and other sayings, that demonstrate her lofty position as a member of the Prophet's family (Āl al-Bait), and her superior knowledge of the faith that is equated to being better than the total sum of all that which is held by the Prophet's other wives and all the women of Islam. The Dīwān's religious education department produced this Sunnī polemical poster. It was not possible to question its presence or time of instalment because of the sectarian sensitivities surrounding 'Ā'isha and given that the shrine is accessed by the Shī'a community, which renders any frank questions on this matter to be seen as insensitive if not provocative.



3B- *Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī's* poster on 'Ā'isha. Photographed during the Hajj season on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010.

Lastly, once a year, on this special day of the Mawlid al-Nabī, a relic, believed to be of Prophet Muhammad, that is housed at the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad, is brought out for a public viewing. This consists of a few strands of hair that are commonly believed to be from the Prophet's head that have been fixed onto an amber base and encased in a glass bell. These and similar relics had been presented to the shrines of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and Imam Ābū Ḥanīfa by an unnamed Ottoman Sultan.<sup>422</sup>

## A.2- Mawlūd Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir:

The Mawlūd of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir seems to have been first introduced as an annual celebration in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the then Gailani Naqīb al-Āshrāf of Baghdad Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn ibn Walī al-Dīn ibn Zain al-Dīn al-Kabīr (d. 1664/5).<sup>423</sup> Today it takes place four weeks after the Prophet's Mawlid, on 11<sup>th</sup> Rabī' al-Thānī, and involves a core three days of festivities, between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of the month, with two weeks of fringe festivities, a week either side of the core three days. As has been explained in chapter 2, locally this date has frequently been misconstrued as being the anniversary of the saint's birth rather than his death. In theory, this confusion should not have arisen, as it has always been accessibly documented that Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir died on 8<sup>th</sup> Rabī' al-Thānī, making 11<sup>th</sup> Rabī' al-Thānī the third day of the funeral and the day on which traditionally a Mawlid (or Mawlūd) is held in honour of the deceased. However, it was noted that the Indian Subcontinent visitors did not have this misconception, but fully understood the Mawlūd to be the saint's 'Urs, which commemorates his death.

<sup>422</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi' al-Shaikh* ..., 42-43).

<sup>423</sup> (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī Tārīkh* ..., 148-149).

Iraqi Qādirīs come to participate in Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Mawlūd celebrations from various parts of the Kurdish region and from central Iraq, as well as from Baghdad. From further afield,<sup>424</sup> large numbers of Qādirīs come from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh; with smaller numbers from Indonesia and Malaysia, and small groups and individuals from other parts of the world, notably, during the period of this research, from South Africa and the UK.

The celebrations include a variety of activities, many of which occur simultaneously. These include visitations and prayers in the burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir; the presentation of new drapes for his tomb; cleansing and perfuming the tomb before redressing it with the new drapes. Visitations to the open cage encasing the tomb are permitted for the pilgrims, to enable them to present their gifts and have their belongings blessed by being positioned briefly on the tomb. Formal dhikr ceremonies are conducted in the Ḥanafī prayer hall and other organised dhikr ceremonies are held in the new functions hall and the lodging rooms of various Sufi shaikhs. In addition, spontaneous dhikr circles in various corners of the courtyard are held by the independent Qādirī groups attending the festivities.

Many participants distribute food, clothes, money, sweets and souvenirs amongst the locals in celebration. Wealthy followers of the custodians and patrons of the shrine pay for the cooking of large quantities of food to be distributed freely for all the pilgrims and the locals of the neighbourhood throughout the period of the celebrations, which extends over two weeks. Large quantities of Indian spices are shipped from Pakistan and India for cooking *Timan Hunūd* – Indian Rice – in two meat varieties, chicken and lamb. Sheep and poultry are sourced from the local markets in advance by the patrons, to ensure supplies are not disrupted. In interviewing a number of these benefactors, it became clear that the importance of *Iṭ‘ām al-Ṭa‘ām* – Feeding Food – was strongly felt and was seen to be a core religious obligation during this festival, and for which much effort was to be spent. This was especially so, given the difficult political and economic situation in Iraq at this time, with shortages in food and energy.

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<sup>424</sup> The numbers of Qādirī followers from the Indian Subcontinent attending the Mawlūd collapsed after 2003, and especially during the height of the civil war that took place in the city between 2005 and 2007, when almost none were able to come. The numbers of these visitors started to pick up after that and have steadily increased during the period of my research, though, according to the custodians, the administrative manager and various attendants, these numbers still do not match former decades.



For the Mawlūd of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, all Sufi subtlety is suspended by the management, and the shrine indulges in brazen self-promotion on behalf of the saint. Chains of thousands of coloured light bulbs are stretched along all the parapets, and drape the minarets and the clock tower; bunting is hung in all the prayer halls; and large banners celebrating Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir as the chief of all saints are stretched across all the façades of its buildings. These large banners include prayers and blessings for the saint, boastful poetic quotations, and good wishes for the festive season.

The Mawlūd as a celebration is characterised by being a mixture of organised and spontaneous events, with much room for flexibility in accommodating unforeseen demands and needs. Each of the three Mawlūd seasons attended for the purposes of this project had a slightly different layout in response to changing circumstances, from security issues within the city at large to religio-political circumstances on the national scene. Nevertheless, there was an overall expectation of what the Mawlūd must consist of and in what order these elements should take place, and there was usually a clear plan and timetable for these various elements. However, the managers had to be flexible and be prepared to alter events at very short notice. An example of this was in 2014, when the non-Sufi Sunnī sectarian religio-political scene had become cynical, with rival Sunnī religious figures in government vying for power and exploiting all religious events to promote themselves and their own agendas. The shrine management made the decision not to formally invite any members of this religio-political scene to the festival, but let it be known that the festival was happening and that public figures were welcome to attend along with the rest of the population. This decision ensured that the shrine was sheltered from being used during that particularly volatile political period.

In that same year’s Mawlūd season, the shrine also had to respond to an unexpected situation that arose as foreign pilgrims to the Mawlūd started to arrive in Baghdad, when a number of them suffered violent robberies in several hotels in the city. Given the weak policing standards within Baghdad, this obliged the shrine, at no notice, to invite all foreign pilgrims to come and stay within the precincts of the shrine for the duration of their stay in the country. This unforeseen situation proved a great logistical challenge, as the shrine had to both run a festival and accommodate hundreds of people for a period that extended for three weeks on this occasion.



4- Banners celebrating Shaikh 'Abd al-Qadir as a Sufi saint are hung above and to the left of the entrance to the shrine and on the window grilles either side of it.



5- Two poetic verses attributed to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir appear above an image of the blue dome that adorns his burial chamber. In these verses, the Shaikh claims that no other has secured his lofty position, for his godly grandfather is the Prophet of God [Muhammad] himself. He then introduces himself in the second verse as being the Qādirī al-waqt [the enabled for all time] 'Abd al-Qādir, with the epithet Muḥyī al-Dīn [the reviver of religion] and the Gailani in origin [from Gīlān].<sup>425</sup>

<sup>425</sup> These two verses appear in (Al-Qādirī, *Al-Fīḍāt al-Rabāniyya* ..., 60).



6- The banner on this window states that “this is the shrine of the Ghawth (the Succour) and the ‘Alam (the Master) who does not disappoint the one who seeks to stand at his door: Stand at our door when the routes become narrow, and you will gain from our superior ability. Did you not see that God has given us a blessing and enabled us to answer needs? Peace be upon you my master the Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī; may God sanctify his mystery.”<sup>426</sup>



7- Banners are hung all round the walls and balcony of the Ḥanafī prayer hall for the Mawlūd. Some are presented as salutations to the saint on his anniversary by other entities and Sufī groups.

<sup>426</sup> This is a basic translation as I understand the meaning of the text. I was not able to trace a published source for the text’s second half which seems to be an extract from a poem.



8- A bunting-shaped banner welcoming visitors to the annual celebration of the Sultan al-*Āwlīā* ' (the master of saints) and wishing them a good year.

The organised Qādirī Sufi groups arrive in individual processions, each gathering at the top of Kifāḥ Street and walking down the side street leading to the shrine's northwest entrance lead by their Order's flag bearers. Some chant in the procession. When the Kurdish Sufi orders arrive at the courtyard of the shrine they stop to gather in a circle to perform a ḥaḍra (remembrance chants). The order's dervishes form a smaller inner circle at the centre of their order's gathered followers, running, jumping and tossing their hair in formation following the rhythm set by tambourines and kettledrums. Once the arrival ḥaḍra is concluded the group, led by their shaikhs, walk up to the entrance of the double portico leading to the burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, take off their shoes, and perform their visitation.



9- A Kurdish *Qādirī* Sufi group arrives with its flags for the *Mawlūd* celebrations.



10- The *Şola* Kurdish *Qādirīs*, with their distinctive red-coloured headdress, perform *dhikr* chanting in the courtyard of the shrine accompanied by tambourines and a kettledrum in the *Mawlūd* celebrations.

When the overseas pilgrims arrive, especially those coming in organised groups from the Indian Subcontinent, they briefly gather in the courtyard before walking in for visitation. Those who arrive at a time when the burial chamber doors are closed will gather in front of it, sitting down on the floor, praying and chanting audibly though quietly. Those bearing gifts for the saint, mainly in the form of embroidered textiles that include covers for his tomb, will stand in a queue bearing these textiles over the heads for considerable lengths of time, and until the doors to the chamber are opened. When admitted, these bearers will



take their burdens of cloth round the grille encasing the saint's tomb in visitation before leaving the space. When the time comes for the opening of the grille's doors to permit the placing of these textiles on the wooden casing that covers the tomb, the bearers of these textiles will bring them again, unpack them and present them for placing inside the grille. One of these textiles will become the main new cover to drape the tomb, while the others are received for future use.



*11- Pakistani and Indian pilgrims entre the shrine bearing gifts of textiles for the burial chamber.*



*12- Waiting for the doors of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's burial chamber to be opened so that the pilgrims can present their gifts of drapes for the saint. Audible prayers and chants are offered while they wait for access.*



*13- The doors of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's silver cage being opened by a member of the Gailani family to start the ceremony of changing the drapes over the grave.*



*14- The new drapes are organised and prepared for covering the grave with the help and participation of the donors of the cover and overseen by members of the Gailani family.*





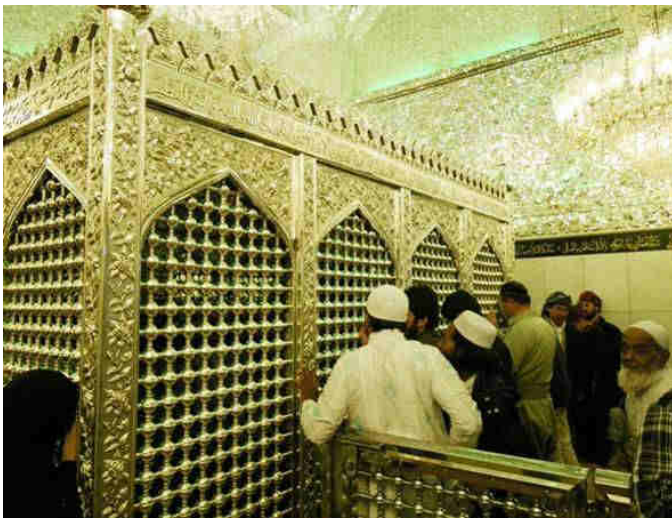
*15- Several layers of drapes are positioned on the wooden panelling above the grave, with the top two layers showing here.*



*16- Visitors wishing to place their gifts on the grave are permitted to do so.*



*17- In turn, male and female visitors are given the opportunity to come up to the cage to briefly touch the covers and say a short prayer.*



*18- Throughout the day during the Mawlūd period visitors come in to visit the saint, with the male and female sides of the chamber separated by a waist-height grille.*



19- Visitors perfuming the threshold of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's burial chamber. His grave in this image is behind the photographer.



20- A Pakistani woman walks into the Mālikī prayer hall from where she can access the burial chamber through its side door. Female pilgrims from the Indian Subcontinent congregate in the Mālikī prayer hall to pray, read and chant invocations. They are also permitted to chant their *durūd* (invocations) in the burial chamber at times when the crowds are less pressing on the females' side of the chamber.

At sunset, on the eve of 11 Rabī‘ al-Thānī all the Sufi orders and group and individual pilgrims gather in the central courtyard chanting, rhythmically beating on their tambourines and displaying their flags and banners. They will proceed into the shrine once the call for the Maghrib (sunset time) prayers is announced. After the prayers are conducted in the main Ḥanafī prayer hall, with the overflow of people praying in all the other halls, the main Mawlūd ceremony starts lead by the shrine’s employed dhikr reciters. The participating womenfolk congregate in the Mālikī prayer hall to the left of the burial chamber to observe the event. The ceremony lasts until the ‘Ishā’ prayers (the nighttime prayer).

Due to the size of the event, the noise generated by of the audiences, and the echoes of the amplification systems, it was not possible to record a full recitation of the Mawlūd.

However, a thirty-minute sample recitation of it was delivered by the reciters for this research project, to give an idea of its structure and its musical modes. The Mawlūd at this Jīlānī shrine consisted of eight segments starting with a reading from the Qur’ān: chapter 10, verses 62-65, which tell of God’s promise of saviour and favour to his friends – the awlīā’. This is followed by Sūrat al-Fātiḥa, the first chapter of the Qur’ān. With the accompaniment of tambourines, seven verses of al-Būṣṭīrī’s al-Burda poem, followed by a poem of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir are recited. These are followed by a poem in praise of him. This latter poem is in the colloquial Baghdadi accent of Arabic. After this, a second poem of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s is recited. To conclude, thanksgiving prayers are offered on behalf of the participants. These are followed by prayers for Prophet Muhammad, and finally the recitation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥa. The public disperse after this conclusion.



21- Sufi chanting in the courtyard between the afternoon and the sunset prayers on the Mawlūd day.





22- *The main celebration of the Mawlūd in the Ḥanafī prayer hall. Along the prayer niche wall and under the red banner to the right of it sit the custodians of the shrine, the imams and other prominent religious figures associated with the shrine, and a number of the Qādirī Order's leading shaikhs participating in the celebrations. In the corner between the pulpit and the prayer niche sit the shrine's reciters of the dhikr and their fellow tambourine players – the only musical instrument used in this ceremony.*



23- *Qādirī dhikr circle in the new functions hall on the second day of the Mawlūd celebrations, mainly attended by Kurds and Arabs.*



24- *The central courtyard on the night of the Mawlūd. Kurdish and Arab dervishes hold spontaneous Qādirī circles, while local spectators watch.*



25- *On the eve of the Mawlūd a group of Pakistani Qādirīs cook and feed visitors to the shrine in one of the open porticos of the shrine.*



26- *The locals queue at the shrine's soup kitchen to collect Indian rice during the Mawlūd festival period. The lamb in the Indian rice is paid for by a South African Qādirī Sufī group.*



27- In the Mālikī prayer hall local women and girls congregate to have their hands decorated with henna gifted by Asian pilgrims.



28- The concluding days of the Mawlūd festival, with the last of the foreign pilgrims still enjoying performing for the locals before they go back home.





29- *The Friday after the Mawlūd. Spaces are returned to their original functions. The women congregate in one of the prayer halls to perform the Friday noon prayers. The lady in white is the attendant responsible for overseeing the prayers in this hall, though not leading them. The piles of bedding against the wall will be removed, sorted and stored elsewhere on site ready for the next season.*

### **A.3- The Fasting Month of Ramaḍān:**

During the fasting month of Ramaḍān<sup>427</sup> the shrine's soup kitchen turns from cooking its lamb and rice soup for people to collect at mid-day, to cooking other foods, including rice with meat and lentil soup to be offered for the breaking of the fast at sunset. This food is available to the public at large. The ingredients are supplied through a combination of direct purchase using the Qādiriyya endowments' funds and through donations from the public.<sup>428</sup>

From analysing all the information collected about the celebration of this fast at the shrine, it has become evident that the shrine on this month-long occasion acts more like a major mosque with a shrine attached to it, rather than a major shrine with a mosque attached to it, for the activities of this month are mainly mosque activities. These include all-night access with extended and supplementary prayers conducted after the 'Isha' prayers (the fifth of the five daily prayers); the recitation of ādhkār (glorifications of God); reading al-Manqaba al-Nabawiyya (eulogies of Prophet Muhammad); and exhortations offered by the imams on a number of days each week.

<sup>427</sup> It was not possible to carry out field research during the month of Ramaḍān, but a number of interviews were conducted to discuss it.

<sup>428</sup> Interviews with the administrative manager and the chief cook at the shrine.

The courtyard of the shrine becomes a family picnic area, where visitors bring their own food and break their fast at the shrine, joining in the prayers, visiting the burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and spending a joyful time in a spiritually inspiring environment.



*30- Breaking the fast after sunset in the Shāfi‘ī prayer hall on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014. The photograph was kindly taken by the custodian of the shrine for the benefit of this thesis, and is illustrated here with his permission.*

#### **A.4- Muḥarram and ‘Āshūrā’:**

One of the consequences of the 2003 invasion of Iraq was the letting loose of the hitherto stifled Shī‘ī sectarian self expression through the performance of a variety of rituals and public observation of a busy calendar of religious commemorations, the most important of which being the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusain (the grandson of Prophet Muhammad from his daughter Fāṭima and his cousin ‘Alī) and his family at Karbalā’. This is named ‘Āshūrā’ (the tenth day of the month), after the day on which the battle of Karbalā’ took place between Imam Ḥusain’s group and the army of the Umayyad Caliph Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyya in the month of Muḥarram in 680 AD.<sup>429</sup> In Iraq the anniversary of the tragedy of ‘Āshūrā’ involves a programme of ceremonies spread over a ten-day period that culminates with a mourning pageant.

As the district of Bāb al-Shaikh now has a majority Shī‘a population, the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir has found itself obliged, on the advice of prominent Shī‘a leaders, to demonstrate sympathy for the Shī‘a community at ‘Āshūrā’. To this end, some members

<sup>429</sup> (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary ...*, 27).

of the Gailani family took it upon themselves to pay for the printing of banners that commemorate this mournful anniversary for the benefit of the shrine and the Shī‘a community.<sup>430</sup>

The banners, examples of which are shown below, are hung on the exterior boundary walls and fences of the complex, on Gailani Street and on Kifāḥ Street, for the duration of the ‘Āshūrā’ season and up to the fortieth day after it. The fortieth day being the Ārba‘īniyyat al-Ḥusain – also known locally as Marad al-Rās (the return of the head), that is the severed head of the martyred Imam Ḥusain – when the final part of this anniversary is commemorated. The content of the banners, of which five were photographed and transcribed, were unlike any Shī‘ī banners observed around the city that year, 2011. Four of the five bore lengthy inscriptions that consisted of quotations from sermons attributed to Imam Ḥusain; and the fifth was a salutation to the Imam and his son, and his descendants and his people. A shrewd choice of quotations, they display Imam Ḥusain’s piety, principled self-sacrifice and resignation accepting that it was God’s Will that laid down his path. Unlike most of the Shī‘ī banners and flags displayed in the city, these banners contain no calls for lamentation, no cries for avenging the spilt holy blood of the Imam and his family at the battle of Karbalā’, no exaggerated expressions of personal devastation, and no implicit sectarian sniping through the condemnation of Imam Ḥusain’s adversaries.

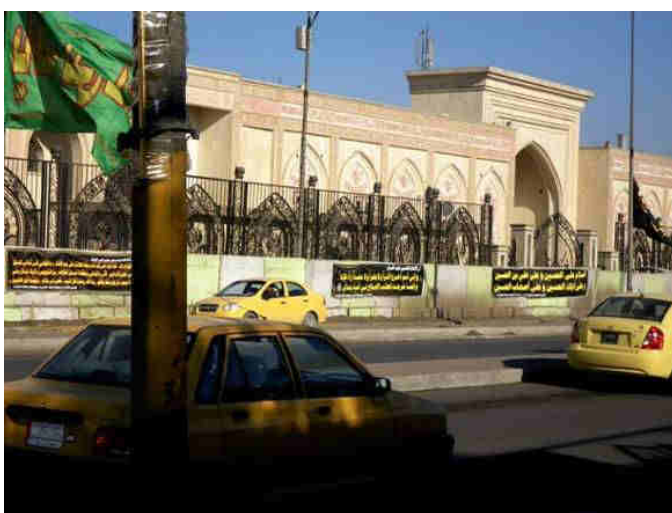
The banners were well noticed and remarked on, with some in the city seeing them as an act of scandalous hypocrisy while others saw them as pragmatic ‘Sunnī taqiyya’ (the concealment of religious beliefs under threat of persecution), an unprecedented gesture within living memory.<sup>431</sup> Perhaps these views are true, but on reflection the bold presence of these banners may offer a possible way forward in breaking the yoke of sectarian self identification, and a shift from holding the people of today, whether Sunnī or Shī‘a, whether so-called descendants of the Prophet or not, responsible for historical events that they, and generations of their ancestors, played no part in.

<sup>430</sup> Interviews with the custodians and with the concerned members of the family in December 2011 when the images of the banners illustrated here were taken.

<sup>431</sup> Taqiyya is a Shī‘ī concept of self-preservation. See a brief definition of the term in (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary ...*, 314).



31- Bunting, flags and banners decorate Kifāh Street next to the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir for the 'Āshūrā' commemorations in 2014. The yellow vertical sign to the right and the yellow and red horizontal sign on the left announce two different processions to the city of Karbalā' to participate in the commemorations.



32- Black banners bearing long inscriptions in yellow are stretched along the outer defensive concrete barriers shielding the shrine's façade on Gailani Street.

It is worth noting that Gailani Street is the main thoroughfare that leads out to Şaddir City, the largest and most deprived Shī'ī neighbourhood in Baghdad, and home of the infamous Shī'ī militia Jaysh al-Mahdī, which also has a not insignificant influence within parts of the Bāb al-Shaikh district.



33- *Imam Ḥusain's sermon quotation.*

The quotation on the large banner in (image 33) is an extract from a sermon attributed to Imam Ḥusain in which he warns of the temptation of life, reminding his listeners that this life never lasts, and if it did, the prophets of God would have more right to it than anyone else. He encourages accepting God's will, for he created this life as a test and created humanity for annihilation. All that is new in life will wear out, all that is blessed will wither, and its happiness will fade, so seek provision for salvation, and the best provision is piety. The banner is undersigned naming its sponsors as being the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, its custodians and employees, and the Gailani family. To the right of this landscape-oriented banner is a row of portrait-oriented banners that has been hung by the Shī'a community. The closest of these to the shrine's banner states: "We promise to God O' Zahrā', we will not forget Ḥusain, victim of Karbalā', foreign to Karbalā', martyr of Karbalā'". Zahrā' here is the epithet of Faṭīma, the Prophet's daughter and mother of Ḥusain. The other adjacent banners in this sequence are in a similar vein.





34- The banner states: “Imam Ḥusain, upon him be peace, said: if Muhammad’s religion will not be reformed other than through my killing then, O swords take me.” The bottom line, in much smaller lettering, names the contributors of this banner as being the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, its custodians and employees, and the Gailani family.

#### A.4.1- Territory-marking and bridge-building – The Jīlānī Shrine and the Shī‘a

Beyond the commemorations of ‘Āshūrā’ many other Shī‘a festivals, ceremonies and political events are marked in the neighbourhood, evidenced by processions and the display of posters and banners across the facades of homes, commercial and religious buildings and on the streets. Some of these posters and banners are displayed on the outer concrete barrier-walls surrounding the fences of the Jīlānī shrine. Three examples of these (see images and associated captions below) include a funeral banner announcing the martyrdom of a member of the Shī‘a community who lost his life in January 2014 while serving in one of the militia. His portrait is displayed in the centre flanked by the portraits of two senior Shī‘ī clerics. The second is a political poster by the National Conference of Failī Kurds inviting all families affected by the terrorist attack on the Ṣadriyya neighbourhood across the road from the Jīlānī shrine, to attend a meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2014 at which financial grants from Prime Minister Nūr al-Mālikī will be distributed. The third poster announces the success of a member of the Rās al-Sāqiyya neighbourhood of Bāb al-Shaikh in securing a seat in the Iraqi parliament as part of the Ṣadrist movement (al-Taīār al-Ṣadrī) that is lead by the controversial Shī‘ī cleric Sayyid Muqtadā al-Ṣadir, a prominent opposition figurehead and the founder of the infamous Jaysh al-Mahdī militia. This poster is a congratulatory presentation by the community of Rās al-Sāqiyya.



35- The green banner announcing the death of a member of one of the Shī'a militia in January 2014. Above and behind this banner hangs on the brick wall of the Jīlānī shrine a banner for the Mawlūd of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, quoting a poetic verse attributed to him in which he states that all other suns have died except his, ever in its lofty orbit, never setting.



36- The dark blue poster of the National Conference of Failī Kurds, with a portrait of Nūrī al-Mālikī on the upper left. Behind it on the brick wall of the Jīlānī shrine is a Mawlūd banner quoting a poetic verse of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādr that states his fame and his attainment of knowledge to the degree that he has become a *quṭb* (pole) and has secured happiness from the lord of all.





37- Poster announcing a Rās al-Sāqiyya neighbourhood Ṣadrīst member securing a seat in the Iraqi parliament in 2014.

The juxtaposition of these Shī‘ī posters and banners with the Jīlānī shrine’s banners, the former being on the low concrete-wall barriers and the latter on the higher yellow brick boundary walls of the shrine standing behind them, can not be missed. This juxtaposition gives an impression of the existence of territory-marking rivalries between the two sides, the Jīlānī shrine and its Shī‘a dominated neighbourhood, where the shrine uses its own property – its external walls – to remind those who have conquered the streets surrounding it, that this is the historical resting place of a great saint whose legacy will outlive all, regardless of who dominates the streets today.

