

MAMLUK STUDIES REVIEW

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MAMLŪK STUDIES REVIEW

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MAMLUK STUDIES

REVIEW

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Preface

This volume of *Mamlūk Studies Review* is dedicated to the Mamluk provinces, highlighting the rich and diverse lines of inquiry currently being used by scholars working in Bilād al-Shām. While the methodologies and source material used by the authors of the articles in this issue vary considerably, they all share an appreciation for the rural dimension, particularly that of the imperial frontier, and emphasize local and regional cultures and identities. Collectively they suggest ways in which "the imperial" alternatively conflicted with and complemented "the local," on the political, economic, administrative, and cultural levels.

The authors represent a variety of disciplines—diplomatic history, art and architectural history, archaeology, and social and economic history—and pull together a wide range of written and material sources underutilized in more traditional, and Egypt-based, Mamluk studies. The cross-disciplinary approach of all the essays suggests alternative venues for future study of the Mamluk empire.

I would like to thank Bruce Craig for the invitation, and challenge, to put together this special theme volume and each of the authors for their contributions.

Bethany J. Walker
Guest Editor

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ZAYDE ANTRIM
TRINITY COLLEGE

Making Syria Mamluk: Ibn Shaddād's *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah*

The consolidation of the Mamluk Empire in Egypt and Syria in the second half of the seventh/thirteenth century provided a new context for what I have called a "discourse of place" among Syrian intellectuals.¹ Representations of Syria and Syrian cities in the Arabic written record, the earliest extant examples of which date back to the geographical literature of the third/ninth century, had proliferated by the turn of the seventh/thirteenth century. This proliferation marked the maturation of a discourse, or an established area of scholarly inquiry characterized by intertextuality and a set of common, if changing, terms and conventions, about "place." The concept of place has been subject to increasing scrutiny in the past few decades in the fields of geography, anthropology, and literary criticism, a scrutiny that has generated complex and varied theoretical frameworks for understanding the human relationship to physical, economic, social, political, and cultural environments.² In this article, however, place is defined simply as a locality, most often a town or region, represented in writing. Since representations are, by their very nature, constructed and contingent, this definition of place implies a relationship between the representer and the locality being represented. In other words, some type of belonging, often but not limited to that of the resident or native, is always tied up with the representation of a locality. To participate in the discourse of place in and about medieval Syria, therefore, was to evoke various categories of belonging by composing geographies, topographies, local histories, or other works from established genres of Arabic literature that treated the locality as their prime focus.³

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¹See my "Place and Belonging in Medieval Syria, 6th/12th–8th/14th Centuries" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2005).

²See, for examples, Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires, eds., *Space & Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London, 1993); James Duncan and David Ley, eds., *Place/Culture/Representation* (London, 1993); Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, eds., *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe, 1996); Paul C. Adams, Steven Hoelscher, and Karen E. Till, eds., *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies* (Minneapolis, 2001); and David Jacobson, *Place and Belonging in America* (Baltimore, 2002).

³The other genre of Arabic writing most commonly used by participants in the discourse of place was a branch of literary anthology listing the *fadā'il* ("merits") of a town or region. For more on *fadā'il* literature in general, see R. Sellheim, "Fadīla," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 2:728; and Ernst August Gruber, *Verdienst und Rang: Die Fadā'il als literarisches und gesellschaftliches*



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Appearing after a period of more than a century distinguished by the active production of written representations of Syria and Syrian cities, the multi-volume historical topography *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah fī Dhikr Umarā' al-Shām wa-al-Jazīrah* (Valuable and important things on the subject of the princes of Syria and the Jazīrah), composed by the Aleppan scholar 'Izz al-Dīn ibn Shaddād, marked a major shift in the discourse of place. Ibn Shaddād's work subsumed the territorial referents for belonging evoked by earlier participants in the discourse, such as Ibn 'Asākir's Damascus or Ibn al-'Adīm's northern Syria, into a new territorial referent for belonging, a unified "al-Shām" increasingly integrated into the broader geopolitical context of Mamluk rule.⁴ What made the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* unique in the discourse of place up to its time was that it represented the region of Syria through topographies of *both* of its major cities, Damascus and Aleppo, as well as through descriptions of its secondary towns and rural areas, while making its author's loyalty to a regime based in Cairo explicit throughout. Thus, the political and military history of the first decades of Mamluk rule in Syria is inseparable from the new direction in which Ibn Shaddād's *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* took the discourse. It was Mamluk rule that made Ibn Shaddād's representation of Syria possible, and it was Ibn Shaddād's representation that, at least in the discursive sense, made Syria Mamluk.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

By the second half of the seventh/thirteenth century, the experience of decades of Ayyubid infighting, persistent Crusader aggression, and a devastating Mongol invasion had created an increasing sense of vulnerability among Syrians, many of whom must have looked to the early Mamluk sultans, despite their origins as slave-born usurpers, for relief. Indeed, after sacking Baghdad and killing the Abbasid caliph, a Mongol army under the leadership of Hülegü, grandson of Genghis Khan, marched into northern Syria in the winter of 658/1259–60 and occupied Aleppo. Having negotiated secret deals with several remaining Syrian Ayyubids, including an off-and-on relationship with al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, prince of Aleppo and Damascus, the Mongol advance southward in Syria met little resistance. Over the next six months, the Mongols set up a skeleton occupation of Damascus and embarked upon a mission of looting and terror in the districts of Palestine and Jordan. The Mamluk sultan in Cairo, Quṭuz, after reconciling with his rival and commander of the formidable Baḥrīyah faction, Baybars, mobilized an army to

Problem in Islam, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, vol. 35 (Freiburg, 1975).

⁴See the introductory volumes of the *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq* by Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1176) and of the *Bughyat al-Talab fī Tārīkh Ḥalab* by Kamāl al-Dīn 'Umar ibn al-'Adīm (d. 660/1262). Various published editions of both works exist.



confront the Mongols in Syria. The historic confrontation occurred at a Palestinian site called ‘Ayn Jālūt in the fall of 658/1260, and the resounding Mamluk victory carried symbolic significance far beyond its practical repercussions. Syria would be harassed for another half century by Mongol forces and, even in the short run, would see violent confrontations between Mongols, Mamluks, and Crusaders on its soil. Nevertheless, the Battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt proved for the first time that the Mongols were not unstoppable and helped portray the Mamluk regime as the defender of Syria and of Islam.

When Baybars took over the sultanate soon thereafter, he prioritized the development of a top-notch military machine to keep the Mongols at bay and initiated the renovation and repair of Syrian fortifications and urban infrastructure destroyed by the Mongols. At the same time, he sought to strengthen the regime’s legitimacy in the eyes of its Muslim subjects through the installation of an Abbasid puppet caliph in Cairo and the adoption of hard-line rhetoric targeting infidels, both Mongol and Crusader, as its enemies. Under his successors Syria would be stabilized and divided into administrative provinces of a centralized, bureaucratic Mamluk state with its capital in Cairo. By the early eighth/fourteenth century, the last Crusaders would be definitively expelled from the Syrian coast, and the Mongol threat on Syria’s eastern borders eliminated for the foreseeable future. It is not difficult to see why many Syrian Muslims welcomed this new “Pax Mamlukia,” some like Ibn Shaddād actively pledging their loyalty to the Mamluk sultans by entering their service.

Ibn Shaddād had spent the early part of his career serving the last Ayyubid prince of Aleppo, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, in administrative posts that required him to travel him all over Syria and to undertake financial and diplomatic missions to the Jazīrah. He even conducted negotiations on behalf of his Ayyubid patron with the Mongols when they occupied Mayyāfāriqīn shortly before invading northern Syria. However, after the Mongol occupation of Aleppo, Ibn Shaddād fled to Egypt and quickly found employment with the new Mamluk sultan Baybars. He returned to Syria again in 669/1271 in the company of the sultan and spent most of the following decade composing the *A’lāq al-Khaṭīrah*. When Baybars died unexpectedly in 676/1277, Ibn Shaddād served his successors until his own death in Cairo in 684/1285. Thus, the *A’lāq al-Khaṭīrah* was not only among the earliest compositions of the Mamluk era, but it was also the first representation of Syria dating after the Battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt.⁵

⁵Although, like Ibn Shaddād, Ibn al-‘Adīm had been in the service of the Ayyubid rulers of Aleppo until he fled to Cairo after the Mongol invasion, where he lived until his death in 660/1262, Ibn al-‘Adīm’s representation of northern Syria, in the form of the topographical introduction to the *Bughyat al-Talab*, was composed in Ayyubid Aleppo and completed by 655/1257 (see David Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable and his World* [Leiden, 1994], 169).



IBN SHADDĀD'S "AL-SHĀM"

As its full title implies, Ibn Shaddād's *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* took the territories known by the toponyms "al-Shām" and "al-Jazīrah" as the subjects of its representation. When the classical geographers of the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries divided the Islamic world by region, or *iqlīm*, both "al-Shām" and "al-Jazīrah" figured among the twenty or so regions considered.⁶ According to them, the region of "al-Shām," often referred to as "Greater Syria," "Geographical Syria," or the "Bilād al-Shām" in secondary scholarship but translated here simply as "Syria," was bound in the west by the Mediterranean Sea, in the north by the Byzantine Empire, in the north-east by the Euphrates River, in the east and south by the Arabian desert, and in the south-west by the region of Egypt.⁷ The early geographers treated the territory to the east of the Euphrates, an "island" of land lying among its tributaries in north-western Mesopotamia, as a separate region called "al-Jazīrah." Though the neighboring Jazīrah would be frequently associated with Syria in the discourse of place, later authors tended to follow the classical geographers in treating the two regions as distinct, if related, territorial entities. In the context of the shifting allegiances and movements of people that characterized the late Ayyubid period, the Jazīrah formed a key corridor connecting northern Syria to the lands and peoples to the east and the north, a corridor that had been featured prominently, for instance, in Ibn al-'Adīm's writing. However, Ibn Shaddād consistently distinguished "al-Jazīrah" from "al-Shām," and there is no sense that the eastern bank of the Euphrates formed a sub-district of Syria in his representation. In fact, as will be discussed below, the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* suggested a fundamental shift in the representation of northern Syria, from an orientation toward the Jazīrah to an orientation toward southern Syria as its primary political partner.

At the most basic level, Ibn Shaddād's *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* may be distinguished from earlier works in the discourse of place by the detail and balance with which it represented the territory of Syria and its internal divisions. The work is divided into three major sections of more or less equal length and detail: the first dealing with Aleppo and northern Syria,⁸ the second with Damascus and southern

⁶For an overview of classical Arabic geographical literature, see S. Maqbul Ahmad, "Djughrāfiyā," *EI*², 2:575–90; for the intellectual origins of these divisions, see André Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du 11e siècle* (reprint edition; Paris, 2001), 1:81–82.

⁷For English translations of the early geographers' descriptions of Syria, see Guy Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500 Translated from the Works by the Mediaeval Arab Geographers* (Boston and New York, 1890).

⁸See the following published editions and translations: Ibn Shaddād, *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah*, vol. 1, pt. 1, ed. Dominique Sourdel (Damascus, 1953) [on Aleppo; hereafter referred to as "Ibn Shaddād (Aleppo)"]; idem, *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah*, vol. 1, pts. 1–2, ed. Yahyá Zakarīyā 'Abbārah (Damascus, 1991) [pt. 1 on Aleppo and pt. 2 on northern Syria; pt. 2 will be referred to hereafter as "Ibn



Syria,⁹ and the third with the Jazīrah.¹⁰ The first two parts of the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah*, on Aleppo and northern Syria and on Damascus and southern Syria respectively, may be characterized as the first representation of "al-Shām" that neither situated it in the greater context of the Islamic world nor reflected the perceived or aspired-for regional dominance of Damascus or Aleppo. Instead, despite his Aleppan roots, Ibn Shaddād featured both cities as key focal points of the region of Syria, not as rivals, but as complementary urban nodes. Furthermore, he established the territory surrounding each city as an immediately relevant and integral component of the greater regional entity. In fact, Ibn Shaddād was one of the first authors in the discourse of place to use the terms "bilād al-Shām" and "al-bilād al-shāmīyah," as well as the simple toponym "al-Shām," regularly, underscoring his conception of Syria as a conglomerate of territories and localities. As such, Syria was not reduced to two urban landmarks on which abstract region-wide descriptions or generalizations were superimposed, but was represented as a collectivity of interrelated territorial entities—cities, towns, villages, mountains, and rivers—that together made Syria a comprehensive and inclusive (geographically, if not necessarily socially) referent for belonging.

In the preface to the work as a whole, Ibn Shaddād presented four hadith-based tributes to "al-Shām." Together the first three constituted what can only be described as a gesture toward the deep reservoir of hadith material tapped extensively by authors in the Syrian branch of the discourse of place up to his time.¹¹ The fourth, however, made explicit the geographical parameters within which Ibn Shaddād conceived the subject of his representation in the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah*. Commenting on a hadith from Ibn al-'Adīm's *Bughyat al-Talab fī Tārīkh Halab* in which the Prophet defined the land God blessed as that stretching between al-'Arīsh and the

Shaddād (northern Syria)]; idem, *Description de la Syrie du Nord*, trans. Anne-Marie Eddé-Terrasse (Damascus, 1984) [French translation of Ibn Shaddād on northern Syria]. See also the translator's corresponding Arabic edition: Anne-Marie Eddé, ed., "La description de la Syrie du Nord de 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn Shaddād," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 32–33 (1980–81): 265–402; and the following Arabic edition of the chapters on the 'Awāsim from this section: Charles Ledit, "Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah li-'Izz al-Dīn b. Shaddād," *Al-Mashriq* 33 (1935): 161–223.

⁹See the following published editions: Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān (Damascus, 1956) [hereafter referred to as "Ibn Shaddād (Damascus)"]; idem, *Tārīkh Lubnān wa-al-Urdūn wa-Filasṭīn*, ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān (Damascus, 1963) [hereafter referred to as "Ibn Shaddād (southern Syria)"].

¹⁰Ibn Shaddād, *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah*, vol. 3, pts. 1–2, ed. Yaḥyā Zakarīyā 'Abbārah (Damascus, 1978) [hereafter referred to as "Ibn Shaddād (al-Jazīrah)"]. See also Muḥammad Sa'īd Rahnā, "Ibn Shaddād fi Kitābat Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah 'Qism al-Jazīrah,'" *Majallat al-Mu'arrikh al-'Arabī* 14 (1980): 124–204; and Claude Cahen, "La Djazira au milieu du treizième siècle d'après 'Izz al-Din Ibn Chaddad," *Revue des études islamiques* 8 (1934): 109–28.

¹¹Ibn Shaddād (Aleppo), 5–8.



Euphrates, an exegetical tradition as good as ubiquitous in earlier representations of Syria, Ibn Shaddād clarified the location of the region's borders in all four directions: "Those who pay close attention to the delimitation of 'routes and realms' specify that [Syria's] southern border is al-'Arīsh, in the direction of Egypt; its northern border is the territory of the Byzantines; its eastern border is the desert from Aylah¹² to the Euphrates; and its western border is the Mediterranean Sea."¹³ This description of Syria's borders was reminiscent of that provided by the classical geographers and defined Syrian territory with more specificity than had, for example, Ibn al-'Adīm or Ibn 'Asākir.¹⁴

Next, Ibn Shaddād drew from al-Tabarī's *Tārīkh* and Qudāmah ibn Ja'far's *Kitāb al-Kharāj* to sketch a brief history of the division of Syria during the caliphate of Abū Bakr into four *ajnād* (sg. *jund*).¹⁵ The term *ajnād*, which can be translated as "armies," came to refer directly to the geographic districts in which the original armies of conquest had been based, i.e. Homs, Damascus, Jordan, and Palestine, the former two districts taking their names from their principal cities.¹⁶ Likewise, the fifth *jund*, Qinnasrīn, created under the Umayyad caliph al-Yazīd, and the sixth *jund*, the 'Awāṣim, created under the Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, initially owed their existence to the exigencies of military conflict with the Byzantine Empire but quickly came to signify, particularly in the case of Qinnasrīn, the extension and consolidation of the political and economic administration of Syria in the second/eighth century. The *jund* of the 'Awāṣim, often associated with a further set of frontier outposts, the Thughūr, as in the oft-repeated phrase "al-'Awāṣim wa-al-Thughūr," retained its military purpose and remained more loosely administratively integrated into Syria until much later than the rest of the *ajnād*.¹⁷ By the Saljuq period, however, the Syrian *ajnād* were no longer a political or military reality, and Syrian territory was divided according to the shifting spheres

¹²Modern-day Eilat.

¹³Ibn Shaddād (Aleppo), 8.

¹⁴The Ayyubid-era geographer/gazetteer Yāqūt al-Rūmī (d. 626/1229), in his entry on "al-Shām" also provided a more specific description of Syria's borders than those found in works since the great geographical treatises of the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries: Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, (Beirut, 1957–95), 3:312.

¹⁵Ibn Shaddād (Aleppo), 8–9.

¹⁶For two different views on the origins of the *ajnād*, see Irfan Shahid, "The Jund System in Bilād al-Shām: Its Origin," in *Bilād al-Shām fī al-'Ahd al-Bīzānī*, vol. 2, ed. Muḥammad 'Adnān al-Bakhīt and Muḥammad 'Aṣfūr (Amman, 1986), 45–52; and John Haldon, "Seventh-Century Continuities: the *Ajnād* and the 'Thematic Myth,'" in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. 3, *States, Resources and Armies*, ed. Averil Cameron (Princeton, 1995), 379–423.

¹⁷For more on the emergence of this frontier zone, see Michael Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War: Studies in the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine Frontier* (New Haven, 1996).



of influence of a succession of sovereigns. Syrian cities served as centers of *mamālik* (sg. *mamlakah*), here best translated as "kingdoms" or "principalities," and the Ayyubid period saw an increased regularization of the Syrian *mamlakah* system. In the Mamluk period, the *mamlakah* divisions of the empire's Syrian territories became more systematized and the structures of provincial government more consistent.¹⁸

During the first decades of Mamluk rule, however, as the last Ayyubids were being divested of their Syrian holdings, the Mamluk system for Syrian provincial administration was not yet solidified. Thus, Ibn Shaddād's highlighting of the origins of the *jund* system and his subsequent use of the *ajnād* to organize his representations of northern and southern Syria could be seen as an early Mamluk-era attempt to bring some sort of order to a region that was in marked disorder.¹⁹ This is not to say that Ibn Shaddād's use of the *ajnād* to organize the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* acted as a policy recommendation for the Mamluk sultans, but it seems possible that Ibn Shaddād aspired to discursive order in making Syria Mamluk, even if the only ordering system at hand was the admittedly archaic *ajnād*. Furthermore, in the absence of contemporary administrative divisions by which to proceed in his representation, Ibn Shaddād's chapters cataloguing the towns, citadels, and rural areas associated with each of the six *ajnād* allowed him to provide a counterweight to the lengthy stand-alone representations he devoted to the cities of Aleppo and Damascus.²⁰ Thus, Ibn Shaddād established the geographical parameters and internal structure of the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah*, geographical parameters that explicitly demarcated Syria's borders and an internal structure that used the *jund* system to address each constituent part of the region systematically.

PERSONAL LOSS AND POLITICAL LOYALTY

The second major difference between Ibn Shaddād's representation of Syria and those prevalent in the discourse of place up to his time lies in the preface to the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* in which Ibn Shaddād personalized his relationship to his native country and highlighted nostalgia as a prime motivation for his composition of the work. Juxtaposed with this evocation of nostalgia was a panegyric to his newfound Mamluk patron in Cairo, Sultan Baybars. Ibn Shaddād's firsthand experience of

¹⁸For more on the Mamluk "mamlakah system," see Nicola A. Ziadeh, *Urban Life in Syria under the Early Mamluks* (Beirut, 1953), 11–24; and Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, 24–43.

¹⁹It must be said here, however, that Ibn Shaddād was not the first participant in the discourse of place to feature the obsolete *ajnād* in his representation of Syria. See, for instance, Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 3:311–15.

²⁰No manuscripts survive of his chapter on the *jund* of Homs, and it may never have been completed, but mention of it occurs in the table of contents Ibn Shaddād supplied at the beginning of the volume on northern Syria. See Ibn Shaddād (northern Syria), 7; and idem, *Description*, 1.



Mongol aggression, which coincided for most Syrians with the shift from the decentralization and instability of Ayyubid rule to the centralization and militancy of Mamluk rule, infused the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* with a sense of personal vulnerability mitigated by political optimism.

Although Syrian authors in the past had composed poetic representations of their hometowns that evoked feelings of nostalgia or homesickness, prose representations of Syrian localities had not generally communicated such explicitly personal perspectives.²¹ One exception was Usāmah ibn Munqidh's preface to his monumental anthology of poetry dedicated to loss and place, *Kitāb al-Manāzil wa-al-Diyār*, in which he described his decision to collect such poetry as a strategy for dealing with his own grief after the loss of his hometown of Shayzar in an earthquake in 552/1157.²² Not unlike Usāmah, Ibn Shaddād explained that the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* was inspired by the destruction of his hometown of Aleppo. However, unlike Usāmah's Shayzar, lost to a natural disaster, Ibn Shaddād's Aleppo—and with it most of Syria—was lost to a political and military enemy against whom retaliation was possible. Consequently, Ibn Shaddād combined nostalgia with a strong statement of political loyalty to Baybars, whose aggressive response to the Mongol occupation restored strong and legitimate Islamic rule to Syria.

