

## Book Reviews

Katia Cytryn-Silverman, *The Road Inns (Khāns) in Bilād al-Shām*. British Archaeological Reports, International Series, 2130 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2010). Pp. vi, 290.

Reviewed by Olivia Remie Constable, University of Notre Dame

This new study of rural *khāns* in Mamluk Syria provides a very useful compilation of material on these road inns. The author brings new data to our knowledge of the buildings' patronage, architecture, and historical details, although the book does not add significantly to our overall understanding of these institutions. The most important new contributions made by Katia Cytryn-Silverman are laid out in Chapter 5 (pp. 83–159), a "Gazetteer" surveying twenty-three rural *khāns* and presenting data collected by the author during five years of field research, followed by one hundred pages of plates and figures (pp. 179–280) containing maps, plans, and photographs of these buildings, both in black and white and in color.

The volume is laid out in five chapters, starting with a short introduction (Chapter 1) and ending with the Gazetteer (Chapter 5), followed by a brief conclusion, a bibliography, and the extensive collection of images. The emphasis throughout is on Mamluk buildings, although the author includes a considerable amount of comparative evidence of Ayyubid, Saljuq, Ottoman, and Iranian *khāns* and other similar courtyard buildings and hostelryes.

In Chapter 2, Cytryn-Silverman tackles the vexing question of terminology; she seeks to pin down the exact meaning of *khān*, and describes the chapter's aim as "to avoid taking misinterpreted structures into consideration by establishing clear parameters before commencing the proper sorting" (p. 2). The chapter is organized into sections on epigraphical evidence, from inscriptions on the buildings themselves, evidence from other written sources (both Islamic and European), and a survey of modern scholarship on the question of terminology. In general, this provides good coverage of the available evidence, although it does have some flaws. For instance, the author believes that Western sources are especially useful for terminology because their transcriptions can show "contemporary popular use." This was indeed sometimes the case, but she goes on to assert that these outsiders were "not biased by traditional uses of terminology" because "they were usually learning the terms for the first time" (p. 36). This seems unlikely. Not only were words like *fondaco* well known in Mediterranean Europe by the later Middle Ages, but most Western travelers came to Palestine and Syria by way of



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Egypt, where they would have encountered all sorts of local hostelries and related institutions. Following her line of reasoning about local usage, Cytryn-Silverman cites Anselme Adorno's visit in the early 1470s to a recently-built *funduq* on the road to Damascus, and makes the point that "his spelling of the term according to Arabic phonetics (*très beau fondouk*), not in the Italianized manner *fondaco*, no doubt reflects what he heard" the building called (p. 38). But the French that she cites is the modern translation by Jacques Heers, while Adorno's original Latin (*pulcherrimo fundico*) does reflect the Italianized term.<sup>1</sup> In her survey of the modern scholarship on terminology, the author considers my 2001 article on Crusader *fondacos*. However, my 2003 book (listed in the bibliography) would have been much more helpful, since it provides a considerably more detailed discussion of the topic.

Returning to the main point of Chapter 2, while the "proper sorting" of buildings and their terminology is a worthy objective, there is always a danger that such clarity of purpose will impose organization on a disorganized and inconsistent reality. The author dismisses as "simplistic and even misleading" R. Hillenbrand's warning that "it is worth emphasizing once more that the use of these various terms may imply no more than differences in regional vocabulary rather than connoting distinctive functions or types" (p. 5). My own research tends to support Hillenbrand's point that terminology can be flexible and contextual. Although Cytryn-Silverman is quite correct that *khān* was the dominant term used for the rural inns that she is studying during the Mamluk period, the word also appears in other settings—she admits that "the parallel use of the term *khān* for urban inns is...confusing" (p. 162)—and at times the term *khān* could be interchangeable with other words (*funduq*, *wakālah*, *qal'ah*, etc.). Sometimes, seeking regularized usage and meaning may itself be simplistic and misleading.

Chapter 3, on the patronage of Mamluk rural inns, looks at the patterns and chronology of *khān* foundations. At least twenty-seven such buildings were founded in greater Syria during the period between 1291 and 1477, by at least eighteen Mamluk patrons. Ten of these *khāns* were founded during the reign of Sultan Qalāwūn, and Cytryn-Silverman agrees with J. Sauvaget that these especially catered to the *barīd* service. Through an analysis of other foundations by the same patrons, the author finds a variety of motivations for the foundation of rural *khāns*, including piety, charity, wealth management, personal prestige, and financial gain. These motives for patronage are not surprising, but it is useful to have their foundations contextualized within the broader nexus of political, economic, and social events in Mamluk Syria.

<sup>1</sup> *Itinéraire d'Anselme Adorno en Terre sainte: 1470-1471*, ed. and trans. Jacques Heers (Paris, 1978), 322–23.



Chapter 4 is devoted to a consideration of architecture. *Khāns* built in the Mamluk period, together with counterparts built under the Ayyubids and Saljuqs, all shared a common courtyard plan, with access through a single entrance. Beyond this, Cytryn-Silverman identifies and describes a number of architectural features that particularly defined Mamluk road inns in Syria. Only twenty-three of these buildings still offer enough remaining material for an architectural analysis, but the author discusses layout, spatial organization, and evidence of fortification. Beyond the basic plan, we learn details about water supply, masonry, and the decoration of façades and other features. The chapter concludes with a summary of the architectural data, presented in table form, that allows comparison of Mamluk *khāns* with their Ayyubid predecessors (pp. 79–81). The next chapter, the Gazetteer, contains detailed information on each of the twenty-three Mamluk inns noted in Chapter 4.

The final third of the book, devoted to plates and figures, is impressive and interesting. These images provide visual evidence for many of the points that the author discusses in the text, especially architectural details. However, the images are of varying quality, reflecting their diverse origins. Many are copied from nineteenth- and twentieth-century publications and photographs, some are aerial images, while others are (presumably) the author's own photographs. Most of the pictures illustrate points made in the Gazetteer, so a considerable amount of flipping back and forth is necessary in order to link arguments and illustrations. Many of the images are quite small and crowded, sometimes laid out with more than ten to a page. The author includes numerous floor-plans of *khāns* and other similar courtyard buildings, collected together over several pages (pp. 182–85, 194–95), and it is sometimes hard to know what to make of these. The compilation of plans certainly confirms general similarities of form, but the different origins of the images mean that they differ in presentation and style. For instance, on the page, most of the *khāns* look to be much the same size, but this is misleading since many floor-plans have no scale indicated, while those that do have a scale indicator often use different formats depending on their source. This could have been corrected and regularized by the addition of a standard scale indicator (measurements were provided in the table at the end of Chapter 4).



Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-Ḥāl fī Waṣf al-Khāl*. Edited by Sihām Ṣallān (Damascus: Dār Saʿd al-Dīn, 1420/1999). Pp. 153, incl. 2 plates.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-Ḥāl fī Waṣf al-Khāl*. Edited by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-ʿUqayl (Beirut: al-Dār al-ʿArabīyah lil-Mawsūʿāt, 1426/2005). Pp. 367, incl. 12 plates.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-Ḥāl fī Waṣf al-Khāl*. Edited by Muḥammad ʿĀyish (Damascus: Dār al-Awāʾil, 2006). Pp. 173, incl. 5 plates.

Also: Copenhagen, Royal Library (Kongelige Bibliotek) MS Cod. Arab. 294, 58 ff., n.d., purchased in Cairo by Frederik Christian von Haven in 1763, available online at <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/254/>.