It is also important to note here that the Jīlānī shrine has in the past few years built up a record of obliging and hosting public and government initiatives to bring the warring religious sects together for public inter-faith dialogue, including hosting one of the special unification Friday prayers, where Shī‘ī imams share Sunnī imams’ pulpits and vice versa, as part of a national programme to reduce sectarian estrangement.

On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2013 Sayyid Muqtadā al-Ṣadr participated in a unification Friday prayer (al-Ṣalāt al-Mūwaḥada), by sharing the pulpit at the Jīlānī shrine with the shrine’s senior imam. The invitation to share the pulpit seems to have come from the imam and his political backers. The event attracted wide media coverage within Iraq, and the local Shī‘a community in the Bāb al-Shaikh district saw it as a positive sign of acceptance of one of their figureheads. The custodians of the shrine, though welcomed the cleric, accommodated the event with some apprehension, fearing the consequences of using the shrine to serve political agendas, given the fundamentally shifting nature of politics in

general. The senior imam was forewarned not to include any politically controversial references in his sermon, and not to encourage his guest to do so either (chapter 5 deals with the politicisation of the Sunnī clerical class and its impact on the shrine). Both clerics obliged and the event was deemed a success, earning the shrine acknowledgement amongst Muqtadā al-Ṣadr's followers.

### **B- The festivities held at the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jīlānī in 'Aqra**

The Jīlānī shrine in 'Aqra could not be more different to the one in Baghdad when festivals are the matter of concern. Smaller in size and resources, ethnically and culturally regional in nature, with a more homogenous stakeholder profile, and politically in a comparatively more stable part of the country. Although the field research visits to 'Aqra did not include attending Mawlid al-Nabī, Mawlūd Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir or the rituals and festivities surrounding the fasting month of Ramaḍān, some of the interviewees briefly described how some of these are conducted.

For Mawlid al-Nabī, a dhikr ceremony is conducted after the sunset prayers. Like the ceremony in Baghdad, the poetic verses of the recitations are focussed on Prophet Muhammad and praising his qualities, calling upon the believers to dedicate themselves to loving him. This Mawlid is held at the takkia in 'Aqra, and is mainly attended by the followers of the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya within the region and the locals from the city.

For the Mawlūd of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, the festivities held at the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad take precedence, and a large contingent of the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya Sufi Order and their leaders travel down to Baghdad to participate in the festivities there. The female kin of the Wūlīānī leaders, who are left behind in their homes in 'Aqra, Rovia and Erbil, hold their own Mawlūd for their women folk at the shrine in 'Aqra, within their quarters there.

For the fasting month of Ramaḍān, the whole community fasts; and on each evening, ifṭār (meal for breaking the fast at sunset) is prepared by the females on site for all those residing and lodging, and their guests. Prayers, supplications and dhikr is held daily after the braking of the fast, and until the small hours.

In addition to these key festivals, the takkia in 'Aqra also holds regular dhikr ceremonies for other important religious dates in the calendar, from the Laylat al-Niṣf min Sha'bān to

their local Sufi saints' annual commemorations. The attendees are mainly their own Sufi order and its extended community.

### **B.1- Documenting the 'Īd al-Āḍḥa celebrations on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010:**

On the second day of the 'Īd festival, whether 'Īd al-Fiṭr or 'Īd al-Āḍḥa, the shrine and takkia of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz celebrate with a Mawlūd celebration that involves a large dhikr circle. Hundreds of people come: the khalīfas, dervishes and initiated devotees of the Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya order; the larger community of followers from the district of 'Aqra and beyond; and delegations from the Order's takkias in Mosul and beyond.

The day starts before the noon prayers, when visitors pay their respects to Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz in the burial chamber, and then gather in the courtyard socialising until the call for prayer is announced. The prayer rugs and mats are laid out in the courtyard to accommodate the overflow from the prayer hall and the reception rooms on the ground floor round the courtyard. Once the prayers are concluded the layout of the prayer rugs and mats is reorganised for the lunch, which is being prepared by the women at the back of the site in building (E).



*38- A devotee visits the burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz before the mid-day prayers, and is greeted by one of the takkia manager's brothers.*



39- *The mid-day prayers taking place in the courtyard and the mosque .*



40- *The courtyard rearranged for lunch with guests waiting to be served.*



41- *The food here is being served into dishes in the cooking yard at the back of building (E), to be placed on trays which are carried to the courtyard of building (C). Wūlīānī men and women help eachother with this task.*





42- Courgette and tomato stew.



43- Chicken on white rice.



44- Dishes are placed on the trays in the yard between buildings (D) and (E), before carrying them through to the takkia's courtyard in building (C).



45- Food being served to the guests in the courtyard of the takkia.

Once lunch is finished, the trays are removed and tea is served. The courtyard is then rearranged a third time to accommodate the Mawlid ceremony and dhikr circle. The dignitaries stand under the covered walkway by the library and the two reception rooms either side of it. The main circle of dervishes and their supervising khalifas form a circle in the courtyard which is then surrounded by the observing devotees. The chanters and musicians stand under the covered walkway in front of the prayer hall / mosque and face the dervishes.



46- The dhikr circle and ceremony being conducted in the courtyard of the takkia. The dervishes at the centre of the dhikr circle and the other devotees surrounding them.



*47- The chanters and the musicians standing in front of the prayer hall, and in front of them are the devotees and the dervishes.*

On this particular day, after the formal dhikr circle was concluded, some devotees stayed on in the courtyard for more chanting, while others went to greet Shaikh Mu‘taṣim al-Wūlānī, the Shaikh of the Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya Sufi order (now deceased). He had come from Mosul where he was based to attend the ‘Īd festivities, but as he was suffering from cancer, he was not able to preside over the dhikr, so the takkia manager was deputised to lead it. The platform in building (D) – the residence of the manager – was used for the audience with Shaikh Mu‘taṣim. His illness and the chemotherapy treatment he was receiving for it meant that he was vulnerable to infection and so his followers could not approach to kiss his shoulders or shake his hands, as is customary. The raised platform served to create a friendly barrier between him and them, without causing offence.



*48- Followers of the Wūlāniyya pay their respects to their shaikh.*





49- *Shaikh Mu'taṣim al-Wūlānī (died in November 2014) greeting his followers on the second day of 'Īd al-Āḍḥā in 'Aqra on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010.*

Meanwhile, in their own reception room, the female guests, some 60-70 women, had their own dhikr circle, which was led by a small number of women including the manager's older sister. The women's dhikr chants were mainly in Kurdish. Children were permitted to come into the room or, if they were boys, to join their fathers in the main takkia.



50- *Dhikr session in the female guests' reception room on the afternoon of 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010.*

### **Concluding remarks**

Despite the difference in the size of the physical space, location and population of each shrine, and despite the difference in resources, the two Jīlānī shrines have largely the same Sunnī and Sufī festival calendar that sustains and rejuvenates them as Qādirī entities.

The main distinctions between the two shrines lies in the their cultural and religio-political contexts, and their administrative systems. The Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad is an international magnate for Qādirī Sufis and a Sunnī institution of high visibility and significance in a sectarian city of Baghdad's magnitude, where it interacts with its Shī'ī neighbourhood and the latter's expectations of the shrine as local community stakeholders. The presence of the governmental department of Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī in the capital at large is more felt in the religious institutions that fall under its monitoring and its religious propagation roles (chapter 5 further explores this role) including this shrine. Having a large staffing structure that includes a number of specialisms, enables the holding and delivering of large scale events and festivities.

As for the Jīlānī shrine in 'Aqra, its distinction from Baghdad's shrine lies in the highly visible and intimate involvement of the spiritual leadership of the Qādirī Sufi Order in the delivery of the festive events, which includes their female kin – the womenfolk of the Wūlīānī family and their helpers. These womenfolk particepate in supporting the key activities of the shrine during these events through the preparation of communal meals, the hosting of female visitors and the holding of all-female celebratory dhikr circles for the religious festivals calendar simultaneously with their male kin.

Finally, and somewhat surprisingly, except for the female-led events, Arabic was found to be the main language of celebratory dhikr circles for both the Baghdad and the 'Aqra shrines.

**The impact of the politico-religious establishment on the two shrines:  
The Ba‘th regime era and its post-2003 Sunnī Salafist legacy**

From mapping the physical environments and the stakeholder communities that make up the two Jīlānī shrines for this thesis, it has become clear that their continuity is determined by both their own esteem and by the contexts in which they exist, interact, and to which they react. These contexts, national and local, range from the historical to the political and the religious. For the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad, the most profound evidence of the influence of these contexts is witnessed through both its physical spaces, and through the relational dynamics between its stakeholder groups. Part of this influence resulted in it forsaking part of its historical architecture, and unwittingly gaining Salafist imams.

**Aim of this chapter:**

In modern times, the national political environment in Iraq greatly affected civic life in general, and also affected religious life, and within that, it had a significant effect on the character and practices of Sufism in particular. Nevertheless, very little has been written on the impact of this particular political environment on Iraqi Sufism.<sup>432</sup> There is no material documenting the relationship of Sufism with the institutionalised religious authorities during these periods, including governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs and its successor the Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī, a relationship that seems – from this brief field research exposure – to have had a not insignificant impact on organised Sufi orders in the country and how they have practiced their mysticism since the establishment of the modern state of Iraq. As the field research conducted for this thesis revealed substantial signs of this impact on the two Qādirī shrines, and particularly on the one in Baghdad, the aim of this chapter is to briefly present and explore these effects on the two Jīlānī shrines, especially in terms of their Sufi identity and

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<sup>432</sup> Other parts of the contemporary Islamic world have fared better from this perspective of academic research, with studies having been conducted to examine the relationship between the national political scene and the Sufi scene. Examples of this research can be seen in the work done by Emily O'Dell on Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in Central Asia; the work done by Anna Bigelow on various parts of the Indian Subcontinent; and Terje Østebø's work on Sufism in Ethiopia (see reference list for titles). For some of the countries in the Middle East, especially Syria, see Paulo Pinto's work on Sufism and the Ba‘th Party government there, which is the closest comparative example to Iraq and its Ba‘th government. Pinto, Paulo. "Dangerous Liaisons: Sufism and the state in Syria." In *Crossing Boundaries: From Syria to Slovakia*, edited by S. Jakelic and J. Varsoke. Vienna: IWM Junior Visiting Fellow's Conferences, 2003, vol.14; accessed September 28, 2014. <http://www.iwm.at/publications/visiting-fellows-conferences/vol-14/> and <http://www.iwm.at/wp-content/uploads/jc-14-01.pdf>

practices, through looking at the impact of two political periods of the recent past and the present: the Ba‘th Party’s rule between 1968 and 2003, and the first 10 years after its collapse and until early 2014. It should be noted here that this study is not organized chronologically. The mapping approach applied involves first considering the Ba‘th Party and its relationship with religion; then Saddam Hussein and his relationship with religion; then to examine the Ba‘th Party and Sufism, following that with Saddam Hussein and Sufism and in particular his relationship with the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Finally, the relationship of the current regime regarding the Jīlānī shrines is explored. The material for this latter period consists mainly of interviews and conversations with the custodians and various personalities associated with the two shrines conducted between 2009 and 2014; coverage in the general and religious media during this period; and direct observations of the behaviours and practices influenced by this interaction between, on the one hand, the national and local political and religious establishments, and on the other hand, these two shrines.

The information presented in this chapter is by no means comprehensive, but is an attempt at recognizing some of the causes and effects that have influenced the changing identity orientations of these two shrines, and indicating where further work needs to be done to better comprehend these influences on this example of Sufism in Iraq.

### **A brief word on the study of the modern history of Iraq:**

Even though there is currently a large void in research on the modern history of Sufism in Iraq, there has been more substantial academic work done on Iraq’s modern history in general, and its political and socio-economic histories in particular. Many academic books and articles have been published in English and other European languages on various aspects of the modern history of Iraq. Peter Sluglett’s writings on the historiography of the country offer an especially important review and qualitative assessment of this material in the West as well as that which has been written by a number of Iraqi scholars.<sup>433</sup>

Of all the scholarly works published in modern times two works in particular – despite their relative old age now – still stand out amongst all those that deal with the socio-

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<sup>433</sup> Sluglett, Peter and Farouk-Sluglett, Marion. “The Historiography of Modern Iraq.” In *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 96, No. 5 (Dec., 1991): 1408-1421; and Sluglett, Peter. “Dealing with the past: Methodological issues.” In *Writing the Modern History of Iraq, Historiographical and Political Challenges*, edited by Jordi Tejel, Peter Sluglett, Riccardo Bocco and Hamit Bozarslan, 1-12. London: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2012.

political history of Iraq, and are still considered to be corner stones in understanding the societal groups behind the modern history of the country. These two monumental works are firstly, Hanna Batatu's book "*The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'athists, and Free Officers*", published in 1978 by Princeton University Press;<sup>434</sup> and secondly, in Arabic, 'Alī al-Wardī's eight volume work "*Lamaḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyya min Tārīkh al-'Irāq al-Ḥadīth*", (Social Aspects of Iraqi Modern History), which was published in Baghdad over a ten year period between 1969 and 1979.<sup>435</sup> Both works explore the role of religion, religious groups and identities in shaping this history; and both refer, though briefly, to Sufism in Iraq in the course of their exploration of the social and political aspects that shaped the various segments of Iraqi society and how they interacted and influenced each other.

The modern history of the Kurds in Iraq has also been the particular focus of a number of academic studies by Western scholars over the past four decades. The most prolific of them has been the Dutch scholar Martin van Bruinessen,<sup>436</sup> who also studied the Sufi orders in Iraqi Kurdistan, including the Qādiriyya, though not the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jīlānī in 'Aqra. One of his key works is his book "*Agha, Shaikh and State, The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*", which has been republished several times and in several languages.<sup>437</sup>

As for more general histories of modern Iraq, a number have been written in the past fifteen years. Charles Tripp's book, "*A History of Iraq*",<sup>438</sup> when it was published in 2000, highlighted how modest, if not negligible, that number was prior to the 2003 invasion of the country, which exposed the lack of research opportunities into this recent history of the

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<sup>434</sup> Hanna Batatu (1926 - 2000) was a leading scholar on the Arab World. He taught at the American University of Beirut and at the Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University. Pace, Eric. "Hanna Batatu, 74, Authority On Politics of Iraq and Syria." *The New York Times*, 29 June 2000. Accessed 11 January 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/29/world/hanna-batatu-74-authority-on-politics-of-iraq-and-syria.html>

<sup>435</sup> 'Alī al-Wardī (1913 – 1995) was a leading Iraqi sociologist. A post-graduate of the University of Texas, USA, he taught sociology at the University of Baghdad. The International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies dedicated the combined issues 2 and 3 of volume 8 to marking his legacy, publishing a number of papers that had been presented at the international symposium "Sociology in Iraq: The Centennial Celebration of 'Alī Al-Wardī", which was held at the American University of Beirut in February 2014. Haddad, William W. (editor). *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies*, 8:2+3 (Bristol: Intellect, 2014).

<sup>436</sup> For a comprehensive list of Martin van Bruinessen's published works, see his pages on the University of Utrecht's website: <http://www.hum.uu.nl/medewerkers/m.vanbruinessen/publicaties-eng.html> (accessed 30th September 2014).

<sup>437</sup> Amongst the large number of works is Martin van Bruinessen's book *Agha, Saikh and State, The Social and Political structures of Kurdistan*. London: Zed Books Ltd, 1992.

<sup>438</sup> (Tripp, *A History of Iraq* ...).

country, and in turn ushered in a new wave of scholarly work on the subject. Tripp's bibliography, and further reading and research lists revealed the type of work produced during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and where the gaps in the research were.

Finally, with regard to the two Qādirī shrines being studied here, no modern academic research has been published concerning their social and religious contexts, whether historical or modern. However, the shrine in Baghdad has been studied from its architectural perspective, and a monograph in Arabic was published in 1994.<sup>439</sup>

### **A- The impact of the Ba‘th regime on the Qādiriyya in Baghdad:**

The Ba‘th regime's almost 35 year reign over Iraq, from July 1968 to March 2003, touched every aspect of public life and many aspects of private life. Faith groups and religious sects were observed and monitored to determine their bearing on the Ba‘th Party's ideology and strategies, and its government's agenda. Inevitably this regime's outlook, policies and administration had their influence and impact on the Sufī groups in the country and their places of worship, including the two Qādirī shrines being studied here. To better understand the manifestations of this influence and impact, a brief exploration of how the Ba‘th Party saw and interacted with religion is presented here.

#### **A.1- The ruling Ba‘th Party and religion**

The Ba‘th Party,<sup>440</sup> a secularist pan-Arab nationalist party, first came to power briefly in Iraq in 1963; and then for a second time in 1968, when its rule lasted for almost a thirty-five-year period that ended with the invasion of Iraq in March 2003.<sup>441</sup> Ideologically, the founders of the Party believed in and aimed for a religiously inclusive Arab nation-state where national identity was the defining character and binding element of a multi-faith

<sup>439</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh* ...).

<sup>440</sup> The party's full name is Hizb al-Ba‘th al-‘Arabī al-Ishtirākī (The Arab Ba‘th Socialist Party) – Ba‘th here meaning resurrection, awakening or revival. Many books cover the history of the Ba‘th Party, but for a brief description of its inception and origins in Syria and its arrival and spread in Iraq, see Batatu, Hanna. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba‘thists, and Free Officers*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978, 722-748.

<sup>441</sup> The Party in Iraq was officially banned in May 2003 by the Coalition Provisional Authority, set up in Iraq by the USA and its allies after the invasion of Iraq. See Picard, Elizabeth. "Ba‘th Party". *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*. Edited by: Gudrun Kramer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Brill Online 2013. Accessed on 28 March 2013. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/bath-party-COM\\_24311](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/bath-party-COM_24311)

society, and where Islamic heritage was the source of inspiration for this nationalism.<sup>442</sup>

However, although very much secularist in nature, the Ba‘th chose not to attack the divisive aspects of religion and religiosity directly, having seen how Iraqi society and its religious establishments had reacted to the secularism of the Marxist / Communist movement in the country during the previous decades. Instead the Party worked on infiltrating religious groups and sects with the main purpose of promoting a nationalist-Arab cultural identity over a religious or sectarian one.<sup>443</sup> The ideological justification for this stand by the Ba‘th is expressed by its founder and main ideologue Michel ‘Aflaq (1910-1989), who stated that Arab nationalism is intertwined with Islam; Islam being viewed as the essence of Arabism, and a force to be harnessed to serve Arab nationalism.<sup>444</sup> As the Party had decided not to express a strong objection to religious affiliation that did not undermine its nationalistic policies, it was ready to accept members into its ranks regardless of their religious leanings.<sup>445</sup> However, as the Ba‘th had gradually worked through pushing out other parties and ideologies from the political arena in the country, it did so too with regard to politico-religious parties including the Muslim Brotherhood<sup>446</sup> (Sunnī) and the Islamic Da‘wa Party<sup>447</sup> (Shī‘ī), both of whom were eventually banned and their members, when caught, prosecuted and persecuted. For a brief but enlightening exploration of how the Ba‘th Party in Iraq gradually moved from its original secularist ideological stance to promoting Islamic orthodoxy see Amatzia Baram’s paper “From Militant Secularism to Islamism: The Iraqi Ba‘th Regime 1968 – 2003”.<sup>448</sup>

The official version of Islam promoted by the Ba‘th Party can be examined for example through looking at what was taught about the faith throughout the state-schools education system. Published academic research into this area of civic life has looked at the origins, type and quality of Iraqi school curricula. On the subject of Islamic education, one finds an

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<sup>442</sup> Tomass, Mark K. “Religious Identity, Informal Institutions, and the Nation-States of the Near East.” *Journal of Economic Issues* vol. XLVI no.3 (September 2012): 718-719.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

<sup>444</sup> (Batatu, *Old Social Classes ...*, 730-735). Batatu presents here an invaluable brief analysis of Ba‘th ideology and its sources and influences (pp. 722-748). ‘Aflaq’s collected writings were published in several editions by the Ba‘th Party in Iraq under the multi-volume title “*Fī Sabīl al-Ba‘th: al-kitābāt al-siāsiyya al-kāmila lil-qā’id al-mu’asis al-rafiq Michel ‘Aflaq*” (For the Ba‘th’s Cause [or ‘for the sake of resurrection’]: the full political writings of the founding leader comrade Michel ‘Aflaq) between 1985 and 1988. These writings included early material that pre-dated the Ba‘th period in Iraq.

<sup>445</sup> (Tomass, “Religious Identity ...,” 718-719).

<sup>446</sup> Abdul-Jabar, Faleh. “The Muslim Brotherhood.” *Ayatollahs, Sufis, and Ideologues: State, Religion, and Social Movements in Iraq*. London: Al-Saqi Books, 2002. pp.162-176.

<sup>447</sup> Long, Jerry M. *Saddam’s war of words: politics, religion, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004. pp.61-62.

<sup>448</sup> Baram, Amatzia. *From Militant Secularism to Islamism: The Iraqi Ba‘th Regime 1968 – 2003*. History and Public Policy Program Occasional Paper, October 2011. Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, 2011.



idealistic representation of Islam that is timeless, non-sectarian and non-regional, with an idealised historical context.<sup>449</sup> The material was written to serve the nationalistic agenda, and avoided addressing differences of interpretation according to the various sects and schools of jurisprudence that are represented in Iraqi society in the modern age.<sup>450</sup> This curriculum also chose to ignore what children were being taught about their religion at home, where they learnt the folklore of their particular sect and how it viewed other sects and religions in the country. These sects' various worship practices – beyond the five daily prayers, fasting the month of Ramaḍān and going on pilgrimage to Mecca – also were not covered. Practices such as shrine visitations and local religious festivals – from celebrating the birth of Prophet Muhammad, to annual commemorative celebrations for various Shī'ī imams and Sufi saints – also were not referred to.<sup>451</sup>

As for learning about the Sufi heritage of the country, both tangible and intangible, no reference was made to it. From my own education path in Iraq during the 1970s and 1980s,<sup>452</sup> in all three stages of education pre-university – in both the subjects of religious education and history – no mention was made of Islamic mysticism or its historical Sufi figureheads or monuments, despite the fact that many of these figureheads are buried in Iraq and have well known historical monuments and popular places of visitation attributed to them. These key historical figures include Ma'rūf al-Karkhī,<sup>453</sup> al-Ḥasan ibn Mansūr al-Ḥalāj,<sup>454</sup> al-Junāid al-Baghdādī,<sup>455</sup> 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, 'Umar al-Suhrawardī<sup>456</sup> and

<sup>449</sup> Zia, Rukhsana. "Nationalism, Islamic Political Activism, and Religious Education in the Arab Region." *World Yearbook of Education 2010, Education and the Arab 'World: Political Projects, Struggles, and Geometries of Power*, edited by Andre E. Mazawi and Ronald G. Sultana, 261-272. London: Routledge, 2010.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid, and Al-Tikrity, Nabil. "War, State Collapse, and the Predicament of Education in Iraq." *World Yearbook of Education 2010, Education and the Arab 'World: Political Projects, Struggles, and Geometries of Power*, edited by Andre E. Mazawi and Ronald G. Sultana, 350-360. London: Routledge, 2010.

<sup>451</sup> Personal observations from my own education experience in Iraq, both in the capital Baghdad and in Hillah, a large Shī'ī city and the centre of the Governorate of Babylon in the south of the country.

<sup>452</sup> My primary-school years were between 1972 and 1979; secondary-school years were between 1979 and 1982; and high-school years were between 1982 and 1985. I was taught Religious education weekly – twice a week in primary school – every year throughout all three stages of my schooling. History was taught weekly from the 5<sup>th</sup> year at primary stage, throughout the secondary stage (three years), and the first of the three years that made up the high-school stage (those choosing the humanities path in high-school, studied history in all this stage's three years). To put in context the absence of historical coverage of Sufism as a subject within both history and religious education, it is important to note that there was an equal absence of coverage regarding the history of other minority religious groups in the country such as Christianity and Mandeism (al-Ṣābi'a al-Mandā'iyya), even though most if not all the large cities in Iraq had visible and thriving contemporary Christian and Sabian-Mandeian communities.

<sup>453</sup> Ma'rūf al-Karkhī (d. 815 AD) is buried on the western side of Baghdad in what is known today as the Cemetery of Ma'rūf al-Karkhī. Field visits on 17 November 2009 and 20 February 2014.

<sup>454</sup> Mansūr al-Ḥalāj (d. 922 AD) is buried in the Cemetery of Ma'rūf al-Karkhī. Field visit on 19 November 2009.

<sup>455</sup> Al-Junāid al-Baghdādī (d. 910 AD) is buried in the Cemetery of Ma'rūf al-Karkhī on the western side of the Baghdad. Field visit on 17 November 2009.

