

Book Reviews

MUHAMMAD IBN AḤMAD AL-FARGHĀNĪ, *Muntahā al-Madārik fī Sharḥ Tā’iyat Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, compiled by ʻĀsim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʻIlmiyah, 2007). Vol. 1, pp. 496; vol. 2, pp. 334.

REVIEWED BY TH. EMIL HOMERIN, University of Rochester

Sa‘id al-Dīn al-Farghānī (d. 699/1300) wrote what is believed to be the first commentary on ‘Umar Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s famous Sufi poem the *Nazm al-Sulūk*, also known as *Al-Tā’iyah al-Kubrā* (Ode in T-major), since the poem rhymes in “t” and spans 760 verses. Al-Farghānī was a third-generation disciple of Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 637/1240), having studied with the latter’s student and stepson Șadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274). Al-Qūnawī was a known admirer of Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s verse, and he used to recite and comment on Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s *Al-Tā’iyah al-Kubrā*. His comments were then incorporated by his student al-Farghānī into the latter’s commentary, *Muntahā al-Madārik* (The utmost perception), which al-Farghānī wrote first in Persian and then in an expanded Arabic version. The Persian edition, *Mashāriq al-Darārī* (The rising places of the shining stars), was edited and published by Jalāl al-Dīn Āshṭiyānī,¹ while the Arabic version appeared as a lithograph in 1876.² Recently, ʻĀsim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī has made a new Arabic edition of the work.

This new edition will be welcomed by scholars of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, and especially students of Ibn al-‘Arabī and his Sufi heirs. Scholars studying the religion of the Mamluk period will also appreciate this new printing of the commentary, as the *Muntahā al-Madārik* was read and admired by many scholars of the time, but denounced by others, including Ibn Taymīyah and Ibn Khaldūn. In fact, a public reading of the commentary sparked a major religious controversy in Cairo in 874–75/1469–70. However, al-Kayyālī’s edition has several shortcomings. First, he does not provide any information on manuscript sources, and I suspect that he has only reformatted the 1876 litho edition. Al-Kayyālī provides little information about al-Farghānī’s life or thought; he merely cites al-Farghānī’s date of death, mentions that he was a follower of Ibn al-‘Arabī by way of al-Qūnawī and Rūmī, and that he

¹Mashhad: Dānishgāh-i Firdawṣī, 1980.

²Istanbul: Maktab al-Sanā‘ī.



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wrote several other works. Al-Kayyālī then lists latter commentators on the verse of Ibn al-Fārid, some of whom were influenced by al-Farghānī's work (1:3–6). This scant introduction is then followed by a short “biography” of Ibn al-Fārid, which al-Kayyālī drew from al-Munāwī's (d. 1031/1622) *Al-Kawākib al-Durrīyah fī Tarājim al-Sadāt al-Ṣūfīyah*, a hagiographical work on Sufi masters (1:7–12). While this account provides very few actual facts about the poet's life, it does offer a popular, reverential image of Ibn al-Fārid, while mentioning and denouncing the controversies of the Mamluk period regarding his monistic views and those of others, including Ibn al-‘Arabī and al-Farghānī.

Al-Farghānī divides his commentary into two parts. First is a long introduction detailing his theosophy of emanation in four sections: (1) on the Divine Essence and the names and attributes engendered from It, with particular attention to the 99 Divine Names (1:18–69); (2) on the properties (*aḥkām*) of the Realm of Spirits and the World of Dominion (*‘ālam al-malakūt*) and how they are realized and engendered from the Presence of Invincibility (*ḥadrat al-jabarūt*) (1:70–78); (3) on the engendering of the World of Similitudes (*‘ālam al-mithāl*), the Realm of Corporeal Bodies, and the creation of Adam (1:79–101), and (4) on the origin of the human being, its phases and states, and how it returns by the path of mystical practice to its spiritual home and union in love (1:102–45).

Throughout this long introduction, al-Kayyālī identifies wherever possible the source of Quranic citations and those for hadith. Occasionally, he will define a Sufi technical term or an obscure word, or clarify an idea, but for the most part, he makes no attempt to present a systematic and analytical presentation of al-Farghānī's ontology, theology, or anthropology. For this the reader should consult the excellent article by Giuseppe Scattolin, “Al-Farghānī's Commentary on Ibn al-Fārid's Mystical Poem *Al-Tā’iyat al-Kubrā*.³

Turning to the commentary itself, we learn that al-Farghānī believed that Ibn al-Fārid had attained the high mystical “Station of Muhammad” (*al-maqām al-Muhammadī*; 1:145), which then served as the basis for *Al-Tā’iyah al-Kubrā*. There, al-Farghānī observed, Ibn al-Fārid explores aspects of mystical love and the Sufi path, offering guidance and instructions, and often speaking or “translating” from the Station of Muhammad. Proceeding to his verse by verse commentary, al-Farghānī first explains lexical and grammatical issues within each verse, and then provides an interpretation of the verse in terms of his mystical and theological ideas presented in his

³*Mélanges (Institut dominicain d'études orientales du Caire)* 21 (1993): 331–83.



introduction. He frequently suggests allusions to the Quran, hadith, and Sufi doctrines that may be present in a verse. At times, al-Farghānī will interrupt his commentary to clarify key points, such as on divine love or mystical annihilation, or to summarize what has occurred so far in the poem. Occasionally, al-Farghānī gives sub-headings to sections of the poem regarding their subject matter. Al-Farghānī also cites the “Saying of Willing Devotions,” and this Divine Saying is, indeed, central to Ibn al-Fārid’s poem. However, to a large extent, al-Farghānī’s interpretations of the verses in terms of his elaborate theosophy are not supported by the poem itself. Nevertheless, his *Muntahā al-Madārik* is an important Sufi work in its own right both for understanding developments in the “Ibn al-‘Arabī School” of Islamic mysticism, as well as important religious trends of the Mamluk period.

