

The Role of the Tribes of the Central Maghreb in the Establishment of the ‘Ubaydid State during the Fourth Century AH/Tenth Century CE (The Kutama and Sanhaja Tribes as Examples)

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Submission: 20/10/2025 Accepted: 27/03/2026 Publication: 28/08/2026

Abstract:

The Kutama and Sanhaja tribes constituted an essential political and military foundation for the establishment of the ‘Ubaydid State and the consolidation of its authority in the Central Maghreb during the fourth century AH. The Kutama supported the Isma‘ili da‘wa under the leadership of Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Shi‘i and contributed to its military expansions, which overthrew several states, most notably the Aghlabid State. The role of the Sanhaja, meanwhile, became prominent with Ziri ibn Manad in confronting the Zanata, and later with Buluggin ibn Ziri, who assumed leadership of the Islamic Maghreb by appointment of the ‘Ubaydid caliph al-Mu‘izz li-Din Allah. Nevertheless, the ‘Ubaydid presence was temporary, as the Sanhaja restored their Maliki doctrinal orientation during the reign of al-Mu‘izz ibn Badis.

Keywords: Kutama; Sanhaja; ‘Ubaydid State; Isma‘ili Da‘wa; Maliki Doctrine.

Introduction:

The Kutama and Sanhaja tribes played an essential role in the establishment of the ‘Ubaydid State in the Islamic Maghreb. The Kutama supported the missionaries Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Shi‘i and Abu ‘Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi, enabling them to overthrow the Aghlabid State. The Sanhaja likewise constituted an important military force through the efforts of Ziri ibn Manad and his son Buluggin in confronting opposing tribes, especially the Zanata. The ‘Ubaydids succeeded in maintaining a balance between the two tribes to limit the separatist tendencies of other tribes. The Islamic Maghreb also provided refuge for Shi‘is fleeing Abbasid persecution. At the same time, the sympathy of its inhabitants for the Prophet's Household facilitated the spread of the Isma‘ili da‘wa, which began among the Kutama. Then the Sanhaja and culminated in the establishment of the ‘Ubaydid State, whose presence in the region lasted for approximately seventy years.

The significance of this study lies in demonstrating the role of the Kutama and Sanhaja in the success of the ‘Ubaydid project during its first phase in the Central Maghreb, before expansion shifted towards Egypt and the East, even though the Shi‘i doctrine did not endure for long in the region, particularly after the Sanhaja ruler al-Mu‘izz ibn Badis championed the Maliki school and restored its standing. The research problem concerns the manner in which

the Kutama and Sanhaja tribes participated in establishing the 'Ubaydid edifice in the Islamic Maghreb, as further clarified by the following questions:

- What were the reasons for the success of the 'Ubaydid da'wa among the Kutama tribe?
- To what extent did the Kutama tribe contribute to establishing the foundations of the 'Ubaydid State?
- Was the 'Ubaydid presence in the Central Maghreb merely a base for military expansion towards the Islamic East?

2. The 'Ubaydid Da'wa in the Islamic Maghreb

2.1 The Beginnings of the 'Ubaydid Da'wa in the Islamic Maghreb

The beginnings of the Isma'ili da'wa refer to the initial spread of Shi'i thought in the Islamic Maghreb. According to al-Qadi al-Nu'man, this passed through the stage of "sowing, then ploughing" and prepared the ground for the practical phase led by Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i after the deaths of the two missionaries Abu Sufyan and al-Hulwani. During this phase, Abu 'Abd Allah disseminated the da'wa of 'Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi and supported his doctrine, thereby paving the way for the spread of the Isma'ili da'wa in the Islamic Maghreb.¹ He had been sent by Ibn Hawshab, the Imam of the Shi'a's chief missionary in Yemen.² Ibn Hawshab was Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i's teacher in Yemen, from whom he learned the principles of the Isma'ili da'wa. Following its success in Yemen, the da'wa was directed towards the Maghreb. Abu 'Abd Allah began his journey after performing the pilgrimage, heading to Mecca in the company of 'Abd Allah ibn Abi Mikhlaf and then Ibrahim ibn Ishaq al-Zubaydi. He arrived there in 279 AH/892 CE in preparation for his journey to the Maghreb and the establishment of the 'Ubaydid State.³ After the pilgrimage season ended, Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i began searching for Kutama pilgrims. This marked his first contact with the people of the Maghreb, especially al-Harith al-Jumayli and Musa ibn Makarima, who were Shi'is from the Kutama. Through his powers of persuasion and eloquence, he succeeded in gaining the support of the Kutama and rapidly spreading his influence among them. This phase demonstrates the Isma'ili da'wa's reliance on persuasion and taqiyya in disseminating its ideas. Some sources indicate that Abu 'Abd Allah was interested in the pilgrimage, while his true objective was to establish contact with the Kutama followers and win them over to his da'wa.⁴

Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i gained the confidence of the Kutama through the righteousness, piety, and learning he displayed, and they invited him to accompany them on their return

¹ Ibn al-Abbar, 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah (d. 658 AH), *al-Hulla al-Siyara*, ed. Husayn Mu'nis, Da'irat al-Ma'arif, Cairo, 1st ed., vol. 1, p. 195.

² Ibn Hawshab: Abu al-Qasim al-Hasan Faraj ibn Zadan al-Kufi. Al-Maqrizi indicates that his name was Abu al-Qasim al-Husayn ibn Faraj Hawshab al-Kufi. He embraced Twelver teachings but became one of the most prominent Isma'ili missionaries. His birth is estimated at approximately 235 AH, and he was entrusted with this da'wa in Yemen around 268 AH. He is regarded as one of the most famous missionaries in Yemen, where most people adopted Shi'ism because of him, especially in Aden. See Sayf al-Din al-Qasir, *Ibn Hawshab wa-l-Haraka al-Fatimiyya fi al-Yaman*, Dar al-Yanabi', Damascus, 1st ed., 1993, pp. 34–35.

³ Al-Qadi al-Nu'man ibn Muhammad ibn Mansur al-Tamimi (d. 363 AH), *Ifitah al-Da'wa*, ed. Farhat al-Dashrawi, al-Sharika al-Tunisiyya lil-Tawzi', Tunis, 2nd ed., 1986, p. 32.

⁴ Ibn 'Idhari al-Marrakushi (d. 695 AH), *al-Bayan al-Mughrib fi Ikhtisar Akhbar Muluk al-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*, ed. Bashshar 'Awwad, Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Tunis, 1st ed., 2013, p. 125.

journey. When they asked about his destination, he replied that he intended to go to Egypt, and they were pleased by his company, while he concealed his true objective from them. This concealment is considered one manifestation of the *taqiyya* adopted by the Shi'i *da'wa*.⁵

2.2 Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i's Efforts to Spread the Da'wa

Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i did not actually intend to travel to Egypt, as he had told the Kutama; rather, his true objective was to spread the Isma'ili *da'wa* in a new region far from Yemen. His decision to use the pilgrimage season to seek out the Kutama was also deliberate, since the pilgrimage brought together Muslims from different regions and because he knew that Abu Sufyan and al-Hulwani had already prepared the ground for the *da'wa* among them. His claim that he was travelling to Egypt was a political method that allowed him to await an initiative from the Kutama themselves. If they offered to accompany him, he would preserve his standing and the strength of his *da'wa*; if they did not, he would avoid revealing his project prematurely.

We may say that religious solidarity began to appear clearly from Egypt because the missionary Abu 'Abd Allah found effective support there. He was not satisfied merely with winning their esteem, however, but pursued broader objectives: he sought to learn about the conditions of the ordinary people in Kutama territory, for this was the land in which he intended to sow, and it was also unknown territory on which he had never set foot.⁶ Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i used the opportunity to learn about the conditions of the Kutama, their living circumstances, and their relations with the rulers, to form a clear picture of the region in which he would operate and in which he found similarities with the Yemeni environment. The sources, particularly al-Qadi al-Nu'man, state that he asked them about their relationship with the ruler, their distance from the governors, and their tribal relations. Their answers were encouraging, given the tense relationship with the rulers of the Aghlabid State. This is also evident from his question about bearing arms, to which they replied, "It is our occupation," revealing their military preparedness and their willingness to support the *da'wa*.⁷

Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i based his approach on studying the circumstances of the Kutama and their relations with the rulers, recognising that the oppression of governors and their mistreatment of the population could create conditions conducive to revolt. Through his political acumen, he persuaded the Kutama to accompany him to the Maghreb by first leading them to believe his destination was Egypt, then feigning hesitation before joining them. They reached Ikjan in 280 AH/893 CE after passing through Sujmar, and from there the Isma'ili *da'wa* began in the Islamic Maghreb.