Āḥmad al-Rifā'ī,<sup>457</sup> all of whom have existing monuments in the country. Similarly, there was no mention – from either the religious or historical perspective – of the key twelve Shī'ī imams, seven of whose shrines dominate several cities in the country: Imam 'Alī in Najaf; Imam Ḥusayn in Kerbalā'; Imams Musa al-Kāḍim and Muhammad al-Jawād in Baghdad; and the three Imams 'Alī al-Hādī, al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī and the occulted Muhammad al-Mahdī in Sāmarrā'.<sup>458</sup>

However, despite the Ba'ṯh government's secularist stand, the Iran-Iraq War (1980 – 1988), the first Gulf War (1990 – 1991) and the economic sanctions that followed necessitated a reaction with regard to its stand on religion and religiosity. Its first response was to Iran's religious revolutionary drive;<sup>459</sup> and its second response was to its weakened grip on power in Iraq in the aftermath of the first Gulf War. On both occasions, the Ba'ṯh Party resorted to manipulative language with both subvert religious connotations, and then with overt religious manipulation. Research into this subject is well covered by a number of scholars including, Adeed Dawisha in his paper "Identity and Political Survival in Saddam's Iraq";<sup>460</sup> Jerry M. Long's book "Saddam's war of words: politics, religion, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait";<sup>461</sup> Achim Rohde's "Change and Continuity in Arab Iraqi Education: Sunnī and Shī'ī Discourses in Iraqi Textbooks Before and After 2003";<sup>462</sup> and Amatzia Baram's previously mentioned paper.<sup>463</sup>

In addition to rhetorical speeches and slogans, the writing of the phrase "Allahu Akbar" on the Iraqi flag, and the launch of a national faith campaign, which will be addressed in more

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<sup>456</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Ābū Ḥafṣ Ūmar al-Sahrawardī (d. 1234 AD) is buried on the eastern side of the old city of Baghdad in what is now known as Shaikh Ūmar's Cemetery, not far from the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. Field visits on 16 November 2009 and 19 February 2014.

<sup>457</sup> Aḥmad ibn al-Sayyid Sultan 'Alī al-Rifā'ī (d. 1182) is buried in the village of 'Um-'Ubaida in Mīsān governorate in south-eastern Iraq. Al-Sāmarrā'ī, Yūnus al-Shaikh 'Ibrāhīm. *Manāqib al-'Aqṭāb al-'Arba'a* (The Laudable Deeds of the Four Poles) [The four poles here are the Sufi saints 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī, Ahmad al-Badawī and 'Ibrāhīm al-Disūqī]. Baghdad: no named publisher, 1988, p.65, footnote 1.

<sup>458</sup> (Jāssim, *Religious Sites* ...). Imam Musa al-Kāḍim (d.799 AD) and Muhammad al-Jawād (d. 834) are both buried in a magnificent shrine on the western bank of the Tigris in Baghdad. Equally, magnificent shrines are built on the burials of the other five Shī'ī imams.

<sup>459</sup> The Iraqi Ba'ṯh government reacted to what was happening in Iran after the 1979 revolution there, and to the new Iranian religious establishment's missionary activities in Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. Here the Iraqi government, through its Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, counteracted Iranian religious propagation with training clerics to respond and negate the validity of the Iranian version of Islam. See Khoury, Dina Rizk. "The security state and the practice and rhetoric of sectarianism in Iraq." *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies*, vol.4, no.3 (2010): 331.

<sup>460</sup> Dawisha, Adeed. "Identity and Political Survival in Saddam's Iraq." *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 4 (Autumn 1999): pp.553-567.

<sup>461</sup> (Long, *Saddam's war* ...).

<sup>462</sup> Rohde, Achim. "Change and Continuity in Arab Iraqi Education: Sunnī and Shi'ī Discourses in Iraqi Textbooks Before and After 2003." *Comparative Education Review*, vo.57, no.4 (November 2013): pp.711-734.

<sup>463</sup> (Baram, *From Militant Secularism* ...).

detail below, one of the manifestations of the manipulation of religion was observed through the attention afforded to the renovation and expansion of a selection of historical religious buildings, including mosques and shrines, and the building of new ones.<sup>464</sup> While some of these religious buildings were looked upon as national heritage and tourist attractions,<sup>465</sup> others were afforded attention to appease and manipulate certain segments of the population. The latter were especially significant with regard to the Shī‘a shrines during the period pre-1990-91 Gulf War period; and then both these and the Sunnī shrines and mosques post 1991.<sup>466</sup>

But even though ideologically the Ba‘th Party did not originally care to engage with or show deference to religion, as a ruling party it carried out a series of amendments and alterations to the laws and regulations that governed and affected religious institutions, in response to its own political agendas.<sup>467</sup> In 1981 the government legislated for a new law to govern the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. This law substantially expanded the remit and goals of the ministry to include a more direct and active role in the propagation of the Islamic faith and Islamic culture.<sup>468</sup> This law also stated that the ministry’s governing body, the Council for Endowments and Religious Affairs, must have on its board as a member of council one Ba‘th Party representative.<sup>469</sup>

<sup>464</sup> Davis, Eric. “Iraq’s Sunnī Clergy Enter the Fray.” *Religion in the News*. Vol.7, no.3 (winter 2005), Hartford: Trinity College, p.10.

<sup>465</sup> An example is the archaeological site of the Abbasid period Great Mosque of Sāmārā’ with its iconic spiral minaret.

<sup>466</sup> (Long, *Saddam’s war ...*, 62); and (Baram, *From Militant Secularism ...*, 10-18).

<sup>467</sup> From reading through all the accessible laws and amendments relating to religious endowments, it must be acknowledged that not all amendments were purely driven by narrow party-politics, but some seem to have been legislated driven by a wider socialist political agenda combined with the need to improve and modernise the management practices of endowments, and the employment conditions in them, to match those in other sectors. For example the legislation concerning regulating employment grades and salaries of staff at religious endowments, including mosques and shrines, addresses unequal pay across the sector through standardising the grades and associated salaries, and centralising the payment of these salaries through the central government’s own funds. Of course such centralisation of salary sources, gave the government the power over whom to employ, and then how they are managed, and what they are permitted to say and do within these religious establishments. Examples of these employment-in-religious-institutions laws are Law number 55 (1966) and Law number 67 (1971), which can be examined on the Iraqi Legal Database (accessed 6 October 2014):

<http://www.iraqlid.com/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=REF&SC=031220057455834&Year=1966&PageNum=1> and

<http://www.iraqlid.com/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=REF&SC=031220056347682&Year=1971&PageNum=1> .

<sup>468</sup> Law number 50 (1981), section 1 “the Ministry’s Goals”: item 1, point 1. Iraqi Legal Database accessed on 6 October 2014) <http://www.iraqlid.com/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=ALL&SC=281120053157069>. Point 1 is the first of nine goals defining the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs’ purpose. The Iraqi Legal Database was set up in 2004 by the United Nations Development Programme in association with Iraq’s High Judicial Council (Majlis al-Qaḍā’ al-Ā‘lā). It lists full Arabic transcripts of all the laws and bylaws and their amendments that have been legislated by the state of Iraq since its inception (including all those issued by the Kurdistan Regional Government).

<sup>469</sup> Ibid; section 2, item 7, point 5.

Although most of the earlier versions of the endowment laws<sup>470</sup> and bylaws referred to the ministry's role in preserving the country's religious heritage and ensuring religious practices were fulfilled in endowed institutions, these laws, in the main, focussed on setting the structures and guidelines that enabled the ministry to carry out its oversight of the regulations that governed endowments, religious or otherwise.<sup>471</sup> Propagation of the faith was mainly an element addressed by the ministry's department responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management of religious and cultural institutions under its control.<sup>472</sup> These institutions included mosques and shrines on the one hand, and religious schools and colleges and their curricula on the other. Bylaw no. 8 of 1977,<sup>473</sup> associated with the Ministry of Endowments' Law no.78 of 1976,<sup>474</sup> referred to the religious reforming roles of two departments of the ministry as including explaining the principles of the Islamic faith according to its "fundamentals and foundations".<sup>475</sup> The first department was the General Directorate for Research and Religious Institutions, which managed mosques and shrines; and the second the General Directorate for Religious Instruction and Guidance, which oversaw religious guidance, the management of pilgrimage affairs, and external relations with similar departments in other Islamic countries.<sup>476</sup>

From the beginning of the 1980s re-legislation of these laws saw a shift in emphasis towards regulating the propagation of the Islamic faith as well as regulating the management of Islamic endowments. This is evidenced by Law no. 50 of 1981, mentioned above, and the bylaws associated with it. This law established a distinct role for religious propagation – and the marshalling of it across the country – to be carried out by the Ministry of Endowments in addition to its regulating and overseeing of religious

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<sup>470</sup> The modern state of Iraq inherited the Ottoman endowments laws and administrative system that existed pre-1917 and the fall of the region of Iraq to Britain at the end of the First World War. From the 1870s the Ottoman religious endowments laws also included regulations concerning the appointment of mosque imams, *mū'dhins* (prayer callers), preachers and teachers, and assessing their qualifications; this is as well as the appointment of custodians and caretakers. From 1913, the late Ottoman laws for endowments also included the nomination for appointment the Muftī of Baghdad. Al-Najār, Jamīl Mūsa. *Al- 'Idāra al- 'Ūthmāniyya fī Wilāyat Baghdad* (Ottoman Administration in the Wilayat of Baghdad). Bagdad: Dār al-Sh'ūn al-Thaqāfiyya al- 'Aāma, 2001, pp.353-359.

<sup>471</sup> Over thirty laws and bylaws concerning religious endowments were legislated and issued between 1929 and the end of the 1960s. Key examples are law no.27 (1929); law no.17 (1938) and associated regulation no.68 (1939); regulation no.27 (1947); law no.107 (1964); law no.55 and law no.64 (1966); law no.67 (1971). See [www.iraqlid.com](http://www.iraqlid.com).

<sup>472</sup> Not all endowments, religious or otherwise, had independent custodians from within their communities. In these cases the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs took direct responsibility for managing them and fulfilling their conditions.

<sup>473</sup> Bylaw number 8 (1977). Iraqi Legal Database. Accessed 6 October 2014:

<http://www.iraqlid.com/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=REF&SC=131220058483561&Year=1977&PageNum=1>

<sup>474</sup> Law number 78 (1976). Iraqi Legal Database. Accessed 6 October 2014:

<http://www.iraqlid.com/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=REF&SC=140120065847411&Year=1976&PageNum=1>

<sup>475</sup> Ibid; items no. 13-14.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

endowments.<sup>477</sup> The overt adoption of religious promotion as the first of the nine main goals of the ministry – with goal no.9 being strengthening religious bonds with other Islamic nations in particular and the rest of the world in general – coupled with the constitutionalising of the presence of the Ba‘th Party in what was originally a regulatory ministry were unprecedented in previous eras and earlier versions of these laws and bylaws. This development in the role of the ministry, or the manipulation of it, may be seen as one of the signs of the government’s reaction to the Iran-Iraq War and the religious and sectarian challenges it presented to both the Party and the government.

This particular area of the government’s legislation, the legislation associated with the management of religious endowments, and how it was implemented, is in need of further research to better understand both the impact of the ministry’s religious-propagation policies on the population at large and on endowed religious institutions – including Sufi establishments – in particular. Further research is also needed to assess the impact of the presence of the designated Ba‘th Party representative in the ministry’s governing body on the tone of this propagation activity, as well as his influence on other governance issues such as the employment of imams in mosques, which has been the domain of the ministry for several decades across the whole country. Section B of this chapter will explore the effect this ministry had on the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir with regard to the kind of imam appointed to it.

Both the 1981 endowments law and the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs were formally abolished in 2012. In their place, three new laws were legislated to accompany three new separate endowment bodies, one for each of the two main sects in Islam – the Sunnīs and the Shī‘a – and one for the other faiths in the country.<sup>478</sup> These new laws reflect the new sectarian realities that emerged after the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the collapse of the Ba‘th government. However, the powers of its successor Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī, the government body responsible for Sunnī endowments, were not curtailed but only limited to the Sunnī sect. This body still maintains the role of propagating the faith, but now, according to its appointed leaders’ preferred creed, and not the central government’s ideological preference or political agenda. This has opened the door for the political manipulation of the governmental institution by various Sunnī factions vying for

<sup>477</sup> Law number 50 (1981). Iraqi Legal Database. Accessed 6 October 2014: <http://www.iraqlid.com/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=ALL&SC=281120053157069>

<sup>478</sup> Law number 56 (2012): Law of Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī. Iraqi Legal Database; accessed 6 October 2014: <http://www.iraqlid.com/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=ALL&SC=051220121035153>; and Law number 57 (2012): Law of Dīwān al-Waqf al-Shī‘ī; accessed 6 October 2014: <http://www.iraqlid.com/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=ALL&SC=051220121135772>

power and government positions. The *Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī* continues to hold control of mosque imams' training and selection for employment as its predecessor had done during the Ba'ṯh era.

As for the effects on the Jīlānī shrine's users and their Sufi practices, the government's exclusive privilege in the employment of imams,<sup>479</sup> chosen and paid for by the central government through the *Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī* (previously the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs), and the subsequent abuse of this privilege, led to the imposition of imams whose sympathies and loyalties – both religious and political – and the reasons for choosing them lay elsewhere, beyond the needs of the shrine. This trend eventually led in 2004 to the appointment of an imam with strong Salafist beliefs and sympathies to the mosque of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.<sup>480</sup>

Concurrent with the changes that the Ba'ṯh government made to the laws that governed religious institutions and endowments, and equally affecting the shrine and its users, were the changes carried out to the education laws of the country, which abolished privately run educational establishments, including religious ones. In the 1970s the Ba'ṯh government – viewing the provision of education as being the responsibility of the state, coupled with the need to raise the levels of literacy across the country and make education equally accessible to all sections of Iraqi society – created laws that made education compulsory for all children, providing it free from pre-school years to postgraduate levels. Furthermore, the eradication of illiteracy for all those below the age of 45 became mandatory.<sup>481</sup> Associated with these changes in the education laws came the nationalisation of all private educational institutions – from schools to seminaries – including those that were run by religious entities such as shrines, mosques, churches, etc.

Exploring the impact of this nationalisation of religious educational institutions is beyond the scope of this thesis due to time restrictions and difficulty in accessing primary sources, but it is important to note that Sufi establishments such as the Qādiriyya Endowments in

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<sup>479</sup> Interviews with the shrine's solicitor on 25 November 2010 and with the custodian on 14 March 2011.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid.

<sup>481</sup> Law number 118 (1976); rule number 102 of the Revolutionary Command Council (1974); and law number 92 (1978) respectively. Iraqi Legal Database. Accessed 10 October 2014: (law no.118): <http://www.iraqlid.iq/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=REF&SC=180120068844610&Year=1976&PageNum=1> ; (rule no.102): <http://www.iraqlid.iq/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=REF&SC=080220065862350&Year=1974&PageNum=1> ; (law no. 92): <http://www.iraqlid.iq/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=REF&SC=060320061760921&Year=1978&PageNum=1>

Baghdad was directly affected by this move, as it lost its own religious school *al-Madrasa al-Qādiriyya* (the Qādiriyya School), which was taken over by the government in 1974 to be run by the then Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. The school was then attached to one of the Ministry's religious institutes and was relocated near the mosque and shrine of Imam Ābū Ḥanīfa. Although, for unclear reasons, the Qādiriyya School retained its original name, it became a preparatory high-school for students wishing to pursue undergraduate studies in Islamic Sharī'a, with a view to becoming mosque imams, preachers and the like.<sup>482</sup> With the school's removal from the Shrine, the shrine's 200-year role as a religious education institution was lost.

The original Qādiriyya School had been an integral part of the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, where the custodians employed leading religious tutors and theologians of their day to teach Qur'ān recitation and interpretation, Prophet Muhammad's traditions and sayings, jurisprudence, and Sufism.<sup>483</sup> Various lists of tutors employed to teach in it include names that may be traced as far back as the 18<sup>th</sup> century. After the school's closure, those who had held teaching positions there did not teach in the new school. Those who were also preachers and imams at the Shrine, continued in this employment.

Later, during the redevelopment of Bāb al-Shaikh in the 1990s, this now government-run school was returned to the area and is now adjacent to the Jīlānī Shrine on Gailani Street. The new building for the school was completed after 2003.<sup>484</sup> It is not clear why the government decided to build the current school next to the Shrine, since it has shown no intention in engaging with the Shrine or Sufism as part of the school's activities in the area.

## **A.2- Saddam Hussein and religion:**

Saddam Hussein had rhetorical opinions on various cultural subjects including religion, heritage and the arts. These opinions were ranked by the Ba'ṯh Party as being philosophical and were published and widely circulated over the years in a variety of formats, from individual speeches in pamphlet form to multi-volume collected works. The Party and various government departments also held conferences and published studies of Saddam Hussein's thoughts regarding these subjects. On examining a sample of this material, no comments were found that related specifically to Sufism and Sufi orders or

<sup>482</sup> Interview with the solicitor of the Qādiriyya Endowments on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010

<sup>483</sup> (Al-Samarā'ī, Al-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir ..., 68-70).

<sup>484</sup> Ibid; and (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fi Tārīkh* ..., 92-96).



their heritage and architecture. Therefore, this section confines itself to focusing on giving a brief overview of the 1990s and how Saddam Hussein manipulated religion to meet his needs; a period when he also took an interest in the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad and influenced its expansion as part of what seems to have been his wider engagement with religion and the re-shaping of the religious scene in the country.

Even though this section will focus on Saddam Hussein’s grappling with, and manipulation of, the Islamic faith and religiosity in Iraqi society, it is important to note the overall impact and implications of Saddam Hussein’s policies and actions. Both political commentators and academics in the West hold him – as the dictatorial president of Iraq and the unrivalled leader of the Ba‘th Party there – personally responsible for the simultaneous manipulation and encouragement of regressive Arab tribalism<sup>485</sup> and Islamic religiosity in Iraqi society, both to the detriment of the Ba‘th Party as a ruling party and of the country as a modern nation state.<sup>486</sup> His own personal actions profoundly affected the Qādirī shrine in Baghdad, as shall be addressed later.

With regard to Islamic religiosity, the long years of the 1980s Iran-Iraq War and the Ba‘th’s loss of unrivalled control of the population post the 1990-91 Gulf War coincided with a progressive rise in Sunnī Islamic fundamentalism (Salafism) in Iraq, despite the Ba‘th’s ruthless oppression of its organised groups over the earlier two decades.<sup>487</sup> For example, support for the Muslim Brotherhood re-emerged and took advantage of the general rise in religiosity within the population at large, as a result of the two wars and their consequences. This support for the Brotherhood also took illicit advantage of the government’s change of heart regarding religion, exemplified in the establishment of a special university for religious studies named “Jāmi‘at Saddam lil-‘Ulūm al-Islāmiyya” (Saddam University for Religious Sciences) in 1989, which the Brotherhood and its ideology managed to infiltrate.<sup>488</sup>

<sup>485</sup> Amongst the various writings on this subject, one of the most important is Baram, Amatzia. “Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein’s Tribal Policies 1991 – 96.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 29, no.1 (1997): pp.1-31. Also see (Dawisha, “Identity and Political ...,” 565-567). Here, Dawisha explains how the social and religious conservatism of tribal society influenced Saddam Hussein’s decisions on promoting Islamic religiosity in the country.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

<sup>487</sup> Fuller, Graham E. *Islamist Politics in Iraq after Saddam Hussein*. Special Report 108. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, August 2003, pp.8-12.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid, p.9-10; and Shahzad, Syed Saleem. “A ‘third force’ awaits US in Iraq.” *Asia Times Online*, 1 March 2003, paragraphs 11 and 12; and (Davis, “Iraq’s Sunnī Clergy ...,” 9-11 and 24). The establishment of this university took place in 1989, when the Iraqi government legislated a law for it entitled “Qānūn Jāmi‘at Saddam lil-‘Ulūm al-Islāmiyya” – the Law of Saddam University for Religious Sciences – no.10 (1989). Iraqi Legal Database. Accessed on 6 October 2014: Iraqi Legal Database.  
<http://www.iraqltd.com/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=REF&SC=311220059134764&Year=1989&PageNum=1>

The Saddam University for Religious Sciences catered for an elite group of students that included non-Iraqis, and was staffed by prominent Muslim clerics as lecturers.<sup>489</sup> The university's main aim was to prepare "du'āt", Muslim missionaries from across the Islamic World "... who have comprehended Islam's established creed and its magnanimous Sharī'a, and the spirit of the age."<sup>490</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood's theological literature featured on the academic syllabus for this university, with the purpose of equipping the students with knowledge of contemporary Islamist thought.<sup>491</sup>

Access to Brotherhood literature at this university seems to have led to unintended consequences for the government. On the one hand, this came to encourage recruitment into the Brotherhood movement; on the other hand, tolerance of Brotherhood ideology led to the enrolment of students with Islamic fundamentalist leanings. Consequently, this access to Brotherhood literature led to the promotion of fundamentalist sentiments amongst students and lecturers in a more vocal way, which in turn led, during the 1990s, to periodic government crackdowns and arrests of those suspected of being members of, or associated with, the still very much banned Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>492</sup>

The Ba'ath government and Saddam Hussein continued their experiment of managing religion with the establishment of a further number of religious education institutions. These included the Saddam Centre for Holy Qur'ān Reciters in 1990; and the Saddam College for training imams, preachers and missionaries in 1997.<sup>493</sup> These two institutions, unlike the independent Saddam University, were formally attached to the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs.

<sup>489</sup> (Baram, *From Militant ...*, 16-17).

<sup>490</sup> See above footnote (44). Law number 10 (1989); item no.3 in this law lays out the purpose of this university as being the teaching of "the original / archetypal and the contemporary Islamic sciences, cultures and movements," as well as "the art of liberal Arabic Islamic dialogue, which Iraq has historically been known for, and which is above sectarianism and bigotry".

<sup>491</sup> (Shahzad, "A 'third force' ..."); and (Fuller, *Islamist Politics ...*, 10).

<sup>492</sup> Ibid.

<sup>493</sup> Regulation number 3 (1990): "Nizām Markaz Saddam li-'Iqrā' al-Qur'ān al-Karīm" (Constitution of Saddam Centre for the Recitation of the Holy Qur'an). Iraqi Legal Database. Accessed 6 October 2014: <http://www.iraqlid.com/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=REF&SC=250120064954970&Year=1990&PageNum=1> ; and Law number 19 (1997): "Qānūn Kulīyat Saddam li-'I'dād al-Ā'ima wa al-khuṭabā' wa al-du'āt" (the Law of Saddam College for preparing imams and preachers and propagators). Iraqi Legal Database. Accessed 6 October 2014: <http://www.iraqlid.com/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=REF&SC=220220062560117&Year=1997&PageNum=1>

### A.2.1- Saddam Hussein and the Great National Faith Campaign:

In 1993, four years after the establishment of Saddam University, Saddam Hussein and the Ba‘th government seem to have decided to take a further step towards promoting Islamic religiosity with a formal u-turn on Ba‘th Party secularism. They launched “*al- Ḥamla al-’Imāniyya al-Waṭaniyya al-Kubrā*” (the Great National Faith Campaign) – more popularly known as “*al- Ḥamla al-’Imāniyya*” (the Faith Campaign) – to serve several of their goals amongst which was to face and counteract the rise of Salafism in Iraq, and to legitimise the regime’s authority and secure its survival, which was being challenged by a distressed population that had fallen under serious economic hardship.<sup>494</sup>

The Faith Campaign first promoted the study of the Qur’ān and the art of its recitation. It then progressed to encouraging the study of the Prophet’s Ḥadīth traditions. This was followed by the compulsory study of both with aspects of the Islamic Sharī‘a across not only the education system and the cadre of the Ba‘th Party, but also every stratum of government, and beyond that into the private sector – from schools to local Party branches, and from the judicial system to boards of commerce.<sup>495</sup> Islamic Sharī‘a punishments were formally integrated into the established Penal Code and were meted out on select offenses. No resource seems to have been spared in supporting the aims of the Campaign. Special teacher training courses for Qur’ān recitation and interpretation were provided. Millions of copies of the Qur’ān were printed and distributed. Tests and competitions with monetary prizes were set up for every sector, from school children to Party members, and from government employees to merchants and business men.<sup>496</sup> The Campaign also involved, or perhaps ran in tandem with, a major mosque renovation and construction effort, which saw in the span of one decade hundreds of mosques built and staffed across the country by the government.<sup>497</sup>

For the Islamist groups in Iraq, the Faith Campaign came as a welcome change of heart on behalf of the government and Party, though they seem to have judged Saddam Hussein’s

<sup>494</sup> For a succinct analyses of the reasons behind Saddam Hussein’s push for change of policy in relation to religion in Iraq see (Baram, *From Militant Secularism ...*); and summary coverage on the Ba‘th Party’s position in relation to the rise of Salafism in Iraq see Hashim, Ahmed S. *Iraq’s Sunnī Insurgency*. London: Routledge for The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper 402, 2009, pp.29-32.

<sup>495</sup> Several authors describe and comment on the Faith Campaign and the reasons behind it and its impact on Iraqi society. See: Al-Khaizaran, Huda. “Traditions of moral education in Iraq.” *Journal of Moral Education*, vol.36, no.3, September 2007, pp.321-332; and (Baram, *From Militant Secularism ...*, 10-15); and (Fuller, *Islamist Politics ...*, 10); and (Hashim, *Iraq’s Sunnī ...*, 30-31).

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid.

personal change of heart on religion and his newly adopted religiosity to be nothing more than hypocrisy.<sup>498</sup>

Although it has not been possible to examine any material published by the Ba‘th Party or its government regarding the Faith Campaign, these were at least four books published by them between 1997 and 2002 on the subject.<sup>499</sup> All may be judged from their titles and their publishers to be non-critical pro-Faith Campaign works. The earliest of these four has no named author but was published by the government’s publishing house “Dār al-Shu‘ūn al-Thaqāfiyya al-‘Āma” in 1997.<sup>500</sup> The second claims to evaluate the performance of Islamic education schools (special high-schools for pupils preparing to study at Islamic theological colleges) in view of the Faith Campaign’s philosophy.<sup>501</sup> The third was authored by three academics evaluating the Campaign as a “blessed” pioneering experiment;<sup>502</sup> and the fourth was written by the then Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs.<sup>503</sup> It also proved impossible to find any anti-Faith Campaign literature written in Iraq while the Campaign was in full swing. However there are indications, from Western scholarship covering this subject, that Saddam Hussein’s son, ‘Uday, who oversaw the publishing of the daily newspaper Bābil, did permit critical articles that warned against the consequences of promoting religiosity by the government.<sup>504</sup>

However, in the course of the field research a few people who had lived through the Faith Campaign period were briefly interviewed. These interviewees, all practising Sunnī Muslims, included a government TV-channel religious-programmes producer, a post-2003

<sup>498</sup> (Fuller, *Islamist Politics* ..., 10).