NŪR AL-DĪN ‘ALĪ IBN ‘ABD AL-RAHĪM IBN AHMAD AL-KĀTIB AL-MALAKĪ AL-MUZAFFARĪ IBN AL-MUGHAYZIL, *Dhayl Mufarrij al-Kurūb fī Akhbār Bani Ayyūb*, edited by ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Sallām Tadmurī (Sidon and Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-‘Asriyah, 2004). Pp. 206.

REVIEWED BY PAUL M. COBB, University of Notre Dame

Appearances can be deceptive. As discrete forms of historical writing, Dhayls, or continuations, tend to be brief, even curt little things, and they give the impression that they merely offer scattered provincial afterthoughts to the “real” chronicles they claim to continue. But as the pioneering work of Li Guo has shown us, dhayls—perhaps especially Syrian dhayls—are not to be trifled with. Ibn al-Mughayzil’s dhayl of Ibn Wāsil’s famous Ayyubid dynastic chronicle, the *Mufarrij al-Kurūb*, is a case in point. The edition under review here is a marvelous example of how this often misunderstood genre of historical writing can hold real treasures.

The editor of the text, ‘Umar Tadmurī, has done a very fine job of definitively identifying the author of the Dhayl, around whom a certain amount of confusion exists in the manuscript history and catalogues. Tadmurī has also fleshed out his portrait of the author with a sketch of the author’s family, a task for which readers will thank him given the prominence that family gossip has in Ibn al-Mughayzil’s work. As for the edition itself, it is based on two manuscripts of the work, attached to the two Paris manuscripts of Ibn Wāsil’s *Mufarrij al-Kurūb* (as one would expect), Bibliothèque Nationale fonds arabe 1702 and 1703. It is unclear from the introduction whether Tadmurī has examined the Cairo or Istanbul manuscripts of the *Mufarrij* to see if Ibn al-Mughayzil’s Dhayl has been



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appended there as well. In any case, the edition has left me with the unscientific impression of being a solid one: variants are reported, editorial readings seem sound, and the notes are filled with references to parallel accounts—this last feature a great boon to researchers.

Ibn al-Mughayzil (d. 701/1302) was born into a large notable family from Ḥamāh that included in their ranks a vizier, a qadi, a muftī, a muhtasib, a khaṭīb, an imam, several traditionists, and a number of kuttāb, including our author. They provided their services to the Abbasid court in Baghdad, the Mamluk sultans in Cairo, and to various Ayyubid lords in Syria, especially that of Ḥamāh. In short, his family represents a cross-section of the medieval Syrian a‘yān. Ibn al-Mughayzil himself seems to have been raised in the household of his grandfather, the Maliki shaykh al-shuyūkh, and was sent on various missions with him or with other relatives. He was an eyewitness to Baybars’ campaigns against Franks and Mongols in Syria, and so must have been part of the administrative corps attached to the army—he doesn’t seem to be the warrior type himself. For the period 682–98/1283–99 he served as the kātib dīwān of al-Malik al-Muẓaffar, the Ayyubid lord of Ḥamāh. At al-Muẓaffar’s death in 1299, Ḥamāh briefly fell under the direct control of Mamluk Cairo. During this period, nothing is known of Ibn al-Mughayzil’s activities, though it is perhaps telling that when we next encounter him, it is away from Ḥamāh in 701/1302, by which time he had joined the entourage of a Mamluk amir sent to govern Tripoli, where he died later that year.

The work, as Tadmurī has determined, was written sometime between 696/1297 and 697/1298, or, to be precise, before the death of al-Muẓaffar on 22 Dhū al-Qa‘dah 697/31 August 1298, just a few years after the expulsion of the Franks from the Levant. It covers—in no way completely—the events of some thirty-four years, from 662 to 695/1263 to 1297, focusing on major political events. But the real importance of the work lies in the fact that the author provides both his own completely unique eyewitness accounts and transcripts of chancery documents related to such events as the conquest of Antioch in 666/1268, Ḥiṣn Marqab in 684/1285, and Tripoli in 688/189, and the defeat of the Mongols at Elbistan in 675/1277, as well as unique accounts on the life and conduct of the sultan Baybars and other battles such as the conquest of Acre in 690/1291. It also includes a great deal of information on Ibn al-Mughayzil’s family and intellectual networks, as the author drops names like they were going out of style, and is always ready to quote samples of his own poetry for us.

Part chronicle, part autobiography, part *inshā’* collection, part *dīwān*: there’s a little something for everyone in Ibn al-Mughayzil’s *Dhayl*. Historians interested in Mamluk Syria, conflicts with the Franks, Mamluk-Mongol relations, and the world of the “civilian elite” of medieval Syria will be rewarded in ways belied by the small size of this svelte volume. I recommend a copy for every Mamlukist’s bookshelf.



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Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras III: Proceedings of the 6th, 7th and 8th International Colloquium Organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 1997, 1998 and 1999, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 102, edited by U. Vermeulen and J. Van Steenbergen (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

REVIEWED BY ALBRECHT FUESS, Universität Erfurt/Équipe Monde Arabe et Méditerranée, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Université de Tours

This conference volume is the product of three international colloquia on Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk eras which were organized at the Catholic University Leuven in May 1997, 1998, and 1999. This annual conference series started in 1992 and has been organized since on a yearly basis by Urbain Vermeulen and Jo van Steenbergen. The seventeenth colloquium of this kind was held in May of 2008 at the University of Ghent. The continuity of this effort underlines the importance of Belgian scholars in current research on the Middle East in the medieval period. In this context, certainly Frédéric "Maqriziana" Bauden from the University of Liège with his innovative work on Mamluk historiography has to be named as well.