Reviewed by Adam Tali b, University of Oxford

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī (b. 696/1297 in Ṣafad, d. 764/1363 in Damascus) was the most important litterateur of the fourteenth century. He left a voluminous oeuvre, much of which remains in manuscript, so the publication of any of his works is cause for celebration.<sup>2</sup> The book under review may appear a tad peculiar at first glance. It is, after all, a narrow nevrological study-cum-poetry anthology; but it is a most intriguing collection of fourteenth-century scientific, cultural, and poetic material on a common epidermal feature, which, when fortuitously placed, ineffably enhances beauty.<sup>3</sup> Another famous, and prolific, Mamluk author, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Nawājī, produced his own nevi poetry anthology entitled *Ṣahāʾif al-Ḥasanāt fī Waṣf al-Khāl* (available in a critical edition edited by Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī) in response to al-Ṣafadī's work. And yet despite al-Ṣafadī's importance as an *adīb* and the need to redress the legacy of neglect that continues to hinder the study of Mamluk literature, the publication of one of his works by three different editors in editions of varying quality within a decade strikes me as a bit excessive.

In 1999, Sihām Ṣallān published the first edition of *Kashf al-Ḥāl*. This edition, apparently the result of her master's thesis work, is clearly deficient and uncritical, but, as space is limited, I will direct the curious to the extensive criticism that

<sup>2</sup>For details of al-Ṣafadī's life and oeuvre, see the essay by Everett Rowson in the new collection *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography II: 1350–1850*, ed. Joseph E. Lowry and Devin Stewart (Wiesbaden, 2009), 341–57.

<sup>3</sup>I should make a disclosure of self-interest here: I am the possessor of a fairly prominent birthmark and the reader should be aware of a bias on my part. Yet I would just say that, although my birthmark does not deface my face, I am still waiting for it to make me very beautiful.



this edition has already attracted.<sup>4</sup> Proceeding chronologically, the next edition, published in 2005, is—in spite of its atrocious cover art—very good.<sup>5</sup> The editor, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-‘Uqayl, based his edition on Copenhagen MS 293 (copied in 996/1587), in consultation with three other versions of the text, which he calls abbreviations.<sup>6</sup> In early 2011, an older manuscript (dated to 847/1444) turned up in a Christie’s auction, but it seems not to have been examined by scholars and its provenance is not explained.<sup>7</sup> Al-‘Uqayl’s edition includes a comprehensive critical apparatus including footnotes containing textual variants, cross-references, glosses, and biographies, as well as six indexes of Qurānic citations, *aḥādīth* and *āthār*, proper nouns, locations, and books. Unfortunately, the editor’s outdated and uncritical appraisal of Mamluk poetry and his positivistic attitude toward modern pseudoscience and medieval epistemology is a blemish on the façade of his fine edition.

The editor’s antiquated attitude toward the aesthetics of Mamluk poetry rehashes many of the shop-worn criticisms of Mamluk literary arts that still seem to circulate: “But al-Ṣafadī was a child of the Mamluk period and one of those poets that went around in a vicious cycle[:] emulating one another, recycling tropes, talking to themselves, and stealing from those who came before them. Like the other poets of his day, al-Ṣafadī was mad about excess in rhetorical arts like parallelism, emulation, double entendre, etc., which he overdid with the worst kind of hyperbole” (pp. 26–27). I understand that this conventional wisdom regarding the aesthetic value of Mamluk literature is a regrettably widespread tenet of faith among many scholars as well as laypeople, so one cannot indulge in too much

<sup>4</sup>See Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Junādī’s review in *Majallat ‘Ālam al-Kutub* 23, No. 5–6 (Rabī‘ I–Jumādā II 1423/May–August 2002): 539–46; as well as in ‘Uqayl’s edition of the text in the section “Al-Nashrah al-sābiqah min al-kitāb,” 96–100.

<sup>5</sup>The cover depicts an attractive young woman, complete with a *khāl* near her lips, turned a quarter toward the camera, but she is rendered horrifically ugly by the grossly inartistic embossing of her lips and pupils, which makes her look like a bogeyman.

<sup>6</sup>“*Wa-thalāth makhṭūṭāt mukhtaṣarah min al-kitāb*” (62): these are Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 221 *adab Taymūr*; Damascus, Zāhirīyah Library [presumably now in the Asad National Library] MS 6927 (used by Ṣallān for her edition); and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS 3973. For more information on the Copenhagen MS Cod. Arab. 293, see *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts: Codices Arabici and Codices Arabici Additamenta, Book Three*, ed. Irmeli Perho (Copenhagen, 2007), 1137–41.

<sup>7</sup>I would like to thank Kristina Richardson of Queens College, The City University of New York, who alerted me to the presence of this manuscript. I tried to contact Christie’s about the MS, but have yet to hear back from them. The MS is included in a codex along with two other works: Ṣamaw’al al-Maghribī’s “Nuzhat al-Aḥbāb wa-Mu’āsharat al-Aṣḥāb” and Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasan al-Shāfi’ī’s “Dalīl al-Mujāz bi-Arḍ al-Ḥijāz,” copied on 15 Rajab 843 22 December 1439 and 12 Rabī‘ I 859/2 March 1455 in Aleppo. See the Christie’s lot description (lot 99/sale 7959: “Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds,” held in London on 7 April 2011), which—bafflingly, to me—is silent about the codex’s provenance.



Mamluk-style *mubālaghah* in condemning it, but I do consider it even more regrettable when it is espoused by a scholar who has made a welcome contribution to the study of Mamluk literature.<sup>8</sup>

Having nitpicked the editor's introduction slightly, I must say that the edition he has produced is very good. The text itself is composed of two introductions—the first a lexical investigation of the word *khāl*, said to be one of the most polyvalent words in Arabic, the second a medical and physiognomic treatise on birthmarks, including answers to such questions as “Where's the best place to have a birthmark?” and “What does the color of a birthmark signify?” as well as a section on famous people who had birthmarks—and a large anthology of short poems (86% of the poems are two-liners and 97% of them are of four lines or less) on the theme at hand, organized alphabetically by rhyme-letter. In all, the book contains, according to al-ʿUqayl, “some 790 verses,” ninety-five percent of which appear in the anthology section (*al-natījah*), with the other five percent sprinkled through the two introductions (*muqaddimah*) (pp. 68–69) (By my count, there are 800 verses in the *natījah* alone.) The editor also mentions the practice of copyists or owners adding verses on the topic to their copies; this in his eyes is rather inconvenient, though it must have been ubiquitous and even one of the great appeals of anthological texts.<sup>9</sup>

The most recent edition of this text was prepared by Muḥammad ʿĀyish and published in Damascus in 2006.<sup>10</sup> According to the editor, he took the same Copenhagen MS 293 as his primary witness and also compared it with the Damascus manuscript mentioned above. This edition is, therefore, in terms of manuscripts consulted alone less critical than the one prepared by al-ʿUqayl. Yet having fewer witnesses is not the only thing wrong with this edition. There are a few peculiarities in the edition that defy explanation as well as a healthy proportion of simple errors. I was able to compare a few pages of these two editions to each other as well as to Copenhagen MS 294, which neither editor used and which is

<sup>8</sup>Al-ʿUqayl writes that he is preparing an edition of the same author's *Ladhdhat al-Samʿ fī Waṣf al-Damʿ* (p. 44).

<sup>9</sup>Al-ʿUqayl criticizes the copyist of the Damascus Zāhirīyah MS for incorporating the verses of ʿĀʾishah al-Bāʿūniyah (d. 922/1516), which were written in the margin of the Copenhagen MS 293; this poet lived a couple of centuries after al-Ṣafadī and therefore her verses could not have been included in the original work (pp. 66–67). It is a testament to the editor's respect for the text and the practice of critical editing that he includes these verses in a footnote (p. 259 n.), noting their spurious inclusion in the Zāhirīyah MS without suppressing them.

