

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH: THE HISTORY OF A LIBRARY, ITS BOOKS, AND ITS READERS

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*To the memory of my grandfather Rudolph Wynter (1925-2020)*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	vii
LIST OF CHARTS .....	x
LIST OF TABLES .....	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	xii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	xiii
NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATIONS .....	xvi
NOTES ON MANUSCRIPT CITATIONS .....	xvii
ABSTRACT .....	xviii
Chapter 1: Introduction: Following the traces of a library .....	1
1.0: A brief history of the Maḥmūdīyah Library and an overview of the dissertation.....	1
1.1. Studies on pre-modern libraries in the Islamic world and manuscript notes .....	7
1.2. Manuscript reading communities .....	11
1.3.0. Creating a Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus.....	14
1.3.1. Identifying the extant Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus .....	15
1.3.2. Identifying volumes in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus .....	23
Chapter 2: The Provenance of the Maḥmūdīyah’s Books and Their Syrian Profile .....	28
2.0. Introduction .....	28
2.1. Accuracy of sample size of Maḥmūdīyah texts; problems in methodology .....	29
2.2. The problem of genre .....	36
2.3.0. Thematic profile as reflection of provenance: A judge, his networks, and his books ....	38
2.3.1. The scion of a prominent family of Shāfi‘ī judges .....	39
2.3.2. Proof of the Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah – Maḥmūdīyah link: A court record .....	42
2.3.3. Proof of the Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah-Maḥmūdīyah link: Ibrāhīm’s ownership statements, references to Maḥmūdīyah books in his works .....	44
2.3.4. Did Maḥmūd al-Ustādār acquire books from other sources? .....	48
2.3.5. Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s teachers and Syrian contemporaries in the Maḥmūdīyah’s books.....	50
2.4. Conclusion.....	63

Chapter 3: The Beginning of a Library and the End of Its Founder: The Founding of the Maḥmūdīyah .....	65
3.0. Introduction .....	65
3.1. The supreme ustādār.....	66
3.2. The library as an extension of Maḥmūd’s household and assets. ....	73
3.3. Endowments: A private or public act? .....	77
3.4.0. Maḥmūd al-Ustādār’s original endowment to the madrasa .....	80
3.4.1. The book endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa .....	84
3.4.2. Other staff positions outlined in the endowment deed .....	89
3.5. Conclusion.....	94
Chapter 4: The Institutional History of the Maḥmūdīyah Library, 797-1286/1395-1870.....	96
4.0. Introduction .....	96
4.1.0. The Maḥmūdīyah’s librarians .....	97
4.1.1. A brief overview of the librarians of the Maḥmūdīyah .....	97
4.1.2. The working hours of the Maḥmūdīyah Library .....	106
4.1.3. Laxity with endowment stipulations regarding hiring of staff positions.....	109
4.1.4. Disappearance of books from the Maḥmūdīyah.....	113
4.2.0. Ottoman book plunder? An assessment .....	116
4.2.1. Syrian library books moving to Istanbul following the Ottoman Conquest.....	122
4.2.2. The Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts in Istanbul: the seal of ‘Abd al-Bāqī ibn al-‘Arabī..	124
4.2.3. Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts in Istanbul: The sultanic endowment libraries .....	128
4.3. The Maḥmūdīyah in the Ottoman Period (923-1286/1517-1870) .....	135
Chapter 5: Readers of the Maḥmūdīyah .....	146
5.0. Introduction .....	146
5.1.0 Sources for determining the clientele and readers of the Maḥmūdīyah.....	146
5.1.1. Notes with dates and locations .....	147
5.1.2. ibn Ḥajar’s circle of friends and students .....	148
5.2. Reading practices: a Mamluk’s slow and deliberate reading .....	156
5.3. Reading practices: al-Maqrīzī’s note taking system .....	161
5.4. Reading practices: notes of individual reading as a citation .....	163
5.5. A shift from group reading to individual reading .....	168

5.6. Conclusion.....	176
Conclusion .....	178
APPENDIX A. A Partial Catalogue of the Maḥmūdīyah Library .....	184
APPENDIX B. The Syrian Profile of the Maḥmūdīyah Corpus .....	214
APPENDIX C. Maḥmūdīyah Librarians .....	217
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	220

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The façade of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa (Photo by author).....	2
Figure 2: The Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement. Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi, fol. 1a. ....	15
Figure 3a-d.: Examples of tampered-with Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements.....	18
Figure 4: The Maḥmūdīyah Library’s secondary endowment statement. Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 50, fols. 8b, 9a. ....	20
Figure 5: Partially erased secondary Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement. Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 472, fols. 8b, 9a. ....	21
Figure 6: Collation note on a non-Maḥmūdīyah manuscript indicating the owner of the manuscript collated it with a Maḥmūdīyah copy of the same work. Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 273, fol. 292a. ....	26
Figure 7a-i: Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s ownership statements on the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus .....	45
Figure 8: A note from Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s second cousin on a book in the Maḥmūdīyah corpus: Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/8, fol. 1a. .	47
Figure 9a-b.: Examples of paratexts in the Maḥmūdīyah written by or mentioning al-Dhahabī .	51
Figure 10a-b.: A Maḥmūdīyah book Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah had acquired from al-Dhahabī .....	55
Figure 11a-c.: Damascene hadith scholarship represented in audition certificates on the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus.....	60
Figure 12: A re-endowment note written on behalf of Maḥmūd al-Ustādār’s daughter Fātimah in 829/1426. Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2907-D10, fol. 1a.....	83
Figure 13: Partially erased secondary endowment statement. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Fatih 4116, fol. 12b. ....	88
Figure 14: Marginal note stating the Maḥmūdīyah’s endowment deed forbade Persians from holding staff positions. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3482, fol. 115b.....	92

Figure 15: Notes by ibn Hajar and his grandson on a Maḥmūdīyah volume. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 474, fol. 169a. ....	101
Figure 16: A note by the judge Muḥibb al-Dīn ibn al-Shiḥnah's on a Maḥmūdīyah volume. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3014, fol. 318a. ....	105
Figure 17: The endowment statement of a book endowed to the Sufi Lodge of the Sultan Faraj ibn Barqūq, written after it had been taken from the Maḥmūdīyah Library. Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2907-D8, fol. 1a. ....	114
Figure 18: An Ottoman inventory of books in the citadel of Aleppo drafted in 923/1517. Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi D 9101.1, fol. 1b. ....	122
Figure 19: Example of the seal of 'Abd al-Bāqī ibn al-'Arabī on a surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscript. Princeton: Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 42B, fol. 1b. ....	125
Figure 20: A Maḥmūdīyah manuscript endowed to al-Azhar in the early thirteenth/late eighteenth century. Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 1217, fol. 1a. ....	139
Figure 21: Reader note on a Maḥmūdīyah book left by the doorman of the Mu'ayyadīyah Mosque. Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1252, fol. 198b. ....	148
Figure 22: Marginal note written by ibn Hajar on a Maḥmūdīyah book. Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2951/2, fol. 222b. ....	149
Figure 23: al-Maqrīzī's reading note on a Maḥmūdīyah book. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3116, fol. 1a. ....	151
Figure 24a-d: al-Maqrīzī's references to ibn Hajar's works in his marginal notes .....	154
Figure 25: A Mamluk's reading note on the Maḥmūdīyah's copy of Nihāyat al-arab. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3527, fol. 244a. ....	157
Figure 26a-b: al-Maqrīzī quoting other books from the Maḥmūdīyah in marginal notes. ....	161
Figure 27a-c: al-Maqrīzī's numerical reference system. ....	162
Figure 28: al-Khayḍirī's reading note on a Maḥmūdīyah book. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3009, fol. 222b. ....	164
Figure 29: al-Khayḍirī's reading note on a non-Maḥmūdīyah manuscript. Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1101, fol. 65a. ....	166



- Figure 30: al-Sakhāwī's reading note on a Maḥmūdīyah book. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3014, fol. 2a. .... 166
- Figure 31: Undated audition certificate on a non- Maḥmūdīyah book recording a group reading of Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī at the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Misrīyah, MS ḥadīth 677, fol. 433b. .... 169
- Figure 32: ibn Kathīr's audition certificate led by al-Mizzī, on the Maḥmūdīyah copy of Tahdhīb al-kamāl. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yozgat 148/3, fol. 201b..... 173
- Figure 33: A note copied from an autograph of Tahdhīb al-kamāl, stating ibn Kathīr grants an ijāzah to anyone who reads his handwriting on the autograph. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yozgat 148/8, fol. 545b. .... 174

## LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1: The student-teacher relationship of authors in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus .....	56
Chart 2: Number of Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts held in each country .....	125
Chart 3: Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts in Istanbul by shelfmark .....	129

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts with the seal of ‘Abd al-Bāqī. ....	127
Table 2: Number of manuscript volumes in al-Azhar libraries in the mid-nineteenth century, according to Nāfi‘ .....	140

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BnF = Bibliothèque nationale de France

EI3 = Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition

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## NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATIONS

The Arabic and Ottoman Turkish transliterations in this dissertation adhere to the standards outlined in the Library of Congress Arabic and Ottoman Turkish Romanization Tables. When using individual Arabic words that also occur in the Oxford English Dictionary, I opt for the anglicized spelling of the word instead of a transliteration (i.e., Quran and not Qur'ān, Cairo and not al-Qāhirah, hadith and not ḥadīth). However, I retain strict Arabic transliteration rules when transliterating entire passages, titles of Arabic books, or Arab publishing houses, even if the word in question has an anglicized equivalent in the Oxford English Dictionary. When quoting a passage in a secondary source I maintain the transliteration choice of the cited author, even if it differs from the system I use. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.



## NOTES ON MANUSCRIPT CITATIONS

This dissertation cites many manuscripts. All of the manuscripts that I consulted were digital images and not the physical manuscripts themselves. The manuscripts are cited in the following way:

The city of the library holding manuscript: the library holding the manuscript, the manuscript's shelfmark, folio number and side.

Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2907-D10, fol. 1a.

## ABSTRACT

In my dissertation I address the social, intellectual, and institutional history of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa Library, constructed in Cairo, Egypt in the year 797 A.H./1394-1395 CE. According to the contemporary literary sources, the Maḥmūdīyah was the largest madrasa library in Mamluk Egypt and Syria and attracted some of the prominent scholars of the time with its rare and impressive collection of books. In this study I read these literary sources against documentary data that can be gleaned from the Maḥmūdīyah's surviving manuscripts, which I have identified in modern manuscript libraries around the world.

In Chapter 1, I give an overview of modern studies on pre-modern libraries in the Islamic world. I then introduce the methodological and theoretical foundations of my study of the Maḥmūdīyah, namely, the ways in which I make use of manuscript paratexts to reconstruct reading communities and book circulation histories. I also provide the methods I used to locate the manuscripts and book titles that were originally endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah. Chapter 2 traces the provenance of the Maḥmūdīyah's books to the personal collection of the Grand Shāfi'ī Judge of Egypt, Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah (d. 790/1388). These books were subsequently seized from the estate of the judge's son by the emir Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ustādār, the founder of the Maḥmūdīyah. Looking at the biography of this judge, the textual profile of the Maḥmūdīyah Library from surviving evidence, and the figures who feature prominently on the earlier notes on the Maḥmūdīyah's books, I argue that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah had partially aimed to document Syrian hadith and historiographical scholarship through his personal book collection. Chapter 3 looks at the circumstances behind the founding of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa in Cairo. I argue that the founder of the library, Maḥmūd al-Ustādār, had

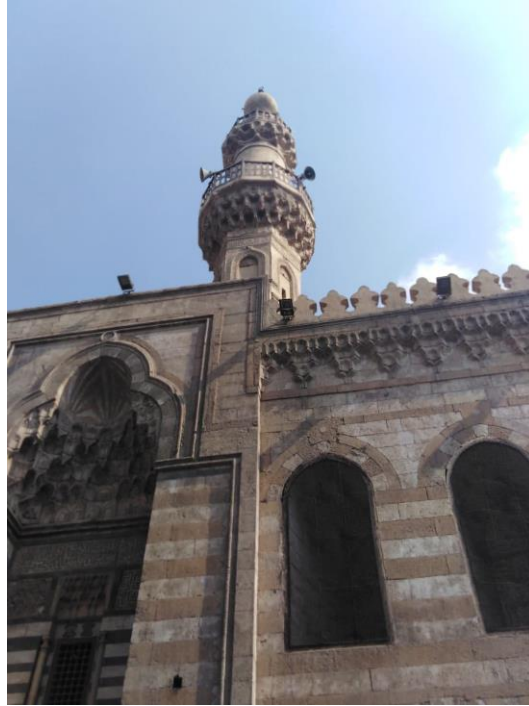
created this book endowment as part of a series of measures he took to secure his possessions and wealth from confiscation by the authorities. This chapter also reconstructs the original endowment stipulations and staff positions for the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa and its library that Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had outlined in his now-lost endowment deed. Chapter 4 turns to the administrative history of the Maḥmūdīyah Library from its founding until its dissolution several centuries later. The clientele and the staff of the Maḥmūdīyah frequently violated the stringent rules concerning hiring practices and the use of the library. Through surviving manuscript evidence this chapter also analyzes that this library was plundered following the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 923/1517. Finally, in Chapter 5, I analyze the notes left on the Maḥmūdīyah's manuscripts in order to reconstruct the library's clientele and their habits of engaging with its books. The results suggest that the textual practice of recording group readings of texts started to decline in the ninth/fifteenth century, and that these practices were replaced by more individual ways of reading. This study is a contribution to Islamic intellectual history, religious endowment history, and manuscript culture in the late medieval Islamic world.

## Chapter 1: Introduction: Following the traces of a library

### *1.0: A brief history of the Maḥmūdīyah Library and an overview of the dissertation*

This dissertation examines the history of the Maḥmūdīyah Library, its books, the institution that housed its books, and the reading communities and cultures that formed around them. The core of the Maḥmūdīyah's books had been collected by the grand Shāfi'ī judge of Egypt, Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Jamā'ah (725-790/1325-1388) who was known for his love of collecting rare books in the hands of their original authors. After the judge's death, the emir Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ustādār (d. 799/1397) would acquire these books from Ibrāhīm's deceased son's estate through illicit means. At the apogee of his career as supreme *ustādār*, or majordomo responsible for the management of the private property and household of the sultan Barqūq (r. 784-791, 792-801/1382-1389, 1390-1399), Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had decided, in the custom of the sultans and high ranking emirs of his time, to construct a madrasa (see Figure 1. below). Significantly, Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had also decided to endow his madrasa with a library (*khizānat kutub*) and filled it with books he had acquired from Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah. However, shortly after this endowment, Maḥmūd had fallen out of favor with the sultan Barqūq. After having all his possessions and wealth confiscated by the authorities, Maḥmūd was subsequently arrested and tortured in prison, where he died in 799/1397.

**FIGURE 1: THE FAÇADE OF THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH MADRASA (PHOTO BY AUTHOR)**



His madrasa and its attached library would become an important intellectual hub in ninth/fifteenth century Cairo, attracting some of the most familiar names in late-Mamluk Islamic scholarship. The Egyptian historian Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī (766-845/1364-1442), who as we shall see made frequent use of the Maḥmūdīyah Library, described the library in effusive terms, saying: “[Maḥmūd] constructed within [this madrasa] a library unequalled in the lands of Egypt or Greater Syria. It remains to this day. No book is ever taken out for anyone unless the book remains in the madrasa. In this library there are all the books of Islam on every subject.”<sup>1</sup> The library’s large collection drew the attention of the premier hadith scholar of the age, ibn Ḥajar al-

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<sup>1</sup> Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iẓ wa-al-i‘tibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār*, ed. Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid (London: Mu’assasat al-furqān lil-turāth al-islāmī, 2002), 4:592-594.

‘Asqalānī (773-852/1372-1449), who would go on to serve as one of the Maḥmūdīyah’s librarians for many years until his death. His loyal student, the hadith scholar and prosopographer Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (830-902/1427-1497) would often accompany ibn Ḥajar while the latter was employed in the library, and it is primarily through him that we find an abundance of references to the Maḥmūdīyah in the contemporary literary sources.

From the very moment the Maḥmūdīyah Library opened its books were frequently subject to theft from all classes of Mamluk society. The collection would suffer a huge blow following the Ottoman conquest of Cairo in the year 923/1517. In an oft cited passage, the Egyptian historian ibn Iyās (852-930/1448-1524) describes a scene in which the conquering Ottoman armies plundered several of the major madrasa libraries of Cairo including the Maḥmūdīyah, and then took the seized books to Istanbul. However, the Maḥmūdīyah did remain operational during the period of Ottoman rule in Egypt (923-1284/1517-1867), albeit with less books and with almost no references made to it in the contemporary literary sources. Finally, in 1286/1870 the Khedive Ismā‘īl Pasha of Egypt issued a proclamation for the manuscripts in Cairo’s various madrasa and mosque libraries to be gathered and moved to a centralized location: the newly founded Khedival Library (*al-kutubkhānah al-khidīwīyah*, currently known as the Egyptian National Library, *Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah*). However, by the time an official from the library had come to take the books from the Maḥmūdīyah ten years later in 1297/1880, its few remaining books had all disappeared, thus ending the history of this institution as a functioning library.

Two facts about the Maḥmūdīyah provided the initial motivation for this dissertation. The first was that, judging from the frequent references to this library in the ninth/fifteenth century literary sources, the library certainly must have played an important role in the intellectual landscape of ninth/fifteenth century Cairo. Despite this, the Maḥmūdīyah Library has received only brief, fleeting mentions in various studies and has never received a proper monograph. The first major modern scholar to show significant interest in the Maḥmūdīyah Library, Fu'ād Sayyid, dedicated a section on its history as an addendum to his edition of a treatise written by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūfī (849-911/1445-1505) concerning the permissibility of taking books out of the Maḥmūdīyah in violation of the madrasa's original conditions of use for each book.<sup>2</sup> However, seeing as Sayyid relied on descriptions of the Maḥmūdīyah given in Mamluk literary sources, his article only provides a tantalizingly brief outline of the Maḥmūdīyah Library similar to the one provided above.

Subsequent articles brought my attention to the second interesting aspect of the Maḥmūdīyah that prompted me to investigate this library further: The existence of extant manuscripts that once belonged to the Maḥmūdīyah now preserved in modern libraries around the world. In an article on the founder of the Maḥmūdīyah, Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ustādār, the scholar Mukhtār al-Dīn Aḥmad mentions several manuscripts in modern Indian libraries that bear the original endowment statement of the Maḥmūdīyah Library, for which he subsequently provided a full transcription.<sup>3</sup> Following this study, Ayman Fu'ad Sayyid took up his father's

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<sup>2</sup> Fu'ād Sayyid, "Naṣṣān qadīmān fī i'ārat al-kutub," *Majallat ma'had al-makhṭūṭāt al-'arabīyah* 2 (1958): 125-136.

<sup>3</sup> Mukhtār al-Dīn Aḥmad, "Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn 'Alī al-Ustādār," *Majallat al-majma' al-'ilmī al-hindī* 9 (1984): 1-30.

interest in the Maḥmūdīyah as well and mentions several manuscripts in Istanbul that also bear the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement.<sup>4</sup>

The existence of these manuscripts, and many more that I have located with the help of friends and colleagues, opens an exciting new avenue to telling a more substantial history of this important library, its books, and the people who used it. On the one hand, the extant Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts contain *texts*: the ideas conveyed in the main sections of these books by their medieval authors. On the other hand, the same manuscripts also contain *paratexts*: all of the written material to be found on the pages of the manuscript other than the text proper. These materials include ownership notes, notes of endowment, reading notes, marginalia containing comments on the main text, interventions in the text proper such as cross-outs, and even notes unrelated to the text entirely.

By reading this wealth of texts and paratexts contained within the surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts against the evidence in the literary sources, this dissertation aims to tell the social, intellectual, and institutional history of the Maḥmūdīyah Library, situating this institution, its books, and their readers within the broader intellectual and political context of late Mamluk Egyptian and Syrian society. In this first chapter, I will contextualize this dissertation within studies on premodern Arabic-Islamic libraries as well as the broader “documentary turn” in the history of the medieval Middle East.<sup>5</sup> I then describe my methodology for identifying both the

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<sup>4</sup> Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid, *Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah: Tārīkhuhā wa-taṭawwuruhā* (Beirut: Awrāq sharqīyah, 1996), 14-17.

<sup>5</sup> Konrad Hirschler, *A Monument to Medieval Syrian Book Culture: The Library of ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 5.



extant and non-extant Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts. In the second chapter, the focus moves to the textual contents of the Maḥmūdīyah. Trends in the texts and paratexts of the Maḥmūdīyah corpus can be attributed to the provenance of the Maḥmūdīyah's books to the personal collection of the grand Shāfi'ī judge of Egypt Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah. The central argument in this chapter is that, through his book collection, the judge was partially interested in creating a collection of texts and paratexts written by individuals in his Syrian and mostly Shāfi'ī intellectual networks. The third chapter addresses the circumstances around surrounding Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's founding of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa and its library in Cairo. Using literary and paratextual evidence, it argues that one of Maḥmūd's motivations in endowing his books to the Maḥmūdīyah Library was to protect them from seizure by the political authorities. The chapter also reconstructs the original endowments Maḥmūd had made to his madrasa and its library. The fourth chapter looks at how the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa and its library functioned as an institution. In practice many staff members and users of the library frequently disregarded the endowment deed's rules, particularly regarding the issue of book theft. This fourth chapter also addresses the murkier history of the Maḥmūdīyah Library and its books after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 923/1517. The fifth and final chapter returns to the Mamluk period and, through paratextual evidence on the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus, explores the clientele of the Maḥmūdīyah Library and the various reading practices that occurred inside the library. The surviving paratexts that can be dated to the period soon after the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts were endowed to the library are all notable as consisting of, individual, private reading notes, in contrast to the group-reading notes that dominate the pages of the manuscripts from the period before the Maḥmūdīyah endowment when the books were circulating in Syria. I place these

findings within the broader intellectual trends in ninth/fifteenth century Syria and Egypt. I conclude with potential future avenues for research. The appendices section includes “Appendix A: A Partial Catalogue of the Maḥmūdīyah Library.” This section consists of a list of the titles of all the books that I could confirm had been originally endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah. Each entry in Appendix A includes the book’s author, a description of its intellectual contents, proof that the book was endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah, and, if the information is available, the number of volumes in the original Maḥmūdīyah copy of the book, any surviving manuscripts of the Maḥmūdīyah copy of the book, and confirmation as to whether the Maḥmūdīyah copy was an autograph or not (written in the original author’s hand).

### *1.1. Studies on pre-modern libraries in the Islamic world and manuscript notes*

My study on the Maḥmūdīyah Library situates itself and its methodologies within several different trends that have emerged recently in medieval and early modern Islamic studies. The first is what Konrad Hirschler has termed the “documentary turn.”<sup>6</sup> For a long time, literary sources such as historical chronicles and biographical dictionaries served as the primary means through which modern scholars would reconstruct the intellectual and social history of the pre-modern Islamic world. Though indeed these literary sources do provide a wealth of information, scholarship had often treated these sources as an objective data mine, with no mind to the active role the authors played in the selection and presentation of the data in their works. Moreover, the traditional literary sources were invariably written by members of the scholarly class, the

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<sup>6</sup> Hirschler, *Monument*, 5.

‘*ulamā*’, and thus only depict the medieval and early modern Islamic world from the perspective of this class. Already in the 1970’s, Roy Mottahedeh acknowledged the limits of these sources, quipping that “Ulemalogy is a noble science—at least we have to think so, because it is almost all the Islamic social history we will ever have; but we need not automatically take the ‘*ulamā*’ at their own high estimate.”<sup>7</sup> In the last two decades, several studies have emerged that consider the traditional literary sources of historical chronicles and biographical dictionaries with the agency and performative aims of their authors in mind.<sup>8</sup>

Though hard to pinpoint exactly when it began, the “documentary turn” in medieval Islamic studies is marked by a consideration of sources that go beyond the traditional literary and narrative sources. Examples of such sources include surviving pre-modern court records and legal documents,<sup>9</sup> endowment deeds for institutions,<sup>10</sup> and state bureaucracy documents,<sup>11</sup> to name but a few. The documentary turn also can be felt in the increase of studies that have made use of what has been termed *paratexts* on Islamic manuscripts, which, as I have defined above, include all written materials on a manuscript besides the text proper.<sup>12</sup> By reading such

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<sup>7</sup> Roy Mottahedeh, “Review of *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History* by R. W. Bulliet,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 95, no. 3 (July - September 1975), 495.

<sup>8</sup> See Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (London: Routledge, 2006); Paula Manstetten, “Ibn ‘Asākir’s *History of Damascus* and the Institutionalisation of Education in the Medieval Islamic World,” (PhD diss., SOAS, University of London, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Salwā ‘Alī Mīlād, *al-Wathā’iq al-‘uthmānīyah: Dirāsah arshīfīyah wathā’iqīyah li-sijillāt maḥkamat al-bāb al-‘ālī*, (Alexandria: Dār al-thaqāfah al-‘ilmīyah, 2001); Christian Müller, *Der Kadi und seine Zeugen: Studie der mamlukischen Haram-Dokumente aus Jerusalem* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, *al-Awqāf wa-al-ḥayāh al-ijtimā’īyah fī miṣr 648-923 h/1250-1517 m. Dirāsah tārikhīyah wa-wathā’iqīyah* (Cairo: Dār al-nahḍah al-‘arabīyah, 1980).

<sup>11</sup> Marina Rustow, *The Lost Archive: Traces of a Caliphate in a Cairo Synagogue* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2020).

<sup>12</sup> Andreas Görke and Konrad Hirschler, eds., *Manuscript Notes as Documentary Sources* (Würzburg : Ergon Verlag in Kommission, 2011).

documentary sources in conversation with the traditional literary sources, a clearer and more fleshed-out picture emerges of the social and intellectual milieu of the medieval Islamic world.

This study on the Maḥmūdīyah Library places itself within the new research avenues opened by this “turn to the manuscripts.” Firstly, it is the next in a long line of studies that have emerged that use both archival documents and paratexts on manuscripts in order to reconstruct the history of libraries in the premodern Islamic world.<sup>13</sup> Some of these studies have made use of surviving inventories,<sup>14</sup> endowment deeds,<sup>15</sup> or catalogues<sup>16</sup> to discover the contents of the now-dissipated collections once held in these libraries. Broader surveys have also made use of surviving endowment deeds to focus on the administrative functioning of these libraries according to dictates of their founders.<sup>17</sup> For the purposes of this study, this first approach based on archival records is unfeasible due to an absence of material. Though al-Sakhāwī tells us that his teacher ibn Ḥajar had made two catalogues of the Maḥmūdīyah Library, such a catalogue has

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<sup>13</sup> For a more complete survey of studies on premodern libraries in the Islamic world, upon which my survey is built, see Hirschler, *Monument*, 6-9.

<sup>14</sup> Ulrich Haarmann, “The library of a fourteenth century Jerusalem scholar,” *Der Islam* 61 (1984): 327-333; Jihān Aḥmad ‘Umrān, *Ḍabṭ wa-taḥrīr maktabat al-sulṭān Qāyitbāy khilāla al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī*, (Cairo: Maṭba‘at dār al-kutub wa-al-wathā’iq al-qawmīyah bi-al-Qāhirah, 2019).

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Creelius, “The *Waqf* of Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab in Historical Perspective,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23, no. 1 (1991): 57-81; Jane Hathaway, “The Wealth and Influence of an Exiled Ottoman Eunuch in Egypt: The *Waqf* inventory of Abbas Agha,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37 (1994): 298-317.

<sup>16</sup> For a rare example of a study of a pre-Ottoman era library catalogue from the Arab world, see Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus: Plurality and Diversity in an Arabic Library: The Ashrafīya Library Catalogue* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

<sup>17</sup> Ibrāhīm ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, *Min al-wathā’iq al-‘arabīyah: Dirāsāt fī al-kutub wa-al-maktabāt* (Cairo: Dār wa-maṭābī‘ al-sha‘b, 1962); İsmail Erünsal, *Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri: Tarihî Gelişimi Ve Organizasyonu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2008).

yet to be unearthed in modern manuscript libraries.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the original endowment deed to the Maḥmūdīyah has yet to be located.<sup>19</sup>

Instead, this dissertation takes a significant portion of its documentary source material from the contents of the surviving manuscripts that were endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library, as well as from the paratexts on non-Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts which mention the Maḥmūdīyah Library. In doing so, my study comes in a line of studies on pre-modern libraries in the Islamic world that similarly relied on what Hirschler has termed the “corpus approach,” that is, the study of these libraries through the texts and paratexts of their surviving books.<sup>20</sup> This dissertation derives its methodology in particular from two studies that fit into this category. Berat Açıl had showed the utility of this corpus approach as a method for fleshing out the biographies of unknown figures in Islamic history through the analysis of their private book collections. In his study of the marginal notes (*derkenar notları*) left on the 2,200 manuscripts held in the Cârullah Efendi collection held in the Süleymaniye Library of Istanbul, Açıl pieces together the career and intellectual interests of Veliyyüddin Cârullah Efendi, a little-known Ottoman scholar and judge from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>21</sup> Chapter 2 of this dissertation similarly uses the paratexts on the Maḥmūdīyah Library’s surviving manuscripts in order to provide more

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<sup>18</sup> Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar fī tarjamat shaykh al-Islām ibn Ḥajar*, ed. Ibrāhīm Bājīs ‘Abd al-Majīd (Beirut: Dār ibn Ḥazm, 1999), 2:609-610.

<sup>19</sup> For a catalogue of surviving documents held in archives in Cairo pertaining to endowment foundations built in Islamic Egypt until the end of the Mamluk period, see Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, *Fihrist wathā’iq al-qāhirah ḥattā nihāyat ‘aṣr salāṭīn al-mamālīk (239-922 H./853-1516 M: ma‘a nashr wa-taḥqīq tis‘at namādhij* (Cairo: al-Ma‘had al-‘ilmī al-faransī lil-āthār al-sharqīyah, 1981). For a catalogue of endowment deeds of endowment foundations constructed in Ottoman Cairo that are held in archives in Cairo, see Daniel Crecelius, *Fihris waqfiyāt al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī al-maḥfūzah bi-wizārat al-awqāf wa-dār al-wathā’iq al-tārīkhīyah al-qawmīyah bi-al-qāhirah* (Cairo: Dār al-nahḍah al-‘arabīyah, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> Hirschler, *Monument*, 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> Berat Açıl, ed., *Osmanlı Kitap Kültürü: Cârullah Efendi Kütüphanesi ve Derkenar Notları* (Istanbul: İlem Kitaplığı, 2015).

information about the book collecting activities of Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, the Grand Shāfi‘ī judge of Egypt whose book collection would eventually become the books of the Maḥmūdīyah Library. The second major study within this corpus approach from which this dissertation takes its methodological inspiration is Boris Liebrecht’s 2016 monograph on the Rifā‘īyah, a library in late Ottoman Damascus whose manuscripts have been preserved in the Leipzig University Library. In particular, his analysis of the notes on the Rifā‘īyah manuscripts reveal insights into developments in reading culture and reading audiences in the late-Ottoman Arab-speaking world.<sup>22</sup> Chapter 5 of this dissertation similarly uses the notes on the surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus to analyze the demographics of the readers who used the Maḥmūdīyah Library, as well as to draw broader conclusions about reading culture in ninth/fifteenth century Cairo.

## *1.2. Manuscript reading communities*

This dissertation also places itself within studies that incorporate paratextual elements of manuscripts as a source for the reconstruction of “reading communities” in the medieval Islamic world. The two primary paratextual elements to be used in this aspect of the dissertation are what will be termed throughout this study as private reading notes and audition certificates. Private reading notes I define as a note left on a book by a reader indicating that they read the book by themselves. Verbs used in Arabic during the medieval and early modern periods to denote this sense of private reading can include *ṭāla‘a* (rendered in this dissertation as “read on

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<sup>22</sup> Boris Liebrecht, *Die Rifā‘īya aus Damaskus : Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

his own, read privately”), *intaqá min* (literally, “selected from,”) and *faragha min* (“completed”). Audition certificates, on the other hand, were records written usually at the end of a book indicating that the book in question had been read aloud to its author or an individual authorized to teach that book. The audition certificate would be followed by a list of all those who attended the reading of the book aloud, the date of the reading, and occasionally the location of the reading.<sup>23</sup> This latter method of reading in a group setting with a shaykh was often seen in the medieval Islamic world as the only legitimate way of learning a text and acquiring the intellectual authority to transmit it to future generations.<sup>24</sup>

Several studies have explored the social aspects of reading communities that emerge around specific manuscripts through the analysis of audition certificates on surviving Islamic manuscripts. For example, in his study of the audition certificates on a copy of *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq (History of the City of Damascus)*, Konrad Hirschler traces the diverse backgrounds of audience members who attended the public readings of the book, as well as the ways that an elite scholarly family attempted to maintain and promote their social rank through positioning themselves as the authorized transmitters of the book.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, in his dissertation on the spread and reception of the works of the early seventh/thirteenth century Sufi occultist and lettrist Aḥmad al-Būnī, Noah Gardiner studies the notes left on the surviving manuscript copies

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<sup>23</sup> Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Munajjid. “Ijāzāt al-samā’ fi al-makhtūṭāt al-qadīmah,” *Majallat ma’had al-makhtūṭāt al-‘arabīyah/Revue de l’institut des manuscrits arabes* 1 (1955): 232-251.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Porter Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 25-26; Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 20-22.

<sup>25</sup> Konrad Hirschler, “Reading certificates (*samā’āt*) as a prosopographical source: Cultural and social practices of an elite family in Zangid and Ayyubid Damascus,” in Andreas Görke and Konrad Hirschler, *Manuscript Notes as Documentary Sources* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag in Kommission, 2011), 73-92.

of al-Būnī's works to show how readership expanded from a few secretive reading groups during al-Būnī's lifetime to wider reader audiences that included members of the Mamluk military elite.<sup>26</sup>

The study of both the texts and the paratexts of the Maḥmūdīyah's books reveals two linked and yet geographically and temporally separated reading communities. The first reading community, discussed in Chapter 2, is the Syrian and mostly Shāfi'ī hadith scholars-*cum*-historians, through whose hands many of the Maḥmūdīyah's circulated from roughly the sixth to the early eighth/twelfth to early fourteenth centuries. Chapter 2 argues that the judge Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah, whose books ended up becoming endowments to the Maḥmūdīyah Library, sought to preserve the scholarship and histories of this Syrian reading community through the books he collected. Besides the authorship profile of the Maḥmūdīyah's books, the presence of this reading community can also be felt in the paratexts on the surviving manuscripts, particularly in the audition certificates.

The second reading community examined in this study emerges once Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's books were endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library in Cairo in 797/1395. Although, as shall be seen in Chapter 5, a good part of this community coalesced around the personality of ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, the famed hadith scholar who served as the librarian of the Maḥmūdīyah for many years, many other paratexts from the period dating to after the Maḥmūdīyah endowment show instances of unidentifiable readers making private reading notes as well. Moreover, while most of the notes that the Syrian reading community left on the manuscripts were audition

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<sup>26</sup> Noah Gardiner, "Esotericism in a manuscript culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and his readers through the Mamlūk period" (PhD. diss., University of Michigan, 2014).



certificates, this ninth/fifteenth century Egyptian reading community in the Maḥmūdīyah left exclusively private reading notes. In Chapter 5, I place these findings within broader intellectual trends in the ninth/fifteenth century scholarship in the Islamic world, particularly in the realm of post-canonical hadith scholarship.

### *1.3.0. Creating a Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus*

Unlike several other premodern Arabic libraries that have been studied before, the Maḥmūdīyah Library's original books have not been preserved with an identifying shelfmark in a single modern library. Rather, the manuscripts are scattered all across the world and, for the most part, have not been identified by the catalogers of the modern libraries in which they are held. Moreover, since the two catalogues of the Maḥmūdīyah Library drafted by ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī in the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century have not yet been identified at the time of this writing, it is not possible to draft a list of every single book volume that had been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library in 797/1395.

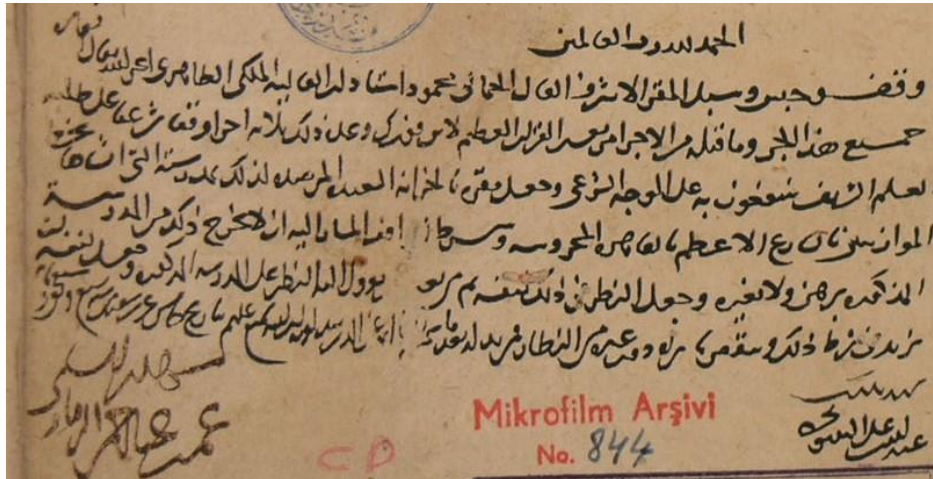
Despite these constraints, I have been able to confirm specific book titles — and in many cases the number of volumes in each title — that the Maḥmūdīyah Library held. In this section of the chapter, I will explain the methods I used to identify and, in the case of the extant manuscripts, locate the Maḥmūdīyah's books. With these methods explained, I then give the total number of identified book titles that were in the original endowment, the total number of extant Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts I have been able to locate, and the total number of volumes in the original endowment whose textual contents I have been able to confirm (including many

volumes no longer extant). These identified manuscripts and book titles shall serve as one of the primary sources of data throughout the rest of this dissertation.

### 1.3.1. Identifying the extant Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus

The first step towards a partial reconstruction of the contents of the Maḥmūdīyah Library lies in identifying extant manuscripts that bear the **Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement**. The endowment statement is a particularly long text written out by hand which states that the manuscript in question had been set aside as a religious endowment (*waqf*) to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa. This endowment statement occurs almost always on the title page of extant Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts. The text of the statement has been transcribed and translated below.

**FIGURE 2: THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH ENDOWMENT STATEMENT. ISTANBUL: MILLET YAZMA ESER KÜTÜPHANESİ, MS FEYZULLAH EFENDİ, FOL. 1A.**



#### Transcription:

الحمد لله رب العالمين  
 وقف وحبس وسبل المقر الأشرف العالي الجمالي محمود أستاذار العالية الملكي الظاهري أعز الله تعالى أنصاره جميع هذا الجزء  
 وما قبله من الأجزاء من تفسير القرآن العظيم لابن فورق و عدة ذلك ثلاثة أجزاء وفقاً شرعياً على طلبة العلم الشريف ينتفعون به

على الوجه الشرعي وجعل مقره بالخزانة السعيدة المرصدة لذلك بمدرسته التي أنشأها بخط الموازينين بالتاريخ الأعظم بالقاهرة المحروسة وشرط الواقف المشار إليه أن لا يخرج ذلك من المدرسة المذكورة برهن ولا بغيره وجعل النظر في ذلك لنفسه ثم من بعده لمن يؤول إليه النظر على المدرسة المذكورة وجعل لنفسه أن يزيد في شرط ذلك وينقص ما يراه دون غيره من النظر فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَمَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ بتاريخ الخامس عشر من شعبان سنة سبع وتسعين وسبعمانه  
شهد بذلك  
عمر بن عبد الرحمن البرماوي  
عبد الله بن علي البتوني

### Translation:

Praise be to God Lord of the Worlds<sup>27</sup>

The supreme royal majordomo of the sultan Barqūq (*al-Zāhirī*), may God grant strength to his supporters, the most illustrious and exalted Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd,<sup>28</sup> has endowed, rendered inalienable, and designated for charitable purposes this entire volume and the volumes preceding it of *Tafsīr al-Qurʿān al-ʿaẓīm* (*Exegesis of the Great Quran*) by ibn Fūrak, three volumes total, to be a legally sanctioned endowment for students of the noble science to benefit from in a manner conforming to the dictates of religion. He has made [the volume's] holding place in the felicitous library designated for it, which is in his madrasa that he has constructed in the Muwāzinīyīn district on the Grand Street in Cairo. The aforementioned endower has stipulated that neither this volume nor any section of it is to leave the aforementioned madrasa, neither through leaving a deposit nor by any other means. He has assigned supervision of this book to himself while he is alive, and thereafter to the person to whom supervision of the aforementioned madrasa has been delegated as explained in the madrasa's endowment deed. He has also granted himself the right to add to the stipulations [of use] for this [book] and to take away what he sees fit, disregarding any of the supervisors [of the madrasa], as mentioned in the endowment of the aforementioned madrasa. (Then whoever alters the bequest after he has heard it - the sin is only upon those who have altered it. Indeed, God is all-Hearing and Knowing.) [Q 2:181, *al-Baqarah*] Dated the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shaʿbān 797 of the Hijrah (June 13<sup>th</sup> 1395).<sup>29</sup>

Witnessed by ʿAbd al-Allāh ibn ʿAlī al-Batanūnī[?].<sup>30</sup> Witnessed by ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-

<sup>27</sup> The opening praise to God is almost always phrased *al-ḥamdullilāh ḥaqqā ḥamdihi* (*Praise be to God as he is owed*), but due to this being the clearest image of the endowment statement in my possession I chose to show this one.

<sup>28</sup> *al-maqarr al-ashraf al-ʿālī al-jamālī Maḥmūd*. The honorific *maqarr* was a common title for high ranking emirs at the time in which the endowment statement was written, whereas the adjectives *al-ashraf* and *al-ʿālī* were often coupled with *al-maqarr*. See Ḥasan al-Bāshā, *al-Alqāb al-islāmīyah fī al-tārīkh wa-al-wathāʾiq wa-al-āthār* (Cairo: al-Dār al-fannīyah, 1989), 489–494.

<sup>29</sup> Around half of the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts I have come across bear a different endowment date: the 25<sup>th</sup> of Shaʿbān 797 (June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1395).

<sup>30</sup> The *nisbah* of this notary is very unclear and has stumped all the editors of critical editions who have come across it. The most likely option al-Batanūnī was suggested by Mukhtār al-Dīn Aḥmad, the *nisbah* for someone from al-Batānūn, a village in the al-Munūfīyah Governorate of Egypt. See Aḥmad, “Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd,” 30.

Raḥmān al-Barmāwī.

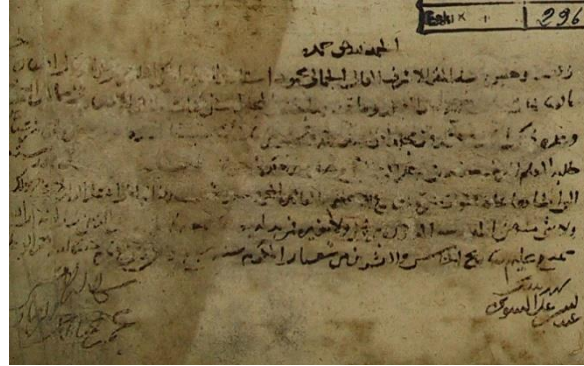
The endowment statements remain more or less consistent their across the surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts. With one exception, they are all written in the same neat hand. The statements almost always occur on the lower half of the title page, except in cases where paratexts written before the date of the endowment crowd the title page. They are also generally written in the same shape: A rectangular box of several lines of text, crowned on top with the opening praise to God in the center, with the signatures of the two notaries acting like “feet” on the bottom right and left corners of the main body of the text. The phrasing of the statement remains consistent throughout all the surviving examples, with the notable exception of the endowment dates. Roughly half of the manuscripts I have located with legible endowment statements state that they were endowed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Sha‘bān 797 (June 13<sup>th</sup> 1395), while the other half of the manuscripts contain endowment dates of the 25<sup>th</sup> of Sha‘bān 797 (June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1395). Furthermore, most of the endowment statements contain signatures by the same two notaries, though in several rare exceptions another notary takes the place of ‘Umar ibn‘ Abd al-Raḥmān al-Barmāwī. This, combined with the two different endowment dates on the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements, shows that Maḥmūd al-Ustādār did not endow all his books to the madrasa in one day. Rather, the process most likely took place over the course of several days.

Due to the endowment statements’ relative uniformity in terms of phrasing, textual shape, placement on the page, and handwriting, I was able to identify many manuscripts as having been

Maḥmūdīyah endowments even in cases where their endowments had been partially erased, crossed out, glued over with a sheet of paper, or written over (see Figures 3a-d for examples).

**FIGURE 3A-D.: EXAMPLES OF TAMPERED-WITH MAḤMŪDĪYAH ENDOWMENT STATEMENTS**

**Figure 3a.** A partially erased Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Karaçelebizade 296, fol. 1a.



**Figure 3b.** A Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement that had been crossed out. The notaries' names can still be made out at the bottom as well as sections of the original endowment statement's text. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reisülküttab 1125, fol. 1a.



**Figure 3c.** A Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement that someone had plastered over with a blank sheet of paper. However, the person who did this neglected to cover the names of the two notaries to the Maḥmūdīyah book endowment, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī al-Batanūnī and 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān (bottom right and left of the picture). Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 43, fol. 1a.

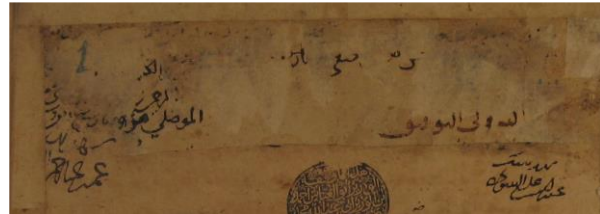
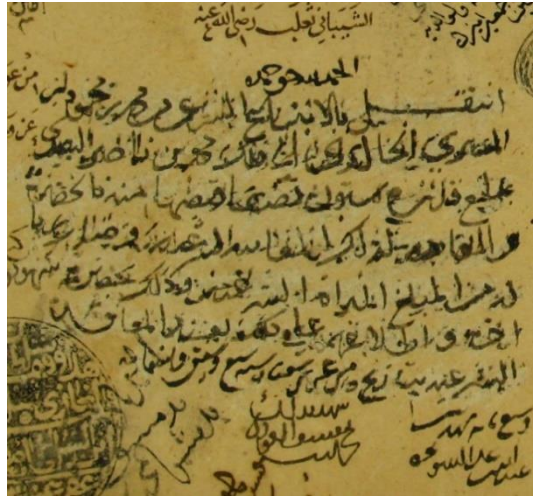


FIGURE 3A-D. CONTINUED

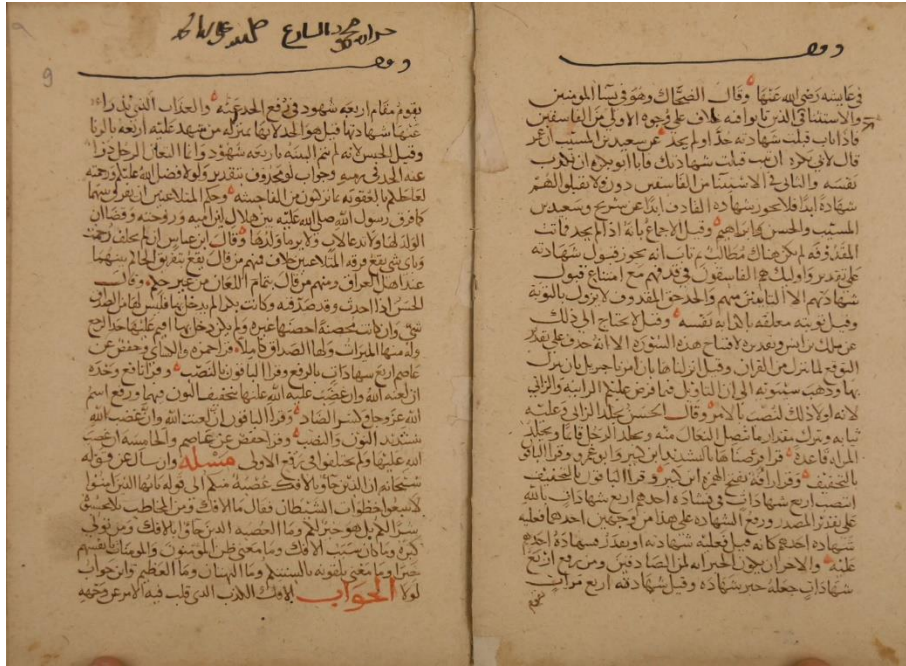
**Figure 3d.** A Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement that had been scratched out. Someone then wrote a note over the scratched out endowment indicating the book was purchased legally (*intaqala bi-al-ibtiyā‘ al-shar‘ī*) in the year 967/1560. However, this person has left the praise to God (*al-ḥamdulillāh ḥaqqa ḥamdihi*) on the top of the endowment statement intact, as well as the names of the two notaries of the book endowment. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Laleli 3581, fol. 1a.



I could identify other Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts with completely removed endowment statements by relying on what I shall refer to in this dissertation as the **secondary Maḥmūdīyah statement**. The statement usually occurs somewhere within the first quire of the manuscript along the top margins of a folio’s *verso* side and the top margins of the following folio’s *recto* side. The full statement reads: “The library of Maḥmūd on [Grand] Street,<sup>31</sup> may God bless our prophet Muḥammad” (*khizānat Maḥmūd bi-al-shāri‘ ṣallā Allah ‘alā nabīnā Muḥammad*). The elongated word “endowment” (*waqf*) stretches out underneath the statement and sometimes along the side margins of the same folios. In many instances the word “library” (*khizānat*) is left out.

<sup>31</sup> I thank Boris Liebrecht for pointing out that *al-Shāri‘* refers to *al-Shāri‘ al-a‘zam*, the main thoroughfare of Mamluk Cairo on which the Maḥmūdīyah was located.

FIGURE 4: THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH LIBRARY'S SECONDARY ENDOWMENT STATEMENT. ISTANBUL: MILLET YAZMA ESER KÜTÜPHANESİ, MS FEYZULLAH EFENDI 50, FOLS. 8B, 9A.



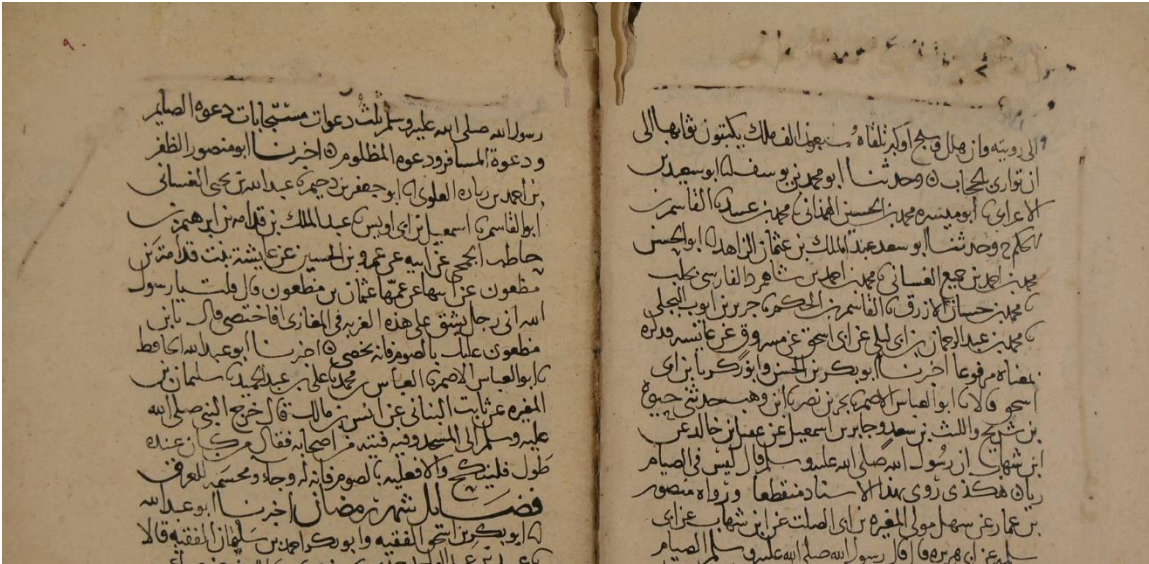
خزانه محمود بالشارع صلى الله على سيدنا محمود  
وقف

The library of Maḥmūd on [Grand] Street, may  
God bless our prophet Muḥammad.  
Endowment

This secondary endowment statement most likely served to assist Maḥmūdīyah librarians in identifying books that had been stolen from the library. While the book's main endowment statement on the title page could easily be ripped out without effecting the contents of the book, the secondary endowment statement's placement within the text proper made it more difficult to remove. In many instances I encountered manuscripts whose primary Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement on the title page had been torn out or disfigured beyond recognition, but whose secondary Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement could still be made out (See Figure 5 below for an

example).

