

Book Reviews

The Dīwān of Ibn al-Fāriḍ: Readings of its Text Throughout History, edited by Giuseppe Scattolin (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2004). Pp. 276.

REVIEWED BY TH. EMIL HOMERIN, University of Rochester

After years of painstaking research Dr. Giuseppe Scattolin has at last published his critical edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān*. While Ibn al-Fāriḍ lived during the Ayyubid period, his verse was a dominant influence on later Arabic poetry composed under the Mamluks. Moreover, his verse and mystical ideas were, at times, sources of contention among factions of ulama during Mamluk rule, while Mamluk amirs endowed the grave and shrine of this poet whom they venerated as a saint.¹

Prior to Scattolin, many editions of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* were published during the twentieth century, yet all, excepting the edition by A. J. Arberry, lacked careful editing or were flawed in some way. As for Arberry's edition, it was based on the Chester Beatty manuscript that was independent of the main line of transmission from Ibn al-Fāriḍ's grandson, 'Alī, and so it lacked 'Alī's hagiographical introduction and appendix of additional, probably spurious verse, ascribed to Ibn al-Fāriḍ.² Now, Scattolin has joined these separate lines of transmission in his meticulous edition of the *Dīwān*.

Adding to this work's importance is Scattolin's re-discovery during his research of several old manuscripts of the *Dīwān*, including one in Konya dating from between 1242 and 1274, making it the oldest known manuscript. Similar to the Chester Beatty manuscript, it is independent of 'Alī's transmission and contains the same fifteen major poems, in addition to a few quatrains and riddles. Scattolin used the Konya manuscript as his primary text to which he then added material from other manuscripts, including those representing 'Alī's line of transmission. In his introduction, Scattolin enumerates and describes the eight manuscripts and thirteen earlier printed editions whose readings and variants appear in the notes to the poems. Scattolin then carefully walks the reader through the critical apparatus of his own edition, which is followed by a "basic bibliography," and illustrations of some of the most important manuscripts (pp. 12–28).

Scattolin precedes this important textual information with some brief

¹See Th. Emil Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Fāriḍ, His Verse, and His Shrine*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York, 2001).

²A. J. Arberry, *The Mystical Poems of Ibn al-Fāriḍ* (Dublin, 1952, 1956).



speculations on the stages of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's life (pp. 1–4). He states that during his last years in Cairo, Ibn al-Fāriḍ chose "to live in seclusion," though we have no evidence to support this. Given that Ibn al-Fāriḍ was married, had at least three children, and a number of students, this seems unlikely. Further, when discussing Ibn al-Fāriḍ's shrine, Scattolin claims that it was "in time enlarged and embellished by many sultans" (p. 3). In fact, to my knowledge, the shrine was never formally endowed by a Mamluk or Ottoman sultan, though they may have attended activities there and given donations. For the most part, the shrine was supported by a *waqf* established by two Mamluk amirs, Tīmūr al-Ibrāhīmī and his protégé Barqūq al-Nāṣirī (d. 877/1472).³

As in his previous studies of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Scattolin reads the poet's verse, particularly the *Al-Tā'īyah al-Kubrā*, as an autobiographical account of the poet's mystical experience, in this case of "separation" (*farq*) from God, "absolute unity" (*al-ittiḥād*) with God, and "universal, all-comprehensive union . . . the synthesis of the One and the Many" (*al-jam'*) (pp. 5–6). Scattolin then notes the importance of love to Ibn al-Fāriḍ as a catalyst to his mystical transformation to the "Perfect Man." Despite Scattolin's use of Ibn al-'Arabī's terminology to describe this mystical apotheosis, he is careful to distinguish between some of the ideas of these two contemporaries (pp. 7–11). Scattolin ends this section by offering a partitioning of the *Al-Tā'īyah al-Kubrā* into ten sections "to help the reader to better understand Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mystical experience expressed in his great mystical poem" (pp. 11–12).

Throughout his introduction, Scattolin makes scarcely any mention of the classical Arabic poetic tradition of which Ibn al-Fāriḍ is a part. Addressing this slightly is the preface by a French translator of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Jean-Yves L'Hôpital (pp. ix–xx). There L'Hôpital touches upon the difficult and, at times, obscure poetic language of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, his use of alliteration for its musical qualities, and the appearance of place names and pilgrimage stops in his verse. L'Hôpital also draws attention to Ibn al-Fāriḍ's use of the "fawn" or "gazelle" to represent his beloved, whom the poet also identifies by the name Laylá and the names of other famous Arab beauties. Like Scattolin, L'Hôpital ends with a short discussion of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's monistic ideas and experience. While both discussions of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's verse and mystical life are limited, Scattolin's critical Arabic edition of the *Dīwān of Ibn al-Fāriḍ* is of immense value, and he is to be commended for his substantive contribution to the study of Sufism and Arabic literature.

³Homerin, *Arab Poet*, 60–62, and idem, "The Domed Shrine of Ibn al-Fāriḍ," *Annales islamologiques* 25 (1990): 133–38.



STUART J. BORSCH, *The Black Death in Egypt and England: A Comparative Study* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005). Pp. 195.

REVIEWED BY RALPH S. HATTOX, Hampden-Sydney College

The potential reader of this comparison of the effects of the fourteenth-century visitation of the Plague in Egypt with those in England should know from the beginning that this is by no means a comprehensive examination of all aspects—social, intellectual, psychological, institutional—of that calamity. It compares, rather, the dramatically different economic consequences of the Black Death on the two areas.

Borsch points out for the potential generalist that the sources for the economic history of Mamluk Egypt are by no means as vast or as accessible as those available for late-medieval Western Europe. He mines the usual archival and literary sources: *waqfiyāt*, chronicles, administrative handbooks, and the like. For his raw economic data for pre- and post-Plague Egypt, he relies on a land survey of 1315 and an Ottoman survey from the end of the sixteenth century. In order to exploit the former effectively and to extrapolate from it data which could be compared to the later survey, he had to establish the value of the *dīnār jayshī*, used in the 1315 survey. He devotes an entire chapter to this discussion of establishing meaningful currency equivalents.

Borsch is aware of the methodological questions that are raised by comparing two such seemingly disparate regions as England and Egypt, and, if he doesn't manage to eliminate all potential objections, he does make a good case for his approach. He points out the similarities of the two: relatively equivalent populations, similarities in the decentralized relationship of the "nobility" and the sovereign, the relative insularity of both, and their similar agriculturally-based economies. He is perhaps a bit too quick to summarily dismiss as an "Orientalist trap" consideration of non-economic cultural factors, and their inherent differences, as having some economic impact. Still, by the end of Borsch's discussion the reader is willing to allow that England and Egypt, if not identical, were near-analogues in their respective regions.

Why, then, were the economic consequences of the calamity so different for the two lands? In England there was the well-known economic benefit for those who survived: wages rose, rents fell, as did the prices of foodstuffs. In Egypt, by contrast, Borsch's comparison from his pre- and post-Plague data sets demonstrates that wages dropped, rents and prices of foodstuffs rose.

The answer Borsch provides is multifaceted, and based on institutional and social factors. There is first and foremost the dramatic difference in patterns of landholding. While both states treated land and the revenues derived from



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agricultural activity as the source of support for a warrior aristocracy, the relationship of each aristocracy to the land and its tenants diverged radically. In Egypt the members of the Mamluk institution were supported by *iqṭāʿ*'s, uninheritable and alienable grants of land, supplying revenue for an individual Mamluk or amir, which were administered by civil servants. Since tenure in any particular holding might be short, there was great incentive to milk them for all possible short-term gains, and little incentive to make long-term improvements. The beneficiaries neither lived on their estates, nor did they have more than minimal familiarity with their holdings or tenants; actual physical visits to one's holdings, if they occurred at all, were limited to participation in expeditions to deal with revolts, Bedouin incursions, or other sources of peril. In these expeditions Mamluks reflected an understanding that, their constant infighting and jockeying for power notwithstanding, they had a common interest in keeping the countryside in line.

This solidarity is cited by Borsch as one of the chief factors in the economic collapse that followed the Plague. When faced with a post-Plague economic crisis in which market forces would have tended to drive up wages and drive down rents and revenues, he sees the Mamluk landholders as making common cause, presenting "a united front in the face of rural labor demands," by not breaking ranks; they profited as well from state decrees which regularly raised the ceiling on rents that could be charged. While in England there were similar acts by the Crown and Parliament to mitigate the economic "hardships" of landholders as a result of the dramatic shrinkage of the supply of labor, in the end these failed, and market forces prevailed. Here each member of the landholding aristocracy was in effect competing in the marketplace with all the others for the services of labor. The long term results saw a rise in wages and a decrease in rents.

For the Egyptian peasant and for the economy of Egypt as a whole, the calamity was compounded by the dramatic deterioration of the complex irrigation system by which the annual cycles of the Nile were put to productive use. It took not only manpower but money to do the yearly maintenance chores required to keep the system functioning, and both were in short supply. Not only were there smaller revenues coming in from agricultural lands, but civil administrators, working in the interest of their individual Mamluk clients, diverted monies that would have gone to irrigation maintenance to meet the continuing revenue needs of the urban elite. More land became uncultivable, with the consequent effect on the price of foodstuffs. As their situation became dire, peasants with increasing frequency sought the perceived security of urban life; their lands, at the same time, more and more were claimed by Bedouin, a process that further exacerbated the economic collapse.

One might at first be tempted to criticize Borsch's work as in one sense uneven: rather than being a full and detailed original study of both the Egyptian



and English economies, it is more a study of the Egyptian economy, and how his findings compare with those of earlier historians concerning England; his use of primary sources is limited entirely to the Egyptian side of the equation. This is hardly a serious flaw, since it would take an almost impossibly versatile historian to be able to pursue both lines with equal skill. In weaving together material extracted from a variety of sources and shedding light on how, starting from a roughly equivalent point, the economic fate of two societies could so dramatically diverge owing to such factors as land tenure and institutional structures, Stuart Borsch has taken us one step closer to an understanding of how the modern world, starting from one near-universal Eurasian calamity, emerged as it did. As he points out, such studies as his, focusing on other societies, could profitably be taken up. The work at hand provides a solid, if not flawless, paradigm.

AḤMAD ṢUBḤĪ MAṢṢŪR, *Al-‘Aqā’ id al-Dīnīyah fī Miṣr al-Mamlūkīyah bayna al-Islām wa-al-Taṣawwuf* (Cairo: al-Hay’ah al-Miṣrīyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 2000). Pp. 404.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD MCGREGOR, Vanderbilt University

This book aims to set things straight regarding the nature of Sufism. Under a thin veneer of historiographical terminology, at base the author’s position is that Sufism is un-Islamic. In short, the author holds that Sufism arose as a deviant practice among Muslims, while in contrast Islam (as reducible to the author’s Quranic quotations) is unchanging, and thus pure, ahistorical, and monolithic. The book is not concerned with the medieval debates over various Sufi concepts or practices, but is rather a long lesson for the reader in how Mamluk era Sufism is not compatible with the author’s own (unexamined) understanding of Islamic religion. The methodological flaws run deep. The point is even made that one of the duties of the historian is to identify and warn contemporary readers against “mistakes” like Sufism. It does not seem to bother the author that this methodology is utterly untenable when it turns to material outside the researcher’s own cultural sphere. Coptic religious history, or say that in China under the Ming dynasty, are thus beyond the horizon of this historian.