<sup>10</sup>ʿĀyish has also edited the same author's *Ikhtirāʿ al-Khurrāʿ fī Mukhālafat al-Naql wa-al-Ṭibāʿ* (Amman, 2004), *Tashnīf al-Samʿ fī Insikāb al-Damʿ* (Damascus, 2004), *Fadd al-Khitām fī al-Tawrīyah wa-al-Istikhdam* (Amman, 2005), *Rashf al-Zulāl fī Waṣf al-Hilāl* (Damascus, 2009), and [pseudo-] Ṣafadī, *Lawʿat al-Shākī fī Damʿat al-Bākī* (Damascus, 2003).



available online at the website given above.<sup>11</sup> A comparison of ‘Āyish’s text with even the few facsimile manuscript pages reproduced in both editions points to unnecessary errors.<sup>12</sup> Other deviations from al-‘Uqayl’s version could either be the result of an unacknowledged preference for the Damascus manuscript variant over the Copenhagen manuscript or occasional paleographical or grammatical difficulties.<sup>13</sup> The unexplained deviations from the text of al-‘Uqayl’s edition as well as the other Copenhagen manuscript raise questions as to the editor’s working method, but belaboring this point is unnecessary.

In sum, the edition of *Kashf al-Ḥāl* prepared by al-‘Uqayl is the most dependable, and while the editor’s narrow-minded literary estimations are unfortunate, they do not detract from the quality of his edition. He deserves many thanks for making available a very interesting text and adding to the still deficient, though growing, library of al-Ṣafadī’s works available to researchers and readers. It is all the more fortuitous that the Danish Royal Library has provided a digital copy of MS 294, which was not consulted by any of the editors, on its website for researchers to use. With the combination of al-‘Uqayl’s edition and Copenhagen MS 294, al-Ṣafadī’s text can be studied by researchers interested in social history and popular culture, medieval Islamic medicine, belles-lettres and poetry, as well as readers who are interested in exploring the breadth and depth of this great scholar’s literary output.

<sup>11</sup>On this MS, see *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts: Codices Arabici and Codices Arabici Additamentata*, Book Three, 1142–43. The MS is undated, but its title page reads: “*bi-rasm al-khizānah al-‘ālīyah al-‘alā’īyah Ibn Faḍl Allāh ṣāhib dawāwīn al-inshā’*,” and it is this vague reference that may link the MS with the Faḍl Allāh family of chancery secretaries who were so prominent in the Mamluk period. I admit that this identification is a guess.

<sup>12</sup>It is clear from the plates in al-‘Uqayl’s edition, for example, that the Copenhagen MS ‘Āyish claims to have used as his main witness (MS 293) has “*nashhadu anna Muḥammadan ...*” and this is also found in al-‘Uqayl’s edition as well as the digital copy of Copenhagen MS 294 available online (cf. al-‘Uqayl’s ed., 117). The Damascus MS has “*ashhadu*,” which may explain why ‘Āyish chose that reading, but it is unlike him not to have indicated that change in the footnotes, especially as he generously records the Damascus MS’s variant readings throughout his edition (‘Āyish’s ed., 33; cf. plate in al-‘Uqayl’s ed., 108). In my brief survey, I encountered only one error that al-‘Uqayl made and ‘Āyish did not. The first poem in the *natijah* section should begin “*wa-la-kam munītu ...*” not, as al-‘Uqayl has it: “*wa-la-kam munnītu ...*” as it does not fit the meter.

<sup>13</sup>E.g., ‘*adūwan la-hum* for ‘*adūw al-hamm*; *ka-anna al-Buḥturī* for *kāna al-Buḥturī*; *fa-mā aḥadan* for *fa-mā aḥadun*; ‘*amma bi-al-nās al-hudá* for ‘*amma al-nās bi-al-hudá*.



Mahdī As‘ad ‘Ar ‘Ar, *Dīwān Fayḍ al-Faḍl wa-Jam‘ al-Shaml* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 2010). Pp. 512.

Reviewed by Th. Emil Homer in, University of Rochester

‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūniyah (d. 922/1517) was one of the most prolific woman authors in Islamic history. She composed panegyrics and *mawliids* in Arabic to the prophet Muhammad and wrote works on Islamic mysticism, including several volumes of mystical and devotional poetry. Surviving among the latter is her collection *Dīwān Fayḍ al-Faḍl wa-Jam‘ al-Shaml* (“The Emanation of grace and the gathering union”), which contains over 370 poems. In this verse, ‘Ā’ishah explored the full range of Arabic rhymes, meters, and poetic forms, including the quatrain (*dū bayt*), the ode (*qaṣīdah*), the love poem (*ghazal*), poems in praise of Muḥammad (*al-madiḥ al-nabawī*), as well as verse in praise of mystical wine (*khamrīyah*). ‘Ā’ishah also composed in newer poetic forms including the quintain (*takhmīs*), the strophic forms of *musammaṭ*, *zajal*, and *muwashshah*, and the *kān wa-kān*, a form using multiple internal rhymes and popular for sermons. This important collection has been recently edited and published for the first time by Mahdī As‘ad ‘Arār.

Following his preface and acknowledgments, ‘Arār provides a short introduction (pp. 11–25) on ‘Ā’ishah’s life growing up as the daughter of the chief Shafi‘i judge of Damascus, where she died in 922/1517. He recounts the story of ‘Ā’ishah’s trip with her son to Cairo during which highway men robbed their caravan and stole a dozen books that she had composed earlier in Damascus. Arriving destitute in Cairo, ‘Ā’ishah was befriended by Ibn Ajā, the personal secretary to the sultan al-Ghawrī, who looked after her and her son. ‘Arār also mentions that ‘Ā’ishah led a religious life and was thoroughly familiar with Islamic mysticism thanks to her spiritual masters Ismā‘īl al-Hawwārī and Yaḥyá al-‘Urmawī. However, ‘Arār gives no information about either teacher, nor does he even mention that ‘Ā’ishah and her extended family were members of the Qadariyah Sufi order. Even more surprising, ‘Arār says nothing about ‘Ā’ishah’s husband, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Naqīb al-Ashrāf (d. 909/1503), with whom she also had a daughter, Barakah (b. 899/1491). ‘Arār does mention the friendly exchange of poems between ‘Ā’ishah and the litterateur ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Abbāsī (866–963/1463–1556) in Cairo, and then provides a brief inventory of ‘Ā’ishah’s writings, with a few comments on her by later historians. ‘Arār’s brief biography is adequate, though lacking important details to be found in recent scholarship on ‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūniyah. Though my work in English (including MSR 7:211–34) may not have been readily available to ‘Arār, I was surprised that he did not mention the useful works by Ḥasan Rabābi‘ah, including his study *‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūniyah: Shā‘irah* (Irbid: Dār al-Hilāl lil-Tarjamah, 1997).



In his next section (pp. 26–55), ‘Arār makes a number of observations on the collection *Fayḍ al-Faḍl wa-Ḵam‘ al-Shaml*, which he values for its literary quality and fine mystical poems. ‘Arār notes that this collection contains a number of poems that had appeared in earlier works by ‘Ā’ishah, though it is by no means a complete collection of her verse; among the missing poems are her quintain on al-Būṣīrī’s *Burdah* and her most famous poem, the *Faḥ al-Mubīn fī Madḥ al-Amīn* (“The Clear inspiration in praise of the trusted prophet”). Next, ‘Arār reviews some of the poetic forms used by ‘Ā’ishah in her verse and several elements of style, citing brief examples of each, along with some of her major themes, such as love of God and the need to live a pious life. He also touches on ‘Ā’ishah’s poetic influences, which included al-Ḥallāj, al-Būṣīrī, and Ibn al-Fāriḍ, among others. ‘Arār then concludes this section with a review of some key Sufi terms frequently found in ‘Ā’ishah’s verse, such as *baṣṭ* (“exhilaration”), *jadhb* (“spiritual attraction”), *ḥāl* (“mystical state”), etc. ‘Arār provides a brief definition for each term and cites their use in several verses. Here again, he could have profited from Rabābī’ah’s *‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūnīyah*, particularly the latter’s detailed discussion of ‘Ā’ishah’s poetic style and forms.