<sup>499</sup> Iraqi National Library and Archives online index, accessed 6 October 2014: <http://www.iraqnla.org/opac/index.php?start=600&q=%22%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AE%22&max=20&hl=ara&sto=t> These four titles are available at the Library in Baghdad, though access to Ba‘th period material was not possible due to the political turmoil in the country.

<sup>500</sup> Anon. *Al-Ḥamla al-‘Imāniyya al-Waṭaniyya al-Kubrā* (The Great National Faith Campaign). Baghdad: Dār al-Shu‘ūn al-Thaqāfiyya al-‘Āma, 1997.

<sup>501</sup> Al-Se‘idī, Mājid Muḥammad ‘Alī. *Taqwīm ada’ madāris al-tarbiyya al-islāmiyya fī daw’ falsafat al-ḥamla al-‘imāniyya al-kubrā* (evaluating the performance of religious education schools from the perspective of / in view of the Great Faith Campaign’s philosophy). Baghdad: Wizārat al-Tarbiyya, 1998.

<sup>502</sup> Maḥmūd, Khaīrī Jābir, and Al-Rikābī, Kāzīm Nazār, and ‘Alī, Ṭahā Rashīd. *Al-Ḥamla al-‘Imāniyya al-Waṭaniyya al-Kubrā tajruba rā’ida wa masīra mubāraka* (the Great National Faith Campaign, pioneering endeavour and blessed course). Baghdad: Dār al-Ḥuriyya lil-ṭibā‘a, 2000.

<sup>503</sup> Ṣāliḥ, ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Aḥmad. *Al-Ḥamla al-‘Imāniyya al-Waṭaniyya al-Kubrā masīrat al-‘Imān wa al-Jihād* (the Great National Faith Campaign, the procession of belief and jihad / struggle). Baghdad: Maṭba‘at al-Awqāf, 2002.

<sup>504</sup> (Baram, *From Militant Secularism* ..., 20-22).

retired high-court judge, a Qur'ānic recitation tutor and an Arabic language and religious education high-school teacher.<sup>505</sup>

With the exception of the television producer, all thought of the Campaign positively, and praised the religious and moral awareness it instilled in people. The high-court judge, who specialised in criminal / penal law and spent most of her career in the courts of Karkh (the half of Baghdad west of the Tigris River), remarked that she found the Sharī'a classes that she and her legal-system colleagues attended – comparing modern laws and their penal system with the Islamic Sharī'a's stance on crime and punishment – very interesting and helped her better understand both the alternative possibilities for the justice system, and better appreciate the sophistication of the Islamic Sharī'a laws.

The Qur'ānic recitation tutor had begun her religious path by learning to recite the Qur'ān privately under the Qādirī Sufi Shaikh 'Abd al-Karīm Bīāra al-Mudaris,<sup>506</sup> who lodged and continued to teach informally at the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad. She was also initiated into Sufism by him. When the Faith Campaign began, she was working for the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs, and was given the responsibility of setting up and managing a number of classes and courses for the teaching of Qur'ān recitation as part of the Campaign's programme. She also taught Qur'ān recitation herself at the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir as part of this Campaign. When asked about her Sufism, she briefly explained that she had originally been interested and initiated into Sufism, and from there was introduced to Qur'ānic studies. Although now retired, she is still employed by the Shrine to oversee the Friday prayers in the women's

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<sup>505</sup> The individuals in this sample were chosen by chance and as opportunities arose, and therefore only represent their own experiences of the Faith Campaign. Three of the four have associations with the Qādiriyya Sufi Order at the shrine in Baghdad, but only one is an initiated Qādirī Sufi. Two of the four knew each other. It was not possible to interview any person belonging to the Shī'a sect for this question because of the sectarian atmosphere in the country. These interviews were conducted on 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February 2014 respectively. The interviewees were informed of the purpose of this study in general, and the purpose of the questions regarding the Faith Campaign in particular, being to better understand what it encompassed, how they personally experienced it, and what it meant to each of them.

<sup>506</sup> Mentioned in chapter 1 in relation to the mosque of Āḥmad al-Makkī, Shaikh 'Abd al-Karīm Muhammad ibn Fatāh al-Mudaris (March 1905 – August 2005), also known as 'Abd al-Karīm Bīāra (Bīāra or Bīāra being the Kurdish village he was associated with for some years before moving to Baghdad), was a leading Qādirī and Naqshbandī Sufi shaikh from the region of Shahrzūr in Iraqi Kurdistan, authoring a large number of books and treaties in Sufism, in both Arabic and Kurdish, many of which are preserved in both Jīlānī shrines' libraries in Baghdad and in 'Aqra. He taught Sufism and Qur'ānic studies, and lodged in the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad from the second half of the 1960s and until his death. He is buried at the shrine in Baghdad in its small graveyard. He became head of Rābiṭat 'Ulamā' al-'Irāq (Association of Iraq's 'Ulama [jurists]) during the Ba'ṯh regime period. This information was obtained from inspection and photography of his grave and tombstone on 14 December 2011, and inspections of the contents of both shrines' libraries in November 2010.

prayer-hall, and guide the female worshippers in their prayers during the Friday lunchtime prayers and sermon.

The Arabic language and religious education high-school teacher works at a girls' high-school in the A'zamiyya district of Baghdad. She explained that, before the Faith Campaign, religious education in all school levels was considered a minor subject, and especially so in high-school education, but through the Faith Campaign it had become equal to the other subjects studied, and was included in the national Baccalaureate examinations. In fact religious education became so important that it was positioned as the first test to be taken in these key stage examinations, at the concluding years of both secondary- and high-school levels. Those who secured a 100% mark in their final year at high-school level were rewarded with the right to choose any undergraduate course they wished to study at university regardless of whether they had gained appropriate passes in the relevant high-school subjects associated with that course. A new curriculum for religious education was set and two new text books were introduced, one for Qur'ānic studies and one for religious education. The latter covered a whole spectrum of subjects from the Islamic Sharī'a's perspective including family life, Islamic economics and finance, and Islamic rule and government. Qur'ānic recitation competitions were established across the country, with generous monetary prizes for contestants. The number of girls choosing to study Sharī'a at university level increased. Also increased was the number of women who adopted wearing the Islamic veil. In her opinion, the high-school teacher explained that, this increase in wearing the veil was in response to the Faith Campaign's direct appeal to women to wear it. She also explained that religious excursions (picnic-type religious trips) were arranged for women by a number of national organisations including "al-'Ittiḥād al-Ām li-Nisā' al-Irāq" (the General Union for Iraq's Womenfolk), students' unions and by youth organisations.

On asking her about how the Faith Campaign saw Sufism, the Arabic language and religious education, the high-school teacher explained that the Campaign supported existing Sufi orders but did not encourage Sufism for individuals as a personal pursuit, or encourage non-Sufis to join Sufi orders. She recalled that during the Faith Campaign period ordinary people mocked 'Izzat Ibrāhīm al-Dūrī – the Vice-President of Iraq and one of the main leader / organiser of the Campaign – for his claims to Sufism. It was seen as a folkish form of popular Islam unbefitting of a Ba'ṯist. She also said that Saddam Hussein himself, though he spoke about religion, was never heard encouraging Sufism.

Nevertheless, both Sunnī saints' and Shī'ī imams' shrines received his attention by way of renovations and expansions, as well as new builds.

The religious programmes producer for the government TV channel was the only interviewee to see the cynicism of the Faith Campaign. From the late 1980s and until the fall of Iraq in 2003 he had worked in the national broadcasting organisation that controlled the television and radio channels in the country as a religious programmes producer in its TV section. Since the 2003 invasion and change of rule, he now works as a cultural programmes producer for a state-owned cultural television station. The producer viewed the Faith Campaign as a Ba'ṯist counteraction to the rise of Shī'ī Islamic movements and Sunnī Islamist "Wahābbī" movements, which grew after the 1990-1991 Gulf War, when the government lost control of the country, and was never able to regain its former strength. He believed that the original reason for the Faith Campaign was to introduce a moderate version of Islam, which the Ba'ṯ Party cadre was to oversee and deliver. He explained that the Campaign first started in the education system and then spread to other government ministries. With regard to Sufism, he shared the high-school teacher's impressions of the Campaign's and Saddam Hussein's stand on the matter. Regarding the role of 'Izzat Ibrāhīm al-Dūrī in supporting Sufi orders, he explained that part of the criticism of al-Dūrī's support for Sufism, lay in al-Dūrī's indiscriminate acceptance and promotion of weak and disputed "Ḥadīth" quotations – sayings attributed to Prophet Muhammad – uttered by Sufis, even when there were no other acknowledged written sources to authenticate them. He also explained that 'Izzat Ibrāhīm al-Dūrī had held his own weekly Sufi gathering, and had even gone so far as to author a book on Sufism entitled "Ḥadīth al-'Ithnain 'an hadī Sayyid al-Mursalīn", Monday's discourse on the guidance of the Master of the Messengers, the master here being Prophet Muhammad, and the messengers being the Biblical prophets recognised by Islam.<sup>507</sup> Unfortunately no copy of this book was accessible due to the political situation at the time of carrying out this research.

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<sup>507</sup> Interview with government TV channel religious programmes producer on 13 December 2011. Despite several attempts between 2011 and 2014 to get hold of a copy of this book, believed to be titled "Ḥadīth al-'Ithnain" (Monday's Discourse), no copy was accessible; but the book's existence was confirmed by the Director of the Iraq National Library and Archive in 2013. After investigation, the director of the library confirmed its existence and that al-Dūrī is the author. The National Library no longer has a copy of it, and was not able to acquire one due to booksellers' fear of handling Ba'ṯ regime period books due to the current volatility of the situation in Iraq.



It is important to note here that Al-Dūrī's role as the political patron of some Sufi groups in the country, such as the Qādirī Kasnazāniyya Sufi Order and branches of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi Order, seems to have started during the 1980s, a decade before the launch of the Faith Campaign.<sup>508</sup> This relationship will be explored further later in this chapter.

The general understandings expressed by the four interviewees mentioned above have been corroborated by both published news coverage and academic research in the West on the Faith Campaign.<sup>509</sup> To sum up, it appears that while the politically instigated and manipulated Faith Campaign seems not to have caused much concern amongst the masses, the regime's interest in courting and manipulating Sufi orders seems to have provoked the indignation of many in the population, and led to some Sufi orders being dismissed for having compromised their spiritual integrity.

#### **A.2.2- Mosque building and shrine renovations in Saddam Hussein's name:**

Although planning for major civic reconstruction projects in the capital and in other major cities in the country during the Ba'ath regime commenced in the 1970s,<sup>510</sup> the mass building of mosques did not begin until the 1990s, and was seen by critics as part of Saddam's attempt to play the faith card in manipulating the public.<sup>511</sup> Some 1800 Sunnī mosques were built during the 1990s and early 2000s, and are now the most visible feature associated with the Faith Campaign still to be observed around the city of Baghdad and many other towns and cities in the country.<sup>512</sup> In addition to the building of new mosques, the government also carried out renovations and expansions to existing ones, and did the same for shrines, both Sunnī and Shī'ī, including those of Sufi saints.<sup>513</sup>

<sup>508</sup> Conversation with the solicitor of the shrine on 25 November 2010, and a conversation with the custodian on 28 December 2011.

<sup>509</sup> (Baram, *From Militant Secularism ...*); and (Al-Khaizaran, "Traditions of moral ...") and (Fuller, *Islamist Politics ...*).

<sup>510</sup> A number of books and articles tackle the subject of the urban planning and architectural development of the city of Baghdad during the Ba'ath regime period. Of these, the Iraqi architect Kanan Makiya's critical aesthetic analyses of these urban development plans appears in his book "The Monument", which gives a brief timeline for these development projects and the motives behind them. Makiya, Kanan. *The Monument, Art and Vulgarly in Saddam Hussein's Iraq*. London: I.B. Tauris (1991 and 2004), pp.19-32 and 60-62.

<sup>511</sup> Al-Yāwar, Ṭal'at (edit). *Al-Ḥalaqa al-niqāshiyya 1: al-'imāra wa al-funūn fī fikr al-qā'id Saddam Hussein, ḥafīḍahu Allah wa ra'āh, 13 May 2001* (Discussion Circle 1: Architecture and the Arts in the Thought of the leader Saddam Hussein, may God protect and take care of him, held on 13 May 2001). Baghdad: Al-Majma' al-'Ilmī, 2001, p.58.

<sup>512</sup> Many were observed in person by car, driving through towns on the rout between Baghdad and the Iraqi border with Jordan, and between Baghdad and the Kurdish region during the field research for this thesis.

<sup>513</sup> Brief reference to the government attempting to give attention to, or interfere with, the Christian population and its religious education as part of the Faith Campaign's agenda were also found; but this area needs further research to determine the extent and significance of Saddam Hussein's attempts at patronising

Examples of the Sufi shrines that received attention during the period of the Faith Campaign include the shrine of Shaikh Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī (died in 815 AD), which was razed to the ground – except for its minaret – and rebuilt in a new and much enlarged fashion between the years 1997 and 2000<sup>514</sup>; the shrine of Ḥusāin ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (died 922 AD) demolished and rebuilt in the 1990s<sup>515</sup>; the shrine of Shihāb al-Dīn ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī (died 1191 AD), which was restored and parts of it refurbished in 2000<sup>516</sup>; and the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, parts of which were refurbished and then expanded between 1994 and the fall of the Ba‘th government in 2003.<sup>517</sup> Saddam Hussein’s attentions towards the latter shrine will be explored later.

It is important to note here that some of these Sufi shrine-refurbishments were not necessarily instigated for reasons only associated with the Faith Campaign, though they coincided with it. The best example of this is the shrine of Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī, which is widely believed to have been rebuilt as a thanksgiving for the failed assassination attempt on ‘Ūday, Saddam Hussein’s oldest son, in 1996, which had left him seriously injured and disabled for a period.<sup>518</sup>

The rebuilt shrine of Karkhī was designed as a gigantic oriental blue eye or what is better known as the “eye of envy” – a symbol of Karkhī’s protection of ‘Ūday Husain’s life. Several interviewees, including the imam of the shrine confirmed this interpretation of the design of the new building. When looking at an aerial view of the shrine, the blue eye-shaped building can be better appreciated. The large dome of the main prayer hall represents the pupil and iris of the human eye and the small dome above the burial chamber of al-Karkhī represents a teardrop at the corner of the eye. The vestibules that surround the main prayer hall form the eyelids of the “blue eye” design. From a front-view elevation of the building, the shrine looks like an Indian turban. A huge blind arch above the entrance crowns the main façade. It bears a calligraphic dedication stating that Saddam

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Christianity in Iraq, and the other minority religious groups in the country. See Dawisha, Adeed. “Identity and Political Survival in Saddam’s Iraq.” *Middle East Journal* vol. 53, no. 4 (Autumn 1999), p.566, footnote 48. For a brief description of how the Ba‘th regime’s policies had generally affected the Christian communities’ educational activities, be they denominational schools or church-based-teaching, see Rassam, Suha. *Christianity in Iraq, Its Origins and Development to the Present Day*. Herefordshire: Gracewing (2005), pp.149-152.

<sup>514</sup> Field visit on 17 November 2009.

<sup>515</sup> Field visit on 19 November 2009. The dedication plaque on the external wall of the shrine was found partially plastered over to conceal the name of Saddam Hussein to protect the shrine from vigilante attacks post 2003.

<sup>516</sup> Field visit on 16 November 2009.

<sup>517</sup> Field research conducted between 2009 and 2014.

<sup>518</sup> Field visits and interviews at the shrine of al-Karkhī on 17 November 2009 and 20 February 2014.

Hussein ordered its construction, ending with his autograph. To the left of this entrance is an equally large marble plaque describing the orders given by Saddam Hussein to the architectural office at the Presidential Palace for the reconstruction of the shrine, and lists the names of the architect, engineers, and project managers of the reconstruction. Three of those named on this dedication panel, including the architect, appear on a similar dedication panel – though discretely positioned within an external alcove of the white dome – at the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. It has not been possible to establish definitively why Saddam Hussein chose this particular shrine for this thanksgiving patronage, but the shrine is a base for one of the Rifā‘ī Sufi orders, which Saddam Hussein’s family may have been associated with.

### A.3- The Ba‘th and Sufism:

As the Ba‘th Party’s published ideological writings and public statements contain no direct or indirect references to Islam’s mystical path – as represented by Sufism and its various living orders and branches – it is difficult to give a definitive opinion on how the Ba‘th saw Sufism in particular; and whether the Party differentiated between it and other forms of Islam such as sectarian, fundamentalist, or heterodox.<sup>519</sup> Having said this, there is evidence that the Party did interact with and make use of some contemporary Sufi orders and key personalities.<sup>520</sup> This is exemplified by the special relationship the Kasnazāniyya Sufi Order had with figures in the Ba‘th regime,<sup>521</sup> which is particularly relevant to the story of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad, and will be dealt with later.

As mentioned above, the best known figure within the Ba‘th Party to have been associated with Sufism is ‘Izzat Ibrāhīm al-Dūrī, the vice-president of Iraq and the Ba‘th’s second-in-command. He personally oversaw the relationship between the Ba‘th and Sufism in Iraq, and was regarded as being the patron of the Sufis within the establishment.<sup>522</sup> From

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<sup>519</sup> To date I have not been able to find published academic research dedicated to studying the relationship between the Ba‘th Party and Sufism in particular. Though there are scattered references to this relationship in other works.

<sup>520</sup> It is important to draw attention to Paulo Pinto’s paper on the Ba‘th Party in Syria and how it dealt with Sufism there. Many similarities remarkably apply to how the Ba‘th in Iraq interacted with Sufism here. (Pinto, “Dangerous Liaisons ...”).

<sup>521</sup> (Bruinessen, “The Qādiriyya and ...,” 138).

<sup>522</sup> Many journalistic and academic articles dealing with the post-2003 Sunnī insurgency in Iraq mention Al-Dūrī’s relationship with the Sufis and his patronage of them pre-2003, and his leadership role in one of their militias, Jaysh Rijāl al-Tariqa al-Naqshbandiyya (JRTN), since 2006. See Knights, Michael. “The JRTN Movement and Iraq’s Next Insurgency”. *CTC Sentinel*. Vol.4, no.7 (July 2011), pp.1-6. Also see entry for JRTN on (Stanford University’s “Mapping Militant Organisations” web-pages ...). Pro-Ba‘thist publications written after the fall of the regime also mention Al-Dūrī’s religiosity and achievements in advancing Islamic

surveying various comments gathered on Al-Dūrī's Sufism, it seems that he may have been hastily initiated into more than one order by named Sufi masters ready to appease the regime, including those of two branches of the Qādiriyya and the Naqshbandiyya orders. For this reason Al-Dūrī's worthiness of these initiations has been under question by some Sufis.<sup>523</sup> It also seems that Al-Dūrī not only attended Sufi events, but also hosted a weekly gathering of his own that took place on Sundays. He also authored a book on Sufism.<sup>524</sup>

As for the Kasnazāniyya Sufi Order, its proper name is "al-Ṭarīqa al-ʿAlīyya al-Qādiriyya al-Kasnazāniyya". It is a Kurdish Qādirī order named after its founding patron and Sufi master Shaikh ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shāh al-Kasnazān (1819 – 1899 AD),<sup>525</sup> a member of the Barzinjī clan.<sup>526</sup> The Kasnazānī family trace their ancestry back to Prophet Muhammad via the city of Hamadān in Iran, hence the term al-ʿAlīyya in the order's name – being of the descendants of Imam ʿAlī.<sup>527</sup> Their Sufi leadership has been hereditary, passing from father to son, and currently rests with Shaikh Muhammad al-Kasnazānī (b. 1938), the great-grandson of the founder.<sup>528</sup> The Kasnazāniyya Order's current head-takkia is in the city of Sulaymāniyya, southeast of the Kurdish region in Iraq; but they have many takkias across the country in both the Kurdish and the Arab regions. The order also has branches within the Kurdish region of Iran and in other countries beyond.<sup>529</sup> Today, the order has a website<sup>530</sup> and a Face Book page<sup>531</sup> on the Internet; a private university in Baghdad, "Kulīyat al-Salām al-Jāmiʿa" – al-Salām University College – in which several subjects are taught in addition to Islamic studies, including computer sciences, law and English.<sup>532</sup> The

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spirituality in Iraq. See Karam, Jihād. "ʿIzzat Ibrāhīm al-Dūrī". *Ba ʿthūn min al-ʿIrāq kamā ʿAraftahum* (Ba ʿthists from Iraq as I knew them). Beirut: al-Dār al-ʿArabiyya lil-ʿUlūm Nāshirūn, 2010, pp. 139-141.

<sup>523</sup> Interview with government TV channel religious programmes editor on 13 December 2011 and on 10 January 2014; and interview with Arabic language and religious education high-school teacher on 16 February 2014.

<sup>524</sup> Interview with government TV channel religious programmes editor on 13 December 2011.

<sup>525</sup> (Husayn, *Al-Ṭarīq ʿilā al-Ṭarīqa...*, 78-84). This book is written on behalf of the current leader of the Kasnazāniyya Order, Shaikh Muhammad al-Kasnazān. The second of the two authors, who holds a PhD in historical astronomy from Durham University, is one of Shaikh Muhammad's khalīfas.

<sup>526</sup> (Bruinessen, "The Qādiriyya and the lineages ...," 134-138).

<sup>527</sup> (Husayn, *Al-Ṭarīq ʿilā al-Ṭarīqa ...*, 98-99).

<sup>528</sup> Ibid, pp.95-97.

<sup>529</sup> A brief visit to observe the location of the takkia in Sulaymāniyya took place on 11 October 2009. Also (Bruinessen, "The Qādiriyya and ...," 138).

<sup>530</sup> ([www.kasnazan.com](http://www.kasnazan.com)); accessed on 1 May 2014.

<sup>531</sup> (<https://ar-ar.facebook.com/AlkasnazanPage/posts/301774469927924>); accessed on 1 May 2014.

<sup>532</sup> This college's website is (<http://www.alsalamuc.net/index.php>) and its Face Book page is <https://ar-ar.facebook.com/Al.Kasnezan>; accessed on 1 May 2014. The college was formerly known as Kulīyat al-Shaikh Muhammad al-Kasnazān, and had been registered as a private college in 2005.

Order publishes a periodical magazine entitled “Majalat al-Kasnazān”, edited by Nehru al-Shaikh Muhammad al-Kasnazān the son of the order’s leader, and his heir-apparent.<sup>533</sup>

It seems that the father of Shaikh Muhammad al-Kasnazānī, Shaikh Abd al-Karim al-Kasnazānī (1915 – 1978), was the first to associate with the political establishment in the country during the 1960s and 1970s, and to benefit from this association through an increased following.<sup>534</sup> His son and successor as leader of the order also aligned himself with the ruling class, the Ba‘thīs, and had a close relationship with ‘Izzat Ibrāhīm al-Dūrī,<sup>535</sup> the political patron of Sufis during the 1980s and 90s.<sup>536</sup> Shaikh Muhammad al-Kasnazānī’s large following enabled him to provide the state with a militia to do their bidding in the Kurdish region; and subsequently he became involved in the oil business on their behalf too.<sup>537</sup> His growing power and affluence resulted in him establishing in 1982 the biggest Sufi takkia in Baghdad, to which he transferred his family and the headquarters of his order.<sup>538</sup> But eventually in the mid- 1990s, Shaikh Muhammad al-Kasnazānī fell out of favour with Saddam Hussein, and returned to his headquarters in Sulaymāniyya.<sup>539</sup> However, the order remained active in Baghdad until the eruption of the sectarian conflict post the 2003 invasion of Iraq.<sup>540</sup>

### A.3.1- The Kasnazāniyya and the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir:

In his book on the architectural history of the shrine, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Al-Gailani noted that a member of the Kurdish Kasnazāniyya family presented the shrine with a new cage to place of the tomb of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, which was installed in 1983.<sup>541</sup> It seems that the leader of the Kasnazāniyya felt that the old cage was no longer worthy and needed changing. But his gift had been an unsolicited and unwelcome gift, and aroused the

<sup>533</sup> At the time of writing this chapter, the latest issue of this journal was no. 13 (winter 2013); <http://www.kasnazan.com/magazine/mz13.pdf> accessed on 1 May 2014. The first issue of the magazine appeared in autumn 2006.

<sup>534</sup> (Bruinessen, “The Qādiriyya and the lineages ...,” 138).

<sup>535</sup> Information gathered, and impressions formed, through several interviews with staff at the Sulaymāniyya museum service on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2009; and interviews with the custodians of the Jilānī shrine in Baghdad on 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010; also, references in Lawrence, Quil. *Invisible Nation: How the Kurds’ quest for statehood is shaping Iraq and the Middle East*. New York: Walker Publishing Company Inc, 2008, p.164; and through news coverage in the printed press: Wong, Edward. “The struggle for Iraq: Religion; As Sunni Divisions Widen, Iraq’s Sufis Are Under Attack.” *The New York Times*, August 21, 2005; accessed on line on 1 October 2014:

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C07EFD7103EF932A1575BC0A9639C8B63>

<sup>536</sup> Interview with the solicitor of the Jilānī shrine in Baghdad on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

<sup>537</sup> (Lawrence, *Invisible Nation* ..., 164).

