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## An Ayyubid in Mamluk Guise: The Portrait of Saladin in Paolo Giovio's *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium* (1575)

Biographical encyclopedias were an important source of information for those sixteenth-century Europeans wishing to inform themselves about the recent events and principal political figures of the Islamic world. Published by Guillaume Rouillé in Lyon in 1551, the *Promptuarium iconum* (“Storeroom of Images”) is notable as the first of this genre of printed books to include a full set of portraits of the Ottoman sultans (Osman I to Süleyman I), each accompanied by a short biographical note. A shrewd businessman, Rouillé probably included these portraits and an image of Tīmūr Lenk (Tamerlane, r. 1370–1405), the victor over sultan Bāyezīd I Yıldırım (r. 1389–1402, d. 1403) at the battle of Ankara in 1402, to cater to the public thirst for information concerning the expanding empire of the Turks.<sup>1</sup> More significant than the *Promptuarium*, however, is the contribution made by the Italian scholar and bishop of Nocera, Paolo Giovio (d. 1552). The author of influential studies of Ottoman and Islamic history, he was also well known in his own time for his portrait collection, located in his houses in Rome and on the banks of Lake Como.<sup>2</sup> Although the majority of the illustrious figures depicted in this extensive group of oil paintings came from antiquity and from late medieval and Renaissance Europe, Giovio also commissioned paintings of all the Ottoman sultans and notable Turkish figures like the admiral, Barbarossa. Among the other Muslims to be included were Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin), Tīmūr, the Safavid shahs Ismāʿīl and Tahmāsp, the late Mamluk sultans Qāyṭbāy, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, and al-Ashraf Ṭūmānbāy II, the Turkoman Ūzūn Ḥasan, and the rulers of Tunis and Morocco.

Each oil portrait was displayed with an explanatory inscription written by Giovio, and these texts formed the basis of his published biographical encyclo-

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<sup>1</sup>On Rouillé’s treatment of the Turkish sultans, see Julian Raby, “From Europe to Istanbul,” in *The Sultan’s Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman*, ed. Selmin Kangal (Istanbul, 2000), 138–41.

<sup>2</sup>The most detailed study of the portrait collection is: Linda Klinger, “The Portrait Collection of Paolo Giovio,” 2 volumes (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1991). Also: idem, “Images of Identity: Italian Portrait Collections of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” in *The Image of the Individual: Portraits in the Renaissance*, ed. Nicholas Mann and Luke Syson (London, 1998), 67–79. On his treatment of the Ottomans, see Raby, “From Europe to Istanbul,” 141–50. On Giovio as an historian of the Islamic world, see Vernon Parry, “Renaissance Historical Literature in Relation to the Near and Middle East (with Special Reference to Paolo Giovio),” in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt (London and New York, 1962), 277–88.



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pedias. The military and political biographies were grouped together under the title *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium*, printed in an unillustrated edition in Florence in 1551. In 1575, Peter Perna published an edition of the *Elogia* in Basle containing the same text but with the addition of woodcut portraits by Tobias Stimmer (d. 1584) modeled after the original paintings.<sup>3</sup> Stimmer's striking representation of the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty, Saladin (r. 1171–93), is the subject of this article.

### Giovio's Saladin in Text and Image

Giovio's entry devoted to "Saladinus Sulthanus" appears early in the *Elogia*, comprising pages 29–31 of the first book. Stimmer's woodcut portrait is placed immediately beneath the title on page 29 (fig. 1). In common with all of the portraits in the 1575 edition the central woodcut is held within an elaborate inhabited frame. A limited stock of frames are employed throughout the book. Given that the one surrounding the figure of Saladin appears elsewhere in the *Elogia*, there is no reason to assume that it contributes to the iconographic dimensions of the portrait of the sultan. Inside the frame is a half-length representation of an older man dressed in a tightly-fitting buttoned jacket partly covered by a thick, fur-lined cape. The sultan addresses the viewer directly. He sports extended moustaches and a long beard divided into two points.<sup>4</sup> His head is covered by an elaborate turban knotted to create horn-like projections, five of which are visible. His hands can be seen at the base of the image. Their arrangement suggests the holding of a sword or dagger though neither weapon is apparent. Commonly a ruler in an Islamic representation would be seen holding a napkin (*mandil*) and a goblet, but these features are not included in Stimmer's woodcut.<sup>5</sup> Behind his right shoulder is an object comprising what may be a reliquary (bearing a diminutive image of the crucified Christ) fixed onto a pole. The decorative ribbon below the "reliquary" is emblazoned with the words VICTORIAE TESTIS ("commemoration of victory").

The present whereabouts of the original oil portrait in Giovio's collection is unknown, though two copies survive: one in Florence and the other in

<sup>3</sup>Paolo Giovio, *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium* (Basle, 1575). The Latin text is now available in an Italian translation: idem, *Elogi degli uomini illustri*, trans. Franco Minonzio and Andrea Guasparri (Turin, 2006). For Saladin, see 467–69.

<sup>4</sup>The interpretation of beard shapes in Europe is dealt with in Will Fisher, "The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (2001): 155–87.

<sup>5</sup>On the symbolism of this object, see Franz Rosenthal, "A Note on the *Mandil*," in *Four Essays on Art and Literature in Islam*, L. A. Mayer Memorial Studies in Islamic Art and Archaeology 2 (Leiden, 1971), 63–99.



Schloss Ambras in Austria.<sup>6</sup> Comparison with the painted portrait by Cristofano dell'Altissimo (d. 1605) probably made between 1552 and 1568 for Cosimo de' Medici, and now in the Uffizi (fig. 2), suggests that the addition of features into the background of the woodcut is an innovation by Stimmer. No mention of the reliquary/standard is made in the accompanying text, but it may be speculated that Stimmer (perhaps at the behest of his publisher Peter Perna) was making a visual reference to the fragments of the True Cross that are believed to have been captured by Saladin from the Crusader army following the battle of Ḥaṭṭīn in 1187. This is not the only example of Stimmer incorporating elements not seen in the surviving oil paintings; for instance, his portrait of Tīmūr has a war-torn landscape in the background containing a schematic representation of a caged figure—that of the defeated Ottoman sultan, Bāyezīd I—carried on a horse-drawn cart.<sup>7</sup> Stimmer's Saladin also differs from Cristofano dell'Altissimo's oil portrait in being half length, thus incorporating the clasped hands of the sultan. In other respects, however, the woodcut follows relatively closely the fully frontal pose, facial features, clothing, and headgear of the painting.

Giovio had written briefly about the career of Saladin in the first book of his *Historiarum sui temporis*, but he provides more detail in the *Elogia*.<sup>8</sup> As might be expected, his biographical treatment of this twelfth-century sultan lacks the degree of accuracy found in his accounts of the Muslim rulers nearer to his own time, particularly the more recent Ottoman sultans. Describing Saladin simply as a “Saracen,” Giovio notes that he came to power through the execution of the Egyptian caliph (i.e., the last Fatimid ruler, al-Āḍid, r. 1160–71), for whom he had been employed as a mercenary. Despite accusing Saladin of perfidy in the overthrow of the caliph, Giovio provides a generous outline of the sultan's character: possessed of courage, an invincible spirit, a sharp mind, and physical strength, Saladin was favored by fortune throughout his military career. He also acted with justice and cultivated religious observance in his empire. Giovio compliments his subject on his use of spies and his ability to judge the ideal times to wage war and to negotiate truces. He refers to Giovanni Boccaccio's (d. 1375, *Decameron* X.9) claim that the sultan even disguised himself as a merchant in order to travel as a spy through France and Italy.

<sup>6</sup>Klinger, “Portrait Collection,” 1:163–64, cat. 312; Friedrich Kenner, “Die Porträtsammlung der Erzherzogs Ferdinand von Tirol,” *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 19, no. 1 (1898): 115–16.

<sup>7</sup>Giovio, *Elogia*, 102. On this image, see Marcus Milwright, “So Despicable a Vessel: Representations of Tamerlane in Printed Books of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Muqarnas* 23 (2006): 322–25, fig. 4.

<sup>8</sup>Paolo Giovio, *Historiarum sui temporis* (Florence, 1550–52), 1:221; idem, *Elogia*, 29–31.