The third volume of proceedings of the series contains seventeen English, five French, and two German articles. The papers are arranged chronologically. You will find three articles concerning the Fatimids and five concerning the Ayyubids. The majority of the articles (fifteen) deal with the Mamluk era. The conference volume covers therefore a time period of over five hundred years (969–1517). Fortunately Egypt and Syria receive equal attention and the work is therefore not leaning solely towards Egyptian history.

There is no thematic restriction. This leads to a large variety of topics which allows the authors the utmost flexibility and elucidates the depth and diversity of contemporary research.

Two articles focus mainly on the role of women in Muslim medieval societies. Recently Carl Petry and Lucian Reinfandt have already shown the importance of women as supervisors of charitable trusts (*awqāf*) in the Mamluk era, but other aspects of the history of women in Muslim medieval societies receive increased interest as well. Yaakov Lev, for example, explains (pp. 1–31) the social life of common and royal women in the Fatimid period. He provides us with an insight into some aspects of the daily life of common women and shows how the Fatimid royal women tried to cope with the problem that the participation of women in political life was on the one hand restricted, but on the other hand there were the needs of dynastic politics, which also necessitated public involvement.

Amalia Levanoni (pp. 209–218) draws our attention to the most prominent woman of Mamluk times: Shajar al-Durr, the Mamluk sultana. As it is well known, she reigned as "queen of the Muslims" for three months in 1250 after the death of her husband al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb and the killing of the Ayyubid



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heir al-Mu'azzam Tūrān-Shāh. Although she had to leave the place of official ruler to a man after three months, the former Qipchaq slave girl played an extraordinary role in the ensuing power struggles until she was finally murdered in 1257. Amalia Levanoni explains this active role of Shajar al-Durr convincingly by the high status women were accorded in the Mongol regency of the Golden Horde, the homeland of the Qipchaq Turk Mamluks. Therefore the Mamluks accorded this prominent role to Shajar al-Durr in the formative period of the Mamluk Empire. Once they had found out that the Egyptian environment was fundamentally hostile to such experiments, the Mamluks never repeated it again.

Another important part of the conference volume deals with different forms of landownership, land taxes, and pious endowments. Stuart Borsch has recently worked out in his *The Black Death in Egypt and England*⁴ that Egypt had an entirely agrarian economy in the Middle Ages and “derived almost all of its Gross National Product from agrarian revenue. . . . Long-distance trade played a subordinate role in the overall development of Egypt's economy.”⁵ When we take these findings into consideration than we can understand how important it was for Mamluk society to define the access to the revenues of agrarian income even in the provinces. Yehoshua Frenkel (pp. 193–208) explains therefore the different aspects of land tenure in Mamluk Palestine, especially as income for the military, and the same author (pp. 33–49) also draws attention to the ketubba (Jewish marriage document) as a source for the study of the economic history of the Fatimid period.

C. Morisot (pp. 309–28) explains that it was common practice for merchants to possess for pious foundations “waqf des commerçants” and he explains in detail the content of such waqf documents. Urbain Vermeulen reflects on the circumstances which led to the issue of a tax lowering document for fourteenth-century Damascus, while Johannes Pahlitzsch (329–44) elaborates on the more spiritual background of the endowment practice in Mamluk Jerusalem, thereby comparing it to contemporary Christian concepts.

Of course, such a conference volume broadens our knowledge about less-known manuscripts. Angelika Hartmann (pp. 89–100) does so with the Syrian chronicle *Al-Tārikh al-Mansūrī* of Ibn Nazīf al-Hamawī from the thirteenth century, who is apparently one of best informed historiographers of the Ayyubid period, but the question remains if another copy of the manuscript is to be found in the future apart from the one in St. Petersburg. M. Aguiar Aguilar (pp. 163–70) discusses Arabic treatises on the sinical quadrant in the Mamluk period, which served to provide answers to problems of spherical trigonometry.

⁴Austin, 2005.

⁵Borsch, Black Death, 19.



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Needless to say, aspects of archaeology and architecture form an integral part of the book. Lorenz Korn (pp. 123–37) demonstrates his broad expertise when explaining the attitude of contemporary historiography towards Ayyubid building activities, thereby stating that it was increasingly popular among authors of late Ayyubid and early Mamluk times to describe buildings, and that criticism from religious scholars for constructing profane buildings is hardly to be found. The same author (pp. 101–21) provides us with a detailed study of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's madrasah in Cairo.

The contributions of Hanisch (pp. 61–88) and Petersen (pp. 345–406) deal with the archaeological evidence for the planning of castles and towns in Ayyubid and Mamluk times. In these articles the military function of places and fortresses is explored as well.

There are three papers which deal mainly with military issues. P.-V. Claverie clarifies the role of the Templars of Catalonia in the final defense of the Frankish Crusader kingdoms up to the fall of the island of Arwād/Rouad opposite Tartūs in 1302 and the beginning of the juridical process against the Templars in Cyprus in 1310. The importance of the Templars in the diplomatic relations of Catalonia with the Mamluk Empire and the Persian Ilkhanate is explored as well.

David Nicolle's article (pp. 139–62) touches on a crucial point in the military history of the Near and Middle East, i.e., the scarcity of necessary raw materials from the tenth to the fourteenth century. He demonstrates how the especially vital iron had to be imported from Europe, Anatolia, and India. On the other hand, this scarcity of raw materials led to special forms of armament such as hardened leather. The article provides numerous further aspects dealing with the manufacture and storage of arms. Moreover it provides an excellent appendix of eleven pages for further reading on the topic. Equally valuable is Dionisus Agius' (pp. 49–60) work on the Arab shalandī in the Fatimid era. Shalandī is the name given by the Arabs to a special type of Byzantine war vessel. Agius enlightens us here with a further insight into Arab shipbuilding, classifies the different types of ships used by Muslims, and discusses the scarcity of wood in the region. The shalandī seems to be originally a Byzantine warship and the name apparently derives from the Greek. It seems that the shalandī was decked and that we can see here a difference from other contemporary ship types. The Fatimids ordered the buildings of shalandīs in Egypt in order to be competitive with the Byzantines. However, it seems from my point of view that the shalandīs were as powerless as the rest of the Fatimid navy against the Crusaders. We do not hear of the shalandīs in later periods and especially not in Mamluk times. But the Mamluks did not have a navy worthy of the name anyhow.

