MAMLŪK STUDIES
REVIEW

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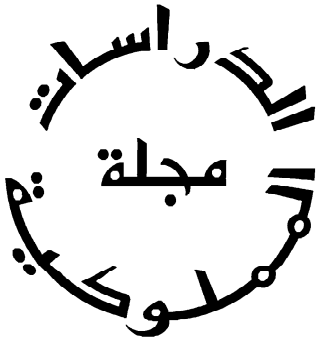

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Mamlūk Studies Review is an annual, Open Access, refereed journal devoted to the study of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria (648–922/1250–1517). The goals of *Mamlūk Studies Review* are to take stock of scholarship devoted to the Mamluk era, nurture communication within the field, and promote further research by encouraging the critical discussion of all aspects of this important medieval Islamic polity. The journal includes both articles and reviews of recent books.

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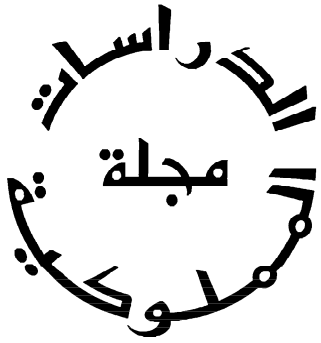

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Mamlūk Studies Review will award a cash prize of $1,000 annually for the best dissertation on a topic related to the Mamluk Sultanate submitted to an American or Canadian university during the calendar year, beginning in 2004. To be considered, dissertations must be received before December 31. Submissions should be sent to:

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Chair, Prize Committee
Mamlūk Studies Review
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In the event no dissertations are submitted, or none are deemed to merit the prize, no prize will be awarded.

Note

Bruce Craig first asked me to undertake the preparation of a *Mamlūk Studies Review* volume devoted to the economic history of the sultanate in early 2000. In retrospect, however, his suggestion only began to assume form and shape over the period from May 2000 to September 2001, endpoints defined by two international conferences devoted to Mamluk studies: the ″International Conference on the Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society″ organized by Haifa and Tel Aviv Universities (May 14–17, 2000); and the ″Symposium on Medieval Arabic Historiography: The Legacy of al-Maqrīzī (1364–1442)″ organized by the University of Notre Dame (September 28–29, 2001). These gatherings facilitated contacts with several of the scholars whose work appears in the following pages. The project then grew in scope as a result of two subsequent *Mamlūk Studies Review*-sponsored activities. The first was a double panel at the 2002 MESA conference entitled ″From Alexandria to Aden: Commerce and Society in the Medieval Middle East,″ and the second was ″The University of Chicago International Conference on Mamluk Studies″ held in May, 2003. The majority of the contributors to this volume were participants in one of these two events. Many people thus contributed their talents and efforts to this volume, as well as to the studies which, due to space constraints, could not be included here. I would like to especially thank Bruce Craig, Marlis Saleh, and our anonymous readers for all they have done to bring this volume to press.

Warren C. Schultz

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Articles

Yossef Rapoport
University of Oxford

Invisible Peasants, Marauding Nomads: Taxation, Tribalism, and Rebellion in Mamluk Egypt*

Right from the outset of Mamluk rule, the Arab tribes of Egypt stand out as the most persistent internal threat to the regime. The Egyptian tribesmen were the only group in the Mamluk domains that was openly and repeatedly contesting the legitimacy of Mamluk authority, and the only group that was ready to resort to armed resistance. In 650/1252–53, in what appears to be a direct response to the Mamluk seizure of power, an Arab uprising engulfed large parts of the Egyptian countryside. Led by the *sharīf* of the tribe of the Ja'āfirah, Ḥiṣn al-Dīn ibn Taghlab, the Arabs mobilized a force of 12,000 cavalrymen and prevented the collection of the agricultural taxes. Ḥiṣn al-Dīn scorned the rule of al-Mu'izz Aybak and the government of the Turkish slaves; rather, he claimed, the Arab tribes *('urbān)* were the true owners of the land.[1] Over the following century, the Arab tribes mounted two more general revolts. In 698/1298–99 the Arab tribes of Upper and Middle Egypt staged a rebellion that lasted for three years until its brutal repression by a Mamluk expeditionary force.[2] In 749/1349, following the first outbreak of

*I would like to thank Abraham L. Udovitch, Adam Sabra, Lennart Sundelin, and the participants in the University of Chicago Conference on Mamluk Studies for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I would also like to thank Tamer el-Leithy for his insightful comments and suggestions at various stages.

[1]For medieval sources, see Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār: Qabā'il al-'Arab fī al-Qarnayn al-Sābi' wa-al-Thāmin al-Hijrīyayn,* ed. Dorothea Krawulsky (Beirut, 1986), 161; Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat al-Duwal wa-al-Mulūk,* ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyādah and Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1934–72), 1:386 ff.; idem, *Al-Bayān wa-al-I'rāb 'ammā bi-Arḍ Miṣr min al-'Arab* (Cairo, 1961), 37–38; Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, *'Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān: 'Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk,* ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1987–), 1:107–8; Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá fī Ṣinā'at al-Inshā'* (Cairo, 1913–18), 4:68. For modern accounts, see, among others, Jean-Claude Garcin, *Un centre musulman de la Haute-Égypte médiévale: Qūṣ* (Cairo, 1976), 183–90, 372–74; Abdel Hamid Saleh, "Les relations entre les Mamluks et les Bédouins d'Egypte," *Annali: Istituto Orientale di Napoli* (n.s. 30) 40 (1980): 365–93; idem, "Quelques remarques sur les Bédouins d'Égypte au Moyen Âge," *Studia Islamica* 48 (1978): 60; Sato Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam* (Leiden, 1997), 95; Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1382* (London, 1986), 27. Note that the reading Taghlab, as found in the critical edition of al-'Umarī, is preferred over the reading Tha'lab found in later works.

[2]Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 1:914, 920; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn*

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the Black Death, most of the Arab tribes of Upper Egypt were again engaged in a loosely organized rebellion centered on the regions of Assiut and Qūṣ. This uprising was only quelled in 754/1354.[3]

Interpretations of the Arab resistance to Mamluk rule differ, mainly with regard to the matter of the relationship between the tribesmen and the peasants. A. N. Poliak emphasized the agricultural nature of the Arab rebellions and the close alliance between the Arabs and the peasants. For Poliak, the bedouins of the Nile were halfway on the road to sedentarization, living in hamlets around the villages but retaining their privilege of armed service to the state.[4] More recently, Abdel Hamid Saleh has gone even further in allying the bedouins with the peasants. The bedouin tribesmen who migrated to the Nile valley were allowed to cultivate the land, and thus became ″peasants (*fallāḥ*s) of bedouin origin,″ distinguished by their tribal ethics and the solidarity of the tribe. When fighting against the Mamluk authorities they formed a close alliance with the general Egyptian population, with whom they had common cause.[5]

Jean-Claude Garcin, on the other hand, emphasized the fundamental conflict between the bedouin and the peasant. According to his interpretation, which is grounded in his detailed and much-praised study of the city of Qūṣ, the causes of Arab resistance to the Mamluks should be sought in the eternal struggle between Qaysī and Yamanī tribes. The Qaysī tribes of Upper Egypt, such as the Banū Hilāl and Banū Kanz, lived alongside the settled population of the southern regions, while Yamanī tribes, such as the Juhaynah, ʻArak, and Balī lived further to the north. Garcin suggests that the revolts were predominantly based in the regions occupied by Yamanī tribes, while the Mamluk authorities, like their Ayyubid predecessors, allied with the Qaysī tribes. But from the second half of the fourteenth century, when the bedouin Yamanī tribes were incorporated into the Mamluk state machinery, their true colors became apparent. When the bedouin leaders became major *iqṭāʻ* holders, their repression and exploitation of the peasantry was no better, and perhaps worse, than that of the Mamluk amirs.[6]

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al-Adab (Cairo, 1923–), 30:333; al-ʻAynī, *ʻIqd al-Jumān,* 4:174–77; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1929–72), 8:149–53. See also Saleh, ″Les relations,″ 369 ff.; Garcin, *Qūṣ,* 374–76.

[3]Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 2:770, 820, 839, 859, 896, 908–20. See also Saleh, ″Les relations,″ 378–79; Garcin, *Qūṣ,* 381–84.

[4]A. N. Poliak, ″Les revoltes populaires en Égypte à l′époque des Mamelouks et leur causes économiques,″ *Revue des études islamiques* 8 (1934): 251–73.

[5]Saleh, ″Quelques remarques,″ *Studia Islamica* 48 (1978): 45–70. Similarly, Sato believes that the life-style of the *ʻurbān* varied from cattle-breeding to agriculture (*State and Rural Society,* 95).

[6]Jean-Claude Garcin, ″Note sur les rapports entre Bédouins et fellahs á l′époque Mamluke,″ *Annales islamologiques* 14 (1978): 147–63; Garcin, *Qūṣ,* 362–84.

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All three interpretations, I would argue, suffer from a common and misleading association of tribal identity with pastoral nomadism, whether past or present. The assumption that the Arab tribes are, or were in the recent past, pastoral nomads partly stems from semantic imprecision. Poliak, Saleh, and Garcin all refer to the rebelling tribesmen as bedouins, but the term most commonly used in the Mamluk sources is *'urbān,* a non-classical plural form of *'arab.*[7] The word *'arab* (Arab) in itself did not mean pastoral nomadism. As defined by the lexicographer al-Azharī (d. 370/980), who is invariably cited in Mamluk dictionaries, the *'arab* are all those descended from the Arabs, whatever their way of life may be. Arabs who live in settled communities, in cities or in villages, are still Arabs, even if they do not speak eloquent Arabic. Likewise, the Companions of the Prophet were Arabs, even though they lived in sedentary communities. The *a'rāb,* on the other hand, is a Quranic term for a sub-category of Arabs who live in the open country and migrate for the purpose of grazing their herds. Al-Azharī is keen to emphasize that not all Arabs but only the *a'rāb,* the pastoral nomads, can be equated with the *badw* (bedouin).[8]

Even the term *badw* could refer, in certain contexts, to rural communities that were not necessarily transhumant, as is demonstrated by Ibn Khaldūn's dichotomy of the *badw* and the *ḥaḍar.* At the beginning of the chapter on *badawī* civilization, Ibn Khaldūn defines *badw* as "those who either live from cultivation of the land *(al-falḥ)* or those who make their living by raising livestock." Both groups are by necessity *badw,* because both need space for their feddans of fields or pasturage for their herds.[9] It is true that Ibn Khaldūn later shifts his attention to the nomadic tribesmen, and his account of the devastation caused by the invasion of the Banū Hilāl to North Africa is often seen as an epitome of the antagonism between the desert and the sown in Islamic history.[10] But, as established by many a Khaldūnian interpreter, Ibn Khaldūn singles out the pastoral nomads because he considers them to be the simplest, the most elementary, and the purest form of *badawī* civilization.[11] On account of their simplicity and remoteness, the camel-herding

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[7]Reinhart Pieter Anne Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (Leiden, 1881), 2:108.

[8]Muḥammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Beirut, 1955–56), 1:586; Shihāb al-Dīn al-Fayyūmī, *Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr* (Cairo, 1312), 2:22. Cited also in al-Qalqashandī, *Qalā'id al-Jumān fī Ta'rīf Qabā'il 'Arab al-Zamān,* ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī (Cairo, 1963), 12; and idem, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Ma'rifat Ansāb al-'Arab* (Beirut, 1980), 18. See also Edward W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863–93), 5:1993.

[9]'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn* (Beirut, n.d.), 132.

[10]E. F. Gautier, *Le passé de l'Afrique du nord: les siécles obscures* (Paris, 1952); Bernard Lewis, "The Decolonization of History," in Lewis, *Islam in History: Ideas, Men and Events in the Middle East* (London, 1973), 43–48.

[11]Peter Von Sivers, "Back to Nature: the Agrarian Foundations of Society according to Ibn

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nomads are able to preserve the purest Arabic speech and purest lineages, which also means that their group solidarity *(ʻaṣabīyah)* is the strongest. They are nonetheless only a sub-category within the larger group of *badw,* a group that includes peasants and nomads, cultivators and herdsmen. Rendering Ibn Khaldūn´s *badw* as ″bedouin″ is therefore somewhat misleading. As Muhsin Mahdi notes, the reduction of the Khaldūnian *badw* to ″nomadic″ can lead to serious misunderstanding of Ibn Khaldūn´s thought.[12]

The dissociation of tribalism and bedouin identity from pastoral nomadism finds its corollary in attempts by anthropologists to come to terms with the often confusing ethnographic accounts of Middle Eastern tribes. In Afghanistan, Pakistan, Oman, the Yemen, and Morocco, and in many other places in the Middle East, tribesmen are for the most part settled cultivators. While most tribes have both nomadic and settled components, major tribal groups in these countries are—and were in any part of their known history—settled cultivators with little or no inclination towards pastoral nomadism. While tribes share some common features, like a segmentary lineage system and ideals of political autonomy, a tribal identity specifies little, if anything, about systems of production.[13] Even a bedouin identity cannot be simply equated with camel-herding or pastoralism. Bedouins are, almost always, Muslim Arabic speakers, and, for the most part, are organized along tribal lines. But the bedouins can live by more than one strategy.[14] In modern Jordan, for example, very few of the large bedouin groups are, or were in the recent past,

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Khaldun,″ *Arabica* 27 (1980): 68–91, esp. 70–71. See also Fuad Baali, *Society, State and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldun´s Sociological Thought* (New York, 1988), 95–102; Mohamed Talbi, *Ibn Khaldun et l´histoire* (Tunis, 1973), 64–72; Aziz al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn in Modern Scholarship: a Study in Orientalism* (London, 1981), 208–15; Steven C. Caton, ″Anthropological Theories of Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East: Ideology and the Semiotics of Power,″ in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East,* ed. Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (London, 1991), 74–108. Robert Irwin also notes that while the opposition between nomad and sedentary is central to Ibn Khaldūn´s thought, his *badawī* civilization includes both bedouin and peasants (″Toynbee and Ibn Khaldūn,″ *Middle Eastern Studies* 33, no. 3 [1997]: 461–79).

[12]Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldun´s Philosophy of History: a Study in the Philosophic Foundation of the Science of Culture* (London, 1957), 193.

[13]Dale Eickelman, *The Middle East and Central Asia: an Anthropological Approach,* 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ, 1998), 45–46, 105–21; Richard Tapper, ″Anthropologists, Historians and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East,″ in *Tribes and State Formation,* 48–68.

[14]Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam, ″Introduction,″ in *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*, ed. Mundy and Musallam (Cambridge, 2000), 1; Eickelman, *The Middle East and Central Asia*, 64–65; idem, ″Being Bedouin: Nomads and Tribes in the Arab Social Imagination,″ in Joseph Ginat and Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Changing Nomads in a Changing World* (Brighton, 1998), 38–49.

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pastoralists or nomads. The decisive elements of their bedouin identity—that which makes them *badw*—are rather their memory of a lineage associated with a distant nomadic past, and their adherence to ideologies of equality and autonomy.[15]

I would contend here that a clear distinction between pastoral nomadism as an economic option, tribalism as a form of social organization, and bedouin-ness as a cultural identity allows for a richer interpretation of the resistance of the *'urbān* to Mamluk rule. Such a conceptual distinction also makes it possible to distill much more precisely the meaning of tribal identity in the medieval Egyptian countryside, and to place the tribes right at the center—rather than at the margins—of Egyptian history. Moreover, it also sheds a much-needed light on the process of conversion and Islamization outside of the urban centers. In order to do that, we need to re-visit al-Nābulusī's *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* the most detailed account of a rural province that has reached us from medieval Islamic Egypt. Al-Nābulusī visited the Fayyum only a decade before the outbreak of the first Arab rebellion against the Mamluks, and I would argue that what al-Nābulusī saw in the 1240s can be generalized for other parts of Middle and Upper Egypt. The tribes of the Fayyum, seen through the eyes of al-Nābulusī, are crucial for a proper interpretation of the Arab revolts in the century that followed.

The account of the province of the Fayyum written by the Ayyubid official Abū 'Uthmān al-Nābulusī, entitled *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm wa-Bilādihi,* is the most detailed cadastral survey to have survived from medieval Egypt.[16] In the words of Stephen Humphreys, it is "as close as we will ever get to an official tax register for

[15]Tariq Tell, "The Politics of Rural Policy in East Jordan, 1920–1989," in *The Transformation of Nomadic Society*, 90–98; Andrew J. Shryock, "Popular Genealogical Nationalism: History Writing and Identity among the Balqa Tribes of Jordan," *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 37, no. 2 (1995): 325–57.

[16]Abū 'Uthmān al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm wa-Bilādihi (Description du Faiyoum),* ed. B. Moritz (Cairo, 1898; repr., Beirut, 1974). George Salmon, "Répertoire géographique de la province du Fayyoûm d'aprés le Kitâb Târîkh al-Fayyoûm d'an-Naboûlsi," *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 1 (1901): 29–77, provides a brief summary for each village. For a discussion of tax obligations, see Claude Cahen, "Le régime des impôts dans le Fayyūm Ayyūbide," *Arabica* 3 (1958): 8–30 (reprinted in idem, *Makhzūmiyyāt* [Leiden, 1977]). On production and irrigation, see Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 215–24; I. König, "Die Oase al-Fayyum nach 'Uthmān ibn Ibrahim an-Nabulusi: ein Beitrage zur Wirtchaftsgeschichte Aegyptens um die Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts n. chr.," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischer Wissenschaft* 10 (1996): 190–253. For a useful recent summary, see G. Keenan, "Fayyum Agriculture at the End of the Ayyubid Era: Nabulsi's *Survey*," in *Agriculture in Egypt: From Pharaonic to Modern Times,* ed. Alan K. Bowman and Eugene Rogan, Proceedings of the British Academy 96 (Oxford, 1999), 287–99.

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Mamluk Egypt.″[17] Al-Nābulusī, dispatched to the Fayyum in 641/1243 by al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb with instructions to report on the fiscal conditions of the province, was a prominent official in the Ayyubid bureaucracy. He wrote at least two other works concerned with the proper administration of the finances of Egypt. One is a staunchly anti-*dhimmī* text, appropriately called *Tajrīd Sayf al-Himmah li-Istikhrāj Mā fī Dhimmat al-Dhimmah,* in which he argues against the employment of Copts in the state′s bureaucracy.[18] In another treatise, *Luma‘ al-Qawānīn al-Muḍī’ah fī Dawāwīn al-Diyār al-Miṣrīyah,* al-Nābulusī exposes abuse and incompetence in the administration. In this work al-Nābulusī comes across as an extremely pedantic and experienced civil servant, who is wholly and totally committed to the increase of the government′s revenue.[19] It is against this perceived incompetence that al-Nābulusī set out to write *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm* as an exemplary model of a cadastral survey, paying very careful attention to the minute details of agricultural production.

Tārīkh al-Fayyūm is divided into nine introductory chapters dealing with the geography, history, and demography of the Fayyum, followed by the main body of the treatise, the cadastral survey itself. The survey begins with a description of the provincial capital, Madīnat al-Fayyūm, which is then followed by entries for more than one hundred villages. For each village, al-Nābulusī starts by indicating the size of the village and the state of its habitation, its geographical location, its inhabitants, its sources of water, the names of the *iqṭā‘* holders, and the local mosques, churches, and monasteries. The fiscal part of the entry is a list of the actual taxes levied on the village, divided into taxes in cash and taxes in kind. The taxes in kind are expressed in *irdabb*s, mostly of wheat and barley, but sometimes also of legumes. The taxes in cash were levied on all other taxable agricultural products, such as livestock and cash crops, including flax, cotton, sesame, indigo, vegetables, and fruits. This category of taxes in cash also included the poll-tax levied on non-Muslims, specifically the Coptic population, a fiscal feature that enables us to estimate the number of Copts residing in each village.

In an introductory chapter, entitled ″on the inhabitants of the Fayyum and their division into *badw* and *ḥaḍar,*″ al-Nābulusī divides the population of the Fayyum

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[17]R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (Princeton, 1991), 174.

[18]Claude Cahen, ″Histoires coptes d′un cadi médiéval,″ *Bulletin de l′Institut français d′archéologie orientale* 59 (1960): 133–50. See also Brian Catlos, ″To Catch a Spy: The Case of Zayn ad-Dīn and ibn Dukhân,″ *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996): 99–113.

[19]Claude Cahen, ″Quelques aspects de l′administration égyptienne médiévale vus par un de ses fonctionnaires,″ *Bulletin de la faculté des letters de Strasbourg* 26 (1947–48): 98–118; English translation by C. A. Owens, ″Scandal in the Egyptian Treasury: A Portion of the *Luma‘ al-qawānīn* of Ibrāhīm al-Nābulusī,″ with an introduction by C. C. Torrey, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 14 (1955): 70–80.

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into the familiar Khaldūnian categories. In the beginning of the chapter al-Nābulusī writes:

> When I was given orders to survey the region of the Fayyum, I went from village to village and acquainted myself with its inhabitants. I would have even made a census, but for my fear that they would notice [me doing so]. I have found the majority of the people to be Arab *(aktharu ahlihā al-'arab),* divided into sections and tribes *(al-afḥādh wa-al-shu'ūb).* As for the *ḥaḍar,* there are very few of them, residing in no more than two or three villages. These few *ḥaḍar* communities are under the protection of the Arabs. In return, the Arabs take a fee from the revenue of their allotted portions *(rizaqihim)*[20] or hold rights to part of their lands, and the Arabs treat [the *ḥaḍar*] in a humiliating manner. The Arabs belong to three tribal confederacies *(uṣūl),* which are the Banū Kilāb, Banū 'Ajlān, and the al-Lawāthīyīn. I will now list their dwelling places, excluding [the tribes] who seek pasture at the time of a drought and those who come there to transport the harvest.[21]

In this key chapter, al-Nābulusī informs us that almost the entire population of the Fayyum consisted of Arab tribesmen, which he also describes as *badw,* or bedouin. The only exceptions were a few *ḥaḍar* communities, who were under the domination of the Arab tribes. Al-Nābulusī goes on to list around one hundred villages—that is practically all the villages in the province—organized by their tribal affiliation. All these villages were populated by *badw,* with the exception of only three villages in which the population was *ḥaḍar* and the *badw* were only the guardsmen *(khufarā').*[22] The list corroborates al-Nābulusī's general statement about the predominance of the *badw,* and shows that the population of the Fayyum was indeed dominated by three tribal groups. First in importance were the Banū Kilāb, then the Banū 'Ajlān, and then—much smaller—the Lawāthah, a Berber tribe. The Banū Kilāb dominated in the central, south, and west; the Banū 'Ajlān in the east and the north; while the Lawāthah dwelt in villages along the Lāhūn gap.[23]

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[20]On the meaning of *rizqah* in the Mamluk period, see N. Michel, "Les *rizaq iḥbāsīyah,* terres agricoles en mainmorte dans l'Égypte mamelouke et ottomane: Étude sur les *Dafātir al-Aḥbās* ottomans," *Annales islamologiques* 30 (1996): 105–98.

[21]Al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 12–13.

[22]These were the village of Munsha'at Awlād 'Arafah and the village of Bājah, both guarded by the Banū 'Āmīr of the Banū Kilāb, and the village of Minyat al-Usquf (al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 13, ll. 18–19).

[23]See summary in Keenan, "Fayyum Agriculture," 292.

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The predominance of the Banū Kilāb in the Fayyum is also attested in a treatise on Arab tribal genealogy written by Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥamdānī (d. after 680/1281), a work that has reached us through al-'Umarī and al-Qalqashandī.[24]

In order to understand the meaning of Arab tribal identity in the Fayyum, let us take a closer look at the village of Saylah, one village out of the hundred-odd *badw* villages described by al-Nābulusī.[25] According to him, Saylah was a medium-size village at the eastern edge of the province, three hours ride from Madīnat al-Fayyūm. He notes that, like most other villages in the province, the inhabitants of Saylah mainly cultivated cereals—wheat, barley, and broad beans *(fūl)*. The reliance of the village on grain production is borne out by its list of taxes. At the top of the list were the taxes on grain, levied in kind. They amounted to 2,500 *irdabb*s, a third of which was to be paid in wheat and the remaining two-thirds in barley. Assuming an average tax rate of 2.5 *irdabb*s per feddan, as reported by Ibn al-Mammātī,[26] we can estimate that the villagers of Saylah cultivated at least 1,000 feddans of cereals.[27] The monetary value of these taxes was also substantial: given normal prices, 2,500 *irdabb*s of grain were worth tens of thousands of dirhams.[28] All the other taxes paid by the villagers of Saylah pale in comparison. They owed only around 730 dirhams for their herds of livestock, which included 600 head of sheep, goats, a few cows, and one solitary ox. In addition, ten non-Muslim men who lived in the village owed twenty dinars as their poll-tax.

Saylah was a cereal-growing community, a typical village in al-Nābulusī's Fayyum. All the taxes on livestock, chicken, and fodder, even including the miscellaneous fees paid to local officials, were nothing but small change compared to the tax on grain. This was a settled community, and its fields were probably

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[24]Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 157; al-Qalqashandī, *Qalā'id,* 117, 124, 126. In another work al-Qalqashandī mentions only the Banū 'Awf as residing in the Fayyum (*Nihāyat al-Arab*, 343), and they are also mentioned by al-'Umarī as inhabiting the province (*Masālik al-Abṣār,* 164–65). See full discussion in Saleh, "Les migrations bédouines en Égypte au Moyen Âge," *Annali: Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 41 (1981): 23.

[25]Al–Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 114–16. For Saylah, see also Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī, *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and Some Neighbouring Countries Attributed to Abû Sâlih, the Armenian,* trans. Basil Thomas Alfred Evetts (Oxford, 1895), 209.

[26]*Kitāb Qawānīn al-Dawāwīn,* ed. A. S. Atiyya (Cairo, 1943), 259.

[27]According to later cadastral surveys, the villagers of Saylah cultivated more than 1,000 feddans. Ibn Duqmāq puts it at 4,573 feddans (Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad Ibn Duqmāq [d. 1407], *Al-Intiṣār li-Wāsiṭat 'Iqd al-Amṣar,* ed. Karl Vollers [Cairo, 1893], 5:9), and Ibn al-Jī'ān at 3,609 feddans (*Kitāb al-Tuḥfah al-Sanīyah bi-Asmā' al-Bilād al-Miṣrīyah* [Cairo, 1974], 155). See also Heinz Halm, *Ägypten nach den mamlukischen Lehensregistern* (Wiesbaden, 1979–82), 1:269.

[28]According to al-'Umarī, in the first half of the fourteenth century, and under normal circumstances, an *irdabb* of grain fetched 10–15 dirhams (cited in Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam* [Cambridge, 2000], 120).

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marked with fences *(judrān),* as were the fields of other villages in the province.[29] While it is possible that some migrated seasonally with the herds, the community as a whole was not transhumant. It was quite different from the *muntaji'ūn,* the nomadic herdsmen, mentioned by al-Nābulusī as being taxed only for their livestock.[30] And yet, like almost all the villages in al-Nābulusī ′s Fayyum, Saylah was inhabited by a tribal group. Al-Nābulusī says that the villagers of Saylah belonged to the Banū Zur'ah, a section of the Banū 'Ajlān.[31]

Like Saylah, almost all the cereal-growing villages of the Fayyum were inhabited by *badw,* or Arab, tribal groups. Each village is identified with a section of a tribe in a plain and straightforward manner, and this identification is repeated twice, once in the fifth chapter on the inhabitants of the province and then again in the individual entries for each village. There is nothing to suggest that the Arab tribes lived around the villages, maintaining a half-sedentary way of life, as suggested by Poliak.[32] The Arab tribes provided armed protection to the few *ḥaḍar* villages, but, given the demographic predominance of the Arabs, this was the exception rather than the rule, contrary to the purely military role ascribed to them by Cahen.[33] Moreover, there is nothing to suggest that these were tribes in the process of becoming settled. Al-Nābulusī is quite keen to note the disappearance of villages and the founding of new ones, but says nothing about recent settlement of nomadic tribesmen. It is not that the *badw* came to resemble the peasants; rather, in al-Nābulusī′s Fayyum, the *badw* was a category that included both peasants and nomads—the vast majority of the inhabitants of the province.

The demographic predominance of the Arab tribesmen meant that even the handful of *ḥaḍar* rural settlements were under the influence of the Arabs. The hamlet of Munsha'at Awlād 'Arafah was populated by Christian *ḥaḍar,* but guarded by the Banū 'Āmir, a section of the Banū Kilāb.[34] Similarly, the majority of the inhabitants of the village of Abū Kisā were *ḥaḍar,* but a minority belonged to the

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[29]The village of Fānū was so close to the village of Naqalīfah that the fence *(jidār)* of the former was in the lands of the latter (al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 31). Similarly, the fence of al-Malālīyah was in the lands of another village (ibid., 133). When the lands of a village were without a fence, al-Nābulusī saw it as a sign of an abandoned village (ibid., 87).

[30]See examples in al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 55, 88.

[31]The published text has Banū Kilāb, but this is a mistake, perhaps on the part of the editor. Compare al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 14, l. 3.

[32]Poliak, ″Les revoltes populaires,″ 257.

[33]Claude Cahen states that protection fees *(rasm al-khafārah)* were paid to the bedouin for not pillaging the villages (″Le régime des impôts,″ 19). He does not clarify that this could have been the case only in the few non-Arab villages.

[34]Al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,*13, l. 18.

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Banū Jawwāb of the Banū Kilāb, who likewise assumed the role of guardsmen.[35] The small town of Bamūyah, boasting of a regional market and a variety of tradesmen, was mainly inhabited by *ḥaḍar*. But three sections of the Banū ʻAjlān shared the responsibility of protecting it.[36]

The difference between the *badw* and the *ḥaḍar* becomes clearer when we consider the village of Minyat al-Usquf as an example of a *ḥaḍarī* village. Minyat al-Usquf was a small village not far from the province's capital.[37] Perennial irrigation allowed the village houses to be surrounded by orchards and gardens. The village produced a great variety of fruits, such as, among others, apricots, grapes, lemons, and pomegranates. The population consisted of Christian *ḥaḍar*, including 56 adult men subject to the poll-tax. Their protection was in the hands of the Banū Zurʻah.[38] The entire tax assessment of the village was in cash rather than in grains, as the village held no arable land. The total tax assessment was around 230 dinars. The major part of this sum, 216 dinars, was levied on the village's orchards, and the remaining taxes were paid on the village's palm-trees and dye-house. In addition, the village had to pay 112 dinars in poll-tax, at the standard rate of 2 dinars per every adult non-Muslim male.

One major difference between the *badw* and the *ḥaḍar* villages lay in their agricultural produce and irrigation method. The village of Minyat al-Usquf mainly cultivated cash-crops and was therefore dependent on perennial irrigation, while the *badw* village of Saylah grew cereals and was dependent on seasonal inundation. The villagers of Minyat al-Usquf, like the other predominantly *ḥaḍar* villages in the Fayyum, did not cultivate wheat or barley at all, but only cash-crops, especially vegetables, fruits, and sugar-cane. The correlation between the *badw* villages and cereal growing may suggest that tribal social organization was linked to the organization of cereal cultivation, and, especially, to the local irrigation system.[39] In cereal-growing villages, the amount of arable land was subject to drastic annual fluctuations, and the peasants may have looked for ways of sharing the risk of a low Nile level. As late as the eighteenth century, cereal-growing villagers in

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[35]Ibid., 46, ll. 17–18. The village is listed as one of the settlements of the Banū Jawwāb (ibid., 13, l. 7).

[36]Ibid., 69, ll. 11–12.

[37]Ibid., 145–46.

[38]Ibid., 145, l. 22. But in another place al-Nābulusī states that it is the Banū Rabīʻah who are the guardsmen of the village (ibid., 13, l. 18). This may be a copying or editing mistake.

[39]On the possible correlation between tribal segmentation and collective land management, see Scott Atran, "Hamula organization and *mashāʻ* tenure in Palestine," *Man* 26 (1986). Alternatively, it has been argued that tribal segmentation emerges when the irrigation system is local and not based on one large waterway (Thomas F. Glick, *From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle: Social and Cultural Change in Medieval Spain* [Manchester, 1995]).

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Upper Egypt redistributed the village lands annually, according to the tillage rights of individual households or clans, with the aim of equalizing the effects of a bad harvest.[40] Indeed, according to an anecdote told by al-Nābulusī, the lands of the village of Saylah were redistributed periodically among the cultivators.[41] In the *ḥaḍar* villages that relied on perennial irrigation such collective management of production would not have been necessary.

The second major difference was that the inhabitants of Minyat al-Usquf were predominantly Christians while the *badw* villagers of Saylah were predominantly Muslim. All in all, 1,142 adult non-Muslim men were registered as living in the province of the Fayyum.[42] Of these, about half lived in eight predominantly Christian *ḥaḍar* villages, which accounted for less than 10% of the total number of villages in the province.[43] The Christian *ḥaḍar* inhabitants of these villages were the only people in rural Fayyum without tribal affiliation or claim to Arab genealogy, the only ones excluded from the otherwise all-encompassing *badw* identity. In addition, about five hundred Christian men liable for the poll-tax were unevenly spread among the far more numerous *badw* villages, at an average of about five per village. In Saylah, for example, ten adult non-Muslim men and their families lived in the midst of the Muslim *badw* majority.

Unlike the *ḥaḍarī*s, the *badw* had the right to bear arms, a privilege obviously reserved to Muslims. Some of the Arab tribesmen must have been armed during peacetime, since we are told that Arab tribesmen guarded, and possibly harassed, the few Christian *ḥaḍar* villages.[44] Al-Nābulusī also tells us that the Arab tribes of

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[40]Kenneth Cuno, *The Pasha's Peasants: Land, Society, and Economy in Lower Egypt, 1740–1858* (Cambridge, 1992), 66; idem, "Origins of Private Ownership of Land in Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12 (1980): 246. Poliak has already suggested that village lands were periodically redistributed in the Mamluk period, but on rather slim evidence ("Some Notes on the Feudal System of the Mamluks," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* [1937]: 104–5).

[41]Al-Nābulusī relates, in the context of an anecdote about a locality in Saylah allegedly blessed by the Prophet Jacob, that "whenever this plot of land falls in someone's field through distribution *(bi-al-qismah),* the yield of the field increases by 100 *irdabb*s" (*Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 114). I take this sentence to mean that the same plot of land rotated between different cultivators according to some form of a periodic draw.

[42]But about a quarter of these 1,142 non-Muslim men were regarded as absentees *(nā'ūn),* that is, men who left their original village and now dwelled in another village, either in the Fayyum or in another province. On this fiscal category of absentees, see also al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab,* 8:244.

[43]Apart from the five villages already mentioned (Abū Kisā, Bājah, Bamūyah, Minyat al-Usquf, and Munsha'at Awlād 'Arafah), other predominantly Christian and *ḥaḍar* villages were Dimashqyan al-Baṣal, Sinnūris and Dhāt al-Ṣafā'.

[44]Qalāwūn's memorandum to Kitbughā, dated 679/1281, specifically prohibits the *'urbān* from carrying weapons of any kind when traveling from village to village (Sato, *State and Rural*

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the Fayyum were required to provide 400 cavalry for royal campaigns, forces that were naturally aligned according to tribal lines.[45] Again, it should be emphasized that the Arab tribesmen of the Fayyum lived, for the most part, in settled communities. Al-Nābulusī´s fundamental dichotomy of *badw* and *ḥaḍar* is not between nomads and settled cultivators, not between the desert and the sown, but rather between Muslim tribesmen and non-Muslims. It therefore follows that the right to carry arms and to participate in royal campaigns was not confined to nomads, but was associated with the Islamic and *badw* identity of the rural population of the Fayyum.[46]

Al-Nābulusī´s dichotomy of Christian *ḥaḍar* and Muslim *badw* meant that not only were all the *badw* Muslims, but, more surprisingly, all the Muslims were *badw*—a demographic situation which could not have been purely the result of settlement by nomadic tribes coming from the Arabian Peninsula. According to medieval Islamic historiography, the Arab tribes that participated in the Muslim conquests spread all over the Islamic world, from the lands of the Turks to Andalusia and West Africa.[47] The tribesmen of the Banū Kilāb, the dominant tribe in the Fayyum, were supposedly the descendants of a small clan that lived in the outskirts of Medina. Some of them had migrated to Egypt in the early second/eighth century, and others to Syria.[48] We are also told that the remoteness of the Fayyum laid it open to raids by Arab and Berber tribes, and that the associated phenomenon of the sedentarization of nomads has been recurrent in the province up to modern times.[49] But if we are to believe that the entire Muslim population of al-Nābulusī´s Fayyum was indeed descended from the Arab tribes that migrated from the Arabian Peninsula, we must wonder about the fate of the indigenous population. We are not dealing here with one single village in which the nomads have chased away

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Society, 113, citing Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt,* ed. C. Zurayq [Beirut, 1936–42], 7:196–200). But such a prohibition suggests that it was not uncommon for Arab tribesmen to travel armed.

[45]Al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 177–78. Sato assumes that the Arabs were required to provide these troops in return for an *iqṭā‘* (*State and Rural Society,* 53), but there is no specific mention of such an *iqṭā‘* in al-Nābulusī´s text.

[46]As Talal Asad reminds us, there is no reason to think that nomads would always be militarily more powerful than sedentary populations. The history of Islam abounds with examples of sedentary populations dominating over nomadic groups, starting with the early Islamic community itself (Talal Asad, ″The Bedouin as a Military Force: Notes on Some Aspects of Power Relations between Nomads and Sedentaries in Historical Perspective,″ in *The Desert and the Sown: Nomads in the Wider Society,* ed. Cynthia Nelson [Berkeley, 1973], 61–71).

[47]See, for example, al-Qalqashandī, *Qalā'id,* 19.

[48]Ibid., 117. In his other treatise on tribal genealogies al-Qalqashandī is not certain whether the Aleppine Banū Kilāb have the same ancestry as Egyptian tribes of the same name (*Nihāyat al-Arab,* 365).

[49]P. M. Holt, ″Al-Fayyūm,″ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., 2:872–73.

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the original cultivators, or with nomads settling on the margins of the cultivated areas, but rather with an entire province. A massive settlement of nomads should have been a cataclysmic event, on the scale of the Hilalian invasion of North Africa. Strangely enough, the process in which a small tribal group came to represent the vast majority in the Fayyum has not left any historical record of violent dispossession or mass exodus.[50]

The only plausible explanation for the concurrent Islamization and bedouinization of the province of Fayyum is that conversion to Islam was accompanied by the assumption of a bedouin tribal identity. Al-Nābulusī actually tells us that the *badw* Muslim villages stood at the same sites as the formerly Christian villages. Even if some villages on the edges of the Fayyum were deserted in late antiquity, the province as a whole was never abandoned by its cultivators.[51] The *badw* Muslim village of Saylah was located in precisely the same place in which the Christian village of Saylah, a center of Coptic Christianity, used to stand.[52] According to al-Nābulusī, as many as forty churches used to serve the village of Saylah alone, although only one church and one monastery remained when he surveyed the village. In fact, remains of the Christian past were everywhere evident in the *badw* Muslim villages of the Fayyum.[53] Therefore, it seems likely that the Christian cultivators gradually took over, not only the Muslim religion and Arabic language of the conquerors, but also their tribal social organization and *badw* identity.[54] We must therefore conclude that most of the villagers of the

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[50]See also the remarks of Saleh, who has made an earnest attempt to chronicle the migrations of the Arab tribes to Egypt, but concludes that in most cases the history of their settlement remains obscure (″Les migrations″).

[51]On the desertion of villages in the Fayyum in late Antiquity, see Keenan, ″Fayyum Agriculture,″ 288, and the sources cited there. For models linking sedentarization of Arab tribes with Islamization, see Nehemia Levtzion, ″Towards a Comparative Study of Islamization,″ in *Conversion to Islam,* ed. idem (London, 1979), 1–23; and more recently, in the context of Crusader Palestine, Roni Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge, 1998), 263–68. For criticisms of this approach, see remarks by Tarif Khalidi, ″Tribal Settlement in Early Medieval Palestine,″ in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East,* ed. idem (Beirut, 1984), 181–89; Jeremy Johns, ″The *Longue Durée*: State and Settlement Strategies in Southern Transjordan Across the Islamic Centuries,″ in *Village, Steppe and State: The Social Origins of Modern Jordan,* ed. Eugene L. Rogan and Tariq Tell (London, 1994), 1–31.

[52]On Saylah as one of the centers of the Coptic Church in the Fayyum, see Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī, *Churches and Monasteries,* 209.

[53]Also noted by Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 182.

[54]The process of conversion in early Islamic Fayyum is the subject of a current Ph.D. thesis entitled ″Arabization and Islamization in the Countryside of Early Medieval Egypt: The Fayyum District, 640–1036,″ by Lennart Sundelin at Princeton University. I am grateful to Lennart for sharing with me his preliminary results.

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Fayyum were holding on to an identity derived from a fictitious account of their ancestry. It is crucial for our understanding of tribal identity in the Mamluk period, and for our perception of Arab resistance to Mamluk authority, that the nomadic past claimed by the Arab tribesmen was imagined, not real.

In the year 701/1301, as the contemporary Mamluk chronicler and bureaucrat al-Nuwayrī tells us, the harm caused by the *'urbān* of Upper Egypt had reached unacceptable levels:

> They resorted to highway robbery, and imposed on the merchants and the artisans in Assiut and Manafalūṭ a tax similar to the *jāliyah* [the common term for the poll-tax imposed on non-Muslims]. They defied the authority of the local governors, and prevented the payment of the agricultural *kharāj* taxes. Their leaders called themselves by the names of [the Mamluk] amirs, one calling himself Baybars and another calling himself Sallār. They armed themselves and released all prisoners incarcerated in jails. Seeing that, the amirs called upon the qadis and the jurists, and asked their opinion on the permissibility of waging battle against [the *'urbān*], and the [jurists] gave a *fatwá* to that effect.[55]

The Arab revolt, according to al-Nuwayrī's account, was about reversing the relations of power between city and countryside. On the one hand, the rebels prevented the payment of agricultural taxes, while on the other hand they siphoned back part of the income made by the local representatives of urban wealth, the merchants and the artisans. The revolt attempted to establish a local autonomous government ruled by tribal leaders who bore the titles of the Mamluk amirs, a mirror image of the central government in Cairo. But it was a topsy-turvy government, one in which the merchants and the artisans pay their taxes to the local population. Not incidentally, perhaps, the taxes imposed by this rebel government had a markedly religious connotation, as if non-Arabs were not true Muslims.[56]

The subsequent brutal suppression by the Mamluk forces leaves us in no doubt regarding the mass participation of peasants in this revolt. After thousands

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[55] Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab,* 30:333, cited in al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 1:920.

[56] Similarly, in al-'Aynī's account of the revolt of Ibn Taghlab, the rebels are supposed to have collected a tax resembling the *jizyah* (the legal term for the poll-tax) from several provinces in Upper Egypt (al-'Aynī, *'Iqd al-Jumān,* 1:107).

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of Arabs were put to the sword, al-Nuwayrī reports that the Mamluk forces took 1,600 Arab captives, who were all cultivators of the land *(la-hum filāḥāt wa-zurū‘)*.[57] The booty was immense, including a substantial amount of agricultural products, such as oil taken from the local presses, and thousands of cows and oxen. Reportedly, the Mamluk armies could not find buyers for the enormous amounts of grain *(ghilāl)* they obtained during the suppression of the revolt. But when the troops returned north, they found the land empty:

> The troops made their way back on 16 Rajab (18 March 1302). [They found that] the land had become desolate, and one could walk and encounter no one on his way, or dwell in a village and see only women and small children. Then they decided to release the prisoners and let them go back, in order to sustain the land *(li-ḥifẓ al-bilād)*.[58] That year, an unusually large portion of Upper Egypt was sown, followed by a harvest so bountiful it could not be counted.[59]

Like the Arab tribesmen of the Fayyum, the majority of Arab rebels were peasants. Following the repression of the Arab revolt, the same Arab tribesmen who participated in the revolt, and who were killed or captured by the Mamluks, were now needed to cultivate the land. This passage has been noted by both Poliak and Saleh, who took it either as a sign of the close alliance between the peasants and the bedouins, or as an indication of the increasing settlement of the nomads. Even Garcin, who is generally keen to distinguish between the peasants and the bedouin, is bewildered by a revolt that evokes images of a French peasant *jacquerie*.[60] But in light of what we know of the Arab tribesmen of the Fayyum, the peasant participation in the revolt should not surprise us. If, as in the Fayyum, the vast majority of the Muslim peasantry had an Arab tribal identity, then their participation in an Arab revolt makes sense: the Arab revolts had an agricultural nature, as well as a peasant mass participation, simply because the Muslim peasants of Upper Egypt *were* Arabs.

All the large Arab revolts of the first Mamluk century had a predominantly agricultural nature. The first Arab revolt of 650/1252–53, erupting only seven

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[57]Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab,* 30:334, cited in al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 1:922; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm,* 8:153; a slightly different wording in al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān,* 4:176.

[58]Al-‘Aynī, citing al-Yūsufī, has ″li-ḥifẓ al-zirā‘āt wa-al-sawāqī wa-ghayruhā″ (*‘Iqd al-Jumān,* 4:177).

[59]Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 1:922, l. 14.

[60]Garcin, ″Note sur les rapports,″ 150.

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years after al-Nābulusī´s survey, engulfed the entire Egyptian countryside, including the Arab tribes of the Fayyum. In this first revolt, as well as in the subsequent ones, the entrepots of grain levied as taxes and destined for Cairo were always targeted. Poliak also points out that the revolts were based in the Nile valley. The nomadic tribes of the desert, on the other hand, are never mentioned as taking part in the revolts.[61] Occasionally, Mamluk sources even appear to use the terms *fallāḥūn* and *'urbān* interchangeably. Thus, after the suppression of the revolt of Ibn al-Aḥdab in 754/1354, the amir Shaykhū is reported to have severed the head of any peasant who pronounced the letter *qāf* in the manner of the Arabs, and went on to kill many *'urbān* and *fallāḥūn*. Later that year, Ibn Iyās tells us, the sultan decreed that no *fallāḥ* should ride a horse or carry a weapon.[62] Similarly, during the suppression of the 701/1301 revolt, a punitive mission led by Sunqur al-A'sar confiscated all the horses of the *fallāḥ*s and the *badw*. According to al-Nuwayrī, the result of this punitive mission was that the *fallāḥ*s were subjugated, and handed over the *kharāj* taxes.[63]

But it would be wrong to equate the Arab tribesmen with a sedentary life-style in the same way as it is wrong to equate them with a nomadic life-style. Both nomads and peasants participated in the revolts, and both were considered to have had an Arab *badw* identity. It is likely that those Arab tribesmen who protected the roads and provided horses for the royal post *(barīd)* were predominantly nomadic.[64] The lists of booty captured by the Mamluk armies during the consecutive suppressions of the Arab revolts suggest that some of the rebels subsisted on animal husbandry, and in particular on camel-herding. Even after the revolt of 701/1301, for which the Mamluk sources most explicitly indicate mass peasant participation, we are told that the Mamluk army confiscated 80,000 head of cattle, 4,000 horses, and 33,000 camels.[65] The involvement of the nomads in the revolts does not exclude the involvement of peasants; these were Arab rebellions, undertaken by Muslim peasants and nomads who subscribed to an Arab tribal identity.

This Arab identity is best captured by the word *'urbān,* a term that distinguished the Arab tribes of Mamluk Egypt and Syria from the pure Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula. Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī (d. 749/1349), who devoted a long chapter to

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[61]Poliak, ″Les revoltes populaires,″ 259.

[62]Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i' al-Duhūr,* ed. M. Muṣṭafá, H. Roemer, and H. Ritter (Cairo and Wiesbaden, 1960–63), 1:550–51.

[63]Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 1:914.

[64]See, among other sources, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 69; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ,* 3:454, 4:211, 13:198; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab,* 8:201; Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 95, 98; Saleh, ″Les relations.″

[65]Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 1:922.

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the Arab tribes in his geographical work *Masālik al-Abṣār,* makes a consistent distinction between the original *'arab,* or Arabs, and the contemporary Arab tribes, ″the *'urbān* found in our time.″[66] In al-'Umarī's view, the *'urbān* are those who claim Arab descent and who subscribe to the values of the nomadic life-style, even if they no longer practice it.[67] While al-'Umarī eulogizes the nomadic way of life,[68] he nonetheless acknowledges that many Syrian tribes have settled down. These tribes, he says, were originally Arab but are no longer so, as they became *ḥaḍarī*s, settled people who cultivate agriculture.[69] The list that follows is organized by localities, each locality with its tribal inhabitants. Among the places mentioned are the cities of Gaza, Hebron, Jerusalem, Nablus, 'Ajlān, Adhru'āt, Ḥimṣ, Ḥamāh and Shayzar. By the end of the long list, which al-'Umarī admits to be incomplete, it is clear that much of the Syrian peasantry claimed Arab origins.[70]

In Egypt, according to al-'Umarī, almost all the *'urbān* were settled cultivators. The Banū al-Zubayr, who dwelled in the province of al-Bahnasā, are described as submissive artisans and peasants.[71] The five sections of the Banū Sa'd of the Judhām mostly practiced agriculture and husbandry. The Banū 'Abd al-Ẓāhir were a lineage of scribes.[72] In his administrative work *Al-Ta'rīf,* al-'Umarī claims that only the Arabs of the western province of al-Buḥayrah have the true traits and mores of Arabs, because these tribes were truly nomadic and traveled as far as al-Qayrawān and Gabes. He also singles out the Arabs of the province of al-Sharqīyah as having special status in the eyes of the sultan.[73] In these two provinces of Lower Egypt, in which the land is more suitable for grazing than for intensive agriculture, the Arab tribes undertook the defense of their own districts, unlike the other provinces, where the *'urbān* were only responsible for maintaining the roads.[74] But the rest of the Arab tribes are not held in great respect, because:

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[66]This distinction was apparently drawn from al-Ḥamdānī's thirteenth-century treatise, now lost (Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 71, 157).

[67]Ibid., 69.

[68]Ibid., 35, 124–36.

[69]″Wa-bi-al-Shām min ṣalībat al-'arab qad kharajū bi-hā 'an ḥukm al-'arab wa-ṣārū bi-hā ahl ḥāḍirah sākinah wa-'ummār diyār kaṭinah″ (ibid., 154).

[70]Ibid., 154–55. On the diversity of bedouin economy in Syria see also Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-Arḍ,* ed. J. H. Kramers (Paris, 1964), 222.

[71]Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 160–62. Also in al-Maqrīzī, *Bayān,* 41; al-Qalqashandī, *Qalā'id,* 148.

[72]Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 174; al-Maqrīzī, *Bayān,* 23. The chronicler and bureaucrat Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir belonged to this lineage.

[73]Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Al-Ta'rīf bi-al-Muṣṭalaḥ al-Sharīf* (Cairo, 1312), 70; cited in al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ,* 7:160. See also Saleh, ″Les relations,″ 367.

[74]Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab,* 8:201; al-Maqrīzī, *Bayān,* 44. See also Sato, *State and Rural*

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> They [the Arab tribes of Egypt] are sedentary people who sow their lands, who do not travel between the highlands and the plains or between Syria and Iraq, as they do in the Arabian peninsula, and who do not venture beyond the limits of their fences.[75]

While al-'Umarī noticed the discrepancy between the reality of the sedentary subsistence on the one hand and the Arab genealogy on the other, he nonetheless considered the Arab peasantry as part of the *'urbān*. Like the word *muslimān,* distinguishing between recent converts and "true" Muslims, the term *'urbān* served to distinguish between the pure Arabs of the legendary past and the mundane contemporary existence of Arab tribesmen, who did not necessarily live up to the notions of true Arab-ness.[76] The sedentary life of the Arab tribesmen of the Fayyum was therefore not an exception, but rather the rule in most Egyptian provinces along the Nile valley. Al-'Umarī's account suggests that it was particularly so in Upper and Middle Egypt, the centers of the great Arab revolts. Al-Nābulusī's tax records for the *badw* cereal-growers of the Fayyum are thus in complete accordance with the mass participation of peasants in the revolts, and are further corroborated by the explicit authority of al-'Umarī, our main contemporary source concerning the Mamluk *'urbān.*

If the Fayyum was indeed representative of Middle and Upper Egypt in general, this would imply not only that most *'urbān* were peasants, but also that the vast majority of the peasants were *'urbān.* As we recall, in al-Nābulusī's Fayyum all the Muslim peasants were also members of an Arab tribe. Modern scholars have always assumed that the Arab tribes lived as a minority amongst a sea of Egyptian peasants, or *fallāḥūn*. But, as Sato noted in his study of Mamluk rural society, the term *fallāḥ* is seldom used in Mamluk sources of this period.[77] In administrative works, including *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* the peasants are usually called *muzāri'ūn,* a fiscal and legal category derived from the *muzāra'ah,* the standard share-cropping

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Society, 98; Saleh, "Les migrations," 14.

[75]". . . li-mā kānū ahl ḥāḍirah wa-zar' laysa minhum man yunjidu wa-lā yuthimu wa-lā yu'riqu wa-lā yush'amu wa-lā yakhrijūna 'an ḥudūd al-judrān" (Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Al-Ta'rīf,* 70; cited in al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ,* 7:160).

[76]The term *'urbān* would appear to have some derogatory connotation, as suggested by Garcin (*Qūṣ,* 362). On the use of the term *muslimān* in the Mamluk period, see Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, "Le converti à travers quelques écrits historiques du IXe/XVe siècle," in *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*: *Law, Christianity and Modernism in Islamic Society,* ed. U. Vermeulen and J. M. F. Van Reeth (Leuven, 1998), 171–84. I owe this reference to Tamer el-Leithy.

[77]Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 185.

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contract in Islamic law. In the chronicles, the term *fallāḥ* is almost never used, except with regard to irrigation works,[78] and, as mentioned above, in association with the term *'urbān.* The Arab identity of the Egyptian peasant can provide a simple explanation for the mysterious silence of the Mamluk sources regarding the *fallāḥ:* the term *muzāri'* defined the peasant's fiscal obligations, the term *fallāḥ* defined his professional activity of cultivating the land, and the term *'urbān* defined his social tribal allegiance and his political agency. The three terms referred to different aspects of the life of the Arab peasantry of Egypt.

However, as with al-Nābulusī's Fayyum, if most of the Egyptian peasants were *'urbān,* it is historically impossible that all were the offspring of the Arab conquerors. In works devoted to tribal genealogy, medieval writers such as al-'Umarī explained the *badw* character of the Egyptian peasant by the settling down of nomadic tribes coming from the Arabian Peninsula. But works of tribal genealogy were compiled with a purpose. Al-'Umarī was interested in highlighting the lineage of his own tribe, and devoted a treatise, now lost, to extolling its virtues. He is very sympathetic to the tribes, glorifying their role in the defense of the Mamluk domains from foreign enemies. His account is as close as we get to the Arab tribesmen's view of themselves, an exercise in propaganda in which genealogical claims play a major role.[79] It would therefore be a mistake to read his text for what it is not. Al-'Umarī's tribal genealogies, in which a seemingly endless reservoir of Arab tribes are constantly migrating and settling down in the Egyptian countryside, hold little historical value. Such tribal histories, which invariably include the migration of distant ancestors to the site of the current settlement, are still found in peasant communities of the Middle East. The tribal histories of Tunisian village communities, for example, would have us believe that the country was first inhabited in the fifteenth century. Therefore, as Lucette Valensi points out, "genealogy reveals itself not as an account of the past, but as an allegory of the present, a translation of political, religious and matrimonial practices."[80]

The claim to Arab descent by the Muslim villagers of Upper and Middle Egypt must be understood as an attempt to negotiate the present rather than as a

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[78]Ibid., 224–25, 230, and the sources cited there. See, for example, al-Maqrīzī's account of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's public works of 723/1323, when the amirs were ordered to bring the *fallāḥ*s of their lands to help in the construction of a dike (*Kitāb al-Mawā'iẓ wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār al-Ma'rūf bi-al-Khiṭaṭ al-Maqrīzīyah,* ed. Khalīl al-Manṣūr [Beirut, 1998], 3:294).

[79]On the pro-Arab inclination of al-'Umarī, see Dorothea Krawulsky, "Introduction," in al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 29, 59–60.

[80]Lucette Valensi, *Tunisian Peasants in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,* trans. B. Archer (Cambridge and Paris, 1985), 57. See also E. Peters, "The Proliferation of Segments in the Lineage of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 90 (1960): 29–53.

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factual narrative of the past, a move that has many parallels in medieval Islam. Michael Brett suggests that the Banū Hilāl invasion of North Africa was not a real event, but a myth perpetuated by sedentary Banū Hilāl tribesmen to establish themselves as a class of warriors, part of the elite and not of the commoners. He concludes that the Banū Hilāl epos emerged as an attempt to ″modify the realities of the past in order to meet the exigencies of the present.″[81] Even more pertinent are the attempts of fourteenth-century North African Berber converts to produce Muslim genealogies that extended to earlier dates than those of their conversion.[82] Last but not least, claims of sharifian descent going back to the Prophet Muḥammad were likewise a means of securing material and social privileges. Medieval Muslim societies made some attempts to regulate the genealogical claims to Prophetic descent, most notably through the institution of *niqābat al-ashrāf,* but they were not always successful. At least one fourteenth-century *naqīb al-ashrāf* was found guilty of selling the entitlement to sharifian status in return for bribes, and there are quite a few other examples from Islamic history.[83]

A claim to bedouin identity and lineage provided the villagers of Mamluk Egypt with a language of rights—both to the land and to its dominant religion. Rather then being viewed as the descendants of Coptic converts, the *badw* identity meant a pride of place within the Muslim community. And rather than being regarded as lowly tax-paying peasants, the claim to an Arab descent was also a claim to the values of an imaginary nomadic past, in particular to the independence and the equality of the nomadic tribe. By adopting an ideology of lineage or of bedouin-ness, the rural communities found a sense of superiority in Islam and nostalgia for the autonomy of a nomadic past. The tribal genealogies preserved in the work of al-ʻUmarī, and later reproduced by al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī, were the product of a purposeful attempt to re-align local identity within the dominant culture.

Moreover, bedouin-ness was also an empowering ideology that could nourish armed resistance. The claim to Arab descent and nomadic past may also be a means of justifying revolt against the state and its tax-collectors. In our *badw* village of Saylah, where a significant proportion of the crops would have been taken away by royal officials like al-Nābulusī, a revolt led by the *sharīf* Ḥiṣn

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[81]Michael Brett, ″The Way of the Nomad,″ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 58 (1995): 265. Brett does not, however, doubt the claims of the Banū Hilāl to a nomadic past.

[82]Maya Shatzmiller, ″Une source méconnu de l′histoire des Bérbèrs : Le *Kitab al-ansab li-abi Hayyan*,″ *Arabica* 30 (1983), esp. 73–80, and idem, ″Le mythe d′origine bèrbere—aspects historiographiques et sociaux,″ *Revue de l′occident musulman* 35 (1983): 145–55. I owe these references to Tamer el-Leithy.

[83]Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr bi-Abnāʾ al-ʻUmr* (Beirut, 1967–75), 1:39. See also C. van Arendonk- [W. A. Graham], ″Sharīf,″ *EI*^{2}, 9:329–37.

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al-Dīn ibn Taghlab would have made an impact. Resistance to taxation and to the local bureaucracy would have found an outlet through the *sharīf*′s alleged descent from the Prophet, the local community′s pride in its Arab lineage, and its adherence to the bedouin ideal of autonomy. Set against a Mamluk elite composed of newcomers both to Egypt and to Islam, the *sharīf* evoked the value of lineage as well as the rights of the indigenous communities. As we remember, scorning the rule of the Turkish slaves, Ḥiṣn al-Dīn claimed that the Arab tribes were ″the true owners of the land.″

In *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm wa-Bilādihi*, al-Nābulusī provides us with a singular eye-witness account of social and economic life in a medieval Egyptian province; we should listen to him very carefully. In particular, al-Nābulusī divides the population of the Fayyum into the Khaldūnian categories of *badw* and *ḥaḍar,* and tells us that almost the entire population of the Fayyum was *badw*. From the fiscal part of his survey we learn that the *badw* tribesmen lived, for the most part, in sedentary cereal-growing villages, which were dependent on seasonal inundation. The few *ḥaḍar* villages, on the other hand, cultivated cash-crops and were dependent on perennial irrigation. Moreover, the inhabitants of the *ḥaḍarī* villages were predominantly Christians while the *badw* villages were predominantly Muslim. Al-Nābulusī′s dichotomy of Christian *ḥaḍar* and Muslim *badw* meant that not only were all the *badw* Muslims, but, more surprisingly, all the Muslims were *badw*. I have argued that the only plausible explanation for this demographic situation is that conversion to Islam by the indigenous Christian population was accompanied by the assumption of a *badw* tribal identity.

Like the Arab tribesmen of the Fayyum, the majority of the tribesmen who took part in the large Arab revolts of the Mamluk period were peasants. Moreover, it seems that, as in the Fayyum, most of the Muslim peasantry in the Egyptian countryside had an Arab tribal identity. This Arab identity is best captured by the term *ʻurbān,* which was meant to distinguish the Mamluk tribesmen from the truly Arab tribes of the Arabian Peninsula. Unlike the original Arabs, most of the *ʻurbān* lived a sedentary existence, but still claimed Arab descent and subscribed to the values of the nomadic life-style. These claims, transmitted to us in several genealogical works composed in the Mamluk period, hold very little historical value. It is quite impossible that a large portion of the Egyptian peasantry were the descendants of a few tribal clans who arrived following the Muslim conquest. Rather, the claim to Arab descent by the Muslim inhabitants of rural Egypt must be understood as an attempt to negotiate the present. Bedouin-ness, that is the memories of an (invented) nomadic past of independence and the pride in an (alleged) lineage in Islam, was an ideological antidote to the lowly status of the

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bulk of the cereal-growing Egyptian peasantry. And when the opportunity was ripe, it was also a rallying cry for revolt.

The findings of this article are limited to the first century of Mamluk rule in Egypt. Arguably, by limiting my discussion to this early period, I have ignored the wealth of historical evidence regarding the increasing political influence of the tribes in the fifteenth century. In particular, I have not discussed the fifteenth-century reports of bedouin violence towards the peasantry, especially in Lower Egypt.[84] I would argue, however, that the outbreak of the plague in the middle of the fourteenth century is an appropriate cut-off point for a study of the rural communities of Egypt. The Black Death brought about radical demographic, economic, and social changes to Egyptian rural society, changes whose nature we are just beginning to understand. The tribesmen of al-Nābulusī´s Fayyum inhabited a world very different from that of their descendants two centuries later. Since Arab and bedouin identities were not fixed or natural, but rather assumed and cultural, the definition of bedouinness must have shifted through the ages. Undoubtedly, there is still detailed research to be done on the place of the Arab tribesmen in Mamluk society. But this research must acknowledge that the Arab tribes represented a significant portion of the Egyptian population, if not an outright majority; and that they should be at the center, rather than at the margins, of Mamluk historiography.

[84]For a summary, see Jean-Claude Garcin, ″The Regime of the Circassian Mamlūks,″ in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1, *Islamic Egypt, 640–1517*, ed. Carl Petry (Cambridge and New York, 1998), 290–317.

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Sharp Practice in Levantine Trade in the Late Middle Ages: The Brizi-Corner Affair of 1376–77*

Given the common reputation of Mamluk officials as being, even by the standards of their own time and place, extraordinarily corrupt and grasping, it is hardly surprising that contemporary governments, confronted by reports of Mamluk officials impounding the goods of foreign merchants, and demanding of them outrageous compensation, were inclined to attribute these acts to greed. That this was not always the case, however, that in some circumstances Mamluk officials operated not solely from greed but as well in reaction to some real offense and from a desire for justice for their own subjects, is evident from the documents from the Venetian archives which refer to what, for want of any official title, might be designated the Brizi-Corner Swindle of 1376–77.[1]

The Venetians were, by the fourteenth century, old hands at Levantine trade, perhaps the oldest in Christendom. The national legend of the smuggling of the body of St. Mark from Abbasid Egypt in the ninth century attests not only to the antiquity of Venetian contacts in the East, but also to their self-perception as a people who could take care of themselves in the treacherous world of Eastern Mediterranean trade and politics. They had confronted and dealt with all manner of hazards at one time or another—pirates, cut-throat competition from the Genoese and others, uncooperative or merely corrupt officials, and the uncertain security of the goods, and, indeed, the very persons, of traders living on sufferance in foreign parts. They knew their way around.

