

MAMLŪK STUDIES REVIEW

XV



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ANNE F. BROADBRIDGE

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Sending Home for Mom and Dad: The Extended Family Impulse in Mamluk Politics

With the exception of references to harem politics or marriage ties, scholars rarely spend much time discussing biological family in connection with the Mamluks, as the concept seems incompatible with the system of imported young slaves and the significance ascribed to surrogate familial relationships as the basis for political allegiance. Yet ideas about biological family may have mattered far more to individual mamluks than scholars currently acknowledge. An examination of the concept of biological family reveals two distinct types of biological relatives: first, biological offspring, particularly males, and second, the existing biological family every mamluk left behind in the old country.

The topic of male biological offspring has attracted plenty of scholarly attention, primarily because it is through sons that men attempt to establish dynasties. Scholars have investigated the importance of sultans' sons in Mamluk society, and their assessments of the relevance, or lack thereof, of the concept of dynasty in the Mamluk world can be divided into two general camps. The arguments made by one side of the discussion read as follows: scholars suggest that the desire of a sultan to form a dynasty by leaving his position to a biological son was inimical to the Mamluk system itself, with its hallmark one-generation aristocracy, its systematic political disenfranchisement of the children of mamluks (the *awlād al-nās*), and the ties of loyalty created among mamluks and their patrons or masters, which replaced biological ties. In this view, the Mamluk system was one in which the position of sultan passed primarily from mamluk to mamluk through factional maneuvering or struggle. Although the biological sons of sultans did inherit their father's positions, everyone, including the dying sultan and the son himself, knew that the son was functioning as a placeholder, since real power would then be assumed by one or even multiple commanders, either covertly, in which case the nominal sultan remained as a figurehead, or overtly, in which case the nominal sultan was deposed.¹

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This article was first presented in Chicago, Illinois, at the International Conference on Mamluk Politics, April 13–15, 2007. I thank John Meloy for reading the paper for me there.

¹ Amalia Levanoni, "The Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26 (1994): 373–74, 377–83, 385; idem, "The Sultan's *Laqab*—A Sign of a New Order in Mamluk Factionalism?" in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Amalia Levanoni and Michael Winter (Leiden and Boston, 2004), 113; idem, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* (Leiden, 1995), 114–17; and also Robert Irwin, "Factions in Medieval Egypt," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1986): 232,



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By contrast, other scholars have suggested that the Mamluk sultans were serious in trying to establish dynasties and thus made real efforts to set up their biological sons to take over after them.² Unfortunately for these nascent dynasties, however, the older, wiser, and more experienced mamluk colleagues of the dying sultan tended to thwart these attempts, which often relegated the son to the abovementioned position as placeholder. This latter assessment can be related to three major time periods: first, the initial fifty-odd years of the sultanate when the impulse to establish dynasties was particularly strong; second, the eighth/fourteenth century when the Qalāwūnid dynasty lasted for decades, although only a few Qalāwūnids held any real power; and third, the Circassian period beginning in the late eighth/fourteenth century and continuing throughout the ninth/fifteenth centuries, during which the impulse to form dynasties faded over time and ultimately died.³

Of these two schools of thought on what could be called the Dynastic Impulse, I myself follow the latter (i.e., the one arguing for a general interest in forming dynasties among Mamluk sultans). I base this choice on the evidence provided both by the specific actions of individual sultans such as Baybars (r. 658–76/1260–77), Qalāwūn (r. 678–89/1279–90), Khalīl (r. 689–93/1290–93), Sha‘bān (r. 764–78/1363–77), and Shaykh (r. 814–24/1412–21), among others, and on the ideas about dynasty they expressed to external rulers through diplomacy.⁴ The primary

237–38. For the suggestion that non-hereditary succession was the rule and Qalāwūnid dynasty was an anomaly, see: Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382* (Carbondale, 1986), 156–57, also 127, 132, 134, 144, 149; P. M. Holt, “Succession in the Early Mamluk Sultanate,” *Deutscher Orientalistentag 23* (Stuttgart, 1989), 146–47; idem, “The Structure of Government in the Mamluk Sultanate,” in *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades*, ed. P. M. Holt (Warminster, 1977), 46; idem, “Mamlūks,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 6:323–24; and idem, “The Position and Power of the Mamluk Sultan,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38 (1975): 239–41.

² See David Ayalon, “From Ayyūbids to Mamlūks,” *Revue des Etudes islamiques* 49 (1981): 55–56, reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War* (London, 1994); also idem, “Mamlūk Military Aristocracy—A Non-Hereditary Nobility,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (1987): 209, reprinted in *Abode of War*; also idem, “Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army—II,” *BSOAS* 15, nos. 2 and 3; 16, no. 1 (1953–54): 208, reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamluks of Egypt* (London, 1977); and idem, “The Circassians in the Mamluk Kingdom,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 69, no. 3 (1949): 145–46, reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamluks of Egypt*. Note that Ayalon believed the Mamluks gave up the hereditary principle for the sultanate by the Circassian period; see references in footnote 3 below. Also see Linda Northrup on Qalāwūn, *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Mansur Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678–689 A. H./1279–1290 A. D.)* (Stuttgart, 1998), 243–49.

³ David Ayalon, “The Circassians in the Mamluk Kingdom,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 69, no. 3 (1949): 139, note 32, 145–46, reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamluks of Egypt*; idem, “Non-Hereditary Nobility,” 209–10; Holt, “Position and Power,” 239–41.

⁴ Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, 2008), 12, 38, 39, 50, 56, 146, 147–48, 194, 200.



argument in favor of the existence of a Dynastic Impulse, I would contend, lies not in the lived reality of political power (whether a son managed to hold on as sultan), but in the intention of the dying monarch. Whether a designated successor succeeded or failed to retain power was ultimately less important than what the outgoing sultan was trying to achieve. I therefore consider the most significant aspect of this Dynastic Impulse to be the attempt by high-ranking mamluks to create a network of support based on a family conservatively defined by biology, not on a surrogate family of other mamluks. I hope soon to compose a longer study of the topic of the Dynastic Impulse and to explore these questions further there.

In addition there is a lesser-known phenomenon, closely related to the Dynastic Impulse, which supports my contention that biological relations mattered more to the Mamluks than scholars tend to acknowledge, but which is almost invariably passed over in favor of the topic of dynasty. This related topic is a mamluk's interest in reconnecting with those long-lost relatives he left behind when starting his career. I call this the Extended Family Impulse, and see it as evidence of a larger, general Mamluk interest in biological relations. The remainder of this article will suggest that the Extended Family Impulse appeared when, for personal and political gain, some mamluks attempted to reconnect with the biological families they had been forced to abandon. This phenomenon appeared most frequently as part of Mamluk success stories, in which certain commanders reached high political, military, and economic levels, and often had ambitions for the position of sultan. Then suddenly they sent home to the old country and brought their parents, siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces, and anyone else they could find to Cairo. Once the relatives arrived the Mamluk commanders found jobs for the men, usually somewhere in the military. The extent of the power these relatives held varied greatly: in some cases their careers were undistinguished, but in a few cases they attained considerable influence in Mamluk society and played important roles in major historical events.

This article will explore the Extended Family Impulse by looking at three case studies of successful men whose long-lost relatives joined them in Cairo at high points of their careers. First is the commander Salār (d. 710/1310), who was one of two men to control the sultanate throughout the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in the early 700s/1300s. The second is Yalbughā al-Yaḥyāwī (d. 748/1347), a great favorite of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad during the 730s/1330s, who held several governorates in Syria after Muḥammad's death, and rebelled twice against Muḥammad's sons, once successfully, once not. Third is the commander and then sultan Barqūq (d. 801/1399), whose implementation of the Extended Family Impulse was the most visible and successful of all three, and the most clearly connected to the concept of Dynastic Impulse, at least until the invader Temür (d. 807/1405) entered the picture and helped destroy Barqūq's forming Zāhirī dynasty. The article will present



each man's career in brief, discuss the timing of his relatives' arrival in Cairo and the careers they achieved, and outline the ultimate fate of each family. Thereafter I will draw some larger conclusions about these three cases, about the concept of the Extended Family Impulse, and about the Mamluk interest in biological relations in general.

SALĀR

The first case was the commander Sayf al-Din Salār, who was either an Oirat or, less likely, a Turk, acquired as a mamluk for the commander and later sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn after the battle of Abulustayn in 675/1277.⁵ Initially Salār worked for Qalāwūn's son and first heir, al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī; then after 'Alī's death from illness in Sha'bān 687/September 1288, he ascended through the ranks of commanders during the reigns of al-Ashraf Khalīl (r. 689–93/1290–93) and al-Manṣūr Lājīn (r. 696–98/1296–99). Salār encouraged the overthrow of Lājīn in Rabī' II 698/January 1299, then rose to prominence along with another well-known commander, Baybars al-Jashnakīr. The two men led rival factions, which allowed them together to marshal broad support and control the sultanate throughout the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (second r. 698–708/1299–1309) with Salār as the vicegerent (*nā'ib*) and Baybars as the high steward (*ustādār*).⁶ Then in 704/1304–5, Salār's daughter married the amir Mūsá, who was the only son of Salār's former Qalāwūnid master, al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī. The lavish wedding included a grand public procession, in which all the important commanders participated.⁷ This match, and the festivities that accompanied it, demonstrated how well Salār had done for himself politically, socially, and financially in Mamluk society.

A few years later in 708–9/1308–9, however, the situation changed when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad rebelled against his two jailers, withdrew to the desert stronghold of Karak, and reestablished himself from there with Syrian support. His success spelled doom for Baybars and Salār. First to fall was Baybars, who had become sultan in Muḥammad's absence, and who therefore fled when Muḥammad arrived outside Cairo. After reinstatement, Muḥammad had Baybars hunted down, brought back to Cairo, and strangled in his presence.⁸ Salār lasted slightly longer. He cooperated with Muḥammad at first by letting him in to the citadel, and promptly stepped down as vicegerent. Later Muḥammad granted Salār's petition for a transfer to the

⁵ P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (Harlow, Essex, 1986), 110; Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 70; also see Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Hijrah*, ed. Donald S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), 155; and idem, *Kitāb al-Tuḥfah al-Mulūkīyah fī al-Dawlah al-Turkīyah*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān (Cairo, 1987), 84.

⁶ Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 110. For the factions see Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 92.

⁷ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 382; Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Sa'īd 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1956–73), 2:9.

⁸ See Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 111–12; Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 85–86.



desert fort of Shawbak in late 709/spring 1310, but this return to the sultan's good graces proved to be temporary. A few months later in Rabī' I–II 710/August 1310 Muḥammad had Salār forced back to Cairo. There he was tortured to reveal the location of his wealth and imprisoned in the citadel, where he died of starvation in particularly horrible fashion.⁹

Salār's story is not instructive because of his political rise and fall, since this, although dramatic, was unremarkable. Rather, Salār's career is interesting in the way it illustrates the Extended Family Impulse. Although Salār began his career as a mamluk after the battle of Abulustayn, and although mamluks are assumed to lose all ties to family upon the commencement of their careers, Salār had biological brothers, whom he left behind in Anatolia when he went to Egypt to work for al-Šāliḥ 'Alī. During those many years in Egypt when Salār rose from a mamluk to a commander to the position of vicegerent, he had no contact with the relatives he had left behind.¹⁰

But he must either have wanted contact all along and been unable to establish it, or developed an interest in seeing his family again once he had achieved success, because eventually Salār felt confident enough to send messengers to Anatolia to find his family and invite them to Mamluk territory. The first contact took place during the reign of the Ilkhanid ruler Ghazan (r. 694–703/1295–1304), but it was not until after Ghazan's death in spring 703/1304 that Salār's relatives could make a surreptitious departure from Ilkhanid territory. Then in late fall 704/1304 two of Salār's brothers, Fakhr al-Dīn Dāwūd and Sayf al-Dīn Jabā, along with Salār's mother and about 200 other Mongol men and their families, arrived in Mamluk territory from Anatolia.¹¹ Salār also had at least one other brother, Samūk, who appears as a commander of unknown rank in the Mamluk forces, but there is no

⁹ For a brief treatment see Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 111–12; Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 86. For lengthier details see the events in 708–10 in Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad 'Alawī Shaltūt (Cairo, 1998), 32:138–41, 144–59, 163–64; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 403–7, 414–17, 420–29; and idem, *Tuḥfah*, 187–91, 193–213, 214–15; Ibn Aybak al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmi' al-Ghurar*, ed. Hans Robert Roemer (Cairo, 1960), 9:167–204. For details of Salār's death see Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Šafadī, *A'yān al-'Aṣr wa-A'wān al-Naṣr*, ed. 'Alī Abū Zayd et al. (Beirut and Damascus, 1998), 2:490–91.

¹⁰ See Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 385; and idem, *Tuḥfah*, 178.

¹¹ A Mamluk raid on Cilicia may also have facilitated their getaway. Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 101; also see al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyah*, 32:96; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 385; idem, *Tuḥfah*, 178; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 9:131; Author Z, *Tārīkh Salāḥīn al-Mamālik or Beiträge zur Geschichte der mamlukensultane*, ed. K. V. Zetterstéen (Leiden, 1919), 132; Faḍl Allāh al-Šuqā'ī, *Tālī Kitāb Wafāyāt al-A'yān*, ed. and tr. Jacqueline Sublet (Damascus, 1974), 89 (Arabic text) and 113 (French translation); Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-'Aynī, *'Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1987–92), 4:348–49 (citing the lost portion of Yūsufī's *Nuzhat al-Nāzīr fī Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir*), also 4:377–78; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:5.



reference to his arrival in the sultanate. Did he arrive with Dāwūd, Jabā, and their mother, or did he enter the sultanate as a mamluk like Salār?¹² We do not know.

Salār was apparently overjoyed to see his siblings and mother, as he had not laid eyes on them since the battle of Abulustayn nearly thirty years earlier. He celebrated the occasion by having his brothers appointed *ṭablakhānah* commanders, or second-tier commanders rating their own military bands, and by building a house for his mother.¹³ It is reasonable to assume that the family members enjoyed places of honor at the wedding of Salār's daughter to Amir Mūsá later that year, although the sources do not specify where they sat at the banquet or note the brothers' place in the grand public procession.¹⁴

After this initial flurry of excitement, the trajectory of the brothers' careers is difficult to discern, since the histories only occasionally refer to Dāwūd, Jabā, and Samūk. When they do, however, the brothers are always involved in Salār's endeavors. In 707/1307–8, for example, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was trying to rebel against Salār and Baybars. At one point many of the commanders loyal to Salār and Baybars were armed, mounted, and ready, waiting outside the citadel for signs of action. All three of Salār's brothers were among them, watching the door through which Muḥammad and his mamluks might come. After a number of hours some of Muḥammad's mamluks emerged to skirmish with the commanders, which caused Samūk to shoot an arrow that hit the frame of a citadel window in which Muḥammad was sitting (apparently to the great consternation of the sultan).¹⁵ Next the populace appeared and began to berate the commanders, and the same brother, Samūk, had to be restrained from attacking in retaliation.¹⁶ Ultimately the standoff was settled through negotiation, not violence, but the presence of all of Salār's brothers among the commanders at such a tense time shows their real connection to Salār's affairs.

Then in Jumādā II 709/November–December 1309, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was camped at Gaza with the Syrian forces preparing to march on Egypt, and important commanders were defecting to him from Cairo, Salār sent out a force to

¹² He appears only in brief text references, with no background given. See al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyah*, 32:127; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 4:427; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:34, 35, 60, 86.

¹³ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 385; idem, *Tuḥfah*, 178; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 4:348–49 and 4:377–78; see also al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyah*, 32:96, Author Z, *Beiträge*, 132 (in 705/1305–6, *sic*); for the house see al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 4:348; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:5–6. For the ranks of commanders see Ayalon, “Army—II,” 467–71.

¹⁴ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 382; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:9.

¹⁵ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyah*, 32:127–128, mentioning the “brothers” (*ikhwah*) but only Samūk by name; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 4:427 (albeit in 1306–7/706, citing Ibn Kathīr and mentioning all three brothers by name); Ismāʿīl Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah fī al-Tārīkh*, ed. Maktab Taḥqīq al-Turāth (Beirut, 1993), 14:50, albeit without mentioning the brothers—clearly a different version from the one al-ʿAynī was citing; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:34–35.

¹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:34–35.



pursue the defectors. This was composed of some of the commanders with their men, as well as Salār's own force of five hundred mamluks. Of the two leaders Salār appointed to this detachment, one was his brother Samūk.¹⁷ Although Samūk did not manage to apprehend the defectors, the fact that Samūk participated in a campaign as important as this on Salār's behalf suggests that neither Salār's brothers nor Salār himself saw their posts as nepotistic sinecures.

But the brothers' connections to Salār carried a price, since Salār's relatives also participated in his misfortune. When in 709/1310 the newly reinstated al-Nāṣir Muḥammad permitted Salār to go to Shawbak, the sultan also sent Salār's brother Jabā to Aleppo.¹⁸ But shortly thereafter when Muḥammad had Salār arrested, he also had all three of Salār's brothers detained, along with others of Salār's companions.¹⁹ Unlike Salār, however, some of these prisoners were fed while incarcerated, since at least two of the brothers, Dāwūd and Jabā, remained alive in prison until they were freed in 715/1315–16 (we do not know the fate of Samūk). Only Salār's mother appears to have suffered nearly as much as her son, as she herself died only a few days after he did; although since there is no evidence that she was imprisoned and starved as well, it seems more likely that she perished of grief.²⁰

YALBUGHĀ

The second case is Yalbughā al-Yahyāwī, who was one of the Khāṣṣakīyah commanders (i.e., in the personal retinue) for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.²¹ Unfortunately the sources provide not a word about his origins—not the chronicles, not the biographical dictionaries, nothing. Rather he appears to have sprung, fully-formed, out of the pages of the histories in the late 730s/1330s. By this point he was very close to the sultan—in fact, one author claims that Yalbughā was one of if not the closest of Muḥammad's personal retinue to him.²² Certainly signs of Muḥammad's favor towards Yalbughā were clear: in 738/1337–38 Muḥammad built a house and stable complex for Yalbughā below the citadel, even though it meant taking property away from other commanders.²³ On another occasion when Yalbughā fell seriously

¹⁷ The other was one Qutuz al-Fāriqānī. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:60.

¹⁸ He and other commanders were sent out via Damascus, then when they reached Aleppo the *ṭablakhānah* commanders were ordered to stay there for a full year, while the commanders of ten were recalled. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:76–77.

¹⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:86.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:88–8, 144.

²¹ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 5:585.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ See al-Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-Awlādihi*, ed. Barbara Schaefer (Wiesbaden, 1977), 25, saying only that the dispossessed was the commander Aydughmish and unnamed others; he also put the cost at forty million silver coins. Al-Maqrīzī says that Muḥammad built another house at the same time for the favored commander Altunbughā al-



ill and seemed near death, Muḥammad demonstrated his devotion by personally nursing him, refusing to leave the sickbed and neglecting other important duties until Yalbughā recovered.²⁴ Muḥammad celebrated Yalbughā's return to health by throwing a great party, paying off 30,000 silver coins worth of debt for debtors, freeing one lucky political prisoner, and giving Yalbughā lavish presents as a “welcome back” gesture.²⁵ Nor was this generosity towards Yalbughā unusual, since Muḥammad routinely showered him with quantities of gifts, cash, robes of honor, and horses.²⁶

After Muḥammad's death Yalbughā remained in favor for several years. First he requested and received the governorate of Hama from the sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl (r. 743–46/1342–45) in 743/1342–43.²⁷ Thereafter he was promoted to governor of Aleppo in summer 744/1343, then governor of all Syria at Damascus in fall 746/1345.²⁸ Although his next move was to rebel in Damascus against Ismā'īl's successor, the sultan al-Kāmil Sha'ḥbān (r. 746–47/1345–46), this turned out to be a shrewd decision, since his feelings were widely shared, and ultimately the Egyptian commanders replaced Sha'ḥbān with al-Muẓaffar Ḥājjī (r. 747–48/1346–47) in autumn 747/1346.²⁹

Māridānī, and adds as dispossessed the commanders Qawsun and Tashtamur al-Sāqī. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:438–39.

²⁴ Information about the event is scanty, and the dating is tricky. In his biography for Yalbughā, al-Ṣafadī claims that Muḥammad refused to go see his own son Ibrāhīm—ill with smallpox—while Yalbughā was sick; even when Ibrāhīm died, Muḥammad skipped the funeral in order to stay with the commander. In his biography for Ibrāhīm, however, al-Ṣafadī does not mention Yalbughā at all, but rather simply claims that Muḥammad refused to visit his son or let his other children visit, which implies that the isolation was motivated by fear of disease. Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 5:591–92 (Yalbughā's biography) and 1:120 (Ibrāhīm's biography). Since Ibrāhīm died in 1337–38/738, this would place Yalbughā's illness in that same year. By contrast, al-Maqrīzī puts Yalbughā's illness in 1339–40/740, does not mention Ibrāhīm, and instead claims that Muḥammad failed to go to the Palace of Justice (Dār al-ʿAdl) while Yalbughā was sick. Al-Maqrīzī also credits Yalbughā with taking the opportunity of his illness to convince Muḥammad to dismiss the extortionist financial official al-Nashw, despite al-Nashw's great influence and position in Muḥammad's administration. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:477, 490. (For al-Nashw, dismissed in 1339/740, see Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 149–55.) Regardless, both authors manage to suggest that Yalbughā's health was of great importance to Muḥammad.

²⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:491.

²⁶ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 5:585.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5:586; al-Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh*, 240; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:627, 634.

²⁸ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 5:586; al-Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh*, 257; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 627, 634 (Hama), 645–46 (Aleppo), 681–82 (Damascus).

²⁹ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 5:586–87; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:696–97, 732–33; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*, ed. Adnan Darwish (Damascus, 1977), 1:479; Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Jawhar al-Thamīn fī Siyar al-Mulūk wa-al-Salāṭīn*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl 'Izz al-Dīn 'Alī (Beirut, 1985), 185–86; see also Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 133–34.



Although Ḥājji confirmed Yalbughā as governor of Syria, some months later Yalbughā became uneasy about the sultan's pattern of arresting commanders.³⁰ He therefore rebelled again in early 748/spring 1347, but this time less successfully, since Ḥājji had indeed called for his arrest.³¹ Yalbughā therefore fled north from Damascus with his entourage, hoping to reach the area around Tabriz in former Ilkhanid territory.³² But his flight was a failure because the Bedouin of the region harassed him mercilessly, while the Syrian forces raced after him so closely that he was forced to abandon many of his supplies. After only a few days of this Yalbughā and his companions surrendered to the governor of Hama, who imprisoned some of them and sent Yalbughā and a few others to Cairo. Yalbughā did not make it to Egypt alive; he was intercepted and beheaded at Qāqūn in autumn 748/1347 by its governor, Manjak, who kept the body and forwarded only the head to the central authority.³³

As in the case of Salār, it is not Yalbughā's political rise and fall that is of interest, but rather the way his actions during the successful portion of his career allowed him to exercise the Extended Family Impulse. Although the beginning of Yalbughā's story is obscure, certainly by the time Muḥammad's favor for him became apparent in the late 730s/1330s Yalbughā was in a position to find a place in Mamluk territory for the family he had left behind in his homeland, wherever it was. It is unclear who first contacted whom. Some historians say that Yalbughā sent for his father, mother, and two brothers, while others say that Yalbughā's family heard of his success and volunteered to emigrate.³⁴ Either way, Yalbughā's relatives eventually joined him in Cairo in a reunion that was joyous all around and financially fruitful for Yalbughā's kin. Muḥammad made Yalbughā's father, one Tabata or Tabuta, a *ṭablakhānah* commander in Cairo in Jumādā II 739/January 1339.³⁵

³⁰ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 5:587–88.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 5:588; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:732–33.

³² 'Umar Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Wardī*, ed. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Sayyid Ḥasan al-Khurāsānī (Najaf, 1969), 2:494, says unspecifically that Yalbughā fled to the Mongols, which could mean the Chobanids or the Jalayirids in the Ilkhanid heartland or even, perhaps, the Uyghur Eretna in Anatolia. Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāyah*, 14:257, specifies a route that headed towards the Caucasus, not Anatolia (from Damascus towards al-Qaryatayn in the Syrian desert), which narrows it to the Chobanids or the Jalayirids. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:733, specifies that a report of Yalbughā's intention places the Chobanids as his goal.

³³ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 5:588–90.

³⁴ For the argument that Yalbughā brought his family see Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīkh*, 2:495, Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi wa-al-Mustawfā ba'da al-Wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Sa'īd 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1984–), 6:358; for the suggestion that they volunteered to come see al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:563; Aḥmad Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī Akhbār al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah* (Beirut: 1993), 2:213.

³⁵ Al-Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh*, 45.



Later, once Yalbughā was established as governor of Aleppo, Tabuta became a commander of one hundred—the highest rank—in Aleppo, while Yalbughā's two brothers, Asandamur and Qarakuz, each became *ṭablahkānah* commanders as well, as did an unidentified male relative and Yalbughā's oldest son, Amir Muḥammad, even though this last was only a child.³⁶ Thereafter the entire family accompanied Yalbughā to Damascus when he was transferred, where his father received a new position (it is unclear whether his brothers did as well, or just held their old ones in Aleppo in absentia).³⁷

Like Salār's family, Yalbughā's relatives shared in his misfortune: they joined him in his flight from Mamluk territory and were arrested with him by the governor of Hama. Yalbughā's father was even put in chains like his son and sent towards Egypt. But also as in Salār's case, the relatives did not suffer as much as the recalcitrant commander. When Yalbughā and his father reached Qāqūn, therefore, they were separated, with Tabuta going on first to Cairo and then to a three-month stint in prison in Alexandria, while Yalbughā's journey ended with his death in Qāqūn itself.³⁸

BARQŪQ

The third and final case involves the best known man of all three: the commander and then sultan Barqūq, who ruled in two nearly-consecutive reigns at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century (r. 784–91/1382–89, 792–801/1390–99). Barqūq was a Circassian mamluk from a commander's household, not the sultan's household, but despite this handicap he managed to become the strongest person in the sultanate by 782/1380. In 784/1382 Barqūq had enough support to depose the reigning Qalāwūnid sultan, al-Ṣāliḥ Ḥājjī (r. 783–84/1381–84), and become sultan himself, with the regnal title of al-Zāhir. Barqūq weathered the storms of factional struggle within the sultanate until 791/1389, when he was forced out by rebel commanders coming from Syria with the support of Anatolian Turkmen. Although the rebels reached Cairo, captured Barqūq, and imprisoned him in Karak, Barqūq managed to reinstate himself as sultan by Ṣafar 792/February 1390. He deposed Ḥājjī again, and had his chief rival, a commander named Mīntash, hunted down and killed. Barqūq then took the precaution of replacing many powerful commanders in Egypt and Syria with his own men, and thus enjoyed a strong grip on the sultanate until his death in Shawwāl 801/June 1399.³⁹

Even more clearly than Salār and Yalbughā, Barqūq displayed a distinct interest in biological family. Evidence of this is found in the lengths to which he went to

³⁶ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 5:587, 591; 2:563.

³⁷ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:563.

³⁸ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:563–64.

³⁹ For an outline of Barqūq's rise to power see Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 127–29.



establish his sons as his heirs and surround them with family, which suggests his invocation of the Dynastic Impulse.⁴⁰ In addition, in a clear case of the Extended Family Impulse, he exhibited an urge to reconnect with the biological family he had left behind when he entered the sultanate. This impulse appeared almost immediately after he took control in 782/1380, when he sent home to Circassia and summoned what appears to have been all of his surviving relatives to Cairo. They came in considerable numbers and were escorted by the same slave trader, Khwājā ‘Uthmān ibn Musāfir, who had originally brought Barqūq himself to Egypt.⁴¹ The delegation included Barqūq’s elderly father, Anaş; at least two of Barqūq’s sisters, one older than the sultan and one younger; and several of Barqūq’s nephews, as well as assorted additional relatives whose precise relationships to Barqūq are unknown.⁴²

The welcome that the delegation received was a public one, and it displayed a level of ceremony typically reserved for high-ranking members of the Mamluk administration, or for the most important foreign ambassadors. This set the tone for how Barqūq wanted the other Mamluk officers to view his family, and by extension himself. The focus of attention was Anaş, the patriarch, whom Barqūq met outside Cairo with an escort of all the Mamluk forces, dressed in their finest. After Barqūq greeted his father he conducted him to a tent that he had had set up, and seated Anaş in the highest place within it in the company of several important commanders. Since Barqūq at this point was still only a commander himself and not yet sultan, and perhaps in order to show respect to his father, he sat below Anaş as they all conversed (Anaş probably through a translator) and enjoyed a meal of fish, fruit, and sweets, which Barqūq had ordered for the occasion.⁴³ It is unclear where the rest of Barqūq’s relatives were during this—perhaps they also entered the tent, or perhaps they were seated nearby in suitable accommodations. Regardless, thereafter everyone rested for a few hours, then rode into the city in a grand procession through streets lighted with candles, in front of the assembled population, which had turned out to witness the spectacle. Thereafter Anaş (and the rest of the party) arrived at their lodgings, at which point the Qalāwūnid sultan Ḥājji gave Anaş a position as commander of one hundred, the highest of the commander ranks.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid., 178–79. I hope to address this example more fully in my upcoming article on the Dynastic Impulse.

⁴¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:105; see also Ayalon, *L’Esclavage du Mamelouk* (Jerusalem, 1951), 2.

⁴² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:112; 3:105; 3:482.

⁴³ It is a mystery why Barqūq chose to serve his father fish, since this was not a part of Circassian cuisine. Perhaps he wanted the novelty? For Circassian food in general see Amjad Jaimoukha, *The Circassians: A Handbook* (New York, 2001), 190.

⁴⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:105–6.



Unfortunately for Barqūq, if he had intended his father to play any real political role in the sultanate, this hope was dashed by his father's death of old age within a year of his arrival—one historian mentions that Anaş did not live to see his son become sultan.⁴⁵ Barqūq's luck was better with his younger relatives, among them a nephew, Baybars, son of Barqūq's younger sister, and a nephew or great-nephew, Sūdūn, son or grandson of Barqūq's older sister.⁴⁶ Both boys were raised in the Royal Harem with Barqūq's sons until they were old enough for Barqūq to take their training in hand personally. Barqūq started Baybars as a commander of 10.⁴⁷ When Barqūq was ousted in 791/1389 Baybars was arrested for his loyalty to his uncle, but was then freed as Barqūq made his comeback.⁴⁸ Later, when Barqūq led the Mamluk armies to Syria to hold off the invader Temür in 796/1394, he not only took Baybars with him, but honored him by assigning him to the vanguard sent to Aleppo, which seemed to be where Temür was most likely to attack.⁴⁹ Before his death in 801/1399 Barqūq made Baybars lord of the audience (*amīr majlis*), and then secretary of state (*dawādār*), both of which were among the highest offices for commanders.⁵⁰ Barqūq also granted Sūdūn a series of (unspecified) military posts until he became a commander of one hundred in Egypt in Şafar 800/October 1397.⁵¹

Perhaps because of the excellent foundation their uncle had given them, neither man's career suffered after Barqūq's death. Their cousin Faraj took over immediately as sultan. But since he was too young at the time to assert himself, he was advised by a collection of commanders, one of whom was his cousin Baybars, who remained secretary of state (*dawādār*). During Faraj's early reign Sūdūn was promoted to master of the royal stables (*amīr akhūr*), but was removed from office on charges of rebellion and sent to prison in Alexandria for a few months. Upon his return to Cairo, however, he was reinstated and even promoted to senior secretary of state (*dawādār kabīr*), replacing his cousin Baybars, who had become chief military commander (*atābak*).⁵² Shortly thereafter Sūdūn became governor of

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 3:106.

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, 3:481 (for Baybars) and 6:112 (for Sūdūn). Al-Maqrīzī calls Sūdūn nephew, not great-nephew, in *Sulūk*, 3:889, 921, 1072. Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi'* (Cairo, [n.d.]), 3:21 (for Baybars), 3:284 (for Sūdūn, whom he calls a great-nephew).

⁴⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:482.

⁴⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:691, 695.

⁴⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:814; al-Jawharī 'Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Şayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa al-Abdān fī Tawārīkh al-Zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1973), 1:388.

⁵⁰ Al-Şayrafī, *Nuzhah*, 1:460 (*amīr majlis*) and 1:461 (*dawādār*); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:482; for the translation see Holt, "Structure," 56; for offices in the Circassian period see Ayalon, "Army—III," 68.

⁵¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:112; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:889.

⁵² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:999, 1012; al-Şayrafī, *Nuzhah*, 2:133; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:112–13.



Syria, another strong position and one normally limited to mamluks, not their relatives. He held this post until he was killed in Temür's invasion of Syria in Rajab 803/February–March 1401.⁵³ Thereafter only Baybars remained as a major player in Mamluk politics until 1405–6/808, when he found himself caught opposing his ousted cousin Faraj. When Faraj made his comeback Baybars fought him as a representative of the new sultan, Faraj's younger brother 'Abd al-'Azīz, but he did so only halfheartedly. Perhaps as a result Baybars was captured and sent to Alexandria, where he died.⁵⁴

Those were the case studies; now, the conclusions. The first conclusion concerns the Mamluk system. As we know, this allowed for many possible personal relationships and their corresponding emotional connections, whether between or among mamluks, between patrons and clients, and among biologically unrelated members of the same household. Nevertheless this variety of relationships among unrelated members of the military elite did not always completely replace relations with biological families—at least, not in the minds of all mamluks. Instead, many manifested a desire to reunite with their biological families by sending back for them and then incorporating them into political networks in Egypt and Syria. The three case studies presented here represent particularly successful and visible examples of this Extended Family Impulse, but other important mamluks sought out their kin as well. Similarly, lower-ranking mamluks may well have had these impulses, but we do not know whether they were able to implement them.

A few examples should demonstrate the popularity of bringing family from home. One example from the 750s/1350s is the governor of Aleppo, Arghun al-Kāmilī, whose brothers and relatives had come from “home” and been appointed commanders (. . . *kāna li-arba'ah min ikhwatihi al-qādimīn min al-bilād wa-aqāribihi arba'ah imrāt*).⁵⁵ Another is the commander Ṭāz (d. 763/1362), lord of the audience (*amīr majlis*) and a major figure during the reigns of al-Muẓaffar Ḥājji and al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (r. 748–52/1347–51), whose father, Quṭghāj, and brother, Jarkas, came from the “lands of the Turks ([?] *bilād al-turk*) to Cairo in 752/1351–52. Quṭghāj then headed back home to bring the rest of the family to Egypt.⁵⁶ In the Circassian period, the commander and then sultan al-Zāhir Barsbāy (r. 825–41/1422–38)

⁵³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:113–15; see also Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 190.

⁵⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:482.

⁵⁵ Unfortunately we do not know any details about these positions. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:895.

⁵⁶ He died on the way and was buried in Ma'arrāh, where the governor of Aleppo built a tomb for him. Later Jarkas died and was interred in the same tomb; thereafter Ṭāz transferred both men's bodies to Cairo and constructed a new tomb for them there. The sources do not record whether the rest of the family ever arrived in Egypt. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:886–87. For Ṭāz see al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:567–71. See also al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:892, for the betrothal of an unnamed brother of Ṭāz, and al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, for the troubles of yet another brother, Jartamur (?).



brought relatives to Cairo from Circassia, two of whom—his elder brother Yashbak and another relative named Jānim—became commanders of one hundred.⁵⁷

Other mamluks clearly had family with them in Cairo, but we have no record of their arrival. One example from the 730s/1330s is the mamluk Almās (or Ulmās) the chamberlain (*ḥājib*), one of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s inner circle, who fell precipitously from favor and was executed in 734/1333, along with his brother, a commander of unknown rank named Qarā.⁵⁸ The death of their third brother, Mughultāy, who was known for building a mosque in Cairo, is unrecorded.⁵⁹ Apparently the family also included other relatives, but these were sent to Syria and “dispersed” (*ukhrija aqāribuhu ilā al-shām wa-furriqū*) at the time of Almās’s disgrace; thereafter only one, Sha‘bān, appears in the historical sources when he was freed from prison in 740/1339–40.⁶⁰ Similarly, Baybughā Arūs (d. 754/1354), vicegerent during the first reign of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan, made his brother Manjak (*akhuhu Manjak*) vizier and their careers intertwined significantly, but we do not know how or when Manjak came to Mamluk territory.⁶¹

Amalia Levanoni has collected numerous examples of the Extended Family Impulse among Circassian commanders.⁶² She suggests that the Circassian cultural practice of the *ataliqate*, or the fostering of children with other families, may have contributed to this phenomenon among Circassian mamluks in particular.⁶³ As the case studies and examples here show, however, this impulse was not restricted to Circassians, since any successful mamluk could employ it, and many did. Despite the prevalent expression of the Extended Family Impulse, a word of warning is in order. Although it is usually clear in the sources when commanders brought relatives from home, discerning the status of commanders’ brothers inside the sultanate is a far more complicated matter. Most recently Jo Van Steenberghe has cautioned

⁵⁷ Levanoni, “Sultan’s *Laqab*,” 81, 104, and footnote 121, citing Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhiraḥ fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhiraḥ* (Cairo, 1963–72), 14:291, 15:165; see also Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:217–19; al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʿ*, 3:63–64.

⁵⁸ Al-Ṣafādī, *Aʿyān*, 1:616–18, with “Almās” (on 616); al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:363, 365, 366, 375; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:89–91, with “Ulmās” (on 91).

⁵⁹ Al-Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh*, 116; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:545.

⁶⁰ Al-Ṣafādī, *Aʿyān*, 1:617; for the prison release see al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:491.

⁶¹ See al-Ṣafādī, *Aʿyān*, 2:87; 2:532–33; 5:440. In all of these, the two are not described as being like brothers (*mīthl*), but just as brothers.

⁶² I reproduce here footnote 122 from Levanoni, “Sultan’s *Laqab*,” 104, which directs the reader to the following additional examples: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ʿIzz al-Dīn (Cairo, 1990), 2:476; Muḥammad Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿīʿ al-Zuhūr fī Waqāʿiʿ al-Duhūr* (Cairo, 1982–84), 2:309, 319, 367, 369, 423, 430, 469; 3:104, 107, 110, 145, 153, 171, 175, 190, 213, 249, 276, 288, 298; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzḥah*, 3:258; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:346, 5:15, 327; 6:164–65, 186; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 8:396.

⁶³ Levanoni, “Sultan’s *Laqab*,” 108, note 143.



that the word “*akh*” or “brother” was sometimes used to denote not a biological relationship between two men who shared parents, but a fraternal-style relationship between two biologically unrelated mamluks. The historical sources designate this mamluk-style, non-biological brotherhood by using such phrases as “they were like (*mithlu*) brothers,” “he was like a brother to him,” “between them there was brotherhood,” etc.⁶⁴ By contrast, the designation of biological brotherhood seems to dispense with the “like brothers” phrasing. Nevertheless, a challenge for historians is discerning which type of “brother” is which when they encounter evidence of such relationships. Regardless, although mamluks did forge and maintain important relationships with other mamluks, some clearly refused to forget their original families. These reconnected with their kin as soon as they could, and they profited personally and even politically from the presence of biological relatives nearby.

The second conclusion is that for a relative, coming to join a mamluk promised at least a modest career. Rarely, however, were these careers glorious. One reason for the lack of significant career advancement was that the relatives’ link to their mamluk family member was a double-edged sword: although the connection brought jobs, family members were routinely punished along with their mamluk relative in times of disgrace. Nevertheless families usually suffered less for the crimes of individual commanders than the commanders themselves did, and even when commanders were executed for bad behavior, their families tended to be pardoned sooner or later. Thus whereas Salār and Yalbughā both died for their political machinations, Salār’s brothers were only imprisoned and later freed, while in Yalbughā’s case the family remained unmolested, other than the three months Yalbughā’s father spent in prison.

Another reason why male relatives of mamluk commanders did not advance to grand careers was their placement in the military hierarchy of the Mamluk Sultanate. As non-mamluks, they should only have received jobs in the auxiliary forces (*ḥalqah*). In the early years of the sultanate this was a significant part of the armies, and the corps included numerous immigrants, who were often politically and militarily important in those years. Nevertheless, the auxiliary forces overall were not as prestigious, well-compensated, or well-trained as the mamluk forces; furthermore, the auxiliaries deteriorated in quality and remuneration over time.⁶⁵

Unfortunately the sources do not always specify where relatives of mamluks were positioned; thus, although we may assume that their posts were in the auxiliaries in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we cannot be completely sure. It seems likely that Salār’s relatives received positions in the auxiliaries, despite his

⁶⁴ Jo Van Steenberg, *Order out of Chaos: Patronage, Conflict and Mamluk Socio-Political Culture, 1341–1382* (Leiden and Boston, 2006), 86–88, and especially footnotes 139 and 141.

⁶⁵ David Ayalon, “Army—II,” 448–56; idem, “The Auxiliary Forces of the Mamluk Sultanate,” *Der Islam* 65 (1988), 19–20, reprinted in his *Abode of War*.



own high position, because the auxiliaries were at their most prestigious then. And certainly Salār's brothers played active roles in factional struggles and were heavily involved with their brother's fortune, whether this was from the auxiliaries or not. The positions that Yalbughā's relatives received in Egypt and Syria may also have been in the auxiliary forces, but the information is too scanty to tell one way or the other. By contrast, Barqūq's nephew Baybars and great-nephew Sūdūn were an exception, since their jobs—constable (*amīr akhūr*), lord of the audience (*amīr majlis*), secretary of state (*dawādār*), chief military officer (*atābak*), governor of Syria—were reserved for the Mamluk military elite, not members of the auxiliaries. Such important positions did not normally go to relatives, and the fact that Baybars and Sūdūn held them attests to the strength of Barqūq's patronage.

The final conclusion, perhaps more tentatively drawn, is that individual mamluks maintained connections to the world outside the sultanate, despite their immersion in the complexity of the Mamluk system. In Salār's case, admittedly, contact with that world was limited—he lived during a time of open hostility between the Sultanate and the Ilkhanate, where his family was located, which may explain why he had no news of them for over thirty years. When he did contact them in Ilkhanid Anatolia, therefore, he had to do so secretly. By contrast, Barqūq lived in a time of relative peace, and appears to have maintained a link to his homeland, since he sent for his relatives openly as soon as he was in a position to do so, using the slave merchant who had brought him to Egypt.⁶⁶

But it was Yalbughā who boasted the most complex interactions with the world outside the sultanate, as reflected in his relationship to his biological family. Yalbughā appears to have kept a link to his relatives throughout his career, since news went back and forth between him and them even before they migrated to Cairo. But where was Yalbughā's family? The histories are silent, except for one late source, which mentions their origin in the land of the Mongols (*bilād al-tatar* or *al-tatār*).⁶⁷ I read this as Ilkhanid territory, not the Golden Horde, since this latter was usually designated as *bilād qifjāq*. Nor do I read it as more distant Mongol territories, since these were less frequently the source of mamluks. The personal names in the family were Turkish—Yalbughā, Asandamur, Qarakuz, Tabuta. The Ilkhanate was therefore a likely place of origin for Yalbughā, especially the northwestern Caucasus region, which contributed Circassians and other peoples to the slave trade. It is possible to imagine that if Yalbughā and his family came from the Ilkhanate, he may have enjoyed additional connections in Ilkhanid territory that the histories do not reveal.

⁶⁶ For the close relationship between a mamluk and his slave trader see David Ayalon, "Mamlūk: Military Slavery in Egypt and Syria," in his *Abode of War*, 10 (first full publication, abridged version in *EI2* 6, fasc. 103–4).

⁶⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:358.



But what would be the reason to imagine this? To answer, we must look more closely both at Yalbughā's career and at his other interactions with those outside the sultanate. From 744/1343 to 746/1345, Yalbughā was governor of Aleppo. This was an extremely important post for ambitious Mamluk commanders in the chaotic years after the death of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 741/1341, since the position was conducive to fomenting Syrian rebellions against Egypt. Earlier, during the first decades of the Mamluk sultanate, Mamluk commanders wishing to rebel against the sultan had looked to the Ilkhanids for military support.⁶⁸ But once the Ilkhanate began to disintegrate after 736/1335, it lost control of Anatolia, which allowed the Mamluks to acquire a number of useful vassals there, among them the Dulqadirid Turkmen. In the later eighth/fourteenth century every Mamluk rebel in Syria started as governor of Aleppo, which allowed him to call on Anatolian vassals such as the Dulqadirids for military support against Cairo. Commanders could also flee to Anatolia for refuge if events turned sour.

Yalbughā rebelled twice against the Mamluk sultan: once against al-Kāmil Shaḥbān in 746–47/1346, and later against al-Muẓaffar Ḥājji in 748/1347. Unlike all other Mamluk rebels in this period, however, Yalbughā did not turn to the Dulqadirids for support, perhaps because he had badly damaged his relations with them while he was governor of Aleppo.⁶⁹ As a result, when his second rebellion went poorly and he was forced to flee, Yalbughā instead looked to the region from which his family may have come: former Ilkhanid territory. He turned in particular to the Chobanids, with whom he tried to take refuge in 748/1347.⁷⁰

The Chobanids were a small dynasty of Mongols that emerged during the disintegration of the Ilkhanate. At the time of Yalbughā's flight from the sultanate, the Chobanids controlled the southern Caucasus and northwestern Iran, and maintained territorial interests in Anatolia.⁷¹ In addition to their location in what may have been his own homeland, Yalbughā may also have fled to the Chobanids because he was already in contact with them. In late summer 744/1343, when Yalbughā was a governor in either Hama or Aleppo, an ambassador from the Chobanid ruler Ḥasan ibn Temürtash (d. 744/1343) traveled through Syria on his way to Cairo.⁷² As a governor Yalbughā was responsible for hosting the ambassador both going to and

⁶⁸ Examples here include Sunqur al-Ashqar (against Qalāwūn); Qipchak and Baktimur al-Sāqī (against Lājīn); Qarasunqur (against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad).

⁶⁹ Anne F. Broadbridge, "Mamluk Ideological and Diplomatic Relations with Mongol and Turkic Rulers of the Near East and Central Asia (658–807/1260–1405)" (PhD. diss, University of Chicago, 2001), 199–203.

⁷⁰ See footnote 32 above.

⁷¹ Charles Melville and Abbas Zaryab, "Chobanids," *Encyclopedia Iranica* 5:496–502.

⁷² He was made governor of Aleppo in June–July 1343/Ṣafar 744 after the death of the previous governor, Altunbughā al-Māridānī. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:645–46.



coming from Egypt.⁷³ Since Mamluk protocol required him to interact with the ambassador, Yalbughā may have taken the opportunity to send a private message to Ḥasan.⁷⁴ His later attempt to flee with his family to the Chobanids suggests he believed in his chances of a good reception there.

Regardless of his destination, Yalbughā's situation suggests that he in particular, and individual mamluks in general, had more connections to the outside world than is usually acknowledged. These connections may have involved not only the extended families of mamluk commanders, but slave merchants, as in Barqūq's case, secret messengers, as in Salār's case, or perhaps formal ambassadors, as in Yalbughā's case. This indicates that scholars must look outside the sultanate even when investigating internal Mamluk politics. At times it is difficult to discern the outlines of these relationships, which makes the task harder. But since these connections did at times factor in to Mamluk political decisions, it is necessary to try.

To conclude: One previously understudied element in Mamluk politics is the category of biological relations that includes not a mamluk's offspring, but rather the biological family he left behind in the old country. I have called the interest that mamluks showed in reconnecting with their long-lost relatives the Extended Family Impulse, and I see it as a related, but relatively ignored subcategory within the general idea of what I have termed the Dynastic Impulse. I have suggested that some mamluks reconnected with their existing biological families for both personal and political gain. We see this phenomenon play out most frequently as part of Mamluk success stories, when commanders reached high political, military, and economic levels, then sent home to bring their families to Cairo. Once the relatives arrived, the Mamluk commanders found jobs for the men, who might attain considerable influence in Mamluk society, or, more often, remain undistinguished. Overall this suggests that while the Mamluk military system was inimical to the appeal of biological family, actual mamluks themselves were not, and in some cases they went to considerable lengths to surround themselves with their kin.

⁷³ Ambassadors from Ilkhanid or post-Ilkhanid territory usually entered the Mamluk Sultanate from the northeast, passing through Aleppo and the smaller cities to Damascus, from which they headed on to Cairo. For the ambassador see al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:648.

⁷⁴ Since Ḥasan died in 1343/744, his brother and successor, Malik Ashraf (r. 1343–57/744–58), would have received this.



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Climbing the Ladder: Social Mobility in the Mamluk Period

It is often said that the civilian sector of Mamluk society was relatively egalitarian with no strong barriers to social advancement. The social group of ulama (scholars) has been considered a particularly open group, whose membership was based on scholarly merit, whereas social origin played a less significant role.¹ This view was modified by Ulrich Haarmann, who showed that the ulama were not very eager to accommodate descendants of mamluks into their ranks. The sons of mamluks were wealthy enough to devote time to scholarship, but the established scholars tended to hold their foreign background against them.²

This article examines how difficult it was for sons of commoners to gain fame as scholars or to be included among the civilian notables through other merits. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s biographical dictionary *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A‘yān al-Mi’ah al-Thāminah*³ describes the lives and careers of notables of the eighth/fourteenth century. Among them there are individuals who were of commoner origin, but their number is quite small, which indicates that even though upward social mobility was possible, a commoner only rarely reached the status of a notable.

The fact that Ibn Ḥajar makes it a point to mention commoner origin of the person described clearly shows that the information was considered relevant. Especially the inclusion of the father’s non-scholarly occupation shows that lineage did indeed matter. Why else should he mention that someone’s father is “said to have been a porter?”⁴ In addition, I found three occasions where Ibn Ḥajar describes the commoners in a way that shows clear prejudice. First, in his entry on the poet Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Alī al-Mi‘mār Ghulām al-Nūrī, Ibn Ḥajar states that “even

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¹Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge, 1994), 64: “the recruitment of the learned elite was relatively open, and the circulation of individuals . . . was rapid.” Also Ira Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA, 1967), 107–10, describes the ulama as a group that was open to anyone devoted to learning.

²Ulrich Haarmann, “Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage: Mamluks and their Sons in the Intellectual Life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33 (1988): 81–114; and idem, “Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: The Arab Image of the Turk from the ‘Abbasid to Modern Egypt,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 20 (1988): 175–96.

³Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A‘yān al-Mi’ah al-Thāminah*, ed. al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wārith Muḥammad ‘Alī (Beirut, 1997); idem, *Dhayl al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A‘yān al-Mi’ah al-Thāminah*, ed. al-Shaykh Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī (Beirut, 1998).

⁴Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 4:158.

though he was a commoner, Ibrāhīm was intelligent and talented and had a pleasant character.”⁵ Similarly, the poet Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Ghālib is characterized as “a good poet, though a commoner.”⁶ Finally, an obviously unpopular *muḥtasib* Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī is described as “a commoner, uncouth and boorish.”⁷

This leads to the question: how did the commoners manage to overcome social barriers and enter the ranks of the notables? To examine the individual strategies of social advancement, I looked into the career patterns of persons who started their lives as commoners or whose fathers had belonged to the common people.

THE COMMONERS IN IBN ḤAJAR’S DICTIONARY

‘Āmmah, the commoners, were a broad social group that Ira Lapidus has further subdivided into three categories. The first category consisted of respectable shopkeepers, physicians, craftsmen, and workers. Below them were the disreputable: those who engaged in trades that were considered to be morally suspect or were connected with substances seen as impure, for example usurers, money changers, butchers, tanners, etc. The lowest strata consisted of vagabonds, prostitutes, beggars, and others who lived on the fringe of society.⁸

In sifting through Ibn Ḥajar’s material and selecting relevant biographical entries, I followed certain parameters. First, I limited my selection to persons living in Mamluk Syria and Egypt. Second, I picked out persons who themselves or whose fathers had earned their livelihoods by a trade, placing them in the social class of commoners. It must be underlined that I only selected the persons whose trades are explicitly mentioned by Ibn Ḥajar.⁹ The same applies to the fathers’ trades. I excluded the cases where the trade is only given as a patronymic forming a part of the person’s name rather than mentioning the actual profession of the father.

It was easy to include the various artisans: the tailors (*khayyāṭ*), carpenters (*najjār*), stonemasons (*ḥajjār*), and porters (*ḥammāl*) clearly belong to the commoners. In addition, I selected those who worked as doorkeepers (*bawwāb*), sweepers (*farrāsh*), or caretakers (*qayyim*) in mosques, tombs, or madrasahs. They were the lowest paid employees of the religious institutions, but even though they worked among the scholars, they were not necessarily scholars themselves. I also included muezzins, when it is the only occupation given or when it occurs together with a craft.

Merchants (*tājir*) form a problematic group because the social status of a merchant depended on his wealth, and that again depended on what was traded. A

⁵ Ibid., 1:35, no. 129.

⁶ Ibid., 4:285, no. 5244.

⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Dhayl*, 212, no. 538.

⁸ Ira Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 80–85.

⁹ The trade appears together with verbs such as *kāna*, *iktasaba*, *ta‘ānā*, etc.

spice merchant or jeweler could easily be counted among the notables, whereas a trader in cotton or soap was less likely to become wealthy enough. I included as shopkeepers the merchants who were said to work in shops or who were reported to sell daily necessities, but I omitted the entries where Ibn Ḥajar does not specify the merchant's activities. Physicians (*ṭabīb*) and oculists (*kaḥḥāl*) are equally problematic because, like the merchants, they could belong either to the common people or the elite. Their social status depended on their clientele: those treating members of the elite had a higher status than those whose patients represented a more modest segment of the population. As Ibn Ḥajar does not usually give any details on the type of patients, I decided to exclude the two medical professions.

In this way, I managed to find ninety relevant biographies among the 5,962¹⁰ persons portrayed in the dictionary. This number is not an exact figure, partly due to my own exclusions and partly due to the fact that Ibn Ḥajar does not always provide information on the livelihoods of the persons. However, even though the quantification remains inexact, the very small number clearly indicates that upward social mobility was difficult and infrequent. This is consistent with the conclusion presented in my earlier study of contemporary popular literature. The stories analyzed portray a rather rigid social system in which advancement was rare and social ambition was seen as a negative characteristic.¹¹

BASIS OF FAME: LONGEVITY

The overwhelming majority of the commoners included in Ibn Ḥajar's dictionary were *muḥaddiths*, transmitters of traditions. Their fame rested in their ability to memorize hadiths and to pass them on to others. To memorize hadiths was considered a religious merit, and according to one of the hadiths, the Prophet had said: "Anyone who preserves forty beneficial traditions for my *ummah* will be asked to enter paradise from any door he wishes."¹²

A *muḥaddith* needed a good retentive memory but, apart from basic literacy, no further learning was necessary. However, memorization alone was not enough to guarantee fame; to become truly successful, a *muḥaddith* needed an appreciative audience that found him or her worth listening to. Ibn Ḥajar mentions that Egyptian scholars crowded around Ḥasan ibn 'Umar,¹³ listening avidly to his transmission. They had realized his value as a transmitter in 713, when he had reached the age of eighty or eighty-one. According to Ibn Ḥajar, some students had come across Ḥasan's name in *isnāds* and, after ascertaining his advanced age, set out to find him.

¹⁰ The four volumes of *Al-Durar* contain 5,323 entries, and *al-Dhayl* contains 639 entries.

¹¹ Irmeli Perho, "The Arabian Nights as a Source for Daily Life in the Mamluk Period," *Studia Orientalia* 85 (1999): 139–62.

¹² Khalid Alavi, "Concept of Arba'īn," *Islamic Studies* 22, no. 3 (1983): 75–78.

¹³ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 2:18–19, no. 1546: Ḥasan ibn 'Umar ibn 'Īsā ibn Khalīl ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kurḏī Abū 'Alī, d. 720/1320.

The scholars began frequenting Ḥasan, and for the last years of his life, he became a focus of scholarly attention.

The foundations for Ḥasan's fame were laid in his childhood by his father, a sweeper and a caretaker at a mausoleum (*turbah*) in Damascus. The father was aware of the prestige in being a *muḥaddith*, and he took care to introduce his son, at a very early age, to scholars. Ibn Ḥajar mentions 'Alī ibn al-Lātī as the boy's first teacher and, according to al-Ṣafadī, Ḥasan was only three years old when he heard hadiths from al-Lātī.¹⁴ Ḥasan not only learned hadiths but also memorized works on *fiqh* and *tafsīr*. Ḥasan's studies in these subjects also seem to have begun very early. Ibn Ḥajar informs us that Ḥasan learned al-Mālik's *Al-Muwatta'* from Mukarram ibn Muḥammad, who died in 635/1238 when Ḥasan was not more than five or six years old.¹⁵

It was important for an aspiring *muḥaddith* to listen to already-famous *muḥaddiths* and to secure an *ijāzah* to transmit the texts further. The teacher should preferably be a very old shaykh because this limited the number of transmitters included in the *isnād* of the hadiths. The length of the *isnād* was seen as an important factor guaranteeing the reliability of the transmission: the shorter the *isnād*, the closer the text was to the original. To reach this goal, old renowned *muḥaddiths* gave *ijāzahs* to very young children even though it is obvious that the children could not have earned them by actually memorizing the texts. In spite of this, the practice was considered acceptable because it was seen to enable the direct transmission of hadiths from a passing generation to an emerging one. The child who gained the *ijāzah* was expected to memorize the hadiths when growing up.¹⁶ This must also have been the case with Ḥasan because he cannot have been able to learn any texts at the age of three, when he became a pupil of al-Lātī's.

As an adult, Ḥasan moved from Damascus to Cairo and opened a paper shop in Giza at the gate of the main mosque (*jāmi'*). He also functioned as a muezzin in a minor mosque. Then finally, he was "found" by the Egyptian scholars and gained a large scholarly audience. He had outlived many of his contemporaries and had become the last person in Egypt to transmit directly from the old Damascene shaykhs

¹⁴ According to Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, vol. 12, ed. Ramaḍān 'Abd al-Tawwāb (Wiesbaden, 1979), 195, the father took his son to hear Ibn al-Lātī when the son was in his fourth year (*fi al-rābi'ah*).