FIGURE 5: PARTIALLY ERASED SECONDARY MAḤMŪDĪYAH ENDOWMENT STATEMENT. ISTANBUL: MILLET YAZMA ESER KÜTÜPHANESİ, MS FEYZULLAH EFENDİ 472, FOLS. 8B, 9A.



In order to locate these manuscripts, I resorted to a variety of methods. In a few happy instances a modern library cataloger had carefully transcribed and cataloged the text of the primary Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement on the manuscripts in their library collections. However, this detailed approach to manuscript cataloging is generally the exception and not the rule, so I had to resort to other methods. Typing a portion of the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement text into Google Books yielded several instances of digitized critical editions of Arabic texts whose editors had transcribed the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements they had encountered on manuscripts.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, several colleagues aided me by generously sharing the shelfmarks of Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts they found in Islamic manuscript paratexts

<sup>32</sup> For example, see Shu‘ayb al-Arnā‘ūt, critical introduction to *Siyar al-‘ām al-nubalā’* by Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhabābī, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arnā‘ūt (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-risālah, 1982-1983), 1:148.



databases they are currently working on.<sup>33</sup> Other colleagues informed me of manuscripts bearing the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement that they encountered in their own research.<sup>34</sup> I am also indebted to a blog post whose author identified several Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts.<sup>35</sup> Finally, in several instances I stumbled across Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts entirely by chance while conducting archival research for other projects.

With all these methods, I have identified a total of **139** extant manuscripts that had been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library.<sup>36</sup> These manuscripts do not represent the total number of extant Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts that exist in the world. Rather, these are the ones I was able to locate given the time and financial constraints of this project, as well as the selection biases inherent in the methodologies I used to locate these manuscripts, which shall be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. At any rate, for the rest of this study I shall refer to these 139 manuscripts as the **Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus**. These manuscripts provide the paratextual data that form a core part of this study.

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<sup>33</sup> These individuals are Frédéric Bauden, who generously showed me all the manuscripts bearing the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement cataloged on the database of *Ex(-)Libris ex Oriente*, a project aiming to catalogue the paratextual elements of Islamic manuscripts around the world; Abū Ya‘qūb ‘Abd al-‘Āṭī al-Sharqāwī who shared with me all the identified Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts cataloged in the database of ILM (International Library of Arab Manuscripts) which is still under construction.

<sup>34</sup> These colleagues include Benedikt Reier, Boris Liebrez, Muḥammad Jamāl Ḥāmid al-Shūrbajī, and Ṣāliḥ al-Azharī.

<sup>35</sup> Maḥmūd al-Naḥḥāl, “al-Tazwīr wa-al-‘abath bi-al-quyūd al-muthbatah ‘alā ḡuhūr al-uṣūl al-mawqūfah wa-kutub al-madrasah al-Maḥmūdīyah bi-al-Qāhirah namūdhan,” *al-Alukah* (blog), October 15, 2016, [https://www.alukah.net/culture/0/108568/#\\_ftn3](https://www.alukah.net/culture/0/108568/#_ftn3).

<sup>36</sup> For detailed proof of how each of these manuscripts were Maḥmūdīyah endowments, see Appendix A.

### *1.3.2. Identifying volumes in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus*

Due to the library's fame in ninth/fifteenth century Cairo, in many instances we find an author, an owner of a book, or a copyist mentioning that they had seen a specific book in the Maḥmūdīyah Library. However, in almost all these instances, I could not locate the corresponding extant Maḥmūdīyah manuscript. Nevertheless, these references can provide insight into another aspect of the Maḥmūdīyah Library: Its textual profile. By adding up the total number of book titles that were among the endowed books to the Maḥmūdīyah, whether through its surviving manuscripts or references made to these Maḥmūdīyah book titles in other sources, I arrive at a number of titles that I refer to throughout the dissertation as the **Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus**.

Additionally, by adding the number of volumes in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus to the number of volumes I found through the accounts of individuals who had seen a Maḥmūdīyah book, I arrive at a total number of book volumes that I will refer to throughout this dissertation as the **total confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes**. This term indicates the number of Maḥmūdīyah volumes whose titles I have been able to confirm — whether extant in manuscript form or not — and the term occurs most frequently in Chapter 2 during the discussion of the suitability of using the Maḥmūdīyah textual and manuscript corpora as a representative sample size of all the books that Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had originally endowed to his library.

The first reference to volumes in the Maḥmūdīyah that are no longer extant can be found in the aforementioned endowment statements on the title pages of the Maḥmūdīyah Library's extant manuscripts. These endowment statements indicate the exact number of volumes of the

work in question that had been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library. For example, I was only able to locate one extant volume of the Maḥmūdīyah copy of the dictionary *al-‘Ubāb al-zākhir wa-al-lubāb al-fākhir* (*The Billowing Waves and The Splendid Quintessence*). However, the extant volume’s Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement indicates that the original endowment had consisted of thirty-one volumes.<sup>37</sup> In this instance, I add thirty-one volumes of this work to the total confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes, even though I have only located one extant volume of the work.

There are also many instances of contemporary authors from mainly the ninth/fifteenth century who mention having seen a book that was endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library. Sometimes the author will go into great detail describing the endowed books in question. For example, the Maḥmūdīyah librarian ibn Ḥajar mentions the following in his discussion of the work *Jāmi‘ al-masānīd wa-al-sunan* (*The Compendium of Prophetic Traditions*) by ibn Kathīr: “It is now among the endowments of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa. The text [of the book] was arranged by ibn al-Muḥibb (al-Ṣāmit). Additions were made in the hand of ibn Kathīr in the margins and on attached slips of paper (‘*aṣāfir*’).”<sup>38</sup> Though I have not been able to locate any extant Maḥmūdīyah volumes of the book described by ibn Ḥajar, I nevertheless added it to the total confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes. However, in instances such as these when the individual neglects to mention the number of volumes in the Maḥmūdīyah copy of the work they saw, I err on the side of caution and only add one volume of the work to the total number of confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes. This is because there is always the chance that the Maḥmūdīyah copy of

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<sup>37</sup> Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah, MS lughah 14, fol. 1a.

<sup>38</sup> Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-ghumr bi-anbā’ al-‘umr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo: al-Majlis al-‘alā lil-shu’ūn al-islāmīyah, 1969), 1:40.

the work was missing volumes at the time of the time of the endowment. In other instances, an author will specify the number of volumes in the original endowment of the book to the Maḥmūdīyah, such as al-Suyūṭī when he says: “Among [ibn Maktūm’s] works is...his three-volume commonplace book of miscellanea which he named *Qayd al-awābid* (*Fettering the Wild Beasts*). I saw it in his own hand in the Maḥmūdīyah.”<sup>39</sup> In this instance, I add three volumes to the total number of confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes.

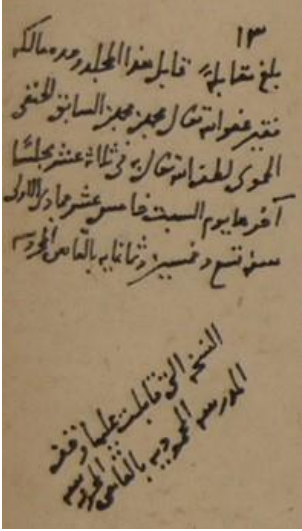
Finally, there are instances in which copyists and owners of manuscripts specify that the exemplar copy from which they made their copy or with which they had collated their own copies had been an endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa. For one example of many, Figure 6 below shows a collation note left by the owner of a copy of al-Ṭaḥāwī’s *Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār* (*An Explanation of Problematic Traditions*). In the top section of the note the author of the note identifies himself as the owner of the manuscript and states that he had collated his copy with another copy over the course of thirteen sessions, the last of which occurred on 15 Jumādā al-Ūlā 859 (May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1455). In the bottom of the note the owner states: “The copy with which I collated [my copy] is an endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa in Cairo.”<sup>40</sup> Though the Maḥmūdīyah copy of the work is no longer extant, we can add this work to the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus. Since the author of the note does not specify the number of volumes in the original Maḥmūdīyah endowment of the book, I make the conservative choice of adding only one volume to the total number of confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes.

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<sup>39</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu‘āh fi ṭabaqāt al-lughawiyīn wa-al-nuḥāh*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-‘aṣrīyah, 1998), 1:327.

<sup>40</sup> Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 273, fol. 292a.

**FIGURE 6: COLLATION NOTE ON A NON-MAḤMŪDĪYAH MANUSCRIPT INDICATING THE OWNER OF THE MANUSCRIPT COLLATED IT WITH A MAḤMŪDĪYAH COPY OF THE SAME WORK. ISTANBUL: MILLET YAZMA ESER KÜTÜPHANESİ, MS FEYZULLAH EFENDI 273, FOL. 292A.**



بلغ مقابلةً قابل هذا المجلد  
وبعدده مالكة فقير غفرانه  
تعالى محمد بن محمد السابق  
الحنفي الحموي لطف الله به  
في ثلاثة عشر مجلساً آخرها  
يوم السبت خامس عشر  
جمادى الأولى سنة تسع  
وخمسين وثمانماية بالقاهرة  
المحروسة  
النسخة التي قابلت عليها وقف  
المدرسة المحمودية بالقاهرة  
المحروسة

Collation reached to this point. This volume and the ones after it were collated by its owner in need of God's forgiveness, the Ḥanafī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Sābiq al-Ḥamawī, may God be kind towards him. The collation was completed over thirteen sessions, the last of which occurred on Saturday, the fifteenth of Jumādā al-Ūlā in the year 859.

The copy with which I collated [my copy] is an endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa in Cairo.

Using the different kinds of sources mentioned above for locating references to books endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah whose manuscripts I have not been able to locate, and adding those volumes to the 139 extant volumes of Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts I have been able to locate, I arrive at a total of **412** volumes which represents **the total number of confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes**. In other words, of all the books that had been originally endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library, we can say with certainty what the textual contents of 412 of them were. These 412 volumes contained the titles of **62** different works.

Appendix A at the end of this dissertation consists of a detailed catalogue of all the texts in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus. The texts are arranged in alphabetical order by author's surname (*nisbah*) as written in Latin letters, then subsequently in alphabetical order by the title of

the work in Latin letters in cases of multiple works by the same author. Each entry consists of the title of the work, a brief description of the contents of the work, proof that a copy of the work had been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library, the number of volumes of the work in the original endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah, a list of extant manuscripts of the work, and whether the work was an autograph copy or not.

Now that a corpus of manuscripts and texts in the Maḥmūdīyah Library has been identified, the task remains to explore their contents. What kind of books did the Maḥmūdīyah Library hold? What trends in their contents can be gleaned from the sample size of the total number of confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes? To what extent do these trends reflect the personal tastes of Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, the judge whose books Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had acquired illicitly and endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library? The following chapter shall explore, problematize, and answer these proposed questions.

## Chapter 2: The Provenance of the Maḥmūdīyah's Books and Their Syrian Profile

### *2.0. Introduction*

The preceding chapter identified a corpus of texts that at some point had existed within the walls of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa and its library. But what were these texts? What were their genres? Can a thematic profile of the Maḥmūdīyah Library be made based on this corpus of texts? Before attempting to answer these questions, this chapter first explores the extent to which the texts in the Maḥmūdīyah corpus can be said to represent the total number of books that had been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library. Though the total number of confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes does represent an acceptable sample size of the original books in the library, selection biases inherent in the methodology used to identify these texts render problematic any thematic analysis of the original contents of the Maḥmūdīyah Library through the prism of the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus. Furthermore, this chapter problematizes the very enterprise of classifying a corpus of texts in the Islamic intellectual tradition into modern thematic categories, arguing that such a division obfuscates and disfigures the genre-bending nature of many of the works represented in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus.

Instead, this chapter opts to frame the significance of these texts in light of the provenance of the Maḥmūdīyah Library's books. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the emir Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had acquired the books for the Maḥmūdīyah Library from the personal collection of the former Grand Shāfi'ī judge of Egypt, Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah. In this chapter, I shall provide a summary of the life and career of Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah. Next, I prove that the books in the Maḥmūdīyah Library consisted solely of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's

personal book collection. I do so by providing evidence from both paratexts in the surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus as well as from archival court records that document the transfer of these books from the estate of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s son Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad in Jerusalem to Maḥmūd al-Ustādār in Cairo, where they were subsequently endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library. Consequently, the texts in the Maḥmūdīyah corpus are to be understood as a reflection of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s own personal tastes and interests. The chapter argues that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah aimed to create a collection of both texts and paratexts written by figures in his Syrian-based scholarly network.

### *2.1. Accuracy of sample size of Maḥmūdīyah texts; problems in methodology*

Before attempting to analyze the thematic profile of the original Maḥmūdīyah book collection, it must first be determined the extent to which the 412 total number of confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes and the 62 book titles in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus can be said to accurately represent all of the books in the original collection. As mentioned in Chapter 1, no trace remains of the original two catalogues of the Maḥmūdīyah Library drafted by ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī. Similarly, the endowment deed of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa, another potential source for the original number of books in the endowment, has yet to be identified. However, ibn Ḥajar provides a rough estimate of the number of books that the Maḥmūdīyah once held in the following anecdote:

And in [the end of Ramaḍān of the year 826 (September 1423)], Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Uthmān, known as ‘the Tyrant,’ librarian of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa in the Muwāzinīyīn district on the outskirts of central Cairo, was beaten in the presence of the sultan. He had been charged with neglecting the endowed books, which are currently among the most



precious books in Cairo. This is because they came from the collection of the judge Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, which he had been collecting over the course of his life. Then Maḥmūd [al-Ustādār] had purchased them from the estate of [Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s] son and subsequently endowed them. He had stipulated that not one thing was to leave the madrasa. He had delegated the protection of these books to his imam Sirāj al-Dīn. Then delegation had been transferred to the aforementioned ‘Uthmān after the aforementioned Sirāj al-Dīn had been charged with losing many of the books. They were inspected and it was discovered that roughly one hundred and thirty volumes were missing. Consequently, Sirāj al-Dīn was dismissed and ‘Uthmān was hired. He had attended to his duties with strength, strictness, and fortitude, ignoring any petitions from elites or commoners. Individuals among the grandees of the state and pillars of the kingdom had even tried to get him to lend out a book. They had expended great wealth but he persisted in refusing [to let them take out books] to the point that he became famous for that. One day someone among the Mamluk elite (*shakhṣ min al-nās*) accused him of accepting bribes secretly. Consequently, all the books were inspected save for a tenth of them, for they had been four thousand volumes and four hundred of them were missing. He was made accountable to cover their cost, which totaled four hundred dinars. As a result, he sold all his possessions and his house to make up the cost, and most of his family suffered greatly. His only fault was being too unfair towards the poorest of students while at the same time being generous towards the elites.<sup>1</sup>

According to ibn Ḥajar, the Maḥmūdīyah had contained 4,000 books before the librarian that preceded him, Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Uthmān, had lost 400 of them. Moreover, ‘Uthmān’s predecessor and the first Maḥmūdīyah librarian Sirāj al-Dīn had lost around 130 volumes. Adding the number of volumes lost under the first two Maḥmūdīyah librarians to the 4,000 volumes that ibn Ḥajar claims had been in the Maḥmūdīyah before his predecessor took up the position of librarian brings the total number of books in Maḥmūd al-Ustādār’s original book endowment to around 4,130 volumes.

It might be contested that ibn Ḥajar’s could have exaggerated his claim concerning the number of books in the Maḥmūdīyah Library. After all, Konrad Hirschler notes that medieval

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<sup>1</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:299.

authors of Islamic literary sources tended to embellish the numbers of books in libraries.<sup>2</sup> However, the cases Hirschler cites of exaggerated book numbers occur in instances where the author of a source either intended to highlight the prestige of the library's founder or to emphasize the devastation inflicted by a conquering army through its plunder of a regime's central libraries. Such cited fanciful descriptions include those of the famed Library of Cordoba holding 400,000 book titles — not volumes! — or the royal Fatimid Library of Cairo holding somewhere between 120,000 and 2,600,000 books.<sup>3</sup> In comparison, ibn Ḥajar's passage about the Maḥmūdīyah and the numbers of books held within seems much more prosaic and not particularly interested in singing the praises of the library's founder. Moreover, the total of 4,130 volumes in the Maḥmūdīyah Library as given in ibn Ḥajar's account aligns more closely with other contemporaneous book collections in the Islamic world given in surviving documentary sources, such as the 2,100 volumes listed in a seventh/thirteenth century catalogue of the library of the Ashrafiyah mausoleum in Damascus,<sup>4</sup> or the over 5,000 volumes listed in an inventory of the Ottoman Palace Library drafted between 1502 and 1504.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, unlike the authors of many of the more literary depictions of medieval libraries' book collections, ibn Ḥajar had a thoroughly intimate knowledge of the Maḥmūdīyah Library and its books through serving as its librarian. His student al-Sakhāwī describes ibn Ḥajar's tenure as librarian in the following way:

He made a catalogue for [the library] organized alphabetically by title, along with another one organized by subject matter. ... He generally used to stay in the library one day a week,

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<sup>2</sup> Hirschler, *Written Word*, 127-132.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>4</sup> Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus*.

<sup>5</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, Cemal Kafadar, and Cornell H. Fleischer, eds., *Treasures of Knowledge: An Inventory of the Ottoman Palace Library (1502/3-1503/4)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

and over the course of the week he would write a list of what [books] he needed to review [in the library] for his own works and for other reasons, so that he would remember it on the day he would be [in the library], as I have seen in his own hand. Through his efforts it was possible to retrieve items that had been lost before him.<sup>6</sup>

Given that ibn Ḥajar had drafted not one but two catalogues of the Maḥmūdīyah Library, and had used the Maḥmūdīyah's books as source material for his own compositions, it can be safely concluded that the number 4,130 volumes drawn from his account of the Maḥmūdīyah's negligent librarians, though certainly not a precise number, provides an adequate basis on which to build an argument about the representativeness of the total number of confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes I have identified.

Assuming that the Maḥmūdīyah Library had originally held roughly 4,130 volumes when it opened, this means that the 412 total number of confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes represent almost 10% of the volumes in the original book endowment. On paper this seems like a reasonable sample size on which to base an analysis of the Maḥmūdīyah Library's intellectual profile. However, this would be the case if I had walked into the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa soon after its opening in the year 797/1395 and had randomly selected 10% percent of its volumes to analyze. By contrast, the methods employed to locate and identify books and titles in the Maḥmūdīyah were decidedly not random, but rather mediated by the observations of other individuals both in the medieval and modern eras who had seen a book bearing the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement; individuals with their own inherent biases, agendas, intellectual tastes, and motivations for mentioning having seen the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement on a specific book.

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<sup>6</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 2:609-610.

For example, the two Islamic manuscript paratext databases consulted to locate Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts only covered manuscripts held in the libraries in specific countries around the world. The Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts I learned about through the *Ex(-)Libris ex Oriente* project are all held in modern Istanbul libraries save for two in European libraries. The manuscripts I located through ILM (International Library of Arab Manuscripts) similarly biased towards Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts held in Turkey, while also pointing me towards Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts held in the Egyptian libraries of Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah (The Egyptian National Library) and al-Maktabah al-azharīyah (The Azhar Library).

Additionally, the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus skews towards manuscripts held in modern libraries that provide both easy access to researchers and thorough, searchable catalogues. These include the highly-user friendly online catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (National Library of France), the on-site digital catalogue of the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi (The Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul), and the online catalogue of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (The Berlin State Library), the latter of which includes thorough entries on the paratexts of a number of its Arabic manuscripts. Conversely, modern manuscript libraries with counterintuitive catalogues and prohibitively byzantine rules of use for researchers hampered my ability to fully plumb their depths for hidden Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts. Finally, the limits of both time and the financial resources available to conduct this study narrowed the geographic scope of the manuscript libraries I consulted. For example, the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus does not contain any manuscripts held in libraries in sub-Saharan Africa and Iran, despite the rich libraries of Islamic manuscripts held in those regions.

I located a good portion of Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts through the decisions of editors of classical Islamic texts who took the time to write out a Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement they encountered on manuscripts used in their critical editions. However, this method too comes with its own shortcomings in creating a representative sample size. Far from being a random selection of the volumes originally housed in the Maḥmūdīyah, the sample size of Maḥmūdīyah volumes I arrived at through the mediation of references made to them by critical editors might more represent what Kristof D’hulster aptly refers to as the “Mamlukologist library:”

What I mean to convey with this Mamluk Library, with capital L, is the corpus of Mamluk literature that we, Mamlukologists, consider valuable enough to edit, to analyse, and, indeed, to include in our private or institutional libraries. The Mamluk Library is what we find to be the green twigs of Mamluk literature, the exceptional, the Ṣafadīs, with its dead branches, the emblematic, the Damāmīnīs pruned away. As such – and it is important to stress this – this Mamluk Library is, to a large extent, a Mamlukologist library, that is, informed by Mamlukologists’ preferences and biases.<sup>7</sup>

The Mamlukologist — or Arabist or scholar of Islamic law for that matter — who peruses the partial Maḥmūdīyah catalogue in Appendix A will encounter many familiar and “exceptional” authors: the Dhahabīs, and, indeed, the Ṣafadīs. In the cases of the first author I discovered that some of his extant works bore Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements only through the decisions of a modern scholar to make critical editions of these texts, seek out their extant manuscripts, and then describe the paratexts on the manuscripts in the introductions to his critical editions. Similarly, a dear colleague drew my attention to the Maḥmūdīyah copy of al-Ṣafadī’s

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<sup>7</sup> Kristof D’hulster, *Browsing through the Sultan’s Bookshelves: Towards a Reconstruction of the Library of the Mamluk Sultan Qāniṣawh al-Ghawrī (r. 906-922/1501-1516)* (Göttingen, Germany : V&R unipress ; Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2021), 278.

*A 'yān al- 'aşr* through his own research into the text for his dissertation.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the selection of texts represented in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus reflect to a large extent the research interests of modern scholars. Noticeably absent from the list are the “dead branches,” the ordinary works that could have been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah that have not yet been published due to lack of modern scholarly interest in the endeavor.

Similarly, medieval scholars and readers played as big a role in shaping the profile of the Maḥmūdīyah works I could identify. Of the sixty-two titles in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus, twenty-two, or about a third of them, were identified through references to them made by individuals who had seen the books while they were held in the Maḥmūdīyah Library. The ninth/fifteenth century Egyptian scholar al-Sakhāwī made eleven of those twenty-two references. What this means for the sake of our discussion of the selection bias in my sample size of Maḥmūdīyah titles is that the final list of Maḥmūdīyah works I could identify was also shaped by the intellectual interests and sensibilities of the Mamluk-era scholars who made reference to them. Two examples highlight this point: Many of al-Sakhāwī’s references to Maḥmūdīyah works occur in his own work, *al-I 'lān bi-al-tawbīkh li-man dhamma ahl al-tawrīkh* (*A Declaration of Rebuke to Those Who Condemn Historians*). Since most of the work serves as a kind of bibliography of works of history, al-Sakhāwī invariably cites in it Maḥmūdīyah books he saw within the field of history. Similarly, the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus contains many works by the Shāfi 'ī legal scholar Yaḥyá ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī due to the fact that both al-Sakhāwī and al-Suyūṭī had dedicated biographies to al-Nawawī and mentioned in each all of al-Nawawī’s works they had seen in the Maḥmūdīyah Library.

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<sup>8</sup> I thank Benedikt Reier for drawing my attention to these manuscripts.

In conclusion to this section, it is tempting to analyze the thematic profile the sixty-two Maḥmūdīyah titles identified in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus as representative of the library's entire original endowed collection. However, as I have shown, the selection of texts in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus lacks the randomness required to make them a truly representative sample of the Maḥmūdīyah Library's original book collection.

## 2.2. *The problem of genre*

There are also issues that come with categorizing the Maḥmūdīyah's works into modern genres and subsequently providing a breakdown of the contents of the Maḥmūdīyah into those genres. As Liebreuz has noted in his own study on an Arabic library, this approach runs the risk of anachronistically imposing modern thematic categories onto the Islamic literary tradition, a tradition noted for its fluid categories that elude modern epistemological frameworks.<sup>9</sup>

A brief look at the contents of several texts in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus perfectly illustrates the problem of imposing modern categories onto the Islamic intellectual tradition. For example, the Maḥmūdīyah Library held several works which modern scholarship has frequently cited as examples of "encyclopedias" from the Mamluk period. These works include ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī's *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (*The Routes of Insight into the Realms of Metropolises*),<sup>10</sup> al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (*The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition*),<sup>11</sup> and al-Waṭwāt's *Mabāhij al-fīkar wa-manāhij al-ʿibar* (*Delightful Concepts*

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<sup>9</sup> Liebreuz, *Die Rifāʿīya*, 80-84.

<sup>10</sup> Appendix A, Entry 26.

<sup>11</sup> Appendix A, Entry 46.

*and Pathways to Precepts*).<sup>12</sup> However, Elias Muhanna highlights the inadequacy of the term “encyclopedia” as an interpretative category to unite texts such as these. Although the aforementioned texts have been lumped together as “scribal encyclopedias” in modern scholarship, it is clear even from the title of these texts — not to mention their contents — that each author sought to situate themselves within a different field of the Islamic literary tradition.<sup>13</sup> As Muhanna points out, al-Nuwayri insists throughout the text of *Nihāyat al-arab* that he is composing a work of *adab*.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, by titling his work *Masālik al-absār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (*The Routes of Insight into the Realms of Metropolises*), ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī places his literary enterprise within the established genre of *masālik wa-mamālik*, which can only somewhat clumsily be rendered into English as “geography.”

The difficulty of categorizing works in the Maḥmūdīyah expands beyond the stubbornly amorphous category of encyclopedias. For example, take ibn ‘Asākir’s *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq* (*History of the City of Damascus*).<sup>15</sup> The title suggests we should classify it as a work of history. However, Paula Manstetten convincingly argues that the work also served as a repository of hadiths collected by ibn ‘Asākir over the course of his life in Damascus. Furthermore, she argues that ibn ‘Asākir aimed to use the work to highlight the centrality of Damascus as a site of hadith transmission.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, by classifying this book as a work of history, we unintentionally erase its function as a hadith collection. Similarly, take the Maḥmūdīyah copy of ibn al-Shabbāt

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<sup>12</sup> Appendix A, Entry 59.

<sup>13</sup> Elias Muhanna, “Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period: The Composition of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī’s (d. 1333) *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012), 1-38.

<sup>14</sup> Further proving the point of the inadequacy of modern categories for analyzing the Islamic intellectual tradition, the term *adab* is one that eludes translation into English. Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila suggests the translation “suitable things to know and to act upon.” See Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, “*Adab* a) Arabic, early developments,” *EI3*.

<sup>15</sup> Appendix A, Entry 24.

<sup>16</sup> Paula Manstetten, “Ibn ‘Asākir’s *History of Damascus*,” 113-145.



al-Tawzarī's *Ṣilat al-ṣimṭ wa-simat al-mirṭ* (*The Link in the Necklace and the Mark on the Wool Robe*).<sup>17</sup> The multi-volume work is ostensibly a commentary on a short fifth/eleventh century panegyric poem about the Prophet Muḥammad. However, the work has also been noted for being a valuable source for the history of the Maghreb, its geography, and its eminent figures.<sup>18</sup>

Many more examples of the polyvalent nature of works in the Maḥmūdīyah abound, but for the sake of brevity I shall limit myself to the works discussed above.<sup>19</sup> For the purposes of concluding this section however, it suffices to say that the issue of modern generic categories renders any attempt to break down the contents of the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus by genre an unproductive exercise.

### 2.3.0. Thematic profile as reflection of provenance: A judge, his networks, and his books

With these caveats in mind, several common trends in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus begin to emerge when considered in light of the origin of the Maḥmūdīyah's books. The Maḥmūdīyah librarian ibn Ḥajar gives us the first clue for tracing the books' provenance in an obituary notice he gives for the judge Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah:

[Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah] died in Sha'bān [of 790/August of 1388]. He left behind precious books, the likes of which would be difficult to be collected by anyone other than him, for he was passionate about books. He would purchase a copy of a book of utmost beauty. Then he would come across the same book in the hand of its author. So he would buy that one and not give up the first copy he had previously bought, to the point that he had collected countless copies of books in their authors' hands. Afterwards, most of these

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<sup>17</sup> Appendix A, Entry 36.

<sup>18</sup> See for example Ahmed el Bahi, "Un témoignage méconnu sur l'Ifrīkiya au milieu du VIIe/XIIIe siècle : la silat al-simṭ d'Ibn shabbāt," in *Actes du 6ème colloque international sur l'histoire des steppes tunisiennes. Sbeitla, session 2008*, ed. Fathi Bejaoui (Tunis, Institut national du patrimoine, 2010) 327-346.

<sup>19</sup> In Appendix A, I have tried as often as possible to highlight the polyvalent nature of the titles in the Maḥmūdīyah in their entry descriptions.

books ended up with Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ustādār, who endowed them to his madrasa in the Muwāzinīyīn district. Students have benefited from these books up to the present moment.<sup>20</sup>

According to ibn Ḥajar, the books in the Maḥmūdīyah Library had previously belonged to Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, the Shāfi‘ī grand judge of Egypt. Subsequently, the emir Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had acquired “most of these books” and endowed them to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa. In the following section, I will sketch a brief biography of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah. I will then confirm that the Maḥmūdīyah’s books did indeed originate from Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s personal collection through an analysis of both the paratextual data on the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus and a surviving court record that documents Maḥmūd al-Ustādār’s acquisition of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s books.

### *2.3.1. The scion of a prominent family of Shāfi‘ī judges*

Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sa‘d Allāh ibn Jamā‘ah (henceforth Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah) was born in Cairo in 725/1325 to the Banū Jamā‘ah, a prominent family of Shāfi‘ī scholars that had produced a number of grand Shāfi‘ī judges.<sup>21</sup> Ibrāhīm’s grandfather, Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad (639-733/1241-1333), the most famous and prolific of the Banū Jamā‘ah clan, served as chief judge of Egypt during the periods of 690-693/1291-1294, 702-710/1302-1310, and 711-727/ 1211-1327. Ibrāhīm’s uncle ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Abd

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<sup>20</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā‘ al-ghumr*, 1:355-356.

<sup>21</sup> For the history of this family during the Mamluk period, see Kamal S. Salibi, “The Banū Jamā‘a: A Dynasty of Shāfi‘īte Jurists in the Mamluk Period,” *Studia Islamica* 9 (1958): 97-109. For the history of this family during the Ottoman period, see Elizabeth Sirriyeh, “Whatever Happened to the Banū Jama‘a? The Tail of a Scholarly Family in Ottoman Syria,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28, no. 1 (2001): 55-65.

al-‘Azīz (694-767/1294-1366) also served as the grand Shāfi‘ī judge of Egypt for an almost continuous period from 738 until his resignation in 766 (1340-1365).

By virtue of his family’s reputation and connections, Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah received an excellent education, studying with some of the most important scholars of his time in Cairo, Damascus, and Jerusalem. He attended hadith recitations led by his grandfather Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad, though he could not have been older than eight at the time since his grandfather died in 733/1333. At a young age Ibrāhīm moved to al-Mazzah, a suburb of Damascus, to live with his relatives.<sup>22</sup> There he studied with a number of scholars including the hadith specialists Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī (654-742/1256-1341) and Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī (673-748/1274-1348), the latter of whom praised young Ibrāhīm’s work ethic and taught him frequently.<sup>23</sup> At the age of fourteen, Ibrāhīm inherited from his deceased father the endowed position of preacher of al-Aqṣá Mosque in Jerusalem. However, a temporary preacher occupied the position until Ibrāhīm came of age.<sup>24</sup>

In the year 773/1371, the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Sha‘bān appointed Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah as grand Shāfi‘ī judge of Egypt. Regardless of the role his family’s name most certainly played in his appointment, given his rather modest credentials at this point of his life, the available sources generally portray Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah as having performed his functions as chief Shāfi‘ī judge of Egypt capably. He had acquired a reputation for sticking to his principles despite constant pressure from the ruling Mamluk elite to bend the law in their favor. According

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<sup>22</sup> ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi‘īyah*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Alīm Khān (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-kutub, 1986), 3:139.

<sup>23</sup> Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *al-Mu‘jam al-mukhtaṣṣ bi-al-muḥaddithīn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb al-Hīlah (Taif, Saudi Arabia: Maktabat al-Ṣiddīq, 1988), 56-57; ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā‘ al-ghumr*, 1:355.

<sup>24</sup> ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi‘īyah*, 3:139.

to the historians al-Maqrīzī and ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah grew increasingly uneasy with his position following the assassination of the sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Sha‘bān in 778/1377. Frustrated with the ceaseless attempts by the Mamluk elite to override his judicial rulings, Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah frequently threatened to step down from his judgeship and return to Syria, only to have the Mamluk emir and *de facto* ruler Barqūq implore him to stay.<sup>25</sup> Finally, in the year 784/1382, Barqūq dismissed Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah after fearing the latter would refuse to legitimize his installment of the child figurehead al-Ṣāliḥ Ḥājjī to the throne. Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah subsequently returned to Jerusalem in order to resume his duties as preacher of al-Aqṣá Mosque. However, upon assuming the title of sultan, Barqūq eventually faced a predicament. Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s replacement was openly known to be a corrupt judge who had bought the position. Several emirs pointed out that it did not look good to have replaced Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah with such a man, especially given the popular support for Ibrāhīm among the commoners. However, they also feared that if Ibrāhīm returned to the grand judgeship position he would remain a perpetual thorn on the Mamluk emirs’ side due to his juridical inflexibility. As a compromise to save face, Barqūq granted Ibrāhīm the vacant position of grand Shāfi‘ī judge of Damascus. According to al-Maqrīzī, when Ibrāhīm tried to excuse himself from the position due to his old age, Barqūq implicitly threatened Ibrāhīm, and so the aged preacher assumed the position in Damascus which he held until his death in 790/1388.<sup>26</sup>

This short biography shows that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, though most known for holding the position of chief Shāfi‘ī judge of Egypt, held a deeper connection to Syria than he did to the city

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<sup>25</sup> ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah. *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi‘īyah*, 3:140; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd al-farīdah fī tarājim al-a‘yān al-muḥīdah*, ed. Maḥmūd Jalīlī (Beirut: Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 2002), 1:90.

<sup>26</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd al-farīdah*, 1:90-91.

of Cairo, a metropole brimming with political intrigues and frequent regime changes. Granted, the depictions encountered in this brief biography of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah frequently attempting to abstain from his judicial appointments must be taken with a grain of salt. Biographical dictionaries of the time commonly employed the trope of the modest scholar unwilling to accept the worldly position thrust upon him by the political authorities in order to highlight the scholar’s virtue and dedication to the pursuit of knowledge. Nevertheless, as we will see below, the texts and paratexts of the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript and textual corpora do indeed confirm Ibrāhīm’s bias towards Syria that the literary sources seem to suggest.

### 2.3.2. *Proof of the Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah – Maḥmūdīyah link: A court record*

In his aforementioned obituary for Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, ibn Ḥajar states that “most of [Ibrāhīm’s] books ended up with Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ustādār” (*ṣāra aktharuhā li-Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ustādār*). However, ibn Ḥajar’s neutral choice of words does not fully capture the circumstances behind this transfer of books to Maḥmūd al-Ustādār. Thankfully, an archival record exists that more fully fleshes out the details of this incident. This record, a court document dating to the end of Muḥarram 797/November-December 1394, has been studied by Christian Müller in his survey of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf documents, a corpus of approximately nine hundred legal documents mostly issued in Jerusalem over the course of the eighth/fourteenth century.<sup>27</sup> The document in question concerns the transfer of the estate of the deceased Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad (d. 795/1393), identified in the document as the son of the deceased Grand Shāfi‘ī judge

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<sup>27</sup> Müller, *Der Kadi und seine Zeugen*.

Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah. According to the document, through an order (*mithāl*) signed by Maḥmūd al-Ustādār, the estate, including “books left behind” by Muḥibb al-Dīn, was to be handed off to an envoy of Maḥmūd al-Ustādār and subsequently sent to Egypt.<sup>28</sup> As Müller points out, Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Īsá, the judge presiding over the transfer of Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad’s estate to Maḥmūd, had previously in another court document annulled the will of Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad under the pretext that the latter had not yet reached the age of sound judgement (*rushd*) before his death and thus had no legal capacity to draft a will.<sup>29</sup> Elsewhere, the chronicler ibn Hījī indicates that Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Īsá had garnered a bad reputation owing to his having collaborated with Maḥmūd al-Ustādār to enrich themselves with the unlawfully seized property and endowments of local Jerusalem notables.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, as Müller shows, the motivations for the judge’s annulment of Muḥibb al-Dīn’s will, as well as his approval of the transfer of the latter’s estate to Maḥmūd’s envoy, most likely stemmed from the judge’s personal connections to Maḥmūd al-Ustādār and their shared history of misappropriating the property of local Jerusalem notables.<sup>31</sup>

Upon reviewing the scant details about Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad’s short life provided the literary sources, it becomes clear that he must have inherited the books in his estate from his deceased father Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah. The Jerusalem-based historian Mujīr al-Dīn al-‘Ulaymī

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<sup>28</sup> Christian Müller, “The Ḥaram al-Šarīf Collection Of Arabic Legal Documents in Jerusalem: A Mamlūk Court Archive?,” *al-Qanṭara* XXXII 2, (July-December 2011), 450. For a facsimile and transcription of the document, see Kāmil Jamīl al-‘Asalī, *Wathā‘iq maqdisīyah tārikhīyah* (Amman: Mu‘assasat ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Shūmān, 1985), 2:127–128.

<sup>29</sup> Müller, *Der Kadi und seine Zeugen*, 520. For a transcription and translation of the document, see Donald P. Little, “Two Fourteenth-Century Court Records from Jerusalem Concerning the Disposition of Slaves by Minors,” *Arabica* 29 (1982), 30–35.

<sup>30</sup> ibn Hījī, *Tārīkh ibn Hījī*, ed. Abū Yaḥyá ‘Abd Allāh al-Kundarī (Beirut: Dar ibn Ḥazm, 2003), 1:131.

<sup>31</sup> Müller, *Der Kadi und seine Zeugen*, 520.

states that Muḥibb al-Dīn had not yet reached puberty when his father Ibrāhīm had died 790/1388, thus necessitating that his uncle Najm al-Dīn ibn Jamā‘ah assume Muḥibb al-Dīn’s inherited professorship position until Muḥibb al-Dīn came of age. However, Muḥibb al-Dīn died while his uncle still held his inherited position, implying that he was still quite young at the time of his death.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, the historian ibn Ḥijjī mentions that Muḥibb al-Dīn had died as a teenager (*wa-huwa murāhiq*) in 795/1393, or five years after the death of his father Ibrāhīm.<sup>33</sup> Given both Muḥibb al-Dīn’s young age at the time of his death and his father Ibrāhīm’s reputation for his large book collection, it can be safely assumed that most of the books Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had acquired through Muḥibb al-Dīn’s seized estate represent the collection of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, and not the intellectual tastes of the young Muḥibb al-Dīn himself.

### *2.3.3. Proof of the Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah-Maḥmūdīyah link: Ibrāhīm’s ownership statements, references to Maḥmūdīyah books in his works*

Paratextual evidence on the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus further confirms that the Maḥmūdīyah’s books had come from Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s book collection. First, nine manuscripts in the Maḥmūdīyah corpus bear the ownership notes of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah (see Figure 7a-i below).

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<sup>32</sup> Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-‘Ulaymī, *al-Uns al-jalīl bi-tārīkh al-quḍs wa-al-khalīl* (Najaf: al-Maṭba‘ah al-Ḥaydarīyah, 1968), 2:108.

<sup>33</sup> Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1027, fol. 141a.

FIGURE 7A-I: IBRĀHĪM IBN JAMĀ‘AH’S OWNERSHIP STATEMENTS ON THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH MANUSCRIPT CORPUS



- a.) “Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah the Shāfi‘ī” (*Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah al-Shāfi‘ī*). Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 6443, fol. 2a.
- b.) “In the possession of Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad” (*fī nawbat Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad*). Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Laleli 3581, fol. 2a.
- c.) “Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Jamā‘ah’s, may God forgive them all (*li-Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Jamā‘ah ghafara Allah lahum*). Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/12, fol. 1a.
- d.) “For God, may He be exalted, in the hand of His servant Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah the Shāfi‘ī”



(*lillāh ta'ālā fī yad 'abdihi Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah al-Shāfi'ī*).<sup>34</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Murad Molla 594, fol. 2a.

e.) “Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah” (*Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah*). Hyderabad: Saidiya Library, MS tarājim 160, fol. 1a.

f.) “Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah the Shāfi'ī” (*Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah al-Shāfi'ī*). Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 474, fol. 1a.

g.) “Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah the Shāfi'ī” (*Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah al-Shāfi'ī*). Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-miṣriyah, MS tafsīr 15, fol. 1a.

h.) “Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Jamā'ah al-Kinānī.” Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 43, fol. 1a.

i.) “Ibrāhīm.” The rest has been erased. Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 3282, fol. 1a.

At first, only nine Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah ownership notes on a surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus of 139 surviving manuscript volumes would seem to suggest that few of the Maḥmūdīyah's books in fact originally belonged to Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah. However, an absence of ownership notes on a medieval Arabic manuscript does not necessarily indicate that an individual did not possess that book. For example, Konrad Hirschler's study on the book collection of a late ninth/fifteenth century Damascene scholar reveals an almost total absence of the scholar's ownership notes on his surviving book collection, despite the presence of many other kinds of notes on the books left by the owner.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, manuscript evidence suggests that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah did not always leave ownership statements on his books. Of the eight surviving volumes of the Maḥmūdīyah's copy of ibn Abī Shaybah's *al-Muṣannaf*, only the first volume bears Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's ownership note. The other volumes in this recension must have also been in Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's collection before being acquired by Maḥmūd al-Uṣṭādār, but for some reason Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah had neglected to write ownership notes on them.

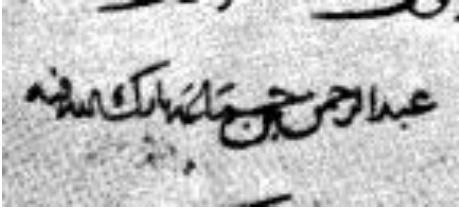
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<sup>34</sup> This ownership note most likely is missing the word *al-mulk* (possession) or *al-ḥamd* (praise) in the beginning.

<sup>35</sup> Hirschler, *Monument*, 148.

Additionally, the title page of another Maḥmūdīyah book contains a note with the name of another member of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s family (see Figure 8 below).

**FIGURE 8: A NOTE FROM IBRĀHĪM IBN JAMĀ‘AH’S SECOND COUSIN ON A BOOK IN THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH CORPUS: ISTANBUL: TOPKAPI SARAYI MŪZESI KŪTŪPHANESI, MS AHMED III 2910/8, FOL. 1A.**



عبد الرحمن بن جماعة بارك  
الله فيه ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Jamā‘ah,  
may God bless him

From the patronymics given in biographical dictionaries we can surmise that this ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was the second cousin of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah.<sup>36</sup> However, as can be seen in Figure 8 above, the formulation of the invocation to God to bless ‘Abd al-Raḥmān in the note (*bāraka Allāh fīhi*) means that it is certainly not an ownership note, but rather a note expressing gratitude to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. The wild variation in Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s handwriting (see Figures 7a.-i. above) makes it difficult to determine if Ibrāhīm had written this note in question. However, given that Ibrāhīm’s own books had ended up in the Maḥmūdīyah, and that Ibrāhīm was very close to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s son,<sup>37</sup> Ibrāhīm had most likely written this note as a token of appreciation to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān for gifting him the book on which the note appears.

We also find that Ibrāhīm cites two texts in one of his own penned works which exist in the Maḥmūdīyah corpus. Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah was not a prolific author, nor was he a particularly

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<sup>36</sup> There are no biographical entries for ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, but we know of his existence through the biographical entry for his son, Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Sa‘d Allāh ibn Jamā‘ah. The latter was the same age as Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah and the two were playmates when they were both children. He also temporarily held Ibrāhīm’s endowed positions in Jerusalem while the latter was serving as chief Shāfi‘ī judge in Egypt. See al-‘Ulaymī, *al-Uns al-jalīl*, 2:108.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. As mentioned in the note above, the two were playmates as children.

competent scholar in the field of hadith, at least according to ibn Ḥajar who had seen several of Ibrāhīm’s works.<sup>38</sup> Fortunately, in one of his surviving short treatises, *Facing the Two Qiblas (Istiqbāl al-qiblatayn)*, Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah quotes from two texts which are coincidentally in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus. He states in one section of the treatise the following: “And in ibn Jarīr’s *History*, in his chain of transmission through ibn ‘Abbās, may God be contented with them both: Adam went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem from India forty times by foot...similarly in ibn ‘Asākir’s *History*, through ibn ‘Abbās...”<sup>39</sup> The first work Ibrāhīm cites is ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk (History of the Prophets and Kings)*, whereas the second is ibn ‘Asākir’s *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq (History of the City of Damascus)*. Both of these works can be found in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it is likely that the Maḥmūdīyah copies of these works had been in Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s possession as well.

#### 2.3.4. *Did Maḥmūd al-Ustādār acquire books from other sources?*

However, can it be said with certainty that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s book collection was the sole source of the Maḥmūdīyah Library’s books? After all, the emir Maḥmūd al-Ustādār could have easily added books to his library from other sources as well. Unfortunately, the narrative sources do not help shed light on this matter, for they remain silent on Maḥmūd’s intellectual interests and focus solely on his political career. Additionally, there is no definitive paratextual evidence on the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus that points to another personal book collection

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<sup>38</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Raf‘ al-iṣr ‘an quḍāt miṣr*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar (Cairo: Maktabat al-khānjī bi-al-qāhirah, 1998), 28.

<sup>39</sup> Riyadh: Jāmi‘at al-malik sa‘ūd, MS 4812, fol. 2a.

<sup>40</sup> See Appendix A, Entry 56; Appendix A, Entry 24.

that could have been a source of the Maḥmūdīyah Library. Nor do we find any paratexts on the corpus written by Maḥmūd himself.

Could Maḥmūd have acquired additional books for the Maḥmūdīyah Library from the estates of other notable Jerusalem families besides that of the ibn Jamā‘ah family? After all, as mentioned above, Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had acquired a negative reputation for having collaborated with the judge Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Īsá to unlawfully seize the estates of Jerusalem families. More court documents from the aforementioned Ḥaram al-Sharīf collection show another instance in which the same corrupt judge offered Maḥmūd the estate of a deceased Jerusalem notable by the name of Shaykh Yaḥyá al-‘Ajamī, including the notable’s books.<sup>41</sup> However, unlike in the case of Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad’s books, the judge had opted instead to sell Yaḥyá’s estate — including its books — and hand off the proceeds from the sale to an agent of Maḥmūd al-Ustādār in Jerusalem.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the court record shows a detailed inventory of the worth of each item sold, including the titles of all the books sold off.<sup>43</sup> By contrast, we find that the court record concerning Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad’s estate specifically draws attention to the books among the other objects in the estate (*fath al-ḥawā’ij wa-al-kutub al-mukhallafah ‘an...Muḥibb al-Dīn*),<sup>44</sup> suggesting it was these books in particular that peaked Maḥmūd’s interest. How do we explain Maḥmūd’s disinterest in the books of Yaḥyá al-‘Ajamī’s books and his interest in the books in the estate of Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad? A clue can be found in the dates of the respective court documents in question. The one relating to the sale of Yaḥyá’s estate dates to 791/1393,

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<sup>41</sup> These documents are studied in depth in ‘Umar Jamāl Muḥammad, “Ijra’āt jard al-mawārīth al-ḥashrīyah wa-bay‘ihā fī al-Quds ‘asr salāṭīn al-mamālīk: tarikat Yaḥyá al-‘Ajamī shaykh zāwiyat Muḥammad Bāk namūdhan,” *Majallat al-dirāsāt al-tārīkhīyah wa-al-ḥadārīyah al-miṣrīyah* 11 (October 2021), 66-134.

<sup>42</sup> For a transcription of the page of the court document in question, see *Ibid.*, 92-99.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 96-97.

<sup>44</sup> al-‘Asalī, *Wathā’iq maqdisīyah tārīkhīyah*, 2:127.

whereas the one relating to the transfer of Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad's books to Maḥmūd is dated to the end of Muḥarram 797/November-December 1394. Given that al-Maqrīzī tells us that the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa was opened in 797/1394-1395,<sup>45</sup> the same year of the second court document, Maḥmūd's primary interest in the books in Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad's estate most likely stemmed from a desire to see that his almost-completed madrasa had a well-stocked library more than it stemmed from any bibliophilia on his part. Moreover, these were not just any books: they were the books of the former grand Shāfi'ī judge of Egypt, Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah, certainly a prestigious acquisition for his newly-built madrasa.

Given the above evidence suggesting that Maḥmūd was not a particularly avid book collector, for the rest of this chapter I work under the assumption that the Maḥmūdīyah's books had originated from Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's book collection, and that furthermore they are a reflection of Ibrāhīm's own personal preferences and tastes.

### *2.3.5. Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's teachers and Syrian contemporaries in the Maḥmūdīyah's books*

This assumption gains even more credence when considering the palpable presence of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's teachers and contemporaries in the authorship profile of the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus as well as in many of the paratexts in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus.

The author whose presence looms most noticeably over the texts and paratexts of the Maḥmūdīyah corpus is the Damascene hadith scholar al-Dhahabī. With five confirmed works, al-

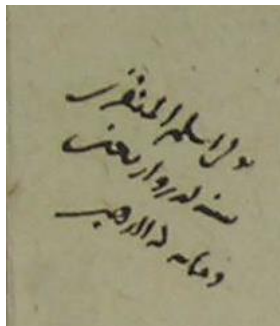
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<sup>45</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa-al-i'tibār*, 4:590.

Dhahabī is by far the most represented author in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus.<sup>46</sup> Three of the five works are autographs in al-Dhahabī’s hand. Of the five works, extant copies of two of them bear Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s ownership notes and a third bears the aforementioned note of Ibrāhīm’s second cousin ‘Abd al-Raḥman. Consequently, it is clear that Ibrāhīm had actively sought out books authored by al-Dhahabī, preferably autograph copies if possible, when forming his book collection.

In addition, several paratexts in the surviving Maḥmūdīyah corpus were either written by al-Dhahabī or indicate that the book in question was read out loud to al-Dhahabī, as can be found in the examples below:

**FIGURE 9A-B.: EXAMPLES OF PARATEXTS IN THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH WRITTEN BY OR MENTIONING AL-DHAHABĪ**



a.

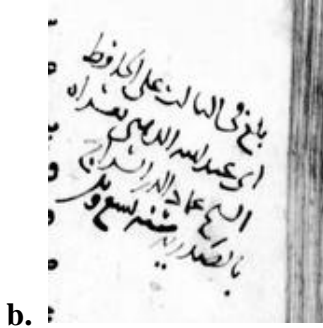
توفي أسلم المنقول  
سنة أربع وأربعون  
ومائة كتبه الذهبي

The cited ‘Aslam’ passed away in the year 144. Written by al-Dhahabī.

Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yozgat 148/1, fol. 220a.

<sup>46</sup> Appendix A, Entries 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

FIGURE 9A-B. CONTINUED



بلغ في الثالث على الحافظ  
أبي عبد الله الذهبي بقراءة  
الشيخ عماد الدين السراج  
بالصدريّة سنة تسع وثلاثين

Reached up to this point in the third session, read aloud to Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Dhahabī by ‘Imād al-Dīn al-Sarrāj in the Ṣadrīyah Madrasa in the year [7]39.

Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 706, fol. 102b.