Successful trade presupposes mastery of diplomacy, and Venice had learned to play that game particularly well: from Flanders to Tana, even among the crafty Byzantines or the testy Mongols, Venetian diplomats had met with success in securing the trading interests of the Republic. And yet, in the mid- and late fourteenth century, the Venetians apparently found their resourcefulness severely tested by trading conditions in Egypt and Syria. Even for a trading nation of such consummate ability, dealing with the Mamluks was something particularly challenging.

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[1]Brief mention of the swindle discussed in this article can be found in Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1983), 123.

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The rapacity of Mamluk officials has, justly, become legendary; there can be little doubt that they often preyed heavily on whomever they could, to the extent that they may have grievously harmed the economies of Syria and Egypt. The system not only allowed such abuses, but in part made them necessary: the tenure of official posts was uncertain, and the temptation to milk them for all they were worth was great. Abuses of office, impositions of extraordinary levies on the helpless—Muslim and non-Muslim alike—manipulation of the market, or even forced purchases to take advantage of one´s own speculations in commodities, were all standard practice for Mamluk officials, both in Egypt and in Syria.[2]

Particularly vulnerable to the greed of such functionaries were the communities of foreign, especially Latin Christian, traders conducting their affairs in port towns and inland emporia. Without the protection offered by law to Muslims, or even to Christian subjects of the sultan, their position on Mamluk soil was, at best, equivocal. Security of person or property, let alone expectations of honest trade practices, was not derived from any legal right, but rather depended on the goodwill of the sultan and his deputies, on their willingness to grant safe conduct and special trading privileges. Self-interest, of course, dictated that the Mamluks allow and even encourage trade, but this consideration hardly deterred officials from seeking bribes in exchange for trading concessions. It is no wonder, then, that throughout the late Middle Ages ambassadors from merchant states around the Mediterranean, their purses bulging with cash to buttress their persuasiveness, arrived at Cairo, commissioned to seek the valuable permission of the sultan to carry on trade, to set up factories, to be represented by consuls, and the like. Such treaties were negotiated with various European trading powers, granting them security and establishing guidelines for trade.[3] But these treaties could in no way be viewed as a guarantee of smooth operations and freedom from harassment. The ability of foreign traders to do business unhampered was directly proportional to the sultan´s willingness (and ability) to see that his edicts were enforced, and that the concessions he had granted were observed, by his governors and lesser officials in the provinces. In the fourteenth century compliance by local officials with concessions handed out at Cairo could not be taken for granted. They, at the very least, could be expected to demand their own share of the graft before carrying out their duties.

That Venice, along with other trading nations, suffered from these abuses is

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[2]See, for example, Ira Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 55–56, 124–25.

[3]Some of the most valuable articles on these concessions have been published by John Wansbrough. See, in particular, his articles ″The Safe-Conduct in Muslim Chancery Practice,″ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 34 (1971): 20–35; ″A Mamluk Letter of 877/1473,″ *BSOAS* 24 (1961): 200–13; ″Venice and Florence in the Mamluk Commercial Privileges,″ *BSOAS* 28 (1965): 483–523.

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abundantly clear: some sense of how difficult a time Venetian merchants were having in the Levant, and of how extensive and regular these abuses were, can be extracted from the pages of the registers of the Deliberazioni Miste of the Senate, preserved at the Archivio di Stato of Venice.[4] Scarcely a register exists—and fourteenth-century registers that cover more than a three to four-year period are rare—that does not contain numerous references to the trials suffered by Venetian merchants at Alexandria, Damascus, or elsewhere. Iniquitous levies (contrary to the privileges granted by the sultan), unwarranted confiscation of the goods of merchants,[5] demands for graft and bribes (Venetian *manzarie;* modern Italian *mangerie*), imprisonment and beatings of Venetian merchants or even of the Venetian consul, all figure in the pages of the registers, and particularly in the drafts of commissions for the embassies that Venice, with monotonous regularity, was forced to send east throughout the last half of the century to secure the interests of her merchants.

The Venetians, like all good negotiators, knew the value of taking the offensive from the first. An ambassador sent on such an important mission was already likely to be well-versed in this cardinal rule of successful negotiation. The commissions, nonetheless, regularly made it clear how the Republic expected her envoys to approach the discussions: however diplomatically he might phrase his arguments, an ambassador was to put all of Venice´s grievances to the fore immediately, and to demand satisfaction. Never argue from weakness, never admit even partial culpability for problems arising between the two states—this seemed to be the principle upon which Venetian negotiations with the Mamluks (and with other states as well) were built.

In any event, the commissions, when read as a series, begin to look like form letters: after giving the usual expressions of goodwill, the ambassador is then to mention all the abuses suffered by Venetian merchants at some given place,

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[4]The registers for the fourteenth century are to be found under the heading *Deliberazioni Miste* (hereafter given as ASV, Senato Miste); after 1400, most material pertaining to foreign relations can be found in the registers of *Deliberazioni Secrete*.

[5]Particularly vulnerable were the goods of the merchants who died while trading abroad—such goods were supposed to be secured by the consul for disposal as the deceased´s will, or law of inheritance, required. But often whatever was found in his possession went into the purse of an official. Such was the case, for instance, of one Nicoleto Trevisan, an agent carrying on trade in the Levant in the early 1380s. Falling ill at Acre, and fearing for his life, he sent his *tarjumān,* with the proceeds from his trading activity, to the captain of a Cretan galley in the harbor, a commission that the *tarjumān* faithfully fulfilled. The luckless Trevisan did die, and the *amiratus* of Acre had his corpse searched immediately. His *tarjumān* was imprisoned and questioned—under circumstances we can only imagine—and the official, having learned the whereabouts of the money, had it extracted from the captain, ″per vim.″ See Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV), Senato Miste, 29 July 1382 (reg. 37, fols. 99v–101r).

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concerning which the ambassador is to say he is sure that the sultan was unaware, and the news of which is certain to be displeasing to that particular font of justice. Only after unburdening himself of this speech and receiving the sultan´s guarantees that such abuses would not be tolerated, and after satisfying himself that these instructions would be carried out, could the ambassador take up other business.

It is in the context, then, of this series of very like commissions that the commission of 8 September 1377 stands out as unusual: the grotesquely un-Venetian tone of apology Nicolò Loredan and Baldo Querini were instructed to take before the sultan was a conspicuous departure from the normal pattern. Why would Venice, usually quick to object indignantly to mistreatment of her citizens and restriction of her trade, instruct her ambassadors to adopt nothing short of a posture of crawling contrition when they went before the sultan?

In light of the usual pattern of commissions, it at first seems worthy of little note that in the winter of 1376–77, the Senate voted to select an ambassador who ″shall place before the sultan the [illegal] novelty perpetrated against our consul and merchants in the regions of Damascus, and obtain the release of the goods and merchandise of our merchants, held in said regions.″[6] The commission for Nicolò Zeno, selected for the job, was worded in the usual way,[7] and he was sent forth with two thousand ducats for gifts and bribes, and told to stay at Cairo until he had received a promise that the abuses would be rectified, had written to the consul at Damascus to this effect, and had received word back that the promise had indeed been carried out.[8]

No verbatim account of the embassy of Nicolò Zeno can be found, but, from what we know from later documents, it must have turned out to be a singularly awkward and uncomfortable assignment. The ambassador, sent to chide the sultan for letting his officials abuse their positions and molest Venetian subjects who

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[6]″. . . exponat [soldano] novitatem factam consuli et mercatoribus nostris, in partibus Damaschi, et procuret liberationem haveris et mercationum nostrorum detentarum in dictis partibus . . .″ Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 30 December 1376 (reg. 35, fols. 133v–134r [new numbering 145v–146r]).

[7]Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 17 January 1376 [=1377] (reg. 35, fol. 138v [new numbering 150v]). It does appear that the Senate was a bit more agitated than usual: a vote was taken (14 January 1376 [=1377]) to cut off completely all commerce with Beirut and Damascus, but this was defeated.

[8]Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 19 January 1376 [=1377]. After all this important business has been taken care of, the ambassador is instructed to do ″whatever good he can″ to effect the release of the king of Armenia and his wife and sons. They had been held by the Mamluks since the dismemberment of the Kingdom of Lesser Armenia two years earlier.

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were trading in all good faith, must have been greeted with stony silence, followed by the revelation, supported by what Zeno apparently found sufficient evidence, that it was not owing to malfeasance by Mamluk officials that Venetians were being imprisoned and their goods confiscated at Damascus, but rather it was owing to the fact that certain Venetians had been systematically swindling Muslim traders.

Up to this point, Marco Brizi, the alleged swindler, and his associates appear, as they doubtless appeared both to their compatriots in the Senate and to the Muslim traders who injudiciously trusted them, as honest Venetian businessmen, of long experience in the Levant. It must have been of a shock, then, when a chastened Nicolò Zeno returned from his embassy to Cairo. The main points of his reports to the Senate can be surmised from the very first words of the decree in which the scandal became public:

> In that Ser Marco Brizi and Ser Zanachi Cornario have, as has been learned, fled the environs of Damascus with the goods and possessions of Saracens, and have sent some of these goods to Venice; and, as is clear enough, they have delivered some of these goods over to the hands of Ser Jacobello Cornario, accomplice of the aforementioned . . .[9]

The decree goes on to detail steps to be taken: the provisors of the state are ordered to make a thorough investigation; all such merchandise found at Venice is to be immediately impounded; the culprits are to be arrested if they come to Venice or fall into the hands of Venetian officials elsewhere.[10]

Marco Brizi was a merchant of apparently long experience in the Orient. His subsequent misdeeds must have proved all the more embarrassing for the Republic in light of the position of trust to which he had been earlier assigned: he had served a long tenure as Venetian consul at Damascus, at least through the first half of the 1370s.[11] Nor could that embarrassment have been diminished by the fact that the Senate, just a year before the scandal broke, had ordered their consul at Alexandria to pressure the Mamluk sultan himself for payment of a debt of

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[9]Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 27 August 1377 (reg. 36, fol. 34r [new numbering 35r]).

[10]Actually, only the Corner brothers are named specifically; Brizi, as later documents reveal, was apparently already dead.

[11]After a short breech of diplomatic and commercial relations in 1369–70, we find reference to permission being given for Marco Brizi to return to his position as consul at Damascus (Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 13 May 1370 [reg. 33, fol. 54r]). He was apparently still consul in early 1375, when he was replaced in that position by Johannes Barbadico (Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 6 February 1374 [=1375], 30 March 1375 [reg. 34, fol. 156, reg. 35, fol. 9v]).

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some 8,000 Byzantine gold pieces, which he owed to two Venetian traders, ″Jacobus Cornario″ and ″Marcus de Briciis,″[12] the first time we see together the names that were to be linked only a short time later in an indictment.

In any event, the investigative and punitive measures ordered by the Senate in August 1377 could only be the first steps in repairing the damage done to Venice´s Levantine trade—and her reputation for honesty—by the actions of Brizi and the Corners. All possible means were to be employed to placate the sultan and his officials: on the very day the public condemnation of Brizi and the Corners was issued, the Senate also voted to send yet another embassy to Cairo, this time to express the Republic´s sorrow and mortification over the incident. Nicolò Loredan and Baldo Querini were selected for the task.[13]

The draft of their commission, dated 8 September 1377, outlined in typically scrupulous detail—often specifying the very words that were to be used—just how the Senate wished the new ambassadors to approach their task. In form, it is much the same as the commissions of other ambassadorial expeditions; in content, however, it is unique: after the usual fulsome exchange of words of greeting and undying friendship, the ambassadors were to tell the sultan that the Senate had received and understood the reports of Nicolò Zeno and the letters of the sultan, and was most upset if any of her citizens had perpetrated such an act. They were to tell the sultan further that Venice had launched an investigation of the affair, but that the results would be disappointing to those seeking restitution or revenge: none of the culprits were to be found at Venice, nor could Venice locate any of their belongings that might be impounded. In any event, a warrant had been issued for their arrest and return to Venice, and it was certain that, once they were caught, it would be a long time before any of them emerged from prison.

> Had we but known [the ambassadors are further instructed to say] of these things before their flight, we should have taken steps against them of such immediate and personal significance, as they would not have forgotten as long as they lived, both as a punishment for them, and as an example to others in the future.[14]

Venice, the ambassadors were to conclude, would never condone such an act, and such occurrences were expressly contrary to the desires of the doge. Since, therefore, Venice had acted in good faith, it was only right that the goods of honest Venetian merchants be released; they had, indeed, been seized illegally, contrary to the

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[12]Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 20 May 1376.

[13]Ibid., 27 August 1377.

[14]Ibid., 8 September 1377.

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sultan´s own edicts, which did not recognize guilt by association: ″the son should not be made to bear the damages or punishment for his father[´s misdeeds], nor the father for [those of] the son.″[15] If by some chance the ambassadors should find the sultan cooperative, they were to press him to order his officials to release the impounded merchandise immediately; one of them was then to go to Damascus to check to see if the order had indeed been carried out, while the other was to remain at Cairo.

And yet so greatly did the Senate recognize the weakness of Venice´s position that they were willing not only that their ambassadors should so uncharacteristically abase themselves, but also that they should descend into melodramatic pathos:

> And, so that you might attain our end more quickly and easily, you should say to the sultan and his aides that every day orphans, widow ladies, and others appear before us, asking of us the release of the aforementioned goods, saying, most insistently, that they have nothing else in this world.[16]

The Senate´s instructions provide as well what we must consider more practical inducements to obtain cooperation on the matter. The commission provides them with 2,000 ducats for ″gifts″ for the sultan and his men, as well as for paying graft; in an addendum to the commission, however, the ambassadors are authorized to make bribes up to 15,000 ducats, ″out of the goods and belongings of our merchants that are held there.″[17] In any event, the ambassadors are instructed to use whatever skills they can: the concern is indeed that of securing the release of the merchandise, but further, and ultimately more important, securing good relations for the future.

No mention of the swindle, of the punishment of the Venetian trading community,

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[15]Ibid. Compare the text of the safe-conduct granted by Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī to the Florentines, edited and translated by Wansbrough, ″Safe-Conduct,″ 22: ″wa-an lā yuṭālib al-ab ʻan ibnihi wa-lā al-akh ʻan akhīhi.″ Venetian traders at Aleppo had apparently enjoyed similar security at a much earlier time: See G. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, eds., *Urkuden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig* (Vienna, 1856), 2:276, mentioned in M. E. Martin, ″The Venetian-Seljuk Treaty of 1220,″ *English Historical Review* 95 (1980): 330; see as well the provisions of the treaty between Genoa and Qalāwūn mentioned in P. M. Holt, ″Qalawun´s Treaty with Genoa in 1290,″ *Der Islam* 57 (1980): 102.

[16]Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 8 September 1377 (reg. 36, fol. 37v [new numbering 38r]).

[17]″. . . quod possitis expendere in manzariis . . . usque ad summam ducatorum .xv. de bonis et rebus nostrorum retentis deinde.″ Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 14 September 1377 (reg. 36, fol. 38r [new numbering 39r]).

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or even of the two ambassadorial missions appears in the usual Mamluk sources. At first this might appear striking, because while arrivals of ambassadors are not always noted by the chroniclers, they are frequently mentioned.[18] But the Islamic years 778–80 [May 1376–April 1379] were ones of particular turmoil in Mamluk Cairo. In March 1377, the sultan al-Ashraf Sha'bān, who had been on the throne for fourteen years and was the last of the line of the descendants of Qalāwūn to rule in more than just name, was overthrown and strangled, and his son 'Alī, who was just a boy of seven, was placed on the throne by the coalition of conspirators.[19] There followed a period of instability and even more than the usual court intrigue, as various Mamluk amirs sought to seize for themselves positions of power around the child sultan: the Islamic year 779 [May 1377–April 1378] saw no fewer than four men occupy the post of *atābak al-'asākir,* normally the second in command in the state but, when the sultan was a mere figurehead, the position of greatest power.[20] The last of these was Barqūq, who would become sultan in 1382, inaugurating the second, or ″Circassian,″ phase of Mamluk rule.

In short, the Venetian embassies arrived in a Cairo gripped by political intrigue. If Zeno arrived anytime after March 1377,[21] his audience was not with a single sultan and his advisers, but with a boy surrounded by a throng of amirs who were at that very moment jockeying for power. This could very well explain the eight-month period between the commission and his report to the Senate. Nor was the embassy of Querini and Loredan faced with significantly more stable conditions. It is amazing that they got anything done at all.

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[18]For instance, both al-Maqrīzī (*Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk,* ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyādah [Cairo, 1934–75], 3:1: 254) and Ibn Iyās (*Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i' al-Duhūr,* ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá [Cairo and Wiesbaden, 1982–84], 1:2:157–58) mention the arrival of an ambassador from the Byzantine emperor in December–January 1375–76, delivering a gift of an ingenious mechanical clock.

[19]Al-Maqrizi, *Sulūk*, 3:1:275–83; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr,* 1:2:174–81; Abū al-Maḥāsin Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, [n.d.]), 11:72–78.

[20]Al-Maqrizi, *Sulūk*, 3:1:303, 305–8, 310, 316–17, 322–24; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr,* 1:2:200, 201–3, 206, 213, 219–20; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm,* 11:152–58, 160–63. Concerning the position of *atābak al-'asākir,* see William Popper, *History of Egypt 1382–1469: Egypt and Syria Under the Circassian Sultans: Systematic Notes to Ibn Taghrî Birdî's Chronicles of Egypt*, University of California Publications in Semitic Philology, vols. 15–16 (Berkeley, 1955), 91; David Ayalon, ″Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army--III,″ *BSOAS* 16 (1954): 58–59; P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades* (London, 1986), 146.

[21]It is impossible to establish from the commissions exactly when the ambassador did depart; in any event, the problems of navigation in the Mediterranean in mid-winter may have made for considerable delays.

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It was with good reason that Venice viewed with concern her prospects for trade in Mamluk lands, because the Brizi-Corner swindle, far from being an isolated incident, was one of many such incidents that had apparently plagued Venetian-Mamluk relations for decades.[22] An addendum to the commission given to Loredan and Querini suggests that they could strengthen their case before the sultan by mentioning that ″at many times many *bancherii*[23] had run off from that region, and never had any sort of innovation or molestation been practiced on that account against merchants or commerce.″[24] Venetian traders, it would seem, as a matter of course had in their possession goods obtained from Muslim merchants for which they had not yet fully paid, goods that had been taken either on credit or on consignment. There is evidence as well that some of these goods were carried off—we must presume legally—from Muslim ports, with expectation of later compensation. In 1369, a time of heightened tension between Venice and Egypt, Venetian citizens who had in their possession the goods of ″Saracens of Egypt or Syria, subjects of the sultan of Babylon″ are called upon to report the fact, although in this case it is just as likely that what Venice was planning was a confiscation of goods legitimately held in trust, a ″freezing of Muslim assets,″ as it were, as relations with the Mamluks deteriorated completely.[25] A far more clear-cut case is that of one Christoforo Permarino, who is reported to have fled Syria with the belongings and goods of Muslim merchants, and whom the Senate orders to be held, and ″dealt with according to what is just.″[26]

The profits to be made in the Levantine trade were, obviously, enormous, more than compensating for the discomforts and indeed hazards of life in so inhospitable a place. Even without resorting to dishonest means, the person involved in such trade, especially one of such long-term experience as Brizi, could expect to amass a handsome fortune. And indeed, the Venetians had made honesty something of their stock-in-trade. It was a tremendous advantage to Venetian traders in the competitive Levantine marketplace to be regarded as always to be

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[22]We must, of course, consider that the charges against the three were manufactured. As noted above, they had lent money in the past to the sultan and, we may assume, lesser officials, and it would not be the first instance where powerful rulers sought to discharge their debts by making accusations of turpitude against their creditors. But the ambassadors and the Senate did find the evidence compelling and the actions of the accused, if not damning, were certainly suspicious.

[23]*Banchiere* generally meant an ″international banker,″ although it could also mean a local banker or even money changer. See Florence Elder, *Glossary of Medieval Terms of Business, Italian Series 1200–1600* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), 39–40.

[24]Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 14 September 1377 (reg. 36, fols. 37r–38v [new numbering 38r–39v]). We do have to wonder how wise a negotiating ploy it was to bring up such past offenses.

[25]Ibid., 31 August 1369 (reg. 33, fol. 30v).

[26]Ibid., 20 May 1385.

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trusted; shrewd, no doubt, and all the more respected for it, but not dishonest.

How, then, could men like Brizi be drawn into dishonest dealings? How, indeed, could they be put in possession of goods not theirs in the first place? The answer is to be found in the very reputation for trustworthiness that had helped Venetian trade flourish: Muslim merchants were, apparently, willing either to sell to Venetian merchants on credit, or to entrust goods to them on consignment, allowing them to take possession of their goods in advance of full payment, in return for greater profit later on. Such a system must have worked well as long as the merchants themselves remained on the scene. But when, after a career in the east, one decided to clear out for good, there must have been some temptation to buy once more on credit, and abscond before paying.

Venice had already encountered problems owing to this practice. In 1359 the Senate instructed the consul at Alexandria to go to Cairo to urge the sultan to forbid Muslim merchants from selling goods to Venetians on credit, or entrusting them with goods on consignment, recognizing that these sales were potentially dangerous.[27] Little apparently resulted from the mission.

A year before the Brizi-Corner scandal broke, there was again alarm in Venice about the potential harm that could be done Venetian interests by the willingness of Arab traders to sell to Venetians on credit. In 1376 the Senate wrote to the Venetian consul at Alexandria, ordering him to ask the sultan to issue an order forbidding the sale of goods by Muslim merchants to Venetians on credit, ″. . . because, owing to the sales on credit made by Saracens to our merchants and citizens at said regions of Damascus and other regions of Syria, many damages and harmful effects might follow, in all sorts of ways.″[28] For their own part, the Senate issued an edict a month later, forbidding Venetians from buying on credit from Muslims, as well as entering into mutual relationships that would involve them in having possession of the goods of Muslim merchants.[29] But either the damage had already been done, or Brizi and his associates were able to ignore the order. Sadly, in the commission for Loredan and Querini, the Senate once again takes up the issue:

> We also commission you, that when you have cleared away the main object of your mission, you should, how and when it seems best to you, take pains and petition before the sultan, as forcefully as you can, that his subjects may in no way sell to our merchants

[27]Ibid., 18 June 1359. Making the situation perhaps even more hazardous was that Mamluk officials themselves often invested in consignments of cargo. See Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 120.

[28]Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 20 May 1376 (reg. 35, fol. 100v [new numbering 112v]).

[29]Ibid., 19 June 1376 (reg. 35, fol. 107v [new numbering 119v]).

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> on credit, so as to prevent such things from happening again in the future, owing to the desertion of either his subjects or ours. Such an injunction should be backed by all the greatest penalties, restraints and strictures that you can obtain, by showing the sultan and his men how useful—indeed necessary—such a thing is for the sake of merchants and commerce; use such arguments and words as seem useful to you.[30]

Clearly there was great risk in Venetians taking possession of goods that belonged to Muslim merchants, even if by honest means and temporarily. So tenuous and uncertain, so subject to abuse of all sorts, was the position of the Latin trader in the East that even the accidental loss or destruction—let alone intentional theft—of goods not fully theirs would be disastrous. So nervous was Venice about the harm that could be done to her commerce by such a loss, that she even prohibited Venetian ships from turning a profit by carrying goods belonging to Muslims from place to place, ″. . . because it might be the cause of great scandal and misunderstanding.″[31] Quite simply, Venice did not want her citizens in the Levant to have in their possession or care goods to which they had not full and clear title.

Given the essentially negative character of the news that they brought to Cairo and the potential for some unpleasantness during—and after—their audience with the sultan, and given the chaos and political turmoil that must have hindered the regular conduct of business at court, few would look with relish on the task to which Loredan and Querini were assigned. Fewer still would anticipate that they would meet with the success that, in spite of everything, the Republic very clearly expected of them. And yet, apparently, they did succeed. Exactly what they said and did, exactly what concessions they had to make, what compensation they had to arrange, whose purses they had to fill, we do not know. But we do have the indirect evidence of commissions to later ambassadors, who were charged with seeing that the sultan enforced the promises he made to ambassador Loredan.[32] Of course, one would not expect the Mamluks to have remained obstinate for long. Trade with the Venetians was dear to Muslim merchants, to the official coffers of the state, and no doubt to the private purses of its minions. We still must, however,

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[30]Ibid., 8 September 1377.

[31]″. . . quod posset esse causa magni scandali et erroris.″ Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 12 May 1384 (reg. 38, fol. 120r [new numbering 121r]).

[32]See, for instance, the commission to Petro Grimani and the same Baldo Querini, Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 29 July 1382 (reg 37, fols. 99v–101r).

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pause to appreciate the choice of the Senate in so obviously picking the right people for the job.

What, finally, of the other protagonists of the story, the people who made all this fuss necessary? Their various fates must have, at least, given some comfort and consolation to the merchants whom they had diddled. Marco Brizi apparently did not live to enjoy his profits. Already in the edict of 27 August 1377, we are struck by the fact that orders for arrest are given only for the brothers Corner; Brizi is not mentioned. Our suspicions that he came to a bad end are confirmed by the commission of 8 September 1377. Brizi, it seems, was killed at sea while making his getaway on Genoese galleys. No further detail is supplied. A curious point arises about the role of Venice´s arch-rival, Genoa, in abetting Brizi´s getaway. Relations between Venice and Genoa, particularly as regarded Levantine trade, had not been unqualifiedly bad in the 1370s. Indeed, the decade opened upon a union of cooperation between the two rivals, engineered and encouraged by the pope, and born of a perceived need to present a united front against abuses in Mamluk ports. But by mid-decade the tension that was ultimately to lead to the unsuccessful Genoese blockade at Chioggia in 1378–80 was already present, nourished by hostility over the dispositions of the islands of Cyprus and Tenedos. Brizi´s contacts with Genoa went back at least to 1370, when Genoese ships were possibly involved in transporting the then- consul at Damascus back to that city from Cyprus.[33] It would seem improbable that Genoa played an active role in Brizi´s swindle. Nonetheless, in helping him make off with the goods of Muslim merchants, Genoa could but hope that the act would do long-term damage to Venice´s interests in the Levant.[34]

Zanachi Corner, it seems, did very little better: he had been found, living as a pauper and beggar on Cyprus. Whether he had already squandered what he had, or whether, when the story first became public, he had to flee without the swag, we cannot say. Both men disappear for good from the records. Not so Zanachi Corner´s brother Jacobellus, who, to be just, seems not to have played so damning a role in the scheme. He had also remained in exile, but some four years later we find him petitioning to be allowed to return to Venice to explain himself without being thrown into prison as soon as his foot hit the wharf: in no way, he explained, had he been an accomplice, or even an associate, of Brizi. The Senate seemed willing to accommodate him.[35] And yet, only a few months later, they withdrew their permission allowing him to return with immunity, fearing that, even after

[33]Ibid., 13 May 1370.

[34]I have found no mention of the incident in Genoese archival materials.

[35]Venice, ASV, Senato Miste, 30 August 1381.

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years had elapsed, Venetians might still suffer.[36] We can only guess how great the original fury of the Mamluk inner circle had been over the crime from the fact that, at least as the Venetians perceived it, it might still be smoldering after four years.

[36]Ibid., 10 December 1381 (reg. 37, fol. 38v).

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The Last Decades of Venice´s Trade with the Mamluks: Importations into Egypt and Syria

For hundreds of years, Venetians and Mamluks were engaged in an economic partnership based on a fundamental interdependence of two economic systems that were both linked to many other commercial networks. During the fifteenth century, Venetian merchants and entrepreneurs became the main middlemen between the territories subject to Mamluk sultans and western Europe.

The basic characteristics of the commercial relations between Mamluk lands and Venice stem from their dependence on the continuous presence of Venetians in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. This presence had two main components: on the one hand merchants, commercial agents, and official representatives (consuls and vice-consuls) staying in the main centers of commercial activity, importing and exporting goods and keeping constant contacts with their partners in Venice and in other centers of international trade; and on the other hand, periodic visits of Venetian ships, including both the state-owned and regulated commercial galleys, particularly those operating on the Alexandria, Beirut, and *trafego* galley lines,[1] and the privately-owned round ships.[2] The latter were also of two kinds: those visiting the Levantine ports in preestablished periods *(mude)* in spring and autumn, and those that were not dependent on a state-regulated sailing schedule. Thus, Venetians functioned not only as exporters of goods from Venice to the East and from the East to Venice, but also as importers of Western goods and products into Egypt and Syria. No Egyptian or Syrian merchant is known to have been involved in this trade with the West beyond the boundaries of Mamluk territories.

The activities of Venetian merchants in Mamluk lands were often disturbed or disrupted, owing to disagreements with Mamluk sultans as to the conditions regulating their activities and to harassments by Mamluk officials, who considered European merchants easy prey to extortion. In particular the policy inaugurated by Sultan Barsbāy in the 1420s and pursued by his successors, forcing the Venetians

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[1]The *trafego* line linked Venice, the Maghreb, and the Mamluk ports. On the system of the merchant galleys, see Frederic C. Lane, *Venice, A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore and London, 1973), 124–31, 337–52.

[2]Round ships is a term used in Mediterranean shipping to distinguish a certain type of ship (roundish in form, propelled by sails) from another type, namely galleys, which were long in form and could be operated either with sails or with oars.

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to buy part of the large quantities of pepper they were always exporting from Mamluk territories from the sultan´s warehouses at a high price, was the source of many difficulties. But notwithstanding several moments of crisis, trade always continued, and Venetians never disappeared from the scene for long periods.

During the last twenty years of the Mamluk Sultanate, there were further internal and external factors that threatened to destroy this commercial relationship altogether. On the Egyptian and Syrian side, the death of Sultan Qāytbāy in 1497 was followed by approximately four years of violent power struggles over the sultan´s throne. The accession of Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī in 1501 seemed to stabilize the political situation inside the sultanate, but other destabilizing forces continued to disrupt trading activities in the region, particularly the rise of the Safavid power in the east and the ensuing military struggle between Safavid Persia and the Ottoman Empire.

At the very same time, in a coincidence that could not have been any worse from both the Mamluk and the Venetian standpoints, the Portuguese caravels began bringing spices to Lisbon through the new sea route around Africa. Mamluk efforts to oust the Portuguese from the Indian Ocean ended in failure, and in 1513 and again in 1516, the Portuguese penetrated the Red Sea, causing damage to Muslim shipping centered around Jidda. In 1513, the Portuguese also reconquered Hormuz.[3]

During those years, Venice had to face one of the most difficult phases in its history. The Italian wars that had begun in 1494 with the French invasion of Italy, the war against the Ottoman Empire that lasted from 1499 to 1503, and even more so, the war of the league of Cambrai, which began in 1509 with the loss of all Venetian territories in the Italian mainland, necessitated enormous investment in armies and military equipment. Loss of income, heavy taxation, and forced public loans led to a serious financial crisis.[4] International trade, the basis of the republic´s power and wealth, could not be pursued without great difficulty during those years, since many of the products exported from Venice to the east originated from or passed through lands that had become enemy territory, either in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean, where the Ottomans constituted a threat, or in the *Terra Firma* and the Alps controlled by the European enemies of Venice.

Confronted with these great difficulties and even by the same threats, such as the rise of Ottoman power and the Portuguese presence in the Indian Ocean, one

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[3]Subhi Y. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter (1171–1517)* (Wiesbaden 1965), 453–61.

[4]Frederic C. Lane, ″Venetian Bankers,″ *Journal of Political Economy* 45 (1937), reprinted in *Venice and History: The Collected Papers of Frederic C. Lane* (Baltimore, 1966), 70–72, 79–80; Gino Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia dall´ XI al XVI secolo* (Venice, 1995), 221–38.

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would have expected more collaboration between Venetians and Mamluks. Yet that was not the case. Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī intervened on two occasions to stop trading relations with Venice. In 1503 he claimed that goods included in the tribute paid by Venice to the sultan in recognition of Mamluk suzerainty over Cyprus were of bad quality, and two years later he tried to raise substantially the quantity of pepper that Venetians were required to buy directly from him.[5] In 1510 another crisis developed on account of Venetian contacts with the Safavids.[6] Consequently, no galleys were sent to Alexandria and Beirut in 1505, to Alexandria in 1506, and to Beirut in 1510. These and further pauses in the functioning of the Alexandria and Beirut lines for other reasons were signs of crisis in the trade between Venice and the Mamluks.[7]

Under such unfavorable conditions Venetian merchants tried to continue their activities in Mamluk territories. Impressed by the dramatic character of military events and political upheavals, we tend to underestimate the peaceful and often uneventful activities of merchants. But international trade is actually the visible aspect of very strong forces of supply and demand, of patterns of consumption and basic needs that are remarkably resilient. Wars eventually end, regimes change, political leaders rise and fall, but, as we shall see, such patterns of material life cannot easily be swept away.

For the last twenty years of the Mamluk Sultanate, we are lucky enough to have a considerable amount of source material that allows us to study in detail the Venetian trading system in general and the commercial exchange with Mamluk territories in particular. Venetian sources are rich and diversified in this respect, including

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[5]Marino Sanuto [Sanudo], *I diarii,* 58 vols. (Venice, 1879–1902), 5:114–15; Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, ″Gli ultimi accordi tra i sultani mamelucchi d´Egitto e la repubblica di Venezia,″ *Quaderni di studi arabi* 12 (1994): 57–60; Francesco Gabrieli, ″Venezia e i Mamelucchi,″ in *Venezia e l´Oriente tra tardo medioevo e Rinascimento,* ed. Agostino Pertusi (Florence, 1966), 427; John Wansbrough, ″A Mamluk Ambassador to Venice in 913/1507,″ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 26 (1963): 503–30.

[6]Francesca Lucchetta, ″L´ ˙affare Zen¨ in Levante nel primo Cinquecento,″ *Studi Veneziani* 10 (1968): 109–219.

[7]In addition to the years mentioned above, no galleys were sent to Alexandria in 1508, 1509, 1513, 1514, and 1515. See Claire Judde de Larivière, ″Entre bien public et intérêts privés: Les pratiques économiques des patriciens vénitiens à la fin du Moyen Age,″ Ph.D. diss., Université Toulouse II-Le Mirail, 2002, 1:80. However, trade on board round ships, more difficult to follow, did not stop, and as of 1514 the galleys lost their monopoly on transporting spices, which could henceforeward be shipped, alongside other goods, on private Venetian ships: Frederic C. Lane, ″Venetian Shipping during the Commercial Revolution,″ in *Venice and History,* 14 (originally published in *American Historical Review* 38 [1933]: 219–39).

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official documents related to trade, commercial correspondence, notarial acts, judicial records, and diaries. These have already been the subject of substantial research, sometimes in combination with Mamluk narrative sources, and it is not my purpose here to return to the well-known themes that have occupied historians of these issues for many decades. In fact, most studies dedicated to this commercial system have focused essentially on trade in products that were exported from the East into Europe. A great amount of research has been carried out, for example, on the spice trade and its vicissitudes following the Portuguese discovery of the route around Africa to the Far East. In a recent book on Venetian trade in late fifteenth-century Syria, it is stated that ″the main scope of Venetian presence in Syria was not to sell [imported] products; on the contrary, the foremost aim of the Venetians was to buy several high-quality products and to sell them in Venice with great profit.″[8] I am not entirely convinced that this distinction rightly reflects the attitude of Venetians engaged in trade with Mamluk territories. As we shall see, much attention was paid to, and an impressive amount of capital invested in, products imported into Mamluk lands. These, however, have attracted relatively little attention by historians, and the few studies that do treat such arguments are not focused on a limited time span of about twenty years, which is precisely the aim of the present paper.

Among the many Venetian sources that shed light on importations into Egypt and Syria during the last twenty years or so of the Mamluk Sultanate I have chosen to focus especially on two types that are of particular interest in this regard. The first includes cargo lists and references to the cargo of ships sailing to Egypt and Syria, included in the diaries of Domenico Malipiero, Girolamo Priuli, and Marino Sanudo. All three were Venetian patricians who recorded, often on a daily basis, the developments of their times, including trade and shipping. Malipiero´s work, which is actually halfway between a chronicle and a diary, covers the period between 1457 and 1500,[9] Priuli´s diary, part of which has been lost, covers the period between 1494 and 1512,[10] and Sanudo´s diary, the most impressive of the three, covers the years between 1496 and 1533.[11] From these diaries I have been able to extract seven detailed cargo lists as well as ten more

[8]Eric Vallet, *Marchands vénitiens en Syrie à la fin du XVe siècle* (Paris, 1999), 88–89.

[9]Domenico Malipiero, ″Annali veneti dall´anno 1457 al 1500 del senatore Domenico Malipiero, ordinati e abbreviati dal senatore Francesco Longo, con prefazione e annotazioni di Agostino Sagredo,″ *Archivio storico italiano* series 1, vol. 7, pt. 1 and pt. 2 (1843): 1–1138.

[10]Girolamo Priuli, *I diarii (1494–1512),* ed. Arturo Segre (vol. 1) and Roberto Cessi (vols. 2 and 4), *Rerum italicarum Scriptores,* vol. 24, pt. 3 (Città di Castello and Bologna, 1912–36). The third volume, covering the period between September 1506 and May 1509, has been lost. Vols. 5–8, treating the period between October 1509 and July 1512, remain unpublished.

[11]See above, n. 5.

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succinct descriptions of cargoes of merchant galleys that sailed from Venice to Alexandria and to Beirut between 1495 and 1515. The cargoes of galleys sailing on the *trafego* line, which ran between Venice, the Maghreb, Egypt, and Syria, are never referred to, most probably because their role in carrying Western goods to the lands of the Mamluk Sultanate was negligible. Altogether, the cargoes of twenty out of thirty-two galley convoys that sailed to Syria and Egypt during those two decades are described, at least to some extent, by the diarists (some of the descriptions refer to both lines). These descriptions have been put together in Appendix A. Another cargo list used here belongs to a private ship that sailed to Syria in 1499.[12] The second type of sources includes two merchant manuals *(Tariffe)* of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries: the unpublished ″Tarifa″ [sic] of 1494, bearing the name of Lorenzo Rimondo [Arimondo] and mainly concerned with Alexandria, and Bartolomeo de´ Paxi´s *Tariffa,* first published in Venice in 1503. Both of them offer very precious and generally up-to-date information on Venetian trading activities at the turn of the sixteenth century.[13] Their lists of products imported into Egypt and Syria are included in Appendix B. Other sources, Venetian and Arabic, and, of course, several modern studies, have been used to try and clear up questions concerning the role of Cyprus in this commercial relationship, as well as the provenance and the patterns of consumption of goods imported into Mamluk lands.[14] This last aspect, however, still remains greatly unexplored.

Before turning to analyze the material drawn from these two types of sources, it is necessary to refer to their reliability. The cargo lists found in the Venetian diaries are not directly drawn from the ships´ manifests, but rather indirect reconstructions, mostly based on reports that the captains of galley convoys sent from the ports of Istria, before sailing to the East.[15] As far as the items mentioned in the lists are concerned, there is no reason to doubt the veracity of data provided by the diarists. More caution should be applied when using the quantitative data included in these lists, in view of the rather uncertain course they had passed

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[12]Benjamin Arbel, ″Attraverso il Mediterraneo nel 1499: una nave veneziana naufragata a Cipro e il suo carico,″ in *Le vie del Mediterraneo: Idee, uomini, oggetti (secoli XI–XVI),* ed. Gabriela Airaldi (Genoa, 1997), 103–15.

[13]Lorenzo Rimondo, ″Tarifa de prexi e spesse achade a metter e ttrar marchadanttie di la terra de Alexandria e alttri lochi etc.,″ Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, MS It. VII 545 (7530); Bartolomeo de´ Paxi, *Tariffa de pexi e mesure del prestantissimo miser Bartholomeo di Paxi da Venetia* (Venice, 1503).

[14]My thanks go to Housni al-Khateeb Shehada for helping me locate and use the Mamluk sources.

[15]On these and other types of cargo lists, see Benjamin Arbel, ″Les listes de chargement des bateaux vénitiens: un essai de typologie,″ in *Mélanges en l´honneur de Michel Balard*, *Byzantina Sorbonensia* (forthcoming).

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before ending up in these diaries. This uncertainty is reflected in the inconsistencies between different reports referring to the same convoy, when available.[16] Except for a short analysis of overall figures referring to the comprehensive value of cargos and precious metals shipped eastward, we shall therefore forego quantitative speculations, contenting ourselves with identifying those products that appear time and again on these lists, and using the numerical data mainly to get a general idea of the order of magnitude of the shipments concerned. For the sake of brevity, this reservation will not be repeated henceforward whenever numbers taken from these lists are cited.

The two commercial manuals present a different problematic. As for Rimondo´s *Tariffa,* thanks to Ugo Tucci we may consider it one of the new types of manuals that appeared in the Venetian commercial milieu at the end of the fifteenth century, being composed by Venetian factors overseas (in this case by Lorenzo Arimondo who was active in Alexandria) and intended for practical use by these agents. We may therefore consider it to authentically reflect the Egyptian market for Venetian imports during those years.[17] Paxi´s book, on the other hand, has been attributed by Tucci to another category of manuals, which mainly served for training of young merchants. But Tucci also emphasized that the training of merchants necessitated up-to-date instruments,[18] and there is no reason to exclude the possibility that an impressive work like that of Paxi genuinely reflected the movements and content of Venetian trade in the Levant at the time of its first appearance in print (1503). In the prologue to his work, Paxi declares that it was the fruit of long and serious effort and laborious study *(grave e longa mia faticha e laborioso studio)*.[19] In fact, there are several indications that Paxi´s book was indeed the consequence of a genuine effort to provide up-to-date material on the world of international trade in the period of its original publication. Tucci has noted, for example, the updating of the measure for oil in Constantinople,[20] and Paxi´s careful reference to the spice *kanter* [=*qinṭār*] of Damascus,[21] to which I may add the absence of Coron and Modon, the important Venetian ports in the southern Peloponnese,

[16]See, for example, Appendix A, for Malipiero´s and Priuli´s reports on the galleys sailing to Alexandria in summer 1498, and Sanudo´s and Priuli´s reports on the Alexandria convoy of 1511.

[17]For problems related to the use of merchant manuals, with special emphasis on the Venetian ones, see Ugo Tucci, ″Tariffe veneziane e libri toscani di mercatura,″ *Studi veneziani* 10 (1968): 65–108, esp. 92–97; idem, ″Manuali di mercatura e pratica degli affari nel medioevo,″ in *Fatti e idee di storia economica nei secoli XII–XX: Studi dedicati a Franco Borlandi* (Bologna, 1976), 215–31.

[18]Tucci, ″Manuali,″ 220.

[19]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 1v.

[20]Tucci, ″Manuali,″ 226.

[21]Tucci, ″Tariffe veneziane,″ 107–8.

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which had been lost in 1500, and which were not re-integrated into the post-war system of Venetian commerce.[22] Admittedly, the opening of the Atlantic spice-route to India is not yet reflected in this book,[23] but this is quite understandable, considering its date of publication.[24] In any event, our scope in using this sort of source is limited to defining the main categories and nature of goods imported by Venetians to the Mamluk lands, and possibly to tracking down their provenance. For this purpose, and although no systematic research has yet been carried out to corroborate this hypothesis, I tend to consider the first edition of Paxi´s manual as a trustworthy presentation of the contents of Levantine trade in general, and of importations into Mamluk lands in particular, in the late fifteenth and the first years of the sixteenth century. A comparison between the lists of goods shipped to the Levant that are included in these manuals with the cargo lists of galleys sailing to those parts, as well as with other commercial papers, seems to corroborate this hypothesis.

The cargo lists of Venetian merchant galleys sailing eastward, and the cargo list of a round ship wrecked off Cyprus on its way to Syria, present a quite coherent picture of which products were expected to find buyers in eastern markets. A first group of such items includes different kinds of metals and their products.

Precious metals constituted a most important item among Venetian importations into Egypt and Syria. Gold reached Venice mainly from the Maghreb and from Hungary, and silver from the Tyrol, and probably also from Serbia and Bosnia.[25] They were exported to Mamluk lands in the form of silver and gold coins (including Mamluk *ashrafī*s),[26] silver ingots, silver and gold artifacts, and even as gold dust

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[22]Benjamin Arbel, ″The Ionian Islands and Venice´s Trading System during the Sixteenth Century,″ *Acts of the Sixth International Panionian Congress,* 1997 (Athens, 2001), 2:147–60. The war with the Ottomans was concluded in 1503.

[23]Tucci, ″Tariffe veneziane,″ 97.

[24]Only in July 1501, two years after the event, was the news about Da Gama´s return from India confirmed in Venice. Besides, though no spices were found in Alexandria in 1499, the quantities of spices that reached Venice from Alexandria and Beirut in 1500 and 1502 were far greater than those reaching Lisbon. See Ruggiero Romano, Alberto Tenenti, and Ugo Tucci, ″Venise et la route du Cap: 1499–1517,″ in *Mediterraneo e Oceano Indiano: Atti del sesto colloquio internazionale di storia Marittima,* ed. Manlio Cortelazzo (Florence, 1970), 109–12.

[25]Eliyahu Ashtor, *Les métaux précieux et la balance des payements du Proche-Orient à la basse époque* (Paris, 1971), 41–42, 46, 50.

[26]See Fernand Braudel and Alberto Tenenti, ″Michiel da Lezze, marchand vénitien (1497–1514),″ in *Wirtschaft, Geschichte und Wirtschaftsgeschichte: Festschrift zum 65 Geburtstag von Friedrich Lütge,* ed. Wilhelm Abel et al. (Stuttgart, 1966), 43 (1497), 62 (1507), 71 (1511).

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(tiber) that reached Alexandria from Tripoli on board Venetian galleys.[27] These distinctions are not reflected in the cargo lists of our diarists, who preferred to express the overall value of precious metals sent on board these ships in terms of Venetian ducats. This does not mean, however, that the entire sum referred to consisted of gold ducats. In fact, silver ingots and coins are never mentioned separately in the cargo lists, although we know for certain that they were shipped to Mamluk territories in great quantities.[28] The Venetian mint even issued special silver coins for exportation to the Levant, worth less than the standard silver coins circulating in Venice.[29] In a commercial letter sent from Famagusta to Venice in 1511 it was reported that the galleys sailing that year to the Levant were carrying silver coins to the value of 100,000 ducats.[30] And at the beginning of the sixteenth century, a French observer noted that in the Venetian mint, silver ingots weighing about 25 marks each (some 6 kg.), were especially produced for exportation to the Levant, to a total annual amount equivalent of about 800,000 ducats.[31] A great part of those must have reached Mamluk territories.

Though not bothering to distinguish between gold and silver, our diarists do, however, use other distinctions that cannot be easily understood. For example, with reference to the Beirut galleys of November 1502 and to the Alexandria galleys of March 1503 and of March 1511, Priuli distinguishes between what he calls *aver di cassa a nollo* or *al nolo,* and *aver di cassa di marcadanti;* Sanudo, on the other hand, uses different distinctions in 1501 and 1511, referring to *aver di cassa d´aviso* and *aver di cassa in scrigni*.[32] These distinctions may partly be understood if we consider that cash money or silver ingots transported on the

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[27]See Appendix B-I.

[28]For overall estimations of precious metals shipped to Egypt and Syria during the period under examination, see Appendix C. For silver, see Ashtor, *Les métaux précieux,* 50; and Frederic C. Lane, *Venice, A Maritime Republic,* 287, 299. E.g.: expressing his dissatisfaction with the fact that Venetians unloaded their ships at Tripoli instead of Beirut in 1499, the governor of Damascus seized 52 sachets *(groppi)* of silver coins kept by Venetian merchants (Malipiero, ″Annali,″ 649); see also the list of coins sent in 1505 by Michiel da Lezze on board the Barbary galleys, where the value of each coin sachet is expressed in ducats, specifying at the same time that they actually contained silver coins *(Mozenigi)* (Braudel and Tenenti, ″Michiel da Lezze,″ 57).

[29]Sanudo mentions a decision taken in March 1498 by the Council of Ten in this regard: Sanudo, *I diarii,* 1:903.

[30]Ugo Tucci, ″Monete e banche nel secolo del ducato d´oro,″ in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima,* vol. 5, *Il Rinascimento: Società ed economia,* ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci (Rome, 1996), 785.

[31]Frederic C. Lane and Reinhold C. Mueller, *Money and Banking in Medieval and Renaissance Venice,* vol. 1, *Coins and Moneys of Account* (Baltimore and London, 1985), 165.

[32]See Appendix A.

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galleys were subject to freight charges. When writing about the quantity of gold and silver (referred to as ″ducats″) on the Alexandria galleys of 1498, Priuli comments that the sum might be much higher than 240,000 ducats, because ″they always declare a lower sum, since they have to pay freight charges″ *(sempre se dice de menno* [sic] *per el pagar del nolo).*[33] The sums mentioned by the diarists should therefore be taken as estimates, including a sum on which freight charges were paid, according to the report *(aviso)* of the convoy´s captain, and an additional sum, which could not be accurately evaluated, since it pertained to gold and silver kept in private strong-boxes *(scrigni)* on board. Another expression found in Priuli´s diary with reference to the Alexandria convoy of 1510, namely *traze le galie di nolo, d´aviso,* does not appear to refer to specie shipped on board, but rather to the sums owed to the galleys on account of freight charges.

In any case, huge amounts of silver and gold yearly reached Egypt and Syria not only on board state galleys, for which we have more information, but also on the privately-owned ships, though on the whole it can be surmised that the latter carried smaller amounts of precious metals, since spices, normally shipped on galleys, were much more expensive than goods exported from Mamluk lands on round ships, and galleys were also better protected against pirates. As a rule, sums sent to Alexandria were higher in comparison with those sent to Syria.

The fact that large quantities of gold and silver were imported annually by Venetians into Mamluk lands is often referred to as a reflection of Venice´s unfavorable trade balance with the Mamluks. Without discarding this claim altogether, it seems that behind this steady flow of precious metals into Mamluk territories there is another economic factor. Precious metals, even in the form of coins, were considered a commodity, similar to copper, tin, or woolens. Merchants had to pay freight charges for gold or silver coins shipped on the galleys, and when reaching Egypt, they were also subject to customs dues.[34] Even more significant is the fact that during the period under consideration, it was more profitable to export silver to the East than gold. This can be inferred, for example, from a remark made by Marino Sanudo in August 1498, writing that considerable quantities of old coins and gold were sent on the galleys sailing to Alexandria; however, he writes, one could not expect to make a profit out of these gold pieces *(di li qual*

[33]Priuli, *I diarii,* 1:94.

[34]On freight charges on coins, see, for example, the account made in 1413 at Ḥamāh by Lorenzo Priuli, where a sum is accounted for the payment of freight for a sachet containing 200 ducats: Archivio di Stato di Venezia (hereafter: ASV), Miscellanea di carte non appartenenti ad alcun archivio, busta 18. In Alexandria, gold ducats were subject to a customs due of 1 per cent, whereas silver coins and ingots had to pay 1 ducat for every 6 *rotoli zeroi* [=*raṭl jarwī*] and 1 ounce (1 ducat for 12 *lire grosse*). See Paxi, *Tariffa,* 49r.

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ori non si farà bene).[35] In fact, it is very likely that the large sums expressed in ducats were actually often brought eastward in the form of silver coins and silver ingots.[36] On silver ingots exported to Alexandria, which had 60 karats of copper per mark of silver (the same alloy as the *Marcelli* coins in Venice), Venetians could make a profit amounting to 4-5 per cent when selling them in Alexandria. This is explicitly stated in Paxi's commercial manual, though with reference to the past, before a slight change in the standard weights of silver was introduced.[37] But it can be surmised that profit could still be substantial, considering the great sums involved. These profits seem rather low in comparison with those that could be enjoyed from other branches of trade, but silver (like gold) was a merchandise that Venetians could dispose of immediately, whereas in the case of other goods it was not always certain when and at what price they could be sold.

Besides for coinage, silver and gold were widely used by the Mamluks for many purposes, such as robes of honor, riding outfits, writing instruments, and various ornaments.[38] Briefly, silver was in demand and was more valuable in the East than in Europe. Moreover, this demand for silver in Mamluk territories seems to have been connected to an even higher demand in India and the Far East, ensuring the constant flow of this metal from Venice into Egypt and Syria, and most probably also farther eastward.[39]

Among other metals shipped eastward, copper in particular was highly sought after in Mamluk lands, since all lists discovered so far include at least one sort of copper cargo, and mostly more. During the fourteenth and early fifteenth century, Italian merchants imported copper into Egypt from the northern shores of Anatolia.[40]

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[35]Sanudo, *I diarii,* 1:1032.

[36]In 1497, no ingots could be found for shipment to the East. See Appendix A-III.

[37]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 49r.

[38]Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-al-Iʿtibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Cairo, 1996), 2:3:158–59, 170–71; Leo A. Mayer, *Mamluk Costume: a Survey* (Geneva, 1952), 25 (silver and golden belts), 35 (spurs overlaid with silver or gold); Carl Petry, ″Robing Ceremonials in Late Mamluk Egypt: Hallowed Traditions, Shifting Protocols,″ in *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture,* ed. Stewart Gordon (New York, 2001), 363 (golden sword, gold saddle, gold insignia).

[39]Ashtor, *Les métaux précieux*, 52; idem, ″Ma'din,″ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., 5:963b; J. Michael Rogers, ″To and Fro: Aspects of Mediterranean Trade and Consumption in the 15th and 16th Centuries,″ *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditéranée* 55–56 (1990): 61, 63. Rogers' statement that Venetian merchants settled their purchases in gold (ibid., 63) seems to be based on the wrong assumption that all the sums of cash and other forms of precious metals shipped eastward, which are expressed in ducats, represent real gold coins.

[40]Philippe Braunstein, ″Le marché du cuivre à Venise à la fin du Moyen Age,″ in *Schwerpunkte der Kupferproduktion und des Kupferhandels in Europa 1500–1650,* ed. Hermann Kellenbenz (Vienna, 1977), 85; Ashtor, ″Ma'din,″ 963b.

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Yet the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, and the gradual closing of the Black Sea to Italian ships, may have enhanced the importance of copper imported by the Venetians to Egypt and Syria from Europe, where copper production considerably expanded precisely during those decades.[41]

Quantities mentioned in our sources are impressive. In 1496, according to Malipiero, the galleys left in Alexandria no less than 10,000 *qinṭār*s of copper, equivalent to some 954 tons;[42] in 1501, 381 tons were sent to Beirut; in 1503, Priuli noted in his diary that the copper exported to Egypt, all sent by one Venetian merchant, Michiel Foscari, amounted to 1,000 *miera* (about 477 tons), in addition to 400 *miera* loaded on private ships and 300 more awaiting further passage, altogether about 811 tons.[43] In 1510, the value of copper exported to Alexandria on board the galleys was estimated by Sanudo at 50,000 ducats.[44] Comparing these impressive quantities to the much lower ones included in two late fourteenth-century cargo lists of the Alexandria galleys—about 212 *miera* (94.6 tons) and 70 *miera* (33.3 tons) in 1395 and 1400 respectively—one may wonder whether what seems to be a spectacular increase really represents a marked rise in the demand for copper in Egypt and Syria towards the end of the Mamluk period.[45]

Most of the copper shipped eastward had originated from the Tyrol and from Slovakia and was brought to Venice by German merchants. It could have reached Venice in various forms, but part of it may have undergone some industrial

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[41]It has been estimated that between 1460 and 1530, the production of European copper had quintupled: J. U. Nef, ″Mining and Metallurgy in European Civilization,″ *Cambridge Economic History of Europe,* vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1952), 469–70.

[42]Copper was weighed in Venice in thousandweights *(miera)* of *lire di grossi;* each *miera* was equivalent to around 477 kg. In Alexandria it was weighed in *qinṭār*s *jarwī* (in Venetian terminology: *canter ceroi* or *geroi*), each one of which was equivalent to around 95.4 kg. Paxi, *Tariffa,* 7v, 44r; *Lettres d'un marchand vénitien: Andrea Berengo (1553–1556),* ed. Ugo Tucci (Paris, 1957), 357; Eliyahu Ashtor, ″Levantine Weights and Standard Parcels: A Contribution to the Metrology of the Later Middle Ages,″ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 45 (1982): 473.

[43]Priuli, *I diarii,* 2:255. Between 1495 and 1503, Michiel Foscari exported to Alexandria 1555 tons of copper. See Braunstein, ″Le marché du cuivre,″ 92.

[44]Sanudo, *I diarii,* 9:516. See also Ashtor, *Les métaux précieux,* 58–64. Though mainly brought on board Venetian ships, copper could occasionally reach Egypt on board other vessels (ibid., 64). See also idem, ″Profits from Trade with the Levant in the Fifteenth Century,″ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38 (1975): 253–54. Since Ashtor does not specify what the original terms translated by him as ″copper plates″ and ″polished plates″ were, his data should be treated cautiously.

[45]Jacques Heers, ″Il commercio nel Mediterraneo alla fine del sec. XIV e nei primi anni del XV,″ *Archivio Storico Italiano* 113 (1955): 167. If the amount of copper shipped in 1395 and 1400 can really be considered ″important quantities″ (ibid.), how should we describe the shipments of 1497 and 1503, which were about eight or nine times as big?

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process in Germany, in Venice itself or in its neighboring territories, before being sent eastward in the form of semi-finished or finished products.[46] It is indeed listed under different headings in the cargo lists: the greatest quantities appear to have been shipped as copper "loaves" *(rami in pan),* most likely raw copper packed in baskets or cases; another common form of shipment included copper bars *(rami in verga);* copper wire *(fil di rame)* was also often shipped on galleys sailing to the east; another category included "worked copper" *(rami lavoradi)*. The significance of the latter can be deduced from a passage in Paxi's manual mentioning "worked copper products, that is coppers" *(rami lavorati, zoè caldiere)*. Ugo Tucci explains that this term signifies semi-finished copper vessels, ready for further elaboration by Egyptian or Syrian coppersmiths.[47] Some of these vessels could have been made of brass, an alloy widely diffused in Mamluk lands for various purposes.[48] Another copper product shipped to Mamluk ports was verdigris *(verdirame),* a green crystallized substance formed on copper by acetic acid. It could have been produced from copper in Venice or Murano, before being shipped eastward.

The uses of all these kinds of copper (*nuḥās*), brass *(shabah, bīrinj),* and

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[46]Braunstein, "Le marché du cuivre," 86–88. Copper also reached Venice by sea, on board the Flanders galleys; see ibid., 86, and Ugo Tucci, "Il rame nell'economia veneziana del secolo XVI," in *Schwerpunkte der Kupferproduktion,* 102.

[47]Tucci, "Il rame," 96.

[48]Michael Rogers suggests that the absence of zinc from bills of lading means that much of the *rami* must actually have been brass, yet zinc was only identified as a distinct metal at a much later stage; cf. Rogers, "To and Fro," 65. The Beirut galleys of 1498 are said to have carried 164 baskets *(coffe)* of copper loaves, whereas those sailing to Alexandria that year had, according to Sanudo, 1,168 (according to Malipiero—1,100) copper baskets on board. The cargo list of 1499 includes 19 packs of "worked copper" *(rami lavoradi)* sent by Antonio Negro to his son Alvise in Beirut (Arbel, "Attraverso il Mediterraneo," 113). In 1500, the galleys of Beirut had 354 cases of copper loaves *(rami in pan),* and 51 cases of copper bars for Alexandria; the Alexandria galleys of the same year carried 1,234 baskets *(coffe)* of copper loaves, 40 loads of copper bars, 30 of "worked copper," and 28 of copper wire. The Alexandria galleys of 1501 had 800 *miera* (some 381 tons) of copper loaves on board (all of them shipped by the firm Agostini dal Banco), and those sailing to Beirut an unspecified quantity of the same. The Beirut galleys that departed in November 1502 had on board 233 cases of copper loaves, 5 of worked copper, and 12 bundles of copper wire. The galleys of Alexandria that sailed in March 1503 (originally the 1502 galleys) had 2,463 cases of copper loaves, 188 bundles of copper bars, 76 bales of worked copper, and 24 bundles of copper wire. The galleys of Alexandria that sailed in October 1503, though rather poor and empty, nevertheless carried 268 copper baskets. In 1504 the Alexandria galleys carried 500 copper baskets. In 1510, the galleys of Alexandria had on board 316 baskets of copper loaves, 327 barrels of copper bars, 16 bales of worked copper *(rami lavoradi),* and 14 bundles *(fardi)* of copper wire. The galleys of Alexandria sailing in 1511 had 505 lots of copper rods, 527 cases of copper loaves, 106 of worked copper, and 9 cases of verdigris. The Beirut galleys of 1513 carried 77 copper loaves and 2 bundles of copper wire. For references to the galleys' cargo lists, see Appendix A.

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derived products in Egypt and Syria were, of course, manifold, such as the minting of coins (both small coins—*fulūs*—and silver coins with copper alloy), military uses, house utensils and ornamental objects, the roofing of mosques and palaces, as well as for medical use and for dyeing (in the case of verdigris). Copper was regularly accepted as barter payment in exchange for pepper and other spices in Syria and Egypt.[49] Copper objects also seem to have served as status symbols. In his fifteenth-century description of Cairo, al-Maqrīzī´s mentions ornamented copper objects carried in a procession, as well as copper watering vessels in the stables of a prominent amir.[50]

Tin was also a common cargo on Venetian ships sailing to Egypt and Syria. Paxi mentions Flanders as the origin of tin bars imported into Syria, but that must have been associated with the fact that Venice imported tin on board the Flanders galleys, which also called on English ports. In fact, most of the tin traded by Venetians must have originated from Cornwall.[51] According to Paxi, tin reached Alexandria in the form of rods *(in verga)*.[52] This important material could, of course, be used for preparing bronze *(ṣafr),* but it has been pointed out that in fifteenth-century Egypt bronze appears to have been replaced by leaded brass.[53] However, tin was also used for tinning of copper vessels, kitchen utensils, and implements. Eric Vallet suggests that since it always followed woolens in price lists of merchants´ letters, it was, among non-precious metals, the greatest in demand on the Syrian market of the early 1480s.[54]

Steel *(azzali),* probably produced in the area of Brescia, appears only once in our lists.[55] It was, of course, an important material for Mamluk armorers, and Egypt and Syria might have been supplied with it from other sources. On the other hand, tinned iron plates always figure in these cargo lists, where they appear under three headings: *banda larga, banda raspa',* and *piastre di laton.*[56] Iron

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[49]Tucci, ″Il rame,″ 97.

[50]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:3:110.

[51]The galleys sailing to Beirut in 1498 carried 22 bundles *(fardi)* of tin. The ship wrecked in 1499 had 8 bundles of tin [bars?] sent by Marcantonio Morosini to Syria: Arbel, ″Attraverso il Mediterraneo,″ 113. The 1500 galleys of Beirut had 112 such bundles; the galleys sailing to Beirut had 130 tin bundles *(fassi)* on board. The 1503 galleys of Alexandria carried 182 bundles; the 1510 galleys of Alexandria carried 45 cases *(casse)*. The 1511 cargo list of the galleys of Alexandria has 106 packages; the Beirut galleys of 1513 carried 11 bundles of ″fine tin.″

[52]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 43v.

[53]Rogers, ″To and Fro,″ 64, based on P. T. Craddock, ″The Copper Alloys of the Medieval Islamic World Inheritors of the Classical Tradition,″ *World Archaeology* 9, no. 1 (1979): 68–79.

[54]Vallet, *Marchands vénitiens,* 84.

[55]20 *azalli* packages figure in the cargo list of the Alexandria galleys of 1511.

[56]The galleys sailing to Alexandria in 1498 had 71 bundles of *banda larga* and those sailing to

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mainly reached Venice from Styria and Carinthia, and its tinning was probably carried out in Venice itself, or in the Venetian mainland.[57] The importation of iron plates into Egypt and Syria must have been intended for specific purposes, whose exact nature can only be guessed at this stage. Military uses have certainly to be taken into consideration, but civil uses, for construction and for all sorts of instruments and utensils should not be excluded either.

