

ḤASAN RABĀBI‘AH, *‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūnīyah: Shā‘irah* (Irbid: Dār al-Hilāl lil-Tarjamah, 1997). Pp. 441.

REVIEWED BY TH. EMIL HOMERIN, University of Rochester.

‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūnīyah (d. 922/1517) left behind a rich legacy as one of the greatest woman authors in Islamic history. ‘Ā’ishah’s writings were extensive even by men’s standards, and they are unparalleled for a pre-modern Muslim woman. Though women were respected scholars and teachers in medieval Islam, they generally did not compile their own independent works. However, ‘Ā’ishah was very prolific. She dedicated a number of panegyrics to the prophet Muḥammad and composed several *mawliids* combining prose and poetry. ‘Ā’ishah also wrote works on Islamic mysticism, including a spiritual guide and several volumes of mystical and devotional poetry.

Despite ‘Ā’ishah’s extensive body of work and celebrated career among her peers and later generations, she has attracted only sporadic attention over the last century. More recently, Fāris Aḥmad al-‘Alāwī issued a new edition of her *Al-Mawrid al-Ahná* (1994; see my review in *MSR* 6), while I have published a study of her life and work (*MSR* 7). It was while completing this latter article that I came across Ḥasan Rabābi‘ah’s very useful book, *‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūnīyah: Shā‘irah*, published in Jordan in 1997. As an introduction, he begins with a chapter on ‘Ā’ishah’s family origins in the town of al-Bā‘ūn in the Mamluk province of ‘Ajlūn in what is now southern Syria and the Jordanian province of Irbid (pp. 13–31). Then, in chapter two, Rabābi‘ah gives a brief biography of ‘Ā’ishah, who was born in Damascus, around 864/1459. Using ‘Ā’ishah’s own comments on her life found in several manuscripts, Rabābi‘ah notes her pilgrimage to Mecca, where she had a vision of the Prophet, her study of Sufism, her marriage to Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Naqīb al-Ashrāf (d. 909/1503) and the names of their children. He also touches on her trip to Cairo in 919/1513, her meeting with the Mamluk sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in 922/1516, and her death the next year (pp. 33–59). Unfortunately, this biographical section is, at times, disorganized and incomplete, and Rabābi‘ah could have added significant information had he utilized his sources more thoroughly. Rabābi‘ah does a much better job when compiling a list of ‘Ā’ishah’s writings and the location of her surviving works (pp. 59–65), with the exception of her *Al-Muntakhab fī Uṣūl al-Rutab*, which he believes to be lost, though a copy may be found in Cairo’s Dār al-Kutub.

Rabābi‘ah’s main concern, however, is not ‘Ā’ishah’s life or religious beliefs, but her refined poetic skills and extensive knowledge of Arabic language and literature. This is evident in his third chapter, on ‘Ā’ishah’s versification in the popular forms of *muwashshahah*, *zajal*, *dū bayt*, and *mawālīyā* (pp. 67–121). Here



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as elsewhere, Rabābi‘ah quotes from a number of ‘Ā’ishah’s works, though he usually draws his examples from her *Fayḍ al-Faḍl wa-Jam‘ al-Shaml* (The Emanation of grace and the gathering of union), which contains over three hundred poems in various styles and forms. Rabābi‘ah pays particular attention to formal matters of rhyme and meter, compiling a series of tables summarizing these and other stylistic and structural elements as found in ‘Ā’ishah’s poems. In passing, he notes that the content of these poems revolves around the prophet Muḥammad, and the mystical themes of love and wine. Rabābi‘ah makes several brief but useful comparisons between ‘Ā’ishah’s *muwashshahah* and those of her Sufi predecessors Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 637/1240) and al-Shustarī (d. 668/1268)(pp. 99–103). Rabābi‘ah follows this same pattern in chapter four on ‘Ā’ishah’s poems involving *tasmīṭ* and *takhmīs* (pp. 125–37).

In chapter five, Rabābi‘ah provides an overview of ‘Ā’ishah’s main poetic themes, including: praise of the prophet Muḥammad and accounts of his life and miracles, praise of his companions and Sufi masters, verse exchanged with some of her learned contemporaries (*ikhwanīyāt*), Sufi themes and states, love, longing, and beauty (pp. 139–224). Rabābi‘ah cites a few verses to illustrate each theme, which help to convey the range and depth of ‘Ā’ishah’s religious and poetic concerns, though Rabābi‘ah’s commentary is very general. Further, he repeatedly fails to note the obvious influence on ‘Ā’ishah of the great Sufi poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235), while mistakenly ascribing to her statements by the Sufi master Ibn ‘Aṭā Allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 709/1309) (p. 212, again on 252).

In chapters six, seven, and eight, Rabābi‘ah turns to ‘Ā’ishah’s *qaṣīdahs*, again, following a structuralist approach. Central to chapter six is Rabābi‘ah’s analysis of an ode by ‘Ā’ishah (pp. 262–68). Rabābi‘ah notes that the encampments of this poem and others by ‘Ā’ishah are not ruined or abandoned, as is the case in earlier classical odes, since she longs for the holy cities of Mecca and Medina and her beloved prophet. Strangely, Rabābi‘ah cites only 37 of the poem’s 50 verses. Chapters seven and eight touch on ‘Ā’ishah’s use of Sufi technical terminology (pp. 269–300), the mystical themes of love and wine, and her devotion to the prophet Muḥammad (pp. 301–34). Rabābi‘ah underscores the thematic unity and harmony of ‘Ā’ishah’s poems and some of her sophisticated rhetorical strategies. Here, too, at last, he finally mentions her debt to Ibn al-Fāriḍ though, unfortunately, Rabābi‘ah does not pursue this important aspect of ‘Ā’ishah’s thought and work. In his final chapter, Rabābi‘ah speculates on the musical qualities of ‘Ā’ishah’s verse. Taking several poems as examples, he examines in some detail their poetic structures and various formal elements including rhyme and meter, sound and rhythm, and ‘Ā’ishah’s creative use of antithesis, repetition, and phonemic patterning (pp. 335–400).



'Ā'ishah al-Bā'ūnīyah: *Shā'irah* is a good general introduction to the verse of a fine poet. A major strength of the book is Rabābi'ah's knowledge and extensive use of relevant manuscript resources, despite a few lapses, as noted above. Further, unlike many scholars of Arabic literature, Rabābi'ah does not stereotype or denigrate Arabic poetry of the Mamluk period as pallid or unoriginal. On the contrary, Ḥasan Rabābi'ah is to be commended for his enthusiasm for and appreciation of the poetry of 'Ā'ishah al-Bā'ūnīyah, and I hope he continues to pursue this line of research in the future.

MOSHE HARTAL, *The al-Ṣubayba (Nimrod) Fortress: Towers 11 and 9: With Contributions by Reuven Amitai and Adrian Boas* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2001). Pp. 130.

REVIEWED BY LORENZ KORN, University of Tübingen

Mamluk fortifications have attracted the interest of Near Eastern architectural historians only after a certain delay. Crusader castles and city walls had become objects of scholarly research and detailed documentation already before World War I. Exploration of their Saljuq/Zengid and Ayyubid counterparts started a few decades ago, and thanks to studies like the one by Paul Chevedden on the citadel of Damascus, we are able to assess the implications of the revolution in siege technique and military architecture which took place in the late sixth/twelfth century. Against this background, Mamluk military architecture received only perfunctory attention. The important fortresses of Gaziantep and Birecik, to cite only two major examples, are practically unexplored, and the same is true for most fortifications built between 1250 and 1517 in the Near East. Again, it has been the citadel of Damascus that exemplifies the possibilities of a detailed architectural study in the minute analysis of its Mamluk constructions by Hanspeter Hanisch.

The fortress of Qal'at al-Ṣubaybah (today often called Nimrod Castle), on the western margin of the Golan Heights, is one of those Mamluk military constructions that were built as a reinforcement to older Crusader or Ayyubid structures, and is similar in size and importance to the castles of al-Karak and al-Shawbak (of which the post-Crusader parts remain to be studied as well, despite valuable archeological soundings undertaken by Robin M. Brown). After the Mamluk takeover, al-Ṣubaybah was substantially rebuilt under Baybars, as earlier studies of the building inscriptions and architectural remains have already shown.



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The present study is the result of work carried out on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority and the Israel National Parks Authority. It covers two large towers and some other sections of the western front of the fortress. Since the spur on which the castle is built continues westward, this side was heavily fortified. The two towers are built on rectangular plans. Each of them consists of an Ayyubid core, which was encased by the Mamluk constructions. Heavy destruction, probably by an earthquake in the eighteenth century, left only the lower parts of the towers standing while the top storeys have almost totally disappeared.

The remaining substance of the towers, the adjacent galleries, and the water reservoir in the southwest corner of the lower bailey of the fortress, is presented in great detail. Every room is described, detailing the masonry of its floors, walls, and ceilings, and including all openings, stairs, and installations, and is richly documented in photographs as well as architectural drawings. Highly interesting are the water installations, such as the latrines and the water lifting shaft in tower 11, or the fountain in the outer wall of the reservoir. The presentation allows a comprehensive insight into the evidence, enabling the reader to test the conclusions of the author. These are mostly reasonable, but in a few points debatable.

In general, Mamluk fortification technique appears as a direct continuation of Ayyubid military architecture. The layout of rectangular towers with vaulted halls and passages, firing chambers, and arrow-slits follows the same principles as in the fortresses of Tabor, 'Ajlūn, Bosra, and Baalbek, to quote the nearest important examples; these elements were changed and improved in details.

Tower 11 used an Ayyubid gate tower as a core around which a vaulted passage with firing chambers was laid. The gate function was given up. In the basement, a postern gate with a narrow passage was built into the new walls. The upper parts of the tower are difficult to reconstruct, but it is clear that a large building inscription was part of its eastern façade. For all these constructions, huge ashlar were used for which parallels in Mamluk fortifications are rare. This is all the more remarkable since the contemporary enlargement of tower 9 shows much smaller blocks. Hartal explains this feature partly with technical reasons, partly with a special function of tower 11. Considering the size of the tower and its position on the slope, he terms the Mamluk constructions "retaining walls" and suggests that they were necessary to "hold back quantities of earth" (p. 63). This might have been true, had there not been the earlier, Ayyubid tower. Its outer walls must actually have prevented any substantial horizontal pressure on the adjacent Mamluk constructions, and made a particular reinforcement less urgent. Similarly, it seems far-fetched to assume that the Mamluk builders of al-Ṣubaybah turned to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem as an example for the handling of huge blocks. The Ayyubid fortresses mentioned above, or perhaps the Herodian remnants in the citadel of Jerusalem, were probably more important in this respect.



Hartal's assumption that the top floor of tower 11 served as a residence for the lord of the castle is convincing and gives a better explanation for the use of the large-scale masonry as a means to enhance the imposing appearance of the building. For the uppermost parts of the tower, one might discuss whether there might have been two-storeyed fighting galleries, with a row of vaulted fighting chambers surrounding the open platform, and a walk behind the crenellated parapet on top. Also, the question of machicouli galleries arises, since these appear prominently in Baybars' rebuilding of the Krak des Chevaliers. Under these circumstances, the reconstruction drawing Fig. 35 seems a little too assertive.

The article by Reuven Amitai deals with the large building inscription from tower 11 and (fragments of) some other inscriptions which were found in the course of the work. Amitai not only gives a detailed examination of the protocol of the inscriptions, with appropriate comparisons, but also a historical commentary which is important for the understanding of the structural history of al-Şubaybah, with Bīlik al-Khāzindār as the actual owner of Bāniyās and the northern Golan. The enlargement of the two towers was certainly due to his patronage.