Evidence from both narrative sources and surviving manuscripts further shed light on the relationship between Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah and his shaykh al-Dhahabī. Al-Dhahabī dedicates an entry to Ibrāhīm in his biographical dictionary of the hadith transmitters of his day, *al-Mu‘jam al-mukhtaṣṣ*. Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah is by far one of the youngest hadith transmitters given an entry in the biographical dictionary (when al-Dhahabī died in 748/1348, Ibrāhīm was twenty-three years old). This inclusion of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah certainly had more to do with his familial pedigree than it did with his capabilities as a hadith transmitter. Al-Dhahabī introduces Ibrāhīm as “Ibrahīm son of ‘Abd al-Raḥīm son of our teacher (*shaykhinā*) the grand judge Abī ‘Abd Allāh ibn Jamā‘ah.”<sup>47</sup> Consequently, al-Dhahabī most likely mentioned the young Ibrāhīm in his biographical dictionary of otherwise well-established hadith transmitters due to having studied under his grandfather, the famous judge Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Jamā‘ah. Further down in the entry, al-Dhahabī describes Ibrāhīm as having “distinguished himself. He is of exceeding virtue...He has read aloud to me a great deal.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, it is clear that Ibrāhīm spent a fair amount

<sup>47</sup> al-Dhahabī, *al-Mu‘jam al-mukhtaṣṣ*, 56.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 56-57.

of time studying with al-Dhahabī in his youth.

Sources show that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah was a loyal and devoted student to al-Dhahabī. For example, Ibrāhīm had copied several of al-Dhahabī’s works by hand. The ninth/fifteenth century Egyptian historian ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah mentions that he had copied a letter that al-Dhahabī had written to his shaykh ibn Taymīyah from a copy written in the hand of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, a study on a hand-written document containing a poem by al-Dhahabī explicating his theological stances convincingly proves that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah had copied the poem based on both a comparison of the hand in the document with samples of Ibrāhīm’s handwriting and references throughout the document to other family members in the Banu Jamā‘ah as “my uncle” or “my grandfather.”<sup>50</sup> Ibrāhīm’s loyalty to al-Dhahabī went so far as to defend al-Dhahabī in the marginalia of his own books, such as in the following passage related by ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah: “The grand judge Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Ḥajar said: ‘I saw two quires written in the hand of [ibn al-Murābiṭ al-Ghranāī] which he had compiled on the faults of al-Dhahabī in which he went too far in insulting him. The judge Burhān al-Dīn ibn Jamā‘ah had written on these [two quires] a response to him, calling him bombastic, stupid, and biased.’”<sup>51</sup>

Another book in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus suggests that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah had started collecting al-Dhahabī’s books from a young age. The manuscript in question, MS Laleli 3581, is a copy of Tha‘lab’s *Eloquent Style (al-Faṣīh)*. Towards the end of the book there

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<sup>49</sup> Cited in Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī, *al-‘Aqīdah wa-‘ilm al-kalām min a‘māl al-imām Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmīyah, 2009), 559.

<sup>50</sup> Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Sarī, “Manzūmat al-Dhahabī fī uṣūl mu‘taqadihi wa-maqṭū‘atān ukhrayān,” *Alukah* (blog), March 9th 2019, <https://www.alukah.net/library/0/133128/>.

<sup>51</sup> ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*, ed. ‘Adnān Darwīsh (Damascus: al-Ma‘had al-‘ilmī al-faransī lil-dirāsāt al-‘arabīyah, 1994), 3:30.

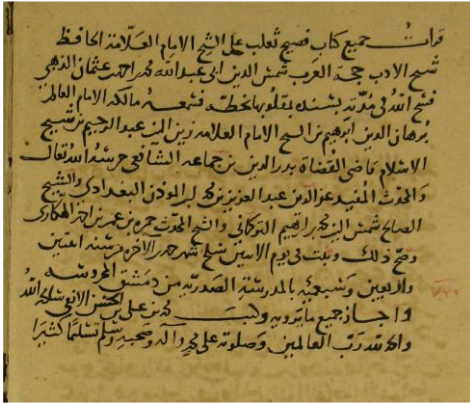


is an audition certificate stating that the book was read aloud to al-Dhahabī in Damascus in the year 742/1341 and that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah was in the audience of the recitation. The writer of the audition certificate refers to Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah as “the owner [of the book]”. (*sami‘ahu mālikuhu*.)” (see Figure 10a. below). Seeing as Ibrāhīm was born in 725/1325, this means that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah was at most seventeen years old when he had acquired this book. On the recto side of the same folio as the aforementioned audition certificate is an earlier audition certificate written in the hand of al-Dhahabī. The note indicates al-Dhahabī himself was the owner of the same book (“*bi-qirā’at kātib hādihā Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Uthmān al-Dhahabī ṣāhib hādhihi al-nuskah*) while he was a young student in the year 691/1292 (see Figure 10b. below). Since al-Dhahabī led the audition session Ibrāhīm attended in 742/1341, it is highly probable that al-Dhahabī had given the young Ibrāhīm this book at some point as a gift. Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s ability to obtain a book owned by the premiere hadith scholar and historian of his time, all while at the young age of seventeen or potentially even earlier, shows the close relationship al-Dhahabī must have enjoyed with his student Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah. Of further note is that in the first audition certificate Ibrāhīm is listed first among the attendees of the book recitation, which suggests that he was sitting closest to al-Dhahabī at the reading session. This in turn further suggests that the two shared a close bond.<sup>52</sup>

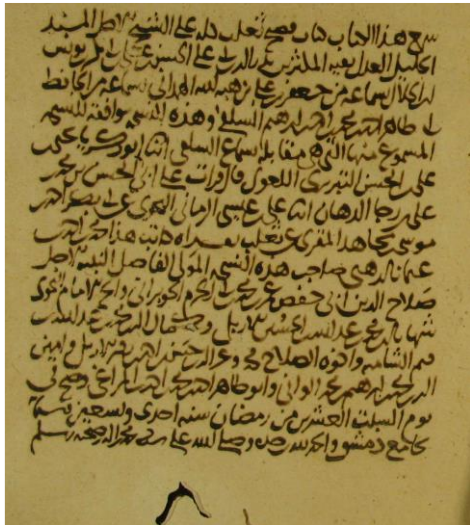
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<sup>52</sup> For lists of participants in an audition certificate reflecting their seating order at the reading session, see Hirschler, *The Written Word*, 46–51.

FIGURE 10A-B.: A MAḤMŪDĪYAH BOOK IBRĀHĪM IBN JAMĀ‘AH HAD ACQUIRED FROM AL-DHAHABĪ



b. Audition certificate stating that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah attended a reading of this book to al-Dhababī in Damascus in the year 742/1341 and that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah was the owner of the book. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Laleli 3581, fol. 49b.

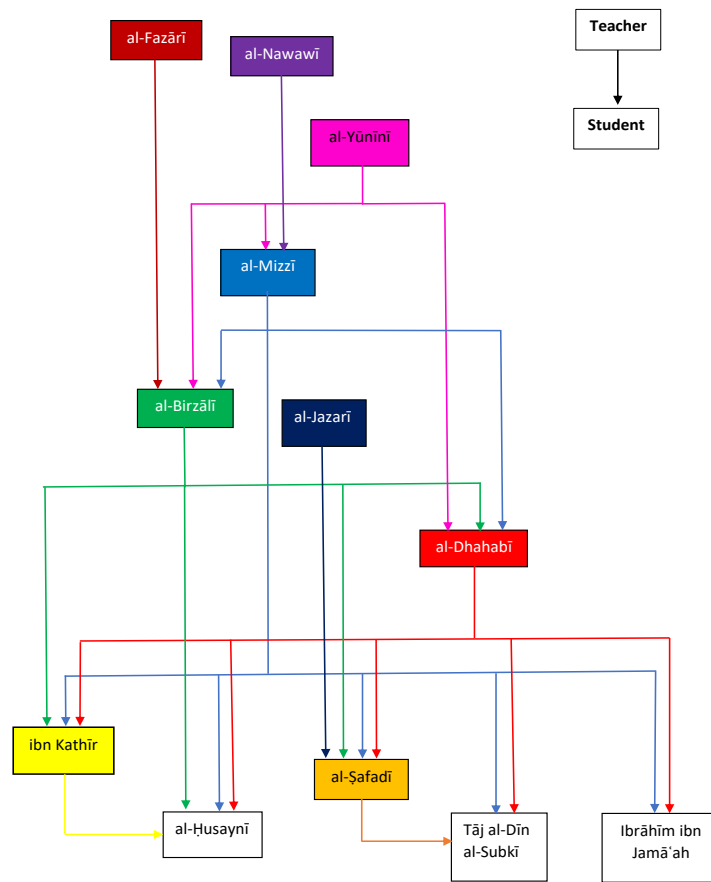


b. Audition certificate written in the hand of al-Dhababī in which he indicates that he was the owner of this book when the reading of the book took place in the year 691/1292. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Laleli 3581, fol. 49a.

In addition to al-Dhababī himself, the authors of other texts in the MaḤmūdīyah textual corpus had been either al-Dhababī’s students, his shaykhs, or his shaykhs’ shaykhs. This aspect of the MaḤmūdīyah textual corpus suggests that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah had sought out works written by his own contemporaries in Syria as well as those in the intellectual networks of his shaykhs and his family. To illustrate this point more clearly, Chart 1 below maps out the student-teacher relationship between each Syrian-based author of a work in the MaḤmūdīyah textual

corpus. Additionally, Appendix B at the end of this dissertation gives a more thorough breakdown of each author’s works in the Maḥmūdīyah, an example of a paratext written by the author on a surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscript, and the author’s teachers who had also authored a work in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus. The criteria for defining the “student-teacher relationship” for Chart 1 involved locating instances in biographical dictionaries, historical chronicles, or lists of authorities in which it is mentioned that an author of a text in the Maḥmūdīyah corpus had heard hadith or another text (*sami‘a*) recited in a session presided over by a shaykh who had also authored a work in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus.

**CHART 1: THE STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP OF AUTHORS IN THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH TEXTUAL CORPUS**



By looking at some of the texts in the Maḥmūdīyah corpus as well as the paratexts on some of its surviving manuscripts, it becomes clear that one of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s aims in collecting his books was to document his shaykhs’ Syrian scholarly lineage and histories. For example, the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus contains many of the most important works of Syrian historiography-cum-biography from the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. Among these works are of course those of his shaykh al-Dhahabī: *Tārīkh al-Islām* (*The History of Islam*) as well as his shorter *Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā’* (*Biographies of Distinguished Notables*). Ibrāhīm also managed to attain a copy of his contemporary al-Ṣafadī’s (696-764/1297-1363) biographical dictionary *A‘yān al-‘aṣr wa-a‘wān al-naṣr* (*Notables of the Age and the Supporters of Victory*), which contains biographical entries for all of the scholars mentioned in this section. Ibrāhīm also collected works in the field of history composed by al-Dhahabī’s shaykhs, such as *Dhayl ‘alā mir‘āt al-zamān* (*A Continuation of The Mirror of Time*), a historical chronology of events and obituaries of famous figures by the Baalbek-based scholar Mūsá ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī (640-726/ 1242-1326) covering the years 654-711/1256-1311 with an emphasis on events and figures in Syria. Similarly, al-Dhahabī’s shaykh al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Birzālī is represented in the Maḥmūdīyah with his own historical chronicle *al-Muqtafá* (*The Continuation*), covering mostly Syrian-based events and obituaries of famous notables between the years 665-720/1266-1321. Finally, the Maḥmūdīyah contained the work of a third major Syrian historian of the late seventh/thirteenth century, *Ḥawādith al-zamān wa-anbā’ihi wa-wafayāt al-akābir wa-al-a‘yān min abnā’ihi* (*Events and News of the Time, With Obituaries of Its Great and Notable Sons*) by Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jazarī (658-739/1260-1338). Works of Syrian historiography-cum-biography going even further back in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus include Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī’s

*Mir'āt al-zamān* (*The Mirror of Time*) in the form of al-Yūnīnī's abridgement of the work, as well as 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Asākir's *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq* (*History of the City of Damascus*).

Many of the later historians in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus were not only linked by their student/teacher relationships, as can be seen in the chart above. They also frequently cited each others' works and even shared each others' draft copies for comments and editing. For example, al-Dhahabī had edited the chronicles of both al-Yūnīnī and al-Jazarī.<sup>53</sup> The Maḥmūdīyah autograph copy of al-Mizzī's *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* (*The Refinement of Perfection in the Names of Hadith Transmitters*) is brimming with corrections added in the margins by al-Dhahabī. Al-Birzālī and al-Jazarī were close friends<sup>54</sup> and al-Jazarī had used al-Birzālī's *al-Muqtafá* when composing his own historical chronicle.<sup>55</sup> It has been noted that al-Yūnīnī and al-Jazarī appeared to have frequently quoted each other verbatim in their historical chronicles, which Ulrich Haarmann explains by suggesting that al-Jazarī had used al-Yūnīnī's first draft of his *Dhayl 'alá mir'āt al-zamān* to compose his own chronicle, the latter of which al-Yūnīnī subsequently used when composing his second draft of *Dhayl 'alá mir'āt al-zamān*.<sup>56</sup>

These Syrian historians represented in the Maḥmūdīyah corpus also conceived of their own works as “continuations” of the efforts of earlier Syria-based historians, as can be gleaned from the titles of their works alone: al-Birzālī's *al-Muqtafá li-tārīkh Abī Shāmah* (*Continuation*

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<sup>53</sup> Li Guo, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'āt al-zamān* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998), 19-20.

<sup>54</sup> Ulrich Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1970), 16-17.

<sup>55</sup> Donald P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of Al-Malik An-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalā'ūn* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1970), 60.

<sup>56</sup> Haarmann, *Quellenstudien*, 94-95.

of *Abū Shāmah's History*), al-Yūnīnī's *Dhayl 'alá mir'āt al-zamān* (*Continuation of [Sibt ibn al-Jawzī's] The Mirror of Time*). Similarly, though not evident from the title of his chronicle, al-Jazarī conceived of his own history as a continuation of the history of 'Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣbahānī.<sup>57</sup> Their wish to portray their own contributions to historiography as continuations of the works of early historians, despite the originality in their own works, betrays a sense that must have been felt among these scholars of a shared cross-generational historiographical project. As Li Guo has noted, these historians in the "Syrian school" of medieval Islamic historiography distinguished themselves from their Egyptian counterparts, who were safer in Cairo from external threats, by an overarching concern to use their historical writings for "preserving the religious and cultural heritage of the umma, especially at times of crisis."<sup>58</sup> The abundance of works from this "Syrian school" of historiography and biography in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus suggests that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah himself similarly sought to preserve this Syrian religious and cultural heritage through his personal book collection.

Ibrāhīm's motivation to document Syrian scholarship through his personal book collection extended to include books with audition certificates recording recitations of the books to famed hadith scholars in Damascus. These include those on the aforementioned autograph copies of works penned by Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's shaykhs al-Dhahabī and al-Mizzī, but expand further back to include important figures in the earlier centuries of Damascene hadith scholarship. For example, Figure 11a below shows an audition certificate dating to 643/1245 recording a reading of al-Bayhaqī's hadith collection *Kitāb al-sunan al-kabīr* (*The Large Book of*

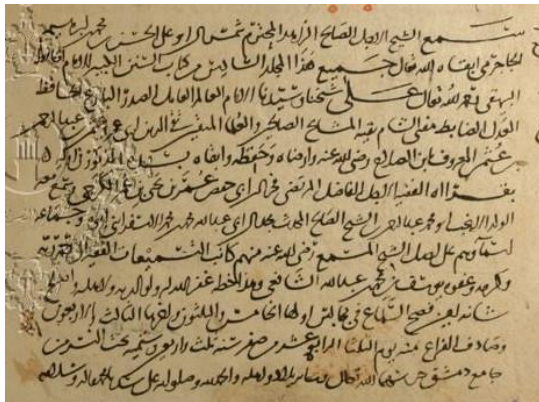
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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

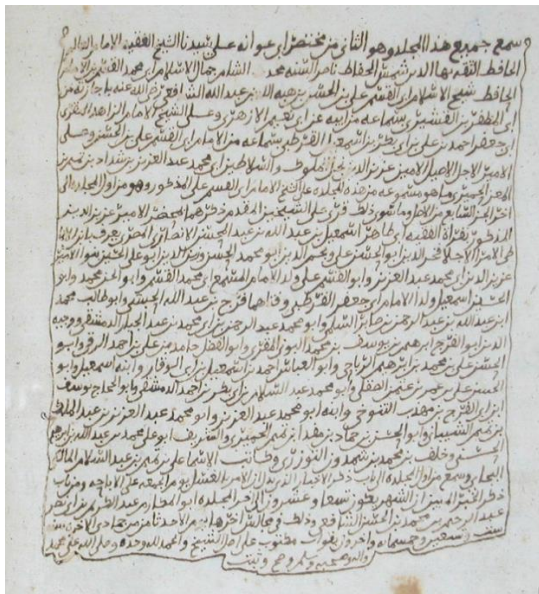
<sup>58</sup> Li Guo, "History writing," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam Volume. 4. Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Robert Irwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 451.

*Prophetic Traditions*) to the famed hadith scholar ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (577-643/1181-1245) in the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus. Figures 11b. and 11c. contain older audition certificates recording readings of books a loud to members of the famous Damascus-based ibn ‘Asākīr clan of hadith scholars: al-Qāsim ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Asākīr (527-600/1132-1203) and his more famous father, the historian of Damascus ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Asākīr (499-571/1105-1176).

**FIGURE 11A-C.: DAMASCENE HADITH SCHOLARSHIP REPRESENTED IN AUDITION CERTIFICATES ON THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH MANUSCRIPT CORPUS**

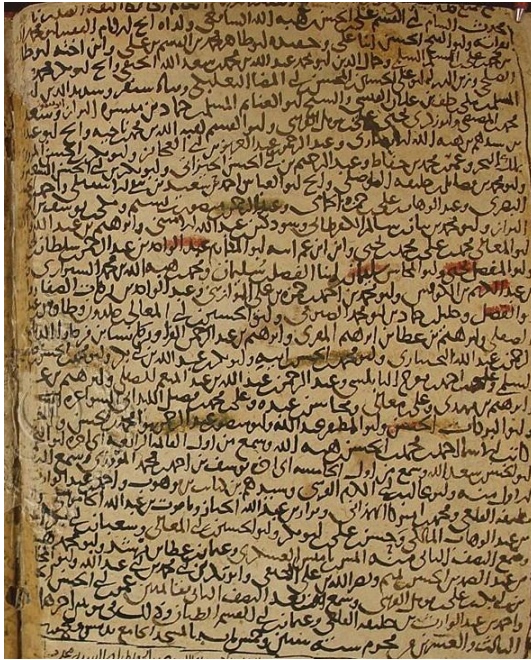


**a:** Audition certificate dating to 643/1245 recording a reading of al-Bayhaqī’s hadith collection *Kitāb al-sunan al-kabīr* to ibn al-Ṣalāḥ in the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus. Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 3282, fol. 209b.



**b:** Audition certificate dating to 596/1200 recording a reading of the hadith collection *Mukhtaṣar Abī ‘Awānah (The Abridgement of Abū ‘Awānah)* to al-Qāsim ibn ‘Asākīr, son of ‘Alī ibn ‘Asākīr Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 401, fol. 246b.

FIGURE 11A-C. CONTINUED



c. Audition certificate dating to 560/1164 recording a reading of *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq* (*History of the City of Damascus*) to its author ‘Alī ibn ‘Asākir. The Maḥmūdīyah copy of the book is written in the hand of the author’s son al-Qāsim. Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 10670-1, fol. 102b.

To conclude this section, it is clear that one of the motivations that drove Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah to add certain books to his collection was to document the history of Syrian hadith and historiographical scholarship. The trajectory of his own life does indeed hint at an inclination towards Syria. Though born in Cairo, he had moved to a suburb of Damascus at a young age, where he received the bulk of his education. He subsequently moved to Jerusalem to take up the position of preacher at al-Aqṣá mosque. He had only returned to Cairo in order to take up the position of grand Shāfi‘ī judge of Egypt, following in the footsteps of his uncle and grandfather. After becoming enmeshed in the political intrigues of the tumultuous transition between the Baḥrī and Burjī eras of the Mamluk Sultanate, he had threatened to step down from his judicial position in Cairo to return to Jerusalem, which he finally managed to do towards the end of his life.



These findings suggest that for Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah the value of some of the books in his collection did not only lie in their intellectual contents, but also in the fact that they passed through the hands of specific individuals in his own scholarly networks. It further adds credence to Noah Gardiner’s assertion that “a given medieval Arabic manuscript is by no means simply a copy of a text, but rather one edge or node of a network or community of human actors—readers, teachers, copyists, booksellers—as well as other manuscripts.”<sup>59</sup> The findings here also coincide with those of several recently published studies documenting other instances in which individuals in medieval Syria sought to create archives of Syrian scholarship. For example, Paula Manstatten puts forward that ibn ‘Asākir’s biographical dictionary *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq* (*History of the City of Damascus*) exhibited “key features of an ‘archival mind’ in action, namely in how it collects Damascene memory for future generations, and in what kind of information it documents.”<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Hirschler argues in his study of the library of ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī, a scholar in late medieval Damascus, that this scholar’s book collection was “a project of monumentalising a specific moment from the past of his city, his quarter, his family and his scholarly community via his carefully curated collection of books.”<sup>61</sup>

With all that being said, it should be stressed that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s motivations for collecting his books cannot solely be reduced to this drive to record his scholarly networks. This drive is just a common theme that can clearly be parsed through the texts and paratexts of the Maḥmūdīyah corpus. Other broader conclusions about Ibrāhīm’s intellectual interests can be gleaned from the trends in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus, but due to the issues of sample size

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<sup>59</sup> Gardiner, “Esotericism in a manuscript culture,” 42.

<sup>60</sup> Manstatten, “Ibn ‘Asākir’s *History of Damascus*,” 77.

<sup>61</sup> Hirschler, *Monument*, 5.

discussed above it is difficult to assess whether these trends were present in Ibrāhīm’s entire book collection or only in the corpus of texts that have come down to us today. To give one example, it is tempting to infer that Ibrāhīm leaned towards books of Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence. After all, he came from a family of Shāfi‘ī judges and he himself served as the grand Shāfi‘ī judge of Egypt. Of the sixty-two confirmed book titles in the Maḥmūdīyah, a whopping nine of them could be classified either as works of Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence or some kind of aid for understanding a famous work of Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence.<sup>62</sup> Another book, al-Bayhaqī’s *Kitāb al-sunan al-kabīr*, though ostensibly a hadith collection, was organized by the legal categories in al-Muzanī’s *Mukhtaṣar*, another seminal Shāfi‘ī legal manual. By contrast, there is only one non-Shāfi‘ī legal text in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus.<sup>63</sup> However, the selection biases inherent in the identification of the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus mean that these Shāfi‘ī legal manuals cannot be seen as representing all the legal manuals that had been held in the Maḥmūdīyah, nor in Ibrāhīm’s personal book collection. For all we know, Ibrāhīm could have also collected an equal amount of books of Mālikī, Ḥanafī, and Ḥanbalī jurisprudence as well, since no evidence at our disposal can confirm or deny this. Consequently, broader conclusions about the thematic profile of the Maḥmūdīyah Library remain frustratingly out of reach.

#### 2.4. Conclusion

This chapter began by presenting the problems of creating a thematic profile of the original book endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Library based on the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus

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<sup>62</sup> For the titles of these works, see Appendix A, Entries 4, 18, 19, 35, 39, 43, 44, 45, and 47.

<sup>63</sup> Appendix A, Entry 54.

identified in Chapter 1. Due to the selection biases in the methods this study carried out to identify the manuscripts and texts that had been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah, the resulting Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus cannot be said to accurately represent the thematic profile of the Maḥmūdīyah's original book endowment. Instead, any analysis of the contents of the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus must be understood within the context of the life and career of the grand Shāfi'ī Judge of Egypt, Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah, whose personal collection of books eventually became the endowments to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa. After giving a brief overview of the life of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah, the chapter presented evidence both from the paratexts of the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus as well as a court record documenting Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's acquisition of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's books to prove that the Maḥmūdīyah's books originated from Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's private collection. When understood in this context, a discernable trend can be parsed out from the texts and paratexts of the Maḥmūdīyah corpus: The presence of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's shaykhs, colleagues, and broader scholarly network of Syria-based scholars of hadith, history, and biography extending back to the beginnings of the Ayyubid period. This chapter takes this as evidence of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah's interest in documenting the history of Syrian scholarship through his book collection.

Up until now, the discussion has remained focused on the circulation of the Maḥmūdīyah's books before their endowment to the library. However, after the death of his son Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad, Ibrāhīm's books would soon end up with one of the most powerful emirs of the Mamluk state and become religious endowments to his library. The next chapter will explore the tumultuous circumstances behind the endowment of these books to the Maḥmūdīyah Library in Cairo.

## Chapter 3: The Beginning of a Library and the End of Its Founder: The Founding of the Maḥmūdīyah

### *3.0. Introduction*

Shortly after the death of Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad, the emir Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ustādār seized Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad's estate, which included the books of his father Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah. Through his agent in Jerusalem, Maḥmūd had the books transported to Cairo, where he subsequently endowed them to the library of his newly completed madrasa, the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa. In the same year, Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd would eventually fall out of favor with the sultan Barqūq, leading to the seizure of all of his possessions and his arrest. The disgraced emir would eventually die in prison on 9 Rajab 799 (April 16th 1397).

This chapter situates the founding of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa and its library within the timeline of Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's life. Using evidence from contemporaneous literary sources and surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts, I argue that Maḥmūd al-Ustādār endowed his books to his eponymous madrasa in order to protect them from seizure, and most likely had intended to keep using these books for himself after he had endowed them to his madrasa library. Despite Maḥmūd's downfall, his madrasa's endowments would remain relatively intact and the institution would continue to function long after his ignominious death. To conclude, I reconstruct the stipulations of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa's lost endowment deed, outlining the various staff positions Maḥmūd had outlined for his madrasa and its library.

### 3.1. *The supreme ustādār*

Though many sources from the Mamluk period recount Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd’s career trajectory, they remain almost entirely silent about his early life. The great historian ibn Khaldūn (732-808/1332-1406), who knew Maḥmūd personally, mentions in an entry in his history *The Book of Lessons (al-‘Ibar)* that Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd “had a Turkic upbringing...and was among the descendants of Karay al-Manṣūrī.”<sup>1</sup> Karay al-Manṣūrī had served briefly as a viceroy of Damascus in 711/1311 before his imprisonment by the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn.<sup>2</sup> As his Turkic name, his surname (*nisbah*), and his career trajectory suggests, Karay al-Manṣūrī was most likely a Turkic Mamluk purchased by the sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (r. 678-689/1279-1290). Consequently, his grandson Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd was a free born descendant of a Mamluk and not a Mamluk himself.<sup>3</sup>

Early in his career Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd worked in various financial positions in the Mamluk administration that set him on the path to becoming the sultan’s supreme *ustādār*.<sup>4</sup> The earliest reference to Maḥmūd’s career trajectory mentions that he was serving as superintendent of the Rashīd Gate in Alexandria during Peter I of Cyprus’s sack of the city in 767/1365, and, according to the source, it was rumored that Maḥmūd had amassed his vast personal fortune during the chaos that followed the sack of the city.<sup>5</sup> After his stint in Alexandria, Maḥmūd found

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<sup>1</sup> ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘ibar wa-dīwān al-mubtada’ wa-al-khabar fī ayyām al-‘arab wa-al-‘ajam wa-al-barbar* (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘ah al-miṣrīyah bi-būlāq, 1867), 5:497.

<sup>2</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 4:311-312.

<sup>3</sup> The descendants of the Mamluks, frequently referred to in secondary scholarship as *awlād al-nās* (“children of the people”), often held high ranking positions in the Mamluk state bureaucracy. See Josh Lash Meloy, “Awlād al-Nās,” *EI3*.

<sup>4</sup> ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘ibar*, 5:497.

<sup>5</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iẓ wa-al-i‘tibār*, 5:594.

employ as the *ustādār* of the emir Sūdūn Bāq.<sup>6</sup> As *ustādār*, Maḥmūd supervised the financial administration of the emir's properties and possessions. He later would become the supervisor of religious endowments and the *shādd al-dawāwīn*, an inspector responsible for extracting funds owed to the various financial bureaus in the Mamluk administration.<sup>7</sup>

In 790/1388, the sultan Barqūq bestowed upon Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd a string of upper-level bureaucracy positions that would transform Maḥmūd into one of the most powerful members of the Mamluk bureaucracy. He was first appointed as the supreme majordomo (*ustādār al-‘ālīyah*) of the sultan.<sup>8</sup> This position differed from his earlier position as *ustādār* of the emir Sūdūn Bāq, for, in addition to being responsible for the supervision of sultan Barqūq's personal possessions and properties, the supreme *ustādār* also directed the newly created Independent Bureau (*diwān al-mufrad*).<sup>9</sup> This bureau was created by Barqūq for the purpose of supplying his newly created Royal Circassian Mamluk corps with monthly stipends, clothing, and other provisions. Because the funds for this bureau came from the revenues of two of Barqūq's personal land-grants (*iqṭā'*) as opposed to state land, Barqūq established the precedent of appointing the sultan's personal *ustādār* as supervisor of the *diwān al-mufrad*.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to this post, Barqūq also appointed Maḥmūd al-Ustādār as counsellor of both the financial bureaus (*mushīr al-dawlah*) and the bureau of the Privy Purse (*al-khāṣṣ*). The former position gave Maḥmūd authority over the finances of the Mamluk state, while the latter

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.; ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘ibar*, 5:497.

<sup>8</sup> ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh ibn al-Furāt*, ed. Quṣṭanṭīn Zurayq (Beirut: al-Maṭba‘ah al-Amīrkānīyah, 1936), 9:30.

<sup>9</sup> For the history of the position of *ustādār al-‘ālīyah* in the Mamluk state bureaucracy, see Daisuke Igarashi, "The Office of the *Ustādār al-‘Āliya* in the Circassian Mamluk Era," in *Developing Perspectives in Mamluk History: Essays in Honor of Amalia Levononi*, ed. Yuval Ben-Bassat (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 115-142.

<sup>10</sup> For the development of the *diwān al-mufrad*, see Daisuke Igarashi, "The Establishment and Development of al-Dīwān al-Mufrad: Its Background and Implications," *Mamluk Studies Review* X, no. 1 (2006): 117-140.

position gave him authority over administration of both tax revenues accrued from the port of Alexandria as well as the royal coin mint.

The abundant accounts of Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's tenure written by his contemporaries express ambivalence at best and outright condemnation more generally towards the *ustādār*, describing him as a greedy emir who exploited his positions for his own personal gain. In the most flattering and literary description of the *ustādār*, ibn Khaldūn describes Maḥmūd as “a gatherer of revenues, plunging into [the task of] extracting what the sultan was owed. He was an elixir for coins, a magnet for property who could compete with the pens of secretaries and fully carry out the subtleties of book-keeping, using his keen mental faculties, sound apprehension, and piercing intuition,” fulfilling his duties with such proficiency that “tax revenues flowed forth, so much so that the courtyards of the warehouses and treasuries could not contain them all.”<sup>11</sup>

Other contemporaneous sources portray Maḥmūd as ruthlessly efficient at collecting revenue. ibn Ṣaṣrā's *Chronicle of Damascus* provides a brief account of the sultan Barqūq's expedition to Damascus in 793/1391 in which the sultan left to Maḥmūd the task of extracting revenue from the beleaguered inhabitants of the city.<sup>12</sup> al-Maqrīzī describes Maḥmūd as “greedy, tight-fisted, and ravenous when it came to accumulating money.”<sup>13</sup> Elsewhere, al-Maqrīzī attributes the inflation crisis of Egypt in the early ninth/fifteenth century to Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's decision to import copper from Europe during his tenure at the Royal Mint. From this copper he ordered the minting of substandard (*nāqiṣat al-‘iyār*) and lightweight (*nāqiṣat al-wazn*) copper

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<sup>11</sup> ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘ibar*, 5:467.

<sup>12</sup> ibn Ṣaṣrā, *A Chronicle of Damascus, 1389-1397*, trans. and ed. William M Brinner (Berkeley: University of California, 1963), 1:146.

<sup>13</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz wa-al-i‘tibār*, 4:597.

coins (*fulūs*), which had been circulating widely in Egypt and eventually replaced the gold dirham as the dominant currency at the time of al-Maqrīzī's writing. Moreover, al-Maqrīzī states that Maḥmūd's decision to produce these copper coins was motivated by his own financial interests.<sup>14</sup>

An account by Bertrando de Mignanelli, an Italian merchant who was on close terms with the sultan Barqūq, similarly portrays Maḥmūd as a ruthless revenue gatherer during Barqūq's preparation for his expedition against Timur in 796/1394: "It is true of course that a certain official of [Barqūq's] by the name of Mahmud by great extortions of money and other things, diligently provided for his army against any defection... The Damascenes were exceedingly frightened, especially because of Mahmud, who was considered not a man but a devil."<sup>15</sup>

Recounting Barqūq's return from the expedition, de Mignanelli continues:

Do not think that this was the only expense that burdened the Sultan; indeed, he was burdened by many greater ones. So then, he busied himself filling up the treasury with money. He relaxed the reins of the aforementioned Mahmud so that he could collect. This he did gladly; by fair and foul means he collected. The Sultan deceived those who complained of Mahmud's extortions and used fine words. He esteemed Mahmud and raised him above others, because he was always thinking of the return of Thomorlengh (Timur) to Syria. Within a short time, Mahmud had accumulated an enormous treasury.<sup>16</sup>

Though one might dismiss de Mignanelli's account of Maḥmūd as overly biased due to the religious and cultural gap between the Italian merchant and the emir, the events in de Mignanelli's account correspond exactly to the contemporary Egyptian historian ibn al-Furāt's

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<sup>14</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *Ighāthat al-ummah bi-kashf al-ghummah*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah and Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shayyāl (Cairo: Lajnat al-ta'lif wa-al-tarjamah wa-al-nashr, 1940), 71.

<sup>15</sup>Walter Fischel, "Ascensus Barcoch (II): A Latin Biography of the Mamlūk Sultan Barqūq of Egypt (D. 1399) written by B. de Mignanelli in 1416. Rendered into English with an Introduction and Commentary," *Arabica* 6 (1959): 166-167.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.



depiction of Maḥmūd's increased revenue collection activities in the period immediately before and after the Timur expedition.<sup>17</sup>

Several documentary sources add credence to some of the accusations leveled at Maḥmūd al-Ustādār in the literary sources. For example, consider al-Maqrīzī's claim that Maḥmūd had been responsible for the inflation crisis through his decision to produce lightweight substandard copper coins during his tenure at the Royal Mint. Though it is dubious to pin an inflation crisis to the actions of one individual, surviving numismatic evidence confirms that Egyptian copper coins minted during Maḥmūd's tenure at the mint were indeed substandard and lighter in weight than previous iterations of the coinage.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, as has been discussed in detail in Chapter 2, several court records from the Ḥaram al-Sharīf corpus provide evidence corroborating the claims in a literary source that Maḥmūd had collaborated with a corrupt judge in Jerusalem to misappropriate the estates and properties of local Jerusalem notables, such as the books in the estate of Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad which Maḥmūd would eventually endow to the Maḥmūdīyah Library.

Though Maḥmūd might have secured Barqūq's favor through his shrewd acumen for collecting revenues, his downfall began when he neglected the essential function of his post as supreme *ustādār*: The securing of stipends for the sultan's Royal Mamluk Corps. In 794/1392, an incident occurred at the Mountain Citadel which, in the words of the contemporary historian ibn al-Furāt, was "when things started to take a turn for the worse for Maḥmūd."<sup>19</sup> As Maḥmūd tried to enter the citadel, the Royal Mamluk Corps of the sultan had started pelting him with stones

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<sup>17</sup> ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:335, 9:360, 9:371, 9:378.

<sup>18</sup> Warren C. Schultz, "Mahmūd Ibn 'Alī and the 'New Fulūs': Late Fourteenth Century Mamluk Egyptian Copper Coinage Reconsidered," *American Journal of Numismatics* 10 (1998): 127-148.

<sup>19</sup> ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:302.

from their barracks due to his delay in distributing their stipends (*nafaqah*) and clothing allowance (*kiswah*). The sultan's Mamluks then descended on Maḥmūd and started attacking him, only to be stopped through the intervention of another emir.<sup>20</sup> As a light reprimand, Barqūq revoked from Maḥmūd his position of supreme *ustādār* only to grant it to him again two months later.<sup>21</sup>

However, Maḥmūd's relationship with the sultan soured for good on 18 Rabī' al-Awwal 797/January 19<sup>th</sup> 1395 when the sultan ordered the seizure of 500,000 dinars from Maḥmūd. The sources are not clear on the reason for this fine, but the sequence of events that follow implies that it may have been due to Maḥmūd neglecting to pay the sultan's Royal Mamluk Corps their stipends once again. Following the sultan's demands, Maḥmūd only paid 150,000 dinars of the required sum and the following week the sultan's Mamluks pelted Maḥmūd with stones once again for not paying out their stipends and clothing allowances. This angered the sultan, and so he ordered Maḥmūd be brought before him and beaten.<sup>22</sup>

It was roughly around this time that Maḥmūd completed construction of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa. al-Maqrīzī states that the madrasa was constructed in the year 797/1394-1395, but does not provide an exact date.<sup>23</sup> However, the endowment statements on the surviving books in the Maḥmūdīyah corpus all state that the books were endowed to the madrasa on both 15 Sha'bān 797 and 25 Sha'bān 797/ June 13<sup>th</sup> 1395 and June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1395. Thus, the madrasa must have been completed sometime between Muḥarram 797 and Sha'bān 797/November 1394 and June 1395.

After the completion of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa, in Ramaḍān 797/July 1395, the sultan

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 9:302-303.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 9:303, 9:306.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 9:401-402.

<sup>23</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa-al-i'tibār*, 4:590.

Barqūq removed Maḥmūd as superintendent of the Royal Mints in Alexandria and Cairo. His replacement complained to the sultan that under Maḥmūd's watch the Mint had lost a significant sum of coins. Maḥmūd agreed to pay the sum of 150,000 dinars as compensation to the sultan, and this appeared to appease Barqūq. However, several months later, Maḥmūd was slowly stripped of all his titles and positions. With the help of Maḥmūd's personal secretary, the sultan ordered the confiscation of all of Maḥmūd's wealth and possessions. The many hiding spots where Maḥmūd's wealth was uncovered include, in the order in which they were discovered: under the steps of his home,<sup>24</sup> in an abandoned lot behind the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa, a storage house in Alexandria, a storage house of one of Maḥmūd's emirs, his janitor's house, on the roof of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa, at the house of his emir of the stable (*amīr akhūr*), the house of his imam Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar, at the house of the historian ibn Khaldūn, in an old house behind al-Azhar mosque, at the house of a female slave, and at a shoe maker's house.<sup>25</sup> These seizures amounted to the astronomical sum of 1,506,268 dinars and 1,914,500 dirhams, not including the value of Maḥmūd's seized slaves, assets, and material possessions. Barqūq then seized the land grants (*iqṭā'*) of both Maḥmūd and his son Muḥammad.<sup>26</sup> Following this, he ordered the torture of Maḥmūd and his son to extract more information about the whereabouts of any of their additional hidden wealth. The son, unable to pay the 400,000 dirhams imposed upon him by the sultan, was forced to sell all his possessions. When he still came up short, his father Maḥmūd sold his own possessions as well.<sup>27</sup> The son was released, but Barqūq ordered the continued

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<sup>24</sup> ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:429.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 9:432-436.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 9:437.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 9:441.

torture of Maḥmūd.<sup>28</sup> Under much duress, Maḥmūd passed away in the infamous prison *khizānat shamā' il* on the 9 Rajab 799/April 16 1397. His body was later interred at the mausoleum of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa, where presumably it remains to this day.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.2. *The library as an extension of Maḥmūd's household and assets.*

The endowment statements on the Maḥmūdīyah's surviving manuscripts state that each book had been set aside as “a legally sanctioned endowment for students of the noble science to benefit from.” Though we will never know the extent of Maḥmūd's true charitable intentions, several pieces of evidence point to the possibility that Maḥmūd had endowed his books to his madrasa in order to protect them from confiscation. Though his money and his possessions could easily be subject to seizure at the whim of the sultan, any item he set aside as a legally sanctioned religious endowment (*waqf*) would — in theory at least — be protected from seizure. Moreover, as shall be seen below, evidence suggests that Maḥmūd had intended to continue using his books after their endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa.

The first factor to consider is the timing of the book endowment. The endowment statements on all surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts indicate that each book was endowed to the library on either 15 Sha'bān 797 or 25 Sha'bān 797/June 13 1395 or June 23 1395. As we have already seen above, this date coincides with the beginning of Maḥmūd's downfall. Roughly five months before the date of the book endowment, the sultan Barqūq forced Maḥmūd to pay the first in a series of fines. Following this incident, the sultan's corps of Royal Mamluks

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 9:453-454.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 9:477.

attacked Maḥmūd as he was trying to leave the citadel for withholding their stipends.<sup>30</sup> The following month, or four months before the book endowment to the madrasa, the sultan ordered Maḥmūd be beaten over his delay in distributing the clothing stipend for his personal Mamluks, which explains why the Mamluks attacked Maḥmūd the previous month.<sup>31</sup> A month after the book endowment, a new supervisor to the Royal Mint of Alexandria complained to the sultan that over six million dirhams had gone missing during Maḥmūd's tenure as head of the mint. Five months after Maḥmūd's book endowment to his library, the sultan began the systematic forced seizures of Maḥmūd's wealth and possessions, leading to Maḥmūd's imprisonment, torture, and death in prison. When viewed in the context of the events leading to his downfall, Maḥmūd's endowment of his books to the madrasa was most likely a preemptive strategy to protect them from any potential seizures by the authorities.

Another factor to consider is that Maḥmūd had attempted to hide everything he owned from the authorities. Though the narrative of events described above only focused on the gold and silver that was taken from Maḥmūd, other sources such as ibn Khaldūn, whom as we will recall had helped Maḥmūd hide a portion of his wealth, describe some of the items uncovered during the raids on Maḥmūd's properties:

I was in Egypt in the days of al-Malik al-Zahir Abu Sa'id Barquq, who had seized power from the descendants of Qala'un, when he arrested his minister of the interior, the amir Mahmud, and confiscated his property. The man charged with the confiscation informed me that the amount of gold he cleaned out was 1,600,000 dinars. There was in addition a proportionately large amount of fabrics, riding animals, pack animals, livestock, and (grain) crops.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 9:401-402.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 9:402.

<sup>32</sup> ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 1:368.

The historian ibn al-Furāt, who also had contacts among those delegated with the confiscations, adds that Maḥmūd, in addition to the money and possessions described above by ibn Khaldun, also had hidden precious gemstones and fine clothes with various confidants which were uncovered during the confiscations.<sup>33</sup> As can be seen, Maḥmūd was concerned with hiding not only his money but many of his most precious possessions as well. Consequently, it would not be a stretch to imagine that Maḥmūd would use his madrasa as a place to hide his books as well. Indeed, the chain of events described above also show that Maḥmūd was not above using his Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa for hiding his possessions, as we have seen with the vast hordes of gold and silver uncovered in the madrasa during the raids against his properties. We also see that the first librarian Maḥmūd had appointed to the Maḥmūdīyah, his imam Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Umar, had also helped Maḥmūd hide thirty thousand dinars during his downfall.<sup>34</sup> His appointing as librarian the man whom he had entrusted to protect a portion of his wealth from seizure lends further credence to the hypothesis that he had donated his books to the madrasa to protect them from seizure.

The next factor to consider is several interesting clauses in the endowment statements written on the Maḥmūdīyah’s surviving manuscripts. The first clause indicates that Maḥmūd had “assigned supervision of [each] book to himself while he is alive, and thereafter to the person to whom supervision of the aforementioned madrasa has been delegated, as explained in the madrasa’s endowment deed.” The second clause states that Maḥmūd had “also granted himself the right to add to the stipulations [of use] for this [book] and to take away what he sees fit,

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<sup>33</sup> ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:436.

<sup>34</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi’* (Beirut: Dār maktabat al-ḥayāh, 1966), 2:609-610, 5:143-144; ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:436.

disregarding any of the supervisors [of the madrasa], as mentioned in the endowment deed of the aforementioned madrasa.” Given that the only stipulation for book use mentioned in the endowment statement on each book emphatically states that each book was to remain inside the madrasa, this added stipulation makes clear that Maḥmūd still intended to exert some control over the use of these books even after endowing them to his madrasa.

However, this stipulation was not as unusual as it would appear to the modern reader. As Doris Behrens-Abouseif points out, surviving endowment deeds for religious institutions from the Mamluk period only mention among the tasks of the librarian the guarding of a library’s books. The endowment deeds in general make no mention of the management of the contents of the library nor the rules regarding further acquisitions of books. Behrens-Abouseif speculates that the supervisor (*nāẓir*) of the religious institution holding the library would have been the one who would play the more active role in determining the library’s specific needs.<sup>35</sup> The aforementioned stipulation on the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements confirms Behrens-Abouseif’s speculation that the supervisor of a religious institution, in this case Maḥmūd, would have played an active role in the management of an institution’s library.

This stipulation in the endowment statement, when combined with further evidence to be presented below, suggests that Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had partially envisioned his madrasa and its library as being an extension of his own residence and properties. For example, take the proximity of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa to Maḥmūd’s house. According to the historian al-

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<sup>35</sup> Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *The Book in Mamluk Egypt and Syria (1250-1517): Scribes, Libraries, and the Book Market* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019), 22.

Maqrīzī, Maḥmūd had ordered his madrasa be built directly opposite his own house.<sup>36</sup> It is easy to imagine Maḥmūd being able to simply walk a few steps from his front door to continue using the books he had endowed to his library and even bring them back to his nearby house, as would have been his right as per the rules of the book endowment that he had created. Additionally, another contemporary historian, ibn al-Furāt, states that following his death Maḥmūd had been buried under the dome of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa, meaning that the madrasa was also meant to serve as a mausoleum for its founder.<sup>37</sup> The same historian also mentions that Maḥmūd owned several warehouses in the immediate vicinity around his madrasa and his house which he had used to store his possessions and wealth.<sup>38</sup> In this context, the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa and its library were two nodes in a constellation of Maḥmūd’s properties that dotted the area of Cairo south of the Zuwaylah Gate.

### 3.3. Endowments: A private or public act?

The example of Maḥmūd’s book endowment to his madrasa shows the murky lines that separated what have traditionally been called the *waqf ahlī* and the *waqf khayrī*, or family endowments and charitable endowments, respectively. According to this division, the purpose of

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<sup>36</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā’iz wa-al-i’tibār*, 4:590–591. Mamluk emirs frequently constructed mosques next to their place of residence. See for example the endowment of Tānībak ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ilyāsī, studied in Lucian Reinfandt, “Die Beurkundung einer mamlukzeitlichen Familienstiftung vom 12. Ġumādā II 864 (4. April 1460),” in *Islamische Stiftungen zwischen juristischer Norm und sozialer Praxis*, eds. Astrid Meier, Johannes Pahlitzsch and Lucian Reinfandt (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 121.

<sup>37</sup> ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:477. In his work on the elites of Damascus from 1190-1350 AD, Chamberlain similarly notes that one of the primary functions of the madrasa was to serve as a tomb for its founder and his or her family. He further stresses that the madrasa for Damascus elites served as an extension of their own households, going so far as to call them “household endowments.” See Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 51-59.

<sup>38</sup> ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:90, 9:126, 9:132.



a family endowment was to secure a stable source of income for the endower's family after his or her death, whereas a charitable endowment was meant to provide public services for the poor, the sick, or students. However, several studies on endowments in the Mamluk period draw attention to the fact that many ostensibly public endowments during this period also served the added function of securing income producing assets for the endower's family after his or her death.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, recent studies on several endowed book collections in the Arab world from the Mamluk and Ottoman eras show how book endowments originally intended for private use by the endower and his or her family often ended up becoming available to the public.<sup>40</sup> In the case of Maḥmūd's book endowment to his madrasa library, he clearly meant for his books to be used both by the public, as evinced by the endowment stipulation on each book stating the book was to be used by students, but also for his books to be used by himself, as evinced by the endowment stipulation granting Maḥmūd the right to control the use of each book endowed to his madrasa library.

Maḥmūd's endowment strategy reflects the common practice amongst eminent Mamluk emirs and sultans of creating endowment foundations to secure their wealth from confiscation during times of duress. During this politically tumultuous period, when sultans and emirs were frequently toppled by rivaling Mamluk factions, a member of the elite could one day find himself

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<sup>39</sup> Amīn, *al-Awqāf*, 72–73; Carl F Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?: The Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning As a Great Power* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 199–200, 202–203; Adam Sabra, "Public Policy or Private Charity? The Ambivalent Character of Islamic Charitable Endowments," in *Stiftungen in Christentum, Judentum und Islam vor der Moderne: Auf der Suche nach ihren Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden in religiösen Grundlagen, praktischen Zwecken und historischen Transformationen*, eds. Michael Borgolte and Tillmann Lohse (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005), 95–108.

<sup>40</sup> For an example of such a collection in the late Mamluk context, see Hirschler, *Monument*. For an example of such a collection in Ottoman Damascus, see Liebrez, *Die Rifa'iya*.

removed from his position for siding with the wrong faction and subsequently have his possessions and wealth confiscated. Through the creation of a mosque, madrasa, Sufi lodge, or other endowment foundation, a member of the elite could render his or her income-producing assets and accrued wealth both inalienable and tax-exempt. Though a portion of these endowed income-producing assets would be allocated for the maintenance the endowment foundation, endowers would often include a stipulation in the deed declaring that any extra yield from the endowed asset would go to the endower's descendants. Thus, by investing a portion of his or her wealth and assets into the construction and maintenance of an endowment foundation, a member of the Mamluk elite could secure a permanent source of income for his or her descendants long after their death.<sup>41</sup>

The sultan Barqūq, under whom Maḥmūd had served, had similarly engaged in this practice of protecting his wealth during times of distress and political instability through the creation of endowments. During the rebellion of the emirs Miṭāsh and Yalbughā in 791/1389, which had temporarily toppled Barqūq from power, the beleaguered sultan converted several of his private income-producing assets into *waqfs*. Similarly, Barqūq endowed his eponymous madrasa with additional *waqfs* from his assets in Cairo and Syria while he was in Gaza in 796/1394 en route on an expedition to confront Timur, whose expansion westward had posed an existential threat to Barqūq's rule.<sup>42</sup> Maḥmūd al-Ustādār must have been intimately involved with the conversion of Barqūq's personal assets into endowments, seeing as one of his duties as

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<sup>41</sup> For more on this practice, see Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians*, 199-200, 202-203; Amīn, *al-Awqāf*, 70-98. For another example of an endowment made during a politically unstable time in the Circassian Mamluk period to protect a family's assets, see Reinfandt, "Die Beurkundung einer mamlukzeitlichen Familienstiftung," 124.

<sup>42</sup> For more on Barqūq's endowment activities during his reign, see Daisuke Igarashi, "The Private Property and *Awqāf* of the Circassian Mamluk Sultans: The Case of Barqūq," *Orient* 43 (2008): 167-196.

supreme *ustādār* was to supervise the sultan's properties. Moreover, Maḥmūd himself had had his wealth confiscated during the brief interregnum in Barqūq's reign when the rebellious emirs Miṅtāsh and Yalbughā conquered Cairo, so the issue of protecting his assets and wealth must have certainly been on his mind even after Barqūq's return to power.<sup>43</sup>

The circumstances behind the founding of the Maḥmūdīyah Library reflected the tumultuous career of its founder Maḥmūd al-Ustādār. Through his personal judicial connections in Jerusalem he had been able to secure for himself the books of the former Grand Shāfi'ī judge of Egypt. Shortly after acquiring these books he endowed them to his madrasa library, an act which I have shown was at least partially motivated by a desire to protect the books from being seized by the authorities. While it is generally known that emirs in the Mamluk period would convert their income-producing assets to endowments in order to secure portions of their wealth for their offspring, this study shows for the first time an example of an emir creating an endowment for the purpose of protecting his books.

However, Maḥmūd al-Ustādār would not have much time to continue enjoying his books. As we have seen, he was arrested the year following his book endowment to the madrasa and would subsequently die in prison the year after that. Nevertheless, it would appear that his strategy to protect his books worked, for, though he may have lost his wealth, his positions, and ultimately his life, his books would remain in the madrasa opposite his home for long after his ignominious death.

#### *3.4.0. Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's original endowment to the madrasa*

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<sup>43</sup> ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:89–90.

