

EXPERT PAPER

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THE SALAFI-JIHADI NEXUS: AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH OF THE CALIPHATE LIBRARY

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E·I·C·T·P

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IMPRINT

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Dedication¹

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The authors thank the Vienna-based AI company T3K for applying OCR on the Arabic PDFs in this dataset, that are part of the Salafi part. Thus, the scanned PDFs are machine readable and transformed into text files. In the second part of the series, the authors are thereby able to draw evidence-based comparisons between the jihadist texts and the Salafi ones, drawing upon the shared vocabulary, shared meaning and hence the shared theology that makes up the Salafi-jihadi nexus.

INTRODUCTION

The era of “the war on terror” began on September 11, 2001, with attacks by al-Qaeda (AQ) in the American urban heartlands of political and military power in the cities of New York and Washington, D.C. Therefore, the United States and their allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 after the Taliban refused to extradite AQ-leader Osama bin Laden and in 2003 occupied Iraq due to the US insistence of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq having a relationship with AQ.² In the two decades of global war that followed since 9/11, with AQ and later IS at times maintaining a physical “Islamic State” mainly in Syria and Iraq, the ideology that fuels both AQ and IS has thrived in the chaos and has, as of writing end of 2021, successfully spread into East, Central and West Africa,³ while also remaining of persistent influence in Europe, South East Asia or the Caucasus. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 enabled AQ to spread their theology of violence⁴ – and to spread this theology, which is hostile and alien to most Muslims, into locations, that had been in sharp contrast to this particular extremist religious identity.

Designated foreign terrorist groups⁵ such as AQ and Islamic State (IS)⁶ have been pro-active in using the internet as well as traditional media formats⁷ to maintain a persistent media presence with the intention to influence their target audiences. Both groups are part of the Sunni extremist movement whose target audience are Arabic speakers worldwide. AQ is a pioneer of this movement, a pioneer both in terms of bringing the fight into the field and mediatizing the fight as well as coherently explaining why to fight – and what for – to a global audience since the 1980s. For AQ jihad is of utmost importance, as well as *da’wa*⁸, an Arabic term for religious proselytism and propaganda. AQ’s boots on the ground in Afghanistan in the 1980s meant not only an organized force to combat the occupying Red Army but also to establish – and maintain – a coherent and persistent media output.⁹ This included fax machines, VHS- and audio-tapes, and with the dawn of the Internet in the 1990s, (and a new conflict for jihadis in Bosnia)¹⁰ the modern era of media operations was established, with the Internet as a primary hub to disseminate general media items. In any zone of conflict, independent of local geography and language, jihadis had been keen to produce content, to explain and justify why they have joined the fight and for what they are fighting for. New content was created and disseminated online as well while content of the pre-Internet era of the 1980s was later digitalized and made available to a global audience.¹¹ The digitalized content is thus available online and has, over the past decades, established the most extreme understanding of Islam as an attractive subculture. This subculture was once restricted to militant jihadis’ operations in Afghanistan and has since spread to a global dimension with September 11, 2001, as a water shed moment.¹² The intention of IS just as much as AQ is to erase local Sunni Muslim traditions, legal schools, and customs and implant their extremist hegemonial view on religion. The ideology of groups such as AQ or IS is therefore a multifaceted phenomenon. Theology is the core of the ideology of both groups and at its center. The specific – and coherent – theology that employs historical as well as contemporary writings penned by non-AQ or IS members to define, outline and authoritatively project the meaning of theological concepts such as jihad or the justifications to kill non-Muslims or Muslims, who are cast as apostates, for example. Based on the coherent interpretation of the legacy of classical Islamic scholarship such as theology, jurisprudence, and science of the Qur’an and hadith. It also draws on various contemporary Islamic scholars and laymen (Islamists). Yet its most prominent feature is that it is embedded in medieval Salafi theology, by means of which contemporary political agenda is legitimized.

The authors of this article have studied the Arabic language materials of jihadi groups (Nico Prucha), as well as their referential frame of classical Islamic scholarship (Pavel Ťupek) and the network analysis thereof (Ali Fisher) for nearly two decades. We have decided to write this article as the here presented dataset, the “Caliphate Library.”¹³ We have chosen the title Caliphate Library, as

that is what it was called by IS on Telegram, who established this channel to offer a wide range of Arabic books and articles to their target audience. The Caliphate Library is the norm of what jihadi networks and their media output are made of. We encounter time and again the same non-terrorist group affiliated authors and books, that matter gravely to AQ and IS, who, in their own, unique created writings and videos, cite, refer, and reference what can best be described as an ecosystem of Salafi writings. In other words, if one is to understand the jihadi ideology in its complexity, one must take into consideration various components of the Jihadi ecosystem as indicated above.

To address what are the shared elements and common denominators between jihadi groups and Salafi actors, that Mohamed-Ali Adraoui terms as “Salafism and Jihadism: a common doctrinal heritage”¹⁴, the Arabic materials must be at the core and center. This link, which bears the necessity to “analyse the jihadis’ claim that they are Salafis”¹⁵, referred to as the Salafi-jihadi nexus in this article, is evident for anyone able to access the rich corpus of Arabic language writings published and shared by jihadi groups. Salafism, for jihadis, is a core tenet revolving around the theological parameters of *tawhid*, or oneness of God. By referring to “salaf” or “salafi” in Arabic publications – and of course by choosing this term as part of a jihadi group, such as the Groupe Salafie pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC), Jihadis seek to assume a total monopoly over what it means to be a ‘pure’ or ‘true’ Sunni Muslim. As such, Salafism is one undercurrent of what empowers and enables the Sunni jihadi movement, with groups such as IS and AQ keen to derive legitimacy not only from Quran and Sunna, but also from a vast corpus of theological literature of historical and contemporary scholars. As the leader of AQ, Ayman al-Zawahiri, stated in 2008, in defence of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), formerly known as the GSPC:

“Our creed (*aqida*) is that of al-salaf al-salih, the noble companions of prophet Muhammad (sahaba), their followers, and those that followed them; the spearhead of the salaf is the guiding messenger Muhammad, peace and blessings upon him. Therefore, it is an obligation for every Muslim and Muslima that the jurisdictions of the book [Quran] and Sunna are enforced in its entirety, in all regards of *aqida*, [divine and worldly] rulings or morals, not rejecting any element thereof or allowing interpreting either [Quran or Sunna].”¹⁶

This is a core component of the writings produced by Sunni jihadi groups for decades and filled with citations by non-jihadi Salafi authors. Jihadi literature, or at least a significant part of it, is equipped with academic footnotes, references and sources to the vast body of theological literature, to elevate the arguments and deliver proof to what jihadi authors authoritatively produce. Not only are the Quran and Sunna cited and referred to within propaganda videos to attract a wider audience, but a range of Islamic authors are cited and referred to, both classical and contemporary ones. The Salafi authors appearing within the body of jihadi online and offline works range from historical scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792), Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 1350), Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855), Imam al-Shawkani (d. 1839), Sulayman ibn Abdallah ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1818), and many others to contemporary scholars such as Abu Bakr al-Jaza’iri, ibn Qasim (d. 1972), Muhammad ibn. Salib Ibn Uthaymin (d. 2001), Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (d. 1999), al-Walid ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Fariyan or Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi’i (d. 2001) among many. Yet it would be a simplification to label all of them as “Salafis”, as the jihadi ecosystem includes also authors that are hardly considered Salafi in Islamic discourse, as is the case with some Ash’arites in the Library, or let us say Sayyid Qutb, one of the most prominent authors of Salafi Jihadism, whose theological views are condemned by the Salafis themselves (Al-Albani for example). Yet these, or at least parts of their work, are appropriated by the Salafi jihadis and incorporated purposefully into the jihadi ecosystem. Therefore, the Salafiness of jihadis is an ideological construct, which deliberately applies various criteria, such as adherence to the Salafi/athari theological school), or criticism of established jurisprudence and schools of law by claiming interpretative independence (*ijtihad*) based primarily on the Quran and Sunna.

CATEGORIZING CONTENT – WHAT DO JIHADI ONLINE NETWORKS VALUE?

CATEGORIZING CONTENT – WHAT DO JIHADI ONLINE NETWORKS VALUE?

To grade the content within jihadi networks, we have established three categories:

1. Core content;
2. Curated content;
3. Shared content.

Based on the evidence of materials collected within jihadi online networks, for nearly two decades, the Caliphate Library is a good sample of what type of writings matter to the Sunni extremist movement as a whole. Before we outline the origin of this dataset and its significance, we describe the content of this dataset. The Caliphate Library is a text-only curated dataset that was set up by IS and shared within Telegram, as outlined in the following chapter. The texts in this dataset can be sorted into three general categories:

1. CORE CONTENT

Uniquely created materials by foreign terrorist organizations (FTO) make up the core content. In the case of the Caliphate Library dataset, IS shared their own products, including that of the preceding organization, the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), and some AQ-era documents in general.

What we refer to as core are in this case writings that almost always are marked with logos of FTO media groups. The jihadi-created writings in the Caliphate Library are clearly identifiable by the media logo of IS, such as al-Anfal magazine (17 editions), 38 Dabiq articles (in Arabic), various texts by Ashhad media, including a dedicated 8-part series explaining the book “nawaqidh al-Islam” (Things which nullify one’s Islam) by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab¹⁷, or the seven part al-Bayan radio program, available as transcripts, “al-Islam, state and religion.”¹⁸ The latter is thematically tied into a Arabic translation of a Dabiq article “Islam is the religion of the sword not pacifism.”¹⁹ This edition was released in 2015 and features on its cover a group of Muslim men with signs saying “Je Suis Charlie” to express their support for the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo that was attacked by AQ in Paris in January 2015. Charlie Hebdo printed the disputed Muhammad cartoons sparking the AQ attack on the Charlie Hebdo office, killing 12 people. The article “Islam is the religion of the sword not pacifism” features citations of Ibn Taymiyya, whose arguments expressed in his book (see below) are at the core of the jihadi reasoning to kill anyone who insults the Prophet Muhammad or God himself.

A 28-part series published by the IS-media outlet “Sunni Shield” is dedicated to studies of the Quran exegesis. This series centralizes the religious obligation for combat and to fight. Interestingly enough, the exegesis combines several works of classical scholarship (of which the most famous author is al-Qurtubi, d. 1272), with the laic, yet in the jihadi circles immensely popular, interpretation of Sayyid Qutb.^{20 21} Martyr (*shahid*) stories are featured, for example, by the IS media group al-Rimah who outline the story of Abu Ali al-Shammari. He was an Iraqi and is in the text thus referred to as an Ansari (supporter) who joined IS. Of the many documents featured, the IS media group al-Azm issued a 17-paged writing outlining the fight between IS-Yemen and the well established AQ group there, framing AQ as heretics who refuse to rule according to Quran and Sunna.²² Or there is al-Naba’, the IS-weekly magazine, which involves over 40 articles and collected editorials (spanning 366 pages).²³

2. CURATED CONTENT

This features mainly books and lengthier writings, penned by classical and contemporary Islamic scholars, written in an authoritative style, that are of grave importance to jihadi networks so that these writings are branded with FTO logos and shared.

Generally curated in this context means content, mainly books, that is branded with FTO logos, but is not authored by terrorist groups or their affiliates. Most of these books belong to a classical Islamic legacy. These were published by various publishing houses (typically in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon), and are unrelated to the jihadi movement. As such, they bear no FTO logo. Writings by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, for example, are of great influence for AQ, IS and others. His books are shared by IS with its media house Maktabat al-Himma logo. The same books by the same author without the logo are hosted across a huge number of platforms, file hosting services and by governmental sites in the Gulf region (i.e. governmental public/open access sites etc.). Prominently featured works by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab by the Islamic State's Maktabat al-Himma are an abridged biography of prophet Muhammad²⁴ or his book "Benefit of the beneficiary regarding the disbelief (*kufir*) of the one who leaves the oneness of God (*tawhid*)."²⁵

Other examples include selected books by historic author Ibn Taymiyya, such as his book of governance according to the *shari'a*, which was re-published by the Islamic State's Maktabat al-Himma media group, as described in greater detail in the appendix, Sample 2.

These writings are part of the modern jihadi ecosystem, originating from the historic pro-jihadi Salafi spectrum and thus make up what we refer to as the Salafi-jihadi nexus. Most of these writings can be attributed to the Wahhabi line and are thus widely shared and curated by Gulf states online as well.

To clarify, what we mean by the term Wahhabism in the context of the Caliphate Library dataset as well as in the meaning of the writings of IS and AQ: By Wahhabism we refer to an interpretation of Islam embedded in Hanbali tradition of Central Arabia and based on teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, as adopted and propagated worldwide by the Saudi state under the more acceptable term "Salafism". Jihadis are not Wahhabis, as they criticise Saudi rulers and modern Saudi official clergy, yet they highly esteem older Wahhabi scholars, and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in particular. For example, the book by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab regarding the "Benefit of the beneficiary regarding the disbelief (*kufir*) of the one who leaves the oneness of God (*tawhid*)" is hosted on the website of the Saudi Ministry of Culture where this work is referred to as the "sciences of Al-aqidah", the sciences of creed.²⁶ The same book is republished by the IS media group Maktabat al-Himma as it is of great importance to IS to justify and sanction the punishment of those who, in the words of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, are deemed to have left *tawhid*.

The term Salafi in this context means historical as well as contemporary Islamic scholars and writers that are theologically in line with the writings, actions and issued legitimacy of modern jihadi terrorist groups that are designated as FTO. Not to be confused: the texts and the videos, that are intended to demonstrate applied theology, implementation of divine law (*shari'a*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) are based on the written output by scholars that are Salafis and in most cases historic. The Salafi segment is dominated by Wahhabi scholars, including first and foremost the original writings by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

3. SHARED CONTENT

Any content based on the evidence of what is shared/linked/hosted/offered within IS as much as AQ networks online that does not fall under category 1 or 2 is referred to as shared content.

A prominent and recurring book is the one authored by 14th century scholar Ibn Taymiyya. Several editions of this book are in circulation within FTO-designated online networks.

Ibn Taymiyya authoritatively outlines the obligation to kill whoever insults the prophet Muhammad or God in his book “The drawn sword against the insulter of the Prophet” (al-sarim al-maslul ala shatim al-rasul).

This book as retrieved within the Caliphate Library is outlined in greater detail in the appendix, Sample 1. Ibn Taymiyya’s book has been used by Muhammed Bouyeri to justify killing Dutch filmmaker and Islam critic Theo van Gogh in November 2004 in Amsterdam and is part of a long list of jihadi operations in recent years.

For example, a brief selection of terrorist attacks, where Ibn Taymiyya’s book was cited, include:

Following the killing of van Gogh 2004, the killer Muhammad Bouyeri attached a statement with a knife to the chest of the slain van Gogh.

In 2008, an AQ operative cited the book in his farewell video before attacking the Danish embassy in Pakistan (as a reaction to Muhammad cartoons).

In 2012, an AQ operative referred to it in German to call upon supporters in North-Rhine-Westphalia to murder right-wing party members who showed the Muhammad cartoons at a demonstration.

In January 2015, the Kouachi brothers, AQ operatives, attacked the Charlie Hebdo office while shouting “we have avenged the prophet” when they shot wounded French police officer Ahmad Merabet in the head. Ibn Taymiyya’s book was referenced throughout AQ media items in relationship to the attack.

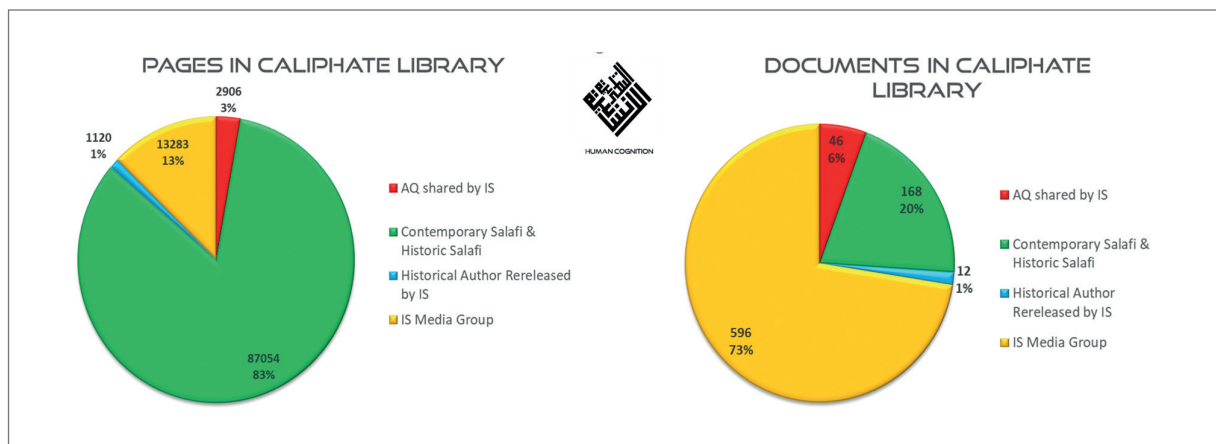
In October 2020, the killing of the French teacher Samuel Paty was justified based on Ibn Taymiyya’s book, which was shared and referred to within mainly AQ networks who celebrated the killer and his video that surfaced shortly after. Paty had shown Muhammad cartoons in class to discuss freedom of speech.

INTERROGATING THE DATASET OF THE CALIPHATE LIBRARY

INTERROGATING THE DATASET OF THE CALIPHATE LIBRARY

For a sustained period, the Islamic State (IS) curated a channel on the encrypted social media platform Telegram called “The Caliphate Library.” The content of this “library” is a small-scale representation of what type of materials and writings jihadi groups in general share online and demonstrates how the jihadi movement thrives on lengthy documents that define their theology, beliefs, fostering the Salafi-jihadi dialectic. This individual library was deleted end of November 2019 in a concerted attempt to ban IS networks on Telegram²⁷ and its materials re-surfaced shortly after on other Telegram channels and platforms, such as TamTam or Nandbox, that had not been used by IS before.²⁸

This individual library contains 908 PDF documents, which collectively contain over 111,000 pages. This is far from what one might expect from a movement which thinks in 140 characters, as some Western commentators suggest – and constitutes the core IS-related literature. The 908 PDF documents are of different origin, as outlined below. Particularly important to note, while most documents (73%) were produced by an IS or its preceding ISI²⁹ media group, most of the writing by number of pages (83%) are theological texts from contemporary and historic Salafi authors. These documents provide a vital insight into the diverse nature of documents which comprise the Salafi-jihadi nexus.