<sup>538</sup> (Husayn, *Al-Ṭarīq ‘ilā al-Ṭarīqa* ..., 96).

<sup>539</sup> (Lawrence, *Invisible Nation* ..., 164).

<sup>540</sup> (Wong, “Sufis Under Attack ...).

<sup>541</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jām‘i al-Shaikh* ..., 20-29); and see chapter 2, footnote 255 of this thesis.

indignation of the Gailani family headed then by the custodian of the shrine Sayyid Yūsif ‘Abd-Āllah Al-Gaylani (1907 – 1996).<sup>542</sup> To avoid an inter-Sufi diplomatic crisis and to thwart the Kasnazānī leader’s access to political backing to enforce his desires upon the shrine, the custodian found himself with only one option for counteraction: to claim that a new cage was already in the process of being made in Pakistan, where large sums of money had been collected by the Qādiriyya Sufis there; but, in the meantime, the Kasnazānī cage was welcome. The custodian immediately contacted his followers in Pakistan who raised an appeal for the manufacture of a new silver cage for the grave of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and oversaw the realisation of it. On 6<sup>th</sup> July 1987 the Kasnazānī cage was removed and the Pakistani cage was installed.<sup>543</sup> On that same day the Kasnazānī cage was sent to ‘Aqra to be placed on the grave of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.<sup>544</sup>

From various discussions over the years with a number of the Gailani family members, the cage incident described above was an example of how powerful Shaikh Muhammad al-Kasnazānī had become, and a symptom of the antagonism that had developed between the Kasnazānī shaikh and the Gailani custodians. According to the Gailanis, Shaikh Muhammad’s rising aspirations and political backing led him to desire to take over the Jīlānī shrine and its custodianship. It was also said that ‘Izzat Ibrāhīm al-Dūrī was not unsympathetic to al-Kasnazānī’s attempts; and this Kasnazānī-Dūrī alliance eventually led to an estrangement between the two parties that endured for some time. What the Gailanis have not been able to answer is why the shaikh of the Kasnazānī Sufis decided to set himself up as a rival to them. Further research into this Sufi order’s dealings with the Ba‘th and with al-Dūrī is needed to help better understand this conflict, which seems to exist even this day. On reading articles concerning how the Ba‘th Party manipulated and favoured some tribal leaders over others, there most probably was a similarity in approach / attitude towards Sufi orders and branches and their leaderships. This issue is best described in Amatzia Baram’s article on Saddam Hussein’s tribal policies,<sup>545</sup> and how the Party meddled in the leadership of tribes and manipulated these leaders to serve the Party’s

<sup>542</sup> The information in this paragraph includes my and my mother’s recollections of an informal discussion with Sayyid Yūsif ‘Abd-Āllah Al-Gaylani at his home in 1985/6. The Kasnazānī cage was only of gilt brass, designed in the style of Shī‘ī saints’ cages, and small in dimensions. It forced out the Ottoman cage, whose mother-of-pearl inlaid wooden structure was erected by orders of Sultan Murād IV in 1640, and was subsequently covered in decoratively beaten silver sheets at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The custodians decided to gift this silver cage to the shrine of the Sufi master al-Junaīd al-Baghdādī to be placed on his grave, where it stands today. Al-Junaīd is considered the spiritual ancestor in the Sufi chain of saints that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is linked to. This shrine was inspected on 17 November 2011.

<sup>543</sup> (Al-Gailani, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh* ..., 20-29).

<sup>544</sup> Ibid. On the field research visits conducted between 2009 and 2011, the Kasnazānī cage was observed to still be positioned on the grave of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.

<sup>545</sup> (Baram, “Neo-Tribalism in Iraq ...,” 1-31).

purposes, rewarding those useful to them at the cost of those who did not serve Party purposes, even if not opposed to them outright.<sup>546</sup>

But it is important to note here that, over the years, Shaikh Muhammad al-Kasnazānī also commissioned and installed a number of not dissimilar cages on the tombs of his ancestors, his father Shaikh ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Kasnazān, in the village of Kripchina,<sup>547</sup> and the shrine of Shaikh ‘Ismā‘īl al-Wūlīānī (d. 1737), the founder of the Wūlīāniyya Qādirī Sufī Order, who is buried in the village of Rovia.<sup>548</sup> Both these shrine complexes are in the Iraqi region of Kurdistan. Shaikh ‘Ismā‘īl al-Wūlīānī’s Sufī order has been discussed in chapters one and three.

The example of the Kasnazāniyya and the patronage it received in return for services rendered to the Ba‘th government illustrates the effect the Ba‘th had in shaping and reshaping the Sufi scene in the country, in a not dissimilar manner to the tribal scene, with lasting social consequences that included re-alliances, changes of territorial claims, and perhaps even changes of spiritual values, especially those associated with materialism and the acquisition and use of worldly power and influence.

### **A.3.2- Two Sufi takkias seek al-Dūrī’s help against the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir:**

In the 1990s two Sufi orders’ lodges benefitted from ‘Izzat al-Dūrī’s protection in association with the expansion of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir mentioned above. These are the Rifā‘ī Sufī order’s small takkia and shrine of Ābū Khumra<sup>549</sup> and the independent Qādirī Sufī order branch and its takkia known as Takkiat al-Ṭayyār.<sup>550</sup> Both takkias are located within the neighbourhood of the Jīlānī shrine, and fell within the boundaries of the government’s expansion plans for the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, which was to take place at the cost of repossessing and demolishing these takkias as well as a sizable number of houses. The motives behind this governmental plan will be addressed in more detail a little further on.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid, pp. 6-7.

<sup>547</sup> (Al-Kasnazān, “Mashru‘ naṣīb al-ḥula ...,” 56-67).

<sup>548</sup> Field visit to the shrine of Ismā‘īl al-Wūlīānī in Rovia on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011. And (Al-Kasnazān, “Mashru‘ naṣīb al-ḥula ...,” 18-19).

<sup>549</sup> See chapter 2 for this takkia. The current takkia follows the Rifā‘īyya Sufī Order. One of the few books in Arabic that mention this establishment with any academic authority is (Al-Durājī, *Al-Rubṭ wa al-takāyyā* ..., 99-102).

<sup>550</sup> See chapters 1 and 2 for this takkia. It currently backs onto the northeast external boundary wall of the Jīlānī shrine.



‘Izzat al-Dūrī was called upon to intervene in exempting these two takkias from repossession. He was able to put pressure on the relevant departments in the government to alter their demolition plans and spare these two takkias.<sup>551</sup> Today, Takkiat al-Ṭayyār’s external boundary backs onto the external wall of the expanded complex of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir; and Takkiat Ābū Khumra is two alleyways beyond it.<sup>552</sup> Al-Dūrī’s manoeuvrings within the government proved invaluable in rescuing these two takkias from demolition. This is especially true since the expansion project was instigated in the first place by none other than Saddam Hussein himself; and planned and implemented, not by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs or the relevant design and projects office in the municipality of Baghdad, but by the architectural office in the Presidential Palace.<sup>553</sup> This issue will also be addressed in more detail later.

It would seem that, in the grand scheme of things, as perceived by the Presidential Palace’s architectural office, these two takkias were insignificant both in their size and quality of architecture, and in their wealth and constituency. Their aesthetically unimpressive buildings, even though very important from a social-anthropological perspective, did not seem to be under any local government heritage preservation scheme.<sup>554</sup> Takkiat Ābū Khumra’s daily clients were predominantly local women from the lower classes seeking intercessions and healing with folklore medicines and potions. It would not be surprising if Saddam Hussein was completely unaware of their existence in the neighbourhood, for he was not of Baghdadi origin nor had he or any of his relatives lived in this part of the old city.

### **A.3.3- The custodians of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and the Ba‘th regime:**

Researching the Ba‘th party’s and the government’s engagement with the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir has been one of the most difficult tasks; such research may even arguably be too soon, as the aftermath of the collapse of the regime is still unfolding. No access was possible to former party and government members or to the archives of relevant ministries and civic bodies. This has left a large gap in this assessment, as it does in the wider subject of researching their relationship with Sufism in Iraq. Because of these research limitations,

<sup>551</sup> Interview with the solicitor of the Jilānī shrine on 10 December 2011.

<sup>552</sup> Field research visits to both takkias, conducted on 13 December 2011.

<sup>553</sup> Interview with Lamia Al-Gailani, an archaeologist specialising in Ancient Mesopotamia, on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2013. She lobbied the government between 1994 and 2001 to prevent the demolition of parts of the shrine for this expansion.

<sup>554</sup> Field visits and interviews with caretakers and attendants of these two shrines on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

the impressions formed here are inevitably biased, but hopefully still of some use in understanding the subject.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the custodians of the shrine have traditionally been descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s sons, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and ‘Abd al-Razzāq; and since the 1840s exclusively of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s line.<sup>555</sup> At some point in their history, the Gailani family of Baghdad became *Ḥanafīs* (followers of the Sunnī Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence), possibly under Ottoman influence, or even before then. From 1535, the Ottomans bestowed upon them the *Naqābat al-Ashrāf* of Baghdad, which remained with them until its relegation to history in 1960, when the head of the newly established republican government refused to approve the appointment of a successor to the last *Naqīb* upon his death.<sup>556</sup> The then president ‘Abd al-Karīm Qāsim was said to have stated that there was no need for such a religious post as all Iraqis were *Ashrāf*.<sup>557</sup> But the most probable reason for this snub was the flowering of nationalist and Marxist ideals that had begun to grow in the 1920s and flourished during the early republican period.<sup>558</sup>

Despite the marginalisation of the shrine’s role in religious public life in subsequent decades, the continued interest in the shrine by Muslim communities in other parts of the world – especially those of the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia – and the continued attention expressed by these countries’ diplomatic representatives in Baghdad, affected to a certain degree how the Iraqi government considered and interacted with the shrine.<sup>559</sup>

Through its then Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, the central government made a point of selecting, in consultation with the custodians of the shrine, distinguished Sunnī imams and preachers to lead the daily prayers and deliver the Friday sermon in the shrine’s mosque. Such personalities from the republican era, to name but a few, were al-‘Alama al-Ḥaj Ḥamdī ‘Abd-Allah al-‘Azamī (1956 – 1971) who had been the dean of the

<sup>555</sup> During the field research in Baghdad, a number of people who carry other family and tribal surnames, and who claim descent from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, were encountered. These claimants included people carrying such tribal names as al-Nu‘aim and Āl Shāmīya; and carrying place or family names as al-Ḥīyalī, al-Alūsī, al-Tekerlī and al-Ḥijīya. Some were observed combining their tribal, place or family surnames with the al-Gailani title. Although this phenomena is not unique to Iraq, as there are many thousands across the Islamic world who claim descent from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir; however, a mutual un-spoken tension was sensed between the Gailani family of the Jilānī shrines and those other claimants in the country. A subject worthy of future research.

<sup>556</sup> (Al-Samarā’ī, *Al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir* ..., 46-47).

<sup>557</sup> Gailani family lore. In addition, in an annotated copy of the above book, footnote 14, the historian ‘Abd al-Rahmān Al-Gailani refers to ‘Abd al-Karīm Qāsim not appointing a successor.

<sup>558</sup> See the chapter entitled ‘*Sadah*’ regarding the social change faced by the *Ashrāf* class in Iraq during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in (Batatu *The Old Social Classes...*, 155-210).

<sup>559</sup> Several interviews with the custodians and solicitor of the shrine between 2009 and 2014.

college of theology at Baghdad University in the 1940s ; Shaikh Hāshim Maḥmūd Ḥasan al-‘Azamī (1963 – 1975) who was the imam of the Shrine of Imam Abu Ḥanīfa al-Nu‘mān, the 8<sup>th</sup> century founder of the Hanafī Sunnī school of jurisprudence; Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir Khalīl al-Qaysī (1966 – 1975); and Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahāb Āḥmad al-Ṭu‘ma (1980 - 1996).<sup>560</sup>

Having said this, the cooperation between the Ministry of Endowments and the shrine’s custodians did not always lead to satisfactory appointments of imams, especially in the latter stages of the Ba‘th era. This is exemplified by the last imam to be appointed by the Ba‘th government, Shaikh Bakr ‘Abd al-Razāq al-Sāmarā’ī (1996 – 2003). This imam was a Sayyid by descent and Sufī with a PhD in the subject.<sup>561</sup> He clashed with the custodians of the Shrine over their roles in the shrine and the endowments associated with it; and, it appears, even started signing his name with the claim that he was the Naqīb al-Ashrāf of Baghdad. These actions outraged the Gailani custodians; and the imam sought ‘Izzat al-Dūrī’s intervention. From the perspective of the Shrine, al-Dūrī took the side of the imam and decreed that the imam had the final say on what happened in the shrine, but that he was not to interfere with the management of the endowments, which were to remain the domain of the custodians.<sup>562</sup> This action set a precedent and ushered in a new era for the Shrine where the imam of the mosque expected to have a say in how the place was run, not merely to carry out the duties of his office, in relation to leading the prayers and delivering the Friday sermon. This may also have been the case in other mosques too, especially those built by the government, where the running costs and staffing were also sourced by the government. Such government funded mosques did not always originate through private citizens’ benevolence, where endowed properties and assets generated the income for the trustees to pay for the appointment of the imam and caretakers, but were built by the government to address the local needs of a rapidly expanding population as it saw fit.<sup>563</sup>

<sup>560</sup> ‘Abd Allah, Hassānī Sharqī. *Dalīl al-Ḥaḍra al-Qādiriyya fī Baghdad, Mu‘jam tawthīqī li-tārīkh wa ḥādir al-Ḥaḍra al-Qādiriyya wa al-‘Usra al-Gailaniyya al-Sharīffa* (Guide to the Qādiriyya See in Baghdad: compendium of the past and present of the Qādiriyya See and the noble Gailani Family). Baghdad: Dīwān al-Āwqāf al-Qādiriyya, 2013, pp.16-18; and (Al-Ā‘zamī, *Tārīkh Jāmi‘ al-Shaikh* ..., 51 and 134-145).

<sup>561</sup> His full name and claim to descent from Prophet Muhammad is stated in his book and appears as al-Sayyid Bakr al-Sayyid ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Sayyid Maḥmūd al-Sāmarā’ī. Al-Sāmarā’ī, Bakr. *Al-Ṣuḥba ‘inda al-sūfiyya wa atharuhā fī al-sulūk* (Companionship for the Sufis and its influence upon their conduct). Baghdad: Dār Saddam li-al-Nashr, 1997. This book seems to have originally been his PhD thesis.

<sup>562</sup> Interview with the solicitor of the Shrine on 25 November 2010.

<sup>563</sup> The population of Iraq has been in rapid rise since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the Ba‘th period it rose from around 10 million to around 27 million. See the United Nations’ “*The Demographic Profile of Iraq*”, accessed 1 June 2015, <http://www.escwa.un.org/popin/members/iraq.pdf>

Shaikh Bakr al-Sāmarā'ī gained international notoriety upon the 2003 invasion of Iraq, when he stood in the pulpit of the Shrine brandishing a sword and calling upon his congregation to fight the infidel invaders following the example of Saddam Hussein.<sup>564</sup> Needless to say, al-Sāmarā'ī fled the city, and then the country, once the Ba'ṯh government collapsed. He settled in Jordan where he died a few years later.<sup>565</sup>

#### **A.4- Saddam Hussein and the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī:**

The earliest record of Saddam Hussein's association with the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad would appear to be his entry in the visitor-book of the shrine's library, which he visited on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1976. At that time he was vice-president of Iraq. In the visitor-book he wrote:

“I visited the library of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Gailani, and admired its organisation and what it holds in books that served and will continue to serve the entirety of Islam and humanity.

God bless those who work in it [the library] and those for it; and God grant success to the Islamic 'umma [nation] in serving their religion and serving humanity.”<sup>566</sup>

As none of those working in the shrine today were there in 1976, there was no opportunity to investigate the reasons behind the visit, or reactions to it. However, from examination of the names of distinguished foreign visitors to the library that signed the visitor-book, Saddam may well have made the visit to accompany a diplomatic guest. Two days after his visit, on 30<sup>th</sup> October, the Turkish minister of culture and media Rafiqī Dānshmān signed the library visitor-book too.<sup>567</sup>

But Saddam Hussein seems to have taken a special personal interest in the shrine in the 1990s, after visiting it in disguise one evening in 1993, when the shrine was holding one of its annual celebrations, and finding the place overcrowded. Orders were issued to the architectural office at the Presidential Palace to expand the shrine complex without prior

<sup>564</sup> Jaulmes, Adrien. “Imam seeks divine intervention to defeat the enemy.” *The Telegraph*, 5 April 2003. Accessed 23 January 2012. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/1426714/Imam-seeks-divine-intervention-to-defeat-the-enemy.html>.

<sup>565</sup> Interview with the solicitor of the shrine on 25 November 2010.

<sup>566</sup> (Al-Muftī, *Maktabat al-Madrasa* ..., 7).

<sup>567</sup> Ibid, p.81.

consultation with the custodians of the shrine.<sup>568</sup> The footprint of the shrine increased more than fourfold and included the construction of new two-storey buildings, an underground shopping arcade and a new free-standing minaret that towered over the shrine's two original minarets. According to the staff, this interest in the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir may have existed since at least the early 1990s, with several accounts of Saddam Hussein being spotted visiting the shrine disguised as a taxi driver, dressed in Arab tribesman's garb, or in the company of look-alikes. Except for one informal encounter in 1991, Saddam Hussein seems not to have revealed his identity to staff while at the shrine.<sup>569</sup>

It is important to note that Saddam's interest in patronising the shrine's expansion in particular came at precisely the time when he and the government were launching their Faith Campaign. Even so, no one was able to convincingly explain the reasons or motives for Saddam Hussein's attention to this shrine, other than speculation and reasoning based on his general turn towards religion, and his patronage of a number of other religious establishments including Sufi and Shī'ī ones. However, it may be important to distinguish between those publicly demonstrated patronages by Saddam Hussein, and his choice to anonymise himself when it came to visiting the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. It was uncharacteristic of him to choose to leave his mark with unexpected and untypical subtlety when it came to patronising the building works at the shrine. This subtlety is demonstrated through the rather discreet writing of his name in a dedication for refurbishing the interior and exterior of the great white dome and the Ḥanafī Prayer Hall located beneath it.

The refurbishment works of the Ḥanafī Prayer Hall and the Ottoman white dome were completed in 2001 and involved a re-decoration of the interior walls, ceilings and cupola, the erection of a marble pulpit in place of its Ottoman wooden one, and the covering of the white dome with plain white ceramic tiles. The dedicatory inscription, which describes Saddam Hussein's patronage of the refurbishment of the shrine, lists his and the names of the architect and engineers who worked on it. It is inscribed in cobalt-blue glazing on

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<sup>568</sup> Interview with Lamia Al-Gailani on 10th August 2013, whose lobbying of the government included direct letters of appeal addressed to Saddam Hussein and an audience with 'Izzat Ibrāhīm al-Dūrī, seeking a modification if not reversal of the plans proposed for the demolition of historical parts of the shrine in association with this expansion project. Copies of the appeal papers and responses to them were examined as part of this interview.

<sup>569</sup> Staff described several references to these visitations during the field research period. Saddam Hussein's personal religiosity, and how his regime dealt with and used religion, has been explored in several publications. One relevant to the period of the early 1990s is (Long, *Saddam's War...*).

white ceramic tiles and is installed in an external alcove of the dome that is not visible other than to those accessing the roof of the building to deal with maintenance issues there.

Another example of the uncharacteristic subtlety in which Saddam Hussein's patronage has been marked may be seen on the main wooden doors leading into the Ḥanafī Prayer Hall. Here Saddam Hussein's signature has been discreetly inserted as a decorative element on a pair of wooden doors that lead into the main prayer hall at the shrine (see chapter 2, p.146, image 56). Although the current members of staff are aware that this pattern consists of Saddam Hussein's abstracted signature combined with the flag, the shrine's post-2003 visitors are no longer aware of its symbolism.

From the above material evidence of Saddam's under-publicised and non-media exploited activities at the Shrine, coupled with our current understanding of his lack of interest in Sufism in general and his non-Qādirī associations in particular, it is almost impossible to fully understand his attention to this shrine, and how it may have served his purposes. According to the custodians, Saddam Hussein was not accessible to them, nor showed them any reverence or preferential treatment as descendants of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. This leads to the inevitable question: did he have a personal need to petition Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir for support that was beyond all his other publicly orchestrated rhetorical gestures of piety – personal needs that are not dissimilar to those of the many thousands of anonymous visitors that come to this shrine?

#### **A.4.1- The consequences:**

The ideological u-turn on behalf of the regime with regard to its stand in relation to religiosity, and Saddam's unwelcome attention to the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, has had a detrimental effect on both Sufism in general and the shrine in particular.

Changing the laws that governed education in the 1970s on the one hand and subsequently those that governed the religious institutions on the other eventually led to direct interference in how Sufi institutions, and the Sufi Orders that own them, practice their faith and how they evolve. For the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, this change of laws has meant the loss of its Qādiriyya School, and the loss of its freedom to employ its own imams independently of the government.

Giving ‘Izzat al-Dūrī a free hand in dabbling in religion, networking with Sufi orders and interfering in their rivalries, spread antagonistic feelings amongst them and caused some orders to abuse this access to power to oust their rivals. This has compromised the reputation of Sufism in Iraq as a spiritual path of higher moral discipline and aspirations, and reduced it to rival groups of people who use Sufism to meet their own worldly ends.

For the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, fear of the wrath of an uncompromising totalitarian regime and not holding favour within it, resulted in the custodians of the shrine finding themselves unable to oppose the government’s continued interference in their affairs or mitigate its consequences, whether on the fabric of its historical buildings or on its users and their Sufi practices, the latter of which will be explored in detail in the second part of this chapter. With regard to the fabric of the building, this government attention led to the loss of a whole section of its historic architecture, which included its original library, soup-kitchen, Sufi lodging quarters, and family burial chambers.

#### **A.4.2- Lobbying the government against the demolition project:**

The loss of the library building mentioned above did not come without any attempt made at rescuing it. According to Lamia Al-Gailani,<sup>570</sup> upon the start of Saddam Hussein’s building expansion project at the shrine, the then custodian Sayyid Yūsif Al-Gaylani [sic.] started looking for ways to avert the demolition. He accepted Lamia Al-Gailani’s offer of help. She was a relative of his and an independent Iraqi archaeologist interested in heritage preservation issues. They lobbied the government to modify the expansion plans, with the main purpose of saving the library / soup-kitchen building from demolition. But they refrained from criticising the size of the expansion beyond the historical buildings, which was seen to be a prudent stance to take at the time.

From the interview with Lamia Al-Gailani and various interviews with the current custodians and management staff at the shrine, it seems the root of the problem with the government’s plan was the lack of interaction with the institution it wished to “improve”. Secular architects based in the Presidential Palace, receiving instructions from the president to expand the shrine to solve its overcrowding problem, did not trouble

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<sup>570</sup> Interview with Lamia Al-Gailani on 10 August 2013. She holds three degrees in her subject from Cambridge, Edinburgh and London, with an early career based in Baghdad at the Iraq Museum, followed by a freelance academic career based in London. She is my mother, and has given me her permission to reveal her identity, role and opinions with regard to her lobbying activity to save the building from demolition. The interview – in mixed Arabic and English – took place in London and was audio-recorded on a digital recording machine. Documents relating to her lobbying activities were made available for this study.



themselves to consult with the managers or users of the shrine on how the place was used and what, if any, were its needs for improvement.<sup>571</sup> No one from that architectural office communicated with the shrine in the preliminary stages of the design and planning for the enlargement.

The shrine's custodians only became aware of Saddam Hussein's visit experience and the Palace's intentions two weeks before the demolition works were due to start in 1994. The senior custodian Sayyid Yūsif attempted to delay the demolition deadline using various excuses, not least of which was the issue of exhuming and reintering a significant number of Gailani family graves from the burial chambers in the building to be demolished. The delays stretched over several years, from 1994 to 2000, aided by Lamia Al-Gailani's lobbying of various government departments, such as heritage and antiquities authorities and the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. She also wrote direct letters of appeal to Saddam Hussein; and requested permission to present her appeal in person to any senior member of the government who would receive her. At the General Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage (part of the Ministry of Culture, and responsible for the preservation of historical buildings) she was shown a copy of one of her letters to Saddam Hussein, which had been forwarded to the Directorate for consideration, on which was Saddam's handwritten note "to be discussed".

Lamia Al-Gailani was granted an audience with 'Izzat al-Dūrī, who, despite a cordial discussion, failed to appreciate the heritage preservation arguments she presented. She also lobbied a number of Muslim countries with strong Qādirī Sufi orders through their embassies in London, requesting their help in raising the preservation issue with the Iraqi government. These included Morocco, Pakistan and Jordan. The latter two attempted to help, but with no success.

In Lamia Al-Gailani's view, the lobbying efforts failed for two reasons. The first was because both the architectural office at the Palace and the Ministry of Endowments failed to appreciate the value of preserving the building, dismissing it as being Ottoman and therefore of a foreign colonial period in Baghdad's more recent history. The ineffectiveness of the General Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage as a public body who did nothing to help the case. The second reason, explicitly expressed to her in a meeting, was the concern of the designer of the new building, that, if the extension plans

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<sup>571</sup> Ibid; and interview with the custodian of the Shrine on 6 April 2013.

were modified to allow for the old library building to remain in place, then his architectural design would be aesthetically compromised by being partially concealed from view from the large prayer hall's side of the site. For fear of clashing with the Palace staff and government departments, the custodians found themselves helpless. The building was demolished in 2001.