On the subject of the sultan, Ibn Shaddād gushed:

I pastured among his flocks from rainy season to dry season, and I swaggered in the garments of his beneficence. And I made peace with my fate, now that it smiles upon me after the period of its scowling.²³

However, clearly Ibn Shaddād had not forgotten his previously scowling fate, as

²¹Like Ibn Shaddād, Ibn al-'Adīm fled Aleppo after the Mongol invasion and settled in Cairo. He did return once to Aleppo before his death in Cairo in 660/1262, and on that occasion he composed a poem mourning the Mongols' destruction of his hometown preserved in the as yet incompletely published *Iqd al-Jumān* of the ninth/fifteenth-century Egyptian historian al-'Aynī. For the manuscript reference and an excerpt from the elegy, see the editor's introduction in Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Halab min Tārikh Halab*, ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān (Damascus, 1951–68), 1:37–38. However, unlike the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah*, neither the *Bughyat al-Talab* nor the *Zubdat al-Halab* features nostalgia or the Mongol invasion in their representations of Aleppo and northern Syria. For earlier Crusader-era examples of nostalgic poetic representations of Syrian cities, see the poems cited in Emmanuel Sivan, "Réfugiés Syro-Palestiniens au temps des Croisades," *Revue des études islamiques* 35 (1967): 135–47.

²²Usāmah ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-Manāzil wa-al-Diyār*, ed. Muṣṭafá Ḥijāzī (Cairo, 1992), 3–4.

²³Ibn Shaddād (Aleppo), 2.



he continued:

The reason for my leaving a country in which I passed my childhood and in which I had brothers and friends, a country that I will never forget, even with the passing of time, and the name of which will continue to be repeated by the mouths of inkwells and the tongues of pens, was the entry of the God-forsaken Mongols into my country and their rupturing of the union of Muslims inhabiting it.²⁴

Thus, Ibn Shaddād identified Syria with childhood memories, never to be recovered, and the Mongol invasion with the disappearance of Muslim unity in Syrian territories.

After explaining that his composition of a history and topography of Syria sprang from his appreciation for the patronage of the Mamluk sultan, Ibn Shaddād switched back to a nostalgic note, adding that another motivation for his work was the love and longing he felt for his hometown of Aleppo and homeland of Syria. Anthologizing material on the subject of *al-hanīn ilā al-awṭān*, or "longing for homelands," had been a conventional practice in the early centuries of Arabic belletristic writing.²⁵ Harking back to this material, Ibn Shaddād justified his decision to open the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* with a volume dedicated to the topography of Aleppo by quoting 'Abd al-Malik ibn Qurayb al-Asma'ī, a philologist of early third/ninth-century Baghdad:

I have heard a Bedouin say that if you want to know a man, look at the manner of his showing love for his homeland, the manner of his longing for his brothers, and the manner of his crying for what has passed of his days.²⁶

Then Ibn Shaddād described his own manner of longing:

If it were not for the beneficence of the sultan and what God Almighty has made possible for him, I would spend all my time yearning for my homeland, and my soul would have become bewildered. But there is in his benefaction that which makes the

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵See Albert Arazi, "Al-hanīn ilā al-awṭān: Entre la Ġāhiliyya et l'Islam: Le Bédouin et le citadin reconcilierés," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 143, no. 2 (1993): 287–327; and Kathrin Müller, "Al-Hanīn ilā l-awṭān in Early Adab Literature," in *Myths, Historical Archetypes and Symbolic Figures in Arabic Literature*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth et al. (Beirut, 1999): 33–58.

²⁶Ibn Shaddād (Aleppo), 3.



émigré forget his homeland and that which returns one to the prime of his youth.²⁷

Ibn Shaddād's representation of Aleppo as his hometown and Syria as his homeland, a representation infused with nostalgia as well as political aspirations and hopes for the future, revealed a sense of belonging to a territorial entity at once local and increasingly translocal. Ibn Shaddād was, in effect, explaining that he was growing out of his former category of belonging, that of hometown and homeland, and growing into his new category of belonging, that of the Mamluk Empire.

Throughout the rest of the work Ibn Shaddād reinforced the dual motivations for composing the *A'lāq al-Khatīrah*, memorializing the losses imposed upon Syria by the Mongols and celebrating the future of Syria as part of a Mamluk state under Baybars. The volume on Aleppo is full of premonitions and portents of the city's destruction by Mongol armies in 658/1260. In one passage a prominent Aleppan Shi'i remembers an ancient prophecy foretelling the ruin of his city:

When the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ṣalāh al-Dīn Yūsuf began to rebuild the walls and towers of the city of Aleppo and to restore the two markets that had been constructed on the eastern side of Aleppo's Great Mosque, transferring the silk merchants to one of them and the coppersmiths to the other, one of the notables, chief men, and bigwigs of Aleppo, Bahā' al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'īd ibn al-Khashshāb al-Ḥalabī, said to me: "I am afraid that this prince is the one who settles in [Aleppo], renovates its walls, and restores its markets, only to have it all taken away." And that is exactly what happened, as predicted, in the year 658 [1259–60].²⁸

Ibn Shaddād's many descriptions of the destruction wreaked by the Mongols in Syria are often followed by accounts of Baybars' subsequent rehabilitation of the landscape, as in the following example dealing with the citadel of Damascus:

²⁷Ibid., 4.

²⁸Ibid., 14. Although the skepticism of the Ayyubid prince of Aleppo, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, implied by the recounting of this prophecy may have been prompted by Bahā' al-Dīn ibn al-Khashshāb's position as a Shi'i, according to his biography in Ibn al-'Adīm's *Bughyat al-Talab* he enjoyed warm relations with al-Nāṣir Yūsuf's grandfather, al-Zāhir Ghāzī, who appointed him supervisor of the Mashhad al-Ḥusayn, a Shi'i shrine dating from the Ayyubid period in Aleppo. See Ibn al-'Adīm, *Bughyat al-Talab fī Tārikh Halab*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut, n.d.), 5:2247; Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 72; and Yasser Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* (University Park, 1997), 112.



When the Mongols seized the country and occupied Damascus, they destroyed its battlements, tore down its towers, and demolished a lot of it. Then when our patron Sultan al-Malik al-Zāhir took possession of the citadel of Damascus, he renovated it, rebuilt it, and repaired what the cursed Mongols had destroyed of it.²⁹

In juxtaposing the devastation visited upon Syria, particularly upon its urban infrastructure, with the restoration and renovation for which Syrians had the Mamluk sultan Baybars to thank, Ibn Shaddād represented Syria as simultaneously lost to the Mongols and won to the Mamluk Empire.

Ibn Shaddād did not, however, associate depictions of the Mongol invasion with images of salvation and rehabilitation in his representation of the Jazīrah. By the time the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* was written in the mid to late 670s/1270s, Syria had been rid of Mongol occupation for over a decade, but the lands east of the Euphrates were either under Mongol suzerainty or were deserted no-man's-lands that hosted border skirmishes between Mamluks and Mongols through the first decades of the eighth/fourteenth century. Though Ibn Shaddād's Syria, once lost, found itself rescued, his al-Jazīrah remained lost. Ibn Shaddād opened the section on the Jazīrah with the following explanation:

In what has preceded of our book we have presented an account of Syria and the passing down of its towns from the hands of one king or prince to another. Here, we are awakening sympathy for [Syria] with an account of the Jazīrah and its first and last rulers until the time of its passing out of the hands of Muslims into the hands of the Mongols, may God deliver it from them.³⁰

Ibn Shaddād's representation of the Jazīrah in the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah*, therefore, was intended as an admonition, a cautionary tale meant to inspire continued vigilance along Syria's eastern borders. Consequently, he portrayed the Jazīrah as a corridor that had been effectively closed off for northern Syria, forcing Aleppo and its surroundings to look elsewhere—namely to the rest of Syria, Egypt, and the Mamluk Sultanate—for sustenance.

HISTORICAL TOPOGRAPHY

In emphasizing the rehabilitation of the Syrian landscape and redemption of the

²⁹Ibn Shaddād (Damascus), 40.

³⁰Ibn Shaddād (al-Jazīrah), 1:3–4.



Syrian people by the Mamluk sultans, Ibn Shaddād produced what may be the first fully integrated historical topography of Syria—in other words, the first detailed physical description of Syria blended with a political and institutional history. The structure and organization of the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* strongly suggest that Ibn Shaddād considered the way Syria “looked” a function of its recent history, particularly the history of the architectural patronage of its rulers.³¹ A comparison with Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Tārīkh Madinat Dimashq* and Ibn al-‘Adīm’s *Bughyat al-Talab* will clarify Ibn Shaddād’s contribution to the discourse of place in terms of historical topography. Whereas both Ibn ‘Asākir and Ibn al-‘Adīm followed their topographical descriptions of Damascus and Aleppo with voluminous biographical dictionaries of the religious scholars and notables of each city, Ibn Shaddād embedded prosopography and a paean to each city’s scholarly tradition in the topographical description itself through his innovative madrasah chapters; and whereas Ibn al-‘Adīm dedicated a separate work, the *Zubdat al-Halab min Tārīkh Halab*, to the recent political history of northern Syria and Ibn ‘Asākir satisfied his historiographical impulse with a lengthy chronicle of the early Islamic history of Syria in his introductory volume, Ibn Shaddād combined historiography and topography by explicitly tying political patronage to transformations of the urban and rural landscapes. Furthermore, though neither section survives, evidence from the extant manuscripts of the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* indicates that Ibn Shaddād appended or intended to append lists of the Islamic rulers of Damascus and Aleppo to their topographies.³² Thus, as the full title of the work, *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah fī Dhikr Umarā' al-Shām wa-al-Jazīrah*, implies, Ibn Shaddād saw places and princes as inextricably linked.

Ibn Shaddād’s volumes on the cities of Damascus and Aleppo make explicit their large debt to the earlier works by Ibn ‘Asākir and Ibn al-‘Adīm, thus reinforcing the importance of intertextual authority in producing and reproducing a discourse of place in and about Syria, but reflect an increased attention to the architectural patronage of each city’s elites during Ibn Shaddād’s lifetime, particularly the last Ayyubids and the first Mamluks. Ibn Shaddād opened these volumes with short chapters on the etymology of the toponyms “Dimashq” and “Halab,” précis of the ancient settlement of the sites, quick enumerations of their gates, and short descriptions of the construction and significance of their citadels. The citadel of Aleppo, commanding such a central position in that city’s topography and playing such an important role as both military fortification and royal habitation,

³¹For more on Ibn Shaddād’s interest in architecture, see Nasser Rabbat, “Perception of Architecture in Mamluk Sources,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 6 (2002): 155–76.

³²See Ibn Shaddād, *Description*, xiv–xv; *idem* (Damascus), 10.



understandably received a longer treatment than that of Damascus.³³ In this treatment, Ibn Shaddād demonstrated the close association of architectural patronage and urban topography that dominated the work as a whole, detailing the building projects initiated at the citadel complex by the Ayyubid prince of Aleppo al-Ζāhir Ghāzī and his son al-‘Azīz. These projects included both the renovation of military fortifications and the expansion and elaboration of the palace complex within the citadel, in addition to repairs and improvements made after a fire in 609/1212, until the Mongols' destruction of the citadel in 658/1260.³⁴

From the citadel sections, both topographies move immediately to accounts of the Great Mosques of Aleppo and Damascus and then enumerations of all the other mosques both inside and outside the walls of the two cities. The volume on Damascus reproduces Ibn ‘Asākir’s famous history of the construction of the Umayyad Mosque, as well as his inventories of the other mosques of Damascus, to which Ibn Shaddād simply appended brief enumerations of the mosques constructed since Ibn ‘Asākir’s time.³⁵ Ibn Shaddād’s main addition to this information was a chapter on the renovations and other building projects sponsored by the Ayyubid princes of Damascus and then by Baybars, including the *awqāf* established by the Mamluk sultan to support scholarly and socioeconomic activities in and around the Umayyad Mosque.³⁶ He also described four new Friday mosques constructed in the immediate suburbs of the city during the Ayyubid period, testifying to the urban sprawl associated with the influx of immigrants and refugees to Damascus during this period.³⁷ The chapter on the Great Mosque of Aleppo cobbles together similar information, relying mostly on material supplied by Ibn al-‘Adīm.³⁸ However, as the *Bughyat al-Talab* provides no comprehensive list of Aleppo’s mosques in the manner of the *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, Ibn Shaddād’s mosque list for Aleppo, which consists merely of the name of each mosque, was probably based on his personal familiarity with the city.³⁹

The centerpieces of Ibn Shaddād’s urban topographies, however, are without a doubt their chapters on the madrasahs. These chapters, which may have been the first of their kind in the discourse of place, divide the madrasahs of Aleppo and

³³ See Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power*, 53–96.

³⁴ Ibn Shaddād (Aleppo), 24–27.

³⁵ Ibn Shaddād (Damascus), 127–31, 157–66.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 75–81.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 86–88.

³⁸ Ibn Shaddād (Aleppo), 30–42. Since the *A’lāq al-Khaṭīrah* was composed after Ibn Shaddād’s emigration from his hometown, his mosque list for Aleppo may have been compiled primarily from memory.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 59–93.



Damascus by school of law and then provide for each entry the name of the founder and the chief ulama active in the madrasah from the date of its foundation up to and, especially for Damascus, beyond the Mongol invasion of Syria in 658/1259–60.⁴⁰ In the *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, Ibn ‘Asākir mentioned those madrasahs housed in or connected to one of the mosques he inventoried, but furnished no other detail about their foundation or function. The three Madrasah al-Nūriyahs that made it into Ibn ‘Asākir’s mosque inventory, however, substantiate the conclusion reached in recent secondary scholarship that the reign of Nūr al-Dīn in Damascus marked the start of an efflorescence of the madrasah in Syrian cities.⁴¹ Ibn Shaddād’s lists reinforce this conclusion and capture the subsequent development of the madrasah system in Syria’s two major cities.

Out of some ninety madrasahs Ibn Shaddād listed for Damascus, only a handful date from before Nūr al-Dīn’s reign,⁴² and only one of the approximately fifty listed for Aleppo predate the Zangid prince.⁴³ The vast majority of the madrasahs Ibn Shaddād described in both cities carried endowments established during the Ayyubid period, and, unlike his other topographical chapters, the madrasah chapters feature no building projects either carrying a new endowment or expanding an older one that date from the Mamluk period. Thus, these chapters celebrate the architectural legacy of the Ayyubid era, both the princely patronage of madrasahs and the increasing frequency of private patronage of such structures among both cities’ civilian elites.⁴⁴ In fact, the nearly equal numbers of Shafi‘i and Hanafi madrasahs—and a significant number of Hanbali madrasahs in Damascus—endowed between the reign of Saladin and that of al-Nāṣir Yūsuf testify to the varied sources of such patronage in this period.

Ibn Shaddād did not order the madrasahs he listed for Aleppo and Damascus

⁴⁰Ibid., 96–122; idem (Damascus), 199–266. See also the following partial translation and commentary on Ibn Shaddād’s chapter on Aleppo’s madrasahs: Dominique Sourdel, “Les professeurs de madrasa à Alep aux XIIe–XIIIe siècles,” *Bulletin d’études orientales* 13 (1949–51): 85–115.

⁴¹For the history of the madrasah as an institution, see J. Pedersen (G. Makdisi), “Madrasa,” *EI*², 5:1123–54; and George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges* (Edinburgh, 1981). For a study of architectural patronage, of which the madrasah formed a significant part, in Ayyubid Damascus, see R. Stephen Humphreys, “Politics and Architectural Patronage in Ayyubid Damascus,” in *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times*, ed. C. E. Bosworth et al. (Princeton, 1989), 151–74. For the architectural innovations and symbolic meanings of madrasahs in Ayyubid Aleppo, see Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power*, 123–61.

⁴²Ibn Shaddād (Damascus), 199–203 (nos. 1–3), 229–32 (nos. 35–37), 246–47 (no. 64).

⁴³Ibn Shaddād (Aleppo), 96–98.

⁴⁴This is a topic addressed in Humphreys, “Politics and Architectural Patronage”; and in Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge, 1994), 27–90.



in terms of their physical layout in the city, and consequently the role the lists played in the representation of the two cities rested much more on their inscription of a scholarly tradition into an urban landscape than on their ordering of that landscape. Similarly, despite his interest in architectural detail manifested in frequent descriptions of recent building projects sponsored by, in particular, the last major Syrian Ayyubid al-Nāṣir Yūsuf and the Mamluk Baybars, Ibn Shaddād's chapters on the madrasahs include very few descriptions of the structures themselves, apart from mentioning mausoleums, gardens, or other physical additions to their endowments.⁴⁵ The text under each entry in Ibn Shaddād's lists, rather, was devoted almost completely to the ulama assigned to teach in the madrasahs. Some entries furnished detailed biographical information about these scholars, including birthplace, education, travels, accomplishments, relationship to the founder, and teaching posts occupied earlier or concurrently.

Thus, these lists functioned in much the same way, though on a smaller scale, as did the biographical volumes of the *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq* and the *Bughyat al-Ṭalab*, representing the city through its human heritage of Islamic scholarship. What was different about the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah*, however, was that it embedded this human heritage in the urban topography, rather than appending it to an introductory topography. Ibn Shaddād's madrasah lists represented Damascus and Aleppo by plotting their scholarly elites directly onto a prose map of the city. Furthermore, the distinctive features of these prose maps, particularly the madrasahs, reflected the very recent past, specifically the Ayyubid period, rather than any perceived former apex of Islamic learning or civilization, such as that suggested by the attention Ibn 'Asākir lavished on the construction of the Umayyad Mosque. Ibn Shaddād's madrasah chapters, therefore, exemplified his approach to representing cities by integrating recent history, biography, and topography and highlighting the human role, particularly the elite role, in defining place through architectural patronage and religious scholarship.

As mentioned above, however, Ibn Shaddād did not reduce his representation of Syria to its two urban centers and their immediate hinterlands. The *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* also represented the towns, villages, and, to a certain extent, the rural landscape of Syria in volumes that divided the region by *jund* and furnished micro-historical topographies for each site mentioned. In these sections, Ibn Shaddād devoted more space to the social, economic, and political status of the towns and villages that made up Syria than to basic topography.⁴⁶ In the cases of the sizable towns, however, the building projects endowed by a succession of princes remained

⁴⁵See Rabbat, "Perception of Architecture," 168–70.

⁴⁶For an exception, see his chapter on the mountains of the *jund* of Damascus: Ibn Shaddād (southern Syria), 35–38.



chief components of Ibn Shaddād's representations of localities, representations that, as we have seen, married architectural and political history.⁴⁷

Ibn Shaddād's treatment of northern Syria took the topographical information supplied by the introduction to Ibn al-'Adīm's *Bughyat al-Talab* and some of the historical material from his *Zubdat al-Halab* and brought it up to date, recording military and political events of note for the sites listed in each *jund* through the reign of Sultan Baybars.⁴⁸ The chapter on the Thughūr, while starting like the previous chapter on the *jund* of Qinnasrīn with a site-by-site inventory, ends with a chronicle of the military campaigns conducted by the armies of Islamic regimes in the district as a whole, starting with the conquest period and listing the campaigns by year, and then vaulting forward in history through the Hamdanid period and beyond. These later sections convey the gradual loss of territory in the region and a waning zeal for confrontations along this frontier.⁴⁹ The length of this chronicle testifies to Ibn Shaddād's emphasis on historiography within a topographical framework and suggests his preoccupation with the contested status of the land of Syria, an undisputable reality as well as a touchstone for the collective memory of Syrians during his lifetime.

One of the discursive innovations of the *A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* was not simply that Ibn Shaddād subjected Syria's towns, villages, and rural areas to both historical and topographical study, but that in presenting a systematic geography of southern Syria at all he was undertaking a relatively new enterprise, as, to my knowledge, no one had performed for southern Syria what Ibn al-'Adīm had for northern Syria since the time of the third/ninth- and fourth/tenth-century geographers.⁵⁰ Ibn Shaddād's volume on southern Syria reflected an even more recent historical perspective than did that on northern Syria, presumably because Ibn Shaddād was active in Baybars' retinue in southern Syria throughout the 670s/1270s. While he carried the histories of most of the northern Syrian localities up through 674/1275, he recorded events for most of the southern Syrian localities through 678/1279. It was in these chapters that Ibn Shaddād displayed his abiding interest in the building and renovation projects sponsored by Baybars in the aftermath of Mongol

⁴⁷ See Rabbat, "Perception of Architecture," 168–70.

⁴⁸ Another new feature of these chapters is his inclusion of information on the revenues of certain towns and districts, starting with Aleppo, information to which he had access as a financial inspector for the Ayyubid al-Nāṣir Yūsuf. See, for instance, Ibn Shaddād (Aleppo), 150–53; *idem* (northern Syria), 26–28, 470–71.

⁴⁹ Ibn Shaddād (northern Syria), 196–349.