Breakdown of Caliphate Library by number of documents and pages

The pie-chart on the left shows the number of pages of each category. The categories are:

1. AQ era (without ISI/IS) in red;
2. IS media group in yellow;
3. Salafi books by contemporary and historical authors in green. These writings are neither banned nor illegal in most countries around the world and provide the religious ecosystem to degrade humans and define the ‘other’ as enemy and so forth. The number of pages of these writings outweigh what terrorist groups produce and are exclusively concerned with theological matters, ranging from jurisprudence (*fiqh*) to defining the *shirk*³⁰/*tawhid* dichotomy as a fundamental marker to build religious identity, as detailed in this article.
4. Blue shows the dedicated re-publication of such legal Salafi writings by IS’ Maktabat al-Himma (MH), marking the importance for the extremist constituents. These books that are published by IS electronically feature especially one author: Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Six books in total are in the Caliphate Library dataset by this author with the Maktabat al-Himma branding to booster the credibility of “the Islamic State, the

Caliphate following the conduct of the Prophet.”³¹ All six books by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab are exclusively of a deeply religious nature, dealing with doctrine (*aqida*), rules of worship, ethical principles and matters related to *tawhid/shirk*. IS emphasizes on the cover of each of his MH-published books, that the author “died in the year 1206, anno higræ.”³² This emphasis is also set in the description of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s books on the homepage of the Saudi Libraries Commission.

The pie-chart on the right side shows the quantity of documents in the Caliphate Library. 596 uniquely IS- (and ISI-) produced documents make up over 13,000 pages. Hence, the number of IS(I) produced documents are shorter, quicker to read, greater in number, yet reference to the rich ecosystem of the (green) 87,000 pages of extremist Salafi writings. This dataset is not unique or unprecedented, rather it is a mundane aspect of hardcore online jihadi networks where a lot of written, and audio-/visual content is shared. The jihadi – be it AQ or IS – curation of documents online in a user-friendly package is also not new. In the early 2000s, AQ laid the foundation of modern online jihad activism as part of the ongoing *da’wa* (proselytism) obligation and to project global influence. Already back in 2006/7, AQ provided similar textual data sets – or libraries electronically – called the “Mujahid’s bag”. Four volumes of “bags” had been shared, each as a single compressed file (*.zip). In sum, all four “bags” contained over 1,500 Word documents and in addition texts as html documents, rtf and some videos.³³

1. THE AQ ERA (THE ARAB PENINSULA DOCUMENTS)

6% of the 908 PDF documents are from the AQ era, excluding the Iraqi AQ side, The Islamic State of Iraq, the forerunner of IS. It is significant to note, for IS and their readership, the ‘historical’ AQ documents of the Arab Peninsula jihadi ecosystem matter. It provides the theological legitimacy to kill those fellow Sunni Muslims who are in the service of Arab regimes (i.e. Faris al-Zahrani³⁴), the historical jihadi legitimacy of indiscriminate killings (i.e. al-Fahd³⁵) or the re-enforced intellectual argumentations of fighting jihad until the end of times (i.e. al-Uyairi³⁶). The first generation of al-Qaeda on the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) had been pioneers in facilitating the Internet as a constant medium for their output in the early 2000s and had a major crossover to the unfolding jihad in neighbouring Iraq.³⁷ AQAP not only produced the first electronic jihad magazines but also had been a key cornerstone in the development of Sunni jihadi online activism.³⁸

Of these core pre-IS AQ documents one AQ author is dominantly featured: Abu Hammam Bakr ibn Abdalaziz al-Athari. Al-Athari gained fame by his real name: Abu Sufyan Turki ibn Mubarak ibn al-Bin’ali, who had been a keen supporter of the Islamic State in Iraq when it was part of AQ and later sided with al-Baghdadi before falling out with him. He was a prolific writer and, for example, under his pseudonym eulogized the Islamic State of Iraq leaders, the “believer of the faithful and his minister”, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Hamza al-Muhajir in April 2010.³⁹ His writings regarding the Arab Spring in 2011, calling for violence as the only possible means in Syria⁴⁰ are shared by the Library as well. A document from February 2010 entitled “Conversation or Mooing”⁴¹ is shared as well, highlighting the framework of that time when the West sought to engage moderate Islamic forces to undermine extremist groups. The document shared in the current context, almost ten years later, is seen as proof for the Caliphate Library target audience that ‘true’ Islam is victorious despite the odds. His 2011 fatwa-styled ruling on banning women from driving is also part of the collection and was enforced during the reign of IS during its physical territorial phase in Syria and Iraq.⁴²

Other writings of the AQ era feature Nasir al-Fahd, a treatise on “What a Woman should wear in front of other women”, dated to the year 2000. Nasir al-Fahd was a prominently featured scholar in the ecosystem and his writings called among other things for indiscriminate revenge bombings of citizens of enemy nations and the like. Nasir al-Fahd was arrested after the May bombings 2003 in Riyadh and recanted his support of terrorism while in prison. AQ, at that time active in Saudi Arabia, was keen to support al-Fahd by the emergent online ecosystem and al-Fahd’s alleged

letter “recanting the alleged recantation” was featured within this ecosystem.⁴³ Unlike al-Fahd, Abu Jandal al-Azdi was executed by the Saudi state after his arrest in August 2004. Abu Jandal al-Azdi aka as Faris al-Zahrani by his real name, was a key jihadi-theologian. In the Caliphate Library collection his work on “Osama bin Laden – Reformer of our Time and Crusher of the Americans” (640 pages) is featured and a new IS version of his early 2000s writing regarding the permissibility to kill Muslims in the service of Arab nation states had been re-published. He was on a wanted list of Saudi Arabia, to which AQAP responded by issuing a 65-page long ‘counter-narrative’ featuring the 26 individuals of the most wanted list. This writing was edited by al-Azdi and is part of the Caliphate Library.

2. IS MEDIA GROUP, INCLUDING THE PRECURSOR ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ (ISI)

In addition to the material produced by *al-Dawla al-Islamiyya*, the channel republished ISI era documents. This is an important part of the identity for *al-Dawla al-Islamiyya* and a religious authoritative source – These combined represent 73% of documents by over 13% of the pages (over 13,000 pages). Many of the documents from the ISI era are martyr stories that had been published by the AQ Iraq media diwan (2005) and consequently distributed by the Majlis al-Shura al-Mujahidin and al-Furqan, the foundations of ISI. IS re-published these early martyr stories of Iraq fighting against mainly the Americans in 2018. The document of 235 pages features over 50 martyr stories, including prominent al-Zarqawi lieutenant Abu Anas al-Shami⁴⁴, valorising the avant-gardist jihadi operations of the time that led to the success of the Islamic State a decade later. The textual cohesion set out in such martyr stories of the ISI era is continued by similar stories by, for example, IS’ al-Rimah media featuring the martyr Abu Ali al-Shammari, a member of a large tribe from Iraq, following the “examples of Khattab [Samir Saleh Abdallah, Chechnya], Shamil [Basayev, Chechnya], Osama [bin Laden] and other” jihadi foreign fighters.⁴⁵ A focal point, naturally, are the IS era documents that to a degree are transcripts of IS radio al-Bayan programs, featuring lengthy theological explanations by iconic IS figures such as Abu Ali al-Anbari outlining the Sunni jihadi understanding of being a *muwabbhid*, of professing the meaning of the “oneness of God”.⁴⁶ Other key documents include the series about the “Baath party – its history and ideology” (published by IS-media al-Battar), the treatise “legal ruling on defending against an attack against the Islamic *shari‘a* and the ruling of the [jihadi] banner”, an updated re-print from the Saudi AQ era and released by al-Battar in 2015. The collected speeches by Abu Muhammad al-Adnani are likewise featured with IS’ Maktabat al-Himma re-releases of slain ISI leaders’ writings, and featured prominently the “30 recommendations to the *amirs* and soldiers of the Islamic State” by Abd al-Mun‘im ibn Izz al-Din al-Badawi aka Abu Hamza al-Muhajir. This 74-page long advice, in a sense his legacy, was re-distributed in multiple languages by Maktabat al-Himma in 2016, along with articles from Dabiq magazine and selected articles taken from the weekly al-Naba’ newspaper. These documents showcase the active side of the Islamic State, the constant emphasis on jurisprudence, which during their occupation of urban areas *was actively* implemented. Lengthy documents clarifying everyday legal issues are also part of the library. These documents use a Q&A style to explain issues ranging from; legal rulings (*fatwa*) to mundane issues such as who has to recompense what to the family of a victim of traffic accidents or general rulings in regards of blood money and revenge killings,⁴⁷ Ashhad writings on the proper process during Ramadan⁴⁸, reacting to AQ claims and drawing a line of distinction between AQ under bin Laden and that of al-Zawahiri⁴⁹ and classical jihadi-styled theological treatises that in sum can be labeled as anti-democracy analysis.⁵⁰

3. HISTORIC AND CONTEMPORARY SALAFI DOCUMENTS

While the majority of PDF documents are crafted by the two dominant Sunni jihadi groups AQ and IS, the Caliphate Library distributed historical and contemporary Salafi writing which intersects with modern Sunni jihadi theology. Of the non-IS branded Salafi writings shared by the Library, not all works are to be associated with the extremist segment. Yet, it is featured because the unique

content, the religious detailing and original sources, matter to the extremist ecosystem. What makes the Salafi writings shared by the Library to be defined as extremist, is the evidence-based linkage of the textual layers. This is based on the shared theology, that is shared meaning, using the same language and referencing and oftentimes the same religious sources to enable, encourage or directly justify violence. This is the core of the Salafi-jihadi nexus with the Salafi writings part of a network of fostering the jihadi religious identity and as such enabling their cause. Citing and sharing at length jihadi-curated Salafi writings as demonstrated in this data set, enables jihadi authors to project religious knowledge and authority with the sources used that serve as a credible basis that is oftentimes shared within the same networks. For example, legitimizing killing those who insult prophet Muhammad (Ibn Taymiyya 1263-1328 AD) is put into practice by AQ in the 2000s (following the Muhammad cartoons), sanctions the murder of Theo van Gogh (Amsterdam, 2004), is the main theme of a major ISI/IS themed video series (2012-2014), was cited by AQ in a farewell video of a suicide operative who then attacked the Danish embassy in Pakistan (2008), and, most recently, skipping many events in between, was referenced in the beheading of a French teacher in Paris in 2020.⁵¹ The writings are the basis of the modern jihadi theology, relating the jihadi religiosity to violence against the defined ungodly, unholy or simply unhuman as the 'other'. Within the literature shared by jihadis, a core element is to detail *shirk* and warnings of Shia who are theologically defined as obligatory to prevent by all means and by means of violence.

Looking at the Arabic produced content of jihadi groups allows to reference and link the sources and to read the original sources as intended in the understanding of those who share these and base their own writings on. The Caliphate Library Telegram channel provides a comprehensive collection of such core-jihadi historical and contemporary extremist Salafi textbooks that continue to inspire and fuel the Sunni jihadi movement as such. This is not limited to historical Salafi writers such as of Abd al-Wahhab, Ibn al-Qayyim, Muhammad al-Shawkani but includes modern extremist Salafi thinkers who are as outspoken in their works and who without much effort are able to maintain online networks to further their view of the world and the hereafter.

All Salafi books in this dataset are scanned PDFs of varying quality. In total, these are 184 files and account for 1.8 gb of data. The 184 scanned PDFs have been transformed into text files with a dedicated OCR tool provided by T3K.⁵² OCR enables us to search the text files for specific key words and phrases and allows to draw a direct comparison between the machine-readable high quality jihadi library and the now machine-readable Salafi part. This direct comparison based on the *shared vocabulary*, that is, *shared meaning* between contemporary jihadi writings and the Salafi files will be addressed in a forthcoming article.

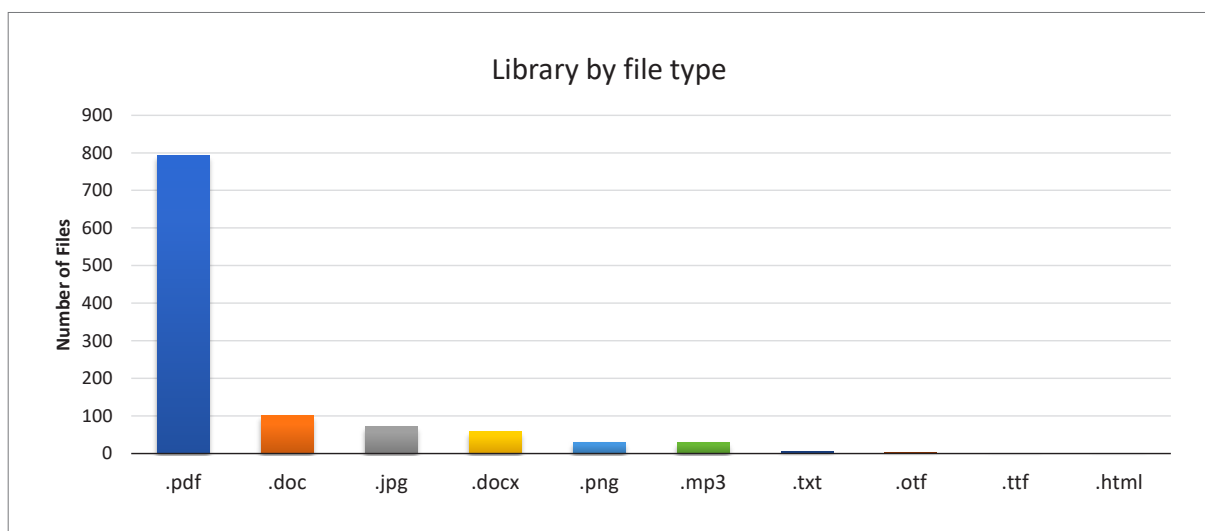
4. THE SALAFI-JIHADI NEXUS BY MAKTABAT AL-HIMMA

Earlier writings are re-published by al-Dawla al-Islamiyya through *Maktabat al-Himma*, a theologically-driven publication house of IS that republishes writings by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, his progeny and other prominent scholars from Najdi families. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's writings are the backbone of modern-day Wahhabism that constitutes the state doctrine of Saudi Arabia and had been considered extreme in his time. Banning veneration of graves and being outspoken anti-Shia, the work of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab gave birth to modern jihadism where a clear Sunni identity is laid out in a cohesive literal format and with the Islamic State from 2013 onwards, demonstrating the power of applying this form of extremist theology in audio-visual format to appeal to a less text-affluent zeitgeist on the Internet. Apart from extremist Salafi books re-published through Maktabat al-Himma (MH), using self-created covers featuring the MH and IS logo with the slogan "upon prophetic methodology"⁵³, many Salafi writings shared by the Library channel are scans made available as PDFs.

THE CALIPHATE LIBRARY – BY THE NUMBERS

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The Caliphate Library contained 1092 files in total. 793 of these files, or 72% are a Portable Document Format (PDF), with another 159 files (14.5%) being Word documents (.doc and .docx). This shows the importance of the written word within the Salafi-jihadi movement.



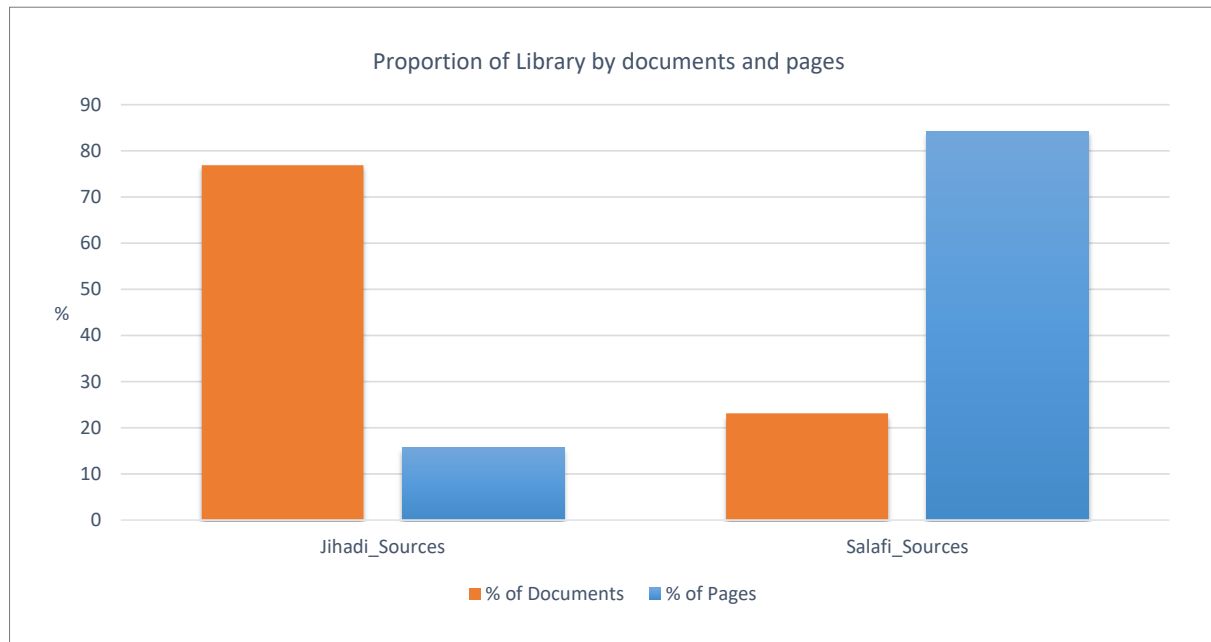
PDF documents in the Library (excluding encrypted files) comprise 104,523 pages of Arabic text, the primary language of the Salafi-jihadi movement – and the primary language of the most important writings that matters to the movement.⁵⁴ That IS have curated the archive demonstrates the importance of these documents to their theological understanding and defining of the world and one which they intend their supporters to share. If we are to avoid the missteps of the past, from Afghanistan to Iraq, Syria, Mali, and Somalia, it is imperative we understand what the Salafi-jihadi movement communicates to their supporters, in the terms they intend it to be understood. The findings from the Library challenge some common misunderstandings about the Salafi-jihadi movement which have become firmly lodged in the imagination of Western-centric orthodox approaches to Terrorism Studies.

Despite the general assumption of IS thinking in 140 characters, a reference to the original length of a Tweet, this data set provides evidence the average (mean) length of a document in the Caliphate Library is closer to 140 pages. However, in the 759 unencrypted documents, there is a large difference in length. The shortest documents are only 1 page, with the longest running to 1,947 pages. The median, mid-point in the data, is 13 pages meaning that there are as many documents longer than 13 pages, than there are documents shorter than 13 pages.