The custodians and solicitor of the Shrine were given to understand that all the land repossessed and used in the expansion of the Shrine would be registered by the government as endowed land for the Qādirī Shrine, and therefore form part of the Qādiriyya Endowments.<sup>572</sup> But until the fall of the regime in 2003, this transfer of title had not taken place; and eleven years on, the matter is still unsettled, with no indication being given to the Shrine on the intention of the current government, thus leaving the ownership of the expanded part of the site firmly in the hands of the government. This unresolved situation has caused concern for the custodians as it gives the current government department responsible for Sunnī Endowments even more leverage in influencing, and interfering in, how the Shrine functions.

The site expansion works were not officially completed until 2009. Although all costs associated with this project were paid for by the Ba'ath government, including the costs of repossessing the land and homes of the neighbourhood to allow for the expansion, the quality of the work proved to be of seriously inferior standards, to such an extent that it necessitated major repairs to both the new foundations of the extended site and the decorative marbled facades of the two storey building above them. The problems with the foundations rendered the new subterranean commercial space unusable due to serious water ingress caused by the high water table in the area. This is the same problem that causes the Sufi shrine of Ābū Khumra to be permanently immersed in water.<sup>573</sup>

The repairs needed were instigated in 2013 by the new Iraqi government under the orders of then Prime Minister Nūrī al-Mālikī, again, at the government's own expense.<sup>574</sup> The significance of Nūrī al-Mālikī's patronage here – being a Shī'a and leader of the sectarian Da'wa Party – will need to be further researched, as it most probably involves seizing a political opportunity to be seen to be non-sectarian in his policies, taking the initiative to rectify a badly constructed building that his party's adversaries, the Ba'ath regime, had

<sup>572</sup> Conversation with the solicitor of the Shrine on 15 November 2009.

<sup>573</sup> For Ābū Khumra's shrine see chapter 2.

<sup>574</sup> The field research involved repeated inspection of the damaged parts of the new building and interviews with the management staff and custodians of the shrine between 2009 and 2014.

erected in one of the two most important Sunnī mosques in the country, the other being Imām Ābū Ḥanīfa's mosque and shrine.

## **B- The current challenges facing the Qādirī shrines with regard to the rise of religious Salafism in the country:**

Since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī has witnessed the total upheaval of Iraqi society. As a Sufī place of worship it has faced the dual challenges of rising sectarianism and the threats of modern Salafism. At the same time in the Kurdish region of Iraq, in the city of 'Aqra, the Qādirī takkia and shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī has experienced the same. The interconnectedness of these two shrines, both belonging to the one religious endowments trust, has helped them steer their way through these unprecedented times.<sup>575</sup>

### **B.1- A Jihādī Salafist agitation:**

On the afternoon of Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2007 the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī received a direct hit – a huge car bomb explosion – to its outer fence at the junction of *Shār 'i al-Gailani* and *Shār 'i al-Kiffāh*.<sup>576</sup> According to media reports at the time, the bomb was thought to have been the work of either a local al-Qaeda affiliated organisation known as Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, or a similar *Sunnī Arab salafī takfīrī* group operating in Iraq. The bomb killed 24 passers-by and injured 68 and some later reports noted that the injuries rose to 90. The bomb caused serious damage to the recently built outer minaret of the shrine, which is situated at the corner of the site and the junction of the two streets. It

<sup>575</sup> What is beyond this section's remit – due to restrictions in time and access while conducting field research – is an historical review of the relationship between Salafism and Sufism in Iraq, and their recent history in the country. What is meant by Salafists in this section are those practising Muslims (including fundamentalists, literalists and puritanical) who are ideologically opposed to Sufism as a method of worship, as a way of religious-self expression, and as a socio-religious institution that individuals belong and give allegiance to. The term also includes those who tolerate Sufism's beliefs as long as they fall within strict Islamic orthodoxy and exclude what they perceive as non-orthodox practices such as saint's-tomb visitations, and the use of musical instruments in worship.

<sup>576</sup> Several Arabic and English language media websites have covered the event. These include Semple, Kirk. 'In Rare Talks, U.S. and Iran Discuss Iraq.' *The New York Times*, 28 May 2007. Accessed 10 February 2013. [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/28/world/worldspecial/28cnd-iraqiran.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/28/world/worldspecial/28cnd-iraqiran.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0); and Al Jazeera TV website's coverage on May 29, 2007, titled "Dozens killed in Baghdad blasts". Accessed 9 February 2013. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2007/05/2008525115811971147.html>. For images of the damage caused by the explosion, see <http://www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2007/05/28/world/28cnd-iraq-bomb.html>; and <http://www.reuters.com/news/pictures/searchpopup?picId=867886>.

also caused the shrine's windows to shatter and damaged the historical carved doors leading into Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's burial chamber.<sup>577</sup>

The news coverage, both national and international, puzzled about the motives behind such an attack, and quoted the condemnations issued by the political establishment in Baghdad. Locals' reactions were recorded too and included questions by devastated lovers of the shrine who tearfully wondered: 'why would they target our Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir?'<sup>578</sup> The senior imam of the Shrine was interviewed by telephone and he condemned the act stating that all 'the *takfīrī* terrorists' have achieved is the disruption of the shrine's charitable works, denying widows, orphans and the poor from benefitting from its soup kitchen.<sup>579</sup> The newspapers also recorded protest-announcements from the then president Jalal Talabani, his two deputies and Prime Minister Nūr al-Mālikī; with the latter ordering that the damage be repaired immediately at the government's expense and the security provision for the shrine be increased.<sup>580</sup> Sufi groups such as the Kurdish Qādirī Kasnazāniyya Sufi Order also issued their own condemnations, which they published in their periodical *Al-Kasnazān*.<sup>581</sup> But despite the general reaction of outrage at the act, no militant group, salafist or otherwise, officially claimed to have carried out the attack nor was any justification for it put forward.

## B.2- The people and Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's resting place:

To better appreciate the recent observations of how this shrine has been facing the challenges and threats of rising Salafism in Iraq, a summary review of its users, managers and inhabitants is presented here.

<sup>577</sup> Interviews with attendants responsible for the burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and for the women's section of the prayer halls in the shrine, February 2013.

<sup>578</sup> (Sample, "In Rare Talks ...").

<sup>579</sup> Cole, Juan, May 29, 2007, reporting on Informed Comment blog, '24 Killed, 90 wounded; Qādirīya Shrine Damaged in Blast,' *Informed Comment, Thoughts on the Middle East, History and Religion*, 29 May 2007, <http://www.juancole.com/2007/05/24-killed90-wounded-Qādirīya-shrine.html>

<sup>580</sup> An example of the news coverage in Iraqi daily newspapers is in *Al-Itthad* which published President Jalāl Ṭalabānī's letter of condemnation and reported his deputies and the Prim Minister's comments and instructions on 30 May 2007. Anon. "Akḥbār wa taqārīr: Ra'īs al-Jamhūriyya yastankir al-I'tidā' al-Irhābī 'ālā al-Ḥadra al-Qādiriyya al-Sharīfa" (News and Reports: The President of the Republic denounces the terrorist assault on the noble Qādiriyya See). *Al-Itthad Newspaper*. Erbil: Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Party, 2007. Accessed on 10 February 2013: <http://www.alitthad.com/paper.php?name=News&News&file=article&sid=25719>.

<sup>581</sup> "The speech of Al-Sheikh D. Nahru Muhammad Al-Kasnazan Al-Hassani about the condemnation of the sinful aggression on the shrine of Al-Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir Al-Gailani (may Allah sanctify his spirit) with Al-Sharqiya Satellite Channel." *Kasnazan.com*. Accessed 10 February 2013; in English: <http://www.kasnazan.com/article.php?id=1030>; and in Arabic: <http://www.kasnazan.com/article.php?id=1020>. Also published in Arabic in *Al-Kasnazān*. Al-Tarīqa al-'Aliyya al-Qādiriyya al-Kasnazāniyya, issue 2, summer 2007, pp.6-9.

In a discussion with one of the custodians about ‘good orthodoxy’ and ‘bad orthodoxy’, he explained that he personally believed himself to be a follower of the ‘al-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ’ (the rightly guided ancestors and followers of the Prophet), and explained that he believed in following the example of the Prophet. He identified himself as a Sunnī Muslim, tutored in Islamic religious matters under the guidance of his scholar father and two leading Sunnī Ṭālibanī Qādirī Sufi shaikhs at the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. In addition to his five degrees in civil law from Baghdad, Cairo and Georgetown universities, he also has a diploma in religious studies from M‘ahad al-Sharī‘a al-Islāmiyya (the Institute of Islamic Sharī‘a) at Cairo University.<sup>582</sup> From the perspective of the Gailani family, the Shrine and mosque of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī is very much a mainstream Sunnī establishment that follows the Ḥanafī School of jurisprudence. They consider their Qādirī Sufism to be compliant with the Islamic Sharī‘a, and the Shrine’s documented histories show a consistent employment of qualified Sunnī imams, khaṭībs, muftīs and mudarrises of both the Ḥanafīyya and the Shāfi‘iyya schools of jurisprudence from at least the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>583</sup>

The shrine’s users are from a variety of backgrounds. Local *Shī‘a* women are the most frequent on a daily basis; Sunnīs, Sufi and non-Sufi, from all over Baghdad and other parts of the country; rich and poor; professionals, skilled and unskilled; and people of various political persuasions. Foreigners visiting the shrine include a substantial majority of Asians.<sup>584</sup> Their backgrounds vary too, from villagers to government ministers; and include businessmen, professionals and Sufis.

The shrine has a local Qādirī Sufi circle – *al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya* – which conducts its public *dhikr* on Friday afternoons. The mosque part of the shrine also offers the five daily prayers and the Friday prayers and sermon. The soup kitchen feeds the locals, Sunnīs and Shī‘a alike, on a daily basis – both the poor and those seeking baraka (blessings) – through eating Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s soup.

<sup>582</sup> Conversation with the custodian of the Shrine on 6 April 2013. Also see his biography in (‘Abd-Allah, *Dalīl al-Ḥaḍra al-Qādiriyya ...*, 81-82).

<sup>583</sup> Ibid; and (Al-Samarā‘ī, *Al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir...*, 68-71); and (Al-Ā‘zamī, *Tārīkh Jām‘i al-Shaikh ...*, 118-145).

<sup>584</sup> The field research revealed the glaring absence of Qādirīs from other parts of the Middle East, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, and from the Caucasus. It is interesting to note that this was not the case in previous eras. The reference in footnote 10 above describes the allocation of specific lodging rooms in the shrine to the Moroccan Qādirīs as well as to the Afghans and the Indians during the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The management of the shrine complex is headed by the Gailani Custodians of *al-Awqāf al-Qādiriyya fī al-‘Irāq*, the Qādirī endowments in Iraq.<sup>585</sup> The large staffing structure consists of the main shrine’s caretaking team, the soup kitchen team, the library team, and the administrative team. Three Sunnī imams, one of whom is a Qādirī Sufī, are currently appointed to the shrine by the government department *Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī*.<sup>586</sup> Also, since the invasion of 2003, the shrine has been allocated an armed security force by the central government. This force’s members are of mixed social and religious backgrounds.

### B.3- Facing Salafism on a daily basis:

Returning to May 2007’s car-bomb attack on the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, this bombing came as part of the latest episode of upheaval in Iraq’s history, and at a time of re-orientation in Iraqi politics along sectarian lines, following the fall of the country in the 2003 invasion and the start of a new struggle for power and dominance in post-Saddam Iraq. Although the shrine’s custodians are, and have been since the 1920s, – with a couple of exceptions<sup>587</sup> – traditionally apolitical, and have long lost their religious leadership position within the *Sunnī* sect in Baghdad, the shrine and its founder, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, are still seen as a *Sunnī* bastion of faith, and one of Iraq’s symbols of non-Salafist traditional *Ḥanafī* Islam.

In the absence of any results from the police investigation of the 2007 bombing, conversations with staff and members of the Gailani family revealed a number of speculative explanations for the reasons behind the bombing. One explanation offered was that the bombing was a warning to the shrine’s staff for having exposed to the authorities a stash of weapons and explosives that had been secretly stored in the adjacent Qādiriyya School, which has been mentioned above. Fearing that the explosives might endanger the shrine, the police were alerted to the presence of the stash. However, reviewing the news coverage for references to the story of the explosives at this government-run school reveals that the incident, or a similar one, had happened a year earlier, on a Sunday evening in

<sup>585</sup> This particular Qādirī endowment trust is exclusively concerned with the two shrines being explored here. Other Qādirī Sufi groups and shrines in Iraq have their own separate endowment trusts that have no association with this trust.

<sup>586</sup> Information supplied by the shrine’s head of administration, including copies of staff lists, during field research carried out between 2009 and 2012 by the author.

<sup>587</sup> Two of those who held the custodianship of the Shrine also became prim-ministers of Iraq, though for brief premiership periods. The first was Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Al-Gailani, who was chosen for the premiership because he was the Naqīb al-Ashrāf of Baghdad, and became prim-minister between 1920 and 1922. The second was Rashīd ‘Ālī Al-Gailani, who became briefly a custodian of the Shrine in the second half of the late 1930s between three short stints at the premiership in 1933, 1940-41, and 1941.

May 2006. As no insurgent group claimed ownership of this stash of arms, and the police investigation into the 2007 incident brought no results, it is not possible to independently verify the claims of association between the two incidents.

But the effects of Salafism on the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir are not limited to the 2007 bomb attack alone. Field research and interviews with the custodians of the shrine and a number of personalities associated with it over a four year period between November 2009 and February 2013 revealed the shrine’s entanglement in a dual struggle to resist two types of extremism that have dominated the country since the 2003 invasion. On the one hand is the sweeping wave of *Sunnī* Salafist Islam that is indifferent, if not hostile, to Sufism and its symbols in the country; and on the other hand is the rise in *Sunnī* / *Shī‘ī* sectarianism in Baghdad in general and in Bāb al-Shaikh and neighbouring districts in particular.<sup>588</sup>

With regard to facing *Sunnī* extremism, be it labelled by ordinary people in Baghdad as Salafist, Wahhabist, *Takfīrī* or Muslim Brotherhood-style fundamentalism, the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir seems to have started dealing with this extremism, though at a much subtler level, in the decades prior to 2003. Books published by the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in the 1970s and 1980s that deal with its history and its founder’s life and works, contain apologetic sections defending the permissibility, from the Islamic Sharī‘a perspective, of honouring saintly figures such as Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and pointing out the duty of, and merits of, visiting the places associated with them.<sup>589</sup>

On speaking to two religious figures at the shrine, the local Shaikh of the Qādiriyya *dhikr* circle and the resident Qur’ānic studies tutor, about how they saw the criticisms thrown at them by anti-Sufis regarding their practices and beliefs, well-thought-out and rehearsed answers were given. These answers used the same theological and historical sources that

<sup>588</sup> For a much earlier encounter between the predecessors of the current custodians of the shrine and early Salafism in Baghdad see Nafī, Basheer M. “Ābū al-Thana’ al-Alusi: An Alim, Ottoman Mufti, and Exegete of the Qur’an.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no.3 (Aug., 2002): p.481. In this Sufi-Salafi encounter Ābū al-Thana’ al-Ālūsī (1802 – 1854), a prominent early modern Salafi theologian and reformist, clashed with the Gailanis and their Qādirī shrine on theological grounds. It is interesting to note – though not mentioned in the article above but in the reference below – that this clash came despite Ābū al-Thana’s early association with the Qadirīs in Baghdad, as he had been sponsored by a Gailani benefactor to study in her religious seminary “al-Madrasa al-Khātūniyya”, which stood opposite the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. His tutor there was the eminent theologian Shaikh ‘Alī ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Mawṣillī (d. 1827) who was employed by ‘Ātika Khātūn Al-Gailani, the founder, benefactor and custodian of the seminary and its endowments. Al-Ālūsī acquired his ‘ijāza from al-Mawṣillī at the age of 21 (c. 1823). Then ten years later, on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1833, al-Ālūsī was appointed as the khaṭīb – preacher – of the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir itself. See (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī tārikh shaikh ...*, 93, 158-161 and 484-485).

<sup>589</sup> Two such examples are: (Al-Ā‘ẓamī, *Tārikh Jām‘i al-Shaikh ...*, 62-63); and (Al-Samarā‘ī, *Al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir...*, 1988, 30-34).



had been quoted at them by their adversaries – principally the Qur’ān, the prophetic *Ḥadīth* collections and the early history of Islam. The use of these sources will be explored in detail below, but it is worth noting at this point that neither of the two figures mentioned here was tempted to use polemical material or counter attacks that discredited their adversaries outright as part of their response to the criticisms levelled against their Sufi beliefs and practices. They also seemed to have found no benefit in using other theological material in their defence, such as the pro-Sufism works by Ābū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. Nor were they tempted to try to reinterpret, in a favourable manner, Ibn Taymiyya’s views regarding their practices, as other defenders of Sufism have done.

#### **B.4- In defence of Sufi practices:**

Firstly, let us consider *Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya* – the Shaikh of the Qādiriyya *dhikr* circle, who has a BA in *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) from the then *Kulīyat al-Sharī‘a* – College of *Sharī‘a* at the University of Baghdad (subsequently renamed *Kulīyat al-‘Ulūm al-Islāmiyya*, the College of Islamic Sciences). In 1985 he succeeded his father as the head of the *dhikr* circle at the shrine. In refuting the Salafist accusations against his Sufi practices, Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa first acknowledged that some criticisms were fair, especially those concerning wrong practices within Sufism that stem from ignorance amongst some Sufis. He then stated that in life *ahl al-jahal* – the people of ignorance – overshadow *ahl al-haqīqa* – the people of the truth.<sup>590</sup> He explained that in his experience not all those who were attracted to Sufism and wished to join a Sufi order had come for the right reasons. When a seeker approaches his circle to join it, the shaikh tells him that if he has come for the tambourine – to enjoy the chanting and the accompanying beating rhythms – this was not the place for him, but if he has come seeking *lā illāh illā Allāh* – There is no God but Allah – this is the right place for him. But Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa vehemently defended the legitimacy of holding *ḥalaqāt al-dhikr* – remembrance circles or gatherings – and the use of tambourines, which are the only instruments they use in his circle, and which he considered to be the closest of instruments to Prophet Muhammad - though he did not qualify this understanding with any prophetic tradition. However, Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa quoted three Qur’ānic<sup>591</sup> verses to

<sup>590</sup> Interview with Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya conducted on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

<sup>591</sup> All the Qur’ānic verses quoted in this section are from *The Holy Qur’ān, English translation of the meanings and commentary*. Edited by The Presidency of Islamic Researches, Iftā’, Call and Guidance. Al-Madīna al-Munawara, Saudi Arabia: The King Fahad Holy Qur’ān Printing Complex, 1989. This particular translation was chosen as it represents an official state supported Salafist understanding of the meanings of the Qur’ān in translation. For ease of identification, the phrases highlighted by Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa in support of his argument have been rendered in *italic*.

illustrate the argument that *dhikr* was requested by God (the specific phrases he emphasised are marked in italics within each verse):

(2:152): ‘Then do ye *remember Me*; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and reject no Faith’;

(2:198): ‘It is no crime in you if ye seek of the bounty of your Lord during pilgrimage. Then when ye pour down from Mount ‘Arafat, *celebrate the praises of Allah* at the Sacred Monument, and *celebrate His praises* as He had directed you, even though, before this, ye went astray’; and

(33:41): ‘O ye who believe, *remember Allah* with much remembrance’.

Shaikh al-Halaqa then went on to explain and to reinforce with further evidence the centrality of the practice of *dhikr* to the believer’s life, starting with the role of remembrance in fortifying the believer’s faith as illustrated in the Qur’ānic verse (8:2).<sup>592</sup> *Dhikr* also gives peace to the heart as stated in the verse (13:28).<sup>593</sup> *Dhikr* prevents the believer from wrongdoing, as stated in the verse (3:135).<sup>594</sup> *Dhikr* effects success, as in the verse (62:10).<sup>595</sup> Remembrance is a sign of those who endure hardship, as mentioned in the verse (22:35).<sup>596</sup> God willed that remembrance accompanies other religious rituals, as stated in the verse (2:198) above, and in the verses (2:200)<sup>597</sup> and (4:103).<sup>598</sup> Two Qur’ānic verses, those of (24:35-38)<sup>599</sup> and (33:35),<sup>600</sup> demonstrate God’s promise of great rewards to those engaged in his remembrance.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid, (8:2): ‘For the believers are those who *when Allah is mentioned*, felt a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His revelations rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put all their trust in their Lord.’

<sup>593</sup> Ibid, (13:28): ‘Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the *remembrance of Allah*; for without doubt in the *remembrance of Allah* do hearts find satisfaction.’

<sup>594</sup> Ibid, (3:135): ‘And those who having done an act of indecency or wronged their own souls, *remember Allah* and ask for forgiveness for their sins; and who can forgive sins except Allah? And are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in the wrong they have done.’

<sup>595</sup> Ibid, (62:10): ‘And when the prayer is finished, then may ye disperse through the land, and seek of the bounty of Allah; and *remember Allah frequently* that ye may prosper.’

<sup>596</sup> Ibid, (22:35): ‘Those whose hearts, *when Allah is mentioned*, are filled with fear, who show patient perseverance over the afflictions, keep up regular prayer, and spend in charity out of what We have bestowed upon them.’

<sup>597</sup> Ibid, (2:200): ‘So when ye have accomplished your rites, *celebrate the praises of Allah* as ye used to celebrate the praises of your fathers, yea, with far more heart and soul. For there are men who say: Our Lord, give us thy bounties in this world; but they will have no portion in the hereafter.’

<sup>598</sup> Ibid, (4:103): ‘When ye have performed the prayers, *remember Allah*, standing, sitting down or lying down on your sides; but when ye are free from danger, set up regular prayers; for such prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times.’

<sup>599</sup> Ibid, (24:35-38): ‘Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a niche and within it a lamp; the lamp enclosed in glass; the glass as it were a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is well-nigh luminous though fire scarce

Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa also pointed out that God condemned those who abstain from remembrance with warnings of its consequences, as expressed in the two verses (2:114)<sup>601</sup> and (18:28).<sup>602</sup>

Prophet Muhammad also encouraged the practice of remembrance and celebrating the praises of God. Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa quoted four prophetic *ḥadīths* in which *dhikr* is praised and encouraged (the following are Arabic transcriptions of the *ḥadīths* as mentioned by Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa as he uttered them, followed by my translations of them):<sup>603</sup>

The Prophet said: *‘akthirū dhikr Allah ḥatā yaqūlū majnūn’* – Indulge in the remembrance of Allah until they say he must be mad.

*‘An ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Amrū raḍīa Allah ‘anhū qāl: qult yā rasul-Allah mā ghanīmat majālis al-dhikr? Qal ghanīmat majālis al-dhikr al-janna al-janna’* – On the authority of ‘Abdallah ibn ‘Amrū: I said O’ Prophet of God what is the prize of remembrance assemblies? He said: the prize of remembrance assemblies is the garden of heaven, the garden of heaven.

Prophet Muhammad said: *‘Idhā marartum bi-rīḍi al-janna fa-’irtā’ū. Qālū wa-mā rīḍu al-janna? Qāl: ḥalaqu al-dhikr’* – If you passed by the gardens of heaven linger there. They said: and what are the gardens of heaven? He said: the circles of remembrance.

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touched it. Light upon light, Allah doth guide whom He will to His Light; Allah doth set forth parables for men, and Allah doth know all things. (lit is such a light) In houses which Allah hath permitted to be raised to honour, for the celebration in them of His name; in them is He glorified in the mornings and in the evenings, (again and again), by men whom neither trade nor sale can divert from the remembrance of Allah, nor from regular prayer, nor from paying zakāt. Their (only)fear is for the day when hearts and eyes will be turned about, that Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds, and add even more for them out of His Grace: for Allah doth provide for those whom He will, without measure.’

<sup>600</sup> Ibid, (33:35): ‘For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah’s remembrance, for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.’

<sup>601</sup> Ibid, (2:114): ‘And who is more unjust than he who forbids that in places for the worship of Allah His name should be celebrated? Whose zeal is (in fact) to ruin them? It was not fitting that such should themselves enter them except in fear. For them there is nothing but disgrace in this world, and in the word to come, an exceeding torment.’

<sup>602</sup> Ibid, (18:28): ‘And keep yourself content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His face; and let not thine eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this life; nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us, one who follows his own desires, and his affair has become all excess.’

<sup>603</sup> I have translated these prophetic sayings as they were quoted to me by Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa.

Prophet Muhammad said: ‘*Ina li-llah malā’ika sayyāra, faḍlān yabtaghūn majālis al-dhikr*’ – God has roaming angels whose preference is to seek out remembrance assemblies.

Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa also explained that remembrance was conducted in a variety of ways, and for a variety of reasons, that have been sanctioned by God and his Prophet. These *aḥwāl al-dhikr* – ways or conditions of remembrance – are eight. He described them as follows: *al-dhikr fī al-khafā’* (discrete remembrance) which is conducted in secret, and is referred to in the Qur’ānic verse (7:205).<sup>604</sup> Prophet Muhammad also instructed believers to raise their voices in remembrance – *al-dhikr fī al-jahr*, that which is proclaimed in public – as exemplified by the Prophetic tradition:

‘*Attānī Jubrīl fa-qāl ina Allah yā’muruka an tā’mur aṣḥābaka ān yarfa’ū aṣwāttahum bi-al-talbiyya wa al-’ihlāl*’ – Gabriel came to me and said that Allah orders you to order your followers to raise their voices in responding to his invitation and in invoking his name.