In common with many of his contemporaries, Giovio attributes the victory of the Muslim army in 1187 to the rivalries between the Frankish leaders in the Holy Land. He notes that on capturing Jerusalem, Saladin's only restriction on Christian worship was the removal of the bronze bells from the churches. He allowed pilgrims to continue to venerate the Holy Sepulchre and left the tomb of Godfrey of Bouillon (d. 1100), first ruler of the kingdom of Jerusalem, undeseccrated. Giovio describes the simplicity of Saladin's burial (quoting a short passage from Boccaccio on this theme), and claims that he entrusted the sultanate to his son, Saphandino. In this case, Giovio simplifies the establishment of the Ayyubid confederacy in 1192 and its aftermath, and erroneously asserts that Saladin was Saphandino's father. In fact, Saphandino (or Safandino) is a Latin corruption of the name of Saladin's brother, Abū Bakr Sayf al-Dīn al-Ādil, sultan of Damascus from 1196 and sultan of Egypt from 1200 to 1218. Giovio's confusion over chronology and Ayyubid genealogy is further illustrated by his assertion that Louis IX's capture of Damietta occurred during the reign of either "Saladin, or, as seems more likely, Saphandino." Giovio does not provide the dates for Louis IX's crusade to the Middle East (1248–54), and it is possible that he confused this with the activities of the earlier French king Louis VII during the ill-fated Second Crusade (1147–49). Giovio also repeats the popular story—first recorded in the mid-fourteenth century—that the captured French king left the Holy Sacrament with the Muslims, pledging to provide the ransom money for it on his return to his country.<sup>9</sup>

The most interesting details come at the end of Giovio's account of the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty. He writes of the sultan's appearance: "In life Saladin had the habit, typical of his people, of wearing wrapped around his head a headdress of linen with horns (sing. *cornu*), as visual evidence of the many valiant kingdoms he had conquered. Hereafter, as we know, this type of crown (*diadema*) has been adopted by his successors. This description of the mode of dress of Saladin was communicated to us by the Venetian patrician Donado da Lezze, who has long been magistrate in Cyprus and Syria, famous for his passion for history and antiquities in general."<sup>10</sup> Aside from being a Venetian official, Donado da Lezze's (d. 1526) name appears as author of the *Historia Turchesca*, an influential account of

<sup>9</sup>On this story, see Otto Kurz, "Mamluk Heraldry and the *interpretatio Christiana*," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, ed. Myriam Rosen-Ayalon (Jerusalem, 1977), 297–307; Marcus Milwright, "The Cup of the *Sāqī*: Origins of an Emblem of the Mamluk *Khāṣṣakiyya*," *Aram* 9–10 (1997–98): 248.

<sup>10</sup>Giovio, *Elogia*, 30. I am most grateful to Julian Raby for his corrections to my initial translation of this passage.



the rise of the Ottomans through to 1514.<sup>11</sup> Whether he did, in fact, pen this work is unclear (there are certainly good reasons to doubt that the other attributed author, Giovanni Maria Angiolello, had any role in its production, though the *Historia Turchesca* evidently makes use of his work), but Donado da Lezze was known, as Giovio asserts, for his interest in history and antiquities. The time da Lezze spent in Cyprus and Syria would have attracted Giovio's attention when it came to finding visual source material for his portrait of Saladin.

That Giovio should seek out such information is very much in keeping with what is known about the methods employed in the assembling of his portrait collection.<sup>12</sup> Reviewing the surviving paintings from Giovio's collection, and the copies made for Cosimo de' Medici and Ferdinand von Tirol, it is clear that their value is not primarily aesthetic. Nor do the paintings exhibit the sorts of psychological insights that are apparent in the best Italian portraiture of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, Giovio's collection was much admired in its time; for Giovio and his contemporaries these "portraits" were esteemed because each was based upon a prototype—a painting, coin, medal, sculpture, or drawing—believed to have been made in the presence of the person. Artefacts such as ancient coins and medals must have tested the ingenuity of the artists working for Giovio, and some of the resulting paintings are distinctly lacking in animation. Though variable in quality, these paintings allowed the viewer to get some sense of the "true" appearances of famous figures of past and present. Giovio went to considerable efforts to acquire his likenesses of the Ottoman sultans, even obtaining through intermediaries a set of sixteenth-century Turkish paintings. His representation of Tīmūr may also derive from a fifteenth-century Persian manuscript painting, though the original source is unknown.<sup>13</sup>

It seems clear that da Lezze provided an image of some sort (not just a textual description) that was believed to be a depiction of Saladin. In what medium the image was made or what form it might have taken cannot be ascertained from Giovio's testimony. Neither is it apparent whether this image was made by a European painter or by an artist from the Islamic Middle East. For Giovio, it appears that the most important aspect of the prototype is the distinctive "horned" tur-

<sup>11</sup>Pierre McKay, "The Content and Authorship of the *Historia Turchesca*," in *Istanbul Üniversitesi 550. yıl, Uluslararası Bizans ve Osmanlı Sempozyumu (XV. Yüzyıl): 30–31 Mayıs 2003 = 550th Anniversary of the Istanbul University, International Byzantine and Ottoman Symposium (XVth century): 30–31 May 2003*, ed. Sümer Atasoy (Istanbul, 2004), 213–22. The *Historia Turchesca* is available in an edition edited by Ion Ursu in Bucharest in 1909.

<sup>12</sup>Linda Klinger and Julian Raby, "Barbarossa and Sinan: A Portrait of Two Ottoman Corsairs from the Collection of Paolo Giovio," in *Venezia e l'Oriente Vicino: Atti del primo congresso internazionale sul'Arte Islamica*, ed. Ernst Grube (Venice, 1989), 47–59; Raby, "From Europe to Istanbul," 145–46.

<sup>13</sup>Milwright, "So Despicable a Vessel," 325, fig. 5.



ban. Giovio assumes that these conspicuous projections are symbols of Saladin's territorial conquests.

### Visual Sources from the Middle East

What then was the visual prototype (or prototypes) for the painted image of Saladin in Giovio's collection, and the version of it subsequently produced by Tobias Stimmer? No definitive answer can be offered to this question. If a precise model cannot be located it is possible, at least, to suggest what sort of images may have been employed in the composition of this image? Aside from the connection with da Lezze mentioned above, the painting and the woodcut provide some clues. Noteworthy are the frontality of the sultan and his elaborate turban. These themes are explored in the remainder of this article.

The fact that Giovio's representations of Saladin are fully frontal is worthy of comment as this is very seldom encountered in the remainder of his portrait collection. Presumably, the unusual pose was dictated by the prototype obtained by Giovio, and scholars have speculated whether this may have come from portrait collections in Egypt or Venice. While a Western European source is certainly feasible (see below), there is no reason to discount the portable arts and secular manuscript paintings produced in the Middle East, particularly given the evidence for Giovio procuring such items in his search for reliable images of other Muslim sultans. Although it can hardly be said to be a ubiquitous theme in Islamic art, numerous representations of Muslim caliphs and sultans are known. Commonly, the ruler is distinguished from those around him by his centrality in the composition, his preternatural scale, and his frontality (the attendant figures usually being turned toward him rather than toward the viewer). He may also be seated—cross-legged on either a dais or a bench-like throne—with attendant figures standing. The frontal gaze and central placement are also maintained in images lacking attendant figures.<sup>14</sup> This motif reaches its simplest form in copper coinage (*fals*, pl. *fulūs*), and one such seated, turbaned man appears on a *fals* issued by Saladin in Mayyāfāriqīn in 586/1190–91 (fig. 3).<sup>15</sup> There is no reason, however, to suppose that Giovio possessed a copy of this rather undistinguished

<sup>14</sup>For a discussion of the common imagery of such enthronement scenes in the eastern Islamic world, see Robert Hillenbrand, "Images of Authority on Kashan Lustreware," in *Islamic Art in the Ashmolean Museum*, part one, ed. James Allan, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 10 (Oxford, 1995), 167–98.

<sup>15</sup>On this coin and others of the same period, see Nicholas Lowick, "The Religious, the Royal and the Popular in the Figural Coinage of the Jazīra," in *The Art of Syria and the Jazīra, 1100–1250*, ed. Julian Raby, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 1 (Oxford and New York, 1985), 159–74. Rulers wearing headgear comprising projecting "horns," or perhaps feathers, appear on *fulūs* issued in Mārdīn in 581–85 A.H. and Nişibīn in 594 A.H. *Ibid.*, 164–65.



copper coin, or that he had seen the other similar designs on *fulūs* minted by Artuqid and Zengid *atābaks* in northern Mesopotamia during the twelfth century (though he evidently made use of coins in the creation of portraits of some rulers of the ancient world).