The reading of the one-line inscription band found near tower 16 (pp. 118 ff.) has to be corrected in one place (Fig. 194): Amitai's reading "nāşir (?) amīr al-mu'[minīn]" must be rejected. The letter in the center of the block cannot be a *şād*, and the adjacent letters do not match either. Instead, I would suggest "al-muthāghir," which is sometimes found in combination with the more common epithets "al-mujāhid al-murābiṭ," missing in the present fragment. In this case, the following "al-mu'-" would then belong to the likewise more frequent "al-mu'ayyad." This sequence of titles is well attested for Ayyubid building inscriptions (cf. *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, Publications de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire [Cairo, 1931–], vol. 10, no. 3664, vol. 11, nos. 4057, 4246, 4417); an example in one of Baybars' inscriptions comes from Ramlah (cf. Max van Berchem, *Inscriptions arabes de Syrie*, Mémoires présentés à l'Institut égyptien 3 [Cairo, 1897], 473f.).

A contribution by Adrian Boas deals with the ceramics found during the removal of the fallen debris. Brief descriptions of the wares are supplemented by comparative material and thus add to a more complete picture of Mamluk ceramics in southern Bilād al-Shām. At the same time, it becomes clear that the rough excavation technique used has limited the evidence in this case, since no stringent stratigraphy could be achieved.

On the whole, this book is a highly valuable contribution to the recording and discussion of Mamluk military architecture. Difficulties in readability which might arise from the lengthy descriptions will not deter the reader to whom the book is addressed. They are far outweighed by the merits of the accurate documentation. This implies the wish that work on al-Şubaybah (also and especially the inner



castle) be continued in the same manner. In this context, it should be remarked that the excavations of the western front were undertaken in the course of preparing a new visitor's exit out of the castle. In this way, the work presented here might constitute a precedence for future investigations into Mamluk fortifications, or the combination of site management with archaeological research. At least, the touristic appeal of Mamluk fortresses should not be underrated.

SHAMS AL-DĪN MUḤAMMAD IBN ṬŪLŪN, *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān*, edited by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Shaybānī al-Mawṣilī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah, 1998). Pp. 421.

AḤMAD IBN MUNLĀ/IBN ṬŪLŪN, *Muṭ‘at al-Adhhān min al-Tamattu‘ bi-al-Iqrān bayna Tarājim al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān*, 2 vols., edited by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Shaybānī al-Mawṣilī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1999). Pp. 1116.

REVIEWED BY STEPHAN CONERMANN, University of Kiel

I was pleased to learn that two new works by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn ṬŪlŪn (d. 955/1548), the scholar and prolific writer from Damascus, are now available in print for the first time. But appearances are deceptive, because in the case of *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān* this surely is a bogus claim, at least from my point of view. All that the editor, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Shaybānī al-Mawṣilī, did was simply to reproduce the exemplary two-volume edition of the unique Tübingen copy (MS MA VI,7) published by Muḥammed Muṣṭafá (Cairo, 1962–64). The less than meager annotations are the only items actually penned by the editor himself.

The other publication that I will review here deserves more attention. Even though it does not represent an original piece of writing by Ibn ṬŪlŪn, the edition does contain extracts from *Al-Tamattu‘ bi-al-Iqrān bayna Tarājim al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān*, a collection of biographies that has not been preserved in its entirety. This part of the work survived because Ibn ṬŪlŪn's student Aḥmad ibn Munlā al-Ḥaskafī al-Ḥalabī (937–1003/1530–94) intended to write such a collection of short biographies himself and therefore made ample use of his teacher's works.

Compiling these unique Who's Who handbooks was very much *en vogue* in the Mamluk period.¹ Scholars wished to portray the merits of famous men in order

¹Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2nd revised ed. (Leiden, 1968), 100–6. See also H. A. R. Gibb, "Islamic Biographical Literature," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed.



to present them as shining examples to their contemporaries. Moreover, general consensus among Muslims had always been that history and thus the renewal of religion was primarily shaped by individuals. The power elite—both rulers and religious scholars—for their part used these biographical accounts to assure themselves that their actions were legitimate. The genre thus satisfied the needs of the authors and the readership for which it was intended at one and the same time. It is therefore hardly surprising that biographical collections became one of the main forms of contemporary historical writing.

Even though all of the biographical abstracts usually contain information about the date of the person's death, his ancestry, his teachers, his writings, and other important events in his life, the works differ regarding the particular common denominator shared by the people included in the anthology. Law schools were one such common denominator, as were the vizierate, blindness, poetry, Sufi congregations, cities, or cemeteries. During the last third of the eighth/fourteenth century, for example, a certain al-Faqīh 'Uthmān wrote a biographical guide entitled *Murshid al-Zūwār ilá Qubūr al-Abrār* in which he described all the people interred at Mount al-Muqaṭṭam in Cairo,² while al-Dāwūdī (d. 945/1538) focused on every known exegete of the Quran.³ But the century in which the famous people had died constituted the most popular selection criterion for these biographical collections.

When compiling a dictionary, the biographical writer made full use of the work done by his predecessors. Of course, one needs to be aware of the fact that plagiarism⁴ in those days did not have the negative implications it does today, but rather was regarded as a completely legitimate narrative method at which nobody took umbrage. Previous historians were considered incontestable authorities,

Bernard Lewis and Peter M. Holt (London, 1962), 54–58; Fedwa Malti-Douglas, "Controversy and Its Effects in the Biographical Tradition of al-Khatib al-Baghdadi," *Studia Islamica* 46 (1977): 115–31; Tarif Khalidi, "Islamic Biographical Dictionaries: A Preliminary Assessment," *The Muslim World* 63 (1973): 53–65; Malak Abiad, "Origine et développement des dictionnaires biographique arabes," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 31 (1979): 7–15; and Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, "Le dictionnaire biographique: un outil historique: Etude réalisée à partir de l'ouvrage de Sakhāwī: *aḍ-Ḍaw' al-lāmi' fī a'yān al-qarn at-tāsi'*," *Cahiers d'onomastique arabe* (1988–1992): 9–38.

²Cf. Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden, 1949), 2:42 and S2:30.

³Cf. *ibid.*, 2:373 and S2:401.

⁴The early attempts of Muslim writers at describing the concept of plagiarism were summed up by the Egyptian chief judge al-Qazwīnī (d. 739/1338) in his work *Talkhīs al-Miftāḥ* (ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Barqūqī as *Al-Talkhīs fī 'Ulūm al-Balāghah* [Beirut, 1982]). Cf. Gustav von Grunebaum, "Der Begriff des Plagiats in der arabischen Kritik," in *Kritik und Dichtkunst: Studien zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte* (Wiesbaden, 1955), 101–29; A. F. Mehren, *Die Rhetorik der Araber* (Copenhagen and Vienna, 1853); and Aḥmad Maṭlūb, *Al-Qazwīnī wa-Shurūḥ al-Talkhīs* (Baghdad, 1967).



especially regarding historical events that one had not witnessed personally. This was particularly so since one did not want to correct one's predecessors by presenting new insights or new interpretations of past events. It was not customary to mention the names of the true authors of the reports and hence this practice was not considered negligent. Some authors occasionally did cite the sources they had used in the preface to their work, but it was not considered absolutely necessary.

The source material for Aḥmad ibn Munlā's life provides some indication of the extent to which different biographical accounts depended on each other. Most of the information about our author can be found in the works of his teacher Ibn al-Ḥanbalī (d. 971/1563),⁵ yet al-Būrīnī (d. 1024/1615)⁶ is the first one to present a complete biographical sketch in his *Tarājim al-A'yān min Abnā' al-Zamān*.⁷ These two short biographies then served as the prototypes for all the following accounts, with the portrayals by Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 1061/1651),⁸ Ibn al-'Imād (d. 1089/1679),⁹ and Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Muḥibbī (d. 1111/1699)¹⁰ differing only in style.

All in all, the biographical descriptions give the following picture: Aḥmad ibn Munlā, whose ancestors came from Diyār Bakr, was born in Aleppo. Some of his family were notable members of the community: his grandfathers, Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf ibn Mūsā al-Sindī (d. 894/1488–89), who was known by the name of Munlā Ḥājj,¹¹ and Yaḥyá ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 935/1528–29),¹² both belonged

⁵Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Durr al-Ḥabab fī Tārīkh A'yān Ḥalab*, ed. Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Fākhūrī (Damascus, 1972–74), 1:239–68. Ibn al-Ḥanbalī wrote his *Durr* on famous individuals who had some kind of relationship with Aleppo, as a continuation of Muwaffaq al-Dīn Abū Dārī Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī's (d. 844/1479) *Kunūz al-Dhahab fī Tārīkh al-Ḥalab*. Incidentally, it was Ibn al-Ḥanbalī's pupil Aḥmad ibn al-Munlā who collected his *dīwān* after his death. On Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, see *GAL*, 2:368 and S2:495, and 'Abd al-Ḥayy ibn Aḥmad Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār Man Dhahab* (Cairo, 1930–31), 8:364–65.

⁶See *GAL*, 2:290 and S2:401 on al-Būrīnī.

⁷Al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-A'yān min Abnā' al-Zamān*, ed. Saḷāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1959–63) 1:180–85.

⁸Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Al-Kawākib al-Sā'irah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-'Āshirah*, ed. Jibrā'īl Sulaymān Jabbūr (Beirut, 1945), 3:109–11 and idem, *Lutf al-Samar wa-Qatf al-Thamar min Tarājim A'yān al-Ṭabaqah al-Ūlá min al-Qarn al-Ḥādī 'Ashar*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Khayr (Damascus, 1981), 1:289–92. On al-Ghazzī, see *GAL*, 2:292 and S2:402.

⁹Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, 8:440–42. On him, see *GAL*, S2:403.

¹⁰Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-Athar fī A'yān al-Qarn al-Ḥādī 'Ashar* (Cairo, 1284), 1:277–80 and idem, *Nafāḥat al-Rayḥānah wa-Rashḥat Ṭilā' al-Ḥānah*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥulw (Cairo, 1967–71), 2:255–61. On this historian, see Carl Brockelmann, "Al-Muḥibbī", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 7:469–70; *GAL*, 2:293 and S2:403.

¹¹Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Durr al-Ḥabab*, no. 61.

¹²Ibid., no. 611.



to the intellectual circles of Aleppo, as did his father, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Munlā al-Ḥaškafī (d. 935/1528–29).¹³

His father evidently took care of Aḥmad ibn Munlā’s education in its early stages. Later on he was sent to study with the local ulama. They instructed him in the subjects that were customary in those days—hadīth, grammar, exegesis of the Quran, theology, jurisprudence.¹⁴ Aḥmad ibn Munlā took two extensive study trips to Damascus during his youth; he was accompanied by his father on one of them. In 958/1551, he went to the Ottoman court in Istanbul to take lessons with a number of well-known scholars. Aḥmad ibn Munlā described his experiences in a book (*Al-Rawḍah al-Wardīyah fī al-Riḥlah al-Rūmīyah*) that unfortunately has not survived. The scholar from Aleppo returned to his hometown later on and held various teaching positions. Aḥmad ibn Munlā was particularly interested in linguistics. He wrote a number of treatises over the years. In addition to a number of studies on Arabic syntax and a historical narrative (*Tārīkh al-Islām wa-Ṭabaqāt al-Mashāhīr min al-A‘lām*), one should also mention his commentary on Ibn Hishām’s (d. 761/1360) famous *Mughnī al-Labīb ‘an Kutub al-A‘arīb* and a comprehensive commentary on al-Bayḍāwī’s (d. after 685/1216) *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa-Asrār al-Ta’wīl* in this context. Neither of the books has apparently been preserved.