¹⁵ Ḥasan ibn 'Umar was born 629 or 630. Mukarram ibn Muḥammad's date of death (Rajab 2, 635/1238) is mentioned in Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, ed. Bashshār 'Awād Ma'rūf and Muḥyī Hilāl al-Sirḥān (Beirut, 1998), 23:34, no. 85.

¹⁶ Asma Sayeed, "Women and Hadith Transmission: Two Case Studies from Mamluk Damascus," *Studia Islamica* 95 (2002): 88. Sayeed refers to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1070) and Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūri (d. 643/1245) as scholars who had considered the practice acceptable.

that he had listened to when he was still a child.¹⁷ Ḥasan is a typical example of a famous *muḥaddith*: he started very young and had a very long life.

Ḥasan's *kunya* was Abū 'Alī, but Ibn Ḥajar does not record 'Alī's biography. One of the problems in using a biographical dictionary as a source is the difficulty in finding the children. The biographies are organized according to the first name of the person, followed by his father's name, grandfather's name, etc. It is easy enough to go backwards along the lineage, whereas going forwards is practically impossible if the entry does not give the first name of the son or sons. The *kunya* is sometimes given, but that is only helpful if it really does refer to the son who earned fame enough to be included in the dictionary. If one of the other sons became famous, or if the *kunya* was just a cognomen that did not refer to any actual son, it leads to a blind alley.¹⁸

In Ḥasan's case, 'Alī's biography is not included in the dictionary, and I skimmed the dictionary for sons with a different first name but found none. Ḥasan may—like his own father—have introduced his son or sons, at an early age, to scholars, but it seems that the sons were not as lucky as the father had been in combining longevity with interesting *ijāzahs*, a circumstance that would assure fame and prestige.

GRADUAL MOBILITY

Sometimes Ibn Ḥajar gives enough information to enable us to establish a family line of several generations and to examine the developments in the social status of the family members. In Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad's case, it is possible to follow a family of *muḥaddiths* from Ibrāhīm to his son Muḥammad and grandson 'Abd Allāh. The biographies attest that the social advancement attained by the family in the three generations was modest, and that a family member's notability continued to rest on his activities as a *muḥaddith*. The slowness of the process and the very small steps taken presumably reflect the reality for most families attempting to climb the social ladder.

Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad¹⁹ was the head of the muezzins in the Umayyad mosque of Damascus and was famous for his beautiful voice. Apart from his professional duties as a muezzin, he memorized hadiths and obviously managed to get some

¹⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 2:18.

¹⁸ According to A. J. Wensinck, "Kunya," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 5:396, the *kunya* could be given by parents to a child and therefore did not necessarily correspond to reality. Richard W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History* (Cambridge, MA, 1972), 87, notes that euphony and historical connections often governed the choice of *kunya*.

¹⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 1:38–39, no. 149: Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Wānī al-Khallāṭī al-Hamdānī Burhān al-Dīn al-Dimashqī. Year of death is not given here, but in the entry of the son (*ibid.*, 3:178), the year 735/1334 is given as the year of death of both father and son.

fame as a transmitter because he is associated with some well-known scholars. Ibn Ḥajar mentions that his own teacher, Burhān al-Shāmī,²⁰ had gained an *ijāzah* from Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad.

Ibrāhīm's contacts with scholars enabled him to assure that his son, Muḥammad,²¹ began to learn hadiths quite early. He is known to have attended transmission sessions in 694 when he was ten years old. Later, he travelled to Aleppo, Mecca, Medina, and Cairo to learn from the local *muḥaddiths*. Muḥammad gained a reputation as a hard-working student, and Ibn Ḥajar quotes Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī's positive comments on Muḥammad's intelligence and cheerful nature. Muḥammad seems to have acted as a muezzin like his father but, in addition, he broadened his scholarly activities by serving as *shāhid* (notary) for a short time. Muḥammad did not live to be very old but died at the age of fifty, in 735, only a month after his father's death. Ibn Ḥajar reports that, after his death, Muḥammad appeared to someone in a dream informing him about the situation of some others in heaven. The fact that this type of report is included in the biographical entry indicates that Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm had managed to gain a fair amount of prestige in his lifetime. A further indication of Muḥammad's fame is that al-Maqrīzī included an obituary about him in his chronicle *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Maʿrifat Duwal al-Mulūk*.²²

Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm's son 'Abd Allāh²³ followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather and built up a career as a *muḥaddith*, first by memorizing hadiths transmitted by local authorities and later by increasing his repertory through independent study. Ibn Ḥajar praises 'Abd Allāh's keen wit and ability as a fast and fluent reader. Ibn Ḥajar's entry on 'Abd Allāh is very short and gives little information, but there is some indication that 'Abd Allāh occupied himself as a copyist.²⁴ Copying was a respectable scholarly occupation and may be considered an advancement if compared to the father's temporary employment as *shāhid*. In spite of this advancement, the extreme brevity of Ibn Ḥajar's entry indicates that 'Abd Allāh's fame did not reach the level of his father's.

'Abd Allāh's *kunyah* is Abū Muḥammad, but no son of that name is included in Ibn Ḥajar's biography, nor can he be found in the dictionary covering the ninth/fif-

²⁰ Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Dā'ūd al-Shāmī (d. 797/1395); his biography is in *ibid.*, 1:22, no. 61.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3:178–79, no. 3416: Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Wānī Amīn al-Dīn thumma al-Dimashqī al-Ḥanafī al-Mu'adhdhin Abū 'Abd Allāh, d. 735/1334.

²² Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Maʿrifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyādah (Cairo, 1942), 2:388.

²³ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 2:172, no. 2197: 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Wānī Sharaf al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī, d. eighth century. Only the century is given for the death year.

²⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *ibid.*, mentions that 'Abd Allāh "*amila Arbaʿin Buldānīyah*," which must mean that he made a copy of the book. Ibn Ḥajar does not explicitly mention that he made copying his trade.

teenth century written by Ibn Ḥajar's pupil, Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī.²⁵ 'Abd Allāh was less famous than his father, but his son seems to have totally dropped out from the ranks of the notables.

The three biographies show a slow change in the status of the family, but for all of them—father, son, and grandson—the most important aspect of their careers was their activity as *muḥaddiths*. The shift from being employed as *shāhid* to occupying oneself as a copyist can be described as a slight advancement, but none of them took steps towards more demanding branches of scholarship, which could have led them to endowed positions within the madrasah system or judiciary. The reason cannot have been a lack of talent because Ibn Ḥajar has recorded the scholars' explicit praise for Muḥammad and 'Abd Allāh.

The reason may have been that the family lacked the necessary network to secure appointments. As *muḥaddiths*, they had contacts with the scholarly world and even enjoyed some fame, but this was obviously not enough to attract the attention of patrons who would have promoted their scholarly careers. The necessity of such patronage is amply attested by a large number of biographies included in Ibn Ḥajar's dictionary. Further, the established scholarly families were able to promote their members; other studies have shown that some families formed dynasties that in practice monopolized certain high-status appointments.²⁶ Those common people able to enter the scholarly circles had to invest time in forming the necessary connections in order to move from the margins to more prestigious positions. The case of Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad and his son and grandson shows that even the span of three generations was not enough to create an effective scholarly network that would have secured the upward mobility of the family and finally established it as one of the scholarly families. As it is, the second generation—represented by Muḥammad—was the one to gain the highest acclaim, and the status was to some extent kept up by the third generation, whereas the fourth generation again disappears into anonymity.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKS: FROM TURNER TO QADI

The biography of Muḥammad ibn Salmān²⁷ presents a case where the information is detailed enough to explain how he managed to create a scholarly career in spite of his modest starting point as an artisan. According to Ibn Ḥajar, Muḥammad ibn Salmān came to Ḥamāh from the east as a child, together with his father. Muḥammad learned the trade of a turner (an artisan who crafts objects on a lathe) but later be-

²⁵ Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw' al-Lāmi' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi'* (Cairo, n.d.).

²⁶ A well-known scholarly family dynasty was Banū Jamā'ah, who held the office of Shāfi'i *qādī al-quḍāh* in Egypt for more than half a century; see Kamal S. Salibi, "The Banū Jamā'a: A Dynasty of Shāfi'ite Jurists in the Mamluk Period," *Studia Islamica* 9 (1958): 98.

²⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Dhayl*, 96–97, no. 214: Muḥammad ibn Salmān ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥamawī thumma al-Ḥalabi Shams al-Dīn al-Kharrāt, d. 806/1403.

came interested in scholarship. Ibn Ḥajar reports that he became a proficient scholar in a short time. He married the sister of one of his teachers, Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥamawī (d. 809/1407).²⁸ He studied law and was appointed assistant judge (*nā'ib al-qāḍī*) in Aleppo in 776. After serving in that capacity for some time, he was appointed judge (*qāḍī*). He was also an overseer (*wālī*) of several madrasahs. Ibn Ḥajar mentions further that Muḥammad ibn Salmān had two famous sons. Both of them, Muḥammad and 'Abd al-Raḥmān, were known as skilled poets, and one of the sons, 'Abd al-Raḥmān, inherited his father's position as a judge when the father died in 806.

Muḥammad ibn Salmān's remarkable advancement from artisan to judge deserves closer study. Ibn Ḥajar gives Muḥammad's name as Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Salmān ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥamawī thumma al-Ḥalabī. Al-Sakhāwī mentions Muḥammad ibn Salmān in *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, where he adds the *nisbahs* al-Ḥarrānī and al-Shāfi'ī to his name.²⁹ Further information on Muḥammad's ancestors is found in al-Sakhāwī's entries for Muḥammad's two sons. According to al-Sakhāwī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān was the eldest son, and his mother was Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf's sister. 'Abd al-Raḥmān's great-grandfather's father is given as al-Qāḍī al-'Allāmah Shams al-Dīn al-Marwazī.³⁰ The genealogy shows the family's origin in the east, first in Merv and then in Ḥarrān, and places it socially among the scholarly families. The advance of the Mongols must have forced the family to move westward and brought Muḥammad's father to Ḥamāh.

It is likely that Muḥammad's career was assisted by the fact that he belonged to a scholarly family. His father was a newcomer, and Muḥammad had to begin with learning an artisan trade but was soon able to devote himself to scholarship. His career was boosted by his marriage into a local scholarly family, an occurrence indicating that he was accepted as a member of the scholarly class. Otherwise, such a marriage between an artisan and a sister of a scholar would have been unlikely. It may well be that the scholarly credentials of Muḥammad's family were recognized and helped him to attain the marriage connection.³¹ The new family alliance must have played a part in securing him his appointments in the judiciary.

²⁸ Ibid., 129, no. 298. In Muḥammad ibn Salmān's biography, Ibn Ḥajar states only that he became related by marriage to Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf (ṣāharahu), but al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, 7:255, no. 643, mentions that Muḥammad married Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf's sister.

²⁹ Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, 7:255.

³⁰ Ibid., 4:130, no. 343. The great-grandfather is given as Abū al-Faḍl Zayn al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh in *ibid.*, but as Shams al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh in *ibid.*, 9:83, no. 234.

³¹ It is interesting to note that the earlier source, Ibn Ḥajar, does not mention the scholarly ancestry of Muḥammad ibn Salmān, but it is found in al-Sakhāwī's *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, a later source. It is possible that the family tree grew backwards only later and Muḥammad's marriage depended only on his personal relationship to Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf.

The importance of family relationships is further underlined by the fact that Muḥammad's eldest son, 'Abd al-Raḥmān, inherited his father's position at the latter's death. 'Abd al-Raḥmān was also a poet and earned fame by his literary activities. He eventually settled in Cairo, and Ibn Taghrībirdī mentions that 'Abd al-Raḥmān recited a *qaṣīdah* celebrating the conquest of Cyprus to Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Barsbāy in 829. In Cairo, 'Abd al-Raḥmān was able to attain high administrative positions,³² but his fame seems to have rested mainly on his poetic talents; in the obituary, Ibn Taghrībirdī focuses on his abilities as a great poet.³³

The younger son, Muḥammad, gained fame as a poet after settling in Cairo in 815.³⁴ Al-Sakhāwī's entry on Muḥammad is relatively short, but he reports that Muḥammad's poetry was appreciated by the scholars. He also mentions that Muḥammad entered into the administration in Cairo and gained a position in the *dīwān al-inshā'*. Muḥammad died of the plague in 823/1420.³⁵

Presumably due to their family connections in Syria, the brothers were able to attain the notice of the Shafi'i scholar Nāṣir al-Dīn Ibn al-Bārizī (d. 823/1420). He was a friend of Amir al-Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī, who became sultan al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh in 815/1412.³⁶ According to al-Sakhāwī, the younger of the two brothers, Muḥammad, came to Cairo together with Ibn al-Bārizī and was his close companion (*muqarrab*). It must have been Ibn al-Bārizī who used his connections with the Mamluk elite to secure Muḥammad's first administrative appointment in Cairo.³⁷ When 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the elder brother, arrived in Cairo, Ibn al-Bārizī seems to have also helped him to launch his administrative career in the *dīwān al-inshā'*.³⁸

None of the sources that I have used mention the names of 'Abd al-Raḥmān's and Muḥammad's children, and this has prevented me from finding out information on the next generation. However, the children must have received a good education

³² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt et al. (Cairo, 1963–72), 14:296, mentions that 'Abd al-Raḥmān was *muwaqqi' al-dast*. Maya Schatzmiller, *Labour in the Medieval Islamic World* (Leiden, 1994), 155, translates the title *muwaqqi' al-dast* as "scribe for Royal Bench in the Palace of Justice."

³³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 15:205–6.

³⁴ Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, 9:138.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 9:83–84, no. 234.

³⁶ Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Bārizī's biography is in al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, 9:137–38, no. 350. His friendship with Amir al-Shaykh is mentioned in Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 13:80; and al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, 9:137–38, mentions that Ibn al-Bārizī came to Cairo in the company of Amir al-Shaykh in 815.

³⁷ Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, 9:83–34.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4:130, no. 343. Al-Sakhāwī mentions that 'Abd al-Raḥmān entered the *dīwān al-inshā'* "in the days of Nāṣir al-Dīn Ibn al-Bārizī."

and had ample opportunities to benefit from their fathers' networks and to continue in their footsteps in the scholarly world.

TALENT COMBINED WITH PATRONAGE

Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf³⁹ represents a case where talent, initial wealth, and timely patronage formed the ingredients of success. Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf was born in al-Jazīrah as a son of a money changer (*ṣayraftī*). The trade of a money changer was one of the disreputable professions, carrying the taint of illegal gain. Ibn Ḥajar mentions the father's trade but then underlines that Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf came to Egypt alone (*mujarrad*), obviously leaving his disreputable father behind in al-Jazīrah. He settled in Qūṣ and began to pursue studies in various fields. Ibn Ḥajar is silent on Muḥammad's finances and does not mention his having any employment or learning any trade. Presumably, his father's trade had provided Muḥammad with enough wealth to enable him to concentrate on studies. Only when Muḥammad moved to Cairo did he attain endowed teaching appointments at various madrasahs. Muḥammad seems to have been quite a versatile scholar who was not only interested in religious sciences but also in *adab*, logic, and mathematics. It must have been these three last-mentioned subjects that he was teaching to Christian and Jewish students as well as to Muslim students.

In Cairo, Muḥammad became a companion of Amir Baybars al-Jāshnakīr (d. 709/1310), and Ibn Ḥajar mentions that Baybars' patronage improved Muḥammad's status. It must have been due to Amir Baybars that Muḥammad was appointed preacher at the Citadel's mosque. Patronage was often a necessary requirement for securing high-status appointments, but patrons could prove fickle. Amir Baybars had another favorite, Naṣr ibn Salmān al-Manbijī, who had founded a *zāwiyah* at Bāb al-Naṣr in Cairo. Naṣr was originally a *faqīh* but came to prefer the life of a Sufi ascetic, and according to Ibn Ḥajar, Naṣr had an influence over Baybars, who relied on him. Naṣr became very influential during the short period when Baybars was sultan (708–9/1309–10).⁴⁰ Ibn Ḥajar informs us that Naṣr conspired against Muḥammad. It may well be that Muḥammad's interest in non-religious subjects such as logic and mathematics, combined with the denominational diversity of his pupils, led Naṣr to dislike him. Naṣr's influence caused Baybars to abandon his protégé, and as a consequence Muḥammad was expelled from his position as the preacher at the Citadel's mosque. When Baybars's reign ended, Muḥammad's fortunes again improved, and he was appointed preacher at the mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn.

³⁹ Ibid., 4:183, no. 4810: Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Jazarī.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 4:240, no. 5056.

‘Alī ibn Muḥammad’s⁴¹ biography forms another case where Mamluk patronage explains at least some of the success. ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad was born in Baalbek as a son of a butcher (*laḥḥām*). The father died when ‘Alī was a baby, and he was raised by his maternal uncle, who taught him to work with linen. According to Ibn Ḥajar, ‘Alī later became interested in scholarship and began to study Hanbali law. Ibn Ḥajar does not tell how it was possible for a linen worker to change his career in this way, but it can be assumed that ‘Alī had managed to gain enough wealth to be able to devote his time to studying. ‘Alī excelled in his studies, and he is known to have written books on *uṣūl al-fiqh*.⁴² His talents were obviously recognized by the Damascene scholarly community because Ibn Ḥajar reports that he functioned both as a teacher and *muftī*. At some point, ‘Alī was appointed assistant judge (*nāba fī al-ḥukm*). He was therefore already a well-established scholar when Timur Lenk’s occupation of Aleppo in 803 made him leave Damascus and settle in Cairo. Upon his arrival in Cairo, he gained a teaching position at al-Manṣūrīyah, and a few months later, shortly before his death,⁴³ he was offered a position as judge, which he declined.

This last stage of his career is described by al-Maqrīzī, who reports that ‘Alī was acquainted with the Mamluk amir Yashbak al-Dawādār, who acted as his patron in Cairo, but he does not give any information on how ‘Alī had been able to attract the amir’s attention.⁴⁴ Ibn Ḥajar does not mention any Syrian patrons or family connections that would explain ‘Alī’s obvious success in Syria, but he reports that ‘Alī gave sermons (*wa‘aẓa*) at the Umayyad mosque. It may well be that his preaching activities attracted the attention of local Mamluk notables, who then helped him to gain the appointment as assistant judge. These Mamluk contacts would then later have secured him the attention of Amir Yashbak.

Not all talented commoners were fortunate enough to attract the attention of well-connected patrons. Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar⁴⁵ was the son of a baker, but he had a paralyzed hand, a condition that prevented him from learning his father’s trade. Instead, Muḥammad turned to scholarship at an early age. Muḥammad chose to study Shafi‘i law⁴⁶ and, like the above-mentioned ‘Alī, became so accomplished that he

⁴¹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Dhayl*, 62, no. 121: ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbās ibn Fityān al-Ba‘lī thumma al-Dimashqī al-Ḥanbalī ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn al-Laḥḥām, d. 803/1401.

⁴² Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *Al-A‘lām* (Beirut, 1995), 5:7.

⁴³ According to Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Dhayl*, 62, he died on *‘Īd al-Aḍḥā*, whereas al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 3:1072, places the death two months earlier, on *‘Īd al-Fiṭr*.

⁴⁴ In al-Maqrīzī, *ibid.*, 1059, his arrival to Cairo is noted as coming “*ilā ‘indi al-amīr Yashbak al-Dawādār*.” The Amir was Yashbak al-Sha‘bānī who was Lālā of Sultan Faraj.

⁴⁵ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 4:72, no. 4293: Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Khabbāz al-Dimashqī, d. 752/1352.

⁴⁶ Ibn Ḥajar does not specifically mention the law school, but Muḥammad studied with the Shafi‘i scholars Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī Kamāl al-Dīn al-Zamlakānī (d. 727/1327) and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn

was given permission to issue fatwas. Ibn Ḥajar further mentions that Muḥammad wrote books and praises the good quality of his work. In spite of these obvious assets, Muḥammad does not seem to have functioned as a teacher or judge, thus never attaining endowed positions. Muḥammad may just have been less lucky, or he may not have had as likeable a personality as ‘Alī and thus remained unable to form the connections required for gaining appointments. A possible reason for this could be Muḥammad’s fame as a good impersonator, noted by Ibn Ḥajar (*la-hu qudrah ‘alá al-muḥākāh*). This must have been a significant characteristic because Ibn Ḥajar includes it in the few lines that constitute the entry on Muḥammad’s life. Muḥammad’s impersonations may have caused offense and formed an impediment to his career.

ACQUIRED WEALTH AS THE SOURCE OF FAME

In some cases, the accumulation of wealth secured a commoner a place among the notables. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Maṣṣūr⁴⁷ was the son of a Jewish convert to Islam, and he began his career as a tailor. It was a profession that he may have learned from his father, though Ibn Ḥajar does not mention the father’s occupation. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s customers seem to have been rather wealthy because tailoring brought him into contact with silk merchants. According to Ibn Ḥajar, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz realized that he would have a chance to improve his status if he involved himself in the silk trade; he therefore took up an offer to join a trade caravan traveling from Aleppo to northern China.⁴⁸ The tour was successful, and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz returned with a large quantity of silk, which formed the foundation of his subsequent wealth. The risk ‘Abd al-‘Azīz had taken in joining the trade expedition paid off; instead of remaining a poor tailor, he became a wealthy man, as evidenced by the fact that his income tax (*maks*) from one year amounted to forty thousand dinars. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz lived up to the expectations that society had of wealthy members by giving generously to charities, paying his *zakāt* dutifully, and establishing various pious foundations (*waqf*).

Muḥammad ibn Musallim⁴⁹ also made his large fortune on trade. The foundations of Muḥammad’s success were laid by his father, who started as a porter but managed somehow to gain some wealth and marry into a wealthy merchant family. Muḥammad was raised in circumstances that Ibn Ḥajar describes as respectable; as an adult he established himself as a merchant, obviously benefiting from his moth-

Muḥammad Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah (d. 726/1326).

⁴⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 2:233, no. 2452: ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Maṣṣūr al-Karīmī ‘Izz al-Dīn, d. 713/1313–14.

⁴⁸ The goal of the expedition is given as “*bilād al-Kh[i]ṭā*.” According to C. E. Bosworth, “Ḳarā Khīṭāy,” *EP*, 4:581, Khīṭā and Khaṭā are used in Muslim sources to refer to northern China.

⁴⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 4:158, no. 4692: Muḥammad ibn Musallim ibn Aḥmad al-Bālisī, d. 776/1374–75.

er's family connections. Muḥammad was successful in commerce and became one of the notable merchants of the century. His generosity increased his fame, and he gained the respect of scholars by establishing a madrasah in al-Fuṣṭāṭ. Muḥammad died in 776, and his sons—grandsons of a modest porter—inherited a huge fortune.

THREE COMMONERS AS ADMINISTRATORS

The position of the market inspector (*muḥtasib*) was precarious because he could easily become a focus of popular discontent. He was the person whom the sultan appointed to oversee and control the markets; in situations where food became scarce and prices high, the population tended to blame the *muḥtasib* for their hardships.⁵⁰ The *muḥtasibs* were often established *faqīhs*, but also lesser scholars, and sometimes even commoners, could be appointed to the office.

One of the *muḥtasibs* of commoner origin was Muḥammad ibn Ṣubayḥ,⁵¹ who seems to have gained his appointment through Mamluk patronage. Muḥammad ibn Ṣubayḥ began his career as the chief muezzin in Damascus. He was famous for his beautiful voice, and it was presumably this characteristic that caught the attention of the *nā'ib al-salṭanah* and caused Muḥammad to become the *nā'ib's* imam. He was obviously able to build on this relationship because he was subsequently appointed as the *muḥtasib* of the Ṣāliḥīyah district in Damascus. Ibn Ḥajar's succinct entry does not give any information on Muḥammad's abilities as *muḥtasib*, but he must have been relatively competent because Ibn Ḥajar does not connect him with any scandals.

Muḥammad ibn 'Alī,⁵² who was the son of a seller of beverages, got the opportunity to purchase the office of *muḥtasib*. Muḥammad ibn 'Alī learned his father's trade and seems to have had some education, even though Ibn Ḥajar does not mention it. However, the fact that Muḥammad was appointed an agent at the Maliki deputy court (*wakīl fī bāb nā'ib al-ḥukm al-mālikī*)⁵³ indicates that he must have acquired at least some basic scholarly skills. According to Ibn Ḥajar, the occupation led Muḥammad into trouble, and he ended up in prison. Ibn Ḥajar does not specify the nature of the trouble, but al-Maqrīzī reports that Muḥammad was

⁵⁰ About the relationship between *muḥtasibs* and the population, see Irmeli Perho, "Al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī as Historians of Contemporary Events," in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950–1800)*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden, 2001), 110–14.

⁵¹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 3:278, no. 3864: Muḥammad ibn Ṣubayḥ ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Tiflīsī al-Dimashqī, d. 725/1325.

⁵² Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Dhayl*, 211–12, no. 538: Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Ḥibrī al-Sharrābī, d. 823/1420.

⁵³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:543, reports that Muḥammad was *nā'ib al-qāḍī*. One of his *nisbahs* was al-Sharrābī, which refers to his father's trade as beverage seller; his other *nisbah* was al-Ḥibrī, which could refer to his own profession: someone who uses ink. Maya Schatzmiller, *Labour in the Medieval Islamic World* (Leiden, 1994), 168, translates *wakīl bi-abwāb al-quḍāh* as "agent in court."

accused of *kuf̄r* and was threatened with death. In the end, his life was spared, and he was punished through beating and imprisonment.⁵⁴

After being released from prison, Muḥammad opened a shop and began to sell sugar. He was obviously a good businessman because he prospered, but this did not satisfy his ambition. He seems to have been determined to obtain a public office and, finally, he managed to buy himself an appointment to the office of *muḥtasib* in 808/1405. Al-Maqrīzī expresses his abhorrence of the practice of selling offices,⁵⁵ and his description of Muḥammad himself is unflattering: he was stupid and impudent.⁵⁶ Ibn Ḥajar is equally negative in his portrayal, and according to him Muḥammad was not only impudent but also uncouth, boorish, and shameless. Ibn Ḥajar concludes his entry by stating: “and in this year [823] God freed [us] from him.”⁵⁷

It is possible that Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī really was an unpleasant person, but it is also possible that al-Maqrīzī’s and Ibn Ḥajar’s statements reflect their prejudice against a commoner’s occupying a relatively important public office, which was usually held by scholars of law. To make things worse, the commoner had purchased the office, which was a practice that the Mamluks condoned but the scholars abhorred.

To some extent, Muḥammad bears a resemblance to a fictional character in the Arabian Nights. In the Hunchback cycle, there appears a one-eyed butcher who managed to prosper in his trade and began to invest in property. His financial and social advancement was cut short by the authorities, who confiscated his property on the basis of some false accusations. Later, the king had him beaten because he could not abide people who had only one eye. Soon he was caught and beaten again because the scars of the earlier beating were a proof that he was guilty of something.⁵⁸ Both the fate of the fictional butcher and the historical Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī show how difficult it was to advance socially; even if a person succeeded to climb up the ladder, it was very easy to fall down again. Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī’s case shows that it was indeed possible to achieve a higher social status, but the scholarly elite did not necessarily view the achievement positively.

Some commoners were able to attain powerful administrative positions through personal relationships to members of the Mamluk elite. The Cairene dancer Khālīd ibn al-Zarrād⁵⁹ is an example of a person who was able to use his status as the amirs’ favorite to make a career. Ibn Ḥajar’s entry does not give Khālīd any ge-

⁵⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:543, The incident took place in 796.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4:11.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4:543.

⁵⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Dhayl*, 212, “*arāḥa Allāh minhu fī hādhihi al-sanah.*”

⁵⁸ *Alf Laylah wa-Laylah*, ed. Muḥsin Maḥdī (Leiden, 1984), 358–60.

⁵⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 2:47, no. 1643: Khālīd ibn al-Zarrād al-Muqaddam, d. 745/1344.

nealogy but only the patronymic Ibn al-Zarrād, son of the chainmail maker. The father's name is not given, nor is his trade specifically mentioned, but in this case the patronymic might actually refer to the father's profession. As the son of a chainmail maker, Khālid would have had a good opportunity to form contacts with the Mamluk amirs. Khālid became a dancer and performed in the *wālī's* house in Cairo (*dār al-wilāyah*). Amir Sanjar—the *wālī* of Cairo⁶⁰—took a liking to him and promoted him to the position of the overseer (*muqaddam bayt al-wālī*). After Sanjar, another amir, Ibn Hilāl al-Dawlah, took over the patronage of Khālid, and with his support Khālid's career advanced further; eventually, he was appointed *muqaddam al-dawlah*. Ibn Ḥajar notes that with this upward mobility both Khālid's wealth and corruption increased, and soon he became associated with Mamluk notables who stole state funds. Together with other offenders, Khālid was arrested in 735 and was ordered to pay a huge fine; still he seems to have had protectors because he was quickly released from prison. Khālid lost his position as *muqaddam al-dawlah* but managed to regain some of his earlier status by becoming the *wālī's* overseer again. This was his title in 742, when he once again got into trouble. According to al-Maqrīzī, Khālid's greed and oppressive actions led the governor to confiscate his wealth. Three years later, in 745, he managed to bargain with the sultan and was reappointed *muqaddam al-dawlah*. The success was short-lived, however; only a few months later, Khālid was arrested and accused of oppression. He was punished, and this time the punishment was so harsh that he did not survive it.⁶¹

According to Ibn Ḥajar, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī was an uncouth and boorish *muhtasib*, but he does not seem to have been caught in any misconduct, whereas Khālid was punished both for stealing and oppression. The fact that he was able to pay the huge fines required of him indicates that Ibn Ḥajar's assessment of him as corrupt was accurate.

NOTORIOUS RATHER THAN NOTABLE

Ibn Ḥajar not only recorded persons whose career, wealth, or learning made them notables, but he also included persons who had become famous through some exceptional action. One of these persons is a commoner, a tailor called Waḍḍāḥ,⁶² who was a native of Aleppo. Waḍḍāḥ became notorious in 753 when, according to Ibn Ḥajar, the Devil made him err and proclaim that he was a prophet. He was imprisoned for some days and was encouraged to repent. He did repent and was pardoned and released from prison. The occurrence obviously did not improve the

⁶⁰ Ibn Ḥajar gives only the name Sanjar, but he was presumably 'Alam al-Dīn Sanjar ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Khāzān (d. 735/1335). Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 9:67–68, reports Sanjar as the *wālī* in 721 and Sanjar seems to have held the position until his death (cf. the obituary, *ibid.*, 9:305).

⁶¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:370, 381–82, 565, 664, 670. Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 2:47.

⁶² Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar*, 4:251, no. 5102: Waḍḍāḥ al-Khayyāṭ al-Ḥalabī.

tailor's social status, but his action guaranteed him fame and immortalized him in an entry in Ibn Ḥajar's biographical dictionary.

CONCLUSIONS

Presumably, many commoners had modest successes and may have improved their social status within the ranks of the commoners, but their careers remain unrecorded and only the histories of those whose prestige, fame, or wealth earned them a notable status are included in Ibn Ḥajar's dictionary. This gives us only a partial view of the careers of the commoners and their chances of social advancement in Mamluk society. Even if the material does not give us the full picture, the very low number of entries portraying people of common origin clearly indicates that social advancement cannot have been easy, and a successful climb up the social ladder was an exception rather than a rule.

Social historians tend to view the scholarly class as an open career track, where individual merits weighed more than lineage or wealth, but my findings in Ibn Ḥajar's dictionary do not support this view. Theoretically, the scholarly world was indeed open to everybody, and merits were important; if one lacked the invaluable network of contacts, however, the prestigious appointments remained elusive. A baker's son could find a way to study with some of the well-known scholars of his day, but this did not secure him an endowed position in the madrasah system or the judiciary.

Ibn Ḥajar's dictionary shows that most of the commoners who gained prestige in scholarly circles were *muḥaddiths*. A literate person endowed with a good memory could gain a position as an authority on hadiths. This led the person into scholarly circles, and the possibilities of social advancement increased. Rubbing shoulders with esteemed scholars was a beginning in forming the network that was indispensable for building up a career. The scholars might recommend one's talents as a notary, or they could request one to prepare copies of books, or they could patronize one's paper shop; the records show, however, that even three generations were not necessarily enough to establish a family as one of the recognized scholarly families.

The number of commoners who managed to enter the scholarly circles was not very large, but Ibn Ḥajar's records show some examples of remarkable advancement within one generation. A son of a carpenter could first learn carpentry and then turn to studies and finally be promoted to an assistant judgeship. It seems that the positions of judge or assistant judge were the highest occupations in the judiciary reached by a commoner. Ibn Ḥajar reports on two artisans who were appointed assistant judges, whereas the only judge with a commoner origin proved to be a scion of an eastern scholarly family that had fled to Syria. The lists of scholars' occupational posts given in Carl Petry's study on the scholars in Cairo point in the same direction. An assistant judge was more likely than a judge to have had an artisan

occupation. It is also significant that none of those appointed as *qāḍī al-quḍāh*, the highest legal office, had ever had an occupation belonging to the artisan group.⁶³

Moving from modest artisan professions to the circles of wealthy merchants seems to have been rare as well. Ibn Ḥajar mentions only one case where an artisan was able to build a large fortune through trade and one case where initial accumulation of wealth was combined with a judicious marriage, securing the next generation an economic head start. It may well be that a much larger number of commoners became affluent through trade, but their wealth did not reach the level of exceptional opulence that would have merited their inclusion among the dictionary entries.

Some commoners were able to attain powerful administrative positions through personal relationships with members of the Mamluk elite. The Cairene dancer is an example of a person who was able to use his status as the amir's favorite to make a career. The dancer's career was obviously a spectacular single occurrence and as such caught the attention of both chroniclers and biographers, who recorded it in their books.

It can be concluded that Ibn Ḥajar's biographical entries show a society in which lineage and networks were important ingredients of social advancement. Individual merits played an important role but did not suffice to guarantee any upward social mobility.

⁶³ Carl Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton 1981), 362–67, list of Category IV occupations in the artisan group: the numbers of artisans among *nā'ib al-qāḍīs* is 57, among *qāḍīs* 32, and among *qāḍī al-quḍāṭ* 0.

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The *Ḥalqah* in the Mamluk Army: Why Was It Not Dissolved When It Reached Its Nadir?

I

The *ḥalqah*¹ was held in high regard during Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's reign as the sultan's small elite bodyguard that was under his personal command on the battlefield.² According to Stephen R. Humphreys, there is little mention of the *ḥalqah* in the sources after Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's death until it reappears in the last years of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's reign (637–47/1239–49).³ At that time the *ḥalqah* continued to enjoy elite status, but which units were included in it or the number of its troops is unclear.⁴ The question of whether the Ayyubid *ḥalqah* had something in common with its immediate descendant in the Mamluk army is still open. Humphreys is of the opinion that the *ḥalqah* in its classic Mamluk form appeared no earlier than the first years of al-Zāḥir Baybars' reign (658–76/1260–77) and had little in common with the elite royal guard of Ayyubid times. Its position in the army was made secondary to the Royal Mamluks and the amirs' mamluks who comprised the new ruling elite. However, as long as the *ḥalqah* retained professional and fully trained soldiers it enjoyed a prestigious position in the army.⁵ David Ayalon, on the other hand, argues that although certain changes occurred in the army with the transition from Ayyubid to Mamluk rule, they did not affect the continuity existing between the two armies.⁶ During the early period of the Mamluk Sultanate the *ḥalqah* maintained a considerable part of its power and high position from Ayyubid times. It was only later that it lost its prominence to the Royal Mamluks, mainly due to the cadastral surveys conducted by al-Manṣūr Lājīn (697/1297) and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (713/1313; 715/1315). David Ayalon links the *ḥalqah*'s decline mainly with the fact that its

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¹ Quatremère and David Ayalon were of the opinion that the name of the *ḥalqah* is derived from its function as the sultan's bodyguard and its central position around him in battlefield. A. N. Poliak, on the other hand, thought that the name came from the battle tactics employed by Turkish warriors of surrounding their enemies. Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army—II," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 16 (1954): 448.

² H. A. R. Gibb, "The Armies of Saladin," *Cahiers d'Histoire Egyptienne* 3 (1951): 305, reprinted in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam* (London, 1962), 74; Ayalon, "Studies on the Mamluk Army II," 448–49; Humphreys, "The Emergence of the Mamluk Army," *Studia Islamica* 45 (1977): 82–83.

³ Humphreys, "The Emergence of the Mamluk Army," 82–83.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 162–65.

⁶ David Ayalon, "From Ayyubids to Mamluks," *Revue des études islamiques* 49, no. 1 (1981): 50.



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members were not mamluks and therefore lacked their military vigor and solidarity (*khushdāshīyah*).

The sources clearly show that from the time of its inception, the *ḥalqaḥ* was a flexible military structure, open to change according to circumstances. Political, social, and moral considerations guided the decision-makers to include military and non-military groups in the *ḥalqaḥ*. Later, patronage had a decisive influence on the *ḥalqaḥ*'s makeup and its division of resources. The purpose of this article is to discuss the changes the *ḥalqaḥ* in Egypt underwent in its makeup and structure, in light of the short- and long-term processes that took place in the Mamluk military and political systems.

II

When Baybars took power he inherited a patchwork army comprised of a large number of old and disorganized military units, both Egyptian Royal Mamluks from al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's reign up to his own time, and former Ayyubid armies. Since Humphreys has studied Baybars' army, mention of his main points will suffice here. Baybars was the first Mamluk sultan to reorganize the army, among other state institutions in the Mamluk Sultanate, according to new principles that marked the initiation of a new central government and the Mamluks' new status as the holders of power. The Mamluk army was divided into three groups: the Royal Mamluks (*al-mamālik al-sultānīyah*), the amirs' mamluks (*mamālik al-umarā'*), and the *ḥalqaḥ*. The Royal Mamluks included mainly mamluks from the Egyptian royal regiments, such as al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's, al-Mu'izz Aybak's, and Baybars' own mamluks, and were to gain exclusive status. The amirs' mamluks remained under the direct command of their masters but were to be placed at the sultan's disposal when necessary, mainly on expeditions. The Egyptian *ḥalqaḥ* included part of the former Ayyubid regiments in Syria—the freeborn Kurdish Shahrzūrīyah and the Mamluk 'Azīzīyah and Nāṣirīyah—that were permitted to remain in Egypt after the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt (the Spring of Goliath, 658/1260), and the rest were absorbed into the *ḥalqaḥ* corps of the Mamluk armies in the Syrian provinces. It should be noted that Turkmen, Kurdish, and Arab tribesmen served as auxiliaries in the army. The masses of Ayyubid freeborn and mamluk soldiers admitted to the *ḥalqaḥ* strengthened the army when the Sultanate was in need of a well-prepared, qualified army for its wars against the Mongols and Crusaders. No less important was the need to institutionalize these disorganized military groups, which could have otherwise turned into anarchist elements in the realm. The *ḥalqaḥ*'s secondary status in the Mamluk army was marked by the fact that although the *ḥalqaḥ* was under the sultan's direct control, its troopers did not share a common living quarters



financed by the sultan, as was the case with his recruits.⁷ The *ḥalqah* troopers also had to provide their own equipment, again unlike the sultan's mamluks. Therefore the sultan's effective control over them depended on the personal authority their commanders had on them, and this was formally restricted to expeditions only. The division between these three groups was not clear-cut. In addition to his mamluks, Baybars' Sultani regiment included Ayyubid mamluks and freeborn officers, some of whom inherited their military status and *iqṭā'* according to previous Ayyubid norms.⁸ However, the domination of the new Mamluk elite in political and military institutions was made clear by the smaller *iqṭā'āt* (s. *iqṭā'*), or fiefs, and lower ranks granted to the Ayyubid and other veterans, as well as the preference of appointing Baybars' colleagues and mamluks to the Sultani regiment and high offices.

Another group of enlistees into the *ḥalqah* were the Wāfidīyah, the thousands of Turko-Mongol tribesmen troops that had deserted the Mongol Ilkhanate for the Mamluk Sultanate since the 1260s.⁹ The first wave of Wāfidis left the Ilkhanate, where they were stationed, in 660–62/1262–64 under the orders of their master, Berke Khan (654–65/1256–66), the ruler of the Golden Horde, as a result of an open conflict he had with Hülegü, ruler of the Ilkhanate. The first group of Wāfidis arrived in 660/1262 and included two hundred horsemen with their families. They were received in Egypt with great honor; their commanders were granted amirates, and the rest were incorporated into the Bahriyah, most probably *ḥalqah* units that at the time were assigned guarding duties in the Citadel of Cairo and other citadels in the Syrian provinces.¹⁰ They embraced Islam and settled in the Lūq quarter of

⁷ Every forty *ḥalqah* soldiers had a *ḥalqah* commander (*muqaddam al-ḥalqah*—pl. *muqaddamū al-ḥalqah*) whose commanding authority was limited to expeditions only. During war time both the *muqaddam al-ḥalqah* and his troops were stationed, together with other Sultani and amirs' mamluks, under the command of a *muqaddam alf*, an amir of one hundred who acted as commander of one thousand soldiers, or *ṭulb*, in battle order (Ayalon, "Studies on the Mamluk Army II," 450–51). The *muqaddamū al-ḥalqah* were responsible for the call-up to battle of the troops under their command.

⁸ Humphreys, "The Emergence of the Mamluk Army," 156–58. Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976), 96; Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf Abū al-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi wa-al-Mustawfā Ba'da al-Wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1985–93), 2:494–95; Mūsā ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān* (Hyderabad, 1954), 3:232; Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah (Cairo, 1957–73), 1:513, 629; Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf Abū al-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1929–72), 7:146.

⁹ David Ayalon, "The Wāfidiyya in the Mamluk Kingdom," *Islamic Culture* 25 (1951): 89–104, reprinted in idem, *Studies on the Mamluks of Egypt (1250–1517)* (London, 1977).

¹⁰ David Ayalon, "Le Regiment Bahriya dans l'armee mamelouke," *Revue des etudes islamiques* 19 (1951): 134–38.



Cairo, which was built by Baybars especially for them.¹¹ In 661/1263, more than thirteen hundred of Berke Khan's warriors arrived in Egypt and again their commanders were granted amirates, but the sources do not mention that their warriors were incorporated into the *ḥalqaḥ*.¹² In 662/1264 a group of refugees arrived from Shiraz, headed by notables from the Khwarizmi and ancient Iraqi regimes and many chieftains of the Khafājah, the Iraqi Arab tribes. Their chief commander, Amir Sayf al-Dīn Baklak, was granted an amirate of forty, but the Arab tribesmen were sent back to their own country.¹³ Baybars became concerned by the continuous influx of warriors from the Ilkhanate when in the same year another group of Tatars entered Mamluk territory seeking refuge. He ordered the army to keep watch until it became clear whether they were indeed refugees (*musta'minīn*).¹⁴ In 675/1276, sixteen Turkmen notables defected with their families from the Seljuk vassal principality of the Ilkhanid Mongols in East Anatolia. They were not granted amirates, and in the same year they joined Baybars on an expedition to Anatolia in an attempt to establish a Mamluk vassal principality in that region.¹⁵ About thirty years would elapse from the first wave of immigration in the early 1260s until another group of three hundred Tatar troops arrived in Egypt in 691/1291.¹⁶ In 695/1295, during al-ʿĀdil Kitbughā's reign (694–96/1294–96), eighteen thousand Oirat families (in the Arab sources they appear as *uwayrātīyah*), or ten thousand according to another version, left the Ilkhanate and entered the Mamluk Sultanate.¹⁷ Only their commanders and notables, who numbered about two hundred (or one hundred and thirteen, depending on the source), including Hülegü's son-in-law, were received with great honor and were permitted to enter Cairo. Their commander Ṭurghāy was granted an amirate of forty; another amir, Alūṣ, received an amirate of ten; and the rest were appointed as *ḥalqaḥ* commanders with *iqṭā'āt*. The thousands of

¹¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:473–75; Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 74.

¹² Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Hijrah*, ed. Donald Richards (Beirut, 1998), 84–85; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:500–1; Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1987), 1:464–65.

¹³ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 88; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:512.

¹⁴ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 89; idem, *Kitāb al-Tuḥfah al-Mulūkīyah fī al-Dawlah al-Turkīyah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān (Cairo, 1987), 146; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:515.

¹⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:625, 627.

¹⁶ Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* (Beirut and Riyadh, 1966), 3:330.

¹⁷ K. V. Zettersteen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlükensultane in den Jahren 690–741 der Hi ra, nach arabischen Handschriften* (Leiden, 1919), 39; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 309–10; Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*, ed. Al-Bāzz al-ʿArīnī (Cairo, 1964–92), 31:296–97; Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh al-Duwal wa-al-Mulūk*, ed. Qusṭanṭīn Zurayq (Beirut, 1942), 8:203; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:813; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 3:304–7; Abū Bakr Ibn Aybak al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmiʿ al-Ghurar*, ed. Hans Robert Roemer, ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿĀshūr, and Ulrich Haarmann (Cairo, 1960–72), 8:362.



Oirats who came with them were ordered to settle on the Palestinian coast, in the environs of ‘Atlīth, and in al-Biqā‘ in south Lebanon.¹⁸ These thousands of Oirats included women, children, and elderly and middle-aged men, with many of them making their way on foot. They were not allowed to enter the cities on their way from Syria to ‘Atlīth and al-Biqā‘; instead, the town markets came out to them. The sultan also ordered Amir Sanjar al-Duwaydārī, who was in charge of them, to keep them in Syria until his arrival. Under these circumstances, many of their elders died and their young sons were taken into the amirs’ service in Syria.¹⁹ The rest were incorporated into the provinces’ armies, where in time they embraced Islam.²⁰ In 704/1304, another group of two hundred Tatar warriors arrived in Cairo, among them the two brothers and mother of Salār, the amir who was the power behind the nominal sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The two brothers received amirates and *iqṭā‘āt*, and others entered the amirs’ service.²¹ In 717/1317 another Mongol grand amir, Ṭāṭāy, reached Cairo with one hundred horsemen and their families. Up until 741/1340 the sources mention only a few Mongol soldiers who immigrated on an individual basis. A famine in the lands in 741/1341 caused multitudes to cross the Euphrates into Mamluk territories. They were allowed to stay in the vicinity of Aleppo, and only two hundred of them were allowed to enter Cairo. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad chose about eighty of them for his personal service. Some were sent to the barracks in the Citadel, some were housed in the Citadel or were allocated amirates, and the others entered the *ḥalqah* or were divided among the amirs.²² This group completed the Wāfidīyah immigration into Mamluk territories.²³

At first glance, the impression received from the events related to the Wāfidīyah is that there was a constant influx of Tatars into the Mamluk Sultanate over a long period. In fact, there were only two significant waves of immigration, one between 660/1262 and 662/1264, and the second in 695/1296. All other records on the arrival of Turko-Mongol warriors and notables in the Sultanate might be classified as trickles that totaled no more than a few hundred. When summing up the number of Wāfidis that immigrated to the Mamluk Sultanate according to the sources’ reports, we find that it was actually not much more than fifteen hundred commanders and warriors during Baybars’ rule.²⁴ Whereas the Turkmen and Arab tribesmen

¹⁸ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:299; Ayalon, “Wāfidiyya,” 99–100.

¹⁹ Zettersteen, *Beiträge*, 39; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:299.

²⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:813; idem, *Kitāb al-Mawā‘iẓ wa-al-Itibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Cairo, 1987), 2:23; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:205.

²¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:5–6.

²² *Ibid.*, 2:515–16, 517–20.

²³ Ayalon, “Wāfidiyya,” 103–4.

²⁴ Ayalon maintains that three thousand horsemen entered into the Mamluk Sultanate during Baybars’ rule. Ayalon, “Wāfidiyya,” 98.



were sent back to their own territories, the Mongol Wāfidis were incorporated into the army and were even settled in Cairo. We might assume that the majority were directed to the *ḥalqaḥ*, although the sources do not explicitly indicate this. In the second wave of immigration in the 690s/1290s, the number of Wāfidis who were admitted into the *ḥalqaḥ* in Cairo was about six hundred soldiers: three hundred in 691/1291 and another two hundred in 695/1296. The number of warriors among the thousands of Oirats that immigrated in 695/1296 is unclear, for this group included the elderly, women, and children. Only one hundred thirteen of their notables reached the *ḥalqaḥ* in Cairo.²⁵ The majority of their warriors and youths were absorbed into the amirs' households in the Syrian provinces.

Another group of freeborn soldiers included in the *ḥalqaḥ* was comprised of the mamluks' sons (*awlād al-nās*).²⁶ Baybars arranged subsistence grants for orphans of soldiers, in spite of their great numbers.²⁷ It is unclear whether the custom of admitting sons of amirs into the *ḥalqaḥ* was initiated during Baybars' reign. However, during Sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn's reign (678–89/1279–90) the admission of amirs' sons was done according to professional standards. This is borne out in the story related by Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), the fifteenth-century historian, about Qalāwūn's refusal to grant fiefs in the *ḥalqaḥ* to young and inexperienced sons of amirs. Al-Maqrīzī relates, without mentioning his source, that Amir Ḥusām al-Dīn Ṭuruntāy, Qalāwūn's vicegerent (*nā'ib al-salṭanah*), and Amir Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā, the vicegerent in absentia (*nā'ib al-ghaybah*), each married their sons to the daughters of the other and petitioned Qalāwūn to grant them *iqṭā'āt* in the *ḥalqaḥ*. Qalāwūn refused their request, arguing: "By God, had I seen them striking their swords or marching in front of me on the battlefield, I would find granting them fiefs in the *ḥalqaḥ* unworthy for fear that it would be said: 'he had granted the fiefs to youths'" [*wa-Allāhi law ra'aytuhumā fī maṣāf al-qitāl yadribān bi-al-sayf aw kānā fī zahf quddāmī astaqbīhu an u'ṭiya la-humā akhbāz fī al-ḥalqaḥ khashyatan an yuqāla a'tā al-ṣibyān akhbāz*].²⁸ Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī (d. 749/1349), who was a chancery official during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's

²⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:812.

²⁶ For more details on the *awlād al-nās* in the *ḥalqaḥ* see: Ayalon, "Studies on the Mamluk Army—II," 456–59; Ulrich Haarmann, "The Sons of Mamluks as Fief-Holders in Late Medieval Egypt," in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, ed. Tarif Khalidi (Beirut, 1984), 142–44; Amalia Levanoni, "Awlād al-nās in the Mamluk Army during the Bahri Period," in *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in honour of Michael Winter*, ed. David J. Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (London and New York, 2006), 96–105; idem, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History, The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn 1310–1341* (Leiden, 1995), 42–52; Jo Van Steenberghe, *Order Out of Chaos: Patronage, Conflict and Mamluk Socio-Political Culture, 1341–1382* (Leiden, 2006), 20–22.

²⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:180.

²⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:216.



third reign (710–41/1310–41), mentions in his account of the Mamluk army of his time that the sons of amirs were customarily allocated payment and provisions such as meat, bread, and fodder by the sultan until they became eligible for recruitment (*ta'ahhala*) into the *ḥalqah*. The more fortunate among them were granted amirates of ten or forty.²⁹ There is no reference to a similar customary track for the sons of low-ranking mamluks in the sources. However, destitute sons of mamluks were admitted to the *ḥalqah* on moral grounds. For example, out of respect for his colleagues from the Baḥrīyah, Qalāwūn inaugurated a special unit in the *ḥalqah*, called al-Baḥrīyah, for their sons who were found dallying in Cairo or made their living as artisans and craftsmen.³⁰ When, in 738/1337, there were forty *ḥalqah* members among the many soldiers who died in the battle of Āyās, a port in Lesser Armenia, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad asked for their sons and granted them fiefs in the *ḥalqah*.³¹

The entry of mamluks from the amirs' households into the *ḥalqah* was done in the early Mamluk period on a limited scale. There are only a few references to amirs' mamluks who were permitted to enter the *ḥalqah*, most often after their master's death but very occasionally during his lifetime. It was only in 678/1279 that an amir's mamluk received an *iqṭā'* in the *ḥalqah* because he had brought about the arrest of two criminals who had bullied the Cairenes for quite a long time.³² In 719/1319 a mamluk of Amir Baktāsh al-Fakhrī was made a *muqaddam* in the *ḥalqah*.³³ In 733/1332–33, after the death of Baktamūr al-Sāqī, one of the most prominent amirs at the time, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad took some of his mamluks into his service as Sultani Mamluks and granted others *iqṭā'at* in the *ḥalqah*. It should also be mentioned that al-Nāṣir was accused of Baktamūr's assassination, which drove him to outdo himself to placate the latter's relatives, mamluks, and adherents.³⁴

We have seen that during the first thirty years of its existence the *ḥalqah* was, in fact, a very flexible institution. It was dependent *a priori* on available qualified military manpower, from inside and outside the Sultanate's territories. Professionalism was the standard for admission into the *ḥalqah*, but political, social, and moral considerations also guided the sultans to include non-military groups,

²⁹ Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyá Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār*, ed. Dorothea Krawulsky (Beirut, 1986), 95. See also: Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā fī Ṣināʿat al-Inshāʿ*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 1987), 4:52–53; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:216.

³⁰ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 173; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 8:303; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:658; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:217.

³¹ Mūsá ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyá al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir fī Sirat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ (Beirut, 1986), 416; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:430.

³² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:672–73.

³³ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:227.

³⁴ Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir*, 157; Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt* (Istanbul, Damascus, and Wiesbaden, 1931–1983), 10:196.



such as the indigent sons of mamluks and Wāfidiyah notables. This makeup of the *ḥalqaḥ* indicates that it was open to change according to circumstances; the sources do not reveal the total number of soldiers included in the *ḥalqaḥ* and do not show that a manpower quota had been determined for all units in the Egyptian or Syrian armies. No reforms were made to reorganize the *ḥalqaḥ* until al-Manṣūr Lājīn's (696–98/1296–99) cadastral survey of 697/1298, nor were any attempts made to determine the number of its troops before al-Nāṣir Muhammad's cadastral surveys of 713/1313 and 715/1315. New recruits, such as the sons of mamluks and Wāfidis, were admitted without purging the veterans from the ranks for about thirty years after the *ḥalqaḥ*'s inception. The majority of those who were admitted into the *ḥalqaḥ* at its inception were experienced soldiers, some of them adults in the middle or at the end of their military careers. This means that those who still survived in the 1290s must have been elders. Indeed, the *ḥalqaḥ*'s makeup during the 1290s reflected its problematic and anachronistic position, for it included many of “those whose contribution equaled nothing” [*man lā yughnā ‘anhu wa-lā yujdá majī’uhu shay’an*].³⁵ At the same time, new mamluk units of superior military quality had been founded—at least two of them, Baybars' Zāhirīyah and Qalāwūn's Burjīyah, were elite units—while Mamluk hegemony in the Sultanate became well established, legitimizing the diversion of more state resources into Mamluk hands. This situation came into the open in the cadastral survey initiated by al-Manṣūr Lājīn in 697/1298, which is called in the sources al-Rawk al-Ḥusāmī.

III

Lājīn rose to power (in 696/1296) after a struggle between two factions of Qalāwūn's mamluks, broadly divided into the Burjīyah, which included mainly Circassian mamluks who supported Lājīn, and the rest of the Manṣūrīyah, Qalāwūn's veteran mamluks to which Kitbughā, the deposed sultan, belonged. In 693/1294, when Kitbughā acted as vicegerent (*nā'ib al-salṭanah*) behind al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's nominal rule, this division between Qalāwūn's mamluks erupted into an open struggle.³⁶ Most of the *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers, the Mongols, and the Shahrāsūrīyah Kurds joined Kitbughā, who was himself of Mongol origin. It was because of the Burjīyah opposition that Kitbughā allowed only the Oirats' commanders and notables to enter Cairo out of the thousands that arrived in 695/1295–96 (see above). After Lājīn's rise to power, he launched a reform in the army through a cadastral survey with the aim of building a new *ḥalqaḥ* (or according to another version, to create a new mamluk unit), as a power base for his rule, from among the unemployed soldiers (*baṭṭālūn*).³⁷ In ei-

³⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:800.

³⁶ Al-ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 3:355–56; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:43–45, al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:798, 799–800.

³⁷ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:347–48; al-ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 3:397; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8: 92, 93.



ther case the *rawk* was intended to increase mamluk hegemony in the army, for the creation of a new military unit necessitated the purchase of fresh mamluk recruits, and the *baṭṭālūn* must have been veteran mamluks of earlier sultans and amirs, such as Baybars' *Zāhirīyah* or al-Ashraf Khalīl's (689–93/1290–93) *Ashrafīyah*.

