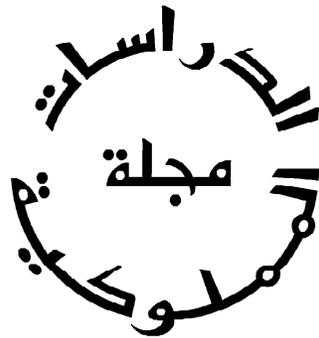


MAMLŪK STUDIES REVIEW

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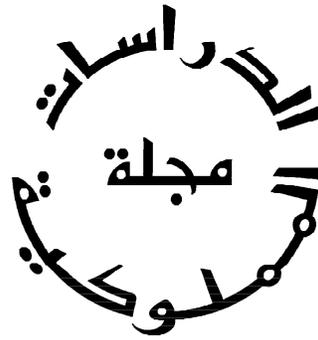
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BETHANY J. WALKER
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Ceramic Evidence for Political Transformations in Early Mamluk Egypt*

The third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (610/1310–641/1341) is viewed by most scholars as a watershed in the history of the Mamluk Sultanate.¹ Often described as the “Golden Age” of Mamluk art, this period is generally recognized as one of security and affluence.² With the victory over the Mongols at ‘Ayn Jālūt in 659/1260 and the campaign against Acre in 690/1291, the borders of the Mamluk state were, for the time being, relatively secure. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad benefited from a lull in regular military activity to develop the infrastructure of Mamluk society. The formation of “classic” Mamluk institutions (such as the fully-developed hierarchy of amiral rank and offices, the structure of the army and the *iqṭā’* system, and official ceremonial and ideology) was one positive contribution of his reign in this regard.³ His reign, nonetheless, may have had a negative impact on

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*The following article is based on three chapters from the author’s doctoral dissertation, “The Ceramic Correlates of Decline in the Mamluk Sultanate: An Analysis of Late Medieval Sgraffito Wares,” University of Toronto, 1998. Research for the original dissertation was conducted in 1995 and 1996 and was funded by a Fulbright predoctoral grant (administered through the Cyprus American Archaeology Research Center), a Kress Predoctoral Fellowship in Egyptian Art and Architecture (facilitated by the American Research Center in Egypt), and the University of Toronto. Research permits to study sherds and complete vessels in museums on Cyprus and in Egypt were provided by the Cypriot Department of Antiquities and the (then) Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt. This article reflects the Egyptian portion of the comparative ceramic study. The author would like to thank Bruce Craig for his invitation to submit the manuscript to *Mamlūk Studies Review*.

¹For a summary of this period, see P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London, 1986), 114–20, and Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382* (Carbondale, IL, 1986), 105–24. Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* (Leiden, 1995), and Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥajjī, *The Internal Affairs in Egypt During the Third Reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn* (Kuwait, 1978), offer specialized studies of this reign.

²Esin Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks* (Washington, D.C., 1981), and Henri and Anne Stierlin, *Splendours of an Islamic World: Mamluk Art in Cairo 1250–1517* (New York, 1997), survey the artistic achievements of this period.

³On the artistic representations of graded offices, see L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry* (Oxford, 1933); on the structure of the Mamluk army: David Ayalon, “Studies on the Structure of the



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Egyptian society and economy in the long run. Amalia Levanoni's claim that the excesses of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's policies ushered in the political and economic decline of the fifteenth century constitutes an important paradigm for the present study.⁴

The following is an art historical contribution to the debate on Mamluk decline, one that highlights the ways in which the demographic upheavals of the later fourteenth century transformed Egyptian society and the arts. This article specifically explores the relationship between ceramic development in the fourteenth century and government practices that affected social mobility and, thus, structured patronage. Sgraffito ware is an important category of glazed ceramics, in this regard, because it is the most visible archaeologically (it is the hallmark of Mamluk-period sites in Egypt), experienced significant development in form and decoration during this period, and seems to have passed out of fashion (at least in Egypt) by the beginning of the fifteenth century. "Sgraffito" refers to a surface design cut through a light-colored slip, laying bare the dark-colored earthenware body of the vessel's fabric. Ideally suited to the reproduction of lengthy inscriptions, the sgraffito technique was adopted in Egypt for the rapid and large-scale manufacture of monumental, ceremonial vessels with complex, militarized designs. This study attempts to demonstrate that the mass-production of this ware was related to the rise of the amiral class at the turn of the fourteenth century and that its subsequent development was a response to the social effects of particular policies initiated by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad during his third reign and continued by his successors.

TRANSFORMATIONS OF MAMLUK SOCIETY UNDER AL-NĀSIR MUḤAMMAD

Modern scholars frequently note the "nostalgic idealization" of the fourteenth century by fifteenth-century Egyptian historians.⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, for instance, regularly bemoans the political corruption of turn-of-the-century Cairo. In contrast with the fiscal and moral bankruptcy of the fifteenth century, the Bahri Mamluk period, was considered a "Golden Age" when there were periods of peace between Egypt

Mamluk Army," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15 no. 2 (1953): 203–28, 15 no. 3 (1953): 448–76, and 16 no. 1 (1954): 57–90; on the *iqṭā'* system in the early Mamluk period: Sato Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam: Sultans, Muqta's and Fallahun* (Leiden, 1997); and on Mamluk ceremonial: Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden, 1995) and Karl Stowasser, "Manner and Customs at the Mamluk Court," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 13–20.

⁴Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*. Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "The Remaking of the Military Elite of Mamluk Egypt by al-Nasir Muhammad b. Qalawun," *Studia Islamica* 72 (1990): 145–63, adopts a similar theme.

⁵David Ayalon, "Some Remarks on the Economic Decline of the Mamluk Sultanate," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 16 (1993): 110.



and her neighbors, the state coffers were full, and the arts and crafts flourished. The third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (710/1310–741/1341) is considered by many to be a watershed in this regard. Scholars have emphasized various ways in which his reign was a turning point in the fortunes of the state: in the realm of the arts,⁶ policy-making,⁷ and the physical development of the modern city of Cairo,⁸ for example. Until recently, his sultanate was considered, by both medieval and modern historians alike, to be one of security, prosperity, and growth.

This view, however, is not embraced by all students of the period. Modern historians are increasingly turning to the “Golden Age” of the fourteenth century in order to explain the origins of Mamluk decline. While acknowledging the economic dilemmas of the fifteenth century, they emphasize social and demographic developments of the late Bahri period that weakened the state early on and contributed to the collapse of the regime in 1517.

A series of plagues (beginning with the Black Death of 748/1347–750/1349) and natural disasters (earthquakes, drought, famine) were certainly factors that, when combined, were demographically devastating.⁹ Al-Maqrīzī’s estimate that one-third to one-fifth of the combined population of Egypt and Syria was lost to the plague seems to be accurate.¹⁰ Abu-Lughod, citing Michael Dols, suggests that

⁶Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*: 15.

⁷Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*.

⁸Ayalon’s negative evaluation of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s “building craze” in Cairo (D. Ayalon, “The Muslim City and the Mamluk Aristocracy,” *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 2 [1968]: 311–29) contrasts markedly with Rabbat’s assessment of the sultan’s contributions to the development of the modern city (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*).

⁹See Z. H. el-Isa, “Earthquake Studies of Some Archaeological Sites in Jordan,” *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 229–35; N. Shehadeh, “The Climate of Jordan in the Past and Present,” *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 25–37; Willem van Zeist, “Past and Present Environments of the Jordan Valley,” *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 199–204; Yousef Ghawanmeh, “The Affects of Plague and Drought on the Environment of the Southern Levant During the Late Mamluk Period,” *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 315–22; and idem, “Earthquake Effects on Bilād ash-Shām Settlements,” *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 4 (1992): 53–59, for data on natural disasters and environmental degradation in Jordan during this period. For a general discussion of the decline of the Mamluk state in geographical Transjordan, see Bethany J. Walker, “Mamluk Administration of Transjordan: Recent Findings from Tall Hisban,” *Al-‘Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭá* 13 no. 2 (2001): 30–33; idem, “Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilad al-Sham* in the Fourteenth Century: The Case of Hisban,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (2003) (forthcoming); and idem, “Mamluk Investment in the Transjordan: a ‘Boom and Bust’ Economy,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8 no. 2 (2004) (forthcoming). The author’s forthcoming monograph, *Life on the Mamluk Frontier: Transjordan, 1260–1516 A.D.*, treats this topic in more detail, drawing on archival, faunal and floral, numismatic, and archaeological data.

¹⁰These statistics are also supported by Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkīrat al-Nabīh fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr*



a death toll of 10,000 daily in Cairo alone would account for a drop in population of 40% when the plague was at its worst.¹¹ These numbers support the popular claim that the economic depression, political corruption, and artistic decline of the fifteenth century were the result, in part, of the demographic changes that followed the fourteenth-century plague.

For Abu-Lughod, Dols, Ashtor, and Irwin the Black Death (*tā'ūn*, or bubonic plague) was the single most important factor in the economic disasters of the following century. According to Abu-Lughod, reduced labor led to a shortfall in surplus. Burji Mamluk sultans, who depended on "labor-intensive methods of production" to support their high expenditure, responded with the exploitative practices mentioned above.¹² Government monopolies, whimsical taxation, confiscations of property, and the export of raw materials to Europe contributed to the "technological stagnation" of Egyptian industries described by Petry.

Dols' frequently-cited *The Black Death in the Middle East* examines the phenomenon of Mamluk decline in its cultural totality and stresses that the Black Death and recurrent epidemics had an enormous effect on the Egyptian economy, industries, arts, and social structure. Artistic development and social change are interrelated in Dols' model of economic decline. Most art historians agree that Mamluk art declined as a result of the plague, but they seldom define what is meant by "artistic decline" and generally fail to account for its origins. The traditional notion is that stylistic and technical quality fell because skilled artisans died during the plague and there were fewer customers to buy their products. Furthermore, many crafts, such as ceramics and textiles, were replaced by the higher-quality European and Chinese imports that flooded the markets in the fifteenth century. Dols suggests a more complex process. He argues that some industries (for example, sugar production) flourished for a time because the shortage of labor pushed up salaries. Artisans also benefited by the rise in wages: their social status rose as a result of the demand for skilled labor.¹³ However, other industries and crafts (which Dols calls "unessential manufactured products") disappeared.¹⁴

In a similar vein, the economic historian Eliyahu Ashtor writes about the role of the plague in the three-fold crises of the mid-fourteenth century: demographic,

wa-Banīh, cited in Eliyahu Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* (London, 1976), 302.

¹¹Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A. D. 1250–1350* (New York, 1989), 237.

¹²*Ibid.*, 239.

¹³Michael W. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1977), 263 ff.

¹⁴For the impact of a declining economy on the local metalworking industry, see J. W. Allan, "Sha'bān, Barqūq, and the Decline of the Mamluk Metalworking Industry," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 85–94.



economic, and social.¹⁵ For Ashtor, the new elite which emerged after the plague was civilian and was comprised primarily of successful merchants and the ulama (religious scholars). Their rise in status is attributed to the sale of *ḥalqah iqtā'āt* in the mid-century and, ironically, government monopolies.¹⁶ The title of *khwājah*, adopted by the sultan's merchants in the fifteenth century, is cited as evidence of social advancement.¹⁷

The emergence of a new social elite in the second half of the fourteenth century has become a regular theme of recent Mamluk scholarship. Unlike Ashtor, who describes the increasing power of the business and intellectual elite, Levanoni describes the process through which a new Mamluk elite emerged, inverting the "traditional" Mamluk social order. Over the course of his third reign, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad rejected the restrictive recruiting and slow but steady process of advancement maintained by earlier Mamluk sultans. In a passage in his *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, al-Maqrīzī explains his innovations in the areas of recruitment, promotion, and military expenditure as necessary for helping mamluks forget their homeland.¹⁸ Levanoni, on the other hand, interprets these as methods for this sultan of non-mamluk background to buy the support and loyalty of the Mamluk corps.¹⁹ His recruitment of non-mamluks and the promotion of *awlād al-nās* and unseasoned mamluks to amirships, however, gradually dissolved the solidarity between mamluk and master and among mamluks that gave the Mamluk system its cohesion and strength.²⁰

According to Levanoni's model, high expenditures combined with counter-productive practices such as these weakened the governing body so that it could not properly respond to the succession crisis after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's death. It is primarily through the inversion of the Mamluk social order after 1341, that is, with the rise of previously disenfranchised groups, that the strength of the sultanate began to wane. The new "elites" of this period were not veteran amirs, but second-

¹⁵ Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History*, 301.

¹⁶ The sale of these *iqtā'āt* began as early as 1337, and by 1347 they were taxable, like any other civilian property. According to al-Maqrīzī, Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'bān's (ruled 746/1345–747/1346) establishment of the *dīwān al-badal*, the administrative department that regulated the sale of *ḥalqah iqtā'āt* to civilians, was necessitated by the impoverishment of the *ḥalqah* that followed the *rawk al-Nāṣirī* in 615/1315 (al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, in Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*, 171).

¹⁷ Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History*, 321; Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Boston, 1967), 128.

¹⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyadah et al. (Cairo, 1934), 2:2:524–25; Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*, 31–32.

¹⁹ Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*, 30–33.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 118.



generation amirs (sons of amirs) and rank-and-file mamluks.²¹ These second-class soldiers, the *ḥalqah*, and common civilians (*‘āmmah*) participated in the power struggles that took place in Cairo’s streets in this period.²² The rebellion of the *julbān* in the fifteenth century, therefore, had a precedent. The poor economic state of Egypt in the fifteenth century is attributed, in part, to a divided and dissolute governing body, bullied by new recruits and the masses, which was ill equipped to handle the economic and political challenges of the time.

What Levanoni and others are describing is a social crisis created by the proletarianization of the army and the rise to power of certain sectors of the civilian population. Social transformations such as these certainly impacted the arts: new classes of patrons emerged and artistic sensibilities (tastes) may have changed accordingly. Historians have begun to explore the impact plague and government policies had on artistic production in the fourteenth century. Dols, for example, describes the ambiguous effects of the Black Death on the arts. Because of the labor shortage, skilled artisans were able to demand higher prices for their work, and their social status rose accordingly.²³ One material expression of this process may be the sharp increase in the number of potters’ signatures on underglaze-painted ware in the fifteenth century. Some crafts survived and seemed to thrive because they served a particular purpose. In the case of architecture and architectural revetment, these industries continued to do well because of increased building activity, which Dols argues was one reason for increased endowments of property as *awqāf*.²⁴ Burji Mamluk architecture, however, pales in comparison to the fresher, more innovative styles of the Bahri period. In this sense, artistic decline in the later Mamluk period can be defined in terms of a stagnation of style, where quantity (or proportions) takes precedence over quality. At the same time other art forms disappeared. While the imitation of Chinese blue-and-white porcelains in underglaze-painted ware was popular in the fifteenth century, Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito seems to have passed out of fashion. The disappearance of sgraffito may be related to either a change in taste or shifting patronage patterns.

The inversion of Mamluk social structure, envisaged by Levanoni, is a useful model for describing the development of sgraffito in the fourteenth century. The empowerment of the amiral class (and particularly the *khāṣṣakīyah*) early on in

²¹Amitai-Preiss describes Levanoni’s “social inversion” as a “remaking of the [Mamluk] elite.” With the replacement of veteran (Mansuri) amirs with his own amirs, who were promoted immediately to amirships of 100, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad effected the “transformation,” rather than the “decline,” of the Mamluk’s social order (Amitai-Preiss, “The Remaking of the Military Elite”).

²²See Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*, 118–32.

²³Dols, *The Black Death*, 270.

²⁴Ibid.



al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign and its replacement by second-class soldiers (*awlād al-nās* and other non-mamluks) and the assumption of mamluk prerogatives by civilians after his death—all are reflected in the decorative development of sgraffito ware in Egypt. These practices, to which Levanoni devotes her book, combined with the plague in mid-century to create a new elite, or, for our purposes, a new class of patrons. It is their adoption of earlier elitist symbols that accounts for the degeneration of sgraffito designs by the end of the century.

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF MAMLUK SGRAFFITO²⁵

DEFINITION OF EGYPTIAN SGRAFFITO (FIG. 1)

The standardization of art forms from capital to province is one frequently noted characteristic of the Mamluk period. However, there is marked regionalism in ceramic styles. Mamluk lusterware, for example, was probably a Syrian specialty, and there is some question whether it was manufactured at all in Egypt.²⁶ Recently, the differentiation of Syrian underglaze-painted wares from Egyptian products has been a focus of active scholarly debate.²⁷ Similarly, the mutually exclusive styles of slip painting in Syria and Egypt, an area understudied at present, bespeaks of regionalism in ceramic production. Among other regional specialties are the imitation celadons of Egypt, which are among the most numerous ceramic types from excavations at Fustat.²⁸

The production and distribution of sgraffito ware present unique problems for the study of Mamluk art. There seem to have been at least two distinctive regional sgraffito styles produced in the fourteenth century: the "military style" of Egypt with blazons and inscriptions (the focus of the following study) and a Levantine variety found in Israel, and perhaps Syria.²⁹ "Mamluk sgraffito" in Israel, for

²⁵The following typological study of Egyptian sgraffito is based on fieldwork conducted piecemeal over several years in Egypt (Cairo: the Islamic Museum, ARCE's Fustat stores in al-Ḥilmīyah, A.U.C.'s Fustat study collection; Alexandria: the Greco-Roman Museum and the Polish Institute's on-site stores at Kom ed-Dikka), Cyprus (various national and regional museums and private collections throughout the island, south of the Green Line), Canada (Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto), and the United States (Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Brooklyn Museum). Approximately 1300 sherds and 15 whole vessels of the Egyptian ware were analyzed for this study; of comparative material in Cyprus, some 2500 sherds and 150 complete vessels were consulted. The author would like to thank the Departments of Antiquities in Egypt and Cyprus for the permits that made access to the relevant collections possible.

²⁶Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 147.

²⁷R. B. Mason and E. J. Keall, "Petrography of Islamic Pottery from Fustat," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27 (1990): 181–82; Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 146.

²⁸Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 190; personal communication, George Scanlon.

²⁹I am indebted to Edna Stern, Antiquities Official at Acre, for sharing with me the Mamluk-period





Figure 1. Rim sherds of Fatimid and Ayyubid sgraffito bowls, Fustat



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example, is essentially a development of earlier Crusader and Ayyubid sgraffito wares under the influence of Venetian and Egyptian sgraffito designs. There is considerable local variation within this regional ware. A brick-red fabric, yellow glaze, and coarsely-incised designs characterize much of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century sgraffito excavated at Acre; a freer sgraffito pattern under a brown or yellow glaze is more common in Jerusalem.³⁰

Levantine Mamluk sgraffito must, then, be differentiated from Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito. While both groups are indebted, to some degree, to earlier Crusader and Byzantine-derivative wares, the Egyptian variety is distinctive. Furthermore, its stylistic and technical development in the fourteenth century is closely related to the social circumstances of contemporary Cairo. The variety of Mamluk sgraffito produced and distributed only within Egypt is a uniquely Egyptian phenomenon, a point that will be demonstrated later in this paper.

Egyptian sgraffito (hereafter called "Mamluk sgraffito") has several readily recognizable characteristics. Although there are exceptions, most vessels are coarsely potted and thick-walled.³¹ There is a tendency for vessels that imitate metalware shapes to be very heavy, quite possibly the result of trying to reproduce sharp profiles in a less plastic, coarse clay. The clay itself is Nile alluvium; several chemical and petrographic studies have been devoted to separating the constituent elements of the fabric.³² The body of Mamluk sgraffito vessels is covered by a stonepaste white slip, which contrasts with the clay slip of contemporary slip-painted ware.³³ Because of the porosity of the clay, the slip is either thickly applied or tends to peel off the vessel surface, obliterating the design. In a later stage of sgraffito development, a thick layer of white or brown slip stands in relief and enhances particular areas of the design, such as the letters of an inscription.

sherds excavated in the Acre area. The major publication dealing with ceramics from Syrian excavations (later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) is P. J. Riis and V. Poulsen, *Hama: fouilles et recherches, 1931–1938*, vol. 4 pt. 2, *Les verreries et poteries médiévales* (Copenhagen, 1957). There seems to be considerable variety in fabric and decoration in the Levantine wares. Publication of these wares by the Departments of Antiquities in Israel, Syria, and Jordan will be eagerly awaited.

³⁰Personal communication, Edna Stern.

³¹The best products of the Sharaf al-Abawānī "workshop" are of high quality, with thin walls, sharp carinations, and even slipping and potting (see below).

³²For chemical profiles see M. A. Marzouk, "Egyptian Sgraffito Ware Excavated at Kom ed-Dikka in Alexandria," *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria* 13 (1949): 3–23, and A. 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Le sgraffito de l'Égypte dans la collection d'al-Sabah," *Annales Islamologiques* 24 (1988): 1–23. Recent petrographic analysis can be found in R. B. Mason and E. J. Keall, "Petrography of Islamic Pottery from Fustat."

³³Mason and Keall, "Petrography of Islamic Pottery from Fustat," 180–81.



Color enhancement of designs in the earlier phase (transitional late Ayyubid-early Mamluk) is achieved through green and yellow-brown "stains." These colored glazes are applied to the sgraffito decoration and bleed into the covering glaze.³⁴ A yellowish lead glaze covers the vessel, appearing a golden yellow or brown over lightly slipped or bare surfaces.

Floral, geometric, inscriptional, and heraldic designs are incised through this slip into the earthenware body.³⁵ The distribution of these designs over the vessel surface adheres to a more or less standardized decorative program. The bowl well, an area emphasized in thirteenth-century sgraffito wares throughout the Byzantine and Crusader territories, was incised with faces, gouged circles, imitative Kufic inscriptions, or amiral blazons (Fig. 2). Amiral blazons not only occupied this zone but were also utilized in wall registers to break up inscriptions (Fig. 3). The influence of metalwork can be seen in the reliance on registers to organize inscriptional and heraldic designs (Fig. 4). Inscriptional registers are often framed by floral rinceaux and "drip lines," vertical dashes that recall textile fringes.³⁶ Narrow registers filled with a repeating series of "Mamluk braids," a stylization of the Coptic version of the Byzantine-late antique guilloche, are a familiar sight in sgraffito ware, and can be found at the juncture of stem and bowl, just below the

³⁴Lead-based stains and glazes naturally "run" into one another during firing, and indeed, this is often the desired effect.

³⁵Figural designs are very rare. See George T. Scanlon, "Preliminary Report: Excavations at Fustat, 1964," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 4 (1965): 7, "Frontispiece" for illustrations of sherds from Fustat, now in the study collection of the American University in Cairo. These were initially identified as Persian (thirteenth-fourteenth c.) and Rhodian or Anatolian (fifteenth c.) imports. It is more likely, however, that "face bowls," angels, and equestrian figures such as these were local imitations of sgraffito designs current in eastern Anatolia and Transcaucasia in the thirteenth century.

³⁶Similar arguments have been made by Fouquet, in emphasizing the role of Coptic textiles in determining patterns of decoration of Mamluk sgraffito in the thirteenth century (Daniel Fouquet, "Contribution à l'étude de la céramique," *Mémoires présentés à l'Institut Égyptien publiés en l'honneur de la naissance de S. A. Mohammed 'Abd-ul-Munaima* 4 [1900]: 71), and much later by Mackie, who discusses the possible decorative influences of wrapping metalware in textiles for transport (Louise W. Mackie, "Toward an Understanding of Mamluk Silks: National and International Considerations," *Muqarnas* 2 [1984]: 143). The interplay of textile and ceramics warrants future investigation. Lisa Golombek has made a significant contribution in this regard in her description of the "textile mentality" of medieval Islamic society (Lisa Golombek, "The Draped Universe of Islam," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. P. P. Soucek [University Park, PA, 1988], 25–38). Here she compares Samanid epigraphic pottery to white linens with *tirāz* bands (p. 35). See also Yasser Tabbaa, "Bronze Shapes in Iranian Ceramics of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 98–113, and J. W. Allan, "The Survival of Precious and Base Metal Objects from the Medieval Islamic World," in *Pots and Pans*, ed. M. Vickers (Oxford, 1986), 57–70, on the relationship between the metalworking and ceramics industries.





Figure 2. Cypriot sgraffito bowl with pseudo-heraldic design in well, 13th century, Polis



Figure 3. Early Mamluk sgraffito bowl with inscription and pseudo-heraldic designs, 13th century



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Figure 4. Egyptian sgraffito designs inspired by metalwork (top and center) and underglaze-painted ware (bottom), late 13th century, Fustat



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vessel's rim on the exterior face, and framing the tondo inside.³⁷

Sgraffito ware, like much of Mamluk art, is stylistically hybrid and borrows extensively from other media. Most of the motifs adopted by Mamluk potters belong to the decorative vocabulary of thirteenth-century sgraffito, fourteenth-century underglaze-painted ware, and metalwork. "Eastern Mediterranean wares," as Seljuk, Crusader, and Byzantine-derivative wares are often called, were most influential for the early development (thirteenth-century) of Mamluk sgraffito. Some motifs with a long history in Byzantine art (the guilloche, rinceaux, and repeating arch friezes, for instance) could have been borrowed directly from much older Coptic painted wares.³⁸ In the fourteenth century, potters imitated the forms and decoration of Islamic metalwork, an extensively traded commodity both within and outside Mamluk domains. The "Y-pattern," broad interlaces, and animal friezes are among the motifs lifted directly from the repertoire of Mamluk metalworkers by sgraffito artists.³⁹ The popularity of amiral blazons and Arabic inscriptions in many media in the fourteenth century, the most distinctive characteristic of this phase of sgraffito in Egypt, was probably also due to the influence of metalwork. At the same time, contemporary underglaze-painted styles exercised an influence on sgraffito. For instance, radial designs were achieved through the use of sgraffito lines and differently colored stains.

Mamluk sgraffito vessels conform to two main shapes: a deep, hemispherical cup on a high pedestal foot and an even deeper, carinated bowl (or "chalice") with straight, flaring sides on a splayed foot (Fig. 5). The hemispherical cup, often called a "goblet," has parallels in glassware and metalware and was a common form for drinking vessels. The carinated form has no clear parallels in any other media but is strongly suggestive of a prototype in inlaid brass that may have had ceremonial or commemorative significance. The only regular exceptions to these

³⁷This braid has been called by various names: a "Greek key" (George T. Scanlon, "Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes from Fustat: 'Sgraff' and 'Slip,'" *Islamic Archaeological Studies* 2 [1980]: 62), an "S-shaped motif" (Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 188), and "a band of undulating lines" imitating *ablaq* arches (*The Luxor Museum of Ancient Egyptian Art: Catalogue* [Cairo, 1979], 204).

³⁸Daniel Fouquet first recognized the similarity of designs in Coptic slip-painted wares of the seventh and eighth centuries and thirteenth- to fourteenth-century sgraffito (Fouquet, "Contribution à l'étude de la céramique," 125, Pl. XV). Coptic and Mamluk bird designs have been compared in C. Décobert and R.-P. Gayraud, "Une céramique d'époque mamlouke trouvée à Tod," *Annales Islamologiques* 18 (1982): 101. A comprehensive study of the designs used in medieval Coptic pottery can be found in William Y. Adams, *Ceramic Industries of Medieval Nubia* (Lexington, KY, 1986). For illustrations of the Byzantine guilloche, see Gawdat Gabra, *Cairo, the Coptic Museums and Old Churches* (Cairo, 1993).

³⁹One such animal frieze in sgraffito has been illustrated in Aly Bahgat and Félix Massoul, *La céramique musulmane de l'Égypte* (Cairo, 1930), Pl. XLIX.6.





Figure 5. Most common forms in Egyptian sgraffito: hemispherical (top) and carinated (bottom) bowls, 14th century, probably Fustat, Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito ware



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shapes are those that directly imitate contemporary metalware, such as basins, tray stands, and possibly candlesticks. Regardless of the shape, sgraffito vessels tend to take on largish, if not monumental, proportions.

The goblet form is also shared by two other groups of Mamluk pottery: slip-painted and underglaze-painted wares.⁴⁰ Many designs are common to all three wares. Slip-painting and sgraffito are related techniques. The basic application of a slip (clay slip in the first case and quartz-based in the second) and the technique of painting a design in slip (the primary decoration in slip-painting and a secondary one in sgraffito) are grounds for association. Furthermore, sgraffito and underglaze-painted wares were fired together in the same kilns; the proficiency of some workshops in both techniques is discussed below.⁴¹

In spite of the designs and range of motifs shared by the various categories of Mamluk pottery, the wares differ in their individual histories. Slip-painted wares are stylistically more related to underglaze-painting and the contemporary slip-painted styles of eastern Anatolia and Iran.⁴² There is continuity from the Ayyubid period in underglaze-painted and lusterwares. Blue-and-white porcelains and celadons imported from China were imitated locally in Egypt and had a significant impact on the development of local underglaze-painted wares in the fifteenth century.

The history of Mamluk sgraffito is quite different. Although it shares designs with many of the groups listed above, its earliest phase (thirteenth century) was oriented to the Crusader eastern Mediterranean. During its later development in the fourteenth century the ware imitated contemporary Islamic metalwork. The stylistic differences between Mamluk sgraffito and other Egyptian ceramic groups are due to several factors, not the least of which relates to marketing, or patronage. The classification of Mamluk sgraffito ware has, therefore, traditionally focused

⁴⁰Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 169, cat. #78 is an example of the goblet form in underglaze-painting. For slip-painted ware, see the profiles in Scanlon, "Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes."

⁴¹In modern kilns all "slip-wares," including sgraffitos and slip-painted styles, are fired at the same time. Both require a leather-hardening process before firing, the clays (and the temperatures at which they are fired) are common to both, and they generally take the same glazes. Although there is no historical evidence to support this, one could argue that, like underglaze-painted ware, slip-painted ware was produced alongside sgraffito in Mamluk Cairo.

⁴²The history of fourteenth-century slip-painted wares is complex and poorly understood. For assorted attempts at clarifying the relationship of the Mamluk ware with foreign ones see George T. Scanlon, "The Fustat Mounds: a Shard Count, 1968," *Archaeology* 24 (1971): 229 (who emphasizes the influence of "Eastern Mediterranean relief slip-wares" and the trailed glaze of "Athlit wares") and Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 149 and 192 (pointing to parallels in underglaze-painting and imitation celadons). Lane's comments concerning the influence of the so-called "Sultanabad" wares (Arthur Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery* [London, 1947]) are somewhat outdated.



on its comparatively restricted range of decorative styles and the technical aspects of form and fabric.

Unlike other wares, Mamluk sgraffito can be considered a purely Egyptian product.⁴³ Evidence of production at Fustat in the form of wasters and kilns and the sheer quantity of the material collected from medieval sites throughout Egypt attest to an intensive, indigenous production.⁴⁴ Moreover, there is no convincing evidence that it was ever transported to Syria or any of the other Mamluk provinces, not to mention ever having been manufactured in these places.⁴⁵ The extra-Egyptian provinces had their own local styles of sgraffito that were quite different from the Fustat product. To my knowledge there are no published examples of clearly Egyptian-style Mamluk sgraffito from sites in Syria or Israel. Ambiguous references in archaeological reports to scraps of “Egyptian” sgraffito found at Syrian sites are never illustrated and do not alter the picture of an Egyptian-only distribution.⁴⁶

If “military” sgraffitos are found at administrative sites and garrisons throughout Egypt, why are they not found in Syria? Egyptian amirs were given *iqṭā’āt* in Syria, were made governors there, lived there, retired there. Yet, there was apparently no export of Egyptian sgraffito to Syria, and if an Egyptian amir had commissioned a vessel in Cairo before his posting in Syria, he apparently did not take it with him. Taking into consideration the indigenous ceramic tradition in Syria one

⁴³Décobert and Gayraud, “Une céramique de l’époque mamelouke,” 102.

⁴⁴Aly Bahgat, “Les fouilles de Foustât: Découverte d’un four de potier arabe datant du XIV^e siècle,” *Bulletin de l’Institut Egyptien* 8 (1914): 245–333 (excavation of a fourteenth-century kiln at Fustat; wasters did not include sgraffito, however); Mason and Keall, “Petrography of Islamic Pottery,” 180, Fig. 13 (ROM cat. # 909.43.21 is a waster with an attached tripod from the Fustat excavations. Petrographic thin-sectioning verified local manufacture). Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito has been excavated at the following sites: “metro” Cairo (Fouquet, “Contribution à l’étude de la céramique,” 121; Bethany J. Walker, “New Approaches to Working with Old Maps—Computer Cartography for the Archaeologist,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 31 [1994]: 189–200); “metro” Alexandria (see references to Kubiak, François, Marzouk, and Lane throughout this paper); Quseir al-Qadim (Donald Whitcomb and Janet Johnson, *Quseir al-Qadim 1980: Preliminary Report* [Malibu, 1982]); Jebel Adda (N. Millet, “The Jebel Adda Project, Nubia, 1962,” in *National Geographic Research Reports [1961–1962]*, ed. P. H. Oehser [Washington, 1970], 191–200); Tod (Décobert and Gayraud, “Une céramique de l’époque mamelouke,” 98); Akhmim (Fouquet, “Contribution à l’étude de la céramique,” 121); Dronca (Fouquet, “Contribution à l’étude de la céramique,” 121); and Luxor (*Luxor Museum*).

⁴⁵On the issue of transport, evidence from shipwrecks would be particularly illuminating. However, there are precious few excavated wrecks from this time period in the eastern Mediterranean and of those cargoes that have reached the attention of scholars, none seem to have included this kind of pottery (see Rachel Ward, *Islamic Metalwork* [New York, 1993], 113; reference is to a shipwreck of ca. 1400 off the coast of Syria, published in *From the Depths of the Sea*, The Israel Museum [Jerusalem, 1985]).

⁴⁶Décobert and Gayraud, “Une céramique de l’époque mamelouke,” 99.



could conclude that:

1. The unattractiveness of Mamluk sgraffito did not find a market in Syria, which had its own respectable, long history of sgraffito manufacture.
2. A high tax on ceramic imports in Syria discouraged Egyptian potters from sending their wares there.⁴⁷
3. The Glazed Relief Ware of Syria served the same purpose as Egyptian sgraffito and was of a generally higher quality. This mass-produced ware was also decorated with dedicatory inscriptions and blazons and distributed to administrative centers and garrisons throughout the region.⁴⁸

It is difficult to assess the Syrian ceramic aesthetic or to find documentary evidence for taxes on a commodity that is very rarely mentioned in either historical or administrative sources. I consider the following as socio-political factors that contributed to the restricted distribution of Mamluk sgraffito.

1. Mamluk "military" sgraffito, or the inlaid brasswares it imitates, was the special prerogative of amirs serving in the capital, as were certain styles of

⁴⁷Pringle cites documentary evidence from commercial treaties for a 25% tax on all pottery sold in Acre in the 1230s (Denys Pringle, "Pottery as Evidence for Trade in the Crusader States," in *I comuni italiani del Regno Crociato di Gerusalemme*, ed. B. Kedar and G. Airaldi [Geneva, 1986], 469). He argues, unconvincingly, that this was an effort on the part of local officials to preserve "local stocks of pottery that were needed by the local citizens."

⁴⁸Glazed Relief Ware is a mold-made ceramic of a fine, white or pinkish clay (5 YR 7/4), decorated in Arabic inscriptions and, for the most part, pseudo-heraldic devices, and covered in a heavy green or yellow lead glaze. Vessel shapes tend to be hemispherical or carinated bowls, with either a simple rounded rim or a characteristic incurving rim, placed on a high pedestal foot. Vessel sizes range from miniature (bowls as small as 8 cm high, 13 cm max dia. at rim) to monumental (bowl rim dia. max. 38 cm wide). Distribution of this ware seems to be concentrated in southern Syria. They have been excavated in large quantities in administrative centers/regional capitals: Jerusalem (M. Avissar, "The Medieval Pottery," in *Yoqne'am I: The Late Periods*, ed. A. Ben-Tor, M. Avissar, and Y. Portugali [Jerusalem, 1996], 102–4); Kerak (M. Milwright, "Trade and Patronage in Middle Islamic Jordan: The Ceramics from Kerak Castle," Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1998, 176–79 and 184–91); and Hişbān (Bethany J. Walker, "The Islamic Age," in *Hesban 11: The Pottery of Hesban*, ed. J. A. Sauer and L. G. Herr [Berrien Springs, MI, 2003], forthcoming; Bethany J. Walker and Ø. S. LaBianca, "The Islamic *Quşūr* of Tall Hişbān: Preliminary Report on the 1998 and 2001 Seasons," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 47 [2003], forthcoming). They were likely manufactured in Jerusalem, and perhaps also Damascus, and sent from there to Mamluk garrisons throughout the region (R. B. Mason and M. Milwright, "Petrography of Middle Islamic Pottery from Kerak," *Levant* 30 [1998]: 188; M. Ben-Dov, *The Dig at the Temple Mount* [Jerusalem, 1982], 365; Avissar, "Medieval Pottery," 102). The inscriptions tend to be generic wishes for prosperity for an unnamed amir ("Glory, good fortune, achievement, and happiness, to the amir"), a statement of commission ("Made [on the order of] the amir . . ."), or poetic verses. Glazed Relief Wares were both made-to-order and mass-produced throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.



- dress and lifestyle privileges (hunting excursions with the sultan, monopolies on certain commodities).
2. This ceramic style was part of the way the city of Cairo framed its self-view in artistic terms.⁴⁹ In other words, it was a specifically Cairene art style, like monumental architectural façades with niches.⁵⁰
 3. Mamluk sgraffito was the product of a time and place, a product of the socio-political atmosphere of the time. Most of the characteristics of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign relevant to the ceramic arts were phenomena of Egypt only.
 4. This style of sgraffito was made in imitation of vessels in more expensive materials that played an important role in Mamluk ceremonies carried out in the capital.

TYPOLGY OF THE WARE

Egyptian sgraffito ware is the hallmark of the Mamluk period in the country. No other kind of pottery is found in such abundance, it was distributed throughout Egypt, and it is readily recognizable to archaeologists and art historians by its characteristic surface decoration. In spite of this, sgraffito has limited archaeological value, because it cannot be dated using traditional techniques; it is often retrieved from secondary (the trash heaps of Fustat and Alexandria) and unstratified (and thus chronologically contextless) deposits during excavation or as isolated surface finds on surveys.⁵¹ Pottery from these contexts is often poorly preserved: the predominance of sherds makes it difficult to ascertain the forms (and range of forms) of the original vessels. The abundance of sherd material in Egyptian museums has encouraged the art historical analysis of surface designs, and this kind of scholarship has a long history in Arabic, French, and English literature. However, the fragmentary nature of the pottery has discouraged any broader analysis, which would enable archaeologists to date it (and, in turn, allow them to use this pottery

⁴⁹Sgraffito would have been associated with Cairo as the luster technique was with Damascus. The "popularization of forms and the use of techniques . . . may have served to reduce socioeconomic distinctions in urban society and to enhance a common local identity" (Michael Morony, "Material Culture and Urban Identities: The Evidence of Pottery from the Early Islamic Period," in *Identity and Material Culture in the Early Islamic World*, ed. Irene Bierman [Los Angeles, 1995], 30).

⁵⁰Michael Meinecke, "Mamluk Architecture, Regional Architectural Traditions: Evolution and Interrelations," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 2 (1985): 166.

⁵¹George T. Scanlon, "The Pits of Fustat: Problems of Chronology," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 60 (1971): 60–78; W. B. Kubiak and M. Redlak, "Kom ed-Dikka: Islamic Finds—Storehouses Survey 1995/96," *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 8 (1997): 32–39; Arthur Lane, "Archaeological Excavation at Kom-ed-Dikka: a Preliminary Report on the Medieval Pottery," *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria* 5 (1949): 143–47.



to date sites and their strata with some precision) or explain to historians the unique role it played in fourteenth-century Egyptian society. Until now, there has been no typology of Egyptian sgraffito ware.

The formal art historical study of the ware began a century ago with Daniel Fouquet, whose stylistic analysis of sgraffito sherds has remained influential until today.⁵² Although outdated, his monograph, *Céramique orientale*, has been singularly responsible for the current debate on the influence of eastern Mediterranean sgraffito. His work was ground breaking on many accounts. Fouquet was concerned with the historical context of sgraffito ware and dated sherds on the basis of inscriptions and blazon designs. He analyzed artists' signatures in order to reconstruct workshop structures, examined stylistic parallels in media as far afield as textiles and metalworking, and examined decorative motifs with an eye towards seriation. One legacy of these approaches can be seen in the several generations of signature studies that have followed.⁵³ He was, most importantly, the first to suggest a connection between Crusader (particularly Cypriot) and Mamluk sgraffito (an idea that has only recently gained some popularity)⁵⁴ and to recognize the impact of "Mosul"-style metalwork on ceramics.⁵⁵ These have remained key concepts in the interpretation of sgraffito designs, even though scholars of Mamluk sgraffito seldom cite Fouquet as an authority on the matter. Fouquet's stylistic analysis was not hampered by the fragmentary remains of sgraffito, and perhaps it is for this reason that archaeologists, consciously or unconsciously, have adopted his approach in working with this material.

With Scanlon's publication of profiles for sgraffito and slip-painted wares in 1980, discussion about the development of sgraffito forms became possible.⁵⁶

⁵²Fouquet, "Contribution à l'étude de la céramique."

⁵³M. A. Abel, *Gaibi et les grands faïnciers égyptiens d'époque mamlouke avec un catalogue de leurs oeuvres conservées au Musée d'art arabe du Caire* (Cairo, 1930) and idem, "Un maître céramiste égyptien du XIVe siècle—Gaiby," *Annales de la Société Royale d'Archéologie de Bruxelles* 35 (1930): 141–56; M. A. Marzouk, "Three Signed Specimens of Mamluk Pottery from Alexandria," *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 497–501; A. 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie d'époque mamelouke—Sharaf al-Abawānī," *Annales Islamologiques* 7 (1967): 21–32; B. Peterson, "Blue and White Imitation Pottery from the Ghaybi and Related Workshops in Mediaeval Cairo," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 52 (1980): 65–88; and M. Jenkins, "Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery: Foundations for Future Study," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 95–114.

⁵⁴Jenkins, "Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery," 124; Scanlon, "Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes" (for the Cypriot connection); W. H. Kubiak, "Crusaders' Pottery of al-Mina Found at Fustat," *Folia Orientalia* 12 (1970): 113–23 (for parallels with al-Mina wares).

⁵⁵Fouquet, "Contribution à l'étude de la céramique," 131; Marzouk, "Three Signed Specimens," 498.

⁵⁶Scanlon, "Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes," is an extremely useful study in this respect, although many conclusions made about origins and stylistic parallels can be challenged.



Very few complete profiles were available and of those that were published (such as the whole vessels in the gallery of the Islamic Museum in Cairo) emphasis was placed on rare forms, ones slavishly imitative of metalware.⁵⁷ One is given an impression in the art historical literature that vessel forms were static. Scanlon's preliminary study, made possible by a careful piecing together of copious sherd material from Fustat, indicates that a typology of sgraffito based on its constantly changing vessel form is possible. Therefore, while the high-footed hemispherical bowl and carinated "chalice" with high, straight walls are the most common forms, there is enough variety within those two groups to consider the possibility of continuity with the Ayyubid period and steady development of form within the Mamluk period.

Modern research on sgraffito has dealt less with typology and chronology, the building blocks of ceramic analysis, and more with the larger issues of trade and provenance. Several recent studies have focused on the roles played by eastern Mediterranean pottery imported through the port of Alexandria, although Fouquet and his contributions in this area are never acknowledged.⁵⁸ Another line of inquiry begins with laboratory analyses of fabric and glaze as methods of locating centers of manufacture.⁵⁹ In spite of the unquestionable usefulness of such studies, other crucial questions remain unanswered, such as the origins of the Mamluk sgraffito style, its specific dates of manufacture and use, the process and social significance of its development, and the reasons for its restricted distribution.

The typology developed in this paper goes beyond the stylistic analyses of Fouquet and Scanlon in two ways. First, it attempts to overcome the stratigraphic problems associated with Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito by developing a relative chronology for different phases of its development (an archaeological contribution). Second, it relates ceramic development to social, political, and economic challenges to the Mamluk establishment in the fourteenth century (a socio-historical contribution). Egyptian sgraffito underwent two distinct phases of development. I date Phase I sherds by their stratigraphic association with chronologically secure

⁵⁷Marzouk, "Egyptian Sgraffito Ware"; A. 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Notes on Islamic Graffito Ware of the Near East," *Annales Islamologiques* 9 (1970): 179–86, and idem, "Le sgraffito de l'Égypte."

⁵⁸W. H. Kubiak, "Overseas Pottery Trade of Medieval Alexandria as Shown by Recent Archaeological Discoveries," *Folia Orientalia* 10 (1969): 5–30, and idem, "Crusaders' Pottery"; V. François, "Contributions à l'étude d'Alexandrie islamique: la céramique médiévale de Kom el-Dikka et Kom el-Nadoura," in *Alessandria e il Mondo Ellenistico-Romano* (Rome, 1995), 314–22, Pls. XLVI–XLVII. Scanlon, "Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes," highlights the influence of foreign sgraffito styles in Fustat.

⁵⁹The methods of analysis are varied: chemical (included in Marzouk, "Egyptian Sgraffito Ware" and 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Le sgraffito de l'Égypte") and petrographic (Mason and Keall, "Petrography of Islamic Pottery").



imports (where that is possible) and through stylistic comparisons with non-Egyptian sgraffito wares at archaeological sites outside Egypt. For Phase II I rely on datable elements of Mamluk metalwork that are adopted by potters in the fourteenth century. Most important in this regard are the shift from *naskhī* to *thulūth* script in inscriptions (roughly 1320s), the replacement of figural designs with epigraphic ones (1320s on), and the use of blazons (first used in metalwork during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign) and names in inscriptions that can be identified from inlaid brasses or historical sources.⁶⁰ My reliance on foreign and domestic stylistic criteria is necessitated by the absence of stratigraphic information that the archaeologist normally expects from excavated material.

PHASE I

The influence of the thirteenth-century Mediterranean sgraffitos on the Egyptian ceramic industry has long been recognized, although the emphasis has traditionally been on Byzantine-derivatives and Levantine Crusader ("al-Mina," Athlit, etc.) wares.⁶¹ In recent years, the Cypriot connection has been cited as an important element in the emergence of Mamluk sgraffito (Fig. 6).⁶² It is difficult to distinguish between the various regional styles of sgraffito in the eastern Mediterranean, thus the confusion in equating all eastern Mediterranean products with either al-Mina or Cyprus. Most archaeologists have focused their efforts on a single region and have acquired an intimate familiarity with one sgraffito group. My own fieldwork has covered three regions (Cyprus, Israel, and Egypt), and it is on the basis of intensive analysis of the Cypriot and Mamluk sgraffitos that I can make the following generalizations.

The great debt Mamluk sgraffito owes to its Cypriot counterpart is indicated by the earliest products of the local Ayyubid and Mamluk Phase I period. I have grouped them into the following categories.

1. Alexandrian Zeuxippus"—a coarsely potted ware in Nile alluvium. The exterior is left plain and rather unfinished, and the slip has a tendency to peel. There is no added color. The tondo designs cut in a wide, shallow sgraffito recall the deeply gouged designs of "thirteenth-century Aegean wares" and other Zeuxippus-derivative produced at coastal sites on Cyprus (see below). The most common design is the circle divided into two by double, curved lines in its center (Fig. 7). The complete vessel form is unknown (I have seen only heavy bases). It is found at Kom ed-Dikka in large numbers (some 15% of the Mamluk sgraffitos at the site) and more rarely at Fustat. An analogous

⁶⁰These developments are conveniently summarized in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 50–53.

⁶¹Kubiak, "Overseas Pottery Trade," 12–13, and idem, "Crusaders' Pottery."

⁶²Scanlon, "Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes."



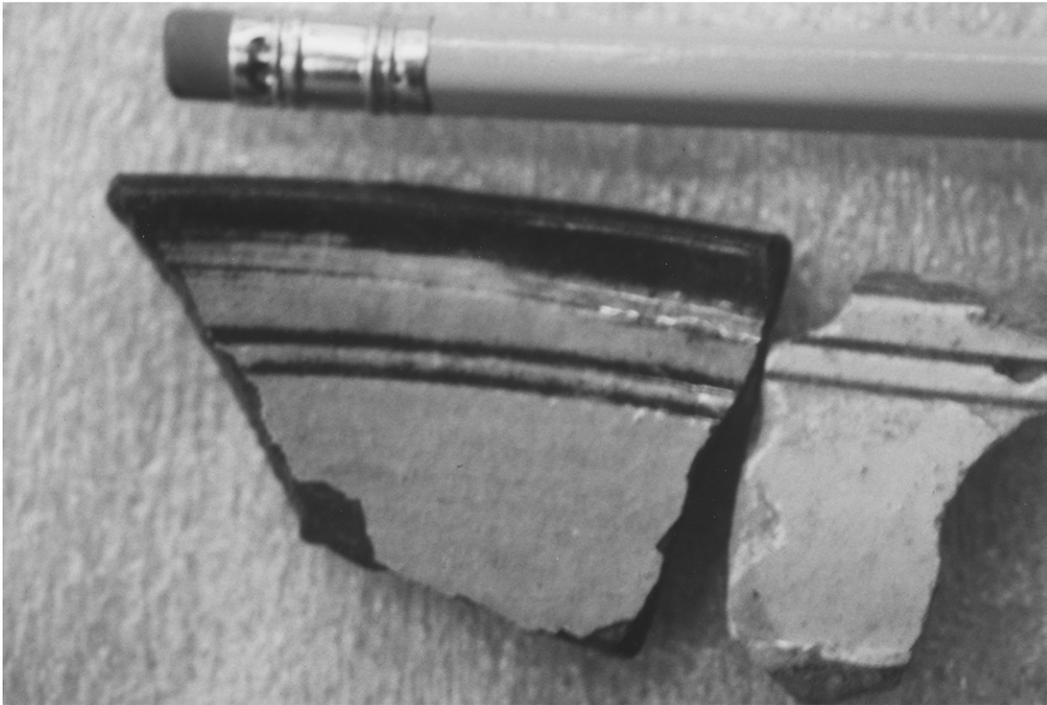


Figure 6. Egyptian (left) and Cypriot (right) sgraffito rim sherds compared



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Figure 7. Alexandrian Zeuxippus, 13th century, Kom ed-Dikka, Ayyubid sgraffito ware



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- product found at Fustat, "Fustat Zeuxippus," was probably derived from the Alexandrian ware. The tondo circle of "Fustat Zeuxippus" is bisected by three or more lines.
2. "Wide Rim Arabesque"—This is a crucial ware typologically, because it bridges the transition between local derivatives of eastern Mediterranean sgraffitos and the fully developed Mamluk ware of "Phase II." It is the most finely potted of Egyptian sgraffitos, and its red fabric is well levigated. Most of the sherds are large, straight wall sections, so the original vessel form was probably the straight-walled, carinated chalice. This form is confirmed by a variant with lightly incised, doubly outlined floral designs on a scribbled ground. The fine, double outlines relate it to Zeuxippus-derivative wares. The exteriors of both styles are plain or very lightly glazed, but the interiors are covered with a slip and incised with a floral arabesque or Arabic inscription (both real and imitative) on a scribbled sgraffito background, designs which share both Phase I and Phase II characteristics. Yellow glaze (Fig. 8) is as common as the green glaze (Fig. 9). This group is found in Alexandria and Cairo. It represents approximately 6% of the Mamluk sgraffitos at Kom ed-Dikka (the Greco-Roman Museum collection).

The most prominent surface decoration is a wide inscriptional register, which is executed in a deep and wide incised line, often on a scrolled background. Such scrolling is not uncommon in Cypriot sgraffito, where the uprights of pseudo-Kufic are also repeated as part of a general rim design.⁶³ In "Wide Rim Arabesque" this inscriptional register is widened, occupying much of the vessel's wall interior down to the carination. The inscriptions are either illegible or pseudo-calligraphic. One Egyptian potter, Sharaf al-Abawānī, has signed several examples of "Wide Rim Arabesque" that have parallels with Cypriot and Transcaucasian sgraffitos of the late thirteenth century.⁶⁴ In later stages of his work the scribbled ground disappears, but the inscriptional register is retained, including legible and formalized Arabic dedications to military dignitaries along with sultanic emblems and amiral blazons. This later style belongs to Phase II, or the "military style," the one most readily recognized as Mamluk sgraffito by archaeologists working in Egypt.

Phase I products share a common repertoire of designs that have currency throughout the eastern Mediterranean in the thirteenth century: the six-pointed

⁶³J. du Plat Taylor and A. H. S. Megaw, "Cypriot Medieval Glazed Pottery," *Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus* (1937–39): Pl. VII (14) and Pl. IX (3.15).

⁶⁴Compare Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, Pl. 50 (bottom center) with A. I. Dikigoropoulos and A. H. S. Megaw, "Early Glazed Pottery from Polis," *Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus* (1940–48): 77–93, Pls. VIII and IX. Also Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, Pl. 50 (uppermost left) with R. L. Hobson, *A Guide to the Islamic Pottery of the Near East* (London, 1932), Pl. 13, Fig. 37.



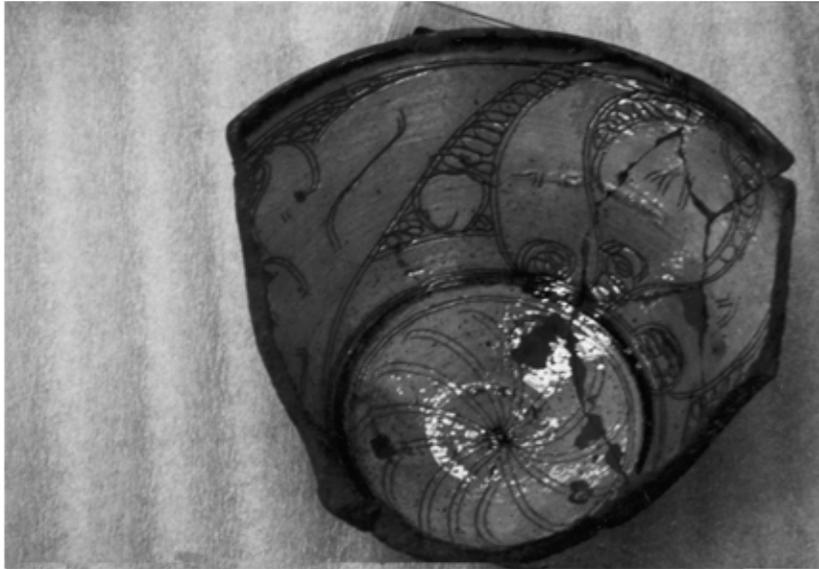


Figure 8. Yellow-glazed Wide Rim Arabesque, late 13th century, Fustat, Phase I
Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito ware



Figure 9. Green-glazed Wide Rim Arabesque, late 13th century, Fustat, Phase I
Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito ware



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star tondo, registers of “fat” Kufic, pseudo Kufic inscriptions in the tondo, the scribbled sunburst, the “Mamluk braid” (also called a cable or S-motif), champlévé triangles and checkerboards, registers of crescents, textile-imitative fringes framing registers, pseudo-Arabic inscriptions, and proto-blazons (or “sultanic devices”) and “Norman shields” in the tondos. A variety of designs and decorative techniques are adopted from Crusader and Anatolian wares, such as the “al-Mina leaf” pattern, the double-incised rim, and champlévé guilloches and sunbursts.

These late Ayyubid and early Mamluk sgraffitos are usually found in stratigraphic association with ceramic imports from throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Although previous scholarship has emphasized the presence of Levantine Crusader imports (al-Mina wares) in Alexandria, Cypriot pottery was, in fact, imported in significantly larger numbers.⁶⁵ The majority of all ceramic imports at Kom ed-Dikka, roughly 40-50%, are clearly identifiable as Cypriot; Byzantine, Byzantine-derivative, and Crusader wares are the minority. Several groups of Cypriot imports are represented in Alexandria; Groups III (west and southwest coast products) and IV (produced throughout Cyprus) are dominant (Fig. 10).⁶⁶ Of other Byzantine-style wares, Zeuxippus ware dominates, followed by Levantine Crusader and Megaw’s “thirteenth-century Aegean.”⁶⁷ At the salvage

⁶⁵See Kubiak, “Overseas Pottery Trade” and idem, “Crusaders’ Pottery” for interpretation of “al-Mina” imports at Kom ed-Dikka and Fustat.

⁶⁶The Cypriot typology refers to categories and a relative chronology established by A. H. S. Megaw in the 1930s, based on stylistic analysis (du Plat Taylor and Megaw, “Cypriot Medieval Glazed Pottery,” 1–13). His “groups” are still valid among archaeologists working on the island today. Excavation of well-stratified sites and church cemeteries, both with coins, have verified many of Megaw’s dates (D. Papanikola-Bakirtzis, “Ξρονολογημένη Κεραμεική 14ου Αιώνα απο την Πάφο,” *Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus* [1988]: 245–48; J. du Plat Taylor, “Medieval Graves in Cyprus,” *Ars Islamica* 5 [1935]: 56–86). Groups III and IV are dated to the late thirteenth and early-mid fourteenth centuries, respectively. The kind of Group III Cypriot sgraffito bowls found in Egypt tend to be typical products of the Lemba and Paphos kilns (verified by petrographic analysis—Walker, “The Ceramic Correlates of Decline,” 175–76); Group IV imports are, for the most part, Polis products.

⁶⁷For technical definitions of Zeuxippus and thirteenth-century Aegean ware, see Ch. 3 of Walker, “The Ceramic Correlates of Decline.” For Megaw’s intuitive discussion of both wares and their relationship to Cypriot sgraffito, see A. H. S. Megaw, “Zeuxippus Ware,” *British School at Athens* 63 (1968): 67–88 and idem, “An Early Thirteenth-Century Aegean Glazed Ware,” in *Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice*, ed. G. Robertson and G. Henderson (Edinburgh, 1975), 34–54. For regional varieties of Zeuxippus ware, see P. Armstrong, “Zeuxippus Derivative Bowls from Sparta,” in *Φιλολακων: Lakonian Studies in Honour of Hector Catling*, ed. J. M. Sanders (Athens, 1992), 1–9. For additional studies of Aegean ware and its distribution, consult G. Philotheou and M. Michailidou, “Plats byzantins provenant d’une épave près de Castellorizo,” in *Recherches sur la céramique byzantine*, ed. V. Deroche and J.-M. Spieser (Athens, 1989), 173–76, and idem, “Βυζαντινά Πινάκια απο το Φορτίο Ναυαγισμένου Πλοίου Κοντά στο Καστελλορίζο,”



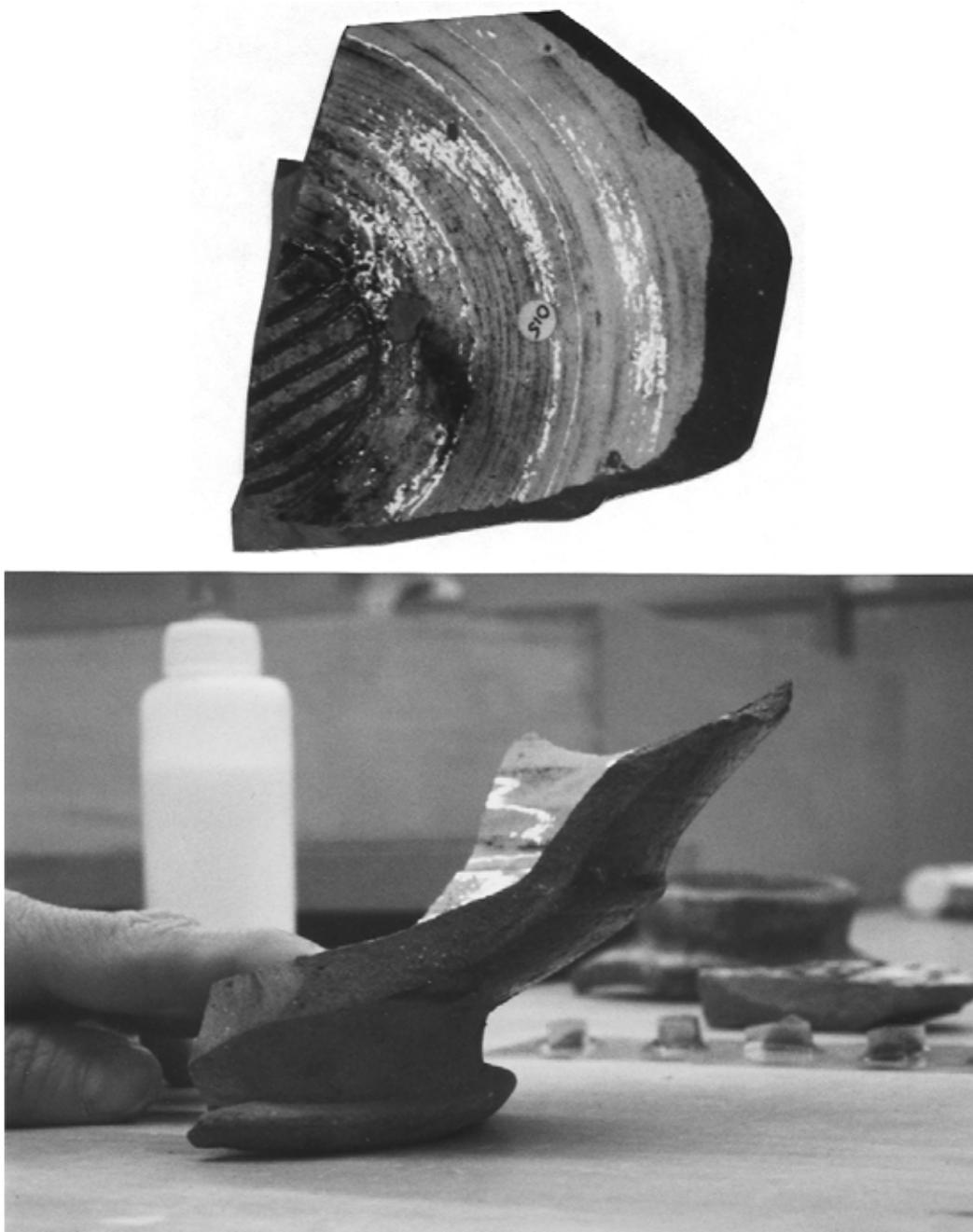


Figure 10. Group III Cypriot sgraffito import from Prastion-Paphos, found at Fustat, 13th century



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excavations of Kom al-Nadoura, also in Alexandria, Cypriot “bird bowls” and “wedding bowls” were rare finds.⁶⁸ What is interesting about this distribution of ceramic types is that not only are Levantine imports rare, but so are the highest-quality groups of Cypriot sgraffito. The most common type of sgraffito import at Kom ed-Dikka belongs to Megaw’s Group II and is of very poor quality (roughly incised, often overfired). The picture is similar to Fustat, where 28% of the imports are clearly Cypriot, and of the Cypriot wares an equal number were of the “Lemba III” and “Polis IV” varieties.⁶⁹

PHASE II (SEE FIG. 5)

War, plague, and a change of economic fortunes took their toll on the city of Alexandria in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The native craft industries, including ceramic production, went into decline. At some early point in the fourteenth century the “Alexandria school” of sgraffito was abandoned. The absence at Kom ed-Dikka of vessels with fully developed dedicatory inscriptions, true blazons, or imitations of the *thulūth* script indicates that the “Fustat school” took over the Alexandrian market sometime before the 1320s and even as early as 1290.⁷⁰

The supposed “hiatus” in ceramic production in Fustat during much of the thirteenth century has often been attributed to the burning of the city by Shāwar in 1168. According to Kubiak, the *kharāb* (ruins) of Fustat were the result of the abandonment of the eastern and southern parts of the city after the famine and plague of 1066–72, but in the thirteenth century Fustat (those areas still occupied) was fully functioning socially and industrially.⁷¹ There does seem to have been a

Αρχαιολογικο Δελτίο 4 (1991): 271–330; P. Armstrong, “A Group of Byzantine Bowls from Skopelos,” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 10 no. 3 (1991): 335–47; and I. Loucas, “Les plats Byzantines à glaçure inédits d’une collection privée de Bruxelles,” in Deroche and Spieser, *Recherches sur la céramique byzantine*, 177–83.

⁶⁸François, “Contribution à l’étude d’Alexandrie islamique,” 316, and personal communication.

⁶⁹The attribution of one complete “Lapithos IV” bowl in the ROM study collection (inv. # 909.25.46) to Fustat, on the basis of the art dealer’s reports of 1909, can be rejected. The excellent preservation of this vessel is not in keeping with the fragments normally recovered from the Fustat mounds. Moreover, this particular group of Cypriot sgraffito was particularly popular for medieval burials on Cyprus. It is unfortunate that the looting of church cemeteries of their grave goods provided the international antiquities market with vessels of this sort.

⁷⁰In metalwork large inscriptions in *thulūth* and heraldic blazons replaced figural decoration and the *naskhī* script after the 1320s (Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 50–51). The first blazon of office has been located on two candlesticks of Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā while he was still amir; it was made around 1290 (Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 52 and 64–65, cat. #15–#16).

⁷¹W. B. Kubiak, “The Burning of Misr al-Fustat in 1168: A Reconsideration of Historical Evidence,” *Africana Bulletin* 25 (1976): 51–64.



reduction in the production of luxury ceramics after the Fatimid period,⁷² but the kilns themselves were still operative in the thirteenth century. Thirteenth-century sgraffito styles such as "Fustat Zeuxippus" and "Wide Rim Arabesque" are proof of the activity of Fustat's kilns in the period of the "hiatus."

Ceramic production at Fustat came into full swing in the fourteenth century, as is evidenced by the extensive "sherd mounds" excavated by the American Research Center in Egypt.⁷³ The sgraffito style associated with the Fustat kilns in this period (Phase II—the "military style") is characterized by formulaic Arabic inscriptions dedicating the vessel to a military dignitary (usually an amir) and the extensive use of amiral blazons within these inscriptional wall registers and in the tondos. Occasionally contemporary designs from other Mamluk wares are imitated. The most important influence, though, comes from contemporary metalwork. The shapes (basins, tray stands), designs (woven bands, the "Y-fret," animal friezes), and color scheme (yellow glaze as brass, white slip as silver inlays) of silver-inlaid brasses are reproduced in sgraffito.

"Military style" vessels were commissioned primarily by amirs and mass-produced for the general public, who had developed a taste for the vessels they had seen displayed at official banquets and at amiral palaces. It was an extremely popular style, probably because it was an effective but less costly alternative to inlaid brasses. Vessels were distributed throughout Egypt but not outside her borders.

Phase II should be roughly dated from 1290 to the late fourteenth century. Phase II sgraffito imitates many of the changes in metalwork of the 1290s–1320s in terms of script, inscriptions, and heraldic blazons. The style apparently petered out by the end of the fourteenth century. Atıl cites the absence of the compound blazons of Burji officers as evidence that the "military style" had passed out of fashion by the fifteenth century.⁷⁴ The absence from sgraffito inscriptions of the names of Burji officers or Mamluk sultans of the fifteenth century, in addition to the title *khwājah* (for civilian patrons) that appears in this period, further supports the fourteenth-century chronology.⁷⁵

Not only in decoration but also in form does Phase II sgraffito continue the long development begun in the thirteenth century with eastern Mediterranean sgraffitos and Ayyubid lusterwares (Fig. 11). The hemispherical bowl changes little from the thirteenth century to the fourteenth. It is the carinated profile that is

⁷²Kubiak, "Overseas Pottery Trade," 27.

⁷³Scanlon, "The Fustat Mounds."

⁷⁴Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 149.

⁷⁵For the title *khwājah* and its relationship to state monopolies in the fifteenth century, see Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 128.



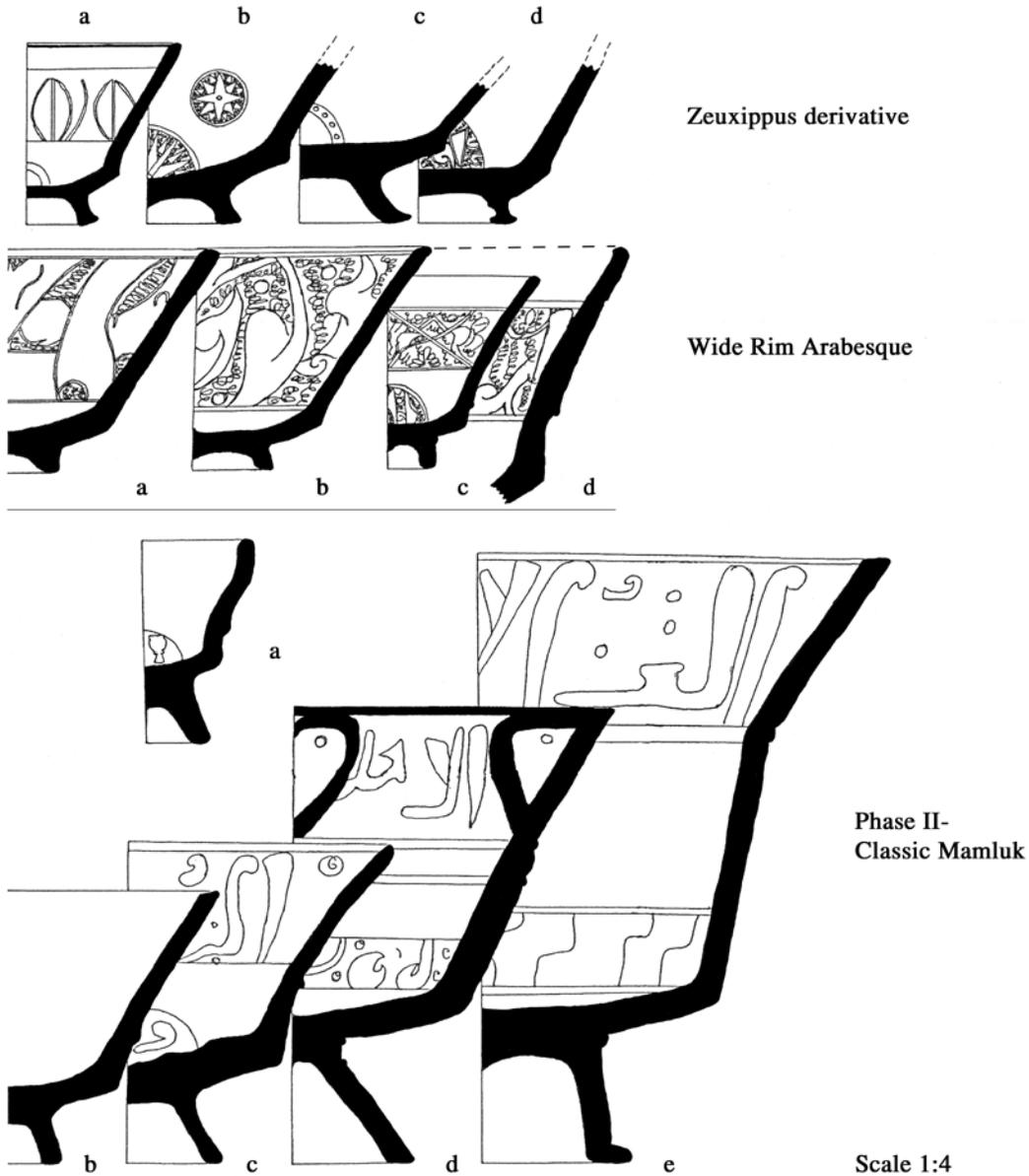


Figure 11. Typological development of late Ayyubid and Mamluk sgraffito



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transformed. The “classic Mamluk chalice” usually associated with military inscriptions and blazons in Cairo is not a static form but is remarkable for its variety.

SUMMARY OF TYPOLOGY

In summary, Egyptian sgraffito developed in two distinct stages in the Mamluk period, each related to special social and economic circumstances of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The first phase is chronologically earlier because it shares so many traits with Cyprus’ Group III and some Group IV sgraffitos. The second phase is later and recalls Islamic inlaid metalwork covered with military inscriptions. Some decorative designs of Egyptian sgraffito shared with Cypriot sgraffito include wall registers interrupted by generic shield blazons and the placement of heraldic devices in the tondo circle and on the wall.⁷⁶ This use of heraldic devices is also found in Anatolian sgraffito of the thirteenth century and may well have had some currency throughout the eastern Mediterranean.⁷⁷

The following summarizes a preliminary relative chronology for the Mamluk sgraffitos that is based on the data available at present.

Ayyubid (1200–1250): influence from Zeuxippus and other Byzantine-derivative wares (like “Thirteenth-century Aegean”). Groups include “Alexandrian Zeuxippus,” “Fustat Zeuxippus,” and tondos circles with the radial design.

PHASE I Mamluk: 1250–1300: strong Cypriot influence. Groups include “Wide Rim Arabesque,” green-glazed wares, poorly incised inscriptions in *naskhī*, fake or practically illiterate inscriptions for decorative value, green and brown stains, generic symbols of authority used outside of Egypt (like the rosette, the lion, and the double-headed eagle), and pseudo-blazons or “Norman shields.”

PHASE II Mamluk: fourteenth century: less Mediterranean influence and more emphasis on eastern Islamic art (the “Mosul” metalwork style). Characteristics include the mature, classic profile of the Mamluk chalice, formalized military inscriptions and blazons, slip-painted relief inscriptions outlined in sgraffito, the absence (or rarity) of staining, biographically identifiable amirs, and careful

⁷⁶For published illustrations of shield devices in Cypriot sgraffito see du Plat Taylor and Megaw, “Cypriot Medieval Glazed Pottery,” Pl. V.8 and p. 4, Fig. 1, and A. Papageorghios, “Ἐρευνα εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Αγ. Κυπριανοῦ εἰς Μενικό,” *Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus* (1964): 236, Fig. 14.

⁷⁷See G. Öney, *Anadolu Selçuklu Mimarisinde Süsleme ve El Sanatları* (Ankara, 1978), 107, Fig. 90.



imitations of metalware shapes (candlesticks, inlaid basins, stands). Mass-produced vessels carrying generic dedications and decorative blazons can be considered the latest phase.

By the end of the Ayyubid period, eastern Mediterranean imports (most importantly Cypriot sgraffito) exerted a stylistic and technical influence on Egyptian potters, who adapted such elements as scribbled inscriptional registers, shield devices, the beveled rim and upturned ringfoot, and the use of brown and green stains to designs that appealed to the military elite. The steady development in design from "scribbled sgraffito" to "Wide Rim Arabesque" and then to the Phase II "military style" was paralleled by the accentuation of the Zeuxippus carinated profile, resulting in the "classic Mamluk chalice" form. Additional evidence for continuity in Mamluk sgraffito is found in the work of Sharaf al-Abawānī, an Egyptian potter usually associated with the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. His signature is found on both Phase I and Phase II products. It is possible to trace the maturation of his style from the thirteenth century, when he continues the practices of Cypriot and other Mediterranean potters, to the fourteenth century, at which time he adopts the militarizing style of other Mamluk arts.⁷⁸

HISTORICAL BACKDROP OF CERAMIC DEVELOPMENT IN EGYPT

Why is Cypriot influence so marked in Egypt and why at this period? A comparison with Cypriot exports to the Crusader Levant is informative. At Acre, Cypriot sgraffito and slip-painted wares (Groups I–III) are represented in high numbers (8% at coastal sites and 24% inland), although at coastal locations proto-majolica and Crusader Levantine wares ("al-Mina") predominate.⁷⁹ Coastal distribution of Cypriot ceramic imports (Groups Ic/X, II, and III) is, in fact, characteristic of the Crusader States.⁸⁰ The pattern of Cypriot sgraffito imports in Egypt differs, however, from that in the Levant in two important ways. First, while the overall percentages are much lower in comparison to local products (3% of all sgraffito at Kom ed-Dikka and far below 1% at Fustat), Cypriot sgraffito far outnumbers any other ceramic import. This may indicate a difference in consumption patterns: the mercantile communities of the coastal Levant relied on both imported and domestic pottery, while Egyptian residents were largely satisfied by the local market. Second, the Cypriot groups represented in Egypt (Groups III–V) are chronologically later

⁷⁸The development of his style is more fully described below.

⁷⁹E. Stern, "Exports to the Latin East of Cypriot Manufactured Glazed Pottery in the 12th–13th Century," in *Cyprus and the Crusades*, ed. N. Coureas and J. Riley-Smith (Nicosia, 1995), 335, Fig. 5.

⁸⁰Pringle, "Pottery as Evidence for Trade," Fig. 2.



than those in the Levant (Groups I–III). Mamluk destruction of the Crusader strongholds in the Levant is the obvious factor in the absence of these later Cypriot styles at Acre and other sites.

The high visibility of Cypriot imports at coastal sites is a characteristic shared by both the Levant and Egypt. Thus, one factor that contributes to the location of imports and the period of the importation is the foreign mercantile community. The influence of Cypriot sgraffito imports on the early development of Mamluk sgraffito is intimately connected to the history of the mercantile communities in Alexandria. The imposing presence of Cypriot pottery in thirteenth and fourteenth-century Alexandria is probably not due to the local residence of Cypriot merchants. The large numbers of Lemba III sgraffito (an estimated 44%), one of the poorest products of Cyprus' kilns in this period, do not necessarily indicate a Cypriot community in the port city. They were, more likely, the tablewares of the international crews manning the ships coming from Cyprus. Many of the Cypriot "imports," which are unexpectedly inconsistent in firing and general appearance, may not have been imported, as such, but belonged to the inhabitants of the foreign *funduqs* in Alexandria or were used as ballast in transport ships.

Cyprus had neither a consul nor a *funduq* in the city. The state of political tension between Cyprus and Egypt during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the result of corsair activities generally encouraged by the Cypriots, did not make Cypriots welcome in Mamluk territory.⁸¹ However, European merchants coming from Cypriot ports were able to establish residences and businesses in Alexandria. Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Marseilles, and the Catalans had permanent communities in the city.⁸² Cypriot merchants who wanted to trade in Egypt generally leased the ships of these European states and hired their crews.⁸³ The demands of Peter de Lusignan in 1368 for the appointment of a consul, the establishment of a *funduq*, and customs exemptions in Alexandria for Cypriots underline the fact that European middlemen handled the bulk of the Cyprus-Egypt commerce in this period.⁸⁴

The papal bulls prohibiting mercantile activity in Mamluk territories forced

⁸¹Egyptian paranoia over rumors of Cypriot spies in Alexandria following the events of 1365 illustrates the extent of the bad relations (A. S. Atiya, *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* [London, 1938], 351).

⁸²Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History*, 299; M. Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte Alexandrias von 564/1169 bis in die Mitte des 9./15. Jahrhunderts: Verwaltung und Innerstädtische Organisationsformen* (Berlin, 1992), 251; Atiya, *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, 366.

⁸³P. W. Edbury, *The Lusignan Kingdom of Cyprus and its Muslim Neighbors* (Nicosia, 1993), 10.

⁸⁴G. F. Hill, *A History of Cyprus* (Cambridge, 1940–52), 2:340; Muḥammad ibn Qāsim al-Nuwayrī, *Kitāb al-Ilmām bi-al-I'lām*, ed. A. Atiya (Hyderabad, 1970), 5:371; Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte*, 59.



clandestine trade through Cypriot ports. So, in spite of the state of “cold war” between Cyprus and Egypt, Cypriot pottery reached the shores of Egypt in large numbers. This is a useful lesson: one should not necessarily equate pottery with people. Cypriot pottery in Alexandria represents the local activities of Venetian merchants and other European businessmen, not the presence of Cypriots.

The changing status of Cyprus as the middleman in east-west trade in the second half of the fourteenth century had important consequences, not the least of which was the disappearance of Cypriot sgraffito in Egypt. This was, ironically, a catalyst for the further development of Mamluk sgraffito. A series of events contributed to this state of affairs. Peter I’s invasion of Alexandria in 1365, which left much of the city in ruins, marks the beginning of the city’s decline.⁸⁵ A series of plagues in the middle of the century drastically reduced the city’s population, forcing the temporary closure of the *Dār al-ṭirāz*, *Dār al-wikālah*, and the markets and customs houses. By the end of the century the city recovered, as the population recovered and the markets were able to reopen.⁸⁶

The decline of the city of Alexandria did not render her port useless, however, and trade continued in spite of internal problems. The decline of Cyprus was a much more important factor in the transition in Egypt from Crusader-derivatives to the “military style” of Mamluk sgraffito. The Genoese wars of the 1370s and changing trade routes weakened the Lusignan dynasty and the Cypriot economy, in general, by the second half of the century. Moreover, relations with the Mamluks were strained until 1370, when a peace treaty was finally signed. A final factor that contributed to the marginalization of Cyprus in east-west trade was the damage done by earthquakes to the island’s major ports. The port at Paphos, from which merchant ships departed directly for Alexandria, was all but abandoned after the earthquake of 1222.⁸⁷ Limassol then took over its commercial traffic, but in the first half of the fourteenth century it, too, suffered a series of devastating earthquakes that rendered its port useless. With the Genoese in possession of Famagusta and its port from 1373 on, Cypriot control of dependable ports on the island was disrupted.

At the same time, events coincided to make the European merchants independent of Cypriot ports. The disintegration of the Il Khanid empire and Mamluk operations

⁸⁵Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte*; al-Nuwayrī, *Kitāb al-Ilmām*—this Arab historian was an eye-witness of the event.

⁸⁶S. Labib, “al-Iskandariyya,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 4:134. Labib has estimated that 200–700 deaths were recorded on a daily basis from 1347 to 1350.

⁸⁷R. Gertwagen, “Maritime Activity Concerning the Ports and Harbours of Cyprus from the Late 12th to the 16th Centuries (1191–1571),” in Coureas and Riley-Smith, *Cyprus and the Crusades*, 511–38.



against the southern coast of Anatolia in the mid fourteenth century forced European merchants to look for ports of call further south in the Mediterranean. Venice began its annual, direct service to Alexandria in 1345. The visits were more regular than during the papal prohibitions, and they bypassed Cyprus altogether.⁸⁸ Therefore, by mid-century regular traffic between the Cypriot ports and Alexandria was coming to an end.

The implications of the decline of Cypriot ports and Alexandria for the further development of Mamluk sgraffito are two-fold. First, by the middle of the fourteenth century contact between Alexandria and Cyprus was less regular. By avoiding Cypriot ports, Venice, among the other mercantile states, had no occasion to bring Cypriot pottery to Egyptian shores.⁸⁹ Second, the concurrent decline of Alexandria negatively affected several crafts, including the city's textile industry. Whether the gradual impoverishment of the city contributed to the decline of the local kilns and the expansion of a ceramic market based in Cairo, the country's political and military center, cannot be substantiated at this point. The notion, however, does explain the shift from a ceramic industry based on the tastes of well-traveled merchants in Alexandria (eastern Mediterranean influence) to one that catered to the military elite of Cairo ("military wares"). A transition in style such as this indicates a shift in patronage, one that could have been facilitated by the waning influence of Alexandria.

The most important development in Mamluk sgraffito, the transition from Phase I to Phase II, can be attributed, in part, to Egypt's political isolation from Cyprus. When Cypriot sgraffito was no longer available locally, Egyptian potters no longer imitated its styles. They began to rely, instead, on indigenous art forms. If Phase I Mamluk sgraffito adopted characteristics of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Cypriot sgraffito, Phase II was imitative of fourteenth-century Islamic metalwork. The transition was a gradual one. The following three sections serve to document the continuity from the Cypriot-influenced style to the mature Mamluk style with formal military inscriptions and amiral blazons.

THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EGYPTIAN SGRAFFITO

PRODUCTION

I. CAIRO'S CERAMIC MARKET

⁸⁸Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 24; Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte*, 66.

⁸⁹A sharp increase in the numbers of Venetian pottery in Alexandria in the second half of the fourteenth century would verify this hypothesis. The latest deposits at Kom ed-Dikka are slightly earlier than this, so such statistics from this site are unavailable. Full publication of the ceramic finds from Kom el-Nadoura may provide this information (see preliminary study in François, "Contribution à l'étude d'Alexandrie islamique").



Phase II sgraffito ware imitated more expensive vessels of brass or bronze inlaid with gold and silver. The metal prototypes were produced for the military elite, as their dedicatory inscriptions indicate. The decorative inscriptions of the less expensive earthenware, on the other hand, was a convenient avenue for the nouveaux riches to express their newly acquired status. While the objects and inscriptions alone illustrate this pattern of patronage, they reveal little by themselves about production or marketing. Archaeological excavations, potters' signatures, and a reading of contemporary Arabic sources do provide information, however limited, about the ceramic market in Mamluk Cairo.

What is Cairo today consisted of two cities in the medieval period: al-Qāhirah and Fustat. The economic health of medieval Cairo depended, in part, on the dynamic relationship between the marketplaces of those two cities. Their markets, although distinct and independent, overlapped to some degree. Most (but not all) of the official or semi-official centers of manufacture, trade, and sale in the Mamluk period were located in al-Qāhirah, close to the palaces of the amirs.⁹⁰ The Fustat markets, on the other hand, consisted of small, privately-owned businesses, managed with little interference from the state, and organized by an informal "guild" system or "craft group."⁹¹

There has been much debate about the character of Islamic guilds and the way they compare or contrast with the sophisticated guild system of medieval Europe.⁹² Guilds in Europe were formed voluntarily by the artisans to protect their economic interests. By contrast, the "guilds" of medieval Egypt were created by the state to facilitate tax collection and urban policing and to stop fraud.⁹³ The state delegated these responsibilities to market inspectors (*muḥtasibs*), who were appointed to collect market taxes, ensure quality of merchandise, control prices and coinage,

⁹⁰The concentration of Mamluk and Ottoman *wakālahs* and *khāns* off of the Qasabah between Bāb al-Futūḥ and Bāb Zuwaylah is illustrated on Map 9 (p. 330) and Map 10 (p. 331) in R. B. Parker, B. Sabin, and C. Williams, *Islamic Monuments: a Practical Guide* (Cairo, 1988).

⁹¹The art historian Irwin argues that formal guilds in the European sense (called *asnab* in later sources) did not exist in Egypt before the Ottoman period. For an overview of the history of the guild structure in Islam, see R. Irwin, *Islamic Art in Context: Art, Architecture, and the Literary World* (N.Y., 1997), 138.

⁹²A. M. Rezaq, "The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt and Their Social and Military Rank During the Medieval Period," *Islamic Archaeological Studies* 3 (1988): 4–5, and Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 97–105. Lapidus' bibliography on European and Islamic guilds is worth consulting.

⁹³The state imposed the guild system on local craftsmen as a way of controlling the economy of the private sector. This arrangement even penetrated the amiral-run establishments. According to al-Maqrīzī, the workshop space in the textile market belonging to one Amīr al-Juyūsh was organized according to guilds (W. 'Izzi, "Objects Bearing the Name of an-Nasir Muhammad and His Successors," in *Colloque International sur l'Histoire du Caire*, ed. A. Raymond, M. Rogers, and M. Wahba [Cairo, 1972], 235).



and maintain moral standards.⁹⁴ The *muhtasib*, in turn, selected representatives from among the craftsmen (*‘arifs*) to assist him in these tasks. The functional equivalent of the *‘arif* among the merchants was the *shaykh*,⁹⁵ a term also applied to the head of a craft workshop, as the potter’s signature “*Shaykh al-Ṣinā‘ah*” indicates. That Egyptian craftsmen routinely signed their work is, to use Lapidus’ words, “a sign of pride and individuality out of keeping with the guild spirit as we know it for the West.”⁹⁶

The Arabic sources have little to say about the ceramics industry of Mamluk Cairo in any detail, however some generalizations can be made. Most of the pottery made for both local consumption and export was produced in Fustat. Ceramics, along with glass, metal smelting, and soap making, were mainstays of Fustat’s economy.⁹⁷ The American and French excavations of Fustat have produced a large quantity of ceramic material, including wasters and kilns, providing archaeological evidence for a vibrant ceramics industry in the city.⁹⁸ Mamluk sgraffito, found in abundance during the excavations, was, apparently, a specialty of the Fustat kilns and had a strong popular appeal. However, neither the local production nor import-export of pottery in the Mamluk period was so lucrative a business that it attracted the interest of the state.⁹⁹ Thus, there is no evidence for a state monopoly on pottery manufacture or the inclusion of potters within amiral or sultanik *wakālahs* and only sporadic references to the industry in contemporary written sources.

While the majority of the Fustat kilns were small, the large number of signed vessels in this period attests to some degree of industrial-scale production. For example, roughly one hundred underglaze-painted vessels alone can be attributed to the potter who signed his name “Ghaybī.”¹⁰⁰ This, compared with the twenty known vessels signed by the earlier Fatimid artist “Muslim”¹⁰¹ (a prolific potter in

⁹⁴Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 98.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 99.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 276, n. 47.

⁹⁷A. Rezaq, “Crafts and Industries in Medieval Egypt and Their Role in Building the Social Structure of its Main Urban Centers,” *Islamic Archaeological Studies* 4 (1991): 72.

⁹⁸See especially Bahgat, “Les fouilles de Foustât.” For a comprehensive list of publications related to modern excavations at Fustat, see B. J. Walker, “New Approaches to Working with Old Maps.”

⁹⁹In his recent review of the contemporary Arabic sources touching on this industry, Marcus Milwright concludes that pottery was generally of little interest to historians of the day and not as highly valued by Egyptian and Syrian consumers as other goods (M. Milwright, “Pottery in the Written Sources of the Ayyubid-Mamluk Period [c. 567–923/1171–1517],” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 62 no. 3 [1999]: 504–18).

¹⁰⁰Abel, “Un maître céramiste,” 149.

¹⁰¹M. Jenkins, “Muslim, an Early Fatimid Ceramist,” *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*



his own day), illustrates to what degree ceramic production had grown by the Mamluk period. The most prolific of Mamluk potters, Sharaf al-Abawānī, seems to have specialized in the production of sgraffito wares. It is difficult to make an estimate of the scale of his workshop's output. Much of the material that bears his signature is fragmentary and inaccessible.¹⁰² The few publications of his work are based, for the most part, on the whole vessels on display at the Islamic Museum or random sherds from small excavations in Cairo and Alexandria and do not reflect the impressive extent of his production.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, the quantity of excavated sherds from Mamluk sites far surpasses that for any other period of Muslim Egypt's history.

Regardless of the quality of the individual vessel, glazed pottery (such as underglaze-painted, luster, and sgraffito wares) was time-consuming and expensive to produce. The application of the slip, the incision, the glazing, and additional slip-painted designs were stages in the manufacturing process that, in spite of the number of firings, added to the production time.¹⁰⁴ Even the most simple and quickly executed designs were produced in this manner. The sheer volume of sgraffito fragments recovered from Mamluk deposits in Egypt is one indication of the extensive activity of these workshops. It is significant that the long process of manufacture did not prevent mass-production of such wares by the ceramic shops.

No single workshop monopolized sgraffito production either through special order or for the general market. The multiplicity of potter's signatures supports this notion and so do scattered references to ceramic kilns in the Arabic sources. The historian Ibn Duqmāq merely mentions the locations of *fakhkhūrah*, that is groups of ceramic kilns, and their owners.¹⁰⁵ His brief notes are important, because they indicate that individual potters routinely managed multiple kilns and that these kiln groups were scattered throughout the city. Although Ibn Duqmāq names several of the kiln owners, none of the names corresponds to the potters' signatures inscribed on sgraffito ware. The historian does not specify the products of the kilns, but it is probable that they did not specialize in sgraffito and sold, instead,

26 (1986): 363.

¹⁰²Large cases of the ceramic material from the Fustat mounds are stored in the Islamic Museum in Cairo, where much of it is uncataloged, difficult to access, and largely unstudied. My own work is based on the sherds and complete vessels in the gallery and the museum's small study collection.

¹⁰³Marzouk, "Three Signed Specimens" (3 sherds); 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Le sgraffito de l'Égypte," 1–23, Pls. 1–8 (2 sherds); idem, "Documents sur la poterie" (3 complete vessels and 7 fragments). Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, do not estimate the number of sherds carrying this potter's name from their excavations at Fustat.

¹⁰⁴In some cases, sgraffitos may have been fired twice (Décobert and Gayraud, "Une céramique d'époque mamelouke trouvée à Tod," 98, n. 1).

¹⁰⁵*Kitāb al-Intiṣār li-Wāsiyat 'Iqd al-Amṣār* in Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, 9.



ordinary, unglazed table and kitchenwares.¹⁰⁶

Allusions to kiln specialization can be found in the Geniza documents, where terms used for particular kinds of potters are defined. For example, the *fakhhkhār* (pl. *fakhhkhūrī*) made architectural pipes from clay. The *qaddār* specialized in pots for export, the *kūzī* produced narrow-necked and spoutless water jugs, and the *ghadā' irī* made translucent dishes.¹⁰⁷ On the basis of this, Goitein concludes that "each type of vessel was made by a separate group of artisans."¹⁰⁸ Such a rich vocabulary also suggests that the average Cairene consumer was quite knowledgeable about pottery and could distinguish among the many products of an extensive and specialized urban market.¹⁰⁹ However, the kinds of pottery described in the Geniza documents are unglazed and industrial wares, not the glazed and signed vessels excavated at Fustat.

References to pottery in the chronicles and administrative manuals are more problematic. The difficulty with these texts rests in the ambiguous ceramics terms that are used intermittently in the narratives. Various attempts by scholars to define these terms have had some limited success.¹¹⁰ Many of the terms refer to vessel shapes and fabric composition, which are the most important criteria in determining ceramic typology. In the Arabic chronicles, *aṭbāq* (serving trays), *suḥūn* (dishes), *awānī* (vessels), and *mā'idah* (table or large tray) were inclusive terms that correspond to a variety of vessel types based on broad categories of shape and function.¹¹¹ Occasionally, the medieval author offers additional information about the vessel, such as its composition (gold, silver porcelain/earthenware), relative size, and function (for serving meat, for drinking flavored refreshments), especially when he is describing an important affair, like an official banquet (*simāt*). These descriptions, however, are short and inconsistent in the details they provide. The chroniclers were not as interested in the serving vessels or even the food served on these occasions as in the expense of the affair and the guest list.¹¹² The shape and decoration (if any) of the serving and drinking

¹⁰⁶For a definition of *fakhhkhūrah*, see below.

¹⁰⁷S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, (Los Angeles, 1967–93), 1:110.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁰⁹The same is true for textiles. The Geniza texts reveal a language replete with terms to describe raw materials, colors, cuts, and technologies of weaving and embroidery.

¹¹⁰Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:110–11; Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, 4–7.

¹¹¹The definitions I have provided are based on the way al-Qalqashandī uses the terms in his description of banquet ceremonial (Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Kitāb Ṣubḥ al-A'shā* [Cairo, 1963]).

¹¹²Al-Qalqashandī's descriptions of court banquets held on the two 'īds is more informative than those al-Maqrīzī includes in his *Khiṭaṭ*. See especially *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 3:523–24, as described



vessels used at banquets cannot be reconstructed from these chronicle entries alone.

Vessel shapes are not the only criteria by which we can determine workshop specialization in the medieval sources. *Khazaf* and *ṣīnī*, for example, refer to fabric composition. They are problematic terms. *Ṣīnī* ("in Chinese style") literally refers to porcelain; *khazaf* has until today retained its traditional meaning of ordinary pottery, or earthenware. The differentiation between the two materials may not have been so clear-cut, though, to authors like al-Maqrīzī and al-Nuwayrī. The two terms are used almost interchangeably in the texts.¹¹³ *Zabḍīyah* (plates or platters) are usually described as "*ṣīnī*";¹¹⁴ expensive grilled lamb and sweet chicken were served in *suḥūn khazaḥīyah* (clay tableware/dishes).¹¹⁵ The textual association of earthenware with Chinese porcelain may indicate that a fine, glazed earthenware, rather than true porcelain, was intended.¹¹⁶ It is likely that these were underglaze-painted earthenwares (the local imitations of Ming blue-and-white porcelains), although the texts are not specific on this point.

A third source of information on the products of medieval ceramic kilns, in addition to the Geniza documents and the Arabic chronicles, are the *ḥisbah* manuals. These were written for the market inspectors (*muḥtasibs*) and provide invaluable information on prices, quality, and market terminology from the twelfth century and throughout the Mamluk period.¹¹⁷ One Mamluk manual, *Ma'ālim al-Qurbah fī Aḥkām al-Ḥisbah*, is of particular importance for its contribution to our knowledge about ceramic specialization. The author, who is known as Ibn al-Ukhūwah (d. 1329), was an Egyptian *muḥtasib* and a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.¹¹⁸ Ibn al-Ukhūwah devotes two chapters (chs. 55 and 56) to the sellers of earthenware and waterpots (*fī al-ḥisbah 'alā bā'ati quḍūrī al-khazaḥī wa-al-kizānī*) and clay merchants and molders (*fī al-ḥisbah 'alā al-fākhīrānīn wa-al-ghaddārīn*), respectively.¹¹⁹ In spite of their brevity, these two entries are informative. The author differentiates between two kinds of ceramic products: unglazed cooking pots and small jugs and glazed wares of a finer quality clay. In the first entry (ch. 55) the guidelines are addressed to those who sell common, unglazed wares. The

below.

¹¹³Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, 9.

¹¹⁴Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:145.

¹¹⁵Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 3:524, ll. 6–7.

¹¹⁶Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, 5; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:145.

¹¹⁷Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:82.

¹¹⁸Ibn al-Ukhūwah, *Ma'ālim al-Qurbah fī Aḥkām al-Ḥisbah* (London, 1938), xvii. His full name is Diyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Qurashī al-Shāfi'ī.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, 222–23.



merchants themselves may have been the potters, because they are advised not to sell broken vessels plastered in such a way that they appear whole.¹²⁰

The second entry (ch. 56) is particularly interesting for its data on raw materials. In this section, Ibn al-Ukhūwah specifies the market standards for ceramic kilns and deals with such issues as the proper dung to fire kilns and the composition of clays and colored glazes. He distinguishes between potters (*fākhīrānīn*) and clay merchants (*bā'atu al-ghaddārī*); it is significant that fine clay could be sold separately from the finished product. The term used for this fine clay (*ghadar*) has been translated by Levy as "porcelain clay," but Goitein's "finely glazed earthenware" seems more suitable.¹²¹ Furthermore, Levy's "porcelain vase" (*zabādī*), described in the text as produced from either crushed pebbles or sand,¹²² is likely a local imitation of porcelain made of the friable Egyptian and Syrian stonepastes usually associated with Mamluk underglaze-painted ware.¹²³ The author refers to the raw materials acceptable in the production of blue, green, and manganese coloring.¹²⁴ There is little doubt that underglaze-painted ware is what is being described here, rather than sgraffito. In fact, there are no specific references to sgraffito ware in Ibn al-Ukhūwah's text.

The potters of medieval Cairo specialized in a variety of earthenware tablewares and accessories. It is difficult to determine, however, exactly how this market specialization operated, because of the ambiguity of the ceramic terms used in the Arabic sources. The sources provide little detailed information on vessel shape and have nothing to say about cost of manufacture or prices paid for special orders. Furthermore, neither the Arab historians nor the authors of the documents in the Ben Ezra geniza specifically address the production, marketing, and use of sgraffito wares. In fact, there seems to be no Arabic term that we can identify with sgraffito.¹²⁵

What may at first appear to be an oversight on the part of the historians may, rather, reflect a significant characteristic of the sgraffito manufacturing process. The patterns of some Phase I Egyptian sgraffito resemble the radial designs of underglaze-painted ware produced in the Bahri Mamluk period and they may

¹²⁰Ibid., 89 and 222.

¹²¹Ibid., 89, l. 13.

¹²²Ibid., ll. 3–4.

¹²³R. B. Mason and E. J. Keall, "Petrography of Islamic Pottery from Fustat," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27 (1990): 181.

¹²⁴Ibn al-Ukhūwah, *Ma'ālim al-Qurbah*, 89 (l. 6) and 223 (ll. 5–6).

¹²⁵There is no standard term in modern Arabic for "sgraffito." *Mahfūr* (dug or carved) is often used today in Egypt for both sgraffito and champlévé.



have been fired together in the same kilns.¹²⁶ According to medieval sources, unglazed wares were made and sold separately from glazed wares. Furthermore, the production of glazed pottery was specialized, and a wide variety of function-specific types were available to the general populace. It is possible that most, if not all, of these glazed wares were produced in the same workshops. That there was no term for “sgraffito” (otherwise known as “incised and slipped pottery”) in Mamluk Egypt may indicate that most workshops did not specialize in sgraffito manufacture. In this scenario, sgraffito would have been produced by the same potters that made underglaze-painted wares and fired them in the same kilns. The range of potters’ signatures and their products supports this argument. The names of Ghaybī, al-Ustādh al-Maṣrī, Ghāzī, and Shaykh al-Ṣinā‘ah are inscribed on both sgraffito and underglaze-painted wares.¹²⁷

Potters’ workshops were organized by the state-imposed guild structure outlined earlier.¹²⁸ The workshops that constituted these proto-guilds were organized internally according to a hierarchy of offices, some of which were by state appointment while others were earned through artisanal proficiency. The shaykh and his assistant in the provinces, the *nāqib*, were selected by the state. They acted on behalf of the workshops in dealings with the state, oversaw their daily activities, and resolved problems among craftsmen. Another supervisory officer, the *ustādh*, assisted the *nāqib*. Among the regular craftsmen, the *mu‘allim* (master craftsman) occupied an important position within the workshop. He was responsible for the management of the kiln and training new apprentices.

The word *mu‘allim* was inscribed on many objects and buildings in Cairo.¹²⁹ It may have been common practice for guild and workshop directors to sign their works. It is this custom which is reflected in the potters’ signatures. Signatures such as *al-Ustādh al-Maṣrī* (the Egyptian “master,” or supervisor), *Shaykh al-Ṣinā‘ah* (workshop director), and *al-Mu‘allim* (the master craftsman) are titles that correspond to rank within the workshop or guild and are not names or nicknames in and of themselves.

It is also possible that the apprentices of the master craftsmen signed their works with the titles of their teachers. There is precedence for this practice in the

¹²⁶When going through boxes of sherds in Cairo, Alexandria, and Toronto, I found many sgraffitos with spots of blue glaze adhering to the exterior, the result of simultaneous firing with blue-stained, underglaze-painted pottery.

¹²⁷Abd al-Rāziq, “Documents sur la poterie,” 4; M. A. Abel, *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers égyptiens*, 142–43; and idem, “Un maître céramiste.” Of course, the workshop of Sharaf al-Abawānī is an obvious exception. His signature has not been associated with underglaze-painted wares.

¹²⁸Rezq, “The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt,” 6.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, 5–7.



Fatimid period: the lusterware artist Muslim sometimes countersigned the work of his students.¹³⁰ Apprenticeships seem to have been more important in the fourteenth century than in the fifteenth. For instance, the vessels signed by Sharaf al-Abawānī were produced over a long period of time, considering the long development of signature style, decorative program, and vessel shape. There is little doubt that this artist's name came to be associated with quality sgraffitos, and no other name is as well known in the realm of ceramic objects with "military" inscriptions. Not only did his students continue to copy their master's style(s) after his death,¹³¹ but they may have adopted his signature as a brand name. This would account for the large number of vessels signed by him and the wide range of styles represented.

Potters' signatures indicating either guild-workshop status or ethnicity are more a phenomenon of late fourteenth and fifteenth century underglaze-painted ware than of sgraffito.¹³² Signatures are relatively rare on Bahri Mamluk ceramics; the series ascribed to Sharaf al-Abawānī and other isolated signatures¹³³ are some notable examples and most are associated with sgraffito. This, compared to the roughly thirty different signatures inscribed in the foot rings of Burji Mamluk underglaze-painted vessels,¹³⁴ suggests changes in ceramic production patterns. One impetus for the widespread use of potters' signatures was porcelain imported from China.¹³⁵ The import of Ming blue-and-white porcelains bearing reign marks (painted in blue on the exterior base of the ring foot) may have initiated the practice of marking the foot ring of blue-and-white underglaze-painted bowls with two oval blue dots in fifteenth-century Egypt.¹³⁶

¹³⁰Jenkins, "Muslim, an Early Fatimid Ceramist," 364.

¹³¹Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie," 32.

¹³²Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 150–51; Abel, "Un maître céramiste."

¹³³For instance, a single bowl in Kuwait signed by one "Ḥannā," ('Abd al-Rāziq, "La sgraffito de l'Égypte," 4). The inscription is broken, however, and the author is unsure of the reading of the artist's name. There are also references to work in sgraffito (?) by Ghaybī (Abel, "Un maître céramiste," 143) and several signatures mentioned in 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie," 4. Unfortunately, the authors do not clarify whether their work was true sgraffito or a plain glazed earthenware.

¹³⁴Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 149.

¹³⁵There have been many studies on the impact of Yuan and Ming imports on the development of Islamic underglaze-painted wares. Some of the more comprehensive ones include Peterson, "Blue and White Imitation Pottery"; Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 150–51; B. Gyllensvard, "Recent Finds of Chinese Ceramics at Fustat (Parts 1 and 2)," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 45 (1973): 91–119 and 47 (1975): 93–117; and L. Golombek, R. B. Mason, and G. A. Bailey, *Tamerlane's Tableware: A New Approach to the Chinoiserie Ceramics of Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Toronto, 1996).

¹³⁶Chinese reign marks in porcelains began with the reign of Xuande, ca. 1426. For illustrations of the blue-dot mark in Mamluk pottery see Peterson, "Blue and White Imitation Pottery," 79 (cat.



Whatever the stylistic origins, the need for including a workshop mark (as an inscribed signature or a painted dot) reflected general developments in the organization of production. Guild membership was originally restricted to skilled craftsmen. Only through lengthy apprenticeships could an inexperienced artisan gain a foothold in a respected and established workshop.¹³⁷ Whether the preponderance of signatures and marks in the fifteenth-century underglaze-painted wares corresponds to an expansion of the ceramic industry (which is unlikely) or a breakdown of the internal hierarchy of the workshops (and the abrogation or shortening of apprenticeships) cannot be determined. These factors, apparently, did not exist in the first half of the fourteenth century, when potters' signatures were much less common. That only the signature of Sharaf al-Abawānī appears at all frequently in this period may indicate a smaller or more exclusive ceramics industry.

Lapidus reduces the Mamluk class structure to four components: the ruling elite (*al-khāṣṣah*) comprised of the sultan and his retinue and the highest ranking amirs and civil officials; the notables (*al-a'yān*), that is the religious leaders (ulama) and low level officials, the rich merchants, distinguished local families, and skilled individuals (physicians, architects); the common people (*al-'āmmah*); and the lumpenproletarians.¹³⁸ The social status of potters in Mamluk society was nebulous. According to al-Maqrīzī, craftsmen, including potters, belonged to the sixth class of Egyptian society—collectively called *al-'āmmah* (commoners) or *al-'awāmm* (the masses).¹³⁹ To this class also belonged the taxpayers, retailers, and the working class in general.¹⁴⁰ Clearly, they were not among the elite of society. In today's parlance, we would call them lower middle-class. However, certain trades enjoyed some respectability. Both al-Maqrīzī and Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī (a market inspector) write about a social hierarchy of trades that reflects relative degrees of religiosity, cleanliness, and prosperity. Tailors, bakers, carpenters, and furriers were the most respectable trades; goldsmiths and silk merchants were moderately respectable; and slaves, singers, prostitutes, and garbagemen were social outcasts.¹⁴¹

#22); Abel, *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers*, 112, Pl. 24; Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, Pl. 45.1 and 3; and du Plat Taylor and Megaw, "Cypriot Medieval Glazed Pottery," 148 (cat. A1 and A2)—exported to Cyprus. Unpublished example in Royal Ontario Museum, Fustat collection—inv. #909.42.1.

¹³⁷Rezq, "The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt," 6.

¹³⁸Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 79–82.

¹³⁹Rezq, "The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt," 4.

¹⁴⁰Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 82.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*; Rezq, "The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt," 4.



Pottery production was a moderately respectable profession and perhaps occupied the lower end of the scale, because the work dirtied the craftsman's hands. To equate an individual with the "potters in Fustat" was an insult.¹⁴² That potters are seldom mentioned specifically in the Arabic sources also illustrates their relatively low status among "respectable" Cairenes. However, as in all the crafts, there was an opportunity for advancement within the workshop and some degree of social mobility. Skilled craftsmen were in demand and were held in some esteem. A master craftsman, for example, could be addressed as shaykh¹⁴³ and, with the assistance of an important or wealthy patron, could attain official positions in the government.¹⁴⁴ The career of Sharaf al-Abawānī may reflect this pattern; the work he did for amirs and judges gave him a practical monopoly on inscriptional sgraffito.

What effect the plague of 1348–49 had on the social status of craftsmen is difficult to ascertain. Crafts certainly went into decline, because both craftsmen and patrons perished. Al-Maqrīzī informs us that "most of the crafts ceased and it was difficult to find a water-carrier or any craftsman."¹⁴⁵ The decline and demise of sgraffito production in Egypt could, then, be related to the events of this year. The proliferation of potters' signatures on underglaze-painted wares of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century may indicate that the social position of potters had improved in this period and that production was growing.

II. POTTERS' SIGNATURES—SHARAF AL-ABAWĀNĪ

It was relatively rare for medieval potters in the Islamic world to sign their work. With the exception of Iranian Seljuk¹⁴⁶ and Fatimid lusterware, only Mamluk sgraffito (fourteenth century) and underglaze-painted wares (late fourteenth-fifteenth centuries) were signed on a regular basis. The incorporation of the potter's name into the inscriptional design of Mamluk sgraffito is a complicated phenomenon that requires a reassessment of medieval Cairene "guild" structure and patterns of market and patronage. A precedence for such practice may have been set in the Fatimid period, with the work of the potter Muslim.

¹⁴²Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:91–92.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 129.

¹⁴⁵*Kitāb al-Sulūk*, quoted in Rezq, "The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt," 13.

¹⁴⁶A. Caiger-Smith, *Lustre Pottery* (New York, 1985), 71, cites the signatures of two potters from Kashan, Abū Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad and Abū Zayd. There are also isolated examples of signatures from earlier ceramic traditions, such as the "Aḥmad" that appears on one Samanid ware vessel from Nishapur (personal communication, Lisa Golombek). An example of a potters' signature from Anatolian sgraffito is published in Ö. Süslü, *Tasvirlerine Göre Anadolu Selçuklu Kiyafetleri* (Ankara, 1989), Photo 149.



Various forms of the signature ‘*aml Muslim ibn al-Dahhān*’ (“the work of Muslim, the son of al-Dahhān”) appear on some twenty known lusterware vessels of the Fatimid period.¹⁴⁷ Several of these are inscribed with the name of the patron, usually a member of Caliph al-Ḥākim’s (r. 996–1021) court. Chronological attributions depend entirely on these dedicatory inscriptions. For example, Marilyn Jenkins has identified Ghaban, named as Commander-in-Chief in the inscription on one plate in the Islamic Museum in Cairo, as a military commander who served al-Ḥākim in 1011–13.¹⁴⁸ It is a very useful piece of information, because it narrows the production of Muslim to at least this two-year period. Likewise, the dedication of another plate in the Benaki Museum in Athens—which reads “[The work of] Muslim, son of al-Dahhān, to please . . . Ḥassān Iqbāl al-Ḥākimī”—can be attributed to the reign of al-Ḥākim on the basis of the *nisbah* “al-Ḥākimī,” even if the particular individual is unknown from historical sources. The work of the Mamluk sgraffito artist Sharaf al-Abawānī can be dated in the same manner. The *nisbah* “al-Nāṣirī” in the dedicatory inscription identifies the patron as a mamluk of the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (r. 1293–94, 1299–1309, and 1310–41) or al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (r. 1347–51, 1354–61).