The first part of the introduction provides a discussion of the nature and goals of Sufism, followed by sections on its origins and relation to asceticism (*zuhd*). The reader is told that a detailed treatment of Sufi terminology is impossible here because Sufis are inconsistent and utterly subjective in their use of terminology



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(pp. 15, 41). The impossibility of a religious tradition sustaining itself while its participants cannot communicate with one another, or those who come after them, does not arise. In reality, there is plenty to say about the evolution of Sufi terminology (or, for example, theological or legal terms), but the fact that vocabulary shifts in meaning over time is surely not proof that it is subjective. The author builds on this "subjectivity," tying the Sufi idea of *dhawq* (tasting) to the Quranic idea of *hawā'* (desire, selfish passion). The aim here is to conflate mystical epistemology with the Quranic condemnation of "him who takes his own passion as a god. . . ." (Quran 25:43). The origin of Sufism is predictably Christian and Jewish, although no historical evidence is provided. Instead, a Quranic quotation to the effect that it itself is the perfection of religion is taken as proof that Sufism could thus have nothing to add or be of any use (p. 22). The entire premise that any religious inspiration (*wahy*) could occur after the revelation of the Quran is rejected (p. 23). The ascetics are superior to the Sufis because they are diligent in their prescribed prayers, but asceticism is finally also rejected as fundamentally superfluous (pp. 26–28).

The second part of the introduction asserts that Sufism was behind an intellectual decline among the ulama of the Mamluk period. Evidence for this decline is the proliferation of commentaries and epitomes, although no details are provided. This correlation between intellectual decline and the production of commentaries is adopted without question. The only heroes fighting this decadence were the *mujtahids*, like Ibn Taymīyah. The introduction ends with a concise summary of the author's approach and ultimate conclusion, one that denies any historicity to Islam, reducing it to an abstract theological statement that takes it out of the realm of human history. We are told that, ". . . in the end Sufism is simply the sum of the opinions of those who follow it . . . and what disgraces Sufis disgraces Sufism; but Islam is different, it is the rule of God over humanity. It is unaffected by the faults of Muslims" (p. 41). Logically, what is said here about Sufism would also apply to the elaboration of *kalām* or Islamic law, but that goes unsaid.

The body of the study takes up figures such as al-Ghazālī, Ibn 'Arabī, and Ibn Taymīyah. Critics of Ibn 'Arabī such as al-Baqā'ī are touched upon, as is his defender al-Sha'rānī. A few lesser but more colorful Sufis of the period are singled out as examples of the poison fruit of Sufism. These include al-Bājirbaqī, Ibn Baqaqī, and Ibn Labbān, each of whom held beliefs accepted only by his followers. A long description is then provided of the figure of the *walī*, his veneration by his followers, and the un-Islamic nature of it all. There is no analysis, historical or otherwise, in this treatment.

The author picks from the historical chronicles familiar to all historians of Mamluk Egypt. However, the bibliography does provide brief annotations to eighty-eight manuscripts (most of them hagiographical documents) found in the Egyptian



National Library. The concluding section restates the assertion that this study “makes clear the gap between the religion of Islam and the beliefs of many Muslims in the Mamluk period” (p. 359). Sufism has been a mistaken path taken by many. The author deduces from this the root of an intellectual decline in the Islamic world, one that would later open the door to European invasion and domination (p. 373). The author asserts finally that Sufism, like Wahhabism, is an extreme best avoided.

This book offers young academics in Egypt and elsewhere a poor model for critical or stimulating research. Viewing history as a soapbox from which to expound one’s own religious beliefs has no place in a multi-religious global village. Perhaps even worse, this approach tempts the researcher with short cuts out of difficult historical complexities, be they methodological or fact-based. Tendentiousness, religious or otherwise, smooths over the difficulties that writing history should embrace, and even seek out.

ANNE-MARIE EDDÉ, *La principauté Ayyoubide d’Alep (579/1183–658/1260)*
Freiburger Islamstudien, vol. 21 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999). Pp.
727.

REVIEWED BY BETHANY J. WALKER, Grand Valley State University

Anne-Marie Eddé’s *opus magnum*, a seven-hundred page tome on the Ayyubid Principality of Aleppo, is based on her doctoral dissertation, written under the supervision of Dominique Sourdel and submitted to the Sorbonne in 1995. The author, who is now Director of the Institut de Recherche et d’Histoire des Textes at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris, worked closely with the leading French and German scholars of the Ayyubid and Crusader Levant, including Jean-Claude Garcin, Jean Richard, Heinz Halm, and Hans Mayer, and the author’s debt to these scholars is duly acknowledged throughout the volume. This formidable monograph is the most synthetic, detailed, and exhaustive textual study of Ayyubid Aleppo now available. Much more than another analysis of the Ayyubid city, Eddé’s work is a finely-tuned analysis of the principality and the role of the city within it during a brief eighty-year period.¹ Building on the textual

¹Previous works on Ayyubid Aleppo include: Muḥammad Rāghib al-Ṭabbākh, *I’lām al-Nubalā’ bi-Tārīkh Ḥalab al-Shahbā’* (Aleppo, 1923–26); J. Sauvaget, *Alep, essai sur le développement d’une grande ville syrienne, des origines au milieu du XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1941); D. Sourdel,



and theoretical foundations laid by Jean Sauvaget in his 1941 monograph,² Eddé spins his short chapter on the Ayyubid city into an encyclopedic compendium and analysis of written sources relevant to the principality as whole when it was at its height, through an evaluation of Aleppo's political, economic, religious, and social institutions. The work offers a sophisticated model of textual criticism that is applicable to any period of research.

The goals of Eddé's study, described in detail in her Introduction, are to present a synthesis of the data available on Ayyubid Aleppo, culled entirely from the textual sources, and to situate the city in the context of its principality and the principality in a larger political context (p. 16). She deliberately eschews theoretical works and non text-based studies in favor of a purely textual approach to the topic, in spite of the availability of a wealth of art historical, archaeological, and anthropological sources. She is, moreover, careful to cite only those secondary sources whose focus areas are geographically close to and roughly contemporary with hers: comparisons with Ayyubid Egypt are kept to a minimum, there are practically no references to scholarship on medieval Europe, and Mamluk sources are carefully selected for their relevance to twelfth- and thirteenth-century northern Syria. She justifies such an approach to her topic, accepting the pitfalls in rejecting other forms of supporting scholarship, in these terms:

Nous avons voulu au contraire rester au contact des sources au risqué d'apparaître parfois trop analytique. L'intérêt d'une telle étude n'était pas de faire correspondre des connaissances générales acquises sur d'autres terrains à la situation en Syrie du Nord, mais bien au contraire de partir des données éparpillées et fragmentées qui apparaissent dans nos sources pour aboutir à une synthèse régionale qui offer, malgré ses imperfections, sa propre originalité (p. 586).

While her selection is focused, the sources she adopts for her study are extensive, combining chronicles, biographical dictionaries, geographies, royal decrees, treaties, and coins (limited to a coin catalogue and one numismatic study in article form) and epigraphy (however to a limited degree). The Arabic sources include Ibn Shaddād, 'Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn al-'Adīm, and Ibn Wāṣil,

"Esquisse topographique d'Alep intro-muros à l'époque ayyoubide," *Annales archéologiques de Syrie* 2 (1952): 109–33; H. Gaube and E. Wirth, *Aleppo: Historische und geographische Beiträge zur baulichen Gestaltung, zur sozialen Organisation, und zur wirtschaftlichen Dynamik einer vorderasiatischen Fernhandelsmetropole* (Wiesbaden, 1984).

²Sauvaget, *Alep*.



among the chroniclers; the biographical dictionaries of Ibn al-Qiftī and Ibn al-‘Adīm (*Bughyat al-Ṭālib fī Tārīkh al-Ḥalab*); the topographies of al-Ḥarawī, Yāqūt, and Ibn Shaddād (*Al-A‘lāq al-Khaṭīrah fī Dhikr Umarā’ al-Shām wa-al-Jazīrah*); and a variety of Mamluk sources that incorporate earlier, Ayyubid material (al-Nuwayrī, al-Dhahabī, al-Qalqashandī, al-Yūnīnī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Khallikān, al-Ṣafadī, Ibn al-‘Imād, al-Dimyāṭī, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, and Abū al-Fidā’, among others). Eddé also makes use of several sources in Persian (Ibn Bībī, for the Seljuks of Rum, and Rashīd al-Dīn, for the Il Khanids), Syriac (Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus), Armenian (many brief accounts), and Latin (largely secondary sources on the Crusader states), all in French translation. Much of the quantitative (prices, salaries, revenues), enumerative (lists of settlements and public buildings), and demographic (family trees, charts of *nisbahs* and professions) data are culled with care from these sources and are tabulated in convenient forms in the many appendices that are included at the back of the monograph.

In terms of its structure, *La principauté Ayyoubide d’Alep* consciously mirrors that of the Ayyubid chapter in Sauvaget’s monograph,³ which was divided into a historical survey; an analysis of urban development; and descriptions of the archaeological remains of the city, its basic characteristics, and its physical development. Eddé divides her study into two parts: political and social history. Part One largely expands on Sauvaget’s historical summary, focusing on the reigns of al-Zāhir Ghāzī (579–613/1183–1216), al-‘Azīz (613–34/1216–36), and al-Nāṣir Yūsuf II (634–58/1236–60). Each chapter is subdivided into multiple sections, based on the outstanding characteristics or developments of each reign, such as the diplomatic relations of the principality under al-Zāhir, an assessment of Tughril’s regency, a comparison of the early and later years of al-Nāṣir’s reign and a description of his diplomatic and strategic failures; and the events leading up to the Mongol invasion. Eddé’s unique contribution in this section is diplomatic history, a topic on which she had already published extensively. On this topic she writes a nuanced and thoroughly documented assessment of the Aleppan sultans’ diplomatic relations with other Ayyubid states, the Seljuks of Anatolia, the Armenians of Cilicia, the Crusaders, and Italian mercantile states. She concludes Part One with a sobering evaluation of the collapse of Ayyubid Syria, which she suggests was due as much to structural failures (Ayyubid rivalries, al-Nāṣir’s political and diplomatic inexperience, the ethnic heterogeneity of Aleppo’s army) as to the Mongol invasion of 658/1260 (pp. 191–92).

