Book Reviews

Iḥsān ʻAbbās, *Tārīkh Bilād al-Shām fī ʻAṣr al-Mamālīk, 648–923 H./1250–1517 M*. (Amman: Maṭbaʻat al-Jāmiʻah al-Urdunīyah, 1998). Pp. 400.

Reviewed by Josef Meri, Institute of Ismāʻīlī Studies, London

The Palestinian scholar Iḥsān ʻAbbās´s career spanned over five decades during which he made outstanding contributions to diverse branches of knowledge, ranging from modern Arabic literature and especially Palestinian, Iraqi, and medieval Arabic poetry, to literary studies of Sicily and Andalusia, biographical literature, and history. His monograph *Tārīkh Bilād al-Shām fī ʻAṣr al-Mamālīk,* which was published in 1998, represents the best general study of the history of Mamluk Syria to date. Although a literary scholar by training, ʻAbbās is no stranger to historical studies. His contribution to Mamluk studies, which is represented by the present work under review, is his first monograph published as part of the Committee for the History of Bilād al-Shām series, jointly published by the Universities of Jordan and Yarmuk, though ʻAbbās jointly edited, along with the Ottoman historian Muḥammad ʻAdnān al-Bakhīt, the seminal three volume *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of Bilād al-Shām during the Early Islamic Period up to 40 A.H./640 A.D*. (Amman, 1987). The series editors are to be commended for producing over the years excellent studies and edited conference proceedings. It is to be hoped that the series will be given a new impetus through fostering closer international collaboration and by focusing on social, cultural, and legal aspects of the history of Bilād al-Shām.

Regrettably, the history of Mamluk Syria has traditionally taken a backseat to that of Egypt. Given the paucity of studies that focus on Mamluk Syria, ʻAbbās´s *Tārīkh Bilād al-Shām* is a most welcome contribution which is to be recommended for graduate study and for reference. This study will also appeal to scholars in the West and the Islamic world who are interested in the political, economic, and military history of the Mamluk Sultanate in Greater Syria. It should also be required reading for advanced undergraduates in the Middle East who lack any substantive knowledge of the pre-modern history of their own region.

The work is clearly and intelligibly presented in an accessible fashion and includes maps of the northern and southern regions of Bilād al-Shām as well as a useful glossary based on Muḥammad al-Baqlī´s lexicon of Mamluk words and expressions, many of which are derived from al-Qalqashandī´s *Ṣubḥ al-Aʻshá*.

Iḥsān ʻAbbās did not regard himself as a historian. In deference to his colleagues, ʻAbbās states that his study does not have any pretensions to be a detailed monograph of Mamluk history. Indeed, the author explicitly states that others have covered aspects of Mamluk history far more thoroughly than he has. Such humility and

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deference to one´s colleagues are rare qualities among academics. Indeed, ‘Abbās´s view of the political and dynastic history of the Mamluk state from the reign of Sultan Qalāwūn onwards is clear when he admits that ″it is not exciting, not because of the periods of unrest that it contains, but rather because it repeats itself in a boring fashion″ (p. 286). For ‘Abbās, it is not the often recurring themes in the political-dynastic history that are at the core of his analysis, but rather those events, policies, and cultural developments that had an impact on Syrian society. Distilling the history of Greater Syria from the broader dynastic and political history of the Mamluks, whose administrative and political base was at Cairo, is a difficult task, but one which ‘Abbās admirably fulfilled.

In the introduction, ‘Abbās comments on the bias of sources toward the Syrian Mamluks themselves rather than being oriented toward Bilād al-Shām (p. 5). Moreover, he observes that most of the sources deal with the battles the Bahri Mamluks fought against the Crusaders and the Mongols and that, in general, their geographical focus tends to be on Damascus. ‘Abbās begins by offering a brief overview of historical works pertaining to the Mamluk dynasty, including some rarely-mentioned sources. Here he invokes Ibn Khaldūn´s influence on later writers like al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497).

‘Abbās provides an overview of the Mamluk Sultanate and its organization. Chapter One provides a brief overview of the institution of the sultanate, the system of investitures, dress, processions, banquets, royal residences, the royal kitchen, stables, and resting places. Chapter Two focuses on the political, economic, social, cultural, and artistic developments in Bilād al-Shām. Noteworthy is ‘Abbās´s alphabetically-organized gazetteer, which summarizes the most peculiar features of the principal villages, towns, and cities of Greater Syria and which is derived from the writings of medieval geographers and travelers (pp. 96–105). This is followed by a brief discussion of European travelers and pilgrims in Bilād al-Shām.

Chapter Three presents the reigns of twenty Mamluk rulers and discusses their involvement in the political and administrative affairs of Bilād al-Shām. ‘Abbās succinctly outlines their achievements, the major battles they fought, their political alliances, rivalries, and economic policies. Especially noteworthy is ‘Abbās´s discussion of Baybars´ (r. 658–76/1260–77) rule, in which he deftly outlines Baybars´ achievements, including his massive public works campaigns, reform of the postal service between Cairo and Damascus, reform of the judiciary and the appointment for the first time of four chief qadis, the organization of the Arab tribes, and promotion of good relations with the leader of the Isma‘ili community in Syria. Baybars also restored major shrines, such as the Dome of the Rock Mosque in Jerusalem and the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. As a historian of pilgrimage places, I was struck by the near absence of a discussion of Baybars´ repairing and endowing shrines such as the tomb of Noah at Karak for pious

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visitors and the meaning of such undertakings within the religious framework both locally and regionally. ‘Abbās′s discussion of interfaith relations might have been augmented, though he does provide an interesting succinct discussion of the relations between Bilād al-Ḥabash and the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Barsbāy (r. 825–41/1426–37).

Understandably, ‘Abbās does not address cultural history, popular customs, or traditions at any great length. In his discussion of the peasants *(fallāḥīn),* he observes that little information about the daily lives, beliefs, and practices of this segment of society exists. Yet we do know a great deal about their lives from pilgrimage guides and travel accounts, among other sources (see Josef Meri, *Cult of Saints Among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria,* Oxford, 2002). A recommended complementary work to *Tārīkh Bilād al-Shām,* which more fully addresses social life in Greater Syria, is Ibrāhīm Za‘rūr′s *Al-Ḥayāh al-Ijtimā‘īyah fī Bilād al-Shām fī al-‘Aṣrayn al-Ayyubī wa-al-Mamlūkī* (Damascus, 1993).

One of the most noticeable deficiencies in this work is its lack of footnotes, which is compensated for by a well-organized overview of the Mamluk state in Greater Syria. Moreover, the publisher should have been more attentive to standardizing the foreign language references in the footnotes and in the bibliography. Despite these rather minor flaws, Iḥsān ‘Abbās is to be heartily appreciated for producing an otherwise excellent introduction to the history of Mamluk Syria.

Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān: al-‘Aṣr al-Ayyūbī (Part 1: 565/1168 [sic 1169]–578/1182).* Edited by Maḥmūd Rizq Maḥmūd (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wa-al-Wathā’iq al-Qawmīyah, Markaz Taḥqīq al-Turāth, 2003). Pp. 432.

Reviewed by Konrad Hirschler, University of Kiel

Al-‘Aynī (d. 855/1451) contributed with his voluminous universal chronicle *‘Iqd al-Jumān* (The necklace of pearls) to the blossoming, encyclopedic historiography of the later Mamluk period. Having pursued a career as a distinguished courtier, he is a typical example of the intimate link between the exercise of power and the production of historical knowledge in this period. During the course of his life he held a variety of offices, chief among them the posts of *muḥtasib, nāẓir al-aḥbās,* and Hanafite chief qadi. This prominent standing within the ruling elite was certainly reinforced by al-‘Aynī′s command of Turkish. Thus, this chronicle

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represents a valuable contemporary source for understanding Mamluk grand politics of the author's period.