⁵⁰ The inventory of pilgrimage sites for southern Syria presented in 'Alī al-Harawī's early seventh/thirteenth-century *Kitāb al-Ishārāt ilá Ma'rifat al-Ziyārāt* could be seen as a specialized exception.



depredations in Palestine and Jordan.⁵¹ Ibn Shaddād also paid particular attention in these chapters to the citadels and urban fortifications of southern Syria and their role in the conflicts of the era, including their destruction and refortification by successive rulers.⁵² As in the volume on northern Syria, Ibn Shaddād, like Ibn al-‘Adīm before him, included towns and areas not under Muslim control in his topographical inventory; however, unlike Ibn al-‘Adīm, Ibn Shaddād provided detailed information on and histories of these localities despite their having yet to reenter the Muslim fold.⁵³ The representation of these localities suggests Ibn Shaddād’s optimistic outlook, a confidence in the Mamluk Empire as the reigning power in Syria, if not quite yet in all of its constituent parts.

MAKING SYRIA MAMLUK

In a recent article, Yehoshu‘a Frenkel examines evidence from epigraphical, documentary, and literary sources to argue that Baybars vigorously endowed *awqāf* to construct shrines, mosques, and Sufi lodges throughout the Syrian countryside, associating new territories with Islam in general and with Mamluk rule and patronage in particular.⁵⁴ In so doing, Baybars was not only “Islamizing” the Syrian landscape by superimposing Islamic institutions and memorials on existing sites commemorating pre-Islamic figures but also integrating rural areas into the newly consolidated Syrian provinces of the Mamluk Empire through construction projects that had been confined in earlier periods primarily to urban areas. Though Frenkel uses the *A‘lāq al-Khaṭīrah* in his study, the literary sources upon which he relies most heavily are two biographies of Baybars, one of which was written by Ibn Shaddād, the other by an Egyptian contemporary of his, Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir.⁵⁵ These works take Baybars himself as the object of representation and his architectural patronage in Syria as one aspect of that representation. The *A‘lāq al-Khaṭīrah*, on the other hand, takes Syria as the object of its representation and the architectural

⁵¹For one example, see Ibn Shaddād (southern Syria), 237.

⁵²For examples, see *ibid.*, 53–54 (Baalbek), 55–64 (citadel of Şarkhad), 69–81 (al-Karak and al-Shawbak), 83–91 (al-Şalt and ‘Ajlūn), 115–20 (Hıṣn al-Akrād “Crac des Chevaliers”), and 146–51 (Şafad).

⁵³See, for instance, *ibid.*, 113–20. While Ibn al-‘Adīm indicated when and how various northern Syrian towns or strongholds fell into the hands of the Crusaders or Armenians, he did so in an almost perfunctory manner and then proceeded to describe the sites using material dating from before the non-Muslim occupation, as if to gloss over the reality of that occupation.

⁵⁴Yehoshu‘a Frenkel, “Baybars and the Sacred Geography of *Bilād al-Shām*: A Chapter in the Islamization of Syria’s Landscape,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2002): 153–70.

⁵⁵Ibn Shaddād, *Tārikh al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. Ahmet Hüseyin (Wiesbaden, 1983); Muhyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir (d. 691/1292), *Al-Rawd al-Zāhir fī Sirat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Khuwayrī (Riyadh, 1976).



patronage of its rulers as one aspect, albeit a central one, of that representation.

Thus, Frenkel has amassed considerable evidence of an "Islamization" of the Syrian countryside that was intended to legitimize Baybars' rule in the provinces—in a political and physical sense, to make Syria Mamluk. Ibn Shaddād's *Al-Ā'lāq al-Khaṭīrah* can be seen as the discursive corollary to this political and physical campaign. Drawing on a centuries-old discourse of place, Ibn Shaddād constructed a historical topography that integrated recent political history and architectural patronage with site-by-site inventories of Syrian cities and countryside. He self-consciously relied on his predecessors in the discourse of place, notably Ibn 'Asākir and Ibn al-'Adīm, to fill out his representations of Damascus, Aleppo, and northern Syria, but furnished new information throughout the work, though especially on southern Syria, to bring his representation up to date, reflecting the most recent transformations of the Syrian landscape initiated by Mamluk sultans.

Though its timing, explicit dedication to Baybars, and details of Mamluk-sponsored construction projects in Syria rendered the *A'�āq al-Khaṭīrah* a discursive corollary to what Frenkel describes as Baybars' "Islamization" of Syria, the strong presence of Ayyubid patronage in the work suggests significant continuities between the Ayyubid and Mamluk period in terms of Ibn Shaddād's aforementioned association of princes and place. Particularly in the chapters dealing with northern Syria and those on the madrasahs of Damascus and Aleppo, Ayyubids appear as often as—if not more often than—Mamluks as founders, endowers, and patrons of the built environment. Though it was composed after the Ayyubid period had all but drawn to a close, the relationship between the Ayyubid princes and Syrian topography is much more explicit in the *A'�āq al-Khaṭīrah* than it is even in the introduction to Ibn al-'Adīm's *Bughyat al-Talab*, a product of Ayyubid-era Aleppo. Nonetheless, it was Baybars who was, in Ibn Shaddād's frequent formulation, "Şāhib al-Diyār al-Miṣrīyah wa-al-Shāmīyah" (Lord of the Egyptian and Syrian Districts), uniting Egypt and Syria as separate but equal—and equally Mamluk—territorial entities. And it is the presence of Baybars throughout the *A'�āq al-Khaṭīrah* that evokes its dominant category of belonging: that of the Mamluk Empire.



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Fiscal Administration in Syria during the Reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad

As Claude Cahen has suggested in his well-known article on the taxation system in Syria,¹ very few sources remain for the fiscal administration of this province during the medieval period, while we find relatively ample sources on the subject for Egypt. Cahen's article examines some unique information on the *kharāj* tax in Syria provided by Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333) in his *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*.² The article is quite useful for understanding the economic and fiscal circumstances in Mamluk Syria, but the content is far too general, and the French translation of the text suffers from several omissions and careless mistakes. Then there is the work of Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, which gives a general description of agriculture in Egypt and Syria during the Mamluk period based on the *Nihāyat al-Arab*, but emphasizes likewise the situation in Egypt.³ Yehoshua Frenkel's recent article,⁴ although discussing the *iqtā'* and agrarian taxation systems in Syria during the Mamluk period, curiously does not refer to al-Nuwayrī. When I was studying agricultural production and rural life in Egypt from the twelfth to the fourteenth century,⁵ I also found a comparison with Syria difficult due to the scarcity of Syrian sources on the subject.

Consequently, the present article first takes up al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-Arab*, translating the original text into English and annotating the terms related to Syrian agriculture and its taxation system during the early Mamluk period. An attempt is then made to describe innovations in the agrarian taxation system by examining the results of cadastral surveys (*rawks*) in Syria carried out during the third reign

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¹Claude Cahen, "Aperçu sur les impôts du sol en Syrie au moyen âge," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 18 (1975): 233–44.

²Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* (Cairo, 1954–97).

³Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, "L'agriculture dans l'empire Mamluk au moyen âge d'après al-Nuwayrī," *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 22 (1974): 23–45.

⁴Yehoshua Frenkel, "Agriculture, Land-Tenure and Peasants in Palestine during the Mamluk Period," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras III*, ed. U. Vermeulen and J. van Steenbergen (Leuven, 2001), 193–208.

⁵Sato Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam: Sultans, Muqta's and Fallahun* (Leiden, 1997), 177–233.



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of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (709–741/1310–41).⁶

THE TAXATION SYSTEM IN SYRIA AS DESCRIBED BY AL-NUWAYRĪ

Since he held the post of *nāzir al-jaysh* in the Syrian coastal town of Tripoli during the years 710–12/1311–13, al-Nuwayrī should have had ample knowledge of the agrarian taxation system in Syria during the early Mamluk period. He began to write the *Nihāyat al-Arab*, his main treatise, just after he returned to Cairo from Tripoli in 712/1313.⁷ In one chapter of volume eight, he attempts to explain the *kharāj* tax in Syria as follows:

[THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION OF *AL-WASMĪ*]⁸

Concerning the *kharāj* tax in Syria and the duties of officials (*mubāshir*). The fiscal tradition (*qānūn*) in Syria has been formed according to the natural condition of rainfall, the beginning of the rainy season, and the season requiring rainfall. The *wasmī* rain means literally "spring rain," but it is actually rain that falls in the autumn. As soon as it begins to rain, fields are plowed and sown. The seed is then covered with soil to prevent birds from eating it. When the second rain comes [pp. 255/256], the seed sprouts, and buds appear on the ground. The sprouts are called "dark green" (*ahwā*). They continue to be irrigated by rain until it turns the ground into a rapid stream. When the last rains (*al-maṭar al-fāṭim*) come—mostly during the month of Nisan [April]—it bears fruit and comes to an end according to the cultivation cycle. This is the mode of production called "*al-wasmī*."

Al-‘Umarī (701–49/1301–49) also relates that in Syria most of the crops are cultivated in accordance with a regimen determined by seasonal rainfall, while fields irrigated by rivers are few.⁹ It is interesting to find that the annual cycle of

⁶On the cadastral surveys in Mamluk Egypt and Syria, see Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 122–61; Heinz Halm, *Ägypten nach den mamlukischen Lehenregistern* (Wiesbaden, 1979), 1:17–30; Hassanein Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt A.H. 564–741/A.D. 1169–1341* (London, 1972), 52–56. Aziz S. Atiya edited the Arabic text of the decree by Sultan al-Nāṣir for the cadastral survey in 715/1315 ("A Mamlūk 'Magna Carta,'" in *Arab Civilization: Challenges and Responses: Studies in Honor of Constantine K. Zurayk*, ed. George N. Atiyeh and Ibrahim M. Oweiss [Albany, 1988], 128–39).

⁷Amīnah Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn, *Al-Nuwayrī wa-Kitābuhu Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* (Cairo, 1984), 64–72.

⁸[] indicates a heading to the quotation added by the present author.

⁹Al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār*, ed. Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid (Cairo, 1985), 25.



agricultural production is closely related also with the weaning rain of April. However, as the next paragraph shows, the peasants in Syria did not enjoy the *wasmī* rain every year, which forced them to cultivate only half of their fields on a rotating basis.

[THE TWO-FIELD SYSTEM]

Within Syria there are some districts where the *wasmī* rain is delayed and people have to sow dry fields. That is to say, they have to plant before the rain comes and then wait anxiously for its arrival. When they seed in this way and it does not rain, the seed remains ungerminated in the earth until the next year. Disappointed, people resorted to planting on the half of their field left fallow the year before. . . . The whole area of Syria follows the custom of every peasant (*fallāh*)¹⁰ dividing his arable land in half and cultivating one half only. The fallow part is plowed to receive sunshine, but planted the next year. The cultivated field this year is to be left fallow the next year. This is the custom in Syria, which is different from Egypt, where all arable land is cultivated every year.¹¹ . . . Even in Syria, when it does rain, both fields are cultivated and produce double yields, but it is extremely rare [pp. 256/257].

According to this citation, most Syrian peasants cultivated their land on the basis of a "two field system" in order to maintain fertility. Al-Nuwayrī points out the difference from Egypt, where arable land was cultivated every year thanks to the annual inundation from the Nile for winter crops and a highly developed irrigation system for summer crops.¹²

[WINTER CROPS AND SUMMER CROPS]

In Syria there are some fields irrigated by rivers¹³ and springs,

¹⁰ Al-Nuwayrī calls the Syrian peasant "*fallāh*," except for *muzāri' dhimmī* (*dhimmī* cultivator) (*Nihāyat al-Arab*, 8:256, 259), while calling the Egyptian peasant both *fallāh* and *muzāri'* (*Nihāyat al-Arab*, 8:245, 246, 251).

¹¹ On Egyptian agriculture during the medieval ages, see Gladys Frantz-Murphy, *The Agrarian Administration of Egypt from the Arabs to the Ottomans* (Cairo, 1986); Hassanein Rabie, "Some Technical Aspects of Agriculture in Medieval Egypt," in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900*, ed. Abraham C. Udovitch (Princeton, 1981), 59–90; Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 177–233.

¹² On the irrigation system in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, see Hassanein Rabie, "Some Technical Aspects," 59–90; Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 220–33.

¹³ In Syria water wheels powered by rivers were called *nā'ūrah* (pl. *nawā'īr*), while in Egypt water wheels driven by oxen were called *maħāl* (al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 8:254; Chapoutot-Remadi,



where the rate of the sharecrop (*muqāsamah*) and the price of privately-held land (*qīmat al-amlāk*) are higher than those of arable land irrigated by rainfall. This is common in lowlands (*al-arādī al-mustafīlah*). Allah knows best.

The collectors of the *kharāj* tax (*mubāshir al-kharāj*) have the following duties: they first order the village heads (*ra'īs al-balad*)¹⁴ to classify their fields into cultivated (*zirā'ah*) and fallow (*kirāb*), for which they use the terms "red" (*ahmar*) and "green" (*akhḍar*). In the case of both winter crops (*shatawī*) and summer crops (*sayfī*), red means a fallow field and green a cultivated one. Winter crops are wheat (*qamh*), barley (*sha'īr*), oats (*shūfān*), broad beans (*fūl*), chick-peas (*himmiṣ*), lentils (*'adas*), vetches (*kirsinnah*),¹⁵ grass peas (*julubbān*)¹⁶ and another kind of pea (*bistūlyah*).¹⁷ The last one is called *bisillī* in Egypt and *hālbah* in the coastal region of Tripoli.¹⁸ Summer crops are sorghum (*dhurah*), pearl millet (*dukhn*), sesame (*simsim*), rice (*aruzz*), black sorghum (*habbah sawdā'*), coriander (*kusbarah*), cucumbers (*maqāthī'*), indigo (*wasmah*), saffron (*qirtam*),¹⁹ cotton (*quṭn*), and hemp (*qinnab*).

Ibn Mammātī (d. 606/1209), a clerk from a well-known Coptic family, cites other winter crops in Egypt in addition to the ones described above: flax (*kattān*), trefoil (*qurt*), onions (*baṣal*), garlic (*thūm*), and lupine (*turmus*).²⁰ Winter crops not cited by Ibn Mammātī are vetch and the "other kind of pea." As for summer crops, Ibn Mammātī cites other Egyptian crops as cumin (*kammūn*), caraway (*karawayā*), turnips (*saljam*), melons (*baṭṭīkh*), green beans (*lūbiyā*), sugar cane (*qaṣab al-sukkar*), taro (*qulqās*), eggplant (*bādhinjān*), Nile sesame (*simsim nīlī*), lettuce (*khaṣṣ*), cabbage (*kurunb*), and onions (*baṣal*). Summer crops not cited by Ibn Mammātī are sorghum, pearl millet, black sorghum, coriander, cucumbers, saffron,

"L'agriculture," 25; Rabie, "Some Technological Aspects," 71).

¹⁴In Syria, as well as in Egypt, *balad* was often used to mean an administrative village, a unit for calculating the annual revenue, while *qaryah* usually indicated a village formed naturally. See Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 179. Accordingly, *ra'īs al-balad* should be translated as "village head," although Cahen explains it as "notables du pays," ("Aperçu," 236).

¹⁵Cahen mistransliterates it as "*kirsīnah*." ("Aperçu," 236).

¹⁶This term is omitted in Cahen's translation (*ibid.*).

¹⁷This term is omitted in Cahen's translation (*ibid.*).

¹⁸This passage reflects al-Nuwayrī's experience living in Tripoli for about two years.

¹⁹This term is omitted in Cahen's translation ("Aperçu," 236).

²⁰Ibn Mammātī, *Kitāb Qawānīn al-Dawāwīn*, ed. A. S. Atiya (Cairo, 1943), 258–64. See Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 198.



and hemp. According to al-‘Umarī, Syrian summer crop vegetables include yellow and green melons (*batṭīkh asfar wa-akhḍar*), cucumbers (*khiyār, qiththā’*), squash (*yaqtīn*), turnips (*lift*), carrots (*jazar*), cauliflower (*qunnabīṭ*), asparagus (*hilyawn*), eggplant (*bādhinjān*), Jew’s mallow (*mulūkhīyah*), Yemenite herbs (*baqlah yamanīyah*), purslane (*rijlah*), etc.²¹ As we will discuss later, sugar cane was also cultivated in the southern coastal region of Syria on a smaller scale than in Egypt.

[*MUQĀSAMAH*]

Then, *mubāshirs* write notices (*mashārīh*) to the village heads²² directing them not to allow peasants to let their lands lie fallow, for if they do, fines will be levied on them for their negligence. When the fields are cultivated, the crops are progressing satisfactorily, and broad beans begin to be harvested, agents (*wakīl*)²³ go to the fields to protect the crops against damage and direct the peasants to harvest and carry the crops to the threshing floors (*baydar*). At this time, orders are given to secure the crops carried to the threshing floors. When the peasants finish threshing the crops, the threshing floors are cleaned and nothing is left except the chaff (*midhran*).... The winnowing is done as follows. Agents order the awns to be separated from the chaff, leaving clean awns on the threshing floors. Agents (*wālī al-‘amal*) and *mubāshirs* come and divide the crops on the threshing floors according to the local taxation systems, and the tradition of sharecropping (*muqāsamah*), the government’s share being determined at the following rates: 1/2 in the case of the irrigated fields, 1/3 or 1/4 in most of the districts, 1/5 or 1/6 for fields where there are no tenant farmers (*mustakrin*) to cultivate them, 1/7 and 1/8 in the coastal lands and the regions adjacent to hostile countries.

Frenkel explains²⁴ that the *kharāj* tax was also called *muqāsamah* in Mamluk Syria. The above citation shows precisely how *muqāsamah* was levied on the threshing floors and how the government’s share was determined, depending on the various conditions of the cultivated fields. Cahen relates that the government’s

²¹ Al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 25.

²² Cahen translates this passage as follows: "Et on leur (aux paysans) écrit les états détaillés *mashārih*" ("Aperçu," 236). However, "leur" probably indicates "village heads" rather than "peasants" (paysans).

²³ The term *wakīl* probably indicates the agents of the *mubāshir*.

²⁴ Frenkel, "Agriculture, Land-tenure and Peasants," 203.



share varied from 1/2 to 1/8 according to field conditions;²⁵ however, it should be emphasized that the *kharāj* rates of 1/3 and 1/4 were levied "in most districts" during the Mamluk period. In Upper Egypt under the Mamluks, the *kharāj* was levied in kind, either 2 or 3 *ardabbs* per feddan, the former for wheat and the latter for barley. Estimating the average yield per feddan as 10 *ardabbs* of wheat, 2–3 *ardabbs* implies rates of 2/10–3/10,²⁶ which are similar to those applied in Syria.

[THE PEASANTS' SHARE AND THE '*USHR*']

After the harvest, the *mubāshirs* take the share proper for the government (*dīwān*). Then crops (*ghallah*), awns (*qaṣal*), straw remains, and chaff are approximated. The government's share is to be divided according to the *muqāsamah*, while the peasants (*fallāḥi*) are granted their portion according to each local taxation system. In some districts the portion is half of the crops (*muwāṣaṭah*), which is set aside for them. After miscellaneous taxes (*rusūm*) are deducted from the peasants' share (*hāṣil al-fallāḥ*), the tithe ('*ushr*) is levied on the remainder. However, this is not uniformly practiced in every district, because the '*ushr*' is not levied on *waqf* or land allocated as charity (*birr*), except the fields on which levying tax is legal. In the districts of the sultan's domains (*khāṣṣah*) and the *iqtā'*s, one part in ten²⁷ is levied on the peasant's share, the assessed amount of which deceases or increases. Furthermore, in some districts '*ushr*' is not levied on *dhimmī* cultivators (*al-muzāri‘ūn al-dhimmīyah*).²⁸ As for the *iqtā'*s and privately owned land (*milk*) where '*ushr*' is levied for the government, in some districts the estimated rate of tax is levied every year regardless of whether the harvest is abundant or poor, while in other districts trusted persons visit to estimate the amount of produce and the amount of '*ushr*'. The estimate is done prior to threshing, while the crops are still standing in the fields or during harvesting. After that, the peasants [pp. 259/260] pay back the amount of their seed (*taqāwī*) and other loans (*qurd*). This payment is set aside to be used for seed the following year.

²⁵Cahen, "Aperçu," 238.

²⁶Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 148–49, 198.

²⁷The reason why this is not called '*ushr*' escapes me.

²⁸Cahen translates *al-muzāri‘ūn al-dhimmīyah* as only *dhimmī* ("Aperçu," 237) for some reason.



The above text tells us that peasants were given their portion, which was half of the crops in some districts, after the *mubāshirs* took the government's share; then miscellaneous taxes were first deducted from that portion and the 'ushr was levied on the remainder in some districts. As for *taqāwī* in Mamluk Egypt, al-Nuwayrī also relates, "the *mubāshir* registers the total amount of revenue in cash and crops, and adds to it the *taqāwī*, loan (*qurd*), tithe ('ushr), and surcharge for every peasant's name."²⁹ He adds, "In some districts, one takes one hundred and eleven for every hundred lent. Recently such a usurious *taqāwī* has become widespread."³⁰ However, al-Nuwayrī does not make clear whether or not the Syrian *taqāwī* was to be returned with the 'ushr and surcharge.