Lead, most probably brought from the Balkans, can also occasionally be found in those cargo lists.[58] Lead was used for the production of leaded brass, for water conducts in aqueducts, for public and private baths, for roofing of important buildings, and generally for protecting iron from corrosion.[59] A kind of lead, called *raṣāṣ qal'ī,* served for manufacturing breast chain-mail.[60]

Information on further uses of lead in these regions can be found in the thirteenth-century pharmaceutical treatise of Ibn al-Bīṭār (died in 1248), who was also active in Damascus. The fact that it was still relevant in the later Mamluk period and even afterwards is attested by the medical treatise of a sixteenth-century doctor from Antioch, Dā'ūd al-Anṭākī (died in 1599). The latter distinguished between two different qualities of lead *(raṣāṣ): asrab* and *qal'ī* (a synonym for *qaṣdīr*). The former was of inferior quality, not fully distilled, and could be easily processed by smiths. The pharmaceutical uses of lead were manifold. It was ground into different ointments (especially for cosmetic purposes), rendering them more effective, and also used for disinfecting wounds and stopping bleeding. It served against various skin diseases, against tumors, especially in the sexual organs, against hemorrhoids, against stings of scorpions, and against masturbation of

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Beirut, 63 barrels of *banda*. The 1499 cargo list has 6 barrels of *banda raspa´* sent to Beirut by Hieronimo and Jacomo Striga: Arbel, ″Attraverso il Mediterraneo,″ 113. The 1500 galleys of Beirut had 18 barrels of *banda raspa´;* those sailing to Alexandria that year had 50 bundles of *banda larga.* The galleys of Alexandria departing in March 1503 had 282 bundles of *banda larga* on board. The Alexandria galleys of 1510 had 4 barrels of *banda raspa´*. The Alexandria galleys of 1511 had 19 barrels of *banda raspa´* and 57 packages of *banda larga* as well as *piastre di latton.* The Beirut galleys of 1513 carried 15 bundles of *banda larga,* and 2 of *banda raspa´*. Paxi explicitly explains the term *banda larga* as tinned iron *(Banda larga zoè ferro restagnado):* Paxi, *Tariffa,* 51r.

[57]Philippe Braunstein, ″Le commerce du fer à Venise au XVe siècle,″ *Studi Veneziani* 8 (1966): 268, 277. Michiel Foscari, whom we have already encountered as a copper exporter to Egypt, was also involved in iron production and exportation: he invested in mines, controlled the processing of iron at Belluno, and exported iron products to Crete and the Levant (ibid.).

[58]Paxi gives equivalents for weight units of Ragusa and Alexandria with reference to lead. See Paxi, *Tariffa,* 44r. The galleys sailing to Alexandria in 1498 carried 55 lots *(pr.)* of lead; the Beirut galleys of 1500 had 32 m. *[miera?]* of lead; the Alexandria galleys of 1510 had 130 ″pieces.″

[59]Ashtor, ″Ma'din,″ 963b.

[60]*Al-Munjid fī al-Lughah wa-al-A'lām,* 28th ed. (Beirut, 1986), 654.

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adolescents. Putting five *dirham*s under someone´s pillow could cause hallucinations, and a few drops sprinkled into one´s ear were considered an effective protection against murder. Rings made of lead were considered effective against becoming overweight. It was also used in agriculture, to prevent fruits from falling immaturely, and in small quantities it was used as a pesticide.[61]

Mercury also seems to have been in demand both in Syria and Egypt, since it figures on four of our cargo lists.[62] Mercury veins were discovered in 1490 at Idria, in the province of Gorizia, and later it was from there that Venetians acquired this material.[63] Among other purposes, especially gilding,[64] mercury *(zi'baq)* was commonly used in Mamluk lands for medical purposes, such as against lice (in combination with other substances), for treating dermatological problems, as well as against muscle and joint pains. It was used externally against bad smells and swollen throats.[65] Mercury also served for preparing cinnabar *(zenabrii),* or mercuric sulfide (vermilion), a decorative dyestuff figuring on several of these cargo lists,[66] which was produced on the island of Murano.

Textiles of various types constituted an important component of Venetian shipments to Syria and Egypt. Most of them were woolens of different qualities and provenance. Eliyahu Ashtor dedicated a long and detailed study to the exportation of Western textiles to the Muslim Orient in the later Middle Ages, a study that opens much wider vistas than our cargo lists, which hardly specify the origins of these products.[67] Only cloths made in Venice and a few specific types of cloth are occasionally listed separately. Such is the case of kerseys, which were

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[61]Dā'ūd ibn 'Umar al-Anṭākī, *Tadhkarat Ūlī al-Albāb wa-al-Jāmi' lil-'Ajab al-'Ujāb* (Beirut, n.d.), 1:168; cf. Ḍiā' al-Dīn Abī Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh Ibn Aḥmad al-Andalusī al-Māliqī Ibn al-Bīṭār, *Al-Jāmi' li-Mufradāt al-Adwiyah wa-al-Aghdhiyah* (Beirut 1992): 1:434–37.

[62]The galleys sailing to Beirut in 1498 had 35 lots of mercury according to Sanudo and 63 *boioli* (vases) of the same product according to Malipiero; in 1500 the Beirut galleys had 248 barrels marked ″for Alexandria″; in 1503 the Alexandria galleys—60 barrels; in 1510, 50 barrels were sent to Alexandria, and in 1511, 251 [barrels?].

[63]Philippe Braunstein, ″Zur Frügeschichte des Bergbaus und Quecksilberhandels von Idria,″ *Neues aus Alt-Villach,* vol. 2, *Jahrbuch des Stadtmuseums* (Villach, 1965), 41–45.

[64]Rogers, ″To and Fro,″ 64.

[65]*Zi'baq* was widely used for dermatological purposes, both for humans and non-human animals: Ibn al-Bīṭār, *Al-Jāmi',* 1:487–88; al-Anṭākī, *Tadhkarat Ūlī al-Albāb,* 1:184.

[66]On the Venetian production, see Luzzatto, *Storia economica,* 180. In 1498, 27 lots of cinnabar were sent to Beirut; in 1500 the Beirut galleys carried 256 cases and those sailing to Alexandria, 307 cases. In 1503 the Alexandria galleys had 78 barrels of cinnabar on board; in 1510 the Alexandria galleys had 44 cases, and in 1511, 21 cases, 5 of which belonged to Michiel da Lezze. See Braudel and Tenenti, ″Michiel da Lezze,″ 71. See also Rogers, ″To and Fro,″ 64.

[67]Eliyahu Ashtor, ″L´exportation de textiles occidentaux dans le Proche Orient musulman au bas Moyen Age (1370–1517),″ in *Studi in memoria di Federigo Melis* (Naples, 1978), 2:303–77.

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relatively cheap woolens originally produced in England but subsequently imitated in many other places.[68] The latter may probably be identified with the woolen cloth called *al-jūkh,* the use of which became so widespread in al-Maqrīzī´s time.[69] Some lists also mention separately linen cloths *(tele),* serge cloths *(sarze),* and *grixi,* or *grisi,* which were cheap woolens, as well as a few specific types of garments, imported in small quantities, such as *bernusi* (women´s gowns known in the east as *burnus*), *carpette* (most likely also women´s garments), and *gonele de griso* (probably a type of men´s coats).[70]

Since our cargo lists provide only a little information on the origin and type of cloth sent to Egypt and Syria, it is worthwhile to cite the relevant paragraphs of Paxi´s *Tariffa*, more helpful in this regard. Among those sent to Alexandria, he mentions:

> Fine Venetian cloths, scarlet and dark blue *(paunazi)* cloths, Paduan scarlet cloths, Brescian cloths, ″bastard″ cloths, Southampton cloths *(panni santani), rocha* cloths,[71] cloths from Geneva and from Feltre, that is dyed *bianchete* [a type of cheap cloth], and other kinds of cloths.[72]

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[68]The galleys sailing to Alexandria in 1498 had 71 bales of cloths on board, while those sailing to Beirut had 418 bales; the ship wrecked in 1499 had 6 bales and one bundle of woolens sent to Syria: Arbel, ″Attraverso il Mediterraneo,″ 113. The 1500 Beirut galleys had 400 bales of *panni* and those sailing that year to Alexandria, 133 bales; the galleys sailing to Beirut in October 1501 carried 330 bales of woolens; the Beirut galleys of 1502 had 560 bales of *panni* on board; those that sailed to Alexandria in 1503 had 127 bales. The Beirut galleys of 1504 had 450 bales; the Alexandria galleys of 1510 had 180 bales of Venetian woolen ″of various sorts,″ 110 bales of woolens originating from Western Europe *(panni di Ponente)* of various sorts, and 100 bales of kerseys. The Alexandria line of 1511 had 134 bales of woolens on board; and the Beirut galleys of 1513 carried 241 bales.

[69]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:3:159; Mayer, *Mamluk Costume,* 25; Ashtor, ″L´exportation,″ 305.

[70]See the list of the Beirut galleys of 1502 (12 bales of *sarze,* 11 of *tele,* and 11 rolls of *grixi*), and the Alexandria galleys of 1510 (8 bales of *bernusi*) and 1511 (2 packings of *gonele de griso*). For *bernussi,* see Salvatore Battaglia, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* (Turin, 1961–2002), 2:186; for *sarze,* ibid, 17:580; for *carpetta,* see Nicolò Tommaseo and Bernardo Bellin, *Nuovo dizionario della lingua italiana* (Turin, 1865), 1:1253; on *griso* (pl. *grisi*), see Achille Vitali, *La moda a Venezia attraverso i secoli: Lessico Ragionato* (Venice, 1992), 210.

[71]*Rocha* may derive from *roça,* i.e., madder, meaning cloths dyed with this material. According to another interpretation, not entirely contradictory, this term denotes low-quality cloths. I am grateful to Dr. Edoardo Demo and Dr. Andrea Mozzato for their assistance in trying to sort out the expressions related to woolens in Paxi´s *Tariffa*.

[72]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 48r.

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Woolens exported to Damascus are listed by him as follows:

> Fine Venetian cloths, some scarlet, some dark blue, Paduan ″bastard″ cloths, fine Florentine cloths, Brescian cloths, narrow cloths from Bergamo, washed and sheared *(bagnadi e cimadi),* expurgated cloths from Bergamo *(panni bergamaschi tiradi),* Guildfort cloths *(panni Zilforto),* Southampton cloths, *sesse* [Essex] cloths,[73] Saint Ursula cloths, narrow Geneva cloths, full-size cloths from Majorca *(panni maiorini integri),* large Geneva cloths, half-size cloths from Majorca *(panni mezzi maiorini),* cheap cloths of the *Fontego (panni de fontego),* large Flemish serge cloths, narrow Flemish serge cloths, *panni zinese le vestrine*,[74] hemp cloths.[75]

Shorter lists are given by Paxi for Aleppo and Tripoli, though with slight variations, as for instance concerning the colors preferred on the Aleppo market: beside the dark violet *(paonazo)* and scarlet, typical for Venetian cloth also shipped to Egypt, we have azure, white, and green, as far as Florentine cloth was concerned.[76] Judging by a few merchant letters written in Syria in 1484, Western woolens sold on the Syrian market at that time were those from Bergamo, Brescia, and Vicenza in the Venetian mainland, as well as cloths from Geneva, Southampton, Essex, the cloths known as *panni bastardi,* cloths of the *fontego,* and serges.[77]

Silk cloth of various types was imported in smaller quantities than woolen cloth to the Mamluk East. Our cargo lists mention gold cloth *(panni d′oro)* or simply ″silk cloth″ *(panni di seta),* very likely products of Venice′s important luxury industries, exported for the refined Mamluk clientele.[78] Al-Maqrīzī explicitly

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[73]The term *sesse* sometimes denotes oriental textile, but in the present case it is obviously a Western product sent eastward. Cf. *Ambasciata straordinaria al sultano d′Egitto (1489–1490)*, ed. Franco Rossi (Venice, 1988), 225; John Wansbrough, ″A Mamluk Letter of 877 (1473),″ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 24 (1961): 209, citing Quatremère.

[74]The significance of these terms remains to be elucidated.

[75]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 54r.

[76]Ibid., 56r–56v.

[77]Vallet, *Marchands vénitiens,* 281, 288, 297, 300–1. On *panni bastardi,* see Ashtor, ″L′exportation,″ 346–48. According to Ashtor, *panni de fontego* were of the cheapest sort (ibid., 313).

[78]The 1500 Beirut galleys had 6 cases with *pani d′oro et de seda* and those sailing to Alexandria, 7 cases of silk cloth *(pani de seda).* The Beirut galleys of 1502 had 10 cases of silk cloth; the galleys sailing to Alexandria in 1503 had 3 cases of silk cloth and one of gold cloth. The Alexandria galleys of 1510 had 2 cases of silk cloth whereas those of 1512 had 15 cases with silk and gold cloth. At the beginning of the sixteenth century there were as many as one thousand silk looms in Venice: Luzzatto, *Storia economica,* 176. See also Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of*

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mentions silk cloths worn by Mamluk amirs as being of Rūmī, that is European, origin.[79] We can partly overcome the succinct character of our lists with the help of the report on gifts presented in 1489–90 by the Venetian ambassador to Mamluk officials, which included luxurious silk cloths,[80] and also with the help of Paxi´s *Tariffa,* mentioning, for the Alexandria market, damask *(damaschi),* velvet *(veludi),* and cloth of gold *(panni d´oro)* and of silver *(panni d´arzento).*[81] For Damascus Paxi provides a slightly different and more detailed list, probably reflecting the tastes of local clients: to Damascus, the Venetians sent, besides damask and velvet, also gold brocade, *campo d´oro,* and silver brocade.[82]

Another category of luxury items included furs. We know, for example, from al-Maqrīzī´s writings that during his times, Egyptians of both sexes, especially but not exclusively Mamluks, used to ornament their clothing with furs of different sorts. The bestowal by the sultan of robes lined with expensive furs was customary as a reward for service, confirmation of an elite status, reconciliation, and restoration.[83] Another indication of the special interest of Mamluks in furs is the fact that they were exempt from customs dues when imported to Alexandria.[84] This weakness for Western furs seems to have been well known in Venice, for when Venetian ambassadors came to Egypt to negotiate with the Mamluks they brought along with them great amounts of furs to be presented to the sultan and his officials.[85] Our cargo lists mention sables *(zebellini)* and vairs *(vari),* which according to Paxi´s book were imported either raw or dressed.[86] To these we may

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Renaissance Venice: The Challenge of Innovation in a Mercantilist Economy 1450–1600 (Baltimore-London, 2000).

[79]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:3:369.

[80]*Ambasciata straordinaria,* 78–83.

[81]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 48r–48v.

[82]Ibid., 54r. For Aleppo and Tripoli, see ibid., 56v.

[83]Ibid., 168–69, 369; Mayer, *Mamluk Costume,* 14, 19, 23, 25; Petry, ″Robing Ceremonials,″ 363–64, 367–70.

[84]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 50.

[85]In 1489, Ambassador Pietro Diedo brought along 3,000 pieces of vairs and 80 of sables: *Ambasciata straordinaria*, 79. In 1512, Ambassador Domenico Trevisan brought as presents 120 sables, 4,500 vairs, and 400 ermines: Jehan Thenaud, *Le voyage d´outremer . . . 1512 suivi de la relation de l´ambassade de Domenico Trevisan au Soudan d´Egypte,* ed. Charles Schefer (Paris, 1884), 187.

[86]The 1500 Beirut galleys had 2 cases of marten´s furs and 3 of vairs; those sailing to Alexandria in the same year had 4 cases containing *″zebelini armilini″* and 2 containing vairs; the 1502 Beirut galleys had 9 barrels of vairs; the 1503 Alexandria galleys carried 8 barrels of vairs; the 1511 Alexandria galleys had 2 cases of marten furs and 19 of vairs; and the Beirut galleys of 1513 had 4 barrels of vairs, one case of ermines, and one of sables.

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add common marten furs *(martore),* stone marten [=beech marten] furs *(fuine),* and ermines *(ermellini),* mentioned in Paxi's manual among goods imported to Alexandria. It would be useful to identify the kinds of furs imported by the Venetians with those mentioned by al-Maqrīzī.[87] Vair *(varo)* must correspond to *sinjab,* whereas ermine *(ermellino)* probably corrsponds to *qamāqin* (=mod. Arabic: *qāqūm*?). Sable *(zibellino)* is normally translated as *sammūr,* but the same Arabic term is also given as a translation for common marten *(martone).*[88] *Fuina* denotes stone marten fur, though Dozy suggested that it was beaver fur, corresponding to al-Maqrīzī's *qirḍ aswad,* or *qundus*.[89] *Washaq,* another sort of fur mentioned by al-Maqrīzī, seems to be lynx fur. If it denotes European lynx and not the Middle Eastern caracal, it is not clear to which sort of furs mentioned in Venetian sources it corresponds.

Hats are also encountered on board ships sailing to Alexandria. Our lists include both *capelli* and *barete,* which seem to represent two different kinds of headgear.[90] Venetian hat manufacturing seems to have undergone an impressive expansion around the turn of the sixteenth century. According to a petition presented by the hatters to the Venetian government in 1506, the number of workshops producing headgear in Venice had risen within a few years from 5 to over 80.[91] Was this impressive expansion somehow related to a demand for Venetian hats in Mamluk territories? Were the green, blue, and red hats mentioned by al-Maqrīzī as being fashionable in his times imported by the Venetians?[92]

A kind of textile not intended for clothing, but often exported to Egypt and Syria, is hemp cloth (*canevaza,* pl. *canevaze*). This coarse material was produced in Venice from hemp grown around Montagnana, in the Venetian mainland.[93] It served particularly the Venetians themselves, for preparing sacks and packages for goods exported by them westwards. This was especially important for the exportation of raw cotton and cotton thread, shipped in great quantities from Syria

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[87]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:3:168–69.

[88]Mayer, *Mamluk Costume,* 23; Rāshid Barrāwī, *Qāmūs al-Nahḍah al-'Arabīyah* (Cairo, 1983), 674, 968; Reinhart Pieter Anne Dozy, *Dictionnaire detaillé des noms des vêtements chez les Arabes* (Amsterdam, 1845), 358–59.

[89]Dozy, *Dictionnaire detaillé,* 328.

[90]The galleys sailing to Alexandria in 1503 had nine bales of *capelli* on board; those sailing there in 1510 had 21 cases of *barete,* and the ones sailing to the same port in 1511 carried 12 cases of *barette.*

[91]Judde de Larivière, ″Entre bien public et intérêt privés,″ 354–55.

[92]See al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:3:168–69. On Mamluk headgear, see Mayer, *Mamluk Costume,* 27–32.

[93]Frederic C. Lane, ″The Rope Factory and Hemp Trade in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,″ in *Venice and History,* 373–74 (originally published in *Journal of Economic and Business History* 4 (1932): 830–47.

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and Palestine on board Venetian vessels.[94]

Various glass products, originating from Venice´s famous glass manufacturies at Murano,[95] were also common on board Venetian ships sailing to the Mamluk Sultanate.[96] Michael Rogers wrote that by the fifteenth century the Mamluk market had already been enslaved to Venetian glass exports, and our cargo lists seem to corroborate this statement.[97] Among the goods imported to Damascus and Tripoli, Paxi´s manuals mentions ″common glass″ *(veri comuni),* rosaries *(paternostri)* made of yellow glass, and glass crystal *(veri cristalini).*[98] Among those imported to Alexandria, Rimondo´s ″Tarifa″ makes reference to ″glass for mirrors″ *(veri da spechio)* and to ″worked glass″ *(veri lavoradi).*[99] Vases made of glass crystal also seem to have been in demand in the Mamluk lands.[100]

The term *veri cristalini,* or *cristal[l]i,* as it appears on our cargo lists, is worthy of some further comment. The word *cristalli* had manifold meanings in Italian writings of the early modern period. It could denote products made of rock crystal or of glass crystal, as well as of mirrors, phials, lenses, drinking glasses, glass panes, and even saltpeter.[101] However, in the late fifteenth century Venetian context, *cristallino* or *cristallo* were terms used to denote a special kind of high-quality colorless and transparent imitation of rock-crystal, invented in Venice during the second half of the fourteenth, and further improved during the first half of the fifteenth, century.[102] The term *Veri cristal[l]ini* seems to have denoted

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[94]The ship wrecked in 1499 had 2 *ruotoli* of canvas on board: Arbel ″Attraverso il Mediterraneo,″ 113. The Beirut galleys sailing in November 1502 had 85 *baloni* of canvas on board; the Alexandria galleys of 1503 had 3 *balle;* and the Beirut galleys of 1513—10 *ruotoli.* Cf. Ashtor, ″L´exportation,″ 367–69.

[95]On the Murano glass industry, see particularly Luigi Zecchin, *Vetro e vetrai di Murano: Studi sulla storia del vetro* (Venice, 1987–90); Rosa Barovier Mentasti et al., ed., *Mille anni di arte del vetro a Venezia* (Venice, 1982); Rosa Barovier Mentasti, *Il vetro veneziano* (Milan, 1982).

[96]The ship wrecked in 1499 carried 6 barrels of rosaries: Arbel, ″Attraverso il Mediterraneo,″ 113. The Alexandria galleys of 1500 carried 3 cases of *christalli;* the Beirut galleys of 1502 had 11 barrels of rosaries and 5 cases of *lavori de cristalo*. The galleys sailing to Alexandria in 1503 carried 12 cases of glass products; the 1510 Alexandria galleys had 3 cases of *cristali* and those of 1511 had 85 cases of glass rosaries. The Beirut galleys of 1513 had 4 cases of glass products *(veri)* and 20 of rosaries.

[97]Rogers, ″To and Fro,″ 68, n. 16.

[98]See Paxi, *Tariffa,* 54r–54 v, 108r.

[99]Ibid., 56v; Rimondo, ″Tarifa,″ fols. XVIII, XLIV.

[100]On arrival at Jaffa in July 1480, the captain of the Venetian pilgrims´ galley sent vases made of glass crystal *(vasi christalini)* to the *dawādār* of Damascus, to ensure favorable treatment of the pilgrims. See Santo Brasca, *Viaggio in Terrasanta,* ed. L. Momigliano Lepschy (Milan, 1966), 63.

[101]Battaglia, *Grande dizionario,* 3:980–82.

[102]Luigi Zecchin, ″Il ´Vetro cristallino´ nelle carte del Quattrocento,″ in his *Vetro e vetrai di*

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various objects made of crystal glass, as can be inferred from a commercial letter sent to the Levant in March and April 1511, announcing the shipment of two cases of *veri cristalini,* one containing 1,000 *stagnaele* and 30 *angistere* and the other one containing 1,000 *stagnaele* and 40 *angistere* with a stem and a gilded rim *(da pé con la bocca indorata)*—all terms designating different sorts of glassware.[103] The same passage also helps us to get an idea about the quantities of products contained in those ″cases″ mentioned in our cargo lists.

Al-Maqrīzī′s description of Cairo, as well as a series of letters sent in 1512 by Martino Merlini, a Venetian merchant in Venice, to his brother and business partner Giambattista, then residing in Syria, help us clarify the nature of those *cristalli,* and also shed some light on Mamluk consumption of Venetian luxury products. From al-Maqrīzī′s work we learn that during his times crystal *(ballūr)* was used as a status symbol by the upper classes of Mamluk society. For example, brides of prominent families were traditionally presented with a sort of bed or divan called *dikkah,* which was paraded in the streets of Cairo. Al-Maqrīzī mentions a granddaughter of one of the sultans who received as a wedding present such a *dikkah* made of crystal, on which there were other precious objects, such as a crystal vessel painted with figures of birds and animals.[104]

Martino Merlini′s commercial correspondence is of great interest in many respects. It reveals the *modus operandi* of the Venetian entrepreneur who encouraged his brother to carry out a thorough market research concerning the demand for what he called *"lavori di cristalo smaltadi,"* that is, enameled crystal objects. Giambattista was required to send to his brother (most probably his elder brother) a detailed report concerning the types of such merchandise which were mostly sought after in Syria, to find out who and what kind of people possessed them, as well as to specify the kinds and quantities of such products in their possession. He was also encouraged to address one of the amirs and ask him what kind of new product he would like to have, and to send to Martino a model made of wood, or a drawing of the same, so that the expert manufacturer of these crystal objects,

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Murano, 1:229–33; David Jacoby, ″Raw Materials for the Glass Industries of Venice and the Terraferma, about 1370–about 1460,″ *Journal of Glass Studies* 35 (1993): 86–87.

[103]Giovanni Dalla Santa, ″Commerci, vita privata e notizie politiche dei giorni della Lega di Cambrai (da lettere del mercante veneziano Martino Merlini),″ *Atti dell′Istituto Veneto*, series 9, vol. 1 (t. 76), part 2 (1916–17): 1575, note. The term *Angistere (Angastare, inghistere, angastera)* denoted a spherically-shaped bottle with a long narrow neck; see Luigi Zecchin, ″I primi cristalli muranesi in Oriente,″ in his *Vetro e Vetrai*, 1:244; idem, ″Vetrerie muranesi dal 1276 al 1482,″ ibid., 3:5; idem, ″Cesendelli, Inghistere, moioli,″ ibid., 3:162–65; Harold Newman (with additions by P. V. Albonico), *Dizionario del vetro* (Milan, 1993), 18; Brovier Mentasti, *Il vetro veneziano,* 44. *Stagnaele* could denote drinking glasses made of opaque white glass (worked with tin oxide).

[104]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:3:171.

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Vetor di Anzoli, could produce it back in Murano.

In another letter of the same year, Martino asked his brother to acquire a suit of Mamluk armor, and if he were unable to do so, to bring with him to Venice a model made of leather or cloth and a drawing of the same. Merlini intended to produce, with the help of Vetor de Anzoli, whom he described as ″the one who makes the most beautiful crystal artifacts sent to that land″ (i.e., the Mamluk Sultanate), a suit of armor made of crystal, with a helmet made of enameled silver, and possibly also inlaid with precious stones. Such a product, Martino wrote ironically, would not be fit for defense, but would be a magnificent and unique piece that could be worn by a sultan´s slave in a parade,[105] ″as is the habit among the Mamluks to parade their beautiful crystal artifacts, such as saddles, breastplates or corsets, and scimitars, which have no other use than adornment.″[106] Martino was hoping to draw a profit amounting to one thousand ducats from such an affair, and he also encouraged his brother to find a way of convincing the Safavid ruler of Persia to acquire a similar artifact, which would raise the profit to about three or four thousand ducats.[107] Martino´s reference to crystal saddles is confirmed by Ibn Iyās´s description of the procession organized by Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī on 15 Rabī‘ al-Ākhar 922/17 May 1516, when leaving Cairo for his battle against the Ottomans.[108] Briefly, Mamluk sultans and amirs seem to have been the clients of these expensive and extravagant glass-crystal artifacts, representing wedding gifts or different instruments of Mamluk horsemanship, produced especially for this market in Venice´s glass manufacturies at Murano, and shipped, alongside other glass products, to Egypt and Syria on board the state galleys. As a matter of fact, objects made of glass crystal were often decorated with elaborate trailing, with enamelling and gilding and with filigree decoration.[109]

Coral of the red, black, and white sorts, originating in the western Mediterranean, could also often be found on board these ships.[110] The most important sources of

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[105]″vestir uno schiavo che vadi davanti el soldan per una ponpa e zentileza.″

[106]″chome i uxano portar dele altre belle chosse in destra, chome xè le selle, e i torsi e samitare, che è fate de cristalo, le qual non se adoperano in altro salvo che in adornamento.″

[107]Dalla Santa, ″Commerci,″ 1566–69; also cited in Zecchin, ″Il vetro muranese negli scritti del Cinquecento,″ in his *Vetro e vetrai di Murano,* 1:234. On Mamluk armor and arms, see Mayer, *Mamluk Costume,* 37–48.

[108]Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Iyās al-Ḥanafī, *Badā'i‘ al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i‘ al-Duhūr,* ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Cairo, 1984), 5:41 (″surūj balūr muzzayak [muzzayan?] bi-dhahab″).

[109]Zecchin, ″Il ´Vetro cristallino,´″ 232 *(lavori cristallini da dorar e da smaltar);* idem, ″Cristallini dorati e smaltati,″ in his *Vetro e vetrai,* 3:109–13, with a photo (p. 113) of a late fifteenth-century enamelled cup produced in Venice and found in Syria; Harold Newman, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Glass* (London, 1977), 81, 327; idem, *Dizionario del vetro,* 113.

[110]The galleys of 1496 left 36 cases of coral in Alexandria. The Beirut galleys of 1498 carried 11

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Mediterranean coral were off the shores of the kingdom of Tunisia, Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily, Provence, and Liguria. The best and probably richest source was the Tunisian one off Marsá al-Kharaz (today in Algeria), and its main clients were in the Mamluk Levant. From the 1430s until the 1460s the Tunisian coral fisheries were dominated by the Genoese, but from the 1470s the Venetians succeeded in breaking the Genoese monopoly on the lease of coral extraction in Tunisian waters. The shipment of coral and coral products on Venetian vessels to Mamluk lands during the last decades of the fifteenth century was therefore linked to a direct involvement of Venetians in the extraction of this natural product in the area considered to produce its best quality. Yet, although there were also coral artisans in Venice, part of the coral products shipped on board Venetian galleys to Egypt and Syria seems to have originated from other sources of supply.[111]

Paxi´s commercial manual mentions four different sorts of coral brought by Venetians to Alexandria—*coralli in brancha* (coral twigs), *toro* (probably polished coral), *bastardo* (broken pieces of coral), and *zoppe,* a term whose significance remains unclear.[112] A substantial part of these materials seems to have been imported as rosary beads, called *bottoni de coralli,* which, as he specifies, were beads *(pater nostri)* that were supposed to be round and thick *(tondi e grossi)* and above all, have a good color.[113] Paxi´s remark that such beads were being acquired in great quantities in Genoa and Sicily indicates that the Venetian grasp of Tunisian coral did not exclude the possibility of acquiring coral products for the Mamluk markets from other sources. Besides, although the Venetians enjoyed a hegemony in Mamluk western trade, other entrepreneurs could also take part in this field, as exemplified in a contract for the sale of coral artifacts in Cairo, stipulated in 1482 between two Neapolitans (one of whom was a jeweler).[114] Such alternative sources of supply must have grown in importance after the retreat of the Venetians from

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cases of coral; the Beirut galleys of 1500 carried 17 cases of coral, and those sailing that year to Alexandria carried 9 cases of coral. The galleys sailing to Alexandria in 1503 carried one case of coral; the 1511 Alexandria galleys had 4 cases of coral beads; the Beirut galleys of 1513 carried 13 cases of coral, 19 of coral beads, and 5 of a similar product.

[111]On the geography and history of coral fisheries in the fifteenth-century Mediterranean, see Giovanni Tescione, *Italiani alla pesca del corallo ed egemonie marittime nel Mediterraneo* (Naples, 1940), xlviii–lvii, 35–60; Bernard Doumerc, ″Le corail d´Ifriqiya à la fin du Moyen-Âge,″ *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* 19/B (1983): 9–12; Damien Coulon, ″Un élément clef de la puissance commerciale catalane: le trafic du corail avec l´Egypte et la Syrie (fin du XIVe–début du XVe siècle),″ *Al-Masāq* 9 (1996–97): 99–149. On Venetian production of coral artifacts, see Luzzatto, *Storia economica,* 183.

[112]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 47r. Paxi once refers explicitly to *coralli barbareschi;* see ibid., 54v.

[113]Ibid., 43r, 47r, 48v.

[114]Tescione, *Italiani,* 45.

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direct exploitation of the Tunisian coral reefs around the turn of the sixteenth century.[115]

Besides rosaries, jewelry, and talismans, coral was widely used in the Islamic world for medical purposes, as a collyrium against eye diseases, against hemorrhage and blockage of the urinary tract, and against epilepsy and mental illnesses. The broken coral imported by the Venetians could have served for such therapeutic purposes. Coral was also widely used as an amulet against various troubles, such as snake bites and malaria, and was believed to be an aphrodisiac.[116]

Amber, which also seems to have enjoyed a regular demand in Mamluk markets, came from the Baltic regions, and reached Venice either through German merchants active in the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi,* or on board the Flanders galleys.[117] Fifteenth-century Venice was famous for its artistic works of amber,[118] and at least part of the cargoes exported to Syria and Egypt must have included such artistic artifacts.[119] Cairo had a special amber market, and according to al-Maqrīzī, even commoners used to wear amber necklaces and ornament their homes with amber objects.[120] Yet it is possible that amber, like coral, was also shipped eastward as a raw material, since it also served medical purposes. Amber was believed to be effective as a hemostatic and astringent, and in solving problems of the urinary tract. It was also used to prevent vomiting and against hemorrhoids, as well as for curing broken bones.[121]

Two more typical industrial products made in Venice and its mainland territories

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[115]Doumerc, "Le corail d'Ifriqiya," 482.

[116]A. Dietrich, "Mardjān," *EI*^{2}, 6:556a; al-Anṭākī, *Tadhkarat Ūlī al-Albāb,* 1:75; Tescione, *Italiani,* xxxv.

[117]Paxi refers to "ambra fina de Fiandra" among goods imported to Alexandria: *Tariffa,* 43r. Venetian merchants in Syria distinguished between "amber from Lübeck," or "amber of the fontego," and "amber from Bruges": *Documenti per la storia economica dei secoli XIII–XVI,* ed. Federico Melis (Florence, 1972), 186 (letter from Damascus, 1484); Vallet, *Marchands vénitiens,* 297, 300–1.

[118]Luzzatto, *Storia economica,* 183.

[119]The Beirut galleys of 1498 carried 7 bales of worked amber, and 12 bales of raw amber (Malipiero mentions only the latter in barrels). The ship wrecked in 1499 carried one barrel of amber: Arbel, "Attraverso il Mediterraneo," 113. The Beirut galleys of 1502 had 9 barrels of amber products *(ambra lavorata)* and 3 more of raw amber; the 1511 Alexandria galleys had 2 cases of amber.

[120]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:3:166–67. For further data and comments, see Ibn Iyās, *Journal d'un bourgeis du Caire,* tr. and ed. Gaston Wiet (Paris, 1955), 1:289–90 and n. 1.

[121]M. Plessner, "Kahrubā," *EI*^{2}, 4:445b; al-Anṭākī, *Tadhkarat Ūlī al-Albāb,* 1:276–77. On amber originating from the Far East and the Indian Ocean, see Floréal Sanagustin, "Parfums et pharmacologie en Orient médiéval: savoirs et représentations," in *Parfums d'Orient,* ed. Rika Gyselen (Bures-sur-Yvette, 1998), 191–92.

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respectively were soap and paper, also encountered on board galleys and ships sailing to the lands of the Mamluks. The solid white Venetian soap was made of olive oil from Venetian colonies in Greece and alkali ashes imported from Syria. Paxi calls these soaps *"savoni bianchi da navegar,"* indicating that they were mainly produced for exportation.[122] To have an idea on quantities of this product exported eastward, we may use the example of a few shipments for which the weight is provided by our sources. The galleys of 1496 brought 200 *miera* (60 tons) of soap to Alexandria and in 1511, our sources mention two shipments to Alexandria, both carried out by the same merchant: the first of 11,701 kg, and the second (on another galley of the same *muda*) of 5,279 kg.[123] In other words, a single Venetian merchant shipped about 17 tons of soap to Alexandria in a single *muda.*[124]

Paper shipments from Venice to Mamluk territories also seem to have been quite regular.[125] This also was undoubtedly a product of Venetian industries in the mainland territories of the republic.[126] The examination of water-marks has shown that during the Ottoman period, paper used in Egypt was to a great extent of Venetian origin,[127] and it is most likely that the preponderance of Venetian importations of this material had already begun under the Mamluks.

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[122]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 46v.

[123]Braudel and Tenenti, ″Michiel da Lezze,″ 71. The quantities are given in Venetian *lire sottili.* The first shipment had 38,875 net *lire* and the second—17,540. The Venetian *lira sottile* was equivalent to 0.301 kg: Paxi, *Tariffa,* 49v, and Tucci, *Lettres d'un marchand vénitien*, 354. These soaps were packed in sacks, whereas the cargo list of the same galleys included in Sanudo´s diary mentions only soap in cases *(casse)*. Cf. Appendix A.

[124]More information on soap shipments: the galleys sailing to Alexandria in 1498 had 573 sacks of soap and those sailing there in 1500 had 62 cases of soap on board. In 1503 the galleys brought 378 cases of soap to Alexandria; the 1511 Alexandria galleys had 602 cases of soap on board.

[125]The ships wrecked in 1499 carried altogether 10 bales of paper belonging to two different merchants: Arbel, ″Attraverso il Mediterraneo,″ 113. The galleys sailing to Beirut in 1500 carried 42 bales of paper; the Alexandria galleys of 1503 carried 23 bales of paper; the 1510 Alexandria galleys had 8 paper bales on board. See also Luzzatto, *Storia economica,* 180, and for evidence on earlier years of the fifteenth century: Eliyahu Ashtor, ″The Venetian Supremacy in Levantine Trade: Monopoly or Pre-Colonialism?,″ *Journal of European Economic History* 3 (1974): 26, n. 85.

[126]Michela dal Borgo, ″Cinque secoli di produzione cartacea nei territori della Repubblica di Venezia,″ in *Charta: Dal papiro al computer,* ed. Giorgio Raimondo Cardona (Milan, 1988), 180–87; Ivo Mattozzi, ″Il distretto cartaio dello stato veneziano: Lavoro e produzione nella valle del Toscolano dal XIV al XVIII secolo,″ in *Cartai e stampatori a Toscolano: Vicende, uomini, paesaggi di una tradizione produttiva,* ed. Carlo Simon (n.p., 1995), 23–65.

[127]Ugo A. Zanetti, ″Filigranes vénitiens en Egypte,″ in *Studi albanologici, balcanici, bizantini e orientali in onore di Giuseppe Valentini* (Florence, 1986), 437–99.

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The importation of soap and paper, as well as of sugar (imported from Cyprus), was mentioned by Ashtor as a reflection of the decline of Levantine industries that had produced these items in the past.[128] Although it can be shown that soap was still produced in the late fifteenth century in Syria,[129] no such evidence exists, to the best of my knowledge, for paper, and the imported quantities cited above, especially in the case of soap, may support Ashtor´s claim.

Spices, dyes, pigments, perfumes, and drugs normally traveled westward, but a few such products of western provenance were nearly always to be found on board Venetian ships sailing eastward. Such is the case of saffron, originating, according to de´ Paxi, from the region around L´Aquila in the Abruzzo.[130] It served for cooking, for medical purposes, for cosmetics, for dyeing, and even for perfume, and must have had special importance considering Mamluk preference for the yellow color.[131] An Egyptian chronicler records how in 855/1451, while celebrating the rise of the Nile, Egyptians happily threw saffron at one another.[132] This habit could have continued in later years, encouraging further importation by the Venetians. Other dyes often shipped to these lands were realgar (*risegallo*, or *sandarac*), the red pigment or varnish that could be produced artificially but which, apparently, was also extracted from the raisin of the Moroccan *callitris quadrivalvis;*[133] *sbiacca,* a carbonate of lead used as a white color, both as a varnish and whitewash for walls, and for paints and cosmetics;[134] and finally, what our sources call *grepola,* or *tartaro,* which seems to be a crust accumulating on the sides of wine casks, a substance that apparently was in demand in the Mamluk

[128]Ashtor, ″The Venetian Supremacy″; idem, ″Levantine Sugar Industry in the Later Middle Ages: a Case of Technological Decline,″ in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900: Studies in Economic and Social History,* ed. Abraham P. Udovitch (Princeton, 1981), 91–132.

[129]On soap manufacturing at Tripoli, See Vallet, *Marchands vénitiens,* 188, based on Paxi, *Tariffa,* 44r.

[130]Armando Sapori, ″I beni del commercio internazionale nel Medioevo,″ *Archivio storico italiano* 113 (1955): 25–26; Paxi, *Tariffa,* 48r.

[131]See Henri Bresc, ″Les entrées royales des Mamlûks: Essai d´approche comparative,″ in *Genèse de l´Etat moderne en Méditéranée* (Rome, 1993), 91.

[132]Abū al-Maḥāsin Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr* (Cairo, 1990), 330.

[133]One and a half bales of saffron were shipped in 1510 to Alexandria; 12 bottles of *risegallo* were transported on the ship wrecked in 1499: Arbel, ″Attraverso il Mediterraneo,″ 113; 3 barrels of *risegalli* were sent to Alexandria in 1503; 12 cases of the same product were on board the Alexandria galleys in 1510, and 35 *risegal* packages of unspecified nature on those of 1511. J. Michael Rogers identifies realgar as the natural orange-red sulfide of arsenic (As_2S_2): Rogers, ″To and Fro,″ 70, n. 42.

[134]Battaglia, *Grande dizionario,* 2:202 *(Biacca).* In 1502 the galleys sailing to Beirut had 135 barrels containing this product.

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Levant, and must have served medical purposes.[135]

The Alexandria galleys of 1510 carried 90 cases of sulfur, and Paxi′s manual also mentions this material among those commonly exported from Venice to Alexandria and Damascus.[136] Sulfur was used for bleaching, for the preparation of gun-powder and fireworks, as fumigation to expel vermin from houses, and in medicine against skin diseases and stings of poisonous animals, in electuaries against fever, cough, asthma, tetanus, and dropsy, as well as in magic.[137]

Among foodstuffs shipped by the Venetians to the lands ruled by the Mamluks, a special place was reserved for chestnuts. This merchandise does not figure in our cargo lists for the simple reason that special ships were required to transport it. Such ships were even called ″the chestnut ships,″ and they seem to have sailed from Italy to Mamluk territories on quite a regular basis. For the two last decades of the Mamluk Sultanate I have found evidence for shiploads of chestnuts sent to Syria in 1509, 1510, and 1516, but these were very likely not the only vessels used for the same purpose during those years.[138]

According to Bartolomeo de′ Paxi, the best chestnuts exported to Egypt and Syria originated from the area of Bologna, the valley of Lamone, and the territory of Imola. The same author mentions, besides fresh chestnuts, also dried chestnuts, and chestnuts boiled in wine, of which only small quantities were exported eastward for obvious reasons.[139] Chestnuts seem to have mainly served as a substitute for grains in periods of scarcity. One may wonder whether the expansion of cotton fields in later medieval Syria was carried out at the expense of grain fields, thus creating periods of scarcity and necessitating resorting to substitutes of this kind.

It is remarkable to observe to what extent the information included in Paxi′s commercial manual corresponds to the cargo lists of our three diarists and to other testimonies that reflect the actual operation of importations into Egypt and Syria. The cargo lists, however, are incomplete (the diarists sometimes admit it), partly, but not only, because galleys were intended for the shipment of special kinds of goods. Judging by the information included in our two commercial manuals, the range of products imported by Venetians to Mamluk lands on board different kinds of vessels was actually much wider. Appendix B includes Paxi′s lists of goods imported into Damascus, Aleppo, and Tripoli, and a list of goods mentioned

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[135]See the cargo list of the Alexandria galleys in 1500, 1510, and 1511. On the meaning of the word, see Battaglia, *Grande dizionario,* 7:35.

[136]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 49r, 53v.

[137]M. Ullmann, ″al-Kibrīt,″ *EI*^{2}, 5:88b.

[138]Sanudo, *I diarii,* 8:11 (1509); ibid., 11:740 (return of a chestnut ship in January 1511); ibid., 24: 19, 221 (the chestnut ship back in Cyprus in January, and in Venice in March 1517).

[139]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 44v–45r, 54r.

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(though not listed) in his manual and in Rimondo's "Tarifa" of 1494 as imported to Alexandria. Besides the products already mentioned, Paxi mentions olive oil of various provenances (from Tripoli and Tunis in Barbary, Seville, Majorca, and Puglia);[140] horse hair and pig hair *(seta de cavallo, seta de porco);*[141] Cypriot sugar; molasses *(gotare)* from Palermo;[142] honey of different provenances (Bologna, Dalmatia, Catalonia);[143] wax, originating from Ragusa;[144] Malmsey wine (most probably imported from Venetian Crete);[145] currants from Smirne;[146] mastic from Chios;[147] walnuts *(noxe)* from the Marche and hazelnuts *(noselle)* from the Kingdom of Naples;[148] [dried] figs from Venetian Dalmatia;[149] dried plums from Naples or Sicily;[150] almonds from Apulia and from Provence (especially for Damascus, in years of scarcity);[151] pine kernels *(pignoli);* cheese (most probably imported from Crete);[152] bells; fustian cloth; camlets; silk cloth known as *camocati* (probably imported from Cyprus);[153] box-tree wood; needles; thimbles;[154] antimony sulfide (*cophalo*, the Arabic *kuḥul*), a typical Catalan chemical, used in the Levant as a cosmetic and for collyrium; orpiment (arsenic trisulfide used as yellow dye) from Salonica;[155] *dragante,* a raisin brought from Greece, serving as an energizer and

[140]Ibid., 44r, 49v; Ashtor, "Profits," 253.

[141]Horse-hair *(seta de cavallo)* is also mentioned in the cargo list of the Alexandria galleys that departed from Venice in November 1500; 24 barrels of pig's hair *(sede de porcho)* were sent on galleys to Alexandria in 1503.

[142]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 44r. For Cypriot molasses, see below, 66 and n. 168.

[143]Ibid., 46r–46v.

[144]Ibid., 44r. See also Luzzatto, *Storia economica,* 180.

[145]Benjamin Arbel, "Riflessioni sul ruolo di Creta nel commercio mediterraneo del Cinquecento," in *Venezia e Creta: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Iraklion-Chanià, 30 settembre–5 ottobre 1997,* ed. Gherardo Ortalli (Venice, 1998), 249.

[146]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 46r ("from Anatolia"), 50r ("from Smirne").

[147]Ibid., 47r.

[148]Ibid., 6r, 45v, 49v.

[149]Ibid., 3v, 46r.

[150]Ibid., 46r.

[151]Ibid., 6r, 44r, 49v. Seven barrels of almonds were on board the ship wrecked off Cyprus in 1499: Arbel, "Attraverso il Mediterraneo," 113.

[152]Arbel, "Riflessioni," 249.

[153]On this product, see Wilhelm Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen Age* (Leipzig, 1886): 2:697–98.

[154]A barrel of thimbles *(diziali)* was sent to Syria on board the ship wrecked off Cyprus in 1499; see Arbel, "Attraverso il Mediterraneo," 113.

[155]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 44r.

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refresher, in preparing a dark blue dye, and probably also as a mordant;[156] *zafari,* a dark blue cobalt-based dyestuff used for painting on glass; blue glaze *(smalta azuro),* undoubtedly for producing enameled glass;[157] *loldano (ladanum),* a Cypriot raisin used for medical purposes and for incense;[158] tinned iron wire *(filo de loton);*[159] alum, acquired in Constantinople;[160] timber from Anatolia and Rhodes;[161] tinned iron basins; and a product called *gozime,* or *gozeme,* which I have not been able to identify.[162]

Rimondo´s ″Tarifa″ of 1494 also mentions among the goods imported to Alexandria wether wool; lead oxide *(mor da sangue); roza*, which might signify rose water; sesame; *tigname,* an aromatic bark used for incense; Barbary hides; coarse woolen cloth or blankets *(s[ch]iavine);* cotton; linen; nut-galls; and *largado,* another product which I have been unable to identify.

The fact that many of these products do not figure in our cargo lists is no proof that they were not imported to Egypt and Syria in the period under consideration. We have very little evidence on private ships active in this period, and even the cargo lists of the galleys that have been analyzed above are not comprehensive, and often include generic terms, such as *merce,* or *aver sottil,* which may comprise many of the items mentioned in the two merchant manuals.

Any discussion of Venetian importations into Mamluk lands should not omit Cyprus, which became a Venetian territory *de facto* in 1473 and *de jure* in 1489. The island, situated merely sixty miles off the Syrian coast and not very far from Egypt, was not only an important emporium and way station on the routes of Venetian ships sailing between Venice and Mamluk territories, but also a source of supply for the latter. This historical aspect of the easternmost colony of Venice is hardly known and difficult to follow. We have, however a few indications pointing to the close mercantile contacts, especially with Syria, carried out on board small local vessels, operated by Syrian Christians, who were inhabitants of Famagusta. The captain of Famagusta reported, for instance, in October 1500 that between four and six boats arrived from Syria every week with foodstuffs.[163] In

[156]Ibid., 48r; Battaglia, *Grande dizionario,* 4:996.

[157]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 108r.

[158]Ibid., 47r.

[159]Ibid., 48v, and Appendix B at the end of the present article.

[160]Paxi, *Tariffa,* 47v–48r.

[161]Ibid., 49r.

[162]Ibid., 47v; Rimondo, ″Tarifa,″ fol. XVIIIv.

[163]Sanudo, *I diarii,* 3:1120.

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September 1502, the captain reported that boats owned by Syrians reach Cyprus on a daily basis.[164] In 1510, the governors wrote to Venice that many poor people in Cyprus depended for their living on trade with Syria.[165] This activity was carried out on small vessels, and only exceptionally left any traces in written documents, but a few archival sources allow us to get an idea about the nature of this trade, and particularly on importations from the island into Syria and Egypt. In 1504, a few Cypriots of Syrian origin complained that the Venetian consul in Damascus compelled them to pay dues on salt, sugar, honey, and molasses, which they imported into Syria, and even on cash money exported from that country.[166] Salt was indeed one of the island´s main export products, and its exportation to Syria (as also to Anatolia) was regulated by a periodical lease to private individuals.[167] In 1514, Cypriot molasses was also exported into Egypt, a piece of information corroborating the testimony of our two *Tariffe* in this regard.[168]

Contraband trade between Syria and Cyprus, as, for instance, the exportation of wheat, normally forbidden to be exported to non-Venetian territories, should also be taken into consideration, considering the relatively short distances separating the island from the shores of the Mamluk Sultanate. In 1509, for example, the governors of Cyprus reported bringing to trial exporters of 60,000 *mozza* of grains.[169] On some occasions grains were officially sold to the Mamluks, as for instance in 1513, when barley crops were abundant on Cyprus and great shipments were carried out to Syria, both by the governors and by private individuals.[170] The Venetian Council of Ten later authorized the governors of the island colony to export to Syria or Turkey up to 40–50,000 *mozza,* instructing them to prevent private individuals from competing with the public exportations.[171] Later that year the Council of Ten authorized two Venetian patricians who held in lease public estates on Cyprus to export up to 20,000 Cypriot *mozza* of barley ″to Syria or

[164]Ibid., 4:486.

[165]Ibid., 11:266.

[166]Ibid., 5:944.

[167]Benjamin Arbel, ″Venetian Cyprus and the Muslim Levant, 1473–1570,″ in *Cyprus and the Crusades,* ed. Nicolas Coureas and Jonathan Riley Smith (Nicosia, 1995), 172; reprinted in Benjamin Arbel, *Cyprus, The Franks and Venice* (Aldershot, 2000), article XII.

[168]Three vessels waited at Paphos for over three months before being able to cross over to Damietta, with a cargo of molasses ″and other drugs,″ finally sailing towards the end of March 1514: Archivio di Stato, Venezia (hereafter: ASV), Lettere ai Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci (hereafter: Lett. Capi X), busta 288, nos. 101–2.

[169]Ibid., fol. 69.

[170]In May 1513, 1,000 *ashrafī*s, the return of a barley shipment to Syria, were sent from Cyprus to Venice: ibid., nos. 86–88.

[171]ASV, Consiglio dei X (hereafter: X) Misti, reg. 36, fol. 63v (30 Aug. 1513).

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Turkey."[172] But grains were also imported from Mamluk lands, as reported in the following year by the governors—who bought 10,000 *mozza* in Damietta and were hoping to obtain more from Syria.[173] During that summer, following a locust plague that ruined Cypriot harvests, ships loaded with Syrian wheat reached Cyprus on a daily basis, until the crisis related to Venetian contacts with Persia temporarily disrupted collaboration with the Mamluks.[174]

Since 1426, Cyprus had been paying tribute to the Mamluk sultan, and its rulers were bound to send yearly to Cairo luxury cloths, mostly produced and dyed on the island, to the value of 8,000 ducats. After taking control of the island, Venice continued to pay this tribute. The main occupation of the camlet and samite industries in Nicosia seem to have been connected to this yearly dispatch of luxury cloths to the Mamluks.[175]

Commercial contacts between Venice, Venetian Cyprus, and the Mamluk territories also had an interesting monetary consequence. Mamluk coins, such as *ashrafī*s and *maydīn*s, circulated in Cyprus, necessitating official intervention to regulate their circulation and make arrangements for evaluating those coins, which must have had different alloys and weights.[176] *Ashrafī*s are also occasionally encountered on ships sailing from Venice eastward, indicating that the circulation of Mamluk gold coins was not limited to lands ruled by the sultan and its close neighbors.[177]

Finally, one cannot disregard the role of Venetian shipping in trade between different Muslim lands, and even between different Mamluk territories. The galleys of the *trafego* line, to which we have devoted too little attention in this paper, connected the Maghreb with Egypt and Syria, and were a convenient means of transportation for Muslim traders, besides their role in the Venetian trading system. Private Venetian ships also sailed between different ports of the Muslim Mediterranean.[178] It is therefore not surprising to find in Paxi's manual, in addition

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[172]Ibid., fols. 80–80v (28 Sept. 1513).

[173]Sanudo, *I diarii,* 11:265–66. See also Arbel, "Venetian Cyprus and the Muslim Levant," 172.

[174]Sanudo, *I diarii,* 11:656.

[175]Arbel, "Venetian Cyprus and the Muslim Levant," 161–62. Following is a list of such cloths sent from Cyprus by the Venetians to the sultan as tribute (plus presents) for the two previous years (the sultan expressed his dissatisfaction about their quality): zambeloti di Cypro per presente-peze 40; zambeloti per le page-peze 582; campo d'oro-pichi 200 quarte 3; damaschini-pichi 42; Raso venitian-pichi 103; panni de lana acoloradi-pichi 318 3/4: Sanudo, *I diarii,* 5:114–15.

[176]ASV, Lett. Capi X, busta 288, no. 91 (14 Dec. 1513).

[177]Braudel and Tenenti, "Michiel da Lezze," 43 (1497), 71 (1511).

[178]E.g., Sanudo's report in mid-April 1497 about the shipwreck off Tripoli of a private vessel owned by Priamo Contarini, sailing from Alexandria to the Maghreb with merchandise belonging to Moors: Sanudo, *I diarii,* 1:605.

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to olive oil imported from Barbary (Tripoli and Tunis), gold dust *(tiber)* imported likewise from Tripoli, or currants imported from Smirne, also linen, a product acquired in Alexandria, and imported by Venetians into Tripoli in Syria, and a product called *muchara,* mentioned among those imported from Damietta into the same Syrian port town.[179] The cotton mentioned in Rimondo´s manual as imported into Egypt also could have originated in Syria.

What general conclusions can be drawn from this material? The difficult political and military background certainly had negative repercussions on Venetian importations into Egypt and Syria. The Alexandria line in particular was often interrupted, and Venice´s dire straits opened new opportunities to its commercial rivals. Priuli and Sanudo noted in their diaries the activity of French and Genoese ships in the course of Venice´s war with the Ottomans in 1500 and 1501, carrying copper, woolens, corals, and specie to Syria and Egypt and exporting cotton and spices.[180] However, it does not seem that the French or the Genoese were able to replace the Venetians as the chief trading partners of Egypt and Syria on a regular and continuous basis. For example, in 1505, to cover a debt owed to him by the Venetians for forced sales of his pepper, the sultan confiscated goods belonging to Venetian merchants in Alexandria and Cairo in order to sell them in public auctions. According to merchants´ letters from Cairo, the woolens and hazelnuts thus sold enjoyed excellent prices, since shortages of certain goods had developed in the Egyptian markets following the temporary absence of Venetian ships.[181] The rich shiploads of the galleys sailing to Alexandria in 1510, which, according to Sanudo, carried goods to the value of 300,000 ducats, may also indicate that shortages of certain products had developed in Egypt during the previous two years, when no galleys had been sent eastward. Despite the difficulties, Venetians and Mamluks thus continued to depend on one another down to the end of the Mamluk Sultanate. This impression would be even stronger if we took into consideration importations on board private ships that were functioning alongside the galleys, and especially during years when galleys were not sent eastward.[182]

In view of this interdependency, a crisis in Venetian-Mamluk trade may also

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[179]See Appendices A and B-I. Could this term signify marine shells (*maḥārah*, pl. *maḥārāt*)?

[180]Priuli, *I diarii,* 1:259; ibid, 2:42–43, 65; Sanudo, *I diarii,* 3:687, 1121.

[181]Priuli, *I diarii,* 2:401.

[182]E.g., the report of the Venetian consul in Alexandria, dated 26 March 1503, on the arrival there of ″Moras´s ship,″ loaded with 240 barrels of oil, a ship loaded with copper belonging to Michiel Foscari, a *barzoto* loaded with hazelnuts, and another [Venetian?] ship with hazelnuts *(noxele)* from Sicily: Sanudo, *I diarii,* 5:34–35.

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indicate a crisis in the Mamluk economy in general. Ashtor´s suggestion that Mamluk external trade in the late fifteenth century was flourishing may be erroneous, being based on rather scanty evidence. In view of the great geopolitical, commercial, and military upheavals characterizing those years, it is difficult to accept the claim that the last decades of the Mamluk Sultanate were characterized by commercial and industrial prosperity that had no precedent in the earlier Bahri Mamluk period.[183]

That does not mean the international trade became insignificant, particularly as far as local demand for certain products was concerned. Assuming that not only the cargo lists, but also the two *Tariffe,* represent a real (though quantitatively incomplete) picture of the importations into Egypt and Syria in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the number, variety, and also the value of products shipped to the Mamluk Levant is impressive indeed.

In three cases, our cargo lists contain estimates for both precious metals and other merchandise sent to Alexandria.[184] In 1486 Malipiero remarked that little money was sent to Egypt whereas the goods shipped there were evaluated by him at 230,000 ducats; in 1496, 220,000 ducats worth of gold and silver were sent to Alexandria, but 50,000 came back, which leaves us with 170,000 ducats as against 150,000 invested in goods sent to the same destination; and in 1510, according to Sanudo, only 52,000 ducats of gold and silver were sent to Egypt whereas the goods shipped there were evaluated by the diarist at no less than 300,000 ducats (including copper worth 50,000 ducats).[185] Regardless of the question of the balance of payment between Venice and the Mamluk Sultanate,[186] our diarists´ evaluations do indicate that the economic importance of goods other than gold and silver imported by Venetian merchants into Egypt (and most probably also to Syria) during those years was far from negligible. It would be, of course, hazardous to judge by these few cases, but the tendency of sending smaller amounts of specie and precious metals on the state galleys sailing eastward indicates an increase in the relative importance of other products shipped on the same vessels during the last decades of Mamluk rule,[187] and probably a growing importance of barter transactions in the East. The decline in gold and silver shipments was both a sign of economic difficulties on the Venetian side, and a grave problem for the Mamluks.

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[183]Cf. Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 510–11; Robert Irwin, ″Egypt, Syria and Their Trading Partners,″ in *Carpets of the Mediterranean Countries 1400–1550,* ed. R. Pinner and W. B. Denny (London, 1986), 78.

[184]See Appendix C.

[185]It should, however, be taken into consideration that no galleys sailed to Beirut in 1510.

[186]See R. S. Lopez, ″Il problema dei bilanci dei pagamenti nel commercio di Levante,″ in *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV,* ed. Agostino Pertusi (Florence, 1973), 431–51. See also my remarks above, 43–46.

[187]See Appendix C.

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It must have been relatively easier for Venetian merchants to acquire on credit in Venice goods that were meant to be sent eastward, but were they able to do the same with gold and silver? Thus, with less gold and silver arriving from the West, Mamluk capacity to finance trade with India and southeast Asia, and most likely also their ability to confront the Portuguese and the Ottomans, were restricted.[188]

Of course, some goods, particularly those that are not mentioned in the cargo lists, were probably only occasionally sent eastward, or else were shipped on board round ships, for which we have only one cargo list at our disposal. However, the fact that not a few products could be found time and again in substantial quantities on galleys and ships sailing both to Syria and Egypt point to well-established patterns of consumption of goods originating from Venice and the West, and to the dependence of the Mamluk market on Venetian importations of certain products. Among those, raw materials, especially metals, occupy a prominent place. Copper in different forms, tinned iron, tin, lead, and mercury seem to have been in constant demand both in Egypt and Syria, and this demand must have only grown when Venetian galleys were unable to reach the ports of the Mamluk Levant. It is also noteworthy that the old restrictions on provision of strategic materials to the Mamluks were ineffective, especially during years in which Venice and the papacy were at war. Indeed, such products were openly exported to the Mamluks.[189]

It has also been noted that in spite of the general crisis, luxury items for the Mamluk elite, such as silk cloth and furs, or extravagant artifacts made of glass crystal, continued to reach the ports of Egypt and Syria, but we have no way of checking whether consumption of these goods declined towards the end of the Mamluk period. Michael Rogers has claimed that ″consumers of luxuries are tenacious and imaginative in their efforts to keep up their standards of living,″[190] and it may well be the Mamluk upper classes also behaved that way despite the financial difficulties characterizing the last decades of the Mamluk Sultanate.

Luxury goods undoubtedly offered the Venetian merchants prospects for great profits, but that did not cause them to neglect other opportunities. For instance, among the woolens imported into Egypt and Syria we encounter kerseys and *grisi (grixi),* which were considered to be common cloths; rosary beads made of glass

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[188]Rogers, ″To and Fro,″ 66.

[189]In view of the huge amounts of copper shipped regularly to Egypt and Syria, the accusation brought against Michiel Foscari, reported by Sanudo in October 1503, of having shipped prohibited goods (i.e., copper) into Egypt, looks more like lip service or even a personal vendetta, rather than an indication of Venetian policy to implement the old restrictions. See Sanudo, *I diarii,* 5:162. Cf. Braunstein, ″Le commerce du fer,″ 288–89.

[190]Rogers, ″To and Fro,″ 66.

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and even amber can also be considered as rather inexpensive merchandise. And an unknown portion, which could be substantial, of the above-mentioned raw materials probably found its way to small manufacturers for production of common utensils. Among the foodstuffs, chestnuts and other sorts of nuts, and occasionally grains, can also be considered as products that had a wider consumption. It would therefore not be erroneous to state that Venetian importations into Mamluk lands reached, either directly or indirectly, a considerably wide spectrum of Mamluk society.

One has also to take into consideration that at least part of the products imported by the Venetians into Egypt and Syria were re-exported to other lands. This may be the case of some of the silver, copper, tin, brass, mercury, cinnabar, woolens, dyestuffs, mastic, mirrors, beads, verdigris, and other goods for which we have evidence of exportation to India via Aden during the fifteenth and the first years of the sixteenth century.[191] According to a German merchant manual of the early sixteenth century, a merchant buying spices in Cochin was required to pay for half of it, or at least one third, in copper.[192] Part of this copper must have reached India through the lands of the Mamluks.

It is also important to note that the appearance of a certain product in a list of imported goods cannot by itself constitute sufficient proof of its scarcity in Mamluk territories. Similar products, or different sorts and qualities of the same products, could be imported and exported at the same time. This is especially true of luxury goods, which could have attracted the refined tastes of an elite clientele. For example, a small ship *(schirazo)* from Constantinople that anchored in July 1484 at Saline, in Cyprus, was said to have sailed from Damietta loaded with wheat (sold on Cyprus) and salt. But it was actually on its way to Tripoli in Syria, where soap was intended to be loaded, to be shipped to Constantinople.[193] We may surmise that both the salt and the soap concerned were local products. Soap from Tripoli was probably not expensive enough or refined enough for the tastes of certain clients in Egypt, who preferred the product imported from Venice.

Finally, it is tempting to try and compare imports into Syria with those into Egypt. As far as precious metals were concerned, it is possible that the smaller quantities of silver imported into Syria, compared with those shipped to Alexandria, have something to do with the lower value of silver in the northern territories of the Mamluk empire, where silver also arrived from Persia and central Asia.[194] However, we should not forget that a large part of the money paid for spices in

[191]Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens,* 130; Rogers, ″To and Fro,″ 61, 63, 65–66.

[192]Braunstein, ″Le marché du cuivre,″ 91.

[193]Melis, *Documenti,* 200.

[194]Ibid., 52–53.

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Alexandria was used to cover purchases of these precious goods from their importers into Egypt, whereas much of the gold and silver imported into Syria remained in the land itself, since it was invested in acquiring cotton and cotton products as well as alkali ashes for the Venetian glass and soap industries.

All shipments of Venetian soap discovered so far were made to Egypt, and none to Syria. Likewise, both Rimondo´s and Paxi´s commercial manuals mention soap among the products imported into Egypt but omit it from the list of importations into Syria. Is it because of protective measures for the soap industry at Tripoli, or was the latter competitive enough in Syria to prevent Venetian importers from trying to market their own soap there? As for woolens, it should be noted that the list of woolen cloths imported, according to de´ Paxi, into Damascus, Aleppo, and Tripoli, is longer and more diversified than the similar list referring to Alexandria. Certain kinds of silk cloth in demand in Damascus, as well as colors preferred in the Aleppo market, are also worthy of attention. However, the limited quantity of relevant data on these issues requires great caution in drawing any definitive conclusions. It is also possible, for example, that higher customs dues in Alexandria, compared to those in Syria,[195] may have played a role in merchants´ considerations as to the destinations of their shipments. In fact, rather than helping us formulate clear answers, the material presented here raises a series of questions. The data included in these few cargo lists are also insufficient for drawing any serious quantitative conclusions, especially since we do not have comparable data from the decades preceding the period treated here. They do provide, however, many elements for further research on patterns of material life and consumption during the last decades of Mamluk rule.