With the exception of an extract in the *Recueil des historiens des Croisades,* the process of editing this chronicle has begun quite belatedly. It is only in the mid-1980s that the first editions were published. In one such edition, 'Abd al-Rāziq al-Ṭanṭāwī al-Qarmūṭ (al-Azhar) brought out the final and, from a factual point of view, most interesting part of the chronicle: his two volumes covered respectively the years 815/1412 to 823/1421 (Cairo: Maṭba'at 'Alā', 1985); and the years 824/1421 up to the chronicle's end in 850/1447 (Cairo: al-Zahrah lil-I'lām al-'Arabī, 1989). In another edition, Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo University) started from the beginning of the Mamluk period and published in four volumes the text for the years 648/1250 to 707/1308 (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-'Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1987–92). Regrettably, he did not complete his project, and the parts dealing with the events and obituaries of the following ninth/fourteenth century are yet to be published.

Maḥmūd Rizq Maḥmūd (al-Minyā University) has now embarked upon the task of editing the parts of the *'Iqd al-Jumān* concerned with the Ayyubid period, i.e., from 565/1169 to 647/1250, the point where Amīn's edition starts. The present first volume reports the rise of the dynasty until 578/1182, the start of the last decade of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's rule. In contrast to the final parts of the chronicle, dealing with events either witnessed by al-'Aynī himself or taken from a variety of sources, obviously, this part does not add significant new detail to Ayyubid history. Nevertheless, the author integrates the main Ayyubid and Zangid sources, most importantly al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, al-'Imād al-Iṣfahānī, Ibn al-Athīr, Abū Shāmah, and Ibn Shaddād, into the skillful and coherent narrative typical of Mamluk encyclopedic historiography.

This historiography's aim "to survey, to comprehend, to control, to consummate"[1] the material is apparent throughout the text. For example, the year 567/1171–72 starts with the end of the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt under Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, neatly structuring the events in sections introduced by "firstly," "secondly," etc. Then the Syrian side of the story with regard to Nūr al-Dīn is introduced in a separate section. Finally, the year's narrative culminates in the developing strife between the two protagonists. By comparison, a text of the Ayyubid period, such as Abū Shāmah's *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn,* narrates the same events in a radically different style: the focus shifts continually between the two protagonists. At the same time, other subjects, such as Frankish raids, appear in the course of the text as independent sections, which "interrupt" the narrative. It is on this historiographical level that the main interest of al-'Aynī's text on the Ayyubids lies: the increasing number of

[1]Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge, 1994), 184.

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edited Ayyubid and Mamluk chronicles will contribute to our understanding of the developing historiographical styles and the different historical perceptions.

Similar to the two previous editions by al-Qarmūṭ and Amīn, the present edition is based on the two manuscripts: MS Ahmet III 19/2911 (microfilm copy in Ma'had al-Makhṭūṭāt) and Dār al-Kutub MS 1584 *tārīkh*. The text was then collated with the chronicle's main Zangid and Ayyubid sources. The edition is of high quality, providing in detail the variant readings. Nevertheless, considering the numerous other extant manuscripts of the *'Iqd al-Jumān,* it would have strengthened the edition if the "Cairo canon" Ahmet III/Dār al-Kutub had been supplemented by additional manuscripts. This will be even more relevant for the future edition of the text covering the later Ayyubid period: the editor states in his introduction that the period between 620/1223 and 647/1250 will be edited solely on the basis of the Dār al-Kutub manuscript. It is hoped that he will look for additional material.

The generous textual apparatus makes this edition a helpful starting point for early Ayyubid history. The clarifications of personal and geographical names, as well as the explanations offered for difficult terms, facilitate the reading considerably. On the same level, the indexes of personal names, groups, geographical names, and technical terms are very useful.

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Arabshāh, *Fākihat al-Khulafā' wa-Mufākahat al-Ẓurafā'*. Edited by Ayman 'Abd al-Jābir al-Buḥayrī (Cairo: Dār al-Āfāq al-'Arabīyah, 1421/2001). Pp. 674.

Reviewed by Arnoud Vrolijk, Leiden University

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Arabshāh[1] (791–854/1389–1450) was born in Damascus. When Timur Lenk conquered the city in 1400–1 he was taken to Samarkand. In his youth he traveled and studied extensively in Central Asia. Later in his life he served under the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, for whom he conducted his correspondence in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Mongol. He returned to Syria in 1421 and finally settled in Egypt in 1436. His main work is a rather unflattering biography of Timur, *'Ajā'ib al-Maqdūr fī Nawā'ib Taymūr* (The wonders of

[1]On the author and his work see al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi'* (Cairo, 1353–55/1934–36), 2:126–31, and J. Pedersen, "Ibn 'Arabshāh," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., 3:711–12.

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destiny, or the vicissitudes of Timur), a text that was first edited by Golius in 1636. Other works by him include a panegyric dedicated to Sultan Jaqmaq and an Arabic translation of Sa'd al-Dīn al-Warāwīnī's version of the *Marzubān-nāmah,* a Persian collection of animal fables in the vein of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah.*

The present work, *Fākihat al-Khulafā' wa-Mufākahat al-Ẓurafā'* (The caliphs' fruit and the elegant people's banter), is an expanded version of Ibn 'Arabshāh's own translation of the *Marzubān-nāmah*. According to Ḥājjī Khalīfah, it was completed in Ṣafar 852/April–May 1448.[2] The work lacks the crisp succinctness of *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah,* and the extensive use of *saj'* or rhymed prose makes it dull and ponderous in the eyes of a modern reader. A scholar like Robert Irwin found "the inflated, metaphorical style . . . hard going."[3] On the other hand, Reuben Levy asked for clemency on the part of the modern reader by stating that medieval authors "catered for different conditions and a different taste. To [them], elaborate imagery and embroidered speech were the means of attracting and holding the attention not of readers, but of listeners; because the tales were recited by rhapsodists to audiences who were enthralled as much by the music of the heaped-up epithets and gracefully involved periods in which the tales were told as by the narratives themselves."[4]

The *Fākihah* is by no means a rare text; any important collection of Islamic manuscripts in the Western world possesses at least several copies. It has also been the subject of numerous editions since Freytag published his *Fructus imperatorum et iocatio ingeniosorum* (Bonn, 1832–52). There is an 1869 edition by the Dominican fathers of Mosul, and the popularity of the text in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Egypt is amply demonstrated by twelve Cairo editions published between 1276/1860 and 1325/1908, some of them with *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah* in the margin. Somehow, the interest of the reading public in the *Fākihah* seems to have dwindled after the early twentieth century, but recently it was revived by an edition by Muḥammad Rajab al-Najjār, the well-known Egyptian specialist in Mamluk literature (al-Ṣafah, Kuwait: Dār Su'ād al-Ṣabāḥ, 1997).

The present work was edited by Ayman al-Buḥayrī, whose interest in anecdotes of the caliphs and mirrors for princes is reflected in his other editions as well.[5] For this edition of the *Fākihah* al-Buḥayrī used two manuscripts from the National

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[2]*Kashf al-Ẓunūn,* ed. Flügel (London, 1835–58), 4:345.

[3]Robert Irwin, "Ibn 'Arabshāh," *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature,* ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London, 1998), 1:312–13.