*al-dhikr al-muqayyad* – restricted or conditional remembrance – explained Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa, is that which is restricted or specific to a place, such as that uttered when entering the mosque or when entering the home or the market; or that which is bound to a specific time, such as the *dhikr* uttered after the prayers; or which is uttered when seeing the new moon; or as a person breaks his fast; or that uttered as part of the morning and evening Qur’ānic recitations. *Al-dhikr al-muṭlaq* – unrestricted remembrance – is the opposite of *al-dhikr al-muqayyad* and includes all manner of *dhikr* and for non-specific reasons.

Then there is remembrance which is conducted when standing *al-dhikr fī al-Qīyām* and when sitting *al-dhikr fī al-Qu’ūd*. These position-related types of remembrance are recognised and praised by God in the Qur’ānic verse (3:191).<sup>605</sup> The last two kinds of *aḥwāl al-dhikr* concern *dhikr* and motion *ḥaraka*, and *dhikr* and stillness *sukūn*. Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa explained that motion – bodily motion – in *dhikr* assemblies arises from *’injdthāb ’ilā Allah* – gravitation towards God. The Shaikh pointed out that if anyone objected to

<sup>604</sup> (Presidency ..., *Holy Qur’ān, English ...*), (7:205): ‘And do thou bring thy soul with humility, and remember without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings, and be not thou of those who are heedless.’

<sup>605</sup> Ibid, (3:191): ‘Men who remember Allah standing, sitting and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the wonders of creation in the heavens and the earth, (and say) our Lord not for naught hast thou created all this. Glory to Thee. Give us salvation from the chastisement of the fire.’

this motion (the swaying from left to right or back to front as is done in his *dhikr* circle), he would answer him by saying that no *nahī* – prohibition, or *karāhiyya* – odiousness, or *tahrīm* – forbiddance have been issued by God or his messenger against it. He further defended *dhikr* as being one of the *‘ibādāt* – forms of worship – through which nearness to God can be achieved. He reasoned that, as all forms of worship in Islam have prescribed steps and rules, and have beginnings and ends, what valid objection could there be to *dhikr* assemblies having prescribed steps with regard to *tartīl* – modulation of the chanting in praise of God, and showing reverence in standing and sitting, as is done in the other forms of worship? Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa concluded his defence of Sufism by explaining that all Islamic Sufism and its various orders is built on the one main article of faith, which is *Lā ‘illah ‘illā Allah* – There is no God but Allah – and that the various *Sharī‘a*-compliant Sufi orders that base their faith and practice on the Qur’ān and the *Sunna* of Prophet Muhammad differ only in the *‘awrād* – the prescribed liturgies of each order, and the Sufi shaikhs they choose to follow for their spiritual guides.

### **B.5- Mawlid festivities at the Shrine:**

The second person to defend Sufi practices in the shrine is the resident Qur’ānic studies tutor Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Janābī.<sup>606</sup> He was traditionally tutored at the hands of the *mulālī*<sup>607</sup> – the traditional *‘ulamā*’ or religious scholars. In the 1960s he became a tutor in the Qādiriyya School at the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir,<sup>608</sup> where he taught recitation and other related subjects until the school was taken over by the central government in the 1970s. After that he continued teaching in the shrine, running his own classes in a more personal and informal manner. After reaching the age of retirement, he was given a room in the shrine to lodge in as a Sufi, while his family continued to reside elsewhere in the city. As a Sufi, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb came from a Rifā‘ī family background, with both his father and grandfather having been Rifā‘ī Sufis. He became a Qādirī after reading a book about Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī at the age of twenty-two. That reading prompted him

<sup>606</sup> Interview conducted with Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Janābī on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010.

<sup>607</sup> *Mulālī* is the plural of *mula* in Iraqi vernacular Arabic; and usually denotes a traditional instructor in the recitation of the Qur’ān. *Mulas* also taught reading and writing Arabic. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb is also popularly known as Mula ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Janābī.

<sup>608</sup> In its heyday during the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the original Qādiriyya School employed leading religious tutors and theologians of the day to teach Qur’ān recitation and interpretation, Prophet Muhammad’s traditions and sayings, jurisprudence, and Sufism. Lists of the names of the various tutors appear in several of the Shrine’s publications. These include such illustrious figures as ‘Abd Allah al-Suwaīdī (d. 1756 AD) who played a role in the negotiations between the Ottomans and Nādir Shāh of Iran in 1737; several Muftis of Baghdad, including Ābū al-Thana’ Shihāb al-Dīn Mahmūd al-Ālūsī (d. 1855); and in more recent times the leading Mufti of Baghdad Shaikh Yūsif al-‘Aṭṭa (d. 1951) to name a few. See: (Al-Durūbī, *Al-Mukhtasar fī tārikh* ..., 92-94); and see (Al-‘Azamī, *Tārikh Jām‘i al-Shaikh* ..., 118-133).

to pay Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir a visit by partly walking and partly hitchhiking his way to the Shrine in Baghdad from the town of Musayyab in the mid-Euphrates region, some 85 km to the south-west.

In defence of the Sufi practice of conducting the *Mawlūd al-Nabī* celebrations – the annual festival commemorating the birth of Prophet Muhammad (*mawlūd* is the Iraqi vernacular pronunciation for *Mawlid*; and *al-Nabī* – the prophet – refers to Muhammad) – Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb published a 16-page pamphlet defending the practice against Salafist criticisms. In it he focuses on arguing its legitimacy in accordance with the *Sharī‘a* and prophetic traditions, and historic precedence.<sup>609</sup>

First he reminds his readers that the prophethood of Muhammad was God’s saving gift to the believers, which should be commemorated as a thanksgiving gesture. He then gives a brief history of public celebrations in Islamic history, starting with the earliest documented according to his sources, which were the *Mawlid* celebrations for Prophet Muhammad held at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century by al-Malik al-Muḍafar Ābū Sa‘īd Gūkbūrī bin Zain al-Dīn ‘Alī bin Baktakīn the ruler of Irbil (Erbil in northern Iraq). Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb describes the lavishness of these *Mawlid* celebrations in detail, footnoting the text with his sources. He then describes those held in Egypt during the Mamluk period (1250 – 1517 AD). For these he highlights the celebration held by al-Malik al-Zāhir Barqūq (died in 1399), where the custom of performing melodic recitations and chanting by the Sufi orders and *faqīrs*, throughout the night until dawn, was stupendously rewarded by the ruler who distributed handfuls of gold upon each of the performers.<sup>610</sup>

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb then goes on to quote five traditions transmitted by Prophet Muhammad’s companions about their recollections of the miraculous things that happened on the night of the Prophet’s birth; from the appearance of a special star; to the emanation of light from earth; to the trembling of the throne of Persia. This is then followed by his argument for the importance of celebrating the Prophet’s birthday, stating that one of the

<sup>609</sup> Al-Janābī, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. *Risālāt al-Janābī ‘Abd al-Wahhāb fī Mawlid al-Nabī al-‘Awāb* (The Treaties of the Janābī ‘Abd al-Wahhāb on the Birth of the Repentant Prophet). No publishing details or date. Copies were being sold at street bookseller-stalls lined up against the outer wall of the Qādirī Shrine along Shārī‘ al-Kiffāh for the equivalent of £1.00.

<sup>610</sup> Thirteen references are briefly listed on the last page of al-Janābī’s *Risāla*. These are as they appear in the *Risāla*: Ibn Abī Shāma’s *al-Bā‘ith ‘ala inkār al-buda‘ wa al-hawādith*; Isma‘īl Bāshā al-Baghdādī’s *Iḍāḥ al-maknūn fī al-dhail ‘alā kashf al-ḍinūn*; Ibn Kathīr’s *al-Bidayya wa al-nihayya*; al-Dhahabī’s *Siyyar ā‘alām al-nubalā‘*; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Mir‘āt al-Zamān*; Ibn Taghrī Bardī’s *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa al-Qāhira*; Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīh*; Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīh*; Ḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad*; Tirmidhī’s *Sunnan*; Ibn Hishām’s *Sīra*; al-Baihaqī’s *Dalā‘il al-Nubwa* and al-Sayūfī’s *al-Khaṣā‘is al-Kubrā*.

main tenets of the Islamic faith is the love and glorification of the Prophet, which is a *farḍ* – an obligation; and for this he quotes the Qur’ānic verse (9:24) in which God states:

*‘Say: if it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or your kindred: the wealth that ye have gained; the commerce in which ye fear a decline: or the dwellings in which ye delight – are dearer to you than Allah or His Messenger, or the striving in his cause; - then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious.’*

This is followed by two prophetic *Ḥadīth* traditions, two Qur’ānic verses (4:69 and 3:31) and an Arabic poetic verse to further illustrate the point and the rewards promised for those who love the Prophet.

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb then moves on to argue that the Prophet deserves to be commemorated through the annual *Mawlid*, as an expression of gratitude for all that he has done to teach the believers their faith and guide them to the path of righteousness. He praises the elements that make up the *Mawlid* celebrations: the gathering of people; the recitation of the Qur’ān; readings from the Prophet’s biography; eulogies extolling his character and ways; recitations of prophetic praises and ascetical poems, which in his view serve to encourage listeners to do good deeds and remind them of the hereafter. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb then refutes the claim that showing excess in celebration, by doing good deeds, giving alms, fasting, feeding the public and expressing happiness and joy, is *ḥarām* – forbidden by *Sharī‘a*.

He then goes on to answer those who attack the celebrations as being *bid‘ā* – innovation – which is frowned upon in religious practice.<sup>611</sup> He explains that not all innovations are bad, giving examples from both the Prophet’s life and from Caliph ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭāb’s time,<sup>612</sup> where they are personally quoted praising specific innovations that they acknowledged and adopted as being good and worthy of practising. The example he gives from the Prophet’s life concerns imitating the Jews of Medina in commemorating the day God saved them from Pharaoh when Moses led them across the Red Sea, which they celebrated by fasting on its anniversary. Prophet Muhammad is said to have found this a worthy celebration as Moses was God’s prophet, and joined in the fasting.

<sup>611</sup> Salafists and those with fundamentalist understandings of Islam see all innovation as deviation and threatening to distort the true faith and its practices; and therefore must be prohibited. (Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary ...*, 138).

<sup>612</sup> The Caliph ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭāb ruled between 634 and 644 AD.



Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb then clarifies the meaning of the much discussed Prophetic saying ‘*kul bid‘a ḍalāla*’ - all innovation is deviation – and explains that the innovations concerned here are those that breach the teachings of the Qur’ān, the *Sunna*, and that which has been adopted by ‘*ijmā*’ – collective consensus. For this, he reasons that if impermissible practices were to appear in the *Mawlid* celebrations, such as mixing of the sexes, indecent singing, or the danger of sedition that disturbs the peace, then these celebrations should be banned, but this ban would be because of those practices and not because it is a *Mawlid* celebration. The pamphlet finally concludes with an eight-verse poem that praises the Night of the *Mawlid* celebration.

In the views of both Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Janābī and Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa al-Qādiriyya, celebrating the *Mawlūd* of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, a three-day festivity which starts on the night before the 11<sup>th</sup> Rabī‘ al-Thānī, is only right and proper and forms part of the thanksgiving offered to God by the believers for the legacy of good works by one of his *awlīā*’ – the friends of God.

Perhaps by restricting themselves to justifying their practices without counter-attacking their adversaries, in the two examples above, the two Sufi shaikhs showed their determination to avoid entering into arguments in religion? It is also interesting to note that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb avoided using historical events that would not be acknowledged as being of value by both Salafis and sectarian Sunnis. In this regard, most notable by its absence is any reference to the *Shī‘a* Fatimids of Egypt and their celebrations of the Prophet’s *Mawlid*, which is the earliest written evidence of the custom in Islamic history.<sup>613</sup>

On asking the junior imam (the third of the three imams in the shrine),<sup>614</sup> who is also a Qādirī Sufi, about his understanding of Salafist logic and how to counter it, he pointed out that one of his Sufi masters, the illustrious Kurdish Qādirī shaikh ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Mudaris,<sup>615</sup> used to impress upon him and fellow students not to engage in religious argumentation, advising them that *al-tark ‘āwlā*, abstinence is more becoming. This stance

<sup>613</sup> For a history of the *Mawlid* see Katz, Marion Holmes. *The Birth of the Prophet Muḥammad, Devotional piety in Sunnī Islam*. London: Routledge, 2007, p.1.

<sup>614</sup> Interviewed on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2013. He is the third of the three imams in the Shrine, and the only Qādirī Sufi amongst them. He was appointed to the Shrine in 2010.

<sup>615</sup> Shaikh ‘Abd al-Karīm Bīāra al-Mudaris (1901 – 2005), tutored at the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir from 1960 and until his retirement in 1973. After that he continued to lodge at the Shrine until his death. He is buried in the Shrine’s graveyard. See (‘Abd Allah, *Dalīl al-Ḥaḍra al-Qādiriyya* ..., 166-167).

may well explain why neither Shaikh al-Ḥalaqa nor Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Janābī used any polemical arguments in defending their beliefs and practices.

### **B.6- A daily tug-of-war:**

The shrine has also been under constant pressure to prove its conformity to what is perceived as Islamic orthodoxy in religious expression. Examples include the staff’s close monitoring of the public and the prohibition of several contentious activities and practices. These prohibited practices include *Ḍarb al-Dirbāsha*<sup>616</sup> which has been discussed in chapter 3. As the Kasnazānīya Qādirī Sufi Order is especially known for this practice in Baghdad, its followers have been prohibited from entering the shrine with any devices which could be used to perform *Ḍarb al-Dirbāsha*. In spite of these precautions, at each of the *Mawlūd* celebrations I have observed, Kasnazānī Qādirīs have attempted, with varying degrees of success, to carry out *Ḍarb al-Dirbāsha* and have been intercepted by staff and security guards, and their instruments confiscated.

Other suppressions of unorthodox practices include exaggerated expressions of love for Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir by pilgrims in his burial chamber. These involve shaking the silver cage encasing his tomb; addressing him loudly and requesting help in such a manner that may seem to be committing *shirk* – polytheism – in public; tying pieces of cloth or strings or fastening locks on to the grilles of the silver cage when requesting Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s intercession to fulfil their *murād* – wishes or desires; and inserting written messages and requests addressed to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir into his cage. The attendants of the burial chamber were observed repeatedly explaining to such visitors that a silent prayer to God, in Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s presence, is enough to achieve the task of beseeching God in the name of his *walī* – friend. The burial chamber attendants were also observed waiting for offenders to leave the chamber before promptly removing the knotted strings or strips of cloth that had been tied to the silver cage. However, because the cage is not readily accessible for the removal of any inserted objects or papers through its grilles, visitors who are caught in the act of trying to insert their material are intercepted and prevented from doing so in a more overt fashion.

Over the years, the shrine has also had to bow to pressures from various imams appointed to the mosque since the mid 1980s. One such example was the pressure to modify the

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<sup>616</sup> (Bruinessen, “Qādiriyya and the lineages ...”, 131-149).

traditional custom of reciting the *tamjīd* – the exaltation of God, Prophet Muhammad and Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir – after each daily prayer, and an extended version of it that follows the afternoon prayer on a Thursday.<sup>617</sup> This *tamjīd* is the privilege of the main *mu’adhin* (muezzin) of the shrine. The criticism was twofold. The first was an accusation that the *tamjīd* was not a tradition of the Prophet’s time, and adding it to the end of the call to prayer or following the prayer was a *bid‘ā*. The second criticism was levelled at the part of the *tamjīd* that concerned the praises bestowed upon Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, which was seen as unorthodox if not *shirk*. The current senior imam – who started his secondment to the shrine in 2004 – in his attempt to ban the *tamjīd*, has introduced a *maw‘īza* – exhortation – that immediately follows the Thursday afternoon prayer, leaving an inadequately short time gap for the *tamjīd* before the ‘*Ishā*’ – night time – prayer is due.<sup>618</sup> The staff in the shrine were aware of the senior imam’s views of the *tamjīd*, and some expressed their indignation at this tactical move on his part.<sup>619</sup>

Since the senior imam’s arrival at the shrine, a tug-of-war started between him and the deputy imam (who is his son)<sup>620</sup> on the one side, and the shrine’s custodians,<sup>621</sup> staff and Sufi lodgers on the other.<sup>622</sup> The senior imam’s stance with regard to the shrine’s life and activities are seen to be of a negative Salafist nature, and he is viewed as belonging to the Salafist movement.<sup>623</sup> The imam is criticised for having shown little empathy for the life of the shrine as a place of saint visitation and as a place where Sufis lodge. In his early days at the shrine he had asked for the burial chamber of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir to be closed

<sup>617</sup> Conversations and interviews with staff at the shrine on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February, and with the muezzin on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013. However, upon playing an audio recording of the *tamjīd* to one of the elderly members of the Gailani family, the lady did not recognise it as being the same as that which she used to hear at the shrine in the 1930s and 40s, which had been an exclusive praise of God, with no mention of Prophet Muhammad or Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir at all.

<sup>618</sup> The *maw‘īza* on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013, was repeated word for word the next day as the first half of the Friday sermon.

<sup>619</sup> Conversations and interviews with various staff on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

<sup>620</sup> Both the senior imam and his son hold doctorates of philosophy in religious studies, and hold posts at Kulīyat ‘Usūl al-Dīn in al-Jāmi‘a al-‘Irāqiyya (the faculty of theology at the Iraqi University). This university is still popularly known by a shortened version of its original name: al-Jami‘ā al-Islāmiyya (the Islamic University); with its former full name having been Jami‘āt Saddām lil-‘Ulūm al-Islāmiyya (Saddam University for Religious Sciences) prior to the 2003 invasion. The current university operates under the umbrella of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The imams’ appointments to the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir are on a secondment bases. From internet research on works published by the senior imam, two books have been found. The first is his doctorate thesis on *Fiqh al-Ghazawāt* (the jurisprudence of military expeditions or campaigns), and the second is a book on *Fiqh al-Sarāyā* (the jurisprudence of military brigades or squadrons). Editions of both books have been published by Dār ‘Amār lil-nashr, Amman, in 2000.

<sup>621</sup> Between them, the two custodians and the solicitor hold seven degrees in law from Baghdad, Cairo and the USA.

<sup>622</sup> A large number of comments expressed during interviews and conversations with the staff and occupants of the shrine between 2009 and 2013.

<sup>623</sup> It is generally believed amongst his opponents that the senior imam was brought to the shrine by influential Salafists in the sectarian government as part of their religious reform agenda.

and visitations to it curtailed as being inappropriate. When he failed to achieve this, he requested the separation of the mosque part of the site from the custodianship of the Qādirī Endowments, to be run by himself as a separate religious entity directly overseen by the governmental department *Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī*. The Qādirī Endowments refused to entertain this request too.<sup>624</sup> The senior imam also unsuccessfully attempted to stop Kurdish Qādirī Sufis from lodging at the shrine during the festive season of *Mawlūd Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir*; and equally failed to ban them from holding their *ḥaḍra* and associated *dhikr* in its courtyard.<sup>625</sup>

The senior imam and his deputy imam have insisted, on theological grounds, on refusing to receive female worshippers seeking religious advice or fatwas if they are not accompanied by a *maḥram* – a male next of kin who is either a husband or a person not eligible to marry the female he is accompanying. This strictness on behalf of the two imams forced the shrine’s custodians in 2010 to accept the appointment of an additional imam to attend to such needs. This third imam is the junior imam referred to earlier. Needless to say that while the junior imam agreed to give me an interview, the two other imams have not been available.

From these interviews and observations it became clear that the removal of the two imams with Salafist leanings – the senior and his deputy – would not be easy, as they seemed to be involved in the sectarian wranglings of the government and its various poles of power, as well as having the backing of the leaders of *Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī*. The shrine’s custodians expressed their concerns about the senior imam’s interest in politics and his engagement with various political groups on both sides of the sectarian divide. They feared for the Shrine being dragged into the country’s politico-sectarian struggle and its unpredictable consequences. Although the custodians defended their unwillingness as Sufis to play the current politico-sectarian game in order to remove the senior imam, they expressed their determination to carry on resisting the unreasonable Salafist demands he presented.

Having said all that, and despite the senior imam’s disapproval, the shrine has managed to continue to permit several *tabaruk* – seeking blessings – practices which may be seen as unorthodox by Salafis. These include the touching and kissing of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s silver cage and also, when opened on special occasions, the draped wooden chest inside it,

<sup>624</sup> Updated conversations with custodian of the shrine on 15<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2014.

<sup>625</sup> Interviews with Qādirī Kurds in November 2010.

which covers the saint's grave. On such occasions, pilgrims are permitted to place on the tomb both gifts to the shrine – such as embroidered drapes – and objects brought for *tabaruk* but intended for taking away again with them. These actions are described in more detail in chapter 2. Pilgrims, especially those from the Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia, are also permitted to sing and chant within the burial chamber, but with no musical instruments.<sup>626</sup> The distribution of sweets by seekers whose prayers have been answered is also permitted. Finally, a compromise was found to enable the staff to continue permitting *Shī'ī* women in mourning from neighbouring districts such as Ābū Saifain to mark the completion of their mourning at the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir.

These *Shī'ī* women mark the end of their mourning of a loved one by changing their black cloths for coloured ones at the shrine.<sup>627</sup> This ritual usually takes place in a mosque or a shrine of importance where the females enter with their coloured cloths packed in a bag and change into them at the holy place. In the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir this custom takes place in the females' prayer hall adjacent to the saint's burial chamber. The discarded black garments are gifted to the establishment or its staff or other female visitors present at the time as an act of *zakāt* – thanksgiving – and accepted by the recipients for the same reason. Despite the discreetness of the ritual, the attendants in the shrine were uneasy about it in fear of the senior imam's condemnation of unorthodox practices. This led the staff overseeing the visitations and the prayer halls to take it upon themselves to find a compromise that would avert the wrath of the imam while fulfilling the needs of the mourners. This compromise involved asking such females to modify the ritual through refraining from taking their black garments off, but wearing the coloured garments over them; so that they can leave the shrine having ended their mourning, fulfilling the main purpose of the ritual. Of course this compromise has meant that the discarded black garments are not given out to other attendees at the moment of changing back to wearing coloured cloths, and therefore deprives both the donors and the recipients from the *zakāt* element of the ritual.

The staff's initiative in anticipating and finding a solution to avert a confrontation with the senior imam over the matter of this benign custom, reveals the amount of tension that exists there on a daily basis, where people are constantly being judged over the legitimacy of their beliefs and worship practices. It stands as a microcosmic example of what is

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<sup>626</sup> These observations were recorded between 2009 and 2013.

<sup>627</sup> Interview with the attendant responsible for the females' prayer hall at the Shrine conducted on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

happening within the city and the country at large, both within each sect, and between the sects.

### **B.7- The Jīlānī saint in Kurdistan:**

As has been illustrated in chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis, three of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s sons’ burials are recognised by the custodians of the shrine as still standing in Iraq. Two are within the precincts of the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir – those of his sons ‘Abd al-Jabbār and Šālih; and the third is in Kurdistan, on the outskirts of the mountainous city of ‘Aqra (*also spelt ‘Aqrah and Akre*) an hour’s drive from the ancient city of Erbil the capital of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq.

To recapitulate, this Jīlānī shrine houses the burial and takkia of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. Like its sister shrine in Baghdad, it forms part of the endowments managed by *al-Awqāf al-Qādiriyya* in Baghdad and is managed by their Qādirī agents in ‘Aqra.<sup>628</sup> Chapter 3 fully describes the shrine in ‘Aqra, the Wūlīānīs and their sphere of influence.

This shrine and its caretakers have also experienced the pressures of the rising tide of Salafism and Sunnī fundamentalism in the region and beyond. The Wūlīānīs were also able to express well formulated counter-arguments to the criticisms directed at Sufism, not dissimilar to those heard from their counterparts in Baghdad. The Wūlīānīs pride themselves on having avoided entanglement in local rivalries for power within their part of the Kurdish region, and having shielded the Shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz from being competed for amongst the various Kurdish political factions throughout the past five decades.<sup>629</sup> These decades included the period of the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s and what it witnessed by way of forced relocations of Kurdish populations across the region, the Persian Gulf War of 1991 and the ten years of unofficial autonomy in the region that was aided by an internationally imposed no-fly zone to protect it from the Iraqi government. The caretakers believe that their consistent apolitical stand has earned them much respect and protection within Kurdistan, even though the Kurdish region within which they are situated has witnessed Salafī activity over the past two decades, with ‘Aqra being known

<sup>628</sup> Three field research visits were conducted to the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, in November 2009 and November 2010, and in December 2011.

<sup>629</sup> Interview with the caretakers in ‘Aqra on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

for its more religiously conservative culture in comparison to other cities within the region.<sup>630</sup>

The Wūlānīs' Qādirī Sufi allegiances, and their Barzinjī tribal loyalties and alliances are closely intertwined, to the extent that, in a conversation in March 2011, the head of the Qādiriyya-Wūlāniyya Order claimed he was able to call upon the allegiance of 200,000 men if need be.<sup>631</sup> It is presumed that these men include Qādirī Kurds following other Barzinjī Sufi shaikhs whom the Wūlānīs share kinship with.

