

Poetic Propaganda

AL QAEDA'S ACAPELLA ANTHEMS IN
YEMEN AND BEYOND

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A

long history of poetry saturates the social landscape of the Arabic-speaking world. From the windswept plains of the Sahara to the lush greenery of the Levant, the weaving wadis of Arabia, or even the fibrous expanse of cyberspace, the scribed and spoken word resonates mightily with Arabs. Yemen's tradition of acapella anthems (nashid, pl. anashid) is especially rich, in spite of, or perhaps due to, the country's many struggles. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), also referred to as Al Qaeda in Yemen, has tapped into Yemen's vocal tradition to inculcate esprit de corps among its local fighters, their supporters, and the broader "Salafi-jihadi" movement.¹ AQAP invests considerable resources into the production of anashid because they are easily disseminated, and are reinforced by a compelling culture and history. The captivating rhythms and rich language of these hymns promote both a glorious past and blossoming

future, and are an effective propaganda tool among jihadis who crave cultural legitimacy and emotional relieve amidst their conflict with Al Qaeda's enemies.

SCHOLARSHIP ON AL QAEDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA'S STRATEGIC MESSAGE

Academic exploration of jihadi culture, which Thomas Hegghammer defines as “products and practices that do something other than fill the basic military needs of jihadi groups,”² has expanded as IP addresses multiply and war-torn nations fall deeper into conflict. Elisabeth Kendall, an Oxford University researcher who makes frequent sojourns to southeastern Yemen, asserts that poetry, unlike “direct pronouncements, rulings and position statements,” functions to “carry messages to a broader audience as it plugs naturally into a long tradition of oral transmission.”³ She evaluates various ways in which AQAP communicates with its audience. First, it relies on a practical argument that accentuates its amelioration of governmental corruption, economic poverty, and social marginalization.⁴ It also deploys an emotional message which can “telescope a complex political landscape into a simple apocalyptic battle between good and evil that is easy to understand and difficult to refute.” This helps the group circumvent Yemen's low literacy rate and limited technological reach.⁵

Linguistic anthropologist Flagg Miller provides insight into the geopolitical calculus of Al Qaeda. His book *The Audacious Ascetic* reveals AQAP's prioritization of Yemen in the post-Afghanistan period by showing that Osama bin Laden viewed the country as an arena to combat communists and insufficiently pious Muslims.⁶ Miller analyzes numerous lectures from Al Qaeda members, including Mustafa Hamid, who asserted that Al Qaeda should “create jihadi posts in the extensive mountain range[s] so that Yemen can be established, as a base” from which to liberate the Arabian Peninsula with “assistance from Muslims nearby.”⁷ Al Qaeda aims to insinuate itself into both the human and the geographic terrain of Yemen, using the country as a staging ground for global jihad. Miller also draws from interview accounts to reveal that AQAP's effectiveness lies in the dignity and professionalization it provides to local youth through its training programs.⁸

Yemeni political analyst Nadwa Al-Dawsari argues that AQAP is marginally effective in channeling

social grievances into tribal support. She states that its emphasis on “humiliation, injustice, underdevelopment, corruption, and the killing of relatives and friends and destruction of property caused by counterterrorism operations” in southern Yemen only resonates with some portions of disenfranchised tribal youth.⁹ Kendall notes that Ansar al Shariah, AQAP's local subsidiary, ingratiates itself with tribespeople by providing social services such as education, utilities upkeep, and jurisprudence.¹⁰ Al-Dawsari nevertheless cautions against the notion that AQAP maintains widespread support. She suggests that its “wanton violence,” threat to social order, attraction of foreign airstrikes in its zones of operation, and antagonism toward “tribal customs” all yield a contentious relationship with many tribes.¹¹ This realization allows for a critical evaluation of the group's claim of near-universal support from local Yemenis.

These scholars reveal that AQAP relies on ideological and practical messaging to sustain its legitimacy in Yemen. The organization places itself on the righteous side of a struggle between good and evil, emphasizing an ethos of strength and forbearance to emulate the tribal experience and juxtaposing itself against the corrupt Yemeni state. How effective are its poetics



Osama bin Laden - famous for terrorism, but unacknowledged as a muse inspiring jihadist poetry. Wikimedia Commons 1997.

inconveying these points, and in what ways does it inspire local support and international influence? Before answering these questions, the next section will explore the historical and literary elements of the Arabic poetry which AQAP utilizes.