[4]Reuben Levy, *The Tales of Marzubān* (London, 1959), 9.

[5]Al-Itlīdī, *Nawādir al-Khulafā'* (Cairo, 1998); Ibn Ẓafar, *Al-Sulwānāt* (Cairo, 1999); and Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Sulṭān* (Cairo, 2002).

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Library of Egypt, the MSS Adab Taymūr 764 and Adab Ṭal‘at 4606, and a 1909 edition he refers to as an imprint of ″al-Maktabah al-Ḥalabīyah,″[6] an edition not cited in ‘Āyidah Ibrāhīm Nuṣayr′s bibliography of early twentieth-century Egyptian imprints.[7] The editor considers MS Adab Taymūr 764 as an autograph (p. 9), presumably because it contains the author′s own colophon and also because of its date, which the author reads as *awākhir* Rabī‘ I 850/25 June–4 July 1446. It is more likely however, that the date is *awākhir* Rabī‘ I 852/3–12 June 1448, which corresponds almost exactly with Ḥājjī Khalīfah′s information on the subject.[8] However, the fact that a manuscript contains the author′s colophon does not necessarily imply that it actually is an autograph. In fact, we find Ibn ‘Arabshāh′s own colophon repeated in a number of manuscript copies, for instance the Berlin MS Petermann 295 and Leiden Or. 135. An old Cairo edition I was able to consult, al-Maṭba‘ah al-Sharafīyah 1316/1898, also has it. None of these three appear to be directly related to the Taymūr manuscript. Other arguments against the editor′s assertion are that the Taymūr manuscript is copied in two different hands and that the first page of the manuscript contains a *tarḥīm,* an expression generally used for deceased authors.[9] On the whole, however, the Taymūr manuscript appears to be a valuable textual witness, containing authentic readings that have not been preserved elsewhere. Regarding it as an autograph, the editor claims to have adopted it as the base text of his edition (p. 10). It is therefore somewhat puzzling to see that al-Buḥayrī′s edition is not based on this particular manuscript at all: a short collation of the facsimiles and the edited text reveals that the first four lines of the manuscript text with the *tarḥīm* have been omitted; likewise, the text of the colophon (p. 577) is not that of the Taymūr manuscript.

It is quite difficult to go beyond this superficial comparison, because al-Buḥayrī′s edition lacks a critical apparatus that would enable the reader to check the provenance of each part of the text. Thus, it is impossible to see what role the other textual witnesses have played in establishing the text. Instead of a critical apparatus there is a footnote apparatus, which contains biographical and geographical information drawn from classical sources like *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* by Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr (ca.. 1300–73) or *Mu‘jam al-Buldān* by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (1179–1229).

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[6]See p. 9, possibly the Cairene printing house of Muṣṭafá al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī.

[7]‘Āyidah Ibrāhīm Nuṣayr, *Al-Kutub al-‘Arabīyah Allatī Nushirat fī Miṣr bayna ‘Āmay 1900–1925* (Cairo, 1983), 230.

[8]See the facsimile text on p. 18 of al-Buḥayrī′s edition. Prof. Jan Just Witkam′s advice on the matter is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

[9]Facsimile page of the manuscript on p. 15 of the edition, l. 4: ″taghammadahu Allāhu ta‘ālá bi-raḥmatihi wa-riḍwānihi″ (May God, exalted is He, cover him with His grace and favor). For this *requiescat* remark after the names of deceased authors see Adam Gacek, *The Arabic Manuscript Tradition: a Glossary of Technical Terms and Bibliography* (Leiden, 2001), 54.

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The greater part of the footnote apparatus, however, is devoted to lexical items. For his explanation, the editor draws upon his own personal knowledge of the Arabic language without reference to lexicographical works. It is not altogether clear what criteria the editor used: a fairly common word like *sirḥān,* ″wolf″ (p. 26), is footnoted, while an obscure word like *ghaḍanfar* for lion (p. 249) remains unexplained.

The value of the edition would have been much enhanced by a thorough introduction to the author, his text, and its social and literary environment, the so-called *Sitz im Leben*. A half-page description of the textual sources of the edition, a single page on edition technique, and one and a half pages on the life of Ibn ʻArabshāh must be regarded as too scanty. A bibliography of consulted works would also have been helpful. Minor defects of the edition are the introduction of modern-style punctuation and the absence of the folio numbers of the most important manuscript source.

The merit of this edition lies in its multiple indexes, covering almost a hundred pages, of Quran verses, *aṭrāf* of prophetic traditions, poetry, names of persons, geographical names, lexical items, proverbs and fixed expressions, and a succinct subject index. Unfortunately, the indexes are not free of errors. For instance, in the index of ″nations and places″ *Āl Qusṭanṭīn* (the Byzantines, p. 482) and the town of Amul (p. 566) are missing. Baghdad appears twice, once under *Baghdād* and once under *Madīnat al-Salām*. The index of personal names cites the names just as they are given in the text without any critical arrangement, which makes them difficult to find. Thus, the Imam Abū Ḥanīfah is entered under al-Nuʻmān, Ibn Sīnā under Abū ʻAlī, Ibn Khaldūn under Abū Hurayrah, and the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq under Abū Saʻīd. The poet′s name is ʻUmar ibn al-Fāriḍ, not ʻAmr ibn al-Fāriḍ. Kisrā is a title, not a person. Finally, Ibn ʻArabshāh himself is not mentioned in the index. In the glossary, words of non-Arabic origin tend to be missing, such as the Greek word *Saqmūniyā* (scammony, p. 201) and the Persian titles *dawādār, bazdār,* and *khaznadār* (p. 466).

In terms of book production, it must be said that the edition is carefully typeset, well printed and bound, and reasonably priced. Despite its shortcomings in terms of editorial scholarship, this edition will help to make Ibn ʻArabshāh′s work more accessible to modern readers. For this, one must be grateful to the editor.

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Shawkat Ramaḍān Ḥujjah, *Al-Tārīkh al-Siyāsī li-Minṭaqat Sharqī al-Urdun min Junūb al-Shām fī ʻAṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Thāniyah* (Irbid: Mu'assasat Ḥamādah lil-Dirāsāt al-Jāmiʻīyah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʻ, 2002). Pp. 308.

Reviewed by Bethany J. Walker, Oklahoma State University

The continuing debate over the decline of the Mamluk state is revisited from the ″periphery″ of the empire in this work by Shawkat Ḥujjah. The book examines the Burji Mamluk period in Jordan and assesses the general political, economic, and demographic decline of the state from the vantage point of the Jordanian provinces, southern Mamlakat Dimashq and Mamlakat Karak. In its chronological scope, methods, and organization, it builds on the work of the Jordanian historian, Yūsuf Ghawānimah, on his country in the Bahri Mamluk period.[1] The present work is the author′s unrevised doctoral thesis, advised by Dr. Ghawānimah[2] and completed at Yarmouk University in Irbid in 1996. Only the conversion of footnotes to chapter endnotes differentiates this publication from his original dissertation.

Ḥujjah′s book opens and closes with the theme of Mamluk decline, a popular topic among Jordanian historians. According to the author, the factors behind this decline and those that most heavily impacted southern Bilād al-Shām are many-fold: natural disasters, Mongol invasions, bedouin incursions, political competition among the Syrian amirs, and the weakness of the central government (p. 9). The marked demographic transformation of the region in the late Mamluk period—the abandonment of villages, general population decline, and shifts in settlement—is the principal indicator of political decline for most historians and archaeologists working in Jordan today. Ḥujjah′s work was conceived, in part, as a contribution to this debate. While he repeats many of the mantras of the academic establishment in this regard, he reads a wider variety of sources and does so with an eye to social history.