The Qādiriyya Wūlāniyya Sufi Order's relationship with the Qādirī Endowments in Baghdad has not been restricted to the caretaking of the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz. The Wūlāniyya have had an active presence in the shrine in Baghdad for decades, and have named lodging rooms allocated to them. A large contingent of the Order travels down to Baghdad to participate in the seasonal religious festivities that mark the calendar of the shrine. The loyalty of the Qādirī Wūlānī Order was called upon during the early days after the invasion of 2003, when they helped protect the shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir from the lawlessness and widespread looting that spread across the city; and then again during the civil unrest years between 2005 and 2007, with the eruption of sectarian violence in nearby neighbourhoods and across the city.<sup>632</sup>

However, because of their presence in the shrine in Baghdad, the Wūlānīs and their Qādirī followers have also experienced the senior imam's unease about their presence. They expressed their concern about the senior imam's Salafist leanings, and his disapproval of their *dhikr* and *ḥaḍra*, and of their lodging at the shrine, which have already been mentioned above.

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<sup>630</sup> Ibid. Unlike the shrine in Baghdad, the caretakers in 'Aqra spoke in general terms without giving many specific or anecdotal examples to illustrate their points. This is partly due to the shortness of the field research days spent there and the focus being the mapping and recording of the shrine and its activities; and partly due to the language barrier with most of the attendants and visitors being non-Arabic speakers. Those who spoke Arabic did not speak it fluently enough to express in-depth views on such sensitive subjects as facing and dealing with Salafism.

<sup>631</sup> A discussion between the leader of the Wūlāniyya and the custodians of the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

<sup>632</sup> Several interviews and conversations that took place in March 2011, during the *Mawlūd* festival of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir in Baghdad.



### **B.8- An incomplete story:**

The findings presented here regarding the interaction between Sufism and Salafism in these two Qādirī shrines are very much from the Sufis point of view. To form a more complete picture of this interaction, the experiences of the senior imam and his deputy would be needed. From published material on the internet, especially film-clips of sermons posted on YouTube, and from the four Friday sermons attended during the field research period,<sup>633</sup> all fail to reveal any connection to Sufism that distinguishes the post holders from other imams in other Sunnī mosques, despite the explicit reference to them being the imams of the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. It was especially interesting to observe that no use was made in their discourses of the literary legacy of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir as a Ḥanbalī theologian and preacher.

Answers needed to complete the story include what the experience of the imams has been working in a mosque that forms part of an active Sufī shrine; and what are the challenges they face in accommodating what may be seen as unorthodox practices that take place in a religiously mixed neighbourhood, with a congregation that flocks from around the world. For according to the administration of the shrine, the senior imam actively sought his own appointment at this place of worship.<sup>634</sup>

### **B.9- A much more complicated reality:**

This brief review shows a few aspects of a much more complicated scene, and draws attention to the need for research into the role of *Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī* (and its predecessor the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs) in the promotion of Salafist ideology in Iraq. This governmental body’s mandate is not only to monitor and oversee the administration of religious endowments, but also to actively propagate the faith through a variety of programmes, as well as the employment of imams and their allocation to Sunnī mosques across the country.<sup>635</sup> A critical examination of the role and syllabus of Sunnī Islamic theological colleges and universities in the country is also needed. This is especially important because Sunnī imams’ recruitment, being the monopoly of *Dīwān al-*

<sup>633</sup> Sermons by the senior imam on 18 March and 16 December 2011; and sermons by the deputy imam on 30 December 2011 and 22 February 2013.

<sup>634</sup> Conversation with the custodian and a number of his followers on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

<sup>635</sup> The revised law number 56 (2012) that defines the role and governorship of *Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī* is published on several Iraqi websites including the Iraqi Legal Database; accessed on 6 October 2014.

*Waqf al-Sunnī*, depends largely on the pools of graduates from these colleges and universities.

Also, an investigation is needed into the impact of regularly attending the *Hajj* season in Mecca in Saudi Arabia by some Iraqi religious leaders and imams, especially with regard to influencing *Sunnī* imams with Salafist ideas and understandings. Between 2009 and 2013, the senior imam at the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir attended at least three of the annual *Hajj* seasons in Mecca: in 2010, 2011 and 2013, not as a pilgrim but as a leading *Sunnī* cleric.<sup>636</sup>

And finally, to better understand the Sufi-Salafi struggle at the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, it would be interesting to investigate how widespread the apathy towards Sufism is amongst graduate imams in Iraq; and to find out how common it is for these two groups, Sufis and Salafis, to be in such close engagement with each other on a daily basis, as is the case at the shrine of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.

### **Concluding remarks:**

The field research for this chapter has revealed dynamics that have not been exposed before, and has found reasons, or reasonings, for some of them; but at the same time it has thrown up many more questions than it has answered. Therefore, it should only be assessed as a preliminary investigation into the subject, to be built on once other primary sources of information become accessible.

This mapping and exploration of the non-Sufi religio-political contexts which the two Jīlānī shrines have navigated shows the extent of the changes they have had to endure in the process of surviving these contexts. Centralisation of modern government has had a direct impact on moderating and modifying how Sufi shrines function, and what and how they preach, as exemplified by the shrine in Baghdad. A dictatorial rule of the land has imposed its will upon the various religious groups in the country, including the Sufis, has self-servingly manipulated Sufism to meet its own ends and, in the process, encouraged

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<sup>636</sup> Field research in Baghdad during 2010 and some of that carried out during 2011 took place over the annual *Hajj* season and festivities, when the senior imam was away on the *Hajj*. References to his participation in public events held in Mecca during the 2013 – as well as for 2011 – season is present on the website of *al-Haī’a al-‘Uliyyā lil-Ḥajj wa al-‘Umra* – the Iraqi Hajj and ‘Umra Commission; accessed 6 October 2014: [www.hajj.gov.iq/ArticleShow.aspx?ID=260](http://www.hajj.gov.iq/ArticleShow.aspx?ID=260).

destructive rivalries and caused rifts amongst its orders, undermining their credibility as spiritual-social grass-roots organisations.

The rise of reactionary fundamentalist religious movements – exemplified here by the Sunnī Salafists – has forced Sufis into conformity, checking their beliefs and understandings against the Islamic Sharīʿa and articulating justifications for these beliefs using language and metaphors recognised by their adversaries. Despite the solidarity found between Sufi groups against the onslaught of Salafism, it seems almost inevitable that they will eventually be compelled to modify their beliefs and practices to prove their legitimacy as Islamic entities under the fundamentalist pressure demanding conformity.

## Conclusion

### **Introduction:**

The journey for this thesis started with a desire to map the presence of the two Qādirī shrines: Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Baghdad and his son Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz in ‘Aqra, to explore their identity orientations and the special relationship that binds them together. The field research revealed a changing and volatile political and religious scene in the country that was influencing these two shrines’ Sufi identity and practices in a significant way. In this turbulent religio-political scene, the shrine in Baghdad experienced unprecedented situations that included having to interact with institutionalised anti-Sufi Salafism and having to respond to and accommodate the integration of sectarianism into both public life and the political system.

Meanwhile, the Jīlānī shrine in ‘Aqra was found to be benefitting from a rare period of Kurdish regional stability that, coupled with an aspirations-driven caretaker-Sufi-order, was seeing the development of the site from a saintly figure’s shrine to a centre of Qādirī Sufism in the region.

Up to the end of the field research period for this project, both shrines, and the other Qādirī groups and takkias mentioned in this thesis had shown a remarkable ability for resilience, despite their varied sizes and financial assets, the effects of governmental civic regeneration plans on their territories and vicinities, and the general indifference to and dismissiveness of Sufism by the political and the religious establishment at large. The majority of these Qādirī groups have been able to remain grassroots-based spiritual organisations that are largely self-determining and self-sufficient through the support of loyal followers.

### **Reflections on Werbner’s analytical method for the comparative assessment of Sufi cults:**

Pnina Werbner’s analytical method for the comparative assessment of Sufi cults was successfully applied in chapter 1 to determine and confirm the Sufi identity of the two Jīlānī shrines. Nevertheless, while going through the testing process, it became apparent that this analytical tool had some limitations, which although not a sign of inadequacy by any means, it is a sign of focussed specificity in purpose. These limitations are worthy of being briefly explored here to draw attention to the need for developing further tools,

complementary ones, to cover the associated contexts in which Sufi-shrine cults exist and by which they are affected, but which are beyond Werbner's analytical method's purpose.

Firstly, as a basic measuring tool, Werbner's analytical method cannot be used to measure the extent to which the key concepts of Sufi order practice affect the wider communities and social and cultural contexts within which this form of organised Sufism exists. The method also does not offer a way of measuring the opposite: the extent to which the wider community and social and cultural contexts influence the Sufi order and shape it and its sacred space and activities. The latter is especially true with regard to measuring the impact of the non-Sufi aspects of the wider environment in which the order exists. These issues of mutual impact between the Sufi orders and the wider environment in which they exist are particularly tangible with regard to the two Jīlānī shrines.

The impact of the Kurdish tribal environment on the Sufi order in 'Aqra has enabled it to have more independence from the central state while remaining intertwined with its wider ethno-centric culture and its needs and expectations. The impact of Baghdad's cosmopolitan environment and its politically and religiously volatile urban sphere on the Qādirī order in Baghdad has meant that the Jīlānī shrine there is more reactive to the central state and its socio-religious agenda and dynamics. The Baghdad shrine is thrust into the centre of the struggle for power between the various politico-religious movements dominating Iraqi public life, exemplified by the Salafī Sunnī sectarian movement and its counterpart, Shī'ī sectarian Islam.

Secondly, Werbner's analytical method seems to work more easily for single Sufi-Order entities that have one hierarchical line of sacred authority and labour. It does not help with revealing the peculiar complexities of sacred authority found in the two sacred spaces being studied here. In the case of the 'Aqra Jīlānī shrine, some of the sacred authority is not exclusively in the Wūlāniyya Order's hands. For there are two concurring entities associated with this sacred space: that of the Wūlāniyya – the local independent Qādirī Sufi Order – and that of the Qādiriyya Endowments and its Gailani custodians in Baghdad, who have legal ownership of it. This analytical method does not offer a way to measure the impact of the dynamics of the relationship between these two Sufi entities, and how these dynamics affect the division of labour, the redistribution of wealth and the indexical events.

Some of these dynamics were observed during the field research period and have been described in the former chapters of this thesis. They included the overlapping sacred authority between the two entities; the physical distance between the two shrines; the current instability of the country coupled with the autonomous aspirations of the Kurdish region and its population at large; and the existence of a parallel regional-governmental Sunnī endowments body within Kurdistan that operates independently of the Dīwān al-Waqf al-Sunnī in Baghdad. All these complexities give rise to possible conflict between the Qādiriyya Endowments' expectations of, and for, the shrine in 'Aqra and their Wūlānī agents' aspirations for it in association with their Sufi order's particular needs. Of these stresses in the relationship that were witnessed, they manifested themselves particularly in the key areas of the management of the sacred space and the priorities for the redistribution of wealth, especially the wealth that was generated by the Qādirī endowments in the region.

But the stresses between the two Qādirī entities are not only focussed on the 'Aqra shrine's needs. The Wūlāniyya Sufi Order's association and relationship with the Qādirī sacred space in Baghdad has also put demands and expectations upon them with regard to their presence and participation at key sacred indexical events, which take place concurrently in both their sacred space in 'Aqra and the cult's main sacred space in Baghdad. This situation obliges the Wūlānīs to grade the two sacred spaces against each other and to take appropriate action accordingly. In the case of the indexical event in which Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's Mawlūd is celebrated, the leadership of the Wūlāniyya are obliged to attend the celebrations in Baghdad, while their deputies carry out similar ones in the shrine in 'Aqra. This obligation is necessitated by both showing support and solidarity with the custodians in Baghdad, and maintaining their own profile on the Qādirī Sufi scene in the country.

Thirdly, Werbner's method was not designed to accommodate and assess overlapping sacred spaces that involve Sufi and non-Sufi orientations or designations. It has not been designed to distinguish between an exclusively Sufi sacred space and a sacred space that has overlapping Sufi sacred associations and users, with non-Sufi associations and users. The shrine in Baghdad is a particular example of this kind of overlapping sacred space. Unlike the mosque and shrine of Ābū Ḥanīfa in Baghdad, which is a non-Sufi exclusively Sunnī sacred space, and unlike al-Junāid al-Baghdādī's shrine in Baghdad, which is an exclusively Sufi sacred space, the Qādirī shrine complex is accessed and used by Sufis, non-Sufi Sunnīs and by the local Shī'a population. The latter two groups of users are selective in their association with, and access of, the sacred spaces, resources and indexical events within the shrine complex. While non-Sufi Sunnīs may attend the shrine's five

daily prayers and Friday sermon, they refrain from visiting the saint's burial chamber or attending his Mawlūd celebrations. With this selectivity in mind, with regard to the Shī'a community, it is interesting to note that even though the local Shī'a do not identify themselves with the key concept of Sufi sacred division of labour, they do seek its help and advice on various personal religious matters. This was witnessed by the regular interaction between the third imam in the shrine, who is also a Qādirī Sufi khalīfa, and the local Shī'a community who sought his religious council on personal and family matters.

Lastly, and reflecting upon the whole comparative exercise between the two Jīlānī shrines throughout this thesis, further testing of Werbner's method may enable its adaptation to resolve the limitations highlighted above, and turn it into a more comprehensive set of tools to measure not only the core key concepts of shrine-based Sufi cults, but also their beliefs and the full extent of their audiences and orientations, Sufi and non-Sufi.

### **Reflections on gender**

In both Jīlānī shrines women's presence as stakeholders was documented. As has been illustrated, these women have a variety of backgrounds and associations, and view and relate to the two shrines from a number of orientations. Even though this female presence and their activities has been recorded as part of this mapping exercise, the exercise's nature has prevented investing quality time in exploring this presence from a gender-focused perspective. For this reason, the information gathered relating to this female presence is only useful in highlighting this presence and its impact on the two shrines as Qādirī Sufi entities. Without dedicated gender-focused anthropological fieldwork, it is not possible to fully appreciate the role of Sufism in the lives of these women and how they engage with it and experience it as a spiritual path.

The mapping project revealed different types of women engaging with these two shrines. In Baghdad, in addition to Sunnī visitors, Sufi and non-Sufi women, locals and foreigners, there were the Shī'ī women of the neighbourhood, who seemed to command an independence of mind regarding their spiritual needs beyond the normative boundaries of their own sect.

In 'Aqra, the Wūlīānī family's Sufi-initiated women's roles and activities were an integral part of the Order's spiritual organisation and division of labour. They lived their Sufi roles within the main Order and not as a female-focused branch, or offshoot, of it, while



maintaining the required gender-segregated spaces and activities of an orthodox Muslim Sufi group.

Without the presence and contribution of these womenfolk, the scenes of both Jīlānī shrines would be very different.

### **Expressing Qādirī Sufi identity beyond the organised orders in Iraq:**

Before concluding this thesis, an important observation regarding individual Qādirī Sufis who choose not to belong to organised groups needs to be mentioned. During field research in November 2010, it became apparent from a number of interviews conducted with followers of the Qādiriyya that there was a segment of initiated disciples who refused to participate in takkia-based collective worship, sacred events or shrine visitation. These individuals seemed not to favour shrine visitation, nor did they feel any need to participate in group rituals or share in group worship.

One such Qādirī lady related how she had been introduced to the Qādiriyya many years ago, and she had received initiation at the hands of a Qādirī shaikh. For her, personal study of Sufism's key texts, in company with a Qādirī friend, was the preferred way. She explained that one of her favourite Sufi books is Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's *al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī* (The Sublime Revelation), which she nicknames *Kitāb al-Razālāt* (the book of telling-offs) – “razāla” being the colloquial Iraqi Arabic word for a “telling-off” – for the sermons in it are a series of admonitions for the things his audience failed to do correctly. She lived an ascetic life, dressed in a plain dark gray men's cotton “dishdasha” (a long, wide, plain garment), covered her head with men's plain white cotton “ghutra” (a large square cotton head cover); and generally refrained from going out unless it was essential. Married to a Qādirī Sufi shaikh with his own takkia in Erbil, she lives apart from him in Baghdad in her childhood home, an extended family home that she and her children share with her widowed mother, sister and her brother's family. She only sees her husband a few times in the year at his base in Erbil. Having grown up in a family that was formerly in charge of the custodianship of Imam Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'man's shrine and mosque for several generations, she grew up in an orthodox Sunnī environment that was also sympathetic to Sufism, as well as embracing modernity and several aspects of its secularisms. Her own parents and her siblings are middle class professionals educated to degree level, with careers and businesses in law, engineering, and computers.

The presence of such independent Qādirī Sufis merits further research to better understand the existence of yet another type of orientation amongst followers of Qādiriyya Sufism, particularly amongst the educated urban middle classes of Iraq today. Amongst some of those met for the purposes of this project, there seemed to be a number who, while identifying with Qādirī Sufism, also seemed to hold puritanical Salafist leanings in their beliefs. Some sympathised with the opinions of the Salafist imam in the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad regarding visitations to the shrine and public displays of dhikr accompanied by musical instruments in its courtyard. For these Qādirīs, it seems that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī’s own Ḥanbalī theological writings are more central to their readings than the hagiographical and apocryphal sources associated with him. Could these Ḥanbalī theological works of al-Jīlānī find new audiences beyond the orthodox-minded Sufis?

### **Answering the thesis’s main research question:**

The thesis’s main driving question has been “*What shapes the identity orientations of these two Qādiriyya Sufi shrines in modern times?*” The mapping and preliminary explorations conducted have demonstrated that in addition to Sufi philosophy, heritage and ritual practice; what shapes the identity orientations of the two Jīlānī Qādirī Sufi shrines is, on the one hand, the socio-religious dynamics within the Sunnī scene that is coupled with the larger Sunnī-Shī‘ī sectarian scene; and, on the other hand, the geo-political dynamics within the country at large and within each of the Arab and the Kurdish regions in particular. These influential dynamics include the onslaught of modernity during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Middle East in general, and secularist Arab nationalism and dictatorship in Iraq in particular; which was then followed by a marked rise in modern reactionary manifestations of Islamic religious fundamentalism and sectarianism.

The two Jīlānī shrines expressed at times a proactive, and at times a reactive, type of engagement with these national, regional and local environments and contexts, which has resulted in a continuously changing and evolving set of orientations for the two shrines, if not alteration to aspects of their Sufi identities.

The thesis also demonstrated that the multiple orientations these two Jīlānī shrines have are driven by the multiple stakeholders associating with them. These stakeholders are active and reactive members of the socio-religious and geo-political scene in the country, and are both shaping, and being shaped by the dynamics of this scene. These stakeholders in turn, influence and define the two Jīlānī shrines’ orientations and their Qādirī Sufism.

Finally, the answers to the four key research questions that were brought up by the field investigation, and that were seen to aid in answering the thesis's main question mentioned above can be summarised here:

Q1: The two Qādirī shrines, though owned by the same charitable entity, the Qādiriyya Endowments, are found to be markedly different in physical size, material wealth, extent of Sufi activities and audiences. How do their Sufi leaders and communities express their Qādiriyya Sufism within the spaces of each of these two shrines?

A1: In addition to Sufi group organisational support activities and shaikh-disciple mentoring relationships, the two shrines express their Qādiriyya Sufism through a public calendar of worship practices and Sufi rituals and festivities. The layouts of the two shrines and the allocation of variety of activity-specific spaces within them, from lodging rooms and prayer halls, to libraries and soup kitchen, facilitate this form of Sufism's self-expression through fellowship, rituals and voluntary community service.

Q2: Different types of people with different needs were observed accessing these Qādirī shrines. With regard to the shrine in Baghdad in particular, these include many from non-Sufi backgrounds and with a variety of non-Sufi needs. Who are these users, what claims do they make upon these shrines, and how does each of the two shrines meet their needs?

A2: For the Jīlānī shrine in 'Aqra, the users are predominantly Kurds from the region in which the shrine is situated. Nevertheless, they also include Arab followers of the Qādiriyya Wūlīāniyya Sufi Order too. For both groups, Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz's lineage, being one of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's sons, and his biography give his place of burial a great spiritual significance. The shrine meets their spiritual needs through a Sufi calendar of rituals and celebrations that form part of the Wūlīāniyya Order's activities as a Sufi entity and as agents of the Qādiriyya Endowments in Baghdad. The 'Aqra shrine's growing congregation has meant a need for more physical space, which has resulted in additional building projects and reorganisation of how spaces are used. More lodging facilities for Sufis, larger reception rooms for female visitors, and more car-parking space have been provided to accommodate larger numbers of participants at festivals.

For the Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad, the users include not only Qādirī Sufis and Qadiri entities in the neighbourhood and the city beyond it, but also many non-Sufi Sunnīs and the local Shī‘a community in the district of Bāb al-Shaikh, and several of its religious institutions. The users also include regional Qadiri groups from other parts of Arab and Kurdish Iraq, as well as those from the Indian Subcontinent and beyond. The users also include the religio-political establishment in the country.

For the Sufis these shrines are the abodes of two of their Sufi saints and places where they can practice and express their Sufism, its rituals, its aims for the individual seeker and its way of life for the Sufi community. For the non-Sufi Sunnīs, these shrines are local saints’ holy spaces, where prayers may be fulfilled, and where practical help can be sought. This applies to the Shī‘a community who recognise the power of the local saints, regardless of their religious affiliation and who else claims them, choosing to rise above some of the sectarian norms to harness the benefits, emotional and practical, available at their local shrines.

For the religio-political establishment and its many facets, these shrines are places that hold power over the populace. Civil government regulatory bodies seek assurances that the two shrines’ administration and activities comply with the various judicial laws that govern religious charitable organisations. For the political parties in government, patronising, or exploiting, the two shrines offers access to the populace and secures legitimacy, recognition and allegiances in a variety of spheres from the religious to the social and the political. This patronage is evidenced in several spheres of the shrine including the architecture, interior decoration and furnishing of its buildings, financing various activities within the shrine, and recruiting imams aligned with its politics.

The multiple needs of these users are met through providing general access for visitation and prayers to all, regardless of religious sect and religio-political affiliation. The shrine in Baghdad attempts to accommodate personal beliefs and visitation practices that help its users satisfy their spiritual needs. It delivers an annual programme of religious festivals and commemorations, and supports those taking place in its neighbourhood. The social welfare needs of the locality in which the Baghdad shrine is situated are met through the provision of a soup kitchen, a funeral parlour, and the distribution of electricity for domestic use, generated and paid for by the Qādiriyya Endowments. This has included the adaptation of its

various services to meet these users' needs, examples of which can be seen in the provision of gender-specific spaces for worship and visitation, in the accommodation of sect-specific funeral parlour services, and in giving access to social welfare activities beyond those which it would normally provide, such as permitting the local health authority in the district of Bāb al-Shaikh to hold its child-vaccination clinics at the shrine.

With a belief in the value of education, both religious and secular, public access to knowledge is provided through the Qādiriyya Library and its encyclopaedic collections; and through the encouragement of leading Qādirī religious scholars to lodge at the shrine.

Finally, financial patronage of the shrine is welcomed in principal; and actively sought to meet the shrine's needs, including those of its users, while accommodating the needs of those who wish to patronise the institution and its users.

Q3: The Jīlānī shrine in Baghdad is situated in a densely populated old neighbourhood of the city that includes other Islamic religious institutions, Sufī and non-Sufī, Sunnī and Shī'ī. What is the relationship between them, and how do they interact and influence each other?

A3: In addition to being accessible to the users of the other religious entities in the Bāb al-Shaikh district, being the oldest and largest amongst them, the Jīlānī shrine has also responded to the needs of these smaller entities in the area. Examples of this include the practical support offered to the Shī'ī establishments of Ḥusaīniat al-Āḥmadī and the al-Khulānī Mosque. The relationship with these institutions grew out of necessity to maintain peace and neighbourly values in the district, as well as to protect the Jīlānī shrine from the consequences of political interference. Electricity provision to the two Shī'ā places of worship is integral to enabling them to fulfil their purpose and meet the needs of their communities, who also use the Shrine of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir.

The shrine's interaction with the independent Sufī entities in the neighbourhood, such as Takkiat Ābū Khumra and Āḥmad al-Makkī Mosque, illustrates its spiritual affinity with not only the Qādiriyya groups in the area, but also with the non-Qādirī Sufī institutions there too. These smaller Sufī institutions benefit from accessing

the Jīlānī shrine for worship, participation in rituals and festivities, and from religious guidance and advice.

Q4: The field research revealed a dynamic engagement between the Sufi leadership of the two Qādirī shrines and the religio-political scene and establishment in their regions. How do these two shrines and their communities interact with the non-Sufi environments that surround them, and what is the impact of this interaction on the two shrines and how they express their Sufi identities?

A4: Neither of the two Jīlānī shrines was ever an outsider institution that was imposed on its locality by external forces or political will. Both have grown out of grass-roots-organisations led by locals over centuries. Like most other grass-root organisations in Iraqi society, they have interacted with and have been affected by the larger local, regional and national scenes to which they belong. Many examples of the impact of this interaction, with the multiple types of stakeholders representing the non-Sufi scenes, have been mapped in this thesis. From the change in political power and ideologies to the social and economic shifts that have been caused by the advancement of modernity and secularism in the country at large.

In surveying the findings of this research project, a member of the Gailani family reflected upon the attitudes and leadership qualities demonstrated by those holding custodial offices within the two shrines stating “the robust and flexible management of the two shrines has proved they can survive through difficult times, without severe changes to their essential nature and purpose. Sufism is alive and well in Iraq and continues to flourish.” The longevity of the Gailani family’s oversight and management of the two Jīlānī shrines has resulted in a wealth of experience in governorship and the nurturing of an aptitude for adaptability, ensuring thus far the continuity of these two shrines and allowing them to have multiple orientations significant to the diverse segments of Iraqi society.

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