In the final section of his introduction (pp. 56–66), ‘Arār lists and describes the three manuscripts from Egypt’s Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah that he used for his published edition. He states that his primary manuscript (“A”) was MS 581 Shi‘r Taymūr, dated 1031/1622. His two other manuscripts were (“B”) MS 112 Shi‘r Taymūr and (“J”) MS 431 Shi‘r Taymūr, both also dated 1031/1622, though ‘Arār argues persuasively that this date for “B” and “J” most likely is the date of the original from which they were copied, probably “A.”

For my own work on ‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūnīyah, I have used and made copies of both “A” and “J,” and in addition, I have two other copies of *Fayḍ al-Faḍl*, Cairo MS 4384 (Adab), dated 1341/1922, and Rabat’s Bibliothèque Generale #734. Using these manuscripts, I read through ‘Arār’s edited edition. Unfortunately, I found many errors and discrepancies, too many to be listed in this review. The most common error was that ‘Arār did not note many variant readings among the manuscripts, or note, in some cases, where he appears to be offering his own reading. An example of this problem is the following couplet as found in the printed edition (p. 74):

*tawājadtu ḥattá lāḥa lī fī tawājudī*  
*wujūdun ‘ani-l-aghyāri lil-qalbi ṣārifu*  
*fa-lā wājidun illā li-ḥālī wājidu*  
*fa-lā ‘arīfun illā bi-mā qultu ‘arīfu*

*I was rapt, until in my rapture there appeared*



*an existence for the heart free from others.  
So no one is ravished save he finds my state,  
and there is no gnostic save he knows what I say.*

The issue here is the term *wujūdun* in the nominative case, when all of the manuscripts that I have cite the word in the accusative case: *wujūdan*. This would lead to a different reading and translation, something like:

*I was rapt, until in my rapture he appeared  
with an existence for the heart free from others.  
So no one is ravished save he finds my state,  
and there is no gnostic save he knows what I say.*

Now, it may be that ‘Arār took his reading from MS “B,” which I do not have, but he does not mention any variations whatsoever. In another poem (pp. 105–6), without a note, ‘Arār omits verse 15 as found in “A”:

*wa-la yustama‘ fihī bi-sh-shāfa‘ata shāfi‘in  
siwāka yā khayra-l-khalqi min jinn wa-insin*

*No intercessor’s word will be heard save yours,  
you, the best of creation among humans and jinn.*

While the vast majority of ‘Arār’s omissions are of minor textual variations, some may affect the reading of individual poems in subtle ways, and so serious scholars will still need to consult the manuscripts of the *Fayḍ al-Faḍl* in the course of any research on ‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūniyah that involves this work. Nevertheless, having edited manuscripts myself, I want to be clear that I am not disparaging the good intentions and dedicated efforts of the editor, Mahdī As‘ad ‘Arār. Yet, had another reader given his manuscript close attention, ‘Arār would have been in a position to publish a more rigorous edition. That being said, over the last few years, many publishers have reduced their staff and too frequently rely on authors to serve as their own copy editors. When one must read over a text many times, it is all too easy to read through and miss omissions and mistakes, and I believe this may have happened with ‘Arār’s published edition of the *Fayḍ al-Faḍl*. Still, Mahdī As‘ad ‘Arār has made a useful contribution to Arabic literature in that he has provided wider access to the verse of an important Arab Sufi poet.



Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Pp. xxv + 347.

Reviewed by Mart yn Smit h, Lawrence University

As is evident from the title, the focus of this book is on Egypt during the Ottoman period. Yet the book warrants attention from readers of this journal for its methodology as well as for details that throw light on the Mamluk period. Alan Mikhail is not the first to take up issues concerning water usage or commodities in Egypt during this time, but his approach to these topics through the theoretical lens of environmental history makes this an especially noteworthy work. The field of environmental history emerged in the 1970s and gained momentum through the 1980s and 1990s. Historians writing within this field have enriched our understanding of various regions and periods by emphasizing the dynamic interaction of human beings with the natural world. In their work the natural world is not simply a static backdrop for human events, but a dynamic actor in its own right.

Previous to this book the Middle East had not yet attracted a self-consciously environmental history on this scale. In an overview of the state of environmental history in 2003, J. R. McNeill writes: "...in Arab and Ottoman historiography, almost all researchers remain indifferent to the possibilities of environmental history..."<sup>14</sup> McNeill goes on to point out how the rich Ottoman archives could form the basis for an environmental history of the Middle East. Mikhail cites this passage in its entirety in the introduction to *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt* (p. 16), and it defines his project both in terms of aim and sources. This book fills a methodological gap in historical accounts of Egypt and challenges us to consider similar approaches to other periods of history.

Mikhail makes good use of archival records, which include documents from rural Egyptian courts, imperial orders, and local petitions, to tell a sweeping story of the changing relationship of the Ottoman Empire to the natural world. Broadly this change can be described as a transformation from a dependence on local knowledge and expertise in solving problems related to the natural world to the imposition of top-down projects that seek to control nature. Considering the present environmental challenges of Egypt, what comes first to mind are likely expansive projects such as the Aswan High Dam or recent efforts to engineer residential cities outside the Nile Valley. Mikhail traces this penchant for large-scale projects back to the construction of the Maḥmūdiyyah Canal from 1817 to 1819. As many as 360,000 peasants labored in the construction of this canal, out of which

<sup>14</sup>J. R. McNeill, "Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History," *History and Theory* 42 (December 2003): 30.



an astounding 100,000 died from disease and hardship. This attempt to engineer the landscape would turn out to be typical of the next two centuries of Egyptian history, but Mikhail demonstrates that this centralized approach to nature was not typical of the earlier Ottoman Empire.

The first three chapters of this book lay out in some detail the management of natural resources that prevailed in the first centuries of Ottoman rule. The first, entitled “Watering the Earth,” is the most interesting with respect to implications for study of the Mamluks. In the decades after their conquest of Egypt in 1517 the Ottomans undertook a survey of Egypt’s irrigation system. This survey contains fine-grained details of the irrigation practices in Egypt down to the level of the village. An important issue this survey attempted to define was whether a canal should be classed as *sultānī* or *baladī*. If the former, the maintenance of the canal was a public good undertaken by the state; if the latter, the local group that benefited from the canal was responsible for its maintenance. Any survey of irrigation practices from the early Ottoman period had to reflect practices and assumptions that extended back into the Mamluk period. This dependence on earlier practices in respect to irrigation is evident in the Ottoman law code for Egypt, the Kanun-name, where frequent reference is made to what was done during the reign of the Mamluk sultan Qāyrbāy (p. 12). This Ottoman way of going about the administration of the irrigation system of Egypt signaled a fundamental respect for local precedent, and that precedent was often inherited from the Mamluk period.

The two further chapters on the Ottoman management of the natural world have fewer implications for the study of the Mamluks since they detail the circulation of commodities (grains and wood, primarily) within the larger empire itself. This issue of the circulation of commodities has been a central interest for environmental historians, evident in a classic work of environmental history such as *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (1991) by William Cronon. Mikhail argues that the early Ottoman Empire developed remarkably efficient modes of distribution for these commodities, circulating Egypt’s grain to meet the needs of pilgrims in the Hijaz or residents of Istanbul, and thus achieving “caloric parity across the empire” (p. 123). On the other hand, wood was quite scarce in Egypt but abundant in other parts of the Ottoman empire, so Egyptian grain was partially balanced by import of another commodity. Mikhail describes this circulation as “natural resource management” (p. 123). Although Mikhail early on cautions that his descriptions should not be seen as “romanticizing” elements of this early modern Ottoman system (p. 33), he provides us with a largely positive image of the early Ottoman state managing the natural world in a sustainable manner.