The city of Kerak, the capital of Mamlakat Karak, occupies central stage in this book and is presented as a microcosm of southern Syria in the ninth/fifteenth century. Ḥujjah′s narrative focuses on the reigns of Sultans Barqūq and Faraj and the many armed uprisings by amirs and tribal shaykhs alike that were launched from that city. It was the rebellions of the Syrian amirs, the author argues, that

[1]Among Ghawānimah′s most important studies on Mamluk Jordan are *Tārīkh Sharqī al-Urdun fī ʻAṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Ūlá, al-Qism al-Siyāsī* and *Tārīkh Sharqī al-Urdun fī ʻAṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Ūlá, al-Qism al-Ḥaḍārī,* both published in Amman in the mid-1980s. He has written a cultural history of Amman and, more recently, brief paperback reports on medieval Irbid, the mosques of ʻAjlūn, and saints′ shrines in Jordan, as well as a monograph on Jerusalem.

[2]Personal communication, Yūsuf Ghawānimah.

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weakened the government in Cairo, created chaos and civil war in Jordan, and drove the general demographic and economic collapse of the Syrian provinces. The introduction and six chapters of his book reflect themes that account for these developments: the strategic importance of Jordan to the Mamluk state; political events during the sultanates of Barqūq and Faraj and after Faraj´s death; the political role of the Jordanian tribes; and trade and communications in the region.

In his well-organized and clearly written introduction, Ḥujjah describes those sources that have yielded the most data on political, economic, and social conditions in Jordan in the ninth/fifteenth century. He relies on an assortment of contemporary sources—administrative manuals (al-'Umarī´s [d. 749/1348] *Kitāb Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār*), travelogues (largely Ottoman: the eleventh/seventeenth-century *Al-Riḥlah al-'Iyashīyah* and *Al-Riḥlah al-Khayārī*), chronicles and biographical dictionaries (primarily Syrian: Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah´s [d. 851/1447] *Tārīkh* and Ibn Ṭūlūn´s [953/1546] *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān*), and biographies of the Burji Mamluk sultans (for instance, Ibn Ṣaṣrā´s [d. 800/1397] *Kitāb al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah fī al-Dawlah al-Ẓāhirīyah,* which covers Barqūq´s reign)—that have until now been underutilized. The bulk of his primary material comes from the microfilm archives of the University of Jordan library that Dr. Muḥammad 'Adnān Bakhīt, Jordan´s leading Ottomanist, created in the mid-1980s. This is a large repository, comprised of copies of Mamluk and Ottoman-period manuscripts housed in collections in Jerusalem, Cairo, Damascus, Istanbul, and libraries throughout Europe.[3] The University of Jordan archives has transformed research in the country since the mid-1980s, allowing Jordanian scholars to work on topics that had previously required international travel. Like the majority of Islamic historians in Jordan today, Ḥujjah relies most heavily on local sources that focus on the Transjordan, and particularly the provincial capital of Kerak, such as 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ´s (d. 920/1514) *Nayl al-Amal fī Dhayl al-Duwal*.

The author justifies his focus on Jordan for the Burji Mamluk period in Chapter 1, where he emphasizes the centrality of geographic Transjordan as a communications corridor, the political role of its tribes and administrative centers (such as Kerak and 'Ajlūn), and the fertility of the *iqṭā'āt* located there. The chapter opens with a linguistic discussion of the term *al-ghūr* and cites numerous poetic references to the term—a section, in all, that contributes nothing to the book. The rest of Chapter 1 is devoted to the technical administration of Transjordan under the Burji Mamluks: the location of provincial and district boundaries, and the frequent transfer of administrative centers. While such topics have been dealt

[3]For the holdings of this collection, see the published catalogues in Muḥammad 'Adnān Bakhīt et al., *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts (on Microfilm),* vols. 1–3 (Amman, 1984-86).

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with in detail by other historians,[4] Ḥujjah's innovation is the attention he showers on the changing fortunes of Mamlakat Karak in this period, as it loses its independent administrative status and is finally added to the District of Jerusalem (Niyābat al-Quds) in the early tenth/sixteenth century. The political rationale for the redistricting of this province, as well as the political fallout that such administrative changes produced, remain important themes for the rest of his book.

In Chapter 2 the author begins to analyze the chaos of the Burji Mamluk period by illustrating the many ways amirs stationed in Transjordan and the citizens and tribesmen of the region created and reacted to political conflicts. This chapter deals primarily with Sultan Barqūq, whose reign was interrupted by the insurrection of Amirs Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī and Minṭāsh in 791/1388. As al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was forced to many years before him, Barqūq spent his exile year imprisoned in the jail of Kerak Castle, from where he was able to consolidate his personal ties with residents of Kerak Town and the leadership of the Banī 'Uqbah and the Jarm. Kerakis, townsmen and tribesmen alike, were united in their support of Barqūq, according to this reading of the sources, and played a central role in returning him to the throne. Underneath the author's narrative are the strains of modern nationalism, in which political loyalty, particularly among the tribes, is applauded. It is not clear whether this double-entendre was deliberate, but it is occasionally encountered today in Jordanian historiography. An innovative analysis of texts on the Jordan River Valley closes this chapter (pp. 79–82), in which Ḥujjah investigates the poor management practices that may have contributed to the collapse of the agricultural sector in the valley at the turn of eighth/fourteenth century, such as the diversion by the *mushadd al-ghūr* of water to his own plots, and extortion, forced sales of produce, and hoarding of food goods by other government officials (p. 81).

Civil war is the theme of the third chapter, which deals with Jordan during Faraj's sultanate. Although he exaggerates the impact of Timur's invasions on Jordan (pp. 119–29), he makes a good argument for the centrality of Kerak, its official personnel, and its residents in the revolts of Mamluk amirs (Mahtar 'Abd al-Raḥmān in 807/1404; Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī and Nawrūz al-Ḥāfiẓī in 813/1410) and tribal shaykhs (pp. 115–19). The chapter primarily examines the careers of the governors of Kerak and of its citadel, which averaged a year or two in length during Faraj's reign, and evaluates the way in which their rivalries, imprisonments,

[4]Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l'époque des Mameloukes d'après les auteurs arabes: description géographique, économique et administrative* (Paris, 1923); Nicola Ziadeh, *Urban Life in Syria under the Early Mamluks* (Westport, Conn., 1970); and, more recently, Ṭāhā Ṭarāwinah, *The Province of Damascus during the Second Mamlūk Period (784/1382–922/1516)* (Kerak, Jordan, 1994).

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armed revolts, and poor administration devastated the economic base of Kerak Province and Gaza. Here Ḥujjah emphasizes the role of the tribes in these troubled times, as marauding bands plundered and destroyed villages in the absence (or weakness) of local Mamluk garrisons, forcing residents to abandon their settlements and take refuge in the nearest citadels (pp. 250 ff). His textual references are perhaps the strongest evidence to date for the relationship between ″bedouin predations″ and the shift from lowland to highland settlements in the fifteenth century, a phenomenon long identified through regional surveys but never sufficiently explained by archaeologists. In his concluding arguments for this chapter, the author attributes the decline of Jordan during Faraj′s reign to: 1) the power struggle among the sultan′s top amirs in Syria; 2) Timur′s invasion of Syria (the effects of which were felt in northern Jordan); and 3) the pillage and destruction of Jordanian centers by soldiers and tribes.