Statistic	Value
Mean	137.71
Median	13
Mode	4
Minimum	1
Maximum	1,947
Sum	104,523
Count	759

These documents are a range of types, those documents written and published by al-Dawla al-Islamiyyah (IS), those written by others but republished by IS, and those curated by IS but written and published by others.

These documents come from both sides of the Salafi-jihadi nexus, as they come from both contemporary Jihadi groups and prominent Salafi authors.



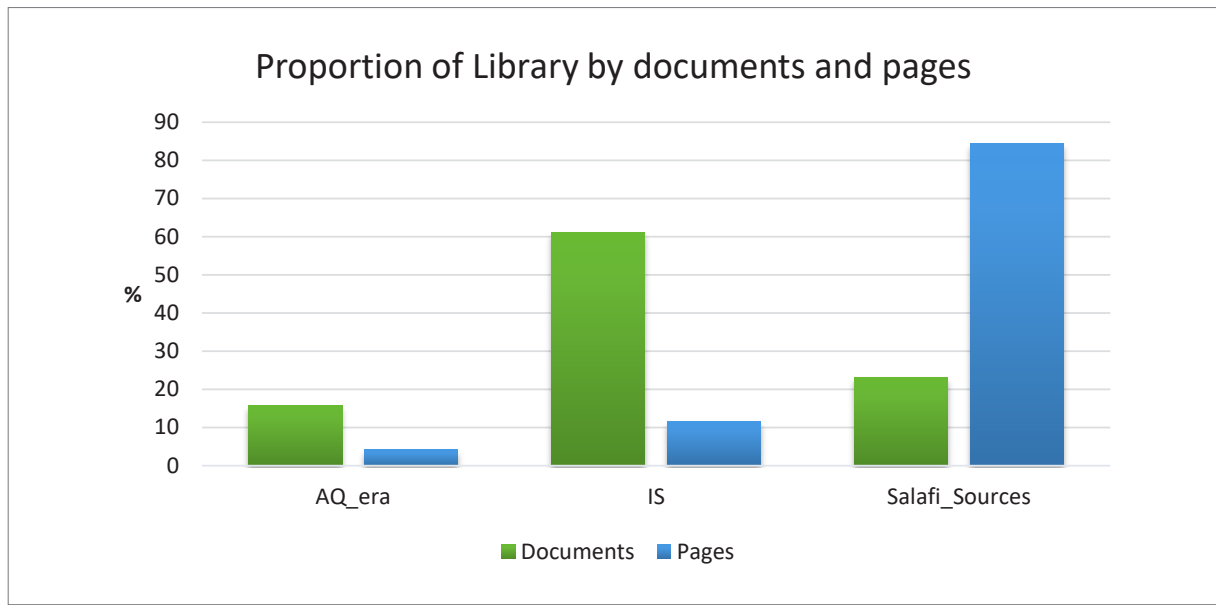
Expressed as a proportion of the total, jihadi sources represent three quarters (76.8%) of the documents but only 15.7% of the pages. This indication from the quantity of material will be discussed qualitatively in the following sections. From a quantitative perspective, this indicates that while IS has produced a large volume of documents, the detailed and lengthy theological arguments are drawn from and set out by existing Salafi authors. As such, while orthodox Terrorism Studies (OTS) has drawn inferences and focused most of their attention on the number of short documents written and published by IS, the meaning encapsulated in these documents is based on and inseparable from documents on the Salafi side of the Salafi-jihadi nexus. Given that IS has curated such an archive of Salafi material, it is worth reiterating the progressive terrorism studies approach:

Only by understanding the language, references, codes and socio-political context, can analysis uncover what Salafi-jihadi groups are communicating. Analysis must be backed by the ability to quote previous examples that elucidate the conceptual framework of producer and target audience.⁵⁵

This contradicts much of the prominent contemporary research about Salafi-jihadi groups which has often been based on the systemic devaluation of Arabic sources and ‘whittling away’ the very theological concepts on which the movement is based.⁵⁶ The most flawed parts of the OTS branch of research claim to ‘uncloak’ the real motivations of the movement drawing on ideas such as crime, rap music, gore porn, and a ‘Jihadi Utopia’.⁵⁷ Not one of the texts envisages a ‘Jihadi Utopia’ nor proposes a ‘Utopian narrative’. The idea of a ‘Utopian Narrative’ is an artefact of Western misinterpretation.

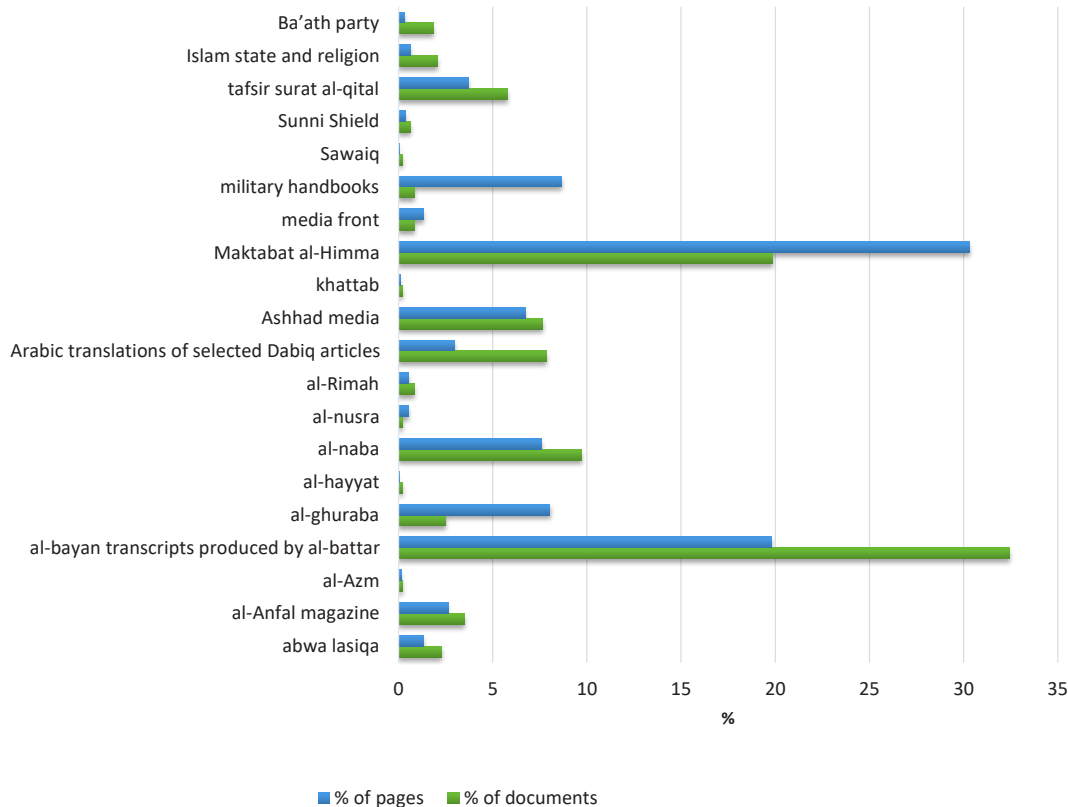
That IS have curated an archive where 23% of the documents and 84% of the pages are from Salafi authors presents a significant counterweight to the notion that the theology is a distraction from the true purpose and meaning of the movement.

Focusing on the jihadi sources it is notable that not all the material was written and produced by IS. In fact, 125 documents (15.8%) come from the AQ era. This is because IS traces its jihadi lineage back through AQ, and why individuals including Osama bin Laden, and Anwar al-Awlaki appear in IS video material.

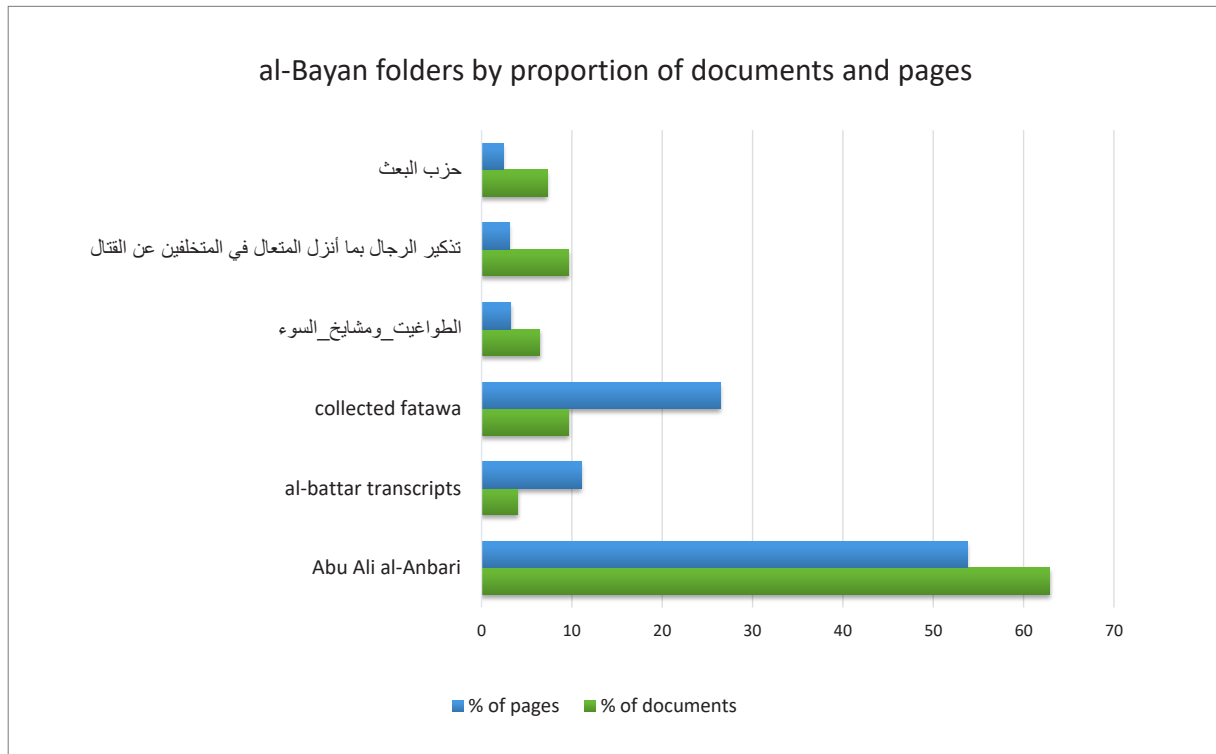


Closer analysis of the IS portion of the archive highlights the range of material which is included. Some of these would be unfamiliar if one were to read prominent OTS work. Even much of the work which has claimed to categorise IS material has seemingly relied on an IS logo, rather than studying what material the movement supporting IS and their Caliphate has produced, even simple elements like al-Bayan programs (except the daily announcements also available in English) go almost entirely unmentioned. An authentic image of the pro-IS material embraces the rhizomatic interconnectivity of meaning across production media.⁵⁸ An authentic representation of Salafi-jihadi groups is much more complex than the narrowband approach frequently published by OTS.

IS documents as proportion of documents and pages



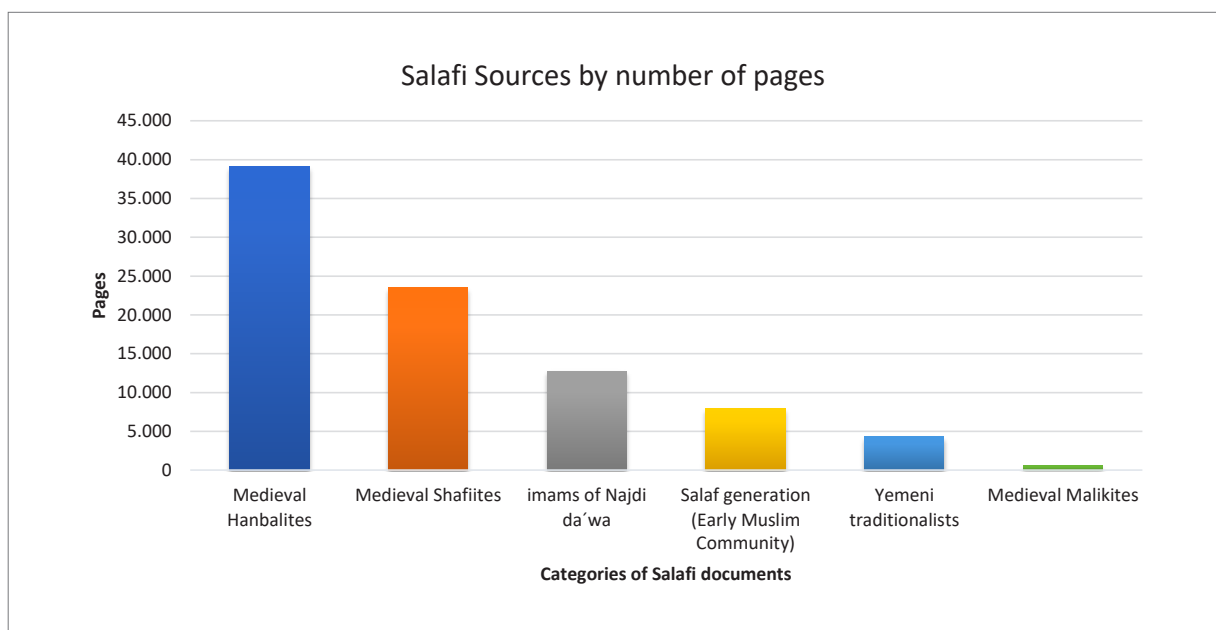
The breadth of often overlooked material is particularly clear in the al-Bayan transcripts. The al-Bayan transcripts produced by IS media al-Battar comprise 124 documents running to 1673 pages (an average of 13.5 pages). Other folders feature the products of IS media institutes that had been highly active in releasing texts.⁵⁹ Al-Hayyat, a mostly video-savvy media house, released a short 3-page long text with the title “Kill the Leaders of Disbelief.” The title is a reference to the 9th Surah (al-Tawba, Repentance), 12th verse. Where the Quran calls on “fighting the leaders of disbelief”, al-Hayyat changed “fight” to use the imperative of the same Arabic root of *q-t-l*⁶⁰ demanding to “kill” the “leaders of disbelief”, referring to the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The ruling House of Al Su‘ud, the family of Saud, is considered by jihadis as an illegitimate rule as in contrast to the teachings of modern Saudi Arabia’s co-founder, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.⁶¹ Two high-ranking AQ theologians are featured who had been killed by the Saudi regime in this short essay to underpin the Unislamic form of rule: Hamad al-Humaydi and Faris al-Zahrani. Al-Humaydi gave a sermon in 2006 with the title “we are terrorists but who are you?”, in which he theologically defines the Saudi rulers as tyrants who have the ambition of being worshipped like a false idol/tyrant, or *taghut* in the vocabulary of jihadis, against whom AQ has sworn to fight. The theology clearly defines the ruling Saudi class as part of what is referred to as *taghut* (plural: *tawaghit*), as tyrants who have a greater interest in forcing Muslims to worship them instead of rendering worship exclusively to God. This constitutes *shirk* and violates therefore the very principle of *tawhid* (monotheism) The sermon by al-Humaydi appears time and again in online networks of both AQ and IS and has influenced many contemporary jihadi theologians such as Faris al-Zahrani (known by his *nom de guerre* Abu Jandal al-Azdi).



Al-Bayan was the IS radio station that exclusively addressed religious topics and ran programs such as *fatwas* in regards of mundane aspects (“collected fatwas”, below), outlining why the Syrian Baath Party is illegitimate, or writings by one of the most important IS theologians, Abu Ali al-Anbari.

Similar to the finding from the jihadi side of the Salafi-jihadi nexus, the Salafi material is more extensive than is usually expressed in much contemporary research. As noted earlier the Salafi material is the lengthy theological material which underpins the shorter jihadi pieces, and to which the *jihadi* pieces implicitly or explicitly refer.

The Salafi material is where many of the key elements of Salafi-jihadi theology is laid out.



THE SALAFI-JIHADI NEXUS – WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE TELL US?

THE SALAFI-JIHADI NEXUS – WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE TELL US?

The Maktabat al-khilafa – or Caliphate Library – can be divided into two parts in terms of the data provenience. First, a collection of IS’ own propaganda and ideological/theological materials, including AQ, as described. Second, a collection of publications of non-IS provenience. For the sake of simplification, we refer to this part of the library as the “Salafi library”. We are aware of the fact that this is a disputable label, as there is an ongoing discussion regarding the meaning and definition of the term “Salafi”, both in Muslim discourse as well as in the current Western scholarship. However, we use the term because IS subscribes to Salafism and refers to themselves as being Salafi, as outlined in the article. Furthermore, the items included in this part of the library can be regarded as an appropriation of the intellectual legacy by IS.

We will demonstrate that the items involved here have two features—some of them are Salafi in the theological term of the word, that is they subscribe to a specific methodology in understanding divine attributes and names, some are Salafi in terms of jurisprudential matters (anti-madhab⁶² approach, calling for *ijtihad*⁶³ in its absolute and lesser degrees, which is the case of *ikhtilaf*⁶⁴). Yet all of them have in common to highlight the importance of *hadith* (saying or documented deeds of prophet Muhammad), be it in creed, theology, jurisprudence, or orthopraxy (Sunna). This fact is reflected in the way IS sympathizers identify themselves as Salafi or Athari (*athar* being a synonym for hadith, *athari* as an adjective denoting a traditionalist, used in names especially as indicating a theological affiliation, for example Abu Hammam Bakr ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Athari).⁶⁵

Chronologically, the Salafi section in the Caliphate Library includes early Muslim authorities (*salaf*) and later authorities (*khalaf*). Most scholars of the *khalaf* group come from the Mamluk period (1250-1517). Another significant group are “imams of Najdi mission” (*a’imat al-da’wa al-najdiyya*). It consists of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792), an eponym of Wahhabism, and later Wahhabi scholars (excluding those who are deemed to having sold out themselves). As for the books of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, several of them are re-published by Maktabat al-Himma, a core-IS media group. Prominently, as outlined above, Maktabat al-Himma republished Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s abridged biography of Prophet Muhammad⁶⁶, al-Wajibat⁶⁷ or Mufid al-mustafid fi kufr tarik al-tawhid.⁶⁸ This version of the biography of Prophet Muhammad focuses on historical battles fought by early Muslims under the Prophet’s command, conveying a *mujahid* identity as a role model based on the Prophet himself and his companions, the *sahaba*. The latter book issues a stern warning outlining the danger of falling into a state of disbelief in case of violating or abandoning the service for the oneness of God (*tawhid*). Other authors that have been re-published by Maktabat al-Himma include Sulayman ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab or what might be a bit of a surprise: a non-religious book on Arabic grammar by Jamal al-Din Muhammad al-Ansari (Ibn Hisham) as mastering Arabic is one of the most important foundations for understanding religious writings in their original language.