Many parallels can be drawn between the vessels signed by Muslim and those produced some three and four hundred years later by Mamluk ceramists. Muslim painted his signature in various locations on the vessel: in the foot (the name usually reduced to “Muslim”), on the exterior, within the interior wall registers, and in the bowl’s well.¹⁴⁹ Likewise, abbreviated signatures are painted in the vessel foot of fourteenth- to fifteenth-century underglaze-painted ware. Sgraffito signatures of the fourteenth century were more ambitious: Sharaf al-Abawānī initially inscribed his signature upside-down in hidden areas of the decoration and, in a later phase of his work, incised and slip-painted his name in a signature phrase in individual, prominent registers. Furthermore, Muslim’s incorporation of his signature into a scrolled register seems to foreshadow the early inscriptional, scribbled registers and later signature registers that distinguished the work of Sharaf al-Abawānī two hundred years later.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷Jenkins, “Muslim, an Early Fatimid Ceramist,” 363.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 361.

¹⁴⁹For illustrations of these, see Jenkins, “Muslim, an Early Fatimid Ceramist.” Other sources include Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, and ‘A. Yūsuf, “Pottery of the Fatimid Period and its Artistic Style,” *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University* 20 no. 2 (1958): 173–279 (in Arabic).

¹⁵⁰Two bowls in the Islamic Museum in Cairo are important in this regard. Muslim has signed the exterior of one bowl, the interior of which is occupied primarily by a wide, scribbled inscriptional register (inv. #15958—Jenkins, “Muslim, an Early Fatimid Ceramist,” 368, App. #12). On another his signature appears below the interior rim festoon, apparently taking the place of a dedicatory



Do these similarities constitute continuity or revival of ceramic styles? Inscriptional registers on a scribbled ground continued in Ayyubid luster and sgraffito ware, but artists' signatures apparently did not. It would seem, then, that the singular emphasis by Sharaf al-Abawānī on his own signature at a time when potter's signatures were rare would represent a revival of an earlier practice. If potter's signatures are somehow related to the production process, then one could argue for parallelisms in kiln or "guild" organization, as the signature of sgraffito artist "Shaykh al-Şinā'ah" indicates. There is another important point of comparison between the work of Muslim and Sharaf al-Abawānī. The dedicatory inscriptions which are so prominently displayed on their vessels emphasize that they worked, at least part of the time, for court patrons. The association of Muslim with al-Ḥakīm's court and Sharaf al-Abawānī with the amirs of al-Nāşir Muḥammad and his sons suggests commonalities in patronage practices, ones that will be discussed further in this section.

Sharaf al-Abawānī is not the only Mamluk potter who signed his work. Although his signature is the most well known for local sgraffito, other names of sgraffito artists are known to us. 'Umar, Mūsá, 'Umar al-Asyūṭī (from Asyūṭ, Upper Egypt), Aḥmad al-Asyūṭī, al-Ra'īs (the master craftsman),¹⁵¹ 'Alī, Ḥannā (or Ḥasan), and al-Kaslān ("the lazy") are names that have appeared only rarely on sgraffito sherds in the Islamic Museum in Cairo and in the Dār al-Āthār al-Islamīyah in Kuwait.¹⁵² Other signatures on sgraffito ware have also been found on sherds of contemporary underglaze-painted ware, which is perhaps our best evidence that the two wares were fired together in the same kilns. Among the artists who manufactured both wares were al-Ustādh al-Maşrī (or simply al-Maşrī, "the Egyptian supervisor"), Shaykh al-Şinā'ah ("the workshop director"), Ghāzī, and al-Faqīr ("the poor").¹⁵³

register (description in *ibid.*, 369, App. #20; illustrated in Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, Pl. XXII, 8a and b).

¹⁵¹The organization of workshops must have been more or less the same for all crafts, because many terms of "guild" hierarchy can be found in artists' signatures in different media. L. A. Mayer, *Islamic Metalworkers and Their Works* (Geneva, 1959), provides some useful definitions of some of these terms from metalwork. The terms *tilmīdh*, *ghulām*, *ra'īs*, and *'ājir* are defined as student, apprentice, master, and journeyman, respectively (p. 14). His point of reference, in this case, is the medieval European professional guild, which probably differed to some degree from the structure of Islamic workshops.

¹⁵²The names can be found in 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie"; *idem*, "Le sgraffito de l'Égypte"; and Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, 84.

¹⁵³Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*; Abel, *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers*; *idem*, "Un maître céramiste," 142; and Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, Pl. XLIV.1, 2, and 3.



Few of the sherds that bear these signatures are illustrated in publications, but of those that are one is given the impression that the artist made no attempt to hide the signature. The artists' names can be the primary decoration of the well of the bowl or may be placed in inscriptional registers just below the interior rim or in the larger cavetto along with dedications to patrons or general blessings.¹⁵⁴

With the exception of Sharaf al-Abawānī, signing sgraffito was not a common practice. While ceramic signatures are rare in the Bahri Mamluk period (1250–1382), in the Burji period (1382–1517) more than thirty names are known.¹⁵⁵ Abel's analyses of signatures in Mamluk underglaze-painted wares, published sixty years ago in an article and monograph, remain the most comprehensive catalogue and stylistic study of what he considers different workshops.¹⁵⁶ The signatures are usually painted in blue in the underside of the foot and, like the signatures inscribed on sgraffito ware, represent a wide range of personal names, nicknames, *nisbahs*, and professional titles.¹⁵⁷ Many are family names; one imagines father and son working alongside one another or the son receiving his training from his father.¹⁵⁸ Other names indicate professions other than pottery making, such as "al-Khabbāz" (the baker). The majority of the signatures are not identifiable as personal names. The potters were, therefore, anonymous to most consumers of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Egypt and Syria, as they are to us today.¹⁵⁹ The purpose in placing what are, for the most part, nicknames on the underside of the foot may be related to the same workshop practices that are described by Cushion and Honey

¹⁵⁴For signatures as tondo designs, see Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, Pl. XLIV. 2 and 3. For more published illustrations of artists' names in inscriptional registers, see 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Le sgraffito de l'Égypte," and Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, Pl. XLIV.1.

¹⁵⁵Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 149.

¹⁵⁶Abel, *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers*, and idem, "Un maître céramiste."

¹⁵⁷This is by no means an exhaustive list of names, although I have tried to be as thorough as possible: Sār al-Fākhūrī al-Maṣrī ("the chief Egyptian potter"), al-Ustādh al-Maṣrī, Shaykh al-Ṣinā'ah, al-Muhandim ("the tidy"), al-Tawrīzī (from Tabrīz), Ghaybī, Dāhin ("painter, glazer"), al-Faqīr, al-Naqqāsh ("inciser"), Darwīsh (Sufi "dervish"), al-Khabbāz ("the baker"), al-Buqaylī ("little green-grocer"?), al-Hurmūzī (from Hormūz), 'Ajamī (a Persian), Ghazzāl ("gazelle"?), Ghāzī ("frontier warrior"), al-Shāmī ("the Syrian"), al-Shā'ir ("the poet"), al-Mu'allim ("master craftsman"), al-Ujayl ("Speedy"), al-Razzāz ("the polisher"), Bādir, Abū al-'Izz, and al-Barrānī ("potter") (Abel, "Un maître céramiste," 142, and Jenkins, "Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery," 112).

¹⁵⁸There are, for instance, Sār al-Fākhūrī "et ses fils," Ghāzī and Ibn Ghāzī, and al-Khabbāz and Ibn al-Khabbāz (Abel, "Un maître céramiste," 142) and Ghaybī and Ibn Ghaybī al-Tawrīzī (ibid., 151; idem, *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers*, 17; and Jenkins, "Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery," 111–12).

¹⁵⁹Ghaybī, for one, worked in both Syria (probably Damascus) and Egypt (Cairo) (see Jenkins, "Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery," 112, and Abel, "Un maître céramiste," 151–52).



for European porcelains.¹⁶⁰ Abbreviated signatures were all that was needed to separate one artist's products from another in the kiln.¹⁶¹ This is particularly significant, given the evidence that underglaze-painted wares and sgraffito (and probably other ceramic types) were produced in the same workshops and fired in the same kilns.

The most prolific of the fifteenth-century potters of underglaze-painted ware is known to us as Ghaybī. His name appears on approximately 100 sherds in the holdings of the Islamic Museum in Cairo and a tile in Damascus.¹⁶² Known alternatively as Ghaybī al-Tawrīzī and Ghaybī al-Shāmī, his signatures indicate that he originally came from Tabrīz ("al-Tawrīzī") and then worked in Syria ("al-Shāmī") and Egypt.¹⁶³ His nickname, "Ghaybī," literally means "hidden" or (in a slightly different form) "absent"; it is a fitting signature for a migrant or, more likely, Sufi artist (see below).

On the basis of design parallels with Persian manuscripts and Chinese blue-and-whites, signed underglaze-painted wares can be dated from the third quarter of the fourteenth century to the end of the fifteenth.¹⁶⁴ The most conclusive evidence for dating Ghaybī's work to the mid-fifteenth century is a tile panel from the mausoleum complex of Ghars al-Dīn Khalīl al-Tawrīzī al-Dasarī in Damascus, completed in 1423 and signed by Ghaybī al-Tawrīzī.¹⁶⁵ This is not the only instance of an underglaze-painted tile signed by an artist hailing from Tabrīz. Ghaybī has signed another tile from the shrine of Sayyidah Nafīṣah in Cairo.¹⁶⁶

This relationship between the tile and pottery industries may be the key to understanding the role of potters' signatures in the fifteenth century. Clearly, artists who worked in the underglaze-painting technique produced both ordinary tablewares and architectural tiles, most likely in the same workshops. Signatures on tilework may have served a purpose similar to masonry marks from Crusader

¹⁶⁰J. P. Cushion and W. B. Honey, *Handbook of Pottery and Porcelain Marks* (London, 1956), 115.

¹⁶¹The practice is still used today in kilns shared by multiple potters. Students in ceramics classes generally carve their names into the foot of the vessel to identify their work from that of their classmates.

¹⁶²Abel, "Un maître céramiste," 149, and Jenkins, "Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery," 104.

¹⁶³Artists in the fourteenth century frequently changed their *nisbahs* when moving within and outside of Iran. See S. Blair, "Artists and Patronage in Late Fourteenth-Century Iran in the Light of Two Catalogues of Islamic Metalwork," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 48 (1985): 58–59.

¹⁶⁴Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 150. Abel, "Un maître céramiste," 153, suggests a fourteenth-century date for Ghaybī's work by stylistic comparisons with Chinese elements in Il Khanid manuscripts.

¹⁶⁵Jenkins, "Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery," 104.

¹⁶⁶Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 151.



monuments in the Latin Kingdom, which identified the work of individual artisans or companies of masons to facilitate the division of labor and payment.¹⁶⁷ This practice would then have been extended to tablewares, particularly if several artists shared the same kiln. Thus, the signature is placed in the ringfoot, out of the way of the vessel's decoration and of importance only to the internal operations of the workshop.

The *nisbah* "al-Tawrīzī" indicates a style associated with a place and is comparable, in this sense, to the popularity of the Mawṣilī *nisbah* in late Ayyubid and early Mamluk metalwork.¹⁶⁸ Atıl identifies potters' signatures in the Mamluk period with workshops, regional styles, and types of wares (underglaze-painted and sgraffito, for instance).¹⁶⁹ This would be a logical enough explanation if it were not for the fact that the fifteenth-century signatures are essentially invisible to the public eye and that both fourteenth- and fifteenth-century signatures are more or less anonymous to the consumer. I would argue that underglaze-painted signatures were meaningful primarily within the workshop. Sgraffito signatures, while functioning in the same manner, may have served an additional purpose. The placement of the signatures within the vessels' decoration would have caught the attention of the public. This, indeed, was probably its purpose.

Sharaf al-Abawānī is remarkable for signing his work at a time when sgraffito artists remained essentially anonymous. Much of his work is of rather fine quality, surpassing the indifferent appearance of most Mamluk sgraffito products, which are of coarse fabric, poor finish, and careless manufacture. His name, moreover, stands out for its sheer visibility. Rather than hiding his signature in the footring, like ceramic artists of the following century, in the latest phase of his career al-Abawānī incorporated his name within the main registers of the vessels' exterior decoration, relegating the patrons' names and titles to the less conspicuous interiors. This would seem to be contrary to the consumer practices of Mamluk patrons, who delighted in the grandiose display of their own names and blazons on the vessels they commissioned. For a patron to have purchased a vessel on which the artist's name appeared in a location more prominent than his own speaks of the reputation of this potter and the ambiguity of artistic patronage in Mamluk Egypt.

In spite of his importance, very little is known about Sharaf al-Abawānī. There are no monographs on his career comparable to Abel's *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers égyptiens d'époque mamlouke* and surprisingly few articles devoted to

¹⁶⁷D. Pringle, "Some Approaches to the Study of Crusader Masonry Marks in Palestine," *Levant* 31 (1981): 173–99.

¹⁶⁸Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 151.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*



him.¹⁷⁰ His association with the court of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad is confirmed by the dedicatory inscriptions and amiral blazons that appear on many of the vessels signed by this artist.¹⁷¹ Al-Abawānī's best work is dominated by blazons of office, several of which were introduced by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. There is steady technical and stylistic development in al-Abawānī's pottery; these emblazoned vessels represent the apex of his career. There is little doubt that he was manufacturing sgraffito wares well before the advent of the "military" style of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign, but exactly when his career began or how long it lasted is difficult to determine. Furthermore, as no catalogue of his work has been published and many collections in Egypt are difficult to access, one cannot begin to estimate the quantity of his production.

His signature includes the geographical *nisbah* "al-Abawānī," "from Ab(a)wān." Yaquṭ (*Mu'jam al-Buldān*) lists three places in Egypt by this name. 'Abd al-Rāziq cites the third, a village in the province of Bahnasā in Upper Egypt (well-known for pottery production), as the most likely candidate for the artist's home.¹⁷² The *nisbah* may have stood for a regional ceramic style, as "al-Mawṣilī" did for metalwork and "al-Tawrizī" did for underglaze painting. Whatever his origins, al-Abawānī did not limit his market to Upper Egypt. Vessels and sherds with his signature have been found in Cairo (Fustat), Alexandria (Kom ed-Dikka), and Luxor (Luxor Temple).¹⁷³ Wasters signed by him have been recovered from Fustat.¹⁷⁴

If the origins of this artist are enigmatic, so is his identity. "Sharaf al-Abawānī," like so many other potter's signatures, is a nickname and not identifiable from historical sources. The name is an abbreviation for "Sharaf al-Dīn," a fairly common title for Mamluk amirs in the fourteenth century.¹⁷⁵ The title was equally popular among the civilian elite of Cairo in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, where it was adopted by the ulama as well as artisans, and frequently used in conjunction

¹⁷⁰ Among the most commonly cited, and consulted for this study, are 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie" and Marzouk, "Three Signed Specimens." M. Muṣṭafá, "Sharaf al-Abawānī Ṣāni' al-Fākhūr al-Maṭlī," *Mu'tamar al-Āthār al-'Arabīyah al-Thāmin fī Dimashq* (1947), and Aḥmad 'Abd al-Rāziq, "La poterie glacée de l'époque mamluke d'après les collections égyptiennes," Ph.D. diss., Paris, 1970, were unavailable to me. However the results of both were incorporated into 'Abd al-Rāziq's 1967 article.

¹⁷¹ For the use of the *nisbah* "al-Malikī al-Nāṣirī" see Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 148, and my discussion below. 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie," 31, and Marzouk, "Three Signed Specimens," 501, make a point about the use of the *jāmdār* blazon. See 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Le sgraffito de l'Égypte," 9, for a discussion on the eagle.

¹⁷² 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie," 28–29; also idem, "Le sgraffito de l'Égypte."

¹⁷³ *The Luxor Museum*, 204, cat. #325; 202 and 205, figs. 163–65.

¹⁷⁴ 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie," 29–30.

¹⁷⁵ D. Ayalon, "Names, Titles, and 'Nisbas' of the Mamluks," *Israel Oriental Society* 4 (1975): 191.



with a geographical *nisbah*.¹⁷⁶ The title was by no means limited to Muslims, as Copts in the administration used it as well.¹⁷⁷ While the historical potter, then, cannot be identified, his signature form fits in comfortably with the titles assumed by many (we may believe successful) artists of the fourteenth century.

‘Abd al-Rāziq describes five different signature styles used by Sharaf al-Abawānī.¹⁷⁸ They fall into two distinct categories: his name carelessly scratched in small *naskhī* characters, often upside-down and discreetly incorporated into the interior design,¹⁷⁹ and a longer, more complex signature phrase carefully inscribed and often slip-painted in large *thulūth* characters, which usually occupies the main decorative register of the vessel exterior. These groups clearly belong to different stages of the potter’s career. *Naskhī* script, while it continued to be used for Qurans during the Mamluk period, is more characteristic of Ayyubid-period decoration. Similarly, *thulūth*, a script with long and straight uprights, barbed heads, and long and deep flourishes on final letters, was the decorative script *par excellence* of Mamluk art.

The more decorative and technical aspects of his work also indicate that Sharaf al-Abawānī’s career probably spanned the late Ayyubid-early Mamluk period. In stylistic terms, the artist was initially influenced by contemporary eastern Mediterranean sgraffito wares and then, with the enormous popularity of emblazoned and inscriptional damascened vessels, by local inlaid metalwork. What is most likely his earliest work is rather experimental and hybrid in style. There are many sherds from Kom ed-Dikka, signed by him, with exaggerated beveled rims and Cypriot-like shapes. A variety of designs on scribbled ground, familiar to thirteenth-century luster, underglaze-painted, and Byzantine-derivative sgraffito wares, on sherds from Fustat bear his signature in scrawled *naskhī*.¹⁸⁰ Anatolian-style champlévé, some of fine quality, and radial designs adopted from late Ayyubid and early Mamluk underglaze-painted wares were also adopted by al-Abawānī.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶There are many references in contemporary biographical dictionaries to civilians with this title. For a few, see Mūsá ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyá al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir fī Sirāt al-Malik al-Nāẓir*, ed. A. Huṭayṭ (Beirut, 1986), 122–24, 131, 255 (*quḍāh*); Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān*, ed. M. M. Amīn (Cairo, 1988–), 2:326–27 (poets), 340 (carpenter); 3:370 (poet); 4:260, 279 (copyists), and 132 (historian).

¹⁷⁷‘Abd al-Rāziq, “Documents sur la poterie,” 28—citing passages in al-Maqrīzī’s *Khīṭaṭ* and *Kitāb al-Sulūk*.

¹⁷⁸‘Abd al-Rāziq, “Le sgraffito de l’Égypte,” 11.

¹⁷⁹See ‘Abd al-Rāziq, “Document sur la poterie,” Pls. I and II.

¹⁸⁰Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, Pl. L; ‘Abd al-Rāziq, “Documents sur la poterie,” Pls. I and II.

¹⁸¹Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, Pl. L, and ‘Abd al-Rāziq, “Documents sur la poterie,” Pl. V.



At the turn of the fourteenth century al-Abawānī's style underwent a transformation. Like most arts of the period, Mamluk pottery fell under the powerful influence of contemporary metalworking.

Metalwork artists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries routinely signed their work. Most Mamluk vessels signed in this manner date from 1275–1350.¹⁸² The signature phrase usually associated with Sharaf al-Abawānī, '*aml al-'abd al-faqīr al-miskīn Sharaf al-Abawānī ghulām al-nās kullihim*' ("the work of the poor, humble slave, Sharaf al-Abawānī, servant of all the people"), is an elaboration, and an unexpectedly humble one, of the way metal artisans of the mid-thirteenth century signed their work. '*Aml*, and less frequently *ṣāni*', are terms used by the metalworkers to describe their final products.¹⁸³ The problematic term is *ghulām*. According to Mayer, *ghulām* was a guild term that corresponded to an apprentice, that is, the artisan who was one step below the master, or *ra'īs*.¹⁸⁴ Rice takes a different view on the matter. He suggests that while *ghulām* took on many shades of meaning over time, by the middle of the thirteenth century, the period the "Mosul school" of metalworking was at its height, a *tilmīdh* was the guild master's student, and a *ghulām* was literally the master's "slave" or at least a hireling.¹⁸⁵ Al-Abawānī, therefore, adapted a signature phrase commonly associated with the contemporary metalworking industry.¹⁸⁶

In this second phase of his career, al-Abawānī was heavily influenced by expensive metalwork. By imitating silver, gold, and brass work in earthenware through the use of color and forms, the quality of his work improved accordingly. Thinner walls in some cases, monumental but elegant proportions in other instances, and the application of slip-painted designs to highlight blazons and inscriptions created a product that was very different from the Byzantine and Cypriot-derivative sgraffito styles with which he was associated earlier. A change of taste alone would probably not account for such a significant development in ceramic style. It is apparent that al-Abawānī was producing sgraffito for a new market in the

¹⁸² Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 51.

¹⁸³ Mayer, *Islamic Metalworkers and Their Works*, 11.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁸⁵ D. S. Rice, *The Baptistère de Saint Louis* (Paris, 1953), 67.

¹⁸⁶ It is likely that al-Abawānī, like many artisans of his day, was a practicing Sufi, as the title "al-'abd al-faqīr al-miskīn" and even "ghulām al-nās" indicate. The nicknames taken by contemporary potters when signing their work attest to the same affiliation (al-Faqīr, Darwīsh, and Ghaybī). If this is so, the potters' organization of Fustat would be one of only two known "craft-based religious fraternities" in the Mamluk state (on the oft-cited silk-workers fraternity in Damascus, see Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 102–3). For the relationship between the quasi-guilds of the day and Sufi brotherhoods, see *ibid.*, and Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1981), 271.



fourteenth century.

Al-Abawānī sold his work to a variety of clients. While there is no doubt that his earlier products were mass-produced, everyday tablewares for Cairo's civilian population, by the fourteenth century Sharaf al-Abawānī was commissioned privately part of the time for amirs. The inscriptions occasionally name particular patrons. The majority, however, include a long list of formal military titles, without specifically naming a particular client. In spite of the standardization of vessel shape, size, and, above all, decorative program, the quality of these inscriptional wares varies considerably. Michael Rogers' suggestion that Sharaf al-Abawānī "may have been a high contractor who supervised the issue of standard equipment to an emir upon his appointment to high office" is a reasonable one.¹⁸⁷

All of these factors suggest that al-Abawānī began to manufacture sgraffito wares in the early Mamluk period, a transitional one for Egyptian art, and continued to be productive throughout al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign. This is a very long career for an individual potter. However, the name may have referred to the original master of a workshop. Given the quantity of vessels that contain his name, it is more reasonable to consider "Sharaf al-Abawānī" the brand of a workshop that specialized, at some point, in outfitting the kitchens or "mantle pieces" of amirs. It is significant that the popularity of this kind of inscriptional and emblazoned sgraffito ware probably did not survive into the fifteenth century, in spite of the fact that the hierarchical social system that promoted its production did. In a sense, the name of Sharaf al-Abawānī has come to stand for a passing Mamluk "fad."

MARKET

I. HERALDRY

Scholarship on Mamluk heraldry tends to emphasize the sultanate of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad because the elaboration of blazon forms and adoption in all media as surface decoration can be largely dated to his third reign. This was a period of artistic development. Amiral blazons of office were introduced into metalworking at this time and replaced the more universal emblems of royal authority. Contemporary with this innovation is the introduction of the epigraphic blazon, intimately related to the replacement of figures with inscriptions.

In his notes to Ibn Taghrībirdī's *Tārīkh Miṣr*, William Popper enumerates those objects and privileges he considers the "emblems of authority" for sultans and amirs.¹⁸⁸ Among the sultan's prerogatives were the royal saddle cover (*ghāshiyah*), sunshade (*mizallah*), tents (*khiyām*), and official inscriptions in

¹⁸⁷*The Luxor Museum*, 204.

¹⁸⁸William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans* (New York, 1977), 84–87.



embroidery (*ṭirāz*).¹⁸⁹ The amirs' symbolic world, on the other hand, consisted of the overcloak (*fawqanīyah*), robes of honor (*khilā'*), horses and swords, and coats-of-arms, or blazons (*rank*). The widespread use of Arabic inscriptions and heraldry in all media of Mamluk art, including ceramics, in the fourteenth century is a phenomenon that requires a somewhat lengthy explanation.¹⁹⁰

The Arabic sources have little to say about Mamluk blazons. Outside of isolated references to unidentified blazons, the most important information about Mamluk heraldry has been documented by Abū al-Fidā, Ibn Taghrībirdī, al-Dhahabī, and al-Qalqashandī. A frequently cited passage from the chronicle of Abū al-Fidā (1273–1331) associates certain emblems (*'alāmāt*) with particular amiral offices.¹⁹¹ For instance, the emblem of the *dawādār* was the penbox, the *silāḥdār* was the bow, the *jāmdār* the napkin, and the *jāwīsh* the golden dome. That amirs of a certain rank and office were assigned blazons of that office is supported by Ibn Taghrībirdī, according to whom the last Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ gave his taster (*jāshankīr*) Aybak the table (*khanjah*) as an emblem,¹⁹² and also by al-Dhahabī, who describes the blazon of the amir Kitbughā as a gold cup (the symbol of his office as cupbearer, or *sāqī*) on a *fesse* and red ground.¹⁹³ The association of Mamluk blazons with amiral office is, in this way, established by the Arabic sources.

Both Arabic and European sources record the methods by which amiral blazons were awarded. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, the sultan assigned blazons to his amirs upon their promotion.¹⁹⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, on the other hand, claims that

¹⁸⁹To the category of official, sultanic inscriptions belong the sultan's "signature" (*'alāmah*) that validates documents of appointments to public office (*taqlīds*) and assignments of *iqṭā'* (*manshūrs*) (Aḥmad ibn Faḍl-Allāh al-ʿUmārī, *Masālik al-Aḥṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār: L'Égypte, la Syrie, le Higaz et le Yemen*, ed. A. F. Sayyid [Cairo, 1985], 43–46). This point is discussed in detail in the following section.

¹⁹⁰*Rank* is a Persian term that originally meant "color" or "dye" (L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry* [Oxford, 1933], 26; Nasser Rabbat, "Rank," *EF*, 8:431; and Abū al-Mahāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* [Cairo, 1963–72], 15:36, n. 1). The term was used by medieval Arab historians in the general sense of "emblems." It designates, more specifically, the colorful insignia of the amirs and sultans of Egypt, Syria, and al-Jazira in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods (Rabbat, "Rank"). Mamluk *runūk* (pl.) have been broadly understood as symbols of military office.

¹⁹¹*Al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar*; passage quoted in Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 4.

¹⁹²*Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, as cited by Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*.

¹⁹³W. Leaf and S. Purcell, *Heraldic Symbols, Islamic Insignia, and Western Heraldry* (London, 1986), 58. In his *Al-Muntaqá*, al-Dhahabī provides what is probably the only illustration of a Mamluk blazon in a contemporary Arabic source (Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 1, n. 7).

¹⁹⁴W.-H. Rüdte de Collenberg, "L'héraldique de Chypre," *Cahiers d'héraldique* 3 (1977): 95.



each amir chose his own.¹⁹⁵ European historians also recognized the relationship between late Ayyubid and early Mamluk heraldry and amiral promotions. Describing events following the Battle of Mansura during St. Louis' First Crusade (1250), the French historian Joinville writes:

The arms of the sultan were gold, and such arms that the sultan bore, these young lads bore as well; and they were called *baharīz*. . . . When their beards started to grow, the sultan knighted them and they continued to bear his arms except that they were differenced, in that they had crimson charges such as rosettes, red bends or birds or other charges that they placed on their gold arms as they pleased.¹⁹⁶

There was a general understanding, then, among both Arab and European historians that Mamluk blazons were amiral prerogatives related to promotion to particular offices.

The proliferation of amiral blazons in glasswork, metalworking, ceramics, textiles, architecture, and painting in the early fourteenth century may be related to an intensified purchase of mamluks and an accelerated system of amiral promotion. Our primary sources on army statistics for the period are al-Maqrīzī (*Khīṭaṭ*) and al-Zāhirī (*Zubdat Kashf al-Mamālik*), who report on the redistribution of *iqṭā'āt* by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1314–15 (*al-rawk al-nāṣirī*) and an army census of unidentified date, respectively.¹⁹⁷ It is difficult to ascertain the numbers of mamluks made amirs from one reign to the next, but one does detect a general trend over time towards accelerated promotions and the enlargement of the sultan's private corps, the *khāṣṣakīyah*. Although al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was said to have bought mamluks on a scale never known before, the size of his army does not seem to have surpassed that of his predecessors.¹⁹⁸ In spite of this, the four hundred twenty-four amirs of different ranks accounted for in the *rawk al-nāṣirī* exceeds the one hundred sixty-four amirs "of former times" and eighty to three hundred amirs of

¹⁹⁵ *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, in Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 3.

¹⁹⁶ From his *Histoire de St. Louis*, translated and cited by Leaf and Purcell, *Heraldic Symbols*, 57–58.

¹⁹⁷ These accounts are reviewed in D. Ayalon, "Khāṣṣakiyya," *EF*, 4:1100.

¹⁹⁸ Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *BSOAS* 15 (1953): 223–24; Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 108. Al-Maqrīzī repeats 12,000 as the number of Royal Mamluks under three different sultans—Qalāwūn, al-Ashraf Khalīl, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *BSOAS* 15 [1953]: 224). Rather than take this figure too literally, we may consider this a statement emphasizing the equivalent sizes of the respective armies.



different years of the Circassian period.¹⁹⁹ As the numbers of amirs increases, so does the number of *khāṣṣakīyah*, from whose ranks most of the high amirs were recruited. Statistics taken from a variety of sources indicate that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad invested in the *khāṣṣakīyah*. The numbers vary according to the source: al-Ashraf Khalīl maintained some thirty to fifty *khāṣṣakīyah*, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad increased this number to at least forty and as many as ninety-two, Barsbāy named some one thousand, and al-Ghūrī supported nearly one thousand two hundred.²⁰⁰

Although the numbers of *khāṣṣakīyah* fluctuated throughout the Mamluk period, there is a more or less steady trend towards expanding the corps over time, a practice that seems to have begun with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and was further developed by his successors. Al-Nāṣir's practice of accelerated promotion of mamluks to amirships continued after his death. The references to the immediate promotion of common mamluks to an amirship of ten and the office of *sāqī* in mid-fourteenth-, fifteenth-, and sixteenth-century sources are too numerous to mention.²⁰¹ This practice, according to Ayalon, began around the end of Qalāwūn's reign. He adds:

Thus the numbers of amirs who, during the Circassian period, are stated to have passed directly from the rank of private to that of the highest amirs, is extremely great. The common expression used for such elevations is "(promoted) at one stroke" (*daf'atan waḥīdatan*).²⁰²

Rapid promotion of amirs in the mid-fourteenth century was, in part, a response to a shortage of manpower following a series of plagues.²⁰³ The practice, however, continued an initiative of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that aimed at fostering a circle of intimate and trustworthy associates, as Levanoni has demonstrated. This may also have been the rationale behind the build-up of the royal guard, the *khāṣṣakīyah*. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad actively promoted his *khāṣṣakīyah*, advancing them to

¹⁹⁹The sources used here by Ayalon should be treated with caution (Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *BSOAS* 15 [1953]: 471).

²⁰⁰Figures from the Circassian period may reflect a change in nomenclature, as "*khāṣṣakīyah*" came to mean the Royal Mamluks in general (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 290). From other numbers take from al-Maqrīzī, al-Zāhirī, al-Qalqashandī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and Ibn Iyās, see Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *BSOAS* 15 [1953]: 215.

²⁰¹Rabbat refers to the high incidence of *suqāh* reaching prominent amirships in the mid-Bahri period but does not cite sources (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 138). A full discussion of the Circassian sources appears below.

²⁰²Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *BSOAS* 15 [1953]: 475.

²⁰³Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 136.



important administrative and ceremonial offices.²⁰⁴

The rise of the *khāṣṣakīyah* and the creation of ceremonial offices for them was a gradual process. Many administrative positions under Baybars were borrowed from the Ayyubids and organized according to a system of amiral rank. However, the first ceremonial offices (the *silāḥdārīyah* or sword-bearers, for example) appeared with Qalāwūn, who also introduced new styles of dress that identified amirs of different ranks.²⁰⁵ The *suqāh* (cupbearers) and *jāmdārīyah* (wardrobe masters), offices that were later to become extremely influential, gained importance under al-Ashraf Khalīl as his personal bodyguard.²⁰⁶ It was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, however, who extended and codified this system of ceremonial offices.²⁰⁷

These trends, then, have important implications for the development of the "military style" in sgraffito, among the other arts, in early to mid-fourteenth-century Egypt. As larger numbers of mamluks became amirs, and many of these were advanced from the *khāṣṣakīyah* to high-rank amirships, amiral blazons of ceremonial office came to dominate the decorative scheme of Mamluk art. The relationship between the advancement of the *khāṣṣakīyah* and the decorative use put to blazons can be implied from a reference from al-Zāhirī, a mid-fifteenth-century source.²⁰⁸ At the time al-Zāhirī was writing, the largest numbers of *khāṣṣakīyah* assigned to the heads of important administrative and ceremonial offices were as follows: ten *dawādārīyah* (pen-box holders), ten *suqāh khāṣṣ* (cup bearers), seven *rā' s nawbat jāmdārīyah* (wardrobe masters), four *khāzindārīyah* (treasurers), four *silāḥdārīyah* (armor bearers), and four *bashmaqdarīyah* (shoe bearers). It is no coincidence that the blazons most frequently encountered on objects, including sgraffito bowls and cups, are the chalice of the *sāqī*, the sword of the *silāḥdār*, the napkin of the *jāmdār*, and the pen-box of the *dawādār*.²⁰⁹ We have every indication of extensive patronage of the arts by the amirs. Not only were financial resources available for

²⁰⁴The increase in *khāṣṣakīyah* numbers and further elaboration of the ceremonial offices occupied primarily by them can be related to his expansion of Mamluk ceremonial in all its manifestations—protocol, architecture, and military office. This subject has been admirably analyzed by Rabbat in his study of the Cairo Citadel, cited above.

²⁰⁵Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*, 12.

²⁰⁶Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 289.

²⁰⁷Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *BSOAS* 16 (1954): 68–69. The crucial source in this regard is Ibn Taghrībirdī's *Nujūm al-Zāhirah*. Ayalon's review of his entries for the sultanates of Qalāwūn and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad is preliminary, and a more detailed study of the source material, a task beyond this article, is needed.

²⁰⁸*Kitāb Zubdat Kashf al-Mamālik wa-Bayān al-Ṭuruq wa-al-Masālik*, cited in Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *BSOAS* 15 (1953): 214.

²⁰⁹Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 138; Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 10; Leaf and Purcell, *Heraldic Symbols*, 73.



artistic sponsorship, but so was the sponsorship: the potential patrons from among the amiral class, and particularly the newly promoted *khāṣṣakīyah*, were numerous. Contemporary developments in sgraffito, along with all art forms, illustrate these trends. The widespread use of amiral blazons, specifically blazons of ceremonial office, in Mamluk art of this period reflects the rise of the favored amirs.

The earliest heraldic devices adopted in Mamluk art, however, were not amiral but sultanic. Such emblems served to legitimize the sultan's rule by visually linking him with earlier Islamic dynasties. The first blazons to appear in the interior of Mamluk sgraffito bowls—eagles, rosettes, lions, and the fleur-de-llys—were borrowed from the artistic repertoire of the Seljuk and Seljuk-successor states. The bicephalic eagle is one of the most common symbols of royal power in Seljuk Rum and appears in glazed tiles, architectural façades, and ceramics.²¹⁰ Its long association with royal sovereignty in the arts of the Buyids, Ghaznavids, and Artuqids (from whom the Anatolian Seljuks no doubt borrowed much of their iconography)²¹¹ made for easy transfer to the Egypt-based sultanate just beginning to develop its own royal iconography in the mid-thirteenth century. Rosettes, common to both Seljuk Rum sgraffito and slip-painted wares, were astral symbols suitable for adoption as royal icons.²¹²

The origins of the lion *passant*, usually associated with Baybars, is more difficult to determine. Lions used in architectural fixtures in Seljuk Anatolia are, with few exceptions, depicted in frontal view.²¹³ Gazagnadou's argument that Baybars adopted the lion *passant* from Mongol silver coins is not convincing for its lack of evidence and confusing chronology.²¹⁴ The lion *rampant* was introduced to Cypriot coins, architectural façades, and ceramics in the same period. The Lusignan and Mamluk lions are depicted in different stances, true, but they are both profile figures and noteworthy for the heraldic purposes to which these contemporary dynasties put them. Familiarity with Crusader coins may also explain

²¹⁰G. Oney, "Kubadabad Ceramics," in *The Art of Iran and Anatolia from the 11th to the 13th Century A.D.*, ed. W. Watson (London, 1977), 75–76.

²¹¹C. Otto-Dorn, "L'Àïas dans le dernier tiers du XIII^e siècle d'après les notaries Génois," *Asian and African Studies* 22 (1978): 124.

²¹²Oney, "Kubadabad Ceramics," 74.

²¹³The apotropaic effect of the frontal lion has long been valued in Anatolia and was also applied to gateways by the Hittites of the second millennium B.C. The talismanic qualities of figural art in Seljuk Rum architecture are explored in Scott Redford, "Thirteenth-Century Rum Seljuq Palaces and Palace Imagery," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 219–27. One exception to the frontal pose is the lion *passant* that appears in a portal relief at the Çifte Medrese in Kayseri (1205–6) (Otto-Dorn, "L'Àïas dans le dernier tiers," 110, Fig. 8).

²¹⁴See D. Gazagnadou, "Note sur une question d'heraldique mamluke: l'origine du 'lion passant à gauche du Sultan Baybars I al-Bunduqdārī," *Der Islam* 65 (1988): 98–101.



the adoption of the fleur-de-lys by Nūr al-Dīn in the second half of the twelfth century.²¹⁵

The bicephalic eagle, fleur-de-lys, lion *passant*, and rosette can best be described as dynastic symbols. They were hereditary to some extent: the lion *passant* was used by Baybars and his son and the eagle and rosette by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his sons. Mamluk armorial blazons did not come into their own, however, until the early fourteenth century, when amiral symbols of office began to dominate the decoration of architecture, metalworking, glass, ceramics, and painting. The transition from sultanic symbols of authority to amiral blazons is a crucial one for Mamluk art. It affects all media and is socially significant for two reasons: it illustrates the rise of a new social class and the creation of a new self-image for the Mamluks.

Leaf and Purcell outline three developmental stages of Mamluk blazons.²¹⁶ At the beginning of the Mamluk period (the middle of the thirteenth century), amirs adopted the sultans' emblems as their own.²¹⁷ At the end of the century simple amiral blazons of office began to replace the lion, fleur-de-lys, eagle, and rosette and were placed on bipartite shields. The earliest dated examples of an amiral blazon of this sort are the cup blazons of the *sāqī* displayed on two candlesticks made for Kitbughā, the important amir who became sultan in the interlude between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's first and second reigns.²¹⁸ The cup was the most common sign of the twenty some amiral blazons that appeared now, followed in number by the sword of the *silāḥdār* and the napkin of the *jāmdār*—all ceremonial offices. Blazons such as these were not entirely an Egyptian invention. According to Abū al-Fidā (*Kitāb al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar*), the Mamluks may have been influenced by the practice of the Khwarazm-Shahs, whose leader Muḥammad ibn Tekish [r. 1200–20] assigned members of his guard emblems of office (here called '*alāmah*').²¹⁹ The full flowering of blazons of office in the fourteenth century,

²¹⁵J. W. Allan, "Mamluk Sultanic Heraldry and the Numismatic Evidence: A Reinterpretation," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1970): 104. Some of the earliest instances of an Islamic "blazon" can be found on the doorways of Nūr al-Dīn's foundations in Damascus (his madrasah, 1154–73) and at Ḥimṣ (his Congregational Mosque) (Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 22).

²¹⁶Leaf and Purcell, *Heraldic Symbols*, Ch. 3 (67–76). While the authors too often define developments in Islamic heraldry according to European criteria, the following outline is a reasonable one and is based heavily on the material evidence provided by Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*.

²¹⁷Leaf and Purcell compare this practice to the European livery (*Heraldic Symbols*, 63). Examples in Egypt include Aydamūr al-Jāmdār, an amir of Baybars, who used the lion *passant* as his own insignia (ibid.), and contemporary amirs who adopted the fleur-de-lys, eagle, and rosette normally associated with the sultan (ibid., 70).

²¹⁸Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 52, cat. #15–16.

²¹⁹Rabbat, "Khāṣṣakiyya," 432; for the reign of 'Alā al-Dīn Muḥammad (ibn Tekish), see C. E.



though, were a uniquely Mamluk contribution.

In the second stage of blazon development, around 1320–30, the sultans had adopted inscribed cartouches as their emblems, and blazons of office were now the exclusive property of the amirs. The introduction of the tripartite shield (or “composite shield,” to use Mayer’s nomenclature) defines the third and final stage and is a fifteenth- and sixteenth-century phenomenon. The sword blazon disappears while the cup and penbox (of the *dawādār*) come to prominence. Composite blazons combine the emblems of several offices and probably represent the offices held in sequence by a particular head of state. One blazon of this sort may be adopted by a number of amirs who belong to the same household, that is *khushdāsh* (mamluks of the same master) who wish to affiliate themselves with their former master.

Changes in heraldry such as these reflect changes in the Mamluk social structure, ones that had important consequences for Egypt’s economy in the fourteenth century. At the risk of oversimplifying the processes of cultural change, each of the “stages” presented above can be related to the various stages of restructuring of the Mamluk elite and the ways each of these groups chose to identify themselves artistically. Blazons thus became a mode of self-expression for newly empowered social groups.

The Arabic sources are unanimous in acknowledging the strength of the sultanate under Baybars and Qalāwūn. Mamluk heraldry at this point corroborates the picture of an authoritative sultan supported by a disciplined body of mamluk soldiers and commanders. Sultanic emblems of authority (the lion and eagle, for example) are assumed by the amirs as their own, emphasizing the bonds of sponsorship between mamluk and master. There are signs of the breakdown of sultanic authority in the early fourteenth century as the amirs begin to assert themselves. The appearance of the amiral blazons of office illustrates the growing influence of this class and its ability to forge an identity independent of the sultan. The centralizing policies of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad are one reaction to the rise of the amiral class and are reflected in the subsequent adoption of the sultanic inscribed cartouches.

These processes are further accentuated by the use of the penbox blazon (of the *dawādār*) on a large scale and the proliferation of composite shields containing the cup blazon in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The widespread occurrence of the penbox blazon would, as the *sāqī* blazon (cup) in the previous century, signal the growing importance of the *dawādārīyah*, in whose hands much power

Bosworth, *El*², 4:1067–68.



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was concentrated towards the end of the Mamluk period.²²⁰ The cup blazon is a familiar element, as well, in composite blazons and illustrates one aspect of the fifteenth and sixteenth-century promotional procedures which the Arabic sources confirm: the preliminary advancement of mamluks to amirships of ten and then to the *suqāh*. Most sultans of the period began their careers as *suqāh*, and this is reflected in the composite blazons adopted by their amirs. Unlike the amiral blazons of office that were characteristic of the fourteenth century, the composite blazons of the following centuries represented not office but membership in a mamluk "household" and identification with the sultan as head of this household. In this way composite blazons are equated with a sultan and his entire mamluk establishment.²²¹

As in all media, the adoption of amiral blazons in sgraffito decoration in the early fourteenth century is socially, politically, and economically significant. It is the single most important factor behind the development of Mamluk sgraffito and is, I believe, one of the keys to understanding the central role this mass-produced but short-lived ceramic style played in contemporary Egyptian society. Furthermore, the precise dating and seriation of Mamluk sgraffito is guided by the chronological development of not only the amiral blazons themselves, but the historical circumstances behind their growing popularity.

In the late Ayyubid period Egyptian potters adopted the decorative layout of inscriptional registers with roundels. Roundels were transformed into pseudo-heraldic ("Norman") shield devices and placed in the wall registers and in the tondo area, as was the custom in Crusader sgraffito of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and Lusignan Cyprus. The early Mamluk sultans adopted symbols of authority used by the Seljuks, Byzantines, and Crusaders, such as the lion and eagle, and incorporated them into the decoration of their tablewares at the end of the thirteenth century. Amiral blazons of office began to appear in all art forms and gradually replaced the lion, eagle, rosette, and fleur-de-lys motifs. The development of ceremonial offices and the subsequent rise of the *khāṣṣakīyah* in the early fourteenth century are reflected in the proliferation of complex amiral blazons of office on round shields and accompanied by elaborate dedicatory inscriptions. The composite blazons of the fifteenth century are not found in sgraffito wares. We can infer

²²⁰For instance, the amir Yashbak was not only *dawādār*, but also *amīr silāh*, *wazīr*, *ustādār*, *kashf al-kushshāf*, *mudabbir al-mamlakah*, and *ra's al-maysarah*. Before he became sultan, Tūmānbay also held these offices (Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *BSOAS* 16 [1954]: 63—citing Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*).

²²¹Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 54; Michael Meinecke, "Zur mamlukischen Heraldik," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 27 no. 1 (1972): 47–80, and idem, "Die Bedeutung der mamlukischen Heraldik für die Kunstgeschichte," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, suppl. 2 (1974): 213–40.



from this that sgraffito ware was no longer manufactured at this time.²²² The development of sgraffito decoration, and particularly the transformation of the heraldic devices executed in it, is therefore typical of general developments in Mamluk art in the fourteenth century.

Fully developed sgraffito decoration of Mamluk Egypt consisted primarily of shield devices (of various forms) and inscriptional registers. Other motifs and techniques—such as scrolling, the occasional human figure or cross, and floral rinceaux—were either borrowed from Crusader wares or belonged to the more trans-Mediterranean milieu of Zeuxippus-derivative sgraffitos. Heraldic and inscriptional registers clearly belong to the realm of Mamluk metalworking.

It was in the general layout of design that metalwork most influenced other media. The organizing system of registers and cartouches (or roundels) was adopted and canonized in Egyptian metalwork, glass, ceramics, and textiles, while other characteristics of the northern Mesopotamian style were modified. Inscriptions of blessings on the patron, for example, were adapted to emphasize his military titles. The court scenes and zodiac figures originally placed in cartouches were replaced by amiral blazons in pointed or round shields. Characteristics of sgraffito wares, in particular, illustrate the dependence of Mamluk designs on the effect produced by inlaid brasses. The color play of earthenware ground against a white base slip, yellowish glaze, and yellow, brown, and green slips and stains imitated rather successfully the color contrasts of yellow brass and silver and gold inlays of metalwork. Furthermore, the scrolled ground of late Ayyubid and early Mamluk sgraffito recalls not only Ayyubid luster wares but also Ayyubid-period metalwork, such as the Cleveland Ewer, dated by an inscription on the vessel to 1223 and signed by Aḥmad al-Dhākī al-Mawṣilī (“of Mosul”).²²³ Similarly, the familiar “Y-fret” roundels encountered on sgraffito sherds from Fustat are unquestionably reproductions of metalwork designs as is the “T-fret” pattern associated with metalwork signed by “Mosul” artists.²²⁴

The impact of Mosul and the greater northern Jazira on early Mamluk art lies not in the specifics of metalwork decoration but in the broader category of figural art. Figural decoration in all media—coins, manuscript illumination, metalwork, and architecture—was particularly rich in this region in the twelfth and thirteenth

²²² Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 149.

²²³ Line drawings and discussion of this vessel can be found in Rice, “Inlaid Brasses from the Workshop of Ahmad al-Dhaki al-Mawsili,” *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 283–326. Scrolling is a common technique in this period and widespread in many media.

²²⁴ The Y-fret is called an “arrow interlace” by Scanlon (“Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes from Fustat,” 62, Pl. IV.b). For the use of the T-fret in Mosuli metalwork, see G. Fehervari, *Islamic Metalwork of the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century in the Keir Collection* (London, 1976), 96 and J. W. Allan, *Islamic Metalwork: The Nuhad Es-Said Collection* (London, 1982).



centuries. The visual vocabulary of the Artuqid and Zengid northern Jazira and Rum Seljuk central Anatolia was one and the same. Many of the sovereign symbols found in early Mamluk art, including the double-headed eagle and astrological motifs, while originating in Seljuk Iranian art, reached their full development in these areas.²²⁵ Thus, the north Jazira-east Anatolia region was a distribution point for figural art with political connotations.

In a revealing study by Rabbat, the impact that wall paintings of one *qā'ah* (hall) from Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu's palace in Mosul may have had on the interior decoration of early Mamluk palaces in Cairo, now gone, has been pieced together from little-known historical references.²²⁶ Figures seated in a row and enclosed within circles most likely represent the attendants of Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' and can be compared to so many other similar representations from metalwork, where the ruler is flanked by his attendants or officers and all is arranged in registers and circular cartouches. The Mamluk-period "St. Louis basin" is decorated in this manner, along with amiral blazons.²²⁷ Such parallels extend to Egyptian palaces where, according to Ibn al-Dawādārī, the walls of Sultan Khalīl's *īwān* (palace or reception hall) had "representations of his amirs, each with his own *rank* above his head."²²⁸

There is a nuanced relationship between the adoption of the Mosul-based figural program and the emergence of heraldry in Mamluk art. In this regard, Whelan's critical analysis of the social significance of Mamluk blazons and their art historical and social historical origins is ground-breaking and has become a catalyst for debate about developments in symbols of authority in Islam.²²⁹ The focus of the study is the "highly developed sovereign imagery" of northern Mesopotamia in the middle of the twelfth century until about 1230. Her arguments are somewhat complicated but can be reduced to the following: 1) Mamluk heraldry (my amiral blazons of office) is a reduction of *khāṣṣakīyah* figural imagery developed from the iconography of the Mesopotamian courts; 2) the codification of Egyptian blazons in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was the direct result of problems of succession inherent in the Mamluk system, where blood ties were at

²²⁵The Urtuqid setting of some of these motifs is presented in S. N. Redford, "How Islamic Is It? The Innsbruck Plate and its Setting," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990): 119–35.

²²⁶Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 174–75.

²²⁷See D. S. Rice, "The Blazons of the 'Baptistère de Saint Louis,'" *BSOAS* 13 (1950): 367–80.

²²⁸*Al-Durrah al-Zakīyah*; cited in Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 170.

²²⁹The study is published in E. Whelan, "Representations of the *Khāṣṣakīyah* and the Origins of Mamluk Emblems," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. P. P. Soucek (University Park, PA, 1988), 219–43. For another discussion of image making in northern Mesopotamia see W. F. Spengler and W. G. Szyles, *Turkoman Figural Bronze Coins and Their Iconography*, vol. I (Lodi, Wisconsin, 1992).



odds with the bonds of *khushdāshīyah*. By marking all personal belongings with their emblems of former office, amirs were, initially, expressing legitimate claims to the sultanate by emphasizing relationships with former sultans. The widespread use of blazons in fourteenth-century art illustrates the amirs' success in establishing their positions vis-à-vis the sultan.

Whelan defines the *khāṣṣakīyah* as "intimates with ceremonial responsibilities."²³⁰ The term itself is a product of the Mamluk period, even though related institutions of ceremonial offices probably existed under the Ghaznavids, Seljuks and Zengids.²³¹ The term *khawāṣṣ* appears in the Ayyubid period to denote the closest personal associates and bodyguards of Sultan al-Šāliḥ Ayyūb.²³² The elite corps of Baybars' mamluks were called *khāṣṣakīyah*, an adjectival derivative of the Turkish colloquial term for the Arabic *khāṣṣah*, or "special" (privileged group).²³³ With al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who elaborated Mamluk ceremonial and codified amiral ranks, the word was applied to amirs of high rank who usually performed ceremonial duties.²³⁴ By this period, according to Whelan, the *khāṣṣakīyah* had come to be the "recognized organ of upward social mobility."²³⁵ Membership in this privileged corps was the first step to amiral advancement. The majority of the *suqāh* (cup-bearers), *jāmdārīyah* (wardrobe master), *silāḥdārīyah* (sword-bearers) and other such ceremonial officers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries came from this select group.

Much of the figural art of northern Mesopotamia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries relates to the court. In addition to the familiar "courtly pleasures" (scenes of revelry and the hunt) there are representations of the sovereign and his entourage. The figures include not only servants but high-ranking officials who walk towards the ruler carrying objects associated with ceremonial offices—a sword, an ax, polo sticks, and a bottle and beaker, to name only a few. One of the earliest examples of these scenes appears on an Urutuqid stone bridge at Ḥiṣn Kayfa, dated to the reign of Qara Arslan (r. 1148–67).²³⁶ Single relief sculptures of striding figures in Turkish costume, carrying a spear, bird, and sword are depicted. The procession

²³⁰Whelan, "Representations of the *Khāṣṣakiyyah*," 220.

²³¹Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 290–91.

²³²Ibid.

²³³Ibid., 135.

²³⁴Ibid., 288. A central thesis of Rabbat's book is the relationship between al-Nāṣir's development of Cairo's Citadel and the expansion of state pomp-and-circumstance. He suggests that the term *khāṣṣakīyah* meant, in this period, those specially selected mamluk recruits who lived in the Southern Enclosure with the sultan himself.

²³⁵Whelan, "Representations of the *Khāṣṣakiyyah*," 234.

²³⁶Ibid., 222.



of ceremonial officers is a popular theme in silver-inlaid brassware of the mid-twelfth century to about 1230. Whelan describes several of these, three of which are signed by artists that use the *nisbah* "al-Mawṣilī."²³⁷ Basins and candlesticks of this style were made in Egypt under the Mamluks.

The most important developments in Mamluk metalwork can be dated between 1275 and 1350, when the figural style was at its best and inscriptional decoration was just beginning to appear.²³⁸ This was a crucial period for Mamluk sgraffito, too, as figural art, in the form of sovereign symbols, was gradually replaced by large inscriptional registers and amiral blazons. The reduction of figural scenes to hieratic, military symbols is symptomatic of the maturation of Mamluk art and the internal development of visual forms more appropriate to Mamluk society. The shift to non-figural decoration was due to a combination of factors. The stabilization of the state under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in part attributable to the disappearance of foreign threat, demilitarized the state in an active sense. The growth of ceremonial and military art in the fourteenth century only masked the increasing acculturation of the mamluks to the civilian culture of Cairo. The artistic correlates of this development may be seen in the growing emphasis on epigraphy (reflecting perhaps intensified cultivation of the ulama by the state) and the iconoclastic removal of figural art.²³⁹ Artistic factors may also have contributed to the disappearance of figural art: as inscriptional registers got larger, there simply was no room left on the vessel for processional or court scenes.

On the eclecticism of Mamluk architecture, Rabbat states:

Their use of various imported and revived modes and techniques to decorate their structures indicates that they had no strong and binding cultural tradition of their own, and this allowed them to choose from several that were available.²⁴⁰

I believe this statement is aptly true for the minor arts, namely metalwork and ceramics. Mamluk artists borrowed from everyone, adapting all figural and symbolic design to the requirements of their militarized social system.²⁴¹ There is some

²³⁷Ibid., 222–23.

²³⁸Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 51.

²³⁹Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 179. For the late Mamluk period, see B. Flemming, "Literary Activities in Mamluk Halls and Barracks," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon (Jerusalem, 1977), 249–60.

²⁴⁰Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 179.

²⁴¹Rabbat's argument in this regard is convincing: "the Mosuli style was directly introduced to the Mamluk realm, where it was adapted to the new requirements and incorporated the features specific to the Mamluk heraldic system" (*The Citadel of Cairo*, 177).



indication, though, that the reduction of figural representations of the *khāṣṣakīyah* to amiral blazons of office was not entirely a Mamluk innovation. According to Abū al-Fidā, the Khwarazmshah Muḥammad ibn Tekish (r. 1200–20) was, like al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, interested in the image-making potential of official ceremonies.²⁴² He maintained a personal group of mamluks, many of whom were later promoted to amirships. Emblems of their ceremonial offices displayed on their banners identified them in processions: a bow for the *silāhdār*, for instance, or a horseshoe for the *amīr akhūr*.

Historical and cultural associations with the Khwarazmians may in part explain how many motifs of sgraffito, including sovereign emblems (the bicephalous eagle) and amiral blazons (the cup of the *sāqī*) came to Egypt. After the Mongol advance into their territory in the 1220s and 1230s, many Khwarazmian Turks entered the service of the Ayyubids in Egypt as mercenaries. They are mentioned as late as the reign of Qutuz, who was the reputed descendant of a Khwarazmian prince, and Baybars, who married the daughter of an important Khwarazmian *wāfidī*.²⁴³ An artistic style is not introduced to a country through the migration of military men alone. However, banners used in procession and on the battlefield, basic accouterments of the soldier, do and it is perhaps through martial accessories such as these, brought by foreign mercenaries, that the Mamluks in Egypt became acquainted with amiral blazons and other symbols of military authority. The impact of coins, discussed above, must have been equally important in making familiar certain sovereign emblems—the bicephalous eagle and lion, for instance. Therefore, rather than overemphasize the role of migrating craftsmen,²⁴⁴ we should consider military equipment brought by mercenaries (weapons and banners), coins in circulation throughout the eastern Mediterranean, and objects imported in large numbers (most importantly inlaid brasses) as the most plausible modes of transferring sovereign imagery to Egypt.

Mamluk amiral blazons can be understood as either the actual objects these former *khāṣṣakīyah* carried in procession or the objects emblazoned on the gear

²⁴²*Kitāb al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar*, cited by Whelan, "Representations of the *Khāṣṣakiyyah*," 220–21.

²⁴³Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 33 and 62, respectively.

²⁴⁴Rogers rejects the role of immigrant artists in transmitting Mongol (J. M. Rogers, "Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations, 1260–1360," in Raymond, Rogers, and Wahba, ed., *Colloque International sur l'Histoire du Caire*, 385–403) and Seljuk art styles (J. M. Rogers, "Seljuk Influences on the Monuments of Cairo," *Kunst des Orients* 7 no. 1 [1970–71]: 40–68) to fourteenth-century Egypt. In both articles he argues for the defining role of imports, which both respond to and create a "taste" for foreign objects, and Egyptian travelers to Iran and Anatolia, upon whom local monuments would have made an impression.



carried and worn by them during processions.²⁴⁵ Blazons were meant to be seen; they were public expressions of military rank and authority. In this sense, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad adopted the sovereign images of the former Seljuk world, claiming a stake in the “larger political arena”²⁴⁶ of the Islamic borderlands of the eastern Mediterranean and legitimizing his rule in the process. The development of amiral blazons during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad can be related to these attempts to define an appropriate visual image for the Mamluk state.

On the level of the individual, the Mamluk blazon helped to identify the patron for which the object was made. Its role in public propaganda and legitimization within the Mamluk social structure should not be underestimated. It is not entirely clear whether an amiral blazon referred to the present or a former tenure of office, the first stage in amiral advancement, or the position held by the bearer’s father or manumitter. In fact, it is probable that the meaning and use of blazons was not static and changed with the progressive codification of rules concerning their use and elaboration of official relationships within Mamluk society. While objects decorated with blazons are usually attributed to amiral patrons, the widespread use of blazons of office in poor-quality sgraffito ware suggests mass-production of the product for other patrons. We should not automatically assume that there was a consistent, one-to-one correspondence between blazon and amir. Other aspects of the decoration of emblazoned sgraffito vessels, for example, indicate that blazons, while generally understood by the larger public as military emblems, had at some point become commonplace status symbols. The popularization of blazons and titles used in inscriptions indicates the dissolution of official control over Mamluk prerogatives and the breakdown of the system that maintained the social hierarchy.

II. DEDICATORY INSCRIPTIONS

Blazons are not the only method which Mamluk potters employed to identify their patron and his social class. Vessels are often decorated with dedicatory inscriptions that include formulaic production orders (usually *mimmā ‘umila bi-rasm al-dārī*),²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵See Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 5.

²⁴⁶Whelan, “Representations of the *Khāṣṣakiyyah*,” 232.

²⁴⁷This is the standard commissioning formula used with Mamluk sgraffito. The word “dār” probably indicates that the vessel was destined for the amir’s own residence and kitchen (see definition of *dār* in M. M. Amīn and L. A. Ibrāhīm, *Architectural Terms in Mamluk Documents (648–923 H/ 1250–1517)* [Cairo, 1990]). *Dār* could also refer to the Mamluk “household.” Alternative terms like *tisht-khānah*, *rabāt*, and *bayt Allāh al-Ḥaram* in inscriptions on brass, bronze, and glass vessels specify other destinations (illustrations in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*). One view, still followed by many scholars, defines *dār* as the wife or daughter of an amir or sultan (M. van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum arabicarum, Égypte I* [Paris, 1903], 188).



standard phrases used to honor military patrons (*al-amīr al-kabīr*, *al-muḥtaram*, *al-‘ālī*), the patron’s personal name (often abbreviated) or office, and well-wishes for prosperity and success (*adāma ‘izzuhā*, for instance). The inscriptions are produced through a combination of sgraffito and slip-painting and are displayed in the most prominent zones of the vessel—usually a wide register just below the lip and above the carination (if there is one). The placement of the dedicatory inscription in the interior of the vessel and the artist’s signature on the exterior is characteristic of most vessels signed by Sharaf al-Abawānī. Military-styled inscriptions seem to be inspired by the designs of contemporary metalworking and are found on glasswares and textiles.²⁴⁸ In Egyptian ceramics these formal dedications are limited to sgraffito wares. They do not normally appear on underglaze-painted or lusterwares.

Dedicatory inscriptions on sgraffito wares occasionally include the name or office of the amir. His full title could consist of an honorific (*laqab*), his personal name (in Turkish), a fictitious patronymic (*‘Abd Allāh*, for instance), patron affiliation (*nisbah*),²⁴⁹ and his rank (which would theoretically correspond to the blazon).²⁵⁰ Official inscriptions containing Mamluk names, titles, or official forms of address represent the status and authority of the patron in much the same fashion as amiral blazons. Mamluk names carried prestige. In spite of the official restrictions, there were attempts by civilians to adopt the Turkish names of the Mamluk aristocracy. The leaders of the *‘urbān* (bedouin) took on Mamluk names as a way of expressing their authority locally.²⁵¹ Foreigners could enter the upper strata of the Mamluk military apparatus by adopting Turkish names to conceal their ethnic background to slave dealers.²⁵² Turkish names given to children of private citizens in Mecca honored the dignitaries of the local Mamluk garrison.²⁵³ The adoption of Turkish names by non-Mamluks was rare in Cairo. The few exceptions were individuals among the *awlād al-nās* (sons of Mamluks) who

²⁴⁸S. N. Redford, “Ayyubid Glass from Samsat Turkey,” *Journal of Glass Studies* 36 (1994): 81–91, discusses possible levels of meaning in glass inscriptions from the Ayyubid period.

²⁴⁹The “īyah” ending reflects the status of a Mamluk to his master—he was formerly his master’s slave and belonged to him. The masculine form of this ending is also used as a nickname of ethnicity or geographical origin (*al-Miṣrī*—the Egyptian, *al-Tabrīzī*—the man from Tabrīz). In this sense the individual “belongs” to his homeland.

²⁵⁰Ayalon, “Names, Titles, and ‘Nisbas,’” 190. Few ceramic inscriptions include all of these elements. The titles, in particular, are abbreviated in comparison to those found on metalworking and in architecture.

²⁵¹*Ibid.*, 208.

²⁵²*Ibid.*, 195. The elite of Mamluk society were slaves of Turkish stock purchased for the sultan and manumitted by him.

²⁵³*Ibid.*, 209.



preferred Turkish names to the more traditional Arab-Muslim ones.²⁵⁴

While dedicatory inscriptions on inlaid metalwares, glass, and silks may include the full name of the patron, it is very rare on pottery. The incompleteness of inscriptions is one factor behind the scholarly neglect of Mamluk sgraffito. "Nicknames" and abbreviated titles do not lend themselves easily to historical study. It is nearly impossible in most cases to identify the patron with any certainty from the *nisbah* or office alone. In those rare instances where an amir is named, misspellings in transliterating his name from Turkish into Arabic, inconsistencies in titlature, and unclear inscriptions render the task of accurate identification equally difficult. Furthermore, most inscriptions refer to the patron only as an "amir" and enumerate a list of honorific titles without including the individual's name. Generic dedications like these may indicate that many of the vessels were mass-produced for a broad clientele within the Mamluk network.

The majority of the legible and specific dedicatory inscriptions in sgraffito include personal names (Kitbughā) and *nisbahs* (al-Malikī al-Nāṣirī) that can, like the amiral blazons, be associated with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.²⁵⁵ This is equally true for metalworking, textiles, and glass, a fact which indicates the range of patronage of this sultan and his amirs. Incomplete and ambiguous dedicatory inscriptions on all media but ceramics have been studied for their historical content.²⁵⁶ The following study attempts to do the same for four sgraffito vessels in the Islamic Museum in Cairo that carry partial inscriptions with the aim of identifying the amir and recognizing changing patterns of ceramic patronage. We begin with a review of the primary sources.

The identification of Mamluk officers relies on an accurate reading of the original inscription and interpretation of the patron's name as it appears in the inscription to determine the personal name or familiar title of the individual. The patron is then identified as a historical figure by relating his name or title to obituary notices in Mamluk chronicles, forms of address explained in administrative manuals, and the personal entries found in contemporary biographical dictionaries. Secondary sources on the spelling and formation of Turkish names used in the Mamluk period and problems of Mamluk titlature have been important resources in this process.²⁵⁷ Primary sources include al-Maqrīzī's *Kitāb al-Sulūk* and *Khiṭaṭ*, Ibn al-Dawādārī's *Kanz al-Durar*, al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, the biographies

²⁵⁴Ibid., 229.

²⁵⁵Most of these remain unpublished; some are discussed below.

²⁵⁶Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*; Rice, "The Blazons of the 'Baptistère de Saint Louis'"; Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, to name a few.

²⁵⁷J. Sauvaget, "Noms et surnoms de Mamelouks," *Journal Asiatique* 238 (1948): 31–58; Ayalon, "Names, Titles, and 'Nisbas'"; and Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*.



of al-Yūsufī and al-Shujā‘ī, and several biographical dictionaries that cover the fourteenth century.²⁵⁸

The first of the four vessels is a heavily-potted chalice with carinated and everted walls and sits on a pedestal foot (the classic Mamluk shape—Fig. 12).²⁵⁹ Both the interior and exterior are divided into three registers, the top one of which carries a sgraffito and slip-painted inscription in *thulūth* script. A floral design with six pointed petals occupies the tondo circle, and the inscriptions on the wall are interrupted by abstract fleur-de-lys. The lowest exterior register is filled with a guilloche band.

The interior inscription expresses the good wishes of the artist and includes his name.

al-‘izz wa-al-iqbāl wa-bulūgh al-a‘māl wa-sa‘ādat al-faqīr, al-miskīn
Sharaf al-Abawānī, ghulām al-nās kullihim

[Glory, good fortune, achievement, and happiness—the poor,
miserable
Sharaf al-Abawānī, servant of all the people]

Some of the best products of Mamluk sgraffito have been signed by this potter, who also inscribed the following dedication that filled the main register on the exterior.

mimmā ‘umila bi-rasm al-dār al-‘ālīyah, al-mawlawīyah, al-
maḥrūsah, al-ma‘mūrah
Kitbughā, mulkuhā al-‘izz, al-iqbāl, wa-bulūgh

²⁵⁸The biographies are incomplete: al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir*, and Shams al-Dīn al-Shujā‘ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn*, ed. B. Schäfer (Wiesbaden, 1978), vol. I. The most important of the biographical dictionaries are Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt* (Istanbul, Damascus, and Cairo, 1931–83); Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *A‘yān al-‘Aṣr wa-A‘wān al-Naṣr*, ed. ‘A. Abū Zayd (Beirut, 1998); and Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal al-Ṣāfī wa-al-Mustawfā ba’d al-Wāfī*, ed. M. M. Amīn (Cairo, 1985–90), also summarized by G. Wiet in “Les biographies du Manhal Ṣāfī, *Mémoires de l’Institut d’Égypte* 19 (1932). Other dictionaries consulted include Muḥammad ibn Shākir ibn Aḥmad al-Kutubī, *Kitāb Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, ed. N. al-Hurīnī (Cairo, 1866) and Faḍl Allāh ibn Abī al-Fakhr Ibn al-Suqā‘ī, *Tālī Kitāb Wafayāt al-A‘yān*, ed. J. Sublet (Damascus, 1974).

²⁵⁹Isl. Mus. #15679, by purchase in 1948. Published in ‘Abd al-Rāziq, “Documents sur la poterie,” 26 and Pl. IV. Another very similar sgraffito chalice, also signed by al-Abawānī, is in the Egyptian Embassy in Washington, D.C. and is illustrated in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 188–89 (cat. #95).





Figure 12. Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito chalice with historical inscription and signed by Sharaf al-Abawānī, 14th century, probably Fustat



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[Among the things made (on order) for the excellent, sovereign,
protected, flourishing house of
Kitbughā. Glory, prosperity, and achievement to its sovereign]

The Kitbughā addressed in this dedication is probably Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā, the mamluk acquired by Qalāwūn at the first battle at Ḥimṣ (1260). Kitbughā ruled as sultan in the years after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's first reign (taking the title "al-ʿĀdil" in 1294–96) and later served as Sultan al-Nāṣir's viceroy. The blazon of the *sāqī*, or cupbearer, appears on an inlaid brass candlestick dedicated to him.²⁶⁰ The cup blazon is not represented on this sgraffito chalice. However, the designs that take its place are not blazons in themselves and do not contradict the identification of the patron with this amir. The form of address used in the inscription indicates that the vessel was made for Kitbughā while he was still an amir and not yet sultan.

In the same collection in Cairo is a round earthenware basin decorated in sgraffito inscriptions and blazons (Fig. 13).²⁶¹ It has a flat bottom²⁶² and three decorative spouts attached to the rim, probably in imitation of more functional prototypes in brass or bronze. The decoration consists of a single, wide inscriptional register. The dedication in both the interior and exterior registers is addressed to the son of an amir of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Shihāb al-Dīn. The name of the father is somewhat unclear from the inscriptions and has been variously read as "al-Sayfī Qarjī"²⁶³ and "al-Sayfī Farajī."²⁶⁴ The interior inscription reads:

mimmā ʿumila bi-rasm al-ajall, al-muḥtaram, al-makhdūm, al-aʿazz,
al-akhāṣṣ
Shihāb al-Dīn ibn al-janabī, al-ʿālī, al-malawī al-Sayfī Qarjī/Farajī
al-Malikī al-Nāṣirī

[Among the things made (on order) for the most magnificent, the
honored, the well-served, the most glorious, the favored Shihāb
al-Dīn, the son of His High Excellency, the lord al-Sayfī Qarjī/Farajī,
the amir of al-Malik al-Nāṣir]

²⁶⁰ Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 65 (cat. #16).

²⁶¹ Isl. Mus. #3945. It is published in Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 206–7 and Pl. XII.1. A brief discussion of the inscription appears in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 148.

²⁶² There may have been a narrow stem or ring foot, which has now broken off.

²⁶³ Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 148.

²⁶⁴ Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 207.





Figure 13. Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito basin with historical inscription, 14th century, probably Fustat



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This is an important dedication for three reasons: the name is more or less complete, a sultan is mentioned, and the patron is a member of the *awlād al-nās*. The title "Shihāb al-Dīn" is a relatively common amiral title for the early Mamluk period.²⁶⁵ The *awlād al-nās* also took titles of this form, usually in combination with an Arab-Muslim personal name, rather than a Turkish one. For instance, the personal name "Aḥmad" was usually combined with the title "Shihāb al-Dīn" for sons of Mamluks.²⁶⁶ The patron of this vessel, then, was probably one Aḥmad Shihāb al-Dīn, the son of the amir Qarjī/Farajī.

I have been unable to locate this Aḥmad in the biographical dictionaries or obituary notices; the name is too common to make a proper identification. The identity of his father is extremely important, though, given his relationship with Sultan al-Nāṣir, as indicated in the amir's title. Neither "Qarjī" nor "Farajī" are typical Turkish names of the period. However, "Qirmishī" ("Qurmushī" or "Qurmuji")²⁶⁷ and "Qarajā"²⁶⁸ are. On both the interior and exterior inscriptions a faint *mīm* can be discerned above and between the *rā'* and *jīm*; there could be either one or two dots above the first letter. Therefore, the name could read "Qurmuji" instead of "Farajī" or "Qarjī."

There is a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad by the name of Qurmuji/Qirmishī who figures rather prominently in Mamluk politics in the early fourteenth century. The amir Qurmuji Sayf al-Dīn was the brother of the *silāḥdār* Aslam Bahā' al-Dīn; the brothers are mentioned in the chronicles on account of their arrest and lengthy imprisonment in Alexandria.²⁶⁹ Qurmuji was a mamluk of the *nā'ib al-Shām*, Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī, and later became a *ḥājib* in Syria and the *nā'ib* of Ḥimṣ.²⁷⁰ These events relate him to a Qarajā Sayf al-Dīn who, according to al-Shujā'ī, served as *nā'ib* of Ḥamāh and was arrested with his brother, the

²⁶⁵ Ayalon, "Names, Titles, and 'Niṣbas,'" 191. It was also popular with the *tājir-khawājah* (high-ranking Karimi merchants) in the Circassian period (Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 214–16).

²⁶⁶ Ayalon, "Names, Titles, and 'Niṣbas,'" 230; Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 207.

²⁶⁷ The alternative spellings are due to the inconsistencies of transliterating Turkish names into Arabic in the Mamluk texts. "Sh" and "j" are often alternated (see Sauvaget, "Noms et surnoms"). Sauvaget also lists the name "Qirmish," which means "he broke into pieces" (ibid., 53, #171).

²⁶⁸ The name appears in Sauvaget's Turkish name list with the meaning "little black" (ibid., 52, #160).

²⁶⁹ Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāzīr*, 190 (also in al-Ṣafadī's *Al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt* and al-Maqrīzī's *Al-Bayān wa-al-I'rāb*; K. V. Zettersteen, ed., *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultane* (Leiden, 1919), 178 and 187).

²⁷⁰ Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 83; Zettersteen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultane*, 198.



silāḥdār in Cairo.²⁷¹ Qurmuḡī died in 1346 (747), five years after the Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḡammad.²⁷²

The title “al-Sayfī” that precedes Qurmuḡī’s name in the sgraffito inscriptions is an abbreviation for the more formal “Sayf al-Dīn.” This was, according to the Arabic sources, the proper title of the Syrian amir. The inscriptions also state that Qurmuḡī was the mamluk of a Sultan “al-Nāṣir” (*al-Malikī al-Nāṣirī*).²⁷³ If the amir of the inscriptions can be identified with the Syrian amir of the chronicles, then this *nisbah* would appear to be a misnomer: Qurmuḡī was the mamluk of an amir, and not a sultan. It is possible, though, that Qurmuḡī changed his *nisbah*. There are a few examples of mamluks changing their titles in gratitude for favors bestowed on them by amirs or sultans.²⁷⁴ Al-Shujā’ī reports that al-Nāṣir Muḡammad offered a position to Qurmuḡī in exchange for Tankiz’s assassination.²⁷⁵ Under these circumstances, it would not be surprising if Qurmuḡī had changed his title to reflect his new relationship with the sultan.

The meaning of the blazon that appears in the inscriptional registers, the tondo, and the exterior of the base is ambiguous. It is a golden half-dome supported by a triangular stand, decorated with a round, target-like device. This symbol has been variously called a target, canopy, saddle, and Mongol *tamgha* and could represent a range of offices. Mayer has associated the office of the *jāwīsh* (macebearer or guard) with two early Mamluk *ḡājibs* whose blazons were described as “dome-shaped palanquins.”²⁷⁶ There is not enough evidence, yet, to equate either the *jāwīsh* or the *ḡājib* with the blazon that appears on this basin.

The significance of this basin is that it was commissioned for a son of a Mamluk amir. The rise of the *awlād al-nās* began with the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḡammad, who gave positions to the sons of amirs as a way of rewarding his favorite Mamluks. However, it is with the reign of al-Nāṣir ḡasan that the empowerment of this social class is usually associated. The *awlād al-nās*, and

²⁷¹Al-Shujā’ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḡammad ibn Qalāwūn*, 177, 235, and 254. The period of imprisonment differs from that mentioned for “Qurmushī” in Zettersteen. Qarajā and Qurmushī/Qurmuḡī may be the same individual, but this is far from certain.

²⁷²Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāṣir*, 191, n. 6.

²⁷³The *nisbah* could just as well refer to Sultan al-Nāṣir ḡasan (r. 1347–51, 1354–61), the son of al-Nāṣir Muḡammad, under whom the *awlād al-nās* came to positions of political power, or his brother Sultan al-Nāṣir Aḡmad (r. 1342). That the *nisbah* probably reflects the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḡammad is indicated by the identification of the amir Qurmuḡī with this sultan.

²⁷⁴A list of these for the early Mamluk period appears in Ayalon, “Names, Titles, and ‘Nisbas,’” 218–19.

²⁷⁵Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 83.

²⁷⁶Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 18. The blazons are not illustrated.



particularly the sons of amirs, emerged as a new class of nobility in the middle of the fourteenth century—they held a number of top amirships and some of the largest *iqṭā'āt*.²⁷⁷ Ceramics is one area of artistic patronage of this newly empowered class.

The basin in Cairo is not the only sgraffito vessel commissioned by a Mamluk's son. One of the highest quality Mamluk earthenwares in the Cairo collection is a round-bottomed, carinated basin, signed by Sharaf al-Abawānī.²⁷⁸ Both the potter's signature and the dedicatory inscription appear in two registers on the exterior of the vessel. A variant of the dedication appears in the interior register, which is interrupted along its length by a round shield device carrying three broad bands.²⁷⁹ The patron named is the "great amir" (*al-amīr al-kabīr*) Sa'd al-Dīn ibn al-Muṣṭī.

The identity of this Sa'd al-Dīn has not been established yet, however the inscriptions indicate that he was the son of someone important. The formal names of the *awlād al-nās* consist of the personal name of the patron followed by the personal name of his father, the father's office, his *nisbah*, or any combination of them. Occasionally the father's "nickname"—a reference to his place of origin, his manumitter, or personal characteristics—is included.²⁸⁰ This could be the form of the patron's name that appears on the al-Abawānī basin. If the shield device is a Mamluk blazon, which it appears to be, then either Sa'd al-Dīn or his father was a Mamluk officer. It is highly doubtful that Sa'd al-Dīn was a Mamluk himself, because his father's name is included in the inscriptions.²⁸¹ Moreover, religious titles, such as "Sa'd al-Dīn," were adopted by civilians or the *awlād al-nās* and not foreign-born Mamluks. Whether Sa'd al-Dīn was the son of a Mamluk or a private citizen with no direct connections to the military aristocracy, this basin is another example of the ways ceramics express Mamluk social policies. The promotion of non-Mamluks (*awlād al-nās* or otherwise) under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his sons is illustrated in the titlature of dedication inscriptions such as these.

The final sgraffito vessel with a complete inscription in the Cairo collection is a large, footed basin of a slightly piriform shape (Fig. 14).²⁸² There is little doubt

²⁷⁷Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 46–49.

²⁷⁸Isl. Mus. #9089.

²⁷⁹It could be a penbox, the blazon of the *dawādār* (secretary) (drawings in Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 12).

²⁸⁰Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, 6:267 and 10:196; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1963–72), 9:286; Ayalon, "Names, Titles, and 'Nisbas,'" 229–31.

²⁸¹In the Mamluk system, the father was considered to be the master (*ustādh*) or the manumitter, if it was a different individual. For formality's sake, a father's name is sometimes included in Mamluk titles, 'Abd Allāh—a false name that alludes to the Mamluks' origins in slavery.

²⁸²Isl. Mus. #3713. Published in 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie," Pl. VIIA; idem, "Notes on Islamic Graffito Ware of the Near East," *Annales Islamologiques* 9 (1970), Pl. XXB; idem, "Le



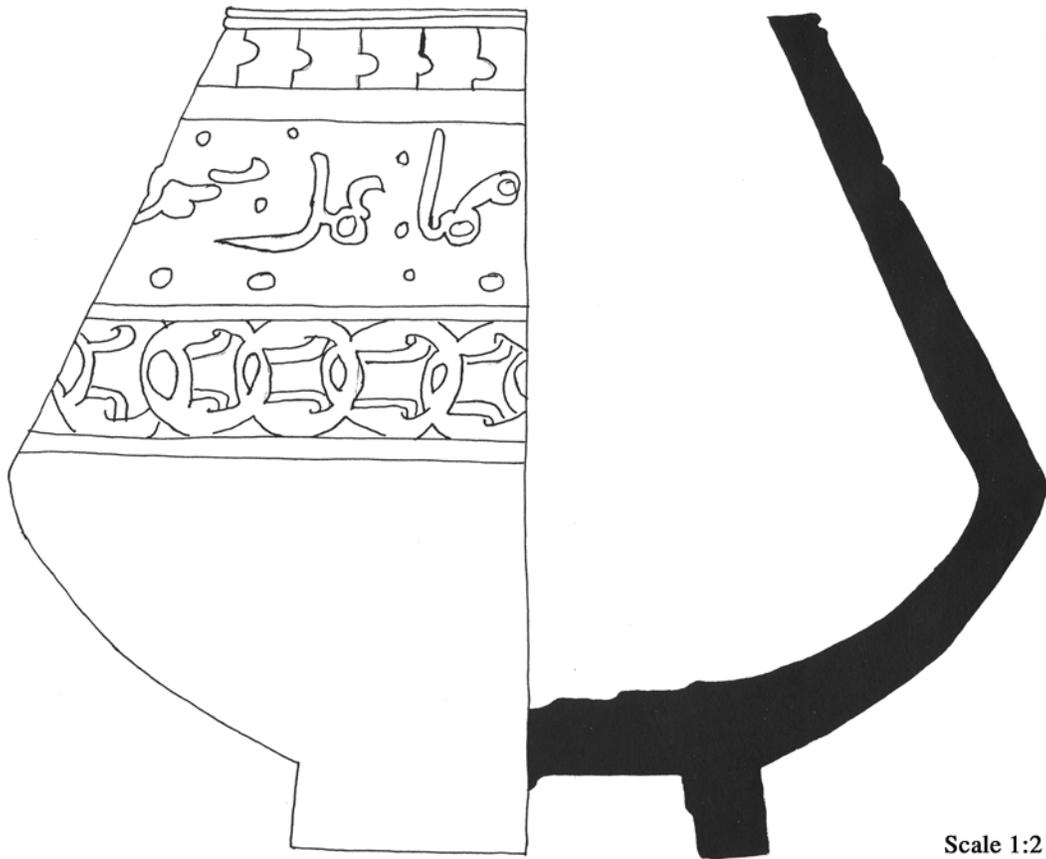


Figure 14. Profile drawing of a Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito basin—ceramic imitation of a 14th-century Persian brass basin, probably Fustat



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that the basin is meant to imitate the form and decoration of cast brass basins with silver and gold inlay from fourteenth-century Persia.²⁸³ The largest of the exterior registers contains the following inscription:

mimmā ‘umila bi-rasm al-dār al-‘ālīyah, al-mawlawīyah, al-ma‘mūrah, al-makhdūmah, al-maḥrūsah—al-Azjīyah al-Aydakīyah. ‘adāma ‘izzuhā bi-biqā’ mulkihā. al-barakah.

[Among those things made (on order) for the excellent, sovereign, prosperous, well-served, protected house of al-Azjīyah al-Aydakīyah. May its glory continue in preserving its sovereignty. Blessings.]

No blazons accompany this inscription.

The quality of potting and the size of the vessel indicate that the patron had some wealth and social stature. His full name, unfortunately, has been reduced to two *nisbahs*, which makes identifying him a difficult task. Consecutive titles in this form often indicate a chronological series of the patron’s masters or the master and the master’s manumitter.²⁸⁴ Thus, the patron would have been a mamluk of an “Aydak” or “Aybak” or “Aydakīn.” The first *nisbah* makes little sense linguistically in the form above. A scribal error may have produced “al-Azjīyah” from “al-‘Izzdīyah,” the abbreviated form of “‘Izz al-Dīn.”²⁸⁵ This would make the patron a Mamluk of one ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak.²⁸⁶ Another error could have rendered “al-Uzkūshī” as “al-Azjīyah.”²⁸⁷ The name would be, then, the mamluk of Aydakīn al-Uzkūshī.

Aydakīn al-Uzkūshī was the mamluk of amir Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Uzkūshī, the governor of Raḥbah. He served as Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s

sgraffito de l’Égypte,” Pl. VII.D; and *Islamic Art in Egypt* (Cairo, 1969), 157 (cat. #146). In his 1967 study (“Documents sur la poterie”), ‘Abd al-Rāziq includes the vessel in a study on Sharaf al-Abawānī. The signature of this potter does not appear anywhere on the basin, however.

²⁸³ Compare with Allan, *Islamic Metalwork*, 107, cat. #24, and E. Baer, *Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art* (New York, 1983), 280, Fig. 227a.

²⁸⁴ Ayalon, “Names, Titles, and ‘Niṣbas,’” 217.

²⁸⁵ A *dāl* can easily be made a *jīm* by the extension of the final line of the letter. The ‘*ayn* may have simply been left out.

²⁸⁶ The honorific “‘Izz al-Dīn” was usually associated with the personal name Aybak in the early Mamluk period (Ayalon, “Names, Titles, and ‘Niṣbas,’” 194).

²⁸⁷ This is more plausible—the *jīm* in Turkish names was transliterated a variety of ways by Arabic-speaking scribes.



walī of Cairo and worked closely with him on projects of urban development.²⁸⁸ His collaboration with the *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ* "al-Nashw" in collecting Mamluk fines led to his dismissal from this post and banishment to Syria.²⁸⁹ Aydakīn died in 1339–40.²⁹⁰

There were other Mamluks by the name of Aydakīn who appear in the Arabic sources in the Circassian period.²⁹¹ However, given the parallels with fourteenth-century damascened basins from Iran and the phraseology of the inscription, the vessel and its patron should probably be dated to the fourteenth century. The identification of the patron with a mamluk of Aydakīn al-Uzkūshī is a plausible, however unprovable, suggestion.

The amirs of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad were not the only patrons of large sgraffito vessels. Occasionally a vessel was dedicated to a judge (*qāḍī*) or a judge's son, according to the inscription (Fig. 15). One large rim fragment in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto carries duplicate inscriptions on its interior and exterior faces:

‘umila bi-rasm al-qāḍī al-ajall al-makh[dūm] . . .

[Among the things made (on order) for the qadī, the most magnificent, the (well-served) . . .]

The sherd comes from the excavations at Fustat.²⁹² Its inscription is a generic dedication to an unnamed judge and honors him with the same military epithets as an amir or amir's son. Not enough of the sherd remains to determine whether or not a blazon was included.

The same formula appears on a surface find (fragments of a large hemispherical bowl) from an archaeological site at Tod, Upper Egypt. The qadī is unnamed, as on the rim sherd in Toronto. The absence of a higher title, such as *qāḍī al-quḍāh* or *qāḍī al-‘askar* indicates the lower status of the judge.²⁹³

Qadis are mentioned in the dedicatory inscriptions of other media. The grandson of a prominent Egyptian judge is the recipient of one damascened brass basin studied by Mayer. The inscription is similar to the ROM sherd in its application of

²⁸⁸ Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir*, 194.

²⁸⁹ Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 73–74.

²⁹⁰ Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir*, 194, n. 2.

²⁹¹ Evidence that the "Aydaki" of the inscription can be identified with a Mamluk of Qaytbāy is not convincing (*Islamic Art in Egypt*, [Cairo, 1969], 106).

²⁹² ROM #909.43.16, Fustat study collection. The rim is probably a fragment of a large, carinated bowl.

²⁹³ Découbert and Gayraud, "Une céramique d'époque mamelouke trouvée à Tod," 98.





Figure 15. Rim sherd of a Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito bowl, inscription refers to a judge, late 14th century, Fustat



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military honorifics for a civilian patron.²⁹⁴ A different set of epithets appears on a penbox dedicated to the qadi Burhānī. In this instance the patron is described in terms more appropriate for a member of the civilian, rather than the military, elite.²⁹⁵

Other members of the urban religious establishment are mentioned in sgraffito inscriptions. A hemispherical bowl of unknown provenance in the Kuwait National Museum is dedicated to a *shaykh Yāsīn*, who was apparently the head of a Sufi establishment.²⁹⁶ Its dimensions (D 22.5 cm, H 11.3 cm) compare with those of the Tod bowl (D 24 cm, H 13 cm) and other similarly inscribed, hemispherical bowls from Fustat²⁹⁷ and Jebel Adda (Nubia).²⁹⁸ The layout of the decoration on the bowl conforms to a standard type: a wide internal register just below the rim frames either a long inscription or short, generic, honorific phrases (*al-a‘azz*, *al-ajall*, for example) separated one from the other by “Norman shields.” The tondo motifs consist of a single figure (like a common bird or eagle), genuine blazon, or, more rarely, geometric interlace design. Monolithic hemispherical bowls are a distinct subgroup of Mamluk sgraffito and are found throughout Egypt. The widespread use of generic inscriptions (or explicit dedications to a civilian official), “Norman shields,” and decorative tondo circle devices reflects the lower social status of the consumers of this group, as compared to those of the carinated bowls (“military chalices”) and earthenware basins.

A complex relationship existed between the military elite (the Mamluks) and the civilian elite (the merchants and the ulama).²⁹⁹ The daily life of civilians was organized by legal, financial, and educational institutions funded by private patrons

²⁹⁴Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 45. Honorific titles include *al-‘ālī al-mawlawī* (His High Excellency), *al-maqarr* (the established), and *al-makhdūmī* (the well-served).

²⁹⁵Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 123. The patron is described as “*al-wāthiq bi-al-malik al-ḥaqq al-mubīn*,” or “the one who trusts in the king, the clear truth.”

²⁹⁶LNS #7c (‘Abd al-Rāziq, “Le sgraffito de l’Égypte,” 1–2, cat. #1).

²⁹⁷See ‘Abd al-Rāziq, “Le sgraffito de l’Égypte,” Pl. X (D 23 cm, H?; another D 22 cm, H 10.6 cm)—incomplete inscriptions; Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 185, cat. #93 (by purchase—D 21.6 cm, H 13.1 cm)—to an unnamed amir; Scanlon, “Some Mamluk Shapes,” 119, Fig. 1 and 121, Fig. 2 (D range 17–20 cm, H range 6–12 cm)—many without inscriptions, those with inscriptions seem to be short, generic phrases (as below) framed by “Norman shields.”

²⁹⁸Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 186, cat. #94 (monumental proportions—D 34.5 cm, H 24.5 cm)—illegible; unpublished: ROM (Nubia) inv. #L973.24.909 (D 29.7 cm, H 12.9 cm)—generic inscription to unknown patron (*al-a‘azz*, *al-ajall*—“the most excellent, the most magnificent”).

²⁹⁹A discussion of this complicated subject is beyond the scope of this article. The reader should consult the following sources for detailed analysis of Mamluk-ulama relations: Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*; Petry, *The Civilian Elite*; Ayalon, “Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,” *BSOAS* 16 (1954); and Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 1.



and put under the jurisdiction of members of the ulama, many of whom were chosen by the state. These scholars further supported the Mamluks by working in the state administration and acting as the sultan's spokesmen on the local level. There was a degree of social mobility inherent to this system. A civilian with enough education and ambition could, if he gained the favor of an amir or the sultan, rise to a position of wealth and influence in the Mamluk bureaucracy. This sort of mutually-beneficial patronage "reinforce[d] the bonds between the elites."³⁰⁰

The qadis, in particular, acquired positions of some power under Mamluk patronage. On a local level, the qadis occupied some of the most prominent positions in education and the courts as teachers and directors, head preachers and shaykhs, *waqf* overseers, and judges. They were often appointed by the sultan to the upper levels of the state bureaucracy as *kātib al-sirr*, *nāzīr al-khāṣṣ*, *nāzīr al-jaysh*, and *wazīr*.³⁰¹ In Ayalon's list of army-related offices, only one is said to have been held by a member of the religious establishment—the *qāḍī al-'askar*. Four "army judges" were appointed to accompany the army during expeditions and keep court on behalf of the soldiers while they were on campaign.³⁰²

Some civilian officials were entitled to honorific names.³⁰³ These often take the form of titles (the *laqab*) familiar from dedicatory inscriptions, like "Sharaf al-Dīn" or "Izz al-Dīn." The inscription on the ROM sherd, as well as dedications to qadis on other pieces of art, reflect the high status of the Muslim judge in the Mamluk society and his position within the military bureaucracy. Civilian patronage of the arts may have been more considerable than it appears at first. The adoption of honorific titles in dedicatory inscriptions may not necessarily indicate that the patron was a Mamluk or even a member of the *ḥalqah*, particularly if the dedication is generic, in other words the patron is not specifically named. The patron in this case could be either a military officer or a high-ranking civilian official.

The majority of dedicatory inscriptions in sgraffito make no specific mention of the patron. The formulae below, or variants of them, are among the most common:

³⁰⁰Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 138.

³⁰¹Ibid., 136–37. The responsibilities of the *wazīr* changed over time. In the early Mamluk period it was the most important office in the fiscal administration (Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 40). Under Barqūq the office was reduced to management of the army's meat supplies (Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," 61).

³⁰²Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," 67.

³⁰³Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 128 and 266–67, n. 7. Merchants, market inspectors, judges, and a variety of craftsmen held honorific titles and were known by such in the Arabic biographical dictionaries.



mimmā ‘umila bi-rasm al-a‘azz, al-ajall, al-muḥtaram, al-makhdūm
 . . .

[Among the things made (on order) for the most excellent, the most magnificent, the honored, the well-served . . .³⁰⁴]

al-amīr al-ajall al-muḥtaram.

[The most excellent and honored amir]

mimmā ‘umila bi-rasm al-dār al-mawlawīyah—adāma ‘izzuhā bi-biqā’ mulkihā.

[Among the things made (on order) for the sovereign house. May its glory continue in preserving its sovereignty.³⁰⁵]

The title “amir” is often absent from generic inscriptions. In fact, there is otherwise no indication that these vessels were produced for military clientele or dignitaries of any sort. The omission of titles from inscriptions on the part of the potter was certainly deliberate. In the case of vessels decorated with blazons, the combination of a generic dedication with an amiral symbol may indicate that the piece was made ahead of time for amirs promoted to this military office (Isl. Mus. #9277).³⁰⁶ The “Norman” shield (a round-topped, pointed-bottom emblem with an empty field) often take the place of official amiral blazons, particularly in generic wall inscriptions (Isl. Mus. #4673). In the absence of a true blazon or any reference to an amir in the inscription, one can assume the vessel was sold to the general public in the city bazaars. Products targeting both groups of consumers were mass-produced and sold publicly. The poor quality of potting, incision, transcription, and coloring of many “generic” pieces such as these reinforce these assumptions.³⁰⁷

By the end of the fourteenth century many of the common people had the

³⁰⁴The inscription is broken at this point but apparently leads directly into al-Abawānī’s signature—Isl. Mus. #14754, published in ‘Abd al-Rāziq, “Le sgraffito de l’Égypte,” Pl. VII, C. This is a ceramic imitation of an inlaid metal tray stand. Compare to a fourteenth-century Mamluk silver and gold inlaid cast brass stand in Allan, *Islamic Metalwork*, 97 (cat. #19).

³⁰⁵Isl. Mus. #9277. This is the interior inscription. The exterior carries the signature of Sharaf al-Abawānī. Although the inscription is generic, the polo master’s blazon occupies the tondo. The rim is strongly beveled inwards, in Cypriot style.

³⁰⁶Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 149.

³⁰⁷For an analysis of “official” inscriptions on Ayyubid glasswork, see Redford, “Ayyubid Glass from Samsat Turkey.”



material means to purchase goods previously accessible only to the upper classes.³⁰⁸ Furthermore, they adopted customs of the elite: their dress, their ways of socializing, and their tastes in art. With the breakdown of Mamluk social structure in the second half of the fourteenth century, there was a broadening in artistic patronage. Sgraffito vessels that carry generic, non-military dedications and are of a poorer quality than “official” military chalices and bowls may have been produced sometime after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s death (641/1341). The distribution of poor-quality, inscribed sgraffito in Nubia may also represent imitation of Cairo elite culture by smaller courts in the south.³⁰⁹

While sgraffito vessels could be dedicated to either military or civilian dignitaries, it seems that they were never produced specifically for the sultan. Neither sultanic titles nor the personal names of a sultan have appeared on vessels or sherds that I have seen or which have been published.³¹⁰ This pattern of patronage probably reflects on the status of glazed earthenware in Mamluk society. Although Arabic inscriptions, and particularly military titles, were prestigious, ceramics decorated in this fashion were of lower commercial value than similarly inscribed damascened brasses and bronzes and enameled glass.³¹¹ The sultan could afford more expensive ways of promoting his name than through inscriptions on common ceramics. Vessels of precious metals, public architecture, and textiles were avenues of self-expression generally closed to patrons of non-elite status. This is especially true of Mamluk silks and robes of honor, the production of which, while not truly a state monopoly, was to some extent controlled by the sultan and the Mamluk elite.³¹² A comparison of the ways in which inscriptions were used on Mamluk pottery and textiles is instructive of these different levels of patronage.³¹³

The most significant difference between ceramic and textile inscriptions lies

³⁰⁸Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*, 113.

³⁰⁹The ceramic material from the UNESCO salvage excavations at Jebel Adda, Nubia remains unpublished.

³¹⁰The large sgraffito chalice in the Islamic Museum in Cairo with Kitbughā’s name is one exception. However, the piece was probably produced for him when he was still amir. The titles used in the dedication are typical honorifics for amirs (Atīl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 66). The inscriptions found on royal silks, as below, are more common for sultanic commissions.

³¹¹Copper wares were also preferred to earthenwares. The higher value of copper vessels is reflected in trousseau lists of the Fatimid period (Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 4, App. D). Ceramics are usually not included in the trousseau (p. 106).

³¹²Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 60.

³¹³For one such analysis of Mamluk textiles and their inscriptions, see B. J. Walker, “The Social Implications of Textile Development in Fourteenth-Century Egypt,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 4 (2000): 167–217.



in the kind of patrons named.³¹⁴ Sgraffito wares were generally produced for a lower class of amirs, while silks were manufactured for and distributed by the sultan. Access to wealth was the determining factor in these consumer patterns. In terms of housewares, the sultan and his top amirs could have afforded silver and gold-inlaid bronze and brass basins and candlesticks and finely enameled glass beakers and chalices. The less affluent amirs and urban dignitaries would have, instead, commissioned earthenware vessels (often oversized), inscribed with their names and titles. The inscriptions “personalized” housewares for the patron, serving a purpose similar to the *tirāz* borders of textiles.³¹⁵

Comparisons can also be made between the generic court inscriptions of pottery and textiles. Dedications to “the sultan” (otherwise unnamed) or “al-Malik al-Nāṣir” (a title used by a number of Mamluk sultans³¹⁶) on silks ensured the propriety of the garment for the regimes to follow. Similarly, ceramic inscriptions praising unnamed amirs were appropriate for a broad market and guaranteed greater sales. The expansion of ceremonials necessitating the distribution of robes of honor and the process of easy promotion to amirships under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad may account for the large demand for these kinds of goods.

On the other hand, unofficial inscriptions take a different form in Mamluk sgraffito and textiles. Poetry, proverbs, and congenial wishes for prosperity and happiness have been part of the decorative vocabulary of ceramics, textiles, and metalworking since the early Islamic period. Mamluk textiles continue this tradition; Mamluk sgraffito does not. Generic inscriptions on sgraffito wares duplicate the formal honorific dedications to amirs and high officials common to inlaid metalwork and enameled glass. The placement of these inscriptions in visible areas (like the wide register below the rim on the exterior of a vessel) and their official format are clear indications that the objects were meant to be seen in public places. Therefore, generic inscriptions in sgraffito are a development of official art, rather than popular art. Likewise, sgraffito wares belong to the official and public realm of Mamluk art. The mass-production of these for the general public then reflects, to some degree, on social developments related to the Mamluk elite.

Inscriptions were widely recognized symbols of sovereignty and occupied an

³¹⁴Inscriptional registers are just one mode of decoration that potters may have borrowed from the design of textiles. The influence of rug fringes on the margin arcades of sgraffito registers has been discussed above. For other studies on the influence of textiles on ceramics see L. W. Mackie, “Toward an Understanding of Mamluk Silks,” 143–44, and L. Golombek, “The Draped Universe of Islam.”

³¹⁵The phrase “textile mentality” was coined in L. Golombek and V. Gervers, “Tiraz Fabrics in the Royal Ontario Museum,” in *Studies in Textile History in Memory of Harold B. Burnham*, ed. V. Gervers (Toronto, 1977), 82–125.

³¹⁶Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 233.



important position in the visual world of medieval Islam. Architectural inscriptions, although incomprehensible to the many illiterate of medieval society, publicly expressed the power and authority of the patron. Objects decorated with inscriptions were held in high esteem because they represented wealth and status. It was not necessary for the inscriptions to be legible, though. Surface decoration consisting of abstract Kufic letters,³¹⁷ abbreviated words,³¹⁸ and pseudo-epigraphic registers³¹⁹ was quite common in medieval ceramics, metalwork, and textiles. The decorative quality and symbolic value of the Arabic script, in this sense, were more important than the meaning of the inscription. Ibn Khaldūn informs us that textiles with the sultan's name lent prestige to the person of lower rank on whom the garment was bestowed.³²⁰ Inscriptions on objects were socially meaningful. Likewise, the symbolic effect of inscriptions on Mamluk pottery should not be underestimated. The appearance of an inscription (especially if it was accompanied by a blazon) increased the status of both object and owner, regardless of the quality of the vessel it was decorating.

The Mamluk epigraphic style of decoration, established under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, gradually replaced figural decoration in all media.³²¹ A variety of factors may have contributed to this development: growing religious orthodoxy, a conscious break with Mediterranean styles associated with the Crusaders, the influence of contemporary metalwork,³²² or simply the changing tastes of the Mamluk elite.³²³ The most important catalysts in this stylistic development, however,

³¹⁷Rim registers of repeated pseudo-Kufic letters were quite common in metalwork in ceramics produced in both the Islamic and Byzantine worlds of the twelfth century. See the characteristic beveled uprights of false Kufic letters in Byzantine sgraffito from Corinth (C. H. Morgan, *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Vol. XI: The Byzantine Pottery* [Cambridge, MA, 1942], Pls. xlv.e, xlviii.b, and xl.a, b).

³¹⁸*Al-sulṭān* was often abbreviated to one or two letters in Mamluk textiles (Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 236). Single and double-letter characters represent the phrases *li-ṣāhibihi* and *al-yumn* in Samanid ceramics and continues in the painted pottery of eleventh-century Afghanistan (J. C. Gardin, *Lashkari Bazar: Les trouvailles, Vol. II: Céramique et monnaies de Lashkari Bazar et de Bust* [Paris, 1963], 60, n. 6).

³¹⁹Possibly because of its much shorter production time, pottery is more prone to decoration in rapidly executed (and often illegible) inscriptions than other media. For examples from early thirteenth-century Bamiyan see J. C. Gardin, "Poteries de Bamiyan," *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 231, Fig. 2; for Mamluk Egypt see Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 186–87, cat. #94.

³²⁰L. W. Mackie, "Increase the Prestige," *Arts of Asia* 26 (1996): 84.

³²¹Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 90.

³²²Inlaid brasses produced in fourteenth-century Fars are decorated in large *thulūth* inscriptions dedicated to unnamed dignitaries (Ward, *Islamic Metalwork*, 99–100).

³²³Mamluk blazons and inscriptions containing the titles associated with amiral offices replaced the figural designs popular with Mosul metalworkers (Ward, *Islamic Metalwork*, 111 and 113).



may have been the changes in Mamluk administrative, fiscal, and social policies initiated by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Sgraffito inscriptions are particularly illustrative of Mamluk society during and following his third reign. The upward mobility of the *awlād al-nās* is reflected in inscriptions dedicated to sons of amirs. The rapid promotion of Mamluks to amirships is paralleled in the proliferation of vessels inscribed with dedications to unnamed amirs. The mass-production of poorer quality vessels with blanket dedications may be related to the rise of the “rank-and-file” soldiers and non-elite members of the civilian population. These formerly marginalized groups became familiar with the epigraphic art of the elite through official ceremonies. The role of Mamluk ceremonial in popularizing inscribed objects, such as textiles and ceramics, is the focus of the following section.

FUNCTION

Of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s ambitious building program on the Cairo Citadel, only his Congregational Mosque remains.³²⁴ Contemporary sources on other constructions, no longer standing—the Qaṣr al-Ablaq (built in 1313–14) and the Great Īwān (final rebuilding by al-Nāṣir in 1333)—emphasize the relationship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s monumentalization of the Citadel during his third reign and the complicated rituals which were staged in them.³²⁵ The Great Īwān, the ceremonial hall *par excellence*, served as al-Nāṣir’s *dār al-‘adl* (court of justice). It was here that public hearings with the sultan took place and the processional route through the lower city ended. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad rebuilt the original structure in 1333 on a much larger scale, presumably to accommodate the increasing elaboration of important public events, such as the investiture and the reception of foreign dignitaries.³²⁶ The ceremonies associated with the monumental Qaṣr al-Ablaq (“Striped Palace”) were semi-private. The morning *asmiṭah* (banquets)

³²⁴Tradition claims that Muḥammad ‘Alī (viceroys of Egypt and Pasha, 1805–188) cleared most of the Citadel platform of earlier Mamluk constructions for his own mosque and military barracks. Nevertheless, the remains of a series of vaults flanking an enclosure wall south of Muḥammad ‘Alī’s mosque have been identified as the subterranean supporting structures of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 34–36). Archaeological work on the Citadel in the 1980s has uncovered the remains of further buildings, the identification of which is still undetermined (M. al-Ḥadīdī and F. ‘Abd al-‘Alīm, “A ‘māl Tarmīm al-Qaṣr al-Ablaq bi-Qal‘at Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn,” *Ālam al-Binā’* 26 (1986): 4–16; archaeological report reviewed in Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 36).

³²⁵For a reconstruction of the ceremonies held in these two structures consult Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The Citadel of Cairo: Stage for Mamluk Ceremonial,” *Annales Islamologiques* 24 (1988): 35–51; Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, Ch. 6; and J. S. Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State: Maḏālim Under the Baḥrī Mamlūks 662/1264–789/1387* (Istanbul, 1985).

³²⁶Rabbat suggests that developments in court ceremonial and processions early in al-Nāṣir’s reign may also have necessitated the first reconstruction in 1311, which replaced al-Ashraf Khalīl’s earlier *īwān* (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 193).



and *khidmah* (royal audience) held here were restricted to the highest-ranking officials and the *khāṣṣakīyah*.³²⁷

The effect of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's elaboration of Mamluk ceremonial was the militarization of state functions. This is particularly evident in the area of judicial administration. The *mazālim* sessions, initiated by Nūr al-Dīn in the twelfth century, were public hearings where civilians could demand redress from wrongs suffered at the hands of government officials. The convergence of these hearings with the ceremonial, twice-weekly *khidmah* and the transfer of both functions to the Īwān Kabīr transformed both events into a public display of the sultanate and government authority.³²⁸ It was a powerful legitimizing tool that the sultan controlled for his own benefit. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, furthermore, regularized the *khidmah*, which convened on Mondays and Thursdays, and ritualized the parades (*mawākib*) and banquets (*asmiṭah*) which preceded and followed the royal audience, respectively.

According to Nielsen, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad completed the process of "militarization" of the *mazālim* sessions which took place in the *dār al-'adl*, now situated in the Citadel's Īwān Kabīr. Al-'Umarī (*Masālik al-Abṣār*) describes in detail the seating arrangement of the *mazālim* sessions: the sultan was flanked by the four *qādī al-quḍāh* and his vizier, surrounded from behind by his top military officers, preceded on each side by the most important administrative officers (*wakīl bayt al-māl*, *nāẓir al-ḥisbah*, *kātib al-sirr*, *nāẓir al-jaysh*, and *kuttāb al-dast*), and the amirs of the royal council remained standing beyond this circle. A protocol for seating was maintained for the banquets, as well; likewise, the line-up of officers who took part twice weekly in the military parades (held before the *khidmah*) reflected the current social and professional hierarchy within the Mamluk elite. In fact, Nielsen argues that such seating/standing arrangements were designed to recreate this hierarchy for public view, yet another method of legitimization with highly political overtones.³²⁹

It was the participation of the Mamluk military elite in the *mazālim* sessions that "militarized" the ceremonial events that accompanied them. Nielsen explains this phenomenon:

³²⁷Ibid., 201.

³²⁸Nielsen, *Secular Justice*, 53.

³²⁹Ibid., 56. N. Rabbat, "Mamluk Throne Halls: *Qubba* or *Īwān*?" *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 201–18, also addresses the relationship between the ceremonialization of the *dār al-'adl* sessions and the architectural history of the Īwān Kabīr. For the general history of the term "īwān" see N. Rabbat, "Al-Īwān: Ma'nāhu al-Farāghī wa-Madlūluhu al-Tadhkarī," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 49 (1997): 249–67.



The involvement of the Mamluk military officers in the *khidma* inevitably led to their involvement in the *mazālim* session when the two were combined in Dār al-‘Adl. . . . [U]nder the Mamluks the amirs [for the first time] had a permanent place [in the Dār al-‘Adl session]. This change is underlined by the Mamluk predilection towards appointing military officers to government posts, such as the vizierate, which had previously been filled by civilians.³³⁰

Ironically, it is at this time, the early fourteenth century, which one can, in one sense, speak of a “demilitarization” of the Mamluk state. Recruitment and training of mamluks continued, it is true, but after the victories at ‘Ayn Jālūt (1261) and Acre (1291), the borders of the Mamluk state were, for the time being, secure against foreign threat. However, the winding down of military activity abroad was accompanied by a “militarization” of ceremonial and culture. The arts of the period are characterized by the military quality of their decoration. What initially appears as an anomaly makes sense if one considers the methods, and purpose, of legitimization of power in the Mamluk sultanate. From the inception of the Mamluk state, the sultans presented themselves as the representatives and defenders of Islam in the eastern Mediterranean and the Hijaz. Their initiatives against the Crusader States and the Mongols established them as leaders of jihad, one requirement of legitimate secular rule as defined by the political thought of the day. The Mamluk sultans, moreover, annually provided the embroidered cover for the Ka’bah in Mecca (the *kiswah*), had their names mentioned in the *khuṭbah*, and provided financial and organizational support for the ulama—all of which were traditional methods of legitimizing rule in medieval Islam.

With military threats removed, at least for the time being, the sultans were able to focus their energies and resources into transforming their image at home. They created new visual images, meant to solidify and legitimize their regimes. Among these were the development of ceremonial with military themes and the “militarized” objects that went with them. The militarization of Mamluk art can, in part, be related to this phenomenon.³³¹

The precise origins of the ceremonies associated with the Īwān Kabīr and the Qaṣr al-Ablaq are obscure. Mamluk sources, as related in al-Maqrīzī, al-Qalqashandī, and Ibn al-‘Abbās’ manual for kings, credit the Persians for various

³³⁰Nielsen, *Secular Justice*, 61.