[LEDGER (*MAKHZŪMAH*)]

Then every kind of crop is estimated in *kayl*,³¹ the unit of measure common to each district. A ledger (*makhzūmah*) is customarily made to record peasant names, the rates of *muqāsamah*, miscellaneous taxes, the 'ushr, and the *taqāwī* and *qurd* to be repaid. The districts (*nāhiyah*) are classified in each administrative province ('*amal*), and on each ledger the income (*mutaḥaṣṣil*) from every kind of crop is recorded, which will be explained later. These are the duties to be performed by the *mubāshirs*.

Cahen understands the *makhzūmah* in Egypt to be a ledger that certifies the taxes to be paid by peasants.³² The *mutaḥaṣṣil* implies the gross amount of village or *iqtā'* income in cash ('ayn) and kind (*ghallah*). It formed the basis for calculating the 'ibrah, or the annual revenue of a village, town, or *iqtā'*, estimated in cash by the government in medieval Egypt and Syria.³³

[NUT TREES AND OTHER CROPS]

Carob (*kharrūb*), olives (*zaytūn*), cotton (*quṭn*), sumac (*summāq*), pistachios (*fustuq*), walnuts (*jawz*), almonds (*lawz*), and rice (*aruzz*) are managed by agents (*wakīl*) until the harvest season, and estimated into *mutaḥaṣṣil* after they are taxed. . . . In some districts of Syria, the work is entrusted to their owners separately (*mafṣūlan*). At

²⁹Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 8:252. See Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 204.

³⁰Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 8:252.

³¹In Damascus 1 *kayl* was equal to about 22 liters and in Aleppo 6.56 liters (Walther Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gewichte* [Leiden, 1955], 40).

³²Claude Cahen, *Makhzūmiyyāt* (Leiden, 1977), 50.

³³Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 245, 253.



harvest time, the tax is levied in ways other than collection by a *wakīl* (*tawkīl*), or sharecropping (*muqāsamah*). This is equivalent to the rent system (*muta'ajjirāt*) [pp. 260/261] in Egypt. Incidentally, the term *faṣal* in Syria originates from a Frankish term [vassal]. *Faṣal* has been practiced customarily in the coastal regions recovered from the Franks.

The crops cited above are various nut trees and specific summer crops, like carob, cotton, and rice. Sumac, pistachio, walnut, and almond trees are peculiar to the mountainous region of Syria and are not found on the Egyptian plain. Al-‘Umarī provides us with further information on Syrian plants bearing figs (*tīn*), grapes (*‘inab*), pomegranates (*rummān*), quince (*safarjal*), apples (*tuffāh*), pears (*kummithrā*, *ijjāṣ*), plums (*qarāṣiyā*), mulberries (*tūt*), mulberry trees (*qirsād*),³⁴ apricots (*mishmish*), medlar (*zu'rūr*), and plums (*khawkh*).³⁵ As for the *tawkīl* (tax collection by agent), Cahen seems to mistake it for "measurer,"³⁶ which he considers to originate probably from measure (*kayl*). However, the Arabic text does not read *kayl*, but rather *tawkīl*. Also, al-Nuwayrī's final comment on *faṣal* seems to refer to his previous expression, "*mafsūlan*" (separately).

FISCAL INNOVATION THROUGH CADASTRAL SURVEYS

The excerpt above entitled [The Peasants' Share and the 'Ushr] reflects the variety of legal land categories in Syria under Mamluk rule. These included land managed by the government (*dīwān*) and *waqf*, the sultan's domain (*khāṣṣah*), *iqtā'*, and privately owned land (*milk*). Among these land holdings, *iqtā'* assignments granted by sultans to *mamlūk* and *ḥalqah* (free born) cavalrymen³⁷ were crucial in the formation of the state order in Egypt and Syria during the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. The amirs and soldiers who were granted *iqtā'*s were obliged to provide military service to the sultan and were granted authority to levy taxes on peasants and local townspeople.³⁸ Thus, they were always eager to acquire better *iqtā'*s,

³⁴The term *qirsād* is unknown. *Qirsād* should be read as *firsād* (mulberry-tree). See al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 17.

³⁵Ibid., 25.

³⁶Cahen, "Aperçu," 238.

³⁷During the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, "*ḥalqah*" denoted a free-born cavalryman, like a Kurd, an Arab, or a son of a *mamlūk* (*awlād al-nās*). On the *ḥalqah* cavalry, see David Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army, II," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15 (1953): 449–76; Ulrich Haarmann, "The Sons of Mamluks as Fief-Holders in Late Medieval Egypt," in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, ed. T. Khalidi (Beirut, 1984), 141–68.

³⁸On the *iqtā'* system, see Claude Cahen, "L'évolution de l'*iqtā'* du IXe au XIIIe siècle," *Annales*,



and consequently, in the course of time, the *iqtā'* also came to be called *khubz* (bread), in reference to the necessity it represented in a cavalryman's everyday life.³⁹

In order to adjust the taxes to be levied, the rulers in Egypt had conducted intermittent cadastral surveys (*rawk*) since the early Islamic period.⁴⁰ The Mamluk sultans also carried out cadastres, like *al-Rawk al-Husāmī* in Egypt under Ḥusām al-Dīn Lājīn (reign 696–98/1296–99) in 697/1298 and *al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī* in Egypt and Syria by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (693–694/1293–94, 698–708/1299–1309, 709–741/1310–41) in 713/1313 (Syria), 715/1315 (Egypt), 717/1317 (Tripoli) and 725/1325 (Aleppo).⁴¹ The Syrian cadastre covered the regions of Damascus, Hims, Baalbek, Gaza, Şafad, and Sidon, but excluded the regions of Tripoli and Aleppo.⁴² Here I would like to take up the three cadastres of Syria, Tripoli, and Aleppo and discuss the innovation that was made in the agrarian taxation system there as a result. Following al-Nuwayrī,⁴³ they are known as *Rawk al-Iqtā'āt bi-al-Shām* (Syria), *Rawk al-Mamlakah al-Tarābulusīyah* (Tripoli), and *Rawk al-Iqtā'āt bi-al-Mamlakah al-Halabīyah* (Aleppo).

RAWK AL-IQTĀ'ĀT BI-AL-SHĀM IN 713/1313: SYRIA

The person who proposed to Sultan al-Nāṣir that *rawks* should be conducted in Egypt and Syria was a Coptic convert to Islam (*Muslimānī al-Qibṭ*) by the name of As'ad al-Shaqī (d. 716/1316), who had inherited the position of *nāzir al-dawlah* (superintendent of the central administration) from Tāj al-Ṭawīl (d. 711/1312), another ex-Coptic Christian Muslim who proposed the *al-Rawk al-Husāmī* in

économies, sociétés, civilisations 8 (1953): 25–52; Ibrāhīm 'Alī Tarkhān, *Al-Nuzūm al-Iqtā'īyah fī al-Sharq al-Awsat fī al-'Uṣūr al-Wusṭā* (Cairo, 1963); Ann K. S. Lambton, "Reflections on the IQTĀ'," in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi (Leiden, 1965), 358–76; Sayyid al-Bāz al-'Arīnī, *Al-Iqtā' al-Harbī bi-Miṣr Zaman Salātīn al-Mamālīk* (Cairo, 1966); 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dūrī, "The Origins of Iqtā' in Islam," *Al-Abhāth* 22 (1969): 3–22; Rabie, *The Financial System*, 26–72; Robert Irwin, "Iqtā' and the End of the Crusader States," in *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades*, ed. Peter M. Holt (Warminster, 1977), 62–77; Sato, *State and Rural Society*.

³⁹Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 46, 85, 93–94, 101, 132, 147. Michael Chamberlain states that *mansabs* (stipendiary posts) became objects of a social struggle among the *a'yān* in the same manner as *iqtā'* became prizes of competition among amirs (*Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* [Cambridge, 1994], 24–25).

⁴⁰Rabie, *The Financial System*, 49–56, suggests that the *rawk* was an established Egyptian custom, possibly dating back to the days of the Pharaohs.

⁴¹Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 124–61.

⁴²Ibid., 136.

⁴³Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:205–6, 255–60; 33:182–83.



Egypt.⁴⁴ The Syrian *rawk* was conducted from around the beginning of 713/mid-1313 until Ramadān 713/January 1314.⁴⁵ Sultan al-Nāṣir himself went to Damascus on the way back from a Meccan pilgrimage in Muḥarram 713/May 1313 and appointed the amir ‘Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Jāwalī, *nā’ib* of Gaza, to head the cadastre.⁴⁶ Sanjar al-Jāwalī then mobilized the officials in the departments of military affairs (*mubāshirū dīwān al-juyūsh*) of Egypt and Syria and all the troops stationed in Damascus and Gaza to carry it out.⁴⁷ Since the survey documents (*awrāq al-rawk*) have apparently not survived to the present day, it is extremely difficult to know their actual content; but many Mamluk historians mention it, and al-Maqrīzī gives the most detailed account:

[Sanjar] al-Jāwalī went to Damascus and remained there with Amir Tankiz, *nā’ib* [*al-Shām*], until documents were drawn up for every village, detailing the total annual revenue in cash (*‘ibrah*), gross income in cash and kind (*mutaḥaṣṣil*), as well as revenue from *iqtā‘*, *waqf*, and privately owned land (*milk*). When the work was finished in the month of Dhū al-Hijjah [713], the *kharāj* year was changed from 712 to 713,⁴⁸ and the documents (*awrāq*) were presented to the sultan [in Cairo].⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, ed. Muhammad al-Ya‘lāwī (Beirut, 1991), 2:76–78. Concerning who proposed the *rawk*, see Sato Tsugitaka, “The Proposers and Supervisors of *al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī* in Mamluk Egypt,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 2 (1998): 74–77.

⁴⁵ Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 135.

⁴⁶ Ibn Bahādūr, “*Kitāb Futūh al-Naṣr fī Tārīkh Mūlūk Miṣr*,” Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 2399 *tārīkh*, fol. 232; Ahmād al-Fayyūmī, “*Nathr al-Jumān fī Tarājim al-A‘yān*,” Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS 1746 *tārīkh*, 3: fol. 102r–v; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A‘yān al-Mi‘ah al-Thāminah*, ed. Muḥammad Sayyid Jād al-Ḥaqq (Cairo, 1966–67), 2:266–67.

⁴⁷ Ibn Iyās, “*Uqūd al-Jumān fī Waqā‘i‘ al-Azmān*,” Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi MS Ayasofya 3311, fol. 45r–v; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:205–6; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Ziyādah and Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Āshūr (Cairo, 1939–73), 2:127; Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 136.

⁴⁸ This adjustment was called in Arabic “*tāḥwil*,” “*izdilāf*,” or “*izdilāq*.” See al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-A‘shā fi Ṣinā‘at al-Inshā* (Cairo, 1963), 2:398; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā‘iẓ wa-al-I‘tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭāṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Būlāq, 1270 H.; repr. Baghdad, 1970), 1:273. In order to correct the discrepancy between the solar (*kharājī*) and lunar (*hilālī* or *hijrī*) calendars, it was customary to advance the solar calendar one year every 33 years of the hijrah calendar. See also S. H. Taqizade, “Various Eras and Calendars Used in the Countries of Islam,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 9 (1937–39), 10 (1940–42); Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 60 n. 2, 62.

⁴⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 2:127.



To repeat, '*ibrah* indicates the annual income of a village or *iqtā'* estimated in cash based on the *mutaḥaṣṣil*, which was the gross income in cash and kind. The cadastre apparently involved ascertaining the annual revenue within village units, after which separate investigations were made into the *iqtā'*, *waqf*, and *milk* within each village. The survey documents drawn up in Syria were sent to Cairo, where Sultan al-Nāṣir issued new authorizations for *iqtā'* grants (*mithāl*) based on them. Qādī Qutb al-Dīn Ibn Shaykh, who was appointed head of Syrian military affairs (*nāzir jaysh al-Shām*), carried these authorization documents to Damascus, assigning them to each cavalryman in Dhū al-Hijjah 713/April 1314.⁵⁰ According to *Tārīkh Bayrūt*, written by Sāliḥ Ibn Yahyā (ninth/fifteenth century), as a result of the rawk of 713/1313, apart from *milk*, *waqf*, and *al-mawārīth al-ḥashrīyah* (property without heirs), Syrian territory was distributed as *iqtā'* *darbastah*,⁵¹ or "complete *iqtā'*'s," the holders of which had the right to all tax revenue from them, including the poll tax, tribute goods (*diyāfah*), and other levies.⁵²

One innovation that was introduced into the Syrian taxation system involved the abolition of miscellaneous taxes for the Syrian people in Muḥarram 714/April 1314, about which al-Maqrīzī relates:

The order (*mithāl*) to exempt the amount in arrears (*bāqī*)⁵³ was sent to Damascus and read from the minbar of the Umayyad Mosque on Muḥarram 10. Then another order followed abolishing such miscellaneous duties as the tax imposed on prisoners (*muqarrar 'alā al-sujūn*), corvée on peasants (*sukhrāh*), the sugar cane tax (*muqarrar al-aqṣāb*), the bow-making tax (*muqarrar ḍamān al-qawwāsīn*), and taxes levied by the officials and governors (*rusūm al-shādd wa-al-wilāyah*). These taxes were to be abolished totally in all Syrian provinces.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:206. As to Amir Sanjar, who headed the Syrian cadastre, he was arrested in 720/1320 for allegedly abusing his authority in granting favorable *iqtā'*'s to his mamluks and himself at the time of the cadastre (Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 136).

⁵¹ Sāliḥ Ibn Yahyā, *Tārīkh Bayrūt*, ed. Francis Hours and Kamal Suleiman al-Salibi (Beirut, 1969), 87.

⁵² Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 49, 69, 157–58. Al-Qalqashandī defines the term *karbastā* (probably *darbastah*) as the right to levy all taxes, not excluding any levies from the granted villages (*Subḥ*, 13:156).

⁵³ At this time the unpaid amount from the beginning of the year 698 to the end of the year 713 was exempted for the people of Syria as a benevolent gesture by Sultan al-Nāṣir. See al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 2:136, 153; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1963–72), 9:49.

⁵⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 2:136–37.



It is noteworthy that after the re-assignment of new *iqtā'*s, the taxes based on *diyāfat al-rawk* were abolished together with the above-mentioned miscellaneous taxes.⁵⁵ The *diyāfah* in Egypt during the Mamluk period signified tribute goods to be presented to the *iqtā'* holders (*muqta'*) by their peasants, like grain, fowl, goats, clover, dough, cakes, etc.,⁵⁶ and the *diyāfah* in Mamluk Syria was probably the same. However, *diyāfat al-rawk* literally means the *diyāfah* levied based on a cadastral survey, but its real meaning will become clear by examining the results of other Syrian *rawks*.

RAWK AL-MAMLAKAH AL-TARĀBULUSĪYAH IN 717/1317: TRIPOLI

After the Egyptian *rawk* of 715/1315,⁵⁷ the *rawk* of Tripoli was conducted in 717/1317. For that purpose, Sultan al-Nāṣir appointed Qādī Sharaf al-Dīn Ya‘qūb al-Hamawī, chief of the military department of Aleppo (*nāzir al-mamlakah al-halabiyah*), to head the cadastre.⁵⁸ Sharaf al-Dīn went to Tripoli and surveyed the region of al-Mamlakah al-Tarābulusīyah, the surrounding areas (*a‘māl*), strongholds (*qal‘ah, hisn*), and the frontier zones (*thughūr*).⁵⁹ When the cadastre was concluded, Sharaf al-Dīn went to Cairo with the documentation (*awrāq al-rawk*), which again became the basis on which to allocate *iqtā'*s. As a result of this *rawk*, *iqtā'*s were allotted to six amirs of forty (*amīr tabikhānah*), three amirs of ten (*amīr ‘asharah*), as well as fifty Bahri mamluks and *halqah* cavalrymen.⁶⁰ With the conclusion of the *rawk* in Ramaḍān 717/November 1317, the *kharāj* year was changed from 716 to 717 and miscellaneous taxes amounting to an annual sum of 110,000 dirhams were abolished. The sultan’s decree regarding this tax exemption is cited by al-Nuwayrī as follows:⁶¹

Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir ordered that the following miscellaneous taxes (*mu‘āmalah*)⁶² be abolished in the region of Tripoli.

⁵⁵ Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Jawhar al-Thamīn fī Siyar al-Mulūk wa-al-Salāṭīn*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Alī (Beirut, 1985), 2:153.

⁵⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭāṭ*, 1:88. See also Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 141, 149.

⁵⁷ Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 138–43.

⁵⁸ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:255; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 2:176–77; Ibn Bahādūr, “Futūh al-Naṣr,” fol. 239.

⁵⁹ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:255; al-‘Aynī, “Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān,” Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi MS Haci Beşir Ağa 457, fol. 329r.

⁶⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 2:177; idem, *Khīṭāṭ*, 2:171; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:255.

⁶¹ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:260–61. See also al-Qalqashandī, *Şubḥ*, 13:33–34. The numbers have been added for the sake of convenience.

⁶² The term *mu‘āmalāt* usually means “transactions,” but here it indicates “miscellaneous taxes.”



1) The tax on celebrations (*afrāh*⁶³ *mahdhūrah*) held in newly conquered territory requiring security. This does not pertain, however, to the tax on celebrations in areas not requiring the provision of security (*ḍamān al-farah al-khayr*). The amount is 70,000 dirhams.

2) The prisoner tax (*sujūn*) in al-Mamlakah al-Ṭarābulusīyah, except that in Tripoli, which was abolished by a previous order. The amount is 10,000 dirhams.

3) The peasants in the district of Tripoli were exempted from forced labor (corvée) in the sugar cane fields belonging to the government. Instead, a tax in kind equal to 2,000 dirhams was levied on them.

4) Tax on the sugar cane of amirs (*aqsāb al-umarā'*). Some amirs who managed districts where sugar cane was cultivated had extracted labor from their peasants in lieu of taxes or had imposed a labor rent (*ujrat al-'amal*) tax, the amount of which is 3,000 dirhams.

5) The governor's tax ('*ifāyat al-niyābah*) in the regions of Tripoli, Anafa and al-Batharūn.⁶⁴ The governors (*nā'ibs*) used to reside at administrative centers on the coast, and when those centers were filled with victorious soldiers (*al-'asākir al-maṣṭūrah*), six dirhams would be levied on each resident. The total amount is 10,000 dirhams.

6) The government tax (*haqq al-dīwān*) levied on persons engaged in the tax evaluation (*hāṣī*)⁶⁵ in the districts of Ṣahyūn and Balāṭunus.⁶⁶ The amount of revenue is 3,000 dirhams.

7) Tax on the threshing floor (*hibat al-bayādir*) in the regions of Kahf.⁶⁷ This was a new tax of three dirhams per feddan. The total amount of revenue is 1,000 dirhams.

⁶³Previously I have translated *afrāh* (pl. of *farah*) as fowl (Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 170), but in that case it was read as "afrākh." According to the decree of Sultan al-Nāṣir in 715/1315, *farah* in Egypt means the celebration of weddings, engagements, or circumcisions (Atiya, "A Mamlūk 'Magna Carta,'" 133–34, 138).

⁶⁴Anafa was a small town on the Syrian coast (Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān* [Beirut, 1955–57], 1:271), and Batharūn was a citadel between Jubayl and Anafah on the Syrian coast (ibid., 338).

⁶⁵*Hāṣī* seems to be used synonymously with *iḥṣā'* (tax evaluation).

⁶⁶Ṣahyūn was located east of Latakia, and Balāṭunus was a fortress facing Latakia (Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 1:478; 3:436).

⁶⁷Kahf was a citadel located near Maṣyāf (Guy Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems* [London, 1890; repr. Beirut, 1965], 507).



8) Tax on the harvest (*damān al-mustaghall*) in Tripoli that was at first for the *dīwān al-niyābah*, then for the principal *dīwān* (*al-dīwān al-ma'mūr*) during the months of 716. The amount is 4,000 dirhams.

9) The arbitrary taxes levied anew on peasants in several amirs' *iqtā'*s, consisting of grass (*hashīsh*), salt (*milh*), and tribute goods (*diyāfah*). The value is 6,000 dirhams.

All of the above are to be abolished in the course of time by the Day of Resurrection, neither demanded, nor claimed, in order not to bring the Devil into our midst. This decree is to be read from the pulpits in order to disseminate it and to procure good wishes for us as a gracious gift from God.

The total exemption for the nine items listed comes to 109,000 dirhams annually, approximating the 110,000 dirhams al-Nuwayrī mentioned elsewhere.⁶⁸ Here I would like to discuss items 3), 4), and 9).

Items 3) and 4) are closely related to sugar cane cultivation around Tripoli during the early fourteenth century. According to Andrew M. Watson,⁶⁹ sugar cane was introduced to southern Iraq from southwestern Iran and spread further to the Jordan valley and the Syrian coast during the tenth century. Arab geographers like al-Muqaddasī (fourth/tenth century), al-Idrīsī (d. 560/1165), Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), and al-'Umarī (d. 749/1349) relate that sugar cane was cultivated in such areas as Filasṭīn, Ṭabarīyah, Jabal Lubnān, Ghawr (Jordan valley), Bayrūt, Sūr, Ṭarābulus, Marqab, and Bāniyās.⁷⁰ According to Yāqūt,⁷¹ most of the crop grown in Baysān in the Ghawr area, in particular, was sugar cane. However, while the above geographers give only sketchy accounts of sugar cane cultivation in Syria, items 3) and 4) indicate clearly that in Tripoli the imposition of a corvée had provided the labor necessary to produce sugar cane (*sukhrat al-aqṣāb*), both

⁶⁸ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:255–56.