No less important was Lājīn's aim of restricting the dependence of the *ḥalqah* on the dominant *Manṣūrīyah* amirs by means of abolishing their *ḥimāyah* (protection) services on the *iqṭā'*s held by the *ḥalqah* troops, or *ajṅād*. Since the *ḥimāyah* prevailed in the army throughout the Mamluk period and had its roots in earlier periods in the Muslim world, a discussion of this practice is in order. Claude Cahen observed three kinds of *ḥimāyah* in classical Islam. One was the protection Bedouin tribes provided, with or without governmental approval, to settlers or travelers in their territories in return for payment. This procedure was identical to *khafārah* (guarding), which goes back to a nomadic pre-Islamic procedure. The more popular practice of *ḥimāyah* was related to the patronage institution that prevailed in the late Roman and Byzantine Empires and later in classical Islam. The *walā'*, the patronage relations between the Muslim conquerors and their non-Arab clients (*mawālī*), during the early centuries of Islam was one version of the *ḥimāyah*. Although Muslim jurisprudence did not recognize *ḥimāyah*, it did recognize *talji'ah*, which was an identical practice and synonym of *ḥimāyah*. It was a tacit agreement whereby small separate landed properties were put under the protection of local potentates for payment, fictively registered under their names for all dealings with tax authorities. The small estates' holders did not cede their ownership on the property to the "protectors," but at the same time the latter could inherit the right to the *ḥimāyah* fees. The *ḥimāyah* practice easily led to the creation of vast domains by those in power and the rendering of small landholders into share-croppers. In addition to the *talji'ah*, the *ḥimāyah* included, on occasion, a non-land-based fee for *khafārah* collected by the potentates for their protection of the roads and crops against bandits in the territory. With the advent of the Buyids and the enlargement of the *iqṭā'* system in the fourth/tenth century, which granted the new military aristocracy all administrative and fiscal rights on the land in their district, the *ḥimāyah* was abolished, both in terms of landed property and police work. Later, the term *ḥimāyah* continued for several centuries to designate the urban *ḥimāyah*, which was a tax levied by the chief of police of town quarters for ensuring public order. On occasion, undisciplined urban groups, such as the *futūwah* of Baghdad, imposed their protection on merchants.³⁸ Whether the *ḥimāyah* nevertheless persisted uninterruptedly into the Mamluk period is not clear. John L. Meloy addressed the issue of the power structure in Mamluk society in a focused discussion on *ḥimāyah* as a gauge of the state's control of coercive power. Meloy's main argument is that the *ḥimāyah* was

³⁸ Claude Cahen, "Ḥimāya," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 3:394; idem, "Notes pour l'histoire de la *ḥimāyah*," in *Melanges Louis Massignon*, vol. 1 (Damascus, 1956), 287–303.



ripe in the Mamluk sultanate during the fifteenth century in the form of a protection racket or the extortion of protection money levied from weak rural and urban sectors by powerful members of the elite. The providers of the *ḥimāyah* formed private sources of power that rendered the sultan's grip on Mamluk society and economy tenuous.³⁹ While the present author has some doubts about the criminal features attributed to the *ḥimāyah* practice (see below), she shares Meloy's opinion that the private protection services, as much as private justice and public order services, diminished the state's authority. Sources from the Mamluk period furnish evidence that the *ḥimāyah* served as a crucial vehicle for maintaining patronage networks impinging on the sultan's authority. In spite of the efforts the sultans made to curb it, it survived throughout the Mamluk period and was used by both the sultan and the amirs to amass great fortunes and build their own patronage networks.

The *ḥimāyah* in the sense of *talji'ah* and *khafārah* was ripe in Mamluk Egypt before Lājīn's cadastral survey. Al-Maqrīzī confirms that fiefs of *ḥalqaḥ* troops were registered in the amirs' bureaus and in fact became their *iqṭā'*s, so that the former gained nothing from their fiefs' income (*fa-lā yaṣīlu ilá al-ajṇād minhā shay'*).⁴⁰ Thus, for example, Sayf al-Dīn Mankūtimur (d. 698/1299), the sultan's vicegerent, amassed one hundred thousand *irdabbs*⁴¹ of cereal per annum from the *ḥimāyah* alone. Al-Maqrīzī also refers to the confusion that prevailed in the *ajṇād*-cultivated lands when law-breakers and rabble-rousers rendered the levying of official taxes (*al-ḥuqūq wa-al-muqarrarāt al-dīwānīyah*) impossible. Therefore these taxes became prey for the amirs' guards who did the policing work and their officials (*a'wān al-umarā' wa-mustakhdamīhim*) who harmed the peasants residing on the *iqṭā'* lands. Lājīn ordered the abolition of the *ḥimāyah* in the amirs' bureaus, making Mankūtimur's own *dīwān* an example to be followed by the rest of the amirs. Al-Maqrīzī relates that in the wake of Lājīn's action, *iqṭā'āt* were returned to their original holders and the practice of the *ḥimāyah* was stopped.⁴² The amirs' encroachment on the sultan's authority through the control over the *ḥalqaḥ* clearly stands out from this account, for the *ḥalqaḥ* troops were formally under the sultan's direct control. It was the sultan's administration that should have been expected to provide the *ḥimāyah* services and the fees levied for it to flow to the sultanic treasury.

³⁹ John L. Meloy, "The Privatization of Protection: Extortion and the State in the Circassian Period," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 47, no. 2 (2004): 195–212.

⁴⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 1:88. See also idem, *Ighāthat al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghummah*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyādah and Jamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl (Cairo, 1957), 37, 70.

⁴¹ A measure of capacity used during the Middle Ages for weighing grain that varied by time and place from ca. 70 kg. See E. Ashtor, "Levantine Weights and Standard Parcels: A Contribution to the Metrology of the Later Middle Ages," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 45 (1981): 479–80.

⁴² Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 1:88.



During the *rawk*, which took about eight months, from Jumādā I to Dhū al-Ḥijjah 697/March to October 1298, the registration of fiefs held by all sectors in the army was carried out, but since the staff was urged to conclude the *rawk* speedily, accurate registration followed by actual inspection of fiefs was only partially accomplished.⁴³ This information is significant because it indicates that the *himāyah*'s abolition was not effectively carried out. Furthermore, the *ḥalqah*'s and the amirs' shares in the cultivated lands of Egypt (*qirāṭ* pl. *qarārīṭ*) were reduced to half in this *rawk*, while the sultan's share of four twenty-fourths remained untouched. The *ḥalqah* and the amirs had each held ten twenty-fourths of the lands, while after the survey they together held ten twenty-fourths, and one twenty-fourth was kept as a reserve to compensate those who were dissatisfied with their new allocations. The remaining nine twenty-fourths were assigned for the establishment of a new *ḥalqah* that was planned to be as big as the existing army.⁴⁴ Mankūtimur, who is described as a strict observer of the rules and an honest amir, conducted the *rawk* stringently, not allowing any petitions regarding the new allocation of *iqṭā'*s.⁴⁵ There were "soldiers who were fortunate and others who were unfortunate, and there were those who were unsuccessful and others who were successful with what they got" [*fa-min al-jund man sa'ida wa-minhum man shaqiya wa-minhum man khāba wa-minhum man anjaḥa bi-mā laqiya*].⁴⁶ Although most of the *ḥalqah* soldiers were dissatisfied, they received their new *iqṭā'*s without protest. Only those "who still retained vigor and bravery" [*baqīyah min ahl al-quwwah wa-al-shajā'ah*] protested and threatened to move to the amirs' service or even remain unemployed.⁴⁷ They were imprisoned but thereafter released. This information confirms the impression that many of the *ḥalqah* soldiers, the survivors of those who had entered the *ḥalqah* during the early years of the sultanate, were in a miserable condition and unfit for service.

Lājīn's intention to initiate a new military unit was nipped in the bud when both he and his vicegerent were killed by the disaffected amirs. All the *iqṭā'*s saved by Lājīn were not returned to their original holders but were distributed among the amirs in addition to the *iqṭā'*s they already held.⁴⁸ The *ḥalqah* ranks were left with many unfit old soldiers with much smaller *iqṭā'* resources, about one third or one half less than those they had held earlier. This *rawk*, then, strengthened the Mamluk amirs' position through the formal registration, under their names,

⁴³ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 320; Hassanein Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt, A.H. 564–741/A.D. 1169–1341* (London, 1972), 52.

⁴⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:92; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:842.

⁴⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:858.

⁴⁶ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdah*, 320; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 3:395.

⁴⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:95; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:846; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:387.

⁴⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:95; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:875–76.



of the *ḥalqaḥ iqtāʿāt*, which had been previously exploited informally through the *ḥimāyah* arrangement. To add insult to injury, the *rawk* did not stop the practice of the *ḥimāyah*, but only replaced the previous prominent amirs with the emerging Burjīyah oligarchy.⁴⁹

In his *rawk* of 715/1315 in Egypt, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad attained the targets that Lājīn had set for his cadastral survey, and beyond. Since updating the land registers was not successfully accomplished in the al-Rawk al-Ḥusāmī, part of the *iqtāʿ* redistribution was based on figurative lists that survived from Ayyubid times. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad determined a permanent manpower quota for the army and a correlative remuneration scale as the basis for the *iqtāʿ* redistribution.⁵⁰ Al-Nāṣir's manpower quota for the Mamluk army in Egypt included twenty four thousand troops organized in the following order:⁵¹

1. Twenty-four commanders of a thousand who had in their service two thousand four hundred mamluks.
2. Two hundred amirs of forty with eight thousand mamluks in their service.
3. Five hundred forty-seven prefects and inspectors in the various districts of Egypt, with five hundred sixty mamluks.
4. Two hundred amirs of ten with two thousand mamluks.
5. Seven regional prefects.
6. Forty *muqaddam mamālīk* over more than two thousand Sultani mamluks.
7. Eight thousand nine hundred thirty-two *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers, with one hundred *muqaddamūn* and twenty-four *nuqabāʿ* (commanders of one thousand troops on the battlefield).

Al-Nāṣir's manpower quota shows that the *ḥalqaḥ* was the largest body in the army, about thirty-seven percent of the army. Obviously, the resources designated to the *ḥalqaḥ*, though divided into small shares of *iqtāʿ*, amounted to a huge fortune. Al-Nāṣir started dismissing the surplus manpower already in 712/1312, when he ordered the mustering of the *ḥalqaḥ* and the Sultani mamluks. Contemporary sources from al-Nāṣir's reign report that eight hundred, or one thousand two hundred according to another version, did not pass muster, among them the elderly, those unfit for service, and youths. The elderly received an allowance sufficient for their livelihood instead of their *iqtāʿ*'s. Their fiefs were distributed among salaried (*jāmakīyah*) Sultani mamluks. In 721/1321, again more than forty-three *ajnād* were dismissed.⁵²

⁴⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:875–76.

⁵⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:218.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 217–18; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:70. For the detailed remuneration scale introduced in the *rawk* see: al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:218–19; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*, 4:16.

⁵² Shams al-Dīn al-Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-Awlādihi*, ed. Barbara Schafer (Wiesbaden, 1977), 114; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 9:244;



The land survey was conducted in all Egyptian districts on a basis of each and every village.⁵³ Al-Nāṣir himself spent two months in Upper Egypt to facilitate communication with the amirs who carried out the land registration.⁵⁴ Whereas Lājīn did not change the sultan's personal share in the *iqṭā'* division, al-Nāṣir increased it from four twenty-fourths to ten twenty-fourths. The remaining fourteen *qirāṭs* of Egypt's cultivated lands were reserved for the amirs and *ḥalqah* soldiers. Al-Nāṣir also changed the *iqṭā'* system by limiting it to cultivated lands only; all *iqṭā'*s based on non-agricultural taxes and customs, such as the tax levied on the grain stores at al-Maqs port in Būlāq, were abolished or transferred to either the state bureaus or the sultan's private treasury (*khāṣṣ*). The *muqṭa'*, or fief holder, was entitled to levy only the land tax (*kharāj*) and the poll tax paid by non-Muslims (*jizyah* or *jawālī*), while all other taxes were abolished.⁵⁵ All other payments that had been informally imposed on the peasants by fief holders, such as gifts (*diyāfah* or *hadīyah*), were calculated in the *'ibrah*, the formal and total revenues levied from the *iqṭā'*.⁵⁶ Even the *ḥimāyah* was calculated in the *iqṭā'* *'ibrah*. Formally relinquishing the *ḥimāyah* money to the amirs by including it among the taxes the fief holders were formally authorized to levy might be regarded as part of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's plan to minimize the sultanic administration's dealing with fiscal matters. More significantly, this move illustrates that it was beyond the sultan's power to mandate the abolition of the *ḥimāyah*. Therefore he resorted to directing the *ḥimāyah*'s funds to the royal treasury, for their inclusion in the *'ibrah* enabled the sultan to allocate smaller *iqṭā'*s to fief holders. As will be shown, this rivalry between the amirs and the sultan over control of the *ḥalqah*'s manpower and financial resources would last until the end of the Mamluk period and would entail changes in the *ḥalqah*'s makeup and structure.

In Dhū al-Ḥijjah 715/1315 al-Nāṣir distributed the *iqṭā'*s in person, and no advocacy of amirs on behalf of the *muqṭa'*s was permitted.⁵⁷ Since the *iqṭā'* was no longer based solely on the *kharāj* tax but now also included the *jizyah*, in practice the *muqṭa'*'s income became smaller. The Coptic peasants, who exploited the decentralization of tax collection, evaded the *jizyah* payment by moving from village to village, declaring that they had already paid it elsewhere. Also, the *iqṭā'* was divided in various locations in Upper and Lower Egypt in order to curb the *muqṭa'*'s influence and his regional power. While these reforms secured the sultan's grip over the amirs and eased the administrative burden connected with the collection

Zettersteen, *Beiträge*, 158; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 9:52.

⁵³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:518; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 9:43.

⁵⁴ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:226.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 227–28; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 9:286–87; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 9:43–48.

⁵⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 1:87, 90; *idem*, *Sulūk*, 2:150–53; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 9:50.

⁵⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 9:51, 54.



of the *jizyah*, they imposed a heavy burden on the amirs' administration because they had to increase the number of clerks to deal with these new tasks. The *ḥalqaḥ* troops' income was reduced to below the *'ibrah* that had been determined in the Ḥusāmī Rawk. Before the Ḥusāmī Rawk, the *ajnād al-ḥalqaḥ* each held a full *iqṭā'*, which yielded an income of between ten thousand and thirty thousand dirhams per annum, according to rank. In addition to these incomes the *ajnād* also levied *diyāfah*, which reached five thousand dirhams in the larger *iqṭā'*s. In the wake of the Ḥusāmī Rawk, their average income was reduced to twenty thousand dirhams, and after al-Nāṣir's, it fell to ten thousand or less, which meant that several *ajnād* shared the same *iqṭā'*.⁵⁸ The *muqaddamū al-ḥalqaḥ* received nine thousand dirhams per annum, including fodder in the amount of nine hundred dirhams. Below them there were seven classes of *ajnād*: in the first there were fifteen hundred cavalryman with an income of nine thousand dirhams; the second included one thousand three hundred fifty *jundīs* with an income of eight thousand dirhams; the third had one thousand three hundred fifty *jundīs* with an income of seven thousand dirhams; the fourth had one thousand three hundred *jundīs* with six thousand dirhams; the fifth one thousand three hundred *jundīs* with five thousand dirhams; the sixth one thousand one hundred *jundīs* with four thousand dirhams; and the seventh one thousand thirty-two *jundīs* with three thousand dirhams.⁵⁹ The income of the lower-rank *ajnād* now reached a level that was insufficient for livelihood, and certainly not enough to pay for equipment.⁶⁰ Some of them were driven to selling their *iqṭā'*s. In 728/1328, a note was dropped in the sultan's stable condemning him for ruining the army because the *awlād al-nās* had sold their *iqṭā'*s out of need and had turned to begging. In response, al-Nāṣir ordered a review of the *ajnād al-ḥalqaḥ* in order to discover those who had no horses or had sold their *iqṭā'*s. Fourteen sons of amirs were dismissed, some *ajnād al-ḥalqaḥ* were beaten, and others were imprisoned for two months and upon their release were sent to Syria.⁶¹ This incident proves that at this stage the *awlād al-nās* already constituted a weak sector in the *ḥalqaḥ*.

The arrival of the Wāfidis in Cairo in 741/1341 (see above) was another opportunity for al-Nāṣir to muster the *ḥalqaḥ*. The *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers were invited to the muster on the pretext that those who had accumulated debts would be allowed to pay them off in three annual installments. The elders and disabled were told that they would be allowed to retire and still keep their *iqṭā'*s by registering them under the names of their sons or other relatives who would fulfill their duty when neces-

⁵⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, 1:88–90.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:219.

⁶⁰ Al-Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad*, 97–98; Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd*, trans. and ed. by Samira Kortantamer as *Ägypten und Syrien zwischen 1317 und 1341 in der Chronik des Mufaḍḍal b. Abī l-Faḍā'il* (Freiburg, 1973), 99–100; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:517–19.

⁶¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:228–29.



sary. This might well be one of the ways by which second and third generations of Mamluks entered the *ḥalqah*. Those who sold their *iqṭāʿ*'s were promised that they would be restored by paying the buyers one eighth of their value in three annual installments. All the elders, disabled, and those who had admitted to selling their *iqṭāʿ*'s—sixty-five solders altogether—were dismissed. Some of the restored *iqṭāʿ*'s were given to low-ranking Sultani mamluks and the newly arrived Wāfidis incorporated into the Sultani household, and the rest were returned to the state treasury.

The small number of those who were dismissed in 721/1321, 728/1328, and 741/1341, out of the inclusive number of the *ajnād al-ḥalqah*, indicates that the great and systematic purge in the *ḥalqah* had occurred earlier—as early as 712/1312. Most of the *iqṭāʿ*'s released from the *ḥalqah* during al-Nāṣir's reign went to the low-ranking Sultani mamluks. In fact, al-Nāṣir followed Lājīn's original policy of increasing mamluk dominance over the *iqṭāʿ*' resources. The “mamlukization” of the army was not only felt in the transferral of *iqṭāʿ*' resources from the *ḥalqah* to the Sultani mamluks, but also in the makeup of the *ḥalqah*, in which veteran mamluks of previous sultans and amirs increasingly replaced freeborn soldiers. The ensuing decrease in the income of the *ajnād ḥalqah* in the wake of Lājīn's and al-Nāṣir's cadastral surveys, and the fee they had to pay for the *ḥimāyah*, pushed them to selling or leasing their small and unprofitable *iqṭāʿ*'s. It was only al-Nāṣir's strong authority that prevented this practice, which, as will be shown below, would flourish under weaker rulers with the amirs' encouragement.

IV

After al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's demise (741/1341), the Mamluk Sultanate was afflicted by forty-one years of incessant struggle over effective power among the dominant amirs who held that power and acted as patrons of most of al-Nāṣir's descendants.⁶² The sources record no less than forty-two political clashes between powerful amirs and the ensuing reshuffling of short-lived factional coalitions for power.⁶³ Important for our purposes here are the ramifications of the frequent disintegration of these power networks for the *ḥalqah* and its place in the power structure of the Mamluk army during this period.

From 741/1341 until the deposing of the house of Qalāwūn in 784/1382, the dominant amirs installed twelve sultans in the sultanate (one, al-Nāṣir Ḥasan, was in office twice, 748–52/1347–51 and 755–62/1354–61). All but one—al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl, who died of an illness—were deposed by the amirs, and seven were murdered after their removal. The short reigns of the Qalawunid sultans and their dependence on their patrons prevented the foundation of new Sultani mamluk households, while the prominent amirs' resources and households grew increasingly. Qawṣūn

⁶² For the reasons and dynamics of these struggles see: Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 81–132.

⁶³ Ibid. See also: Van Steenberghe, *Order out of Chaos*, 130, 100–22.



(742/1342), who held executive power immediately after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's death, had seven hundred mamluks.⁶⁴ Bashtāk (741/1341), Qawṣūn's rival, had at least three hundred fifty mamluks of his own.⁶⁵ Yalbughā al-ʿUmarī (d. 767/1365), one of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan's favorite mamluks who played a leading role in his master's murder, held a mamluk household that included over eighteen hundred recruits, *julbān* or *ajlāb*,⁶⁶ and it was from among them that Barqūq rose to power and deposed the Qalawunid house in 784/1382. Al-Nāṣir Ḥasan and al-Ashraf Shaʿbān (764–78/1363–77) were the only Qalawunid sultans who succeeded in recruiting mamluk households of their own, owing to their long reigns (by the standards of this period), and the executive power they exercised. Yet their mamluk households were smaller than those of the dominant amirs, and both were murdered when they attempted to rule autonomously, thus impinging on the amirs' power and patronage. Ḥasan was murdered by Yalbughā al-ʿUmarī, who then acted as vicegerent, attempting to create a counterbalance to the mamluk amirs by encouraging the advancement of *awlād al-nās* to prominent amirates and governorships in the provinces. Al-Ashraf Shaʿbān's murder came against the background of a land survey he carried out in 777/1376, in which members of the Qalawunid house, the *asyād*, were allocated *iqṭāʿāt* with rich revenues in Upper Egypt and the vicinity of Cairo.⁶⁷ Al-Ashraf's new distribution of state resources led to a rebellion against him by both loyalist and oppositionist Mamluks. In this context, the survey of state revenues and expenditure conducted by the amirs in 750/1349 is indicative of the power and wealth the amirs accumulated during this period. The purpose of this survey was originally to check the high expenditure of the Sultani household, which at the time reached 22,000 dirhams a day. Yet the same survey also revealed that the major part of the sultan's land revenues all over Egypt, including *iqṭāʿāt* and leased lands, were distributed as grants to the amirs or were registered in their names as beneficiaries.⁶⁸

In spite of their great power, the dominant amirs were insecure in the face of the common and permanent danger of the disintegration of their support in favor of new power networks. In their bid for power expansion and the sequential conflicts over power, the amirs, who acted as patrons, placated other amirs and low-ranking mamluks with money and privileges to encourage them to shift their allegiance

⁶⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:588; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:393; idem, *Nujūm*, 10:40; al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, 10:194; Aḥmad Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fi Aʿyān al-Miʿah al-Thāminah*, ed. Muḥammad Sayyid Jādd al-Ḥaqq (Cairo, n. d.), 3:343.

⁶⁵ Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, 10:143; al-Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad*, 76.

⁶⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:139.

⁶⁷ Ulrich Haarmann, "The Sons of Mamluks as Fief-holders," 141–69.

⁶⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:808, 810. See also: 156, 163, 760.



from one patron to another.⁶⁹ As a result of the intensive mobility of mamluks between the factions and coalitions, power networks were continuously being formed and dissolved, leaving the amirs uncertain regarding the support they had organized as their power base. At the head of these coalitions stood two or more amirs who would temporarily put aside personal rivalries and join forces to expand their power networks and, no less important, to limit and inspect the political and economic power of their partner-rivals. Examples of this pattern abound in the sources dealing with this period.⁷⁰ As to the low-ranking mamluks, in general they benefited from the reshufflings in the power networks, for they improved their bargaining power; the atmosphere of an open market for support improved their remuneration and their socio-political position vis-à-vis the decision makers. However, on the personal level, the low-ranking mamluks, like the amirs, suffered uncertainty during the frequent political reshufflings. Most of the mamluks strove towards a timely move from the waning network to the ascendant one with the expectation of obtaining higher remuneration for their support. By contrast, those associated with the defeated amirs, especially those who belonged to their households and were quite numerous during this period, were excluded from the new power networks. Some received minor positions in the army, some were expelled from Cairo, and others were left unemployed (*baṭṭālūn*). Normally, the majority of the unemployed mamluks were given minor allowances and *iqṭāʿ*s in Egypt, mainly in the *ḥalqah*. Thus, for example, in 748/1347, when two hundred mamluks who had been in the amirs' service complained about unemployment, the amirs' council (*majlis al-mashūrah*) decided to divide them among the amirs.⁷¹ Before his flight to Karak in 742/1342, al-Nāṣir Aḥmad intended to recruit Qawṣūn's and Bashtāk's unemployed mamluks and place them in the Citadel as his bodyguard against his vicegerent, Ṭashtamur. According to his abortive plan, these mamluks were to be paid by *iqṭāʿāt* in the *ḥalqah*.⁷² After the Crusader attack on Alexandria in 766/1365 by Peter I of Lusignan, the king of Cyprus who was also titular king of Jerusalem, it was decided to send an expedition to Cyprus to curb Christian piracy based in that island and Rhodes. In 767/1365–66, Yalbughā al-ʿUmarī ordered a muster of the *ḥalqah* soldiers, which was interrupted after reviewing two thirds of the troops when the rebellion against him broke out. The muster was thereupon discontinued and the *ḥalqah* soldiers were asked to join his forces against the rebels.⁷³ After Yalbughā's assassina-

⁶⁹ For the mechanism of power networking creation during struggles for power see Van Steenbe - gen, *Order out of Chaos*, 123–46.

⁷⁰ Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 81–106.

⁷¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:751.

⁷² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:64.

⁷³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:114, 129, 131; Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿiʿ al-Zuhūr fī Waqāʿiʿ al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Cairo, 1982–84), 1:2:28, 44.



tion, those who were dismissed from the *ḥalqaḥ* during the muster were reinstated by the new holders of power, and their *iqṭāʿ*s were restored.⁷⁴ During al-Ashraf Shaʿbān's reign, a large number of mamluks from previous amirs' households were employed as *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers in the service of royal family members (*asyād*). Barqūq, the future sultan al-Zāhir, and his coalition partner Barkah, were among the Yalbughāwīyah mamluks who had been exiled to Syria in 769/1368 for their part in the rebellion against their master and his murder.⁷⁵ They were summoned to Cairo by al-Ashraf Shaʿbān to serve under his sons for *iqṭāʿ*s in the *ḥalqaḥ*. It was from this position that Barqūq would take part in future rebellions and pave his way to rule.⁷⁶ Qurtāy al-Ṭāzī, Asandamur al-Dhabbāḥ al-Sirghitmushī, Balāṭ al-Ṣaghīr al-Sayfī, and Yalbughā al-Nizāmī were all mamluks of amirs who rose to high rank from the position of *mufraḍī* (pl. *mafāridah*), i.e., *iqṭāʿ* holder in the *ḥalqaḥ*.⁷⁷ In 784/1382, al-Zāhir Barqūq (784–801/1382–99) surveyed al-Ashraf Shaʿbān's mamluks with the intention of purging them from the army; those of them who held large *iqṭāʿ*s were made *muqaddamūn* in the *ḥalqaḥ*, while the rest were reduced to simple *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers. Then Barqūq inquired about other Ashrafi mamluks who earned ten thousand dirhams per annum, i.e., the largest *iqṭāʿāt* in the *ḥalqaḥ*. He found that four hundred such mamluks had been admitted to the *ḥalqaḥ* after their master's death; he also found one hundred mamluks who had held *jāmikīyah*, or an allowance, of this same amount of ten thousand dirhams in the sultan's bureau. The holders of *jāmikīyāt* were dismissed and their allowances were given to Barqūq's mamluks; the *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers were relieved of their duties, although they were allowed to keep their fiefs for their livelihood.⁷⁸ In 782/1380, Barqūq called for the *ḥalqaḥ* and the unemployed soldiers to fight for him against his partner-rival Barkah.⁷⁹ During this period, then, the *ḥalqaḥ* was under the amirs' control and served as a sort of temporary occupation for many young mamluks from defeated factions until their fortunes changed and brought them back into an effective power network.

As was mentioned earlier, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad prevented the protection of amirs over *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers and dealt severely with *ḥalqaḥ ajnād* who had sold their *iqṭāʿ*s. By contrast, the prominent amirs who held effective power during this

⁷⁴ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿiʿ*, 1:2:55.

⁷⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:155.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 3:305, 308; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:286; idem, *Nujūm*, 11:72, 159; ʿAlī ibn Dāwud al-Ṣayrafī (al-Jawharī), *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-al-Abdān fī Tārīkh al-Zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970), 1:34–35.

⁷⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:287–88; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:149–50. For *mufraḍī* in the *ḥalqaḥ* see: al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:87.

⁷⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:479.

⁷⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿiʿ*, 1:2:258.



period often allowed the selling and exchanging of *iqṭāʿ*s in the *ḥalqah* for money. As early as 744/1343, the vicegerent ʿAlī Malik al-Ḥājj, a man of moral integrity, forbade the relinquishing of *iqṭāʿāt* (*al-nuzūl ʿan al-iqṭāʿāt*) by *ḥalqah* soldiers or exchanging (*al-muqyādāt*) them for money. The practice of exchanging fiefs in the *ḥalqah* ceased for a while when ʿAlī Malik demanded that monies paid in these transactions be transferred to the state treasury instead of the amirs' and clerks' pockets.⁸⁰ Only two years later, when a new power network was formed, the amir Ghurlū, who was in charge of the tax bureaus (*shādd al-dawāwīn*), introduced the norm of paying the state treasury for posts and for relinquishing or exchanging *iqṭāʿ*s.⁸¹ Lack of strong control by the central government reached its peak during the Black Death (748–49/1348–49), allowing the admittance of civilians to the *ḥalqah*. A large number of *ḥalqah* soldiers were decimated in the Black Death, so much so that within a week an *iqṭāʿ* would move between six soldiers consecutively. This confusion was exploited by commoners who bought vacant *iqṭāʿ*s in the *ḥalqah*.⁸² In 753/1352, when the amir Qublāy emerged as vicegerent of a newly formed power coalition, the phenomenon of *iqṭāʿ* sale and exchange reached a level whereby even the *muqaddamū al-ḥalqah* sold their commandership. A group of about three hundred agents (*muhayyisūn*) was formed during these years, moving among the *ajṅād al-ḥalqah* and encouraging them to sell their *iqṭāʿ*s that were coveted by artisans.⁸³ Worthy of mention is that between 744/1343 and 754/1353 the wars between the Bedouin tribes of the ʿArak and Banū Hilāl over hegemony in Upper Egypt made travelling in the region impossible, damaged agriculture, and prevented the levying of land tax. The weakness of the government vis-à-vis the Bedouin reached such a level that Muḥammad Ibn Wāṣil came to depend on al-Aḥḍab, the chief of the ʿArak tribe that controlled Upper Egypt, to collect the *kharāj*.⁸⁴ In 754/1353, when the economic crisis in the Sultanate reached its worst, the *majlis al-mashūrah*⁸⁵ authorized the amir Shaykhū, who acted as *al-amīr al-kabīr*, to take drastic measures to put an end to the disorder prevailing in the government. It was during this year that the Sultani harem that squandered the sultan's private treasury was eliminated, the Coptic clerks were purged from the state administration, the Coptic Church's estates were confiscated, and the Bedouin in Upper and Lower Egypt were dealt a heavy blow.⁸⁶ Unsurprisingly, this was also the year in which Shaykhū ordered the abolition of relinquishing and exchanging *iqṭāʿāt* in the army, and he also ordered

⁸⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:643; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:219.

⁸¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:687.

⁸² Ibid., 873, 780, 781.

⁸³ Ibid., 860.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 908; Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 183.

⁸⁵ Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 194–95.

⁸⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:908, 910–11, 913; Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 173–96.



that clerks in the army bureau (*dīwān al-jaysh*), who amassed great fortunes from the frequent transactions of fiefs, would levy only three dirhams instead of twenty for issuing fief allocation decrees.⁸⁷ Shaykhū's measures terminated some fifteen years of disorder in the *ḥalqaḥ* administration that was used by amirs and clerks to amass great wealth. After Shaykhū's murder, the amirs' grip over the *ḥalqaḥ* was gradually renewed.

It was during the reign of al-Zāhir Barqūq that *ḥalqaḥ iqtā'*s were shared formally between the sultan and the amirs, probably as part of the arrangement he made to placate the amirs after deposing the House of Qalāwūn. That is to say, the *ḥalqaḥ* was manned mainly by mamluks from the sultan's and the amirs' households. *Ḥalqaḥ iqtā'*s were allocated to recruits from the sultan's mamluk household registered in the *dīwān al-mufrad* (the bureau established by him especially for payment of the sultan's mamluks)⁸⁸ and to mamluks in amirs' households in addition to the incomes they already held.⁸⁹ In this way, considerable disparities in income level became widespread in the *ḥalqaḥ* between increased income holders, who had a double and triple income, and others whose *iqtā'* income remained so low that it was unfeasible to levy it.⁹⁰ In addition, the practice of collecting *ḥimāyah* fees and leases was widespread among the amirs in Egypt. Yalbughā al-Naṣirī (d. 817/1414) was outstanding in abstaining from levying them, so much so that al-Maqrīzī thought it was an important piece of information to be included in his obituary.⁹¹ During the twelve-year civil war that prevailed in the sultanate after Barqūq's death, the amirs' patronage was also instrumental in the inclusion of their protégés in the *dīwān al-mufrad*. For example, in 805/1403, al-Nāṣir Faraj, Barqūq's son, decided to cut the salaries and fodder payments of twelve hundred mamluks who had been registered in the *dīwān al-mufrad* since his father's death. Due to the amirs' advocacy, they were reinstated, except for two hundred thirty "who had no one to protect them [*lam yūjad man ya'tanī bi-him*]." ⁹² In 821/1418, when al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (815–24/1412–21) was preparing for an expedition against Qārā Yusūf, the Turkmen chieftain who then ruled northern Iraq, he used the *ḥalqaḥ* survey as an opportunity to renew the separation between the amirs' households, the *ḥalqaḥ*,

⁸⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:890–91.

⁸⁸ For *Dīwān al-Mufrad* establishment and development see: Igarashi Daisuke, "The Establishment and Development of al-Dīwān al-Mufrad: Its Background and Implications," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 10 (2006): 117–40.

⁸⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:462; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:71; Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-Ghumr bi-Abnā' al-'Umr* (Hyderabad, 1967), 3:169. See also: Igarashi, "Dīwān al-Mufrad," 136.

⁹⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:462; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:71.

⁹¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:295.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 3:1103.



and *dīwān al-mufrad*. Consequently the amirs' mamluks had to choose between service in their masters' households or the *ḥalqah*. Those who chose the *ḥalqah* but still complained about low income had their *iqṭā'*s increased, probably to prevent *ḥimāyah* payment to the amirs.⁹³ However, al-Mu'ayyad's reforms did not last long, for the historians al-Maqrīzī and Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470) contend that the double position practice was the reason for the diminished number of soldiers in the army in their days, i.e., after al-Mu'ayyad's reign.⁹⁴ The sources do not show that mamluks in the amirs' households held *iqṭā'*s in the *ḥalqah*, but they do show that many Sultani mamluks continued to hold both a *jāmīkīyah* from the *dīwān al-mufrad* and an *iqṭā'* in the *ḥalqah*. While distributing salaries to Sultani mamluks in 827/1424, al-Ashraf Barsbāy (825–42/1422–38) decided to cut the *jawāmīk* of those who also held *iqṭā'*s in the *ḥalqah*.⁹⁵ In 873/1468, *ḥalqah* soldiers who held both *jāmīkīyah* and *iqṭā'* could choose between going on the expedition organized against Shāh Suwār, the rebelling Turkmen chief of the Dhū al-Qādirid vassal principality in eastern Anatolia, or paying one hundred dinars to cover the expenses of a substitute (*badīl*).⁹⁶ In 890/1485, when news of the Ottoman invasion into Mamluk territories in eastern Anatolia arrived, the veteran mamluks (*qarāniṣah*) and *awlād al-nās* who were unable to go on the expedition were required to bring a fully-equipped substitute and a horse, and those who held a *jāmīkīyah* and *iqṭā'* had to pay one hundred dinars in case they could not provide the substitute for the expedition.⁹⁷

The exclusion of the mamluks in the amirs' service from the *ḥalqah* and *dīwān al-mufrad* obviously did not influence the amirs' informal patronage over the *ḥalqah* and Sultani mamluks. The sources reveal some personal testimonies of amirs' patronage in the *ḥalqah* and the *dīwān al-mufrad*. 'Alī ibn Dāwud al-Ṣayrafī (d. 900/1495), a fifteenth-century historian and a grandson of a *ḥalqah jundī*, testifies that in 833/1430, when he was fifteen years old, the amir 'Alā' al-Dīn Āqbughā al-Jamālī (d. 837/1434) arranged a position in the official mint (*ṣarrāf*) for his father, and a *jāmīkīyah* in the *dīwān al-mufrad* for 'Alī himself, which he held until Āqbughā's death.⁹⁸ Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn Iyās, the grandson of a fourteenth-century amir,⁹⁹ mentions that in 914/1508 he was among the *awlād al-nās* whose *iqṭā'*s in the *ḥalqah* were cut and given to the sultan's mamluks. His *iqṭā'* was allocated to four mamluks, which means that it was not a small one, but, he contends,

⁹³ Ibid., 4:462; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:69–71.

⁹⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:462; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:71.

⁹⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:661; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:92.

⁹⁶ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:26.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 3:219.

⁹⁸ Al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 3:182, 285.

⁹⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:47.



it was restored to him with Allāh's help.¹⁰⁰ A more vital indication of the amirs' patronage over *ḥalqaḥ* and Sultani mamluks is borne out by the evidence that the practice of *ḥimāyah* was enlarged in the fifteenth century by both the increase in the number of fees levied for protection (*ḥimāyāt*) and its diffusion throughout most parts of Egypt, probably in reaction to the closing of the *ḥalqaḥ* ranks to mamluks in the amirs' service. Ibn Taghrībirdī testifies that after al-Mu'ayyad's reign the *ḥimāyah* increased in Egypt and became a norm (*sunnah*), reaching an unprecedented degree during al-Ashraf Īnāl's reign (857–65/1453–60) and bringing about the destruction of the cultivated lands in the country.¹⁰¹ Al-Ashraf Barsbāy had considerable incomes from *ḥimāyah* levied on *iqṭā'* lands.¹⁰² Both Barsbāy's son, al-'Azīz, and Īnāl's son, Aḥmad, amassed during their fathers' reigns a fortune from their *iqṭā'*s, *ḥimāyah* payments, and the leasing of estates.¹⁰³ In 919/1513, the whole army, except the fifth corps that was manned with very low-salaried soldiers equipped with firearms, was dissatisfied with Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's (906–22/1501–16) payment policy, while the amirs considered deposing him. All the mamluks complained not only about the cuts in payment for fodder and meat, but more so about the ruin of their *iqṭā'*s because of the *ḥimāyāt* payments and the oppression of the tax officials and the local Bedouin chieftains.¹⁰⁴

Except for al-Maqrīzī's aforementioned description of the *ḥimāyah* in the context of the thirteenth century, fifteen-century chronicles do not provide details on the nature of the new *ḥimāyāt*. Meloy brought to our attention a forgotten source from the fifteenth century, which was published already in 1968, that shed light on this issue.¹⁰⁵ It is a tract by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalīl al-Asadī, a clerk who served in *dīwān al-inshā'* (the correspondence bureau),¹⁰⁶ bearing the title *Al-Taysīr wa-al-Ittibār wa-al-Taḥrīr wa-al-Ikhtibār fīmā Yajibu min Ḥusn al-Tadbīr wa-al-Taṣarruf wa-al-Ikhtiyār*, which might be loosely translated as "The quest for and investigation about the right management, conduct, and experience of rulership." The tract advocates economic and administrative reform in line with Islamic principles to remedy the prevailing dire economic situation.¹⁰⁷ Although the tract

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:136, 172; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 3:336.

¹⁰¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:160.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1139; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:225. See also: al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 3:199.

¹⁰⁴ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:319.

¹⁰⁵ Meloy, "The Privatization of Protection," 198–99.

¹⁰⁶ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalīl al-Asadī, *Al-Taysīr wa-al-Ittibār wa-al-Taḥrīr wa-al-Ikhtibār fīmā Yajibu min Ḥusn al-Tadbīr wa-al-Taṣarruf wa-al-Ikhtiyār*, ed. 'Abd al-Qādir Aḥmad Ṭalaymāt (Cairo, 1968), 5–12.

¹⁰⁷ Meloy, "The Privatization of Protection," 199–200.



represents a moralistic and ideological outlook, it still provides vital information about how the economic patronage networks functioned and the role the *ḥimāyāt* played in them. Al-Asadī counts the *ḥimāyāt* among the defects resulting from the inadequate salaries paid to administrative officials and the purchase of government positions that had become a norm since the middle of the fourteenth century. Since offices were obtained by payment to the sultan and reshufflings in state administration to increase the sultan's income became frequent, office holders resorted to regain their investment to a harsh tax collection from the lower sectors of the population in both urban centers and villages. To repel complaints charged against them for their misconduct and to secure their interests, the office holders sought the protection of powerful patrons close to the ruler. On the other hand, the weak villagers and many *iqṭā'* holders and *ajṅād* also sought the protection of influential elite members, marking their lands as *ḥimāyāt* (*wasamū bilādahum bi-al-ḥimāyāt*) for a sum of money (*jumlah min al-māl*) to relieve themselves of the administrators' oppression.¹⁰⁸ Al-Asadī contends that several kinds of *ḥimāyāt* were invented in arable lands and villages in accordance with the taxes the prefects in the provinces (*wulāh*, s. *wālī*) and inspectors in cultivated lands (*kushshāf*, s. *kāshif*) imposed on the villagers. For example, when the maintenance of the irrigation system was thrust upon the prefects and inspectors by the sultans, taxes were imposed on the peasants for cleaning the canals and conduits and repairing the dams in their districts. In reaction, the villagers and holders of small *iqṭā'*s were obliged to seek protection with prominent amirs, viziers, and others who held sway as men of influence with the sultan (*ahl al-shawkah*). Since *ḥimāyah* in urban centers is beyond the scope of the present article, it is sufficient to mention that protection fees were paid to the same top military and civilian elites by business owners such as millers, bakers, and brokers against the sultan's administrators. Under the protection of these potentates, business owners evaded paying taxes, escaped the inspection of *muhtasibs* (who also paid for their own protection), raised prices, and hoarded cereals and other vital staples in order to make high and easy profits from price fluctuations they created in the market.¹⁰⁹

While the *ḥimāyah* practice was admittedly immoral in terms of Islamic principles, which call for equity and universal and equal access to the state resources, it was not considered a criminal activity such as racket protection.¹¹⁰ It was a formalized and widely recognized arrangement, encompassing most sectors in society and, as in classical Islam, it was considered the protector's (*ḥāmī*) right once it was agreed upon. Al-Asadī confirms that when the prefect and inspector were stronger than the protector, the latter was ignored and the oppression of the weak

¹⁰⁸ Al-Asadī, *Al-Taysīr wa-al-ʿtibār*, 95–96, 136.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 136–37.

¹¹⁰ See also: Meloy, "The Privatization of Protection," 201–2.



was doubled.¹¹¹ The protector then would neither listen to the peasants' complaints nor protect them. Nevertheless, he would levy the *ḥimāyah* because it became an obligatory custom (*ʿādah maqḍīyah*).¹¹² Al-Asadī's testimony proves that *ḥimāyah* providers did not come as a rule from among the most potent elite members of society, nor did they always hold coercive power sufficient to enforce protection rackets. Al-Asadī also testifies that in spite of the wide dispersion of the *ḥimāyāt*, there were areas that were not protected by the *ḥimāyāt* and therefore their populations were oppressed without hindrance by government officials.¹¹³ Clearly traceable in al-Asadī's account is the rivalry that prevailed in the fifteenth century over the landed revenues between the Sultani tax collectors and the *ḥimāyah* providers, a situation reminiscent of the tension that had existed over the *ḥimāyah* between the sultan and the amirs in the early days of the sultanate.

Musters of the *ḥalqaḥ* in the fifteenth century prove that many of its members were protégés of strong elite figures. Ibn Taghrībirdī relates that in 839/1435, the amir Arkamās unwisely conducted the *ḥalqaḥ* muster, held in preparation for an expedition to Syria, wherein he instructed the soldiers to contribute each according to his ability without examining their true economic situation. As a result, those who held large *iqṭāʿ*s were untouched because they were protected by men of power (*ahl al-shawkah*) or paid for their *iqṭāʿ*, while the poor who had low-income *iqṭāʿ*s "had no zealous supporter" [*lā ʿaṣabīyah la-hu*] to protect them from getting into trouble (*tawarraṭa*).¹¹⁴ When the amir Ibn Taghrībirdī surveyed the *ḥalqaḥ* in 844/1440 in order to form a force to be stationed in the Egyptian Mediterranean ports of Rashīd and al-Ṭīnā against anticipated Christian piracy, it was decided to choose only soldiers whose *iqṭāʿ* income was thirty thousand dirhams or more, i.e., the stronger *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers. However, soon they were exempted from the expedition because of the widespread belief that "whoever stood against the *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers, his rule would be terminated" [*man taʿarraḍa li-ajnad al-ḥalqaḥ zālat dawlatuhu*].¹¹⁵ These cases clearly show that musters of the *ḥalqaḥ* were normally designated for its weak and helpless members, those who were easy prey [*ka-al-fārisah bi-yad fārisihā*] for the office holders.¹¹⁶ This might be the reason for the small numbers indicated in the sources for the soldiers reviewed during fifteenth-century *ḥalqaḥ* musters. Thus after al-Muʿayyad's purge of the amirs' mamluks from the *ḥalqaḥ* in

¹¹¹ Al-Asadī, *Al-Taysīr wa-al-Iʿtibār*, 136–37, 144–45.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 136.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 96, 136.

¹¹⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:69; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 3:306, 336.

¹¹⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1228. See also: *ibid.*, 2:721; 3:561; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:82–83.

¹¹⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:69.



821/1418, the number of its troopers was about one thousand. Only four hundred of them were mustered, most of whom were poor and unfit.¹¹⁷

The musters were used as opportunities for sultans to get rid of those who were not protected, the main group among them consisting of *awlād al-nās*. In the muster of 839/1435, mentioned above, among the penniless soldiers surveyed were elders, infants, and the blind.¹¹⁸ In 868/1464 al-Zāhir Khushqadam cut the clothing payment for the weak *ajnād* and *awlād al-nās*.¹¹⁹ In Ṣafar 873/October 1468, al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy suspended payment of allowances to *awlād al-nās* until they proved their military ability in archery using a heavy bow. They were humiliated, and the *jāmikīyah* of a number of them was cut.¹²⁰ In Rabīʿ I/November, when Qāyṭbāy prepared for the expedition against Shāh Suwār, the *awlād al-nās* were put to an archery test again, this time with the test including three bows, each offering a different challenge. The *jāmikīyahs* of some of those who were incapable of shooting the bows were cut, and others were required to pay one hundred dinars each for a substitute who went into battle in his place. Some of the amirs interceded with the sultan on behalf of those who held a *jāmikīyah* of one thousand dirhams—which was a very low annual income—to retain their posts and others to pay fifty instead of one hundred dinars.¹²¹ It might well be that the amirs' advocacy made Qāyṭbāy change his demands on the *awlād al-nās* in the following muster he held in Jumādā II/January 1468. Those who held both *jāmikīyah* and *iqṭāʿ* could choose between going on the expedition or paying one hundred dinars to cover the expenses of a substitute, and those who held a *jāmikīyah* of one thousand dirhams to pay twenty-five dinars.¹²²

As we have seen, the majority of the *ḥalqah* troops were in fact either Sultani mamluks or the amirs' protégés, while the weaker ones, including many of the *awlād al-nās*, formed only a small part of the *ḥalqah*. The latter were not true soldiers but rather the weaker members of the Mamluk elite that were kept in the *ḥalqah* with very low monthly wages out of charity instead of being given alms (*ṣadaqah*) from the sultan's treasury.¹²³ Since the early days of the Mamluk sultanate the *ḥalqah* had served as the framework for absorbing the weaker sectors of the Mamluk elite. Veteran mamluks ended their military careers in the *ḥalqah* even

¹¹⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:63, 65; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 2:40.

¹¹⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:69.

¹¹⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 2:419.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 20–21; see also 462, 470.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 26.

¹²³ ʿAlī ibn Dāwūd al-Jawharī (al-Ṣayrafi), *Inbāʾ al-Ḥaṣr bi-Abnāʾ al-ʿAṣr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Caro, 1970), 501–2.



when they reached old age and became disabled,¹²⁴ and mamluks' descendents, including orphans of both genders, inherited their father's *iqṭā'* or *jāmkīyah* out of moral considerations.¹²⁵ As mentioned above, destitute sons of Baḥrīyah mamluks were admitted to the *ḥalqaḥ* by Qalāwūn on moral grounds. The sons of forty *ḥalqaḥ* members who died in the battle of Āyās in 738/1337 were granted fiefs in the *ḥalqaḥ*.¹²⁶ Providing for the needs of the poor was one of the traditional functions of government in Islam and fell into line with the Mamluk ethos of factional solidarity and the right of equal access to economic resources.¹²⁷ The sultans' fear of criticism for infringing upon that right of the poor and weak was the main reason for the measured purges of the unfit from the *ḥalqaḥ* and the cuts in their meager payments. In 751/1350, al-Nāṣir Ḥasan wanted to get rid of the children and artisans who had purchased *iqṭā'āt* in the *ḥalqaḥ*, and he ordered the amir Baybughā Ṭaṭar to survey the *ḥalqaḥ*. A group of artisans, babies carried by their mothers, children, and youths pleaded for mercy. After a consultation among the amirs, it was decided to abolish the muster.¹²⁸ When al-Muẓaffar Ḥājī intended to inspect the *ḥalqaḥ* (747/1346), Amir Aruqtāy thwarted him.¹²⁹ On Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar al-Bulqīnī's advice, al-Zāhir Barqūq cancelled the *ḥalqaḥ* survey he had decided upon and even began to implement in 789/1387.¹³⁰

Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī departed aggressively from those principles of protecting the poor when he started persecuting the weak members in the *ḥalqaḥ*, diverting their resources to his plan for the introduction of firearms into the Mamluk army. Particularly notable is the absence of cases in which al-Ghawrī cut the income of the high-income members of the *ḥalqaḥ*. Al-Ghawrī was confronted by the strong opposition of the Mamluk elite when he established the corps of harquebusiers, known in the sources as the "Fifth Corps." Therefore it was financed largely from

¹²⁴ See for example the reasons the amir Ṭaṭar gave his rivals for the inclusion of his old veteran mamluks in the *ḥalqaḥ* (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:184–85).

¹²⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 4:25

¹²⁶ Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir*, 416; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:430.

¹²⁷ For the issue of the inherent right of all sectors working in the same community to equal access to rank and economic resources see: William Barth and Robert Hefner, "Approaches to the Study of Social Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 1 (1957): 105–10; Seymour Martin Lipset, *Consensus and Conflict: Essays in Political Sociology* (New Brunswick and London, 1985). Ralph W. Nicholas, "Rule, Resources, and Political Activity," in *Local Level Politics*, ed. M. Swartz (Chicago, 1968), 295–321; Winslow W. Clifford, "State Formation and the Structure of Politics in Mamluk Syro-Egypt, 648–741 A.H./1250–1350 C.E." (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1995).

¹²⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:830–31.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 721.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:561.



unofficial resources derived from the manipulation of *awqāf*¹³¹ and the resources he cut off from *dīwān al-mufrad* and the weak sector in the *ḥalqah*.¹³² In 907/1501 al-Ghawrī surveyed the holders of *jawāmik* from among the *awlād al-nās*, including orphans and women, and cut their wages. Later al-Ghawrī cut the salaries of many of the most respectable among the *awalād al-nās*.¹³³ In 910/1504, the sultan surveyed again a group of the same *awlād al-nās* and *sayfīyah* mamluks (mamluks of deceased amirs) whose *jawāmik* had been taken; part of them retained their *jawāmik* and others were given only half of their allowance.¹³⁴ In 914/1508, al-Ghawrī increased the scope of his purges when he cut off, for no obvious reason as Ibn Iyās reports, four hundred *iqṭā'āt* and *waqf* allowances, most of them held by *awlād al-nās* serving in the *ḥalqah* and women supported by charitable trusts. In this event, the *awlād al-nās* were humiliated by the sultan's mamluks who attacked them in their homes.¹³⁵ While distributing the *jawāmik* in 918/1512, al-Ghawrī cut one third of the clothing allocation given to *awlād al-nās* and the elderly among the mamluks.¹³⁶ The allowances and *iqṭā'āt* that had been saved were directed to the Fifth Corps, manned again by *awlād al-nās*, the sultan's mamluk recruits, and foreigners such as Turkmens and North Africans. Unlike the *ḥalqah* or *dīwān al-mufrad* in which the *iqṭā'āt* and *jawāmik* had been allocated until al-Mu'ayyad's reign as a second income, mainly to mamluks from the sultan's and amirs' households, payment in the Fifth Corps was the only allowance given to its members. Their allowances were low and reached only one thousand five hundred dirhams, approximately the same as the *jawāmik* that had been cut from the weak and poor *ḥalqah* soldiers.¹³⁷

CONCLUSION

At its inception in the early 1260s, the *ḥalqah* was already characterized as a flexible and diverse military body, comprised of individuals from many backgrounds. Their secondary status in the Mamluk army was reflected by the smaller fiefs they were granted. At the same time the *ḥalqah* was the biggest body in the army, and the total sum of the relatively small fiefs held by its members was identical to the amirs' share of the state resources. The weakness of the *ḥalqah* soldiers induced the involvement of powerful patrons and clerks in the military administration, especial-

¹³¹ Carl F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power* (New York, 1994).

¹³² Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:206, 368–69.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 65–66.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 285, 321–22.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 324, 368–69, 436, 459, 460, 467.



ly in the absence of a strong central government. The *ḥimāyah* was used by amirs to include *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers in their patronage network and lay their hands on part of their income. Since the amirs encroached on the sultan's control and authority in the *ḥalqaḥ*, the *ḥimāyah* became an object of tension between the sultan and the amirs. From the amirs' perspective, denying them *ḥimāyah* over *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers meant not only preventing them access to landed incomes but also harming their prestige as patrons of power networks, i.e., as their clients' advocates with the authorities. It is in this context that al-Manṣūr Lājīn's cadastral survey of 697/1298 should be viewed. Through this survey Lājīn intended to reclaim state resources from the power network that rivaled his own. He intended to stop the amirs' *ḥimāyah* and restore the sultan's control over the *ḥalqaḥ*. This round in the conflict between the sultan and the amirs ended with the strengthening of the latter's power, since with Lājīn's murder all the *iqṭā'*s taken from the *ḥalqaḥ* formally went to the amirs. The *ḥimāyah* was not abolished, but the old patrons of power networks were replaced by new ones. As a weak, unorganized military group, the *ḥalqaḥ* remained with numerous unfit old soldiers with far fewer *iqṭā'* resources. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad attained the targets that Lājīn had set for his cadastral survey, not only because of his strong authority but also because he determined, for the first time in the Mamluk state, a permanent manpower quota for the army and a correlative remuneration scale as the basis for the *iqṭā'* distribution. The *ḥalqaḥ*'s size was fixed as one third of the army, over eight thousand soldiers out of twenty-four thousand, and it held about thirty percent of the *iqṭā'* resources.

The frequent reshufflings of power after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's death, and the ensuing creation and disintegration of power networks headed by prominent amirs, tipped the balance in the tension between the sultan and the amirs over control of the *ḥalqaḥ* in the amirs' favor. The *ḥalqaḥ*'s makeup was changed when, in addition to the old members and artisans who bought *iqṭā'*s in the *ḥalqaḥ* in the wake of the Black Death, it became a temporary haven for many young mamluks from defeated factions until their fortunes changed and brought them back to an effective power network. Thus the *ḥalqaḥ* was again open to the patronage of powerful amirs and its involvement in power struggles over rule increased. The amirs' control over the *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers reached its peak when al-Zāhir Barqūq formalized their patron-client status by allowing the registration of mamluks from the amirs' households as *iqṭā'* holders in the *ḥalqaḥ* together with his own Sultani mamluks. Control over the *ḥalqaḥ* was, in fact, divided between the sultan and the amirs, although the form of this division is unclear. Al-Mu'ayyad restored the sultan's control over the *ḥalqaḥ*; the amirs' mamluks were denied access to the *ḥalqaḥ*, while Sultani mamluks continued to be numbered among the *ḥalqaḥ* soldiers. Yet the amirs' patronage over the *ḥalqaḥ* members and Sultani mamluks was not curbed but rather increased because in the fifteenth century their households played a central part in the state's econom-



ic, military, and political power networks. Thus, due to the dire economic situation, the sultans employed oppressive tax policies to increase their income, while the amirs and some civilian elite members provided protection, *ḥimāyah*, to the lower military and civilian sectors against the state officials, encroaching on the sultan's authority. The *ḥalqah*'s makeup reflected the Mamluk patronage system and power structure. In the main, it was manned by strong, protected persons: mamluks from the sultan's household and the amirs' protégés. In contrast, the weak and oppressed *ḥalqah* soldiers, who constituted a small part of the *ḥalqah*, remained unprotected. They were the soldiers who were mustered before expeditions, to go into battle or to pay a part of their already low salary, and dismissals from the *ḥalqah* were from their number. They were the soldiers to whom the seemingly sorry plight of the *ḥalqah* in the fifteenth century can be attributed.



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Hanafism and the Turks in al-Ṭarasūsī's *Gift for the Turks* (1352)

Wilferd Madelung's articles on the relationship between the spread of Hanafism and Maturidism and the expansion of Turkish political influence over the Near East underline "the militant Ḥanafism of the Turks."¹ During the reign of Ṭuğrul Bey (431–55/1040–63), for instance, the Seljuq state was strongly engaged in curbing the Shafi'is, and the ruler himself stood behind the measures, as is evident from an open letter of Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī written in defense of Ash'arism, the theological school mostly identified with the Shafi'is.² This strong Seljuqid interest in Hanafism, coupled with the fact that the Ottomans, who succeeded in establishing the longest lasting dominion over Muslim lands, were also Hanafis, leads one to wonder whether Hanafism might be in any way more "government-friendly" than other legal schools. Or, to put it differently, would it have affected the political success of the Turks had they been, let us say, Shafi'is? This article is an attempt to answer this question negatively with a consideration of the Mamluk example.

The Turkish Mamluks, who ruled over Egypt and Syria for almost 150 years (648–784/1250–1382),³ officially adopted the principle of the equality of the four

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¹ Wilferd Madelung, "The Spread of Māturīdism and the Turks," in *Actas do IV Congresso de Estudos Arabes e Islâmicos, Coimbra-Lisboa 1968* (Leiden, 1971), 109–68, reprinted in Madelung, *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam* (London, 1985); idem, "The Two Factions of Sunnism: Ḥanafism and Shāfi'ism," in *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (Albany, 1988), 26–38; idem, "The Early Murji'a in Khurāsān and Transoxania and the Spread of Ḥanafism," *Der Islam* 59 (1982): 32–39, reprinted in *Religious Schools and Sects*; and idem, "The Murji'a and Sunnite Traditionalism," in *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*, 13–25, provide a plausible explanation of the Turkish attraction to the Hanafi school in the eastern provinces.

² Madelung, "The Spread of Māturīdism," 129. In 469/1077, however, the son of the same Abū al-Qāsim, Abū al-Naṣr Ibn al-Qushayrī, came to Baghdad to preach Ash'arism, with the official support of Nizām al-Mulk, the Shafi'i grand vizier of the Seljuqs; Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Muntaẓam fī Tawārīkh al-Mulūk wa-al-Umam* (Beirut, 1995), 9:538–39.