Part Two is dedicated to social and administrative history in a broad sense and more fully explores themes that were merely summarized in Sauvaget. It is subdivided into three sections: administrative history (the institutions and power

³Ibid., 129–54.



of the state), social history (the religious and cultural life of Aleppo), and what the author calls “the activities of the countryside and towns” (in short, the hinterland). Section One aims at identifying the different levels and forms of power in thirteenth-century Aleppo (political, economic, and social), their institutional forms, and how they interact and intersect on the levels of officialdom and civilian society.⁴ Eddé considers the institution of *iqṭāʿ* a central component in the multi-faceted power structure binding the state to its officials and the general population. The author traces the development of *iqṭāʿ* in the principality and offers promising lines of inquiry for evaluating political, economic, and social relations in the process. She suggests that as part of the process towards centralization, Sultan al-Zāhir strengthened the hand of the state over the powerful amirs by reassigning their *iqṭāʿ*’s, which were largely important towns and fortresses, to governors (*wālīs*) or their lieutenants (*nāʾibs*), compensating amirs with *iqṭāʿ*’s consisting of villages (or shares thereof) and agricultural land (pp. 281–82). In this way strategic centers came under the direct control of the sultan and agricultural land was essentially farmed out to amirs and occasionally rotated, foreshadowing the Mamluk *iqṭāʿ* system of the fourteenth century. This analysis is followed by a description of Aleppo’s defenses and a highly readable and entertaining narrative of Ayyubid warfare (pp. 291–310). Her suggestions about the long-term environmental impact of siege warfare, based entirely on written sources, may be supported by archaeological and environmental research and warrant further consideration by specialists in these fields. Military presence was not always detrimental to the countryside, however. For the author, fortresses were the expression of the power of the Ayyubid state in all its forms: they were not merely military centers but were also integral to the economic life of the countryside by generating development. Citing written sources, she claims that village markets thrived under the economic stimulus of castles nearby and that their markets often collapsed and the villages declined or were abandoned once a fortress was abandoned or destroyed (p. 298). Again, such patterns are confirmed by the archaeological record, which illustrates in sometimes vivid ways how closely garrison and village economies were intertwined in the Ayyubid and Mamluk-period Levant.⁵

⁴This theme has recently been the focus of a three-year joint research initiative of the French and American institutes in Cairo, called “Exercising Power in the Age of the Sultanates” (www.arce.org/ifao/ifao.html). The proceedings of a bi-lingual conference launched by this project and held in Amman in May, 2005, is being published by l’Institut Français du Proche Orient in Damascus and Amman (*L’Exercice du pouvoir à l’age des sultanats: Bilad al Shām et l’Iran*, ed. B. J. Walker and J-F. Salles [in press]).

⁵To cite only one example, it appears that the village of Ḥisbān in central Jordan was gradually abandoned after the relocation of the Mamluk citadel to nearby Amman in the mid-fourteenth century. The village likely supplied the garrison with foodstuffs and played a role in the processing



Eddé devotes her second section of Part Two to Aleppo's religious and cultural life, for which she relies heavily on biographical dictionaries and such entries included in chronicles in reconstructing social classes, power relations, economic activity, and demographic change.⁶ One of the most interesting themes to emerge from this section is that the revival of Sunni Islam under the Ayyubids did not necessarily eradicate Shi'ism.⁷ Aleppo retained its religious diversity, even while numerous madrasahs were built to promote "orthodox" Islam and the sultan ordered from time to time an attack on local Shi'ah communities. Eddé cites three different Shi'ah communities in Aleppo, all of which maintained a presence in the city throughout the period and are attested in the written sources: the *ashrāf* (direct descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad), the Imamīs (Twelver Shi'is), and the assimilated Ismailīs (a holdover from the period of Fatimid control of the region) (pp. 436–37).

The final section is the most innovative of the monograph and should have the most to offer social historians. It deals with what is often called the "hinterland," that is rural society and the physical landscape and resources of the countryside. Maintaining her concern with power relations throughout, Eddé carefully combs the texts for references to the countryside and the fellahin.⁸ She describes the overwhelming concern for water in the sources and the methods used to capture, transport, and store it. She describes the natural resources of the countryside, including agricultural products, timber, salt, and minerals, and the exploitation of these resources by the state and *muqta*'s.⁹ Unfortunately, many of these descriptions take the form of lists, which is often all the original texts had to offer on such subjects. Eddé also attempts to describe village-Bedouin relations (p. 500) and the ranking of settlements (pp. 570–73) through the written sources. Here, however,

and distribution of cane sugar for the state official stationed there. See B. J. Walker, "Mamluk Administration of Transjordan: Recent Findings from Tall Hisban," *Al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* 13, no. 2 (2001): 29–33; B. J. Walker and Ø. S. LaBianca, "The Islamic *Qusur* of Tall Hisban: Preliminary Report on the 1998 and 2001 Seasons," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 47 (2003): 443–71; and B. J. Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilād al-Shām* in the Fourteenth Century: The Case of Hisban," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62, no. 3 (2003): 241–61.

⁶The author identifies twelve amirs and over 344 names of the civilian elite in the biographical entries for this study (p. 18).

⁷In this she disagrees with Sauvaget, who asserts that the madrasahs succeeded to such a degree in their proselytizing functions that Shi'i Islam survived merely as the doctrine of a weak and disappearing community that played no active role in Aleppan society (Sauvaget, *Alep*, 137).

⁸Her primary sources in this respect are Ibn al-'Adīm, Ibn Shihnah, Ibn Shaddād, and Yāqūt.

⁹The medieval texts, once again, offer tantalizing information on contemporary assessments about environmental decline. Deforestation, for example, is attributed by the Arab sources to the construction of new homes and to siege warfare (p. 497). Eddé makes the most of references, as few of them as there are, to generate a meaningful narrative.



is where over-reliance on the medieval texts and refusing to incorporate the results of archaeological and anthropological research (which has an extensive literature on the subject) weaken the narrative: the author has little to say about village or nomadic life in general, admitting that the sources are largely silent about such matters. In short, one cannot discuss the “hinterland” in any depth without recourse to the archaeological literature.

Her written sources, however, are strong when it comes to numbers: Eddé exerts much effort in reconstructing price lists of agricultural commodities and assessing price fluctuations of the same (pp. 554–58). Her population estimates illustrate the most creative and rigorous use of the textual material at her disposal (pp. 558–65). Eddé arrives at an estimate of 50,000–80,000 people living in Aleppo on the eve of the Mongol invasion, a number at which she arrives using a variety of methods adopted in earlier studies on Islamic cities, based on: the number of baths in the city (one bath servicing 3,000–5,000 people), the number of *masjids*, city density calculated at 200 people/hectare (applied in studies on Nishapur, among other cities), the number and size of houses, and the size of the city’s Great Mosque. Eddé uses a combination of all of these and checks them against numbers provided by the texts, which she admits are probably exaggerated by the Arab historians.

In her intensive and extensive, I should say exhaustive, use of the available textual material Eddé is to be congratulated. It is a gargantuan task, and she makes the most of her source material to write a coherent and ambitious narrative. It is also in the exclusive use of these sources that she is to be criticized. Although Eddé justifies her methodology in her Introduction, and indeed reminds her reader of this throughout the monograph, the “grand narrative” suffers in places, nonetheless, because there has been no recourse to the rich scholarly literature generated by art historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, and environmental historians.¹⁰ The treatment of Ayyubid Aleppo is, thus, uneven, with strengths in the analysis of political and economic history but a weakness in cultural history. To her credit, the author is more than aware of such deficits,¹¹ acknowledging throughout where her sources fail and presenting her work as only a first stage in a synthesis of available written sources on the topic (p. 15). In this regard, it is the questions that emerge from her reading of the more limited sources that are the most interesting

¹⁰The author does cite a few art historical sources, but they are out-of-date and do not reflect the best of the literature available for her study.

¹¹Her goal is ultimately synthesis of the fractured written record and to let that record speak for itself: “L’intérêt d’une telle étude n’était pas de faire correspondre des connaissances générales acquises sur d’autres terrains à la situation en Syrie du Nord, mais bien au contraire de partir des données éparpillées et fragmentées qui apparaissent dans nos sources pour aboutir à une synthèse régionale qui offre, malgré ses imperfections, sa propre originalité” (p. 586).



and should generate scholarly research in this field for years to come. Such questions as the role of the *muqta'* in planting decisions, what accounts for village abandonment, how to describe political actors and action, what was the relationship between central and regional powers, and how to define Aleppo as a "city" are promising lines of inquiry across the disciplines.

These criticisms aside, Eddé's monograph offers one of the best models for textual criticism in modern Islamic historiography and is the best description available to us today of Ayyubid Aleppo; it is beautifully written, exhaustive in its textual synthesis and analysis, and a truly excellent reference for the period. Mamluk scholars will benefit from the work's holistic portrait of the principality on the eve of Mamluk annexation, which describes the institutions, personnel, settlement network, land management systems, and defensive network that were passed on to the Cairo-based sultanate. The author appropriately concludes her study with what she believes was, ultimately, the character of Ayyubid Aleppo: there was social mobility (merchants were religious scholars, scholars were soldiers, soldiers were poets), ethnic diversity and tolerance (urban neighborhoods were not segregated), and religious diversity (Christians and Shi'is were active members of their mixed communities), and the foundations were laid there for the future economic prosperity of northern Syria (through its trade with Europe) (pp. 582–86). Although the Mongol invasion dealt Aleppo a terrible blow, it was the society described by Eddé that experienced a renaissance in the fourteenth century, this time under the Mamluks (p. 586).

SHAMS AL-DĪN ABŪ 'ABD ALLĀH MUḤAMMAD IBN ABĪ BAKR IBN QAYYIM AL-JAWZĪYAH, *Al-Ṭuruq al-Ḥukmīyah fī al-Siyāsah al-Shar'īyah, aw, Al-Firāsah al-Marḍīyah fī Aḥkām al-Siyāsah al-Shar'īyah*, edited by Sayyid 'Umrān (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1323/2002). Pp. 286.

REVIEWED BY JON HOOVER, Near East School of Theology, Beirut

By the Mamluk era, much of the Muslim religious establishment had made peace with the political impotency of the caliphate, and it was widely accepted that the military rulers and their *mazālim* courts performed necessary public functions that fell outside the jurisdiction of the qadi and the jurists' *fiqh*. While not challenging the fundamental order of the Mamluk government, Ibn Taymīyah (d. 1328) and his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah (d. 1350) contested this limitation of religious law in a number of works on *al-siyāsah al-shar'īyah* (governance in accord with



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the shari‘ah). These writings reconceive the *fiqh* to encompass the offices of public administration, endow the non-caliphal ruler with religious authority, and make the overall welfare of Muslim society the aim of the shari‘ah.