Before looking at how individuals used the Maḥmūdīyah Library and the books held within, it would be useful to understand how the founder of the madrasa Maḥmūd al-Ustādār originally intended for his madrasa and library to be used. Understanding this will enable us to compare Maḥmūd's stipulations of use for the madrasa and its books with the actions of the users of the madrasa and its books. The easiest way to know Maḥmūd's original intentions for the administration of his madrasa would be to look at the madrasa's original endowment deed. Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, the endowment deed to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa has yet to be uncovered, though the evidence in the narrative sources, make constant reference to there having been an endowment deed to the madrasa at some point.

The absence of the endowment deed does beg the question of whether someone had seized Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's income producing assets endowed to the madrasa sometime after his death in prison. Though assets designated as *waqfs* were legally granted immunity from requisition, Mamluk emirs often maneuvered around this inviolability through a practice known as legal exchange (*istibdāl*). By claiming that a particular endowed asset had been abandoned with no one to supervise its management, a member of the elite could seize that endowed asset by exchanging it with a piece of income-producing assets in his or her possession.<sup>44</sup> The endowments of the Maḥmūdīyah could have easily fallen victim to such subterfuge, considering that the original endower Maḥmūd had died in ignominy in 799/1397.

However, several pieces of evidence indicate that the Maḥmūdīyah's endowments remained at least partially intact throughout the course of the ninth/fifteenth century. First, the

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<sup>44</sup> For more on this practice in the Mamluk period, see Amīn, *al-Awqāf*, 341-353.

steady line of librarians working at the Maḥmūdīyah throughout the ninth/fifteenth century (see Appendix C) strongly suggests that the institution's endowments still functioned well enough to provide salaries to its staff members. Additionally, ibn al-Jī'ān's survey of all incoming-producing agricultural land in Egypt in the mid ninth/fifteenth century indicates that the yield of nine *qīrāṭs* of land in a village in the province of al-Sharqīyah were allocated for the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa's endowments.<sup>45</sup> Since the author frequently mentions when tracts of land had changed hands elsewhere in his work, the fact that he doesn't mention any change of ownership for the Maḥmūdīyah's endowed land suggests that the yield of this tract of land still went towards the maintenance of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa by the time of the survey's composition. However, since nine *qīrāṭs* of land corresponds roughly to a meager third of an acre, it is likely that a portion of the land allocated as endowments for the upkeep of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa could have been misappropriated following Maḥmūd's death, though I have not been able to find any documentary evidence to confirm this.

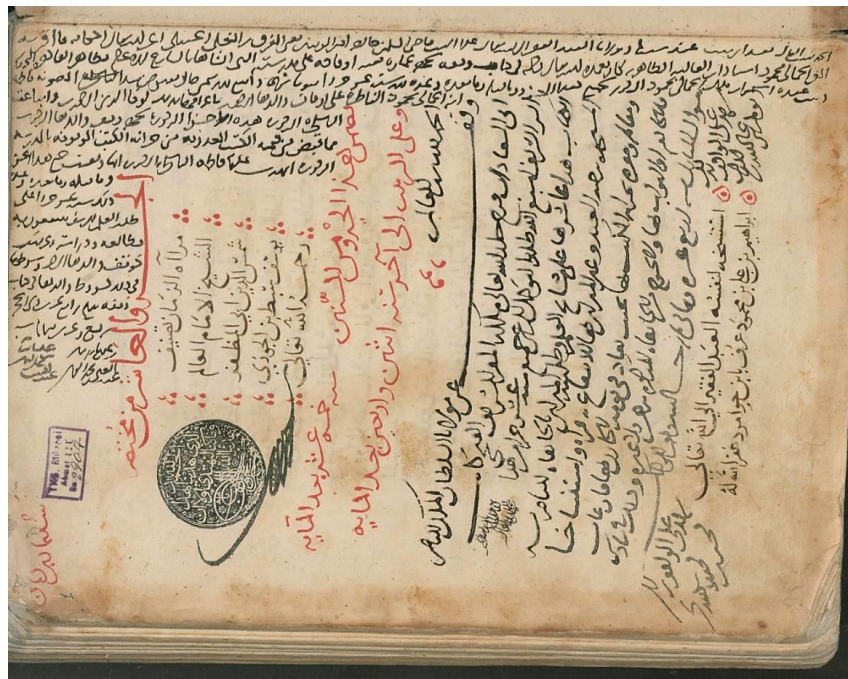
Finally, an interesting note left on several surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts reveals that the Maḥmūdīyah still had an endowment supervisor at least up until the year 829/1426 (see Figure 12 below). The manuscripts in question, several volumes of al-Yūnīnī's abridgement of Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's *The Mirror of Time* (*Mukhtaṣar mir'āt al-zamān*), do not have the original Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement, though they do contain two other endowment statements added at a later date. The first indicates that the original sixteen volumes of the work had been endowed to the Nāṣirīyah Khānqāh's library in the year 814/1412. The second endowment statement, which can be found on the top and left edges of the image in Figure 12 below, was

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<sup>45</sup> ibn al-Jī'ān, *al-Tuḥfah al-sanīyah bi-asmā' al-bilād al-miṣrīyah* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al-ahlīyah, 1898), 37.

written in 829/1426 on behalf of a woman named Fāṭimah, whom the statement introduces as “the daughter of Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd and supervisor of her father’s endowments.” The endowment states that her father had originally endowed the sixteen volumes of the book to his madrasa, and that Fāṭimah had purchased the book back along with other books that had been seized from his library. Then she re-endowed the books back to the Maḥmūdīyah Library, preserving the same stipulations for use of the books that her father had outlined in the madrasa’s original endowment deed. The Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa’s endowments must have been at least partially intact at this point since there was a supervisor to look after them. Moreover, at least one of these supervisors, Maḥmūd’s daughter Fāṭimah, took her duties seriously enough to track down books that had been seized and return them to the library.

FIGURE 12: A RE-ENDOWMENT NOTE WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF MAḤMŪD AL-USTĀDĀR’S DAUGHTER FĀṬIMAH IN 829/1426. ISTANBUL: TOPKAPI SARAYI MŪZESI KŪTŪPHANESİ, MS AHMED III 2907-D10, FOL. 1A.



الحمد لله رب العالمين بعد إنه ثبت عند سيدنا ومولانا الفقيه الفقير إلى الله تعالى علاء الدين قاضي المسلمين خادم أمير المؤمنين مفتي الفرق بن المغلي الحنبلي أعز الله أحكامه ما أقر به المقر الجمالي محمود أستاذار العالية الظاهري كان تغمده الله رحمته في كتاب وقفه بحجة عمارة [؟] أوقافه على مدرسته التي أنشأها بالشارع الأعظم بظاهر القاهرة المحروسة وثبت عنده استمرار ذلك الجمالي محمود المذكور بجميع هذا الجزء وما قبله وما بعده و عدة ذلك ستة عشر جزءاً ثبوتاً شرعياً .... المصونة فاطمة... ابنة الجمالي محمود الناظرة على أوقاف والدها.... وابتاعت الناظرة المذكورة هذه الأجزاء المذكورة بحجة وقف والدها المرحوم مما قبض من... الكتب المعدودة من خزانة الكتب الموقوفة بالمدرسة المذكورة أشهدت عليها فاطمة المذكورة أنها وقفت جميع هذا الجزء وما قبله وما بعده و عدة ذلك ستة عشر جزءاً على طلبة العلم الشريف ينتفعون به مطالعةً ودراسةً وفي ذلك كوقف والدها المرحوم وشرطها في ذلك كشرط والدها في كتاب وقفه بتاريخ رابع عشر من ذي الحجة تسع وعشرين وثمانمائة

“Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds. Our master and protector, the jurisprudent in need of God the most exalted, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, the judge of the Muslims and servant of the Commander of the Faithful, the issuer of legal opinions for all denominations, ibn al-Mughlī the Ḥanbalī, may God fortify his rulings, has confirmed what Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the supreme *ustādār* of the sultan Barqūq (*al-Zāhirī*), and whom God has ensconced in his mercy (i.e., the deceased Maḥmūd), had outlined in his endowment deed for the maintenance of his endowments to his madrasa which he had constructed on the Grand Street on the outskirts of Cairo. Likewise, the continued validity of this [endowment of] the aforementioned Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd, along with this book volume and all those preceding it and following it, in total sixteen volumes, has been legally verified by [the judge ibn al-Mughlī]... Fāṭimah, the daughter of Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd and supervisor of her deceased father’s endowments...has purchased..., with the endowment deed of her deceased father, these aforementioned volumes among the several books that had been seized from the endowed library of the aforementioned madrasa. Fāṭimah has been called to testify that she has endowed this entire volume along with all those preceding and following it, in total sixteen volumes, for students of the noble science to use for private consultation (*muṭāla‘atan*) or for group study (*dirāsatan*), just as is [outlined] in her father’s endowment. Her conditions [of use] for this [volume] are the same as her father’s conditions [of use for the volume] in his endowment deed. Dated the 14<sup>th</sup> of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, 829 (October 26, 1426).

### 3.4.1. The book endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa

Having established that the Maḥmūdīyah’s endowments remained relatively intact throughout the ninth/fifteenth century, let us return to the question of the original outlined functions and positions of this institution. Though its endowment deed is now lost, it is possible to reconstruct specific sections of the deed based on both first-hand accounts of those who had seen the deed, along with paratextual evidence on manuscripts.

The endowment statements on the surviving books from the Maḥmūdīyah Library allow us to reconstruct several stipulations in the original endowment deed concerning the intended use of the library books as well as the delegation of supervision over the madrasa's endowments. As mentioned in the previous section, Maḥmūd had assigned to himself supervision over every book in the library and granted himself the right to add or take away from the stipulations for use of each individual book. The endowment statements on the books state that these two clauses were included in the original endowment deed. Concerning supervision of the Maḥmūdīyah's endowments, the statement on the books also indicates that Maḥmūd had designated in the original endowment deed "the person to whom supervision of the aforementioned madrasa would be delegated" after his death. He also indicated that this person in question would be responsible for the supervision of each book in the madrasa library. Recalling that his daughter Fāṭimah had been supervising the madrasa and its books in 829/1426, the original endowment deed most likely delegated supervision of the madrasa's endowments to a member of Maḥmūd's family after his death, which was a typical stipulation in endowment deeds of the time. Most likely supervision of the madrasa's endowments had been delegated to Fāṭimah after the disappearance and subsequent murder of her brother Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad shortly after the death of Maḥmūd.<sup>46</sup>

The books' endowment statements aimed to keep each book within the madrasa and to deter potential thieves. As we have seen, Maḥmūd had stipulated that it was forbidden to remove any volume from the library. This stipulation might seem self-evident to the modern reader, but

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<sup>46</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmīyah, 1997), 6:200.



it must have seemed unique for scholars at the time judging by their frequent references to this stipulation when they described the library in their works.<sup>47</sup> Leaving no room for exceptions to this clause, Maḥmūd elucidated in each book's endowment statement that "The aforementioned endower has stipulated that neither this volume nor any section of it is to leave the aforementioned madrasa, neither through leaving a deposit nor by any other means." By including the phrase "neither this volume nor any section of it is to leave the aforementioned madrasa," Maḥmūd precludes the possibility of a reader taking an individual quire from the codex and removing it from the library, which was sometimes allowed in other madrasa libraries.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, the clause forbidding the book being removed by leaving a deposit or any other means further highlights that Maḥmūd preempted every pretext that could be used by someone to find a loophole in his stipulation forbidding the removal of his books from the library. Finally, Maḥmūd concluded the endowment statement with the Quranic verse 2:181, a verse commonly invoked as a deterrent for those contemplating breaking the rules of an endowment.

The endowment statements on each book also included specific information about the book that was most likely meant to help the librarian locate and identify the book if it had been taken out the madrasa. Each endowment statement lists the number of total volumes of a specific work that had been included in the original endowment, presumably to make it easier to detect if a volume from the series went missing from the library. Maḥmūd al-Ustādār astutely made sure

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<sup>47</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa-al-i'tibār*, 4:594; ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:299; al-Sakhāwī *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, 5:143.

<sup>48</sup> For example, on the title page of a Maḥmūdīyah book there is another endowment statement above the Maḥmūdīyah endowment which was made to al-Azhar in the year 1208/1794. This later statement contains a clause indicating that the book's endower "stipulated that no more than three quires of [the book] are to be changed out". See Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 1217, fol. 1a.

to mention on every volume all volumes of the work that had been endowed to the madrasa library, such as in the following statement: “Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd has endowed, rendered inalienable, and designated for charitable purposes this entire volume along with all volumes preceding and following it, numbering twenty-one volumes total, of al-Dhahabī’s *History of Islam (Tārīkh al-Islām)*, in the author’s hand...”<sup>49</sup> This provision would allow for diligent librarians to identify a volume as having been taken from the Maḥmūdīyah collection even if the endowment statement had been tampered with or removed, as long as one volume of the work had remained in the madrasa.<sup>50</sup> The endowment statement also mentions if a volume had been missing from a work when the volume had been endowed to the library, such as in the following case: “The book *The Routes of Insight into the Realms of Metropolises (Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār)* by ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī, numbering twenty-two volumes total, was originally twenty-three volumes but the twenty-first volume is lost.”<sup>51</sup> This section of the endowment statement was most likely included to reassure later librarians that the missing volume had not been removed illegally from the madrasa library.

In addition to the endowment statement on the title page of each endowed volume, Maḥmūd al-Ustādār also included a less obvious endowment statement within the pages of each endowed volume, which has been discussed in detail in Chapter 1, Section 1.3. This secondary endowment statement was most likely included as an additional means of identifying a Maḥmūdīyah book if it was taken outside the library. While the book’s main endowment

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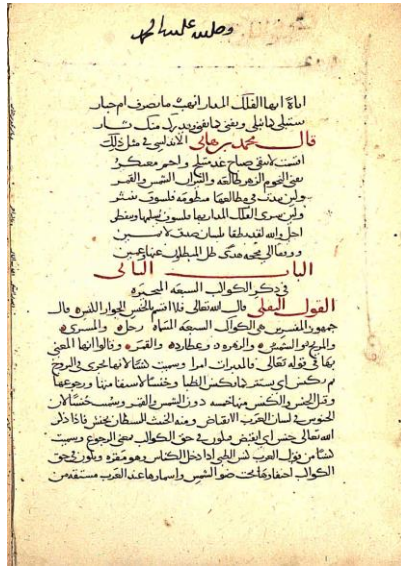
<sup>49</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3005, fol. 2a.

<sup>50</sup> It was Maḥmūd’s foresight to include this information that allowed me to identify many volumes in Istanbul as having been in the Maḥmūdīyah, even when the endowment statements had been crossed out, scratched out, or torn from the codex entirely.

<sup>51</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3422, fol. 3a.

statement on the title page could easily be ripped out, this secondary endowment statement was included within the text proper to make it more difficult to remove. Additionally, the inclusion of the invocation to God to bless the Prophet Muḥammad most certainly served the added mundane function of deterring potential thieves from erasing that section of the secondary endowment statement, thus making it easy for a librarian to identify a stolen Maḥmūdīyah book. Several surviving examples attest that this indeed must have been one of the motivations for including the invocation. For example, in Figure 13 below, the secondary Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement on the manuscript's has been partially erased, but the invocation to bless the prophet Muḥammad has been left intact, making it possible to identify the book as having belonged to the Maḥmūdīyah Library.

**FIGURE 13: PARTIALLY ERASED SECONDARY ENDOWMENT STATEMENT. ISTANBUL: SÜLEYMANIYE KÜTÜPHANESİ, MS FATİH 4116, FOL. 12B.**



### 3.4.2. Other staff positions outlined in the endowment deed

The literary sources also contain information about the various staff positions provided by the original endowment along with any attendant eligibility requirements. First, the original endowment provided a stipend for a librarian position, but this position came with conditions attached, as is clear in the following anecdote transmitted by al-Sakhāwī:

Those seeking the position of librarian at the Maḥmūdīyah were roused up: one of them said that the stipulation indicated that [the librarian] should be a Shāfi‘ī, pointing out that it had been in the hands of our shaykh (ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, a Shāfi‘ī scholar). Another one of them said that [the librarian] should be a Ḥanafī, pointing out the lessons in the madrasa were only for Ḥanafīs. Consequently, the Sultan’s secretary (*dawādār*) ordered that the endowment deed be brought forth and discovered that [the position of librarian] was written for students in the aforementioned lesson (i.e., lessons in Ḥanafī jurisprudence at the Maḥmūdīyah). He asked about them, and it became clear that the man for the job was the shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Jalālī, who held the qualities of piety, virtue, and sound mind. As a result, [the Sultan’s secretary] appointed him to the position and the conflict ceased.<sup>52</sup>

The original endowment deed of the Maḥmūdīyah had stipulated that the position of librarian be filled by the one of the madrasa’s students of Ḥanafī law. This stipulation might seem unusually specific, but several surviving endowment deeds for institutions with libraries from the Mamluk period similarly stipulated that their librarians should already have some affiliation with the institution in question, whether as a student or a staff member.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>al-Sakhāwī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī dhayl al-sulūk*, eds. Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Āshūr, Najwā Muṣṭafā Kāmil, and Labībah Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafā (Cairo: Maṭba‘at dār al-kutub wa-al-wathā’iq al-qawmīyah, markaz taḥqīq al-turāth, 2002), 3:42-43.

<sup>53</sup> For examples of this stipulation, see the endowment deed of the Barqūq madrasa-*khānqāh* complex, published in Felicitas Jaritz, “Auszüge aus der Stiftungsurkunde des Sultan Barqūq,” in *Madrasa, Ḥanqāh und Mausoleum des Barqūq in Kairo*, ed. Saleh Lamei Mostafa. (Glückstadt: J.J. Augustin, 1982), 129; see also the endowment deeds of the madrasa-*khānqāh* of Barsbāy and the madrasa-*khānqāh* of Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Ustādār, published in Leonor E. Fernandes, *The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: The Khanqah*. (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1988), 58, 84.

The account related by al-Sakhāwī above also reveals that Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's endowment deed stipulated for lessons in Ḥanafī jurisprudence, which al-Sakhāwī confirms in another source as well.<sup>54</sup> Evidence from other narrative sources confirms that all jurisprudence professors at the Maḥmūdīyah were indeed of the Ḥanafī school, the most prominent among them being the famed scholar Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī.<sup>55</sup> The stipulations providing only for a jurisprudence professor of the Ḥanafī school here coincide with the general trend among Mamluk elites of the period of promoting the Ḥanafī school.<sup>56</sup>

The endowment of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa also provided a stipend for a professor of hadith transmission (*ismāʿ al-hadith*) and a professor of hadith recitation (*qirāʿat al-hadith*). Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, in addition to his position as librarian at the Maḥmūdīyah, also served the posts of both professor of hadith transmission and hadith recitation at the madrasa. Upon his death, he left both these positions to his student Shihāb al-Dīn ibn al-ʿAṭṭār. However, al-Sakhāwī states that “it was discovered in the endowment deed that the endower had stipulated that these positions must go to two separate men, so Shihāb al-Dīn ibn al-ʿAṭṭār continued his position of hadith transmission, and Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Damīrī was appointed to the hadith recitation position.”<sup>57</sup> The incident not only reveals that Maḥmūd had stipulated that there be two separate positions for hadith recitation and transmission, but also serves as a reminder that the endowment deed was not always followed in practice, for ibn

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<sup>54</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb wa-bughyat al-ṭullāb fī al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-mazārāt wa-al-tarājim wa-al-biqāʿ al-mubārakāt*, eds. Maḥmūd Rabī and Ḥasan Qāsim (Cairo: al-ʿUlūm wa-al-ādāb, 1937), 105.

<sup>55</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Dawʿ al-lāmiʿ*, 10:132.

<sup>56</sup> For an overview on the Mamluk elite's promotion of the Ḥanafī *madhhab*, see Leonor E. Fernandes, “Mamluk Politics and Education: The Evidence from Two Fourteenth Century Waqfiyya[s],” *Annales islamologiques* 23 (1987): 87-98.

<sup>57</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 2:595.

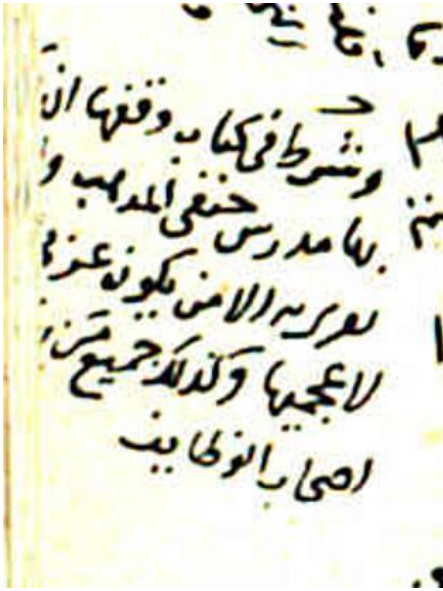
Ḥajar's serving the two positions simultaneously appears to have disregarded the stipulations that Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had originally outlined for the madrasa. This shall be a common theme, as we shall see in Chapter 4.

A marginal note in a recension of al-Maqrīzī's *al-Khiṭaṭ*, MS Ayasofya 3482, reveals another stipulation that was in the Maḥmūdīyah's endowment deed (see Figure 14 below). In the marginal note, the copyist writes the following next to al-Maqrīzī's entry on the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa: “[Maḥmūd al-Ustādār] stipulated in [the madrasa's] endowment deed that there is to be a professor of the Ḥanafī school of law, and that only those who are of Arab origin, and not Persians (*'arabī al-aṣl lā 'ajamī*) are to recite the Quran (*yuqri*) in [the madrasa], as is to be the case with everyone holding positions there.”<sup>58</sup> This marginal note reveals that Maḥmūd had provided a stipend for at least one Quran reciter, a common position for endowment foundations with tombs for their founders such as the Maḥmūdīyah.

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<sup>58</sup> Bauden and Gardiner compare MS Ayasofya 3480, another volume of *al-Khiṭaṭ* copied by the same copyist as MS Ayasofya 3482, with Michigan Islamic MS 605, the only known volume of al-Maqrīzī's fair copy of *al-Khiṭaṭ*. They reach the conclusion that the copyist of MS Ayasofya 3480 had direct access to al-Maqrīzī's holograph copy and took great pains to transmit any blank spaces and marginal notes left by al-Maqrīzī in Michigan Islamic MS 605. Thus, the marginal note transmitted by the copyist of MS Ayasofya 3482 concerning the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa's endowment deed was most likely al-Maqrīzī's original note he had written in his holograph copy of *al-Khiṭaṭ*. See Frédéric Bauden and Noah Gardiner, “A Recently Discovered Holograph Fair Copy of al-Maqrīzī's *al-Mawā'iz wa-al-i'tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār* (Michigan Islamic MS 605),” *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 2.2 (2011): 126.

FIGURE 14: MARGINAL NOTE STATING THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH’S ENDOWMENT DEED FORBADE PERSIANS FROM HOLDING STAFF POSITIONS. ISTANBUL: SŪLEYMANIYE KŪTŪPHANESİ, MS AYASOFYA 3482, FOL. 115B.



ح Note:  
 و شرط في كتاب وقفها أن يكون بها مدرس حنفي المذهب وأن لا يقرئ إلا من يكون عربي الأصل لا عجميها (كذا) وكذلك جميع من بها من أصحاب الوظائف

And [Maḥmūd al-Ustādār] stipulated in [the madrasa’s] endowment deed that there is to be a professor of the Ḥanafī school of law in [the madrasa], and that only those of Arab origin, and not Persians, are to recite the Quran in [the madrasa], as is to be the case with everyone holding positions there.

The stipulation gleaned from this marginal note requiring all staff members of the Maḥmūdīyah to be of Arab and not Persian origin stands in contrast with stipulations of several educational institutions in Mamluk Cairo contemporary to the Maḥmūdīyah whose founders intentionally aimed at hiring non-Egyptians who could speak Turkish and/or Persian in addition to Arabic, as well as providing stipends for foreign students.<sup>59</sup> Maḥmūd’s specific prejudice against the hiring of Persian staff can be seen as a response to the growing influx of Persians fleeing to Cairo in a process that began with the Mongol invasions into the Persian lands in the mid seventh/thirteenth century and accelerated once again following the conquests of Persia by Timur Lang at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century, in events roughly coinciding with the

<sup>59</sup> Fernandes, “Mamluk Politics and Education.”

founding of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa.<sup>60</sup> The appointment of these newly-arrived Persians to positions in the Egyptian state apparatus provoked feelings of xenophobia among local Egyptians, most notably in the historian al-Maqrīzī.<sup>61</sup> Unlike the Mamluk elites who had constructed educational institutions to cater to these foreign students and scholars, Maḥmūd al-Ustādār was, as we have established earlier, was a descendant of Mamluks born within the Mamluk realms. Consequently, Maḥmūd most likely held more of a chauvinism towards Egypt and Egyptians than other Mamluk emirs who had been brought over to Egypt as slaves. Finally, it would appear that at least this stipulation of the endowment deed was abided by in the ninth/fifteenth century, for among all the biographies of scholars who held positions in the Maḥmūdīyah not one of them appears to have been of Persian background.

Finally, architectural features from the surviving madrasa can also be used to reconstruct some of the stipulations in the original endowment deed. The presence of a minaret in the original building means most likely that there was a stipend for a muezzin. Additionally, the madrasa contains several living units on the upper floors, suggesting that Maḥmūd had also included stipends for the upkeep of residents in his madrasa.<sup>62</sup> A biographical entry from the ninth/fifteenth century referring to a certain scholar as a “resident of Maḥmūd’s madrasa” confirms that scholars were indeed taking advantage of this stipulation.<sup>63</sup>

In summary, from a perusal of narrative and paratextual sources we can confirm the

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<sup>60</sup> For more on the migration of Persian scholars to Mamluk Cairo, see Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 61-68.

<sup>61</sup> Fernandes, “Mamluk Politics and Education.”

<sup>62</sup> Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 74.

<sup>63</sup> al-Biqā‘ī, *Unwān al-zamān bi-tarājim al-shuyūkh wa-al-aqrān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo: Dār al-kutub wa-al-wathā’iq al-qawmīyah, 2009), 4:176.



following about the original endowment made to the Maḥmūdīyah: Concerning its administrative functions, Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had stipulated that he would be in charge of the institution while he was alive then delegate its supervision to someone else. As we have seen with the case of the stolen Maḥmūdīyah book returned by his daughter Fāṭimah, Maḥmūd most likely stipulated the supervisor of his endowments to be one of his descendants. He also stipulated that he would be in charge of supervising the madrasa's library books and granted himself the ability to add or take away stipulations concerning the usage of each book. The endowment provided stipends for a librarian, a professor of Ḥanafī fiqh, a professor of hadith recitation (*qirā'at al-hadīth*), a professor of hadith transmission (*ismā' al-hadīth*), at least one Quran reciter, a muezzin, and funds for the upkeep of residents in the madrasa's upper-floor dormitories. Finally, the entire staff was to be only of Arab origin and not Persian.

It bears repeating here that due to the absence of a surviving endowment deed, our reconstruction of the original endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah remains imperfect. Due to the inherently '*ulamā'*'-oriented bias of the sources consulted for this section it was impossible to determine the more mundane aspects of the Maḥmūdīyah's daily functioning and administration that an endowment deed would have been able to provide.

### *3.5. Conclusion*

Nevertheless, several conclusions can be drawn about the Maḥmūdīyah's original endowment based on what can be constructed from the sources mentioned above. Firstly, Maḥmūd al-Ustādār took many steps to ensure that the books that he endowed would remain in

the madrasa or at least would be able to be identified if someone removed them from the madrasa. Secondly, the Maḥmūdīyah provided stipends for a number of professorial positions and also for residents of the madrasa. Finally, the original endowment also endowed for the position of a librarian, the duties and lives of which shall be explored in the following section.

This chapter has explored the motivations behind Maḥmūd's endowment to his madrasa, as well as the positions outlined in the madrasa's now lost endowment deed. In other words, the focus of this chapter has been on how the founder Maḥmūd al-Ustādār *intended* his madrasa and library to function. The next chapter will discuss how staff and patrons actually used the library, which we will see was often in violation of the rules set out in the institution's endowment deed.

## Chapter 4: The Institutional History of the Maḥmūdīyah Library, 797-1286/1395-1870

### *4.0. Introduction*

This chapter explores the institutional history of the Maḥmūdīyah Library from the date of its book endowment in 797/1395 until the late thirteenth/nineteenth century. The chapter addresses the performance of the Maḥmūdīyah's librarians during the first hundred years of the library's operation. It shows that, in violation of hiring requirements outlined in the madrasa's endowment deed, many of the librarians received their positions through connections with the Mamluk military elite. Additionally, the chapter shows that books had disappeared from the Maḥmūdīyah under most of the librarians' watch.

The chapter then addresses the issue of the plunder of Mamluk madrasa libraries in Cairo following the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 923/1517. While other studies overly rely on the literary sources' depictions of Ottoman plunder, documentary sources from several cases in Syria do confirm that books were transferred from Syrian library collections to Istanbul following the Ottoman conquest. Furthermore, using evidence in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus, I argue that most of the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts currently held in the Istanbul collections of Ayasofya and Ahmed III had arrived in Istanbul following the Ottoman conquest of Egypt. However, the paratextual evidence on many other Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts currently held in Istanbul show that some Maḥmūdīyah books had remained in Cairo following the Ottoman conquest.

The last section of the chapter looks at how the Maḥmūdīyah fared during the subsequent period of Ottoman rule in Egypt (923-1286/1517-1870). Though not mentioned in the

contemporaneous literary, the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa and its library did remain operational during this period, albeit with a much reduced book collection.

#### *4.1.0. The Maḥmūdīyah's librarians*

ibn Ḥajar's loyal student al-Sakhāwī took a special interest in the Maḥmūdīyah Library and its librarians. In particular, his biographical entries about the Maḥmūdīyah's librarians allow us to construct a continuous timeline of librarians who worked at the Maḥmūdīyah from its founding in 797/1395 all the way to the very end of the ninth/fifteenth century. These biographical entries also reveal several important details about the Maḥmūdīyah Library: Its day-to-day functioning, the extent to which these librarians succeeded in keeping the Maḥmūdīyah's books in the madrasa, and the ways these librarians received their positions.

#### *4.1.1. A brief overview of the librarians of the Maḥmūdīyah<sup>1</sup>*

The first librarian of the Maḥmūdīyah was Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar. As we have already seen in Chapter 3, Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar had served as Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's imam and had also helped him hide a sizeable portion of his wealth from confiscation by the state authorities. However, 'Umar had been just as unsuccessful in keeping Maḥmūd's books as he was in protecting Maḥmūd's wealth, for he was dismissed following the discovery that 130 volumes had

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<sup>1</sup> For a table of the librarians, the years they served, and reasons for their appointment and dismissal, please consult Appendix C at the end of the dissertation.

disappeared from the Maḥmūdīyah under his watch.<sup>2</sup>

Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Umar’s replacement, Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Uthmān, did not fare too much better as a librarian, as we have also seen in Chapter 3. In the beginning of his tenure, ‘Uthmān had acquired such a reputation for not allowing users to take out the library’s books that he had acquired the nickname “the Tyrant” (*al-ṭāghī*). As his successor ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī recounts, at first ‘Uthmān would not even allow prominent men of state to take out books.<sup>3</sup> However, in the year 826/1423 ‘Uthmān was dismissed from his position when it was discovered that books had disappeared under his watch as well.<sup>4</sup>

Following ‘Uthmān’s dismissal, ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī took up the position of Maḥmūdīyah librarian, which he held until his death in 852/1449. At that point he had already been serving as professor of hadith at the Maḥmūdīyah for seventeen years, so we can imagine that he had been eyeing the librarian position during Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Uthmān’s tenure. As al-Sakhāwī relates, ibn Ḥajar started off his tenure with diligence:

Our shaykh [ibn Ḥajar] wished to supervise [the Maḥmūdīyah Library] himself. He made a catalogue for it organized alphabetically by title, along with another organized by subject matter. In this way he had benefited from this and God had benefited him. He generally used to stay in the library one day a week, and over the course of the week he would write a list of what [books] he needed to review [in the library] for his own works or for other reasons so that he would remember it on the day he would be [in the library], as I have seen in his own hand. Through his efforts it was possible to return items that had been lost before him. He remained at the position until he died, then Abū al-Khayr took it up.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 5:143-144.

<sup>3</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:299.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 2:609-610.

As can be seen, ibn Ḥajar made frequent use of the Maḥmūdīyah's books as a reference source for his own works. Several surviving Maḥmūdīyah books do in fact contain marginal notes scribbled in the hand of ibn Ḥajar, as will be explored in more detail in the following chapter.

Though ibn Ḥajar may have been able to reverse some of the damage done to the Maḥmūdīyah Library by his predecessors, the rare books appeared to have been too great a temptation for even him to resist. al-Sakhāwī, in a passage heaping praise on ibn Ḥajar's willingness to lend out his own books to his students, states:

Regarding his lending out of books, it is a matter in which he stands out above anyone else in his country. I would go so far as to say that I do not know any equaled to him in this. He would even lend out books to those who would go on travels with them. Many is the time he would offer up his own books for the sake of those in the Maḥmūdīyah. He would even tell me, may he rest in peace, "Only take books from the library that I don't already own." I swear to God, he forbade me from borrowing books from anyone else other than him.<sup>6</sup>

Though al-Sakhāwī makes it appear that ibn Ḥajar did try to prevent his students from taking out books from the Maḥmūdīyah, he also implies that ibn Ḥajar would indeed allow his students to borrow its books if the book in question was not already in his possession.

Elsewhere al-Sakhāwī reveals that ibn Ḥajar would take out books for himself. After ibn Ḥajar passed away, his grandson sent al-Sakhāwī a copy of his will, which the latter would

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 3:1018.

reproduce in his biography of ibn Ḥajar. After granting the grandson a sum of his wealth, ibn Ḥajar requested that the grandson use the money to purchase what he would like from ibn Ḥajar's book collection with the exception of:

My own works written in my own hand that I had owned when I was in good health. He should endow those to students of the noble science of hadith. They should be under his watch while he is alive, and then they should stay in the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa in the Muwāzinīyīn District... Among [my books] are a great deal of volumes from the Maḥmūdīyah from the Maḥmūdīyah's endowments. He should make haste to identify them and transfer them to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, it would appear that ibn Ḥajar had been taking books out of the Maḥmūdīyah as well in violation of Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's endowment stipulation. However, he had sought to rectify the situation by ordering the books be returned to the Maḥmūdīyah in his will. al-Sakhāwī concludes the story of ibn Ḥajar's will with the following passage:

[ibn Ḥajar's] son and the rest of his inheritors carried out most of [the will]. Regarding the books, they did not follow through with his wish, not even with regard to the endowed books that had been in his possession... All of the books got dispersed and many of them, particularly the books composed by others in his hand, were carried off just like that to the Supervisor of the Bureau of the Privy Purse al-Jamālī without anything offered in compensation. This was all started through the grandson. Thus any benefit to be had from these books was rendered null and void.<sup>8</sup>

A surviving Maḥmūdīyah volume exists whose paratexts, when collaborated with the above mentioned passage by al-Sakhāwī, confirm that ibn Ḥajar's grandson did indeed make off with at least one Maḥmūdīyah book that he had acquired from his grandfather's will. The volume

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 3:1205.

<sup>8</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 3:1207.

in question, Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 474, is an interesting specimen (see Figure 15 below). It is a codex consisting of two volumes of a work by al-Dhahabī. The first volume was written in al-Dhahabī's hand. Its title page contains the ownership statement of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah, whose books as it will be recalled Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had misappropriated and endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah. The second volume of the codex was a copy of the work written in a different hand at a later date in 801/1399, or four years after the book endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Library. The title page of this second volume contains the following two notes:

**FIGURE 15: NOTES BY IBN ḤAJAR AND HIS GRANDSON ON A MAḤMŪDĪYAH VOLUME. ISTANBUL: SŪLEYMANIYE KŪTŪPHANESİ, MS AYASOFYA 474, FOL. 169A.**



<p>أحمد بن علي بن حجر هو والذي قبله</p>	<p>Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar [owns] this [volume] and the one preceding it.</p>
<p>من من نعم الله على عبده يوسف سبط ابن حجر هو والذي قبله في سنة 855</p>	<p>A gift among the blessings of God upon his most insignificant servant, Yūsuf, the grandson of ibn Ḥajar. This [volume] and the one preceding it, in the year 855.</p>

Going off of this evidence, ibn Ḥajar must have not only taken out the first volume of MS Ayasofya 474 from the Maḥmūdīyah, but also bound it to his own personal copy of the second volume of MS Ayasofya 474. And, confirming al-Sakhāwī's anecdote, ibn Ḥajar's grandson Yūsuf did indeed inherit some of the endowed books to the Maḥmūdīyah from ibn Ḥajar after the



latter's death in 852/1449. Furthermore, Yūsuf did not return the Maḥmūdīyah books in ibn Ḥajar's possession to the library.

After ibn Ḥajar's death in 852/1449, Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās took up the position of Maḥmūdīyah librarian for a brief period.<sup>9</sup> Abū al-Khayr stands out among the staff of the Maḥmūdīyah for his unusual background. As his surname (*nisbah*) indicates, he started out life as a coppersmith. Though he had memorized the Quran and had received a basic religious education, he was reported to have been a mediocre student and soon returned to working in his father's coppersmith shop. Perhaps due to his less than stellar intellectual pedigree and commoner background, the chronicles and biographical dictionaries depict Abū al-Khayr's rise to power with contempt and belittlement. One day, Abū al-Khayr had managed to gain favor with the sultan Jaqmaq when he had raised a complaint before the sultan regarding unpaid debts owed to him by a powerful member of the Mamluk bureaucracy. From there, Abū al-Khayr managed to remain a constant figure in the sultan's court and, as the sources indicate, had succeeded in bringing down the grand Shāfi'ī judge of the time over charges of corruption. The sultan granted Abū al-Khayr many of the positions of the disgraced Shāfi'ī judge, including supervisor of the treasury, supervisor of the collection of the *jizyah* tax on Christians and Jews, and supervision of production of the *kiswah*, the drape covering the Ka'bah sent annually to Mecca by the Mamluk sultan in Cairo.<sup>10</sup> By the time Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās took up ibn Ḥajar's position as librarian of the Maḥmūdīyah in 852/1449, he had reached the apogee of his

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<sup>9</sup> For the primary sources consulted in this section on Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās I am indebted to Richard T. Mortel, "The Decline Of Mamlūk Civil Bureaucracy In The Fifteenth Century: The Career Of Abū L-Khayr al-Naḥḥās," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 2, (July 1995): 173–188.

<sup>10</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw' al-lāmi'*, 7:63.

power, prompting the contemporary observer ibn Taghrī Birdī to observe that “he came to rule all the Egyptian, Syrian and Aleppine territories, and became the most influential person in all the kingdom; he obtained such power and authority as was not to be seen elsewhere in our time.”<sup>11</sup>

This sequence of events begs the question: how and why did Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās receive the position of the Maḥmūdīyah librarian at this point in his career? Any financial motivation can be ruled out. Though no information about the Maḥmūdīyah staff’s stipends survives, librarians in the Mamluk period generally received a paltry salary, usually receiving similar pay to the institution’s custodial positions.<sup>12</sup> Abū al-Khayr at this point had been able to amass enough wealth and influence in the Mamluk bureaucracy to obviate the need for such a small salary.

Instead, his motivation seems to have been to secure the position as a reward for a member of his inner circle named Muḥammad al-Turaykī. al-Sakhāwī tells us that a young Zakarīyā al-Anṣārī applied for the Maḥmūdīyah librarian position following ibn Ḥajar’s death, but his ambitions were stymied when “al-Naḥḥās took action and took [the position] for al-Turaykī.”<sup>13</sup> A Mālikī scholar born and raised in the Maghrib to an originally Damascene family, al-Turaykī had fled to Cairo in 845-6/1449, where he studied with ibn Ḥajar shortly before the latter’s death. After serving a very brief stint as the head Mālikī judge of Damascus in 852/1448, al-Turaykī joined the retinue of Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās in Cairo. Abū al-Khayr granted al-

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<sup>11</sup> ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Ḥawādith al-duḥūr fī madā al-ayyām wa-al-shuhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Izz al-Dīn (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-kutub, 1990), 1:278.

<sup>12</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *The Book*, 29.

<sup>13</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’ al-lāmi’*, 3:237.

Turaykī the position of Maḥmūdīyah librarian sometime around the very end of 852 or the beginning of 853/1449 as a consolation prize for his inability to secure for him the position of chief Mālikī judge of Egypt.<sup>14</sup>

However, in 854/1450 al-Turaykī suffered a fall from grace in a series of trials set off by his connections to Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās, who at that point had antagonized too many prominent members of the Mamluk bureaucracy and had gone through his own humiliating downfall. Following the familiar pattern we have seen earlier with the confidants of Maḥmūd al-Ustādār, al-Turaykī had been hiding thousands of dinars for his patron Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās. After his refusal to divulge their location, an inquiry into his time as chief Mālikī judge in Damascus revealed that he had made a scandalous comment on a hadith. Upon learning this, the sultan ordered al-Turaykī be beaten and exiled back to his homeland of Tunis.<sup>15</sup>

Following this incident, in the year 854/1450 a student of Ḥanafī jurisprudence at the Maḥmūdīyah named Muḥammad al-Jalālī received the Maḥmūdīyah librarian position. Though al-Sakhāwī does not mention how long al-Jalālī held the position, he most likely served as librarian until 860/1456, the approximate year of his death, since al-Sakhāwī mentions that he had bequeathed the librarian position to his son Aḥmad.<sup>16</sup> Aḥmad had acquired a number of other positions during his tenure as Maḥmūdīyah librarian, rising to the rank of a deputy judge. However, he was forced to step down from his deputy judgeship after Muḥibb al-Dīn ibn al-Shiḥnah, the chief Ḥanafī judge of Egypt at the time, pressured the young Aḥmad into letting

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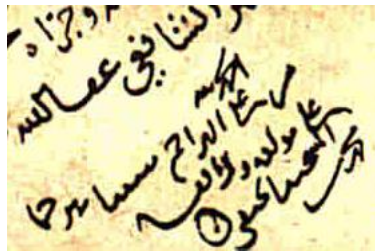
<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 6:286-87.

<sup>15</sup> al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-‘aṣr li-asrār ahl al-‘aṣr*, ed. Muḥammad Sālim ibn Shadīd al-‘Awfī (al-Muhandisīn, Jīzah: Hajar lil-ṭibā‘ah wa-al-nashr wa-al-tawzī‘ wa-al-‘ilān, 1992), 1:234-239.

<sup>16</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk*, 3:42-43; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-lāmi‘*, 8:228.

him take the books he wanted from the Maḥmūdīyah. The young Aḥmad could not take it anymore and resigned from his deputy judgeship, even after he had already given ibn al-Shiḥnah more than one hundred volumes from the Maḥmūdīyah. These volumes would only be returned to the Maḥmūdīyah after Aḥmad’s death in 871/1467.<sup>17</sup>

FIGURE 16: A NOTE BY THE JUDGE MUḤIBB AL-DĪN IBN AL-SHIḤNAH’S ON A MAḤMŪDĪYAH VOLUME. ISTANBUL: SÜLEYMANIYE KÜTÜPHANESİ, MS AYASOFYA 3014, FOL. 318A.



<p>الحمد لله مر على التراجم ترتيباً مرحماً على مؤلفه وواقفه محمد بن الشحنة الحنفي</p>	<p>Praise be to God The Ḥanafī Muḥammad ibn al-Shiḥnah perused the biographies in order, wishing that [the book’s] author and endower rest in peace.</p>
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The following librarian of the Maḥmūdīyah, Sālīm al-‘Abbādī, must have started his tenure at the latest in 871/1467, the year of his predecessor’s death. From a poor background, al-‘Abbādī managed to join the entourage of the powerful Mamluk commander-in-chief (*atābak al-asākir*) Azbak al-Zāhirī Jaqmaq, serving as his imam and advisor. During this period, al-‘Abbādī acquired a great amount of wealth as well as a “countless number of religious positions” through his connections to the emir, including the Maḥmūdīyah librarian position.<sup>18</sup> In his biographical notice on the librarian, al-Sakhāwī praises al-‘Abbādī’s handling of the library’s affairs, but in the entry on the previous librarian al-Sakhāwī mentions that “then Sālīm al-‘Abbādī was appointed librarian [of the Maḥmūdīyah] and ruined it.”<sup>19</sup> This contradiction in his

<sup>17</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Dhayl ‘alā raf’ al-iṣr, aw bughyat al-‘ulamā’ wa-al-ruwāh*, eds. Jūdah Hilāl and Muḥammad Maḥmūd Ṣubḥ (Cairo: al-Dār al-miṣrīyah, 1966), 382.

<sup>18</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’ al-lāmi’*, 3:240.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:154.

evaluation of the librarian might best be explained by Sālim’s decision to allow an affiliate of his named Muḥammad al-‘Abbādī to temporarily serve as librarian in his place (*istanābahu*). Furthermore, in al-Sakhāwī’s estimation Muḥammad did not attend to his duties well.<sup>20</sup> As his surname (*nisbah*) suggests, Muḥammad came from the same village as Sālim, and al-Sakhāwī draws attention to this fact to imply that Sālim gave Muḥammad the librarian position — in addition to other posts — as an act of regional nepotism.<sup>21</sup> Regardless, it seems that Sālim retained the librarian position until the very end of the ninth/fifteenth century, for al-Sakhāwī ends his entry on Sālim with the phrase “may God, may He be exalted, give him a good ending” (*Allāh ta ‘ālā yushin ‘āqibatahu*). This phrase indicates that Sālim must have been alive when al-Sakhāwī completed his biographical dictionary at the end of the ninth/fifteenth century.<sup>22</sup> After this biographical entry, we have no further information about any subsequent Maḥmūdīyah librarians in any of the narrative sources.

#### 4.1.2. *The working hours of the Maḥmūdīyah Library*

The sources indicate that the Maḥmūdīyah librarians had a fair amount of freedom in determining their work hours. In his biography of ibn Ḥajar, al-Sakhāwī provides a day-by-day breakdown of his teacher’s hectic weekly schedule. He says:

When he was a judge he would ride to the hadith recitation sessions at the Citadel two or three days a week after the midday prayers, then he would come back after the late afternoon call to prayer.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 8:112-113.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 3:240.

On Tuesdays he would ride off from his house an hour after sunrise to recite his works to his students out loud. After finishing he would go to his Aleppine wife's house which was in the Baybarsīyah Sufi lodge...and stay with her. Then he would go to the Sufi lodge. Then he would go back to his house towards sunset.

On Wednesday he would usually be at the Ṭūlūn mosque at the start of the day. Then he would return to the Maḥmūdīyah and stay there until around late afternoon, reading books by himself (*yūṭāli*'), composing works, and having books read aloud to him. Then he would go to the Mu'ayyadīyah Mosque.

On Friday, when he was serving as judge, he would ride out about an hour or a third of an hour or so before the call to prayer, then give a Friday sermon before the sultan. Then he would go back to his Aleppine wife's house, usually being unable to reach her for other than these two days. When he wasn't serving as judge, he would either head out two hours early to the 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ mosque to give the Friday sermon himself, or head to the al-Ḥākīm mosque an hour early to give the Friday sermon.<sup>23</sup>

al-Sakhāwī's account of ibn Ḥajar's weekly schedule highlights how little time ibn Ḥajar spent attending to his duties as librarian at the Maḥmūdīyah. However, considering al-Sakhāwī's glowing evaluation of ibn Ḥajar as a librarian elsewhere in his biography of his teacher, working one day a week must have been considered quite normal for a librarian and not worthy of rebuke.

If the position was indeed part-time, was the library was open to the public at all times without anyone to guard the books? al-Sakhāwī answers this question in the following anecdote about ibn Ḥajar:

One day [ibn Ḥajar] went to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa and couldn't find its key, for he had left it at home. So he called for a carpenter, and he started praying until the carpenter finished opening the door. It was said to him: If you had sent for me I would have brought the key from your house and it would have been less expensive. [ibn Ḥajar] said: This was faster, and the second key could be of use to me.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 3:1052.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:171.

This passage shows that the Maḥmūdīyah librarian had access to a key to the building and that the door to the building remained locked when a staff member was not present. Of course, ibn Ḥajar must have had more of a say in determining the building's functioning hours than other librarians, for he simultaneously held the positions of the Maḥmūdīyah's librarian, professor of hadith transmission, and professor of hadith recitation. Nevertheless, it is clear from the passage above that the Maḥmūdīyah's doors were not open to the public the whole time.

Since no other librarian at the Maḥmūdīyah held as many simultaneous positions as ibn Ḥajar, it is probable that some of them had more time to dedicate to the job than a few hours a day for one day a week. Manuscript evidence confirms that this was the case for at least the sixth librarian of the Maḥmūdīyah, Muḥammad al-Jalālī. The manuscripts in question, a several-volume set of al-Ṭahāwī's *Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār* (*An Explanation of Problematic Traditions*), contain detailed collation notes indicating that the owner of the volumes had collated them with exemplars in the Maḥmūdīyah Library.<sup>25</sup> In these collation notes, the owner lists the number of sessions it took for him for him to collate each volume with the corresponding Maḥmūdīyah copy, along with the date of the final collation session. On the first volume of the book, he states that he completed the collation with the Maḥmūdīyah copy on 15 Jumādā al-Ūlā 859/May 12<sup>th</sup> 1455 over the course of thirteen sessions.<sup>26</sup> On the second volume he writes that he completed the collation on 28 Jumādā al-Ūlā 859/May 25<sup>th</sup> 1455 over the course of ten sessions.<sup>27</sup> These dates coincide with the tenure of Muḥammad al-Jalālī as Maḥmūdīyah librarian, allowing us to approximate how often the library was open to the public during his tenure as librarian. The

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<sup>25</sup> For this collation note, see Figure 6 in Chapter 1.

<sup>26</sup> Istanbul, Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 273, fol. 296a.

<sup>27</sup> Istanbul, Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 274, fol. 298b.

owner of this book had collated his second volume with the exemplar in the Maḥmūdīyah in ten sessions over the course of thirteen days. This rate approximates to almost a session every day. Even if we allow for the possibility of multiple collation sessions occurring in a single day, the rate still shows that the Maḥmūdīyah Library during the tenure of Muḥammad al-Jalālī was open to the public for several days a week. It is not clear whether the librarian would have been present for the entire time. However, since the sources only mention that Muḥammad al-Jalālī held one other position, a professorship at a minor madrasa, he certainly did not have the same heavy workload as other Maḥmūdīyah librarians such as ibn Ḥajar and most likely would have had more days to dedicate to the position.

#### *4.1.3. Laxity with endowment stipulations regarding hiring of staff positions*

The biographies of the Maḥmūdīyah librarians also reveal that in many instances the endowment deed's eligibility requirements were ignored when it came time for a new librarian to be appointed. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2., Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had stipulated in his endowment deed that the Maḥmūdīyah's librarian was to be selected among the Maḥmūdīyah's students of Ḥanafī jurisprudence. The narrative sources only explicitly state one instance of this stipulation actually being carried out: the appointment of the sixth Maḥmūdīyah librarian, Muḥammad al-Jalālī, who had studied Ḥanafī jurisprudence at the madrasa. Though some of the librarians could have studied Ḥanafī jurisprudence at the Maḥmūdīyah without the sources having mentioned it, there are at least two instances, that of ibn Ḥajar and Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās, where we can say with certainty that the librarians had never studied Ḥanafī



jurisprudence at the Maḥmūdīyah. In these instances, the social and political capital of the applicants to the position of Maḥmūdīyah librarian must have played a role in their appointments.

In four instances the librarian position was granted due to the candidate's personal relationship with someone associated with the Maḥmūdīyah. As we have already seen, the first Maḥmūdīyah librarian Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar had been Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's imam and had helped him hide a portion of his wealth from seizure. Similarly, the fourth librarian Muḥammad al-Turaykī was given the position by his benefactor Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās, whose wealth he had also helped hide from seizure. The seventh librarian, Aḥmad ibn al-Jalālī, had inherited the position from his father. The ninth librarian, Muḥammad al-'Abbādī, had received his temporary appointment from his fellow countryman, the eighth librarian Sālim al-'Abbādī.