ARABIC POETRY'S STAYING POWER

Arabic, both with its formal constancy and its many colloquial nuances, links the ethnically diverse and spatially dispersed Arab people. Arabic poetry materialized a few centuries prior to the Prophet Muhammad's message, and it proved vital to the sociopolitics of nomadic, tribal life in Arabia. Reynold Nicholson notes its function: "[I]n the midst of outward strife and disintegration a unifying principle was at work. Poetry gave life and currency to an ideal Arabian virtue (*muruwwa*) which...became an invisible bond between diverse clans."¹² Poetry was an element of statecraft which facilitated relations and affirmed in-group ties. Adonis emphasizes the form of pre-Islamic poetry: "The voice in this poetry was the breath of life—'body music.' It was both speech and something which went beyond speech...go[ing] beyond the body towards the expanses of the soul."¹³ Poetry went beyond a passive auditory experience; rather, it stirred the soul and incited emotional responses in its listeners.

The pre-Islamic poetic form remained prevalent in post-conversion societies. A. F. L. Beeston notes that this form emphasized themes like love, natural description, praise, self-glorification, lampooning of adversaries, lamentation of deceased tribesmen, and wise sayings.¹⁴ As Islam grew, combat also became a central theme. The Islamic scholar al-Ghazali stated: "The recitation of poems [is permissible] in the *rajaz* metre by the brave once battle is joined. The purpose of such poems is to keep up the courage of one's self and one's allies, and to stir eagerness for combat among them. The poems recited in this ritual are a celebration of bravery and courage. *When it is done with fine articulation and a beautiful voice it has a powerful impact on the soul/mind.*"¹⁵

The artful, even reverent promotion of tribal allegiance and courage against a formidable enemy inspired

Muslims to take up arms in the spread and defense of Islam. Contemporary jihadis would co-opt this tradition in the service of their own battles, beginning in Afghanistan and radiating back to the Middle East and North Africa.

Osama bin Laden, who helped found Al Qaeda in Afghanistan around 1988, used poetry as a catalyst for jihad. He was a voracious consumer and prolific producer of poetry, and many people lauded him for his asceticism (*zuhd*). In Miller's telling, asceticism allowed bin Laden to retrace the "path blazed by heroic sage-warriors long ago that might lend dignity to the hard and compromised lives of God's modern strugglers." In this way, austerity represented a simultaneous engagement with the glories of the past and ambitions of the future.¹⁶ Miller states that bin Laden's notoriety stems from his "summons toward asceticism, conveyed most notably in poetry, [which] commends listeners to an abstemious and patient temperament."¹⁷ Poetry functioned to smooth the reconciliation between the riches of early Islam and the struggle of modernity that Al Qaeda seeks to surmount.

Jihadis craft their poetry to frame themselves as the conduits of a restored past amidst the throes of current chaos. This poetry aims to render jihadism legitimate by drawing from a wellspring of romantic, heroic, and chivalrous precedent. Kendall states that jihadi ideologues employ the classical *qasida* poem form, "with its jaunty rhythms, echoing rhymes and redolent classical language," to permeate the subconscious and conscious psyche of listeners and readers.¹⁸ They use classical terminology like swords, steeds, and knights as allusions to modern guns, cars, and combatants. In an AQAP work from 2017 titled "Oh My Weapon You are the Lamp of Darkness," the reciter refers to his rifle as a rod, ring, sword, and knife "that does not transgress"¹⁹ — word choices which equate the modern gun to medieval arms. These rhetorical devices surfaced in Algeria, Egypt, and other nations, but they are especially potent in Yemen.