A key work in the genre of *al-siyāsah al-shar‘īyah* is Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Al-Ṭuruq al-Ḥukmīyah*. This is dedicated primarily to the evaluation of evidence in court cases. In the formalistic judicial procedure of classical *fiqh*, the qadi could take only verbal testimony of reputable witnesses (and sometimes circumstantial evidence) into account. It was thus difficult to attain convictions, leading to the notion that Islamic law was inadequate in itself to maintain civil order. Rejecting these limitations, Ibn al-Qayyim draws all manner of evidence, including testimony extracted through judicial torture, into a religious framework devoted to public justice. This serves both to inform *mazālim* procedures with religious legitimacy and guidance and to challenge the qadis to expand their range of admissible evidence.

The interest of such ideas to modern Muslims seeking comprehensive Islamicization of the political sphere is apparent. This helps explain the proliferation of editions and printings of Ibn Taymīyah’s and Ibn al-Qayyim’s works on *siyāsah*. The edition of Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Al-Ṭuruq al-Ḥukmīyah* under review was prepared by Sayyid ‘Umrān. As for text critical matters, ‘Umrān tells us only that he relied on two copies (unidentified), one of which was already edited. The printing contains a number of unfortunate errors not found in previous editions (p. 9 l. 15 *hādhihi* for *hal*; p. 107 l. 15 a stray *alif* after *idhā*; p. 182 l. 3 *al-ḥukm* spelled *al-ḥukkm*, etc.), but footnotes helpfully define terms and give Quran and hadith references. In short, this text gives access to Ibn al-Qayyim’s thought, but it is little more than a trade edition, and not a very good one at that. Rather than comment further on ‘Umrān’s work, I have judged it more useful to compile a history of the printing of Ibn al-Qayyim’s text to draw attention to the numerous versions available and encourage someone to assemble a serious critical edition of this important work.

Ibn al-Qayyim’s text has come into the hands of at least eight editors since 1900. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqī’s edition (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyah, 1372/1953) is based on two late manuscripts. Although undated, al-Fiqī reckons that the first was copied in the late nineteenth century at the earliest. The second was copied in 1338/1919–20.

Al-Fiqī notes that the company Shirkat Ṭab‘ al-Kutub al-‘Arabīyah—which, he adds, was established and run by Muḥammad ‘Abduh—also made Ibn al-Qayyim’s text available, but he regrets that it seems to have been based on a corrupt source full of omissions. The edition in question was printed at the Maṭba‘at al-Ādāb wa-al-Mu’ayyad in Egypt in 1317/1899–1900. Unfortunately, it does not include any mention of its editor or manuscript source. It differs from al-Fiqī’s text at many points and suffers a large omission on p. 121 corresponding to



al-Fiqī pp. 122–38 and ‘Umrān pp. 105–19.

An edition by Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm al-‘Askarī (Cairo: Al-Mu’assasah al-‘Arabīyah lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr, 1380/1961) gives no indication of its textual sources. Perhaps al-‘Askarī had resort to al-Fiqī’s text since comparison of the first three pages in the two editions shows only very minor differences.

Muḥammad Jamīl Ghāzī’s edition appeared in both Jeddah (Dār al-Madanī lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, no date) and Cairo (Maṭba‘at al-Madanī, no date). Although paginated and typeset differently, these two printings may have come out about the same time. Both include an introduction by Ghāzī dated 29 Dhū al-Qa‘dah 1397/November 10, 1977. In the preface to the Cairo printing, the publisher Maḥmūd ‘Alī al-Madanī briefly honors the passing of his father during Ramaḍān 1398/1978. This note is absent from the otherwise identical preface to the Jeddah version. Ghāzī bases his text on a photograph—in the possession of a certain Muḥammad Naṣīf—of a complete manuscript in the Baghdad library Maktabat al-Awqāf al-‘Āmmah dated Dhū al-Ḥijjah 811/1409. Ghāzī notes that this manuscript is better than the defective sources used by ‘Askarī and al-Fiqī, and Ghāzī’s text does in fact differ from these two at many points.

A printing by Ibrāhīm Ramaḍān (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī, 1991) does not indicate its source. However, information in footnotes on the first three pages referring to “the printed text” (unidentified) and to textual variants mentioned by “the editor” (again unidentified) correspond to what we find in al-Fiqī’s edition.

‘Iṣām Fāris al-Ḥarastānī, another editor of Ibn al-Qayyim’s text (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1998), criticizes the poor quality of earlier editions, but regrettably he fails to note his sources. The text itself is clearly printed and is accompanied by notes defining terms and providing hadith references. There is also a hadith index. While this edition provides hadith collections and numbers, the references in ‘Umrān are more helpful in that they also indicate the books (*kitāb*) and sections (*bāb*) in the respective collections.

Coming out in the same year as ‘Umrān’s work, the text of Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad al-Shāmī (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1423/2002) is drawn from al-Fiqī and an edition by Bashīr Muḥammad ‘Uyūn, which I was unable to locate. Al-Shāmī provides no publication information for ‘Uyūn’s edition and tells us only that the latter based his text on a number of earlier printings of Ibn al-Qayyim’s work. Al-Shāmī’s primary contribution is sustained attention to the structure and rational division of the text.

Also worth mentioning is the English translation of Ibn al-Qayyim’s work by Ala’eddin Kharofa, *The Legal Methods of Islamic Administration* (Kuala Lumpur: International Law Book Services, 2000). The translation is serviceable if somewhat free, and it follows variously the Arabic of Ghāzī (Jeddah), al-‘Askarī, and al-Fiqī (in an undated printing by Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah in Beirut). Kharofa’s division



of the work into ten chapters is not found in the Arabic and sometimes obscures the flow of Ibn al-Qayyim's argument.

To conclude, substantial effort has been given over the last several decades to making Ibn al-Qayyim's *Al-Ṭuruq al-Ḥukmīyah* readily accessible. From a scholarly point of view, however, the situation is chaotic. Pagination varies widely from printing to printing. Very little progress has been made toward a critical edition, and no one available version is of such distinguished quality that it might serve as the reference standard until such time as there is a proper critical edition. The time is thus ripe for a disciplined attempt at a critical text.

‘ĀMIR NAJĪB MŪSĀ NĀṢIR, *Al-Ḥayāh al-Iqtisādīyah fī Miṣr fī al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 2003). Pp. 390.

REVIEWED BY STUART BORSCH, Assumption College

For any scholar in search of an up-to-date survey of the Mamluk economy, this book serves as a valuable resource. Its scale and scope cover a wide panorama of factors that drove and influenced the Mamluk economy. The title is slightly misleading, as the book is really a study of the agrarian, not urban side of the economy. However, this misnomer is a pleasant surprise for scholars, as the rural facets of Egypt's economy still remain neglected compared to the urban ones.

The first chapter is devoted to geography and offers fresh material for those interested in the subdivisions and routes of major canals in Egypt's agrarian system. It also provides a detailed survey of population levels during the Mamluk period. It also provides a very well-documented examination of plague deaths in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The second chapter explores the variations in landholding. It extensively details the function and operation of that enigmatic and elusively complicated structure: the *iqṭā‘* system. Although not the last word in exploring this subject, the book is very helpful in outlining and clarifying areas of this method of tax farming. The book then describes the agrarian side of pious endowments (*waqf*), relating the ways in which funds were channeled from donor to tax farmer and tax farmer to the endowment. The nature of *rizq* as well as *milk* lands are also discussed here.

The third chapter is devoted to the organization of agrarian life, a subject that has been relatively ignored in previous studies. The use of specific agricultural tools is described here, as well as the way in which labor was applied to different applications. The all-important irrigation system is studied in careful detail, a



systematic if not novel approach to the structure of wet-farming in the delta and valley of the Nile. This chapter also includes a very engaging exploration of the social conflicts and problems associated with the systems of *iqṭā'* and *waqf*.

Chapter four serves as an encyclopedia of the different plants and animals raised in the agrarian economy of Egypt. The author provides a separate description and series of tables on the various kinds of crops grown for proto-industry and urban consumption. It also covers, in some depth, the use of animals for traction and pasture in the rural life of Egypt.

Chapter five examines, minutely, the kinds of rents or taxes imposed on peasants. Some of this is a repeat of details that can be found in other sources, but it serves well as a general outline of the organization of *kharāj*, *'ushr*, *jizyah*, and *mukūs*. For a reader approaching these subjects for the first time, this is a valuable source of reference information.

The final chapter is perhaps the best and most original in the book. The author takes on the difficult task of describing peasant life in Mamluk Egypt. This is a very difficult area due to a paucity of sources but the author is able to extract enough information to provide a fresh and cogent look at this too-often ignored arena of life in the Mamluk Sultanate.

This book provides a valuable reference for scholars, as well as keen insight into otherwise obscure areas of Egyptian life.

ḤASAN AḤMAD JAGHĀM, *Al-Jins fī A'māl al-Imām Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Sūsah: Dār al-Ma'ārif lil-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 2001). Pp. 395.

REVIEWED BY SYRINX VON HEES, Universität Bonn

The work under review claims to present examples of al-Suyūṭī's writings on matters of sexual life. In the introduction the author states his aim in writing this book: "I consider it our obligation—we, the people of this age—to re-establish connection to and better understanding of what our grandfathers left us in the form of literary and scientific heritage. We did not comprehend all the dimensions of this legacy. In many cases we did not even look at it. I hope, that (through this book) we will undermine the wall of indifference which separates the cultivated among us from the pioneers of Arab civilization, who were more tenacious than ourselves" (pp. 18–19). The author attributes special tenacity to Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, especially in his writings on sexuality. Jaghām claims that al-Suyūṭī's books on erotica, characterized by the usage of explicit sexual diction, were until



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now ignored in studies on al-Suyūṭī and his works (p. 25). He accuses modern scholars interested in al-Suyūṭī either of deliberately ignoring these works or of denying that these works were written by al-Suyūṭī. He argues that modern Arab scholars' avoiding work on these books stems from religious conservatism and apparent piety, which is a late development in Arab culture (pp. 69–78). However, in the introduction he undermines his own argument by presenting the reader with a quotation from al-Jāhīz criticizing his contemporary colleagues for avoiding explicit sexual terminology (pp. 23–24).

The author has used most of the studies and bibliographical works on al-Suyūṭī written in Arabic only. He points out, that in certain bibliographies, the names of some of these books were altered and others were not mentioned at all, due to the fear that they might offend the modesty of the readers (p. 69).

After the introduction, he presents the readers with a summery of al-Suyūṭī's biography. In it he most probably overlooked a minor mistake, claiming that al-Suyūṭī lived for 92 years (p. 33). In a subchapter he gives the characteristics of al-Suyūṭī's writings on sexuality, stating that al-Suyūṭī used the most explicit and sometimes vernacular words so as to reach the broadest public possible (pp. 63–64). He gives a typology of al-Suyūṭī's erotic literature, saying that "since al-Suyūṭī was an imam and a *faqīh*," he wrote his works according to the following schema: first Quranic testimony, second exegesis of the Quran, followed by hadith, linguistics, anecdotes and historical events, and finally poetry (p. 52). However, this typology does not apply at least to one of the books cited in this work, namely *Rashf al-Zulāl min al-Sihr al-Ḥalāl*.