[195] Ashtor, ″Profits,″ 267.

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APPENDIX A: CARGOES OF VENETIAN GALLEYS SAILING TO BEIRUT AND ALEXANDRIA, 1495–1513, ACCORDING TO THE DIARISTS MALIPIERO, PRIULI, AND SANUDO

I–II. AUGUST 1495: INFORMATION ON THE GALLEYS TRAVELING TO ALEXANDRIA AND BEIRUT

Le gallie de Alexandria, che sono quatro, et da Barutto altrettante, partirono nel mese di agosto secondo il consueto et piui riche assai di quello che cadauno pensava, che per le guerre et angarie accadute pensavanno non dovesseno andar si riche; quelle de Alexandria de contantti ducati 190,000, rami in pani mura [*sic,* should be *miera*] 1,100, ogli botte 500, le galee da Baruto richissime al´uxato et alttri danari et robe assai, che non si pol chusì dirle, perché non se intende la veritade.

Priuli, *I diarii,* 1:30

III–IV. 1496: INFORMATION ON CARGOES SENT TO ALEXANDRIA AND BEIRUT

Nonostante che in 18 mesi sia sta´ messo quatordese decime a Monte Nuovo e sie perse ai Governadori, è sta´ manda´ in Alessandria su queste galie 220,000 ducati e a Barutho 120,000, senza quei che è sta´ mandai in Soria per le nave . . .
. . . galie d´Alessandria . . . torna in drio 50,000 ducati de contadi; e dise che resta in Alessandria 1,000 bote de ogio, 10,000 cantera de rami e 200 miera de saoni, 36 casse de corali e altre merce, in tutto per cento e cinquantamile ducati . . .

Malipiero, ″Annali,″ 629, 634–35

V–VI. 1497: PRECIOUS METALS SENT TO THE EAST

A 22 d´Avosto [1497] è sta´ manda´ con le quattro galie d´Alessandria tresentomile ducati de contadi senza le merce; e a Baruthi sessantamile. Non se ha possudo haver arzenti in pezza, che è sta´ pagadi cinque ducati e vinti un grosso la marca; et è sta´ fatto gran quantità de moneda; e per questo, è abondantia de monede forestiere: testoni de Milan, da trenta soldi l´un; Bolognesi, Ferraresi, Mantoani; carlini papali da 12 e da 20; e de bezzi di Alemagna.

Malipiero, ″Annali,″ 640

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VII–VIII. Summer 1498: Cargoes of the Galleys Sailing to Alexandria and Beirut

A. Malipiero´s Report

El cargho delle galie che va in Alessandria, è de contadi dusentomile ducati, settanta una bala de pani, mile e cento coffe de rame, cinquecento e settanta tre sachi de saoni; e quelle che va a Baruthi, sessanta mile ducati de contadi, quattrocento e disdotto bale de pani, cento e sessantaquattro coffe de rami, dodese barili de ambra, sessantatre barili de banda, vintisette casse de cenapri, sessanta tre bojoli de argento vivo.

Malipiero, ″Annali,″ 646

B. Priuli´s Report

August 1498: Cargo List of the Beirut Galleys, Captain Gabriel Barbarigo, and of the Alexandria Galleys, Captain Pietro Lando

Ali XII detto de agosto se partì tutte le gallie deli viagii, zoè le ultime, et per lettere da Puola se intende le gallie da Baruto aver tra argenti et ongari a nolo de gallia duc. 55,000 et in cassa de marchadanti et tanse ducati 15,000, in tuto ducati 70,000 de contanti, pani per Soria balle 418, rami in pani coffe 164, stagni fardi 22, corali casse 11, ambra lavorata bale 7, ambra greza balle 12, zenabrii C.i 27, argenti vivi C.i 35, et altre simile cosse et marchadantie al uxato che ogni anno se manda.

Le gallie de Alexandria hano tra argenti e monede et venetiani ducati 190,000 a nollo di gallia et in cassa de marchadanti et tanse duc. 50,000, in tutto duc 240,000 de contanti, benché se judicha sia stato molto piui, perché sempre se dice de menno *[sic]* per el pagar del nolo. Rami in pani coffe 1,168, piombi pr. 55, banda larga fassi 71, et altre merchadantie, che solenno andar ogni anno pani balle 71.

Priuli, *I diarii,* 1:94

IX. November 1500: Cargo List of the Galleys of Beirut, Captain Marino da Molin

Panni	bal. 400	Rami in verga per Alexandria	c. 51
Zenabrii	c. 256	Zebellini	c. 2
Stagni	ff. 112	Pani d´oro et de seda	c. 6
Banda raspa´	bl. 18	Vere per Famagosta	c. 2
Piombi	m. 32	Merze	c. 24
Argenti vivi per Alexandria	bl. 248	Velli	c. 1
Rami in pam	c. 354	Chanevaze	r. 22

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Per Cipro Famagosta

Chanevaze	r. 30	Ambra	bl. 13
Fero	f. 10	Coralli	c. 17
Grisci	r. 12	Sarze	bl. 9
Pani	bl. 25	Cartte	bl. 42
Merze	f. 3	Rami lavorati	bl. 9
Chorezuoli	bl. 1	Vari	3
Banda larga	f. 48	Aver di cassa a nollo	50,000
Fil de rame	f. 33	Aver di cassa per Zipro	10,000

Priuli, *I diarii,* 2:74

X. NOVEMBER 1500: CARGO LIST OF THE GALLEYS OF ALEXANDRIA, CAPTAIN ALVIXE ZORZI

Rami in pam	chofe 1,234	Seta de cavalo	c. 2
Rami in verga	c. 40	Choralli	c. 9
Rami lavorati	c. 30	Zebelini armilini	c. 4
Fil de rame	c. 28	Vari	c. 2
Banda larga	ff. 50	Pani de seda	c. 7
Zenabri	casse 307	Christalli	c. 3
Saponi	c. 62	Aver di cassa a nolo duc.	100,000
Pani	bl. 133	Aver di cassa di	
Gripolla	bl. 9	marchadanti d´avixo duc.	40,000

Priuli, *I diarii,* 2:74

XI–XII. OCTOBER 1501: CARGOES OF THE GALLEYS SAILING TO ALEXANDRIA AND BEIRUT

Il charigo dele gallie de Alexandria, che partironno a questi giorni fo ducati 80,000 a nolo et ducati 40,000 in cassa di marchadanti, in tutto ducati 120,000 di contadi; rami in pam miera 800, tutti in una persona deli Agostini dal Bancho. Altre sorte de merze al´uxatto.

Il charigo dele gallie da Barutti che partironno a qusti giorni fo tra nollo di gallia et cassa de marchadanti de contadi ducati 18,000, per Rodi ducati 8,000 venetiani di zecha, panni balle 330, stagni fassi 130, rami in pam et altre sorte merze al´uxato.

Priuli, *I diarii,* 2:183

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XIII. November 1502: Cargo List of the Galleys of Beirut, Captain Pollo Vallaresso

Pani	bl. 560	Pani de seda	casse 10
Rami in pani	chase 233	Carpette	bl. 3
Rami lavorati	chasse 5	Paternostri	barili 11
Fil di rame	fassi 12	Lavori de cristalo	casse 5
Sarze	balle 12	Merze	casse 13
Telle	balle 11	Aver sotil	casse 7
Canevaze	baloni 85	Sbiacha	barili 135
Vari	botte 9	Aver di cassa per Rodi duc.	5,000
Ambra lavorata	bl. 9	Aver di cassa a nollo duc.	25,000
Ambra greza	bl. 3	Aver di cassa di marcadanti	5,000

Per Corfu

Pani	bl. 22	Velli	casse 13
Capelli	bl. 5	Grixi	rodoli 11
Savoni	casse 11		

Priuli, *I diarii,* 2:254

XIV. March 1503: Cargo List of Alexandria Galleys, Captain Sebastian Moro

Rami in pani	chasse 2463	Vari	casse 12
Rami in verga	fassi 188	Merze	casse 3
Rami lavorati	balle 76	Rixegelli	bl. 3
Filo di rame	fassi 24	Capelli	bl. 9
Stagni	fassi 182	Pani de seda	cassete 3
Banda larga	fassi 282	Pani d'oro	cassetta 1
Arzenti vivi	barili 60	Corallo	cassa 1
Zenabrii	barili 78	Canevaze	bl. 3
Savoni	casse 378	Aver di cassa a nollo	
Pani	bl. 127	per duc.	70,000
Vaio	botte 8	Aver di cassa de marchadanti	
Sede de porcho	barili 24	per duc.	30,000
Carte	bl. 23		

Priuli, *I diarii,* 2:255

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XV. OCTOBER 1503: CARGOES OF ALEXANDRIA GALLEYS, CAPTAIN PANGRATIO GIUSTINIAN

Le gallie de Alexandria etiam questo anno andoronno al suo viazo, et rispecto il consuetto, foronno poverissime et solamente ducati 35,000 de contadi a nolo de gallia et ducati 5,000 in chassa de marchadanti, rami cofe 268 et altre fussare; et mai per aricordo de marchadante andoronno le piui povere gallie per uno viazo in Alexandria. . . .

Priuli, *I diarii,* 2:303

XVI–XVII. 28 SEPTEMBER–3 OCTOBER 1504: DEPARTURE OF THE BEIRUT AND ALEXANDRIA GALLEYS

adi 28 settembre . . . partironno duo gallie da Venetia al viazo consuetto de Barutti, capittanio ser Antonio Morexini, cum la muda, in borssa, il suo charigo veramente pani bl. 450 et altre merze, segondo il consueto, danari in cassa, zoè aver di cassa per ducati 30,000 in zercha. . . .

[3 October] . . . se partironno a questi giorni tre gallie al viazo di Alexandria, capitanio ser Polo Calbo, cum charigo de ducati 70 mila de conttadi et coffe 500 rami in zercha, et altre droge, et panni assai; tamen fu tenuto cum veritade poverissimo viazo.

Priuli, *I diarii,* 2:355–56

XVIII. 6–15 FEBRUARY 1510: GALLEYS SAILING TO ALEXANDRIA, CAPTAIN LORENZO LOREDAN

A. GENERAL EVALUATION [6 FEB.]

In questa note partì la galia di Alexandria ultima di sora porto, patron ser Mafio Bernardo, molto richa et carga . . . Et nota dite galie di Alexandria porta de ducati 50 milia ducati di rami, e merze e panni per ducati 250 milia.

Sanudo, *I diarii,* 9:516

B. CARGO LIST [15 FEB.]

Panni di più sorte da Veniexia	balle 180	Savoni, casse et sachi	No. 410
		Rami in pan	coffe 316
Charisee	balle 100	Rami in verga, barili e fardi	No. 327
Panni di più sorte di Ponente	balle 110	Zenabri	casse 44

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Arzenti vivi	barili 50	Resegal	casse 12
Banda larga	fardi 89	Zafaran	balle 1 1/2
Stagni	casse 45	Cristali	casse 3
Rami lavoradi	balle 16	Carte	balle 8
Fil di rame	fardi 14	Merze	casse 15
Banda raspa´	barili 4	Panni di seda	casse 2
Piompi *[sic]*	peze 130	Aver di cassa	
Alumi	botte et casse...	d´aviso per duc.	40,000
Solfari	casse 90	Aver di cassa	
Barete	casse 21	in scrigni per duc.	10,000
Bernusi	balle 8	Traze le galie	
Gripola	casse 24	di nolo, d´aviso duc.	2,500

Sanudo, *I diarii,* 9:536–37, with a slight correction on the basis of Sanudo´s autograph manuscript in Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (Venice) MS It. VII 237 (9224), fol. 34v [*resegal,* instead of *Zisegal* in the printed edition]

XIX. 23 March 1511: Cargo List of the Alexandria Galleys, Captain Piero Michiel

A. Sanudo´s Report

Rami in verga	505	Gonele de griso	2
Rami in pam	casse 527	Paternostri de vero	casse 85
Arzenti vivi	251	Sede da cavalo	barili 1
Zenabri	casse 21	Ambra	2
Rami lavoradi	106	Panni de seda e d´oro	casse 15
Barette	casse 12	Banda raspa´	19
Pani de lana	134	Gripola	28
Vari	19	Banda larga	57
Ver de rami	casse 9	Zebelini	casse 2
Azalli	20	Piastre de laton	casse 27
Botoni di corallo	casse 4	Merze casse	
Stagni	106	Aver di nollo per cassa	
Savoni	casse 602	di merchadanti d´aviso, duc.	90,000
Risegal	35		

Sanudo, *I diarii,* 12:77–78

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B. PRIULÍ'S REPORT

Da Puola veramente segondo il solito si hebbe il carigo delle gallie quale andavano al viagio de Alexandria, capitano ser Piero Michiel, chome apar qui a carta 119. Et haveranno al nolo tra arzenti lavorati et danari contadi ducati 90,000, et in chassa di marchadanti ducati 16,000, tuta volta se iudichava certissimamente fusseno in tuto ducati 120,000 de contadi et arzenti lavorati, quali se potevanno reputare danari . . . Et cum le sopradicte galie etiam andoronno merze assai, id est pani de piui sorte bale 234, stagni fassi 236; rami in pam choffe 250; et rami in verghe fassi 250; arzenti vivi et zenabri bogiolli 350 in zircha; et rami lavoradi et altre robe assai segondo il solito che furono stimate riche galie a questi tempi

Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr (Venice) MS P.D. PD 252-c, vol. 6, fol. 128v

XX. SEPTEMBER 1513: SPECIE AND GOODS ON THE BEIRUT GALLEYS, CAPTAIN MARCANTONIO DA CANAL

Da sier Marco Antonio da Canal, capitanio di le galie di Baruto, date . . . a Puola. Avisa il cargo dile do galie sue, ch'è di contadi ducati 10 milia e merzi ut in poliza, e col nome di Dio fanno vela a buon viazo . . .

1513, adì 18 Septembrio, ai scogi di Puola

cargo di galie do di Baruto, capitanio sier Marco Antonio da Canal

Panni	bale 241	Botoni di coralo	casse 5
Ambra	casse 22	Botoni di coralo *[sic]*	casse 19
Vari	bote 4	Armelini	casse 1 1/2
Veri	casse 4	Zebelini	casse 1 1/2
Merze	casse 3		
Rami	C.o 77	Canevaze	ruodoli 10
Banda larga	fassi 15	Pater nostri	casse 20
Banda raspa	fassi 3	Aver sotil, zercha	ducati
Fil di rame	fassi 2		6000
Stagno fin	fassi 11	Aver di cassa	ducati
Corali	casse 13		10,000

Sanudo, *I diarii,* 17:79, 82, with slight corrections on the basis of Sanudo's autographic manuscript in Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (Venice) MS It. VII 245 (9232), fol. 50v [concerning the numbers of cases of *Armelini* and *Zebelini*]

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APPENDIX B: Importations into Mamluk Lands according to the *Tariffe*

I. Goods Imported into Syria According to Bartolomeo de´ Paxi (1503)

A. Products Imported into Damascus[196]

Arzento di bolla che sono dela liga de marzelli
Stagni in verga de Fiandra
Stagni de fontego
Arzenti vivi
Rami in pan
Piumbi
Rami tiradi in fil rosso
Fil de loton zallo tirado
Fil de ramo rosso tirado
Rami de bolla
Banda larga, zoè ferro stagnado
Grepola zoè tartaro
Cophali mordasangue
Cenabrio in pan
Verderamo in udre
Solphari
Arsenico
Sulimado
Oropiumento
Lume de rocha
Oio de tigname Cera de Natolia et d´altri loghi
Mastici
Coralli, zoè brancha
Toro
Bastardo
Zopa Zafran *[sic]*
Botoni de coralli
Coralli pescadi
Ambra zalla de Fiandra
Ambra greza fina
Ambra lavorada
Ambra mezana de Fiandra
Smalto azuro
Bacille de loton
Tigname
Cristallo
Paternostri zalli
Carta da scrivere
Tele de molte sorte
Canevaze
Zuchari fini de Cypri
Miele *[sic]* de Dalmatia; ma nota che voleno esser bianci e duri
Veri cristalini
Vari fini de pelo
E vari fini de coro
E zibelini
Armelini

De molte sorte de panni de lana fano per Damascho, ma se trazeno da Venesia e da altri loghi qui di soto darò noticia de tute sorte fano per lì, e prima:

Panni fini da Venesia
Alcuni scarlati
Alcuni Pauonaci panni paduani bastardi

[196]The first grouping of products, up to ″armelini,″ probably refers to wares imported into Damascus, since it is located between detailed information on trade with Damascus and additional lists of products imported into that city.

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Panni da Fiorenza fini
Panni bressani
Panni bergamaschi streti, bagnadi e cimadi
Panni bergamaschi tiradi
Panni Zilforto
Panni Santoni
Panni sesse
Panni Santorsola
Panni genevrini stretti
Panni maiorini integri
Panni genervini larghi *[sic]*
Panni mezi maiorini
Panni de fontego
Sarze de Fiandra large
Sarze de Fiandra strete
Panni zinese le vestrine
Canevaze

Panni de seda li quali fano per Damascho e se trazeno da Venesia e de altri loghi, e prima:

Veludi de più colori
E damaschini de piu colori
Brocha d´oro
Campo d´oro
E brocha d´arzento

Alcuni fructi fano per Damascho, e prima:

Maroni, ma voleno essere del conta´ de Bologna overo della valle de Lamone et del conta de Imola, et questi sono li migliori, et durano più che altri fructi de altri loghi
Castagne seche mondade
Castagne cote in vino ma poche se ne conduse
Mandole comune de Puia quando Damascho non fa
Noselle da Napoli quando manchano a Damascho ne vene portado
Miele biancho duro del conta´ de Bologna overo de Dalmatia o de Catalogna, questi sono le meior de tutti li altri mieli

Molte merce de fontego se fano per Damascho
Lavor de lotoni assai
Pater nostri zalli de vero
Banda raspada de fontego

Merce milanese de più sorte, come sono:

deziali de loton
Campanelle
Alchuni aghi
Anchora alchune altre merce milanese

Paxi, *Tariffa*, 53v–54v

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B. Products Imported into Aleppo
Merce e panni che fano per Alepo

Prima panni fini da venesia scarlati
pavonazi, panni da Fiorenza,
la mazor parte azuri biavi et verdi,
panni bastardi bagnadi, zimadi,
panni bastardi de Fiandra tiradi,
che non siano bagnadi ne zimadi,
panni zenevrini largi, panni maiorini,
panni santoni, panni bergamaschi
tirade ogni color
Arzenti de bolla de liga del marcello
Ducati d´oro de zeche venetiani
Stagni de Fiandra stagni de fontego
Banda raspada
Bacille de loton
Cotoni [sic, but: Botoni] per coralli
ma volleno essere tondi e grossi
et de bon color
Grepola
Carta da scriver
Zibilin
Loldano
tigname
Ambra lavorada de ponente
Vari
Panni de seda, zoè veludi e damaschini
panni d´oro
Merce de fontego de più sorte
Merce milanese de ogni sorte
Canevaze

Paxi, *Tariffa*, 56r–56v

C. Products Imported into Tripoli
Robe, zoè merze e panni che fano per Tripoli de Soria, e prima:

Arzenti de bolla
Panni bergamaschi bagnadi zimadi
Panni zervevini
Panni visentini streti
Panni fini scarlati
Panni santoni
Panni visentini alti
Panni bastardi
Panni bressani et quarantani
Panni de seda
Panni de oro
Canevaze
Ambra lavorada
Loldano
Panni de fontego
Vari
Stagni
Panni paduani
Zibelini
Rami lavoradi
Rami in caphe
Tigname
Vari cristalini de ogni sorte
Zuchari
Muchara de Damiata
Lini de ogni sorte de Alixandria
Veri comuni
Orzo
Sal de Corfu
Risi
Paternostri de vero
Carta da scrivere

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Arzento vivo
Noselle da Napoli overo de Cicilia

Et tute le sopradite robe fano per Alepo

Paxi, *Tariffa*, 56v

II. Goods Imported into Alexandria According to Rimondo´s and Paxi´s Merchants Manuals

A. Products Imported into Alexandria Mentioned in Rimondo´s 1494 "Tarifa" (Arranged Here in Alphabetical Order According to the Original Spelling)

Anbra
Armelini
Arzenti vivi
Bastardi
bazilli
Biacha
Bossi
Canbelotti
Cartte
Cera
Chamocha
Chanevaze
Chastegne
Chorali in brancha
Choralli
Cibibo
Cofolli
Coralli in fil, zoè pater nostri
Dragantti
Eoro
Fige
fil di rame
Formazi
Formazi in ff.
Fostagni
Galle
Gottare in zare
Gottare zoè melazi in charatelli
Gottoni
Gozema
Lana di Chastron
Largado in zare
Lini
Loldano
Mandolle senza schorzo
Mastizi
Mieli in udri
Mieli in zare
Mieli in zarotti
Mor da sangui
Nosse (Noxe)
Noxelle
Oglio in botta
Oglio in udri
Oglio in zare di Sibilia
Oglio magrabi in zare
Oropimentto
Pani
Pani di seda
Pelle di Barbaria
Pignulli
Piombi
Rami
Rixegall
Roza
S[ch]iavine
Savoni in sachi da Venetia
Seda di porcho e di chavallo
Solfari
Stagni

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Sussimani
Sussine (susine)
Tigname (tegname)
Tta . . . tir
Ttarttaro
Ttavole di rame
Vari crudi e chonzi
Verdirami
Veri da spechi
Vini
Zafaran
Zafari
Zope

Rimondo, "Tarifa," fols. 10r–28v, 40v–41v

B. Goods Mentioned by Paxi as Imported to Alexandria (Arranged Here in Alphabetical Order According to the Original Spelling)

Armelini
Arzenti in piatini de bolla
Arzenti lavoradi
Arzento vivo (arzenti vivi)
Bacili de loton
Banda raspada
Bossi
Botoni de coralli, zoè pater nostri
Canevaze
Castagne zoè maroni
Cenabrio
Cere
Cibibo de Natolia dal'Ismir
Cophali
Coralli
Draganti
Ducati d'oro in groppo
Fige
Filo de loto
Formazo
Fuini
Gotare
Gozime
Grepola, zoè tartaro
Landano
Lignami [from] Natolia over Rodi
Lume de rocha [from] Constantinopoli
Mandole comune de Puia rotte
Martoni
Mastici da Sio
Miele de Dalmatia
Miele in caratelli [from] Romagna e [il] Bolognese
Miele in udre de Cipri overo d'altro logho
Miele in Zara
Monede [such as] Marceli e Mozenighi
Nose dela Marcha
Noselle integre del Reame de Napoli
Noselle rotte da Napoli
Noxe de la Marcha da Recanati overo da Fermo
Oio de Maiolicha
Oio de Puia dela mesura de Bari
Oio de Sibilia
Oio de terra de Barbari
Oio in udri
Oio magarbin da Tripoli de Barbaria e da Tunis
Oro lavorado
Oropimento
Panni de lana de molte sorte
Panni de seda
Piombi (piumbi)
Rame (ramo) philado

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Risagallo
Rame in pan (in panno)
Savoni bianchi da Venesia (da navegar)
Sbiaca
Sede de Cavallo
Sede de porco
Solphari
Stagni in verga
Susine seche da Napoli overo
da Cicilia
Tiber de Tripoli di Barbaria
Vari crudi e conzi
Verderamo
Vini malvasie
Zafari
Zafran
Zibelini

Extracted from Paxi, *Tariffa*, pp. 43v–50r

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APPENDIX C: Overall Value of Precious Metals and Goods Shipped to the Mamluk East, According to the Venetian Diaries (Expressed in Ducats)

	Alexandria		Beirut	
Year	Prec. Metals	Goods	Prec. Metals	Goods
1423				200,000
1486	"little money"	230,000		
1495	190,000			
1496	220,000 -50,000 170,000	150,000	120,000	
1497	300,000		60,000	
1498	200–240,000		60–70,000	
1499	no galleys		no galleys	
1500	140,000		50,000	
1501	120,000		18,000	
1502			25–30,000	
1503	100,000 -50,000 50,000			
1504	70,000		30,000	
1510	52,000	300,000		
1511	90,000 [Sanudo]			
1511	90+30,000= 120,000 [Priuli]			
1513			10,000	

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Sugar in the Economic Life of Mamluk Egypt

Sugar cane cultivation seems to have originated in northern India,[1] from where it spread both eastward and westward. As for the eastward route, it was only during the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries that sugar cane cultivation was introduced to Okinawa in Japan through southeast China, but it spread swiftly to the countries on the westward route. It is believed that sugar cane cultivation had already begun both in Iran and Iraq in the mid-seventh century at the end of the Sasanian period.[2]

According to *Tabaṣṣur bi-al-Tijārah* (Thoughts on commercial activities) by al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868–69), the district of Ahwāz irrigated by the Dujayl River in western Iran was particularly well known as a major producer of sugar *(sukkar)* and silk brocade *(dībāj).*[3] According to Andrew M. Watson,[4] sugar cane cultivation was introduced to southern Iraq from western Iran and diffused further to the Jordan valley and the Syrian coastal regions up to Bāniyās around the tenth century. As to the situation in tenth century Iraq, Ibn Ḥawqal relates that there was no village without sugar cane *(qaṣab sukkar)* in this vast area.[5]

Before sugar cane spread to the Islamic world, a traditional treacle of grapes, carobs, and other fruits, called *dibs,* was very popular in addition to honey *('asal),* the universal sweetening agent among both the wealthy and common people.[6] However, even after the wide diffusion of sugar cane, the common people under the Abbasids still continued to use the less expensive treacle for sweetening.[7]

The first clear reference to the cultivation of sugar cane in Egypt comes from a papyrus of the mid-eighth century.[8] According to D. Müller-Wodarg, sugar cane cultivation spread in ninth-century Egypt.[9] However, the main sugar cane-producing

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[1]Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China,* vol. 6, pt. 3, *Biology and Biological Technology: Agro-Industries and Forestry; Agro-Industries: Sugarcane Technology,* by Christian Daniels and Nicholas K. Menzies (Cambridge, 1996), 191.

[2]Andrew M. Watson, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1983), 26.

[3]Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Tabaṣṣur bi-al-Tijārah* (Cairo, 1935), 32.

[4]Watson, *Agricultural Innovation,* 26–28.

[5]Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-Arḍ* (Leiden, 1967), 254.

[6]M. M. Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids* (London, 1979), 100–1.

[7]Ibid., 100.

[8]Watson, *Agricultural Innovation,* 28.

[9]D. Müller-Wodarg, ″Die Landwirtschaft Ägyptens in der frühen Abbasidenzeit,″ *Der Islam* 31

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districts noted in the Arabic sources up to the end of the eleventh century were mostly restricted to the outskirts of al-Fusṭāṭ and the villages of Lower Egypt. On the other hand, al-Bakrī (d. 487/1094) is probably the first to refer to sugar cane cultivated in such districts as Assiut and Qūṣ in Upper Egypt.[10] Accordingly, it was after the eleventh–twelfth centuries that sugar cane plantations spread to Upper Egypt on a large scale, resulting in an increase of sugar consumption in Egypt and sugar export from Egypt to other Muslim countries and Europe.[11]

The present article attempts to demonstrate the importance of sugar in the economic life of Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, focusing on sugar as merchandise, medicine, and festival goods after an explanation of the diffusion of sugar cane cultivation and its manufacturing technology.

The Diffusion of Sugar Cane Cultivation in Egypt

Both Muḥammad al-Musabbiḥī (d. 420/1029) and Ibn al-Ma'mūn al-Baṭā'iḥī (d. 588/1192) refer repeatedly to the sugar consumption in the Fatimid court,[12] but do not identify the districts where it was grown in Egypt. However, the following account of the village of Naqqādah in Qūṣ shows that Ayyubid soldiers were eager to cultivate sugar cane.

> Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn granted the village of Naqqādah, together with one-third of the village of Sandabīs, as *waqf* to twenty-four soldiers who were guarding the prophet´s tomb. They set up a water wheel *(dūlāb),* constructed a sugar cane pressing factory *(ma'ṣarah lil-qaṣab)* there, and guarded the water wheel by turns.[13]

Thereafter during the reign of Saladin, Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān al-Nābulusī (d. 660/1261), an Ayyubid government official, under orders from Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ (r.

(1954): 47–48.

[10]Al-Bakrī, ″Kitāb al-Masālik wa-al-Mamālik,″ Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS Cod. Mixt 779, fols. 19–20.

[11]Sato Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam: Sultans, Muqta's and Fallahun* (Leiden, 1997), 211. Helmut Blume, based on the description by von Lippmann (*Geschichte des Zuckers* [Leipzig, 1890]), relates that sugar cane spread to the Levant and Egypt before the end of the seventh century, to Cyprus (about 700), Morocco (about 709), Andalusia (about 714), Crete (about 818), and Sicily (about 827) (*Geography of Sugar Cane* [Berlin, 1985], 24). However, the dates are too early to confirm the full spread of sugar cane cultivation into these districts. See Watson, *Agricultural Innovation,* 28–29.

[12]Al-Musabbiḥī, *Akhbār Miṣr* (Cairo, 1978–84), 1:65, 79–80; Ibn al-Ma'mūn, *Akhbār Miṣr* (Cairo, 1983), 26, 31, 35–36, 42, 63.

[13]Ibn Duqmāq, *Kitāb al-Intiṣār* (Cairo, 1893), 2:33, 49.

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638–47/1240–49), observed the situation in the province of Fayyum for two years (641–42/1243–44) after which he wrote a history entitled *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm* dedicated to his master.[14] This book contains a vivid description of the introduction of sugar cane into the province of Fayyum. Here are a few examples.

1. The village Dahmā *(iqṭā‘):*
   In this village cotton had been cultivated until irrigation water was diverted to sugar cane. As sugar cane spread, all the water was devoted to its irrigation, which caused [the village] to abolish cotton cultivation.[15]
2. The village Dhāt al-Ṣafā’ *(iqṭā‘):*
   In this village sesame had been cultivated, then rice was introduced as the land worsened in fertility. But rice was abandoned eventually because the water was diverted to sugar cane newly introduced into the village.[16]
3. The village Shānah *(iqṭā‘):*
   As the population increased, the villagers went to the village of Lawāsī to cultivate there. But because Lawāsī was distant from their village, they emigrated to a nearby place. It is also said, however, that the cause of their emigration *(intiqāl)* was the lack of irrigation water *(qillat al-mā’)* due to the increase of sugar cane cultivation in the province of Fayyum.[17]
4. The village Shadamūh *(iqṭā‘):*
   The village has fruit orchards of dates, grapes, and sycamores. Winter crops [wheat, barley, broad beans, flax, etc.] are mainly cultivated, and summer crops [sesame, cotton, taro, eggplant, etc.] had also been cultivated until sugar cane increased.[18]

The instances described by al-Nābulusī show that sugar cane cultivation spread to the extent of supplanting such summer crops as rice *(aruzz),* cotton *(quṭn),* and sesame *(simsim),* because its cultivation required irrigation even after the Nile had receded. According to his survey during the middle of the thirteenth century, the cultivated area of sugar cane in the province of Fayyum amounted to 1,468 feddans (about 881 hectares), while the area of wheat, for example, was 29,000 feddans (about 17,400 hectares) in total.[19]

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[14]Ed. B. Moritz (Cairo, 1898). About *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm* and its author, see Claude Cahen, ″Le régime des impôts dans le Fayyūm ayyūbide,″ in idem, *Makhzūmīyāt* (Leiden, 1977), 194–96.

[15]Al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 101–2.

[16]Ibid., 102.

[17]Ibid., 122–23.

[18]Ibid., 125–26.

[19]Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 212–13.

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The following accounts confirm that sugar cane cultivation was already widespread in the districts of Upper Egypt other than the province of Fayyum in the first half of the Mamluk period. We find an account in the annal for 697/1289 in *Kitāb al-Sulūk* by al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442):

> [After the Ḥusāmī *rawk* (the cadastral survey of Egypt conducted by Sultan al-Ḥusām Lājīn in 1289)][20] the viceroy *(nā'ib al-salṭanah)* Mankūtamur was granted vast *iqṭā'*s in Upper Egypt; that is to say, Marj Banī Humaym and its surroundings, Samhūd and its surroundings, Ḥarajat Qūṣ, Madīnat Udfū, and waterwheels *(dūlāb)* in these districts. The revenues were made up of over 110,000 *irdabb*s (about 9,900,000 liters) of crops *(ghallah),* raw sugar *(qand),* molasses *('asal),* dates, sheep, and firewood. He owned 27 sugar cane-pressing factories *(ma'ṣarah li-qaṣab al-sukkar)* there.[21]

Al-Maqrīzī gives another account on Mallawī in Upper Egypt:

> During the reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir, the cultivated area for sugar cane increased to 2,500 feddans (about 1,592 hectares) in this district. ['Abd al-Wahhāb] al-Nashw, supervisor of the sultan's domain *(nāẓir al-khāṣṣ),* seized all the sugar produced there in 738/1337–38 to send 14,000 *qinṭār*s (1,260,000 kilograms) of raw sugar *(qand)* other than molasses to Dār al-Qand at al-Fusṭāṭ. Later he forced the people in the district to deliver 8,000 *qinṭār*s (720,000 kilograms) of *qand* to it.[22]

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[20] About *al-rawk al-Ḥusāmī* carried out in Egypt in 697/1298, see Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 124–34.

[21] Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk* (Cairo, 1939–73), 1:843–44. E. Ashtor relates that the sugar factories were usually in the same area where sugar was grown ("Levantine Sugar Industry in the Late Middle Ages: A Case of Technological Decline," in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900: Studies in Economic and Social History,* ed. Abraham L. Udovitch [Princeton, 1981], 93). However, while sugar pressing factories *(ma'ṣarat al-sukkar)* were in the same area, sugar refineries *(maṭbakh al-sukkar)* were often located in towns like Qifṭ, Qūṣ, and al-Fusṭāṭ (see below).

[22] Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā'iẓ wa-al-I'tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Bulaq, 1270 H., repr. Baghdad, 1970), 1:204. Concerning the sugar industry in Mallawī, see Ashtor, "Levantine Sugar Industry," 99. 'Abd al-Wahhāb Sharaf al-Dīn al-Nashw (d. 740/1339), a converted Coptic Muslim, was employed as a clerk *(kātib)* by Sultan al-Nāṣir and was later appointed *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*. He was arrested because he had confiscated the estates of amirs and merchants and levied heavy taxes on the people (Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah* [Cairo, 1966–67], 3:42–43; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī* [Cairo, 1994], 7:390–93; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* 2:473 f.).

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Ibn Baṭṭūṭah (703–770 or 779/1304–1368–69 or 1377), who visited Mallawī at the beginning of the fourteenth century, states:

> The town has eleven sugar cane-pressing factories *(ma'ṣarah li-sukkar)* where even beggars or the poor *(faqīr)* can enter freely. They come to the factories with hot bread, put them into the pots which are boiling pressed juice, and go out with the bread steeped plentifully in sugar juice.[23]

According to Abū al-Fidā' (d. 732/1331), Qamūlah, a village located south of Qūṣ in Upper Egypt, had many orchards where sugar cane was cultivated.[24] Al-Udfuwī (d. 748/1347) further relates that he found forty sugar refineries *(maṭbakh lil-sukkar)* and six sugar cane-pressing factories *(ma'ṣarah li-qaṣab al-sukkar)* in Qifṭ, and in Samhūd there were many such factories with seventeen stone mills *(ḥajar)* in total.[25] Al-Udfuwī's description shows that during the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries Qifṭ was a particularly important center for sugar production in Egypt. *Al-sukkar al-Qifṭī* was famous for its purity.[26]

These accounts reveal that sugar cane had come to be cultivated on a large scale in the districts of Upper Egypt by around the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The large plough known as *muqalqilah* must have been invented during this time.[27] The work required from planting to harvest is summarized by al-Nuwayrī

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[23]Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Tuḥfat al-Nuẓẓār fī Gharā'ib al-Amṣār* (Paris, 1854), 1:100–1. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah calls the town "Manlawī." It was also called "Mallawī" or "Maltawī" (Muḥammad Ramzī, *Al-Qāmūs al-Jughrāfī lil-Bilād al-Miṣrīyah* [Cairo, 1953–68], 2:4:68–69).

[24]Abū al-Fidā', *Taqwīm al-Buldān* (Paris, 1840), 103–4. Yāqūt says that Qamūlah had many date trees and vegetables (*Mu'jam al-Buldān* [Beirut, 1955–57], 4:398–399).

[25]Al-Udfuwī, *Al-Tālī al-Sa'īd al-Jāmi' li-Asmā' al-Fuḍalā' wa-al-Ruwāt* (Cairo, 1914), 7–8, 9, 18; Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal* (Cairo, 1981), 4:154; Yāqūt relates also that sugar cane cultivation was popular at Bahjūrah in Upper Egypt (Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān,* 1:514). In 742/1341–42 Amir Qūṣūn was able to make numerous grants to his mamluks, partly because he held 500 feddans of privately owned land in Upper Egypt for sugar cane cultivation (al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* 2:561; al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir* [Beirut,1986], 370–71). See also S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967–93), 1:125–26.

[26]Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal,* 4:154; Subhi Y. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im spätmittelalter (1171–1517)* (Wiesbaden, 1965), 320; E. Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976), 243.

[27]"A Memorandum to Amir Kitbughā" issued in 1281 may be the first reference to this *muqalqilah*, which was used for the construction of canals and irrigation dikes (Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 111, 207). See also Hassanein Rabie, "Some Technical Aspects of Agriculture in Medieval Egypt," in *The Islamic Middle East,* ed. Udovitch, 64.

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(d. 733/1333) with respect to his native land, Qūṣ:

> In the Coptic month of Barmahāt (25 February–26 March), after weeded fields are cultivated six times by the *muqalqilah*—a large-sized plough *(miḥrāth kabīr)*—and smoothed by harrows after six more ploughings, sugar cane with two joints is planted by throwing it into ridged fields. The second-year sugar cane *(khilfah)* is irrigated after burning the old stubble. When seed leaves grow, the soil is hoed *(ʻazq)* to weed the fields, which continues until the end of Bashnas (26 April–25 May). During this period the plants are to be irrigated at fixed intervals, twenty-eight times in total, for two to three hours. The second-year cane harvest in Kīhak (27 November–26 December) and the first-year cane *(raʼs)* harvest in Ṭūba (27 December–25 January) are reaped and carried on camels or donkeys to pressing factories *(maʻṣarah)*.[28]

Al-Nuwayrī adds, ″This explanation is about sugar cultivation in the province of Qūṣ, but it is not much different from that of other provinces.″[29] In any case, sugar cane, in addition to its long term of cultivation (about 10 months), required complicated tasks, such as deep ploughing, weeding, hoeing, irrigation at intervals, pressing, and processing. That is to say, sugar production in medieval Egypt was conducted with high technology, large capital outlays, and much labor. Sugar production, therefore, was mostly carried out under the control of the government from the Fatimid period on.

Sugar Production Technology

As to who cultivated sugar cane in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, al-Nābulusī says that in the province of Fayyum cultivation was chiefly done on crown farms (*wasīyah,* pl. *awāsī*). *Awāsī,* in the early Islamic period, designated a private domain *(ḍayʻah)* mostly consisting of estates belonging to Coptic monasteries *(dayr)* and great bishops *(rāhib)*.[30] On the other hand, *awāsī* during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods have been regarded as state domains cultivated by corvée or as village common lands.[31] However, when we examine the terms provided by

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[28]Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* (Cairo, 1954–92), 8:264–67.

[29]Ibid., 8:271.

[30]Morimoto Kosei, *The Fiscal Administration of Egypt in the Early Islamic Period* (in Japanese) (Tokyo, 1975), 342.

[31]Cahen, ″Le régime des impôts,″ 28; idem, ″Contribution à l'étude des impôts dans l'Égypte médiévale,″ *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 5(1962): 265–66.

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al-Nābulusī in detail, we find both explanations somewhat inadequate. Al-Nābulusī gives us various accounts: government income through cultivation of *al-awāsī al-dīwānīyah* (ministry *awāsī*); *al-awāsī al-sulṭānīyah* (the sultan's *awāsī*) in the town of Fayyum; and provisions from *al-wasīyah al-'ādilīyah* (charitable *wasīyah*).[32] Furthermore, it is interesting to find *awāsī* not only as a part of *iqṭā'*, but also in the villages belonging to the sultan's domain.[33] We may therefore conclude that *awāsī* under the *iqṭā'* system were crown farms controlled directly by the government or sultan.

Al-Nābulusī gives us brief references to their cultivators:

1. sugar cane in the village of al-'Udwah (80 feddans)
   80 feddans cultivated by *murābi'ūn*[34]
2. sugar cane in the village of Sinnūris (318 feddans)
   222 feddans cultivated by *muzāri'ūn*
   96 feddans cultivated by *murābi'ūn*[35]
3. sugar cane in the village of Fānū (268 feddans)
   95 feddans cultivated by *murābi'ūn*[36]

There is another example from the village Maṭar Ṭāris, where both *muzāri'ūn* and *murābi'ūn* cultivated sugar cane and vegetables on 76 feddans of *awāsī*.[37] Furthermore, the town of Fayyum allotted 110 feddans for sugar cane cultivation in the surrounding area, among them 28.5 feddans cultivated by *muzāri'ūn,* and 81.5 feddans by *murābi'ūn.*[38]

Muzāri'ūn, who were usually called *fallāḥūn,* were peasants who customarily cultivated the land allotted under *qabālah* contracts concluded with the government or *iqṭā'* holders *(muqṭa')* after the annual flood of the Nile in autumn.[39] On the other hand, *murābi'ūn,* according to Cahen, meant peasants who had the right to take one-fourth *(rub')* of what they produced. They paid the ordinary tax in cash

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[32]Al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 25–26.

[33]Ibid., 32–34, 100, 108, 134, 157, 158. See also al-Makhzūmī, "Minhāj fī 'Ilm Kharāj Miṣr," British Library MS Add. 23483, fols. 99r–100v.

[34]Al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 32–34.

[35]Ibid., 107–10.

[36]Ibid., 156–59.

[37]Ibid., 156–59.

[38]Ibid., 27, 174–75.

[39]Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 192–97. After the annual flood of the Nile, irrigated land was classified according to each cultivation contract *(qabālah)* concluded between peasants *(muzāri'ūn)* and *iqṭā'* officials or government officials *(mubāshirūn).*

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on their cultivation of sugar cane.[40] I have my doubts about *murābi'ūn* paying the ordinary tax in cash, but the following two points should be taken into consideration. First, most of the *murābi'ūn* cultivated sugar cane in *awāsī,* while *muzāri'ūn* cultivated wheat and barley in addition to sugar cane. Secondly, *murābi'ūn* were provided with both crops and cash by the government every year, while the *muzāri'ūn* were given only seed for cultivation.[41] That is to say, *murābi'ūn*, who might have formed a class of agricultural laborers, were apparently inferior in status to *muzāri'ūn.*[42] However, it should be noted that *murābi'ūn* were not slaves in any sense of the word.[43]

Now, let us turn to the description of al-Nuwayrī once again explaining the way sugar was produced in Qūṣ.

> The harvested sugar cane is carried on camels or donkeys to pressing factories *(ma'ṣarah)* and put in a place called ″the sugar cane plant″ *(dār al-qaṣab),* where laborers cut it into small pieces with large knives and clean the mud off. The cleaned pieces are carried to mill stones *(ḥajar)* which are rotated by excellent oxen *(baqar jayyid).* The pressed juice is boiled in large pots (with a capacity of 3,000 *raṭl*s, about 1,350 kilograms of juice) called *khābīyah* in the refinery *(maṭbakh)* after filtrating the crushed cane through a sieve *(munkhal).* The boiled juice is filtered three times through wool and put in another room after further boiling to produce raw sugar *(qand)* and molasses *('asal).* Then the raw sugar is boiled once again with water and fresh milk *(al-laban al-ḥalīb)* to get white sugar *(al-sukkar al-bayāḍ)* and fine molasses *(quṭārah).* The refining percentage of white sugar is one-fourth or one-sixth of raw sugar.[44]

According to his explanation, the process of sugar production can be summarized as follows: (1) sugar cane cutting and cleaning at the *dār al-qaṣab,* (2) pressing with mill stones rotated by oxen, (3) filtration of the crushings and boiling juice in the refinery *(maṭbakh),* (4) reboiling to produce raw sugar *(qand)* and molasses

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[40]Cahen, ″Le régime des impôts,″ 23.

[41]Al-Nābulusī, *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,* 32-34, 107–10, 133–38.

[42]Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 217–19.

[43]Al-Maqrīzī explains that ″*'abd qinn*″ is a slave for life who cannot expect to be sold or emancipated (*Khiṭaṭ,* 1:85). Egyptian peasants (*muzāri'ūn* or *fallāḥūn*) under the *iqṭā'* system were also not slaves by law, but were actually likened to *'abd qinn*. See Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 177.

[44]Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 8:267–71, 272.

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('asal), and (5) further boiling of raw sugar with water and fresh milk to make white sugar.

Al-Nuwayrī explains that sugar cane was pressed with mill stones *(ḥajar)* rotated by oxen; however, we do not know whether these mills were of the vertical or horizontal type. In *Description de l'Égypte* published after Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798, we find a drawing of horizontal and roller-type mills for sugar cane pressing.[45] In the Caribbean islands, where sugar manufacturing technology was introduced from the Islamic world, roller-type mills were popular among planters.[46] Based on these later facts, it may well be supposed that horizontal and roller-type stone mills were used for sugar cane pressing in Egypt during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods.

Al-Nuwayrī relates that when raw sugar is boiled a second time with water and fresh milk, white sugar and fine molasses can be produced. Does his assertion have any scientific grounds? According to a scientist at the Department of Agriculture, the University of Tokyo, fresh milk is effective in creating white sugar because heated milk protein curdles absorb the impurities in raw sugar. In the same vein, raw sugar was boiled with fresh eggs to get white sugar in Okinawa during the Tokugawa period. Consequently, al-Nuwayrī's explanation is based on sound scientific grounds.

Al-Nuwayrī does not refer to the method of adding ashes into the pressed juice before boiling; however, there is the well-known story told by Marco Polo (1254–1324) about sugar production in China. His travel account reads:

> Before this city (Unken) came under the Great Khan (Qubilai 1260–94) these people knew not how to make fine sugar; they only used to boil and skim the juice, which when cold left a black paste. But after they came under the Great Khan some men of Babylonia who happened to be at the Court proceeded to this city and taught the people to refine the sugar with the ashes of certain trees.[47]

It is annotated that Babylonia in this passage indicates "little Babylonia of Egypt" within the old city of al-Fusṭāṭ and Unken is a city located near Zaytun. If this account is reliable, sugar-refining technology was introduced into the coastal areas of southeast China from Mamluk Egypt. According to Christian Daniels, most scholars regard this as a factual report due to the lack of evidence of the use

[45]*Description de l'Égypte* (Cologne, 1994), 692.

[46]Blume, *Geography of Sugar Cane,* 27.

[47]*The Book of Ser Marco Polo,* trans. and ed. H. Yule, 3rd ed. (London, 1929), 2:226.

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of plant extracts for sugar refining in China.[48]

Al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283) relates that Assiut in Upper Egypt was a sugar-producing center transporting every kind of sugar all over the world.[49] Raw sugar *(qand)* (that is, poor quality sugar) was called ″red sugar″ *(al-sukkar al-aḥmar)* in the Arab world.[50] *Sulaymānī* was a kind of sugar produced from *qand* after another boiling.[51] Then *sulaymānī* was refined to *fānīdh* or white sugar by another boiling.[52] What was produced after further refining was rock sugar *(ṭabarzad or thalij),* regarded as the highest-quality sugar.[53]

As to ″Egyptian sugar″ during the Mamluk period, al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) lists in *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá* the following varieties: *mukarrar* (repeated), *taba'* (subordinate), *wasaṭ* (middle), and *nabāt* (literally ″plants,″ that is, sugar candy).[54] According to Ashtor, *mukarrar* was thrice-boiled sugar, *taba'* and *wasaṭ* twice-boiled, and *nabāt* once-boiled.[55] I assume that these three types correspond roughly to *fānīdh*, *sulaymānī,* and *qand,* respectively.

As sugar production spread from Lower to Upper Egypt on a large scale by the thirteenth or fourteenth century, sugar was considered the most important export to European countries as well as a luxury good consumed by Egyptian sultans and amirs at their residences or at public festivals. Taking a great amir as an example, the account book *(daftar)* of amir Ṭaybars al-Ḥājj al-Wazīrī (d. 687/1288), which was written down by one of his mamluks, discloses that Ṭaybars and his household had consumed totally in his career 3,000 sheep *(ghanam),* 600 cows *(baqar),* 500 horses *(ikdīsh),* 28,000 *qinṭār*s of sugar for drinks *(sukkar lil-mashrūb)* and 160 *qinṭār*s of sugar for making sweets *('amal al-ḥalāwāt).*[56] As one *qinṭār* was about 45 kilograms, 28,000 *qinṭār*s and 160 *qinṭār*s were equivalent to 1,260 tons and 7.2 tons of sugar respectively. Ṭaybars, who was related to

[48]Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 351–52.

[49]Al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-Bilād wa-Akhbār al-'Ibād* (Beirut, 1960), 147.

[50]Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal,* 4:149, 152; al-Dimashqī, *Kitāb al-Ishārah ilá Maḥāsin al-Tijārah* (Cairo, 1318), 32.

[51]Al-Idrīsī, *Kitāb Nuzhat al-Mushtāq fī Ikhtirāq al-Āfāq* (Naples and Rome, 1970–84), 3:227.

[52]Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān,* 5:42. Yāqūt relates that *al-fānīdh al-māsakānī* is a kind of fine sugar produced in the district of Māsakān in Sijistān in southeast Iran.

[53]Al-Tha'ālibī, *Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif* (Cairo, n.d.), 82–83. Concerning the various kinds of sugar produced in the Islamic world, von Lippmann, *Geschichte des Zuckers,* 98–102.

[54]Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá fī Ṣinā'at al-Inshā'* (Cairo, 1963), 3:309.

[55]Ashtor, ″Levantine Sugar Industry,″ 96–97. He concludes that *mukarrar, taba', wasaṭ,* and *nabāt* correspond respectively to *muccaro, caffettino, musciatto,* and *candy* found in the description of Pegolotti who travelled to China via the Middle East and wrote a book entitled *La practica della mercatura scritta* (1335–43).

[56]Al-'Aynī, *'Iqd al-Jumān* (Cairo, 1987–92), 3:172.

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Sultan Baybars by his daughter's marriage, was promoted to amir of one hundred and appointed as *nā'ib al-salṭanah* in Damascus in 659/1261.[57] This shows evidently that the households of great amirs during the early Mamluk period were already consuming a large quantity of sugar.

Sugar in Egyptian Society under the Mamluks

Sugar as a Commodity

We find various descriptions of domestic and international transactions involving sugar in Arabic historical sources dating back to around the ninth century. For example, al-Ṭabarī relates that in 238/852 the Rūm (Byzantine) army attacked Damietta in Lower Egypt, plundering goods *(amti'ah),* raw sugar *(qand),* and flax *(kattān)* to be carried to Iraq.[58] Besides, according to Ibn Ḥawqal, white sugar *(fānīdh)* produced in Kirmān was transported to Sijistān and Khurāsān in Iran during the tenth century due to an increase of sugar cane cultivation there.[59] Al-Muqaddasī (tenth century) also states that sugar produced in Khūzistān was transported to Iraq, Yemen, and other countries.[60]

As to the sugar carried from Egypt to Syria, Bar Hebraeus (d. 685/1286) has the following to say:

> [A Jew said to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, who was encamped before Acre], "I am a Jew and a merchant of Damascus. I was coming by sea from Alexandria, and I had with me twenty loads of sugar. And when I came to the port of 'Akkā thy servants plundered me." . . . and when they admitted that they had deposited it in the Treasury, he [Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn] commanded the officials and they gave to the Jew the price of the sugar.[61]

Goitein says, "Sugar production must have been one of the major, if not the greatest, industry in Fusṭāṭ during the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods, and the share of the Jews in this field was very extensive."[62] He further relates that *sukkarī,* or maker (and seller) of sugar, was one of the most common occupations and family

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[57]Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt* (Wiesbaden, 1982), 16:508–9; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* 1:448.

[58]Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-al-Mulūk* (Leiden, 1879–1901), 3:1418.

[59]Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-Arḍ,* 313.

[60]Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm* (Leiden, 1906), 416.

[61]Bar Hebraeus, *Chronology,* ed. and trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (London, 1932), 2:342.

[62]Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* 1:125–26.

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names occurring in the Geniza documents.[63]

We find another account about the sugar carried from Egypt to Baghdad in *Kitāb al-Sulūk* by al-Maqrīzī:

> In this year [650/1252] the news arrived that the Mongol army encountered a caravan *(qāfilah)* headed for Baghdad from Ḥarrān and plundered it of great assets, including 600 loads *(ḥiml)* of Egyptian sugar, valued at 600,000 dinars.[64]

As one *ḥiml* was about 225 kilograms during the twelfth–thirteenth centuries,[65] 600 *ḥiml*s were equivalent to 135 tons of sugar. Consequently, these accounts show that Egypt had already become one of the most important sugar-producing countries in the Islamic world, exporting to such countries as Syria and Iraq.

As to sugar exportation from Egypt to European countries during the Mamluk period, al-Maqrīzī relates:

> When the water of the Nile flows into the Alexandria Canal during Misrā (25 July–23 August), ships *(markab)* loaded with various kinds of goods, like crops *(ghallah),* spice *(bahār),* and sugar *(sukkar),* set sail.[66]

The Alexandria Canal was a long canal connecting a place near Ṭanṭā and the coastal town of Alexandria, where Italian merchants chiefly from Venice, Genoa, and Pisa purchased various spices from Muslim merchants under the protection of their own consulates.[67] However, as al-Maqrīzī discloses, the goods purchased by the Italians also included agricultural crops, sugar, alum, and paper from Egypt, besides spices from the East.[68]

It is well known that the Kārimī merchants carried on a flourishing spice trade

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[63]Ibid., 126. We find the account of the Jewish merchants of sugar *(al-Yahūd al-sukkarīyūn)* in Ibn Duqmāq, *Kitāb al-Intiṣār,* 1:41.

[64]Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* 1:383–84.

[65]Walther Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gewichte* (Leiden, 1955), 13–14; E. Ashtor, *Histoire des prix et des salaires dans l'Orient médiéval* (Paris, 1969), 141.

[66]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 1:273.

[67]Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History,* states on page 299, ″Even after the fall of Acre [in 1291] the trading nations sent embassies to the sultan of Cairo and concluded new commercial treaties, reducing imposts and acquiring new rights.″

[68]Concerning the sugar transportation from Egypt to European countries, see the following works: Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens,* 320; Ashtor, A *Social and Economic History,* 306; Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 215.

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in Yemen, Egypt, and Syria during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. According to al-Ashqar, 201 Kārimī merchants can be identified from the Arabic sources of the Mamluk period.[69] Based on the vast profits from the spice trade, they made loans to the sultan of Cairo and other princes. However, it should be noted that they traded also in wood, sugar, textiles, precious metals, wheat, and ceramics for the Italian merchants.[70]

As to sugar production and trade by the Kārimī merchants during the Mamluk period, here is an example from *Kitāb al-Intiṣār* by Ibn Duqmāq (d. 809/1406). Among the 65 refineries *(maṭbakh al-sukkar)* located at al-Fusṭāṭ,[71] 7 were owned by the sultan, 21 by amirs, 13 by merchants *(tājir),* and 27 not identified. Among the 13 *maṭbakh*s owned by merchants, 4 were managed by *sukkarī*s[72] (Muslim or Jewish sugar merchants), and another 4 by the Kārimī merchants.[73] This indicates that in the Mamluk period, Kārimī merchants were involved in managing sugar refineries in addition to trading sugar with Muslim and European countries.

Among the above-mentioned four *maṭbakh*s owned by Kārimīs, two were managed by the Kharrūbī family from Cairo. Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Kharrūbī (d. 762/1361) was particularly well known as a ″sugar refinery merchant″ *(tājir fī maṭābikh al-sukkar)* at al-Fusṭāṭ and as founder of a school *(madrasah)* across from the Nilometer, where he stipulated that every post at the school should be occupied by Arabs.[74] On the other hand, his brother, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Kharrūbī (d. 769/1368), started out as a poor merchant, but earned immense profits later through trade and constructed a large tomb *(turbah)* in the district of al-Qarāfah, south of Cairo.[75]

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[69]Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Ghanī al-Ashqar, *Tujjār al-Tawābil fī Miṣr fī al-ʻAṣr al-Mamlūkī* (Cairo, 1999), 467–539. According to Ashtor, people of all denominations belonged to the Kārimīs, Muslims, Christians, and Jews (*A Social and Economic History,* 300).

[70]Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens,* 93; Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History,* 241, 300; al-Ashqar, *Tujjār al-Tawābil,* 76.

[71]Ibn Duqmāq, *Kitāb al-Intiṣār,* 1:41–46.

[72]Among the merchants who sought protection from amirs like Qūṣūn and Bashtāk in 737/1336–37, there was a sugar merchant *(rajul sukkarī)* who had made adulterated sugar and molasses *(zaghal fī al-sukkar wa-al-ʻaṣal)* (al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir,* 370).

[73]The names of the refineries owned by the Kārimī merchants were as follows: Maṭbakh ʻUqbah al-Milḥ, Maṭbakh al-Kamāl ibn Marzūq, Maṭbakh Sirāj al-Dīn ibn al-Kharrūbī, and Maṭbakh Nūr al-Dīn ibn al-Kharrūbī.

[74]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:369–70. Al-Maqrīzī relates also that Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad constructed a quarter *(rabʻ)* near the school. On the Kharrūbī family, see Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens,*114–15, 228; E. Ashtor, ″The Kārimī Merchants,″ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1956): 48–50; Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 121, 212.

[75]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:369.

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Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn′s grandson, Nūr al-Dīn ʻAlī (d. 802/1400), called ″the last merchant of the Kharrūbī family,″ made the Meccan pilgrimage several times and was reputed to be an honest and pious person. However, at the age of thirty he was whipped by the amir Barqūq (later sultan 784–91/1382–89, 792–801/1390–99) for trying to secure the position of vizier at the Mamluk court by bribery.[76] His grandson, Sirāj al-Dīn Sulaymān (d. 864/1460), could not maintain his status as one of the notables *(aʻyān)* at al-Fusṭāṭ, for in 826/1423 Sultan Barsbāy (825–41/1422–38) proclaimed a government monopoly over sugar refining and trade and in 832/1429 ordered that spices be traded at prices fixed by the government, dealing the Kārimī merchants a fatal blow.[77] Sulaymān, who could not pay his debts under such severe conditions, was arrested and sent to prison in Cairo.[78]

The fall of the Kharrūbī family symbolized the fate of the Kārimī merchants during the later Mamluk period. Under monopolistic policies imposed on sugar and spices by Sultan Barsbāy, they suddenly lost their livelihoods in Egypt. Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470) relates in his chronicle that the Kārimī merchants had disappeared from the Egyptian markets by the middle of the fifteenth century.[79]

Sugar as Medicine

Sugar was widely used also for medical purposes in the medieval Muslim world and elsewhere. Ibn Bayṭār (d. 646/1248), who was born in Malaga in Andalusia and lived in both Ayyubid Cairo and Damascus as a pharmacologist, compiled a voluminous work entitled *Al-Jāmiʻ li-Mufradāt al-Adwiyah wa-al-Aghdhiyah* (Compiled terminology on medicines and nourishments),[80] based on the results of his reading and field work. The item on *″sukkar″* in this book reads:

> Dioscorides [first century] relates that it is a kind of honey *(ʻasal),* but solid. In fertile lands like al-Hind and al-Maghrib, it is found

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[76]Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr bi-Anbāʾ al-ʻUmr* (Cairo, 1969–72), 1:195–96. It is said that Nūr al-Dīn [or Kamāl al-Dīn?] proposed a bribe of 100,000 dinars to get the position.

[77]Aḥmad Darrāj, *L'Égypte sous le règne de Barsbay* (Damascus, 1961), 57 f.; Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens,* 355 f.; Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 36, 52, 57, 96.

[78]Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʾ al-Lāmiʻ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsiʻ* (Beirut, 1353–55), 3:267.

[79]Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madá al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr* (Berkeley, 1930–42), 2:247. He says, ″This year [859/1455] not a single Kārimī merchant was to be found [in the market] from the end of Ramaḍān to date, which caused much damage to the situation of the common people.″ Concerning the monopolistic policies of Sultan Barsbāy, see the following works: Darrāj, *L'Égypte sous le règne de Barsbay*; Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens,* 422–23; Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History,* 309; al-Ashqar, *Tujjār al-Tawābil,* 439–51.

[80]Ibn Bayṭār, *Al-Jāmiʻ li-Mufradāt al-Adwiyah wa-al-Aghdhiyah* (Bulaq, 1291).

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as [sugar] cane.[81] It looks like salt, but if one drinks it with water, his stomach will be relieved. It is also effective against bladder *(mathānah)* and kidney *(kulyah)* pain.

Galen [ca. 129–ca. 200] relates that the *sukkar* carried from al-Hind and al-Maghrib was apparently extracted from cane and congealed. It is not harmful to the stomach, unlike our honey *(ʻasal)*.

Ibn Māsawayh [160–243/775–857] relates that it is effective for the stomach, in particular for persons whose gall *(al-mirrah al-ṣafrāʾ)* is not sufficient. *Ṭabarzad* (rock sugar) is not softened like *sulaymānī* and *fānīdh*.

ʻĪsá al-Baṣrī[82] relates that if one drinks it with almond powder, it is effective both against colic (*qawlanj)* and impotence *(ʻatīq)*. It is also capable of removing phlegm *(balgham)* from the stomach.

Al-Sharīf[83] relates that if one drinks it with butter, it becomes a fine diuretic. If one drinks one *ūqīyah* [25 grams] of sugar with two *ūqīyah*s of butter, it is effective against stomachache, and it also purifies afterbirth. If one drinks sugar with hot water, it heals sore throat and is effective against cough *(suʻāl)* and asthma *(taḍāyq)*. Persons with experience relate that it relieves cough.

Al-Rāzī [543–606/1149–1209] relates that it relieves chest *(ṣadr)* and lung *(riʾah)* pain. If raw sugar *(nabāt)* is boiled with rosewater *(māʾ al-ward),* it becomes the coldest and lightest of drinks. And if it is boiled with violet leaves *(waraq al-banafsaj),* it becomes the gentlest drink for the body.[84]

For all these reasons, sugar was one of the generic medicines sold by druggists, *(ʻaṭṭār),* as well as a luxury good traded by sugar merchants *(sukkarī)*. The *ʻaṭṭār*s during the Mamluk period also sold spices like pepper, nutmeg, and cloves, and perfumes like frankincense, musk, and saffron in addition to generic medicines like pomegranate and lemon bark or root, medicinal herbs, dry fruit, rosewater, and sugar.[85] Furthermore, Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 737/1336), who wrote a guide to everyday life, relates that sick Muslims require foods and drinks mixed with sugar.[86]

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[81]It is doubtful that the material related by Dioscorides refers to the sugar made from sugar cane.

[82]ʻĪsá ibn Ibrāhīm al-Baṣrī? See Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden, 1970), 3:128.

[83]Perhaps ″al-Sharīf al-Idrīsī.″ See Ibn al-Bayṭār, *Al-Jāmiʻ li-Mufradāt,* 1:5.

[84]Ibid., 3:22–23.

[85]A. Dietrich, ″Al-ʻAṭṭār,″ *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., 1:751–52.

[86]Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal,* 4:153–154.