This journey reveals careful planning for the transition from the *da'wa* phase to the phase of establishing the state. Abu 'Abd Allah relied on religious and doctrinal factors to gain the confidence of the Kutama, then transformed this Isma'ili affiliation into a bond of tribal and doctrinal solidarity that enabled the *da'wa* to spread and prepared the way for the establishment of the 'Ubaydid State.

⁵ Al-Maqrizi, *Kitab al-Muqaffa al-Kabir*, ed. Muhammad al-Ya'lawi, Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Beirut, 1st ed., 1991, vol. 3, p. 483.

⁶ 'Ali Hasan al-Kharbutli, *Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i Mu'assis al-Dawla al-Fatimiyya*, 1972, p. 33.

⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *al-Mawa'iz wa-l-I'tibar bi-Dhikr al-Khitat wa-l-Athar*, ed. Muhammad Zaynhum and Madiha al-Sharqawi, Maktabat al-Madbuli, Cairo, 1st ed., 1997, vol. 2, p. 388.

3. The Role of the Kutama Tribe in the Establishment of the 'Ubaydid State

Ibn Khaldun is among the most prominent historians to have studied the tribes of the Islamic Maghreb, their genealogies, and their branches, particularly in the sixth volume of his *al-Ibar*. The importance of his method lies in his precise classification of the Berber tribes, based on his extensive knowledge of genealogy, which made his works an essential reference for researchers studying the tribal composition of the Islamic Maghreb. Among the tribes he discussed was the Kutama, whom he described as strong and formidable and traced to Kutam ibn Burnus. Al-Qalqashandi agreed with him that the Kutama lineage traced to the Baranis branch of the Berbers.⁸

3.1 Kutama Support for the 'Ubaydid Da'wa

The Kutama were among the strongest Berber tribes in terms of manpower and arms, and they played a prominent role in supporting the Shi'i da'wa and the 'Ubaydid State, particularly during the state's founding. The 'Ubaydids used their military strength to reinforce the state and ensure its continuity. Caliph al-Mansur also praised the Kutama as supporters of the da'wa and the state, commending their patience, loyalty, and sacrifices in the service of the state.⁹

The Kutama tribe constituted the military backbone of the Shi'i da'wa. Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i organised those who were loyal to the da'wa and prepared to fight, dividing the tribe into seven groups and appointing an experienced commander to each, while preserving the standing of chiefs, missionaries, and elders to secure their loyalty and popularity. He imposed military service on them, thereby strengthening the da'wa's military organisation and enabling it to achieve its objectives.¹⁰ He also enrolled them in the registers, until the Kutama tribe came to represent the centre and origin of the state.¹¹ This continued throughout the caliphate of al-Mahdi 'Ubayd Allah, the reign of al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah, then of al-Mansur, and the period of al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah al-Fatimi.

The Kutama also moved with the 'Ubaydids under the commander Jawhar. Al-Qadi al-Nu'man stated that the Fatimid army at that time consisted of seventy thousand men, fifty thousand of whom were Kutama.¹² During the Maghrebi period, the 'Ubaydid army consisted of Kutama alongside Saqaliba, Zuwaylis, and Arab recruits, with the Kutama predominating in the Fatimid army during the Ifriqiyan period. Their role was prominent in supporting the 'Ubaydids and participating actively in various battles and revolts.¹³

3.2 Contributions of the Kutama Army to the Expansion of the 'Ubaydid State

⁸ Ibn Khaldun, *al-Ibar wa-Diwan al-Mubtada' wa-l-Khabar fi Tarikh al-'Arab wa-l-Barbar wa-man 'Asarahum min Dhawi al-Sha'n al-Akbar*, rev. Suhayl Zakkar, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, 2000, vol. 6, p. 195.

⁹ Abu 'Ali Mansur al-'Azizi al-Jawdhari, *Sirat al-Ustadh Jawdhar*, ed. Muhammad Kamil Husayn, Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, p. 59.

¹⁰ Farhat al-Dashrawi, *al-Khilafa al-Fatimiyya bi-l-Maghrib: al-Tarikh al-Siyasi wa-l-Mu'assasat*, Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1st ed., 1999, pp. 114–15.

