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PRIX DE SOUSCRIPTION AU VOLUME XLI (1994) (3 fasc. d'environ 144 p. chacun):
370 Francs hollandais pour les institutions et 113 Francs hollandais pour les abonnements personnels (les frais d'expédition en plus).
Les abonnements sont reçus par MM. E. J. BRILL, B.P. 9000, 2300 PA LEIDEN (Holland), éditeurs d'ARABICA.

All prices and postage & handling charges are exclusive of VAT in EC-countries.
(VAT not applicable outside the EC)

This journal is printed on acid-free paper.

Translittération de l'arabe:

a, e, i, u, y, h, b, d, t, r, z, s, x, d, j, z, g, f, q, l, m, n, h, w, y.
ia marbija = a, at (état construit). Article: al- et l- (mème devait les «sourires»).
Voyelles: a, i, u, — a, i, u. Diphtongues: au, oy.
THE FIRST-CENTURY CONCEPT OF HIJRA*

BY

PATRICIA CRONE

In sources for the first century of Islamic history, the word hijra is used of two different types of emigration. Most commonly, it refers to emigration from Mecca to Medina in the time of the Prophet: this is the classical meaning of the word. But at other times it stands for emigration from Medina and other parts of Arabia to garrison cities in the conquered lands after the Prophet’s death, which is not classical usage. Participants in both types of emigration are known as muhājirūn. How are the two meanings of the word related?

Most scholars undoubtedly envisage the classical meaning as original and the non-classical usage as a later development. ‘Hijra no longer meant Flight, but emigration (with wife and children) to a military and political centre in order to serve there’, as Wellhausen says with reference to the post-conquest period1. In a recent study Madelung adopts the same view and traces the non-classical usage to ‘Umar: “The duty of hijra acquired renewed, if changed, significance with the expansion of Islam after the death of Muhammad”; reaffirmed by the caliph ‘Umar, the “renewed emigration, ... was no longer directed to Medina but to the newly founded garrison towns in the conquered territories. With this interpretation, the duty of hijra, based on the precedent of the Prophet’s time, remained a vital institution throughout the Umayyad caliphate”2. Thereafter, one takes it, the concept reverted to the meaning that it had in the Prophet’s days.

But there is something uncomfortable about a reconstruction in which a concept is born with its classical meaning so that evidence for the century after the Prophet’s death must relate to a diversion rather than the development from which the classical concept emerged. One would have expected the first century to be formative. This is not how the sources see it, of course, for they systematically equate their own, classical Islam with that of the Prophet and the Rāfidin and so have no choice but to dismiss the pre-classical period as diversionary or positively aberrant. For example, they assure us that the caliphal title was born under Abū Bakr in its classical form of bālīfat rasūl allāh, though it was not actually used in that form until the ‘Abdāsīd period: this was because the Umayyads ‘changed’ it3. They also assure us that the canonical taxes were fixed by the Prophet and ‘Umar, but that the Umayyads changed them too4, and that the Umayyads were in general wont to introduce innovations, though the original rules always won out in the end because the scholars ‘remembered’ how things had been under the Prophet and the Rāfidin. But this is history as legitimation. In Madelung’s reconstruction it is ‘Umar who changes the original concept of hijra, not the Umayyads, who merely favour the un-classical idea; but one suspects the sources of doctrinal rewriting yet again. Is it not possible to propose a history of the concept of hijra in which the classical notion is the outcome of an evolution rather than its starting point? This is what will be attempted here.

Emigration in the Qurʾān

The Qurʾān is generally assumed to be a faithful record of Muhammad’s utterances, indeed the only reliable record that we possess. Wansbrough has cast doubt on this assumption, with considerable justification in my opinion5, but his theory is not suffi-

* I should like to thank Uri Rubin for permission to quote his unpublished article, and Michael Cook, Frank Stewart and Fritz Zimmermann for helpful comments on earlier drafts of mine.
4 See for example Wellhausen, Kingdom, pp. 277ff.
ciently concrete to be usable in the present context. Since the Qurʾānic evidence cannot simply be left aside, and since further the scholars who have worked on hijra subscribe to the conventional view of the provenance and transmission history of the Qurʾān, I shan’t meet them halfway by adopting it myself for purposes of the present argument.

The Qurʾān does not actually use the term hijra, but it pays considerable attention to emigrants (man yahājin, al-muhājinun), of whom it strongly approves. They are identified as believers (2:217/215 [the figures separated by a dash refer to the Egyptian and Flügel editions respectively]; 8:71, 73/73, 75; 9:19/20; 29:25; 33:5/6), and their emigration is regularly presented as a response to maltreatment: we hear of “those who emigrated and were expelled from their habitations, those who suffered hurt in My way” (3:194), “those who emigrated in God’s cause after they were wronged” (16:40/43), of “poor muḥājinun who were expelled from their homes and their property” (39:77), and of “those who emigrated min ba’di mā fuṭrāna”, usually translated “after persecution” (16:109/111); when people complain of being mustadʿaffān fi ʾl-arḍ, the angels ask why they have not emigrated (4:96/99); and those who emigrate in God’s cause are assured that they will find muḥājanān kāfirun, sometimes translated “many refugees” (4:99/101). But no persecution seems to be envisaged in the passage on Lot, who believed in Abraham saying, “I will emigrate unto my Lord” (29:25), unless the words are to be construed as Abraham’s.

Emigrants, who were often poor (cf. 24:21/22; 59:78), are contrasted with unbelievers and believers who have stayed behind: emigrants should not have friends in either group, though they should assist their co-religionists when the latter ask for help as long as it does not require action against allies (4:88/91; 8:71/73). The Qurʾān makes it clear that Muhammad has emigrated (33:49) and that others are expected to join him (4:98/91; 8:71/73; 60:9/10); rewards are held out to those who go out muḥājinun ilā ʾl-hāj wa-raṣūlīhi even if they die on the way (4:99/101). We are not told where people emigrated from or to, though it is clear that their destination was a place with earlier inhabitants, who were also believers (59:8/9).

The most striking characteristic of emigrants in the Qurʾān is their association with holy war. Rewards are held out to “those who emigrated ... and fought and were slain” (3:194), “those who emigrated and were slain or died” (22:57), “those who believe and have emigrated and struggled with their possessions and their selves in the way of God” (8:71/73; 9:19/20), “those who believe and have emigrated and struggle in the way of God” (8:73/75), “those who have believed afterwards and emigrated, and struggled with you” (8:74/76), “those who emigrated after persecution, then struggled and endured” (16:109/111); and one verse seems to identify gīhād as an activity peculiar to emigrants as distinct from those “who have given refuge and help” (8:71/73). Emigration and warfare are meritorious for being performed fi sabīl allāh, suggesting that they could also be performed in a non-religious vein (as warfare obviously could); and it seems reasonable to infer that hijra, gīhād and qiṭāl alike were secular terms in pre-Islamic times. This is also suggested by the fact that the Qurʾān hardly ever associates them with earlier prophets. One would have expected Abraham and Moses to figure prominently as muḥājinun, and Moses to be presented as a war-leader too, given that Abraham was not only the first monotheist, but also the first to separate himself from his unbelieving people (as Hadīth is well aware), while Moses staged the exodus from Egypt which culminated in the Israelite conquest of the Holy Land. But Lot is the only prophet before Muhammad to be described as a muḥājin, and not a single earlier prophet is depicted as a protagonist of gīhād/qiṭāl.

**Emigration to garrison cites**

Most Islamicists probably assume the Qurʾānic and the classical concepts of gīhād to be identical or so closely related that the one developed into the other without intervening links. But is it not possible that the non-classical concept of hijra was such a link? Since the evidence has not been systematically collected before, I shall begin by listing all the attestations of the non-classical concept known to me⁶ (except for the Hārīgīt material, which will be considered later). The order of the list is chronological and based on the approximate time to which the passages refer, not on their time of origin or the dates of the works in which they are preserved.

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⁶ I owe many of the attestations to the authors cited above, notes 1-2, especially Rubin, and also to J.M.D.M. Jødø, al-ʾArab wa ʾl-arḍ fi ʾl-Qaṣīf fi ʾl-adīb al-Islām, Amman 1977, pp. 22ff.
1. The Prophet predicted that “you will emigrate to Syria and conquer it”.

2. The Prophet said that “there will be ḥīḍra after ḥīḍra”, adding that “the best people on earth will be those who attach themselves most closely to Abraham’s place of emigration (muhāǧir)”.