In his day, Aḥmad ibn Munlā was evidently recognized not only as a scholar but also as a poet. Ibn al-Ḥanbalī offers us a selection of his poetry. His life ended in a manner hardly befitting his social standing: farmers beat him to death near Aleppo. Aḥmad ibn Munlā was buried in his grandfather’s *turbah* at al-Jubayl Cemetery in Aleppo. He was survived by two sons, Ibrāhīm (d. 1032/1622–23) and Muḥammad (d. 1010/1601–2).¹⁵

At the beginning of his *Mut‘at al-Adhhān*, Aḥmad ibn Munlā tells us that he took extensive excerpts from Ibn Ṭūlūn’s *Al-Tamattu’ bi-al-Iqrān bayna Tarājim al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān* when preparing his manuscript. In doing so, he had selected every item that helped him compose his own handbook.¹⁶ The book prepared by the alim from Aleppo contains 1,030 biographical sketches, with the month of Dhū al-Qa‘dah 993/1585 being the last date mentioned. It is very difficult to tell from the content which parts were actually written by Ibn Ṭūlūn and which

¹³Ibid., no. 529.

¹⁴Ibn al-Ḥanbalī provides a long list of his teachers.

¹⁵On Aḥmad ibn Munlā’s sons, see al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣah*, 1:11–12 (Ibrāhīm) and 3:348–50 (Muḥammad); and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Khafājī (d. 1068/1659), *Rayḥānat al-Alibbā wa-Zahrāt al-Ḥayāh al-Dunyā*, ed. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥulw (Cairo, 1967), 1:97–98. Al-Khafājī’s *Rayḥānat al-Alibbā* is an expansion of his own work *Khabāyā al-Zawāyā fīmā fī al-Rijāl min al-Baqāyā*; see *GAL*, 2:286 and S2:396.

¹⁶Aḥmad ibn Munlā, *Mut‘at al-Adhhān*, 39.



parts were added by Aḥmad ibn Munlā. To answer this question it would be helpful to do a detailed study comparing the styles of his *Mut‘at al-Adhhān* with Ibn Ṭūlūn’s “Dhakhā’ir al-Qaṣr fī Tarājim Nubalā’ al-‘Aṣr” (Gotha MS 1779), which is an appendix to his *Al-Tamattu‘* written in his own hand and containing 136 biographies of well-known Damascene citizens in alphabetical order. The original models upon which the two authors based their work also merit close analysis. Ibn Ṭūlūn primarily used Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī’s (d. 909/1503)¹⁷ *Al-Riyāḍ al-Yāni‘ah fī A‘yān al-Mi‘ah al-Tāsi‘ah*¹⁸ and al-Buṣrawī’s (d. 905/1500)¹⁹ *Tārīkh*²⁰ as his models, while Aḥmad ibn Munlā apparently referred not only to Ibn Ṭūlūn’s writings but also to the biographies compiled by al-Sakhāwī and al-Būrīnī.

The Berlin manuscript (Berlin MS 9888) is the only available copy of Aḥmad ibn Munlā’s *Mut‘at al-Adhhān min al-Tamattu‘ bi-al-Iqrān bayna Tarājim al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān*. The manuscript is quite difficult to read, yet my cursory comparison of the original text and the present edition revealed hardly any mistakes. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Shaybānī al-Mawṣilī has evidently done a very good job. The detailed annotations and the comprehensive indexes are extremely useful, while the introduction could be a bit more detailed.

JONATHAN P. BERKEY, *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001). Pp. 143.

REVIEWED BY TH. EMIL HOMERIN, University of Rochester.

In his *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo* (Princeton, 1994), Jonathan Berkey offered a detailed study of religious education in Mamluk Cairo. His main concerns were higher education, primarily Islamic jurisprudence, the scholarly elite (ulama) and their students, though he also discussed the place of women and the ruling Mamluk military elite in this educational system. Among his insightful conclusions, Berkey found that the transmission of religious knowledge in Mamluk Egypt was vital to easing certain social boundaries as it brought together individuals from groups that otherwise might not have mingled so easily. Now in his most

¹⁷On this scholar see *GAL*, 2:107–8 and S2:130–31; Stefan Leder, “Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Hādī,” *EI*², 9:354; and Aḥmad ibn Munlā, *Mut‘at al-Adhhān*, 838–40 (no. 968).

¹⁸Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī, *Al-Riyāḍ al-Yāni‘ah fī A‘yān al-Mi‘ah al-Tāsi‘ah*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Shaybānī al-Mawṣilī (Damascus, 1986).

¹⁹On him, see Aḥmad ibn Munlā, *Mut‘at al-Adhhān*, 540–41 (no. 591).

²⁰Alī ibn Yūsuf al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh*, ed. Akram Ḥasan al-‘Ulābī (Damascus, 1987).



recent book, *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East*, Berkey again addresses the transmission of religious knowledge, but by those who were generally outside the small circle of religious professionals. In particular, he studies the many popular preachers and storytellers, and how their activities raised issues of the interrelationship between high and popular cultures, on one hand, and questions of religious authority, on the other.

To start, Berkey discusses some of the key players involved. The *khaṭīb* was generally a state-appointed religious scholar who delivered the official Friday sermon, while the *wā'iẓ* ("preacher," "admonisher") and the *qāṣṣ* ("storyteller") were often independent and less educated though they, too, called the common people to lead a pious life. As such, this latter group, like the ulama, actively transmitted religious knowledge, but this became a major source of tension. For as Berkey notes, "the controversy that their activities engendered was in the final analysis about how the common people were to understand Islam." (p. 21) That much was at stake is clear from the many critiques of the popular preachers written throughout the medieval period by members of the religious establishment, including those by Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200), Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 737/1336), Zayn al-Dīn al-'Irāqī (d. 806/1404), al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), and 'Alī ibn Maymūn al-Idrīsī (d. 917/1511). Though these and other members of the ulama held a variety of theological and legal views, they were united in their stand against unlawful innovation in religion, which they sought to define and articulate in a system of proper Sunni belief and ritual.

Yet this was a daunting task, for the popular preachers and religious storytellers were pervasive in medieval Muslim society, and they were often adored by the common people as sources of religious edification as well as entertainment. Their critics, however, warned of charlatans and fools, who might cheat the people out of their money, while leading them astray. Such imposters and ignoramuses lacked proper education and certification, and so they spread lies, weak hadith, and heresies, while their preaching sessions were thought to encourage the mixing of the sexes and other illicit activities. This was a crucial issue, for popular preaching and storytelling were acceptable, even honorable, activities provided that their practitioners were trained and regulated by the ulama. Indeed, many critics of the popular preachers and storytellers were, themselves, preachers as well as religious scholars. Their sermons were punctuated by quotations and allusions, traditions of the prophet Muḥammad, and stories of the earlier prophets (*Isrā'īliyyāt*).

Further, two themes central to all preaching were the renunciation of worldly goods and preparation for the Day of Judgment. Berkey reviews these and other themes found in the sermons of popular preachers, and their emotional impact on their audiences. He further observes that underlying much of this preaching was Sufism, which was a prominent feature of Islam in the Mamluk period. Poverty



and death were major topics of medieval mysticism, which sought to foster the love between God and His servants. But some critics feared that public expressions of pious love would be misconstrued by common folk as blatant eroticism, while the public presentation of mystical teachings, such as those by Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 637/1240) could be even more dangerous.

In response to such criticism, others defended popular preachers and storytellers as serving an essential religious service to the Muslim community. Here, Berkey focuses on an anonymous manuscript entitled *Al-Bā‘ith ‘alā al-Khalāṣ fī Aḥwāl al-Khawāṣṣ* (“The Enticer to Liberation from the Concerns of the Elites”). Through a good piece of scholarly detective work, Berkey discovered that the author of this work is almost certainly ‘Alī Ibn Wafā’ (d. 807/1404), an important member of the Wafā’īyah Shādhaliyah Sufi order, and a popular preacher. He wrote this treatise in response to Zayn al-Dīn al-‘Irāqī’s polemic against popular preachers and their Sufi values. The two men squared off over “the fundamental issue surrounding the preachers and storytellers . . . control: who was to control their activities, their words, and their messages, and how was such control to be exercised” (p. 55). Al-‘Irāqī, fearing sedition and heresy, wanted to control and regulate what he believed to be illegal activity on the part of ignorant and unrestrained preachers. Ibn Wafā’ agreed that preachers who preached against the law would surely face divine retribution. But he noted that many preachers and storytellers had, in fact, been authorized to transmit legitimate religious knowledge. Further, for Ibn Wafā’, what truly mattered was the quality and sincerity of a sermon’s *‘ibrah*, or spiritual message. As Berkey points out on this and similar matters, Ibn Wafā’ and al-‘Irāqī held differing views regarding what constituted proper religious knowledge. While the conservative al-‘Irāqī attempted to circumscribe this knowledge and its transmission, Ibn Wafā’ pressed for openness, “for the possibility that humanity’s understanding of the will of God was incomplete and susceptible to further refinement, even in the hands of individuals such as those preaching and telling stories to the Muslim masses” (p. 85). Berkey concludes that this debate over popular preachers and storytellers underscores the fact that while the ulama had emerged as the religious authorities of medieval Islam, precisely who qualified for membership in this elite group and on what basis remained somewhat ambiguous.

Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East is a concise, well-argued, and well-written book. My only real criticism is that in a book about preaching, we never read an actual sermon. Either as part of his second chapter “Storytelling and Preaching in the Late Middle Period,” or as a separate succeeding chapter, Berkey might have translated and analyzed several representative sermons. For example, reading a sermon by the conservative *khaṭīb* Ibn al-Jawzī, together with one by the respected Sufi preacher Ibn ‘Aṭā Allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 709/1309), and another by one of the popular preachers, such as



Shaykh Shu‘ayb al-Ḥurayfīsh (d. 801/1389–99), would have made for an interesting contrast, and provided a fuller picture of the types of material involved. Finally, to Berkey’s extensive bibliography should be added Īliyā Ḥāwī’s anthology *Fann al-Khaṭābah* (Beirut, n.d.). These minor points aside, with *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East*, Jonathan Berkey has presented a detailed and insightful discussion of the vibrant and dynamic activity of Muslim preaching and storytelling and so has made another important contribution to the study of medieval Islam.

Grandes villes méditerranéennes du monde musulman médiéval. Edited by Jean-Claude Garcin (Rome: Collection de l’École française de Rome, 2000). Pp. 323.

REVIEWED BY PAULINA B. LEWICKA, University of Warsaw

This ambitious volume brings together a number of papers prepared by fourteen distinguished scholars who acted upon the request of Claude Nicolet, then the director of the École française de Rome and the organizer of a conference on the “megapoles” of the Mediterranean (Rome, May 1996). The contributors decided to examine nine cities—not all of them of the Mediterranean basin, despite the book’s title. The list, which includes Damascus, Qayrawan, Cordoba, al-Fuṣṭāṭ, Aleppo, Cairo, Fez, and Tunis, is complemented by Baghdad, a center separated from the Mediterranean’s eastern shore by over 800 km of desert routes. Baghdad, however, a great early medieval megapolis of the Arab-Muslim world, “could not be ignored,” to use the editor’s own words. Therefore it was included—on an equal basis—“for scholarly comparison.” The magnitude of tenth-century Baghdad cannot be denied. To include it, however, among Mediterranean urban centers is somewhat confusing. Similarly, the need to compare the characteristics of Oriental cities with those of Mediterranean urban centers is indisputable. However, to claim regularity based on the comparison of those centers with the single model of Baghdad is somewhat misleading.