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We find another example of the medicinal importance of sugar in *Ighāthat al-Ummah* by al-Maqrīzī:

> The year 695/1295–96 began with the people distressed because of high prices and diminishing income. However, they placed their hopes on the crops *(al-ghilāl al-jadīdah),* which were almost due. When the crops were ripe, a wind coming from the direction of Barqa blew like a storm and darkened the horizon, carrying a yellow dust that covered the crops in the area. . . . The crops withered; the summer crops, such as rice, sesame, colocasia, and sugar cane, as well as other irrigated plantings, all failed. Consequently, prices soared. This wind was followed by diseases and high fevers that afflicted the entire population, thus causing the prices of sugar, honey, and other products needed by the sick to soar.[87]

Faced with this severe situation, Sultan Kitbughā (694–96/1294–96) ordered that the poor and needy *(faqīr, dhū al-ḥājāt)* be assembled and distributed among the amirs. He allocated one hundred of them to every amir of one hundred, fifty to every amir of fifty, and so on down to every amir of ten receiving ten.[88] However, the situation was worsened by the epidemics following rampant inflation. Al-Maqrīzī continues:

> Epidemics intensified throughout the countryside and in the villages, and disease spread in Cairo and Old Cairo (al-Fusṭāṭ). The number of deaths multiplied, and medicines were so much in demand for the sick that a druggist *(ʻaṭṭār)* located at the beginning of the Daylam quarter in Cairo sold 32,000 dirhams [of medicines] in one month.[89]

It is probable that what this Cairene *ʻaṭṭār* sold, in the midst of the epidemic, was mostly sugar. At the end of the thirteenth century, the annual *iqṭāʻ* revenue of a

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[87]Al-Maqrīzī, *Ighāthat al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghummah* (Cairo, 1940), 33–34; English tr. by Adel Allouche as *Mamluk Economics* (Salt Lake City, 1994), 44. The translation has been modified slightly by the present writer.

[88]Al-Maqrīzī, *Ighāthah,* 35; *Mamluk Economics,* 45. In 694/1294, when Kitbughā acceded to the sultanate, the disaster began in Egypt and he was regarded as an ″ill-omened sultan″ (Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 106).

[89]Al-Maqrīzī, *Ighāthah,* 35; *Mamluk Economics,* 45.

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ḥalqah cavalryman was 20,000 dirhams or less, lower than the sum earned in a month by the above Cairene *'aṭṭār*.[90] We find another example in the annal for 709/1309 by al-Maqrīzī:

> During this year fierce disease spread among the people and epidemic *(wabā')* also prevailed. Medicines and doctors were in demand, but what was needed by the sick became so scarce that sugar was purchased at five dirhams per *raṭl* [450 grams], chicken at the same price, and melon at one dirham. Under such circumstances, an *'aṭṭār* could earn from two to three hundred dirhams per day.[91]

Furthermore, during the autumn of 748/1347 plague *(ṭā'ūn)* spread to Egypt from Syria, then throughout Lower Egypt and further to Upper Egypt the next year.[92] In 749/1348 the daily death toll in Cairo increased rapidly from 300 to 2,000, devastating Barjawān quarter, where al-Maqrīzī was born and raised, leaving 42 vacant houses.[93] The plague spread outside Egypt; for example, in Ghazzah a peasant was found dead, grasping a plough *(miḥrāth)* in his hands.[94] At this time, the price of sugar needed by the sick soared to 23–27 dinars per *qinṭār* (45 kilograms),[95] which was equivalent to 4.6–5.4 dirhams per *raṭl,* enabling the *'aṭṭār*s of Cairo to enjoy once again windfall incomes, far beyond that of the *ḥalqah* cavalrymen.

SUGAR AS A FESTIVAL GOOD

Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. 453/1061), a Persian poet and traveller who visited Fatimid Egypt in 439/1047,[96] states in his travel account, *Safar Nāmah:*

> They say that during Ramaḍān sugar granted by the sultan [Fatimid caliph] to his servants amounted to 50,000 *mann* (about 41,650 kilograms). I actually saw an [ornamental] tree shaped like a citron *(turanj),* with all its branches, leaves, and fruits made of sugar.[97]

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[90] Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 133.

[91] Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* 2:55.

[92] Concerning the plague in the Middle East during the years 748–49/1347–49, see Michael W. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1977).

[93] Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* 2:780, 782.

[94] Ibid., 775.

[95] Ashtor, *Histoire des prix,* 317.

[96] Nāṣir-i Khusraw converted to the Isma'ili sect during his stay in Egypt.

[97] Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Safar Nāmah* (Berlin, 1340), 79.

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This was an elaborate decoration of sugar to display the authority of the Fatimid caliph, al-Mustanṣir (487–95/1094–1101) to the Muslim and non-Muslim peoples in Cairo. Based on the above description, we may see further that the practice of distributing sugar by the caliphs or sultans in the sacred month of Ramaḍān had already begun in the Fatimid period. It is related also that in 624/1227 the Ayyubid sultan al-Kāmil (615–35/1218–38) spent his money on schools *(madrasah)* and Sufi convents *(khānqāh),* giving bread, meat, candy *(ḥalawī),* and sugar to every scholar *(faqīh)*.[98] Furthermore, in 636/1238 Sultan al-Malik al-ʻĀdil (635–37/1238–40), who had acquired lordship over Egypt and Syria, held a banquet *(simāṭ)* below the citadel in Cairo and provided candy and 5,000 *ublūj*s of sugar (about 50,000 kilograms) to the common people.[99]

In 660/1262 over 200 Mongol soldiers who had been defeated by Berke Khan arrived in Cairo with their families. They were cordially received as *"wāfidīyah"* (immigrants) by Sultan Baybars (658–76/1260–77), who ordered that they be provided with fodder, sheep, robes, and sugar.[100] According to *Ṣubḥ al-Aʻshá* by al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), the cadastral surveys conducted by Sultan al-Nāṣir *(al-rawk al-Nāṣirī)* during the years 713–25/1313–25 helped establish the basis of an empire which continued up to the end of Sultan Ashraf Shaʻbān's reign (764–78/1363–77).[101] It is related that this Sultan al-Nāṣir, who had a deep appreciation for horses *(khayl),* granted textiles, sugar, and other goods to persons who brought excellent horses to him.[102]

During the third reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir (709–41/1310–41), the sugar grant to

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[98]Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Al-Durr al-Maṭlūb fī Akhbār Mulūk Banī Ayyūb* (Cairo, 1972), 283.

[99]Ibn Duqmāq, "Nuzhat al-Anām fī Tārīkh al-Islām," Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 1740 Tārīkh, fol. 35a–35b. The *ublūj* originated from the Persian *āblūj* which meant a loaf of sugar. According to al-Maqrīzī, one *ublūjah (ublūj)* was equal to about a ninth *(tusʻ)* of a *qinṭār [jarwī]* (about 10 kilograms) (*Khiṭaṭ,* 1:103). Ashtor reads the words *"tisʻ* (nine) *qinṭār*s" (810 kilograms) ("Levantine Sugar Industry, 123, 127), but the output of sugar per feddan based on that weight far exceeds the figure seen in modern Egypt. Cf. H. A. B. Rivlin, *The Agricultural Policy of Muḥammad ʻAlī in Egypt* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), 146. See also Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 219–20.

[100]Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* 1:473–74. Notables of the *wāfidīyah,* also called *"mustaʻminūn"* (persons who requested safety), were granted the rank of amir, and the others were incorporated into the Bahri Mamluks. See also Ibn ʻAbd al-Ẓāhir, *Al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Ẓāhir* (Dacca, 1956), 58–59; David Ayalon, "The Wafidiya in the Mamluk Kingdom," *Islamic Culture* 25 (1951): 89–104.

[101]Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ,* 4:14. See also Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 161. Ibn Khalīl al-Asadī (ninth/fifteenth c.) estimates that the Nāṣirī *rawk* brought about the prosperity of villages through fair administration promoting public welfare, which continued until the reign of Sultan Barqūq (al-Asadī, *Al-Taysīr wa-al-Iʻtibār* [Cairo, 1968], 74, 76–77).

[102]Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* 2:526.

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the Mamluk amirs in Ramaḍān had already become an established custom. Al-Maqrīzī states:

> During the days of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, the annual grant of sugar *(rātib al-sukkar)* [to amirs and sultan's mamluks] during Ramaḍān amounted to 1,000 *qinṭār*s (about 45,000 kilograms), then increased to 3,000 *qinṭār*s (135,000 kilograms) in 745/1344–45 [under the reign of al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad], estimated at 600,000 dirhams which are equal to 30,000 Egyptian dinars.[103]

The purchase of a great number of mamluks and horses by Sultan al-Nāṣir, as well as the generous grant of sugar to his servants, gradually affected the finances of the Mamluk government. However, heavy sugar consumption continued during the reigns of his successors. Here is an example from 778/1377:

> We could not estimate the loads of kitchenwares, drinks, and various kinds of eatables [prepared for the Meccan pilgrimage by Sultan Ashraf Sha'bān]. Among them there were 30,000 small bags of sugar candy *(ḥalawī),* each bag weighing 5 *raṭl*s [about 2.25 kilograms], 180,000 *raṭl*s [about 81,000 kilograms] in total. Since all the candy was made of pure sugar, it was worth more than 100 *mithqāl*s [about 468 grams] of musk, except sandalwood and aloes.[104]

Since the amirs who accompanied Sultan Ashraf to Mecca also provided sugar candy, 360,000 *raṭl*s (162,000 kilograms) of sugar was consumed in only one month. Although the small bags of sugar candy were prepared for the Meccan pilgrims, the Cairene people criticized such luxury, saying "it is not suitable for the Meccan pilgrimage."[105]

Besides the lavish consumption of sugar by sultans and amirs, the close relationship between sugar consumption and festivals had already appeared among the common people in Fatimid Cairo. Al-Baṭā'iḥī writes that on Mawlid al-Nabī (12 Rabī' I 517/10 May 1123) sugar, almonds, honey, and sesame oil (*sīraj*) were provided to every religious shrine *(mashhad)* in Cairo.[106] Al-Maqrīzī further relates a case in Mamluk Cairo in his *Khiṭaṭ:*

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[103] Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:231.

[104] Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* 3:273.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Al-Baṭā'iḥī, *Akhbār Miṣr* (Cairo, 1983), 62.

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> The Sugar Candy Market *(Sūq al-Ḥalawīyīn)* [in Cairo]. This is a market for selling sugar candy *(ḥalawī),* called today ″various sweets.″ It was the best market where one could find shops selling plates, heavy brass-wares, and various colored sugar candy. I witnessed that in this sugar market each *qinṭār* (45 kilograms) of sugar was sold at 170 dirhams. . . . During the month of Rajab one finds a beautiful scene in this market. Many kinds of sugar candy are made in the shapes of horses *(khayl),* lions *(sab‘),* cats *(qiṭṭah),* etc. Since the candy is hung by threads in the shops, they are called ″hung candy.″ Each piece weighs between 1/4 *raṭl* [about 110 grams] and 10 *raṭl*s [4.5 kilograms] and are all purchased for children. The markets in al-Fusṭāṭ, Cairo, and their environs are also filled with goods like these.[107]

The tradition of abstaining from raids and warfare during the holy month of Rajab has been observed since the Jāhilīyah. Furthermore, it is related that on the 26th night of this month the Prophet Muḥammad travelled to Jerusalem on a legendary horse *(al-Burāq)* and ascended to heaven (the *isrā’* and *mi‘rāj* legends based on Quran 17: 1). We are not certain whether the custom of ″hung candy″ in Rajab originated from this popular legend or not. In contemporary Cairo, we find similar customs on the occasions of the Prophet′s birthday *(mawlid al-nabī),* and the Feast of the Sacrifice *(‘īd al-aḍḥá)*.[108] At the sugar candy stores, large candies in the shape of brides, camels, and horses are displayed, as well as boxes filled with small candy in the shape of radishes, eggplants, turnips, strawberries, etc.

According to al-Maqrīzī, successive misfortunes after the latter half of the fourteenth century caused a swift decline in sugar production in Egypt. He states,

> Misfortunes *(miḥnah)* happened [intermittently]. The price of sugar increased due to the ruin of both waterwheels *(dūlāb)* in Upper Egypt and sugar refineries *(maṭbakh al-sukkar)* in the town of al-Fusṭāṭ. Since many sugar candy artisans *(ṣāni‘)* died out, production also declined.[109]

Miḥnah in the works of al-Maqrīzī indicates *fasād* (corruption) on the part of

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[107] Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:99–100.

[108] On the Muslim festivals, see Gustav E. von Grunebaum, *Muḥammadan Festivals* (London, 1951).

[109] Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:99.

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sultans and amirs rather than natural disasters—mostly *ṭa'ūn* (plague)—that struck Egypt intermittently beginning with the great epidemic of 748/1347–48, which was called ″the Black Death″ in Europe.[110] On the other hand, Ashtor states that the Egyptian and Syrian sugar industries during the later Mamluk period adhered to their old methods, using oxen as power to drive the pressing mills,[111] while in the sugar mills of Sicily and Cyprus, oxen had been replaced by horses and waterpower.[112] This argument is not correct, however, because the above account by al-Maqrīzī discloses that waterwheels *(dūlāb)*[113] were already in use in Egypt under the Mamluk sultans. Consequently, it may well be that it was not technological stagnation, but rather both political corruption and natural disasters that caused the decline of the Egyptian sugar industry in the later Mamluk period.

[110]Al-Maqrīzī gives the following explanation as to the causes of famine and high prices in late Mamluk Egypt. The first is political corruption among the Mamluk amirs. Political posts such as vizier, qadi, and *wālī* could not be obtained without paying bribes *(rishwah)*. The second is the rise in the taxes levied on *iqṭā'*s; and the third is the circulation of copper coins. During the reign of Barqūq, dinars and dirhams disappeared from the market places (*Ighāthah,* 71). In contrast to the explanation of al-Maqrīzī, Abraham Udovitch proposed that repeated plague epidemics from the middle of the fourteenth century must have significantly decreased the population in Egypt, which led to the stagnation of economic activity in rural and urban society (″England to Egypt, 1350–1500: Long Term Trends and Long-distance Trade,″ in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East*, ed. M. A. Cook [London, 1970], 115–28). However, since Egyptian agriculture was closely tied to administrative affairs, we cannot easily reject al-Maqrīzī′s suggestion on the grounds that he mistook cause for effect. See also Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 237–39.

[111]Ashtor relates that from the second half of the thirteenth century until the end of the fourteenth, the technological level of the Middle Eastern sugar industry was relatively high and was by no means lower than that of the sugar industries in the southern European countries (″Levantine Sugar Industry,″ 105).

[112]Ibid., 105–6.

[113]On *dūlāb* see Rabie, ″Agriculture in Medieval Egypt,″ 70–71; Sato, *State and Rural Society,* 134 n. 2.

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A Note on Archaeological Evidence for Sugar Production in the Middle Islamic Periods in Bilād al-Shām

The role of sugar in medieval Mediterranean trade is well documented in Italian and Arabic sources. The cultivation of sugar cane and the refinement of sugar are also well documented in the archaeological record.[1] Numerous sugar mills and refineries have been discovered in surveys of Israel and Jordan, and four refineries have been the subject of excavation (and publication), providing physical evidence for sugar production, as well as insight into the modes and methods of production,

[1]The textual evidence for production and trade in the Islamic Mediterranean has been discussed most prolifically by Eliahu Ashtor (see especially his ″Levantine Sugar Industry in the Later Middle Ages: A Case of Technological Decline,″ in *The Islamic Middle East: 700–1900,* ed. Abraham Udovitch [Princeton, 1977], 91–132; idem, ″Levantine Sugar Industry in the Later Middle Ages: An Example of Technological Decline,″ *Israel Oriental Studies* 7 (1977): 226–80). It is also discussed by Andrew M. Watson among other agricultural products: Andrew M. Watson, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1983). W. D. Philips discusses the diffusion of sugar throughout the Mediterranean, and its trade through the sixteenth century: W. D. Philips, ″Sugar Production and Trade in the Mediterranean at the Time of the Crusades,″ in Vladimir Goss, ed., *The Meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange between East and West during the Period of the Crusades,* Studies in Medieval Culture, vol. 21 (Kalamazoo, 1986), 393–406. A. Peled concentrates on Crusader production in Palestine: A. Peled, ″The Local Sugar Industry under the Latin Kingdom,″ in *Knights of the Holy Land: The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, ed. Silvia Rozenberg (Jerusalem, 1999), 251–57. Anthony Luttrell, Franz Georg Maier and Vassos Karageorghis, and Marie-Louise von Wartburg have all written on the Cypriot sugar industry, with Maier and von Wartburg drawing on excavations of several well-preserved mills on Cyprus: Anthony Luttrell, ″The Sugar Industry and Its Importance for the Economy of Cyprus during the Frankish Period,″ in *The Development of the Cypriot Economy from the Prehistoric Period to the Present Day*, ed. V. Karageorghis and D. Michaelides (Nicosia, 1996), 163–73; Franz Georg Maier and Vassos Karageorghis, *Paphos: History and Archaeology* (Nicosia, 1984); Marie-Louise von Wartburg, ″The Medieval Cane Sugar Industry in Cyprus: Results of Recent Excavations,″ *The Antiquaries Journal* 63 (1983): 298–314; idem, ″Cane Sugar Production Sites in Cyprus, Real and Imagined,″ *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (2000): 381–400. H. Eduard LaGro′s dissertation on Ayyubid-Mamluk ceramics from Tell Abu Sarbut contains a nice summary and description of the sugar industry in the southern Levant, noting al-Nuwayrī′s description of differences between Egyptian and Syrian production methods. See his dissertation (due to be published in 2004): H. Eduard LaGro, ″An Insight into Ayyubid-Mamluk Pottery: Description and Analysis of a Corpus of Mediaeval Pottery from the Cane Sugar Production and Village Occupation at Tell Abu Sarbut in Jordan,″ Ph.D. diss., University of Leiden, 2002.

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throughout the region of Bilād al-Shām. In addition, excellent comparanda come from very well preserved sugar refineries dating to the late thirteenth to sixteenth centuries A.D. excavated in Cyprus, which, having been modeled on the earlier and contemporary Levantine refineries, illustrate how the Levantine installations may have functioned.[2] Other comparanda come from Iran and North Africa: a refinery dating to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D. was excavated at Susa,[3] and several sites, probably sixteenth century and later, have been surveyed in Morocco.[4] Although sources such as al-Qalqashandī and al-Nuwayrī, as well as Geniza letters and other trading documents, indicate Islamic Egypt was awash in sugar cane, there have unfortunately been no published excavations in Egypt to accompany the textual evidence.[5]

In Bilād al-Shām, four sugar factories have been excavated and published, all in the south, in modern Israel and Jordan. Tell Abu Qa'dan/Deir Alla in southern Jordan was excavated by Henk J. Franken and Moawiyah M. Ibrahim in 1977 and 1978, and the nearby Tell Abu Sarbut was excavated by Hubert de Haas, H.

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[2]Marie-Louise von Wartburg, ″Design and Technology of the Medieval Cane Sugar Refineries in Cyprus: A Case Study in Industrial Archaeology,″ in *Paisajes del Azúcar: Actas del Quinto Seminario International Sobre la Caña de Azúcar,* ed. Antonio Malpica (Granada, 1995), 81–116; von Wartburg and Maier, ″Excavations at Kouklia (Palaepaphos): 15th Preliminary Report: Seasons 1987–1988,″ *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (1989): 175–88. Also see Maier, ″Excavations at Kouklia (Palaepaphos): Ninth Preliminary Report: Season 1976,″ *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (1977): 134–40; von Wartburg and Maier, ″Excavations at Kouklia (Palaepaphos): 16th Preliminary Report: Seasons 1989 and 1990,″ *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (1991): 255–62.

[3]Rémy Boucharlat and Audran Labrousse, ″Une sucrerie d'époque islamique sur la rive droite du Chaour à Suse: I: Description et essai d'interprétation des structures,″ *Cahiers de la délégation archéologique française en Iran* 10 (1979): 155–76; Monik Kervran, ″Une sucrerie d'époque islamique sur la rive droite du Chaour à Suse: II: Le matériel archéologique,″ *Cahiers de la délégation archéologique française en Iran* 10 (1979): 177–237.

[4]Paul Berthier, *Les anciennes sucreries du Maroc et leurs réseaux hydrauliques,* 2 vols. (Rabat, 1966).

[5]For example, Ashtor has culled Arab chroniclers such as Ibn Duqmāq and Ibn Mutawwaj for lists of factory owners in both Cairo and Upper Egypt (Eliahu Ashtor, ″Levantine Sugar Industry in the Later Middle Ages: An Example of Technological Decline″). The Cairo Geniza documents, covering a slightly earlier period, also indicate production and sale in Egypt: S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza,* vol. 1, *Economic Foundations* (Berkeley, 1967); idem, ″Mediterranean Trade in the Eleventh Century: Some Facts and Problems,″ in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East: From the Rise of Islam to the Present Day,* ed. M. A. Cook (London, 1970), 51–62. Jean-Claude Garcin has compiled the sources for Qūṣ and Upper Egypt: Jean-Claude Garcin, *Un centre musulman de la Haute-Egypte médiévale, Qūṣ,* Textes arabes et études islamiques no. 6 (Cairo, 1976).

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Eduard LaGro, and Margreet L. Steiner in 1989, 1990, and 1992.[6] In Islamic Beisan (Roman-Byzantine Scythopolis), excavations have revealed a Mamluk sugar factory making use of part of the Crusader citadel there. Brief descriptions are included in Ruth Gertwagen´s report on the Abbasid-Fatimid fortress and surrounding Islamic settlement,[7] and by Jon Seligman in his report on his excavations of the Crusader citadel.[8] Edna J. Stern has excavated a fairly well-preserved sugar refinery and associated mill in northern Israel that dates to the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods.[9]

There are numerous mills extant in Palestine and the Jordan valley, and numerous places are known from the textual sources to have grown sugar cane and manufactured sugar. All of the surveys of the Jordan valley at least mention sites having numerous sugar pots scattered on the surface, and some have described milling sites in detail.[10] Stern´s M.A. thesis provides valuable survey data of the forty-three sites in Israel that have positive evidence of having been sugar factories.[11] She also lists those that may have produced sugar (twenty sites), and those that have been rumored to produce sugar but for which there is no evidence (three

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[6]Henk J. Franken and Mo'awiyah Ibrahim, ″Two Seasons of Excavations at Tell Deir ´Alla, 1976–1978,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 22 (1977–78): 57–80; Henk J. Franken and J. Kalsbeek, *Potters of a Medieval Village in the Jordan Valley: Excavations at Tell Deir 'Allā—a Medieval Tell, Tell Abu Gourdan, Jordan* (Amsterdam, 1975); Hubert de Haas et al., ″First Season of Excavations at Tell Abu Sarbut, 1988: A Preliminary Report,″ *ADAJ* 33 (1989): 323–26; idem, ″Second and Third Seasons of Excavations at Tell Abu Sarbut, Jordan Valley (Preliminary Report),″ *ADAJ* 36 (1992): 333–43.

[7]Ruth Gertwagen, ″The Fortress (of Bet She´an),″ *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 11 (1989–91): 56–59.

[8]J. Seligman, ″Bet She´an, the Citadel,″ *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 15 (1996): 43–47.

[9]Edna J. Stern, ″The Excavations at Lower Horbat Manot: A Medieval Sugar-Production Site,″ *´Atiqot* 42 (2001): 277–308.

[10]See especially Mo'awiyah Ibrahim et al., ″The East Jordan Valley Survey, 1975,″ *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 222 (1976): 41–66; idem, ″The East Jordan Valley Survey, 1976 (Part Two),″ in *Archaeology of Jordan: Essays and Reports,* ed. Khair Yassine (Amman, 1988), 203; G. R. D. King, ″Survey of Byzantine and Islamic Sites in Jordan: Third Season Preliminary Report (1982): The Southern Ghôr,″ *ADAJ* 31 (1987): 39–460; idem, ″Survey of Byzantine and Islamic Sites in Jordan: Third preliminary report (1982): The Wadi Arabah (Part 2),″ *ADAJ* 33 (1989): 203; B. MacDonald, *The Wadi el Hasa Archaeological Survey 1979–1983, West-Central Jordan* (Waterloo, Ontario, 1988); idem, ″The Southern Ghors and Northeast ´Arabah Archaeological Survey, 1986, Jordan: A Preliminary Report,″ *ADAJ* 31 (1987): 410; Donald S. Whitcomb, ″The Islamic Period as Seen from Selected Sites,″ in *The Southern Ghors and Northeast ´Arabah Archaeological Survey,* Sheffield Archaeological Monographs, no. 5, ed. B. MacDonald (Sheffield, 1992), 113–18.

[11]Ms. Stern has generously e-mailed me the tables from her M.A. thesis in English.

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sites).[12] Fifty-one possible sugar-producing sites in Palestine have also been collected from survey and textual sources and summarized by Brigitte Porëe-Braitowsky in a long article that also relies on some of her own reconnaissance.[13] This number is mostly a count of milling sites, for which there is no direct archaeological evidence of sugar production, however. Here we are concerned with those sites that have been excavated or surveyed, and found to contain the best proof there is for sugar production, which is the presence of great quantities of sherds of both conical sugar molds and syrup jars.[14] Boiled, reduced cane juice (collected from chopped and crushed sugar cane) was poured into the molds, which were conical, having a wide mouth and narrow base, and had one to three small holes punched in the base. The molds were either set directly on or raised over syrup jars, which collected the liquid slowly draining from the mold. This slow draining, as well as evaporation of liquid, resulted in a cone-shaped cake of sugar. The collected syrup might be re-boiled and poured again into molds, or sold in its own right.[15] The sugar molds were often broken during the removal of the sugar cake, resulting in great quantities of broken pottery remaining at sugar-production sites, and likely on-site production of pottery.[16]

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[12]Edna J. Stern, ″The Sugar Industry in Palestine during the Crusader, Ayyubid, and Mamluk Periods in Light of the Archaeological Finds,″ M.A. thesis, Hebrew University, 1999. There are numerous such sites in this region. For example, the excavators at Caesarea believe they have discovered an Abbasid-period mill used for sugar, which would have been animal-driven. They cite no evidence beyond the mill itself, but Caesarea was known as one of the more important sites of sugar production in the early Islamic period. See Avner Raban, ″Combined Caesarea Excavations (B),″ *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 17 (1998): 58–76. (I am grateful to Asa Eger for this reference.)

[13]Brigitte Porëe-Braitowsky, ″Les moulins et fabriques à sucre de Palestine et de Chypre: Histoire, geographie et technologie d´une production croisee et medievale,″ in *Kypros kai oi Staurophories/Cyprus and the Crusades: Papers given at the International Conference ´Cyprus and the Crusades,´ Nicosia, 6–9 September, 1994,* ed. Nicholas Coureas and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Nicosia, 1995), 377–510.

[14]Milling sites that are not accompanied by this ceramic evidence could not have been used for sugar, although it has been argued that some of them may have been built for grinding sugar cane and were later used for grain.

[15]The reconstruction of sugar production comes from al-Nuwayrī, and from the above-mentioned excavations at Kouklia, Cyprus. See LaGro´s useful summary of al-Nuwayrī´s description in his dissertation (LaGro, ″An Insight into Ayyubid-Mamluk Pottery,″ 30–31, or al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab,* vol. 7 (Cairo, 1931).

[16]Berthier, *Les anciennes sucreries du Maroc;* Franken and Kalsbeek, *Potters of a Medieval Village*; von Wartburg, ″The Medieval Cane Sugar Industry in Cyprus.″

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Summaries of the excavations known to date illustrate what is known and possible to know from the archaeological evidence:

Tell Deir Alla is a large mound in the east side of the Jordan valley, close to the Zerqa' river. Excavations from 1960 to 1967 by Henk J. Franken of the University of Leiden revealed intensive Late Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation, but in the Islamic periods the site was used as a cemetery, presumably contemporaneous with the adjacent site of Tell Abu Qa'dan.[17] Some of the grave goods include sugar molds and syrup jars.[18] At Tell Abu Qa'dan, northeast of Deir Alla, mills were still visible in the early twentieth century several hundred meters to the east of the tell.[19] Because of its presumed relationship with Tell Deir Alla, it was excavated briefly in 1967 by M. Jamerah of the Department of Antiquities. These excavations and a detailed ceramic study were published by Franken and J. Kalsbeek, providing the most detailed study extant of sugar vessels from this region.[20] Only two 5 m x 5 m trenches were dug, with most of the work concentrating on one trench. The excavators reached a depth of 6.5 m, of material that they dated from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries A.D.[21] In trench DA/AR100 a series of courtyard levels was excavated, each containing pottery, ash, and thick clay deposits from collapsed walls, as well as some pits and thick ash deposits. Bread ovens were also found. The excavators emphasize that the most surprising aspect of the excavation was the very large quantity of ceramic recovered from the courtyards, including several pots smashed *in situ* by a collapsed wall, and thus able to be reconstructed. Partly because of the nature of the deposition, and partly because of the speed of excavation, the excavators were unable to get good stratigraphic differentiation. All the dating is done on the basis of ceramic analysis, not stratigraphy. Thus Franken and Kalsbeek differentiate three phases of occupation, or at least of ceramic production, but they are unable to anchor them to an absolute chronology.

The greatest quantity of sherds from the site is of two types, present only in

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[17]Franken and Ibrahim, ″Two Seasons of Excavations at Tell Deir ′Alla, 1976–1978.″ (Abu Qa'dan is spelled Abu Gourdan in the publications.)

[18]The cemetery was again excavated in 1976–78 by a joint expedition of the University of Leiden and the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, directed by H. J. Franken and M. M. Ibrahim.

[19]Franken and Kalsbeek, *Potters of a Medieval Village*, 219.

[20]Ibid.

[21]James A. Sauer questions the basis for these dates, as Franken and Kalsbeek make only a few general comparisons of their pottery with other sites, and make no attempt to sort through the nineteen layers of stratigraphy. James A. Sauer, ″Pottery Techniques at Tell Deir ′Alla,″ *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 222 (1976): 91–94. LaGro′s dissertation is meant to follow up on and perhaps improve upon Franken and Kalsbeek′s ceramic study: LaGro, ″An Insight into Ayyubid-Mamluk Pottery.″

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the latter two phases of the site. Thousands of body sherds were found belonging to the above-described sugar-pots: conical molds (these having a single small hole in the base) and syrup jars, which are generally described as ″bag-shaped,″ and are handle-less and almost rimless. Both types of sugar pot are usually of somewhat coarse red- or white-firing wares, thickly potted. Only the interiors of the molds are smoothed. According to Franken and Kalsbeek´s study of those at Deir Alla and Abu Qa'dan, they are made with a combination of coil-built and wheel-thrown techniques. The molds come in various heights, keeping a generally standard rim diameter. They seem to be roughly standardized to three different capacities. The same rim variations occur in each phase, making rim changes useless for chronology. Syrup jars are likewise consistent in shape and capacity throughout the periods. The vast majority of both molds and jars are plain, but there are rare examples of decorated sugar molds, having combed decoration or even a dark green glaze.[22] The sheer quantity of ceramics related to the sugar industry, along with the presence of some vitrified sherds, indicates that they may have been produced on site to meet the high demands of sugar production.[23] The courtyards themselves may represent the remains of a refinery, used over a long period of time.

Tell Abu Sarbut, only about 1.5 km west-northwest of Tell Deir Alla and Tell Abu Qa'dan, was excavated by Hubert de Haas, H. Eduard LaGro and Margreet L. Steiner in 1989, 1990, and 1992. Although no remains of either a mill or a press were found, the excavators did find part of a large building that may have been used as a refinery, with two main phases of use some time apart. In its second phase there were benches with sugar molds embedded in them, ready to hold other sugar molds into which the boiled sugar cane juice would be poured. Many fragments of sugar molds and jars were also found here. Another part of the tell revealed a domestic area containing four phases of Ayyubid-Mamluk occupation built directly over unexcavated Byzantine remains. Material culture included numerous ceramics, but also fragments of glass bracelets and pieces of iron and bronze. The dating of this area and the factory was based on calibrated ^{14}C dates.[24] They date the last phase of the domestic area, which is evidence of the village, to A.D. 1434–1510 or 1598–1620, and the phase succeeding the last phase of the factory to 1292–1448. Thus the factories could have been late Ayyubid or early

[22]Franken and Kalsbeek, *Potters of a Medieval Village*, 143–46.

[23]For comparison, the fourteenth–fifteenth-century sugar mill at Kouklia on Cyprus included a simple round kiln for manufacturing the molds and jars on site (von Wartburg, ″The Medieval Cane Sugar Industry in Cyprus″). Generally the quantity of specialized vessels for sugar production is so high at each site that it only seems reasonable to assume that they were manufactured on-site.

[24]The reports do not disclose what material was used for the ^{14}C samples or how many samples were taken.

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Mamluk. We may infer that the village was not completely dependent upon the success of the factories, for it remained occupied for at least a century after the last use of the factory.[25]

Beisan or Bet She'an, Byzantine Scythopolis, also possesses evidence of sugar production in its later periods. It has been excavated by numerous institutions, but we are concerned with two projects: the Bet She'an Excavation Project in cooperation with the Department of Archaeology of Haifa University excavated the area of interest to us in August–October 1989 and May–November 1990 under the direction of Ruth Gertwagen and Adrian Boaz; and the Israel Antiquities Authority excavated in the summers of 1992, 1993, and 1994 under the direction of Jon Seligman. In the lower town, in an area about 400 m west of the center of the Roman-Byzantine town, there is an area of occupation dating from the Byzantine through the Ottoman periods, centered around the Crusader citadel. The citadel appears to have been built over an earlier fortress from the Abbasid-Fatimid periods. In the early Mamluk period a complex of installations for the manufacture of sugar was built inside the citadel′s inner rooms, keep, and part of the moat, as well as over the basalt buildings to the north of the citadel, which may be interpreted as houses built around a courtyard. The principal evidence for sugar manufacture is the presence of thousands of sherds of sugar pots lying on a lime floor. Seligman also noted ″compartments built along the walls to support vessels used in the sugar industry,″ presumably sugar molds.[26] Unfortunately neither Gertwagen nor Seligman describe the finds in detail, although Seligman notes they found no installations for processing the cane itself (i.e., a press). In any case the industry appears to have been short-lived in this location, and by the late Ottoman period the citadel′s upper story was rebuilt and used as a school.

Excavations at Yesud HaMa'ala in the Galilee have revealed the interesting building sequence of a possible synagogue cum sugar factory.[27] Yesud HaMa'ala is in eastern Galilee, on the east bank of the Jordan, about 15 km north of Safed. Excavations were carried out there in 1883, 1970, and 1974–83 by Y. Shoram,

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[25]De Haas et al., ″First Season of Excavations at Tell Abu Sarbut″; idem, ″Second and Third Seasons of Excavations at Tell Abu Sarbut″; LaGro, ″An Insight into Ayyubid-Mamluk Pottery. ″

[26]Seligman, ″Bet She′an, the Citadel.″

[27]Although there are four short publications by the excavators in Hebrew, I have relied most heavily on the summary in French by Porëe-Braitowsky. A. Biran, ″Yesud HaMa′ala,″ in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1993), 4:1510; Biran and Shoram, ″Remains of a Synagogue and of a Sugar Installation at Yesud HaMa′alah″ (in Hebrew), *Eretz-Israel, Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies* 19 (1987); A. Biran and Dan Urman, ″Yesud HaMa′ala, Synagogue—1982–1983″ (in Hebrew), *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 2 (1983): 110–11; Porëe-Braitowsky, ″Les moulins et fabriques à sucre de Palestine et de Chypre.″

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Avraham Biran, and Dan Urman. The building housing the sugar factory seems to be undated. The entire twenty-one meter length of the south wall was uncovered to a height of 1.5 m. The interior space of the building was divided with two rows of columns. In its latest phase the three spaces provided by the rows of columns each held a plastered basin in and around which numerous fragments of sugar molds and jars were discovered. The basins each incorporated a column base. Further evidence of sugar refining was the presence of a five-meter-long stone canal, providing the water necessary for the process of sugar refining.

The ceramics, including those of the sugar pots, were dated on the basis of one Crusader coin minted in Cyprus to the thirteenth century, to which the excavators date the last phase of use of the building. The excavators claim that there were no ceramics later than the medieval period, and also that there were no Roman or Byzantine sherds. The colonnaded building is nevertheless identified as a synagogue based on an Aramean inscription found on the site, along with architectural similarities with those at Gush Halav and Capernaum, which date to the fourth through sixth centuries A.D.

Excavations at Lower Horbat Manot provide the final example of an excavated sugar refinery in Bilād al-Shām. This was a salvage excavation conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority in 1995. At this site, on the Acre plain about 12 km northeast of Acre, a refinery and aqueduct were built by Godfrey le Tor in the thirteenth century A.D. (who sold it to the Hospitallers, who in turn leased it to the Teutonic Knights of Montfort) and remained in operation under Mamluk and then Ottoman governance.[28] A screw-press nearby was likely the site of sugar cane crushing, before it was taken to the refinery to be boiled. The excavation of the site was incomplete, but the excavators did establish the location of the building that would have housed the fire pits over which cauldrons of cane juice would have been boiled, and they fully excavated the courtyard where the cakes of sugar were dried. The large quantities of sugar pots dating from the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries indicated that the production of sugar did not slacken during or after the transition to Mamluk rule.[29] The nature of the Ottoman sugar production is far more fragmentary, however. One transformation is apparent, and that is in the manufacture of the sugar vessels themselves. In the Crusader period they are made of a cleaned clay, with added temper, and fired at a high temperature to a hard finish. The Mamluk and Ottoman vessels were, however, made of clay that had not been cleaned or had any added temper, and were fired at a lower temperature to a softer finished product. Stern suggests this difference in production may reflect the change in ownership between the Crusader and Mamluk periods,

[28]Stern, ″The Excavations at Lower Horbat Manot.″

[29]Ibid.

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even though the workers at the plant are likely to have remained the same, coming from the nearby village of Manueth.[30] In addition, the capacity of the molds became greater over time, with the Crusader sugar molds having an average volume of 3.8 liters, the Mamluk sugar molds having volumes of 4, 4.5, or 6 liters, and the Ottoman sugar molds being too fragmentary to determine their volume.[31]

As mentioned above, comparanda for the functioning of sugar mills and refineries can be found at several sites on Cyprus, which are said to be modeled on the Crusader refineries found on the Levantine coast.[32] The sugar factory at Kouklia-Paphos is the most complete factory extant, containing a press, mill, boiling and refining installations, and a workshop and storage area, built within the remains of Roman temples. It was thoroughly excavated by a Swiss-German expedition in the late 1980s, and dates from the thirteenth century with possible use into the seventeenth century.[33] The layout of the factory is logical and efficient for the production of sugar, and represents a refinement of mill planning from those known in the Levant, the layouts of which do not seem planned. Water, so important in both the growing of cane and the production of sugar, was brought to the site from a spring 3 mi. away by means of an aqueduct. Two mills operated at the site, the smaller perhaps an addition to increase the milling capacity of the factory. The larger stone-built mill, grinding hall, and refinery are adjoined, sitting at the bottom of a slope on the main aqueduct line. In the mill proper, the cane was crushed on a large mill-base, still *in situ,* on which a large animal-driven runner stone rotated. The mash thus produced was then taken to a water-driven mill north of the hall and pressed, as described by al-Nuwayrī. The adjoining vaulted refinery hall contained basins for collecting the freshly-squeezed cane juice, and hearths for boiling it in large copper cauldrons, as well as a water conduit in the center of the room, compartments for molds of sugar juice to rest on beams for evaporation, and rooms with water basins for the soaking and cleaning of sugar jars and molds.[34] The stone and mud-brick hearths are constructed so that their stoking chambers are on the outside of the building, to prevent ash and soot from entering

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Von Wartburg, ″The Medieval Cane Sugar Industry in Cyprus″; idem, ″Cane Sugar Production Sites in Cyprus.″ Until the mid-fifteenth century, the master of the royal refinery at Kouklia was always a Syrian (Maier and Karageorghis, *Paphos: History and Archaeology*).

[33]Von Wartburg, ″The Medieval Cane Sugar Industry in Cyprus″; von Wartburg and Maier, ″Excavations at Kouklia (Palaepaphos): 15th Preliminary Report″; idem, ″Excavations at Kouklia (Palaepaphos): 16th Preliminary Report.″

[34]Von Wartburg, ″The Medieval Cane Sugar Industry in Cyprus.″

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the refining area.[35] A storage and workshop area was found adjoining this complex at the north, which may have served as a place to store and repair the cauldrons and other implements used in refining. An additional mill or crushing installation was found here as well.[36]

This review of the excavations of sugar-production sites reveals that the archaeological evidence corroborates the textual evidence of both the processes by which sugar was produced in the Mamluk period and the implements with which it was done.[37] The numerous sugar mills that have been surveyed (twenty positively-identified sites in modern Israel alone) also seem to corroborate the story of large quantities of sugar being produced for the international and probably local markets in this period. On the other hand, these excavations and surveys cannot yet flesh out the picture of production in rural Bilād al-Shām, placing sugar in its agricultural and economic contexts. This is not due to the inherent limitations of archaeological investigation, but rather to the failure on the part of excavators to determine the relationship of the sugar refineries with their supporting settlements. This element is missing from all excavations discussed above but that of Tell Abu Sarbut, where the excavators determined that the existence of the village was not contingent upon the success of the sugar refinery, as it was occupied long after the refinery was defunct.[38] Careful excavation of additional sugar factories and their attendant settlements will help address such debated issues as rural population fluctuation in Mamluk Bilād al-Shām, and the degree to which populations of various regions depended on cash crops and associated industries.

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[35]Von Wartburg and Maier, ″Excavations at Kouklia (Palaepaphos): 15th Preliminary Report.″

[36]Von Wartburg and Maier, ″Excavations at Kouklia (Palaepaphos): 16th Preliminary Report.″

[37]For example, al-Nuwayrī describes the sugar pots and molds, noting that the molds were of different volumes.

[38]This may soon be remedied by the ongoing research at Tall Hisban in southern Jordan, where excavators have unearthed a storeroom containing sugar storage jars. The surrounding area is likely to have held numerous sugar mills, and several mill sites have tentatively been identified in archaeological field surveys as being Mamluk. See Bethany J. Walker, ″Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilad al-Sham in the Eighth/Fourteenth Century: The Case of Hisban,″ *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62 no. 4 (2003): 241–61. As she notes in this article on p. 259, n. 81, research on the possible sugar industry at Hisban will integrate the field research and textual study of *waqf* and other documents and is published in her article entitled ″Mamluk Investment in Transjordan: A ′Boom and Bust′ Economy″ in this volume.

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Mamluk Investment in Transjordan: a ″Boom and Bust″ Economy*

The fourteenth century witnessed a flurry of economic activity not only in Egypt but also in the most remote and previously neglected of the Mamluk provinces, such as *Mamlakat Karak* and the southern districts of *Mamlakat Dimashq*. This region, which constitutes today′s Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, benefited from intense capital investment from Cairene sources, as well as an expansion of the local military and administrative apparatuses. From the reinstatement of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to the sultanate in 1310 until the end of the century the agriculture of geographical Transjordan prospered. Yet, in spite of this prosperity and the obvious financial benefit gained by the Egyptian state from this region, large parts of the Transjordan were abandoned by the fifteenth century.

The handful of historians who have written on Mamluk Jordan and the much larger number of archaeologists working in the region′s ″Middle Islamic″ period have largely agreed on the factors behind this phenomenon.[1] They regularly cite natural disasters (earthquakes, droughts, locust infestations, and floods), plague and other epidemics, currency devaluation and changing trade and transport routes, political factionalism in Cairo, and the region′s unruly bedouin, who are said to have been eager to devour villages once the garrisons protecting them pulled out, as creating the conditions for the economic collapse of the fifteenth century.[2] They describe this collapse as total, affecting the entire region, and permanent, a financial,

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*The following is based on a paper presented at the MESA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., on November 25, 2002, as part of the pre-organized panel ″From Alexandria to Aden: Commerce and Society in the Medieval Middle East.″ I want to thank Dr. Warren Schultz for organizing this panel and for his encouragement in submitting my contribution for publication here.

[1]The most prolific of the historians are Jordanian nationals: Drs. Yūsuf Ghawānimah and Muḥammad ‘Adnān al-Bakhīt. The most relevant archaeological literature will be cited throughout this paper.

[2]Yūsuf Ghawānimah, ″The Affects of Plague and Drought on the Environment of the Southern Levant During the Late Mamluk Periods″ (in Arabic), *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 315–22, and idem, ″Earthquake Effects on Bilad al-Sham Settlements,″ *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 4 (1992): 53–59; R. M. Brown, ″Late Islamic Settlement Patterns on the Kerak Plateau, Trans-Jordan,″ M.A. thesis, SUNY-Binghamton, 1984; Jum′a Mahmoud H. Kareem, *The Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley in the Mid- to Late Islamic Period* (Oxford, 2000), 12 and 16–17.

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political, and demographic ruin from which the region recovered only briefly in the sixteenth century. Their conclusions are based largely on contemporary Egyptian sources and interpretations of archaeological surveys in the region now twenty or more years old. They are regularly cited in both the historical and archaeological literature and have colored the way both groups of scholars ″read″ their respective sources.

The economic decline of Transjordan should be understood as part of the larger pattern of political, financial, social, and environmental decline of Greater Syria and the Mamluk empire as a whole. Its local conditions, however, must also be considered in any debate about the agricultural and demographic shifts of the late Mamluk period. Transjordan was unique in many respects. Outside of Kerak in the south (the nursery of sultans and a provincial capital) and the smaller administrative center of ʻAjlūn to the north, it had no large or permanent official centers. Although the structure of Mamluk administration throughout Syria was irregular, the Transjordan seemed to have been particularly susceptible to shifts in district capitals, fluid administrative borders, and frequent changes in the ranks of its local governors, phenomena perhaps reflecting the state´s precarious relationship with the region´s large bedouin population.[3] Moreover, investment by the state and state officials had an ambiguous effect on the fortunes of this region. While the location of the hajj and caravan routes through its interior certainly benefited Jordan, the plantation-style development of the Ghôr (Jordan Valley) for growing and processing cane sugar and the conversion of some of the best farmland in the well-watered northern highlands and central plains to vast, grain-producing *iqṭāʻāt* may have contributed to uneven development of the region, favoring particular districts over others. In addition, much of this land was made *waqf* for institutions outside of Jordan. Many of these endowments, and the farms that supported them, survived well into the Ottoman period.[4] This was not necessarily the case with the agricultural properties in the Ghôr, a large portion of which belonged to the sultan as part of his personal estate *(khāṣṣ)*. In the absence of a strong, centralized government, irrigation canals fell into disrepair, there was no longer any direct supervision of sugar manufacturing and transport, and many industries were abandoned, to be replaced by new agricultural projects.[5]

A general over-reliance on written sources from Egypt has obscured many of

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[3]Bethany J. Walker, ″Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilād al-Shām* in the Fourteenth Century: The Case of Ḥisbān,″ *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62, no. 4 (2003): 243 ff.

[4]See the discussion of the Ottoman tax registers for northern Jordan below.

[5]In his archaeological survey of the northern Jordan Valley, Kareem began to document the rise and fall of the local sugar industry through mill sites, storage facilities, canals, and road systems (Kareem, *Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley,* 9 ff).

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these developments. What was true for Egypt was not necessarily true for the Transjordan, as a reading of Syrian sources seems to indicate. Among the chronicles of the period, those of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah (who died in 1448) and Baybars al-Dawādār *(Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Hijrah)* are illustrative of the kind of data available on local agriculture. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah's *Tārīkh* includes regular excerpts of letters exchanged between this judge and his colleagues posted in other cities throughout Syria. These letters often discuss how crops are doing that year in villages under the judges' jurisdictions, occasionally mention the prices of agricultural goods, and lament the cold spells and floods that have ruined local harvests. Significant in this regard are passages describing farms in northern (the village of Ḥibrāṣ) and central (the village of Ḥisbān) Jordan.[6] The Mamluk amir Baybars al-Dawādār served as the governor *(nā'ib)* of Kerak from 1286 to 1291.[7] While this source is primarily concerned with political events and military campaigns, the author makes the occasional reference to towns and villages in southern and central Transjordan and the road networks that connect them. The Syrian geographies of the period are also a rich source of information about the location of towns and villages, the topography of the region, water resources, and agricultural specialization. Most significant in this regard are *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* of Ibn Shaddād (d. 1285) and *Nukhbat al-Dahr fī 'Ajā'ib al-Barr wa-al-Baḥr* of al-Dimashqī (d. 1327).[8] In addition, the secretary's manual of Amir Khalīl al-Ẓāhirī, who served at Kerak in 1437, not only describes the administrative structure of Greater Syria in his day but also describes, however irregularly, the topography, climate, and crops that characterize each region.

These sources are very general and treat the smaller villages of the region in only a cursory fashion. Mamluk *waqfīyāt* and early Ottoman tax registers (*defter*s) are much richer sources of information on demographics, the size of farms, ownership of rural estates, crops grown in the smallest of villages, and the revenues they yield. With one exception, the *waqfīyāt* remain in manuscript form; several from the Dār al-Wathā'iq and Wizārat al-Awqāf in Cairo are presented publicly for the first time in this study.[9] Many of the Ottoman registers in Istanbul relevant to Jordan have been published and translated into Arabic by Muḥammad 'Adnān

[6]Abū Bakr Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah,* ed. 'Adnān Darwīsh (Damascus, 1977–), 3:164 (entry for year 761) and 4:181 (year 803).

[7]Baybars al-Manṣūr al-Dawādār, *Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Hijrah,* ed. D. S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), XVI.

[8]These sources, however, should be used with caution. They often combine data from much older sources with contemporary descriptions, not always specifying the time period to which they are referring. In order to locate rural sites from archival sources (such as *waqfīyāt*), one should combine the medieval geographies with a reading of more modern travel accounts.

[9]They are listed at the end of this paper.

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Bakhīt and charted into map form by the historical geographers Hütteroth and Abdulfattah.[10] These are a gold mine of detailed data on Mamluk agriculture and rural endowment practices, because the Ottomans inherited the Mamluks′ local tax apparatus and applied it with little alteration in the sixteenth century and the registers make regular reference to *awqāf* in the region dating back to the Mamluk period.[11] In the absence of any comparable Mamluk tax records, these sources are priceless for this kind of research. The picture of Jordanian agriculture that emerges from these documents is one of continuity. While it is clear that many villages were abandoned during the fifteenth century and that there was some level of decline in agriculture throughout Jordan, some areas, particularly the north, continued to be relatively productive throughout this period and grew rapidly in population in the first half of the sixteenth century.

In addition to the underutilization of these textual sources, there are archaeological reasons for reconsidering the phenomenon of decline in Mamluk Jordan. A refinement of ceramic chronologies during the last fifteen years has resulted in the identification of many Middle (or Ayyubid and Mamluk) and Late Islamic (Ottoman) occupational levels and sites that were mistakenly assigned to other time periods.[12] This, combined with an intensified effort at regional surveys

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[10]These are the registers published by Bakhīt and used for this study: three registers for Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah (*Tapu Defteri* #430 of 930/1523, #401 of 950/1534, and #99 of 1005/1596–97) and two for Liwā' 'Ajlūn (*Tapu Defteri* #970 and #185 of 1005/1596). There is no date given for #970 in the manuscript used by Bakhīt, but he suggests a date of roughly 1538, based on the year of service for an amir named as an *iqṭā'* recipient in one entry (Muḥammad 'Adnān Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah [Shamālī al-Urdunn] fī al-Qarn al-'Āshir al-Hijrī/al-Sādis 'Āshir al-Mīlādī* [Amman, 1989], 9). Hütteroth and Abdulfattah use the following: *defter-i mufassal* of Liwā' Quds al-Sharīf (#112), Nablus (#100), Gaza (#192), Lajjūn (#181), 'Ajlūn (#185), Ṣafad (#72), and Shām al-Sharīf of Ḥawrān subprovince (#99) (Wolf-Dieter Hütteroth and Kamal Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan and Southern Syria in the Late 16th Century* [Erlangen, 1977], 4). Bakhīt also used two of these registers. They date to 1005/1596–97 and reflect the results of the ″new census″ taken at the end of the century, which was the last the Ottomans administered in the Arab provinces.

[11]The Ottomans levied the '*ushr* on charitable *awqāf*. This is why they appear as a source of revenue for *khāṣṣ, timar,* and *za'āmāt* holders in the registers.

[12]Ceramicists are slowly beginning to visually differentiate Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman variations of the Handmade Geometric Painted Ware (Jeremy Johns, ″The Rise of Middle Islamic Hand-Made Geometrically-Painted Ware in Bilad al-Sham [11th–13th Centuries A.D.],″ in *Colloque international d′archéologie islamique*, Textes arabes et études islamiques no. 36 [Cairo, 1993], 65–93; R. M. Brown, ″A 12th Century A.D. Sequence from Southern Transjordan: Crusader and Ayyubid Occupation at el-Wu'eira,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 31 [1987]: 267; and idem, ″Summary Report of the 1986 Excavations: Late Islamic Shobak,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 32 [1988]: 225–45) and handmade burnished cookpots with ″elephant ear″ handles (ibid.). One category of crudely handmade bowls, often attributed to ″bedouin″

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and the excavation of late medieval sites, is forcing archaeologists working in the country to rewrite the occupational history of late Mamluk and early Ottoman Jordan.[13] On the basis of archaeological data alone it is becoming clear that while certain regions were abandoned by the fifteenth century (such as much of the Kerak Plateau),[14] much of the remainder of the country was still occupied and retained viable local markets and a productive agricultural base.[15]

The most damaging evidence against general economic decline in Jordan at the end of the fourteenth century is the numerous endowments of productive agricultural land located throughout the country and dating to the third quarter of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth centuries. Thus, Jordan's overall economy, as it can be measured from *awqāf* alone, would appear to be thriving at the very time that the Mamluk economy was in "decline."[16] Among the published examples of the endowment of rural land in Jordan by sultans are: the endowment by Barqūq of the villages of Nimrīn, Kafrīn, and Zarā'ah in the Jordan Valley and

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manufacture, is generally acknowledged by archaeologists to be Ottoman to modern in date (B. Mershen, "Recent Hand-Made Pottery from Northern Jordan," *Berytus* 33 [1985]: 75–87) or twelfth-century to modern (Dr. Roberta Tomber, Museum of London and Wādī Faynān Expedition, personal communication, citing parallels from Petra and Gharandale; the Wādī Faynān pottery is as yet unpublished). For a general downdating of several Mamluk wares to the Ottoman period, consult G. Ziadeh, "Ottoman Ceramics from Ti'innik, Palestine," *Levant* 27 (1995): 209–45.

[13]An important survey in this regard is that of Wādī Faynān (interim reports have been published in recent issues of *Levant;* see also previous note and forthcoming monograph *Archaeology and Desertification: the Wādī Faynān Landscape Survey, Jordan,* ed. G. Barker and D. Mattingly [Amman]). For excavated sites, see Brown, "Summary Report" (Shobak); A. M. McQuitty, M. A. Sarley-Pontin, M. Khoury, M. P. Charles, and C. F. Hoppe, "Mamluk Khirbat Fāris," *ARAM* 9 (1997): 181–226 (Khirbat Fāris); and B. J. Walker and O. S. LaBianca, "The Islamic *Quṣūr* of Tall Ḥisbān: Preliminary Report on the 1998 and 2001 Seasons," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 14 (2003): in print (Tall Ḥisbān).

[14]J. Maxwell Miller, *Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau* (Atlanta, 1991); Brown, "Late Islamic Settlement Patterns."

[15]Walker and LaBianca, "Islamic *Quṣūr* of Tall Ḥisbān"; Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilād al-Shām*"; Jeremy Johns, "The *Longue Durée:* State and Settlement Strategies in Southern Transjordan Across the Islamic Centuries," in *Village, Steppe and State: The Social Origins of Modern Jordan,* ed. E. L. Rogan and T. Tell (London, 1994), 1–31.

[16]Endowments of rural properties are only one measure of economic health. Other factors that are quantifiable or can be documented textually or archaeologically, and which will be examined in my forthcoming *Life on the Mamluk Frontier, Transjordan 1260–1516 A.D.,* are minting and exchange of coins, prices, distribution and longevity of industrial sites (copper smelting, sugar processing, textile factories, etc.), continuity of local and regional markets, maintenance of roads and caravansaries, evidence of continued exchange of luxury goods (certain categories of glazed wares, imported semi-precious stones, exotic building materials), and educational facilities and programs.

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several properties in Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, and Syria for his mosque-madrasah complex in Cairo;[17] Khushqadam′s endowment of a *mazra‘ah* (isolated plot) in the Ghôr and the villages of Marw and Harhar in northern Jordan for his madrasah in Cairo;[18] and Sha‘bān′s endowment of the village of Ādar and a bathhouse and garden in Wadi Kerak in 777/1375.[19]

The following is a preliminary discourse on the success of Mamluk agricultural investment in Jordan in the fourteenth century and its apparent failure by the fifteenth. The oft-repeated wholescale abandonment of this region at the end of the century is far from proven. It remains to be determined to what degree Jordan really was abandoned by the Mamluk authorities and subsequently depopulated and what factors account for this. Was this image of a ″boom and bust″ economy true for the entire country or only parts of it? What were the Mamluk state′s administrative and agricultural objectives in the region and what impact did they have on Transjordanian society, in terms of its economic health and settlement patterns, and the local environment?

In order to assess the regional differences, if any, in settlement history or agricultural development, I have selected individual villages in four different districts in Jordan as case studies: Malkā and Ḥibrāṣ in the Sawād (northern Jordan, between the Yarmouk River and Irbid and southeast of the Sea of Galilee); Nimrīn and Kafrīn in the Lower Ghôr (central Jordan Valley); Ḥisbān in the Balqā’ (central Jordanian highlands, the Madaba Plains); and Ādar (a suburb of Kerak) in the Shira’ (southern Jordanian highlands) (Fig. 1).[20] All six villages are

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[17]There is no date for the Ghôr endowments—Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah,* 23; M. A. Bakhīt and Nūfān Rajā’ al-Ḥammūd, *Daftar Mufaṣṣal Liwā’ ‘Ajlūn: Ṭābū Daftarī Raqm 185, ‘Anqarah 1005 Hijrī Muwāfiq 1596 Mīlādī* (Amman, 1991), 32. The other endowments appear in an unpublished manuscript (*Waqfīyah* 9/51) and date to 796/1393.

[18]No date—Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah,* 45 and 57; M. A. Bakhīt and N. R. al-Ḥammūd, *Daftar Mufaṣṣal Liwā’ ‘Ajlūn: Ṭābū Daftarī Raqm 970* (Amman, 1989), 187; and idem, *Ṭābū Daftarī Raqm 185,* 32.

[19]Manuscript incomplete, and recipient remains unknown—*Waqfīyah* 8/49, sections relevant to Jordan published in Yūsuf Ghawānimah, *Tārīkh Sharqī al-Urdunn fī ‘Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-‘Ūlá (al-Qism al-Ḥaḍārī)* (Amman, 1979), 243–44; idem, ″Al-Qaryah fī Junūb al-Shām (al-Urdunn wa-Filisṭīn) fī al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī fī Ḍaw’ Waqfīyāt Ādar,″ *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 1 (1982): 363–71; and M. A. Bakhīt, ″Awqāf During the Late Mamluk Period and the Early Ottoman Times in Palestine and Jordan,″ in *Urbanism and Islam,* ed. Editorial Committee of the Research Project ″Urbanism in Islam, a Comparative Study″ (Tokyo, 1994), 186.

[20]Jordan in Mamluk times was administratively divided between the southern section *(safaqah)* of the Province of Damascus *(Mamlakat Dimashq)* in the north and the Province of Kerak *(Mamlakat Karak)* in the south (Nicola Ziadeh, *Urban Life in Syria Under the Early Mamluks* [Beirut, 1953], 13; Aḥmad ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī, *Al-Ta‘rīf bi-al-Muṣṭalaḥ al-Sharīf,* ed. M. Mas‘ūd [Cairo, 1894], 177–81). The northern half of the country consisted of five regions *(‘amal):* the Balqā’ (its

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attested historically, having appeared in medieval geographies and been recorded in some detail in Mamluk *waqfīyāt* or Ottoman tax registers or both. All have been either excavated or surveyed and appear in formal archaeological reports. A combined analysis of all of these sources indicates that each village experienced the mixed benefits of an uneven investment in local agriculture by the Mamluk state. Moreover, two were local administrative centers and enjoyed some political prominence: Ḥibrāṣ was one of the largest villages in the Sawād in the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, and Ḥisbān served as the capital (a *wilāyah*) of the Balqā' (an *'amal*) for roughly the first half of the fourteenth century.[21]

I am most concerned in this article with determining when and where (and under what circumstances) agricultural investment in Jordan began by Mamluk officials; quantifying that investment (and determining to what degree that system was exploitative); and identifying when it came to an end, why it did. These questions can only by fully addressed by using all the sources available, that is to combine textual, archival, and archaeological data. The data gleaned from archaeological surveys, in particular, are ideally suited to a rereading and fleshing out of medieval *waqfīyāt* and tax registers. All three sources are concerned with historical and economic geography, their coverage overlapping with and complementing each other in various ways. This is an experiment in methodology that I believe is beginning to bear fruit.

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capital shifted among Amman, Ḥisbān, and Ṣalt), Jabal 'Awf (and its capital 'Ajlūn), the Sawād (containing the districts, or *aqālīm,* of Bayt Rās and Fahl/Pella), the Upper Ghôr (with its center of al-Quṣayr), and the Middle Ghôr (its center was 'Amaṭah) (A. G. Walmsley, ″Settled Life in Mamluk Jordan: Views of the Jordan Valley from Fahl [Pella],″ *ARAM* 9 [1997]: 129; Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Dimashqī, ″Nukhbat al-Dahr fī 'Ajā'ib al-Birr wa-al-Baḥr,″ published as *Manuel de la Cosmographie du Moyen Age,* ed. M. A. F. Mehren [Amsterdam, 1964], 270 ff.). For the rank of the amirs stationed in the local capitals, see Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá fī Ṣinā'at al-Inshā'* (Cairo, 1913–), 5:207–8. This was the agricultural heartland of the country. Southern Jordan, while agriculturally less productive, on the whole was more important politically because of the prominence of Kerak in the Mamluk period. This province included Kerak, Shobak, and the Lower Ghôr. Jordan in the Ottoman period was part of Damascus Province in three parts: the southernmost sections of the subprovince of the Ḥawrān (Qaḍā' Ḥawrān), Liwā' 'Ajlūn, and Niyābat Karak. Four districts in the southern Ḥawrān in this period are located in modern Jordan: Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah (in the Sawād, today's Irbid District), Nāḥiyat Juhmah, Nāḥiyat al-'Asar, and Nāḥiyat 'Uqbah (Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah,* 1–2).

[21]For an administrative history of Tall Ḥisbān, see Walker, ″Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilād al-Shām,*″ and idem, ″Mamluk Administration of Transjordan: Recent Findings from Tall Ḥisbān,″ *Al-'Uṣūr al-Wusṭá* 13, no. 2 (2001): 29–33.

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Northern Jordan

One of the richest agricultural regions in Jordan is the ″Sawād,″ the rolling hills and deep wadis located between the Yarmouk River and Irbid. Because it is so close to the border with modern Syria, the Sawād fell under the administration of either Syria or Jordan through the medieval and early modern periods.[22] This location placed it at the crossroads of communications and commerce; an extensive network of roads connected the regional center, Irbid, with the markets of medieval Damascus, Baghdad, Jerusalem, and Cairo.[23]

This region occupies a high plateau (800–900 meters above sea level) above the eastern slopes of the northern Jordan Valley and enjoys temperate weather and good soil.[24] It is well watered, with an average annual rainfall of 376 mm, or 15″, (heaviest in the winter), wadis with running water for at least part of the year, and numerous springs. In the Middle Ages the region was known for its forests of oak, evergreen, and cypress. During the Mamluk and Ottoman periods the Jordanian Sawād specialized in wheat, barley, and olives; today it produces some of the best olive oil in this part of the Middle East.[25] A variety of summer crops are also grown, such as lentils, chickpeas, and carobs. The rolling hills and low grass cover, moreover, make for excellent grazing: sheep and goats were a significant

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[22]In the thirteenth century Kūrat Sawād was part of Jund Urdunn, a subprovince of the Province *(jund)* of Damascus (Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī ibn Shaddād, ″Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah fī Dhikr Umarā' al-Shām wa-al-Jazīrah,″ published as *Liban, Jordanie, Palestine: Topographie historique d'Ibn Šaddad*, ed. Sāmī Dahhān [Damascus, 1963], 123, citing Yaʻqūb). By the fifteenth century Iqlīm Baysān fell under the authority of Maʻāmilat Dimashq of Mamlakat Shāmīyah (Ghars al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Ẓāhirī, ″Kitāb Zubdat Kashf al-Mamālik wa-Bayān al-Ṭuruq wa-al-Masālik,″ published as *Zoubdat kachf el-mamâlik: Tableau politique et administrative de l'Égypte, de la Syrie et du Ḥidjâz sous la domination des soultans mamloûks du XIII au XV siècle,* ed. Paul Ravaisse [Paris, 1894], 44). During the sixteenth century the Ottomans, as part of their administrative reorganization of Bilād al-Shām, defined this area as a *nāḥiyah* (district) in the southern region of Qaḍā' Ḥawrān (Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah,* 3).