Stories of local interest frame Chapter 4, which chronologically covers the post-Faraj years, between 816/1413 and 922/1516. Here the author recounts those political events of the period that either took place in Jordan or had the greatest impact there. Among these are the establishment of the rival sultanate of Ibn Thaqāl, a.k.a. ″al-Sufyānī,″ in ʻAjlūn in 816/1413, as well as several short accounts of the rapid rise and fall of several governors of Kerak. The author then lists those governors *(nawāb)* of Kerak, ʻAjlūn, and Salṭ (merged into one administrative district sometime in the third quarter of the eighth/fifteenth century), and the Jordan River Valley *(al-ghūr)*. He makes ample use of biographical sources for this purpose, including Ibn al-Jīʻān ([d. 901/1496] *Al-Qawl al-Mustaẓraf*), Ibn Ṭūlūn ([d. 954/1546] *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān*), and Ibn Iyās ([d. 930/1523] *Badā'iʻ al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'iʻ al-Duhūr*). This chapter provides a convenient list in Table 2 of the governors of Kerak during the reigns of Barqūq and Faraj (pp. 168–70). Ḥujjah concludes this chapter with a diatribe against the later governors of Kerak, accusing them of destroying Jordan through their political rivalries (which led to oppression of the peasants and tribal devastations in their absence), corruption (they essentially bought their governorships) and political opportunism (leading to their exile and imprisonment), collaboration with foreign powers, and irresponsible land management (pp. 185–87).

The final two chapters of the book enumerate Jordan′s tribal groups (and their roles in the political debacles of the period) and highlight the central role that the region played in Mamluk trade (the pilgrim markets of ʻAqabah, ʻAjlūn, and Zarqā'; lists of merchandise produced and sold; domestic and transit trade routes) and communications (the hajj route from Damascus, for example, passed through the middle of Jordan). While these are interesting and useful summaries for the newly initiated, such topics are standard fare for Jordanian master′s theses and doctoral dissertations. Moreover, the handwritten maps of trade routes on pp. 281

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and 283, which are appendices for Chapter 5, are illegible and, thus, not usable. Likewise, the author's commentary on archaeological surveys in Irbid reflects a superficial understanding of such fieldwork and does not contribute to his arguments about the structure of caravan trade networks (p. 253). Nonetheless, Ḥujjah makes more meaningful assertions about the civil resistance of townsmen (and particularly those of Kerak) vis-à-vis the Mamluk governors (p. 116–17) and their united self-defense against tribal raids (p. 230).

One of the strengths of Ḥujjah's monograph is his broad foundation of written sources. One of its weaknesses is his uncritical reading of these sources and sweeping generalizations based on a few of them: applying the special circumstances of Kerak to the whole of Jordan, for example, and using Ottoman-period travelogues to comment on the socio-political state of towns and villages in the Mamluk period. Moreover, the author neglects some key sources that would have refined and, in some instances, contradicted his conclusions, such as Ottoman tax registers (translated into Arabic and published in Jordan by Bakhīt in 1989 and 1991, thus readily available to the author at the time of writing his dissertation)[5] and the large body of archaeological literature (providing a wealth of data on demographics, settlement, environment, and material culture and trade) found in nearly every university library in the country.

These criticisms aside, Ḥujjah's study is a thorough, interesting, and extremely useful analysis of the political conditions that impacted Jordanian society and economy in the ninth/fifteenth and early tenth/sixteenth centuries. As a provincial history (and one of the few books on Jordan) and one focused on the transition between the Bahri and Burji periods, readers will find it a most welcome contribution to Mamluk studies. Ḥujjah's interpretation of the role of the Syrian amirs in the decline of the Mamluk state, his understanding of the political role of the Jordanian tribes, and his interest in the impact of both on local agriculture are topics that are multi-disciplinary in appeal and fresh in approach.

[5]Muḥammad 'Adnān Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah (Shamālī al-Urdunn) fī al-Qarn al-'Āshir al-Hijrī/al-Sādis 'Āshir al-Mīlādī* (Amman, 1989); idem, *Tapu Defteri No. 275: Detailed Register of the Private-Khass of the Governor in the Province of Damascus 958 A.H./1551-2 A.D.* (Amman, 1989); Muḥammad 'Adnān Bakhīt and Nūfān Rajā al-Ḥammūd, *The Detailed Defter of Liwa' 'Ajlun: Tapu Defteri No. 970* (Amman, 1989); and idem, *The Detailed Defter of Liwa' 'Ajlun: Tapu Defteri No. 185, Ankara, 1005 A.H./1596 A.D.* (Amman, 1991).

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Fustat Finds: Beads, Coins, Medical Instruments, Textiles and Other Artifacts from the Awad Collection. Edited by Jere L. Bacharach (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2002). Pp. xi + 235.

REVIEWED BY WARREN C. SCHULTZ, DePaul University

This book is both a celebration of the role played by the Egyptian physician Henri Amin Awad in the preservation of material culture objects from Fustat *and* a poignant reminder of the lost opportunities to learn more about this important site for the history of early to medieval Islamic Egypt. As the Introduction points out, Dr. Awad opened a clinic in the Fustat region in 1950, and shortly thereafter began accepting small unidentified objects of ″no real market value″ (p. 4) from his poor patients in exchange for medical treatment. Over the course of the next few decades, Dr. Awad obtained, examined, studied, occasionally published, and eventually donated many such objects to several institutions and universities in Egypt and abroad. Thus the word ″collection″ in the subtitle of this volume is to be understood broadly as referring to material which funneled through Awad′s holdings before ending up elsewhere, and should not be taken to mean a set of material currently in his possession or in a single location.

The Introduction states that Dr. Awad had the initial difficult choice before him as to whether he should accept these items or refuse to take them since leaving them *in situ* ″until scientific teams of archaeologists could examine them″ would be the preferred situation in an ″ideal world″ (p. 3). This of course is a key issue of some controversy in the scholarly arena (not to mention those of government policy and legal regulations) and readers of the book will undoubtedly have their own strong views on this matter. While it is certainly true that artifacts with specific site references are of the most value to scholars present and future, it is also valid that items with only the most general provenance—i.e., found in the Fustat region—are of use to scholars. It is in that spirit that this book was prepared.

The book is divided into thirteen sections of varying lengths. The majority were prepared especially for this volume, although two are revised versions of previously published material (those coauthored by Hamarneh and Amin). All provide detailed descriptions of the items therein, and some also situate the significance of their items in wider arenas of knowledge. The contents are: the ″Forward″ by Ibrahim ‘Abd al-Rahman and ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Abd al-Tawwab; ″Introduction″ by Jere L. Bacharach; ″Beads″ by Peter Francis, Jr.; ″Bone, Ivory & Wood″ by Jere L. Bacharach and Elizabeth Rodenbeck; ″Coins″ with initial comments by Jere L. Bacharach, and identifications by Michael L. Bates, Peter Mentzel, Norman D. Nicol, and Luke Treadwell; ″Copper Coinage of Egypt in the Seventh Century″ by Lidia Domaszewicz and Michael L. Bates; ″Glass Weights

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and Vessel Stamps″ by Katharina Eldada (the longest contribution); ″Glass Vessel Stamp Data for *Materia Medica*″ by Sami K. Hamarneh and Henri Amin Awad; ″Medical Instruments″ by Sami K. Hamarneh and Henri Amin Awad; ″Medical Prescriptions″ by Henri Amin Awad; ″Metal Objects″ by Jere L. Bacharach and Elizabeth Rodenbeck; ″Textiles″ by Nancy Arthur Hoskins; and an appendix, ″Selected Bibliography of Published Works by Dr. Henri Amin Awad.″

The overwhelming majority of the items listed and described in this volume are from the periods before the establishment of the Mamluk Sultanate. (The main exceptions to this observation are the numerous Mamluk coins listed in the ″Coins Section″ and two Mamluk-era medical prescriptions.) Nevertheless, the Mamlukist will find the book a useful resource for situating in wider contexts any Mamluk-era material culture artifacts that s/he may have occasion to analyze. The contributions on ″Beads″ and ″Textiles″ in particular serve as both useful primers (to the non-specialist) for those knowledge-fields as well as detailed catalogues of the items described.