Another major faction of Salafi books shared in the Caliphate Library are scanned PDFs of Yemeni traditionalists, namely Ibn al-Wazir (d. 1436) and Muhammad al-Shawkani (d. 1839). Especially Muhammad al-Shawkani is featured often in jihadi writings and videos to authoritatively legitimize hostage takings, releasing certain hostages for ransom⁶⁹ and executions.⁷⁰

The books contained in the Salafi library are part of what is in Arabo-Islamic milieu referred to as *turath*: Islamic intellectual legacy. That means most of the books are by no means “typical” for extremists and terrorists, and hence these books and writings are not those one would expect to be put on a “blacklist”. They cover thematically diverse fields of religious disciplines and fields, such as jurisprudence, theology, creed, Quranic exegesis, individual or collective biographies, Prophetic

biography, hadith etc.⁷¹ Saying that, the exception are books of Wahhabi legacy, that is books of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his disciples. Many of those books underline radical socio-religious concepts and offer very simplistic opinions. This is especially true as it comes to doctrines such as *hijra* (emigration), *al-wala' wa al-bara'* (loyalty and dissociation)⁷² and the theological-historical concept of *jihad* itself, which are the building stones of jihadi literature. While these doctrines are part of the classical legacy, these are oftentimes dealt with judicious and accurate distinction by jihadi authors and scholars.

We presuppose that the most influential authors for IS are Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab⁷³ and Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328). The first influenced IS by his simplistic radical socio-religious concepts that already had influenced AQ, while by the means of the latter IS – just as AQ – tries to establish religious legitimacy and superiority. The connection between the two men was gradually established by the Wahhabi scholars, especially in the third Saudi State (from 1932 onwards). It is important to bear in mind that Salafi jihadism in general, and IS in particular, emerged from Wahhabism, the official state doctrine of the third Saudi state, or more precisely, from Salafism, an intellectual hybrid that sprouted from the Wahhabi substrate in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s and thereafter.⁷⁴ From the beginning of the third Saudi state, there was an effort to get rid of the label of heresy connected with Wahhabism, that is the radical works and teachings by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, so his legacy was gradually connected with that of Ibn Taymiyya in an effort to seek broader currency and legitimacy.⁷⁵ Jihadis adopted this approach.⁷⁶ What makes them different from the Saudi official interpretation of Salafism is that they consider themselves the true scions and defenders of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's legacy – and actively fight to implement his understanding of *tawhid* or *shirk* –, thus criticising the Saudi regime for betraying his teachings, especially the radical-socio religious conceptions. This is especially true as it comes to radical socio-religious concepts such as the aforementioned *hijra*, *al-wala' wa al-bara'* and *jihad*. The significance of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab in the ideology, that is, to be precise, the theology of IS, is evident, among other things, by the very fact that they publish his work (as it is or even in simplified versions) – and frequently cite his works in their own.⁷⁷ As featured in the Caliphate Library, a whole IS-penned series is dedicated to one of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's books, *Nawaqidh al-Islam*, – warning the readers of the “nullifiers that lead to annulation of Islam” and thus endangering the believer to become a disbeliever. Apart from this dedicated series, of the 654 documents in total that are penned by jihadis in the Caliphate Library, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is mentioned 68 times.⁷⁸

Yet it would be too simplistic to view the books of *turath* as mere tools for jihadis to seek legitimacy or religious authority. The books offer a detailed model of true believers and warriors for the sake of God (especially in the biographies of early Muslims), orthopraxis (*sunna*), orthodoxy (*aqida*) and spiritual relief. For Salafi jihadis, the apocalyptic imagery, promised rewards for martyrs, eschatology, proper belief in divine attributes and names or other doctrinal issues all combined really matter.⁷⁹

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SALAFI PART OF THE CALIPHATE LIBRARY

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SALAFI PART OF THE CALIPHATE LIBRARY

We start our description by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and Ibn Taymiyya, respectively. In the Salafi part of the Library, what draws our attention is an electronic version of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's treatise on the above-mentioned socio-religious concepts, entitled *Madkhal al-aqida yalibi al-masa'il al-sitta* (An Introduction into Creed, Followed by The Six Questions). The reason is that it is one of the two books of non-jihadi authors contained in the Salafi library, published, most probably, by IS itself. The second book of this kind is a treatise on *taghut* by a Wahhabi scholar of the third Saudi state, namely Sulayman ibn Sahman (d. 1931), in his *Risala fi bayan al-Taghut wa wujub ijtinabihi* (Treatise explaining *Taghut* and how to avoid it).

However, more voluminous are two well-known collections of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's texts, *Majmu'at al-tawhid* (Compendium on monotheism) and *al-Durar al-saniya fi al-ajwiba al-najdiyya* (Glittering pearls of Najdi responses). The first was published by Abd al-Qadir al-Arna'ut and Bashir Muhammad Uyun in 1987 in Damascus.⁸⁰ Besides Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, it contains treatises by scholars of "proper *aqida*", to paraphrase the publisher, such as Ibn Taymiyya, dealing with the topic of different aspects of *tawhid*, *shirk*, hypocrisy, *nawaqid al-Islam* ("nullifiers of Islam"), conditions of prayer, highlights from the biography of the prophet etc.

The latter, edited by Ibn Qasim,⁸¹ is a very comprehensive collection of treaties written by the "imams of the Najdi mission" (16 volumes in total), chronologically ranging from Ibn Abd al-Wahhab himself up to "our days". The Salafi library includes only selections from this collection, especially passages attributed to Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's disciples and descendants (Al al-Shaykh). Therefore, by the selections made in the Salafi library, we can tell which topics were chosen and highlighted from the whole collection, which makes it of substantial analytical value to experts. The proper analysis is yet to be done, yet it might be said for now that the choice underlines, as one would expect, not only topics relevant to the jihadis, such rulings on apostasy (*hukm al-murtadd*), or theological framework outlining militant jihad, but also topics of practical issues such as sales (*bay'*), and more importantly treatises on doctrinal issues (*aqa'id*), worship (*ibadat*), friendly admonitions (*nasa'ih*), *tawhid* (monotheism)⁸² in general, and *tawhid al-asma' wa-l sifat* in particular. So, this provides evidence that jihadis of IS are concerned not only with military and practical aspects of Islam but are concerned with theological issues as well. They define themselves as adherents of one of the three orthodox theological schools of Sunni Islam⁸³, who are distinguishable by very peculiar understanding of divine attributes and names according to early Muslim community (Salaf), hence the name Salafi school.

This fact is reflected in the contents of the Salafi library, which includes many treatises on divine attributes and names. The topic is also reflected in jihadi production as such in the Maktabat al-khilafa. We think this is an interesting line to follow, as in Western scholarship, which underestimates Arabic sources, IS is oftentimes reduced in terms of its intellectual scope (referential frame), yet Maktabat al-khilafa show that intellectual legacy adopted by IS is a very complex one.

THE IMPACT OF THE WRITINGS BY IBN TAYMIYYA IN THE DATASET

Perhaps the most comprehensive treatise on the topic of divine attributes in general, and in the Salafi library in particular, is a collection of treatises authored by Ibn Taymiyya, published in two volumes under the title *Kitab al-asma' wa-l sifat* (Book of Divine attributes and names) in Beirut in 1998.⁸⁴ The treatises – often repetitive in content— are written in a very difficult technical language, and given the erudition of Ibn Taymiyya combined with his obscure prose, makes it a hard read, comprehensible only to those who are at ease with classical Arabic and with deep insight into Islamic medieval theological debates. It is relevant to note here that there is a difference between works of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (intended to the uneducated and ignorant people⁸⁵) and those of Ibn Taymiyya, whose writings are intended, with some exceptions, to the educated elite. This is especially apparent when it comes to divine attributes and names. While Ibn Abd al-Wahhab focused primarily on *tawhid* of worship (*tawhid al-uluhiya*) and the question of divine attributes and names was reduced to brief dogmatic formulations, as a formal statement of his subscription to the Hanbali theological school⁸⁶, Ibn Taymiyya's position in this part of theology was gradually adopted by the Saudi religious authorities and IS all together, as is evident from the library. In other words, IS draws its theology primarily on Ibn Taymiyya's works.

The theological line, as we suggest here, is a clue in understanding the contents of the Salafi library. As the Salafi theological position towards divine attributes and names was in medieval Islam interconnected with the Hanbali school of law (to the extent that this school is also referred to as a Hanbali theological school), and partly to the Shafi'i school of law, as well as Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was Hanbali itself (both in legal and theological sense), it is not surprising, that the Salafi library consists mainly of the books of Hanbalis and Shafi'is.⁸⁷ As we aforementioned, Ibn Taymiyya can be considered the most important figure for jihadis, in terms of his personal qualities, as well as his both and legal and theological opinions. Therefore, the Salafi library contains a lot of books written by him, and not surprisingly even about him.

For instance, in the Salafi library, there is a voluminous book (793 pages) devoted to biographical excerpts from various authors across centuries devoted to Sheikh al-Islam, how is he referred to by his sympathizers and admirers.⁸⁸ In such a broad scope the book in question simply illustrates the influence of Ibn Taymiyya on later generations of Salafi scholars, who range chronologically from the Mamluk period up to the generations of modern Salafi reformers such Muhammad al-Shawkani (d. 1839), Siddiq Hasan Khan (d. 1890) and Nu'man al-Alusi (d. 1896). Thematically, the library of Ibn Taymiyya cover various fields, be it creed, theology, law, political theory, Quranic exegesis,⁸⁹ and polemics.

Ibn Taymiyya's books included in the Salafi library range from brief treatises intended for ordinary people, to extensive ones intended for scholars. The example of the first kind is a very famous doctrinal treatise dedicated to people of Wasit, known as *al-Aqida al-Wasitiya*.⁹⁰ *Wasitiya* is known as one of most popular Salafi treatises on creed. It is characteristic that it underlines the proper understanding of divine attributes and names according to the understanding of early Muslim community.

NOTEWORTHY HANBALI SCHOLARS AND THEIR WORKS

Besides Ibn Taymiyya, the Salafi library includes only three fellow Hanbalis, that is members of the same legal and theological school to which Ibn Abd al-Wahhab subscribed. Namely these are Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya (d. 1315), Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi (d. 1223) and Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1201).⁹¹ The first is a well-known disciple of Ibn Taymiyya, yet a great thinker of his own. In comparison with Ibn Taymiyya, he was much more eloquent in Arabic, clearer in expressing his ideas, which makes him a more accessible author. It explains why many Salafis found their way to Ibn Taymiyya by reading Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya first. As Ibn Taymiyya, he is often quoted as an authority condemning heretical innovations in belief and practice, a defender of Salafi creed as it comes to divine attribute and names, as well as a theorist on Islamic government. Although his theological opinions are in accordance with those of his master, he uses alternative classification of tawhid, different from that disseminated by the Saudi religious authorities especially from the 1960s, which was finally adopted also by IS itself. Yet Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's conception is also worked with in jihadi texts.

The library includes many titles of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya. Among them, there is *Ighathat al-lafban min masayid al-Shaytan* (Supporting the distressed against the tricks of Satan). Amongst Salafis, this is a popular work, characterized by its Sufi technical language, and dealing with the sickness of body and spirit. Another book of this sort included in the Salafi library is *Miftah dar al-sa'da* (Key to the Blissful Abode). It focuses on the importance of knowledge and willpower, as means through which a person may attain Paradise, in particular knowledge which pertains to God and His Attributes, the Quran and the example of the Prophet is the key.

One who is not intimately familiar with Salafi discourse might ask the legitimate question, why Salafi jihadis, and IS-fighters are interested in spiritual literature, combined with such theological subtleties as divine attributes and names. To answer such a question, we shall turn our attention back to the teachings of Abdallah Azzam (d. 1989). He is regarded as the first modern ideologue of transnational jihad and is credited with paving the way for the rise of AQ. In the early 1980s, during the war in Afghanistan, Azzam articulated a new jihad doctrine saying that liberating occupied Muslim territory was more important than toppling Muslim governments, and that the *umma* needed to unite and fight together.⁹²

EXCAVATING THE SALAFISM OF ABDALLAH AZZAM

Regarding Azzam's Salafism, we have at our disposal — but it is not part of the library — Azzam's short treatise on doctrine entitled “Creed and its impact on building of the generation” (*al-aqida wa-atharuha fi bina' al-jil*). The doctrine can be considered Azzam's personal creed, as is stated at the very beginning of the treatise.⁹³ It is noteworthy that it was placed at the very beginning of 'Azzam's collected works edited and published by his nephew, which implies its doctrinal/ideological importance.⁹⁴ In the creed Azzam presents his opinions on behalf of the Salafi doctrine. In doing so, he starts in accordance with Ibn Taymiyya's⁹⁵, and therefore with Saudi official discourse. He affirms the trichotomic conception of *tawhid*, emphasizing proper creed of the God's attributes and names. In this context he mentions explicitly theological issues such as God sitting on the throne (*istawa'*) and his transcendency (*fawqiyah*), which can be regarded, among other things, as traditional proofs of Hanbali doctrine.⁹⁶ He defines Sunnites as people of the middle as regards sins, who stands in between two extremes – that of *murji'ites* and that of *kharijites*. In other issues, such as necrolatry, which is being regarded as polytheism (*shirk*), including funeral architecture, he is fully in accordance with official Saudi Wahhabi discourse.

However, in further parts of his treatise, he leaves aside traditional language of theology and embarks on an innovative one. In doing so, he combines a laic approach with traditional scholarship. As result, we find Azzam quoting from as diverse sources as The protocols of the elders of Zion⁹⁷, Sayyid Qutb, and the medieval al-Ghazzali, to name a few examples. It seems that Azzam's reference to proper creed of God's names and attributes can be attributed to getting support from Salafi/Wahhabi circles for his real concern – the liberation of Palestine via war against Soviets in Afghanistan and his enmity against secular regimes. The latter is what he shares with Sayyid Qutb. Unlike Qutb, who was criticised by many Salafis for his heretic theological opinions (including those on God's attributes and names), Azzam affirms the Salafi standpoint on this issue, while elaborating on others. In respect to analyzing and contextualizing the Salafi library, it is very interesting to note how Azzam describes impacts of neglecting doctrine. He treats an improper creed as a malady one must be cured from. A true doctrine, especially when it comes to God's attributes and names, is a remedy and panaceum from a series of symptoms. In Azzam's own words, doctrine is the cure for mankind, whose misery is because of corrupted doctrine (*tabrif al-aqida*). It must be reconstructed (*bina' al-aqida min jadid*). Azzam's style might evocate medieval literary genre of maladies of heart (*amrad a-qulub*). However, in Azzam's actualization, the symptoms are very up-to-date and relevant to his times. Among these symptoms he mentions

- a) repression, for example in Soviet Union and Yugoslavia;
- b) moral and psychological decay;
- c) anxiety and, mental and physical maladies, such as peptic ulcer disease, homosexuality, schizophrenia, suicide etc.⁹⁸

To put it simply, jihadis believe that following proper methodology in interpreting divine attributes and names is their way to heaven, and even during their lifetime, it is a relief of their maladies. In the Salafi library, there is another polemic book by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, which deals with the topic of divine attributes and names entitled *al-Sawa'iq al-mursala ala al-jahmiya wa al-mu'aẓtila*⁹⁹ (The unleashed thunderbolts against jahmiya and mu'tazila).

PROVISIONS FOR THE HEREAFTER AND OTHER IMPACTFUL WORKS

Another well-known treatise by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya included in the Salafi library is *Zad al-Ma'ad* (Provisions for the Hereafter) (abridged and non-abridged). This work is devoted to the biographical peculiarities of prophet Muhammad (*al-sira al-nabawiya*). The book has also been extremely popular in Salafi circles (Ibn Abd al-Wahhab himself wrote an abridged version thereof which is republished by IS' Maktabat al-Himma and part of the Caliphate Library as noted). It is known that Sayyid Qutb (d. 1996), a well-known 'father' of modern fundamentalism, highly influential for jihadi circles opens his discussion on jihad in his "jihadi bestseller" *Ma'lim fi al-tariq* (Milestones) by quoting from *Zad Ma'ad* the treatment of unbelievers and hypocrites.¹⁰⁰

There is in the library also a treatise of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya condemning singing and the use of musical instruments, based on opinions of Salafis entitled *Hukm al-ghina' fi al-islam*.¹⁰¹ One may suggest that the opinions in this book are hardly in conformity with the vocal music, namely nasheeds, so popular in jihadi subculture. Speaking of subculture, the library includes a short *qasida* (poem) of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya *al-Ribla ila bilad al-ashwaq* (A journey to the abode of longing), known otherwise as *al-qasida al-mimiya* (a poem with rhyme on the sound m). The topic of the spiritual *qasida* is askesis and longing for paradise. As one can observe, the diversity of literature in the Salafi library, as it comes to genres and topics, is immense.

As for Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi, another Hanbali in the Salafi library, his only book included there is his legal compendium *Kitab al-mughni*. It is one of the most comprehensive works in the field of the differences in schools of jurisprudence (*ikhtilaf*). This book has no connection to the ideology of IS. Yet it seems that IS draws – but not exclusively – from Hanbali jurisprudence. It also shows their interest in methodological approaches in jurisprudence as such. The book namely underlines *ijtihad*, more precisely it's lesser form, taking into consideration different opinions across established school of law (the affiliation with just one school may considered as in contradiction to the Salafi approach).

As for Ibn al-Jawzi, just two books are included in the Salafi library. The first one is his *Talbis iblis* (Deceptions of devil), a very popular books in Salafi circles, which is a criticism of heretic practices within Islam, written from a Hanbali-Sufi perspective. The other one is *Sayd al-khatir* (Captured thoughts), a book of spiritual comport and ethical principles. As Ibn al-Jawzi inclined in certain periods of his life to allegorical interpretations of divine attributes and names, which dissonances with Ibn Taymiyya's position as adopted by IS, he is – as far as we know – never quoted as an authority in this field both in Salafi and Salafi jihadi literature.¹⁰² It is evident that the list of books included in the library is very selective and the selection itself is based on certain criteria, such an adherence to a theological school, legal methodology and hadith scholarship.