³³¹For a complementary view on the militarization of the early Mamluk state consult N. Rabbat, “The ‘Militarization’ of Architectural Expression in the Medieval Middle East (11th–14th Century): An Outline,” *Al-‘Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭá* 6 no. 1 (1994): 4–6.



aspects of not only ceremonial but also architecture.³³² The Il Khanid court represented the "imperial ideal" in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, most notably in the areas of ceremonial and state-sponsored art.³³³ Two Mongol practices, the ritual drinking of *qumiz* (a fermented and sweetened mare's milk) and the organization of state-sponsored banquets, were shared by the Mamluk court. Formalized drinking and eating at court were easily translated into a Mamluk context, where they strengthened the bonds of *khushdāshīyah*.³³⁴ Both the protocol and dress adopted for these occasions were incorporated into Egyptian court practice.³³⁵ As for the arts, there are numerous examples of Il Khanid influence in the fourteenth century: the decorative use of faience on minarets (Amir Aytamish's village mosque, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's Citadel mosque, Amir Qawṣūn's mosque in Cairo);³³⁶ the layout and iconography of Sultan Ḥasan's mosque-madrasah complex at the base of the Citadel and the so-called "Sulṭānīyah" complex in the Southern Qarafah;³³⁷ the stucco mihrab of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's madrasah on the Bayn al-Qaṣrayn; large Qurans and "bestiaries";³³⁸ ceramics (the so-called "Sultanabad ware");³³⁹ and large inlaid jugs and ewers with military inscriptions.³⁴⁰ The aesthetic and overall visual impact of Mongol and Mamluks arts of this

³³²Behrens-Abouseif, "The Citadel of Cairo," 30.

³³³Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250–1800* (New Haven, 1994), 81; S. Blair, "The Mongol Capital of Sultaniyya, 'The Imperial'," *Iran* 24 (1986): 139–51. The method of transmission of Mongol art to Mamluk territories is some matter of debate. Rogers rejects the role of the *wāfidiyah*, exchange of emissaries, ethnic commonality, and migrant artists from Persia, and emphasizes instead the impact of Persian imports (Rogers, "Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations"). He identifies two phases of Il Khanid artistic influence in Egypt: isolated points of contact (1260–1320) and the adoption of Mongol chinoiserie (1320s on).

³³⁴For references to Mongol ceremonies in Mamluk-period sources, see L. A. Mayer, *Mamluk Costume* (Geneva, 1952).

³³⁵Mayer, *Mamluk Costume* (textiles); Rogers, "Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations," and Rice, "Inlaid Brasses," 283–326 (for the depiction of Mongol-style dress in Mamluk inlaid basins), describe the kinds of Mongol garments adopted by the Mamluks at court.

³³⁶Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 265–66; Rogers, "Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations," 386–87; and M. Meinecke, "Die mamlukischen Fayencemosiakdekorationen: eine Werkstatt aus Tabrīz in Kairo (1330–1350)," *Kunst des Orient* 11 (1976–77): 85–144.

³³⁷Blair and Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam*, 84; Blair, "The Mongol Capital of Sultaniyya," 148.

³³⁸R. Hillenbrand, "Mamluk and Ilkhanid Bestiaries: Convention and Experiment," *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 149–87; Rogers, "Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations."

³³⁹Rogers, "Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations," 397. The ware is defined and illustrated in Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery*.

³⁴⁰Blair, "Artists and Patronage."



period are the same: they are monumental in size, colorful, and meant for ostentatious display.

As regards the role of such ceremonies in Egyptian society, more suggestive comparisons may be made with Fatimid customs, upon which many aspects of both public and semi-private ceremony were based.³⁴¹ Cairo's Citadel under al-Nāṣir has been described as a stage for the elaborate ceremonials that he developed.³⁴² Similarly, in her recent work on Fatimid ceremonies, Paula Sanders has described Fatimid Cairo as a "ritual city" and has emphasized how public processions and banquets played against the backdrop of Cairo's urban landscape contributed to the city's "urbanness."³⁴³ Fatimid ceremonies, such as the biweekly audience, the Opening of the Khalīj, urban processions, and official banquets, were adopted by the Mamluks, modified, and elaborated, and many were moved from the Bayn al-Qaṣrayn (the Fatimid center) to the architectural "stage" built for them on the Citadel. By moving parades and sultanic audiences, for instance, to the Citadel, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was able to claim the Fatimids' symbolic heritage as his own.³⁴⁴

"Insignia of sovereignty" associated with the Fatimid court—the throne, parasol, flags and banners—can also be found in Mamluk processions and receptions.³⁴⁵ The lengthy, detailed descriptions of Fatimid banquets, processions, and formal audiences in which historians like al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī indulge illustrate their interest in the kinds of ceremonies that were the most important in their own day.³⁴⁶ In these ways, it can be argued, the Mamluks borrowed from the visual vocabulary of Fatimid sovereignty as a way of legitimizing their rule locally.

³⁴¹For a different view, see R. S. Humphreys, "The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo: A Preliminary Essay," *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972): 86–87, where the "ideology of kingship" symbolized in Mamluk ceremonial is contrasted with the Fatimids' public symbols of universal monarchy.

³⁴²Behrens-Abouseif, "The Citadel of Cairo," 66.

³⁴³Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Egypt* (New York, 1994). See also Jonathan Katz's review of her book in *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 33 (1996): 212–13.

³⁴⁴Similarly, Rabbat argues that some architectural developments in the early fourteenth century "dissociat[ed] the Mamluk ceremonial and official image from that of the Fatimids" (Rabbat, "Mamluk Throne Halls," 208).

³⁴⁵Behrens-Abouseif, "The Citadel of Cairo," 30–31.

³⁴⁶It is significant, in this respect, that al-Maqrīzī documents the organization of the royal kitchen under the sultans al-Ashraf Khalīl and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* [Bulaq, 1853], 2:230–31) with the same relish for detail on expense as in his descriptions of Fatimid banquets for 'Īd al-Fiṭr (ibid., 1:387; compare al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 3:523–24).



These symbols and ceremonies were familiar to Egyptians and accepted by them.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad developed complex rituals around these Mongol, Ayyubid, and Fatimid customs.³⁴⁷ The biweekly audience in the *dār al-‘adl* (practiced by both the Fatimids and Ayyubids) was moved to the monumental Īwān al-Kabīr on the Citadel. The Qaṣr al-Ablaq was the scene of the *khidmah* (royal audience or review of mamluks/service ceremony); audiences were followed by large, formal banquets where either the Mamluk elite (in the mornings) or the army as a whole (for afternoon sessions) attended and where, as always, stringent rules regarding seating, serving, and eating were observed.³⁴⁸ The biweekly polo games, held initially at the Hippodrome,³⁴⁹ and formalized hunting excursions were innovations of al-Nāṣir and were accompanied by ceremonial extravagance in gift-giving, processions, and banquets. Over the course of the Mamluk period, processions began to take on an increasing importance and were used to mark occasions as diverse as major holidays (the ‘Īds, plenitude ceremony, the *maḥmal* procession),³⁵⁰ coronations, military victories, hunting excursions,³⁵¹ and the return of the sultan or an important amir from abroad.³⁵²

Processions and banquets were rare occasions for the Mamluks to come into contact with the local populace and were taken full advantage of by the sultan as a way of popularizing his rule.³⁵³ The development of ceremonial during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s third reign was, furthermore, another aspect of his policies geared

³⁴⁷ Al-‘Umarī (*Masālik* and *Al-Ta’rīf*) is the principle source on ceremonial under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s reign. As al-Nāṣir’s *kātib al-sirr* in Syria, al-‘Umarī was personally familiar with the organization of festivals and the daily routines of the court. Both al-Maqrīzī (*Khiṭaṭ* and *Sulūk*) and al-Qalqashandī (*Ṣubḥ al-A‘shā*) rely heavily on al-‘Umarī for their information on Mamluk customs (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 308). They do not differentiate between the Bahri and Burji periods, however, and do not account for developments in ceremonial over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Two secondary studies on Mamluk architecture and the role it played in ceremonial—Behrens-Abouseif, “The Citadel of Cairo,” and Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*—document the most important developments, particularly the ways in which Mamluk ritual was simplified and curtailed by the Circassian sultans. Other sources consulted for the present study include Stowasser, “Manner and Customs,” and B. Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge, 1993).

³⁴⁸ A description of dining etiquette can be found in Ibn al-‘Abbās’ manual for kings, *Atar al-Uwwal* (Behrens-Abouseif, “The Citadel of Cairo,” 44–45).

³⁴⁹ The polo games were moved to the *ḥawsh* (animal pens) of the Citadel by the Circassian Mamluks (Behrens-Abouseif, “The Citadel of Cairo,” 65).

³⁵⁰ Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, describes several of these events.

³⁵¹ Stowasser, “Manner and Customs,” 18.

³⁵² Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 74.

³⁵³ Popular support for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s regime was exhibited in mob riots during the usurpation of Baybars al-Jāshankīr (609–10/1309–10) (Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 52–54).



towards consolidating his power vis-à-vis the factious mamluk system which had dethroned him two times previously. The daily repetition of rituals designed to demonstrate the exalted status of the sultan over the other mamluks reinforced the Mamluk class structure while emphasizing his sovereignty in terms derived from Fatimid symbols of authority.

Drinking parties and formal banquets (both public and semi-private) were focuses of Mamluk ceremonial. To what degree vessels, and particularly ceramic vessels, played a visible role in these is suggested in references to banquets found in the Arabic sources and illustrations of the same in metalworking and manuscript painting. These vignettes of Mamluk daily life are few and restricted in detail.³⁵⁴ However they are suggestive of a specialization in vessel form and decoration that relates to both their ceremonial use and the Mamluk social hierarchy.

The following section serves two purposes. First, references to vessel shape, decoration, and use will be documented and compared to the typology of sgraffito set forth earlier in this paper. Second, the visibility of the *khāṣṣakīyah* in Mamluk banquets and processions is analyzed and related to characteristics of sgraffito decoration in the fourteenth century. It is argued that the development of sgraffito in Egypt is related to general developments in Mamluk ceremonial introduced by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and continued by his successors.

The term most often applied to banquets in the Arabic sources is *asmiṭah* (singular *simāt*).³⁵⁵ Later historians, such as Ibn Iyās (d. ca. 1524), use the term *walīm* (pl. *walā'im*) interchangeably with *simāt*. In Ibn Iyās they appear in the common phrase *wa-fīhi walīmat/asmiṭat ḥaflatin, wa-kāna yawman mashhūdan* ("and in that year was a dinner party, and it was a notable day").³⁵⁶ *Khiwān* is less common: a more formal kind of banquet may be intended in this case.³⁵⁷ The

³⁵⁴Illustrations from al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* often include scenes from banquets and dinner parties. See D. Haldane, "Scenes of Daily Life from Mamluk Miniatures," in *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades*, ed. P. M. Holt (Warminster, 1977), 85, Fig. 3 for a banquet at a merchant's wedding (fourteenth century, Syrian). D. Hill, *The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices* (Dordrecht, Holland, 1971), 99, Fig. 82 (fifteenth century) and 219, Pl. 13 (fourteenth century) reproduce drinking sessions from Badī' al-Zamān al-Jazarī's *Kitāb fī Ma'rifa al-Ḥiyal al-Handasīyah*.

³⁵⁵In Fatimid usage it refers to the place where food is eaten, often a temporary construction built of wood or a long, varnished wood table (al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:387).

³⁵⁶Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*, ed. M. Muṣṭafá (Wiesbaden and Cairo, 1975–84), vol. 3 has many examples. See especially p. 468, ll. 18–19.

³⁵⁷Humphreys, "The Expressive Intent," 87. In al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 4:56, ll. 1–7, there seems to be slight distinction between *khiwān* as a banquet held on a special occasion and *simāt*, one of the daily meals attended by the mamluks at the Citadel. Sayyid, the editor of the 1985 edition of *Masālik al-Abṣār*, equates al-Qalqashandī's *khiwān* with al-'Umarī's *simāt*; in this case, both indicate the sultan's table (al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 40, n. 3).



chronicles and biographies are full of references to banquets of all kinds, but details are often lacking. The occasion for the banquet, however, is usually noted. Banquets could mark a variety of events, such as weddings, national holidays, procession-days, and the completion of a building project or literary work,³⁵⁸ as well as the five daily group meals that the mamluks attended.³⁵⁹ The pattern of extravagance established by the sultan was followed by his governors,³⁶⁰ lesser amirs,³⁶¹ and even the civilian elite. The ulama were often invited to sultanic and amiral banquets during special events.³⁶² They, in turn, held their own banquets, which were attended by other religious scholars, government officials, and members of the court.³⁶³ In this way, civilian Cairo became acquainted with the expensive food, drink, and serving vessels used by the court in the Citadel.

Other information provided by the contemporary historians relates to the expense of the banquet, such as the quantity of chicken consumed, the measure of saffron used in food preparation, and the amount of money spent on food and drink. Al-Maqrīzī is particularly interested in the minutia of pocketbook and kitchen. His descriptions of Fatimid banquets, about which he borrows heavily from earlier

³⁵⁸While amirs marked the completion of a palace in this way in the fourteenth century, this practice becomes more common for sultans, amirs, and the civilian elite in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, according to the numerous references in Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*. See, for example, 1:1:549, ll. 15–20; 2:207, ll. 5–12; 333, ll. 21–24; and 406, ll. 6–10; and 3:218, ll. 14–21.

³⁵⁹There were, technically, two sets of banquets given daily for the mamluks. Of the first set, one was in the morning, the second was called *al-khāṣṣ*, and the third was *al-ṭārī* and was attended personally by the sultan (al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Aḥṣār*, 40). There were two seatings in the evening (Stowasser, "Manner and Customs," 18; Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 201).

³⁶⁰The governors in Alexandria and Syria held biweekly justice hearings followed by meals for those officials attending as well as sponsored banquets for the Īd celebrations, in the manner of the sultan. For instance—al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Aḥṣār*, 43, and al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 4:24, l. 7; 197, ll. 7–8; and 225, ll. 16–19.

³⁶¹Amiral banquets usually followed weddings and the inauguration of a new building. See Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*, 3:302, ll. 6–9 (*walīmatu-'arsin*, "wedding banquet").

³⁶²On procession days, the head qadis and civilian administrators attended banquets held at the Īwān al-Kabīr (al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 4:56). According to al-Qalqashandī, it was the custom of the sultan to share a simple morning meal (*simāt*) of stew and sweets with the head shaykhs (ibid., 5:205). His reference to banquets held after military drills, to which the ulama and other civilian elite were invited, suggests that this was a somewhat regular practice (ibid., 206). In 906 Quran readers, preachers, and all of the amirs were invited to an amiral banquet in Ezbekīyah (Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*, 3:467).

³⁶³One example has been dated to 842 by Ibn Iyās. The *qādī al-quḍāh* (head judge) sponsored a banquet (*asmiṭah/walīmatu ḥaflatin*) to celebrate his completion of a commentary on al-Bukhārī. In attendance were the sultan's son, the other head qadis, Sufi shaykhs, the *kātib al-sirr*, and the *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ* (*Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*, 2:207, ll. 5–12).



historians, are long and detailed. The banquet held for ʿĪd al-Fiṭr by the caliph was particularly lavish.³⁶⁴ Al-Maqrīzī devotes considerable attention to the food and the vessels in which it was served. Silver, gold, and “porcelain” (*ṣīnī*) vessels were placed on the table; chicken and bread were stacked “as high as a man is tall” on large ceramic (*khazafī*) trays.

For the Mamluk period, the biographer and contemporary critic of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, al-Yūsufī (d. 1358), likewise emphasizes the great expense lavished by the sultan on banquets held in honor of political dignitaries.³⁶⁵ One is described as an eating frenzy, a festive gorging that lasted as many as four days.³⁶⁶ Similarly, al-Maqrīzī devotes a lengthy section on the kitchen expenditure of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and includes such details as the number of chickens killed daily for the morning banquets, the amount of sugar purchased annually for Ramaḍān, and the household expenses of al-Nāṣir’s son, al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl.³⁶⁷ The wealth and extensive personal estates accumulated by the royal cooks are documented by al-Maqrīzī, but the day-to-day management of the kitchen is not a point of interest.³⁶⁸ Nowhere in any of these Mamluk accounts are the vessels for cooking, serving, or consumption described or, for that matter, even mentioned.

Short references to vessels can be found, however, in the descriptions of Fatimid banquets, food rations in the Mamluk period, a Mamluk drinking ceremony, and the Geniza documents. The large Fatimid serving trays described by al-Maqrīzī were supported by heavy cylindrical stands. These trays and supporting stands were still used in the Mamluk period, as is suggested by historical references to sizable ceramic trays (*khawāfiq ṣīnī*) used to serve large quantities of sweets and meat at the daily mamluk banquets³⁶⁹ and the fourteenth-century brass and ceramic stands displayed in museum collections.³⁷⁰ One sgraffito vessel in the gallery of the Islamic Museum in Cairo is a ceramic copy of a brass or bronze stand of this sort (Fig. 16).³⁷¹

³⁶⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:387. The same account is found in al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*, 3:523–24.

³⁶⁵ Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāzir*, 364 and 376. Al-Yūsufī was *muqaddam al-ḥalqah* under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. He published his biography of the sultan anonymously because of its critical, even hostile, assessment of al-Nāṣir’s reign (D. Little, “The Recovery of a Lost Source for Bahri Mamluk History: al-Yūsufī’s *Nuzhat al-nāzir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94 [1974]: 42–54).

³⁶⁶ Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāzir*, 206.

³⁶⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:236–37.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*; Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*, 185 (citing al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*).

³⁶⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:236.

³⁷⁰ Examples include a mid fourteenth-century cast brass stand inlaid with silver and gold (Allan, *Islamic Metalwork*, 97, cat. #19).

³⁷¹ Inv. #14754; profile published in ʿAbd al-Rāziq, “Le sgraffito de l’Égypte,” 15, second row,





Figure 16. Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito copy of a local brass tray stand, 14th century, probably Fustat



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The term *zabādī* (sing. *zubbīyah*) describes vessels in which rations or measured portions of meat or sweets were distributed.³⁷² Individual servings of meat purchased from the *sūq* were sold in *zabādī*, which were, in this case, smallish ceramic bowls. References to the *zubbīyah* as a “take-out” dish for meat span the Fatimid to Mamluk periods. According to Ibn Iyās, the vizier’s sister sent him daily a *zubbīyah* of meat from the market, presumably to save him the trouble of going himself.³⁷³ In the late fifteenth century (873), during a food shortage, amir Yashbak reduced the meat rations (*zabādī-laḥmī*) of Sufis and all “turbaned men”; he then confiscated all meat sold in the *sūq* for the mamluks.³⁷⁴

Individual servings of sweets at banquets and during Ramaḍān were also distributed in *zabādī*.³⁷⁵ At his wedding (892, turn of the sixteenth century), Sultan al-Ghawrī distributed small bowls of sweets (*zabādī ṣīnī fīhi sukkar*) in the mosque.³⁷⁶ The term also appears in the much earlier Geniza documents. According to Goitein, the *zubbīyah* was the most common vessel on the average Cairene’s table and the regular eating bowl so ubiquitous in museum collections.³⁷⁷ It came in a variety of sizes and was used for a variety of purposes. In the smallest *zabādī* were served fruits and nuts. They may have been made of wood, at least in the middle-income households of Fatimid and Ayyubid Cairo. Dessert bowls like these were relatively small. The servings distributed to the masses during Ramaḍān would have been meager. Furthermore, references to confiscated *zabādī* from personal treasures in the Fatimid and Mamluk periods number into the tens of thousands; the numbers argue for a small size.³⁷⁸ The term is current in Egypt today and designates a small yoghurt bowl.

Liquids were also served and consumed in ceremonial vessels called *zabādī*. An important passage in *Kitāb al-Tārīkh* describes the Mamluk custom of drinking

middle drawing. The Cairo stand has been signed by Sharaf al-Abawānī and carries a generic military inscription of dedication.

³⁷²The word *khafīqīyah* appears much less regularly. It is also associated with meat ration distribution. Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl was said to have sent his army into the markets while on campaign to get their daily meat. The servings were brought back in *khafīqīyah ṣīnī* (al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:230, l. 36; Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, 7.

³⁷³Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*, 1:1:219.

³⁷⁴Ibid., 3:22–23.

³⁷⁵Al-Nuwayrī, a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, describes *zabādī* as vessels for serving sweets (R. P. A. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* [Leiden, 1881], 1:578).

³⁷⁶Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*, 3:241.

³⁷⁷Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 4:145–46.

³⁷⁸Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*, 1:1:193 (confiscation of the vizier Jawhar’s treasury, tenth c.); ibid., 454 (contents of an amiral house, fourteenth century).



qumiz (fermented mare's milk or a sour milk sweetened with sugar),³⁷⁹ a practice the Qipchak Turks brought from their homeland in the southern Russian steppe.³⁸⁰ According to Ibn Iyās, in 791 (1389) Sultan al-Manṣūr Ḥajjī formalized this practice by obliging the amirs every Sunday and Wednesday to join him in the Maydān below the Citadel for drinks. The ceremony followed the protocol of formal banquets: the amirs were seated according to rank and served *qumiz* by those members of the *khāṣṣakīyah* whose function it was to serve drinks at banquets, the *sāqīs*. The *sāqīs* served the drink in individual ceramic bowls (*zabādī ṣīnī*): "wa-al-suqāh tasqīhim al-qumiz fī al-zabādī al-ṣīnī."³⁸¹ Like many other formalities initiated by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his successors, the formal drinking ceremony came to an end after the reign of Barqūq (r. 1382–89, 1390–99).

In another entry from al-Yūsufī, the drinking of *qumiz* is described in an informal setting.³⁸² The *khān* Abū Sa'īd (r. 1316–35), a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, has confronted the bedouin leader, Mahāh, about his alliance with the Mamluks. In order to fortify himself for the verbal confrontation, the *Īlkhān* drinks *qumiz* from a *hanab*, or beaker. The incident is informative on several accounts. First, the drinking of *qumiz* was a pan-steppe tradition also practiced by the Mongols. Second, it was a custom that could at times be informal and practiced "at home." Finally, one drank *qumiz* from a cup. Unfortunately, neither the size nor shape of the *zubbīyah* or the *hanab* can be established on the basis of these accounts alone.

More detailed information on the custom of drinking *qumiz* is provided by accounts written by European visitors to the Mongol court. The Franciscan William of Rubruck, who spent time in Karakorum from 1253 to 1255, writes frequently about the centrality of *qumiz* drinking parties in the court life of the Mongols. He writes that silver and gold goblets studded with precious stones were kept at the entrance to the Mongols' tent, along with large containers of *comos*.³⁸³ Drunkenness was not only approved of, but was considered honorable, and both men and women were encouraged to drink as much as they could during these parties. Even guests were showered with drink. "When they want to challenge someone to drink, they seize him by the ears, tugging them vigorously to make him open his

³⁷⁹The term has been defined in Dozy, *Supplément*, 2:405.

³⁸⁰Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*, 1:1:393; translated into French in Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane*, 8.

³⁸¹Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*, 1:1:393, l. 14.

³⁸²Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir*, 202 (esp. l. 9).

³⁸³William of Rubruck, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253–1255*, ed. P. Jackson (London, 1990), 132.



gullet, and clap and dance in front of him.”³⁸⁴

The khān’s drinking sessions were important occasions with all the formalities of official banquets. Mengü Khān, for example, held court-wide drinking parties twice a year at Karakorum, during which time he distributed garments and other presents to his nobles and organized parades and feasts.³⁸⁵ This description resembles Marco Polo’s account of the Great Khān’s “White Feast” on his birthday, where the cupbearers, tasters, and guards played focal roles and embroidered gold silks with golden belts covered with precious stones and pearls were given to the khān’s intimates.³⁸⁶

The few details that can be obtained from these accounts indicate that *qumiz*, whether consumed alone at drinking parties or along with food at banquets, was served from large ceremonial vessels. Marco Polo writes:

The wine, or precious beverage . . . is drawn into large golden vessels, big enough to contain sufficient wine for eight or ten men. Of these vessels, one is placed on the table for every two guests. Each of the two guests has a golden cup with a handle, and with it he draws his drink from the large golden vessel. And so with the ladies, every two of whom have one of the large vessels and two cups, like the men.³⁸⁷

The somewhat fanciful drawing by William of Rubruck of a silver fountain with four spouts for each of the four alcoholic “staples” of the Mongol diet—*qumiz*, wine, mead, and rice wine—suggests that a variety of vessels were used to contain and distribute the drink.³⁸⁸

In twentieth-century Western culture, we differentiate between eating and drinking and between bowls and cups. This is far from a universal concept, however. In the modern Middle East soup is drunk (not eaten) from a vessel that could be called a bowl or cup. The nomenclature is subjective; in fact, many industrial potters in the modern United States reject the labels and call their vessels of consumption (regardless of shape, size, or form) “bowls.” The distinction between “cup” and “bowl” is a fine one that exists only in the mind of the typologist, at least as far as medieval pottery is concerned. The term *zudāyah*, for example, could refer to either: both food and liquids were served in this vessel-type.

³⁸⁴Ibid., 76.

³⁸⁵Ibid., 209.

³⁸⁶Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, ed. A. Ricci (London, 1950), 133, 137–38.

³⁸⁷William of Rubruck, *The Mission of Friar William*, 131.

³⁸⁸R. Tannahill, *Food in History* (New York, 1973), 135.



The medieval Egyptian sources do, however, mention vessels that were used only for drinking liquids. A variety of drinking vessels were used in the average Cairene home. The *ṭāsah* and *kūz* are two types of cups mentioned in the Geniza documents, differentiated by function and shape.³⁸⁹ Goitein has defined the *ṭāsah* as a “wide, but shallow, drinking vessel.” He suggests it was a communal cup, passed around the table from person to person, and of monumental size. That this was a vessel used on special occasions is suggested by Dozy, who mentions, for instance, that black eyes could be treated by water held in the *ṭāsat al-tarbah*, or “concussion cup.”³⁹⁰ Likewise, one drank lukewarm milk, honey, or water from a “magic bowl” (*ṭāsah*) inscribed with incantations or instructions for medical use in order to cure a variety of common maladies.³⁹¹ The cup used on a daily basis was called a “*kūz*,” which is an Arabic term used today in Egypt. Like *zubdīyah*, the term *kūz* can refer to a variety of shapes, sizes, and materials. The ceremonial *kūz* was rare: it was made of silver and was large and heavy.³⁹²

Banquet-ware differed from regular tableware in size, material, and decoration. Some of the most well-known banqueting vessels were recovered from a hoard in northwest Iran and have been dated to the late tenth century.³⁹³ They comprise a set of silver and nielloed jugs, bowls, and a platter—the sorts of vessels used in Fatimid banquets, according to al-Maqrīzī’s account. The three bowls have steeply sloping sides, which are internally inscribed with a frieze showering blessings on the patron, one amir Abū al-‘Abbās Walkin ibn Hārūn. Ward suggests these were dessert bowls, because their steep walls would render drinking difficult.

The notion that form follows function is useful only if one is clear about what *range* of forms are suitable for a particular task. Steep walls do not necessarily eliminate drinking. For example, the silver and enameled Byzantine chalices used for the Eucharist had high, vertical walls. One cannot eliminate the possibility that, like the communion cup, ceremonial drinking vessels among the Mamluks were larger and of a different shape than regular household cups. The deep and wide spaces afforded by carinated or vertical-sided vessels would also have been ideal for serving fruit.³⁹⁴ Fruit was consumed in some quantity at banquets, both in the Mamluk and Fatimid periods. However, large bowls with straight sides are

³⁸⁹Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 4:147.

³⁹⁰Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, 16:167.

³⁹¹Wiet, “Les biographies,” 269–72. For a bibliography of sources on “magic bowls,” see his n. 189 on 284.

³⁹²Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 4:148.

³⁹³Ward, *Islamic Metalwork*, 54.

³⁹⁴Although I disagree with his notion that large, carinated ceramic bowls held fruit at Mamluk banquets, I am grateful to Prof. Daniel Crecelius of California State University for the suggestion (personal communication, August 1996, ARCE Fellow’s Luncheon, Cairo).



never mentioned in association with fruit and banquets. We read, instead, of dried sweets served on large platters³⁹⁵ and fruit in baskets.³⁹⁶ In the banqueting passages from al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī mentioned earlier, we get the impression that food in general (whether meat, vegetables, or sweets), if served in large quantities, was carried on large platters. Bowls/cups with carinated or vertical walls, if found at all at banquets, would have functioned in another manner.

Rare illustrations of banqueting vessels in metalwork and illuminated manuscripts are informative about form and function in a way that the historical sources are not.³⁹⁷ Little is known about the artist who signed his work "Ibn al-Zayn," except that he was a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his work represents some of the best inlay work of the early Mamluk period.³⁹⁸ At least two pieces can be attributed to him on the basis of his signature: the well-known St. Louis basin and the Vasselot bowl.³⁹⁹

The "St. Louis basin," now in the Louvre, is so-named because it was originally identified as a fourteenth-century royal French baptismal basin. This notion was rejected with Rice's 1953 monograph, in which he identified the patron as Salār and assigned its production to the period of his amiral promotion (1290–1310).⁴⁰⁰ The central register pictures an array of armed amirs and members of the royal household, bringing "gifts" to single equestrians framed by a roundel. Although Rice did not specify these figures as the *khāṣṣakīyah*, the *silāḥdār*, *jumāqdār*, *bunduqdār*, *jāmdār*, *jukāndār*, *bāzdār*, *sāqī*, and *jāshankīr* clearly carry symbols of their office across the surface of the basin in what seems to be a ceremonial procession. The placement of the *sāqī* (cupbearer) and *jāshankīr* (royal taster) close to the equestrian figures and the detailed execution of the vessels they carry emphasize the ceremonial importance of these two officials. The *sāqī* carries a bulbous carafe and offers a drink from a long-stemmed, vertical-sided goblet. At the other end of the procession stands the *jāshankīr* holding a wide, shallow, hemispherical "bowl" on a high pedestal foot—a shape that may correspond to the

³⁹⁵Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A' shá*, 3:524 (Fatimid).

³⁹⁶Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*, 3:241 (late Mamluk).

³⁹⁷See note 356.

³⁹⁸Rice, *The Baptistère de Saint Louis*, 12.

³⁹⁹For the bibliography of sources on these two works, see Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 75. Rice, *The Baptistère de Saint Louis*, has the best plates (in black and white) of the St. Louis basin. Both vessels are illustrated in color in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*. Rogers, "Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations," analyzes in depth their *khāṣṣakīyah* iconography and relates it to Mongol influence on the Mamluk court.

⁴⁰⁰Rice, *The Baptistère de Saint Louis*, 17. Rice recognizes the portrait of Salār in one of the armed amirs.



Geniza *ṭāsah*.⁴⁰¹ The decoration of the vessel is familiar enough from sgraffito: the dark rim is outlined several times in heavy incisions and a wide, central register carries an inscription: *anā makhfīyah li-ḥaml al-ṭa‘ām* (“I am a *makhfīyah*, for serving food”). It is a very fortunate inscription, indeed, for determining banqueting vessel shape and function. However, the term may not have been that familiar to fourteenth-century Egyptians, since Ibn al-Zayn felt it necessary to include this commentary.⁴⁰² One thirteenth-century source, al-Baghdādī, defines *makhfīyah* as the food which may have been served in this vessel: a sort of meat stew containing kebabs and strips of red meat cooked in a pot with water, chickpeas, onions, and spices.⁴⁰³ On the basis of more modern usage, Dozy has identified the term as a Maghribi word for a covered container or tureen.⁴⁰⁴

A similar sort of vessel is inscribed on the other of Ibn al-Zayn’s signed works, a large brass bowl inlaid with silver and gold, also in the Louvre.⁴⁰⁵ The main register of the “Vasselot bowl” makes explicit reference to a royal banquet: a dignitary sits with beaker in hand inside two medallions and musicians and the *khāṣṣakīyah*, all holding the various objects of their offices, are seated to either side of him. One figure with Mongol features sits cross-legged to the right of the dignitary and holds aloft a wide, shallow vessel on a high pedestal foot. It is almost identical to the *makhfīyah* of the St. Louis basin, except for a pronounced carination and some indication of an out-turned rim. The *naskhī* inscription of its wide, central register displays the artist’s signature—‘*aml Ibn al-Zayn* (“the work of Ibn al-Zayn”). Atıl refers to this figure as the *sāqī*, because of the small beaker laid at his feet. However, the artist has incorporated several beakers and pouring vessels into the background rinceau; the beaker here is entirely decorative. The placement of this officer to the right of the dignitary and the shape of the inscribed vessels he holds are the same in both of Ibn al-Zayn’s pieces. It is entirely possible that the St. Louis basin and the Vasselot bowl belong to the same banqueting set and that the scenes were meant to complement one another. If this is so, then the

⁴⁰¹Atıl (*Renaissance of Islam*, 76) identifies this official as the *jāshankīr* on the basis of the vessel he is carrying. On another Mamluk inlaid brass, Rogers recognizes the *jāshankīr* by what appears to be a brass “lunchbox” in his hands (Rogers, “Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations,” 390). The vessel known as the Mamluk lunchbox was a sort of lockable tureen designed to prevent poisoning. See illustration in Ward, *Islamic Metalwork*, 119, Fig. 95. Ironically, in none of these illustrations does the *jāshankīr* carry the official blazon of his office: the table.

⁴⁰²Ibn al-Zayn also identifies penboxes (*dawāt*) on the basin in this manner. Rice reminds us that “explanatory inscriptions” like these were also part of the decorative vocabulary of thirteenth-century metalworking (*The Baptistère de Saint Louis*, 20).

⁴⁰³Tannahill, *Food in History*, 174.

⁴⁰⁴Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:387–88.

⁴⁰⁵See illustrations and descriptions in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 74–75, cat. #20.



Vasselot figure is the *jāshankīr*, and he is holding the taster's bowl, or *makhfīyah*.

The *makhfīyah* and the *sāqī's* goblet are specialized banqueting vessels and are related to the ceremonial roles of the *jāshankīr* and the *sāqī*. Ibn al-Zayn takes care to detail certain aspects of form and decoration in order to emphasize the ceremonial importance of these two vessel types. The beaker, on the other hand, is a more familiar and widespread form that figures prominently in banqueting scenes. The truncated cone of its profile and the straight, flaring sides are repeated as a decorative device in the Vasselot bowl and as an icon itself of the royal banquet in Islamic minor art. The frontispiece of the Vienna manuscript of al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* essentially repeats the banqueting scene of the Vasselot bowl by emphasizing the drinking dignitary with his beaker surrounded by household officials and musicians.⁴⁰⁶ The cross-legged prince lounging with glass beaker in hand is a visual abbreviation for the "pleasures of the court" that fits conveniently into a bowl interior. The beaker motif has a long history in Islamic ceramics, one that begins with Abbasid slip-painted and lusterware and continues into Seljuk, Byzantine, Cypriot, and Mamluk sgraffito.

The goblet held aloft by the *sāqī* of the St. Louis basin differs from ordinary stemmed bowls. The artist has emphasized its vertical, carinated walls, and the interplay of brass and silver inlay within the contours of the goblet is meant to indicate a metal vessel rather than a glass one. Similarly, the metal inlay of Ibn al-Zayn's *makhfīyahs* represents the original inlay of those vessels. Metalworking was imitated in Islamic ceramics before the Mongol invasions.⁴⁰⁷ The products of Mamluk metalworkers became extremely influential in the fourteenth century and were reproduced in many media, including glass and ceramics. The debt fourteenth-century Mamluk sgraffito owes to contemporary Egyptian and the slightly earlier Mosul metalworking tradition has been duly noted by scholars of medieval Egyptian pottery.⁴⁰⁸

The full development of brass-imitative sgraffito within a relatively short period of time (early-mid fourteenth century) may indicate factors at work other than technological development, the scarcity of a raw material, or the adoption of

⁴⁰⁶Vienna, Nationalbibliothek AF 9, dated 1335. Rogers' claim that this is the only surviving illustration of Mamluk ceremonial can now be rejected (Rogers, "Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations," 395; illustrated p. 394, Ill. 6).

⁴⁰⁷For a discussion of the impact the bronze-working industry had on twelfth- and thirteenth-century Iranian ceramics, see Y. Tabbā, "Bronze Shapes in Iranian Ceramics of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries."

⁴⁰⁸Consult the following for observations on decorative composition and general layout: Fouquet, "Contribution à l'étude de la céramique," 130; Marzouk, "Three Signed Specimens," 498; and Atil, *Renaissance of Islam*, 148. On specific motifs borrowed from beaten and inlaid brass and developments in form see Scanlon, "Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes," 62.



the art of the ruling elite by the bourgeoisie.⁴⁰⁹ Not all forms of inlaid brass were reproduced in ceramics. In fact, the most popular vessels did not capture the imagination of the Egyptian potter. Lamps, straight-sided basins, trays, penboxes, incense burners, and ewers do not seem to have been produced in sgraffito. On the other hand, rounded basins, tray stands, goblets, large footed bowls, and, arguably, candlesticks do have counterparts in Mamluk sgraffito. It is as if particular vessels associated with banquets and processions were targeted by Cairene potters. It is significant that these were the largest and most visible brass and bronze accessories. The development of ceremonial in the fourteenth century and the restructuring of the Mamluk elite—both related to the policies of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his successors—emerge as key factors in the development of Mamluk sgraffito in this period.

The monumental, inscribed sgraffito vessels of fourteenth-century Egypt share many characteristics with the ceremonial drinking vessels described here. Exaggerated dimensions are emphasized in the *makhfīyahs* of St. Louis' basin and the Vasselot bowl and metalware vessels described in the Geniza documents and contemporary chronicles and administrative manuals. The extended proportions of brass basins, bowls, ewers, and candlesticks are paralleled in fourteenth-century sgraffito bowls. Furthermore, the layout of decoration standardized in Mamluk metalworking is applied to ceramics. The repetition of inscriptional registers interrupted by blazon roundels and the placement and formulae of the artist's signature is characteristic of Sharaf al-Abawānī's work, for example. Details such as the "Y-pattern," double register lines, the color combination of yellows and browns (imitative of gold inlay on brass or bronze), and dark outlined rims are also borrowed from metalwork.

Of the two main forms of Mamluk sgraffito, the hemispherical bowl is most easily identifiable as a product of the glass industry.⁴¹⁰ It is impossible to precisely determine, however, what kind of vessel shape from Mamluk metalworking is imitated in the carinated sgraffito forms of the fourteenth century. The carinated shape does not replicate closely enough any form of Egyptian or Mosul metalworking, nor does it reproduce the vessel shapes illustrated in Ibn al-Zayn's

⁴⁰⁹The development of figural, inlaid metalwork in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries can be explained in terms of a "silver crisis" (J. W. Allan, "The Survival of Precious and Base Metal Objects"—genesis of Iran's beaten brass and bronze industry) and the empowerment of the non-royal, urban elite (O. Grabar, "The Illustrated *Maqāmāt* of the Thirteenth Century: the Bourgeoisie and the Arts," in *The Islamic City*, ed. H. H. Hourani and S. M. Stern [Oxford, 1970], 207–22—focuses on painting). While these arguments are useful for the Seljuk and Ayyubid worlds, they do not adequately document artistic and social developments of fourteenth-century Egypt.

⁴¹⁰For a review of the history of this form in glassware and ceramics and its relationship with metalworking, see Tabbā, "Bronze Shapes," and Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 118–44.



basin and bowl. One should not read Ibn al-Zayn's illustrations too literally, however. The vessel profiles and proportions are approximated and only express the impression the *makhfiyah* and *sāqī's* cup left on an artist who had visited the Mamluk dining halls.⁴¹¹ The question, then, remains whether carinated forms of Mamluk sgraffito imitate a known ceremonial vessel (such as the *makhfiyah* or *sāqī's* goblet), reproduce a metalware form that has disappeared, or developed independently. One could imagine the sort of "large, golden vessel" described by Marco Polo in reference to alcoholic beverages served at banquets.

The overwhelming decorative influence of contemporary metalwork on all media cannot be ignored. The decoration of fourteenth-century sgraffito, unlike that of the thirteenth century, clearly derives more from contemporary metalworking than ceramics. Likewise, the exaggerated proportions of many fourteenth-century sgraffito vessels can be compared to a developing monumentality in the beaten brass basins, bowls, candlesticks, and trays set aside for banquets and processions.⁴¹² Some vessels resemble goblets; others are remarkably similar to ceremonial candlesticks set upside-down (see Fig. 5, bottom).⁴¹³ The base stem, straight flaring sides, and decorative mode of some carinated sgraffito bowls and brass candlesticks are quite similar, although the dimensions are not comparable. Ceremonial metalwork made enough of an impression on contemporary Cairenes to popularize monumentality, untraditional proportions, and inscriptional and heraldic decoration in common tableware.

The "classic Mamluk chalice," however, is neither a true chalice nor a large ceremonial basin or bowl. The dimensions, profiles, organization of decoration, and proportions place it somewhere between the two. Thus, the original typological problem remains: is the "classic Mamluk chalice" a cup or a bowl? If its general shape does not seem to correspond to a particular function, neither is the heraldry incorporated into the vessel's decoration informative about the vessel's use. While the *sāqī's* goblet is the most common blazon in Mamluk sgraffito, it is certainly not the only one. Therefore, one cannot assume that every carinated vessel was meant to represent the *sāqī's* cup, particularly if the blazon is that of the *silāhdār* or *dawādār*.⁴¹⁴ On the other hand, the blazon of the *jāshankīr* (a circular table) is

⁴¹¹The carination of the *sāqī's* cup on St. Louis' basin may represent the curvature of a hemispherical wall.

⁴¹²The unwieldy size of the largest sgraffito bowls presents a functional problem. Because Nile clay is porous, vessels tend to be heavily potted. When they reach these proportions they become extremely difficult to lift. The possibility that large sgraffito vessels were meant only for display is worth some consideration.

⁴¹³I am grateful to Dr. Lisa Golombek, Royal Ontario Museum, for this suggestion.

⁴¹⁴The stemmed bowl does reproduce the *sāqī's* cup. Glass cups identical to the hemispherical forms of Mamluk sgraffito often have the ringed stem that is illustrated in the *sāqī's* blazon (Atıl,



rare in sgraffito, but this does not necessarily eliminate the *makhfiyah* as a source of inspiration for sgraffito shapes. There seems to be no correlation between the blazon and vessel shape or use.

A variety of vessel shapes were executed in the sgraffito technique. While the stemmed, hemispherical bowl imitates the *sāqī*'s goblet used at banquets, the "classic Mamluk chalice" recalls a variety of carinated brass vessels used at formal banquets, while not adopting their forms *per se*. The profiles are unique and seem to be transitional between a cup and a bowl, that is between the *sāqī*'s cup and the *makhfiyah* or *tāsah*. It is possible that the carinated forms imitated a brass prototype that has left no trace in the archaeological record, such as that described by Marco Polo in regards to the Great Khān's high feasts. There is, however, a continuous development in profile from Ayyubid luster wares⁴¹⁵ to the Alexandrian products, Wide Rim Arabesque, and fourteenth-century high-footed bowls of monumental proportions. While the profiles are consistently ceramic, specific technical developments such as changes in the color scheme, increasingly large proportions, a decorative program emphasizing inscriptions and blazons, and the elongation of stem and carination point to the realm of metalworking. In short, developments in Mamluk sgraffito from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century can be explained by a consistent and gradual maturation of the Ayyubid ceramic bowl profile along with decorative and technical influence from ceremonial metalwork. It is unfortunate the historical sources have so little to say about tableware. The traditional melting-down of brasses and bronzes has denied us access to what was once a rich repertoire of cups and bowls.

The ceremonial importance of the *sāqī* and *jāshankīr*, more than other *khāṣṣakīyah*, has been emphasized because of their association with expensive tablewares and the central position these figures occupied in Mamluk banquets and processions. The *suqāh* have been described as the overseers of Mamluk banquets. They not only prepared the settings and served drinks to all those in attendance but also cut the meat.⁴¹⁶ The *jāshankīriyah* played an equally important role. Along with the *ustādār al-ṣuḥbah* (majordomo in attendance), they were in charge of organizing the banquets; both officials remained standing for the duration of the meal. The *jāshankīr* was specifically responsible for tasting both food and

Renaissance of Islam, 142, cat. #62; compare also cat. #59 and #94). The pronounced carination of the *sāqī*'s cup in St. Louis' basin may be an exaggeration of the vertical bend in the hemispherical wall or may indicate some variety in goblet forms. ROM 909.43.53 (the chalice miniature) clearly has a sharply carinated wall, and the curvature of its wall and rim parallel the *sāqī* blazon that decorates its tondo.

⁴¹⁵See Marilyn Jenkins, *Islamic Art in the Kuwait National Museum* (London, 1983), cat. #51.

⁴¹⁶Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣuḥb al-A'shā*, 5:454.



drink as a precaution against poisoning, a rather common method of removing political rivals.⁴¹⁷

There is evidence that the ceremonial offices of the *sāqī* and *jāshankīr* offered more opportunity for upward mobility for the *khāṣṣakīyah* than any other office. Al-Qalqashandī informs us that the *jāshankīrīyah* ranked among the top amirs.⁴¹⁸ The power wielded by these officers is underlined by multiple references to important *jāshankīrīyah* under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁴¹⁹ Serial promotions to the office of *sāqī* and an amirship of ten are recorded by Ibn Taghrībirdī and shed some light on why the *sāqī* blazon was so common in Mamluk art: there were a lot of *suqāh*.⁴²⁰ Promotion alone only partially explains how amirs with ceremonial positions acquired power and wealth. The *suqāh* and *jāshankīrīyah* knew all of the *khāṣṣakīyah* and *barrānī* mamluks by fraternizing with them daily at Citadel banquets.⁴²¹ Their high visibility facilitated the strengthening of personal alliances and gave them access to important individuals among the civilian elite.⁴²²

The *jāshankīr* was as familiar a figure in public processions (*mawākib*, singular *mawkib*) as he was at the semi-private banqueting tables of the Citadel. Along with the *ustādārīyah* and the *silāḥdārīyah*, the *jāshankīrīyah* rode at the head of the sultan's party in the 'Īd processions.⁴²³ Processions were among the few occasions when the Mamluks as a group had contact with the civilian population. There were numerous occasions for parades—the two 'Īds ('Īd al-Fiṭr and 'Īd al-Aḍḥá), the *maḥmal* procession (to celebrate the transport of the *kiswah* to Mecca), Friday prayer, enthronements, military victories, and festivals associated with the flooding of the Nile, to name only a few.⁴²⁴ Visually and physically Mamluk processions

⁴¹⁷Ibid., 4:21 and 5:460; al-Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 73, n. 2.

⁴¹⁸Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 4:21.

⁴¹⁹See, for instance, the entries on Altunbughā, Tughay, and Tināl in al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 2:3:614, 654, and 822. The power of Tughay and Tināl posed a threat to the sultan's authority (Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*, 72).

⁴²⁰Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, vols. 14 and 15. In the early Bahri period more Mamluks held the offices of *sāqī* and *dawādār* at one time than any other ceremonial position (ten each—Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *BSOAS* 15 (1953): 214, citing al-Zāhirī, *Zubdah*). Although no numbers are given, Rabbat states that most of the highest-ranking amirs in the middle Bahri period were *suqāh* (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 138).

⁴²¹Rabbat defines the *khāṣṣakīyah* as those mamluks raised in the Southern Enclosure of the Citadel with the sultan's sons and the *barrānī* as the recruits who resided in the barracks "outside" (*barra*), in the Northern Enclosure (see his glossary in Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*).

⁴²²Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, devotes some attention to the business and marital relationships cemented between amirs and their sons (*awlād al-nās*) and the powerful families of Cairo.

⁴²³Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 4:46.

⁴²⁴Stowasser, "Manner and Customs," 19.



integrated civilian Cairo and the royal Citadel through a ceremonial route which began at Bāb al-Nāṣr, followed the Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, and exited Bāb Zuwaylah for the Darb al-Aḥmar, the horse market at the foot of the Citadel, Bāb al-Silsilah (a Citadel gate), and the Īwān al-Kabīr.⁴²⁵

The frequency and pomp of these parades increased in the middle Bahri period at a time when other Mamluk ceremonies were being elaborated and codified. A crucial element of these processions, for the purposes of the present study, is the visual display of amiral symbols. It was the responsibility of the sultan's weapons-officers—such as the *silāḥdār* (armor-bearer), *ṭabardār* (ax-bearer), and *jukāndār* (polo master)—to bear his weapons and display them to the public. They marched directly behind the sultan during processions and ahead of the other amirs.⁴²⁶ The objects in their care—in this case the sword, ax, and polo sticks, respectively—thus became extremely powerful symbols of authority and cultural elitism to the civilian population. The *khāṣṣakīyah* imagery so carefully documented by Whelan is replete with ceremonial officers displaying their objects of office at court.⁴²⁷ These figures from miniature painting, stone carving, and metalworking belong to a genre of court art that also includes scenes of ceremonial procession, where the *khāṣṣakīyah*, presumably in order of office and rank, carry their respective objects for public view.⁴²⁸

In some cases, the objects themselves were replaced by blazons displayed on the amirs' clothing, armor, and horsegear. Therefore, the blazons that occur most frequently in Mamluk sgraffito (the *sāqī's* cup, *silāḥdār's* sword, and *jukāndār's* polo sticks) were visually important components of two of the most important public celebrations staged by the Mamluk elite: formal banquets and processions.⁴²⁹ Similarly, the *jāmdār's* blazon, the napkin, is a familiar element of sgraffito

⁴²⁵Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 238 (citing al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*); Behrens-Abouseif, "The Citadel of Cairo," 48 (al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*); Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 74–75.

⁴²⁶Stowasser, "Manner and Customs," 19. For another account of objects of office displayed during processions see al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-A'shā*, 4:46.

⁴²⁷Whelan, "Representations of the *Khāṣṣakīyah*." Note especially a miniature from *Kitāb al-Diryāq* in Vienna, the throne niche from Sinjar, and a ewer signed by Aḥmad al-Dhākī al-Mawṣilī now in Cleveland.

⁴²⁸To this category belong a candlestick signed by Dā'ūd ibn Salāmah in Paris (Whelan, "Representations of the *Khāṣṣakīyah*," 224), St. Louis' basin, and possibly an Artuqid bridge at Ḥiṣn Kayfa (ibid., 222).

⁴²⁹The *dawādār's* penbox is a common heraldic device found on sgraffito that cannot be accounted for in this manner. The bearing of the inkwell was a ceremonial office symbolically associated with the administration and would not, understandably, play a large role in either processions or banquets. It was not an important office under the Bahris (Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *BSOAS* 16 (1954): 62).



decoration.⁴³⁰ The *jāmdārīyah* (wardrobe masters) stood alongside the *silāḥdārīyah* during public processions and *dār al-‘adl* sessions, visible to the public at all times.⁴³¹ This visibility of the *khāṣṣakīyah* in public ceremonial is a key to understanding the process by which “military art” was popularized in fourteenth-century Egypt.

There seems to have been a deliberate attempt by many sgraffito artists to reproduce the designs of ceremonial candlesticks used in court and public processions. Monumental brass candlesticks with silver and gold inlay were produced in large quantity for a variety of special occasions. Al-Maqrīzī recounts, for instance, the fantastic spectacle created when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s amirs presented festive candles in celebration of his son Anuk’s marriage; another evening they brought 3030 candles in expensive candlesticks to his palace!⁴³² Magnificent candlelit festivities continued into the fifteenth century. To commemorate the completion of his *qubbah*, the governor of Jedda threw a *walimah ḥaflah* on the banks of the Nile, the affair luminated by rows of candles set up along the river.⁴³³ Processions and parties, inadvertently, familiarized the local population with amiral art and paved the way for mass-production of “military” styles for non-Mamluks.

Mamluk ceremonies captured the imagination of civilian Cairo above all because they were among the rare points of contact between native Cairenes and the ruling elite. Not since the Fatimid period had Cairo witnessed such powerfully symbolic performances by the ruling establishment. While the particulars of Mamluk social hierarchy and self-determination represented in these performances were not comprehended by most Cairenes, their visual symbolism was not lost on them. Brass vessels inlaid with precious metals, military blazons, and bands of inscriptions were consciously associated with the elite of Egyptian society.

Civilian Cairo became familiar with these symbols of the ruling elite, in part, through the production and display of amiral commissions in the public bazaars. One of the most important markets in Cairo in the fourteenth century was the *sūq al-kaftīyīn*, or “bazaar of inlaid work.” Al-Maqrīzī describes in some detail the kinds of goods produced there and the clientele that frequented its quarter.⁴³⁴ The most important service the metalworkers provided for the Mamluk households was the outfitting of expensive bridal trousseaus, which included plates, candles, lamps, basins, small pitchers, and incense burners—many of the same vessel types

⁴³⁰See, for example, Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 185, cat. #93.

⁴³¹Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 142 and 253.

⁴³²Blair and Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam*, 97–99, and Behrens-Abouseif, “The Citadel of Cairo,” 49.

⁴³³Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*, 2:406.

⁴³⁴Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:105.



that were imitated in sgraffito.⁴³⁵

That these vessels left an impression on the civilian population is clear from al-Maqrīzī's narrative. He explains that hardly a single household could be found that did not have some inlaid brass or bronze-work and that the kind of work done for Mamluk patrons was in demand by most Cairenes. The market practically disappeared, however, by the early fifteenth century because of lowered demand and, one can presume, reduced resources. Al-Maqrīzī notes that there was much less inlaid brass available in his day than in the fourteenth century.⁴³⁶ Beginning with the accession of Barqūq, metalwork production was significantly reduced.⁴³⁷ The disappearance of sgraffito from the markets may be related, in part, to the decline of the metalwork industry in this period.

The shapes, sizes, decoration, and color scheme of Mamluk sgraffito in the fourteenth century are distinctive and remarkably different from underglaze-painted ceramics and glassware. The unique development of sgraffito in this period can be related to the powerful influence of contemporary metalworking, a consequence of an enriched ceremonial life that helped to bolster the cohesion and prestige of the Mamluk elite. While the impact of metalworking was felt in all media, pottery decorated in sgraffito, more than any other art form, can be considered truly imitative.

The expansion of Mamluk ceremonial in the fourteenth century served as a catalyst for sgraffito development in the same period. There is significantly more variety in Egyptian sgraffito in the thirteenth century, when multiple international ceramic styles were adopted and combined. The move towards homogeneity and mass-production in the following century reflects not changes in dining habits, but the popularization of amiral art forms in non-mamluk society. Formerly elite symbols of military power (emblems of office and elaborate titles) became commonplace, and eventually meaningless, with their introduction into the civilian market through ordinary tablewares.

⁴³⁵This is perhaps the most convincing evidence that some of the sgraffito vessels could have possibly been commissioned for Mamluk women. Basins and candlesticks were not only used on ceremonial occasions, but they comprised the basic accessories of a comfortable household. In some cases, the word *dār* that appears in dedicatory inscriptions may have been intended for the woman of the house, who was an extension, in a sense, of the Mamluk office-holder.

⁴³⁶Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:105.

⁴³⁷Allan, "Sha'ḥbān, Barqūq," 86.



CONCLUSIONS—CERAMIC DEVELOPMENT AS A BAROMETER OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE

The development of Egyptian sgraffito ware in the fourteenth century is related to the general militarization of Mamluk art that gained momentum under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The intensive production, limited distribution, and eventual disappearance of this ware cannot be properly understood without appreciating the ways in which this sultan's third reign was a watershed in Mamluk social and economic history.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad impacted the arts through his patronage of the amiral class and his manipulation of symbols of authority. The rise of the *khāṣṣakīyah* is directly related to his desire to define and control the state's elite from their early stages of training in the Citadel barracks. The prestige of the amiral class rose accordingly and, with it, were developed official ceremonies and images to bolster their elite status. The reinforcement of Mamluk class-consciousness was achieved in the early fourteenth century through an elaborate series of banquets and processions. Objects (primarily silver-inlaid brass vessels) played a focal role in the ceremonies. It was through the public display of basins, serving vessels, chalices, and candlesticks that the civilian population of Cairo became familiar with the symbols of Mamluk elitism: amiral blazons and formal inscriptions of dedication.

The popularization of elitist symbols was achieved through the reproduction of ceremonial vessels in pottery. Compared to brass and silver, earthenware vessels were more affordable for the average Cairene buyer. Furthermore, the sgraffito technique could effectively imitate chasing and inlaying. The mass-production of the military style of sgraffito ware, the reduction of the amiral blazon to pure decoration, and the bastardization of official formulae of address in dedicatory inscriptions are some ceramic correlates of the political and social turmoil in the decades following al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's death.

The oft-repeated characteristics of Mamluk art—monumentality, the use of color, expense, and elitism—are true of sgraffito ware. What makes this ceramic group unique is its relationship to the social circumstances of the time. The Phase II military style was phenomenon-bound, a "fad" of fourteenth-century Cairo. Initially produced for a clientele that was active in creating its own class-mythology and in image building, the mass marketing of Mamluk sgraffito by the end of the century heralded the collapse of the Mamluk social order. With the emergence of a new class of patrons, at the expense of the old, this art form lost its *raison d'être* and fell out of fashion.



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Photographs and drawings by author, unless otherwise indicated

Figure 1: ROM 988.117.12.43 and 988.117.162

Figure 2: L/Cal 1947/I - 11, 66

Figure 3: published in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 185, #93

Figure 4: ROM 909.43.10

Figure 5: published in *Ars Orientalis* 37 and Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 188, #95

Figure 6: ROM—no inv. #, Cypriot survey sample

Figure 7: Pol. Inst.—no #

Figure 8: ROM 909.43.4

Figure 9: ROM 909.43.7

Figure 10: ROM 988.117.164

Figure 11: Zeuxippus derivative

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a) Pierides 1732—Cyprus | c) Gr.-Rom., drawer 13971, #426— |
| Kom al-Dikka | |
| b) ROM 909.43.10—Fustat | d) Gr.-Rom., drawer 13971, #433— |
| Kom al-Dikka | |

*Abbreviations refer to museum collections as follows:

ROM: Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto, Canada)—Fustat and Jebel Adda study collections

L/Cal: Limassol Castle Museum (Cyprus)—main gallery

Isl. Mus.: Museum of Islamic Art (Cairo, Egypt)—main gallery

Pol. Inst.: Polish Institute, Kom ed-Dikka stores (Alexandria, Egypt)

Pierides: Pierides Foundation Museum (Larnaca, Cyprus)—gallery

Gr.-Rom: Museum of Greco-Roman Art (Alexandria, Egypt)—stores of SCA Kom ed-Dikka excavations

ARCE: American Research Center in Egypt's Fustat study collection (Cairo, Egypt)—housed at the American University of Cairo stores in al-Ḥilmīyah



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Wide Rim Arabesque

- a) ROM 909.43.4—Fustat c) Isl. Mus. #5680—no provenience
b) ROM 66:3:46—Jebel Adda d) ROM 909.43.7—Fustat

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- a) ROM 909.43.53—Fustat d) Isl. Mus. #4673
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Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 955/1548): Life and Works

With this article I wish to take up the suggestion offered by the editor in number 5 of *MSR* (2001) that it would be desirable to publish occasional biographical articles on one of the numerous “polymaths” of the Mamluk period in the journal. While Marlis J. Saleh contributed a portrait of al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) in the above-mentioned issue,¹ my essay will deal with the life and works of the Damascene scholar Ibn Ṭūlūn. In doing so, I do not primarily intend to present a consistent and well-rounded biography, but rather a brief sketch of some possible areas of research. A short overview of the most important stages in the author’s life will form the beginning. This account will be somewhat more detailed than the entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*² by William M. Brinner. We are very fortunate because Ibn Ṭūlūn himself provided some basic information about his life in his autobiography *Al-Fulk al-Mashḥūn fī Aḥwāl Muḥammad ibn Ṭūlūn*.³ The following information is therefore mainly based on a rereading of the text; most of the facts were already published in Henri Laoust’s biography of our Mamluk alim.⁴

Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad Ibn Ṭūlūn al-Ṣāliḥī al-Dimashqī al-Ḥanafī lived from 880/1475 to 953/1546. He was a scholar and a very prolific writer whom his contemporaries acclaimed as a traditionist, legal scholar, and teacher —less as a historian. Ibn Ṭūlūn naturally was aware of the fact that he was a subject of the Mamluk rulers, particularly since he could trace his paternal roots back to a Mamluk called Khumārwayh ibn Ṭūlūn⁵. However, Muḥammad first and foremost felt a loyalty to his hometown Damascus and its changing rulers. It was there that he was born in the suburb of al-Ṣāliḥīyah in the Ḥikr al-Hajjāj neighborhood in 880/1475.⁶ His birthplace thus was located south of the al-‘Umarīyah Madrasah at Mount Qāsiyūn.⁷ He emphasized in his autobiography

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¹Marlis J. Saleh, “Al-Suyūṭī and His Works: Their Place in Islamic Scholarship from Mamluk Times to the Present,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 73–89.

²William M. Brinner, “Ibn Ṭūlūn,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 3:957–58.

³Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Fulk al-Mashḥūn fī Aḥwāl Muḥammad ibn Ṭūlūn* (Damascus, 1929).

⁴Henri Laoust, *Les gouverneurs de Damas sous les Mamlouks et les premiers Ottomans (658–1156/1260–1744)* (Damascus, 1952), IX–XXI.

⁵Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Fulk*, 6.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibn Ṭūlūn describes this suburb in his *Al-Qalā’id al-Jawharīyah fī Tārīkh al-Ṣāliḥīyah*, ed.



that he was born into a family with good connections to the scholarly world of Syria,⁸ although this only applied to his paternal relatives, as we will see later on. According to his own information his mother Azzdān came from Anatolia (*rūmīyah*).⁹ Ibn ṬŪlŪn's statement that she spoke *lisān al-arwām*¹⁰ leaves open whether she was a Turkish or a Greek woman from Anatolia. Usage in those days allows for both interpretations. The boy was half-orphaned at a very early age, because Azzdān fell victim to one of the numerous plague epidemics.¹¹ In the following years Muḥammad grew up in the bosom of his father's family.¹²

His father together with his brother Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf (d. 937/1530–31), who was *muftī* and *qadī* at the *dār al-‘adl* in Damascus at that time,¹³ took care of educating young Muḥammad. But his paternal grandfather Shams al-Dīn ibn ṬŪlŪn (d. 887/1482–83) apparently also played a significant part in Muḥammad's intellectual training, as did Khwājah Burhān al-Dīn ibn Qindīl, the half-brother of his paternal grandfather, whose life as a merchant ended in Mecca in the year 887/1482–83.¹⁴ Burhān al-Dīn became well known mainly because of a major foundation that he had established in Damascus.¹⁵ His family's ambitions meant that Ibn ṬŪlŪn attended elementary school (*maktab*) at the al-Ḥājjibīyah Madrasah¹⁶ to learn reading and writing.¹⁷ He studied the Quran at the *maktab* of the al-Kawāfī Mosque at the same time—or after school.¹⁸ The author proudly tells us in his autobiography that he recited from the Quran in public for the first time when he was seven years old, i.e., in 887/1482–83, at a meeting held during the night of the 20th of Ramaḍān.¹⁹

Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān. (Damascus, 1949–56).

⁸Ibn ṬŪlŪn, *Fulk*, 6.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid, 6–7.

¹³Aḥmad ibn Munlā, *Mut‘at al-Adhhān min al-Tamattu‘ bi-al-Iqrān bayna Tarājim al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān* [= extracts of Ibn ṬŪlŪn's *Al-Tamattu‘ bi-al-Iqrān bayna Tarājim al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān*], ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Shaybānī al-Mawṣilī (Beirut, 1999), 843–44 (# 974).

¹⁴Ibn ṬŪlŪn, *Fulk*, 7.

¹⁵Ibid, 28.

¹⁶Abd al-Qādir al-Nu‘aymī, *Al-Dāris fī Tārīkh al-Madāris*, ed. Ja‘far al-Ḥasanī (Cairo, 1988), 1:501–2.

¹⁷Ibn ṬŪlŪn, *Fulk*, 7.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.



Ibn Ṭūlūn was fortunate, by the way, to have grown up in times of peace.²⁰ Law and order generally prevailed in Syria during Qaytbāy's regency from 872/1468 to 901/1496. Abū al-Baqā' ibn Yaḥyá Ibn al-Ji'ān (d. 902/1496–97) presents quite authentic testimony on the conditions that characterized this epoch.²¹ In his capacity as the deputy of Zayn al-Dīn Ibn Muzhir (d. 893/1487–88),²² who was confidential secretary (*kātib al-sirr*) in those days, he kept a most interesting journal of the sultan's official visit to Syria and Palestine in 882/1477,²³ describing the living conditions of the people in the countryside and the cities in great detail.²⁴

Ibn Ṭūlūn's intellectual powers were also stimulated in the following years: in 891/1486–87, at age 11, he was awarded a scholarship endowed by the *waqf* of the al-Māridānīyah Madrasah²⁵ to study jurisprudence (*fiqh*).²⁶ He subsequently pursued his studies at the educational institutions of the al-Manjak Mosque²⁷ and the Maṣjid al-Jadīd²⁸ after that.²⁹ While our protagonist's uncle Jamāl al-Dīn apparently was his most important teacher at the beginning, other respected scholars in the city, such as Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn Zurayq (d. 891/1486),³⁰ Sirāj al-Dīn al-Ṣayrafī (d. 917/1511–12),³¹ Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Mizzī (d. 906/1500–1),³² and al-Suyūṭī,³³ took

²⁰The historical background is given in Carl F. Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamlūk Sultans al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy and Qanṣūh al-Ghawrī in Egypt* (Seattle, 1993), and idem, *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power* (Albany, 1994).

²¹Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden, 1949), 2:38 and S2:26. Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi'*, ed. Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Qudṣī (Cairo, 1934–36), 11:10 (# 21).

²²Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 11:88–89 (# 233).

²³For this journey, see Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām al-Warā bi-Man Wulliya Nā' iban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-Kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duḥmān (Damascus, 1964), 72–82 = Laoust, *Les gouverneurs de Damas*, 33–38.

²⁴Ibn al-Ji'ān, *Al-Qawl al-Mustaḏraf fī Safar Mawlānā al-Malik al-Ashraf*, ed. R. V. Lanzone (Turin, 1878). French translation: R. L. Devonshire, "Relation d'un voyage du sultan Qaitbay en Palestine et en Syrie," *Bulletin d'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire* 20 (1922): 1–42.

²⁵Al-Nu'aymī, *Dāris*, 1:592–94.

²⁶Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Fulk*, 24.

²⁷Al-Nu'aymī, *Dāris*, 2:444–45.

²⁸Ibid, 361–62

²⁹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Fulk*, 24.

³⁰Aḥmad ibn Munlā, *Mut'at al-Adhhān*, 48–49 (# 5).

³¹Ibid, 557–58 (# 617).

³²Ibid, 770–71 (# 881).

³³Elizabeth M. Sertain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*, vol. 1, *Biography and Background* (Cambridge, 1975).



over later on. It was an honor to have been instructed by such an eminent personality as al-Suyūfī, which is why the historian Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 1061/1651)³⁴ specifically mentions in his short biography that Ibn Ṭulūn was awarded a teaching licence (*ijāzah*) by the master.³⁵

The syllabus covered the usual subjects of those days: Hanafi law, hadith studies, exegesis of the Quran, grammar, theology, but also medicine and astronomy. In his autobiography Ibn Ṭulūn provides us with a long list of all the ulama with whom he studied; he also recorded every single book that he worked through in the course of his studies.³⁶ He was particularly interested in history. Two individuals had a formative influence in this context: Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī (d. 909/1503), a Hanbali known by the name of Ibn al-Mibrad, who wrote several works on the history of Damascus,³⁷ and ‘Abd al-Qādir Nu‘aymī (d. 927/1521), a Shafi‘i, who left a comprehensive topography of Damascus to posterity.³⁸

We have only a smattering of information about Ibn Ṭulūn’s life after the completion of his studies. But his autobiography lets us know that he held various teaching positions and religious administrative jobs: in 902/1496–97 he was posted at the al-Khātūnīyah³⁹ and in 909/1503–4 at the al-Jawharīyah.⁴⁰ He earned some additional money by reciting from the Quran in a number of madrasahs: at the al-‘Ilmīyah and al-‘Izzīyah in 901/1495–96,⁴¹ at the al-Dulāmīyah in 902/1496–97,⁴² at the al-‘Umarīyah in 909/1503–4,⁴³ and at the Umayyad Mosque in 912/1506–07.⁴⁴ Moreover, he served as the imam of various Sufi congregations in Damascus: at the al-Ḥusāmīyah in 901/1495–96⁴⁵ and at the al-Yūnusīyah⁴⁶ and al-Suyūfīyah in

³⁴Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Luṭf al-Samar wa-Qaṭf al-Thamar min Tarājim A’yān al-Ṭabaqah al-Ūlā min al-Qarn al-Ḥādī ‘Ashar*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Shaykh (Damascus, 1981), 1:11–211 (introduction).

³⁵Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Al-Kawākib al-Sā’irah fī A’yān al-Mī’ah al-‘Āshirah*, ed. Jibrā’īl Sulaymān Jabbūr (Beirut, 1945), 2:52.

³⁶Ibn Ṭulūn, *Fulk*, 7–18.

³⁷*GAL* 2:107–08, S2:130–31; Stefan Leder, “Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Hādī,” in *El*², 9:354; Aḥmad ibn Munlā, *Mut‘at al-Adhhān*, 838–840 (# 968).

³⁸See note 16. *GAL* 2:133, S2:165.

³⁹Nu‘aymī, *Dāris*, 1:507–18.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, 498–501; Ibn Ṭulūn, *Fulk*, 23.

⁴¹Ibn Ṭulūn, *Fulk*, 23; Nu‘aymī, *Dāris*, 1: 550–55, 558–60.

⁴²Ibn Ṭulūn, *Fulk*, 23.

⁴³*Ibid*, 22–23; Nu‘aymī, *Dāris*, 2:100–12; Ibn Ṭulūn, *Qalā’id*, 165–83.

⁴⁴Ibn Ṭulūn, *Fulk*, 22; Nu‘aymī, *Dāris*, 2:371–416.

⁴⁵Nu‘aymī, *Dāris*, 2:143–44.

⁴⁶*Ibid*, 189–90.



908/1502–3.⁴⁷ He became administrator of a small *zāwiyah* in al-Rabwah⁴⁸ in 909/1503–4.⁴⁹ After Ibn Ṭūlūn had made his pilgrimage in 920/1514⁵⁰ he worked as an assistant professor at the al-Muqaddamīyah⁵¹ and at the Umayyad Mosque⁵² on the eve of the Ottoman's Syrian conquest.

The occupation of his hometown by the Ottoman Sultan Selīm (r. 918–26/1512–1520) in 922/1516⁵³ does not seem to have represented a break for our author. In his writings he only mentioned this event in passing and did not attach much importance to it.⁵⁴ Nor does the transition in power seem to have been detrimental to his career: in 924/1518 he was appointed imam and reader of the Quran at the Grand Mosque⁵⁵ that had been built in al-Ṣāliḥīyah by the new sultan next to the mausoleum of Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240).⁵⁶ In the same year, Ibn Ṭūlūn also served as reader of the Quran at the *turbah* of Shāhīn al-Shujā'ī (d. 813/1411–12)⁵⁷ at the foot of Gabriel's Cave (*kaḥf Jibrīl*).⁵⁸ Ibn Ṭūlūn's career reached a kind of pinnacle in 926/1520: this was the year that he taught at the al-'Adhrāwīyah Madrasah,⁵⁹ held the office of a supervisor at the al-Yūnusīyah Khānqāh,⁶⁰ and worked as a librarian in the library that 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Bukhārī

⁴⁷Ibid, 202; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Fulk*, 23.

⁴⁸The part of Ibn Ṭūlūn's *Dhakhā'ir al-Qaṣr fī Tarājīm Nubalā' al-'Aṣr* which deals with al-Rabwah has been edited separately by Aḥmad Taymūr as *Waṣf Rabwat Dimashq wa-Muntazahātuhā wa-Mīdān al-Qabaq* [in *Revue de l'Académie Arabe de Damas* 2 (1922): 147–52].

⁴⁹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Fulk*, 25.

⁵⁰Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām*, 208 = Laoust, *Les gouverneurs de Damas*, 139.

⁵¹Nu'aymī, *Dāris*, 1:594–99.

⁵²Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Fulk*, 24.

⁵³Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān*, ed. Muḥammed Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1962–64), 2:32–36. The historical value of this source was first recognized by the Viennese scholar Herbert Jansky. See Herbert Jansky, "Die Chronik des Ibn Ṭūlūn als Geschichtsquelle über den Feldzug Sultan Selīm's I. gegen die Mamluken," *Der Islam* 18 (1929): 24–33. When Jansky wrote his study "Die Eroberung Syriens durch Sultan Selīm I." [in *Mitteilungen zur Osmanischen Geschichte* 2 (1923–26): 173–241] he did not know of Ibn Ṭūlūn's chronicle. Ibn Ṭūlūn's *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān* provides a good historian with much interesting information. See, for example, Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, "Voleurs et assassins à Damas et au Caire (fin IX^e/XV^e—début X^e/XVI^e siècle)," *Annales islamologiques* 35 (2001): 193–240.

⁵⁴Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām*, 211, 212 = Laoust, *Les gouverneurs de Damas*, 143, 144.

⁵⁵Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Fulk*, 23.

⁵⁶Ibid., and Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām*, 226–27 = Laoust, *Les gouverneurs de Damas*, 149–50.

⁵⁷Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 3:294; Nu'aymī, *Dāris*, 1:313–15.

⁵⁸Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Fulk*, 23.

⁵⁹Nu'aymī, *Dāris*, 1:373–82.

⁶⁰Ibid, 2:189–90.



(d. 841/1437–38),⁶¹ a Hanafi, built in the sepulcher of Sharaf al-Dīn ibn ‘Urwah (d. 620/1223) that is known by the name of “Mashhad ‘Urwah.”⁶²

Ibn ṬŪlŪn’s favorable attitude towards the new rulers became quite apparent upon the revolt of the governor of Damascus, Jānbirdī al-Ghazālī (d. 927/1521),⁶³ shortly after Sultan Selīm’s death on the 8th of Shawwāl 926/21st of September 1520 and the accession to the throne of Sultan Sulaymān (r. 926–74/1520–66):⁶⁴ the author of the *Fulk al-Mashḥūn* harshly condemned the actions of the governor, regarding the event as a desertion (*fitnah*) that was potentially dangerous to Syrian society.⁶⁵

We know very little about the next ten years of Ibn ṬŪlŪn’s life. Sources dating from 931/1524–25 show that he taught Hanafi law at the al-‘Umarīyah Madrasah, which I already mentioned above—at first he was an assistant and then from 935/1528–29 on a full professor.⁶⁶ In 946/1539–40, when Muḥammad Beg al-IṣṭanbŪlī, the Grand Qadi of Damascus appointed by the Sublime Porte, suggested that Ibn ṬŪlŪn succeed the deceased Shafi‘i Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad and take on the office of preacher at the Umayyad Mosque⁶⁷ he declined because of his age. Nor did Ibn ṬŪlŪn accept the offer made upon the death of Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad to become his successor as Hanafi *muftī* of Damascus.⁶⁸ To the end of his days Ibn ṬŪlŪn held various teaching positions at different educational institutions in Damascus,⁶⁹ particularly at the al-Zāhirīyah Madrasah.⁷⁰ In the end, the committed bachelor died at an age of over 70 years on the 10th of Jumādā II 953/9th of August 1546.⁷¹

⁶¹ Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 9:291–94.

⁶² Nu‘aymī, *Dāris*, 1:82–89; Ibn ṬŪlŪn, *Fulk*, 23–24.

⁶³ Ibn ṬŪlŪn, *I’lām*, 228–37 = Laoust, *Les gouverneurs de Damas*, 151–59.

⁶⁴ Muḥammad A. Bakhīt, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century* (Beirut, 1982), 19–34.

⁶⁵ Ibn ṬŪlŪn, *I’lām*, 231–37 = Laoust, *Les gouverneurs de Damas*, 154–59.

⁶⁶ Ibn ṬŪlŪn, *Fulk*, 24.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Nu‘aymī, *Dāris*, 1:543–48.

⁷¹ Al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 2:53; Ibn Ayyūb, “Kitāb al-Rawḍ al-‘Āṭir,” Berlin MS 9886, fol. 237a, has 955/1548.



IBN ṬŪLŪN'S WORKS—PAST EDITIONS AND FUTURE TASKS

Ibn ṬŪlŪn provides us with a list of his works in his autobiography. He mentions a remarkable total of 750 titles,⁷² even though probably less than 100 have been preserved. Carl Brockelmann discovered some 75 works in the relevant catalogues,⁷³ but he also found some evidence that yet another 100 manuscripts of our author's texts are to be found in the private library of Aḥmad Taymūr in Cairo.⁷⁴ Unfortunately, I was not in a position to verify this information. If it is true, and I am working on the assumption that it is, because some of the published texts evidently were taken from this source, then the collection should prove to be a goldmine with regard to future research on Ibn ṬŪlŪn's intellectual horizon. In his works Ibn ṬŪlŪn deals with almost every known subject area, but his papers vary greatly in length: some of his articles are just a few pages long, whereas others take the form of voluminous monographs. The following works by our Damascene alim are presently available in print.⁷⁵

1. *Al-Arba'in fī Faḍl al-Raḥmah wa-al-Rāḥimīn*, ed. Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān Yūsuf (Beirut, 1995).
2. *Baṣṭ Sāmi' al-Musāmir fī Akhbār Majnūn Banī 'Āmir*, (Cairo, 1964).
3. *Ḍarb al-Ḥūtah 'alā Jāmi' al-Ghūtah*, ed. Muḥammad As'ad Ṭalas, in *Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmī* 21 (1946): 149–61; 236–47; 338–51.
4. *Faṣṣ al-Khawātim fīmā Qīla fī al-Walā'im*, ed. Nizār Abāzah (Damascus, 1983).
5. *Al-Fulk al-Mashḥūn* (Damascus, 1929).
6. *Ḥārāt Dimashq al-Qadīmah*, ed. Ḥabīb Zayyāt, in *Al-Mashriq* 35 (1937): 33–35.
7. *Inbā' al-Umarā' bi-Abnā' al-Wuzarā'*, ed. Muḥannā Ḥamad al-Muḥannā (Beirut, 1998).
8. *I'lām al-Sā'ilīn 'an Kutub Sayyid al-Mursalīn* (Damascus, 1929).
9. *I'lām al-Warā' bi-man Wulliya Nā'iban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-Kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān (Damascus, 1964).
10. *Al-Lam'āt al-Barqīyah fī al-Nukat al-Tārīkhīyah*, (1) (Damascus, 1929); (2) ed. Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān Yūsuf (Beirut, 1994).
11. *Al-Manhal al-Rāwī fī al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, ed. Z. 'Uthmān al-Ja'īd (Beirut, 1996).

⁷²Ibn ṬŪlŪn, *Fulk*, 26–48.

⁷³*GAL* 2:481–83 and S2:494–95.

⁷⁴*Ibid*, 494. Some catalogues are listed in Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden, 1967–2000), 6:325.

⁷⁵This list makes no claim to be exhaustive.



12. *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Cairo, 1962–64).
13. *Al-Mu‘izzah fīmā Qāla fī al-Mizzah*, (1) (Damascus, 1929); (2) ed. Muḥammad ‘Umar Ḥammādah (Damascus, 1983).
14. *Naqd al-Ṭālib li-Zaghal al-Manāṣib*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān (Beirut, 1992).
15. *Al-Qalā’id al-Jawharīyah fī Tārīkh al-Ṣāliḥīyah*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān (Damascus, 1949–56).
16. *Qayd al-Sharīd min Akhbār Yazīd*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Azad (Cairo, 1986).
17. *Quḍāt Dimashq: al-Thaghr al-Bassām fī Dhikr Man Wulliyya Qadā’ al-Shām*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1956).⁷⁶
18. *Qurrāt al-‘Uyūn fī Akhbār Bāb Jirūn*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1964).
19. *Al-Shadharāt al-Dhahabīyah fī Tarājim al-A’immah Ithnā ‘Ashar ‘inda al-Imāmīyah*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid under the title *Al-A’immah al-Ithnā ‘Ashar* (Beirut, 1958).
20. *Al-Shadhrāh fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mushtahirah*, ed. Kamāl Zaghlūl (Beirut, 1993).
21. *Al-Sham‘ah al-Muḍī‘ah fī Akhbār al-Qal‘ah al-Dimashqīyah* (Damascus, 1929).
22. *Tabyīd al-Ṭirs fī al-Samar al-Layālīyah li-‘Irs* (Damascus, 1929/30).
23. *Al-Taḥrīr al-Murassakh fī Aḥwāl al-Barzakh*, ed. Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Miṣrī (Tanta, 1991).
24. *Al-Tamattu‘ bi-al-Iqrān bayna Tarājim al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān*. Extracts are: Aḥmad ibn Munlā, *Mut‘at al-Adhhān min at-Tamattu‘ bi-al-Iqrān bayna Tarājim al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Shaybānī al-Mawṣilī (Beirut, 1999).
25. *Tuḥfat al-Ṭālibīn fī I’rāb Qawlihi Ta‘ālā ‘Inna Raḥmata Allāh Qarībun min al-Muḥsinīn,* ed. Jābir al-Sayyid Mubārak (Cairo, 1989).

An in-depth analysis of writings alone would already give us many new insights into the world view of their author. But finding and studying new texts composed by the scholar would inevitably have to be the first step before actually writing a more detailed account of Ibn Ṭulūn’s life. We are very fortunate, after all, that many manuscripts are autographs and that obtaining them on microfilm or as a copy does not pose a serious problem, at least as far as all of the holdings in German libraries are concerned:

⁷⁶Gerhard Conrad, *Die Quḍāt Dimašq und der Madḥab al-Auzā‘ī: Materialien zur syrischen Rechtsgeschichte* (Beirut, 1994), 11–17, 55–61.



MANUSCRIPTS IN GERMANY⁷⁷

1. "Dhakhā'ir al-Qaṣr fī Tarājīm Nubalā' al-'Aṣr" (Gotha 1779)
2. "Ghāyat al-Bayān fī Tarjamat al-Shaykh Arslān" (Berlin 10106)
3. [An essay on the various meanings of some important words] (Berlin 5105)
4. "Al-Wāḍiḥah fī Waṣf al-Qarīnah al-Ṣāliḥah" (Berlin 5595, 2)
5. "Al-Nafḥah al-Zanbaqīyah fī al-As'ilah al-Dimashqīyah" (Berlin 297)
6. "Al-Naṭq al-Munabbi' 'an Tarjamat al-Shaykh al-Muḥyawī Ibn al-'Arabī" (Berlin 10098)
7. "Al-Ṭārī' 'alá Zallat al-Qāri'" (Berlin 571)
8. [A *qaṣīdah* on different kinds of martyrdom] (Berlin 7936, 3)
9. "Ramz al-Sālik li-'Ilm al-Madārik" (Berlin 134)
10. "Ta'līq Wajīz fī Tadwīn 'Ilm al-Kumūn wa-al-Burūz" (Berlin 5104)
11. "Al-Ibtihāj fī Aḥkām al-Ikhtilāj" (Leipzig 843)

Perusal of Ibn Ṭūlūn's manuscripts kept at Leiden University Library or elsewhere in the Netherlands should be just as easy.⁷⁸

MANUSCRIPTS IN THE NETHERLANDS

1. "Al-Arba'ūnah Ḥadīthan al-Ṭūlūniyah" (Or. 2519)
2. "Al-As'ilah al-Mu'tabarah wa-al-Ajwibah al-Mukhtabarah" (Or. 2520)
3. "Fath al-Qadīr fī al-Tanīth wa-al-Tadhkīr" (Or. 2507)
4. "Al-Ilmām bi-Sharḥ Ḥaqīqat al-Istifhām" (Or. 2514)
5. "Ithāf al-Nubahā' bi-Naḥw al-Fuqahā'" (Or. 2505)
6. "Majlis al-Mukhāṭabah bayna al-Zajjāj wa-Tha'lab" (Or. 2517)
7. "Al-Masā'il al-Mulaqqabāt fī 'Ilm al-Naḥw" (Or. 2503)
8. "Minḥat al-Afāḍil li-al-Shurūṭ Allatī bi-hā Yataḥaqqaqu Tanāzu' al-'Āmilayn aw al-'Awāmil" (Or. 2515)
9. "Qā'idat al-'Iqyān fī Ajwibat Mas'alat 'Laysa fī al-Imkān Abda' mim mā Kān" (Or. 2510)
10. "Tabyīn al-Munāsabāt bayna al-Asmā' wa-al-Musammayāt" (Or. 2508)
11. "Al-Talwīhāt fī al-Wujūd al-Dihni wa-al-Khāriji" (Or. 2513)
12. "Tārīkh Aḥwāl Ifranj Bayrūt" (Or. 2506)

⁷⁷Berlin = Wilhelm Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniß der arabischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1887–99); Gotha = Wilhelm Pertsch, *Die arabischen Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Gotha* (Gotha, 1878–92); Leipzig = Karl Vollers, *Katalog der islamischen, christlich-orientalischen, jüdischen und samaritanischen Hds. der Universitätsbibliothek zu Leipzig* (Leipzig, 1906).

⁷⁸P. Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Collections in the Netherlands* (Leiden, 1957).



13. "Tashnīf al-Sāmi' fī 'Ilm Ḥisāb al-Aṣābi'" (Or. 2511)
14. "Tuḥfat al-Ḥabīb bi-Akḥbār al-Kathīb" (Or 2512)
15. "Al-Ḥāwī 'alā Ṭuraf min al-Tanzīl li-Zuraf min al-Ta'wīl (Landb.-Br. 146)⁷⁹
16. "Laṭā'if al-Minnah fī Muntazahāt al-Jannah" (Brill-H.² 1011)⁸⁰

Accessing the manuscript sections of non-European libraries may prove to be somewhat more challenging. There seems to be a major collection of Ibn Ṭulūn's writings in Alexandria:

MANUSCRIPTS IN ALEXANDRIA⁸¹

1. "Laḡs al-Ḥanak fīmā Qīla fī al-Samak" (Alex. Fun. 183, 6)
2. "Al-Mulḥā fīmā Warada fī al-Subḥah" (Alex. Fun. 183, 11)
3. "Al-'Uqūd al-Durrīyah fī al-Umarā' al-Miṣrīyah" (Alex. Fun. 183, 14)
4. "Al-Naḥlah fīmā Warada fī al-Nakhlah" (Alex. Fun. 183, 2)
5. "Al-Ta'rīf fī Fann al-Taḥrīf" (Alex. Fun. 183, 13)
6. "Araj al-Nasamāt fī A'mār al-Makhlūqāt" (Alex. Fun. 183, 10)
7. "Ibtisām al-Thughūr fīmā Qīla fī Naf' al-Zuhūr" (Alex. Fun. 183, 8)
8. "Ijāzah" (Alex. Fun. 183, 1)
9. "'Unwān al-Rasā'il fī Ma'rifat al-Awā'il" (Alex. Fun. 183, 3)
10. "Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb fī Mantīq al-Ṭayr wa-al-Dawāb" (Alex. Fun. 183, 9)
11. "Irtiyāḥ al-Khāṭir fī Ma'rifat al-Awākhir" (Alex. Fun. 183, 4)
12. "Nafaḥāt al-Zahr fī Dhawq Ahl al-'Aṣr" (Alex. Fun. 183, 12)
13. "Risālat fī al-Fakhkh wa-al-'Uṣfūr" (Alex. Fun. 183, 7)
14. "Risālat fī al-Fīl" (Alex. Fun. 183, 5)

The remainder of the manuscripts represent individual copies that can be found at various libraries in Europe, America, Egypt, and Syria:

⁷⁹These data in *GAL* refer to C. Landberg, *Catalogue de manuscrits arabes provenant d'une bibliothèque privée à El-Medina et appartenant à la maison E. J. Brill* (Leiden, 1883). I am not sure about the whereabouts of this manuscript.

⁸⁰Brill – H.² = M. Th. Houtsma, *Catalogue d'une collection de mss. Arabes et turcs appartenant à la maison E. J. Brill. à Leide*, 2nd., extended edition (Leiden, 1889). I do not know where this manuscript is kept now.

⁸¹Alex = A. Abū 'Alī, ed., *Fihrist Makḥṭūṭāt al-Maktabah al-Baladīyah fī al-Iskandarīyah* (Alexandria, 1926–29). *GAL* 2:482–83.



OTHER MANUSCRIPTS⁸²

1. "‘Arf al-Zaharāt fī Tafsīr al-Kalimāt al-Ṭayyibāt (Garr. 702)
2. "Al-Fihrist al-Awṣaṭ min al-Marwīyāt" (Taymūrīyah, Tārīkh No. 754)⁸³
3. "Al-Ghuraf al-‘Alīyah fī Tarājim Muta’akhhirī al-Ḥanafīyah" (Br. Mus. 645; Şehid Ali Paşa 1924; and Taymūrīyah, Tārīkh No. 631)
4. "Kamāl al-Murūwah fī Jamāl al-Futūwah"⁸⁴
5. "Al-Kinās li-Fawā'id al-Nās" (Esc.² 545)
6. "Al-Lu'lu' al-Manzūm fī al-Wuqūf ‘alā Mā Ishtaghaltu bi-hi min al-‘Ulūm" (Br. Mus. 430, 6)
7. "Ta‘līqāt fī al-Tarājim" (Zah. 186)
8. "Tuḥfat al-Kirām bi-Tarjamat Sayyidī Abī Bakr ibn Qiwām (b. 548)" (Cairo² V, 415)

SOME PROPOSALS TOWARDS A BIOGRAPHY OF IBN ṬŪLŪN

The above-mentioned biographical data on Ibn ṬŪlŪn can be regarded as the building blocks that might lay the factual groundwork for additional, more comprehensive studies. A study of our author's life within the contemporary context, for example, seems to be a worthwhile initial research project. Viewing Ibn ṬŪlŪn's life in such a context would lend a potential biography depth of focus and significance. However, writing a historical biography is not an easy feat these days.⁸⁵ The protagonist of such a biography must be conceived of as a subject

⁸²Esc.² = H. Derenbourg, *Les manuscrits arabes de L'Escurial*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1884); vol. 2/1, *Morale et politique* (Paris, 1903); Br. Mus. = W. Cureton und C. Rieu, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in Museo Britannico asservantur: Pars secunda, codices arabicos amplectens* (London, 1846–71); Cairo² = *Fihrist al-Kutub al-‘Arabīyah al-Mawjūdah bi-Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah*, vols. 2–6 (Cairo, 1926–34); Garr. = Ph. K. Hitti et al., *Descriptive Catalogue of the Garrett Collection of Arabic Mss. In the Princeton University Library* (Princeton, 1938); Şehid Ali Paşa = this collection is now kept in the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi—it has a card index; Taymūrīyah = *Fihris al-Khizānah al-Taymūrīyah* (Cairo, 1948–50); Zah. = *Fihrist Makhṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub al-Zāhirīyah: al-Tārīkh wa-Mulḥaqātuh, wa-Da‘ahū Yūsuf al-‘Ish* (Damascus, 1947).

⁸³GAL S2:495 (# 42) has "Fihris al-Marwīyāt al-Akbar, al-Awṣaṭ, al-Şaghīr."

⁸⁴Ibid. (# 31). Joseph Schacht mentions this manuscript in his "Einige Kairiner Handschriften über furusija und futuwa," *Islam* 19 (1931): 51.

⁸⁵*La biographie, modes et méthodes*, ed. Robert Kopp (Paris, 2001); *Biographie und Geschichtswissenschaft*, ed. Grete Klingenstein (Vienna, 1979); *Problèmes et méthodes de la biographie: Actes du Colloque (Mai 1985)* (Paris, 1985); Jacques LeGoff, "Comment écrire une biographie historique aujourd'hui?," *Le débat* 54 (1989): 48–53; idem, "Whys and Ways of Writing a Biography: The Case of Saint Louis," *Exemplaria* 1 (1989): 207–25; Ernst Engelberg and Hans Schleier, "Zu Geschichte und Theorie der historischen Biographie: Theorieverständnis-biographische Totalität-Darstellungstypen-und Formen," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 38 (1990): 195–217; Jean-Claude Passeron, "Le scénario et le corpus: Biographies, flux, trajectoires," in *Le*



enmeshed in a complex web at the center of the entire field of cultural studies.⁸⁶ Is there any subject better suited to provide comprehensive information about all of its surroundings and the different aspects that a cultural scientist might select from the pool of historical knowledge than such a personality? In his lifetime, Ibn Ṭulūn was active in every arena, be it economic, social, political, religious, or cultural. It is the biographer's responsibility to illustrate these complex links in a vivid and coherent manner. In doing so, the quest for absolute knowledge of the respective individual will necessarily always be an elusive, utopian one. It is particularly in this area of research, and more so than in others, that one needs to respect the gaps and omissions in the reference sources. On no account should one attempt to uncritically restore the elements concealed by silence; reconstructing missing links is always a risky undertaking. When working on the subject it is also important to bear in mind that a biography is no closer to real events than any other topic that the researcher might be dealing with. Often one gets the mistaken impression that there is a contrast between a concrete biography and abstract political history. A biography frequently creates so-called reality effects, which is why one needs to take due care in this context. A historian must always bow to his sources, they dictate the scope and the limitations of his study. That is what distinguishes him from a novelist, although the latter might also try very hard to obtain information about the subject matter he wants to describe. It may appear trivial to point out, but writing a biographical account must invariably be preceded by a highly critical assessment of the sources. Personalities who were not at the forefront of attention fortunately were not idealized to the same extent as saints or exceptional rulers. Jean-Claude Passeron warns of the "risk of exaggerated interpretation and complete coherence that is inherent in every biographical approach."⁸⁷ A portrayal of a person's life must always point out that it represents an "illusion biographique" (Pierre Bourdieu).⁸⁸ After all, a biography cannot be a reconstruction of an authentic life, but only an approximation at best. A biography always runs the risk of combining a well-ordered chronology with a consistent, stable personality, coherent actions, and logical decisions. But according to Giovanni Levi a biography, on the other hand, also represents "le lieu idéal pour vérifier le caractère interstitiel—et néanmoins important—de la liberté dont disposent les agents, comme pour observer la façon dont fonctionnent concrètement des systèmes

raisonnement sociologique (Paris, 1991), 185–206.

⁸⁶Jacques LeGoff and Pierre Toubert, "Une histoire totale du Moyen Age—est-elle possible?," in *Actes du 100^e congrès national savantes* (Paris 1975) (Paris, 1977), 31–44.

⁸⁷Passeron, *Le scénario*, 187.

⁸⁸Pierre Bourdieu, "L'illusion biographique," in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 62–63 (1985): 69–72.



normatifs qui ne sont jamais exempts de contradictions.⁸⁹ The oft-proclaimed contrast between individual and society is nothing but an ostensible problem in this context. The individual only exists within a network of multiple social relationships and it is precisely this variety that permits him to unfold his lifestory. Sound knowledge of the respective society is a prerequisite for observing how a specific individual establishes himself in this society and how he organizes his life.

This is the backdrop against which one might ask, for example, how a scholar like Ibn Ṭulūn experienced the transition of power in Syria in 922/1516 and how he dealt with it. At first glance there seems to be every indication that the event might have represented a turn of an era (*Zeitenwende*),⁹⁰ but the people concerned apparently faced it with seeming equanimity, particularly in Syria. It is therefore essential to consider the author's point of view:⁹¹ whereas Ibn Iyās (d. 930/1523)⁹² and Ibn Zunbul (d. after 960/1552)⁹³ wrote from an Egyptian perspective, the authors of the large number of *Selīm-nāmahs* regarded matters from the victorious Ottoman point of view.⁹⁴ This, of course, also holds true for the Ottoman historians

⁸⁹Giovanni Levi, "Les usages de la biographie," *Annales, économies, sociétés, civilisations* (1989): 1325–36, esp. 1333–34.

⁹⁰On *Zeitenwenden* see now *Zeitenwenden: Historische Brüche in asiatischen und afrikanischen Gesellschaften*, ed. Sven Sellmer and Horst Brinkhaus (Hamburg, 2002). Within this context, it is interesting to see how Muslim historians have interpreted the fall of Baghdad 656/1258. See Anja Pistor-Hatam, "Ursachenforschung und Sinnggebung: Die mongolische Eroberung Bagdads in Ibn Ḥaldūns zyklischem Geschichtsmodell," in *Die Mamluken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur: Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942–1999)*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam (Hamburg, 2003), 313–34.

⁹¹Still the best introduction is Peter Holt, "Ottoman Egypt (1517–1798): An Account of Arabic Historical Sources," in *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt*, ed. idem (London, 1968), 3–12. For documentary sources see S. J. Shaw, "Cairo's Archives and the History of Ottoman Egypt," in *Report on Current Research* (Middle East Institute, Washington) (1956): 59–72, and A.-K. Rafeq, "Les registres des tribunaux de Damas comme source pour l'histoire de la Syrie," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 26 (1973): 219–26. Cf. also Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule: Institutions, Waqf and Architecture in Cairo (16th and 17th Centuries)* (Leiden, 1994), 1–19.

⁹²Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā' i' al-Duhūr*, ed. Paul Kahle and Mohammed Mostafa (Wiesbaden, 1961–75).

⁹³Ibn Zunbul, *Tārīkh Ghazwat al-Sultān Salīm Khān ma'a al-Sultān al-Ghawrī*, ed. 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Āmir (Cairo, 1997). See Benjamin Lellouch, "Ibn Zunbul, un égyptien face à l'universalisme ottoman (seizième siècle)," *Studia Islamica* 79 (1994): 143–55.

⁹⁴On this genre, see Shehabeddin Tekindag, "Selimnāmaler," *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 1 (1970): 197–231, and Ahmet Uğur, *The Reign of Sultan Selim I in the Light of the Selimnâme Literature* (Berlin, 1985).



Muḥyī al-Dīn Meḥmed (d. 957/1550)⁹⁵ and Luṭfī Pāshā (d. 970/1562–63).⁹⁶ ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Diyārbakrī (d. after 945/1538–39)⁹⁷ is an interesting contemporary witness from Egypt. In his capacity as the Ottoman qadi he had arrived together with Selīm and continued working for the country’s Ottoman administration. As yet there are no in-depth studies of his *Tarjamāt al-Nuzhah al-Sanīyah fī Fikr al-Khulafā’ wa-al-Mulūk al-Miṣrīyah*⁹⁸ nor of his *Nawādir al-Tawārīkh*.⁹⁹

A comparative study of Ibn Ṭulūn’s *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān* and *I’lām al-Warā’ bi-man Wulliya Nā’iban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-Kubrā* with al-Ishbīlī’s (d. after 923/1517) *Al-Durr al-Muṣān fī Sīrat al-Muẓaffar Salīm Khān*¹⁰⁰ seems to be a worthwhile undertaking to learn more about the attitude of Syrian scholars towards the new rulers. After having spent his youth in North Africa, ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Lahmī al-Ishbīlī al-Maghribī al-Dimashqī¹⁰¹ moved to Damascus. He was a member of the Maliki community, which was extremely small in the Syrian capital at the beginning of the ninth/sixteenth century.¹⁰² Apparently, he did not rise very far in the Maliki hierarchy, but rather had to make do with a number of humble and thus low-paid positions. When it became clear that Mamluk rule was drawing to a close in Syria, al-Ishbīlī obviously wished to accommodate himself to the changing times by writing a panegyric chronicle of the new ruler. He probably wanted to ingratiate himself with the new establishment and—as a result—climb the social ladder. Al-Ishbīlī therefore had to write such a chronicle as fast as possible in order to give it to the new ruler while he still was in the country. Our author’s behavior was in absolute agreement with a concept of Islamic law according to which any new conqueror was preferable to an old, weak, and corrupt regime if he maintained law and order and thus ensured the performance of religious duties.¹⁰³ One also believed that every century

⁹⁵Muḥyī al-Dīn Meḥmed’s *Tārīkh-i Āl-i ‘Othmān* is still available only in MS. See Franz Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* [= GOW] (Leipzig, 1927), 72–74, and Theodor Menzel, “Muḥyī l-Dīn Meḥmed,” *EF*, 7:478–79.

⁹⁶Luṭfī Pāshā, *Tevārīkh-i Āl-i ‘Othmān*, ed. ‘Alī Emīrī (Istanbul, 1922–23).

⁹⁷GOW, 58–59.

⁹⁸‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Diyārbakrī, “*Tarjamāt al-Nuzhah al-Sanīyah fī Dhikr al-Khulafā’ wa-al-Mulūk al-Miṣrīyah*,” British Library MS Add. 7846.

⁹⁹‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Diyārbakrī, “*Nawādir al-Tawārīkh*,” Millet Library Istanbul MS 596.

¹⁰⁰Al-Ishbīlī, *Al-Durr al-Muṣān fī Sīrat al-Muẓaffar Salīm Khān*, ed. Hans Ernst (Cairo, 1962). See Michael Winter, “A Seventeenth Century Arabic Panegyric of the Ottoman Dynasty,” *Asian and African Studies* 13 (1979): 130–56.

¹⁰¹Al-Ishbīlī, *Durr*, 19.

¹⁰²One finds a survey of this *madhhab* in al-Nu‘aymī, *Dāris*, 2:3–28.

¹⁰³See Ulrich Haarmann, “Lieber hundert Jahre Zwangsherrschaft als ein Tag Leiden im Bürgerkrieg’: Ein gemeinsamer Topos im islamischen und frühneuzeitlichen europäischen Staatsdenken,” in



brought forth an exceptional personality (*mujaddid al-‘aṣr*) who would renew the faith that had been corrupted over time, restoring Islam to its pure and original form.¹⁰⁴ Of course, scholars hardly ever agreed as to who actually was the respective renewer. Al-Suyūṭī, for example, considered himself to be the *mujaddid* of the tenth century of the Muslim calendar,¹⁰⁵ whereas the Persian scholar Faḍl Allāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī (d. 927/1521) initially thought that the Uzbek ruler Shībānī Khān (d. 916/1510) represented the restorer of an ideal Islamic society.¹⁰⁶ Khunjī was a little fickle-minded, however, because he dropped the Uzbek ruler after Shībānī had been defeated by Shāh Ismā‘īl (d. 930/1524) at Chaldirān in August 920/1514 and, without further ado, declared the Ottoman sultan Selīm the true *mujaddid al-‘aṣr* in two poems.¹⁰⁷ His opinion was shared by Luṭfī Pāshā, the Ottoman historian mentioned above, who described Selīm as the religious reformer of the tenth century in his chronicle *Tevārīkh-i Āl-i ‘Othmān*.¹⁰⁸ Al-Ishbīlī readily agreed with this pronouncement.¹⁰⁹ In his view the Ottoman ruler had not been motivated by power politics when he conquered Egypt and Syria, but rather had followed divine inspiration.¹¹⁰ He felt that Selīm possessed a “blessed soul,”¹¹¹ and as the “keeper of the faith”¹¹² was not merely the successor of the “righteous

Gottes ist der Orient, Gottes ist der Okzident: Festschrift für Abdoldjavad Falaturi zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Udo Tworuschka (Cologne, 1991): 262–69.

¹⁰⁴For the *mujaddid* conception, see Ella Landau-Tasseron, “The ‘Cyclical Reform’: A Study of the Mujaddid Tradition,” *Studia Islamica* 70 (1989): 79–113. The idea of a *mujaddid al-‘aṣr* is based on the following hadith: “God will send to this community at the turn of every century someone who will restore religion.” Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 889/1484), *Kitāb al-Sunan*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥāmid (Cairo, 1951), 4:156.

¹⁰⁵Al-Suyūṭī, *Kitāb al-Taḥadduth bi-Ni‘mat Allāh*, ed. Elizabeth M. Sartain (Cambridge, 1975), 215, 227. See Ignaz Goldziher, “Zur Charakteristik Jelāl du-dīn us-Suyūṭī’s und seiner literarischen Tätigkeit,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Joseph Desomogyi (Hildesheim, 1967), 52–73.

¹⁰⁶Faḍl Allāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī, *Mihmān-nāmah-i Bukhārā*, ed. Manūchihr Sutūda (Tehran, 1962), 1, and Ursula Ott, *Transoxanien und Turkestan zu Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts: Das Mihmān-nama-yi Buḥārā des Faḍlallah b. Rūzbihān Ḥunḡī* (Freiburg, 1974), 52.

¹⁰⁷For the first poem, see Aḥmed Beg Ferīdūn, *Munsha‘āt al-Salāṭīn* (Istanbul, 1857), 1:416 ff, and Edgar G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge, 1956–59), 4:78 ff. Erika Glassen has verified Khunjī’s authorship: idem, “Krisenbewußtsein und Heilserwartung in der islamischen Welt zu Beginn der Neuzeit,” in *Festschrift für Hans Robert Roemer zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann and Peter Bachmann (Beirut and Wiesbaden, 1979), 166–79, n. 34.

¹⁰⁸Luṭfī Pāshā, *Tevārīkh-i Āl-i ‘Othmān*, 11.

¹⁰⁹Al-Ishbīlī, *Durr*, 1, lines 1–3.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 6, line 30.

¹¹¹Ibid., 2, line 7.

¹¹²Ibid., 2, line 13.



caliph¹¹³ but the caliph himself,¹¹⁴ as he was also the "imam,"¹¹⁵ the "shadow the Almighty casts on his earth"¹¹⁶ and the "sovereign of the faithful."¹¹⁷ But despite these divine directions al-Ishbīlī is hard put to justify the Ottoman invasion of the Sunni empire of the Mamluks. Finding reasons for the campaigns against the Shi'i Safavids was easy: after all, they were "godless people and strayers from the flock of believers,"¹¹⁸ "Kharijite hordes,"¹¹⁹ "innovators,"¹²⁰ and "the devil's party"¹²¹ in general. According to al-Ishbīlī, the Shāh and his followers had expelled themselves from the Islamic community by their activities. Being heretics, they had to be destroyed in the Holy War according to religious laws and regulations. Selīm's campaign against Shāh Ismā'īl was, therefore, perfectly justified by the Sunnah and the Quran. But one could hardly criticize the Mamluks in the same manner, which is why al-Ishbīlī accused them of suppression¹²² and tyranny¹²³ as a result of depraved religious conditions in the country.¹²⁴ In order to substantiate his arguments, the author resorted to dreams and number-symbolic interpretations of specific historical events in his *Al-Durr al-Muṣān* to demonstrate divine omens of Selīm's destiny. From the fact that the battle of al-Raydānīyah had been fought on the 29th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah 922 [= 23 January 1517], the last day of the Islamic lunar year, he inferred the following: "This portends the end of their rule. Because the month had passed and thus the year [9]22."¹²⁵ These allusions are taken up in his dreams: in his first dream two moons rise and meet above Damascus. One tumbles down and the other one shines on the Umayyad Mosque.¹²⁶ The Angels Gabriel, Michael, and the four righteous caliphs appear in the following dream. One of them says: "These [Mamluks] will disappear with the help of Salīm ibn 'Uthmān."¹²⁷ Finally the Prophet Muḥammad appears, explaining that: "Sulṭān Ibn 'Uthmān is

¹¹³Ibid., 3, line 21.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 3, line 9.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 6, line 11.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 6, lines 11–12

¹¹⁷Ibid., 6, line 3.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 4, lines 13–14.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 5, line 9.

¹²⁰Ibid., 4, line 20.

¹²¹Ibid., 5, lines 18–19.

¹²²Ibid., 7, line 12.

¹²³Ibid., 15, line 15.

¹²⁴Ibid., 7, line 13.

¹²⁵Ibid., 12, lines 13–14.

¹²⁶Ibid., 10, lines 7–8.

¹²⁷Ibid., 11, lines 10–12.



the ruler of Egypt and Cairo.¹²⁸

Al-Ishbīlī's currying favor with the Ottomans appears to have been the normal behavioral pattern of many Syrian scholars in those days. A new ruler did not mean a new era to them, but simply a shift in the power structure of the whole Sunni community (*umma*). One did not owe the Mamluks any particular loyalty, because they represented a foreign elite too.

This may also explain why Ibn Ṭūlūn took little interest in the events in Damascus. A brief discussion of the methods Ibn Ṭūlūn used as a historian may be useful in this context: Richard Hartmann showed¹²⁹ that his *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān* mainly consists of diary entries, unlike Ibn Iyās' chronicle *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā' i' al-Duhūr*, written at the same time and composed of various diary-like records that were regrouped later on. There is no evidence in Ibn Ṭūlūn's work that he edited or revised the diary-like material any further. In several instances he recorded a rumor spread in Damascus on one day and only added that it was false on another day, when this was found to be the case. He possibly intended to make major revisions. In fact he not only refers to other chroniclers in his text from time to time, but at the end of the year he sometimes also adds an entire appendix taken from other contemporary historians.¹³⁰ But the first part of the chronicle must be based on other works, because the text begins in 844/1440–41 and Ibn Ṭūlūn was only born in 880/1475–76. So we need to find out which models the historian used, a matter that has not been completely resolved until now. And when does the real diary actually begin? In reference to this problem Hartmann points to a break in continuity in the entry for the 5th of Ṣafar 921/21st of March 1515.

Ibn Ṭūlūn's *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān* is an extremely important source for the year 922/1516 and the following years because the author, clearly impressed by the unfolding events, kept his diary partly also offering detailed descriptions of the Ottoman camp. His firm neutrality also with respect to the decisive battle is evidenced by the fact that he uses the epithets "hypocrite and Pharisee" to characterize the people who prayed for the victory of the ruling Mamluk sultan together with the qadis before the Battle of Marj Dābiq (15th of Rajab 922/24th of August 1516).¹³¹ One cannot help but suspect that Ibn Ṭūlūn,

¹²⁸Ibid., 17, lines 1–2. See also A. N. Asrar, "The Myth about the Transfer of the Caliphate to the Ottomans," *Journal of the Regional Cultural Institute* 5 (1972): 111–20.

¹²⁹See Richard Hartmann, *Das Tübinger Fragment der Chronik des Ibn Ṭūlūn*, Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft, Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse, year 3, vol. 2 (Berlin 1926), 87–170, esp. 87–104.

¹³⁰Ibid, 96.

¹³¹Ibid, 101.



driven by opportunistic motives, also revised his observations later on to reflect a more pro-Ottoman stance. Al-Ishbīlī and Ibn Ṭulūn are not the only ones to demonstrate eloquently that such turnabout loyalties were quite common in ulama circles; the Shafi‘i qadi Walī al-Dīn al-Farfūr (d. 937/1530–31)¹³² is another example. After Selīm’s victory he gradually moved over to the Hanafi camp. He thus managed to become chief judge—after the Ottomans had reorganized the tiers of the civil service, replacing the formerly four qadis of the four law schools with one qadi and four deputies for the *madhāhib*. Eventually he had to flee because he was afraid of Governor Jānbirdī, whom he distrusted—and rightly so. For a while, Ibn Ṭulūn—who of course already had been a Hanafi beforehand—had also aspired to a lucrative sinecure at the mosque at Ibn al-‘Arabī’s tomb, which had been newly constructed by Selīm. Seeing how disparagingly Jānbirdī’s attitude is described in the chronicle one might be a bit suspicious: he is blamed for several murders in a rather thinly veiled manner.¹³³ On the other hand, the very case of Ibn al-Farfūr seems to prove that Ibn Ṭulūn’s depiction is probably not far removed from the truth. If any editing was done at all at a later stage, one would have to assume that it merely consisted of emphasizing a specific tenor of the text.