A manuscript painting in the Freer Gallery of Art has sometimes been claimed, explicitly or implicitly, to be a near-contemporary image of Saladin (fig. 4), although I am unaware of any evidence to support this assertion.<sup>16</sup> Compared to ruler portraits found in early thirteenth-century manuscripts—such as the famous painting of the enthroned Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu', *atābak* of Mosul, with his court on the frontispiece of a copy of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Book of songs) of Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, dated 1218–19<sup>17</sup>—this supposed representation of the Ayyubid dynasty's founder looks both schematic in character and rather crudely drawn. The sparseness of the area surrounding the “sultan” has more in common with engineering diagrams. Indeed, the painting is now attributed to a Mamluk-period copy of the *Kitāb fī Ma'rīfat al-Ḥiyal al-Handasīyah* (Book of knowledge of ingenious mechanical devices) by Abū al-'Izz ibn Ismā'īl ibn al-Razzāz al-Jazarī (d. 1206).<sup>18</sup>

Other Islamic ruler “portraits” made their way to Europe during the medieval and early modern periods. These include such items as carved ivory from Umayyad Spain and the Fatimid caliphate, and, most pertinently in the present context, inlaid metalwork from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Egypt and Syria. The most famous of these is the so-called *Baptistère de Saint Louis*, an inlaid brass basin dating between the second half of the thirteenth and the early part of the fourteenth century and signed by one Muḥammad ibn al-Zayn.<sup>19</sup> The complex figural cycles on the basin contain two enthronement scenes with unnamed Mamluk sultans flanked by cupbearers and other attendants (fig. 5, a and b). These roundels have as their central focus an enthroned royal figure looking directly out of the scene and holding a beaker and a napkin. Aside from the frontality of the pose in each case, these figures are also interesting for their headgear; rather than a turban, they wear a crown-like head covering with three peaks. Albrecht Fuess has identified this feature as a *sharbūsh*, a triangular hat that was popular with Turkish rulers between the tenth and

<sup>16</sup>For example, the image appears on the front cover of Anne-Marie Eddé, *Saladin*, Grandes Biographies (Paris, 2008).

<sup>17</sup>For an illustration of this famous image, see David Roxburgh, ed., *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600* (London, 2005), 97, no. 54

<sup>18</sup>The illustrations of this text are discussed in: Derek Hill, *The Book of the Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices* (Dordrecht and Boston, 1974); Rachel Ward, “Evidence for a School of Painting at the Artuqid Court,” in *The Art of Syria and the Jazīra*, ed. Raby, 69–83.

<sup>19</sup>On this basin, see D. S. Rice, *Le baptistère de Saint Louis* (Paris, 1953); Esin Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks* (Washington, DC, 1981), 76–80, no. 21.



the thirteenth centuries. The *sharbūsh* was apparently introduced to Egypt by the Ayyubids, and it remained in use for some public occasions under the Bahri Mamluk sultans. Amirs were at times allowed to wear it. The Mamluk chronicler al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442) indicates that the *sharbūsh* fell out of use during the Circassian (Burji) Mamluk period.<sup>20</sup>

Another inlaid brass bowl signed by Muḥammad ibn al-Zayn carries images of enthroned Mamluk rulers and courtiers (fig. 5. c–e).<sup>21</sup> Like the *Baptistère*, this smaller vessel contains numerous images of early Mamluk headgear. One of the roundels contains an enthroned figure sporting what appears to be a *sharbūsh*. Another enthroned male (not enclosed in a roundel) holding a bow and a mace wears a bifurcated head covering rising to two horn-like projections. The chased lines on the surface of the sections of silver sheet suggest that this might be an elaborately wound turban, though this identification must remain conjectural.

The absence of dedicatory inscriptions on the two vessels signed by Ibn al-Zayn is puzzling; while attempts have been made to attribute the *Baptistère* to Mamluk patrons during the time of Sultan Baybars I (r. 1260–77) or the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1310–41),<sup>22</sup> there remains the possibility—persuasively argued by Rachel Ward—that some of these lavish items were made for wealthy European patrons, and not for Mamluk sultans or amirs. She notes that those pieces of inlaid metalwork containing the names of members of the Mamluk elite do not employ representations of humans.<sup>23</sup> The first documentary evidence to place the *Baptistère* in France dates to 1742, though it seems probable that it had come into the country considerably earlier.<sup>24</sup> We should perhaps assume a relatively extensive trade in high-quality metalwork (including examples with figural decoration) from Egypt and Syria to Europe during the Ayyubid and early Mamluk periods. European coats of arms were

<sup>20</sup>Albrecht Fuess, “Sultans with Horns: The Political Significance of Headgear in the Mamluk Empire,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 2 (2008): 31, citing al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Mawā‘iz wa-al-I‘tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār*, ed. Ayman Fu‘ād Sayyid (London, 2002–4), 3:668.

<sup>21</sup>Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 74–75, no. 20.

<sup>22</sup>Rice, *Baptistère*; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The Baptistère de Saint Louis: A Reinterpretation,” *Islamic Art* 3 (1988–89): 3–9.

<sup>23</sup>Rachel Ward, “The Baptistère de Saint Louis’—A Mamluk Basin Made for Export to Europe,” in *Islam and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Charles Burnett and Anna Contadini (London, 1999), 113–32. A noteworthy example of an inlaid vessel made for a European client, but lacking figural ornament, is the brass basin made for Hugh IV of Lusignan, king of Cyprus (r. 1324–59), now in the Louvre.

<sup>24</sup>Rice, *Baptistère*, 1–2.



added to Mamluk metalwork in the fifteenth century, but by that time the taste for human or zoomorphic decoration was waning.<sup>25</sup>

## European Representations of Saladin

The deeds and personality of Saladin were subjects of considerable interest in Europe from the late twelfth century onward. He has been evaluated by historians and his life has been incorporated into literature and poetry (see below). Unsurprisingly the European fascination with the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty and victor at the battle of Ḥaṭṭīn did not just find expression in literature and drama. Medieval representations of Saladin range from manuscript paintings to pieces of architectural ornament. An interesting example of this genre is the slip-painted and glazed tiles from Chertsey abbey (dating to ca. 1250) representing a formalized battle between Richard I and Saladin in which the former succeeds in knocking his Muslim adversary to the ground. The Ayyubid sultan is shown as a beardless youth dressed without armor and wielding an implausibly large sword.<sup>26</sup> An older Saladin features in the illustration of the battle of Ḥaṭṭīn in the mid-thirteenth-century volume of Matthew Paris' *Chronica majora* in Corpus Christi college, Cambridge. In this painting, the bearded Saladin (seen in profile) wrests the True Cross from the desperate figure of Guy de Lusignan.<sup>27</sup> Some other medieval representations of Muslims adopt grotesque facial types and darkened skins, presumably as a means to signal the supposedly diabolic nature of their religious practices. For instance, a marginal drawing in the fourteenth-century Luttrell Psalter repeats the composition of the Chertsey tile, but gives the Muslim knight (Saladin?) a grimace, a hooked nose, and a swarthy complexion.<sup>28</sup>

Fifteenth-century French manuscript painting provides further representations of Saladin. For instance, the *Chronique des empereurs* by David Aubert (Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, Paris ms 5090), made between 1461 and 1462 for Philippe le Bon, contains images of a militant Saladin dressed in armor and pursuing battles against the Franks. He has a full, dark beard which separates into two "forks" and wears on his head a conical cap around which is wrapped a relatively small

<sup>25</sup>For example, a candlestick in the British Museum, probably made in Damascus in ca. 1400 and carrying the arms of a Venetian family. Illustrated in: Sylvia Auld, "Master Mahmud and Inlaid Metalwork in the 15th Century," in *Venice and the Islamic World, 828–1797*, ed. Stefano Carboni (New Haven and London, 2006), 217, cat. 94.

<sup>26</sup>Elizabeth Eames, *English Medieval Tiles* (London, 1985), 38–41, fig. 44.

<sup>27</sup>Suzanne Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora* (Aldershot, 1987), 269–72, fig. 171.