Finally, in two instances the library position was offered as a reward due to a candidate's proximity to a member of the Mamluk elite. Due to his connections to the sultan Jaqmaq, the fourth librarian, Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās, had acquired several endowed positions over a very short period, including the Maḥmūdīyah librarian position. Similarly, the eighth librarian, Sālim al-'Abbādī, had received his librarian position — among many other endowed positions — as a reward for his services rendered to the commander-in-chief (*atābak al-'asākir*) Azbak al-Zāhirī Jaqmaq. This last instance of a position granted through connections with a Mamluk elite is notable, for the name Azbak min Ṭaṭakh al-Zāhirī appears elsewhere in connection with the Maḥmūdīyah Library. In his autobiography, the historian al-Sakhāwī mentions this emir Azbak amongst the notables of Mamluk society with whom he had enjoyed close ties. He states : “I have known [Azbak] for over forty years...He said to the person who was looking after the

Maḥmūdīyah Library as a temporary replacement (*niyābatan*) while I was in Mecca at the time: ‘It is forbidden for you to let anyone take out [the library’s] books except for al-Sakhāwī and ibn Ḥijjī.’<sup>28</sup> This anecdote shows that the emir Azbak Min Ṭaṭakh was capable of not only granting the position of Maḥmūdīyah librarian to whomever he pleased, but that it was even in his power to determine who could and could not break the Maḥmūdīyah’s original endowment stipulation that forbade individuals from taking out library books. Furthermore, it suggests that by the end of the ninth/fifteenth century supervision of the Maḥmūdīyah’s endowments had fallen out of the hands of Maḥmūd al-Ustādār’s descendants and into the hands of other members of the Mamluk military elite.

It is tempting to read the aforementioned examples of Maḥmūdīyah positions being handed out by members of the Mamluk elite as indicative of a general decline in legal standards during the Mamluk period. Such readings are predicated on the assumption put forward in earlier studies on Islamic law that state interference in the realm of positive law during the middle period was a result of an increasing rigidity of Islamic legal scholarship that allowed little room for interpretation. Furthermore, modern scholarship has often portrayed the intervention of members of the political elite into matters of law — such as we have seen in the instances of candidates for the Maḥmūdīyah librarian position appealing to the *dawādār* (sultan’s secretary) — as a deviation from an idealized vision of Islamic law in which the realm of *sharī‘ah* must always remain separate and diametrically opposed to *siyāsah*, or state power. However, in a recent study Youssef Rapoport refutes these assumptions and convincingly shows how Mamluk-

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<sup>28</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *Irshād al-ghāwī bal is‘ād al-ṭālib wa-al-rāwī lil-i‘lām bi-tarjamat al-Sakhāwī*, ed. Sa‘d ibn Fajhān al-Dūsarī, (Kuwait: Maktabat ahl al-athar, 2014), 367.

era jurists portrayed the *siyāsah* courts of the Mamluk military elite as an integral part of the *sharī‘ah*.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, it would be anachronistic to describe these Maḥmūdīyah appointments as examples of nepotism or corruption. The contemporaneous literary sources tend to neutrally portray the inheritance of endowed positions. For example, al-Sakhāwī expresses genuine shock that ibn Ḥajar’s son chose not to assume his father’s endowed positions after his death, “even those that would have been proper to be in his name, such as preaching the Friday sermon at the ‘Amr [ibn al-‘Āṣ] mosque or librarian of the Maḥmūdīyah books.”<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, the delegation of endowed positions to acquaintances was a more contentious issue in ninth/fifteenth century Cairo. However, it was clearly a common practice during this period, prompting legal scholars such as al-Suyūṭī to outline the instances in which it was legally permissible to delegate endowed positions to others.<sup>31</sup> Overall, the lax attitude towards the transfer of endowed positions to acquaintances and family members can best be understood within the context of the primacy of personal relations over institutional affiliations in Islamic education during the Mamluk period. Just as a scholar’s *bona fides* lay in the repute of his shaykh with whom he had studied rather than the institution in which the lesson may have occurred, so too were individuals’ personal relations considered an important factor when it came time to assign an endowed position, even when such an appointment would circumvent the explicit stipulations of the

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<sup>29</sup> Yossef Rapoport, “Royal Justice and Religious Law: *Siyāsah* and Shari‘ah under the Mamluks,” *Mamluk Studies Review* XVI (2012): 71-102.

<sup>30</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 3:1221.

<sup>31</sup> This issue is addressed in al-Suyūṭī’s treatise *Kashf al-ḍabābah fī mas’alat al-istinābah* (*Casting Away the Fog in the Issue of Delegation*). See al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī fī al-fiqh wa-‘ulūm al-tafsīr wa-al-ḥadīth wa-al-uṣūl wa-al-naḥw wa-al-i‘rāb wa-sā‘ir al-funūn* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmīyah, 2000), 1:152-157.

endower of the position in question.

#### 4.1.4. Disappearance of books from the Maḥmūdīyah

Library books frequently disappeared under several of the librarians' watch. The first Maḥmūdīyah librarian, Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar, had lost approximately 130 of the books from the original endowed collection.<sup>32</sup> His successor Fakhr al-Dīn 'Uthmān lost a further 400 books from the original collection of 4,000 books, a precipitous drop.<sup>33</sup> Though al-Sakhāwī portrays his teacher ibn Ḥajar as a hard-working librarian who had been able to retrieve many of the Maḥmūdīyah's lost books, we have seen in the story of his will that ibn Ḥajar himself admitted to having taken out books from the Maḥmūdīyah as well. Finally, the seventh librarian Aḥmad ibn al-Jalālī submitted to pressure from the grand Ḥanafī judge of Egypt Muḥibb al-Dīn ibn al-Shīḥnah and let him take 100 volumes from the Maḥmūdīyah.

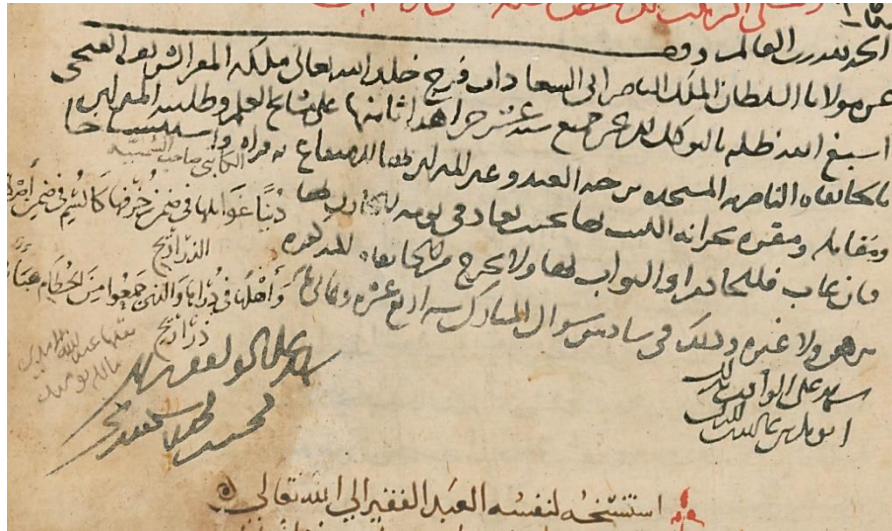
One of the common themes recurring through both the survey of the Maḥmūdīyah's librarians and the manuscript evidence is that members of the Mamluk military elite as well as high-ranking judges frequently took books from the Maḥmūdīyah. Let us return to the example of MS Ahmed III 2907, the aforementioned manuscript volumes that Maḥmūd al-Ustādār's daughter Fāṭimah had reendowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa after they had been seized and endowed to another library. This other library belonged to the Sufi lodge (*khānqāh*) of the Sultan Faraj ibn Barqūq, as can be seen in the endowment statement below.

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<sup>32</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw' al-lāmi'*, 5:143-144.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:144.

FIGURE 17: THE ENDOWMENT STATEMENT OF A BOOK ENDOWED TO THE SUFI LODGE OF THE SULTAN FARAJ IBN BARQŪQ, WRITTEN AFTER IT HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM THE MAĤMŪDĪYAH LIBRARY. ISTANBUL, TOPKAPI SARAYI MŪZESİ KŪTŪPHANESİ, MS AHMED III 2907-D8, FOL. 1A.



الحمد لله رب العالمين

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

وقف عن مولانا السلطان الملك الناصري أبي السعادات فرج خلد الله تعالى ملكه المقر الأشرف الفتحي كاتب السر الشريف أسبغ الله ظله بالتوكيل الشرعي جميع ستة عشر جزءاً من هذا الكتاب هذا تاسع عشرها على مشايخ العلم وطلبته المنزليين بالخانقاه الناصرية المستجدة برحبة العيد وغير المنزلين بها للانتفاع به قراءةً واستنساخاً ومقابلةً ومقره بخزانة الكتب لها بحيث يعاد أو البواب لها ولا يخرج من الخانقاة المذكورة برهن ولا بغيره وكُتِبَ ذلك في سادس شوال المبارك سنة أربع عشر وثمانمائة حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل

The confidential secretary Faṭḥ al-Dīn, may God grant him His protection, has been legally authorized to endow on behalf of our master, the sultan and ruler Abū al-Sa‘ādāt Faraj al-Nāṣirī, may God perpetuate his reign, all sixteen volumes of this book, this [volume] being number nineteen, to the shaykhs and students residing in the newly built Nāṣirī Sufi Lodge at Raḥbat al-‘Īd, and [as well as for those] not residing [in the lodge] so that they may use [the book] for reading, copying, or collation. Its residing place is the [lodge’s] library to where it should be returned on the same day to the [lodge’s] librarian. If the librarian is absent, then [it should be returned] to the servant or the doorman. [The book] is not to be taken out of the aforementioned lodge, neither through leaving a deposit nor through any other means. Written on the 6th of Shawwāl in the year 814 (January 30<sup>th</sup> 1412). God is sufficient for me and the best disposer of affairs.

شهد على الواقف بذلك أبو بكر بن عبد الله بن الكركي

Abū Bakr ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Karakī and

شاهد على الواقف بذلك      Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn [?] witnessed the  
محمد بن محمد بن [؟]      endower [make this endowment].

Though the book endowment to the Sufi Lodge of Faraj ibn Barqūq was made in 814/1412, evidence in the narrative sources shows that the book bearing this endowment statement was taken from the Maḥmūdīyah much earlier. The endowment statement above states that the endowment was made on behalf of the sultan Faraj by his confidential secretary (*kātib al-sirr*) Faṭḥ al-Dīn. Faṭḥ al-Dīn Faṭḥ Allāh ibn Mustaʿṣim al-Tabrīzī is noted in several sources as having been fond of collecting books.<sup>34</sup> He was also mentioned as being the main official who oversaw the seizure of Maḥmūd al-Ustādār’s possessions and properties during the latter’s downfall (*fa-lammā kānat al-nakbah al-shahīrah li-Jamāl al-Dīn kāna huwa al-qāʿim bi-aʿbāʾihā*).<sup>35</sup> With all the aforementioned evidence, it is most likely that this confidential secretary Faṭḥ al-Dīn had taken the volume featured in Figure 17 and the fifteen other volumes in the same series from the Maḥmūdīyah as he was overseeing the seizure of Maḥmūd al-Ustādār’s properties and wealth, before endowing the book to the sultan Faraj’s Sufi lodge in 814/1412. The loss of these sixteen volumes — among many others— would lead to the dismissal of the Maḥmūdīyah’s first librarian, Sirāj al-Dīn ʿUmar.

The above instances of the Maḥmūdīyah’s endowment deed being ignored, whether when it came to appointing a new librarian or a librarian letting books leave the Maḥmūdīyah, all hint that these ninth/fifteenth century actors did not hold an institution’s original endowment

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<sup>34</sup> ibn Ḥajar ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl al-durar al-kāminah*, ed. ʿAdnān Darwīsh, (Cairo: Maʿhad al-makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿarabīyah, 1992), 232; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ*, 6:166.

<sup>35</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ*, 6:166.

stipulations to be as sacrosanct and inviolable as the language with which these stipulations were recorded would have one believe. Instead, it seemed that an endowment deed would only ever be brought out and consulted if it was to the advantage of an interested party. This chasm between the proscriptive language of endowment stipulations and the actual practices on the ground highlight some of the pitfalls of relying purely on archival sources for the reconstruction of an institution's history from the middle period of Islamic history. While endowment deeds often can reveal important information about how a founder wished his or her endowment institution to function, the literary sources from the late Mamluk period show how these institutions actually functioned on a day-to-day basis, as well as the extent to which the wishes of an institution's founder would actually be carried out.

#### *4.2.0. Ottoman book plunder? An assessment*

It will not escape the reader that the discussion of the administrative history of the Maḥmūdīyah Library has remained up until now exclusively focused on the ninth/fifteenth century. But what of the history of the Maḥmūdīyah Library during the period of Ottoman rule of Egypt? In studies on Arabic book culture and libraries during the middle period, the discussion typically ends at the Ottoman conquest of the Arabic speaking lands between the years 922/1516 and 923/1517. These studies almost unanimously cite a passage in the historical chronicle written by ibn Iyās, a tenth/sixteenth century Egyptian historian who was an eyewitness to the Ottoman

conquest of Cairo in 923/1517. Concerning the Maḥmūdīyah and similar libraries in Cairo during the Ottoman conquest, ibn Iyās states the following:

Then [the Ottoman] viziers went on to take the precious books that were in the Maḥmūdīyah, Mu'ayyadīyah, and Ṣarghitmishīyah mosque libraries, and other mosques in which there were precious books. Then they transported them to their homeland...<sup>36</sup>

Several studies on pre-modern libraries in the Arab world have used this account by ibn Iyās to mark the beginning of Ottoman rule. Philippe de Tarrazi, founder of the National Library of Lebanon in 1921, states in his survey of Arab libraries around the world that:

The aforementioned [Mamluk-era] libraries of Cairo remained functional until the fall of the Mamluk Empire in 1517 AD, upon whose remains was established the Empire of the Turks in the reign of Selim I (1512-1519), who conquered Egypt and made it a province subservient to the throne of the Ottoman Sultanate...

Among the numbers of Sultan Selim I's retinue were the creme of the crop of the learned classes who were amazed by the precious works they saw in Egyptian libraries. When they informed [the Sultan] of this, he ordered them to gather the choicest [books] and to pick out the most precious among them in order to transfer them to the capital of their sultanate. It is said that at the time a thousand camels were required to transfer those books, along with all the gold, plundered goods, and gifts that the aforementioned sultan had taken. A portion of these volumes are still held in forty-two libraries in the libraries of Constantinople which are considered among the richest cities in the world for oriental manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.<sup>37</sup>

De Tarrazi does not cite his source for the passage about the Ottoman scholars selecting the finest of books from Egypt's libraries, though it is most certainly an embellishment of ibn

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<sup>36</sup> ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-miṣrīyah al-'āmmah lil-kitāb, 1982), 5:179.

<sup>37</sup> Fīlīb dī Ṭarrāzī, *Khazā'in al-kutub al-'arabīyah 'alā al-khāfiqayn* (Beirut: Wizārat al-tarbiyah al-waṭanīyah wa-al-funūn al-jamīlah, 1947), 188.



Iyās's sparser description. Nor does de Tarrazi cite his source for the anecdote about the one thousand camels, though this passage is repeated in several studies in Arabic about Arabic libraries and book culture.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid echoes similar sentiments:

And with the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 923 H. / 1517 CE, the sultan Selim I took with him a collection of Qurans and manuscripts and carried them with him to Turkey. Similarly, this happened in the rest of the Arab lands that the Ottomans had conquered. These are the core of the massive collection of Arabic manuscripts held today in the libraries of Turkey which exceed three hundred thousand manuscripts.

Throughout the Ottoman period, as a result of the decline of Egypt's position from an independent state to merely a province of the Ottoman Empire, as well as several travelers and adventurers frequenting Egypt through national consulates, many manuscripts and cultural artifacts left Egypt through illicit means verging on theft and plunder and would end up in the libraries and museums of Europe. Then the French campaign came at the end of the eighteenth century to similarly seize a number of rare manuscripts which would find their way to the National Library of France.<sup>39</sup>

In this passage, Sayyid ascribes the existence of large Arabic manuscript collections in modern Turkish libraries to the Ottoman conquest of the Arabic-speaking world and subsequent plunder of its madrasa libraries. Accounts such as these are typical of the "decline narrative" that until recently had been endemic in modern scholarship on the Ottoman-era Arabic-speaking world. This narrative traditionally presented the three hundred years of Ottoman rule of the Arabic-speaking world as one of intellectual stagnation and humiliation that paved the way to European colonization in the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup> This decline narrative, though no longer taken

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<sup>38</sup> For example, see Yaḥyá Wahīb al-Jubūrī, *al-Kitāb fī al-ḥaḍārah al-islāmīyah*, (Beirut: Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1998), 323-324.

<sup>39</sup> Sayyid, *Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah*, 17.

<sup>40</sup> For examples of criticisms of this narrative, see Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under Ottoman Rule, 1517-1800* (Harlow, UK ; New York : Pearson Longman, 2008), 3-9; Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1-3.

seriously in modern scholarship, still holds popular sway in the Arab world.<sup>41</sup> However, Arab scholars in the last decades have begun to challenge this narrative with important studies. For example, over the last three decades several Egyptian scholars specializing in Ottoman Egypt have eschewed the traditional decline narrative and produced seminal studies that have utilized under-exploited documentary sources in both Arabic and Ottoman Turkish held in state archives in Turkey and Egypt.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, the issue with relying on solely on literary sources such as the history of Ibn Iyās for tracing the history of supposed book plunder in the pre-modern Islamic world is that pre-modern authors often employed the (often embellished) literary trope of libraries' books being plundered by an invading army in order to symbolize the dramatic shift of power to a new regime. This literary *topos* has already been treated briefly above in section 2.1.1. of Chapter 2 during the discussion of depictions of centralized royal libraries of the medieval Islamic world.<sup>43</sup> In another study on a similar theme, Michael Biran calls into question the exaggerated literary depictions of the conquering Mongol armies destroying Baghdad's libraries in 656/1258. Through a close analysis of a biographical dictionary paired with audition certificates from surviving manuscripts from the period, Biran argues that many of Baghdad's supposedly plundered libraries remained operational and even flourished during the subsequent period of

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<sup>41</sup> For a typical example, as recently as 2020 a book of popular history was published in Egypt by the journalist Walīd Fikrī under the provocative title *al-Jarīmah al-'uthmānīyah: al-waqā'i' al-ṣādimah li-arba'at qurūn min al-iḥtilāl* (*The Ottoman Crime: The Shocking Events of Four Centuries of Occupation*).

<sup>42</sup> For examples, see Seyyid Muhammed es-Seyyid Mahmud, *XVI. Asırda Mısır Eyâleti* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1990); Mīlād, *al-Wathā'iq al-'uthmānīyah*; Nelly Hanna, *In Praise of Books: A Cultural History of Cairo's Middle Class, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2003); Hudá Jābir, *al-Bashar wa-al-ḥajar: al-Qāhirah fī al-qarn al-sādis 'ashar* (Cairo: Maṭba'at dār al-kutub wa-al-wathā'iq al-qawmīyah, 2010).

<sup>43</sup> Hirschler, *The Written Word*, 128.

Ilkhanid rule.<sup>44</sup> In light of the often-exaggerated nature of these literary depictions of book plunder, this study will not rely solely on a single depiction of book plunder in a literary source to explain the history of the Maḥmūdīyah Library during the Ottoman period.

On the other hand, a healthy dose of skepticism towards the problematic Ottoman decline narrative has led some modern scholars to adopt the other extreme position of summarily rejecting any suggestion of any trend that could be interpreted as negative occurring during the period of Ottoman rule over the Arabic-speaking world. Ahmed El Shamsy draws attention to this new opposite extreme best in his discussion on the general intellectual tendency towards scholasticism and anti-book learning in the Arabic-speaking world immediately prior to the advent of the printing press in the early nineteenth century, as well as the disappearance of many books from libraries in the Arab world during the Ottoman period:

My identification and discussion of these trends should not be read as a rehash of the nineteenth-century narrative of decline, which dismissed postclassical Islamic thought as a mere lifeless shell waiting to be revived and filled by European Enlightenment. This narrative is untenable because its sweeping stigmatization of a period of several centuries as intellectually barren ignores actual historical variability and many instances of intellectual innovation. But we should not overcompensate for this caricature by treating any criticism of the postclassical intellectual framework as modernist slander. The available evidence does indicate that the supremacy of postclassical curriculum texts and the esoteric disdain for book learning, together with the dramatic loss of books from the Arabic-speaking lands discussed in the preceding chapter, had a significant constricting effect on the intellectual horizons of the Islamic literary tradition, especially by facilitating and accelerating the marginalization and loss of older works.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Michal Biran, "Libraries, Books, and Transmission of Knowledge in Ilkhanid Baghdad," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 62 (2019): 464-502.

<sup>45</sup> Ahmed El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 61-62.

In a similar vein, several studies analyzing the transfer of books to the imperial metropole of Istanbul from the conquered peripheries also “overcompensate for this caricature” of Ottoman book plunder by denying that any plunder occurred in the first place. For example, İsmail Erünsal, one of the foremost experts on Ottoman libraries, rightly calls into the question the veracity of ibn Iyās’s depiction of the Ottoman plunder of libraries in Cairo owing to the historian’s known anti-Ottoman bias. However, Erünsal also rejects any possibility that the conquering Ottoman armies had taken *any* books from libraries in the Arab world, purely based on isolated incidences of Ottoman governors and sultans respecting the inviolability of local pious endowments in the conquered territories as well as cases of Ottoman governors and bureaucrats constructing new libraries in the conquered Arabic-speaking world.<sup>46</sup> Another scholar makes a similar argument with regards to the books of libraries in former Safavid territories conquered by the Ottomans.<sup>47</sup>

The rest of the section of this chapter aims to take the middle path on this contentious issue of Ottoman book plunder by turning to available documentary sources. I will first point out other confirmed incidences of the Ottoman looting of libraries in Syria. Next, I will use evidence from the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus to determine which of the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts currently held in modern Turkish libraries had arrived in Istanbul immediately following the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 923/1517.

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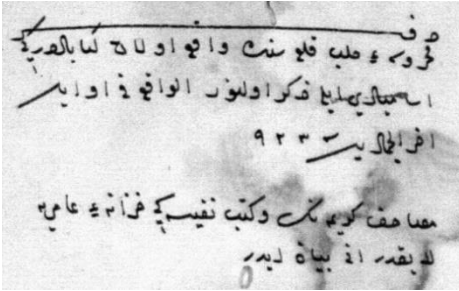
<sup>46</sup> İsmail Erünsal, “Fethedilen Arap Ülkelerindeki Vakıf Kütüphaneleri Osmanlılar Tarafından Yağmalandı mı?” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies* XLIII (2014): 19-66.

<sup>47</sup> Osman G. Özgüdenli, “İstanbul Kütüphanelerinde Bulunan Farsça Yazmaların Öyküsü: Bir Giriş,” *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 27, no. 43 (2008): 34-35.

#### 4.2.1. Syrian library books moving to Istanbul following the Ottoman Conquest

Though to my knowledge no study of documentary sources has been conducted with regards to the transfer of library books from Cairo to Istanbul following the Ottoman conquest of 923/1517, there are two confirmed instances of this occurring with libraries in Syria, which had been conquered by the Ottomans in the previous year in 922/1516. The first case is recorded in a document preserved at the Topkapı Palace Archives in Istanbul.<sup>48</sup> The document, dated to *fî evā'il-i āhîr'l-cemāziye 923* (21-30 June 1517), is written in Ottoman Turkish and contains an inventory of books in the citadel of Aleppo. A portion of this document can be found in Figure 18 below.

FIGURE 18: AN OTTOMAN INVENTORY OF BOOKS IN THE CITADEL OF ALEPPO DRAFTED IN 923/1517. ISTANBUL: TOPKAPI SARAYI MÜZESİ ARŞİVİ D 9101.1, FOL. 1B.



Defter-i maḥrūse-i Haleb ḳal'asında vāḳi' olan kitāblardır ki esāmîleri şöyle zıkr olunur, el-vāḳi' fî evā'il-i āhîri'l-cemāziye 923 [June 21-30 1517].

This is a register of the books in the Aleppo Citadel, whose titles are listed below, in the final portion of Jumādā II 923 [June 21-30 1517].

Maṣāḥif-i kerīmeniñ [sic] ve kütüb-i nefise ki ḥizāne-i 'āmiriye lāyıḳdır ānı beyān ider:

These are the Qur'anic manuscripts and exquisite books that are worthy of the Imperial Treasury:

The document ends with the following:

*Bu mezkūrlardan ğayri otuz üç kıḳ'a vardır ki ba'zı ḥatme-i kerīme ve ba'zı nişf ve ba'zı rub' ve ba'zı cüz' ve ba'zı ed'iyedir, köhne olup, şatılması vech görüldi. Ve yüz otuz mücellid kitāb dahī vardır ki ba'zı nāḳış ve ba'zı ğayr-i müsta'mel ve ba'zı taḥte'l-*

<sup>48</sup> This document has been edited, translated, and studied in detail in D'hulster, *Browsing*, 315-341.

*minberiyyâtdır, satılmağdan ğayrîye yaramaz, şaklamağa kâbil deĝildir. Ol bâbda her ne vechile emr olunur ise işâret buyurıla*

Apart from the abovementioned, there are thirty-three Quranic items including wholes, halves, quarters, sections and prayers, which are worn and thus have been set aside to be sold. Additionally, there are a further hundred and thirty bound volumes that are fragmentary, unusable or materially commonplace, which are no good for anything but to be sold; they are not worth keeping. In this matter, please send us directions on the manner in which we should proceed.<sup>49</sup>

This document confirms at least one instance of the Ottoman forces seizing books from a library in the conquered Mamluk territories. The wording of the document suggests that, at least in this case of the Aleppo Citadel Library, books were carefully sorted through and selected for both their material value and content. Moreover, the author of this document had made an inventory of the books specifically for the purpose of choosing which ones should be sent to the Ottoman Imperial Treasury (*hizâne-i 'âmireye lâyıkdır*).

Another confirmed instance of the transfer of library books to Istanbul following the Ottoman conquests of 922-923/1516-1517 can be found in the case of the Ashrafiyah Library of Damascus. In his study of the library's catalogue, which was composed circa 670/1270, Konrad Hirschler identified 143 manuscripts from the Ashrafiyah Library currently held in the Süleymaniye Library of Istanbul. Moreover, the bulk of those identified books are distributed between the two collections of Ayasofya and Fatih. Pointing out that both the Ayasofya and Fatih collections in the Süleymaniye Library were originally endowment libraries set up by the Ottoman sultan Maḥmūd I. (r. 1730-1754) with books from the sultan's own collection, Hirschler

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., fol. 3a.

convincingly argues that the Ashrafiyah manuscripts located in these two collections were most likely taken from the library following the Ottoman conquest of Syria in 922/1516.<sup>50</sup> Adding further weight to Hirschler's claim, Cemal Kafadar notes that not one of the Ashrafiyah manuscripts that Hirschler had identified in these two collections bears the seal of the sultan Bayezid II (r. 886-918/1481-1512), the father and predecessor of Selim I, the sultan and conqueror of Syria and Egypt. Nor do these manuscripts contain the hand of 'Atūfī, a librarian who between the years of 908-909/1502-1504 drafted an inventory of the manuscripts held in the Topkapı Palace Treasury.<sup>51</sup> These two paratextual absences on the Ashrafiyah's manuscripts that were once held in the Topkapı Palace Treasury suggest that these specific books had only entered the treasury following Selim I's conquest of Syria in 922/1516.

#### 4.2.2. *The Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts in Istanbul: the seal of 'Abd al-Bāqī ibn al-'Arabī*

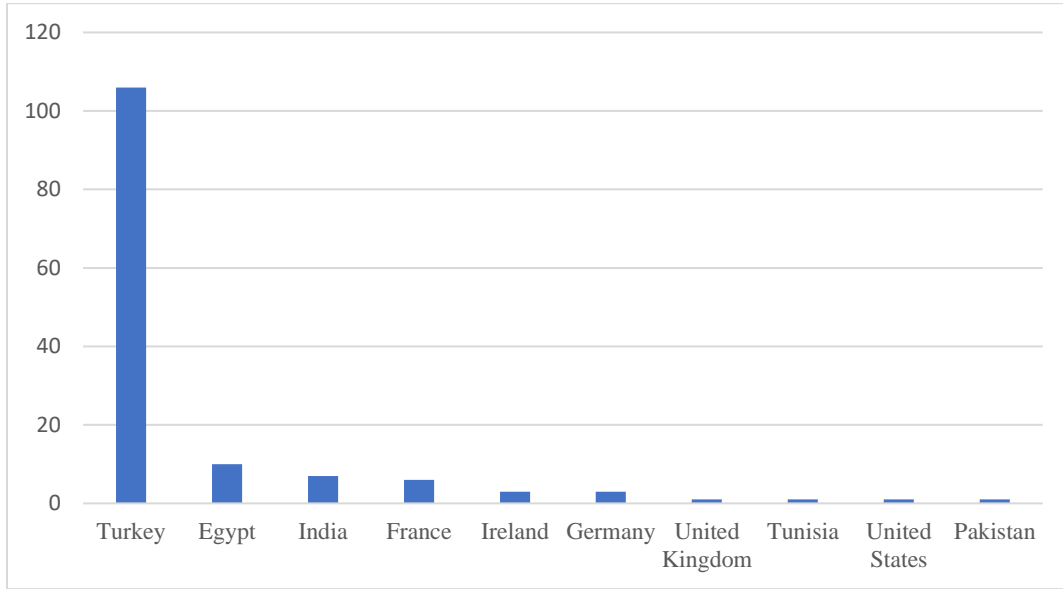
Given these two aforementioned cases in Syria, does this mean we should take seriously ibn Iyās's depiction of the Ottoman plunder of the Maḥmūdīyah and other libraries in Cairo? As can be seen in Chart 2 below, the vast majority of manuscripts in the surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus are currently held in modern Turkish libraries, all of them in Istanbul. This would at first glance confirm ibn Iyās's claim.

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<sup>50</sup> Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus*, 45-53.

<sup>51</sup> Cemal Kafadar, "Between Amasya and Istanbul: Bayezid II, His Librarian, and the Textual Turn of the Late Fifteenth Century," in *Treasures of Knowledge: An Inventory of the Ottoman Palace Library (1502/3-1503/4)*, eds. Gülru Necipoğlu, Cemal Kafadar, and Cornell H. Fleischer (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 91.

CHART 2: NUMBER OF MAḤMŪDĪYAH MANUSCRIPTS HELD IN EACH COUNTRY



However, a significant piece of paratextual evidence on many of the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts, including several currently held in Istanbul, allows us to confirm that these specific manuscripts remained in the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt. This paratext is the seal of ‘Abd al-Bāqī ibn al-‘Arabī.

FIGURE 19: EXAMPLE OF THE SEAL OF ‘ABD AL-BĀQĪ IBN AL-‘ARABĪ ON A SURVIVING MAḤMŪDĪYAH MANUSCRIPT. PRINCETON: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, MS GARRETT 42B, FOL. 1B.



الراجي رحمة ربه  
وشفاعه النبي  
عبد  
الباقي  
بن علي العربي

Imploring the mercy of his  
Lord and the intercession  
of the Prophet, ‘Abd al-  
Bāqī ibn ‘Alī al-‘Arabī.



Carine Juvin first drew attention this seal in her study of a Mamluk-era Quran acquired by the Louvre Museum in Paris. In her article, Juvin identified the same seal on several other Qurans bearing the endowment statements of Mamluk-era Egyptian institutions. She went on to identify the owner of the seal as an Ottoman judge who had served as the chief judge of Egypt between the years 960-962/1553-1555 until he moved on to other judgeship posts in the Ottoman provinces. Noticing that several manuscripts upon which ‘Abd al-Bāqī left his seal had remained in their respective endowment institutions in Egypt until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Juvin concluded that the seal could not have been a seal indicating ownership.<sup>52</sup> Building upon Juvin’s findings, Boris Liebreuz expanded his search for the seal to manuscripts beyond Qurans and identified a total of forty-six volumes around the world bearing the seal. Liebreuz identified the traces of Egyptian Mamluk-era endowment statements on thirty-nine of the forty-six volumes in his study. Considering all the different implications of this Ottoman judge’s seal, Liebreuz arrives at the conclusion that the Ottoman judge was most likely performing an inventory of the contents of Cairo’s endowment libraries while he was serving his judicial functions in the city between the years 960-962/1553-1555.<sup>53</sup>

With all that said, the seal plays a crucial role in determining the circulation history the Maḥmūdīyah’s manuscripts: Any of the surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts bearing this seal must have remained in the Maḥmūdīyah Library until at least until 960/1553 and potentially later, well after the reported plunder of the Maḥmūdīyah’s books following the Ottoman

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<sup>52</sup> Carine Juvin, “A Mamluk Qur’ānic *Ġuz*’ and its Connection with *Amīr* ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā’irī,” *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 10 (2019): 105-135.

<sup>53</sup> Boris Liebreuz, “What’s in a Seal?: Identification and Interpretation of ‘Abd al-Bāqī Ibn al-‘Arabī’s (d. 971/1564) Seal and Its Function”, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 13 (2022): 55-80.

conquest of Egypt in 923/1517. Table 1 below shows that a significant portion of the surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus does indeed bear the seal of ‘Abd al-Bāqī.<sup>54</sup>

**TABLE 1: MAḤMŪDĪYAH MANUSCRIPTS WITH THE SEAL OF ‘ABD AL-BĀQĪ.**

Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah, MS tafsīr 15
Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 1217
Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 6151
Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 10670
Dublin: Chester Beatty Library, MS Arab. 4340
Gotha: Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, MS Orient. A 1759
Hyderabad: Saidiya Library, MS Tarājim 160
Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 50
Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 263
Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 270
Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 442
Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2963
Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2964
Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2970
Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reisülküttab 1125
Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 706
Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 5034
Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 6643
Princeton: Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 42B

Of particular interest for our discussion of the subject of Ottoman plunder of the Maḥmūdīyah is the fact that several Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts bearing the seal of ‘Abd al-Bāqī are held in libraries in Istanbul today. What this means is that these manuscripts must have entered Istanbul sometime after 960/1553, or after the Ottoman conquest of 923/1517. However, this does not mean that the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts in Istanbul that do not bear this seal had

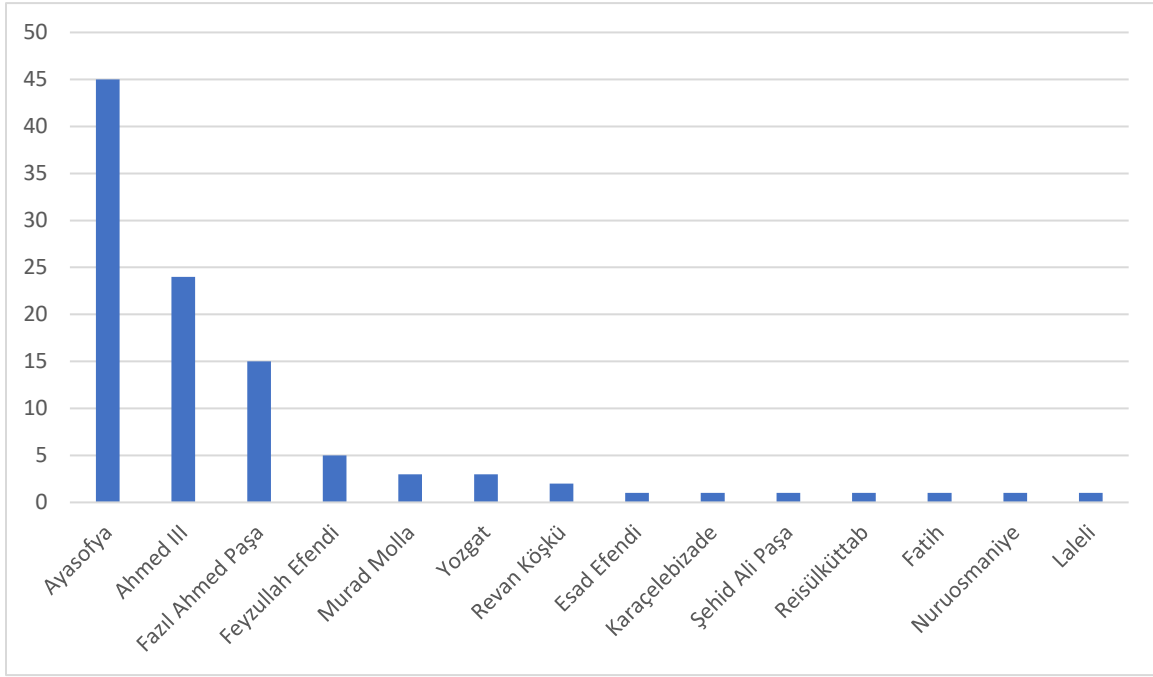
<sup>54</sup> It must be said that this table does not include every single surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscript I have been able to identify, for there are some manuscripts (particularly those located in Indian libraries) that I have been able to identify but not peruse in their entirety.

arrived in Istanbul immediately after the Ottoman conquest of 923/1517. What it does confirm though is that not all the manuscripts in Istanbul from libraries in the Arab world had arrived there as booty from imperial conquest.

#### *4.2.3. Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts in Istanbul: The sultanic endowment libraries*

With all that being said, there is evidence to suggest the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts classified under several shelfmarks in modern Turkish libraries had arrived in Istanbul around the time of the Ottoman conquest of Egypt. To start building this argument, we must first understand how manuscripts are classified in modern Turkish libraries. All the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts cited in this study that are currently held in Istanbul are all classified with shelfmarks that indicate their library of origin in Istanbul before they were incorporated into one of the main central manuscript collections in Istanbul in the twentieth century. Consequently, investigating the history of the now-defunct libraries signified by these manuscripts' shelfmarks allows us to begin tracing the circulation of these manuscripts from when they left the Maḥmūdīyah until they ended up in their current locations in Istanbul. Chart 3 below breaks down all the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts currently held in Istanbul by their shelfmark, which should be understood as indicating the libraries to which they were endowed in Istanbul.

CHART 3: MAĤMŪDĪYAH MANUSCRIPTS IN İSTANBUL BY SHELFMARK



As can be seen in the chart above, the majority of the 106 Maĥmŭdĭyah manuscripts identified in Istanbul are distributed among two shelfmarks: Ayasofya (45) and Ahmed III (24). These shelfmarks correspond to two older library collections: The Ayasofya Library and the Ahmed III Library. The Ayasofya Library was opened in 1153/1740 by the Ottoman sultan Maĥmŭd I (r. 1143-1168/1730-1754) as a library within the Ayasofya (Hagia Sophia) Mosque in Istanbul. The core of the library's collection had consisted of books donated from the Topkapı Palace Imperial Treasury, in addition to donations presented by Ottoman state officials to the sultan Maĥmŭd I at the library's opening ceremonies.<sup>55</sup> The Ahmed III Library was opened in 1132/1719 by the Ottoman sultan Ahmed III (r. 1115-1143/1703-1730). By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Ottoman sultans had established the practice of keeping books from the

<sup>55</sup> Erünsal, *Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri*, 213-214.

main Topkapı Palace Treasury in separate rooms within the male or harem quarters called Privy Chambers (*hāşş odalar*).<sup>56</sup> Ahmed III had founded the Ahmed III Library in a freestanding building within the third courtyard of the Topkapı Palace for the purpose of gathering the books scattered in these separate chambers of the palace into a single location.<sup>57</sup> The core of books in the Ayasofya Library as well as all the books in the Ahmed III Library then trace their origins to the Topkapı Palace Imperial Treasury.

Before the Ottoman sultans moved palace books in separate privy chambers, the books of the Topkapı Palace had been kept in a building in the third court of the palace known as the Imperial Treasury (*hizāne-i 'āmire*) or the Inner Treasury (*hizāne-i enderūnī*). This treasury not only included precious books in a variety of languages, but also both Muslim and Christian relics, textiles, weapons, artwork, and other treasures amassed by Ottoman sultans over the centuries. The sultan Selim I had greatly augmented the collection of the Inner Treasury after his conquests of Cairo and Tabriz. So proud was he of filling the Imperial Treasury that he had requested in his will that the doors to the treasury continue to be sealed with his own seal until another sultan surpassed his contributions to the treasury, a tradition that had continued until the end of the Ottoman dynasty.<sup>58</sup>

Given that the books in the Ayasofya and Ahmed III Libraries had originated from the Topkapı Palace's Imperial Treasury, nearly all of the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts bearing the

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<sup>56</sup> Zeynep Atbaş, "Artistic Aspects of Sultan Bayezid II's Book Treasury Collection: Extant Volumes Preserved at the Topkapı Palace Museum Library," in *Treasures of Knowledge: An Inventory of the Ottoman Palace Library (1502/3-1503/4)*, eds. Gülru Necipoğlu, Cemal Kafadar, and Cornell H. Fleischer (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 162.

<sup>57</sup> Erünsal, *Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri*, 195-199.

<sup>58</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York, N.Y. : Cambridge, Mass.: Architectural History Foundation ; MIT Press, 1991), 133-139.

shelfmarks of these two libraries were most likely brought to the Topkapı Palace as plunder following the Ottoman conquest of Egypt. Manuscript evidence confirms this as a plausible provenance hypothesis. First, the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts with these two shelfmarks stand out from those of other shelfmarks in Istanbul in that, with rare exceptions that shall be discussed below, their original Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements have all been left intact and untampered with. By contrast, almost all of the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements on manuscripts held in other Istanbul collections I have identified have been partially or entirely removed. This anomaly can be explained when considering the provenance of the Ayasofya and Ahmed III Libraries. Since these books had been endowed to the libraries from the Imperial Treasury's manuscript collection, sultans or librarians presiding over the books in this treasury perhaps felt no need to hide that these books had once been endowed to a madrasa in Cairo centuries ago. It also indicates that whoever took these books out of the Maḥmūdīyah Library in Cairo felt no need to hide that they had once been religious endowments, as would be the case with those in the retinue of the victorious Ottoman army entering Cairo.

The Maḥmūdīyah titles with the Ayasofya and Ahmed III shelfmarks have also retained many of the original volumes of the multi-volume works that had been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa in 797/1395.<sup>59</sup> By contrast, the extant manuscripts of multi-volume Maḥmūdīyah titles that were NOT held in the Ayasofya or Ahmed III Libraries are scattered across differing shelfmarks all across the world: A volume in Cairo, two volumes in one Istanbul

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<sup>59</sup> For examples of these multi-volume works preserved in these collections, see the extant manuscripts lists in Appendix A, Entries 2, 9, 13, 15, 26, 40, 46, 56, and 61.

library, three in another Istanbul library, one in Paris, and so on.<sup>60</sup> This additional peculiarity of the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts with the Ayasofya and Ahmed III shelfmarks suggests that these multi-volume works had retained their coherency all the way up to their date of endowment to the Ayasofya and Ahmed III Libraries in the twelfth/eighteenth century. When coupled with the intact Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements on these manuscripts, this further suggests that whoever had removed these specific multi-volume works from the Maḥmūdīyah Library had been able to do so in one fell swoop without fear of having to sneak them out one by one past a librarian. One can imagine this being the case in the chaotic situation that followed the Ottoman army's entry into Cairo in 923/1517, where a librarian would not have been able to stop an Ottoman soldier from taking out multiple-volumes of a large historical chronicle, for example.

Lastly, the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts of the Ayasofya and Ahmed III shelfmarks (with one exception in the Ayasofya to be explained below) do not contain any paratexts that can be dated to the period between the Ottoman conquest of Cairo, 923/1517 and the manuscripts' endowments to the Ayasofya and Ahmed III libraries in the twelfth/eighteenth century. By contrast, many of the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts classified under other shelfmarks in modern Istanbul libraries are brimming with ownerships notes and reader notes from the same period, which means that they must have circulated and changed ownership many times before ending up in their respective Istanbul libraries. This absence on most the Ayasofya and all the Ahmed III manuscripts lends further credence to the hypothesis that they had been removed from the

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<sup>60</sup> For examples of multi-volume Maḥmūdīyah works dispersed across many different shelfmarks, see the extant manuscripts lists in Appendix A, Entries 1, 5, 23, and 41.

Maḥmūdīyah Library and transported directly to the Imperial Treasury of Topkapı Palace before their endowment to the Ayasofya and Ahmed III Libraries.

The astute reader might recall that I have been careful to say that *nearly* all the Maḥmūdīyah books with the Ayasofya shelfmark had been taken from the Maḥmūdīyah following the Ottoman conquest of Cairo. This is because, as can be seen in Table 1 in the preceding section of this chapter, three Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts with the Ayasofya shelfmark also bear the seal of ‘Abd al-Bāqī, which as we have established above is proof that a Maḥmūdīyah manuscript had remained in the Maḥmūdīyah Library decades after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt. These three manuscripts are all volumes of al-Şafadī’s biographical dictionary *A ‘yān al- ‘aşr wa-a ‘wān al-naşr* (*Notables of the Age and the Supporters of Victory*). The manuscripts are also full of ownership notes from other Ottoman owners. These paratexts can be explained by looking further into the history of the Ayasofya Library. At the opening ceremony to the library in 1153/1740, various high-ranking officials of the Ottoman state had presented the sultan Maḥmūd I with book donations to add to the core collection of books which the sultan had donated from the Topkapı Palace Imperial Treasury.<sup>61</sup> These three aforementioned manuscripts must have been among those additional donations made to the Ayasofya by other individuals and do not represent the core of books that had been donated from the Ottoman Palace Treasury.

Taking this one exception aside, the totality of the evidence presented above provides a clear case supporting ibn Iyās’s account of the invading Ottoman army taking books from at least

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<sup>61</sup> For a list of the individuals who made these donations, see Günay Kut, “Sultan I. Mahmud Kütüphânesi (Ayasofya Kütüphânesi),” in *Osmanlı Devleti’nde Bilim Kültür ve Kütüphâneler*, eds. Özlem Bayram et.al (Ankara, Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği, 1999), 109-111.



one library in Cairo and transporting them to Istanbul. To reiterate, all that can be said given the evidence provided above is that all the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts with the Ahmed III shelfmark and nearly all of them with the Ayasofya shelfmark had been taken from the Maḥmūdīyah Library in Cairo shortly after the Ottoman conquest of 923/1517 then transported to the Imperial Treasury of the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul before they were endowed to libraries in Istanbul two centuries later. Other Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts in Istanbul could have been taken during the Ottoman invasion as well, but there is currently not enough evidence to confirm or deny this. However, to reiterate what has already been stated above in the discussion of the seal of ‘Abd al-Bāqī, not all the Arabic manuscripts in Istanbul can be said to have arrived there as booty from Ottoman imperial conquest.

The discussion up until now has danced around the issue of looting and the time has come to address it. The evidence presented above outlines a clear-cut case of what any outside observer would identify as a case of looting. However, this transfer of a portion of the Maḥmūdīyah’s books to Istanbul from Cairo should not be seen as a kind of extraordinarily decisive event marking the end of the Maḥmūdīyah as a functioning library. Recalling the discussion above, the number of the Maḥmūdīyah’s books had been dropping consistently since the moment of its founding, with books being lost by librarians, taken by chief judges and Mamluk emirs, and so on. In this regard, the Ottoman requisition of a portion of the Maḥmūdīyah’s books is not particularly unique in the library’s history, and instead points to the shifting and fluid nature of publically-facing book collections in the pre-modern Arab world before the advent of centralized national libraries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

#### 4.3. *The Maḥmūdīyah in the Ottoman Period (923-1286/1517-1870)*

It is much more difficult to trace the institutional history of the Maḥmūdīyah for the period of Ottoman rule in Egypt. This partially stems from an absence of literary sources from the century immediately following the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 923/1517, especially when compared with the voluminous biographical dictionaries and historical chronicles produced in the preceding ninth/fifteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, a cursory look at the available sources shows that the Maḥmūdīyah and its library did still function following the Ottoman conquest of Egypt. We have already seen in the discussion above concerning the seal of ‘Abd al-Bāqī that there had been books remaining in the Maḥmūdīyah following the Ottoman conquest. Furthermore, two separate scholars, one from the mid-tenth/mid-sixteenth century and one from the mid-twelfth/eighteenth century both make references to books that they claim they saw in the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>63</sup> In his study on education and intellectual life in Ottoman Egypt, Nāṣir ‘Abd Allāh ‘Uthmān cites a number of court documents indicating the continued functioning of several madrasa libraries in Ottoman Cairo from the Mamluk period, including a court record

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<sup>62</sup> The paucity of sources for tenth/sixteenth century Ottoman Egypt has remained a source of frustration for modern historians of the period. Behrens-Abouseif attributes this paucity of historical chronicles from this period to lack of “contact between the Citadel and those capable of writing history” during the tenth/sixteenth century of Ottoman rule in Egypt. She then notes that more historical chronicles start emerging in the following century with the decentralization of power from the *pasha*, or Ottoman governor of Egypt, to the various Mamluk factions that had closer ties with the *‘ulamā* population. See Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule: Institutions, Waqf and Architecture in Cairo, 16th and 17th Centuries* (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 128.

<sup>63</sup> al-Šāliḥī, *Subul al-hudā wa-al-rashād fī sīrat khayr al-‘ibād*, eds. ‘Ādil ‘Abd al-Mawjūd and ‘Alī Muḥammad Mu‘awwad (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmīyah, 1993), 1:297; Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘arūs min jawāhir al-qāmūs*, ed. ‘Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (Kuwait: Maṭba‘at ḥukūmat al-Kuwayt, 1965), 1:7.

dating to 1010/1601 which he claims concerns the librarian position of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa (though he does not specify the contents of the court document.)<sup>64</sup>

Several sources also show that the Maḥmūdīyah's endowments had not completely dwindled away during the Ottoman period. In his work *Qaṭf al-azhār min al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār* (*Plucking the Flowers Among al-Maqrīzī's Kḥiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār*), the eleventh/seventeenth century Egyptian historian ibn Abī al-Surūr states the following about the Maḥmūdīyah:

I say: [the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa] is now facing the residence of the emir Riḍwān Bey, the current emir of the noble *ḥājj* in Egypt. The aforementioned emir Riḍwān has renovated [the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa] and rebuilt what had dilapidated. He also endowed it with a big endowment, may God reward him with paradise in all His munificence and generosity.<sup>65</sup>

Riḍwān Bey (d.1066/1655-1656), the aforementioned emir of the *ḥājj* or the pilgrimage caravan to Mecca, was a figure who dominated Egyptian politics in the first half of the eleventh/seventeenth century. The endowment he made to the Maḥmūdīyah was part of a larger renovation project in the area south of the Zuwaylah Gate in Cairo. The renovation project included the construction of two *zāwīyahs*, apartments, stores, a caravanserai, Riḍwān's Bey's own house, and most famously, the roofed market directly south of Zuwaylah Gate known today as *al-khayyāmīyah*, or the Tent Maker's Market. In total, this newly renovated district would come to be known as *Qaṣabat Riḍwān*, or Riḍwān's Quarter. Riḍwān's endowments to the Maḥmūdīyah and its environs are documented in two surviving endowment deeds, which

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<sup>64</sup> Nāṣir 'Abd Allāh 'Uthmān, *Qabla an ya 'tī al-gharb: al-ḥarakah al-'ilmīyah fī miṣr fī al-qarn al-sābi' 'ashar* (Cairo: Maṭba'at dār al-kutub wa-al-wathā'iq al-qawmīyah bi-al-qāhirah, 2012), 110, note 150. I have not been able to see the cited court document due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

<sup>65</sup> Paris: BnF, MS. Arabe 1765, fol. 119a.

unfortunately I could not gain access to due to the Egyptian Ministry of Endowments being closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, according to Doris Behrens-Abouseif's summary of these two documents, Riḍwān Bey had allocated wages for a Friday preacher at the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>66</sup> We also know from ibn Abī al-Surūr's entry quoted above that Riḍwān Bey had renovated the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa.

Several decades later, the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi (d. ~1096/~1685) wrote down a survey of the many mosques, Sufi lodges, and other endowment institutions he had seen during his multiple-year stay in Cairo towards the end of his life. He describes a mosque he calls the Mosque of Maḥmūd Bey (*Maḥmūd Bey Cāmi'i*), which can be identified as the Maḥmūdīyah due to the location he provides for it as “across the street from Riḍwān Bey's palace” (*Riḍwān Bey sarayı önünde yol aşırı*).<sup>67</sup> He describes the mosque as small and without a courtyard, but “very clean and expertly crafted” (*ğāyet pāk ve muşanna' bir cāmi'dir*),<sup>68</sup> the cleanliness of which was most likely provided for by the endowments Riḍwān Bey had made to the institution several decades earlier. He also mentions that people would frequent the mosque in order to cure themselves of jaundice by licking the two exquisite columns framing the *miḥrāb*,<sup>69</sup> though this could easily be one of Evliya Çelebi's signature playful invented insertions.