⁶⁹ Andrew M. Watson, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1983), 26–28.

⁷⁰ Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rīfat al-Aqālīm*, ed. M. J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1906), 161, 176, 180–81, 188; al-İṣṭakhrī, *Al-Masālik wa-al-Mamālik*, ed. M. J. al-Haynī (Cairo, 1961), 46; al-Idrīsī, *Kitāb Nuzhat al-Muṣṭaq fī Ikhtirāq al-Āfāq* (Naples and Rome, 1970–84), 4:372; Ibn Sa'īd al-Maghribī, *Kitāb al-Jughrāfiyā*, ed. Ismā'īl al-'Arabī (Beirut, 1970), 152; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 4:217; Ibn Shaddād, *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah fī Dhikr Umarā' al-Shām wa-al-Jazīrah: Lubnān*, ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān (Damascus, 1963), 92, 104; al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-Bilād wa-Akhbār al-'Ibād* (Beirut, 1960), 142; Abū al-Fidā', *Taqwīm al-Buldān*, ed. M. Reinaud (Paris, 1840), 253, 255; al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 25, 132.

⁷¹ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 4:217.



in the fields managed by the government and those of the amirs, until this practice was abolished by Sultan al-Nāṣir's decree in 717/1317.

Regarding item 9), consisting of recent levies demanding grasses, salt, and tribute goods (*diyāfah*) on several amirs' *iqtā'*s, this *diyāfah* is clearly different from the *diyāfat al-rawk* (tribute goods temporarily levied at the *rawk*) based on the Syrian cadastre of 713/1313. It is *diyāfah* that may possibly lead us to a better understanding of the innovative taxation system that was introduced into Syria by the cadastral surveys.

RAWK AL-IQTĀ'ĀT BI-AL-MAMLAKAH AL-HALABĪYAH IN 725/1325: ALEPPO

The Aleppo cadastre in northern Syria was undertaken in Jumādā II 725/June 1325. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Muqri' al-Fayyūmī (d. after 770/1368) has this to say about it:

In this year the *iqtā'*s in the region of Aleppo were surveyed. The sultan [al-Nāṣir] ordered the *rawk* of al-Mamlakah al-Halabīyah because there remained no region except Aleppo unsurveyed. On 20 Jumādā II 725/4 June 1325, Amir Jamāl al-Dīn Mughulṭāy al-Jamālī al-Nāṣirī, an official of the state (*mudīr al-mamlakah*), left [Cairo] to conduct the survey with Makīn al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Qarawīnah, a chief financial official (*mustawfī al-ṣuhbah*). He returned on Tuesday, 16 Ramaḍān/27 August, after which the survey documents were released in order to assign *iqtā'*s to a group of *al-mamālik al-sulṭānīyah* and *halqah* cavalrymen.⁷²

According to this account, the cadastre was concluded in the span of about eighty days, and as a result, *iqtā'*s were assigned to a group of the royal mamluks and the *halqah* cavalry.⁷³ No further details are known about the content of the work, but Ibn Iyās (d. ca. 930/1524), a later Mamluk historian, provides us with the following important information:

One amir of ten⁷⁴ went with a group of officials (*mubāshir*) to conduct the survey. They went from Cairo to Aleppo and carried out the *rawk* there by the same method as in Syria. Consequently,

⁷² Al-Fayyūmī, "Nathr al-Jumān," 3: fol. 190r; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 2:264.

⁷³ See also Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 144–45.

⁷⁴ This amir is the above-mentioned Mughulṭāy al-Jamālī, who held the offices of *ustādār* and vizier at the time of the cadastre (Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 145).



all the provinces of Egypt, Syria, and Aleppo are now included in *al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī*.⁷⁵

From this account, we may assume that the same methods were used for all four Syrian and Egyptian surveys, and it is this uniformity that constitutes the major fiscal innovation brought about by the *rawks*.

To begin with, the *rawk* of 713/1313 in Syria resulted in the distribution of "complete *iqtā'*'s" (*iqtā'* *darbastah*) to amirs and soldiers. Concerning the Egyptian *rawk* of 715/1315, al-Nuwayrī states:

Sultan [al-Nāṣir] sat down in order to issue the authorizations (*mithāl*) placed before him. He assigned to each amir a fixed number of villages, and added to the allotment all the items in those villages, like royal soldiers (*al-juyūsh al-sultāniyah*), the poll tax (*jawālī*), and so on. As a result of this assignment, the *muqta'*s gained control over their villages completely (*darbastan*).⁷⁶

However, al-Nuwayrī's account is baffling, since he does not explain what "all the items in those villages like royal soldiers" means. Concerning the same assignment, al-Maqrīzī is more explicit:

The sultan ordered his officials to write documents (*waraqah*) for the sultan's domains (*al-khāṣṣ al-sultāni*) and amirs' *iqtā'*s. At this time he added to the *'ibrah* of each village the tribute goods (*diyāfah*) for which the peasants (*fallāhūn*) were assessed and the poll tax (*jawālī*) of each village. Previously, before the *rawk*, an independent *dīwān*, attached to the sultan, had been set up for the *jawālī*. But at this time, the *jawālī* of each village was added to its *kharāj* (land tax) revenue.⁷⁷

The *'ibrah* indicates the annual revenue of a village estimated in cash (*dīnār* or *dīnār jayshī*).⁷⁸ According to al-Maqrīzī, to this *'ibrah*, which had hitherto been

⁷⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i' al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Wiesbaden, 1960–75), 1:164.

⁷⁶ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:226.

⁷⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 2:150. See also idem, *Khiṭāṭ*, 1:88; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 9:50.

⁷⁸ The term *dīnār jayshī* was a unit expressing the amount of *iqtā'* revenue in the Mamluk period, while during the Ayyubid period it was called *dīnār jundī*. The dirham exchange rate differed



calculated on the basis of the *kharāj*, were now added the *diyāfah* and *jawālī*, suggesting a completely new method for calculating the *'ibrah* under the *iqtā'* system.⁷⁹ In his *Khitāt*, al-Maqrīzī suggests that the sultan gave authorizations for *iqtā'*s to his soldiers on this principle (*hukm*).⁸⁰ This is what I refer to as "the survey method common to the *rawks* in Egypt and Syria." In other words, the new *iqtā'*s reassigned after the conclusion of the cadastres were called *iqtā' darbastah*, in which its holder (*muqta'*) had the right to all tax revenues, including the *diyāfah*, *jawālī*, and other taxes.

However, there is another problem to be solved. Although new *iqtā'*s were assigned to amirs and soldiers as "*iqtā' darbastah*" after the cadastres in Egypt and Syria, Sultan al-Nāṣir then issued decrees abolishing *diyāfah* both in the Egyptian *rawk* of 715/1315 and the Syrian *rawk* of 717/1317. These decrees read as follows:

1) The Egyptian *rawk* of 715/1315

In the year of the blessed *rawk*, we hereby exempt from a group of peasants (*jamā'at al-fallāhīn*) the *diyāfah* to be paid on the occasion of the transfer of an *iqtā'* (*intiqālāt al-iqtā'āt*).⁸¹

2) The Syrian *rawk* of 717/1317

Sultan al-Nāṣir abolished the following miscellaneous taxes in the region of Tripoli: the unscheduled taxes levied anew on peasants in several amirs' *iqtā'*s, consisting of grass (*hashīsh*), salt (*milh*), and tribute goods (*diyāfah*).⁸²

However, in both cases we should note the fact that the orders abolishing miscellaneous taxes were given after the introduction of the new method of calculating the *'ibrah*, to which *diyāfah* and *jawālī* had already been added to the main *kharāj* tax. Therefore, ordinary *diyāfah* continued to be levied on peasants, not in kind but in cash.

according to the type of cavalryman; that is, higher ranking cavalrymen were granted *iqtā'*s on the basis of higher exchange rates (Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 152–55, 243).

⁷⁹ Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 142.

⁸⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khitāt*, 1:88.

⁸¹ Atiya, "A Mamlūk 'Magna Carta,'" 134–35. In this article, Atiya explains the sentence as follows: "Farmers should be relieved from billeting or forced hospitality imposed on them by itinerant functionaries in this year of land surveying (*rūk*)" (*ibid.*, 138). However, *intiqālāt al-iqtā'āt* means not the itinerary between *iqtā'*s by functionaries, but the transfer of *iqtā'*s by order of the sultan. See Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 159.

⁸² Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:261.



Historically, the fiscal innovation created through these cadastres and the reallocation of *iqtā'*s resulted in the establishment of a system that persisted up to the founding of the Burji Mamluk dynasty. As to the effect of *al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī* in Egypt and Syria, al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) concludes, "*Al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī* helped establish the basis of an empire (*qā'idat al-mamlakah*) that continued up until the end of the dynasty of Sultan Ashraf Sha'bān (764–78/1363–77)."⁸³

The Qalāwūnid dynasty came to an end when al-Ashraf Sha'bān was deposed by al-Malik al-Ζāhir Barqūq (784–91/1382–89, 792–801/1390–99) in 784/1382. As al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) relates:

The new system brought into being by Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir through this *rawk* persisted until the end of the rule of the house of Qalāwūn with the enthronement of Sultan al-Malik al-Ζāhir Barqūq in Ramadān 784/November 1382. And even thereafter, this system continued until the many changes made to it in the wake of the occurrences (*hadīth*) and disasters (*miḥnah*) of 806/1404–5.⁸⁴

On the other hand, Ibn Khalīl al-Asadī (d. 854/1450), a Syrian scholar, writes:

When al-Malik al-Manṣūr Lājīn (696–98/1296–99) took power, there appeared a deficiency within local provinces, a decrease in revenues (*irtifā'*) and an interruption in administration for prosperity ('imārah). . . . Since pious and acute people petitioned him to conduct a *rawk* in order to attain the welfare (*maṣlahah*) of worshippers, Lājīn ordered the *rawks* of Egypt, Syria, and other provinces.^{⁸⁵} The order was implemented, but not completed. When al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad returned to the throne, he ordered that *rawks* be conducted as Lājīn had directed. . . . The 'ibrah of the Syrian province was found to be equal to that of the Egyptian province in the *al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī*, and the number of cavalrymen

^{⁸³} Al-Qalqashandī, *Šubḥ*, 4:14.

^{⁸⁴} Al-Maqrīzī, *Khitāṭ*, 1:91. According to al-Maqrīzī, in 806/1403 the rise of the Nile ceased and conditions deteriorated. Prices increased to the extent that one *ardabb* of wheat cost 400 dirhams. This was applied to everything purchased: food, drink, and clothing (*Ighāthat al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghummāh*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah and Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shayyāl [Cairo, 1940], 42).

^{⁸⁵} This cadastre was called *al-Rawk al-Husāmī*, which was conducted in Egypt in 698/1298 for the purpose of assessing the actual situation regarding tax revenue. However, soon after its conclusion, Sultan Lājīn and his deputy Mankūtamur were assassinated by amirs who were discontented with the resulting *iqtā'* assignments (Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 124–34).



in each province amounted to 24,000.⁸⁶

I have my doubts about the *rawks* resulting in the ‘ibrah of the Syrian province becoming equal to that of the Egyptian province; however, Ibn Khalīl gives another interesting account that *al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī* brought about much welfare (*maṣlahah jammah*) and prosperity in the rural areas (‘imārat al-bilād).⁸⁷ What we may conclude from these accounts is that *al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī* helped establish the basis of an empire based on the *iqtā‘* system, which led to prosperity in the rural societies of Egypt and Syria for an extended period of time.

⁸⁶Ibn Khalīl al-Asadī, *Al-Taysīr wa-al-I‘tibār wa-al-Tahrīr fīmā Yajibu min Husn al-Tadbīr*, ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir Aḥmad Ṭulaymāt (Cairo, 1968), 75–76.

⁸⁷Ibid., 74. See also Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn* (Leiden, 1995), 143–44.



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Public Projection of Power in Mamluk Bilād al-Shām

The institutions and courtly protocols that supported the Mamluk sultan and legitimized and projected his power have been investigated in previous scholarship.¹ Such work emphasizes the formalities of relations between the sultan and his amirs and with society at large. Royal etiquette guided the sultan's manners while he was at court² as well as during travel,³ and was designed to distance him from his peers. According to the protocols of the day, for example, only the highest ranking amirs were allowed to enter the central hall (*dihlīz*).⁴ Upon approaching the sultan they were instructed to prostrate themselves in front of him (*kharr*).⁵ Social distance was maintained not only in physical terms but also in the realm of political prerogatives. Mamluk political philosophy recognized three domains in which the sultan's name was publicly proclaimed: his title (*laqab sultānī*), being mentioned by name at Friday noon prayer (*khutbah*), and minting coins (*sikkah*).⁶

When the sultan nominated viceroys, the royal chancellery issued letters of appointment that were accompanied by symbolic gifts, which articulated the relationship between the ruler and his appointee.⁷ The sultan customarily awarded

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¹P. M. Holt, "The Position and Power of the Mamluk Sultan," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38 (1975): 237–49; idem, "The Structure of Government in the Mamluk Sultanate," in *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades*, ed. P. M. Holt (Warminster, 1977), 44–61; idem, "The Sultan as Ideal Ruler: Ayyubid and Mamluk Prototypes," in *Suleyman the Magnificent and his Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (London, 1995), 122–37.

²Muhammad ibn Alīmad Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i' al-Duhūr*, ed. Muhammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1982–84), 4:81.

³For a description of the archetype of the sultan's camp during a hunting expedition, see Qaraṭāy al-‘Izzī Khaznadārī, *Tārīkh Majmū‘ al-Nawādir mimmā Jarā lil-Awā'il wa-al-Awākhir*, 616–694 H, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 2005), 198.

⁴Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Šayrafi, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-al-‘Abdān fī Tawārīkh al-Zamān*, ed. Hasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970–94), 1:114.

⁵Taqī al-Dīn Alī ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk li-Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muhammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah (Cairo, 1934–73), 4:608–9.

⁶Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:572, 569.

⁷The symbolic role of gift exchanges and their function in facilitating relations between parties has been studied by Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (London, 1966).



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the viceroys a robe of honor (*khil‘ah*), a horse-blanket (*kanbash*) made of silk embroidered with gold and silver (*zarkash*), saddles (*surūj*), and furs.⁸ Additionally, the sultan and his viceroys exchanged presents and governors bestowed riding animals, linens (*qumāsh*), garments (*thiyāb*), and other textiles, in addition to cash.⁹

However, to consolidate his position, the sultan had to address a wider circle than his military intimates. Syrian sources of the period attest to the energy and resources sultans devoted to propaganda and projecting their royal persona among the civil population. Considerable sums were dedicated to public relations.¹⁰ Poets, musicians, and preachers were paid to cultivate and promote the sultan’s public image.¹¹

Yet, the interaction between the Mamluk sultans and their subjects was not restricted to verbal exchanges. Literary and archeological sources demonstrate the considerable resources the sultan and ruling elite allocated for the construction of public and private buildings.¹² By these projects they hoped to promote several agendas: 1) to make their presence known; 2) to fashion an environment that would reflect their desired images; 3) to establish communication with their subjects. Needless to say, this policy demanded heavy taxation. The willingness of the Mamluk administrators to risk public backlash against harsh levies demonstrates

⁸Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān*, ed. ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Tanṭawī al-Qarmūt (Cairo, 1985), 1:125; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-Ghumr bi-Anbā’ al-‘Umr*, ed. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bukhārī (Hyderabad, 1985), 8:1; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 4:79.

⁹Abū al-Mahāsin Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḩawādīth al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr*, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt (Cairo, 1990), 1:96, 108, 112, 164. Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Ta‘līq: Yawmīyāt Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad ibn Ṭawq; Mudhakkirāt Kutibat bi-Dimashq fī Awākhir al-‘Ahd al-Mamlūkī*, 885-908 H, ed. Ja‘far al-Muhājir (Damascus, 2000), 1:217; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 1:255, 300-2, 315, 375; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:571.

¹⁰The idea of political legitimacy was not foreign to the sultans. Rebellious amirs claimed al-Malik al-Sa‘īd ibn Baybars was unfit to rule. They told him: “A king should not spend time in vigorous pursuit of games or amusements. These are not appropriate entertainments.” (Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* [Beirut, 2001], 13:288.)

¹¹Sārim al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Aydāmar Ibn Duqmāq al-‘Alā’ī, *Al-Nafhah al-Miskīyah fī al-Dawlah al-Turkīyah: min Kitāb al-Thamīn fī Siyar al-Khulafā’ wa-al-Salāṭīn*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon, 1999), 67; al-Khaznadārī, *Tārīkh Majmū‘ al-Nawādir*, 258; Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, “Du bon gouvernement d’après la hadiyat al-‘Abd al-Qasir ila al-Malik al-Nasir de ‘Abd al-Samad al-Salihi,” *Annales islamologiques* 34 (2000): 312 (2), 300-1 (13-14).

¹²Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh Ḥawādīth al-Zamān wa-Anbā’ihi wa-Wafāyāt al-Akābir wa-al-A‘yān min Abnā’ihi al-Ma‘rūf bi-Tārīkh Ibn al-Jazarī*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām al-Tadmurī (Beirut, 1998), 1:423.



the importance they assigned to construction projects.¹³ In the following my aim is to broadly outline the Mamluk policy for shaping the public sphere in Syria by focusing on documented examples from Damascus and other Syrian cities, relying on a broad range of local sources of the period.

CREATING PUBLIC SPACE IN BILĀD AL-SHĀM

The Mamluk elite constructed numerous and varied public structures in Syria: mosques,¹⁴ tombs,¹⁵ schools,¹⁶ Sufi lodges,¹⁷ hospitals,¹⁸ caravanserais,¹⁹ gates,²⁰ canals,²¹ public fountains,²² bridges,²³ and walls.²⁴ Moreover, the Mamluk patrons did not limit their investments to new edifices;²⁵ they also devoted considerable

¹³Ibid., 2:331.

¹⁴*Repertoire chronologique d'épigraphie Arabe* (Cairo, 1931–91) (hereafter RCEA), 12:176 (no. 4662 Hims 671/1272–73); 13:205 (no. 5100) and 263 (no. 5190); 14:266 (no. 5587 Gaza 730/1329); 15:24–25 (no. 5637 Aleppo). Heinz Gaube, *Arabische Inscripten aus Syrien* (Beirut, 1978), 26 (no. 35) and 45 (no. 76).

¹⁵RCEA, 12:75 (no. 4504), 176 (no. 4663), and 182 (no. 4673); 13:75 (no. 4909) and 186 (no. 5065 Tripoli 698/1298); 14:24 (no. 5636), 33 (no. 5251), 113 (no. 5777), 165 (no. 5449 Damascus 721/1321), 181 (no. 5473 Damascus 722/1322), 193 (no. 5486 Damascus 723/1323), and 194 (no. 5487 Ḥamāh 723/1323); 15:201 (no. 5926 Ṣafad 741/1341) and 199 (no. 6290 Jerusalem 759/1359); 16:85 (no. 6119), 121 (no. 6181), and 215–16 (no. 6324 Tripoli 760/1359); 18:129 (no. 792007), 127 (no. 792005), 170 (no. 795007), 200 (no. 797009), and 202 (no. 797012). Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 13:280; Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṣaṣrā, *Al-Durrāh al-Mudī'ah fi al-Dawlah al-Zāhirīyah* (Berkeley, 1963), 172; Muḥammad ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, 'Uyūn al-Tawārīkh al-Sanawāt 688–699 A.H., ed. Nabīlah 'Abd al-Mun'im Dāwūd (Baghdad, 1991), 129; Anne-Marie Eddé, *La principauté Ayyoubide d'Alep: (579/1183–658/1260)* (Stuttgart, 1999), 448–49.

¹⁶RCEA, 15:199 (no. 5923 Jerusalem 741/1340); Gaube, *Arabische Inscripten*, 70 (no. 129) and 82 (no. 156); George Makdisi, "Autograph Diary of an Eleventh-Century Historian of Baghdad," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 19 (1957): 288.

¹⁷RCEA, 13:163–64 (no. 5033) and 15:200 (no. 5924 the Ṣalāḥīyah in Jerusalem in 741/1341).

¹⁸Ibid., 16:147 (no. 6220 Aleppo 755/1345); Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Nafḥah al-Miskīyah*, 79.

¹⁹RCEA, 13:98–99 (no. 4946); 14:22–23, 118 (no. 5235, 5385, 5418 Aleppo 719/1319), and 141 (no. 5590); 15:236 (no. 5971). Ibn Ṣaṣrā, *Al-Durrāh al-Mudī'ah*, 169.

²⁰RCEA, 15:35 (no. 5706); Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Nafḥah al-Miskīyah*, 196.

²¹RCEA, 18:179 (no. 796001); Gaube, *Arabische Inscripten*, 113 (no. 204); Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:256.