The book presents nine Islamic cities. Thierry Bianquis examines post-Umayyad Damascus, while Mondher Sakly looks at Qayrawan, the capital of the province of Ifrīqīyā until the mid-eleventh century. The flourishing Abbasid Baghdad is discussed by Françoise Micheau; this presentation, the only one in this volume that contains comprehensive footnotes, is followed by a plan of the city, prepared by Abdallah Cheikh-Moussa. The plan includes the toponyms recorded in the



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period between the foundation of Baghdad and the beginning of the tenth century. M. Acién Almansa and A. Vallejo Triano deal with tenth-century caliphal Cordoba. Ayman Fu'ad Sayyid and Roland-Pierre Gayraud, director of the archeological mission in al-Fuṣṭāṭ, examine the characteristics of this city in the Fatimid period. Anne-Marie Eddé's study presents Aleppo of the twelfth–thirteenth centuries. Two of the contributions deal specifically with the capital of the Mamluk state: the presentation by Doris Behrens-Abouseif, Sylvie Denoix, and Jean-Claude Garcin is followed by Garcin's evaluation of possible Cairo population figures in 1517. Halima Ferhat looks at fourteenth-century Merinid Fez. Finally, Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi examines fifteenth-century Tunis of the Hafsid.

To make sure that the results of their work remain (to quote the editors' expression) at least in "minimum harmony," the contributors agreed that a set of twelve topics be addressed for each of the cities under study. The topics, inspired by those drawn up by scholars working in Claude Nicolet's project on the metropolitan areas of the northern Mediterranean, are: documentation and studies; quantitative evaluations; the forming of the population; distribution of the population; urban morphology; infrastructure and services; city authorities and administration; the city in its territory; the city and its long-distance links; religious and cultural topography; identity of the city.

The presentations are preceded by Thierry Bianquis' and Jean-Claude Garcin's thoughts on the notion of "megapolis" and its meaning. In fact this interesting chapter, while shedding much light on the question of the proper understanding of the ancient Greek term, is also somewhat confusing to the reader, who expects that being a "megapolis" is an element connecting the cities under study and probably constituting one of the main threads of the whole volume. In reality the essay offers an otherwise absorbing presentation in which Jean-Claude Garcin argues that Cairo of the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries can be considered a "megapolis" (which in his view is also the case for Baghdad of the ninth–tenth centuries), but that cities like al-Fuṣṭāṭ, Aleppo, Qayrawan, and Cordoba should not be included in this category. Garcin's reasoning, apparently inspired by Claude Nicolet's project, is very convincing, if not too closely in line with the chapters that follow.

Twelve topics, nine cities, an enormous abundance of secondary literature to study and sources to rediscover—and just one volume to contain it all. The title, the impressive format, and the preface appear promising, as do the table of contents and the names of the contributors, many of whom are internationally recognized experts on medieval Muslim cities. However, as soon as one reaches the bibliography (which precedes the presentations), confusion returns. In her bibliography for the essay on Baghdad, Françoise Micheau states that the list contains the most important works only and as for the sources, one should refer to the article itself (its footnotes



are indeed detailed and exhaustive) or to the appropriate entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* [sic!]. To compensate for this deficiency, the author includes in the list of secondary literature that follows one- or two-sentence descriptions of each work. A number of works also seem to be missing from the list of sources for the chapter on al-Fuṣṭāṭ (compare it with the bibliographies included by Ayman Fu'ad Sayyid in any of his numerous editions of Arabic sources for the history of Cairo).

For anybody acquainted with the enormous richness of sources for the history and topography of Mamluk Cairo (including the European travellers' accounts that are frequently quoted in Jean-Claude Garcin's presentation), the five items that constitute the list of sources seem at least odd; defining them as "sources essentielles" to some degree explains the brevity, but does not quite help to understand the number of works selected. The list of modern literature that follows omits a number of important works, a deficiency that becomes particularly manifest in the presentation itself, as the reader is rarely given a chance to see more details on literature or additional explanations that are usually placed in footnotes. The case of Mamluk Cairo, however, is not an extraordinary example: chapters on Cordoba, al-Fuṣṭāṭ, Qayrawan, Damascus, and Fez are hardly annotated at all.

As for the articles themselves, their content is formed according to the pattern mentioned above and presented in an almost encyclopedically concise manner. For example, the chapter on Mamluk Cairo contains a very brief description of basic sources for topography of the city and mention of a few names of scholars who have studied its urban history (section "documentation and studies"), followed by "quantitative evaluations" by Jean-Claude Garcin in which the author discusses all known estimations concerning the population of Cairo and suggests 270,000 as the most probable number (this fails to correspond with what André Raymond and others have calculated, which Garcin explains in a separate chapter). In the same section the author, using the works by al-Maqrīzī, Leo Africanus, and the map of Cairo by Matheo Pagano, provides some more figures concerning the city's area and the density of population in certain parts of it.

Doris Behrens-Abouseif presents the composition of the population and, pointing out the cosmopolitan character of Mamluk Cairo, explains that the emergence of the multinational mosaics that the city dwellers formed was a result of many factors, such as the original multi-religious character of the city, frequent immigration of conquering troops, and waves of refugees that followed various conquests and wars. The Mamluk system of recruitment, the widespread use of slaves, and the international character of shrines and religious academies of Cairo added new nationalities and new groups to the already differentiated society.

In the following section the same author examines the distribution of the city population and notes that in Mamluk Cairo the separation of the Muslim and non-Muslim quarters was not very strict; a certain flexibility was permitted here.



She also points out that despite the professional specialization of Copts and Jews, there did not exist a strict religious segregation as far as the workplaces or crafts were concerned. She also stresses that because of the lack of sources similar to the Geniza archives for the time of the Fatimids or to court registers for the Ottoman epoch, we know relatively little on the distribution by profession of the population of Mamluk Cairo.

In the section dealing with infrastructures and services, Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Jean-Claude Garcin very briefly present the system of water provision and transportation of merchandise; they devote more space to Cairo bazaars. They examine the nature of commercial installations in the center of al-Qāhirah, explain the changing topography of the Cairene commerce that evolved according to the sultans' and amirs' orders, to economic crises, or to changing fashion. They also discuss the history of the founding of the bazaars along al-Qaṣabah, or the main axis of the Fatimid city, and explain the reasons for this development.

In her presentation on the authorities and administration of the city, Sylvie Denoix first points to the fact that, contrary to its European counterpart, the medieval Islamic city did not have municipal institutions of any kind and that the absence of urban administration is one of the characteristic features of the "Islamic city." The author does not examine this interesting phenomenon further (which, considering the form of the volume, is quite understandable), but she also fails to mention fundamental studies on the subject, such as S. M. Stern's "The Constitution of the Islamic City" (in A. H. Hourani and S. M. Stern, eds., *The Islamic City: A Colloquium* [Oxford, 1970]) or I. M. Lapidus's "Muslim Cities and Islamic Societies" (in I. M. Lapidus, ed., *Middle Eastern Cities* [Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969]).

Sylvie Denoix goes on to say that the Islamic cities were governed by other institutions instead: by *ḥisbah*, by judicature of the qadis, by various types of police and by *waqf*—the system of "social solidarity," and she briefly presents each of them. Again, the omission of basic sources (the works of al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Duqmāq do not constitute the fullest compendium on the Cairene *ḥisbah* system) and of at least a few important items from the long list of secondary literature on the subject (the literature on the institution of *waqf* in Egypt is fairly rich) is an element that can hardly be applauded.

The author concludes the essay by stating that what in fact made Mamluk Cairo different from other Islamic cities was the duality of forces in power: there were local civilian elites responsible for religious and certain administrative issues on the one hand, and the army with the military and political power on the other; but as this duality was apparently the case with all Egyptian and Syrian cities where Mamluk troops were posted, this is not a distinguishing feature of the Cairo urban administration. This city was unique in being the seat of the Mamluk sultan, an officer who was not only the ruler of the kingdom, but also the one who often



took a personal interest in, and gave dispositions as to, the order in the city, the safety of its gates and streets, control over its various legal and illegal businesses, as well as its urban development. It was he, finally, who presided over the *mazālim* court sessions, so that the four Sunni judges were not the only institution that dispensed justice in the city.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking part of the chapter on Mamluk Cairo, if not of the entire book, is Jean-Claude Garcin's "Note sur la population du Caire en 1517." In his article the author, referring to various sources that indicate the number of dwellers in late medieval Cairo, comments on the results of contemporary studies on the subject (particularly those by André Raymond), draws his own conclusions, and attempts to establish his own figures. Garcin apparently does not agree with the methods of calculation applied by Raymond nor with his application of these methods to the pre-Ottoman epoch.

Thus, trying to avoid the methodological confusion that an "Ottomanist" approach to medieval Cairo may cause, the author decides in the first place to redefine the term "Cairo" by incorporating al-Fuṣṭāṭ within Cairo's medieval limits at the end of the fifteenth century—contrary to the "Ottomanists," for whom al-Fuṣṭāṭ is just a ruined suburb. However logical this move may appear, the soundness of it is open to discussion, and not just on whether al-Fuṣṭāṭ was already ruined or not. In the late fifteenth century, as before, the chief of police of al-Qāhirah was not responsible for order in al-Fuṣṭāṭ, and *vice versa*; the two officers did not have any common beat or share a common commander, which suggests that from the administrative point of view (whatever this may mean in the case of a city with no municipal authorities) the two urban entities were separate. Al-Qalqashandī, who in his encyclopedia devotes a section to describe *madīnat* al-Fuṣṭāṭ, and another to describe *madīnat* al-Qāhirah, apparently confirms the late medieval situation.

At the same time, another proposition by the author, to include Būlāq and other *extra-muros* quarters within the city limits, seems to be rational. This said, one remark should be added, viz., that the poor of Cairo (if we consider them its inhabitants) seem not to fit the methods of counting valid for other inhabitants. Some of them lived in exceedingly overcrowded houses, where a "feu fiscal" could by no means be limited to five persons; some of them—usually homeless immigrant scholars and personnel of various and numerous religious institutions of Cairo—dwelled in the institutions' buildings or slept in front of them. Still others lived outside the walled city, on the ground or in some kind of temporary housing. How large a part of Cairo's population did they form? An absorbing study by Adam Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge, 2000), does not provide the answer either, but leaves this question tantalizingly open.

The glossary of Arabic urban terms and a set of carefully prepared colored maps of the nine cities complete the book. There is no index.



The approach the contributors have adopted in their study resulted in creating a reference volume, a kind of encyclopedia-style handbook consisting of nine large entries on nine medieval Mediterranean cities, including Baghdad. Indeed, much of this material covers—to use Carl F. Petry’s words—ground thoroughly trodden by specialists in the field, especially in the case of Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo, which over the preceding thirty years have been “worked over to a degree verging on excess.” This, however, does not negate the value of the volume. As the editor states, the aim was to contribute to the work on the general history of Islamic urbanism. And the book, no doubt, satisfies all conditions to serve this purpose. It indeed paves the way for further work in this direction; what we need now is to rediscover, reread, reanalyze the sources, and interpret the data on Islamic urban and social history that the medieval works and documents contain. One can only praise the efforts of this group of distinguished scholars for placing their research on medieval Muslim cities in a framework that enables further comparative studies on a scale even larger than Mediterranean Muslim urbanism.

‘IMĀD BADR AL-DĪN ABŪ GHĀZĪ, *Taṭawwur al-Hiyāzah al-Zirā’īyah fī Miṣr Zaman al-Mamālīk al-Jarākisah* (Cairo: ‘Ayn lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Buḥūth al-Insāniyah wa-al-Ijtimā’īyah, 2000). Pp. 155.