Noticeably absent is any description of the Maḥmūdīyah's library, although Evliya Çelebi does describe the libraries of several other institutions in Cairo in detail. Among the libraries he describes in the most detail is the library of al-Azhar mosque: “The mosque has two hundred

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<sup>66</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule*, 128.

<sup>67</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1996), 10:121.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

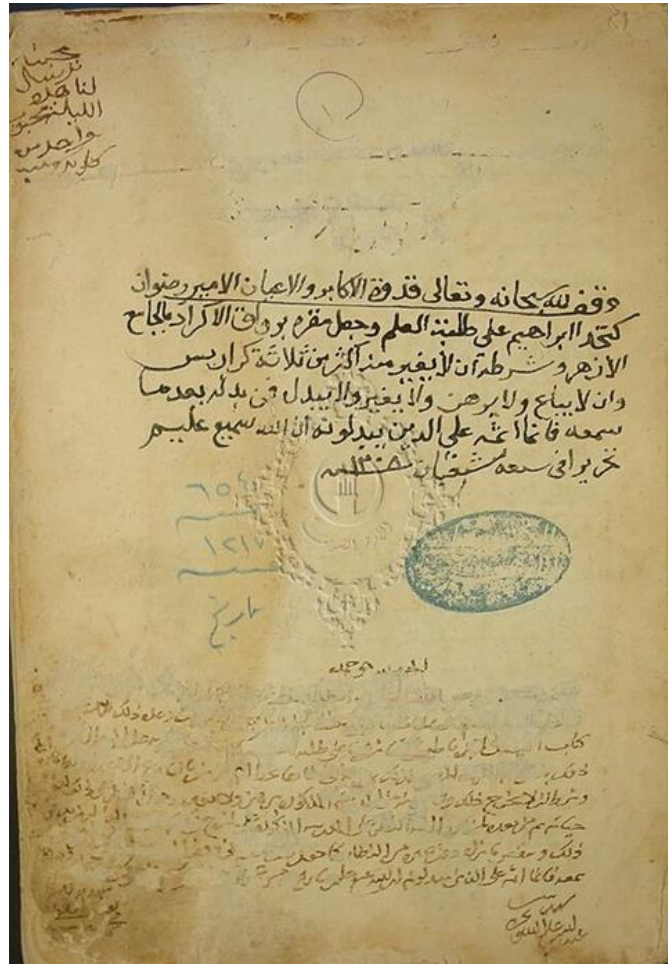
chests, each the height of two man's steps, with each chest consisting of six or seven levels. This amounts to 9,000 chests and they are brimming with books as well as other student necessities such as food and drink."<sup>70</sup> This description belies the increasingly centralized role that al-Azhar played in the educational landscape of Ottoman Cairo. During this period in Cairo's history, Ottoman governors and Mamluk emirs lavished al-Azhar with endowments at a level not seen during the Mamluk period.<sup>71</sup> In addition to renovating and adding new buildings to al-Azhar, men of state had also greatly expanded the libraries within al-Azhar with book donations. We can find paratextual evidence on the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts currently held in al-Azhar of this wave of endowment activities directed towards al-Azhar during the Ottoman period. Many of these manuscripts have had their original Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements crossed out and new endowment statements on them written on them dating to the twelfth-thirteenth/eighteenth century. For example, in Figure 20 below, a Maḥmūdīyah manuscript has had its original Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement on the lower half of the folio partially erased. On the upper half of the folio, a statement indicates that the emir Riḍwān Katkhudā Ibrāhīm had made the book an endowment to the dormitory for Kurdish students (*riwāq al-akrād*) at al-Azhar Mosque in the year 1208/1794.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>71</sup> See Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule*, 89-95.

FIGURE 20: A MAḤMŪDĪYAH MANUSCRIPT ENDOWED TO AL-AZHAR IN THE EARLY THIRTEENTH/LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. CAIRO: AL-MAKTABAH AL-AZHARĪYAH, MS 1217, FOL. 1A.



وقف لله سبحانه وتعالى قدوة  
 الأكابر والأعيان الأمير رضوان  
 كتحدا إبراهيم على طلبية العلم  
 وجعل مقره برواق الأكراد  
 بالجامع الأزهر وشرطه أن لا  
 يغير منه أكثر من ثلاثة كراريس  
 وأن لا يباع ولا يرهن ولا يغير  
 ولا يُبدل فمن بدلته بعد ما سمعته  
 فإثمًا إثمًا على الذين يُبدلونه إن  
 الله سميعٌ عليمٌ تحريراً في سبعة  
 شعبان سنة 1208

The exemplar for grandees and notables, the emir Riḍwān Katkhudā Ibrāhīm, has endowed [this book] for the sake of God, may He be praised and exalted, and for students. He has made [the book's] holding place in the dormitory for the Kurds in al-Azhar Mosque. He has stipulated that no more than three quires of [the book] are to be changed out, and that it is not to be sold, taken out with a deposit, changed, or replaced. (Then whoever alters the bequest after he has heard it - the sin is only upon those who have altered it. Indeed, God is all-Hearing and Knowing.) (Q 2:181) Written on 7 Sha‘bān 1308 (March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1794)

By the first half of the nineteenth century, al-Azhar had held the largest public-facing book collection in the city of Cairo. In his topography of mid-thirteenth/mid-nineteenth century Cairo, *Dhayl khīṭaṭ al-Maqrīzī* (*Appendix to al-Maqrīzī's al-Khiṭaṭ*), the litterateur ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Nāfi‘ (d. between 1861 and 1863) provides a survey of the endowment institutions in Cairo, along with an inventory of the number of manuscript books held in each of these institutions’ libraries. Table 2 lists the number of books held in each student dormitory in al-Azhar or in a madrasa incorporated into al-Azhar according to Nāfi‘. The survey shows that al-Azhar vastly surpassed any Mamluk-era institution in terms of the number of books held in its library.

**TABLE 2: NUMBER OF MANUSCRIPT VOLUMES IN AL-AZHAR LIBRARIES IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY, ACCORDING TO NĀFI‘<sup>72</sup>**

<b>Library within al-Azhar or incorporated into al-Azhar</b>	<b>Number of volumes</b>
al-Azhar, Upper Egyptian Students’ Dormitory	1190
al-Azhar, Syrian Students’ Dormitory	2100
al-Azhar, Darfur Students’ Dormitory ( <i>Riwāq al-dakārnah</i> )	21
al-Azhar, Javanese Students’ Dormitory	64
al-Azhar, Sulaymānīyah Dormitory (for Afghan students)	353
al-Azhar, Maghrebi Students’ Dormitory	3686
al-Azhar, Turkish Students’ Dormitory	5051
al-Azhar, Djibouti Students’ Dormitory	156
al-Azhar, Yemeni Students’ Dormitory	145
al-Azhar, Kurdish Students’ Dormitory	1297
Ṭaybarsīyah Madrasa (f. 709/1309)	49
al-Azhar, Wanā Students’ Dormitory (village in Upper Egypt)	175
al-Azhar, Indian Students’ Dormitory	29
al-Azhar, Baghdadi Students’ Dormitory	36
Aqbughāwīyah Madrasa (f. 740/1340)	1000
al-Azhar, al-Bahāriwah Students’ Dormitory	360

<sup>72</sup> Taken from ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Nāfi‘, *Dhayl khīṭaṭ al-Maqrīzī*, eds. Khālid ‘Azab and Muḥammad al-Sayyid Ḥamdī (Cairo: Maktabat al-dār al-‘arabīyah lil-kitāb, 2006), 44-49.

TABLE 2 CONTINUED

al-Azhar, al-Ghaymah Students's Dormitory	167
al-Azhar, Rīf Students' Dormitory	907
al-Azhar, Fashnī Students' Dormitory	15
al-Azhar, Mu'ammār Students' Dormitory	123
al-Azhar, Berber Students' Dormitory	17
al-Azhar, Ṣulayḥ Students' Dormitory	5
Al-Azhar, al-Sharqāwī Students' Dormitory	145
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,071</b>

Nāfi's survey of Cairo's libraries also includes a description of the Maḥmūdīyah:

On Qaṣabat Riḍwān Street: ...the Masjid of Maḥmūd al-Kurdī also known as the Masjid of al-Mu'izz. It has a library of fifty-eight volumes. Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūfī says in some of his works that this library is the one that helped him compose so prolifically, saying that it contained so-and-so number of books ...Now, only this meager amount of books remain [in the library] due its [endowment] supervisors having stolen them.<sup>73</sup>

The Maḥmūd al-Kurdī Mosque that Nāfi refers to is none other than the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa. The nineteenth century Egyptian education reformer and public work minister 'Alī Bāshā Mubārak confirms in his own urban topography of Cairo, *al-Khiṭaṭ al-tawfīqīyah*, that the Maḥmūd al-Kurdi Mosque was once known as the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa.<sup>74</sup> Most probably, the reason for this name change is that in 1567 an Ottoman governor of Egypt named Maḥmūd Bāshā had constructed a large madrasa near the Mountain Citadel of Cairo also called the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa.<sup>75</sup> Consequently, at some point locals had most likely started referring to

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 67-68.

<sup>74</sup> 'Alī Bāshā Mubārak, *al-Khiṭaṭ al-tawfīqīyah al-jadīdah li-Miṣr, al-Qāhirah wa-mudunihā wa-bilādihā al-qadīmah wa-al-shahīrah* (Būlāq: al-Maṭba'ah al-kubrā al-amīriyah, 1886-1889), 2:109.

<sup>75</sup> Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo: An Introduction* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1989), 160-161.



the Mamluk-era Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa as the Maḥmūd al-Kurdī Mosque in order to distinguish it from the Ottoman-era Maḥmūdīyah. The reason for this name change to Maḥmūd al-Kurdī specifically is unclear. The sources consulted for the biography of Maḥmūd al-Ustādār given in Chapter 3 do not mention that he was of Kurdish stock. The only Maḥmūd al-Kurdī mentioned in the literary sources for the Ottoman period is Maḥmūd al-Kurdī (d. 1195/1780), a prominent figure of the Khalwatī Sufī Order in Cairo and shaykh of the famous historian of the French occupation of Egypt ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī.<sup>76</sup> However, it is unclear whether the Maḥmūdīyah’s new name refers to this individual.

Nevertheless, the name change from being a madrasa to a mosque in all the sources from the twelfth/seventeenth century onwards suggests that at some point the Maḥmūdīyah had stopped providing a regular stipend for professors of hadith and Ḥanafī jurisprudence. This would follow a pattern of several older madrasa institutions from the Mamluk periods and earlier becoming mosques or sites of Sufī devotion in Ottoman Cairo.<sup>77</sup> ‘Alī Bāshā Mubārak would complain shortly after Nāfi‘ that of the seventy madrasa institutions originally mentioned by the ninth/fifteenth century historian al-Maqrīzī in his urban topography of Cairo, every single one with the exception of al-Azhar had ceased to serve as a teaching institution.<sup>78</sup>

Returning to Nāfi‘’s passage, the Maḥmūdīyah at this point in the mid-thirteenth/mid-nineteenth century only held fifty-eight volumes, a precipitous drop from the over four thousand volumes mentioned by ibn Ḥajar in the early ninth/fifteenth century. Nāfi‘ attributes this decline

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<sup>76</sup> al-Jabartī, *‘Ajā’ib al-āthār fī al-tarājim wa-al-akhbār* (Beirut: Dār al-jīl, 1978), 1:553.

<sup>77</sup> James Heyworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt*. (London: Luzac and Co., 1939), 16.

<sup>78</sup> Mubārak, *al-Khiṭaṭ al-tawfīqīyah*, 1:87-88.

to theft committed by the Maḥmūdīyah's endowment supervisors, which again would seem to follow a pattern of what happened to several other older endowment libraries in Ottoman Cairo.<sup>79</sup>

Nevertheless, based on the numbers given by Nāfi', it seems that the libraries of several other Mamluk-era institutions fared better than the Maḥmūdīyah during the Ottoman period. Consider the library of the Ṣarḡhitmishīyah. Ibn Iyās had included this along with the Maḥmūdīyah as among the libraries plundered by the Ottomans in 923/1517. However, a surviving court record held in the Egyptian National Archives dated to Rabī' al-Thānī 1078/September 1667 records an inventory of the books held in the Ṣarḡhitmishīyah Madrasa Library, including a recent book endowment donation that had been made by a Medinan judge:

An inventory of books endowed to scholars and students by the deceased *shaykh al-Islām* Aḥmad Afandī, the judge of Medina, which have been placed in the library of the deceased Ṣarḡhitmish al-Nāṣirī, may he rest in peace, in his madrasa located in the Tulunid Ṣalībah District. [The books] have been received by our *mawlā*, the pride of all distinguished teachers, Murtaḍā Afandī, the teacher at the aforementioned madrasa and its librarian.<sup>80</sup>

This inventory lists a total of 394 volumes in the madrasa library. However, almost two centuries later Nāfi' states that by the mid-thirteenth/mid-nineteenth century the Ṣarḡhitmishīyah held 650 volumes,<sup>81</sup> meaning that it must have received further book donations in the intervening period. What this means for the purpose of our discussion here is that, while Mamluk-era libraries such as the Maḥmūdīyah certainly did lose their books during the Ottoman period, the

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<sup>79</sup> See El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics*, 19-23.

<sup>80</sup> Cited in Milād, *al-Wathā'iq al-'uthmānīyah*, 1:411.

<sup>81</sup> Nāfi', *Dhayl khitāṭ al-Maqrīzī*, 73.

history of Cairo's libraries during the Ottoman period is more complicated than a simple narrative of a steady decline, and that the state of a given institution's endowments must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Nevertheless, in order to prevent further books from disappearing from the Maḥmūdīyah and other endowment institutions, 'Alī Bāshā Mubārak had suggested to the Khedive Ismā'īl Bāsha of Egypt to found an Egyptian National Library modelled on those that had been established in European cities such as Paris. In 1286/1870, Ismā'īl Bāsha issued a proclamation for the manuscripts in Cairo's various madrasa and mosque libraries to be collected and transported to the newly founded Khedival Library (*al-kutubkhānah al-khidwīyah*, currently known as the Egyptian National Library, *Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah*).<sup>82</sup>

However, the Maḥmūdīyah's remaining books would not make it to the Khedival Library. According to his speech on the state of libraries in Egypt in 1916, Muḥammad 'Alī al-Bīblāwī reported that an official charged with the order to move the manuscript books from Cairo's madrasa and mosque libraries to the Khedival Library had felt that by moving the books to another location that he would be violating the endowment stipulations outlined by the original founders of these institutions. Consequently, this individual ended up leaving many books in the historic madrasa and mosque libraries. In 1297/1880, the Minister of Religious Endowments at the time was informed that many of the books in these madrasa and mosque libraries had in fact not been moved to the Khedival Library as had been ordered ten years ago. Upon finding this out, he ordered that they all be transported at once to the Khedival Library.

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<sup>82</sup> Sayyid, *Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah*, 21.

However, the new official charged with this task found that many of the libraries' remaining books had been stolen in the intervening ten years. According to al-Biblāwī, "when he arrived at the Masjid of the emir Maḥmūd al-Ustādār in Qaṣabat Riḍwān, he found the book cabinets stripped of their priceless pearls and valuable treasures."<sup>83</sup> Thus, by around the year 1297/1880, the Maḥmūdīyah no longer held any books, bringing our history of the Maḥmūdīyah as a library to a close.

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<sup>83</sup> Muḥammad 'Alī al-Biblāwī, "Tārīkh dūr al-kutub fī al-sharq wa-awwal man allafa fī al-Islām," in *Maṭba'at al-ma'ārif wa-aṣdiqā'uhā mundhu nash'atihā ilā al-ān* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-ma'ārif, 1931), 31.

## Chapter 5: Readers of the Maḥmūdīyah

### *5.0. Introduction*

So far, this study has considered the circulation histories of the books in the Maḥmūdīyah before their endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah, as well as their circulation histories after they left the Maḥmūdīyah. This chapter shall treat the histories of the books while they were endowments within the Maḥmūdīyah. The questions that this chapter will answer are: 1.) Who were the clientele of the Maḥmūdīyah Library? 2.) How did the readers of the Maḥmūdīyah engage with its books while they were endowed to the library? 3.) How do these engagements with the books reflect broader trends in reading culture in ninth/fifteenth century Egypt and Syria?

#### *5.1.0 Sources for determining the clientele and readers of the Maḥmūdīyah*

The sources for determining the clientele of the Maḥmūdīyah can be divided into two categories. The first are the literary sources written by contemporaries who followed the affairs of the Maḥmūdīyah closely enough to consider it worth mentioning in their works. The second kind of sources are the notes left by individuals on the Maḥmūdīyah's surviving manuscripts while these manuscripts were in the Maḥmūdīyah Library. These notes include reading notes, collation notes, and marginalia commenting on the books' main text.

However, the presence of a note on a Maḥmūdīyah manuscript does not necessarily mean that the note was written while the manuscript was in the Maḥmūdīyah Library. After all, each one of these books circulated widely before its endowment to and subsequent removal from the

Maḥmūdīyah. Consequently, the assignment of a specific location to the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus's reading notes, which do not usually mention where the note was written, becomes less of a science and more of an art. Using several facts that we have already established in previous chapters about the Maḥmūdīyah Library, along with some deductive reasoning, we can categorize several different groupings of notes as having been written on the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts while they were held in the Maḥmūdīyah Library.

### *5.1.1. Notes with dates and locations*

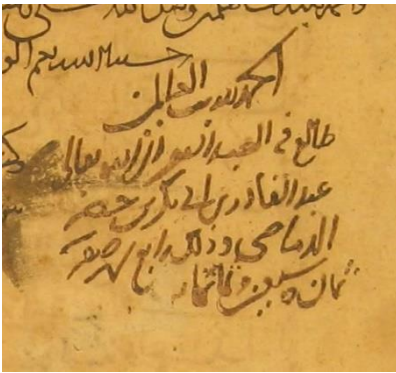
The first grouping of notes that can be identified as having been written in the Maḥmūdīyah include those which mention a date or other information that can either place the author of the note close to the physical location of the Maḥmūdīyah or temporally close to the Maḥmūdīyah's endowment date of 797/1395. For example, on the Maḥmūdīyah copy of Buḥturī's poetry collection is a reading note left by a certain 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Bakr ibn Khiḍr al-Damāṣī, which he dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> of Ṣafar 878 (July 10<sup>th</sup> 1473).<sup>1</sup> al-Sakhāwī's entry on this 'Abd al-Qādir in his biographical dictionary mentions that, in addition to composing poetry as a hobby, he was the doorman of the Mu'ayyadīyah Mosque, which is about a five to ten minute walk to the Maḥmūdīyah in modern Cairo.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, this note was most likely written while the book was still in the Maḥmūdīyah.

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<sup>1</sup> Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1252, fol. 198b.

<sup>2</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, 2:264-265.

**FIGURE 21: READER NOTE ON A MAḤMŪDĪYAH BOOK LEFT BY THE DOORMAN OF THE MU'AYYADĪYAH MOSQUE. ISTANBUL: KÖPRÜLÜ KÜTÜPHANESİ, MS FAZIL AHMED PAŞA 1252, FOL. 198B.**



الحمد لله رب العالمين  
 طالع فيه العبد الفقير إلى الله تعالى  
 عبد القادر بن ابي بكر بن خضر  
 الدماصي وذلك رابع شهر صفر سنة  
 ثمان وسبعين وثمانمائة

Praise be to God Lord of the worlds. The servant in need of God the Exalted, ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Bakr ibn Khidr al-Damāṣī, read this on the 4th of the month of Ṣafar in the year 873.

With all that said, I erred on the side of caution and would avoid the conclusion that a note was written in the Maḥmūdīyah if it did not fill one of these two criteria of location or date stated above. Nevertheless, these notes by more anonymous readers can shed some light onto the clientele of readers at the Maḥmūdīyah, as we will see below.

### 5.1.2. *ibn Ḥajar’s circle of friends and students*

The second grouping of notes that can be confirmed to have been written in the Maḥmūdīyah are those written by individuals connected in some way to ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, the famed hadith scholar of the ninth/fifteenth century who, as has been established above, served as librarian of the Maḥmūdīyah from 826 until his death in 852 (1423-1449). We know that ibn Ḥajar took full advantage of his position as librarian for his own scholarly output, as his student al-Sakhāwī describes it:

Our shaykh [ibn Ḥajar] wished to supervise [the Maḥmūdīyah Library] himself. He made a catalogue for it organized alphabetically by title, along with another organized by

subject matter. In this way he had benefited from this and God had benefited him. He generally used to stay in the library one day a week, and over the course of the week he would write a list of what [books] he needed to review [in the library] for his own works or for other reasons so that he would remember it on the day he would be [in the library], as I have seen in his own hand.<sup>3</sup>

Notes left by ibn Ḥajar on the books in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus therefore were most likely written while they were still endowments to the library. Consider the following example, a marginal note ibn Ḥajar left on an obituary section of the Maḥmūdīyah copy of *al-Muqtafá li-tārīkh Abī Shāmah* (*A Continuation of Abū Shāmah's History*) by al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Birzālī. In the note, ibn Ḥajar expands upon an obituary of a certain individual. He writes: “I say that this [man] is my father’s uncle. He is ‘Uthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar... written by Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar” (see Figure 22 below).

**FIGURE 22: MARGINAL NOTE WRITTEN BY IBN ḤAJAR ON A MAḤMŪDĪYAH BOOK. ISTANBUL: TOPKAPI SARAYI MŪZESI KŪTŪPHANESI, MS AHMED III 2951/2, FOL. 222B.**



<sup>3</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 2:609-610.



حاشية	Note:
قلت هذا عم والدي	I say this is my father's uncle.
فإنه عثمان بن محمد بن علي	He is 'Uthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī
ابن حجر وآل بيتنا	Ibn Ḥajar and our family
يعرفون ببني البزاز	is known as Bani al-Bazzāz
وذلك واضح في أشعار	as is clear in my father's poetry <sup>4</sup>
والدي وكان عم أبي	And this uncle of my father
هذا سكنه الإسكندرية	lived in Alexandria
واستمر بها	and stayed there.
كتبه أحمد بن علي بن حجر	Written by Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥajar

ibn Ḥajar would often stay at the Maḥmūdīyah with his students and colleagues. One of his most loyal students, al-Sakhāwī, describes the lively environment of the Maḥmūdīyah during ibn Ḥajar's tenure as librarian. Referring to himself in the third person, al-Sakhāwī writes:

Then he would often go with [ibn Ḥajar] to the library in the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa and stay with him there. He would read out loud to him, and [ibn Ḥajar] would train him in subjects of *kashf* and extracting transmission chains from non-hadith works (*takhrīj*), as well as investigation into the biographies of hadith transmitters and hadith texts (*naẓar fī al-rijāl wa-al-mutūn*)...after evening prayers [al-Sakhāwī] would keep listening or reading them aloud himself, whether they be hadith transmissions or books, along with others such as al-Sayyid Ḥamzah al-Ḥusaynī or Najm al-Dīn 'Umar ibn Fahd al-Makkī, or Quṭb al-Dīn al-Khayḍirī al-Dimashqī, or others like my shaykh ibn Khidr or Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb al-Mālikī, or Taqī al-Dīn al-Qalqashandī, or Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyá al-Bikrī or al-Biqā'ī.<sup>5</sup>

And indeed, notes left by ibn Ḥajar's students on the Maḥmūdīyah corpus along with mentions of the Maḥmūdīyah in the works of ibn Ḥajar's students all confirm that many of ibn Ḥajar's students and contemporaries did in fact use the Maḥmūdīyah Library. In fact, most of the

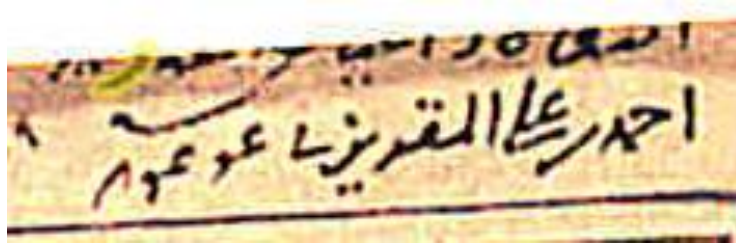
<sup>4</sup> I express my gratitude to Ahmed El Shamsy for helping me with this line.

<sup>5</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *Irshād al-ghāwī*, 1038.

authors of paratexts from the Maḥmūdīyah period of these books’ histories whose biographies can be identified are all linked to ibn Ḥajar in some way, whether as his students or his friends.

For example, the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus contains notes written by al-Maqrīzī, the famous Egyptian historian and friend of ibn Ḥajar. In the note below, al-Maqrīzī states that he read the Maḥmūdīyah copy of the universal history *Tajārib al-umam* (*The Experiences of Nations*).

**FIGURE 23: AL-MAQRĪZĪ’S READING NOTE ON A MAḤMŪDĪYAH BOOK. ISTANBUL: SŪLEYMANIYE KŪTŪPHANESI, MS AYASOFYA 3116, FOL. 1A.**



انتقاه داعيًا لمعيره أحمد بن علي المقرئ سنة 844  
 Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī picked out sections [of this book], praying for the person who lent it to me, in the year 844.<sup>6</sup>

It is noteworthy that al-Maqrīzī includes a prayer for someone who lent him this book, presumably while the book was still in the Maḥmūdīyah. The person who lent him this volume

<sup>6</sup> As can be seen in Figure 23, the top line of the reading note has been mostly cut off due to the poor quality of the image of the manuscript at my disposal. My reading of the top line is partially based on the visible lower half of the ligatures of the first line and partially based on the samples of the formulations al-Maqrīzī commonly used in his reading notes. According to Bauden, several manuscripts bear his note with the same phrase *intiḡāhu dā’iyan li-mu’trihi Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī* (“Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī picked out sections [of this book], praying for the person who lent it to me”). The other expressions al-Maqrīzī frequently used in his reading notes such as “praying for [the book’s] author” (*mu’allifihi*) or “praying for [the book’s] owner (*mālikīhi*) do not match the very visible letter *rā*’ on the last word of the cut-off first line of the reading note in Figure 23 (The letter *rā*’ has been highlighted in yellow in Figure 23 for clarity). For a list of al-Maqrīzī’s reading notes (which does not include his reading note on the Maḥmūdīyah copy of *Tajārib al-umam* in Figure 23 above), see Frédéric Bauden, “Maqriziana II: Discovery of an Autograph Manuscript of al-Maqrīzī: Towards a Better Understanding of His Working Method Analysis,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (2008): 117-18.

was undoubtedly al-Maqrīzī's dear friend and Maḥmūdīyah librarian ibn Ḥajar. The date al-Maqrīzī wrote the note coincides with the time in which ibn Ḥajar was working as the Maḥmūdīyah librarian. Moreover, we know from al-Sakhāwī that ibn Ḥajar would frequently lend out Maḥmūdīyah books, provided that he did not own the book in his own personal collection.<sup>7</sup> ibn Ḥajar and al-Maqrīzī enjoyed a particularly close relationship, as ibn Ḥajar describes it: "Pages could not contain the friendship that exists between us."<sup>8</sup> Not only would the two scholars lend each other their own works, but they would even let each other add to each other's own works. As Frédéric Bauden has shown, ibn Ḥajar had let al-Maqrīzī borrow his autograph copy of his list of his hadith authorities, *al-Majma' al-mu'assas*, which al-Maqrīzī filled with marginal notes correcting or adding to ibn Ḥajar's entries.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Bauden proves elsewhere that al-Maqrīzī had let ibn Ḥajar borrow his autograph copy of his history *al-Muqaffā al-kabīr (The Large Addendum)*, to which ibn Ḥajar had added a total of 178 biographies in spaces left blank by al-Maqrīzī.<sup>10</sup> It would appear from this reading note in Figure 23 above that ibn Ḥajar also lent his friend al-Maqrīzī a book from the Maḥmūdīyah.

Further notes written by al-Maqrīzī show that his friend ibn Ḥajar had lent him copies of his own works to peruse while the former worked in the Maḥmūdīyah. However, unlike in the first instance, al-Maqrīzī does not identify himself in these notes. Though it has been noted elsewhere that identifying an author through the peculiarities of his or her handwriting is a

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<sup>7</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 3:1018.

<sup>8</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Dhayl al-durar al-kāminah*, 195.

<sup>9</sup> See Frédéric Bauden, "Maqriziana IX: Should al-Maqrīzī Be Thrown Out with the Bath Water? The Question of His Plagiarism of al-Awḥadī's *Khiṭaṭ* and the Documentary Evidence," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 14 (2010): 168.

<sup>10</sup> See Frédéric Bauden, "Maqriziana X: al-Maqrīzī and His *al-Tārīḥ al-Kabīr al-Muqaffā li-Miṣr*. Part 2: The Fortunes of the Work and Its Copies," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 15 (2020): 196-203.

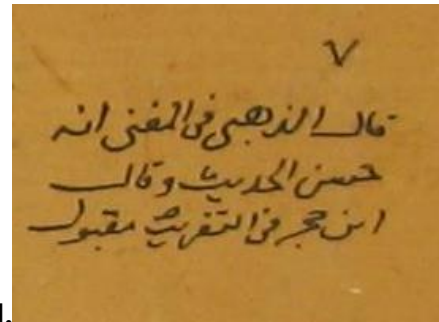
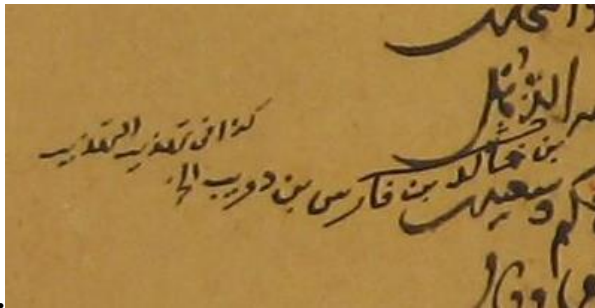
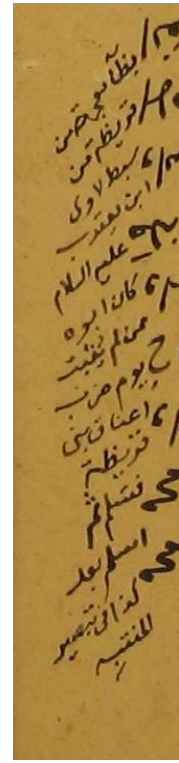
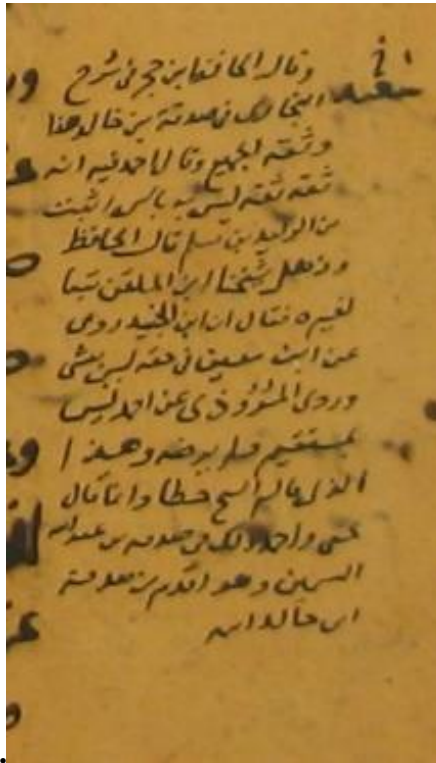
notoriously shaky enterprise,<sup>11</sup> the sheer number of surviving holographs written by al-Maqrīzī and the numerous studies written about his working methods by Frédéric Bauden, including an in-depth study on al-Maqrīzī’s handwriting,<sup>12</sup> leave no doubt as to the identity of the author of the notes in question. With that being said, al-Maqrīzī references four different works by his friend ibn Ḥajar in his marginal corrections on the Maḥmūdīyah copy of an abridgement and expansion on a biographical dictionary of hadith transmitters. In the examples below, the ibn Ḥajar works al-Maqrīzī references in his notes on the Maḥmūdīyah book include the former’s hadith commentary *Fath al-bārī fī sharḥ al-Bukhārī* (*Victory of the Creator in the Commentary on al-Bukhārī*, which al-Maqrīzī refers to as *Sharḥ al-Bukhārī* or *Commentary on al-Bukhārī*), ibn Ḥajar’s abridgement of al-Mizzī’s *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* which he called *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* (*The Refinement of The Refinement*), ibn Ḥajar’s abridgement of his *own* abridgement called *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* (*The Abridgement of The Refinement*), and *Tabṣīr al-muntabih bi-taḥrīr al-Mushtabih* (*Granting Vision to Those Careful in Writing Ambiguous Names*), an abridgement and expansion upon a work by al-Dhahabī on the correct way to vowel the problematic names, titles, and patronymics of hadith transmitters.

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<sup>11</sup> See Élise Franssen, “*Bi-khaṭṭ mu`allifihī*”... Vraiment?! L’apport de l’analyse judiciaire d’écritures à l’étude des manuscrits arabes,” in *In the Author’s Hand: Holograph and Authorial Manuscripts in the Islamic Handwritten Tradition*, eds. Frédéric Bauden and Élise Franssen (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 78-135.

<sup>12</sup> See Frédéric Bauden, “Maqriziana XV: The Characteristics of al-Maqrīzī’s Handwriting,” in *In the Author’s Hand: Holograph and Authorial Manuscripts in the Islamic Handwritten Tradition*, eds. Frédéric Bauden and Élise Franssen (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 136-231.

FIGURE 24A-D: AL-MAQRIZI’S REFERENCES TO IBN ḤAJAR’S WORKS IN HIS MARGINAL NOTES



a. “ibn Ḥajar has said in his commentary on al-Bukhārī” (*qāla al-ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar fī sharḥ al-Bukhārī*....) Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 263, fol. 102b

b. “...According to [the book] *Granting Vision*” (...*kadhā fī tabṣīr al-mushtabih*). ....) Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 263, fol. 207b.

c. ...According to *The Refinement of The Refinement* (...*kadhā fī tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*) Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 263, fol. 210a.

d. “...ibn Ḥajar has said in *The Abridgement* that [this hadith transmitter] is acceptable” (...*qāla ibn Ḥajar fī al-taqrīb maqbūl*). MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 263, fol. 117b.

By looking at the dates ibn Ḥajar completed these works, we can assign an approximate date range that al-Maqrīzī wrote these notes in the Maḥmūdīyah. The completion of the latest of these works, *Fath al-Bārī*, was announced in the winter of 842/1438 with an extravagant feast in Cairo.<sup>13</sup> However, as Joel Blecher has shown, ibn Ḥajar heavily involved his students and colleagues with the process of composing and editing his *Fath al-Bārī* ever since he undertook the challenge of writing it in 813/1410, so al-Maqrīzī could have seen a draft of it before its official “completion.”<sup>14</sup> The next latest work of ibn Ḥajar’s that al-Maqrīzī mentions, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, was completed in 827/1424 according to the completion date on the surviving autograph of the work stored in the Egyptian National Library.<sup>15</sup> This gives us a conservative approximate date range of 827-845/1424-1442 in which al-Maqrīzī was writing his comments on this manuscript in the Maḥmūdīyah, the upper limit of this range being the year of al-Maqrīzī’s death. This date range falls exactly within the time period in which ibn Ḥajar was serving as the Maḥmūdīyah’s librarian. It is highly likely, given how the two would frequently let each other borrow their own works, that ibn Ḥajar had loaned al-Maqrīzī his own personal copies of the four works of his to consult while the latter was perusing other books in the Maḥmūdīyah.

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<sup>13</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 2:38, 2:675-676.

<sup>14</sup> Joel Blecher, *Said the Prophet of God: Ḥadīth Commentary Across a Millennium* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018), 50-54.

<sup>15</sup> Cairo: Dar al-kutub al-miṣrīyah, MS tārikh taymūr 533, fol. 210b.

## 5.2. Reading practices: a Mamluk's slow and deliberate reading.

Earlier modern scholarship had once cast the Mamluk class of Egyptian and Syrian society as foreign rulers who lived in parallel worlds to the local inhabitants of the areas in which they ruled, separated by language and culture. However, Ulrich Haarmann's seminal study on the literary and scholarly activities of Mamluks had put this outdated notion to rest,<sup>16</sup> and has spawned further studies that explored the intellectual and cultural life of this misunderstood class of medieval Islamic society.<sup>17</sup>

Examples in the literary sources show that Mamluks did indeed make use of the Maḥmūdīyah Library. In the anecdote about the disgraced Maḥmūdīyah librarian Fakhr al-Dīn 'Uthmān quoted in detail in section 2.1 above, we have already seen that members of the Mamluk elite had frequented the library and had even tried to bribe 'Uthmān in order to entice him to let them remove books from the library.<sup>18</sup> However, a paratext on a surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscript sheds more light on the Mamluk readers that frequented the library. The note in question occurs on the last folio of the last volume of Maḥmūdīyah's thirty-volume copy of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (*The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition*).

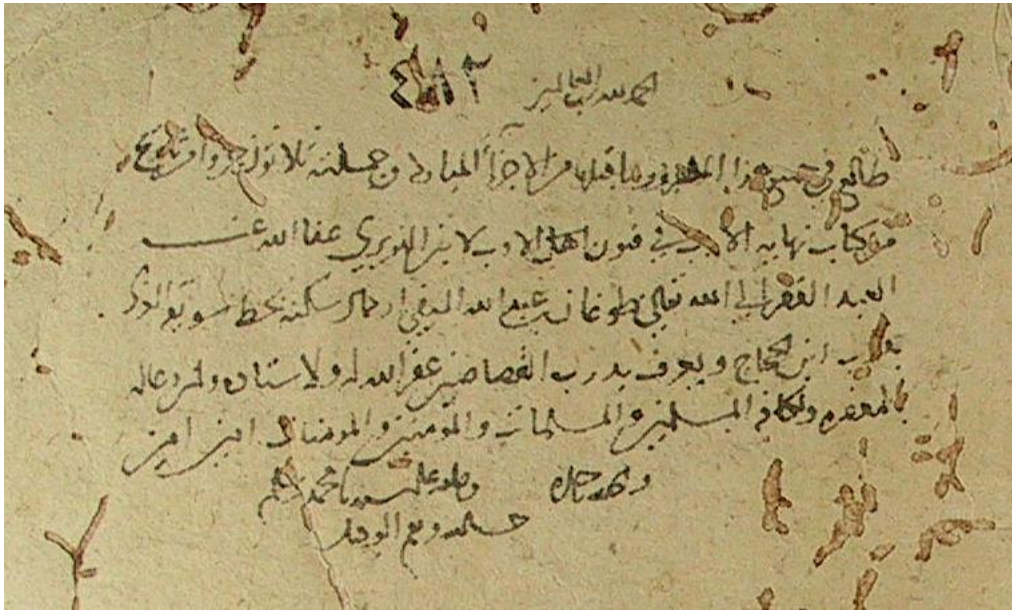
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<sup>16</sup> Ulrich Haarmann, "Arabic in Speech Turkish in Lineage: Mamluks and Their Sons in the Intellectual Life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria," *Journal of Semitic Studies* XXXIII/1 (Spring 1988): 81-114.

<sup>17</sup> For studies on the book collections of the Mamluk elite, see D'hulster, *Browsing*; Élise Franssen, "What was there in a Mamluk Amīr's Library?: Evidence from a Fifteenth-Century Manuscript," in *Developing Perspectives in Mamluk History: Essays in Honor of Amalia Levanoni*, ed. Yuval Ben-Bassat (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 311-332; Barbara Flemming, "Literary Activities in Mamluk Halls and Barracks," in *Essays on Turkish Literature and History*, ed. Barbara Flemming (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2018), 105-116. For a systematic study on Mamluk education based on the narrative sources, see Christian Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger: Die Mamluken als Träger arabischsprachiger Bildung nach al-Ṣafadī, al-Maqrīzī, und weiteren Quellen* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2012).

<sup>18</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:299.

FIGURE 25: A MAMLUK'S READING NOTE ON THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH'S COPY OF NIḤĀYAT AL-ARAB. ISTANBUL: SÜLEYMANIYE KÜTÜPHANESİ, MS AYASOFYA 3527, FOL. 244A.



Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds. The servant in need of the most exalted God, Ṭughān ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Sayfī Arkmās read through all of this volume and the blessed volumes preceding it, a total of thirty volumes..., of the book *The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of The People of Erudition* by ibn al-Nuwayrī (may God grant him forgiveness). [Ṭughān’s] place of residence is in the Quarter of the al-‘Izzī Market, on ibn al-Ḥajjāj Way, also known as Sheepshearers’ Way. May God forgive him, his master, whomever prayers for forgiveness for him, all Muslim men and Muslim women, all believing men and women, amen amen. Praise be to God and blessings to our lord Muḥammad and his family. God alone is sufficient to us and is the best disposer of affairs.

الحمد لله رب العالمين طالع  
في جميع هذا الجزء وما  
قبله من الأجزاء المباركة  
من جملته ثلاثون جزوا...  
من كتاب نهاية الأرب في  
فنون أهل الأدب لابن  
النويري عفا الله عنه العبد  
الفقير إلى الله تعالى طوغان  
بن عبد الله السيفي أركماس  
سكنه بخط سويقة العزي<sup>19</sup>  
بدر بن الحاج ويعرف  
بدر القصاصين غفر الله  
له ولأستاده ولمن دعا له  
بالمغفرة ولكافة المسلمين  
والمسلمات والمؤمنين  
والمؤمنات أمين أمين  
والحمد لله حمده وصلى  
على سيدنا محمد واله  
حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل

<sup>19</sup> I thank Elon Harvey for helping me with this reading.



The author of this note identifies himself as Ṭūghān ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Sayfī and states that he read all thirty volumes of the book on his own. Though he does not explicitly mention that he is a Mamluk, several clues throughout the long note indicate that this must be the case: In addition to his Turkic name, the generic patronymic ibn ʿAbd Allāh (son of God’s servant) was often applied to Mamluks because, owing to their having been enslaved in foreign lands and brought to Egypt at a young age, the identities of their fathers were usually unknown. More subtle clues that Ṭūghān was a Mamluk include the invocation he wrote later on in the note: “May God grant forgiveness to him, his master, whomever prays for forgiveness for him...” It is often the case in private reading notes that the author would conclude the note with a prayer for forgiveness for him/herself followed by his or her parents, but here Ṭūghān prays for forgiveness for his master (*ustādhihi*). However, it should be noted that there is not enough information here to confirm or deny that Ṭūghān was currently enslaved or manumitted at the time he wrote this note. Though he does pray for God’s forgiveness for his master, it was often the case that Mamluks felt a strong bond with their masters even after their manumission.

This reader who at some point was a Mamluk provides an unusual amount of information that reveals a kind of reading practice that went on inside the library. To begin with, Ṭūghān ibn ʿAbd Allāh states in his note that he read all thirty volumes of the book to himself. This note provides an interesting insight to how a Mamluk-era reader engaged with *Nihāyat al-arab*, a text considered one of the examples *par excellence* of Mamluk encyclopedism. The implicit assumption that pervades several studies on Islamic encyclopedic works and anthologies is that these works were meant to be consulted as a reference and that it would be anachronistic to read

them from cover to cover.<sup>20</sup> Providing a corrective for this assumption, Dagmar Riedel argues that, due to the phenomenon of a paginated table of contents not appearing in Arabic manuscripts until the eighteenth century, the primary means a reader had of retrieving information from an encyclopedia would be to skim through the work from cover to cover, their success dependent on their “ability to understand the textual divisions, page layout, and illumination, and to utilize their clues while scanning the text of such encyclopedias.”<sup>21</sup> In his dissertation, Muhanna agrees with Riedel’s assessment concerning the structure of *Nihāyat al-arab*. Though al-Nuwayrī structured the content of his encyclopedia in a way that would appear to facilitate the retrieval of information for the reader, such as creating a consistent three-tiered division of its contents and including a network of cross-references within the text, Muhanna hesitates to conclude that al-Nuwayrī wrote *Nihāyat al-arab* with the express goal of providing easy access to its contents. He states that though the structure of *Nihāyat al-arab* “could not bring the reader to his desired destination in a single step, it could at least eliminate one step in the process.”<sup>22</sup>

However, even in the more nuanced assessments of Riedel and Muhanna, the assumption still remains that medieval readers approached these large encyclopedias with the aim of extracting a piece of information. While this most certainly must have been the case in some instances, in the note referenced above Ṭūghān ibn ‘Abd Allāh explicitly states that he read the

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<sup>20</sup> See for example Theodore Beers, “The Lives of Sām Mirzā (923-75/1517-67): Dynastic Strife and Literary World-Building in Early Safavid Iran” (PhD. diss, University of Chicago, 2020), 255; Stephanie B. Thomas, “The Concept of *Muḥāḍara* in the Adab Anthology with Special Reference to al-Rāghib al-İṣfahānī’s *Muḥāḍarat al-udabā*” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2000); Maaïke van Berkel, “The Attitude towards Knowledge in Mamluk Egypt: Organisation and Structure of the *Ṣubḥ Al-A ‘shā* by Al-Qalqashandī (1355-1418),” in *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts: Proceedings of the Second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996*, ed. Peter Binkley (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 159–168.

<sup>21</sup> Dagmar A. Riedel, “Searching for the Islamic Episteme: The Status of Historical Information in Medieval Middle-Eastern Anthological Writing” (PhD diss. Indiana University, 2004), 210.

<sup>22</sup> Muhanna, “Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period”, 122-123.

entirety of all thirty volumes of the Maḥmūdīyah copy of *Nihāyat al-arab* (*tāla ‘a fī jamī‘ hādhā al-juz’ al-mubārak wa-mā qablahu min al-ajzā’ al-mubāraka wa-jumlatuhu thalāthūn juz’an*).

The words *tāla ‘a* along with *jamī‘* here implies a more deliberate linear style of reading, as opposed to other verbs that can be found in other reader notes in the Maḥmūdīyah corpus, such as “selected from” (*intaqā*). Ṭūghān’s linear cover-to-cover reading of a work which has often been called encyclopedic most resembles the reading practice of *samā‘*, or group readings of a book aloud from cover to cover. As was the case in group reading sessions, Ṭūghān’s linear private reading of the thirty-volume *Nihāyat al-arab* was most certainly broken up into several sessions. Though he leaves no other notes across the surviving volumes of this recension of *Nihāyat al-arab*, other hints in his reading note can help us reconstruct how he must have went about reading this book. According to what he writes in the note, Ṭūghān lived in “the Quarter of al-‘Izzī Market, which is on ibn al-Ḥajjāj Way, also known as Sheepshearers’ Way” (*sakanuhu fī khuṭṭ suwayqat al-‘Izzī bi-darb ibn al-Ḥajjāj wa-yu‘raf bi-darb al-qaṣṣāṣīn*). al-Maqrīzī locates this quarter just outside the Zuwaylah Gate.<sup>23</sup> Seeing as the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa is right outside the Zuwaylah Gate as well, Ṭūghān must have lived within easy walking distance of the Maḥmūdīyah. Consequently, it is not hard to imagine this Mamluk reader coming to the Maḥmūdīyah on a regular basis to read a section of *Nihāyat al-arab*, then returning to his nearby home.

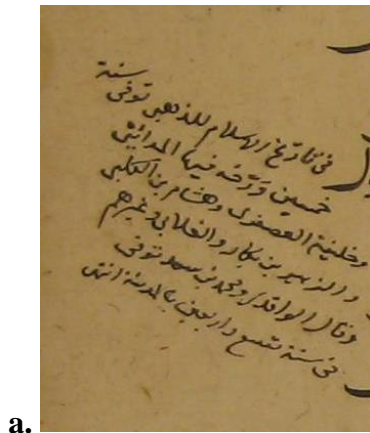
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<sup>23</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz wa-al-i‘tibār*, 3:353; 4:615.

### 5.3. Reading practices: al-Maqrīzī's note taking system

While reading the aforementioned biographical dictionary of hadith transmitters in the Maḥmūdīyah, al-Maqrīzī left abundant marginal notes with corrections and cross references to other books, some of which he most likely had open next to him as he was perusing the book at the Maḥmūdīyah. We have already considered the books penned by ibn Ḥajar that he had been consulting while at the Maḥmūdīyah. In addition to those books, he frequently referenced the works of al-Dhahabī such as *Tārīkh al-Islām* (*The History of Islam*) and al-Mizzī's copy of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* (*The Refinement of Perfection*), the autograph copies of both of which were endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>24</sup>

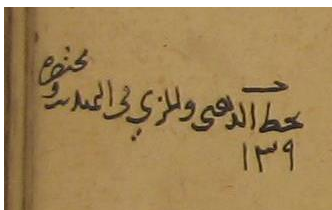
FIGURE 26A-B: AL-MAQRĪZĪ QUOTING OTHER BOOKS FROM THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH IN MARGINAL NOTES.



a.

في تاريخ الإسلام للذهبي  
توفي سنة خمسين... In al-Dhahabī's *History of Islam*, he passed away in the year 50...

Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS  
Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 263, fol. 48a.



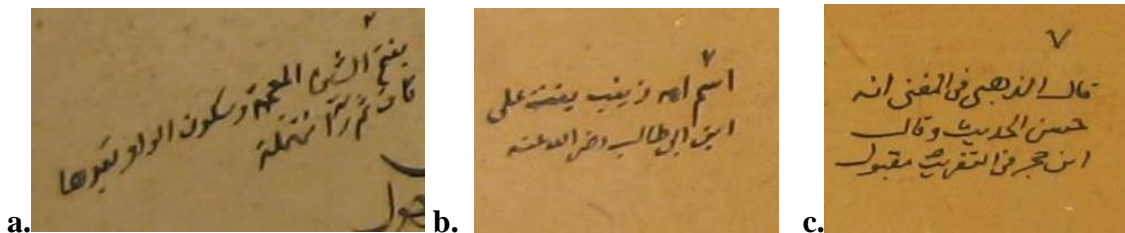
b.

خط الذهبي والمزي في  
التهذيب ومختصره 139. Note: In the hands of both al-Dhahabī and al-Mizzī in *The Refinement* and [*The Refinement's*] abridgement: [the year given is] 139

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix A, Entries 15, 41.

Several of al-Maqrīzī’s marginal notes on the same manuscript are also headed by numbers. In the examples below, these numbers are 2, 7 and 7 from left to right.

FIGURE 27A-C: AL-MAQRĪZĪ’S NUMERICAL REFERENCE SYSTEM.



- a. Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 263, fol. 47a.
- b. Ibid., fol. 117b.
- c. Ibid., fol. 127a.

Though I have not been able to decipher what these numbers signify, we do know from Bauden’s study on al-Maqrīzī’s working method that al-Maqrīzī used a number-based reference system in a personal notebook he kept of passages from other works that he aimed to use in his own compositions, a system which Bauden convincingly argues was for quick information retrieval.<sup>25</sup> However, al-Maqrīzī’s system that Bauden uncovered relies on the numbers 2 and 3, whereas the numbers he uses in MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 263 include the number 7 in addition to the number 2. Regardless of what these numbers signify, the fact that this numerical reference system corresponds roughly to one that he used for himself in his own personal notebook

<sup>25</sup> Bauden, “Maqriziana II,” 109-10.

suggests that al-Maqrīzī was making these notes for his own private benefit rather than for the use of other readers at the Maḥmūdīyah.

#### 5.4. Reading practices: notes of individual reading as a citation

Throughout this dissertation we have made use of individual reading notes (*muṭāla‘ah*) as a means of tracking a manuscript’s circulation history and reading history. Though there have been an efflorescence of studies that employ this kind of paratextual data as documentary sources, to the best of my knowledge there has been no attention paid to the social and intellectual function of these notes. Put quite simply, why did readers in the medieval Islamic world feel compelled to record that they read a book on their own? The ready answer to this question might be that the authors simply wished to leave a little personal mark on an object, a “so-so was here” kind of note. This most certainly was the motivation behind some of the reading notes already treated above, such as those of the Mamluk reader on the Maḥmūdīyah copy of *Nihāyat al-arab*.

However, there are examples in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus of individual reading notes that appeared to have a scholarly function. Take the case of some of the reader notes on the Maḥmūdīyah multi-volume autograph copy of al-Dhahabī’s *Tārīkh al-Islām*.