<sup>28</sup>Reproduced in: Jonathan Riley-Smith, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades* (Oxford and New York, 1995), 51, lower plate.



turban.<sup>29</sup> This arrangement is similar to the type employed by the Ottoman sultans from the time of Meḥmed II Fātiḥ (r. 1444–46, 1451–81) onward in which the fabric of the turban was wound around a ribbed cap (*tāj*), although comparison could also be made with the Mamluk cap (*kallawtah* or *kallaftah*) with its turban.<sup>30</sup> The principal difference appears to be in the quantity of material wrapped around the cap, which in the case of the Ottoman sultans was much more considerable. Saladin’s execution of Renaud de Châtillon, lord of Oultrejourdain, is depicted in an early fifteenth-century *Trésor des histoires* (Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Paris ms 5077).<sup>31</sup> In this case, the Muslim ruler is shown as an older man with a long white beard which again splits into two. The cap is the prominent aspect of his headgear with the turban reduced to a white band encircling the lower section. Late medieval images of these types did not provide the inspiration for Giovio’s portrait of Saladin, though they may have been picked up in another sixteenth-century biographical encyclopedia. The engraved image of Saladin in *Les vrais portraits et vies des hommes illustrés* by André Thevet (d. 1590), published in Paris in 1584, makes use of the tall cap and diminutive turban of the type described above (fig. 6).<sup>32</sup> Thevet, unfortunately, does not specify the visual source for the engraving.

Perhaps the most interesting European image of Saladin in the present context is one that appears on a parchment roll in the British library (fig. 7). Produced in Italy in the fifteenth century, this roll (BL MS Add. 30359) is entitled *The Six Ages of the World*, and includes the stern-faced image of “Saladinus rex Aegypti” as number eighty-six in its list of famous personages. The Ayyubid sultan wears a European-style coat of armor, though he carries a scimitar in his right hand rather than a straight sword. His beard is full, but lacks the two points seen in Giovio’s Saladin. In his left hand he carries a golden orb. Although not fully frontal, there is an obvious point of comparison with the portraits created by Cristofano dell’Altissimo and Tobias Stimmer: the fifteenth-century Saladin painted on BL MS Add. 30359 wears a substantial turban with a series of points rising from around its summit.

Are the points around Saladin’s turban on the Italian parchment roll schematic representations of knotted pieces of linen? Both dell’Altissimo and Stim-

<sup>29</sup>These manuscript images are illustrated in the unnumbered color plates in Eddé, *Saladin*.

<sup>30</sup>Julian Raby, *Venice, Dürer and the Oriental Mode*, Hans Huth Memorial Studies 1 (London, 1982), 21–22. Portraits of the sultan are also reproduced in: Julian Raby, “Opening Gambits,” in *The Sultan’s Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman* (Istanbul, 2000), 80–91, cat. 1–8; eds., *Bellini and the East*, ed. Caroline Campbell and Alan Chong (London, 2005), 66–79.

<sup>31</sup>Illustrated in the unnumbered color plates in Eddé, *Saladin*.

<sup>32</sup>This book is reprinted under the same title, edited by Reuben Cholakian (New York, 1973). Saladin is dealt with in chapter 137 (627r–629v).



mer devoted considerable attention to the turban of the sultan, indicated by the drawing and modelling of the tight twists of the fabric making up the horns. By contrast, the angular points on the headgear of Saladin in BL MS Add. 30359 have no obvious connection to the wound fabric that makes up the remainder of the turban. Furthermore, these points appear to have been gilded (like the orb, the gold leaf of these sections is now much abraded). Thus, it is more probable that the artist responsible for this “portrait” of the Ayyubid sultan was trying to combine the traditional Muslim turban with a golden crown.

This combination of two types of headgear—one Islamic and the other European—is unlikely to have been drawn from a Middle Eastern image of Saladin. Crowns were not, of course, a normal attribute of Muslim rulers of the Middle East during the medieval period. Instead, authority was connoted by the specific form, color, and dimensions of the turban. This became particularly important during the Mamluk sultanate (see below). Some of the portraits commissioned by the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II do show an interest in establishing a symbolic link between the royal turban and the crown. The famous portrait of Mehmed painted by Gentile Bellini (d. 1507) in 1480 surrounds the sultan with seven crowns, six floating in the black background in the upper left and upper right of the painting and a final one stitched in pearls in the sumptuous textile draped over the architectural frame.<sup>33</sup> The bronze medal designed by the same artist and cast in ca. 1480 depicts three identical crowns on the reverse (the obverse carrying the portrait of Mehmed). Given that a medal cast in 1480 by Bertoldo di Giovanni (d. 1491) carries on the reverse the image of three captured female figures, identified by the captions as Greece, Trebizond, and Asia, it is possible that the crowns on Bellini’s medal are meant to stand for the conquests of the sultans.<sup>34</sup> Ottoman experiments with the iconography of European headgear—both royal/imperial and papal—reached their greatest heights with the gold helmet commissioned from Venetian goldsmiths by Sultan Süleymān I Qānūnī (r. 1520–66) in 1532.<sup>35</sup>

If one looks to European art of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, there is much more evidence for the combination of the crown and the turban. In some cases this hybrid headgear is intended merely to signal that the wearer is of royal stature, as can be seen in Peter Flöthner’s (d. 1546) series of princes and kings. An anonymous print of the Judgment of Solomon probably

<sup>33</sup>Bellini’s painting is now located in the National Gallery in London.

<sup>34</sup>Raby, “Opening Gambits,” 88, cat. 5. This medal was commissioned by Lorenzo de’ Medici as a gift for Mehmed II.

<sup>35</sup>On this episode, see Otto Kurz, “A Gold Helmet made in Venice for Sulayman the Magnificent,” *Gazette des beaux-arts* 74 (1969): 249–58; Gülrü Necipoğlu, “Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry,” *Art Bulletin* 71 (1989): 401–27.



produced in Wittenberg in the second half of the sixteenth century has the Old Testament king sporting a turban and crown.<sup>36</sup> Hugo van der Goes' (d. 1482/83) Monforte Altarpiece (ca. 1470) has one of the magi wearing a large red hat, somewhat like a turban, circled by a crown, while the kneeling king has set his head covering—a fur hat carrying an inset diadem—on the ground.<sup>37</sup> The magi also wear crowns combined with turbans or other types of hat in Benozzo Gozzoli's (d. 1497) frescos of the Procession of the Magi (1459–60) in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in Florence.<sup>38</sup> Other types of authority might also be signaled by the turban and crown; a printed version of the works of Aristotle made in Venice in 1483 contains hand-painted illuminations by Girolamo da Cremona (fl. 1451–83), including one of the *turba philosophorum* ("crowd of philosophers"). Among the represented philosophers are two of Aristotle's major Muslim commentators, Ibn Rushd (Averroës, d. 1198) and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 1037). The latter wears the robe of an Italian physician but his head is covered by a turban topped with a golden crown.<sup>39</sup>

Commonly the linking of the crown and turban appears to have distinctly negative connotations; these qualities are seen most powerfully in German woodcuts of the sixteenth century. For instance, a woodcut by Erhard Schoen (d. 1592), dated 1531 and entitled "Portal of Shame of the Twelve Tyrants of the Old Testament," represents the Pharaoh wearing a turban surmounted by spikes much like that of Saladin in BL MS Add. 30359. Both are, of course, rulers of Egypt. Another print by Lucas Mayer (active in Nuremberg, 1566–1605), entitled "Mandate and Report of the Great Lord 'Generis Masculini' against the powerless Decrees of 'Feminarius,'" has the ruler wearing a spiked turban.<sup>40</sup> German prints made to express Protestant sympathies often depicted the twin evils of the pope and the Turkish sultan, with the latter often wearing a turban and crown. Matthias Gerung (d. 1570) included this distinctive piece of headgear in a number of woodcuts including memorable representations of: the pope and the sultan dragging infidels and Catholics into Hell (forming the backdrop to Christ preaching); Christ dispatching Roman clerics and infidels into the mouth of Hell; the Turks engulfed in fire brought down from the Heavens. By the same artist is the "Adoration of the

<sup>36</sup>Max Geisberg, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500–1550*, revised edition ed. Walter Strauss (New York, 1974), 3:822; Walter Strauss, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1550–1600* (New York, 1975), 3:1265.