The last cluster of themes which can be grouped together in the present conference volume deals with aspects of the civilian and military elites in



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the Mamluk Empire. Bernadette Martel-Thoumian (pp. 271–308) reflects first on the role of the urban elites in the Circassian period, before describing in detail the life of Muhibb al-Din Salāmah ibn Yūsuf al-Aslāmī, a very prominent secretary in Damascus on the eve of the Ottoman conquest (pp. 219–70).

Another interesting double set of articles concerning members of the civilian elite in Mamluk Syria is provided by G. Schallenberg, who explains the negative attitude of the famous Damascene scholar Ibn Taymīyah towards the Shi'ah (pp. 407–20), before elaborating on the most prominent disciple of Ibn Taymīyah, i.e., Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, and his spiritual way to healing “the diseases of the heart,” in his second contribution (pp. 421–28).

Finally, Jo van Steenbergen (pp. 429–48) explains the functioning of the Mamluk governorship in Damascus from 1341 to 1382 and provides a list of all Mamluk governors of the period. In a second article (pp. 449–66) the same author examines the question of whether the powerful amir Qawṣūn was a statesman or a courtier. Van Steenbergen concludes that Qawṣūn was a pawn in the double policy of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Qawṣūn had been installed by the sultan to counterbalance other powerful Mamluk factions, but after the death of the sultan, Qawṣūn had not been capable of building enough alliances to hang on to power and therefore he was overthrown in 1342. (In this context I would like to point out the very good recent study of Henning Sievert, who has examined the structures behind Mamluk succession struggles in the Circassian period: *Der Herrscherwechsel im Mamlukensultanat: Historische und historiographische Untersuchungen zu Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī und Ibn Taġribirdī* [Berlin, 2003]). Regarding the case of the succession of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, van Steenbergen concludes, alluding to the ambiguous role of the sultan: “But as soon as the puppeteer left his play, the system collapsed and chaos seemed about to ensue” (p. 466). But as van Steenbergen knows all too well himself, there will be always “Order Out of Chaos.”

To sum up: All contributions to this conference volume are of high scholarly standard and display thematic depth and intellectual sharpness. Moreover, the book provides starting points for further research. It has to be clearly acknowledged that the Belgian conference series with the accompanying proceedings in Leuven, and nowadays Ghent, are one of the few established and vital scientific platforms where scholars of medieval Egypt and Syria can present their current research and intensify international academic contacts.



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TAMĪM MA'MŪN MARDAM BEK, *Al-Malik Qānsūh al-Ghawrī al-Ashraf wa-al-Wazīr Lālā Muṣṭafā Bāshā Dhī al-Sayf al-Aḥnaf* (Damascus: Maktabat Dār Ṭulās, 2007).

REVIEWED BY IGARASHI DAISUKE, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, The Toyo Bunko

The title of this book is an arrangement of the names of Qānsūh al-Ghawrī—the de facto last Mamluk sultan, who was killed in the Battle of Marj Dābiq, which was fought between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Ottoman Empire in 1516—and of Vizier Lālā Muṣṭafā Pasha, who held various governmental posts including the governorship of Damascus (1561–68) and took the command of the army in various campaigns such as the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus (1571) under the reign of the Ottoman sultan Suleyman I (r. 1520–66) and Selim II (r. 1566–74)—both of whom were prominent military rulers but appear to have no connection with each other. This title might sound strange until one studies the family tree of its author. The Mardam Bek family, one of Syria's most distinguished, traces its ancestry back to this very Lālā Muṣṭafā Pasha. Lālā Muṣṭafā Pasha was married to Fāṭimah, the daughter of al-Ghawrī's son al-Nāṣirī Muḥammad and his wife, the daughter of Amir Sibāy (the viceroy of Damascus under al-Ghawrī). This implies that the author of the book is a fifteenth-generation descendant of al-Ghawrī and, at the same time, a thirteenth-generation descendant of Lālā Muṣṭafā Pasha. In addition, the author's great-grandfather was married to a woman who was the eleventh-generation descendant of Sibāy. Therefore, this book is not so much an academic study as it is an introduction to the author's own great ancestors.

This book is comprised of the following six chapters: (1) The biography of Sultan al-Ghawrī, (2) the biography of Sibāy, (3) the biography of al-Nāṣirī Muḥammad al-Ghawrī, (4) the biography of Fāṭimah Khātūn al-Ghawrī (the wife of Lālā Muṣṭafā Pasha), (5) the biography of Vizier Lālā Muṣṭafā Pasha, and (6) the genealogical tree of the Mardam Bek family (an additional chapter).

Although this book contains some interesting information regarding these historical figures, unfortunately, we must state that it is inappropriate for academic use. This is because it disregards the basic principles of academic writing. For example, Chapter 1 includes al-Ghawrī's brief biography and the “edited” text of two Arabic sources—*Nafā'is al-Majālis al-Sultāniyah fī Haqā'iq al-Asrār al-Qur'āniyah* (by Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī) and *Al-Kawkab al-Durri fī Masā'il al-Ghawrī*. Both of these sources include dozens of questions (most of which pertain to religious matters) submitted by al-Ghawrī to the sultanic council (*majlis*) along with the ulama's answers.