Poetry's prominence in the social and political landscape of Yemen predates Afghan or Arab struggles. Steven

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Caton explains that in northern Yemen "a tribesman does not compose poetry purely for the sake of art," but rather as a sociopolitical act that can "stir or, better yet, captivate an audience" to mold allegiances and shape opinions.²⁰ Miller arrives at a similar conclusion that poetry is "an important conduit for popular political opinion,"²¹ though he expands its scope: "Exchanged among itinerant herders, craftsmen, merchants, soldiers, and town-based administrators, poetry provided the cultural flesh for an inimitable ideal" indicative of early Islam's "influential Muslim thinkers."²² This ideal included everlasting values such as honor, dignity, and forbearance. These values found their way onto audio cassettes where the stylistic and performative richness of written poetry was replicated en masse, leading to a resurgence of *inshad*.

THE RISE OF INSHAD

Inshad is akin to poetry in terms of its literary qualities. *Inshad* is a verbal noun derived from the three-letter consonant cluster *n-sh-d* which makes up the noun *nashid* (pl. *anashid*). The term means recitation, recital, or declamation.²³ *Inshad* is the vocal performance of poetry in which a reciter (*munshid*) deliberately varies his intonation and volume to offer an especially emotional resonance. Adonis marshals the scholarship of the great Islamic philosopher and thinker al Farabi to explain the difference between poetry and *inshad*, or music: "[A]n essential difference separates them: poetry is an arrangement of words according to their meanings, ordered in a rhythmic structure and taking the rules of grammar into account, while music attempts to adapt rhythmic speech to its measures, and transmits it as sounds in harmonious relationships both quantitatively and qualitatively, according to its own methods of composition."²⁴ *Inshad's* adaption of rhythmic speech allows for a more liberal and free-flowing interpretation of written or spoken texts. The variation in pitch and speed enraptures listeners in ways that poetry often cannot, leading to a communal experience that inculcates enjoyment and solidarity amidst its listeners. Although *inshad* is traditionally acapella, secondary tunes and synthesized background voices magnify its captivating

qualities.

During the 1980s, two events in the Islamic world spurred the mobilization of *inshad* as a tool for jihadis. The first was the so-called "Islamic awakening" (*al Sahwa al Islamiyya*), wherein primarily Islamists and regimes affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood vied for "cultural domination" through mediums of discourse. The second was the transit of Arab foreign fighters to Afghanistan, where they produced and exchanged music praising their exploits in battle.²⁵ One Afghani fighter revealed: "Although it was a holy war, we still listened to music. We were not narrow-minded. Music was our entertainment."²⁶ The adoption of *anashid* in jihadi circles related more to flexible Salafi and Muslim-Brotherhood thought than to Wahhabism—the Hanbali Sunnism in Saudi Arabia—since the musical form is not prominent in Saudi Arabia.²⁷ Afghanistan was an arena for the jihadization of *anashid*, which migrated to the Arab world in the minds and rucksacks of returning jihadis, where they were grafted onto traditional forms of poetry.

Jihadis quickly realized the usefulness of *anashid* in shaping the hearts and minds of prospective recruits and local populations in ways that transcended tedious discourse. Nelly Lahoud points out that "*Anashid* do not strictly belong to the doctrinal realm of jihadism, but rather to a set of practices or technologies that curate the listener's emotions: the melodic rhythms of *anashid* seem intended to give rise to cathartic releases that complement and even substitute for dry ideological dogma."²⁸ They entice recruits, motivate fighters during periods of training and combat, and calm suicide bombers before their missions.²⁹ Anwar al Awlaki, the Yemeni-American cleric killed in a 2011 US drone strike, deemed *anashid* "especially inspiring to the youth, who are the foundation of jihad in every age and time. [*Anashid*] are an important element in creating a 'Jihadi culture.'"³⁰ Their simultaneously rousing and soothing qualities keep combatants primed for battle, while also, in a broader sense, inculcate Muslims around the world with a zeal for jihad.

The Internet facilitates the dissemination of jihadi *inshad*. By uploading their *anashid* onto YouTube, Twitter, and other social media platforms, groups like AQAP expand the reach of their poetic propaganda. Gilbert Ramsay calls jihadi forums “collective projects... which generate powerful affective attachments among members—not just to the duty of *jihād*, but to the forum itself, and the practices and sense of presence in jihadi space which it sustains.”³¹ *Anashid* exist primarily in three mediums: audio clips that can be easily downloaded onto a phone, transcribed deliveries, and videos that bring the historical allusions and fighting scenes of the voiced text to life. Jihadi Abdur Rahman affirms: “Be it a video of a raging battle, a *mujahid* shooting mortars, the setting off of an I.E.D. or simply sitting amongst other *mujahideen*, 9 times out of 10 you’ll find these videos being accompanied by jihadi [*anashid*].”³² The visuals that accompany *anashid*, whether a photoshopped image of a fighter presenting his rifle or a compilation of video clips, add an emotive dimension that is as important as the content itself.