These are just a couple of ideas regarding the point of view from which one might approach a biography of Ibn Ṭulūn. Placing this scholar in the historical context of his times in such a way that his biography will render an overall picture of the era is a task that needs to be completed in the future.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING AS A LITERARY GENRE OF THE MAMLUK PERIOD

A more detailed study of Ibn Ṭulūn’s *Al-Fulk al-Mashhūn fī Aḥwāl Muḥammad Ibn Ṭulūn* may also prove to be a worthwhile undertaking. As we know, autobiographical writing already existed in very early times and in every literary culture. When Wilhelm Dilthey’s article entitled *Das Erleben und die Selbstbiographie*¹³⁴ was published at the beginning of the twentieth century, it triggered academic research into the manifold literary representations of a person’s own life.¹³⁵ Right from the beginning it was very difficult to give a content-based

¹³² Aḥmad ibn Munlā, *Mut‘at al-Adhhān*, 607–9 (# 686), and Ibn Ṭulūn, *Mufākahat*, passim.

¹³³ Hartmann, *Das Tübinger Fragment*, 101.

¹³⁴ Wilhelm Dilthey, “Das Erleben und die Selbstbiographie,” in *Die Autobiographie: Zu Form und Geschichte einer literarischen Gattung*, ed. Georg Niggel (Darmstadt, 1989), 21–32.

¹³⁵ Extensive bibliographies are given in Jürgen Lehmann, *Bekennen, Erzählen, Berichten, Studien zu Theorie und Geschichte der Autobiographie* (Tübingen, 1988), 251–81, and Niggel, *Die Autobiographie*, 539–68. Short research reports can be found in James Olney, “Autobiography and the Cultural Moment: A Thematic, Historical, and Bibliographical Introduction,” in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. idem (Princeton, 1980), 3–27, and Georg Niggel, “Einleitung,” in idem, *Die Autobiographie*, 1–17.



and formal definition of the genre since the borders between autobiography and memoirs, philosophical self-reflections, autobiographical novels, stories written in the first person, or fictitious autobiographies are rather fluid. Jürgen Lehmann nevertheless managed to present a concise working definition in his post-doctoral thesis *Bekennen-Erzählen-Berichten: Studien zu Theorie und Geschichte der Autobiographie* submitted to Göttingen University:

Autobiography is a type of text in which an author expresses internal and external events experienced in the past as well as activities carried out by himself in a writing situation, summarizing all of this and articulating himself in such a narrative style that he actively puts himself into a specific relation to the environment.¹³⁶

If one studies this type of autobiographical narrative more closely, however, one encounters some problems inherent in this genre. The fact that historical events have actually taken place and that the author consistently refers to reality merely represent external features of demarcation vis-à-vis imaginary stories. The crucial difference between a fictional account and an autobiography is its intention. The author presents the reciprocal influence of the own self and the extrapersonal environment as if it were a consistent and logical development. Subjective experience is thus judged *ex eventu* and placed in a higher time continuum. Autobiographical writers frequently attempt to present the complex, accidental web woven between the self and the external world as if it were the result of a deliberately controlled process. It will always be difficult for someone interpreting autobiographical accounts to deal with this problem. The fact that the author is both the subject and object of his writing poses another problem. He endeavors to order his previous life beyond all determining of historical and social factors. In view of his auctorial intention he cannot avoid stylizing his own past and inventing some elements either consciously or unconsciously. The mere—or possibly the particular—choice and emphasis of facts and experiences by the autobiographical narrator already is of crucial significance in this process of stylization. He arranges the selected facts in a meaningful manner in order to render a condensed account, presenting the reader with a life that is an integrated whole.

A whole set of spiritual, political, and academic works containing autobiographical material also exist in classical Arabic literature.¹³⁷ So nowadays

¹³⁶Lehmann, *Bekennen, Erzählen, Berichten*, 36.

¹³⁷See Franz Rosenthal, "Die arabische Autobiographie," *Studia Arabica* 1 (1937): 1–40; Carl Brockelmann (Brukilman), "Mā Ṣanf 'Ulamā' al-'Arab fī Aḥwāl Anfusiḥim," in *Al-Muntaqā min Dirāsāt al-Mustashriqīn*, pt. 1, *Dirāsāt Mukhtalifah*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Cairo, 1955);



one can no longer make the same sweeping statement as Georg Misch, author of the monumental *Geschichte der Autobiographie*, did when he said that autobiographies were only “testimony to the development of self-awareness of man in the Occident.”¹³⁸

Until now, research has not focused on biographical accounts from the Mamluk period. The genre was not really established in the academic tradition of those days. This may be due to the fact that a Mamluk scholar occasionally must have shied away from publishing details about his own life in a vain manner. Abū al-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taghrībirdī’s (d. 812/1415) opinion is characteristic of this attitude: although he did dictate his life story to his student Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn al-Turkumānī al-Ḥanafī, known as al-Marjī,¹³⁹ he mentioned expressly that this actually ran counter to the conventions of his profession. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī it was by no means customary for scholars to write their own biographies. It was customary, however, to proceed like the learned Damascene Ibn Ayyūb (d. 1000/1592)¹⁴⁰ did in his biographical reference work *Al-Rawḍ al-‘Āṭir*.¹⁴¹ He very skillfully supplemented various suitable passages of his work—e.g., the end of the biographical sketches of his grandfather Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ayyūb and of his cousin Muḥīb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ayyūb—with information about his personal development.¹⁴² Al-Sakhāwī found an equally elegant solution to the problem. He simply wrote his own biography, including it without any additional comments in his monumental biographical dictionary.¹⁴³

Gustav E. von Grunebaum, *Der Islam im Mittelalter* (Zurich and Stuttgart, 1963), 329–75; Sartain, *Biography*, 137–41; S. M. Al-Ghamdi, “Autobiography in Classical Arabic Literature: An Ignored Literary Genre,” Ph.D. diss., University of Indiana, 1989; Stephen F. Dale, “Steppe Humanism: The Autobiographical Writings of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, 1483–1530,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22 (1990): 37–58; and Shawqī Muḥammad Mu‘āmilī, *Al-Sīrah al-Dhātīyah fī al-Turāth* (Cairo, 1989).

¹³⁸Georg Misch, *Geschichte der Autobiographie*, (Frankfurt am Main, 1949–69), 1:1:5.

¹³⁹This text is an appendix to the second volume of the Viennese manuscript (Or. 1173) of his “Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī wa-al-Mustawfā ba’d al-Wāfī” [= Gustav Flügel, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, vol. 2 (Vienna, 1865), 338–39], fol. 430v–432r. Ibn al-‘Imād speaks in his *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār Man Dhahab* (Cairo, 1931–32) of an autobiography written by the Mamluk “polymath” al-Ṣafādī (d. 764/1363). Cf. Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 6:201. The text has not yet been discovered.

¹⁴⁰Ibn Taghrībirdī, “Manhal,” fol. 430v.

¹⁴¹See n. 75.

¹⁴²See Ahmet Halil Güneş, *Das Kitāb ar-rauḍ al-‘āṭir des Ibn Aiyūb: Damaszener Biographien des 10./16. Jahrhunderts, Beschreibung und Edition* (Berlin, 1981), 2–5.

¹⁴³Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 8:1–32.



Ibn Ṭūlūn's autobiography is a different matter. The historian al-Nu'aymī urged him to write the story of his life as an independent account. This was done when our author already was quite advanced in years. At least, he observed that his strength was failing and complained that he was left with only a few friends but many foes.¹⁴⁴ Separate autobiographical accounts from the Mamluk period were also prepared by al-Suyūṭī¹⁴⁵ and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406).¹⁴⁶ Dating the biographies is not easy because the circumstances surrounding the manuscripts of both works are a little complicated: Elizabeth M. Sartain proceeds on the assumption that al-Suyūṭī began writing down his autobiography *Al-Taḥadduth bi-Ni'mat Allāh* in 889/1484 after the dispute about his announced ability to exercise *ijtihād*.¹⁴⁷ Of course, he may have used some notes that he had taken previously. At any rate, he discontinued working on the project sometime in the 890s, never to resume it. Neither does Ibn Khaldūn seem to have written *Al-Ta'rīf bi-Ibn Khaldūn wa-Riḥlatihi Gharban wa-Sharqan*, the highly selective story of his life that was probably the product of his stay in Egypt, in one go after 784/1382, but rather with long breaks in between.¹⁴⁸ Comparing the content of the works of al-Suyūṭī, Ibn Khaldūn, al-Sakhāwī, and Ibn Ṭūlūn already points to some differences and commonalities of the genre:

Al-Suyūṭī

(Al-Taḥadduth bi-Ni'mat Allāh)

- opening quotations (pp. 1–3)
- earlier autobiographies (3–4)
- father's genealogy (5)
- Humām al-Dīn al-Khūḍayrī (5–6)
- view of Sufism (6–7)
- other ancestors (7–11)
- the name of al-Suyūṭī (12)
- on Asyūṭ (12–19)
- disagreement with his father (20–31)

Ibn Khaldūn

(Al-Ta'rīf bi-Ibn Khaldūn wa-Riḥlatihi Gharban wa-Sharqan)

- name (pp. 3–6)
- Andalusian ancestors (6–10)
- ancestors from Ifrīqiyah (10–17)
- education, teachers (17–56)
- appointment as chief of chancellery in Tunis and travel to the Maghrib (57–67)
- appointment as secretary to Sultan Abū 'Inān (67–68)

¹⁴⁴Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Fulk*, 5.

¹⁴⁵Al-Suyūṭī, *Taḥadduth*.

¹⁴⁶Ibn Khaldūn, *Al-Ta'rīf bi-Ibn Khaldūn wa-Riḥlatihi Gharban wa-Sharqan* (Cairo, 1979).

¹⁴⁷Sartain, *Biography*, 142–46.

¹⁴⁸Walter J. Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn in Egypt, His Public Functions and His Historical Research (1382–1406): A Study in Islamic Historiography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), 159–65.



Al-Suyūṭī
(cont.)

- birth (31)
- name (31–38)
- literature studies (31–42)
- hadith studies, teachers (43–78)
- visit to the Ḥijāz (79–82)
- journey to Alexandria and Damietta - (83–84)
- students on his journeys (84–87)
- return and teaching (88)
- students (88–89), beginning of his work as *muftī* (89–90)
- hadith professor at al-Shaykhūnīyah (90–91)
- inaugural lecture (92–104)
- works (105–36)
- eulogies on his books (137–54)
- dissemination of his works outside Egypt (155–59)
- (discussion of other scholars (160–202)
- problems of *ijtihād* (203–14)
- theory of the *mujaddid* (215–27)
- legal decisions (228–34)

Ibn Khaldūn
(cont.)

- withdrawal of the sultan's favor (69–70)
- appointment as secretary to Sultan Abū Salīm (70–83)
- journey to al-Andalus (84–99)
- journey to Bijāyah and appointment as treasurer (99–107)
- support of Abū Hammū, ruler in Tilimsān (107–44)
- support of Sultan 'Abd al-'Azīz, ruler in the Maghrib, in opposing the 'Abdalwadids (144–66)
- [insertion] eulogy of the vizier Ibn al-Khaṭīb (167–231)
- return to the Maghrib (232–42)
- second journey to Andalusia and Tilimsān; stay with the Awlād 'Arīf (243–46)
- return to Sultan Abū al-'Abbās' court in Tunis (246–63)
- eastward journey; qadi in Cairo (263–70)
- pilgrimage to Mecca (270–303)
- teaching positions and work at several *khānqāhs* (304–42)
- supervision of Baybars' *khānqāh* (342–44)
- revolt by al-Nāṣirī (345–70)
- mediation in the exchange of gifts between the rulers in the Maghrib and al-Malik al-Zāhir (370–83)
- 2nd term of office as qadi in Egypt (383–87)
- sultan's campaign into Syria to defend the empire against the Tartars (388–405)



Al-Suyūṭī
(cont.)

Ibn Khaldūn
(cont.)

- talk with Tīmūr (406–20)
- return to Egypt (421–28)
- appointed qadi in Egypt for the third, fourth, and fifth times (429–30)

Al-Sakhāwī
(Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'
li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi')

Ibn Ṭulūn
(Al-Fulk al-Mashḥūn fī Aḥwāl
Muḥammad Ibn Ṭulūn

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - name, genealogy (p. 2) - first <i>maktab</i> (2) - first teachers (2–3) - learning the Quran by heart (3) - hadith studies, his teacher Ibn Ḥajar (3–5) - further education, books (5–7) - death of Ibn Ḥajar, studies at Mecca (7) - journey to al-Shām (8–9) - debates and discussions (9–13) - hajj, visit to the Ḥijāz (14) - back in Cairo (14–15) - his works (15–20) - praise of his knowledge (21–28) - laudatory verses on him (28–32) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduction, earlier autobiographies (pp. 5–6) - birth, parents, first years (6–7) - education, books, teachers (7–14) - sciences and scholars (14–18) - teaching licences (18–20) - his reservations about marriage (20–22) - appointments (22–26) - his works (26–49) - laudatory verses on him (49–51) - two books of Shams al-Dīn 'Ulwān (51–52) - praise of his poetry (52–53) - a poem in praise of work and in distrust of a seemingly fixed salary (53–54) |
|--|--|

Just like the other authors, Ibn Ṭulūn was fully aware of the genre's traditions. He mentions famous autobiographies known to him on the first few pages of *Al-Fulk al-Mashḥūn fī Aḥwāl Muḥammad ibn Ṭulūn*.¹⁴⁹ Although these four works tell us very little about the author's personal life, they do represent excellent source material for studying the author's intellectual development and traditional

¹⁴⁹Ibn Ṭulūn, *Fulk*, 6.



Islamic education in those days. In addition, the documents contain an almost exemplary portrayal of the background and the careers of legal scholars in the Mamluk period and—in Ibn Ṭulūn’s case—also the early years of Ottoman rule in Egypt and Syria.

Jürgen Lehmann emphasized that these accounts obviously must be regarded as constructs that were composed in retrospect by individuals looking back on their own lives. This is why a comparison of such a personal interpretation of the narrator’s life with statements made by contemporaries would prove helpful. Obviously, one should give more credence to opinions expressed by independent minds than to those uttered by students. In al-Suyūṭī’s case, for example, his students simply copied their teacher’s autobiography, made some stylistic modifications, and added magnificent eulogies.¹⁵⁰ The spiteful and slanderous comments that al-Sakhāwī made about al-Suyūṭī are much more instructive in this context.¹⁵¹

The same applies to Ibn Ṭulūn. In addition to two brief biographical sketches by Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī and Ibn al-‘Imād,¹⁵² a remarkable portrayal by Ibn Ayyūb has been preserved as well.¹⁵³ His estimation of Ibn Ṭulūn’s personality is ambivalent: he calls him the *Sībawayhī* (d. approx. 180/776) of his times, praising him with the most favorable epithets on the one hand, and voices some rather harsh criticism of his works and scientific methods on the other. He reproaches Ibn Ṭulūn for making linguistic mistakes, for using dubious traditions, even for untrue reporting. He also criticizes the fact that Ibn Ṭulūn mixed verse and prose, and that he included both relevant and irrelevant information, making his works extremely tedious for the reader. This rather harsh critique basically can be traced back to Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Mālikī (d. 975/1567),¹⁵⁴ a learned Damascene who originally came from Tunis. In his biography of Ibn Ṭulūn, Ibn Ayyūb gives a lengthy account of the dogged disputes between the two. Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Mālikī belonged

¹⁵⁰Sartain, *Biography*, 150–51. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Shādhilī’s (d. after 945/1538) *Bahjat al-‘Ābidīn bi-Tarjamat Jalāl al-Dīn* [ed. ‘Abd al-Ilāh Nabhān (Damascus, 1998)] and Shams al-Dīn al-Dāwūdī’s (945/1539) “Tarjamat al-Suyūṭī” [Berlin (Tübingen) MS 10134] do not add anything new. On al-Shādhilī, see Sartain, *Biography*, 146–47; *GAL* 2:391 S2:932, and S3:1261; and Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 8:53. On al-Dāwūdī cf. Sartain, *Biography*, 148–149; *GAL* 2:289, S2:401; al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 2:71; and Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 8:264.

¹⁵¹Al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 4:65–70. On the clashes between these scholars, see Sartain, *Biography*, 72–76, and William Popper, “Sakhāwī’s Criticism of Ibn Taghrībirdī,” in *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida* (Rome, 1965), 2:371–89.

¹⁵²Al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 2:52–54; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 8:298–99.

¹⁵³Ibn Ayyūb, “Al-Rawḍ al-‘Āṭir,” Berlin MS 9886, fols. 235v–237r.

¹⁵⁴On Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Mālikī, see *ibid.*, fols. 237a–239a [= Güneş, *Das Kitāb ar-rawḍ al-‘āṭir*, 72–82 (Arabic text)], and Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 8: 360–81.



to a different circle of scholars than Ibn Ṭūlūn and overwhelmed his opponent with criticism and reproaches. Ibn Ayyūb actually must have had a favorable opinion of Ibn Ṭūlūn, also thinking highly of him as a historian, because he refers not only to al-Sakhāwī, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Hindī (d. 990/1582),¹⁵⁵ al-Nu‘aymī, and Ibn al-Mibrad as role models in his introduction to *Al-Rawḍ al-‘Āṭir*, but also to Ibn Ṭūlūn.¹⁵⁶ So it is hardly surprising that Ibn Ṭūlūn’s *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān* and *Tamattu‘ bi-al-Iqrān bayna Tarājim al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān* represent two of the more prominent sources cited by Ibn Ayyūb.¹⁵⁷

This goes to show that a rather slim volume such as Ibn Ṭūlūn’s *Fulk al-Mashḥūn* does indeed merit due consideration. One would have to undertake a detailed comparison of all known autobiographical accounts by Muslim scholars up to the days of Ibn Ṭūlūn to really accord his own autobiographical writings their proper rank and to define the genre of Arabic autobiography even further. Once that is done, it will also be possible to compile the requisite inventory of topoi, stereotypes, commonalities, and differences of these works.

From the vast number of available options I have selected only two avenues of research that one might explore for a better understanding of the life and works of Ibn Ṭūlūn. Of course, one will have to complete various individual studies to piece together an overall picture. But it may also make sense to tackle the project of a monograph before the task of analyzing the material takes on Sisyphean dimensions. If one did so, one would have to portray the typical features without neglecting the individual ones. Writing a biography will thus always resemble the squaring of the circle. The re-narration of a life will obviously always have to be a construct.

¹⁵⁵The Indian-Meccan scholar al-Nahrawālī is meant. On him, see J. R. Blackburn, “al-Nahrawālī,” *EF*, 7:911–12.

¹⁵⁶Ibn Ayyūb, “Al-Rawḍ al-‘Āṭir, fol. 1v [= Güneş, *Das Kitāb ar-rauḍ al-‘āṭir*, 1–2 (Arabic text)].

¹⁵⁷Güneş, *Das Kitāb ar-rauḍ al-‘āṭir*, 28–30.



Mamluk *Furūsīyah* Literature and Its Antecedents

Furūsīyah literature, the greater part of which is still unpublished,¹ undoubtedly

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¹Manuscripts of all periods cited in this article include: "Al-'Adīm al-Mithl al-Rafī' al-Qadr," Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Revan 1933; (pseudo) Najm al-Dīn al-Aḥḍab, "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah" (added title), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2829; Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā ibn Ismā'īl al-Ḥanafī al-Aqsarā'i, "Nihāyat al-Sūl wa-al-Umnīyah fī Ta'līm A'māl al-Furūsīyah," London, British Library MS Add. 18866; Abū al-Rūḥ 'Īsā ibn Ḥassān al-Asadī al-Baghdādī, "Al-Jamharah fī 'Ulūm al-Bayzarah," British Library MS Add. 23417, Madrid, Escorial Library MS Ar. 903; Aḷṭanbughā al-Ḥusāmī al-Nāshirī, known as Aḷṭajuq, "Nuzhat al-Nufūs fī La'b al-Dabbūs," Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 21 *furūsīyah Taymūr*; Badr al-Dīn Baktūt al-Rammāḥ al-Khāzindārī al-Zāhirī, "Kitāb fī 'Ilm al-Furūsīyah wa-La'b al-Rumḥ wa-al-Birjās wa-'Ilāj al-Khayl," Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2830 (fols. 2v.–72r.); Abū Bakr al-Bayṭār ibn Badr al-Dīn al-Nāshirī (Ibn al-Mundhir), "Kāshif al-Wayl fī Ma'rifat Amrāḍ al-Khayl" (or "Kāmil al-Ṣinā'atayn fī al-Bayṭarah wa-al-Zardaqaḥ"), Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2813; 'Umar ibn Raslān al-Bulqīnī, "Qaṭr al-Sayl fī Amr al-Khayl," Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library MS Şehid 'Alī Paşa 1549; Sharaf al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mu'min ibn Khalaf al-Dimyāṭī, "Faḍl al-Khayl," Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2816; "Al-Furūsīyah" (untitled fragment), British Library MS 9015; hunting treatise (untitled), Alexandria, Egypt, Maktabat al-Baladīyah MS 1201/1; Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb ibn Ghālīb Ibn Akhī Ḥizām al-Khuttalī, "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah," Bayezit Public Library Veliyüddin Efendi MS 3174; idem, "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah wa-Shiyāt al-Khayl," British Library MS Add. 23416; idem, "Al-Kamāl fī al-Furūsīyah . . ." (added title), Istanbul, Fatih Mosque Library MS 3513; Muḥammad Ibn Manglī al-Nāshirī, "Al-Adillah al-Rasmīyah fī al-Ta'ābī al-Ḥarbīyah," Istanbul, Ayasofya Library MS 2857; idem, "Al-Tadbīrāt al-Sulṭānīyah fī Siyāsāt al-Ṣinā'ah al-Ḥarbīyah," British Library MS Or. 3734; idem, "Uns al-Malā bi-Waḥsh al-Falā," Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2832/1; Abū Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh Ibn Maymūn, "Kitāb al-Ifādah wa-al-Tabṣīr li-Kull Rāmin Muḥtādī' aw Māhir Naḥrīr bi-al-Sahm al-Ṭawīl wa-al-Qaṣīr," Istanbul, Köprülü Mehmet Paşa Library MS 1213; 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Abī al-Qāsim al-Naqīb al-Akhmīmī, "Ḥall al-Ishkāl fī al-Ramy bi-al-Nibāl," Bibliothèque Nationale MS 6259; idem, "Naqāwat al-Muntaqā fī Nāfi'āt al-Liqā," British Library MS Add. 7513/2; Rukn al-Dīn Jamshīd al-Khwārazmī, untitled, British Library MS Or. 3631/3; "Kitāb fī La'b al-Dabbūs wa-al-Ṣirā' alā al-Khayl," Bibliothèque Nationale MS Ar. 6604/2; "Kitāb al-Ḥiyāl fī al-Ḥurūb wa-Faṭḥ al-Madā'in wa-Ḥifz al-Durūb," British Library MS Add. 14055; "Kitāb al-Makhzūn li-Arbāb al-Funūn," Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2826; "Kitāb al-Makhzūn Jāmi' al-Funūn," Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2824; Ḥusām al-Dīn Lājīn ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Dhahabī al-Ḥusāmī al-Ṭarābulṣī al-Rammāḥ, "Kitāb 'Umdat al-Mujāhidīn fī Tartīb al-Mayādīn," Bibliothèque Nationale MS Ar. 6604/1; "Al-Maqāmah al-Ṣalāḥīyah fī al-Khayl wa-al-Bayṭarah wa-al-Furūsīyah," Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 81 *furūsīyah Taymūr*; Marḍī ibn 'Alī al-Ṭarsūsī, "Tabṣīrat Arbāb al-Albāb fī Kayfiyat al-Najāt fī al-Ḥurūb," Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Huntington 264; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, "Al-Qawl al-Tāmm fī (Faḍl)



represents one of the most extensive and diverse fields of knowledge in the medieval Islamic literary tradition. It covers a broad scope of disciplines ranging from hippology and the art of riding (*'ilm al-khayl wa-fann al-rukūb*) to military technology (*'ilm al-ālāt al-ḥarbīyah*). While these disciplines are interrelated and form a unity in *furūsīyah* literature, each one of them constitutes a vast domain of research, an independent science with its own literature and chain of authorities. The treatises dealing with one specific discipline (hereinafter: thematic *furūsīyah* treatises) constitute the core of *furūsīyah* literature. As for the treatises comprising more than one discipline (hereinafter: general *furūsīyah* treatises), they are mostly works of compilation, based on the thematic *furūsīyah* treatises. In modern scholarship, general *furūsīyah* treatises are usually referred to as "*furūsīyah* manuals," and are often thought to be synonymous with *furūsīyah* literature. In fact, general *furūsīyah* treatises represent only a fraction of the surviving literature, and they can be quite misleading to anyone who is not familiar with thematic *furūsīyah* treatises.

Notwithstanding the undisputed importance of *furūsīyah* literature for the study of Islamic history and culture, this field suffers from a lack of scholarly research and, consequently, from deep misconceptions as well as an array of prejudices. One of the most common of these is the assumption that *furūsīyah* literature emerged under the Ayyubids in the late sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries because of the sweeping challenges posed by the Crusades, and that it developed and reached maturity under the Mamluks.²

al-Ramy bi-al-Sihām," Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 2m *funūn ḥarbīyah*; "Sharḥ al-Maqāmah al-Ṣalāḥīyah fī al-Khayl," Bibliothèque Nationale MS Ar. 2817; Library of Istanbul University MS 4689; al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Aysūn al-Ḥanafī al-Sinjārī, "Hidāyat al-Rāmī ilā al-Aghrād wa-al-Marāmī," Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 2305; Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Qāzānī al-Ṣughayyir, "Al-Mukhtaṣar al-Muḥarrar," Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 2620; idem, "Al-Hidāyah fī 'Ilm al-Rimāyah," Bodleian Library MS Huntington 548 (annotated version of the latter); idem, "Sharḥ al-Qaṣīdah al-Lāmīyah lil-Ustādh Ṣāliḥ al-Shaghūrī," Bibliothèque Nationale MS Ar 6604/3; Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, "Ghars al-Anshāb fī al-Ramy bi-al-Nushshāb," British Library MS Or. 12830; Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī, untitled fragment, British Library MS Or. 9265/1; idem, "Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ (fī 'Ilm al-Ramy)," British Library MS Or. 9454; Ṭaybughā al-Ashrafī al-Baklamīshī al-Yunānī, "Kitāb al-Ramy wa-al-Rukūb" (added title), Bibliothèque Nationale MS 6160; Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Yūnīnī, "Al-Nihāyah fī 'Ilm al-Rimāyah," Ayasofya Library MS 2952; Abū al-Naṣr al-Qāsim ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn al-Hāshimī al-Zaynabī, "Al-Qawānīn al-Sulṭānīyah fī al-Ṣayd," Fatih Mosque Library MS 3508.

²See Shihab al-Sarraf, "Adab al-Furūsīyah fī al-'Aṣrayn al-'Abbāsī wa-al-Mamlūkī," in *Furūsīyah*, vol. 1, *Funūn al-Furūsīyah fī Tārīkh al-Mashriq wa-al-Maghrib*, ed. Shihab al-Sarraf (Riyadh, 2000), 105, 121; idem, "Furūsīyah Literature of the Mamlūk Period" in *Furusiyya*, vol. 1, *The Horse in the Art of the Near East*, ed. David Alexander (Riyadh, 1996), 131.



Apart from a lack of research, this wrong impression has been caused by the fact that the main corpus of surviving *furūsīyah* manuscripts is, indeed, from the Mamluk period. However, careful examination of such manuscripts shows that original Mamluk treatises constitute only one part of this literature. The other part consists of pre-Mamluk, mainly Abbasid, treatises, copied and reused by the Mamluks as manuals and as basic references. It also shows that the majority of Mamluk *furūsīyah* treatises, which did not always acknowledge their sources, were themselves largely based upon Abbasid *furūsīyah* literature and its sources. Some of the pre-Mamluk treatises were originally anonymous, others were rendered so by Mamluk copyists, and still others were falsely attributed to Mamluk authors. As an additional complication, some Mamluk treatises were imputed to earlier authors. Finally, a considerable number of the extant manuscripts of all periods are either unsigned and/or untitled or copies of one work but under different titles.

These points exemplify the problems peculiar to *furūsīyah* literature. The inability to distinguish pre-Mamluk from Mamluk treatises and to identify pre-Mamluk data within Mamluk treatises, and the failure to sort out its numerous sources (including Classical Greek, Sassanian, and Byzantine), have hindered research into *furūsīyah* literature from its inception. This partly explains why research in this field has not grown much beyond the stage of bibliographical documentation, which, understandably, in its current embryonic state includes many errors. One of these concerns the definition and scope of *furūsīyah* literature, which has been reduced to a fragment of what it should represent in the bibliographical essays.³ Furthermore, no attempt has ever been made to research the term *furūsīyah*, its origin, and its evolution as a concept and as an institution.

³Aloys Sprenger, *Kitāb Fihrist al-Kutub Allatī Narghabu an Nabtā'ahā* . . . (London, 1840); Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall, "Das Pferd bei den Arabern," *Mémoires de l'Académie de Vienne* (1855–56): 211–46; Louis Mercier, *La parure des cavaliers et l'insigne des preux* [French translation and commentary of "Ḥilyat al-Fursān wa-Shi'ār al-Shuj'ān," by Ibn Hudhayl al-Andalusī] (Paris, 1924), 433–59; Hellmut Ritter, "La Parure des Cavaliers und die Literatur über die ritterlichen Kunst," *Der Islam* 18 (1929); George T. Scanlon "Introduction," in *A Muslim Manual of War, Being Tafrīj al-Kurūb fī Tadbīr al-Ḥurūb*, ed. and trans. George T. Scanlon (Cairo, 1961), 1–21; Iḥsān Hindī, "Muḥāwalat Ḥaṣr Bibliyūjrafī lil-Ta'ālīf al-'Askarīyah wa-al-Ḥarbīyah 'inda al-'Arab al-Qudamā'," in *Abḥāth al-Mu'tamar al-Sanawī al-Thānī lil-Jam'īyah al-Sūrīyah li-Tārīkh al-'Ulūm* (Aleppo, 1978), 117–58; 'Abd al-Raḥmān Zakī, "Military Literature of the Arabs," in *Cahiers d'histoire égyptienne* 7 (1955): 149–60; idem, "A Preliminary Bibliography of Medieval Arabic Military Literature," *Gladius* 4 (1965): 107–12; Kūrķīs 'Awwād, "Al-Jaysh wa-al-Ḥarb wa-al-Silāh fī al-Athār al-Makhṭūṭah wa-al-Maṭbū'ah 'inda al-'Arab," *Al-Majallah al-'Askarīyah* (Baghdad) 41 no. 1 (1964): 105–22, 43 no. 4 (1966): 113–26, 44 no. 1 (1976): 86–104, 44 no. 2 (1976): 99–117; idem, *Maṣādir al-Turāth al-'Askarī 'inda al-'Arab*, 3 vols. (Baghdad, 1981–82). The last essay is the most exhaustive, but with many errors and inaccuracies. Ritter's contribution, although not free from errors and limited to treatises in Istanbul libraries, remains the most noteworthy, since he actually saw and examined the treatises.



This article attempts to elucidate these issues: firstly, through investigating the Abbasid background and origins of Mamluk *furūsīyah* and its literature; secondly, by proposing an altogether new research-based classification of Mamluk *furūsīyah* literature, and finally, by providing a systematic and critical survey of the available basic treatises of Mamluk *furūsīyah* literature and its antecedents.

EMERGENCE OF *FURŪSĪYAH* AND ITS LITERATURE UNDER THE ABBASIDS

The term *furūsīyah* emerged as a concept and an institution under the Abbasid caliphate in Iraq during the later half of the second/eighth century.⁴ It attained full currency during the third/ninth century, when its conceptual and technical framework became well established and clearly defined. The activities covered by the term *furūsīyah* included horsemanship, training a horseman in the arts of the lance, close combat techniques and weapons handling, archery on foot and horseback, hunting, and polo. It also included both practical and theoretical knowledge of the basics of veterinary science, of the types and characteristics of weaponry, and of the art of war itself. The scope of *furūsīyah* was, logically, further extended to cover training, exercises, and games performed on foot. *Furūsīyah* was, therefore, subdivided into "upper *furūsīyah*" (*al-furūsīyah al-'ulwīyah*), which denoted activities performed on horseback, and "lower *furūsīyah*" (*al-furūsīyah al-suflīyah*), which denoted those performed on foot, like wielding arms, archery, boxing, and wrestling. The overall *furūsīyah* activities were generated and shared by two complementary and intermingling concepts and institutions of *furūsīyah*: noble *furūsīyah* (*al-furūsīyah al-nabīlah*) as represented by the Abbasid court and military *furūsīyah* (*al-furūsīyah al-ḥarbīyah*) centered on the training of mounted warriors.

AL-FURŪSĪYAH AL-NABĪLAH

Noble *furūsīyah* was initially inspired by the traditions and institutions of the

⁴There is no evidence on the use of the term *furūsīyah* in the *jāhilīyah* and early Islam. In some *furūsīyah* treatises, however, the caliph 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb is quoted as having said in a letter to the inhabitants of Syria "Instruct your children in swimming, archery, and *furūsīyah*." The earliest *furūsīyah* treatise which cited this passage is "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah," by Ibn Akhī Ḥizām, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 5m *funūn ḥarbīyah*, fol. 75r.; see also *Kitāb al-Siyar al-Kabīr* by Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Cairo, 1971–72), 1:113; al-Qarrāb al-Sarakhsī (in his *Kitāb Fad'īl al-Ramī fī Sabīl Allāh*, edited and translated into English by Faḍl al-Raḥmān Bāqī in *Islamic Culture* 3 (1960): 195–218) gave two versions of this passage, one of them without the term. In both versions 'Umar is said to have been paraphrasing a hadith of the Prophet Muḥammad from which the word *furūsīyah* is absent (see A. J. Wensinck, *Concordance et Indices de la Traditions Musulmane* [Leiden, 1936–69], 2 :295, 310). All this casts strong doubt on the authenticity of the wording of the hadith. For more information see al-Sarraf, "Adab al-Furūsīyah," 105.



Sassanian court and by local practices. It consisted of training from childhood the male members of the Abbasid family and the sons of notables in horsemanship and the use of arms, archery, polo, and hunting.⁵ The basic rules and conceptual framework of noble *furūsīyah* were expounded in the "books of *ā'in*" (*kutub al-ā'in*), such as "Kitāb *Ā'in* al-Ramy," "Kitāb *Ā'in* al-*Ṣawālijah*" and "Kitāb *Ā'in* al-*Ṣayd*," which formed part of the greater "Kitāb *Ā'in-nāmah*." This work (also called "Kitāb al-Rusūm") was translated from Persian into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 139/756–57) during the first years of Abbasid rule. The text is lost, but Ibn Qutaybah quoted extracts in his *'Uyūn al-Akhhbār* on the *ā'in* of archery and polo under the heading *Ādāb al-furūṣah*.⁶ An important fragment on the *ā'in* of hunting is included in "Al-Qawānīn al-Sulṭānīyah fī al-*Ṣayd*" by al-Zaynabī⁷ (see below). These lost treatises of *ā'ins* constituted the nucleus of the noble *furūsīyah* literature in the early Abbasid period.

Noble *furūsīyah* was a state institution almost from its inception after the founding of Baghdad during the caliphate of al-Manṣūr (136–58/754–75). Al-Manṣūr was too old to engage in such activities, but he prepared the ground for his heir, al-Mahdī (158–69/775–85), and their successors.⁸ Al-Mahdī was the first crown prince to be brought up according to the principles of noble *furūsīyah*. In 151/768, the first polo field (*maydān*) in Islam was built for him adjacent to his palace at al-Ruṣāfah in Baghdad.⁹ He was an archer of repute, skilled with both the simple Arab bow and the composite Persian bow,¹⁰ and it was he who turned hunting into a sophisticated caliphal institution. His successors followed his example, and proficiency in the arts of *furūsīyah* virtually became a prerequisite for the caliphate, as affirmed by al-Jāhīz: "None of the descendants of al-'Abbās mounted the throne without having fully mastered the arts of *furūsīyah*."¹¹

⁵Al-Jāhīz, *Rasā'il al-Jāhīz*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn (Cairo, 1964–79), 3:32; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Umam wa-al-Mulūk* (Cairo, 1323/1905–6) 2:74–75.

⁶Ibn Qutaybah, *'Uyūn al-Akhhbār* (Cairo, 1938), 1:133–34.

⁷Al-Zaynabī, "Al-Qawānīn al-Sulṭānīyah fī al-*Ṣayd*," fols. 22v., 37r.–v.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 10:281; Bashir Yousif Francis, *Baghdād fī 'Ahd al-Khilāfah al-'Abbāsīyah* [a critical commentary and translation of Guy le Strange's *Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate* (Oxford, 1924)] (Baghdad, 1936), 164. Al-Mahdī was the first caliph to play polo, for which he was denigrated by the poet Bashshār Ibn Burd (cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 10:18); the claim (al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa-Ma'ādīn al-Jawhar*, ed. and trans. Charles Pellat [Beirut, 1966–74], 5:212) that Hārūn al-Rashīd (170–93/786–809) was the first caliph to play the game is thus incorrect.

¹⁰Al-Zaynabī, "Al-Qawānīn al-Sulṭānīyah," fols. 39r., 270r.

¹¹Al-Jāhīz, *Al-Bayān wa-al-Tabyīn* (Cairo, 1932) 3:11:

† لم يقيم أحد من ولد العباس بالملك إلا وهو جامع لأسباب
الفروسية



Al-furūsīyah al-nabīlah was not simply a Sassanian product with an Arab or Islamic tinge; it was a unique and original blending of the interaction of mainly Arab and Sassanian cultures within the framework of Islam and the Abbasid context. Byzantine influences came through the first Islamic dynasty, the Umayyads (41–132/661–750), who also had retained many of the old pre-Islamic tribal values. These include the Arab conception of the horseman (*fāris*), embodying bravery (*shajā‘ah*), gallantry (*shahāmah*), manliness (*murūwah*), and generosity (*sakhā‘*),¹² qualities often lauded by Umayyad and early Abbasid poets. The notion of *fāris* penetrated the very fiber of Abbasid court *furūsīyah*, and the term *furūsīyah* is still used in Arabic as a synonym for these virtues. Indeed, the chivalric aspect of *al-furūsīyah al-nabīlah* was so powerful that it survived when the institution itself died out.

The same virtues constituted the moral foundation of *futūwah* (from *fatá*, lit., “young man”), which emerged concurrently with *furūsīyah*. The conceptions *fāris* and *fatá* were closely associated, and the terms were used, since the pre-Islamic period, interchangeably.¹³ This association was reflected in *furūsīyah* literature, which came to include treatises on aspects of *futūwah*, for example, *futūwat ramy al-bunduq* (the *futūwah* of hunting birds with the pellet bow).¹⁴ Chapters on *ramy al-bunduq* were usually included in Abbasid hunting treatises; entire works devoted to the subject began to appear in the sixth/twelfth century, especially during the caliphate of al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (575–622/1180–1225), and continued to be written into the Mamluk period (see below).

See also al-Zaynabī, “Al-Qawānīn al-Sulṭānīyah,” fol. 45r.

¹²On the the Arab concept of *fāris*, see al-Sarraf, “Adab al-Furūsīyah,” 105, and idem, “Furūsīyya Literature,” 132, n. 10.

¹³Cf. Muṣṭafá Jawād, “Introduction,” in *Kitāb al-Futūwah*, by Ibn al-Mi‘mār, ed. Muṣṭafá Jawād et al. (Baghdad, 1958); and al-Sarraf “Adab al-Furūsīyah,” 106.

¹⁴*Ramy al-bunduq*, which flourished in Iraq in the latter half of the second/eighth century, was practiced at the Abbasid court and in high society (as well as among the common people). Its practioners developed a powerful and strongly hierarchical fraternity, or *futūwah*, which the Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (475–622/1180–1225) “co-opted,” declaring himself supreme head. The Ayyubids joined it, and *ramy al-bunduq* took strong hold in Egypt and Syria. The Mamluks perpetuated this legacy. The pellet bow (*qaws al-bunduq*) is a hand bow. However, unlike that of the arrow bow, the string of the pellet bow is cut in the middle and fastened from each end to a small piece of leather designed to hold the pellet, *bunduqah*, which was made of glazed hardened clay. The pellet bow is drawn in much the same way as an arrow bow but on loosing, the pellet-bowman should rapidly shift his left hand holding the bow to the left (if he is right-handed, or to the right if he is left-handed) so that the *bunduqah* will not strike the grip or hurt the hand. As an additional precaution, the thumb (of the left hand holding the grip) is protected by an iron sleeve called *bārūq*. Simple hand pellet bows are still used today in Sind and Afghanistan. See Shihab al-Sarraf, “L’archerie mamluke (648–923/1250–1517),” Ph.D. diss., Université de Paris Sorbonne, 1989, 1:275–99, 314–12.



AL-FURŪSĪYAH AL-ḤARBĪYAH

Military *furūsīyah* originated in the professional army created by the Abbasids when they first came to power. The presence of the traditional tribal army dwindled rapidly in the latter half of the second/eighth century until it was practically extinguished under the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (198–218/813–42) and officially abolished by his brother and successor al-Mu'taṣim (218–27/833–42). Initially, the hard core of al-Ma'mūn's cavalry was mainly composed of Khurasanis, but during the last years of his reign, Abbasid cavalry was also steadily reinforced by sedentary Transoxanian Turks and then by free and unfree Turkish tribal nomads. Al-Mu'taṣim pursued this recruitment policy on a larger scale, favoring Turkish tribal horsemen with a certain preference for servile Turkish elements. The *ghilmān* institution started taking shape in his reign but only reached maturity during the caliphate of al-Mu'taḍid (279–89/892–902) who founded the elite corps of *al-ghilmān al-ḥujarīyah*,¹⁵ the fore-runner of *mamālīk al-ṭibāq* of the Mamluk sultanate. Henceforth the *ghilmān*, or mamluks as they came to be known, became a cornerstone of military *furūsīyah*.

The Abbasid *ghulām* military institution was the end result of a sophisticated training system, which was constantly and painstakingly elaborated by Abbasid *furūsīyah* masters over a period of one hundred years starting from the second half of the second/eighth century. It represented an ingenious synthesis of various military traditions, namely Arab, Persian, Central Asian, and Byzantine. The ultimate aim was to produce an accomplished and almost unique brand of mounted archers who would be superior to and better coordinated than even the Central Asian

¹⁵ *Ghilmān al-ḥujarīyah*, or *ghilmān al-ḥujar*, were the most distinguished *ghilmān* élite in the second half of the third/ninth century and the first quarter of the fourth/tenth century. They were also referred to as *ghilmān al-dār* or *ghilmān dārīyah*, as they were raised, educated, and trained within the palatial compound (*dār al-khilāfah*) where they were permanently housed in special quarters or chambers, the *ḥujar*; hence their name. During their formation period, *al-ḥujarīyah* were not allowed to go beyond this palatial compound unless accompanied by their supervisors and *furūsīyah* masters. Their number reached twenty thousand during the caliphate of al-Muktafī billāh (289–95/902–8), and they were superbly trained and equipped, also being given the highest salaries among *ghilmān* troops. However, they remained a local force and did not take part in expeditions outside Iraq. Their political role grew with time and culminated in the installation of the caliph al-Rāḍī in 322/934 with the participation of another *ghilmān* élite corps (*al-ṣājīyah*). However, this political role brought about their destruction in 325/936–37. See Hilāl al-Ṣābī, *Tuḥfat al-Umarā' fī Tārīkh al-Wuzarā'*, ed. H. F. Amedroz (Beirut, 1904), 12–13; idem, *Rusūm Dār al-Khilāfah*, 2nd ed., ed. Mīkhā'il 'Awwād (Beirut, 1986), 8; Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-Umam*, ed. H. F. Amedroz (Cairo, 1332–34/1914–16), 1:258; cf. Shihab al-Sarraf, "Close Combat Weapons in the Early Abbasid Period," in *Companion to Medieval Arms and Armours*, ed. David Nicolle (London, 2002), 149–78.



horse archer nomads while being at the same time highly proficient in handling the lance and weapons of close combat. The horseman was likewise trained to fight on foot in case he was unhorsed or ordered to dismount during battle. In addition, he was required to know the basics of veterinary science and be familiar with the types and characteristics of the weapons currently used by the cavalry, the infantry, and in siege warfare. He must also be acquainted with the stratagems of war and have some knowledge of the art of war in general. After the initial training period, which might last for several years, the skills acquired throughout were continuously perfected and sustained by a multitude of games and exercises. Hunting and polo were considered essential in maintaining such skills.

The Khurasani corps was the foremost corps of the Abbasid army to have practiced this training system and unceasingly contributed to its development.¹⁶ Being the first professional multi-ethnic caliphal army in Islam, the Khurasanis, whose first generation brought the Abbasids to power, had a precursor role in promoting Abbasid military *furūsīyah*. Although by the second half of the third/ninth century, this prestigious corps had lost much of its importance as a military force after the massive recruitment of Turkish and other elements, its prominent members and commanders remained the absolute model for Abbasid/Iraqi military *furūsīyah*.

From their ranks emerged the man who definitively marked Muslim *furūsīyah* and its literature. This was Ibn Akhī Ḥizām al-Khuttalī, the greatest *furūsīyah* master of his time and the central figure in Muslim *furūsīyah* as a whole. His masterly work became the basic source of future treatises and to a large extent determined the content of *furūsīyah* literature. Knowledge of the work and its author is essential for the understanding of Mamluk *furūsīyah* literature.

IBN AKHĪ ḤIZĀM, THE FOUNDER OF *FURŪSĪYAH* LITERATURE

Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb ibn Ghālib ibn ‘Alī al-Khuttalī,¹⁷ known as Ibn Akhī Ḥizām, was born in Baghdad and died there sometime in the last quarter of the

¹⁶Al-Jāhīz, “Risālat Manāqib al-Turk,” in *Rasā’il*, 1:20–21.

¹⁷From Khuttal, a region on the right bank of upper Oxus between the rivers Wakhsh and Panj, famous for its horses. Medieval Khuttal is now part of Tajikistan (C. E. Bosworth, “Khuttal,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 5:75). According to al-Sam‘ānī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb* (Beirut, 1988), 2:322–23, there was also an Iraqi village named al-Khuttal near Daskarah on the great road between Baghdad and Khurasan, but the existence of such a place, and the association of those bearing the *nisbah* of al-Khuttalī with it, have been rejected (see Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Lubāb fī Tahdhīb al-Ansāb* [Cairo, 1938–49], 1:345; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld [Leipzig, 1866–73], 2:402; ‘Abd al-Mu‘min al-Baghdādī, *Marāṣid al-Iṭṭilā‘ ‘alā Asmā’ al-Amkinah wa-al-Biqā‘* [Cairo, 1954–55], 1:452). Ibn Manglī (“Uns al-Malā bi-Waḥsh al-Falā,” *Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah* MS 12 *ṣinā‘ah*, fol. 7r.), and later Viré (“Iṣṭabl,” *EI*², 4:216), accepted al-Sam‘ānī’s dubious explanation of the *nisbah*.



third/ninth century. He was the descendent of a prominent family of *Abnā'*¹⁸ who served the Abbasid dynasty for several decades. His uncle Ḥizām ibn Ghālib was a well-known commander of the Khurasani corps and stable master to the caliph al-Mu'taṣim¹⁹ (*ṣāhib khayl al-khalīfah*, the equivalent of the later *amīr akhūr kabīr*). According to al-Ya'qūbī, care of al-Mu'taṣim's stables was not entrusted to Ḥizām alone, but was shared by his brother Ya'qūb, the father of Ibn Akhī Ḥizām.²⁰ Ya'qūb himself was an unrivaled authority on horses and their medical treatment in his time, and he became the chief veterinary surgeon to the caliph al-Mutawakkil (232–47/847–61). Nevertheless, because of the celebrity of his brother Ḥizām, he was commonly referred to as Akhū Ḥizām "brother of Ḥizām," whence his son's *shuhrah* "Ibn Akhī Ḥizām."

It is difficult to imagine a more propitious milieu for developing skills in *furūsīyah* arts and for gaining an intimate knowledge of horses. Ibn Akhī Ḥizām logically walked in the steps of his uncle and his father. He became a member of the Khurasani corps and ranked amongst its most prominent commanders.²¹ There is also evidence that he became the stable master of the caliph al-Mu'taḍid. Ibn Akhī Ḥizām was an experienced soldier, expert on horses, master of *furūsīyah* arts, and unchallenged authority in lance and close combat techniques and weapons—hence the unmatched importance of his work, which represents the oldest surviving *furūsīyah* manual.

¹⁸The term *Abnā'* (literally "sons" or "descendants") was originally used to denote the descendants of the first Khurasanis who brought the Abbasid caliphal dynasty to power and who were mostly Arab settlers in Khurasan. But as recruitment from Khurasan continued, the term was used for the descendants of any first generation Khurasani recruits regardless of the time of their arrival in Iraq or their ethnic origin. The *Abnā'*, whether of Arab or Persian origin and whether they were descendants of early or later Khurasanis, had a great sense of unity and solidarity. Raised and trained according to the rules of Abbasid *furūsīyah*, they constituted a redoubtable military force, serving both as cavalry and infantry. Their devotion to Iraq, Baghdad, and the Abbasid house was almost fanatical. Distinguished *Abnā'* may always have joined the Khurasani corps and to have assumed positions of command, as was the case with Ibn Akhī Ḥizām.

¹⁹On the notoriety of Ḥizām ibn Ghālib in this post, see al-Jāhīz, "Risālah fī Ṣīnā'at al-Quwwād," in *Rasā'il*, 381 and n. 2.

²⁰Al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. M. J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1892), 381. The stables in Samarra were located behind the quarter of Ḥizām:

. . . وفي هذا الشارع قطائع قواد خراسان منها قطيعة هاشم بن بانيجور وقطيعة عجيبة بن عتبسة وقطيعة الحسن بن علي المأموني وقطيعة هارون بن نعيم وقطيعة حزام بن غالب وظهر قطيعة حزام الاصطبلات لدواب الخليفة الخاصة والعامية يتولاها حزام ويعقوب أخوه.

²¹His name figures among the army commanders who in the year 251/856 supported the caliph al-Musta'in (248–52/862–66) against al-Mu'tazz (252–55/866–69) and the Turks in Samarra. He led (jointly with 'Abd Allāh Ibn Naṣr) the vanguard of the caliphal army under the command of al-Ḥusayn ibn Ismā'il (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 11:120).



His work, written, according to Ibn al-Nadīm, for the caliph al-Mutawakkil,²² consisted of two complementary treatises intended as manuals for the mounted warrior and for army officers and commanders. The first treatise (hereafter designated as Treatise A, see below, Category I [a]) is a comprehensive work on horses including equitation, hippology, and farriery. The second treatise (hereafter Treatise B, see below, Category II) mainly deals with the principles of riding and horse-mastery, lance and sword techniques, arms, archery, and polo. These two treatises came down to us either separately and bearing different titles, or combined as one work, though in two parts each with its own preface (hereafter Treatise AB) and also bearing different titles. The most recurrent title, however, and probably the nearest to the original, is “Kitāb al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah.” The title given by the Mamluk author and *ḥalqah* commander Muḥammad ibn Manglī to the overall work is “Al-Fawā’id al-Jalīlah fī ‘Ulūm al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Rimāyah wa-Amrāḍ al-Khayl wa-Mudāwātihā.”²³

During the Mamluk period Ibn Akhī Ḥizām’s work became the manual par excellence for *furūsīyah* masters, mamluks, and *ḥalqah* troopers. Indeed, Ibn Manglī warned his fellow *ḥalqah* troopers and mamluks not to consult any other work but that of Ibn Akhī Ḥizām.²⁴ He insisted elsewhere that he who heeds the teachings of Ibn Akhī Ḥizām while being trained at the hands of a knowledgeable master in the arts of *furūsīyah* shall licitly benefit from his *iqṭā’* and effectively serve the sultan in time of war.²⁵ Even the opening words that Ibn Akhī Ḥizām used in the preface of his Treatise AB:

أما بعد فإنني لم أزل بعد ما وهب الله لي من المعرفة بآلات الفروسية ودقة النظر وشدة الفحص عما
وصفه أهل النجدة والبأس من ذوي النيات الخالصة

(which is also the preface of Treatise A) became a cliché in Mamluk *furūsīyah* treatises.²⁶

Since Ibn Akhī Ḥizām’s Treatise AB (often referred to as his “grand book,” *kitābuhu al-kabīr*) was rather too voluminous to be used as a handy manual, and since it consisted of two distinct and independent manuals representing different disciplines in *furūsīyah* arts and literature, Treatise AB was often split into Treatises

²²Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, ed. Reza Tajaddod (Tehran, 1967), 377.

²³Ibn Manglī, “Uns al-Malā,” Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 12 *ṣinā’ah*, fol. 7r.

²⁴Ibid. ولا يجوز للجندي إذا كان يحسن المطالعة أن يعرج على غيره من الكتب وكتابه الكبير جمع علومنا شتى.

²⁵Ibn Manglī, “Al-Tadbīrāt al-Sulṭānīyah,” fols. 38v.

ومن اشتغل بكلامه وتمهر على شيخ عارف بأمر الحرب أكل اقطاعه حلالا ونفع سلطانه وقت الاحتياج لقتال من تعين قتاله شرعا من كافر وباغ.

²⁶See for example al-Aqsarā’ī, “Nihāyat al-Sūl wa-al-Umnīyah fī Ta’līm A’māl al-Furūsīyah,” fol. 2r.; Baktūt al-Rammāḥ, “Kitāb fī ‘Ilm al-Furūsīyah,” fol. 5v.



A and B and these were used and copied separately. This accounts for the limited number of the surviving copies of Treatise AB²⁷ in comparison with the extant copies of Treatises A and B. It also explains why most copies of Treatise A (which had the title page of Treatise AB) bear the signature of Ibn Akhī Ḥizām, while most copies of Treatise B are either unsigned or bear fictitious names. Moreover, the copies of Treatise B are all catalogued under different titles.

This is one reason why Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise B, though fundamental for a proper comprehension of Islamic *furūsīyah* literature as a whole and Mamluk in particular (see below), has remained largely unrecognized as a third/ninth century work. Furthermore, like all *furūsīyah* manuals in demand, the overall work of Ibn Akhī Ḥizām suffered at the hands of copyists, booksellers, and compilers; even the name of the author was not spared, especially his *shuhrah* and *nisbah*.²⁸ These errors have led to a number of recent false identifications of the author and his work²⁹ thus helping to obscure his immense contribution to *furūsīyah* literature, of

²⁷There are five manuscripts that contain both Treatises A and B: Bayezit Public Library MS Veliyüddin Efendi 3174, entitled "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah wa-Ma'rifat al-Khayl wa-Riyādatihā wa-Ta'dībihā wa-'Ilājihā wa-Ma'rifat al-'Amal bi-al-Sayf wa-al-Rumḥ wa-Ramy al-Nushshāb," dated 740/1339 but transcribed from a manuscript dated 428/1036–37—its colophon reads:

تم كتاب محمد بن يعقوب بن أخي خزّام (كذا) المختلي في الفروسية وكان راض المعترض بالله . . . يحيط علم الواقف على هذا الكتاب انه كتب من نسخه تاريخها على ما وجد ٤٢٨ سنة وهي نسخه لا يكاد يقرأ منها شيء إلا بالجهد فسيدينا يعذر المملوك في ما يجده في هذه النسخه من إشكال؛

Ayasofya Library MSS 2898, entitled "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah min Qibal al-Ṭibb wa-Umūr al-Salṭanah" (Treatise B incomplete), and 2899, entitled "Kitāb al-Khayl wa-al-Furūsīyah"; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 5m *funūn ḥarbīyah*, entitled "Kitāb fī 'Ilm al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah," catalogued as anonymous; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS 5555, untitled and catalogued as anonymous.

²⁸The *shuhrah* Ibn Akhī Ḥizām was often corrupted to Ibn Abī Ḥizām and Abū Ḥizām; the name was written Ḥaram, Ḥazām, Ḥazzām, Khizzām, and Khazzām. The *nisbah* al-Khuttalī was written al-Khaylī, al-Jilī, al-Ḥilī, and al-Jabalī, which are common corruptions of this *nisbah* (see Ibn Mākūlā, *Al-Ikmāl fī Raf' al-Irtiyāb 'an al-Mu' talif wa-al-Mukhtalif fī al-Asmā' wa-al-Kunā wa-al-Ansāb*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Yamānī [Hyderabad, 1962–1972], 3:219 ff.). In some copies the personal name Muḥammad is omitted, and only Ya'qūb Ibn Akhī Ḥizām remains, usually with the *kunyah* Abū Yūsuf, which is common with the name Ya'qūb, rather than 'Abd Allāh, which normally accompanies Muḥammad. In one copy of Treatise B the name Muḥammad has been corrupted to Aḥmad. Such errors were so frequent in the Mamluk period that Ibn Manglī, "Uns al-Malā," Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2832/1, fol. 5v., tried to clarify the problem, but he, too, made errors. Ibn Manglī's work was one of the few sources used by Mercier (*La Parure des cavaliers*, xii–xiii), in efforts to establish Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's name and to identify his work; on the basis of the variations Mercier suggested that there might have been three authors: Ya'qūb and his two sons Muḥammad and Aḥmad. François Viré ("Iṣṭabl," 222–26) took Mercier's hypothesis as established and even added another imaginary person, Akhī Ḥizām, ostensibly Ya'qūb's father!

²⁹See for example the preceding note.



which he was, undoubtedly, the founder.

FROM THE ABBASIDS TO THE MAMLUKS

Since *furūsīyah* was and remained a state institution, its rise and decline was intimately connected with the sovereignty and independence of the caliphate. Two great periods of Abbasid *furūsīyah* literature can be isolated; the first flourished from the second half of the second/eighth century until the Buwayhid domination (334/945), and the second from the mid-sixth/twelfth century onward until the Mongol invasion in the mid-seventh/thirteenth century. The destruction of Baghdad and the abolition of the caliphate (656/1258) made Cairo and Damascus the uncontested centers of the Islamic world. The Mamluks inherited and built upon Abbasid traditions, including *furūsīyah* literature, enlarging and emphasizing military exercises and training due to their particular military institution and to the Mongol threat.

CLASSIFICATION OF MAMLUK *FURŪSĪYAH* LITERATURE

Careful examination and extensive research into *furūsīyah* literature and its historical background can only lead to the classification proposed below. This stands in direct opposition to the tentative classifications previously proposed by Mercier and Ritter.³⁰

Furūsīyah treatises fall into one of two categories. The first, henceforth Category I, includes thematic treatises dealing with a particular subject or branch of *furūsīyah*. These are:

- a) treatises on horses and farriery;
- b) treatises on archery;
- c) treatises on the arts of the lance;
- d) treatises on the arts of the mace;

³⁰Mercier, *La Parure des cavaliers*, 384–85, artificially divided the treatises into four categories: treatises on the description of horses and the mysterious virtues attributed to them; treatises on wielding arms on horseback; treatises on farriery; and treatises on falconry. Ritter combined Mercier's first three categories into one and added two more: archery and organization of the army. He discarded falconry. In both attempts the term *furūsīyah* was used in a restrictive way. Scanlon, "Introduction," in *A Muslim Manual of War*, 6–7, adopted Ritter's classification, but saw this only as military literature, thus limiting the scope of *furūsīyah* treatises to those covering the training of the horse, the training of the rider to wield certain weapons consummately, the concerted action of the cavalryman on the field, the technique and variety of single combat, tournaments, and the basics of veterinary medicine. Thus treatises on archery, hunting, polo, tactics, and organization of the army, which constitute an integral part of *furūsīyah* literature, were arbitrarily regarded as distinct from it. See also Ananiasz Zajackowski, "Introduction," in *Ādāb al-Ḥarb wa-al-Shajā'ah* (Warsaw, 1969), 7–13, who, although skeptical about such classifications, and the restrictive use of the term *furūsīyah*, did not propose any alternative.



- e) treatises on the art of war;
- f) treatises on arms and war engines;
- g) treatises on hunting;
- h) treatises on polo.

Thematic *furūsīyah* works, with the exception of those on polo, may be subdivided into two types of treatises: comprehensive and specific thematic *furūsīyah* treatises. The former gives an overall treatment of the subject, while the latter deals only with a specific aspect of the subject matter.

The second category, Category II, includes general *furūsīyah* treatises. They deal with some or most of the above-mentioned subjects, either in an abridged form or by including portions from Category I treatises or entire small treatises. This applies mainly to lance play and mace play. It also covers the training of the Mamluk *fāris* and all that concerns lower (foot) *furūsīyah*.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING OF MAMLUK *FURŪSĪYAH* LITERATURE

The Mamluk *furūsīyah* treatises of either category may be divided into three groups. The first group is made up of treatises that can be described as basic because of their originality or essential contribution. This group, however, constitutes only a small proportion of the total number of works produced in this period. They were usually written by professionals who belonged to the military institution or worked closely with it. Two authors in this group belonged to the *ḥalqah* corps. Not many treatises are signed by pure Mamluks, probably because of an insufficient knowledge of Arabic. Otherwise, this group would have been greatly enriched with original works based on first-hand observation and experience. This group includes only one original Mamluk-Kipchak treatise (see Category I [d] below).

The second group consists of compilation treatises based on the first group and on pre-Mamluk works. The best examples were composed by men of learning (ulama) like Sharaf al-Dīn al-Dimyāṭī (d. 705/1305–6), Badr al-Dīn Ibn Jamā‘ah (d. 733/1333), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah (d. 751/1350), ‘Izz al-Dīn Ibn Jamā‘ah (d. 819/1416), Walī al-Dīn Aḥmad al-‘Irāqī (d. 826/1422), Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497), Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūfī (d. 911/1505), and many others.³¹ They quoted clearly and exactly from treatises now lost, and usually acknowledged their sources, which the authors of the treatises in the first group did not necessarily do, and those in the third group almost never did. Moreover, they sometimes defined important technical terms and, finally, their language is of the highest caliber ever used in *furūsīyah* literature, thus aiding in

³¹The marked interest and participation of ulama in *furūsīyah* literature started in the sixth/tenth century under the Abbasids, and assumed important proportions in the Mamluk period. See al-Sarraf, "Adab al-Furūsīyah," 109–10.



the verification and correction of copyists' errors in treatises in the other groups. Many of these authors were quite familiar with the arts of *furūsīyah*. For example, Muḥammad al-Aqsarā'ī al-Ḥanafī (d. 749/1348), the author of "Nihāyat al-Sūl" (see below), was an experienced lancer and well versed in archery. Many members of the ulama practiced the latter art and even excelled in it.³² 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Akhmīmī al-Naqīb, chief Shafi'i magistrate under Sultan al-Ghūrī (906–22/1501–16), was considered by his contemporaries a great master of archery and an undisputed expert.³³ For this reason and because he spoke Turkish perfectly, he was very popular among the Turks, a matter that contributed significantly to his selection for the post of *aqdā al-quḍāh*.³⁴ There is strong evidence that he was the author of two deliberately unsigned treatises. The first is on archery, entitled "Ḥall al-Ishkāl fī al-Ramy bi-al-Nibāl" (see Cat. I [b] below), and belongs to the first group, and the other is a general *furūsīyah* treatise entitled "Naqāwat al-Muntaqā fī Nāfi'āt al-Liqā'," an abridged version of a lost treatise by Taqī al-Dīn Yaḥyá ibn al-Kirmānī (d. 833/1430) which belongs to the second (see Cat. II below).

The third group encompasses popular and often apocryphal literature produced to meet the great demand for *furūsīyah* works at the end of the Bahri period and throughout the Circassian period. Much of it consists of truncated and sometimes amalgamated portions of pre-Mamluk and Mamluk treatises from the previous two groups. The copyists and booksellers, who played a great role in propagating these works, either deliberately left them anonymous or attributed them to well-known authors from Category II.

An illustrative example of this group is the luxurious manuscript now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, MS 2824, entitled "Al-Makhzūn Jāmi' al-Funūn" and fraudulently attributed to Ibn Akhī Ḥizām. It begins with the preface and the first section on training the rider and horse from his Treatise B, followed by the lance *bunūd* of al-Aḥḍab (see below), then a section on incendiary weapons taken from pre-Mamluk and early Bahri sources, ending with a corrupted vernacular version of an anonymous work on the training of the Mamluk *fāris*. Because of its very nature, this group has led scholars astray and should only be studied and exploited after a full understanding of groups one and two. Although random examples will be given below, this article focuses on the first two groups.

³²The reasons are discussed in al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 1:51–56.

³³Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi'* (Cairo, 1353–55/1934–36), 5:275; Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā' i' al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Wiesbaden-Cairo, 1961–75), 4:348:

وكان الشيخ علاء الدين له شهرة طائلة عند الاتراك وكان علامة في الرمي بالنشاب عارفا به وكان له اليد الطولى في ذلك.

Cf. al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 1:52–53.

³⁴Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr*, 4:848.



MAMLUK *FURŪSĪYAH* TREATISES AND THEIR SOURCESCATEGORY I: THEMATIC *FURŪSĪYAH* TREATISES

CAT. I (A): TREATISES ON HORSES AND FARRIERY

Abbasid treatises on horses were the objects of two kinds of contributions; the first was made by Arab philologists and the other was made by professionals and *furūsīyah* masters. The main body of Arab philological works on horses was written in Iraq during the period from the latter half of the second/eighth century to the end of the first half of the fourth/tenth century.³⁵ These works included both comprehensive and specific treatises. Of the former type, commonly titled *Kitāb al-Khayl*, more than twenty treatises were written,³⁶ all deemed lost except four. These are *Kitāb al-Khayl* by Abū ‘Ubaydah Ma‘mar ibn al-Muthanná (d. 209/824),³⁷ *Kitāb al-Khayl* by al-Aṣma‘ī (d. 216/831),³⁸ “*Kitāb al-Khayl*” by Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad al-‘Uṭbī (d. 228/842), and “*Kitāb al-Khayl*” by Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr (d. 280/893). The last two treatises are still in manuscript and the fate of their extant copies, presumably kept in a private collection, is uncertain.³⁹ In any case, the basic and unmatched contributions in this domain remain the above first two treatises by the celebrated Basran philologists whose competence and rivalry in the knowledge of horses were particularly well-known. However, notwithstanding the importance of al-Aṣma‘ī’s contribution, Abū ‘Ubaydah’s *Kitāb al-Khayl* undoubtedly represents the most complete and learned philological work on horses, and was the source par excellence for subsequent treatises whether written by philologists, *furūsīyah* masters like Ibn Akhī Ḥizām, or compilers. Similarly, very few, of an otherwise considerable number, of specific philological and historical works on horses have survived. The most notable of these are *Nasab al-Khayl fī al-Jāhilīyah wa-al-Islām* by Ibn al-Kalbī⁴⁰ (d. 204/819); *Asmā’ Khayl al-‘Arab wa-Fursānihā* by Ibn al-A‘rābī⁴¹ (d. 231/846), and *Al-Sarj wa-al-*

³⁵ Cf. al-Sarraf, “Adab al-Furūsīyah,” 110–111.

³⁶ On this work see *ibid.*, 111.

³⁷ Published in Hyderabad, 1358/1939.

³⁸ Published by Nūrī Ḥammūdī al-Qaysī, in *Majallat Kullīyat al-Ādāb* (Baghdad University) 12 (1969): 337–88, then published separately (Baghdad, 1970).

³⁹ See ‘Awwād, *Maṣādir al-Turāth al-‘Askarī*, 1:294–96.

⁴⁰ Published by Giorgio Levi Della Vida (Leiden, 1928); another edition by Aḥmad Zakī Pasha (Cairo, 1946; 2nd ed., 1995); and republished by Nūrī Ḥammūdī al-Qaysī and Ḥātim Ṣāliḥ al-Dāmin (Beirut, 1987). A copy written by Abū Maṣṣūr al-Jawālīqī (d. 540/1145) is preserved in the Escorial, MS 1705.

⁴¹ Published by Levi Della Vida together with *Nasab al-Khayl* by al-Kalbī in one volume (Leiden,



Lijām by Ibn Durayd⁴² (d. 321/933).

In all, Abbasid philological works on horses were essential for preparing the ground for the emergence of the *furūsīyah* masters' contributions in this field. These were primarily concerned with subjects that are not dealt with in philological works such as dressage, riding, ailments of horses and their cures, suitable horse equipment in war and peace, etc., while integrating at the same time the essentials of the philologist's contributions, especially concerning hippology.

Ibn Akhī Ḥizām was the first *furūsīyah* master to make this synthesis in his Treatise A, commonly titled "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah." It is not only the oldest preserved text in Arabic on horses and their medical treatment, but also the earliest contribution, probably in any language, in which hippology, riding, training, and veterinary medicine, together with many other related topics, are integrated in one work. Thus the genre was established and Treatise A became the prototype of subsequent treatises. The work was a seminal contribution because it was based on the deep knowledge and practical experience of the author. In a number of subjects, it even reached the limits of perfection, as can be seen in the method of training the rider and the horse in the ring.⁴³ In the part devoted to farriery, the main reference besides the author's own experience was his father Ya'qūb, who is referred to by his *kunyah* Abū Yūsuf. Ibn Akhī Ḥizām also gives some medical prescriptions in order to discredit them; he urges veterinary surgeons to be more prompt in their work and demands that they should be cross-examined before being allowed to practice. In the chapters on colors, markings, and whorls, a certain Indian named Junna was mentioned and quoted, though only for reasons of completeness, as the author did not agree with what Junna wrote⁴⁴. Ibn Akhī Ḥizām also elaborated on the borrowings he made from *Kitāb al-Khayl* by Abū 'Ubaydah.

More than fifteen copies of Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise A have been traced so

1928), and reedited by Nūrī Ḥammūdī al-Qaysī and Ḥatīm Ṣāliḥ al-Dāmin (Beirut, 1987).

⁴²Published by William Wright in *Majmū'at Jurzat al-Ḥātib wa-Tuḥfat al-Ṭālib* (Leiden, 1859). The text of Wright was republished by Ibrāhīm al-Sāmarrā'ī (in the seventies, but no date is given); a third edition by Munāf Mahdī Aḥmad appeared in 1992 (Cairo). However, this treatise, which is unique in its genre in *furūsīyah* literature, deserves to be studied more appropriately. Two copies are extant, one in the Library of the University of Leiden, MS 53, the other in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, MS 459/5 *lughah Taymūr*.

⁴³Translated by Beate Sierwert-Mayer in "Riding in the Early Abbasid Period," in *Furusiyya*, ed. Alexander, 1:110–17. For the Arabic text of this chapter, see idem, "Rukūb al-Khayl fī Bidāyat al-'Ahd al-'Abbāsī," in *Furūsīyah*, ed. al-Sarraf, 1:98–103.

⁴⁴See, Ibn Akhī Ḥizām, "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah" (Treatise A), Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 1610, *tibb*, fols. 52v.–53r.



far and I believe the list is still far from being exhaustive.⁴⁵ There is also an unsigned late eighth/fourteenth-century Mamluk-Kipchak version of Treatise A (unidentified as such hitherto) entitled “Kitāb Bayṭarat al-Vāziḥ.” The translation from Arabic was made at the request of Tolu Beg, who is almost certainly the same as Tolu min ‘Alī Shāh, *nā’ib* of Ṣafad, who was killed in 808/1405.⁴⁶ At his orders another *furūsīyah* treatise, this time on archery, was also translated into Turkish (see below, Cat. I [b]). Two copies of “Bayṭarat al-Vāziḥ” are preserved.⁴⁷

The earliest authentic Mamluk work on horses is the anonymous “Kitāb Sharḥ al-Maqāmah al-Ṣalāḥīyah fī al-Khayl wa-al-Bayṭarah,” which was written towards the end of the seventh/thirteenth century. It is a learned commentary on a comprehensive didactic poem on horses and other related topics in 133 verses, in *-ri*, presented within the framework of a *maqāmah*. There are two extant copies of this treatise bearing different and apocryphal titles.⁴⁸

⁴⁵The following manuscripts of Treatise A have been identified: British Library MS Add 23416, entitled “Al-Furūsīyah wa-Shiyāt al-Khayl”; Chester Beatty Library MSS 3889 (seventh/thirteenth century), 416 (645/1256), 3319 (869/1464–65), 3073, and 3220 (twelfth/eighteenth century), all entitled “Al-Furūsīyah wa-Shiyāt al-Khayl”; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 1610 *tibb*, entitled “Al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah fī ‘Alamāt al-Khayl wa-‘Ilājihā”; Damascus, Dār al-Kutub al-Zāhirīyah MS 71 *‘amm*, entitled “Al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah”; Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library MS 3608, ascribed to al-Ṣāḥib Tāj al-Dīn (d. 707/1307) and published under this apocryphal name by Fuat Sezgin as a facsimile in 2 vols., *Book on Veterinary Medicine: Kitāb al-Bayṭarah by al-Ṣāḥib Tāj al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī* (Frankfurt, 1984); Fatih Mosque Library MS 3510, entitled “Kitāb al-Khuyūl wa-al-Furūsīyah” (written for the *amīr akhūr* “stable master” of Sultan al-Nāṣir ibn Qalāwūn and the son of *amīr akhūr kabīr* “chief stable master” of the same sultan); Topkapı Sarayı Library MS 1951, entitled “‘Awn Ahl al-Jihād min al-Umarā’ wa-al-Ajnād” (893/1487): this copy, incomplete and catalogued as anonymous, was published (presumed unique) in Damascus (1996); Budapest University Library MS Arabe O.3, transcribed in Baghdad in 757/1356: this copy is incomplete, untitled, and catalogued as anonymous, and it was published as such (and presumed unique) by Muḥammad al-Tūnjī under the title *Al-Jawād al-‘Arabī* (Kuwait, 1413/1993); Baghdad National Library MSS 134 *al-athār*, 1938/1 *al-athār*; Leiden University Library MS 528; Bibliothèque Nationale MSS 2823, untitled and containing only the first and last folios (1063/1653), and 2815, untitled and classified as anonymous. Treatise A was also plagiarized by a number of compilers, for example, British Library MS Or. 813 (620/1223; signed Aḥmad Ibn ‘Atīq al-Azdī); and Ayasofya Library MS 3705 (copied for the Rasulid sultan of Yemen al-Muzaffar Yūsuf al-Sa‘īd [647–94/1249–95] by Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad, known as Ibn Abī Quṭayrah).

⁴⁶See al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, 4:48.

⁴⁷Topkapı Sarayı MS Revan Köskü 1695 and Bibliothèque Nationale MS Suppl. Turc 179, fols. 1–99r. See also Janos Eckmann, “The Mamluk-Kipchak Literature” in *Central Asiatic Journal* 8 (1963): 316–17, and Kurtuluş Öztopçu, “Introduction,” in *Münyetü’ l-ğuzāt: 14. yüzyıla ait Memluk-Kipçakçasıyla yazılmış askêri bir risâle*, ed. and trans. Kurtuluş Öztopçu, *Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures*, 13: Turkic Sources, 11 (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), 4.

⁴⁸The first one, written for the library of Yalbāy min Qānī Bāy al-Hamzāwī, is preserved in the



The text begins with a short introduction on the blazes, markings, stockings, and shackles of the horse. Then the author rather smoothly shifts to the rhymed prose of the *maqāmah*, setting forth the frame story: Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ibn Yūsuf Ibn Ayyūb (Saladin) ordered that pure-bred Arab horses should be amassed for war. When that was done he summoned his courtiers and questioned them about the origins of the (Arab) horse, its breeds and bloodlines, its conformation, its qualities, the ailments that can strike it, its markings, its colors, and the equipment of its rider. No one answered but one man, an outsider, who stood up and recited the poem.⁴⁹ The commentary normally follows after one or two verses. Those from 1 to 116 cover hippology and farriery, from 117 to 122 deal with arms and armor, from 123 to 130 treat saddles and bridles, and finally from 131 to 133 deal with how the horseman should behave on the battlefield. When the commentary of the last three verses is completed, the rhymed prose resumes the argument of the *maqāmah* and reports that the sultan, greatly pleased with the poem, decided to appoint the poet as his stable master and to make him his boon companion. The *maqāmah* concludes in the style and spirit of *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī* as the narrator (appearing in the role of al-Ḥārith ibn Hammām of the *Maqāmah*) discovered that he knew the poet (resembling the famous Abū Zayd al-Sarūjī) and engaged him in a pleasant and lively conversation.

This treatise is one of the hidden jewels of Mamluk *furūsīyah* literature. First of all, it should be noted that didactic poems, while common in such *furūsīyah* disciplines as archery and hunting, were not very frequent in the domain of horses, especially in such a comprehensive way.⁵⁰ Consequently, if this didactic

library of Istanbul University, MS 4689, and titled "Kitāb al-Razdaqah fī Ma'rifat al-Khayl wa-Ajnāsīhā wa-Amrāḍihā wa-Adwiyatihā." The second copy, dated 1180/1766, is kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Arabe 2817. It is spuriously attributed to Wahb Ibn Munabbih under the title "Kitāb fī 'Ilm Siyāsat al-Khayl." There is also one copy of the "Maqāmah" sans commentary in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 81 *furūsīyah Taymūr*, entitled "Al-Maqāmah al-Ṣalāḥīyah fī al-Khayl wa-al-Bayṭarah wa-al-Furūsīyah."

⁴⁹The poem begins as follows:

الحمد لله ميدي عالم الصور \ وخالق الخيل عزاً منه للبشر
والصلوة على المختار من مضر \ وسيد الرسل من بدو ومن حضر

⁵⁰In *furūsīyah* literature, didactic poems, namely in the fields of archery, hunting, and horses, appeared mainly from the sixth/twelfth century onwards, after these disciplines were established, and the major pertinent treatises were written during the first two hundred years of Abbasid rule. Among the few surviving didactic poems on horses from that period is "Al-Urjūzah al-Manṣūrīyah fī Ṣifāt al-Khayl" by the Zaydī Imam al-Manṣūr billāh 'Abd Allāh Ibn Ḥamzah (d. 614/1217). It was commented by his son al-Amīr Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad in a treatise entitled "Kitāb Sharḥ al-Urjūzah al-Manṣūrīyah fī Ṣifāt al-Khayl," of which at least two copies survived; one of them is kept in the British Library, MS 814. The "Urjūzah" and its commentary are entirely based on early Abbasid philological contributions and works of *adab*.



poem was not the first of its kind, it is undoubtedly the earliest and the unique surviving example. It is also the first and probably the last didactic poem presented within the framework of a *maqāmah*. In *furūsīyah* literature, the *maqāmah* is an exceptional genre and the only one I am aware of is "Al-Maqāmah al-Qawsīyah" (on archery) by Ismā'īl ibn Jamāl al-Dīn al-Isbahānī (sixth/twelfth century), which is in rhymed prose⁵¹.

The real importance of this work, however, lies in the subtlety of the didactic poem, the expert and erudite commentary of the author, and his clear and fine Arabic style. Although he did not name his pre-Mamluk sources, the text clearly shows that the author was perfectly familiar with the relevant Abbasid literature, especially *Kitāb Nasab al-Khayl* by Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 204/819), *Kitāb al-Khayl* by Abū 'Ubaydah and above all "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah" by Ibn Akhī Ḥizām. It is also clear from his commentaries that the author was a pure product of military *furūsīyah*, as he was highly proficient in horsemanship, hippology, veterinary science, and arms and warfare. He gave us a valuable hint about himself and the period during which he wrote the treatise when he casually referred to two of his contemporaries who were alive when this work was written. One of them was Amir Sunqur al-Ashqar (Shams al-Dīn Sunqur al-Ṣāliḥī), *nā'ib al-salṭanah* in Damascus who died in 691/1292. He was personally and intimately known to the author who must have, therefore, belonged to the upper strata of the Mamluk ruling elite or was very close to it. The other personality is Sharaf al-Dīn al-Dimyāṭī, who died in 705/1305–6. Al-Dimyāṭī wrote a work on horses entitled "Faḍl al-Khayl," based exclusively on Abbasid philological and *adab* works and including a compendium of hadiths of the Prophet on the merits of horses,⁵² with rather long chains of authority which our anonymous author quotes. As al-Dimyāṭī wrote his treatise in 688/1289, "Kitāb Sharḥ al-Maqāmah al-Ṣalāḥīyah" was, therefore, composed sometime between the latter date and the death of Sunqur al-Ashqar in 691/1292.

The only worthy signed Mamluk treatise on horses belonging to the first group is *Kāshif al-Wayl fī Ma'rifat al-Khayl*, also known as *Kāmil al-Ṣinā'atayn fī al-Bayṭarah wa-al-Zardaqaḥ* and as *al-Nāṣiri*,⁵³ by Abū Bakr al-Bayṭar ibn Badr

⁵¹See below, note 101.

⁵²It has been published by Muḥammad Raghīb al-Ṭabbākh (Aleppo, 1930) from a single copy in Aleppo, al-Maktabah al-Riḍā'īyah MS *furūsīyah* 801, now lost. A new edition was published in Damascus (2001), allegedly based on a copy conserved in 'Ayn Shams University Library (Egypt), no reference number given. The most reliable copy, however, is that in Medina, 'Ārif Ḥikmat Library MS *ḥadīth* 54, dated 688/1289. Another copy, dated 850/1446–47, is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, MS 2816.

⁵³Translated into French by Nicolas Perron, under the title *Le nâcérî: la perfection des arts, ou, Traité complet d'hippologie et d'hippiatrique arabes, par Abū Bakr Ibn Bedr*, 2 vols. (Paris,



al-Dīn, known as Ibn al-Mundhir, chief veterinary surgeon to Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn during his third sultanate (709–41/1310/41). Although the author drew heavily on Abbasid sources, especially on Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise A (from which he borrowed much more than he intimated), his professional experience ensured that his book was a genuine contribution. More than fifteen copies have survived, including an autograph version.⁵⁴

The anonymous "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah fī 'Ilm al-Khuyūliyah" is another valuable, hitherto unknown work that needs to be noted. The author, who assumed the role of a narrator, attributed the treatise to someone called al-'Abbāsī and claimed that the latter copied it from sources pertaining to King Solomon (al-Malik Sulaymān Ibn Dāwūd). The treatise is largely based on Abbasid sources and some of these are lost, hence the importance of this work. The text begins with a long introduction relating the Arabo-Islamic version of the creation of the horse and its breeds, which is the most detailed and complete account on this subject in *furūsīyah* literature. The work is divided then into four parts and each part into several sections. The first part deals with training and horse mastery; the second covers training the obstinate horse; the third treats colors, markings, and characteristics of the horse; and the fourth part is devoted to ailments and cures. Three copies of this interesting treatise are extant.⁵⁵

A good example of a Mamluk compilation treatise on horses (group two) is by 'Umar ibn Raslān ibn Naṣr al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1402), called "Qaṭr al-Sayl fī Amr al-Khayl." It is an abridgment of al-Dimyāṭī's *Faḍl al-Khayl* but with supplementary material on hippology and equitation. At least six copies have been preserved.⁵⁶

CAT. I (B): TREATISES ON ARCHERY

Archery was indubitably the most important and sophisticated discipline among

1852–60). It was edited by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Daqqāq, *Kāshif Hamm al-Wayl fī Ma'rifat Amrād al-Khayl: Le découvreur de l'importance des maux relativement à la connaissance des maladies des chevaux, ou, La perfection des deux arts: Traité complet d'hippologie et d'hippiatrie connu sous le nom de al-Nāṣiri* (Beirut, 1991).

⁵⁴Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 1956, dated 722/1322. Nine more copies deserve particular mention: Topkapı Sarayı Library MSS Ahmet III 203, E.H. 1813, and E.H. 1817; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MSS 4 and 5 *furūsīyah Taymūr*; Bibliothèque Nationale MSS 2813 and 2814; Baghdad, Iraqī Museum Library MS 187; and Chester Beatty Library MS 3680.

⁵⁵Bodleian Library MS Huntington 377; Süleymaniye Library MS Şehid 'Alī Paşa 1550; Vienna National Bibliothek MS 1474.

⁵⁶Süleymaniye Library MSS Şehid 'Alī Paşa 1549 and 2138; Iraqī Museum Library MS 17108; Sohag (Suhaj), Egypt MS *adab* 559; ; 'Ārif Ḥikmat Library MS *ḥadīth* 57; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 214 *funūn ḥarbīyah*.



furūsīyah arts and the keystone in the training of the Mamluk *fāris*.⁵⁷ Likewise, archery treatises represent the richest branch in *furūsīyah* literature and the preserved copies account for almost one third of the total number of extant *furūsīyah* manuscripts of both categories. Furthermore, archery themes and texts constitute an integral part of general *furūsīyah* treatises (Cat. II), and of such thematic *furūsīyah* treatises as those concerning the art of war, arms and war machines, and the chase (respectively Cat. I [e], [f], and [g]). All this makes knowledge of Muslim archery and its literature indispensable for the comprehension of *furūsīyah* arts and literature as a whole.

However, archery literature is a singularly thorny field of research. It was subject more than any other branch of *furūsīyah* literature to manipulations and falsification at the hands of booksellers, copyists, and unknowledgeable compilers. Furthermore, because of its highly technical language, archery literature was particularly exposed to copyists' errors and omissions. This phenomenon assumed such amplitude in the Mamluk period that even learned and acknowledged authors/archers like al-Akhmīmī showed reluctance to comment certain texts for fear of misinterpretation.⁵⁸

These and other problems and pitfalls characteristic of archery literature, in conjunction with lack of research, may explain the total confusion reigning in modern publications concerning medieval Muslim archery, its evolution, history, historiography, and literature. It took many years of systematic research, during which the main core of archery literature—all still in manuscript form—was examined and collated, to clear up the picture. The following is a résumé of the main axes of Mamluk and pre-Mamluk archery literature. Its understanding, however, is innately connected with the evolution of archery techniques, the correct identification of archery masters, their epoch and their schools, and the types of bows used.

It should be emphasized that Arabo-Islamic archery as depicted in archery treatises was exclusively based on the use of the composite bow. On the other hand, all Arab philological works on bows,⁵⁹ classical Arabic poetry, as well as the entire corpus of hadith attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad on the merits of archery,⁶⁰ denote only the simple wooden hand bow. This was the traditional Arab bow and the only type of hand bow used by the Arabs in the pre- and proto-Islamic

⁵⁷For a detailed exposition of the training of the Mamluk *fāris* in archery, see al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 3:750–869.

⁵⁸Al-Akhmīmī, "Ḥall al-Ishkāl fī al-Ramy bi-al-Nibāl," Bibliothèque Nationale MS Arabe 6259, fols. 5v., 100r., 101r. Cf. al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 1:41.

⁵⁹See al-Sarraf, "Adab al-Furūsīyah," 113.

⁶⁰The major source on this is al-Qarrāb al-Sarakhsī's *Fadā' il al-Ramy fī Sabīl Allāh*. See above, note 4.



periods. Nearly all the nomenclature pertinent to the simple Arab bow was adopted for the composite bow, which is referred to in archery treatises as *qaws* (bow) without further distinction. This may induce confusion between the two types of bows, especially when we know that archery treatises usually begin with the relevant traditions (*sunnaḥ*) on archery, followed by the nomenclature and types of the simple bow as established by Abbasid philologists and coupled with the appropriate verses of Arabic poetry. As the composite and simple bows differ fundamentally, any confusion between them will render archery treatises totally incomprehensible and will also deeply compromise our understanding of *furūsīyah* arts and literature. Indeed, the essence of military *furūsīyah* and the whole Mamluk institution was based on horse archery,⁶¹ which was totally subject to the employ of the composite bow. Unless otherwise specified, all occurrences of the term "bow" hereafter denote the composite bow.

Practically, all the basic archery texts were written during the first two centuries of Abbasid rule. The authors were confirmed archers and their works were records of their own experience and/or of the techniques of their respective schools of archery (*madhāhib al-ramy*). All these schools of archery emerged during the period in question. The founders, who flourished in Iraq and Khurasan, were the archery masters commonly referred to as *a'immat al-ramy* (imams of archery). Their number is not the same in all treatises but the data concurs that there were no more than ten principal figures and that the most prominent among these were Abū Hāshim al-Bāwardī, Ṭāhir al-Balkhī, Ishāq al-Raffā', Abū al-Ḥasan al-Kāghadī, and Abū al-Fath Sa'īd Ibn Khafīf al-Samarqandī. The latter, considered the greatest master of his time and the last of the archery imams, was born in Baghdad in the second half of the third/ninth century and gained prominence under the caliphs al-Rādī (322–29/934–40) and al-Mustakfī (333–34/944–46).⁶² His father Khafīf al-Samarqandī was one of the loyal and close *ghilmān* of the caliph al-Mu'taḍid and the last of his chamberlains. Under this caliph, accredited for being a great archer⁶³ and the propagator of the technique of *ikhtilās*,⁶⁴ Abbasid archery was at

⁶¹On the interdependent relation between the mamluk institution and archery, especially from horseback, see al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 3:1055–81.

⁶²See anonymous, *Kitāb al-'Uyūn wa-al-Ḥadā'iq fī Akhbār al-Ḥaqā'iq*, ed. 'Umar Sa'īdī (Damascus, 1972–73), 1:316; 2:428, 442.

⁶³Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 11:265; al-Zaynabī, "Al-Qawānīn al-Sulṭānīyah," fol. 43v.; al-Ṭarsūsī, "Tabṣirat Arbāb al-Albāb," fol. 61r.–v.; al-Aqsarā'ī, "Nihāyat al-Sūl," fol. 36r.; al-Ṣughayyir, "Kitāb Ramy al-Nushshāb," Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 2620, fol. 89r.

⁶⁴A form of loose which gives the arrow greater power of penetration, suitable for war. Basically, it consists of drawing the bow to a certain limit, followed by a very short pause and then by a full draw executed with a snatch. Al-Ṭarsūsī, "Al-Tabṣirah," fols. 61r.–v.; Ibn Maymūn, "Al-Ifādah wa-al-Tabṣīr," fols. 62r., 68v.; al-Aqsarā'ī, "Nihāyat al-Sūl," fol. 36r.; Ṭaybughā, "Kitāb al-Ramy



its apogee. As an army commander, al-Samarqandī's *madhhab* in archery was entirely military. He was the younger contemporary of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Kāghadī, who lived in Herat (now in Afghanistan) and devoted his life and fortune to gain excellence in archery. His school, based on target archery, was civilian.

As for al-Bāwardī, al-Balkhī and al-Raffā', they were the three celebrated great masters consecrated in the late Ayyubid and Mamluk periods as the greatest and true masters of archery (*a' immat al-ramy al-kibār*). The consequences of this consecration largely dictated the orientation and nature of archery literature in the Mamluk period. The school of al-Bāwardī, who probably was still alive in the first half of the second/eighth century, was the first in Islam. It was very close to the old Sassanian school, which was principally based on foot archery. Al-Balkhī lived in the second half of the second/eighth century; his school mainly represented Abbasid Khurasani foot and horse archery. Ishāq al-Raffā' flourished in Iraq in the first half of the third/ninth century. His school was a genuine Abbasid development and extremely important to our understanding of the evolution of Muslim archery, especially in the Arab region, where it was adopted by the majority of mounted and foot archers during the Abbasid and Mamluk periods. The school of al-Raffā' was often described as the Median School (*madhhab al-wasaṭ*) for having allegedly taken a median position in terms of archery techniques between the schools of al-Bāwardī and al-Balkhī. However, its real importance lies in its contribution to the standardization of archery techniques implied by the systemization of the Abbasid military training program, which inevitably led to the standardization of the war bow and consequently allowed its production in large quantities. This development reached considerable dimensions in Ayyubid Syria when Damascus became the largest center for manufacturing war bows in the Islamic world.⁶⁵

The foremost authority on the schools of al-Bāwardī, al-Balkhī, and al-Raffā', and the key figure in Muslim archery literature as a whole, is Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī, who was Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's older contemporary. Not much is known about him except that he was a devoted archer who traveled in Khurasan and Iraq seeking perfection in this art, and that he was trained in the technique of each one of the three masters by their respective disciples and then formed his own synthesis of their techniques. He expounded their methods, as well as his own eclectic approach, in a book entitled "Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ fī al-Ramy." This became the most popular and widely used archery treatise in the Mamluk period, when al-Ṭabarī, referred to as the "founder of the eclectic school" (*ṣāḥib madhhab al-ikhtiyār*), was implicitly consecrated as the fourth imam of archery.

wa-al-Rukūb," fol. 37r.; al-Ṣughayyir, "Kitāb Ramy al-Nushshāb," fols. 80r., 89r.–90v.

⁶⁵See al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 2:498–506.



"Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ" is an essential treatise not only in understanding and assessing Mamluk archery literature, but also Mamluk archery as a whole. In the Ayyubid period when the massive production of war bows in Damascus was standardized into three types, certain Syrian authors and archers introduced the idea that the practices of the great masters represented three somatic categories, tall (Abū Hāshim al-Bāwardī); medium (Ishāq al-Raffā'); and short (Ṭāhir al-Balkhī). This categorization, which probably played an important role in legitimizing the consecration of the three masters during that period, was too constricting, as a bow made for a tall man and the techniques for using it were not necessarily unsuitable for a man of medium or short proportions. Al-Ṭabarī's eclectic method provided a practical alternative and was a stabilizing influence and safety valve against rigid classification.⁶⁶

Most of the ten copies of "Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ" that have reached us⁶⁷ bear only the *nisbah* of its author, al-Ṭabarī, preceded by such attributes as *shaykh*, *ustādh*, and/or *'allāmah*. This created a grievous misconception regarding the identity of the author, who was grossly confused in modern bibliographical essays with Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī (615–94/1218–95), the well-known *shaykh al-ḥaram* of Mecca,⁶⁸ whose works and activities are fully documented by Mamluk sources.⁶⁹ The persistence of this flagrant error, accepted without further verification by modern scholars from the end of the nineteenth century till now,

⁶⁶Ibid., 2:494–506, 524–33; 3:722–40, 773–74, n. 42.

⁶⁷British Library MSS Or. 9454, 9265/2, fols. 55r.–96r., and 3134; Bayezit Public Library MSS Veliyüddin Efendi 3175, 3177; Nuruosmaniye Mosque Library MS 4098; Topkapı Sarayı MS Revan Köskü 1933/2; Bodleian Library MS 396; Cairo, al-Azhar Library MS 6 *abazah* 7275; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS Ahlwardt 5539.

⁶⁸W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften de Königlichen bibliothek zu Berlin* (1887–99, nos. 5540 and 5550) was the first to confuse the author of "Al-Wāḍiḥ" with *shaykh al-ḥaram* Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī; he was followed by Ritter, "La Parure," 136, and Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (Leiden, 1937–49), 906. The copies of "Al-Wāḍiḥ" available to Ahlwardt, Ritter, Brockelmann, and even to Ḥajjī Khalīfah (*Kashf al-Zunūn 'an Asāmī al-Kutub wa-al-Funūn* [Istanbul, 1941–43], 2:1995) bore only the *nisbah* of the author: al-Ṭabarī. In his *Talkhīṣ Rasā'il al-Rumāh* (Istanbul, 1263), written in Turkish for Sultan Maḥmūd II (1809–39), the Ottoman archer Muṣṭafā Kānī Qahwaçī Bāshī identified the author of "Al-Wāḍiḥ" with the historian Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923). This sort of confusion was probably very old and may go back to the early fourth/tenth century, cf. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-Udabā'*, ed. D. S. Margoliouth (Cairo, 1923–30), 6:453. The correct and full name of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭabarī figures in a number of *furūsīyah* treatises. Cf. al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 1:70–76, 166, n. 97.

⁶⁹See for example al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-'Ibar fī Khabar Man Ghabar*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid and Fu'ād Sayyid (Kuwait, 1960–66), 5:238; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī*, 1:342–48; cf. Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār Man Dhahab* (Cairo, 1931–32), 5:8.



attests to the deplorable state of research in *furūsīyah* literature and particularly in archery literature, where al-Ṭabarī undoubtedly represents the key element par excellence in our understanding of it.

Furthermore, contrary to what is generally believed, "Kitāb al-Wāḍih" was not the only archery treatise written by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭabarī and in terms of thoroughness, it was not the most important one. His definitive work is "Kitāb al-Shāmil fī al-Ramy," which represents the oldest surviving comprehensive archery treatise and probably the first of its kind in archery literature. It mainly deals with military archery and covers, *inter alia*, the types of bows, cords, arrows, thumb-rings, training the novice, shooting at the *birjās*,⁷⁰ faults and injuries to which the archer is exposed, bracing the bow, hints for archers in time of war, shooting at and from a fortress, etc. "Kitāb al-Shāmil," of which I have found so far only one copy,⁷¹ became a major source for subsequent *furūsīyah* treatises of both categories starting with Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise B. Other works by al-Ṭabarī, still untraceable, include "Kitāb Nuzhat al-Qulūb," "Kitāb al-Kanz," and "Kitāb Jāmi' al-Asrār."⁷²

The work of Rukn al-Dīn Jamshīd al-Khwārazmī was also an important third/ninth century Abbasid source of Mamluk archery literature. The long quotations which certain Mamluk authors give from his treatise made it clear that Jamshīd was a major source for the Mamluks on the great masters and on al-Ṭabarī, in particular, with whom he was a contemporary.⁷³ This information is confirmed by Jamshīd in a small but important treatise ascribed to him of which one copy only is extant.⁷⁴ In this treatise, probably a much abridged version of his main, untraceable treatise, Jamshīd mentions that his work was seen and verified by the great Iraqī archer Abū Bakr Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz Ibn Julham al-Baghdādī, to whom no archery treatise is attributed. Another Abbasid source for Mamluk archery literature is the work of Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf al-Akhbārī (third/ninth century) entitled "Al-Iḍāḥ fī 'Ilm al-Ramy" which has survived in one copy.⁷⁵ Mamluk writers also drew on the now lost works of Abū Bakr al-Warrāq, Abū Mūsā al-Ḥarrānī al-Sarakhsī,

⁷⁰For the different meanings and functions of *birjās* (pl. *barājis* and *barjāsāt*) in *furūsīyah* literature see al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 3:751–53.

⁷¹British Library MS 9265/1, fols. 1r.–55r. This manuscript, of which the first pages are wanting, is not recorded in the printed catalogue.

⁷²See al-Ṣughayyir "Kitāb Ramy al-Nushshāb," fols. 12v., 23r., 42r., 53r., 66r., 68r., 85v., 90r., 91v.

⁷³Al-Ṣughayyir, "Kitāb Ramy al-Nushshāb," fols. 48v. ff., 84v. ff.; Ṭaybughā, "Kitāb al-Ramy," fol. 65r.–v.; al-Sinjārī, "Hidāyat al-Ramy," fols. 14v., 16r.–v., 18r.–v., 21v., 22v.

⁷⁴British Library MS Or 3631, fols. 279v.–293r., with the author's name given as Jamshār, instead of Jamshīd.

⁷⁵Nuruosmaniye Mosque Library MS 4098/2.



Aḥmad al-Suhrawardī, Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Harawī, and ‘Alī al-Daqqāq,⁷⁶ all of them ranked as great archers.

The advent of the Buwayhids in Iraq and the Fatimids in Egypt contributed to the decline in the region of military archery, and horse archery in particular. Neither the Daylami troops of the former nor the Berbers of the latter used this arm. The recourse of both dynasties, especially the Buwayhids, to Turkish horse-archers did not stop this decline. Only when the Saljuqs swept over the region with their Turkoman horse-archers did archery come back with force. Interest in archery literature was greatly revived, old Abbasid texts were reproduced and new ones were written. This time, the Syrian archers, who were already bearing the brunt of the Crusaders thrust, took the initiative. This also coincided with the efflorescence of bow manufacturing in Damascus and the birth of the famous Damascus war bow under the Burids.⁷⁷ Three contributions in the form of didactic poems are representative of this new spirit. The first one, a short and almost riddle-like poem on the fundamentals of archery intended for knowledgeable archers, is “Al-Qaṣīdah al-Lāmīyah fī al-Ramy” by Ṣāliḥ al-Shaghūrī who, on behalf of the Damascene archers, took it to Egypt in 553/1158 to challenge the Cairene archers and test their knowledge. It was commented by an Egyptian archer named Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Nabīl in a treatise entitled “Kitāb fī ‘Ilm al-Rimāyah bi-al-Nushshāb wa-Uṣūlihi wa-Madhāhibih” of which one copy is preserved.⁷⁸ The second contribution is an anonymous and untitled *urjūzah* on the fundamentals of archery and the schools of the three great masters, including important information on the main prototypes of war bows known in the region since the advent of the Abbasids. This fine *urjūzah* was commented at the end of the ninth/fifteenth century by al-Akhmīmī (see “Ḥall al-Ishkāl” below).

The third didactic poem was written and commented by Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Yūnīnī⁷⁹ (d. 650/1252), who claimed to be the rightful heir of the bygone masters. While this claim may be questionable, al-Yūnīnī was certainly one of the greatest archers of his time. His work, entitled “Al-Nihāyah fī ‘Ilm al-Rimāyah,” represents the most important archery treatise written in Ayyubid Syria, and is a precious link in our understanding of the evolution of archery techniques and literature. Like all archery treatises written after the period of the great masters, “Al-Nihāyah” is essentially based on early Abbasid texts and deals

⁷⁶Al-Sarraf, “L’archerie mamluke,” 1:149–51.

⁷⁷Ibid., 2:497–98.

⁷⁸Köprülü Mehmed Paşa Library MS 470.

⁷⁹He was also called al-Yunānī. Both *nisbahs* are correct in denoting Yūnīn or Yunān, a village near Baalabak (Baalbek) in Lebanon. See al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*, 5:248, n. 1; al-Baghdādī, *Marāṣid al-Ittilā’*, 3:1488.



with the fundamentals of archery as established by the masters. But it contains extremely valuable information on contemporary practices and equipment. Furthermore, it was al-Yūnīnī who first introduced the notion that the schools of the three great masters were influenced by their physical characteristics. This notion, though unsupported, was widely accepted by Mamluk archers and authors, as "Al-Nihāyah" became one of the standard sources of Mamluk archery literature. At least nine copies exist, including an imperfect autograph version.⁸⁰

Sometime in the second half of the seventh/thirteenth century or early eighth/fourteenth century, two important archery treatises, greatly appreciated by Mamluk authors and archers, appeared in the Maghrib. This was exceptional and unprecedented as the crossbow, not the hand bow, usually predominated in that region. In fact, it was to challenge this trend and to promote the cause of the composite hand bow and the relevant oriental traditions that these treatises were avowedly and expressly written. The first one is "Kitāb al-Badā'ī wa-al-Asrār fī Ḥaḡīqat al-Radd wa-al-Intiṣār wa-Ghāmiḡ Mā Ijtama'at 'alayhi al-Rumāh fī al-Amṣār" by Abū Bakr Muḡammad ibn 'Alī ibn Aṣḡagh al-Harawī, who severely criticized his Andalusian compatriots for preferring the crossbow to the hand bow. His treatise gives a penetrating and unique exposé on the merits and superiority of the hand bow to the crossbow and the defects of the latter in the open battlefield. The treatise also includes important information on contemporary practices relevant to archery and warfare in Muslim Spain. Three copies have survived.⁸¹

The other treatise is by the Moroccan archer Abū Muḡammad Jamāl al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh Ibn Maymūn al-Murrākishī,⁸² who wrote "Al-Ifādah wa-al-Tabṣīr li-Kull Rāmin Muḡtadi' aw Māhir Naḡrīr bi-al-Sahm al-Ṭawīl wa-al-Qaṣīr," which is absolutely one of the best comprehensive treatises in archery literature and probably the most complete. In fact, "Al-Ifādah," written as a manual for both the beginner and the expert archer, represents a concise and intelligible encyclopedia on archery covering a wide range of subjects that were never previously united in any one single comprehensive archery treatise. Ibn Maymūn drew on al-Ṭabarī's works,

⁸⁰Damascus, Assad National Library MS 22 Zayyat, *al-adabīyāt al-manẓūmah* (originally in al-Zāhirīyah Library), autograph; Ayasofya Library MSS 2952 and 4051; Manisa (Maghnisa), Turkey, General Library MS 1145/3, fols. 21v.–130v.; Tire, Turkey, Necip Paṣa Library MS 333/3, fols. 212v.–279r.; Chester Beatty Library MS 3158/1, fols. 1r.–62v.; Alexandria, Maktabat al-Baladīyah MS 81 *funūn ḡarbīyah*; Leiden University Library MS 1416; Gotha, Landesbibliothek MS 1340.

⁸¹Bodleian Library MS Marsh 304; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS 5538; Rabat, Maktabat al-Khizānah al-'Āmmah MS 32/1q.

⁸²There is evidence that archery flourished in Morocco before the sixth/twelfth century and that a school, perhaps as important as the two traditional ones in Iraq and Syria, existed there (al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 2:82–83).



especially "Kitāb al-Shāmil," and on many other Abbasid treatises, some of which are lost. The "Ifādah" was particularly esteemed in the Mamluk period, and Ibn Manglī emphatically advises his fellow troopers to use it as a major reference.⁸³ An earlier treatise by Ibn Maymūn, entitled "Kifāyat al-Muqtaṣid al-Baṣīr fī al-Ramī 'an al-Qaws al-'Arabīyah bi-al-Sahm al-Ṭawīl wa-al-Qaṣīr," was more condensed and also known in the Mamluk period, but is not extant. Four copies of the "Ifādah" have been preserved.⁸⁴

The Mamluks did not produce any worthwhile treatises on archery until the end of the Bahri period, contenting themselves with the reproduction of the pre-Mamluk archery literature. For example, the important chapter on archery in al-Aqṣarā'ī's "Nihāyat al-Sūl," written during the third sultanate of Sultan al-Nāṣir Ibn Qalāwūn, is based entirely on pre-Mamluk sources (see below, Cat. II). The author defends this by saying that after the old masters no contributions had been made to this field.⁸⁵ Ibn Manglī's main sources for archery in his various *furūsīyah* treatises, written under the sultan al-Ashraf Sha'bān (764–78/1363–76), were Ibn Maymūn's "Al-Ifādah" and al-Ṭabarī's works. Both Ibn Manglī and al-Aqṣarā'ī deplored the state of archery under the sultanate,⁸⁶ which had started to deteriorate during the third sultanate of al-Nāṣir,⁸⁷ and only worsened during the successive reigns of his sons.

A timid revival of archery and *furūsīyah* in general took place under al-Ashraf Sha'bān, bringing forth several relevant works, including a didactic poem on archery titled "Ghunyāt (or Bughyāt) al-Murāmī (or al-Marāmī) wa-Ghāyat al-Marām (or al-Murām) lil-Mu'ānī." It was written and commented by a Syrian instructor of archery (*ustādh*) called Ṭaybughā al-Baklamīshī al-Yunānī.⁸⁸ This

⁸³Ibn Manglī, "Al-Tadbīrāt al-Sulṭānīyah," fol. 56r.

⁸⁴Köprülü Mehmed Paşa Library MSS 1212, 1213 (verified [*qubilat*] 759/1357–58), both of the second half of the fourth century; Chester Beatty Library MS 5144; Princeton University Library MS 793, catalogued as an anonymous sixteenth-century "Kitāb fī Bayān Faḍl al-Qaws wa-al-Sahm wa-Awṣāfihimā." This last copy, presumed until now unique, was in fact translated with many errors into English under the title *Arab Archery* (Princeton 1945) by Nabih Amin Faris and Robert Potter Elmer. They remained unaware of the fact that they had actually translated a basic work on Muslim archery and not, as they believed, an anonymous sixteenth-century work, a mistake which was unfortunately readily adopted by modern scholarship. See al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 1:89–90.

⁸⁵Al-Aqṣarā'ī, "Nihāyat al-Sūl," fol. 37v.

⁸⁶Ibid., fol. 41v., Ibn Manglī, "Al-Tadbīrāt al-Sulṭānīyah," fol. 32r.; cf. al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 3:942, n. 3.

⁸⁷On the causes for this decline and that of *furūsīyah* in general and the sultan's role in it, see al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 3:877–82, 922–33.

⁸⁸A version of this work has been translated into English with a commentary by J. D. Latham and



was the first true Mamluk treatise on archery.

Still borrowing heavily from pre-Mamluk sources, such as the works of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭabarī, al-Yūnīnī, and Ibn Maymūn (all unacknowledged), Ṭaybughā’s main contribution, unique in archery literature, lies in the few pages he devoted to the technique of shooting from horseback, and the measurements and descriptions he gave of the Mamluk war bow, the Damascene bow.⁸⁹ He also provides important information on crossbows and arrow guides. The relative thoroughness of his work, its simplicity, usefulness, and the vacuum it filled made it quite popular in the Circassian period as attested by the attention it was accorded and by the many, although variously titled, copies which have survived.⁹⁰

The main Mamluk contribution to the literature on archery comes from the Circassian period. Especially significant was Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Qutlubeg ibn al-‘Alā’ al-Qāzānī (d. 858/1454), better known as Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī al-Ṣughayyir. He was also called “al-Mu‘allim,” being a great authority on archery, and because he was the chief archery instructor of the royal Mamluks in the *ṭibāq* during the reigns of Sultan Mu‘ayyad Shaykh (815–24/1412–21) and his successors up to the reign of his friend Sultan Jaqmaq (842–57/1438–53). He was then appointed governor of Damietta (Dimyāt).⁹¹ He is the only author of works in this group about whom the sources furnish information. During his long life, many considered him the greatest authority on the theory and practice of archery.⁹² This praise is totally justified, for he is certainly the most important

W. F. Paterson under the title *Saracen Archery* (London, 1970); cf. al-Sarraf “L’archerie mamluke,” 1:125–29. On the term *ustādh* in Mamluk archery, see al-Sarraf “L’archerie mamluke,” 1:49. Ṭaybughā was still active in the first two decades of the ninth/fifteenth century; this can be inferred from al-Ṣughayyir’s “Kitāb Ramy al-Nushshāb,” composed in 822/1419, where his name is mentioned frequently (fols. 6r.–v., 7v., 9r., 14r., 15v., 18v., 22r., 27v., 28r., 48v., 53v., 54r., 65r., 75r., 76r., 77r., 79v., 91r., 93v., 94r.). It has been suggested (Ritter, “La Parure,” 137) that Ṭaybughā could have been Ṭaybughā Ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ashrafī, reported by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī in “Inbā’ al-Ghumr” (Bodleian Library MS Huntington 123, fol. 129r.) to have died in prison in Aleppo in 797/1395. This unlikely identification has been generally accepted by modern scholars.

⁸⁹Al-Sarraf, “L’archerie mamluke,” 1:90–93, 2:506–20, 3:813 ff.

⁹⁰For example; “Ghunyat al-Ṭullāb fī Ma‘rifat Ramy al-Nushshāb,” “Bughyat al-Murāmī wa-ghāyat al-Gharāmī fī Ramy al-Sihāmī,” “Bughyat al-Murāmī wa-Ghāyat al-Marāmī lil-Mu‘ānī,” “Al-Jihād wa-al-Furūsīyah wa-Funūn al-Ādāb al-Ḥarbīyah,” and “Al-Ramy wa-al-Rukūb.” More than twenty copies of Ṭaybughā’s work exist. On the fifteen copies known to Latham and Paterson see *Saracen Archery*, 195–96 (titles not indicated); in addition, see Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah MSS 1m *funūn ḥarbīyah* (catalogued as anonymous) and 3m/2 (fols. 61v.–107v.); Suhaj Library MS 6 *ṣinā‘ah*; Aleppo, al-Maktabah al-Riḍā‘īyah MS 802 *furūsīyah*; Iraqi Museum Library MS 9405/‘Azāwī.