FIGURE 28: AL- KHAYḌIRĪ'S READING NOTE ON A MAḤMŪDĪYAH BOOK. ISTANBUL: SŪLEYMANIYE KŪTŪPHANESİ, MS AYASOFYA 3009, FOL. 222B.



فرغه مطالعة واستفادة  
العبيد محمد بن محمد بن  
عبد الله بن الخيزري  
الشافعي الدمشقي بالقاهرة  
سنة 844 نسأل الله السلامة  
والتوفيق

The insignificant servant of God Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Khayḍirī, the Shāfi‘ī and Damascene, finished this book through private reading, deriving from it great benefit, in Cairo in the year 844. He asks God for good health and success.

This reading note was one of many written on the Maḥmūdīyah copy of *Tārīkh al-Islām* by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Khayḍirī, a scholar from Damascus who had come to Cairo to continue his studies and would go on to assume the Shāfi‘ī chief judgeship of Damascus several times.<sup>26</sup> At the time he had written his notes on *Tārīkh al-Islām* in the year 844 he had been in Cairo for a year, having arrived there for the first time the year before to study with a number of teachers.<sup>27</sup> Chief among them was ibn Ḥajar, with whom al-Khayḍirī “studied very closely, night and day, reading aloud to him and listening to him recite hadith.”<sup>28</sup> al-Sakhāwī notes elsewhere that ibn Ḥajar would lend al-Khayḍirī many books of history to help him compose his biographical dictionary of Shāfi‘ī scholars.<sup>29</sup>

What motivated al-Khayḍirī to write the note? To answer this question, let us return to al-Sakhāwī’s entry on al-Khayḍirī. According to the entry, al-Khayḍirī had been preparing his

<sup>26</sup> For his biography, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 9:117-124.

<sup>27</sup> ibn Fahd, *Mu’jam al-shuyūkh*, ed. Muḥammad al-Zāhī, (Riyadh: Maṭbū‘āt dār al-yamāmah lil-baḥṭh wa-al-tarjamah wa-al-nashr, 1982), 390.

<sup>28</sup> al-Khayḍirī, *Ijāzat al-ḥāfiẓ al-Khayḍirī lil-wazīr Kamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd Bāshā al-‘Uthmānī, wa-fihā sīrat al-Khayḍirī wa-riḥālātuhu wa-shuyūkhuhu wa-mu`allafātuhu wa-marwīyātuhu bi-khaṭṭihi, wa-yalīhi al-Imtā’ bi-ḥukm al-samā’*; *wa-yalīhumā Majlis fī khatm al-ḥilyah li-Abī Nu‘aym al-Aṣbahānī*, ed. Nūr al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥamīdī al-Idrīsī (Amman: Dār al-faṭḥ, 2021), 35.

<sup>29</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 9:119.

dictionary of Shāfi‘ī scholars, *al-Luma‘ al-alma‘īyah li-a‘yān al-shāfi‘īyah* (*The Brilliant Lights Among the Shāfi‘ī Notables*). The book, only surviving in a partially completed draft form upon the author’s death in 894, was most likely begun when al-Khayḍirī had visited Cairo for the first time in 843 as the editor of its recently published critical edition convincingly argues.<sup>30</sup> The editor also points out that al-Khayḍirī frequently transmits from al-Dhahabī’s *Tārīkh al-Islām*, even though he only cites the text twice throughout the work. Under al-Khayḍirī’s entry for al-Dhahabī in his incomplete work, he states that among his works is the “massive *Tārīkh al-Islām*, twenty-one volumes, which I have seen his autograph copy of in Cairo.”<sup>31</sup> Here he must be referring to the Maḥmūdīyah copy of *Tārīkh al-Islām* in which he left multiple reading notes.

al-Khayḍirī was in fact very punctilious about leaving reading notes at the end of autograph copies he consulted when gathering material for his biographical dictionary of Shāfi‘ī scholars over the course of his life. In one example of many, al-Khayḍirī left a reading note at the end of an autograph copy of *Ṣilat al-takmilah li-wafayāt al-naqalah* (*The Link to The Continuation to the Obituaries of Transmitters*), another important source for his Shāfi‘ī biographical dictionary. Though not a Maḥmūdīyah book, the note adds to our understanding of al-Khayḍirī’s working methods and motivations for writing his reading notes on the Maḥmūdīyah copy of *Tārīkh al-Islām*:

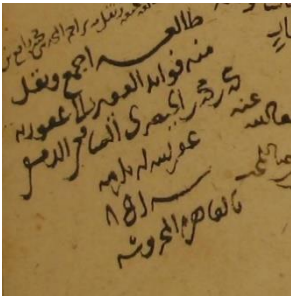
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<sup>30</sup> al-Khayḍirī, *al-Luma‘ al-alma‘īyah li-a‘yān al-shāfi‘īyah*, ed. Abū Rufaydah Karīm ibn Muḥammad Zakī (Cairo: Dār al-dhakhā’ir, 2020), 1:73.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:105.



FIGURE 29: AL-KHAYḌIRĪ'S READING NOTE ON A NON-MAḤMŪDĪYAH MANUSCRIPT. ISTANBUL: KÖPRÜLÜ KÜTÜPHANESİ, MS FAZIL AHMED PAŞA 1101, FOL. 65A.



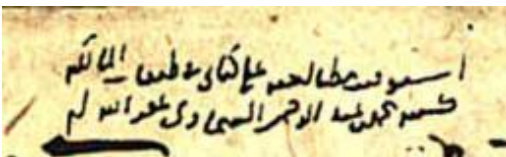
طالعه أجمع ونقل منه فوائد  
الفقير إلى عفو ربه محمد  
بن محمد بن الخبزي  
الشافعي الدمشقي غفر الله له  
بكرمه<sup>32</sup> سنة 851 بالقاهرة  
المحروسة

Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Khayḍirī, the Shāfi‘ī, in need of his Lord’s forgiveness, May God forgive him with His generosity, read through this entire [book] on his own and transmitted miscellanea from it, in the year 851 in Cairo.

In this reading note and in others,<sup>33</sup> al-Khayḍirī makes sure to include that he read certain books in Cairo. He was after all based in Damascus, by dint of his position of chief Shāfi‘ī judge of that city. In his frequent trips to Cairo, he must have taken assiduous notes from books he had access to in his notebook he was known to carry with him,<sup>34</sup> then organize the material for what would become his unfinished draft of his Shāfi‘ī biographical dictionary.

A different scholar we have seen frequently so far in this dissertation, al-Sakhāwī, left reading notes on the same volumes of al-Dhahabī’s *Tārīkh al-Islām* indicating he was preparing a biographical dictionary.

FIGURE 30: AL-SAKHĀWĪ’S READING NOTE ON A MAḤMŪDĪYAH BOOK. ISTANBUL: SÜLEYMANIYE KÜTÜPHANESİ, MS AYASOFYA 3014, FOL. 2A.



استوفيت مطالعته على  
كتابي في طبقات  
المالكية  
كتبه محمد بن عبد  
الرحمن السخاوي غفر  
الله له

I completed reading [this book] for my book on the biographies of Mālikī scholars. Written by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, may God forgive him

<sup>32</sup> I thank Elon Harvey for helping me with this reading.

<sup>33</sup> For a collection of his reading notes, see Frédéric Bauden, “Maqriziana X,” 207-212. Almost all of these notes mention that he read the books in question in Cairo.

<sup>34</sup> ibn Fahd, *Mu‘jam al-shuyūkh*, 390.

Like al-Khayḍirī however, al-Sakhāwī would die with his biographical dictionary only in draft form. Throughout several of his works al-Sakhāwī mentions the status of this biographical dictionary of Mālikīs to which he refers to in the note mentioned above. In an autobiographical entry for himself in *al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ*, completed in 896/1491, six years before his death, he states that he had composed “a biographical dictionary of Mālikīs consisting of around four volumes, the first of which, a biography of the imam [Mālik ibn Anas] and his students, has been made into a fair copy.”<sup>35</sup> A year later in 897/1492 he completed his book *al-Iʿlān bi-al-tawbīkh li-man dhamma ahl al-tawrīkh*, mentioning in it that “I have made for [the Mālikīs] a large book currently in draft form.”<sup>36</sup> Neither the draft nor the final copy of al-Sakhāwī’s biographical dictionary of Mālikīs is known to have survived.

The function of the reader notes that al-Khayḍirī and al-Sakhāwī left on the Maḥmūdīyah copy of *Tārīkh al-Islām* for their unfinished works must be understood in the context of the notes’ intended audiences. As stated above, the clientele of the Maḥmūdīyah included members of the Mamluk elite, scholars in ibn Ḥajar’s circles, and students in the madrasa itself. In this regard, these reader notes can be seen as a kind of scholarly advertisement to this community of readers, indicating to teachers, friends, and colleagues that the authors of these notes were currently in the process of gathering material for a new book coming down the pipeline.

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<sup>35</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ*, 8:17.

<sup>36</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Iʿlān bi-al-tawbīkh li-man dhamma ahl al-tawrīkh*, ed. Sālim ibn Ghatar ibn Sālim al-Ḍufayrī (Riyadh: Dār al-ṣumayʿī lil-nashr wa-al-tawzīʿ, 2017), 328.

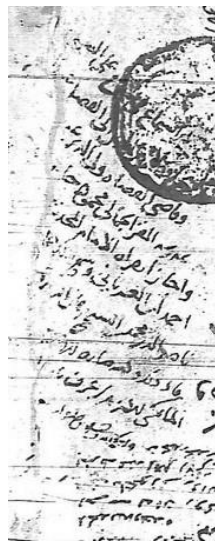
### 5.5. A shift from group reading to individual reading

Though varying in their functions, authors, and intended audiences, an interesting trend emerges in the notes considered so far. Not a single audition certificate attesting to a group reading session of a book was written on the books while they were in the Maḥmūdīyah Library. Instead, the vast majority of the notes from this period are individual reading notes (*muṭāla‘ah*), as well as notes of collation (*muqābalah*). By contrast, the majority of reading notes left on the Maḥmūdīyah corpus from before their endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah in 797/1395 are audition certificates (*samā‘āt*) of group reading sessions. As discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the evidence on many books in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus as well as their authorship and thematic profiles indicated that these books circulated widely in Syria, particularly Damascus, throughout the seventh and eighth/thirteenth and fourteenth centuries before their endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Library in 797/1395. Moreover, as many of these books were in fact autograph copies, they were frequently read out loud in audition sessions, often with the author’s students and family members in the audience. Consequently, the readers of the texts during this period can be said to have had some personal connection to the texts and their authors in some way.

However, the period after the book endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa in the year 797/1395 represents a marked shift in the readership and circulation histories of the books in the Maḥmūdīyah corpus. Instead of a network of Syrian-based readers with some connection to the author or owner of the book, the books after their endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah could theoretically be handled by anyone who happened to be in the vicinity of the madrasa.

Before moving on to make broader conclusions about manuscript reading culture in the period based on these findings, a few caveats are in order. Firstly, the absence of audition certificates (*samā‘āt*) dating to the ninth/fifteenth century on the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus does not mean that audition sessions never occurred within the walls of the Maḥmūdīyah. As has been mentioned in Chapter 4, the Maḥmūdīyah had an endowed position of hadith auditor (*ismā‘ al-ḥadīth*), a position which surely necessitated the endowed professor serve as auditor during audition sessions at the Maḥmūdīyah. Evidence that this indeed occurred can be found in a copy of the canonical hadith collection *Sāḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which, though not endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah, bears an undated audition certificate testifying that the book was read aloud in the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa (*balagha al-samā‘ ....bi-madrasat al-maqarr al-jamālī Maḥmūd*).<sup>37</sup>

**FIGURE 31: UNDATED AUDITION CERTIFICATE ON A NON- MAḤMŪDĪYAH BOOK RECORDING A GROUP READING OF ṢAḤĪḤ AL-BUKHĀRĪ AT THE MAḤMŪDĪYAH MADRASA. CAIRO: DĀR AL-KUTUB AL-MISRĪYAH, MS ḤADĪTH 677, FOL. 433B.**



... بلغ السماع على  
...وقاضي القضاة ولي الدين...  
...بمدرسة المقر الجمالي محمود

Recited aloud to both...  
...and the Chief Judge  
'Abd [Allāh?]. . . at the  
Madrasa of al-Maqarr al-  
Jamālī Maḥmūd.

<sup>37</sup> I thank Abū Ya‘qūb ‘Abd al-‘Āṭī al-Sharqāwī for telling me about this note.

Additionally, we run into the issue of sampling size of manuscripts that is discussed in detail in Chapter 1. A surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus of 139 extant volumes is admittedly a small sample size from the original 4,130 volumes that once rested within the Maḥmūdīyah. Consequently, it is highly probable that Maḥmūdīyah volumes now lost had contained audition certificates written while the books were Maḥmūdīyah endowments. al-Sakhāwī states that one of ibn Ḥajar’s students, ibn Fahd, had read aloud to ibn Ḥajar a book endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah and had recorded an audition certificate of the reading on its cover (*al-ṭabaqah bi-khaṭṭihi fī zāhir nuskhat al-Maḥmūdīyah*).<sup>38</sup> Consequently, it would be too much of a stretch to conclude that audition sessions were never recorded on the Maḥmūdīyah books based purely on the lack of evidence in the available corpus.

Nevertheless, the near lack of audition certificates on the surviving Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus from the ninth/fifteenth century onwards when compared to their abundance from the sixth to the early eighth centuries of the *hijrah* (twelfth to early fourteenth centuries CE) corresponds with a phenomenon observed by several studies of a “decline in frequency and shift in the nature of audition notices [that] seems to be paralleled by an increase in the frequency of notices of silent reading.”<sup>39</sup> The exact period in which this decline has been observed to occur shifts depending on the manuscript corpus under consideration. Through his study of eight hundred and fifteen reading notices on manuscripts housed in the collections of the State Library of Berlin, Leipzig, and Gotha, Garrett Davidson found a steady increase in private reading notes

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<sup>38</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 3:1179.

<sup>39</sup> Garrett Davidson, *Carrying On the Tradition: A Social and Intellectual History of Ḥadīth Transmission Across a Thousand Years* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 98.

starting in the tenth/sixteenth century along with a coterminous decline in audition certificates.<sup>40</sup> Stefan Leder's study of 1350 audition certificates on eighty-five manuscripts housed in the Syrian National Library in Damascus arrived at a similar conclusion that the practice of recording audition certificates on manuscripts reached a peak in the seventh and eighth/thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, Noah Gardiner's study on the reading communities of the works of the early seventh/thirteenth century Sufi lettrist Aḥmad al-Būnī finds that al-Būnī's reading communities expanded from those who studied his texts in small exclusive groups, as evidenced by the audition certificates on al-Būnī's surviving manuscript corpus, to wider reading communities exposed to his ideas through private reading practices such as consulting encyclopedias featuring summaries of his work.<sup>42</sup> The Maḥmūdīyah corpus, brought together in the library in 797/1395, but with a distinctive Syrian seventh-eight/twelfth-thirteenth century thematic and paratextual profile, serves as an interesting sample of manuscripts with which to trace the chronological evolution of reading practices from group reading to private reading.

These findings correspond with a broader intellectual phenomenon observed the middle period of Islamic history concerning the increasing acceptance of reading a book without a teacher as a means of acquiring intellectual authority. Hirschler for example observes in several teaching manuals written between the fifth and eighth/eleventh and fourteenth centuries that scholars became increasingly less hesitant about students reading books privately for their own benefit without the mediation of a shaykh.<sup>43</sup> He also observes in biographical dictionaries of

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 98-99.

<sup>41</sup> Stefan Leder, Yāsīn al-Sawwās, and Ma'mūn al-Ṣāgharjī, eds., *Mu'jam al-samā'āt al-Dimashqīyah: al-muntakhabah min sanat 550 ilá 750 H / 1155 ilá 1349 M*, (Damascus: al-Ma'had al-faransī lil-dirāsāt al-'arabīyah, 1996), 30.

<sup>42</sup> Gardiner, "Esotericism in a manuscript culture."

<sup>43</sup> Hirschler, *The Written Word*, 20-22.

scholars written in the eighth/fourteenth century onwards a similar rise in the use of the term “he read on his own” (*qara`a bi-nafsihi*) when discussing texts a scholar had studied.<sup>44</sup> The ways we have seen scholars in ninth/fifteenth century Cairo interact with the books in the Maḥmūdīyah through their notes can be seen as another step in this trend.

A paratext in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus and how a reader of the library interacted with it serves as a strong example of the increasing validity of private individual reading as an acceptable means of receiving authority to transmit a text in the ninth/fifteenth century. In ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s list of his hadith transmission authorities, *al-Majma‘ al-mu‘assas lil-mu‘jam al-mufahras* (*The Founding Assembly of the Indexed List of Authorities*), he states that he received an *ijāzah* (license to transmit a text) for al-Mizzī’s book of evaluation of hadith transmitters, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā‘ al-rijāl* (*The Refinement of Perfection in the Names of Hadith Transmitters*). He mentions that he received this *ijāzah* through the scholar ibn Kathīr, saying “I had read in [ibn Kathīr’s] hand at the end of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* [the following]: ‘I read [this book] from beginning to ending out loud to its author (al-Mizzī) and I grant to anyone who has read this in my hand to transmit it through me.’”<sup>45</sup>

The copy of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* through which ibn Ḥajar had received this written *ijāzah* from ibn Kathīr was in fact the autograph copy that had been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library. Unfortunately, I could not locate the specific volume in question bearing the written *ijāzah* that ibn Ḥajar saw. However, two pieces of evidence indicate that this volume must have been in the Maḥmūdīyah. First, the surviving Maḥmūdīyah volumes of *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, bears

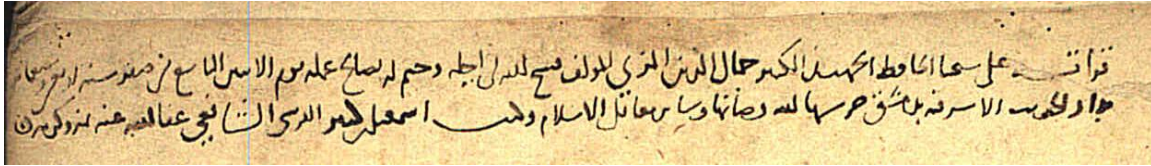
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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

<sup>45</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Majma‘ al-mu‘assas lil-mu‘jam al-mufahras*, ed. Yūsuf ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mar‘ashlī (Beirut: Dār al-ma‘rifah, 1992), 2:607.

audition certificates stating that ibn Kathīr read the manuscript aloud to the author al-Mizzī at various dates, such as in the example below which states that ibn Kathīr read aloud to al-Mizzī on 9 Šafar 740/ August 24, 1339 at the Ashrafīyah hadith school in Damascus.

**FIGURE 32: IBN KATHĪR’S AUDITION CERTIFICATE LED BY AL-MIZZĪ, ON THE MAĤMŪDĪYAH COPY OF TAHDHĪB AL-KAMĀL. ISTANBUL: SŪLEYMANIYE KŪTŪPHANESİ, MS YOZGAT 148/3, FOL. 201B**



قرأته على شيخنا الحافظ الجهيد  
الكبير جمال الدين المزي المؤلف  
فسح الله في أجله وختم له بصالح  
عمله يوم الاثنين التاسع من صفر  
سنة أربعين وسبعماية بدار الحديث  
الأشرفية بدمشق حرسها الله  
وصانها وسائر معاقل الاسلام  
وكتب اسماعيل بن كثير القرشي  
الشافعي عفا الله عنه بمئه وكرمه

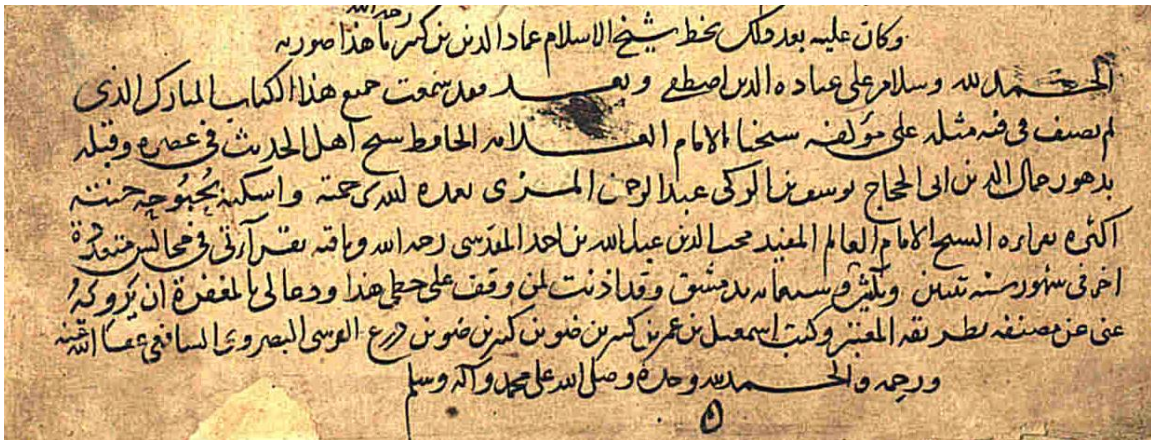
I read this aloud to our shaykh, who has memorized the Quran, the brilliant scholar, the great Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī, the author [of this book], may God grant him a long time on earth and conclude his deeds with righteous ones, on Monday, the ninth of Šafar in the year 740 at the Ashrafīyah hadith school in Damascus, may God preserve and maintain it along with all the other strongholds of Islam. Written by Ismā‘īl ibn Kathīr al-Qurashī, may God forgive him with His grace and munificence.

The second piece of evidence comes from another copy of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* other than the Maĥmūdīyah copy. The copyist of the volume in question ends the colophon with a transcription of a note by ibn Kathīr which he had seen on the exemplar from which he had made his copy. In the note in question, ibn Kathīr supposedly states that he had heard read the book aloud to the author al-Mizzī for some sections and that he had read the book himself to the author in other sections, the last of these sessions occurring in the year 732 in Damascus. Furthermore, ibn Kathīr permitted “whomever sees this in my hand and prays for forgiveness for me to transmit [this book] through me (i.e., my authority), through its author (i.e., through al-Mizzī’s authority)”



(see Figure 33 below). The copy from which the copyist transmitted this *ijāzah* must be the same copy that ibn Ḥajar had seen and mentioned in his list of authorities. Moreover, as we have seen above, one of the surviving volumes of the Maḥmūdīyah/autograph copy bears the audition certificate written by ibn Kathīr. Consequently, it is most likely that the lost last volume of the Maḥmūdīyah copy of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* had contained this *ijāzah* by ibn Kathīr.

FIGURE 33: A NOTE COPIED FROM AN AUTOGRAPH OF TAHDHĪB AL-KAMĀL, STATING IBN KATHĪR GRANTS AN IJĀZAH TO ANYONE WHO READS HIS HANDWRITING ON THE AUTOGRAPH. ISTANBUL: SÜLEYMANIYE KÜTÜPHANESİ, MS YOZGAT 148/8, FOL. 545B.



وكان عليه بعد ذلك بخط شيخ الإسلام عماد الدين بن كثير رحمه الله ما هذا صورته:

After that, there was this, in the hand of the shaykh of Islam ‘Imād al-Dīn ibn Kathīr, may he rest in peace, and this is a copy of it:

الحمد لله وسلام على عباده الذين اصطفى وبعد فقد سمعت جميع هذا الكتاب المبارك الذي لم يصنف في فيه مثله على مؤلفه شيخنا الإمام العلامة الحافظ شيخ أهل الحديث في عصره وقبلة بدهور جمال الدين أبي الحجاج يوسف بن الزكي عبد الرحمن المزي تغمده الله برحمته وأسكنه بحبوحة جنته أكثره بقراءة الشيخ العالم المفيد محب الدين عبد الله

“Praise be to God and peace to his worshippers who were chosen. Concerning what follows: I had heard all of this blessed book, the likes of which have not been composed before, recited aloud to its author, our shaykh, the imam, the great scholar who had memorized the Quran, the shaykh of the people of hadith in his age and in all epochs beforehand, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Hajjāj Yūsuf ibn al-Zakī ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī, may God shelter him in His mercy and grant him abode in the repose of His paradise. Most [of the recitation] was read by the shaykh and assistant Muḥibb al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad al-

بن أحمد المقدسي رحمه الله  
 وباقية بقراءتي في مجالس متعددة  
 اخره في شهور سنة اثنين  
 وثلاثين وسبعمائة بدمشق وقد  
 اذنت لمن وقف على خطي هذا  
 ودعالي بالمغفرة ان يرويه عني  
 عن مصنفه بطريقه المعتبر وكتب  
 اسماعيل بن عمر بن كثير بن  
 ضو بن كثير بن ضو بن درع  
 القرشي البصري الشافعي عفا  
 الله عنه ورحمه والحمد لله وحده  
 وصلى الله على محمد واله وسلم

Maqdisī, may he rest in peace, and the rest was read by me in several sessions, the last of which took place in the months of the year 732 in Damascus. I have granted permission to whomever sees this in my hand and prays for forgiveness for me to transmit [this book] through me (i.e., my authority), through its author (i.e., through al-Mizzī’s authority) in [al-Mizzī’s] esteemed method. Written by Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Umar ibn Kathīr ibn Ḍaw ibn Kathīr (sic.) ibn Ḍaw (sic.) ibn Dir‘ al-Qurashī, of Basran origin, the Shāfi‘ī. May God forgive him and have mercy upon him. Praise be to God alone and the Blessings of God and Peace upon Muḥammad and his family.”

The case of an *ijāzah* written on a book allowing all readers to transmit the book in question is to my knowledge quite unusual and has not been observed in the literature on *ijāzahs*. Garrett Davidson similarly observes this very same instance through ibn Ḥajar’s mention of it in his *al-Majma‘ al-mu‘assas*.<sup>46</sup> Davidson situates this instance of what he calls a “global *ijāzah*” within a broader phenomenon he identifies in the post-canonical phase of hadith transmission as a liberalization of the standards through which a hadith was transmitted for the purpose of maintaining a steady chain of transmission going back to the Prophet Muḥammad.<sup>47</sup>

While this explanation most certainly could have been one of ibn Kathīr’s motivations for granting this written *ijāzah*, we must once again consider the likely intended audience for this paratext when it was written and its contrast to the Maḥmūdīyah’s reading audience. As has been mentioned in Chapter 2, the Maḥmūdīyah copy of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* was al-Mizzī’s autograph copy and is full of audition certificates attesting to the presence of many of his students and family members during readings of the book out loud in Damascus. In fact, ibn Kathīr himself

<sup>46</sup> Davidson, *Carrying On the Tradition*, 146.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 143-151. A more thorough study on this kind of written *ijāzah* would require a massive searchable database of paratexts on Islamic manuscripts, a desideratum for many modern scholars working with Islamic manuscripts.

was al-Mizzī's son-in-law as well as his student. In other words, the readers of this autograph copy had some kind of connection to the author and the intellectual milieu that he inhabited, even if that connection was as tenuous as merely attending a reading of the book out loud to him. Ibn Kathīr when writing this *ijāzah* must clearly have had this milieu in mind as its intended beneficiaries.

However, as this book and the *ijāzah* hidden within it travelled from Damascus to Cairo and entered the Maḥmūdīyah, Ibn Kathīr's *ijāzah* had reached a much wider audience. As has been established, the Maḥmūdīyah Library had its doors open to a wide swathe of Cairene society from Mamluk emirs to poor students. Therefore, theoretically anyone who had seen Ibn Kathīr's *ijāzah* could transmit the book from al-Mizzī's authority. It is difficult to say the extent to which Maḥmūdīyah users took advantage of this valuable *ijāzah*. In my perusal of *ṭabats* of scholars whom I have confirmed had used the Maḥmūdīyah regularly, I have only found Ibn Ḥajar's reference to this unique kind of *ijāzah* in his list of transmission authorities.

Nevertheless, the fact that the great hadith scholar Ibn Ḥajar did not feel any hesitation to include an *ijāzah* he had seen in a library book amongst his list of transmission authorities must indeed indicate an increasing (if not explicitly stated) acceptance of the written word as an acceptable means of knowledge transmission and scholarly authority among scholars of the ninth/fifteenth century.

## 5.6. Conclusion

This chapter has covered the various reading practices and engagements with books that went on inside the walls of the Maḥmūdīyah. It has shown that the paratexts of the Maḥmūdīyah

corpus point to an inclination to individual, private reading practices from the ninth/fifteenth century onwards, especially when compared with the paratexts on the corpus dating to before the creation of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa in 797/1395.

The findings in chapter fit with what scholarship generally has observed concerning the bookishness of Muslim scholarship during the Mamluk period, a trend that can be observed in the rise of abridgements, compendia, an increase in libraries open to the public, developments in copying practices to facilitate information retrieval, and many other coterminous scholarly practices. The chapter also provides more evidence of the observed phenomenon the diminishing of the written audition certificate as a textual practice beginning in the ninth/fifteenth century. As more and more databases gathering Islamic manuscript paratexts become available to the public, even more expansive studies on reading practices in the late-Mamluk period will surely be carried out.

## Conclusion

Cairo, 1870. As the scholar and Egyptian National Library employee Muḥammad al-Biblāwī recounts the story, an official is charged with gathering the remaining manuscripts in the small endowment libraries dotted across the city in order to deposit them into the newly founded Khedival Library for permanent safe-keeping. This official feels some hesitation to carry out his duties out of fear of breaking the original endowment stipulations of these books:

It is unfortunately the case that the person charged with moving the books was of a rigid mind when it came to religion. Owing to the rigidity of his religiosity he resented the Minister of Public Education for having to move these books from their locations, claiming that he would be breaking the stipulations of their endowers. However, ever careful for his salary, he would go to the masjids and take out a few books from their libraries, leaving most of them in their place. In this way, he imagined that he would be keeping his salary while not completely breaking the rules of the endowers, although, may God forgive him, if he had even reflected a little he would have seen that the endowers had only stipulated these locations for the books out of their belief that these places would be the safest strongholds for them. If they had known that these locations were no longer suitable, they would have thanked whomever had removed these books from them to a place in which they would be secured.<sup>1</sup>

While al-Biblāwī attributes this official's hesitation to remove the books to a rigidity in religious belief, this anecdote also reveals an aspect of manuscript culture that the unnamed official surely was aware of. That, as Noah Gardiner so aptly put it, "a given medieval Arabic manuscript is by no means simply a copy of a text, but rather one edge or node of a network or community of human actors—readers, teachers, copyists, booksellers—as well as other manuscripts."<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly as he made the rounds of Cairo's mosques and inspected the manuscripts held within them, this unnamed official was confronted with books full of notes that

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<sup>1</sup> al-Biblāwī, "Tārīkh dūr al-kutub," 31.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner, "Esotericism in a manuscript culture," 42.

attested to their colorful histories: audition certificates recording readings of these books centuries ago, marginalia, and of course endowment statements. As Islamic manuscripts entered the national libraries of Europe then subsequently those of the Middle East, the texts within these books would be carefully cataloged for facility of access and use by future researchers. However, catalogers would more often than not ignore the paratexts these manuscripts contained, thus obscuring the readership and circulation histories of these manuscripts.

It is with an eye to Islamic manuscripts being this node of human and textual relationships that I endeavored to tell the story of the Maḥmūdīyah Library, its books, and the people who used them. The consideration of the texts and paratexts held in the Maḥmūdīyah Library also served as a launching point for broader topics as wide ranging as religious endowment practices, book collecting, trends in reading practices in the late-Mamluk period, and the transfer of books from Cairo to Istanbul following the Ottoman defeat of the Mamluk Sultanate. But was this dissertation successful in reconstructing the history of the Maḥmūdīyah?

The results are ultimately mixed. On the one hand, the combination of references to the library in the literary sources when coupled with the paratexts on the many extant Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts I have been able to locate have made it possible to provide an unprecedented look into functioning and contents of a medieval Muslim library as well as the circumstances behind its founding, and the circulation of its books. However, this study was limited by the lack of any surviving endowment deed or library catalogue for the Maḥmūdīyah Library. This absence greatly limited my ability to make any definitive statements about the thematic profile of the original book endowment to the library and the more daily administrative features of the library and its surrounding madrasa. Additionally, unlike other libraries from the pre-modern Islamic

world that have been studied,<sup>3</sup> the Maḥmūdīyah’s original book collection has not been maintained and preserved in one individual modern library, meaning that its manuscripts had to be tracked down.

Given these limitations, I had resorted to data that could be gleaned from the paratexts of the Maḥmūdīyah’s surviving manuscripts. As discussed in Chapter 2, the 139 volumes I identified as the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus cannot be said to be a representative sample size of the original books that the Maḥmūdīyah held due to the inherent selection biases in the process of identifying these manuscripts. The issue of representative sample size came up most frequently in the discussion of the thematic profile of the Maḥmūdīyah’s books as well as in the discussion of the reading practices that went on inside of the library. In these sections I opted instead to eke out discernible trends in the flawed sample size of books and book titles I had at my disposal without making broader statements about the library as a whole based on those trends. In this regard, I followed in the footsteps of Kristof D’hulster in aiming to avoid the “fallacy of composition” in his own study of the library of the Mamluk sultan Qāniṣawh al-Ghawrī based on a limited number of manuscripts, *Browsing Through the Sultan’s Bookshelves: Towards a Reconstruction of the Library of the Mamluk Sultan Qāniṣawh al-Ghawrī (r. 906-922/1501-1516)*: “[T]he ‘fallacy of composition’... captures best the epistemological leap that separates this book’s main title from its subtitle: when moving from ‘browsing’ to ‘reconstructing’, from knowing (an undetermined) part of a whole to profiling, identifying and reconstructing that whole, it is tempting to mistake the ‘part’ for the ‘whole.’”<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the

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<sup>3</sup> Açı, *Osmanlı Kitap Kültürü*; Liebrez, *Die Rifā’īya*.

<sup>4</sup> D’hulster, *Browsing*, 278.

aforementioned sections of my study tended more towards a “browsing” of the Maḥmūdīyah rather than a fully-fledged “reconstruction” of its contents or reading practices that went on inside the library.

The global lockdown caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, which occurred right as I was about to start archival research in Turkey and Egypt, also greatly impacted the range of source material at my disposal for this study. Particularly, I had not been able to explore the Topkapı Palace Museum Library in Istanbul, which I suspect holds many more Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts than those I had been able to identify from secondary sources. The Egyptian National Archives proved impossible to access during my stay in Cairo, which held a court document pertaining to the Maḥmūdīyah Library dated to 1010/1601 which I alluded to in Chapter 4.<sup>5</sup> Though the exact contents of this document are unknown, given that many other court documents concerning Mamluk-era libraries in Cairo from the same period are in fact book inventories,<sup>6</sup> the document could have shed light on many more titles of books that had survived in the Maḥmūdīyah at that point.

Despite all of these limitations with access to source material, several of the findings of this dissertation invite expansion into future research. First, several sections of this dissertation have highlighted some of the ways medieval actors in the Islamic world considered and valued paratexts on manuscripts. For example, part of Chapter 2 argued that Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, the judge and bibliophile whose books that would eventually become endowments to the Maḥmūdīyah, had intentionally sought out specific books for not just their textual contents but

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<sup>5</sup> See footnote 65 in Chapter 4.

<sup>6</sup> For examples, see Mīlād, *al-Wathā‘iq al-‘uthmānīyah*, 409-413; ‘Umrān, *Ḍabṭ wa-taḥrīr*.



also for the paratexts they bore. These paratexts were those that placed the books within the scholarly networks of some of the most important figures in Syrian historiography and hadith scholarship in the Ayyubid and early Mamluk periods. Similarly, Chapter 5 has shown some of the scholarly functions of the notes left on the Maḥmūdīyah manuscripts while they were still in the library by considering the audience of the library and the individuals who went there. As the paratextual material of Islamic manuscripts become more available through the further development and expansion of current projects to catalogue and sort through them, further research will be made possible into the social and scholarly significance of certain paratextual elements on Islamic manuscripts for pre-modern readers.

Another avenue of research that would prove fruitful is the exploration of the impact that the transfer of Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah’s books of Syrian historiography and hadith scholarship to Cairo via their endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah would have on the intellectual output of ninth/fifteenth century Egyptian scholars. A quick perusal of critical introductions to editions of works composed by the scholars in Cairo who had used the Maḥmūdīyah will reveal that these scholars certainly relied on the texts in the Maḥmūdīyah for source material. However, what influence would the methods of the Syrian school of historiography have on the methods of the emergent school of ninth/fifteenth century Egyptian historians? Similarly, a consideration of the libraries and institutions that held these texts in Mamluk Cairo could explain some of the intellectual trends that emerged towards the end of the Mamluk period. For example, we will find that ibn Ḥajar had composed abridgements and summaries for several texts that were held in the Maḥmūdīyah. However, rather than being indicative of a lack of originality, could his drive to create abridgements of these works be seen more practically as a way to disseminate the useful

contents of the books under his custodianship at the Maḥmūdīyah to a wider audience? Similarly, when we understand that al-Sakhāwī refers readers to books he saw in the Maḥmūdīyah in his work *al-I'lān bi-al-tawbīkh li-man dhamma ahl al-tawrīkh* (*A Declaration of Rebuke to Those Who Condemn Historians*), we can perhaps frame the work not only as an apology for the science of history but also as a bibliographic survey of the works of history held in the libraries of Cairo at the time.

Finally, the rise of individual reading practices in the transition between the late-medieval and early-modern Arab world deserves further investigation. As has been mentioned in Chapter 5, several studies have already observed a notable decline in group-reading practices in the Arab Islamic world roughly starting in the eighth/fourteenth centuries. This decline is particularly noticeable in the various branches of hadith transmission and scholarship such as the recording of audition certificates on manuscripts as well as the increasing acceptability of written *ijāzahs* (licenses to transmit a text) not received directly through a reading of the text aloud to a teacher. It remains to be seen the effects of this shift towards the written word has had in the realm of hadith scholarship in the Arab world from the ninth/fifteenth century onwards, an understudied field.

Such research avenues and more open up as scholars of the pre-modern Islamic world continue to work with the wealth of documentary sources that can be found on Islamic manuscripts. As more and more digital humanities projects put into the hands of researchers the paratexts on Islamic manuscripts held in modern libraries around the world, undoubtedly more studies shall be carried out using these indispensable sources for reconstructing the social and intellectual history of the Islamic world.

## APPENDIX A. A Partial Catalogue of the Maḥmūdīyah Library

The following is a catalogue of the titles of the books that had been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library that I have been able to confirm. The entries are arranged alphabetically by surname of the works' authors as spelled in Latin letters. If an individual author has more than one work represented in the Maḥmūdīyah Library, the works are subsequently arranged under the author alphabetically by title of the work as spelled in Latin letters. Each entry begins with a transcription of the title of the work in question as well as its English translation. Next, the entry provides proof that the work had originally be endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library. If applicable, the entry includes the original number of volumes of the work that had been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library as well as any extant manuscripts of the Maḥmūdīyah copy of the work that I have been able to locate. Finally, each entry mentions whether the Maḥmūdīyah copy of the work was an autograph copy or not.

Total Number of Confirmed Titles in the Maḥmūdīyah (i.e., the “Maḥmūdīyah Textual Corpus”):  
**62** titles.

Total Number of Extant Maḥmūdīyah Manuscripts Located (i.e., the “Maḥmūdīyah Manuscript Corpus”):  
**139** volumes.

Total number of confirmed Maḥmūdīyah volumes:  
**412** volumes.

Abū ‘Awānah al-Isfarāyīnī, Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq (d. 316/929)

1. ***Mukhtaṣar Abī ‘Awānah*** (*The Abridgement of Abū ‘Awānah*)

Description: More commonly known as *Mustakhraj Abī ‘Awānah ‘alá Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, the book fits into the *mustakhraj* genre of hadith collections which emerged shortly after the emergence of the two sound hadith collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Using one of the aforementioned sound hadith collections as an organizing template and methodological starting point, the composer of a *mustakhraj* work would provide for each hadith in the template collection his own

personal transmission chain linking him to the Prophet Muḥammad. In most cases the transmission chain would join the transmission chain of the composer of the template hadith collection. However, Abū ‘Awānah’s *mustakhraj* diverges significantly from the template of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown, the section of the endowment statement listing the number of volumes has been erased.

Extant manuscripts:<sup>1</sup> Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah, MS ḥadīth 473; Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 401; Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 404; Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 405; Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 508; Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 509; Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, MS Khuda Bakhsh 2701.

Autograph: Unknown.

al-Āmidī, Sayf al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Abī ‘Alī (551-631/1156-1233)

2. *Abkār al-afkār fī uṣūl al-dīn* (*The Purest Meditations on the Foundations of Religion*)

Description: A work on the fundamentals of Islamic theology.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 2, mentioned in the surviving books’ endowment statements.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2165; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2166.

Autograph: Unknown.

3. *Daqā’iq al-ḥaqā’iq* (*The Subtleties of Realities*)

Description: A work on the rational sciences, split into three volumes: one on logic, one on the natural sciences, and one on metaphysics (*ilāhīyāt*). However, only the first volume on logic is extant.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

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<sup>1</sup> Of all the manuscripts I have located in this set, only Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah, MS ḥadīth 473 has its Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement intact. The remaining volumes’ endowment statements have all been completely removed, whether through erasure, the plastering of slips of paper over them, or in some cases their original title pages having been completely removed. In most instances the secondary endowment statements located in the margins of the text proper have been covered in sheets of paper, rendering them unidentifiable. Nevertheless, I have been able to identify these manuscripts as having been Maḥmūdīyah endowments through a combination of evidence: 1.) The legible endowment statement of Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah, MS ḥadīth 473 does not mention that any of the volumes of the book were missing at the time of the endowment; 2.) these manuscripts were all copied by the same copyist as Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah, MS ḥadīth 473, and; 3.) The paper plastered over the margins all occur in the same locations in the codex where the Maḥmūdīyah secondary endowment typically occurs in other manuscripts.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 3, according to the endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Princeton: Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 42B.

Autograph: No.

al-Ardabīlī, Faraj ibn Aḥmad (d. 749/ d. 1348)

4. ***Sharḥ minhāj al-ṭālibīn*** (*Commentary on The Path for Students*)

Description: A commentary of al-Nawawī's *Minhāj al-ṭālibīn*, which is a commentary on the Shāfi'ī law manual *al-Muḥarrar* by al-Rāfi'ī.

Proof it was in the Mahmūdīyah: al-Sakhāwī mentions having seen it in the Mahmūdīyah.<sup>2</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: al-Sakhāwī mentions having seen 6 volumes.<sup>3</sup>

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: Unknown.

al-ʿAskarī, Abū Hilāl al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd Allāh (d. ~ 400/d. ~1010).

5. ***Kitāb al-ṣināʿ atayn al-kitābah wa-al-shiʿr*** (*The Book of the Two Arts of Prosody and Poetry*)

Description: A manual on rhetoric.

Proof it was in the Mahmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 2, mentioned in the surviving books' endowment statements.

Extant manuscripts: Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 6443; Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1334.

Autograph: Unknown.

al-Baṭalyawsī, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad (444-521/1052-1127)

6. ***al-Iqtidāb fī sharḥ adab al-kuttāb*** (*The Concision: A Commentary on Erudition and Etiquette for Chancery Scribes*)

Description: A commentary on a scribal manual by ibn Qutaybah, a guide for all of the branches of knowledge a successful scribe in the chancery must know.

Proof it was in the Mahmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

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<sup>2</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Manḥal al-ʿadhb al-rawī fī tarjamat quṭb al-awliyāʾ al-Nawawī*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazyadī (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-ʿilmīyah, 2005), 25.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 1, according to the surviving endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 6151.

Autograph: No.

al-Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn (384-458/994-1066)

7. ***Shu‘ab al-imān (The Branches of Faith)***

Description: A hadith collection thematically arranged into seventy-seven branches of faith based on the saying of the Prophet Muḥammad “There are over seventy branches to faith.”

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: An extant manuscript with the secondary Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement, partially erased, but still identifiable.<sup>4</sup> The manuscript’s title page with the original endowment statement has been removed.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 472.<sup>5</sup>

Autograph: Unknown.

8. ***Kitāb al-sunan al-kabīr (The Large Book of Prophetic Traditions)***

Description: A hadith collection organized by legal issue, following the chapter division of the Shāfi‘ī jurist al-Muzanī’s *Mukhtaṣar*. The hadiths included are those found in the Six Reliable Hadith Collections, as well as opinions of the Companions of the Prophet and their Followers.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 9, according to the endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 3282.

Autograph: No.

al-Birzālī, al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad (665-739/1267-1339)

9. ***al-Muqtafá li-tārīkh al-shaykh al-imām Shihāb al-Dīn Abī Shāmah (The Continuation of the History of the Shaykh, the Imam Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Shāmah )***

Description: A historical chronicle picking off where the Damascene historian Abū Shāmah left off in his *Kitāb al-rawḍatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn*, covering the years 665-720/1266-1321. The chronicle is arranged chronologically with obituaries for famous individuals interspersed within the chronology of events. The colophon for the second volume of the Maḥmūdīyah copy indicates that there

<sup>4</sup> Istanbul: MS Feyzullah Efendi 472, fols. 8b.-9a.

<sup>5</sup> I thank Boris Liebrecht for directing my attention to this manuscript.

is a third volume which continues with the year 721,<sup>6</sup> but this volume is not extant nor was it endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements  
Numbers of volumes in the original endowment: 2, according to the endowment statements.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2951/1; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2951/2.

Autograph: No, but collated in the presence of the author al-Birzālī in the year 721 AH according to a note left by al-Birzālī himself on the colophon of Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2951/2.<sup>7</sup>

al-Buḥturī, al-Walīd ibn ‘Ubayd (206-284/821-897)

10. ***Dīwān al-Buḥturī*** (*The Collected Poems of al-Buḥturī*)

Description: The poems of al-Buḥturī, the famous court poet of the ninth century caliph al-Mutawakkil in Baghdad.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.  
Numbers of volumes in the original endowment: 1, according to the endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1252.

Autograph: No.

al-Dhahabī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad (673-748/1274-1348)

11. ***Mīzān al-i‘tidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*** (*The Scale of Balance in the Evaluation of Hadith Transmitters*)

Description: A biographical dictionary of hadith transmitters deemed to be unreliable.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript. The endowment statement on the title page has been erased but the names of the same two notaries who bore witness to the endowment have been left intact at the bottom of the statement. Additionally, the title page bears the ownership statement of Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, whose collection Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had acquired and endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown, the section of the endowment statement listing the number of volumes in the endowment has been completely erased.

Extant manuscripts: Hyderabad: Saidiya Library, MS Tarājim 160.

Autograph: No.

<sup>6</sup> Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2951/2, fol. 340b.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

12. ***al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*** (*The Large List of Authorities*)

Description: A list of al-Dhahabī's authorities.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Sakhāwī mentions that there is an autograph copy in al-Dhahabī's hand in the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>8</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown

Extant manuscripts: Unknown

Autograph: Yes, according to al-Sakhāwī.<sup>9</sup>

13. ***Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*** (*Biographies of Distinguished Notables*)

Description: Composed after *Tārīkh al-Islām* (see below), *Siyar* is a biographical dictionary of major figures from the Prophet Muḥammad down to the year 700/1300-1301. The book includes biographies not mentioned in *Tārīkh al-Islām*, including many figures not associated with traditional Sunni scholarship such as kings, philosophers, Shīʿīs, Muʿtazilites, and others.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 12, mentioned in the surviving books' endowment statements.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/3; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/4; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/5; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/6; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/7; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/8; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/9; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/10; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/11; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/12; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2910/13.

Autograph: No.

14. ***Talkhīṣ al-mustadrak*** (*A Summary of The Addendum*)

Description: A summary of *al-Mustadrak* by al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, a collection of hadiths which were not included in the two *ṣāḥīḥ* (sound hadith) collections of al-Bukhāwī and Muslim which al-Ḥākim argued fit the criteria for soundness and should have been included. al-Dhahabī summarizes the work while providing heavy criticism of al-Ḥākim's choices of hadith.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: MS Ayasofya 474 is a composite manuscript consisting of two parts of al-Dhahabī's *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak*. The first part is an

<sup>8</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Iʿlān bi-al-tawbīkh*, 368.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



autograph copy of part 1 of the work written in al-Dhahabī's hand.<sup>10</sup> Two other works in the Maḥmūdīyah are written in al-Dhahabī's hand as well. The title page of this first part also bears the ownership statement of Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah, whose book collection was acquired by Maḥmūd al-Ustādār and endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library.<sup>11</sup> The bottom third of the title page has been completely ripped out.<sup>12</sup> This would usually be the place where the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement would be located.

The second part is a copy of the second part of *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak* made in the year 801/1399, almost four years after the original book endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Library.<sup>13</sup> The title page of this copy bears the ownership statement of ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, a librarian of the Maḥmūdīyah. It also bears the ownership statement of ibn Ḥajar's grandson. According to al-Sakhāwī, when ibn Ḥajar died it was discovered in his will that he had expressed the following wish: "Among [my books] are a great deal of volumes from the Maḥmūdīyah from the Maḥmūdīyah's endowments. [My grandson] should make haste to identify them and transfer them to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa."<sup>14</sup> Moreover, ibn Ḥajar had written under his ownership statement on MS Ayasofya 474 the following: "The one preceding this one should be returned (*ya ʿūd alladhī qablahu*)." He must be referring to the aforementioned autograph copy of *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak* that forms part one of this codex. When coupled with all of the aforementioned evidence, it is clear that part one of MS Ayasofya 474 had originally been one of the books endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah that ibn Ḥajar had stolen while serving as librarian. A note under ibn Ḥajar's note written by his grandson adds further credence to this hypothesis: "[This book is] from the blessings of God upon his most insignificant servant, Yūsūf the grandson of ibn Ḥajar [including] this [volume] and the one preceding it, in the year 855." al-Sakhāwī mentions that ibn Ḥajar's grandson never carried out his grandfather's request to return the endowed books the latter had taken from the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>15</sup> It appears from this note that his grandson never returned the autograph copy of *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak* to the Maḥmūdīyah and kept it for himself after ibn Ḥajar's death in 852.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 474, fols. 1a. – 168b.

Autograph: Yes, only fols. 1a. – 168b.

15. ***Tārīkh al-islām wa-ṭabaqāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-aʿlām*** (*The History of Islam and Generations of Famous and Notable Figures*)

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<sup>10</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 474, fols. 1a.–168b.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., fol. 1a.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., fols. 169a. – 435b.

<sup>14</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 3:1205.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 3:1207.

Description: A chronological history from the time of the Prophet Muḥammad until the year 700/1300-1. The work is divided into seventy generations (*tabaqāt*) each spanning ten years. The bulk of the book consists of obituaries of prominent figures who died in each outlined generation, with the major events within the Islamic world covered as well.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 21, mentioned in the surviving books' endowment statements

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3005; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3006; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3007; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3008; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3009; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3010; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3011; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3012; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3012; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3013; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3014.

Autograph: Yes

al-Dīnawarī, Aḥmad ibn Marwān (d. 333/ d. 944-945).

16. ***al-Mujālasah wa-jawāhir al-‘ilm*** (*The Holding of Sessions and the Gems of Knowledge*)

Description: A collection of hadiths, reports from the Companions and Followers, anecdotes, aphorisms, and poetry.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Sakhāwī mentions that the Maḥmūdīyah copy of al-Dīnawarī's *al-Mujālasah* contained on its title page an audition certificate written in the hand of Najm al-Dīn ibn Fahd that recorded a reading of the book aloud to ibn Ḥajar.<sup>16</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown.

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: Unknown.

al-Fasawī, Ya‘qūb ibn Sufyān (c. 190-277/806-890)

17. ***al-Ma‘rifah wa-al-tārīkh*** (*Knowledge and History*)

Description: Originally three volumes, only the latter two are extant. The extant volumes are a chronological history from the years 135/752-3 to 242/856-7. The

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 3:1179.

history is followed by hadith collected by al-Fasawī as well as reports of hadith transmitters from the first-second/seventh-eighth centuries.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 3, mentioned in the surviving books' endowment statements.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 2391; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Revan Köşkü 1554.

Autograph: No.

al-Fayyūmī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī (d. ~ 760-770/d. ~ 1358-1369)

18. ***al-Miṣbāh al-munīr fī gharīb al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr*** (*The Lantern Illuminating the Obscure Terms in The Large Commentary*)

Description: A commentary explaining the linguistic peculiarities and obscure terms in the Shāfi'ī law book *al-Sharḥ al-kabīr* (*The Large Commentary*) by al-Rāfi'ī, it in turn being a commentary on Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's Shāfi'ī law manual *al-Wajīz* (*The Summary*).