REVIEWED BY IGARASHI DAISUKE, Chuo University

It is generally agreed that the *iqtā’* system was a fundamental military and economic system of the Mamluk state providing the basic framework for the Mamluk regime and its society. However, even though this is a most important matter directly linked to the social and political power structures, only a few attempts have so far been made to understand the actual transformation process of the *iqtā’* system—that is, the land tenure system under the Circassian Mamluks that has been regarded as being in “a period of decline”—with the exception of C. F. Petry’s recent studies using Mamluk *waqf* documents concerning the expansion of the sultans’ *waqf* lands.

The present book is a remarkable study that considers the land tenure system in Circassian Mamluk Egypt based on Mamluk documents in the Ministry of *Waqfs* and National Archives in Cairo, which have heretofore been used almost exclusively for *waqf* studies, and Ottoman land registers of *rizaq* (*dafātir al-rizaq al-jayshīyah*, *dafātir al-rizaq al-aḥbāsīyah*) that have never been used as historical sources for Mamluk studies. The author notices that there were many cases of



state land sales from the state treasury (*bayt al-māl*) to individuals during the Circassian Mamluk period. The data he examines is based on 570 cases of state land sales appearing in the documentation. The aim of the book, as the author describes it in the Introduction, is to consider the process of development, causes, and effects of the sale of state lands, which he regards as an important phenomenon influencing the traditional land tenure system in medieval Egypt. It argues against the common opinion that most agricultural land belonged to the state, and that private ownership had not developed in medieval Egypt, as attested by al-Qalqashandī and al-Maqrīzī, historians of the Circassian Mamluk period. They state in their works that there was neither much privately owned nor *waqf* land in Egypt in the early fifteenth century, the beginning of the Circassian period.

Chapter 1 deals with the development of state land sales during the Circassian Mamluk period, in which most of the cases were found, although the practice had existed since the Fatimid period. Some 570 cases are arranged chronologically and according to sultanic reigns. In a table, the author shows that most state land sales were carried out during specific reigns, like those of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī and al-Ashraf Īnāl, but, in contrast, only few cases can be found under others, like al-Zāhir Barqūq and al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, despite their long terms. Similarly, land sales are concentrated in particular periods, that is, the mid-fifteenth century and the last twenty years of Mamluk rule. Judging from this data, it is obvious that the state land sales did not occur equally throughout the Circassian Mamluk period.

Chapter 2 focuses on the reasons for state land sales. In Mamluk documents, they were ordinarily legitimated "for expenditures on military expeditions and payments to soldiers," attempting to overcome the fact that the *fuqahā'* had not agreed on the legality of selling land originally belonging to the state treasury. Therefore, the following three questions are considered by the author: did state land sales coincide with military expeditions or with other military activities? Were there fiscal circumstances that actually required selling land? Did land payments actually enter the state treasury's coffers? As a result of this investigation, no apparent relationships can be found between fiscal or military circumstances and the frequency of state land sales. Moreover, the documents frequently tell us that land payments from the state treasury were "awarded" to buyers. Consequently, the author concludes that the reasons for selling state land described in the documentation were not legitimate.

In Chapter 3, entitled "Effects of state land sales under the Circassian Mamluks," the author assumes that state land sales influenced various aspects of society in medieval Egypt for the reason that agricultural land was the basis of state revenues as well as the *iqṭā'* system, and therefore he examines the buyers of state lands and the subsequent transfer of that land after purchase. From this analysis, he



reveals that a vast amount of agricultural land was turned into *waqf* through the sale of state lands, thus in effect transferring land ownership from the state to private hands. He points out that three important changes in the land tenure system and Egyptian society resulted from this. First, it may have caused a decline in the *iqṭā'* system owing to a reduction of state land that could be awarded to mamluks and amirs as *iqṭā'*. He expects that the traditional loyalty between sultans and mamluks and amirs depended on the *iqṭā'* system and may have collapsed as a result of the change in their land tenure status from *muqṭa'*s to private land owners, making them independent of the state to some extent. Secondly, a new landlord group consisting of *awlād al-nās* and Egyptians who had been excluded from the ruling class appeared, now that the state was no longer the exclusive source of land due to the free transfer of land as a result of the spread of sales from the state treasury. However, their social influence on their own land was reduced because it was necessary to turn it into *waqf* to avoid confiscation, in addition to the fact that they had been absentee landlords. Thirdly, nevertheless, the documentation makes clear that most of the land sold from the state treasury eventually fell into the hands of the sultans. That is, they became the greatest beneficiaries of state land sales. Consequently, the author concludes that the real reason for the state land sales was to benefit the sultans themselves, who used it to reward their followers and to conciliate their enemies, all of this due to the political corruption of the period.

The most valuable features of this book are its numerous tables and graphs, which organize the data in archival sources statistically and quantitatively. In addition, the author compares these tools with narrative sources, examining the phenomenon of state-land sale from various aspects. His opinion that this unfortunately overlooked phenomenon was significant in causing great social transformation at the time is very interesting. However, his hypothesis in Chapter 3 about the transformation of the land tenure system remains uncertain because it mostly depends on statistical analysis of the documents, and cannot be proven by the narrative sources. Furthermore, the sultans' intentions regarding state land sales and the contemporary political situation caused by it, or requiring it, are not examined satisfactorily, but only summed up as political corruption, despite possible effects on the political and power structure of the traditional Mamluk regime. We may recall that many state land sales occurred under particular sultanic reigns, despite the absence of pressing military and economic circumstances, as seen in Chapter 2. Therefore, we must look more carefully into the political circumstances of those reigns, including reconsideration of whether state land sales were transacted under similar situations and for the same purposes throughout the Circassian period, or were merely a part of some intentional policy by particular sultans for some special purpose.



Even though the author's opinion leaves room for further investigation, especially from the aspect of political history, the importance of this book cannot be overemphasized. Most of all, it shows that Ottoman documents are applicable to Mamluk studies, which have usually been based on narrative sources due to an assumed lack of administrative documents, thus enabling scholars to explore further the land tenure system during the Mamluk period. Land systems are crucial elements of society, having close relationships to political, economic, and social conditions. The conclusions reached in this book will have an impact on other fields of Mamluk history, and will change the previously held historical image of the Circassian Mamluks.

IBN ḤAJAR AL-'ASQALĀNĪ, *Dhayl al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah*, edited by Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1419/1998). Pp. 376.

IBN ḤAJAR AL-'ASQALĀNĪ, *Dhayl al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah*, edited by 'Adnān Darwīsh (Cairo: Ma'had al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-'Arabīyah, 1412/1992). Pp. 452.

IBN DUQMĀQ, *Nuzhat al-Anām fī Tārīkh al-Islām, 628/1230–659/1261*, edited by Samīr Ṭabbārah (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Aṣrīyah, 1420/1999). Pp. 320.

REVIEWED BY THOMAS BAUER, Universität Münster

Historiographical works are not only important for the facts they contain. Each of these works is also a document for the world view of the time of its composition and can tell a lot about the interests and predilections of its readers, about the scholarly life of that time, and the perception of history in it. Therefore, one should not be disappointed if the recently published works under review do not add many historical facts previously unknown. They are interesting nevertheless, each one in its own way.

Ibn Ḥajar (773–852/1372–1449) hardly needs to be introduced in these pages. His *Durar al-Kāminah*, a collection of biographies of the important persons who died during the eighth century (701–800), is a basic tool for everyone interested in the Mamluk period. It is the first of a long series of works containing the biographies of important people who died within a certain century. But if we consider the date of Ibn Ḥajar's birth and death, he seems not to have been particularly predisposed



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to writing the biographies of the prominent people of the eighth century, because a book like this did not allow him to treat the biographies of all those who died after the author was only twenty-seven years old. It is therefore only too understandable that he planned a continuation to this book, a *Dhayl al-Durar al-Kāminah*. In the year 832 he noticed, as he writes himself, that already a third of the ninth century had elapsed. This inspired him to put together a volume containing short presentations of those who had died during the years 801 to 832 in chronological order (different from the *Durar*). The volume contains the obituaries of 639 persons, ranging between a single line and two pages. Ibn Ḥajar finished a draft (*musawwadah*) only, which circulated among several ulama, among them Ibn al-Labūdī, in whose possession al-Sakhāwī had seen the book,¹ and Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, who left notes in the manuscript. This *musawwadah* in Ibn Ḥajar's own hand has survived and is probably the only manuscript of the text that ever existed. Ibn Ḥajar himself obviously never cared for the preparation of a fair copy (*mubayyadah*). Probably he felt that his *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, a history of the *ḥawādith/wafayāt* type, which he carried on until his death, made a further continuation of the *Dhayl* superfluous.² In any case, the whole material of the *Dhayl* can also be found in the *Inbā'* (and, additionally, in al-Sakhāwī's *Ḍaw'*), so that the edition of the *Dhayl* yields only a very small number of hitherto unknown facts. However, the texts are not identical, and it is never devoid of interest to have the *ipsissima verba* of as great a scholar as Ibn Ḥajar in front of oneself. The edition is, therefore, to be welcomed.

But which edition? The edition by Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī is meant to complete the two-volume set (four volumes in two) of Ibn Ḥajar's *Al-Durar al-Kāminah* issued by the Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah (henceforth: DKI). The DKI does not mention an editor of the *Durar*, but presents the book as being "corrected" by a certain ‘Abd al-Wārith Muḥammad ‘Alī (Beirut, 1418/1997). It has become common practice with the DKI to publish "remakes" of books published previously by other publishing houses. In these cases, the original edition (which is hardly ever specified) is simply retyped without consulting any manuscript. The new text (which is usually presented in a clumsy layout with small margins standing in marked contrast to a pompous cover) can, of course, never be better than the text from which it is copied, because it copies its mistakes and inevitably adds new ones. To give but one example, in the biography of al-Ṣafadī in the new DKI edition of the *Durar* the reader comes across al-Ṣafadī's statement that he wrote "two hundred (*mi' atayn*) volumes" and may find it inconsistent with a later notice

¹Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir wa-al-Durar fī Tarjamāt Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Ḥajar*, ed. Ibrāhīm Bājīs ‘Abd al-Majīd (Beirut, 1419/1999), 3:688.

²Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-Ghumr bi-Abnā' al-‘Umr*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Khān et al., 9 vols. (Hyderabad, 1387–96/1967–76).



that he wrote more than five hundred. Even more surprising is the enigmatic information that al-Şafadī suffered from “a hardness of hearing in the hereafter (*fī al-ākhirah*)”. If this text is compared with the much superior Hyderabad edition, the reader will find out that al-Şafadī claimed to have written “hundreds (*mi’īn*) of volumes,” and that the problems with his hearing occurred “towards the end of his life (*fī al-ākhar*).” This example proves the practice of the DKI not only to be ethically dubious but also detrimental to scholarly standards. It is only to be hoped that the easily available print of the DKI will not supersede the excellent Hyderabad edition.