³ The personal religious affiliation of Turkish Mamluks, as a ruling class, is not easy to establish. Qutuz (r. 657–58/1259–60) is blamed for being a Hanafi by Shafi'i sources, and Baybars (r. 658–



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Sunni schools of law.⁴ The fact that they created three chief judgeships in addition to the Shafi'ī one might be considered an attempt to stunt the Shafi'ī position, yet they actually preserved the priority of the Shafi'ī school, as will be shown below.⁵

Within this framework where the Hanafis enjoyed a secondary rank at best, Najm al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn 'Alī al-Ṭarasūsī (d. 758/1357), the Hanafi *qāḍī al-quḍāh* of Damascus (746–58/1346–57), authored a treatise called *Tuḥfat al-Turk fīmā Yajib an Yu'mala fī al-Mulk*, in which he engaged in a deep effort to “sell” Hanafism to the Mamluk sultanate as the official law of the state.⁶ In order to do this, the author strove to argue that Shafi'ism is not “government-friendly,” especially toward

76/1260–77) is known to have shown personal favor to Hanafis; Jorgen S. Nielsen, “Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars and the Appointment of Four Chief Qāḍīs, 663/1265,” *Studia Islamica* 60 (1984): 173–75. The appointment of mostly Hanafi *qāḍī al-askars* (Joseph H. Escovitz, *The Office of Qāḍī al-Quḍāt in Cairo under the Bahrī Mamlūks* [Berlin, 1984], 187–89) suggests that the military establishment was predominantly Hanafi. As to how Hanafism may have spread among them, it is clear that the young “slaves” were going through some sort of religious education (David Ayalon, “L'esclavage du Mamelouk,” *Oriental Notes and Studies* 1 [1951]: 1–66, reprinted in Ayalon, *The Mamlūk Military Society* [London, 1979], 13). My colleague Adam Sabra suggested that this education would have been conducted by scholars who knew Turkish, and that condition would have been most easily met by Hanafi scholars who came from the eastern provinces as a result of the Seljuqid expansion and later the Mongol invasion. As to the Circassian Mamluks (784–922/1382–1517), I do not have any idea about their personal preference among legal schools, and that is why their period is excluded from this study. It is quite plausible, however, that they followed the Turks, since they even used to change their names to Turkish ones; David Ayalon, “Names, titles and ‘nisbas’ of the Mamlūks,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975): 189–232, reprinted in Ayalon, *The Mamlūk Military Society*, 196.

⁴In 663/1265, Baybars established a chief judge for each of the generally-recognized Sunni schools of law, following the already established administrative practice of the Fatimids and Ayyubids (Nielsen, “Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars,” 169–71). I do not agree with the author, however, in his underlying assumption that the establishment of four chief judgeships broke the Shafi'ī predominance.

⁵This, of course, does not mean that the Shafi'īs were happy with the new arrangement; see Maelung, “The Spread of Māturīdism,” 165, n. 145.

⁶This text was first published by Riḍwān al-Sayyid (Beirut, 1992) with an extremely useful introduction (titled “Ṣirā' al-Fuqahā' 'alā al-Sultāh wa-al-Sultān fī al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī min khilāl Kitāb 'Tuḥfat al-Turk' lil-Ṭarasūsī,” 5–50) and notes throughout the text, which led me to most of the references I used for this study. Al-Sayyid's edition of the *Tuḥfat al-Turk* is based on MS Berlin 5614; the manuscript I checked it with is İstanbul Millet Kütüphanesi, Feyzullah Efendi collection, 2122, fols. 96b–105b (hereafter MK), for which I have to thank Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj once more. For the life and works of the author, see Appendix I; for a study of this work, see Michael Winter, “Inter-Madhhab Competition in Mamluk Damascus: Al-Tarsusi's Counsel for the Turkish Sultans,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001): 195–211. Since I completed the first draft of this study, I have come across two other editions of the *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, one by Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ḥasan Muḥammad Ḥasan Ismā'īl (Beirut, 1995), and another one by Mohamed Menasri (Damascus, 1997), the latter of which includes a detailed study as well as a complete French translation of the work. All citations in this article refer to al-Sayyid's edition.



a government of Turks. Yet, a closer look into his arguments and an examination of Shafi‘i views in a Mamluk context—which he at times misrepresents—reveal that: first, principles of constitutional law held by legal schools, at least those of Shafi‘ism, tend to accommodate political developments; second, in certain respects, Shafi‘ism may at times be even more “government friendly” than Hanafism; and third, there is a considerable tension between the letter of the law and its practice, which renders theoretical limitations meaningless in effect.

The first chapter of the *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, or *Gift for the Turks*, “on the explanation (of the validity) of the sultanate of the Turks,”⁷ will be the focus of this article. Here, the author first outlines the necessary conditions for an imam, as laid down by the Shafi‘i sources, which emphasize that the imam should be of Quraysh and a *mujtahid*. Hanafism, argues al-Ṭarasūsī, does not claim any of these conditions.⁸ Yet when he finishes his quotations from the Shafi‘i sources, he twists his earlier exposition and concludes that for Shafi‘is the *sultan* should be of Quraysh and a *mujtahid*, in which case neither the Turks, nor the Persians, could be legitimate

⁷ *Fī Bayān (Ṣiḥḥat) Salṭanat al-Turk*; *ṣiḥḥah* does not appear in the Berlin manuscript (see *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 60, and W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften* [Berlin, 1893, reprinted: Hildesheim, 1980], 5:116), yet it is in the MK, fol. 96b, line 14.

⁸ Al-Ṭarasūsī does not quote any Hanafi sources directly but states that Abu Ḥanifah and his *aṣḥāb* see neither descent from Quraysh, nor the quality of being a *mujtahid*, nor justice as a requirement expected from a sultan and presents the fact that Mu‘āwiyah was followed by the *ṣaḥābah*, despite his controversy with ‘Alī during the latter’s rule, as an example supporting his point; *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 63; MK, fol. 96b, lines 26–28. Yet descent from Quraysh as a condition for the imam had been accepted in Hanafi circles elsewhere. Even during the Ottoman era, the question had to be dealt with, when, for instance, Luṭfi Pasha (d. c. 970/1562–63) was confronted by people citing ‘Umar al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142) and Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 790s/1390s), asking whether they had a valid imam; Hamilton A. R. Gibb, “Luṭfi Pa a on the Ottoman Caliphate,” *Oriens* 15 (1962): 287–95; see al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-‘Aqā’id al-Nasafīyah* (Cairo, 1987), 98, where al-Nasafī states that the imam must be of Quraysh and al-Taftāzānī strenghtens it by citing the tradition of the Prophet (see below) to that effect. As for the Shafi‘i ones, he quotes [*Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 63–65; MK, fol. 96b, line 29–fol. 97a, line 3] al-Shāfi‘ī through al-Rāfi‘ī’s (d. 623/1226) *Kitāb al-Jināyāt al-Mūjibah lil-‘Uqūbāt*, which I have not been able to locate; al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058), *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭānīyah* (Bonn, 1853), 5–6; and al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), *Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn* (Beirut, 1992), 7:262—the quotations are not word-for-word, yet are in essence correct. He cites the Prophetic tradition *al-a’immah min quraysh* as the Shafi‘i justification of their position (among the six books examined by A. J. Wensinck, *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane* [Leiden, 1936], 1:92, this hadith is only found in Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* [Beirut, 1993], 3:163, no. 12292; 3:231–32, no. 12884; 4:565, no. 19722. But it is also found in al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā* [Beirut, 1994], 3:172 and 8:247–48, most of the chains coming from Anas). Interestingly enough, al-Shāfi‘ī himself does not cite this tradition when he deals with the qualification of the imams in the context of the prayer, though he does cite other traditions favoring Quraysh (*Kitāb al-Umm* [Beirut, 1993], 1:287–88), yet al-Muzanī (d. 264/878) puts it into the same section in his *mukhtaṣar*; *ibid.*, 9:28.



rulers. Thus, declares al-Ṭarasūsī, Hanafism is more suitable for the Turks than Shafi'ism.⁹

Yet, as Riḍwān al-Sayyid points out, he not only misrepresents al-Māwardī, who actually engaged in an effort to justify the sultanate-by-force within the framework of Muslim constitutional law,¹⁰ but also neglects Badr al-Dīn Ibn Jamā'ah's (d. 733/1333) constitutional theory,¹¹ which shows very well how constitutional law accommodated political developments. Let us look at the political developments first.

After the end of the caliphate in Baghdad in 656/1258, the Mamluk sultan al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 658–76/1260–77) recognized the caliphate of an Abbasid prince in 659/1261,¹² creating a caliphate in Cairo, which brought some prestige and legitimacy to a sultanate of “slaves.” Yet, the caliph became nothing more than a ceremonial figure;¹³ in time, the *bay'ah*, which was traditionally given by the subjects to a superior power as a sign of recognition, began to be given by the caliph to the sultan.¹⁴ Thus, the distinction between the sultanate and the caliphate became negligible, so much so that the Ottomans did not even bother to continue the institution

⁹ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 65; MK, fol. 97a, lines 4–8.

¹⁰ Al-Sayyid, “Širā' al-Fuqahā',” 26–27; al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭānīyah*, 54–57 (*faṣl . . . imārat al-istīlā'*); Tilman Nagel, *Staat und Glaubensgemeinschaft im Islam* (Zurich, 1981), 1:362–66; Ann K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam, an Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory: The Jurists* (New York, 1981), 100–2.

¹¹ Ibn Jamā'ah held the Shafi'i chief judgeships of Jerusalem, Damascus, and Cairo several times throughout his life (see al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Muqaffā* [Beirut, 1991], 5:89–94) and authored, among other things, an important treatise called *Taḥrīr al-Aḥkām fī Tadbīr Ahl al-Islām* (ed. Fu'ād 'Abd al-Mun'im Aḥmad, 3rd. ed. [Qatar, 1988]); for a short assessment of this work, see Lambton, *State and Government*, 138–43; Nagel, *Staat und Glaubensgemeinschaft*, 1:436–40.

¹² David Ayalon, “Studies on the Transfer of the Abbasid Caliphate from Baghdad to Cairo,” *Arabica* 7 (1960): 50–51, reprinted in Ayalon, *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt (1250-1517)* (London, 1977).

¹³ “When in 709/1310 the usurper al-Muẓaffar Baybars was confronted with a general revolt and tried to reinforce his authority with a new diploma from the caliph, his act provoked only the jeering comment, ‘Stupid fellow. For God's sake—who pays any heed to the caliph now?’” P. M. Holt, “The Position and Power of the Mamlūk Sultan,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38 (1975): 248. According to al-Maqrīzī, the caliph “had no authority, not even the right of expressing his opinion. He spent his time among nobles, high officials, scribes, and judges, paying them visits to thank them for the dinners and entertainments to which they had invited him.” Cited by Donald P. Little, “Religion under the Mamlūks,” *Muslim World* 73 (1983): 173, reprinted in Little, *History and Historiography of the Mamlūks* (London, 1986).

¹⁴ P. M. Holt states that the formula *bāya'ahu al-khalīfah bi-al-salṭanah* “appears occasionally from the accession of al-Nāṣir Aḥmad (740/1342) to the end of the Qalawunid dynasty, and becomes usual with al-Zāhir Barqūq and the Circassian sultans.” (P. M. Holt, “The Structure of Government in the Mamluk Sultanate,” in *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades*, ed. P. M. Holt [Warminster, 1977], 45).



of the Abbasid caliphate after they conquered Egypt in 1517. Selim I brought the last caliph, Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb al-Mutawakkil, to Istanbul where he first imprisoned him at the Seven Towers (Yedikule). In 1520, as Selim was approaching his death, he ordered the release of al-Mutawakkil and permitted him to move back to Egypt with a daily allowance of 60 *akçes*, where the latter died in January 1539, leaving behind two sons who continued to receive allowances from the Ottoman treasury.¹⁵ Clearly, the Ottomans did not regard the last caliph and his male heirs as a threat to their sovereignty.

Ibn Jamā‘ah, writing during this process of marginalization of the caliphate, updated the constitutional theory by putting the sultanate on an equal footing with the caliphate. Whereas for al-Māwardī, what one can get by force was only an *imārah*, but not an *imāmah*, Ibn Jamā‘ah states that there are two types of *imāmah*, one by election and one by force. When enumerating the conditions for the imam by election, he does count descent from Quraysh as one of them.¹⁶ Yet, for the imam whose *bay‘ah* is concluded as a result of his might and soldiers, no such condition is given; furthermore, it is stated that his being ignorant or sinful does not impair his *imāmah*, and anyone for whom the *bay‘ah* is concluded deserves to be called *khalīfat rasūl Allāh*.¹⁷ Moreover, while counting the rights of the ruler over the subjects and his responsibilities toward them, Ibn Jamā‘ah uses the term *sulṭān* instead of *imām*, in contrast to al-Māwardī.¹⁸ Thus, in the constitutional theory of

¹⁵ Muṣṭafā Cenābī, “Gülşen-i Tevârîh,” Dār al-Kutub al-Qawmīyah (Cairo) MS 170 Tārīkh Turķī Tal‘at, fol. 80b; Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-Duwal wa-Āthār al-Uwal fī al-Tārīkh*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥaṭīṭ and Fahmī Sa‘d (Beirut, 1992), 2:226.

¹⁶ Ibn Jamā‘ah, *Tahrīr al-Aḥkām*, 51. An anonymous writer with strong Sufi leanings had argued, about half a century earlier, that Qurashi descent is not a necessary condition, in an effort to identify the imam with the ruling sultan Baybars; W. Madelung, “A Treatise on the Imamate dedicated to Sultan Baybars I,” in *Proceedings of the 14th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, part one, ed. A. Fodor, in *The Arabist, Budapest Studies in Arabic* 13–14 (1995): 95; in this context I should note that Madelung’s presentation of Ibn Jamā‘ah, according to which the notion of a Qurashi representative head of the Muslim community is retained by Ibn Jamā‘ah (*ibid.*, 102), slightly disagrees with my presentation.

¹⁷ Ibn Jamā‘ah, *Tahrīr al-Aḥkām*, 55, 57. It is interesting to note that Ibn Jamā‘ah clearly prohibits the use of the term *khalīfat Allāh* (*ibid.*, 57), whereas al-Māwardī mentions this prohibition only as the view of the majority, and he himself seems to be inclined to see it as permissible (*Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭānīyah*, 22–23).

¹⁸ Ibn Jamā‘ah, *Tahrīr al-Aḥkām*, 61, 65; al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭānīyah*, 23, 25; it is also interesting to note that whereas in al-Māwardī the responsibilities come first, and the rights are only two, Ibn Jamā‘ah first counts ten rights, and then ten responsibilities. Moreover, when explaining the meaning of the word *sulṭān* in the Arabic language, Ibn Jamā‘ah, citing the Quran, 14:10 (. . . Bring to us then a clear *proof* [Ahmed Ali tr. (Princeton, 1994), 218]), states that the sultan is so called for his being the proof of God and his unity (*Tahrīr al-Aḥkām*, 73); also indicated by Nagel, *Staat und Glaubensgemeinschaft*, 1:438.



Ibn Jamā'ah, we witness that the Shafi'ī principles change in order to accommodate political developments, invalidating al-Ṭarasūsī's claims that Shafi'īs do not recognize a government of the Turks.¹⁹

In the rest of the chapter, al-Ṭarasūsī discusses thirteen points of comparison between Hanafism and Shafi'ism, which are meant to strengthen his contention that Hanafism is better suited for the Turks. It is hard to categorize the issues, yet one may divide them roughly into five groups: finances, land management, criminal law, prayer, and war booty. Out of these, I chose to focus on the first two groups, as I believe they matter most for the smooth operation of a government.²⁰

There are three points that pertain to land law. First, according to Abū Ḥanīfah, the sultan has the right to hire out *kharāj* land that belongs to someone who is unable to cultivate it and pay its *kharāj*, and to take the *kharāj* from the rent, whether the holder of the land consents or not; whereas al-Shāfi'ī does not bestow this right upon the ruler.²¹ Second, the sultan is entitled, according to Abū Ḥanīfah, to confirm the conquered lands of the infidels in the hands of the current holders and levy *jizyah* on them, instead of dividing the lands among the soldiers, whether the soldiers consent or not. In contrast, for al-Shāfi'ī, the consent of the soldiers is necessary for the sultan to do that, otherwise he has to divide it among them.²² And third, according to Abū Ḥanīfah, the person who revitalizes waste land may only own it with the permission of the ruler, whereas for al-Shāfi'ī, the permission of the sultan is not needed.²³

¹⁹ That was certainly not the first modification of constitutional law; al-Juwaynī (d. 499/1105), for instance, already questioned the condition of descent from Quraysh in his *al-Irshād*; Lambton, *State and Government*, 106.

²⁰ The points that I left out are summarized in Appendix II.

²¹ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 65; MK, fol. 97a, lines 9–11. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī actually goes further and states that the sultan is entitled to sell the land as well, if nobody is found to rent it, and take its *kharāj* from the price (*Al-Intiṣār wa-al-Tarjīḥ lil-Madhhab al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Madīnat Naṣr, n.d.), 17).

²² *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 66; MK, fol. 97a, lines 11–14; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Intiṣār wa-al-Tarjīḥ*, 17. This is a quite long debate stemming from the conquest of al-Sawād and how later jurists interpreted Caliph 'Umar's action in not dividing the land among the soldiers, but levying *kharāj* on the current holders of the land. Al-Shāfi'ī is not against the levy of *jizyah*, but his real contention is that any land that is conquered by force should be considered as *ghanimah*, and should be divided accordingly (one fifth for the ruler, and four-fifths to the soldiers) unless the soldiers consent otherwise; al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭānīyah*, 254–55, 302–3; al-Sarakhsī (d. 483/1090), *Kitāb al-Mabsūṭ* (Cairo, 1324), 10:15, 37; Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798), *Kitāb al-Kharāj* (Cairo, 1981), 73–91. There is an important financial issue at stake, as the land divided among the soldiers becomes *ushr* land, whereas the land left to its holders is considered *kharāj* land (Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, 149), the tax rate of which is higher.

²³ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 66–67; MK, fol. 97a, lines 19–20; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Intiṣār wa-al-Tarjīḥ*, 17; al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭānīyah*, 308–11. Al-Ṭarasūsī is actually not representing the general Hanafi view by quoting only Abū Ḥanīfah; see al-Marghīnānī (d. 593/1197), *Al-Hidāyah: Sharḥ*



None of these points had much significance for the Mamluk rulers. To begin with, the contemporary Shafi‘i viewpoint is slightly modified. Regarding the second point, for instance, Ibn Jamā‘ah is ambivalent in stressing the consent of the soldiers: “Land conquered by force: it is divided among the ‘capturers,’ then the imam calls upon them to forgo it, then he satisfies them with a substitute (*‘iwad*) or without a substitute, and he institutes it as a *waqf* (*waqqafa*) for the benefit of Muslims and imposes upon it the *kharāj*, as ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may God be pleased with him, did with the *sawād al-‘irāq*. . . .”²⁴ Moreover, regarding the third point, Ibn Jamā‘ah inserts a significant limitation and states that no one may “guard” (*yahmī*) a waste land “guarded” by the sultan, and he would not “own” it if he did that. This statement might very well be regarded as qualifying his earlier statement that anyone may revitalize a waste land without the permission of the sultan.²⁵

Furthermore, what really mattered for the Mamluks was the *iqṭā‘*, the basic principle of the exploitation of land by the “state.” Al-Maqrīzī summarizes this point very well by stating that “from the days of Saladin Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb until today, all Egyptian cultivated land has been assigned in the form of *iqṭā‘*s to the sultan, his *ajnād*, and his amirs.”²⁶ And on this issue the Shafi‘i understanding of the law does not present any problems for the ruler, at least as presented by Ibn Jamā‘ah, who states that this type of *iqṭā‘* is the contemporary practice in the lands of Egypt and Syria.²⁷

Moreover, even when the law presented difficulties for the ruler, it was not necessarily the Shafi‘is who caused the problems. The reconquest of territory from the Mongols, for instance, raised the question of whether the land reverted to the original owners and their heirs, or could be disposed of by the sultan. In 666/1267–68,

Bidāyah al-Mubtadī (Cairo, 1995), 6:199–203; and Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, 137–41, where it is clear that Abū Ḥanīfah’s view was modified, as the tradition of the Prophet, *man ahyā arḍan mawātan/maytatan fa-hiya lahu* is evoked; Wensinck, *Concordance*, 1:539, indicates that the tradition is mentioned in all the six books he examines.

²⁴ Ibn Jamā‘ah, *Tahrīr al-Aḥkām*, 102–3; actually, he treats the land conquered by force under *‘ushr* land as well, where he states that it is divided among the “capturers,” and that it becomes their *milk* (ibid., 106). Then he discusses the issue once more and presents the views of all the four founders of legal schools, without making any judgment; Mālik’s view is even stronger than Abū Ḥanīfah’s, and Aḥmad’s is not certain as there are versions that parallel all the three (ibid., 203–4). Hossein Modarressi Tabātabā‘i, *Kharāj in Islamic Law* (London, 1983), 124–25, states that “[w]hether the *imām* had the authority to divide the land or not, most Muslim jurists agreed that such an authority had never been exercised.”

²⁵ Ibn Jamā‘ah, *Tahrīr al-Aḥkām*, 108, 117.

²⁶ Cited by Hassanein Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt A.H. 564–741/A.D. 1169–1341* (London, 1972), 26, from al-Maqrīzī’s *Kitāb al-Mawā‘iḏ wa al-I‘tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Cairo, 1270), 1:97.

²⁷ Ibn Jamā‘ah, *Tahrīr al-Aḥkām*, 110. Al-Māwardī, on the other hand, had presented the possibility of the *iqṭā‘ al-istiḡlāl* in a more limited way (*Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyah*, 337–41).



lawyers supported the former view. Then “Baybars called a session in the Dār al-‘Adl to force through recognition of his rights over the land. All duly agreed with him except the Hanafi chief qadi of Damascus.”²⁸

Regarding finances, al-Ṭarasūsī first asserts that even if a person has already paid the *zakāt* of his *sawā’im*, the sultan is entitled, according to Abū Ḥanīfah, to take it for a second time and distribute it to the poor, whereas al-Shāfi‘ī does not accord such a prerogative to the sultan.²⁹ The second issue is the *jizyah*, which brings more income if collected in accordance with the Hanafi practice: 48 dirhams from the rich, 24 dirhams from the “middle class,” and 12 dirhams from the poor. According to al-Shāfi‘ī, it is one dinar from everyone, which makes only 10 dirhams.³⁰ The third is about the distribution of the *ṣadaqāt*. For Abū Ḥanīfah, the ruler is entitled to keep the chattels (*a‘yān al-ṣadaqah*) and give its equivalent to the poor if he considers this to be in the public interest, whereas al-Shāfi‘ī does not allow this.³¹ Finally, al-Ṭarasūsī states that if the sultan needs to strengthen his army, he may take what is necessary from the *arbāb al-amwāl* without their consent.³²

These theoretical points of law do not have much relevance when one looks at the practice. To begin with the *jizyah*, the amount collected by the Shafi‘i Ayyubids in the sixth/twelfth century seems to be in line with what al-Ṭarasūsī presents as the Hanafi practice. In the first part of the seventh century, it is recorded as 2 dinars per head. And under the Mamluks, though there is no conclusive data, the *dhimmi*s “were frequently obliged to pay double the legal amount”; moreover, the one dinar per head was at times collected as an extra tax, in addition to the *jizyah*.³³ As for the late seventh and early eighth centuries, al-Qalqashandī remarks that the amount decreased quite a bit and is taken as 25 dirhams from the richest and 10 dirhams

²⁸ “The matter was settled when the original owners agreed to pay an annual sum to Baybars to retain possession,” and in 677/1279, al-Sa‘īd Barka Khān succeeded in canceling this arrangement; Nielsen, “Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars,” 174–75, and 175, n. 1.

²⁹ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 67, MK, fol. 97a, lines 23–26; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Intiṣār wa-al-Tarjīḥ*, 17.

³⁰ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 68; MK, fol. 97a, lines 31–34. Al-Ṭaḥawī (d. 321/933), *Mukhtaṣar al-Ṭaḥawī* (Cairo, 1370), 294; and al-Marghinānī, *Al-Hidāyah*, 4:326–27, both cite the same amounts; the latter even states that the total is collected in monthly installments. Al-Shāfi‘ī, on the other hand, depends on three traditions of the Prophet and states that it should be one dinar, or its equivalent, from everyone; al-Shāfi‘ī, *Kitāb al-Umm*, 4:253 (where nn. 2–4 identify the traditions).

³¹ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 68–69; MK, fols. 97a, line 34–97b, line 1. As al-Sayyid points out, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī discusses this issue in his *Īthār al-Inṣāf fī Āthār al-Khilāf* (n.p., 1987), 67–71, providing several traditions to support the Hanafi point of view against the position shared by Mālik and al-Shāfi‘ī; yet his discussion is concentrated on *collecting* the substitute of that which is supposed to be collected.

³² *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 69; MK, fol. 97b, lines 1–2.

³³ Rabie, *The Financial System*, 108–12.



from the poorest.³⁴ Though not as profitable as the Hanafi figures, this practice is certainly not in line with what al-Shāfi‘ī states.

As for the *zakāt* on livestock, there is not much evidence pertaining to its collection. Yet, with regard to the *zakāt* on merchandise, the practice seems to have differed from the theory, and the taxpayers did pay double *zakāt* in one year.³⁵ And finally, regarding the strengthening of the army, there are two cases in the seventh century in which resources were extorted, once from the *ra‘āyā*, and once from the wealthy and the merchants.³⁶

Thus, most of the points raised by al-Ṭarasūsī become meaningless when compared with the actual practice, which was not in line with what he presents as the Shafi‘ī stance. In addition to this discrepancy, there are certain issues in which the Shafi‘ī stance is actually more profitable to the “state” than the Hanafi one, as the author himself discloses: “As for the idea of the common people—and that is deeply rooted in the minds of the Turks—that the *madhhab* of al-Shāfi‘ī makes the state treasury an inheritor, this is not right. What is right about the *madhhab* of al-Shāfi‘ī is that in these times, the treasury does not inherit from anybody; on the contrary, the “uterine relatives” (*dhawū al-arḥām*) inherit as in the *madhhab* of Abū Ḥanīfah.”³⁷ Here again, al-Ṭarasūsī omits the practice of the Mamluks who actually had a special institution to deal with this matter: *dīwān al-mawārīth al-ḥashrīyah*, the bureau of escheat estates. This institution provided for the public treasury to claim, at the expense of the *dhawū al-arḥām*, either the whole of the estate of a deceased person if s/he died without legal heirs, or the residue of it if the heirs were not legally entitled to the whole of the estate.³⁸

³⁴ Al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), *Die Geographie und Verwaltung von Ägypten* [an epitome of the author’s *Ṣubḥ al-A‘shā fī Ṣinā‘at al-Inshā’*], tr. F. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1879), 163.

³⁵ The way to do this was to collect it before it fell due; Rabie, *The Financial System*, 99.

³⁶ The first one was during the reign of Qutuz (657–58/1259–60) and the second in 699; Escovitz, *The Office of Qādī al-Quḍāt*, 160.

³⁷ MK, fol. 97b, lines 4–5; *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 69, where al-Sayyid makes up for a missing part in the Berlin manuscript quite well. For the right of “uterine relatives” to inherit in Hanafism, see al-Sarakhsī, *Kitāb al-Mabsūt*, 30:2–13. Al-Ṭarasūsī bases his contention about the Shafi‘ī viewpoint on his personal conversation with Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355), the Shafi‘ī chief judge of Damascus (739–56), who said to him that there is no difference between the two *madhhabs* as to the priority of “uterine relatives” over the treasury in matters of inheritance, for the state treasury is corrupted; *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 69; MK, fol. 97b, lines 5–7.

³⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Geographie und Verwaltung*, 164–65; Rabie, *The Financial System*, 127–32; Donald P. Little, “The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents for the Study of Medieval Islamic History,” *Der Islam* 57 (1980): 189–219, reprinted in Little, *History and Historiography of the Mamlūks* (London, 1986), 203–5. It is interesting to note in this respect that the Hanafi theory, as presented by al-Ṭarasūsī, is in parallel to the Shi‘ī one as it was applied in Fatimid Egypt; Rabie, *The Financial System*, 127.



This is not the only issue where the Hanafi stance is more disadvantageous for the public treasury. Al-Ṭarasūsī claims that the Hanafi judge should be made responsible for the properties of orphans so that they would receive a more favorable treatment, as Hanafism does not impose *zakāt* on such properties, whereas Shafi'ism does.³⁹ This is probably why the properties of the orphans were almost exclusively controlled by the Shafi'ī chief judge throughout the Turkish Mamluk period.⁴⁰

A glance at the times of the Turkish Mamluks provides more examples of favors given to the Shafi'īs. Even after the establishment of the other three chief judgeships, the Shafi'ī chief judge preserved his predominance, as he “was put in charge of the moneys of the orphans, as well as verifying *waqfiyāt* and legacies.”⁴¹ Shafi'īs are also seen as viziers and occasionally even as *qāḍī al-ʿaskars*.⁴² And their priority over the Hanafis is symbolized by the seating arrangements in the Dār al-ʿAdl in Cairo, where all the four chief judges sat to the right of the sultan, the Shafi'ī one preceding the Hanafi chief judge. Though the latter was later moved next to the sultan on his left side, preceding the Hanbali judge, he was still inferior to the Shafi'ī one, who kept his original seat on the right side of the sultan.⁴³ In exchange, the Shafi'ī judges seem to have been quite cooperative with the political authority, as some of the “government-friendly” decisions they took bear witness.⁴⁴ Inciden-

³⁹ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 80; MK, fol. 98b, lines 10–15; the issue arises from the Hanafi viewpoint that the children, alongside “lunatics,” are exempted from *zakāt*, which is seen as part of the *ʿibādah*; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Īthār*, 72–75.

⁴⁰ Escovitz, *The Office of Qāḍī al-Quḍāt*, 183.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴² For viziers, see *ibid.*, 175–77; for a Shafi'ī army judge, *ibid.*, 189. The latter post was more generally given to the Hanafis, as al-Ṭarasūsī himself points out; *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 91; MK, fol. 100a, lines 12–14.

⁴³ Escovitz, *The Office of Qāḍī al-Quḍāt*, 25.

⁴⁴ To cite one example among many: in 780, when the judges were summoned to discuss the abolition of all the *awqāf* of Egypt and Syria, the Shafi'ī chief judge, Badr al-Dīn al-Subkī, “took the most politically advantageous line by saying that all the land belonged to the sultan, and he could do whatever he liked.” As a result a number of *awqāf* were turned into *iqṭāʿ*s (*ibid.*, 153). Though in a different context, other Shafi'ī scholars, too, showed signs of a positive disposition toward Turkish Mamluk rule; Ibn al-Nafīs (d. 687/1288), a doctor and *faqīh*, for instance, presented the rule of Baybars as almost the outcome of a foreordained divine plan; Remke Kruk, “History and Apocalypse: Ibn al-Nafīs’ Justification of Mamluk Rule,” *Der Islam* 72 (1995): 331. There is also Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī’s (d. 888/1483) later work in which he cited *zulm al-turk wa-lā ʿadl al-ʿarab*, yet he is too late for our purposes and does not seem to be a good representative of the Shafi'ītes; Ulrich Haarmann, “Rather the Injustice of the Turks than the Righteousness of the Arabs—Changing ‘Ulamā’ Attitudes towards Mamluk Rule in the late Fifteenth Century,” *Studia Islamica* 68 (1988): 61–77; Haarmann is extremely unfair toward Mamluk jurists when he claims that “[t]he radical changes the Mamluk system of government introduced were kept out of systematic speculation” (*ibid.*, 61–62), and he seems to be unaware of Ibn Jamāʿah and Najm al-Dīn Ibrāhīm when he attributes a paucity of political writing to Mamluk Egypt and Syria.



tally, when the Ottoman sultan Murad II decided to attack the Karamanid dynasty of central Anatolia and sought legal opinions from Egyptian jurists that would legitimize his military enterprise against another Muslim power, the fatwa of the Shafi‘i judge, who happened to be the famous Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 1448), was much more permissive than that of his Hanafi colleague.⁴⁵

Thus, in Egypt under the Turkish Mamluks, we witness an ethnically Turkish rule operating quite well without engaging in an effort to make Hanafism—the legal school adhered to by most of the military establishment—the law of the state. And we see a legal school, Shafi‘ism, the foundations of which go back to the hadith movement that aimed at limiting the law-making capacity of the political authority, cooperating with and even legitimizing a political authority that did not necessarily follow the letter of the law as defined by al-Shāfi‘ī. It seems not only that the theoretical limitations put on political authority do change with a view to accommodating new developments, but also that the guardians of the theory do cooperate with rulers who contravene that very theory with their practice; and this collaboration is by no means limited to a particular legal school. As argued by Yossef Rapoport, the state and jurists from all four schools of law “shared a common vision of the social good.”⁴⁶ Therefore I would say it would not matter very much for the political success of the Turks had they been, let us say, Shafi‘is.

⁴⁵ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “Karamanoğulları devri vesikalarından İbrahim Beyin Karaman imareti vakfiyesi,” *Belleten* 1 (1937): 118–19 and 129–33.

⁴⁶ Yossef Rapoport, “Legal Diversity in the Age of *Taqīd*: *qāḍīs* under the Mamluks,” *Islamic Law and Society* 10, no. 2 (2003): 227.



APPENDIX I: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF NAJM AL-DĪN IBRĀHĪM IBN 'ALĪ AL-ṬARASŪSĪ (D. 758/1357)

There are a couple of small problems related to the identity of al-Ṭarasūsī. First, Ḥājji Khalīfah mentions him in one of his entries as Burhān al-Dīn, and second, al-Qurashī identifies him as Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid. Al-Qurashī names his father once as 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid, and once as 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid, though talking about the same person in both cases. Probably because of the work of al-Qurashī, later biographers fall into some confusion.⁴⁷ Yet, the earliest sources available establish his identity quite firmly as Najm al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid, though the question remains as to how al-Qurashī created this confusion despite his personal contact with the father 'Alī.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ḥājji Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn 'an Asāmī al-Kutub wa-al-Funūn* (Tehran, 1967, 3rd reprint), 1:183; 'Abd al-Qādir al-Qurashī (d. 775/1373), *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍīyah fī Ṭabaqāt al-Hanafīyah*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattāh Muḥammad al-Ḥulw (Cairo, 1978–), 1:213–14 (Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid); 2:535–36 ('Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid); #2040 in the *ansāb* section of the work ('Alī ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid—I could not read this entry as it was not accessible to me during my research, yet the editor, to whom I owe a lot for leading me to most of the sources I used in this appendix, states that both entries talk about the same person, and give the name of the son as Aḥmad). Besides, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalanī (d. 852/1449) has an entry for Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid, yet it only gives the name without any biography (*Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah* [Hyderabad, 1348], 1:217); and he provides the biography of Ibrāhīm ibn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid on pp. 43–44. Moreover, Abū al-Maḥāsīn ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470) has two entries describing our author in his *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi wa-al-Mustawfā ba'd al-Wāfi*, ed. Aḥmad Yūsuf Najātī (Cairo, 1956), 1:110–11 and 379–80 (the latter entry is named for Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid, whereas the former is for Ibrāhīm ibn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid). Later sources are aware of the problem and state that the name should be Ibrāhīm; see Taqī al-Dīn Ibn 'Abd al-Qādir al-Tamīmī (d. 1010/1601), *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Sanīyah fī Tarājim al-Ḥanafīyah*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattāh Muḥammad al-Ḥulw (Riyadh, 1983), 1:213–15; and 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Laknawī (d. 1304/1886), *Kitāb al-Fawā'id al-Bahīyah fī Tarājim al-Ḥanafīyah* (Cairo, 1324), 10–11 [as indicated in the introduction, this work is for the most part an abridgement of Maḥmūd ibn Sulaymān al-Kaffawī's (d. 990/1582) *Katā'ib A'lām al-Akhyār*].

⁴⁸ The earliest sources for the life of the author are al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), *A'yān al-'Aṣr wa-A'wān al-Naṣr*, ed. F. Sezgin and M. Amawī (Frankfurt am Main, 1990), 1:23–24, where the author mentions a personal contact with Ibrāhīm in 757/1356; and Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Ḥusaynī (d. 765/1363–64), "Al-Dhayl al-Thānī lil-Ḥusaynī," in *Min Dhuyūl al-'Ibar lil-Dhahabī wa-al-Ḥusaynī*, ed. Muḥammad Rashād al-Muṭṭalib (Kuwait, n.d.), 269 (for the father), 315–16 (for the son). Al-Qurashī, *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍīyah*, 2:536, mentions that the father visited them (*wa-qadima 'alaynā al-Qāhirah ṣuḥbat al-quḍāt*); the editor of *Al-Manhal*, 379, n. 5, quotes probably another edition of al-Qurashī, which reads *qadima 'alaynā min Dimashq ilā al-Qāhirah ṣuḥbat al-'askar fī salṭanat al-malik al-Nāṣir Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qalā'un*, which establishes the date of the visit of the father to Cairo as 742–43/1342.



Though the *nisbah* Ṭarasūsī refers to Tarsus,⁴⁹ Ibrāhīm's father 'Imād al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad actually came from Egypt. He was born in 669/1271 in Munyah ibn Khaṣīb in Upper Egypt.⁵⁰ His teaching career in Damascus seems to have begun in 720/1320 at the Qal'ah Mosque.⁵¹ In 722/1322, upon the death of Shams al-Dīn ibn al-'Izz, the deputy of the Hanafi chief judge of Damascus, 'Imād al-Dīn succeeded the deceased, who happened to be his father-in-law as well, in office.⁵² This led him to succeed the chief judge, when the latter died in 727/1327. He taught at a number of madrasahs, such as al-Nūrīyah and al-Qaymāzīyah.⁵³

Chamberlain argues for a strong competition for *manṣībs* among the elite of Damascus in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁵⁴ Teaching posts seem to have been a means of preserving the elite status of one's family in the future, and fathers worked hard for their sons to succeed them in their posts. Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī could do no more than wish for "just three things: that my son here take up my posts, that I see my [dead] son Aḥmad in a dream, and that I die in Cairo." Later he went to the tomb of Shaykh Ḥamād outside the Bāb al-Ṣaghīr and sought the

⁴⁹ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān* (Beirut, 1955–57), 4:28, states: *madīnah bi-thughūr al-Shām bayna Anṭākiyah wa-Ḥalab wa-bilād al-rūm*; and al-Sam'ānī, *Al-Ansāb* (Hyderabad, 1978), 9:65, reads: *bilād al-thaghr bi-al-Shām*. Gabriela Linda Guellil, *Damaszener Akten des 8./14. Jahrhunderts nach at-Ṭarasūsīs* Kitāb al-I'lām: *Eine Studie zum arabischen Justizwesen* (Bamberg, 1985), 17, n. 3, takes it correctly to refer to Tarsus in modern Turkey, hence her title; yet she, too, is aware that in the sources the proper spelling is al-Ṭarasūsī.

⁵⁰ Al-Qurashī, *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍīyah*, 2:535; al-Nu'aymī (d. 927/1521), *Al-Dāris fī Tārīkh al-Madāris* (Damascus, 1948), 1:622; Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546), *Quḍāt Dimashq* (Damascus, 1956), 196. Munyah ibn Khaṣīb is located, according to al-Nu'aymī and Ibn Ṭūlūn, in upper Ṣa'īd (Upper Egypt), whereas Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 5:218, calls the town Munyah Abī al-Khuṣayb and indicates that it is in lower Ṣa'īd. Al-Ḥulw states that this town is modern Mīnyā, located on the western bank of the Nile, the capital of the province of Mīnyā, one of the provinces of central Ṣa'īd; al-Qurashī, *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍīyah*, 2:535, n. 1.

⁵¹ Al-Nu'aymī (*Al-Dāris*, 1:622); Ibn Ṭūlūn (*Quḍāt Dimashq*, 196); Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* (Beirut, 1994), 14:7:77.

⁵² That 'Imād al-Dīn was the son-in-law of Shams al-Dīn ibn al-'Izz is only mentioned by Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:7:81. Yet Najm al-Dīn Ibrāhīm does refer to him as his maternal grandfather in *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 109, where the name appears wrongly because of the Berlin manuscript; see MK, fol. 102a, lines 14–15, where the name is correct; al-Sayyid misidentifies the person, reading Shams al-Dīn as Ṣadr al-Dīn (*Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 109, n. 2).

⁵³ For the location of these madrasahs, see Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge, 1994), map 2, p. xv. Besides these two, he also taught at al-Rayḥānīyah, the tenure of which he held even after giving up his chief judgeship, and al-Muqaddamīyah; Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:7:126, 175; al-Nu'aymī, *Al-Dāris*, 1:622; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Quḍāt Dimashq*, 197; for a document about his appointment to al-Rayḥānīyah, see al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā fī Ṣinā'at al-Inshā'* (Cairo, 1332-40), 12:78–80, cited by Guellil, *Damaszener Akten*, 18.

⁵⁴ Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 91–107.



shaykh's intercession: "I have three sons, one of whom has gone to God, another is in Ḥijāz and I know nothing of him, and the third is here. I want him to take my posts."⁵⁵

ʿImād al-Dīn seems to have operated in this framework as well. In 734/1334, his son Najm al-Dīn Ibrāhīm began teaching at al-Iqbālīyah al-Ḥanafīyah, when he was only 15 years old; and in 737/1337, he taught at al-Shiblīyah.⁵⁶

A widely used method for securing the tenure of one's intimates was the *nuzūl*, or "resignation," of the office holder in favor of them, while he "had the power to do so."⁵⁷ That is exactly what ʿImād al-Dīn did in 746/1346; thus Najm al-Dīn, after a deputyship of about two years, became the chief Hanafi judge of Damascus and succeeded his father in the teaching position at al-Nūrīyah as well.⁵⁸ ʿImād al-Dīn died in 748/1348 in al-Mizzah, on the outskirts of Damascus.⁵⁹

Najm al-Dīn Ibrāhīm was born in al-Mizzah, in 720/1320.⁶⁰ From 746/1346 onwards, he held the Hanafi chief judgeship and a teaching position at al-Nūrīyah. Among the interesting anecdotes about his life mentioned in the biographical dic-

⁵⁵ Cited by Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 95 and n. 23, from al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿīyah al-Kubrā* (Cairo, 1964–76), 6:175. What Taqī al-Dīn asked for was realized, as his son Tāj al-Dīn succeeded him in office; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Quḍāt Dimashq*, 103.

⁵⁶ Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:7:133–34, 141. Al-Shiblīyah is on the foot of Mount Qāsyūn, northwest of Damascus; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Qalāʾid al-Jawharīyah fī Tārīkh al-Šāliḥīyah* (Damascus, 1949), 128–29.

⁵⁷ Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 93–94.

⁵⁸ Al-Šafādī, *Aʿyān al-ʿAṣr*, 23, uses the exact terminology: *nazala la-hu wāliduhu ʿan mansīb al-qaḍāʾ*. To arrange this affair, the father talks to the amir Sayf al-Dīn Yalbughā [*nāʾib* in Damascus, 746–48; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Iʿlām al-Warā bi-man Wullīya Nāʾiban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-Kubrā* (Cairo, 1973), 19–20], who in turn writes to the sultan and gets his approval. See also Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:7:175; and for a document about his appointment to al-Nūrīyah, see al-Qalqashandī, *Šubḥ al-Aʾshā* (Cairo ed.), 12:353–55, cited by Guellil, *Damaszener Akten*, 21. The way the father succeeds his father-in-law and is succeeded by his son is very much in line with the predominant practice of the age. Escovitz indicates that 25 out of 31 judges of Cairo under Turkish Mamluk sultans, whose reason for appointment can be discerned, came to office through nepotism, *nāʾib* succession, the combination of both, and patronage (see the chart of "Reasons for Appointments" in Escovitz, *The Office of Qāḍī al-Quḍāt*, 82). This should lead us to consider carefully whether these informal ways of coming to office are anomalies, or the very basis, hence the norm, of the operation of public offices.

⁵⁹ For Mizzah, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, 5:122. Besides the sources cited, biographical information about ʿImād al-Dīn may also be found in al-Ḥusaynī, "Al-Dhayl al-Thānī," 269; Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah*, 3:18–19; Abū al-Maḥāsin Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1949), 10:181; and al-Laknawī, *Al-Fawāʾid al-Bahīyah*, 117.

⁶⁰ The date is given as 721 by al-Šafādī, *Aʿyān al-ʿAṣr*, 23, and Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah*, 4:43, though this date does not agree with Ibn Kathīr, who states that Najm al-Dīn was 15 years old in 734/1334 (*Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:7:133–34). Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Quḍāt Dimashq*, 198, gives a precise date, 2 Muḥarram 720, which is closer to Ibn Kathīr's statement.



tionaries, there is one that supports Chamberlain's argument about the competition among the elite over available positions at madrasahs. Najm al-Dīn was challenged over the position at al-Khātūniyah by someone called 'Alā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Uṭrūsh, and some members of the scholarly elite got involved in the issue by writing letters in support of Najm al-Dīn. One of them, Abū al-Baqā' al-Subkī, later Shafi'i chief judge of Damascus, claimed Najm al-Dīn to be the shaykh of Ḥanafīyah in all Syria (al-Shām).⁶¹

Najm al-Dīn seems to have had good relationships with the political authorities as well; in 750/1349, he received a robe of honor from Cairo.⁶² And when he died in 758/1357, his funeral prayer was led by the amir 'Alī al-Mārdānī, the deputy of the sultan in Damascus.⁶³ His works are many, and the following is a tentative list:

- *Tuḥfat al-Turk fīmā Yajib an Yu'mala fī al-Mulk*, written in 753/1352, for which Brockelmann mentions three copies, among them the Berlin 5614, which is the manuscript used by al-Sayyid for publication. In addition to the ones mentioned by Brockelmann, at least two more copies exist, the second of which formed the basis for a draft translation into English by Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj.⁶⁴
- *Al-Nūr al-Lāmi' fīmā Yu'malu bi-hi fī al-Jāmi'*, a short treatise about the administration of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus, inserted into the sixth

⁶¹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah*, 4:43; al-Tamīmī, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Sanīyah*, 1:214; the latter source is the fullest about Najm al-Dīn's life, as it makes use of almost all the biographical dictionaries written earlier. For Abū al-Baqā' al-Subkī, see Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Quḍāt Dimashq*, 106–7.

⁶² Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:7:186. Actually, the text suggests that this occasion might be his official appointment as well: on Monday, 15 Jumādā II, . . . Najm al-Dīn . . . *ḥukkimal ḥakama, wa dhālika bi-tawqī' sultānī wa-khil'ah min al-diyār al-Miṣrīyah*. The date corresponds to the coming of the new *nā'ib* Aytamish; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām*, 21. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie a L'époque des Mamelouks* (Paris, 1923), 160, states that the chief judges of Damascus were appointed by the *tawqī' sharīf* of the palace. If that was his official appointment, one wonders on what grounds he may have held his office until then.

⁶³ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān al-'Aṣr*, 23, and following him, Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah*, 4:43; al-Tamīmī, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Sanīyah*, 1:214; al-Mārdānī was the *nā'ib* of Damascus between 753 and 759; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām*, 22–23.

⁶⁴ Ḥājjī Khalifah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 1:364, and Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal*, 1:111, both give the same date, suggesting the possibility that they saw the autograph version of the work. For the three copies, see C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur* (Leiden, 1949), 2:95/79; idem, Supplementband II (Leiden, 1938), 87; Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 5:116. A fourth copy is mentioned by al-Ziriklī, *Al-A'lām* (Beirut, 1979, 4th ed.), 1:51 (cited by al-Sayyid, "Ṣirā' al-Fuqahā'," 18, n. 2), as 'Arif Ḥikmat Library (in Medina), *fiqh ḥanafī*, n. 83; and the fifth one is in İstanbul, Millet Kütüphanesi, Feyzullah Efendi collection, 2122, fols. 96b–105b, ascribed to Feyzullah Efendi (d. 1115/1703), an Ottoman *ṣeyhülislām*, of which Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj was kind enough to let me borrow the microfilm. Abou-El-Haj's unpublished English translation is a draft, though it greatly helped me in finding my way in the Arabic original.



chapter of the *Tuḥfah*, thus published by al-Sayyid as well.⁶⁵ Ḥājjī Khalīfah attributes it to Ibn al-‘Izz al-Ḥanafī, a name mentioned as a pseudo-author in his entry for the *Tuḥfah* as well.⁶⁶

- *Anfa‘ al-Wasā’il ilá Taḥrīr al-Masā’il*, or *Al-Fatāwá al-Ṭarasūsīyah*, the best-known work of the author. Several manuscripts exist; it was published in 1926, and it was abridged by at least three later authors.⁶⁷
- *Al-I‘lām bi-Muṣṭalaḥ al-Shuhūd wa-al-Ḥukkām*, large parts of which have been published and translated into German by Guellil.⁶⁸
- *Urjūzah fī Ma‘rifat mā bayna al-Ashā’irah wa-al-Ḥanaḥīyah min al-Khilāf fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*, a short poem, mentioned by Ibn Ḥajar, and already reproduced by al-Ṣafadī.⁶⁹

Apart from these published works, there are six titles mentioned by al-Maqrīzī:⁷⁰

- *Raf‘ al-Kulḥah ‘an al-Ikhwān fī Dhikr mā Quddima fīhi al-Qiyās ‘alá al-Istihsān*;⁷¹

⁶⁵ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 102–5; MK, fol. 101a, line 26–fol. 101b, line 35; also see, Ahlwardt, *Verzeichn - nis*, 5:393. Although Guellil, *Damaszener Akten*, 23, n. 32, thinks that the Berlin manuscript only includes a fragment of the work, as al-Sayyid points out, it contains all of it (“Ṣirā‘ al-Fuqahā’,” 19–20, n. 1).

⁶⁶ Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 1:364, 2:1983; Ahlwardt, *Verzeichn - nis*, 5:116, argues that Ibn al-‘Izz and Najm al-Dīn should be the same person since the grandfather of Najm al-Dīn was called Shams al-Dīn al-‘Izz. Yet, first of all, the grandfather is Shams al-Dīn *ibn* al-‘Izz, and he is a maternal grandfather, as MK, fol. 102 a, lines 14–15 reads (see also note 52 above); and second, the Paris copy of the *Tuḥfat al-Turk* is ascribed to Aḥmad ibn al-‘Izz al-Ḥanafī, not Ibrāhīm (Brockelmann, *GAL*, 2:95/79). Thus, this problem might be connected to the biographical issue with the name Aḥmad, mentioned above; however, none of this endangers the identification of the author of *Tuḥfat al-Turk* and *al-Nūr*; see the next footnote.

⁶⁷ *Al-Fatāwá al-Ṭarasūsīyah aw Anfa‘ al-Wasā’il ilá Taḥrīr al-Masā’il*, ed. Muṣṭafá Muḥammad Khafājī (n.p., 1344/1926). See Brockelmann, *GAL*, 2:95/79, and Supplementband II, 87, where it is mentioned that the two abridgements were made in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries; the third one is taken from Ḥājjī Khalīfah’s entry on the book in *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 1:183, which does not give a date. The *Anfa‘* is referred to by the author in the *Tuḥfat al-Turk* as his own work, clinching the case for Najm al-Dīn’s authorship of the *Tuḥfat al-Turk* (*Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 136; MK, fol. 104b, lines 32–33).

⁶⁸ See n. 49 above. The four manuscripts examined by Guellil are described in *Damaszener Akten*, 29–32. The work is also attributed to a different author: see Brockelmann, Supplementband II, 87; and Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 1:127. Guellil resolves the problem, *Damaszener Akten*, 29.

⁶⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah*, 1:44, and following him al-Tamīmī, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Sanīyah*, 1:215; they may have seen the poem in al-Ṣafadī, *A‘yān al-‘Aṣr*, 23–24.

⁷⁰ Al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Mulūk* (Cairo, 1970), 3:1:36; and following him, Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 10:326, and idem, *Al-Manhal*, 1:110–11.

⁷¹ Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 1:830 and 910, both referring apparently to the same work.



- *Al-Ikhtilāfāt al-Wāqi‘ah fī al-Muṣannaḡāt*; ⁷²
- *Manāsik al-Ḥājj*; ⁷³
- *Maḡzūrāt al-Iḡrām*; ⁷⁴
- *Al-Ishārāt fī Ḍabṡ al-Mushkilāt*; ⁷⁵
- *Al-Fawā‘id al-Manzūmah fī al-Fiḡh*. ⁷⁶

Another important title might be *Wafayāt al-A‘yān min Madhhab Abī Ḥanīfah al-Nu‘mān*, which seems to be at least three volumes. ⁷⁷

Two more works of his are available in manuscript form:

- *‘Umdat al-Ḥukkām fīmā lā Yanḡudhu min al-Aḡkām*; ⁷⁸
- *Al-Unmūdḡaj min al-‘Ulūm li-Arbāb al-Fuḡūm*. ⁷⁹

Other titles attributed to him are:

- *Al-Khiṡāl fī Furū‘ al-Ḥanaḡīyah*; ⁸⁰
- *Risālah fī Jawāz (al-Jum‘ah) fī Mawḡī‘ayn min Miṡr*; ⁸¹

⁷² Ibid., 1:33.

⁷³ Ibid., 2:1832, referred to as *Manāsik al-Ṣarasūsī*, yet the description of the book as *muṡawwal* parallels al-Maḡrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 2:1616.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1:97.

⁷⁶ This is the work referred to by Brockelmann as *Al-Fawā‘id al-Fiḡḡīyah al-Badrīyah*, written in 754/1352, composed in one thousand verses; see *GAL* 2:95/79, and Supplementband II, 87. Ḥājjī Khalīfah has two different entries, one called *Al-Fawā‘id al-Fiḡḡīyah*, described as a *manzūmah* (*Kashf al-Zunūn*, 2:1300); and one called *Manzūmah fī al-Furū‘*, described as comprising a thousand verses. Ḥājjī Khalīfah adds that the author called it *Al-Fawā‘id al-Badrīyah al-Fiḡḡīyah*, then wrote a commentary on it, called *Al-Durrah al-Sanīyah*, which became a source for the *manzūmah* of Ibn Wahbān (ibid., 2:1867); see also Ismā‘īl Pāshā al-Baḡhdādī, *Īḡāḡ al-Maknūn fī al-Dḡayl ‘alā Kashf al-Zunūn* (Tehran, 1967, 3rd ed.), 1:615. This work is probably the second-best-known title of the author, as Ibn Quṡlūbugḡā (d. 879/1474), *Tāj al-Tarājjim fī Ṭabaḡāt al-Ḥanaḡīyah* (Baghdad, 1962), 4, only cites two works of the author in his short entry, namely *Al-Fawā‘id* and *Al-Fatāwā*.

⁷⁷ Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 2:1098 and 2019, apparently both referring to the same work; al-Ziriklī mentions a copy of it in al-Zāḡirīyah library in Damascus (*Al-A‘lām*, 1:51, n. 9625); and Maḡmūd Ḥasan al-Tunkī, *Mu‘jam al-Muṡannifīn* (Beirut, 1344), 3:243, mentions that he came across the first and third volumes of this work. This work might be the reason why Wüstenfeld included Najm al-Dīn Ibrāḡīm among the historians of the Arabs in his *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Araber und ihre Werke* (Göttingen, 1882), 419.

⁷⁸ Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 2:1166–67; Brockelmann, *GAL*, 2:95/79.

⁷⁹ Ismā‘īl Pāshā al-Baḡhdādī, *Īḡāḡ al-Maknūn*, 1:137; al-Ziriklī, *Al-A‘lām*, 1:51, states this title is available in Awḡāf Baḡhdād, no. 6470.

⁸⁰ Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 1:705; Ismā‘īl Pāshā al-Baḡhdādī, *Īḡāḡ al-Maknūn*, 1:430.

⁸¹ Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, 1:858; this treatise is written in response to *Risālah fī al-Jum‘ah wa-‘Adam Jawaz al-Ṣalāt fī Mawāḡī‘ Muta‘addidah* by a certain Qiwām al-Dīn Amīr Kātīb ibn



- a *sharḥ* to the famous *Hidāyah* of al-Marghīnānī;⁸²
- *Al-Sirāj wa-al-Wahhāj*;⁸³
- *Rafʿ Kulfat al-Taʿab li-mā Yuʿmalu fī al-Durūs wa-al-Khuṭab*;⁸⁴
- *Dhakhīrat al-Nāẓir fī Ashbāh wa-al-Naẓāʾir*.⁸⁵

Amīr ʿUmar.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 2:2039, supposedly in five volumes.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1:984, yet the identification of the author is far from certain, as only the *nisbah* al-Ṭarasūsī is mentioned. According to the description of Ḥājji Khalīfah, the work seems to have been translated into Ottoman Turkish in the sixteenth century.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:910.

⁸⁵ Al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 1:51.



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APPENDIX II: FURTHER POINTS OF COMPARISON BETWEEN HANAFISM AND SHAFI'ISM⁸⁶

First, the application of a *ḥadd* punishment to a slave: according to al-Ṭarasūsī, Abū Ḥanīfah states that the owner of the slave is not eligible to apply the *ḥadd* without the permission of the ruler, whereas al-Shāfi'ī claims that the owner does not need the permission of the ruler. For the author, this is an offense against the sovereignty of the sultan because the Prophet said: “(The prerogative of) the *ḥudūd* belongs to the rulers.”⁸⁷

Second, according to al-Ṭarasūsī, whereas Abū Ḥanīfah does not hold the ruler responsible for a person who dies under a deserved *ta'zīr*, al-Shāfi'ī does.⁸⁸

Third, if a person kills a *laqīṭ*, according to Abū Ḥanīfah, the sultan has the license to execute retaliation, whereas for al-Shāfi'ī, he does not.⁸⁹

Fourth, for Abū Ḥanīfah, the feast prayer is permissible only if the sultan or his deputy is present, whereas al-Shāfi'ī does not see the sultan's or his deputy's presence as necessary.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ See n. 20 above.