<sup>37</sup>Friedrich Winkler, *Das Werk des Hugo van der Goes* (Berlin, 1964), 9–23. The central panel is illustrated on pl. 1.

<sup>38</sup>Diane Cole Ahl, *Benozzo Gozzoli* (New Haven and London, 1996), 81–119, pls. 97, 105–9.

<sup>39</sup>Illustrated in: Michael Barry, "Renaissance Venice and her 'Moors,'" in *Venice and the Islamic World*, ed. Carboni, 168, fig. 5.

<sup>40</sup>Geisberg, *Woodcut, 1500–1550*, 3:1070; Strauss, *Woodcut, 1550–1600*, 2:726.



Seven-headed Beast” from his Apocalypse series. Here again one finds a prominent figure wearing a turban and crown.<sup>41</sup>

Intriguingly Saladin himself is sometimes associated with the apocalyptic seven-headed beast (Revelation 12:3). In his commentary on the Book of Revelation entitled *Expositio in apocalypsim*, the twelfth-century theologian Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202) identified this beast as the devil and stated that the seven heads represented the seven chief persecutors of the Church running chronologically from Herod to the Antichrist. The sixth head was Saladin, who Joachim claims, “at this present time persecutes the church of God; and has her into captivity with the Lord’s Sepulchre, and the Holy City of Jerusalem, and the land in which the Lord walked [as man]...” In the illustrations of this scene in two early manuscripts of Joachim’s later work on this theme, *Liber figurarum*, in Oxford and Dresden, the sixth head of the beast is identified as “Saladinus” and is the only one of the seven to be adorned with a crown (but no turban).<sup>42</sup>

The horned turban of Giovio’s Saladin can be linked to another group of European images of the sixteenth century. In this case, they are representations not of Saladin or Ottoman rulers, but of Mamluk sultans and governors. A striking enameled plaque, probably produced in Limoges in the sixteenth century, depicts a standing figure wearing an elaborate turban (fig. 8.a). The plaque entered the collection of the Dukes of Brunswick in the eighteenth century. The plaque carries an inscription; the first word unfortunately has disappeared but the second reads SOLTANUS. In an article published in 1913 Marquet de Vasselot pointed to the similarities between this plaque and the painting of Saladin by dell’Altissimo made after the original in Giovio’s portrait collection.<sup>43</sup> Both depict the sultan frontally, he wears rather similar clothing (such as the buttoning of the inner robe and the fur lining of his outer cloak), his beard divides into two points, and his turban rises to a series of projections (four being visible in the enamel plaque and five in dell’Altissimo’s painting). The same areas of similarity can be highlighted with the half-length portrait in Stimmer’s woodcut in the 1575 *Elogia*. Clearly there are also differences, and these are most obvious in the face (and facial expression) of the sultan and in the treatment of the turban. Where dell’Altissimo and Stimmer depict a relatively narrow turban dominated by five curving projections terminating in points, the enameled plaque has a wider lower section rising to a series of balloon-like folds of cloth. This latter feature invites

<sup>41</sup>Strauss, *Woodcut, 1550–1600*, 1:282, 289, 297, 313, 314, 325.

<sup>42</sup>Marjorie Reeves and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford, 1972), 146–52, pl. 21, 22; Robert Lerner, “Antichrists and Antichrist in Joachim of Fiore,” *Speculum* 60, no. 3 (1985): 563–68.

<sup>43</sup>J.-J. Marquet de Vasselot, “Un portrait de sultan par un émailleur limousin,” *Archives de l’art français* 7 (1913): 93–104.



comparison with the portrait of the Mamluk sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (r. 1501–16) in the 1590 edition of Cesare Vecellio's *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri due*.<sup>44</sup>

Figures attired in identifiably Mamluk costumes and headgear are a feature of Italian painting in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, particularly in Venice. In a few cases these are depictions of Muslims within broadly contemporary scenes, but it was also common practice to employ characteristically Mamluk or Ottoman features in Christian religious painting as a means to establish an appropriately “Oriental” visual context for the narrative being represented. These narratives included scenes from Christ's passion and the lives of saints. The most important surviving visual document of the Venetian appreciation of Mamluk culture is an anonymous work entitled *The Reception of the Ambassadors* (fig. 8.b). This work is now dated 1511 or soon afterward on the basis of a recently rediscovered inscription.<sup>45</sup> There is general agreement that this painting provides some topographically accurate details of Damascus, especially the Umayyad mosque, which Julian Raby has demonstrated is probably depicted from the viewpoint of the Venetian compound (*fondaco*) in the city.<sup>46</sup> Equally accurate are the details of the late Mamluk insignia on the walls and gate and the costumes worn by the Mamluk soldiers and officials. Pertinent to the present study is the Muslim man seated at the front of the dais, outside of the gate, for he wears a large and elaborate white turban rising to six rounded projections. Raby and Fuess both conclude that the painting shows a version of the *takhfīfah kabīrah* known commonly as the *nā'ūrah* (“the waterwheel”) because of its distinctive profile. This turban started as a sultanic prerogative, though this restriction was relaxed in the early sixteenth century to allow amirs of one hundred (*amīr mi'ah wa-muqaddam alf*) to wear it as well (see below). This is the senior rank required for the governor (*nā'ib al-salṭānah*) of Syria who is most probably depicted in the *Reception*.<sup>47</sup>

Other painted, drawn, or printed images of Mamluk high officials must have been available in Venice prior to completion of the *Reception of the Ambassadors*, for features such as the insignia, *nā'ūrah*, tall fur hat (*tāqīyah*), and tufted cap (*zamṭ*) appear in religious paintings from 1499 onward. Giovanni Mansueti (fl. 1485–1526) made considerable use of these themes in his cycle of paintings devoted to the life of St. Mark. Consistently the *nā'ūrah* is placed on the head of enthroned figures and clearly acts as a visual shorthand to denote Oriental authority. The *zamṭ* appears several times in the St. George cycle painted by Vittore Carpaccio

<sup>44</sup>Marquet de Vasselot, “Un portrait de sultan,” 99; Raby, *Oriental Mode*, 48, fig. 24.

<sup>45</sup>Campbell and Chong, *Bellini and the East*, 22–23, no. 2.

<sup>46</sup>Raby, *Oriental Mode*, 55–60, figs. 38–41.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 62; Fuess, “Sultans with Horns,” 80–81.



(d. 1525/26).<sup>48</sup> Albrecht Dürer (d. 1528) too picked up on the vogue for Mamluk detail as the result of his trips to Venice in 1495 and 1505–6. Raby has demonstrated that the German artist's *Small Woodcut Passion* (1509–11) differs significantly from his earlier woodcuts of the same scenes. Where in the earlier representations of the Passion he had employed turbans and other headgear of Ottoman derivation for the tormentors of Christ, these switch largely to Mamluk styles in the *Small Woodcut Passion*. Notably, the woodcut of *Pilate Washing His Hands* has the governor attired in a tall turban with two prominent knots around the ears.<sup>49</sup> This form is probably the turban of the high secretary (*dawādār*) of the Mamluk sultanate, at least in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>50</sup>

Giovio himself commissioned portraits of three Mamluk sultans, Qāyṭbāy, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, and Ṭūmānbāy II, each of whom wears an elaborate turban (figs. 9 and 10).<sup>51</sup> The first two wear turbans with two twisted horns made of fabric at the summit of the turban directly above the forehead (this arrangement is also seen in Vecellio's later depiction of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī). Ṭūmānbāy II has a rather different tall turban with knots of material located near the ears. As noted above, this latter item of headgear is believed to be the type worn by an amir of the rank of *dawādār*; and perhaps indicates that the source for Giovio's portrait was a representation of Ṭūmānbāy II made before he became sultan. Of course, the prototype could also have been another Mamluk notable who rose only to the rank of *dawādār*. Significantly, Giovio specifies the source for his portrait of Qāyṭbāy. He writes that it was made after an image that had been painted for a palace at Memphis destroyed by the Turks in 1517. Friedrich Kenner speculates that the sources for the other Mamluk portraits (and that of Saladin) in Giovio's collection came from Egyptian portrait collections, or possibly Venetian portraits made after originals painted in sixteenth-century Egypt.<sup>52</sup>

## Horned Turbans in the Mamluk Sultanate

The previous section concluded with some evidence of European representations of Mamluk sultans produced during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centu-

<sup>48</sup>Raby, *Oriental Mode*, 35–54, 66–77.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 30, fig. 15.