3. Abū Darr described Syria as ard al-ḥīḍra in conversation with the Prophet.

4. The Prophet cursed those who turned Bedouin after having emigrated (mas hadda ba‘da ḥīḍratihā), but exonerated those who did so in times of fitna. Since there was no fitna in the Prophet’s time, this must refer to people who abandoned their ḥīḍra after his death, be it in Kūfa (below, nos. 32-3), Basra (nos. 33, 43), the Yemen (no. 56) or Medina.

5. The Prophet told his followers to invite the enemy to convert before engaging them in battle: if they accept, then “invite them to transfer from their abode to the abode of the emigrants!” (al-habbawwat min darīkh ilā din al-muhāǧirin), and tell them that they will have the same rights and duties as the Muhāǧirūn; if they refuse to move, “then tell them that they will be like the bedouin Muslims (a‘rab al-muṣaliyn), who are subject to God’s law on a par with the believers, but who do not share in the fāy or the ḍarūna unless they fight ḡāḥad with the Muslims. And if they refuse to adopt Islam, then ask them to pay fīzya.”

15 Tabarī, ser. i, p. 2341.
16 Sufi in Tabarī, ser. i, p. 2069; cf. the glossary, s.v. ḍarūn.
19 Tabarī, ser. i, p. 2482.
20 Tabarī, ser. i, p. 2390.
25 Tabarī, ser. i, p. 2482.
26 Tabarī, ser. i, p. 2390.
13. Rabī‘a, the son of al-Nāmīr b. Ta’lāb, hāfara to Kufa.23
14. When Šaḏḥa converted to Islam, she hāfara to Baṣra.24
15a. Kīlāb b. Umayya b. al-Askar al-Layṭi hāfara to Medina in the caliphate of Ŭmar according to some; according to others, he had already done so in the time of the Prophet;25 he and his brother subsequently hāfara with Sa’d b. Abī Waqqās, i.e., to Iraq.26
16. Kurayb b. Abraha and his brother Abī Šamir hāfara to Egypt in the caliphate of Ūmar.26
17. In 17/638 Ali told Ūmar that Kufa was li ‘l-hīgra ba’da ‘l-hīgra’27.
18. Ūmar held the best person to be a man endowed with a home, family and property who learns about Islam and who reacts by driving his camels to ‘one of the abodes of emigration (dār min dār al-hīgra)’, where he sells them and spends the money on equipment in the path of God, staying among the Muslims and confronting their enemy.28
19. Tustar reneged on its agreement, so the muḥāfīrs had to conquer it.29
21. The Muslims appear as Maqarin in two Egyptian papyri of 642 and 643.31
22. ‘Umār identified the participants in a campaign against Kurds as muḥāfīrs.32
23. ‘Umār encouraged people to emigrate, saying hāfira wa-lā tahāfara.33
24. ‘Umār spoke of the Muslims as divided into muḥāfīrs, Anṣār and bedouin. His muḥāfīrs clearly included emigrants to garrison cities, not just those to the Prophet’s Medina: they were ‘beneath the shades of swords’, they and their families were to be paid their fay’ in full, and they were not to be kept too long in the field (lā tālhummaru).34
25. Isho’yabl refers to the Muslims as Maḥgre in a letter written not later than the mid-640s.35
26. The Muslims appear as Maḥgre, mahgray in a Syriac account of a religious dispute set in 644.36
27. Of Nu’mān b. ‘Uthāda al-Bakri we are told that he stayed in Fars, wa-lam yukun hāfara ilā ‘l-Basra. Presumably this means that he had stayed on in Fars in 30/650, when Tawwaj ceased to be a dār hīgra and its troops were transferred to Basra.37

24 Tabari, ser. i. p. 2718b, 2721.
26 Tabari, i. p. 2775.
28 In the opinion of S.H. Griffith, ‘The Prophet Muhammad, his Scripture and his Message according to the Christian Apologists in Arabic and Syriac from the First Abbasid Century’, in La vie du prophète Mahomet, Colloque de Strasbourg, octobre 1980, Paris 1983, pp. 122f, the terms Maḥgre and Maḥgray have nothing to do with hīgra, and this is even less so in his ‘Free Will in Christian Kalām’, Le Musée 100 (1987), pp. 151f.
28. In 30/650f Umar initiated a complex laud exchanged in favour of Medina participants in the conquest of Iraq who had decided to stay in Medina instead of making the hijra to Iraq (min ahl al-Madinah minman qama ta-lam yakun yubadhir ila ’Iraq)\(^{39}\). Umar referred to the Syrians as mubadhirun in ard al-hijra\(^{40}\).

29. In Kufa in the time of Umar al-Ashtar told an Asadi that “your people only converted because they were forced and only emigrated (hajara) because they were poor”\(^{41}\).

30. The poet Hašim b. Qabša b. Dinar al-Dabbâbî likewise told his son that “you have not emigrated for the sake of Paradise, but for the sake of bread and dates”\(^{42}\).

31. The poet Labîb b. Rabî’ visited the Prophet, converted and returned to his people; then he hajara to Kufa; after his death in 41/661 his sons returned îla ’hijzah yarâhan\(^{43}\).

32. At the time of Mu’awiyah’s accession the population of Mosul and the Gazora consisted of Kufans and Barans who had abandoned their hijra, so Mu’awiyah established the military district of Qinnanîn for them (musayrahah wa-kun naqadah\(^{44}\).

33. Mu’awiyah lorded it over gamât al-muslihim min al-Anajir wa-l-mubadhirîn in the year of his accession according to al-Gâhibî\(^{45}\). Apparently, there were no Muslims of other kinds (except perhaps bedouin, cf. above, no. 24).

34. The Muslims appear as Mahgrây in a Syrian colophon dated 63/104\(^{46}\).

35. After the death of Yazid I in 683, Ubaydallâh b. Ziyâd tried to ingratiate himself with the Barans by telling them that he had been born among them and that his father had made his hijra to them (mâ mubâhir abî išâ[label] ilajum\(^{47}\).

36. The Muslims also appear as Mahgrây in the works of Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) and other Syriac sources of the Umayyad period\(^{48}\).

37. Tagî in the Jazîrîn were bedouin; after the battle of Marq Râbiṭ, when they were feeding with Qays, they converted their mubadhirîn in Azarbayan\(^{49}\).

38. The bedouin is distinguished from the mubâhirîn in a verse by the Tagî in poet al-Qârînî\(^{50}\).

39. The same distinction is made in a verse by the Taťin poet Iyâs b. Malik\(^{51}\).

40. Confronted with the Asâřîn at Dîlûbî in 65/685, the governor of Basra promised any mušaîla who would join him the stipends of an Arab and any bedouin who would join him the stipends of a muḥārîn\(^{52}\).

41. When al-Hâghâqî arrived as governor of Iraq in 75/694, he recited a verse by an anonymous Asadi poet with the line mubadhirîn bâs bi-’arâb\(^{53}\).

42. The father of the Hârgîn rebel Šabîb b. Yazid was min mubâhirîn al-Kufrî. He had emigrated from Kufa to Mosul\(^{54}\).

43. A poem in praise of al-Muḥallab attributed to Dîbîn says that the Basrans, threatened by the Azâriqîn, “had decided to move to the bedouin, fearing that they might perish. They almost reached a state of extreme suffering, after nobility and after the hijra’\(^{55}\). In other words, they had decided to abandon their hijra to Basra.

\(^{39}\) Tabari, c. i. p. 244.

\(^{40}\) Ibn al-Mubâsrâk, Gihâd, no. 194 (with parallels in the note thereto).


\(^{43}\) Abû Tamâmîn, Hâfûzat ar-ramâs wa-l-tâhristh shâhidî, ed. O. Freytag, Bonn 1848-51, p. 799.

\(^{44}\) Ibn Sa’dî, Taḥbîrî, vol. vi, pp. 206.

\(^{45}\) Tabari, c. i. p. 267M.

\(^{46}\) Al-Gâhibî, Risâla fî batin Umayya in his Aṣârîlî, ed. H. al-Sandûbbi, Cairo 1933, pp. 293f.


\(^{49}\) Cf. the examples in P. Croce and M. Cook, Hagurism, the Making of the Islamic World, Cambridge 1977, pp. 11, 164\(^{40}\), 173-93, 213.

\(^{50}\) Aṭâmîn, ed. J. Barth, Leipzig 1906, no. IV: 25.