The excerpts from fourteen of al-Suyūṭī's works start on page 81, thus comprising the main bulk of this book. Six works are completely devoted to "the science of coitus": *Shaqā' iq al-Utrunj fī Raqīq al-Ghunj* (pp. 81–102); *Nuzhat al-Muta'ammil wa-Murshad al-Muta'ahhil fī al-Khaṭīb wa-al-Mutazawwaj* (pp. 103–27); *Rashf al-Zulāl min al-Sihr al-Ḥalāl* (pp. 129–63); *Al-Īdāh fī 'Ilm al-Nikāh* (pp. 165–91); *Al-Wishāh fī Fawā'id al-Nikāh* (pp. 193–228); *Al-Ayk fī Ma'rifat al-Nayk* (pp. 229–39). In another part, Jaghām selects quotations on sexual life from eight works by al-Suyūṭī dealing with various subjects: *Nuzhat al-Julasā' fī Ash'ār al-Nisā'* (pp. 243–49); *Al-Mustazraf fī Akhbār al-Jawārī* (pp. 251–59); *Nuzhat al-'Umr fī al-Tafḍīl bayna al-Bīd wa-al-Sūd wa-al-Sumr* (pp. 261–66); *Kitāb al-Raḥmah fī al-Ṭibb wa-al-Ḥikmah* (pp. 267–91); *Ghāyat al-Iḥsān fī Khalq al-Insān* (pp. 293–307); *Laqṭ al-Murjān fī Aḥkām al-Jānn* (pp. 309–22); *Al-Kanz al-Madfūn wa-al-Falak al-Mashḥūn* (pp. 323–41); *Al-Muzhir fī 'Ulūm al-Lughah wa-Anwā' ihā* (pp. 343–50).

In this main part of Jaghām's book the author does not specify the reason for selecting certain extracts and omitting others. Most of the works from which Jaghām extracted his selections were edited recently, as he mentions himself, and



the rest were printed in the nineteenth century, mainly in Egypt. In some cases, he criticizes the editors and corrects their work without referring to any original manuscript (for example, p. 95). It is evident from the footnotes that he did not use original manuscripts. His footnotes are not systematic and precise. In many cases he does not provide page numbers of the secondary literature he is citing, nor any information on the editions of primary sources he is using. Due to the lack of proper usage of quotation marks and footnotes it is sometimes impossible to distinguish between the comments of the author and the original text of al-Suyūṭī.

A work which is reproduced in toto is *Rashf al-Zulāl min al-Siḥr al-Ḥalāl*. In the introductory comment on this work the author argues that al-Suyūṭī's intention in writing this book was to fight the widespread homosexual behavior of his contemporaries. This is the interpretation of Jaghām, who also claims that showing homosexuals the delights of heterosexual life is a proven cure for homosexuality in our days (p. 133). Such an interpretation and such a statement are definitely questionable. The author projected his own opinion onto al-Suyūṭī's book, which belongs to the *maqāmāt* genre; its language and message are not at all pedantic.

Jaghām, without referring to any manuscript, tries to reconstruct a work attributed to al-Suyūṭī, namely *Al-Ayk fī Ma'rifat al-Nayk*. His reconstruction of al-Suyūṭī's work is very dubious, because the excerpts he uses are derived from another book by Ni'mat Allāh al-Jazā'irī, where the latter does not at all indicate that this material belongs to al-Suyūṭī (pp. 229–39).

Jaghām states that the medical work of al-Suyūṭī is disappointing because it is full of descriptions of superstitious practices (pp. 268–69 and 272–73). In footnotes he tries to explain to the reader the names of some spices used in medical prescriptions. However, he fails in a number of cases, as for example his fantastic explanations for *dār ṣīnī* and *qāqūlah*, which are simply cinnamon and cardamom (p. 274).

In the final analysis this work is not a scholarly contribution to our knowledge of al-Suyūṭī and his writings on erotica.

AḤMAD ḤUṬAYṬ, *Qaḍāyā min Tārīkh al-Mamālīk al-Siyāsī wa-al-Ḥaḍārī (648–923 H/1250–1517 M)* (Beirut: al-Furāt lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2003). Pp. 295.

REVIEWED BY AMALIA LEVANONI, University of Haifa

This volume is a selection of Ḥuṭayṭ's articles on important issues in the history of the Mamluk Sultanate (648–923/1250–1517). It is divided into two parts consisting



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of eleven chapters, which have previously been published individually as articles. The first includes four chapters dealing with contemporary historiography, both Mamluk and European, while the second contains seven chapters on internal issues in the Mamluk Sultanate and its foreign relations with the Mongol Ilkhanate and the Crusaders. The book also includes an introduction, index, and a short biography of the author.

Part One of the book begins with a chapter on the reign of al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 658–76/1260–77) and one on the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (710–41/1310–41). These are followed by two chapters on the treaties signed during Baybars' reign, which coordinated land use, commercial activity, and security between the Mamluks and the Franks.

Chapters in Part Two deal with a variety of political, religious, and economic issues. These include chapters on the Mamluk Sultanate's relations with the Kasrawānī hillmen, Cyprus, and the Kārimī merchants. Other chapters deal with issues of religious institutions under the Mamluks, such as the role of the Abbasid Caliphate and the construction and maintenance of mosques and madrasahs by the elite. The book ends with a chapter devoted to the biases of contemporary Western historiography on the Mamluks.

The rationale behind dividing the book into two parts is not clear. If a division in such a volume is necessary at all, then all chapters dealing with documents and historiography should have been systematically included in one part, and the rest, which discuss Mamluk institutions and historical events, in another. This volume relies heavily on and, in fact, summarizes Western and French research in particular, up until the late 1970s. Only rarely is a recent study mentioned and therefore the book's contribution to the present state of Mamluk research is small. Moreover, the preface offers a promise that new data is included in the volume in addition to the chapters already published by Ḥuṭayṭ. Unfortunately, the reprinted chapters do not appear in their original format nor is any indication given as to where and when they were previously published. Thus, even the difficult task of going back to Ḥuṭayṭ's original publications in order to discover the book's new contributions has been rendered impossible. Despite these drawbacks, this volume serves as a testament to the author's broad research activity. Indeed, to the present reviewer's mind, it might have been more appropriate had this book appeared as a variorum volume in honor of Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ as one of the leading Arab scholars of Mamluk history.



ŞUBĤĪ ‘ABD AL-MUN‘IM, *Al-Mughūl wa-al-Mamālīk: al-Siyāsah wa-al-Sirā‘* (Cairo: al-‘Arabī lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 2001). Pp. 135.

REVIEWED BY ANNE F. BROADBRIDGE, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

In this short work Şubĥī ‘Abd al-Mun‘im discusses three aspects of Mongol-Mamluk interaction during the Ilkhanate in Iran (1258–1335): the period of hostility and warfare (1258–1317), the period of peaceful relations (1317–35), and cultural and social cooperation during this latter period. A secondary interest for ‘Abd al-Mun‘im is the role that Christians played as military allies of the Mongols during the period of hostility, but this theme disappears in the two later sections. ‘Abd al-Mun‘im used Arabic sources, and contemporary works either in Arabic or translated from other languages. Although he consulted neither Persian nor Armenian sources directly, he did rely on works based on them. Nevertheless this leads to a certain weakness in the analysis, for both the Armenian and Persian sources must themselves be read for proper treatment of Mamluk-Ilkhanid relations. ‘Abd al-Mun‘im’s Arabic sources include all the usual chronicles, but no biographical dictionaries, which is unfortunate; nor did he include a single work by Muĥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, the official biographer for Baybars, Qalāwūn, and Khalīl, for no reason that I can understand.

I found the work to be creative, interesting, and thoughtful, although I did not always agree with the author’s conclusions. It does, however, have some flaws. First, it suffers from a certain simplification of the role played by religion: ‘Abd al-Mun‘im’s discussion of cooperation between the Ilkhans and Christian rulers, for example, is full of interesting detail about Christian Mongols and their effect on historical events; however, he does not take into account the power discrepancy between the two sides, or the differences among types of Christians. Thus he never explains what it meant to be a vassal to the Mongols, nor does he distinguish between the Armenians (who were vassals), and the popes (who were not). Similarly he claims that unity in religion caused al-Nāşir Muĥammad to be on splendid terms with both Abū Sa‘īd and Choban, yet never explains why Muĥammad refused all of Abū Sa‘īd’s attempts at a marriage alliance even though he had plenty of eligible daughters, and forbid Choban from being buried in his own tomb in Medina. At times ‘Abd al-Mun‘im also seems to tweak his historical evidence to glorify Muslims more than appropriate: he says that the Mamluks defeated the Mongols at ‘Ayn Jālūt and “saved Islam,” after which the Ilkhan Hulegu died, but fails to mention that Hulegu was not even at ‘Ayn Jālūt, or that his death was five full years later. Likewise when discussing the Ilkhanid invasions of Mamluk Syria, ‘Abd al-Mun‘im makes the Mamluks look like undefeated heroes by mentioning only their victory at Marj al-Şuffār in 702/1303, and not the



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two previous invasions (699/1299–1300, 700/1300–1), during one of which the Mamluks themselves were routed (at Wādī al-Khaznadār), while during the other no battle occurred. Surely such details should be included in a serious historical work, even though they paint a less favorable picture of the Mamluks.

A greater flaw is that ‘Abd al-Mun‘im has not read extensively in the Western literature. This is an ongoing problem for Western and Middle Eastern scholars, since neither side reads enough of the other’s work (and yes, this historian includes herself). It seems sometimes that there are two parallel literatures developing, which is a shame. Here this kept the author from gaining familiarity with major ideas that would have contributed greatly to his argument. ‘Abd al-Mun‘im could have benefited from the work of Charles Melville (on the Assassins, the Hijaz, and Ghazan’s conversion); Adel Allouche (Ahmad Teguder’s hostile, not friendly, intentions towards the Mamluks); Reuven Amitai (on the Cold War, Ahmad Teguder’s conversion, and many other topics), and David Ayalon (on demographics). Nor has the author read sufficiently in Mongol history, which leads to omissions or misinterpretations: he describes the center of the empire in the 1290s as Mongolia, not China, ignores the effect of Möngke’s death on the battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt, and omits the Ilkhanid rebellion of 1319 when explaining why it took several years to arrange a peace between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Abū Sa‘īd.