Jihadi *anashid* revolve around four primary themes, as identified by Behnam Said. First are those related



A sight fit for song? A detonation device for an IED. Kunar province, Afghanistan, 2010. Photo credit Cameron Boyd, Wikimedia Commons.

to battle, which “are committed to fighting and used to encourage and mobilize the warriors and their supporters.”³³ These *anashid* are generally high-tempo and provide numerous references to both medieval and contemporary weapons. There are also those commemorating the deaths of martyrs (*shuhada*) by highlighting their resolve in the face of death. Third, *anashid* of mourning (*ritha*) lament the arduous circumstance of individuals or societies. Finally, those related to praise (*madih*) emphasize the “generosity, bravery, or honor”³⁴ of a specific jihadi or the community supporting him or her. I will analyze the following four *anashid* based on their adherence to these themes of battle, martyrdom, mourning, or praise.

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SAMPLE ANASHID FROM AL QAEDA IN YEMEN

AQAP produces dozens of *anashid* each year, primarily, though not exclusively, through its al Basha’ir Foundation for Audio Production. This section will explore four *anashid* from 2017: “Do Not Descend from the Mountain of Archers,” “Farewell Dialogue,” “Groans from Burma,” and “Happy Eid.” For each, I will describe how their content relates to either a local or international audience and analyze how different verses highlight the pragmatic *thoughts* and emotional *feelings* of the jihadi experience.

The *nashid* “Do Not Descend from the Mountain of Archers” is a seven-verse hymn released in June 2017 that emphasizes the importance of warriors’ perseverance during battle. It uses a tight rhyme scheme ending with the “t” consonant and a rapid rhythm which seizes the listener’s attention. The echoing chant linking each verse lingers in the ear, leading to ease in memorization. The *munshid* Abu Bakr al Hadrami uses formal Arabic case endings to emulate the dual hemistich form of classical *qasida*. This work is truly an anthem, meant to inspire reverence for AQAP fighters as they fight off the enemy.

Two verses of “Do Not Descend from the Mountain of Archers” emphasize the pragmatism of combat. The first verse begins:

Either we perish together, or succeed in compelling the

enemies

From us the blood and from you the tears of humbleness
in prayer

Upon us the wars and their harshness, and upon you
supporting the resistant

You are the guards of our backs, don't descend from the
mountain of archers!³⁵

The reciter is speaking to fighters who, while not on the frontlines, play an important role in AQAP's insurgency. He adopts a first-person perspective in a conflict marked by "blood" and "harshness," and calls upon his allies to support his group by watching their flank. The words emphasize solidarity; without buy-in from each faction, the enemy will kill them all. The refrain employs the standard trope of AQAP *inshad*: equating modern combat with classical warfare. The "mountain of archers" hearkens to a medieval battle scene where noble Muslim warriors may draw their bows to strike Crusaders. Though the "archers" likely reference artillery squads, the use of classical language conjures an eternal warrior mystique that produces temporal continuity for the jihadi project.

Practical qualities are also found in the *nashid*'s sixth verse, which begins: "Victory lies in a generation that has prepared for difficult matters." The most valiant fighters possess a yearning for hardship, for it is the bridge to brighter days. The verse then highlights the qualities of "consciousness, youthful zeal, *taqwa* and virtues... truthfulness, high-mindedness, chivalry and generosity." The text encourages traits highly prized in both the Arabic literary tradition and in Yemeni tribal dogma. In addition to the gentlemanly qualities of intelligence and placing the needs of the community ahead of oneself, the use of *taqwa*—consciousness and fear of God—imparts the need for Islamic piety. Coupled with the fifth verse's imploration to gather around the Qur'an and *Hadith*, we see that this *nashid* calls for a well-rounded fighter, strong in body, mind, and spirit.³⁶