Some comments regarding the ″Coins″ section are in order as more than four hundred coins described therein are linked to the Mamluk era. The coins listed in this section are all now preserved at the American Numismatic Society in New York. In light of that, the omission of their ANS accession numbers from the catalogue (as was done in the section on ″Glass Weights and Vessel Stamps″) is unfortunate, since those numbers not only provide the date of donation, but are what make it possible to track down specific coins in the collection. Still, it is convenient to have this list gathered in one place, as the following example points out: given the usual assumption about the limited circulation of copper coins, the large number of mintless *fulūs* of Sultan Baybars from the Fustat region as found in the Awad collection adds credence to the argument advanced by Michael Bates that these coins were struck in Egypt as well as in Syria.

Finally, the Introduction also points out that Dr. Awad donated many coins to several Egyptian museums in addition to those given to the ANS, but that ″it proved to be too complex a problem to track down the gifts to these various institutions″ (p. 5). I certainly have great empathy for this problem, and what follows is only a minor quibble. Nevertheless, even a preliminary and general list of what went where, gleaned perhaps from the personal records of Dr. Awad, would have been useful information for any scholar whose work might benefit from tracking down additional specimens. For, as Bacharach and Rodenbeck point out, it is first necessary to build up a database of artifacts in order to use material culture in the effort of writing ″the history of everyday life in Fustat and other Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cities″ (p. 32).

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SHIHĀB AL-DĪN AḤMAD IBN MUḤAMMAD IBN ʻUMAR AL-ANṢĀRĪ IBN AL-ḤIMṢĪ [841–934], *Ḥawādith al-Zamān wa-Wafayāt al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān.* Edited by ʻUmar ʻAbd al-Salām Tadmurī. (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-ʻAṣrīyah lil-Ṭibāʻah wa-al-Nashr, 1419/1999). Three volumes.

REVIEWED BY CARL F. PETRY, Northwestern University

The publication of an important historical text heretofore accessible only from scattered manuscripts covering disparate chronological portions of the whole in a legible format is a welcome event. The editor has consulted the known fragments of Ibn al-Ḥimṣī´s text to produce what appears at first glance to be a carefully annotated and documented edition. Tadmurī states (pp. 63–68) that the surviving fragments of the *Ḥawādith* are preserved in the Feyzullah Library (Istanbul) for the years 851–900, Cambridge University (UK) for the years 901–8, and Suhāj University (Egypt) for the final period 909–30. The latter two manuscripts were examined from photocopies held by the Manuscript Institute of the Arab League in Cairo. The three volumes do not follow the chronological divisions imposed by the manuscript fragments, but are divided between the years 851–901 (vol. 1), 902–23 (vol. 2), 923–30 (vol. 3—to which are appended short episodic fragments and surviving, but incomplete, lists of necrologies).

The editor notes that chronological lacunae occur at various stages of all three manuscripts, while other writers likely contributed entries that the author included without overt acknowledgment. Some were inserted after his demise. The edited text of the original is preceded by the editor´s detailed introduction that includes a biography of the author, a list of his teachers, a summation of research on his career by a scholar identified as Laylá ʻAbd al-Laṭīf, a discussion of the editor´s consultation and collation of the three manuscript fragments, a list of the author´s writings (surviving or undiscovered), and a statement about his place in the historiography of Mamluk Egypt and Syria (pp. 9–68).

This place, although infrequently acknowledged in contemporary scholarship of the period,[1] is significant. Ibn al-Ḥimṣī spent most of his mature years in Damascus, second city of the Mamluk Empire. Keenly observant of the turbulent events unfolding there during the final decades of rule by the Circassian sultans and their viceroys, Ibn al-Ḥimṣī reveled in reporting factional infighting waged by the military elite and their civilian adjutants. His rich tapestry of local happenings, personally witnessed, is interspersed by descriptions of intermittent visits by officials

[1]For example, Brockelmann mentions Ibn al-Ḥimṣī only once, in a one-line reference that does not provide the author´s *nisbah* (Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* [Leiden, 1938], S2:41, #12a).

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from Cairo, the imperial center, and reference to broader developments in foreign lands. The *Ḥawādith* is therefore a valuable, indeed indispensable, source for the history of Damascus, and Syria more generally, during this era that preceded the Ottoman conquest. No student of the region can afford to ignore it now that Professor Tadmurī has made the work readily available.

A cautionary note is necessary, however. I have had occasion to consult the original manuscript (#1438) held by the Feyzullah Library myself. Among its more striking entries is a discussion of circumstances surrounding the succession to the Sultanate of ″Iraq and the East″ following the alleged death of Ya‘qūb Bak ibn Uzun Ḥasan in Shawwāl of 898/August 1493 (fol. 132a; see below for correct death date). Ibn al-Ḥimṣī castigates Ya‘qūb′s vile behavior when he states that the sultan responded to a request for an *iqṭā‘* from the son of a notable with his own demand for ″an abomination″ *(fāḥishah)* in return for its bestowal. Upon the youth′s complaint to the sultan′s mother, she upbraided her son for his conduct. Ya‘qūb responded by slaying his parent in shocking fashion—while intoxicated. When his brother learned of the murder, he attacked Ya‘qūb and killed him. The army then rose against the brother, executed him, and ultimately selected a grandson of Uzun Ḥasan via another line, Rustam Bak, as sultan. This lurid episode is certainly unsettling. Matricide is a crime condemned unconditionally in any society. Yet it raises perspectives vital to understanding the background to Ya‘qūb′s death and Rustam′s succession, a noteworthy episode in Aqqoyunlu history (Ibn al-Ḥimṣī′s details themselves may be questioned; Ya‘qūb was assassinated in 896/1490 rather than in 898).

But the editor omitted this episode from the printed version (vol. I, 343–44). His rendition jumps from request for the *iqṭā‘* to the brother′s murder of Ya‘qūb. With the deletion, the text reads as if Ya‘qūb murdered the boy, which appears as the occasion for the army′s deposition of him. This amounts to an unconscionable distortion of the original. It is the one case that I encountered (I was unable to obtain a complete copy of the original or to examine it *in toto;* the original was brought down to the Süleymaniye). Yet if the editor made this deletion, for whatever reason, he may have committed similar distortions elsewhere throughout the manuscripts. The otherwise admirable result may thus be unreliable for accurate historical reference and should be consulted with caveats.