[23]Ghawānimah, *Tārīkh Sharqī al-Urdunn,* 39. This was true for the Roman period, too.

[24]Most of the region lies at 400–500 meters above sea level (JADIS entries for Khirbat Malkā and Ḥibrāṣ). Temperatures of the last ten years have ranged from a balmy 39.3° C in the summers to -.92° C in the winter, with an annual average of 18° (www.dos.gov.jo/env/annual/environment_2001). The relatively cool temperatures, high rainfall, high water table, and high percentage of humus in the soil makes this region ideal for agriculture (Kareem, *Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley,* 6).

[25]George Adam Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (New York, 1898), 612–13, describes the extensive wheat fields as they existed in the late nineteenth century. For references to olive groves and presses in the vicinity of Malkā in the fourteenth century, see *Waqfīyah* 9/51, fol. 18, l. 18, and fol 19, l. 22. Ottoman taxes on olives, olive oil, and presses have been published in Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah.*

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part of the tax base in this region during the sixteenth century.[26] It has always been a densely settled region, with numerous small villages that experienced marked population growth in the fourteenth and the middle of the sixteenth centuries.[27] Because of its continued prosperity into the nineteenth century, the region was among the first in Transjordan to fall under the jurisdiction of the Tanzimat administrators.[28]

The Sawād was, moreover, richly provided with public institutions, financially supported through endowments of largely local farmland. *Zāwiyah*s for Companions of the Prophet, pre-Islamic prophets, and local Sufi shaykhs and small village mosques[29] punctuated the landscape, as they do today.[30] The remains of a barrel-vaulted mosque still stand in the largest village of the region, Ḥibrāṣ; the minaret of another mosque, which once carried an inscription that can be dated to 686/1287, was either dismantled for building material or collapsed at some point during the

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[26]These taxes, like all others, are published on numerous pages throughout Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kināna*h.

[27]For population figures from the early Ottoman period, see Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography,* and Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kināna*h. Evidence of population growth in the Mamluk period is based on a reading of ceramics from surface surveys, architectural inscriptions (see below), and written sources. For published reports on archaeological surveys in the region, see T. Kerestes, J. Lundquist, B. Wood, and K. Yassine, ″An Archaeological Survey of Three Reservoir Areas in Northern Jordan,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 22 (1978): 108–35; G. King, ″Preliminary Report on a Survey of Byzantine and Islamic Sites in Jordan, 1980,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 26 (1982): 85–96; G. King, C. J. Lenzen, and G. O. Rollefson, ″Survey of Byzantine and Islamic Sites in Jordan, Second Preliminary Report, 1981,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 27 (1983): 85–437.

[28]The appointment of an Ottoman governor in Irbid in 1851 predated the Syrian Land Reform Law by thirteen years (for Ottoman administration of the Sawād in this period, see E. L. Rogan, ″Bringing the State Back: The Limits of Ottoman Rule in Jordan, 1840–1910,″ in *Village, Steppe and State: The Social Origins of Modern Jordan,* ed. E. L. Rogan and T. Tell [London, 1994], 34–41).

[29]The Ottoman tax registers record 23 mosques in 23 villages in 950/1534 and 28 mosques in 25 villages in 1005/1596–97 (Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kināna*h, 15–16).

[30]Among these are the *zāwiyah*s of Shaykh ʻUthmān al-Ḥamāmī and Shaykh ʻĪsá in Malkā and those of Shaykh Mismār, Banī Ḥamīd, and Shaykh Samādī in Ḥibrāṣ (Table 9 in Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kināna*h, 36–37). Eight *zāwiyah*s are listed in Bakhīt′s tax registers as having been supported by properties in Nāḥiyat Banī Kināna*h* (ibid., 16). How many of the *zāwīyah*s, and not just the *mawāqif,* were located in this region cannot be determined from these registers alone. Biographical dictionaries of the Mamluk period also describe the careers of individuals trained in such local mosques (and perhaps madrasahs). For references to shaykhs and *fiqh* scholars from Ḥibrāṣ, Malkā, and other smaller villages in their vicinity, see Ghawānimah′s lists of names compiled from these sources in his *Al-Tārīkh al-Ḥaḍārī li-Sharqī al-Urdunn* (Amman, 1982), 128, 134, 181, 182, and 185–86. (He relies heavily on Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, al-Sakhāwī, and Ibn Kathīr.)

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last eighty years.[31] According to the *defter–i mufassal* #99, there were three muezzins and three khatibs serving perhaps two mosques in the same village.[32] Large landholdings by Mamluk sultans and amirs account for the cultivation of cash crops (such as olive oil) and the withdrawal of tax revenues levied on them for *awqāf*.[33] According to the early Ottoman *defter*s of *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah,* some of the most productive villages (or parts of them) were endowed for institutions located outside the region. Sultan Khushqadam endowed three shares of the village of Marw (population of 28 households) and three shares of Harhar (38 households) for his madrasah in Cairo. The annual revenues for each of these villages in 950/1534 were 9900 and 9100 *aqja* respectively.[34] For Harhar the revenues came entirely from tax on wheat, the yield of which was among the highest in the region.[35] Although the size of the fields was not mentioned in any of three *defter*s for this *nāḥiyah,* those of Marw amounted to 12 feddans (approximately three acres or 1.5 hectares).[36] Although the Ottomans continued to recognize Khushqadam´s endowment, they made the rest of the remaining shares of the two estates the private property *(khāṣṣ)* of the provincial governor.

Parts of three other villages were endowed by amirs for various purposes[37]: Bulūqs (population of 3 households in 1005/1596–97) for al-'Izzīyah madrasah in

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[31]D. C. Steuernagel, ″Der 'Adschlūn,″ *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Palestinien Vertrag* 49 (1926): 155–56; Michael Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien (648/1250 bis 923/1517)* (Glückstadt, 1992), 2:65, entry #43.

[32]Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah,* 111. This register names properties in Ḥibrāṣ that were made *waqf* for two mosques, but whether these mosques were also located in the village, as Bakhīt asserts, is not clear (ibid., 15).

[33]In the Jordan Valley these cash crops include sugar, bananas, and indigo. The excavated site of Mamluk Tabaqat Fahl falls into the same pattern of land use in this regard (Walmsley, ″Settled Life in Mamluk Jordan,″ 131). Excavations of Bayt Rās (C. Lenzen and E. Knauf, ″Beit Rās/Capitolias: A Preliminary Evaluation of the Archaeological and Textual Evidence,″ *Syria* 64 [1987]: 21–46; C. Lenzen and A. McQuitty, ″The 1984 Survey of the Irbid/Beit Ras Region,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 22 [1988]: 265–74) and Khirbat al-Burz (C. Lenzen and A. McQuitty, ″Khirbet el-Borz,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 29 [1985]: 175–78) provide further archaeological evidence for intensive agriculture and growing population in this period.

[34]Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah,* 38 and 45.

[35]Only Ḥibrāṣ produced as much wheat for that year.

[36]Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah,* 45.

[37]The registers do not provide the date the endowments were originally made. Amirs are generally not named, so it is far from certain that the *awqāf* are Mamluk in origin. While this seems to generally be the case, Bakhīt suggests that the Bulūqs and Dullūzah endowments are Ayyubid (ibid., 15, n. 36). Nonetheless, the *mawāqif* were still productive and the endowments recognized as such by the Ottoman authorities.

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Damascus, Dullūzah (14 households in 950/1534) for the same institution, and Ḥawar (17 households in 1005/1596–97) for an unnamed recipient; all three were *timar*s in the mid-sixteenth century.[38] The highest revenues of any recorded year from each of the villages (2400, 2950, and 8220 *aqja* respectively) are primarily from grains; olives also figured prominently among the revenues from Ḥawar (2579 *aqja* in 950/1539).[39] The field size for Dullūzah and Ḥawar were recorded at six (ca. 1.5 acres or .3 hectare) and ten feddans (ca. 2.5 acres or 1.25 hectares), respectively.[40]

The village of Ḥibrāṣ, located eight kilometers northeast of Bayt Rās and twelve kilometers north of Irbid, was one of the largest villages in Mamluk Jordan´s Sawād and the largest of the Ottoman´s southern Ḥawrān.[41] Archaeological surveys have documented continuous occupation at the site from the Byzantine through Ottoman periods.[42] The remains of two contemporary mosques, both dated by inscriptions to 686/1287, have stood in the modern village of the same name until modern times.[43] The one, comprised of enclosure walls enclosing a small nine-bay mosque of later date, can be attributed to the Mamluk period on account of an inscription that once adorned its minaret, destroyed in the 1970s, and its construction;[44] nine-bay mosques, with the aisles running parallel to the qiblah wall, pointed arches, reused basalt columns (often from Byzantine churches), and deep mihrabs can be found throughout northern Jordan at thirteenth- and fourteenth-century sites.[45] Ḥibrāṣ does not seem to appear in contemporary written sources

[38]Ibid., 21–22.

[39]Ibid., 170, 62, and 92.

[40]Dullūzah: p. 42 (930/1523); Ḥawar: p. 126 (1005/1596–97). In 1005/1596–97, Ḥawar´s revenues had dropped to 5600 *aq*/yr.

[41]Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah,* 15.

[42]JADIS site #2223.007.

[43]The twelve-meter high minaret that carried the dated inscription is now gone, but it was recorded in the 1920s by Steuernagel (˝Der ʻAdschlūn [1926],˝ 155–56). The inscription, not fully translated in the survey report, was apparently an abbreviated endowment text that carried the name of the donor, Caliph ʻUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb II. Steuernagel attributes the minaret, on this basis, to 686/1286 (ibid., 156). The mosque to which this minaret was attached was no longer standing at the time of the survey.

[44]The inscription has been reproduced in Yūsuf Ghawānimah, *Madīnat Irbid fī al-ʻAṣr al-Islāmī* (Irbid, 1986), 59.

[45]A published floor plan of this mosque can be found in ibid, 55. Mamluk mosques at Tabaqat Fahl, Amman, and ʻAzraq (Walmsley, ˝Settled Life in Mamluk Jordan,˝ 134, Figs. 3–5; 137, Fig. 6; and 137, Fig. 7) and several in the vicinity of ʻAjlūn are of roughly the same scale, construction, and design (Yūsuf Ghawānimah, *Al-Masājid al-Islāmīyah al-Qadīmah fī Minṭaqat ʻAjlūn* [Irbid, 1986]; N. MacKenzie, ˝Ayyubid/Mamluk Archaeology of the ʻAjlun Area: A Preliminary Typology,˝ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 46 [2002]: 615–20).

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until the middle of the fourteenth century, when historians note it for its connection to scholarship and agriculture.[46] The village continued to grow throughout the Mamluk period and into the Ottoman. The village had a large population by 950/1534 (at 90 households, two ″bachelors,″ and two imams) and has been described as ″crowded.″[47] It also was a market center, one on the same scale as Kerak, Ṣalt, ʻAjlūn, and Irbid;[48] the market taxes were paid directly to the provincial governor.[49] Taxes on wheat and barley supported, in part, local *zāwiyah*s and mosques.[50]

The much smaller village of Malkā, eight kilometers west of Ḥibrāṣ and seven northwest of Um Qeis, figures prominently in an unpublished manuscript in Dār al-Wathā'iq in Cairo.[51] In this lengthy *waqfīyah* of 796/1393, Sultan Barqūq has endowed several of his personal properties throughout Egypt and Syria for his madrasah complex on the Bayn al-Qasrayn in Cairo. These include businesses in Cairo, all of the district of Baḥrīyah and entire villages in the district of Kursīyah in Egypt, villages near Jerusalem, villages around the south shore of the Sea of Galilee, villages in the Golan, and a share of rural properties in the district of Maʻarrat Nuʻmān. The section of this manuscript that concerns this study deals with villages in the Lower Galilee, specifically one called ″Ḥay Malkā.″[52] Here is described a hilltop settlement hedged in on all sides by deep wadis, a tight network of villages and hamlets, and well-traveled roads. The land around Malkā, according to the *waqfīyah,* is full of vineyards, olive trees and presses, smaller villages, *mazraʻ*s (isolated plots of farmed land), and shrines. The only evidence in the *waqfīyah* of economic decline is the occasional reference to an outlying settlement in ruins *(kharāb),* fields that have been abandoned, or presses *(maʻāṣir)* that are no longer working *(baṭṭāl)*. This is remarkable, given the fact that the endowment dates to the end of the fourteenth century. Clearly this part of Jordan was still densely settled and economically viable then.

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[46]Neither Ibn Shaddād nor Baybars al-Dawādār, two local sources for the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, make any reference to this village (Ibn Shaddād, *Liban, Jordanie, Palestine;* Baybars al-Dawādār, *Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Hijrah*). On the other hand, in passages cited above from Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah′s chronicle, Ḥibrāṣ emerges in several annual entries, including one for 761/1359 in which the village′s qadi is said to have drowned in a flood there that year, and in an obituary for 762/1360, when a religious scholar by the name of Aḥmad ibn Mūsá, a companion of Ibn Taymīyah, dies in the village.

[47]Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah,* 23 and 8.

[48]Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography,* 87, Fig. 8, and 199.

[49]Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah,* 14.

[50]Ibid., 37, 59, and 111.

[51]*Waqfīyah* 9/51. I will publish the Malkā section of the manuscript in my forthcoming *Life on the Mamluk Frontier*.

[52]Fols. 18–21 of this manuscript.

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The occupational and agricultural history of Malkā provides the perfect example of the intensified investment in the region by the Mamluks in the fourteenth century. Contemporary Arabic sources do not mention this village until the late fourteenth century, when scholars using the *niṣbah* ″al-Malkāwī″ appear in the biographical entries of Syrian chronicles. [53] The relative prosperity alluded to in the *waqfīyah* of 796/1393 seems to have continued into the sixteenth century. Its revenues in ″summer crops″ (melons, beans, and vegetables) and ″trees″ (here olive groves are likely) were among the highest in the region, according to the *defter* of 1005/1596–97. It had its own mosque by mid-century, and its population had doubled in size by the end of the century.[54] The village was still occupied in the late mandatory period and is today a thriving center of olive oil production.[55]

CENTRAL JORDAN—THE BALQĀ'

The Balqā', a highland plateau situated between Wādī Zarqā' and the Sawād in the north to Wādī Mu'jib and the Kerak Plateau in the south, has historically been one of the bread baskets of Jordan.[56] Its annual rainfall (350–440 mm) is sufficient for dry farming, and the high clay content of the local soils allow for a harvest even in drier seasons.[57] Although never a densely settled region, the Balqā' sustained a political importance as a communications corridor. The Mamluks retained the classical period ″King´s Highway″ as the caravan route through Syria and placed their pigeon, postal, and pilgrimage routes, which led travelers from Damascus to

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[53]Neither Ibn Shaddād nor Baybars al-Dawādār mention Malkā, even though they do write about other villages in Jordan (for passages on Nimrīn and Kafrīn, for example, see Baybars al-Dawādār, *Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Hijrah*, 180).

[54]For tax entries for Malkā in 950/1534 and 1005/1596–97, see Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kināna*h, 88 and 162. See also Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography,* 202 (entry MZ65).

[55]Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography*. Archaeological surveys in this region 1885–1914 and during the 1920s and 1960s documented many of the sites discussed above (Siegfried Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes* [Wiesbaden, 1970]; Steuernagel, ″Der 'Adschlūn [1926]″; idem, ″Der 'Adschlūn,″ *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Palestinien Vertrag* 47 [1925]: 206–40 and *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Palestinien Vertrag* 48 [1925]: 1–50, 121–34). (For Malkā, see Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte,* 24–25 and 257; Steuernagel, ″Der 'Adschlūn [1926],″ 118–19; and JADIS site #2223.016—″Khirbet Malkā.″) The results of these surveys indicate that occupation was most intense during the Roman, Byzantine, and Mamluk periods. Renewed fieldwork in the Malkā region by Oklahoma State University in October, 2003, aimed at updating the database of these earlier surveys (see the author´s upcoming field report, ″The Malkā-Ḥibrāṣ Survey: Archaeological Investigation of Mamluk Agricultural Policy″).

[56]The Balqā' was also known for its fruit and walnut groves.

[57]M. Russell, ″Hesban During the Arab Period: A.D. 635 to the Present,″ in *Hesban 3: Historical Foundations,* ed. L. Geraty and L. G. Running (Berrien Springs, MI, 1989), 33.

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either Cairo or Mecca, in this, Jordan´s heartland. The region was also of political importance to the state, as local tribes actively participated in the internal power struggles among the Mamluk elite.[58] The capital of this district *(Wilāyat Balqā')* from early in the fourteenth century until 1356 was the town of Ḥisbān.[59] At 895 meters above sea level, this hilltop site commands a view of the Madaba Plains and the northeast end of the Dead Sea and offers a glimpse, on clear days, of Jerusalem and Jericho. According to al-Ẓāhirī, Ḥisbān was the center of an agricultural district that included over 300 villages.[60] It was also strategically located on several important communications corridors: on the *barīd* and interior pigeon routes of Syria and just off the hajj road from Damascus.[61]

Phase II excavations at Tall Ḥisbān, begun in 1998, are contributing to our knowledge of the Mamluks´ official presence in Transjordan in the fourteenth century.[62] Most of the architecture standing on the tell dates to this period, when a citadel occupied the summit. This complex consisted of what has been identified as the residence of the governor of the Balqā'[63] (a building loosely based on a

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[58]For the role of the tribes of the Balqā' in Baybars´ campaigns against the local Ayyubid princes and in reestablishing al-Nāṣir Muḥammad on the throne for his third reign, see Walker, ″Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilād al-Shām*.″

[59]Ḥisbān was the capital of the southernmost district of Mamlakat Dimashq (al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-'asha'*, 4:200–1). For documentation of its rise and decline as a rural capital, see Walker, ″Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilād al-Shām*.″

[60]Al-Ẓāhirī, *Zoubdat kachf el-mamâlik,* 46.

[61]Yūsuf Ghawānimah has compiled lists of postal, pigeon, and pilgrimage stops from brief references in al-'Umarī, al-Qalqashandī, Ibn Shāhīn, al-'Aynī, and Ibn Aybak in his *Al-Tārīkh al-Ḥaḍārī,* 64 and 69.

[62]The most recent excavation reports and historical studies related to the project can be found in O. S. LaBianca, P. J. Ray, Jr., and B. J. Walker, ″Madaba Plains Project, Tall Ḥisbān, 1998,″ *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 38, no. 1 (2000): 9–21; B. J. Walker, ″The Late Ottoman Cemetery in Field L, Tall Ḥisbān,″ *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 322 (2001): 47–65; idem, ″Mamluk Administration of Transjordan″; idem, ″Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilād al-Shām*″; and Walker and LaBianca, ″The Islamic *Quṣūr* of Tall Ḥisbān.″ For on-line overviews of the project and weekly field reports, consult the following web sites: history.okstate.edu/depttour/histarch/index.html (Oklahoma State University) and www.quonic.com/~hisban (Andrews University). The Tall Ḥisbān excavations are under the senior direction of Dr. Øystein LaBianca of Andrews University. The author is Co-Director and Chief Archaeologist of the project. Andrews University began fieldwork at the site in 1968. For a full bibliography of this Phase I work, see B. J. Walker, ″Militarization to Nomadization: The Middle and Late Islamic Periods,″ *Near Eastern Archaeology* 62, no. 4 (1999): 202–32. Tall Ḥisbān is registered in JADIS as site #2213.001.

[63]To date I have found only one name of an amir who is said to have served at Ḥisbān: Jarkas al-Jalālī (d. 791/1388) (Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 4:308). The source does not specify the years he served at this post, only that he was a mere *jundī* when he served as *wālī* at Ḥisbān and was

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four-*īwān* plan, with four clusters of rooms opening onto an open-air, paved courtyard), a small *ḥammām,* the remains of a kitchen, and a series of high barrel-vaulted rooms that may have been the barracks. The field seasons of 1998 and 2001 concentrated on the long storeroom of the ″governor′s residence,″ a room preserved by an earthquake and fire in mid-century.[64] This space was full of lamps and storage (sugar jars) and serving vessels (glazed relief wares), the latter monumental in size and bearing lengthy dedicatory inscriptions to unnamed amirs.[65] In the second half of the century the military installation on the summit was abandoned, while the town below and surrounding the tell, with an active marketplace and possible madrasah, continued to thrive until the end of the century.[66]

The architectural remains of the citadel and the objects recovered from its storeroom attest to Ḥisbān′s role as an administrative center, garrison, and sugar transport point in the fourteenth century.[67] Both tell and town, however, were all but abandoned by the middle of the fifteenth century.[68] The Ottoman *defter*s of the sixteenth century suggest that the population of Ḥisbān had been reduced to a small village. The register of 1538 states that Ḥisbān was the only village between Na‘ūr and Wādī Mu’jib and that it had a population of only seven households.[69] The only tax category was ″olive oil and grapes.″[70] By the end of the century (1005/1596), there was no permanently settled population living there *(khālī).*[71] The village was not resettled until the late nineteenth century.[72]

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later promoted to an ″amir of 100, commander of 1000″ and transferred.

[64]Earthquakes in the vicinity of Ḥisbān are historically attested for 1341, 1343, 1366, 1403–4, and 1458 (Ghawānimah, ″Earthquake Effects″).

[65]The inscriptions are formulaic and generic: no historically attested name of amir has yet been deciphered. The two most common are: ″Among the things made [on order] of the amir″ *(mimmā ‘umila bi-rasm al-amīr)* and ″Glory, good fortune, achievement, and happiness [to the owner]″ *(al-‘izzah wa-al-iqbāl wa-bulūgh al-āmāl wa-sa‘ādah).*

[66]Walker, ″Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilād al-Shām*.″

[67]There is no evidence for sugar production or processing at the site. However, water mills (of questionable date and use) have been identified during archaeological surveys (Robert D. Ibach, Jr., *Hesban 5: Archaeological Survey of the Hesban Region* [Berrien Springs, MI, 1987], 194). Moreover, the proximity of the tell to the Jordan Valley, its location on important transport routes, and the large quantity of sugar jars found in the storeroom (too many to serve the dietary needs of the garrison alone) suggest that Ḥisbān served as a sugar distribution point.

[68]The absence of fifteenth-century pottery at the site suggests this.

[69]Bakhīt and al-Ḥammūd, *Ṭābū Daftarī Raqm 970,* 100.

[70]Ibid., 33.

[71]Bakhīt and al-Ḥammūd, *Ṭābū Daftarī Raqm 185,* 149 (entry #138) and Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography,* 169 (entry P138).

[72]Walker, ″Late Ottoman Cemetery.″

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Central Jordan—the Lower Ghôr

The agriculture of the Jordan Valley received considerable attention from Mamluk officials over the course of the fourteenth century. High temperatures (surpassing 45° C in the summers) and an abundance of water ensured that *iqṭā'āt* located here would be productive. Many factors contributed to the growth of large towns and villages in this region during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries: the destruction of Tiberias and Baisan during the Ayyubid-Crusader wars, the new geographical division and administration of the Jordan Valley by the Ayyubids and Mamluks, security, the *barīd* system of Sultan Baybars (the routes of which now passed through the Ghôr), and the sugar industry.[73] In the Jordan Valley new villages emerged and others were transformed into agricultural storage places (for grains and sugar), industrial sites (primarily for sugar), and centers of large ″plantations″ for large-scale production of grains. Some of the most lucrative *iqṭā'āt* were located here, and many of these were made *waqf* for sultanic institutions in Cairo.

As quickly as the Jordan Valley benefited from official investment, however, it suffered from its gradual withdrawal. The plague of 748/1347 may have been the initial cause of this decline. Maqrīzī is only one of many sources that describe this event in Jordan. He claims, ″According to the news that I have received, the people of al-Ghôr and Baisan find the lions, wolves, wild asses, and other wild animals dead and on them the trace of the bubo.″[74] The heat and crowded living conditions may have made the effects of the plague worse than in other parts of Jordan. The Ghôr, unlike other regions of the country, did not recover; many villages were abandoned, and the sugar industry eventually collapsed.

It is possible to trace these developments through textual and archaeological sources. Ottoman tax registers for Liwā' 'Ajlūn make reference to two villages in the central Jordan Valley endowed by the Mamluk sultan Barqūq for his madrasah-mausoleum complex in Cairo.[75] Nimrīn (185 m below sea level) and Kafrīn were little more than rest stops on a well-traveled road between Kerak and Damascus at

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[73]Kareem, *Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley,* 10–11. For a bibliography on Mamluk sugar, see Walker, ″Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilād al-Shām*.″ The best archaeological evidence for sugar processing comes from Abū Sarbut and Tall Abū Ghurdān. Tall Ḥisbān and Tabaqat Fihl appear to have been sugar distribution sites.

[74]Kareem, *Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley,* 16.

[75]Bakhīt and al-Ḥammūd, *Ṭābū Daftarī Raqm 970,* 102 *(defter–i mufassal* #970) and 125 (*defter–i mufassal* #185). Register #185 is based on the 1005/1591 census. Register #970, on the other hand, is undated, but has been attributed to 945/1538 by its editors on the basis of the name of one *iqṭā'* holder (ibid., 9). See also Mehmed İpşarli and Muḥammad Dāwūd al-Tamīmī, *Awqāf wa-Amlāk al-Muslimīn fī Filasṭīn* (Istanbul, 1982), 32, 53, and 94.

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the turn of the fourteenth century.[76] By the end of the century they were lucrative enough for the sultan to have set aside the entire village of Nimrīn and shares of Kafrīn for his Cairo complex.[77] Excavations at Tall Nimrīn and surveys of the region have documented a long history of occupation in the area that peaks in the Mamluk period.[78] Evidence of sugar production in the form of water mills and *abaleeg* (sugar jars) has been identified here and in the region.[79] The Ottoman authorities respected Barqūq´s endowment in both of these villages, at least through the end of the sixteenth century. They invested in the Ghôr in order to rejuvenate their tax base in the area. While Nimrīn remained a small village throughout, the population of Kafrīn grew to 43 households, which oversaw 20 feddans of some of the richest grain fields in central and southern Jordan.[80] Cotton and sesame replaced sugar cane as cash crops; the Mamluk sugar industry was never revived.[81]

SOUTHERN JORDAN—KERAK PLATEAU

Southern Jordan was dominated by Kerak Castle, which was the capital of its own province *(Mamlakat Karak),* a favored place of exile for deposed sultans, and the

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[76]Baybars al-Dawādār, *Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Hijrah,* 180.

[77]Bakhīt and al-Ḥammūd, *Ṭābū Daftarī Raqm 970,* 23.

[78]JADIS, site #2014.027; J. Mellaart, ″Preliminary Report of the Archaeological Survey in the Yarmouk and Jordan Valley for the Four Point Irrigation Scheme,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 6–7 (1962): 126–57, Pls. 24–32 (site #58); M. Ibrahim, J. Sauer, and K. Yassine, ″The East Jordan Valley Survey, 1975,″ *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 222 (1976): 41–66; A. Ḥadīdī, ″Archaeological Work of the Department of Antiquities,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 25 (1981): 15–42, 6 Pls. (in Arabic); M. Piccirillo, ″A Church at Shurat Nimrīn,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 26 (1982): 335–42, Pls. 103–10; R. H. Dornemann, ″Preliminary Comments on the Pottery Traditions at Tell Nimrīn, Illustrated from the 1989 Season of Excavations,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 34 (1990): 153–82; J. Flanagan and D. McCreery, ″First Preliminary Report of the 1989 Nimrīn Project,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 34 (1990): 131–52; J. W. Flanagan et al., ″Preliminary Report of the 1990 Excavation at Tell Nimrīn,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 36 (1992): 89–111; and Kareem, *Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley* (site #182). Flanagan, McCreery, and Yassine excavated Tell Nimrīn/Tell al-Shūnah South from 1989 to 1994. For Kafrīn, see Ibrahim, Sauer, and Yassine, ″The East Jordan Valley Survey″ and Kareem, *Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley* (site #197—p. 69, Pl. 48).

[79]See Ibach, *Archaeological Survey of the Hesban Region,* and Kareem, *Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley,* for a list of sites.

[80]Bakhīt and al-Ḥammūd, *Ṭābū Daftarī Raqm 185,* 125. For a chart comparing the yield of wheat and barley among villages in Liwā' 'Ajlūn, see p. 52.

[81]Ibn Taghrībirdī provides the last historical account of sugar production in the Jordan Valley in 802/1399 (Kareem, *Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley,* 17).

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nursery of sons of sultans during the Mamluk period.[82] This is one of the most inhospitable regions of Jordan; it is crisscrossed by deep canyons, is mostly desert, and, for the period under discussion, was frequented by nomadic groups who had a reputation for attacking trading and pilgrimage caravans and local villages. Contemporaries emphasized how difficult travel was there and how little water there was.[83] Nonetheless, villages, mills, *mazār*s, and *mashhad*s were numerous on the Kerak Plateau under Mamluk suzerainty. Many of these fell into ruin, however, over the course of the fifteenth century, as villages were abandoned for the security of the hills on the western and southern fringes of the plateau.[84] The withdrawal of Mamluk troops from the local garrisons, which protected these villages and the road system, quite likely contributed to this state of affairs.[85]

A partially published *waqfīyah* in the Dār al-Wathā'iq in Cairo describes the endowment by Sultan Sha'bān of the village of Ādar and a bathhouse and farmland in its vicinity in 777/1375.[86] The document describes a large and thriving farming community of 140 households (both Muslim and Christian),[87] where a variety of foodstuffs were produced (including walnuts, fruit, wheat, olives, and cheese), and there was local industry (flour mills and oil and wine presses) and public services (mosque, madrasah, bathhouse). However, the *waqfīyah* also bears witness to some degree of economic decline: 10 of the 83 houses in the village were uninhabited, as were several cisterns. By the early Ottoman period Ādar had been

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[82]Both al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Barqūq lived here during their periods of exile from Cairo, and it was from here that they plotted the return to their thrones. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, moreover, grew up at Kerak, as did the sons of Baybars. For an archaeological description of the Mamluk palace in the citadel, see R. M. Brown, ″Excavations in the 14th Century A.D. Mamluk Palace at Kerak,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 33 (1989): 287–304.

[83]Al-Ẓāhirī, *Zoubdat kachf el-mamâlik,* 43.

[84]Brown, ″Late Islamic Settlement Patterns on the Kerak Plateau″; R. Brown, ″Late Islamic Ceramic Production and Distribution in the Southern Levant: A Socio-Economic and Political Interpretation,″ Ph.D. diss., SUNY-Binghamton, 1992, 363–467. Archaeological surveys attest to the widespread abandonment of settlements during this period (Miller, *Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau*). Jeremy Johns argues, however, that the farmers of the Kerak Plateau shifted from a market to a subsistence economy as early as the thirteenth century. For his argument, based entirely on ceramic production, see his ″The Rise of Middle Islamic Painted Ware″ and ″The *Longue Durée*.″

[85]For a recent reassessment of this period, see Shawkat Ḥujjah, *Al-Tārīkh al-Siyāsī li-Minṭaqat Sharqī al-Urdun min Janūb al-Shām fī 'Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Thāniyah* (Irbid, 2002), which attributes much of Jordan's social and economic decline in the fifteenth century to amiral rebellions.

[86]*Waqfīyah* 8/49, sections published in Ghawānimah, ″Al-Qaryah fī Junūb al-Shām,″ and idem, *Tārīkh Sharqī al-Urdunn,* 243–44. The name of the recipient of this endowment is missing from the extant manuscript.

[87]Ghawānimah estimates a total population of some 700 people (Ghawānimah , ″Al-Qaryah fī Junūb al-Shām,″ 364).

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reduced to a mere *mazra'ah:* an isolated, cultivated field, with no permanent settlement.[88]

CONCLUSIONS

I have come across three Mamluk *waqfīyāt* that record sultanic endowments of agricultural land in Jordan.[89] They are roughly contemporary, dating to the end of the fourteenth century.[90] All three describe a relatively healthy economy and thriving village structure in different parts of the country. These, combined with references to Jordanian villages in contemporary sources and evidence from archaeological surveys and excavations, indicate that in terms of population and agricultural production, Jordan was doing very well throughout the fourteenth century. While there is evidence of decline in some regions of Jordan fifty to a hundred years later (villages are abandoned, certain industries disappear), this is far from true for the country as a whole.

If the Black Death of 748/1347 was the catalyst for economic decline across the Mamluk Empire, why was there an agricultural flowering in Jordan in this very period? What do the flurry of endowments, population growth, and continued market activity mean? Perhaps the importance given to this single event has been exaggerated, and attention should be paid, instead, to other factors, such as environmental change, agricultural diversity, and the peculiarities of Mamluk administration of the Transjordan. Pollen analysis of cores taken throughout Jordan indicates that the higher precipitation that allowed for increased intensive agriculture in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries began to decrease during the fifteenth.[91] This would have heavily impacted water-intensive crops, such as cane sugar, and would have diminished overall agricultural yields for areas without irrigation.

Political problems may have been an indirect factor in the abandonment of villages in southern and central Jordan. In northern Jordan, where local farming did not have to rely on state support (to repair irrigation canals, for example) and had a diversified agricultural base (not a plantation economy), there is very little evidence of real economic or social decline. On the other hand, administrative centers (and especially those garrisoned with Mamluks, such as Ḥisbān) and ″plantation farms″ (Nimrīn and Kafrīn) seemed to have suffered the most from

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[88]Bakhīt and al-Ḥammūd, *Ṭābū Daftarī Raqm 970,* 152 and Bakhīt and al-Ḥammūd, *Ṭābū Daftarī Raqm 185*, 306.

[89]*Waqfīyah* 8/49, *Waqfīyah* 9/51, and *Waqfīyah* 704.

[90]777/1375, 796/1393, and 792/1389, respectively.

[91]N. Shehadeh, ″The Climate of Jordan in the Past and Present,″ *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 25–37, and W. van Zeist, ″Past and Present Environments of the Jordan Valley,″ ibid., 199–204.

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economic and political problems in Cairo, which drew away locally-based soldiers and administrators. The affluence of the fourteenth century and general impoverishment in some of these regions in the fifteenth may be related to the successes and failures of the *iqṭā'* system, after its reorganization by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad during his *rawk* of 1313–25.[92] While it is dangerous to base even preliminary assessments on only a handful of villages, such a pattern of regionally based growth and decline is generally supported by archaeological surveys, which document hundreds of sites.

The traditional views on Mamluk ″decline,″ culled largely from Egyptian chronicles, do not do justice to the complexities of economic developments and settlement cycles in Jordan. Here economic trends are not so easily explained by epidemics, changes in trade routes, the depredations of soldiers in urban streets, and abusive taxation practices. Mamluk investment in Transjordan was exploitative and short-term, but only in some districts did it produce a ″boom and bust″ society for the period under consideration.

[92]Sato Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam: Sultans, Muqta´s and Fallahun* (Leiden, 1997), 237.

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ABBREVIATIONS FOR SOURCES

MANUSCRIPTS

Waqfīyah 8/49 *Sijill* 49, *maliff* 8, *Ḥujjaj 'umarā' wa-salāṭīn,* Dār al-Wathā'iq, Cairo (Sultan Sha'bān's endowment of 777—lands in Egypt and Syria, name of recipient missing from manuscript)—*mawqūf* of village of Ādar and its dependents, also published in Ghawānimah 1982 and 1979: 243–44.

Waqfīyah 9/51 *Sijill* 51, *maliff* 9, *Ḥujjaj 'umarā' wa-salāṭīn,* Dār al-Wathā'iq, Cairo (Sultan Barqūq's endowment of 796—lands in Egypt and Syria for his madrasah complex on the Bayn al-Qasrayn in Cairo)—*mawqūf* of village of Malkā and its dependents, fols. 18–21.

Waqfīyah 704 *Sijill* J.-704, Wizārat al-Awqāf, Cairo (Sultan Barqūq's endowment of 792—miscellaneous rural properties, locations throughout southern Syria).

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

JADIS: Jordan Antiquities Database and Information System (courtesy of the Department of Antiquities office, Amman, Jordan; also available on-line at www.nis.gov.jo/anti).

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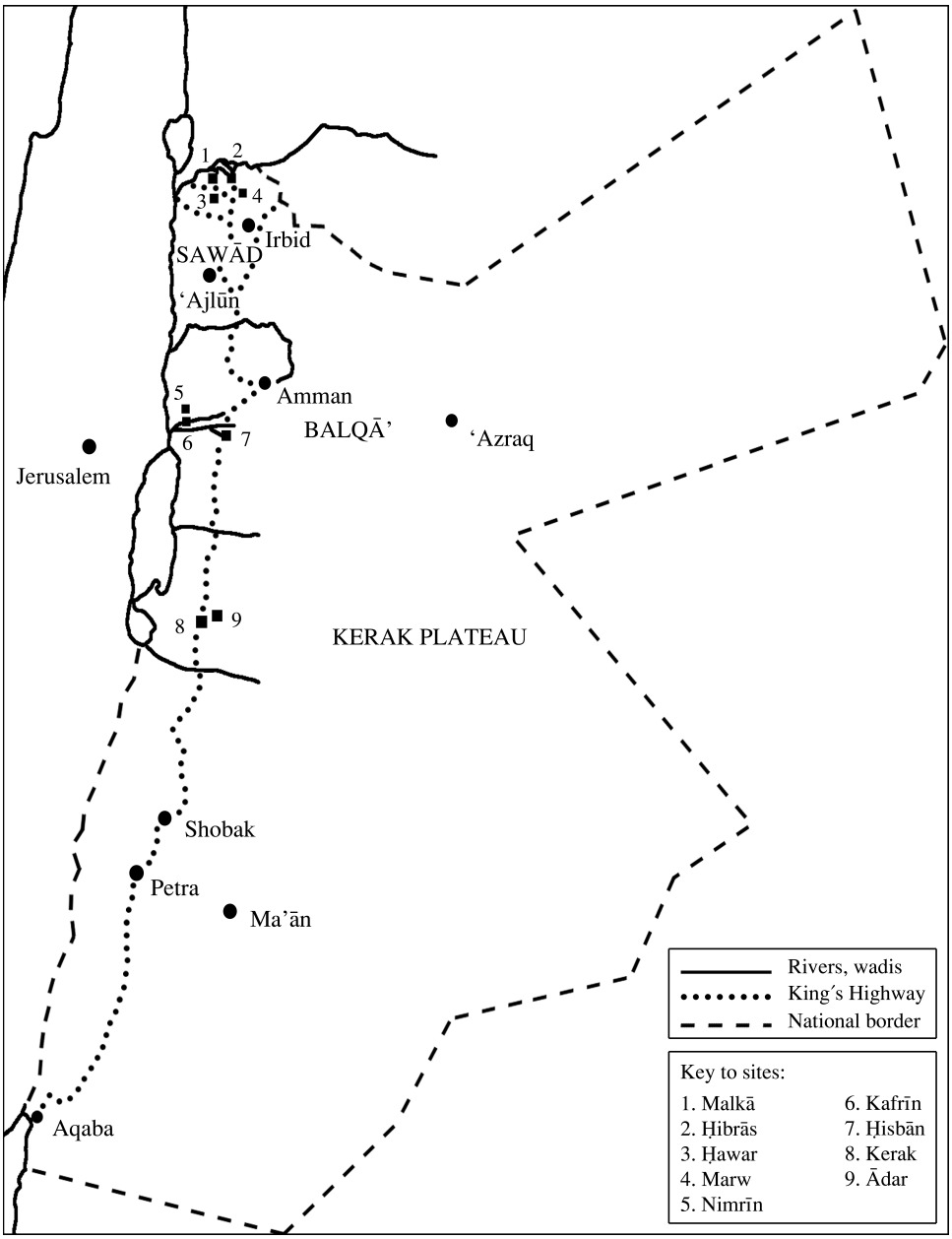

Fig. 1. Agricultural map of Mamluk Jordan.

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Fig. 2. Mamluk mosque in Ḥibrāṣ. Built in two phases and reused in modern times, this mosque has never been formally excavated. A recent architectural survey by Oklahoma State University indicates that the central building, a late Ottoman or Mandate-period mosque, was built within the remains of a larger thirteenth–fourteenth-century mosque.

Fig. 3. Interior view of later Ḥibrāṣ mosque. This small, three-aisled mosque is typical of constructions in northern and central Jordan. Like many historical mosques in the region, it had no minaret: a staircase of basalt steps engaged in the exterior face of the qiblah wall led to the roof, from where the muezzin called the faithful to prayer.

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Fig. 4. Modern village of Malkā. Malkā produces some of the highest quality olive oil in the region, as it did in the Mamluk period.

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Fig. 5. Network of wadis surrounding Malkā. Sultan Barqūq's *waqfīyah* of 796/1393 lists numerous wadis, watercourses, springs, and hills that demarcated his estate in Malkā. It is difficult to identify the nearby wadis today with those detailed by Barqūq's scribe: the residents of Malkā today know the river beds by a variety of names, and there is little consensus among them.

Fig. 6. Tell and grainfields in Ḥisbān. Once the administrative capital of the Balqā', Mamluk Ḥisbān was known for its wheat fields, orchards, gardens, and market. Grains and olives dominate the villagers' agricultural production today.

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Fig. 7. *Qa'ah* of Mamluk ″governor's complex″ at Tall Ḥisbān. When first excavated in the 1970s, the flagstones of the central courtyard were in pristine condition, and some walls were preserved to a height of a meter and a half. Although greatly dilapidated today, it remains one of only two Mamluk palaces in Jordan. It is currently undergoing restoration.

Fig. 8. Mamluk sugar jar. The Mamluks produced several different sugar products, each of varying degrees of fine or coarse crystallization and priced accordingly. Sugar cane was cut and boiled and then dried in ceramic cones, where crystallization occurred. The final product was eventually stored in cylindrical or hourglass-shaped ceramic jars for storage and transport. Sugar cones are found in production sites, primarily in the Ghôr. Sugar jars *(abaleeg)* are associated with both production sites and administrative centers, which may have doubled as redistribution points.

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Fig. 9. View of Jordan River Valley. The Jordan River and the wadis that flow into it were the focus of intensive sugarcane cultivation during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The industry then largely disappeared in Jordan, as epidemics decimated the workforce and the local *iqṭā'* system that supported the industry collapsed. By the sixteenth century cotton and indigo became the main plantation crops in the Ghôr.

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Fig. 10. Wādī Mu'jib. This deep canyon, the largest in Jordan, made transport to and from Kerak Castle quite difficult. In spite of this, parts of the Kerak Plateau were fairly densely settled in the Mamluk period with well-to-do farming villages.

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Fig. 11. Village of Ādar. Sultan Sha'bān endowed this village for a charitable purpose, according to a partially published *waqfīyah* of 777/1375. Nothing of the Mamluk village remains, however; the core of the modern village is Ottoman. Today Ādar is a prosperous village of wheat farmers, a large percentage of whom are Roman Catholic.

Fig. 12. 'Ajlūn in the springtime. 'Ajlūn is located in one of the best watered and richest agricultural regions of Jordan. Unlike other areas, this part of northern Jordan appears to have been continuously occupied and agriculturally productive from the Middle Islamic period until today.

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The Regime and the Urban Wheat Market: The Famine of 662/1263–64 in Cairo*

Famines and the Cairo Wheat Market

The Nile's Annual Cycle

The typology of famines in Muslim Egypt is rather simple since famines occurred either as the result of speculation, meaning the withholding of supplies, or as a result of the Nile not rising enough. When the Nile failed to reach its plenitude the effect was twofold: on the year it occurred (the current year) and, of course, the next one. It must be emphasized that the price and availability of grain in the current year were determined by the flow of the Nile in the preceding year, which might have been normal. The shortages that were likely to occur in the current year came about as the result of buying for the future or hoarding in preparation for an impending shortage. In this case the famine took place because of a disturbance in the workings of the market mechanism, and not necessarily as a result of speculation or actual shortage. These observations become clear when one examines the annual flow-regime of the Nile and the resultant availability of grain in Cairo.

The annual rise of the Nile used to begin during the Coptic month of Ba'ūnah (8 June–7 July) and intensified during Abīb (8 July–6 August). The beginning of the rise during Ba'ūnah made it possible for boats loaded with grain to sail from both Upper and Lower Egypt toward Cairo. During Misrā (7 August–5 September, to which five to six extra days are added since Misrā is the twelfth Coptic month), the rising water of the Nile made the canal of Alexandria navigable and boats began sailing toward Cairo with grain and other agricultural products such as flax and sugar cane as well as timber and iron brought to Alexandria by Italian merchants for the government. The Nile usually reached plenitude, i.e., sixteen cubits as measured at the Cairo Nilometer, during Misrā. The new agricultural year began during Tūt (11/12 September–9/10 October) when the seeds needed for the planting of wheat and barley were delivered to the *fallāḥīn* but the actual sowing only began in Upper Egypt during Bābah (11/12 October–9/10 November). The annual rise and subsequent decrease in the level of the Nile came first in Upper Egypt while, in other parts of the country, the preparation of the land for the sowing of

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grain and barley was done during Kiyahk (10/11 December–8/9 January). The harvest and threshing of the grain were completed shortly before the beginning of the rise of the Nile in Ba'ūnah.[1]

If we shift our attention back to Cairo we can note two parallel events that always took place in the capital: the observation of the rise of the Nile and the arrival of freshly-harvested grain to the ports. Progress in the rise of the Nile indicated what the fortunes of the next agricultural year would be, whereas the amount of grain available was determined by the previous year's river-flow. Whatever the quantities of grain that arrived in Cairo were, the fluctuations in the market were related to the observation of the rise of the river—which ultimately determined the intensity and volume of the demand. It must be pointed out that the rise of the Nile was measured and announced on a daily basis and the attempt of the first Fatimid caliph in Egypt (973) to ban this, in order to prevent panic, failed.[2] The suppression of information was an ill-conceived idea since it created panic. The rise was public knowledge and clearly observable even without the measurements made at the Nilometer.

How the Cairo Wheat Market Worked

When grain arrived at the grain ports (*sāḥil* pl. *sawāḥil,* meaning docks or wooden jetties) of Cairo it was taxed.[3] This taxation is widely documented for the whole period of the Middle Ages. Ostensibly the government thus had a powerful tool in its hands to combat rising prices and to prevent the starvation of the worst-off segments of the urban population. Abolition of taxes, even temporarily, could have been an effective tool to combat both a brief (or artificial) crisis or a real and acute shortage by encouraging more affordable prices and delaying the worst of the famine for a while. Medieval regimes, however, were very reluctant to abolish

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[1]This section is based on the agricultural calendars of Ibn Mammātī, al-Makhzūmī, and al-Maqrīzī. These texts have been edited, translated into French, and annotated by Charles Pellat, *Cinq calendriers Égyptiens* (Cairo, 1986), 7, 15, 19, 65, 75, 79, 95, 99, 101, 105, 113, 123, 125, 127, 129. For the distinction between winter crops (wheat, barley, beans, and flax) and summer crops (watermelons, beans, cotton, and sugar cane), see Hassanein Rabie, ″Some Technical Aspects of Agriculture in Medieval Egypt,″ in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900,* ed. Abraham L. Udovitch (Princeton, 1981), 68–71.

[2]Al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ al-Ḥunafā' bi-Akhbār al-A'immah al-Fāṭimīyīn al-Khulafā',* ed. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo, 1967), 1:138; Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels (Safarnāmah),* translated into English by W. M. Thackston, Jr. (New York, 1986), 41.

[3]In eleventh-century Cairo there were two main grain ports. One, *sāḥil Maqs,* served for unloading the grain designated for the consumption of the Fatimid palace, while the other, *sāḥil Miṣr,* served the capital and its population. Grain shipped from Upper and Lower Egypt arrived at *sāḥil al-Sa'īd* and *sāḥil Asfal Arḍ* while barley was unloaded at *sāḥil al-sha'īr*. See al-Musabbiḥī, *Akhbār Miṣr,* ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid and Thierry Bianquis (Cairo, 1978), 39, 73, 78, 87, 94.

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taxes on grain. For example, in 1025, taxes on grain were only lifted at the height of the famine but this was too late and too little to have any real effect on the prices.[4] Another tool in the hands of the government was the declaration of maximum prices *(tas'īr)* for grain, flour, and bread. This policy was usually implemented more readily and at earlier stages of any evolving crisis yet, as far as can be ascertained from the sources, this always had a negative effect on the market and brought sales to a standstill.[5]

The government had two further means in its hands to combat shortages in grain and high prices: importation or the sale of grain from its own stocks. The importation of grain into medieval Egypt is a complex and little-researched topic and the evidence collected and discussed by Eliyahu Ashtor is inconclusive. We do know that grain was imported to Egypt during periods of shortage at the end of the thirteenth century, and even during normal years, but whether the Mamluk authorities or private merchants were behind the imports during the years of shortage remains vague.[6] As has been demonstrated by Benjamin Arbel's work on Venetian Cyprus in the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries, grain was traded in the eastern Mediterranean and the flow of the trade was determined by regional shortages with grain surplus countries exporting to places affected by poor harvests. Other forces were, however, also at work and price differences were a powerful inducement for the exporting of grain from Mamluk Egypt or Venetian Cyprus (even during

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[4]For taxation of grain in the Fatimid period, see ibid., 75. For the Mamluk period, see al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab,* ed. al-Bāz al-'Arīnī and 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Ahwānī (Cairo, 1992), 32:227; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk,* ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyadah and Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1943–72), 2:2:538, 3:3:972–73; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i' al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Cairo, 1963), 3:315, 331.

[5]For legal and theological aspects of *tas'īr*, see D. Gimaret, "Les theologiens musulmans devant la hausse des prix," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 22 (1979): 330–39. For practical aspects, see Adam Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Islam: Mamlūk Egypt, 1250–1517* (Cambridge, 2000), 138, 146.

[6]Eliyahu Ashtor, "The Wheat Supply of the Mamlūk Kingdom," *Asian and African Studies* (Haifa) 18 (1984): 283–85, 287. One of the most explicit references to massive imports of grain to Egypt concerns the famine of 694/1294–95, which was caused by the insufficient rise of the Nile. The imports of grain to Alexandria reached 300,000 *irdabb*s and the grain was imported from Sicily, Constantinople, and the Land of the Franks (perhaps France); but as to who was behind these imports, this is not specified. See Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Hijrah,* ed. D. S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), 305–6, 312. In 1396, the arrival of boats loaded with grain lowered the prices of wheat and bread in Fusṭāṭ-Cairo and brought relief to the famine-stricken capital. The crisis of 798/1395–96 was caused by excessive flooding of the Nile in the previous year, but the identity of those responsible for the imports in 1396 remains unknown. See Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt,* ed C. Zurayk (Beirut, 1932), 9:432, 434, 435, 436.

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years of shortages) toward markets offering higher prices.[7] The most effective tool the government had to combat rising prices was the selling of grain from its own stocks and forcing people of the ruling class to do the same. This point directly touches upon the essence of the Cairo grain market and needs greater elaboration.

Ira M. Lapidus has pointed out that the ruler procured the grain he needed from the lands under his direct control, shipped it to the capital and stored it in granaries as did people of the ruling class, amirs and administrators. The urban grain market operated parallel to this system, but it was occasionally influenced by the household grain economy of the regime. The ruler and other people of the ruling class sold surplus grain on the urban market and, in time of crisis, diverted and confiscated supplies going to that market. How the grain economy of the Fatimid regime worked is known from al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ*. Al-Maqrīzī (1364–1442) combined in his account information derived from Ibn al-Ma'mūn (d. 1192) and Ibn al-Ṭuwayr (1130–1220). Lands belonging to the Fatimid ruler were scattered all over Egypt but the grain shipped for the regime to Cairo came from Upper Egypt. Grain from other regions was shipped to Alexandria, Tinnis, and Damietta and, from there, was transferred to Tyre and Ascalon. Tyre, until its fall to the Crusaders in 1124, received 70,000 *irdabb*s of grain annually while Ascalon (lost to the Crusaders in 1153) received 50,000 *irdabb*s. In Cairo the regime stored 300,000 *irdabb*s of grain in its granaries *(ihrā')* and fodder in two large *shuwan*. The most significant information is supplied by Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, who specifies to whom the Fatimid regime allocated its grain: the employees of the state and the court *(arbāb al-rutab wa-al-khidam),* those who were entitled to state sponsored charities, the black corps of the army and navy, and the royal guest house. The grain intended for consumption by the ruler and his wives and concubines *(jihāt)* was ground at special mills operated by slave-girls of the palace.[8] The Office of the Navy, also known in the Fatimid period as the Office of Holy War, maintained a fleet of Nile boats that belonged to the regime for the shipment of grain and

[7]Benjamin Arbel, ″Venetian Cyprus and the Muslim Levant, 1437–1570,″ in *Cyprus and the Crusades*, ed. N. Coureas and J. Riley-Smith (Nicosia, 1995), 171–72. For imports of wheat to Palestine and Syria in the high and late Middle Ages, see J. H. Pryor, ″In Subsidium Terrae Sanctae,″ *Asian and African Studies* (Haifa) (Studies in Memory of Eliyahu Ashtor) 22 (1988): 127–47; Robert Irwin, ″The Supply of Money and the Direction of Trade in Thirteenth-Century Syria,″ in *Coinage in the Latin East,* ed. P. W. Edbury and D. M. Metcalf (Oxford, 1980), 77; Zohar Amar, *Agricultural Produce in the Land of Israel in the Middle Ages* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 2000), 65–68. Most of these imports came from Sicily with small amounts coming from Egypt.

[8]Ira M. Lapidus, ″The Grain Economy of Mamlūk Egypt,″ *JESHO* 12 (1969): 12–14; al-Maqrīzī, *Musawwadat Kitāb al-Mawā'iẓ wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār,* ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (London, 1995), 246–48. For shipping of firewood to Constantinople, see J. Koder, ″Maritime Trade and the Food Supply for Constantinople in the Middle Ages,″ in *Travel in the Byzantine World,* ed. R. Macrides (Aldershot, 2002), 113–14.

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firewood *(aḥṭāb)* to Cairo.[9] Altogether the Fatimid regime had one million *irdabb*s at its disposal[10] but one should add the grain sent annually to the Holy Cities of Arabia to the grain allotments mentioned by Ibn al-Ṭuwayr.

Little changed after the transition from the Fatimid-Ayyubid to the Mamluk period. Al-Qalqashandī (1355–1418) notes that grain, barley, and beans received from the lands controlled by the sultan were stored in the sultanic *ihrā'* that were located in Fusṭāṭ and at the arsenal. Fodder, designated for the royal stables, was also stored, as was most of the grain that came from the Manfalūṭ region where the taxes were collected in kind. The stored grain was sent to the sultan´s mills, which were also located at the arsenal and occupied a vast closed area. The amirs did what the sultan did but on a reduced scale, storing grain and fodder and thus providing for the needs of their households and troops.[11] The clearest contrast between the household grain economy and the free markets appears in the early fifteenth-century writings of Muḥammad ibn Khalīl al-Asadī. He states that the daily wheat consumption of the capital city was 1,000 *irdabb*s, and this was divided equally between the free market and households. He maintains that the ruling establishment (*aṣḥāb al-mu'n wa-al-rawātib al-sulṭānīyah wa-al-amirīyah,* literally those employed by the sultan and the amirs), the law colleges, and the Sufi lodges consumed 500 *irdabb*s daily. Al-Asadī´s figures, however, should not be taken seriously, especially since he states that the yearly consumption of the capital was 360,000 *irdabb*s of wheat, which is a misleading extrapolation from the supposed daily wheat consumption of the capital. The significance of al-Asadī´s account is in its being a reflection of medieval people´s awareness of the huge inequality that existed in the operation of the urban wheat market wherein a tiny minority enjoyed disproportionate supplies.[12]

It is important to note that the desire for a self-sufficient household grain economy (conduct typical of the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk rulers and people of the ruling class during those periods) was also shared by the better-off segments of the urban society. The Geniza documents and the work of S. D. Goitein shed important light on this subject. What clearly emerges is that the wheat market was almost always a buyer´s market and that prices fluctuated sharply. Goitein estimates that twelve *irdabb*s of wheat were needed annually ″for an average middle-class household.″[13] People of the upper middle class, and perhaps even of the middle

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[9]Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, *Nuzhat al-Muqlatayn fī Akhbār al-Dawlatayn*, ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (Beirut, 1992), 139.

[10]Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Muqaffá al-Kabīr,* ed. Muḥammad al-Ya'lāwī (Beirut, 1991), 6:489.

[11]Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá,* ed. M. H. Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 1987), 3:522–23, 4:33, 61.

[12]Al-Asadī, *Al-Taysīr wa-al-I'tibār,* ed. 'Abd al-Qādir Ṭulaymāt (Cairo, 1967), 142.

[13]See *A Mediterranean Society* (Berkeley, 1983), 4:235.

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middle class (if such terms can be used to describe medieval society), often tried to buy the wheat needed for their household consumption as it arrived at the grain-ports of Cairo. Although they usually managed to provide for themselves they had no surpluses for sale and thus must be distinguished from the people of the ruling class and their vast stocks. It seems that people of the middle middle class could bake bread for themselves either by buying flour from a miller *(ṭaḥḥān)* or a flour merchant *(daqqāq),* yet their main problem must have been getting firewood.[14]

Other segments of the population, the lower middle class, the working class, and the vast urban underclass, were dependent for their supply of bread on the operations of the wheat market. A number of participants were involved in this supply, each with its own role, but access to these participants was class related. Two professional groups, the oven owners and the bakers/bread vendors, were directly involved in the baking and selling of bread. Information on how the oven owner *(farrān)* operated is provided by *ḥisbah* manuals (works dealing with the rules of the market). For instance, according to al-Shayzarī, Saladin′s contemporary whose work might reflect more a Syrian than an Egyptian urban reality, the *farrān* used to receive dough from customers and then bake bread for them which was delivered to their homes by boys in his service. The same picture emerges from the *ḥisbah* book of Ibn Bassām, a twelfth-century Egyptian contemporary of al-Shayzarī. The differences between the *farrān* and the *khabbāz* are, however, blurred in their works,[15] an ambiguity that is also characteristic of the writings of Ibn al-Ukhūwah, a fourteenth-century Egyptian author of a *ḥisbah* manual. His chapter concerning these two professional groups, entitled ″The rules of *ḥisbah* concerning the *farrān* and the *khabbāz,*″ implies that both had ovens and that certain regulations about how these should be operated applied to both of them. Ibn al-Ukhūwah′s account mostly deals with the *farrān* who baked bread for people who brought him dough but, in fact, he also baked bread from his own dough for others.[16] His main problem was how to secure fuel that was neither human nor animal waste, to operate the oven. The clearest evidence of the differences between the *farrān* and the *khabbāz* appears in the writings of Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 1337), author of a moral guide who also presents a vivid picture of Cairo′s street life. He corroborates Ibn al-Ukhūwah′s depiction of the *farrān* as a baker who

[14]Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, *Nuzhat al-Muqlatayn*, 94.

[15]Al-Shayzarī, *Kitāb Nihāyat al-Rutbah fī Ṭalab al-Ḥisbah,* ed. al-Bāz al-‘Arīnī (Cairo, 1946), 22–23; Ibn Bassām, *Nihāyat al-Rutbah fī Ṭalab al-Ḥisbah,* ed. Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Sāmarrā’ī (Baghdad, 1968), 21–23, 61–62; Maya Shatzmiller, *Labour in the Medieval Islamic World* (Leiden, 1994), 107, 108, 220–21.

[16]Ibn al-Ukhūwah, *Ma‘ālim al-Qurbah,* ed. with partial English translation by R. Levy (London, 1938), 91–92.

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baked for others and he refers to his customers as ″owners of the bread,″ meaning he baked them bread from the dough they had brought. The *farrān*′s shop served as a kind of communal bakery and a place of social gathering while the *khabbāz* sold bread from the flour he himself bought and his customers are referred to as ″buyers.″ To what extent, if at all, the *farrān* also baked bread on his own initiative is not alluded to by Ibn al-Ḥājj. As clearly borne out by Maya Shatzmiller′s discussion of the *farrān,* the Egyptian realities alluded to by Ibn al-Ḥājj were quite similar to those in other Muslim cities.[17] We may safely assume that there were also bread vendors who had no ovens and baked no bread but bought a quantity of bread from the *khabbāz* in order to sell it in the streets.[18] They are also referred to as *khabbāz* but, apparently, they served a lower class clientele and neighborhoods farther away from the main markets. Most probably the urban underclass, and perhaps also the working class, were dependent for their daily bread on this type of *khabbāz*.

Daily dependence on the bread vendor-*khabbāz* had serious drawbacks since the price of bread varied on a daily basis and, socially, buying bread on the streets was regarded as demeaning. Food and cooked dishes were sold on the streets but eating was perceived as a private matter. This tension between what was considered to be proper conduct and urban realities is nicely illustrated by Ibn al-Ḥājj. On the one hand, he describes food vendors and the dishes they prepared and sold but, on the other hand, he advocates the partaking of food at home.[19] Another problem, according to the physician Ibn Riḍwān (998–1068), was that the bread baked in Egypt crumbled after a day and became inedible.[20] There were many qualities of bread ranging from white bread of high quality *(ḥuwwārah),* which enjoyed wide popularity and was common in Cairo and Baghdad alike, to low quality bread.[21]

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[17]See *Kitāb al-Madkhal* (Beirut, 1972), 4:178, 180, 182–83; Shatzmiller, *Labour in the Medieval Islamic World,* 220–21.

[18]The clearest evidence for *khabbāz* as bread vendor is from Cairo of the mid 440s/early-1050s. A *khabbāz* referred to as *ṣu'lūk* (beggar, vagabond), indicating a low social origin, reduced the price of bread he sold and competed successfully with the *'arīf* (possibly meaning the head of the trade/profession) of the *khabbāzūn*. The market supervisor took actions against the *ṣu'lūk* but the chief qadi supported and rewarded him. See al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ al-Ḥunafā'* , ed. Muḥammad Ḥilmī Muḥammad Aḥmad (Cairo, 1971), 2:224. For a shop *(ḥānūt)* of a *khabbāz* in Cairo of 1025, see al-Musabbiḥī, *Akhbār Miṣr*, 107.

[19]See Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Kitāb al-Madkhal,* 2:322, 324, 328, 330.

[20]*Medieval Islamic Medicine: Ibn Riḍwān′s Treatise "On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt,"* English trans. and introduction by Michael W. Dols, Arabic text ed. 'Ādil S. Jamāl (Berkeley, 1984), 90 (trans.), 7 (text). J. D. Latham, ″Some Observations on the Bread Trade in Muslim Malaga (c. A.D. 1200),″ *Journal of Semitic Studies* 29 (1984): 113.

[21]The preference for white bread was deeply rooted in Middle Eastern societies. For Byzantine Egypt, see M. S. A. Mikhail, ″Some Observations Concerning Edibles in Late Antique and Early

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Other types of breads common in Egypt were *khushkār,* made of coarse-ground flour, and semolina bread (*samīd*). The price differences between the *ḥuwwārah* and the *khushkār* breads are illustrated by the attempts of the *muḥtasib,* the market supervisor, to regulate their prices during the famine of 1025. He fixed the price of the *khushkār* bread at five *raṭl*s per dirham and that of *ḥuwwārah* at four *raṭl*s per dirham; however, as usually happened with price-fixing, the edict brought the market to a standstill. Following the cancellation of the edict the *samīd* bread was sold at two *raṭl*s per dirham, indicating how unrealistic the price regulation of the market supervisor had been. Although the prices continued to soar the pricing of bread continued to reflect the different qualities and preferences of the customers. The *samīd* was sold later at two *raṭl*s per one and a quarter dirhams while the *khushkār* was sold at two *raṭl*s per dirham.[22]

One last point concerns the highest level of the grain market, where we find both the wheat merchants *(qammāḥūn)* and the brokers *(samāsir)*. The *ḥisbah* manuals do not mention them at all, indicating that they were too powerful to be under the jurisdiction of the market inspector. Their wealth is well attested in the sources, but their precise role in the operation of the market still requires clarification. This is also the case with respect to the difference that existed between the roles played in the market by wheat merchants and brokers.[23]

The Famine of 662/1263–64

The information concerning the events of 662/1263–64 and Baybars′ grain policy comes from a number of highly authoritative and well-placed contemporary historians. We shall begin with the narrative of Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʻAbd al-Ẓāhir (1223–92), who was the head of Baybars′ chancery *(dīwān al-inshā')*. He recounts that, at the beginning of Rabīʻ II 662/end of January–beginning of February 1264, the prices went up and the sultan imposed maximum prices. Although not explicitly

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Muslim Egypt,″ *Byzantion* 70 (2000): 108. For Baghdad, see D. Waines, ″Cereals, Bread and Society,″ *JESHO* 30 (1987): 280. For Constantinople, see J. L. Teall, ″The Grain Supply of the Byzantine Empire, 330–1025,″ *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 13 (1959): 91–92, 99–100.