¹¹ Al-Maqrizi, *al-Mawa'iz wa-l-I'tibar bi-Dhikr al-Khitat wa-l-Athar*, ed. Muhammad Zaynhum and Madiha al-Sharqawi, Maktabat al-Madbuli, Cairo, 1st ed., 1997, vol. 2, p. 387.

¹² Al-Qadi al-Nu'man, *al-Majalis wa-l-Musayarat*, ed. al-Habib al-Faqi et al., Dar al-Muntazar, Beirut, Lebanon, p. 54.

¹³ Ayman Fu'ad al-Sayyid, *al-Dawla al-Fatimiyya fi Misr: Tafsir Jadid*, Maktabat al-Usra, Cairo, 2007, p. 658.

Power and predominance are among the most important factors in extending and sustaining state authority, and the Kutama's military strength enabled the 'Ubaydids to control the Islamic Maghreb. The Kutama army was distinguished by its large size, and its activity extended beyond the region. It participated in the 'Ubaydid campaigns against Egypt, particularly the 301 AH/914 CE campaign led by Abu al-Qasim al-Qa'im, which included a large number of Kutama troops. This was followed by another campaign in 308 AH/919 CE, after the failure of the first, for which the 'Ubaydids mobilised armies from Kutama, the Arabs of Ifriqiya, and the Berbers of Ifriqiya.¹⁴ The 'Ubaydids were then able to advance as far as Fayyum and Upper Egypt. It is noteworthy that the 'Ubaydid campaigns towards Egypt during the reigns of al-Qa'im and al-Mansur were halted because of revolts that shook the foundations of the Islamic Maghreb, requiring the 'Ubaydids to devote themselves to suppressing them. This continued until al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah al-Fatimi assumed leadership of the state and revived its expansionist project towards the East, a Shi'i plan to bring the Islamic world under its control from east to west and to control the holy places in the Hijaz. Egypt was under Ikhshidid rule¹⁵ during the tenure of Kafur,¹⁶ who died in 357 AH/976 CE. Egypt then entered a phase of weakness and decline, as society's economic conditions deteriorated due to the high prices that afflicted the country during that period, and no one in Egypt remained around whom hearts could rally.¹⁷

After the death of Kafur al-Ikhshidi, the 'Ubaydids took advantage of the political vacuum in Egypt and began preparing the long-awaited campaign, which had been in preparation since 355 AH/965 CE, when Jawhar al-Siqilli contacted the Kutama to mobilise soldiers and collect taxes from the Berbers, accompanied by men and funds.¹⁸ Al-Mu'izz then ordered wells to be dug along the route and a palace to be built for him at each stopping place, as a pre-emptive plan to ensure that the army would find water during its advance on Egypt. In Muharram 358 AH/968 CE, al-Mu'izz assembled near Raqqada approximately 100,000 cavalymen, most of them from Berber tribes, especially the Kutama.¹⁹ The Kutama army participated extensively in the 'Ubaydid campaign against Egypt under the command of Jawhar al-Siqilli, who was provided with substantial financial and military resources. The army departed on 14 Rabi' al-Awwal 358 AH, and Jawhar succeeded in entering Egypt on 17 Sha'ban 358 AH. Al-Mu'izz subsequently entered Cairo on 7 Ramadan 362 AH/973 CE. The role of the Kutama was not confined to the conquest of Egypt; they continued to expand with

¹⁴ 'Abd Allah Muhammad Jamal al-Din, *al-Dawla al-Fatimiyya: Qiyamuha bi-Bilad al-Maghrib wa-Intiqaluha ila Misr ila Nihayat al-Qarn al-Rabi' al-Hijri*, Faculty of Dar al-'Ulum, Cairo, 1991, p. 109.

¹⁵ The Ikhshidids (323–358 AH/934–968 CE) were of Turkish origin. Muhammad ibn Tughj is considered the founder of the dynasty and succeeded in repelling the first Fatimid campaigns. Among its most prominent administrators was Kafur al-Ikhshidi during the rule of Abu al-Hasan Kafur. The state fell in 357 AH/967 CE. See Mustafa Shakir, *Mawsu'at Duwal al-'Alam al-Islami*, vol. 1, p. 345.