\(^{51}\) Abû Tamâmîn, Hâfûzat ar-ramâs, p. 294.

\(^{52}\) Aṭâmîn, vol. vii, p. 417.


44. In the Greek papyri issued by Qurra b. Śarik al-ʿAbṣi, governor of Egypt 709-14 AD, and others, the Muslim soldiers appear as Mūḥāṣṣara and mawṣuʿ/mawṣūʿ.

45. In a story set between 93/712 and 95/714 Muqāṭṭāl b. Ḥāvyān relates how he abandoned his position as judge in Samarqand, went to Buḥārā and emigrated (hīghāt kardom) from there to Marw.46

46. Some Isfahānīs in Basra were said to owe their presence there to conversion and emigration (islāmū wa-ḥiğārū)47.

47. The misdeeds of the Umayyads, according to al-Ǧāḥiẓ, included their habit of returning (non-Arab) converts to their villages baʿda ʿl-ḥiğār46.

48. In his fiscal edict ʿUmar II declared himself obliged to “open the gate of hīghāt for the people of Islam”. He continues: “As for Islam....whoever accepts Islam, whether Christian or Jew or Zoroastrian....and joins himself to the body of Muslims in their abode, and who forsakes the abode wherein he was before, he shall have the same rights and duties as the Muslims....As for emigration (hīghāt), we open it up to whoever may emigrate of the bedouin and who sells his cattle and transfers from his bedouin abode to the abode of emigration (dār al-ḥiğār), to wage against our enemy. Whoever does that shall have an equal share with the Muhāṣṣarūn in that which God has given them of booty”48.

49. Gāhār, a bedouin poet of the Umayyads period, was told by his wife that “it would be best for you if you were to emigrate (ḥağarata) to Medina, sell your camel and enroll for stipends (ijtaraḍa fi ʿl-ʿaṭa)49.

50. In 109/727 Asad al-Qasrī, the governor of Ḥarrān, made a speech in which he asked God to take him back to his mūḥāṣṣar and waṭan, presumably meaning Syria.50

51. Al-Ḥasan, presumably al-Ṭasirī (d. 110/728), held that “the hīghāt of the bedouin (is effected) when they join their ʿāṣrūn”. Al-Šaybānī explains that “hīghāt was a duty in the beginning”, and al-Saraqī adds that “it is part of al-Ḥasan’s doctrine that he did not consider this rule to have been abrogated and that a bedouin who converts must (in his view) inscribe his name in the dīwān al-ğūṣi in order to become a mūḥāṣṣar, the purpose of hīghāt being warfare in those days”51.

52. Bīḥārī b. Abī Burda al-ʿAffārī, deputy for Ḥālid al-Qasrī in Basra until 120/738, reminded a Tamīmi that Ḥirā was his dār ʿaṣrūn and Basra his dār ḥiğār52.

53. ʿUmayr b. Ḥānī al-Anṣ, a member of Yazīd III’s Yamaniyya, encouraged people to pay allegiance to Yazīd, saying that “there are only two hīghāt, the hīghāt to God and His Messenger and the hīghāt to Yazīd”53.

54. The Farāhād had their homes (manāzīl) in Oman and their mūḥāṣṣar in Muṣul; the Ḥimān had their homes in Oman and their mūḥāṣṣar in Muṣul and Basra, as we are told sub anno 129/746-756.

55. Emigrants from the Yemen to Ḥimṣ are referred to as mūḥāṣṣarūn, and Syria as their mūḥāṣṣar, in apocalyptic prophecies dating from the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods; here too emigrants are contrasted with bedouin.54

56. In a letter to İbrāhīm b. ʿUbaydaḍlah al-Ḥaḍābī, governor of the Yemen for Hārūn al-Raṣīl (786-809 AD), the Yemeni writer Bīr b. Abī Kubār al-Balawī says that “The amīr, may God preserve him, knows how long I have loved and respected him, and that I have emigrated with him (wa-ḥiğātī muʿāḥa), and that I am one of those who ‘spent and fought before the victory’ (cf. Qur. 57:9/10), and further that I have not reverted to bedouinism after emigrating (wa lam aṭa‘arrab baʿda ʿl-ḥiğār)”55.

55. ʿUmayr b. Ḥānī al-Anṣ, p. 94. Cf. also below, note 131.


The concept of hīfra in these passages conforms to that of the Qurʾān in that it is closely associated with warfare. A dār al-hīfra is a military centre (manzil ʾīhād, qayrawān, miṣr and ṣand, cf. nos. 11, 33); and a muḥāfīq is a resident of such a centre, where he is registered as a soldier and receives stipends from the proceeds of the immovable spoils of war known as fāṣj (nos. 5, 17, 24, 41, 48, 51). Unlike the Qurʾān, the first-century material never envisages hīfra as a response to persecution; and despite the Qurʾānic inclusion of ‘poor Muḥāfīrūn’ among the recipients of booty bestowed by God on His Messenger (Q. 59:67ff.), the stress on the fiscal entitlements of the muḥāfīq is new; so too is the contrast between muḥāfīq and bedouin (nos. 5, 24, 32, 38-43, 48, 51, 32, 35, 56; cf. also 17, 49) and between the former and mauwālī (nos. 41, 44, cf. also 48). But these changes are not problematic.

Such persecutions as the Muslims may have suffered obviously came to an end when they gained the upper hand in Arabia. They continue to emigrate in order to fight holy war, however, and the conquests resulted in the acquisitions of massive tracts of land which might have been distributed among the actual conquerors, but which ‘Umar decided to keep in public ownership as so-called fāṣj, rewarding the conquerors by paying them stipends out of the tax income instead: the conquerors could then be kept together as soldiers in garrison cities instead of dispersing (and ultimately disappearing) as landlords and peasants among the conquered peoples. This raised questions about precisely who was entitled to a share. In Ṣumayyad practice it is clear that emigration to a garrison city and regular service there were normally required for a stipend, and this view is attributed to ‘Umar too: ‘the fāṣj belongs to the inhabitants of these garrison cities and those who join them, help them and stay among them’, he is reputed to have announced when he instituted the disāna; ‘he who hurries to hīfra hurries to stipends’, as he is also said to have put it49 (though he is credited with the alternative view as well50). An emigrant thus came to be identified as a person endowed with fiscal rights which bedouin and

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48 Tabari, ser. 1, p. 2414.
50 ‘Umar held that all Muslims (not just soldiers in garrison cities) were entitled to a share in the fāṣj, except for slaves (Yalūya b. Adam, Kitāb al-ṭāriq, ed. Th. W. Juyboll, Leiden 1896, p. 6; similarly Abu ʾUbayd, Aṣmāl, p. 304, end of no. 523).
to be explained. It is in answer to this question that Madelung proposes reinterpretation by 'Umar. 'Umar does indeed figure prominently in the above list; and though the non-classical use of the word is also attested before his caliphate (nos. 1-7), this could (and in several cases clearly must) be disavowed as back-projection. It was 'Umar who gave orders for the establishment of garrison towns, who decided not to distribute the conquered lands among the conquerors, who set up the disāwān for the payment of stipends and who ruled (or is said to have ruled) that only muḥāǧirūn were entitled to a share. It would thus seem reasonable to infer that the very notion of hīgра is garrison cities was 'Umar's brainchild too.

But why do we take it for granted that the concept of emigration had to be changed in order to include movement to military centres outside Arabia? Given that 'Umar and the Prophet were contemporaries, and indeed intimate associates, the presumption must surely be that they operated with the same concept of emigration. This presumption may strike us as odd because we all think of hīgра (or rather the 'real' as opposed to the Ethiopian hīgра) as a process which began in 622 and came to an end in 630, when Mecca was conquered, or as a single event of 622, so that any hīgра encountered therefore must be a reinterpretation or re-enactment of the original idea; but we owe this line of thought to the tradition, not to the Qurʾān. The Qurʾān nowhere states that emigration must go to a particular place, be it in Arabia or elsewhere, in order to count as hīgра. On the contrary, it seems to suggest the opposite: "whoso emigrates in the way of God will find in the earth muqārāmān kāfīrān" (Q. 4:99/101). It does convey the impression that Muhammad had a single centre in Arabia, and we may accept that this centre was Yathrib; but since the Qurʾān never reveals its identity, it would be difficult to present Yathrib as intrinsic to the Qurʾānic concept of emigration. Nor does the Qurʾān present the duty of hīgра as finite; on the contrary, hīgра and holy war are linked with such regularity that one would assume them to stand and fall together. Holy war remained a duty far beyond the lifetime of the Prophet, and we now find that the same is true of hīgра. Why then assume that 'Umar reinterpreted the concept? The prīma facie reading of the evidence is that he simply continued it.