This practice arouses suspicion also for the edition of the *Dhayl*, a suspicion that turns out to be only too justified. Though al-Mazīdī certainly had a copy of Ibn Ḥajar’s autograph in hand (as the plates on pp. 23–24 prove), everything points to the conclusion that this was not the main source for his edition. Six years before, another edition of the *Dhayl* had appeared in Cairo. Its editor, ‘Adnān Darwīsh, had done an impressive job. By comparing Ibn Ḥajar’s *musawwadah*, which is written almost without diacritical dots, with the text of the *Inbā’*, the *Ḍaw’*, and other sources, he manages to decipher Ibn Ḥajar’s text nearly completely. He even succeeds in reading most of the marginal notes by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah. Further, he gives a comprehensive commentary in the footnotes identifying nearly every person and book title mentioned in the text. It may well be the case that Darwīsh’s commentary proves to be more helpful than Ibn Ḥajar’s own words. All these notes are lacking in al-Mazīdī’s edition, a fact that alone lends superiority to Darwīsh’s edition. But really striking is the fact that al-Mazīdī’s version of Ibn Ḥajar’s text is completely identical with Darwīsh’s. By not mentioning Darwīsh’s edition, al-Mazīdī implies that he did not know it. But it is hard to imagine that his reading of Ibn Ḥajar’s sketchy text, which is extremely difficult to decipher (as the sample plates show), is always the same as that of Darwīsh and that he always had the same idea as to how to divide the text into paragraphs. Whenever Darwīsh could not read a word and therefore omits it, al-Mazīdī also could not read it. In many cases Darwīsh notes that a passage was extremely difficult to read, that he could only guess the right word, or that he had to put forward a conjecture. In all these cases, al-Mazīdī’s text is absolutely identical, but without admitting any textual problems. Even where there is a lacuna in the text of the *Dhayl* that Darwīsh tried to fill by adding the corresponding passage of the *Inbā’* in square brackets, al-Mazīdī’s text is identical —with the exception of the brackets. He thus presents passages which are definitely missing in Ibn Ḥajar’s autograph as part of the original text. Therefore we can conclude with almost complete certainty that al-Mazīdī did plagiarize the edition of Darwīsh. It is a matter of course that only Darwīsh’s erudite edition should be bought, used, and quoted.



The author of the next book under review is Šārim al-Dīn Ibrāhīm, known as Ibn Duqmāq, an elder contemporary of Ibn Ḥajar. He was born between 740 and 750, and died in 809/1496. He was an important source for the historical works of Ibn Ḥajar and is the subject of an entry in Ibn Ḥajar's *Dhayl* (no. 274) and in his *Inbā'* (6:16–17). As his name shows, he belonged to the *awlād al-nās*, and as such had the usual problems of being accepted by the great ulama, because he could not comply with their linguistic standards, which required a flawless mastery of Classical Arabic. Though Ibn Ḥajar had a liking for him and drew heavily on his writings, he cannot help stating that Ibn Duqmāq, "despite his passion for literature (*adabiyāt*) and history, was bare of the clothes of the Arabic language, and his speech was vulgar (*'āmmī al-'ibārah*)" (*Dhayl*, p. 182). Several works of Ibn Duqmāq have been preserved at least partially, among them a collection of the biographies of Hanafi scholars, which caused him a lot of trouble, since he was accused of slandering al-Shāfi'ī in it, and a description of Cairo and Alexandria edited by Vollers in 1893 (*Kitāb al-Intiṣār li-Wāsiṭat 'Iqd al-Amṣār*). A fine edition of a précis of Mamluk history up to the year 805 has appeared recently.³ In this work, he refers to his *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* (p. 26), by which he certainly meant his history entitled *Nuzhat al-Anām fī Tārīkh al-Islām*, a history in annalistic form following the *hawādith/wafayāt* pattern. It seems as if at least more than half of it has been preserved.⁴ Ibn Ḥajar states that this work was the most important source for Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī for the period not covered by Ibn Kathīr. Al-'Aynī, he says, copied Ibn Duqmāq, including his linguistic mistakes and without mentioning his source in passages in which Ibn Duqmāq presents himself as an eyewitness, thus pretending falsely to have been an eyewitness himself (*Inbā'*, 1:2–3).

Samīr Ṭabbārah now has undertaken the task of editing the portion covering the years 628–59/1230–61, the end of the Ayyubid and the beginning of the Mamluk period. Obviously Ibn Duqmāq used a great variety of sources, and though many of them are well known, his text provides different formulations, unknown details, and even some biographical entries which the erudite editor could not trace in any other source. But of course only a careful source-critical study will determine the *Nuzhah*'s importance as a historical source for this period. Whatever the results will be, the part edited by Ṭabbārah is interesting in any case, because it is based on Ibn Duqmāq's autograph. Fortunately the editor did not obliterate the grammatical peculiarities of the manuscript, but only corrected

³Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Nafḥah al-Miskīyah fī al-Dawlah al-Turkīyah*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 1420/1999).

⁴The most comprehensive survey of the surviving manuscripts is given in *ibid.*, p. 26, where Tadmurī however fails to mention the Gotha manuscripts. Taken together and provided that all given dates are correct, we possess the parts dealing with the years 176–422, 436–552, 628–59, 701–42, and 768–804.



obvious errors, in which case he gives the original wording in the notes. In cases of grammatical and syntactic influences of the spoken language, he preserves Ibn Duqmāq's text and gives the form complying with the rules of Standard Arabic in the notes. In some cases, for no obvious reason, he proceeds the other way around. However, the reader is always able to reconstruct the features of the autograph and is at the same time provided with a readable text. If only the editor had been more attentive and the considerable number of misprints been smaller, this edition could serve as a model for similar cases.

Ṭabbārah's edition allows us to assess Ibn Ḥajar's criticism, and we must admit that he was not entirely wrong when he questioned Ibn Duqmāq's grammatical competence. Ibn Duqmāq's mistakes, however, were by and large predictable. He starts sentences having a plural subject with a verb in the plural form, disregards accusative endings and mixes up the endings *-ūn* and *-īn*. These completely unspectacular peculiarities are the main features of dialectal influence in Ibn Duqmāq's text. Instead of mentioning these features, the editor in his introduction discusses the problem of *hamzah* orthography at some length (pp. 17–18). I would prefer that the subject of *hamzah* orthography disappear entirely from discussions of dialect influence in classical manuscripts or of the features of so-called Middle Arabic. Of course these people did not pronounce the *hamz*, but this fact cannot be derived from the manuscripts, because *hamzah* was also unnoted in manuscripts of purely classical texts written by educated writers. The standard orthography was always to write *mas'ūl* with one *wāw* and no *hamzah* sign, and to write *sā'ir* with dotted *yā'* and no *hamzah* sign either. This being so, nothing speaks against replacing this tradition with the modern standard orthography for *hamzah* in editions. This was also Ṭabbārah's idea. Therefore his haphazard (and often simply wrong) way of writing *hamzah* comes as somewhat of a surprise.

It is remarkable further, as Ibn Ḥajar had already noted, that Ibn Duqmāq's unaccomplished grammatical training was no obstacle to his predilection for literature. It becomes very clear that Ibn Duqmāq is occupied mainly with two fields, history and *adab*, to which one may add a certain interest in Sufism. For this reason, Ibn Duqmāq treats the eventful year 648 in eleven pages and a half, but devotes nineteen pages to the year 632, in which nothing especially interesting seems to have happened, since the *ḥawādith* of it are treated in only three lines. But 632 was the year in which the poets al-Ḥājirī and—above all—Ibn al-Fāriḍ died. Ibn Duqmāq gives a long biography of Ibn al-Fāriḍ and quotes extensively from his and al-Ḥājirī's poetic productions. Ibn Duqmāq's history clearly is no instance of *siyāsah*-oriented historiography, but rather a combination of political and cultural history with a conspicuous focus on *adab*. Ibn Duqmāq obviously liked poetry. Repeatedly he gives his own judgments about the lines he quotes, thereby presenting himself as an *adab* expert. The poetry quoted pertains exclusively



to high literature. There are no vernacular verses, and *mirabilia* play hardly any role. Therefore I think that the extraordinary role of poetry cannot be explained sufficiently by considering it part of a process of popularization, as Ulrich Haarmann suggested.⁵ Taking into account the high prestige of *adab* in the Mamluk period and the overall process, which I call the “‘*ulamā*’ization of *adab*” and the “*adab*ization of the ‘*ulamā*’,”⁶ one of the motives for adducing such a great amount of poetry may also be the desire of the author to prove his professionalism and, in the special case of Ibn Duqmāq, to make up for his incomplete linguistic training. In any case, Ibn Duqmāq’s book provides rich material for a new assessment of this and many other questions about the nature of Mamluk historiography. Therefore, though the edition is far from being faultless, one can only give the advice to buy it as long as the DKI has not plagiarized it and added even more mistakes.

‘AZĪZ AL-‘AZMAH, *Ibn Taymīyah* (Beirut: Riyād al-Rayyis lil-Kutub wa-al-Nashr, 2000). Pp.499.

REVIEWED BY JON HOOVER, Dar Comboni Arabic Study Centre, Cairo

‘Azīz al-Azmah has published extensively in both English and Arabic, including the recent *Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan Politics* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997). In the Arabic book under review al-Azmah offers an anthology of texts drawn from Ibn Taymīyah’s (d. 728/1328) vast corpus of writings. Many domains of the Hanbali jurist’s thought are represented, although there is little from his spiritual writings. The first and shortest of three major parts is allotted to passages on “the true religion.” The second part presents *fatwās* and other texts dealing broadly with legal matters, including the caliphate and popular religious innovations. Among these are excerpts from the jurist’s rulings on the obligation to fight the Islam-confessing Mongols. These have been picked up by modern day radicals to justify violent opposition to governments in the Islamic world. The third part of the anthology includes discussions of religious epistemology and doctrine, as well as Ibn Taymīyah’s *Wāsiṭīyah* creed, which

⁵Ulrich Haarmann, “Auflösung und Bewahrung der klassischen Formen arabischer Geschichtsschreibung in der Zeit der Mamluken,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 121 (1971): 46–60.

⁶Thomas Bauer, “Literarische Anthologien der Mamlukenzeit,” in *Die Mamluken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur im Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942–1999)*, ed. S. Conermann and A. Pistor-Hatam (Hamburg, 2002), in press.



remains in use to the present. While the texts chosen are interesting, they are not always taken from the best available printed editions, and they do not necessarily grant perspicuous access to the jurist's ideas. Moreover, al-Aẓmah provides no explanatory notation because, as he informs us in the introduction, this would have made the volume too unwieldy. Al-Aẓmah closes the book with an appendix containing six historical extracts dealing with Ibn Taymīyah's life and works and an index of names.

In the appendix al-Aẓmah performs a sleight of hand that is inexcusable for a modern scholar of any repute. The first and only full account of Ibn Taymīyah's life presented is the late biography of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), in which, contrary to several earlier sources, Ibn Taymīyah confesses Ash'arism under duress and thereby admits that his view of God's attributes is heterodox. After this comes an abridgement of Ibn Rajab's (d. 795/1392) biography that has been divested of nearly everything that counters Ibn Ḥajar's account and a great deal more of substantial historical interest. The third selection, the biography of Kutubī (d. 764/1362), provides an extensive list of Ibn Taymīyah's works but little else, and the fourth is the late biography of Ibn 'Imād (d. 1089/1678), which also does not deal with Ibn Taymīyah's trials concerning God's attributes. The fifth excerpt in the appendix is a condemnation of Ibn Taymīyah's views on God's attributes by the Ash'ari apologist Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370), and the final piece is Ibn Kathīr's account of the jurist's funeral. In short, al-Aẓmah has selected and edited texts so as to portray Ibn Taymīyah as heterodox on God's attributes while ostensibly providing important and informative historical sources.

Despite its sophistication and occasional insight, the introduction confirms that one of al-Aẓmah's purposes in presenting this volume is polemical distortion. He does make the valid point that it is important to read what Ibn Taymīyah says in historical context instead of selectively quoting him for tendentious purposes, and he accuses radical Islamists who use the jurist's anti-Mongol *fatwās* to justify armed resistance of historical anachronism. However, al-Aẓmah demonstrates to excess that Ibn Taymīyah was out of step with the Sunni legal and doctrinal consensus of the day. He also makes no attempt to help the reader understand that Ibn Taymīyah's view of God's attributes is more sophisticated than Ash'ari polemicists have wished to acknowledge, a point that has been made by Henri Laoust and that an extended reading of Ibn Taymīyah's texts bears out.