While the previous *nashid* promotes a pragmatic fighting corps, "Farewell Dialogue" presents a jihadi who proudly declares his anticipation of martyrdom during a dialogue with his concerned mother. This 2017 al Basha'ir Foundation hymn, delivered as part of the "Ambassadors of Glory" album, is recited by Abu Bakr al Hadrami and composed by Abu Hajar al Hadrami, according to *Nasheed Translations*. Unfortunately, I

was not able to secure an audio rendition of the work; thus, my analysis relies only on an Arabic-English transliteration. Nevertheless, this *nashid* offers political and emotional references that proclaim a multi-faceted impetus for jihad.

"Farewell Dialogue" blends past and present by juxtaposing historically disparate political forces. It introduces the Yemeni state as one "whose nature has been prominent with treachery...[who] killed the best of our men." It then links the Yemeni state to past attackers of the Muslim polity: "The Mongols have returned, the most evil Genghis of America leading them / And the Crusaders came."³⁷ The *nashid* equates the contemporary government of Yemen, which is supported by the United States, with the 13th-century Mongols and Crusaders who besieged the Middle East from the East and West respectively. AQAP relies on the myth of an impenetrable bond between the jihads of yesteryear and its own modern campaign to carve a base in Yemen to justify its insurgency.

The draw of this *nashid* lies in its rebuttal toward complacency in fulfilling obligations. Toward the middle, the narrator's mother begs her son to leave jihad to marry his fiancée. He retorts by declaring: "My wedding is my diving into enemy ranks without fear or alert / And my bride is a Russian, in her heart the death has settled." The narrator dismisses the mother's plea, affirming that he does not want the fanfare of a wedding and human bride. His "Russian" bride is an AK-47 rifle, and the wedding banquet is his charge into battle. In the final verse the mother warns that the son "will undoubtedly be killed" and that he should "reconsider" jihad. He retorts boldly that death is: "[T]he survival of my creed, [and] my death is the victory ... for I am a martyr [and] in the paradises I obtained the highest dwelling."³⁸ The narrator offers a layered meaning to survival: while he will be a martyr, his obligation to martyrdom will remain everlasting. *Farewell Dialogue* seeks to ameliorate jihadis' concern over death by comparing it to a bridge to the tranquility of the afterlife.

Al Qaeda in Yemen also produces *inshad* related to internationally afflicted Muslims to present themselves as vanguards of the global Salafi-jihadi movement. One such composition is "Groans from Burma," a mournful *nashid* which interrogates global Muslims' indifference to the persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Burma.

"'Groans of Burma' implores global Muslims to shake their indifference and come to the defense of the Rohingyas."

This is not an al Basha'ir Foundation production, which produced a similar *nashid* titled "Burma" in Fall 2017. However, it is likely that "Groans of Burma" is linked to AQAP since Abu Hajar al Hadrami is its *munshid*. A video with images of Rohingyas crammed into boats, clamoring for water, and sifting through the rubble of destroyed homes accompanies the audio. There are at least three male voices delivering the text in a harmonious blend of bass and tenor voices to accentuate the *nashid*'s primary message of solidarity.

The narration details the transgressions of a monolithic "Buddhist" who targets the Rohingyas with indiscretion. Al Qaeda uses this dichotomization to position itself on the side of the oppressed Muslim group. It states that the Buddhist has "broiled my children with fire, Burned my mosque arrogantly and causeless[ly] and tore [apart] my pure Qur'an." The first-person perspective personifies the Rohingyas as one person who feels tangible and corporeal pain. The bodily description of pain continues: "And our sister in religion, what a pity? / The criminal soiled her honor, / and shackled her with chains / without mercy and compassion."³⁹ Here, the hymn uses gender-based violence to spur anger over Buddhists' violence. By presenting a Muslim woman relegated to bondage, the entire Muslim polity is humiliated.