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However, almost the entire chapter is copied word for word from 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām's *Majālis al-Sultān al-Ghawrī: Ṣafhāt min Tārīkh Miṣr fī al-Qarn al-Āshir al-Hijrī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Nashr, 1941), probably without referring to the original manuscripts of the two Arabic sources. In addition, the author has added some trivial information, including excerpts from Wikipedia. This problem applies not only to this chapter but to entire sections within the book. Due to the defectiveness of his annotation, it is impossible to know exactly what information and details are being relied on for authority. Moreover, the author has not clearly demarcated which descriptions he has written himself and which descriptions are quoted from papers written by other researchers.

Thus, it is hard to say that this book meets the acceptable levels for academic study. Nonetheless, it does not diminish the value of research on this unique family that originated through the formation of marital relationships among members of the military elite of the destroyed old regime and of the new empire at its peak. It is expected that the book will inspire further research on this family by specialists in Mamluk and Ottoman history.

MUHAMMAD 'ALĪ ŞUWAYRIKĪ, *'Ā'ishah al-Bā'ūnīyah: Fāḍilat al-Zamān* (865–922 H = 1460–1516 M) (Amman: Wizārat al-Thaqafah, 2006). Pp. 203.

REVIEWED BY TH. EMIL HOMERIN, University of Rochester

This book was published to coincide with UNESCO's commemoration of 'Ā'ishah al-Bā'ūnīyah and her contributions to human knowledge and culture approximately five centuries after her death. The book was compiled by Muhammad 'Alī Şuwayrikī, who offers a concise biography of 'Ā'ishah al-Bā'ūnīyah and a list of her writings (pp. 11–50), followed by a small sampling of her poetry with little commentary (pp. 51–67). The third section of the book contains two works by 'Ā'ishah in praise of the prophet Muhammad, her famous *bādīyah*, *Al-Fath al-Mubīn fi Madh al-Amin*, and one of her mawlid, *Al-Mawrid al-Ahnā fī al-Mawlid al-Asnā* (pp. 69–184). The final section of the book contains brief proclamations by various Jordanian ministries and writers in support of UNESCO's recognition of 'Ā'ishah al-Bā'ūnīyah (pp. 185–98).

The book is clearly a commemorative volume aimed at a literate Arab public. Şuwayrikī openly acknowledges that he drew all of his material from Arabic secondary sources; he seems unaware of Western scholarship



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on ‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūniyah¹ For his biography, bibliography, and selection of poems, Șuwayrīkī relied heavily on Hasan Rabābi‘ah’s ‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūniyah: Shā‘irah (1997)²; while reprinting editions of ‘Ā’ishah’s works from Fāris Ahmād al-‘Alāwī’s ‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūniyah al-Dimashqīyah (1994),³ complete with notes, minor omissions, and typographical errors. It is clear that Șuwayrīkī is not a scholar of Mamluk literature, and that the book under review offers no new scholarship, though it is a readable general introduction to the life and work of ‘Ā’ishah al-Bā‘ūniyah, a very gifted Sufi poet of the Mamluk period.

DANIELLA TALMON-HELLER, *Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria: Mosques, Cemeteries and Sermons under the Zangids and Ayyūbids (1146-1260)*, Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture (Leiden: Brill, 2007). Pp. 332.

REVIEWED BY ZAYDE ANTRIM, Trinity College

This meticulously researched and lucid monograph is a valuable contribution to ongoing investigations into the religious culture of medieval Muslims. In it, Daniella Talmon-Heller tackles two thorny and persistent questions faced by scholars in this area of inquiry: first, did the experience of communal worship create actionable corporate solidarities for medieval Muslims at an intermediate level between the *ummah* on the one hand and the family on the other? And second, is it appropriate to speak of a “popular” culture of worship in tension with the “high” or “orthodox” religious authority of the *ulama*? The answer to both questions, Talmon-Heller convincingly argues, is “no,” though more emphatically in the latter case than in the former.

Although her theoretical framework for the study is far-reaching and comparative, informed by anthropologists of religion and cultural historians as well as works on late antique and medieval Christianity and Judaism, Talmon-Heller sets herself in most direct dialogue with scholars of Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt and Syria, such as Stephen Humphreys, Louis Pouzet, Michael Chamberlain, Jonathan Berkey, and Charles Taylor. Talmon-Heller makes clear the particular influence on her thinking of works by Berkey and Taylor, which “place at the center of their inquiry the religious experience of the individual rather than power relations” (p. 21), although she does not always find herself in agreement with their conclusions, partly because both of them focus primarily on Egypt in the Mamluk period while she focuses on Syria in the earlier Zangid and Ayyubid

¹ E.g., *MSR* 7, [no. 1] (2003): 211–34.

² See *ibid.*, 236–39.

³ See *MSR* 6 (2002): 191–92.



periods. By elucidating aspects of the overlapping, and often intimately linked, ritual practices of the ulama, the ruling elite, and the unlettered masses, Talmon-Heller's research on the "hybrid religious orientations" (p. 1) of medieval Syrian society adds an important layer to the aforementioned studies of the complex religious life of this period.

Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria is divided into three sections, all of which draw from an extensive and diverse body of sources, including narrative histories and geographies, religious treatises, administrative manuals, and inscriptions, to occupy the spaces and observe the practices of medieval Syrian religiosity. The first section deals with mosques, their physical structures, their personnel, and the activities associated with them; the second moves from the mosque to the cemetery and the shrine, addressing similar issues and generally interpreting them as extensions and/or alternate sites of the same religious sensibilities expressed in and around mosques; the third section subjects the same sources from which she extracts empirical data in the first two sections to discourse analysis in order to gain a better understanding of the meaning of piety and impiety in Syrian society of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In all three sections, Talmon-Heller demonstrates an impressive facility with her wide-ranging source base as well as an uncompromising critical eye: she is as ready to assert her findings from the sources as she is to remind us of their limitations. While there is insight to be gained from all three sections, the first section represents the most comprehensive and original contribution to the existing literature.