⁸⁷ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 67; MK, fol. 97a, lines 20–23. Here, as in most of the other points, the source of al-Ṭarasūsī, as indicated by al-Sayyid, seems to be Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's (d. 654/1256) *Al-Intiṣār wa-al-Tarjīḥ lil-Madhhab al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Madīnat Naṣr, n.d.), 17. However, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī never mentions al-Shāfi'ī as the opposing view; he states the other view as *wa-qāla ghayruhu*, or *wa-qāla man khālafahu* in all his nine points. Another Hanafi, al-Marghīnānī (al-Ṭarasūsī wrote a *sharḥ* of his *Al-Hidāyah*; see Appendix I), states that al-Shāfi'ī argues that the owner has absolute *wilāyah* over his slave; then he invokes the tradition of the Prophet that four (prerogatives) belong to the rulers, among them the *ḥudūd*, which is a version of the tradition that al-Ṭarasūsī employs (*Al-Hidāyah*, 4:119–20). Yet the tradition seems to be quite weak, as there are at least three versions of it where the four things mentioned differ, and one of them includes only three prerogatives; see Jamāl al-Dīn al-Zayla'ī (d. 762), *Naṣb al-Rāyah, Takhrīj Aḥādīth al-Hidāyah* (published together with *al-Hidāyah*), 4:119–20, for the three versions the transmissions of which do not reach back to the Prophet; the tradition is not mentioned by Wensinck.

⁸⁸ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 66; MK, fol. 97a, lines 16–18; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Intiṣār wa-al-Tarjīḥ*, 17. Al-Marghīnānī, *Al-Hidāyah*, 4:175, states that al-Shāfi'ī holds the *bayt al-māl* responsible for blood money.

⁸⁹ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 68; MK, fol. 97a, lines 28–29; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Intiṣār wa-al-Tarjīḥ*, 18.

⁹⁰ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, 67–68, MK, fol. 97a, lines 26–28. There is a disagreement over the presence of the sultan or his deputy at the Friday prayer, but I could not find any reference to the issue in feast prayer; see al-Ṭaḥawī, *Mukhtaṣar al-Ṭaḥawī*, 35; al-Marghīnānī, *Al-Hidāyah*, 2:233; al-Sarakhsī, *Kitāb al-Mabsūt*, 2:25, where the author states that if the sultan stays in his residence, then the people should find out whether its door is open or not, the open door indicating permission for the Friday prayer. The argument seems to depend on the weak tradition referred to above, as the Friday prayer is one of the four prerogatives mentioned. On the other hand, the Shafi'ī al-Shīrāzī (d. 476) recognizes the permission of the sultan for Friday prayer as a *sunnah*; and al-Māwardī, by dividing the mosques into two, the government mosques—which are big and hence host the Friday prayer—and the public mosques, and by giving the right of appointment of a prayer leader to the former



Fifth, in a funeral prayer where both the sultan and the relatives of the deceased are present, Abū Ḥanīfah says that the sultan should lead the prayer, while al-Shāfi'ī claims that the relatives have priority.⁹¹

Sixth, the booty of the killed does not belong to the killer according to Abū Ḥanīfah, unless the ruler specifies beforehand that whoever kills someone has the right to the booty of the killed; whereas for al-Shāfi'ī, the booty belongs to the killer whether the ruler stipulated so or not.⁹²

exclusively to the sultan, in effect modifies the Shafi'ī view; Norman Calder, "Friday Prayer and the Juristic Theory of Government: Sarakhsī, Shīrāzī, Māwardī," *BSOAS* 49 (1986): 41, 44–45; al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭānīyah*, 172, 179–80.

⁹¹ *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, p. 68; MK, fol. 97a, l. 29–31; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Intiṣār wa-al-Tarjīḥ*, 18. Al-Shāfi'ī, *Kitāb al-Umm*, 1:461, sees this as a private matter, hence the priority of the relatives. See also al-Ṭaḥawī, *Mukhtaṣar al-Ṭaḥawī*, 41; and al-Marghīnānī, *Al-Hidāyah*, 2:315, who gives an elaborate line of succession according to which if the sultan is not present, then the *qāḍī* should lead the prayer; if he is not present either, then the imam of the neighborhood should lead the prayer; the relatives come only after him.

⁹² *Tuḥfat al-Turk*, p. 66; MK, fol. 97a, lines 14–16; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Intiṣār wa-al-Tarjīḥ*, 17; al-Sarakhsī, *Kitāb al-Mabsūṭ*, 10:47–48. Al-Shāfi'ī, *Kitāb al-Umm*, 4:184, states that what the Prophet said at the battle of Ḥunayn, *man qatala qaṭīlan la-hu salabuhu*, is a *ḥukm* since the Prophet gave the booty to the killer on other occasions as well, as opposed to an *ijtihād* limited to this particular case, a view held by Mālik (see n. 2, p. 184). This becomes a trivial issue as that kind of booty is limited to the things that are on the body of the person who is killed, excluding his properties (Ibn Jamā'ah, *Taḥrīr al-Aḥkām*, 220); besides, there are five conditions which qualify whether the killer deserves the booty of the killed (*ibid.*, 219–20).



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The Politics of Insult: The Mamluk Sultanate's Response to Criminal Affronts

Authority, to be acknowledged, requires a recognized capacity for enforcement of its edicts. But from a broader perspective, the effective implementation of edicts rests on respect. In medieval Muslim societies, such respect accrued to the governing agents pledged to rule as custodians of *sharī'ah* and *sunnah*, law and orthodoxy. The members of the oligarchy that stood at the apex of authority in the Mamluk state regarded themselves as the legitimate upholders of the revealed law, guardians of accepted canons of belief, and guarantors of that public order requisite to the function of God's commonwealth among the faithful. God had seen fit to grant them alone the means to serve in this singular role.

God's endorsement of their custodianship rested on a venerable foundation of legal theory. The learned establishment (ulama) concurred that the ruler and his retainers served legitimately as God's adjutants in this life. Obedience of their commands was equivalent to obedience to God himself.¹ The scholars' rationale behind such a sweeping delegation of legitimacy derived from their association of the power to enforce with the need for order. Humankind was prone to endemic conflict, and only through its resolution could order be maintained. No practical legal system can tolerate anarchy, and no divine injunctions readily sanction it. The classical jurists thus reasoned that the ruler acted as a successor to the Prophet, standing as a bulwark against anarchy by upholding order. The *sharī'ah* was applied as a divine dispensation to assure the welfare of Muslim believers. Their welfare required stability, while anarchy was antithetical to it. The ruling authorities, despite their temporal flaws, accordingly warranted obedience since they were essential to stability and thus welfare.² The Mamluk oligarchy took seriously their obligations as custodians of *sharī'ah* and guarantors of order, not the least because their own origins as independent rulers stemmed from usurpation. Keenly aware

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¹ Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Religion and Violence in Islamic Law* (Cambridge, 2001), 15–16, discusses the analysis posed by Aziz al-Azmeh (*Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan Politics* [London, 1997], 123), who claims that commands from the legitimate ruler were to be obeyed as the equivalent of God's ordinances. Al-Azmeh relied on such theorists as al-Mawārdī and Ibn Jamā'ah.

² Abou El Fadl, *Religion and Violence*, 26: the legal system does not endorse anarchy; 27: the ruler succeeds the Prophet as upholder of order which is requisite to the function of the Islamic commonwealth. Order was essential to the welfare of Muslim believers.



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that the founders of their regime had deposed and executed a legitimate member of the preceding dynasty, the Mamluks sought to justify their coup by standing as a bulwark against chaos. The coterie of senior officers who made up this oligarchy, first of whom was the sultan, expected the jurists and scholars to provide the ideological justification for their exercise of power. The latter supplied the requisite principles as expressed by the classical expounders of the law. According to them, the ruler possessed the discretion (*takhyīr*) to determine criminal penalties according to the severity of the crime.³ More specifically, the ruler could decide the degree of heinousness of crimes committed via “banditry” (*muḥārabah*)—a term with a flexible definition, embracing a broad range of larceny and theft. Severity was measured according to stealth applied, value of commodities stolen, extent of injury inflicted, or number of lives taken.⁴ While the ruler was in theory not free to impose punishments arbitrarily, the imperatives of assuring order and preserving God’s commonwealth gave him a virtually free hand in practice—to the extent of his enforcement capacity and personal inclinations.

Mamluk sultans readily adopted the stance of severe but just arbiters of criminal litigation, particularly when attempting to solidify their reigns. Several chroniclers noted the discomfiture caused by al-Zāhir Barqūq in Ramaḍān 789/September–October 1387, when he announced his readiness to hear petitions twice a week from victims of crime at all social levels.⁵ The authors elaborated on the trepidation this proclamation stirred among political notables (*ahl al-dawlah*) who, by implication, were responsible for much of the criminal predation suffered by the masses. But one commentator, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, went so far as to claim that this proclamation tempted “the lowest (*al-asāfil*) [in society] to assault the highest (*al-a‘ālī*).” Al-Maqrīzī subsequently mused over Barqūq’s stratagems that aimed cleverly at ameliorating the impression that he had acted for simple revenge. In Muḥarram 793/December 1390, the sultan imprisoned the amir Āqbughā al-Mārdīnī, former governor of Upper Egypt and a potential contender for the throne, on the grounds of his tyranny and oppression.⁶ Al-Maqrīzī noted that Barqūq had waited patiently until the amir’s cruelty necessitated his removal. The amir’s manifest criminality

³ *Ibid.*, 57: the ruler has discretion to decide the penalty appropriate to a crime’s severity.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 138: Mālik stated that the ruler had the discretion to determine the most effective way to deal with bandits; 208: the Maliki jurist al-Bājī argued that the ruler’s discretion to decide the penalty for banditry should not be open to whim; he should consult the jurists according to the circumstances of each case—therefore implying that the jurists should participate in criminal prosecution.

⁵ Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, vols. 1–2 ed. M. Muṣṭafā Ziyādah (Cairo, 1956–58), vols. 3–4 ed. Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Āshūr (Cairo, 1970–73), 3:566, line 3: sultan holds court twice a week to hear injustice appeals; Nūr al-Dīn ibn al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-al-‘Abdān fī Tawārīkh al-Zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970–73, 1994), 1:157, line 1: same issue.

⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:734, line 3.



obscured any popular perception that the sultan was acting in his own self-interest. He struck down his rival when the latter's own acts merited reprisal in the cause of justice.

The Mamluk oligarchy often displayed its commitment to preserving public order by periodically demonstrating its rigorous enforcement of public morals. Restricting the movement of women outside the home was a reliable ritual imposed when natural crises such as plague signaled to many God's wrath over lapsed morals. Chroniclers on several occasions commented on edicts forbidding women to depart their dwellings even during festivals when they customarily went out to fulfill religious obligations.⁷ Elaborate instructions setting the appropriate length for gowns, sleeves, and veils often accompanied these edicts. Penalties for ignoring these edicts were potentially severe and might even warrant bisection—for both the female offender and the conveying mule driver foolish enough to have disobeyed the sultan's warning. Yet chroniclers noted that these strictures inevitably lapsed, and women resumed their previous penchant for public egress, until the next crisis necessitated a re-imposition of control over their movements.⁸

An illuminating example of an individual whose behavior embodied qualities sought by the ruler seeking to curb crime by intimidation may be seen in the appointment of one Dawlāt Khujā al-Zāhirī by Sultan Barsbāy to the Cairo prefecture of police in Ramaḍān 836/April–May 1433.⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī discussed this individual's character at length, stressing his vulgarity and malice. Barsbāy had noticed his bellicosity when both were serving as line troopers during Barqūq's reign. Upon Barsbāy's own enthronement, he sent Dawlāt Khujā to inspect several provinces. When Dawlāt showed himself sufficiently formidable, the sultan made him inspector (*kāshif*) over all of Upper Egypt “where he devised diverse torments of criminal elements (*ahl al-fasād*) and highwaymen (*quṭṭā' al-ṭariq*). When he apprehended a criminal, he inflated him through his buttocks with a bellows so that his eyes popped out and his brain burst.” Ibn Taghrībirdī did not intend his gruesome depictions of Dawlāt's ferocity to obscure the amir's astuteness upon his appointment to the pre-

⁷ Ibid., 3:751, line 5, Dhū al-Qa‘dah 793/October 1391: *nā'ib* cuts wide sleeves on women's gowns; 4:1209, line 11, Jumādā I 844/Sept.–Oct. 1440: women forbidden to go out; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhah*, 1:334, line 11, Jumādā II 793/May–June 1391: on prohibition of women's free movement; Abū al-Mahāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt et al. (Cairo, 1970–72), 12:30, line 5, Ramaḍān 792/Aug.–Sep. 1390: *nā'ib al-ghaybah* restricts women's movements; ibid., 15:94, line 9, Ramaḍān 841/Feb.–Mar. 1438: *muḥtasib* brutally limits women's movements; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i' al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā et al. (Cairo/Wiesbaden, 1960–63), 3:67, line 11, Rajab 876/Dec. 1471–Jan. 1472: sultan proclaims clothing rules for women.

⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1033, line 13, Ramaḍān 841/Feb.–Mar. 1438: women again allowed to go out.

⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:359, line 23: on appointment of Dawlāt Khujā as *walī*.



fecture of Cairo. Dawlāt initiated his tenure by releasing most hardened criminals from Cairo’s jails. His magnanimity was tempered by an ominous warning. After recording the names of all prisoners set free, the *wālī* informed them that any who were subsequently apprehended in thievery would be bisected—no exceptions, no chance for reincarceration. Ibn Taghrībirdī stated that Dawlāt inflicted a veritable reign of terror over Cairo’s criminal classes. He also noted wryly that his methods were brutally effective; theft came to a virtual standstill during his prefecture. Although Dawlāt’s savagery offended too many influential persons and led to his temporary dismissal, the sultan soon found his talents indispensable. In Ramaḍān 841/March 1438, he appointed him market inspector (*muḥtasib*), commissioning him to apply similar tactics under the guise of a different office.¹⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī claimed that Barsbāy rejected a list of candidates submitted to him by his advisors, presumably as excessively humane. He then claimed “to know one who is not (a devout) Muslim, and does not fear God.” Barsbāy summoned Dawlāt, bestowed his robe of office, and urged him to enforce his duties rigorously. Dawlāt was enjoined to focus his special attention on regulating women’s public movements, even though his previous restrictions on them had forced his earlier dismissal. Rising alarm over successive plague epidemics apparently induced the ulama to sanction the sultan’s re-imposition of strict regulations over women’s dress and the circumstances under which they might leave their homes (primarily to purchase household supplies). Dawlāt enforced the sultan’s commands so severely that he was alleged to have denied mothers the right to visit their children’s gravesites upon interment.

The example of Dawlāt Khujā as police chief and market inspector may seem extreme, but he clearly manifested traits thought necessary for the effective curbing of violence and quelling of crime. Public outcry over the methods of such an individual might oblige his temporary dismissal. But he was invariably recalled when public alarm reached a critical stage that threatened the collapse of order. Such a calamity signaled the potential disintegration of society. The preservation of order was essential even if individual rights were compromised. But were the ruling authorities dedicated to upholding law and order solely on principle rather than self-interest? Their record on this issue was mixed.

The political system over which the Mamluk oligarchy presided accepted conspiracy and violence as normative to advancement. As a military caste whose origins in Egypt were steeped in supplanting rivals, the Mamluks eschewed a dynastic rationale for the political elite’s legitimacy. Prowess in the martial arts ranked as perhaps the most esteemed skill a recruit could offer to earn his status in the dominant caste. And since the training to which young recruits were subjected upon their arrival from Turkestan or Circassia emphasized factional loyalties cemented in barracks drill units, the potential for rivalry or outright sedition was omnipresent.

¹⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:94, line 9: Dawlāt Khujā appointed *muḥtasib*.



All the way through the promotional ranks from line soldier, medial officers, senior amirs, to the sultan himself, a pervasive sense of competition and potential deposition pervaded the military caste. This deeply imbedded attitude combined with an ingrained belief in personal immunity from laws governing the civilian masses to produce a mentality that eagerly anticipated violence as an opportunity rather than a liability. The Mamluk military system that evolved in Egypt and Syria during the later Middle Ages has been the object of detailed scholarship for more than half a century, and it requires no elaboration here.¹¹ The issue relevant to this discussion centers on the tie between the Mamluks' proclivity for conspiracy and violence, and the propensity of this caste to exploit its advantage in criminal ways. That the ruling oligarchy routinely indulged in certain kinds of crime while simultaneously justifying its military monopoly to protect civilians from criminals is a paradox of the ruling elite's stance.

This paradox becomes explicable if the Mamluk commitment to order is seen as a collective necessity while its proclivity for violence is recognized as a path to individual advantage.¹² The military elite realized that their primary sources of income were rents from landed estates (*iqṭā's*), or taxes paid by commercially productive groups in urban centers. The regularized flow of revenue from these sources depended on the maintenance of order and stability. But as noted previously, the Mamluk procedure of advancement was highly individualized—pitting soldiers and officers against each other and even their own peers in endemic factional rivalry. Moreover, those who manifested aggressive traits and relished armed conflict were simply displaying the martial values most admired by the ruling caste. Persons who harbored a congenital aversion to conflict were unlikely to rise high in the Mamluk oligarchy. These people liked to fight.

And beyond the significance of personal inclinations, the Mamluk oligarchy discerned the substantial rewards to be gained by sponsoring, if not actually committing, profitable forms of crime. These officers were fully prepared to exploit the

¹¹ See David Ayalon, "Aspects of the Mamluk Phenomenon: A. The Importance of the Mamluk Institution; B. Ayyubids, Kurds and Turks," *Der Islam* 53 (1976): 196–225; 55 (1977): 1–32; idem, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army—I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15 (1953): 203–28; Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382* (London, 1986), 85–104; Carl Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1981), 15–33; idem, *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power* (Albany, 1994), 72–101; Linda Northrup, "The Bahri Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1390," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1, *Islamic Egypt, 640–1517*, ed. Carl Petry (Cambridge, 1998), 242–89; Jean-Claude Garcin, "The Regime of the Circassian Mamluks," in *Cambridge History of Egypt*, 290–317.

¹² Guido Ruggiero noted the tension between group aversion to violence and individual proclivity to commit it in the context of the Venetian nobility. See *Violence in Early Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick, 1980), 65–66.



prerogatives of their military status to pursue the illegal activities they were sworn to suppress.¹³ This tendency was exacerbated by endemic cash shortfalls the ruling oligarchy encountered in the second half of the Mamluk period. As their demands for revenues relentlessly outdistanced the supply yielded from licit sources, the oligarchy turned increasingly to extra-legal means to make up the difference.¹⁴ Elaborate programs of confiscation concocted by the sultan himself were only the most notorious strategy in this process. The sultan's subordinate officers devised their own extortion schemes, striking deals with a wide range of gang leaders and Bedouin chiefs. And at the oligarchy's base, trainees and recruits (*julbān*) staged riots almost routinely to demand stipend or bonus payments that had fallen into arrears. All of these factors combined to create a pragmatic inducement to violence among the military elite. Its occurrence was always a latent possibility. What then were the selective categories of criminality that the elite was not prepared to tolerate? The answer is those that challenged its primacy or diminished its sources of income.

The ruling oligarchy assumed a stance of absolute supremacy in the political hierarchy. In return for their defense of order, the oligarchy expected all subordinate elements to acknowledge their hegemony. They were prepared to confront and subdue any individual or group that challenged this primacy, the essence of which was a monopoly over military force. Any acts they perceived as threatening or otherwise compromising their primacy were met with vigorous reprisal—while other obstreperous behavior confined to lower classes was often ignored.¹⁵ Al-Zāhir Barqūq, founder of the Circassian line of sultans, demonstrated an acumen for maintaining a balance between autocracy and magnanimity. While demanding submission from his subjects, Barqūq was solicitous of their interests and garnered widespread popular support. The historian al-Maqrīzī appreciated this acumen on the sultan's part, and gave him credit for much of his success among the masses as

¹³ Barbara Hanawalt discussed “fur-collar” crimes committed by persons high placed in the English military establishment in *Crime and Conflict in English Communities, 1300–1348* (Cambridge, 1979), 138–39. Hanawalt also described extortion and protection rackets overseen by English nobles (142–43), nobles and their household gangs (214), and nobles directing criminals responsible for the acts (215).

¹⁴ See Petry, *Protectors*, chapters 6 and 7, for analysis of confiscation schemes devised by Mamluk sultans to ward off insolvency.

¹⁵ Severe reprisals against regional crimes were meted out when the regime's reputation had been flaunted. Al-Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*, 2:383, line 9: Rajab 735/Feb.–Mar. 1335) observed that an individual, whose legacy of cruelty in Damascus qualified him for the inspectorship of the Delta, imposed draconian penalties on highwaymen who had discredited the government. The same author noted a similar appointment decades later (*Sulūk*, 3:352, line 2, Muḥarram 781/Apr.–May 1379) when tribal predation around Aswan exceeded tolerable limits. Al-Maqrīzī emphasized the negative consequences of the new governor's ferocity, since the tribes responded with increased raiding, to the extent that Aswan was temporarily isolated from Cairo's control.



a rejuvenator of the Mamluk oligarchy.¹⁶ The interdependence between defense of stability and demand for acknowledged primacy was hardly unique to the Mamluk Sultanate. Historians who have pondered crime in medieval and renaissance Europe have noted a widespread tendency for ruling classes to reserve their most ruthless reprisals for those who disputed their authority. Guido Ruggiero, for example, noted that the Council of Ten, organized in fourteenth-century Venice to prosecute criminals regarded as inimical to the interests of the commercial elite in that city, concentrated its attention on speech crimes that slandered the motives behind governmental policies.¹⁷ Overall, several commentators have observed that the steady rise of state control over crime in pre-modern Europe broadly paralleled a simultaneous intensification of the local regime's demand for recognition of primacy from its subjects.¹⁸

The ruling oligarchy of Cairo, and their civilian staff who administered the apparatus of government, therefore regarded as particularly odious crimes that: (a) compromised their control over society, (b) denigrated their status, (c) disrupted access to property, (d) alarmed custodians of religious belief, or (e) rattled moral sensibilities to the extent that order was threatened. The sources comment extensively on all of these categories. They are considered below seriatim to indicate the special characteristics of the threats they posed. The tension between formal principle and pragmatic interest is revealed in the rich roster of cases emerging in each category.

Civil disorder was the most brazen act of defiance the lower classes could carry out. Eruptions of mob violence starkly challenged the regime's ability to assert its authority. But despite their failure to prevent it, the regime could not let it pass unnoticed. Incidents of mob violence permeated the logs of all the chroniclers and were omnipresent in Ibn Ṭūlūn's reports on events in Damascus. This second city of the empire during the Sultanate's final decades appears to have been riven with clashes between rival gangs that had staked out their control over local districts. Although Cairo was no stranger to mob violence, the rate of cases mentioned involving civilians does not approach their frequency in Damascus. Whether this disparity

¹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*, 3:352, line 13, Muḥarram 781/Apr.–May 1379) claimed that Barqūq “was ever solicitous of the masses’ favor, defending their interests so that they admired him and fanatically supported him.”

¹⁷ Ruggiero (*Violence*, 131) observed that in Venice speech considered slanderous was condemned as a violation of communal honor and warranted the most vigorous repression.

¹⁸ See *Crime and the Law: The Social History of Crime in Western Europe since 1500*, ed. V. A. C. Gatrell, Bruce Lenman, and Geoffrey Parker (London, 1980), 18, for intense reprisals inflicted on those who challenge the established social order. Juridical sources focus on crimes regarded as such threats, while neglecting crimes regarded as inconsequential to this issue. E. Muir and G. Ruggiero (*History from Crime* [Baltimore, 1994], 227) note this focus of sources emphasizing crimes that confront the ruling authorities.



is due to more effective control by the police forces in Cairo or to innate differences between the propensity of social elements to commit mob violence in each city is an issue weighed subsequently.

Mob violence was rarely indiscriminate; its outbursts reveal distinct perpetrators: organized criminal bands, rival gangs fighting for hegemony over local turf, or Mamluk recruits obstreperously defying commands to behave docilely from their officers—often following shortfalls in rations or delayed stipend payments. The regime’s responses to these diverse patterns of disruption corresponded in severity to the perceived challenge they posed. Repeated assaults by criminals represented coordinated action calculated to profit from civil unrest. The authorities’ reprisals against repeat offenders—when they succeeded in catching them—ranged from spectacular cruelty to resigned cooption. But indifference could not be an option in the face of defiance.

The eminent legal scholar Ibn Ḥajar, whose logs included only notorious criminal cases, reported a mass execution of repeat offenders profiting from riots in Damascus during Rajab 804/February–March 1402.¹⁹ The group was “suspended from hooks driven through their orifices” and left to expire slowly. Ibn Ḥajar was keenly aware of the shock value posed by this grisly mutilation. But he hardly condemned it, noting that these hardened thieves “had assailed the populace, murdering, strangling, and plundering. The amount of clothing (*qumāsh*) they had seized was beyond calculation.” Although the dry goods the authorities could locate were placed on display for victims to reclaim, Ibn Ḥajar also stated that this reprisal did not deter but in fact motivated the thieves’ comrades to even further predation. This ambiguous outcome of an extreme punishment was echoed by all the chroniclers uniformly. Yet the regime persisted with such measures throughout the later medieval period.²⁰

Gang warfare, as distinct from more random mob violence, was often described as a reaction to premeditated provocation. Depictions of incidents revealed evi-

¹⁹ Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-Ghumr bi-Abnā’ al-‘Umr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1969–72), 2:204.

²⁰ Nūr al-Dīn ibn al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’ al-Ḥaṣr bi-Abnā’ al-‘Aṣr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970), 425, line 10, Ramaḍān 876/Feb.–Mar. 1472: sultan orders mutilation of repeat offenders; Shams al-Dīn Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Hawādith al-Zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1962, 1964), 1:257, line 23, Dhū al-Qa’dah 907/May–June 1502: four repeat criminals hanged publicly; *ibid.*, 1:374, line 2, Dhū al-Qa’dah 918/Jan.–Feb. 1513: five criminals denounced and bisected; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 4:416, line 10, Dhū al-Qa’dah 920/Jan. 1514: *walī* bisects two grooms for allegations of theft after dark; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahah*, 2:22, line 18, Jumādā II 922/July 1516: *nā’ib* of Damascus bisects four criminals for elaborate thievery operations; *ibid.*, 2:43, line 4, Ṣafar 923/Feb.–Mar. 1517: *nā’ib* executes entire criminal gang for rampaging in aftermath of Mamluk defeat; *ibid.*, 2:62, line 5, Jumādā I 923/May–June 1517: Ottoman sultan (*sūbāshī*) impales gang leader to curb mob action; *ibid.*, 2:100, line 11, Rabī’ I 926/Feb.–Mar. 1520: *nā’ib* builds five guard towers in Damascus to restrain criminals.



dence of long-standing, coordinated operational structures and hidden arms caches. As noted above, the overwhelming majority of such incidents were reported for Damascus.²¹ The quarters of al-Shāghūr, Maydān al-Ḥaṣā, and al-Qubaybah emerged as hotbeds of armed conflict, brigades of their residents rallying forth to seek revenge for a slight from a rival district. Violence was invariably directed against the symbol of governmental restriction: the *nā'ib* governor. In Jumādā II 890/June–July 1485, Ibn al-Ḥimṣī reported a massive riot that began with the murder of a Shāghūrī.²² The victim had himself instigated the incident by accosting an individual from another quarter with murderous intent. But the latter's son apprehended the Shāghūrī, who was then struck down by his intended victim. Ibn al-Ḥimṣī then stated that the residents of al-Shāghūr gathered to avenge the homicide of one of their own. After plundering the bowmakers' market (almost certainly not a coincidence since the regime had attempted to monopolize this weapon), the Shāghūrī brigade refused to disperse when confronted by a spokesman for the governor. Defying the *nā'ib*'s emblems displayed to demand surrender of weapons, the Shāghūrīs assumed “full battle gear” and marched against the governor's residence. Alarmed by this massive show of resistance, the *nā'ib* recalled companies deployed in the countryside to quell the Bedouin. When these units formed up in front of the *nā'ib*'s palace and charged the rebels, the Shāghūrīs retreated back to their district. However, the governor found himself incapable of further pursuit because the rebels broke down gates and bridges, barring access to their quarter. “The women perched on the roofs, casting stones from slingshots. Some of them were killed, some wounded. A devastating event that closed the markets.”

This kind of incident, reported so often by chroniclers of Damascene politics, exhibits several common features. First, the inhabitants of al-Shāghūr were well-organized militarily and heavily armed. Second, their ulterior aim was theft rather than vengeance. They stood ready to seize upon any provocation to raid markets, in particular those containing weapons that were otherwise off-limits to civilians. Third, these rioters regarded themselves as rebels defending their autonomy from the regime. When the authorities displayed the ritual emblems calling for their submission, the rioters openly defied them. Finally, the regime itself, in the person of

²¹ Of twenty-four incidents depicting gang actions that motivated the regime to respond, only two occurred in Cairo. The evidence indicates organized gang militias in several districts of Damascus. See in this context James Grehan, “Street Violence and Social Imagination in Late-Mamluk and Ottoman Damascus (ca. 1500–1800),” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 2 (May 2003): 215–36; Miura Toru, “Urban Society in Damascus as the Mamluk Era was Ending,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 10, no. 1 (2006), in particular 176–89. Miura's discussion of gangs is the most informed on the subject to date.

²² Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-Zamān wa-Wafayāt al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut, 1999), 1:300, line 15, Jumādā II 890/June–July 1485: riot in Shāghūr district of Damascus over murder plot.



the *nā'ib* governor, took whatever measures were necessary to put down the rebellion, even to the extent of recalling units sent on other military duties. But these measures could quash only the immediate incident, never its root cause. The rebels withdrew in the face of superior forces, yet blocked the regime's entrance into their district, regrouping to riot another day. The latent propensity continued unabated. Nonetheless, the regime did not contemplate passivity in the face of this endemic challenge.

While Cairo, as the seat of imperial power and the most heavily garrisoned city in the central Arab lands, did not endure the incessant conflicts of ward gangs that sapped Damascus, the capital suffered from near-endemic revolts by its own soldiers. These riots increased in frequency and intensity during the latter decades of the Mamluk Sultanate, fueled by heightened awareness on the troopers' part of their potential power to paralyze commerce until their demands were met and their discontent over delayed wages and short rations was allayed. But chroniclers aware of market forces discerned that many junior soldiers showed themselves quick studies who learned how to profit from their riots and matured into seasoned criminals. It was this transition from naive recruit to astute predator that the regime most feared and attacked most rigorously.

The perceptive historian Ibn Taghrībirdī described this ominous trend in the context of a sultanic proclamation forbidding recruit larceny.²³ “On Wednesday the twenty-third [of Ramaḍān 860/26 August 1456], the Mamluk recruits were ordered not to oppress the populace, traders, and merchants. But this proclamation had the force of a fiddler's bow or a fly's buzz. The recruits persisted with their seizure of the people's assets, their harshness causing prices to rise for all kinds of foodstuffs, clothing, cereals, and fodder. They initially went to the outskirts of Cairo and confiscated what they found of barley, hay, and clover, paying excessively low prices (for indeed they wanted to seize them without any payment). Those [cultivators] who suffered this abuse tended not to raise these commodities a second time unless compelled by dire need. Consequently, these crops became scarce. Even as their prices climbed, they were in short supply. The recruits then began to plunder storage magazines for summer melons and other produce. Ultimately, the recruits applied their tactics to cloth merchants and other retailers. Prices of many commodities thus rose in the wake of their assaults against prominent traders (*arbābihim*), producing a condition that adversely affected all the populace, elite and commons alike. This incident signaled the start of more sordid acts to follow.”

Ibn Taghrībirdī's summary of this event depicted the recruits' learning curve as they progressed from simple confiscators to sophisticated plunderers whose actions depressed Cairo's commerce as the ninth/fifteenth century drew on. The historian brusquely dismissed the sultan's proclamation as inconsequential, a fruitless ges-

²³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:98, line 1, Ramaḍān 860/Aug.–Sep. 1456.



ture in the face of a rising tide of lawlessness. The regime recognized the portent of this trend and did not limit its responses to proclamations. Troop revolts, in particular those between recruits and veterans of former rulers, were vigorously repressed after admonitions to desist were met with derision. But the propensity to rebel could not be eradicated, especially as the recruits perceived its lucrative potential. Troop rioting thus had a foreboding future. Suffice it to note that it constituted a significant aspect of resistance to the regime's authority. The regime could not ignore these challenges to its primacy, and it doggedly sought to put down each incident. While the Sultanate could not eliminate the root causes of threats to its primacy, those posing these threats never succeeded in supplanting the regime itself.²⁴ Until the arrival of the Ottomans in 923/1517, the Mamluk Sultanate retained its position at the apex of the political structure in Egypt and Syria. An uneasy equilibrium between disruption and stability prevailed. What about the Sultanate's reaction to those who denigrated its status as an affront?

Some incidents are described primarily in terms of the insult they dealt to the regime; these incidents aroused the regime's consternation over its consequent embarrassment, but also frustration over its incapacity to mete out effective reprisal. Chagrin stemmed as much from this frustration as from any injury done to victims. Events evoking the impression of an affront were especially associated with Bedouin raiding, rural and urban banditry, or rioting by civilians and recruits. The potential for disruption of agriculture and commerce by Bedouin (*al-'urbān*) long predated the Mamluk period. Ever since the migration of tribes from the Arabian Peninsula into the Nile Valley following the conquest, ruling authorities in Egypt had encountered their sporadic plundering and, on occasion, open revolt. In light of the Mamluk Sultanate's own history of usurpation, however, its pledge of security for at least the settled portions of the realm ranked high in its own scale of legitimacy. Chroniclers were thus sensitive to those episodes of resistance tinged with brazen contempt on the perpetrators' part.

²⁴ Analysts of criminal violence in western Europe during the later Middle Ages reached parallel conclusions about the obsession of governments to proclaim their primacy of control over all subordinate elements. Of course, their success varied considerably. B. Hanawalt noted how much of English criminal law evolved as a mechanism of social control from the top (*Crime and Conflict*, 3, 63). Esther Cohen summarized the intent of criminal court proceedings in fourteenth-century Paris as primarily the preservation of order ("The Hundred Years' War and Crime in Paris," in *The Civilization of Crime: Violence in Town and Country since the Middle Ages*, ed. E. Johnson and E. H. Monkonen [Urbana, 1996], 121). Mary Perry's study of violent crime in sixteenth-century Seville discerned the authorities' incapacity to restrict arms bearing (*Crime and Society in Early Modern Seville* [Hanover, NH, 1980], 70). The regime resigned itself to using agents of law enforcement as a buffer between themselves and the instigators of violence. G. Ruggiero, in his analysis of crime in Venice, detected an elaborate process of control. The Venetian elites acknowledged that the root causes of violence were ineradicable. But they could be suppressed enough for the elites' primacy to be upheld. See *History from Crime*, 43–44, 82, 88, 121.



Al-Maqrīzī reported a spate of Bedouin raiding early in the Circassian period.²⁵ “During this month [Jumādā I 818/July–August 1415], repercussions from banditry increased throughout Egyptian territory, north and south. This was due to the Bedouin’s departure from obedience, and their assaults on travelers by land and the river. Many were killed. The troops were prevented from touring the districts and thus could not collect their crop yields. This [condition] resulted from the Bedouin’s lack of respect for the Sultanate, and the vigor of their boldness.” Ire over a “lack of respect” at the least paralleled the authorities’ consternation over interruptions in collection of rents from their rural estates. Reprisals that concluded with brutal executions of those offenders they could capture led at best to temporary respites. More often, they goaded the tribes to further predation. Yet the regime persisted with this reaction.

In Syria, where the Mamluk garrisons dealt with even more destructive raiding, reprisals were correspondingly savage. Ibn Ṭūlūn described a district inspector’s response as unusually barbaric.²⁶ “On Friday the fourteenth [of Rabī‘ II 893/28 March 1488], the *kāshif* of Ḥawrān apprehended a band known as Haytham, after the *nā’ib* governor had honored them, and written an edict (*marsūm*: of safe conduct) for them. They had showed this edict to the *kāshif*, but he paid it no heed. [Rather], he executed some thirty of them. He [then] slashed the wombs of many pregnant women, killed many youths, and seized their sheep and cattle. He inflicted on them acts not committed [even] during war. There is no power save in God, for indeed it was claimed that they [the band] were merchants of the Bedouin.” While Ibn Ṭūlūn’s rendition of this reprisal was intended to reveal the inspector’s excess, it underscores the authorities’ frustration over their perception of the affront posed by incessant Bedouin raiding.

A more personally-focused incident occurred late in the Sultanate, during the reign of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī. The chronicler Ibn Iyās described the Sultan’s outrage over the theft of an Ottoman emissary’s diplomatic pouch by Bedouin near Cairo. The incident occurred in Jumādā II 920/August 1514, as relations between the Mamluk and Ottoman regimes were progressively worsening. Al-Ghawrī was keen to preserve Cairo’s neutral stance while simultaneously pursuing clandestine stratagems with the Safavid regime in Iran to curb Ottoman expansion.²⁷ Alarmed over the probable reaction by the Ottoman sultan Selim, already known for his irascible temper, al-Ghawrī was particularly piqued by the seizure of the pouch while the emissary slept at his encampment in al-Ṣāliḥīyah, just north of Cairo. The act signaled the regime’s failure to assure the safe passage of an important foreign dignitary at the doorstep of its own capital, the alleged bastion of its security. Al-

²⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:319, line 3.

²⁶ Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahah*, 1:87, line 18.

²⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 4:385, line 3.



Ghawrī allegedly tore at his mustache upon learning of the theft, and dashed off an ultimatum to the regional *shaykh al-‘arab*, Aḥmad ibn Baqar, demanding immediate apprehension of the culprit and return of the pouch. If the emissary’s letter went missing, the shaykh’s life would be forfeit. Convinced apparently of the sultan’s readiness to inflict this penalty, Ibn al-Baqar captured the offender and restored the pouch, letter intact, the same day.

Vivid incidents of this kind figured prominently in the chroniclers’ reportage of Bedouin activity in Egypt and Syria. They emphasized bold raids or stealthy thefts in the vicinity of Cairo and Damascus to highlight the regime’s inability to prevent them, despite the ferocity of its reprisals. But the continuous occurrence of both raids and reprisals, as noted by narrative historians over some 250 years of the Mamluk era, also indicates the authorities’ profound need to make a dramatic show of response. Even if the Bedouin threat was irrepressible, it could not go unanswered. The Sultanate obviously felt obliged to mete out brutal punishments that involved torture and mutilation prior to execution. Such punishments seemingly gave the authorities a measure of satisfaction over the infliction of suffering, even if aware of their dubious efficacy. And the authorities seem to have believed that these reprisals genuinely bolstered their stance of primacy. By reacting ferociously to every provocation that defied this stance, the regime declared that Bedouin predation might embarrass but never supplant it.

Banditry that affected the ruling elite was regarded as an affront equivalent to Bedouin raids. While many accounts of larceny left both perpetrators and victims unnamed, accounts of larceny affecting notables and officials usually identified them, elaborated on articles stolen, and noted whether their assaulters were apprehended. That a majority of these bandits escaped with their loot caused the authorities their deepest chagrin. When perpetrators were caught, their execution was certain.²⁸

²⁸ For incidents of banditry aimed at officials, see Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbāʿ*, 438, line 8, Dhū al-Ḥijjah 876/May–June 1472: *raʿs nawbah* and *ḥājib al-ḥujjāb* incensed over robbery of latter’s wife by bandits, uncaptured; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿiʿ*, 3:218, line 4, Jumādā I 890/May–June 1485: bandits pillage prominent visitors to Qarāfah cemetery; bandits not captured, victims stripped, veils taken, “disgusting event;” Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahah*, 1:161, line 15, Ṣafar 900/November 1494: bandits rob trousseau of eminent shaykh’s wife, no sign of forced entry, no arrests; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿiʿ*, 3:319, line 1, Jumādā II 901/Feb.–Mar. 1496: *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ* of Cairo assaulted while visiting his own tomb; his valuables taken, no mention of capture; *ibid.*, 4:181, line 19, Ṣafar 916/May 1510: groom of senior amir arrested for pilfering his master’s gold inlay saddles and bridles, groom bisected; *ibid.*, 4:417, line 10, Dhū al-Qaʿdah 920/Dec. 1514–Jan. 1515: mass thievery during fireworks display hosted by sultan at al-Raydanīyah, sultan’s palanquin rifled, perpetrators not captured; *ibid.*, 5:273, line 15, Ramaḍān 924/Sep.–Oct. 1518: Ottoman soldier catches pickpocket in the act of pilfering four *aṣnāf* coins; thief bisected by viceroy as warning to those who assault the occupiers; Ibn Iyās finds the penalty unjust.



Ironically, the most unsettling insults to the regime were dealt by its own soldiery: the *julbān* or recruits only recently manumitted from cadet status. The impact of this cadre of troops as an endemic criminal class has been noted previously. Throughout the economic troubles of the Circassian period, these recruits took to menacing their own officers along with the fiscal officials. Perceiving these individuals as oppressors who withheld their stipends, the *julbān* frequently threatened them lethally.

In Rabi^c II 835/December 1431, Ibn Taghrībirdī described an assassination plot by recruits against Karīm al-Dīn ibn Kātib al-Munākh, currently serving as vizier and *ustādār* simultaneously, and thus responsible for paying troop stipends and overseeing their distribution.²⁹ The vizier, having picked up on the plot, managed to lock his house and escape. Missing their chance for homicide and robbery, the recruits rampaged through the neighborhood. Ibn Taghrībirdī wryly observed that Sultan Barsbāy, having ordered the *wālī* prefect to arrest the marauding soldiers, was taken aback when the prefect intended to bisect them. The sultan queried as to whether fellow Muslims should be treated in this way. The *wālī* brusquely disputed their status as true believers, whereupon Barsbāy mockingly threatened to arrest him. Whatever the prefect's fate, this incident disclosed the embarrassment felt over *julbān* criminality. It also provided a glimpse into the backbiting that erupted during arguments over appropriate responses.

These arguments were often heated because of the authorities' ambivalence regarding their fiscal officials' vulnerability. Compelled to implement the sultan's draconian reductions in stipend payments, such a figure as the vizier Karīm al-Dīn deflected the recruits' rage away from the autocrat. Yet if the *julbān* actually succeeded in murdering him, they would insult the regime and remove a skilled procurer of clandestine funds for the autocrat. The complexity of this dilemma resurfaced three years later, in Šafar 838/September 1434, when the *julbān* again raided Karīm al-Dīn's house in a sweep that included the home of the current *nāẓir al-jaysh*.³⁰ The sultan apparently held the vizier responsible for provoking the *julbān*, and consigned him in chains to the *wālī* prefect "until his wrath subsided." But the next day, he restored Karīm al-Dīn to his offices of *ustādār* and vizier, acknowledging his crucial role as a key player in the ruler's fiscal priorities. Throughout the later Mamluk period, the *julbān* would vent their anger over stipend cuts by attacking the sultan's agents they held accountable. The autocrat and his senior amirs had to

²⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:356, line 1.

³⁰ Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṭaṭṭāwī al-Qarmūṭ (Cairo, 1989), 455, line 3.



balance their impulse to scapegoat their officials against their need to protect such adroit minions and uphold the regime's facade of dignity.³¹

The realities of *julbān* fury rendered this stratagem problematic. In Ṣafar 846/June 1442, al-ʿAynī described a massive riot by the recruits that threatened to overwhelm the regime's capacity to subdue them.³² The *julbān* climbed onto the roofs of their barracks, closing down the Citadel, and stoned anyone trying to enter or leave. They then managed to penetrate the arsenal, seizing 20,000 dinars worth of weapons. When Sultan Jaqmaq ordered his officers to confront them, they refused, claiming that they could not put down 2,000 armed rioters. An effective stand-off was settled only after two days of negotiation. Al-ʿAynī did not disclose whether the recruits received any back pay or delayed bonus money. But his depiction of the event, which nearly resulted in the *kātib al-sirr*'s death after he met with the *julbān* on the barracks roof, vividly indicated the regime's dilemma. They were forced to back away from an open clash with their recruits. In this instance, negotiation showed the only path to resolution. On-site bargaining may have reconciled this specific incident, but it cannot have enhanced the regime's prestige. For their part, the recruits may have sensed that their own future was tied to the regime's primacy, and therefore sullenly disbanded, albeit ready to riot again. Mutual recognition that undermining the primacy of the regime cut two ways—with the potential for denigration of the entire Mamluk corps if internecine strife exceeded certain limits—could have led both parties to call a truce. The murky expedient of a stand-off was resorted to when a decisive reprisal was not perceived as a viable option. For all their obstreperousness, the *julbān* recruits represented the future of the Mamluk elite, the reservoir from which new regime leaders and dominant factions would evolve. Mutual interdependence plus a stake in upholding caste supremacy, from which all members benefited, tempered the viability of violent suppression.

The ambiguities stemming from intra-caste violence were starkly exposed when control over property was compromised. Security of assets was a basic component of the regime's claim to legitimacy. Yet its own soldiers posed one of the most endemic threats to the security of property. The quandary imposed on the ruling authorities was not lost on contemporary chroniclers. Spoliation of markets during troop revolts outnumbered parallel rampages by civilian bandits in their reports of thievery that highlighted the authorities' discomfiture. The essence of the regime's

³¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:232, line 4, Muḥarram 842/June–July 1438: prominent fiscal official openly attacked by Ashrafi Mamluks during sultan's court review; al-ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 652, line 11, Shaʿbān 850/Oct.–Nov. 1446: *sulṭānī* Mamluks attempt to assassinate *ustadār*; Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr*, ed. William Popper (Berkeley, 1930–31), 8:21, line 14: same incident; ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl al-Malaṭī, “Rawḍ al-Bāsīm fī Ḥawādith al-ʿUmr wa-al-Tarājīm,” Vatican MS Arabo 729, fol. 186-b, line 14, Dhū al-Ḥijjah 872/June–July. 1468: *julbān* assault vizier and *ustadār*.

³² Al-ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 578, line 3.



predicament centered on agents of reprisal: upon whom could it rely to inflict penalty and reclaim property? Since the most persistent culprits were recruits, the sultan and senior amirs had little recourse but to summon line troops and veterans to curb them. Yet as noted above, assaults on recruits, particularly when sparked by grievances, weakened the solidarity that sustained the entire military system. Would trainees who felt betrayed by attacks from their superiors fight on their behalf in time of war? This quandary lurked in many of the chroniclers' depictions.

Rampages by recruits directed against markets and other large repositories of property became a fact of life in Cairo during the Sultanate's last decades. Ibn Taghrībirdī reported a ploy in Sha'bān 861/June–July 1457 that *julbān* recruits exploited to limit access to desirable produce items such as summer melons (*baṭṭikh ṣayfī*).³³ Initially offering sums in excess of what wholesalers could pay, recruits bought up the available supply and presumably hoarded it until re-sale at higher prices was feasible. Ibn Taghrībirdī chose the term “mockery” (*‘abath*) to describe this scheme, implying the recruits' disdain for the commoners' welfare. That it occurred during the reign of Īnāl, known for his nepotism and placidity, was not happenstance. Even during more forceful administrations, *julbān* assaults on property increased in frequency and severity. Several years later, the same historian detailed a riot by recruits stemming from the breach of an arrangement over horse sales.³⁴ In Jumādā II 868/February 1464, a band of “low-ranking” recruits set upon merchants in the horse market whom they believed were violating a covert agreement to sell mounts to them at prices they could afford, rather than to amirs or manumitted soldiers (*jund*) who bid more. The recruits, angered over losing out on the better stock, attacked the horse merchants with daggers. They were joined by other brigades from the barracks and began pillaging the cloth market. Ibn Taghrībirdī claimed that the recruits dared to assault notables riding horses, forcing them off and confiscating their mounts. When reports of these excesses reached Sultan Khushqadam, they “troubled him” (*shaqqa ‘alayhi*). He invited anyone abused by recruits to ascend the Citadel and inform him personally, presumably for compensation. Ibn Taghrībirdī mentioned no direct reprisal against the offending recruits, however; only a proclamation which the historian admitted did produce a “timely benefit.”

But only temporarily. Raids on markets launched to protest wages and rations the recruits found stingy continued to escalate. Despite the high marks accorded him overall by historians, Sultan Qāyṭbāy never dealt conclusively with these revolts. They exploded in epidemic proportions during the tenure of his ultimate successor, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī. Perhaps the most devastating of these occurred at the height of al-Ghawrī's powers, during Muḥarram 916/April 1510.³⁵ Ibn Iyās dwelled at length

³³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hawādith*, 8:301, line 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 8:457, line 11.

³⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:177, line 8.



on the circumstances behind this event. Recruits in the Citadel barracks had requested a bonus payment of 100 dinars per man (expected as their reward for training in anticipation of likely confrontations with Bedouin at home or the Ottomans abroad). When al-Ghawrī refused, and his supply master failed to deliver delayed meat rations, the recruits forced the *atābak* Qurqmās and several other officers to repeat their demands to the sultan in person. Upon his adamant rejection and threat of abdication, the recruits descended upon several of Cairo's busiest markets (in the Ṭulūn, Taḥt al-Rabʿ, and Bustiyīn districts) in a fury of pillage that lasted two days. They went so far as to confront the armaments officer, Dawlāt Bāy, at his home in al-Azbakīyah with a demand that he assume the sultanate (an ultimatum he flatly declined, instead joining al-Ghawrī in the Citadel). At the height of the riot, the recruits were joined by grooms and black slaves, indicating the propensity for indentured persons lower down the social ladder to seize upon the recruits' initiative to pillage items otherwise unavailable to them. This riot effectively shut down commerce in Cairo, since merchants in remaining markets bolted their gates and waited for eventual intervention. Ultimately, when the senior amirs rallied troops from their own companies and veterans, the *julbān* realized that they faced certain defeat and disbanded.

Now the regime faced the demands for reparations from outraged merchants. Ibn Iyās tallied the figure for despoiled shops, with damage claims totaling twenty thousand dinars. The amirs organized searches in the recruits' barracks to recover some of the stolen goods for return to their owners. Nonetheless, the sultan's accountants were called upon to make up the differences from his own resources. Whether al-Ghawrī and his personal enforcer, Zaynī Barakat ibn Mūsá, actually compensated the merchants in full Ibn Iyās did not say. He left the impression of smoldering dissatisfaction among all concerned parties (since no mention was made of al-Ghawrī acceding to the recruits' initial bonus request that sparked the disaster). The potential for incidents of this magnitude remained a reality, exercising a depressing effect over commerce in the capital (and other cities of the empire) up to the Ottoman conquest and beyond. The regime's inability to curb troop raids on property reveals limits on both its capacity and will to enforce order. Shows of reprisal were mandatory, but effective solutions may have proven unobtainable. Various interest groups in Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo thus began to adopt their own measures of security. Jewish merchants in the Zuwaylah district of Cairo who suffered heavy property losses during riots in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 902/July–August 1497 anticipated subsequent problems. When raids by occupying Janissaries were rumored twenty-four years later, they moved their goods elsewhere and barricaded entrances to their quarter.³⁶ Other marketers reacted in similar ways.

³⁶Ibid., 3:375, line 9; 5:374, line 4.



The preceding remarks should not obscure assaults on property committed by persons outside the military hierarchy. Later discussions will analyze acts of larceny at the hands of individuals and gangs from both the civilian and military sectors. But in the context of culpability and reprisal, historians who weighed the damage in stolen goods and lost confidence clearly held the regime's recruits responsible for the worst ravages. To them, the most heinous criminality linked to theft was part and parcel of the recruits' legacy. The historians readily acknowledged the regime's difficulties as it contemplated responses to the outrages of its wayward cadets. They still made clear their skepticism over long-term efficacy.

Ibn Iyās, commenting on conditions in Cairo following the Ottoman occupation, saw few signs of improvement. He expressed his contempt for the behavior of the former officer in al-Ghawrī's service who had betrayed his cause to the Ottomans at Marj Dābiq and was rewarded for his treason with the viceroyship of Egypt. In Jumādā I 924/May–June 1518, he described the viceroy's brutal execution of a prayer caller (muezzin) for his theft of a medicinal herb.³⁷ Cultivation of this herb, *khiyār shanbar* (purging cassia), had been placed under the viceroy's control. When the prayer caller was arrested for cutting off two branches of the plant, he was turned over to the *wālī* prefect—who subsequently brought him before the viceroy. Because the muezzin violated the latter's prohibition, he ordered his bisection. The muezzin was led to the execution site with the basket containing the pilfered branches hanging from his neck. Ibn Iyās stated that the value of the stolen herb did not exceed four *aṣṇāf*, bitterly musing over the disparity between a petty loss and severe punishment (the prayer caller left behind “children, a wife, and mother”). He went on to denounce the viceroy for personal immorality (drunkenness) and a disdain for equitable rule. Yet this incident amply demonstrated the issue of affront, the continuity of readiness on the regime's part to mete out reprisal—especially following theft by civilians outside its hierarchy.³⁸ Acts that alarmed custodians of

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 5:254, line 21.

³⁸ Analyses of assaults on property in other societies reveal similar patterns of reprisal. V. Gatrell and G. Parker noted that, in later medieval Europe, commercial classes increasingly demanded rigorous deterrents against theft due to the heightened production of commodities. See *Crime and the Law*, 38; J. Given discerned a tie between a demand for prosecution of theft and the rise of trade in medieval England. See *Society and Homicide in Thirteenth-Century England* (Stanford, 1977), 111–12. He also noted the development of “entrepreneurial banditry” as a skilled craft unimaginable without a growing urban setting; B. Hanawalt discussed a link between organized thievery and economic depression, a parallel with the situation in fifteenth–sixteenth-century Egypt. See *Crime and Conflict*, 238; P. Huang found the most consistent expectation of the courts in Qing China focused on protection of property against thieves. See *Civil Justice in China; Representation and Practice in the Qing* (Stanford, 1996), 15; T. Gurr also concluded that the classes benefitting from “early capitalism” in western Europe were the most ardent advocates of tougher and more consistent laws, enforcement, and punishment for property offenses. See “Development and Decay: Their Impact on Public Order in Western History,” in *History and Crime: Implications for Criminal Justice Policy*,



religious observance and accepted canons of belief posed dilemmas no less complex.

Events that riled the religious establishment in Cairo or Damascus enough to compel the regime to intervene involved disputes over Christian activism or allegations of aberrant views laid against prominent Muslims. Behavior by Christians in Egypt regarded as excessively assertive frequently stemmed from their attempts to restore churches, or complaints over religious services that impinged on Muslim sensibilities. Incidents that incited vigorous opposition from Muslim clerics sufficient to draw in the regime were clearly regarded as criminal acts, in that they entailed investigations to ascertain the veracity of the claim and subsequent imposition of a penalty. For example, al-Maqrīzī reported a petition by a delegation of Christians from the Delta province of Gharbiyah, submitted in the distant past (755/1354–55, no month given).³⁹ The delegation had requested the sultan to allow their restoration of a church, once titled al-Nahrīriyah, they claimed had been illegally converted to a mosque (*masjid*). Al-Maqrīzī did not provide details on why their suit was dismissed (possibly too remote for survival of background data). But he did state that the petitioners were evicted from the sultan’s presence after being flogged, treatment usually reserved for convicts rather than failed litigants in a civil hearing. The delegates may have pressed their case belligerently, or a counter accusation from unnamed defenders of the mosque may have claimed they overstepped communal limits.

A case with known circumstances occurred a quarter century later in Jumādā I 780/August–September 1378.⁴⁰ Notorious enough for two historians to discuss, the incident focused on a claim by an unnamed Sufi esteemed for his piety, who complained of noise from hand bells (*nawāqīs*) rung at the church of Abū Numrus in Jiza province so loudly that they disrupted the Friday *khutbah* in an adjacent mosque. The Sufi alleged that the bells were sounded deliberately to drown out the Muslim sermon. The sultan, al-Ashraf Sha‘bān, found the Sufi’s protest unsubstantiated. Undaunted, the Sufi proceeded to the Hijaz, from where he returned with documents certifying that he had sojourned at the Prophet’s tomb pleading with God’s

ed. J. Inciardi (Beverly Hills, 1980), 34; M. Perry observed a sophisticated underworld active in sixteenth-century Seville, many of whose members were out-of-service soldiers more closely paralleling the status of unemployed Mamluks than anywhere else in Europe; see *Crime and Society*, 24. Finally, G. Ruggiero identified the Venetian social category of “important people” as those having the status of property or office holders without formal membership in the nobility. As the category most vulnerable to theft, they made the most consistent demands for protection against property crime. By contrast, the nobility were, as individuals, among the most violent elements in Venetian society, since they regarded themselves as personally beyond prosecution, similar to the Mamluk elite. See *Violence*, 59–61, 65, 84, 148.

³⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:918, line 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:340, line 12; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ*, 1:177, line 1.



messenger for an endorsement of the church's demolition. Appealing to the *atābak* and future sultan, Barqūq, the Sufi persuaded him to send the current *muḥtasib* to investigate his allegations. Upon his return the market inspector confirmed the Sufi's accusation, adding that the church's congregation had lavished money on its expansion. It was on these latter grounds, as concrete violations of *sharī'ah*, that the *atābak* ordered the church demolished. Following the *muḥtasib*'s report, Barqūq had summoned the Jacobite patriarch (to whose rite the church presumably belonged) and rebuked him for transgressing established law limiting churches to existing proportions. This case is interesting because the criminal offense that achieved the demolition had nothing formally to do with the disruptive bell ringing. Irritating as it may have been, the music emanating from Christian services did not constitute as clear a violation as did the church's enlargement. The persistent Sufi got his way, but only via indirect means.