<sup>50</sup>Fuess, "Sultans with Horns," 81.

<sup>51</sup>For the original images, see: Giovio, *Elogia*, 170 (Magnus Caythbeius = Qāyṭbāy), 222 (Campso Gaurus = Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī); 225 (Tomumbeius ultimus = Ṭūmānbāy). These images were the prototypes for portrait roundels in Jean-Jacques Boissard, *Vitae et icones sultanorum Turcicorum* (Frankfurt, 1596). Illustrations of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī and Ṭūmānbāy from the edition of 1648 are reproduced in Fuess, "Sultans with Horns," figs. 9, 10 (with translations of the Latin captions).

<sup>52</sup>Kenner, "Die Porträtsammlung," 115–16. Other scholars have suggested a Venetian provenance for the prototype. See Klinger, "Portrait Collection," 2:163.



ries. Given the tendency of European artists to exaggerate qualities of Muslim costume (as writers also did when writing about the cultural practices of the Middle East), one might legitimately ask whether the large and unusually shaped turbans in their paintings and drawings were simply Orientalist fantasies. There is, however, enough evidence—visual and textual—to suggest that this is not the case. The former category offers fewer examples, though it is possible to point to a painting of a battle scene in a sixteenth-century Ottoman *Selīm-nāme* in the Topkapı Sarayı Library. Discussed by Raby and Fuess, this depiction of an engagement between Turkish and Mamluk forces clearly shows the differences in the profiles of the turbans, with the latter possessing a taller profile with a flattened frontal face.<sup>53</sup> Shadow puppets are another important source. In 1909 the renowned Orientalist Paul Kahle bought a cache of ancient shadow puppets in the Egyptian village of Manzalah. He argued that this group of more than eighty fragmentary leather and textile puppets could be dated to the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, though it now appears likely that they were produced later, and perhaps over a more extended period. Particularly important in the present context is a puppet of a boat containing a wealthy occupant smoking a water pipe (hookah or narghile) (fig. 11).<sup>54</sup> The fact that he is seen smoking argues in favor of a date in the seventeenth or early eighteenth century, but his headgear belongs to the end of the Mamluk sultanate. Comparison with Giovio's image of sultan Ṭūmānbāy II (fig. 10) indicates that the man within the boat is probably wearing the turban of the Mamluk *dawādār* (see above).

Recent research by Fuess has provided greater precision for the introduction of the elaborate horned turbans of the Mamluk period. They belong to a type known as the *takhfīfah* (literally, “the lighter one”) that first makes its appearance at the end of the fourteenth century. According to the Egyptian chronicler Ibn Iyās (d. after 1524), it was sultan Barqūq (r. 1382–89, 1390–99) who first wore the *takhfīfah ṣaghīrah* (“small *takhfīfah*”) in public in 1394. It did not become commonplace at this time, however, and it is only from the late 1460s that it is mentioned more frequently in public gatherings of the Mamluk elite. There was also an evolution toward larger and more complex forms of the *takhfīfah*. In the last years of the fifteenth century there are references to the *takhfīfah kabīrah* (“large *takhfīfah*”).<sup>55</sup> This item of headgear also included horns made from folds of material. As noted above, the largest of all these was the *nā'ūrah* (“waterwheel”) with six horns. Others were equipped with four and two projections. While the *nā'ūrah* was reserved

<sup>53</sup>Raby, *Oriental Mode*, fig. 28; Fuess, “Sultans with Horns,” 83, fig. 13.

<sup>54</sup>This puppet is discussed in: Paul Kahle, “Islamische Schattenspielfiguren aus Egypten. II. Teil,” *Der Islam* 2 (1911): 153–59; Marcus Milwright, “On the Date of Paul Kahle's Egyptian Shadow Puppets,” *Muqarnas* 28 (2011): 52–57, fig. 6. a, b.

<sup>55</sup>Fuess, “Sultans with Horns,” 77–78.



for sultans and governors, there is evidence that sultans did also make use of the *takhfīfah* with two horns; for instance, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī wore such a turban during an embassy with the Venetian Domenico Trevisan in 1512. In his account of this event Trevisan remarks that the two projections on the turban (he calls it a “fez”) were each half the length of an arm.<sup>56</sup> This same two-horn *takhfīfah* can be seen on the head of the sultan in his portrait in Giovio’s *Elogia* (fig. 9). The demise of the *takhfīfah*, *kallawtah*, *zamṭ*, and other distinctive forms of Mamluk apparel occurred in the years following the Ottoman conquest in 1517, and particularly after the suppression of the Mamluk revolt against Turkish rule that occurred after the death of Sultan Selīm I in 1520.

In general terms the turban was understood to connote both authority and Muslim (male) identity. These qualities drew their potency from a hadith variously ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad (d. 632) and the *Rāshidūn* caliphs ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 634–44) and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (r. 656–61): “the turbans (*‘imāmah*, pl. *‘amā’īm*) are the crowns of the Arabs.”<sup>57</sup> The deliberate linkage of the turban and the crown has already been noted in the European portraits of the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II Fātiḥ. Fuess has argued that the *takhfīfah*, in both its small and large versions, has more specific meanings that can be located in the political culture of the turbulent last decades of the Mamluk sultanate in Egypt.<sup>58</sup> The key moment occurred at the beginning of the short rule of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (r. 1496–98), son of the last great Mamluk sultan, Qāyṭbāy. According to Ibn Iyās, the young sultan appeared at Friday prayers wearing the *takhfīfah ṣaghīrah* rather than the official *kallawtah*. This act appears to have been intended as a statement to the Mamluk court: al-Nāṣir was using the *takhfīfah* to signal his desire to create a new political order and to make clear that he would not relinquish power to the older amirs who had served his father (few sons of sultans enjoyed long rules during the fifteenth century, with power usually passing instead to a senior Mamluk amir).

A concerted reaction to al-Nāṣir’s provocative gesture did not take long to materialize. Within a month of the sultan’s adoption of the *takhfīfah ṣaghīrah*, the leading amirs took to wearing larger versions of the *takhfīfah* with horns. The political impasse between the young sultan and his court led to al-Nāṣir’s assassination in 1498 and a prolonged struggle for supremacy among the leading amirs that culminated in the elevation of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in 1501. The taste for the horned *takhfīfah* persisted after the death of al-Nāṣir in 1498, and became a dominant feature of court culture in the last years of the Mamluk sultanate. Written

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 78.

<sup>57</sup>M. J. Kister, “The Crowns of this Community’... Some Notes on the Turban in the Muslim Tradition,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 24 (2000): 217–45.

<sup>58</sup>Fuess, “Sultans with Horns,” 79–80.



sources of the sixteenth century provide indications concerning the symbolism of these striking turbans. Ibn Iyās quotes a remark made by a contemporary poet following a conversation with an amir: “I was in the war and Dhū al-Qarnayn was calling me: ‘I am a ram (*kabsh*). When the sheep pass me by and try to go out then I push them with my horns.’”<sup>59</sup> The recognition of the horns of the *takhfīfah* as references to the ram extended beyond the political elite and became the subject of a popular aphorism. Ibn Iyās also records that the *nā‘ūrah* was understood as the “crown” of the rulers of Egypt, and that it had its origins with the kings of Persia. The Quranic Dhū al-Qarnayn (i.e., “possessor of the two horns”) is identified with Alexander the Great in medieval Islam. Fuess notes the status of Alexander both as an epic hero and archetype of kingship. This ancient ruler was also associated with the ram as the result of having been named the son of the ram-headed Egyptian deity Zeus-Amun.<sup>60</sup>

## Conclusion

While the prototype for Giovio’s Saladin remains unclear, there seems little doubt that it must have been produced in the last two decades of the Mamluk period, or soon after the fall of the dynasty in 1517. The form of the Ayyubid sultan’s headgear in both dell’Altissimo’s painting and Stimmer’s print is the Mamluk *nā‘ūrah*, the six-horned turban that probably evolved from earlier forms of the *takhfīfah kabīrah* worn by powerful amirs during the short rule of sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The *nā‘ūrah* appears to have been relatively common during the rule of the penultimate Mamluk sultan, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, and turns up in textual sources, paintings, drawings, and prints. The wearing of the *nā‘ūrah* was restricted to sultans and a few high officials. Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī himself seems to have made use of both the six-horned and two-horned turbans on public occasions, and it is in the latter type that he is depicted in Giovio’s *Elogia*. Giovio was, therefore, mistaken in his belief that Saladin would have worn a turban of this sort and we may also infer that his prototype was probably a representation of a member of the Mamluk elite. More interesting, however, is to establish what Giovio understood of the symbolism of the *nā‘ūrah* and why he might have thought it appropriate as the head-covering of Saladin.