The achievement of Talmon-Heller's in-depth study of mosques in medieval Syria is the portrait it paints of "truly popular and vibrant institutions, accommodating a loosely organized body of faithful, men, women and children" (p. 145). Mosques in this period were public spaces par excellence, marked by extreme inclusivity. Despite the admonitions of some (but by no means all) members of the ulama against inappropriate uses of mosques (for women's prayer, sleeping, selling, emotive displays, political dissent, special devotions) they were enthusiastically and repeatedly put to all of these uses and more. As the sheer number of mosques in both urban and rural areas increased considerably during the Zangid and Ayyubid periods, the concomitant increase in the amount of space available for such activities made possible an increase in the activities themselves as well as the number of people participating. Moreover, although some members of the ulama looked askance at some mosque activities, at least an equal number joined right in and/or furnished the leadership in the role of preacher (*khaṭib*) or prayer leader (*imām*) necessary to produce and reproduce the "culture of pluralism and heterogeneity" in Syrian mosques (p. 144). Talmon-Heller skillfully weaves together anecdotes about mosque building, biographies of preachers, transcripts of sermons, and descriptions of the ever-popular "assembly of exhortation" (*majlis al-wa'z*) to evoke a culture of mosque-going in which ulama, commoners, and princes mingled, perhaps to different ends but by shared means. In this culture



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the ulama acted more as mediators between social groups than as arbiters of an orthodox Islam.

Did this culture produce corporate solidarity in the form of local self-regulating and self-conscious congregations? In general, Talmon-Heller answers in the negative—at least in terms of what the extant sources allow us to see—with one important exception: the Hanbali communities of Syria, and Damascus in particular, tended to coalesce around strong leaders who created a sense of belonging to a community of worship, usually coterminous with a neighborhood or suburb. Nevertheless, Talmon-Heller is not willing to go as far as Michael Chamberlain in downplaying the importance of associative identities above the level of the individual family but below the level of the *ummah*. She suggests—and argues her sources suggest—the presence of a culture, a mosque-going culture, or a culture of piety, in medieval Syria that had the capacity to bind a broad range of people together, even if only for the length of time (admittedly, sometimes quite epic) of one of the assemblies of exhortation led by the famous preacher Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī in early thirteenth-century Damascus.

This sense of belonging to a culture of piety for which the mosque was the chief public space can also be extended to the spaces of the cemetery and the shrine. Just as the number of mosques in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Syria increased, so too did the number of shrines and cemeteries designated (whether officially or unofficially) as destinations for pious visitation (*ziyārah*). In the second section of *Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria*, Talmon-Heller contributes to earlier studies of *ziyārah* in medieval Syria by including a discussion of the translation of relics in this process, by setting the visitation of tombs in the context of Crusade-era inter-faith encounter and conflict, and by observing the coexistence between, and occasional patronage of both, Shi‘i and Sunni sites of visitation. The invocation of blessing (*barakah*) and intercession (*shafā‘ah*) on behalf of either the living or the dead, Talmon-Heller argues, was the primary goal of founding, preserving, and visiting cemeteries and shrines for people from across the social spectrum. In accordance with the book’s overall argument, these sites should be seen as widely accessible and well-used “outlets for piety in a ‘pious age’” (p. 207), rather than merely expressions of political propaganda or new doctrines of sainthood (though they could be these things as well).

In the final section of the book, Talmon-Heller turns to the meaning of piety in this period. She identifies two trends, moderate Sufism and moderate Hanbalism, converging in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Syria to produce an ecumenical understanding of piety that embraced both activism and asceticism. Particularly revealing of what constituted piety in this period, she argues, was the discourse on impurity that made up a good part of the scholarly production of the ulama. While Talmon-Heller does not dismiss interpretations of this discourse as a struggle over religious authority or power among elites, she insists that the *content* of the discourse was meaningful in and of itself to the individuals who participated in



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the discourse and to those whom they led in worship at mosques, cemeteries, and shrines. “From the point of view of our medieval informants, correct belief, legitimate behavior, and the construction of boundaries between right and wrong indeed were at stake; not merely political benefits disguised as debates about religion” (p. 227). Thus, condemnations of astrology, philosophy, and antinomian Sufism should be seen as expressions of commitment to the shari‘ah and the Quran as the most important moral standards for social and spiritual life. The Syria presented by Talmon-Heller was one in which the ulama, the ruling elite, and the unlettered masses shared a religiosity informed by this mainstream understanding of piety: “an outlook successfully disseminated in all echelons of society thanks to its highly inclusive character, and to the efficient activity of its agents in the central arenas of the mosque, the cemetery, the shrine, and the public assembly of exhortation” (p. 251).

In *Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria*, Daniella Talmon-Heller has given scholars of many fields, including cultural history, anthropology, and religion, a gift of meticulous research and lively prose. Reading the book is a delightful experience for the specialist, as the copious anecdotes Talmon-Heller relates from her sources (often with full Arabic transliteration) capture the sensibilities and senses of humor that pervade literary production from this period. Perhaps its greatest contribution is its presentation of an alternate vision of religious culture grounded in time and place that complicates assumptions about tensions between “high/elite” and “low/popular” versions of Islam.

SHAMS AL-DĪN MUHAMMAD IBN HASAN IBN ‘ALĪ AL-NAWĀJĪ, *Ta’hīl al-Gharīb*, edited by Ahmad Muḥammad ‘Aṭā’ (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1425/2005). Pp. 1165.