Here as so often, our perspective is skewed by classical conceptions, for we tacitly accept with our sources that the Prophet's incomparability places him in a category of his own: hīgра in his time was one thing, hīgра thereafter something else. Obviously, if hīgра in the time of the Prophet was a unique process—Hīgра with a capital H—then all later emigration must be imitation and/or reinterpretation of the original idea; but what the continued use of the notion of hīgра suggests is precisely that this view of things is secondary. Like the Qurʾānic concept, that which prevailed in the first century and a half was open-ended: Medina was Muhammad's abode of emigration, but emigration continued to both this and other abodes of emigration after his death: one could still engage in hīgра to Medina in the time of 'Umar and the Umayyads (nos. 15, 49); one could make a hīgра away from Medina too (nos. 15, 28), to one of the centres outside Arabia (a movement which later authors would describe as mere taḥawwul); and one could abandon one's hīgра in any of these centres by engaging in the reprehensible act of tawarrī ibn hīgра. One abandoned one's hīgра by becoming a bedoin or a peasant as opposed to remaining a soldier wherever one happened to be inscribed, not just by leaving Medina, for a dār al-hīgра was simply an armed camp or mobilization centre to which one went to fight the infidels whoever and wherever they might be. There is no sense in this material of an original hīgра with a capital 'H' verses an imitative one of less importance. All Arabs in all garrison cities are Muḥāǧirūn, be they in Arabia or elsewhere, and all are unselfconsciously referred to as such in official documents, poetry, incidental remarks and by their non-Muslim subjects.

If Muhammad operated with a closed concept of hīgра for eight years and 'Umar introduced the open-ended version which predominated for the next hundred years, one wonders how the original concept survived: for once all emigrants to garrison cities had come to be known as Muḥāǧirūn, the emigrants to Muhammad's Medina can hardly have been distinguished from everyone else by that very title, and one would have expected the cheap currency to drive out the expensive variety. By contrast, it is easy to see how the closed concept could have driven out the open-ended one, given that the obligation to live as a Muḥāǧir in a mobilization centre lost relevance in the course of the Umayyad period, whereas

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34 Cf. Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqāt, s. v. 13: 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd Allāh b. Aswāf b. ath-Thālib b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Quddāsī, n. 1: [after the conquest].

the Qurʾānic references to emigrants in Muhammad’s time ensured that the earliest Muhājirūn would be remembered even if the original use of the term was forgotten. In other words, the open-ended concept must have been the first. What the evidence suggests is not that Umar reinterpreted the concept of hīṣa to include emigration to garrison cities, but on the contrary that later generations reinterpreted it so as to exclude it.

The emergence of the classical concept

If this is correct, how and when did the classical concept emerge? We may start by surveying the material in which the open-ended concept of hīṣa is under attack. It falls into three groups.

First, numerous traditions present Muhammad as exempting individuals and tribal groups from the duty of hīṣa, or abolishing it altogether, before the conquest of Mecca, or without reference to it. Thus he allowed Salama b. al-Akwas to Aslamī to live in the desert when he asked for permission to do so; alternatively, he exempted the entire bedouin section of Aslam from the duty of emigration in a letter stating that “they are Muhājirūn wherever they are”17; or he exempted the Aslamī emigrants in Medina, saying “inhabit the ravines/swell in the desert, O Aslam ... you are Muhājirūn wherever you are”18. Ibn ʿUmar held Aslām to be the only Muslims to be allowed to live in the desert?9, but the classical tradition knows of many more. Thus the Prophet is said to have written to B. ʿAmr of Ḥuzza that “I give those of you who emigrate the same rights as I have myself, even if they emigrate in their own land”10. When four hundred men of Muzayna came to Medina in 5/626, the Prophet ʿabd Allāh b. Hāshām b. Dāṣirah, telling them that “you are Muhājirūn wherever you are”10. Three “Abūs had heard from their guer? that one could not be a Muslim without emigrating (la ʾislam li-mm la hiʾṣata labu), but the Prophet assured them that this was not so: “Fear God wherever you are, God would not deprive you of your deeds (cf. Qur. 52:20/21) even if you lived in al-Damad and Gāzin”11. A man deisrs of ʿihād and hīṣa, but endowed with property that needed his presence, was similarly reassured that God would not deprive him of his deeds even if he lived in al-Damad and Gāzin12. While another was told that it would not harm him to live in the vicinity of al-Damad of Gāzin13. A certain Fudayk had heard that he who does not emigrate will perish (man lam yahdīg halaša), but the Prophet told him to pray, say zakāt, shun evil and to live among his people wherever he wanted14. ʿAbd Allāh b. Asid al-Sulami fell ill in Medina, but did not want to leave for a more salubrious place because he di not want to undo his hīṣa, but the Prophet told him to go, “for you are a Muhājir wherever you are”15. Others were exempted from the duty of emigration to Medina by swearing allegiance to Muhammad on hīṣa al-bīdāya/ab-dīd or bayʿat al-arabiyah as

19 Thus according to Salama b. al-Akwas, who invoked the Prophet’s collective exemption of Aslam when he was accused of qalida (π σ τον δυ κώριον δυ κώριον by Buraq B. al-Hajib al-Aslamī and whose version presents the Aslamīs as emigrants in Medina by making them express fear of committing that very sin (Abū ʿUbayd, Amwāl, p. 314, no. 539; Ibn Hanbal, Muwād, vol. iii, pp. 361f; iv, 55; 55; Hayyami, Muqna al-sawādḍ, vol. v, pp. 235f). According to other versions, Salama merely invoked his personal dispensation when he was accused of undoing his hīṣa (see the references given below, note 141; the accuser is here al-Ḥaqqāq), and still others have it that he only left Medina when ʿUkān was killed, not in the time of the Prophet (al-Buγārī, al-Sabī, ed. L. Krebs and T.W. Juynboll, Leiden 1862-1908, vol. iv, p. 373.)

13 Ibn Saʿd, Tabaqat, vol. iv/2, p. 42 = Wellhausen, Skizzen, vol. iv, p. 140, no. 79, where the names are corrupt. Al-Damad and Gāzin were places between Yemen and Mecca (Yaqūt, Muḥjam al-bulān, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Leipzig 1866-73, x, x, citing the Abū tradition s.v. ‘al-Damad’).
14 Yahyā b. ʿAbd Allāh, Hama, p. 59.
15 Yaqūt, Bulūḥ, s.v. ‘al-Damad’.
17 Ibn ʿAbd Allāh, Hama, p. 59.
opposed to ḥiṣrāt al-bāḥṭal/ al-ḥācir or ḥayrat al-ḥiṣra. Some bedouins were positively advised by the Prophet to stay by their camels on the grounds that one could do good works 'even across the sea'.

There was no duty to emigrate physically at all: "If you perform the prayer and pay the alms, you are a Muhājinīr even if you die in al-Ḥādar/al-Ḥadrama/ al-Ḥadramawt", an anonymous bedouin was told. The earth is God's and the worshippers are God's, so wherever one of you finds it good to live, there let him fear God and stay", the Prophet said on another occasion.

A muḥājinīr was not someone who emigrated physically, but rather someone who shunned what God has forbidden, as several Prophetic traditions inform us, invoking the root meaning of hīṣra, or someone who abandoned polytheism (i.e. a convert). Just as the best ghādī is prayer, so shunning sins is the best hīṣra. Or hīṣra is a morally neutral act which acquires its meaning from intention: for just as the emigrant may turn to God and his Apostle, so he may turn to things of this world, depending on what his niyyā is.

Secondly, a number of traditions tell us that the Prophet formally abolished the duty of hīṣra when he conquered Mecca, or that the duty came to an end when he died. The former idea is by far the best attested. "Stay in your residences, for the duty of hīṣra has come to an end; but ghādī and intention continue", he proclaimed on the conquest of Mecca according to one version. "There is no hīṣra after the conquest (of Mecca), only ghādī and intention", as the classical ḥiṣra tradition has him say. Practically all versions are careful to point out that holy war continues, and many add that people should respond when they are called up. Other traditions show us the new dispensation in action. Thus Muḥāzin b. Masāfīr al-Sulamī told the Prophet that he and his brother (or nephew) wished to pay him allegiance: "Alī! I ḥiṣra, to which the Prophet replied that there was no hīṣra any more, but that they could swear allegiance on Islam and holy war. Murra b. Wābah al-Ṭaʿāfāfī and his son Yaʿāb received much the same reply. Saḥwān b. Ummayya and other Meccans who wished to emigrate to Medina after the conquest returned to Mecca because the ḥiṣra had been closed. And when Muḥāzin wished to emigrate to Syria, Ibn Umar replied that "there is no ḥiṣra (any more), but there is ghādī, so go and offer yourself", assuring him that he was free to return if he wished.