The big story that Mikhail tells in this book is the way this Ottoman system got out of whack in the later period, especially in its waning days under the ad-



ministration of Mehmet Ali. Making Egypt into a modern state in the nineteenth century was a wrenching experience, and that experience has been narrated in other books, such as *All the Pasha's Men* (1997) by Khaled Fahmy. Mikhail's view of the critical events of this era is inflected by environmental history, which he connects to a breakdown in the previous distribution system of commodities. His account of Mehmet Ali's invasion of Syria from 1831 to 1841 allows us to see more clearly his theoretical vantage point. Other historical works (such as that by Fahmy, for example) have pointed out the importance of Syria's wood in the calculus for the invasion. But Mikhail lends this need for wood a deep explanatory power: "Mehmet 'Ali's ten-year incursion into Syria and Anatolia was largely driven by his desire to acquire usable wood supplies for his province" (p. 167). Having already seen how the Ottoman state achieved a studied balance in commodities, we grasp that as Egypt became an independent power it would run against a fundamental imbalance in commodities, and this imbalance would push the state outward. This understanding of the circulation of commodities could be useful in trying to understand the forces that determined Mamluk territorial ambitions as well, and it is certainly to be hoped that this approach will be taken up further in the study of the Mamluks.

My criticism of the book is that while Mikhail has delivered a book that fills an important gap in modern scholarship on Egypt, to a surprising extent he is rediscovering the emphases of Egyptian historians themselves. This goes oddly unacknowledged even as Mikhail cites Egyptian historians in order to make his points. This appears most starkly in Chapter 3, which takes as its subject the circulation of wood. On pages 130 and 131 al-Jabartī is cited no less than nine times in the footnotes. A sample note from these pages reads: "The timber yards of Bu-laq were at the base of al-Khurnub Tenement near a huge market complex built from stone and wood..." Details of Egypt's dependence on and use of wood are often drawn from this Egyptian historian. Something similar happens in the final chapter detailing the construction of the Maḥmūdīyah Canal, where Mikhail sketches the history of the canal and draws extensively from Mamluk historian al-Maqrīzī (pp. 264–65). It is evident that Egyptian historians shared this interest in commodities and the management of water. The central writers of history in the Egyptian tradition have themselves emphasized many of the principal themes of environmental history.

In the work of the Mamluk historian al-Maqrīzī we can find a view of history that has many parallels with the work of environmental historians, though obviously not expressed through modern assumptions. An example can be seen in his economic treatise known as the *Ighāthah*,<sup>15</sup> in which he advances a strident argu-

<sup>15</sup>*Mamluk Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrīzī's Ighāthah*, ed. and trans. Adel Al-louche (Salt Lake City, 1994).



ment against the Mamluk management of the natural world and the currency. In one section al-Maqrīzī recounts historical instances of *ghalāʾ*, or scarcity. Arriving at the Fatimid conquest of Egypt in 358/969, he emphasizes the crisis in commodity prices at that point.<sup>16</sup> He thus encourages the reader to understand a central historical event as a result of a crisis in resources, paralleling an approach to history that we have seen in the book by Mikhail. More broadly, the well-known *Khiṭaṭ* of al-Maqrīzī takes up many of the particular topics that are at the heart of Mikhail's book. In his section on Nilometers al-Maqrīzī describes how levees and canals are maintained by a percentage of the land tax and that the cutting of the levees takes place in accordance with the expertise of locals (1:61). Part of what animated al-Maqrīzī is that this system of precedents was failing, and he wrote in the midst of what he felt to be a crisis. But it is here that we should look for the forebears to an environmental approach to Egyptian history. An unexpected result of *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt* is that it allows us to better perceive the strengths of historians like al-Maqrīzī and al-Jabartī.

Leigh Chipman, *The World of Pharmacy and Pharmacists in Mamlūk Cairo* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010). Pp. viii + 318.

Reviewed by Li Guo, University of Notre Dame

The book under review sets out to analyze a popular medieval Arabic manual for pharmacists and, in light of this key text, to explore various related issues. The manual is the *Minhāj al-Dukkān*, “How to manage a [drug] store [hereafter: Handbook],” attributed to one Abū al-Munā Dāwūd al-Kūhīn al-ʿAṭṭār (fl. 1260), a Jewish druggist living and practicing in late Ayyubid and early Mamluk Cairo. Based on the author's Hebrew University dissertation (2006), this well-written book combines solid, old-fashioned textual research (materials in Arabic, Judeo-Arabic, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew) with sound technical synthesis and delicate historical contextualization. The result is a richly documented and carefully argued essay on the history, theory, and practice, as well as social and cultural impact, of pharmacy and pharmacists in what S. D. Goitein would call a “Mediterranean Society,” where Arab, Jewish, and Christian physicians and pharmacists worked side by side, sharing common resources.

The book is divided into two main parts: Part One (3 chapters) deals with the textual and technical aspects of the Handbook, while Part Two (2 chapters) ad-

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 30.



dresses issues pertaining to the practice of pharmacy and its scientific, social, and legal context. Four appendices provide information about the manuscripts of the Handbook, its recipes, tests as suggested by various sources, and a glossary of terminology.

Chapter 1 lays the groundwork for analysis with a description of the content and structure of the Handbook. Through an outline of its chapters with translated headlines, Chipman confirms the Handbook's affiliation within the *aqrābādhīn* (Greek *graphidion*) tradition, albeit with its own compositional features. This is followed by a comparative analysis of sources: a chain of transmission—from Ibn Jumay<sup>c</sup> (d. 1198), via Ibn Abī al-Bayān (d. 1236), to al-Kūhīn al-ʿAṭṭār—is established through painstaking correlations, taking into consideration other indirectly quoted sources.

Following the above discussion of continuity and discontinuity of the Handbook vis-à-vis the *aqrābādhīn* tradition, Chapter 2 highlights the non-technical elements added to the Handbook. These elements show, as Chipman argues, greater similarities to a medical encyclopedia than to a druggist's recipe collection. This is evidenced in the Introduction and Chapter 23 of the Handbook, which spell out concerns relating to medical ethics, showing an affinity to the Greek tradition as inherited and transmitted by medieval Arab, Persian, and Jewish medical practitioners. The addition of these segments to the Handbook thus demonstrates al-Kūhīn al-ʿAṭṭār's indebtedness to a long chain of "physicians' writings for physicians," as the author compares these segments with the key "classic" texts of the genre. These additions set the Handbook apart from other how-to pharmacy manuals, and delineate an environment in Cairo where medical (and by extension pharmaceutical) moral injunctions evidently gained currency among local practitioners.

For those interested in learning more about the nuts and bolts of pharmaceutical practice at the time as described in the Handbook, Chapter 3 is perhaps the highlight of the book. Instead of a laundry list, the discussion is grouped under various thematic rubrics. Chipman is quick to point out that of the thousands of pharmaceutical items mentioned in the documentary sources such as the Cairo Geniza, only a fraction were in common use. This gap, Chipman argues, stimulated the development of lists of drug substitutes and synonyms, which, alongside the related matter of weights and measures, constitute the focal point of this chapter. Another topic discussed is the identification and treatment of *materia medica*. Other practical aspects scattered throughout the Handbook are summarized in the following segment.

Part Two, "The Pharmacist and Society," consists of two chapters that deal with the scientific context and social impact of the pharmacy and pharmacists on society, respectively. Biographical dictionaries and documents (the Cairo Geniza,



*waqf* collections) are utilized effectively in Chapter 4. A brief summary of the current scholarship on pharmacy and medicine within the context of scientific research in the post-Mongol Islamic Near East leads to a detailed account of the role played by the pharmacist in Mamluk society. It is interesting to learn that the terms commonly used at the time to denote “pharmacist”—*‘aṭṭār*, which also means “perfume seller,” and *‘ashshāb*, “herbalist”—indicate the broadening range of the craft. Chipman points out that the classical term *ṣaydalānī*, “pharmacist” per se, had fallen out of use by that time. Combing through the massive volumes of major Mamluk biographical dictionaries, the life and career of some seventy-five *‘aṭṭārs* (or *‘ashshābs*) are surveyed. The segment on pharmacists in hospitals is extremely informative as well.