[22]Al-Musabbiḥī, *Akhbār Miṣr*, 48, 72. For types of bread and bakeries, see Ch. Pellat, ″Khubz,″ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., 5:1087–92; R. Mielck, *Terminologie und Technologie der Müller und Bäcker im islamischen Mittelalter* (Hamburg, 1913), 75, 78–79 (I owe the reference to Mielck′s work to the kindness of Thomas Bauer of Münster University).

[23]This ambiguity is reflected by al-Musabbiḥī′s report about the death (in 1025) of Ibn Saʻdān, described as a ″wheat merchant who was one of the respected brokers dealing with wheat at the Upper Egypt Dock in Fusṭāṭ.″ See *Akhbār Miṣr*, 94. For the wealth of a Christian wheat merchant in mid-eleventh century Cairo, see Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels*, 55–56. The memory of the wealth and generosity of a flour merchant who handed out charity to the poor during the 1060s civil war in Cairo still lingered in fifteenth-century Cairo. See Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Al-Kawākib al-Sayyārah fī Tartīb al-Ziyārah,* ed. A. Taymūr (Baghdad, n.d.), 149.

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stated, it is clear that Baybars′ edict of maximum prices brought the market to a standstill. The sultan quickly realized his failure at influencing the working of the market and on 7 Rabī‘ II/8 February he rescinded the maximum prices.

Baybars′ subsequent policies were the outcome of his initial failure to influence the working of the market. It seems that on the same day, 7 Rabī‘ II/8 February, he ordered the selling of grain from the stocks of the regime to the amount of 500 *irdabb*s per day. The sale was made exclusively, and at affordable prices, to the poor *(ḍu‘afā’)* and widows and restricted to two *wabī‘* per person. What makes Baybars′ policy unique is his decision to commit the resources of the regime to combat high prices at a very early stage of the crisis. The steps that followed were an extension of this policy towards other social groups and involved people of the ruling class in sharing the responsibility for the implementation of the policy. The names of the poor in Cairo-Fusṭāṭ were registered and amirs were obliged to feed groups of the poor for three months. In addition to this, people who belonged to the civilian society, such as great merchants, witnesses serving at the courts of the qadis, and other wealthy people, took upon themselves the responsibility of providing for the poor *(masākīn)*. To what extent the participation of the people of the ruling class and those of the civilian society in these efforts was voluntary or forced is not alluded to. Baybars undertook to provide for the blind, but the most interesting references are to the Kurds and the Turkmen *(turkumān)* for whom the *atābak*, or commander-in-chief of the Mamluk army, provided.[24] Apparently the Kurds and the Turkmen were both part of the *wafīdīyah* and, as auxiliary troops, their remuneration was low and insufficient in times of dearth. The high price of bread brought them to the brink of starvation and, as organized military tribal units, they had the potential for violence. Baybars, by committing the resources of the state and the ruling class, bought social peace.

According to Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī (1251–1330), Baybars′ biographer and the maternal uncle of Ibn ‘Abd al-Ẓāhir, the rise of the Nile in 662/1263–64 was low and, as a result, prices surged.[25] His remark indicates that the crisis of 662/1263–64 was probably caused by massive purchases of grain in anticipation of difficulties in 663/1264–65, but the supplies that existed in 662/1263–64 must have been quite normal and the regime probably had adequate grain resources at its disposal. The

[24]See *Al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Ẓāhir,* ed. and trans. into English by S. F. Sadeque under the title *Baybars I of Egypt* (Dacca, 1956), 94–95 (text), 204–6 (trans.); ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976), 188–90. Other accounts are strongly influenced by Ibn ‘Abd al-Ẓāhir: see al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab,* 29:96; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 1:2:507–8.

[25]See Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī Ibn ‘Asākir, *Kitāb Ḥusn al-Manāqib al-Sirrīyah al-Muntaza‘ah min al-Sīrah al-Ẓāhirīyah*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976), 74. According to Ibn al-Dawādārī, the rise of the Nile in 661/1262–63 was above 16 cubits but he has no data for 662/1263–64. See his *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmi‘ al-Ghurar*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann (Cairo, 1971), 8:94, 106.

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fact that the crisis began only in February 1264 does, however, raise some questions. If indeed the crisis was a result of a low Nile and massive purchases of grain for the future one would expect it to have begun earlier (in August–September when the low rise of the Nile had already been recorded) and to have intensified during October–November 1263. Possibly the rise of the Nile was only slightly below 16 cubits and the future purchases, although not that massive, were sufficient to create a depressed market that experienced low supplies and high prices. This trend slowly gained momentum, and erupted in full force during February 1264.

The sources offer clues about Baybars´ household grain economy. Apparently Baybars needed 20,000 *irdabb*s of grain annually to bake bread for the people of his inner circle *(khāṣṣah)* and his *mamālīk* military slaves, in addition to 120,000 *irdabb*s of fodder for his stable. Another biographer of Baybars, Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī Ibn Shaddād (1217–85), says that the state (in his words, Baybars) made charitable distributions of wheat and flour to the poor and devotees in the Holy Cities of Arabia and also distributed large quantities (10,000 *irdabb*s annually) to the poor, mystics living in lodges, and the people living in seclusion in Cairo. These charitable allocations of grain must be distinguished from a special pious endowment *(waqf)* set up by Baybars for buying bread for poor Muslims. It seems that feeding the poor was quite central to Baybars´ conduct as a ruler and believer and, during Ramaḍān, Baybars used to set slaves free and supply food to 5,000 people each night. The freeing of slaves was Baybars´ personal charity, but whether the Ramaḍān food provisions were supplied from Baybars´ own grain or from the state resources remains unclear.[26]

The Wider Implications

Two issues need to be addressed when the wider implications of the events of 662/1263–64 are discussed: 1) to what extent Baybars´ policy was unique and 2) what the characteristic features of Cairo´s wheat market in a broader comparative perspective were. As simple as the typology of famine in medieval Egypt is, it should serve as a guide when the response of a regime to a crisis is evaluated. There is no point in comparing what a regime did, or failed to do, during a famine caused by the inadequate rise of the Nile to its conduct in other circumstances. The crisis of 662/1263–64 was a minor one and Baybars´ actions reflect his understanding of the limits of governmental intervention into the market mechanism. Clearly, those most adversely affected were the poor and some foreign military groups and Baybars realized that there was no point in exerting pressure on other

[26]Ibn ʻAbd al-Ẓāhir, *Al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir,* ed. Sadeque, 24, 103 (text), 107, 217 (trans.); Shāfiʻ ibn ʻAlī, *Kitāb Ḥusn al-Manāqib,* 34; Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Ẓāhir,* ed. Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ (Wiesbaden, 1983), 301–2.

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participants in the market to lower prices, so he took action on his own. The grain stocks of the sultan and the military and civil elite were adequate and the supplies of new grain (determined by the harvest of 661/1262–63) were normal. The sultan could afford to dispense grain in order to achieve social peace. His policies enhance what is known about his personality, his involvement in the affairs of the state, the way he set a personal example, and his swift and determined response to emergencies.

Baybars′ biographers favorably compare his policies in 662/1263–64 to those of other rulers, whose indifference in times of crises brought great misery to people. Quite understandably they conveniently overlooked the different circumstances of each crisis and Ibn ʻAbd al-Ẓāhir′s comparison of Baybars to the Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-ʻAdil and his actions in 597/1200–1 is quite misleading. According to Ibn al-Dawādārī (d. after 1335), in 595/1198–99, 596/1199–1200, and 597/1200–1 Egypt suffered a famine caused by the insufficient rise of the Nile. The cumulative effect was devastating and, in 597/1200–1, the signs of depopulation in the capital and the rural areas were visible, with people being reduced to cannibalism. At the height of the famine (in 596/1199–1200, according to al-Maqrīzī, or in 597/1200–1, according to Ibn al-Dawādārī), al-Malik al-ʻAdil distributed grain to the poor and his example was followed by the amirs and people of means.[27] By any comparison al-ʻAdil did more than Baybars did and under the worst circumstances imaginable. If anything al-ʻAdil′s example perhaps inspired Baybars, and providing for the poor by the sultan and other members of the elite during times of crisis became common in the Mamluk period. The responses of the Mamluk sultans, however, varied greatly and fluctuated between intervention and indifference or a late response.[28] It is difficult, almost impossible, to discern clear patterns in the way rulers dealt with crises and the assumption made about the grain ″moral economy″ in Mamluk Egypt is rather speculative, being based on a questionable model (eighteenth-century France and England) and presented with too little textual evidence.[29]

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[27]Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar,* ed. Saʻīd ʻAbd al-Fattāḥ ʻĀshūr (Cairo, 1972), 7:133, 136, 140, 148, 149; al-Maqrīzī, *Ighāthat al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghummah,* ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyadah and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo, 1940), 29–31.

[28]During the famine of 1294–95, for example, people of the military ruling class as well as wealthy civilians, including the historian Baybars al-Manṣūrī (then an amir in Alexandria), provided for the poor, while during the crisis of 1395–96 the sultan Barqūq distributed food and charity to the poor and righteous in the capital (see sources quoted in note 6). For a detailed study of the 1294–96 crisis, see M. Chapoutot-Remadi, ″Une grande crise à la fin du XIIIe siècle en Egypte,″ *JESHO* 26 (1983): 217–46.

[29]See Boaz Shoshan, ″Grain Riots and the ′Moral Economy′: Cairo, 1350–1517,″ *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10 (1980): 459–61.

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Any comparison made between the unique Egyptian realities and other Mediterranean regions, not to say Western Europe, is difficult and must be carefully handled. According to Paul Magdalino about forty percent of Constantinople´s grain market in the ninth–twelfth centuries was dominated by the household grain economy. The court, the Church, charitable institutions, and private people managed to secure grain supplies for themselves in a way unrelated to the ups and downs of Constantinople´s grain market.[30] Thus a basic resemblance to Cairo does exist but the differences are no less important. Supplying Constantinople with grain, from the point of view of geography (i.e., the regions from which the grain came) and transportation, was a far more complex and demanding task than it was in Cairo, which benefited from the movement of boats from Upper and Lower Egypt toward the capital.

In the case of the Cairo wheat market and, more broadly, the grain economy of Muslim Egypt as a whole, we can truly speak about *longue durée* trends. Al-Kindī, the tenth-century author of a booklet entitled the *Excellencies of Egypt,* outlined the three main grain economy realities of Egypt: 1) the country produced vast surpluses; 2) there was a close correlation between the height of the Nile´s annual rise, the agricultural fortunes, and the level of taxation; and 3) Egypt fed the Holy Cities of Arabia.[31] This was not only a question of a river-dependent agricultural economy, since the Nile and its annual flood also permeated the religious and social life of the country. Moreover, ancient Egyptian customs and festivities continued under the guise of Christianity, and later Islam, well into the nineteenth century.[32]

Al-Kindī´s last point reflected the new seventh-century realties of an Egypt slipping away from Byzantine control. Although the loss of Egypt and North Africa carried many consequences for Byzantium, the shipment of grain from Alexandria to Constantinople had already collapsed earlier. In the sixth century truly vast quantities of grain, estimated at 160,000 metric tons, were being shipped each year by a fleet of 1,200 to 1,800 ships from Alexandria to Constantinople but this *longue durée* system came to an end in the early seventh century. In 618 the distribution of public bread in Constantinople ceased and new patterns of supply

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[30]P. Magdalino, ″The Grain Supply of Constantinople, Ninth–Twelfth Centuries″ in *Constantinople and Its Hinterland,* ed. C. Mango and G. Dagron (Aldershot, 1995), 39, 43.

[31]See *Faḍā'il Miṣr,* ed. Ibrāhīm Aḥmad. al-'Adawī and Muḥammad 'Umar (Cairo, 1947), 44, 46, 60, 70.

[32]For medieval festivities and ceremonies connected with the Nile, see William Popper, *The Cairo Nilometer* (Berkeley, 1951); Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (Albany, 1994), ch. 5. For the early nineteenth century, see E. W. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (repr. New York, 1973), ch. 26. The similarities are striking and these accounts can be read as a continuous sequence.

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emerged and were consolidated.[33] Writing about Constantinople after the eighth century J. Durliat has categorically stated: ″Constantinople ne fut plus affamée.″[34] It must be emphasized that the provision of grain to Constantinople was not only a question of overcoming geographical and administrative complexities, but frequently involved political issues relating to Byzantium´s commercial relations with other Mediterranean powers. For example, in the commercial treaties between Byzantium and Venice during the rule of Michael VIII (1259–82), Venetian exports of grain from Byzantium were dependent upon the level of grain prices in Constantinople, giving priority to the needs of the local urban market.[35] Like their Byzantine predecessors, the Ottomans were much concerned with securing orderly grain supplies for Istanbul and preventing shortages. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, these efforts culminated in the creation of a special administration to deal with this problem.[36]

Returning to medieval Cairo and its wheat market, one may conclude that it was torn between the household grain economy of the regime, the ruling elite, the upper echelons of the civil society, and the free market upon which the rest of the population was dependent. Governmental intervention in the functioning of the free market was minimal and no special efforts were made to supply Cairo. This lack of interest in how the population of the capital obtained its bread stands in contrast to the Byzantine and Ottoman policies in regard to Constantinople-Istanbul.

[33]For the sixth-century system of supply and its collapse, see M. McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy* (Cambridge, 2001), 104–5, 108–10.

[34]See ″L´approvisionnement de Constantinople,″ in *Constantinople and Its Hinterland,* 21.

[35]J. Chrysostomides, ″Venetian Commercial Privileges Under the Palaeologi,″ *Studi Veneziani* 12 (1970): 267–356.

[36]R. Murphey, ″Provisioning Istanbul: The State and Subsistence in the Early and Modern Middle East,″ *Food and Foodways* 2 (1988): 217–63; T. Guran, ″The State Role in the Grain Supply of Istanbul: The Grain Administration, 1793–1839,″ *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 3 (1984–85): 27–39.

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Reconstructing Life in Medieval Alexandria from an Eighth/Fourteenth Century *Waqf* Document*

On 12 Jumādá I 726/16 April 1326, the Mamluk sultan of Egypt, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, sold a large quantity of property in Alexandria. The purpose of this sale was to finance an increase in the salaries and allowances of the inhabitants of the *khānqāh* (Sufi convent) at Siryāqūs, some twenty miles northeast of Cairo, which he had founded the previous year. The transaction and the subsequent increases in salaries are recorded in a *waqf* (religious endowment) document from the period, now kept at the Dār al-Wathā'iq al-Qawmīyah in Cairo.[1] In the document the property to be sold, which consists of inns, dye-houses, oil presses, and other buildings, is described in great detail. The approximate positions of the buildings in Alexandria are also specified. These details allow the modern historian to collect a large amount of information regarding the spatial relationships between the individual structures and the area they occupied, as well as giving an insight into the activities that took place there.

Currently modern knowledge of the layout of medieval Alexandria (Fig. 1) is fairly sparse.[2] Writers of the period give only a general description of the city, and so this *waqf* document, published by Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn in 1982,[3] sheds vital new light on this topic. In this article an attempt is made to reconstruct maps of the properties described and, where possible, to determine their approximate location using a combination of the document and the existing reconstructions of

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[1]The *waqf* is written on the versos of two documents, 25/4 and 31/5. The rectos contain the original *waqf* of the *khānqāh.*

[2]The map is derived from those published in 'Abd al-'Azīz Sālim, *Tārīkh al-Iskandarīyah wa-Ḥaḍāratuhā fī al-'Aṣr al-Islāmī* (Alexandria, 1961), 115; idem, *Takhṭīṭ Madīnat al-Iskandarīyah wa-'Umrānihā fī al-'Aṣr al-Islāmī* (Beirut, 1964), (between) 80–81, 96–97; and Martina Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte Alexandrias von 564/1169 bis in die Mitte des 9./15. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1992), 332.

[3]As an appendix to Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī, *Tadhkirat al-Nabih fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-Banīh,* ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1982). The document may be found on pages 419–48.

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the city by modern historians, which are based on the historical sources. Consideration will also be given to the role of the properties in the city and its commercial life. A translation of the relevant part of the *waqf* document (lines 15–91) forms an appendix to the article.

Funduq al-Bayḍ wa-al-Qaṣab (Fig. 2, Lines 15–28)

The first property described in the document is listed as being a *funduq* named ″al-Bayḍ wa-al-Qaṣab.″ The modern Arabic word *funduq* means a hotel, and derives from the Greek *pandokheion*.[4] In the Middle Ages it had a similar meaning, being a hostelry where people could store goods and find lodging for themselves and their animals.[5] As Olivia Remie Constable has shown, textual references to *fanādiq* are found in documents dating from at least as early as the year 284/896,[6] and isolated references to them continue to appear during the fourth/tenth century.[7] References to *fanādiq* become much more common during the Ayyubid sultanate (564–647/1169–1249),[8] and throughout the Mamluk Sultanate (647–923/1249–1517) they occupied a position of great importance in the Levant. The majority of the clientele of these *fanādiq* were merchants.

As Martina Müller-Wiener notes, *fanādiq* were administered in a number of ways. Some were owned and administered by families or amirs who were heavily involved in trade, whereas others were dedicated to particular trades or to particular nationalities.[9] The last was particularly true in Alexandria, as European trade was

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[4]See Olivia Remie Constable, ″Reconsidering the Origin of the *Funduq*,″ *Studia Islamica* 92 (2001): 195–96. The Byzantines used the term *phoundax* (itself derived from *funduq*) to refer to these buildings. Other buildings similar in function included the Byzantine *mitaton,* and the Muslim *khān* and *wakālah* (Ennio Concina, *Fondaci* [Venice, 1997], 21, 58).

[5]R. le Tourneau, ″Funduḳ,″ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 2:945. Mirfat Maḥmūd ʻĪsá suggests that *fanādiq* were not themselves used for accommodation, but that they normally had a *rabʻ* (living quarters) built above them that fulfilled this function (″Dirāsah fī Wathā'iq al-Sulṭān al-Malik al-Ashraf Shaʻbān ibn Ḥusayn: al-Munsha'āt al-Tijārīyah wa-Aḍwā' Jadīdah ʻalá Takhṭīṭ al-Miʻmārī lil-Fanādiq wa-al-Ribāʻ fī al-ʻAṣr al-Mamlūkī,″ *Al-Mu'arrikh al-Miṣrī* 21 [1999]: 155–56). This distinction does not seem to be drawn in this document.

[6]Constable, ″Reconsidering the Origin of the *Funduq*,″ 196.

[7]See M. Sharon, ″A Waqf Inscription from Ramlah,″ *Arabica* 13 (1966): 77–84; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-Arḍ,* ed. J. H. Kramers, Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1967), 432–33; and Abū al-Maʻālī al-Musharraf ibn al-Murajjā ibn Ibrāhīm al-Maqdisī, *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis wa-al-Khalīl wa-Faḍā'il al-Shām,* ed. Ofer Livne-Kafri (Shfaram, 1995), 200. Although the last of these was written between 1030 and 1040, the account seems to date from the previous century.

[8]André Raymond and Gaston Wiet, *Les Marchés du Caire,* Textes Arabes et Études Islamiques, vol. 14 (Cairo, 1979), 2.

[9]Müller-Wiener, *Stadtgeschichte Alexandrias,* 250–51.

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not allowed in Cairo,[10] and hence the town became Egypt´s most important center for trade between the East and the West. However, unless the name has no direct connection to the usage of the establishment, rather like that of an English public house, it would seem to indicate that the *funduq* described here is based around trades, in this case in *bayḍ* (eggs) and *qaṣab* (reeds or sugar cane), rather than being linked to a particular family or nationality.

The *waqf* states that this *funduq* is located on the southern side of the Maḥajjah al-ʻUẓmá, the main road that runs from the Rosetta Gate at the east end of Alexandria to the Green Gate at the west end. Given that the Muslims used the West Harbor of the town,[11] and might be expected to prefer shorter rather than longer trips to transport their goods (particularly in the case of eggs!), a western location on this road is not inconceivable.

The layout of the *funduq* itself seems to be slightly different from that of other Alexandrian *fanādiq* of the Middle Ages. One enters through a door into a vestibule *(dihlīz),* before coming into a central hallway *(qāʻah),* which is surrounded by other rooms, mostly storerooms *(makhāzin)* with a vault *(khaznah)* on the eastern side. The layout of the first floor is similar, with another central hall surrounded by two rooms, a pantry *(khuristān),* a utility room *(murtafaq)* and a bay window *(rawshan)* projecting out from the northern wall. Directly above the bay window is another similar bay window and a small room. One of the major sources for the layout of these buildings, the German traveller Felix Fabri, who travelled to Alexandria in 887–88/1483, describes *fanādiq* belonging to the Venetians, Genoese, and Catalans, and all of them have central spaces like those found here, but these are courtyards, rather than the halls found in this building.[12] He notes that the Catalan and the larger of the two Venetian *fanādiq* he saw are constructed like monasteries,[13] with the Catalan *funduq* in particular having bedrooms around the courtyard.[14] This implies a cloister-like structure, with buildings surrounding the

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[10]Subhi Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter (1171–1517)* (Wiesbaden, 1965), 197.

[11]Ibid., 134. Franks and Byzantines used the East Harbor.

[12]Felix Fabri, *Voyage en Egypte,* trans. R. P. Jacques Masson (Paris, 1975), 693–95, 959–61. Bernhard von Breydenbach, another German traveller who made the pilgrimage in this year, notes Alexandrian *fanādiq* belonging to the King of Sicily, the Venetians (two), and the Genoese (Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Die Reise ins Heilige Land*, ed. Elisabeth Geck [Wiesbaden, 1961], 39). Symon Semeonis, an Irish friar who visited the city in 723–24/1323, notes *fanādiq* belonging to Marseilles, Genoa, Venice, the Catalans ″and others″ (Symon Semeonis, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis ab Hybernia ad Terram Sanctam,* ed. and trans. Mario Esposito, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, vol. 4 [Dublin, 1960], 48–49).

[13]Fabri, *Voyage,* 694, 960.

[14]Ibid., 694.

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central yard.[15] However, be it a hall or a courtyard, it seems likely that the central space surrounded by other rooms was a standard design for *fanādiq* in Alexandria. Expanding beyond the city, there are also examples of Cairene *fanādiq* from the period built in this way,[16] and Ennio Concina has shown that the design was used for *fanādiq* and similar buildings in Europe, the Byzantine Empire, and throughout the Levant,[17] although it is not clear exactly where it originated. One can imagine that it would be practical, since the central space would provide both an area for maneuvering large bundles of goods and safe overflow storage for times when the stores were full. Fabri describes the two Venetian *fanādiq* as having goods stored in the courtyard,[18] which would seem to support this possibility.

The existence of shops outside this *funduq* suggests two possibilities. Either local merchants set up shops outside *fanādiq* in order to supply travellers with goods, or the travelling merchants carried out some direct trade with the public, rather than trading entirely through agents. Either way, the location of shops outside *fanādiq* was a normal practice at the time.[19]

It is worth noting that there does not appear to be a religious building of any type in this *funduq*. This further supports the suggestion that this was not a building used by foreigners, from the West at least. As Wilhelm von Heyd notes, *fanādiq* used by Europeans had chapels, where Western priests ministered to the inhabitants.[20] In Alexandria this service would not be required by local traders, who could attend religious buildings in the city. Thus the absence of a religious building in the *funduq* suggests that it probably catered to local inhabitants, rather than Europeans.

Two of the buildings surrounding the *funduq* are of particular interest. The ruined bath on the west side is interesting as there seems to be a link between baths and *fanādiq*. It is understandable that hot, sweaty travellers might be relieved to find a bath near the *funduq* in which they were staying, but what is interesting is that the bath is ruined. The historian al-Maqrīzī (766–845/1364–1442), in his

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[15]This is also in accordance with the description given by Wilhelm von Heyd in *Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen Âge* (Leipzig, 1923), 2:430.

[16]For other examples from the period, see Sylvie Denoix et al., *Le Khan al-Khalili et ses Environs: Un Centre Commercial et Artisanal au Caire du XIII^e au XX^e Siècle,* Études Urbaines, vol. 4/1–2 (Cairo 1999), 2:8–10 and 105–8 (both in Arabic section).

[17]Described in Concina, *Fondaci.*

[18]Fabri, *Voyage,* 960.

[19]See ʿĪsá, ″Dirāsah fī Wathā'iq,″ 143.

[20]Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce*, 2:433. According to Fabri′s work, this is true of the Genoese, Catalan, and at least one of the Venetian *fanādiq*. See Fabri, *Voyage,* 691–92, 959. Muslim *fanādiq* did sometimes contain mosques or rooms for prayer. However, this is not the case with regard to either of the *fanādiq* mentioned in this document.

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description, or *Khiṭaṭ,* of Egypt, refers to two *fanādiq* in similar locations in Cairo. The Funduq ʻAmmār al-Ḥammāmī, in the area of Suwayqat al-Masʻūdī, was built on the site of a ruined bath,[21] and the great *funduq* of the Office of Inheritances, in the area of al-Akfānīyīn, was built next to similar ruins.[22] This might suggest that there was something provided by such ruins that *fanādiq* required. The most likely answer is that *fanādiq* required large quantities of water for both the inhabitants and their beasts. However, in the face of a lack of definite evidence, this must be regarded as mere speculation for the moment.

The second building of interest is the madrasah on the other side of the baking oven and ruined bath. The madrasah is that of Abū Ṭāhir ibn ʻAwf, which was established by Riḍwān al-Khashī, the vizier of the Fatimid caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ, in 533/1137.[23] Unfortunately, the identification of this madrasah is of limited use in establishing the precise location of the *funduq*. Although the madrasah was well known in the Mamluk period, nothing remains of it today[24] and its exact location is unknown.

FUNDUQ AND SESAME OIL PRESS (*FUNDUQ WA-MIʻṢARAT AL-SHĪRAJ*, FIG. 3, LINES 28–45)

The second property described consists of two buildings, another *funduq* and a sesame oil press. It is difficult to determine the exact location of these two buildings, as no information is given regarding this apart from that they are on the eastern side of Musk Alley, as shown. The fact that they are bordered to the south by three markets might suggest that they are on the northern side of the Maḥajjah al-ʻUẓmá, between the East Mosque and the Sea Gate, for as Müller-Wiener notes, it is here that most of the markets were located.[25] However, this location is by no means certain.

This second *funduq,* which is not named, is constructed in a similar fashion to the Funduq al-Bayḍ wa-al-Qaṣab, although its layout is more complex. Once again, it has the central hall surrounded by stores. However, instead of another hall on the first floor it has a wooden gallery *(riwāq khashab)* which goes around the space above the hall below and crosses it from east to west.[26] This seems more

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[21]Ḥammām Ibn Qaraqah, listed in al-Maqrīzī, *Al Mawāʻiẓ wa-al-Iʻtibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Bulaq, n.d.), 2:81.

[22]Ḥammām ʻAjīnah, listed in ibid., 2:81.

[23]Sālim, *Tārīkh al-Iskandarīyah,* 63–4. See also Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabih,* 430, n. 4.

[24]Sālim, *Takhṭīṭ Madīnat al-Iskandarīyah,* 79–80.

[25]Müller-Wiener, *Stadtgeschichte Alexandrias,* 241.

[26]A similar arrangement is found in the layout of the Funduq al-Ḥujar, in the area of Bāb al-Zuhūmah in Cairo. This building is recorded in the *waqf* of the sultan Barsbāy, written in

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in accordance with the standard design of *fanādiq* described earlier, in that the central space at ground level is open to the elements. The gallery is surrounded by rooms upstairs, in what seems to be the usual arrangement. The stores on the eastern side of the first floor are used by *(maḥmūl ʻalá)* shops in the Carpenters´ Market to the south. Again, there are shops outside the door, suggesting direct trade was carried out with the public, and there are no religious buildings in the *funduq,* implying that it catered mainly to local inhabitants.

Immediately to the south of the *funduq* is a sesame oil press. This is a simple, two-storey building with a baking oven, an animal stall, and a variety of pieces of equipment for making the oil in a small rectangular area on the ground floor. On the first floor are two stores. The existence of this press is interesting as, according to Subhi Labib, Egypt imported oil, most particularly sesame oil,[27] which was rarely produced in the country.[28]

It is not clear if there was a link between the press and the *funduq,* or whether they are mentioned as being together purely for convenience´s sake. The *funduq* door, the public fountain, and two shops to the north of the *funduq* door are contributory to *(ḥāmilah ilá)* the mosque next door. This fact, and the fact that several stores are used by two shops in the Carpenters´ Market, as mentioned above, suggest a fairly high level of interaction between the *funduq* and other local properties and institutions. In the case of the stores that are used by the shops in the Carpenters´ Market, the use of storage space nearby is understandable. However, the precise relationship between the mosque, its shops, and the *funduq* is less clear. It seems that the *funduq* is required in some way to contribute to the mosque´s upkeep, but what form this takes, and why only parts of the property are regarded in this way, remains a mystery. It may be that the incomes of these parts of the property are a *waqf* for the mosque.

Glass-Works (*Zajjājah,* Fig. 4, lines 45–52)

The next property described is a glass-works, which according to the document is located in an area known as the (two) baths of al-Akhawayn. The location of this area is unknown, but as the property contains a well that is described as being on the Nile, this might place it on the western side of the city, where the *khalīj* from the river passes through it.

The glass-works, which the *waqf* states was originally a soap-works *(ṣabbānah),* consists of a vestibule that goes past two rooms and a well, before ending at a

846/1442. It also has an upper storey that overlooks the courtyard, although this does not include a gallery (see Denoix, *Khan al-Khalili,* 2:8–10 [Arabic section]).

[27]Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens,* 39

[28]Ibid., 321.

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hall. On the opposite side of the hall is a store, a room where the glass is made, and a *sābāṭ,* which Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Laylá ʻAlī Ibrāhīm describe as a raised passageway which would normally pass between two buildings above ground level.[29] Since the *waqf* does not state that the rest of the building is above ground level, this definition does not seem to be appropriate here. It is more likely to be a roofed passageway at ground level. A number of properties in this document include these structures, as will be shown below. The passageway contains a number of pieces of equipment that are left over from when the building was a soap-works.

It is interesting that the glass-works is bordered by the house of a Jewish jeweler to the north, and the house of a (presumably Muslim) swordsmith to the east. The existence of these craftsmen side by side suggests that Alexandria may not have had sharply delineated quarters defined by the religions of their inhabitants, but consisted rather of a mix of peoples living throughout the town. However, in the face of a lack of further evidence, it is difficult to say how far this one instance is representative of the general situation.

DYE-WORKS (*MAṢBAGHAH,* FIG. 5, LINES 52–57)

This dye-works is one of two properties that the *waqf* describes as being located in an area called ″al-Qamarah.″[30] As ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz Sālim notes, in the Classical era the gate at the western end of Alexandria was known as the Gate of the Moon.[31] It might be that the area near the gate would have picked up its name. If one were to assume that the name of the gate was carried over after the Muslim conquest, becoming Arabicized to ″Bāb al-Qamar,″[32] before falling out of use in favor of the name ″al-Bāb al-Akhḍar″ (the Green Gate), it might be that the name of the area nearby would also have become Arabicized, becoming ″al-Qamarah″ (the crescent moon).[33] This would place this property at the west end of Alexandria, near the Green Gate.

One enters the dye-works through a vestibule containing a well, before coming into a hall, on the opposite side of which is another hall, a *sābāṭ,* a room, and a staircase leading up to another room. On the north side of the building, to the west of the vestibule, is another area where dyeing kettles are made.

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[29]Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Laylá ʻAlī Ibrāhīm, *Al-Muṣṭalaḥāt al-Miʻmārīyah fī al-Wathā'iq al-Mamlūkīyah* (Cairo, 1990), 60.

[30]The other is the slaughterhouse listed next in the document.

[31]Sālim, *Tārīkh al-Iskandarīyah,* 19.

[32]This is the name used by the Arabic sources (Sālim, *Takhṭīṭ Madīnat al-Iskandarīyah,* 42).

[33]It is known that the Muslims did not change the layout of the town when they conquered it (ibid., 69).

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Textiles formed a large proportion of the industry of Alexandria. As one of the major trade centers between the East and the West, it was well positioned to take advantage of the dyes that passed through the town. Labib describes numerous dyes that came to Egypt from India and places further east.[34] Thus it is likely that this building was very important to merchants who dealt in textiles. It is probably no accident that it was built immediately to the north of the silk *funduq*.

Slaughterhouse (*Maslakh,* Fig. 6, lines 57–61)

This is noted as being the second property in al-Qamarah, but beyond that little information is given. The properties around the building are mentioned, consisting of two houses and a dye-works. However, the description of the building itself is very brief.

Dye-Works (*Maṣbaghah,* Fig. 7, Lines 61–69)

This property is located in an area called al-Qaṭṭābīn, and would appear to be on the other side of the area of Bi'r Ḥar, to the east of the slaughterhouse just mentioned, as the document states that the road runs from this property west to Bi'r Ḥar, whereas the road was described as running east from the previous property to the area. Assuming the area is not huge, this would place this property in the western end of the city, near al-Qamarah. This proposed location is further supported by the existence of a well on the Nile canal inside the building.

The description of this building is slightly confused, particularly as the Arabic word *"mutaqābil"* may mean either "being opposite" or "being together with." In particular, the two *īwān*s are described as *"mutaqābil"* but then it is stated that one is in the north, and the other in the west. The map given presents what seems to be the most likely arrangement.

Scalding-House (*Masmaṭ*, Fig. 8, Lines 69–72)

The description of this building is very brief. It is described as being a large building roofed with wood and palm fronds in the area of Lesser Ḥaddādīn. The properties surrounding it are also mentioned, consisting of a blacksmith's shop, an oil press, and the Qaysārīyat al-Nashā, which may be a perfume workshop. Apart from that there is no further information.

Sesame Oil Press (*Ma'ṣarat al-Shīraj,* Fig. 9, Lines 72–78)

This property is in the area of Dār al-Jadīdah, Qaysārīyat al-A'jām, and Furn al-Sabbānah. "Qaysārīyat al-A'jām" translates as "the trade complex of the non-

[34]Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens,* 334–35.

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Arabs,″ which might place the property in the eastern half of Alexandria, near the harbor used by foreigners.

The description of the property is confused, seeming to make little sense when it is drawn out, and so the map presented here should be seen as a particularly rough reconstruction. In particular, it has been assumed that the entrance passage turns to the north, in order to allow for the existence of rooms on either side of it, even though this is not specified in the document. Again, the existence of this press seems to contradict Labib′s suggestion that sesame oil was rarely produced in Egypt.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE (*MASLAKH,* FIG. 10, LINES 79–83)

This slaughterhouse is described as being in the area of the Great Market, to the south of it. Considering that the *funduq* and sesame oil press described in lines 29–45 of the document are described as being to the north of the Great Market, this would place this property somewhere to the south of these, perhaps on the northern side of the Maḥajjah al-ʻUẓmá, between the East Mosque and the Sea Gate, where most of the markets were located.

The description of the property itself is extremely brief, and as it seems to consist of only a vestibule and a *sābāṭ,* it is not clear exactly where the actual slaughter of animals takes place. It is surrounded by a shop, a bench where skins are sold, a mosque, and an area where taro is grown.

BAKING OVEN (*TANNŪR,* FIG. 11, LINES 83–91)

The last urban property described in the document[35] is a baking oven on the southern side of the street running from it in the direction of Saqīfat al-Zardī. It includes an upper level, which seems to include a way down to the hall below. However, it is not clear how this is achieved, and so a way down has not been marked on the map.

CONCLUSION

It is important, when conducting a study of this type, to remember that one is dealing with possibilities, rather than definite facts. The information presented in the *waqf* document is unclear, with the descriptions of the buildings being vague and sometimes confused. This suggests that the scribe was not actually at the properties when the descriptions were written. In addition, it is notable that towards the end of the list of properties the descriptions gradually become shorter and less detailed, with more difficulties regarding the feasibility of the layouts described.

[35]The document also describes a piece of rural property which is sold to help finance the *waqf*.

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This, combined with increasing omissions of words (particularly *"yantahī"* [extends] in the description of borders) suggests that the scribe may have become either rushed or bored with this part of his work. Given that the rest of the document is carefully written, the latter seems more likely. One additional problem with the descriptions of the properties sold is that they lack any measurements.

As a result of the problems with the descriptions, the maps presented here must be regarded as possible interpretations, rather than definite representations. Likewise, the interpretations of the relations between the properties, the surrounding environment, and the local inhabitants, based as they are on sparse historical records and a relatively small quantity of modern scholarship, must also be regarded as remaining open to debate. However, despite the tentative nature of the reconstructions presented here, they present a model that may be enhanced and refined as more information becomes available in the future, and so remain a valid contribution towards our knowledge of the geography and history of Alexandria.

Regardless of the problems with the reconstruction of properties, this document still sheds an important light on al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his involvement in Levantine trade. The properties being sold by this sultan represent a wide range of trades and commodities, including reeds or sugar cane, eggs, sesame oil, glassmaking, dyeing, slaughter of livestock, and preparation of meat and bread, to say nothing of income from accommodating merchants and travellers in the *fanādiq*. As has been noted by Eliyahu Ashtor and Ira M. Lapidus, the Mamluk sultans and amirs of Egypt, including al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, were frequently involved in the exploitation of products of particular commercial importance, of which sugar was one,[36] so his ownership of a *funduq* which may have been involved in this important trade is not surprising. However, it is interesting to note how many other trades al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was involved in. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that this mercantile policy might also have been employed by the Mamluk amirs, in order to avoid being vulnerable to crises in the market for a particular commodity.

Many of the trades represented by these properties declined significantly during the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. Most particularly, the trade in sugar, textiles, glass, oil, and soap suffered in the face of increasing European competition.[37] Amalia Levanoni traces the origins of this decline back to excessive expenditure during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign, during which there was also a

[36]Eliyahu Ashtor, "Levantine Sugar Industry in the Later Middle Ages—an Example of Technological Decline," in *Technology, Industry and Trade: The Levant versus Europe, 1250–1500*, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Croft Road, Hampshire, and Brookfield, Vermont, 1992), 237–40; and Ira M. Lapidus, "The Grain Economy of Mamluk Egypt," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 12 (1969): 1.

[37]Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* (Leiden and New York, 1995), 140–41.

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significant decline in the transit trade with Europe.[38] In this light, the sale of a number of properties associated with trades that would eventually wane seems ominous, although it may be too early to read any greater significance into it.

The use of contemporary legal documents is a relatively new field in Islamic studies, simply due to the fact that it is only recently that collections of such documents have become available to modern scholars. In addition to giving insights into both the possible geography and urban life of medieval Alexandria and the mercantile policy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Mamluk amirs, this article illustrates one way in which these documents may be used to complement the evidence of textual sources, illuminating aspects of urban history that they neglect.

[38]Ibid., 142–96.

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APPENDIX

15.[39] . . . All of the *funduq* that is in the protected port of Alexandria, known as Funduq al-Bayḍ wa-al-Qaṣab.

16. He is appointed to sell it[40] and the four shops outside its door and the upper level overlooking the north side of the *funduq* mentioned

17. and its shops mentioned. It is on the Maḥajjah al-ʻUẓmá. On the southern side of it [the road] on the east side are two of the shops of its [the *funduq*ʹs] property, and on the west side of it are two shops

18. also of its property. One enters from the door of the *funduq* to a vestibule that has a platform on the western side of it. Then one enters a hall

19. in which, on the eastern side, there are three stores containing the property of others. Next to them is a door through which one enters a vault, which is part of the property of this *funduq*.

20. That is going round in a circle from the south.[41] On the west side there are also three stores. On the north side to the east of the vestibule are two stores,

21. and to the west of the vestibule is one store. On the opposite side of the *funduq* are three stores. The door of the overlooking upper level mentioned is to the west of the two western shops mentioned.

22. One goes up from it on a stone staircase to a vestibule, then to the door of a marbled hall. On the western side of the hall is a room, and opposite it is a room like it. On

23. the southern side is a platform, next to which is a door to the utilities. Opposite the platform on the northern side is a bay window made of baked brick and lime. In it are

24. windows with wooden shutters looking out over the road. Next to the bay window is a pantry in which is a wooden staircase. One goes up it to a bay window, above the bay window

25. mentioned, with windows with wooden shutters also looking out over the road. Next to it is a small room in which is a staircase. One goes up it to the roof above.

26. Four borders surround that [property]. The southern [border] extends to the crypt, which is the tomb of the Muslims. Its second border, which is the northern [border], extends to the

27. main street, which is the Maḥajjah al-ʻUẓmá, in which is its door. The eastern [border] extends to a house known as [belonging to] Shihāb al-Ḥall, the

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[39]The description begins on the fifteenth line of the document.

[40]Reading *"li-bayʻihi."*

[41]In other words, from south to north one has a store, another store, another store, and then a vault.

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house of Muḥammad al-Karābilī and the upper level known as
28. [that of] Ibn al-Zarqā. The western [border] extends to the ruined bath and the baking oven, which separate it from the ʻAwfī madrasah. And [also being sold is] all of
29. the *funduq* and the sesame oil press and the five shops outside their doors, which are in Alexandria in the area of
30. Musk Alley. The sesame oil press is outside the *funduq* mentioned. The doors of these places are on[42] the east side
31. of the alley mentioned. One sees their doors from the west. One enters the *funduq* through the door to a vestibule on the southern side of which is a platform,
32. [then] one enters a hall. On the northern side of it are four stores, in one of which is a cistern. On the eastern side of it are also four stores
33. and a staircase with stone stairs. One goes up it to a long passageway in which are six stores. These stores are used by shops in the Carpenters´ Market.
34. Some of them are religious bequests. On the southern side of the lower part of the *funduq* are three stores. On the western side is a false door. On the eastern side
35. is a staircase that one goes up on stone stairs to a second level, on top of the stores below, and a wooden gallery with wooden bannisters. In the middle of the
36. gallery is a gallery with wooden bannisters extending from it, from the east side, to the west side. On the northern side of the
37. second level are four rooms, on the eastern side are five rooms, on the southern side are four rooms, and on the western side are four rooms.
38. Then one goes down to the hall of the *funduq* and one finds next to the platform of the vestibule a door in which is a staircase. One goes up it to the roof of the *funduq* mentioned. One goes out of the *funduq* and one finds next to it, on the southern side, the door of the oil press. One enters through it to a small rectangle in which is a baking oven. Opposite it is
39. the sesame oil [grind]stone. On the northern side are oils and kneading troughs. Above the oil press shop is a store for sesame seeds. To the west of it [the store] is another store. To the north
40. of the [grind]stone is an animal stall. The two stores were property of the *funduq* mentioned. To the south of the door of the oil press are three shops, and to the north of its door
41. is the door of the *funduq,* the cistern of a public fountain, and the two remaining shops. The door of the *funduq* and the cistern of the public fountain[43] and the two shops next to

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[42]Lit. ″clinging to.″

[43]Reading ″*ṣahrīj al-sabīl.*″

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42. the cistern are contributory[44] to a mosque there. That is surrounded by four borders. The southern [border] extends to the two shops separating the southernmost shops
43. outside the door[45] from the Great Market, which extends from it to the Carpenters′ Market on the east side and to the market . . .[46]
44. on the west side. The northern [border] extends to the mosque mentioned and to the *funduq* known as [that of] al-Jamālī ʻAbd Allāh ibn Ḥasan ʻAlī. The eastern [border extends] to the Qaysārīyah
45. al-Jukundārīyah, known now as Sufi dwellings. The western [border] extends to the street in Musk Alley, and in it is the door. And [also being sold is] all of
46. soap-works, which is now a glass-works for making glass in the protected port of Alexandria in the area of the two baths of al-Akhawayn, on the
47. eastern side of the passing alley, which is on the northern side of the two baths mentioned. One enters through its door into a vestibule in which, on the left
48. of the one entering, is a room. Opposite it is a utility room. Next to the door of the room is a cistern, then one enters a hall, in the eastern side of which is a *sābāṭ*
49. and two pillars. In it is a copper dome for making soap and also basin troughs for the soap. Opposite this *sābāṭ* is a room, next to which is
50. a well on the Nile canal. On the opposite side of the hall is a large room for making the glass, next to which is a store. Four borders surround that. The southern [border] extends to
51. the main street to the two baths mentioned and other places. The northern [border] extends to the house of Mūsá the Jewish jeweller. The eastern [border extends] to the house of Muḥammad
52. the swordsmith. The western [border] extends to the main alleyway, and in it is its door. And [also being sold is] all of the dye-works
53. that is in the port of Alexandria in the area of al-Qamarah. One enters through its door into a vestibule in which is a well, then one enters a hall in the southern side
54. of which is an *īwān*.[47] Opposite it is a place in which dyeing kettles are made. Opposite it is a *sābāṭ* with pillars. Next to it is a room, and next to the room is a staircase. One goes up
55. it on stone steps to another upper room above the lower room mentioned. Four borders surround that. The southern [border extends] to the silk *funduq*

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[44]Reading *″ḥāmilat tilka.″*

[45]Lit. ″the southern shops of its shops, which are outside its door.″

[46]Unreadable word in manuscript.

[47]Three-sided hall.

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56. facing the tomb of Fuḍūl the teacher. The northern [border extends] to the main street, and in it is its door. The eastern [border extends] to the upper level of which it is mentioned that it is property of
57. Sayf al-Dīn Khalaf ibn Farāj. The western [border extends] to the school appointed for the teaching of the noble Quran. And [also being sold is] all of
58. the slaughterhouse, which is appointed for the slaughter of sheep in the protected port of Alexandria, in the area of al-Qamarah on the southern side of the street running from it
59. eastwards in the direction of Bi'r Ḥar. On enters through its door to a large room for the purpose of slaughtering the sheep. Four borders surround that. The southern [border] extends to the house
60. of al-Naṣārī. The northern [border extends] to the main street. The eastern [border extends] to the dye-works known as the bequest of the amir Sayf al-Dīn Sallār.
61. The western [border] extends to the house of Abū al-Hinā the Christian, and in it is its door. This slaughterhouse contains the property of others. And [also being sold is] all of
62. the dye-works that is in the protected port of Alexandria in al-Qaṭṭābīn, on the northern side of the street running east of it
63. to al-Maqūqas, and west, passing in the direction of Bi'r Ḥar. One enters through its door into a vestibule in which are two rooms opposite one another. One has in it a *sitt jawābī*[48]
64. for the purpose of dyeing, and a room [that has] in it a well on the Nile canal. One enters from it [the vestibule] into a hall in which are two *īwāns* near one another in the west and the north. The western [one] has in it a vault
65. with a door. Next to the northern [one] is a room for firewood and utilities and a staircase. One goes up it to an upper room above its shop, [which is to the] west of[49] its [the dye-works'] door
66. and next to its door. On the eastern side there is also a shop of its property. This dye-works has four borders. The southern [border extends] to
67. the main street, and in it is its door. The northern [border extends] to the turn of the western alley. The eastern [border extends] to the shop
68. that is [part] of its property,[50] which divides it from the alley without crossing it. The western [border extends] to the shop that is [part] of its property,
69. which divides it from the alley that crosses the main street. And [also being sold is] all of the scalding-house appointed for the scalding of heads

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[48]It is not clear what this means.

[49]Reading *"gharbī min."*

[50]Reading *"ḥuqūqihā."*

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70. in the protected port of Alexandria in the area of Lesser Ḥaddādīn. It is a large house roofed over with wood and palm fronds. Four borders surround it.
71. The southern [border] extends to the oil press known as that of the Banū al-Qawāmī. The northern [border] extends to a blacksmith´s shop acknowledged as a possession of Ibnat Ismā'īl al-Ḥanafī.
72. The eastern border extends to the passage in the market, and in it is its door. The western [border] extends to Qaysārīyat al-Nashā.[51] And [also being sold is] all of
73. the sesame oil[52] press that is in the protected port of Alexandria in the area of Dār al-Jadīdah, Qaysārīyat al-A'jām, and Furn al-Sabbānah.
74. One enters through the door of this oil press into a passage to a [grind]stone then to kneading troughs and oils. On the eastern side of this passage is a baking oven then
75. an animal stall. Facing this animal stall mentioned is a store for the sesame seeds. Next to the baking oven is a staircase. One goes up it on stone steps to an upper room
76. for the sesame seeds, then to another upper room. Next to the door of the oil press is a shop, [which is part] of its property, for selling the sesame oil. Next to the shop is a well.
77. Four borders surround this oil press. The southern [border extends] to benches and a baking oven, which are religious bequests. The northern [border] extends to al-Dār
78. al-Jadīdah. The eastern [border extends] to the main street, and in it is its door. The western [border extends] to the 'Imādī madrasah.
79. And [also being sold is] all of the slaughterhouse appointed for the slaughter of sheep in the port of Alexandria in the area of the Great Market on
80. the southern side of the street running eastwards in the direction of . . .[53] One enters through its door to a long vestibule then to a *sābāṭ*
81. with two pillars roofed with palm fronds and reeds. Four borders surround it. The southern [border] extends to the bench known for the sale of skins.[54]
82. The northern [border extends] to the Great Market. The eastern [border extends] to a shop known[55] as [that of] the Banū Salāmah and others. The western [border extends] to the mosque
83. known as the work of the *faqīh* Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī and to the ruins

[51]Possibly a perfume workshop.
[52]Reading *"shīraj."*
[53]Unreadable word in manuscript.
[54]Reading *"al-maq'ad al-ma'rūf bi-bay' al-julūd."*
[55]Reading *"yu'rafu."*

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appointed for the growing of taro. And [also being sold is] all of
84. the baking oven appointed for the preparation of grilled meat[56] in the protected port of Alexandria, on the southern side of the street running from it in the direction of Saqīfat
85. al-Zardī. One enters through its door to a hall in which are two ovens and a well and a fireplace for scalding heads and sheep. On the southern side
86. of the hall is a well, and on the northern side is a *sābāṭ* with a pillar and a large store for slaughtering. Among the properties of this oven is
87. an upper level over the southern side of it. Its [the upper level's] door is on the north side of the road [that is] next to the oven on the southern side of it. One goes up to its door on a
88. stone staircase. One enters through it into the hall mentioned. All of the roof of this place is reeds and palm fronds. Four borders surround that.
89. The southern [border] extends to the road known as that of al-Baṭlah, in the front of which is the door of its upper level, [which has been] mentioned. The northern [border] extends to the house of Yāqūt
90. al-Ḥabashī al-Shawī. The eastern [border extends] to the passage in the road, and in it is its door. The western [border extends] to the mill known as [that of] the amir ʿAlam al-Dīn
91. ibn Khālid al-Sulamī.

[56]Reading *"shiwā'."*

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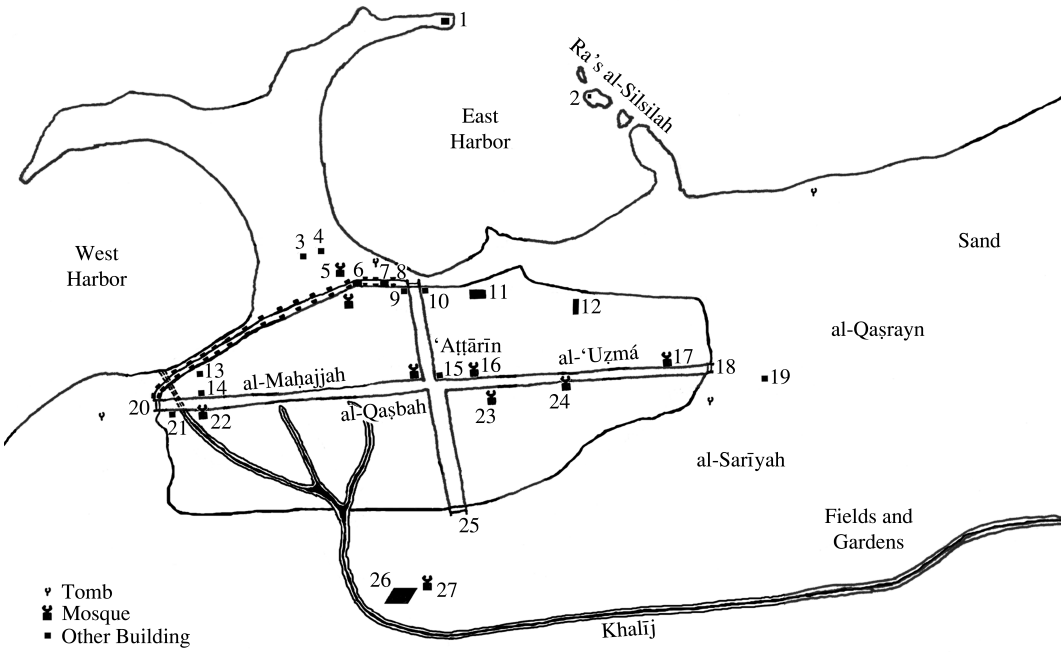

1. Pharos
2. Tower of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad
3. Ribāṭ al-Siwār
4. Ribāṭ al-Wāsiṭī
5. Mosque of al-Ṭarṭūshī
6. Arsenal (Dār al-Ṣinā'ah)
7. Textile factory (Dār al-Ṭirāz)
8. Sea gate
9. Center for exports (al-Ṣādir)
10. Jafār al-Qaṣārīn
11. Governor's Palace
    (Dār al Niyābah)
12. Obelisk
13. Weapons Depot (Qaṣr al-Silāḥ)
14. Sultan's Palace (Dār al-Sulṭān)
15. Dār Ibn al-Jiyāb
16. East Mosque
    Mosque of al-'Aṭṭārīn
17. Mosque of Ibn al-Ashhab
18. Rosetta Gate
19. Ribāṭ al-Hakkārī
20. Green Gate
21. Tomb of al-Ṭarṭūshī
22. West Mosque
23. Mosque of Dhū al-Qarnayn
24. Mosque of al-Mu'tamin
25. Gate of the Pillars
    Gate of al-Sidrah
    Spice Gate
26. Cavalry Pillars and Ruins of
    the Serapaeum
27. Mosque of the Cavalry (al-Sawārī)

Fig. 1. Mamluk Alexandria

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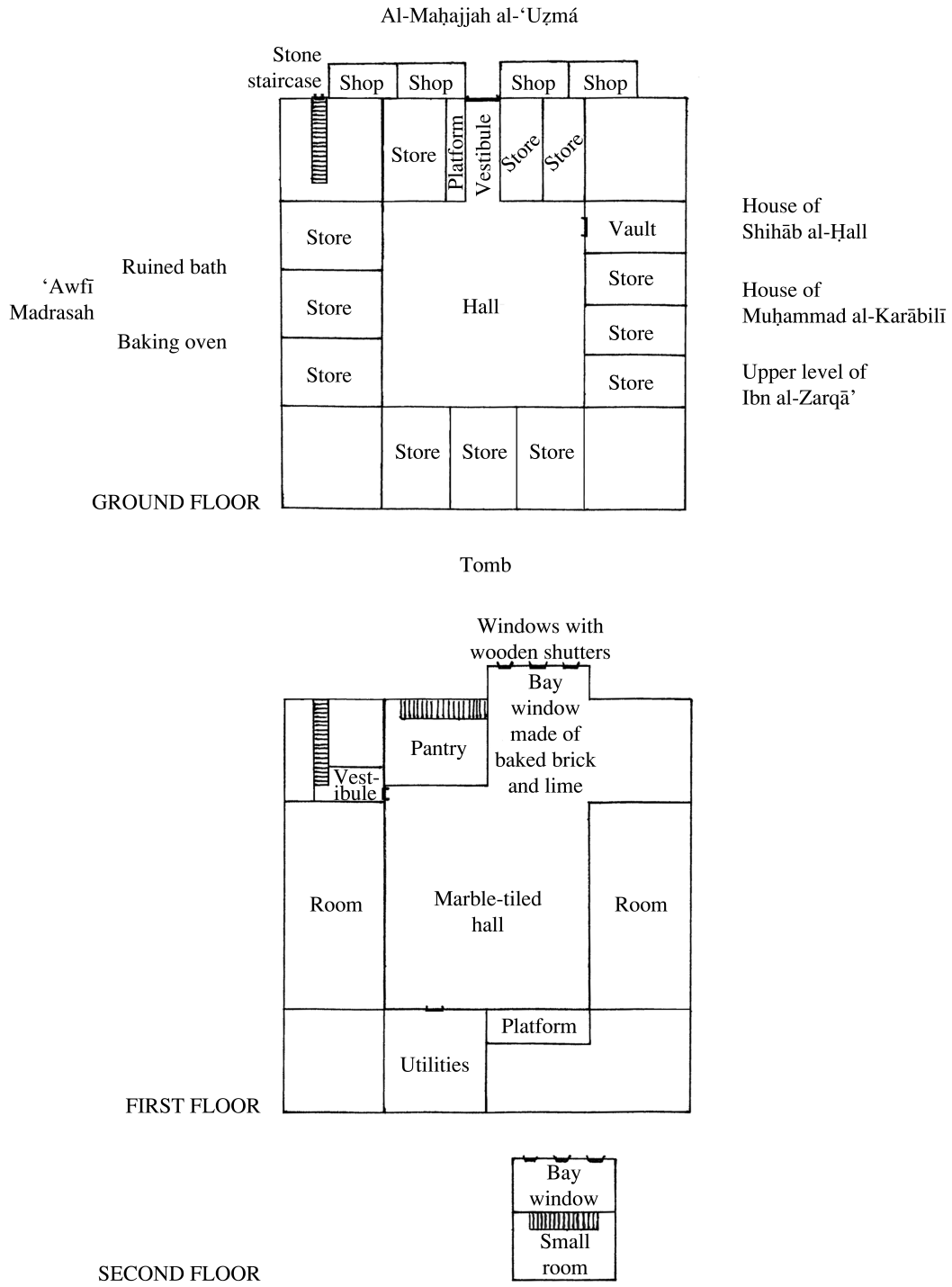

Fig. 2. Funduq al-Bayḍ wa-al-Qaṣab

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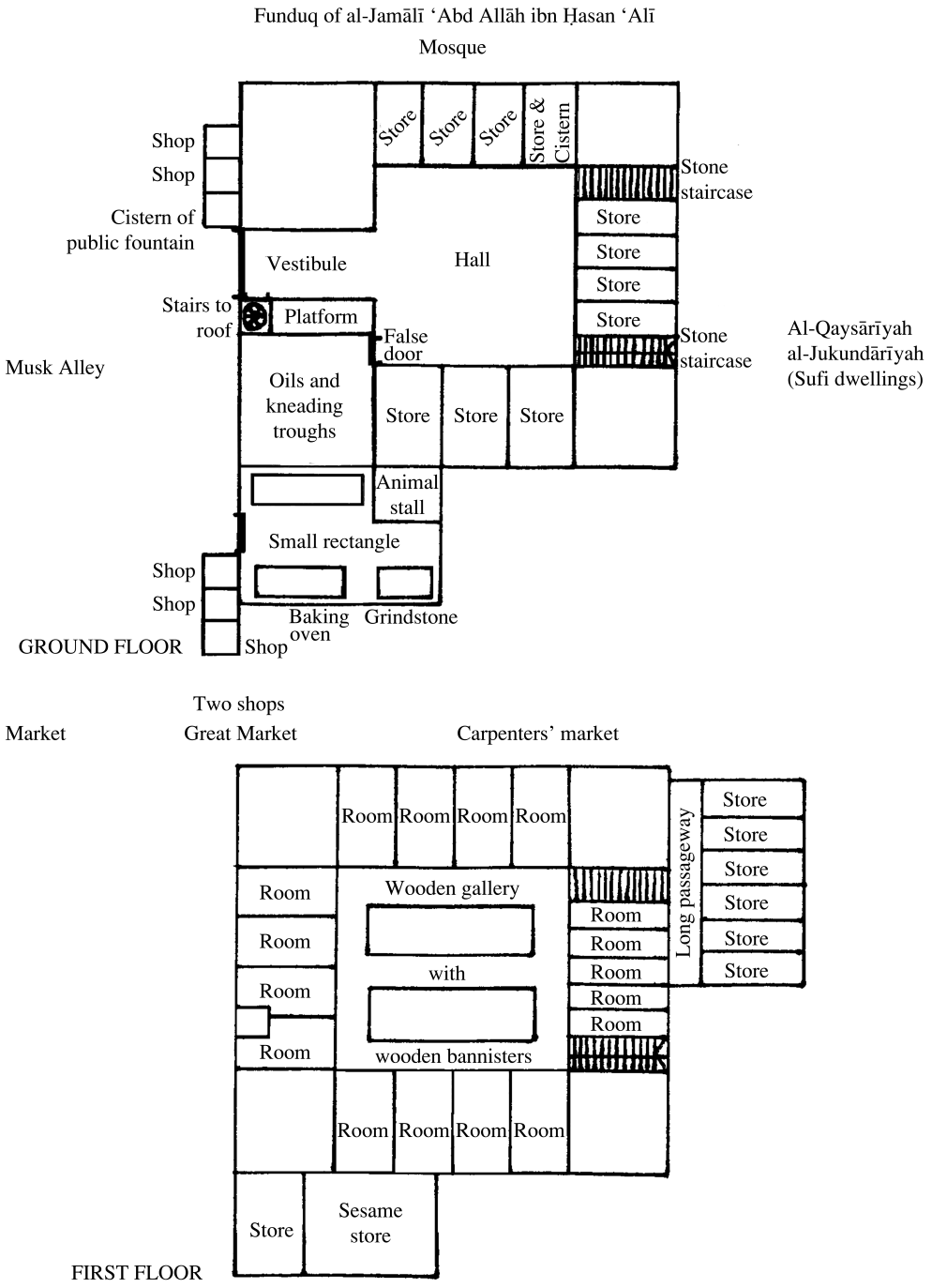

Fig. 3. Funduq and sesame oil press

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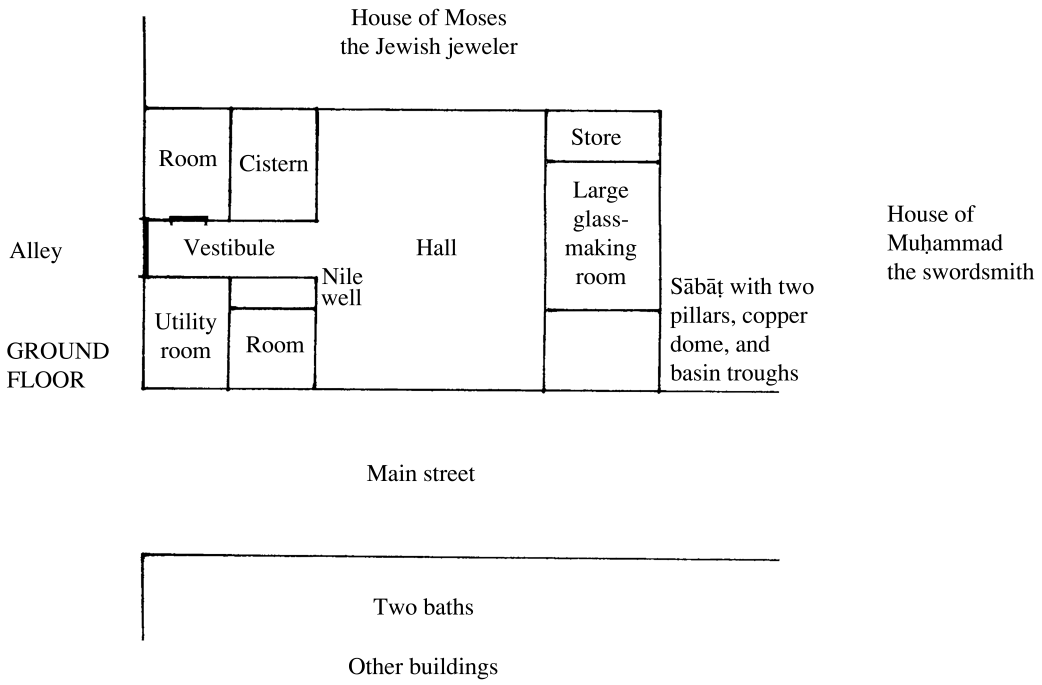