Thirdly, a small number of counter-traditions argue against the above material by having the Prophet declare that "the duty of..."
Hiğra will not come to an end as long as infidels are fought”, or “as long as gūhāt continues”.198 “Hiğra will not come to an end until repentance does, and repentance will not come to an end until the sun rises in the west”; Mu’āwiyah cites him as saying199.

Group 1

What then can we make of this material? Modern scholars generally accept the traditions of group 1, or some of them, at face value and infer that Muhammad relaxed and eventually abolished the duty of hiğra because Medina was becoming overcrowded: “There seems to have been... a definite policy of requiring Muslims to be—or to become—allied to Muslims. As the number of people from nomadic groups rose, however, this policy became increasingly difficult to implement”, Donner says199: “As the conversions to Islam increased throughout Arabia, the duty of emigration to Medina no doubt became more and more unrealistic and was, if not formally abolished as the Meccan and Medinese traditions affirmed, left in abeyance”, as Madelung puts it180. But this interpretation is difficult to accept.

In the first place, is there not something implausible about the idea that the Prophet should have abandoned the duty of hiğra because Medina was filling up? If one abode of emigration was getting overcrowded, the obvious response would surely have been to set up another. When the bedouin of twentieth-century Arabia were fired by the idea of settling as holy warriors, they established a plurality of hujjar, not just a single one, and the Muslims of seventh-century Arabia can hardly have been so witless as to abandon a policy of sedentarization and/or recruitment on the unsurprising discovery that not all the inhabitants of Arabia could be accommodated in a single town180. If recruits continued to be needed, as they clearly did, one would have expected new abodes of hiğra to be established, and so indeed they were. It merely so happens that the new dar al-hijra (cf. above, no. 17) were established by caliphs rather than the Prophet, in Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Iran rather than in Arabia, and that this causes us automatically to classify the new foundations as wholly different from the first. But we should not see early Islamic history through classical eyes.

In the second place, the material is inconsistent199, and moreover so didactic in tone as to leave no doubt that it is using history to make doctrinal points. Many traditions, for example, go out of their way to get their message across by first having the bedouin expound the view to be refuted, whereupon the Prophet explains the true position: “our qurā’? say that there is no Islam for whoever does not emigrate”180. “Oh Messenger of God, we are afraid of apostatizing after having emigrated”199. “Oh Messenger of God, where should I make the Hijra? To you wherever I am, or to a particular land or a particular people? And will it be cut off when you

198 In Donner’s view, the policy of sedentarization was not abandoned; rather, the bedouin were allowed to settle in their own land instead of Medina, this being the meaning of hujra fi dakhilin (Conquests, pp. 790). But the traditions make it abundantly clear that bedouin who were allowed to ‘emigrate in their own homes’ were thereby allowed to remain bedouin.

199 Cf. the information on Aslam. If the entire tribe, or its bedouin members, had been granted status as emigrants regardless of their whereabouts, why did Salama need personal permission to live in the desert? And if he only left when Ummān was killed, how can he have asked for permission to leave in the days of the Prophet? (Cf. above, notes 76-8) Rubin’s answer to the first question is that Salama represents Aslam at large in the story of his individual permission (‘Hijra’, note 104); but the formulation does not suggest as much and the contexts do not tally: the letter in which the Prophet exempts all bedouin Aslamis from the duty to emigrate is addressed to Aslam in their own land, whereas Salama depicts the Aslam who received collective dispensation as emigrants in Medina. If moreover all Aslam, or their bedouin members, had been dispensed from the duty to emigrate one way or the other, how could an eminent Aslam Companion such as Buraydah b. al-‘Uthayb be unaware of it? (cf. above, note 78). If Buraydah was unaware of it, how can the Prophet have issued the dispensation in his presence? (Cf. above, note 77). And if all and sundry individuals and tribes had received dispensation too, how could Ibn ‘Umar think that Aslam were unique (note 79)?

180 Ibn Sa’id, above, note 82.

199 Ibn Hanbal in note 78 above.
settled groups to stay where they were by having the Prophet write them letters in which the duty of hijra is tacitly replaced by that of separation from infidels (firq al-musāba‘), or in which neither separation nor emigration is mentioned at all, so that one is in danger of forgetting that the duty of emigration had ever applied to settled people. By contrast, the tradition offers an abundance of stories about bedouin making the hijra to Medina, their dislike of being there, their merit in having come, their accurzedness in going back, their permission to go back, their exemption from the duty to come and so on, as if hijra invariably involved a transition from bedouin to urban life. It is for this reason that Donner interprets the duty of hijra in the Prophet’s time as a duty to settle, a view that Rubin is close to espousing too; but it seems more natural to infer that the material reflects later conditions.

113 Ibn Sa’d, Tabaqat, vol. 1/2, p. 158f = Wellhausen, Skizzen, vol. iv, p. 978. That many of these letters were addressed to wholly or partly settled tribes is clear from the nature of the property they discuss. Not one requires the recipients to emigrate. One explicitly exempts them from the duty (b. Amin of Quraḍa, cf. above, note 80), while another exempts their bedouin section without imposing on it their settled members (Adam, cf. above, note 77). The rest either require the recipients to separate from infidels (vol. 1/2, p. 21-3, 25, 30 = pp. 107, 169-12, 114, 128: w-mq-trb al-munakib, twice replaced by w-tb al-munakib (at p. 22, 199) or else make no mention of separation or emigration at all. It is not clear whether the firq is to be envisaged as actual departure or as mere termination of friendly relations with infidels. Rubin interprets it as actual departure (‘Hijra’, section 9), but those who are to engage in it are openly confirmed in their possession of their lands and wells and merely required to hand over a fifth of their booty, pay zakāt (on their animals) or ṣadaq on their fruits, keep the roads safe and so on. One would not have inferred that they left.


115 Donner, Comment, p. 79. For arguments against this interpretation, see the review by E. Landau-Taeveron in Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam 6 (1985), pp. 501f (add Hayyami, Majma‘ al-zawā’id, vol. i, p. 255, 4 where ‘Aṭīfa identifies the emigrants of Muhammad’s time as abla al-quray). Ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbar goes to the outer extreme when he claims that bedouin were not required to emigrate at all in the Prophet’s time (cited in Madshuq, ‘Hijra’, pp. 220).

116 Rubin, ‘Hijra’, section A, argues that the original meaning was ‘transfer to a town’, with reference to kāf in the sense of town and lexicographical material. But though one would agree with him that there is more to the concept than the severance of ties, the lexicographers simply reproduce the distinction between bedouin and musāba‘ current in the Umayyad period, and though kāf in the sense of town (attested in the South Arabic epigraphical material and in the name of al-Hijar) could be relevant, both Quray and Ḥadjj suggest that the additional meaning had more to do with getting together for war than with sedentarization as such.
Whereas the Qurʾān never contrasts bedouin with emigrants, the Umayyad material regularly does, as has been seen. Possibly, settled Arabs who had stuck to their homes were less conspicuous from the vantage point of the new garrison towns, or less desirable as soldiers, than were bedouin. In any case, settled Arabs who stayed put were now classified as bedouin themselves, in so far as they attracted attention: thus the Hirans and the Meccans, for example. It was the bedouin who would become the paradigmatic shirkers. Hence it was also to them that the Qurʾānic prohibition of ṣawādaʿ with non-emigrants was taken to refer; and since the prohibition implied that emigration was necessary for membership of the umma, bedouinism was widely regarded as tantamount to infidelity: Umar II treated bedouin and non-Muslims as close to identical (above, no. 48); al-Hasan al-Baṣri equated the ḥiḍra of bedouin with their conversion (above, no. 51); al-Haqqāq and others regarded taṭarrab baṣaʿa ʿl-ḥiḍra as tantamount to apostasy, or as a grave sin; and the frequency with which Prophetic traditions deny that non-emigrants were exiled from salvation shows that they were widely regarded as doomed to perdition.