Disputes erupting over allegations of blasphemy by Muslims were potentially more explosive than reactions to Christian activism because of the dissension the former caused within the majority community. Sultans and their adjutants often found the outcome problematic regardless of how they ruled, since partisans on both sides of a case had taken obdurate stands. When sultans or grand amirs convened councils of judges to review allegations, the qadis themselves often deadlocked over a decision. Yet the authorities, as ultimate agents of enforcement, were bound to demand a decision and impose the appropriate censure. And individuals who had already attracted a devoted following before their alleged deviance was brought to the authorities' attention posed risks of widespread disorder if they were arrested summarily. Al-Sakhāwī described a manumitted black slave from Damascus called Mubārak who was accused of corrupting the faith in Ramaḍān 899/June–July 1494.⁴¹ Having previously established himself as a revered person (*mu'taqad*) in Syria with a large following, this Mubārak arrived in Cairo with a reputation for rabble rousing. Making the rounds of venerated tombs in the Egyptian capital, he was denounced for preaching blasphemous views at such strongholds of orthodoxy as the Azhar. A group of senior ulama demanded his arrest, but Sultan Qāyṭbāy and his advisors were reluctant to imprison or execute him after their interrogation. They considered the revered Mubārak more incendiary as a potential martyr than as a public nuisance. However annoying his pronouncements may have been to the clerics, removing or eliminating him was more likely to inflame the masses and incite a riot.

Alleged blasphemers did not routinely escape unscathed, however. Persons who recklessly transgressed conventions of accepted conduct were convicted more often than popular preachers. Ibn Iyās discussed several incidents of such deviance

⁴¹ Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, "Al-Dhayl al-Tāmm 'alā Duwal al-Islām," Dār al-Kutub al-Waḥīfah (Tunis) MS 6856, fol. 245, line 30.



during Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's reign. In Sha'bān 911/December 1505–January 1506, a dervish from Upper Egypt behaved in ways that brought capital charges of atheism (*zandaqah*) and sorcery (*suhūr*) against him.⁴² Denounced for performing his ablutions with milk and other untoward acts “contrary to the *sharī'ah*,” he was turned over by the sultan to the chief Maliki qadi for questioning. After the judge found him guilty of unbelief, he was beheaded outside the Ṣāliḥīyah Madrasah, seat of the highest judicial tribunal in Cairo. This dervish's execution seems to have presented al-Ghawrī with few risks since the chronicler reported no mob of advocates who might riot in his defense.

A more complex case decided less to the sultan's liking occurred two years later in Jumādā I 913/September–October 1507.⁴³ The defendant in this incident was no fringe mendicant but a prominent Hanafi *khaṭīb*. Accused of making “impertinent remarks” about the prophet Abraham in his sermons, the *khaṭīb* was interrogated by a senior judge—who concluded that his statements did not warrant punishment for *kufr*. Al-Ghawrī thought otherwise. Partisan to the prophet Abraham, al-Ghawrī asserted that the *khaṭīb*'s comments indeed merited his execution. The sultan convened the four senior qadis and other eminent clerics to review the offensive statements. After a stormy debate, the council rejected al-Ghawrī's call for the *khaṭīb*'s beheading. According to precedents set by similar events in the past, if the accused sincerely retracted his depiction of Abraham, he should not pay the ultimate price. The council sentenced the *khaṭīb* to a jail term pending his recantation. Ibn Iyās stated that the council reached this verdict despite the sultan's demand for an execution. This case revealed tensions that often surfaced between clerical authorities charged with determining the veracity of blasphemy charges and the regime pledged to back their decisions, even if they disagreed. Incidents that the regime had presented on its own initiative were particularly galling when the ulama ruled contrary to its wishes—often to assert their own primacy in matters of religion. But regardless of whose agenda was favored, such cases were unlikely to go unprosecuted. Even if the defendant's stature mitigated against a conviction for deviance—whatever his guilt or innocence—both the regime and clerics felt obliged to subject him to a criminal investigation. The legitimacy of both groups rested on principles that required them to conduct a formal procedure. Events that shocked moral sensibilities imposed similar expectations on them.

Acts provoking hostile responses from turbulent sectors of the populace required rapid responses from the authorities to head off riots that might ignite city-wide conflagrations. While immediate reprisals were necessary, the volatility inherent in such acts presented the authorities with difficult choices. Their underlying goals were curbing further disorder and maintaining security. Their success at achieving

⁴² Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:87, line 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4:120, line 11.



them varied according to incident. Acts regarded as morally corrupt or threatening to sectarian identities were especially inflammatory. They were sufficiently notorious to warrant recording by historians long after they occurred. In Rajab 727/ May–June 1327, al-Maqrīzī discussed an incident of sexual assault alleged against a European (*fīranjī*) merchant in the port of Alexandria.⁴⁴ The merchant was apprehended in the act of soliciting a “beardless youth” to commit indecency. The intervener was an adult Muslim who charged the European with impermissible behavior. The merchant responded by striking his accoster in the face with his shoe, whereupon a mob set upon him. The European’s community immediately rose in his defense. A pitched battle with drawn weapons threatened to erupt between the two factions, until the commandant of the Alexandria garrison interceded. The Muslims insisted that the merchant had committed acts meriting his execution. Yet al-Maqrīzī simply concluded the incident by stating that he was taken before a judge for questioning. But he also noted that the resultant tension necessitated closing gates and markets—a temporary stalling of the commerce basic to Alexandria’s economy. Whether the European was actually terminated for this allegation (a response that might provoke a more serious reaction from the foreign mercantile community) remains unknown from al-Maqrīzī’s depiction.

The chronicler Ibn al-Ṣayrafī described at length an incident with more damaging potential due to its incitement of sectarian conflict. In Shawwāl 876/March–April 1472, he detailed a case of attempted conversion of Christian children.⁴⁵ A Maghribī (otherwise unnamed) residing at a mosque in the Jiza district acquired renown for evocative preaching. Too evocative for local Christians, it would seem, since some of their children fell under the Maghribī’s spell and converted to Islam. Their enraged parents fell upon the preacher, throttled him until his tongue came out, cut it off (perhaps a symbolic means of punishing the offending vehicle of speech), and then began to disembowel him. After failing to find a pit into which they might cast him, they were arrested by the Jiza inspector (*kāshif*).

At this stage, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī’s narrative becomes alert to the nuances of communal rivalries confronting the authorities. When the *kāshif* conveyed the Christians to the Cairo prefect (*wālī*), the latter decided that a senior officer should take charge of them. He therefore consigned the Christians to the *amīr akhūr al-kabīr* (grand officer of the horse), a member of the sultan’s advisory council. But even he hesitated before ordering the Christians’ execution, despite their brutal murder publicly witnessed. The amir elected to bring the offenders, who numbered six, before Sultan Qāyṭbāy himself. As the final arbiter of criminal cases, the sovereign opted for imprisonment. Seemingly convinced that the Maghribī had overstepped accepted boundaries of communal autonomy by actively proselytizing to minors and thus

⁴⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:284, line 7.

⁴⁵ Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbāʾ*, 424, line 5.



unduly provoking their parents, Qāyṭbāy ruled the Christians' behavior justifiable homicide. But his decision was not met with equanimity by his co-religionists. A mob gathered at the base of the Citadel, seized the Christians from their Mamluk guards and stoned five of them to death. Only one of them converted to Islam on the spot to save himself and was spared. Ibn al-Ṣayrafī reported Qāyṭbāy's wrath upon learning of the mob's vigilantism. He caused the *wālī* to proclaim an edict forbidding ordinary subjects to take the law into their own hands, or to "seize the Mamluks' bridles." But he took no further action. Indeed, the caution and reluctance over assuming responsibility for the fate of these Christians at progressive stages of the ruling oligarchy underscores the regime's unease over the explosiveness of a case that put Christians and Muslims at odds. None of the officers charged with apprehending the Christians displayed any sympathy for the Maghribī who had sparked the incident. Charismatics who deliberately aggravated adherents of a rival faith were the true culprits in their eyes, responsible for unleashing forces that compromised their authority.

Although hesitant to prosecute members of their caste, the ruling oligarchy could not ignore assaults committed by Mamluks who wantonly disregarded public morality. Yet neither could they allow the masses free rein to take revenge. Ibn Ṭūlūn noted the arrest of an officer described as a European from Tripoli in Ramaḍān 906/March–April 1501.⁴⁶ This individual was accused of several murders for theft, concealment of his victims, raping women after stealing their jewelry, and casually eating after his debauchery. While the *nā'ib* governor of Damascus ordered the Mamluk's dismemberment, the masses got to him first. After stabbing the Mamluk multiple times, they dragged him to the gallows district and set him on fire. Infuriated by this mob action, the *nā'ib* ordered his troops to ride the offenders down indiscriminately. Those who survived were detained and fined. He also ordered the markets temporarily closed.

Incidents of this kind were not unique to Damascus. Cairo often witnessed similar events at the hands of soldiers. Ibn Taghrībirdī mentioned their plundering and "gross atrocities" against women attending Friday prayers at the Ibn al-ʿĀṣ mosque in Fuṣṭāṭ during Ramaḍān 863/July 1459.⁴⁷ Yet chroniclers provided more lurid descriptions of shocking behavior, especially during unsettled transitions within the regime itself. Ibn Iyās, who looked askance at the deportment of Qāyṭbāy's son, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, held up the depravity of a recently promoted recruit as an example of troop excess unhindered by a lax sovereign. In Shaʿbān 903/March–April 1498, while riding a spirited horse, this recruit encountered a funeral procession. His mount bucked in alarm, throwing off his rider. Angered by the pallbearers, the recruit threatened them and they ran off, abandoning the corpse. Venting his ire

⁴⁶ Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahah*, 1:235, line 10.

⁴⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:135, line 5.



further, the recruit struck at the body several times with his dagger until he calmed down and departed. The body was left lying where it had fallen, unburied to the end of the day. Ibn Iyās mentioned no punishment of a single recruit for this incident. But he elaborated on more devastating cases involving whole units of soldiers, particularly during the early stages of the Ottoman occupation. In Muḥarram 924/February 1519, Ibn Iyās stated that the outrages committed by the Ottoman soldiery had become unbearable. Arrogantly ignoring time limits placed on plundering, they stripped several districts of wood and metal furnishings for use as tinder and tools in the Citadel barracks.⁴⁸

Damaging as such pillage was, it was endured as the inevitable consequence of defeat. But the personal debaucheries of the occupiers were intolerable. The Ottomans were alleged to convene mass orgies in their barracks, enlivened with copious draughts of beer (*būzah*). Their assaults victimized both women and young boys. They went on drunken rampages through the town, seizing the turbans of passers-by and showering them with insults. Eventually, groups of notables petitioned the Ottoman “emperor”’s (*khandakar*) own head qadi, who now presided over the four chief justices, for redress. Upon hearing their complaints, he approached the most senior Mamluk officer remaining from the previous government, Qāyṭbāy al-Dawādār (no relation to the eminent sultan). The two ascended to the governor Khayrbak (referred to as the *malik al-umarāʾ*) and demanded an audience. The Ottoman judge accosted the governor as follows: “Pay heed to the Muslims’ condition, for if you do not, Cairo (*Miṣr*) will be ruined totally. The state of affairs has gravely worsened, and if the *khandakar* were to learn of the situation, he would order our necks cut (i.e., decapitated). He would say: ‘How have you dared to conceal from me Cairo’s state, and to neglect the condition of the Muslims so that these events have occurred?’”

The governor’s response conveyed, as a microcosm, the essence of his dilemma and political savvy. Apparently indifferent to the complaints of his civilian subjects (recall that Khayrbak was the renegade who betrayed Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī at the battle of Marj Dābiq), he could not dismiss an accusation from his patron’s justice minister. Nor could he afford to alienate the Ottoman troops on whom he relied for his own survival (the indigenous Mamluks loathed him as a traitor). Thus, Khayrbak responded with a review of both the Janissary (*al-Inkishāriyah*) and the Sipahi (*al-Isbahanīyah*) units, interrogating them as to who were guilty of these acts. But Ibn Iyās mentioned no further reprisals. Rather, he noted that the governor confined women and youths to their houses for ten days, and named the shrines of al-Sayyidah al-Nafīṣah, al-Ḥusayn, and the commercial district of Bayn al-Qaṣrayn as off-limits (possibly to the Ottomans, although this is unclear from the text). All

⁴⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 5:233, line 2.



shops were to close after sundown. Khayrbak thereby sought to cool off the situation without personally penalizing those guilty of perpetrating it.

An incident at the hands of the occupiers even more repellent occurred four years later, and it disclosed Khayrbak's long memory over a slight. Ibn Iyās, in *Jumādā I* 928/March–April 1522, described a clash between Janissaries and Mamluks over the former's abuse of a Christian.⁴⁹ The Janissaries had impaled this Christian (cause not mentioned) and left him to expire. Passing by him subsequently, in the company of several Mamluks who served Qāyṭbāy al-Dawādār, the Janissaries refused him a draft of water. Appalled by their callousness, the Mamluks sought to relieve the Christian's pitiable state. After taking him down, they pulled out his stake and let him drink. Affronted, the Janissaries disputed the Mamluks' mercy. One of the latter stabbed a Janissary. The Mamluks then retreated to Qāyṭbāy's house, pursued by the Janissaries who threatened to set its gate on fire when the *bawwāb* barred their access. As word of the dispute spread, a full riot between Janissaries and Mamluks ensued. The *wālī* prefect sent his adjutant to re-impale the Christian, "who still breathed." The governor Khayrbak was informed of the incident the following day. Harboring his resentment of Qāyṭbāy, he demanded that he turn over the Mamluks involved. Qāyṭbāy sent his brother to remonstrate with him, but Khayrbak was adamant. The governor sent out an edict warning anyone who hid a guilty Mamluk in his house would be hanged "without recourse." But whoever intercepted a Mamluk who set off the riot would receive 100 dinars and a velvet caftan.

On the tenth of Ramaḍān/3 August, the governor descended to the Maydān to witness the punishment of two Mamluks arrested by the *wālī*, and the doorman who had denied the Janissaries access: bisection for all three. Khayrbak forced Qāyṭbāy to witness the mutilation of his own officers and servant, "since he despised him intensely." The Citadel commandant and one other officer stood up and interceded for the *bawwāb*, noting that he had children and an aged father. But Khayrbak "did not relent from his cruelty." As for Qāyṭbāy, the governor succeeded in tarnishing his prestige permanently, thus eclipsing his career. Ibn Iyās stated that Qāyṭbāy attempted to mollify the Janissary wounded by his Mamluk with a compensation of 100 dinars and a silk robe lined with squirrel fur to replace his robe slashed during the dispute. Ibn Iyās depicted this episode as "one of the most cruel and odious events."

Yet his anger cannot conceal Khayrbak's ultimate victory over a popular opponent surviving from their mutual careers under al-Ghawrī. Qāyṭbāy's diminution left Khayrbak in unfettered control over Cairo. His unswerving support of the occupiers cemented his own position with no meaningful opposition until his own death. Khayrbak triumphed because he understood the political necessity of maintaining

⁴⁹Ibid., 5:445, line 19.



the support of his Ottoman troops, while Qāyrbāy met defeat as a remnant of the old, defeated order. His presence had been a nagging reminder of personal betrayal. Khayrbak's response to the Ottomans' barbarity in Cairo overall was to act belatedly when confronted by the *khandakar*'s representative. Otherwise, he remained aloof to moral outrages inflicted on the commons.

Civilians who violated moral sensibilities could be dealt with more summarily. Ibn Iyās mentioned a tomb robber in Shawwāl 903/May–June 1498, who stole the deceased's shrouds, presumably for resale.⁵⁰ The sultan, Qāyrbāy's minimally admired successor al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, ordered the thief's face flayed while he was still alive. His skin was left hanging down to his chest, the facial bones exposed. The thief was conveyed in this state to the Bāb al-Naṣr where he was hanged. Cairo's gravediggers were then warned to respect the shrouds of the deceased. Many of the sensational murders minutely recorded for their shock value by the chroniclers could be considered here as gruesome examples of moral depravity. Since these cases warrant analysis in the context of their complex motives, they are relegated to a separate discussion of homicide.

But one case of extraordinary fraud does indicate a degree of creativity so nefarious that it bemused as well as shocked. This incident was sufficiently famous that it was remembered and recorded a century after it occurred. Al-Maqrīzī discussed at length the antics of a charlatan who duped many into believing he had discovered a tomb containing several Companions of the Prophet. The incident happened in Rabī' II 744/August–September 1343, in the Lūq district outside Cairo.⁵¹ Al-Maqrīzī described the site as a rubbish heap known as the Dung Hill (*Kawm al-Zibl*). He claimed that "people of iniquity, the worst riff-raff" repaired to it. While digging into the site, remains of previous structures—some containing fragments of documents—were uncovered. One of the excavators, named Shu'ayb, whom al-Maqrīzī condemned as "a devil among the masses," claimed that he received visions while asleep confirming that these ruins sat on top of a sepulcher where the Companions were interred. He went further, proclaiming that his dreams empowered him to cure the crippled and restore sight to the blind. His fellow ruffians eagerly heeded his words and began digging down two fathoms until they reached the remains of a mosque. This discovery evoked wild rejoicing among the mob and their uproar attracted wider notice in the vicinity. By dawn, some one thousand persons had gathered, all digging away at the rubbish heap. Shu'ayb announced that the excavated ruins indeed belonged to the Prophet's Companions. His powers of persuasion were acute, it would seem, since notables of both the military and civil elites now visited the site. Al-Maqrīzī observed that women were especially taken in by Shu'ayb's therapeutic promises, stating that the sultan's mother came herself.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 3:391, line 8.

⁵¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:649, line 6.



Shu‘ayb would conduct cure seekers personally into the now-vast pit, from whence they emerged shouting, amid cries of “God is Most Great!” that their maladies were remedied, their sight regained. All, of course, willingly paid the dinars or dirhams Shu‘ayb and his comrades charged for this treatment.

As the notoriety of the alleged Companions’ tomb spread, several amirs and qadis became alarmed over the presence of such a throng now attending the site night and day. They urged the *wālī* prefect to inspect the *kawm*, their missive noting reports that the ruffians had exhumed cadavers from legitimate graves to be passed off as the Companions’ remains. When the prefect arrived at the hill, the mob greeted him with howls of “vile denunciations,” their protest so intense that his soldiers shot arrows to disperse them. Shu‘ayb and his cohort fled, leaving the *wālī*’s contingent to excavate until they reached bedrock and a sewer. No verifiable indications of a tomb were discovered and the huge pit was filled in. The mob eventually lost interest in the site and calm was restored. Nonetheless, Shu‘ayb and his fellow charlatans made off with a trove of money and apparel.

A case involving individuals at the opposite end of the social spectrum took place just after al-Maqrīzī’s lifetime, as observed by his disciple, Ibn Taghrībirdī. He reported a case following a stalled Nile flood in Shawwāl 866/June–July 1462, in which the son of a respected jurist was implicated in a sex scandal.⁵² As was customary during crises affecting Egypt’s sole source of water, the sultan (Khushqadam) enjoined the magistrates to demand abstinence of the populace “from sin” (*al-ma‘asin*). The *wālī* prefect duly rode out to Būlāq, a quarter apparently known for its looseness, to carry out his orders. After arresting revelers there, he crossed over to an island that had emerged as a result of the low level of the river. A crowd had assembled there, and the prefect rounded up a large number of men and women, seemingly engaged in unchaperoned activities. These he placed on donkeys and paraded from Būlāq to Cairo. Among them was a son of the chief qadi Shams al-Dīn al-Qāyātī. The son had attempted to mask his face in order to conceal his identity while mounted ignominiously on the donkey. His humiliation greatly incensed the juristic establishment, and a delegation confronted the prefect with a complaint of inappropriate arrest. The famous shaykh and hadith scholar Amīn al-Dīn al-Āqsarā’ī took his denunciation of the *wālī* to the sultan himself. But the pious Khushqadam replied that he had so ordered the prefect personally. The jurists refused to desist, and again accused the prefect of defaming the scion of an esteemed family. The *wālī* responded: “Why does the son of al-Qāyātī sit with his [ad-hoc] harem among commoners (*al-‘awāmm*), exposed to onlookers?” Although he did release the son, the damage to his family’s reputation had been done. The jurists remained agitated (*fī harj marj*). The sultan saw no reason to budge from his stance of probity. He granted the prefect a splendid robe and congratulated him for

⁵² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 8:424, line 9.



his resolute enforcement of public decency. A second proclamation was read out, forbidding attendance at diversions (*muftarajāt*). All subjects were to shun “moral defilements” (*al-qadhūrāt*). “Thus was the stature of the *wālī* augmented, and everyone held his tongue about him.”

This incident disclosed contention when a sweep to ensnare revelers whose behavior was deemed insulting to God unexpectedly trapped the offspring of a prominent family who had pledged to uphold morality. Quite prepared to endorse these sweeps when limited to commoners, the juristic elite, cream of the ulama, were acutely embarrassed when one of their own was exposed. They uniformly closed ranks to denounce the prefect and defend Ibn al-Qāyātī’s honor (and that of his father). Sultan Khushqadam refused to relent in this instance and threw his promotion of the *wālī* in their faces. The readiness of the sovereign, whose status as legal arbiter granted him jurisdiction over even the chief qadis, to oppose them, while simultaneously winking at his recruits’ excesses in other circumstances, suggests something of the paradox clearly evident in the regime’s application of criminal justice.

All the preceding events, despite their diversity, highlight common trends that impelled the authorities to act, but often compromised their capacity to resolve. All either posed a challenge to the authorities’ powers of control over subordinate elements, or aroused significant sectors of society by adversely affecting property rights or defying accepted canons of faith and moral conduct. Disturbances threatening public order or violating property rights repeatedly involved members of the ruling elite, notably its young recruits only recently promoted from cadet status. These troops precipitated many of the most turbulent episodes disrupting order and trade in the Sultanate’s major cities, seats of its most influential social groups and wealthiest stores of capital assets. The authorities could not allow the disruptive criminality so ubiquitously associated with their own recruits to go unchecked. Yet neither could they take definitive steps to crush the cadres from whose ranks their successors would be drawn. Every senior amir, as well as the sultan, had invested substantial sums training the soldiers on whose loyalty his political future—and often physical survival—depended. These events therefore provided intriguing insights into the dilemmas faced by the authorities as they sought to contain the violence endemic to their troops within manageable limits.

It is worth noting that these troops were virtually absent from disputes over canons of belief, and only marginally visible in affronts to public morality—at least until the Ottoman occupation. These crimes occurred, in the main, within the civilian sectors of society. But the authorities rarely found themselves freer to assert themselves decisively, or to act without regard for the sensibilities and biases of competing factions. Nonetheless, however complicated the circumstances of crimes



affecting religion or morality, the authorities could not ignore them.⁵³ Their claims to primacy over preservation of order, and the foundations of their legitimacy as defenders of a Sunni Muslim polity and arbiters of its criminal suits, demanded their intimate involvement. The civilian sectors of society, whose numeric advantage was overwhelming and whose assets, taxed or confiscated, were essential to the ruling elite's support, submitted to that elite's political supremacy in return for the latter's enforcement of judgments emanating from the legists and clerics who served as custodians of faith and definers of morality. This symbiosis was visible in every salient case stemming from conflicts over religion and probity. It was this interdependence that shaped the context of authority over criminal matters in the Mamluk Sultanate. We can discern the disparate aspects of this context repeatedly as we analyze the several categories of crime reported by the narrative sources. Their authors were uniformly sensitive to them.

⁵³ Claude Gauvard noted that the French monarchy in the later Middle Ages was expected by the clergy to intervene in morals cases, depicted by the clergy as God's punishment for sin. Even though such crimes were interpreted as divine retribution, the king was required to protect his subjects from them. See "Fear of Crime in Late Medieval France," in *Medieval Crime and Social Control*, ed. B. Hanawalt and D. Wallace (Minneapolis, 1999), 3.



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On the Brink of a New Era? Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī (d. 1366) and the Yalbughāwīyah

INTRODUCTION

In the winter of the year 1366, the Mamluk political scene was all set for the rising star of the amir Sayf al-Dīn Yalbughā al-‘Umarī al-Nāṣirī al-Khāṣṣakī (d. 1366) to reach its zenith.¹ The adolescent Qalāwūnid sultan, al-Malik al-Ashraf Sha‘bān (1353–77; r. 1363–77), was firmly patronized by this former mamluk of Sha‘bān’s uncle, the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (d. 1361; r. 1347–51 and 1354–61).² Furthermore, in February 1366, Yalbughā’s gradual empowerment after Ḥasan’s violent deposition in 1361 had reached a final stage when he managed to finish off the amir Ṭaybughā al-Ṭawīl (1325–68), the last of his rivals for effective power behind the Qalāwūnid throne.³ Finally, a major setback to Yalbughā’s increasing success, which had suddenly and quite unexpectedly emerged from the Latin West in October 1365—the “Alexandrian crusade” of Peter I of Lusignan, king of Cyprus—had been turned to his own advantage by late November 1366.⁴ In that month, a large

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¹ For a detailed account, analysis, and assessment of Yalbughā’s career, within the larger framework of the Qalāwūnid sultanate and of Qalāwūnid political culture, see Jo Van Steenbergen, “The Amir Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī, the Qalāwūnid Sultanate, and the Cultural Matrix of Mamlūk Society: A Re-assessment of Mamlūk Politics in the 1360s,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, in press.

² See *ibid.*; idem, *Order Out of Chaos: Patronage, Conflict and Mamluk Socio-Political Culture, 1341-1382* (Leiden, 2006), 117, 158–60.

³ See Van Steenbergen, “The Amir Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī”; idem, *Order Out of Chaos*, 159.

⁴ Robert Irwin, on the other hand, considers this event a major factor in Yalbughā’s downfall (Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382* [London, 1986], 145). On this crusade, see Peter Edbury, “The Crusading Policy of King Peter I of Cyprus, 1359–1369,” in *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Periods of the Crusades*, ed. Peter M. Holt (London, 1977), 90–105; Peter Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades, 1191–1374* (Cambridge, 1991); Martina Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte Alexandrias von 564/1169 bis in die Mitte des 9./15. Jahrhunderts: Verwaltung und innerstädtische Organisationsformen* (Berlin, 1992); Jo Van Steenbergen, “The Alexandrian Crusade (1365) and the Mamluk Sources: Reassessment of the *Kitāb al-Ilmām* of an-Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānī (d. 1372 AD),” in *East and West in the Crusader States: Context, Contacts, Confrontations, III. Acta of the congress held at Hernen Castle in September 2000*, ed. K. Ciggaar and H. G. B. Teule (Leuven, 2003), 123–37 (however, this paper should be treated with some caution [I consider it to demonstrate my callowness at the time!] in light of Otfried Weintritt, *Formen spätmittelalterlicher islamischer Geschichtsdarstellung: Untersuchung zu an-Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānīs Kitāb al-Ilmām und verwandten zeitgenössischen Texten* [Beirut, 1992]).



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revenge fleet's construction was completed, manned, and equipped for war against the island of Cyprus, and on Saturday 28 November its formidable combat capacities were demonstrated on the Nile outside Cairo, in a massively attended and awe-inspiring enactment of sea warfare, described by al-Maqrīzī as follows:

The sultan, the amir Yalbughā and all the regime's amirs and notables rode out to view the warships (*al-shawānī*). They had been successfully completed and their crews were ready. . . . The sultan led his armies from the citadel to the island of Urwā [or Jazīrat al-Wuṣṭá, between the islands of Rawḍah and Ḥalīmah], and boarded the "fire ship" (*al-ḥarrāqah*), while the banks were filled with people. The warships came and their crews played with the war equipment, as one would do in an engagement with the enemy, with their drums being beaten, their trumpets being blown, and the naphtha bombs being released. It was a frightening but beautiful spectacle, and would have been a good thing if it had served its purpose (*law tamma*).⁵

Commissioned by Yalbughā and constructed, as one contemporary author testified, "in less than a year, despite the lack of wood and material,"⁶ this fleet of 100 warships—each manned by some 150 sailors⁷ as well as by a handful from each of the amirs' mamluks, geared for war⁸—generally must have been considered a remarkable feat and a clear token of Yalbughā's promising capacities. Hence, its spectacular public presentation in late November 1366 washed off any stain left by the Alexandrian crusade on Yalbughā's public image as the legitimate power holder behind the ephemeral Qalāwūnid sultan Shaʿbān. When Yalbughā thereupon proceeded to go hunting on the Nile's west bank, near Giza, there was nothing and

⁵ Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Maʿrifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. M. M. Ziyādah et al. (Cairo, 1934–72), 3:129–30. For a detailed contemporary description of this public inauguration ceremony and of the strong impression it left, including on Catalan envoys, see Muḥammad al-Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānī, *Al-Ilmām bi-Mā Jarat bihi al-Aḥkām wa-al-Umūr al-Muqḍīyah fī Waqʿat al-Iskandariyah Sanata 767 H.*, ed. A. S. Atiya (Hyderabad, 1986–73), 3:231–34. On the types of ships mentioned here, see Dionisius A. Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean* (Leiden, 2008), 343–48. For the exact location of the island of Urwā, see the map in André Raymond, *Cairo: City of History* (Cairo, 2001), 150; on its whereabouts in the fourteenth century, see Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawāʿiz wa-al-ʿItibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Beirut, 1998), 3:326.

⁶ Aḥmad al-Bayrūtī, [unknown title], Oxford, Bodleian Ms. Marshall (or.) 36, fol. 2r. (See also n. 10 on this manuscript).

⁷ See Dionisius A. Agius, "The Arab *Šalandī*," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, Vol. 3, ed. Urbain Vermeulen and Jo Van Steenbergen (Leuven, 2001), 58–59.

⁸ See al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:129.



no one left to vie with his status and authority. At least, that is what things looked like. But Yalbughā was soon to experience how appearances can be misleading!

As al-Maqrīzī suggested from hindsight, Yalbughā's fleet would never really serve its purpose. On the contrary: instead of setting sail to Cyprus, it remained on the Nile, between Cairo and Būlāq al-Takrūrī on the west bank, and was probably for the most part left to rot.⁹ This, however, would only happen after it was deployed there one more time, about a fortnight after its promising inauguration. On this occasion, instead of being deployed as a mighty instrument of Muslim revenge against crusading infidels, it was used against fellow Muslims, the latter ironically including Yalbughā himself! On Tuesday 8 December Yalbughā narrowly escaped a murder attempt at his hunting camp near Giza, only managing to cross back to his residence near Cairo in the course of the following day. Subsequently, he tried to undo this rebellion by isolating it and preventing his opponents from crossing the Nile and returning to Cairo. But when the latter obtained part of their opponent's revenge fleet, the Nile between Cairo and Giza again witnessed an enactment of sea warfare, but now for real and between two groups of amirs and mamluks, one supportive of Yalbughā on the east side and on the island of Urwā, and another opposing him on the west bank, featuring the sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Sha'bān as well as large numbers of Yalbughā's own mamluks, the Yalbughāwīyah. This spectacle surely must have been as impressive as the one that was staged two weeks earlier, at least according to historical reports like the following one by the mysterious contemporary chronicler Aḥmad al-Bayrūtī:

[Yalbughā] remained on the Jazīrat al-Wuṣṭā [Urwā] while al-Malik al-Ashraf and his company were on the bank of [Būlāq] al-Takrūrī. Someone known as Muḥammad ibn Bint Labṭah, the captain (*al-rāyis*), then came to al-Malik al-Ashraf, offered him about thirty of the newly-built ships, with crew, and he broke the ships' rigging (*burūq al-marākib*), thus flattening them so that they could cross over. A number of the amirs and mamluks of Yalbughā embarked upon them for the crossing, but Yalbughā shot naphtha bombs at them. Thereupon, they made the ships' crews bring them close to the river bank, shooting arrows at Yalbughā so as to hit his companions and drive them back to where they came from. But Yalbughā

⁹ In fact, one of these ships is explicitly reported to have been used, in the course of 1368, by a sea captain (*rāyis al-baḥr*) known as Muḥammad al-Tāzī al-Maghrabī in a successful corsairing campaign against a ship of the "Franks" (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:159). Most of this Egyptian fleet's whereabouts, however, remain unknown, but it may indeed have shared in the fate of its Syrian counterpart, which was left to rot near Beirut (see Albrecht Fuess, "Rotting Ships and Razed Harbors: The Naval Policy of the Mamluks," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 [2001]: 52–53; on rotting ships, see also Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam*, 253–54, 260–62).



and his companions shot at them with arrows and naphtha, without, however, impressing them.¹⁰

Thus, Yalbughā tried to regain control of the situation with a host of impressive strategic, military, and institutional maneuvers. These included not only his blockade of the Nile and his engagement in sea warfare, but also such remarkable measures as the installation of yet another Qalāwūnid sultan instead of the recalcitrant and absent Sha‘bān: al-Malik al-Manṣūr Ānūk ibn Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (d. 1391), mockingly referred to by commoners and chroniclers alike as “*sulṭān al-jazīrah*,” since he only held court for one day on the above-mentioned island.¹¹ When, however, on Saturday 12 December al-Ashraf Sha‘bān and his supporters eventually managed to cross the Nile and catch up with their Cairene supporters, Yalbughā’s attempts to reverse the situation proved futile, and after his arrest the conflict ended in the following gruesome manner:

[Yalbughā’s] mamluks came, took him from the prison, and brought him down from the citadel. When he went through the Bāb al-Qal‘ah and waited at the wall, they brought him a horse to ride. But when he intended to mount, a mamluk called Qarātamur hit him [with his sword], decapitating him, whereupon [others] jumped at him with their swords, cutting him to pieces. They took his head and held it in a burning torch for the bleeding to stop, though some of them refused to have anything to do with that. When they removed the torch, the bleeding had stopped and they wiped [the head] clean. They could no longer recognize him [in it] but for the scar he had under his ear. Then, they took his body and brought it to al-‘Arūsātayn to hide it there. But under cover of the night[’s darkness], Ṭashtamur, [Yalbughā’s] *dawādār*, came and took the head from them, and he looked for the body until he found it. He had it stitched, and then he buried it in the mausoleum which [Yalbughā] had constructed near

¹⁰ Al-Bayrūtī, fol. 3r (for a single, extremely brief reference to this so-far untraceable chronicler and the unique 788 A.H. [1386 C.E.] manuscript [in 131 folia] of his very valuable chronicle for the years 769–779, see Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur: Zweite den Supplementbänden angepasste Auflage* [Leiden, 1943–49], 2:61 [“A. al-Bairūtī schrieb: Eine Geschichte der J. 768–80/1366–78 (*sic* !) mit Nekrologen”]). Another account of this engagement, with even more detail, may be found in al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:133–35. Thanks are due to Dionisius A. Agius for helping me with the translation of this passage.

¹¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:133–35; Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A‘yān al-Mī‘ah al-Thāminah*, ed. H. al-Nadawī (Beirut, 1993), 1:418–19; Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi wa-al-Mustawfā ba‘d al-Wāfi*, ed. M. M. Amīn (Cairo, 1986–2009), 3:107–8.



the mausoleum of Khwand Umm Ānūk, at al-Rawḍah, outside Bāb al-Barqīyah.¹²

AN ASSESSMENT OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

When Mamluk studies have awarded any attention at all to this drawn-out military engagement in early December 1366, it has been done indifferently and quite briefly within a larger historical or conceptual framework. Moreover, in their summary reconstructions, such studies have invariably identified either al-Ashraf Sha‘bān or a nameless mass of the Yalbughāwīyah, or both, as the culprits for this remarkable and abominable turn of events. Thus, in the 1960s, in William Brinner’s preliminary attempt to make sense of late fourteenth-century power struggles, he entirely blamed the sultan, claiming that he was “determined to be ruler in fact as well as in name.”¹³ In the early 1980s, Werner Krebs’s chronological reconstruction of Mamluk history between 1341 and 1382 accused Yalbughā’s mamluks first and foremost, identifying them as “die Masse seiner namenlosen Mamluken.”¹⁴ In their historical surveys of “medieval” Islamic history, both published in 1986, Robert Irwin and Peter Holt generally agreed with this view, adding some more nuances. The former stated that “Yalbughā was killed in 1366 by some of his own mamluks who had been unable to endure their master’s harsh discipline any longer,” adding that “though the sultan approved their action, he was not fully master of the changed situation.”¹⁵ Agreeing about the Yalbughāwīyah’s involvement, Holt, however, also repeated Brinner’s accusation against Sha‘bān, claiming that “al-Ashraf Sha‘bān, now old enough to take a hand in politics, gave his patronage to a faction of malcontent Mamluks.”¹⁶ The last scholar who dealt with this conflict in any serious fashion was Amalia Levanoni, who in 1995 followed the arguments put forward by Krebs and Irwin, stating that:

When the Yalbughāwīyah mamluks rebelled against their master, Yalbughā al-‘Umarī, the idea of the rebellion had originated with

¹² Al-Bayrūtī, fol. 3v; similar story in al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:136.

¹³ William M. Brinner, “The Struggle for Power in the Mamlūk State: Some Reflections on the Transition from Bahrī to Burjī Rule,” in *Proceedings of the 26th International Congress of Orientalists. New Delhi, 4–10 January 1964* (New Delhi, 1970), 233.

¹⁴ Werner Krebs, “Innen- und Außenpolitik Ägyptens, 741–784/1341–1382” (Ph.D. diss., Universität Hamburg, 1980), 101–2. At about the same time, Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥajjī came to a similar conclusion; see his “Al-Aḥwāl al-Dākhilīyah fī Salṭanat al-Ashraf Sha‘bān ibn Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn: 764–778 H/1362–1376 M,” *‘Ālam al-Fikr* 14, no. 3 (1983): 782–84.

¹⁵ Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 148

¹⁶ Peter M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London, 1986), 127; repeated in idem, “Miṣr,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 7:171; and idem, “Sha‘bān. 2. al-Malik al-Ashraf,” *EI2*, 9:155.



the mamluks, and they were the ones who forced the senior amirs to join them, threatening those who would not unite with them with dire consequences. Following the success of the rebellion, the mamluks insisted that the sultan, al-Ashraf Sha‘bān, hand over to them their defeated master whom they then murdered.¹⁷

From all this, it has to be acknowledged that the analysis of this conflict has not really been furthered much beyond the eyebrow-raising views that were already formulated by the late nineteenth-century orientalist William Muir. In his “The Mameluke or Slave Dynasty of Egypt,” he stated that:

Yelbogha . . . was at first the dominant Emir; but his atrocities so transcended even the barbarous precedents of the age as to arouse the hatred of the people, who rallied to the support of the young sultan when Yelbogha rebelled and would have raised another brother to the throne. The tyrant was defeated, and his head exposed upon a burning torch. His memlukes, however, remained dominant and in their wild excesses had the city at their mercy.¹⁸

Despite a flavor of historical inaccuracy in the latter statement, Muir’s reading of the conflict, implicating the Yalbughāwīyah, has clearly remained the bottom line of scholarly consensus until this day. Moreover, just as Muir implied that “the tyrant” really had it coming, this idea that Yalbughā’s harsh attitude towards his mamluks triggered their actions has remained the prevalent explanation for such a remarkable and radical breaking of the mutually beneficial bonds that tied rank-and-file mamluks to their master. Whereas the passing references to such harshness by Irwin and Holt suggested that, like Muir, they simply considered Yalbughā unfit for the job, Levanoni in 1995 took this moral argument one step further, by linking it to a “remamlukisation” project endeavored by Yalbughā in order to stem the tide of moral laxity in the military ranks, which allegedly had set in during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.¹⁹ Hence, she not only blamed Yalbughā and “his crass atti-

¹⁷ Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn, 1310–1341* (Leiden, 1995), 119–20, also 89. Repeated in her “Rank-and-file Mamluks versus Amirs: New Norms in the Mamluk Military Institution,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge, 1998), 25.

¹⁸ W. Muir, *The Mameluke or Slave Dynasty of Egypt: A History of Egypt from the Fall of the Ayy - bite Dynasty to the Conquest by the Osmanlis, A.D. 1260-1517* (London, 1896; repr. Amsterdam, 1968), 97.

¹⁹ For an earlier passing reference to this “remamlukisation” thesis, see Holt, “Miṣr,” 171. It was also repeated and elaborated by Linda S. Northrup in her “The Bahri Mamlūk Sultanate, 1250–1390,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, Volume 1, Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge, 1998), 286–89. For a critical approach to such a concept of an ideal, normative “mamlūk phenomenon,” as originating in the thirteenth century, see Peter Thorau, “Einige kritische Bemerkungen zum



tude towards [his mamluks], the humiliations they suffered at his hands, and the excessive punishments he meted out,” but also the Yalbughāwīyah, who “had become too reliant on conditions of material permissiveness” and who were characterized by “disloyalty, lack of restraint, and greed.”²⁰

However, in limiting themselves to such dismissive, negative appreciations of this episode and its protagonists—Yalbughā wronged his own mamluks, and they were all rogues and up to no good—all modern studies alike demonstrate first and foremost how deeply embedded they are in the value judgments of near-contemporary historians (and it has been sufficiently demonstrated in recent years how such an approach entails many pitfalls).²¹ Thus, Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406)—who had access to inside information on this as well as subsequent episodes because of his close friendship with the Yalbughāwī Alṭunbughā al-Jūbānī (ca. 1341–89)²²—very succinctly assesses the background of the 1366 revolt as follows:

Yalbughā’s autocracy (*istibdāduhu*) had been lasting long for the sultan, and his cruelty (*waṭ’atuhu*) had been hard to bear for the amirs, for the regime’s employees, and especially for his mamluks. He had been increasing the number of mamluks, disciplining them in an extreme fashion and overstepping all bounds when he beat them with the stick, until their noses were cut off and their ears were severed (*tajāwaza al-ḍarb fihim bi-al-‘aṣā ilā jad‘ al-unūf wa-iṣṭilām al-ādhān*). . . . [That is why] they harbored [feelings of] disloyalty (*al-ghishsh*).²³

sogenannten ‘mamlūk phenomenon,’” in *Die Mamlūke: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur: Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942–1999)*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam (Hamburg, 2003), 367–78.

²⁰ Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*, 88–89, 90, 103.

²¹ See, e.g., Amalia Levanoni, “Al-Maqrīzī’s account of the Transition from Turkish to Circassian Mamluk Sultanate: History in the Service of Faith,” in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950–1800)*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden, 2001), 93–105. On top of that, it can also be convincingly suggested that this pervasive uncritical and negative approach to the 1366 conflict owes an equal amount to the widespread tendency to assess Mamluk political history through a modern, Marxist and/or systems analysis prism, anachronistically applying modern conceptions of class, class consciousness and solidarity, and class struggle to a premodern society (i.e., the mamluk proletariat struggling for their emancipation from their control by the bourgeois amirs!). In this respect, see, for instance, Winslow W. Clifford’s apt and stimulating analysis in his “*Ubi Sumus? Mamluk History and Social Theory*,” *MSR* 1 (1997): 45–62.

²² See Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar wa-Dīwān al-Mubtada’ wa-al-Khabar fī Ayyām al-‘Arab wa-al-‘Ajam wa-al-Barbar wa-man ‘Aṣarahum min Dhawī al-Sulṭān al-Akbar*, ed. N. al-Hārūnī (Cairo, 1867–68), 5:476.

²³ *Ibid.*, 5:456.



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Al-Maqrīzī, a student and well-known admirer of Ibn Khaldūn,²⁴ later repeated this general negative stance, claiming that this Yalbughā character would beat his mamluks with a whip and cut off their tongues.²⁵

However, what has not been picked up so far, and what is very striking in this context, is that all other Mamluk chroniclers that discuss this episode in Mamluk history, including the contemporaries al-Bayrūtī (fl. latter half of the fourteenth century) and Ibn Duqmāq (ca. 1350–1407) refrain from making such value judgments. This “depreciation” of Yalbughā in particular is only present with Ibn Khaldūn (and with al-Maqrīzī after him), who actually justifies in unmistakable fashion the Yalbughāwīyah’s actions against their master. Was this perhaps primarily how surviving Yalbughāwīyah—such as Ibn Khaldūn’s source, Aṭunbughā, or Ibn Khaldūn’s patron, the sultan Barqūq (r. 1382–89, 1390–99)—preferred to remember this black page in their history?

Nevertheless, it would be otiose to doubt that there may well be a kernel of truth in these assertions, that Yalbughā was an unpleasant man to work for, that there was a general feeling of physical maltreatment among Yalbughā’s mamluks, and that the December 1366 revolt had much to do with that. Even so, it remains puzzling that these disgruntled mamluks had chosen to support Yalbughā on several earlier occasions, until just a few months earlier, in February 1366, against his peer Ṭaybughā, who at the time could count on a lot of support among the amirs and also among the commoners.²⁶ Why, or perhaps more appropriately, how did they change their mind and eventually turn against him, in December 1366? Was there more at stake, triggering these harbored feelings of disloyalty to erupt at this specific moment?

In all, this is one episode from a long list in Mamluk history that continues to generate many more questions than those that have been considered so far. Especially from a long-term historical perspective, it becomes increasingly relevant to pursue such questions and start digging beyond today’s surface of Mamluk history. In the present context, for instance, the underlying assumption in modern historiography’s face-value acceptance of Ibn Khaldūn’s views seems to be that for nearly two centuries decline from an initial late thirteenth- and early-fourteenth century point of success was predominant in the sultanate’s history. More precisely, the above perception of the December 1366 conflict as a total breakdown of the “natu-

²⁴ See for instance Robert Irwin, “Al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Khaldūn: Historians of the Unseen,” *MSR* 7, no. 2 (2003): 217–25; Anne F. Broadbridge, “Royal Authority, Justice, and Order in Society: The Influence of Ibn Khaldūn on the Writings of al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī,” *MSR* 7, no. 2 (2003): 231–45.

²⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:130. See also Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, ed. Ibrāhīm ‘Alī Ṭarkhān (Cairo, 1963–72), 11:36.

²⁶ See Van Steenbergen, “The Amir Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī.”



ral” relationship between mamluks and their master turns it into a telling exception to the alleged rule that there was a “Mamluk system” of unconditional loyalty to one’s master (*ustādh*) and to one’s peers (*khushdāsh*) dominating Mamluk politics at large, which had been responsible for the sultanate’s initial successes, but which became increasingly strained thereafter.²⁷ Therefore, the conflict’s perception as the breaking of this crucial taboo and normative code perfectly confirms and illustrates the idea of crisis and of the breakdown of norms and behavior in the quagmire of what must have been a horrible fourteenth century, from which the sultanate would never really manage to escape again, despite any attempts at “remamlukisation.”

But does such a linear, comparative approach really do justice to what actually happened in that fourteenth century, let alone to what happened thereafter? As said, the time has definitely come to start delving beyond such static, judgmental, and negative views of Mamluk history, moving away from a focus on “what went wrong” and towards an appreciation of the many dimensions of Mamluk historical change in their own right. Therefore, in the second part of this article, the December 1366 conflict will be analyzed from one among quite a few possible alternative angles.²⁸ It will be claimed that prosopography, and a more accurate identification of Yalbughā’s opponents and of their relationship with Yalbughā in general, opens up very interesting new perspectives. This will eventually allow for a more positive reading of the causes and consequences of this conflict, moving away from the depressing “Khaldūnian decline paradigm” that has perverted Mamluk studies for far too long now, and towards an understanding in its own right of the process of change and transformation that the Mamluk sultanate clearly was undergoing by the latter half of the fourteenth century, and which was to ensure its continued existence well into the sixteenth century!²⁹

²⁷ On this “Mamluk system,” as the static backbone of the Mamluk political economy, see esp - cially the various pioneering works by David Ayalon (mainly republished in his collected volumes: *The Mamlūk Military Society: Collected Studies* [London, 1979]; *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam: Mamluks, Mongols, and Eunuchs* [London, 1988]; *Islam and the Abode of War* [Aldershot, 1994]; and neatly summarised in Reuven Amitai, “David Ayalon, 1914–1998,” *MSR* 3 [1999]: 1–12). For an updated, more dynamic (in a negative sense, though [see n. 29]) version, see Levanoni, *Turning Point*, esp. 4–27.

²⁸ Inspiration for these angles may (in fact, should) certainly be searched for in concepts, views, and ideas as developed in related fields of pre-modern historical research, such as (among others) in the works of Gerd Althoff (e.g., his *Die Macht der Rituale: Symbolik und Herrschaft im Mittelalter* [Darmstadt, 2003]); Marco Mostert (e.g., *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* [Turnhout, 1999]); and Geoffrey Koziol (e.g., *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* [Ithaca, 1992]).

²⁹ For the identification of a notion of “decline” permeating Levanoni’s *Turning Point*, see the r - view by Winslow W. Clifford in *MSR* 1 (1997): 179–82. For a very stimulating survey of modern Ottoman historiography’s recent move away from its “decline paradigm,” see Donald Quataert, “Ottoman History Writing and Changing Attitudes Towards the Notion of ‘Decline,’” *History Com-*



THE YALBUGHĀWĪYAH: VETERAN AMIRS AND JUNIOR MAMLUKS

If one takes a closer look at the December 1366 conflict, and at Yalbughā's opponents in particular, there certainly are a number of factors that deserve much more attention than they have hitherto been awarded. As far as causes and consequences of the rebellion are concerned, the most important factor seems to be the sliding scale of multiple relationships between Yalbughā and his opponents, revealing how in many modern studies the latter so far have been unjustly reduced to generic terms such as "the Yalbughāwīyah mamluks." Certainly, Yalbughā's mamluks were deeply involved, but not all of them at the same time, nor for the same reasons, nor in similar fashion. There was indeed much more at stake than malcontent mamluks simply breaking up with their master!

VETERAN AMIRS

Continuing his above-mentioned account of the rebellion, Ibn Khaldūn actually explains how one amir's brother fell victim to Yalbughā's notorious temper one day; the brother then enjoined that amir, Asandamur al-Nāṣirī (d. 1368), to conspire with his peers and the sultan against Yalbughā.³⁰ The other extant contemporary accounts, by Ibn Duqmāq and al-Bayrūtī, give more details on this aspect of the rebellion. In almost identical wording, they both claimed that:

it was agreed [to revolt] by the mamluks of Yalbughā who had been promoted amir by him, by their "brothers," and by the leading *ḥalqah* chiefs (*mamālīk Yalbughā alladhīna ammarahum wa-ikhwatuhum wa-ru'ūs al-bāshāt*),³¹ including Aqbughā al-Aḥmadī, known as al-Jalab, Asandamur al-Nāṣirī, Qajmās al-Ṭāzī, Taghrī Birmish al-ʿAlāʾī, Aqbughā Jarkas Amīr Silāḥ, and Qarābughā al-

pass 1 (2003): 1–9. The conceptual and practical parallels with Mamluk historiography, both modern and contemporary, are extremely striking, and call for a similar revision that may "offer a more nuanced view of the [Mamluk] experience, . . . discussing the realities of those experiences rather than [Mamluk] failures to follow particular patterns of change" (ibid., 3); if gradually implemented in Mamluk studies, also in light of a larger perspective offered by comparative and global history, such a revision will undoubtedly be as revealing as in the Ottoman case, where Quataert describes how "the emerging new scholarship is revealing an Ottoman state (society and economy) in the process of continuous transformation, rather than a decline or fall from idealized norms of the past. . . . In this new understanding, the Ottoman state underwent continuous modifications in its domestic policy, an ongoing evolution in which there is no idealized form, since change itself is understood as the norm" (ibid., 4).

³⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 5:356.

³¹ On the latter title, rarely encountered and therefore less well known, see Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī, *Zubdat Kashf al-Mamālīk fī Bayān al-Ṭuruq wa-al-Masālīk*, ed. Paul Ravaisse (Paris, 1894), 116: "every one hundred from a thousand [*ḥalqah* troopers] have a chief (*bāsh*) and a superintendent (*naqīb*)."



Şarhitmishī, as well as those that had allied with them. They geared up [for combat], rode out and attacked their *ustādh*, the honorable *atābak* Yalbughā al-‘Umarī, raiding his encampment [at Giza] and intending to kill him.³²

Al-Maqrīzī, for his part, agreeing on the identity of these six as leaders of the revolt, explains their action further, incorporating these contemporary accounts and at the same time implementing, it would seem, an expanded version of Ibn Khaldūn’s moralizing story line. He claims that the young recruits got fed up with Yalbughā’s harsh treatment of them, whereupon these six amirs went to Yalbughā to plead their case, asking him to relent and to show them some mercy. Thereupon, however, Yalbughā supposedly insulted and threatened these amirs, which ultimately convinced them to attack Yalbughā’s encampment in conjunction with those malcontent mamluks.³³

Whatever the truth of the matter, this “gang” of six Yalbughāwī amirs clearly constituted a major factor in the conflict’s initial phase, and, as it would turn out, they were also to figure prominently among its political and institutional benefi-

³² Quoted from al-Bayrūtī, fol. 2v; also in Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Aydamur ibn Duqmāq, “N - zhat al-Anām fī Tārīkh al-Islām,” Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek Gotha MS Orient A 1572, fol. 2v. In fact, this passage’s version in the latter autograph manuscript, dated 784/1382, shows only three slight but reductive modifications to al-Bayrūtī’s text, as it appears in the Bodleian manuscript from 788/1386: Ibn Duqmāq’s text collapses the phrase (*wa-ru’ūs al-bāshāt minhum*, “by the leading *ḥalqah* chiefs, including . . .”) into a less enigmatic variant (*wa-ru’ūsuhum . . .*, “and their leaders were . . .”) and drops altogether the attributive relative clause (*al-ma’rūf bi-*, “known as”) after the name of Aqbughā al-Aḥmadī, as well as the verb (*labisū*, “they geared up”).

^{An} identical fragment, also with slight modifications (but not as reductive as Ibn Duqmāq’s), is in the fifteenth-century chronicle of Maḥmūd al-‘Aynī, “‘Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān,” Dār al-Kutub MS 1584 *tārīkh*, fol. 144r (in this version, the initial verb is put in the third person feminine singular (*ittafaqat*) instead of the third person masculine plural (*ittafaqū*) in al-Bayrūtī and Ibn Duqmāq; the verb *kabasū* (“they attacked/raided”) is dropped (and not *labisū* as in Ibn Duqmāq); there are minor adjustments to certain names (twice adding al-Khāṣṣakī to Yalbughā’s name, once changing his title from the official form of address (*al-maqarr al-atābakī*, “the honorable *atābak*”) to the more functional (*al-atābak*), and once specifying that “Aqbughā al-Aḥmadī, known as Jalab, [was] *ra’s nawbah* [a mamluks’ chief]”). On the problematic identity of this manuscript in relation to other extant copies of the work of this author, see my discussion with Sami Massoud as reconstructed in his *The Chronicles and Annalistic Sources of the Early Mamluk Circassian Period* (Leiden, 2007), 41–45.

^{An} adjusted, but clearly related version of this passage may be found in the *Jawhar al-Thamīn*, the summary chronicle of Islamic history by the same Ibn Duqmāq, interestingly now denoting these six amirs as chiefs [*bāshātuḥum*] (Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Jawhar al-Thamīn fī Siyar al-Khulafā’ wa-al-Mulūk wa-al-Salāḥīn*, ed. S. ‘A. ‘Āshūr [Mecca, 1982], 415).

^{Finally}, the version of Ibn Taghribirdī is also clearly similar in substance, demonstrating obvious textual traces of a contemporary original (Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:36).

³³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:130–31.



ciaries. The morning after Yalbughā's murder, four amirs—including three out of these six initiators: Aqbughā al-Aḥmadī al-Jalab (d. 1367), Asandamur al-Nāṣirī (d. 1368), and Qajmās al-Ṭāzī (fl. 1360s)³⁴—were even reported to have been “installed as the spokesmen for the untying and tying [of the regime's business], for the giving and taking [of the regime's wealth], and for the appointment and the dismissal [of the regime's functionaries].”³⁵ Soon thereafter, this shift was confirmed institutionally, when these “spokesmen” reshuffled al-Ashraf Sha'bān's entourage of courtiers.³⁶ On the one hand, this re-organization of the court conspicuously benefited a handful of amirs and officials with clear pre-Yalbughā credentials, like Qashtamur al-Manṣūrī (ca. 1310–69), a long-standing veteran of the Qalāwūnid era;³⁷ Aydamur al-Shāmī, a veteran from al-Nāṣir Ḥasan's reign,³⁸ and Muḥammad

³⁴ The fourth amir, Ṭughāytamur al-Nizāmī, a high-ranking member of the political elite for several years, had been siding with Yalbughā for most of the December 1366 conflict, but he had changed camps just in time not to be discredited by Yalbughā's downfall (al-Bayrūtī, fol. 3r–3v; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:74, 75, 134–35); his (brief) leadership after Yalbughā's murder is confirmed from his biography in Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 2:223.

³⁵ See al-Bayrūtī, fol. 4r; al-ʿAynī, “Iqd,” fol. 147. Again in a reductive version in Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 4r (the fourth “odd” amir, Ṭughāytamur al-Nizāmī, is not mentioned, the verb [*istaqarra*, “to install”] is missing, and they were “spokesmen for the untying and tying” only). Clear traces of a contemporary original may again be found in Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:40–41 (including reference to Ṭughāytamur and use of the verb *istaqarra*, “to install”). A different version, but also referring to the three Yalbughāwī amirs, is in al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:137 (“they started managing the affairs of the regime [*akhadhū fī tadbīr umūr al-dawlah*]”).

³⁶ Al-Bayrūtī, fol. 4r–4v; al-ʿAynī, “Iqd,” fol. 147. Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 4r–4v. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:138–39. Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:41. On the classification of Mamluk military offices, see Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 38–41; in this case, the “local” nature of the December 1366 conflict, as well as the fact that power politics—including direct access to and influence with the sultan—was its main issue, is borne out by the fact that this re-organization only involved court offices and high military ranks “in the sultan's vicinity,” leaving the executive offices and the administration of the realm untouched.