But despite these flaws, I still appreciated the book: I liked ‘Abd al-Mun‘im’s smooth and coherent combination of topical and chronological approaches, his choice of precise historical detail, and most of all the sense this book gave me of a lively mind at work. For example, ‘Abd al-Mun‘im argued that Ghazan’s attacks on the Mamluks were influenced by no fewer than six interesting factors: the flight of rebel Oirats to Egypt, the rebellion of Ghazan’s governor Sülemish, a Mamluk desire to retake Baghdad, Ghazan’s own desire to transfer the Abbasid caliphate to Baghdad, Ilkhanid disdain for the Mamluks, and finally Ghazan’s attempt to increase his separation from the Great Khan in China, with whom he had broken politically. Although I myself would offer a different interpretation for the same set of events, I finished the book feeling that Ṣubḥī ‘Abd al-Mun‘im is an author with whom I would like to engage in spirited discussion.



‘IMĀD ABŪ GHĀZĪ, *Ṭūmān Bāy: al-Sulṭān al-Shahīd* (Cairo: Mīrīt, 1999). Pp. 96.

REVIEWED BY RALPH S. HATTOX, Hampden-Sydney College

Al-Ashraf Ṭūmānbāy is one of those unfortunates who, owing to the circumstances of their public careers, get less attention than they deserve. It is easy to view his reign as something of an anti-climax, to believe that the conquest of Egypt and Syria by the Ottomans was inevitable after (perhaps even before) Marj Dābiq and the death of Qāṣawh al-Ghawrī in August 1516, and that the battles of al-Raydaniya and Giza were merely epilogues to a drama that had been played out months earlier. Ṭūmānbāy, if we give him much thought at all, is seen as at best a transitional leader, a Dönitz, whose role it was merely to hold things together until the new masters arrived.

The work at hand reminds us that that view is not entirely universal, and, if it does not contribute anything profound to our understanding of the period, it does give us a glimpse at the place this Circassian holds in the Egyptian national consciousness. ‘Imād Abū Ghāzī is the editor of *Wathā’iq al-Sulṭān al-Ashraf Ṭūmān Bāy: Dirāsah wa-Taḥqīq wa-Nashr li-Ba‘d Wathā’iq al-Waqf wa-al-Bay‘ wa-al-Istibdāl*. The work at hand is not, nor is it meant to be, an in-depth examination of Ṭūmānbāy’s sultanate; it is rather a short summary of the events of his life, one volume in the publisher’s “National Heritage: Personalities” series. This is telling, for one of the author’s desires is to convey Ṭūmānbāy’s importance, despite his foreign origins, as an Egyptian hero.

Abū Ghāzī begins his narrative with the scene of Ṭūmānbāy’s execution; far from being a mere dramatic device, it underscores the fact that perhaps nothing in al-Ashraf Ṭūmānbāy’s life was quite as important as the manner and circumstances of his death. It was in this that he became, rather than a forgettable bridge between one regime and another, *al-sulṭān al-shahīd*, a martyr not for the faith, but for an independent Egypt.

A nephew of Qāṣawh al-Ghawrī, Ṭūmānbāy was given by his uncle as a gift to Qāyṭbāy. He was manumitted during the brief reign of Muḥammad ibn Qāyṭbāy, and began his rapid ascent through the ranks when his uncle became sultan. By 1505–6 he was already commander of a thousand, and two years later he was promoted to the *dawādārīyah al-kubrā*. In this capacity he became Qāṣawh’s right-hand man, overseeing collection of taxes in the Ṣa‘īd and elsewhere, acting as an intermediary with various segments of the political and religious hierarchy as well as with the populace. When his uncle left Cairo in 1516 for what was to be his final confrontation with the Ottomans, Ṭūmānbāy was the obvious choice for *nā’ib al-ghaybah* at Cairo.

For the author all this is clearly prelude to Ṭūmānbāy’s months of glory, when



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following Marj Dābiq he assumed the mantle of a dauntless fighter for a lost cause. This was no Dönitz, merely overseeing the surrender and transfer of power. Nor was he a Talleyrand, smoothly adjusting to and serving the new order. Indeed, when Selim offered him terms in return for his cooperation, he staunchly refused. The picture that Abū Ghāzī paints for us is that of a worthy man who rejects offers for position and power until he becomes convinced that his duty lay in assuming the sultanate and organizing resistance to the new order, not for the sake of his Mamluk comrades, but for the sake of the Egyptian people.

Of course many of the subordinates that thrust the sultanate upon Ṭūmānbāy would prove uncooperative in the coming months. Discontent and even treachery in the ranks, as well as monumental difficulties in raising the funds needed for further resistance, made an already daunting task a hopeless one. Ṭūmānbāy's fellow amirs insisted on falling back on al-Raydaniya to make their stand. This resulted, of course, in defeat, in part owing to deliberate treachery by those who sought to secure their futures through collaboration.

Ṭūmānbāy's determination to resist the Ottomans, or at least his sense that some duty obliged him to do so, went unabated following the rout. He organized resistance at Cairo where, for a short time, he and some seven thousand loyal troops, along with some dauntless Cairenes, managed briefly to eject the Ottomans. When the city was retaken, Selim's revenge on the town was frightful. Ṭūmānbāy himself eluded capture and fled south, where for some time, in the company of rebellious native elements as well as remnants of the Mamluk army, he conducted a somewhat effective guerrilla campaign. In the end, however, he decided on one last battle at Giza, and, defeated once again, fled to the Buḥayrah. He ultimately fell into Ottoman hands, either through betrayal by tribesmen, the relentless pursuit by Selim's agents, or his own decision to surrender. Abū Ghāzī discusses the circumstances of his captivity, and the question of whether he was tortured or well-treated by Selim. He concurs with those Arabic sources which maintain that Ṭūmānbāy was rather well-treated, and that Selim was even inclined towards clemency. In the end practical political policy dictated Selim's actions: he was convinced by renegade amirs that as long as Ṭūmānbāy lived he would be the focus of continued opposition to Ottoman rule.

Abū Ghāzī clearly feels something of a partisanship towards his subject. Ṭūmānbāy, he tells us, was revered in the memory of Egyptians for his qualities of kindness and humility, as well as for his courage on the battlefield. He does concede that Ṭūmānbāy had his faults, among which were some fairly brutal measures towards rebellious nomads and peasants in the Ṣa'īd when he was his uncle's henchman, and turning a blind eye to the corruption of those around him. But this work is clearly not one intended to demonstrate Ṭūmānbāy's shortcomings,



but rather to discuss his place in the national consciousness of Egypt in subsequent centuries.

There is little new that this book has to offer to the specialist concerning the last few decades of the Mamluk sultanate. It is in large part based on Ibn Iyās and Ibn Zūbul, and while it does incorporate some documentary material and later Egyptian sources and European travellers' accounts, there is no systematic use of contemporary or modern Turkish sources. But Abū Ghāzī's treatment of his subject offers a valuable glimpse at the reverence with which at least some modern Egyptians regard this last Mamluk sultan. To Abū Ghāzī Ṭūmānbāy was less of a Mamluk hero than an Egyptian one, who, in spite of his Circassian origins, was embraced by Egyptian public sentiment both immediately after his death and in the coming decades and centuries as a symbol of resistance to foreign occupation.

DAMIEN COULON, *Barcelone et le grand commerce d'orient au moyen âge: un siècle de relations avec l'Égypte et la Syrie-Palestine, ca. 1330–ca. 1430*, Bibliothèque de la Casa Velásquez, vol. 27 (Madrid: Casa de Velásquez, Barcelona: Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània, 2004). Pp. 933.

REVIEWED BY BENJAMIN ARBEL, Tel Aviv University

What is generally called the "Levant trade," a term reflecting the Eurocentric character of relevant studies, has for many years attracted considerable interest among historians. This also applies to its late medieval phase, when all territories of that "Levant" were ruled by the Mamluks. The three most important studies on this period are Wilhelm Heyd's old, but still useful, two-volume study of the Levant trade in the Middle Ages, published in 1885–86, and essentially based on Western sources; Subhi Labib's book on Egyptian trade in the later Middle Ages (1965), the first serious study integrating Arabic with Western sources, but with rather limited use of European archival documents; and Eliyahu Ashtor's book (1983), in which Arabic and Western sources were used as well, this time, however, including an impressive amount of unpublished material from a great variety of European archives.¹

Venice and Genoa, the main protagonists of this trade, have been for decades

¹Wilhelm Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen âge* (Leipzig, 1885–86); Subhi Y. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter (1171–1517)* (Wiesbaden, 1965); Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1983).



the favored subjects of many articles, chapters, short monographs, and publications of sources dedicated to the commercial exchange between Christian Europe and the Islamic Levant. A few other monographs were dedicated to the commercial history of single cities, such as Marseilles or Montpellier, but these were not exclusively focused on relations with the Mamluk territories. This is also the case of Carrère's important study of Barcelona's economy in the later Middle Ages and of Del Treppo's classic work on the commercial expansion of Catalonia in the fifteenth century.² It is probably the richness of the source material, a great part of which still remains unpublished, which until now has deterred scholars from writing extensive syntheses centered on the main participants in this trade. The present volume, which focuses on Barcelona's trade with Egypt and Syria-Palestine between 1330 and 1430, can therefore be considered, despite the rich historiography already dealing with the Levant trade, as an important breakthrough. As a matter of fact, this monumental book is the most detailed, thorough, and voluminous monograph hitherto published on the history of the Levant trade of one of the major trading centers of southern Europe in the late Middle Ages.

This impressive study is essentially based on archival material gleaned from different collections in Barcelona, particularly notarial documents and account books of private commercial firms, as well as official registers of the royal administration and of the city of Barcelona. These are supplemented by published sources, mainly Aragonese and, to a certain extent, Arabic as well, particularly those available in translation into Western languages.

The book is divided into three parts: the first deals with the infrastructure of trade in the wider sense of this term, including both institutional and technical factors. The discussion opens with an examination of the role of the Church and the papacy. With the idea of a Crusade still in vogue, trade with the Mamluks was officially banned by the Church, but tolerated in practice, in exchange for licenses sold by the papacy, and often resold to merchants directly involved in this activity.

The discussion then turns to the attitude of the Aragonese crown to commercial relations with the Mamluks and its relevant diplomatic interventions, with special attention to the change resulting from the rise to the throne of Alfonso V (1416–44). Probably because he was a bitter enemy of the papacy, this king tried to prove his loyalty to Christendom by allying himself with the Hospitallers of Rhodes, and by encouraging piracy in the eastern Mediterranean, all of which had negative repercussions on Catalan trade with the Mamluks. On the other hand, the king derived profits by issuing licenses to trade with the Muslims and by collecting

²Claude Carrère, *Barcelone, centre économique à l'époque des difficultés, 1380–1462* (Paris, 1967); Mario Del Treppo, *I mercanti catalani e l'espansione della Corona d'Aragona nel secolo XV* (Naples, 1972).



customs imposed on this activity. These two opposing interests were reflected in great instability in the commercial relations with the Mamluks, as if the crisis caused by the pepper monopoly imposed by the Mamluk sultan were not enough.

