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ABSTRACT: Documents like the one on Human Fraternity have become a prominent feature of both intra- and inter-religious dialogue with Muslim leaders and religious figures since the early 2000s. This inaugural lecture, delivered at the beginning of the 2022-2023 academic year at PISAI, intends to draw the attention of students and colleagues engaged in interreligious dialogue to the fundamentals of how meaning is generated and communicated in these documents. Taking 'citizenship' as a case study, the lecture explores (1) the (legal) semiotic horizon of the documents and its impingement upon the construction of 'citizenship', (2) the trajectory of the concept of 'citizenship' in modern and contemporary Egyptian constitutional theory, and finally (3) the opportunities (and challenges) of redefinition of the concept in the context of interreligious dialogue.

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### TRACKING AL-'ABBĀS B. 'ALĪ THROUGH ABŪ MIḤNAF

ABSTRACT: Among the details, scant as these may be, that we possess about the life of al-'Abbās, son of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and half-brother to al-Ḥusayn, few things garner more attention in the popular piety and devotion of the Šī'ī community than his gallant and altruistic attempt to source and provide water for the thirsty followers and family of al-Ḥusayn. This heroic endeavour has become part of the collective consciousness of the Šī'ī community, most particularly those known as Twelvers or *itnā 'aṣarī*, and it is an instant from the field of Karbalā' forever taken up and preserved in the Šī'ī liturgical life. These mourning performances (*ta'ziya*) and commemorative gatherings (*maḡlis*) about the actions and martyrdom of al-'Abbās are centred on the seventh night of the month of Muḥarram, dedicated in particular to him as the 'water-bearer' of Karbalā'. This paper sets out to revisit the elements of this story in the earliest Šī'ī and Sunnī historians.

This paper offers a preliminary investigation into the popular but textually elusive figure of al-'Abbās b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, half-brother to al-Ḥusayn and eldest of four sons born to 'Alī and his wife Fāṭima bt. Ḥizām, known as Umm al-Banīn ('mother of the sons'). Born in Medina around 4<sup>th</sup> Ša'bān 26/647, roughly ten years before his father 'Alī would face the forces of Syria's unruly governor Mu'āwiya at Siffin, and fourteen years before 'Alī would be assassinated in Kūfa's great mosque by a resentful Muslim, al-'Abbās is known to his devotees by a number of epithets (*laqāb*).<sup>1</sup> Chief among these are 'moon of the Banī Hāšim' (*qamr Banī Hāšim*), 'moon

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<sup>1</sup> A nickname conveying a certain esteem, the *laqāb* might signal some moral quality or distinct merit, might accentuate a physical peculiarity, or simply underscore belonging to a particular sect or group.