Giovio’s own caption to his painting of Saladin—reproduced in both the 1551 and 1575 editions of the *Elogia*—asserts that the horns of the turban were intended to symbolize the sultan’s victories. Unfortunately, Giovio does not state which military engagements or territorial conquests might be represented by the five

<sup>59</sup>Translated by Albrecht Fuess in *ibid.*, 78. The quote comes from Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i‘ al-Zuhūr fī Waqā’i‘ al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Wiesbaden, 1961), 3:340.

<sup>60</sup>Quran 18:83–98. Fuess, “Sultans with Horns,” 78–79.



horns visible on the sultan's headgear. His failure to provide specific details on this issue is perhaps a further indication of the difficulty he experienced in finding reliable historical information about Saladin. Reviewing the evidence for the symbolism of the *nā'ūrah*, there is little to support the notion that its projections were explicit emblems of victory; rather, it would appear that its six horns were a sign of higher status (Mamluks of lesser rank being restricted to four or two horns on their *takhfīfah*). It is possible, however, that Giovio and his contemporaries may have picked up on the connection made by the Mamluks themselves between the ram-like, two-horn *takhfīfah* and Alexander the Great. If this were the case, though, one would expect the victorious Saladin and not the defeated sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī to have been equipped with the two-horned turban.

Clearly Giovio believed that the *nā'ūrah* was appropriate for Saladin, and some explanation for this can be sought in other European images produced of Muslim rulers during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The painted portrait and medal of Meḥmed produced by Gentile Bellini implied a symbolic equivalence between the crown and the turban. Significantly, the crowns on Bellini's medal are believed to stand for his conquests of Asia, Europe, and Trebizond. The propagandist activities of Süleymān I, particularly the extravagant helmet commissioned in 1529–30 from the Caorlini family of goldsmiths in Venice and delivered to Istanbul in 1532, also sought to forge links between Muslim and Christian traditions of authority. Süleymān gave crowns to vassal Christian rulers, and this practice was perpetuated by later Ottoman sultans. European art of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also provided numerous examples of the combination of the crown (always shown with numerous projections rising vertically from the headband) and the turban into a single piece of Orientalist headgear. This European invention was placed on the heads of the magi, Muslim philosophers, a pharaoh, and in one instance Saladin himself. The sheer variety of wearers does not allow for a single interpretation of the crown-turban, though it is most prevalent in apocalyptic scenes. The association with tyranny is indicated by the pharaoh who wears the crown-turban, while the depiction of Saladin from *The Six Ages of the World* parchment roll encourages a rather bellicose and malevolent reading.<sup>61</sup> Visually, at least, the prominent rising horns of the *nā'ūrah* provided a Muslim counterpart to the crown-turban.

Saladin occupies an ambiguous place in European culture from the late twelfth to the sixteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Giovio reflects this in his own biography of the famous

<sup>61</sup>On the concept of tyranny and its association with Muslim rulers, see Nebahat Avcioglu, "Ahmed I and the Allegories of Tyranny in the Frontispiece to George Sandy's *Relation of a Journey*," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 203–26.

<sup>62</sup>Robert Irwin, "Saladin and the Third Crusade: A Case Study in Historiography and the Historical Novel," in *Companion to Historiography*, ed. Michael Bentley (London, 1997), 139–52; Jean



enemy of the Crusaders; Saladin's admirable personal qualities and tactical skills are balanced against his adherence to Islam and his perfidious overthrow of the legitimate ruler of Egypt. It is perhaps the theme of victory that is dominant both in Giovio's writings and in the depiction of Saladin, with the Mamluk horned turban itself becoming a visual manifestation of the sultan's military successes. In this context it is fitting that Stimmer should have added the reliquary, presumably containing the True Cross, into the background of the image. As potent a symbol of Saladin's crushing defeat of the Crusaders as his reoccupation of the holy city of Jerusalem, the supposed presence of this precious relic in the treasury of Cairo continued to excite diplomatic activity in Christian Europe long after the fall of the Ayyubid dynasty.<sup>63</sup> This combination of factors results in one of the most memorable images in the 1575 edition of Giovio's *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium*.

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Richard, "Les transformations de l'image de Saladin dans les sources occidentales," *Revue des mondes musulmanes et de la Méditerranée* 89–90 (2000): 177–87; John Tolan, *Sons of Ishmael: Muslims through European Eyes in the Middle Ages* (Gainesville, 2008), 79–100.

<sup>63</sup>For example, see Aziz S. Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon: Embassies and Diplomatic Correspondence between 1300 and 1330 A.D.* (Nendeln, 1966).



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Figure 1. Saladin from Paolo Giovio, *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium* (Basel, 1575), 29. Image courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.



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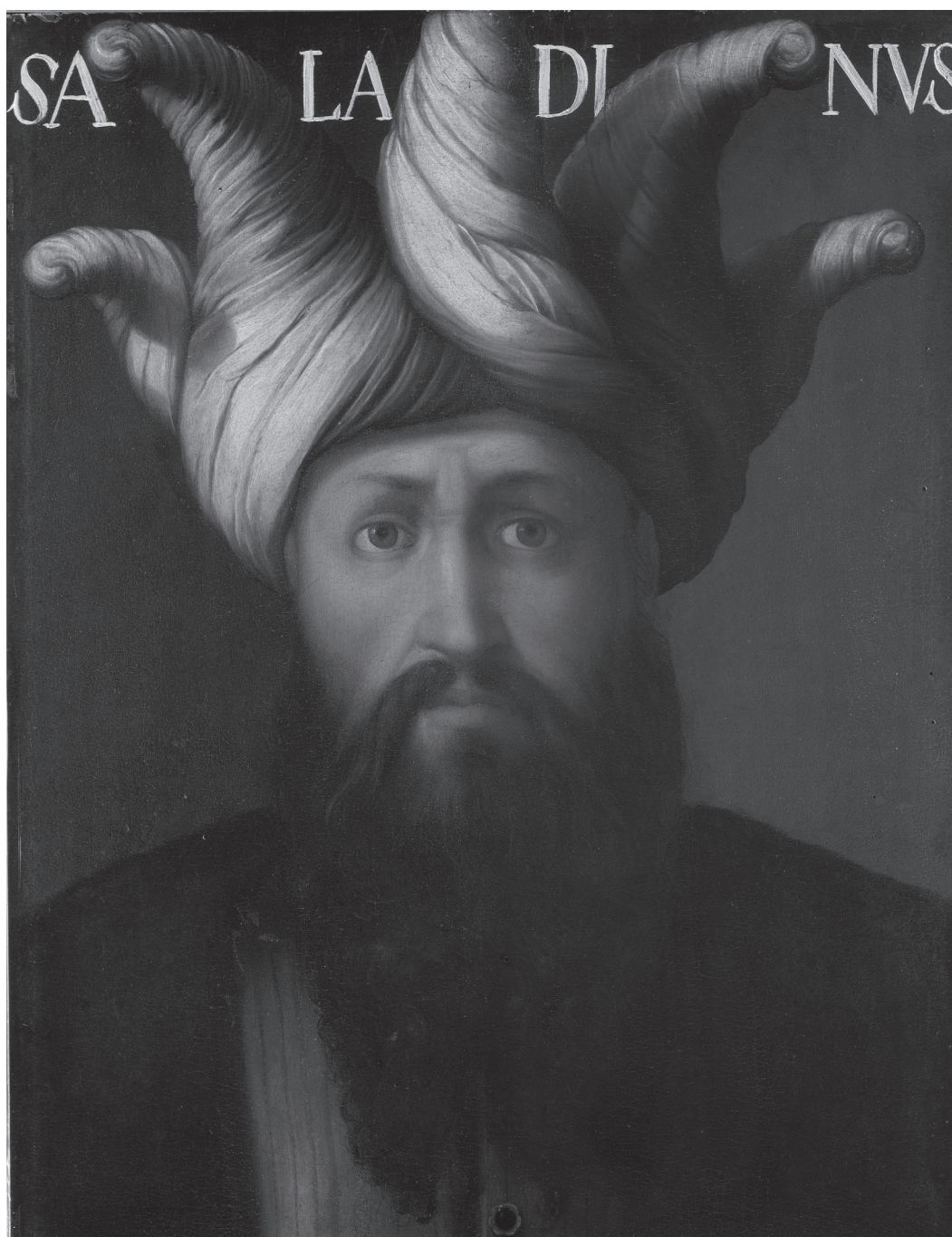


Figure 2. Saladin, Sultan of Egypt by Cristofano dell'Altissimo. Oil on wood, mid-sixteenth century. Uffizi 1890 n.15. Scala/Ministero per i Beni e le Attivà culturali/Art Resource, NY.