³⁷ He was a mamluk of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, promoted to amir by Muḥammad's son and successor al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr (r. 1341), who between 1341 and 1366 performed a host of minor and major executive functions in Egypt and Syria; on 15 December 1366, he was made *ḥājib al-ḥujjāb* (chief chamberlain) (see Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt* [Wiesbaden, 1949–(1999)], 24:246; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 3:249; Abū Bakr ibn Aḥmad Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*, ed. ʿAdnān Darwīsh [Damascus, 1977–1994], 3:353–54; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:138; al-Bayrūtī, fol. 4r; al-ʿAynī, “Iqd,” fol. 147; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 4r; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:41). On the office of *ḥājib al-ḥujjāb*, see the references in Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 40, n. 65.

³⁸ He had been made a high-ranking amir and senior *dawādār* (personal secretary) in the latter half of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan's reign; on 15 December 1366, he was again made a high-ranking amir and senior *dawādār* (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:43, 138; al-Bayrūtī, fol. 4r; al-ʿAynī, “Iqd,” fol. 147; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 4r; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:41). On the office of *dawādār*, see the references in Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 40, n. 65.



ibn Qumārī (d. 1377), whose father had been a leading amir in the 1330s and '40s.³⁹ On the other hand, upon gaining pre-eminence, the new “spokesmen” obviously also made sure to cash in and to include themselves in this round of promotions and new entries into al-Ashraf Sha‘bān’s court. Thus, Qajmās al-Ṭāzī, an amir of forty since March 1366, was appointed *amīr silāh* (“master of weaponry”);⁴⁰ Aqbughā al-Aḥmadī al-Jalab, an amir of one hundred since March 1366, was awarded—according to at least one report—the title and senior status of *amīr kabīr*, “sitting in the audience hall above Asandamur al-Nāṣirī”;⁴¹ and the latter, equally an amir of one hundred since March 1366, at first remained a “spokesman” without an official title, but with court privileges concomitant with his newly acquired status, including, as just mentioned, the right to sit down in the sultan’s presence. Furthermore, still in December 1366, a fourth member from that “gang” of six, the amir Qarābughā al-Ṣarghitmishī, was promoted to the highest rank—a very exceptional feat, as indicated by the explicit contemporary addendum that this happened “from the rank of amir of ten (*min al-‘ashrah*).”⁴² Finally, other new or transferred court

³⁹ Muḥammad, an amir of forty since October 1363, was appointed *amīr shikār* (“master of the hunt”) on 15 December 1366 (see al-Bayrūtī, fol. 4v; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 4r [“*amīr shikār al-sultān*”]; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:138; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:534). On the office of *amīr shikār*, see Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A‘shā fi Ṣinā‘at al-Inshā’* (Cairo, 1913–19), 4:22, 5:461; al-Zāhirī, *Zubdah*, 114, 126. On his father, Qumārī al-Nāṣirī al-Kabīr (d. 1346), see Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *A‘yān al-‘Aṣr wa-A‘wān al-Naṣr*, ed. ‘A. Abū Zayd et al. (Beirut-Damascus, 1998), 4:132–33; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 24:275.

⁴⁰ Al-Bayrūtī, fol. 4v; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 4v; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:117, 138; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:41. On the office of *amīr silāh*, see the references in Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 40–41, n. 66.

⁴¹ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:298; his having been appointed *amīr kabīr* is confirmed from his biography in Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:391. On the position of *amīr kabīr*, see Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 44, with additional references in n. 82.

⁴² Al-Bayrūtī, fol. 4v; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 4v; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:139; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:41 (making this comment even more explicit: “at once from the rank of amir of ten [*daf‘atan wāḥidatan min imrat ‘ashrah*]”); also Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 36–37. As for the two remaining members of the “gang” of six, nothing further is mentioned in any source about the amir Aqbughā Jarkas Amīr Silāh, but Taghrī Birmish al-‘Alā’ī, equally obscure, suddenly pops up once more in the accounts of March 1367, three months after the December 1366 conflict, when this “Taghrī Birmish put on his war gear and rode out; but the amirs rode against him and caught him,” whereupon he was sent off to Alexandria (al-Bayrūtī, fol. 5r; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 5r [now with a longer (!) variant reading, and arguably more correct dating than al-Bayrūtī’s]; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:42 [which is his own enhanced version of the same story, linking this to the preceding arrest of “gang” member Qarābughā al-Ṣarghitmishī]). It seems that the latter three amirs actually served in a more subordinate capacity as the “henchmen” of this “gang,” considering the far less prominent role they were awarded in the conflict’s aftermath, including their very direct, even brutal involvement therein, as with Qarābughā’s bullying of one of Yalbughā’s former civil servants to extract money from him, or with Taghrī Birmish’s supervising the transfer



officers were the amir of one hundred Ṭaydamur al-Bālisī (d. 1377), the amir of forty Asanbughā al-Qawṣūnī (d. 1374), and Qarātamur al-Muḥammadī, an amir of forty, but again only since March 1366.⁴³ In all, this new, variegated composition of the court is certainly indicative of the fact that there were more amirs than just that “gang” of six actively involved in the preceding conflict, as also suggested in the following obituary notice of an amir known as Uzdamur al-‘Izzī (d. 1367), promoted amir of ten by Yalbughā in March 1366: “he belonged to those that agreed to kill Yalbughā, and after his murder, he was given a rank of amir of forty.”⁴⁴ Surely, this allegation similarly applied to more than just a handful of Yalbughāwī amirs for December 1366!

In due course, the amir Asandamur al-Nāṣirī, left without a functional court position on this occasion, also managed to acquire for himself a more formally defined stake in the sultan’s court, for in the accounts for the summer of 1367 he starts appearing in the top office of *atābak al-‘asākir* (commander of the army), formerly executed by Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī.⁴⁵ This, however, had everything to do with the fact that by that summer, the amir Asandamur had succeeded in overcoming and eliminating these former Yalbughāwī associates of his, as well as other peers and contenders for influence and authority. More precisely, two further political conflicts, one in March and one in June 1367, enabled Asandamur to finish off the authority of any other “spokesman” and, indeed, to “acquire the status of his *ustādḥ* Yalbughā, managing the affairs of the regime, issuing the appointments and dismissals of its officials, and living in Yalbughā’s residence at al-Kabsh.”⁴⁶

Clearly, and whatever the motives of each of those who stood up against Yalbughā in December 1366 were, it was amirs who took a leading role in this conflict and benefited most prominently from it afterwards. Moreover, as most sources did not fail to notice, most of these amirs—the “gang” of six in particular—were

of a group of arrested amirs to the prisons of Alexandria (al-Bayrūtī, fol. 4v; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 4v; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:139).

⁴³ Ṭaydamur, an amir of one hundred since 1363 and formerly *amīr silāḥ*, was transferred to the office of *ustādār* (majordomo); Asanbughā, an amir of forty since 1365, was made the sultan’s *lālā* (tutor); Qarātamur was made the sultan’s *khāzindār* (treasurer) (al-Bayrūtī, fol. 4v; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 4v; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:139; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:41). For biographies of these amirs, see Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manḥal*, 7:39; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:456, 525–26. On the offices of *ustādār* and *khāzindār*, see the references in Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 40–41, n. 66.

⁴⁴ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3: 326.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., al-‘Aynī, “‘Iqd,” fol. 150; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:46; idem, *Manḥal*, 2:440.

⁴⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:141. On these conflicts, see Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 161–62, 194.



of conspicuous Yalbughāwī signature; they had Yalbughā's patronage in common, and all "had been promoted amir by him."⁴⁷

Surprisingly, perhaps, the latter rather enigmatic source quotation turns out to be extremely helpful in reconstructing the background of the December 1366 conflict. Indeed, almost every one of the above-mentioned amirs owed his last promotion to Yalbughā and his total re-organization of the regime's elites less than a year before!

At that time, in late February 1366, Yalbughā had managed—as mentioned at the beginning of this article—to remove one of the last remaining obstacles for his absolute pre-eminence, the amir Ṭaybughā al-Ṭawīl. After a violent confrontation outside Cairo between the supporters of both grandees, Ṭaybughā was sent to the prisons of Alexandria. As Ibn Kathīr put it, recounting how this "clash (*waq'ah*) between the amirs in Egypt" was conceived of in contemporary Damascus, "there was an enormous uproar (*khabṭah 'aẓīmah*) in Egypt, during which the *amīr kabīr* Yalbughā managed to keep his strength, support, and backing."⁴⁸ Most importantly in the present context, Yalbughā's supporters were rewarded for their backing. Therefore, in early March 1366, after the arrest of dozens of Ṭaybughā's associates, Yalbughā appointed a host of new court officials, including the amir Ṭaydamur al-Bālisī, and at the same time he promoted two trusted fellows to the rank of amir of one hundred: Aqbughā al-Aḥmadī al-Jalab and Asandamur al-Nāṣirī.⁴⁹ In the case of Aqbughā, this was his very first appearance in the sources, suggesting that he was promoted to the regime's highest ranks from very humble origins, which was later explained as a result of "his belonging to Yalbughā's mamluks and of his having a privileged status with him."⁵⁰ Moreover, the sources describe how a few days later many mamluks and amirs were "all given a robe of honor and dressed with fur hats, upon which all came down from the Dār al-ʿAdl in the citadel [proceeding] to the Maṣūriyah madrasah, in Cairo's Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, where they were made to swear, as is the custom [for the promotion of amirs]."⁵¹ In fact, both al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī list with remarkable and conspicuous detail the names of all amirs who were thus rewarded:

On Monday 9 March 1366, 38 amirs were promoted, among whom [the following were made] amirs of forty: Aqbughā al-Jawharī, Arghūn al-Qashtamurī, Aynabak al-Badrī, ʿAlī al-Sayfī Kashlā (the *wālī* of

⁴⁷ Al-Bayrūtī, fol. 2v; al-ʿAynī, "ʿIqd," fol. 144.

⁴⁸ Ismāʿīl ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* (Beirut, 1990), 14:318–19; detailed accounts in al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:115–16; al-ʿAynī, "ʿIqd," fols. 139–40; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:31; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:274–75.

⁴⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:117.

⁵⁰ See Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:298.

⁵¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:118.



Cairo), Ṭughāy Tamur al-‘Uthmānī, Altunbughā al-‘Izzī, Qajmās al-Sayfī Ṭāz, Arghūn al-‘Izzī Kunuk, Qarātamur al-Muḥammadī, Urūs Bughā al-Khalīlī, Ṭājār min ‘Awaḍ, Quṭlūbughā al-‘Izzī, Aqbughā al-Yūsufī, Altunbughā al-Māridānī, Raṣlān al-Sayfī [Shaykhū] (who was established as *ḥājib* of Alexandria), ‘Alī ibn Qashtamur, Sūdūn al-Quṭluqtamurī, Quṭlūbughā al-Sha‘bānī, Ṭughāy Tamur al-‘Izzī, and Muḥammad al-Tarjumān [al-Turkumānī]. The remainder [were made] amirs of ten; they were: Kakbughā al-Sayfī [Baybughā], Ṭanbak al-Azqī, Arghūn al-Aḥmadī, Arghūn al-Arghūnī, Sūdūn al-Shaykhūnī, Uzdampur al-‘Izzī, Urūs al-Niẓāmī, Yūnus al-‘Umarī, Durtbughā al-Bālisī, Ṭūr Ḥasan, Qarābughā al-Ṣarghitmishī, Ṭāz al-Ḥasanī, Qumārī al-Jamālī, Yūsuf Shāh, Ṭaqbughā al-‘Alā’ī, Fīr ‘Alī, Qurqumās al-Ṣarghitmishī, and Ṭājār al-Muḥammadī.⁵²

Comprehensive lists such as this one, with details one would normally only expect in the regime’s administrative registers, are only rarely encountered in the era’s chronicles.⁵³ In the case of this list, its survival is extremely fortunate, as it offers an unusual but insightful glimpse into the lower strata of the regime’s military hierarchy and its socio-political allegiances. Many of the names mentioned here soon faded back into historiographical oblivion, a token of the distorting top-down view dominating the Mamluk narrative source material.⁵⁴ A handful of amirs, like Aqbughā al-Jawharī (1341–90), Aynabak al-Badrī (d. 1378), ‘Alī ibn Qashtamur (d. 1381), Arghūn al-Aḥmadī (d. 1374), and Sūdūn al-Shaykhūnī (d. 1396) were to surface again as leading characters in the 1370s and beyond, and they are encountered here for the very first time.⁵⁵ Finally, as seen above and similar to their fortunate high-

⁵² *Ibid.*, 3:117–18; also Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:33–34. This round of promotions is also referred to in Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*, 5:455. No contemporary accounts of this conflict and its aftermath have survived, as extant fragments from the detailed chronicles of al-Bayrūtī and Ibn Duqmāq only start with the report for the hijri year 768 (starting in September 1366). Ibn Duqmāq’s summary world history only mentions the arrest of “about twenty amirs,” but not their replacement (Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Jawhar al-Thamīn*, 413).

⁵³ On the administrative registers, large parts of which consisted of the detailed listings of the names of *iqṭā’* holders, i.e., primarily of amirs, see Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* (Cairo, 1931–77), 8:200–13. For other examples of similar extant lists, see below, for the discussion of the June 1367 list and for the reference to later lists (nn. 69, 108).

⁵⁴ No further references in any of the contemporary sources were found to any of the following twelve amirs: ‘Alī al-Sayfī Kashlā, Arghūn al-‘Izzī Kunuk, Raṣlān al-Sayfī, Sūdūn al-Quṭluqtamurī, Ṭughāy Tamur al-‘Izzī, Muḥammad al-Tarjumān, Ṭūr Ḥasan, Qarābughā al-Ṣarghitmishī, Ṭāz al-Ḥasanī, Ṭaqbughā al-‘Alā’ī, Fīr ‘Alī, and Ṭājār al-Muḥammadī.

⁵⁵ Aqbughā would serve as a governor in several Syrian cities in the late 1370s and 1380s (Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:391; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:474–76); Aynabak was party to the rebellion against al-Ashraf Sha‘bān in 1377 and briefly held power shortly thereafter (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:221–



ranking colleagues Ṭaydamur, Aqbughā, and Asandamur, there was a last group, including the fresh amirs of forty, Qajmās al-Ṭāzī and Qarātamur al-Muḥammadī, and the new amirs of ten, Uzdamur al-‘Izzī and Qarābughā al-Ṣarḡhitmishī, whose names were to resurface much more quickly and prominently than anyone at the time might have expected.⁵⁶ Most importantly, it becomes clear from all this that most of those Yalbughāwī amirs who instigated the December 1366 conflict not only shared the fact that they were all promoted thanks to Yalbughā’s patronage, but also that this had only happened very recently, in March 1366.

Moreover, the other rather striking feature common to those amirs who were opposing their patron in December 1366 is that despite such patronage none of them (apart from Yalbughā’s mamluk Aqbughā) really had Yalbughā as his *ustādh* or original mamluk master, and that none of them therefore technically was a true member of the Yalbughāwīyah.⁵⁷ Thus, Asandamur’s mamluk origins lay with an otherwise unknown Qalāwūnid, Mūsā ibn al-Qardamīyah ibn al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, from whom sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan had acquired him, turning him into one of his own mamluks (hence his *nisbah* al-Nāṣirī); only after the latter’s deposition in 1361 had he been added to the mamluks of Yalbughā, who therefore technically was no more than Asandamur’s patron or *makhdūm*, as well as his Nāṣirī peer (*khushdash*), instead of his master or *ustādh*.⁵⁸ Furthermore, as their *nisbahs* suggest, the other aforementioned “gang” members Qajmās al-Ṭāzī and Qarābughā al-Ṣarḡhitmishī originally had been mamluks with the great political rivals of the early 1350s, the amirs Sayf al-Dīn Ṭāz al-Nāṣirī (d. 1362) and Sayf al-Dīn Ṣarḡhitmish al-Nāṣirī (d. 1358) respectively.⁵⁹ Finally, also in the case of most of the other known partici-

24; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:558); ‘Alī was an amir of one hundred and court official between 1377 and 1381 (Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 3:96); the same goes for Arghūn, but from 1368 until 1374 (Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:351), and for Sūdūn, between 1381 and 1394 (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:104–9; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:596–97).

⁵⁶ Apart from Qajmās, Qarātamur, Uzdamur, and Qarābughā, whose whereabouts have been mentioned, there were the amirs Arghūn al-Qashtamurī (d. 1368), who was an amir of one hundred for a few months in 1367 (Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:353–54); Ṭughāy Tamur al-‘Uthmānī (d. 1377), again amir of forty and then court official from 1368 onwards (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:228, 258, 161, 183); Ṭājār min ‘Awaḍ, arrested with Qarātamur al-Manṣūrī in June 1367 (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:143); Kakbughā al-Sayfī, briefly promoted amir of forty and court official in the summer of 1368 (al-Bayrūtī, fol. 40r; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 42v); and Ṭanbak (also referred to as Ṭanaybak) al-Azqī (d. 1369), similarly an amir of forty and court official, between 1368 and 1369 (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:161, 187).

⁵⁷ On the bond between mamluks and their *ustādh* (coined “ustādhīyah”), see Van Steenberg, *Order Out of Chaos*, 88–92; for the classic study on the subject, see David Ayalon, *L’Esclavage du Mamlouk* (Jerusalem, 1951).

⁵⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:386.

⁵⁹ Biographical information on Qajmās and Qarābughā is very obscure, since they were not deemed important enough to be awarded individual entries in any of the era’s biographical dictionaries, or



pating amirs in the December 1366 rebellion and its aftermath, such as Uzdamur al-‘Izzī, Asanbughā al-Qawṣūnī, and Ṭaydamur al-Bālisī, it is attested that they conspicuously shared similarly twisted Yalbughāwī origins.⁶⁰

Interestingly, the same may also be inferred for most of those on the March 1366 list of Yalbughā’s newly promoted amirs. In most cases, specific information on an amir’s origins remains wanting, and linking the various *nisbahs* in that list to those origins, as could be done for Qajmās and Qarābughā, quickly turns into an extremely hazardous exercise.⁶¹ Nevertheless, such great variety already suggests that for the majority, just as for Qajmās and Qarābughā, their entry into Mamluk society has to be situated beyond the confines of Yalbughā’s household, most probably in the secondary households of preceding amirs of lower profile, rank, or status. Nevertheless, for a handful of these amirs, information on their mamluk origins has been preserved, indeed again confirming, as in the case of Uzdamur al-‘Izzī, such a non-Yalbughāwī background. It is more precisely the great households of Yalbughā’s political predecessors from the 1350s that emerge as the cradles of the latter amirs’ careers, most notably those set up by Qalāwūnid magnates like Baybughā Rūs al-Nāṣirī (d. 1353), Shaykhū al-‘Umarī al-Nāṣirī (ca. 1303–57), the aforementioned Ṣarḡhitmish, and, once again, the Qalāwūnid sultan who managed to free himself from those magnates’ reins in the late 1350s, Yalbughā’s own master al-Nāṣir Ḥasan.⁶²

obituaries in any of the era’s chronicles. Their names are therefore all there is to reconstruct some biographical information (on Mamluk *nisbahs* and their uses, see D. Ayalon, “Names, Titles and ‘Nisbas’ of the Mamlūks,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975): 189–232, esp. 213–23).

⁶⁰ Uzdamur’s *ustādh* was the amir Baktamur al-Mu’minī al-Wishāqī (d. 1370) (Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:355); Asanbughā was linked to the mamluk corps of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:456); Ṭaydamur’s precise mamluk origins remain unknown, but the fact that he is said to have been “transferred in the executive offices before he became an amir of one hundred and commander of one thousand in the year 65 (1363)” suggests that his origins similarly lay beyond the Yalbughāwīyah (Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:525)

⁶¹ These many *nisbahs*, derived from either the title (*laqab*) or the proper name (*ism*) of a mamluk’s master (or occasionally of his slave dealer) (see Ayalon, “Names, Titles, and Nisbas,” 213), are: al-Jawharī, al-Qashtamurī, al-Badrī, al-Kashlāwī, al-‘Uthmānī, al-‘Izzī, al-Muḥammadī, al-Khalīlī, al-Yūsufī, al-Quṭlūqtamurī, al-Nizāmī, al-Bālisī, al-Ḥasanī, al-Jamālī, al-Sha‘bānī, al-Azqī, al-Aḥmadī, al-Argḥūnī, and al-‘Alā’ī. They are all either too common or too vague to allow for any positive identification of the masters to whom they were referring.

⁶² Three amirs, Raslān al-Sayfī, Yūnus al-‘Umarī, and Sūdūn al-Shaykhūnī, may be positively linked to the household of Shaykhū al-‘Umarī (al-Bayrūtī, fol. 40v; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:596–97; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:33; idem, *Manhal*, 6:104–9); apart from Qarābughā, Qurqumās’ *nisbah* also unequivocally suggests that he originated in Ṣarḡhitmish’s mamluk corps; Kakbughā al-Sayfī, also referred to as al-Sayfī Baybughā and al-Baybughāwī, originated most probably from among the mamluks of Baybughā Rūs (al-Bayrūtī, fol. 40r; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:161, 223); Alṭunbughā al-Māridānī was said to have been a mamluk of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:417–18); and, finally, the amir Arḡḥūn al-Aḥmadī is suggested to have had a career of some sort predating



Apparently, in the 1360s there was a considerable pool of veteran mamluks available, stemming from a variety of high- and low-profile households that had dominated the preceding decades, but that all had ceased to exist one way or another due to one of the several purges of Qalāwūnid magnates in the 1340s and '50s, or that of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan in 1361.⁶³ While by the 1360s their masters had thus disappeared and their direct access to the regime's resources and to rank and status had therefore been blocked, these mamluks were obviously still around, undoubtedly looking for alternative avenues of subsistence and socio-political participation. In later times, the standard pattern for this would have been their re-employment in a secondary unit of the sultan's mamluks.⁶⁴ In the fourteenth century, however, such a formalized procedure is not yet attested, and considering the ephemeral status of the Qalāwūnid sultans of the 1360s, it is easy to imagine how at that time they ended up in the fresh but rapidly expanding corps of this decade's new magnates, including Yalbughā's, which were only being established in the wake of the ascendance of the latter in the late 1350s and early 1360s.⁶⁵ The fact that the numerical strength of these leaderless mamluks was supposedly still substantial by this time, stemming from regiments numbering from a handful to many hundreds of mamluks,⁶⁶ coupled with their status as "time-tested and battle-tried veterans"—as the sultan Mu'ayyad Shaykh (1412–21) was to explain his employment of similar uprooted mamluks in his service half a century later⁶⁷—undoubtedly led their new masters to welcome them with open arms. They must have seemed extremely useful to these 1360s magnates in compensating for the evident lack of military and political experience in their own relatively fresh mamluk corps. These qualities were then clearly put to good use by these magnates to settle the new scramble for pre-eminence between 1361 and 1366, compensating those veteran mamluks for their support with promotions to military rank and status. Such is clearly borne out by one of the eventual outcomes of that scramble, the aforementioned March 1366 list naming Yalbughā's supporters who were thus compensated. That this prag-

Yalbughā by the statement that "he was transferred [in the services] until Yalbughā appointed him [in 1363] in the sultan's service" (Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:351; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:438). On these Qalāwūnid magnates and their whereabouts in the 1350s, see Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 153–58.

⁶³ See Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 153–58.

⁶⁴ On this fifteenth-century fate of an amir's mamluks after his disappearance from the Mamluk scene, see David Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army, I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15 (1953): 204, 220–22, referring to al-Zāhirī; al-Zāhirī, *Zubdah*, 116.

⁶⁵ See Van Steenbergen, "The Amir Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī."

⁶⁶ See Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 89.

⁶⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:112; quoted here from a paraphrase of this text in Ayalon, "Studies-I," 220.



matic utilization and compensation of veteran mamluks in the 1360s was a general policy, practiced also by patrons other than Yalbughā, may be further derived from the names that were mentioned at that same occasion for the arrested supporters of Yalbughā's opponent Ṭaybughā al-Ṭawīl, which hint at most of these associates' variegated pre-1360s origins. "[Ṭaybughā] was caught, as were his associates among the amirs, including Arghūn al-Is'ardī, Urūs al-Maḥmūdī, Kūkandāy, brother of Ṭaybughā al-Ṭawīl, Jariktamur al-Sayfī Manjak, Arghūn min 'Abd Allāh, Jumaq al-Shaykhūnī, Kilim, brother of Ṭaybughā al-Ṭawīl, Tulak, brother of Baybughā al-Ṣāliḥī, Aqbughā al-'Umarī al-Bālisī, Jirjī ibn Kūkandāy, Uzramuk min Muṣṭafā, and Ṭashtamur al-'Alā'ī."⁶⁸

Even after Yalbughā's removal and the ascent to power of veteran mamluks from his corps in December 1366, this pool continued to prove extremely apposite and appealing to these new patrons, who lacked more than ever the time and means to set up proper corps that could be of any value in the power struggles that immediately ensued. Eventually, as mentioned, by June 1367 the veteran amir Asandamur al-Nāṣirī emerged victorious, and the radical change he once more is reported to have instilled in Egypt's military hierarchy on this occasion—rewarding his supporters—reflects again the similarly variegated and predominantly pre-1360s, non-Yalbughāwī background of the latter:

On 10 June 1367, a robe of honor was bestowed upon the following [newly promoted] amirs *muqaddams alf*: Uzdampur al-'Izzī Abū Daqn, appointed *amīr silāḥ*, Jariktamur al-Sayfī Manjak, appointed *amīr majlis*, Alṭunbughā al-Yalbughāwī, appointed *ra's nawbah kabīr* [and promoted] from the rank of amir of ten (*min al-'ashrah*) [to the rank of *muqaddam alf*], Quṭlūqtamur al-'Alā'ī, [appointed] *amīr jāndār*, Sulṭān [Shāh] ibn Qārā, [appointed] *ḥājib thānī*, Bayram al-'Izzī, [appointed] *dawādār* [and promoted to the rank of] *muqaddam alf* from the rank and file (*min al-jundīyah*), and he was granted the *iqṭā'* of Ṭughāytamur al-Nizāmī, as well as all the horses, textiles, mamluks, money, grain, etc., that had been the latter's. The following were made members of the sultan's *jūkāndārīyah* ("masters of the polo mallet"): Qarāmish al-Ṣarḥitmishī, Mubārak al-Ṭāzī, and Īnāl al-Yūsufī. Tulaktamur al-Muḥammadī was confirmed as *khāzindār*, as usual, and Bahādur al-Jamālī was made *shādd al-*

⁶⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:31; also listed with slight variations in al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:116–17. For most of these twelve amirs, any further prosopographical information again remains wanting; only the pre-1366 whereabouts of Urūs (d. 1373) and Jariktamur (d. 1375) are known, originating indeed in the corps of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan and of the long-standing amir Manjak al-Yūsufī (ca. 1315–75), respectively (Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:438, 490); additionally, it may be safely assumed that Jumaq's *nisbah* indicates that he stemmed from the household of the amir Shaykhū (d. 1357).



dawāwīn, instead of Khalīl ibn ‘Arrām. Khalīl ibn Qawṣūn was offered the rank of *muqaddam alf*, and Qunuq al-‘Izzī and Arghūn al-Qashtamurī were [also] granted the rank of *muqaddam alf*. . . . Muḥammad ibn Ṭayṭaq al-‘Alā’ī, servant of Asandamur al-Nāṣirī, was granted a rank of *muqaddam alf*. The following were promoted to the rank of amir of forty by the sultan: Arghūn al-Muḥammadī al-Ānūkī al-Khāzin, Buzlār al-‘Umarī, Arghūn al-Arghūnī, Muḥammad ibn Ṭaqbughā al-Mājārī, Bākīsh al-Sayfī Yalbughā, Sūdūn al-Sayfī Shaykhū, Aqbughā Aṣ al-Shaykhūnī, Kubak al-Ṣarghitmishī, Julbān al-Sa‘dī, Īnāl al-Yūsufī, Kumushbughā al-Ṭāzī, Qumārī al-Jamālī, Baktamur al-‘Alamī, Arslān Khujā, Mubārak al-Ṭāzī, Maliktamur al-Kashlāwī, Asanbughā al-‘Izzī, Quṭlūbughā al-Ḥalabī, and Ma’mūr al-Qalamṭāwī. [The following were promoted to] the rank of amir of ten: Alṭunbughā al-Maḥmūdī, Qarābughā al-Aḥmadī, Kizil al-Arghūnī, Ḥājji Bak ibn Shādī, ‘Alī ibn Baktāsh, Rajab ibn Khidr, and Ṭayṭaq al-Rammāh.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Al-Bayrūtī, fols. 5v–6. With only slight variation, indicating again an obvious textual interdependence, in Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fols. 5v–6. Very similar listings are also found in al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:144–45; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:44–45. Also present in al-‘Aynī, “‘Iqd,” fol. 149, but in a summary format (referring only to the first three high-ranking amirs and their new positions). On the court offices of *amīr silāh*, *ra’s nawbah kabīr*, *amīr jāndār*, and *khāzindār*, see the references in Van Steenberg, *Order Out of Chaos*, 40–41, nn. 65 and 66; on the secondary court positions of *ḥājib thānī*, *shādd al-dawāwīn*, and *jūkāndār*, see al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A’shā*, 4:22, 5:458; al-Zāhirī, *Zubdah*, 114–15.

This June 1367 list indeed looks very similar to the March 1366 list as far as the diverse, pre-1360s background of the majority of these amirs is concerned. Both lists have many different pre-1360 *nisbahs* in common (besides the most conspicuous and suggestive *nisbahs* al-Ṣarghitmishī, al-Ṭāzī, and al-Shaykhūnī, these are al-Qashtamurī, al-Kashlāwī, al-‘Izzī, al-Muḥammadī, al-Jamālī, al-Aḥmadī, al-Arghūnī, and al-‘Alā’ī); they moreover also share the amirs Uzdampur al-‘Izzī, Arghūn al-Arghūnī, Sūdūn al-Shaykhūnī, Qumārī al-Jamālī, and Jariktamur al-Sayfī Manjak, whose veteran status has been discussed before. Apart from all this, the origins for six more amirs on this list can moreover be positively located in preceding, vanished households; they are Bayram al-‘Izzī (a former mamluk of the amir ‘Izz al-Dīn Tuqtay al-Nāṣirī [1319–58] who was now not just granted a high rank, but also the household means to perform that rank’s demands [see Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:514; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:327]), Mubārak al-Ṭāzī (as his *nisbah* indicates, he stemmed from the household of the aforementioned Qalāwūnid magnate Ṭāz al-Nāṣirī [see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-Ghumr bi-Abnā’ al-‘Umr fī Tārīkh*, ed. M. ‘Abd al-Mu‘īd Khān (Beirut, 1986), 1:287], Bahādur al-Jamālī (whose mamluk origins went back to the household of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn [Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:496]), Khalīl ibn Qawṣūn (son of the illustrious Qawṣūn al-Nāṣirī [d. 1342], who made a career in the reign of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan [Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 5:280]), Arghūn al-Muḥammadī al-Ānūkī (as his *nisbah* indicates, he had been a mamluk of Ānūk ibn Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn [d. 1340] [Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:489]), and Buzlār al-‘Umarī (a former mamluk of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan [Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:476; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:361]). In all, this list of 39 beneficiaries of the June 1367 round of promotions still only mentions



Nevertheless, the employment of veteran mamluks also entailed some serious disadvantages. As suggested by Ibn Taghrībirdī on a similar, but much later situation, “they are as nothing, for they generally follow the majority; none of them is tied to any particular ruler, but they serve whoever happens to ascend the throne much in the manner of the popular dictum: ‘Whosoever marries my mother, to him I cry: ‘O my father.’”⁷⁰

The pragmatic, opportunist, and second-hand nature of the ties that bound most of these veteran mamluks and amirs to their new households seriously conditioned their loyalty to their patrons. Most importantly, new opportunities and a change of fortune were bound to affect those ties. Thus, one might speculate, there was little to prevent some from trying their luck against Yalbughā in December 1366, when differences of opinion on the treatment of his mamluks were emerging and an opportunity arose near Giza to attack him by surprise. Certainly, most amirs at first decided to join forces with Yalbughā to quell a rebellion that only a handful of them had started anyway and that seemed too remote and isolated to succeed. There even were a handful of rebellious amirs who regretted their initial actions against Yalbughā and who still managed to cross over to Cairo, including “some of his mamluks whom he had made amir, like Aqbughā al-Jawharī, Kumushbughā, and Yalbughā Shuqayr.”⁷¹ But when the rebels managed to involve the sultan and, quite unexpectedly, to return to the citadel with him and turn the conflict’s tide, there similarly was little to prevent the great majority of amirs from changing sides, so that sources observed how eventually: “Yalbughā’s associates slipped away, batch after batch, and Yalbughā was forced to flee. . . . He mounted his horse and left for his residence at al-Kabsh . . . while the common people were making fun of him and were calling him names, all the way until he reached his residence.”⁷²

four genuine members of the Yalbughāwīyah (Alṭunbughā al-Yalbughāwī, Īnāl al-Yūsufī, Bākīsh al-Sayfī Yalbughā, and Ma’mūr al-Qalamṭāwī [on their unambiguous Yalbughāwī origins, see Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:70, 190; idem, *Nujūm*, 12:122; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:362, 3:327; Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi’* (Beirut, 1992), 2:320]).

⁷⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Extracts from Abū ‘l-Maḥāsīn ibn Taghrī Birdī’s Chronicle Entitled Ḥawādith ad-Duhūr fī Madā ‘l-Ayyām wash-Shuhūr*, ed. William Popper, University of California Publications in Semitic Philology, vol. 8 (Berkeley, 1930–42), 3:443; translation quoted from Ayalon, “Studies–I,” 220.

⁷¹ See al-Bayrūtī, fol. 3r; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 3r; al-‘Aynī, “‘Iqd,” fol. 145. Aqbughā was a member of the Yalbughāwīyah (see Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:474), as Kumushbughā was also said to have been, though his mamluk origins really lay elsewhere (see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 6:230 “the son of the lord of Ḥamāh had bought him when he was a young boy; he raised him and then presented him to al-Nāṣir Ḥasan; after Ḥasan’s murder Yalbughā al-‘Umārī took him and made him a *ra’s nawbah* with him”). No further information has survived on Yalbughā Shuqayr.

⁷² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:135–36. Variant reading in al-Bayrūtī, fol. 3v; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 3v.



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While a composite group of freshly promoted veterans clearly took the lead in the December 1366 rebellion and its aftermath, this surely does not invalidate the assertion most commonly found, namely that it was Yalbughā's non-promoted mamluks who stood up against their master. Most importantly, all source descriptions of the conflict agree that it was mamluks who bore the brunt of the action, including Yalbughā's eventual lynching; as suggested above, Yalbughā's harsh disciplining undoubtedly convinced many of them to go along with those bold and defiant amirs and act against their master.

But as with the amirs above, and even more so in this context of Yalbughā's numerous mamluks, the question that remains to be answered is whether such an unusually insubordinate attitude was similarly adopted by all of them at the same time, for similar reasons, or in similar fashion. In fact, a detailed analysis of the sources' representations of the role those mamluks really played in the December 1366 conflict and its aftermath adds a number of significant nuances to the overall picture.

After Yalbughā had barely escaped the amirs' attack while he was encamped at Giza, al-Maqrīzī details the reaction of his mamluks in particular as follows:

When they learned about Yalbughā's escape, they announced that "whoever wants his *makhdūm* Yalbughā should follow him, and who wants the sultan should stay with us." So a group (*tā'ifah*) followed Yalbughā, while most of them remained behind. The latter then hastened towards those who had defected from them and they overcame and enchained them, dividing everything they had brought with them among themselves.⁷³

Clearly, not all of Yalbughā's mamluks had been equally ill-disposed towards their master at the start of the conflict, at least according to the later historian al-Maqrīzī. Furthermore, this author suggested in a similar vein that thereafter "a group of his intimates" (*naḡar min khāṣṣatihi*) escaped to Cairo with him and that he then managed to rally "amirs and rank-and-file soldiers" (*min al-umarā' wa-al-ajnād*) around him in Cairo, spending the night with this "troop of his" (*bi-jam'ihī*) in his residence at al-Kabsh.⁷⁴

Suggestions like these, that at least some of Yalbughā's mamluks maintained their loyalty, certainly gain credibility when Yalbughā's manifest and impressive resilience in the hours and days following the outbreak of the conflict—includ-

⁷³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:132.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:131, 132. Very tellingly, Ibn Taghribirdī explains the enigmatic "a group of his intimates" by clarifying that they were "his intimates from among his mamluks" (Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:36).



ing the enthronement of a new sultan—is taken into consideration. In the volatile Mamluk political climate of this era, where a “shortage of men” was considered “the worst possible merchandise” (*qillat al-rijāl akhass biḍā‘ah*),⁷⁵ this would have been extremely difficult for anyone to effect without any numerically persuasive support from one’s own mamluk regiment.

Finally, the same consideration similarly lends validity and weight to al-Maqrīzī’s detailed representation of the conflict’s final hours on Saturday 12 December 1366. Whereas, as referred to above, most sources flatly claim that Yalbughā’s end was drawing nigh when all the amirs fled his party and “there was no one left with him,”⁷⁶ al-Maqrīzī adds that also “his mamluks fled one after the other (*farra mamālīkuhu shay’an ba‘da shay’in*)” and that in spite of this “a mere hundred horsemen yet remained with him (*wa-lam yabqa ma‘ahu illā dūna al-mī‘ah fāris*)” until he got arrested.⁷⁷

It may therefore be convincingly argued that in December 1366 Yalbughā was not just opposed by, amongst others, mamluks who all identified themselves as members of his Yalbughāwīyah, but that at the same time a substantial number of the rank and file maintained their loyalty, and that the latter group undoubtedly equally included such Yalbughāwīyah. Only in the course of the four days that this conflict lasted, therefore, and in particular when al-Ashraf Sha‘bān decided to join the rebels’ cause and managed to return to Cairo, did Yalbughā’s chances to emerge victorious evaporate and did most of his supporters from the Yalbughāwīyah leave him, as did the amirs, deciding the conflict to the detriment of their patron.

Unlike those promoted veterans, however, Yalbughā’s non-promoted mamluks did not benefit at all from the conflict’s outcome, whatever their initial stand. Actually, the precipitate fall of their patron may have done them more harm than good, for with his decapitation, they may have solved the alleged problem of their maltreatment, but at the same time a new, much bigger problem appeared. Since Yalbughā, as their employer, had been the guardian of their access to income and further resources, their killing of him, almost in a moment of insanity, had in fact deprived them of legitimate leadership, social status, and secure income. They, as it were, had severed the links that had embedded them within Mamluk society and that had offered them warrants for their own future. There is a hint at a new round of promotions a few weeks after Yalbughā’s death, when al-Maqrīzī, just as in March 1366, describes how “on Thursday 21 January 1367, the group of amirs came down from the citadel [proceeding] to the Manṣūrīyah madrasah, where they were made

⁷⁵ Shams al-Dīn al-Shujā‘ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-Awlādihi*, ed. B. Schäfer (Wiesbaden, 1977), 1:173; Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 91.

⁷⁶ Al-Bayrūtī, fol. 3v; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 3v; al-‘Aynī, “‘Iqd,” fol. 146; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:39.

⁷⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:135, 136.



to swear and [where] they were dressed with the fur hats, as is the custom [for the promotion of amirs].”⁷⁸ Unfortunately, in this case no names are mentioned. Yet, considering the aforementioned pattern of promotions on similar occasions, as well as the corps’ subsequent history, only a handful of Yalbughā’s mamluks, if any at all, may have benefited from this round.

In the months after December 1366, therefore, the majority of Yalbughā’s non-promoted mamluks were forced to try to find ways to overcome a certain destiny on the edge of Mamluk society, either spreading terror in Cairo’s streets and looting what they could no longer legitimately acquire, or seeking new employment and hiring their services out to new patrons, hoping for suitable rewards.⁷⁹ Thus, to mention but one example, immediately after the conflict, on 16 December 1366, one close companion of Yalbughā, the amir Aynabak al-Badrī, avoided being arrested and obtained rehabilitation, not just by “sending a lot of money to the amirs,” but also by “offering to every one of [Yalbughā’s] mamluks 1000 silver dirhams, which at that time was equivalent to more than 50 *mithqāl* in gold,” as a token of their aggressive, fearful reputation in those days, but also of the opportunities their precarious position offered.⁸⁰

Eventually, the one who according to all sources best managed to make use of those opportunities was the aforementioned veteran Asandamur al-Nāṣirī, who succeeded more than any of his peers in portraying himself as a credible substitute for the Yalbughāwīyah mamluks’ murdered *ustādh* and patron. Hence, by early June 1367, when this evolution of re-grouping and re-employment came full circle, Yalbughā’s mamluks are all presented as playing a key role in Asandamur’s aforementioned ousting of his veteran peers.⁸¹

Now, it has already been established that an important part within those Yalbughāwīyah ranks was reserved for mamluks of veteran status, who either gained rank and status in the course of the years 1366 and 1367, or were forced once again to seek new employment after December 1366, in both cases surely losing their Yalbughāwī-status for reasons of irrelevance. What is very interesting in the same context, however, is that source reports for what happened after the December 1366 rebellion hint with increasing explicitness at a crucial common identifying feature for those Yalbughāwīyah who continued to be labeled as

⁷⁸ Ibid., 3:140.

⁷⁹ For ample source references to their violent engagements in Cairo in the course of 1367, see al-Bayrūtī, fols. 5r–v, 37r–38r, 42; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fols. 5r–v, 40r–41r; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*, 5:457, 458, 461–62; al-‘Aynī, “‘Iqd,” fols. 148–49, 152–54; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:141, 142–43, 150–51, 153–54; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:295, 296, 309–11, 326, 327; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:42–44, 47–49, 103.

⁸⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:139.

⁸¹ See al-Bayrūtī, fol. 5r–v; Ibn Duqmāq, “Nuzhat al-Anām,” fol. 5r–v; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*, 5:457; al-‘Aynī, “‘Iqd,” fols. 148–49; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:142–43; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:42.



such, even after their *ustādh*'s demise. In his account of the December 1366 rebellion, al-Maqrīzī, in fact, already defined the rebellious mamluks very precisely as Yalbughā's "*ajlāb* mamluks (*mamālīkuhu al-ajlāb*)," even clarifying at one point that their number had been no less than 1,800.⁸² To my knowledge, this is in fact the very first time the sources generically apply the term "*ajlāb*," which is well known from fifteenth-century Mamluk history to denote a royal corps' last import of mamluks, but quite unusual for preceding periods. Al-Maqrīzī, however, is the only one among the chroniclers to use the term in the context of this December 1366 rebellion, which suggests that it may well be an anachronism from the first half of the fifteenth century, when this historian was writing his chronicle and when use of the term, especially in the context of multifarious local problems with the sultan's junior mamluks, indeed became ubiquitous in the era's historiography.⁸³

Nevertheless, also in his description of Yalbughā's mamluks' continued search for alternative patronage after December 1366, al-Maqrīzī persists in frequently applying the term "*ajlāb*."⁸⁴ Moreover, from the accounts on early June 1367 onwards, when this search ended in Asandamur's employing these mamluks' services to impose his authority, the term "*ajlāb*" gradually comes to be used by all sources alike. At first, in the course of those June 1367 actions of Asandamur against his peers, the contemporaries al-Bayrūtī and Ibn Duqmāq, and Ibn Taghrībirdī with them, still used the common denominator "Yalbughā's malicious mamluks (*mamālīk Yalbughā al-ashrār*)" for those whom al-Maqrīzī grouped in the same context under the term "*ajlāb*."⁸⁵ After that point in the sources' historical chronologies, however, "*ajlāb*" seems the appropriate term, applied by all sources alike to denote Asandamur's new rank-and-file supporters who continued to prove extremely difficult to control.⁸⁶ Even Ibn al-Furāt (1134/5–1405), for instance, mentions how eventually "al-Ashraf Sha'bān was victorious over the '*ajlāb*' mamluks of the amir Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī (*al-ajlāb mamālīk al-amīr Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī*)

⁸² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:130, 139.

⁸³ See Ayalon, "Studies–I," 204, 206–13 (207: "In the Circassian period, a new name for the mamluks of the ruling sultan appears which becomes more frequent than *mushtarawāt*, without displacing it entirely, viz. *ajlāb*, or *julbān*, sing. *jalabī* or *jalab*"); Amalia Levanoni, "The Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26 (1994): 386–87; Jean-Claude Garcin, "The Regime of the Circassian Mamluks," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, Volume 1, Islamic Egypt, 640–1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge, 1998), 295, 300–2, 309–10; Amalia Levanoni, "The Sultan's *Laqab*: A Sign of a New Order in Mamluk Factionalism," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden, 2004), 79–116.

⁸⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:141, 142, 150, 152, 153–55.

⁸⁵ Al-Bayrūtī, fol. 5r; Ibn Duqmāq, "Nuzhat al-Anām," fol. 5r; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:42.

⁸⁶ Al-Bayrūtī, fol. 40r; Ibn Duqmāq, "Nuzhat al-Anām," fol. 40r; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-Ibar*, 5:457, 458, 472; al-ʿAynī, "Iqd," fol. 152; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:47.



and arrested the amir Asandamur al-Nāṣirī.”⁸⁷ Another contemporary, al-Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānī (d. 1372), also used this term in a similarly telling way in his passing reference to these events of late 1367: “the common people had come to the aid of the sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Sha‘bān during the operation of the *ajlāb* mamluks (*fi ḥarakat al-mamālīk al-ajlāb*) . . . , when they intended to cause trouble for the sultan, in conjunction with the amir Asandamur al-Khāṣṣakī. . . . But the common people were mobilized, killing the *ajlāb* and making them bite the dust.”⁸⁸

In a very curious and puzzling addendum, the same author even explains such disturbing events by claiming that upon examination of these defeated “*ajlāb*,” it turned out that “they had their foreskins intact and were not circumcised (*wa-hum ghulf bi-ghayr khitān*), by which it became known that they were Christians who kept away from the true faith (*naṣārā ba‘īdūn ‘an al-īmān*).”⁸⁹

It has been convincingly argued that one should be very wary of treating al-Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānī and his literary compendium as a historical source, for its key event of the Alexandrian crusade as much as for any other contemporary occurrence.⁹⁰ This “islamicized” and at once also surprising explanation for the turmoil of the year 1367 certainly warrants this kind of historiographical wariness. At the same time, however, it is doubtful that such an explanation has no bearing whatsoever on the historical reality of the late 1360s, during which its author was living and writing; it should certainly not be denied that in essence it represents in one way or another a version of the story of these “*ajlāb*” as it was being told and retold in contemporary Alexandria.⁹¹ At the very least, al-Nuwayrī’s remark hints at the extremely negative perception of these “*ajlāb*” by contemporaries by the time he was writing up his work.⁹² Furthermore, in conjunction with the other contem-

⁸⁷ Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, ed. Quṣṭantīn Zurayq and Najlā ‘Izz al-Dīn (Beirut, 1936–42), 9:319.

⁸⁸ Al-Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānī, *Kitāb al-Ilmām*, 6:18.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Weintritt, *Formen spätmittelalterlichen islamischer Geschichtsdarstellung*.

⁹¹ Furthermore, in the context of literary *topoi*, there seems to exist an intriguing degree of similarity between this contemporary assessment of the “*ajlāb*” as Christians and reports by European travelers to the Mamluk sultanate that portray all mamluks as Christian renegades (cf. Ulrich Haarmann, “The Mamluk System of Rule in the Eyes of Western Travellers,” *MSR* 5 (2001): esp. 6–16).

⁹² Quite intriguingly, Robert Irwin, in his article “Mamluk Literature” (*MSR* 7, no. 1 [2003]: 12), stated that the term *ajlāb*, or rather its variant *julbān*, already occurred earlier, during the reign of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan, in the context of which it would have been used by the “jack-of-all-literary-trades” Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Abī Ḥajalah (1325–75) in his “account of the revolt of the *julbān* (newly imported mamluks) against that sultan.” Closer inspection, however, reveals that this account, ominously entitled “Dawr al-Zamān fi Ṭaḥn al-Julbān,” does not concern the reign of that sultan, but indeed, as would be expected from the argument presented here, it deals with Yalbughā’s junior mamluks and their disturbing behavior in the timeframe between December 1366 and October 1367. In fact, this brief account as preserved in its Dār al-Kutub manuscript (5664 Adab)—contained in 9 folia, only



porary and later authors' common use of "*ajlāb*" in their accounts of the events of the summer and autumn of 1367, there can be no doubt that there was at the time a distinctive body at work in Cairo that was identifiable by a generic term that explicitly linked them to Yalbughā's leaderless junior mamluks and to the December 1366 rebellion and its chaotic aftermath.

In general, it should come as no surprise that the 1360s not only provided contenders for power with a recruitment pool of ready-made veteran mamluks of various stock, but also with sufficient opportunities to acquire the usual junior rank-and-file recruits, firmly tied to their own *ustādh*'s patronage only.⁹³ However, as far as Yalbughā is concerned, this traditional building block of a magnate's mamluk household was expanded to a giant scale, reaching massive dimensions of, allegedly, 1,500 to 1,800 juniors.⁹⁴ Numerically, therefore, his personal corps of mamluks, including veterans as well as these *ajlāb*, surely outdid those of any of his contemporaries, with the later historian Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah claiming that "one of [the contemporary historians⁹⁵] stated that it was said that he had three thousand mamluks."⁹⁶ In fact, this more than anything else is what Yalbughā continued to be remembered for long after his death, so that eventually Ghars al-Dīn al-Zāhirī (d. 1468), in his administrative manual, considered it still apposite to include a reference to Yalbughā's corps rather than to any other historical number of mamluks, claiming that Yalbughā even had had "3,500 mamluks in his service, one of them being al-Malik al-Zāhir Barqūq who was still a junior (*ṣaghīran*) at the time."⁹⁷

This quote reminds us once more of the fact that by 1366 these Yalbughāwīyah ranks were still made up in large part of juniors like Barqūq. In view of this junior status, not yet having completed their training, most of his corps surely was still

5 of which were actually used for this text—was according to the colophon written down by one 'Umar al-Dumyātī al-Shāfi'ī in 1465–66 (870 AH) and annotated by a Muḥammad ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Ḥamawī on Sunday 17 July 1611, and it was therefore only indirectly a text by Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, as suggested in the beginning of the text ("the high-minded *shaykh*, the *imām* Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Abī Ḥajalah said . . .). Most importantly in the present context, in its berating, even vituperative anti-"*ajlāb*" language, this short treatise in rhymed prose by an author who, like al-Nuwayrī, died before these juniors' partial rehabilitation in the second half of the 1370s, clearly also presents the same extremely negative perception of them as was still in vogue at the time.

⁹³ On the links between junior mamluks and their *ustādh*, see Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 88–92; for the classic study on the subject, see Ayalon, *L'Esclavage du Mamlouk*, esp. 27–29.

⁹⁴ Al-Bayrūtī, fol. 37v; Ibn Duqmāq, "Nuzhat al-Anām," fol. 37v; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:151 (1500), 139 (1800).

⁹⁵ This may well refer to Ibn al-Furāt (d. 1405), whose chronicle for these years is lost, but who was a well-attested source for Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah (see David Reisman, "A Holograph MS of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah's '*Dhayl*,'" *MSR* 2 (1998): esp. 29–42.)

⁹⁶ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:306.

⁹⁷ Al-Zāhirī, *Zubdah*, 113, also repeated on 148.



more of a liability than an asset to Yalbughā, despite its numerical strength. Hence his and his colleagues' pragmatic employment of veterans in the same ranks, as detailed above. In fact, the questionable political and military usefulness of the junior mamluks that made up those ranks may be further inferred from the fact that many seem to have been acquired only shortly before 1366. Thus, according to one biographical note, Barqūq was only imported and bought from a slave merchant in the course of the year 1363.⁹⁸ Indeed, the generic term “*ajlāb*” (recent imports) by which Barqūq and the many hundreds of his cohorts eventually became known in the streets of Cairo and beyond suggests that his was not a unique case.

At the same time, however, Barqūq and the other “*ajlāb*” whose biographies have survived (such as Ibn Khaldūn's eyes and ears, Alṭunbughā al-Jūbānī, or the patron of today's famous Khān al-Khalīlī in Cairo, Jarkas al-Khalīlī) were surprisingly older than one would expect of junior mamluks like this, as they were all said to have been born around the year 1340 and were therefore already in their twenties when they became mamluks.⁹⁹ In view of the career of their *ustādh* Yalbughā and his quickly rising political star, especially after the murder of Sultan Ḥasan in 1361, it can be quite convincingly suggested that it must have been for reasons of impatient ambition, peer rivalry, and concomitant time pressures that Yalbughā acquired his own mamluks at such an advanced age, attempting to transform them into a useful army in the shortest time possible by subjecting these novices to spartan training methods and relentless discipline. Undoubtedly, Yalbughā's intentions and his *ajlāb*'s training were cut short by the December 1366 conflict. This policy's partial success would nevertheless show again when the survivors among these “*ajlāb*,” including Barqūq, were allowed to return to Cairo in 1373 “to train [al-Ashraf Sha‘bān's] mamluks.”¹⁰⁰

Overall, however, by 1366 their training and experience were still deemed insufficient, despite their numerical usefulness for Yalbughā's political muscle. When therefore support and loyalty had to be rewarded and ranks redistributed in the course of Yalbughā's struggle for pre-eminence, as in March 1366, it was in general not these junior Yalbughāwīyah who benefited. As detailed above, in view of their expertise of considerable years, their more veteran status, and perhaps also their much more artificial household membership, it was Yalbughā's veteran mamluks who were almost automatically preferred for promotion. Only in a very few cases did juniors manage to break into the military ranks, but these are exceptions that rather seem to confirm the general rule. As mentioned before, Aqbughā al-

⁹⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:223.

⁹⁹ See, for references to their age, al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:476; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:120; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:308. On the issue of a mamluk's age, see Ayalon, *L'Esclavage du Mamlouk*, 13–14.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, 5:462.



Aḥmadī (quite tellingly nicknamed “*al-jalab*”), for instance, was made an amir of one hundred in March 1366, but this seems primarily to have been the result of “his having a privileged status with Yalbughā.”¹⁰¹

When this factor of numerous very junior Yalbughāwīyah mamluks is taken into consideration for the December 1366 conflict and its background, it becomes clear that dissatisfaction with their harsh training played an important role in inducing these “*ajlāb*” to take part in it. Moreover, a role was surely also played by the *ajlāb*’s frustrations with what those veterans in their corps were already achieving while, despite their mature age, most of the *ajlāb* were still reckoned too junior for such advancement.¹⁰²

All in all, however, whatever the role of such *ajlāb* frustrations, it seems that all sorts of practicalities, including even the Nile, were surely as much of a decisive factor in the course the conflict took for the Yalbughāwīyah as Yalbughā’s relentless and selective patronage may have been. First of all, considering that Yalbughā had only gone to Giza in December 1366 for a hunting party, it is highly unlikely that his entire corps of mamluks crossed the Nile with him, especially in view of its infamously giant size. Obviously, sufficient numbers had been left in or near his residence at al-Kabsh to prove extremely useful when, after the failed attempt against his life, he hastily returned with only a handful of his intimates. Secondly, changing camps was not made easy for those Yalbughāwīyah mamluks who had been left near Giza, considering Yalbughā’s instant blockade of the Nile; as mentioned earlier, some amirs and “mamluks he had promoted” still did manage to cross and switch back to Yalbughā’s side on Friday, but most who tried failed and, as stated by al-Maqrīzī, fell into the hands of their rebellious peers.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ See Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:298.

¹⁰² In this context, it is worthwhile to compare the case of, for instance, the amir Uljībughā al-Muẓaffarī al-Khāṣṣakī, who was said to have been only nineteen when he died in 1349, and who despite that young age already had been a leading amir in Cairo and a governor of the province of Tripoli (al-Ṣafādī, *A’yān*, 1:594–98; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:216 [“his moustache had not yet come out”]); a less extreme, more mainstream, and equally interesting example concerns that of the amir Maliktamur al-Ḥijāzī (d. 1347), who was already mentioned as an amir in Cairo in 1333 (see Mūsā ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyá al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāzīr fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, ed. A. Ḥuṭayṭ [Beirut, 1986], 179), that is, when he was in his early twenties, as suggested by paleopathological investigations of his remains in his burial crypt in Cairo (“These bones belong to the male of massive morphological structure in good state of health, most probably of the White Variety, 173 cm tall. His age at death was 35–40 years.” [Tadeusz Dzierzykraj-Rogalski, Jerzy Kania, and Medhat al-Minabbawi, “The investigations of burial crypts in the mausoleum of princess Tatar al-Ḥijāziyya in Cairo,” *Annales Islamologiques* 23 (1987): 83–84]). That these examples date back to two or three decades from the situation of the “*ajlāb*” is, in fact, revealing for the profound changes that are occurring (see below).

¹⁰³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:132.



In all this, however, fear of Yalbughā's retaliation rather than any type of maltreatment seems to have been the driving force behind these and most other actions of the mamluks who tried to return to Yalbughā. Anxieties about their treatment may have easily tricked many of the Yalbughāwīyah-mamluks in Giza into their promoted veteran colleagues' scheme, but when this failed and Yalbughā escaped, leaving them cut off from the center of power on the Nile's "wrong" side, the following painful observation by one later historian may indeed have guided their further actions: "When they realized that their *ustādh* had saved himself and [that] he had fled, they became extremely worried (*ishtadda takhawwufuhum*) that when he would overcome them thereafter, he would not leave any of them alive (*lā yubqī minhum aḥadan*)."¹⁰⁴

Such fears, undoubtedly most vivid among those of Yalbughā's *ajlāb* who had been at Giza with him, obviously did not materialize. Nevertheless, they eventually did to some extent become a reality for all of Yalbughā's "*ajlāb*." With the loss of their *ustādh* and their training incomplete, they did as a matter of fact experience death in financial, social, and political terms. When they realized this, and when hiring out their numerically useful services to Asandamur and his peers in 1367 did not seem to result in any lasting change of fortune or sufficient tangible rewards—unlike once again for the veteran mamluks—the consequences were dearly felt in Cairo's streets and palaces. Going totally out of control, especially after June 1367 and another missed round of rewards and promotions, they started looting and attacking whatever and whomever they could lay their hands on, and no one, not even Asandamur, seemed willing or capable to rectify that situation. It is this process that goes a long way in explaining how there gradually was generated a public and very negative awareness of their distinctive identity as Yalbughā's junior mamluks, or his "*ajlāb*," as attested by source reports. The immediate outcome of this parallel formation of a hateful public opinion of them surely can be read in the remarkably bad press they received from al-Nuwayrī.¹⁰⁵ In the longer run, however, this abusive tone was moderated, reflecting in fact the lasting change of fortune that a number of these *ajlāb* did eventually experience. Hence, in a much milder and rather functional account, al-Maqrīzī (once more inspired by the very similar remarks of Ibn Khaldūn) presents the final, but in his version also rather purifying, whereabouts of Yalbughā's junior mamluks as follows:

On Thursday 14 [October 1367], the sultan drowned a group from the Yalbughāwīyah mamluks, who had agreed to kill him, in the Nile. . . . In the morning of this Thursday, 100 of the notables of these Yalbughāwīyah *ajlāb* (*al-ajlāb al-Yalbughāwīyah*) were

¹⁰⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:36.