²²RCEA, 12:140 (no. 4611); 13:250 (no. 5171); 14:148 (no. 5427 Jerusalem); 15:74 (no. 5708); 16:12 (no. 6015 Aleppo 746/1345) and 123 (no. 6185). Gaube, *Arabische Inscripten*, 17 (no. 11: a *sabīl* built in 915/1508 by Khā'ir Bek, the governor of Aleppo); Ibn Ṣaṣrā, *Al-Durrāh al-Mudī'ah*, 188.

²³RCEA, 12:174–75 (no. 4660, 4661); 15:48 (no. 5670).

²⁴Ibid., 13:204 (no. 5099 Majdal 700/1300).

²⁵Ibid., 12:68 (no. 4530 Gaza); 18:197 (no. 797004 Gaza).



efforts to refurbishing citadels²⁶ and sacred shrines,²⁷ including renovations of the Great Mosque of Damascus. Since Mamluk governors were fully aware of the role such structures played in public image-making, it is not surprising to come across reports of orders to demolish standing structures,²⁸ an act that was aimed at obliterating the memory of their adversaries and reshaping the environment to their own benefit.²⁹

The sheer volume of references in Syrian sources to urban projects strongly supports the view that the Mamluks focused their building initiatives in the cities. Three criteria set urban centers apart from rural communities, dictating appropriate types of investment by the state and its officials:

- 1) Urban communities were complex societies composed of a range of occupations and economic-cultural strata.
- 2) Cities were economic hubs. In order to house merchants and artisans, commercial and handicrafts complexes (*wakālah*; *qaysāriyah*), as well as markets, were built.³⁰
- 3) Urban residents paid taxes on private properties, and their urban plots were not classified as *iqtā'* land, although they kept gardens.

In addition to these economic, legal, and social criteria, architectural features distinguished the Mamluk cities. As in Egypt, communal buildings, such as cathedral mosques (*jāmi'*),³¹ hospitals, and schools, influenced the layout of neighborhoods and streets in Syrian cities. From time to time the Mamluks made efforts to enforce "Islamic" values and norms on the city dwellers. The inspector of the markets was instructed to impose bans on alcohol, prostitution, and other forbidden activities. These policies were often aimed at women.³²

As administrative centers, cities also served as residences of amirs and civilian officials, and where amirs met regularly with bureaucrats and religious dignitaries.

²⁶Ibid., 18:30 (no. 786006 Aleppo 786/1385).

²⁷Ibid., 18:3 (no. 784004 a mosque in Damascus). Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:318–19.

²⁸On one occasion (in 690/1291) the viceroy of Damascus ordered the destruction of houses, shops, and workshops. Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:60.

²⁹Upon regaining control of Damascus in 1398, Barqūq had structures demolished that the rebel Mintāsh may have built. Ibn Şaşrā, *Al-Durrah al-Mudī'ah*, 74/104.

³⁰Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:620.

³¹Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Kawkab al-Rawdah fī Tārīkh al-Nīl wa-Jazīrat al-Rawdah*, ed. Muḥammad al-Shishtawī (Cairo, 2002), 104.

³²Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh ibn Qādī Shuhbah*, ed. ‘Adnān Darwīsh (Damascus, 1977), 1:266; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 1:120–21 and 2:95; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 2:371; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-Ghumr*, 1:101; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Sakhawī, *Al-Tibr al-Masbūk fī Dhayl al-Sulūk*, ed. Najwā Muṣṭafā Kāmil and Labībah Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 2002), 1:54.



The ruling elite strove to construct an urban environment that would be commensurate with their status and image and would facilitate their daily activities.³³ The Green Hippodrome (*al-Maydān al-Akhḍar*) in Damascus, built to serve the ruling Mamluk army, and the construction of a small market (*suwayqah*) nearby, are only a couple of examples of this concern for image and utility.³⁴

The inauguration of new projects was lavishly celebrated.³⁵ Food was served in great quantities; gifts and awards were bestowed on officials and builders (*mi'mārīyah*).³⁶ At the completion of a canal in Aleppo in 731/1330–31, the viceroy called for a public celebration. The Syrian historian al-Birzalī (1267–1339) described the gathering of army commanders, notables, and commoners, stressing that the puritanical governor banned musicians (*muṭribūn*) from participating in the event.³⁷ The following panegyric by Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-Kātib captures one part of public reaction to Mamluk construction activity:

We prostrate ourselves and kiss the ground. Our master's realm is the best (*ghurrah*) amongst the nations, almighty God made it shine. . . . Our sultan's generosity directed him to construct mosques and places of prayer, to build mausolea and shrines. Roads were paved to help travelers arriving and departing. After falling into disrepair, canals were renovated. The great mosque of Damascus was refurbished and regained its splendor, its decorations and marbles restored. The candelabra were multiplied. Many places acquired new looks, and the worshipers' hearts became full of joy.³⁸

Yet, it should be emphasized that Mamluk amirs did not refrain from building mosques in the countryside, where the vast majority of the sultanate's subjects dwelled and labored on the *iqtā'* lands. Mamluk mosques are still visible in Syrian villages today.³⁹

The policy of construction promoted by the Mamluks also aimed at strengthening the hold of Islam on a territory believed to be under constant threat. While illusory threats of imminent invasions by Franks and Mongols haunted the Muslim

³³ RCEA, 18:203 and 204 (nos. 797013, 797014).

³⁴ Ibn al-Jazārī, *Tārīkh*, 1:60; 2:327, 329, 330, 455–56, 467.

³⁵ Ibn Ṣaṣrā, *Al-Durrah al-Mudī'ah*, 116, 133–35.

³⁶ Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Naḥḥah al-Miskīyah*, 123, 244; Ibn al-Jazārī, *Tārīkh*, 2:258–59.

³⁷ Aleppo 731/1330–31. Ibn al-Jazārī, *Tārīkh*, 2:455.

³⁸ Ibid., 389–90. For the formula of kissing the white hand, see *ibid.*, 441.

³⁹ RCEA, 13:53–55 (nos. 4880–82).



population, the building initiative provided society with a sense of security and stability. Sultans and governors invested considerable resources in developing Muslim shrines and other holy sites that attracted large numbers of visitors. These edifices amplified the ruler's image and defined the structure and borders of Mamluk sacred topography. Tombs of biblical prophets such as Noah,⁴⁰ Moses,⁴¹ and Abraham⁴² were renovated or enlarged, as were the tombs of the Prophet Muhammad's close companions. Baybars started this policy by erecting a sanctuary east of the Jordan River, said to be the burial ground (*mazār*) of Abū 'Ubaydah.⁴³ In southern Palestine a Roman structure was identified as Abū Ḥurayrah's tomb.⁴⁴ Not far away from this location is the shrine (*mashhad*) of Salmān al-Fārisī.⁴⁵ In central Syria the shrine of Khālid ibn al-Walīd was renovated.⁴⁶ In Aleppo builders constructed the shrine of Sa'd ibn Ayyūb al-Anṣārī.⁴⁷ Another area of investment was the renewal of Latin (Crusader) and Ayyubid fortifications, which delineated the Mamluks' political domain. Inscriptions from Shawbak in southwestern Jordan to Ḥiṣn al-Akrād (Krak des Chevaliers) in central Syria attest to this initiative.⁴⁸

Conspicuously sacred and military structures as these often bore inscriptions appropriate to Syria's role as imperial frontier and holy land. As "public text" they name the founder and announce his self-asserted achievements and titles.⁴⁹ Baybars'

⁴⁰Janine Sourdel-Thomine, "Inscriptions arabes de Karak Nuh," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 13 (1951): 82.

⁴¹RCEA, 12:142 (no. 4612).

⁴²Ibid., 13:51–53 (nos. 4876–77); and later renovations: 13:95–96 and 194 (no. 4943, 5079); 18:179 (no. 796001).

⁴³Ibid., 12:208–9 (no. 4714); 13:70 (no. 4901).

⁴⁴Ibid., 12:191 (no. 4686); 13:115 (no. 4965).

⁴⁵Ibid., 12:134 (no. 4600).

⁴⁶Ibid., 12:104–5 (no. 4556, 4557) and 128–29 (no. 4593); although some Muslim authors doubt this identification. Al-Khaznadārī, *Tārīkh Majmū' al-Nawādir*, 277–79.

⁴⁷Gaube, *Arabische Inscripten*, 23–25; Eddé, *Alep*, 431.

⁴⁸RCEA, 12:148–51 (nos. 4623–26 Ḥiṣn al-Akrād) and 222–24 (nos. 4733–34 Karak); 13:58–59 (no. 4886 Ḥiṣn al-Akrād) and 176–78 (nos. 5048–51 Shawbak). Reuven Amitai, "An Arabic Inscription at al-Subayba (Qal'at Namrud) from the Reign of Sultan Baybars," *The al-Subayba (Nimrod) Fortress: Towers 11 and 9*, ed. Moshe Hartal (Jerusalem, 2001), 109–23.

⁴⁹Epigraphic data constitute historical sources, generally contemporary with the construction of the buildings. RCEA, 12:124 (no. 4588 Baybars in Ramlah 666/1268), 125 (no. 4589 Ṣafad), and 210 (no. 4715 Damascus); 13:41–42 (no. 4859, 4860 Aleppo 684/1284); 14:58 (no. 5291 Damascus 711/1311), 59–60 (nos. 5292–94 Aleppo 711/1311); 77 (no. 5323 Jerusalem 713/1314), 88 (no. 5339 Gaza 714/1315), 89–90 (nos. 5340–42 Ramlah 714/1314), 101 (no. 5358 Tripoli 715/1315), 105–6 (no. 4956 Khalīl in Hims 691/1292), 118–19 (no. 5386 Baalbek 717/1317), 127 (no. 5400 Gaza 718/1318), 128 (no. 5401 Ramlah 718/1318), and 129 (no. 5403 Aleppo 718/1318); 15:4–5 (nos. 5606–7 Jerusalem al-Aqsa mosque); 16:7–8 (nos. 6009–10 Jerusalem al-Aqsa mosque



name, for example, is accompanied by a long list of royal titles: "our sultan, the victorious king, judicious, righteous, warrior, master of kings and sultans, ruler of the two *qiblahs* [Mecca and Jerusalem], servant of the holy places, partner of the caliph, the commander of the faithful, Alexander of our days."⁵⁰ Qalāwūn's titulature included additional titles, such as: "the greatest sultan, king of kings (*shāhanshāh al-mu'azzam*), the monarch who holds the nations by their necks, the king supported by heaven (*mu'ayyad*)."⁵¹ In addition to insignia and regalia,⁵² inscriptions are informative about financial investments and assert the role of religious endowment (*waqf*) in building or maintaining a specific institution.⁵³ In other instances architectural inscriptions were believed to have a protective quality, shielding property from mismanagement or seizure.⁵⁴ In addition, inscriptions occasionally document the abolition of taxes and limitations on tariffs.⁵⁵

The development of the public sphere was not restricted to stone and marble. To capture the viewers' attention the governing elite shaped the urban space by staging events.⁵⁶ Cities were decorated to celebrate military victories, investitures of sultans, proclamations of royal births, recovery of the sultan's health, or the accession of a new governor.⁵⁷ In a manner resembling an outdoor performance,⁵⁸

746/1345), and 9–10 (no. 6013 Tripoli 746/1345). Also Mūsā ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān* (Hyderabad, 1957), 1:198.

⁵⁰ RCEA, 12:57–58 (nos. 4476–77), 103 (no. 4554), 193 (no. 4690), 195 (no. 4692), and 226 (no. 4738).

⁵¹ Ibid., 12:196 (4693); 13:9 (no. 4815 Baalbek), 15–16 (nos. 4823–24), 36 (no. 4852 Cairo), 40–41 (nos. 4857–58), and 225 (no. 5135); 14:136–41 (nos. 5412–17).

⁵² Ibid., 18:4 (no. 784005, 784006 Damascus 784/1382) and 155 (no. 794003 Damascus 794/1392 by Sultan Barqūq).

⁵³ Ibid., 18:6 (no. 784008 Masjid Ḥaydar al-‘Askarī in Damascus) and 91 (no. 788054 covered market in Jerusalem 788/1386).

⁵⁴ Ibid., 18:29 (no. 786005 Aleppo 786/1385).

⁵⁵ Ibid., 18:1 (no. 784001 Cairo), 126 (no. 792003 Karak 792/1390), 154 (no. 794002 Karak Nūh 794/1392), 169 (no. 795006 Jerusalem 795/1393), 171 (no. 795009), 181 (no. 796002 donations to support the holy tomb of the prophet Nūh), 195 (no. 797002 Idfū [Edfou]), and 200 (no. 797009 Baalbek).

⁵⁶ Al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 1:256, describes acrobats (*min funūn al-bahlawān* [pahlavan]) walking on a strong rope held between two minarets.

⁵⁷ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jazarī, *Al-Mukhtār min Tārīkh Ibn al-Jazarī al-Musammā Ḥawādith al-Zamān wa-Anbā’ihi wa-Wafāyāt al-Akābir wa-al-A‘yān min Abnā’ihi*, ed. Khudayyir ‘Abbās al-Munshidawī (Beirut, 1988), 305 (680/1281), 364, 372 (695/1295), and 388 (the recovery of the sultan Ḥusām al-Dīn Lājīn); Ibn Ṣaṣrā, *Al-Durrah al-Mudī‘ah*, 19, 20, and 112; Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:112.

⁵⁸ On references to whitewashing (*tabyīd*) house walls, see Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:526; ‘Abd



the rulers staged parades, public ceremonies, and festivities.⁵⁹ Cavalry and infantry marched, drums were beaten, jugglers preformed,⁶⁰ and emblems of state were put on display.⁶¹ Streets and squares were also decorated with textiles, colors, and lights.⁶² On the occasion of the sultan's recovery from illness, the people of Damascus were ordered to decorate the streets with ornaments and pieces of brocade embroidered with gold and silver. The drums played loudly in the citadel and palaces, and the viceroy put on the royal robe of honor in a public ceremony.⁶³ When Altunbughā al-Jubānī reentered Damascus and took up his post as viceroy, candles were lit and the imam of the Great Mosque invoked blessings for the sultan.⁶⁴

The decoration and lighting of the streets was only one element in the staging of these political performances. With lights came sounds.⁶⁵ Bands of drummers (*ṭablkhānah*) played to publicly announce important events.⁶⁶ The rhythm of drums on these occasions differed from the music played by tambourines or the beating of the drums during fighting.⁶⁷ The account of the victorious return of Sultan Barqūq to the throne in 792/1390 preserves the joyful scene at the welcoming reception:

At dawn al-Malik al-Ζāhir Sayf al-Islām Abū Sa‘īd Barqūq arrived at Raydānīyah. A mission from Cairo proceeded to meet him: the descendants of the Prophet, the Sufis carrying banners (*sanājiq*), army battalions dressed for combat and armed with weapons, Jews carrying candelabra and the Torah, Christians holding candles and

al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl Ibn Shāhīn al-Ζāhirī al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-Amal fī Dhayl al-Duwal*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 2002), 2:43–44.

⁵⁹ Al-Kutubī, ‘Uyūn al-Tawārikh, 107 (on the vizier Ibn al-Salūs's visit to Damascus in 691/1292).

⁶⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Mułūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1963–72), 9:7; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i‘*, 4:59–61, 70, and 72; Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:267 and 273; Ibn al-Şayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 1:141.

⁶¹ Ibn Faḍl Allāh Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad ibn Yahyā al-‘Umarī, *Al-Ta‘rīf bi-al-Muṣṭalah al-Sharīf*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 1988), 273–75.

⁶² Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Rahīm Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, ed. Qusṭanṭīn Zurayq (Beirut, 1942), 7:187; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Tūlūn, *I‘lām al-Warā bi-Man Wulliya Nā‘ibān min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-Kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān (Damascus, 1984), 116; Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 13:293.

⁶³ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:389 (730/1330).

⁶⁴ Ibn Şaṣrā, *Al-Durrāh al-Mudī‘ah*, 63.

⁶⁵ Al-‘Umarī, *Al-Ta‘rīf*, 103; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 10:22.

⁶⁶ The beating of drums also proclaimed the end of fasting during the month of Ramaḍān (Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:77).



Bibles, and the masses. They chanted blessings, and the women trilled.⁶⁸

The decorated streets and buildings were intended by the ruling Mamluk elite as a backdrop to their striking costumes and to gain the admiration of the viewing public (*washshaha al-madīnah ba‘da an zuyyinat*).⁶⁹ Official parades and ceremonies marked particularly important events in great splendor (*fī ubbahah ‘azīmah*).⁷⁰ On the arrival of al-Malik al-Sa‘īd ibn Baybars to Damascus in 677/1279 the city was decorated. Domed pavilions (*qibāb*) were erected, and people packed the streets. On the day of the Great Feast (*‘Id al-Nahr*) they prayed together at the hippodrome with the sultan. This mass gathering was followed by a more modest event inside the citadel, where a welcoming reception took place.⁷¹ On another occasion, in 741/1341, an ailing sultan ordered the release of all prisoners. In reaction to this gratifying news people came out carrying burning candles, beating drums, and holding Bibles (Jews) and Gospels (Christians) in their hands.⁷²

Victory parades were staged to arouse hopes for stability and peace, in addition to demonstrating authority and strength.⁷³ Riding in front of their troops army commanders entered the cities' gates and led processions along crowded streets.⁷⁴ Returning victorious from a battle against the Mongols, Qalāwūn ceremoniously crossed Damascus with his soldiers and twelve wagons full of prisoners of war.⁷⁵ Several days after Qalāwūn's defeat of the Franks and his capture of Tripoli, a carrier pigeon landed in the Damascus citadel and brought the news. The garrison force played drums, and the streets were decorated.⁷⁶

A similar event was staged following the conquest of Acre by al-Ashraf Khalīl

⁶⁷Ibid., 1:53 and 391; Ibn Şaşrā, *Al-Durrah al-Mudī‘ah*, 58, 76, 79, 80, 139, and 140; Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Nafhah al-Miskīyah*, 208.

⁶⁸Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:199.

⁶⁹Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:682 (he traversed the decorated city); al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn al-Tawārīkh*, 108; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*, ed. Fu’ād M. Shaltūt (Cairo, 1998), 31:35; al-Fath ibn ‘Alī al-Bundārī, *Sanā al-Barq al-Shāmī*, ed. Fathīyah Nabarāwī (Cairo, 1979), 30, 81.

⁷⁰Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 13:301 (the entrance of Qalāwūn into Damascus 682/1283–84); Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Fadā’il, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd wa-al-Durr al-Farīd fīmā ba‘da Tārīkh Ibn al-‘Amīd*, ed. Edgar Blochet (Paris, 1911), 67, 68, 151, 156, and 318.

⁷¹Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 13:280.

⁷²Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:129.

⁷³Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 7:103 and 104.

⁷⁴Ibn Şaşrā, *Al-Durrah al-Mudī‘ah*, 71, 74, 76, 93–96, 100, 115, and 126.

⁷⁵Li Guo, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: al-Yūnīnī’s Dhayl Mir’āt al-Zamān* (Leiden, 1998), 67 (Arabic). Ibn Abī al-Fadā’il, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd*, 300 and 332–33.



in 1291. Damascus was elaborately adorned (*wa-zuyyinat ajmal zīnah*). Riding ahead of his cavalry, the sultan resembled "the full moon surrounded by shining stars" (*ka-al-badr bayna kawkabihī*).⁷⁷ Comparable was the reaction to al-Ashraf Khalīl's victory over the Armenians and the capture of Qal'at al-Rūm. Damascus was decorated, the citadel, streets, and palaces festooned. Leading his soldiers, the victorious sultan rode through the city's streets. In the course of the military parade Armenian captives were exhibited. The chronicles report on the joyful audience crowding the squares.⁷⁸

Other occasions for public celebration included the inauguration of a new sultan or viceroy.⁷⁹ For these events the audience cheered and blessed the new leader,⁸⁰ as was the case for the coronation of al-Malik al-Afdal, the ruler of al-Ḥamāh.⁸¹ Upon the investiture of the minor prince al-Malik al-Naṣr Faraj ibn Barqūq in 801/1399, a long black cloak (*franjīyah*) embroidered with gold thread was draped over the child's shoulders and a golden turban ('imāmah) placed on his head. The royal procession in Cairo crossed the city and ascended to the citadel, where the new sultan sat on the throne (*dast*).⁸² Similar performances marked political insurrections in the provinces. During the revolt of al-Malik al-Kāmil al-Ashqar Sanqar against Qalāwūn, the rebel declared the severing of contact between Damascus and Cairo. This declaration was echoed by a parade joined by cavalry, men of religion, and notables. Leading his forces, Sanqar descended from the citadel and rode towards Damascus' hippodrome. There he inspected the forces and honored their commander with robes of honor.⁸³

These events provided an entertaining spectacle for the public. Many accounts of celebrations (*yawm mashhūr*) depict large crowds flooding the streets carrying candles and joining the procession, as if they were actors in a play.⁸⁴ On one occasion the merchants of Damascus were ordered to stand outside the city wall when al-Ashraf Khalīl was entering the city. Joining them were artisans led by their master ('arīf); all were holding candles. As the sultan's convoy drew closer

⁷⁶ Al-Kutubī, 'Uyūn al-Tawārīkh, 15; Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Nafhah al-Miskīyah*, 113–14; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7:152.

⁷⁷ Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Hijrah*, ed. Zubaydah Muḥammad 'Atā (Cairo, 2001), 263.