⁹¹For further information, see al-Sarraf, “L’archerie mamluke,” 1:44–49, 899ff.

⁹²Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, 7:203; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, ed. William Popper (Berkeley, 1909–), vol. 7 pt. 2:577; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’ al-Zuhūr*, 2:321. Al-Ṣughayyir was more



Mamluk authority in this field and one of the great names in Islamic archery literature in general.⁹³ While he was still a young disciple of *ustādh* Lu'lu' al-A'azz, al-Ṣughayyir made his first contribution to archery literature. He wrote a short and learned commentary on "Al-Qaṣīdah al-Lāmīyah" by Ṣāliḥ al-Shaghūrī (above). At least two copies have survived.⁹⁴ Many years later, when he was in his forties and fifties, he composed several specialized books on archery, but only one of these has survived, in two copies bearing different titles, one of them an autograph, "Kitāb Ramy al-Nushshāb al-Mukhtaṣar al-Muḥarrar," dated 822/1419.⁹⁵ Although the treatise deals only with the bow and its accessories and the fundamentals of archery, the treatment of these subjects is so extensive and profound that it stands unparalleled in the entire extant archery literature. In fact, this monument, which includes many directions and hints for archery instructors, was not written for beginners—for whom the author promised to write a simplified version—but for experienced and learned archers who could understand and appreciate a critical analysis of some of the teachings of the pre-Mamluk masters. Al-Ṣughayyir cited and discussed an imposing number of Abbasid archery sources, all acknowledged, including the works of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭabarī, Abū Bakr al-Warrāq, Jamshīd al-Khwārazmī, Abū Mūsā al-Sarakhsī, Aḥmad al-Suhrawardī, Abū Ja'far al-Harawī, 'Alī al-Daqqāq, and two anonymous and apocryphal treatises attributed to the Sassanid king Bahrām Ghūr. The sole Mamluk work mentioned is Ṭaybughā's "Ghunyat al-Marāmī," which al-Ṣughayyir quoted many times, though often for the purpose of highlighting the errors of its author, Ṭaybughā, who is even described in one occasion as unworthy of the title *ustādh*.⁹⁶ Al-Ṣughayyir's work has also a remarkable social and historical dimension, which is generally lacking in other archery treatises. It provides, for example, important and unique contemporary information on the practices and functions of archers' guilds in Cairo and on the

than eighty years old when he died.

⁹³Cf. al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 1:142ff.

⁹⁴Bibliothèque Nationale MS 6640/3, fols. 19r.–25r., entitled "Kitāb Qaṣīdat al-Lāmīyah al-Mushtamilah 'alā Uṣūl al-Ramy wa-Furū'ihī wa-Ma Yadullu 'alayhi min Ma'rifat Sharā'itih," dated 799/1397; and Chester Beatty Library MS 3158/3, fols. 79v.–83r., entitled "Sharḥ Naẓm Ṣāliḥ al-Shaghūrī fī al-Ramy" (transcribed in the seventeenth century and incorrectly attributed to 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭabarī). The author did not mention this work in his own "Kitāb al-Nushshāb," where he did list two even more elaborated works, "Kashf al-Sirr al-Khafī li-Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī al-Ḥanafī" and "Al-Masā'il al-Qūṣīyah," which he had composed in Qūṣ in Upper Egypt (fols. 17v., 56v., 57r.; al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 1:147).

⁹⁵Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 2620.

⁹⁶At least part of this criticism, which is sometimes excessive and not always justified, is due to the strong rivalry that existed between the Egyptian and Syrian archers; cf. al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 1:145ff.



preponderant role of Syrian archers in this domain. The margins of this autograph often bear additional notes and comments by the author who at times seems submerged in the overflow of his vast erudition. The second extant copy of al-Ṣughayyir's work bears the title "Al-Hidāyah fī 'Ilm al-Rimāyah"⁹⁷ and is slightly different from the autograph in the disposition of its contents. This copy is particularly important because it was transcribed in 845/1441 by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Pahlawān, who was himself an instructor of archery and one of the great archers of his time. Most significantly, al-Pahlawān, who personally knew al-Ṣughayyir and had great respect for him, preserved the margin-notes and comments of the latter and added many more of his own. Consequently, "Al-Hidāyah" is not merely a copy of "Kitāb al-Ramy" but rather a stand-alone treatise and an invaluable document on Mamluk archery. Because of their specialized nature, al-Ṣughayyir's works never attained the popularity of Ṭaybughā's treatise.

Of the long list of lesser works in this group the following treatises deserve special mention: "Al-Urjūzah al-Ḥalabīyah fī Ramy al-Sihām 'an al-Qisī al-'Arabīyah," a poem of 400 verses of which one copy is extant, composed by Abū Bakr al-Ramī al-Ḥalabī, known as al-Minqār (d. 890/1485),⁹⁸ and al-Akhmīmī's "Ḥall al-Ishkāl fī al-Ramy bi-al-Nibāl," a late ninth-/fifteenth-century commentary on the anonymous sixth-/twelfth-century *urjūzah*, see above. Three copies are known.⁹⁹

Among the very good compilation treatises of the second group is an autograph dated 855/1451 written for Sultan Jaqmaq by al-Ḥasan Ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Aysūn al-Ḥanafī al-Sinjārī, "Hidāyat al-Rāmī ilā al-Aghrād wa-al-Marāmī."¹⁰⁰ It is a very clear résumé of Muslim archery with some very important information on pre-Mamluk archery. The treatises "Ghars al-Anshāb fī al-Ramy bi-al-Nushshāb" by al-Suyūṭī and "Al-Qawl al-Tāmm fī Faḍl al-Ramy bi-al-Sihām" by al-Sakhāwī are also worthy of consideration. At least three copies of the former exist;¹⁰¹ of the

⁹⁷Bodleian Library MS Huntington 548.

⁹⁸Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS 5540

⁹⁹Bibliothèque Nationale MS Arabe 6259, dated 913/1507–8 (transcribed from an autograph manuscript); Ayasofya Library MS 3845, dated 895/1489–90; Princeton University Library MS Yahudah ELS 3954/1, fols. 1v.–91r.

¹⁰⁰Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 2305.

¹⁰¹Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 2325; British Library MS Or. 12830; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS 5540. This treatise is the only one that includes passages from "Awthaq al-Asbāb fī al-Ramy bi-al-Nushshāb" by 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn Jamā'ah (al-Suyūṭī, "Ghars," fols. 15r.–22r.). A hasty reading of Ritter ("La Parure," 143), led 'Awwād (*Maṣādir al-Turāth*, 107) to conclude that the manuscript in the Topkapı Sarayı library is the work of Ibn Jamā'ah himself. The same manuscript (fols. 22r.–30r.) includes the entire text of "Al-Maqāmah al-Qawsīyah" ("Al-Risālah al-qawsīyah," according to Ḥājji Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 1:884) by Ismā'il Ibn Jamāl al-Dīn al-Isbahānī



latter we have an autograph dated 875/1470–71.¹⁰² There is only one Mamluk-Kipchak archery treatise, entitled “Al-Khulāṣah,” or “Kitāb fī ‘Ilm al-Nushshāb.” It was composed and translated for Tolu Beg (see above) by an anonymous compiler basically from “Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ” of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭabarī. Two copies are known.¹⁰³

CAT. I (C): THE ARTS OF THE LANCE

The arts of the lance can be divided roughly into four parts: firstly, training the *fāris* in handling the lance, types of lance charges and thrusts, and the techniques of lance combat under different situations. Secondly, the *bunūd* (sing. *band*): each *band* comprises a set combination of movements performed solo by the horse lancer while he is in motion, and as if he is in the *mêlée* of a battle. The *band* is based on two essential movements: thrusting and parrying, which are executed in four directions, front, rear, left, and right, but with various angles. Thirdly, *al-manāṣib al-ḥarbīyah*, which denotes the technique of fencing with the lance where two horse lancers are engaged in simulated combat. And fourthly, *al-mayādīn* or *al-mawādīn* (sing. *maydān*, and by extension the exercise itself): this is the technique of collective simulated combat between two teams of lancers executed according to a traced course.¹⁰⁴

The main source for the Mamluks on lance training, types of charges, and thrusts was Ibn Akhī Ḥizām’s Treatise B. It was also one of the principal sources on the techniques of lance combat under different situations. Although other sources remain unidentified, two late Abbasid masters are mentioned in this connection, particularly in relation to *al-manāṣib al-ḥarbīyah*: Muḥammad Ibn al-Shayḍamī and Ibrāhīm Ibn Sallām.¹⁰⁵ There are no extant pre-Mamluk sources

(sixth/twelfth century). Al-Suyūṭī’s treatise is thus the most trustworthy source on this *maqāmah*, two of the three surviving copies of which are later than his work and probably transcribed from it: Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library MS Ḥamīdiye 1447, fols. 114v.–116r.; Ayasofya Library MS 2983; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS *adab* 3901.

¹⁰²Princeton University Library MS Yahudah 3551; ‘Awwād, *Maṣādir al-Turāth*, 2:271, gave the wrong reference number. Three more copies are known, one of them Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 2m *funūn ḥarbīyah*.

¹⁰³Bayezit Library MS Veliyüddin 3176, and Bibliothèque Nationale MS Suppl. Turc 197. See Eckmann, “The Mamluk-Kipchak Literature,” 317–19.

¹⁰⁴In modern research *bunūd* and *al-manāṣib al-ḥarbīyah* are generally described in vague and laconic terms like “exercises, maneuvers, and movements.” *Al-mayādīn* are generally described as parades. The only serious effort to define and explain these terms was made by Mercier in *La Parure des cavaliers*, 389–93, but his limited sources and failure to dissociate his approach from European references greatly limited the value of his explanations. The definitions given here have been derived from an overall reading of the pertinent *furūsīyah* treatises.

¹⁰⁵See for example “Kitāb al-Makhzūn li-Arbāb al-Funūn,” fol. 38r.–v.; (pseudo) Najm al-Dīn



for the *bunūd*. The evidence shows that the Mamluks inherited 150 *band* from the Abbasids and that the most eminent pre-Mamluk authority in this domain was the Iraqi lance master Uṣṭā Bāriq al-Rammāḥ al-Baghdādī,¹⁰⁶ who flourished in the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century. There are no surviving pre-Mamluk sources for the *mayādīn*. The monumental cloverleaf *maydān* discovered in Samarra¹⁰⁷ and Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise B¹⁰⁸ make it clear that the origin of this art was also Abbasid. Mamluk treatises drawing on a lost Abbasid source also mention that collective and individual lance combats had been performed before al-Mu'taṣim and al-Mu'taḍid and furthermore that the stable master of the latter, Ibn Akhī Ḥizām, used to participate.¹⁰⁹

No matter how important the Abbasid legacy was, it is in this field that the Mamluks showed genuine creativity and that their contribution to *furūsīyah* is most apparent. The credit for this goes almost entirely to the Syrian lance masters and particularly to the celebrated Syrian lance master Najm al-Dīn al-Aḥḍab al-Rammāḥ (636–95/1238 or 39–1296), who made innovations in three of the four categories. His fame rests principally, however, on the 72 *bunūd* that he condensed out of the 150 *band* inherited from the Abbasids.

Al-Aḥḍab's marked influence on Mamluk *furūsīyah* literature persisted throughout the Mamluk period. This is clearly attested by the many extant manuscripts containing his *bunūd* and *manāṣīb*. Most of these treatises belong to Category II (general *furūsīyah* treatises) and many of them could be rated as vulgar *furūsīyah* literature (group three). Copyists and anonymous compilers clumsily crafted lengthy treatises to envelop his very thin *bunūd* and *manāṣīb*. By crediting al-Aḥḍab with the authorship of these treatises, the false impression was created that he had written several.¹¹⁰ Even the *bunūd* ascribed to him are only

al-Aḥḍab, "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah," fol. 16r.–v.

¹⁰⁶See for example, Baktūt al-Rammāḥ, "Kitāb fī 'Ilm al-Furūsīyah," fol. 6r.

¹⁰⁷On this *maydān*, see Ahmed Sousa, *Rayy Sāmarrā' fī 'Ahd al-Khilāfah al-'Abbāsīyah* (Baghdad, 1948–49), 1:116–22; Ernst Herzfeld, *Geschichte der Stadt Samarra* (Hamburg, 1948), pls. xxiiiib, xxiv; Alastair Northedge, "Sibāq al-Khayl wa-Mayādīnihi fī Sāmarrā'," in *Furūsīyah*, ed. al-Sarraf, 1:91–97 and editor's note (u).

¹⁰⁸See Ibn Akhī Ḥizām, "Al-Kamāl fī al-Furūsīyah," fols. 21v., 41r.–v.

¹⁰⁹See (pseudo) Najm al-Dīn al-Aḥḍab, "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah," fol. 16r.

¹¹⁰The titles of the manuscripts attributed to al-Aḥḍab ("al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Manāṣīb al-Ḥarbīyah"; "Al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Jihād wa-Ma 'adda Allāh lil-Mujāhidīn min al-'Ibād"; "Kitāb al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Jihād [fī Sabīl Allāh]"; "Kitāb al-Bunūd fī Ma'rifat al-Furūsīyah," etc.) are all later additions contrived by anonymous compilers or even drawn from the prefaces of manuscripts by modern bibliographers and archivists. Moreover, these titles do not necessarily belong to different treatises, just as manuscripts bearing the same title are not always identical. The following list of manuscripts ascribed to al-Aḥḍab is not exhaustive and should be viewed with reserve: Mecca, Maktabat al-Ḥaram al-Makkī al-Sharīf MS 50 *tārīkh*; Bibliothèque Nationale MSS 2825, 2829; Topkapı



dubious versions of those found in his "Kitāb al-Bunūd," which never reached us as an independent treatise. Al-Aqsarā'i, a Damascene himself and al-Aḥḍab's younger contemporary, as well as a disciple of his disciple ('Izz al-Dīn al-Rammāh), could not find a definitive copy of "Kitāb al-Bunūd"; he included four different versions in his own "Nihāyat al-Sūl." He commented that these varying versions were useful,¹¹¹ implying that they reflect not copyists' manipulations but rather different original versions by the author. This comment casts strong doubt on the existence of a main "Kitāb al-Bunūd" and suggests two possibilities: (1) that al-Aḥḍab wrote different versions during his career as a lance master, or (2) that he never wrote a treatise at all but that at different times his *bunūd* were recorded by his followers, on their own initiative, or from dictation by him. The second possibility is more in keeping with the traditions of the period and can be inferred from al-Aqsarā'i, as well as other writers.¹¹² The transmission and development of lance *bunūd* by followers of a master can explain the absence of signed treatises by those who are known to have created new *bunūd*, for example, al-Aqṭa', a contemporary of al-Aḥḍab, Ādam, and Uṣṭā Bārīq al-Baghdādī.

Al-Aḥḍab's *mayādīn* did not become as famous as his *bunūd* and *manāṣīb*. The most current treatise on *mayādīn* in the Mamluk period was "Tuḥfat al-Mujāhidīn fī al-'Amal bi-al-Mayādīn," by Lājīn Ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Dhahabī al-Ṭarābulṣī al-Rammāh (d. 738/1337). More than eleven copies are available.¹¹³ Lājīn and his work should not be confused with his son Muḥammad Ibn Lājīn al-Ḥusāmī al-Ṭarābulṣī al-Rammāh and his work, also on *mayādīn*, entitled "Bughyat al-Qāsidīn bi-al-'Amal fī al-Mayādīn," written for Sayf al-Dīn 'Āshiqīmūr al-Mārdīnī al-Nāṣirī, governor of Aleppo (d. 791/1389). Two copies are preserved.¹¹⁴ Muḥammad Ibn Lājīn also related his own version of *bunūd* al-Aḥḍab in a small treatise entitled "Ghāyat al-Maqṣūd fī al-'Ilm wa-al-'Amal bi-al-Bunūd," which survived

Sarayı Library MSS Ahmet III 2129/1, Baghdad Köskü 370/2; Fatih Mosque Library MSS 3512/2, 3509/2.6; Ayasofya Library MSS 2899a/1, 4196/1; Nuruosmaniye Mosque Library MS 2294/2; Aleppo, al-Maktabah al-Aḥmadīyah MS 1272; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS 5553.

¹¹¹Al-Aqsarā'i, "Nihāyat al-Sūl," fol. 44r.:

واختلفت عنه النسخ وأنا أذكر ما وصل إلي من النسخ التي صححتها وفيهم اختلاف كثير ولا يخلو اختلاف النسخ من فوائد وقد أحببت أن أذكر كل نسخه من أولها إلى آخرها حتى نعم ما حصل فيها من الفوائد وهذا لمن يطلب الدرجة العليا في العمل بالرمح وإذا لم يطلب الدرجة العليا تكفيه نسخه واحدة.

¹¹²See al-Sarraf, "L'archerie mamluke," 1:162.

¹¹³Al-Maktabah al-Aḥmadīyah MS 1372; Fatih Mosque Library MSS 3512/4, 3509/8; Topkapı Sarayı Library MSS Ahmed III 2129/3, Baghdad Köskü 370/1; Ayasofya Library MSS 2899a/3, 4196/2; Nuruosmaniye Mosque Library MS 2294/2; Rampur Riza Library MS 3524; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS 5552; Bibliothèque Nationale MS 6604/1 (with the title "Umdat al-mujāhidīn fī tartīb al-mayādīn").

¹¹⁴Ayasofya Library MS 3799/1, dated 780/1378; Leiden University Library MS 1418.



in one copy under the latter original title¹¹⁵ and in several copies under different apocryphal titles and often with added material.¹¹⁶

CAT. I (D): THE ARTS OF THE MACE

Three basic and distinct types of mace were used in the early Abbasid period.¹¹⁷ The first, commonly called *dabbūs* (pl. *dabābīs*), consisted of a wooden or iron shaft with a head of iron or other solid material with different shapes. The second was a one-piece iron staff, usually without a separate head or with one which was actually made integrally with the handle, invariably called ‘*amūd* (pl. ‘*amad* or ‘*umud*), and was both longer and considerably heavier than the *dabbūs*. The third, habitually called *kāfir-kūb* (pl. *kāfir-kūbāt*), was entirely made of wood, and was typical of the Khurasanis’ rank and file horsemen; it became obsolete as a regular cavalry weapon in the region by the end of the third/ninth century.¹¹⁸ The ‘*amūd*, a costly weapon, was mainly the privilege of the rich military and political Abbasid elite. Most references to its use are associated with caliphs, army commanders, high-ranking officers, and the cream of *ghilmān* troops. The decline and fragmentation of the caliphate and the consequent collapse of its worldwide trade in armaments, iron, and steel, brought to an end the use of the ‘*amūd* as an elite weapon. It survived, however, on a very limited scale as a ceremonial and parade weapon, especially under the Fatimids.¹¹⁹ The Mamluks of Egypt and Syria knew the ‘*amūd* only by name through Abbasid and Fatimid sources. All the precious though scanty data on the ‘*amūd* which is found in Mamluk *furūsīyah* treatises dates from the third/ninth century and was borrowed from early or later lost Abbasid *furūsīyah* treatises, such as those of Muḥammad Ibn Khālid (see below) and Ṣābir al-Manjanīqī (see below, Cat. II); the *dabbūs* was the only type of mace known in the Mamluk period.

Under the Abbasids, most references to the use of the *dabbūs* from the early third/ninth century onwards were associated with *ghilmān* troops. In fact the emergence of their institution coincided remarkably closely with the appearance of the term *dabbūs* in the documentary sources. By the time this institution reached full maturity under the Caliph al-Mu‘taḍid, the *dabbūs* became a permanent feature of *ghilmān* military equipment. In contrast to later periods when it became a heavier weapon, the third/ninth century Abbasid *dabbūs* was of a light type and, consequently, it played a minor role in close combat. Here it was of less importance

¹¹⁵Bibliothèque Nationale MS Ar. 2827/2.

¹¹⁶See al-Sarraf, “Adab al-Furūsīyah,” 127

¹¹⁷For more information on this subject, see al-Sarraf, “Close Combat Weapons,” 149–78.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid.



than were the *‘amūd* and the *ṭabarzīn* (war-axe). The rapid decline of the latter two weapons during the fourth/tenth century necessitated the emergence of a heavier and oversized type of *dabbūs* called the *latt*. The term was ephemeral, as in the sixth/twelfth century the term *dabbūs* had become the generic term for studded maces, irrespective of their weight and the forms of their heads. By this time, however, the standard type of *dabbūs* was sufficiently heavy and effective to become the primary cavalry close-combat weapon for a Mamluk *fāris* or fully trained cavalryman.¹²⁰

It was probably in the second half of the sixth/twelfth century or the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century that the rules of the art of fighting with a *dabbūs* were regulated in a recognized number of exercises called, like those of the lance, *bunūd*. Thirty five of these *bunūd* were recorded, most probably in Syria, during the Bahri period in an anonymous treatise entitled “*Kitāb fī Ma‘rifat La‘b al-Dabbūs wa-al-Ṣirā‘ ‘alā al-Khayl ‘inda Mulāqāt al-Khaṣm fī Awqāt al-Ḥurūb*.” It is divided into two parts, in the first of which the exercises are described, and in the second, techniques of hand-to-hand combat on horseback. At least four copies have survived.¹²¹

Two contributions on the arts of the mace were made during the Circassian period. The first is the lost “*Al-Usūs fī Ṣinā‘at al-Dabbūs*,” by ‘Izz al-Dīn Ibn Jamā‘ah.¹²² Given Ibn Jamā‘ah’s erudition, this work must surely have contained more information on fighting with the mace than simply an enumeration of thirty-five *bunūd*.

The second contribution is a Mamluk-Kipchak treatise entitled “*Nuzhat al-Nufūs fī La‘b al-Dabbūs*,” composed in Syria by Aḷṭanbughā al-Ḥusāmī al-Nāṣirī, known as Aṭājuq. It is preserved in an original copy dated 822/1419.¹²³ The importance of this hitherto unknown Mamluk-Kipchak treatise, wrongly described and classified as an Arabic work, is manifold. Besides being the only extant signed Mamluk treatise on the mace, this work, unlike all the other surviving Mamluk-Kipchak *furūsīyah* treatises, is not a translation from an Arabic text but was originally composed in Mamluk-Kipchak. Furthermore, as the author was an expert in the art of the mace and in close-combat techniques, his work undoubtedly constitutes an original and extremely important contribution to this field and to *furūsīyah* literature as a whole. In his rather long and reasonably well-written Arabic introduction, Aḷṭanbughā indicated that he was trained at the hand of several

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 3469/3; Ayasofya Library MS 3186/2; Bibliothèque Nationale MSS 2830/2, 6604/2 (incorrectly attributed to Lājīn al-Ṭarābulṣī).

¹²²Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 1:91.

¹²³Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 21 *furūsīyah Taymūr*.



furūsīyah masters in mace play, a domain to which he was particularly devoted, and that, urged by his comrades, he decided to record the best of what he had learned in order that it would serve as a reference for his fellow warriors. He synthesized his masters' teachings in six major *bunūd* associated with forty types of mace blows. The six *bunūd* comprise the essential maneuvers and techniques covered by the thirty-five *bands* described in the above anonymous work. The treatise also includes valuable hints on relevant close-combat techniques. A lack of pre-Mamluk sources for the *bunūd* of the mace is probably due to the same reasons which explain the lack of sources for the *bunūd* of the lance.

CAT. I (E): THE ART OF WAR

When in 129/746 'Abd Allāh Ibn Marwān was ordered by his father, the last Umayyad caliph Marwān II (127–32/744–50), to march against al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Khārījī,¹²⁴ Marwān's secretary (*kātib*), 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ibn Yaḥyá al-Kātib, wrote (on the order of the caliph) 'Abd Allāh a letter containing practical advice and directions for organizing the army and the conduct of war.¹²⁵ This important and original epistle can be considered the forerunner of Muslim and Arab treatises on the art of war.

'Abd al-Ḥamīd's epistle set the pattern for the Abbasid *kuttāb*.¹²⁶ 'Abd al-Jabbār Ibn 'Adī, *kātib* to the caliph al-Manṣūr, and according to Ibn al-Nadīm one of the ten most eloquent Abbasid *kuttāb*, followed 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's example. Ibn 'Adī's treatise "Ādāb al-Ḥurūb wa-Ṣurāt al-'Askar" was written for al-Manṣūr and dealt with the conduct of war and the organization of the army.¹²⁷ This lost work was probably the first true Abbasid and Muslim treatise on the art of war.

About seventy years later, al-Khalīl Ibn al-Haytham al-Harthamī al-Sha'rānī composed his monumental "Kitāb al-Ḥiyal wa-al-Makā'id fī al-Ḥurūb" for al-Ma'mūn. It was a multi-volume encyclopedic work comprising four hundred fifty topics and one thousand seventy-six chapters. Al-Mas'ūdī ranked it among the pre-eminent contributions made by Muslim scholars.¹²⁸ The description and praise

¹²⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 10:76–77; Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, *Rasā'il al-Bulaghā'* (Cairo, 1908), 66; cf. al-Sarrāf, "Adab al-Furūsīyah," 122.

¹²⁵ Published in Kurd 'Alī, *Rasā'il al-Bulaghā'*, 1st ed. (1908), 66–89, 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1913), 139–172, 3rd ed. (Cairo, 1946), 173–313. It was also published in *Umarā' al-Bayān*, ed. Kurd 'Alī (Cairo, 1937); and in *Jamharat Rasā'il al-Arab*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī Ṣafwat (Cairo, 1937). A serious edition and study of this important work is still lacking.

¹²⁶ Knowledge of the art of war apparently became one of the professional qualifications of a *kātib*; see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, 140.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 140, 377.

¹²⁸ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 1:13.



Ibn al-Nadīm gives this work, cited by him as *Kitāb al-Ḥiyal*,¹²⁹ adds considerable testimony to its importance and esteem. Undoubtedly al-Harthamī, an experienced and learned soldier writing for a refined and knowledgeable warrior caliph surrounded by a veritable pantheon of tacticians and illustrious army commanders, could only produce a masterpiece.¹³⁰

It seems, however, that this work soon became rare and inaccessible after the fifth/eleventh century. Even copies of its abridged version, *Mukhtaṣar Siyāsat al-Ḥurūb*, were apparently quite scarce; only one copy has been preserved.¹³¹ It is also likely that during the Mamluk period copies of this condensed version were mostly unsigned and probably untitled. This could explain the omission of al-Harthamī's name from the Mamluk treatises that used *Al-Mukhtaṣar* and especially from the treatises of Ibn Manglī, who usually acknowledges his sources.

The anonymous "Kitāb al-Ḥiyal fī al-Ḥurūb wa-Fatḥ al-Madā'in wa-Ḥifẓ al-Durūb," compiled in the late third/ninth century or early fourth/tenth century, was also used by Mamluk authors, especially compilers of texts of the third group. This Abbasid treatise, whose first chapters were taken from Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise B, deals with military organization and stratagems of war in general; it also includes a section on the use of incendiary devices which is the oldest available in *furūsīyah* literature. The anonymous compiler claimed that the chapter on stratagems was inspired by an ancient Greek text found hidden between two rocks in Alexandria and based on the wisdom of Alexander. I have so far traced eight copies,¹³² most of which were transcribed during the Mamluk period and one of which was apocryphally ascribed to the Mamluk author Ibn Manglī.¹³³ In the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries the subject of *al-ḥiyal al-ḥarbīyah* and military organization was usually dealt with in general *furūsīyah* treatises, but works entirely devoted to this question were also written. One of those is *Al-Tadhkirah al-Harawīyah fī al-Ḥiyal al-Ḥarbīyah*, by Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī Ibn Bakr al-Harawī, who wrote it sometime between 588/1192 and the time

¹²⁹Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, 376–77.

¹³⁰See al-Sarraf, "Adab al-Furūsīyah," 123–25.

¹³¹Köprülü Mehmet Paşa Library MS 1294; published without care by 'Abd al-Ra'ūf 'Awn (Cairo, 1964). A proper edition of this important work is still lacking. For a critical analysis of "Mukhtaṣar," see al-Sarraf, "Adab al-Furūsīyah," 123–25.

¹³²British Library MS Add. 14055; Topkapı Sarayı Library MSS Ahmet III 3469/2, 3467/1; Ayasofya Library MSS 3186/2, 2875, 3187, 3086/7; Leiden University Library MSS 92 and 499. A microfilm of Ahmet III 3469/2 is available in Ma'had al-Makhtūāt, incorrectly catalogued as being by Ibn Manglī and so cited by certain researchers.

¹³³It is Ayasofya MS 3086/7 which Brockelmann (*GAL*, S2:167) rather precipitately included within Ibn Manglī's works, thus generating this misconception.



of his death in 611/1215.¹³⁴ At least three out of five known copies were transcribed in the Mamluk period, one of them for the private library of Sultan Qāyṭbāy,¹³⁵ which proves that the Mamluks were familiar with this small but important work.

On the subjects of military tactics and army organization the Mamluk treatises introduced hardly any new concepts, but rather were based indiscriminately on earlier sources, regardless of their contemporary relevance. Ibn Manglī cited the *Tactica* of the Byzantine emperor Leo VI (886–912), itself almost entirely based on the *Strategicon* of the emperor Maurice (582–602); he gave it the title “Marātib al-Ḥurūb” and recommended it highly to soldiers.¹³⁶ Al-Aqsarā’ī used Sassanian sources, cited the Greek Polybius, and also drew heavily on the *Tactica* of Aelian, written in Greek at the beginning of the second century.

The main pre-Mamluk source remained the abridged version of al-Harthamī’s work, though almost never acknowledged. It was quoted by al-Aqsarā’ī, Ibn Manglī, and especially ‘Umar Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Awsī al-Anṣārī, who included almost the entire text verbatim in his *Tafrīj al-Kurūb fī Tadbīr al-Ḥurūb*,¹³⁷ written for Sultan al-Nāṣir Faraj ibn Barqūq (801–8/1399–1407). On the whole, notwithstanding strong dependence on pre-Mamluk sources, Ibn Manglī’s treatises constitute a worthy contribution.

Muḥammad Ibn Manglī al-Qāhirī (d. 784/1382) held the rank of commander of forty (*muqaddam*)¹³⁸ in the *ḥalqah* and was *naqīb al-jaysh* in Alexandria under Sha‘bān, to whom he dedicated his major treatises. It was in those years, when he was in his sixties and seventies, that he wrote most of his works. His treatise on naval warfare, entitled “Al-Aḥkām al-Mulūkīyah wa-al-Ḍawābiṭ al-Nāmūsīyah,” containing 122 *bābs*, is unique in Arabic literature; in it he described naval tactics, types of warships, maritime equipment, and weaponry, especially guns. The text is interspersed with practical advice for the marine fighter. At least one copy has survived.¹³⁹

¹³⁴Edited and translated by Janine Sourdel-Thomine as “Les Conseils du Shaykh al-Harawī à un prince Ayyubide,” *Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales* 17 (1961–62): 206–66.

¹³⁵For a description of four of the five copies, including the one transcribed for Qāyṭbāy, see Sourdel-Thomine, “Introduction,” in “Les Conseils,” 214–16. The fifth copy is in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, MS 2299 *adab*.

¹³⁶Ibn Manglī, “Al-Tadbīrāt al-Sulṭānīyah,” fol. 14v.

¹³⁷Edited and translated by George Scanlon as *A Muslim Manual of War, Being Tafrīj al-Kurūb fī Tadbīr al-Ḥurūb* (Cairo, 1961), who failed to recognize that it was based on a third/ninth century work and thus drew incorrect conclusions.

¹³⁸The *muqaddam* commanded forty soldiers of the *ḥalqah* on military expeditions; as soon as an expedition was over he lost his command (see David Ayalon, “Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army (i–iii),” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15 (1953–54): 64.

¹³⁹Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 23 *furūsīyah Taymūr*. See Albrecht Fuess, “Rotting Ships and



Two other treatises by Ibn Manglī on warfare have been preserved, "Al-Adillah al-Rasmīyah fī al-Ta'ābī al-Ḥarbīyah" and "Al-Tadbīrāt al-Sulṭānīyah fī Siyāsāt al-Šinā'ah al-Ḥarbīyah."¹⁴⁰ Although the title of "Al-Adillah" suggests that the battle formations are the main subject of this small but important work, less than a quarter of the text is devoted to this topic. The rest consists of hints and advice to soldiers and *muqaddams* on war, arms, equipment, naval warfare, siege warfare, and the like. Two copies have survived, one an autograph dated 770/1368–69.¹⁴¹ Without acknowledging him, Ibn Manglī draws on the treatise of al-Harthamī and cites the mystic Abū al-'Abbās al-Būnī in connection with a certain battle formation taken from the latter's books on talismans and the secret powers of numbers and letters.¹⁴² Ibn Manglī included several plans of battle formations in which the numbers of soldiers were determined by the mysterious powers of the corresponding letters.¹⁴³ He was more explicit in "Al-Tadbīrāt," where he revealed his belief in the subtle powers of letters and numbers and recommended that letters be inscribed on arms and armor. Indeed, he mentioned having written an entire treatise on the matter, the lost "Aqṣā al-Amad fī al-Radd 'alā Munkir Sirr al-'Adad."¹⁴⁴ "Al-Tadbīrāt" consists of advice and recommendations on arrangements to be undertaken at different governmental and military levels in anticipation of war. It also includes sections on archery, lance techniques, and horses. Ibn Manglī's basic sources for this work were al-Harthamī's *Mukhtaṣar*, Ibn Maymūn's "Al-Ifādah," and Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise AB. Of the latter, Ibn Manglī said that Ibn Akhī Ḥizām was the originator of the fundamentals of charging with the lance and highlighted his contribution to the art of *furūsīyah* and its literature.¹⁴⁵ Five extant copies of

Razed Harbors: The Naval Policy of the Mamluks," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 70–71.

¹⁴⁰He also wrote five other works that have not survived: "Al-Manhal al-'Adhb li-Wurūd Ahl al-Ḥarb," "Al-Risālah al-Marḍīyah fī Šinā'at al-Jundīyah," "Aqṣā al-'Amad fī al-Radd 'alā Munkir Sirr al-'Adad," "Risālat al-Taḥqīq fī Sur'at al-Tafwīq," and "Al-'Iqd al-Maslūk fīmā Yalzamu Jalīs al-Mulūk."

¹⁴¹Ayasofya Library MSS 2839 (the autograph), 2875a.

¹⁴²See Ibn Manglī, "Al-Adillah al-Rasmīyah fī al-Ta'ābī al-Ḥarbīyah," fol. 22v. Muḥyī al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Yūsuf al-Būnī (*nisbah* derived from the Algerian town Būnah; d. Cairo 622/1225) is not known to have written a book on *furūsīyah* or the art of war. His most important treatises were on the power of numbers and letters: *Laṭā'if al-'Awārif fī 'Ilm al-Ḥurūf wa-al-Khawāss* and "Mawāqif al-Ghayyāt fī Asrār al-Riyāḍīyāt"; cf. Khayr al-Dīn al-Zirkī, *Al-A'lām*, 4th ed. (Beirut, 1979), 2:145; A. Dietrich, "Al-Būnī," *EI*², Supplement I:3–4, 156–57.

¹⁴³Ibn Manglī, "Al-Adillah al-Rasmīyah," fols. 14r.–17r., 22v.–23r.

¹⁴⁴Ibn Manglī, "Al-Tadbīrāt al-Sulṭānīyah," fols. 2v.–9r.

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*, fol. 38v.:

وهذه الأصول الأربع كلها من كلام الختلي رحمه الله فانه بث في الإسلام قضايا حربية جزاه الله عنا معشر المسلمين.



"Al-Tadbīrāt" are known.¹⁴⁶ Ibn Manglī's works constitute a major source on the equipment of the Mamluk army, in particular the *ḥalqah* corps, at the end of the Bahri period. They are also essential for evaluating Mamluk military thinking.

CAT. I (F): TREATISES ON ARMS AND WAR ENGINES

During the first two centuries of Abbasid rule in Iraq, a great number of comprehensive and specific treatises on arms and armor and military technology were written by philologists, specialists, and *furūsīyah* masters.¹⁴⁷ At this point in our research, no treatise of the comprehensive type is known to have survived apart from *Kitāb al-Silāḥ* by Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām al-Baghdādī (d. 224/838), a succinct but highly important philological contribution on the nomenclature and types of weaponry used by and known to the Arabs in the pre- and proto-Islamic periods as attested mainly by Arabic poetry.¹⁴⁸ However, considerable data from lost treatises can be found dispersed in other sources. Encyclopedic dictionaries and works of *adab* preserved much of what Abbasid philologists wrote about the subject. Similarly, contemporary and later general and thematic *furūsīyah* treatises contained important borrowings from comprehensive arms and armor treatises written by Abbasid specialists and *furūsīyah* masters. Among the lost works of this category of authors are "Kitāb al-Silāḥ" by the Abbasid commander and statesman Abū Dulaf al-Qāsim Ibn 'Īsā al-Baghdādī al-'Ijlī (d. 227/830),¹⁴⁹ "Kitāb 'Ilm al-Ālāt al-Ḥarbīyah" by Mūsā Ibn Shākīr's sons Muḥammad (d. 259/872–73), Aḥmad, and al-Ḥasan, and "Kitāb Ajnās al-Silāḥ" by a certain Abbasid army commander and *furūsīyah* master named Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Khālīd who flourished in the second half of the third/ninth century.¹⁵⁰

As for specific treatises on arms and armor, only two survived from that period; namely the treatise on the types of swords by Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb Ibn Ishāq al-Kindī (d. around the middle of the third/ninth century, perhaps in 252/866), and his treatise on the composition, manufacture, and quenching of steel blades. Both treatises were written for the caliph al-Mu'taṣim. The first one, entitled "Ajnās al-Suyūf" or "Al-Suyūf wa-Ajnāsuhā," is unique in its genre within *furūsīyah* literature. It was a remarkable field study, as each type of blade described was known and examined by al-Kindī himself, who spent years frequenting swordsmiths

¹⁴⁶British Library MSS Or. 3734, 9016 (imperfect at the beginning and end); Ayasofya Library MS 2856; St. Petersburg University Library MS c-726; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 1147b.

¹⁴⁷See al-Sarraf, "Adab al-Furūsīyah," 118–21.

¹⁴⁸Published by Ḥātim Ṣāliḥ al-Dāmin (Beirut, 1408/1988).

¹⁴⁹See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, 130; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān wa-Anba' Abnā' al-Zamān*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut, 1969–72), 4:74; Ismā'īl al-Baghdādī, *Īdāḥ al-Maknūn fī al-Dhayl 'alā Kashf al-Zunūn* (Istanbul, 1954), 2:303.

¹⁵⁰Ḥājji Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 1:145.



and investigating the sword markets of Baghdad, Basra, and Samarra. This perhaps explains why there was no attempt to write something similar again. In fact, al-Kindī's work remains definitely the most important source on swords in the entire medieval period. Ibn Akhī Ḥizām made extensive use of it, and he was probably the first *furūsīyah* author to do so. Nearly all subsequent borrowings from al-Kindī's work by Abbasid and Mamluk *furūsīyah* treatises were taken from Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise B rather than directly from al-Kindī's treatise, of which three copies are available.¹⁵¹

The second treatise, entitled "Risālah fī Jawāhir al-Ḥadīd lil-Suyūf wa-Ghayrihā min al-Asliḥah wa-Siqāyātihā," is no less important. Surely al-Kindī was neither the first nor the last Muslim author to write on the making of steel, but his treatise was the only work which has survived. Moreover, while admitting that none of the thirty-five recipes which he mentioned was his own, al-Kindī assured the caliph that he had critically tested each one of them. Al-Kindī was as brilliant an alchemist and metallurgist as he was a philosopher, and his second treatise therefore presents extremely precious scientific testimony on this subject. The text of this "Risālah," generally presumed lost, is fully preserved in al-Aqsarā'ī's "Nihāyat al-Sūl" as part of lesson three on the arts of the sword (see below, Cat II).

Abbasid treatises on arms and military technology also included contributions on incendiary weapons and on siege engines. Ibn al-Nadīm mentions, respectively, the anonymous "Kitāb al-'Ilm bi-al-Nār wa-al-Naḥḥ wa-al-Zarrāqāt fī al-Ḥurūb," and the anonymous "Kitāb al-Dabbābāt wa-al-Manjanīqāt."¹⁵² Later Abbasid *furūsīyah* literature did not include comprehensive or specific treatises on arms and military technology but the subject continued to be treated within general *furūsīyah* treatises. One of these was the lost "Umdat al-Sālik fī Siyāsāt al-Mamālik" (see below) by Ibn Ṣābir al-Manjanīqī¹⁵³ (d. 620/1220), who was the chief (*muqaddam*) of the *manjanīqīyīn* (mechanics and engineers of projectile engines) in Baghdad where he was born and died. Given his great and acknowledged expertise in arms and war engines, his monumental work undoubtedly represented one of the most authoritative contributions in this field.

The magnificent treatise written for Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī (d. 589/1193) by Marḍī ibn 'Alī al-Ṭarsūsī, viz. "Tabṣirat Arbāb al-Albāb . . .," should be mentioned.

¹⁵¹Leiden University Library MS 287 (being chapter 6 of "Jamharat al-Islām Dhāt al-Naḥr wa-al-Naẓm," by al-Shayrāzī); Ayasofya Library MS 4833 (fols. 38–45); Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 3640, which is a recent copy transcribed in 1359 H. from the Ayasofya copy, published with many errors by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Zakī in *Nashrat Kulliyat al-Ādāb, Jāmi'at al-Qāhirah* 14 no. 2 (1956): 1–36. See al-Sarraf, "Adab al-Furūsīyah," 120.

¹⁵²Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, 377.

¹⁵³His *nishbah* derived from *manjanīq*-mangonel, an Arabicized term used not only to denote the catapult or the trebuchet, but also to designate projectile-throwing engines in general.



Although it can be classified among general *furūsiyah* treatises, as it covers three distinct *furūsiyah* themes (weaponry, archery, and the art of war), the “Tabṣirah” was meant to be, and basically is, a work on arms and armor, and military technology. A close examination of the treatise, which is still essentially known through the truncated and quite misleading extracts published by Claude Cahen,¹⁵⁴ shows that “Al-Tabṣirah” is a compilation, based largely on early Abbasid sources. Contemporary data is mainly limited to siege engines and compound weapons. Al-Ṭarsūsī’s only source in this domain was an Egyptian innovator in military technology named Abū al-Ḥasan al-Abraqī al-Iskandarī, who himself did not write a treatise on the subject. In all, “Al-Tabṣirah” remains an extremely valuable source on Islamic arms and particularly on siege engines. The chapter on archery is among the best available on the various schools and techniques of the great Abbasid masters.¹⁵⁵ One of the three extant copies is an autograph, imperfect, written for the private library of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.¹⁵⁶ Although the other two copies were transcribed in the Mamluk period, it seems that “Al-Tabṣirah” was little known to Mamluk authors.

Under the Mamluks, and despite the thriving and highly developed weapons industry of Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo, not a single original treatise on arms and armor can be cited. Compilations based on pre-Mamluk sources were also scarce. One of them is *Mustanad al-Ajnād fī Ālāt al-Jihād*, by Badr al-Dīn ibn Jamā‘ah, who compiled it from early Abbasid philological contributions, and works of *adab* and hadith. Only one copy, dated 773/1371, has so far been traced.¹⁵⁷ As for the ninth/fifteenth century anonymous *Khizānat al-Silāḥ*, it is not, as presumed, a Mamluk work. It was composed in 840/1436 by an Iraqi *adīb* for the Muzaffarid ruler of Kirmān, Sultan Aḥmad Shāh. It is a petty, anecdotal, and banal work contrived from the books of *adab* and completely insignificant as a

¹⁵⁴Claude Cahen, “Un traité d’armurerie composé pour Saladin,” *Bulletin des études orientales* 12 (1947–48): 103–63. He failed to recognize *inter alia* that the folios were misarranged and that, in some of the most important folios, the lines are extended all the way through to the opposite page. A critical edition of “Al-Tabṣirah” is forthcoming.

¹⁵⁵This chapter on archery was translated, rather equivocally, and published by Antoine Boudot-Lamotte as *Contribution à l’étude de l’archerie musulmane* (Damascus, 1968). As Boudot-Lamotte was neither familiar with the technical language of archery literature, nor with the sources of al-Ṭarsūsī, his translation as well as the edition of the Arabic text are extremely misleading.

¹⁵⁶Bodleian Library MS Huntington 264 (presumed unique); Ayasofya Library MS 2848 (written by different hands; the last portion is dated 709/1309). There is a third ninth/fifteenth-century copy kept in Katahiya Library, Turkey, which I haven’t seen yet, nor am I certain of its reference number.

¹⁵⁷Iraq Museum Library MS 34310/3, edited and published by Usāmah Nāṣir al-Naqshbandī (Baghdad, 1983).



source on Islamic arms. Only one copy is extant.¹⁵⁸

Apart from the information provided by Mamluk archery literature, such as the treatises of Ṭaybughā and Muḥammad al-Ṣughayyir, on bows, crossbows, and other archery equipment, contemporary data on arms and armor are lacking in both thematic and general Mamluk *furūsīyah* treatises, which recycled instead Abbasid data regardless of its relevance to the Mamluk period. Indeed, the most recurrent information on arms and armor found in Mamluk *furūsīyah* literature is derived from the sections of Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise B on swords, lances, and shields. On the other hand, general Mamluk *furūsīyah* treatises represent the source par excellence on incendiary weapons and firearms. There is also an anonymous work entirely devoted to the subject, entitled "Iyārāt al-Naḥḥ," of which one copy, dated 774/1372, is extant.¹⁵⁹

Information on incendiary weapons and firearms, including cannons, is also dealt with in a unique work on siege engines, *Al-Anīq fī al-Manājīq*, written by Urunbughā al-Zaradkash for the *atabāk al-askar* Manglī Bughā al-Shamsī (d. 836/1432). This work, complete with detailed drawings, provides full descriptions of the methods of constructing various siege engines: trebuchets, cannons, pedestal crossbows, wooden towers, ladders, and platforms. The last chapter deals with incendiary devices to be propelled by trebuchets and crossbows. Two copies of this treatise are known to exist.¹⁶⁰

CAT. I (G): TREATISES ON HUNTING

The art of hunting with birds of prey, *bayzarah*, was the subject of the first Muslim treatises on the hunt, which appeared early in the Abbasid period. The oldest known Muslim contribution on hawking was a collective work containing 150 *bābs* entitled "Kitāb Manāfi' al-Ṭayr" or "Kitāb al-Ṭuyūr," written on the order of the caliph al-Mahdī, who wanted a treatise on sporting birds synthesizing the knowledge of the Byzantines, Turks, and Arabs.¹⁶¹ The principle authors of this work, of which at least two copies exist,¹⁶² were al-Ghiṭrīf ibn Qudāmah

¹⁵⁸Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 2796 *adab*, published by Nabīl 'Abd al-'Azīz (Cairo, 1978).

¹⁵⁹Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 3469.

¹⁶⁰Both copies are included in one manuscript, Ayasofya Library MS 3469. A tentative edition was made by Nabīl 'Abd al-'Azīz (Cairo, 1981), and it was reedited by Iḥsān Hindī (Aleppo, 1405/1985).

¹⁶¹See "Kitāb Manāfi' al-Ṭayr," Bodleian Library MS Marsh 148, fol. 1v.

¹⁶²*Ibid.*; and Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 2016 (880/1475), entitled "Ṭibb al-Ṭuyūr"; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 2 *furūsīyah Taymūr*, a recent copy (dated 1323/1915) transcribed from a photostat copy (also kept in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah inv. no. 748 *ṭibb*) of the Topkapı Sarayı MS.



al-Ghassānī¹⁶³ and Adham ibn Muḥriz al-Bāhilī,¹⁶⁴ who were unanimously acknowledged by the sources as being the pioneer authorities in this field. A later Abbasid modified version of this work was apparently ascribed to al-Ghiṭrīf alone¹⁶⁵ and was translated into Latin on the order of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (1194–1250) and from Latin into French by Daniel of Cremona, who dedicated it to Frederick's son Enzo (1220–72).¹⁶⁶

Another early Abbasid authority on falconry and hunting was a native of Basra named Ibrāhīm al-Baṣrī al-Bāzyār, who flourished during the period of Hārūn al-Rashīd and gained his favor. He was credited by al-Asadī as being the author of the first treatise written on hawking. Al-Asadī probably meant that al-Baṣrī was the author of the first original treatise on hawking. He speaks highly of his proficiency in hunting with sporting birds (the hawk, the saker falcon, and the peregrine falcon), dogs, cheetahs, and other trained predators, and in using all sorts of traps and snares, and credits him above all with introducing and propagating the techniques of liming birds (*tadbīq*).¹⁶⁷

During the third/ninth century most of the treatises on the hunt were written by high Abbasid dignitaries and notables, such as Abū Dulaf al-Qāsim Ibn ʿĪsā al-ʿIjlī (d. 225/839), "Kitāb al-Jawāriḥ wa-al-Laʿb bi-hā" and "Kitāb al-Buzāh wa-al-Ṣayd"; al-Faṭḥ ibn Khāqān (d. 247/861), "Kitāb al-Ṣayd wa-al-Jāriḥ"; Aḥmad Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr (d. 280/893), "Kitāb al-Ṭard"; Aḥmad Ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī (d. 286/899), "Kitāb al-Jawāriḥ wa-al-Ṣayd Bi-hā"; ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Muʿtazz Ibn (the caliph) al-Mutawakkil (d. 296/908), "Kitāb al-Jawāriḥ wa-al-Ṣayd." These

¹⁶³Who is said to have lived long enough to be the grand falconer of the Umayyad caliphs Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (105–25/724–43) and al-Walīd ibn Yazīd (125–26/743–44) and to have to filled the same post for the Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd; "Manāfiʿ al-Ṭayr" (Bodleian MS), fol. 1v.

¹⁶⁴He must not be confused with the poet and army commander who fought in the ranks of Muʿāwiyah at Siffīn (cf. al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 1:227, 3:294, and 6:134).

¹⁶⁵Other than taking an active and prominent part in the composition of the above collective work on falconry, there is no evidence that al-Ghiṭrīf made another contribution to this field. He was recently, however, credited with the authorship of yet another treatise on falconry of which several unsigned and variously titled copies survived. Two of these copies are preserved in Topkapı Sarayı Library, MSS Ahmet III 2099 and 2102. The former was published in facsimile by Fuat Sezgin and attributed to al-Ghiṭrīf under the title *Dawārī al-Ṭayr* (Frankfurt, 1986).

¹⁶⁶See Casey A. Wood and F. Marjorie Fyfe, "Introduction," in *The Art of Falconry, Being the De Arte Venandi cum Avibus* (Stanford, 1969), xlix; Baudouin van den Abeele, *La fauconnerie dans les lettres françaises du XIIIe au XIVe siècles* (Louvain, 1990), xvi, n. 10; idem, "La chasse au vol médiévale," in *La chasse au vol au fil des temps* (Gien, 1994), 52–53, 55; see also Charles Homer Haskins, *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), 318–20.

¹⁶⁷Al-Asadī al-Baghdādī, "Al-Jamharah fī ʿUlūm al-Bayzarah," Escorial MS Ar. 903, fols. 76v.–77.



works, mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm,¹⁶⁸ are all lost and were even unknown to the sixth/twelfth century Abbasid authors, let alone later Mamluk authors.

In any case, it is doubtful whether any one of the above treatises can match the highly expert work written by the falconer of the caliph al-Mutawakkil (232–47/847–61) and his boon companion, viz. Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Umar al-Bāzyār, known as ‘Irjah. His treatise, entitled “Kitāb al-Jawāriḥ” and often referred to as “Al-Mutawakkilī,” was one of the most outstanding and definitive contributions made in this field in Islam and a major source for later treatises. It also had a significant and lasting influence on the art and literature of falconry in Europe, where the author was known under the name of Moamin or Moamyn. “Kitāb al-Jawāriḥ” was translated into Latin as *De scientia Venendi per Avers* by Theodor of Antioch at the order of Frederick II, who reviewed it during the Siege of Faenza in 1240–41, and used it as a reference for his own monumental *De Arte Venendi Cum Avibus*.¹⁶⁹ The emperor’s treatise was virtually the first true and major treatise on falconry in the West but it had a very limited diffusion and practically no influence on the subsequent European cynegetic tradition.¹⁷⁰ This was far from being the case concerning the treatises of al-Ghiṭrīf and Muḥammad al-Bāzyār. The latter’s work survived in twenty-four copies in Latin and in several more copies in French,¹⁷¹ Tuscan, Neapolitan, and Spanish.¹⁷² Paradoxically, the complete Arabic text is still lacking, though important borrowings and large portions can be found in subsequent treatises.¹⁷³

The fourth/tenth century witnessed the appearance of two important treatises on hunting: *Kitāb al-Maṣāyid wa-al-Maṭārid* by Abū al-Faṭḥ Maḥmūd Ibn

¹⁶⁸Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, 130, 163, 321, 377.

¹⁶⁹Haskins, *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science*, 318–19; Wood and Fyfe, “Introduction,” in *The Art of Falconry*, xli.

¹⁷⁰See K. Lindner, “Tragödie der Monumentalität: Das Werk Friedrichs II von Hohenstaufen in historischer Sicht,” *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Falkenordens* (1976–77): 75–78.

¹⁷¹Like the treatise attributed to al-Ghiṭrīf, “Kitāb al-Jawāriḥ” was also translated into French by Daniel of Cremona for Frederick’s son Enzo. An excellent edition of the French version of both al-Ghiṭrīf’s and Muḥammad al-Bāzyār’s treatises was made by Håkan Tjerneld as *Moamin et Ghatrif: traités de fauconnerie et des chiens de chasse* (Stockholm and Paris, 1945).

¹⁷²The Spanish version of Muḥammad al-Bāzyār’s “Kitāb al-Jawāriḥ” is the most important and complete, as the translation was made directly from Arabic and not from Latin like the other versions. A very good edition of the Spanish version was made by José Manuel Fradejas Rueda under the title *Libro de los animales que cazan (Kitab al-Yawarih)* (Madrid, 1987).

¹⁷³Such as the anonymous “Al-Manṣūrī fī al-Bayzarah,” compiled for the Hafsid sovereign al-Mustanṣir billāh (647–75/1249–77), of which only the fourth chapter (on hunting dogs), taken verbatim from al-Mutawakkilī, reached us in two copies kept in Dār al-Kutub al-Waṭanīyah in Tunis, MSS 15072, 13464. This portion was published by ‘Abd al-Ḥafīz Manṣūr in *Al-Mashriq* 62 (1968): 155–222; and it was published as a book (Tunis, 1989).



Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Sindī Ibn Shāhik, better known as Kushājim (d. 360/970), and *Kitāb al-Bayzarah* by ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bāzyār, falconer of the Fatimid caliph al-‘Azīz billāh (365–86/975–96).

The *Maṣāyid* of Kushājim is the oldest extant text which attempts to give a comprehensive treatment of venery and falconry. It represents a valuable résumé of contemporary practices and knowledge from the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. As a poet and *adīb*, Kushājim sprinkled his treatise with related poems and anecdotes which gave his work important literary and social dimensions. This partly accounts for the treatise’s popularity, which was not limited to the cynegetic milieu and literature. *Al-Maṣāyid* is the earliest source on hunting birds with the pellet bow (*qaws al-bunduq*), and is also the oldest surviving signed work that draws on Ibn Akhī Ḥizām’s Treatise B. At least two copies are extant.¹⁷⁴

The Fatimid *Kitāb al-Bayzarah* is one of the earliest known works in which the term *bayzarah* occurs, and is used as a title.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, as the author of the Fatimid treatise dealt with both venery and falconry, the term *bayzarah* is used in a generic sense covering all types of hunting. *Kitāb al-Bayzarah* is the first Egyptian treatise on hunting and probably the only one to have been written during the Fatimid period. It was composed for al-‘Azīz billāh, who from the early years of his reign was a zealous adherent of the Abbasid *al-furūsīyah al-nabīlah* which was upheld in Egypt by the Ikhshidids and before them by the Tulunids. Not only was he a passionate hunter, but he was also the first Fatimid sovereign to practice archery, play polo, and handle the lance in the eastern Abbasid fashion.¹⁷⁶ He was, however, unique in Fatimid history, as there is no evidence that his example was followed by his successors and the Abbasid *al-furūsīyah al-nabīlah* was not allowed to take root as a court institution under the Fatimids. This was partly due to the strong cultural and physical influence of the Berbers, who regained their pre-eminence after al-‘Azīz’s death. This also explains why apart from the *Kitāb al-Bayzarah* no other Fatimid *furūsīyah* treatise exists.

Al-Ḥasan al-Bāzyār modeled his treatise on the *Maṣāyid* of Kushājim, from which he drew abundantly, without acknowledging his source, and even plagiarized

¹⁷⁴Fatih Mosque Library MS 4090; Bayezit Library MS 2592. A tentative edition was made by Muḥammad As‘ad Ṭalas, based on a defective manuscript of 617/1220 owned by him (Baghdad, 1954).

¹⁷⁵The word *bayzarah* is rarely if ever used in the literature of the second/eighth and the third/ninth centuries and is also absent from Kushājim’s *Kitāb al-Maṣāyid* and Ibn al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist*. It is probable that this term emerged in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries to designate the profession of the *bāzyār* or *bayzār*, though the former term is more commonly used for falconer. The term *bazdār*, which is the Persian equivalent of the Arabic *bāzyār*, is occasionally encountered.

¹⁷⁶Ibn Muyassar, *Al-Muntaqā min Akhbār Miṣr: Passages Selected by al-Maqrīzī*, ed. Ayman Fu‘ād Sayyid (Cairo, 1981), 179; cf. al-Sarraf, “L’archerie mamluke,” 2:487–90.



some of Kushājim's poems. The contribution of *Kitāb al-Bayzarah* lies mainly in the relatively small chapter on falconry, where the author gives some original and first hand observations. This treatise, which was rarely cited and apparently quite scarce, was completely unknown to the Mamluks. Two copies dating from the fourth/tenth century have been traced so far, of which one could be the original manuscript written for al-'Azīz billāh.¹⁷⁷

After a long, barren period, Abbasid hunting treatises, like most of the other branches of *furūsīyah* literature, found new life in the last hundred years of the caliphate, when three of the most important Muslim treatises on the hunt were written: al-Zaynabī's "Al-Qawānīn," al-Asadī's "Al-Jamharah," and al-Baladī's "Al-Kāfī." The treatise of 'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Muḥammad al-Baladī,¹⁷⁸ *Al-Kāfī fī al-Bayzarah*, is exclusively devoted to falconry, and is among the best and most authentic texts written on the subject. In addition to his proper practical and theoretical knowledge, the author, who was a confirmed falconer and hunter, often related the opinion and experience of his fellow falconers, whom he frequented not only in Iraq but also in Egypt and especially in Syria. His written sources included the joint work of al-Ghiṭrīf and Adham Ibn Mihriz and Muḥammad al-Bāzyār's "Kitāb al-Jawāriḥ," which was heavily cited. Until the latter work (when found) and/or the magnificent work of al-Asadī have been edited, *Al-Kāfī* will remain the most important published source on falconry.¹⁷⁹

"Al-Qawānīn al-Sulṭānīyah fī al-Ṣayd" was written by Abū al-Naṣr al-Qāsim Ibn 'Alī al-Zaynabī al-'Abbāsī, a member of the highly distinguished Abbasid family of the Zaynabids,¹⁸⁰ particularly prominent in the social, cultural, and political

¹⁷⁷Chester Beatty MS 3831, a copy de luxe in 154 folios, considered among the oldest surviving Arabic manuscripts (see Kūrķīs 'Awwād, *Aqdam al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-'Arabīyah fī Maktabāt al-'Ālam* [Baghdad, 1982], 97). The other fourth-/tenth-century copy of "Kitāb al-Bayzarah" is apparently lost; a photostat copy of it is kept in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, inv. no. 762 *tabī'īyāt*. A copy of the latter is also kept in Ma'had al-Makḥṭūṭāt, inv. no. 20 *kīmyā' wa-tabī'īyāt*. Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī published a poor version of "Kitāb al-Bayzarah," based on a defective copy without a colophon owned by an "orientalist" (unnamed) (Damascus, 1953). This edition was translated into French by François Viré as *Le traité de l'art de volerie (Kitāb al-Bayzara): Rédigé vers 385/995 par le Grand-Fauconnier du calife fāṭimide al-'Azīz bi-llāh* (Leiden, 1967).

¹⁷⁸From the Iraqi town Balad, situated on the Tigris north of Mosul; the author, however, lived in Baghdad.

¹⁷⁹Based on the unique manuscript in Tunis, al-Maktabah al-Aḥmadīyah MS 14290, a good edition of *Kitāb al-Kāfī fī al-Bayzarah* (Beirut, 1403/1983) was made by Iḥsān 'Abbās and 'Abd al-Ḥafīz Maṣṣūr. It is regrettable, however, that the editors failed to consult the manuscript literature on falconry, contenting themselves instead with the published treatises of Kushājim and al-Bāzyār.

¹⁸⁰The *nisbah* is derived from Zaynab bint Sulaymān ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn al-'Abbās ('*ammat al-khulafā'*); see Ibn al-Ṭīqtaqā, *Al-Fakhrī fī al-Ādāb al-Sulṭānīyah wa-al-Duwal al-*



life of Iraq during the second half of the fifth/eleventh century and the first half of the sixth/twelfth century. The author, like his father before him, was the chief judge (*qāḍī al-quḍāh*) in Baghdad, where he died in 563/1167. Autobiographical data indicates that he started writing the treatise for the caliph al-Muqtafī (530–55/1136–60) shortly before his death and finished it in the beginning of the caliphate of al-Mustanjid (555–66/1160–70), to whom the work was ultimately dedicated. It was no accident that this treatise was begun under the patronage of al-Muqtafī, for during the Buwayhid and Saljuq period in Iraq the Abbasid caliphs lost the right of the royal hunt. And for almost a hundred and fifty years this caliphal institution, an ensign of royalty, and above all symbol of sovereignty, was practically non-existent. The death of the Saljuq sultan Mas‘ūd in 545/1150 strengthened the position of al-Muqtafī, who is considered to be the first Abbasid caliph to have gained independence in Iraq since the advent of the Buwayhids,¹⁸¹ and it was during the last five years of his reign that the Abbasid chronicles record that “the caliph went to the hunt” (*wa-kharaja al-khalīfah ilá al-ṣayd*).¹⁸²

The “Qawānīn” was meant to be a royal or caliphal manual of the hunt. This accounts for the extraordinary range and detail of this work, which included, in addition to venery and a valuable and long chapter on falconry, sections on types of horses, horse equipment, arms, archery, polo, the *futūwah* of hunting with the pellet bow, climatic conditions (in Iraq), astronomical tables and instruments, various methods of finding the direction of the *qiblah*, etc. The treatise also contains original epistles on hunting and a number of *ṭardīyāt* (hunting) poems, as well as new information on the Abbasid caliphs and the royal hunt in the early centuries of the caliphate. Consequently, it is a major reference on the Abbasid *al-furūsīyah al-nabīlah*. Moreover, al-Zaynabī’s work is essential for assessing and verifying early Abbasid *furūsīyah* texts, of which he used a large assortment. Only one copy has survived.¹⁸³

Abū al-Rūḥ ‘Īsá Ibn ‘Alī Ḥassān al-Asadī al-Baghdādī composed his “Al-Jamharah fī ‘Ilm (or ‘Ulūm) al-Bayzarah” during the first two decades of the second half of the sixth/twelfth century. This treatise is not restricted to falconry but is about hunting in general; consequently the word *bayzarah* is used generically. Al-Asadī was an experienced hunter and also had extensive theoretical knowledge,

Islāmīyah (Beirut, 1966), 219. On the author, see Ibn Abī al-Wafā’ al-Qurashī, *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍīyah fī Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafīyah* (Hyderabad, 1322/1913–14), 1:411. On the other illustrious Zaynabids, see al-Sarraf, “Adab al-Furūsīyah,” 139.

¹⁸¹Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1965–67), 11:256:

وهو أول خليفة إستبد بالعراق منفردا عن سلطان يكون معه منذ أيام الديلم ولحد الآن.

¹⁸²E.g., Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa-al-Umam* (Hyderabad, 1938–40) 6 (book x): 165, 176.

¹⁸³Fatih Mosque Library MS 3508 (244 fols.); a microfilm of this manuscript in the Ma‘had



and he was able to synthesize all the cynegetic and halieutic material of the Orient in two definitive volumes. The first was dedicated to technique and the second to the treatment and care of all sorts of trained predators and other animals. This majestic and unequalled work towers over the whole literature written on this subject in the Orient and constitutes absolutely the most important and decisive contribution to this field in Islam.¹⁸⁴ Three complete sets are extant.¹⁸⁵

The basic Mamluk work on hunting was Ibn Manglī's "Uns al-Malā bi-Waḥsh al-Falā," compiled in 773/1371. The originality of this work lies in the first few folios, where the author provided important information on types of saddles and on the techniques of hunting from horseback with the bow, spear, and sword. The rest of the treatise is entirely drawn from earlier sources, all acknowledged, especially al-Asadī's "Al-Jamharah," which in an abridged form constitutes two thirds of "Uns." Ibn Manglī also used Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's entire section on lion hunting with the bow from horseback (from Treatise B). Other sources included Kushājim's *Al-Maṣāyid*, al-Jāhiz's *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, and Ibn Waḥshīyah's *Kitāb al-Filāḥah al-Nabaṭīyah*. More than two copies are extant.¹⁸⁶

CAT. I (H): TREATISES ON POLO

With the advent of the Abbasids and the establishment of military *furūsīyah*, the "king of games" was inevitably democratized and lost its alleged exclusivity as "the game of kings" since it became an integral part of the training and on-going exercise of the mounted warrior and one of the fundamentals of military *furūsīyah*. Ibn Akhī Ḥizām emphatically exhorts his fellow cavalymen to constantly play polo, which he believes most beneficial for the practice of *furūsīyah* arts, especially the arts of the sword, lance, and archery. He also deems polo essential for horse mastery and for training the horseman and the horse on individual and collective maneuvers. In sum, Ibn Akhī Ḥizām considers the game a physical and mental

al-Makhṭūṭāt is incorrectly catalogued as a late Mamluk treatise dedicated to the caliph al-Mustanjid of Egypt (859–84/1455–79).

¹⁸⁴Several extracts have been published by D. C. Phillot and R. F. Azoo in *Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 3 (1907): 139–43, 173–78, 401–3, 599–600.

¹⁸⁵Escorial Library MS Ar. 903; Ayasofya Library MS 3813; Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal Library MS 865 M9 (the copy used by Phillot). A copy of the second volume of "Al-Jamharah" is in the British Library, MS Add. 23417; another one is in the Iraqi Museum Library, MS 22147.

¹⁸⁶Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 12 *ṣinā'ah*, transcribed from an autograph, as mentioned in the colophon; Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2832/1, dated 923 H., the colophon also indicates that it was transcribed from an autograph. The treatise was translated and published, apparently from a defective manuscript, by Florian Pharaon as *Traité de vénerie de Sid Mohamed el-Mangali* (Paris, 1880); a more recent translation, with annotations, based only on the manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, was made by François Viré as *De la chasse: Commerce des grands de ce monde avec*



practice for war.¹⁸⁷ In accordance with this perception of the role of polo in military training, general Abbasid *furūsīyah* treatises, starting from Treatise B of Ibn Akhī Ḥizām, commonly included a chapter—which usually represented a veritable self-contained treatise—on polo. This tradition was not observed by Mamluk authors/compilers of general *furūsīyah* treatises.

In fact, during the Mamluk period, although polo was consecrated as a royal institution, as an integral part of military training, and as a popular game among Mamluks and *ḥalqah* troopers, contribution to this field was practically nil. The only Mamluk treatise that can be cited on the topic is “Ghāyat al-Itqān fī A‘māl al-Nushshāb wa-al-Ṣawājān” by a certain Alṭamish (eighth/fifteenth century). This treatise, of which one copy is available,¹⁸⁸ merely recycled Abbasid data on the subject. This not only means that the Mamluks accepted without further innovation the rules and “arts” of the game which they inherited from the Abbasids, but also that the latter’s contribution in this field was complete and final. Indeed, all the pertinent texts and information in circulation during the Mamluk period were Abbasid.

The earliest text on polo in the Abbasid period was translated from the Persian under the title “Kitāb Ā’in al-Ṣawālijah,” of which a small portion has survived in ‘*Uyūn al-Akhbār*, by Ibn Qutaybah. This text was perhaps different from the untraceable “Kitāb Ā’in al-Ḍarb bi-al-Ṣawālijah” mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm.¹⁸⁹ The first original contribution in this field, however, was probably al-Jāḥiẓ’s “Kitāb al-Ṣawālijah,” which is deemed lost though reportedly a copy is jealously preserved in the library of al-Zāwīyah al-‘Ayyashīyah in Morocco.¹⁹⁰ In any case, it would seem that al-Jāḥiẓ’s work was not very accessible all along, as it was neither quoted nor mentioned in *furūsīyah* literature or works of *adab* other than the bibliographical and biographical dictionaries. Conversely, the most accessible and widespread document on polo during the Abbasid and Mamluk periods was the relevant chapter from Ibn Akhī Ḥizām’s Treatise B, which represents the oldest surviving document on the subject. No less valuable but far less known and accessible is “Kitāb ‘Ilm al-Ḍarb bi-al-Ṣawālijah wa-Mā Yata‘allaqu bi-Dhālīka

les bêtes sauvages des déserts sans onde (Paris, 1984).

¹⁸⁷Ibn Akhī Ḥizām, “Kitāb al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Bayṭarah” (Treatise AB), Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 5m *funūn ḥarbīyah*, fol. 105v.:

اعلم أن الضرب بالصولجة من أعظم أصول الفروسية منفعة لكل من طلب فنا من فنون الفروسية لا سيما العمل بالسيف والرمح والرمي لما يقع فيه من الكر والعطف والاختلاس والجولان والمناوشة وتدريب الدواب. وهي تدريب للحرب وتقرين للقلوب على القتال.

¹⁸⁸Rabat, Maktabat al-Khizānah al-‘Āmmah MS 32/3q.

¹⁸⁹Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, 376.

¹⁹⁰See Muḥammad Mursī al-Khulī, ed., “Introduction,” in *Kitāb al-Burṣān wa-al-‘Umyān*, by al-Jāḥiẓ (Cairo, 1981, 2nd ed.), 9.



min Ālāt al-Fursān wa-al-Rammāhīn,¹⁹¹ which constitutes part of an anonymous, untitled, but highly important general Abbasid *furūsīyah* treatise written in the first half of the fourth/tenth century by a warrior and confirmed *furūsīyah* master (see below). The so-far unique though incomplete copy of this monument, which I happily discovered while preparing this study, is included in a *majmūʿ* on *furūsīyah* compiled for the private library of Sultan al-Muʿayyad Shaykh entitled “Kitāb fī Maʿrifat al-Khayl wa-al-Jihād wa-fī ʿIlm al-Ḍarb bi-al-Ṣawālījah wa-Mā Yataʿallāqu bi-Dhālika min Ālāt al-Fursān.” The chapter on polo contains a significant amount of information, especially on the history and rules of the game, not available in Ibn Akhī Ḥizām’s relevant chapter, which was the only source cited and quoted by the anonymous author, who praised Ibn Akhī Ḥizām, calling him “*imām al-fursān*,” and acknowledged his authorship and definitive contribution in this particular domain. The anonymous author refers to a more comprehensive general *furūsīyah* treatise that he had written earlier and which included an even more detailed discourse on polo.

GENERAL *FURŪSĪYAH* TREATISES

The treatises which fall into this category are normally devoted to military *furūsīyah* and integrate different *furūsīyah* disciplines and fields of knowledge, both practical and theoretical, necessary for the training and education of the mounted warrior. The treatises vary in range and coverage of *furūsīyah* disciplines, but they invariably include and put emphasis on the arts of the lance, which sometimes constitute the central theme in such works.

The earliest and certainly the most important surviving general *furūsīyah* treatise is Ibn Akhī Ḥizām’s Treatise B, which established the genre and served as a model for future treatises. In this treatise Ibn Akhī Ḥizām used, just for the sake of thoroughness, two sources (unacknowledged), namely the treatise of al-Kindī on the types of swords, and “Kitāb al-Shāmil fī al-Ramī” by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭabarī. The rest of the treatise is entirely based on his personal experience and knowledge as a *furūsīyah* master. Indeed, the main core of the book lies in the chapters he composed on military equitation and horse mastery, the diverse arts of the lance, and the art of wielding the sword and javelin. His invaluable digression on the types and quality of lances, shields, and swords most suitable for the warrior is unique in *furūsīyah* literature. As for his chapter on archery, although he borrows heavily from al-Ṭabarī, it is very significant as it reflects the state of archery in the Abbasid army in the third/ninth century and the conflict between the Khurasani school of horse and foot archery and the Turkish school of horse archers. He closes his treatise with his famous contribution on polo, followed by

¹⁹¹Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 2066/8.



his unique discourse on hunting lions with the bow on horseback. All these chapters and data were quoted and recycled by subsequent Abbasid and Mamluk *furūsīyah* treatises to the point that the treatise of Ibn Akhī Ḥizām became not only a basic source of future treatises but an integral part of them.

All six copies that I have discovered so far are catalogued under different titles, and most of them are either unsigned or bear fictitious names;¹⁹² two copies are ascribed to Ṭaybughā al-Baklamīshī (above) and so quoted by modern researchers. Like his Treatise A on horses, Treatise B of Ibn Akhī Ḥizām was also translated into Kipchak, though in an abridged and truncated way, under the title *Munyat al-Ghuzāt*. Only one copy is extant.¹⁹³ There are also Ottoman and Persian versions of his work.¹⁹⁴ As previously explained, this work is still largely unrecognized in modern research as a third/ninth century work. The preamble of Treatise B may help in making the text easily identifiable. It begins with the words:

الحمد لله ذي العظمة، المتعالي بالقدرة عن الصفات، ذي المجد والعز والسلطان، أحمدته حمدا يزيد
على حمد الحامدين وصلى الله على نبينا محمد خاتم النبيين.

However, one should keep in mind that this preamble and the section on military equitation which follows were sometimes used by Mamluk compilers of the third group to give an air of authenticity to their texts.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹²Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 3m *funūn ḥarbīyah*, entitled "Al-Jihād wa-al-Furūsīyah wa-Funūn al-Ādāb al-Ḥarbīyah," catalogued as having been written by Ṭaybughā al-Baklamīshī and so cited by modern researchers; Fatih Mosque Library MS 3513, entitled "Kitāb al-Kamāl fī al-Furūsīyah wa-Anwā' al-Silāḥ wa-Adab al-'Amal bi-Dhālika wa-Ṣifāt al-Suyūf wa-al-Rimāḥ," transcribed for the private library of Sultan al-Ghūrī; Köprülü Mehmed Pasha Library MS 1361, entitled "Kitāb fī al-'Ilm bi-al-Furūsīyah wa-al-'Amal bi-hā," transcribed for the private library of Ibrāhīm ibn Sultan Mu'ayyad Shaykh; Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmed III 2515/1, entitled "Kitāb Yashtamilu 'alā Ma'rifat al-Ramy bi-al-Nushshāb wa-Ālāt al-Ḥarb wa-Anwā' Wujūh al-Ramy wa-Kayfiyat Shurūṭihi wa-Aḥwālihi"; Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Library MS 3915, dated 843/1439–40, untitled and incomplete. The colophon was plagiarized from that in Bayezit Public Library MS Veliyüddin Efendi 3174, with corruption of the author's name to Aḥmad; Alexandria, Maktabat al-Baladīyah MS 1201b, fols. 105r.–120r., entitled "Al-Jihād wa-al-Furūsīyah wa-Adab al-Funūn al-Ḥarbīyah." This copy is ascribed to Ṭaybughā al-Baklamīshī and so quoted by modern scholars.

¹⁹³The only copy is Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 3468 (850/1446), translated and published by Kurtuluş Öztopçu, see note 48 above.

¹⁹⁴For an Ottoman translation of this work, see Topkapı Sarayı Library MS *khazina* 415; for Persian translations, see C. A. Storey, *Persian literature, a Bibliographical Survey* (Leiden, 1977), vol. 2 pt. 3:396. Cf. Kurtuluş Öztopçu, "Introduction," in *Münyetü'l-guzāt*, 4.

¹⁹⁵For example, British Library MS Or. 20730, fols. 1a–9a; Bibliothèque Nationale, inv. nos. 2826, fols. 55a–58a, entitled "Al-Makhzūn li-Arbāb al-Funūn," and 2824, entitled "Kitāb al-Makhzūn Jāmi' al-Funūn," composed for a Mamluk notable, and attributed in the beautiful colophon to Ibn Akhī Ḥizām.



The only other surviving Abbasid general *furūsīyah* treatise that I am aware of so far is the anonymous fourth/tenth century work mentioned in the polo section above. In addition to the chapter on polo, it consists of a long and highly original discourse on the arts of the lance largely based on the author's experience as a veteran soldier and *furūsīyah* master. The author cited and described a considerably more comprehensive work that he wrote earlier and which he referred to as "*kitābī al-kabīr*." It covered the arts of the sword, the arts of the lance, archery, including the description and use of crossbows, arrow guides and the relevant types of darts, the art of wielding the *'amūd* and the *kāfir-kūb* (respectively the heavy iron staff and the wooden mace, both typical of the early Abbasid period), the art of wielding the *ṭabarzīn*, war-axe, the game of *ṭibṭāb*, hockey, and the game of polo.

It is quite possible that this work, which could be the untraceable "*Kitāb al-Furūsīyah*" of al-Ishmīṭī mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm,¹⁹⁶ was among the lost Abbasid works great numbers of which were used by Mamluk compilers of general *furūsīyah* treatises. Among these works might have been "*Kitāb al-Furūsīyah*" of the famous Baghdadi alim Ibn al-Jawzī (597/1200),¹⁹⁷ and especially the monumental work of Abū Yūsuf Najm al-Dīn Ya'qūb ibn Ṣābir ibn Barakāt al-Manjanīqī al-Baghdādī (d. 620/1220), "*Umdat al-Sālik fī Siyāsat al-Mamālik*." Ibn Khallikān's description of the author's work and its contents indicate that this lost treatise might well have been one of the most outstanding contributions to Muslim *furūsīyah* literature.

Ibn Ṣābir al-Manjanīqī, who was also a talented poet, was so versed in siege engines that he became *muqaddam al-manjanīqīyīn* in his native city, Baghdad. According to Ibn Khallikān, Ibn Ṣābir started his career as a soldier and devoted himself to the study and practice of military arts until he became a celebrated and unrivalled authority in this field. His treatise, as its title indicates, was meant to be a definitive reference book for the Abbasid state on *furūsīyah*. It treated the conduct of war, battle formation, stratagems of war, military engineering, fortification, construction of strongholds, siege warfare, military training and exercises *al-riyāḍah al-maydānīyah* (which include all the "branches" of upper [mounted] and lower [foot] *furūsīyah*), the arts of wielding various arms, the manufacturing of weapons, equitation, and types of horses and their descriptions.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, 377.

¹⁹⁷Hājji Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 1446; Ismā'īl al-Baghdādī, *Hadīyat al-'Arīfīn* (Istanbul, 1951–55), 1:522.

¹⁹⁸Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, 7:36:

كان ابن صابر المنجنيقي جندياً في ابتداء أمره مقدماً على المنجنيقين بمدينة السلام بغداد؛ ولم يزل مغرماً بأدب السيف والقلم وصناعة السلاح والرياضة واشتهر بذلك ولم يلحقه أحد من أبناء زمانه في درايته وفهمه لذلك. وصنف فيه كتاباً سماه عمدة المسالك في سياسة الممالك ولم يتممه. وهو مليح في معناه يتضمن أحوال الحروب، وتعبيتها،



Al-Manjanīqī died before finishing this massive encyclopedic work, but the fact that contemporary sources were familiar with its title, and above all with its contents, strongly suggests that copies were available in the seventh/thirteenth century.

The main corpus of general Mamluk *furūsīyah* treatises belong to the group designated as popular (third group). Basic treatises (first group), and good compiled ones (second group), are quite few. Of the first group, the following merit attention.

The oldest surviving general Mamluk *furūsīyah* treatise is by Badr al-Dīn Baktūt al-Rammāḥ al-Khazindārī al-Zāhirī.¹⁹⁹ He began writing his treatise in 689/1290 while Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl (689–93/1290–94) was conducting the siege of Acre, in which Baktūt participated as an ordinary trooper in the *ḥalqah*. It is a crude but sincere and highly motivated work. The author has no pretensions to the eloquence or erudition of his colleague of the late eighth/fourteenth century, Ibn Manglī; nor had he the same concerns and motives, for he was writing and responding to a different era, one marked by intense military activity. At this time the *ḥalqah* and its men enjoyed high esteem and *furūsīyah* was at its zenith. This was also the period of al-Aḥḍab and "lance fever." Baktūt was particularly proficient in the use of the lance. From the 150 *bunūd* of the Abbasid masters, the seventy-two *bunūd* by al-Aḥḍab, and the twenty-four by Ādam, he forged seven essential exercises so as to make it easier for the beginner. He modeled his work on Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise AB, imitating even its preamble. The treatise is mainly devoted to lance techniques and the care of horses, but it also contains interesting passages on other subjects, mainly on training the novice in archery and the alternation of different weapons on the battlefield. Apparently Baktūt did not give a title to his work and it has survived under different names.²⁰⁰ More than seven copies have been traced so far.²⁰¹

The treatise of Muḥammad Ibn 'Īsā Ibn Ismā'īl al Aqsarā'ī al-Ḥanafī (749/1348), "Nihāyat al-Sūl wa-al-Umnīyah fī Ta'līm A'māl al-Furūsīyah," is generally

وفتح الثغور، وبناء المعادل، واحوال الفروسية، والهندسة، والمصابرة على القلاع والحصار، والرياضة الميدانية، والحيل الحربية، وفنون العلاج بالسلح، وعمل أداة الحرب والكفاح، وصنوف الحيل وصفاتها. وقد قسم هذا الكتاب ورتبه في ابواب، كل باب منه يشتمل على فصول.

¹⁹⁹Charles Rieu (*Supplement of the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the British Museum* [London, 1894], 556), suggested that he could be the Baktūt Amīr Shikār al-Khāzindārī mentioned in al-'Asqalānī's *Al-Durar al-Kāminah* as *nā'ib* of Alexandria (711/1311–12); he dug the canal of that city at his own expense. This hypothesis has led some modern scholars to confound the *nā'ib* with another Baktūt, who died in 771/1369, almost a century later than Baktūt al-Rammāḥ.

²⁰⁰For example, "Al-Furūsīyah wa-'Ilāj al-Khayl" and "Kāmil al-Ṣinā'ah fī 'Ilm al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Shajā'ah." Copyists have also added Baktūt's name to such treatises as al-Aqsarā'ī's "Al-Nihāyah" and "Al-Sirr al-Makhzūn wa-Jāmi' al-Funūn" (Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 2:89–99). The varying titles also have led modern scholars to conclude that Baktūt wrote several works.

²⁰¹Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2830, fols. 1a–72b, catalogued as anonymous; British Library MS



considered the most important Mamluk *furūsīyah* treatise. This is a questionable assumption, since a full analysis of the work and its sources is still lacking.²⁰² It is not a synthesis but an ingenious original compilation by an alim who combined erudition with practical knowledge in some branches of *furūsīyah*, particularly in the arts of the lance and archery. It is a deliberate attempt at placing the available knowledge and experience into a unified framework, and also a concerted effort to reverse the deterioration of *furūsīyah* in his time. The result was a unique work of incontestable encyclopedic dimension which is curiously reminiscent of Ibn Ṣābir al-Manjanīqī's "Umdat al-Sālik." "Nihāyat al-Sūl" includes historical data from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Much of this data was not indicative of contemporary practices. Some of the information on tactics, military organization, and battle formations was taken from Greek and Sassanian sources, which were never part of Abbasid or Mamluk military practice, at least not in the raw form presented. The importance of this work does not, however, lie in its supposed representation of Mamluk military reality, but rather in its being the only extant source on a number of subjects, including long quotations from treatises no longer surviving. A preliminary breakdown of the contents and, when possible, the identification of sources will provide a more precise assessment of the treatise.²⁰³

Lesson 1 (fols. 27b–42b). This chapter on archery is based on a considerable number of pre-Mamluk sources. Al-Akhbārī's "Al-Idāḥ fī 'Ilm al-Ramy" is mentioned as "Al-Idāḥ" without accrediting the author; al-Yūnīnī's "Al-Nihāyah fī 'Ilm al-Rimāyah" is referred to simply as "Al-Nihāyah" without mentioning the author's name; al-Ṭabarī's "Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ" and Ibn Maymūn's "Al-Ifādah wa-al-Tabṣīr" are both used without acknowledgment. He quotes "Ardashīr" (Ibn Bābak) and refers to his treatise as "Al-Nihāyah."²⁰⁴

Lesson 2 (fols. 42–118a). This chapter on the arts of the lance is the longest, and represents perhaps the most comprehensive development on the techniques of the lance in *furūsīyah* literature. It is divided into sets of *bābs*, the first five of which are devoted to different versions of the *bunūd* of al-Aḥḍab; his *mayādīn* and *manāṣīb* are expounded in other *bābs*. On this subject, al-Aqsarā'ī may be considered the most reliable authority. The only other source which can be identified

Or. 3631, fols. 261a–279a; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS *funūn ḥarbīyah* 4m; Rabat, Maktabat al-Khizānah al-‘Āmmah MS 266/a; Istanbul, Evkaf Museum Library MS 2107; Ayasofya Library MS 4826/1; Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 3471/5.

²⁰²It has been edited in two unpublished Ph.D. theses by Sayed Muḥammad Luṭf al-Ḥaq (London University, 1955) and Nabīl ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (Cairo University, 1972). Both editors failed to use the two most reliable copies: Chester Beatty Library MS A 21 and British Library MS Add. 18866 (see below).

²⁰³Taken from the text in the British Library, MS Add. 18866.

²⁰⁴A work entitled "Kitāb Ramy al-Nushshāb," attributed to Ardashīr and narrated on the authority



is Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise B (not acknowledged); his chapters on equitation and lance techniques, quoted verbatim, fill twenty *bābs*. For the remainder of this chapter, which is considerable, the author drew on unidentified sources.

Lesson 3 (fols. 118a–148b). This chapter on the arts of the sword is entirely based on Abbasid sources. It includes three pages from Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise B (not acknowledged) and al-Kindī's entire treatise "Risālah fī Jawāhir al-Ḥadīd" (acknowledged). The remainder of the text, which constitutes the greater part of this chapter, includes an extensive discussion of the arts of the sword which is unique in the available *furūsīyah* literature. The source or sources used for this important discussion cannot be ascertained at this stage of research, though it may reasonably be suggested that al-Aqṣarā'ī drew here from al-Manjanīqī's work and/or from the "Grand *furūsīyah* book" of the anonymous fourth/tenth century author.

Lesson 4 (fols. 151b–152b). This chapter on shields was taken almost entirely from Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise B (not acknowledged).

Lesson 5 (fols. 152b–153a). This short chapter on the '*amūd* (a ponderous iron staff), taken from early Abbasid sources, is irrelevant to the Mamluk period, for the weapon was already extinct at the advent of the Mamluks, who knew and used only the *dabbūs* (see above). Al-Aqṣarā'ī concluded this chapter by mentioning that a frontier (*thughūr*) warrior told him that the '*amūd* weighs one hundred fifty dirhams and that it is preferable to have one even lighter.²⁰⁵ The one hundred fifty dirhams is equivalent to about 0.5 kg, which is not even a third of the weight of a light *dabbūs*, while the minimum weight of an '*amūd* as standardized in the early Abbasid period was six kg and the maximum weight was commonly fixed at ten kg, but it could be much more.²⁰⁶ This clearly indicates that al-Aqṣarā'ī not only had never seen a real '*amūd* but that he did not have the slightest notion about its functions.

Lesson 6 (fols. 153a–161b). For cavalry training al-Aqṣarā'ī's principal source was again Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise B (not acknowledged), covering horse equipment, vaulting on horses, and hunting with the bow. There is particular emphasis on the famous method of lion hunting with the bow from horseback.

Lesson 7 (fols. 161b–197b). The methods of using arms in various situations are described. The unity of style and subject matter is evidence that al-Aqṣarā'ī was quoting verbatim from a now unidentifiable source. His work is thus the only one available on this aspect of *furūsīyah*.

Lesson 8 (fols. 197b–211b). In this chapter, the author deals with recruiting and organization of the army, including data totally incompatible with the Mamluk

of Ṭāhir al-Balkhī, survives in a single copy: Nuruosmaniye Mosque Library MS 4098, fols. 63a–71a.



period, for example, a section on summoning and recruiting troops based on the army register (*dīwān al-jaysh*) developed by the Abbasids. It was considered important to keep accurate descriptions of each soldier and his mount in these registers, hence the emphasis on physiognomy, *‘ilm al-firāsah*, which motivated scholars like al-Kindī and al-Jāhīz to take an interest in the subject. The most important contributions in this field were *Kitāb al-Firāsah* by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209),²⁰⁷ and *Kitāb al-Firāsah* by Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī al-Ṣūfī al-Dimashqī (d. 727/1327).²⁰⁸ Al-Aqṣarā’ī drew on both (not acknowledged) and on *Al-Kharāj wa-Ṣinā‘at al-Kitābah* (not acknowledged) by Qudāmah ibn Ja‘far al-Baghdādī (d. 329/940).²⁰⁹ The section on ambush was taken from al-Harthamī’s abridged treatise (not acknowledged) and also includes material from Aelian’s *Tactica*.²¹⁰ The remainder of the text is probably from the same Sassanian source that al-Aqṣarā’ī used in Lesson 9 (not acknowledged).

Lesson 9 (fols. 211b–235b). This chapter on battle formations is irrelevant to the Mamluk context, for it was based mainly on Aelian’s *Tactica*²¹¹ (acknowledged) and a Sassanian source (not acknowledged) that was already available in Arabic in the latter half of the second/eighth century, as some of the battle formations, especially those of crescent shape, were already known to al-Harthamī.

Lesson 10 (fols. 235b–240b). This chapter is devoted to military ruses involving incendiary and smoke devices. It is divided into two parts, the first, on the use of fire, copied from the anonymous Abbasid treatise *Kitāb al-Ḥiyal fī al-Ḥurūb* (not acknowledged). The second part is about the use of smoke in battle. The source material for it has not yet been identified.

Lesson 11 (fols. 240b–281a). This rather long chapter is on the spoils of war and various problems of Islamic law concerning attitudes toward the enemy in war and peace. It is acknowledged to have been drawn from *Kitāb al-Siyar al-Ṣaghīr* and *Kitāb al-Siyar al-Kabīr*,²¹² both written by the Iraqi jurist Muḥammad Ibn

²⁰⁷First published by Muḥammad Raghīb al-Ṭabbākh, as *Risālah fī ‘Ilm al-Firāsah* (Aleppo, 1929); then edited and translated into French by Yūsuf Murād as *La physiognomonie et le Kitāb al-firāsa de Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Paris, 1939); cf. Tawfiq Fahd, “Firāsa” *EL*², 2:937. The work is also called *Jumal Aḥkām al-Firāsah*.

²⁰⁸Published in Cairo 1882. The work is also known as “Al-Siyāsah fī ‘Ilm al-Firāsah” or “Al-Firāsah li-Ajl al-Siyāsah.”

²⁰⁹Edited and published by Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Zubaydī (Baghdad, 1981).

²¹⁰See Geoffrey Tatum, “Muslim Warfare: A Study of a Medieval Muslim Treatise on the Art of War,” in *Islamic Arms and Armour*, ed. Robert Elgood (London, 1979), 194.

²¹¹According to Tatum, “Muslim Warfare,” 194, “Al-Nihāyah” contains approximately one third of the *Tactica*.

²¹²The original text is apparently lost, but a version survived within the commentary of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī (d. 429/1037), published and edited by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid and ‘Abd



Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189/805).

Lesson 12 (fols. 281b–292a, end of treatise). This chapter covers complementary branches of knowledge needed by the warrior like casting auguries, treatment of wounds, and so on. The author's sources are not known, but the fact that he included such a chapter in his treatise attests to his concern for thoroughness.

After careful consideration of the treatise it is apparent that its importance lies in lessons 3 and 7 and parts of lessons 1 and 2. Consequently, it seems an exaggeration to qualify it as "the most important of all sources in Arabic on Muslim military organization, training and theory."²¹³ At least ten copies of the "Nihāyat al-Sūl" are extant.²¹⁴

Baktūt's and al-Aqsarā'ī's works are the only authentically signed general *furūsīyah* treatises in the first group which can be traced up to now. All the other treatises of this group are unsigned either by accident or design. An example is the untitled and unsigned work with the first and last pages missing, written in the second half of the fourteenth century by a veteran master of *furūsīyah* in the royal barracks, during the sultanate of Sha'bān or of Barqūq. It should be considered one of the most original Mamluk *furūsīyah* texts. Its importance lies mainly in the author's directions and advice to his cadre of fellow *furūsīyah* instructors, whom he urges to be more inventive and to create new exercises for their pupils, especially in lance play. He has furnished information on how to treat and train the sultan's personal mamluks. There is also useful information on past and present *furūsīyah* masters, both Turkish and Arab. The author further expounded on riding and lance techniques. Only one copy has survived.²¹⁵

Another anonymous text, "Al-'Adīm al-Mithl al-Rafī' al-Qadr" is the only one in which the complete training program of the Mamluks is set forth. It covers practically all aspects of upper (mounted) and lower (foot) *furūsīyah*, including techniques of fighting on foot, fighting with the dagger, boxing (the unique source

al-'Azīz Aḥmad, as *Kitāb al-Siyar al-Kabīr bi-Sharḥ al-Sarakhsī*, 5 vols. (Cairo, 1971–72). A version of *Kitāb al-Siyar al-Ṣaḡhīr* was published by Majid Khadduri (Beirut, 1975).

²¹³Scanlon, "Introduction," in *A Muslim Manual of War*, 10, quoting Ritter, "La Parure," 132–35.

²¹⁴Chester Beatty Library MS A 21 (dated 767/1366); British Library MSS Add. 18866 (773/1371, probably copied from the Chester Beatty manuscript), Or. 3631, Add. 23487, 23488; Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Ahmet III 2651 (dated 775/1373); Ayasofya Library MSS 4044, 4197; Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2828; University of Cambridge Library MS Q9277; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 3m/1. This last copy is incomplete, unsigned, and untitled; it is bound with a version of Ṭaybughā's treatise "Ghunyāt al-Marāmī," and the whole manuscript, bearing the fictitious title "Al-Jihād wa-Funūn al-Adab al-Ḥarbīyah," is attributed by modern research to the latter and quoted as such.

²¹⁵British Library MS Or. 9015 (imperfect).



on this subject), and wrestling.²¹⁶ This treatise is all the more valuable because most exercises are illustrated in detail. Only one copy, the original, is extant under this title;²¹⁷ later versions appeared under different titles. The one that needs to be mentioned, being a persistent source of misunderstanding, is the luxurious, anonymous version entitled "Al-Makhzūn Jāmi' al-Funūn" kept in the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg. It was wrongly attributed to Ibn Akhī Ḥizām or rather, *faute de mieux*, to "Ibn Abī Khazzām!"²¹⁸ This attribution is largely influenced by the similarity of title and general aspect with manuscript 2824 of the Bibliothèque Nationale apocryphally signed Ibn Abī Khazzām which we have described above and classified among the treatises of group three.

Among the compiled texts (second group) of general *furūsīyah* treatises two are especially noteworthy, *Kitāb al-Furūsīyah* by Ibn Qayyim al Jawzīyah,²¹⁹ which is of some use in explaining and correcting certain names and terms, and "Naqāwat al-Muntaqā fī Nāfi'āt al-Liqā," by al-Akhmīmī. It was written before his appointment as *qādī al-quḍāh* under Sultan al-Ghūrī. It is an abridgment of a lost work entitled "Al-Muntaqā fī 'Ulūm al-Furūsīyah" by Taqī al-Dīn Abū Zakarīyah Yaḥyá ibn Muḥammad al-Kirmānī al-Shāfi'ī al-Baghdādī²²⁰ (761–833/1359–1429), who in turn compiled it from the major early *furūsīyah* works, including Ibn Akhī Ḥizām's Treatise B. It is useful for explaining certain technical terms used by Ibn Akhī Ḥizām in his chapter on the lance. The only surviving copy is an unsigned autograph dated 889/1484.²²¹

²¹⁶Al-Suyūfī composed a treatise on wrestling, "Al-Musāra'ah ilá al-Mušāra'ah," of which perhaps two copies are known: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS 5557/2; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 5 *khidiwīyah*, 11845. I have not seen the latter and I am not sure of its existence.

²¹⁷Topkapı Sarayı Library MS Revan 1933 (871/1466–67), incorrectly catalogued as al-Ṭabarī's "Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ"; a microfilm in Ma'had al-Makhtūṭāt is also incorrectly catalogued as a "*majmū' fī al-rumḥ*," and a large portion of it has been attributed to 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭabarī.

²¹⁸A. Alikberov, "Ibn Abi Khazzam and his Kitāb al-Makhzun: The Mamluk Military Manual," *Manuscripta Orientalia: International Journal for Oriental Manuscript Research* 1 (1995): 21–28.

²¹⁹Edited by 'Izzat al-'Aṭṭār (Cairo, 1942).

²²⁰See Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qādī Shuhbah*, ed. 'Adnān Darwīsh (Damascus, 1977), 151–52; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw' al-Lāmi'* 10:259–61.

²²¹British Library MS 7513/2.



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Political Violence and Ideology in Mamluk Society

The Mamluk era in the history of the Middle East is probably best known for two things: its impressive architectural legacy in Egypt and Syria and its political violence. As Lane-Poole wrote a century ago: "Most of these sultans died violent deaths at the hands of rival emirs. . . . The uncertainty of the tenure of power, and the general brevity of their reigns make it more astonishing that the Mamluk sultans found the leisure to promote the many noble works of architecture and engineering which distinguish their rule above any other period of Egyptian history since the Christian era."¹ A century after Lane-Poole, in the most recent history of the Mamluks, Robert Irwin still writes, "The tenure of power at the top was very insecure—at first sight the history of Egypt and Syria is little more than a sequence of sultans, whose often obscure reigns are embellished only by their own assassination, by the specters of strangled viziers and slaughtered emirs."²

Yet between Lane-Poole and Irwin something significant changes in the historiography of the era: the understanding of political violence in Mamluk society. Earlier historians like Lane-Poole deplored the violence, but then were faced with the task of explaining how the Mamluk system remained in place for more than two and a half centuries despite it. However, in recent years there has been a reconsideration of political violence in Mamluk Egypt and Syria. Broadly, there are two revisionist approaches.

Winslow Clifford in his dissertation, "State Formation and the Structure of Politics in Mamluk Syro-Egypt, 648–741 A.H./1250–1340 C.E.," attempts to explain Mamluk politics as a "dynamic equilibrium."³ Accordingly he refers to "structured violence," and "the political theater of structured violence." He argues, "Violence was never the true cement of the early Mamluk state."⁴ Further, "Far from embracing a Hobbesian 'war of all against all,' the Mamluks cultivated a manageable system of interaction meant precisely . . . to inhibit violence and resolve conflict by ensuring a reasonably equitable distribution of resources and rotation of power

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¹Stanley Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt in the Middle Ages* (London, 1901), 246–47.

²Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382* (London, 1986), Introduction, ii.

³Winslow Clifford, "State Formation and the Structure of Politics in Mamluk Syro-Egypt, 648–741 A.H./1250–1340 C.E.," Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1995, 4.

⁴*Ibid.*, 2.



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within the ruling elite.”

On the other hand, analysts such as Carl Petry and Robert Irwin see the violence as central. Petry says, “Recent analysts of military slavery in the medieval Muslim world have become convinced that, for good or ill, such feuding was not at all an aberration but in fact had evolved as a basic, indeed fundamental, dimension of militarist politics.”⁵ And a number of passages in Irwin’s book *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382* consider the meaning of such violence.

Yet despite this change of perspective, there still remains a certain tendency in scholarly writing, even as one acknowledges the level of violence, to treat it as excessive—or at least as *excess* to a less sanguinary topic—*waqf* endowments, cult of saints, the status of women, and so forth. And in any case, the question remains, if the violence was somehow “systemic,” how did it function as part of the system—that is, how did it arise and prevail? In short, the seemingly paradoxical question still arises: how did seemingly continuous political violence serve the political system? The following essay considers not only the phenomenon of violence itself, but also its representation in the medieval chronicles, principally those of al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrībirdī and Ibn Iyās. It proposes an ideological role for violence on the basis of those chronicles.

I should begin by saying that in my view the paradox of “stable yet violent” is the perspective illusion of a conventional way of thinking, one that assumes some sort of social equilibrium is the usual state of things. Such a perspective informs much critical thinking no less than everyday thinking (for example, conservative economists who treat such phenomena as recurrent monetary crises, environmental pollution, work place health hazards, terrorism, etc., as mere excesses and aberrations of global capitalism that, with just a bit more tinkering and fine tuning, will be largely eliminated). By way of contrast, the quasi-Hegelian view here is that such “excesses” and “unintended consequences” are fundamental to the system. What is more, such excesses play a critical ideological role in the subject’s allegiance to the political order. The premise is that of Slavoj Žižek: “every ideology attaches itself to some kernel of *jouissance* which, however, retains the status of an ambiguous excess.”⁶ Lacan used the term *jouissance* to mean that form of traumatic attachment, the “pleasure in pain” that Freud described as “beyond the pleasure principle.”

Evidence for this premise can easily be drawn from contemporary politics. For example, consider the role of sex scandals in American right-wing political discourse in the past decade. Ostensibly right-wing journalists and prosecutors investigated

⁵Carl Petry, “Class Solidarity versus Gender Gain,” in *Women in Middle Eastern History*, ed. Nikkie Keddie (New Haven, 1991), 124.

⁶Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (New York, 1997), 50.



and discussed the intimate details of the sex life of Bill Clinton not out of a prurient sado-voyeuristic pleasure in the public humiliation of their opponent, but rather because of some other high-minded concern: "It's not about sex. It's about character. It's about the law. It's about family values," etc. Yet their obsessive attachment to the subject meant that cable news networks constantly broadcast gross details of people's sex lives—even as the same people who discussed these "scandals" also complained about coarse and offensive television programming. In other words, the American right wing is galvanized, united by the very thing they claimed to denounce—a perverse obsession with sex (why was Ken Starr always grinning?).

Since the ideology at stake is medieval Sunni Islam, an example from the medieval chronicle of Ibn Taghrībirdī will provide some evidence for the validity of this premise in another time and culture (*jouissance* is ahistorical; how the "hard kernel" of *jouissance* is caught in various ideological fields is historical). In 693/1294 a powerful amir, al-Shujā'ī, was murdered by a rival's mamluks. Then, in what was common practice, his head was paraded through the streets of Cairo on a lance. Since he had been an oppressive and rapacious official, Ibn Taghrībirdī says:

People greatly enjoyed his killing, so that when the herald carried his head through the houses of the Coptic secretaries, they beat his face with their slippers as a way of seeking justice, and they pissed coins on the heralds—who earned a lot that way. But I say that this was a reprehensible mistake on the part of the heralds—God damn them (*qātalāhum Allāh*). Even if he had been an oppressor, he was better than the Christian Copts.⁷

In other words, Ibn Taghrībirdī is affronted by the fact that Christians derived enjoyment from something—the abuse of a decapitated head—that ought to have been the exclusive enjoyment of Muslims, a fact explained by his own libidinal attachment, as a Sunni Muslim, to the violence: for Ibn Taghrībirdī, the Christians were stealing the Muslims' *jouissance*.

This essay then will explore the libidinal economy of Mamluk violence as represented in the chronicles. I shall also say that Mamluk violence is "excessive"—but in another sense: it is excessive as an instance of Lacanian *jouissance*, what Slavoj Žižek calls "surplus enjoyment." Precisely in so far as this violence fascinates the chroniclers (and us their readers), it reveals the "surplus

⁷Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1963), 8:52.



enjoyment that is the necessary support of social relationships of domination.”⁸ I will try to show how violence—assassination, execution, torture—was the “hard kernel” of *jouissance* that sustained the prevailing ideology. In that ideology, medieval Sunni Islam, the social relation of lord and servant is “fetishized” in the Marxist sense—that is to say, a contingent historical relation is represented as something “already there,” preordained by divine order. In the Quran 16:74 God compares master and slave in this way: “God makes a comparison: a slave, property of his master, who cannot do anything, and one whom we have endowed with wealth, who may spend it privately or publicly—are they equal?”

To show how violence forms the ideological bond, we will consider a number of historical narratives from the chronicles of Mamluk historians—mostly from al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrībirdī and Ibn Iyās—all of them versions in one way or another of one of the master narratives of medieval Islamic culture: the fall of the mighty man. That narrative will be critiqued by means of Kojève’s “fight for pure prestige;” where in the medieval account, the great man falls on account of Fate or God, defeat in the “fight for pure prestige” is solely at the hands of another man—which means that the fall of one great man is necessarily the rise of another.

Among all the various states and dynasties in medieval Islamic history, Mamluk social order in particular seems to give very clear empirical expression to this fetishized relation of master and slave. Obviously, that it was also extremely violent even by medieval standards was not, I think, mere accident.

To begin to sort out both the agents and the acts of violence, some provisional categories are necessary. A summary account of the beginnings of Mamluk rule will provide most of them. Like many good stories, it begins with a murder.

In 648/1250 a group of Bahri mamluks assassinated the Ayyubid sultan al-Mu‘azzam Tūrānshāh. The mamluks were frustrated with Tūrānshāh’s rule and concerned about threats he had made against them. Yet it seems that although Tūrānshāh’s assassination had been discussed, the event itself was not well planned. After one of the Bahri mamluks bungled an assassination attempt on him in his tent, Tūrānshāh took refuge in a wooden tower near the Nile. Hearing of the botched attempt, the other Bahri mamluks rushed to the scene and set the tower on fire. When Tūrānshāh emerged, they shot him with arrows and chased him into the river where they finished him off with their swords. The upshot was—in the context of medieval Islamic history—an anomaly: the brief reign of a woman, Shajar al-Durr, the widow of Tūrānshāh’s father, al-Šāliḥ Ayyūb II. After a few weeks, to patch up this weird state of affairs, she married the amir Aybak, who is usually reckoned the first Mamluk sultan. However, Aybak’s reign was interrupted after only five days when a group of Bahri mamluks led by Aqtāy secured the

⁸Zižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, 51.



purely nominal restoration of an Ayyubid prince, al-Ashraf Mūsá, a boy of six years at the time. Obviously Mūsá never exercised real power; his reign simply sutured a split between Bahri and non-Bahri amirs. And indeed, the ostensibly deposed Aybak continued to wield great power by virtue of being Mūsá's *atabak* or military commander-in-chief, until, in 652/1254, after four years of maneuvering and plotting, Aybak, having secured his power base, lured his Bahri rival Aqtāy to the palace under the pretense of "consultation." Aybak's mamluks cut him down with their swords. Then they cut off his head and threw it down from the wall of the Citadel to his Bahri comrades who were waiting for him outside.⁹ Aybak then deposed the child sultan and assumed the title of sultan himself.

Aybak's reign ended in 655/1257 when his wife Shajar al-Durr, hearing he was going to displace her with a Syrian princess, had her servants strangle him while he was taking a bath. A few days later, Shajar al-Durr was herself murdered by servants of her mother-in-law who beat her to death with their wooden clogs (*qibāqīb*). Aybak's son 'Alī succeeded as sultan, but again merely as a place-holder until the contending forces among the mamluk amirs could sort themselves out and a clear victor could emerge.

Having proceeded only this far, certain empirical patterns and categories emerge to provide a sufficient framework for analysis.

First of all, there were, as Irwin puts it, two sorts of sultans: real sultans and "mock sultans." Real sultans were powerful amirs who seize the throne either by 1) assassinating another real sultan or 2) by deposing a "mock sultan." "Mock sultans" were usually young offspring of real sultans who tried repeatedly to establish hereditary dynasties and repeatedly failed. Their offspring simply "fronted juntas of feuding military men"¹⁰ until one group gained the decisive advantage. The reasons for the failure to establish a hereditary dynasty are clear: the young sultan took the throne surrounded by powerful, older mamluks practiced in the arts of politics—intrigue, extortion, and murder—while the young sultan was not. The chronicler Ibn Taghrībirdī remarked when he was witness to the fall of one such mock sultan, al-Manṣūr 'Uthmān, a Burji sultan whose "reign" lasted less than two months:

As the saying goes, "The weapon is present, but the understanding is absent." [This is] because they are young and inexperienced,

⁹Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk* (Cairo, 1956–58), 1:2:390; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:10–12; Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā' i' al-Duhūr* (Cairo, 1972), 1:1:291.

¹⁰Irwin, *Middle East*, 27.



unpracticed in the arts of war, and they know nothing of deceit and double-dealing with their opponents.¹¹

Most often mock sultans were not murdered, since they were seen as harmless. The most important exceptions to this pattern were the descendants of Qalāwūn who must be accounted real sultans, yet even they also served time as mock sultans and were deposed one or more times before they matured and established their power so as to rule as real sultans.

The second thing we see in the story of Tūrānshāh, Shajar al-Durr, and Aybak is the variety of violence. The following categories drawn from the preceding summary may serve as rubrics for this essay and will help us sort out the mayhem: assassination (Tūrānshāh, Aybak); execution (Aqtāy); revenge-*lex talionis* (Shajar al-Durr). To these, I would add two more: torture and spectacle. As will be seen shortly, some blurring of these categories is inevitable. Clearly we would usually say that being strangled in a bath is an assassination, while being strangled in front of the sultan is an execution. Yet, the example of al-Nāṣir Faraj will show us the difficulty of this distinction. The larger significance of political violence in Mamluk culture hinges on two matters, its prevalence and its representation in the chronicles. What can we say about the gross realities beyond the representation? We shall work backwards, considering what seems the reality and then consider what we may deduce from the narrative representation of that.

ASSASSINATION

One may wonder, how prevalent was assassination? My tally of Mamluk sultans indicates that twenty-two of fifty were murdered. More to the point, if one only counts the twenty-nine "real" sultans (discounting the twenty-one "mock" sultans who did not really hold power), roughly two-thirds of these were murdered: nineteen of twenty-nine. Again, certain empirical patterns—the how, the when, and where—emerge with respect to assassinations. Often what I term an "assassination" is described in the chronicles as an instance of *fatk*, which the *Lisān al-‘Arab* tells us is "to take the man by surprise and kill him," whereas an execution is most often termed *qatl* ("killing") in the chronicles. But not always.