Fig. 4. Glass-Works

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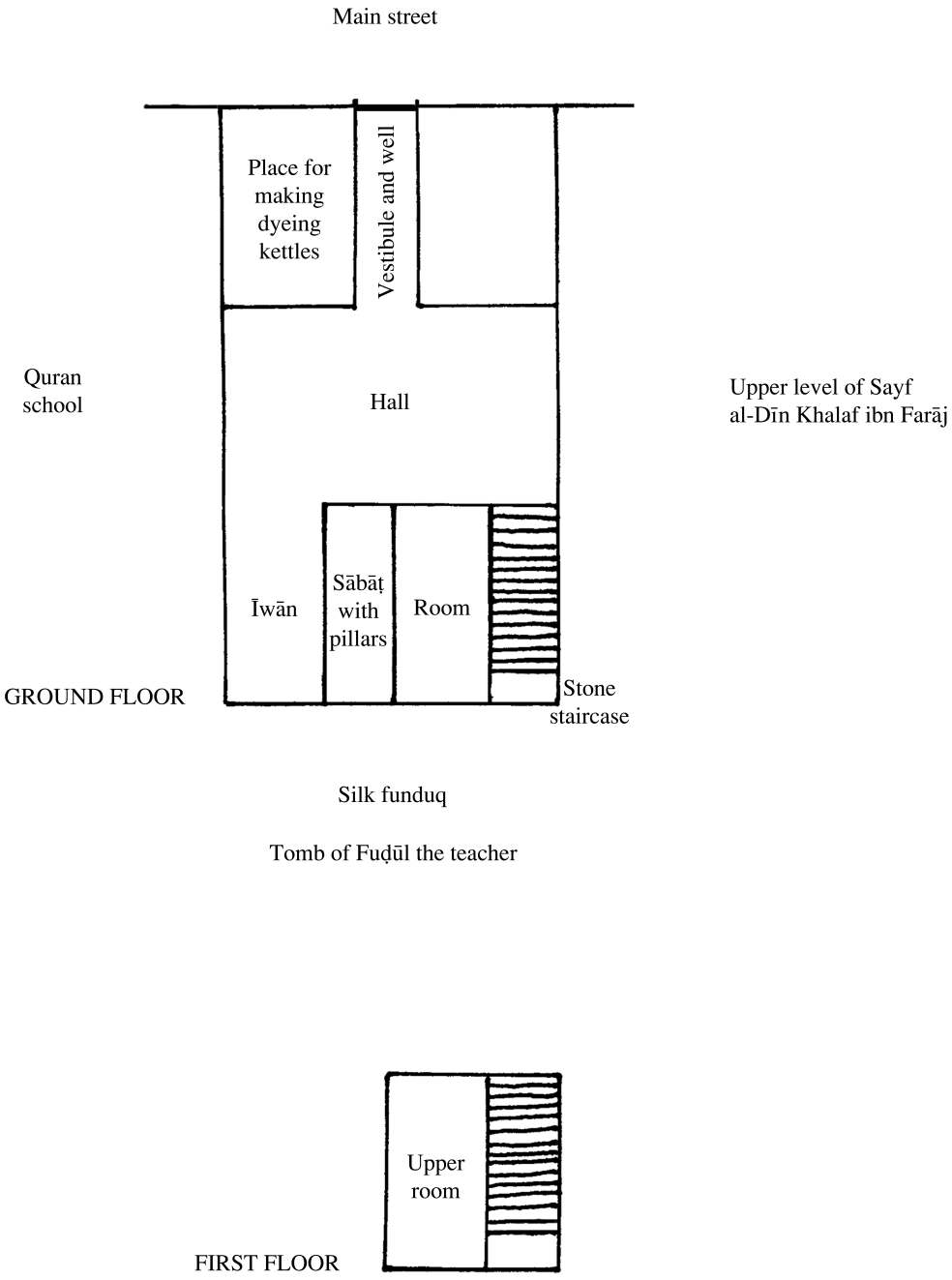

Fig. 5. Dye-Works

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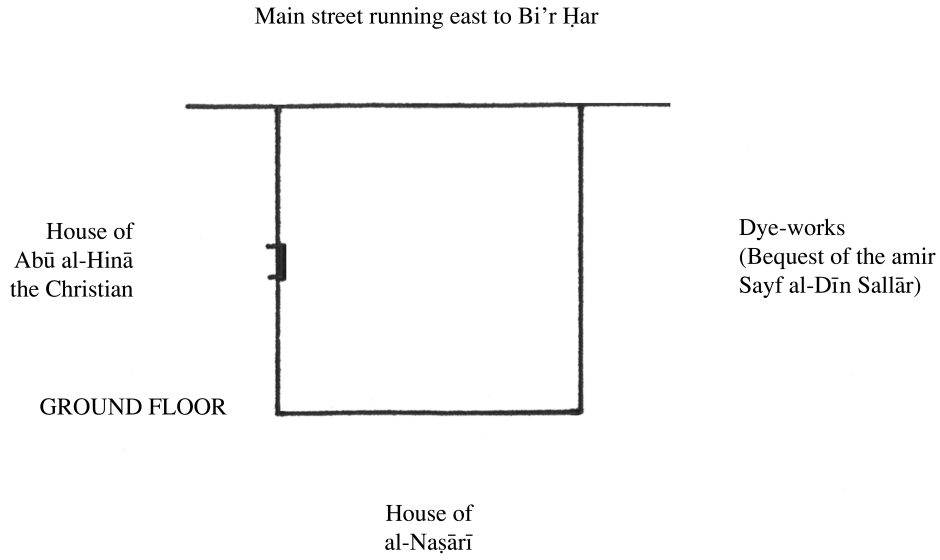

Fig. 6. Slaughterhouse

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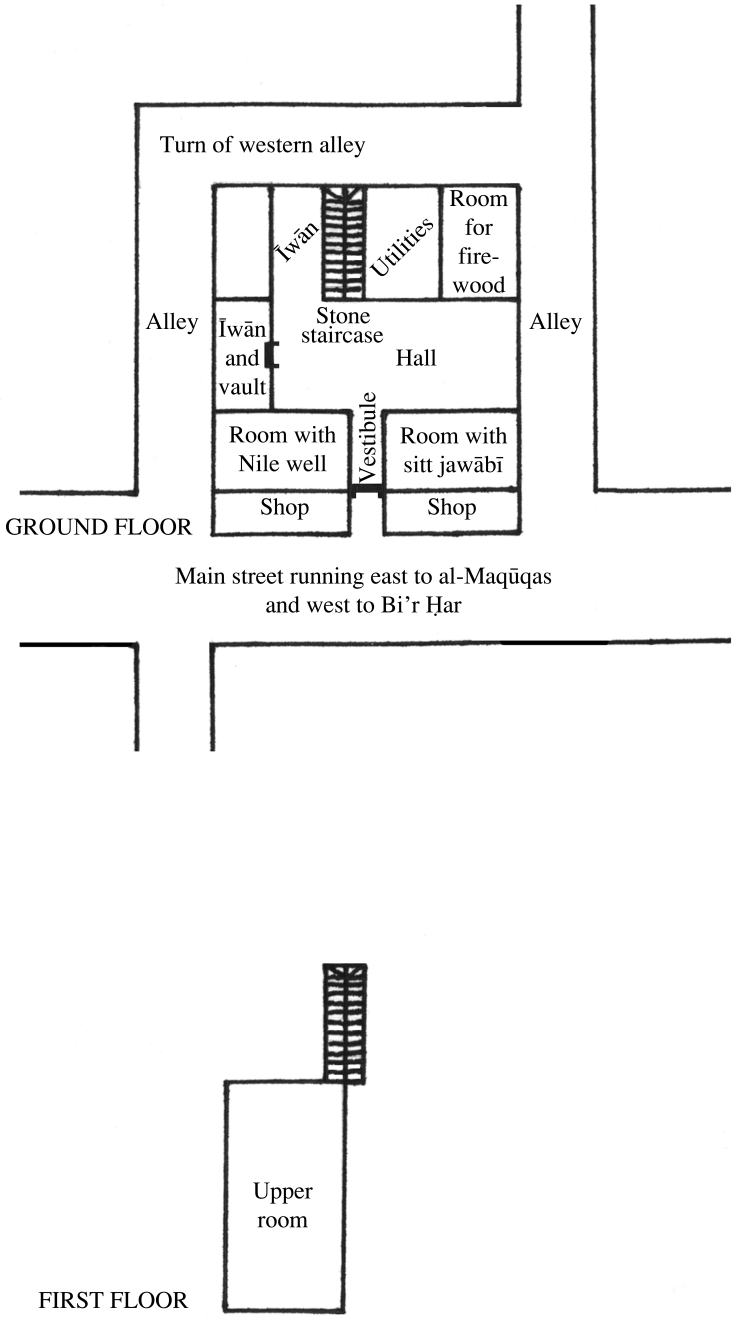

Fig. 7. Dye-Works

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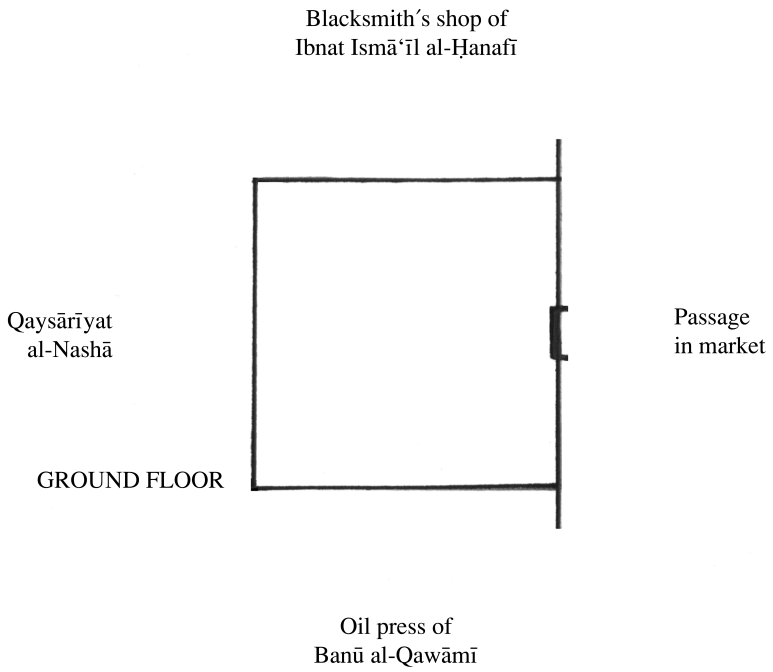

Fig. 8. Scalding-House

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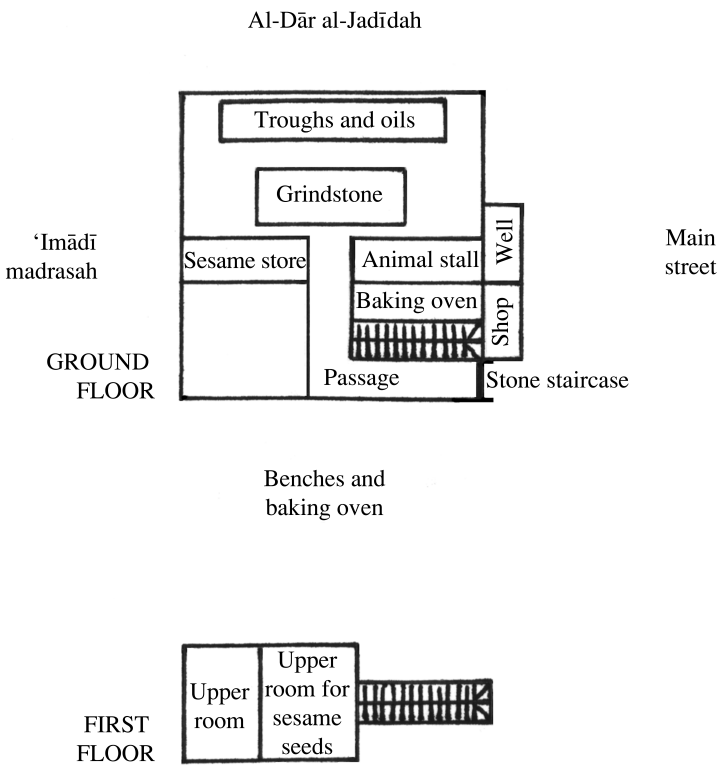

Fig. 9. Sesame Oil Press

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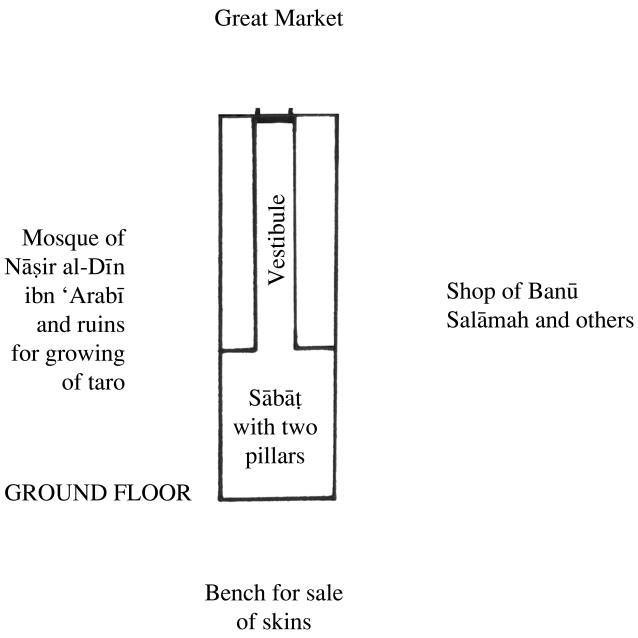

Fig. 10. Slaughterhouse

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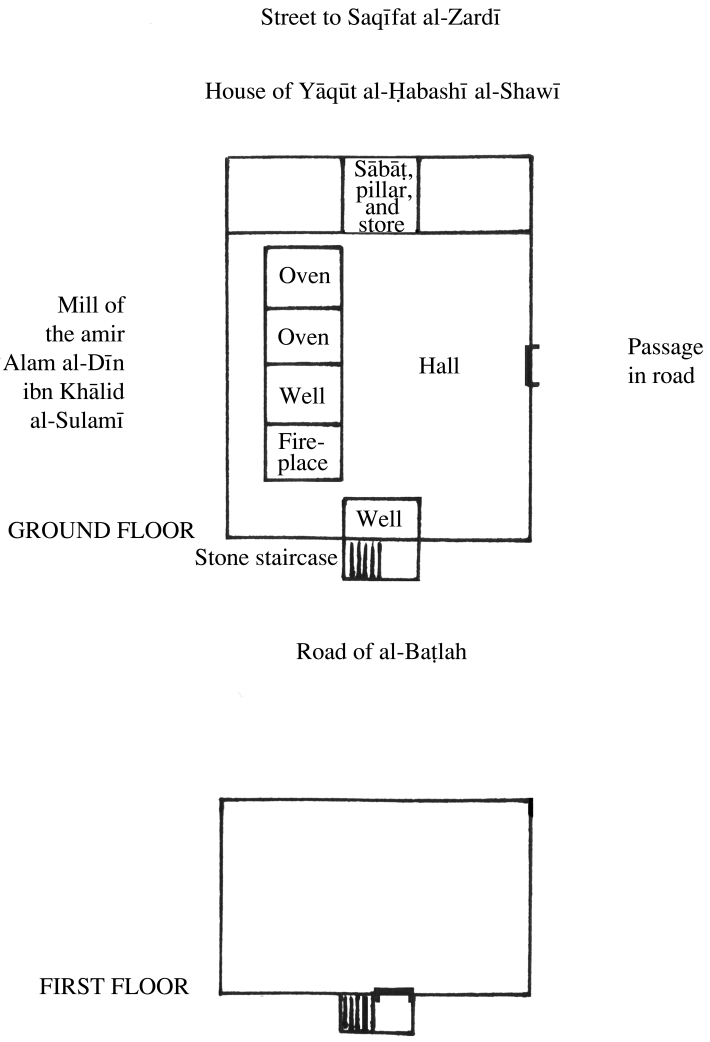

Fig. 11. Baking Oven

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Thirty Years after Lopez, Miskimin, and Udovitch

Some thirty years ago, Robert Lopez, Harry Miskimin, and Abraham Udovitch boldly set out to depict the economic panorama of post-plague Europe and the Middle East in their article, ″England to Egypt, 1350–1500: Long-Term Trends and Long-Distance Trade.″[1] Within the confines of England, Italy, and Egypt, they described a widespread pattern of economic deterioration. This degeneration, they argued, was the product of several factors. One of these was the little ice age.[2] The little ice age was a period of climatic change that broke the warm spell in northern Europe and brought with it drenching rains and horrifically cold winters. In England, this heavy rainfall coupled with icy winters ushered in a famine the like of which had never been seen before or since.[3] In other areas, such as southern Europe, it may have accelerated soil erosion. In the Middle East and Central Asia, they speculated that it might have ushered in a dry spell that brought similar catastrophic famines to these regions. Another factor that affected all of these regions was the intensification of warfare.[4] From the Hundred Years War in Europe to the campaigns of Tamerlane in the Middle East, warfare brought with it widespread devastation to urban and rural areas alike. Finally, they argued that plague ushered in a major demographic retrenchment that was followed by a severe and widespread economic depression.[5]

Lopez, Miskimin, and Udovitch focused on two major aspects of the subsequent economic depression: social stratification and the lack of bullion engendered by the imbalance of trade flows between East and West, North and South.[6] Economic dislocation, they argued, brought with it an end to the comparatively open and democratic society of the age of prosperity and separated society into two

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[1]Robert Lopez, Harry Miskimin, and Abraham Udovitch, ″England to Egypt, 1350–1500: Long-Term Trends and Long-Distance Trade,″ in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East,* ed. Michael Cook (London, 1970), 93–128.

[2]Ibid., 94.

[3]Ibid., 96. See also William Chester Jordan, *The Great Famine* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[4]Lopez et al., ″England to Egypt,″ 95.

[5]Ibid., 94.

[6]Ibid., 95, 106, 111, 114.

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differentiated compartments. At the top were the rich and powerful few and, at the bottom, were the hard-pressed and degraded multitude.

The second focal point of their argument follows from the first: the enriched upper stratum of society poured money into the luxury goods of long-distance trade. The result of this trade was that gold and silver flowed from Northern to Southern Europe.[7] From Southern Europe, it flowed to the Levant.[8] From the Levant, the drain of bullion finally found a resting place on the shores of India, from which highly valued spices were exported.[9]

Their analysis of the economic dislocations of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries beg for a fresh scrutiny. I will challenge here both the importance of these international trade flows and the universality of economic stratification in Western Europe and the Middle East.

I will focus on other factors that test their depiction of this period as one of unremitting depression and stratification in all the areas that they study. Lopez, Miskimin, and Udovitch found an equally dismal scenario in England, Italy, and Egypt. I will contest some of their findings here by comparing the situation in England with that in Egypt, illustrating the important contrasts in the economic reaction of both economies to depopulation from the Black Death. This analysis will, at the same time, shift our focus away from long-distance trading patterns to the more significant developments that were taking place in the domestic economies of these two regions.

Regarding the situation in England, Harry Miskimin offered a picture of economic depression aggravated by increasing disparities in the incomes of the upper and lower stratum of society. This was coupled with increasing purchases by the upper class of luxury goods flowing in from the south. I contend that this picture is at best incomplete, and in many areas contradicts more recent research on the economic profile of England after the Black Death.

By any economic measure of income, the most prosperous caste in England was the landholders. If a rising disparity between rich and poor became evident, one must then ask if this upper stratum of society benefited or lost from events that followed plague depopulation. If it is Miskimin´s contention that the upper stratum of society became relatively wealthier in the wake of the plagues, then we must look to this class to discern a pattern of wealth distribution from the poorer classes to the richer ones.

Plague depopulation in England brought with it a situation in which landholders found themselves challenged by the relative scarcity of rural labor and abundance

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[7]Ibid., 101–6.

[8]Ibid., 109–10, 114–15.

[9]Ibid., 128.

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of arable land. Landholders were faced with conditions in which the price scissors threatened their economic status. On the one hand, the decrease in grain prices ate away at their revenues. On the other hand, peasant demands for reduced rents and higher wages exposed them to increased costs of production.[10] English landlords attempted in vain to battle with the economic demands of scarce labor, but their failure to effectively band together over a long period of time meant that market forces eventually ruled the day.[11] Wages rose, rents decreased, and both of these phenomena took place within the context of falling grain prices.[12] Landlords, not their peasants, were squeezed by the new economy which arose in the wake of the plague. Not for nothing is the fifteenth century known as the ″golden age of the peasantry.″ This was not an era of rising disparities in income; it was, in fact, quite the opposite.

On another economic level, Harry Miskimin glides over dramatic changes that were taking place in the English economy. The collapse of the manorial system, rising per-capita incomes, and scarcity of labor created opportunities for peasants to become producers in rural industries that were cropping up.[13] Most notable is the rise of the cloth industry. Here, finished goods took the place of unfinished wool in the export industry. Granted, the overall revenues from wool and cloth exports dropped, but one must keep in mind that population had dropped significantly at the same time. Per-capita exports of finished goods certainly increased, and the

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[10]See, for example, N. J. Mayhew, ″Population, Money Supply, and the Velocity of Circulation in England, 1300–1700,″ *Economic History Review* 48 (1995): 238–57; Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England c. 1200–1520* (Cambridge, 1989), 151–87.

[11]John Hatcher, ″English Serfdom and Villeinage: Towards a Reassessment, ″ in *Landlords, Peasants, and Politics in Medieval England,* ed. T. H. Aston (Cambridge, 1987), 247–84; R. H. Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society 1000–1500* (Cambridge, 1993), 200, 219–21; Rosemary Horrox, ed. and trans., *The Black Death* (Manchester and New York, 1994), 238; Dyer, *Standards of Living,* 42, 147; Rodney Hilton, *The Decline of Serfdom in Medieval England,* 2nd ed. (London and Bassingstoke, 1983), 39, 42, 56–57; E. B. Fryde, *Peasants and Landlords in Later Medieval England c. 1380–c. 1525* (New York, 1996), 3; Z. Razi, ″The Myth of the Immutable English Family,″ *Past and Present* 140 (1993): 257–58.

[12]Dyer, *Standards of Living,* 42, 97, 146–47, 221; Fryde, *Peasants and Landlords,* 147, 160; Razi, ″The Myth,″ 253–54, 256–57; Rodney Hilton, *The English Peasantry in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1975), 24, 35–38, 64–67; idem, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism* (London, 1985), 13.

[13]Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism,* 47, 255–57, 265, 277; Dyer, *Standards of Living,* 210: Peter Kriedte, *Peasants, Landlords, and Merchant Capitalists: Europe and the World Economy, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 1983), 6–7, 13, 29, 100; Hilton, *English Peasantry,* 13, 40, 52, 82; Dyer, *Standards of Living,* 185.

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new phenomenon of exporting finished cloth was one that would never be reversed.[14] Of equal or greater importance was the increase in demand and supply in the domestic market for cloth, due to higher incomes below the economic strata of the landlords. The rise of the peasantry equaled the rise of a new class of consumers that buoyed England's economy in the fifteenth century.[15]

England's economy was not suffering from rising income disparities, nor was it suffering from a collapse in trade; domestic consumption more than made up for the loss of raw wool exports. Was this even an economic depression, as Miskimin maintains? The answer here would again be no. The profile of a classic economic depression is missing. Rising wages and rising profits in the arena of proto-industry are hardly hallmarks of an economic depression. An overall rise in per-capita income also serves to negate the profile of a classic economic depression.[16] I would argue that post-plague England in fact went through a positive period of what we would now call "structural adjustment." We will look at this again as we turn to study the case of Egypt after the Black Death.

Egypt provides us with a sharp contrast to events that took place in England. Here, landlords were highly successful in squeezing the peasantry in the wake of the plague. The reasons for this lie in the complex mechanism of landholding that existed in Egypt. Egyptian landlords were economically less tied to their individual estates due to frequent transfer of estates from one hand to another, the lack of inheritance, scattered holdings, and, above all, the filtering role played by the Egyptian urban-rural bureaucracy.[17] The net result was that Egyptian landlords

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[14]Peter Spufford, *Money and Its Use in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1988), 376–77.

[15]Mavis Mate, "The East Sussex Land Market and Agrarian Class Structure in the Late Middle Ages," *Past and Present* 139 (1993): 48, 60, 65; Dyer, *Standards of Living,* 149–50; Mayhew, "Population," 249; Britnell, *Commercialisation,* 202, 220; Steven Epstein, "Cities, Regions, and the Late Medieval Crisis: Sicily and Tuscany Compared," *Past and Present* 130 (1991): 5–8. See also John Langdon, "Lordship and Peasant Consumerism in the Milling Industry of Early Fourteenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 145 (1994): 3, 4, 7, 41.

[16]At this point, not only had the marginal and average product of labor increased significantly, but the total agrarian product and even landlord revenues were reaching and exceeding their pre-plague levels. See Mayhew, "Population," 244 (Table I for comparison of 1300 and 1526 output in monetary terms), 248 for his comment on living standards in the early sixteenth century, and 250–51 for more analysis of the full recovery in absolute terms in the early sixteenth century. To mention one local case, Durham priory provides an interesting example of an area that had suffered heavy losses in the fifteenth century (not only from the plague but also from Scottish raids) and was now in full recovery. See R. B. Dobson, *Church and Society in the Medieval North of England* (London, 1996). At this point the output of tin and lead were back up to their pre-plague levels as well, and were soon to expand much further in scale. See Dyer, *Standards of Living,* 103–4.

[17]Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá fī Sinā'at al-Inshā'* (Cairo, 1913–19), 13:118–23;

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were able to successfully collude and squash peasant demands for reduced rents.[18] However, Egyptian landlords won little more than a Pyrrhic victory. As Udovitch correctly points out, the Egyptian agrarian economy was ruined by the plague, its revenues falling from some nine million dinars to little more than a million dinars over a century and a half.[19] The beleaguered peasants fled their lands, flocking to urban centers as the irrigation system slowly collapsed around them.[20] No one stood to benefit from this situation, and the profits of the spice trade offered the elite only a token compensation for the returns they lost in Egypt′s hitherto rich agrarian sector.

Furthermore, pressure on urban centers from rural flight, coupled with the collapse of the irrigation system, seems to have led to a situation in which the price scissors were the reverse of those found in England. Grain prices rose and wages, at least in the mid-fifteenth century, seem to have dropped in the wake of

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Carl Petry, ″A Paradox of Patronage during the Later Mamluk Period,″ *Muslim World* 73 (1983): 188; Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk,* ed. Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1957–73), 3:563; Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, *Al-Awqāf wa-al-Ḥayāh al-Ijtimā'īyah fī Miṣr* (Cairo, 1980), 72; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *'Inbā′ al-Ghumr bi-Anbā' al-'Umr,* ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1969–72), 6:134; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā'iẓ wa-al-I'tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Cairo, 1853–54) 1: 90; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ,* 3:501; Sato Tsugitaka, ″The Evolution of the Iqṭā' System under the Mamluks: An Analysis of al-Rawk al-Ḥusāmī and al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī,″ *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko (the Oriental Library)* 37 (1979): 99–131; idem, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam* (Leiden, 1997); Hassanein Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt A.H. 564–741/A.D. 1169–1341* (London, 1972), 56; Jennifer M. Thayer, ″Land Politics and Power Networks in Mamluk Egypt,″ Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1993, 45–46; Cairo, Wizārat al-Awqāf (Ministry of Religious Endowments [hereafter W. A.]) Waqfīyah 1019; W. A. Waqfīyah 901; W. A. Waqfīyah 92; W. A. Waqfīyah 3195; W. A. Waqfīyah 883; W. A. Waqfīyah 140; W. A. Waqfīyah 809; W. A. Waqfīyah 720; Ibn Mammātī, *Kitāb Qawānīn al-Dawāwīn,* ed. A. S. Atiya (Cairo, 1943), 297–306; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 1:61; Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Ẓāhirī, *Kitāb Zubdat Kashf al-Mamālik wa-Bayān al-Ṭuruq wa-al-Masālik,* ed. Paul Ravaisse (Paris, 1894), 78, 129–30; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ,* 3:522–26, 4:18; 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍarah fī Akhbār Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Beirut, 1997), 2:131; Carl Petry *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1981), 15–36, 203–20.

[18]Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ,* 3:519–22; Ibrāhīm'Alī Ṭarhkān, *Al-Nuẓum al-Iqṭā'īyah fī al-Sharq al-Awṣaṭ fī al-'Uṣūr al-Wusṭá* (Cairo, 1968), 100, 482; al-Ẓāhirī, *Zubdat Kashf al-Mamālik*, 107, 130; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 4:345; Thayer, ″Land Politics,″ 134.

[19]Lopez et al., ″England to Egypt,″ 115.

[20]Michael Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1977), 163–65; William Tucker, ″Natural Disasters and the Peasantry in Mamluk Egypt,″ *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 24 (1981): 215–24; Boaz Shoshan, ″Grain Riots and the ′Moral Economy′ in Cairo: 1350–1517,″ *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10 (1980): 462–67; Ira Lapidus, ″The Grain Economy of Mamluk Egypt,″ *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 12 (1969): 11–14; Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āshūr, *Al-Mujtamā' al-Miṣrī fī 'Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk* (Cairo, 1993), 45–46.

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the plagues.[21] England and Egypt provide us with a mirror in which opposite outcomes arose from the same exogenous input.

But there is more that should be said here about the output of ″proto-industrial″ goods, particularly textiles, the engine of pre-modern manufacturing. Miskimin correctly points to the growth of a finished cloth industry in England, and Udovitch correctly points out that the cloth industry in Egypt suffered from both decreased output and higher prices. These changes within the domestic market signaled major transformations in economic development. Why was English cloth both cheaper and more abundant in the wake of the plagues, while Egyptian cloth became both scarcer and more expensive?

The reasons lie in different changes in aggregate supply and demand curves and I would like to turn your attention to graphs that illustrate the trend in both economies. This particular example analyzes the supply and demand for wool in the domestic economies of England and Egypt before and after the Black Death. Taking a 50% loss of the population as a given for our hypothesis, we can see the alternative outcomes for both countries.[22]

For England, the quantity of arable land and hence grain for the domestic market decreased, but not as much as population. Following the plagues, there was more land available for the production of wool for finished cloth on the domestic market. The amount of land devoted to pasture for wool actually increased after the plagues.[23] This was due to the fact that the lower demand for grain had increased the amount of land available for other products. (See Fig. 1.)

Because the grain supply decreased less than the population (demand), the equilibrium point moved down and to the right. (See Figs. 2 and 3.) There was less grain being grown, but at a cheaper price. Because of the redistribution of income down the social scale, there were now more consumers demanding finished

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[21]See my forthcoming book, *The Black Death in World History: The Case of England and Egypt* (Austin, in press).

[22]Ibid.

[23]Slicher Van Bath, *The Agrarian History of Western Europe* (London, 1963), 14; Mate, ″East Sussex Land Market,″ 57–60. Mate notes that some lords reversed their practice of trying to increase surplus extraction and instead tried to increase, and, where possible, diversify production. Mate particularly singles out the knightly families as being especially active in this process. See also Hilton, *English Peasantry,* 45. Hilton also notes that more landlord income was reinvested in agricultural buildings (ibid., 213–14) and Dyer estimates that the percentage of revenue reinvested by landlord aristocracy in buildings for agricultural use more than doubled between the early fourteenth century and the early fifteenth century (from 5% to more than 10%). See Dyer, *Living Standards,* 80. That landlords began to keep their own accounts and concentrate on fewer estates, rather than relying exclusively on reeves and bailiffs, is also indicative of increased concentration on flexible and rationalized production (ibid., 94, 100).

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cloth and hence the demand for wool was greater.[24] At the same time, the supply of domestic wool had increased. The equilibrium point moved down and to the right: more wool was available at a lower price.

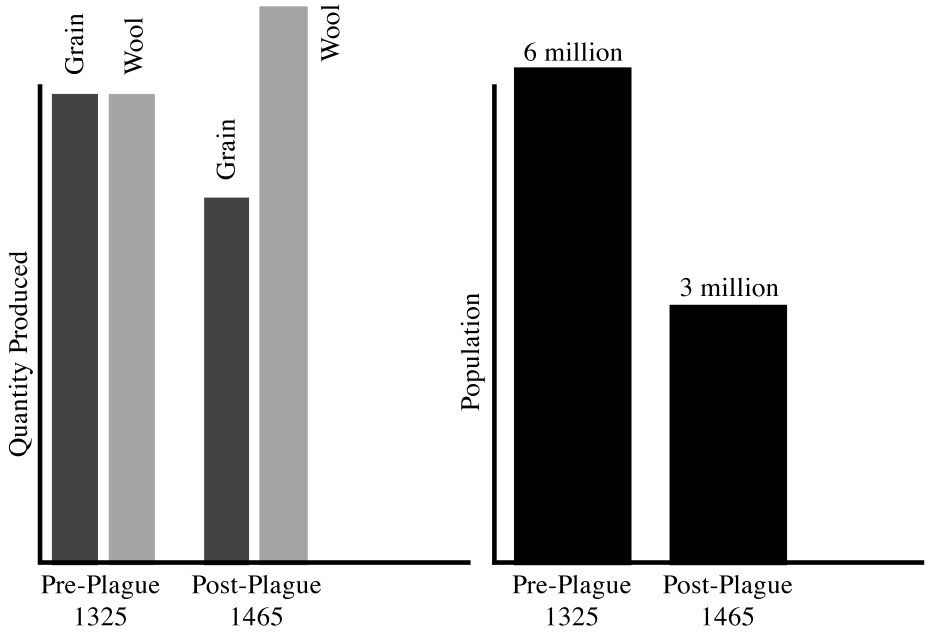

Fig. 1. Output of grain and wool in England. Population of England.

[24]Dyer, *Standards of Living,* 158–59.

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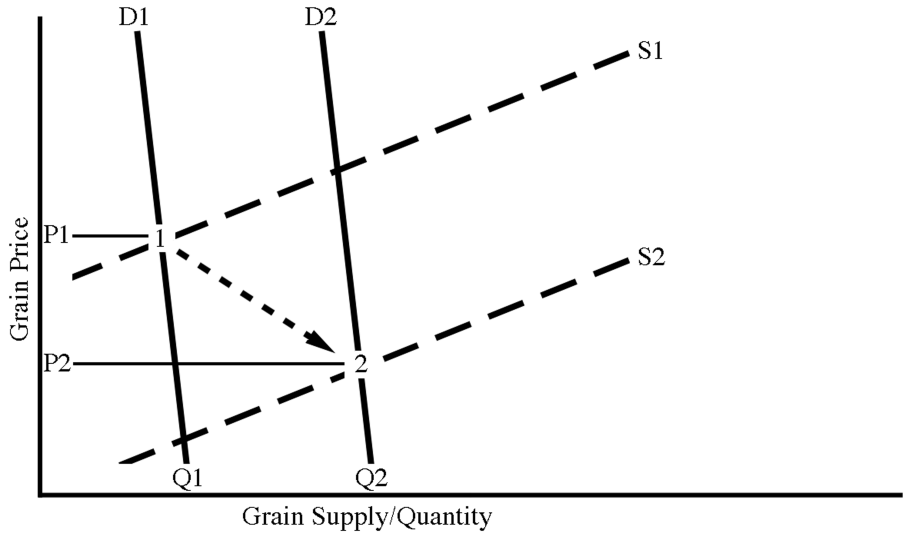

Fig. 2. Grain supply and demand in England.
D=Demand S=Supply P=Price Q=Quantity

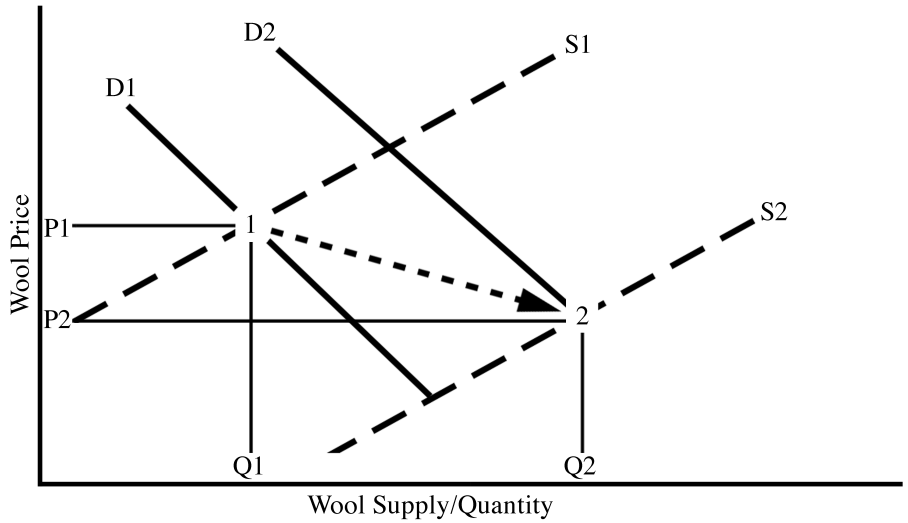

Fig. 3. Wool supply and demand in England.

Egypt´s profile for the same two goods looks quite different. The quantity of arable land and hence grain for the domestic market had decreased more than the

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drop in population. (See Fig. 4.) The supply of grain had decreased more than the number of plague survivors; hence you now had not only less grain, but the grain that was available cost more.[25] The equilibrium point for grain moved up and to the left, now selling at a higher price. (See Figs. 5 and 6.) At this point the differential elasticities of the demand curves become important. Regardless of the price, people will always demand a certain amount of basic nutrition, in this case grain, and hence the demand curves are steeper than those for wool, which people can forego during extremely hard economic times. The demand curves for wool are accordingly more elastic, closer to the horizontal than the vertical. Because the demand for grain is less elastic, it will tend to ″crowd out″ the demand for wool. If only so much land was available in Egypt′s ruined irrigation economy, wool was sacrificed to make space for grain.

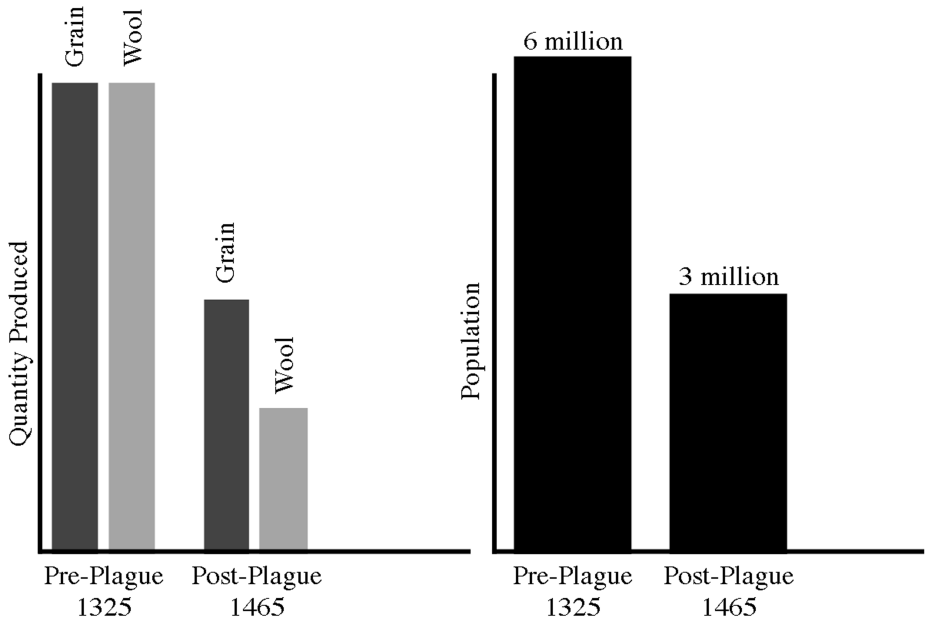

Fig. 4. Output of grain and wool in Egypt. Population of Egypt.

[25]See Borsch, *The Black Death*.

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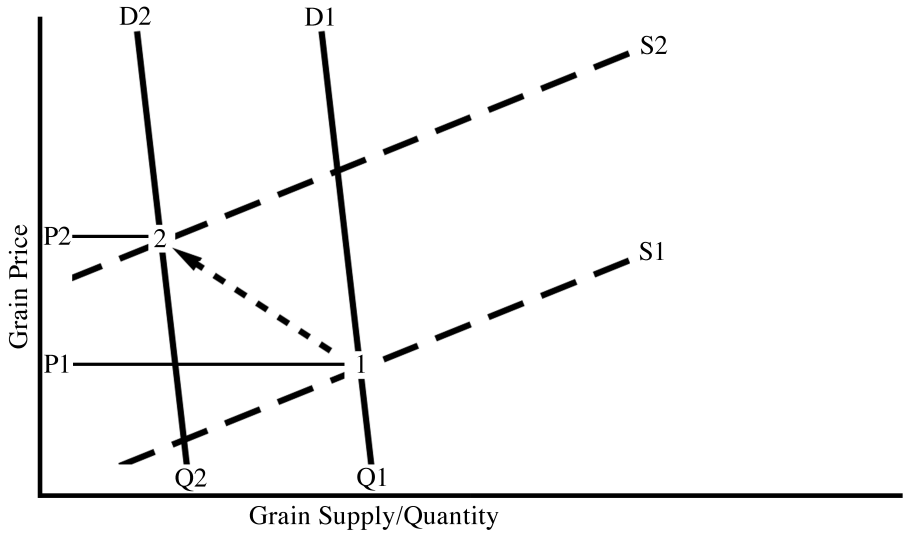

Fig. 5. Grain supply and demand in Egypt.

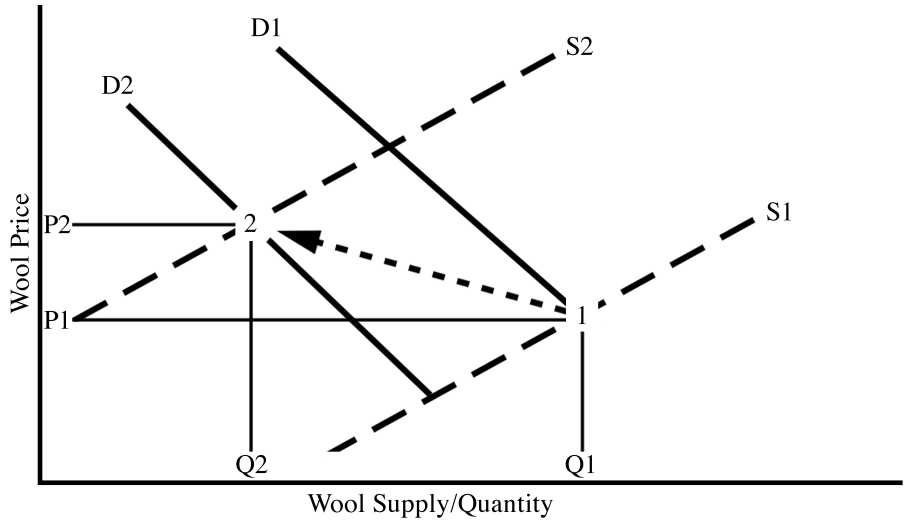

Fig. 6. Wool supply and demand in Egypt.

The significantly reduced supply of wool was actually great enough that there was now not only less wool, but it was selling at a higher price. This was despite the

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fact that demand for finished cloth by impoverished consumers had decreased. The equilibrium point moves up and to the left: less wool selling at a higher price.

I have belabored this point to demonstrate how these two economies were moving in opposite directions. England was developing a more commercialized domestic market while the other economy, Egypt, was going through a process of de-commercialization.[26] This process can be seen in a number of other areas besides the production of wool. Examples can be seen in the reduced production of flax and sugar in the Egyptian economy,[27] and increased production of pig iron and other manufactured products in the English economy.[28]

To sum up, the picture presented here challenges the universality of trends that Lopez, Miskimin, and Udovitch presented. Economic developments in England were not so dismal as depicted by Miskimin; social stratification and bullion flows did not play the role that he contended they did. On the other hand, developments in Egypt seem to have been far more disastrous than that portrayed by Abraham Udovitch. Bullion flows, as significant as they were, pale in comparison to developments within the domestic economy, and social stratification played a far more marginal role in England, even as it may have played a more significant role in Egypt. These opposing outcomes should be the focus of future research in this area as scholars attempt to find a discernible global pattern of the calamitous fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

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[26]See, for example, al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 4:705.

[27]Ibid., 256, 280, 603, 663, 709–10, 737.

[28]W. R. Childs, ″England′s Iron Trade in the Fifteenth Century,″ *Economic History Review* 34 (1981): 25–47. See also Hilton, *English Peasantry,* 38, 86–89. Hilton also points to relative expansion in other areas of rural industry such as brewing, tanning, and metallurgy in the making of iron implements.

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The Rise of a New Class? Land Tenure in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: A Review Article

There is a consensus among historians of Mamluk Egypt that the fifteenth century was a turning point in the country's social and economic history. For some, the key element lies in demographics, in the failure of the Egyptian population to recover from repeated blows dealt by the arrival of the Black Death and subsequent recurrences of epidemic disease. For others, the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean spelled the end of Egypt's central role in the transit trade between the East Indies and the Mediterranean. Still others argue that Egypt's manufacturers were unable to keep pace with technological improvements taking place in Europe. Whatever one's perspective, however, it is difficult to deny that insufficient attention has been paid to Egypt's most important economic resource, agriculture. The fifteenth century saw fundamental changes in the types of land tenure and the identity of landholders.

In this context, 'Imād Badr al-Dīn Abū Ghāzī's book *Fī Tārīkh Miṣr al-Ijtimā'ī: Taṭawwur al-Ḥiyāzah al-Zirā'īyah Zaman al-Mamālīk al-Jarākisah* (On the social history of Egypt: the development of landholding in the age of the Circassian Mamluks)[1] helps to fill an important gap. Abū Ghāzī uses a variety of sources, including Ottoman registers that have only recently begun to be utilized by Mamluk historians, to examine changes in landholding in the last century of Mamluk rule.[2] Although Abū Ghāzī is a Marxist historian, he begins by setting himself up in opposition to those historians, Marxist or otherwise, who see Egypt as an example of Oriental despotism or the Asiatic Mode of Production. These historians have argued that Egypt's riverine agricultural system made it inevitable that state property would predominate over private property in agriculture.[3] Here he is clearly correct. Although a series of Egyptian states were involved in maintaining the system of canals and dikes that irrigated much of Egypt's farmland, this never prevented the existence of private ownership of land or the growth of a class of landowners with substantial holdings. One need only observe the example of Roman Egypt to see

[1]Cairo: 'Ayn lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Buḥūth al-Insānīyah wa-al-Ijtimā'īyah, 2000. Reviewed by Igarashi Daisuke in *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7 (2003): 254–57.

[2]Nicolas Michel has used some of the same sources in his recent articles on the Egyptian peasantry in the early sixteenth century.

[3]Abū Ghazī, *Fī Tārīkh Miṣr al-Ijtimā'ī,* 5.

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that private land ownership has been prevalent in some periods.[4]

Abū Ghāzī argues that the fifteenth century saw the sale of large quantities of agricultural land by the state to private parties, and that by the end of the Mamluk Sultanate, a new class of private landowners was coming into existence.[5] Abū Ghāzī bases these conclusions on a study of Ottoman documents, especially the *daftar*s of the *Ruznāme*. These sources detail the origins of private landholdings, *waqf*s, and *rizqah*s. Using them, he can trace sales from the Mamluk Bayt al-Māl which resulted in land being alienated by the state into private hands.

In order to understand the significance of this process, however, one must go back to the year 1315, when the Mamluk state reached its highest degree of centralization. It was in that year that the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad instituted his famous *rawk* (cadastral survey) in Egypt. In fact, the survey began in Syria in 1313, and was not completed in Aleppo until 1325.[6] In Egypt, the process was finished by April 1316, with the sultan reserving 10/24 of Egypt′s agricultural land for himself and his mamluks. The remainder was turned into *iqṭā‘*s for the amirs and members of the *ḥalqah*.[7] At this point, with the exception of limited *waqf* lands that were held over from the previous period, all of Egypt′s taxable agricultural land was to be turned over to the state *dīwān*s or else made into *iqṭā‘*. While it is not possible to examine all of the implications of the Nāṣirī *rawk* in this essay, the important point with regard to land tenure is that the sultan controlled almost all of Egypt′s land, either for his own use, or to be distributed as temporary *iqṭā‘*s. Private ownership of agricultural land was insignificant and *waqf* land limited.

It appears that this centralized system was still largely in place in the year 1400. It is not clear when things began to change, but there are good reasons to believe that the alienation of state lands was limited prior to the fifteenth century. Ulrich Haarmann′s study of the decline of the *awlād al-nās* as a military force shows that the *ḥalqah* continued to hold significant *iqṭā‘*s until 1397, but had lost almost all of them by 1480.[8] The following table, which I have compiled based on the information from two surveys of Egypt′s lands contained in Ibn al-Jī‘ān′s *Al-Tuḥfah al-Sanīyah fī Asmā’ al-Bilād al-Miṣrīyah,* gives a sense of how significant

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[4]Jane Rowlandson, *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt: The Social Relations of Agriculture in the Oxyrhynchite Nome* (Oxford, 1996).

[5]Abū Ghazī, *Fī Tārīkh Miṣr al-Ijtimā‘ī,* 10.

[6]Sato Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam* (Leiden, 1997), 135.

[7]Ibid., 142–43.

[8]Ulrich Haarmann, ″The Sons of Mamluks as Fief-Holders in Late Medieval Egypt,″ in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East,* ed. Tarif Khalidi (Beirut, 1984), 141–68.

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the alienation of state lands in the fifteenth century became.[9]

Table 1: Villages containing *waqf*s, private estates, and *rizqah*s in 1376 and 1480

Year	*Waqf*	Private Estates	*Rizqah*
1376	66	49	?
1480	885	607	1425+

What this table clearly shows is that the Mamluk state was alienating lands at a furious rate during the fifteenth century. By the latter part of the century, *waqf,* private, and *rizqah* land were present throughout the Egyptian countryside. In the cases of *waqf* and private estates, the increase in the number of villages containing these types of tenure was more than tenfold. Since Ibn al-Jī'ān counted 2,163 villages in Egypt, not counting some villages in Giza that were under the control of the royal *dīwān,* we can calculate the percentage of villages in Egypt containing these types of land tenure at these two dates:

Table 2: Percentage of Egyptian villages containing *waqf,* private property, and *rizqah*s in 1376 and 1480

Year	*Waqf*	Private Property	*Rizqah*
1376	3.0%	2.2%	?
1480	40.9%	28.0%	65.8%

Unfortunately, Ibn al-Jī'ān's numbers are not specific enough for us to calculate the exact amount of land that fell into each category. While he does give figures for the amount of *rizqah* land in each village, there was clearly *rizqah* land whose extent he did know with precision. The total amount of *rizqah* land that he counted was 78,975.5 feddans, or an average of 55.4 feddans per village containing *rizqah*

[9]Cairo, 1974. The data is presented in raw form in Heinz Halm, *Ägypten nach den mamlukischen Lehensregistern* (Wiesbaden, 1979).

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land. This amounts to less than two percent of Egypt's total agricultural lands in 1315. Despite the incompleteness of our evidence, and even if we assume that Ibn al-Jī'ān's information was better for 1480, when he wrote his survey, than it was for 1376, one cannot avoid concluding that all three types of tenure were spreading very quickly.

One thing that we cannot learn from Ibn al-Jī'ān's work is exactly when these changes were taking place. Here, Abū Ghāzī's work is very helpful. He has examined 40 original deeds of sale from the Bayt al-Māl from the Mamluk period, and another 530 deeds he identified in the Ottoman archives in Cairo.[10] He believes that these are only a fraction of the original documents, but they give him a substantial sample from which to work. Having compiled these deeds, Abū Ghāzī can identify the periods in which most of the sales of lands from the Treasury occurred. He finds that the periods 853–72 (1449–67) and 903–22 (1498–1517) saw the greatest number of sales, comprising 40.1% and 36.7% respectively of the total.[11] These periods correspond to the reigns of a number of mid-fifteenth century sultans and that of the final twenty years of Mamluk rule, especially the reign of Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī. The first large group of sales occurred in the reign of Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbāy (1422–37), and the reign of al-Ashraf Qāytbāy (1468–96) also saw a significant number, although not as many as one might expect given his long reign.[12]

The timing of these sales is curious. As Abū Ghāzī points out, the justification sometimes cited in the documents, that the sales are necessary to raise money to fund a war, is not convincing. The chronology of the sales does not correspond to the periods of greatest military threat to the Mamluk empire, which Abū Ghāzī identifies as the years 800–20 (1397–1418) and 880–900 (1475–95), when the Mamluks were at war with Tamerlane and the Ottomans, respectively.[13]

For Abū Ghāzī, the explanation for this phenomenon lies not in military necessity, but in economic crisis. He proceeds to recite the usual list of weaknesses of the fifteenth-century Egyptian economy: demographic decline, decline of the transit trade, the failure of the state to control the Nile floods, bedouin raids in the countryside, exorbitant taxation of the peasantry, monetary crisis, etc. Following Fernand Braudel's analysis, he concludes that while the West was able to recover quite quickly from the Black Death, the "East" did not.[14] While he puts his finger on a number of key aspects of fifteenth-century Egyptian economic history, his

[10]Abū Ghazī, *Fī Tārīkh Miṣr al-Ijtimā'ī,* 11, 16.

[11]Ibid., 28.

[12]Ibid., 20–22.

[13]Ibid., 61.

[14]Ibid., 67–69.

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explanation is not convincing. Indeed, it is not really an explanation so much as a laundry list of economic woes which are assumed to have reduced the income of the Mamluk state, which then compensated by selling off state lands that had been assigned as *iqṭā'*s.

There are several problems with this analysis. First of all, in many cases, the buyer of state lands was the sultan himself. This is particularly true of Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī, who used a combination of purchases from the Bayt al-Māl and ″exchanges″ (*istibdāl*s) of property with existing *waqf*s to build his massive endowment. Indeed, as Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Carl Petry have shown, the size of many royal *waqf*s was so large that the revenues generated were too great to be intended to fund the *waqf* itself.[15] It is likely that the sultans were setting aside sources of revenue for themselves and their progeny, and in this sense, acting much as most founders of endowments did.

Furthermore, if one examines the chronology of major economic crises in the fifteenth century, it is not clear whether it would correspond to the periods in which the Bayt al-Māl was doing most of its business in land sales. Although it is very difficult to assess the rise or fall of revenues from trade, it is clear that the worst agricultural crises of the Mamluk period occurred in the period 1373–1404.[16] Although later crises did occur in 1415–16, 1449–52, 1469–70, and 1486–87, these dates do not match up well with the data collected by Abū Ghāzī. Furthermore, later crises do not seem to have had the impact that the great crises of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century did. Clearly it is true that Egypt's agricultural revenues declined in the fifteenth century, but to what degree did this result from agricultural decay or from the alienation of state lands into private hands?[17]

I have argued elsewhere that the sudden rise in the number of *waqf*s in the mid-fifteenth century should be understood in the context of the changing character of the Mamluk elite.[18] It is at this very time when Haarmann shows that the military role of the *awlād al-nās* was in serious decline that the number of *waqf*s established by the descendents of mamluks increases considerably. While some of

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[15]Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, *Al-Awqāf wa-al-Ḥayāh al-Ijtimā'īyah fī Miṣr, 648–923/1250–1517* (Cairo, 1980), 72 ff; Carl F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?: The Last Mamlūk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power* (Albany, 1996), 199.

[16]Adam Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt, 1250–1517* (Cambridge, 2000), chapter 6.

[17]For the opinion that widespread decay overcame Egypt's irrigation system in the fifteenth century, see Stuart J. Borsch. ″Nile Floods and the Irrigation System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt,″ *Mamlūk Studies Review* 4 (2000): 131–46. For a discussion of village desertion see Nicolas Michel, ″Villages désertés, terres en friche et reconstruction rurale en Égypte au début de l'époque ottomane,″ *Annales islamologiques* 36 (2002): 197–251.

[18]Sabra, *Poverty,* 93.

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these *waqf*s were funded by urban properties, others were based on the donation of rural estates. The large increase in the number of *waqf*s in the fifteenth century should be seen as part of a process by which members of the Mamluk elite and their descendents privatized state resources, especially agricultural land, for their own benefit.[19] The tide of centralization which had reached its height in the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was now receding, and at an increasingly swift pace.

Abū Ghāzī identifies three consequences of this process of the privatization of agricultural lands.[20] First, he argues that a change in land tenure was taking place; the *iqṭā'* system was collapsing. Second, the shift of resources into private hands was fundamentally changing the social structure of the country at the expense of the Mamluks. Finally, the corruption which had taken hold of many aspects of the Egyptian economy, evident in the sultans' monopolies over certain commodities, now extended to the land market, since the land sales were frequently made to the sultan's retainers.[21] Based on his study of the Ottoman *daftar*s, Abū Ghāzī[22] can identify 275 villages in Egypt and Syria where lands were sold to private parties. The prime beneficiaries of these sales were Mamluk amirs, who were the buyers in 40.6% of sales, the *awlād al-nās* (23.6%), bedouin chiefs and village shaykhs (8.4%), state bureaucrats (6.1%), jurists and judges (5.1%), and sultans and their families (2.5%).[23] Obviously, the fact that some purchases must have been significantly larger than others means that the role of rulers and their families was probably much larger than these statistics indicate. He does not identify the gender of the buyers, but my own study of *waqf*s by the *awlād al-nās* found that up to 50% of the founders in that category were women.[24] One may also suspect that the role of bedouin shaykhs may have been larger. As the research of Jean-Claude Garcin has shown, the bedouin were of increasing significance as landholders in fifteenth-century Egypt, especially in the province of Sharqīyah and in Upper Egypt.[25]

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[19]There are some interesting parallels between the privatization of the state in fifteenth-century Egypt and a somewhat similar process that occurred in the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century. See Ariel Salzmann, "An Ancien Régime Revisited: 'Privatization and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,'" *Politics and Society* 21 no. 4 (December 1993): 393–423.

[20]Abū Ghazī, *Fī Tārīkh Miṣr al-Ijtimā'ī,* 103.

[21]Ibid., 80.

[22]Ibid., 104.

[23]Ibid., 109.

[24]Sabra, *Poverty,* 92–93.

[25]Jean-Claude Garcin, "Note sur les rapports entre bedouins et fellahs à l'époque Mamluke," in his *Espaces, pouvoirs et idéologies de l'Egypte médiévale* (London, 1987), 147–63; idem, *Un Centre musulman de la Haute-Égypte médiévale: Qus* (Cairo, 1976), 468–511. For the role of bedouin

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For Abū Ghāzī, the fifteenth century was a turning point in Egyptian history. The system of land tenure was changing from that of state ownership of the majority of agricultural lands which were doled out in *iqṭā'*s to a new reality in which private property predominated. The owners of these lands constituted a new social class who would eventually have asserted themselves politically. In fact, however, two factors prevented this social transformation. The most important, in Abū Ghāzī's view, is the Ottoman conquest. Although the Ottomans did not abolish all of the private holdings and *waqf*s, they reversed the trend towards privatization of land. As he puts it, foreign invasion "aborted" the "possibilities latent in society."[26] Only in the nineteenth century did private ownership of land become a permanent feature of the Egyptian agricultural economy. To paraphrase the title of Peter Gran's well-known book, the "Mamluk roots of capitalism" were uprooted by the Ottomans only to re-emerge under the khedives.

This argument is problematic in a number of ways, most obviously because it is conjectural. There is no way to test what would have happened had the Ottoman conquest never occurred. More importantly, however, there are good reasons to question whether capitalism (as we know it, anyway) could have developed out of late Mamluk society. As Abū Ghāzī himself notes, lands purchased from the Bayt al-Māl rarely remained private holdings for long. Usually they were turned into *waqf* quite quickly. Almost two-thirds of the property sold by the Mamluk treasury remained in the hands of the purchaser, his family, or his *waqf* after the Ottoman conquest.[27] This demonstrates that the market for land was limited. Furthermore, 63.6% of land sales were eventually turned into *waqf* lands. After the Ottoman conquest, that figure rose to 88.89%.[28]

In short, what happened in Egypt in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century was not the formation of a class of private landowners who operated in a widespread land market. Rather the state gradually sold off much of its lands to the military elite, their children, local officials, and even to the sultans themselves. To prevent the state from reasserting its rights over these lands, the new owners quickly turned them into trusts and endowments. Since these trusts and endowments were sacrosanct under Islamic law, and since they frequently benefited various religious institutions or the poor, it was much harder for the state to recover what it had lost. Each sultan was faced with a dilemma: he needed to reward his retainers and provide for his family. He may also have wished to construct a monument to preserve the memory of his rule and to gain support from the religious scholars

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shaykhs in reclaiming lands in al-Buḥayrah, see Michel, "Villages désertés," 224–29.

[26]Abū Ghazī, *Fī Tārīkh Miṣr al-Ijtimā'ī,* 112.

[27]Ibid., 113.

[28]Ibid., 106.

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and the ordinary people. Yet he could not seize the endowments of his predecessors without earning the condemnation of the religious classes. Furthermore, to seize others′ endowments would virtually guarantee that his own *waqf*s would be seized after his death. Thus, each sultan found that it was in his best interest to leave the existing endowments alone and concentrate on building his own. In order to maintain the support of his retainers, he made sure that land was made available to them for the same purpose.

We have no way of knowing what would have happened had this process continued unchecked. Perhaps subsequent sultans would have followed the model of al-Ghūrī and built their own *waqf*s on the ruins of others′. Perhaps they would have confiscated many of the *waqf*s on the premise that sales from the Bayt al-Māl were illegitimate. They might have attempted to return to the status quo ante and reinstitute the *iqṭā‘* system in full. We also do not know what an economy dominated by *waqf* would have meant for the peasantry or for industry. Contrary to what has been argued at times, *waqf* and commercial agriculture are by no means incompatible. There is no way to determine whether the *waqf* administrators would have turned into agricultural entrepreneurs or simply waited for their rents to pour in.

Despite these weaknesses it must be said that Abū Ghāzī′s book is an important one. It raises significant historical questions, provides new evidence for Mamluk economic history, and brings new sources to bear on the problem. In particular, his systematic use of the Ottoman archives to answer questions about Mamluk history is an important innovation, one which will undoubtedly influence future students of Mamluk history.

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Book Reviews

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

Reviewed by Josef Meri, Institute of Ismāʻīlī Studies, London

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reviewed by Konrad Hirschler, University of Kiel

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reviewed by Arnoud Vrolijk, Leiden University

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reviewed by Bethany J. Walker, Oklahoma State University

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

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

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

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

[2]Personal communication, Yūsuf Ghawānimah.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REVIEWED BY WARREN C. SCHULTZ, DePaul University

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REVIEWED BY CARL F. PETRY, Northwestern University

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL WINTER, Tel Aviv University

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM TUCKER, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Arabic Transliteration System

Romanized Arabic in *Mamlūk Studies Review* follows the Library of Congress conventions, briefly outlined below. A more thorough discussion may be found in *American Library Association-Library of Congress Romanization Tables* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1991).

ء	’	خ	kh	ش	sh	غ	gh	م	m
ب	b	د	d	ص	ṣ	ف	f	ن	n
ت	t	ذ	dh	ض	ḍ	ق	q	ه	h
ث	th	ر	r	ط	ṭ	ك	k	و	w
ج	j	ز	z	ظ	ẓ	ل	l	ي	y
ح	ḥ	س	s	ع	‘				
		ة	h, t (in construct)			ال	al-		

ـَ	a	ـُ	u	ـِ	i
ـً	an	ـٌ	un	ـٍ	in
آ	ā	ـُو	ū	ـِي	ī
ا	ā	ـُوّ	ūw	ـِيّ	īy (medial), ī (final)
ى	á	ـَو	aw	ـَي	ay
				ـَيّ	ayy

Capitalization in romanized Arabic follows the conventions of American English; the definite article is always lower case, except when it is the first word in an English sentence. The *hamzah* is not represented when beginning a word, following a prefixed preposition or conjunction, or following the definite article. Assimilation of the *lām* of the definite article before ″sun″ letters is disregarded. Final inflections of verbs are retained, except in pausal form; final inflections of nouns and adjectives are not represented, except preceding suffixes and except when verse is romanized. Vocalic endings of pronouns, demonstratives, prepositions, and conjunctions are represented. The hyphen is used with the definite article, conjunctions, inseparable prepositions, and other prefixes. Note the exceptional treatment of the preposition *li-* followed by the article, as in *lil-sulṭān*. Note also the following exceptional spellings: Allāh, billāh, lillāh, bismillāh, mi’ah, ibn (for both initial and medial forms). Words not requiring diacritical marks, though following the conventions outlined above, include all Islamic dynasties, as well as the following terms: Quran, sultan, amir, imam, shaykh, Sunni, Shi‘i, Sufi. Common place-names should take the common spelling in American English. Names of archaeological sites should follow the convention of the excavator.