¹⁶ Kafur ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ikhshidi, Abu al-Misk, was an Abyssinian slave whom al-Ikhshidi, ruler of Egypt, purchased in 312 AH/924 CE. He rose through the ranks and was known for his discernment, intelligence, and sound governance. He died in 357 AH and was buried in Cairo. See Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-A'yan*, vol. 4, p. 99.

¹⁷ Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 911 AH), *Husn al-Muhadara fi Akhbar Misr wa-l-Qahira*, ed. Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1st ed., 1967, vol. 1, p. 599.

¹⁸ Al-Hadi Roger Idris, *al-Dawla al-Sanhajiyya fi 'Ahd Bani Ziri min al-Qarn al-'Ashir ila al-Qarn al-Thani 'Ashar*, trans. al-Hadi al-Sahili, Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Beirut, 1st ed., 1966, p. 61.

¹⁹ Ibn Abi Dinar, *al-Mu'nis fi Akhbar Ifriqiya wa-Tunis*, p. 81.

the 'Ubaydids towards the Levant, and several of them assumed important offices, including Ja'far ibn Fallah, Abu al-Fath ibn al-Shaykh in Sidon, Mansur ibn Karadis in Shayzar, Fahl ibn Isma'il in Tyre, and Hisn al-Dawla Mu'alla ibn Haydara ibn Manzu al-Kutami, who became governor of Damascus in 461 AH.²⁰ Dr Musa Laqbal discussed several Kutama commanders who played prominent roles in shaping events in the Levant, including the efforts of Kutama troops and their commanders to recover the city of Antioch under the leadership of Futuh and 'Arras during the period of Ja'far ibn Fallah.²¹

The Kutama tribe acquired a prominent position both internally and externally because of its military strength, which the 'Ubaydids employed to achieve their victories, bringing Kutama tribal solidarity to its peak. The Kutama experience, viewed through Khaldunian theory, also confirms that the union of tribal solidarity with Shi'i religious solidarity enhanced the tribe's strength and extended its influence from the regional to the external level, making solidarity a decisive factor in shaping Maghrebi society and establishing new states during the medieval period.

4. The Role of the Sanhaja Tribe in Consolidating the Foundations of the 'Ubaydid State

The historical sources do not clearly clarify the origins of the alignment of Sanhaja tribal solidarity with the 'Ubaydid State during the da'wa phase, as they focus on the role of the Kutama. Nevertheless, it is difficult to claim that no contact existed, given the strength and standing of the Sanhaja and their connections with the Kutama, which made interaction with the 'Ubaydids inevitable, whether through support or conflict. The 'Ubaydids therefore adopted a policy of winning over some tribes and confronting others by exploiting rival tribal solidarities, to preserve the state's influence and avoid conflict with tribes loyal to it.

4.1 Manifestations of the Sanhaja-'Ubaydid Alliance

The 'Ubaydid caliphs were keen to select the strongest tribes in terms of military power, valour, and steadfastness in Shi'ism.²² The role of the Sanhaja began to emerge strongly when Ziri ibn Manad built the city of Ashir in 324 AH/935 CE, which became a barrier to Zanata expansion and supported the 'Ubaydid State. The first effective contact became evident through Ziri ibn Manad's contribution to suppressing the revolt of Abu Yazid al-Khariji, when he supported Caliph al-Qa'im with 200 horsemen and 500 slaves to lift the siege of Mahdia. Al-Qa'im rewarded him with valuable gifts, thereby strengthening the bond of amity between them.²³

Ziri ibn Manad continued to support the 'Ubaydid State during the reign of al-Mansur. He mobilised forces from the Sanhaja and 'Ajisa and participated in suppressing Kharijite

²⁰ Abu Ya'la al-Tamimi al-Qalanisi (d. 555 AH), *Tarikh Dimashq*, ed. Suhayl Zakkar, Dar Hassan, Damascus, 1st ed., 1983, p. 161.

²¹ Musa Laqbal, *Dawr Kutama fi Tarikh al-Khilafa al-Fatimiyya min Ta'sisiha ila Muntasaf al-Qarn al-Khamis al-Hijri*, al-Sharika al-Wataniyya lil-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi', Algiers, p. 565.

