

cinq et six endroits à Qus et dans la Sharqiya et la Gharbiya il est obligé de nommer 4 gérants, auxquels va tout le *khubz*, et il ne lui revient rien à lui même...

يا ولدي اكثر الاجناد اليوم عامة وباعة وفزازين كل من لبس قبا وركب
فارس وجا الى امير من هاولاء الترك وقدم له قوس وبرطل واستاذناره
على خبز جندي من جندي معروف بالشجاعة والحرب، طرده اميره
واعطا خبزه لذلك العامي الذي لا ينفع، واكثرهم على هذه الحالة، فاذا
عابنوا العدو وقت الحاجة هربوا وينكسروا العسكر لانهم ما يعرفوا ولا
هو شغلهم فينبغي ان لا تستخدم

O mon fils, la plupart des soldats de l'armée sont des gens du peuple, des boutiquiers et des tisserands (?). Quiconque revêt un *qabā*, monte un cheval et vient trouver un de ces Emirs turcs, on lui amène un cheval on corrompt le...et l'*ustādhār*, pour avoir le *khubz* d'un soldat connu par sa vaillance et ses qualités de guerre, l'émir l'abandonne et donne le *khubz* à ce soldat commun, qui n'est d'aucune utilité (pour l'armée).⁶⁸

According to Claude Cahen, who edited the text, *khubz* is “un des termes courants pour designer les *iqṭā'āt* de dimensions modestes.”⁶⁹ *Khubz* has also been used to refer to the *iqṭā'āt* of the sons of Mamluk amirs in the *ḥalqah*. These *iqṭā'āt* were usually inferior compared with those granted to the Royal Mamluks.⁷⁰

I will conclude with a contemporary of al-Yūnīnī and al-Nuwayrī, who shares many similarities with al-Makīn, both in his biography and in his use of term *khubz*: Ibn al-Suqā'ī. Like al-Makīn, he was an Egyptian Copt. He worked in the Mamluk administration. He wrote a biographical dictionary, *Tālī Kitāb Wafayāt al-A'yān*. In this work the term *khubz* is used more than any other expression related to the concept of *iqṭā'* (fourteen times out of twenty). I have already quoted some passages of his work, talking about the use of *khubz* followed by the number of horsemen to be maintained by it. The copious use of the term by this author confirms its bureaucratic usage. Apparently, *khubz* and *iqṭā'* are used interchangeably in his writing. Although in the *Tālī Kitāb khubz* refers mainly to *iqṭā'*, in one

⁶⁸Ibid., 102 (Arabic text), 111 (French translation).

⁶⁹Ibid., 110.

⁷⁰This passage is quoted in Amalia Levanoni, “Awlad al-Nas in the Mamluk Army during the Bahri period,” in *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honor of Michael Winter*, ed. Ami Ayalon and David J. Wasserstein (London, 2006), 97.

case it is related to soldiers' wages: "[He promised] that he would appoint him as (give him the office of) soldier with a *khubz*: يجعله جندي بخبز"⁷¹

SOME FINAL REMARKS

The presence of the term *khubz* in the work of all the authors under review confirms its usage. The point now is to understand to which linguistic register the term *khubz* belonged. The frequent use of this term, in fact, could be related to a wider use of colloquialisms or bureaucratic terms, or to the author's familiarity with the latter. My opinion is that, although *iqṭāʿ* was the administrative term, *khubz* must have been widespread, especially in bureaucracy and administration and in certain expressions like "*khubz* of 100 horsemen." A very interesting point is that in Ibn al-Athīr the term *khubz* never appears. The fact that this term is not used cannot, in my opinion, be solely attributed to the chronological gap between him and the authors under review. Ibn al-Athīr was a professor who devoted most of his life to his literary work. His *Al-Kāmil*, moreover, is partly assembled from his students' notes.⁷² If the language used in *Al-Kāmil* is the same language the author used for his lessons, the absence of the term *khubz* is not surprising; on the contrary, it would fit perfectly with the use of the term mainly in the spoken language and the vernacular of the administration. As *iqṭāʿ* was a technical term, the most correct one, in fact, it is not surprising that it was commonly used by teachers during their lectures. The absence of the term in Ibn al-Athīr does not prove that the term *khubz* was not in use at that time; it is rather a result of the author's linguistic and stylistic choices. It is true, however, that the decades between Ibn al-Athīr and the writers discussed in this article are not insignificant. The use of *khubz* might have become more common in the period that followed.

The use of the term in the narratives I have analyzed is not in conflict with the hypothesis that it was used particularly frequently in administration. It is well known that in the period under review the authors already enjoyed a certain independence from tradition and that their language contains colloquialisms.⁷³ What is more, all of the authors mentioned in this article held positions in the administration or had close ties with the courts and administrative and political groups, which may have shaped the language of their works.

The textual analysis of the works under discussion confirms that *khubz* was mainly used with the meaning of *iqṭāʿ*, even when the latter came to refer to lo-

⁷¹ Al-Suqāʿī, *Tālī Kitāb*, paragraph 187. *Jundī* means private soldier; see Ayalon, "Studies in the Structure," 473, n. 5.

⁷² Chase Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge, 2002), 175.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 97. On this subject see Ulrich Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit* (Freiburg, 1969), 159.



cality. Nevertheless there are specific uses of *khubz* which might be connected to its meaning of bread: firstly al-Makīn's use of the term in the context of complaints and requests; secondly its use followed by the number of horsemen to be sustained by the *iqṭā'*.

The analysis of these particular cases also highlights the relevance of a semantic analysis for an understanding of the functioning of the *iqṭā'* system and of the way the latter was perceived in the period under discussion. Although further research is needed, I think that the use of the word *khubz* to indicate *iqṭā'* and its usage in contexts of complaint is relevant to the social and emotional relations that underlie the contractual aspect. Even more relevant for an understanding of both the local perception of the *iqṭā'* system and of its functioning on the ground is the use of both *iqṭā'* and *khubz* to mean an estate. Both these points, moreover, show that the local developments of the *iqṭā'* system might present particular features that are not congruent with the traditional definition of *iqṭā'* as a tax allocation and nothing more. In fact, these local developments might in some cases bring into question—at least in part—the assumptions about the differences between the Muslim *iqṭā'* and the Western fief.

To conclude, I would say that a semantic study can, to some extent, help us to go beyond a purely legal perspective, and can contribute to a better understanding of the features of the *iqṭā'* system and especially of its local developments.