"Groans of Burma" implores global Muslims to shake their indifference and come to the defense of the Rohingyas. The first-person narration states: "But you continue your life in prosperity and happiness / You didn't even saddle a horse for me / Don't my sorrows sadden you?" The ambiguous "you" refers to the Muslims around the world that do not face the persecution playing out in southwestern Burma. The hymn also takes the opportunity to conflate the past and present. The call to "saddle a horse" is not literal in a geographic sense; it is a figurative plea for a genuine request: travel to "Arakan"—the historical coast of Southeast Asia—to defend Muslim dignity. Toward the end, the *nashid* becomes more confrontational: "Excuse me, son of Islam, but you abandoned my bleeding wound / Burma asks you, / why this silence my brothers? / Respond [to] us,

we implore you: aid the lands of Arakan!"⁴⁰ Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula envisions itself the leader of global jihad. By disseminating a *nashid* that positions itself on the righteous side of the Rohingya plight, the group frames itself as the defender of persecuted brethren. AQAP lacks extra-regional capacity, but by highlighting its confrontation with far-flung injustice, it reinforces the notion of universal appeal.

Al Qaeda in Yemen's enduring preoccupation is insinuation into the tribal fabric of southern Yemen. A praise *nashid* entitled "Happy Eid," disseminated by al Basha'ir Foundation and delivered by Abu Bakr al Hadrami, reminds the citizenry that jihad's victory is impending. Like other anthems, it uses a high-pitched and dancing voice that ebbs and flows in the ear of the listener. The deeper background voice adds resonance to the words, making them rest in the psyche. The sound's matter-of-fact presentation offers a sort of clairvoyance that would likely swirl around a crowded Eid gathering and linger in the heart and mind of the recipient.

"Happy Eid" presents a hopeful circumstance of impending victory which aims to connect with each segment of society. In the first verse, the hymn wishes "[a] happy Eid, my ummah, that urges you to the evident victory," proclaiming that Al Qaeda's fighters "have been blessed with your love and sacrifice, oh Muslims." The reciter argues that the community's support is pivotal to forthcoming success. Verse three speaks especially to the youth, offering "candies and melodies of joy" and a "poem chanted with love" that inspires emotional familiarity, joy, and trust. Finally, the fourth verse mentions the "elders, who gather at every Eid," to signify their importance as the bedrock of Muslim society.⁴¹ This three-part reference strives for emotional solidarity during a time that is both arduous and joyous.

The hymn also highlights the pragmatic sacrifices of jihadi fighters that lead to communal rewards. Importantly, the narrator affirms: "We do not tell this as a favor, nor to blame the sad one" to ensure that the words are not seen as arrogant. The three-line fifth verse and

the first line of the sixth verse proclaim:

We run to arms in advance, so that you may wear the new dress.

And we spill our pure blood, for you the scent of musk and oud.

And we spread our dead bodies, so that you proceed towards eternity.

We keep the clang of swords at wars away from your ears.⁴²

Each fighters' sacrifice translates into better material and spiritual circumstances for those not on the frontlines of battle. While the warriors bleed and struggle in confronting the enemy—again, with medieval implements like “swords”—society is rewarded with blessings. Through this proclamation of valiant selflessness, AQAP aims to enhance its legitimacy and effectiveness.

THE UTILITY OF POETICS

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula does not simply focus on the tactics of battle. It also taps into the linguistic character of Yemeni society to undergird its armed exploits with emotional justifications. The poetic form of inshad serves as a valuable propaganda tool in AQAP's quest for martyrs and supporters. These four anashid identify how they merge historic and contemporary jihad into a single quest for retribution and righteousness against Islam's enemies. In the future, inshad has the potential to resonate with both would-be and battle-hardened jihadis. As Abdur Rahman proclaims, "I believe personally that this anasheed movement is still in its infancy stage and hasn't reached its maturity. The day in which we see both Muslim[s] and non-Muslims reciting the rhythmic poetry written by a Munshid ... is the day we can say that we've reach[ed] the pinnacle of our potential."⁴³

Jihadi inshad form a soundscape with immense introspective insight. As long as their production persists, inshad will continue to elucidate the myriad ambitions of AQAP as it strives to corner the market of both global and local jihad. ♦

Endnotes

1. The author of this article defines *Salafi-jihadis* as militant actors who draw on the tenets of religiously-sanctioned *jihad* warfare to implement, through force, a

global caliphate which adheres to puritanical renditions of early Islam's politics and society. See Shiraz Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

2. Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 5.