All this had changed by early Abāsid times, however. Practically all jurists now accepted the bedouin as full members of the umma; and though some continued to deny them a share in the fay’, except in so far as they qualified under Q. 59:7-8, the majority granted them that right as well on the grounds that the duty of ḥiḍra had been abolished and that all Muslims were now muḥāǧirūn in the sense of believers regardless of their whereabouts: it was in support of this view that the traditions of groups 1 and 2 were adduced. It does not seem likely that this wholehearted endorsement of the bedouin’s status as full members of the umma should have been accomplished in the time of Muḥammad, reversed under the Umayyads and then accomplished again by the classical scholars. The developmental scheme is familiar enough, of course, but it seems more economical to assume that the Prophetic traditions reflect the ambivalence of the scholars themselves. Some take the duty of ḥiḍra for granted and merely exempt individuals or groups from it while others abolish the duty itself, but all tell us that membership of the umma does not depend on whereabouts. All, in short, are evidence for the process whereby the post-conquest distinction between emigrants and bedouin was effaced and eventually rejected.

Group 2

The message of the material of group 2 is to some extent identical with that of group 1: faith does not depend on whereabouts; given that ḥiḍra does not exist any more, all believers, including bedouin, enjoy the same position and are all entitled to a share in the fay’. But whereas the traditions of group 1 abolish the duty of ḥiḍra by elevating all Muslims to the status of Muḥāḡirūn in a metaphorical sense, those of group 2 terminate it at a specific point in time, so that the historical stump of the literal duty remains: and it is this stump which is ḥiḍra in the classical sense of the word. The cut-off point is usually identified as al-fath, which some scholars took to be the events of al-Hudaybiyya, but which was classically understood as the conquest of Mecca; and in its classical interpretation the material has as much to say about Mecca as it does about emigration, a point to which I shall come back.

Unlike the traditions of group 1, those of group 2 are not normally taken at face value by modern scholars. In Madelung’s reconstruction, for example, the duty to emigrate falls into abeyance first in the Prophet’s time in response to overcrovding in Medīna, reflected in group 1, and next under the early Abāsid...
in response to long-term developments, reflected in group 2. Though one can dispute his interpretation of group 1, Madelung is undoubtedly right as far as group 2 is concerned. Indeed, the long-term developments account very well for all of the material. In the course of the Umayyad period, residence in a garrison city ceased to be synonymous with military service; the payment of stipends was gradually restricted to professional soldiers and other public servants, while the bulk of Muslims took to making a living on their own. Under those circumstances it obviously ceased to make sense that people should be obliged to live in garrison cities. Why should their status as members of the umma be doubtful merely because they lived in the desert or in villages? Why should they be branded as backsliders or even apostates if they took to earning their keep as pastoralists or vegans? One could worship God and shun evil wherever one was. The institution of hifra remained alive as long as the Umayyads recruited bedouin soldiers, and the Syrians defended it longer than anyone else, but it cannot have retained much significance when the 'Abbāsid replaced the Syrian armies with Ḥūrasānī troops, and it must have been then that the 'Hijāri' position that the duty of hifra had been abolished by the Prophet after the conquest ... found backing by consensus', as Madelung says. This accords with the fact that the open-ended concept of hifra is densely attested from the conquests to the 720s, but practically gone by c. 800, except in connection with non-Arab converts.

But Madelung's position is not as clear cut as one might like. Although it is in the 'Abbāsid period that he finds a context for the classical 'Hijāri' tradition, he assumes it to have been in circulation for so long before it won general acceptance that for practical purposes he equips it with the usual history of origin in the earliest times, suspension under the Umayyads and restoration under the 'Abbāsid; thus he implies that it was known to Muṣawīya, who supposedly disliked it; and he treats it as familiar to 'Umar II, who 'did not accept' this tradition, as he puts it. But Muṣawīya's appearance as the transmitter of one of the counter-traditions does not of course mean that moves were afoot for the closure of hifra already in his days; and given that 'Umar II never mentions the 'Hijāri' tradition, it seems more reasonable to infer that he did not know it. Al-Saraḥṣī and others similarly credit al-Ḥasan al-Buṣrī with a conscious rejection or qualification of the closed concept of hifra, though the chances are that he merely took the open-ended concept for granted. Everybody seems to have done so in the mid-Umayyad period, not just the Umayyads and their supporters, but also their invertebrate enemies, the Ḥārīṣīes. It is well known that the Azārīqa, Naṣḏādī and other Ḥārīṣīes of the Umayyad period held hifra from the abode of non-Ḥārīṣīes to be obligatory, referred to their camps as abodes of hifra and called themselves muḥāṣṣirīn; and as might be expected, the sources mostly interpret this as an obligation to re-constitute the Prophet's emigration rather than to continue it: thus Sālim b. Dākwān credits Naṣḏā with the view that one must make a hifra 'like the hifra of the Prophet' and invokes the classical 'Hijāri' tradition against him; and the parallel with the Prophet's Medina is also explicit in al-Asbā'ī's account of the Azārīqa. But

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127 It shows that there was resistance to the abolition of hifra in circles apt to invoke the Umayyads as their authorities, clearly Syrians (cf. Cook, Dogma, p. 202, note 127, where Marwān is also included).

128 For the list above, no. 51 (al-Ḥasan) 'did not consider this rule to have been abrogated'; al-Ṭabarānī, Muṣannaf al-Ḥasan li-Salām al-qārit, ed. H. al-Rasūlī al-Mahālātī, Teherān n.d., vol. iii, pp. 526f.; al-Ṭabarānī, al-Tishnāf fi sīrat al-qāri, ed. A.S. al-Āmīn awd A.H. Qādir al-Āmīlī, Naṣḏā 1957-65, vol. v, p. 166, both ad 8.74/750 (al-Ḥasan said that 'the hifra of the bedouin-garrison cities will continue until the Day of Resurrection').

129 Al-Ṭabarānī, Maqādiḥ al-istallāqyyin, ed. H. Rütter, Istanbul 1929-33, pp. 80f., 89, 91, 115, 120; Sālim b. Dākwān, Sīrah in the Hintha Xerox, Cambridge University Library, microfilm Or. 1402, pp. 175, 178f; cf. Cook, Dogma, pp. 3f, 17, 97.


132 Sālim, Sīrah, p. 175; Cook, Dogma, p. 17, 100f.

133 Al-Ṭabarānī, Maqādiḥ, pp. 88f.
the Ḥārīrites themselves saw hīfrah and ḡīḥād as ongoing duties. Like their opponents, they identified emigration to a military centre as indispensable for Muslim status and took the Qur’ānic prohibition of ʿadaṣya with non-emigrants to exclude social relations with bedouin, from whom they duly dissociated even when the latter adhered to those views, and unlike later heretics, they did not appoint naqīb or dāʾīs in their abodes of emigration, or call their followers anṣār: their concept of hīfrah was Qurʾānic, not inspired by the Sira. When the Azāirya attacked Basra, the Barans feared having to abandon their hīfrah by leaving Basra (above, no. 43), whereas the Azāirya refused to acknowledge Basra as a dār al-hīfrah and enjoined emigration to their own camp instead: the concept of emigration was the same on the two sides of the fence. The first evidence for actual re-enactment of the Prophet’s hīfrah seems to be furnished by the Hāšimiyah in Ḥurāsān, who called ʿAbd ar-Rahmān al-Mawardi (at large) their dār al-hīfrah, appointed dāʾīs and naqīb, and eventually elevated their followers to the status of anṣār (al-dāw’al al-dawla). It seems gratuitous to assume that the closed concept of hīfrah had been present from the start when it is only in the transitional period between the two dynasties that we begin to see it.

Group 3

The traditions of group 3 defend the open concept of hīfrah, and all are Syrian; it is because Muʿāwiyah was an authority to the Syrians that he appears as the transmitter of one of them. They take it for granted that hīfrah and ḡīḥād are related activities and assert that both will continue for ever, which agrees with the fact that when the generality of Muslim lawyers declared ḡīḥād to be a ṣaḥabī, the Syriacs took the dissenting view that it was a ṣaḥabī, every Muslim being individually obliged to engage in holy war according to them. The Syriacs were so preoccupied with ḡīḥād that they did not know much about anything else, as Malākī is supposed to have told al-Mansūr, but their attempt to salvage the open-ended concept of hīfrah was not successful.