Not surprisingly, assassinations were usually attempted when the would-be victim was likely to be alone, relaxed, and off guard. As we have seen, Aybak was strangled while taking a bath. In 698/1298 the sultan Lājīn would be assassinated while playing chess. Prayer time was also a favored time; in 747/1347 Gurlū, an amir who had manipulated events under the young Qalwunids Ismā‘īl and Sha‘bān, was similarly murdered while praying; and towards the end of the Mamluk dynasty

¹¹Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:49.



in 908/1502 we read of Azdamūr, the *dawādār* of the sultan Qānsūh al-Ghawrī, being shot at with arrows while on his way to pray, his thoughts presumably concentrated on that beyond to which his rival wished to hasten him on his way.¹²

Many of the Mamluks liked to hunt, and hunting provided another opportunity to ambush the victim while he was alone.¹³ In 657/1259, shortly after defeating the Mongol army at ‘Ayn Jālūt, Quṭuz, who had been one of Tūrānshāh’s assassins, was ambushed and killed while hunting by a group of mamluk amirs, one of whom was the future sultan Baybars. And again in 693/1293 the sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl was assassinated while hunting by a group of disaffected amirs led by Baydarā. In the instance of Quṭuz, one of the amirs struck him first with a blow on the shoulder. Then another pulled him from his horse, and when he was on the ground, the rest shot him full of arrows. In the assassination of Khalīl, the first blows struck are similarly on the hand, and then the shoulder. Al-Maqrīzī describes it in this way: “The two rushed him with their swords [the amirs Baydarā and Lājīn]. He [Baydarā] struck him on his hand and cut it off (*abāna yadahu*), then a second time and disabled (*hadda*) his shoulder. Then the amir Lājīn got to him and shouted at Baydarā, “Whoever would be King of Egypt and Syria should strike a blow like this!” and he struck him on the shoulder a blow which severed it (*ḥallahu*). Thus disabled, he was finished off by the other amirs. This plan of attack is found again and again in the sources no matter what the scene; the initial blow is not meant to kill, but is struck on the right shoulder, and its purpose is clearly to disable the victim and prevent him from fighting back. For example, when the amir al-Shujā‘ī, already mentioned above, was jumped by mamluks of his rival Kitbughā, the first blow was struck on his hand. Then a second blow severed his head from his body.¹⁴ In any situation where the victim is armed, the assassinations—taking into account, to be sure, the differences in weaponry—resemble mob-style killings; the goal is first to disable, then to dispatch the victim as quickly as possible—and in such a way that his death is a certainty.

In the pre-Thompson sub-machine gun era, the killing of al-Nāṣir Faraj illustrates the difficulties that could arise, even from a victim who has already been arrested (his is one of the examples that blurs the easy distinction between assassination and execution). Faraj surrendered to the amirs Nawrūz and Shaykh Maḥmūdī when they and the caliph al-Musta‘īn gave him a written pledge of safety. But once they had apprehended Faraj, the amirs called in some complaisant qadis who ruled that the pledge was “inoperative.” They sent a party of five amirs and

¹²Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:736–37.

¹³One might expect the irony of “the hunter being ‘bagged’ ” would have furnished the poets with obvious material, but the chronicles do not include any poetry on that theme.

¹⁴Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:46.



executioners to Faraj, but seeing them, he realized at once what they meant to do, and he tried to defend himself. Al-Maqrīzī's account reads thus:

He [Faraj] defended himself. Two of the men jumped him and, after they had wounded him in several places, they threw him to the ground. At this point one of the two young assassins went at his neck with his dagger, and then he strangled him. By now he was wounded in five places. When he thought he was finished off, he stood up. [But] his heart was still beating, and he strangled him a second time. This time he was more certain he had died, and he left him, but then he moved again. So he went at him a third time and cut his arteries with his dagger.¹⁵

Whatever distinctions we might make between an assassination and an execution, I must add that this distinction usually has no legal implications. If the chronicles are to be believed, sultans rarely sought a legal ruling before they ordered someone killed. This distinction much more often concerns the relative rank of killer and victim, and bonds of loyalty that the chronicler might have thought ought to have existed between them. Assassination is most often the killing of a superior, whereas execution is the killing of an inferior—sometimes with, sometimes without legal pretence. In other words, the terms more nearly reflect a power relation—master and servant—rather than legal distinctions.

The slaying of the amir Shaykhūn in 758/1357 is another example that shows the absence of legal pretence and the difficulties of nomenclature. Shaykhūn was one of a powerful group of amirs who ran Egypt while a grandson of Qalāwūn, al-Nāṣir Ḥasan, learned the ropes. He was murdered in the presence of the sultan in the Hall of Justice by a mamluk named Qutlūqjā. The mamluk jumped Shaykhūn and struck him three blows with his sword, on his head, his face, and his arm.¹⁶ The sultan gathered his private guards and hurried to safety. The killer claimed he acted solely on account of a private grudge and was executed shortly thereafter, but it was widely believed that the sultan ordered the murder.¹⁷

EXECUTION

Execution was the usual fate for a Mamluk amir who lost in the game of hardball politics. The means of execution were several. Common means were strangulation,

¹⁵Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:224.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 3:1:33.

¹⁷Irwin, *Middle East*, 142.



hanging, decapitation, bisection (*tawsīt*),¹⁸ crucifixion, drowning, and burning. But as Aybak's killing of Aqtāy shows, the simplest form of execution was to order one's mamluks to cut the man down with swords. Strangulation with a bow string seems, as Irwin says, to have been regarded as "more honorable."¹⁹ After the sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan consolidated his power, he arrested the amir Sarghitmish and had him strangled in prison in 759/1358. Likewise, hanging also seems to have been reserved for worthy foes; one of Baydarā's conspirators in the assassination of al-Ashraf Khalīl in 693/1293, the amir Qujḡār, was hung in the horse market.²⁰ But it is not always easy to determine why one means of execution is selected over another. Al-Zāhir Barḡūq provides an example; Ibn al-Furāt tells us that in 793/1391 Barḡūq ordered some prisoners to be taken to the Ridānīyah exhibition grounds, and of them he singles out three to be drowned, seven others to be crucified and then bisected.²¹ If one were to single out drowning as "more honorable" would that be anything more than personal preference?

On the basis of my readings I would say that bisection was the most common form of execution for political opponents. This procedure was described by fourteenth century traveler Leo Africanus:

The pains inflicted on malefactors are severe and cruel, especially those which are pronounced in the sultan's court. He who steals is hung. He who commits a homicide through treachery incurs the following punishment: one of the executioner's aides holds him by his two feet, another holds him by his head. The executioner, armed with a two-handed sword, cuts the body into two parts. The superior part is then placed on a pile of quicklime and can survive for twenty minutes, continuing to talk. It is a frightful thing to see and hear.²²

¹⁸Ibid., 86. The description of a method called *shaqq* may be an error. This was based on Excursus F in *The Theologus Autodidactus of Ibn Nafis*, ed. Max Meyerhoff and Joseph Schacht (Oxford, 1968), 81–82, which uses a manuscript of al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*. However, that portion of al-Nuwayrī's work has since been published, and the word in the printed text is not *shaqq* but *shanaq* = "gibbeting." On the other hand, in Ibn Faḡlān there is definitely mention of a technique in Central Asia like *shaqq*, splitting a malefactor "in half from his neck to his thighs." (*Risālat Ibn Faḡlān*, ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān [Damascus, 1959], 134). So it is possible the printed text is in error.

¹⁹Irwin, *Middle East*, 86.

²⁰Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:796.

²¹Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, ed. Constantine Zurayk (Beirut, 1936), 9:1:261, ll. 5–11.

²²Jean-Léon L'Africain, *Description de l'Afrique* (Paris, 1956), 2:519.



It should be noted that bisection and most of the other modes of execution have no relation whatsoever to any Islamic *ḥadd* penalty. As Irwin notes, bisection seems to have derived from Mongol practice.

Decapitation, as we have already seen, was another common fate for political losers. Sometimes it was the means of execution, but often it was performed on the already dead victim for other reasons that we will explore. In 782/1389 the amir al-Nāṣirī, who had outgrown his usefulness to the sultan Barqūq, was decapitated. In 680/1281 the amir Sayf al-Dīn Kunduk al-Zāhirī formed a conspiracy to assassinate the sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn while he was in Palestine, but Qalāwūn discovered the plot (with the help of Frankish intelligence) and had Kunduk arrested. Kunduk and his conspirators pleaded guilty and asked for a royal pardon, but Qalāwūn thought better of this. Kunduk and his conspirators were beheaded and then drowned in Lake Tiberias. This sort of “overkill” was far from uncommon, and raises obvious questions about the significance of inflicting further violence on an already dead body. Since it serves no practical purpose—in this case, that purpose having been achieved by the decapitation—it must serve some other end. And as I just noted, it was also often the case that someone was killed by other means and then had his head cut off.

Several aspects of these sorts of executions need to be sorted out. In and of itself the phenomenon of “overkill” would seem to be driven by hatred and the desire for revenge. On the other hand, decapitation of someone who was already slain does not always come under the heading of revengeful “overkill.” It also served sometimes as a means of publicity/spectacle—or even a more practical purpose. In 694/1393, after the amir Baydarā assassinated al-Ashraf Khalīl, some loyal Ashrafī mamluks killed him and put his head on a lance and had it carried by an executioner through the streets of Cairo. This entire episode will be considered below as spectacle. But decapitation seemed to have also served a specific, practical purpose apart from whether it was the means of execution or not. This is seen in the instance al-Nāṣirī. In his Latin biography of Barqūq, Bertrando de Mignanelli, who was resident in Egypt and Syria and was witness to many events in the reign of Barqūq, wrote, “His head was brought before the Sultan, because the Sultan wanted to examine it carefully, as there was a squint in his eye, so that he would be in no doubt about his death.”²³ Similarly, we read of the heads of four unfortunates executed in Syria being conveyed to the sultan in Cairo for his examination. In 742/1342 the deposed sultan al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr was executed while imprisoned

²³Bertrando de Mignanelli, *Ascensus Barcoch*, trans. Walter Fischel, *Arabica* 6 (May 1959): 163. As Fischel notes, it seems that Barqūq’s name (which can mean “plum” or “prune”) may refer to his need to squint and hence the wrinkles that resulted. But al-Azraqī in *Akhbār al-Makkah* says that it was due to their protrusion (*juhūz*). (Ed. Wüstenfeld, 3:186).



in Qūṣ in Upper Egypt, but his head was sent to the amir Qawsūn in Cairo (later in the same year Qawsūn himself, opposed by Syrian amirs, would be arrested and strangled in prison). In such instances as that of al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr and al-Nāṣirī, the decapitated head was equivalent to a death certificate for the individual.

In sum, the forms of execution could serve several different functions in addition to the permanent elimination of a political rival. There were cold executions, especially those carried out in prison such as that of al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr. At the other end of the spectrum were those executions in which feelings of revenge clearly played a part. Those carried out in public will be discussed in the next section; here we will confine the discussion to those carried out in the palace in front of the sultan or some powerful amir. The execution of al-Muẓaffar Baybars II provides an example. Al-Muẓaffar Baybars' brief reign ended when Qalāwūn's son al-Nāṣir Muḥammad I was restored for his third reign. Al-Maqrīzī paints a vivid picture of his ignominious end when he is captured by mamluks of his enemy Qarāsunqur: Baybars hurls his *al-kuluftāh* (a sort of embroidered cap) to the ground and says, "God damn the world. I wish I had died and never seen this day." The mamluks of his enemy Qarāsunqur take pity on him; they dismount and put his cap back on his head.²⁴ When he is brought before the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad I, the latter scolds Baybars II for the way he treated him when he was young: "When I wanted roast goose you used to say, 'What does he do with goose? He eats twenty times a day!'"²⁵ The sultan then orders Baybars II to be strangled in his presence with a bow string. But when he is almost dead, the sultan has him revived. He curses and reviles him for a while; then he has him strangled a second time, this time until he dies. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, the sultan himself would sometimes put the bow string (*watr*) around the victim's neck.²⁶

SPECTACLE

In the chronicles the most common public form of execution was crucifixion on the back of a camel followed by bisection. Perhaps the two most complete accounts of these spectacles describe the punishments meted out to the killers of al-Ashraf Khalīl in 693/1293 by Ashrafī mamluks, and, a century later in 793/1391, the sultan Barqūq's execution in Damascus of amirs loyal to his nemesis Miṭṭāsh.

In the instance of Baydarā and his confederates, the accounts of al-Maqrīzī

²⁴Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:493. The *kuluftāh* was a sort of embroidered cap worn under one's steel helmet. It seemed to symbolize membership in the military caste. See Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:54. When two amirs are released and pardoned the new sultan allows them to wear this cap again.

²⁵Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:274–75.

²⁶Ibid., 32.



and Ibn Taghrībirdī describe Baydarā's death in such a way that he seems to be killed in a fight with Ashrafī mamluks. When the tide turns against them, Baydarā's men flee, and he is surrounded by Ashrafīs who cut off his hand first (in assassinating Khalīl, Baydarā had cut off his hand and then his arm, and following *lex talionis* the same is done to him before they give him the *coup de grace*). Then they cut off his head and carry it back to Cairo on a lance.²⁷

Ibn Iyās's version differs in having more detail—though it is not necessarily in contradiction with the other two accounts. According to Ibn Iyās, when the Ashrafī mamluks subdue Baydarā they take him to the amir Kitbughā, the leader of the Ashrafī loyalists. Rather as in the case of Yalbughā the Lunatic, as soon as the royal mamluks see him they pounce on him. In Baydarā's case, however, Kitbughā does not call them off:

Then they took him to the amir Kitbughā. When the Ashrafī mamluks saw him, they cut him to pieces (*qaṭṭa'ahu*) with their swords. Then they split open his belly and pulled out his liver, and each one of the mamluks cut off a piece and ate it—due to the severity of their grief for their master al-Ashraf Khalīl. Then the amir Kitbughā cut off his head and put it on a lance. He sent it back to Cairo where it was paraded and finally hung on the door of his house.²⁸

This recalls the notorious episode in the battle of Uḥūd, when the Muslim warrior Ḥamzah was slain, and Hind bint 'Utba cut out his liver and ate part of it, and perhaps raises the question of its factuality—Ibn Iyās may be indulging in fictional embellishment at this point. In any event, all three chroniclers go on to describe the capture, torture, and execution of seven of Baydarā's confederates in very similar terms. Al-Maqrīzī describes it this way:

Baybars the Jashankīr took charge of their torture to determine who else was in league with them. Then they took them out on Monday, the eighteenth [of Muḥarram]. Their hands were cut off with an axe on a wood chopping block. Then they were crucified on the back of camels with their hands hanging from their necks. And with Baydarā's head on a lance leading the way, they were paraded through Cairo.²⁹

²⁷Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:792; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:19.

²⁸Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr*, 1:1:375, ll. 8–13.

²⁹Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:796.



In the account of Ibn Iyās, the *mashā'ilīyah* or heralds precede the parade calling out, "This is the punishment of someone who kills his master."³⁰ Al-Maqrīzī also devotes considerable attention to the grief of the families:

They took them past the doors of their houses, and when they passed the door of 'Alā' al-Dīn Altunbughā, his female slaves came out unveiled, beating their breasts. And with them were his children and his male slaves. They had torn their clothes and their cries went up. His wife was on the roof and she tried to throw herself down upon him, but her servants grabbed hold of her. She was saying, "If only I could die instead of you." She had cut her hair, and she threw it down on him. The people collapsed from their crying—may mercy be upon them. They went on like that for days.³¹

The chronicle of Ibn Ṣaṣrā (fl. 793/1390) describes Barqūq's execution in 793/1391 of a group of twenty mamluks who had been in league with Barqūq's stubborn adversary Miṅṭāsh. This came after almost seven years of struggle between Barqūq and Miṅṭāsh, and in the train of a tremendous number of executions of collaborators. Miṅṭāsh would elude Barqūq for another eight months. Ibn Ṣaṣrā's account reads thus:

He [Barqūq] immediately ordered them crucified and cut in two at the waist, and they were brought down from the citadel with chains on their necks, barefooted, to the stables of the sultan. They brought twenty camels at once, erected crosses on them, and brought the nails. It had rained during the night of that day, and there was much mud and it was slippery. The sultan went up and sat in the Pavilion to watch them, while the area below the citadel was filled with people, and the families of the crucified stood bewailing them. The mother of Amir Aḥmad ibn Baydamūr and their neighbors, barefooted and with torn clothing, were weeping, and the people wept at their weeping. When the day was half over, they brought the prisoners out of the stables of the sultan, and nailed up all of them for fatal crucifixion. They made a circuit of the city in that mire and slipperiness. They cried out for help, but they were not

³⁰Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr*, 1:1:379.

³¹Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:796.



helped. Their families tore their clothes in grief for them, especially for the amir Aḥmad ibn Baydamūr. He was a native of the city, a good lad, who had caused no one any harm. Everyone liked him, for he was close to the people. The people saw him in this state, crucified, and his mother and neighbors bereft of hope. Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ibn Aybak eulogized the amir Aḥmad ibn Baydamūr well, telling what happened to him, how the people wept, how the sultan did not accept intercession for him, when he recited a description of his state at that time in a poem:

Leave him on the cross, like a bridegroom without tambours
or candles.
But the eyes of men are on him. For him there was shedding
of tears.
And hearts fell melted with grief and pain within their ribs.
For alas! He was a star of beauty which has left us without
rising!

They brought the prisoners to the bridge of Zalābīyah while the sultan watched from the Pavilion. Then they took them down from the nails and began to cut them in two, one after another. The amir Aḥmad ibn Baydamūr remained to the last. When he saw what had happened to his companions and that only he remained, he breathed a sigh and recited this single verse

I see death lurking between the sword and the executioner’s
mat
Watching me wherever I turn.

Then they cut him in two, and the families of those cut in two each took their relatives to bury them. They brought a bier and took amir Aḥmad and Muṣṭafá to their tombs in four pieces.³²

Ibn Ṣaṣrā’s description is almost “cinematic.” He describes in some detail the positions and attitudes of the sultan, the families, and the spectators, setting the stage as it were before the condemned are brought forth. He places particular emphasis on the muck and mire through which the crucified make their fatal tour,

³²Ibn Ṣaṣrā, *A Chronicle of Damascus, 1389–1397*, ed. and trans. William M. Brinner (Berkeley, 1963), 139–42 (pp. 103–5 in the Arabic text, *Al-Durrah al-Mudī’ah fī al-Dawlah al-Ẓāhirīyah*).



and one can see in his emphasis the objective representation of a medieval commonplace: the precariousness and instability of life in this world, *al-dunyā*, in contrast to the stability of the next world, *al-ākhirah*, a theme that is central in the “master narrative,” the fall of the mighty man. Finally, Ibn Ṣaṣrā “zooms in,” focusing on one individual, the amir Aḥmad ibn Baydamūr, whose youth, beauty, and popularity in Damascus (and possibly his innocence) make his fate particularly heart-wrenching. The sultan’s emphatic rejection of clemency is followed by a poem in which, striking a Gothic note, Ibn Baydamūr is “married” to death. Ibn Ṣaṣrā’s text, lingering over painful details so as to show us beauty being destroyed, is a perfect example of Lacanian *jouissance*, the excessive pleasure-in-pain that escapes the equilibrium of the pleasure principle—as well as the “dynamic equilibrium” of historians and political scientists.

TORTURE

Torture was commonplace. The terms most commonly used to mean torture are *‘adhāb*, *‘uqūbah*, and *mu‘āqabah*. The verb *‘aṣara* is also common, but seems to be used to mean more specific forms of torture involving presses of some sort. Yet, here again, it must be said that the term “torture” is our own; the chronicles do not really distinguish between punishment and torture. For example, when al-Maqrīzī speaks of a famine and economic crisis in Iraq in the year 825/1422, he employs the same terms where we would clearly translate *‘uqūbah* as simply “punishment”: they were, he says, “‘uqūbah min Allāh la-hum bi-mā hum ‘alayhi min al-qabḥ.”³³ Thus, while the writers may register disgust at particular instances, torture per se—as we usually think of it—is not something condemned by these writers.

In an atmosphere of relentless conniving and plotting, torture was used to uncover the identities of plotters and conspirators. Yet its principle purpose in Mamluk politics was more mundane: it was used to raise revenue. All the most adept fiscal officers specialized in it. It was assumed that powerful officials would have used their office to amass secret hordes by means of bribes, extortion, and so forth, and once they were dismissed they were commonly tortured to reveal their caches of money and jewels and expensive cloths. For the less prominent, other means had to be used to identify those likely to yield secret wealth. In al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s third reign, al-Yūsufī describes how the *mutawālī* of Cairo, Aydakīn, used to go about in disguise at night and eavesdrop on houses, listening for singing or the sounds of drinking, the assumption being, it seems, that if the residents could afford musicians, they must have money. If such sounds were

³³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:611.



heard, Aydakīn would raid the house and extort money from them.³⁴

When al-Ashraf Khalīl assumed the throne in 689/1290 he immediately turned on the amir Turantāy. Al-Maqrīzī tells us Turantāy was killed *ba'da 'uqūbah shadīdah* (after severe torture.) Ibn Taghrībirdī says that Khalīl *basāṭa 'alayhi al-'adhāb ilā an māt* (put him to torture until he died). When the vizier Ibn Sal'ūs, a favorite of al-Ashraf Khalīl, was arrested after Khalīl's murder, he was tortured to force him to reveal where he had hidden his wealth. His enemy the amir al-Shujā'ī turned him over to the amir Lu'lu' al-Mas'ūdī, the *shādd al-dawāwīn*, who carried out the torture. Al-Maqrīzī wrote, "Fa-'āqabahu bi-anwā' al-'uqūbāt wa-'adhhabahu ashadda 'adhāb fa-istakhraja minhu mālan kathīran." In Ibn Iyās the episode is described in this way: "He [al-Shujā'ī] began to torture (*yu'āqibuhu*) Ibn al-Sal'ūs every night. He used presses on his joints until he died under the blows."³⁵

At times it seems that some symbolism played a role in the specific torture. I have mentioned the significance of the embroidered cap *kuluftāh*. The metal helmet that all mamluks wore over this in battle was also used as an instrument of torture. In 800/1398 Barqūq had the powerful amir Ibn Tablāwī arrested and tortured at the instigation of the amir Yalbughā the Lunatic. The latter placed an iron helmet on Ibn al-Tablāwī's head, and then heated it over a fire.³⁶ An even more sadistic variation of this is found in the instance of Tāj al-Dīn Aḥmad, a scribe, arrested and tortured in 755/1354 by the amir Shaykhūn. A barber was summoned who shaved Tāj al-Dīn Aḥmad's head and made incisions in his skull. Then beetles were put in these incisions and a brass helmet was placed on Tāj al-Dīn's head. Again the helmet was heated over a fire and the beetles ate their way into his brain.³⁷

"KINGSHIP IS CHILDLESS"

The foregoing examples, a small sample taken from a list of prominent men only, suggest the extent and varieties of political violence in Mamluk society. Obviously the chronicles usually make no mention of lesser lights who were tortured or executed. Nor does the preceding sample take into account mass violence: riots by lesser mamluks, or popular protests and uprisings by the commoners. An idea of the extent and variety of these latter sorts of violence can be found in Chapter V of Lapidus's *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages*.³⁸ But if this brief survey

³⁴ Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāzīr fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Nāzīr* (Beirut, 1987), 196–97.

³⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr*, 1:1:379.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:2:499.

³⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:6.

³⁸ Ira Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1967) 143–84.



convinces the reader that Mamluk politics were unusually violent even by medieval standards, why was this so?

Various explanations of Mamluk politics have been proposed. Sometimes it is argued that the conditions of mamluks—as strangers in the society they governed, cut off from their own families—tended to remove many of the restraints that might have otherwise acted as a check on their violence. Only religion might play such a role. But its effect—even though many mamluks were pious men—was, as we know, obviously weak in this area. And in any case, as we know from our own experience, one need not be an accomplished theologian to find religious sanction for horrific violence.

More often, the notion of *khushdāshīyah* is sometimes employed to explain factional strife in Mamluk politics. A mamluk who had been purchased and trained by the same master as another was the latter's *khushdāsh*. This tie, as Irwin says, "has been seen as the cement that bound mamluk factions together."³⁹ But this explanation must be rejected. For one, as Irwin also notes, the term was used very loosely. For another, contending mamluks often sought support outside the mamluk class. But most importantly, the instances of amirs who were *khushdāsh* to each other contending with one another, assassinating or executing one another, are numerous enough to call into question the explanatory power of the term. To cite only two prominent examples, as Holt notes, "both al-Zāhir Baybars and al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn were opposed by rebellious governors of Damascus, each of whom was a *khushdāsh* of the sultan against whom he rebelled."⁴⁰ As Irwin argues, the notion that the principle bond of loyalty of a faction to the amir who led it issued from any source except self interest in the most material sense is suspect. "The factions," Irwin writes, "were hardly more than coalitions formed by the greedy and the ambitious; they were in the main innocent of 'any common fund of party principle.'"⁴¹

But there is another aspect of *khushdāshīyah* that is important: not its supposed camaraderie, but rather that it is part of a master/slave relation. In order to consider the role of this relation in Mamluk political violence, I would return to the beginning of the dynasty and the episode of Shajar al-Durr's reign.

Her brief reign after the assassination of Tūrānshāh is, in the context of the medieval Islamic state, a conspicuous anomaly. It can only be explained by the fact that Tūrānshāh's killers, even if they had more or less resolved that he ought to be eliminated, had not yet figured out what was to come next. The description

³⁹Irwin, *Middle East*, 88.

⁴⁰P. M. Holt, "The Position and Power of the Mamluk Sultan," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38 no. 2 (1975): 248.

⁴¹Irwin, *Middle East*, 152. See also 89–90, 153–57.



of the assassination in the chronicle shows it unfolding without careful planning, and is consistent with this surmise.⁴² What Shajar al-Durr's reign masks to some extent, and what neither Tūrānshāh's killers nor those who opposed them seemed to realize at the time, is that the assassination of Tūrānshāh effectively abolished the principle of hereditary succession. As noted above, attempts would be made by certain Mamluk sultans to put their sons on the throne, but these usually failed—and even when they succeeded, it was not because the hereditary principle was generally recognized, but rather because the son, after he was deposed as mock sultan, somehow survived to learn the game of Mamluk politics well enough to build a power base and then usurp the throne himself, a pattern best seen in the multiple reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn.

Two well-known sayings regarding this remarkable state of affairs crop up in the chronicles. One is the so-called "Law of the Turks": "He who kills the king is the king." The second is the saying "al-mulk 'aqīm" (kingship is childless). These statements have occupied the attention of a number of scholars. Ibn Taghrībirdī asserted that the Mamluk rulers introduced the so-called law code of the Mongols (= "Law of the Turks"), the *Yasa*, into their domains, and many historians, David Ayalon most prominently, have taken pains to show the dubiousness of this.⁴³ More recently, Ulrich Haarmann has concerned himself with possible historical precedents for the specific "Law of the Turks" stated above, viz., "He who kills the king is the king."⁴⁴

But the contention here is that the meaning of these two well-known statements cited by Ibn Taghrībirdī are examples of "retrojection." They are best understood not with reference to some cultural import from Turkish or Mongol societies in Central Asia, but rather to the violent events which gave birth to the Mamluk dynasty, not in reference to some dim past, but rather to a new and startling present, one in which the abolition of the hereditary principle brings forth a more primal sort of politics in which there is no ideological stake. Political violence among Mamluk politicians is devoid of any ideological/religious significance—as Irwin says, "The factions were hardly more than coalitions formed by the greedy and the ambitious." Remarks made about Aybak, the first Mamluk sultan, support such an interpretation. Ibn Taghrībirdī quotes some mamluks as saying, "When we want to remove him, we can because of his lack of power and his middling

⁴²Peter Thorau, *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century*, trans. P. M. Holt (London, 1992), 38–39.

⁴³David Ayalon, "The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān: A Re-examination," *Studia Islamica* 33; 34; 36; 38 (1971; 1971; 1972; 1973): 97-140; 151-80; 113-58; 107-56.

⁴⁴Ulrich Haarmann, "Regicide and the 'Law of the Turks,'" in *Intellectual Studies on Islam*, ed. Michel M. Mazzaoui and Vera B. Moreen (Salt Lake City, 1990), 127–35.



rank among the amirs.⁴⁵ The unnamed mamluks' words make it clear that, for them, monarchy is not charismatic in any way.⁴⁶

The rejection of a principle of hereditary succession effectively meant that there was no recognition of any principle of legitimacy—other than power itself. Violence done to one's rival should not, then, be attributed to the breakdown of authority—it was the source of authority. Nor, for that matter, is the trend in the later stages of the dynasty for rank-and-file mamluks to assert their power against the amirs to be considered as some sort of deterioration of the system.⁴⁷ Rather it is the logical extension of power politics throughout the entirety of the military class. For these reasons, we can say that Mamluk politics revealed—whether Mamluk politicians themselves knew it or not—the fetishistic basis of the master-slave relation that served as the social paradigm for not only Mamluk society, but medieval Islamic society in general. As in the Kojèveian "fight for pure prestige," the willingness to risk one's life was precisely the ante required to play the game of Mamluk politics; the death notices of amirs abound with the terms like *shujā'* (brave), *miqdām* (bold), possessing *fiṭnah* (acumen), and *ḥazm* (determination). Mamluk political violence is "imaginary" in the Lacanian sense of the term; insofar as the hereditary principle is a symbolic feature par excellence—in the Lacanian sense—its abolition brings forth a politics of pure rivalry devoid of ideological content.⁴⁸

How then to square this account of Mamluk politics with the historians such as al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and Ibn Iyās? What remains is to examine the

⁴⁵Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:4. Also in P.M. Holt, "Succession in the Early Mamluk Sultanate," in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Supplement VII (Stuttgart, 1989), 145.

⁴⁶The contrast between the blunt assessment offered by the amirs of Aybak and the portrait of a sultan that emerges in an "official" biography such as that of al-Zāhir Baybars by his "spin doctor" Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, and in anecdotes told of Quṭuz found in Ibn al-Dawādārī's *Kanz al-Durar*, could not be stronger. Syedah Fatima Sadeque, *Baybars I of Egypt* (Dacca, 1956), 9–10, 31 (Arabic text), and Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmi' al-Ghurar*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann (Freiburg, 1979), 8:40–3.

⁴⁷David Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15 nos. 2 and 3 (1952–53): 210–13, and Amalia Levanoni, "The Rank-and-File versus Amirs: New Norms in the Mamluk Military Institution," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Philipp and Haarmann (Cambridge, 1998), 17–31.

⁴⁸The importance of the master-slave relation in various places and times in the Islamic Middle Ages is seen in Hodgson, and in Paul Forand's article "The Relation of Slave and Master in Medieval Islam," in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1 (1971): 59–66. Walter Andrews, in *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song* (Seattle, 1985), 90, wrote, "As the system of slavery grew to pervade the military and palace services, this peculiar master-slave relation appears to have become the dominant pattern of relationship throughout the central government. Even [free] born Muslims . . . came to define their relation to the *padishah* (monarch) as that of slave to master."



ideological role of this violence in the chronicles, for in the chronicles violence is given an ideological content.

NAKĀL: THE HARD KERNEL OF JOUISSANCE

Al-Maqrīzī's account of a failed assassination plot against the first Burji sultan, al-Zāhir Barqūq, combines several of the preceding types of violence: attempted assassination, torture, and execution. An amir named 'Alī Bāy al-Khazindār planned to assassinate Barqūq on the occasion of one of the rituals of Mamluk rule, the sultan's annual opening of the Nile canal in Cairo. Al-Maqrīzī writes:

When he [Sultan Barqūq] opened the canal as was the custom, he was accompanied by the amirs except for the amir 'Alī Bāy the Khazindār. The latter secluded himself in his house for some days due to an illness that had befallen him—at least apparently—but harboring inside himself his murderous intention (*fatk*) towards the sultan. For he knew that when he descended to open the canal, he would pass by his house with the amirs, and so he plotted the assassination (*ighiyāl*) of the sultan.⁴⁹

'Alī Bāy gathered a group of armed mamluks in his house ready to rush Barqūq and kill him as he passed, but the sultan was tipped off. The standards that marked his place in the parade were removed and the door of 'Alī Bāy's house bolted from the outside. By the time 'Alī Bāy and his men got out, the sultan had already safely passed. In the mêlée that ensued 'Alī Bāy's mamluks deserted him and he hid in the heating room of a bathhouse, where he was apprehended. 'Alī Bāy was tortured for two days to force him to reveal his collaborators, and then strangled.

If the political struggles per se were without ideological content, in al-Maqrīzī's narrative we find rhetorical effects with certain broad ideological implications. The sentence in the translation above that begins "The latter secluded himself in his house . . ." reads in Arabic: "fa-innahu kāna qad inqāṭa'a fī dārihi ayyāman li-maraḍ nazala bi-hi fīmā aẓharahu wa-fī bāṭin amrihi annahu qaṣada fatk bi-al-sultān." In his use of the verb *aẓhara* and the participle *bāṭin* al-Maqrīzī falls back on one of the most venerable rhetorical contrasts in medieval Arabic literature, that between what is exterior and apparent, *ẓāhir*, and what is interior and unseen, *bāṭin*.⁵⁰ The two terms are ubiquitous in the literature and are at once both rhetorical

⁴⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:903.

⁵⁰ Whether the words are actually al-Maqrīzī's or not is another matter—al-Maqrīzī was known to copy long tracts from other writers without attribution. See the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., article "Al-Maqrīzī" by Franz Rosenthal, and "Notes on the Early *Nazar al-Khāṣṣ*," by Donald



and interpretive devices. In a broad sense they were key terms in a pervasive medieval worldview wherein *bāṭin* designates the unseen but real, while *zāhir* refers to mere appearance, which is often misleading.⁵¹ And this is how al-Maqrīzī employs them here. In order to explain ‘Alī Bāy’s treachery, al-Maqrīzī writes:

The reason for this it seems is that one of his private mamluks, his steward (*shādd sharāb khānātihi*), took an interest in one of the slave girls of the amir Aqbāy al-Turantāy, wanting from her that which a man wants from a woman. But problems arose between them and that got back to Aqbāy. So he seized him [‘Alī Bāy’s mamluk] and gave him a violent beating. Then ‘Alī Bāy got angry and complained of him [Aqbāy] to the sultan, but the sultan paid no attention to him. . . . So he [‘Alī Bāy] got angry about that, and it stirred in him a hidden sense of outrage (*al-baghy al-kāmin*).⁵²

This account of ‘Alī Bāy’s plot is preceded in the chronicles by an account of a polo match among the mamluks attended by the sultan exactly one week before it. The polo match was followed by a drunken party that scandalizes the austere sensibility of al-Maqrīzī, who concludes:

It was a day of extreme infamy and repulsiveness; intoxicants were flaunted, and the mamluks (*al-nās*) publicly committed abominations and sins the likes of which had not been known. Learned people (*ahl al-ma‘rifah*) surmised that the end was near, and this was so. From that day forward indecencies were committed in the land of Egypt, while modesty diminished.⁵³

Al-Maqrīzī tells us that the sultan afterwards gave “the commoners (*al-‘āmmah*) permission to plunder the leftover food and drink.”⁵⁴ And he stresses that the sultan wanted to join in the drinking, but was advised to leave and go back to the Citadel. Moreover, the language describing the drunken mamluks’ behavior on this occasion emphasizes the publicity of it, in the strictest sense: “tajāhara al-nās

Little, in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, 226.

⁵¹Such a view, of course, finds justification in the Quran 57:3, where God is *al-Bāṭin*—“the Unseen.”

⁵²Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:903.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 902.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*



min al-fuḥsh wa-al-ma‘āṣī.”⁵⁵

What emerges then in al-Maqrīzī is a moralizing narrative in which the public and visible turpitude of the drunken polo match party begets ‘Alī Bāy’s secret and disastrous assassination plot which also, al-Maqrīzī tells us, came about because of sexual indecencies. If we consider the rhetorical structure contrasting what is internal and unseen and what is external and apparent—his apparent illness but his unseen murderous intent, his secret hatred—the moralizing intent of al-Maqrīzī’s narrative is clear. Also apparent is the libidinal charge the violence carries; al-Maqrīzī’s narrative weaves from public turpitude (the polo match debauch) to private sins (fornication and hatred) and ends in public violence (attempted assassination).

Al-Maqrīzī concludes his account with—what else?—the torture and execution of ‘Alī Bāy: “On Tuesday evening, the twenty-second [of Dhū al-Qa‘dah] ‘Alī Bāy was severely tortured in front of the sultan. His feet and knees were broken, and his chest was crushed. But he did not implicate anyone else. Then he was taken outside and strangled.”⁵⁶

The rhetorical strategy that attempts to endow violence with a moral content is even more apparent in two other accounts from al-Maqrīzī. The first is the torture and execution of the disgraced vizier Ibn al-Sal‘ūs in the wake of al-Ashraf Khalīl’s assassination in 693/1293. Ibn al-Sal‘ūs, a Syrian, made many enemies with his techniques of raising revenues, and when his patron Khalīl was murdered, his days were numbered. The amir al-Shujā‘ī arrested him and had him tortured in the Madrasah Ṣāhibīyah. Al-Maqrīzī says the amir Lu’lu’ al-Mas‘ūdī took charge of his torture:

Every day he would lead him from the madrasah to the Citadel on a donkey, and the riffraff would accost him along the way with their worn out sandals saying, “Master! Audit these for us!” They

⁵⁵The accounts of both the drunken polo party and the plot of ‘Alī Bāy in Ibn Taghrībirdī and Ibn Iyās repeat much of al-Maqrīzī’s text verbatim, though each writer adds a few details. After repeating al-Maqrīzī’s statement that the plot of ‘Alī Bāy ruined Barqūq’s relations with the mamluks, Ibn Taghrībirdī adds the now well-known piece of advice that Barqūq’s wife supposedly gave him: that he ought to make his mamluks *ablaq*, of four stripes, that is, composed of four different peoples: Mongols, Circassians, Greeks, and Turks (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:88). Ibn Iyās mentions al-Maqrīzī as a source, and then amplifies with his own observations. He tells the reader that the steward was one of ‘Alī Bāy’s favorites (*kān ‘azīzan ‘indahū*) and the number of blows he received from Aqbāy. And when ‘Alī Bāy goes to the sultan to complain, Ibn Iyās adds dialogue: “So he [‘Alī Bāy] got angry and he said, ‘If you won’t take revenge for my mamluk, I will take revenge for him with my own hand’ (Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’ al-Zuhūr*, 1:2:502–8).

⁵⁶Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:907.



made him listen to every sort of nastiness, and he was subjected to inexpressible humiliations and punishments. This Lu'lu' owed his position to Ibn al-Sal'ūs. . . . Ibn al-Sal'ūs was nice to him and made him the inspector (*shādd*) of the *dīwāns* in Egypt. And he [Lu'lu'] advanced in his service to the point that he was almost like one of his deputies—Ibn al-Sal'ūs simply called him "Lu'lu'." But God decreed that he fall into his [Lu'lu's] hands, and he went to extremes to humiliate him.⁵⁷

After he describes the killing of al-Nāṣir Faraj, a son of Barqūq who—like Rasputin—did not go easily, al-Maqrīzī writes:

They stole his clothes and dragged his body out. Then they threw it on a pile of garbage rising up [below the Citadel in Damascus]. He was naked with only his underwear covering his private parts and his thighs, and his eyes were open. People passed by him—amirs and mamluks—but God had turned their hearts away from him. The rabble played with his beard and his hands and his feet all day Sunday as an exemplary punishment of him from God. For truly he had thought nothing of the majesty of God, and thus God showed him his omnipotence.⁵⁸

The theme of the fall of the mighty was, of course, one dear to medieval historians for whom it provided confirmation of the "vanity of the worldly pursuits"—and possibly consolation for their own lack of power. Al-Maqrīzī, among the three historians, places special emphasis on it in his introduction to his work. Immediately after his *bismillah*, al-Maqrīzī writes: "Say 'Allāhumma, lord of lordship (*mālik al-mulk*), you give power to whom you will and you take it from whom you will, you make mighty whom you will and you humble whom you will. . . .'"⁵⁹ Al-Maqrīzī concludes by saying that God helps his faithful servants conquer kings and take the wealth that they [the kings] have gained merely through power and force, and these people then pass it on to their sons and their sons' sons, but, "When they diverge from the guidance their prophets have brought them, He inflicts upon them calamities and destruction, and He gives power over them to the scum of the rabble (*ra'ā' al-ghawghā'*) . . . who, after gaining power, bring

⁵⁷Ibid., 1:3:798.

⁵⁸Ibid., 4:1:224.

⁵⁹Ibid., 1:1:26.



down upon them ruin.”⁶⁰ His introduction, which begins with *mālik al-mulk*, ends with *ra‘ā‘ al-ghawghā*, its obverse, and with it we have descended from the loftiest to the basest—the scenes of the drunken polo party and the corpse lying on the garbage heap seem precisely the sorts of scenes anticipated by the phrase *ra‘ā‘ al-ghawghā*. In fact, in his account of the death of al-Nāṣir Faraj, *ghawghā* is the very word al-Maqrīzī uses. But another term is more important here.

In the accounts above, al-Maqrīzī twice uses the same word to explain the terrible punishment and torture suffered by the losers—*nakāl*, translated above in the instance of Ibn Sal‘ūs rather weakly as “punishments.” But in fact it means more than simply “punishment.” In *Lisān al-‘Arab* Ibn Manẓūr quotes al-Jawharī: “nakkala bi-hi tankīlan idhā ja‘alahu nakālan wa-‘ibratan li-ghayrihi.”⁶¹ Al-Maqrīzī employs the same term to describe the killing of al-Nāṣir Faraj. And we find Ibn Taghrībirdī using it much the same way when he describes the punishment of the two amirs Qutlubughā al-Fakhrī and Ṭashtamur Ḥimmiṣ Akhḍar by the sultan al-Nāṣir Aḥmad in Karak in 742/1342: “The sultan imprisoned Qutlubughā al-Fakhrī and Ṭashtamur Ḥimmiṣ Akhḍar in the citadel of Karak after he made a public spectacle of Fakhrī, who was grossly humiliated by the common people.”⁶²

The language the two historians use is Quranic. *Nakāl* and variants are found in the Quran in five places. In 2:65–66, God says, “You have learned of those among you who broke the Sabbath. We said to them, ‘Be contemptible apes!’ We made them an example (*nakālan*) to their contemporaries and to those who came after, and a lesson to the righteous.” In 5:38, He says, “as for male and female thieves, cut off their hands as punishment for what they have earned as exemplary punishment from God.” And in 79:25, “God smote him with a punishment in the hereafter and in this world.”⁶³ Beyond the insistence of al-Maqrīzī and other writers on the exemplary nature of torture and execution—that they are signs from God—the language used to describe instances of torture and execution in the chronicles cannot help but resonate with the temporal deaths and eternal tortures God inflicts on unbelievers in the Quran. For these reasons, insofar as al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and Ibn Iyās are successful in interpreting the violence this way, a consistent analogy emerges: Just as God inflicts horrible torments on unbelievers

⁶⁰Ibid., 1:1:28.

⁶¹Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut, n.d.), 11:677.

⁶²Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:68, l. 5. “Fa-sajana al-sulṭān Qutlubughā al-Fakhrī wa-Ṭashtamur Ḥimmiṣ Akhḍar bi-Qal‘at al-Karak ba‘da mā nakkala bi-al-Fakhrī wa-uhīna min al-‘āmmah ihānatan zā‘idatan.”

⁶³Yet there is some unintended irony in the way al-Maqrīzī uses the word in the case of Ibn Sal‘ūs when he says that “he was subjected to inexpressible punishments” (*fa-yanzilu bi-hi min al-khazy wa-al-nakāl mā lā yu‘baru ‘anhu*), since *nakāl* means precisely a punishment from which a meaning/lesson (*‘ibrah*) can be derived, as we have seen in the notice in the *Lisān al-‘Arab*.



who defy him, so too are horrible torments inflicted on those who defy a sultan, an amir more powerful in the political hierarchy. The recurrence of a variety of epithets designating those at the base of this hierarchy of domination in these contexts—*arādhil*, *ra‘ā’*, *ghawghā’*—is not by chance either, as al-Maqrīzī signaled in his introduction. And, indeed, in addition to the term *nakāl* other elements of the vocabulary of punishment, torture, and humiliation in the Quran recur in the chronicles; variants of *‘aqab*, *‘adhāb*, *hīn*—all used in the Quran—also are common in the chronicles. Whether the writer bewails the punishment meted out to a loser in this instance or lauds it as well deserved in another is to some extent irrelevant—the over-arching pattern is one of an oscillation between fascination and disgust with violence. For, indeed, had Baydarā succeeded, had ‘Alī Bāy succeeded, had Miṣṣāsh succeeded—had any of the other rivals in the political game succeeded—the same moral could have been applied to their victims: the mighty man who falls because he is too much absorbed with matter of *dunyā* to the detriment of *dīn*. In other words, the “moral” is in large degree independent of the actual empirical events—that is, of the violence.

The violence then is “excessive” in this sense too: that it exceeds the attempt of the historian to inscribe it in some such explanatory myth, and it exceeds it precisely insofar as it reveals the “truth” of the social structure of Mamluk society—that the relation of master and slave is ultimately based on nothing but violence and death. *Nakāl*, we should say, should be understood not so much as “exemplary punishment,” but rather as “exemplary violence.” Insofar as it alternately fascinates and disgusts the chroniclers *nakāl* is the “hard kernel of *jouissance*,” the surplus enjoyment that sustains the ideological bond of the chroniclers. The sublime monuments of Mamluk architecture are built not only of sandstone, but also of blood.



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Black Camels and Blazing Bolts: The Bolt-Projecting Trebuchet in the Mamluk Army

The Mamluks pioneered the use of gunpowder ordnance, but their principal piece of heavy artillery was “the crushing, demolishing trebuchet” (*manjanīq hādīm haddād*).¹ In their campaigns of conquest, the Mamluks used substantial batteries of trebuchets, and Mamluk military science produced the only major technical treatise on the construction and operation of this form of artillery. The trebuchet (Arabic *manjanīq*, pl. *majāniq*, *manājīq*, *manājanīq*, and *majanīqāt*)² was the most powerful form of mechanical artillery ever devised. It consisted of a long tapering beam which pivoted near its butt-end around an axle mounted on top of a framework. At the end of the long arm of the beam, a sling was attached which held the missile. This was designed to open when the beam’s motion and position reached the desired state for discharge.

To launch a projectile, the beam—equipped with pulling-ropes at its short end—was set in a horizontal position. The operator of the machine readied the machine for launch by placing a projectile in the pouch of the sling. The sling had two ropes: one attached firmly to the end of the beam and the other looped over an iron prong extending from the tip of the beam. The alignment of the prong and the length of the sling were crucial to achieving maximum range. Human muscle force was applied to the pulling-ropes by a team of men—or, in some cases, women—while the operator guided the missile through the initial phase of the launch cycle. When the operator released the sling, a sudden surge of power was

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¹Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ṣaṣrā, *A Chronicle of Damascus, 1389–1397*, by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ṣaṣrā: *The Unique Bodleian Library Manuscript of al-Durra al-Muḍīʿa fī l-Dawla al-Zāhirīya* (Laud Or. MS 112), ed. and trans. William M. Brinner (Berkeley, 1963), 1:118, 2:85. On the development of gunpowder artillery by the Mamluks, see David Ayalon’s classic study *Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamluk Kingdom: A Challenge to a Mediaeval Society* (London, 1956). This study of the bolt-projecting trebuchet has been supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency.

²On the Arabic term *manjanīq* denoting a trestle-framed trebuchet, see Paul E. Chevedden, “The Artillery of King James I the Conqueror,” in *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Robert I. Burns, S.J.*, ed. Paul E. Chevedden, Donald J. Kagay, and Paul G. Padilla (Leiden, 1996), 47–94, esp. 59–61. On the Arabic terms ‘*arrādah* and *lu’bah*, denoting a pole-framed trebuchet, see below note 4, and note 57 and text. Other Arabic terms for the trebuchet are discussed throughout the article.



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imparted to the beam, as the maximum force exerted by the pulling-crew took full effect. This action propelled the throwing arm skyward and allowed the looped end of the sling to fly free, thus hurling the missile from the sling.

In later versions of the trebuchet a weight was added to the butt-end of the beam. This weight was first used to counterbalance the weight of the long arm of the beam at discharge when the sling was loaded with a heavy stone shot. The horizontal counterbalancing of the two arms of the beam was an ergonomic innovation in artillery design that greatly improved the efficiency of the human-powered trebuchet. The human energy required to hold the beam in place at discharge was greatly reduced, thereby allowing a greater amount of force to be exerted by the pulling crew to accelerate the beam. The great turning point in the evolution of the trebuchet came with the introduction of the counterweight machine that utilized gravity power alone to accelerate the beam. The counterweight trebuchet replaced the pulling crew with a gravitating mass that was either fixed rigidly to the butt-end of the beam (Figs. 7, 8, 9, 11, 12) or was articulated to the beam's end by means of a hinge in order to allow the counterweight to move freely (Figs. 5, 6, 10).³

Trebuchets fall into three broad categories: (1) traction trebuchets, powered by crews pulling on ropes (Figs. 1 and 2); (2) hybrid trebuchets, powered by crews that received a gravity assist (Figs. 3 and 4); and (3) counterweight trebuchets, powered by gravitational energy (Figs. 5–12). The supporting framework for the axle of all three types of trebuchets adhered to two basic designs: (1) a pole framework; and (2) a trestle framework. Pole-framed machines required a fork-mounted beam. Two different mounting systems were used: (1) a fork mount, or pivot yoke, that surmounted the pole frame and held the axle (Figs. 1 and 3); and (2) a forked beam, looking like the letter Y, that attached its fork arms to the ends of the axle affixed atop the pole frame (Fig. 6). Pole-framed machines needed less material to construct than trestle-framed ones and had the great advantage of being able to discharge stone-shot in any direction without requiring the framework to be repositioned. Both mounting systems of the pole-framed trebuchet—pivot yoke and rotating axle—enabled the machine to be aimed instantly in any required direction. Trestle-framed machines pivoted the beam on an axle supported by the two triangular trusses of the framework (Figs. 2, 4–5, 7–12). They could only be aimed at a new target with great difficulty. To point such machines just a few degrees to the right or to the left required a change in position of the entire

³An engineering analysis of the trebuchet that compares the principles of design and operation of traction-powered trebuchets with that of gravity-powered trebuchets is provided by Zvi Shiller in Paul E. Chevedden, Zvi Shiller, Samuel R. Gilbert, and Donald J. Kagay, "The Traction Trebuchet: A Triumph of Four Civilizations," *Viator* 31 (2000): 433–86.



framework, which necessitated the expenditure of considerable labor. Although trestle-framed trebuchets were cumbersome and expensive, and were difficult to line up on a new target, they had the advantage of being sturdy and reliable.

DEVELOPMENT AND DIFFUSION OF THE TREBUCHET

The invention of the trebuchet was a unique discovery that was diffused from a single center of origin. China developed this powerful form of artillery between the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. From China, the two fundamental types of trebuchets—the traction-powered, pole-framed machine (Fig. 1) and trestle-framed machine (Fig. 2)—spread westward.⁴ The new ordnance reached the eastern

⁴On the development and diffusion of the Chinese trebuchet, see Herbert Frankle, "Siege and Defense of Towns in Medieval China," in *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, ed. Frank A. Keirman, Jr., and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), 151–201; Joseph Needham, "China's Trebuchets, Manned and Counterweighted," in *On Pre-Modern Technology and Science: Studies in Honor of Lynn White, Jr.*, ed. Bert S. Hall and Delno C. West (Malibu, Calif., 1976), 107–45; Sergei A. Shkoliar, "L'Artillerie de jet à l'époque Sung," in *Etudes Song: In memoriam Étienne Balazs*, series 1, *Histoire et institutions*, pt. 2, ed. Françoise Aubin (Paris, 1971), 119–42; idem, *Kitaiskaia doognestrelnaia artilleriia: Materialy i issledovaniia* (Moscow, 1980); Robin D. S. Yates, "Siege Engines and Late Zhou Military Technology," in *Explorations in the History of Science and Technology in China*, ed. Li Guohao, Zhang Mehgwen, and Cao Tianqin (Shanghai, 1982), 414–19; *Weapons of Ancient China*, ed. Yang Hong (New York, 1992); and Joseph Needham and Robin D. S. Yates, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 5, *Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, pt. 6, *Military Technology: Missiles and Sieges* (Cambridge, 1994). The Chinese developed an elaborate nomenclature for the trebuchet to identify many different types of trebuchets, but they divided all of these types into two basic categories according to the configuration of the framework of the machine: (1) the pole-framed machine, called a "Whirlwind" trebuchet (*xuan feng pao*) (Fig. 1); and (2) the trestle-framed machine, called a "Four-footed" trebuchet (*si jiao pao*) (Fig. 2). Thus, a binary nomenclature for the trebuchet was born. As the traction trebuchet was diffused across Eurasia and North Africa, a binary terminology, based on the framework of the machine, was used by all who adopted the new artillery. In Arabic, for example, the pole-framed trebuchet was designated an 'arrādah, and later a lu'bah ("Plaything") (see below, note 57 and text); the trestle-framed trebuchet was called a manjanīq (see above, note 2). The employment of the 'arrādah and the manjanīq by Islamic armies during the period 632 to 945 is examined by Hugh Kennedy in *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State* (London, 2001), 110–13, 133–36, 154, 155, 163, 184, 185, 189. In the Latin West, a variety of terms were used to refer to the trebuchet in both Latin and the European vernaculars, but a clear terminological dichotomy is evident prior to the introduction of gravity-powered artillery, based upon the configuration of the machine's framework. The most commonly used term to denote the pole-framed trebuchet was *manganellus* (mangonel), while the heavier trestle-framed machine was usually identified by the term *petraria* ("rock-thrower"). Scholars who have examined the nomenclature for artillery have erroneously concluded that the diversity of terms may reflect differences in the size of the machine, in the weight of the projectile discharged from it, or even fundamental differences in the kind of artillery employed (e.g., tension, torsion, or traction). In the era of human-powered artillery, the terminology was related to the most obvious design feature of the



Mediterranean during the sixth century C.E. and rapidly displaced the heavy artillery of the classical world. Widespread diffusion of the new artillery throughout the Mediterranean and the Middle East followed. Arabia was familiar with the pole-framed and trestle-framed trebuchet prior to the rise of Islam, and, during the century following the death of Muḥammad in 632, the armies of the Prophet carried the new artillery from the Indus to the Atlantic in a ballooning movement of conquests.⁵ These conquests spurred innovations in weaponry that led to the

machine: its framework. Even with the introduction of the hybrid machine, trebuchet terminology underwent no fundamental change, since this terminology was based on the configuration of the framework of the machine, a component that remained unchanged regardless of whether the trebuchet was a traction or hybrid model. This explains why only a few languages—Armenian, Syriac, Latin, French, and Occitan—introduced new terms to identify the hybrid trebuchet. Arabic literary culture generally ignored the hybrid trebuchet, but Arabic oral culture did not. It was dubbed *al-ghaḍbān* (The Furious One), and this term for the hybrid machine entered both Armenian and Turkish (see below, note 60 and text). For a discussion of the terminology of the trebuchet and its meaning, see Chevedden, "Artillery of King James I," 56-76; idem, "The Hybrid Trebuchet: The Halfway Step to the Counterweight Trebuchet," in *On the Social Origins of Medieval Institutions: Essays in Honor of Joseph F. O'Callaghan*, ed. Donald J. Kagay and Theresa M. Vann (Leiden, 1998), 182, 198-212; idem, "The Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet: A Study in Cultural Diffusion," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000): 71-116; and Chevedden et al., "Traction Trebuchet," 433-86, esp. 452 (Table 3), 460-61, 474-84.

⁵On the development and diffusion of the trebuchet outside of China, the following studies are of fundamental importance: Guillaume Dufour, *Mémoire sur l'artillerie des anciens et sur celle du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1840), 87-112; Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, *Études sur le passé et l'avenir de l'artillerie* (Paris, 1848-71), 2:26-61; Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture du XI^e au XVI^e siècles*, (Paris, 1854-68), 5:218-42; Alwin Schultz, *Das höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesinger* (Leipzig, 1889), 2:363-93; Gustav Köhler, *Die Entwicklung des Kriegswesens und der Kriegführung in der Ritterzeit von Mitte des II. Jahrhunderts bis zu den Hussitenkriegen* (Breslau, 1886-89), 3:139-211; Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey, *The Crossbow, Mediaeval and Modern, Military and Sporting: Its Construction, History and Management, with a Treatise on the Balista and Catapult of the Ancients* (London, 1903); Rudolf Schneider, *Die Artillerie des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1910); Marco Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, 3d ed., trans. and ed. Colonel Sir Henry Yule (London, 1926), 2:161-69; Bernhard Rathgen, *Das Geschütz im Mittelalter* (1928; repr., Düsseldorf, 1987), 578-638; Kalevero Huuri, "Zur Geschichte des mittelalterlichen Geschützwesens aus orientalischen Quellen," in *Societas Orientalia Fennica, Studia Orientalia*, 9/3 (Helsinki, 1941); Claude Cahen, "Un traité d'armurerie pour Saladin," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 12 (1947-48): 103-63; José Frederico Finó, "Machines de jet médiévales," *Gladius* 10 (1972): 25-43; idem, *Forteresses de la France médiévale: construction, attaque, défense*, 3d ed. (Paris, 1977), 149-63; Donald R. Hill, "Trebuchets," *Viator* 4 (1973): 99-115; Carroll M. Gillmor, "The Introduction of the Traction Trebuchet into the Latin West," *Viator* 12 (1981): 1-8; D. J. Cathcart King, "The Trebuchet and other Siege-Engines," *Chateau Gaillard* 9-10 (1982): 457-69; Randall Rogers, "The Problem of Artillery," Appendix III of *Latin Siege Warfare in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1992), 254-73; Peter Vemming Hansen, "Experimental Reconstruction of a Medieval Trébuchet,"



development of the hybrid trebuchet (Figs. 3–4). The Byzantine Empire soon acquired this advanced piece of artillery, and by the second half of the ninth century it was being used in northern Europe.⁶

Another conquest movement, or more exactly an enterprise of reconquest, is likely to have led to the development of the counterweight trebuchet. In his efforts to reconquer Anatolia from the Saljuq Turks, Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) constructed large trebuchets, referred to as ἑλεπόλεις (*helepoleis*, “city-takers”), of several types, “but most of them were fashioned according to an unprecedented design of his own devising which amazed everyone.” The Byzantine emperor supplied the new artillery to the Latin Crusaders in 1097 to aid in the conquest of Nicaea in western Anatolia. During the twelfth century, the dynamics of conflict and contact quickly diffused the counterweight trebuchet throughout the Mediterranean and the Middle East. New terms arose to identify the machine that had started the gravity-powered revolution in artillery—the trestle-framed counterweight trebuchet. Arabic sources designated it a “big” trebuchet (*manjanīq kabīr*), a “great” trebuchet (*manjanīq ‘aẓīm*), or as a “huge” or “frightful” trebuchet (*manjanīq hā’il*). During the thirteenth century, it was given a new Arabic name, the “Western Islamic” trebuchet (*manjanīq maghribī* or *manjanīq gharbī*), perhaps reflecting a design improvement.⁸ Syriac sources named the machine a “great”

Acta Archaeologica 63 (1992): 189–208; Paul E. Chevedden, Les Eigenbrod, Vernard Foley, and Werner Soedel, “The Trebuchet: Recent Reconstructions and Computer Simulations Reveal the Operating Principles of the Most Powerful Weapon of its Time,” *Scientific American* (July 1995): 66–71; Chevedden, “The Artillery of King James I”; idem, “Hybrid Trebuchet”; George T. Dennis, “Byzantine Heavy Artillery: The *Helepolis*,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 39 (1998): 99–115; Paul E. Chevedden, “Fortifications and the Development of Defensive Planning during the Crusader Period,” in *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages*, ed. Donald J. Kagay and L. J. Andrew Villalon (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1999), 33–43; idem, “Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet”; and Chevedden et al., “Traction Trebuchet.”

⁶On the development and diffusion of the hybrid trebuchet, see Chevedden, “Hybrid Trebuchet”; and Chevedden et al., “Traction Trebuchet.”

⁷Anna Komnena, *Alexiade: Règne de l'empereur Alexis I Comnène (1081–1118)*, ed. and trans. Bernard Leib, Collection byzantine publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé (Paris, 1937–45), 11.2.1. The learned monk Euthymios Zygabenos, a close associate of Alexios, ranks the emperor's new artillery with the works of Archimedes, the most famous inventor of ancient Greece. This suggests that an important breakthrough in the design and construction of the trebuchet was achieved at Nicaea. Given the imminent appearance of gravity-powered artillery, this breakthrough is most likely to have been the development of the first counterweight trebuchet (Euthymios Zygabenos, *Panoplia*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne [Paris, 1857–66], 130:20). On the introduction of the counterweight trebuchet, see Chevedden, “Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet.”

⁸On the *manjanīq maghribī/gharbī*, a trestle-framed, gravity-powered trebuchet with a hinged counterweight, see Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb Aḥḍab al-Rammāh, *Al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Manāṣīb al-*

trebuchet (*manganīqē rawrbē*), and a Greek source called it a "great siege-engine" (μεγάλη μηχανή, *megalē mēkhanē*). In the Latin West, the new artillery was designated by the term "trebuchet," a diminutive form derived from the medieval Latin word *trabuc[h]us*. The term first appeared as *trabuchellus* in 1189, and a decade later *trabuchus* entered the record (Fig. 5).⁹ Today the term "trebuchet" is used to refer to the entire class of artillery that draws its energy from a beam pivoted around an axle.

By the end of the twelfth century the diversification of the counterweight trebuchet into different forms had begun. In the Latin West, a pole-framed machine was introduced that had a bifurcated beam with two counterweights suspended from its fork arms. Its pivoting shaft and paired counterweights earned it its name, the *bricola*, or the "Two-Testicle" machine (Fig. 6), from the combination of the prefix *bi-*, "having two," and the Latin *coleus*, meaning testicle (Fr. *bricole*, It. *briccola*, Oc. *bricola*, Catal. *brigola*, Cast. *brigola*, late L. *bric[c]ola*, Gk. *praikoula* or *prekoula*). In 1242 Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen sent *bricolas* to the Levant, and soon thereafter (post 1250) the Mamluks incorporated this versatile piece of artillery into their siege arsenal, calling it the "Frankish" or "European" trebuchet (*manjanīq ifranjī* or *manjanīq firanjī*). Muslim engineers employed by the Mongols brought the *bricola* to China, where it was designated the "Muslim" trebuchet (*hui-hui pao*). Batteries of *bricolas* (sing. *manjanīq firanjī*) rained

Ḥarbīyah: al-Barūd, al-Nirān al-Ḥarbīyah, al-Taqtūr, al-Nīranjāt, ed. Aḥmad Yūsuf al-Ḥasan, Maṣādir wa-Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh al-‘Ulūm al-Taḥbīqīyah, vol. 8 (Aleppo, 1998), 118, Fig. 71; Chevedden, "Artillery of King James I," 62–63, Figs. 7–9; idem, "Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet," 106, Fig. 3; and below, note 32 and text. Since the *manjanīq maghribī* had a hinged counterweight, it is likely that the feature which distinguished it from earlier counterweight trebuchets was the hinged counterweight box or a new method for hanging the counterweight box with a hinge. It should be noted that the earliest extant illustration of a gravity-powered trebuchet, the double-propose machine described and illustrated by al-Ṭarsūsī, had a "hinged" counterweight consisting of a rope sack filled with stones held by three strong cords (Murḍī ibn ‘Alī ibn Murḍī al-Ṭarsūsī [d. 589/1193], "Tabṣirat Arbāb al-Albāb fī Kayfīyat al-Najāh fī al-Ḥurūb min al-Aswā’ wa-Nashr A’lām al-I’lām fī al-‘Udad wa-al-Ālāt al-Mu’īnah ‘alā Liqā’ al-A’dā’" [Instruction of the masters on the means of deliverance in wars from disasters, and the unfurling of the banners of information: equipment and engines which aid in encounters with enemies], Bodleian MS Hunt. 264, fols. 133v–135r [hereafter cited as "Tabṣirah fī al-Ḥurūb"]); idem, "Tabṣirah fī al-Ḥurūb," Süleymaniye Library MS Ayasofya 2848 mü, fols. 100r–102r; idem, *Mawsū‘at al-Asliḥah al-Qadīmah: al-Mawsūm Tabṣirat Arbāb al-Albāb fī Kayfīyat al-Najāh fī al-Ḥurūb min al-Anwā’* [sic] wa-Nashr A’lām al-A’lām [sic] fī al-‘Udad wa-al-Ālāt al-Mu’ayyanah [sic] ‘alā Liqā’ al-A’dā’, ed. Karin Ṣādir [Beirut, 1998], 168–69, 256–57 [Fig. 12]; Cahen, "Traité," 119, 120, Pl. 3, Fig. 14; and Chevedden, "Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet," 87–90, 115–16, Fig. 1).

⁹For a discussion of the nomenclature of the counterweight trebuchet, see Chevedden "Artillery of King James I," 61–63, 68–76; Chevedden, "Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet"; and Dennis, "Byzantine Heavy Artillery."

destruction on the cities of Fancheng (1272) and Xiangyang (1273), on the Han River in northwest Hubei province, and broke the power of the Song Empire (960–1279). On the high seas, the *bricola* was mounted on the poops of ships and was used to bombard coastal cities and fortresses.¹⁰ Human ingenuity and engineering skill combined to produce yet another type of gravity-powered trebuchet. This new machine extended the capabilities of the trebuchet enormously; it enabled the machine to do what it had never done before: discharge immense bolts.

THE BOLT-PROJECTING TREBUCHET

The improved performance of the counterweight trebuchet presented new possibilities for artillery. Two additional contrivances, the counterweight and the elongated sling, enabled artillery to break free of many of the limitations of the traction-powered trebuchet. The high rotational velocity reached by the beam of a counterweight trebuchet and the wider range of rotation that was utilized to accelerate

¹⁰On Frederick II's dispatch of *bricolas* to the Levant, see Caffaro, *Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori*, ed. Luigi T. Belgrano and Cesare Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia pubblicate dall'Istituto storico italiano, Scrittori, Secoli XII e XIII*, nos. 11–14bis (Rome, 1890–1929), 3:128: "Et cum inimici mari et terra cum machinis, prederiis (= *petrariis*), bricolis, scalis et aliis hedifficiis eorum infortunio ad locum Levanti pervenissent." On the Muslim engineers who brought the *bricola* to China and the role these machines played in forcing the surrenders of Fancheng in 1272 and Xiangyang in 1273, see Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh*, ed. Bahman Karīmī (Tehran, 1338/1960), 1:651–52; idem, *Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh*, trans. John Andrew Boyle, *The Successors of Genghis Khan* (New York, 1971), 290–91; Arthur C. Moule, *Quinsai: With Other Notes on Marco Polo* (Cambridge, 1957), 70–78. Both Rashīd al-Dīn (1247?–1318) and Chinese historian Zheng Sixiao (1206–83) provide details on the heavy artillery used at the sieges of Fancheng and Xiangyang (modern-day Xiangfan). Rashīd al-Dīn identifies the most powerful pieces of artillery as "European" trebuchets (sing. *manjanīq firangī*), or *bricolas* (*Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh*, 1:651; *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 290), and Zheng, who calls the machines "Muslim" trebuchets (*hui-hui pao*), indicates that, "in the case of the largest ones, the wooden framework stood above a hole in the ground" (quoted in Needham and Yates, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 5:6:221). Since the *bricola* was the only counterweight piece of artillery that had a framework capable of being mounted in a hole in the ground and was commonly set up in this fashion, there is little doubt that Zheng is referring here to the *bricola*. The stone-shot launched by these machines weighed 150 *jin*, or 94.5 kilograms (208 lb) (Moule, *Quinsai*, 76), and Zheng states that, "the projectiles were several feet in diameter, and when they fell to the earth they made a hole three or four feet deep. When [the artillerists] wanted to hurl them to a great range, they added weight [to the counterpoise] and set it further back [on the arm]; when they needed only a shorter distance, they set it forward, nearer [the fulcrum]" (Needham and Yates, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 5:6:221). On the development and diffusion of the *bricola* and the *manjanīq ifranjī/firanjī*, see Chevedden, "Artillery of King James I," 62–63, 68, 71–76, 79, 84, Fig. 11; idem, "Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet," 102–3, 106–10, Fig. 5; and below, notes 33, 34, 35, and 36, and text. *Elegant Book* (see note 13) includes two illustrations of the *bricola* ("Anīq," fols. 20r, 22r; *Anīq*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz, 47, 51; *Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 97–98).



the beam made it possible to increase the length of the sling. By using a longer sling that was now driven by a constant or rotating load, the shooting potential of the machine was greatly improved, both in terms of the size of the projectile thrown and the range of the shot. The increased rotational velocity and greater rotational range of the beam also made it possible to substitute the standard trebuchet release mechanism—the sling—for a new release mechanism that enabled it to hurl projectiles never before launched by this type of artillery. With a few structural modifications, a stone-projecting, trestle-framed, counterweight trebuchet could be converted into a bolt-projecting machine and employed to discharge flaming bolts. A large blazing bolt hurled from a trebuchet was particularly suited for setting alight the wooden siege engines of an attacking army or burning the protective screens that shielded fortifications from bombardment.¹¹

¹¹The evolution of the trebuchet from stone-projector to bolt-projector follows in reverse order the development of the ancient catapult. The catapult, which developed from the hand-bow, was originally designed to launch bolts. It was eventually scaled up in size and adapted to hurl stone-shot. On the development of the catapult, see Erwin Schramm, *Die Antiken Geschütze de Saalburg* (1918; repr., Bad Homburg, 1980); E. W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery: Historical Development* (Oxford, 1969); idem, *Greek and Roman Artillery: Technical Treatises* (Oxford, 1971); Nicolae Gudea and Dietwulf Baatz, "Teile Spätromischer Ballisten aus Gornea und Orsova (Rumänien)," *Saalburg Jahrbuch* 31 (1974): 50–72; Dietwulf Baatz, "The Hatra Ballista," *Sumer* 33 no. 1 (1977): 141–51; idem, "Das Torsionsgeschütz von Hatra," *Antike Welt* 9 no. 4 (1978): 50–57; idem, "Recent Finds of Ancient Artillery," *Britannia* 9 (1978): 1–17, Pls. 1–5; idem, "Teile Hellenistischer Geschütze aus Griechenland," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1979): 68–75; idem, "Ein Katapult der *Legio IV Macedonica* aus Cremona," *Römische Mitteilungen* 87 (1980): 283–99; idem, "Hellenistische Katapulte aus Ephyra (Epirus)," *Athenische Mitteilungen* 97 (1982): 211–33; idem, "Katapultteile aus dem Schiffswrack von Mahdia (Tunesien)," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1985): 677–91; idem, "Eine Katapult-Spannbuchse aus Pityus, Georgien (UDSSR)," *Saalburg Jahrbuch* 44 (1988): 63–64; idem, "Die Römische Jagdarmbrust," *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 21 (1991): 283–90; idem, *Bauten und Katapulte des römischen Heeres* (Stuttgart, 1994); Dietwulf Baatz and Michel Feugère, "Éléments d'une catapulte romaine trouvée à Lyon," *Gallia* 39 (1981): 201–9; A. G. Drachmann, *The Mechanical Technology of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Copenhagen, 1963), 186–91; idem, "Biton and the Development of the Catapult," *Prismata, Naturwissenschaftsgeschichtliche Studien, Festschrift für Willy Hartner*, ed. Y. Maeyama and W. G. Saltzer (Wiesbaden, 1977), 119–31; Barton C. Hacker, "Greek Catapults and Catapult Technology: Science, Technology and War in the Ancient World," *Technology and Culture* 9 (1968): 34–50; Yvon Garlan, *Recherches de poliorcétique grecque* (Paris, 1974), 212–25; John G. Landels, *Engineering in the Ancient World* (Berkeley, 1978), 99–132; Arnold W. Lawrence, *Greek Aims in Fortification* (Oxford, 1979), 43–49; Werner Soedel and Vernard Foley, "Ancient Catapults," *Scientific American* 240 (March 1979): 150–60; Philippe Fleury, "Vitruve et la nomenclature des machines de jet romaines," *Revue des Études Latines* 59 (1981): 216–34; idem, *La mécanique de Vitruve* (Caen, France, 1993); Paul E. Chevedden, "Artillery in Late Antiquity: Prelude to the Middle Ages," in *The Medieval City under Siege*, ed. Ivy Corfis and Michael Wolfe (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1995), 131–73; and Alan Wilkins, "Reconstructing the *cheiromballistra*," *Journal of Roman*



Bolt-projecting trebuchets played an important role in the Mamluk army, particularly in the campaigns of conquest that brought an end to the Crusader states in Syria. This new class of artillery was designated by the term *manjanīq qarābughrā* (the “Black Camel” trebuchet).¹² The most important technical treatise devoted to the trebuchet, Yūsuf ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh’s *An Elegant Book on Trebuchets* (*Kitāb Anīq fī al-Manājanīq*),¹³ written in 867/1462–63, offers a detailed description of the “Black Camel” trebuchet.

IBN URUNBUGHĀ’S BOLT-PROJECTING TREBUCHET

The steps that are required to convert a stone-projecting, trestle-framed, counterweight trebuchet into a bolt-projecting machine are explained by Ibn Urunbughā, the foremost authority on medieval artillery:

If you want to shoot bolts (*nushshāb*)—some of which are filled with inflammable material (*al-nār*) and sticky gums (*or* resins) (*lizāqāt*) and others are not—from a trebuchet (*manjanīq*) [do as follows]. If you want that [i.e., to shoot bolts], put a hook (*kullāb*)¹⁴ at the center of gravity (*‘idl*) of the bolt (*al-nushshāb*). The hook should be made

Military Equipment Studies 6 (1995): 5–59.

¹²The word *bughrā* is the Arabic form of the Turkish term for a camel stallion, *buğra*. The prefix *qarā-* is the Arabic form of the Turkish word for black (*kara*), which carries figurative meanings, often pejorative, but it can also mean “strong” or “powerful.” On these Turkish terms, see Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972), 317–18 (*buğra*); 643–44 (*kara*); J. H. Kramers, “*Qarā*,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 4:572.

¹³Yūsuf ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh, “*Kitāb Anīq fī al-Manājanīq*,” Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kutuphanesi MS Ahmet III 3469/1. This treatise is the longest and most profusely illustrated work in any language dealing with the trebuchet. Two editions of this text have appeared. The first was edited by Nabīl Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz under the title *Al-Anīq fī al-Manājanīq* (Cairo, 1981), and the second was edited by Iḥsān Hindī under the title *Al-Anīq fī al-Manājanīq*, Maṣādir wa-Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh al-Taknūlūjiyā al-‘Arabīyah, no. 4 [Aleppo and Kuwait, 1985]. This treatise is hereafter cited as “*Anīq*,” and its two published editions as *Anīq*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, and *Anīq*, ed. Hindī.

¹⁴The “hook” holds the loose end of the cord that is tied to the end of the throwing arm of the trebuchet. The “hook” is presumably attached to the loose end of the cord by a ring. The bolt is released when the ring at the end of cord frees itself from the “hook” during the launch cycle. This “hook” serves the same purpose as the device identified by Francesco di Giorgio Martini as a “nock” and probably resembled this component (see discussion below, “The Bolt-Projecting Trebuchets of Taccola and Francesco di Giorgio,” and Fig. 12). In Arabic, the term “hook” can be applied to a variety of devices. Al-Ṭarsūsī uses the term “hook” (*khuṭṭāf*) to denote the prong, or style, that is fixed to the tip of the throwing arm to hold the loose end of the sling. This device may be bent or straight and looks nothing like a normal hook (“*Tabṣirah fī al-Ḥurūb*,” Bodl., fols. 134v, 136v; “*Tabṣirah fī al-Ḥurūb*,” Süleymaniye, fols. 97r, 100v; *Tabṣirah fī al-Ḥurūb*, ed. Ṣādir, 167, 169; Cahen, “*Traité*,” 119, 120, 141, 142).



of iron. The hook will facilitate the lift-off (*yahmil*)¹⁵ of the bolt (*al-sahm*) and effect the discharge (*ḍarb*)¹⁶ [of the projectile]. The front part of the hook should face the head of the bolt (*nasl al-nushshāb*), and its back should face the fletching of the bolt (*rīsh al-sahm*). Then, after [doing] that, remove the pouch (*kaffah*) of the trebuchet and take out its first cord (*sā'id*)¹⁷ [i.e., the cord attached to the loose

¹⁵The verb *ḥamala*, meaning “to carry,” “to pick up” (something in order to carry it), “to lift,” or “to convey” (something), is used to describe the launching operation of the bolt-projecting trebuchet. Al-Ṭarsūsī also uses the verb *ḥamala* to describe the launching of projectiles from trebuchets (“*Tabṣīrah fī al-Ḥurūb*,” Bodl., fol. 130r; “*Tabṣīrah fī al-Ḥurūb*,” Süleymaniye, fol. 95r; *Tabṣīrah fī al-Ḥurūb*, ed. Şādir, 163). The action associated with this verb perfectly describes the first two stages of the launch cycle of a trebuchet. A missile that is launched from a sling is first *carried* by the sling of the trebuchet as the loaded sling slides along the trough of the machine prior to lift off. When the sling leaves the ground at lift-off, the missile is *lifted* from the trough but continues to be *carried* by the sling as it rotates in a circular orbit around the extremity of the long arm of the beam before being released. In the case of the bolt-projecting trebuchet, the “hook” holds the loose end of the cord that is fastened to the end of the throwing arm of the trebuchet. Just like the sling, the “hook” can be viewed as *carrying* the bolt as it first *carries* the bolt along the trough during the first stage of the launch cycle and then facilitates the *lift-off* of the bolt during the second stage of the launch cycle. The bolt enters the third stage of the launch cycle, the ballistic phase, when the loose end of the cord frees itself from the “hook.” In the context of hurling a missile from a trebuchet, the verb *ḥamala* means “to carry” (a projectile along the running-path of the trough), “to facilitate lift-off” (of a projectile), or simply “to shoot” or “to discharge” (a projectile), in the sense that a trebuchet can be said *to carry* a projectile a specified distance or in a specified way. The subsequent use of the verb *ramá*, meaning “to throw” or “to hurl,” to describe the launching of a bolt from the *qarābughrā* seems to indicate that the author seeks to establish a difference between the two initial stages of the launch cycle and the ballistic stage.

¹⁶According to Hindī, *ḍarb* (“discharge,” “shooting”) designates the projectile (*maqdhūf*) of the machine (*Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 45 n. 10). He cites Reinhart Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (Leiden, 1881; repr., Leiden, 1967), 2:6, as the source of this information, but Dozy provides no such translation for *ḍarb*.

¹⁷Hindī believes that the term *sā'id* (pl. *sawā'id*) refers to the rotating beam of the trebuchet (*Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 41 n. 9, 42 n. 2, 43 n. 9, 44 nn. 1 and 5, 45 n. 6). This term, which means “forearm,” refers specifically to the two sling cords of a trebuchet. This is made abundantly clear in Ibn Shaddād’s account of the Mongol siege of al-Bīrah (Birecik) in 674/1275. The Mongol battery of trebuchets bombarding the city was commanded by a Muslim artilleryman who presumably had been impressed into Mongol service against his will. At the height of the siege, he seized an opportunity to betray his new masters. As the city defenders were attempting to bring counter-battery to bear upon the Mongol artillery, they persistently overshot their mark. Realizing that a simple adjustment to the sling cord would correct for overshooting, the Muslim artilleryman shouted in Arabic to the operator of a trebuchet inside al-Bīrah and directed him to shorten the sling cord (*sā'id*) of his trebuchet by a cubit. When he had made this adjustment, the range of his shot was reduced, and he was able to make a direct hit on a Mongol trebuchet. This episode illustrates that medieval artillerymen knew full well that slings of different lengths provided variations in trajectory



end of the sling]. Then, attach the hook to the second cord [i.e., the cord fixed to the end of the throwing arm] and launch it (*tarmī bi-hi*), and it will hit the target you want, if God wills. This account of ours is a complete [description of the] operation of the trebuchet which is known as the "Black Camel" (*qarābughrā*).¹⁸

Although the text clearly states that the "Black Camel" trebuchet is a bolt-projecting machine, Iḥsān Hindī, who edited *Elegant Book*, asserts that "it is a type of trebuchet specifically designed for hurling stone-shot."¹⁹ *Elegant Book* describes and illustrates three trebuchet incendiary bolts, providing detailed information on the type of projectiles that were discharged from a *qarābughrā*.²⁰ Three illustrations of the *qarābughrā* appear in *Elegant Book*, but they are difficult to interpret. The machine depicted is not designated a *qarābughrā*, but a *ziyār*, a machine identified in *Elegant Book* as a base-mounted, two-armed torsion catapult.²¹ All three

and range (‘Izz al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. Aḥmad Huṭayṭ [Wiesbaden, 1983], 125). The trebuchet was apparently viewed as a metonymic extension of the human arm, since the trebuchet both closely resembles the human arm and operates in much the same way as the human arm. The long bone of the arm, the humerus, closely resembles the throwing arm of the trebuchet. The two thinner bones of the forearm, the radius and ulna, resemble the two sling cords of a trebuchet. The terminal part of the arm, the hand, bears a likeness to the pouch of the sling, since it both holds and releases the projectile. In addition, the mechanical properties of the human arm and the trebuchet have a marked resemblance to one another, because both the trebuchet and the human arm operate as a lever system. The pivoting motion of the trebuchet mimics the human arm in the act of throwing. The beam, resembling the humerus, pivots on its axle and sets in motion the sling, which is swung on its pivot around the extremity of the throwing arm, imitating the action of the elbow and the forearm. The energy flow process of the trebuchet and the human thrower is also similar. Potential energy given to the counterweight is converted into kinetic energy as it passes from the throwing arm to the sling and finally to the projectile. Similarly, energy supplied by muscle in the human thrower comes down the upper arm and acts to bend the arm at the elbow enabling the hand to move upward and downward in the act of throwing. For other parallels that contemporaries drew between human anatomy and the trebuchet, see Chevedden, "Artillery of King James I," 73–74, Pls. 14–15; Chevedden et al., "Traction Trebuchet," 446; and note 10 above and text.

¹⁸"Anīq," fol. 3v; *Anīq*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, 26; *Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 45.

¹⁹*Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 46 n. 1. In his discussion of the bolt-projecting trebuchet, Hindī again insists that the *qarābughrā* launches stone-shot, while the *ziyār* launches bolts (*Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 94). Hindī also identifies the *qarābughrā* with the trestle-framed, stone-projecting trebuchet referred to as a "Turkish" trebuchet (*manjanīq turkī*) in *Elegant Book* (*Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 110).

²⁰"Anīq," fols. 53v–54r; *Anīq*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, 117–19; *Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 185–87.

²¹"Anīq," fol. 33r; *Anīq*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, 73; *Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 109–10: a crude drawing of a *ziyār*, depicted as a bolt-projecting, two-armed torsion catapult mounted on a cruciform base, is shown together with a pole-framed traction trebuchet and a trestle-framed counterweight trebuchet atop a fortress tower. The projectile of the machine is a large bolt or shaft, identified by the term,



illustrations reveal an engine that is a true Frankenstein monster of medieval artillery. Two disparate species of artillery are combined in a single drawing. A torsion catapult and a bolt-projecting, trestle-framed trebuchet are united into one machine. The numerous drawings of trebuchets and other siege engines in *Elegant Book* indicate a high degree of technical competence, so the composite creations representing a bolt-projector do not appear to be the result of a casual or accidental act. Still less do they appear to be the result of inexperience or ineptitude on the part of the illustrator. Rather, it seems, the illustrator set out to deliberately produce in a single drawing two different types of bolt-projecting artillery used by the Mamluk army: the *ziyār* and the *qarābughrā*. Drawings of machines dating from the classical and medieval periods often incorporated multiple perspectives in the same figure. The draftsman could include, all in one diagram, the plan of a machine, its two side elevations, as well as its front and rear-elevations, making it very difficult for the modern researcher to interpret. Our illustrator has gone a step further and created a bastard machine by fusing two machines into one. This experiment, like Dr. Frankenstein's, does not appear to have been very successful, although anyone with a sound knowledge of artillery construction would likely have been able to make out the meaning of the drawing.

Two of the illustrations of the bastard bolt-projector show a single, vertically-mounted torsion spring set in the center of one of the trusses of the trestle frame of a trebuchet (Figs. 7–8), while a third illustration shows a single, horizontally-mounted torsion spring positioned halfway up one of the trusses of a trestle-frame (Fig. 9). Although the illustrations are a fusion of incongruous elements, the features that are most characteristic of a *qarābughrā* predominate: a trestle framework, a beam with a counterweight fixed rigidly to its butt-end, a windlass for hauling down the beam, and a trough loaded with a bolt. The famous Sieneese engineers Mariano di Iacopo, known as Taccola (1381–ca. 1458), and Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439–1502) have fortunately provided a number of fairly accurate illustrations of the “Black Camel” trebuchet.²²

kazz. This word may be derived from ξυσ-τον (*xus-ton*), the Greek term for “shaft,” “spear-shaft,” or “spear.” On *kazz*, mistranscribed as *karr*, see Abū al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn ‘Alī Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa-al-Umam* (Hyderabad, 1360/1940), 10:169. The machine known as the *Kashk-anjūr* (“Battlement-Piercer”), a bolt-projecting, two-armed torsion catapult mounted on a cruciform base, is related structurally to the *ziyār* (“Anīq,” fol. 23r, 33v, 35r; *Anīq*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, 53, 74, 77; *Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 103–8). Al-Ṭarsūsī identifies the *ziyār* as a base-mounted bolt-projecting tension catapult. He describes and illustrates a single-bolt *ziyār*, a multiple-bolt *ziyār*, and a compound pulley for spanning a *ziyār* (*Tabṣīrah fī al-Ḥurūb*, ed. Ṣādir, 118–23, 245–47, Figs. 1–3; Cahen, “Traité,” 108–10, 129–32, 151–52, Pl. 1, Figs. 1–3).

²²Mariano Taccola, “De ingeneis” (ca. 1419–50), Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Codex CLM 197 II, fol. 68v: trebuchet with hinged counterweight launching a single bolt (reproduced in



THE BOLT-PROJECTING TREBUCHETS OF TACCOLA AND FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO

Taccola's bolt-projector is a trestle-framed trebuchet with a hinged-counterweight (Fig. 10). The throwing arm terminates in a special four-pronged appendage that holds four "sling" ropes for the simultaneous discharge of four bolts. For simplicity's sake, the illustrator has only drawn one of the bolts. Above the four-pronged appendage of the beam is an insert showing details of a two-tined fork for the throwing arm. A caption underneath the insert reads, "It [the component shown above] shall be placed on the end of the beam (*mictatur in stilo istius pertice*)."

Taccola's illustration of the bolt-projecting trebuchet is the earliest depiction of the machine and the most accurate. The four-tined throwing arm shown in the illustration may have been a less than optimal design for the bolt-release mechanism, due to the close proximity of the "sling" ropes, but the two-tined fork that is depicted appears to be able to actuate the discharge of two bolts with adequate success.

Francesco di Giorgio's illustration of a bolt-projecting trebuchet carries more than a caption title; it is accompanied by a full-length description of the machine,

Mariano Taccola, *De ingeneis: Liber primus leonis, Liber secundus draconis, addenda: Books I and II, On Engines and Addenda [The Notebook]*, ed. Gustina Scaglia, Frank D. Prager, Ulrich Montagsda [Wiesbaden, 1984], 1:86; 2:fol. 68v); Francesco di Giorgio Martini, "Opusculum de architectura" (ca. 1470–75), British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings 1947–1–17–2 (= London, British Museum Cod. Lat. 197 b 21), fol. 40r: trebuchet with hinged counterweight launching two bolts; Francesco di Giorgio, "Codicetto" (ca. 1470–90s), Biblioteca apostolica vaticana MS Vat. Urb. lat. 1757, fol. 99v: trebuchet with hinged counterweight and forked attachment at tip of beam launching two bolts (reproduced in Francesco di Giorgio Martini, *Das Skizzenbuch des Francesco di Giorgio Martini: Vat. Urb. lat. 1757*, Belser faksimile Editionen aus der Biblioteca apostolica vaticana Codices e Vaticanis selecti quam simillime expressi iussu Ioannis Pauli PP II consilio et opera curatorum Bibliothecae Vaticanae, vol. 80 [Zurich, 1989], 2:99v); Francesco di Giorgio, "Trattato I," copy (ca. 1480–1500), Biblioteca Reale di Torino Codex 148 Saluzzo, fol. 61v: trebuchet with fixed counterweight and forked attachment at tip of beam launching two bolts (reproduced in Francesco di Giorgio Martini, *Trattati di architettura, ingegneria e arte militare*, ed. Corrado Maltese, Trattati di architettura, vol. 3 [Milan, 1967], 1:227 and Pl. 114); Anon. Sienese Engineer, Copybook Drawings, ca. 1470–90s, British Library Add. MS 34,113, fol. 133r: trebuchet with hinged counterweight launching two bolts with no forked appendage at tip of beam; Anon. Sienese Engineer, Copybook Drawings, ca. 1470–90s, British Library Add. MS 34,113, fol. 219v: trebuchet with hinged counterweight and forked appendage at tip of beam; and Anon. Raccolta Artist Engineer, "Raccolta di città e macchine" (ca. 1490s), Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Codex Magliabechiana II I 141 part 3, fol. 195v: trebuchet with fixed counterweight and forked attachment at tip of beam launching two bolts (reproduced in Chevedden, "The Artillery of King James," Fig. 10). For information on the manuscripts and drawings of Francesco di Giorgio Martini, see Gustina Scaglia, *Francesco di Giorgio: Checklist and History of Manuscripts and Drawings in Autographs and Copies from ca. 1470 to 1687 and Renewed Copies (1764–1839)* (Bethlehem, Penn., and London, 1992).



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which reads as follows:

If we want to shoot bolts in another way, we first have to make a base frame composed of large and firmly-fastened beams of wood, above which two other beams of wood are nailed in an upright position and set a foot apart from each other. Between them [the uprights] is put a squared beam [counter]balanced like [the beam of] a trebuchet. The beam is twenty-five feet or more in length and has a [counterweight] box on top of its [butt-]end secured by iron straps. At the tip of the beam is a fork with three rings. The two lateral rings [of the fork] have a cord attached to them that is connected to the nock of the bolts, and the middle ring is connected to the serpentine lever [of the catch-and-trigger device], which is pulled up [to free the beam] after the beam has been elevated by a capstan. So, by elevating the [counterweight] box to the height at which gravitational energy [can be effectively employed], and by lifting the curved release, the bolts are discharged with great force because of the recoil of the [counterweight] box as it falls on the cords [stretched between the two uprights] below.²³

Francesco's illustration accompanying his description of the bolt-projecting trebuchet (Fig. 11) shows heavy cords wound around the lower portion of the uprights of the machine that act as a buffer for the descending beam. The buffer provides a safeguard against a movement of the beam that would damage the mechanical pull-back system of the throwing arm. This pull-back system is made up of two ropes that run from the top of the counterweight box to a capstan positioned behind the base frame of the machine. Incorporated in the system is a horizontal bar placed above the axle of the beam that redirects the ropes downward to the base frame where a set of rollers sends the ropes in the direction of the

²³Francesco di Giorgio, *Trattati di architettura*, 1:227: "Se in altro modo i dardi trar vorremo, faccisi in prima un pavimento di grosse e ben commesse travi, sopra delle quali due altri diritti legni fermai d'altezza piè vinti quattro, in distanza uno piè dall'una e l'altra. Infra le quali una quadrata trave bilicata a guisa di trabocco, in longhezza piei vinticinque o più, in nella testa da piè una cassa con corregge di ferro collegata, e nella sua sommità uno forcone con tre anelli, e ai due che di fuore sono sia accomandato un pezzo di canape a ciascuno ch'el groppo loro a la bolgionella de' dardi si riferischi, e all'anello di mezzo al lasso sia accomandato, ch'è dopo l'azar della tirata trave che all'argano tirare bisogna. Elevandosi la cassa dell'altezza della gravedine el lasso lassando i dardi potentemente trae per la repercussione della cadente cassa che ne' canapi dappiè ribatte." I thank Silvia Orvietani Busch of the University of California at Los Angeles for her generous help in the translation of this passage. I alone am responsible for any errors.



capstan. This pull-back system fails to utilize the mechanical advantage that would be gained by the use of a lever. Worse, it requires the insertion of a cross-member that is placed in the direct path of the beam. A buffer must therefore halt the beam before it crashes into this component. This resolves one problem but creates another. With each discharge the beam would forcibly strike the buffer. Repeated blows would shake the machine apart. Design flaws—even catastrophic ones, such as this—are not altogether uncommon in the works of the great Italian Renaissance engineers, such as Taccola, Francesco di Giorgio, and Leonardo da Vinci. However, such flaws are not likely to have been repeated in workshops where heavy artillery was built. Here experienced craftsmen with a sound knowledge of artillery construction exercised control over production, not “engineer-artists/authors” whose kaleidoscopic interests occasionally overshot their technical skills.

Another problem with Francesco’s bolt-projecting trebuchet is the short span of the axle, a mere foot, which would have been quite detrimental to the lateral stability of the machine. Counterweight trebuchets were commonly constructed with wide axles to provide better lateral stability for the axle of the machine.²⁴ An axle measuring only a foot would have made it quite impossible for the counterweight box to pass between the uprights of the machine, despite the fact that Francesco’s illustration indicates that this was feasible. In addition, a gap of only a foot between the uprights does not provide adequate space for the two bolts positioned for launch at the base of the machine (Fig. 11). Another illustration of a bolt-projecting trebuchet, one by an anonymous artist-engineer that is based upon Francesco’s drawing, depicts a wider axle for the machine (Fig. 12). This axle is supported upon a trestle framework that is far more robust than the vertical posts depicted in Francesco’s drawing.

The anonymous artist-engineer has improved some features of Francesco’s machine and drawn others more distinctly. The release mechanism for the bolts in Francesco’s drawing is deficient in its details, making it impossible to determine how the bolts were discharged (Fig. 11). This feature is clearly represented by the anonymous artist-engineer. The device, identified by Francesco as a “nock,” is shown to consist of a tube, or sleeve, that is fitted over each of the bolts at the balance point (center of gravity). A notch on the upper side of the “nock” holds the loose end of the cords. The fixed end of the cords is attached to the outer prongs of the forked appendage at the end of the throwing arm of the trebuchet (Fig. 12). The bolts are projected during the launch cycle when the loose ends of the cords are freed from the “nock.” This device performs the same function as the “hook” on the bolts of Ibn Urunbughā’s machine (see above).

²⁴Chevedden et al., “Traction Trebuchet,” 447, 453–54.



The anonymous artist-engineer has provided Francesco's machine with a more efficient mechanical pull-back system for the throwing arm, one that utilizes leverage. A single rope, threaded through a roller at the base of the machine, runs from the end of the beam to the capstan. The catch-and-trigger device for both machines consists of an S-shaped (serpentine) lever that is pivoted backward. This device is so crudely depicted in Francesco's original drawing that the lever cannot be pivoted backward (Fig. 11), but the anonymous artist-engineer has delineated it accurately so that it can be turned (Fig. 12).

One component that remains unchanged is the buffer. Since the version of the machine drawn by the anonymous artist-engineer has no cross-member obstructing the path of the beam, the sole purpose of the buffer is to stop the throwing arm before it reaches a fully upright position. Francesco apparently believed that the recoil of the counterweight box against this buffer served in some way to discharge the bolts. In fact, such recoil would shake the machine to pieces. Furthermore, it is not the breaking action of the buffer and the recoil of the beam that effects the discharge of the bolts, but gravitational energy as it flows from the counterweight box to the beam, to the cords, and finally to the bolts. The presence of the buffer seems to indicate that Francesco held the view that the pivoting beam of the trebuchet must be halted before it reached a fully vertical position in order for the bolts to fly free from the two cords attached to the throwing arm. The buffer prevents the full range of the beam's rotation from being utilized to hurl the bolts, since the buffer halts the beam before it can reach a fully upright position. Taccola's drawing of the bolt-projecting trebuchet shows no such buffer for the beam (Fig. 10), and Ibn Urunbughā makes no mention of one in his description of the *qarābughrā* (see above).²⁵ It is unlikely, therefore, that the bolt-projecting trebuchet was furnished with a buffer for the beam, a device that would have hampered the operation of the machine.

NOMENCLATURE OF THE "BLACK CAMEL" TREBUCHET

The nomenclature of the "Black Camel" trebuchet presents a problem. Ibn Urunbughā is almost alone in identifying the bolt-projecting trebuchet by the term "Black Camel" (*qarābughrā*). The only other Arabic work that adopts this designation for the bolt-projecting machine is *Sīrat al-Sultān Jalāl al-Dīn Mankubirtī* by Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Nasawī, which was produced in a Persian cultural milieu.²⁶ All other Arabic historical sources refer to this engine as the "Black Bull"

²⁵On the question of whether Francesco's bolt projecting trebuchet, as well as many of his other "ingenious devices," were ever meant to be actually operated, see Scaglia, *Francesco di Giorgio*, 9–10. For Taccola's drawing of the bolt-projecting trebuchet, see note 22 above.

²⁶Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Nasawī, *Sīrat al-Sultān Jalāl al-Dīn Mankubirtī*, ed. Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmad



(*qarābughā*) trebuchet, a corruption of the original term.²⁷ *Qarābughrā* is clearly the parent term, since *Elegant Book*, a technical treatise, employs this word, as does the first historical source to refer to the bolt-projecting trebuchet, al-Nasawī's *Sīrat Jalāl al-Dīn*. The romance cognate *caraboha* and its kindred terms *carabouha*, *carabaga*, *carabaccani*, and *carabachani* are all derived from *qarābughā* ("Black Bull"),²⁸ not from *qarābughrā* ("Black Camel").

The Turkish name for the bolt-projecting trebuchet may be linked to an association of the trebuchet with the camel that is also found in Arabic. One of the Arabic synonyms for a trestle-framed trebuchet (*manjanīq*) was *khaṭṭārah*, a word applied originally to a stallion-camel engaged in the action termed *khaṭarān*, the raising of its tail time after time which happens during bouts with rival camels. A connection was made in Arabic between the camel's tail being raised repeatedly and the motion of the throwing arm of a trebuchet as it goes through its launch cycle.²⁹ Although it seems sensible to establish a link between the camel-trebuchet connection in Arabic and that in Turkish, there is no absolute necessity to postulate such a relationship. The Turkish language appears to have associated the camel with the trebuchet in a semantic context related to the power of the machine, not to its operation. The camel stallion was one of the totem animals of the Turks, and this fact alone may explain why it was coupled with the most powerful form of artillery. The Turkish dynasty of the İlek-Khans or Qarakhanids, which ruled over the regions of Eastern and Western Turkestan from 992 to 1212, commonly used

Ḥamdī (Cairo, 1953), 303.

²⁷David Ayalon, "Hiṣār," *EI*², 3:473.

²⁸The word *bughā* is the Arabic form of the Turkish term for bull, *buğa* or *buka* (Clouston, *Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, 312).

²⁹Edward W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, (London, 1863–93), s.v. *khaṭara*; Hill, "Trebuchets," 100; and Kennedy, *Armies of the Caliphs*, 110. When the Umayyad Caliph Yazīd I besieged Mecca in 64/683, he employed a trestle-framed, traction trebuchet called *Umm Farwah* (Mother of Hair) that was described by the poet al-Zubayr ibn Khuzaymah al-Khath'amī as a *khaṭṭārah*: "raising its tail [i.e., beam] like a raging stallion camel (*khaṭṭārah mithla al-fanīq al-muzbid*)" (Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-al-Mulūk [Annales]*, ed. Michael Jan de Goeje et al., 3 series, 15 vols. [Leiden, 1879–1901], 2:426 [the reference is to series and page number, not to volume and page number]; idem, *Tārīkh*, trans. I. K. A. Howard, *The History of al-Ṭabarī [Tārīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk]*, vol. 19, *The Caliphate of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah*, SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies, Bibliotheca Persica [Albany, 1990], 224). The poet Abū Ya'qūb al-Khuraymī also refers to the trebuchet as a *khaṭṭārah* in his description of defensive artillery at Baghdad during al-Ma'mūn's siege of the city in 197–98/812–13. "In every gated street and on every side," the poet relates, was a *khaṭṭārah* that launched stone-shot the size of a man's head, and the barrage was so intense that the projectiles resembled "flocks of dusky sand grouse taking flight in commotion" (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:877; idem, *Tārīkh*, trans. Michael Fishbein, *The History of al-Ṭabarī [Tārīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk]*, vol. 31, *The War Between Brothers*, SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies, Bibliotheca Persica [Albany, 1992], 145–46).



a totemistic title formed from the term for a camel stallion, Bughra Khān.³⁰ The Turkish prefix *qarā-* (literally “black”) carries the figurative meaning of “strong” or “powerful” and serves to intensify the meaning of *bughrā*, a term which on its own communicates the idea of power actively and efficiently displayed. Since the trebuchet was an instrument of enormous power, it was given a name in Turkish that symbolized great physical strength and energy.

The Turkish origin of the term *qarābughrā* suggests a Turco-Islamic origin for the bolt-projecting trebuchet. It may have emerged in the sultanate of the Great Saljuqs or in one of the Atabeg or Turkish principalities of western Asia. Alternatively, the Qarakhanids, who made the camel part of their regnal titles, may have invented the machine. As the western realms of the Qarakhanids passed into Saljuq and Khwarazm Shah spheres of influence, these two states may have acquired the bolt-projecting trebuchet and effected its diffusion westward.

THE “BLACK CAMEL” TREBUCHET IN MIDDLE EASTERN HISTORICAL SOURCES

Arabic historical chronicles identify the *qarābughrā*, usually under its corrupt form *qarābughā*, as being used in six sieges. In 626/1229, the last Khwarazm-Shah, Jalāl al-Dīn Mengübirte, became the first recorded military leader to employ a *qarābughrā* in his six-month siege of Akhlāt.³¹ When the Ayyubid Sultan al-Malik al-Şāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb laid siege to Homs in the winter of 646/1248–49, he employed a battery of artillery consisting of two trestle-framed, counterweight trebuchets—a bolt-projecting *qarābughrā* and a stone-projecting *manjanīq maghribī* (Western Islamic trebuchet)—and twelve “Devilish” traction machines (*majānīq al-shayṭānīyah*).³² In 684/1285, the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn besieged the Hospitaller fortress of al-Marqab (Margat) with three *qarābughrās*, three *bricolas*, identified as “Frankish” or “European” trebuchets (*majānīq firanjīyah*), and four traction trebuchets (*majānīq shayṭānīyah*).³³ In 688/1289, he attacked the

³⁰ Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties: A Chronological and Genealogical Manual* (New York, 1996), 181–84; idem, “İlek-Khāns,” *EI*², 3:1113–17; *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, ed. Aḥmad H. Dani and Vadim M. Masson, vol. 4, *The Age of Achievement, A.D. 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century*, pt. 1, *The Historical, Social and Economic Setting*, ed. M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth (Paris, 1998), 121.

³¹ Al-Nasawī, *Sīrat Jalāl al-Dīn*, 303.

³² Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Sālīm Ibn Wāṣil, “Mufarrij al-Kurūb fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb,” Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fonds arabe 1703, fol. 61r. Al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb’s *manjanīq maghribī* threw stone-shot against Homs weighing 140 Syrian *raṭls* (259 kg or 571 lb). On the “Devilish” trebuchet (*manjanīq shayṭānī*), see Chevedden, “Artillery of King James I,” 61, and note 58 below and text.

³³ Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-Ayyām wa-al-‘Uṣūr fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. Murād Kāmil and Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Najjār (Cairo, 1961), 78.



Crusader port city of Tripoli with a battery of nineteen counterweight trebuchets composed of thirteen *qarābughrās* and six *bricolas* (*ifranjīyah*).³⁴ After Qalāwūn's death, his son and successor, Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl, took up the siege of Acre, which his father had already set in motion. In 690/1291, he unleashed a deadly artillery attack against this heavily defended Crusader stronghold using a battery of seventy-two trebuchets, which included a complement of *qarābughrās* alongside fifteen *bricolas* and fifty-two traction machines.³⁵ During the following year, in 691/1292, al-Ashraf Khalīl conquered the mighty fortress of Qal'at al-Rūm with a battery of artillery comprised of five *qarābughrās*, five *bricolas* (*majānīq firanjīyah*), and fifteen traction trebuchets (*majānīq shayṭānīyah*).³⁶ Rarely do the historical

³⁴Abū Bakr ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Aybak al-Dawādārī, known as Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmi' al-Ghurar*, vol. 8, *Al-Durrah al-Zakīyah fī Akhbār al-Dawlah al-Turkīyah*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann (Cairo and Wiesbaden, 1971), 283; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*, vol. 31, ed. al-Bāz al-'Arīnī (Cairo, 1992), 47; and Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, ed. Costi K. Zurayk and Nejla Izzedin, vols. 7–9, Publications of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the American University of Beirut, Oriental Series, nos. 9–10, 14, 17 (Beirut, 1936–42), 8:80.

³⁵Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Abū Bakr al-Jazarī, *Ḥawāḍith al-Zamān wa-Anbā' ihī wa-Wafayāt al-Akābir wa-al-A'yān min Abnā' ih: al-Ma'rūf bi-Tārīkh Ibn al-Jazarī (min Wafayāt Sanat 689 ḥattā Ḥawāḍith Sanat 699 H)*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon, 1998), 1:45; Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān*, ed. Antranig Melkonian, *Die Jahre 1287–1291 in der Chronik al-Yūnīnīs* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1975), 86 (Arabic text), 163 (trans.); Muḥammad Ibn Shākīr al-Kutubī, *'Uyūn al-Tawārīkh: Sanawāt 688–699 H*, ed. Nabilah 'Abd al-Mun'im Dāwūd (Baghdad, 1991), 71; and Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:112. See the excellent article by Donald P. Little, which analyzes the Arabic accounts of the siege of Acre in great detail, "The Fall of 'Akkā in 690/1291: The Muslim Version," in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization in Honour of Professor David Ayalon*, ed. Moshe Sharon (Jerusalem and Leiden, 1986), 159–81. Little's student Andreas D'Sousa has also produced an important study of the siege of Acre comparing Christian and Muslim sources, "The Conquest of 'Akkā (690/1291): A Comparative Analysis of Christian and Muslim Sources," *Muslim World* 80 (July–October 1990): 234–50.

³⁶Al-Jazarī, *Ḥawāḍith al-Zamān*, 1:109; *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultane in den Jahren 690–741 der Hīgra, nach arabischen Handschriften*, ed. Karl V. Zetterstéen (Leiden, 1919), 16; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 8:333; Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd wa-al-Durr al-Farīd fīmā ba'da Tārīkh Ibn al-'Amīd*, ed. and trans. Edgar Blochet, "Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks," *Patrologia Orientalis* 14, no. 3 (1920): 553; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 226; and Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:136. All of the accounts of the siege of Qal'at al-Rūm that provide an enumeration of the several types of trebuchets used against this castle suffer from textual corruption. The most authoritative account appears to be that of al-Jazarī, who relates information received from two eyewitnesses to the siege, Amir Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Bayyān, known as Ibn al-Miḥaffadār, Amīr Jandār (armor bearer or guard officer), and his son Amir Sayf al-Dīn. The version of the siege in the anonymous chronicle edited by Zetterstéen is based on al-Jazarī's account, and the later accounts of the siege by Ibn al-Dawādārī and the Christian historian al-Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī



sources give an enumeration of the different types of artillery used in a siege, so the actual use of *qarābughrās* was probably far more numerous than the extant sources suggest.

al-Faḍā'il, appear to be unsuccessful attempts to resolve the textual problems of al-Jazarī's original (debased) narrative. Al-Jazarī's enumeration of the different trebuchets at Qal'at al-Rūm omits the number "five" before the second substantive in the list of three types of machines: "nuṣiba 'alayhā min al-majānīq khams majānīq ifranjīyah wa-qarābughā wa-shayṭānīyah khamsata 'ashr manjanīqan." Since the anonymous author, Ibn al-Dawādārī, and al-Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il all state that five *qarābughrās* were positioned on the western side of the castle, it is evident that there were five *qarābughrās* at the siege, and that al-Jazarī's enumeration of artillery should be interpreted as entailing five "Frankish" trebuchets (*khams majānīq ifranjīyah*), or *bricolas*, five bolt-projecting trebuchets (*qarābughā*), and fifteen traction trebuchets (*shayṭānīyah khamsata ash'r manjanīqan*). The ungrammatical phrase, *min al-gharbīyah jihat qarābughā*, that appears in al-Jazarī's description of the artillery at Qal'at al-Rūm should be amended to read, *min al-jihah al-gharbīyah khamsat qarābughā* ("on the western side [of the castle] were five *qarābughrās*"), which follows, exactly or approximately, the phraseology found in the accounts of the anonymous author, Ibn al-Dawādārī, and al-Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il. The attempts by authors after al-Jazarī to provide an accurate tally of the number of trebuchets used against Qal'at al-Rūm were unsuccessful. Ibn al-Dawādārī and al-Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, either confused by al-Jazarī's phraseology or the corrupt nature of his text, set the number at nineteen (Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 8:333; Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Al-Nahj*, 553). Al-Nuwayrī and Ibn al-Furāt did better and came to a total of twenty trebuchets (al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 226; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:136), while al-'Aynī came closest to the mark with a tally of twenty-three trebuchets (Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān: 'Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk*, vol. 3, *Ḥawādith wa-Tarājīm*, 689–698 H/1290–1298 M, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn [Cairo, 1989], 113).