In some ways, Chapter 5, “The Pharmacist in the Marketplace,” comes as a pleasant surprise, and for this reviewer, a treat. By utilizing materials usually considered irrelevant to the subject of “history of science,” or “Islamic medicine,” this chapter not only sheds rare light on hitherto seldom explored areas relating to the practice of medicine and pharmacy in the pre-modern Arab world, but also invites us to re-examine the value and use of non-historical sources for historical inquiry. The discussion of the fascinating topic of what we today might call “consumer protection” is based on a careful survey of an array of materials—legal and literary. There are so many things to learn from Chipman’s reading of these unconventional materials. There are, for example, almost no references to pharmacists or drugs *per se* in major Mamluk fatwa collections, while moralist treatises touch upon the matter only briefly, often within the context of correct behavior. It is in the *ḥisbah* manuals that specific guidelines, rules, and appropriate procedures regarding quality control are to be found.

Refreshingly informative is also the segment on the “image” of the pharmacist presented in popular literature, such as *The 1001 Nights* and shadow plays. The remarkable thing about these literary texts, “fiction” by nature, is that in addition to, as one would expect, shedding light on mentality and psyche, and on society’s attitudes and sentiments towards the perfumer-druggist, they also afford many *technical details* in relation to the pharmacy and pharmacist that are not found in “conventional” sources. This is particularly true with regard to the shadow plays. In one shadow play, a group of tricksters parade onto the stage; they represent a variety of “quacks,” among them a *ma‘ājīnī*, “seller of medicinal pastes,” and an *‘ashshāb*, “herbalist.” A translation of their self-portraits, in the form of monologue and songs, is provided. Here, the “fiction” offers some technical details that conventional medical texts fail to provide; and Chipman is to be commended for tackling this extremely challenging material, providing the reader, for the first time, with a full English translation. Speaking of the translation, I have only one note to add. Regarding the lyric sung by the *‘ashshāb*-herbalist, the word



*dashāsh* (“a powder”) in the Kahle edition would be better replaced by its variant, *ḥashāʾish*, “hashish, weed” (see Everett Rowson’s review of the edition in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114 no. 3 [1994]). It not only fits the profile of an *herbalist*, but also is grammatically appropriate (feminine verbs follow), and scans the meter (which ought to be *mujtathth*, p. 167) as well. To use these kinds of literary sources is justified by the fact that the author of the shadow plays, Ibn Dāniyāl, was himself an eye doctor in Cairo. The technical accuracy of his description of the medicinal craft (including pharmacy) has been confirmed by modern Orientalist and practicing physician M. Meyerhof, among others. It is true that the theme of “quacks” becoming the butt of the joke had developed into a literary topos, but the reality and implication behind it cannot be denied. The figure of a druggist as a “greedy swindler” and trickster as represented in legal and popular literature, Chipman argues, may help to explain why we know so little about the pharmacist as a person: if chronicles are virtually silent on many an *ʿaṭṭār* when they appear in biographical dictionaries, it is because they were *literati* at the same time. Ibn Dāniyāl the eye doctor knew a thing or two about the sentiment against his fellow craftsmen in Cairo, insofar as his shadow plays and poetry are riddled with self-loathing while describing the profession of “health care” in general. As for al-Kūhīn al-ʿAṭṭār the druggist, not only was he ignored by biographical dictionaries, the “Hall of Fame” for medieval Muslim learned men, he was also shunned by his own kind: the best known figure in the history of Arab medicine, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, in his comprehensive roster of Arab physicians, did not say a thing about the Jewish druggist, who was actually his contemporary and a fellow student. The silence is telling: the Jewish druggist was not a physician; this shows us a further divide from within, between doctors and pharmacists, in medieval Cairo. Such is the fascinating, and rather sad, story of the pharmacist in Mamluk Cairo. We owe Leigh Chipman for bringing it to life.

Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007). Pp. xix + 359, illus.

Reviewed by J. M. Rogers, The Nour Foundation

The development of Fatimid al-Qāhirah into the great metropolis it became under the Mamluks was by no means a foregone conclusion. Under Baybars Fuṣṭāṭ was not entirely neglected, though his Friday mosque in its northern sector, the Jāmiʿ al-Jadīd (660/1261–62), was already abandoned by al-Maqrīzī’s time, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s mosque in the same area (no. 15), also called the Jāmiʿ al-Jadīd (711–



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12/1312–13) survived for an even shorter time. Baybars' works on the island of Rawḍah were similarly impermanent, and heralded his successors' concentration upon al-Qāhirah, its citadel, and the port of Būlāq on the Nile. The present volume combines Doris Abouseif's long familiarity with the rich Mamluk historical and biographical tradition and her deep knowledge of the historical topography of Cairo to give a masterly account of the city and its architecture between 1250 and the Ottoman conquest.

Though she takes due account of earlier scholarship, and of Creswell's meticulous surveys, Professor Abouseif's originality lies in the importance she gives to foundation documents (*waqfiyahs*). They frequently offset the errors of the historians whom she justly criticizes for their ignorance of architectural styles and technicalities; the *awlād al-nās* (like the historian Ibn Taghrībirdī), who were often directly involved in construction and its management, were generally much better informed. In the last resort *waqfiyahs* could not guarantee immunity from confiscation, and they only rarely state what must often have been the case, namely that a particular foundation was ad hominem, a madrasah, say, for a respected teacher or a *khānqāh* for a particularly revered Sufi. But they otherwise give a clear idea of the patrons' intentions and their conception of their role in the development of the city.

Behrens-Abouseif's discussions of the individual monuments comprise a biography of the founder and the historical background of the structure; an analysis of the foundation document; and a description of the plan, fabric, and decoration. This last has often been complicated by the long-term activities of the Comité de conservation des monuments de l'art arabe, which, understandably, did not have the funds to embark on large-scale operations and which for much of its existence was advised by experts whose standards of authenticity fell well short of present-day conservators. Behrens-Abouseif usefully records such arbitrary restorations, though lack of space precludes mention of routine maintenance and repairs which may be recorded in later copies of the *waqfiyah*, or detailed descriptions of major alterations in the Ottoman period, for example to the mosque of Aqsunqur al-Nāṣirī (no. 24).

The author begins her survey with the mausoleum of the Ayyubid al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Din Ayyūb (no. 1), who was the creator of the Bahri regiment and a pioneer in the development of Bahri funerary architecture. In this she follows the historians, who gave the prime role in the expansion of al-Qāhirah to al-Ṣāliḥ's successors, whose mosque-foundations led the way for courtiers and 'the people' to settle in their vicinity. These figure prominently among the sixty monuments Behrens-Abouseif discusses in detail,<sup>17</sup> and her survey is largely a social, eco-

<sup>17</sup>Unlike Michael Meinecke's 2 volumes (*Die mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien [649/1250 bis 923/1517]* [Glückstadt, 1992]), her chronological coverage is even—28 of the 60 monu-



nomie, and architectural study of sultans' pious foundations and their interaction with the urban fabric, as well as those of their amirs, with whom they often had ties of kinship or marriage. Periodization of architecture by reign is reasonable (with the obvious reservation that overlaps of some projects from reign to reign complicate a linear chronology), though Behrens-Abouseif observes that only al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Qāyṭbāy can be said to have established a regnal style.