⁷⁸ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:110. Another example is the report on the arrival of Barqūq to Damascus and his meeting with the viceroy Yālbughā al-Nāṣirī in 793/1391 (al-Kutubī, 'Uyūn al-Tawārīkh, 131).

⁷⁹ Al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 2:266.

⁸⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:663–64; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:17.

⁸¹ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:519.

⁸² Ibn al-Şayrafi, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 2:5–6.



to the gate they lit their candles. The majestic entourage advanced along an illuminated route from Bāb al-Naṣr to al-Qadam mosque.⁸⁵ On another occasion, as the troops fighting Minṭāsh advanced towards Damascus, many Damascenes came out of the city holding candles and listening to singers accompanied by tambourines.⁸⁶

When Sultan Barqūq entered Damascus in 793/1391, the official ceremony was said to be "according to the fashion of the kings." The governor Yālbughā al-Nāṣirī bore the royal parasol (*al-qubbah wa-al-ṭayr*) over his head, candles were lit, and girls sang. The people spread pieces of cloth along the streets that the sultan passed on his way to the citadel. Men called out blessings to the sultan, and women gave shrill cries. The citadel's commander had rebuilt, whitewashed, and furnished most of the citadel's structures. Sitting high on his horse Barqūq reviewed the dismounted cavalry. This gesture reflected the distance between royal authority and subordinates. The ceremony ended with the sultan bestowing robes of honor on the amirs "as was the custom of the kings."⁸⁷ These were not low-cost events, and the local population was occasionally asked to bear the financial burden of hosting them.⁸⁸ No wonder, then, that public reaction was sometimes hostile.⁸⁹

Parades were used by the authorities to display (*ashhara*) those who were declared enemies of the public order. In order to humiliate them, they were exhibited to the public, occasionally tied back-to-back on a beast of burden, sometimes fastened with nails to a board (*tasmīr*). In one instance the sultan ordered rebellious soldiers to be put on display. As the camels were led along the streets, the soldiers' wives, their faces unveiled and exposed, dashed around them.⁹⁰ A similar situation was reported in Damascus in 792/1390. The guards beat drums as Ibn Hanash was brought to the city. Soldiers with drawn swords in their hands marched at the column's head, while the prisoners, tied to the backs of beasts of burden, were shown to the public.⁹¹ For three days the heads of two executed amirs were hung in Cairo, first at the citadel gate, then at the town gate. During these days the

⁸³Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 13:290; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:289.

⁸⁴Ibn al-Jazarī, *Mukhtār Hawādīth al-Zamān*, 353.

⁸⁵Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:118–19.

⁸⁶Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmād ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah*, ed. Muḥammad Sayyid Jād al-Ḥaqq (Cairo, 1973), 1:52.

⁸⁷Ibn Ṣaṣrā, *Al-Durrah al-Mudī'ah*, 93–96, 128–31, and 151.

⁸⁸Ibn al-Jazarī, *Mukhtār Hawādīth al-Zamān*, 391; idem, *Tārīkh*, 1:46 and 52. On one occasion an encampment of twelve tents was erected.

⁸⁹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām al-Warā*, 204 and 218.

⁹⁰Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:270 and 285; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 1:128 and 130.

⁹¹Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:329–30.



military bands continuously beat small drums.⁹²

Dār al-Sa‘ādah palace in Damascus served as a place of assembly where the influential men (*ahl al-hall wa-al-‘aqd*) congregated to pay homage (*bay‘ah*) to the new viceroy nominated by the sultan. The first stage in the formal procedure was the reading of the letter of appointment by the light of candles. This was accompanied with the bestowal of a robe of honor. From Dār al-Sa‘ādah the incoming viceroy proceeded to the citadel, where the second stage of the ceremony took place. Arriving there the viceroy bowed and kissed the gate’s doorstep (*‘atabah*) and entered the hall. With this he commenced his term of office.⁹³ Other ceremonies marked the end of service and the departure of officials. They also included the exchange of gifts.⁹⁴

Outside of political functions, the streets of Mamluk cities were also used for religious ceremonies. All strata of society celebrated communal feasts together and participated in mass gatherings. The chronicles report on the departure and return of the hajj caravan and on religious festivals to commemorate Muslim holidays. Worshipers commemorated other occasions, such as the completion of the recital of the entire Quran (*khatmah*) or the end of a yearly cycle of hadith recitation.⁹⁵ The nomination of Ibn Khallikān, the well-known jurist and historian, to a teaching position at the Zāhirīyah madrasah in Damascus in 677/1278 was celebrated by a gathering of political and religious dignitaries.⁹⁶ On his visit to Damascus in 696/1296, Sultan Kitbughā followed the pilgrims’ steps. He paid a visit to the Umayyad Mosque and inspected a precious manuscript said to be the Quran of ‘Uthmān. He then proceeded to the mosque’s southern wall and prayed at the tomb of Nabī Hūd. At Friday prayer he invited members of the congregation to write him and personally collected their petitions (*qissah*).⁹⁷

Public ceremonies and rituals did not always take place outdoors. Some were held within the walls of religious or governmental buildings. Mosques and shrines served as common loci for public encounters with the rulers. During Friday noon prayers the preacher blessed the sultan, a transparently political gesture. When Barqūq succeeded in taking control of Damascus, a celebratory ritual took place

⁹²Ibn al-Şayrafi, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 2:56.

⁹³Ibn Şaşrā, *Al-Durrah al-Mudī‘ah*, 24, 25 and 69; Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 289. Muhyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-Ayyām wa-al-‘Uṣūr fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. Murād Kāmil (Cairo, 1961), 61. See also the account of Lājīn’s nomination in Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7:176.

⁹⁴Ibn al-Şayrafi, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 1:151.

⁹⁵Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘ i‘*, 4:88; Ibn al-Jazārī, *Mukhtār Hawādīth al-Zamān*, 388.

⁹⁶Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 13:279.

⁹⁷Ibn al-Jazārī, *Tārīkh*, 1:291 and 292; idem, *Mukhtār Hawādīth al-Zamān*, 380.



in the Umayyad Mosque. Candles were lit, and the preacher, standing on the top step of the pulpit, invoked blessings for the sultan, who stood on a lower step.⁹⁸ Following the recovery of Badr al-Dīn Baydarah from an illness, a communal gathering took place in Damascus' Grand Mosque. Candles illuminated the building, as was the practice on mid-Sha'bān nights. Readers recited short chapters from the Quran, and Baydarah distributed considerable sums of alms (*sadaqah*).⁹⁹ After the dismissal of Tankiz, the powerful viceroy of Damascus, in 741/1340, the new governor prayed at the rulers' stall (*maqṣūrah*) in the Grand Mosque. In order to denigrate his predecessor, the new governor listed Tankiz's faults and promised to introduce reforms in taxation and administration.¹⁰⁰

The audiences at these events were not passive spectators. They participated in, and reacted to, the public displays and performances. They crowded the streets, their rising voices heard from every corner of the city. Occasionally they carried candles and even copies of the Quran.¹⁰¹ At least during one occasion of alms distribution, in 'Āshūrā' 912/1506, several people were crushed as the crowd forced its way toward the sultan, who was throwing coins to the poor from horseback.¹⁰² Crowded conditions are plainly illustrated by a report from Damascus. When a procession with an elephant reached a bridge, the poor animal became so terrified that he tumbled over the side of the bridge and died.¹⁰³

It is appropriate to mention here that streets and squares were not used only for prayers and parades. Sultans and commanders used such public spaces for their private rites of passage and invited rich and poor to participate. During ceremonies such as weddings (*zaffah*) and circumcisions (*khitān*) participants dined, listened to bands and poets, and exchanged gifts,¹⁰⁴ as was the case in Damascus for an event sponsored by the local governor in 801/1399. To accommodate the numerous guests, tents were erected, and eleven bowls of sugar were cooked. The governor's son was seated on a horse and accompanied by guests and musicians to the palace where his circumcision took place.¹⁰⁵ At a party given by the sultan in 837/1434, forty boys were circumcised alongside the royal prince. He was presented

⁹⁸Ibn Şaşrā, *Al-Durrah al-Mudī'ah*, 63.

⁹⁹Ibn al-Jazārī, *Tārīkh*, 1:11.

¹⁰⁰Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:123.

¹⁰¹Ibn Şaşrā, *Al-Durrah al-Mudī'ah*, 68, 69, 74, 75, 101, 126, and 133.

¹⁰²Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:94.

¹⁰³Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 4:264.

¹⁰⁴Al-Khaznadārī, *Tārīkh Majmū' al-Nawādir*, 63; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7:7; Ibn al-Jazārī, *Tārīkh*, 2:398; Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Nafḥah al-Miskīyah*, 215; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 9:101; al-Kutubī, *'Uyūn al-Tawārikh*, 132; Ibn al-Şayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 1:93–94; 2:34 and 116.

¹⁰⁵Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 4:28–29.



with gifts, jewelry, and sweets. Food and drinks were served to all.¹⁰⁶

Funerals were another opportunity for public relations. An inscription on the wall of the Zāhirīyah madrasah in Damascus reads: "our master Sultan Muḥammad Berke ordered the construction of this blessed mausoleum and the two schools. He had built it to inter his father and himself; one day he will join him. Hence this tomb will contain two mighty kings, al-Malik al-Zāhir and al-Malik al-Sa'īd."¹⁰⁷ The coffin of Ibrāhīm ibn Aybak was transferred in 645/1247–48 from Cairo to the tomb that he had built for himself in Damascus.¹⁰⁸ Citizens were summoned from the minarets to take part in funeral processions that traversed the city. Shops were closed, and women exposed their hair as a sign of mourning.¹⁰⁹ In 730/1330 the body of Sayf al-Dīn Bahdar was taken first to the Great Mosque in Damascus. From there the funeral procession (*janāzah*) proceeded to the cemetery. Notables, heads of local government, and the religious establishment participated in the ceremony. All the mourners walked on foot; not a single person was seen on horseback.¹¹⁰ In the services commemorating the end of the first year after the death of Qalāwūn, a customary meal (*simāt*) was served in Cairo and Damascus. The population of Damascus gathered at the Green Hippodrome, north of the old city. Its gates were unlocked. From midday until midnight Quranic verses were recited, and preachers (*wu‘āz*) related stories from the sultan's life.¹¹¹

The manipulation of the urban topography of the city and its public spaces for official image-making by the Mamluks was as true for Damascus, and cities of Bilād al-Shām, as it was for Cairo. Building projects, the inscriptions that covered those buildings, and the public performances staged inside and outside their walls combined to fortify and to disseminate the image of Mamluk sultans and viceroys as unquestioned rulers. Various actors participated in those performances, engaging both representatives of the state and the civilian urban population. It was in these urban, public spaces that sultans, commanders, jurists, Sufis, civil servants, merchants, and the masses ('āmmah) encountered one another and participated together in the construction of official imagery. Occasionally during these events gifts and awards were bestowed. The exchange of gifts, the distribution of alms,

¹⁰⁶ Anonymous [*mu'arrikh shāmī majhūl*], *Hawliyāt Dimashqīyah* 834–839/1430–35, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1968), 98.

¹⁰⁷ RCEA, 13:57 (no. 4884 Damascus).

¹⁰⁸ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān*, 1:16.

¹⁰⁹ Sharaf al-Dīn Ibn Ayyūb, *Das Kitāb ar-rauḍ al-‘āṭir des Ibn Aiyūb*, ed. Ahmet Halil Güneş (Berlin, 1981), 17; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:677; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:16, 19, 71, 134; 2:307. Also al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān*, 1:177.

¹¹⁰ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:410.

¹¹¹ Ibn Iyās, *Bādā'i'*, 4:29; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Mukhtār Hawādīth al-Zamān*, 342; idem, *Tārīkh*, 1:58.



communal prayer, and the blessings of the governors merged in an inspiring political ritual.



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BENJAMIN MICHAUDEL

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The Use of Fortification as a Political Instrument by the Ayyubids and the Mamluks in Bilād al-Shām and in Egypt (Twelfth-Thirteenth Centuries)

INTRODUCTION

Fortification played a major role in the management of conflicts between Franks and Muslims in Bilād al-Shām at the time of the Crusades. In addition to protecting the borders, fortifications preserved the local *iqtā'*-based economy. Between the end of the twelfth and the end of the thirteenth centuries, Ayyubid and Mamluk rulers used fortification to consolidate their power in Muslim and former Frankish territory. This political use of Islamic fortification knew three distinct stages of development between the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, parallel with the technical evolution of Islamic military architecture and contemporary with political changes in Bilād al-Shām and Egypt (fig. 1).

STAGE ONE: THE DEFENSIVE POLICY OF ȘALĀH AL-DĪN AT THE END OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

Beginning in 1170/1171, Șalāh al-Dīn built fortifications as the Fatimid vizier of Egypt. His considerations were primarily defensive in this period, following the Frankish campaign of 1168 that led to the siege of Cairo, and the Frankish-Byzantine naval expedition against Damietta in 1169. Thus, Șalāh al-Dīn ordered the restoration of the Fatimid walls of Cairo, conquered the castle of Ayla on the Red Sea, and made improvements to the fortifications of Alexandria.¹

The launch of the fortification program of Cairo in 1176 by Șalāh al-Dīn not only symbolized his will to affirm his independence from the dying Nurid power in the Bilād al-Shām, but also to put an end to the Fatimid power in Egypt. This defensive program represented the first step toward the political and military supremacy of Șalāh al-Dīn at the end of the twelfth century. Until that time, Cairo had been the capital of the Fatimid Caliphate, founded in 969 to the north of the city of al-Fusṭāṭ. Thus, the city had been subject to careful works of fortification,

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¹J. M. Mouton and Sami 'Abd al-Malik, "La forteresse de l'île de Graye (Qal'at Ayla) à l'époque de Salah al-Din: Etude épigraphique et historique," *Annales Islamologiques* 29 (1995): 85; Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden, 1995), 6–7.



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comprising two defensive walls. The first was built from brick in 971, and the second from stone masonry in front of it between the years 1088 and 1092.²

Şalāh al-Dīn entrusted the amir Qarāqūsh with the supervision of a fortification program unequalled in the former Fatimid capital. This program led to the construction of a citadel at the top of a hill to the southeast of Cairo (fig. 2), and a twenty-kilometer-long wall surrounding the whole city (fig. 3).³ Used both as the residence of the new sovereign and as a law court, the citadel symbolized the political preeminence of Şalāh al-Dīn and of the Ayyubids over the Fatimid city. It became, moreover, the physical base of Şalāh al-Dīn's power in Egypt: it was above all a fortified complex in which Şalāh al-Dīn, his relatives, and his mamluk troops could take refuge in case of an invasion of Cairo by the Franks or a revolt in the city against the new sovereign. The construction of the citadel was part of a larger building program aimed at creating a Muslim counterpoint to Crusader Jerusalem. The Ayyubid capital would thus be able to compete with the Frankish capital by virtue of its defensive system. It validated the political transition between the Fatimids and the Ayyubids, which did not represent a total rejection of the pre-existing fortifications, as the defensive walls built around Cairo by the Fatimids were preserved and surrounded by the Ayyubid ramparts.⁴ Therefore, the defensive pragmatism extolled by Şalāh al-Dīn came with the political transition. The extension of the defensive policy to the rest of Egypt, with fortification programs applied to the main coastal positions and on the primary communication routes of the Sinai, symbolized the extension of Şalāh al-Dīn's power to the entire former Fatimid province and the emergence of a competitive Muslim territory in the turmoil of the Crusades.

Nonetheless, in Bilād al-Shām, Şalāh al-Dīn did not undertake a fortification policy similar to the one developed in Egypt, mainly due to a difference in the management of power. After having unified almost all of the former Nurid provinces in Bilād al-Shām with the taking of Aleppo in 1183, Şalāh al-Dīn delegated his authority to his most faithful amirs and to his family members. He entrusted former Saljuq and Frankish territories to them as *iqtā'* and also delegated to them, as *muqta'*s (*iqtā'* holders), the responsibility for the defence of these lands. Thus, delegation of power was accompanied by a delegation of defensive decision-making in which Şalāh al-Dīn, who was occupied primarily with the military expeditions

²Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭāṭ wa-al-Āthār fī Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, trans. Paul Casanova, *Description historique et topographique de l'Egypte* (Cairo, 1920), 4:81, 87.

³Imād al-Dīn al-İsfahānī, *Kitāb al-Fayḥ al-Qussī fī al-Faṭḥ al-Qudsī* (583/1187–589/1193), ed. M. Mahmūd Şabāḥ (Cairo, 1975), 209.

⁴Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 6–7.



he led against the Franks in the region, only rarely interfered.⁵

Therefore, as for Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in Egypt a decade earlier, the fortifications erected by the *muqta'*s in Bilād al-Shām served to affirm their authority and power over a territory recently subjugated and provided the key to semi-autonomy from the Egyptian central power; indeed, the castles became the residence of the *muqta'*, received the taxes in coin or in kind, and could shelter the locals in case of threats. A good example of this provincial policy is the *iqtā'* of the Mengüverish amirs, located on the northern Syrian coast. The amirs, who were granted a vast territory by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in 1188, reigned for more than eighty years in semi-autonomy and launched private fortification programs through the main castles that protected the borders of their *iqtā'*s, i.e., Ṣahyūn, capital of the *iqtā'*, Balāṭunus, and Burzayh.⁶

One observes at the end of the twelfth century two facets of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's power bound closely to two defensive policies. In Egypt, the Ayyubid conquest of the Fatimid state was followed by a large fortification program in Cairo and in the main strategic zones supervised largely by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. In Bilād al-Shām, the system of *iqtā'* applied on a large scale to the territories taken from the Franks and the Nurids generated private and individual fortification programs led by the *muqta'*s, who sought military and financial autonomy.

STAGE TWO: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF FORTIFICATION IN THE INTERNAL STRUGGLES BETWEEN THE SUCCESSORS OF ṢALĀḤ AL-DĪN DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

This period saw tensions between Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's successors for their supremacy as leaders of the vast Ayyubid empire. Two main centers emerged and remained rivals during the first half of the thirteenth century: the principality of Aleppo, controlled by al-Zāhir Ghāzī, and the principality of Damascus/Cairo, under the authority of al-‘Ādil.⁷

The war against the Franks was relegated to the background during this period because of numerous truces and peace treaties; the attention of the two main Ayyubid sovereigns was therefore focused on the development of their own territories within the Ayyubid empire. In this regard, they led policies of centralization of the *iqtā'*s granted at the time of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn that aimed to territorially and politically unify these two main poles of the empire, in order to limit their dissensions and their defensive weaknesses.

Fortification played a major role in these centralization policies of the two

⁵Anne-Marie Eddé, *La principauté ayyoubide d'Alep (1183–1260)* (Stuttgart, 1999), 279 ff.

⁶Ibid., 266–67.

⁷Ibid., 235.



main Ayyubid princes, insofar as control of the *iqtā*'s was generally symbolized on the ground by the implementation of fortification programs "sponsored" by Aleppo, Damascus, or Cairo. These aimed at improving the defensive system of a region, developing the defensive network of the principality, and affirming the sovereign's power in even the most distant provinces of their territories.

Thus, this empire-wide defensive system appeared mainly as the competition between the two princes of Aleppo and Damascus/Cairo to outdo their respective rival in the quality of a regional defensive system that had to be sufficiently effective in preventing any attack from a neighboring family member. Political and military rivalries generated this defensive emulation, a defensive race internal to the Ayyubid world that encouraged the development of Islamic fortification during this period.

The sites affected by these fortification policies were numerous in Bilād al-Shām: one can mention Aleppo (fig. 4), Hārim, Qal‘at Najm, Qal‘at Ja‘bar, al-Shughr-Bakās, Apamea, and Shayzar (fig. 5) for the principality of Aleppo and Damascus, and Bosra, Salkhad, ‘Ajlūn, Shawbak, Karak, and Cairo for the principalities of Damascus/Cairo. The Ayyubid princes were quite careful in the execution of these fortification projects, sometimes personally inspecting the progress of work. The supervision of these fortification programs by the princes led to the emergence of standardized characteristics for this maturing practice of Islamic fortification. The sovereigns in particular turned their attention to the main towns of their principalities, Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo, whose citadels became their place of residence. There they coupled the fortification works with palatial architectural works intended to change these defensive sites into fortified palaces reflecting both their military and political might.

The castle of al-Shughr-Bakās, located in northeast coastal Syria (fig. 6), experienced the "princely" defensive policies of this period.⁸ Conquered by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn from the Franks in 1188 and granted as an *iqtā* to an amir, the site was recovered by the prince of Aleppo, al-Zāhir Ghāzī, shortly after the sultan's death and after the rebellion of the sons of the amir in 1194. The prince of Aleppo ordered immediately the execution of a major fortification program on the site: from the defensive point of view, the upgrading of the castle by the prince of Aleppo ensured direct control of one of the main roads linking the Ayyubid principality of Aleppo to the Crusader principality of Antioch. From the political point of view, the fortification program increased the power of the prince of Aleppo in the region. Indeed, the improved castle symbolized the authority of the

⁸Max van Berchem and Edmond Fatio, *Voyage en Syrie* (Cairo, 1914–15), 1:251–59; Paul Deschamps, *Les châteaux des croisés en Terre-Sainte*, vol. 3, *La défense du comté de Tripoli et de la principauté d'Antioche* (Paris, 1973), pt. 1, 349–50.



prince in a region which had been semi-autonomous since its conquest by Șalāh al-Dīn in 1188.