REVIEWED BY GEERT JAN VAN GELDER, University of Oxford

Ta’hīl al-Gharīb (“Familiarizing the Strange,” or, if one prefers, “Making the Stranger Feel at Home”) is a very large anthology, now edited for the first time, of longer poems on lyrical themes, mostly love, including introductory *nasīb* sections of panegyric poems. It was compiled by al-Nawājī (d. 859/1455), himself a poet but now better known as the author of the Bacchic anthology *Halbat al-Kumayt*. The present collection, apparently made in emulation of an anthology with the same title by his friend (and later enemy) Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, contains more than one thousand pieces, some 12,000 verses in all, mostly from the seventh/thirteenth, eighth/fourteenth, and ninth/fifteenth centuries, arranged alphabetically



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according to rhyme-letter, each section subdivided into rhymes ending in $-\bar{u}$, $-\bar{a}$, $-\bar{i}$, *sukūn*, and rhymes with a suffix. This, incidentally, enables us at times to see how poems are based on earlier models in emulation (*mu'āradah*) or parody (see, e.g., poems nos. 767–774, with quotations from Imru' al-Qays's *Mu'allaqah*). The poet most often quoted is Ibn Nubātah, with 141 pieces, followed at considerable distance by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Hillī, Bahā' al-Dīn Zuhayr, Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, Ibn al-Nabīh, al-Nawājī himself, and Ibn Ḥijjah al-Hamawī. The earliest periods are represented minimally: there is only one pre-Islamic poem (by Zuhayr) and seven from the Umayyad period. Abbasid times are better represented, but the great majority of poets and poems (727 of a total of 1068) date from the Mamluk period. Apart from the well-known poets mentioned above there are many others, including lesser known poets; 48 pieces are anonymous. The compiler has provided no commentary or context, apart from indicating, where appropriate, if the poem was made as a panegyric; in such cases the piece stops at the *takhallus*, or transition from the lyrical introduction to the panegyric section. He set himself the task of including poems rhyming in every letter of the alphabet, even the less popular rhyme letters: there are only three pieces rhyming in *z*, five in *gh*, and, as he tells us, he was forced to compose a poem in *kh* himself for the occasion, after searching for years in vain for a suitable piece in this rare rhyme (better suited to lampooning than to lyrical themes).

Perhaps surprisingly, no *muwashshahāt* or *azjāl* are included; the only strophic form represented is the *takhmīs*, with rhyming hemistichs of the pattern *a1a2a3a4a5 b1b2b3b4a6 c1c2c3c4a7*, etc., often embedding an earlier *qaṣīdah* (*a4a5 b4a6 c4a7 . . .*); see nos. 198, 262, 264, 430, 555, 775, 1047. Love is the dominant theme, but there are wine poems too, such as the very first one, by Abū Nuwās (the famous *Da' anka lawmī . . .*), one of the very few poems in the collection that could be classified as *mujūn* (see vs. 3). Wine and obscenity are also present in a sequence of poems (nos. 740 to 743) beginning with one by al-Nawājī inviting a friend to a party. Ibn al-Fārid's famous wine poem (*Sharibnā 'alā dhikri l-habībi mudāmatan . . .*) is also quoted in its entirety, and one may justly wonder—as so often without arriving at an unambiguous answer—how many of the *ghazal* poems are to be taken in a mystical rather than (or in addition to) a profane sense. There is some descriptive poetry: Ibn Nubātah's depiction of a shooting trip with the crossbow (no. 430), Ibn al-Ṣā'igh's description of Damascus (no. 662), Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Hillī on a candle (no. 1006). Twelve poems take the form of a riddle, e.g., nos. 38 (on a water-skin), 217 (a pigeon), 233 (a prayer mat), 975 (the sweetmeats *kunāfah* and *qatā'if*). One poem, by al-Nawājī (no. 763), is an acrostic in which the initial



letters of the ten verses spell “Ali al-Zarkashī,” the name of the boy whose praises are sung, a form less usual in Arabic than in Western literatures.

The editor, who must be thanked for making this rich collection accessible, has provided useful appendices on the poets and, in his introduction, some statistics on the poets and the periods represented in the anthology. Although *Tāhil al-Gharīb* is preserved in several manuscripts, the editor says (pp. 40–41) that only one was available to him (Cairo, Ma‘had al-makhtūtāt, no. 2406); his written requests for microfilms from other libraries (Paris, Topkapi, British Museum) were, apparently, not honored with answers. This is deplorable, but collating the various manuscripts and adding variants to the apparatus would have added considerably to the editor’s efforts as well as to the size of the already bulky paperback. The Cairo manuscript, according to the editor, is riddled with scribal errors and the order of its folios is in some disarray. In his annotation the editor points out obvious errors in the manuscript and variants offered by *dīwāns* or other sources. Since the manuscript is unvoweled he has also provided nearly full vocalization.

This does not mean, unfortunately, that the edited text is as free from error as could be desired. It does not matter much, perhaps, if the meter of a poem is wrongly identified by the editor (no. 256 is not *rajaz* but *kāmil*, no. 1002 is not *sari‘* but *munsarih*, no. 1068 is not *madīd* but *ramal*); but it is another matter when such misidentifications, ignorance of the meter, or general carelessness results in faulty readings and vocalizations. Thus the fifteen verses of poem no. 1068, by Abū al-Faḍl Ibn Abī al-Wafā, contain a rich sprinkling of errors: *muhjatuḥū* read *muhjatun*, *fiya* read *fi* (twice), *bulitu* read *baliyat*, *āhin* read *āhi*, *al-ḥayyā* read *al-ḥayā*, *arwāḥuhum* read *arwāḥahumū*, *ab‘ada tamuwwuhā* (?) read *ab‘adtu mūhā*, *wa-hiya* read *wa-hya*, *qadaytu muddata* read *quḍiyat muddatu*. Poem 256, by Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Makhzūmī, fares little better: *humran* read *ḥamrā’u*, *awdat ba‘da l-bānati* read perhaps *aw dhāti ghuṣni l-bānati*, *jīdan* read *jaydā’u*, *aw in / anshadat ghannat* read *aw anshadat / ghannat*, *lā tahfalanna* read *lā tahfilan*, *ṣufratan lawnīhī* read *ṣufrata lawnīhī*, *ghīdan* read *ghaydā’u*, *la-ādhā* read presumably *lā ṣahbī*, *wa-ṣaltu* read *wa-ṣalītu*, *lākinna dhawā’iba* read *lākin dhawā’ibū*). These poems may not be representative, but there are other pages with a similar density of mistakes. The first five lines of a poem in *tawīl* (no. 354) by Ibn Makānis are unmetrical and have been left uncorrected (*li-hawāḥu* read *lahwiḥī*, *min al-mudāmi kumaytan* read *mudāma kumaytin*, *fa-innahā* read *fa-inna*, *wa-l-Iskandarā* read—to make it scan!—*wa-l-Iṣikandarā*, *wa-qāṣrin Qaysarā* read *wa-qāṣrin tuṣuwwirā*).