The fate of the pre-classical material

It is the traditions of group 2, and above all the classical lā hīfrah tradition, which lie behind all conventional accounts of the development of the concept of hīfrah, be they Muslim or Islamicist: all take it for granted that hīfrah in the original sense of the word came to an end in the lifetime of the Prophet. The classical position is neatly illustrated by al-Mawardi, who unnecessarily claims a whole century’s development into the Prophet’s life. “The word hīfrah only applies to those who emigrated from their home to Medina in search of Islam”, he says, forgetting the muḥāǧirūn to garrison cities or perhaps dismissing them as pale reflections of the genuine article. “Every tribe that emigrated in its entirety was called al-Barāna, while those which emigrated in part were known as al-Ḥaḍara”, he continues, automatically taking Sayyid’s information on Muḥāǧirūn in Abū Bakr’s Iraq to relate to those in Muḥammad’s Medina (cf. above, no. 7). “After the conquest (of Mecca) the duty of hīfrah ceased to apply, and the Muslims now came to include both Muḥāǧirūn and bedouin”, he adds, innocently forgetting that the bedouin still had not come to be accepted as full members of the umma by Umayyad times. “In the time of the Prophet the people of ṣadaqa were known as bedouin while the people of fay’ were known as Muḥāǧirūn”, he concludes, adducing the verse muḥāǧir laya bi-ʿarābi cited by al-Ḥaḍīḥ in illustration (cf. no 42) on the automatic assumption that the anonymous poet quoted by al-Ḥaḍīḥ was a contemporary of the Prophet.

139 This is clear from their very name, which is a self-designation derived from Q. 4: 99/101 (use-man yaḥfūṣu min baytīhā muḥāǧirūn illā lāhī), cf. S. E. Brinner, Die Chirdschiten unter den ersten Umayyaden, Leiden 1884, p. 290. Compare also the story of how al-Muhallab sowed dissension among the Azairiyah (Mubarrad, Kāmil, vol. iii, p. 1040): he asked them about the fate of two men who went out muḥāǧirūn ṣāḥabī, one of them dying on the way and the other managing to arrive, only to fail his sība. This sowed dissension because neither man had passed his exam, but Q. 4: 99/101 promises those who go out muḥāḏirūn illā lāhī sa-nābībūllāh their reward even if they die on the way. The Azairiyah evidently took the Qur’ānic injunction to emigrate to be addressed to themselves, not just to past believers whose obligation had been abolished on the conquest of Mecca.
140 Ṣalmīn, Sīra, p. 173; cf. Cook, Dogma, p. 96 (where this is puzedlog).
142 Cf. above, notes 127, 130.
143 Van Ess, Theologie und Geschicht, vol. i, p. 68.
A whole century's development is likewise crammed into the lifetime of the Prophet when the classical texts illustrate the reprehensible act of 'a'ārūb ba'da l-hiǧra with exclusive reference to departures from the Prophet's Medina, though here some asymmetries survive: for it is not clear why Abū Darr should have accused Ummān of returning him to bedouinism by exiling him to al-Rabī'a if the Prophet had declared that one could now be a muhādis "even in the ravines"\(^{143}\), or why al-Nābiya should have needed 'Ummān's permission to leave Medina for the desert if the duty of hiǧra had been abolished\(^{144}\), let alone how al-Haǧǧāq could accuse Salama b. Akwa' of irrīdād 'aš al-hiǧra some eighty years after the abolition of hiǧra had supposedly been effected\(^{145}\).

Asymmetries also survived in the form of all the passages on hiǧra in its open-ended sense collected in the above list. They do not seem to have been a source of anguish, presumably because they were taken to refer to hiǧra of a lesser and imitative kind: they were about al-hiǧra ba'da l-hiǧra, 'the emigration after (the real) hiǧra', as 'Ali called it (above, no. 16), carefully making the distinction between hiǧra in the Prophet's time and thereafter which Madelung has now reaffirmed. Several types of hiǧra were known to later scholars too, for though all accepted that the historical emigration from Mecca to Medina had come to an end, they obviously did not think that hiǧra in the spiritual sense of turning to God or shunning evil had been terminated\(^{146}\), and many held that physical emigration continued to be a duty on Muslims who fell under infidel rule. In favour of these views they would adduce the counter-traditions of group 3\(^{147}\). Historically, the counter-traditions of group 3 were out to preserve hiǧra as a duty to emigrate physically for service under legitimate rulers, not as a spiritual journey or as a flight from infidels: what they defended was movement in support of caliphs who represented God's cause, so that joining them was both a physical journey and a spiritual hiǧra iša allāh wa-rasūlī, as it had been in the Prophet's time. It was in this vein that 'Umār b. Hāni' could speak of a hiǧra to God and his Messenger and a hiǧra to Yāsīd III (above, no. 53). But Bīr b. Abī Khaṭār al-Balāwī, writing about eighty years later, is the last author to whom this concept of hiǧra is alive (above, no. 56).

The meaning of the reinterpretation

The open-ended concept of hiǧra is one of the rare Islamic notions of which we can unequivocally say that they take us back to the beginnings. It encapsulates the fact that Islamic history started with a great departure: to convert was to leave one's home in order to fight for the cause; salvation lay in going forth for heroic ventures and a new world ahead, not in patiently staying by one's fields or camel. Hiǧra as originally understood was nothing if not a concept of mobilization. By the same token its lifespan was limited, for it is only at the beginning of a revolution that salvation lies in going forth: one cannot sit on hayyūn, as Napoleon is reputed to have said. Muslim society could not remain a camp for ever, however attached the Syrians might be to the idea. Once the new world had been established, the Aufbruchsstimmung of the early days gave way to the settled mentality of the classical pattern, and the open-ended concept of hiǧra had to be closed.\(^{148}\)

The first-century concept of hiǧra thus evokes a bygone era, and this is perhaps where its main interest lies. But there are also other things of interest to be learnt from its demise. The fact that the Muslims had to divest themselves of the open concept of hiǧra does not explain why they put its end where they did. They might have linked its abolition to the first civil war, for example, or to the waning of the great conquests: the latter would have been historically correct. But given that the Muslims liked to have the Prophet's own verdict on all questions of classical concern, it is not surprising that

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\(^{143}\) Balāḏūrī, ansāḥ, vol. v, p. 54; cf. Athamīn, 'Abī Sāib and Muhājanūn', pp. 11f.

\(^{144}\) Agūrū, vol. v, p. 10.


\(^{146}\) Tāhāwī, for example, calls the spiritual hiǧra, or hiǧrat al-/bash, 'the second hiǧra', explaining that it does not require departure from one's home and that it is the hiǧra which continues after the conquest of Mecca (Makki, vol. iii, p. 260).


\(^{148}\) I owe both the thought in this paragraph and the term Aufbruchsstimmung to Fritz Zimmermann, whose comments on the first draft of this article made the point more vividly than I have been able to do.
they made him abolish the duty of hīdā in person, be it at unspecified times or on the fath, or by dying. But why did the view that he abolished it on the conquest of Mecca win universal acceptance?

The answer presumably lies in the fact that it could be used to make at least three important statements about Mecca. First, by identifying the conquest of Mecca as the cut-off point, the tradition singles out the conquest of Mecca as the culmination of Muhammad’s career: the one and only purpose of emigration had been the fath; though there were to be many safeh thereafter, they were of a different and lesser order, for one could no longer gain the status of muhājrīn by enlisting for holy war, be it in Medina (as the Sulāmīs and others learn) or in Syria (as Muṣḥid was told). “The cancelling of the implementation of the hīdā principle after the conquest of Makkah … reinforced the belief that hīdā was originally designed to strengthen the Muslim community in al-Madīna, so as to increase the military potential of the Muslims in order to use it against Makkā”149, as Athamina puts it150. The message is that the Prophet’s interest was focused on Mecca, the central shrine of Islam, not on conquests outside Arabia151.

Secondly, the tradition could be used to highlight the Meccan identity of Muhammad’s supporters. “There is no hīdā today!”152, ʿĀdhilah explains with reference to the conquest of Mecca; “the believer used to flee (ṣafīr) with his religion to God and His Messenger lest he be persecuted for it (ṣuṭrān ʿalārī); but as for today, God has made Islam victorious, so the believer can worship God wherever he wants; but sīlah and sunna (continue)”153. Here emigration is explicitly identified as flight, clearly on the basis of the Qur’ānic passages on emigration, and the possibility of hīdā from places other than Mecca is implicitly denied, for the persecution is envisaged as a purely Meccan phenomenon to which the fath has now put an end. The fact that numerous converts emigrated to Medina from places other than Mecca, and that Mecca would hardly have been conquered if this had not been the case, is quietly ignored. That Muḥammad’s hīdā was a flight from persecution is a commonplace view in the literature, and it is of course also as such that hīdā is envisaged in the enigmatic story of the emigration to Ethiopia, in which its link with ṣīlah has wholly disappeared and the emigrants are Meccans pure and simple.