The "Black Camel" (*Qarābughrā*) Trebuchet Used Together with Other Pieces of Military Ordnance in Thirteenth-Century Sieges

<i>Date</i>	<i>Siege of</i>	<i>Besieged by</i>	<i>Artillery</i>
626/1229	Akhlāṭ	Jalāl al-Dīn Mengübirṭi	1 <i>qarābughrā</i>
646/1248–49	Homs	al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb	1 <i>qarābughrā</i> 1 Western Islamic trebuchet (<i>manjanīq maghribī</i>) that hurled stone-shot weighing 140 Syrian <i>raṭls</i> (259 kg or 571 lb) 12 "Devilish" traction trebuchets (<i>majānīq al-shayṭānīyah</i>)
684/1285	al-Marqab	Qalāwūn	3 <i>qarābughrās</i> 3 <i>bricolas</i> (<i>majānīq firanjīyah</i>) 4 "Devilish" traction trebuchets (<i>majānīq al-shayṭānīyah</i>)
688/1289	Tripoli	Qalāwūn	13 <i>qarābughrās</i> 6 <i>bricolas</i> (<i>ifranjīyah</i>)
690/1291	Acre	al-Ashraf Khalīl	5 <i>qarābughrās</i> 15 <i>bricolas</i> (<i>majānīq al-kibār al-ifranjīyah</i>) that hurled stone-shot weighing one Damascene <i>qintār</i> or more (185 kg or 408 lb +) 52 "Devilish" traction trebuchets (<i>majānīq al-shayṭānīyah</i>) an unspecified number of traction-powered pole-framed "Playthings" (<i>lu'ab</i>)
691/1292	Qal'at al-Rūm	al-Ashraf Khalīl	5 <i>qarābughrās</i> 5 <i>bricolas</i> (<i>majānīq firanjīyah</i>) 15 "Devilish" traction trebuchets (<i>majānīq al-shayṭānīyah</i>)



THE TACTICAL ROLE OF THE "BLACK CAMEL" TREBUCHET

Judging from its employment in the six important sieges mentioned above and its likely use in other sieges, it seems reasonable to assume that the *qarābughrā* played a useful role in most of the major sieges undertaken by the Mamluks in the thirteenth century. Unfortunately, the historical sources provide no hints about the tactical use of this piece of artillery. What purpose did the "Black Camel" trebuchet serve? As a piece of artillery for shooting flaming bolts, it was perfectly suited for destroying the protective screens that shielded fortifications from stone-shot discharged from trebuchets. To protect defensive circuits in the Middle Ages, load-bearing curtains, or screens, were hung down over the walls on beams of wood projecting about a meter from the battlements. These screens were commonly composed of netting overlaid with cushioning material that served to deaden the impact of stones cast by artillery.³⁷ Since stone-shot of heavy artillery could only take effect on exposed masonry, it was essential for besiegers to destroy the protective screens in order to knock down walls with artillery safely from a distance. With the introduction of the counterweight trebuchet, the breaching capacity of artillery was greatly enhanced. Besiegers found that they could not only use the new ordnance to batter walls safely from a distance, but they could also—with a few minor adjustments, as indicated by Ibn Urunbughā—use this

³⁷On the use of protective screens in premodern warfare, see Paul E. Chevedden, "The Citadel of Damascus," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1986, 1:194–97; idem, "Artillery of King James I," 79 and Pl. 12; Robert I. Burns and Paul E. Chevedden, *Negotiating Cultures: Bilingual Surrender Treaties in Muslim-Crusader Spain under James the Conqueror*, The Medieval Mediterranean, vol. 22 (Leiden, 1999), 176–77; Needham and Yates, *Science and Civilization in China*, 5:6:398–413; and Lawrence, *Greek Aims in Fortification*, 59, 64, 103–5. Several types of protective screens were employed in China during the Warring States Period (403–222 B.C.E.). These are described in the book *Mozi* (Book of Master Mo), dating from the fourth century B.C.E., and are analyzed in Yates, "Siege Engines and Late Zhou Military Technology," 420–23. Philo of Byzantium, writing around 200 B.C.E., discusses the use of screens on fortifications (Lawrence, *Greek Aims in Fortifications*, 105), as does Vegetius and an anonymous sixth-century Byzantine author (Flavius Vegetius Renatus, *Epitoma rei militaris*, ed. and trans. Leo F. Stelten [New York, 1990], 4.23; *Three Byzantine Military Treatise*, George T. Dennis, ed. and trans. [Washington, D.C., 1985], 43). In the Islamic world, a discussion of protective screens (*satā' ir*, sing. *sitārah*) can be found in Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Ṭabīb, *Histoire des Mongols de la Perse*, trans. Étienne Quatremère, Collection orientale, manuscrits inédits de la Bibliothèque royale (Paris, 1836; repr., Amsterdam, 1968), 286–87; Abū al-Sa'īd al-Harthamī, *Mukhtaṣar fī Siyāsāt al-Ḥurūb*, ed. 'Arif Aḥmad 'Abd al-Ghanī, Silsilat Kutub al-Turāth, vol. 5 (Damascus, 1995), 61 (*sutar*); 'Alī ibn Bakr al-Harawī, *Al-Tadhkirah al-Harawīyah fī al-Ḥiyāl al-Ḥarbīyah*, ed. and trans. Janine Sourdel-Thomine, "Les conseils du šayḥ al-Harawī à un prince ayyūbide," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 17 (1961–62): 239 (trans.), 243; and al-Ḥasan ibn 'Abd Allāh al-'Abbāsī, *Āthār al-Uwal fī Tartīb al-Duwal*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Umayrah (Beirut, 1989), 368 (on fixed fortifications), 372 (on ships).



artillery to destroy protective screens safely from a distance.³⁸ The trestle-framed counterweight trebuchet appears to have been adapted for this task. Although crossbows could also be used to shoot flaming bolts, their smaller projectiles were less likely to cause a conflagration that would consume the protective screen due to incendiary-proofing measures taken by defenders. These measures included soaking the protective screens in fire-retardant liquid and pouring water down from the battlements. An immense incendiary bolt launched by a *qarābughrā* facilitated rapid combustion by the release of the stored energy in its pyrotechnic mixture. If trebuchets could lodge a sufficient number of flaming bolts in a protective screen, a serious outbreak of fire would result that was capable of setting a protective screen ablaze. Aside from being well adapted for the task of destroying protective screens, the *qarābughrā* was equally suited for raining fire from heaven upon besieged towns and fortresses, but this does not appear to have been its primary function. Rounded fire-pots released from the sling of a trebuchet were quite capable of setting ablaze the interior parts of cities and castles, but only flaming bolts were capable of cleaving to a protective screen, thereby allowing combustion to spread and fire to consume the defensive shield of a masonry wall.³⁹ As a destroyer of protective screens, the *qarābughrā* appears to have filled a special niche in the medieval siege arsenal.

This is one possible route by which the idea of the bolt-projecting trebuchet may have been arrived at. On the other hand, this piece of artillery could have been invented to serve a defensive function and been subsequently adapted to perform in an offensive capacity. The defensive value of bolt-projecting artillery, particularly against approach-works, such as filling-mantlets, digging-mantlets, ram-mantlets, and mobile siege-towers, as well as against hostile artillery and densely packed groups of soldiers, is quite obvious. The fiery-bolt launched by a *qarābughrā* had the great advantage of being able to stick to wooden equipment and set it ablaze. Whatever in fact prompted the development of the bolt-projecting

³⁸On the introduction of the counterweight trebuchet, see Chevedden, "Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet."

³⁹Ibn Urunbughā offers the following instructions for launching fire-pots (*quḍūr al-naft*) and other rounded incendiary missiles from a trebuchet: "If you want to shoot a pot (*qidrah*) filled with naphtha (*naft*) and *lizāqāt* [sticky gums or resins], a pot of quicklime (*kils*) and smoke pots (*dakhhānāt*), or a stone of a trebuchet packed with naphtha (*naft*), first of all, take the oil of the radish (*mā' al-fujl*) or mica (*talq*) dissolved in strong vinegar (*khall al-'atīq*) and wet [some] felt in [this]. [Then], stitch this felt in the pouch (*kaffah*) of the trebuchet and [on] the cords (*sawā'id*) [of the sling] up to their middle. Put the [fire-]pot (*qidrah*) in it [the pouch] and launch it, and it will burn what you want." ("Anīq," fol. 18r; *Anīq*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz, 24–25; *Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 44–45).

For additional descriptions, as well as illustrations, of trebuchets hurling fire-pots, see al-Rammāh, *Furūsiyah*, 114–18, Figs. 66, 67, 68, 71.



trebuchet, it seems certain that defending, as well as attacking, forces could readily make use of this piece of artillery.

Baybars al-Manṣūrī describes, with great rhetorical flourish, the incendiary projectiles that the Mamluks launched against Acre in 690/1291. The “Islamic trebuchets” (*majānīq al-islāmīyah*), he says, shot stones “resembling stunning thunderbolts” (*ka-al-ṣawā’iq al-ṣā’iqah*) and hurled bolts “bearing the likeness of gleaming flashes of lightning” (*ka-al-bawāriq al-bāriqah*).⁴⁰ His description of the stone-shot conveys the image of a flash of lightning viewed as an intensely hot solid body moving rapidly through the air before striking something. Ibn Unrunbughā describes stone-shot perforated with holes to contain naphtha (*naft*) that easily fits this image.⁴¹ Baybars may be referring to this type of projectile or to any incendiary device having the shape of rounded stone-shot. His depiction of the bolts as “gleaming flashes of lightning” conveys the image of an electrical storm that rains down destruction by means of bolts or darts. There can be little doubt that Baybars is referring here to incendiary missiles hurled by bolt-projecting trebuchets.⁴² Although there is no direct evidence that the Mamluk *qarābughrās* were used to destroy the protective screens at Acre, we can be fairly certain that the defenses of the city were equipped with these devices. The inhabitants of Acre had a full seven months to prepare for the Mamluk siege, and Arabic sources note that they prepared the city extremely well for an assault. Al-‘Aynī affirms that when Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl reached Acre during the first ten day of Rabī‘ II/4–13 April, “he found it fortified with all kinds of equipment and siege machines.”⁴³ Since the outfitting of defenses with protective screens was a normal measure taken by besieged forces in the Middle Ages, we can assume that the defenders furnished the walls and towers of Acre with these screens. Their absence would certainly have merited a comment in the Arabic sources. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, an eyewitness to the siege, states that the inhabitants of Acre were so convinced of their ability to withstand a siege, due to the defensive measures that they had taken to fortify the towers and walls, that “they did not even close the gates of the city, nor even

⁴⁰Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Hijrah*, ed. Donald S. Richards, Nasharāt al-Islāmīyah, vol. 42 (Beirut, 1998), 279; Little, “Fall of ‘Akkā,” 172.

⁴¹See note 39 above, and “Anīq,” fol. 54r–54v; *Anīq*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, 119–21; *Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 188–91, where Ibn Unrunbughā describes three types of “flaming” stones, i.e., rounded stone-shot drilled with holes to contain naphtha and other inflammable substances.

⁴²For an alternate view, see Little, “Fall of ‘Akkā,” 172, where Baybars al-Manṣūrī’s description of the missiles hurled by trebuchets is credited to rhetorical exaggeration.

⁴³Al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 57: “fa-wajadahā qad taḥaṣṣanat bi-sā’ir al-‘udad wa-al-ālāt.” Here, “equipment” (‘*udad*, sing. *uddah*) would include protective screens, and “siege machines” (*ālāt*, sing. *ālah*) would imply artillery as well as other siege engines.



hang down a protective screen (*ḥijāb*) in front of the gates."⁴⁴ Baybars's observation is quite revealing. It indicates that the defenders properly prepared their city for a siege, which would certainly have entailed the use of protective screens. It shows the supreme confidence of the inhabitants in the defensive measures that they had taken to protect the city from siege, but, more importantly, it discloses that the confidence, or "indifference" (*'adam al-mubālāh bi-al-muḥāṣarah*), that they exhibited had its limits. It only extended to leaving the gates of the city open and not hanging protective screens in front of the gates. Had this confidence been more robust and involved leaving the city walls and towers bereft of protective screens, Baybars would doubtless have commented on this fact.

The specialized function to which the *qarābughrā* was put hardly precludes other uses for the machine. Ibn Unrubghā describes the *qarābughrā* as a modified stone-projecting, trestle-framed counterweight trebuchet. As such, it could easily be restored to its original condition as a stone-projecting piece of artillery. Once it had completed its primary task of reducing the protective screens to ashes, the *qarābughrā* could be refitted with a sling without any difficulty and put into action as a stone-projector. This may explain why Western European accounts of the *qarābughrā* mention it as being employed solely as a stone-projector (see below).

THE "BLACK CAMEL" TREBUCHET IN WESTERN EUROPEAN HISTORICAL SOURCES

Western European sources that refer to the *qarābughrā* cite it as being used by the Mamluks in only two sieges: the siege of Tripoli in 688/1289⁴⁵ and the siege of Acre in 690/1291.⁴⁶ The Mamluk conquest of these two great port cities effectively brought an end to Latin rule in Syria. The machine is designated by its romance

⁴⁴Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 279; Little, "Fall of 'Akkā," 171–72. The use of the term *ḥijāb*, rather than *sitārah* (sing.) or *satā'ir* (pl.), for a protective screen draped in front a gate seems to indicate that protective screens were differentiated in Arabic on the basis of size. A small screen hung in front of a gate was denoted by the term *ḥijāb*, while a large screen hung in front of a curtain wall or tower was generally referred to by the plural word for screen, *satā'ir*.

⁴⁵"Les Gestes des Chiprois," in *Recueil des historiens des croisades, Documents arméniens* (Paris, 1869–1906), 2: no. 476 (*carabohas*).

⁴⁶"Ibid., no. 491 (*carabouhas*); *Chroniques d'Amadi et de Strambaldi*, vol. 1, *Chronique d'Amadi*, ed. René de Mas Latrie (Paris, 1891), 220; Marino Sanudo, "Liber secretorum fidelium crucis super Terrae Sanctae recuperatione et conservaione," in *Gesta Dei per Francos*, ed. Jacques Bongars (Hanau, 1611), 2:230 (*carabagas*); John of Ypres, *Chronicon Sythiense Sancti Bertini*, in *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, ed. Edmond Martène and Ursin Durand (Paris, 1717), 3:770E (*carabagas*); and Florio Bustron, *Chronique de l'île de Chypre*, ed. René de Mas Latrie, in Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques (France), *Mélanges historiques: Choix de documents*, Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de la France, Mélanges historiques (Paris, 1873–86), 5:120 (*carabaccani*).



cognate *caraboha* or kindred terms (derived from *qarābughrā* through its corrupt form *qarābughā*), but no reference is made to it being used to hurl bolts, flaming or otherwise. According to the accounts of the siege of Acre by Marino Sanudo, John of Ypres, and Florio Bustron, the *caraboha* hurled large stones. The so-called “Templar of Tyre,” who authored *Les Gestes des Chiprois*, contends that “*carabohas* are small traction-powered Turkish trebuchets that have a rapid rate of discharge.”⁴⁷ The anonymous *Chronique d’Amadi*, which is dependent on *Les Gestes*, depicts *carabachani* as light artillery with a rapid sequence of discharge used for clearing the battlements of defenders.⁴⁸ The first three authors may have applied the term to an actual bolt-projecting trebuchet (*qarābughrā*) that had been refitted to launch stone-shot. Alternately, the authors may have confused the trestle-framed, bolt-projecting trebuchet (*qarābughrā*) with the gravity-powered, pole-framed trebuchet known as the *bricola*. According to al-Yūnīnī, the Mamluks employed fifteen “big” (i.e., counterweighted) *bricolas* (*majānīq al-kibār al-ifranjīyah*) against Acre, which hurled stone-shot weighing one Damascene *qintār* or more (185 kg or 408 lb +).⁴⁹ The “Templar of Tyre,” on the other hand, has probably mistaken the *qarābughrā* trebuchets for the numerous traction trebuchets used by the Muslims at Acre (see below), which had an extremely rapid sequence of discharge.⁵⁰ This misidentification of the *qarābughrā* has led Christopher Marshall to conclude that this machine is a hand-held sling used for hurling stones.⁵¹ Other scholars, such as Charles Dufresne Du Cange, Henry Yule, and Eugène Martin-Chabot, have associated the *qarābughrā* with the hybrid trebuchet called a *calabre* in French.⁵²

⁴⁷“Gestes des Chiprois,” 2:no. 491: “Qarabouhas, que sont engins petis turqueis quy se tirent as mains.”

⁴⁸*Chroniques d’Amadi*, 220: “. . . et il quarto di da poi venuto fece drizar ripari in molti lochi et fece metter grandi ingegni et machine et caravachani, che gittavano spesso li muri della terra.” Andreas D’Souza identifies both the *carabachani* in the *Chroniques d’Amadi* and the *caraboha* in *Les Gestes* as “catapults” and considers them to be different machines (D’Souza, “Conquest of ‘Akkā,” 242 and n. 62).

⁴⁹Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 86 (Arabic text), 162 (trans.). The editor of *Dhayl Mir’āt al-Zamān*, Antranig Melkonian, incorrectly gives the weight of stone-shot launched by the Mamluk *bricolas* as 44.93 kilograms (99.05 lb.), by assuming that one Damascene *qintār* (185 kg or 408 lb) is equivalent to 100 Egyptian *raṭls* (al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 162 n. 7 [trans.]). Little accepts Melkonian’s calculation and drastically underestimates the weight of stone-shot hurled by the *bricolas* (Little, “Fall of ‘Akkā,” 171). On the Damascene *qintār*, a weight of 100 Syrian *raṭls* of 1.85 kilograms, see Walther Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gewichte umgerechnet ins metrische System* (Leiden, 1970), 26, 30.

⁵⁰Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 86 (Arabic text), 162–63 (trans.): “majānīq al-shayṭānīyah wa-al-la‘ab”; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 58: “majānīq ithnān wa-khamsūn manjanīqan shayṭānīyan.”

⁵¹Christopher Marshall, *Warfare in the Latin East, 1192–1291* (Cambridge, 1992), 214, 234.

⁵²Charles Dufresne Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* (Niort, 1883–87), s.v.



MAMLUK LIGHT ARTILLERY AT THE SIEGE OF ACRE

The account of the Mamluk artillery at Acre found in *Les Gestes* appears to be contradictory. We are told that the light artillery, identified by the "Templar of Tyre" as *carabohas*, "did more harm to our men than the heavy artillery."⁵³ This statement does not mean to imply that the small caliber machines caused more damage than the large caliber machines. Light artillery would certainly not have inflicted more damage than heavy artillery, but large numbers of small trebuchets deployed in batteries could put down a tremendous barrage against defending forces. By producing a concentrated hail of missiles, light artillery served to neutralize the defenders on the battlements so that heavy artillery could engage in its work of destruction while siege-works and machinery were advanced against fortified positions. Given the slow sequence of discharge of the counterweight trebuchet, its effective use in siege operations required the deployment of sufficient numbers of light traction-powered trebuchets capable of delivering sustained volleys of small shot that would send defenders diving for cover. By putting down a heavy barrage against defending forces, the light artillery enabled heavy artillery to bombard strongpoints with virtual impunity. The anti-personnel use of light artillery also facilitated the approach of siege-engines and assault-works. Since the light artillery was employed specifically to kill or injure human beings, it would have taken from Acre a heavy toll of its defenders, thereby eliciting the seemingly paradoxical remark by the "Templar of Tyre." Both the Latin and Arabic descriptions of the siege of Acre indicate that Muslim light artillery provided neutralizing shooting that gave support to heavy artillery and mining operations by keeping the defenders at bay.⁵⁴

calabra; Marco Polo, *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, 2:168; William of Tudela and anonymous, *La Chanson de la croisade Albigeoise*, ed. Eugène Martin-Chabot, *Les classiques de l'histoire de France au moyen âge*, vols. 13, 24–25 (Paris, 1931–61), 3:59. On the *calabre* as a hybrid trebuchet, see Chevedden, "Hybrid Trebuchet," 210–11.

⁵³"Gestes des Chiprois," 2:no. 491: "Qarabouhas . . . faizoient plus de maus a la gent que les grans engins."

⁵⁴Amadi's chronicle claims that bombardment from the Mamluk *carabachani* neutralized the defenders on the battlements of the Tower of the King, or the Accursed Tower, thereby allowing the besiegers to undermine it (*Chroniques d'Amadi*, 221). *Les Gestes* provides additional details on the Mamluk mining operations ("Gestes des Chiprois," 2:nos. 491, 493). Al-Yūnīnī indicates that the artillery destroyed the tops of the towers and the walls (al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 87 [Arabic text], 163 [trans.]), and al-'Aynī describes how the trebuchets tore away the battlements and shook the denuded curtain walls in order to bring about their collapse (al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 60). With the battlements sheared off, the defenders along the rampart walk of the curtain walls and the towers were completely exposed to the hail of missiles being directed at them by the besieging Mamluk army. The Mamluks were able to easily undermine the walls of the city



Fifty-two of the Mamluk trebuchets at Acre, according to al-‘Aynī, were traction-powered machines called “Devilish” trebuchets (*manjanīq shayṭānī*).⁵⁵ Al-Yūnīnī states that three varieties of trebuchets were used in great numbers: “Devilish” machines, “Playthings,” and *qarābughrās*.⁵⁶ The first two machines are traction powered. The “Plaything” (*lu‘bah*, pl. *lu‘ab*), called an ‘*arrādah* in most Arabic sources, was a pole-framed traction machine with a throwing arm mounted upon a pivot-yoke.⁵⁷ The name “Plaything” comes from the play, or rapid movement, of its throwing arm as it is sent skyward in quick succession during continuous operation. Al-‘Aynī may have included the pole-framed “Playthings” in his figure for “Devilish” trebuchets, or the “playful” artillery could be additional to the number of “Devilish” machines. Whatever interpretation is accepted regarding the number of traction trebuchets at Acre, it is clear that they were employed in great numbers and were used to neutralize the defenders on the ramparts.⁵⁸

because the barrage of missiles prevented the defenders from mounting any effective resistance. Even sallies in force failed to stop the mining operations. Al-Jazarī, al-Yūnīnī, and al-Nuwayrī comment briefly on the mining operations undertaken by the Mamluk army, but neither Little nor D’Souza make mention of the Arabic accounts of these activities, which were critical to the conquest of Acre (al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-Zamān*, 1:45; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 87 [Arabic text], 163 [trans.]; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 198; Little, “Fall of ‘Akkā”; and D’Souza, “Conquest of ‘Akkā”). Little credits the successful Mamluk assault on Acre to artillery bombardment that weakened the defenses of the city. He ignores the fact that mining operations created the breaches in the walls that made the assault possible (Little, “Fall of ‘Akkā,” 174). The references to mining operations in the Arabic sources confirm and corroborate the Christian accounts of these siege-works.

⁵⁵ Al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 58.

⁵⁶ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 86 (Arabic text), 162–63 (trans.): “ammā al-majānīq shayṭānīyah wa-al-la‘ab wa-qarābughā shay’ kathīr.”

⁵⁷ On the pole-framed traction trebuchet, referred to in Arabic sources as the *lu‘bah* and the ‘*arrādah*, see Chevedden, “Artillery of King James I,” 58–59, 61, 68, Figs. 1–4; idem, “Hybrid Trebuchet,” 184, 199, 206, 211, Figs. 1, 3, 7, 9; Chevedden et al., “Traction Trebuchet,” 460–61, 464 (Fig. 3), 466 (Fig. 5), 470 (Fig. 10), 474 (Fig. 14), 484 (Fig. 24). *Elegant Book* includes a number of illustrations of the pole-framed trebuchet (“Anīq,” fols. 33r, 43v, 44r; *Anīq*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, 73, 94, 95; *Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 109, 117, 118).

⁵⁸ The design of the “Devilish” trebuchet is open to debate. *Elegant Book* is the only source that provides illustrations of it, depicting it as a traction version of the pole-framed *bricola* (“Anīq,” fols. 21v, 31r; *Anīq*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, 50, 69; *Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 100–102). The two editors of *Elegant Book* both identify the machine incorrectly as a “Sultanic” or “Royal” trebuchet (*manjanīq sultānī*), due to the fact it is erroneously identified as such on fol. 21v of the text. The caption title for this machine is accurately inscribed on fol. 31r as *manjanīq shayṭānī*, so there is no question regarding the precise name of this trebuchet, which is the name by which it is known in all of the Arabic historical sources. Since Ibn Urubughā’s pole-framed traction machine known by the names ‘*arrādah* and “Plaything” (*lu‘bah*) is quite different from the “Devilish” trebuchet, it is clear that he, like al-Yūnīnī, considers it to be a different machine (“Anīq,” fols. 33r, 44r; *Anīq*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, 73, 95; *Anīq*, ed. Hindī, 109, 118; Chevedden, “Artillery of James I,” 61, Fig. 1;



MAMLUK HEAVY ARTILLERY AT THE SIEGE OF ACRE ACCORDING TO *LES GESTES DES CHIPROIS*

Despite his misidentification of the *qarābughrā*, the “Templar of Tyre” does provide important and reliable information on the Mamluk artillery at Acre that demonstrates both his competency in Arabic and his ability to acquire accurate information on the Muslim assault. According to him, the heavy artillery launched stone-shot weighing a *qinṭār* (185 kg or 408 lb), which is in agreement with the weight given by al-Yūnīnī for stone-shot discharged by the Muslim *bricolas*. The “Templar of Tyre” describes four separate pieces of heavy artillery employed by the Mamluks. The first he calls by its Arabic name “Haveben,” giving a rough transliteration of

idem, “Hybrid Trebuchet,” 184, Fig. 9; and Chevedden et al., “Traction Trebuchet,” 461, 484, Fig. 24). It may well have been configured as a traction version of a *bricola*, as illustrated in *Elegant Book*, but it is hard to imagine that the trestle-framed traction trebuchet passed out of use. The “Templar of Tyre” speaks of his so-called *carabohas* as small traction-powered “Turkish” trebuchets. While these small-caliber machines may be identified with the pole-framed *‘arrādah* or *lu‘bah*, which had an extremely rapid rate of discharge, it is equally plausible that the stone-projectors dubbed “Turkish” trebuchets by the “Templar of Tyre” were the same machines that are called “Turkish” by al-Ṭarsūsī. His “Turkish” trebuchet (*manjanīq turkī*) is a trestle-framed traction machine that has a framework consisting of two paired trusses in the shape of the Greek letter *lambda* (*Tabṣīrah fī al-Ḥurūb*, ed. Šādir, 167, 254, Fig. 10; Cahen, “Traité,” 119, 141–42, Pl. 2, Fig. 11; and Chevedden et al., “Traction Trebuchet,” 460–61, 481, Fig. 21). Al-Ṭarsūsī recommends the “Turkish” trebuchet as the cheapest of all the trebuchets he describes and the one composed of the least amount of parts. This machine was used widely across Eurasia and North Africa and was known as the “Crouching Tiger” trebuchet (*hu dun pao*) in Chinese sources and as the *labdarea* (the *lambda*-shaped machine) in Byzantine sources. The Chinese machine had a beam of 7.50 meters in length mounted on a framework that stood approximately 5.19 meters in height. Attached to the butt-end of the beam were forty pulling-ropes that were hauled down by a crew of forty men, while a single loader directed the shot. The machine was capable of throwing a stone projectile weighing 7.56 kilograms a distance of more than 75.0 meters (Chevedden, “Artillery of King James I,” 61, 66, 86, Fig. 5; idem, “Hybrid Trebuchet,” 199–200; and Chevedden et al., “Traction Trebuchet,” 452, 475, Fig. 15). Although the evidence is somewhat tenuous, the “Devilish” trebuchet (*manjanīq shayṭānī*) and the “Plaything” (*‘arrādah* or *lu‘bah*) do appear to be different types of traction machines. The “Plaything” probably never deviated significantly from the Chinese machine of the same design, known as the “Whirlwind” trebuchet (*xuan feng pao*) (see Fig. 1, and Chevedden et al., “Traction Trebuchet,” 452, 474, Fig. 14), while the “Devilish” trebuchet was doubtless a larger machine. The design of the “Devilish” machine may have resembled Ibn Urunbughā’s drawing of it as a traction-powered *bricola*, or it may have had a trestle framework. Both the “Devilish” trebuchet and the “Plaything” worked their devilish ways by playing the enemy with rapid volleys of stone-shot. A discharge of slightly better than four shots per minute could be maintained by traction-powered trebuchets, so a battery of these machines was quite capable of neutralizing defenders on the battlements (Chevedden, “Artillery of King James I,” 55; idem, “Hybrid Trebuchet,” 209; and Chevedden et al., “Traction Trebuchet,” 441, 457).



the Arabic *al-ghaḍbān* (The Furious One). This term was originally applied to a hybrid trebuchet used in the defense of Baghdad in 251/865.⁵⁹ The term went on to become a generic name for the hybrid trebuchet and passed into Armenian and Turkish as *baban*, designating this class of artillery.⁶⁰ At the siege of Acre in 690/1291 the term was applied once again to an individual trebuchet, in this case, most probably a counterweight trebuchet from among the battery of gravity-powered machines used by the Mamluks. The “Templar of Tyre” correctly translates the name of this trebuchet as “furious” and indicates that this machine directed its shot against the guard of the Templars. His description of the second trebuchet provides the same data as his description of the first: “Another trebuchet that was shooting at the guard of the Pisans had the name *Mensour*, which means the Victorious.” The Arabic title *al-Manṣūr* does indeed mean “The Victorious One,” but the name of the trestle-framed counterweight trebuchet (*manjanīq ‘aẓīm*) identified by the “Templar of Tyre” takes the form of a *nisbah*, *al-Manṣūrī*, and refers to a trebuchet of Sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn, or a “Royal” trebuchet.⁶¹ The “Templar of Tyre” admits that he does not know the name of the third trebuchet, but he does specify that it was a “big” machine that directed its shot at the guard of the Hospitallers. For the fourth trebuchet he provides only its location, not its name: “The fourth trebuchet (*le cart* [sic] *engin*) was shooting at a great tower called the ‘Accursed Tower,’ which is along the second [i.e., outer] wall [of the city] and is under the

⁵⁹*Fragmenta historicorum arabicorum*, vol. 1, Anon., *Kitāb al-‘Uyūn wa-al-Ḥadā’iq fī Akhbār al-Ḥaqā’iq*, ed. Michael Jan de Goeje (Leiden, 1869), 580; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:1551; idem, *Tārīkh*, trans. George Saliba, *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-rusul wa’l-mulūk)*, vol. 35, *The Crisis of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate*, SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies, Bibliotheca Persica (Albany, 1985), 40.

⁶⁰For references to *baban* in Armenian historical sources, see Matthew of Edessa, *Patmut’iwn* (Jerusalem, 1869), 142–45, 177, 231, 235, 303, 306, 448, 452, 454, 465; idem, *Armenia and the Crusades, Tenth to Twelfth Centuries: The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, trans. Ara Edmond Dostourian (Belmont, Mass., and Lanham, 1993), 87–88, 103, 128, 131, 162, 163, 232, 233, 235, 241; Aristakēs Lastivertts’i, *Patmut’iwn Aristakisi Lastivertts’woy* (Erevan, 1963), 92–93; and idem, *Aristakēs Lastivertc’i’s History*, trans. Robert Bedrosian (New York, 1985), 103–4. Aristakēs notes that the Saljuqs also employed this term (Aristakēs, *Patmut’iwn*, 92; idem, *Aristakēs Lastivertc’i’s History*, 103). On the Arabic term *al-ghaḍbān*, see Chevedden, “Hybrid Trebuchet,” 189–90, 202, 203.

⁶¹On this royal Mamluk trebuchet that required a hundred carts to transport it from Ḥiṣn al-Akrād (Krac des Chevaliers) to Acre, see Ismā‘il ibn ‘Alī Abū al-Fidā’, *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī Tārīkh al-Bashar*, (Cairo, 1907–8), 4:24; idem, *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī Tārīkh al-Bashar*, trans. Peter M. Holt, *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince: Abū’l-Fidā’, Sultan of Ḥamāh (672–732/1273–1331)*, Freiburger Islamstudien, vol. 9 (Wiesbaden, 1983), 16. On the use of the term “great” trebuchet (*manjanīq ‘aẓīm*) to denote a trestle-framed counterweight trebuchet, see Chevedden, “Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet,” 77, 90, 92, 93, 96, 106, 113.



guard of the king.”⁶²

MAMLUK HEAVY ARTILLERY AT THE SIEGE OF ACRE ACCORDING TO ARABIC HISTORICAL SOURCES

The “Templar of Tyre” does not give a full accounting of the heavy artillery arrayed against Acre. For that we must turn to the Arabic sources. According to Abū al-Fidā’, the number of “big” and “small” trebuchets (*majānīq al-kibār wa-al-ṣiḡhār*, i.e., counterweight and traction machines) deployed against Acre “was the greatest concentration of artillery ever assembled against any locality.”⁶³ The very detailed and authoritative accounts of the siege by Shams al-Dīn al-Jazarī and Badr al-Dīn al-‘Aynī put the total number of Muslim trebuchets at seventy-two.⁶⁴ Ibn al-Furāt, al-Maqrīzī, and al-Nuwayrī put the number even higher, at ninety-two, but this figure is most probably a scribal error for seventy-two, since the unpointed *sab‘* and *tis‘* are often confused.⁶⁵ Of the seventy-two machines, most were traction-powered,⁶⁶ but a significant number were gravity-driven. Two types of gravity-powered engines were used: *bricolas* and *qarābughrās*. According to al-Yūnīnī, fifteen *bricolas* (*majānīq al-kibār al-ifranjīyah*) were employed, but no specific figures are given in any source for the number of *qarābughrās* used. If from a total number of seventy-two trebuchets (the figure given by al-Jazarī and al-‘Aynī), al-Yūnīnī’s fifteen *bricolas* and al-‘Aynī’s fifty-two “Devilish” traction engines

⁶²“Gestes des Chiprois,” 2:no. 490: “Et a terme de ses .viii. jours; adreserent et aseïrent au point lor engins, que la piere qu’y getoi[en]t pezoit un quintar. L’un de ses engins, quy avoit nom Haveben, quy vient a dire Yrious, si estoit devers la garde dou Temple, et l’autre engin, quy getet contre la garde des Pizans, avoit nom le Mensour, ce est a dire le Victorious; et l’autre grant, que je ne vos le say nomer, getoit contre la garde de l’Ospitau; et le cart engin getoit contre une grant tour quy a nom la tour Maudite, qui est a[s] segons murs et est de la garde dou roy.” Andreas D’Souza translates “le cart [sic] engin” (“the fourth trebuchet”) as “the cart engine” (D’Souza, “Conquest of ‘Akkā,” 242).

⁶³Abū al-Fidā’, *Mukhtaṣar*, 4:24; idem, *Memoirs*, 16.

⁶⁴Al-Jazarī, *Ḥawāḍith al-Zamān*, 1:45; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān*, 58. Although al-Jazarī was not present at the siege of Acre, his account of it is based on the report of the Mamluk Amir Sayf al-Dīn ibn al-Miḥaffadār, who witnessed the entire operation. Al-Yūnīnī also drew upon this important source for his account of the siege (Little, “Fall of ‘Akkā,” 163, 171, 172). Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī follows al-Jazarī and al-‘Aynī and sets the total number of trebuchets used against Acre at seventy-two (*‘Uyūn al-Tawārīkh*, 71).

⁶⁵Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:112; Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, (Cairo, 1934–73), 1:3:764; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 226.

⁶⁶If the total number of “Devilish” traction trebuchets given by al-‘Aynī (fifty-two) does not include the numerous pole-framed traction trebuchets (*lu‘ab*) cited by al-Yūnīnī, there would have been far more than seventy-two pieces of artillery deployed by the Mamluks at Acre and a far greater percentage of these machines would have been traction powered.



are subtracted, the remainder will be five. We can assume therefore that the Mamluks employed at least five *qarābughrās* at Acre.

MAMLUK ARTILLERY AND SIEGE TACTICS AT ACRE

Artillery played an important role in the conquest of Acre. Batteries of artillery were erected to effect both destruction and neutralization. Bolt-projecting trebuchets were probably used to launch incendiary missiles to consume the protective screens shielding the walls and towers from bombardment. Other pieces of artillery rained down incendiary projectiles on the interior of the city to cause a serious outbreak of fire. Once the walls were laid bare, heavy artillery began stripping away the battlements and pounding the ramparts, as light artillery and other missile weapons kept the defenders at bay. The neutralizing shooting allowed sapping operations to be conducted with virtual impunity. Sallies in force mounted by the defenders were unable to disperse the attackers or to seriously hamper the progress of the siege. Once the saps had effected substantial breaches in the urban defenses, the city was successfully stormed. Acre, one of the best defended cities of its day, was unable to withstand the powerful and well-organized Mamluk assault, which made use of the most advanced techniques of mechanized siegecraft then known. Key to the Mamluk victory was the extensive use of siege-works and artillery. Of no less importance was the sustained and determined spirit that motivated the besieging forces.⁶⁷

THE "BLACK CAMEL" TREBUCHET AND THE EAST-WEST ARTILLERY AXIS

Although the trebuchet can be traced back to ancient China, many civilizations contributed to its development. The story of the trebuchet is not a simple one of linear diffusion in a five-part sequential process: from China to the Sasanian and Byzantine Empires, thence to Arabia, and finally to the Latin West. Divergent paths of innovation and dissemination permeated the Sino-Sasanian-Byzantine-Islamic-Latin axis as advancements in one cultural zone spread to others in a process of continuous interchange across Eurasia and North Africa. Knowledge of the trebuchet took some time to reach other parts of the world, but once Western Asia and the Mediterranean discovered the machine its dissemination and advancement proceeded at an accelerated pace. By the eighth century the civilization of Islam had greatly improved China's human-powered artillery. Muslim conquerors introduced a much larger traction-powered machine that utilized the action of gravity to assist in the discharge of a projectile (the hybrid trebuchet). Byzantium

⁶⁷See Little, "Fall of 'Akkā," and D'Souza, "Conquest of 'Akkā," for details on the powerful siege-train brought against Acre by the Mamluks, especially well equipped with ordnance, as well as for information on the spirit motivating the campaign.



and the Latin West quickly adopted this new machine and took the technology even further. From the eleventh century on, the pace of development quickened. Byzantine advances culminated in the invention of the first gravity-powered piece of artillery, the trestle-framed counterweight trebuchet. Progress in projectile technology did not stop there. A process of diversification of gravity-powered artillery soon began. The Latin West introduced a counterweight trebuchet with a pole framework that was capable of discharging missiles in any direction (the *bricola*). The Islamic world readily adopted this machine, as did the Mongols, who used it to subdue the Southern Song and consolidate their hold on all of China. As the *bricola* made its way eastward from Western Europe, the *qarābughrā* proceeded westward from the eastern realms of Islam. The Mamluks made the "Black Camel" trebuchet a standard piece of artillery, and their employment of this machine at Acre in 1291 is likely to have inspired Europeans to incorporate it into their siege arsenal. Although precise information is lacking regarding the dissemination of the bolt-projecting trebuchet to Europe, we may presume that it reached the West and found a place in European siege warfare.⁶⁸ The attention

⁶⁸Roland Bechmann has reconstructed the trestle-framed, counterweight trebuchet (*trebucet*) of Villard de Honnecourt as a bolt-projecting machine (Roland Bechmann, *Villard de Honnecourt: La pensée technique au XIIIe siècle et sa communication* [Paris, 1991], 255–72). If this interpretation stands, the presumption that the bolt-projecting trebuchet was diffused from a common source will be undermined, and the likelihood that it was invented independently and nearly simultaneously in the Latin West and in the eastern realms of Islam will emerge as a distinct possibility. The description and plan of the base frame of Villard's trebuchet, which survives in his portfolio of architectural drawings dating from ca. 1230–35, has elicited a number of interpretations since the first facsimile edition of Villard's drawings was published in 1858. The description of the machine ends with a passage pertaining to the release of the "shaft," or "beam" (*fleke*), of the trebuchet: "Et al descocier de le fleke pense. Et si vus en dones gard. Car il le doit estre atenu a cel estancon la devant" [As for the discharging of the beam, remember and take heed, because it must be connected to the upright post in front]. The term *fleke* proved problematic because another word, *verge*, had been used by Villard to refer to the beam of the machine. Could *fleke* and *verge* signify the same component—the beam—or was *fleke* a different component, and if so, which one? The original editors of Villard's portfolio, J. B. A. Lassus and Alfred Darcel, assumed that *fleke* referred to the projectile of the machine, which they believed was an arrow. (*Album de Villard de Honnecourt: Architecte du XIIIe siècle, manuscrit publié en facsimile*, ed. Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Lassus and Alfred Darcel [Paris, 1858; repr., Paris 1976]). In an important review of the Lassus-Darcel edition, Prosper Mérimée observed that the trebuchet was a stone-projecting machine and that the term *fleke* could only be understood as the pivoting beam of a trebuchet (Prosper Mérimée, review of *Album de Villard de Honnecourt: Architecte du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Lassus and Alfred Darcel, *Le Moniteur Universel* [20 December 1858]). Mérimée's sensible interpretation is adopted here. In the first English edition of Villard's portfolio, Robert Willis suggested that *fleke* should be understood as a detaining bolt of a catch-and-trigger device that held the beam in place prior to discharge and effected the release of the beam when it was dislodged by a mallet (*Facsimile of the Sketch Book of Wilars de Honcort with Commentaries and Descriptions by M.*



given to it by the great architect-engineers of the Renaissance attests to its assimilation by Western Europe.

The history of the trebuchet represents a complex process of diffusion and cross-fertilization of new ideas and techniques produced by cultural interaction on a vast scale. Just as the trebuchet is a fusion of different elements, which when working in proper relation produce a successful machine, the history of this weaponry exhibits a fusion of contributions of many cultures and peoples. Although the trebuchet may be characterized as a collective work, it was not the multitude that produced the dramatic breakthroughs in the development of the machine, but individual engineers who were the source of every important innovation.

J. B. A. Lassus and by M. J. Quicherat: Translated and Edited with Many Additional Articles and Notes by the Rev. R. Willis [London, 1859]). Bechmann has reverted back to the idea proposed originally by Lassus and Darcel and has reconstructed Villard's trebuchet as a Rube Goldberg device for launching arrows. His design rivals any of Rube Goldberg's machines and is just as preposterous. A mammoth scaffolding towers above the trestle frame of the machine upon which rests a single arrow that is discharged by the impact of the throwing arm as it pivots skyward following release. Bechmann's machine is made out of whole cloth. He invents key design elements (e.g., the scaffolding) and radically reinterprets other components. The catch-and-trigger device of the machine, for example, which consists of a stanchion (*estancon*), or upright post, to hold a detaining bolt is refashioned as a break lever to restrain the rotation of a drum. Bechmann uses textual and pictorial evidence as a mirror to reflect his own *a priori* assumptions.



GUIDE TO ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. Two traction-powered trebuchets depicted in the Song dynasty's military encyclopedia entitled *Wu jing zong yao* (The Essentials of the military classics), chap. 12, p. 50a, edited in 1044 by Zeng Gongliang (in *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu*, vol. 726 [Taipei, 1983], 420). *Center*, the Chinese pole-framed trebuchet called a "Whirlwind" trebuchet" (*xuan feng pao*) because it could be turned to face any direction. This machine had a beam of 5.40 meters in length mounted on top of a pole-frame that stood approximately 4.30 meters in height. Attached to the butt-end of the beam were forty pulling-ropes that were hauled down by a crew of forty men. The machine was capable of throwing a stone-shot weighing 1.89 kilograms a distance of more than 75.0 meters. In Arabic sources this machine was designated an 'arrādah or a "Plaything" (*lu'bah*, pl. *lu'ab*), due to the play, or rapid movement, of its throwing arm as it was sent skyward in quick succession during continuous operation. In the Latin West the most commonly used term for this machine was *manganellus* (mangonel). *Left*, the Chinese "Hand-Trebuchet" (*shou pao*), operated by a single man. A pole, fixed in the ground, carried a pin at its topmost extremity, which acted as a fulcrum for the arm of the machine. In Byzantine sources this machine was designated a χειρομάγγανα (*cheiromangana*).

Fig. 2. The most powerful trebuchet depicted in the *Wu jing zong yao*, chap. 12, p. 48a (in *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Si ku quan shu*, vol. 726 [Taipei, 1983], 419): a traction-powered, trestle-framed trebuchet, identified as "The Septuple-Beam" trebuchet (*qi shao pao*). It had a composite beam made up of seven wooden spars lashed together with rope or bound with metal bands that measured 8.40 meters in length. The beam was mounted on a framework 5.55 meters in height and 6.78 meters wide with trusses that were tilted inward 23 degrees off the vertical. The butt-end of the beam had 125 pulling ropes attached to it that were hauled down by a crew of 250 men. This machine was capable of throwing a stone-shot weighing between 56.70 and 63.0 kilograms a distance of more than 75.0 meters. In Arabic sources the trestle-framed trebuchet was called a *manjanīq*, and in the Latin West it was usually identified by the term *petraria* ("rock-thrower").

Fig. 3. A pole-framed hybrid trebuchet identified as a *manjanīq* 'arrādah in Ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh's *An Elegant Book on Trebuchets* (*Kitāb Anīq fī al-Manājanīq*), 867/1462–63. This machine is identified in Chinese sources as the "Whirlwind" trebuchet (Fig. 1). A small counterweight is fixed to the butt-end of the main beam of the machine to keep it in balance when the sling is loaded with a projectile. Caption titles (*clockwise*): "a pole-framed trebuchet" (*manjanīq*

‘*arrādah*’); “beam” (*al-sahm*); “pivot yoke [literally, ‘housing’] of the trebuchet” (*bayt al-manjanīq*); “pulling-rope” (*al-watar*); “pole-frame” (‘*amūd*’); “small counterbalance” (*al-aṣghar tathqīlah*); “axle” (*khinzīrah*); “framing-piece [literally, ‘bow’] of the trebuchet” (*qaws al-manjanīq*); “sling” (*al-filqān*). After “*Kitāb Anīq fī al-Manājanīq*,” Topkapı Sarayı Muzesi Kutuphanesi MS Ahmet III 3469/1, fol. 44r.

Fig. 4. Detail of a stone fragment with a relief carving on its outer face depicting a siege. This fragment, mounted on a wall in the Church of Saint-Nazaire in Carcassonne, France, dates from the early thirteenth century. Some scholars believe it represents the siege of Toulouse in 1218 in which Simon de Montfort was killed by a stone-shot hurled from a trestle-framed trebuchet operated by women. If so, the stone-carver has saved Simon de Montfort embarrassment by depicting an all-male artillery crew. The relief carving shows a trestle-framed hybrid machine being prepared for discharge. Pulling-ropes are attached to six rings affixed to a weighted-base at the butt-end of the beam. A six-member pulling-crew is set to launch a rounded stone-shot which is being placed in the pouch of the sling by the operator of the machine (positioned, for purely artistic considerations, above the pulling-crew). Five of the crew are placed behind the trestle framework of the machine. Four of the five are ready to pull horizontally with both hands on two lines of rope, while the fifth, in a kneeling position, is about to pull downwards on a single line of rope. The sixth member of the crew is located directly under the butt-end of the beam and is set to pull vertically downwards on two lines of rope. This trebuchet has a curved axle, a feature which it shares with the pole-framed hybrid trebuchet pictured in Ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh’s *An Elegant Book on Trebuchets* (Fig. 3).

Fig. 5. Reconstruction of a trestle-framed counterweight trebuchet (*trebucet*) of Villard de Honnecourt, France, ca. 1230–35. This reconstruction by the Reverend Robert Willis (1800–75), the first professor of the University of Cambridge to win an international reputation as a mechanical engineer, is based upon Villard’s own account of the machine (description and plan of the base frame), which survives in his portfolio in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (MS Fr 19093, fol. 30r; Villard de Honnecourt, *Facsimile of the Sketch-Book of Wilars de Honcourt*, trans. and ed. R. Willis [London, 1859], 197). Lateral and longitudinal bracing is omitted and the capstan in the foreground is left unfinished since the construction of both capstans would be the same. The volume of the counterweight box has been estimated to have been about eighteen cubic meters and was able to carry a mass weighing up to thirty tons. With such a gravitating mass, it has been conjectured that this trebuchet could launch a 100-kilogram projectile more than 400 meters



and a 250-kilogram projectile more than 160 meters. This reconstruction of the machine is to be preferred to that of Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–79), which appears in his *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture du XI^e au XVI^e siècles* ([Paris, 1854–68], 5:227–28), and to that of Roland Bechmann, which appears in his study *Villard de Honnecourt: La pensée technique au XIII^e siècle et sa communication* (Paris, 1991), 255–72. This machine was identified in Arabic historical sources as the “Western Islamic” trebuchet (*manjanīq maghribī* or *manjanīq gharbī*).

Fig. 6. Mariano Taccola, “Liber Tertius de ingeneis ac edifiitiis non usitatis” (1433), Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (Florence) Cod. palat. 766, fol. 41r. The “brichola” (*bricola*), or the “Two-Testicle” machine, from the combination of the prefix *bi-*, “having two,” and the Latin *coleus*, meaning testicle. This pole-framed trebuchet with two hinged counterweights was invented in the Latin West by the beginning of the thirteenth century. The Mamluks acquired it post 1250 and called it the “Frankish” or “European” trebuchet (*manjanīq ifranjī* or *manjanīq firanjī*). Muslim engineers employed by the Mongols brought the *bricola* to China, where it was designated the “Muslim” trebuchet (*hui-hui pao*). At the siege of Acre in 690/1291, the Mamluk *bricolas* hurled stone-shot weighing one Damascene *qinṭār* or more (185 kg or 408 lb +).

Fig. 7. Yūsuf ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh, “Kitāb Anīq fī al-Manājanīq,” Topkapı Sarayı Muzesi Kutuphanesi MS Ahmet III 3469/1, fol. 34r. A bastard bolt-projector: a cross between a torsion catapult and a bolt-projecting, trestle-framed trebuchet. Figure title: “Depiction of its fabrication that you make just as you make the first [trebuchet].” Figure subtitle: “A *ziyār* different from the first.” Caption titles in figure identifying parts of a torsion catapult: *jīsr fawqānī*: the upper transom [of a catapult connecting the two tension-frames of a two-armed torsion catapult]; *jusūr taḥtānīyah*: the lower transoms [of a catapult fixed to the stock of the machine]; *sha‘r rafī*: “fine hair” [making up the vertically-mounted torsion-spring]. Caption titles in figure identifying parts of a trestle-framed trebuchet: *qā’imah*: vertical support post [of the trestle frame] x 6; *jīsr al-awwal*: first horizontal crosspiece [of the trestle frame]; *jīsr thānī*: second horizontal crosspiece [of the trestle frame]; *jīsr thālith*: third horizontal crosspiece [of the trestle frame]; *jīsr rābi‘*: fourth horizontal crosspiece [of the trestle frame]; *dūlāb*: windlass [one handspike-drum of the windlass is depicted next to the tip of the throwing arm]; *mizrib al-sahm*: the trough of the bolt; *qā’idah*: base frame [of the trebuchet]; *tathqīl al-sahm*: counterweight of the beam.



Fig. 8. Yūsuf ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh, “Kitāb Anīq fī al-Manājanīq,” Topkapı Sarayı Muzesi Kutuphanesi MS Ahmet III 3469/1, fol. 11r. A bastard bolt-projector: a cross between a torsion catapult and a bolt-projecting, trestle-framed trebuchet. Figure title: “Depiction of the fabrication of this [trebuchet] that you make just as you made the first [trebuchet].” Caption titles in figure identifying parts of a torsion catapult: *jīsr fawqānī*: the upper transom [of a catapult connecting the two tension-frames of a two-armed torsion catapult]; *jīsr taḥtānī*: the lower transom [of a catapult fixed to the stock of the machine] x 5; *sha‘r raftī*: “fine hair” [making up the vertically-mounted torsion-spring]. Caption titles in figure identifying parts of a trestle-framed trebuchet: *qā‘imah*: vertical support post [of the trestle frame] x 6; *jīsr al-awwal*: first horizontal crosspiece [of the trestle frame]; *jīsr thānī*: second horizontal crosspiece [of the trestle frame]; *jīsr thālith*: third horizontal crosspiece [of the trestle frame]; *jīsr rābi‘*: fourth horizontal crosspiece [of the trestle frame]; *dūlāb*: windlass [one handspike-drum of the windlass is depicted next to the tip of the throwing arm]; *mizrīb*: trough; *tathqīl al-sahm*: counterweight of the beam.

Fig. 9. Yūsuf ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh, “Kitāb Anīq fī al-Manājanīq,” Topkapı Sarayı Muzesi Kutuphanesi MS Ahmet III 3469/1, fol. 32r. A bastard bolt-projector: a cross between a torsion catapult and a bolt-projecting, trestle-framed trebuchet. Figure title: “Another *ziyār* different from the first on which infantry (*al-rijāl al-ḥarīkah*) are stationed atop the *ḥiṣār* [lit., ‘fortress,’ i.e., the crenellated superstructure atop the framework of the trebuchet].” Caption titles in figure identifying parts of a torsion catapult: *sha‘r*: “hair” [making up the horizontally-mounted torsion-spring]; *bayt al-sha‘r*: tension frame of the torsion-spring. Caption titles in figure identifying parts of a trestle-framed trebuchet: *qā‘imah*: vertical support post [of the trestle frame] x 4; *wasat*: middle [support post of the trestle frame]; *dūlāb*: windlass x 2 [the two handspike-drums of the windlass are shown in front of the framework of the machine (defined here as the downrange side of the trebuchet)]; *jīsr al-dūlāb*: windlass-roller; *mizrīb al-sahm*: the trough of the bolt; *mizrīb*: trough; *qā‘idah*: base frame [of the trebuchet]; *al-sahm*: the beam; *tathqīl al-sahm*: counterweight of the beam; *mafrūkah*: handspike [of windlass] x 2 [One windlass handspike has five bars or levers by which the windlass is worked, another has four].

Fig. 10. Mariano Taccola, “De ingeneis,” ca. 1419–50, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Codex CLM 197 II, fol. 68v. Trebuchet with hinged counterweight launching a bolt. A four-tined throwing arm allows for the simultaneous release of four bolts. For simplicity’s sake, the illustrator has only drawn one of the bolts. Above the beam is an insert showing details of a two-tined fork for the throwing



arm with a caption underneath reading, "It [the component shown above] shall be placed on the end of the beam (*mictatur in stilo istius pertice*)."

Fig. 11. Francesco di Giorgio Martini, "Trattato I," copy, ca. 1480–1500, Turin, Biblioteca Reale di Torino Codex 148 Saluzzo, fol. 61v. Trebuchet with fixed counterweight launching two bolts. Distinctive features include: a buffer that prevents the beam from attaining a full upright position; a mechanical pull-back system that requires a cross-member positioned in the path of the beam above the axle; a three-pronged forked appendage at the tip of the beam designed to release two bolts simultaneously; and a catch-and-trigger device consisting of an S-shaped (serpentine) lever that is designed to be pivoted backward but would be unable to perform its function as illustrated.

Fig. 12. Anon. Raccolta Artist Engineer, "Raccolta di città e macchine," ca. 1490s, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Codex Magliabechiana II I 141 part 3, fol. 195v. Trestle-framed trebuchet with fixed counterweight launching two bolts. Distinctive features include: a buffer that prevents the beam from attaining a full upright position; a mechanical pull-back system that utilizes the leverage of the beam; a two-pronged forked appendage at the tip of the beam designed to release two bolts simultaneously; and a catch-and-trigger device consisting of an S-shaped (serpentine) lever that is pivoted backward.



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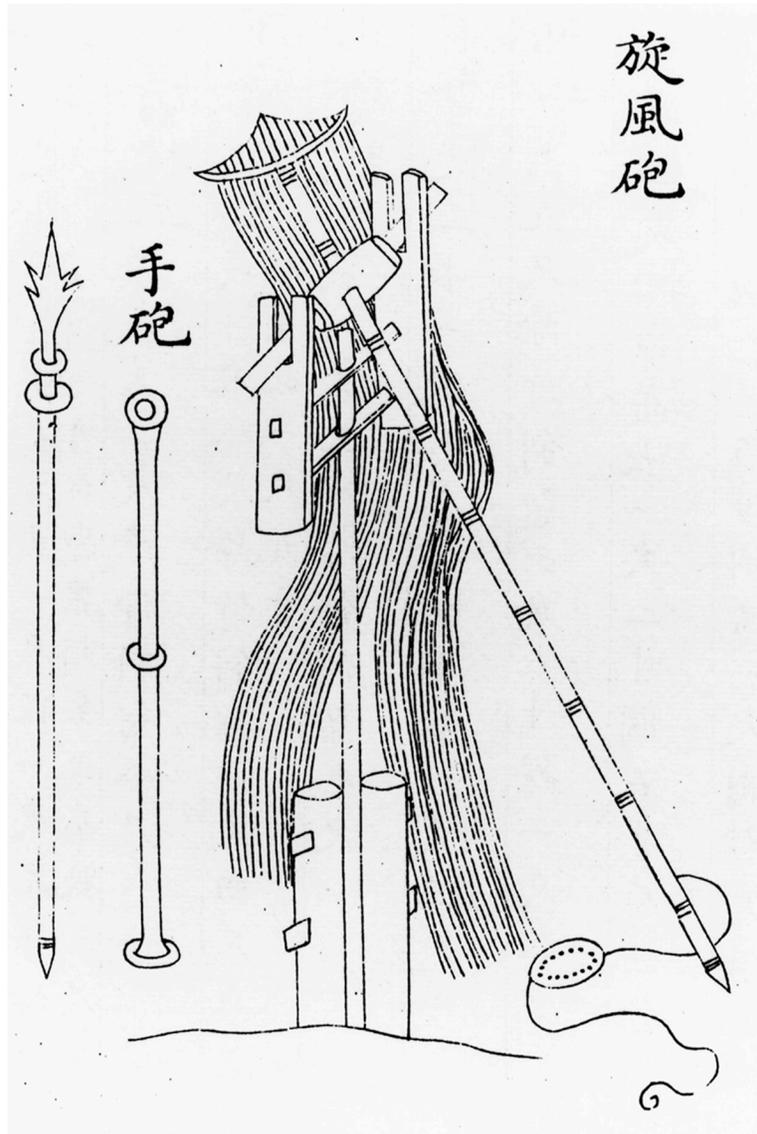


Fig. 1. Two traction-powered trebuchets depicted in the Song dynasty's military encyclopedia entitled *Wu jing zong yao* (The Essentials of the military classics).

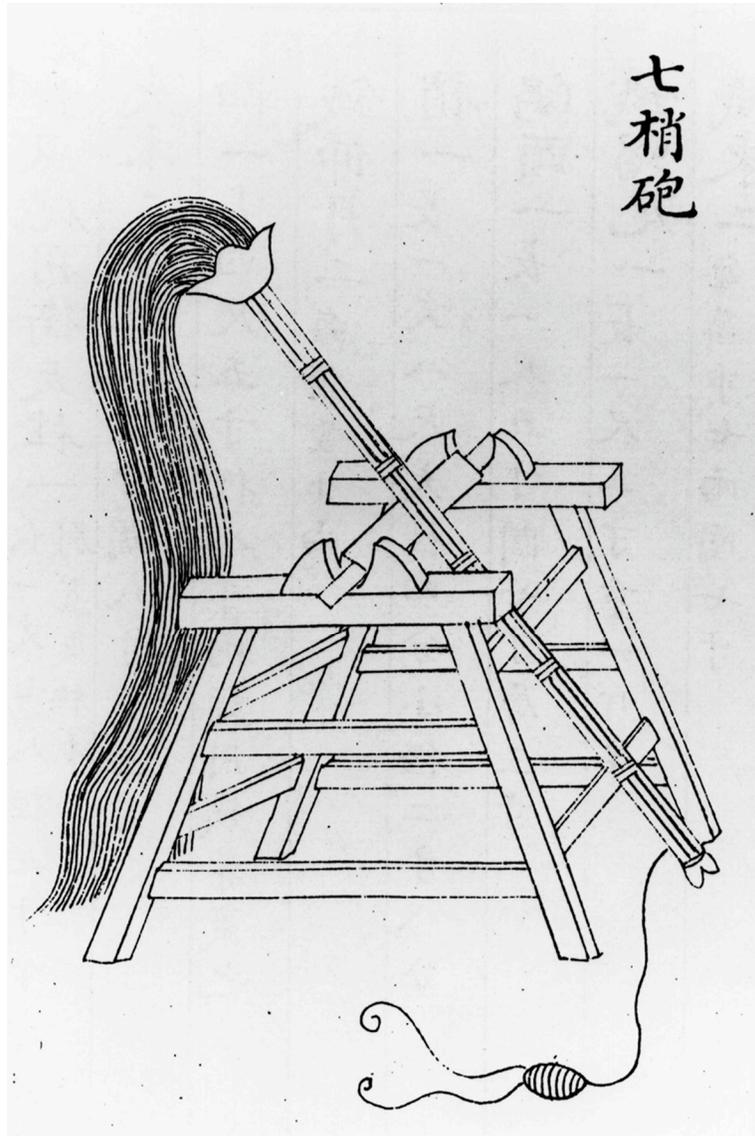


Fig. 2. The most powerful trebuchet depicted in the *Wu jing zong yao*: a traction-powered, trestle-framed trebuchet, identified as “The Septuple-Beam Trebuchet” (*qi shao pao*).

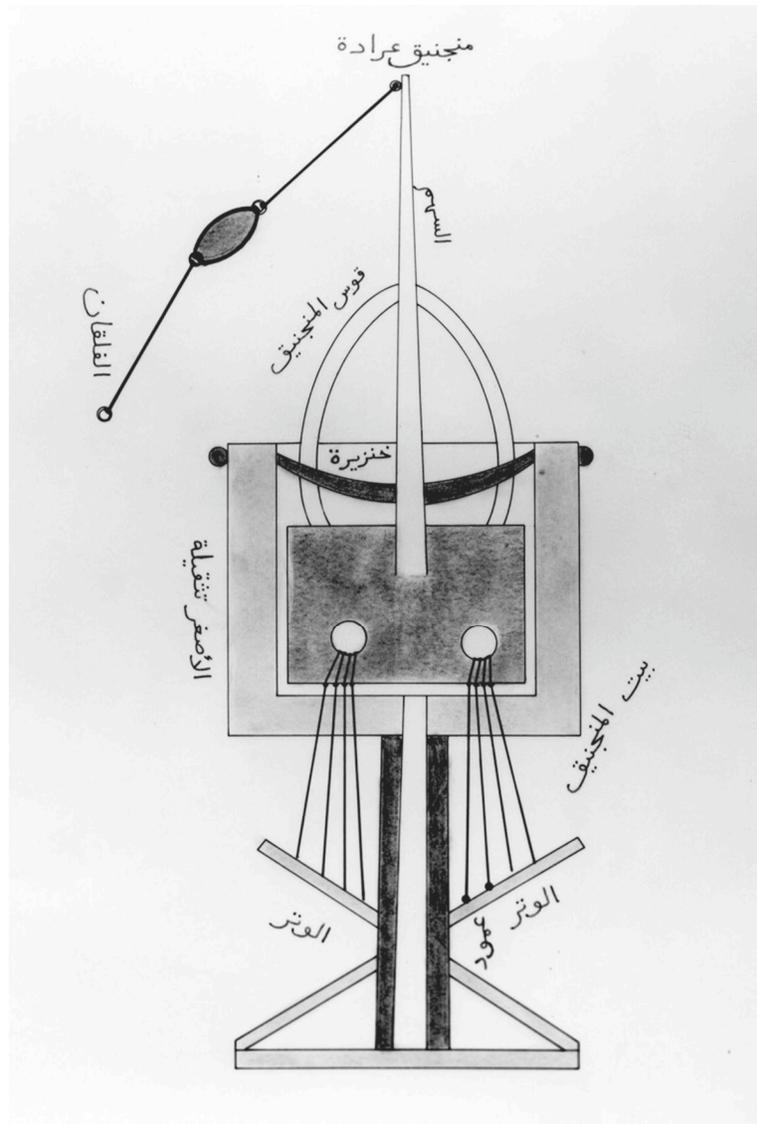


Fig. 3. A pole-framed hybrid trebuchet identified as a *manjanīq 'arrādah* in Ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh's *An Elegant Book on Trebuchets* (*Kitāb Anīq fī al-Manājanīq*), 867/1462-63.



Fig. 4. Detail of a stone fragment in the Church of Saint-Nazaire in Carcassonne, France, with a relief carving on its outer face showing a trestle-framed, hybrid machine being prepared for discharge.

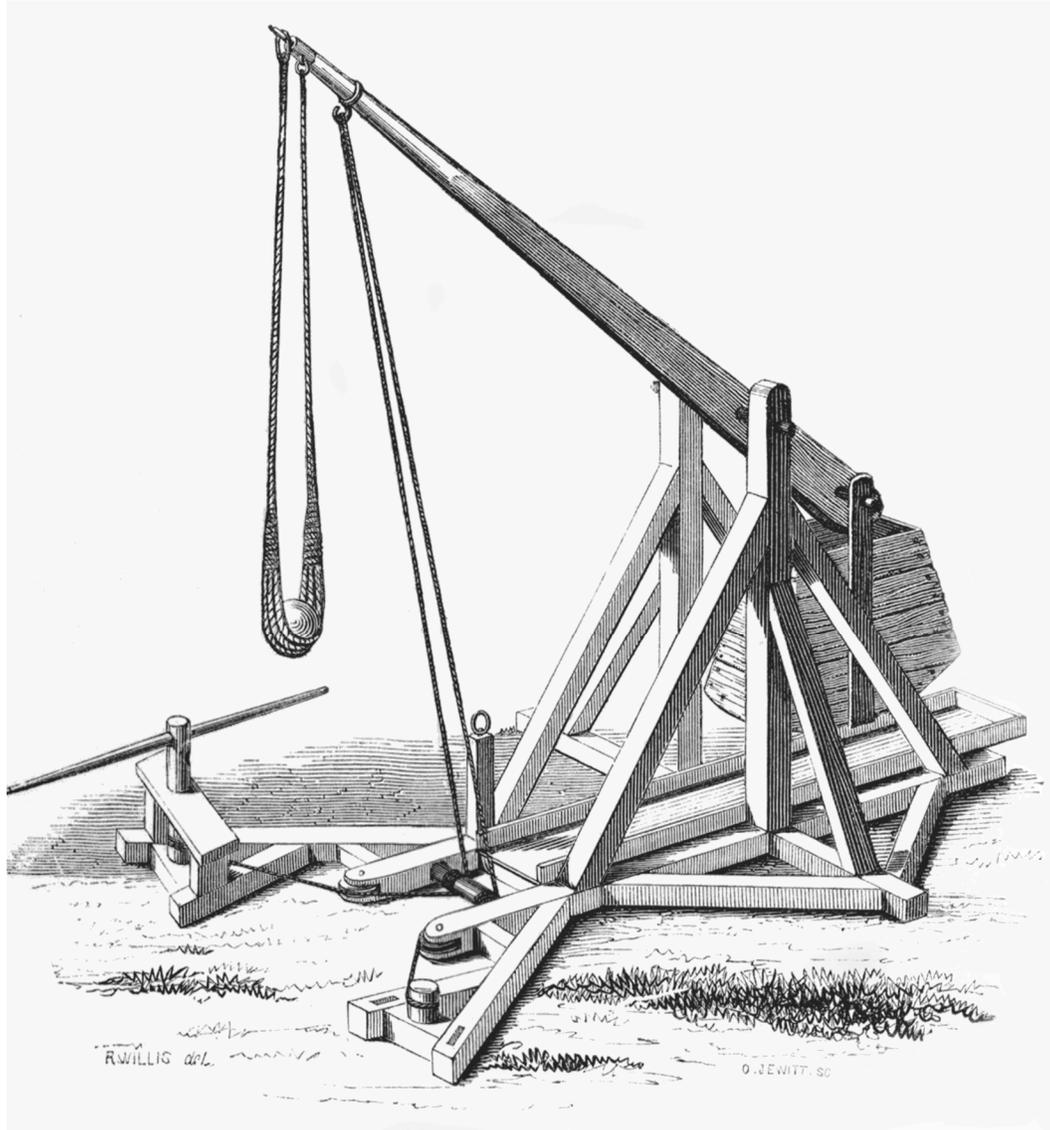


Fig. 5. Reconstruction of a trestle-framed, counterweight trebuchet (*trebuchet*) of Villard de Honnecourt, France, ca. 1230–35, by the Rev. Robert Willis (1800–75).



Fig. 6. Mariano Taccola, "Liber Tertius de ingeneis ac edifiitiis non usitatis" (1433), Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (Florence) Cod. palat. 766, fol. 41r. The "bricola" (*bricola*), or the "Two-Testicle" machine, a pole-framed trebuchet with two hinged counterweights, identified in Arabic historical sources as the "Frankish" or "European" trebuchet (*manjanīq ifranjī* or *manjanīq firanjī*).

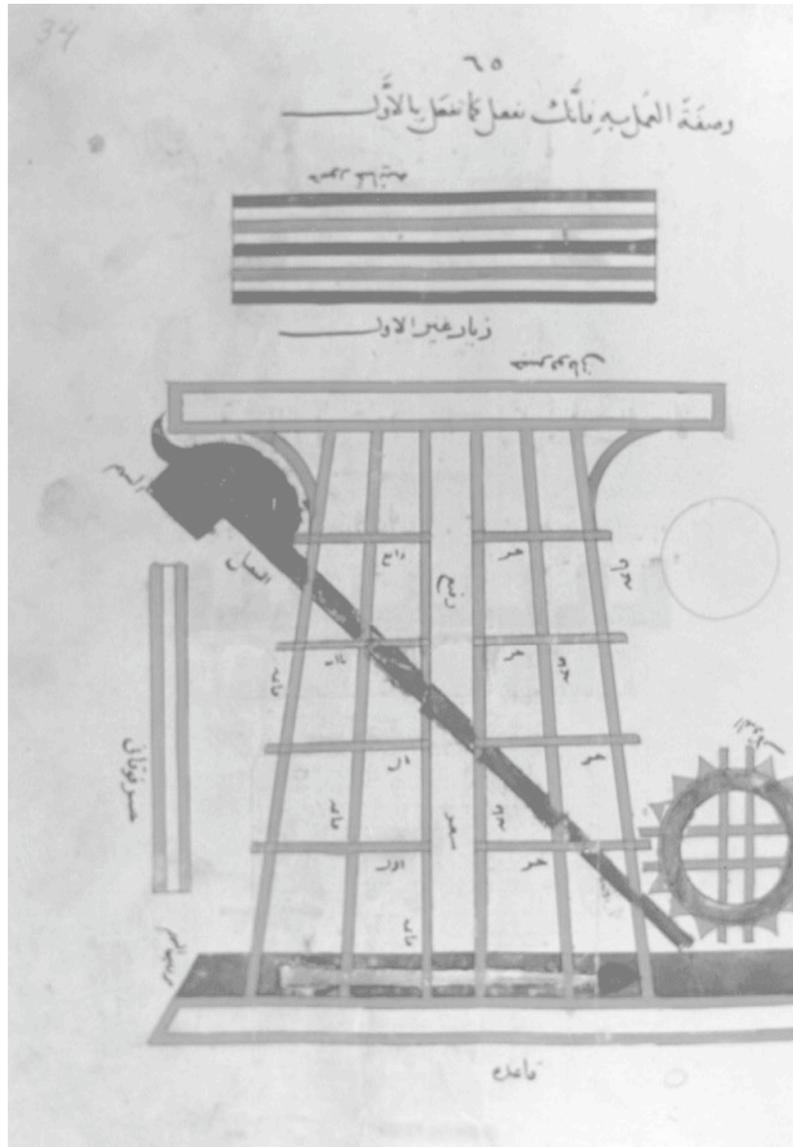


Fig. 7. Yūsuf ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh, “Kitāb Anīq fī al-Manājanīq,” Topkapı Sarayı Muzesi Kutuphanesi MS Ahmet III 3469/1, fol. 34r. A bastard bolt-projector: a cross between a torsion catapult and a bolt-projecting, trestle-framed trebuchet.

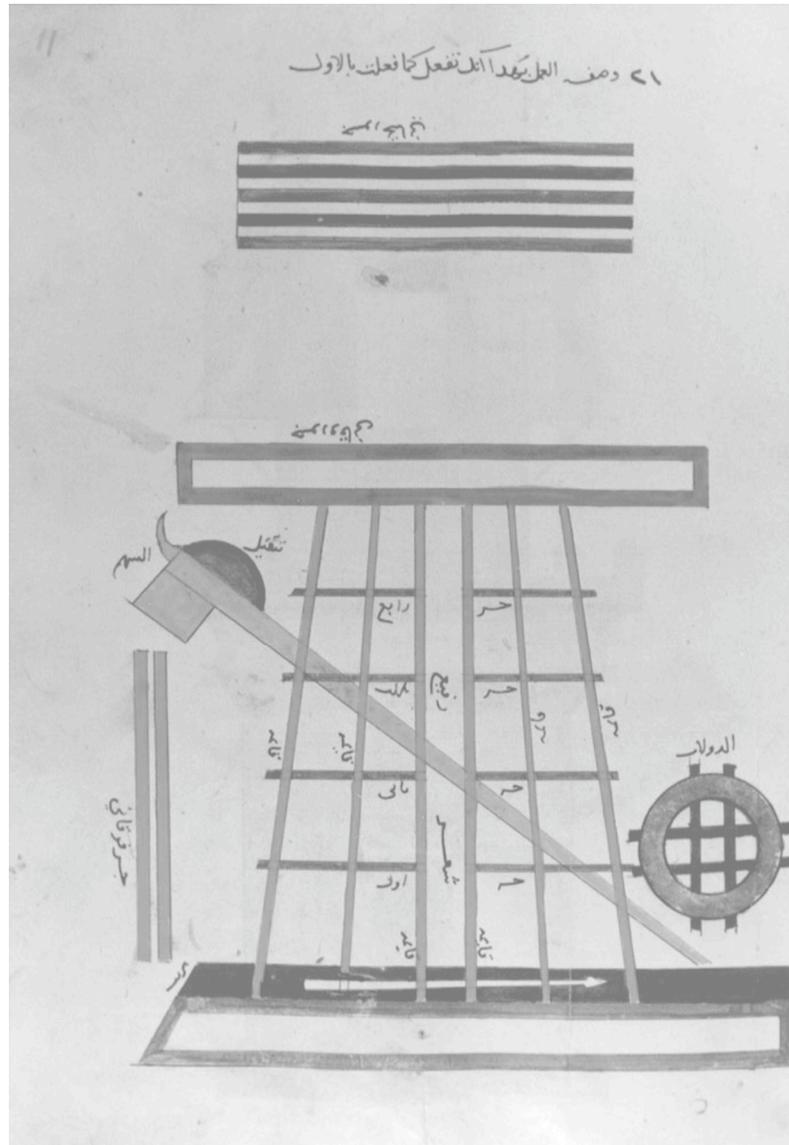


Fig. 8. Yūsuf ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh, “Kitāb Anīq fī al-Manājanīq,” Topkapı Sarayı Muzesi Kutuphanesi MS Ahmet III 3469/1, fol. 11r. A bastard bolt-projector: a cross between a torsion catapult and a bolt-projecting, trestle-framed trebuchet.

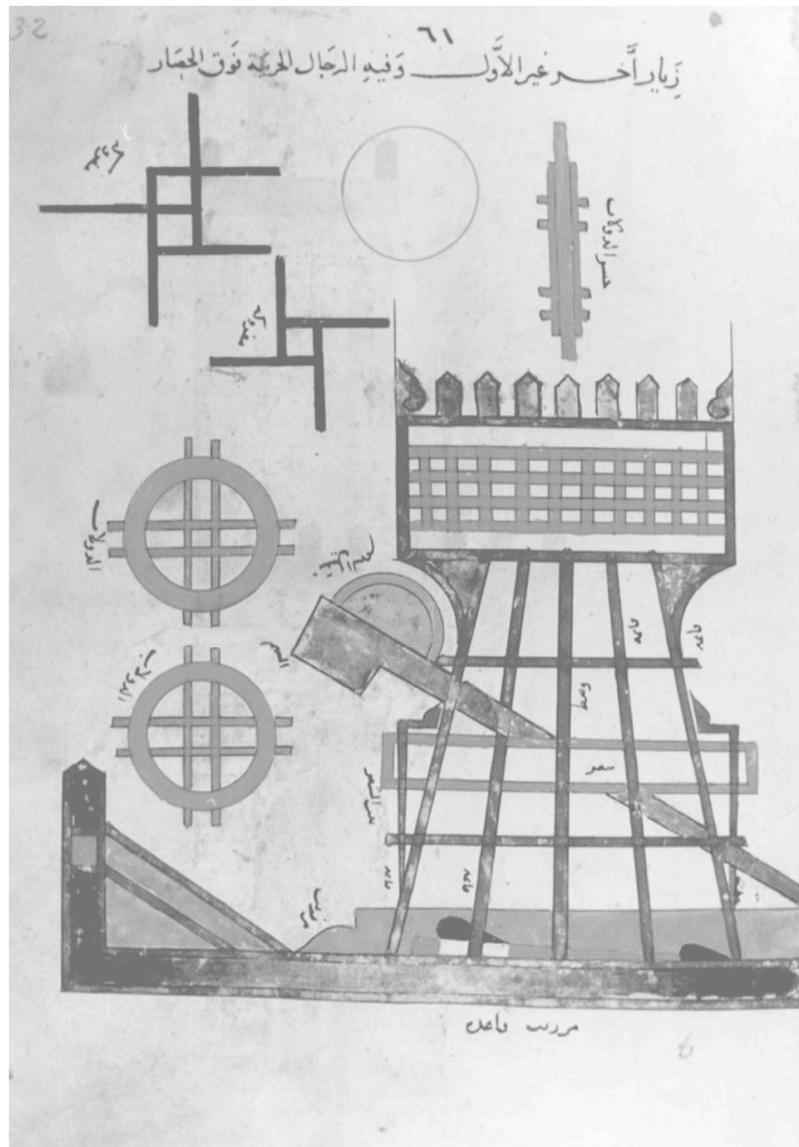


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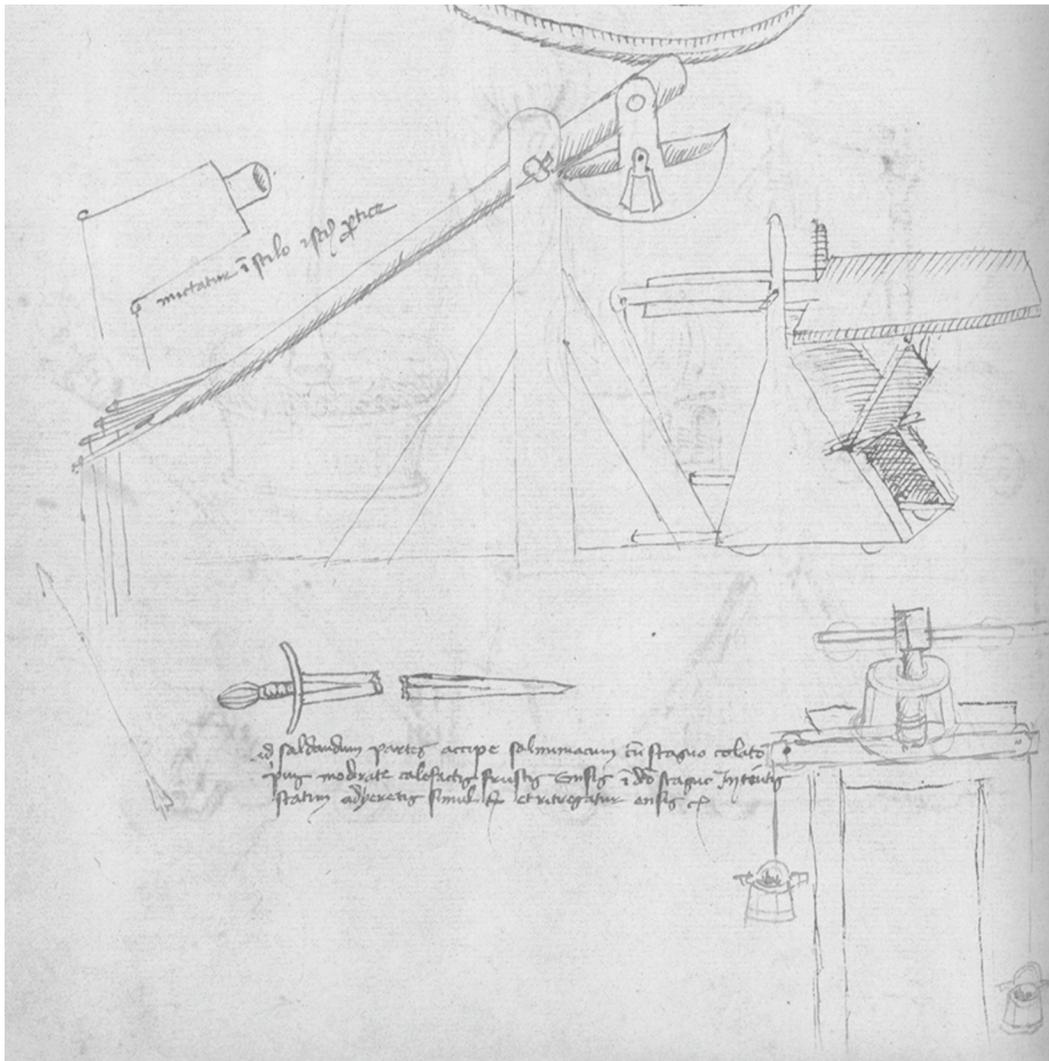


Fig. 10. Mariano Taccola, "De ingeneis," ca. 1419–50, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Codex CLM 197 II, fol. 68v. Trebuchet with a hinged counterweight and a four-tined throwing arm launching a bolt.

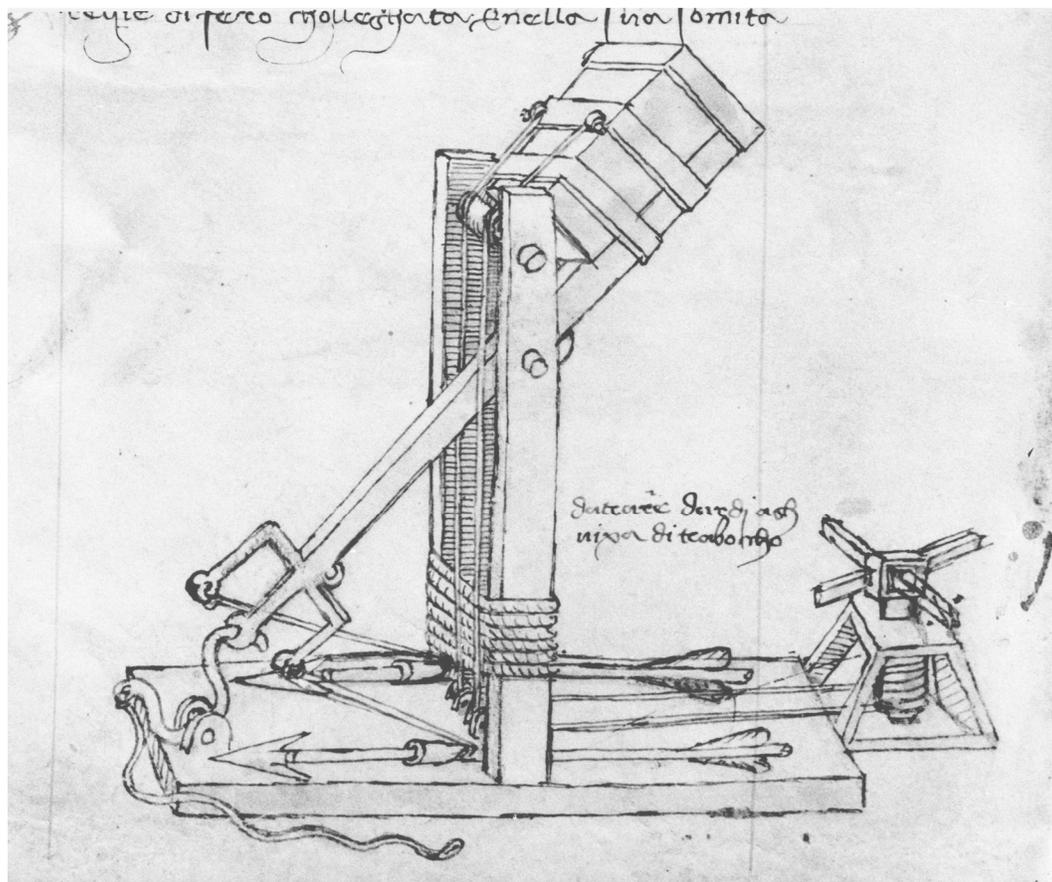


Fig. 11. Francesco di Giorgio Martini, "Trattato I," copy, ca. 1480–1500, Turin, Biblioteca Reale di Torino Codex 148 Saluzzo, fol. 61v. Trebuchet with fixed counterweight launching two bolts.

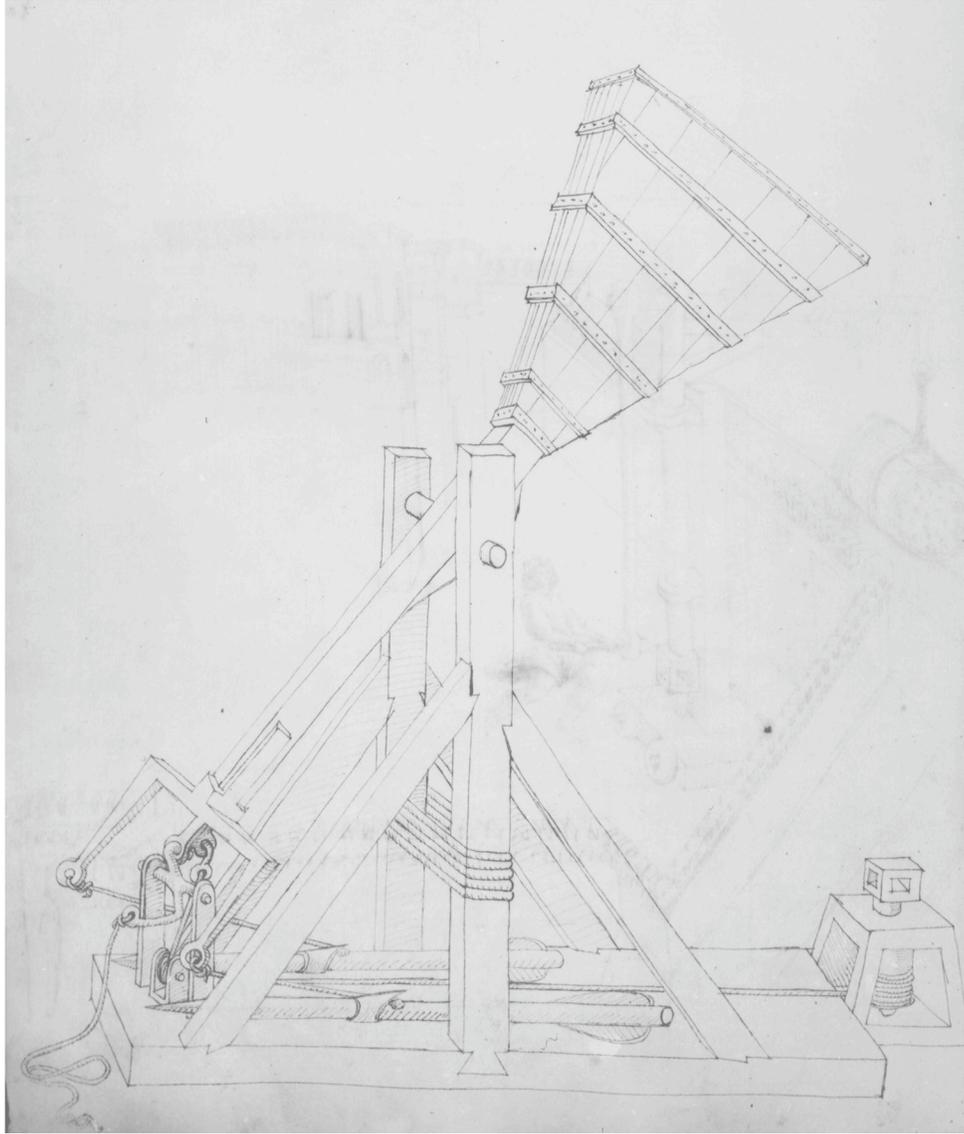


Fig. 12. Anon. Raccolta Artist Engineer, "Raccolta di città e macchine," ca. 1490s, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Codex Magliabechiana II I 141 part 3, fol. 195v. Trebuchet with fixed counterweight launching two bolts.

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The Fire of 884/1479 at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and an Account of Its Restoration

Among the series of fires that are reported to have hit the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus during its pre-modern history, the fire of 884/1479 is so far the least known.¹ The well-known sources for this period, such as the contemporary Cairene chronicles of Ibn Iyās and al-Şayrafī, do not mention it; nor does al-Sakhāwī refer to the subsequent substantial restoration of the Umayyad Mosque in his long list of Qāyṭbāy's construction and renovation works.² The Syrian historian Ibn Ṭūlūn (880–953/1476–1546), whose chronicle starts in 884, the same year when the fire broke out, when he was still a child, refers only briefly to the restoration works that followed this fire.³ In his biographical dictionary of the viceroys of Damascus, however, he does not include any reference to this fire under the entry of Qānşūh al-Yahāwī, the viceroy in charge at that time.⁴

However, a detailed description of the catastrophe and the following restoration works can be found in the chronicle *Ḥawādith al-Zamān wa-Wafayāt al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān* by the Damascene historian Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-

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¹Earthquakes occurred in 132/748, 233/847, 587/1191, 702/1302, and 1173/1759, and fires in 461/1069, 552/1157, 562/1166, 570/1174, 646/1247, 740/1340, 803/1401, 884/1879, and in 1893. Jean Sauvaget, *Les Monuments Historiques de Damas* (Beirut, 1932), 16–18; 'Afīf al-Bahnasī, *Al-Jāmi' al-Umawī al-Kabīr* (Damascus, 1988), 93 f. (his dates are not exact); Muḥammad Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb, *Rawā' i' al-'Imārah al-'Arabīyah al-Islāmīyah fī Sūryā* (Ministry of Awqāf) (Damascus, 1982), 19 f. Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Şaşrā mentions the fire of Sha'bān 794/1392: *Kitāb al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah fī al-Dawlah al-Zāhirīyah*, ed. William Brinner (Berkeley, 1963), 2 (Arabic text): 117. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah mentions a reconstruction of the transept dome in 800/1397. In Muḥarram 788/1381 some of its lead sheets had been carried away by the wind: *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*, ed. Adnan Darwich (Damascus, 1977), 1:583, 654.

²Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā' i' al-Duhūr*, ed. M. Muşṭafā (Wiesbaden-Cairo, 1961–75), vol. 3; al-Jawharī al-Şayrafī, *Inbā' al-Ḥaşr bi-Abnā' al-'Aşr*, ed. H. Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970); al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi'* (Cairo, 1896), 6:201 ff.

³*Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Muşṭafā (Cairo, 1962), 1:6.

⁴*T'lām al-Warā bi-Man Wulliya Nā' iban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-Kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duḥmān (Damascus, 1964), 92, 98. He was twice governor; the first tenure was 883–86/1478–81, the second 892–903/1487–98.



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Anṣārī Ibn al-Ḥimṣī (1438–1527), who was an eyewitness to the event.⁵

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī's account of the fire of 884/1479 sheds light on an event that he considered to be of major importance to the city of Damascus but which, unlike the fire at the mosque of Medina one year later, did not engage the interest of the historians in the Mamluk capital.

THE AUTHOR⁶

According to his own statements, written in the introduction to his chronicle and scattered in the text, Ibn al-Ḥimṣī was born in Damascus in Rajab 841/January 1438 into a wealthy family of qadis and scholars.⁷ His death is reported in 934/1527, his life thus having straddled the late Mamluk period and the first Ottoman decade of Syrian history.

In the month of Sha'bān 886/1481, while he was chief of the muezzins at the Umayyad Mosque, he was appointed as the deputy of the Shafi'i chief qadi of Damascus, Ibn Farfūr. In 896/1491 he was the qadi of the Syrian pilgrimage caravan. Ibn al-'Imād, who refers to him as Ibn al-Ḥimṣī *al-mu'arrikh*, i.e., the historian, writes that he spent some time in Cairo, where he was deputy of the Shafi'i chief qadi Zakarīyā al-Anṣārī and the *khaṭīb* of the royal mosque of the Citadel of Cairo. Sultan al-Ghawrī (1501–16) appreciated his voice and his performance. Al-Ghazzī quotes him on many occasions among his sources.

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī wrote a great chronicle, so far unknown, to which he often refers in his more concise *Ḥawādith al-Zamān*. The latter was conceived as a *dhayl* or continuation to Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī's *Inbā'*⁸; like its predecessor, it is at the same time a biographical encyclopedia of contemporary scholars.

SOME IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF IBN AL-ḤIMṢĪ'S ACCOUNT

Because Ibn al-Ḥimṣī's text is a unique document in Mamluk historiography, a

⁵There are two new editions of this manuscript. I am quoting that of 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut, 1999). The other one, published in Beirut (2000), is by 'Abd al-'Azīz Fayyāḍ Ḥarfūsh. Laylā 'Abd al-Laṭīf Aḥmad has already drawn attention to the importance of this source in *Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh wa-Mu'arrikhī Miṣr wa-al-Shām ibbāna al-'Aṣr al-'Uthmānī* (Cairo, 1980), 171–89.

⁶Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār Man Dhahab* (Cairo, 1351/1932–33), 8:201; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahah*, 1:49, 145, 324, 343, 346, 359; Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Al-Kawākib al-Sā'irah bi-A'yān al-Mī'ah al-'Āshirah*, ed. Jibrā'īl Jabbūr (Beirut, 1979), 1:5.

⁷This corrects Ibn al-'Imād, who gives two alternative dates for his birth, 851 or 853.

⁸Ibn Ḥajar's best known historical works are *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mī'ah al-Thāminah* (Hyderabad, 1348–50/1929–31, and Cairo, 1966), and *Inbā' al-Ghumr bi-Abnā' al-'Umr* (Beirut, 1967, 1986). For his biography see F. Rosenthal, "Ibn Ḥadjar al-'Asqalānī", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.



translation of all the dispersed passages in the chronicle which deal with the outbreak of the fire and the subsequent restoration has been appended to the following discussion of the text.

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, whose report consists of several passages integrated into his chronicle among various other events, provides a detailed and lively step-by-step description of the outbreak of the fire and its consequences. In his reconstruction of the scene that led to the outbreak of the fire, his presentation of the sequence of the restoration with all the data concerning the costs and the sponsors' contributions, and the account of the respective tasks performed by the craftsmen's teams, Ibn al-Ḥimṣī demonstrates the kind of accuracy that one would expect from a project manager. His account provides valuable information on the architectural history of the Umayyad Mosque and on building crafts in late Mamluk Damascus. Moreover, while he mentions the sequence of actions taken by the Damascene authorities to repair the damage, the author sketches a vivid picture of various episodes around the event, which add to the interest of this extraordinary document.

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī writes as a patriotic Damascene commoner emphasizing the solidarity between the various groups of the city's population facing the catastrophe and their involvement with the fate of the mosque. He painstakingly records the contributions made by individual volunteers and sponsors to supplement the sultan's share of the restoration costs.

The description of the collective grief of the Damascene population across its social and religious groups is remarkable. Following the first selfish reactions of those who sought to rescue their belongings while others were looting, a civic sense prevailed, which led people to cooperate in order to limit the damage. Did the religious establishment play a role here? The author himself writes that he helped in removing the furnishings and urged others to do the same.

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī does not provide any information concerning the existence in medieval Damascus of provisions for a fire emergency. He mentions only rescuing, not fire fighting measures. It seems, however, that it was common knowledge that in such cases beams should be removed from the wooden ceiling through which the fire progressed. The private and spontaneous initiative of an amir, who dwelt in an adjacent palace, of removing the beams on his side ultimately brought the fire to a halt. For this reason, the sultan's master-builder was blamed for not having ordered this measure at an earlier stage. It thus appears that the responsibility for coordinating emergency responses resided in the office of the sultan's master-builder of Damascus

The account sheds light also on the relationship between Muslims and *dhimmīs*. We are told that the marble craftsmen were Christians and that the non-Muslims grieved equally at the sight of the burning mosque. The episode of a Jewish



merchant who attempted to acquire the lead debris reveals another aspect of the Muslim-*dhimmī* relationship.

It is interesting to note that Ibn al-Ḥimṣī does not mention any *dhimmī*, i.e., Christian or Jew, by name. Similarly, Ibn Ṭūlūn, when he referred in his chronicle to the craftsmen who worked at the restoration of the mosque, explicitly wrote that he would name the Muslims among them, which implies that the non-Muslims were supposed to remain anonymous. There is a purpose in this attitude; some medieval Muslim historians considered it “blackening the paper with unimportant things” to write about Christians and Jews.⁹

It is obvious from Ibn al-Ḥimṣī’s account that the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus was a true icon for the city’s population. In his picture of that particular moment, all those who participated in the rescue shared a common identity. This may explain why the author takes care to name the craftsmen, an exceptional occurrence in chronicles of that time. Similarly, the credit he gives to the private sponsors makes clear that the reconstruction of the mosque was made possible by the populace, not just the sultan.

THE EFFECT OF THE FIRE ON THE Umayyad MOSQUE

A history of the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus in the post-Umayyad period has not yet been written; this makes it difficult to assess the real effect of this fire on its structure.

As in earlier cases, the fire originated in the surrounding markets and reached the interior of the mosque through an opening. This indicates that the markets and dwellings must have been adjacent to the walls of the mosque. This is further confirmed by the fact that rubble falling from the mosque during the works killed prisoners in a jail located nearby. The northern portico seems to have been damaged only on its western side. It has preserved to this day a restoration inscription dating from the reign of the Mamluk sultan al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh in 1416, referring to its reconstruction by a builder from Alexandria.¹⁰

Because of the great fire in 1893, which severely damaged the mosque, it is difficult to assess how the mosque looked after the restoration described by Ibn al-Ḥimṣī. The latest detailed description of the Umayyad Mosque so far known prior to the fire of 884 is that of Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī. In a brief passage about the contemporaneous mosque, he mentions mosaics around the courtyard and in the upper part of the transept. He also refers to the local production of glass mosaics, though of a lesser quality, for the restoration of the Umayyad Mosque, which also provided the tesserae for the decoration of the mosque of Tankiz in the

⁹Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1952), 267.

¹⁰Sauvaget, *Les Monuments Historiques*, 23–25.



fourteenth century.¹¹ A stock of these tesserae, which were stored in boxes, was destroyed by the fire of 740/1340.¹² Ibn al-Ḥimṣī does not mention any damage to the mosque's masonry, nor does he say anything about the mosaic decoration, which had dazzled so many eyewitnesses in the past. In fact, the mosque at that time had already lost many of its mosaics as a result of the series of previous fires and earthquakes. Ibn al-Ḥimṣī's use of the term *fuṣūṣ* to describe what fell during the fire is ambiguous; the term could refer either to mosaic tesserae or to the glass pieces that are inserted in stucco grille windows (*qamarīyahs*).¹³ It is astonishing, however, that the largest part of the surviving mosaics are located in the western portico, which was severely damaged by the fire. This raises the question as to whether the walls at that time were coated with plaster, which would have preserved the mosaics underneath. The coating could have been applied during the restoration that followed the devastating fire resulting from Timur's invasion. In any case, it is important to note that mosaic decoration no longer characterized the image of the mosque in the mind of the Damascene population at the time when Ibn al-Ḥimṣī was writing.

In the prayer hall the decoration of the qiblah wall, which was just being renovated and was not yet completed, was destroyed alongside grille windows and some of the metal doors. Ibn al-Ḥimṣī himself was involved in the rescue actions, removing furniture and books and directing others to help.

In his report of the restoration works Ibn al-Ḥimṣī describes the aisles of the sanctuary as three individual segments (*jamalīn*, his plural of *jamalūn*, which means gabled aisle) on each side of the transept to the east and the west.¹⁴

Referring to the transept, he distinguishes between a northern and a southern *nasr*, both of which he praises for their beauty. This description, however, is confusing and difficult to reconcile with the well-known tripartite composition of the transept. Ibn Jubayr's detailed description of the transept in the twelfth century refers to a large central dome, *qubbat al-raṣāṣ*, with a rounded profile and a wooden double-shell, covered with lead and supported by a canopy of piers. This dome was flanked to the north and south by two smaller ones. Because he misunderstood the meaning of the word *nasr*, he compared the transept with an

¹¹The mausoleum of Tankiz, which alone survives, has preserved parts of its mosaic decoration. Michael Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien* (Glückstadt, 1992), 1:97.

¹²Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī (Cairo, 1924), 193.

¹³The mention of the glass is in an addition in the margin of fol. 84.

¹⁴Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Laylā ʿAlī Ibrāhīm, *Architectural Terms in Mamluk Documents, 648–923H/1250–1517M* (Cairo, 1990).



eagle spreading its wings.¹⁵ By referring to a northern and a southern *nasr*, however, Ibn al-Ḥimṣī seems to view the transept as being composed of only two parts. He might have viewed the bay in front of the mihrab, which he calls *maqṣūrah*, as distinct from the rest of the transept.

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī mentions that the original ceiling was double-layered and that it was rebuilt with a single upper layer. The northern *nasr*, however, was single-layered prior to the fire.

In the Mamluk period the mosque had four mihrabs.¹⁶ The fourth, on the very western end of the sanctuary, seems to have been added during the years 1326–38, when Tankiz, the governor of Syria, rebuilt the qiblah wall. Each of the four mihrabs served one of the four *madhhabs* of Sunni Islam. During these restoration works Tankiz pulled down the two minarets at the north corners of the mosque and reused their stones for the sanctuary.¹⁷

According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭah¹⁸ and al-ʿUmarī the *miḥrāb al-ṣaḥābah*, the oldest one, was on the eastern side of the transept, and used by the Maliki community. The one on the western side of the transept was that of the Hanafis, followed by that of the Hanbalis further west. The axial main mihrab was that of the Shafīʿis. The three other mihrabs were the core of three madrasahs, each with its own imam, muezzin, and teacher serving the three other *madhhabs*.

During the restoration works in 1479 the *khuṭbah* was delivered at the Hanafī mihrab on the western side of the transept, then at the *miḥrāb al-ṣaḥābah*, or mihrab of the Prophet's companions, on the eastern side. Once the restoration was completed, Friday prayer returned to the *maqṣūrah*, i.e., at the axial mihrab.

The account of Ibn al-Ḥimṣī draws attention to a hardly noticed feature of the Umayyad Mosque, which is the four oblong rooms located on each side of the sanctuary and the courtyard (see plan). Described as a *mashhad* or shrine, they were named initially for the four rightly-guided caliphs; however, the names changed with time.¹⁹ They were used for diverse purposes, including ceremonial and teaching. It is interesting to note, however, that the *mashhad al-muʿadhdhinīn*

¹⁵Ibn Jubayr uses the word *nasr* for the entire transept (*al-gharīb al-mustaṭīl al-musammá al-nasr*). Ibn Baṭṭūṭah refers to the entire transept area as *qubbat al-nasr* (*Riḥlat Ibn Jubayr* [Beirut, 1959], 266 f.). Creswell already noticed that the word *nasr* did not refer to an eagle, but that it must be the translation of the Greek word *aétos*, which means both eagle and gable, the latter being meant in this context. K. A. C. Creswell and James Allan, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture* (Aldershot 1989), 52 f.

¹⁶Creswell and Allan believe that the fourth is "quite modern." *Short Account*, 53.

¹⁷Sauvaget, *Les Monuments Historiques*, 17; al-Bahnasī, *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Umawī al-Kabīr*, 78.

¹⁸Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Riḥlah* (Beirut, 1985) 1:103 ff.

¹⁹According to Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, the southeastern one, named for the caliph Abū Bakr, included a library; the northeastern was named for ʿAlī; the southwestern, named for ʿUmar, was



was used as a treasury, where people could deposit their valuables in safety boxes. These were modernized after the fire, to be fixed in the wall with a uniform shape.

Qāyṭbāy's minaret at the southwestern corner of the mosque, which has well preserved its original features to the present day, seems to be all that remains from the restoration works that followed the fire of 1479.²⁰ Its octagonal shaft is decorated with Damascene *ablaq* masonry. Although the octagonal configuration vaguely recalls Cairene minarets, its proportions and the minaret's profile differ too much from the metropolitan style to be attributed to Cairene craftsmen, as has been suggested by Meinecke.²¹ In fact, Ibn al-Ḥimṣī himself says nothing about an Egyptian contribution to the construction of the minaret. The tower, which forms the base of Qāyṭbāy's minaret, is the only one of the four Roman corner towers to have survived to the present day. The original structure, although it was restored in 680/1184 and 803/1400,²² seems to have retained its initial proportions until 1479. Its size must have been impressive, since Ibn al-Ḥimṣī describes the minaret as having only one quarter the size of its predecessor.

THE PATRONAGE

The costs of the restoration were estimated by the viceroy of Damascus at 58,700 dinars. However, the sultan originally allocated only 15,000 and ultimately paid 22,500, including the reconstruction of the minaret! Obviously he did not trust his viceroy's estimate. He, moreover, seems to have been either unable or unwilling to come up with the entire cost of the mosque's repair, sponsoring the restoration of the prayer hall and the reconstruction of the minaret, and leaving the restoration of the western portico to other sponsors. In addition to the physical damage caused to the bazaar and the mosque, the destruction of the markets, which belonged to its *waqf* estate, deprived the mosque, for a while, of its natural source of revenue. Therefore, only the restoration of the *sāghah*, or goldsmiths' market,

endowed with a chair of hadith and also included a library. The northwestern one was named for 'Uthmān. This was the place where the viceroy of Syria used to perform his prayer near a window, accompanied by the Shafi'i qadi. This *mashhad* also functioned as a tribunal and as the seat of the four chief qadis when they met to discuss political matters. Each of these *mashhads* had an imam and a muezzin of its own. Al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 196.

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī uses different names: Shaykh Khaṭṭāb instead of 'Alī, 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr or *mashhad 'Urwah* or *mashhad al-mu'adhdhinīn* instead of *mashhad 'Umar*, *mashhad al-nā'ib* instead of *mashhad 'Uthmān*, and *mashhad al-zanāyī* instead of *mashhad Abī Bakr*.

²⁰The balconies of the minaret were restored after the earthquake of 1173/1759. Mehmet Yaşar Ertaş, "1759 Şam Depremin'de Büyük Hasar Gören Emeviye, Selimiye ve Süleymaniye Camilerinin Onarımı," in *Papers Submitted to the International Symposium on Ottoman Heritage in the Middle East, 28 October 2000, Hatay, Iskenderun* (Ankara, 2001), 1: 241–49, 245.

²¹Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 1:198.

²²Al-Khaṭīb, *Rawā'i' al-'Imārah*, 21.



could be covered by *waqf* funds, while the rest had to be sponsored by the merchants and other individuals, including Mamluk dignitaries.

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī is quite precise in defining at each stage of completion what the sultan sponsored and what other donors did. Although a clear distinction between public funds and privy is difficult to make in the Mamluk period, the reference to *māl al-sultān* should not be understood as the sultan's private purse, but rather as the public treasury, or *bayt al-māl*.

The reconstruction of the southwestern minaret dragged on for a strikingly long period, lasting from Rabī' II 887/1482 to Dhū al-Qa'dah 893/1488, over six years.²³ Furthermore, the work began more than two years after the outbreak of the fire, once the interior restoration was completed. Ibn al-Ḥimṣī's statement that the minaret was visibly smaller than the original is confirmed by the discrepancy between the size of the minaret's base and that of the Roman tower on which it stands (see figure). The fire of 886/1481 in the Prophet's mosque in Medina, which required funds and craftsmen from Cairo and Damascus, must have contributed to the delay in its restoration.²⁴ All this indicates that the restoration of the Umayyad Mosque was a substantial burden even for such a great builder as Sultan Qāyṭbāy. Obviously Damascus did not enjoy a priority status in the sultan's otherwise ambitious building program.²⁵ Considering that the reign of Qāyṭbāy produced in Cairo an impressive number of new buildings and restoration projects at a much speedier pace, the duration of two years for the restoration of the roof and the prayer hall of the Umayyad Mosque appears rather long, indicating that the building craft in Damascus was not adequate for important architectural projects.

THE BUILDING CRAFTS

Unlike the restorations of the mosques of Mecca and Medina by Sultan Qāyṭbāy, the restoration of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus took place without the contribution of Egyptian craftsmen. The author explicitly denies the participation of the marble workers whom the sultan sent from Cairo, due to the death of their master; the work was executed by local Christians. Ibn al-Ḥimṣī also seems to follow, though not explicitly, the general opinion which put the blame on the sultan's master-builder Ibn al-'Aṭṭār for the magnitude of the damage. He gives all the credit for the work to the local workshops, whose names and contribution are mentioned individually.

Four teams of builders were involved in the project: Aḥmad al-Zanīk²⁶ and his

²³ An inscription in the minaret indicates the completion date as 893/1487–88.

²⁴ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Sultan Qāyṭbāy's Foundation in Medina, the *Madrasah*, the *Ribāt* and the *Dashīshah*," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 2 (1998): 61–72.

²⁵ Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 1:193f.



partners ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and Aḥmad ‘Abbās, who worked together with the apprentices of Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār. The *mu‘allim* Muḥammad ibn al-‘Ajlūnīyah repaired the *mashhad* of Abū Bakr. In his short reference to the restoration work at the Umayyad Mosque, Ibn Ṭūlūn writes that a man called al-Zubdānī ibn al-‘Izqī, who is not mentioned by Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, almost died in jail where he was kept in connection with the fire in the mosque. He does not clarify this connection, however.²⁷ Ibn Ṭūlūn adds that the fire necessitated a great deal of restoration work. The list of the craftsmen he cites as having been involved in the work differs slightly from that of Ibn al-Ḥimṣī; they are: ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Ḥalabī, Ibn al-‘Ajlūnīyah, Muḥammad ibn al-Mu‘adhdhin, al-A‘sar, al-Dafīh ibn al-Tāzī, and his brother ‘Abd al-Wahhāb.

Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār, the sultan’s master-builder, was not personally involved in the work, probably because of the accusations brought against him of not having taken the necessary measures to halt the fire. Another person, Fakhr al-Dīn ibn al-Bayrutī, is mentioned as having been the *mu‘allim al-sultān* and to have died in Sha‘bān 886/1481;²⁸ it is not clear whether he shared Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār’s position or was his successor. Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār, however, later regained his position as the *mu‘allim al-sultān*.²⁹

As was usual in the Mamluk period, construction works of such significance took place under the supervision of an amir; in this case it was Yashbak, the viceroy’s chamberlain. The viceroy of Damascus, assisted by the governor of the Citadel and other bureaucrats, were in charge of estimating the restoration costs.

The craftsman who made the grille windows had the *nisbah* “al-‘Ajāmī,” which in Mamluk texts could mean either Iranian or Turcoman from Iranian lands, or could also refer to someone who had lived or worked in Iran. Ibn al-Ḥimṣī refers to anonymous metalworkers (beaters) from Aleppo who made some of the doors, and he names Awlād al-Zu‘aymah as another team of metalbeaters also in connection with the doors. The craftsman who cast and applied the lead was an Anatolian Turk (*rūmī*), the *Ḥājj* Aḥmad Ishāq al-Rūmī. As expected, none of these men is mentioned in contemporary biographical encyclopedias.

²⁶Ibn Ṭūlūn mentions Ibn al-Zafīk, who died in jail in 886/1481, having been beaten to death by order of the sultan in connection with the construction of a *khān* at Wādī al-Tīm. *Mufākahah*, 1:46. My reading of Ibn al-Ḥimṣī’s manuscript is, however, Ibn al-Zanīk, who must be identical with this person. The *fā’* and *nūn* could have been confused.

²⁷Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahah*, 1:6.

²⁸Ibid., 56.

²⁹Ibid., 107, 318. Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 1:194.



IBN AL-ḤIMṢĪ'S ACCOUNT OF THE FIRE³⁰

(fol. 74v f.) On the night of Wednesday 26 to 27 Rajab 884/13 October 1479 a catastrophe of unprecedented extent—even by comparison with Timur's calamity—occurred when a fire broke out in the Umayyad Mosque, burning it entirely (*min awalihī ilā ākhirihī*), sparing only the *mashhad al-nā'ib*, also known as *mashhad 'Uthmān*, and the *mashhad al-shaykh Khaṭṭāb*, also known by the name of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn [*sic*] and a section of the northern portico (*riwāq*). The *mashhad al-nā'ib* was spared only because its ceiling was lower than that of the rest of the mosque [see plan].

In the northern *riwāq* only a small area escaped the fire. The western minaret caught fire and collapsed, killing a man.

The fire started in the bazaar, destroying the respective markets of the shoemakers (*akhfāqīyīn*),³¹ the amber-dealers (*'anbarīyīn*), the sword-makers (*suyūfīyīn*), the silk-weavers (*ḥarīrīyīn*), the small market of the merchants (*tujjār*) and weavers (*ḥayyākīn*) known as the farmers' market (*sūq al-zurrā'*), and the great old goldsmiths' market (*al-ṣāghah al-kabīrah al-'atīqah*). In this night people lost fortunes and shops and stores were looted; it was an abominable night, the thought of which makes one shudder (*yuqash'ir al-julūd*).