²² Al-Qadi al-Nu'man, *Da'a'im al-Islam wa-Dhikr al-Halal wa-l-Haram wa-l-Qadaya wa-l-Ahkam 'an Ahl Bayt Rasul Allah 'alayhi wa-'alayhim Afdal al-Salam*, ed. Asif ibn 'Ali and Asghar Faydi, Dar al-Ma'arif, Cairo, vol. 1, 1963, p. 358.

²³ Shihab al-Din al-Nuwayri (d. 733 AH), *Nihayat al-Arab fi Funun al-Adab*, ed. 'Abd al-Majid Tarjini, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, Lebanon, vol. 24, p. 89.

revolts, thereby strengthening his position and leading al-Mansur to grant him command of the Sanhaja and new territories. During the reign of al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, he participated alongside Jawhar al-Siqilli in the conquest of Fez in 348 AH/958 CE. He also maintained his loyalty to the 'Ubaydids in confronting the Zanata and internal revolts until his rule ended after the battles of 360 AH/971 CE. He was known for his good conduct and for building the city of Ashir, and his rule lasted for approximately twenty-six years.²⁴

Buluggin ibn Ziri emerged as a prominent commander through the victories he achieved with his father and became known for founding the cities of Algiers, Medea, and Miliana. After his father was killed in 360 AH and he assumed leadership of the Sanhaja, he declared his loyalty to the 'Ubaydids and led military campaigns that included M'Sila, Tubna, Baghaya, and Biskra. He bore the titles Abu al-Futuh Yusuf and Sayf al-Dawla after assuming leadership of the Maghreb, then continued his conquests towards Tlemcen to confront the Zanata siege of the city.²⁵

The Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah summoned Buluggin ibn Ziri after his victories in preparation for his departure to Egypt following its stabilisation by Jawhar al-Siqilli. After Ja'far ibn 'Ali ibn Hamdun rejected the terms of governorship, al-Mu'izz offered the government of the Maghreb to Buluggin, who accepted on the condition that he be granted a degree of independence in administering the judiciary and the land tax. Al-Mu'izz therefore appointed him governor over Ifriqiya and the entire Maghreb, except Sicily, and bestowed upon him the title Sayf al-'Aziz bi-Allah.²⁶ Ibn Khaldun, al-Maqrizi, and Ibn al-Khatib all referred to al-Mu'izz's letter to Buluggin ibn Ziri, in which he advised him not to increase taxation on the rural population or raise the sword against them, especially the Berbers, to do good to the inhabitants of the towns, and not to appoint brothers or paternal cousins because they would regard themselves as more entitled to rule than he was. Al-Darjini added to this account the statement: "Avenge me upon the sons of the Magi, the Zanata."²⁷ On 11 Rabi' al-Awwal 362 AH/972 CE, al-Mu'izz departed for Cairo, and Buluggin assumed rule of the Maghreb. Caliph al-'Aziz bi-Allah then expanded his governorship in 367 AH/977 CE to include Tripoli and Ajdabiya in addition to the Maghreb. Buluggin continued his wars against the Zanata, and his armies reached Fez in 368 AH/979 CE, conquering it and Sijilmasa. He continued to consolidate Zirid rule in the Maghreb until he died in 373 AH/984 CE, after a 12-year reign during which he achieved major accomplishments and laid the groundwork for the emergence of new political entities in the Islamic Maghreb.

5. Conclusion

The Isma'ili da'wa in the Central Maghreb was founded on the tribal solidarity of the Kutama and Sanhaja tribes, which contributed to its spread and the expansion of the 'Ubaydid State. The 'Ubaydids employed religion to strengthen tribal loyalty and motivate tribes, particularly

²⁴ Al-Nuwayri, previous source, vol. 24, p. 93.

²⁵ Muhammad ibn 'Umayra, *Dawr Zanata fi al-Haraka al-Madhabiyya bi-l-Maghrib al-Islami*, al-Mu'assasa al-Wataniyya lil-Kitab, 1984, p. 244.

²⁶ Lisan al-Din ibn al-Khatib, *A'mal al-'Alam*, part 3, ed. Ahmad Mukhtar al-'Abbad, Dar al-Kitab, Casablanca, 1964, p. 65.

through the da'wa of Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i and his announcement of the Mahdi's coming. The combination of tribal and religious solidarity strengthened the state and enabled it to move from a tribal framework to a broad political and urban entity. Tribal solidarity contributed to the establishment of the state, while religion maintained its principles and defined its moral framework.

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