Thirdly, the la hīdā tradition could be used to absolve the Meccans from the stigma of living in the city the Prophet had left, as Cook and Rubin point out with reference to stories in which Quraish opted for continued residence in Mecca with the Prophet’s blessing, having learnt that the duty of hīdā had come to an end154. But there was more than Meccan honour to the issue. Being non-emigrants, the Meccans were regarded as bedoin, with whom one should not intermarry155 and whose ability to achieve salvation was in doubt, as we learn from the traditions on ʿAbwān b. Umayya and another on ʿUbayd b. Muʿāwiyah, who was assured by the Prophet that the Meccan would be rewarded for their good deeds even if they lived in a fox-hole156. Mecca was moreover a city in which no Muslim should stay overnight according to ʿAli157, in which muhājrīn should spend no more than three days after completing their pilgrimage according to the Prophet (as ʿUmar II was told when he enquired about sunnah al-Makkiyyah)158.

149 Athamina, ʿAṣim and Muḥājirīn, p. 163, citing ʿAthari, ʿĀdāb, sec. ii, p. 925, where ʿAbd al-Malik castigates Ḥālid b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥālid b. Asid for having appointed his brother, ʿAbd al-Yāsīn min al-Makka, to the war against the Ḥārijītah: Ṭabarzī, Maqām, vol. iii, p. 563; Ṭiḥayyūn, vol. v, p. 166, both ed. b: 74775, where ʿAbd al-Haṣan prohibits intermarriage of Muhājirīn and bedoin, and ʿUmar says “don’t marry the people of Mecca, they are bedoin”.
150 Athamina, ʿAṣim and Muḥājirīn, p. 12, citing ʿAthari, ʿĀdāb, sec. ii, p. 925, where ʿAbd al-Malik castigates Ḥālid b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥālid b. Asid for having appointed his brother, ʿAbd al-Yāsīn min al-Makka, to the war against the Ḥārijītah: Ṭabarzī, Maqām, vol. iii, p. 563; Ṭiḥayyūn, vol. v, p. 166, both ed. b: 74775, where ʿAbd al-Haṣan prohibits intermarriage of Muhājirīn and bedoin, and ʿUmar says “don’t marry the people of Mecca, they are bedoin”.
152 Athamina, ʿAṣim and Muḥājirīn, p. 12, citing ʿAthari, ʿĀdāb, sec. ii, p. 925, where ʿAbd al-Malik castigates Ḥālid b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥālid b. Asid for having appointed his brother, ʿAbd al-Yāsīn min al-Makka, to the war against the Ḥārijītah: Ṭabarzī, Maqām, vol. iii, p. 563; Ṭiḥayyūn, vol. v, p. 166, both ed. b: 74775, where ʿAbd al-Haṣan prohibits intermarriage of Muhājirīn and bedoin, and ʿUmar says “don’t marry the people of Mecca, they are bedoin”.
153 Athamina, ʿAṣim and Muḥājirīn, p. 12, citing ʿAthari, ʿĀdāb, sec. ii, p. 925, where ʿAbd al-Malik castigates Ḥālid b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥālid b. Asid for having appointed his brother, ʿAbd al-Yāsīn min al-Makka, to the war against the Ḥārijītah: Ṭabarzī, Maqām, vol. iii, p. 563; Ṭiḥayyūn, vol. v, p. 166, both ed. b: 74775, where ʿAbd al-Haṣan prohibits intermarriage of Muhājirīn and bedoin, and ʿUmar says “don’t marry the people of Mecca, they are bedoin”.
155 Athamina, ʿAṣim and Muḥājirīn, p. 12, citing ʿAthari, ʿĀdāb, sec. ii, p. 925, where ʿAbd al-Malik castigates Ḥālid b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥālid b. Asid for having appointed his brother, ʿAbd al-Yāsīn min al-Makka, to the war against the Ḥārijītah: Ṭabarzī, Maqām, vol. iii, p. 563; Ṭiḥayyūn, vol. v, p. 166, both ed. b: 74775, where ʿAbd al-Haṣan prohibits intermarriage of Muhājirīn and bedoin, and ʿUmar says “don’t marry the people of Mecca, they are bedoin”.
which the Prophet himself refrained from setting foot in the houses when he returned from the pilgrimage, and in which it was the greatest misfortune for a muḥājir to die. No doubt all this was painful to the Meccans, but more importantly it made for an odd sanctuary: how could the holiest place of Islam be so unhappy? In fact, all lands abandoned by emigrants were unhappy, and returning to live or die in them jeopardized one's status as a believer wherever they might be: Mecca was no exception. It merely happened to be particularly unhappy in that it was the Prophet himself who had left it. Hence it could not be successfully transformed into the central shrine of Islam unless the Prophet was made to soften the meaning of his departure, and this is what the la ḫiṣra tradition and its interpreters achieve. Their message is that the Prophet's mission was an essentially Meccan enterprise from beginning to end: both he and his followers were Meccans, and though they had to flee from Mecca in response to Meccan pressure, their period in Medina was a mere interlude, not a permanent departure, for the one and only object of their ḫiṣra was al-fath. The Prophet's ḫiṣra was a reluctant departure, not a rejection: "by God, you are God's best land and the dearest of God's land unto God; if I were not expelled from you, I would not leave", as another tradition has him exclaim on his departure.

The closure of the duty of ḫiṣra is thus connected, not only with the waning of the Umayyad conquest society, but also with the elevation of Mecca to the central sanctuary of Islam. The literary sources contain residues of the view that Muḥammad's ambitions included the conquest of Syria, and what the open-ended concept of ḫiṣra suggests is precisely that the occupation of Mecca was preparatory to conquests on a wider scale: it comes across as a step towards the consolidation of Muslim power in Arabia that was required for campaigns outside it, not as an end in itself. At the same time, literary and archaeological sources seem to indicate that from the time of ʿUmar to ʿAbd al-Malik the Muslims prayed in the direction of a central sanctuary in northern Arabia, or to Jerusalem, or to a plurality of sanctuaries, suggesting that the classical status of Mecca may be the outcome of an evolution stretching beyond Muḥammad's lifetime. But the closure of the concept of ḫiṣra drives a wedge between Muḥammad's campaigns and the great conquests and firmly identifies Arabia in general and Mecca in particular as the holy land, making the great conquests appear semi-accidental and reducing the rival sanctuaries of the post-conquest period to deviant qiblas for which the Muslims, in so far as they remembered them, unsurprisingly chose to blame the Umayyads.

Once again, then, we encounter the evolutionary scheme whereby the Prophet creates an institution which the Umayyads supposedly change and which has been 'restored' by the time the sources set in (though in this case, as in that of ḫiṣra, the 'change' is arrested already under ʿUmar). Is it not time that we try to go beyond this scheme? The Umayyad period must be one of the most creative centuries of Islamic history, or indeed any history; and yet it is remembered above all as a century of impious deviation from an established tradition. This is an extraordinary fact, and we shall not be able to make sense of this fact, or of the formative period in general, unless we remember and think of all the believers who created a new civilization in allegiance to him, not just those of Muḥammad himself.

158 Ruhot, Ḫiṣra, notes 65-6; Athamīnā, ʿArāf and Muḥājirun, p. 12.
159 Cf. Ibn Bāṣāyūn below, notes 155: ʿAli said that one should not stay overnight in a land Ḫiṣra, which read al-ḥalāfā in šurūṭ al-ḥalāfā.
161 Cf. Crone and Cook, Hagarism, pp. 74, for the non-Muslim evidence; Donner, Conquests, pp. 101ff, for the Muslim material.

160 Crone, Risāla fi bāni ʿUmayya, p. 296, on the qibla of Wāsiṭ. The first mosque in Khūfa, which was orientated to the west rather than the south, was built by Saʿd b. ʿAbd Waqqāṣa, a close companion of the Prophet, in the caliphate of ʿUmar (Baladjaʿī, Fawāʾid, p. 276).