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‘UMAR IBN AL-FĀRIḌ, *‘Umar ibn al-Fāriḍ: Sufi Verse, Saintly Life*. Translated and introduced by Th. Emil Homerin (Paulist Press: New York and Mahwah, NJ, 2001). Pp. xvii + 360.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL WINTER, Tel Aviv University

‘Umar Ibn al-Fāriḍ (576–632/1181–1235), arguably the greatest mystical poet in Arabic, lived in a century exceptionally rich in famous Sufi poets, writers, thinkers, and shaykhs, many of whom were recognized as *awliyā’,* saints, or friends of God. The best-known names are Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-‘Arabī, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī, Shihāb al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī, Sayyidī Aḥmad al-Badawī, Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, and Ḥajjī Bektāsh. The personalities and the works of many Sufi writers and shaykhs were loved and admired by many Muslims, but also gave rise to controversies. ‘Umar Ibn al-Fāriḍ was one of them. His poetry was loved, well known, and influential, and found a host of commentators. Yet his poetry and mysticism were also a subject of repeated attacks and controversies, particularly during the Mamluk period. His mysticism and religious attitudes were often associated with those of Ibn al-‘Arabī, although, as Th. Emil Homerin notes, it is not likely that the two famous contemporary mystics knew of each other.

Ibn al-Fāriḍ lived most of his life in Cairo, but also spent fifteen years in Mecca. He was devout and learned in the Islamic sciences. Yet it was his poetry that brought him fame and ultimately recognition as a *walī,* a saintly man. Homerin has been studying this Sufi poet, his life, his poetry and ideas as they were expressed in his mystical poetry, for a long time. His first book, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Fāriḍ, His Verse, and His Shrine*[1] was the first thorough study of Ibn al-Fāriḍ. That study introduced the poet, giving his biography and his ideas and religious views as they are reflected in his poetry. Also described are the controversies that took place about his doctrines that seemed to certain scholars contrary to Islamic orthodoxy, and his eventual acceptance by most Muslims and his reputation as a *walī*. These developments happened in Cairo during the Mamluk period. Homerin described in detail the ideas, personalities, and forces that were at play around Ibn al-Fāriḍ´s mysticism. The book discusses the poet´s legacy and status in later times, up to the twentieth century.

The present book has the objective to make Ibn al-Fāriḍ´s poetry and ideas accessible to a wider readership of people who may not know Arabic but are interested in mysticism, Sufism and Islam in general, and classical Arabic poetry.

[1]Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1994.

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Arabists and other specialists in the field will also find the book useful for deepening their knowledge of Arabic Sufism.

The book, which opens with a comprehensive introduction about Ibn al-Fāriḍ and his poetry (pp. 7–37), is an annotated reader of translated selections of Ibn al-Fāriḍ′s most famous poems, parts of authoritative Arabic commentaries, and also the biography, or rather hagiography, of the poet written by his grandson ʻAlī, Sibṭ Ibn al-Fāriḍ. It is entitled *Dībājat al-Dīwān* (Adorned proem to the *dīwān*) (the collection of Ibn al-Fāriḍ′s poems edited by his grandson.) ʻAlī received the information about Ibn al-Fāriḍ from Kamāl al-Dīn ʻAlī, one of the poet′s sons. The *Adorned Proem* presents the poet′s physical description and some highlights of his life in Cairo and Mecca. We are told that Ibn al-Fāriḍ turned down offers by al-Malik al-Kāmil, the Ayyubid sultan of Egypt, to prepare for him a grave next to the sultan′s mother in the domed shrine of al-Imām al-Shāfiʻī, and also returned money sent to him by the ruler, as befits a saintly man. Various miracles were attributed to Ibn al-Fāriḍ.

ʻAlī relates that during one of his pilgrimages to Mecca, Ibn al-Fāriḍ unexpectedly met Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, the renowned Sufi shaykh and writer, who also came from Iraq to perform the hajj duty. The two mystics were indeed contemporaries, but whether this encounter was a historical fact is doubtful.

Finally, Ibn al-Fāriḍ′s death and his awesome funeral procession are described in detail.

The *Adorned Proem* reports an incident that happened around 687/1288, during the reign of Qalāwūn, the Mamluk sultan. ʻAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Bint al-Aʻazz, a well-known scholar who was vizier and later a high ranking qadi, slandered a prominent Sufi shaykh named al-Aykī for ordering his disciples to study Ibn al-Fāriḍ′s longest and most important poem, ″Naẓm al-Sulūk,″ translated by Homerin as ″Poem of the Sufi Way.″ It is also the longest Sufi poem in Arabic, spanning over 761 verses. Ibn Bint al-Aʻazz, like many of Ibn al-Fāriḍ′s critics afterwards, accused the poet of promoting the doctrine of *ḥulūl,* or incarnation of the Holy in a human form, thus annihilating the separation between God and His Creation, contrary to the belief of Islamic orthodoxy. The author of the *Adorned Proem* reports that as a punishment from God, Ibn Bint al-Aʻazz was dismissed from his high positions. Later he repented, and even recited Ibn al-Fāriḍ′s verses during his next hajj. God accepted his prayers, and he was again entrusted with the judgeship.[2]

In the center of the book is the full and annotated translation of ″Naẓm al-Sulūk″

[2]A fiercer controversy about Ibn al-Fāriḍ′s poetry and doctrines raged in 874–75/1469–70 during the reign of Sultan Qāytbāy. Al-Biqāʻ, an alim who was the poet′s fiercest critic, suffered humiliation and exile. See Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Fāriḍ, his Verse, and His Shrine,* 62-73.

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(″Al-Tā'īyah al-Kubrá,″ the ode rhyming on *tā'*). The translator decided on a verse-by-verse commentary, printed on the pages facing the text of the translation, a graphically successful solution. This poem is full of motifs, allusions, and imagery from the Quran, the hadith, and the Sufi tradition. Homerin′s wide knowledge of all these sources makes his commentary extremely useful even to experts in Islamic culture and vital to the wider public. Only the principal themes of the ″Poem of the Sufi Way″ will be mentioned here: the love of the mystic for God; the Day of the Covenant;[3] the Light of Muḥammad;[4] *dhikr;*[5] and many allusions to figures and ideas from the Quran and Arab poetry. As Homerin makes clear, Ibn al-Fāriḍ′s mystical ideas, images, and allusions are not original. The poet drew on the Sufi heritage and literature. For example, Junayd of Baghdad (d. 297/910) developed the doctrine of the Day of the Covenant, and the writings of Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 289/896) were important for the belief in the Light of Muḥammad. The influence of the great al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) on later mystical theories and attitudes are also discernible in the work of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, as in the ideas of many other Sufis. Yet the artistic rendition of these mystical elements was Ibn al-Fāriḍ′s own contribution that brought him fame, admiration, and sometimes denouncement.

In the Introduction (pp. 35–36) Homerin notes correctly that medieval and modern commentators, who persisted in reading the ″Poem of the Sufi Way″ as Ibn al-Fāriḍ′s spiritual autobiography, have failed to appreciate the presence of the lyric ″I,″ the dramatic persona so essential to the poem′s craft. That ″I″ is at times the lover, at others ″Muḥammad′s Light,″ and at times a combination of both. Homerin adds: ″Many sections of the poem, such as that on divine emanation and the various levels of existence, would be more the product of doctrine, reason, and reflection than of personal mystical experience.″ Homerin also points to the poem′s openly didactic character.

I fully agree with Homerin′s analysis and conclusions. I would emphasize more the strong apologetic strain used by Ibn al-Fāriḍ that is evident in many verses in this poem. The poet repeats the message that in spite of the fact that the lover has experienced union with the Holy, he is committed to fulfill the religious

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[3]*Yawm al-Mīthāq,* the day in pre-eternity on which God made His covenant with the spirits of humanity before their existence in creation, after Quran 7:127.

[4]The pre-eternal entity, a type of logos principle, God′s first emanation and the instrument of all subsequent creation. According to one hadith, Muḥammad said: ″I was a prophet when Adam was still between water and clay,″ and in a divine saying, God says to Muḥammad: ″If not for you, I would not have created the heavens.″ Even after the death of the human Muḥammad, the Prophetic Light continues to appear on earth among the gnostics and friends of God. Homerin, *Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, 29.