The city of Barcelona constituted another institutional factor influencing the development of trading relations with the Islamic Levant. It had much to gain from the Levant trade, and supported it by nominating Catalan consuls in Alexandria and Damascus. These consuls are the subject of a detailed examination, including their social and professional profile, their functions and prerogatives. The Catalan capital derived income from this trade through customs dues, and was often at loggerheads with the Crown concerning the right to collect dues on the goods imported to and exported from the city.

Ships constitute the last subject treated in this first part of the book. A database including all ships mentioned in the sources as operating between Barcelona and the Levant allows Coulon to draw a large picture of commercial shipping during the century under examination. Like their Genoese rivals, the Catalans preferred using round ships rather than galleys in their trade with the Levant, although the latter were occasionally used as well. Ship owners, shipmasters, and seamen then come under Coulon's close scrutiny, to be followed by an analysis of the vicissitudes of maritime traffic, the seasons of navigation, the routes followed, the organization of convoys and the duration of crossings. The last chapter of this part concerns piracy, an important factor in the activities of Catalans in the eastern Mediterranean.

The second part of this study deals with the mechanisms and objects of Barcelona's Levant trade: commercial techniques, the use of capital, and the goods imported and exported. It is mainly based on a serial and quantitative analysis of a large amount of notarial contracts preserved in the historical archives of Barcelona. Noteworthy is the preponderant role still occupied by the *commenda* contract, which was by then already in decline in other major centers of the Mediterranean trade, such as Venice, as a consequence of structural changes in the organization of international trade. The fact that this was also exceptional in Barcelona's trade with other regions suggests that it must have resulted from the conditions peculiar to its trade with the Mamluk Sultanate. According to Coulon, one cause of such conservatism was the absence of substantial colonies of Catalan merchants in Egypt or Syria, which forced merchants to continue in the old ways of pooling funds from different investors back home and accompanying their goods on their way to and from the Levant. This somewhat archaic pattern of commercial practices was also reflected in the field of maritime insurance. Premium insurance reached Barcelona's Levant trade relatively late, and its functions were partly covered by *cambium marittimum* (maritime exchange) contracts, which combined credit with an element of insurance. However, when premium insurance did become widespread in Barcelona's Levant trade in the 1420s, it must have constituted one of the



factors that brought profits derived from this activity to unprecedented levels. Further explanations for this relative conservatism include the low level of support offered to the merchants of Barcelona by the state, compared to the situation in Venice, Florence, and Genoa, as well as the lack of any infrastructure in the eastern Mediterranean, which meant that Venetian and Genoese merchants enjoyed intrinsic advantages over their commercial rivals.

The abundance of extant commercial contracts from the century between 1330 and 1430 allows the author to reconstruct the long-term trends of Barcelona's Levant trade, partly influenced by more general developments, such as the Black Death, and partly by political circumstances in both the Iberian Peninsula and the Mamluk Sultanate. The grave commercial crisis caused by the Plague in the mid-fourteenth century was prolonged owing to the exhaustion of the Aragonese silver mines in Sardinia, conflicts between Aragon and Castile (1356–75), and the sack of Alexandria by King Peter I of Cyprus in 1365. The evidence on investments and on shipping is unequivocal in this regard. However, from the 1370s onwards, the author has traced a slow recovery which, according to him, by the turn of the century brought the scope of investments in this trade to its pre-Plague level, and by the 1420s, to well above this level. The new crisis of the 1430s was again consequent upon political developments, namely the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples by Alfonso V and its repercussion on the maritime milieu. Trade began to revive in the 1450s, but finally collapsed owing to the civil war that started in Barcelona in 1462.

The goods normally exchanged between Barcelona and the Mamluk Sultanate were similar to those which traveled on board Venetian or Genoese ships, namely various textiles, metals, dyes, furs, and foodstuff travelling eastwards, and spices, drugs, and different dyestuff that were shipped westwards. The trade in these commodities is subject to a close examination, partly incorporating data derived from studies based on Italian sources. The impact of political developments on trade in specific goods is brought to the fore. Thus, the conquest of Famagusta by the Genoese, the great rival of the Catalans, pushed the merchants of Barcelona to trade in Syria, which had an impact on the sort of goods traded by them—more ginger at the expense of pepper (1373–1415). After 1415, Rhodes, ruled by the Knights of St. John, became a key center for Catalan trade, and pepper, brought there from Alexandria, again became the prime object of the Catalan spice trade.

The changing roles of precious products exported to Mamluk lands in exchange for spices and drugs are also exposed with great clarity in this study. In the earlier period, silver mining in Sardinia provided Catalan merchants with precious metal that could be exchanged for expensive goods imported from Egypt and Syria, but when this resource had been exhausted, a substitute was found by extracting and exporting coral and coral products from the western basin of the Mediterranean.



Since most of Coulon's data on commodities moving between Barcelona and the Levant are gleaned from contracts signed in Barcelona, the book is more informative on goods travelling eastwards than on those exported from the Levant. Nevertheless a detailed discussion of the various spices, their different types, their prices, and, as much as possible, the trends characterizing the trade in these costly products between the mid-fourteenth and the early fifteenth century are also provided.

The book's third part deals with the human factor, examining the identity of the people involved in this commercial current, and the changes characterizing Barcelona's mercantile milieu during the period under consideration. A quantitative approach is here combined with individual and family histories, offering an interesting panorama of the human aspects of this trade. According to Coulon, in the earlier phases, Barcelona's Levant trade attracted a wide variety of investors, including not only big merchants, but also women, Jews (before the 1391 pogroms), *Conversos*, inhabitants of other Catalonian towns, and even foreigners, such as Genoese and Florentines. By the end of the period, however, this trade was concentrated in the hands of a restricted group of big Barcelonese merchants. Yet, the latter were unable to use their wealth to acquire political power, since the government of the city continued to be controlled by the relatively closed oligarchy of the *honrats*. The growing tensions between these two elites finally brought about the civil war of 1462–72, which also ended the prosperity of Barcelona's Levant trade.

The book is accompanied by many tables, maps, and diagrams, three appendices covering some 200 pages (pp. 673–873), three résumés (in French, Catalan, and English), and a very useful index, including personal names, toponyms, and subjects.

His thorough reconstruction of this long-term commercial activity allows Coulon to propose several new interpretations. The author discards the earlier image of this period of Barcelona's economic history as "a period of difficulties," a term coined by Cl. Carrère. According to Coulon, although the Levant trade gradually became concentrated in a few hands, its key role as an economic engine must have positively influenced Barcelona's general economic situation, particularly between 1370 and 1430.

Another interpretative contribution is Coulon's use of the Braudelian concept of "world-economy." The term was originally coined to characterize a model of economic structure of the early modern period, namely "an economically autonomous section of the planet able to provide for most of its own needs, a section to which internal links and exchanges give a certain organic unity." According to Braudel such "world-economies" always had a "center of gravity," called by him "a world-city," and sometimes several such centers which were competing



with one another for supremacy.³ Coulon claims that the same model can be used to describe the Mediterranean economy of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with Barcelona functioning, at least for a time, as one of its three main economic centers, together with Venice and Genoa. Seen from the perspective of each of the competing economic capitals, this "world-economy" had different colors and components, but they all contended for the domination of the lucrative spice trade with the Mamluk Sultanate. The role of the latter was essential in this system, but to a great extent passive. The Mamluk Sultanate was integrated into the world systems of the Western commercial powers and largely dependent on them. This late-medieval "world-economy" was, according to Coulon, a kind of laboratory, preparing the world-economies of the early modern period.

That being said, Coulon admits that Barcelona never reached the level of involvement in Levantine trade attained by its two main rivals, Venice and Genoa. According to the author, there was no continuous presence of Catalan merchants in Egypt and Syria, commercial practices employed in this trade were outdated, and the number of ships involved and the amount of capital invested was lower than those of the two leading powers. This relative weakness resulted, according to Coulon, from the status of Barcelona's merchants in their own city as well as from Barcelona's subordinate status in the Aragonese kingdom. Unlike the two Italian republics, Barcelona remained dependent upon the policies of a crown that did not always consider the interests of Barcelona's merchants as paramount.

The size of the book and its great interest are my only excuses for the lengthy presentation of its content. What follows are a few critical remarks, which in no way are meant to diminish my admiration and esteem for this impressive and solid work. It is only natural that many of the following observations are inspired by E. Ashtor's book on the Levant trade in the later Middle Ages, where Catalans, and specifically the merchants of Barcelona, occupy a central position, and with whom Coulon is occasionally conducting a dialogue, sometimes agreeing with and sometimes arguing against Ashtor's claims. In fact it was Ashtor who already pointed to the importance of Catalan trade with the Mamluk territories during the last decade of the fourteenth century and the first decade of the fifteenth. Like Coulon, he also considered the Catalans, alongside the Venetians and Genoese, as a major trading power, distinguishing between these three and the "smaller trading nations."⁴

Our remarks will start with a question: is it useful to invest so much effort in investigating one commercial aspect of a single city, important as it may have

³Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century*, vol. 3, *The Perspective of the World*, trans. S. Reynolds (London, 1979), 22, 25–26.

⁴Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 199, 233, 236.



been? The answer, I believe, is in the affirmative for two main reasons: firstly, only in this way can one appreciate the scope, intensity, and dynamism of Barcelona's commercial contacts with the Mamluk Sultanate. The second reason is connected to Coulon's findings, according to which Barcelona was one of the centers contending for the Braudelian title of a "world-city," and that Barcelona's Levant trade was an essential component in assuring Barcelona's economic prosperity. Yet, even according to Coulon, the trade with Mamluk territories, although occupying a central place in this "world-economy," was not even the most important component of its foreign trade as measured by the capital invested and the intensity of commercial shipping. Luckily, however, Coulon is aware of this fact, and, like him, we have now to reconsider his findings in the light of studies that have dealt with the economy of Barcelona in a wider perspective. But even in a more restricted discussion, dealing with Barcelona's Levant trade, there is more to be said about the role played by other Aragonese territories in this system, especially Sicily. Some of Ashtor's remarks and his discoveries in Sicilian archives could serve as a starting point for elaborating on this issue.⁵

Not unrelated to the above is the problem of the sources. This book is mainly based on materials found in the archives and libraries of Barcelona. The use of Arabic sources is rather limited, and no use at all is made of archival material outside of Barcelona. Moreover, the extensive work carried out by Ashtor, although often cited and used throughout Coulon's book, is not always fully utilized. To give one example: apparently, no Catalan notaries were active either in Alexandria or Damascus during the period under consideration. However, Venetian notaries who were active in the Mamluk Levant also served non-Venetian clients, including Catalans. Coulon's claim that there were no colonies of Catalan merchants established in Alexandria and Damascus in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, on which he partly bases his explanation of the continued use of *commenda* contracts, contradicts evidence from the same period presented by Ashtor on the basis of Venetian notarial documents and Western travelogues.⁶ In fact, using non-Barcelonese sources could have been very useful to bridge lacunae in the archives of the Catalan capital. This can be exemplified with respect to Coulon's discussion of goods exchanged between the Mamluk Levant and Barcelona. The author's examination of this subject is essentially founded on *commenda* contracts from the registers of Barcelonese notaries. He openly admits that this fact constitutes one of the weaknesses of his data base, since goods shipped from the Levant westward would often not be recorded in these contracts. Yet we have learned from the studies of Melis, Ashtor, and others how richly documented are the lists

⁵E.g., *ibid.*, 139–40, 222, 235.