Al-Aẓmah closes his introduction by explaining that research on Ibn Taymīyah is still in its infancy. True as that may be, al-Aẓmah has taken little effort to avail himself of what research there is, and this and the book's polemical agenda render it misleading and nearly useless for those interested in Mamluk studies or the



history of medieval Islamic thought. This anthology is regrettably little more than testimony to modern intra-confessional controversy, and the excerpted passages are better read in context in the original printed editions.

SULAYMĀN AL-MADANĪ, *Timūrlank fī Dimashq* (Damascus and Beirut: Al-Manārah, 2000). Pp. 192.

REVIEWED BY ZAYDE G. ANTRIM, Harvard University

It is surprising that Tamerlane's invasion of Syria at the turn of the ninth/fifteenth century and its devastating social, cultural, economic, and political repercussions have received so little attention from historians of the Mamluk period or of Bilād al-Shām more generally. Indeed, I have not found a single monograph-length study in a European language dealing with the topic of Tamerlane's campaign in Mamluk Syria. Although in the broad context of Timurid history the Syrian invasion may be interpreted as a strategic side-note, an unresolved interlude, or a denouement, it undoubtedly plays a key role in the context of the history of Syria under Mamluk rule. A lone published monograph in Arabic, Akram Ḥasan al-'Ulabī's *Taymūrlank wa-Ḥikāyatuhu ma'a Dimashq* (Damascus and Beirut, 1987), has filled this historiographical gap in the Arabic-speaking world until quite recently. A thorough survey of the contemporary Arabic source material, including a helpful annotated bibliography, al-'Ulabī's book offers, if not original analytical insight, then at least a solidly documented narrative account of the protagonists and major events that dominate this historical episode. The publication of Sulaymān al-Madanī's *Timūrlank fī Dimashq* raises hopes that a new contribution to this neglected area of study might update, complement, or expand upon al-'Ulabī's synthetic work. Unfortunately, it falls short of these expectations.

The greatest weakness of al-Madanī's work is its sloppy scholarly apparatus. Initially, a glance at the bibliography left me concerned. A brief list of ten works consisting of no more than author and title, this "bibliography" does not even cover all the major Arabic chronicles describing the historical events, much less include Persian chronicles or significant secondary works on the Mongols, Tamerlane, or Mamluk Syria published in the last few decades. The only secondary work listed is al-Sayyid al-Bāz al-'Arīnī's 1967 monograph on the Mongols, and the only work originally published in a language other than Arabic that appears in the bibliography is Walter Fischel's *Ibn Khaldūn and Tamerlane* (1952). Although al-Madanī includes accurate, albeit abbreviated, entries for the important chronicles



by al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and Ibn Iyās, he erroneously records the title of Ibn al-Athīr's earlier chronicle as *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* and identifies the author of '*Ajā'ib al-Maqrūr fī Nawā'ib Ibn Tīmūr*' by the obscure sobriquet Ibn Dimashqī, rather than by the well-known appellation Ibn 'Arabshāh (and his inconsistent use of both names throughout the rest of the text contributes to this point of confusion). The other three works al-Madanī chooses to list are Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī's *Khīṭaṭ al-Shām*, to which I found only one reference in the book as a whole, Ibn Ṭūlūn's *Mufākahat al-Khillān*, to which I found no reference at all, and the mysterious *Al-Mawsū'ah al-'Askariyah*, which I could neither identify nor find mentioned elsewhere in the book.

As I began to read the text of *Tīmūrlank fī Dimashq*, however, it quickly became clear that al-Madanī employs many sources not listed in the bibliography, including those by some of the more conspicuously absent chroniclers, such as Ibn Qādī Shuhbah and others. Although this is good news on one level, al-Madanī's idiosyncratic annotation style makes it frustratingly difficult to establish which source corresponds to which passage, where a quotation begins and ends, whether a marked passage represents a direct quotation or a paraphrase, to which edition the volume and page numbers in the notes refer, and, in the case of obscure secondary sources, what work is being referenced in the first place. For instance, he relies heavily on a source listed in the footnotes simply as "Shihāb," sometimes followed by a number. Only by referring back to al-'Ulabī's annotated bibliography did I discover that al-Madanī is most likely citing an (apparently) unpublished thesis entitled *Tīmūrlank* submitted by Maḥzar Shihāb for a doctorate from the Université Libanaise in 1981. Finally, *Tīmūrlank fī Dimashq* is peppered with passages clearly quoted or paraphrased without citation as well as passages introduced by a phrase within the body of the text, such as "according to al-Maqrīzī," without further annotation.

The content of the book does not manage to redeem the weaknesses in its form. The first half of the work is characterized by a disjointed sequence of synthetic overviews of the life of Ghengis Khān, the Mongol expansion, the Crusades, and the rise of Tamerlane. After a completely unannotated ten-page chapter on Tamerlane's early career and before a long discursion on Ayyubid history, al-Madanī inserts a brief chapter entitled "Tamerlane's Warning to the Sultan of the Mamluks" (pp. 37–40). This chapter consists almost entirely of a reproduction of the text of a communication between Tamerlane and "the Sultan of the Mamluks" without further identification, interpretation, or analysis. Although the full text of this missive may be found in al-Maqrīzī's *Kitāb al-Sulūk* and Ibn Taghrībirdī's *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, as well as in several of the other major chronicles, the only annotation al-Madanī provides for the extended quotation is the location of verses from the Quran appearing therein. Furthermore, he indicates



that the "Sultan of the Mamluks" received this correspondence after Tamerlane's ravaging of Aleppo, which occurred during the reign of Sultan Faraj in 803/1400, despite the fact that it was Sultan Barqūq who received the message in 796/1394, years before Tamerlane invaded northern Syria. Al-Madanī returns to this letter in the proper historical context in a short statement fifty pages later (p. 89), without reference to or explanation of its earlier misleading, if not completely mistaken, presentation.

The rest of the book proceeds more or less chronologically after this interruption, starting with an indictment of Ayyubid disunity, dissolution, and disregard for the Arab subject population. Next to be condemned are the barbarous and foreign military slaves whose coup in Cairo in 648/1250 led to the formation of the Mamluk Sultanate. Mongol and Crusader villains also play parts in this sweeping historical narrative of the victimization of the Arab inhabitants of Bilād al-Shām at the hands of tyrants and armies leading up to their climactic manipulation, betrayal, and near annihilation at the hands of Tamerlane and his minions. The final half of the book, dedicated to a detailed account of Tamerlane's campaign in Syria, unfolds as a string of excerpts from the major contemporary chronicles without rigorous documentation or original analysis. The extent to which al-Madanī engages in source criticism may be illustrated by the handful of statements contrasting subject matter covered by Tamerlane's Persian court biographer, Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī al-Yazdī, with that covered in the Arabic histories of Ibn 'Arabshāh, al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, Ibn Iyās, and others. The book ends abruptly with Tamerlane's departure from Bilād al-Shām, Syrian captives in tow, leaving behind a devastated human and infrastructural landscape. Al-Madanī does not provide his readers with a glimpse of the efforts at social, political, and economic reconstruction over the next decade or any insight into the repercussions of Tamerlane's invasion for the last century of Mamluk rule.

One of the more provocative aspects of *Tīmūrlank fī Dimashq* is the short preface in which al-Madanī sets out his ideological agenda (pp. 5–9). He blames Tamerlane's successful victimization of Syria on Arab disunity and Islamic sectarianism within the Arab population. He portrays the Ayyubids, Mamluks, Crusaders, and Mongols as ethnic strangers whose natural inclination was to prioritize their own aggrandizement at the cost of the well-being of the indigenous Arab inhabitants of Bilād al-Shām. If the Arabs could only have united against these foreign rulers and armies, he implies, they would not have suffered as much during this period. Al-Madanī argues that this is a lesson that modern Arabs need to learn as they are still successfully manipulated, betrayed, divided, and conquered by outsiders, most notably Israel, today. Although al-Madanī does not apply this parallelism explicitly in the rest of the book, overtones of the ethnic determinism suggested by this preface resonate throughout. Politics aside, such a presentist



attitude towards historiography combined with an uncritical approach to the sources and a sloppy scholarly apparatus make Sulaymān al-Madanī's *Timŭrlank fī Dimashq* a disappointing contribution to the field of Mamluk studies.

ARNOUD VROLIJK, *Bringing a Laugh to a Scowling Face. A Study and Critical Edition of the "Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-Muḍḥik al-'Abūs" by 'Alī Ibn Sūdūn al-Bašbuḡāwī (Cairo 801/1407–Damascus 868/1464)* (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1998). Pp. xiv, 203 (Engl.) + iv, 178 (Arab.).

'ALĪ IBN SŪDŪN AL-YASHBAGHĀWĪ, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-Muḍḥik al-'Abūs*, edited by Maḥmūd Sālim (Damascus: Dār Sa'd al-Dīn, 1421/2001). Pp. 352.

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The edition of Ibn Sūdūn's *Nuzhah* will change our understanding of Mamluk literature more deeply than would the edition of many other literary texts of this period. This work provides insight into a type of literature that was until now only peripherally known, but must have been rather omnipresent in the salons, gatherings, and streets of Mamluk and Ottoman Egypt and Syria. Besides representing a poorly-known current of Arabic literature, Ibn Sūdūn's poetry and prose display a very distinct personal character and prove again that in the Mamluk empire men of letters produced a lot of original and innovative works.

Due to its relevance to many fields, Ibn Sūdūn's work has already attracted the interest of Arabists more than once,¹ though they had to rely on manuscripts or a Cairo lithograph from 1280/1863. Now within just three years, two editions of Ibn Sūdūn's *Nuzhah* have appeared. The Beirut edition is a serious attempt by an obviously able and diligent editor. But, unfortunately, he neither knew of Vrolijk's enterprise, nor did he use any manuscript that was not available in Syrian libraries, limiting himself to three manuscripts in Damascus and the lithograph. Whereas three manuscripts may be a reasonable basis for some other texts, this is not the case with Ibn Sūdūn's *Nuzhah*, which was obviously an extremely popular text right up to the eighteenth century. Vrolijk has traced 38 manuscripts, 33 of which he was able to study either on the spot or in a microfilm copy. The most important

¹Vrolijk's edition provides a good bibliography. Not included is van Gelder's chapter on Ibn Sūdūn and food, cf. Geert Jan van Gelder, *Of Dishes and Discourse: Classical Arabic Literary Representations of Food* (Richmond, 2000), 90–96. A detailed review of Vrolijk's edition by Everett K. Rowson was published in *Edebiyât* 12 (2001): 128–38.



result was that he detected two autograph copies written by Ibn Sūdūn himself, which he made, of course, the basis of his edition. In addition he used two other manuscripts close to the autograph tradition to help in cases in which the autographs proved defective. Since many of Ibn Sūdūn's texts are in colloquial Arabic for which no standard orthography existed, the author's own orthography (including his usage of vowel signs) is of primary importance, especially since the text provides interesting material for dialectologists. Therefore, the autograph tradition is even more important in the case of Ibn Sūdūn than in the case of texts in pure classical Arabic. Due to this textual basis of Vrolijk's edition, Maḥmūd Sālim's edition is deprived of much practical significance. At least, it presents a textual tradition slightly different from the autograph tradition which is not completely devoid of interest, and Sālim also adds several notes which may help in understanding Ibn Sūdūn's often rather difficult text. Its main value, however, lies in the fact that a text like the *Nuzhah* has been published in the Arab world at all. For too long modern Arab intellectuals have been rather embarrassed by the existence of a humorous literary tradition instead of appreciating it. Now Maḥmūd Sālim's edition will certainly help make Ibn Sūdūn's texts more widely known in the Arab world. It is predictable that Vrolijk's edition will not fulfill this task, because it will probably not appear in bookshops in Arab countries, and because Vrolijk uses Latin abbreviations in his apparatus which might deter Arabic readers. I can see no reason for sticking to this antiquated tradition and would favor a purely Arabic apparatus. In any case, Vrolijk's diligent and impeccable edition remains the authoritative one. His edition is also accompanied by a thorough, profound, and well-written study of Ibn Sūdūn, which provides a solid starting point for further studies.