[5]″Recollection,″ the Sufi ritual of calling God′s names in unison, often to the point of ecstasy, to recollect past union with God in order to return to the Day of the Covenant.

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laws and follow the mainstream of Islamic theology. ″I have not transgressed the two truths: The Book, and the traditions of our Prophet″ (p. 155, verse 280). Other examples in a similar vein are: p. 287, verse 743, p. 203, verse 454, and the translator´s comment on p. 202, for verses 454–55.

I have found that the most interesting part of Ibn al-Fāriḍ´s apologetics is his repeated denial of his belief in *ḥulūl,* the divine´s incarnation into a human form that would annul the separation between God and His creation. This strong denial is significant, since Ibn al-Fāriḍ´s poetry in general and ″Al-Tā'īyah al-Kubrá″ in particular were associated with the doctrine of *ḥulūl,* particularly among his critics. The poet knew exactly what he was being accused of, although, as we have seen, he was not the creator of that doctrine. For example: ″When did I ever shift away from my saying: ´I am her´ or say—how wrong indeed!—´She dwells in me´?″ (p. 153, verse 277).[6] For another example, see p. 289, verse 749. Perhaps the most explicit expression to that effect is p. 155, verse 284: ″So in the clearer of the two visions I have a sign that keeps my creed free from any incarnation.″

The book is an important literary and scholarly achievement. The two poems which Homerin translated and annotated are by far Ibn al-Fāriḍ´s most celebrated ones, ″Naẓm al-Sulūk″ being the most important Sufi poem in Arabic. The ″Wine Ode″ (Al-khamrīyah) is a short poem about mystical love, which in Sufi imagery is likened to wine. The translation of the ″Wine Ode″ is followed by selected portions of the commentary by Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 747/1345), a supporter of Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī´s mystical doctrines. As Homerin explains, the commentary gives us an idea about the interpretative strategies used by Sufis. He notes that this poem could be read as a classical Arabic wine and love poem, without the mystical dimension.

It is hard to translate poetry; all the more so when the texts are the difficult and beautiful mystical poetry composed in Arabic in the Middle Ages. I have compared many verses of the original with the translation, and I am deeply impressed at how faithful to the original text and at the same time elegant and lucid the translation is.[7]

Finally, the cover art of the book ought to be mentioned, not only because of its beauty in form and colorful decoration, but because Th. Emil Homerin tells how special this painting is to him. Mark Staff Brandl, an international artist, theorist and critic, who is his friend from childhood, created it. One sees a sort of colorful and imaginative calligraphy echoing the Arabic sounds *ta*, *ti,* and *tu*, the

[6]Ibn al-Fāriḍ´s use of the feminine gave rise to accusations that he was referring to God in the feminine form.

[7]Only in one place did I not like Homerin´s translation. On p. 215, verse 496, he translates *al-ma'īyah* as ″withness.″ Even the quotation marks do not make this translation seem right. But, of course, it is easier to criticize than to translate.

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past tense suffix for the second person masculine and feminine, and then the first person. The artist was inspired by verse 218 of the ″Tā'īyah,″ whose message is that lovers in union transcend duality as ″You,″ and become ″I.″ This is one of the central motifs of the poem.

MAJDĪ ʻABD AL-RASHĪD BAḤR, *Al-Qaryah al-Miṣrīyah fī ʻAṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk, 648–923 H./1250–1517 M.* ([Cairo]: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-ʻĀmmah lil-Kitāb, 1999). Pp. 376.

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM TUCKER, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville

Originally an M.A. thesis in history at al-Minufīyah University (Egypt), the present volume is a study of village life in Egypt from ca. 1250 to 1517. The author seeks to elucidate the role of the Egyptian peasant village in the economy and politics of the Mamluk period through consultation and analysis of major Egyptian Mamluk-era authors in both published works and manuscript sources. The results are presented through the prism of economic, social, cultural, and religious life.

The book consists of an introduction, six chapters, and a conclusion. The source materials include a judicious mixture of chronicles, biographical dictionaries, administrative handbooks, topographical works, travelers′ accounts, etc. Baḥr seems to have used these materials carefully and critically, although the obvious problem is that of ferreting out reliable and substantial information on country dwellers, particularly poor cultivators, from these religiously or politically elite authors.

Chapter 1 provides interesting and useful information about the village administrators, *ʻumdah*s, as well as the village agricultural technical specialist (?), the *khawlī*. Baḥr′s discussion of the latter is particularly interesting because it provides insight into the knowledge and planning involved in cultivation in Mamluk Egypt, as well as peasant perceptions of this official and, for that matter, the *ʻumdah*s.

Chapter 2 details the various forms of *dawāwīn, iqṭāʻ*s, and *awqāf* present in Egypt during this period. Although the information here is clearly of value, the informed reader will recognize much of it from previous studies, e.g., those of Professors Sato, Ayalon, etc. The chapter concludes with some mention of individually-owned land, but, probably because the sources available do not contain nearly as much information on this issue as one would like, the author furnishes much less information here than the present reviewer would like to have seen.

Baḥr devotes Chapter 3 to an examination of the Mamluk feudal system and to the various officials involved in its performance and maintenance. The discussion

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of the activities of the *nāẓir*s, the *mustawfī,* and other officials, whether administrative, technical, or fiscal, is interesting and offers insight into the ways in which peasants were controlled, disciplined, and, indeed, exploited. In many respects this section is the most valuable part of the book because of its actual engagement with peasant life and the methods of control exerted by Mamluk feudal interests operating in the countryside.

In Chapter 4 the author investigates such issues as irrigation, crops planted, and markets, and inevitably, the range of disasters and catastrophes that blighted the lives and livelihoods of Egyptian rural dwellers. On the latter point, the materials cited are useful but betray a surprising unfamiliarity with some of the basic secondary sources that deal with these serious problems (as, for example, this reviewer´s own study of disasters and Mamluk peasants published more than twenty years ago in *JESHO,* in 1981, to be exact).

Chapters 5 and 6 offer the reader some insight into social life, daily existence, and religious identity and worship in the countryside. We learn, for instance, about the work, homes, and health problems of Mamluk-era peasants. In this respect, Baḥr´s work complements the writings of some Western scholars about European peasant life. The contents of Chapter 6 particularly, while interesting, do not add substantially to what we already know about mosques and churches in Egypt during this period, although the detailed treatment of rural Christians´ religious institutions is valuable.

All in all, this book constitutes a serious attempt to illuminate the economic and social base of Egyptian society in a very important era and, as a result, merits a careful reading. That being said, there are obvious problems with this volume. First of all, the information presented by many of the Mamluk authors is, not surprisingly, very sketchy and ultimately tells us more about the Mamluk masters than about their peasant producers. Secondly, the present author´s impressive knowledge of the primary source material is not matched by a parallel awareness or utilization of modern studies, especially those of non-Egyptian scholars. If nothing else, a rapid perusal of the bibliographies provided in *The Cambridge History of Egypt,* Volume 1, should have offered valuable assistance in such an effort.

I readily understand the problems of procuring books from countries other than one´s own, but I feel quite certain that at the very least *The Cambridge History of Egypt,* if not other sources, must be available in Egyptian academic libraries. It is important that we all, wherever we are, try to learn from and utilize all of the available scholarship regardless of its country of origin. That is, in the final analysis, the impetus for the *Mamlūk Studies Review*´s admirable policy of offering reviews of so many books on the Mamluks coming from the contemporary Arab world.

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