⁶*Ibid.*, 147–48, 222–23, 232–33, 236, 340.



of ship cargoes and price lists of commodities found in the Datini archives at Prato.⁷ The integration of such material would have served Coulon well.

Another observation concerns the author's calling into question Ashtor's famous thesis regarding the technological decline of Middle Eastern industries in the later Middle Ages, and more specifically, the discussion of this theme in relation to the sugar industry.⁸ Great quantities of sugar were imported from the Levant to Barcelona until 1370, when imports of this product began to decline and finally disappear from the documentation. Although it is not quite clear where this sugar originated, especially since many ships stopped over in Cyprus (which was already a major sugar producer), Coulon uses this material to question Ashtor's thesis. According to Coulon, rather than any technological decline of Oriental sugar production, it was the Genoese conquest of Famagusta in 1370 that encouraged other Western powers to embark on a "second wave" of sugar plantations in Sicily and Spain. Yet such a claim is problematic, since it is based on the assumption that most of the sugar imported to Barcelona came from Cyprus (i.e., where the Genoese intervention took place), rather than from Mamluk territories, where Catalan trading activities were rising in the 1370s. Ashtor did not claim that Cyprus suffered from technological decline—quite the contrary, he mentioned Cyprus as part of the Western enterprises that were more advanced in their sugar-producing techniques than those of Egypt and Syria. The Catalans might have renounced buying Cypriot sugar after 1370, but this is not an argument that contradicts Ashtor's thesis.

Relatively little is said in this book about Catalan contacts with Egyptians and Syrians, or their relations with rival trading nations present in the Mamluk Levant. It is indeed an important chapter in the economic and social history of Barcelona, and consequently, the Mamluks and the commercial milieu of their cities occupy only a marginal place in this book. This is not to say that the author has not fulfilled his task. The book is already long enough as it is, and some work must be left for future studies. Coulon has produced an excellent study, which will long serve scholars who continue to be attracted by the fascinating world of the Levant trade.

⁷Ibid., 149–50, 194–98.

⁸Eliyahu Ashtor, "Levantine Sugar Industry in the Later Middle Ages: A Case of Technological Decline," in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900: Studies in Economic and Social History*, ed. Abraham L. Udovitch (Princeton, 1981), 91–132. An earlier version was published as "Levantine Sugar Industry in the Later Middle Ages—An Example of Technological Decline," *Israel Oriental Studies* 7 (1977): 226–80, reprinted in his *Technology, Industry and Trade: The Levant versus Europe, 1250–1500*, ed. B. Z. Kedar (Aldershot, 1992), article 3.



SHAMS AL-DĪN MUḤAMMAD IBN ḤASAN AL-NAWĀJĪ, *Kitāb al-Shifā' fī Badī' al-Iktifā'*, edited by Ḥasan Muḥammad 'Abd al-Hādī (Amman: Dār al-Yanābī' lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2004). Pp. 424.

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The Cairene writer al-Nawājī (d. 859/1455) is known chiefly as the author of the Bacchic anthology *Halbat al-Kumayt*. Among other works of his that have been edited in modern times are an anthology of strophic poems, *'Uqūd al-La'āl fī al-Muwashshahāt wa-al-Azjāl*, and a short, essayistic treatise on the poetics of verse and prose, *Muqaddimah fī Ṣinā'at al-Naẓm wa-al-Nathr*. Many more titles are known to have been written by him and some are preserved in manuscripts. Ḥasan 'Abd al-Hādī has devoted himself to publishing some of these, such as *Al-Maṭāli' al-Shamsīyah fī al-Madā'ih al-Nabawīyah*¹ and *Ṣaḥā'if al-Ḥasanāt fī Wasf al-Khāl*.² Another edition is the work under review. It has been edited before, by Maḥmūd Ḥasan Abū Nājī,³ but the present editor seems to be unaware of this. His edition is of an altogether different order. The earlier edition is based on a single manuscript; it is only lightly and superficially annotated, and it lacks an index. In contrast, Ḥasan 'Abd al-Hādī lists 29 manuscripts, 25 of which he has been able to use. In addition, he provides a critical apparatus that has swelled the book to a size some four times as large as its predecessor. In spite of its size and its merits the edition leaves something to be desired. The various manuscripts are described but their relationships are not discussed; presumably the manuscript listed as no. 1, from the Escorial (erroneously said to be in Madrid), was used as the basis for the edition, but this is nowhere stated. There is an appendix (pp. 303–36) with variant readings. There are indexes of persons, books mentioned, technical terms, places, peoples and nations, months (one questions the use of references to Dhū al-Ḥijjah or Sha'bān), and rhymes.

Al-Shifā' fī Badī' al-Iktifā' (a somewhat flippant paraphrase would be "Quenching the thirst that on everybody's lips is: on poetic ellipsis") is a rather short treatise-cum-anthology devoted to a poetic device that was incorporated by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. 749/1349) in his seminal *Badī'īyah*; Pierre Cachia translates it as "truncation."⁴ The first example al-Ḥillī provides in his own commentary, *Sharḥ al-Kāfīyah al-Badī'īyah*,⁵ is a verse by Ibn Maṭrūḥ (d. 649/1251): "I shall

¹Amman, 1999.

²Amman, 2000.

³Beirut: Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, A.H. 1403, 108 pp.

⁴*The Arch Rhetorician* (Wiesbaden, 1998), 54.

⁵Ed. Nasīb al-Nashāwī (Damascus, 1982), 105.



not stop, renounce, give in / as long as I'm alive, or even when (. . . *wa-la idhā*).” The words “I’m dead” are easily supplied by the attentive listener and therefore no longer needed. Al-Nawājī’s older contemporary, Ibn Hījjah al-Ḥamawī (d. 837/1434), quotes many more examples in his work on *badī‘*, *Khizānat al-Adab*,⁶ and distinguishes between two kinds: ellipsis of a whole word, and ellipsis of part of a word, the latter being more difficult but also more attractive. Among his examples (and those of al-Nawājī, see p. 172) is an epigram by Ibn Makānis (d. 794/1392):

That lovely fawn! He came to visit me
shyly, at night, seeking a place to dwell [reading
mustawṭinan, with Ibn Hījjah].
Yet he stayed only long enough for me
to say to him, “Come in! You’re very wel-”
(*ahlan wa-sahlan wa-mar*).

Arab grammarians and rhetoricians studied ellipsis in its various forms and usually called it *ḥadhf*. The term *iktifā‘*, “sufficiency,” was used by Ibn Rashīq in his *Al-‘Umdah*⁷ in the chapter on *ījāz*, “brevity,” as is duly mentioned by al-Nawājī; it has little to do with *iktifā‘* as it was introduced into *badī‘* by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī. Nevertheless, al-Nawājī tries to deal with both kinds of ellipsis in his book, devoting an introductory and somewhat perfunctory chapter to cases of *ḥadhf* in the Quran (e.g., the standard example Quran 12:82, *wa-is’ali al-qaryata* “ask the town,” meaning “ask the people of the town”). As for the Ḥillian sense of *iktifā‘*, neither al-Nawājī nor, strangely, the two modern editors seem to have been aware that Ibn Rashīq discusses precisely this phenomenon elsewhere, in the chapter on *ishārah*.⁸ Calling it a form of *ḥadhf*, he quotes some odd verses, such as the anonymous *bi-al-khayri khayrātin* [thus, not *khayran*] *wa-in sharran fā / wa-lā urīdu al-sharra illā an tā*, where *fā* stands for *fa-sharr* and *tā* for *tashā‘*. These and similar verses are old: they are quoted by Sībawayh⁹ and many subsequent grammarians, who had to cope with these and similar extreme distortions practised by early *rajaz* poets when in a jocular mood. No doubt to a poet and critic from the Mamluk period such whimsical use of language would have been merely a disfigurement, a form of barely acceptable poetic license, certainly not part of refined *badī‘*, and therefore to be ignored.

⁶Bulāq, A.H. 1291, 157–64.

⁷Ed. Muḥammad Muḥyi al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (repr. Beirut, 1972), 1:252–53.

⁸Ibid., 310–11.

⁹*Kitāb Sībawayh* (Bulāq, A.H. 1316), 2:62, section “Indicating a word by means of one letter.”



Ibn Rashīq also discusses a yet more extreme form of ellipsis: three lines attributed to Abū Nuwās in which the rhyme words are replaced by gestures indicating a kiss, "no, no!" and "go away!", respectively; the lines are also found in Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī, *Al-Zahrah*,¹⁰ but not in Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān*. Again, it is disappointing to see that neither al-Nawājī nor his editors were aware of this unique case of unrhymed verse.

Al-Nawājī makes some further distinctions, between forms of *iktifā'* with or without other forms of *badī'* such as *tawriyah* (double entendre). A charming but untranslatable example of the latter, again by Ibn Makānis, is the punch line of a distich in praise of his own poetry:¹¹ "Say, when those who taste it find it sweet: / This is, by God! sweet magic!" The last words, *siḥrun ḥalā*, would immediately evoke the very common expression *siḥrun ḥalāl*, "licit magic", said of particularly eloquent speech. Al-Nawājī's presentation of *iktifā'* does not make any significant improvement on that of his one-time friend (and subsequent enemy) Ibn Ḥijjah, apart from arranging his material more systematically and giving more examples. Ibn Ḥijjah, too, had pointed out that the figure could fruitfully be combined with his favorite device, double entendre. Indeed, the verse quoted above, ending in "... to say to him: 'Come in, you're very wel-','" is an illustration of this, for it could also be rendered as "to say to him: 'Come in!' And he went (*wa-marr*)."

The edition is very richly annotated, with numerous references given for most of the verses quoted by al-Nawājī. Some 87 pages are filled with information on every person mentioned in the text, arranged chronologically. Much of this is rather superfluous: anyone worth his salt in Arabic studies can find information on well-known persons of the early centuries; we do not need a whole page of references for al-Bukhārī or al-Mutanabbī. However, the information on persons from the Mamluk era is by no means useless, as long as important poets such as Ibn Makānis are absent from reference works (he has no entry either in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* or in the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*).

¹⁰Ed. Ibrāhīm al-Sāmarrā'ī (Beirut, 1985), 789.

¹¹*Kitāb al-Shifā'*, 181.