As foreign usurpers, and Hanafis at that, the Mamluk sultans were heavily dependent upon the goodwill of the ulama, and prudence might have led them to favor the Shafi'is, the predominant *madhhab* in Egypt. This *madhhab*, however, did not recognize the Turkish dynasties, which naturally were not of Qurayshi stock, as legitimate. Baybars' solution was to replace the Shafi'i imam with chief qadis for each of the four schools, a seeming even-handedness which in fact worked to the Hanafis' advantage. His successors also abandoned the immemorial Shafi'i principle that there should be no more than one congregational mosque in each quarter (*khutt*). The multiple *khutbahs*, along with the lack of space available in central Cairo for major building projects, increasingly favored neighborhood mosques and funerary oratories with residential features, where a funerary dome and a minaret became virtually essential markers. The latter, which were the work of specialist builders, were transformed into highly decorative architectural features, as well as foci of structural development.<sup>18</sup> Understandably, prestige vied with piety, the tomb generally occupying the most conspicuous position on the street front and, for example in the case of the amir Shaykhū (no. 25), even prompting the suppression of the mihrab to allow for a window to overlook the street.

With few exceptions (among them the mosque of Sultan Ḥasan, no. 27), even royal founders deliberately chose modestly proportioned buildings and multiple foundations rather than a single colossal unit, a tendency which, especially in the fifteenth century, must have further decreased the cost to the patron. The available figures suggest that the average building cost of even a royal foundation was not much more than the monthly pay of a royal Mamluk, and could not compare with what the sultans spent on luxuries in the market, imported at prices which they could not dictate. It was the luxury of their furnishings, Behrens-Abouseif suggests, that accounted for the much greater cost of palace architecture, most of which, ironically, has disappeared without a trace.

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ments chosen for detailed discussion are Burji. Meinecke's volume 2 is a very full summary catalogue of the monuments, either extant or historically attested, but in his general discussion in volume 1 Burji architecture in Cairo is allotted a mere 26 pages.

<sup>18</sup>See now Doris Behrens-Abouseif, with contributions by Nicholas Warner, *The Minarets of Cairo: Islamic Architecture from the Arab Conquest to the End of the Ottoman Empire* (London and New York, 2010).



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The degree to which Cairene architectural evolution was determined by the urban environment was unique in Islam, nor did the unification of Egypt and Syria under Mamluk rule lead to a merging of architectural styles. The sultans' limited intervention in Damascus and Aleppo gave even their viceroys' most splendid monuments a provincial air, well illustrated by Khayrbak's two mausolea in Cairo (no. 60) and in Aleppo (figs. 15–16), though the marked difference between them is also to be explained by the fact that the Cairene foundation was erected late in Khayrbak's life, when he was at the zenith of his career. Yet the cityscape was not just a haphazard agglomeration, and under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad urban planning and design were a conspicuous feature of his patronage. (In marked contrast to David Ayalon and his pupils, Behrens-Abouseif ascribes to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad a very positive role in the development of Cairo.) Architecture went hand in hand with civil engineering projects such as the building of canals, bridges, aqueducts, reservoirs, hippodromes, port installations, and maintenance of the Nile bed to keep the river navigable. Many later projects involved the exploitation of natural features, especially water,<sup>19</sup> and the fact that hunting lodges, palaces, grazing grounds, and amirs' residences were generally inside Cairo—along the Khalij, around the large reservoirs, and on the banks of the Nile—added to the amenities of the city. Moreover, pious foundations like the domed mosques of Yashbak at Maṭariyah and Ḥusayniyah (nos. 48–49) were part of complexes of gardens with residences and religious buildings.

For most of the period the sultan's circle in central Cairo largely monopolized patronage. The caliphs were kept in modest seclusion, well away from the center, though their tomb (no. 6), which Professor Abouseif identifies as originally intended for the sons of Baybars, was magnificently decorated. The pious foundations of the civilian elites associated with the ruling establishment, including viziers and other high bureaucrats, tended to take the form of substantial contributions to the maintenance and repair of existing royal foundations, like the Māristān of Qalāwūn (no. 8). The foundations of merchants, even those as rich as the Kārimīs, were conspicuously few and seem to have been confined to increasingly run-down areas like Fustāt.

In Behrens-Abouseif's view, the markets of Cairo and Damascus with their well-developed artistic traditions tended to make court workshops superfluous, though this is not to say that there were no long-term builders' workshops, or still less that building projects were extemporized. This leads her to a perceptive discussion of the organization of construction, which, for the most part, can be attributed to the work of skilled craftsmen under the administration of favorite amirs or qadis. However, the problem of coordinating the virtually discrete parts

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Azbakiyya and its Environs: from Azbak to Ismā'īl, 1476–1879* (Cairo, 1985).



of Sultan Ḥasan's complex (no. 27), for example, was real enough. Inescapably (in this case at least), the supervisor's functions must have closely approximated to those of a modern architect. The lavish marble revetment to the qiblah *īwān* added after the sultan's death strongly suggests, moreover, that the material (all obtained from earlier monuments) must have been acquired at an early stage in the project and drawings prepared to show how the panels were to be assembled. Elsewhere, the *embarras de choix* which faced craftsmen and builders when it came to vaulting, *muqarnas*, façade designs, portals, etc., was evidently resolved in largely practical terms, without any pattern books, let alone such detailed records as the Timurid scroll published by Gülru Necipoğlu.<sup>20</sup> This must explain why there is so little resemblance between the four minarets erected by Qāyrbāy in Cairo—at his funerary foundation in the Cemetery (1474) (no. 47); at his madrasah on the Qal'at al-Kabsh (1475); at his madrasah on the island of Rawḍah (1491); and at al-Azhar (1495)—when standardization would have saved much labor and expense.

The skilled staff associated with the courts of the sultans and their viceroys must have been constantly overstretched, which would have precluded concentration on the provinces, where Cairene architectural influence was sufficiently infrequent to evoke comment. Qāyrbāy was exceptional in this respect, but the gang he dispatched to Jerusalem that built his *sabīl* in the Ḥaram<sup>21</sup> evidently did not include a specialist in dome construction, for research has shown that the dome's decoration is not fully adapted to the surface and some details were not executed, a diffidence which suggests both lack of supervision and inexperience on the workmen's part.

Construction was rapid and cheap. Oppression (*zulm*) was patently no bar to founding a *waqf*: the despoliation, confiscation, coercion, forced labor, and straightforward theft of which al-Maqrizī complained all substantially reduced building costs. The recycling of material from earlier buildings, which was much decried because of the abuses to which it gave rise (even Ibn Taghribirdī describes al-Mu'ayyad's acquisitions for his funerary complex at Bāb Zuwaylah [no. 35] as "a want of good behavior and chivalry"), may not, however, invariably have involved illegality, for the materials could have come from *awqāf*, the revenues

<sup>20</sup>Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Topkapı Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture: Topkapı Palace Library MS H. 1956, with an Essay on the Geometry of the Muqarnas by Mohammad al-Asad* (Santa Monica, 1995).

<sup>21</sup>Michael Hamilton Burgoyne and Christel Kessler, "The Fountain of Sultan Qāyrbāy in the Sacred Precinct of Jerusalem," in *Archaeology and the Levant: Essays for Kathleen Kenyon*, ed. Roger Moorey and Peter Parr (Warminster, 1978), 250–69; Michael Hamilton Burgoyne, with D. S. Richards, *Mamluk Jerusalem: An Architectural Study* (Jerusalem, 1987), 606–11.



of which were no longer adequate to keep the buildings in good repair, thereby permitting them to fall into ruin.<sup>22</sup>

It is generally agreed that, once the historians' stock invocation of the great arch of Ctesiphon is dismissed as a *topos*, foreign influence on Mamluk architecture in Egypt and Syria was limited to Iran and Anatolia. What about European influence, however? The Bahris, of course, were notorious for their conspicuous use of *spolia*: the doorway of the church of St. Andrew from Acre in the façade of the madrasah of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in the Naḥḥāsīn (no. 13), or the column carved with Palestinian monuments incorporated into the façade of the mosque of Sultan Ḥasan. However, the street façade of Qalāwūn's madrasah-mausoleum-hospital (no. 8) strongly suggests that Crusader prisoners-of-war, possibly from north Syria, may have had a hand in its design. Later, features like fenestration, as in the madrasah of Uljāy al-Yūsufī (Rajab 774/January 1373) (no. 31), and moulded cornices also look startlingly European. Unfortunately, even when one can establish a chronological sequence of these developments, it is difficult to say more. Unlike Damascus, access to Cairo for much of the Mamluk period was restricted for Western travelers and merchants, the free movement of craftsmen was unpredictable, and the supply of Frankish prisoners-of-war to work on building projects after the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad constantly fluctuated. Nor did Europeans necessarily build in their native styles: the two Mamluks from Oppenheim in the Palatinate who built the fortress of Qāyṭbāy in Alexandria (completed 1479), whom Felix Fabri met on the streets of Cairo, produced a building strongly reminiscent of fortress architecture in southern Italy.