As we have seen, the Hanbali section of the Salafi library includes spiritual books. It must be said here that medieval Hanbalis such as Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, and Ibn al-Jawzi¹⁰³ were to varying degrees influenced by non-mystical Sufism, yet they opposed heretical practices both in practices and ideas. In sharp contrast to such an approach, Wahhabi tradition is indiscriminately anti-Sufi, and the anti-Sufi hatred continues in the propaganda of IS/AQ itself. Saying that, more research must be done on the role of spirituality in the popular culture of IS. Yet, it is safe for now to say that jihadis are not devoid of spiritual/Sufi aspects. As we will show below, they show interest in particular in the field of Sufism, namely ascetism.

To conclude, IS adopted a Hanbali theological position concerning divine attributes and names (Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim), a Hanbali-Sufi ascetical approach devoid of mysticism, yet offering spiritual comfort (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Ibn al-Jawzi), as well as they draw heavily on Hanbali jurisprudence (Ibn Taymiyya's legal opinions, Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi).

BOOKS OF OTHER SUNNI SCHOOLS OF JURISPRUDENCE CURATED BY IS

BOOKS OF OTHER SUNNI SCHOOLS OF JURISPRUDENCE CURATED BY IS

Leaving aside Hanbalis, which all the aforementioned scholars were, the question is whether the Salafi library contains also books of remaining Sunni schools of jurisprudence. The answer will be a complex one. First, the Salafis are convinced that they model their teachings on the early Muslim community (*Salaf*). Salafis are by definition the first three generations of Muslims. The first generation refers to Muslims under Prophet Muhammad and his companions, the second their followers, and by the third followers of the followers. So, what are the authorities and books contained in the library of this period, other than the prophetic biographies (*al-sira al-nabawiyya*)? There are three authors from the third generation of followers of the followers (*tabi'u al-tabi'in*), namely al-Shafi'i (d. 820), Ibn Hanbal (d. 855) and Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 778). These are known as eponyms of the legal schools, sometimes referred to as founding jurists (*usuliyyun*). As for the first mentioned, the library contains his book *Kitab al-umm*, which is a first exhaustive compendium on Islamic code law. Together with Ibn Qudama's book, these two are the most voluminous books on positive law (*furū' al-fiqh*) in the library. As for Ibn Hanbal, the library includes only his theological diatribe against those who embark on unacceptable speculations concerning divine attributes (*al-Radd ala al-jahmiya wa al-zanadiqa*).

As for Sufyan al-Thawri, the library includes his most famous work, a Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*). From the second generation of the Salaf, that is the followers, Ibn al-Mubarak (d. 797) is the only representative, himself a jurist influenced by Abu Hanifa (an eponym of Hanafi school of law)). His only included book in the Salafi library, *Kitab al-zuhd* (Book of ascetism), corresponds with IS understanding of non-mystical, ascetic Sufism.

As it comes to medieval authors from non-Salaf generations (these are collectively referred to as *khalaf* in Arabic), three of the four existing schools of law are represented in the library. Besides already mentioned Hanbalis, majority of these are Shafi'is. There is only one Hanafi scholar, namely al-Qurtubi (d. 1272). However, al-Qurtubi is not included in the library because of his legal opinions, but as the author of an eschatological treatise *Mukthasar al-tadhkira fi ahwal al-mawta wa umur al-akhirah* (Concise remembrance about the dead and the Hereafter).¹⁰⁴

There are no Hanafi scholars in the library. We suppose that the reason is that Hanafis are the most rationalists among the four.

The significant occurrence of Shafi'i scholars in the Salafi library needs more explanation. These are namely Ibn al-Mundhir (d. 930), al-Nawawi (d. 1277), al-Dhahabi (d. 1348), Ibn Nahhas (1411/12), and al-Sakhawi (d. 1497). Except for the first, who lived in the Abbasid period, they all lived in the Mamluk period (1250-1512) in Syria and Egypt. In that period, part of the Shafi'i legal school was very close to the Hanbalis, both underlined the role of hadith. The relation was in some case so close that the Shafi'i school was divided into two camps: one camp adhered to Asha'ri theology, while the other to the Hanbali theology (which gained that name according to the Hanbali legal school), which interpreted divine attributes and names according to the Salafi methodology. The question of who was Asha'rite and who Salafi (Hanbali in theology in medieval parlance, today the term Athari is also used) has been a subject of religious appropriation and Sunni polemics between Asha'ris and Salafis, and we do not want to embark on it for this article.¹⁰⁵ It concerns for example al-Dhahabi, one of the greatest Sunni hadith experts and historians, who was appropriated by the Salafis (including IS). Shafi'i Al-Dhahabi was a student of Ibn Taymiyya, yet he was a Shafi'i in law (yet Hanbali or Salafi) in theology). This excursus is of high relevance. In the Salafi library, there is Dhahabis' theological treatise *al-Ulu* (Transcendence), which is in accordance with Ibn Taymiyya's position in interpreting divine attributes and names, concerning

such theological questions, as whether God sits on his throne (*istiwa'*), to name the most typical one. Moreover, the Salafi library includes a biography of Ibn Taymiya written also by al-Dhahabi, with underlines the significance of the first. The remaining books are collective biographies of notables and scholars, a literary genre known as *tabaqat* in Arabic, namely *Alam al-nubala* ('The most prominent notables, in 18 volumes) and *al-ibar fi man ghabar* (Remembrance of those who died).

As for al-Sakhawi, he was a student of great hadith scholar Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 1449) and himself a great jurist, historian and hadith scholar. In theology he was Ash'arite (which is an arch-rival school to Salafis). The library contains only *Fath al-mughith* (Inspiration of the Savior), a commentary of al-Hafiz al-Iraqi's respected collection of hadiths.

Ibn Nahhas (d. 1411) is rather a minor figure of Shafi'i school. The Salafi library contains his treatise on the merits (*fada'il*) of jihad *Mashari' al-ashwaq ila masari' al-ushbaq*.¹⁰⁶ The work shows a preoccupation, typical for its time-with the necessity of waging the combative jihad to rid the Muslim world of the crusaders as well as the Mongol hordes.¹⁰⁷

As regards al-Nawawi, he was a well-known traditionalist (*muhaddith*), whose collections of hadiths are one of the most popular in Sunni Islam. Two his books are included in the Salafi library. The first one is *Riyad al-Salihin* (The Garden of the Righteous), one of the most widely known and read books of hadiths containing hadiths on ethics, manners, worship etc. The book is not only popular amongst Salafis, but also amongst other Sunni streams, who pinpoint life in accordance with orthopraxis of the early Muslim community (*salaf*), such as the Tabligh movement. The other book included in the Salafi library is *Kitab al-adbkar* (The book remembrances), which contains religions formulas of remembrance and glorification (*dhikr*) and supplications (*du'a*).

As for Ibn al-Mundhir, he is known as an important author of the *ikhtilaf* genre. The library includes his treatise on the consensus of the Islamic jurists (*al-ijma'*). The Hanbali Ibn Qudama (see above) quotes frequently from this particular book. Both books, that of Ibn Qudama and Ibn al-Mundhir, reflects interest in the *ikhtilaf* genre.

Besides medieval scholars and books on Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's and imam of Najdi's mission, the Salafi library contains books of Yemeni traditionalists. These are to be considered separately, as they do not belong to any school of law as they claimed *ijtihad* in the sense of maximal legal independence, as they emerged from Shi'i (Zaidi) milieu, not from the established Sunni schools. The library contains books of reformers Ibn al-Wazir (1436) and Muhammad al-Shawkani (d. 1839). Both are well known representatives of Yemeni reformism and traditionalism (hadith scholars). In law, they called for *ijtihad*, which means here reasoning based on Quran and hadith, and renounced *taqlid* (traditionalism), the very principle of the *madhhabi* system of the four established Islamic schools of jurisprudence.

In doctrinal issues, they strongly defended monotheism (*tawhid*) and criticised all religious practices they considered to be forms of polytheism (*shirk*). Ibn al-Wazir was among the first in Yemen who depended on Sunni collection on hadith to criticize *mu'tazila*. He paved the way to his student Ibn al-Amir al-San'ani, and Muhammad al-Shawkani, one the most famous scholar of Yemen and one of the most renowned scholars of the 18th and 19th centuries. It is noteworthy that the teachings of Yemeni reformers in doctrinal issues are very close to that of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, especially as it comes to their short treatises on *tawhid* and *shirk*. Muhammad al-Shawkani is often cited in Wahhabi sources in support of the legitimacy of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, given the broad currency of the first (in a quite similar way as Ibn Taymiyya). However, it seems that al-Shawkani sympathised with Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, but was critical of Ibn Saud military campaign of that time.¹⁰⁸ The library contains a treatise on *ijtihad* by Ibn al-Wazir entitled *al-Awasim fi al-qawasim*. As for al-Shawkani, there are three books. The first one is a treatise on *tawhid* entitled *al-Durr al-nadid fi ikhlas kalimat al-tawhid* (Ranged pearls in rendering the word of monotheism). The treatise is strongly influenced by Ibn Taymiyya and focuses on the permissibility of asking God for intercession during visitation

of graves (*ziyara*). The remaining two treatises are part of a collection of various Islamic treatises entitled *Majmu'at al-rasa'il al-muniriyya*.¹⁰⁹ It contains, among others, two treatises of al-Shawkani, one on the principle of commanding good and forbidding wrong, and one on divine attributes and names.

In the Salafi library, there is another book worth a few notes, as it deviates from aforementioned literature thematically and chronologically: *Ithaf al-jama'a bima fi ja' fi al-fitna wa al-malahim wa asbrat al-sa'a* (Bestowing the community of what appears in the apocalyptic tribulations, battles and the signs of the Hour 3. vol) of Hamud ibn Abdalla Al-Tuwayjiri (d. 1992).¹¹⁰ This book is in all likelihood the most influential modern work on apocalypse in the modern Salafi context. It is noteworthy that the treatise influenced Juhayman al-Utaybi (d. 1980) and his apocalyptic imagery. Al-Utaybi, known as the leader of the Grand Mosque uprisal in Mecca in 1979, is a very important figure for Salafi jihadis. One of his writings is included in the jihadi library.¹¹¹

CONCLUSION

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The Caliphate Library dataset is the expression of the most modern means of communication. Curating a user-friendly set of PDFs, that are of good quality and ready to read, download and share, on a platform where not everyone finds quick access to. The Library was curated for initiated sympathizers and an Arabic speaking audience who are aware of religious elements and who – not necessarily are first and foremost interested in IS-writings. Conveying a large dataset of theological writings electronically with the possibility of re-establishing the mechanisms to re-share this dataset in case of deletion or network disruption, is what lies at the heart of “Cyberia.”

At the dawn of mass access to the internet, some, including legendary author of the video game “Cyberia” Douglas Rushkoff,¹¹² foresaw that dissident groups would use technological innovation and the networks of our postmodern society in unconventional ways and toward subversive goals. Groups such as the Islamic State have developed a multiplatform online distribution system which is based on emergent behaviour in complex systems – projecting a unique set of coherent content to its followers, sympathisers, and their target audiences. Islamic State has fully adopted a similar approach to that which Rushkoff outlined.¹¹³ For the Islamic State, the “battle for your reality” is one of religious identity.¹¹⁴

What makes this unique is that this identity is nourished by hundreds of writings by mostly historical scholars who clearly outline theological and legal parameters and referencepoints that matter to modern-day terrorist groups.

Any release by IS – as much as by AQ – seeks to inform, educate and convince the consumer that the jihadis are the only “true” Muslims, a handfull of the saved ones (*al-firqa al-najiya*, *al-ta’ifa al-mansura*, *ghuraba’* in Islamic imagery), following the correct “prophetic methodology” and are thus truly in accordance with the early Muslim community’s (*Salaf*) guidance. This ideational content echoes an earlier prediction about an internet-enabled ideological struggle over the definition of reality. In this vision, warfare would be “conducted on an entirely new battleground; it is a struggle not over territory or boundaries but over the very definitions of these terms”¹¹⁵ where IS seeks to maintain hegemony over concepts such as the “prophetic methodology” and other theological concepts expressed by key words – and key readings by Salafi/Wahhabi sources and books as outlined.

To explore the question of how jihadis – in their own words – describe themselves as Salafis and justify their actions, the Arabic writings freely disseminated electronically by jihadi groups online for decades matter. Unfortunately, this massive corpus of ideology, that is full of theological arguments, books and coherent – yet selective (curated) in nature – references to build an extremist religious individual and collective identity, is often overlooked and even neglected by analysts. Sunni extremists, jihadis and pro-jihadi Salafis alike continue operating freely online, expanding their existing databases of texts and videos for future generations. The videos are a form of legacy, in the case of the Islamic State demonstrating what had been achieved, tied into the Salafi legacy materials that promote what IS claims on camera. The jihadi movement has always tried enabling consumers to read into a set of curated books by historical writers to map out that they are a modern ‘revivalist’ movement, enforcing theologically sanctioned violence against Shiites, Sunni Muslims defined as apostates, and non-Muslims – all while claiming fighting for ‘justice’ and combatting repressive regimes in the Islamic world.

As Abdallah Azzam wrote in the 1980s, “I learnt that being truly alive is the life of jihad and being a mujahid. Therefore, my age right now is only seven, for my life has been driven by jihad for

six years in Afghanistan and one year and some months in Palestine. This is the opinion of some of the mufassirin [interpreters of Quran and Sunna] in the reading of the verse: “Believers, respond to God and His Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life.”^{116 117}

The documents in the Library demonstrate that the jihadi movement thrives on lengthy documents that set out their theology, beliefs, and strategy. Not one of the texts envisages a ‘jihadi Utopia’ nor proposes a ‘Utopian narrative’. The idea of a ‘Utopian Narrative’ is an artefact of Western misinterpretation. It is not rooted in the texts of *Dawla al-Islamiyya* nor their predecessors. This highlights the nexus around which Salafi and jihadi theology intersects and emphasises why understanding this content matters to comprehend the persistent jihadi presence online and the possible outlook of its physical existence.

Organized on platforms such as Telegram or hosting their own servers allows a swarming to other platforms, social media sites and the Internet in general, in their belief to fulfil the divine obligation of *da’wa* to indoctrinate future generations for their cause. Groups as IS can operate conveniently online, as their clandestine networks are protected by:

- Arabic language required to access clandestine networks, the ongoing paucity of these language skills amongst researchers is appalling (linguistic firewall),
- Knowledge of the coherent use of coded religious language and keywords, which few researchers can demonstrate in their writing (initiation firewall),
- With the migration to Telegram, IS succeeded in shifting and re-adapting their modus operandi of in-group discussions & designated curated content intended for the public (as part of *da’wa*).

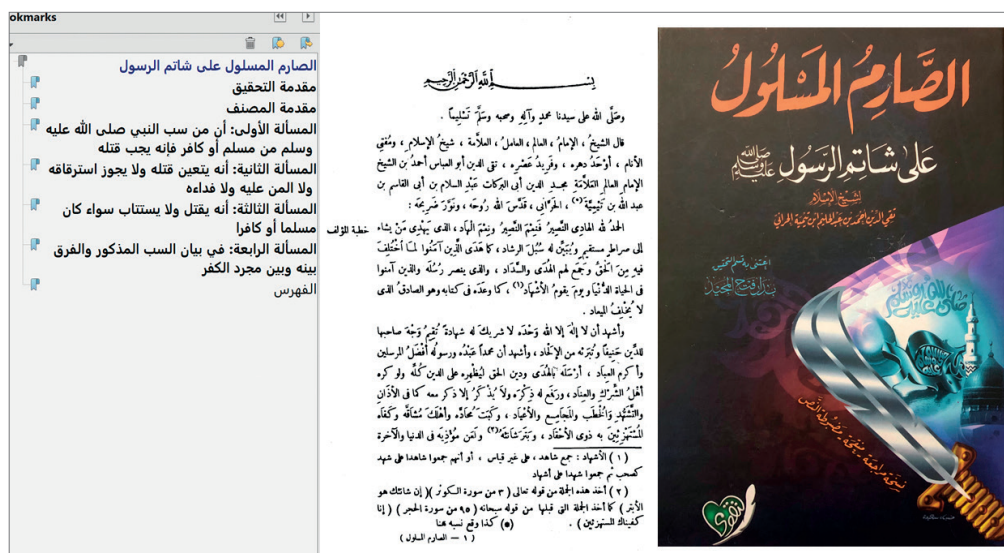
Media raids ensure that dedicated content gets pumped to the surface web while the IS-swarm can (re-) configure and organize content related to what is happening offline on the ground to ensure the cycle of offline events influencing or producing online materials is uninterrupted. The theological motivation, coherently repacked and put in practice, based on tens of thousands of pages of writings and thousands of videos just by the Islamic State needs to be addressed. Yet, “without deconstructing the theology of violence inherent in jihadi communications and practice, these religious ideas will continue to inspire others to act, long after any given organized force, such as the Islamic State, may be destroyed on the ground.”¹¹⁸

The Islamic State projects influence based on a coherent – and thus for its target audience – credible framework. To maintain their influence operations, with little or no territory, media operatives are often addressed and included in strategic writings. “To the media workers (...) this is as much an information war as it is a military conflict on the battlefields. Have patience as the Mujahideen have in the fields of battle. Indeed, our brothers, be patient in the space of the media, do not be diverted by the enemy’s objective in their campaign to delete [your] social media accounts. This is nothing out of the ordinary, while truly the State of Islam relies on you to disseminate its media; enraging its enemies and your enemies; expect [as God said]: “Be steadfast: God does not let the rewards of those who do good go to waste.”¹¹⁹

APPENDIX: THREE BOOK SAMPLES OF THE CALIPHATE LIBRARY DATASET

APPENDIX: THREE BOOK SAMPLES OF THE CALIPHATE LIBRARY DATASET

SAMPLE 1: IBN TAYMIYYA'S ECHO FROM THE KILLING OF THEO VAN GOGH (2004) TO THE ISLAMIC STATE



The Salafi books featured in the Caliphate Library Channel by far outweigh in number of pages the jihadi documents. Apart from classical works by al-Shawkani (himself highly influenced by Ibn Taymiyya) or Ibn al-Qayyim (a disciple of Ibn Taymiyya), the “shaykh al-Islam”, Ibn Taymiyya is overrepresented. Ibn Taymiyya, who died in 1328, was a prolific writer and member of the Hanbali school of jurisprudence and theology. His work has influenced the Wahhabi movement of which the theological jihadi branch is the most extremist extension thereof. Within the 300,000 penned pages by AQ authors and IS productions, Ibn Taymiyya is referenced over 40,000 times. His jurisprudential (*fiqh*) works justify the persecution and killing of non-Muslims and provide a clear-cut definition of when Sunnis become apostates – the very essence of almost every contemporary jihadi author (and applied in the videos of jihadi groups). Ibn Taymiyya is renowned for his “characteristically juridical thinking”¹²⁰ and has a high level of competence as a legal scholar which is expressed in his writings that are based – at least in parts – on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Ibn Taymiyya is frequently cited in Sunni extremist writings since the 1980s and accordingly referred to and quoted by jihadi ideologues in audio-visual publications. The “Islamic State” is basing all of its audio-visual output on the theology that has been penned by AQ since the 1980s – with the significant difference, however, that IS has had the territory to implement and enforce this corpus of theology upon the population of the self-designated “caliphate” – which as of 2019 serves as the filmed legacy and pretext for the return of IS. Featured in the Caliphate Library is the over 4,000 page long multivolume “tafsir shaykh al-Islam”, a thematic exegesis of the Quran by Ibn Taymiyya, and his notorious book “The drawn sword against the insulter of the Prophet” (al-sarim al-maslul ala shatim al-rasul). Within the Sunni extremist mindset, the sword must be drawn upon anyone who opposes their worldview and specific interpretations of Quranic sources, the hadith or frame of references that have been penned since the 1980s. Jihadis have also used the writings of Ibn Taymiyya to justify specific attacks. For example, Muhammed Bouyeri cited Ibn Taymiyya’s book before killing Dutch filmmaker and Islam critic Theo van Gogh in November 2004 in Amsterdam:

“Shortly before he [Bouyeri] killed van Gogh, he circulated the theological tractate on the “heroic deed” of Ibn Maslama¹²¹ per e-mail to his friends. It is one of the 56 texts Bouyeri wrote or distributed. The fatwa of Ibn Taymiyya was among them also in a short leaflet-form downloadable from tawhed.ws titled “The drawn sword against the insulter of the Prophet” (al-sarim al-maslul ala shatim al-rasul). It is likely that the text not only influenced Bouyeri’s decision to assassinate van Gogh, but also his method.

