

Clerical Authority in Shiite Islam

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The History and Development of the Hawza

Shaykhi and Akhbari Learning in Eastern Arabia

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I will investigate the centres of learning associated with the following groups:

1) Akhbārīs in Bahrain in the al-‘Ālī and Būrī areas and their ḥawzat al-‘alamayn which was only established in 1994 – what networks and centres of learning existed before associated with the ‘ulema families of al-Widā‘ī, Āl-‘Uṣfūr, Zayn al-Dīn (Shaykh Muḥammad Amīn Zayn al-Dīn being the last great Akhbārī thinker according to many), and Āl Mubārak. I intend to spend time interviewing teachers and students at the centres and researching into their history, partly using the manuscripts that exist on the history and ‘ulema networks of Eastern Arabia. I will also visit their centres in Qum and Mashhad and interview teachers and students there as well as small pockets of Akhbārīs in Qaṭīf.

2) Shaykhīs in Kuwait – the Jāmi‘ al-Imām al-Ṣādiq and the schools associated with it in al-Sharq and arrange to meet the leaders and their seminary in Tehran. This is the Iḥqāqī/Tabrīzī line of the Shaykhīs – the Kirmānī branch does not seem to have a presence in Eastern Arabia.

3) As a ‘control’, I will look into the history of the uṣūlī ḥawzas in the region as well and investigate their relationship, these being primarily associated with the Shirāziyya (and culturally Karbalā‘ī) such as the al-Rasūl al-A‘ẓam ḥawzas in Dammām, Manama in Bahrain and Bneid al-Gār in Kuwait.