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: In the colophon of MS Jāmi'at al-Malik Sa'ūd 7147, the copyist states that he had made his copy from an autograph copy that had been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa "located outside the Zuwaylah Gates in Cairo."<sup>17</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown.

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: Yes, according to the copyist of of MS Jāmi'at al-Malik Sa'ūd 7147.

al-Fazārī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ibrāhīm (624-690/1227-1291)

19. ***al-Iqlīd li-dar' al-taqlīd*** (*The Key to Warding off Imitation*)

Description: A commentary on the Shāfi'ī jurisprudence book *al-Tanbīh fī al-fiqh al-Shāfi'ī* (*The Notification in Shāfi'ī Jurisprudence*) by Abū Ishāq al-Shirāzī.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 6.

Extant manuscripts: Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, MS Khuda Bakhsh 1818.

Autograph: Unknown.

al-Ḥamawī, Yāqūt (575-626/1179-1229)

20. ***Mu'jam al-buldān*** (*Dictionary of Countries*)

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<sup>17</sup> Riyadh: Jāmi'at al-malik sa'ūd, MS 7147, fol. 389a.-389b.

Description: A geographical work which also includes relevant information about biographies of figures associated with those places.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown (endowment statements partially erased). There are 4 extant manuscripts comprising parts 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1161; Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1162; Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1163; Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1164.

Autograph: Unknown.

al-Ḥusaynī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī (715-765/1315 or 1316 – 1363 or 1364).

21. ***al-Tadhkirah bi-ma ‘rifat rijāl al-kutub al- ‘ashrah*** (*The Memorandum for Knowing the Hadith Transmitters in the Ten Books*)

Description: A dictionary of hadith transmitters and an abridgement of al-Mizzī’s *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*. al-Ḥusaynī removes from al-Mizzī’s *Tahdhīb* all of the hadith transmitters that the latter included who did not transmit the hadith of the six canonical hadith collections while also adding entries for transmitters mentioned in the hadith collections of the founders of the four Sunni legal schools.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: The extant manuscript’s Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement has been almost entirely crossed out, but the name of the notary to the endowment is still visible.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 263.

Autograph: Yes

ibn Abī Ḥātim, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad (240-327/ 854 or 855 – 938)

22. ***Tafsīr al-Qur ‘ān al- ‘aẓīm musnadan ‘an al-rasūl wa-al-ṣaḥābah wa-al-tābi ‘īn*** (*Exegesis of the Great Quran, Based on the Reports of the Prophet, the Companions, and the Followers*)

Description: A close exegesis of the Quran deriving its explanations from reports from the Prophet Muḥammad, the Companions, and the Followers and providing their chains of transmission.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown, section of endowment listing number of volumes is illegible.

Extant manuscripts: Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah, MS tafsīr 15.

Autograph: No.

ibn Abī Shaybah, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad (159-235/775-849)

23. ***Muṣannaḥ ibn Abī Shaybah*** (*The Hadith Collection of ibn Abī Shaybah*)

Description: A collection of prophetic hadith and reports from the Companions of the Prophet and Successors arranged topically.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 5034 has the partially erased but still recognizable endowment statement from the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa on its title page. The other volumes of the same recension written in the same hand that I have identified have all had their original title page endowment statements completely removed, but there is evidence that these volumes were endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah as well. One bears the ownership statement of Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, whose original book collection had been acquired by Maḥmūd al-Ustādār and endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>18</sup> Others can be identified as Maḥmūdīyah endowments due to visible traces of the secondary Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements on their margins, even in cases when these statements have been covered up by sheets of paper.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown, the original endowment statements have either been completely removed or erased to the point that the section enumerating the original volumes in the endowment is illegible.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 440; Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 441; Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 442; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Murad Molla 594; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Murad Molla 596; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Murad Molla 597; Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 5034.

Autograph: No.

ibn ‘Asākir, ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan (499-571/1105-1176)

24. ***Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*** (*History of the City of Damascus*)

Description: An enormous work composed by ibn ‘Asākir in part to highlight the role of Syria in both Islamic history and in Islamic scholarship. He does this in part by opening the work with an exposition of the virtues of Syria and its religious significance, in part by providing biographies of figures associated with Syria in Islamic history, and in part by citing over 14,000 hadith with full chains of transmissions that were transmitted by Syrians.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with a fully legible Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement.<sup>19</sup> Traces of the Maḥmūdīyah primary and secondary endowment can be found on the pages of several other volumes of this

<sup>18</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Murad Molla 594, fol. 1a.

<sup>19</sup> Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azhariyah, MS 10670-6, fol. 1a.

set. These include a slip of paper affixed to the title page upon which is simply written “endowment of the Maḥmūdīyah” (*waqf al-Maḥmūdīyah*);<sup>20</sup> a Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement that has been partially erased;<sup>21</sup> fully intact secondary Maḥmūdīyah statements.<sup>22</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Although al-Sakhāwī mentions there were 57 volumes in the Maḥmūdīyah copy, the endowment statement on an extant manuscript mentions that there were 56 volumes in the original endowment.<sup>23</sup>

Extant manuscripts: Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 10670-1; Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 10670-2; Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 10670-6; Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 10670-8.

Autograph: No, but written in the hand of ibn ‘Asākir’s son al-Qāsim, who was the first to make a fair copy of the work from his father’s draft copies.<sup>24</sup>

ibn Bāṭīsh, Ismā‘īl ibn Hibat Allāh (575-655/1179-1257)

25. ***al-Tamyīz wa-al-faṣl bayna al-muttafaḥ fī al-khaṭṭ wa-al-naqṭ wa-al-shakl*** (*Differentiating and Separating Between Names Alike in Spelling, Dotting, and Voweling*)

Description: A work that describes homonymic *nisbahs* (ancestral names, tribal names, or names denoting a place of origin), outlines the different denotations inherent in each name, and provides examples of figures holding such names with each outlined denotation.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown, the section in the endowment statement listing the number of volumes has been erased.

Extant manuscripts: Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 1217.

Autograph: No.

ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī, Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyá (700-749/1301-1349)

26. ***Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*** (*The Routes of Insight into the Realms of Metropolises*)

Description: A massive encyclopedia ostensibly about geography but also including large discursions on history, literature, and other subjects.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements.

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<sup>20</sup> Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 10670-1, fol. 1a.

<sup>21</sup> Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 10670-2, fol. 1a.

<sup>22</sup> Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 10670-8. fols. 31b, 32a.

<sup>23</sup> Cairo: al-Maktabah al-azharīyah, MS 10670-6, fol. 1a.

<sup>24</sup> Muḥammad Muṭī‘ al-Ḥāfiẓ, *al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn ‘Asākir. Muḥaddith al-Shām wa-mu’arrikhuhā al-kabīr, 499–571 h.* (Damascus: Dār al-qalam, 2003), 454-460.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 22, according to the endowment statement. The endowment states that this recension is a 23 volume work but a volume was missing from it at the time of the endowment.

Extant manuscripts: Berlin: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS or. quart 1121; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3419; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3420; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3422; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3425; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3426; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3427; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3429; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3433; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3435; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Karaçelebizade 296; London: British Library, MS ADD 24348; Paris, BnF MS Arabe 2328.

Autograph: Unknown.

ibn Fūrak, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan (d. 406/ d. 1015-1016)

27. ***Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*** (*Exegesis of the Great Quran*)

Description: An exegesis of the Quran in a question and answer format, focusing on the verse's syntax, commentaries of earlier exegetes on the verse, rulings derived from verses from earlier jurists, and variant readings of the verse. Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement. Number of volumes in the original endowment: 3, according to the endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 50.

Autograph: Unknown.

ibn Kathīr, Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUmar (~700-774/~1300-1373)

28. ***Jāmiʿ al-masānīd wa-al-sunan*** (*The Compendium of Prophetic Traditions*)

Description: A biographical dictionary of all the Companions who transmitted a hadith directly from the Prophet Muḥammad according to the following hadith collections: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan al-Nasāʿī*, *Sunan ibn Mājah*, *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, *Musnad Abī Yaʿlā*, *Musnad al-Bazzār*, and *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr* by al-Ṭabarānī. Organizing his book by alphabetical order of the Companion's name, ibn Kathīr includes a biography of the Companion, the aforementioned hadith collections in which the Companion is listed as first in the chain of transmission of the hadith, then a list of all the hadiths in which the Companion is featured in the aforementioned hadith collections.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: ibn Ḥajar, the librarian of the Maḥmūdīyah, stated that the work was “among the endowments of the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa.”<sup>25</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown.

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: According to ibn Ḥajar, the text of the Maḥmūdīyah copy was written in the hand of ibn al-Muḥibb al-Šāmiṭ but it contained many additions in both the margins and on attached slips of paper (‘*aṣāfir*’) written in the hand of ibn Kathīr.<sup>26</sup>

ibn Mājah, Muḥammad ibn Yazīd (209-273/824 or 825 – 887)

29. ***Sunan ibn Mājah*** (*The Hadith Collection of ibn Mājah*)

Description: A collection of hadith with full transmission chains included, organized topically. It is often included in the list of *al-kutub al-sittah*, or the six reliable hadith collections. However, several hadith scholars of the middle period did not include *Sunan ibn Mājah* in their own lists of the six reliable hadith collections for its inclusion of hadith of questionable *isnāds* (chains of transmission).

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 1.

Extant manuscripts: Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 706.

Autograph: No.

ibn Maktūm, Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir (682-749/1284-1348)

30. ***Qayd al-awābid*** (*Fettering the Wild Beasts*)

Description: A commonplace book by ibn Maktūm. Though no longer extant, from surviving quotations from the text in other works we know that *Qayd al-awābid* consisted of literary citations and focused on issues of grammar and morphology.<sup>27</sup>

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Suyūṭī mentions having seen it at the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>28</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 3, according to al-Suyūṭī.<sup>29</sup>

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

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<sup>25</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:40.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> For a study that partially reconstructs *Qayd al-awābid* based on other scholars’ citations of the text, see Muḥammad Maḥmūd Muḥammad Šabrī al-Jubbah, “Masā’il al-naḥw wa-al-šarf al-khamsūn al-bāqiyah min kitāb qayd al-awābid al-ma’rūf bi-tadhkirat ibn Maktūm: Jam’ wa-taḥqīq wa-dirāsah,” *Majallat kulliyat al-dirāsāt al-islāmīyah wa-al-‘arabīyah bi-Damanhūr* 5 (2020), 765-896.

<sup>28</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu’āh*, 1:327.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.



Autograph: Yes, according to al-Suyūṭī.<sup>30</sup>

ibn Mālik, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh (600 or 601 – 672/ 1203 or 1204 or 1205 – 1274)

31. *Fatāwá fī al-‘arabīyah* (*Rulings on Arabic*)

Description: A group of eight responses to eight prophetic hadiths with unusual grammar and syntax. ibn Mālik answers with citations of examples from the Quran, hadith, and poetry that confirm the grammatical correctness of the problematic hadith.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Suyūṭī states: “I saw [ibn Mālik’s] *Fatāwá fī al-‘arabīyah* in one of the composite manuscripts endowed to Maḥmūd’s Library. One of his students had compiled it for him. I have transmitted from it in my commonplace book (*tadhkiratī*).”<sup>31</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: According to the passage by al-Suyūṭī the work was a single composite volume (*majmū‘*).

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: Unknown.

ibn al-Mundhir al-Naysābūrī, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm (d. 318/ d. 930)

32. *al-Awsaṭ fī al-sunan wa-al-ijmā‘ wa-al-ikhtilāf* (*The Intermediate Study of Laws, Consensus, and Disagreement*)

Description: ibn al-Mundhir’s abridgement of his own book *al-Mabsūṭ* (*The Expansive Study*), a book on juristic disagreements and consensus from the time of the Companions of the Prophet until his own time.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Before the title page of Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 1034, the following note is written in the recognizable hand of al-Sakhāwī, a frequent visitor to the Maḥmūdīyah: “In this volume, the first of *al-Awsaṭ* by ibn al-Mundhir, from the Maḥmūdīyah copy [consisting of] three volumes, contains the following” followed by a table of contents (*fī hādhā al-mujallad wa-huwa al-awwal min al-Awsaṭ li-ibn al-Mundhir min nuskhāt al-Maḥmūdīyah thalāth mujalladāt ishtamalat ‘alá*).<sup>32</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: al-Sakhāwī mentions 3 volumes in the Maḥmūdīyah in his aforementioned note.

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: No.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 1:132.

<sup>32</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 1034, fol. 1b.

ibn Nuqtah, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Ghanī (579-629/1183-1231)

33. ***Takmilat al-ikmāl*** (A Continuation of The Completion)

Description: A continuation of ibn Mākūlā’s *Ikmāl al-mukhtalif wa-al-mu’talif min asmā’ al-rijāl*, a work on the onomastics of hadith transmitters that focuses on common errors made by copyists in transcribing certain names. ibn Nuqtah expands on the work of ibn Mākūlā while correcting some of the latter’s mistakes.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 2, according to the endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Gotha: Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, MS Orient. A. 1759.

Autograph: No.

ibn al-Qammāḥ, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad (656-741/1258 or 1259 – 1340)

34. ***Unknown work in a majmū’*** (composite manuscript)

Description: al-Suyūṭī states that he borrowed this composite manuscript from the Maḥmūdīyah when he was looking for an answer to the legal issue of whether a husband who makes an oath to divorce his wife has committed perjury (*ḥinth*) in the following two instances: a.) If he made the oath concerning a past action and it later becomes clear that he was mistaken about the action, or b.) if he made the oath concerning a future action and he inadvertently does not commit the action out of forgetfulness. al-Suyūṭī says the following of the composite manuscript he consulted:

It so happened that one day I borrowed a composite manuscript from the Maḥmūdīyah Library in the hand of the scholar Shams al-Dīn ibn al-Qammāḥ, one of the sheikhs of Tāj al-Dīn ibn al-Subkī. I found that it mentioned a long section on this issue [of perjury in oaths of divorce] from the words of the Chief Judge Taqī al-Dīn ibn Razzīn, the student of ibn al-Ṣalāḥ.<sup>33</sup>

From this brief anecdote we can surmise that the composite manuscript that al-Suyūṭī borrowed from the Maḥmūdīyah was a series of tracts written by ibn al-Qammāḥ in his own hand, and the tract that al-Suyūṭī consulted was a work of jurisprudence. The subjects of the rest of the works in the composite manuscript are unknown.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Suyūṭī mentioning that he borrowed this book from the Maḥmūdīyah, as mentioned above.

Numbers of volumes in the original endowment: 1.

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<sup>33</sup> al-Suyūṭī, “al-Taḥadduth bi-ni‘mat Allāh,” edited in E.M. Sarstain, *Jalāl Al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 2:165.

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: Yes, as mentioned by al-Suyūṭī in the anecdote above.

ibn al-Rifʿah, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (645-710/1247 or 1248 – 1310)

35. ***Kifāyat al-nabīh fī sharḥ al-Tanbīh*** (*Sufficient for the Attentive in Commenting on The Notification*)

Description: A commentary on the Shāfiʿī jurisprudence book *al-Tanbīh fī al-fiqh al-Shāfiʿī* (*The Notification in Shāfiʿī Jurisprudence*) by Abū Ishāq al-Shirāzī.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 12.

Extant manuscripts: Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, MS Khuda Bakhsh 1819.

Autograph: No.

ibn al-Shabbāṭ al-Tawzarī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī (618-681/1221-1282)

36. ***Ṣilat al-ṣimṭ wa-simat al-mirṭ fī sharḥ Simṭ al-hadī fī al-fakhr al-Muḥammadī*** (*The Link in the Necklace and the Mark on the Wool Robe in Commenting on The Necklace of Guidance in Praise of Muḥammad*)

Description: A commentary on a poem in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad written by ibn al-Shabbāṭ al-Tawzarī himself, which in turn was an adaptation of another poem written in praise of the Prophet written by a fellow Tunisian, al-ʿAbd Allāh ibn Yaḥyá al-Shaqrāṭīsī (d. 466/ d.1073). However, ibn al-Shabbāṭ al-Tawzarī’s commentary diverges from the subject of the poem to include information about the history of the Maghreb, its geography, and its prominent figures.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: In his book on the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Ṣāliḥī (d. 942/ d. 1535 or 1536) quotes from ibn al-Shabbāṭ al-Tawzarī’s commentary on the al-Shaqrāṭīsī’s panegyric on the Prophet Muḥammad. He then says that the commentary “is in six volumes and an endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Library.”<sup>34</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown, though Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Ṣāliḥī mentions 6 volumes as being endowments to the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>35</sup>

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: Unknown.

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<sup>34</sup> al-Ṣāliḥī, *Subul al-hudá wa-al-rashād*, 1:297

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

al-Isfarāyīnī, Abū al-Muẓaffar Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad (d. 471/d. 1078-9)

37. ***al-Tabṣīr fī al-fīraq*** (*Providing Insight Into the Sects*)

Description: More commonly known as *al-Tabṣīr fī al-dīn wa-tamyīz al-firqaḥ al-nājiyah ‘an al-fīraq al-hālikīn* (*Providing Insight into Religion and Distinguishing the Sect Which Will Be Saved from the Sects Doomed to Perdition*). The author lays out theological beliefs of various sects and refutes them, then outlines the correct beliefs of the People of the Sunnah and the Community.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: The title is part of a larger composite manuscript (*majmū‘*) consisting of this title and another title, *al-Ajwibah al-fākhīrah ‘an al-as‘ilāh al-fājīrah* (*Splendid Answers to Degenerate Questions*) by Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Idrīs al-Qarāfī. The Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement can be found on the title page of *al-Ajwibah al-fākhīrah* but not on the title page of the preceding *al-Tabṣīr fī al-fīraq*. However, the two titles must have been part of the same codex before the latter title’s endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Library. They are both written in the same hand, and the title pages of each title bear an earlier statement indicating that both titles had been copied on commission for the library of the governor of Karak and Shoubak in the year 723. Consequently, *al-Tabṣīr fī al-fīraq* must have been endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah as part of the same codex as its sister title *al-Ajwibah al-fākhīrah* when the latter was endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 1, part of a larger composite manuscript (*majmū‘*).

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Şehid Ali Paşa 1574, fols. 1a. – 95b.

Autograph: No.

al-Jazarī, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm (658-739 / 1260-1338)

38. ***Ḥawādith al-zamān wa-anbā’ihī wa-wafayāt al-akābir wa-al-a’yān min abnā’ihī*** (*Events and News of the Time, With Obituaries of Its Great and Notable Sons*)

Description: al-Sakhawī mentions that the Maḥmūdīyah had an autograph copy of “a large history” by al-Jazarī, but does not mention the title of the work.<sup>36</sup> The work al-Sakhawī is referring to is al-Jazarī’s historical chronicle *Ḥawādith al-zamān wa-anbā’ihī wa-wafayāt al-akābir wa-al-a’yān min abnā’ihī* (*Events and News of the Time, With Obituaries of Its Great and Notable Sons*), given that the work is often simply referred to as *Tārīkh al-Jazarī* in the sources.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> al-Sakhawī, *al-I‘lān bi-al-tawbīkh*, 477.

<sup>37</sup> Haarmann, *Quellenstudien*, 23.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Sakhāwī states that there was an autograph copy of the work in the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>38</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown.

Extant manuscripts: Unknown. Haarmann describes a three-volume rough draft of the work held in the Gotha Library, but I have not been able to access them to confirm if they are the Maḥmūdīyah autograph copy of the work that al-Sakhāwī mentions.<sup>39</sup>

Autograph: Yes, according to al-Sakhāwī.

al-Māwardī, ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad (364-450/974-1058)

39. *al-Ḥāwī al-kabīr fī fiqh al-madhab al-Shāfi‘ī* (*The Great Compendium of the Shāfi‘ī School of Law*)

Description: A compendium of Shāfi‘ī substantive law, a commentary on al-Muzanī’s *al-Mukhtaṣar* (*Abridgement*).

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 31.

Extant manuscripts: Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, MS Khuda Bakhsh 1813; Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, MS Khuda Bakhsh 1814; Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, MS Khuda Bakhsh 1815.

Autograph: Unknown.

Miskawayh, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (c. 320-421/932-1030)

40. *Tajārib al-umam wa-‘awāqib al-himam* (*The Experiences of Nations and the Outcomes of Endeavors*)

Description: A universal history from the Flood until the year 369/980.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 6, mentioned in the surviving books’ endowment statements.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3116; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3117; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3118; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3119; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3120; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3121.

Autograph: No.

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<sup>38</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-I‘lān bi-al-tawbīkh*, 477.

<sup>39</sup> Haarmann, *Quellenstudien*, 27-28.

al-Mizzī, Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (654-742/1256-1342)

41. ***Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā’ al-rijāl*** (*The Refinement of Perfection in the Names of Hadith Transmitters*).

Description: A comprehensive biographical dictionary of every hadith transmitter mentioned in the six canonical hadith books as well as those mentioned in other books by the authors of the six canonical hadith books. In this way al-Mizzī expands upon the biographies mentioned in the book *al-Kamāl fī asmā’ al-rijāl* (*Perfection in the Names of Hadith Transmitters*) by ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqqḍīsī as well as “refining” it by correcting its mistakes.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: There are two extant volumes of the work in the hand of the author whose Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements have been crossed out but are still recognizable.<sup>40</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 26. I was able to make out through the lines crossing out the endowment statement in MS Reisülküttab 1125 the section of the endowment statement providing the Number of volumes in the original endowment.

Extant manuscripts:<sup>41</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reisülküttab 1125; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yozgat 148/1, fols. 171a. - 259b.; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yozgat 148/3, fols. 1a. - 220b.; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yozgat 148/5, fols. 340a. - 521b.; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yozgat 148/6, fols. 367a. - 505b.;<sup>42</sup> Dublin: Chester Beatty Library, MS Arab. 4340; Dublin: Chester Beatty Library, MS Arab. 4341; Dublin: Chester Beatty Library, MS Arab. 4342; Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Feyzullah Efendi 1472; Tunis: al-Maktabah al-waṭanīyah al-tūnisīyah, MS Zaytūnah 1654.

Autograph Yes.

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<sup>40</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yozgat 148/1, fol. 171a; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reisülküttab 1125, fol. 1a.

<sup>41</sup> Though only MS Yozgat 148/1 and MS Reisülküttab 1125 bear any traces of the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement, it is possible to expand this list of extant manuscripts of the Maḥmūdīyah copy of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*. We have confirmed above that the original endowment statement states that there were twenty-six volumes of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah. Moreover, the original endowment statement does not indicate that there were any volumes missing at the time of the endowment, as it does in other instances such as the Maḥmūdīyah copy of ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī’s *Masālik al-abṣār*. Consequently, I have included in this list all copies of *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* that I have been able to see that are written in the same hand as MS Yozgat 148/1 and MS Reisülküttab 1125, i.e. copies in the hand the author al-Mizzī. In addition to being autograph copies, these extant manuscripts also all bear the same audition certificates and reading notes as those of the confirmed Maḥmūdīyah copies of MS Yozgat 148/1 and MS Reisülküttab 1125, further lending credence to my claim that these other volumes were Maḥmūdīyah endowments as well.

<sup>42</sup> Each autograph copy of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* held in the Yozgat collection of the Süleymaniye is bound in a volume containing later recensions of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*. The text of these later recensions continue where the autograph copies leave off. Since I have only seen this addition of later recensions in the Yozgat copies of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, my suspicion is that this intervention was carried out by a librarian in the Yozgat library at some point who noticed that sections of the autograph copy of *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* in his library were missing.

Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/ d. 767)

42. ***Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*** (*Muqātil ibn Sulaymān's Exegesis of the Quran*)

Description: One of the earliest surviving exegeses of the Quran, with a focus on explaining the narrative elements of the Quran. The work contains transmissions of exegeses of the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad and their Followers.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: In the colophon of MS Ahmed III 74/1, the copyist states that his copy was made from “the copy of the Maḥmūdīyah in Cairo.”<sup>43</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown

Extant manuscripts: Unknown

Autograph: Most likely not, the editor of the printed edition of this work does not mention any autographs in his survey of the surviving manuscripts.

al-Nawawī, Yaḥyá ibn Sharaf (631-676/ 1233-1277)

43. ***Minhāj al-ṭālibīn wa- 'umdat al-muftīn*** (*The Path for Students and Support for Issuers of Fatwas*)

Description: a manual of Shāfi'ī law, a commentary on the Shāfi'ī law manual *al-Muḥarrar* by al-Rāfi'ī

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Sakhawī mentions in his biographical dictionary a student who would “frequent the Maḥmūdīyah to collate his copy of *al-Minhāj* and *al-Rawḍah* with [those in] the hand of its author (in the Maḥmūdīyah).”<sup>44</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown

Extant manuscripts: Unknown

Autograph: Yes, according to al-Sakhāwī.<sup>45</sup>

44. ***Rawḍat al-ṭālibīn wa- 'umdat muftīn*** (*The Garden for Students and Support for Issuers of Fatwas*)

Description: An abridgement of al-Rāfi'ī's *al-Sharḥ al-kabīr*, the latter of which is an explication of the Shāfi'ī law manual *al-Wajīz* by al-Ghazālī, with comments by al-Nawawī

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Sakhawī mentions in his biographical dictionary a student who would “frequent the Maḥmūdīyah to collate his copy of

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<sup>43</sup> Cited in 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shaḥātah, “Muqaddimat al-taḥqīq,” in *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulayman* by Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, ed. 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shaḥātah (Beirut: Dār iḥyā' al-turāth, 2002) 1: ٢

<sup>44</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw' al-lāmi'*, 8:276.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

*al-Minhāj* and *al-Rawḍah* with [those in] the hand of its author [in the Maḥmūdīyah].”<sup>46</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: According to al-Sakhāwī there were four volumes in the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>47</sup>

Extant manuscripts: Unknown

Autograph: Yes, according to al-Sakhāwī.<sup>48</sup>

45. ***Tahdhīb al-asmā’ wa-al-lughāt*** (*Refinement of Names and Linguistic Variants*)

Description: A biographical dictionary of major figures mentioned in several foundational texts of Shāfi’ī law. The book also explains obscure or difficult terms mentioned in these Shāfi’ī law texts.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Suyūṭī states the following about the work: “*Refinement of Names and Linguistic Variants*: A massive two volume work, usually in four volumes. al-Isnawī has said: ‘[al-Nawawī] died when it was in draft form and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī made a fair copy of it.’ Regarding this, I have seen a fair copy of the first volume in his hand in the Maḥmūdīyah Library, but there are a few spots left blank in it.”<sup>49</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: al-Suyūṭī only mentions having seen the first volume of the work in the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>50</sup>

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: It is unclear in the above-quote passage whether the fair copy al-Suyūṭī saw “in his hand” (*bi-khaṭṭihi*) is referring to the hand of al-Nawawī or al-Mizzī. Both are potential options: The Maḥmūdīyah held autographs of al-Nawawī’s works and al-Mizzī’s *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*. If al-Suyūṭī means al-Nawawī’s hand then it would mean he is contradicting al-Isnawī’s account of the text’s history.

al-Nuwayrī, Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (677-733/ 1279-1333)

46. ***Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*** (*The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition*).

Description: A massive encyclopedia covering a wide range of topics, including cosmology, meteorology, geography, history, anatomy, literature, zoology, botany, medicine, government, and many other subjects.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Manhal al-adhb al-rawī*, 21.

<sup>48</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’ al-lāmi’*, 8:276

<sup>49</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *al-Minhāj al-sawī fī tarjamat al-imām al-Nawawī.*, ed. Aḥmad Shafīq Damj (Beirut: Dār ibn Ḥazm, 1988), 60-61.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.



Number of volumes in the original endowment: 30, according to the surviving endowment statements.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Nuruosmaniye 4360;<sup>51</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3515; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3516; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3517; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3518; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3519; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3520; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3521; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3524; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3525; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3526; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3527; Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 1579.

Autograph: Uncertain.<sup>52</sup>

al-Qamūlī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (d. 727/d. 1327)

47. *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ fī sharḥ al-Wasīṭ* (*The Encompassing Sea: A Commentary on The Medium Digest*)

Description: A commentary on Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's *al-Wasīṭ* (*The Medium Digest*), a book on Shāfi'ī jurisprudence.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 32, according to the endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, MS Khuda Bakhsh 1825.

Autograph: No. The endowment statement indicates that the book is an autograph (*mujallad min mujalladāt al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ bi-khaṭṭ muṣannifihi*). However, this cannot be true because in the colophon of the manuscript the scribe mentions the author with the following prayer only used for the dead: “May God ensconce him with His mercy and grant him abode in His capacious paradise.” (*taghammadahu Allah bi-rahmatihī wa-askanahu fī fasṭḥ jannatihī*).<sup>53</sup> Consequently, this

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<sup>51</sup> The original title page bearing the Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement has been completely covered over by a sheet of paper. Nevertheless, the manuscript can be identified as an endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah through the secondary Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement written on the margins of several folios. See Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Nuruosmaniye 4360, fols. 17b., 173b., 174a.

<sup>52</sup> Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 1579 has a colophon indicating that the author al-Nuwayrī was the copyist. However, Muhanna has noted that two sets of holographs of *Nihāyat al-arab* exist that look like they were written in two different hands. He proposes two possibilities: either that al-Nuwayrī, being a well-versed scribe, might have been able to copy the works in different hands; or that one of the two holograph sets was actually copied by someone else then passed off as a holograph. As Muhanna notes, further investigation of the holograph sets is required. See Elias Muhanna, “The Art of Copying: Mamlūk Manuscript Culture in Theory and Practice,” in *In the Author's Hand: Holograph and Authorial Manuscripts in the Islamic Handwritten Tradition*, eds. Frédéric Bauden and Élise Franssen (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 248.

<sup>53</sup> See Khudā Bakhsh Oriyanṭal Pablik Lā'ibrerī, *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library* (Patna: The Library, 1970), 33:86.

manuscript must have been completed after the author's death, making it not an autograph.

al-Qarāfī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Idrīs (626-684/1228-1285)

48. ***al-Ajwibah al-fākhīrah 'an al-as'ilah al-fājirah*** (*Splendid Answers to Wicked Questions*)

Description: An apologetic work written in response to a letter written by the bishop of Sidon in Arabic in which the bishop uses Quranic evidence to prove that the tenets of Christianity are sound and God-given. al-Qarāfī responds by pointing out the author of the letter's misunderstanding of the cited Quranic passages, then goes on to answer questions often posed by the Christians and the Jews other than those covered in the letter, then poses questions of his own to the Christians and the Jews, and then finally concludes the book with citations from the Bible which prove that Islam is the true religion.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 1, mentioned in the surviving book's endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Şehid Ali Paşa 1574, fols. 96a. - 218b.

Autograph: No.

al-Qunawī, 'Alī ibn Ismā'īl (668-729/ 1269 or 1270 – 1329)

49. ***Ḥusn al-taşarruf fī sharḥ kitāb al-Ta'aruf li-madḥhab al-taşawwuf*** (*Good conduct in commenting on the book Introduction to the Doctrine of the Sufis*)

Description: A commentary on the book *al-Ta'aruf li-madḥhab ahl al-taşawwuf* (*Introduction to the Doctrine of the Sufis*) by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Kalābādhī, a Sufi apologetic.

Proof that it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Sakhāwī mentions that he saw a volume of it in the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>54</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown, though al-Sakhāwī writes that he saw it in one volume at the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>55</sup>

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: Unknown.

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<sup>54</sup> al-Sakhawī, *al-Qawl al-munbī 'an tarjamat ibn al-'Arabī*, ed. Khālid ibn al-'Arabī Mudrik, in Khālid ibn al-'Arabī Mudrik "al-Qawl al-munbī 'an tarjamat ibn al-'Arabī" (Masters Dissertation: Jāmi' at Umm al-Qurā, 2020), 2:225-226.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

al-Şafadī, Khalīl ibn Aybak (696-764/1297-1363)

50. *al-Tadhkirah al-Şalāhīyah* (*Şalāh al-Dīn al-Şafadī's Commonplace Book*)

Description: a commonplace book of the biographer and litterateur al-Şafadī.  
Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Copyist of Dublin: Chester Beatty Library, MS. Arab. 3861, another copy of the work, mentions in the colophon that he had collated his copy with both the author's autograph and with a copy in the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, al-Sakhāwī mentions his teacher ibn Ḥajar, librarian of the Maḥmūdīyah, left notes on a copy of al-Şafadī's *Tadhkirah* in response to notes written in the same copy by Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah, whose personal collection of books ended up as endowments to the Maḥmūdīyah Library.<sup>57</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown.

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: No, since in the aforementioned collation note on Dublin: Chester Beatty Library, MS Arab. 3861, the copyist specifies he was looking at both the author's autograph *and* a copy in the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>58</sup>

51. *A 'yān al- 'aşr wa-a 'wān al-naşr* (*Notables of the Age and the Supporters of Victory*)

Description: A biographical dictionary of the eminent individuals in al-Şafadī's lifetime, organized alphabetically.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements either partially removed or entirely removed.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown. The endowment statements on the title pages are too damaged to make out the number of volumes in the original endowment.

Extant manuscripts:<sup>59</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2962; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2963; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2964; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2965; Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2970.

Autograph: No, but copied from an autograph.

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<sup>56</sup> Dublin: Chester Beatty Library, MS Arab. 3861, fol. 54a.

<sup>57</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 1:384.

<sup>58</sup> Dublin: Chester Beatty Library, MS Arab. 3861, fol. 54a.

<sup>59</sup> I thank Benedikt Reier for drawing my attention to these manuscripts.

al-Ṣaghānī, al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad (577-650/1181 – 1252)

52. *al-‘Ubāb al-zākhir wa-al-lubāb al-fākhir (The Billowing Waves and The Splendid Quintessence)*

Description: A dictionary.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 19, according to the endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah, MS lughah 141.

Autograph: Unknown.

al-Subkī, Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn ‘Alī (727-771/1327-1370)

53. *Mu ‘jam shuyūkh al-Subkī (al-Subkī’s List of Authorities)*

Description: a list of Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī’s authorities, composed by Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyá ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyá ibn Sa‘d al-Maqdisī.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Sakhāwī mentions that a copy of the work exists in the Maḥmūdīyah written in the hand of its composer Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyá ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyá ibn Sa‘d al-Maqdisī.<sup>60</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Two volumes, according to al-Sakhāwī.<sup>61</sup>

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: Yes, according to al-Sakhāwī.<sup>62</sup>

al-Surūjī, Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm (637-710/1239 or 1240 -1310)

54. *al-Ghāyah fī sharḥ al-Hidāyah (The Aim: A Commentary on The Guidance)*

Description: A commentary on al-Marghīnānī’s compendium of Ḥanafī jurisprudence *al-Hidāyah (The Guidance)*.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: On the title page of MS Süleymaniye 532, another recension of the work, an owner of the manuscript wrote the following note: “In Cairo I have seen the author’s copy in his hand at the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa outside the Zuwaylah Gate, in seven large volumes.”<sup>63</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: The author of the note mentioned above states that he saw 7 volumes.

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

<sup>60</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-I‘lān bi-al-tawbīkh*, 368.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Süleymaniye 532, fol. 1a.

Autograph: Yes, according to the author of the note mentioned above.

al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr (224 or 225-310/ 839-923)

55. ***Tahdhīb al-āthār*** (*The Refinement of Traditions*)

Description: An incomplete work of hadith traditions arranged by the latest transmitter. al-Ṭabarī provides philological and legal analysis of each hadith. Of the incomplete work, only three volumes are extant.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with an endowment that has been almost entirely erased and written over. However, the first line of the original endowment statement has remained unchanged. Additionally, the secondary Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement within the margins of the text has been erased.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 270.

Autograph: No.

56. ***Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*** (*History of the Prophets and Kings*)

Description: A famous universal history beginning with Creation and ending in the year 302/915.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscripts with endowment statements.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 15, according to the surviving endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Berlin: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Sprenger 41; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Revan Köşkü 1555; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2929/1; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2929/9; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2929/11; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2929/12; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2929/13.

Autograph: No.

al-Ṭahāwī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (d. 321/ d. 933)

57. ***Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār*** (*An Explanation of Problematic Traditions*)

Description: An explanation of apparent contradictions between different hadith or between hadith and verses in the Quran.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: On the colophons of another recension of the work, the copyist mentions: “the copy with which I copied my own copy is an endowment to the Maḥmūdīyah Madrasa in Cairo.”<sup>64</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown.

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: Unknown.

Tha‘lab, Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyá (200-291/814 or 815-904)

58. *al-Faṣīḥ (Eloquent Style)*

Description: A book on Arabic morphology.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

The endowment statement has been almost entirely erased and replaced with a note of sale for the book, but the last line of the endowment statement is still legible. Moreover, the title page contains the ownership statement of Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, whose original book collection Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had acquired and endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 1, according to the endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Laleli 3581.

Autograph: No.

al-Waṭwāt, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm (632-718/ 1235-1318)

59. *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-‘ibar (Delightful Concepts and Pathways to Precepts)*

Description: An encyclopedia covering subjects as wide ranging as cosmology, botany, zoology, geography, literature, and astronomy.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: Extant manuscript with endowment statement.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 2, according to the endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Fatih 4116. This manuscript contains the two original volumes that were endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah.<sup>65</sup> At some point the two volumes must have been bound together to form the current codex, but this must have happened after they were endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah in 797/1395 because the endowment statements on each volume describe each as being a bound volume (*mujallad*). Additionally, both volumes of

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<sup>64</sup> Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Fezzullah Efendi 273, fol. 296a; Istanbul: Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, MS Fezzullah Efendi 274, fol. 298b.

<sup>65</sup> The first volume spans MS Fatih 4116, fols. 1a – 218b., the second spans MS Fatih 4116, fols. 219a. – 459b. The Maḥmūdīyah endowment statements for each volume can be found on fols. 1a. and 219a. respectively.

this manuscript erroneously give the work the title *Manāhij al-fikar wa-mabāhij al-‘ibar*.

Autograph: Unknown, but most likely not. The aforementioned erroneous title on MS Fatih 4116 does not exist on any of the other extant recensions of the work, suggesting it is a copyist’s mistake.

al-Yūnīnī, Mūsá ibn Muḥammad (640-726/ 1242-1326)

60. ***Dhayl ‘alá mir ‘āt al-zamān*** (*A Continuation of The Mirror of Time*)

Description: A continuation of Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī’s universal history *Mir ‘āt al-zamān*, covering the years 654-711/1256-1311. The continuation focuses on events in Syria, with inclusion of events and obituaries within a chronological framework.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: al-Sakhāwī mentions that the Maḥmūdīyah held a copy of the work.<sup>66</sup>

Number of volumes in the original endowment: According to al-Sakhāwī, the Maḥmūdīyah copy consisted of 4 volumes.<sup>67</sup>

Extant manuscripts: Unknown.

Autograph: Unknown, but al-Sakhāwī does not mention that the copy was autograph like he does for other Maḥmūdīyah works.

61. ***Mukhtaṣar mir ‘āt al-zamān*** (*An Abridgement of The Mirror of Time*)

Description: al-Yūnīnī’s abridgement of Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī’s universal history *Mir ‘āt al-zamān* (*The Mirror of Time*). The abridgement cuts the original work by about half and includes additions by al-Yūnīnī.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: The extant manuscripts do not bear the original Maḥmūdīyah endowment statement, but they bear an endowment statement made by the founder of the Maḥmūdīyah’s daughter Fāṭimah. In the endowment statement she states that she had purchased these books after they had originally been taken from her father’s madrasa and that she had re-endowed them to the madrasa.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: 16, according to Fāṭimah’s endowment statement.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2907-D2; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2907-D8; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2907-D10; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2907-D12; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2907-D17;

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<sup>66</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-I‘lān bi-al-tawbīkh*, 473-74.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2907-D19; Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 5866.<sup>68</sup>  
Autograph: No.

al-Zajjāj, Ibrāhīm ibn al-Sarī (ca. 230 – 311 / ca. 844 – 923)

62. *I'rāb al-qur'ān wa-ma'ānīhi* (Case Endings of the Quran and Its Meanings)

Description: An exegesis of the Quran focusing on syntax and philology.

Proof it was in the Maḥmūdīyah: An extant manuscript whose Maḥmūdīyah endowment has mostly been covered with a sheet of paper. However, the names of the two notaries of the endowment are still visible. The title page also bears the ownership statement of Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā'ah, whose books Maḥmūd al-Ustādār had acquired then subsequently endowed to the Maḥmūdīyah Library.

Number of volumes in the original endowment: Unknown, the section of the endowment statement listing the number of volumes in the endowment has been covered with paper.

Extant manuscripts: Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 43.

Autograph: Unknown.

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<sup>68</sup> The digitized catalogue of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* erroneously catalogs this manuscript as Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's original *Mir'āt al-zamān*, presumably due to damage on the title page that rendered the word abridgement (*mukhtaṣar*) illegible. See <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc32896d>.



APPENDIX B. The Syrian Profile of the Maḥmūdīyah Corpus

Figure in the Maḥmūdīyah profile	Texts authored the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus	Example of paratext in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus	Teachers in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus
Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah (725-790/1325-1388)		Ownership statement. <sup>a</sup>	Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī <sup>b</sup> ; Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī. <sup>c</sup>
Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn ‘Alī al-Subkī (727-771/1327-1370)	<i>Mu‘jam shuyūkh al-Subkī</i>	A note left by al-Subkī only indicating his name and the date. <sup>d</sup>	Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī; <sup>e</sup> Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī, <sup>f</sup> Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī. <sup>g</sup>
al-Ḥusaynī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī (715-765/1315 or 1316 – 1363 or 1364).	<i>al-Tadhkirah bi-ma‘rifat rijāl al-kutub al-‘ashrah</i>	The Maḥmūdīyah copy of his <i>al-Tadhkirah</i> is an autograph copy.	Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī; ibn Kathīr; Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī, al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Birzālī
ibn Kathīr, Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Umar (~700-774/~1300-1373)	<i>Jāmi‘ al-masānīd wa-al-sunan</i>	Reading note. <sup>h</sup>	Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī; al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Birzālī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī.

<sup>a</sup> Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 43, fol. 1a.

<sup>b</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā‘ al-ghumr*, 1:355.

<sup>c</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd al-farīdah*, 1:86.

<sup>d</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2165, fol. 1a.

<sup>e</sup> al-Subkī, *Mu‘jam al-shuyūkh*, eds. Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma‘rūf, Rā‘id Yūsuf al-‘Anbakī, and Muṣṭafā Ismā‘īl al-A‘zamī (Beirut: Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 2004), 1:352.

<sup>f</sup> Ibid., 1:508.

<sup>g</sup> Ibid., 1:178.

<sup>h</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3014, fol. 318a.

Figure in the Maḥmūdīyah profile	Texts authored the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus	Example of paratext in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus	Teachers in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus
al-Şafadī, Khalīl ibn Aybak (696-764/1297-1363)	<i>al-Tadhkirah al-Şalāḥīyah; A 'yān al-'aşr wa-a 'wān al-naşr</i>	Reading note. <sup>i</sup>	Yūsuf ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī; <sup>j</sup> Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī; <sup>k</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jazarī; <sup>l</sup> al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Birzālī. <sup>m</sup>
Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī (673-748/1274-1348)	<i>Mizān al-i 'tidāl fī naqd al-rijāl; al-Mu 'jam al-kabīr; Siyar a 'lām al-nubalā'; Talkhīş al-mustadrak; Tārīkh al-islām wa-ṭabaqāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-a 'lām</i>	Marginal note indicating book was read out loud to al-Dhahabī. <sup>n</sup>	Mūsá ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī; <sup>o</sup> Yūsuf ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī; <sup>p</sup> al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Birzālī. <sup>q</sup>
al-Birzālī, al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad (665-739/1267-1339)	<i>al-Muqtafá li-tārīkh al-shaykh al-imām Shihāb al-Dīn Abī Shāmah</i>	Audition certificate written in al-Birzālī's hand attesting he read the book <i>Tahdhīb al-kamāl</i> out loud to its author Yūsuf ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī. <sup>r</sup>	Yūsuf ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī; <sup>s</sup> Mūsá ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī; <sup>t</sup> 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ibrāhīm al-Fazarī. <sup>u</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Istanbul: Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1164, fol. 1a.

<sup>j</sup> al-Şafadī, *A 'yān al-'aşr wa-a 'wān al-naşr*, ed. 'Alī Abū Zayd (Beirut: Dār al-fikr al-mu 'āşir, 1998), 5:646.

<sup>k</sup> Ibid., 4:288.

<sup>l</sup> Ibid., 4:220-221.

<sup>m</sup> Ibid., 4:49-52.

<sup>n</sup> Paris: BnF, MS Arabe 706, fol. 50b.

<sup>o</sup> al-Dhahabī, *Mu 'jam al-shuyūkh: al-mu 'jam al-kabīr*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb al-Hīlah (Taif, Saudi Arabia: Maktabat al-şiddīq, 1998), 2:348.

<sup>p</sup> Ibid., 2:389.

<sup>q</sup> Ibid., 2:115-116.

<sup>r</sup> Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yozgat 148/6, fol. 405b.

<sup>s</sup> al-Subkī, *Mu 'jam al-shuyūkh*, 1:508.

<sup>t</sup> Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Mufliḥ, *al-Maqşid al-arşad fī dhikr aşḥāb al-imām Aḥmad* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-rushd, 1990), 2:260-61, note 1.

<sup>u</sup> ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa-al-nihāyah*, ed. 'Alī Şhīrī (Beirut: Dār iḥyā' al-turāth al-'arabī, 1988), 13:325.

Figure in the Maḥmūdīyah profile	Texts authored the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus	Example of paratext in the Maḥmūdīyah manuscript corpus	Teachers in the Maḥmūdīyah textual corpus
al-Mizzī, Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (654-742/1256-1342)	<i>Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā’ al-rijāl</i>	The extant Maḥmūdīyah copies of <i>Tahdhīb al-kamāl</i> are autographs in the hand of al-Mizzī containing his marginalia as well as auditions certificates recording group readings of the book he led for his family and students.	Yaḥyá ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī; <sup>v</sup> Mūsá ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī. <sup>w</sup>
Quṭb al-Dīn Musá ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī (640-726/1242-1326)	<i>Dhayl ‘alá mir’át al-zamān, Mukhtaṣar mir’át al-zamān</i>	-	-
Yaḥyá ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī (631-676/ 1233-1277)	<i>Minhāj al-ṭālibīn wa-‘umdat al-muftī; Rawḍat al-ṭālibīn wa-‘umdat mufti; Tahdhīb al-asmā’ wa-al-lughāt</i>	-	-
al-Fazārī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ibrāhīm (624-690/1227-1291)	<i>al-Iqlīd li-dar’ al-taqlīd</i>	-	-

<sup>v</sup> al-Şafadī, *A’yān al-‘aṣr*, 5:645.

<sup>w</sup> Ibid., 5:646.

APPENDIX C. Maḥmūdīyah Librarians

Name (lifespans)	Length of tenure as librarian	Reasons for receiving and leaving post	Other positions held by category (number of positions)
Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Umar (d. ???).	797-???/1395-???	Appointed by Maḥmūd al-Ustādar; dismissed due to negligence. <sup>a</sup>	Imam of Maḥmūd al-Ustādar.
Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Uthmān, nicknamed (d.828/1424).	???-826/???-1423. <sup>b</sup>	Dismissed due to negligence. <sup>c</sup>	Shaykh of Sufi shrine. <sup>d</sup>
Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (773-852/1371-1449).	826-852/1423-1449. <sup>e</sup>	Reason for receiving librarian position: requested it himself. <sup>f</sup> Reason for dismissal: Death.	Professor of Quran Exegesis (2); <sup>g</sup> Professor of Hadith (9); <sup>h</sup> Professor of Jurisprudence (7); <sup>i</sup> Sermon giver (1); <sup>j</sup> Grand Shāfi‘ī judge of Egypt (1); <sup>k</sup> Religious Endowment Supervisor (3); <sup>l</sup> Muftī (1); <sup>m</sup> Head of Sufi lodge (1) <sup>n</sup> ; Friday preacher (4). <sup>o</sup>

<sup>a</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:299.

<sup>b</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 2:609.

<sup>c</sup> Ibid.

<sup>d</sup> ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:356.

<sup>e</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 2:609.

<sup>f</sup> Ibid.

<sup>g</sup> Ibid., 2:589.

<sup>h</sup> Ibid., 2:589, 591, 593-596.

<sup>i</sup> Ibid., 2:596-598.

<sup>j</sup> Ibid., 2:589.

<sup>k</sup> Ibid., 2:597.

<sup>l</sup> Ibid., 2:598, 2:601, 2:605.

<sup>m</sup> Ibid., 2:600.

<sup>n</sup> Ibid., 2:601.

<sup>o</sup> Ibid., 2:605.

Name (lifespans)	Length of tenure as librarian	Reasons for receiving and leaving post	Other positions held by category (number of positions)
Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās (815-864/1412-1459).	852/1449. <sup>p</sup>	Reason for receiving the position: sought it out. <sup>q</sup>  Reason for leaving the position: handed it to the following librarian. <sup>r</sup>	Supervisor of the treasury; <sup>s</sup> supervisor of the poll-tax on the non-Muslim population ( <i>jizyah</i> ); <sup>t</sup> Supervisor of production of the silken cover presented for the Ka‘bah ( <i>kiswah</i> ); <sup>u</sup> Religious endowment supervisor (4). <sup>v</sup>
Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Turaykī (c. 820-c. 894/c. 1417 - c. 1489);	853-854/1449-1450. <sup>w</sup>	Reason for receiving the position: Granted by his predecessor. <sup>x</sup>  Reason for dismissal: Forced to flee Egypt. <sup>y</sup>	Chief Mālikī judge in Damascus. <sup>z</sup>

<sup>p</sup> Ibid., 2:610.

<sup>q</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk*, 2:102-103.

<sup>r</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-lāmi‘*, 3:237.

<sup>s</sup> ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhirah fī mulūk miṣr wa-al-qāhirah* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at dār al-kutub al-miṣrīyah, 1972), 15:375.

<sup>t</sup> Ibid., 15:379.

<sup>u</sup> Ibid., 15:381.

<sup>v</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-lāmi‘*, 7:63.

<sup>w</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 2:610.

<sup>x</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk*, 2:103; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-lāmi‘*, 6:287.

<sup>y</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-lāmi‘*, 6:287; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām fī al-dhayl ‘alā duwal al-Islām*, eds. Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma‘rūf, ‘Iṣām Fāris al-Ḥarastānī, and Aḥmad al-Khuṭaymī (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-risālah, 1995), 3:1106.

<sup>z</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-lāmi‘*, 6:287.

Name (lifespans)	Length of tenure as librarian	Reasons for receiving and leaving post	Other positions held by category (number of positions)
Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Jalālī (c. 800- c. 860/c. 1397- c. 1456) <sup>aa</sup>	854- c. 860/1450- c. 1456.	Reason for receiving position: Granted by the <i>dawādār</i> . <sup>bb</sup>  Reason for dismissal: death in c. 860/c. 1456.	Professor of Ḥanafī jurisprudence (1). <sup>cc</sup>
Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-Jalālī (d.871/1467) <sup>dd</sup>	860- ???/1456- ???.	Reason for receiving the position: Inherited from his father. <sup>ee</sup>  Reason for dismissal: Unknown.	Professor (2); Friday preacher (2); deputy judge (1). <sup>ff</sup>
al-Zaynī Sālim al-‘Abbādī (Unknown, but alive in 898/1493) <sup>gg</sup>	???-???	Reason for receiving the position: Granted by his benefactor.	Acquired many unnamed endowment positions due to his connections with the Mamluk elite. <sup>hh</sup>
Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Abbādī (c. 815-895/c. 1413-1490). <sup>ii</sup>	???-???	Reason for receiving position: Granted by his predecessor. <sup>jj</sup>  Reason for leaving: Unknown.	Copyist, acquired unnamed positions due to his connections with the Mamluk elite. <sup>kk</sup>

<sup>aa</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 2:610; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk*, 3:42-43; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 8:228.

<sup>bb</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk*, 3:42-43.

<sup>cc</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 8:228.

<sup>dd</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 2:610.

<sup>ee</sup> Ibid.

<sup>ff</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 2:154.

<sup>gg</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-al-durar*, 2:610.

<sup>hh</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 3:240.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid., 8:113.

<sup>jj</sup> Ibid.

<sup>kk</sup> Ibid.

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