¹⁰⁵ And from Ibn Abī Ḥajalah (see n. 92)



nailed and cut in two. A group of them were drowned. The remainder of them were banished to Syria and to Aswan. Among those of the Yalbughāwīyah that were banished were Barqūq, Barkah, Altunbughā al-Jūbānī, Jarkas al-Khalīlī, and Aqbughā al-Māridānī. The *sharīf* Baktamur, *wālī* of Cairo, took them and detained them in his house, their hands fixed in wood. His lunch came, but he did not give them anything to eat. He assigned over them someone to take them to Qatyā. The *wālī* of Qatyā took them and sent them to Ghaz-zah. Its governor sent them to al-Karak. They were imprisoned in a dark pit, in its citadel, for several years. Then they were released and they went to Damascus, where they served the amir Manjak, *nā'ib al-Shām*, until the sultan called for the Yalbughāwīyah mamluks to employ them in the service of his two sons. So Barqūq served amongst the others that were in the service of the two sons of the sultan, until the sultan got killed after his return from 'Aqabat Aylah. Then, the amir Aynabak led the regime, Barqūq becoming one of the amirs of forty. Thereupon, he took hold of the stable and remained there until he became sultan.¹⁰⁶

ON THE BRINK OF A NEW ERA?

In sum, in the course of the four days this conflict lasted, two clear-cut but fluctuating parties appear as opposing each other, including Yalbughāwīyah mamluks and amirs on both sides. This already seems quite surprising from a modern historiographical perspective, but even more surprising is the general observation that the friction between these two multifarious parties seems less to have been caused by any lack of morality or respect for traditional values in either camp, and rather to have been closely tied up with the actual composition of the Yalbughāwīyah, and, by extension, with the subtle but irrevocable changes the Mamluk political scene was undergoing. From this perspective, modern historiography was right after all to implicate the Yalbughāwīyah, but has failed so far to grasp the actual background and the deeper meaning of that allegation!

Most importantly, one of the more conspicuous lines along which friction developed in the 1360s was a generational one, with on one end mamluks of veteran status, stemming from households long gone and yet increasingly managing to improve their status, and on the other end their junior colleagues, recently imported and firmly tied to their *ustādhs'* current successes, but despite that only left with crumbs of benefit. Undoubtedly, the actual picture was less black and white than stereotyping like this allows for. Nevertheless, from the above discussion it is clear that at the time there generally were such pragmatic processes at work in the Mam-

¹⁰⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:154–55; see also Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, 5:458, 472.



luk sultanate, from veteran re-employment and rewarding to junior acquisition and frustration. Most importantly, the friction caused by the more striking extremes of these processes was a reality that should not be questioned and that became particularly apparent and relevant as time elapsed. Thus, in December 1366, Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī became the victim of a remarkable coinciding of these processes in the course of a rather classical Mamluk struggle for power. On that occasion, veteran ambitions concurred with junior frustrations to ignite a rebellious spark, and geographical circumstances, including the young sultan's presence on the rebellious side of the river, encouraged that spark to turn into a blaze that even the almighty Yalbughā proved incapable of fighting.

As seen above, this outcome did not mean the end of those processes, or of the subsequent friction. Quite to the contrary: whereas the processes were simply continued throughout 1367, the friction came increasingly to the forefront in the new struggles for power that ensued after Yalbughā's murder. In the end, Yalbughā's "*ajlāb*" themselves very prominently fell afoul of that friction, when al-Ashraf Sha'bān's survival was at stake again and his reaction proved surprisingly astute (with due assistance, as all sources did not fail to notice, from Cairo's populace, fed up as they were with the havoc).

In the short run, therefore, the new social and political reality that emerged from this situation seriously advantaged veteran mamluks once more, when from the end of 1367 onwards al-Ashraf Sha'bān turned—either deliberately, or simply by lack of any serious alternative, or perhaps even as a result of both—to such veterans to sustain his reign. Thus, in the course of the next few years, he signed up veterans to become the executive pillars of his regime, as with the amirs Uljāy al-Yūsufī (d. 1373), Manklī Bughā al-Shamsī (ca. 1320–72), 'Alī al-Māridānī (ca. 1310–70), and Manjak al-Yūsufī (ca. 1315–75).¹⁰⁷ Even more striking, however, is the fact that Sha'bān also chose to continue the more general line of policy vis-à-vis veterans that had been favored by Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī and his peers before, singling out mamluks with a clear pre-1360 background rather than his own recruits in any round of promotions, as may be gathered once more from another set of detailed lists of promoted amirs that has been preserved for the remainder of his reign, even up to its final year 1377.¹⁰⁸ Clearly, in the 1360s and 1370s power and authority remained closely linked to the fate and status of the many mamluks who had entered the regime in the 1350s, the 1340s, and even before.

In the long run, however, this situation did not last, and this was surely not just due to those veterans' natural life cycles. As summarized by al-Maqrīzī above, in

¹⁰⁷ See Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 109, 162–63.

¹⁰⁸ For these lists, see al-Bayrūtī, fols. 40r–40v, 52v, 56v–57, 80–80v, 82, 84, 100, 107; Ibn Duqmāq, "Nuzhat al-Anām," fols. 43r, 60r, 83v, 85, 110v–111r; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:161–62, 176–77, 185, 216, 219, 225–26, 255, 270, 387–88.



March 1377 rehabilitated survivors from Yalbughā's "ajlāb" in particular suddenly managed to engage successfully in a program of estrangement between Sha'ban and his supporters, finally generating their own access to rank and status and eventually culminating, in November 1382, in the dissolution of the Qalāwūnid sultanate and the enthronement of one of their own, Barqūq.

Surely, friction between veterans and their established interests on the one hand and juniors and their hunger for change on the other is nothing new in history, and this qualification is all the more valid for the Mamluk sultanate, in the era of the Qalāwūnid sultanate between 1279 and 1382 as well as in general. What is remarkable in this respect, however, offering insight into another conspicuous line along which that friction developed in the 1360s, is that these processes and the conflicts they fed into no longer took place within the confines of one royal household, be it fourteenth-century Qalāwūnid or thirteenth-century Ayyubid/Ṣāliḥīd. This was not a friction that involved the royal household and its members in any meaningful manner, despite the political nature of what was at stake. Rather, in the 1360s things revolved increasingly around the household of the amir Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī, without any royal involvement, but also without strictly being limited to Yalbughā's assorted environment. This was in fact not even a friction that took place within the confines of any one household, between its senior and junior members, as had happened so often in the past, from the Baḥrīyah's actions against Tūrān Shāh to al-Nāṣir Ḥasan's collisions with his father's mamluks and, eventually, with some of his own. Rather, there were two broad generational social categories at work that, especially as far as veterans are concerned, had little more in common than the insecure fate they were sharing and the pragmatic approach they took to circumventing that problem. As such, the December 1366 conflict and its aftermath was one of the very first political conflicts of substance in the fourteenth century that was fought outside of the umbrella of the Qalāwūnid sultanate, that is, by a majority of contenders for authority and status that had at most only very limited ties with the royal house. This was therefore a first, but ominous, breach of the Qalāwūnid political monopoly, originating in the fissioning of great households under the Qalāwūnid umbrella in the 1340s and 1350s.¹⁰⁹

Moreover, this was also a first and ominous breach in Qalāwūnid household politics, when the friction and resulting conflict were no longer about realigning loyalties within the Qalāwūnid house or its offshoots, but about gaining support

¹⁰⁹ For more details on this fission, see Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 147–58. On the origins of this process, and its consequences for the Qalāwūnids, see idem, "Caught between Heredity and Merit: The Amir Qawṣūn and the Legacy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (d. 1341)," in *The Mamluk Sultanate: Political, Military, Social and Cultural Aspects*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Amalia Levanoni, forthcoming. For an assessment of the life and times of the Qalāwūnid political monopoly in general, see Van Steenbergen, "The Mamlūk Sultanate as Military Patronage State: Royalty, Household Politics and the Case of the Qalāwūnid Bayt (1279–1382)," forthcoming.



and status by a majority of outsiders to any such traditional framework of reference. In such a transforming environment, new political strategies had to be devised, including the tendency to give absolute priority to the alignment of those outsiders through material rewards, as opposed to the more traditional preference that used to be shown to those that were already firmly tied to one's social and political success.

The far more tiered and friction-prone political system which such strategies automatically gave rise to—with veteran amirs on one side of the political spectrum and junior mamluks or “*ajlāb*” on the other, tied through quite distinct sets of alliances to the political leaders of the day—is actually quite reminiscent of Mamluk politics as it has been described for the fifteenth century. In fact, the similarities are so striking that Jean-Claude Garcin's description of this aspect of that next century's political system in the *Cambridge History of Egypt* reminds one immediately of the historical processes described above for the December 1366 conflict and its aftermath:

From 1428 . . . the problem first appeared of recruits who were unruly, not because they . . . would not have had a political future in the framework of their integration into the system, but because that integration could not happen fast enough. Faced with the recruits, the amirs, now with fewer mamluks, found themselves at a loss. The rift between the old troops and newcomers brought about a corresponding strengthening of the move to form the older ones into an aristocracy. . . . So a new political mechanism had gradually been imposed: any amir who rose to be sultan had first to remove his predecessor's recruits, relying on the previous age group that had been kept in the wings until that point, which marked their genuine entry into the political arena. The initial rhythm of Mamluk political life was thus much slowed down.¹¹⁰

Clearly, “the problem . . . of recruits” and the “new political mechanism” did not first appear in 1428 or thereabouts, but became increasingly apparent already from the December 1366 conflict onwards, filling the vacuum left by the slowly disintegrating Qalāwūnid house.

¹¹⁰ Garcin, “The Regime of the Circassian Mamluks,” 300–1. The workings of this “mechanism,” including the new types of alliances between non-promoted *julbān* and promoted amirs, were further explored by Amalia Levanoni in her very insightful “The Sultan's *Laqab*”; on p. 115, she in fact already seems to hint at earlier precedents for this “new order,” without however naming them. This “rift between the old troops and newcomers” as a typical feature of fifteenth-century Mamluk politics was first fully formulated by Amalia Levanoni in her “The Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate,” esp. 386–87.



Viewed from this perspective, however, the ascendancy of the *ajlāb*, Barqūq's ending of the Qalāwūnid sultanate in November 1382, and his deliberate attempt to impose his own Zāhiri household, including his own lineage and his own mamluks, as the new framework of social and political reference instead of the defunct Qalāwūnid one, actually suspended the emergence of such an entirely new political system. As such, the sultanates of Barqūq and his sons (1382–1412) were not so much a radical break from the past, as references traditionally tend to portray them, but rather an attempt to link up again with that past and to restore to pre-eminence the traditional royal household, as a comprehensive political unit that firmly monopolized the regime, its political economy, and Mamluk society at large, far beyond the limits of generational pragmatism.

Despite the fact that the latter observations and their background obviously need further qualification, it is already clear that this attempt at a reversal of historical processes that had first come to the surface in the 1360s did not, in the long run, manage to eradicate those processes. This was surely as much due to their innate resilience and embryonic presence in traditional Mamluk political practices (as in the cyclical or “generational” nature of rank-and-file acquisition, training, and employment, as well as in the aforementioned reliance on numerical strength), as to the many crises that the turn of the century witnessed. From 1412 onwards, therefore, change did eventually re-emerge, when a tiered, exclusive system of veteran amirs, junior mamluks and political (and financial!) pragmatism gradually came to supersede a more inclusive household system, and an overall process set in that unmistakably should be identified as one of Mamluk state formation, at the cost of traditional household politics.¹¹¹

Processes of historical change such as these, then, originating in the middle of the fourteenth century, catching momentum from the 1360s onwards, and only temporarily suspended towards the end of the century, led the sultanate towards its own version of early modernity in the course of the fifteenth century. Clearly, no one in particular, not even Yalbughā or his mamluks, can or should be blamed individually for generating transformations that they were all subject to. They are rather a token of the dynamic nature of Mamluk history, as they were gradually yet irrevocably heralding a new era.

¹¹¹ A research project at Ghent University (financed by the European Research Council and by the university's Research Foundation) is currently involved in the detailed reconstruction and assessment of these transformations on the basis of prosopographical research. The overarching project's title is “The Mamlukisation of the Mamluk Sultanate: Political Traditions and State Formation in 15th Century Egypt and Syria.”



Book Reviews

MUHSIN J. AL-MUSAWI, *The Islamic Context of The Thousand and One Nights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). Pp. x, 334.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT IRWIN

Muhsin J. al-Musawi is the author of several previous studies on literature, including *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth-Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights* (Washington, 1981). That book concluded by quoting an article by the American scholar of Hebrew Crawford Howell Toy in the *Atlantic Review* of June 1889. Toy characterised *The Thousand and One Nights* as follows: “The book is both the history of Moslem culture and the record of Moslem *esprit* in the palmy days of the Arabs in Asia; it gives a truer as well as a more vivid picture of their life than all the ordinary histories combined.”

A study of the Islamic context of *The Thousand and One Nights* would in principle be very welcome. The relevant article on “Religion” in *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, edited by Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen, noted the omnipresence of religion in the stories. “Religion governs the moral codes, the social relations, and the imaginations of the heroes. It is part of a social and individual notion of normality that is neither unduly stressed nor questioned.” The article went on to discuss fate, trust in God, proselytizing stories, and inter-faith relations. Clearly the subject is an important one and hitherto rather neglected.

There is much of value in al-Musawi’s book. He relates themes and practices in the stories to those found in other literary sources including *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*, the essays of al-Jāhīz, the table talk of al-Tanūkhī, the dos and don’ts of *hisbah* manuals, the law books, and other sources. The idea that the thoroughly urban tales of the *Nights* only became popular in Europe as that continent became more urban is attractive. The hitherto neglected importance of such motifs as tree climbing (this in the frame story) is brought out. It is also pleasant to learn of the lady mentioned by al-Jāhīz, who had two of the attributes of Paradise, “coolness and width.” One looks forward to al-Musawi’s forthcoming annotated bibliography of *The Arabian Nights*.

In *The Islamic Context of The Thousand and One Nights*, al-Musawi has set out to develop Toy’s verdict on the *Nights* in considerable detail. But there are some problems. The first is that al-Musawi seems afraid of being too easily understood. Consider, for example, this sentence: “The concomitance of the judicial and the narrative is significant here, as in many other cases, since jurisprudence is predicated on factual grounds that demand an answer in keeping with Islamic teaching



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from the prime period of its social and economic expansion and growth.” Or this one: “The premise falls short of Ibn Khaldun’s historical and social perspective, for the association with the Islamic warning against the accumulation of riches and the neglect of piety and faith implies resignation and an acceptance of consequences.”

Another problem is a pervasive vagueness about chronology. He repeatedly states that the oldest surviving manuscript of the *Nights*, the one used by Antoine Galland, dates from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, but, as I suggested in *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* and as Heinz Grotzfeld has conclusively demonstrated in essays about the endings of the *Nights* and about numismatic evidence within the *Nights*, the manuscript in question must have been compiled in the late fifteenth century. At times al-Musawi wants to use the *Nights* stories to illustrate Abbasid custom and practice and, correspondingly, to use Abbasid literature to highlight or clarify themes in the stories of the *Nights*. At other times he prefers to set the stories in an Ayyubid or Mamluk context, but most often he prefers to generalize about a changeless Islamic society. It is a pity he has neglected the painstakingly researched studies by Patrice Coussonnet on the dating of individual stories, most notably in *Pensée mythique, idéologie et aspirations sociales dans un conte des Mille et une nuits* (Paris, 1989). (That particular study dated the composition of “The Story of the Great Merchant ‘Alī of Cairo, Son of Ḥasan the Jeweller of Baghdad” to the fifteenth century. In another study Coussonnet conclusively dated the story of “Nūr al-Dīn and Shams al-Dīn” to the early fifteenth century.)

It is difficult to say how much stories that are ostensibly set in the Abbasid period do actually represent Abbasid realities. In an essay entitled “From History to Fiction: The Tale Told by the King’s Steward” (published in volume three of Muhsin Mahdi’s edition of the core tales as they appear in the manuscript of the *Nights* from which Antoine Galland translated), Mahdi pointed that while that particular tale, notionally set in the Abbasid period, might have pleased an audience in the Mamluk period, it would not have satisfied a tenth-century audience for “they would have found it silly and cold, not because they lacked imagination or were ignorant, but because they knew too much. It was a tale about their city and history and institutions and customs, and it was ridiculously inaccurate.” Although al-Musawi points to the importance of the list of foodstuffs carried by the porter who has been hired for that purpose by the lady of Baghdad, he has not noticed how many of those foodstuffs have a Syrian or Egyptian provenance. Rather, he takes the list as evidence of nostalgia for Abbasid affluence.

Noting the absence of Shi‘is in the stories, al-Musawi argues that “the material as transmitted and accumulated obviously took a final form sometime in the twelfth century when Fatimid sentiments lingered only among the general populace but rarely in elitist scholarship, which subscribed to the official discourse.” First, I do not think it at all obvious that the *Nights* took final form in the twelfth century. That



would have to be demonstrated. Secondly, the official discourse in Egypt was Fatimid and Isma‘ili for almost three quarters of the twelfth century. Because so much of the discussion in *The Islamic Context of the Thousand and One Nights* takes place in a chronological limbo, there is little that is specifically relevant to students of Mamluk social history.

The discussion is concentrated on the stories found in the Galland manuscript and therefore also in the Mahdi edition and the Haddawy translation. Only occasionally does al-Musawi focus on the additional stories that are found in the Bulaq edition. This means that there is little or no discussion of stories which were almost certainly composed in the Mamluk period, such as the crime stories featuring Crafty Dalilah and Mercury ‘Ali, or “The Man of Upper Egypt and His Frankish Wife.” According to al-Musawi, the Bulaq edition of 1835 “demonstrates the intervention of compilers, editors, and redactors in matters relating to the Islamic context of the tales. Especially in religious matters and poetic extracts, this edition can authenticate or debate the nature of poetic misreading or distortion and its historical relevance to the primacy of specific Islamic laws in certain periods.” But this still leaves it unclear why the Bulaq version is to be preferred to the more comprehensive Calcutta II edition of 1839–42.

A close focus on religious issues in the stories would have been welcome, but al-Musawi uses “Islam” in a broad sense to encompass the culture of a vast region over many centuries. In this very broad sense, even wine drinking and adultery can be seen as Islamic. With reference to the sifting and collating of the tales, al-Musawi writes that “the outcome is a cultural repertoire, an inventory of many directions, that may be defined metaphorically as Islamic to account for life as it was desired or made available in talks, anecdotes, and, in some cases, lived.”

At several points Musawi touches on Sufi themes in the *Nights*. Referring to the three tales told by one-eyed men that are boxed within “The Story of the Porter and the Three Ladies,” he argues that the “emphasis placed on the figure of the *qalandar* and the transfer into the *Thousand and One Nights* of this characterization and naming could be used to date this set of Baghdad tales to between the eleventh and twelfth centuries.” Specifically he relates it to Aḥmad al-Ghazālī’s brand of Sufism, with its combination of spirit and love, the internalization of “blame” and regret in surrender and devotion to the Beloved. But if one actually reads the stories told by the three one-eyed mendicants, they seem to be devoid of any spiritual content. Though the mendicants have repented their various importunities, there is no indication that they have turned to the “Beloved” or are following any specific spiritual discipline. Al-Musawi suggests that the mendicants finally attain “total contentment upon the immersion in the divine beatitude,” but the stories they tell, tales of lost love and missed opportunities, do not suggest contentment at all.



It seems unlikely that medieval readers would have discovered Sufi messages in the tales the mendicants related about subterranean love and mutilation. So how Sufi are the alleged “*qalandars*”? It is true that their shaven heads, beards, and eyebrows certainly conform to the appearance of the *qalandar* dervishes as attested in other sources, but the author of their stories seems to have had little actual knowledge of or interest in the ways of the *qalandars*. On a point of chronology, the *qalandar* movement seems to have originated in Khurasan in the eleventh century, but only became widespread in the western Islamic lands in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, so the specific linkage to al-Ghazālī’s Sufism seems implausible. As al-Musawi notes elsewhere, the second *qalandar* claims to have studied jurisprudence in a book by al-Shāṭibī, and this scholar died in 1388.

“What holds the collection together, and what upholds the concept of nationhood, Islamic or Arab, is the Islamic context,” according to al-Musawi, but this is studiously vague, for he never explains what “concept of nationhood” is embodied in the extremely diverse stories. Indeed, it is doubtful whether it is appropriate to think in terms of nations in pre-modern times. It is of course a chronological paradox that this collection of Islamic tales is set within a frame story about Shahriyar, Shahzaman and Shahrazad that is situated in Sassanid times. Moreover, within this frame story there is a boxed set of stories (the Hunchback cycle) that are told to the king of China, who, it is implied, is a Muslim.

As his quotation of Crawford Howell Toy may suggest, al-Musawi tends to quote the judgements of nineteenth-century figures such as Leigh Hunt, Bernard Cracroft, Walter Bagehot, Thomas Carlyle, and James Mew as authoritative, but none of these writers knew Arabic or had made any serious study of the *Nights* and several of them were mediocrities. For the most part, their essays on the subject were under-researched, bookmanly chats designed to entertain a general readership. Leigh Hunt, in particular, was a specialist in enthusing in a perfectly uncritical way about the joys of reading. (As the apparently sunny and uncritical Harold Skimpole, he featured in Dickens’s *Bleak House*.) In a discussion of “The City of Brass” al-Musawi cites a not very interesting article published in the *Spectator* in 1882 with reference to the alleged “mysticism of the Desert” in this story. Surely, it would have been more useful to have taken into consideration the views of Mia Gerhardt, Andreas Hamori, or Abdelfattah Killito?

Al-Musawi’s enthusiasm for Victorian litterateurs sits oddly with his bleak view that to translate something or to study something from another culture is to appropriate it. “Galland made the East a property available to be possessed, accommodated and plundered.” Though the British empire later “appropriated” Arab Islamic culture in the nineteenth century, al-Musawi declares that earlier Arab empires did not appropriate the cultures of others, but it is hard to follow his reasoning on this point.



Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras IV: Proceedings of the 9th and 10th International Colloquium Organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 2000 and May 2001. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 140. Edited by U. Vermeulen and J. Van Steenbergen (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2005). Pp. xii + 496.

REVIEWED BY PAUL E. WALKER, The University of Chicago

This volume, the fourth to present the papers of colloquia held in successive years at the Catholic University of Louvain, is like its predecessors a mixed bag of often fine scholarship on a broad range of topics. Here there are twenty-one articles by sixteen different experts on the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk periods, the majority in English with four in French and two in German. (Unfortunately, a few of those in English could have benefited from the help of a competent editor; as printed they are barely intelligible.) Five cover the Fatimids, seven the Ayyubids, and nine the Mamluks. The subject matter of the individual contributions is diverse, likewise the methods employed. Michael Brett, for example, offers three pieces interpreting in grand style key problems of Fatimid rule: conversion to Islam, the role of the Coptic church, and the reign of Badr al-Jamālī. At the other end of the spectrum, Hanspeter Hanisch's report on the archaeology of the citadel of Harran runs a full 125 pages in great detail, complete with tables and a copious supply of photographs. Needless to say the other entries are more modest in size, though many hardly less so in importance. Heinz Halm's attempt to pin down the source and authorship of the two texts that make up the *Kitāb al-Dhakhā'ir wa-al-Tuhaf*, Stefan Heidemann's theories concerning Numayrid al-Raqqā, Pierre-Vincent Claverie on the "mauvais chrétiens" in the Orient of the crusading period and, separately, on Philippe Mainebeuf in Cairo (1291), Nicholas Coureas on Christian attempts to control Cypriot trade with the Mamluks, Donald S. Richards on the office of *wilāyat al-Qāhirah*, and Jo Van Steenbergen's identification of a late medieval cadastral survey of Egypt are good examples. But there are others as well.

The rest of the contributions are just as varied. Taef El-Azhari writes on Ayyubid women and eunuchs; Yehoshua Frenkel writes about chains of transmission in first Ayyubid *samā'āt* and then in Mamluk women's *samā'āt*; Konrad Hirschler contributes on the sociology of medieval Arabic historical scholarship (Ibn Wāṣil and Abū Shāmah); Denys Pringle reports on the Ayla/Aqaba fortresses; Dionisius Agius describes an inscribed ostrich egg from Qusayr; Corinne Morisot, a *waqfiyah* of Jaqmaq in favor of Mecca; Gino Schallenberg analyzes the Sufi terminology of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah; and finally U. Vermeulen offers a short piece on the official dress of the Mamluks.



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With so much offered over a long span of time, dealing with such a spread of subjects, few readers, including this reviewer, will have an equal interest in each one. And not all are either major contributions or of a similar high standard. Even so it is certain that specialists in any or all of the three periods will find many items in this volume that are quite well worth their time.

Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras V: Proceedings of the 11th, 12th and 13th International Colloquium Organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 2002, 2003 and 2004. Orientalia lovaniensia analecta 169. Edited by U. Vermeulen and K. d'Hulster (Leuven: Peeters, 2007).

REVIEWED BY YOSSEF RAPOPORT, Queen Mary University of London

The publication of the proceedings of the Leuven annual colloquia has now become an established tradition in the field of Fatimid and Mamluk studies. This is the fifth volume in the series, and, like its predecessors, it is particularly strong on economic and political history. The following remarks are intended to highlight some of the outstanding contributions in the volume, out of a total of thirty-one.

Several of the contributions in the Fatimid section deal with the institutions of the *da'wah*. S. Calderini's survey of the surviving manuals for Isma'ili *dā'īs* is particularly useful. Calderini notes the overall idealized character of these manuals, but she also indicates changes over time and space, especially after the establishment of the Fatimid state, when the *dā'ī* became a representative of the head of state in the Fatimid domains, and a leader of the local Isma'ili community outside the Fatimid realms. The essay comprehensively covers the surviving literature and places it in its historical context. D. Cortese supplements the discussion of the *da'wah* with a study of references to women in the same manuals, pointing out that *dā'īs* were especially encouraged to target women.

Heinz Halm offers a new reading of the career of the Fatimid vizier Badr al-Jamālī (466–87/1074–94) as a precursor to the later military regimes. Al-Jamālī's personal biography, and even his personal name, is typical of slaves. He assumes titles and responsibilities which are far beyond that of earlier Fatimid viziers—most significantly, military functions. In these respects, his role resembles that of the Ayyubid and Mamluk sultans of the following centuries. Halm is also right to note that this development parallels the emergence of the Seljuk sultans in Baghdad a few decades earlier. Rather than viewing the transition from the rule of the caliph to the rule of the sultan as an exclusively Sunni development, the rise of Badr al-Jamālī suggests a deeper shift towards military rule throughout the Islamic



world during the eleventh century. J. Den Heijer complements the discussion with a study of the building activities of the Fatimid vizier, who populated Cairo with non-official civilian population, and his reconstructing the walls of the city. The inscriptions over the renovated Bāb al-Naṣr glorified Badr al-Jamālī on par with the Fatimid caliph, and even above him.

In two rich contributions, Yaacov Lev uses a variety of previously unexplored documentary sources to examine the economic significance of the transition from Fatimid to Ayyubid rule. When Saladin ordered the dismantling of the centralized, lavish Fatimid palace, one of the results was a decline in demand for luxury goods, and Lev interestingly suggests that the decreased demand for luxury textiles is the underlying reason for the disappearance of the textile center of Tinnīs. Moreover, in contrast to the Fatimid close regulation of trade, Saladin abolished a significant number of customs and fees on merchants in the capital, as part of a more general policy of relaxing state control of the economy. Lev utilizes al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil's *Al-Mutaḥaddidāt*, a daily diary quoted by al-Maqrīzī, and in particular the list of revenues and expenditures for 585/1189, as well as similar late Fatimid fiscal documents. The result is an impressive set of quantitative data, which suggests that the Ayyubids enjoyed increasing revenues from agricultural production. For the province of the Fayyum, for example, there is ample evidence to indicate a decidedly sharp rise in government revenues between 1170 and 1240. Thus, Lev is right to assert that neither the introduction of the Ayyubid *iqṭā'* system nor the diversion of funds towards military conquests have had any adverse impact on Egypt's economy. Moreover, by using al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil's diary, Lev is also able to put a price tag on Saladin's financial support of the scholars and the mystics: between 200,000 and 300,000 dinars, a good investment given the impeccable reputation they have given him over the centuries.

In a well-written contribution, which is also one of the most interesting in the volume, L. Richter-Bernburg highlights the unique sensibilities of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī's account of his visit to Egypt. Unlike other medieval observers of Egypt's Pharaonic antiquities, 'Abd al-Laṭīf's observations on architecture are resolutely naturalistic, and he refuses to resort to "jinn, primeval giants, magic whips or divine direct intervention" (p. 351). Indeed, 'Abd al-Laṭīf's chief interest is in the ingenious craftsmanship which brought the monuments into existence, rather than in the occult or religious significance of the structure. The monument that impressed him most deeply was the great sphinx in Giza, where he most admired the technical achievement of blowing up the human features to gigantic scale, yet at the same time he shows himself to be appreciative of the monument's aesthetic value. Richter-Bernburg manages to provide a vivid portrayal of al-Baghdādī as a writer who works both within and outside the established tradition of medieval Islamic travel literature.



A. Petersen's contribution on new towns in Mamluk Palestine examines the distinct features of towns established in the Islamic world after 1000 C.E., and specifically those founded by the Mamluk authorities. While the cities of the early Islamic period have received much scholarly attention, new cities, such as the Almohad Qaṣr al-Ṣaghīr founded in 1184, or Sulṭānīyah built by Öljeitü in 1313, have been relatively neglected. In this essay, Petersen focuses on Majdal (near the destroyed port of Ascalon) and Safed. Compared to the cities of early Islam, these new urban centers were of moderate size, and of no apparent orthogonal plan. They were also based around the castle, or the *qal'ah*, which in many cases was a remnant of the Crusader period. And, finally, these new towns were built along the revived Cairo-Damascus coastal road, often replacing ports destroyed by the Mamluks during the second half of the thirteenth century.

Other contributions worthy of special note include a comprehensive, well-illustrated study of the architecture of the Citadel of Damascus under the Seljuks, Ayyubids, and Mamluks, written by H. Hanisch. This will surely be a useful reference work for the growing number of scholars interested in Mamluk military architecture. K. D'Hulster's erudite, polyglot comparison of several Turkish translations of Sa'dī's *Gūlistān* offers a rare window into the cultural life of the Mamluk courts in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, specifically highlighting the continued influence of the Persian literary canon on the Mamluk elite. Finally, Th. M. Wijntjes' study of the visit of Pedro Mártir, an ambassador of the Spanish court, to Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī deftly demonstrates that many European sources on the late Mamluk period are yet to be fully explored.

The editors of the volume should be commended for continuing to make the proceedings of the Leuven conferences available to all scholars working in the field, especially given the number of contributions and resulting size of the volume. However, several contributions really do suffer from weak copy-editing, and plans for providing indices in future volumes in the series would be very welcome.

NORMAN D. NICOL, *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean*. Vol. 6, *The Egyptian Dynasties* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2007). Pp. 21 + 82 plates.

REVIEWED BY WARREN C. SCHULTZ, DePaul University

In the mid-1990s, the Heberdon Coin Room of the Ashmolean Museum embarked upon an ambitious ten-volume plan to publish their collection of Islamic coins in sylloge format. The Ashmolean's own significant holdings had by that time been supplemented by the addition of the important Shamir Shama collection (via long-



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term loan in 1994), and thus totaled some 13,500 coins. Under the series-editorship of Luke Treadwell, this volume is the fourth of the ten to appear. In it, Norman D. Nicol provides first a very brief introduction (pp. 11–13) and then detailed descriptions and images of 1584 coins (on 82 plates) from the major dynasties of Egypt and Syria for the period 254–692/868–1517: those of the Tulunids (coins 1–126); the Ikhshidids (127–217); the Fatimids (218–829); the Zengids (830–853); the Ayyubids (854–1153); and the Mamluks (1154–1584). As with the previous three volumes of the SICA series, the production values are high and the 1:1 coin images clear, precise, and detailed. The publication of these 1584 coins is a welcome addition to the monetary history of Egypt and Syria in general, and to the field of Mamluk numismatics in particular. The Heberdon holdings in Mamluk coins are particularly strong for copper *fulūs*, which, given the paucity of previously published images of these types of coins, is especially noteworthy. That said, non-numismatic specialists who will use this book should be aware of two wider contexts in which this volume appears. The first is the state of the field for the numismatic history of Egypt and Syria. The second is a wider debate on the best ways to organize numismatic material for publication.

Both contexts emerge from the following comment by Treadwell in his forward (p. 9): “This volume fills a need. To date the copious publications of medieval Egyptian and Syrian coinage [*context one*] have consisted of dynastic corpora and catalogues. This is the first catalogue to provide a regional overview of the dynasties concerned and will for this reason be of particular interest to historians and students of the medieval Near East [*context two*].” As Treadwell alluded, there is a prolific body of scholarship on the monetary and numismatic history of Egypt and Syria. Nicol, however, has provided only a very brief bibliographic introduction to this scholarship. While it is true that in sylloges the emphasis should be on the coins, as it is here, rather than an in-depth historiographic analysis of the field, users of this volume will need to turn elsewhere to get an appreciation of just how numerous these previous publications are. Mamlukists, in particular, may turn to the numismatic section of the Chicago Online Bibliography of Mamluk Studies to see the number of titles available, especially those published since the appearance of Paul Balog’s seminal *The Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria*, Numismatic Studies no. 12 (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1964).

The second context has to do with organizational schemas for presenting numismatic information. This volume is called a sylloge. This term may be unfamiliar to non-numismatists and thus some historical and terminological background is useful here. The frequent use of the term “usually,” however, signals that exceptions to the following assertions may be encountered. The use of sylloges is relatively new in Islamic numismatics. The first institution to begin a sylloge series for Islamic coins was the Forschungstelle für islamische Numismatik in Tübingen, under the



directorship of Lutz Ilisch. The first volume of this institution's *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen*—or SNAT as it is commonly known—appeared in 1993. The Heberdon Coin Room was the second major collection to embark upon a sylloge series. As it is widely understood, sylloges publish the complete holdings of one institution, within the chronological and geographic parameters of the coinage singled out for study. Usually every coin in that collection is described and illustrated, subject to editorial and curatorial judgment, regardless of overall rarity or commonness, and independent of whether it is an example of which the institution has several specimens or only one. Thus the user of any sylloge volume will have access to information about all the pertinent coins which that collection holds, but depending on the strengths of the particular collection, will likely not see the entire range of any numismatic series. Additionally, sylloges are also usually organized by mint series, which means that coins are presented in chronological order by mint of issue. A sylloge's table of contents, for example, usually features mints as the primary organizational criterion, with regnal periods of any ruler serving as a secondary or tertiary criteria.

Sylloges are different from two other common methods of publishing coin collections, those which for better or worse can be called traditional catalogues and those known as corpora. Sylloges are different from the former in two fashions. The first is that traditional catalogues usually only describe and illustrate a sample of their collection. Duplicates, in particular, are usually just listed rather than illustrated. The second is that most traditional catalogues follow a dynastic organizational schema rather than one based upon mint series, meaning that the first level of organization is ruler's reign, as opposed to mints which are relegated to a subsidiary catalogue variable. Sylloges are also different from dynastic corpora, such as Balog's mentioned above, for the latter not only are usually organized by regnal period but aim for as complete as possible representation of the entire numismatic issues of a dynasty by drawing upon coins from many collections.

These distinctions between the regnal organization of traditional catalogues and corpora versus the mint organization of sylloges may strike the non-specialist as trivial, but they are not. To put it another way, numismatic works organized first by dynastic details primarily support the identification of individual coins, while those organized by mint series support the analysis of wider numismatic questions not specifically bound to an individual ruler or even dynasty. Moreover, one of the widely agreed aims of sylloges of collections is the publication of more specimens of coins to add to the archive of specimens readily accessible for analysis. These larger samples are necessary, to give but one example, in matters of die analysis, which in turn can shed more light on questions of mint issue output. This debate is clearly ongoing, and proponents of both organizational schemas will no doubt continue to argue their points.



This digression is pertinent since the forward to the first volume published of the SICA series (vol. 10, *Arabia and East Africa*, 1999, by Steve Album) contained the following statement:

The choice of ordering by mint is becoming increasingly common in the field these days and for good reason: it allows the development of all aspects of a coin series to be studied in the sequence within which the coins were actually produced, i.e., in both their geographical and chronological contexts. The disadvantage of this method is that it tends to favour the reader who has some numismatic knowledge over the historian who does not. In order to facilitate the use of the catalogue by non-numismatists, careful attention has been paid to the compilation of indexes of names, titles, and dynasties (Treadwell, p. vi).

Volume 6, however, unlike the preceding three, is arranged differently:

The catalogue is arranged in chronological sequence of the ruling dynasties subdivided by ruler. This is a departure from the procedure followed in the other volumes of this series. I find that the complex issues of several dynasties are easier to understand when the entire spectrum of each particular ruler's issues are described next to another (Nicol, vol. 6, p. 11).

Nicol is of course entitled to this view. The result, however, is a missed opportunity. By organizing by ruler rather than mint, this volume presents like a compilation of excerpts from those aforementioned "dynastic corpora and catalogues" rather than offering something that the field still lacks, namely an overview of the mint series over this long era. As it is, the reader moves from the Tulunids through the Mamluks, ruler by ruler, but does not easily see the processes which change over a chronological time span asynchronous to those regnal periods. Thus we end up with another work which is primarily an aid identification rather than a work that privileges wider analysis by situating the coins in those geographical and chronological contexts. Nevertheless, the addition of 1584 coins from this important collection to the published archive of Islamic numismatic evidence is still to be celebrated.



ABDALLAH KAHIL, *The Sultan Ḥasan Complex in Cairo 1357–1364: A Case Study in the Formation of Mamluk Style*. Beirut Texts and Studies 98 (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2008). Pp. 403, illustrations.

REVIEWED BY BERNARD O’KANE, The American University in Cairo

It is strange that we should have waited so long for an art historical monograph on the greatest Mamluk monument. Despite Cairo’s fame as a city with one of the most dense concentrations of pre-modern Islamic architecture, monographs on its buildings are few and far between, most having been written from the perspective of those involved in their architectural restoration.¹

This book is a revised version of the author’s doctoral dissertation, completed in 2002, and although in the preface Kahil apologises to the publication manager of the series for late delivery of the manuscript, the intervening time has been used profitably to expand and refine his text. One of his major findings, the extensive design input of the monument’s building supervisor (*shādd al-‘imā’ir*) (the amir Muḥammad ibn Bīlik al-Muḥsinī, who was also a noted calligrapher), was published in the interim in the festschrift for Priscilla Soucek,² but the information is also included here, as it should be.

In his introduction Kahil gives the historical background, discusses previous interpretations of the complex, and sets out his main purpose, which is a meticulous documentation of the building’s structure and decoration, backed by copious references and comparisons not only to monuments in Cairo but also to those in such Syrian centers as Damascus, Aleppo, and Tripoli. The author’s obvious familiarity with the monuments from the whole of Mamluk territory makes these comparisons all the more pertinent.

His discussion (pp. 36–38) of the annexes of the monument, those areas situated behind the portal and which now contain ablutions facilities, clearly shows them to be fabrications of Herz and the Comité. Another surprise is the extent to which the tomb was envisaged to be an independent unit within the whole complex. Reminiscent of his grandfather Qalāwūn’s tomb, the entrance was guarded by ten of his manumitted slaves. Doris Behrens-Abouseif has recently highlighted how Mamluk tomb chambers were often categorized as *masjids* in *waqfiyahs* to legitimize prayers within them,³ and in this case, to lead the five daily prayers, the tomb even

¹ E.g., the volumes on the Barqūq and Faraj ibn Barqūq complexes by Saleh Lamei Mostafa, and Max Herz’s books on the Qalāwūn and Sultan Ḥasan complexes.

² “The Architect/s of the Sultan Ḥasan Complex in Cairo,” in *Pearls from Water, Rubies from Stone: Studies in Islamic Art in Honor of Priscilla Soucek*, ed. Linda Komaroff and Jaclynne Kerner, *Artibus Asiae* 66, no. 2 (2006), 155–74.

³ *Cairo of the Mamluks* (Cairo, 2008), 18. Kahil (p. 58) further shows how the *waqfiyah* characterized the burial space within the tomb as private property, further circumventing possible legal



had its own imam, different from the one who performed the same duties in the adjacent qiblah *īwān*. The scale of the mausoleum was reflected in the provision of a team of one hundred twenty Quran readers to provide round the clock recitation—Qalāwūn’s tomb had a “mere” fifty. This makes the projection of the tomb on three sides of the Maydān Rumaylah more understandable, as the continuous chanting of the Quran would have reminded passersby to pray for the occupant of the tomb.

In his extensive discussion (pp. 53–58) of the anomalous placement of the tomb behind the qiblah *īwān* Kahil alludes to the parallel of the Turbat-i Shakyh Jām complex. His characterization of the dome chamber there as a tomb is incorrect (the tomb is an open one in front of the preceding *īwān*), although Kahil rightly dismisses the example as a parallel on the grounds that the *īwān* there, as in Ilkhanid Friday mosques such as that at Varamin, was conceived as an entrance to the dome behind, unlike the qiblah *īwān* of Sultan Ḥasan which totally obscures the view of the dome and which, with its depth and elaborate decoration, was the focal point of the congregational mosque of the complex.

The portal and its decoration are the subject of the third chapter. Kahil mentions the Seljuq and Iklhanid parallels for the original paired minaret design, although he also notes that a desire to surpass previous Cairene monuments with multiple minarets would probably have been a factor. But the fact that the one being built was so unstable as to fall down during construction supports Michael Rogers’ contention that, unlike the Anatolian Seljuq examples on which it might have been loosely based, it was made of stone and was not buttressed from the side of the portal, denoting the work of a craftsman who had admired the form but was unfamiliar with the structural procedures.⁴ The same craftsman might have designed one particular strapwork pattern (pl. 220), a dense ungrooved basket-weave that can be read as interlocking hexagons, whose only parallels are also in Seljuk Anatolia.⁵

With regards to the reused colonettes that adorn the plinth, Kahil plausibly notes (p. 83) that after the Mamluk raid on Adana in 1360 the portal of the church was sent to Cairo, and that these might have been part of this booty, especially given their similarities to Cilician manuscript illumination. He also brings out the parallels with contemporary Cairene Quranic illumination, particularly relevant considering the involvement, noted above, of the calligrapher Muḥammad ibn Bīlik al-Muḥsinī as supervisor of the building.

Kahil also discusses in detail the chinoiserie decoration on the chamfering at the sides of the portal (pl. 23); it might have been useful to include in the analysis the findings of Rachel Ward, who has shown how such chinoiserie quickly became

objections.

⁴ J. M. Rogers, “Seljuk Influences on the Monuments of Cairo,” *Kunst des Orients* 7(1970–71): 47.

⁵ *Ibid.*, fig. 12, showing the great *īwān* of the hospital of Kaykā’ūs, Sivas, or on the mihrab of the Erzurum Friday Mosque: Ömür Bakırer, *Anadolu Mihrablari* (Ankara, 1976), pl. 30.



standard, at least in metalwork, after the establishment of trade relations between the Ilkhanids and the Mamluks in the 1320s.⁶

Throughout the book the meticulous descriptions of decoration bring into focus features that have otherwise not been noticed or discussed in the literature, such as the central recess on the northern side with an unusual six-pointed star with curving sides, and a square panel with an interlacing geometric design surrounding the oculus above it (pls. 15, 227, 261a). The appreciation of these details is greatly facilitated by the number of original drawings published by the author, helpfully grouped by him in related clusters. It is worth singling out two drawings that are notable for their virtuosity: those of the *muqarnas* of the portal and the vestibule (pls. 216–17), each of stunning complexity.

In his section (p. 126) on the living units of the madrasahs, Kahil compares them to Cairene *rabʿ*s, suggesting that the madrasah courtyards are a combination of the *rabʿ* and a *khānqāh* courtyard with an *īwān* such as that of Baybars al-Jāshankīr. However, I'm not sure that it is helpful to cite the *rabʿ* in this context, especially since one of the chief characteristics of the *rabʿ*, its arrangement of the living units in a duplex with a two-storey *īwān* unit facing the exterior, is not present at Sultan Ḥasan.

In discussing the bulbous dome of the Sultan Ḥasan fountain Kahil suggests (p. 132) that it may have derived from Fatimid prototypes at Aswan or that of the *mashhad* of al-Juyūshī. The Fatimid examples, however, even if they have a drum, are not truly bulbous. More plausible prototypes for the bulbous domes of Cairo, which appear there after the middle of the fourteenth century, might be the Muzaffarid tomb of Sultan Bakht Āghā at Isfahan datable to 752/1351, and a no longer extant dome at Isfahan from the first half of the fourteenth century that has been attributed to the Ilkhanid Sultan Abū Saʿīd.⁷

The tomb chamber receives a chapter to itself, and here as elsewhere the discussion of the formal and decorative parallels is as thorough as one could wish. Kahil notes that the painting on the pendentives was restored by Herz, but suggests (p. 160) that the painting has an Ottoman character. To me, however, the combination of arabesques on the main *muqarnas* units and of chinoiserie-inspired blossoms on the polylobed blind niches above them is fully in keeping with the original decoration of the complex. He also comments on the unusual legibility of the main inscription in the tomb chamber, and while this is certainly true, it was unfortunately achieved by large thick letters which are surprising for their lack of adherence to the usual canons that distinguish the finest Mamluk monumental epigraphy.

⁶ “Brass, Gold and Silver from Mamluk Egypt: Metal Vessels Made for Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 14 (2004): 66.

⁷ Luṭfallāh Hunarfar, *Ganjīnah-i āsār-i tārikhī-i Isfahān* (Isfahan, 1350/1971), respectively pp. 318, 295 (the drawing he reproduces on p. 295 is not, as cited, after Dieulafoy, but after Flandin).



Editorially, a number of suggestions can be made. While the author's English is admirably clear, concise, and jargon-free, there are typographical errors, slips in grammar and translation, and references to incorrect plate numbers too numerous to list that should have been caught by an editor. The continental system of pluralizing Arabic nouns by adding hyphens after them (e.g. *madhhab-s*) is distracting—the hyphens should have been omitted. An index would also have substantially increased the usefulness of the work. Some of the plates are underexposed, a pity especially in the illustration of the vestibule (pl. 41), which is given the unusual luxury of a full page reproduction. I'm not sure of the utility of the photos (pl. 7) of the sun striking the upper row of *muqarnas* on the portal: the time and angle of this varies greatly with the seasons. With regard to the bibliography, Howayda al-Harithy's *The Waqf Document of Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn* (Beirut, 2001) is omitted. Even though the author himself provides the most pertinent extracts from the *waqfiyahs* in his publication, it should have been included, or we should have been told why it was omitted.

As well as being a compendium of all the information one could want on the building, including its complete epigraphic program, for instance, the book's discussion of comparative material is comprehensive. This is well illustrated by the discussion of the possible contributions of the architect al-Ḥujayj to the complex (pp. 181 ff.), an individual who had traveled to Ḥamāh to view a *qā'āh* that had earlier been built in the city by its ruler Abū al-Fidā', before building one for his patron at the citadel.⁸ Kahil rightly points out the importance of this episode in indicating the receptiveness of patrons to emulating architecture in other areas.

In sum, this work shows an extremely impressive mastery of the primary and secondary literature on the subject and related areas. It will remain the definitive account of the building for the foreseeable future.

The City in the Islamic World. Salma Jayyusi, general editor, Renata Holod, Attilio Petrucciolo, and André Raymond, special editors. Handbuch der Orientalistik/ Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 1, The Near and Middle East, vol 94. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008). Two volumes. Pp. 1142 + 321 pp. of plates.

REVIEWED BY JOHN RODENBECK

Brill's blurb for this pair of hefty, expensive, and lavishly illustrated tomes quotes directly from the joint introduction by its three distinguished special editors. Both the blurb and the introduction tell us that the purpose of these volumes is "to draw

⁸ Also mentioned in the contemporary publication of Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo*, 43.



attention to the sites of life, politics and culture where current and past generations of the Islamic world have made their mark. Unlike many previous volumes dealing with the city in the Islamic world, this one has been specially expanded not only to include snapshots of historical fabric, but also to deal with the transformation of this fabric into modern and contemporary urban entities.”

This latter claim is probably more or less true. The 7500-odd Western studies of “the Middle Eastern City and Islamic Urbanism” listed by Bonine, Ehlers, Krafft, and Stöber in their great bibliography (1994) do indeed divide generally into two sorts: those obviously intent on urban history and those preoccupied with urban fabric and morphology.

The general editor of these two Brill volumes is Salma Jayyusi, a scholar better known as a poet, literary anthologist, and champion of Arab culture than as an expert on cities. Her candid and graceful preface not only explains the genesis of these two books, but points to their most salient feature: the fact that they were written and edited by well-established specialists, but are intended for a far more general audience. This audience includes people who may be more or less ignorant of Middle Eastern languages and culture. It is surely for this reason that such an impressive collection found support at the cultural summit of the Muslim world, in this case funding from Prince ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Fahd ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. The venture was so risky that it is difficult to conceive of its being published otherwise.

“The single leading concept,” as the special editors remark quite early in their joint introduction, “has been to consider the city as a living organism.” Such words are clearly not to be taken as a rhetorical gesture towards a set of politically-correct pieties, but as signaling real attitudes that have been too rare in the past. In Cairo, for example, they were championed 30 years ago by Laila ‘Ali Ibrahim, but she was virtually alone. During a conference on conservation of Cairo’s Historic Zone in 1980, for example, an international expert toured the Darb al-Aḥmar checking off for demolition buildings that he thought were “un-Islamic,” while a local design firm produced an elaborate and costly plan for enclosing the Darb al-Aḥmar and Fatimid al-Qāhirah in a *cordon sanitaire* of six-lane boulevards, expelling all “modern” activities, dressing the remaining inhabitants willy-nilly in medieval costume, and compelling them to turn out cheap tourist wares or perform in occasional folk-pageants.

One notes with relief that the special editors have also consciously avoided the pitfalls of deduction from some platonic idea of “the Islamic city,” an abstraction built around a notion of exclusively Muslim needs. This inheritance from earlier scholars bedeviled thinking about cities and urbanism in the Muslim world for decades. The title the editors have thus carefully given these volumes suggests instead that the organic urban entities under examination and the varied elements that compose them have actually existed or do in fact still exist within the Muslim world.



Though these studies constitute a *tour d'horizon*, they do not attempt to take in the entirety of that world; and it is obvious that to have done so would have served no very useful purpose. A consideration of Indonesia, for example, is excluded completely; and out of 48 articles, only six (three each) concern the great cities of India and Persia. There is one article on Ottoman cities of the Balkans, one on Bukhara and Samarkand, one on sub-Saharan cities, while the Arabian Peninsula is represented only by an article on Sana'a and one on Dubai. Though references are made to scholarship at work on cities in Al-Andalus, there is no study here of Muslim urbanism in Western Europe. This reviewer, who lives in a region of southern France that had an Arab governor for 40 crucial years and where Arab rule still survives in local fact and legend, regrets the slow progress on that particular front.

Mamlukologists, though unlikely to learn anything new in their own field, will be gratified at the appearance here of important large-scale articles by scholars already well known for their work on Cairo or on specific questions about urbanism in a Mamluk context. André Raymond, for example, is not only one of the special editors, but also the author of three magisterial articles.

In an article called "The Mamluk City," Doris Behrens-Abouseif offers a parallel to Chapter VIII of her indispensable book, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (2007). A significant difference, however, is that her book uses three illuminating maps, of which only two are reproduced here and in reductions of 60 per cent and 70 per cent, which limit their usefulness. Partial compensation is the addition of four stunning Orientalist views of Cairo, clearly aimed at a non-specialist audience, two by Louis-François Cassas (1756–1827) and two by K. L. Libay (1814–88). It is regrettable, incidentally, that illustrations referred to throughout this massive work had to be gathered at the end of the second volume, rather than appearing with the articles they illustrate. For the reader to locate illustrations thus requires reference to the names of the authors of particular articles as listed in the table of contents.

Sophie Denoix is represented by an article called "Founded Cities of the Muslim World," which contains separate sections on both Fuṣṭāṭ and al-Qāhirah. Nelly Hanna's "Guilds in Recent Historical Scholarship" wisely emphasizes what is really recent and ignores the vehemently authoritative conclusions of forty years ago to the effect that such organizations never existed. A penultimate article by Eric Denis, as circumlocutory as its subject matter would suggest, describes what is happening in the carcinopolis of present-day Cairo, which makes the Mamluk city seem like a golden dream.



List of Recent Publications

- ‘ABD ALLĀH, SULĀFAH. *Binā’ al-Uslūb fī Muwashshahāt al-Mamlūkīyah*. Ĥimṣ: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 2009. Pp. 308.
- ‘ABD ALLĀH, SULĀFAH. *Tiqānīyāt al-Ta‘bīr ‘an Khamr fī al-Shi‘r al-Mamlūkī, Dirāsah Uslūbīyah fī Namādhij Shi‘rīyah Mutanawwi‘ah*. Ĥimṣ: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 2009. Pp. 233.
- AQSARĀ’Ī, MUḤAMMAD IBN ‘ĪSĀ. *Kitāb Nihāyat al-Su’l wa-al-Umniyah fī Ta‘allum A‘māl al-Furūsīyah*. Edited by Khālīd Aḥmad al-Mullā al-Suwaydī. Damascus: Dār Kinān lil-Ṭībā‘ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 2009. Pp. 573.
- ATĪQ, NĀHID BINT ‘UMAR. *Masā’il al-Naḥwīyah fī Kitāb Faṭḥ al-Bārī bi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī lil-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Jam‘an wa-Dirāsatan*. Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd Nāshirūn, 2009. 2 vols.
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- GHUNAYMĀN, AḤMAD IBN ‘ABD ALLĀH. *Juhūd Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah fī Tawḍīḥ Tawḥīd al-‘Ibādah*. Medina: Al-Jāmi‘ah al-Islāmīyah, 2009. 2 vols.
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- IBN QAYYIM AL-JAWZĪYAH, MUḤAMMAD IBN ABĪ BAKR. *Samā‘āt Ibn al-Qayyim min Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah wa-Mushāhadātuḥu wa-Ḥikāyātuḥu li-Faḍā’ilihī wa-Manāqibihī wa-Aḥwālīhī*. Edited by Suhayl ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Sardī. Beirut: Dār al-Nawādir, 2010. Pp. 432.
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Arabic Transliteration System

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ء	’	خ	kh	ش	sh	غ	gh	م	m
ب	b	د	d	ص	ṣ	ف	f	ن	n
ت	t	ذ	dh	ض	ḍ	ق	q	ه	h
ث	th	ر	r	ط	ṭ	ك	k	و	w
ج	j	ز	z	ظ	ẓ	ل	l	ي	y
ح	ḥ	س	s	ع	‘				
		ة	h, t (in construct)			ال	al-		
		َ	a	ُ	u	ِ	i		
		َـ	an	ُـ	un	ِـ	in		
		آ	ā	ُو	ū	ِي	ī		
		َا	ā	ُوّ	ūw	ِيّ	īy (medial), ī (final)		
		ى	á	َو	aw	ِيّ	ay		
						ِيّ	ayy		

Avoid using apostrophes or single quotation marks for ‘*ayn* and *hamzah*. Instead, use the Unicode characters ‘ (02BF) and ’ (02BE).

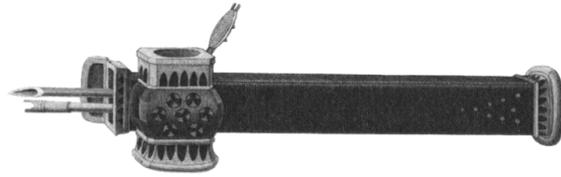
Capitalization in romanized Arabic follows the conventions of American English; the definite article is always lower case, except when it is the first word in an English sentence or a title. The *hamzah* is not represented when beginning a word, following a prefixed preposition or conjunction, or following the definite article. Assimilation of the *lām* of the definite article before “sun” letters is disregarded. Final inflections of verbs are retained, except in pausal form; final inflections of nouns and adjectives are not represented, except preceding suffixes and except when verse is romanized. Vocalic endings of pronouns, demonstratives, prepositions, and conjunctions are represented. The hyphen is used with the definite article, conjunctions, inseparable prepositions, and other prefixes. Note the exceptional treatment of the preposition *li-* followed by the article, as in *lil-sultān*. Note also the following exceptional spellings: Allāh, billāh, lillāh, bismillāh, mi’ah, and ibn (for both initial and medial forms). Words not requiring diacritical marks, though following the conventions outlined above, include all Islamic dynasties, as well as terms which are found in English dictionaries, such as Quran, sultan, amir, imam, shaykh, Sunni, Shi’i, and Sufi. Common place-names should take the common spelling in American English. Names of archaeological sites should follow the convention of the excavator.

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