The text details how and why to kill targets, first of all because of insult of Islam. Bouyeri tried to sever van Gogh’s head with a big knife after he had shot him several times. In the text we find the passage: “the cutting of the head without mercy is legal if the Prophet does not disapprove it.” Moreover, the text advises multiple times to use assassination as an act of deterrence. The slaughter of van Gogh in open daylight seems like a one-to-one translation into reality of the directives we find in the text.”¹²²

This work is part of a wide ecosystem of jihadi and pro-jihadi Salafi operations and activities:

AQ alluded to the writings of Ibn Taymiyya in a video claiming responsibility for a suicide bombing targeting the Embassy of Denmark in Pakistan in 2008¹²³ after a Danish newspaper published cartoon depictions of Muhammad.

Ibn Taymiyya’s book was made prominent within the extremist movement by the work by Jordanian-Palestinian jihadi scholar Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. Al-Maqdisi stands out in its attempt to clearly outline who can be killed legitimately for insulting Prophet Muhammad. Al-Maqdisi extends this beyond individuals, and says any government deemed to have insulted either the Prophet, God or religion in general is a legitimate target for reprisal.¹²⁴ This had had a lasting effect with many jihadi figures and an IS four-part video series 2012-2014, with the last part showing IS consolidating Sunni territories under their control at the time and punishing those, that had been considered as having violated Sunni Islam by collaborating with US Forces or who served the Syrian or Iraqi governments.

In June 2012, the *Jund Allah* (soldiers of God) media outlet of the *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* published a German language video featuring Moroccan-German “Abu Ibraheem” (Yassin Chouka) calling on his associates in Bonn from Waziristan to kill members of the German right-wing party Pro-NRW, based on the framework by Ibn Taymiyya, to kill any insulter of the Prophet.¹²⁵ In the video Chouka cites sources used by Ibn Taymiyya such as the hadith by al-Imam Ahmad that “whoever insults the prophet, no matter if Muslim or kafir, must be killed.”¹²⁶

Months before the video was released, members of the Salafi movement protested several times in North-Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) against public events of the “Pro NRW” party. The right-wing party provoked individuals identifying as Salafis by publicly exhibiting the controversial Muhammad caricatures by Danish daily Jyllands-Posten.¹²⁷ Violence emerged during several protests between the two extreme camps and German police officers were wounded repeatedly in these clashes.¹²⁸ The clashes and subsequent arrest of Salafis had been used for the propaganda cause immediately, including in the video featuring Chouka, framing the German police – and as such the state and society – as protecting the right-wing “Pro NRW” and the arrested Muslims as victims of this conflict. In this framing the Salafi, the ‘true’ Muslim, is arrested for defending the honor of Prophet Muhammad, as stated by scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya as an obligation for every believer. A video appeared after a major clash in Solingen in May (and hence a month before the Chouka video) 2012 entitled “In Rank and File they Stood for *Rasulullah* [the Prophet of God]”¹²⁹ showing how the ‘true’ Muslims engage to defend their brothers and the Prophet Muhammad, being aware and conscious that punishing anyone who insults the Prophet is obligatory.

Summarizing Ibn Taymiyya's demand that anyone insulting the Prophet must be dealt with violently, the German Salafi media repeatedly conjured their readiness to sacrifice themselves, as Abu Azzam al-Almani, a German media *Mujahid*, claimed: "By God, may all of *Millat Ibrahim* [the community/religion of Prophet Abraham], man by man and sister by sister be extinguished, wiped out and murdered. We prefer this over the Prophet being insulted by just one word."¹³⁰

Foreign fighters, former pro-jihadi Salafis that then became jihadis, turned into role models and heroes for the stay-at-home Salafi milieu. With the outbreak of violence in Syria in 2012 and the emergence of AQ-affiliated groups and the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, which then morphed into IS, this communication increased in relation to the fighters arriving in Syria from Germany. However, in the years before the war in Syria, jihadis like the brothers Mounir and Yassin Chouka from Bonn had produced about 40 German-language videos and nasheeds for years. By this footprint and by their in-depth sermons and religious lessons from Waziristan, Pakistan, they projected fulfilling the jihadi lifestyle in a most appealing manner for their audience who wish to be able to re-enact these two brothers and engage in physical combat with the framed "enemies of God", including German soldiers in Afghanistan.

The professional and frequent use of the Internet has transformed the Chouka brothers not only into role models but also into ideological transmitters who are able to influence local movements in their former country of residence. Shortly after the violent clash in Solingen, Yassin Chouka reacted in a video entitled "Death to the Pro NRW". In this message, Yassin Chouka a.k.a. "Abu Ibraheem" called on the Salafis in Germany to avoid the "Pro NRW" protests in the future and instead conduct a systematic hunt against the right-wing extremists, to kill them one by one.¹³¹ In his talk, Abu Ibraheem uses a specific language to justify his order, thus replicating Arab ideologues in German. His words have a certain authority within the scene in Germany as he has moved out to fight, having proven his readiness to die and become a martyr. These role models are the ones who are fulfilling, living out, re-enacting the presumed acts and deeds of early Muslims, thus transforming themselves by their own acts – and most importantly their own words documented by the digital lens – as the only 'true' believers and real men. The jihadi is a practitioner of verses of the Quran, by his belief and standards, directly exercising the divine command by God's words.¹³² Being alive in our contemporary times is a punishment, with the wishful dream to fight alongside the prophet. The collective is unified by the imagined taking part in historical battles together with Muhammad – these battles, for the prophet and for God, are re-enacted today in the mindset of the Mujahidin, backed by the theological Salafi mindset that sets the normative framework upon the believer and receives the divine calling to act.

This exact notion was picked up by German-speaking Global Islamic Media Front activists in 2012 in the wake of the violent protests in parts of the Islamic world in response to the movie "Innocence of Muslims." A German translation of al-Maqdisi's pamphlet, presumably by Austro-Egyptian jihadi Muhammad Mahmud, enriched the fatwa by the Egyptian pro-jihadi Ahmad 'Ashush calling for the death of anyone involved in the movie project.¹³³

In January 2015 two brothers, apparently trained by AQ on the Arab Peninsula in Yemen, attacked the offices of the French satire magazine Charlie Hebdo. The Kouachi brothers after the massacre are seen and heard in one video made by a bystander shouting "we have avenged the Prophet" (*li-intiqamna al-rasul*), and then shoot wounded French police officer Ahmad Merabet in the head.¹³⁴ A video published on January 11, 2015 by the IS-affiliated media outlet *Asawitimedia* praises the attacks. The video is entitled "The French have insulted the Prophet of God – thus a merciless reaction."

SAMPLE 2: IBN TAYMIYYA'S "THE BOOK OF GOVERNANCE ACCORDING TO THE SHARI'A"

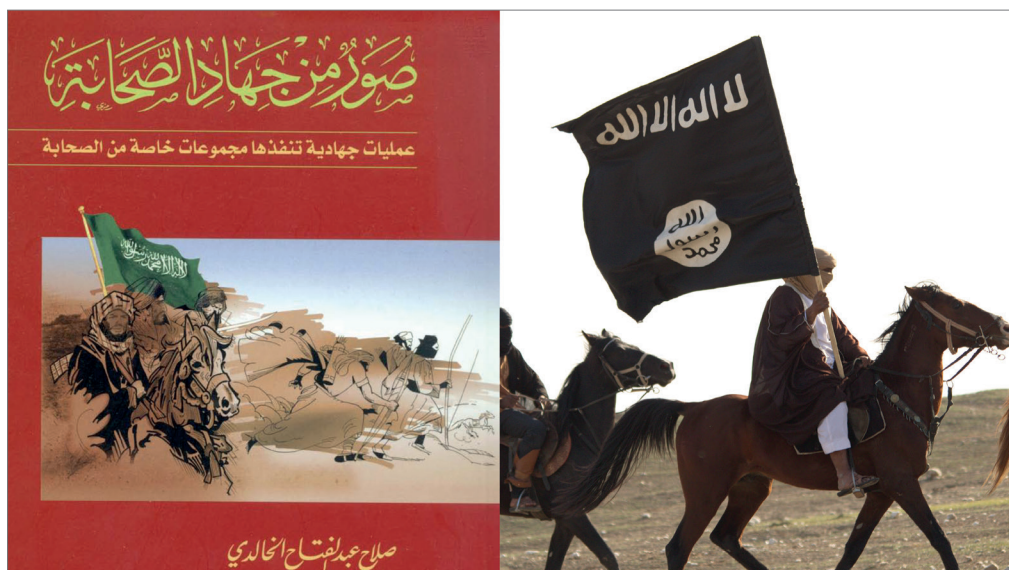


A version of Ibn Taymiyya's "book of governance according to the shari'a" is available online as a scanned PDF, published by the Saudi Ministry for Islamic Affairs and released 1418 a.H.¹³⁵ It is easy to find and has downloaded on some sites been over 100,000 times.¹³⁶ In 2015, 1436 anno Higræ, IS' Maktabat al-Himma released a version thereof, but shortened from 136 pages to a little over 50. The core chapters are featured, outlining the structure of an Islamic state, the connection between the religious and worldly authority required, the application of divine laws for the human community or citizens, questions of internal and external policies, war and peace and legal rulings on how to deal with groups resisting the state doctrine. Essentially, IS projects being the sole honest Sunni representative, having "established religion in full in all affairs of daily life, propagating the Islamic faith (da'wa), safeguarding religion and actively supporting it, commanding right and forbidding wrong, opposing the people of hypocrisy and *bid'a* (innovation) who are spreading mischief/corruption (*fasad*) on earth."¹³⁷ The chapters by Ibn Taymiyya are the same in both the Saudi and the Maktabat al-Himma document, of course the foreword was rewritten by IS as well as the selected chapters re-arranged. The main message for the MH version is that "the caliphate upon the prophetic methodology" has been re-established and is actively being "governed according to the shari'a." The MH version in the first chapter gives a definition of an Islamic State: "An Islamic state is a group of Wilayat – organized territory [under state control] (...) the ruler or caliph or leader of the faithful is the head thereof, this is the source definition for the term "*dawla*" among the Islamic scholars concerned with *shari'a* law, the legal affairs of worldly authority and as a consequence it is possible to say that the state consists of three principles: territory, population and sovereignty."¹³⁸ A "state", by this definition, is legitimized in its existence to benefit "the religious and worldly interest of the Muslim population."¹³⁹ Within the realms of the Islamic State's rich video output, consisting of about 4,000 productions from its various *Wilayat* during its territorial height, many theological obligatory elements as described by Ibn Taymiyya's book are seen in practice, applied and as an active force of authoritative state power, where the state holds the monopoly of violence. This ranges from mundane views of Islamic Police (al-Hisba) patrolling in the caliphate enforcing clothing regulations, the separation of men and women, ensuring shops are closed during prayers to applying *ad* punishments, executions of alleged homosexuals, spies, wizards, or apostasy and rich visual content of IS in the active roles of "commandeering good and forbidding what is wrong."¹⁴⁰ Part of al-Hisba operations had been within the Caliphate to enforce "the ruling of the creator (God) upon the thief"¹⁴¹ as internal policing operations while controlling markets for food regulations.

This written volume is a good example of how jihadi groups use historical theological writings and claim being the sole group of Sunni Muslims to truly live according to divine will.¹⁴² The short period of time that IS was able to pitch and project influence in multiple languages on Twitter enabled the group to provide simple and clear messages, using visual communication, brief translations, non-Arabic subtitles in Arabic videos, of otherwise sometimes intellectually complicated writings by scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya. For Sunni extremists, no matter if part of the hardcore jihadi, ultraorthodox Salafi, or conservative Wahhabi spectrum, the integral importance revolves around the element of *tawhid*, the oneness of God. Every other tenet is derived or related to *tawhid*. This is where the role models of Prophet Muhammad and his companions, the *sahaba*, are idealized as warriors, as *Mujahideen*, embodying the divine-human relationship of total commitment to God and thereby ensuring Sunni Muslim life on earth is guaranteed. While some Salafi torrents refrain from violence and this limited understanding of early Islam, for others the aspect of violence can be acceptable. The *sahaba* and with them the first Islamic community, the *ahl Sunna wa-l-jama'a*, are seen as pure Muslims and only by re-enacting their decision-making process, by copying their clothing style, by following their path, the “Salaf” can claim authenticity in modern times. The violent aspect is of course reserved for Sunni jihadi groups that claim the engulfing role models of the Salaf as both pure Muslims and warriors at the same time. This book by Ibn Taymiyya meets this angle of being a handbook on being a Muslim citizen of an Islamic State, perceived as the ultimate fulfillment of the role models of early Muslims and the absolute divine-human relationship. Hence, “the most important aspect to establish an Islamic State is the message brought by the messenger of God, that the people worship their Lord. Worship in its truthfulness means that people, free of any coercion, serve their Lord, that everything [in their lives] is set for God, exalted is He, that is the true [*tawhid*] “there is no God but God.” This is the honest human loyalty – expressed by their faith (*iman*). Thus, the conflict between *iman* and *kufur* (disbelief) is in reality a conflict over the right by God to be the commander of good (*amir nahy*) on earth.”¹⁴³ Ibn Taymiyya cites Quran 43:84, that God is both high in the skies as well as the all-seeing, all-hearing on earth, to back his argument of the divine presence. For *tawhid* to be safeguarded by human believers as gatekeepers on earth, a leader for the Islamic community, a functioning Imam, is needed. Ibn Taymiyya provides several verses of the Quran as argumentative proof¹⁴⁴ that in turn are used within the framing of the Islamic State to justify and enforce their power. Chapters republished by MH include details on giving the pledge of allegiance (*bay'a*), ruling when the *bay'a* is violated, groups that oppose the imam, the obligations of the imam, religious duties that constitute Sunni Muslim life, but also practical aspects such as securing the borders of the state and issues related to warfare, “protecting religion and worldly affairs.”¹⁴⁵ This worldview defines two abodes (*dar*), *dar al-Islam*, physical territory where Islam is practiced and Islamic jurisprudence applied, and *dar al-kufur*, the abode of disbelief. Ibn Taymiyya was clear by stating “the Salaf scholars and their successor had not disagreed over this issue, the division of the world in two abodes, not three, as revealed in the book (Quran) and the tradition (Sunna) of the messenger.”¹⁴⁶ *Dar al-Islam* is defined by the form of governance within, “the legal scholars agree who applies the hadd punishments in dar al-Islam, is the imam or his vice, no matter what apostates comment (...). The Prophet, peace and blessings upon him, applied the *hadd* punishments in his lifetime, and his successors thereafter.”¹⁴⁷ Notions such as these are backed and enriched by selective readings of the rich Islamic history and theological writings of the past 1,400 years. Hence, Salafis and jihadis share a mindset of the ideal understanding what ‘Islam’ should be, with varying parameters of enabling violence, yet stories of the companions of Prophet Muhammad, selected sources of the Sunna and historic as well as contemporary Salafi authors are used for an all-comprising projection of ‘Sunni identity’.

SAMPLE 3: IDEALIZING THE VIOLENT COMPONENT OF THE COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET

A book with the title “The Fashion of the Jihad by the Companions [of Prophet Muhammad] – Special Jihadi Operations Groups of the Companions”, is part of the Caliphate Library data set. A scanned PDF of the 233 pages comprising book, second edition, 2009 (1430 A.H.), features a band of raiders on the cover with one warrior bearing the flag of Saudi Arabia.¹⁴⁸



Cover (left) in same style as IS propaganda (right)

This book is the third part of a series about Islamic history and theology, with the intention by the author, Salih Abd al-Fattah al-Khalidi, to “offer in our age knowledge of Islamic history for Muslims.”¹⁴⁹ The first two volumes of the series had been about (i) “The Rightly Guided Caliphs between internal strife and martyrdom” and (ii) “The Messenger, the Revelator.” The second volume focuses on the “revelation by Prophet Muhammad and da‘wa, the spreading of the message of Islam to the kings and worldly rulers at the time of Muhammad.”¹⁵⁰ For this volume, al-Khalidi announces, “my intention with this book is to present the noble reader the radiant jihadi fashions used by the sahaba, the Mujahideen, may God be pleased with them, who undertook marvelous jihadi operations, who thus had been Mujahideen on the path of God. They are the ones who realized the jihadi confrontations conveyed in al-kitab (the Quran) and Sunna, guided by the example of their messenger, the Mujahid.”¹⁵¹

Just as is the case for much of the extremist literature, Prophet Muhammad is only considered in a militaristic-warrior fashion, reducing the spread and tradition of Sunni Islam to theological-historical elements confined to the violent understanding of jihad. Al-Khalidi points this picture clearly, the companions of the prophet had established “special Mujahideen groups, under the direct command of the messenger, peace and blessings upon him.”¹⁵² Al-Khalidi then recommends a historic book to his readers to enforce his understanding of the Prophet and his companions which is also shared as a PDF in the Caliphate Library. “The best book on jihad is by the Imam, the martyr Ibn Nahhas who attained martyrdom in jihad against Crusaders in the year 814 anno Higræ.” Ibn Nahhas’ book is 1,241 pages long and is an integral part of literature shared by AQ who often reference his work likewise.