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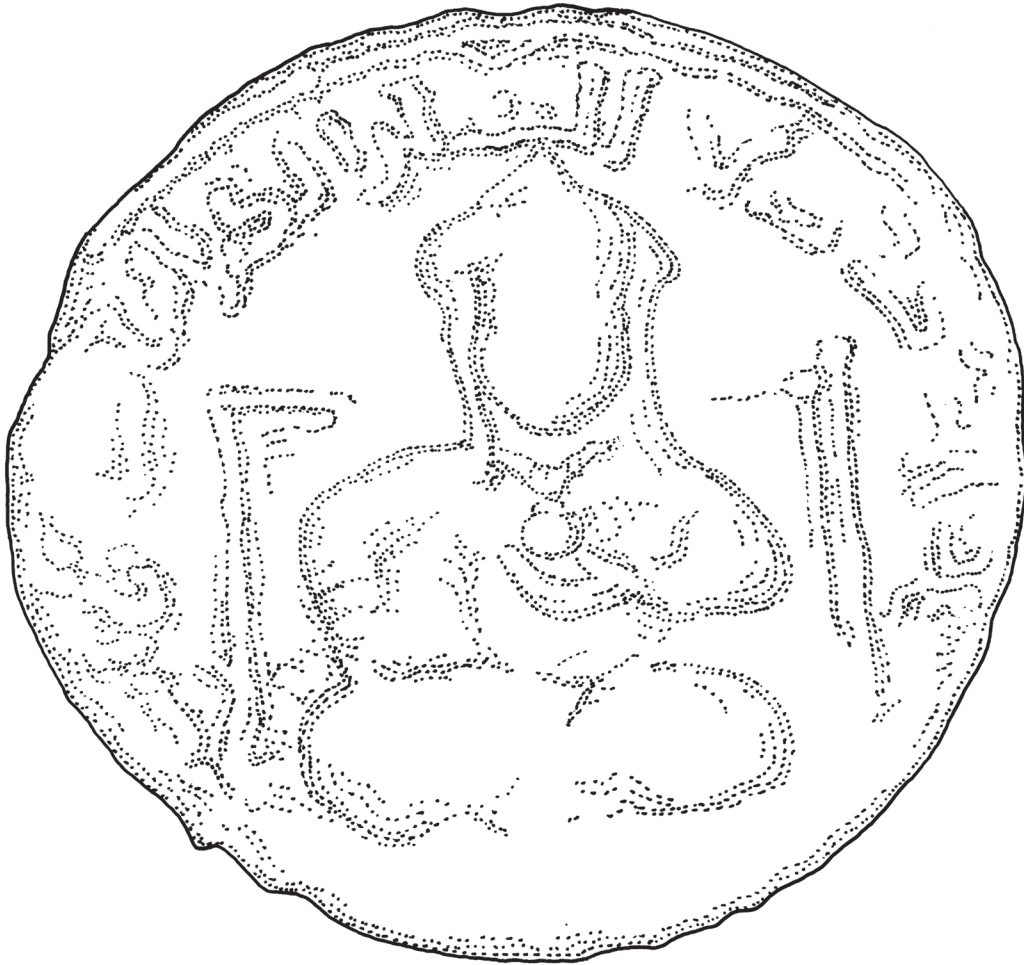


Figure 3. Drawing of *fals* minted in Mayyāfāriqīn in 586/1190–91. After Eddé, *Saladin*.



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Figure 4. Page of a manuscript of al-Jazari's *Kitāb fī Ma'rifat al-Ḥiyal al-Handasīyah*. Manuscript dated 1354. Image courtesy of the Freer and Sackler Galleries. F1932.19.



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Figure 5. (a, b) details of headgear from roundels on the *Baptistère de Saint Louis* (after Rice, *Baptistère*); (c, d, e) Drawings of headgear from an inlaid brass bowl signed by Muhammad ibn al-Zayn, late thirteenth century (after Esin Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 1981).



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Figure 6. Saladin from André Thevet, *Les vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres* (Paris, 1584), fol. 627r. After Thevet (Cholakian) 1973.



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Figure 7. Saladin from “The Six Ages of the World” (BL MS Add. 30359), Italy, fifteenth century. Ink, pigment, and gilding on parchment. Courtesy of the British Library.



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Figure 8. (a) Drawing of an enameled plaque with a portrait of an unnamed Egyptian sultan. Probably Limoges, sixteenth century. Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum in Brunswick; (b) Drawing of the enthroned governor from *The Reception of the Ambassadors*, 1511. Anonymous Venetian artist. Louvre.



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Figure 9. Portrait of Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī from Giovio, *Elogia*, 222. Image courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.



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Figure 10. Sultan Tūmānbāy II from Paolo Giovio, *Elogia*, 225. Image courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.



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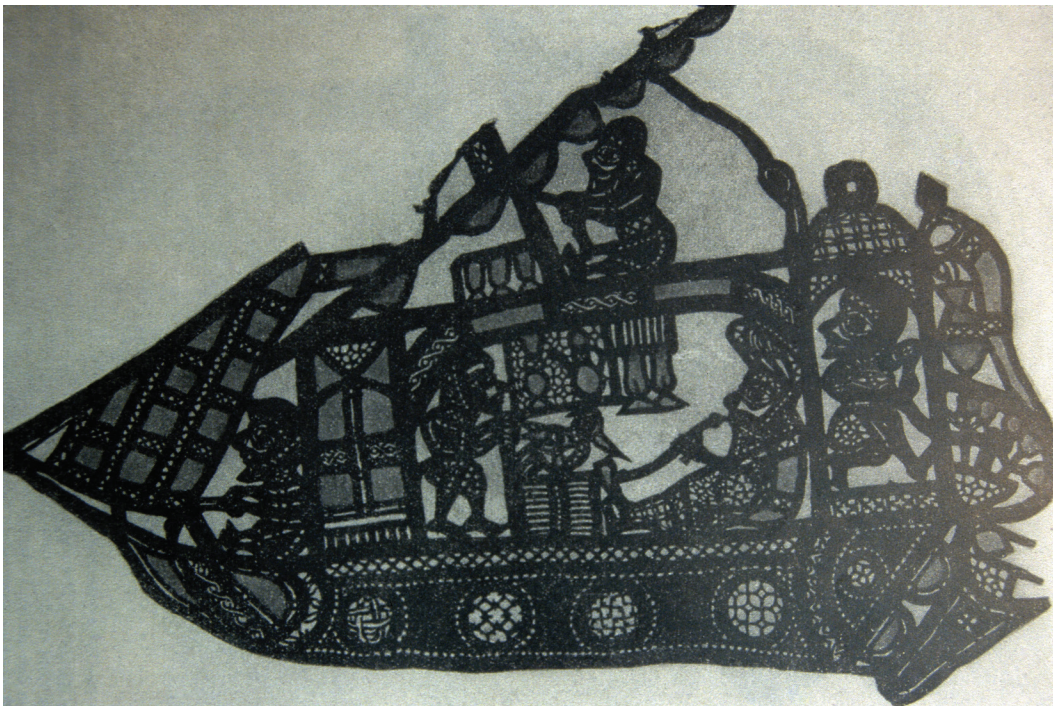


Figure 11. Leather puppet of a boat with sailors and elite occupant. Bought by Paul Kahle in Manzalah, Egypt, 1909. Seventeenth century, Egypt. After Kahle, “Schattenspielfiguren II,” fig. 45 (present whereabouts unknown).



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