The fire broke out when a shoemaker called Abū Bakr ibn 'Alwān al-Budyūkī, who dwelt in a flat at the Bāb al-Barīd, asked his wife to prepare candle fat (*duhn sham'*). While she was doing so, fat dripped on some hemp [that was there] which then caught fire without any of them noticing it. When the two of them realized what had happened they were so scared that they removed their belongings without informing anyone. The fire increased and spread into the shoemakers' market. People rushed to move their belongings instead of extinguishing the fire, (fol. 75v) while others were looting. The fire went on destroying the shoemakers' market (*adamīyīn*) and spread further to destroy the amber market, from where it penetrated the mosque through a broken grille window (*qamarīyah*) near the door of the southwestern minaret. It got to the ceiling on the southwestern corner and progressed to all other parts. It is reported that the sultan's *mu'allim*³² Muḥammad ibn al-'Aṭṭār, who was present, replied to those who reported the fire to him that

³⁰The passages concerning the fire and the restoration which are dispersed in the chronicle have been here pasted together. For this free translation I am using a microfilm of the manuscript from the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts in Cairo (Ma'had al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-'Arabīyah MS 239), not the published texts, which have gaps. In Tadmurī's edition, the passages referring to the fire are 1:232–63, 313, and in Ḥarfūsh's edition, 1:147–73.

³¹Elsewhere the author uses the synonymous term *adamīyīn*.

³²This term in late Mamluk historiography refers to the court master-builder. See my "Muhandīs, Shādd, Mu'allim: Note on the Building Craft in the Mamluk Period," *Der Islam* 72 no. 2 (1995): 293–309.



the ceiling was too high to catch fire; he [therefore] did not remove any beams [to prevent its advance]. However, the amir al-Ṣārimī Ibrāhīm ibn Manjaq, who dwelt in the Manjaq palace adjacent to the gate of the Clocks (Bāb al-Sā'āt), ordered some beams on his side to be removed and thus succeeded in stopping the fire short of his residence. The *mashhad al-shaykh Khaṭṭāb*³³ located nearby and the rest of the *riwāq* could thus be rescued. As for the *mashhad al-nā'ib*, it was not reached by the flames because its ceiling is lower than that of the mosque, with a gap between them.

I was present most of the time, carrying away with my colleagues the carpets from the mosque to the courtyard and urging others to do the same. As the fire was progressing, I gave orders to remove the minbar and carry out the Quran of 'Uthmān and the Quran fascicles (*rab'āt*) and the *ḍarīḥ* which belonged to the *waqf* [of the mosque].³⁴ We had just had straw mats (fol. 76) of unparalleled fine quality newly made. They were placed near the window of *mashhad al-nā'ib* where they all burned. However, the *mashhad* itself did not; it had also escaped the fire of Timur.

Two months earlier the viceroy Qānṣūh al-Yaḥāwī had ordered the renovation of the mosque and the estate that belonged to its *waqf*. The marble paneling in the southern wall had been entirely renovated by Christian craftsmen (*naṣārā murrakhimīn*), as far as the shrine (*ḍarīḥ*) of Sīdī Hūd. The fire also destroyed the gilded *ṭirāz* (inscription band) that had been entirely renovated. The marble burned down and collapsed like melting salt. Glass bits fell alongside a grilled glass window and the lead from the roof melted down. The beauty of the mosque vanished and it was wrapped in smoke.

Every time a part of the roof collapsed, one heard a formidable thunder-like noise. People could see each other in the night because of the brightness of the fire. All grieved profoundly; even *ahl al-dhimma* wept at the sight, as did the people who flocked in from the villages. (fol. 76v) On Friday 29 Rajab (15 October) a bench (*kursī*) for the *khaṭīb* was placed in the courtyard before the transept dome (*qubbat al-nasr*). He performed the sermon while the audience was heavily weeping (*wa-bakā al-nās bukā'an 'aẓīman*). It was a terrible moment.

On 27 Sha'bān (12 November) Shaykh Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ḥiṣnī came to the Umayyad Mosque and gave orders to remove the debris of the three eastern and three western aisles (*jamalīn*) and those of the *mashhad al-mu'adhdhinīn*. The debris of the western portico was removed on the first day, that of the three

³³This is another name for the *mashhad* of 'Alī, located behind the eastern portico of the mosque, and is not to be confused with the *mashhad* of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, which is on the western side of the prayer hall.

³⁴It is not clear what is meant by *ḍarīḥ* here; perhaps the shrine of Hūd.



western aisles [of the sanctuary] the next day, and that of the eastern aisles on the third day. An overwhelming number of people were present during these three days, including women and children, each carrying according to his capacity, so that the task was achieved at an unusual speed. (fol. 77) I saw qadis, scholars, and *ashrāfs* loading the debris on animals and dumping it outside in the ruins (*kharāb*). This task would otherwise have taken a year to accomplish, but the zeal of the knowledgeable and virtuous made this possible. The mosque was filled with ovations and recitations (*tahlīl wa-takbīr*); it was a great moment.

On Sunday, the last day of Sha‘bān (14 November), the sultan ordered the viceroy to make a cost estimate of what the mosque and its *waqf* estate would need. The viceroy Qānṣūh al-Yahāwī, alongside the qadi of the army (*qāḍī nāẓir al-jaysh*), Muwaffaq al-Dīn, the Maliki chief qadi, Bahā‘ al-Dīn al-Marīnī,³⁵ and Yashbak, the chief chamberlain and great *dawādār*, and many others, including master-builders (*mu‘allimīn*) with the sultan’s master-builder Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār, came to inspect the mosque. Some people believed that Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār was responsible for the spread of the fire because he opposed the removal of beams from the ceiling, a measure that would have stopped the fire. For this reason, when the angry populace saw him arrive with the viceroy, while people were busy removing the debris, they shouted to prevent him from entering the mosque and some tried to kill him. While the mamluks were taking his defense, the populace began to throw stones at the viceroy with ever increasing vigor. The angry viceroy grasped an axe to attack while his mamluks were hitting people who were running away. (fol. 77v) At that point the viceroy saw a Turk (*rūmī*) carrying his *tanbūr*,³⁶ which increased his fury, so that he and the mamluks beat him almost to death with a burnt log from the mosque. It was a terrible sight. After the populace had run away, the viceroy and his men eventually estimated the costs of the repair at 58,700 dinars and sent their report to the sultan.

On 3 Ramaḍān (17 November), the *shaykh al-balad*, the Shafi‘i shaykh Taqī al-Dīn ibn Qāḍī ‘Ajlūn³⁷ began to collect money from the merchants and other sponsors and set out to repair the *mashhad* of ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr, also known as *mashhad al-mu‘adhhdhinīn*, as well as the northern portico between the gates of Bāb al-Kallāsah and Bāb al-Barīd.

(fol. 78) In the same month an order came from the sultan announcing the allocation of 15,000 dinars from the sultan’s treasury in the Citadel of Damascus, which should be sufficient to cover the restoration works. This should be [a

³⁵ According to Ibn Ṭūlūn, the Maliki chief qadi at that time was Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Marīnī, who died in 897/1492.

³⁶ A musical instrument.

³⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *Al-Kawākib al-Sā‘irah*, 1:114ff.



donation], not a loan to be reimbursed (*wa-lan tustadān thumma tudfa' li-ajlin ājil*).

On Thursday 23 Shawwāl (6 January 1480) the sultan departed for pilgrimage.

In this same month [Shawwāl], the ceiling of the *mashhad al-mu'adhdhinīn* together with that of the vestibule of Bāb al-Barīd and the ceiling of the western portico were repaired. It used to be a double ceiling before the fire, but it was rebuilt, for structural reasons (*li-ajl al-khiffah*), with a single layer. This part was exclusively sponsored by generous donors from among the merchants and others.

On 5 Dhū al-Qa'dah (17 January) the viceroy ordered the carpenters and builders (*al-mu'allimīn wa-al-khashshābīn*) and the attendants of the Umayyad Mosque to tour the Damascene province in search of timber and beams suitable for the restoration of the mosque, which they did. (fol. 78v) The timber was purchased at a fair price and in a just manner (*bi-al'adl wa-al-inṣāf*) with funds from the sultan's treasury handed out by his deputy the qadi Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-'Arīkī(?).

On Monday the 13th, the viceroy ordered the demolition of the mihrab of the *mashhad* of 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr, also known as *mashhad al-mu'adhdhinīn*, which was a beautiful marble mihrab flanked on both sides by cells, to be replaced by a new one and new cells. A new one was carved in the wall.

(fol. 79 f.) On 24 Dhū al-Ḥijjah (6 March) the restoration work sponsored by the sultan began in the sanctuary. The supervisor of the work was the amir Yashbak, the viceroy's second chamberlain, alongside the notaries (*shuhūd*) Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn ibn al-Jāmūs al-Asadī and his companion, Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn al-Jabṣīnī. A few months later, however, the sultan appointed Aydakī, the governor of the Citadel, as the financial trustee (*nā'ib alā al-maṣrūf*); he eventually replaced the previously-mentioned *shuhūd*, although they were men of outstanding piety and honesty, by Burhān al-Buṣrawī and Maṣṣūr al-Ismā'īlī. Amir Yashbak continued to work with the governor of the Citadel.

In Muḥarram 885 (March), a Jew came to buy the debris of the burnt lead that used to roof the aisles of the mosque, offering the amount of one thousand dirhams for it. They took him to the deputy-supervisor of the mosque, who refused to sell for less than 3,000 dirhams, to which the Jew also agreed. The reason for this purchase was that someone caught the Jew while he was stealing the lead debris. Fearing a scandal he offered to buy it. When he was asked to pay, he changed his mind and declared that he was short of cash. At that point someone outbid him by raising the price to 250 *ashrafīs*, which the Jew eventually paid. Later on he began, along with his wife, to complain about having been forced into this deal he had no need for. Another person came up and outbid them, so that by 7 Muḥarram (18 March) the price of the debris had reached 20,000 dirhams. On the 25th the debris was eventually sold for 1,250 dinars to Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bahnasāwī, the treasurer (*ṣayrafī*) of the Citadel in the Umayyad Mosque, in the presence of a



large crowd. The Jew then returned, saying “‘indī fīhi bi-al-amānah 10,000 dinars,”³⁸ but Nāṣir al-Dīn replied that he would buy it himself for any amount, disregarding profit, for the benefit of the mosque.

The mosque had lead at the southern aisles, the two *nasrs* (*nasrayn*), and the ‘*abbārāt*(?). What escaped the fire was stored in a room in the mosque. What was burnt was sold with the debris.

The sultan’s restoration of the *mashhad al-zanāyi*’, also known as *mashhad Abī Bakr*, was completed by (fol. 80) the *mu’allim* Muḥammad ibn al-‘Ajlūnīyah.

In the same month the restoration of the safes of *mashhad al-mu’ adhdhinīn*, or *mashhad ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr*, was completed. A total of fifty-two safe-boxes were replaced. This was done with the funds provided by the viceroy’s secretary (*dawādār*). They were better than the original ones, which had different shapes and were not attached to the wall.

In Ṣafar (April) the first southwestern aisle (*jamalūn*) was completed with the sultan’s funds by the *mu’allim* Aḥmad Ibn al-Zanīk and the *mu’allim* ‘Abd al-Wahhāb under the supervision of Amir Yashbak al-Ḥamzāwī, the second chamberlain and overseer of the Umayyad Mosque.

The works progressed rapidly, thanks to the ingenious mechanical device of an old carpenter from Ṣāliḥīyah called Muḥammad al-Kuftī. It consisted of a pole (*sārī*) and a wheel (*dūlāb*) which could easily lift the beams, so that all the beams of an aisle could be raised in one morning. This was a great blessing that saved a great deal of money.

(fol. 80v) In Rabī‘ I (May) the roof of the second southwestern aisle was completed with the sultan’s funds by the *mu’allim* Aḥmad ‘Abbās and his team of Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār’s apprentices.

In the same month the first southeastern aisle was completed by the *mu’allims* Aḥmad al-Zanīk and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. It included a great *maqṭū’* (cross-beam?)³⁹ above the shrine of St. John.

In Jumādā I (July) the sultan’s restoration of the third southwestern aisle was completed by the *mu’allim* Aḥmad ‘Abbās along with the apprentices of Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār.

(fol. 81) In the same month they began the restoration of the marble dado sponsored by the sultan, beginning with the southwestern side. Aydakī, the governor of the Citadel and the sultan’s financial trustee (*amīn ‘alā al-maṣrūf*), ordered the repainting of the white frieze of the sanctuary with red (*zanjafar*) color. (fol. 81v)

³⁸I am not able to interpret this sentence. Could it perhaps mean that he had already pledged some security to fulfil his obligation?

³⁹Literally this is an adjective meaning “cut”; here it might refer to a perpendicular section in the beams to mark the site of the shrine of St. John.



The original white was better and more pleasant; but the one who gave the orders was popular (*maḥbūb?*), namely the Citadel's governor.

In Jumādā II (mainly August) the sultan's restoration of the third southeastern aisle was done by *mu'allim* 'Abd al-Wahhāb and his partner Aḥmad al-Zanīk, thus completing the six aisles of the sanctuary with the exception of the two parts of the transept (*nasrayn*). They also began to replace the grille windows (*qamarīyah*) of the southern wall.

In Rajab (mainly September) the floor of *mashhad al-mu'adhhdhinīn* was paved with stone (*al-balāṭ al-lāṭūn*) with funds provided by the sultan.

(fol. 82) The works began at the inner doors, paid for by the sultan.

(fol. 83v) On the 27th (1 October) they began to cast the lead for the two transepts (*nasr*) and the 'abbārāt. The lead was carried to the *madrasah balkhīyah* to be processed there.

(fol. 84) On 15 Sha'bān (19 October) the southern *nasr* was covered with lead; it took 77.25 *qinṭārs*. This was done by a Turk (*rūmī*) called al-Ḥājj Aḥmad Ishāq al-Rūmī, who came on his own initiative without having been summoned. He was paid 20 dirhams per *qinṭār* for casting and mounting the lead, in addition to the wage of his apprentices. This man had previously produced the lead for Jerusalem. In the same month also the northern *nasr* was covered with lead with the sultan's funds.

(fol. 84v) During the month of Ramaḍān (November/December) the mosque was painted at the sultan's expense; the chandeliers and the lamps were then suspended. The chandelier (*fanūsāt al-qanādīl*) was hung at the shrine of St. John. The *khuṭbah* and the *tarāwīḥ* prayer were then performed at the *miḥrāb al-ṣaḥābah* on the eastern side of the transept, instead of the Hanafī mihrab on the western side, where the *khuṭbah* was being held since the fire. Everyone was delighted.

(fol. 85f.) In Shawwāl (December 1480/January 1481) the great grille windows of the transept were mounted.⁴⁰ They were made by Muḥammad al-'Ajamī. At the same time the painting of the northern *nasr* was completed. This and the other *nasr* are of unparalleled beauty. They were decorated with gold and lapis and the sultan's name with the date were inscribed on the southern *ṭirāz*. The northern *nasr* had no lower ceiling before the fire. Three doors were mounted in the area of the southern *nasr*, made by master metal-beaters (*al-mu'allimīn al-daqqīyah*) from Aleppo. The southwestern doors were made by the beaters Awlād al-Zu'aymah. The southeastern doors, which had not been damaged, were polished and returned

⁴⁰The original mosque had arched windows with marble grilles of geometric design (*qamarīyah*) in the Roman tradition. Six of them are extant in the western portico. (Creswell and Allan, *Short Account*, 69f.). Because of the fire of 1983 it is not possible to say if the *qamarīyahs* destroyed by the fire were Umayyad or later ones.



to their place. The sultan paid for all of this.

The 15,000 dinars allocated by the sultan were now almost exhausted. The sultan had sent marble specialists from Cairo but their *mu'allim* died and they did not do any work.

(fol. 86v) In Muḥarram 886 (March 1481) the copper door of Bāb al-Ziyādah,⁴¹ also known as the gate of the *'anbariyyin*, was mounted. It was restored at the sultan's expense and came out better than before.

On Saturday the 16th (13 March) the bench of the muezzins was mounted in its original location in the *maqṣūrah*; it was decorated with gold and lapis and cost 25,000 dirhams. The repainted minbar was returned to its place, more beautiful than ever.

On Friday the 29th (30 March) a celebration service was held in the *maqṣūrah*, the chief qadi Sirāj al-Dīn al-Ṣayrafī performing the sermon. After the end of the sermon and the prayer, the Hanafī chief qadi Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-Qaṣīf, the Maliki chief qadi Shihāb al-Dīn al-Marīnī, the Hanbali chief qadi Najm al-Dīn ibn Muflīḥ, the great chamberlain Yashbak, and the sultan's *dawādār* Yalbāy came, and the Quran fascicles (*rab'ah*) were distributed among them in the *maqṣūrah*—the muezzins were also there; they dedicated their prayers and recitations to the sultan in gratitude for his having restored the mosque. So far the costs of the restoration had amounted to 16,000 dinars.⁴²

(fol. 88) On Friday 24 Rabī' II (22 June) another service was held in honor of the sultan, in the presence of the viceroy Qijmas. Robes of honor were bestowed on the supervisor of the construction work and the governor of the Citadel, Aydakī, as well as on the qadis and the *khaṭīb* of the mosque representing the Shafī'i chief qadi Sirāj al-Dīn ibn al-Ṣayrafī. By that time the restoration costs amounted to 17,000 dinars.

(fol. 88v) In Jumādā I 886 (June/July) the merchants and others returned to the now-restored markets of the farmers (*zurrā'*), the silk-makers, the amber-dealers, and the sword-makers. The funds had been provided by the sale of the lead debris, which brought 1,250 dinars, along with funds provided by the *waqf* of the mosque. The goldsmiths' market and parts of the shoemakers' market were not restored yet because of the western minaret.

(fol. 90v) On Wednesday 9 Sha'bān (3 October) an accident occurred at the gate of the Bāb al-Barīd. While the builders were dismantling the gate to rebuild it, rubble fell and killed a number of prisoners in the adjacent jail.

The restoration work took two years and fifteen days to complete and amounted

⁴¹The gate of the exterior extension of the mosque, at the western end of the sanctuary.

⁴²Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufaḥkahah*, 1:34, who gives the date 19 Muḥarram. This must be an error, however, as this date could not be a Friday.



to 18,000 dinars, not including the reconstruction of the western minaret.⁴³

In Dhū al-Qa‘dah (December) news arrived that a fire had broken out at the Prophet’s mosque in Medina; the sultan summoned builders who had worked at the Umayyad Mosque, among them the above mentioned Muḥammad al-Kuftī who had raised the beams.⁴⁴

(fol. 96) In Rabī‘ II 887 (May/June 1482) the sultan ordered the reconstruction of the western minaret and the restoration of the lead in the remaining parts of the mosque.⁴⁵

(fol. 97) In Rajab (August/September) the restoration of the goldsmiths’ market, which belonged to the endowment of the mosque, was completed with *waqf* funds.

(fol. 148) In Dhū al-Qa‘dah 893 (October/November 1488) the reconstruction of the western minaret was completed to the best standard. It cost the sultan 4,500 dinars. It was built on the foundations of the former one, reusing its stones, albeit on a smaller scale of about one quarter of its original dimensions.

⁴³According to Ibn Ṭūlūn the restoration was completed in Rabī‘ II 886. *Ibid.*, 1:42.

⁴⁴Muḥammad al-Kuftī is also mentioned by Ibn Ṭūlūn, who similarly credits him for having raised the beams of the mosque. *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 54.





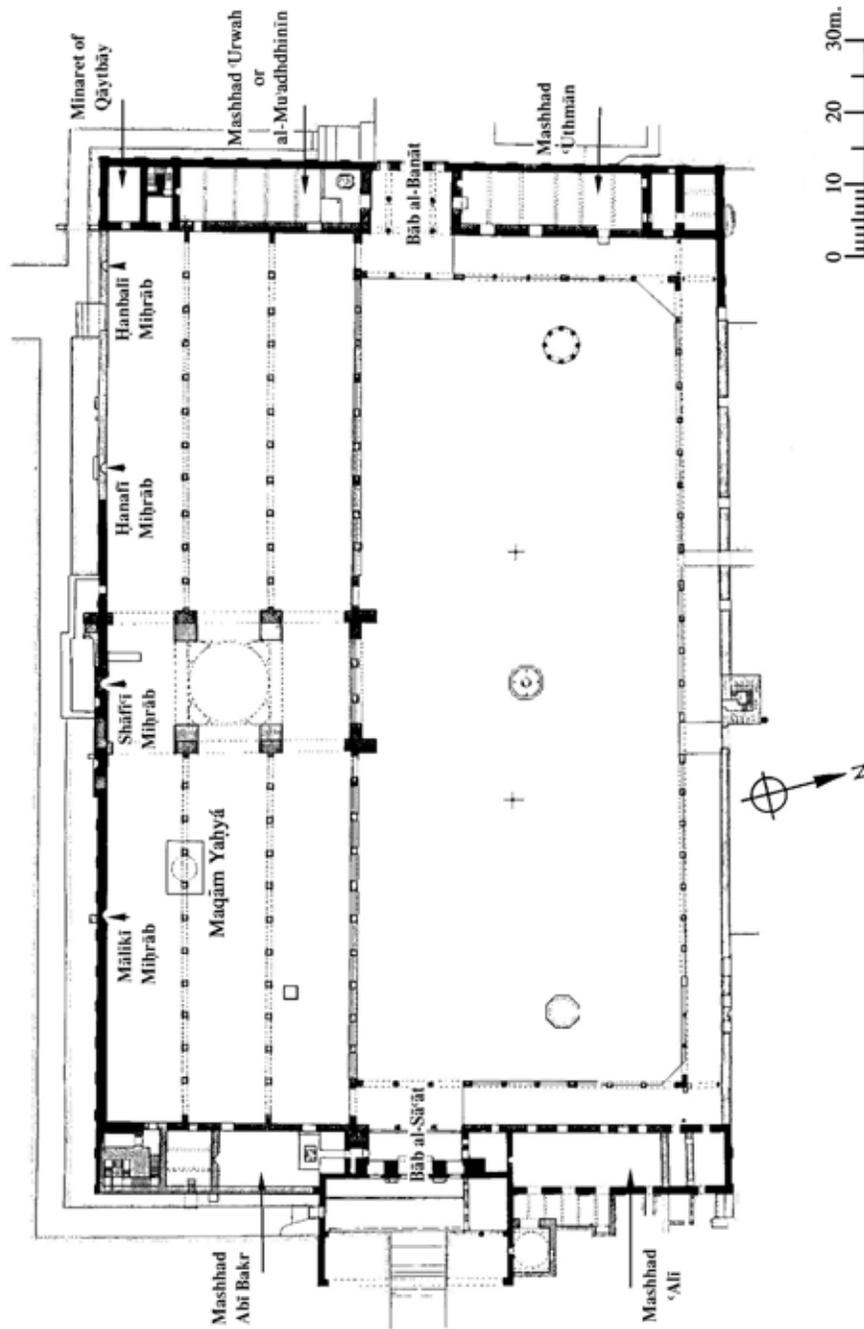
The minaret of Qāyṭbāy above the Roman tower



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Plan of the Umayyad mosque indicating the *mashhads* in the late Mamluk period



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Book Reviews

AḤMAD IBN ‘ALĪ AL-MAQRĪZĪ, *Al-Mawā‘iz wa-al-I‘tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār*. Edited by Muḥammad Zaynhum and Madīḥah al-Sharqāwī. Ṣafahāt min Tārīkh Miṣr, no. 39 (Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 1998). Three volumes.

REVIEWED BY FRÉDÉRIC BAUDEN, University of Liège

For those who are familiar with Claude Gilliot’s reviews of books published in Egypt, regularly appearing at the end of the *Mélanges de l’Institut Dominicain d’Études Orientales*, Muḥammad Zaynhum (sometimes Muḥammad Zaynhum Muḥammad ‘Azab) is almost a celebrity. His critical editions (*taḥqīq*) are generally based on previous ones published by the Būlāq press, or on a single manuscript preserved in the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah. Unsurprisingly, most of them are strongly criticized by Gilliot. Now, Zaynhum has decided to tackle the problem of a critical edition of al-Maqrīzī’s *Khiṭaṭ*. It is a well-known fact that the Būlāq version, with its impractical format, numerous defects, and the poor typography, has remained since its appearance in 1853 the standard edition, although some attempts were made to provide scholars with a better one. Several editions have appeared in the course of the last century, but a complete critical edition, based on several manuscripts, was still seriously needed. This is finally the case, with Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid’s project, which will be completed by the time this review is printed.¹ Compared to the latter, the Zaynhum edition must be categorized among the commercial shenanigans to which the Maktabat Madbūlī is accustomed. The new series, in which this book appears, is full of reprints of older editions almost without any modification. This is also the case here. Probably taken from the Būlāq edition, the text is presented in a more agreeable format in three volumes with a readable font. It is hard to know whether the text has been set up again or if an Optical Character Recognition process has been used. Be that as it may, the result is a disaster: no introduction, no bibliography, no indexes; footnotes limited to the identification of Quran verses, persons, and places in a rather erratic way ending with p. 498 of vol. 1; mistakes added to the Būlāq version (like al-Musabbihī’s name becoming al-Mashīkhī! (2:113). A collation of the beginning revealed the following errors : 1:5, line 3: يتقبلون for يتقبلون; line 15: مضى وعبر for مضى وعبر. To conclude, this edition should not find its way onto the shelves of any library and this is even more the case because of the appearance of A. F. Sayyid’s critical edition.

¹London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2002. Three vols. published so far. See my forthcoming review of vols. 1 and 2 in *Journal of Islamic Studies*.



‘ĀDIL SHARĪF ‘ALLAM, *Al-Nuṣūṣ al-Ta’sīsīyah ‘alā al-‘Amā’ir al-Dīnīyah al-Mamlūkīyah al-Bāqīyah bi-Madīnat al-Qāhirah* (Dār al-Thaqāfah lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr, 2001). Pp. 453, illustrations.

REVIEWED BY DINA GHALY, University of Toronto

This book is a catalogue of the foundation inscriptions of the standing Mamluk religious buildings in Cairo. Studies on foundation inscriptions are rare, and there are only two other major systematic works that cover, within their broader scope, the material of the book under review. The first is Max Van Berchem’s *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum (CIA)*, and the second is the *Repertoire chronologique d’épigraphies arabes (RCEA)*, which is a collaboration of several authors. The former is so far unsurpassed in its scope and methodology, while the latter, which is focused on cataloguing the inscriptions without any further analysis of the context, is still incomplete. Therefore, a study in this category is always welcome.

The book, as outlined by the author in his preface, consists of an introduction, four chapters and a summary of results. The introduction provides a brief review of the earliest foundation inscriptions in Islamic architecture in Egypt. It also provides a useful list of the different building materials used for the inscriptions. Unfortunately, no reference is given for the trade terminology the author uses for the different stone types (p. 11).

The first three chapters follow a typological division of the different building types: the first covers madrasahs, the second mosques and the third the rest of the religious foundations such as *khānqāhs*, *zāwīyahs*, and *ribāṭs*. This division is practical and facilitates systematic comparison within each group. The fourth chapter is an analysis of the catalogued inscriptions, with a comparison between the content of the inscriptions and the data available from the sources and *waqf* documents.

For each building listed, the author gives the foundation inscriptions, their location within the building, and a transcription in Arabic. Some of the inscriptions offer revisions made to previously published ones. Unlike the *RCEA*, which only gives the reference to the Quranic citations found in the inscriptions, the author reproduces Quranic texts in full. This is one of the positive aspects of the book. However, some of his revisions to the *RCEA*, which is a reference conspicuously absent from his bibliography, are not properly explained. For instance, for the Madrasah al-Bunduqdārīyah, he says that Wiet added two words to the text, but the reader is left to guess whether he means that the two words were there when recorded by Wiet and are no longer there now, or whether Wiet made a mistake adding those two words.

Other problems include the wrong references he gives to the *RCEA* for many



foundation inscriptions. For example, the reference he gives for the Madrasah al-Bunduqdārīyah is to vol. 12. Vol. 12 ends with the year 680/1281–82, while the madrasah dates to 683/1283–84 and is found in vol. 13, n. 4874. He also does not include inscription n. 4872 at the base of the dome, but adds one inscription stating the date. Another example is the reference for the Madrasah al-Jāwilīyah (pp. 186–87), which he gives as vol. 13, p. 5, when in fact it is p. 245, n. 5163 (he did not provide the catalogue number in this case). Furthermore, other inscriptions in this building are not mentioned at all. The author is also inconsistent in giving the corresponding *RCEA* reference for many of his catalogue entries (e.g., pp. 51, 188–89). One important aspect provided in the *RCEA* but missing in this book is the extensive bibliography that follows each catalogue entry.

There are useful additions and revisions for some inscriptions. For instance, the author adds the date to an inscription in the *khānqāh* of Baybars al-Jāshankīr, which is missing in the *RCEA*, as well as the name of the sultan in another inscription (pp. 188–89). Another example is the date he adds for an inscription in the *khānqāh* of Mughulṭāy. However, the lack of explanation of why or how this information was added when it has been missing in earlier publications raises doubts as to the validity of this data and makes it difficult to use the text.

For the madrasah of Īnāl al-Yūsufī, the author gives only the foundation inscription on the façade and ignores the inscription on the *sabīl*, published earlier by Van Berchem (*CIA* n. 190). In addition, the inscription he provides differs from the one published earlier by Lamei and Creswell, whom he does not mention. In this case, the author fails to provide any reference to previously published inscriptions. Furthermore, although the author discusses this building again in the fourth chapter, p. 234, and provides a partial transcription of its *waqf* manuscript in the appendix on pp. 312–17, no cross-reference to these two sections can be found in the main catalogue entry of the monument (p. 56).

In Chapter 4, “Analytical Studies,” (pp. 223 f.) the author attempts to analyze the relationship between the foundation inscriptions and the function of the buildings. In this chapter, the author also provides a comparison between the architectural planning of the buildings and the information available from the sources and *waqf* documents. For this purpose, he reproduces plans—all were published earlier—for all the buildings he discusses, although the figure numbers are missing for most of them.

For each building type, the author attempts to organize the different designs adopted into categories, e.g., four-*īwān* plans, two-*īwān* plans, etc. Within each plan type, a list of the monuments that follow the specified type is provided. Under madrasahs, a curious plan type is his no. 8, “the *riwāq* plan without a courtyard or a *durqā‘ah*,” under which he gives the Madrasah al-Bunduqdārīyah as an example. This is not accurate, since the only surviving parts of the building



are the two mausolea. The central part of the building, on which he based his plan type, is of later construction of unknown date and does not relate to the foundation inscription provided by the author. In addition, the reader is disappointed when no analysis is given showing how a specific plan type relates to the foundation inscription, as the author promised to do. In fact, since there is no relationship between building function and specific plan type, it is hard to understand the necessity of the detailed categorization the author provides.

The author explains, through the study of *waqf* documents, the intended functions of the building, and how these functions were to be carried out. Although this shows the relationship between the architecture and the *waqf*, it does not explain the particular plan type as categorized by the author. The obvious conclusion one can reach from the author's search for a relationship between foundation inscriptions and building designs is that there is none. Plan types, such as the *īwān*-plan, and building function, whether it is a mosque, a madrasah, or a *khānqāh*, became increasingly interchangeable in the Mamluk period and were not related to the foundation inscriptions. In other words, the exercise conducted by the author to compile his plan types seems unnecessary and irrelevant to the purpose of the chapter and the book.

An analysis of plan types in Mamluk architecture has already been successfully attempted by Meinecke in his *Mamlukische Architektur*, who also provided a reason and context for their development. Obviously, the development of plan types was subject to various urban and other criteria and was unrelated to the intended function of the building.

The author notes that the madrasahs that have a mosque function do not have minarets. However, the madrasah he mentions in the preceding paragraph, that of *Īnāl al-Yūsufī*, which had a mosque function as he himself explains, does have a minaret (p. 234).

The author quotes extensive excerpts from several *waqf* documents in support of the description of the buildings' functions. He also appended several of these buildings' *waqf* texts to the book, which he considers one of the achievements of this publication. However, he only reproduced the sections relevant to his study and not the entire manuscripts. The sections dealing with the buildings' description and location, as well as the income producing properties allocated to the building, are not provided. The manuscripts are only transcribed and not edited.

One valid conclusion the author arrives at is that when the word "madrasah" is included in the foundation inscription, the plan follows the *īwān*-plan consistently.

Editorial mistakes abound in this publication. First, a table of contents is conspicuously missing, as well as an index. The photographs are of such poor printing quality that they are entirely useless. Chapter one, the one cataloguing madrasahs, lacks a title.



More importantly, there are numerous spelling mistakes that hamper the soundness of the inscriptions. For example, p. 42, n. 7: "Allāh *illā* ilāh *illā* huwa," which is again repeated for n. 8. Uljāy al-Yūsufī is printed "Uljāy ila Ūsufī" and Qānībāy is printed "Qātbāy." Such mistakes are so frequent, occurring in monument names as well as personal names, that they constitute a real obstacle, especially for someone unfamiliar with the material. In addition, there are numerous grammatical and language mistakes which render the author's intent at times incomprehensible. Footnote references do not correspond to the correct footnotes (wrong numbering). Also, mistakes in dates can be found, as on p. 251 where the date is given as 13862. Pages 254–55 are repeated on pp. 256–57, while the correct two pages are missing. In these two pages, we miss the categorization of the author's mosque plans.

Overall, this book, which would have been a practical reference for the study of Cairo's religious architecture, does not replace the major references in this field with respect to Mamluk religious architecture. It offers some revisions to previously published inscriptions but must be consulted with other reliable references.

The Dîvân of Qânsûh al-Ghûrî. Edited by Mehmet Yalçın (Istanbul: Bay, 2002). Pp. 203.

Kansu Gavri'nin Türkçe Dîvânı. Edited by Orhan Yavuz (Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi, Türkiye Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2002). Pp. 376.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT DANKOFF, University of Chicago

These are two editions of the Turkish poetry of Sultan Qānşūh (or Qansu, or Qānīşawh, or Qanīsav) al-Ghawrī (or al-Ghūrī), d. 1516, hereafter in this review referred to by his Turkish *maḥlaş* as Gavri. Of these, the one by Yavuz is superior on the grounds of accuracy and comprehensiveness. The one by Yalçın does have the feature of an English rendering of the text, and so may be useful to someone who does not know Turkish but wishes to gain an idea of what the ill-fated sultan wrote poems about in that language (he also wrote poems in Persian and Arabic). The introductions of the two editions cover more or less the same ground—life, times, works, description of the manuscript—and both books include a facsimile of the unicum. Yavuz adds some poems drawn from other texts, plus a long and detailed analysis of the language of the poems; this analysis (pp. 159–282) may have some utility for Turcologists, although it struck this reviewer as largely



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unnecessary since Gavri's language is generally simple and straightforward and departs in no way from standard Ottoman Turkish; also the analysis is skewed as based on a corpus that includes verses definitely not by Gavri (see below).

The unicum in question (Staatsbibliothek, Marburg, or. oct. 3744) has been known for some time and was described by Manfred Götz (*Türkische Handschriften* II [Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1968], 207–8) and used by Barbara Flemming in several of her articles devoted to Turkish literary activities in the late Mamluk period. The title, *Dīwān-ı Qānsūh al-Ghawrī*, refers to the first 87 folios out of a total of 236, but even this part contains *ghazals* of other poets (see below). The rest contains poems of Aḥmed Paşa (d. 1497) and 'Adnī (Maḥmūd Paşa, d. 1474) and several treatises on 'arūz metrics.

The first part of the manuscript is incomplete, since there are clearly folios missing. What remains are roughly seventy poems attributed to Gavri. Yavuz counts 71, Yalçın 68. The discrepancy is accounted for as follows:

1. Yalçın omits a poem (XLVI in Yavuz's edition) which in the manuscript bears an attribution to Şeyḫī, but although Şeyḫī is mentioned in the poem it is clearly by Gavri.
2. Yavuz includes an elegy (*merḫiye*; LII in his edition) for the Amir Yaşbek which is incomplete and which there is no reason to assign to Gavri.
3. Yavuz includes a long but incomplete *kaşide* as the last of Gavri's poems in this collection (LXXI in his edition), apparently because the previous folio ends with an attribution to Gavri, but clearly at least one folio is missing in between, since the acephalous *kaşide* begins with the second hemistich of a verse; also the style is very Persianate and completely different from Gavri's style, and furthermore the poet refers to himself as Aḥmed in the second-to-last extant verse. In fact, this is a portion of a well-known *kaşide* by Aḥmed Paşa dedicated to the Ottoman sultan Meḥemmed II Fātih (see *Ahmed Paşa Divanı*, ed. Ali Nihad Tarlan [Istanbul, 1966], poem no. 13; Götz, *Türkische Handschriften*, 207, had already identified this properly).

Thus, by my reckoning, the Marburg manuscript contains 69 poems of Gavri. To these Yavuz appends nine others from four other manuscripts; five of these are by a certain Derviş Aḥmed who also signs himself Gavri but is clearly a different poet; the other four can confidently be assigned to Sultan Gavri (one—LXVIII in Yavuz's edition, Poem 66 in Yalçın's—is from his Arabic *dīwān* and can be seen as balancing out the one Arabic poem in his Turkish "diwan").

One further discrepancy must be noted: Yavuz's edition skips two pages of the original text, apparently corresponding to one opening that was skipped in the photograph of the manuscript which he used. The omission occurs after the first



two verses of no. IX in his edition. For the missing nine verses, see Yalçın, Poem 9. From this point also the enumeration of the folios is off by one in the two editions; thus Yavuz's 14b = Yalçın's 15b, etc.

The contents of the first eighteen poems can be roughly characterized as "religious," including praise of God, the Prophet, and the Companions; Sufi-style sentiments; and expressions of remorse for sin. The remainder of the poems sound the familiar *ghazal* themes of wine and love, and it is these that often appear in the manuscript together with counterparts (*naẓīre*) in the same meter and rhyme by other poets, including Aḥmedī (d. 1413), Nesīmī (d. ca. 1404), Aḥmed Paşa (d. 1497), and Cem Sultan (d. 1495). In the case of his contemporaries it appears that sometimes Gavri was responding to one of theirs, sometimes vice versa, although the question needs more study. Yavuz gives the text of these interspersed poems in footnotes to his edition or else in his introduction, thus permitting us to witness this *naẓīre* phenomenon at work; Yalçın omits them, thus giving us a distorted view of the original text.

At the end of two *ghazals* Gavri names Şeyhī (d. 1431) as the one he is emulating: "O Gavri, if Şeyhi heard your verse he would cock his ear, saying, 'Apparently shahs and sultans have favored you'" (Yavuz, XLI = Yalçın, Poem 41); "If your poetry does not match that of Şeyhi, go and give up Turkish!" (Yavuz, LX = Yalçın, Poem 58; reading: *Ermediyise şan'at ile Şeyhiye şî'rüñ / Var Türkiyi terk et*).

We cannot date any of Gavri's poems, nor are there internal indications as to whether any one was composed before or after he became sultan. The only exception is the *ghazal* elegizing the Amir Yaşbek, presumably written shortly after he died in 1489 (Yavuz, LI = Yalçın, Poem 50). During his sultanate (1501–16) Gavri also sponsored the monumental Turkish translation of Firdawsī's Persian epic, the *Shāh-nāmāh*, completed by the poet Şerīf (also known as Şerīfī) in 1511. This has recently been published in four volumes as *Şerīfī: Şehnâme Çevirisi*, edited by Zuhâl Kültürâl and Latif Beyreli (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 1999). Şerīf clearly gives his patron's name as Ğavrī Kānışav (vol. I, p. 14, verse 00335), confirming the interpretation of his name as Tk. *kaṃı sav* or *kaṃı sağ* meaning "the one of sound blood."

Four of Şerīf's *ghazals* written in honor of his patron are found toward the end of Gavri's "diwan" (text in Yavuz, pp. 31–34). Şerīf states that Gavri's verses have given great pleasure to the people of Egypt (*Sözinden Ğavrīnüñ el-ḥaḳ katı zevḳ itdi Mışr ehli*), and that his own have garnered respect because of Gavri's (*Şerīf üñ sözleri buldı şeref Ğavrī kelâmından*), indeed that it was Gavri's verse that made him, Şerīf, incline to poetry at all (*Ğavrīnüñ nazmı-durur meyl itdüren şî're beni*). He praises Gavri's justice as giving rise to a peaceable kingdom where ducks and geese nest together with falcons (*'Adlünden ördek kaz-ıla uçup konarlar*



bāz-ıla)—the same image is found in the introduction to his *Shāh-nāmāh* translation (vol. I, p. 15, verse 00382: *Ḳucaqlar ḳaz-ıla ördekleri bāz*).

Annemarie Schimmel, in her foreword to Yalçın's edition, points out that Turkish was the preferred language for poetical activities of most of the rulers of this period, including the Safavid Shah Ismail, Hussain Baiqara of Herat, and Babur conqueror of India; the only exception, paradoxically, is the Ottoman Sultan Selim I, who wrote poems only in Persian. Ottoman, or Anatolian, Turkish was cultivated as a literary language by the later Mamluk amirs and sultans, as Barbara Flemming especially has pointed out. The quality of Gavri's verse is not high: it is competent but pedestrian, for the most part, and would hardly be of much interest except that the poet was also a sultan.

I pointed out above the superiority of Yavuz's edition of Gavri's poetry. Disregarding the unfortunate omission of nine verses and the unfortunate inclusion of a *ḳaṣīde* by Aḥmed Paṣa as though it were by Gavri, Yavuz's edition is nearly flawless. The remainder of this review contains critical notes on the book of Yalçın.

The Dîvân of Qânsûh al-Ghûrî was originally a Harvard dissertation, completed in 1993. The 2002 publication is unrevised, with the exception of substituting *é* for *i* in the text edition to represent the Turkish closed e-vowel. This is a welcome innovation; but in the one place where it really matters—distinguishing *éṣ* "peer, equal" from *iṣ* "thing, work" (Poem 11, lines 2a, 7a, etc.)—he fails to make the distinction. Some of the cross-references were not changed to accord with the printed format; thus in note 99 on p. 32 the reference to "p. 5 n. 11" should be to p. 14 n. 10.

Some of the most flagrant misreadings of Gavri's text are the following (reference is to poem number followed by line number):

- 2.2a derkidür ⇒ deriñdür
- 2.8a kelîmdür ⇒ kelîmüm dér
- 3.14b ve'n-nâr-ı 'âtî ⇒ ve'nnâzi'âti (i.e., Quran 79:1)
- 6.3a ördi ⇒ urdı
- 6.6b size vâ-r-ı ⇒ sezâvâr-ı
- 9.7b yansın ⇒ yanasın
- 9.8a yalhiyetüñ ⇒ yâ lihyetüñ
- 10.11b lâli ⇒ le'âli
- 14.5a Tevbe a'yân ⇒ "Tûbû" 'ayân
- 23.4b özene ⇒ uzana



- 45.3a şefatinuñ [hem] ⇒ şefeteynüñ
 54.4a ħaddidir ⇒ ħaddi dër
 65.7a merhametüñle ⇒ raĥmetüñle

Many corrections need to be made in the English translations as well. Here are a few:

- 1.11b His treasury is filled with darkness and empty of actions ⇒ Devoid of good deeds, his treasure filled with wrong-doing
 2.2a Whoever ponders upon comprehending His Essence, it is a contemplation to which intelligence cannot reach ⇒ Who can ponder His essence? It is too deep for intellect to reach
 2.8a He is the interlocutor to Moses ⇒ He calls Moses "my interlocutor"
 4.7a the fish ⇒ the height of heaven
 9.5b the shawl in front of you has no value for you ⇒ the shawl on your back is a great load
 9.8a your state were white ⇒ or your beard was white
 10.9a The heavens put the sandals upon his face ⇒ He put his sandal upon the face of heaven
 12.10b Anything other than You is worthless ⇒ Anything else is self-regard. For Your sake, God!
 20.8b feast ⇒ trumpet
 26.2b a savaged heart replaces it ⇒ "he comes with a pure heart" (i.e., Quran 26:89)
 26.3a I have no reason to let go the hem of your skirt after dying ⇒ I have no desire to let go the hem of your skirt until I die
 36.5a God's verse of *Nûr* ⇒ the verse: "God is Light"
 37.3 protect ⇒ pity
 39.1a The boat has fallen ⇒ Let the boat sink
 41.7a the Sheykh ⇒ Şeyhî (cf. 58.7a)
 52.3b Have pity for the lover come, do not do it ⇒ Do not sacrifice the lover
 53.2a put love's fire into my heart ⇒ love's fire is a glowing ember on my heart
 58.7a give up composing poetry and Türkü ⇒ give up Turkish



‘ABBŪD QARAH, *Ādāb al-Furūsīyah ‘inda al-‘Arab* (Damascus: Dār al-Malāyīn, 2000). Pp. kaf, 474.

MUḤAMMAD IBN MANKALĪ AL-NĀSIRĪ, *Al-Ḥiyal fī al-Ḥurūb wa-Fath al-Madā’ in wa-Ḥafẓ al-Durūb*. Edited by Nabīl Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Aḥmad (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, 2000). Pp. 444.

REVIEWED BY JO VAN STEENBERGEN, K. U. Leuven–FWO-Flanders (Belgium)

Ever since the rise of Islam, the *jāhilīyah*-rooted concept of *furūsīyah* or “horsemanship” has remained an intrinsic part of Muslim society. Yet changing contexts and settings blurred its conceptual usages to such an extent that, e.g., the Mamluk historian and alleged *furūsīyah* expert Abū al-Maḥāsīn ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1469) thought it necessary to precisely define its true nature, emphasizing that “*furūsīyah* is something different from bravery and intrepidity, for the brave man overthrows his adversary by sheer courage, while the horseman is one who handles his horse well in the charge and in the retreat, and who knows all he needs to know about his horse and his weapons and about how to handle them in accordance with the rules known and established among the masters of this art.” Indeed, theory and practice had grown apart, so that apart from its strictly technical meaning, only known to “military” experts like Ibn Taghrībirdī, in every day use *furūsīyah* had often become synonymous with “bravery,” even “chivalry.”¹ This ambiguity was also extant in the age-old literary production on the subject, with, on the one hand, works of lexicography and *adab*, setting the technicalities of horsemanship within the framework of (Islamic) virtue, heroism, and chivalry, and on the other hand, the treatises on *furūsīyah*, mostly dating from the late Middle Ages and very technical by nature and content. Unlike the former sort, the majority of these treatises on horsemanship and supplementary military aspects were drawn up by practising experts, “men of the sword” rather than “men of the pen,” though by tradition they as well liked to show off their erudition by punctuating their handbooks with quotes from classical Arabic literature.²

¹Abū al-Maḥāsīn ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, ed. Ibrāhīm ‘Alī Ṭarkhān (Cairo, 1963–72), 14:131; David Ayalon, “Notes on the *Furūsīyya* Exercises and Games in the Mamluk Sultanate,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961): 34-35; reprinted in idem, *The Mamluk Military Society* (London, 1979), 2:34-35; idem, “Furūsīyya - In the Mamlūk State,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 2:954; the translation is taken from Ayalon. Very illustrative in this respect is also the fact that in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* one is referred to the lemma “*furūsīya*” for information on both “horsemanship” and “chivalry” (“horsemanship,” *EI*², 3:536; “chivalry,” *EI*², 2:32).

²G. Douillet, “Furūsīyya,” *EI*², 2:952-53.



This conceptual dichotomy and its omnipresence throughout Islamic history happens to find a very enlightening illustration in the two works that are the subject of this review. For, on the one hand, ‘Abbūd Qarah’s *Ādāb al-Furūsīyah*, published on the brink of the twenty-first century, is a clear exponent, both in title and content, of the ancient “chivalrous” branch of *furūsīyah* literature, while, on the other hand, the first critical edition of *Al-Ḥiyal fī al-Ḥurūb wa-Faṭḥ al-Madā’ in wa-Ḥafẓ al-Durūb*, a fourteenth-century treatise on weaponry and warfare, is a prime example of this literature’s technical branch.

As indicated by its title, Qarah’s *Ādāb al-Furūsīyah* deals in detail with the manners and customs that characterize the classical standard of Arab “horsemanship,” “i.e., good manners and the doing of noble deeds by which the Arab horseman has distinguished himself since ancient times and that have become exemplary, including the keeping of a promise, patience in bad times, the protection of those who seek refuge, the protection of women and children and of the weak, modesty and courage, generosity, openmindedness and liberality, forgiveness whenever possible, and, last but not least, all noble deeds man has extolled over the course of time” (p. 24). He traces the origins of this moral horsemanship among the Arabs long before the rise of Islam, analyzes the factors that caused it to be an exclusively Arab phenomenon, and presents its constituent parts, ranging from the breeding of horses to the proverbial Arab hospitality. All these elements are presented in a way reminiscent of classical Arabic texts, making and illustrating his points through examples, stories, and quotations that stem from the Arabs’ rich cultural background. Unfortunately, the richness of his material sometimes also happens to make the author indulge in details and arguments the relevance of which is not always clear. Thus, e.g., he consistently tries to argue that Europe only managed to rise from its “dark” Middle Ages thanks to the practices and principles of Arab *furūsīyah*, with which it became acquainted during the Crusades. As for the field of Mamluk studies, regrettably this book’s argumentation does not go beyond the twelfth-century example of Arab-Muslim unity set by Saladin and it is therefore of only limited relevance for anyone particularly interested in Mamluk *furūsīyah*.

For obvious reasons, the latter observation does not hold for the fourteenth-century military treatise entitled *Al-Ḥiyal fī al-Ḥurūb wa-Faṭḥ al-Madā’ in wa-Ḥafẓ al-Durūb* that has now for the first time been carefully edited by Dr. Nabīl Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, a *furūsīyah* expert in his own right.³

This work consists of two parts that are further divided into nine chapters (*abwab*), subdivided into numerous paragraphs (also *abwāb*). In the first part,

³He graduated from Cairo University (1972) with an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation on Mamluk *furūsīyah*, entitled “Nashr wa-Taḥqīq Makḥṭūṭah: Nihāyat al-Su’l wa-al-Umnīyah fī Ta’līm A’māl al-Furūsīyah ma’a Muqaddimah Tārīkhīyah ‘an Niẓām al-Furūsīyah fī ‘Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk.”



different sorts of swords and shields, and bows, strings, and arrows are dealt with in every possible detail of fabric and use, followed by an excursus on different types and applications of glues and oils. The second part continues on bows and arrows, now concentrating on their construction; this is followed by a detailed and illustrated chapter on the construction of water wheels. The book concludes with two chapters on strategies and stratagems before, during, and after battle, including firm recommendations for commanders and the intricacies of besieging a city.

This entire treatise is presented as an amalgamate of different parts of text that were picked from a general guideline for rulers, written by Alexander the Great for his son, and that had been recovered from the ruins of ancient Alexandria by the Arabs, who had translated it into Arabic (pp. 192–93, 230). Hence the continuous use of the imperative masculine singular throughout the entire work and the unusually direct and plain way of writing. Yet the particularity of certain specific military terminologies and other at times rather anachronistic references, e.g., to Quranic verses (p. 23), suggests this alleged origin is nothing but a fabrication of style. Nevertheless, the attribution to Alexander is said to be a known phenomenon for a number of *furūsīyah* texts, suggesting that a link with certain Greek originals should not be excluded.⁴

At the same time, this particular setting has caused some confusion with regard to the identity of the treatise's author. For already in 1929, Ritter questioned its attribution to the known *furūsīyah* author and soldier in the Egyptian *ḥalqah*, Muḥammad ibn Mankalī, whose literary production is said to have flourished during the reign of the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Sha'bān (764–78/1362–76).⁵ Unfortunately, the editor, Dr. Nabīl Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz, makes no mention of this discussion, nor does he substantiate why he attributed this work to Muḥammad ibn Mankalī, though his name remained unnoticed in any of the manuscripts of the work that were used.

As for the latter, this edition is based on three fourteenth-century manuscripts, the oldest of which dates from the year 757/1356, which may serve as a *terminus ante quem* for the treatise.⁶ They are consistently and with great care referred to

⁴V. Christides, "Naft," *EI*², 7:886.

⁵H. Ritter, "La Parure des Cavaliers und die Literatur über die ritterlichen Künste," *Der Islam* 18 (1929):151; Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden, 1938): S2:167. On Muḥammad ibn Mankalī, see Gerhard Zoppoth, "Muḥammad ibn Māngli: Ein ägyptischer Offizier und Schriftsteller des 14. Jh.s," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 53 (1957): 288–99.

⁶MS Ahmet III 3469, Al-Khizānah al-'Āmmah bi-al-Ribāṭ MS 43 *jīm*, and Al-Khizānah al-Malikīyah bi-al-Ribāṭ MS 285 (2712); the editor acknowledges having failed to get access to a number of other manuscripts, mentioning MSS Aya Sofia 3086, 3087, and Leiden MS 949 (pp. 7–9).



by the editor every time textual differences occur. On top of that, it is one of this edition's major merits that the editor actively applied his scrutiny, erudition, and familiarity with the subject, its sources, and its academic production to try to solve the large number of difficulties of both technical and lexicographical nature which the specific character of this treatise poses to a modern reader. This not only enhances its accessibility to non-specialists, it would also allow specialists in related fields to make active use of this sort of source material. However, due to the unfortunate absence of a detailed index, this edition fails to measure up to the standard one expects of a properly executed edition.

However, this first and careful edition of *Al-Ḥiyal fī al-Ḥurūb* by Dr. Nabīl Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz is a major stepping stone for our understanding of the technical branch of *furūsīyah* literature. For, as David Ayalon already observed more than forty years ago, to date this literature remains not only in want of a careful and critical edition of its texts, but also of a lexicographic elimination of the semantic obstacles that continue to obstruct much of their profitable utilization.⁷

MUḤAMMAD IBN ‘AZZŪZ, *Madrasat al-Ḥadīth fī Bilād al-Shām khilāla al-Qarn al-Thāmin al-Hijrī: ‘Aṣr al-A’immat Ibn Taymīyah wa-al-Mizzī wa-al-Dhahabī wa-al-Barzālī* (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā’ir al-Islāmīyah, 1421/2000). Pp. 696.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL B. SCHUB, Trinity College, Hartford

In the Mamluk period a number of religious schools flourished under the general name of “Houses (*dūr* or *buyūtāt*) of Hadith in the greater Shām (approximately: Syrian) area, the most famous of which was founded in Damascus by Atabeg Nūr al-Dīn (d. 560/1173). In the eighth/fourteenth century, thousands of scholars (including some women) lived righteous lives investigating and memorizing the traditions of the Prophet which had been *grosso modo* collected by al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), Muslim (d. 261/875), and the four other editors of the canonical collections of acceptable hadiths for Sunni Muslims (“The Six Books”), i.e., about six hundred years previously.

This work is the outcome of the author’s doctoral dissertation, which was accepted in Rabat, Morocco in 1419/1998. After a pedestrian survey of the historical

⁷Ayalon, “The *Furūsīyya* Exercises,” 31–32; J. D. Latham and W. F. Paterson, *Saracen Archery: An English Version and Exposition of a Mameluk Work on Archery (ca. AD 1368) with Introduction, Glossary and Illustrations* (London, 1970), xxxii–xxxiii.



background of the period, the author begins what can only be called a hagiography. He lists the ancestors, teachers, children, students (sometimes supplying genealogical charts), etc., of a few hundred *muḥaddiths*, and repeats the encomia (often in verse) of these scholars reported in previous biographical works. No critical scholarly analysis sullies the pages of this worshipful catalog.

Only nine citations from the Quran and fourteen from the hadith are present, and those only *in passing*. Jacob Neusner would include this work in the genre of *Listwissenschaft*. One can only appreciate it as such.

FRANÇOIS CHARETTE, *Mathematical Instrumentation in Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria: The Illustrated Treatise of Najm al-Dīn al-Miṣrī*. Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science, Texts and Studies, 51 (Leiden: Brill, 2003). Pp. xxi + 422 + 136, illustrations.

REVIEWED BY IRINA LYUTER, Dibner Institute, MIT

This volume is representative of a growing trend in publications devoted to science and technology in the Mamluk period, including the mathematical instrumentation of that period. It contains a critical edition with English translation of the *Kitāb fī al-Ālāt al-Falakīyah* (Charette's title), a richly illustrated Arabic treatise in 122 chapters concerning the construction of over one hundred different mathematical instruments. The value of the text lies in its detailed descriptions of instruments that are either insufficiently documented in the medieval Arabic technical literature as a whole, or indeed even absent from it. Taking into account the unprecedented number of its illustrations, it would be no exaggeration to describe the treatise as unique in its genre. The text was composed in Cairo around 730/1330 and has come down to us in two anonymous manuscripts.

Charette deserves recognition for his work. He has undertaken a profoundly professional linguistic and historical investigation to identify the author of the treatise as Najm al-Dīn al-Miṣrī, a little-known practical astronomer who spent most of his active life in Cairo; and he has presented convincing arguments for this authorship. Charette is ideally situated for this task, having previously studied three other works by Najm al-Dīn: two short treatises on spherical astronomy and approximate methods of finding the prayer times; and a huge compendium of tables.

The illustrated treatise of Najm al-Dīn was written as a reference manual for intermediate students and thus differs from works by Najm al-Dīn's contemporaries



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written on the use of instruments. It is in fact a compendium of instructions on how to construct a large variety of instruments by ruler and compass, sometimes by methods unique to the author. These instructions are concentrated exclusively on the mathematical aspects of the construction without discussions of a theoretical nature (for example, spherical trigonometry and gnomonics) or of more practical details of the construction (such as constructions of alidades and sights), the knowledge of which is implicitly assumed of the reader.

During the period of Mamluk rule, instrumentation became localized within the frame of a new subdiscipline of astronomy, the science of astronomical timekeeping (*'ilm al-mīqāt*). From the second half of the seventh/thirteenth century, this subdiscipline encompassed all aspects of practical astronomy (spherical astronomy, time keeping, astronomical instrumentation, qiblah computation, chronology and prediction of lunar crescent visibility), in other words, those aspects that were of direct relevance to the Islamic community. In David King's terminology, this was "an astronomy in the service of Islam." This orientation stipulated a new category of professional astronomers—the *muwaqqits*, employed by a mosque or madrasah and responsible for establishing the times of prayer, computing the qiblah, and constructing instruments.

In his Introduction, Charette evaluates these radical changes in the practice of astronomy in order to define the place, role, and virtues of instrumentation in the context of Egyptian and Syrian societies of the Mamluk period. The increasing significance of the practical and useful aspects of astronomy (as opposed to the theoretical) specified a change in the practice and transmission of science. Among the peculiarities of Mamluk *mīqāt* literature, evident in both the concerns of its authors and the requirements of the religious institutions, Charette identifies the interaction of "folk" and mathematical astronomies; the predominance of approximate methods of solving problems for the needs of practical astronomy; the universality of methods for designing and developing instruments without the cost of approximation; the compilation of universal auxiliary tables; and the use of lists of so-called formulae accompanied by the mostly didactic character of the literature.

In this connection, and of particular importance for the history of mathematical sciences, Charette identifies a significant innovation that he deems "an important step away from the hold of the rhetorical and toward a greater symbolic abstraction" (p. 23). This innovation, appearing first in the encyclopaedia of *mīqāt* entitled *Jāmi' al-Mabādi' wa-al-Ghāyāt* by the seventh/thirteenth century astronomer Sharaf al-Dīn al-Marrākushī, consists in compiling mnemotechnic four-column tables in which each row has four quantities in which relation $a:b=c:d$ holds. A similar table, though containing fewer entries, is credited to Najm al-Dīn al-Miṣrī and investigated by Charette in the present book (Part V, pp. 7–8, Appendix B).



The work of al-Marrākushī became the standard reference work for Mamluk Egyptian and Syrian, Rasulid Yemeni, and Ottoman Turkish specialists of the subject, including Najm al-Dīn al-Miṣrī, and is the earliest and most important source for the history of astronomical instrumentation in Islam. In this connection, a remarkable contribution from Charette is the supplemental biographical information he provides on the basis of al-Marrākushī's *Jāmi'*. Moreover, Charette presents in the Introduction a list of numerous lesser- or entirely unknown authors of the seventh–ninth/thirteenth–fifteenth centuries and sketches their main contribution to this science: al-Maqsī, Ibn al-Sam'ūn, al-Mizzī, Ibn al-Sarrāj, Ibn Shāṭir, Ibn al-Ghuzūlī, al-Bakhāniqī, Ṭaybughā al-Baklamishī, Jamāl al-Māridīnī, Ibn al-'Aṭṭār, and others.

Charette's commentary on Najm al-Dīn's treatise is divided into five chapters and is a logical continuation of his Introduction. As a whole, these chapters form a groundbreaking historical-scientific essay on Islamic mathematical instrumentation during the Mamluk period. In the first part of the commentary, the author presents a classification, based on morphological and historical criteria, of the different categories of astrolabes and related instruments treated by Najm al-Dīn. The following chapters are devoted consequently to horary quadrants and portable dials, fixed sundials, trigonometric instruments, and, finally, miscellaneous instruments. This detailed historical and technical commentary is further characterized by Charette's analysis of a large number of both previously studied and unstudied manuscript sources on instrumentation from the period 800–1500 C.E. Charette also adds commentaries treating the mathematical aspects of the subject in order to aid the reader in grasping the main ideas and achievements of Najm al-Dīn as well as his predecessors and contemporaries. In some cases, Charette provides quite new and useful perspectives on the mathematical peculiarities of the constructions. For example, in the chapter on various-shaped horary quadrants and portable dials, Charette considers these instruments "in the light of the history of nomography" (p. 113) since they undoubtedly bear in modern terms the graphical representation of function of one or more parameters on a two-dimensional surface with a certain scale. What makes this particular chapter of special importance is the fact that earlier textual sources on such instruments are brief and scanty (not to mention that most are still unpublished), whereas Najm al-Dīn's information on them, as demonstrated by Charette, surpasses even the best-known account of al-Marrākushī.

Despite the textual problems inherent in the treatise (the instructions are obscure and indirect, explanations of the technical terminology are absent, and the language of the treatise is Middle Arabic), Charette has succeeded in producing an excellent *editio princeps* and a qualified English translation of this treatise. One small remark on Charette's translating technique may be in order. While the use of



modern terms like “tangent” and “cotangent” for the corresponding medieval trigonometric functions *ẓill mankūs* and *ẓill mabsūt* for the purpose of distinguishing them from proper vertical and horizontal shadows seems quite reasonable, the frequent use of the term “function” strikes one as overly modern for the medieval context. This is a relatively minor quibble given Charette’s achievement. The present volume is truly a wonderfully realized edition and translation and a masterful example of sound scholarship. This young author deserves high praise for his devotion to and absorption in the history of Islamic mathematical and technical sciences. I wholeheartedly recommend the present work to historians of Islamic and Western science, specialists of historical scientific instruments, as well as specialists of the Mamluk period. Charette announces future publications in the pages of this book; we await them eagerly.

KHALĪL IBN AYBAK AL-ŞAFADĪ, *Al-Kashf wa-al-Tanbīh ‘alá al-Waṣf wa-al-Tashbīh*. Edited by Hilāl Nājī and Walīd ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Zubayrī (Leeds: Majallat al-Ḥikmah, 1420/1999). Pp. 530.

NABĪL MUḤAMMAD RASHĀD, *Al-Şafadī wa-Sharḥuhu ‘alá Lāmīyat al-‘Ajam: Dirāsah Taḥlīlīyah* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1421/2001). Pp. 424.

REVIEWED BY EVERETT K. ROWSON, New York University

Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Şafadī (d. 764/1363) is in need of no introduction to readers of this journal. His massive biographical dictionary, *al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt*, is a fundamental reference for all students of medieval Islam, and his wide-ranging literary production in other areas assures his status as a key figure for anyone concerned with the history and culture of the early Mamluk period in particular. Burgeoning interest in this period, both in the Middle East and in the West, has meant burgeoning interest in al-Şafadī, and the two recent publications under review here—one a critical edition of a previously unpublished text of his, and the other a focused study of what is perhaps his most interesting work—are welcome additions to our library of Şafadiana.

Al-Şafadī was, above all, an *adīb*, a littérateur, and his *oeuvre* includes a series of monographs on aspects of rhetoric. Those on the two most important tropes in the poetry of his time, paronomasia (*jinās*) and (roughly) double-entendre (*tawriyah*), have been available for some time—the former, indeed, appears to



have been the first of his works to find its way into print¹—and the latter has been the subject of a fine analytical study by Seeger Bonebakker.² Now the redoubtable Hilāl Nājī, to whom we owe so much for his multitudinous critical editions of previously unavailable *adab* texts, has, with his collaborator Walīd al-Zubayrī, offered us the *editio princeps* of al-Şafadī’s work on similes (*tashbīh*), essentially a poetic anthology but prefaced by not one but *two* theoretical introductions.

In their own introduction to the text, the editors provide a fairly conventional sketch of al-Şafadī’s life and career, including notes on his interactions with fellow littérateurs (Ibn Nubātah in particular, although no sustained attempt is made to work out the details of the stormy relationship between the two). To this is appended what may be the most complete list to date of al-Şafadī’s works, with full bibliographical information on eighteen published, thirty-four extant in manuscript, and fifteen apparently lost, as well as five red herrings that are not al-Şafadī’s at all. There are a few minor slips in this list, however, and in a few places it is already out of date. The *Rashf al-Zulāl fī Waşf al-Hilāl* is included among the published works, although the editors themselves point out that this is a mistake (it is extant in manuscript). The *Ikhtirā’ al-Khurā’* has now been published; to describe it as “an explanation of two obscure verses” is not inaccurate, but obscures the fact that the verses are nonsense and the entire work is a parody of scholarly practice (as noted already by Brockelmann). Several more volumes of the *Wāfi* have appeared since the editors’ tally of the progress in its publication. Whether one can conclude that al-Şafadī put together his own *dīwān* (now lost) from Ibn Taghrībirdī’s statement that “his poetry is copious (*shī’ruhu kathīr*)” seems problematical.

Discussing the text itself, the editors cogently argue for its authenticity on the basis of both external and internal evidence. They also offer an illuminating quotation from Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1369) on al-Şafadī’s composition techniques: having borrowed from al-Şafadī one volume of his multi-volume commonplace book, the *Tadhkirah*, at the time that he was in the course of composing his work on similes, al-Subkī noticed a notation to the effect that “this volume has been gone through for material for the *tashbīh* book (*najiza al-tashbīh minhu*)”—and promptly composed a three-line poem in praise of the author cleverly playing off this phrase. Nājī and al-Zubayrī then provide a literary context of sorts for the work in the form of a list of ten earlier works on *tashbīhāt* (several of them

¹*Jinān al-Jinās fī ‘Ilm al-Badī’* (Istanbul, 1881) (with al-Biṣṭāmī, *Manāhij al-Tawassul fī Mabāhij al-Tarassul*); I have not seen the recent edition by Samīr Ḥusayn Ḥalabī (Beirut, 1987).

²*Faḍḍ al-Khitām ‘an al-Tawriyah wa-al-Istikhḍām*, ed. al-Muḥammadī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ḥināwī (Cairo, 1979); S. A. Bonebakker, *Some Early Definitions of the Tawriya and Şafadī’s Faḍḍ al-xitām ‘an at-tawriya wa-’l-istixḍām* (The Hague, 1966).



explicitly acknowledged as sources by al-Şafadī), although they make no attempt to analyze this material or chart a development of the genre. The edition itself is based on a unique Paris manuscript, briefly described and illustrated with four extremely dark and muddy photographs. Most disconcerting is the editors' bald statement that the work's second volume has been lost. While this seems likely enough—the text as published stops without any real ending, and another entire volume with other "themes" is easy to envisage—we are nowhere vouchsafed the grounds for this succinct pronouncement. (Something in the manuscript itself? We are not told).

Certainly the most interesting parts of the *Kashf* itself are its introductions. Why there are two of these rather than one is not entirely clear, although the first is on the whole more general and diffuse and the second highly technical. The ten chapters of the first introduction include, among other topics, a word-study of the root *sh-b-h* (with, inevitably, a review of interpretations of the famous "obscure verses" [*mutashābihāt*] of Quran 3:7); a discussion of the imaginative (*mukhayyilah*) faculty of the brain, complete with diagram (and betraying a very superficial knowledge of the philosophical tradition); a first pass (followed up in the second introduction) at an analytical parsing of different kinds of similes, with a spirited attack on Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (d. 637/1239) in defense of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil (d. 596/1200);³ and a list of thirty poets who were particularly good at employing similes, about half of them "post-classical," which gives us valuable insight into al-Şafadī's perception of the canon of Arabic poetry in his day. The second introduction, in twenty-four chapters, lists a variety of definitions of *tashbīh*, and distinguishes it carefully from the related concepts of *mathal*, *tamthīl*, and *majāz*, but is mostly devoted to working through a tree of subvarieties of simile, differentiated by various combinations of such aspects as concrete/abstract, unrestricted/restricted, single/multiple, and reversible/irreversible. The editors offer us no guidance for situating al-Şafadī's views here in their context, in terms either of sources or of responses to earlier opinions; but then one cannot demand that a text edition also be a study.

The bulk of the book itself, after the introductions—what al-Şafadī calls the "*natījah*"—consists of an anthology of verses deploying similes, arranged thematically. There are sixty-five chapters, beginning with celestial phenomena (sky, stars, and Milky Way; Pleiades; moon; etc.), shifting to meteorology (thunder and lightning; snow and hail; rainbow; etc.), then moving on to gardens (with some twenty chapters on individual flowers, including rich material on the famous

³Al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil was of course a literary icon in al-Şafadī's day, whereas Ibn al-Athīr seems to have been a personal bugbear of his, as emerges most clearly in his *Nuṣrat al-Thā'ir*, written in support of and supplementing *Al-Falak al-Dā'ir*, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd's (d. 656/1258) attack on Ibn al-Athīr's *Al-Mathal al-Sā'ir*.



debate between the rose and the narcissus), fruits, vegetables (briefly, but eggplant gets inordinate attention), desserts and other foods, and beer. With bathhouses, followed by tree branches and birds, the principle of organization becomes a bit foggier; and the abrupt ending with birds certainly does suggest more topics to come. The poems presented, mostly of two to four lines, but occasionally longer, are rarely commented on, although al-Şafadī does like to offer “chains” of lines, tracing back through the tradition the use of a specific simile (*akhadhahu min*, “he took [this image] from”). Poets from all periods are represented, although there is relatively little pre-Abbasid verse; quite a lot of Andalusian poetry is included. Al-Şafadī sporadically includes as well some of his own verses, usually at the end of a chapter.

The edition is on the whole meticulous and intelligent (with full attention to the text’s making sense, to the prosody of the verse, and so forth). The relatively copious and at times quite valuable notes mainly focus on parallel texts, often with variant readings, but do not attempt any real analysis of al-Şafadī’s use of his sources. There are a few problems. Typographical errors occur in the first third of the book at a rate of about one every nine pages, hardly optimal but not an unfamiliar problem; but then from about page 148 this rate increases to about one every three pages, through to the end of the text, a fairly intolerable rate in particular for a text consisting mostly of poetry, not the least because most of these errors produce real words (and in some cases must be editors’ rather than printers’ errors); the misreading *aşfar* for *aşghar*—and vice versa—is especially frequent. Furthermore, page 148 itself is an erroneous duplication of page 149, and the proper text for that page is missing; the same thing happens at page 329 (duplicating page 339, with its own material omitted). There is also a bit of bowdlerization; although the *Kashf* is certainly not one of al-Şafadī’s racier books, the editors have felt compelled to suppress three single words and two lines of verse in the first introduction, as well as several words from a line of verse about eggplant in the *natījah*. Less problematical, if not entirely justified, are the editors’ relatively frequent interpolations of additional lines of verse from parallel sources, always, however, carefully noted.

The end matter provided is not really very satisfactory. We are given sixty pages of capsule bio-bibliographies of poets who appear in the work, alphabetically by *ism*, but not all of the latter appear and the basis for inclusion is not at all clear. This is followed by the bibliography, arranged alphabetically by title, consisting almost entirely of primary sources, and exclusively in Arabic, and a detailed table of contents. Distressingly, there are no indices, despite the obvious value both an index of proper names and one of verses would have had for readers and researchers.

Still, it is a joy to have this book in print—although it could hardly be claimed that it is al-Şafadī’s most scintillating achievement. Twelve solid pages of verses



(mostly one- and two-liners) on the Pleiades can become a bit wearisome—and such dogged thoroughness betrays a weakness of al-Şafadī's that was noted even by medieval readers. Nabīl Muḥammad Rashād, in the second of the two publications to be considered here, has reproduced a telling comment by Ibn Taghrībirdī, praising al-Şafadī's literary accomplishments but noting that "I have observed, reading his verse in his own hand, that when he emulates (*yu'ārid*) one of the illustrious poets among his predecessors on a particular clever topos (*ma'ná*) he takes that topos or twist (*nuktah*) and renders it himself in two lines of verse, often quite good ones, but then adds two more lines on the same topos, and then two more, and two more, relentlessly continuing to versify the topos while saying 'and I said (*wa-qultu anā*),' until the eye gets bored, the mind gets fed up, and the ear rejects it; if he had abandoned such a procedure and been a little more discriminating in presenting us with his own verse, he would be (considered) one of the great poets. . . ."⁴

On the other hand, al-Şafadī could be exquisitely sensitive to readers' short attention spans, and nowhere more than in his *Al-Ghayth al-Musajjam fī Sharḥ Lāmīyat al-'Ajam*, a sort of *tour de force* of digression, in which commenting a celebrated 59-line poem becomes a vehicle for a two-volume work consisting mainly of extended disquisitions on the most varied topics imaginable. The *Ghayth* has been available in print since 1887, although never critically edited. It is a pity that the late Franz Rosenthal never devoted a sustained study to this work, despite his obvious enchantment with it, which is clear from any number of his articles (including his relatively recent entry on al-Şafadī for the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*). Now we do have such a sustained study, from Nabīl Muḥammad Rashād, and if it is disappointing in some important respects it is nevertheless gratifying to see attention devoted to such a rich, erudite, and entertaining monument of Arabic literature.

Rashād's study began as an M. A. thesis under Muḥammad Zaghlūl Sallām, whose surveys of the later periods of Arabic literature, supplemented by an array of text editions, are fundamental for anyone pursuing further research in the field. This is, not surprisingly, a less mature work, and while Rashād has read the *Ghayth* carefully, and on the whole intelligently, his vision is in some ways severely circumscribed. Not only is he oblivious to Western scholarship (his references throughout are exclusively Arabic), he appears to be unaware of Arabic scholarship outside Egypt as well, citing two unpublished Egyptian dissertations of relevance to the *Ghayth* but ignoring two relatively recent published studies by

⁴Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Şāfi*, vol. 5, ed. Nabīl Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz (Cairo, 1988), 257, cited by Rashād, p. 79.



Syrian scholars.⁵ And while quite a lot of valuable contextualizing information is provided for both the author and his book, the “analysis” promised in Rashād’s title appears only sporadically, and many of the more interesting and important questions about both author and book are either not answered or not posed.

Predictably, the first two of Rashād’s five chapters are devoted to “Intellectual Life in the Period” and “al-Şafadī’s Cultural Accomplishments (*thaqāfat al-Şafadī*).” In the former he is at pains to stress (and perhaps overstress) the support offered to arts and letters by the Mamluks themselves, and makes clear his vision of this period in Arabic literary history as one of retrenchment and preservation, after the disastrous Mongol invasions of the previous century; the prominence of “the encyclopedic impulse” in the “renaissance” (*naḥdah*) of Arabic learning and literature in Mamluk Egypt (and, distinctly secondarily, Syria) is explained on this basis and lauded in explicitly nationalistic terms. An excursus on accomplishments in the secular sciences (alchemy, medicine, and others) suffers from a certain naivete, but does avoid (as does the book as a whole) the traditional and now much contested view of the period as one of decadence. Rashād notes, correctly, the extraordinary prominence of the homoerotic *ghazal* and explicit sexuality (*mujūn*) in the material he is discussing, and while bowing to contemporary mores in generally avoiding extensive citation from these genres he laudably refuses to bowdlerize such quotations as are essential to his presentation. His discussions of the popularity of rhetorical tropes in general, and especially *jinās*, *tawriyah*, and *taḍmīn* (quotation), of the importance of Sufism in the culture of the period, and of the role of Andalusian and Maghribi immigrants in Mamluk culture generally are interesting, and his portrayal of the popularity of literary “debates” offers some truly fascinating material (including al-Şafadī’s rather jaundiced views on Ibn Taymīyah).

Chapter 2, on al-Şafadī himself and his “culture,” stresses the breadth of the latter, rather severely overestimating al-Şafadī’s expertise in science and philosophy and with some attendant confusion over the distinctions to be made between the realms of philosophy, theology, and science. The section on al-Şafadī as *adīb* is, on the other hand, quite rich, particularly with regard to his relationships with such fellow *udabā’* as Ibn Nubātah, al-Subkī, and the Andalusian Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745/1344).

⁵He notes Manāhil Fakhr al-Dīn Fulayḥ, “Nashāt al-Şafadī fī al-Naqd wa-al-Balāghah,” a 1977 Ph.D. dissertation in the Faculty of Letters at Cairo University, and Ibrāhīm Muḥammad Maṣṣūr, “Shurūḥ Lāmīyat al-‘Ajam, Dirāsah Taḥlīlīyah Naqdīyah,” a 1998 M.S. thesis in the Faculty of Letters at Tanta University. Unnoted are Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Sulṭānī, *Al-Naqd al-Adabī fī al-Qarn al-Thāmin al-Hijrī bayna al-Şafadī wa-Mu‘āşirīhi* (Damascus, 1974, published in the wake of his edition of the *Nuṣrat al-Thā’ir* [Damascus, 1972]), and Ḥasan Dhikrī Ḥasan, *Şalāḥ al-Dīn al-Şafadī wa-Minhajuhu fī Dirāsah al-Naṣṣ al-Adabī wa-Naqdihi* (Cairo, 1988).



The remaining three chapters focus on the *Ghayth* itself. Chapter 3 looks at al-Şafadī's sources, which are divided into oral and written. Al-Şafadī was generally very punctilious about his citations, and his habit of saying "I heard from X in Damascus (or Cairo, or Şafad) in the year Y" or "I read the following by X in his own hand" has much to tell us about both his personal biography and the way *adab* worked, so to speak, in his world. While presenting his material mostly in the form of lists, Rashād does manage, cumulatively, to paint a rather vivid picture of this. Had he consulted Josef van Ess's article on al-Şafadī, however, he would have been able to both sharpen and expand his presentation.⁶ In discussing interrelationships between al-Şafadī's own works, he fails to note that a passing reference in the *Ghayth* to a previously-composed opuscle (*muqtaḍab*) entitled *Al-Tanbīh 'alā al-Tashbīh* must be either the *Kashf* edited by Nājī and al-Zubayrī or at least some earlier version thereof. And he is quite wrong in assuming that the fourteenth volume of the *Tadhkirah*, of which there is a copy in the Egyptian National Library, is the last; van Ess has pointed out that al-Şafadī produced at least forty-nine volumes of this work.

Chapter 4, on al-Şafadī's methodology in the *Ghayth*, tackles the topic from a number of different vantage points. Regarding the author's motives for composing the work, Rashād specifies the excellence of the poem being commented on, the model of previous commentaries on the *Lāmīyat al-'Arab* of the pre-Islamic poet al-Shanfarā, and al-Şafadī's interest in displaying both his eloquence and his erudition; the latter point, an important one, deserves a fuller and more critical treatment than Rashād has given it. Al-Şafadī, in the introduction to the *Ghayth*, is quite explicit about his methodological aims, and Rashād pursues a "test case," examining the extent to which the commentary on the poem's first line actually conforms to them; his conclusion that it does so "perfectly" is perhaps a bit disappointing, but less so than his reluctance to analyze, rather than simply present, al-Şafadī's rather elaborate defense of his digressive style and his explicit interest in supporting "modern" poets against the prejudices of more conservative tastes. Rashād is actually a bit touchy about the former, offering a rough division of al-Şafadī's relentless digressions (*istiṭrād*) into those that are pertinent, fortuitous (not directly pertinent to the text being elucidated, but pertinent to al-Şafadī's broader pedagogical and encyclopedic aims), and unwarranted (about which Rashād's comments are distinctly ungenerous). On al-Şafadī's pedagogical aims,

⁶Josef van Ess, "Şafadī-Splitter," *Der Islam* 53 (1976): 242–66, and 54 (1977): 77–107, is, as indicated by its title, rather a hodgepodge of observations (but valuable ones), in the wake of van Ess's editing volume nine of al-Şafadī's *Wāfi*, including an extensive list of his sources for that work. Also helpful would have been Donald P. Little, "Al-Şafadī as Biographer of His Contemporaries," in *Essays on Islamic Civilization Presented to Niyazi Gerkes* (Leiden, 1976), 109–20.



on the other hand, Rashād is perceptive and cogent, offering a variety of arguments to show that the distribution of information in the *Ghayth* was unquestionably determined in large part by the author's expectation that students, or neophytes, would constitute a large proportion of its audience. Appended to this chapter is the full text of al-Ṭughrā'ī's *Lāmīyah* as it appears (59 lines, chopped up verse by verse) in the *Ghayth*, as well as an "emulation" (*mu'āraḍah*) of it (60 lines) by al-Ṣafadī, the latter absent from the *Ghayth* but happily discovered by Rashād, by chance, in a much later anthology.

In chapter 5, on "Critical and Rhetorical Views in the Commentary," Rashād picks out five literary topics for further investigation. The first of these, on the "music" of poetry, is mostly devoted to a discussion of al-Ṣafadī's arresting suggestion that al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (d. 175/791) was influenced by Greek prosody in producing his henceforth canonical analysis of prosody in Arabic. Giving full credit to the plausibility of this proposal, Rashād nevertheless ultimately rejects it on the basis of the consensus of traditional reports to the contrary from "our forebears (*aslāfunā*)"; such credulity is unfortunately characteristic of the book as a whole. The other chosen topics—well justified by the content of the *Ghayth* itself—are al-Ṣafadī's assessment of the verse of al-Mutanabbī (staking out a middle position in the centuries-old controversy), his defense of the poet Ibn Ṣanā' al-Mulk (d. 608/1211) against an attack by a certain Ibn Jabbārah (d. 632/1235), his treatment of plagiarism (both al-Ṭughrā'ī's "thefts" from earlier poets and those by later poets from him), and his discussions of rhetorical tropes (eighteen of them altogether, with particular attention to paronomasia [*jinās*]). Of the latter perhaps the most interesting is *ikhtilāṣ*, the device of cleverly shifting a topos (*ma'nā*) from one genre (*gharaḍ*) to another (such as using love-poetry imagery in an elegy, for example); al-Ṣafadī was extremely fond of this technique, as were his contemporaries generally, but here Rashād has little to say about it beyond his quotations from al-Ṣafadī himself.

In an appendix, Rashād pulls together all of al-Ṣafadī's own verses as cited in the *Ghayth*—187 altogether, few exceeding four lines. In itself this is useful (since we lack a real *dīwān* of al-Ṣafadī's poetry), but Rashād presents the verses alphabetically by rhyme letter, with virtually no indication of their original context, which in some cases renders their point completely opaque; some of the instances of *taḍmīn* (embedding quotations from earlier poetry) elude him as well. A brief conclusion simply highlights the principal points made throughout the study, and is followed by a bibliography (all Arabic, divided into primary and secondary sources) and a detailed table of contents. Again, there are no indices.

Despite its limitations, Rashād's study is must reading for those of us with a particular interest in al-Ṣafadī, and is certainly worth the attention of anyone concerned with Arabic literature of the Mamluk period generally. Together, this



text edition and study advance our knowledge appreciably, and as indicators of a trend encourage us to look forward to more Ṣafadī, and more Ṣafadī studies, in the near future.

The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950–1800). Edited by Hugh Kennedy. The Medieval Mediterranean: Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400–1453, no 31. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001). Pp. 269.

REVIEWED BY ANNE F. BROADBRIDGE, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

This work represents the proceedings of a conference on the Historiography of Islamic Egypt, held at the University of Saint Andrews, Scotland, from 28–31 August, 1997. Based on the generally high quality of these papers, it appears to have been a fascinating and unusually cohesive conference. All but one article are written in English; the exception is in French. This is a satisfying collection, which provides well-deserved attention to historians of Egypt, and paves the way for future work in this rich field.

The volume is arranged chronologically in sections of uneven length. Section topics include the Fatimid and Ayyubid Periods (358–658/969–1260), the Bahri Mamluk Period (648–792/1250–1390), al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) and His World, Historians of the Circassian Mamluk Period (784–922/1382–1517), and the Historiography of Ottoman Egypt. The collection concludes with a solitary article on the modern period.

Only two scholars presented on the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods, which reflects the relative paucity of that historical material. First Michael Brett uses John Wansborough's theory on diplomatic terminology as a meta-language for communication in the Mediterranean to illustrate that Fatimid chancery documents, even when inaccurate, shaped the tone and style of the chronicles that relied on them as sources. Brett also discusses the institutional continuity that allowed authors from later periods to use these documents, and theorizes briefly about reasons for the eventual disappearance of such materials. Next David Morray provides a description of the biographical dictionary of Aleppo by Ibn al-Adīm (d. 660/1262), the *Bughyat al-Ṭalab fī Tārīkh Ḥalab*. Morray focuses on the different kinds of travel in which medieval personalities engaged, and lays the groundwork for future in-depth studies.

Given the preponderance of historical sources for the Mamluk period (648–923/1250–1517), it is no surprise that Mamluk topics dominated the



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conference. In the section on the Bahri period, D. S. Richards discusses the historian Baybars al-Manṣūrī (d. 725/1325) as a person and an author, although this work has now been superseded by the introduction to his edition of Baybars al-Manṣūrī's *Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Ḥijrah* (Beirut, 1419/1998). Reuven Amitai uses six brief case studies to analyze the sources, style, strengths, and weaknesses of the little-known history of the Mongols written by the Mamluk historian Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333), which appears in his *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*. Amitai demonstrates that al-Nuwayrī's information is often independent of the Persian histories and the anonymous *Secret History of the Mongols*, and argues convincingly that this work must be consulted by anyone seeking a fresh view of Mongol history. Robert Irwin makes a similar call for scholars to move outside the standard historical corpus. Interested in both the literary world of the Mamluk sultanate and its history, Irwin has struggled to promote Arabic literature in its own right, and as an aid to historical study.¹ This time he presents a literary analysis of an erotic text by the eighth/fourteenth-century 'Alī al-Baghdādī, which he combines with an outline of the way this fictional collection could illuminate the social history of Cairo in the 730s/1330s.

Several presenters contributed to our increasingly sophisticated understanding of scholarly biases in the sources with which we grapple. For the Bahri period, Nasser Rabbat argues that when writing, the civilian literati not only emphasized their own social class to the detriment of commoners and the military elite, but actually constructed specific and often reductionist images of these two other groups, which have affected modern views of Mamluk society. Rabbat also explores the political and social reasons for the literati's biases, and the way the literati used variations in language to further their stereotypes. For the Circassian period, Carl Petry analyzes uneven coverage of Bedouin raids in the countryside and urban crime in Cairo to reveal that historians' discussion of crime reflected their own privileged and stratified view of society, and also gave them an opportunity to issue oblique criticism of the ruling elite.

An entire section of the conference was devoted to that perennially interesting personality and topic, the famous eighth/fifteenth-century Mamluk-era historian Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442).² In the solitary article written in French, Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid provides an overview of topographical

¹See also his "What the Partridge told the Eagle: a Neglected Arabic Source on Chinggis Khan and the Early History of the Mongols," *The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden, 1999): 1–11.

²Scholars interested in al-Maqrīzī will also benefit from the proceedings of a later conference devoted entirely to that historian, for which see *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7/2 (2003).



writing in Egypt (*khiṭāṭ*) both before and after the composition of al-Maqrīzī's paramount *Al-Mawā'iz wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭāṭ wa-al-Āthār*. Sayyid draws our attention to those authors whose works have been lost, and those who were members of religious minorities, among them Copts and Shi'ites. Also focusing on al-Maqrīzī, Amalia Levanoni and Irmeli Perho both employ case studies to illuminate different aspects of his writing. Levanoni uses the struggles for power by the Mamluk sultan Barqūq (r. 784–91/1382–89; 791–801/1389–99) to reveal that al-Maqrīzī's moralizing sometimes led him to present biased or inaccurate information; she also makes an important call for a reevaluation of the role of ethnicity in the transfer from Turkish to Circassian rule. Perho's case study of the treatment of common people in Cairo (*al-‘āmmah*) in the writings of both al-Maqrīzī and his student Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470) demonstrates that their writing styles were shaped by their different interests and backgrounds.

Some took this conference as an opportunity to introduce new or little-known works. Among them was Li Guo, writing on Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Umar al-Biqā‘ī (d. 885/1480), a brilliant maverick scholar with an ugly personal life whose chronicle contributes an original view of society in the mid-ninth/fifteenth century. A welcome addition to the existing sources, al-Biqā‘ī's writing should expand our knowledge of the history and culture of this as yet understudied period. Guo also discusses al-Biqā‘ī's use of apocalyptic visions and Quranic prophecy to produce a distinctive salvation history, and places al-Biqā‘ī's work in the greater context of Islamic salvation history over the ages. Similarly, the late Ulrich Haarmann, to whom the conference proceedings are dedicated, also contributed an investigation of a misfit scholar, although this one was more bumbling than brilliant. Haarmann discussed one Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī (d. 888/1483), who was emotionally scarred in a nasty incident of scholarly hazing. By subsequently rejecting the norms of the social class that had rejected him, Abū Ḥāmid managed to break all literary conventions, distance himself from the tired stereotypes used for the Mamluk military elite (and aptly described by Nasser Rabbat earlier in this volume), and produce a unique and valuable set of works about life in Cairo in the later ninth/fifteenth century.

Despite the dominance of the Mamluk period, this collection also features a welcome set of articles on the historiographical wealth of Ottoman Egypt. Michael Winter provides an overview of changing attitudes towards the Ottomans displayed by Egyptian historians from the tenth/sixteenth to the fourteenth/twentieth centuries. This contribution is particularly useful for its discussion of works composed in Arabic, Turkish, and Hebrew.

Other articles on the Ottoman period propose the rethinking of current scholarly assumptions and practices. Jane Hathaway uses the example of two rival political factions in Egypt and their real or fictional ties to Yemen to call for the rehabilitation



of Yemen as crucial in understanding Egypt. She also demonstrates the localism and limitations of Ottoman-era historians by contrasting the simultaneous yet dissimilar historiographical traditions of the two regions. Daniel Crecilius also suggests a revision of scholarly assumptions. He unmasks the revered historian ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥasan al-Jabarī (d. 1237/1822) as an overly proud man who refused to acknowledge his sources, then details the way some modern scholars have been misled by al-Jabarī’s coy insistence that he worked alone. That accomplished, Crecilius rehabilitates many of the oft-ignored eleventh/seventeenth- and twelfth/eighteenth-century historians whose works al-Jabarī consulted, and suggests that we do the same.

In a similarly revisionist vein, Nelly Hanna argues that a surfeit of comparisons between Ottoman Egyptian historians and their Mamluk predecessors has divorced the Ottoman authors from the social and cultural context in which their works were produced. She rectifies this shortcoming with an analysis of that context and of the role played in it by history as art, entertainment, and education. Like Nasser Rabbat, Hanna focuses in part on language variation in the texts, which illuminate different aspects of society and culture. Hanna also provides a list of histories in manuscript from this period, which should be read with the material provided by Crecilius and by Winter for a sense of the extent and variety of Ottoman Egyptian historical sources.

The final contributor, Paul Starkey, analyzes the uses of Egyptian medieval and pharaonic history by modern authors of fiction, and spotlights the works of Jurjī Zaydān and Gamāl al-Ghīṭānī. Like Robert Irwin’s piece, this work gives us a welcome view of the shifting boundaries between history and fiction, and a reminder that history—though fascinating—is but one aspect of the extraordinary legacy of Egypt.

The editing of this collection is uneven, and the book contains some typographical errors in English and French, as well as mistakes in the transliteration of Arabic. But these are minor faults. They do not change the fact that reading such a fine collection of essays should be considered *de rigueur* for serious historians. By doing so, they will gain a new and subtle vision of the works on which we all depend.



MUḤAMMAD IBN AḤMAD AL-FĀSĪ, *Shifā' al-Gharām bi-Akḥbār al-Balad al-Ḥarām*. Edited by 'Ādil 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-'Adawī and Hishām 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Aṭā under the supervision of Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ. Mawsū'at Makkah wa-al-Madīnah, no. 2 (Mecca-Riyadh: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafá al-Bāz, 1417/1996). Two volumes.

IDEM, *Al-Zuhūr al-Muqtaṭafah min Tārīkh Makkah al-Musharrafah*. Edited and annotated by Adīb Muḥammad al-Ghazzāwī, preface and revision by Maḥmūd al-Arnā'ūt (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2000). Pp. 319.

IDEM, *Al-Zuhūr al-Muqtaṭafah min Tārīkh Makkah al-Musharrafah*.¹ Edited by 'Alī 'Umar (Al-Zāhir: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīnīyah, 1422/2001). Pp. 404.

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When one considers Mamluk historiography, it is now recognized that there exists a Ḥijāzī school of historians in addition to the Egyptian and Syrian ones. It remains to be determined if significant differences characterize the historians of this area as compared to their colleagues in Cairo or Damascus. It would be interesting to know whether their technique of redaction or the use they made of their sources shows similarity to the historians of the other schools. However the Ḥijāzī historians have not yet attracted sufficient interest from scholars conducting studies of this sort, which is a great pity. Only recently, a first attempt to survey all Meccan historians, from the very beginning until the nineteenth century, has appeared and should stimulate further research in this field despite its shortcomings.²

The emergence of this school during the period under consideration coincides with the activity of a Meccan scholar, although of Moroccan origin, who lived mainly during the second period of Mamluk rule, namely Taqī al-Dīn al-Fāsī (832/1429). Between him and the first historians of Mecca, al-Azraqī (244/858) and al-Fākihī (*adhuc viv.* 272/885), there is a gap of more than five centuries, and thus it is important to stress the fact that he can be credited with the revival of a school that had not really caught on. This does not mean that there were no other scholars who were interested in the history of Mecca, but their works were merely isolated cases in their production, while al-Fāsī devoted most of his time to the writing of historical books dealing with the Holy City. Also, the heuristic aspect

¹"Yunshar kāmilan wa-bi-fahāris shāmilah lil-marrah al-ūlā."

²See Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb al-Hīlah, *Al-Tārīkh wa-al-Mu'arrikhūn bi-Makkah min al-Qarn al-Thālith al-Hijrī ilā al-Qarn al-Thālithah 'Asharah : Jam'*, *'Arḍ wa-Ta'rīf* (London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, Makkah al-Mukarramah Encyclopaedia Branch, 1994). See my review in *MSR* 3 (1999): 223–30.



of his works is worthy of mention. Unlike many historians, he did not rely only on other written sources, although they included *fiqh* and hadith works for instance, but utilized less conventional materials such as diplomas (*ijāzah*) and dictionaries of authorities (*mashyakhah*, *mu'jam al-shuyūkh*, *thabat*). Even more intriguing is his undertaking "field work" in search of evidence, as when he personally measured the Ka'bah, comparing his results to those of his predecessors. The same inquisitiveness drove him when, as an epigraphist, he scrutinized inscriptions which he found on buildings, sometimes giving the full text. Al-Fāsī certainly deserves a study in his own right and it is to be hoped that this call will not go unheeded.³

If he won fame and inspired students, it was thanks to two of his books: a biographical dictionary of residents of Mecca from the beginning of Islam to his own time, entitled *Al-'Iqd al-Thamīn fī Tārīkh al-Balad al-Amīn*,⁴ and a history of the Holy City, the title of which is *Shifā' al-Gharām bi-Akhhār al-Balad al-Ḥarām*. Both were begun at the same time and conceived as complementary. The idea of composing such a history occurred to him after he noticed that since al-Azraqī nothing serious had been written on the subject (*Shifā'* 1:39), a lacuna even stranger in his eyes when he considered that other cities had already been the subject of this kind of work, giving as examples the *Tārīkh Baghdād* by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, the *Tārīkh Dimashq* by Ibn 'Asākir, and the *Tārīkh Miṣr* by al-Quṭb al-Ḥalabī (1:42). He then decided to collect all he had read about this subject, including inscriptions found on marble, stones, and wood, oral information, etc. (1:40). All the material gathered on independent leaves was then reorganized, following a plan of forty chapters.⁵ It is thus clear that the *Shifā'* is not a conventional

³What is available is completely inadequate. See Ṣubḥī 'Abd al-Mun'im Muḥammad, *Taqī al-Dīn al-Fāsī: Rā'id al-Mu'arrikhīn al-Hijāzīyīn (775–832 H./1373–1429 M.)* (Cairo: al-'Arabī lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 1997). Reviewed by Li Guo in *MSR* 5 (2001): 169–75.

⁴Ed. by Muḥammad Ḥāmid Al-Fiḳī (vol. 1), Fu'ād Sayyid (vols. 2–7), and Maḥmūd Muḥammad Al-Ṭanāhī (vol. 8) (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyah, 1962–69; repr., Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1406/1986).

⁵In a very important note added at the end of his book (2:1065), al-Fāsī recounts the history of its composition, explaining that the original work was much bigger and that he summarized it a first time in 811. Initially, it was organized in 24 chapters, but the author made important additions in 812, 813, 814, 815, and 816 which resulted in the presentation in 40 chapters as it is now. New additions were brought in 817 and 818–19. Most of these were taken from *Tārīkh Makkah* by al-Fākihī, a work which he did not get access to before, and from his own book *Al-'Iqd al-Thamīn*. Thus the actual version of the *Shifā'* appears to be in fact a summary made by the author and expanded several times. The original text is constantly referred to by the author as the *aṣl* (1:47: "as'alu min kull wāqif 'alā hādhā al-mukhtaṣar wa-aṣlihi"; 1:356: "kamā dhakartuhu fī aṣl hādhā al-kitāb wa-iqṭaṣartuhu hunā min dhālika 'alā mā dhakartuhu"; 1:380: "wa-nadhkuruhu kamā dhakira fī aṣl hādhā al-kitāb"). This version must have contained,



historical work where the data are presented according to the year or the reign. Each chapter focuses on a theme dealing with the Ḥaram (for instance, the names of Mecca, the Ḥaram, the Ka‘bah, etc.) where all periods are considered, beginning with the Jāhiliyah. For Mamlukologists, the most important parts are probably chapters 23 (on the madrasahs, *ribāṭs*, etc.) and 37 to 39 (lists of governors, and political, meteorological, and finally economic events).⁶ But substantial data can also be found scattered in other chapters. Those interested in the Fatimid period will be surprised to learn that al-Fāsī occasionally quotes the *Tārīkh* of al-Musabbihī as he had access to a resumé (*mukhtaṣar*) made by Rashīd al-Dīn al-Mundhirī (1:203), a fact that has been overlooked by historians of this period.⁷

Before the edition under discussion here, the *Shifā’* was available in the following ones:

1) It was published for the first time in 1859, but only partly, by F. Wüstenfeld, in a collection of works dealing exclusively with the Holy City.⁸

2) It was only in 1956 that the full text was made available to scholars⁹ in an edition based on an undated manuscript belonging to the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah (shelf-mark: Tārīkh 504). This edition also utilized another manuscript which was in fact a recent copy of the Cairo manuscript, and the editors also made use of other sources. The result of the collation was indicated in the footnotes, which rarely satisfy the requirements of a scientific edition.

3) Another edition was prepared by ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī.¹⁰ It has been criticized by al-Hīlah¹¹ as being just a copy of 2). This same author recognized the lack of a good critical edition of this important text and hoped that one would be published in the future.

This could have been the case with the present edition. Published by a committee of three persons under the supervision of Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Fattāh, it appears as no. 2 in a promising series called “Mawsū‘at Makkah wa-al-Madīnah,” where no. 1 was in fact the *Tārīkh Makkah* by al-Azraqī. It seems thus that the publisher intends to place at the disposal of scholars the most important texts dealing with the two Holy Cities. In his preface (p. 11), the supervisor stresses the fact that only a few

among other details, full chains of transmitters. It is now presumably lost.

⁶Some of these aspects have already been studied. See particularly the articles published by R. Mortel and C. Morisot.

⁷These quotations are not found in A. F. Sayyid, “Nuṣūṣ Dā’i‘ah min Akhbār Miṣr lil-Musabbihī,” *Annales Islamologiques* 17 (1981): 1–54.

⁸*Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1857–61), 2:55–324.

⁹Ed. by a board of experts, with supplements including *Al-Durrah al-Thamīnah fī Tārīkh al-Madīnah* by Ibn al-Najjār (Mecca: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Ḥadīthah).

¹⁰Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1405/1985.

¹¹*Al-Tārīkh wa-al-Mu‘arrikhūn bi-Makkah*, 122.



books on Mecca have been published, although many manuscripts are still waiting to be unearthed. What is curious in such a statement is why the committee decided to publish first two histories which were already available, unless it intended to prepare new critical editions. Unfortunately, as we will see with the *Shifā'*, this is far from being the case.

The introduction (pp. 13–33) contains a short biography of al-Fāsī where only his most important works are mentioned. It lacks references and contributes nothing to our knowledge of the author. In the next section (pp. 19–21 and 27–33), the manuscripts “selected” are described. The editors have relied on two manuscripts, one of them corresponding to the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah manuscript already mentioned for edition no. 2.¹² This was not chosen as the basic text; rather another manuscript preserved in the same institution under the shelf-mark Tārīkh Ṭal‘at 2067 was selected.¹³ Because it is dated 864, only 32 years after al-Fāsī’s death, it was preferred.¹⁴ Recognizing that in some places both manuscripts have blanks clearly indicated as such (*kadhā fī al-aṣl*), the editors have hastily concluded that they are copies of the author’s original, but this is not necessarily so. Both are described summarily and no other copy is referred to, although they would have learned of others had they consulted al-Hīlah’s book, which has been available since 1994 (pp. 121–22).

The edition is provided with notes indicating the results of the collation of both manuscripts, as well as others where persons and places are identified, though not systematically. For instance (1:168), in an *isnād* with eleven transmitters, only four are clearly identified. Elsewhere (1:458), Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Māwardī is identified as his famous namesake who died in 450/1058,¹⁵ even though he appears in an *isnād* just after Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah (d. 196/811), and is followed by three other transmitters, the last one being al-Dāraqūṭnī (d. 385/995). This was an anachronism apparently unnoticed by the editors. When the name of a person previously identified occurs subsequently, the editors have taken trouble to note

¹²Here its shelf number is given as Tārīkh M 54. However, it is clear that we are dealing with the same manuscript, as the scribe’s name that can be read on the facsimile page of the colophon (p. 33) is identical with the one mentioned in the edition no. 2.

¹³The editors also refer to a third manuscript in the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah (Tārīkh Taymūr 1463), dated to 1336 A.H. As often in the case of such recent manuscripts, they are just copies of another MS from the same institution.

¹⁴According to al-Hīlah, *Al-Tārīkh wa-al-Mu’arrikhūn bi-Makkah*, 121, there is a manuscript in the Royal Library in Rabat (al-Khizānah al-Malikīyah, no. 1911) which is the oldest copy (848 A.H.) and the most reliable one (*aṣaḥḥ*).

¹⁵Al-Māwardī in this passage must be read al-Jārūdī, a correct reading appearing in the edition no. 2 although their manuscript gave al-Māwardī. In this case, the editors could modify the reading by comparison with the source quoted by al-Fāsī.



the previous identification, but this proves useless since no cross reference is provided and because the indexes are incomplete. Moreover, no particular effort has been made to try to locate passages quoted by al-Fāsī from other sources, not even the traditions selected from canonical collections, such as al-Bukhārī, Muslim, etc., although this would surely have helped to correct some incorrect readings common to both manuscripts. I have taken some soundings which confirm my negative impression: this edition is surely not a definitive one and in many respects it has proved to be less reliable than edition no. 2, adding new mistakes. Among these, I will mention just a few, such as 1:365, where *تنحس* must be read *تنخش*; 1:397, where *منقوش* must be read *معرضة* as al-Fāsī is speaking of the *hijr* (an enclosure with a wall in the shape of a bow); 1:459, where (two occurrences) *الحافظ العراقي* is in fact *الحافظ العراقي* as is confirmed by a quotation two lines below where the name is correctly given; 2:999 (عفيف الدين الطبري, leg. مشايخنا, leg. ماشخنا); 2:1026 (ابن مسدي, leg. ابن مسدي); 2:1029 (مشايخنا, leg. ماشخنا). The presence of indexes should allow me to temper these criticisms, but they are deficient. All the indexes have been placed at the end of vol. 2, even though they consist in fact of separate indexes for each volume. Most of them are incomplete and are not adequate for making use of the book. In conclusion, *Al-Shifā'* still awaits a serious critical edition with full annotation and proper indexes.

Al-Fāsī prepared a resumé of the *Shifā'* that he entitled *Al-Zuhūr al-Muqtaṭafah min Tārīkh Makkah al-Musharrafah*, where most details (*isnāds*, debates) have been eliminated. It would be a mistake, however, to neglect the work on this basis, since it appears that in some cases the author has added data which are not to be found in the *Shifā'*. Besides the *Zuhūr*, he produced, as he declares in his introduction, three other books on the same subject which must also be considered resúmes of the *Shifā'*: *Tuḥfat al-Kirām bi-Akḥbār al-Balad al-Ḥarām*, *Taḥṣīl al-Marām min Tārīkh al-Balad al-Ḥarām*, and *Hādī Dhawī al-Afhām ilā Tārīkh al-Balad al-Ḥarām*.¹⁶ Except for the last work, they are preserved only in manuscript and remain unpublished. It is only recently that the *Zuhūr* has become available in several editions, among which two are under review here.¹⁷ Both are based on an important manuscript and provide us an opportunity to compare how the editors have rendered it in their work. This manuscript, dated to 825 A.H. (thus during

¹⁶ Al-Hīlah, *Al-Tārīkh wa-al-Mu'arrikhūn bi-Makkah*, 122–23, also mentions *Tarwīḥ al-Ṣudūr bi-Ikhtisār al-Zuhūr* and *Mukhtaṣar Tarwīḥ al-Ṣudūr* as resúmes of the *Zuhūr*.

¹⁷ Alī 'Umar speaks in disparaging terms (“*ṭab'ah kathīrat al-taḥrīf wa-al-asqāt*”) of an edition published in Mecca-Riyadh (Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafá al-Bāz) in 1997 and prepared by Muṣṭafá Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, who based it on two manuscripts. Divergences noticed by 'Umar with this Meccan edition have been indicated in the footnotes.



the lifetime of the author, who died in 832), is in the handwriting of Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Shuwā’iṭī al-Yamanī¹⁸ and was in the library of the Kuwaiti scholar ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Khalaf al-Daḥiyyān, who bequeathed it to the Maktabat al-Awqāf al-Kuwaytīyah upon his death. Additionally, the title-page proves that the text was transmitted by well-known scholars. None of the editors has studied these notes that are transcribed here thanks to the facsimile of the title-page added in ‘Umar’s edition:

أروي هذا الكتاب من طريق شيخنا الحافظ برهان الدين الناجي¹⁹ عن المؤلف تقي الدين الفاسي

وعن شيخنا السخاوي إجازة عن شيخه ابن حجر رواية عن المؤلف

وعن شيخنا الشيخ شهاب الدين ابن الملاح المقرئ الرملاوي²⁰ بدمشق رواية عن المؤلف

أروي هذا الكتاب من طريق شيخنا القاضي سراج الدين ابن الصيرفي²¹ رواية عن المؤلف

Given its importance, a facsimile edition of the whole text was published by Muḥannā Ḥamad al-Muḥannā²² together with an introduction, notes, and indexes. ‘Umar, however, made occasional use of an additional manuscript preserved in Baghdad (al-Maṭḥaf al-‘Irāqī, no. 1385), which was previously the property of Father Anastase Marie de Saint-Élie, who bought it in 1918. It is unfortunately undated, but seems to be from the seventeenth century.²³ While al-Ghazzāwī’s edition is provided with an introduction written by the supervisor al-Arna’ūṭ (pp. 5–20), in which he discusses the author and his work and provides a cursory description of the manuscript, ‘Umar is more laconic (pp. 5–8) and speaks especially of the previous Meccan edition and of the manuscripts. Both editions are provided with footnotes, but not of the same value. Al-Ghazzāwī has tried to return to the original sources from which al-Fāsī quoted, though failing to locate the references made by the author to his other works. He also added, but rather meagerly, identifications of persons and places and explanations of lexical terms. On the other hand, ‘Umar has considered it important to faithfully indicate where he

¹⁸On him, see ‘Umar ibn Fahd, *Mu‘jam al-Shuyūkh*, ed. M. al-Zāhī (Mecca, n.d. [1982?]), 67, where it is stated that he settled in Mecca in 803 A.H. His *nisbah* designates a locality situated near Ta‘izz.

¹⁹Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Dimashqī (d. 900/1495). See ‘U. R. Kaḥḥālāh, *Mu‘jam al-Mu‘allifīn* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d.), 1:106.

²⁰Unidentified.

²¹Unidentified.

²²Kuwait: Al-Ṣundūq al-Waqfī lil-Thaqāfah wa-al-Fikr, 1417/1997.

²³In one particular case, this manuscript appeared more reliable since a complete passage (pp. 133–34) was missing in the Kuwaiti manuscript.



found the references made by al-Fāsī to his other works. Yet he disregarded the identification of persons or places, which is a pity.

In summation, I believe that ‘Umar’s edition is, generally speaking, more reliable. If I should recommend one of them, I would be inclined to say that ‘Umar can be trusted in most cases, although one must be aware that his edition is not free from mistakes. His edition permits us to emend some readings in all the available editions of the *Shifā’*. The presence of numerous, reasonably reliable indexes, is another positive aspect.²⁴ In the following lines, I have given the result of my collation of some passages, where the bold version is considered the correct one, so that the reader will be able to draw his own conclusions.

	Ghazzāwī		‘Umar
p. 30	الغرب	p. 19	المغرب
ibid.	lacuna	ibid.	بالبناء
ibid.	هجر	ibid.	هجم
p. 31	خامس عشر من شوال	ibid.	خامس عشري من شوال
ibid.	منها	p. 20	lacuna
p. 32	بأبي قبيس	ibid.	lacuna
ibid.	سمي برجل من	ibid.	lacuna
	إياد وذكر الوراق أنه		
ibid.	حمامات	ibid.	حمامان
p. 35	وهو الهدية بعد	p. 22	وهو الهدية معدودان من
	ودان من أعمالها		أعمالها
p. 80	بن أبي الصغير	p. 87	بن أبي الصفراء
p. 91	شبر	p. 108	سنبر
ibid.	ضبات	ibid.	ضباب
ibid.	فتخشن	ibid.	فتنخش

²⁴Although in my copy pp. 367–84 are missing and pp. 385–404 are duplicated at the end of the book.



p. 99	منقوش	p. 124	متقوس
p. 111	ابن الحباب	p. 142	ابن الجباب
p. 112	ذو الفرس	p. 145	ذوالقرنين
p. 118	في حجرته	p. 153	مسند مكة وموثقها
p. 131	شرح الثانية	p. 167	شرح التنبيه
p. 156	علي السعداني	p. 195	علي البعداني