3. Elisabeth Kendall, "Yemen's Al-Qa'ida and Poetry as a Weapon of Jihad," in *Twenty-First Century Jihad: Law, Society, and Military Action*, ed. Elisabeth Kendall and Ewan Stein (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 247.

4. Elisabeth Kendall, "Al-Qaeda and Islamic State in Yemen: A Battle for Local Audiences," in *Jihadism Transformed: Al-Qaeda and Islamic State's Global Battle of Ideas*, ed. Simon Staffell and Akil N. Awan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 90.

5. *Ibid.*, 101.

6. Flagg Miller, *The Audacious Ascetic: What the Bin Laden Tapes Reveal about al-Qa'ida* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 177.

7. As cited in *Ibid.*, 307-8.

8. *Ibid.*, 361-2.

9. Nadwa Al-Dawsari, *Foe Not Friend: Yemeni Tribes and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula*, Project on Middle East Democracy. February 2018. Accessed April 5, 2018. http://pomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Dawsari_FINAL_180201.pdf, 21.

10. Kendall, "Al-Qaeda and Islamic State in Yemen," 94.

11. Al-Dawsari, *Foe Not Friend*, 22-3.

12. Reynold A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 72.

13. Adonis, *An Introduction to Arab Poetic*, translated by Catherine Cobham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 13.

14. A.F.L. Beeston, T.M. Johnstone, R.B. Serjeant, and G.R. Smith, editors, *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 39.

15. As cited in Nelly Lahoud, "A Cappella Songs (anashid) in Jihadi Culture," in *Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists*, ed. Thomas Hegghammer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 45.

16. Miller, *The Audacious Ascetic*, 33-4.

17. *Ibid.*, 366.

18. Elisabeth Kendall, "Jihadist Propaganda and its Exploitation of the Arab Poetic Tradition," in *Reclaiming Islamic Tradition: Modern Interpretations of the Classical*

- Heritage*, ed. Elisabeth Kendall and Ahmad Khan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 241.
19. “New Nashid from al-Qā'idah in the Arabian Peninsula's Abū Bakr al-aramī: ‘Oh My Weapon You Are The Light Amid Darkness,’” *Jihadology*. March 3, 2017. Accessed April 18, 2018. <http://jihadology.net/2017/03/03/new-nashid-from-al-qaidah-in-the-arabian-peninsulas-abu-bakr-al-%E1%B8%A5a%E1%B8%8Drami-oh-my-weapon-you-are-the-light-amid-darkness/>.
20. Steven Caton, *Peaks of Yemen I Summon: Poetry as Cultural Practice in a North Yemeni Tribe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 40.
21. Flag Miller, *The Moral Resonance of Arab Media: Audiocassette Poetry and Culture in Yemen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 123.
22. *Ibid.*, 422.
23. Hans Wehr, “n-sh-d” in *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J Milton Cowan, Fourth ed. (Urbana: Spoken Language Services, 1994), 1132.
24. Adonis, *An Introduction to Arab Poetics*, 23.
25. Behnam Said, “Hymns (Nasheeds): A Contribution to the Study of the Jihadist Culture,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 12 (2012): 865-68.
26. Simon Broughton, director, *Breaking the Silence: Music in Afghanistan* (BBC/AdiTi Image, 2009).
27. Said, “Hymns (Nasheeds),” 870.
28. Lahoud, “A Cappella Songs,” 43.
29. *Ibid.*, 62.
30. Anwar al Awlaki, *44 Ways to Support Jihad* (Victorious Media), 19. Accessed April 22, 2018. https://ebooks.worldofislam.info/ebooks/Jihad/Anwar_Al_Awlaki_-_44_Ways_To_Support_Jihad.pdf.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Ibn Abdur-Rahman, “Anasheed: A tool in our Media's Warfare Arsenal,” *Jihad Recollections* 3 (August 2009): 25. <https://thejihadproject.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/magazine-jihad-recollections-issue-3-aug-2009.pdf>.
33. Said, “Hymns (Nasheeds),” 871.
34. *Ibid.*, 873.
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