Further following a classical Wahhabi theology that is so intimately tied into the theology of Sunni jihadi groups, al-Khalidi outlines two jihadi principles based on his understanding of selected religious sources. First, *jihad al-thubat*, the jihad by specialized individuals, firm in their belief and steadfast, referring to “a group of Mujahideen less than a dozen committed to special jihadi

operations.” Second, *jihad al-jami‘*, or the general jihad obligatory for any able Muslim, based on the parameters of “heeding to the call” (*naḥīr*). For al-Khalidi and idealized by terrorist key ideologues such as al-Uyairi or leaders such as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, it is the wishful thinking of “mobilizing an army of Mujahideen consisting out of groups of individuals dedicated to fighting in various raids, skirmishes or large battles.”¹⁵³ Al-Khalidi then continues to outline (p. 8-10) ten samples of jihadi operations by the *sababa* that are detailed throughout the book. All these examples are often featured in the extremist literature and videos produced by contemporary jihadi groups, especially in regards of defining and punishing the “*mushrikin*”. *Shirk*, and thus the *mushrikin*, are those that associate partners next to God and thus violate the theology of *tawḥīd*, the oneness of God. It had been the slogan of the first generation of al-Qaeda on the Arab Peninsula (AQAP), based on the saying by Prophet Muhammad, “to expel the mushrikin from the Arab Peninsula” that led to attacks and staged executions of non-Muslims in Saudi Arabia in the early 2000s. Al-Khalidi delivers a whole chapter on the “groups of companions led by Abdallah ibn Jahhash that killed the first mushrik in the holy month of Ramadan. The first Mujahid group to succeed in killing a mushrik; enslaving two mushrikin, seizing a caravan of Quraysh merchants. Their jihadi operation took place in the month of Rajjab, in the second year of the Hijra.”¹⁵⁴

The centrality of the theological theme of “*mushrik*” is highlighted by searching for this specific key words in its varying grammatical appearance in Arabic in the Sunni jihadi texts. In the documents by both AQ and IS, the term appears over 50,000 times and is of course, due to the textual authority, often mentioned in jihadi videos where often the graves or shrines are demolished and those practicing *shirk* executed.

Thus, in the early days of the Islamic State in 2013 and 2014, the same theological principle was applied when for the first time in Iraq and then Yemen, Shiite mosques, Sufi sites, graveyards, Yazidi temples, Christian churches and many others had been physically conquered. As the conquered area was to become part of the territory of the Islamic State, any place where *shirk* is practiced and where *tawḥīd* violated, must be annihilated. Citing historical scholars such as Ibn al-Qayyim, a disciple of Ibn Taymiyya, the justification for destruction, is thus projected by IS as the mere application of what is referred to as the ‘correct’ methodology as “it is not permissible [for Sunni Muslims] to leave the sites and places of *shirk* and idols¹⁵⁵ untouched once the power to destroy them is established, even if just for one day. For these are the symbols of *kufr* and *shirk*, the greatest of evil. Therefore, it is not permissible to rule while maintaining these sites after conquering them.”¹⁵⁶

Books such as this one by al-Khalidi deliver a valuable milestone for militant-extremist groups, by nature keen to use such publications, to boost their authority in their mission of projecting influence and credibility. Emulating the companions of the Prophet – and of course Prophet Muhammad himself – modern jihadi terror groups frequently express the claim to be re-enacting the era when Islam was first revealed. Thus, derived from this understanding and corpus of theological literature, Sunni Muslim communities following a differing understanding are targeted, their members often declared as apostates (*murtaddin*), and executed on camera with speakers referring to such a framework of theology. In the hundreds of thousands of pages shared by jihadi groups, religious books by Islamic scholars especially originating from the Gulf States appear frequently in the online realms and libraries of Sunni jihadi groups that have a clear-cut theological definition of who is a Sunni Muslim and who should be excommunicated (and thus killed); providing a wholesome ideology based on theological parameters and sources to dehumanize the ‘other’; targeting especially Shia Muslims worldwide and focusing on the annihilation of Shiite communities, using a theology of violence to explain the killings of Christians, Yazidis and other minorities in particular in Iraq and Syria. Videos by the Islamic State demonstrate the application of such a theology and thus can be appealing to a wide target audience that is familiar with such books by authors such as al-Khalidi. While al-Khalidi describes “jihad as the soul of Islam” and furthermore “jihad is the foundation not only of this religion, but of any religion preceding Islam, as every prophet came with a jihad, as every book sent by God narrates about jihad, demanding Mujahideen as a consequence, who as

a reward are allowed by God into Paradise,”¹⁵⁷ fighting against *kufi*, disbelief, is a divine obligation and a necessity, with “jihad [being] the hump of Islam.”¹⁵⁸ Al-Khalidi continues: “God ordered the believers to fight against the kuffar, annihilating them by wrathful force, as God, exalted is He, said: “You who believe, fight the disbelievers near you and let them find you standing firm: be aware that God is with those who are mindful of Him.”¹⁵⁹ For jihadi scholars and ideologues, a foundation of values that is part of the Salafi mindset and tradition is present and easily incorporated and reframed to a certain angle within their own Sunni jihadi mindset.

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REFERENCES:

- 2 As then US-President George W. Bush stated in June 2004: “The reason I keep insisting that there was a relationship between Iraq and Saddam and al-Qaeda [is] because there was a relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda. This administration never said that the 9/11 attacks were orchestrated between Saddam and al-Qaeda. We did say there were numerous contacts between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda. For example, Iraqi intelligence officers met with bin Laden, the head of al-Qaeda, in the Sudan. There’s numerous contacts between the two.”
About the Ties between Saddam and Osama, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, George Washington University, <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/5745>.
- 3 IS was able to take over parts of Mozambique and maintains a guerrilla war in Niger, Nigeria, Congo while AQ in East Africa (Somalia) has established a firm presence and claims territorial control of urban environments.
- 4 Coined by Rüdiger Lohker.
- 5 As per designation by the European Union or the United States government;
<https://www.dni.gov/nctc/ftos.html>
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/fight-against-terrorism/terrorist-list/>
- 6 We are referring to al-Dawla al-Islamiyya as IS, to reflect both the current use in Arabic by the group as well as their global ambition of projecting statehood for historical and contemporary Muslim lands in Africa, the Middle East, South East Asia, the Caucasus, India and elsewhere.
- 7 Think of the time in the early 2000s when Osama bin Laden’s speeches had been sent to al-Jazeera with the ambition of being aired at least in parts by the global news station and outlets.
For a timeline: <https://www.theguardian.com/alqaida/page/0,12643,839823,00.html>
- 8 A note by the authors: we are using a simplified version to transliterate Arabic words. Anyone who has command of Arabic will nevertheless be able to understand how the original Arabic word is written and able to look up the (re-) sources in its original format.
- 9 Detailed in the account of Abdallah Anas: *Waladat al-Afghan al-Arab – sirat Abdallah Anas bayna Mas’ud wa-Abdallah Azzam* (Beirut: Dar al-Saqi, 2009).
- 10 The impact of 1980s jihad veterans flushing from Afghanistan to Bosnia in the 1990s and their media work to promote this field is outlined in: Nico Prucha: *Arab Foreign Fighters in Bosnia – The Roads to Europe*, in: In: Gunther Hauser, Franz Kernic, Sven Gareis: “The European Union – a Global Actor?”, Opladen, Berlin, Toronto: Budrich Publishers, 2013.
Other areas where AQ-linked or inspired militants in the 1990s had been active include Somalia, Kashmir, the Caucasus.
- 11 For example, the handbooks used by Arab and local fighters in the 1980s in Afghanistan, which often had been black and white paper copies of a copy of a copy and therefore difficult to read, had been digitalized in the early 2000s by the media-savvy pioneers of the first generation of AQ in Saudi Arabia. These handbooks, in parts Arabic translations from US military training books, became part of the “Encyclopedia of Jihad” and are available as professionally made and well-organized PDFs. In some cases, this jihadi tradition of conveying hands-on knowledge, framed with religious forewords outlining the divine obligation to “prepare” for every able-minded and bodied believer, led to the production of follow-up handbooks, including chapters on “computer and internet security.” Nico Prucha, *The Ultimate Security Encyclopedia*, onlinejihad, <https://onlinejihad.net/2007/04/05/the-ultimate-security-encyclopedia/>, 5 April 2007.
- 12 The subsequent US-led interventions into Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) gave the Sunni jihadi movement as a whole a momentum that fueled conflicts worldwide. As of 2022, IS or AQ are active in the Sahel, Central Africa, the Horn of Africa (AQ in Somalia especially) and remain active combatants in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere.
- 13 *Maktabat al-khilafa*.
- 14 Mohamed-Ali Adraoui, *Salafism, Jihadism and Radicalisation: Between a Common Doctrinal Heritage and the Logics of Empowerment*, in: *Militant Jihadism – Today and Tomorrow*, Seafettin Pektas, Johan Leman (eds), Leuven University Press: 2019, 19-41.
- 15 *Ibid*, 20.
- 16 Ayman al-Zawahiri, *al-Liqa’ al-maftuh maa al-shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri*, al-Sahab Media, 1429 a.H.
- 17 *Al-Badr al-tamam sharh nawaqidh al-Islam*, penned by Abu Hafs al-Azdi, Ashhad media, part 1-8.
- 18 *Al-Islam din wa-l dawla, idha’at al-Bayan*, part 1-8.
- 19 *Dabiq* no. 7m Rabi’ al-khayr, 1436 anno higræ. Muslims stating “Islam equals peace” are defined as “deviants”.
- 20 *Series naql al-awwal fi tafsir ayat al-qital*, 28 parts, Sunni Shield Media, 2018.

- 37 Paz, Reuven. "Debates within the family: Jihadi-Salafi debates on strategy, takfir, extremism, suicide bombings and the sense of the apocalypse." In *Meijer, Roel (red.) Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (2009): 267-280.
- 38 The range of pioneer activist media operations, spanned from re-thinking jihadi videos to professionally broadcasting the testimonies of suicide bombers, include important textual sources in filmed documents to legitimize beheadings (before these became a symbol in Western mindset for AQ Iraq with the filmed beheading of Nick Berg in 2004), and even a first form of streaming: a squad of AQAP operatives maintained a cellphone connection allowing an audio recording as the operation unfolded. This audio was then included in a later video production to praise the attack and commemorate the killed operatives. Nico Prucha: *Die Stimme des Dschihad – al-Qa'idas erstes Online Magazin*, Dr. Kovac: Hamburg, 2010.
- 39 Al-Bin'ali was killed in 2017, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (Abu Ayyub al-Masri) died in 2010.
- 40 Al-Bin'ali (al-Athari): *Ya ahl al-Sham inn al-'asima fi l-husam*, Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l Jihad, 2011.
- 41 Al-Bin'ali (al-Athari): *Hiwar am khuwar?*, Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l Jihad, 2010. He notes the term khuwar "mooing sounds" by citing the Lisan al-Arab reference of the Quran: 7:147.
- 42 Al-Bin' ali (al-Athari): *al-Ishara fi hukm qiyadat al-mar'a al-sayyara*, Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l Jihad, 2011.
- 43 For more on the online operations and key players of the first generation of AQ in Saudi Arabia: Nico Prucha: *Die Stimme des Dschihad – al-Qa'idas erstes Online Magazin*, Dr. Kovac: Hamburg, 2010.
- 44 Abu Anas al-Shami was a renowned theologian and a vital figure for al-Zarqawi and his group. He died in a targeted missile strike by American forces in 2004 near Abu Ghraib in Iraq. He was a Palestinian based in Jordan. He grew up in Kuwait, where arguably many Palestinian workers and engineers had been exposed to the strict teachings and interpretations of the Wahhabi-dominated Arab Peninsula Islam. Experiencing war and expulsion again, the Palestinian migrants, who nevertheless had been refugees in Jordan and had come to Kuwait in pursuit of economic opportunities, had to flee back to Jordan because of the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait in 1990, taking the Arab Peninsula Salafism with them. As the PLO sided with Saddam Hussein, the Palestinians lost their base in Kuwait and in most cases returned to the refugee camps of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and elsewhere. Hazim al-Amin, *Al-Salafi al-yatim – al-wajh al-Filastini li "l-jihad al-'alami" wa-l "Qa'ida"*. Beirut-London: Dar al-Saqi, 2011, 114-127.
- 45 Abu Mu'adh al-Shammari, *Qissat shahid min ard al-Iraq Abu Ali al-Shammari*, Rimah Media, 2018.
- 46 For example the – as featured in the Library as of time of writing – 26 transcribed episodes of al-Anbari's lessons on how to avoid involuntarily *shirk* ('polytheism').
- 47 i.e. *Fatawa abra al-athir: Qatl wa-mawt wa-qisas wa-diyyat wa-l jana'iz*, al-Bayan, 2017.
- 48 Abu Ammar al-Ansari, *al-Khuttab al-minbariya istiqbal Ramadan*, Ashhad, 2018.
- 49 Abu l-Bara'a al-Yamani, *al-Radd al-qasif ala shuyukh al-qa'ida al-khawalif*, Ashhad, 2018.
- 50 Abu Mu'adh al-Shammari, *al-Dimukratiyya wa-atiba'uha fi al-mizan al-shar'i*, Ashhad, 2018.
- 51 A French teacher, Samuel Paty, was beheaded by an AQ-inspired militant called to action to act upon the divine obligation to avenge anyone offending prophet Muhammad. Both jihadi networks online, AQ and IS, celebrated the murder and shared ibn Taymiyya's book to ultimately justify this act. The details are outlined in: Reicher, Prucha, Fabris et al: *Im Namen des Propheten – Kontextualisierung und Social Media Analyse zu den jüngsten dschihadistischen Anschlägen in Europa*, https://www.beratungsstelleextremismus.at/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Beratungsstelle_Extremismus_Kontextualisierung_Social-Media_Analyse_dschihadistische_Anschlaege_Europa.pdf, December 2020.
- 52 T3K is a provider for innovative, customizable AI technologies in the field of digital forensics. T3K solutions aim to streamline and accelerate existing data analysis and screening workflows with ease-of-use in mind. All tools designed at T3K aim at identifying data, individuals, or devices of interest. While all tools can be applied in numerous use-cases, T3K has exceptional subject matter expertise in investigations related to violent extremism, specifically of the Salafi-jihadi ecosystem. This expertise is paired with highly advanced technology to identify and explain this data. T3K's extremism desk sets the standard for the identification and understanding of threats, for highly efficient investigative processes and long-term results in fighting extremist groups.
- 53 Nico Prucha, *Upon the Prophetic Methodology and the Media Universe*, Islamic State Briefing part 2, Onlinejihad, <https://onlinejihad.net/2017/08/01/part-2-upon-the-prophetic-methodology-and-the-media-universe/>, August 1, 2017.
- 54 The coherent use of Salafi sources which can best be described as a literal body of theology that is cited, recited, referenced and shared within the ecosystem of IS and AQ.
- 55 Fisher, Prucha, *Understanding the Global Jihadist Movement 20 years after 9/11* (2021), EICTP Expert Paper, online available at <https://www.eictp.eu/en/eictp-expert-paper-understanding-the-global-jihadist-movement/>.
- 56 The lack of evidence in orthodox terrorism studies and a thorough look at the much appraised "IS Reader" that, however, fails to provide an insight depth analysis of IS materials and claims that theology cannot matter for jihadis is discussed by Rüdiger Lohker, 'Innovating a new Islamic text: The theology of violence IS style', *Wiener Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 2021.