Chapter 10 of Behrens-Abouseif's volume contains a useful Appendix by Philipp Speiser (pp. 101–5) surveying Mamluk building materials and construction methods. Considering the constant shortage of wood and the increasing shortage of marble and other building materials, the Mamluks, who relied upon techniques perfected in the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods, did well to maintain this skilled workmanship in increasingly unfavorable circumstances.

This volume is richly illustrated, and Nicholas Warner's plans and axonometric views are handsomely executed. It is, however, slightly let down by the copy-editing. The misprints are mostly benign, but it is much to be hoped that the confusion of "privy purse" with "privy" is corrected in subsequent editions.

<sup>22</sup>Sometimes, moreover, the ulama seem to have missed the point. When al-Ghawrī arbitrarily confiscated marbles for the decoration of his palace on the Citadel, the Baysariyah, instead of denouncing his action out of hand, Ibn Iyās criticizes him for not using the marbles instead in his funerary foundation (no. 56) in central Cairo.



*Emanations of Grace: Mystical Poems by ‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūniyah (d. 923/1517)*, edited and translated by Th. Emil Homerin (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2011). Pp. 151.

Reviewed by Richard McGregor, Vanderbilt University

The study of religious life in the Mamluk Empire has benefitted greatly over the last fifteen years from the work of Emil Homerin. His studies of the Sufi poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235), along with a number of fine translations, have illuminated the important intersection of high poetry and mysticism. The translation under review here of selections from *Fayḍ al-Faḍl wa-Jam‘ al-Shaml* (The Emanations of grace and the gathering of union) is a significant advance in our knowledge of this corner of medieval religious life. The author is ‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūniyah (d. 923/1517), a Syrian mystic and writer, who according to Homerin wrote more in Arabic than any other woman before the twentieth century. She was from a well-established family of scholars, most of whom spent their careers in Damascus. Several of her relatives were religious men of note; one great uncle was an ascetic, and an uncle a writer of devotional poems (p. 13). Her family were devotees of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (d. 561/1166) and associated with the Qadariyah Sufi order. ‘Ā’ishah’s most immediate spiritual affiliation and training were with Jamāl al-Dīn Ismā‘īl al-Ḥawwārī (d. 900/1495) and Muḥyī al-Dīn Yaḥyá al-‘Urmawī (fl. ninth–tenth/fifteenth–sixteenth c.). The Bā‘ūnī family married a number of their daughters into the leading family of Sharifan descendants of the Prophet. ‘Ā’ishah’s husband Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naqīb al-Ashraf died in 909/1503, leaving behind one daughter and one son (p.14). It was with her son ‘Abd al-Wahhāb that ‘Ā’ishah travelled to Cairo, in order to support his career in administrative service. She spent only three years there, but wrote several new poems and cultivated a network of contacts with the literati of Cairo. She travelled with ‘Abd al-Wahhāb to Aleppo, where she had an audience with Sultan al-Ghawrī in 922/1516, before returning finally to Damascus.

Although her connection to Ibn al-Fāriḍ is important, and will be treated below, her poetry is distinct in its focus on praise for the prophet Muḥammad. Beyond poetry, ‘Ā’ishah also composed, copied, and epitomized works on Sufi theory; she drew on the great mystics of the tradition including al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), al-Kalābādhī (d. 385/995), al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), and Ibn ‘Aṭā Allāh al-Iskandari (d. 709/1309). Her acumen as a poet is well attested in her most famous work, *Faṭḥ al-Mubīn fī Madḥ al-Amīn* (The Clear inspiration in praise of the trusted prophet), in which she engages the various complex schemes of verse known as *badī‘*. Remarkably, she also composed a commentary on this work in which she refers to nearly fifty earlier poets. The manuscript history of the *Fayḍ al-Faḍl*—the collection Homerin has translated here—is murky because it



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seems to have been composed and copied at various points throughout her career. Nevertheless, Homerin suggests a terminal date of 919/1513 for the collection, the point at which she left ʿAmāscus for Cairo.

Homerin presents us with forty-five short poems, and the longer *Ode in “T”* (*al-ṭāīyah al-Bāʿūniyah*) at 252 verses, which is followed by a ten-page commentary entitled “Homage to Ibn al-Fāriḍ” composed by Homerin himself. A full-length study would be ideal, but this commentary serves as a very effective way of locating the two poets in relation to one another. Homerin highlights a number of passages from the *Ode in “T,”* connecting them with key texts from Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s poem of the same name. Central concepts such as love of God, annihilation in the divine, spiritual submission, and poverty are examined. Parallels are also drawn between the two poets’ use of devices such as wine, the drinking glass, and the seeker lost in drunkenness.

Homerin relies on both manuscript material and recently published editions of the poems (p. 10). He is currently at work on a critical Arabic edition of this material. My spot checks comparing the translations to a draft of Homerin’s edition show that the care and skill displayed in these translations is consistent and impressive. Researchers in the field will benefit not only from ready access to this material, but also from the poetic sensibility captured in the translations.

Perhaps surprisingly, the same attention has not been paid to the many short subtitles that appear throughout the collection. These phrases vary in length, with some providing cues to either ʿĀ’ishah’s psychological state or to the circumstances in which the poems were composed. Occasionally a frame for reading is provided. For example, one poem is introduced with the following (p. 40): “From His inspiration upon her as was needed [to refute her critics],” and another (p. 45) “From His inspiration upon her as she stood before the Noble Stone (in Mecca),” and (p. 35) “From His inspiration upon her concerning the required mystical stages.” The significance of these introductory (and perhaps linking?) statements should not be over-stated; the content of the poems themselves remains central. Yet Homerin’s presentation does not do them justice, and they are at times awkwardly translated. The subtitle on page 35, for example, (*wa-min faṭḥihi ayḍan wa-jadda al-wajdu*) appears as “Also from His inspiration, and rapture was intense.” Perhaps easier on the ear would be to phrase the second half as “when the rapture was intense.” On page 36, the subtitle runs, “From His inspiration upon her, and patience was gone as loving desire increased,” which might better run, “Her inspiration when patience had given way to desire.” The poem on page 46 is introduced by “*wa-min faṭḥihi ʿalayhā thubutuhā bi-sharaf al-dhikr,*” which Homerin translates, “From His inspiration upon her regarding her certainty of the nobility of recollection.” While this is accurate, perhaps phrasing such as, “By inspiration of her high standing in divine remembrance” would resonate more



easily with an English reader. On page 66 the poem is introduced with, “From His inspiration upon her, indicating His blessing her with her exemplary faith,” but a more felicitous phrasing would run, “From a divine inspiration blessing her as spiritual exemplar.” In addition to these criticisms, the following should be addressed. Footnote 4 on page 54 is made redundant by the first footnote on page 34. Further, it would be helpful to identify the “axis al-Jilī” as ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī on page 127 rather than later in the text on page 139. The source cited in footnote 17 on page 16, Mājid al-Dhahabī and Ṣalāḥ al-Khiyamī, “Dīwān ‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūniyah” in *Turāth al-‘Arabī* 4 (1981), should be added to the bibliography. These small technical errors aside, Homerin has given us an excellent introduction to an important yet underappreciated medieval poet.



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