Within its self-chosen thematic limitation, the collection shows off so-called post-classical Arabic poetry at its best, or perhaps one ought to say at its most accessible to a modern readership: lyrical verse, without extremes of difficulty, artifice, fulsome panegyric, tedious piety, or dreary didacticism: a kind of *Golden Treasury* of Arabic verse (but one that, unlike Palgrave’s English anthology, will not easily fit into any pocket).



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IBN AL-JĪĀN, *Al-Qawl al-Mustazraffi Safar al-Malik al-Ashraf Qāytbāy*, and ANONYMOUS, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Ashraf Qāytbāy*, edited by Muhammad Zaynuhum (Cairo: al-Dār al-Thaqāfiyah lil-Nashr, 2006). Pp. 142.

REVIEWED BY LI GUO, University of Notre Dame

Two historical accounts of the reign of the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Qāytbāy (r. 901–3/1496–98) are published here. The first, the title of which is translated by Carl Petry as “The elegant report recounting the voyage of . . . the esteemed monarch,” is a log of the sultan’s journey that “describes conditions of rural life as well as receptions accorded the royal guests by provincial officials.”⁴ The author, Abū al-Baqā’ Muḥammad Ibn al-Jīān, served as deputy to Qāytbāy’s privy secretary Zayn al-Din Ibn Muzhir and participated in the sultan’s trip through Syria to the Euphrates frontier in 882/1477.⁵ The work was published once before, with a French translation, by H. Devonshire, in the IFAO *Bulletin* 20 (1922): 2–40.

None of the above is mentioned in the Introduction to the present “edition.” Worse, it did not even get the author right, claiming the author to be Abū al-Barakāt Ibn al-Jīān, “the brother of Abū al-Baqā’” (p. 6), instead. Since I have not seen the manuscript upon which the present edition is based—a hand copy from the Ma‘had al-Makhtūtāt al-‘Arabiyyah in Cairo of a manuscript attributed to one “Ibn al-Jīān” housed in the Dār al-Kutub (tārīkh 210)—I am not in a position to determine whether the error has to do with the substandard catalogue system in the Dār al-Kutub, or with the less-than-diligent homework on the part of the editor. Of the several Ibn al-Jīāns, Abū al-Barakāt, who is *not* the author, seems to be an easy choice: anecdotes about his blind loyalty to the sultan are well documented in the chronicles⁶ and are quoted verbatim, without naming the sources, in lieu of an adequate biography (even for the wrong person) in the Introduction. The Introduction does not shed light on the manuscript situation of the work either; there is therefore no way of knowing whether the Cairo manuscript used for this edition is among the ones listed by Carl Brockelmann⁷ and utilized by the Devonshire 1922 edition, or not.

The next text is perhaps more interesting. Despite the fact that scholars have long been aware of it,⁸ it has remained in manuscript form—and there is a good reason for that. This “précis of Qāytbāy’s reign,” in Carl Petry’s assessment, does

⁴Carl Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamlūk Sultans al-Ashraf Qāytbāy and Qānsūh al-Ghawrī in Egypt* (Seattle and London, 1993), 11–12; idem, *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamlūk Sultans and Egypt’s Waning as a Great Power* (Albany, 1994), 8.

⁵Petry, *Twilight*, 11.

⁶See Petry, *Protectors*, 135.

⁷*Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, 2:38, S2:26.

⁸*Ibid.*, 2:38.



not yield “any original information.”⁹ The present edition is based on a codex from the Ma‘had al-Makhtūṭāt al-‘Arabiyyah in Cairo, which in turn is a copy of a manuscript in the Dār al-Kutub (8554 h). According to the Introduction (p. 5), the “manuscript” (of the Ma‘had or the DK?) consists of 82 folios (*waraqah*). In the present edition the full text runs some 60 pages (pp. 41–117), with footnotes. The footnotes are very odd. They are too long on the things we already know, such as the hadith transmitters ranging from al-Bukhārī to Abū Hurayrah, but frustratingly short, or nearly absent, on the things we really want to know, namely persons and technical terms of the time in question. It seems that the editor tried hard to give the book a “scholarly” look: in addition to Introduction, text, and footnotes, which all turn out to be unscholarly, it includes several indexes and a bibliography. Upon closer examination, the seemingly scholastic apparatus again reveals its inadequacies. While some of the indexes are not totally unhelpful, some are inadequate. For example, the index of verses (p. 137) fails to cite the full *matla‘* (opening line) with the rhyme (*al-qāfiyah*) of any given poem; as a result, it is useless. The long bibliography (pp. 137–42) looks impressive for such a slim volume, but again, it lacks substance: the majority of it is made up of titles irrelevant to late Mamluk historiography, to say nothing of the recent publications on Sultan Qāytbāy.

⁹Petry, *Twilight*, 12; idem, *Protectors*, 8.



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