- 57 Ingram, Haroro J., Craig Whiteside, and Charlie Winter. *The ISIS Reader: Milestone texts of the Islamic state movement*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2020. pp. 7, 225
- 58 Rüdiger Lohker, 'Innovating a new Islamic text: The theology of violence IS style', Wiener Kunde des Morgenlandes, 2021
Importance of Rhizomatic approach is further discussed in;
Fisher, Prucha, Understanding the Global Jihadist Movement 20 years after 9/11 (2021)
- 59 In some cases, the media institutes released pictures, videos, and texts, such as Maktabat al-Himma, Ashhad Media or al-Rimah.
- 60 The Arabic root for fight, combat.
- 61 While the ruling house of Al Su'ud has the ambition to present itself to the outside world as reformist and modern, it must collaborate with the Al al-Shaikh, that is the descendants of sheikh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, many of them, but not exclusively, are in charge of maintaining the legacy of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. The writings by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab are of great importance – and extensively featured, shared, republished and applied – by both AQ and IS while the King and those religious leaders of Al al-Shaikh who are considered to serve the King's interest of power are referred to as apostates or disbelievers that must be combatted or killed.
- 62 Madhhab refers to established Islamic legal schools (Hanbali, Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i), schools of thought, within Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*).
- 63 An Islamic legal term referring to independent reasoning as opposed to *taqlid* (imitation or conformity to legal precedent within each school of law).
- 64 An Islamic scholarly religious disagreement that also addresses questions and issues of *fiqh* and the mundane lives of Muslims of what is considered "allowed" or "banned" etc.
- 65 As Halverson describes it:
"The Atharis can thus be described as a school or movement led by a contingent of scholars (*ulama*), typically Hanbali or even Shafi'i, which retained influence, or at the very least a shared sentiment and conception of piety, well beyond the limited range of Hanbalite communities. This body of scholars continued to reject theology in favor of strict textualism well after Ash'arism had infiltrated the Sunni schools of law. It is for these reasons that we must delineate the existence of a distinct traditionalist, anti-theological movement, which defies strict identification with any particular madhhab, and therefore cannot be described as Hanbalite." Halverson, Jeffry, *Theology and Creed in Sunni Islam: The Muslim Brotherhood, Ash'arism, and Political Sunnism*, Palgrave Macmillan 2010, p. 36.
- 66 Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab: Mukhtasar sirat al-rusul, Maktabat al-Himma, 2015.
- 67 Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab: al-Wajibat al-mutahattimat al-ma'rifa 'ala kull Muslim wa-Muslima, Maktabat al-Himma, 2015.
- 68 Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab: Mufid al-mustafid fi kufr tarik al-tawhid, Maktabat al-Himma, 2015.
- 69 Al-Uyairi cites al-Shawkani in dealing with different categories of prisoners, such as "the permissibility of ransoming enemy prisoners in return for Muslims prisoners" etc. Yusuf al-Uyairi, *Guiding the Perplexed on the Permissibility of Killing the Prisoners*, 2002.
- 70 Al-Shawkani is cited in a commentary of the Quran (9:120), "God has commanded us to kill the disbelievers did not specify the exact manner in which to do so." Cited in AQAP's writing by Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Salim (Isa al-Awshin), *30 Ways to Serve and Participate in Jihad*, 2003. As is common for jihadi literature, the source is properly cited, as per al-Salim: al-Shawkani, al-Sayl al-Jarrar, 4/534.
For subtleties between Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and Muhammad al-Shawkani, as it comes to extremism, see Bernard Haykel, *Revival and reform in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- 71 Just as is reflected within the jihadi part of the Library -
- 72 To our knowledge the term was not used by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab himself and used only under influence of Qutbists.
- 73 For a general survey of his life and work see 'Abd Allah Salih Al-'Uthaymin, *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab: The Man and His Works*, Library of Middle East History (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009).
- 74 Roel Meijer, *Global Salafism. Islam's New Religious Movement*, 4
- 75 Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism* (Columbia University Press 2015) gives a readable account of "how Wahhabism was rebranded to Salafism.
- 76 To put it otherwise, this effort was palpable for example in the way Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab was interpreted through Ibn Taymiyya. Importantly enough, the widespread Salafi trichotomic conception of *tawhid*, that is *tawhid al-rububiya*, *tawhid al-uluhiya* and *tawhid al-asma' wa al-sifat*, was introduced gradually and got finally applied retrospectively on the teachings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (and other Salafis), a fact that was overlooked by many Western scholars. The very same – that is ISIS seeks and claim religious legitimacy over others by connecting themselves with Ibn Taymiyya's theology (in its trichotomic conception of *tawhid*), including the later official Wahhabi discourse – will be evident from our description of the Salafi library.

- 77 He is cited, referenced, and referred to 68 times in the jihadi part of the Library, including his IS-branded works that featured there as part of Maktabat al-Himma.
- 78 Per result of searching for his name in Arabic.
- 79 According to Hegghammer, who studies jihadism and jihadi culture, it is erroneous to deny the religious motivation of jihadis and emphasize the aspects of power and politics. He assumes that the faith of a Jihadi is no less intensive just because they do not know much about theology. Just on the contrary, they often pursue religious activities in their free time. According to Hegghammer, Jihadis believe in the existence of God, devil, evil spirits, life after death and the prophetic power of dreams. At the same time, he emphasizes, that a Jihadi will find a new path of their religiousness having undergone a personal crisis. See his *Jihadi culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).
- 80 ed. Abd al-Qadir al-Arna'ut, Bashir Muhammad Uyun (eds.), *Majmu'at al-tawhid* (Damascus: Maktabat Dar al-Bayan, 1987).
- 81 Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Qasim, *al-Durar al-saniya fi al-ajwiba al-najdiya*, 1999.
- 82 The difference between *aqida* and *tawhid* is that *aqida* is a more general term, which includes one's belief in all doctrinal issues such as angels or resurrection for example, while *tawhid* is part of *aqida* which deals only with God.
- 83 The other two being Ash'arites and Maturidites.
- 84 *Kitab al-asma' wa-l sifat lil imam al-'allama Taqiyyuddin Ibn Taymiyya* (Book of Divine attributes and names by imam and great scholar Taqiyyuddin Ibn Taymiyya), ed. Mustafa Abd al-Qadir Ata (Beirut, Dar al-kutub al-ilmiya, 1998).
- 85 Perhaps with exceptions of his letter to notables and scholars, if we are to accept their authenticity.
- 86 Michael Cook, who studied early Wahhābism, notes quite aptly, referring of course to the early Wahhabism, that domain of *al-asma' wa al-sifat* is "a domain as central to early Hanbalism as it was peripheral to Wahhābism". Cook, Michael. "On the Origins of Wahhābism." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, 2, no. 2 (1992): 191-202, footnote 72.
- 87 Hanafis being the most rationalist among the four schools, in theology connected almost exclusively with Ash'arism/Maturidism.
- 88 Al-Jami' li-sirat shaykh al-islam Ibn Taymiyya khilala sab'at qurun, ed. Muhammad Uzayr Shams, *Ali ibn Muhammad al-Umran (Dar al-Fu'ad, financed by Sulaiman al-Rajhi endowment company, 1322 AH)*
- 89 In the general consciousness, Ibn Taymiyya is not ranked among the great exegetes of the Quran, yet he was a pioneer of thematical exegesis.
- 90 Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-aqida al-wasitiyya* Cairo: (al-Maktaba al-salafiyya, without date)
- 91 Those who are not experts of medieval Islam sometimes confuse Ibn al-Jawzi with Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, otherwise known as Ibn al-Qayyim.
- 92 Thomas Hegghammer, "Abdallāh ,Azzām and Palestine" 355—356.
- 93 ,Azzām, Abū 'Adil, *Mawsū'at*, 2.
- 94 ,Azzām, Abū 'Adil, *Mawsū'at*
- 95 Those articles of faith which deviate from the traditional doctrinal discourse are namely two: first that secular law (qawānīn wa d'īya) is invalid and that ruling according by that which God has revealed (al-tashrī' bi ghayr ma anzala allah) is tantamount to unbelief (kufr).. As regards jihad, it is religious duty until the day of resurrection day. The last two. Albeit the Saudi régime supported jihad outside Saudi Arabia in that time, the doctrine of secular law and jihad were lately used against Islamic regimes themselves, including Saudi Arabia.
- 96 Azzam, Abu Adil, *Mawsū'at*, 2.
- 97 Derek J. Penslar, "Anti-Semites on Zionism: from Indifference to Obsession," in Jeffrey Herf ed., *Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective: Convergence and Divergence*, Routledge, 2013, p. 16 in http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/kiyo/pdf/2015/bulletin_e2015_6.pdf
- 98 *al-aqida wa atharuba*, 71. .
- 99 See QADHI, YASIR. "THE UNLEASHED THUNDERBOLTS OF IBN QAYYIM AL-ĞAWZIYYAH: AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY." *Oriente Moderno* 90, no. 1 (2010): 135-49. Accessed July 12, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23253751>
- 100 <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/sayyid-qutb%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%99Cmilestones%E2%80%9D-and-its-impact-on-the-arab-spring>
- 101 *Hukm al-ghina' fi al-islam* Tanta, ed. Abu Hudhayfa, Ibrahim ibn Muhammad: maktabat al-sahaba, 1986)
- 102 For more info about his theological opinions see *A Medieval Critique of Anthropomorphism. Ibn al-Jawzī's Kitāb Akhbār aṣṢifāt. A Critical Edition of the Arabic Text with Translation, Introduction and Notes.* By Merlin Swartz. (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, Texts and Studies, Vol. 46). Pp. xvi + 446. Leiden: Brill, 2002. EUR 104.0

- 103 Anjum, Ovamir. Sufism without Mysticism? Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's Objectives in Madarij al-Salikin, *Oriente Moderno* 90, no. 1 (2010): 161-88. Accessed July 13, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23253753>.
- 104 As we have mentioned, his famous exegesis on the legally relevant verses (Ahkam al-Qur'an) was included in the Jihadi library in the form of the exegetical passages on Jihad.
- 105 See Makdisi, George. "Ash'ari and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History I." *Studia Islamica*, no. 17 (1962): 37-80. Accessed July 13, 2021. doi:10.2307/1595001 and Makdisi, George. "Ash'ari and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History II." *Studia Islamica*, no. 18 (1963): 19-39. Accessed July 13, 2021. Makdisi, George. "The Significance of the Sunni Schools of Law in Islamic Religious History." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10, no. 1 (1979): 1-8. Accessed July 13, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/162473>.doi:10.2307/1595177.
- 106 His name is also being translated into English as ibn Nuhaas or Ibn Nuhas. The author is quoted as an authority on jihad by Abdallaz Azzam, see Hassan, Muhammad Haniff. 2014. *The Father of Jihad*. Vol. 2. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd
- 107 Asma Afsaruddin, Striving in the path of God. Jihad and Martyrdom in islamic thought (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 173.
- 108 See Ondřej Beránek and Pavel Ťupek, The Temptation of Graves in Salafi islam (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018) 73-80;
- 109 The Salafi library includes only volume 2 (out of 4 volumes). The pdf file is without a front page. Muhammad Munir al-Dimasqi, Majmu'at al-rasa'il al-muniriyya, 1343 AH.
- 110 Hamud ibn Abdalla Al-Tuwayjiri , Ithaf al-jama'a bi-ma ja'a fi al-fitan wa al-malahim wa ashrat al-sa'a (Riyadh: Dar al-Sumay'i, second edition 1414 h)
- 111 See Bronislav Ostransky, The Jihadist preachers of the end times. ISIS apocalyptic propaganda (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019) 58.
- 112 Douglas Rushkoff, *Cyberia: Life in the Trenches of Hyperspace*. New York: Harpercollins Publishers, 1995 (reprint).
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 Further discussed in: Nico Prucha, "IS and the Jihadist Information Highway – Projecting Influence and Religious Identity via Telegram", Perspectives on Terrorism, Vol. 10, No 6 (2016), <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/556>
- 115 Ibid.
- 116 Quran 8:24.
- 117 Abdallah Azzam, fi khaim al-ma'araka, part 2, electronic version (2002), undated electronic version.
- 118 Rüdiger Lohker, Why Theology Matters – The Case of ISIS, Strategic Review July –September 2016, <http://sr-indonesia.com/in-the-journal/view/europe-s-misunderstanding-of-islam-and-isis>
- 119 Quran 11:115.
- Nasif al-Shubahat, dawla satunsar wa-hamla satuksar, Mu'assasat al-Wafa', April 2018.
- 120 Wael b. Hallaq: Ibn Taymiyya against the Greek Logicians. Translated with an introduction by Wael Hallaq, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, xxxiii.
- 121 As the author of the citation Philipp Holtmann explains, "terrorists are called upon to identify with the Muslim Ibn Maslama who volunteered to kill Muhammad's critic Ka'b bin al-Ashraf." Philipp Holtmann, Virutal Leadership in Radical Islamist Movements: Mechanisms, Justifications and Discussion. Working Paper, The Institute for Policy and Strategy, Herzliya Conference February 6-9, 2011, http://www.herzliyaconference.org/eng/_Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/PhilippHoltmann.pdf
- 122 Ibid.
- 123 A video entitled *al-qawla qawla al-sawarim*, "the words [are now about action and hence] words of the sword", shows the testimony of the suicide operative identified as a Saudi by the nom de guerre Abu Gharib al-Makki [the Meccan]. The one-hour video justifies the attack; "the time to talk is over, the time for actions (i.e the swords must be drawn) has come to avenge the insults of Prophet Muhammad".
- 124 Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, al-Sarim al-maslul ala sabb al-rabb aw al-din aw al-rasul salla allahu alayhi wa-sallam, Minbar al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad.
- 125 Yassin Chouka, Tod der Pro NRW, *Jundallah media*, May 20, 2012.
- 126 Ibid.
- 127 John Ward Anderson, Cartoons of Prophet met with outrage, *The Washington Post*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/30/AR2006013001316.html>, January 31, 2006. Accessed February 12, 2014.

- 128 Hubert Gude, Die Ehre der Löwen, *DER SPIEGEL*, May 14, 2012.
- 129 In Reih und Glied standen sie für Rasulullah, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRVgZdl5Zx0>, July 14, 2012. The original video had been removed, however, it has been uploaded again several times, for example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IzTMuAFga4>, March 18, 2014. This edition has Farsi subtitles.
- 130 Abu ‘Azzam al-Almani, Wir machen, was Allah uns befohlen hat!, Interview with Abu Usama al-Gharbib, *al-risalah.de*, <http://alrisalah.de/component/k2/item/60-interview-mit-abu-usama-al-gharib>. Accessed May 31, 2012.
- 131 Yassin Chouka, Tod der Pro NRW, *Jundallah media*, May 20, 2012.
- 132 As the German jihadi Abu Adam states in the video “Boden der Ehre, part 1” (Waziristan, March 2010), the *Mujahidin* are “practitioners of the verses” of the Quran, unlike most Muslims. Therefore, most Muslims dwell in the unchanged status of sin, particularly the diaspora in western countries while the *Mujahidin* have by their contribution to *jihad* and by undertaking the emigration (*hijra*), ‘cleansed’ of such sin and neglect of God and His religion.
- 133 Nico Prucha, Fatwa calling for the death of the director, producer, and actors involved in the making the film “Innocence of Muslims”, *Jihadica*, September 18, 2012, <http://www.jihadica.com/fatwa-calling-for-the-death-of-the-director-producer-and-actors-involved-in-making-the-film-%E2%80%99innocence-of-islam%E2%80%99/>
- 134 A detailed oversight is provided by the BBC, outlining in depth also the attack by IS member Amedy Coulibaly who executed several hostages in a Jewish supermarket, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30708237> Amedy Coulibaly uploaded a video where he pledges allegiance to al-Baghdadi. Part of his video is used in one of the ‘official’ IS videos to applaud the January 2015 Paris attack, *Risala ila Faransa, Wilayat Salah al-Din*, February 14, 2015.
- 135 Ibn Taymiyya, al-Siyasa al-shar‘iyya, Wizarat al-Shu‘un al-Islamiyya, King Fahd Library, Riyadh: 1418 a.H. (2007).
- 136 See for example: <https://archive.org/details/FP162512FP>. This version is interlinked to many mundane online libraries concerned with Islamic affairs among other subjects.
- 137 Ibn Taymiyya, Taw‘iyat al-ra‘iyya bi-l siyasat al-shar‘iyya, Maktabat al-Himma, 1436. The title of this version differs slightly from Ibn Taymiyya’s original book as it has been abridged. The added taw‘iyat al-ra‘iyya seeks to enhance this version, stating the title in full as “consciousness raising of the subjects for the governance according to the shari‘a”, underpinning the handbook nature of this publication for the Islamic State in 2015, 23.
- 138 Ibid, 7.
- 139 Ibid.
- 140 In a three-part video series IS pitched itself as those, who are actively commandeering good and forbidding evil, Jumadi al-awwal, 1436. The expression of “commanding good and forbidding evil” is the Islamic police body, al-Hisba. The videos demonstrate the application of this doctrine by destroying pre-Islamic cultural heritage sites and hunting and punishing alcohol and tobacco smugglers (who by this spread *fasad*, or mischief), re-educating Sunnis caught smoking. This follows the same doctrinal commitment of the Saudi Committee of “Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice”, in a different translation, with the Islamic police, al-Hisba, as its executive body. For an overview of its function inside the Kingdom: Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, https://adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/2015.03.31_Ch.-1-CPVPV.pdf, March 2015.
- 141 Hukm al-khaliq bi haqq al-sariq, wilaya Nineveh, June 4, 2015.
- 142 Spreading across borders and being used by Arabic speakers as guidebooks outside of the classical Arabic language zone, suggesting at least an ideological relationship by finding this particular MH book by DRC soldiers. Robert Postings, The Tentative Ties Between the Allied Democratic Forces and ISIS, The Defense Post, <https://thedefensepost.com/2018/12/04/tentative-ties-allied-democratic-forces-isis-dr-congo/>, December 4, 2018.
- 143 Ibn Taymiyya, Taw‘iyat al-ra‘iyya bi-al-siyasat al-shar‘iyya, Maktabat al-Himma, 1436.
- 144 i.e. al-Hadid:25; 4:59.
- 145 Ibn Taymiyya, Taw‘iyat al-ra‘iyya bi al- siyasat al-shar‘iyya, Maktabat al-Himma, 1436, 23.
- 146 Ibid, 40.
- 147 Ibid, 46.
- 148 The title on the cover of the book is slightly different in the inlay where “special” stated twice, reading: “Special jihadist operations by special/selected groups of the sahaba.” Three publishing houses are listed: Dar al-Qalam (Damascus), al-Dar al-Shamiyya (Beirut) and Dar al-Bashir (Jeddah). The green flag of Saudi Arabia features the Islamic *shahada* and a sword.
- 149 Salih Abd al-Fattah al-Khalidi, Suwar min jihad al-sahaba – amaliyyat jihadiyya khassa tunaffidhuha majmu‘a khassa min al-sahaba, Dar al-Qalam: Damascus / Dar al-Bashir: Jeddah, 2009 (third edition), 5.
- 150 Ibid.
- 151 Ibid, 6.
- 152 Ibid.

- 153 Ibid, 7.
- 154 Ibid, 8.
- 155 In Arabic, *tawaghit* (plural of *taghut*), is a term used in reference to worldly tyrant rulers and idols who are worshipped in violation of *tanbihid*. The fight against *taghut* in the jihadist mindset is bound by both elements – fighting worldly un-Islamic Arab regimes, and even Western democracies, and the restoration of the ‘true’ Islamic community (*umma*).
- 156 Ibn al-Qayyim, “Zad al-ma‘ad fi hady khayr al-ibad “ (1/506). <http://katarat1.com/forum/showthread.php?t=968>
- 157 Al-Khalidi, 11.
- 158 This expression is based on an allegedly sound Prophetic hadith (oral transmission of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions), in which Muhammad compares the duties of Islam to the different body parts of a camel, which was an extremely valuable animal in Arab tribal culture of the 7th century. In IS writings – and supportive Salafi literature such as this one provided by contemporary al-Khalidi – jihad is the “hump of Islam” and thus the most important aspect for believers to embark on. In the words of IS, al-Naba’ magazine no. 296: “the Mujahideen today are the best of people, committed to realizing the hump of Islam. That is jihad which is to bring victory to religion.” AQ in Iraq in 2005 published an electronic magazine by the name “the hump of Islam”, featuring martyr stories, various claims, promoting books and providing monthly reports. The first edition of this magazine featured Osama bin Laden’s speech “a greeting to the Mujahideen in Iraq.”
- 159 Al-Khalidi, 14.



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