As far as the content of the *Nuzhah* is concerned, I will limit myself here to a few words and refer to Vrolijk's introduction, Rowson's review, and van Gelder's study mentioned in note 1. Ibn Sūdūn's book is divided into two sections, a smaller one on "serious topics" (*jidd*), comprising mainly poems in praise of the prophet and *ghazal*, and a second one, more than three times as long, on "humorous topics" (*hazl*). This second section is subdivided into five subsections, mainly on formal criteria. It contains texts both in the classical language as well as in colloquial. Both speech forms are utilized in *qaṣīd* poetry, in strophic poetry (*muwashshah* and *zajal*), and in rhymed and unrhymed prose (*maqāmāt* and other prose texts). Vrolijk is certainly right to consider some of the prose texts as dramatic sketches (pp. 36–38). Food and hashish are recurrent themes, but a wide range of other topics is also covered and makes Ibn Sūdūn's text an extraordinarily important source for the study of material culture in late Mamluk Egypt. Ibn Sūdūn's usage of the Egyptian dialect (studied by Vrolijk, pp. 137–59) and his interest in foreign languages (some poems contain Turkish and Persian elements)



and strange dialects (a man from Baghdad makes his appearance, who speaks a dialect that can be clearly identified as *qeltu* Arabic of an Anatolian type) are also not devoid of interest. For comparative literature it will be especially interesting to analyze the specific kind of humor displayed by Ibn Sūdūn. Maḥmūd Sālim feels himself reminded of surrealism (p. 5), while I, myself, rather think of the absurd theatre of Ionesco, and Vrolijk draws a parallel to Monty Python (p. 37).

The author of this fascinating text is ‘Alī ibn Sūdūn al-Bashbughāwī (this, not al-Yashbaghāwī as is stated in al-Sakhāwī’s *Ḍaw’*, seems to be the right *nisbah*; it is discussed in Vrolijk, p. 3). He was born in Cairo (810/1407) and died in Damascus (868/1464). It is probable that his father, Sūdūn, was a mamluk of Circassian origin. ‘Alī therefore belonged to the group of the *awlād al-nās* which played an important role in the intellectual life of the Mamluk empire, though few of them completed the requisite scholarly training that would have allowed them to become fully accepted members of the established ulama. The same seems to hold true for Ibn Sūdūn. Vrolijk, who painstakingly traces Ibn Sūdūn’s biography, overestimates Ibn Sūdūn’s scholarly training. The memorizing of a Hanafī textbook and of a bit of hadith,² mathematics, and metrics is not really a “first class education,” and if Vrolijk’s assumption is right that Ibn Sūdūn took part in military campaigns as a member of the *halqah*, one may doubt even more that a “promising career” (p. 9) as a scholar lay ahead of him, which was only thwarted by the economic conditions of the time. Instead, I would suggest that Ibn Sūdūn was one of the hundreds or even thousands of urban people who had acquired some sort of academic training without ever achieving a scholarly proficiency sufficient to enter the ranks of the great ulama.³ If these people did not earn their livings as craftsmen or traders, they could only hope for unprestigious and poorly paid *mansibs* such as the post of muezzin or of imam in one of the smaller madrasahs. And this is exactly the position to which Ibn Sūdūn did rise. That he could ever have aspired to a more brilliant scholarly career remains very doubtful.

Altogether, it seems that Ibn Sūdūn belonged to a layer of Mamluk society which was of enormous importance for its culture. It is the partially educated, urban middle class, consisting of people such as craftsmen, traders, and minor

²The phrase “sami‘a ‘alā al-Wāsiṭī al-musalsal wa-baqīyat masmū‘ih” (al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’* [Cairo, n.d.], 5:229) does not refer to a philological textbook, as Vrolijk assumes (p. 8), but means that al-Wāsiṭī passed on to Ibn Sūdūn the traditions that were transmitted to him in the *musalsal* way as well as his other orally transmitted traditions. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Wāsiṭī (745–836) was “discovered” in the year 826 as a mine for hadith traditions from people long dead, thus providing hadiths with comparatively short *isnāds* (al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 2:106–7).

³Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton, 1992), 193–216. Berkey mentions “minor scholars” explicitly on pp. 198 and 204.



ulama. The last group especially seems to have had a considerable proportion of *awlād al-nās* among its ranks. This group left behind more documents than is generally recognized, and these documents are of particular interest, since they allow us to see more deeply into the experiences, values, and attitudes of the people underneath the “turbaned elite,” though we must always be aware of the fact that even through them we have not arrived at the “ordinary people,” the urban lower classes and the peasants. Quite a lot of poetry from members of this social group has come down to us. Among scattered poems by craftsmen like ‘Ayn Baṣal al-Ḥā’ik and al-Ḥammāmī (who was the manager of a bath), the entire *dīwān* of the architect Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār is preserved in several manuscripts.⁴ As far as I can see, al-Mi‘mār is the figure most closely resembling Ibn Sūdūn, though he lacks the “dramatic” side of Ibn Sūdūn, his love of the absurd, and his keenness for honey, sugar, and *kunāfah*. Instead, he is more satirical, more critical of social conditions, less pious, and more interested in erotica than in bananas. Al-Mi‘mār is far more traditional in form, but less proficient in *fushā*. With Ibn Sūdūn he shares a skill in dialect poetry, an addiction to the topic of hashish (not necessarily to hashish itself, since al-Mi‘mār seems to have preferred wine), and the fact that both look at the world from a middle- or lower-class perspective. A comparison of these authors would be of great interest.

Anthologies are another important source for the middle class, its interests and intellectual horizons. The Mamluk period was, in fact, the golden age of the anthology. More than a hundred of them are preserved in the libraries, but this source for Mamluk culture and society still remains untapped. An anthology such as the *Kanz al-Madfūn*, by a certain Yūnus al-Mālikī, collects material destined for the education, edification, and entertainment of this group of people.⁵ As Vrolijk shows (pp. 49–57), Ibn Sūdūn was also the author of such an anthology (besides the fact that the *Nuzhah* is an anthology itself, comprising a selection of Ibn Sūdūn’s own works), in which—small wonder—Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār figures prominently (p. 52). Further studies are needed to determine to which type of anthology this book belongs. I would like, however, to note that it is absolutely

⁴Thomas Bauer, “Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār: Ein dichtender Handwerker aus Ägyptens Mamlukenzeit,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 152 (2002): 63–93 (cf. p. 67, note 14, on ‘Ayn Baṣal al-Ḥā’ik); idem, “Die Leiden eines ägyptischen Müllers: Die Mühlen-Maqāme des Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār (st. 749/1348),” in A. Blöbaum et al., eds., *Ägypten Münster: Kulturwissenschaftliche Studien zu Ägypten, den Vorderen Orient und verwandten Gebieten (Festschrift Erhart Graefe)* (Wiesbaden, 2003), 1–16. A poem on his bath by al-Ḥammāmī and a *zajal* on the Nile festival by al-Mi‘mār will be presented by Otfried Weintritt and myself in the Festschrift Heinz Grotzfeld (to appear 2003).

⁵Thomas Bauer, “Literarische Anthologien der Mamlukenzeit,” in S. Conermann and A. Pistor-Hatam, eds., *Die Mamluken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur im Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942–1999)* (Hamburg, 2002). The *Kanz* was composed probably around 770–90.



unremarkable that, as Vrolijk states (p. 52), “classical” authors are not represented in it. In fact, the vast majority of Mamluk anthologies focus on material from Ayyubid and Mamluk times. The reason for this is not that they reflect a “secondary tradition” (p. 54). Ibn Nubātah, the author most often quoted in Ibn Sūdūn’s anthology, must have been a “classical” author already for Ibn Sūdūn, and he remained a “classical” author until the end of pre-modern Arabic literature in the middle of the nineteenth century. Instead, literary anthologies in the Mamluk period are less monuments that preserve the heritage of the past than the reflection of an intense and vivid literary culture. In the Mamluk period, literature was not the domain of a small section of society, but an omnipresent means of communication. Poetry was an everyday commodity for the ulama as well as for the common people (perhaps with the sole exception of the Mamluks themselves). This fostered a great need for poetry that was up to date and *en vogue* and could be imitated or at least quoted whenever necessary. This need was met by the many anthologies of this period. Even the great ulama-poets like Ibn Nubātah and al-Şafadī published their work rather in the form of anthologies than in the form of a *dīwān*. Therefore it is not surprising that so many anthologies of this period focus on material that was new and directed at contemporary taste rather than regurgitating a sanctified tradition.⁶

A second characteristic of Mamluk literature is of importance in this context. In the Mamluk era there existed a broad layer of people who were neither fully-fledged ulama nor illiterate yokels but something in between. In other words, social layers were not neatly separated, but there was a continuum ranging between the totally uneducated (who nevertheless may have been acquainted with rather sophisticated oral folk poetry) on the one end and the Şafadīs and Ibn Ḥajars on the other end. This in turn led to the fact that what we call “popular literature” and “high literature” ceased to be two completely different phenomena separated by a broad gap. Instead, there was again a continuum stretching between the *zajals* sung by the peasants, which never transcended their purely oral existence, and the sophisticated odes by poets like Ibn Nubātah with their many intertextual references to the poetic tradition of past centuries. Ibn Nubātah was popular, as Ibn Sūdūn’s anthology and the *Kanz al-Madfūn* show, also among the urban middle classes, and vernacular poetry by al-Mi‘mār (and certainly also that by Ibn Sūdūn) was highly esteemed among the great ulama. They only seemingly were embarrassed by its ungrammatical features and considered its contents in conflict with their scholarly dignity—but they liked it and read it.⁷ Ibn Sūdūn’s work must be seen in this context. It is not popular literature in the sense that it is the pure voice of the

⁶Anthologies of this kind existed nevertheless. I mention only Ibn Nubātah’s *Maṭlā’ al-Fawā’id* and Ibn Ḥijjah’s *Thamarāt al-Awrāq*, cf. *ibid*.

⁷Bauer, “Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār,” 69–72.



common people, nor is it "high" literature. Instead, it reflects the literary taste of the urban (especially Cairene), semi-educated middle classes among which Ibn Sūdūn might have found his main public. There is little doubt, however, that his poems and *maqāmāhs* were esteemed by the high-brow ulama as well as by members of the lower classes. This explains the fact that at least 38 manuscripts of the *Nuzhah* have survived until the present day.

Regardless of the work that has been done in the fields of history and economics, I suggest that the study of literature, especially of texts produced by and/or addressed to members of its middle classes, will help considerably in enhancing our knowledge of the Mamluk period. The edition of Ibn Sūdūn's *Nuzhah* is a great step in this direction. And, by the way, did I already mention that Ibn Sūdūn's book provides for extremely entertaining and amusing reading?