Some Ayyubid *iqtā'*s and principalities remained in the margins of the policies of the main successors during the first half of the thirteenth century and developed their own defensive programs to strengthen their local power. This was the case in the principalities of Hims and Ȇamāh, in the territory of the Isma'īlis and in the *iqtā'* of the Mengüverish amirs on the northern Syrian coast around Ȇahyūn castle. This castle, located around thirty kilometers to the north-east of Latakia, was transformed by the amirs into a scaled-down imitation of the citadel of Aleppo, notably with the building of a palace similar to that built in the citadel of Aleppo by the prince al-Zāhir Ghāzī at the beginning of the thirteenth century (fig. 7).⁹

STAGE THREE: MAMLUK FORTIFICATION AS THE REFLECTION OF MILITARY SUPREMACY AT THE END OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

The advent of the Mamluks in the second half of the thirteenth century represented the last main turning point of the Crusades with the emergence of a power that took responsibility for subduing the Latin States on the shores of Bilād al-Shām. Following the example of their Ayyubid predecessors, the Mamluks used fortification as a means to establish their power in the provinces of Bilād al-Shām that remained faithful to Șalāh al-Dīn's successors and in the regions progressively conquered at the expense of the Crusaders.

In the former Ayyubid territories of Bilād al-Shām and Egypt, the Mamluks sought to recover the former *iqtā'*s and principalities, and gradually replace the *muqta'* at his death with a governor, as was the case with the *iqtā'* of the Mengüverish amirs. Other *iqtā'*s, such as those of the amir of Karak and the Shawbak castles of Jordan, were recovered after military expeditions. This system was also applied to the last Frankish territories and castles conquered during this period, such as Krak des Chevaliers.

The castles served as residences for the Mamluk governors and centralized the political, economic, and military life of the region, as in the Ayyubid period, but the Mamluk sultans were not able to launch fortification programs similar in extent to those of their predecessors. One notable exception was Cairo, where the citadel was re-fortified at the end of the thirteenth century. The main reason for this situation was that the Mamluks generally recovered castles and citadels in good condition, since they tried to conquer them while inflicting as little damage as possible. Dismantling these Ayyubid and Frankish defensive works and eventually replacing them in face of the threat of a Crusader counteroffensive would have

⁹Yasser Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* (University Park, PA, 1997), 89–91.



required a heavy investment of time and money. Therefore, the sultans could not symbolize their new authority by building numerous towers and palaces *ex nihilo*, but had to adapt their works to the pre-existing fortifications.

The Mamluks, thus did restore and make defensive improvements to these castles, both to strengthen the sites against a potential threat and to symbolize to the locals the fall of the Ayyubids and the beginning of their own rule. These works were characterized by monumentality and ostentation; they built towers and curtain-walls surpassing the size and defensive efficiency of pre-existing towers, such as in Krak des Chevaliers, Aleppo, and Marqab (fig. 8).

Finally, they demonstrated their political and military superiority by displaying in an ostentatious way the progressive transformation of these castles into palatial residences that had been initiated during Ayyubid times: epigraphical registers with floral and animal-shaped patterns were used liberally on castle walls, in addition to decorative designs around such defensive devices as loopholes and box machicolations (ex. Cairo, Krak des Chevaliers, Marqab) (figs. 9 and 10).¹⁰

In conclusion, one can observe, between the end of the twelfth and the end of the thirteenth centuries, a significant evolution in the role of fortification as a major political instrument used by the Ayyubids and the Mamluks. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn used fortification as a precious tool in the affirmation of his power in Egypt. In Bilād al-Shām, it allowed him to rely, politically and militarily, on his faithful amirs and relatives while he was occupied with the struggle against the Franks. During the first half of the thirteenth century, fortification was used as a chessboard in a game played between the two main poles of the Ayyubid empire for their own supremacy over Bilād al-Shām and Egypt: every castle or citadel put under the control of a prince was a pawn in this game and, thanks to the improvement of their defensive systems at that time, could be useful both for the protection of the "king" and for the acquisition of territory. Finally, for the first Mamluks of the second half of the thirteenth century, fortification was essentially used in support of defensive ingenuity at its apogee and of an artistic expression that went beyond the mere military functionality of the castles. They became strong symbols of a military and political power that spread in progressive and inexorable ways over the whole Bilād al-Shām and Egypt at the end of the Crusades.

¹⁰Jean Mesqui, *Quatre châteaux des Hospitaliers: Le Crac des Chevaliers: Le château haut: première et seconde enceinte* (Paris, 2004), 21, 25–26; idem, *Quatre châteaux des Hospitaliers: Qal'at Marqab: Le château* (Paris, 2004), 3.





Fig. 1. Main fortified sites in Bilād al-Shām during the Crusades



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Fig. 2. Citadel of Cairo: Al-Ramlah and al-Haddād Ayyubid towers on the eastern front



Fig. 3. Ayyubid wall of Cairo: Al-Maḥrūq tower near the north-eastern side of the wall



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Fig. 4. Citadel of Aleppo: Ayyubid gate-tower (Mamluk upper part)



Fig. 5. Citadel of Shayzar: Ayyubid and Mamluk keep



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Fig. 6. Al-Shughr-Bakās castle: Western view of the Ayyubid castle of Bakās



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Fig. 7. Şahyūn castle: Portal of the Ayyubid palace



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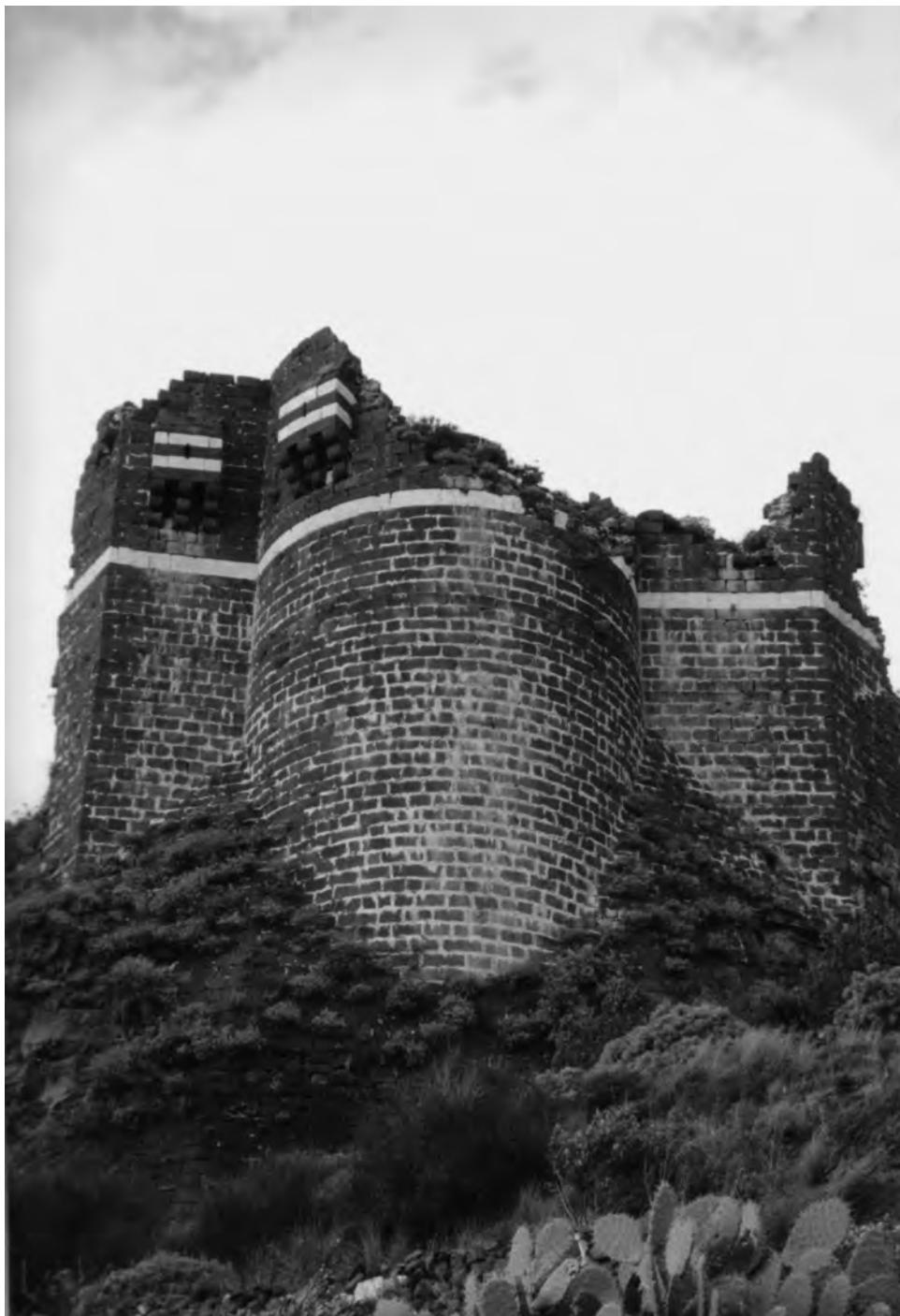


Fig. 8. Marqab castle: Mamluk tower on the southern front



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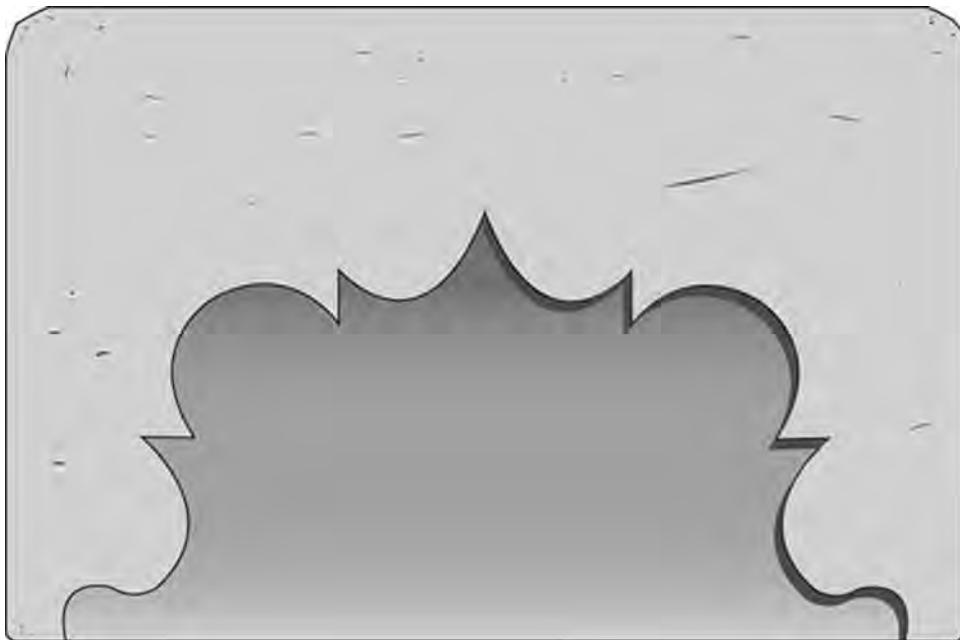


Fig. 9. Krak des Chevaliers: Arabesque pattern engraved on the upper lintels of the Mamluk loopholes



Fig. 10. Marqab castle: Decorative alternation of basalt and limestone courses on the facing of the Mamluk box machicolations



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MAHMOOD IBRAHIM

CAL POLY POMONA

Practice and Reform in Fourteenth-Century Damascene Madrasahs

Prior to the Mamluk period, Damascus suffered a series of political and economic crises which underscored its already diminished status. It had been an object of contention between the Fatimids in Cairo and the Abbasids in Baghdad, each seeing the city as an advance post against the other. The insertion of the Saljuq Turks and the Crusaders into this equation did not make matters any easier for Damascus and its inhabitants. Relative stability and prosperity, however, were slowly regained with the arrival of Nūr al-Dīn Zangī who made Damascus the capital of his realm in 1154. And despite minor setbacks during the following century, when the Ayyubids ruled Egypt and Syria, Damascus continued to grow in importance in the cultural life of the region, especially after the fall of Baghdad (1258), as a center for Sunni (and Sufi) education with its ever expanding number of madrasahs and *khānqāhs*. This role was further enhanced during the Mamluk period as these sultans relied on an Arabic-speaking bureaucracy. During the Mamluk period, Damascus became the capital of the province, and as the most important city in Syria, it played a crucial role in the formulation of post-Abbasid culture.¹

Although by no means the only venue to transmit knowledge, the madrasah became an important cultural institution whose role went beyond that of a place for higher education. Recent literature suggests different social and political roles and raises further questions that need to be answered in an effort to fully comprehend the role the madrasah played during the medieval period.² While preparing an edition of *Tārīkh al-Jazarī* comprised of all available fragments,³ I came upon,

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¹This is one of a series of pieces that I will undertake based on *Tārīkh al-Jazarī*. I am grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities and the ARCE for the fellowship that allowed me to do this research during 2004/5. For the importance of the Mamluks to Arabic and Arab culture, see Linda Northrup, "The Bahri Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1390," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1, *Islamic Egypt 640–1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge, 1998), 254f.

²For a critical assessment of the role of the madrasah in Damascus, see Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge, 1994). See also Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton, 1992). A history of the institution may be found in George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh, 1981).

³Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādīth al-Zamān wa-Anbā' ihi wa-Wafāyāt al-Akābir wa-al-A'yān min Abnā' ihi*. I am working with five fragments of the manuscript: Gotha



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among other things, continuous reference in the narrative of events and in the obituaries of some noteworthy individuals to madrasahs in Damascus, their teachers, when they were appointed or were transferred, and who replaced whom, among other relevant information that might shed further light on the institution, at least during the years covered by the remaining fragments. At this time, only selected reports will be highlighted that refer to practices related to the madrasah institution and mention attempts to reform some abuses that were associated with it.

NEW INSTITUTIONS

While Pouzet could count 94 madrasahs in Damascus by 1300,⁴ more were built after that. What remains of al-Jazarī's manuscript unfortunately does not cover the first twenty-five years of the fourteenth century but only the years from 1325 to 1338 (725–38 A.H.). Al-Jazarī tells of the dedication of several madrasahs and mausolea. One madrasah was a modest establishment and the others more grand. Inaugurated on 14 Dhū al-Qa'dah 726, the Madrasah Ḥimṣīyah, not to be confused with the venerable Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ḥimṣīyah, was a small one. It was located opposite the Shāmīyah Juwwānīyah and came into being barely four months after the death of the person who endowed it. One teacher, Muhyī al-Dīn, known as Qādī 'Akkār, began teaching there.⁵

The founder of Dār al-Qur'ān al-Sinjāriyah, the well-to-do merchant 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī al-Sinjārī, died suddenly on Thursday, 13 Jumādā II 735, while in Cairo. He had earlier established the Madrasah Sinjāriyah in Damascus, opposite the Bāb al-Naṭṭāfin, one of the northern gates of the Umayyad Mosque. The endowment provided for a group of Quran reciters and students as well as for the teaching of hadith.⁶

Another madrasah is Dār al-Qur'ān wa-al-Ḥadīth, established, built, and endowed by (*ansha'ahā wa-'ammarahā wa-waqafahā*) Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Harrānī, known as Ibn al-Ṣabbāb. He was a wealthy traveling merchant (*tājir saffār*). This madrasah was sufficiently endowed to have a hadith

MSS A1559, A1560; and A1561; Bibliothèque Nationale MS A6739; Kōprülü Zadeh MS 1037. There has been a recent edition of the manuscript by 'Umar Tadmurī (*Tārīkh Ḥawādīth al-Zamān wa-Anbā'ihi wa-Wafāyāt al-Akābir wa-al-A'yān min Abnā'ihi al-Ma'rūf bi-Tārīkh Ibn al-Jazarī: Juz' fīhi [min Wafāyāt Sanat 689 ḥattā Hawādīth Sanat 699 H]* [Beirut, 1998]), but he does not incorporate the Gotha fragments. However, citations to al-Jazarī in this article will be made to Tadmurī's edition as a more readily available reference.

⁴Louis Pouzet, *Damas au VIIe–XIIIe siècle: vie et structures religieuses d'une métropole islamique* (Beirut, 1988), 426.

⁵Al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādīth al-Zamān*, 2:122. Al-Nu'aymī has it opposite the Shāmīyah Barrānīyah (*Al-Dāris fi Tārīkh al-Madāris*, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn [Beirut, 1990], 1:174).

⁶Al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādīth al-Zamān*, 3:804.



scholar and students (*shaykh li-samā' al-hadīth wa-mustamī'ūn*). The five prayers as well as the special *tarāwīh* prayers were to be performed there. It was located opposite the Madrasah 'Ādilīyah al-Kabīrah and its inauguration was on Tuesday, 1 Ramadān 738.⁷

The mausoleum (*turbah*) had developed, as an institution supported by *waqf*, during the Mamluk period and referred to a complex structure that housed the tomb and included a mosque and facilities for the staff. Some included a Sufi convent. Often, a *turbah* could also include a madrasah. The size and facilities attached to the *turbah* depended on the station of the benefactor and the size and purpose of the endowment. Thus, a *turbah*, in its manifold manifestations, was among the various types of institutions where knowledge was exchanged. The following reports found in al-Jazarī illustrate the construction of some mausolea in Damascus.

A mausoleum was built by the merchant Amīn al-Dīn 'Uthmān ibn 'Umar, known also as al-Buṣṣ, who died on 7 Dhū al-Hijjah 731. The mausoleum was outside the Jābiyah Gate on the site of an older mosque that was knocked down and rebuilt with a minaret and a burial room next to it. Attached to the walls of the mosque, he built upper chambers and shops (*'alālī wa-hawānīt*) and made their income *waqf* for the mosque. He also endowed a chair for the teaching of hadith. Amīn al-Dīn 'Uthmān also built a *khān* (or inn) in al-Muzayrib (a village in the Hawrān, south of Damascus) with a mosque and a minaret. A prayer leader and a caretaker, among others, were to take care of the place and the travelers who stayed there for the night. They were to light ten candles for each boarder. The total cost of Amīn al-Dīn's endowment was about 250,000 dirhams.⁸

Another mausoleum was built for the Mamluk amir Sayf al-Dīn Balabān, also known as Turnā. He died on 21 Rabī‘ I 734 and left a great deal of money, of which 30,000 dirhams were set aside for the building of the *turbah* and the attached mosque and to buy whatever was needed for them. The imam of the mosque was to receive 30 dirhams, the muezzin 30 dirhams, and the caretaker 30 dirhams. The mausoleum and the mosque each had windows made of iron that opened to the street and were inside the city walls, near the Umayyad Mosque. They were adjacent to his former residence.⁹

A friend and a neighbor of al-Jazarī when he lived near Bāb al-Khawwāṣīn, Najm al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahīm al-Rahbī was a very wealthy merchant. He died on Wednesday, 27 Jumādā II 735. He built a mausoleum and a mosque in the area of Mazzah, where his endowment supported a group of residents and caretakers. One

⁷Ibid., 1027.

⁸Ibid., 2:508.

⁹Ibid., 3:698.



third of his wealth (50,000 dirhams) went to buy property whose income was designated for charity.¹⁰

MEDICINE AND THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES

It is thought that the madrasah institution was specifically established for the teaching of religious sciences, and especially *fiqh* (law). While that might be true of some institutions, in others subjects such as medicine were taught alongside the religious sciences, often by the same individuals. Also, just as in the teaching of religious sciences, the approach to the teaching of physical sciences was similarly varied to include the formal and the informal types of education practiced at the time. Al-Jazarī provides the following reports which illustrate this complexity. 'Imād al-Dīn Abū Bakr 'Uthmān al-Hanafī, known as 'Imād al-Hayawān, was a physician at the Bīmāristān al-Šālihiyah as well as the Bīmāristān al-Nūrī. He also taught Hanafi law in the Hanafi schools.¹¹ 'Izz al-Dīn Abū 'Alī ibn Zufar, from Irbil, was a physician by training and experience who studied and worked in Baghdad, Tabriz, and other cities in the east. He came to Damascus in 692 and became a Sufi. He must have passed certain requirements for he was recommended to the authorities and he was finally given permission to practice medicine (*thumma innahu zukkiya wa-uhina lahu fī mubasharat al-tibb*). He, however, was in a quandary and could not take off his Sufi garb and decided to forsake his profession.¹² Najm al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahīm ibn al-Rahmān, known as Ibn al-Shahhām, passed away in the Madrasah Jārūkhīyah¹³ on Tuesday, Rabī' II 730. This Shafi'i scholar, originally from Mosul, left his home town as a youth and traveled around before he settled in Baghdad in pursuit of knowledge (*wa-aqāma bi-Baghdād yashtaghilu bi-al-'ilm*). He then "stayed awhile" in the Sarāy Madrasah of Uzbek Khan. Najm al-Dīn came to Damascus in 724. He must have been well known by then for he was immediately given the *tadrīs* (teaching assignment) in the Madrasah Zāhirīyah, which is outside the city wall. The *mashyakhah* of the Palace Khānqāh and the *tadrīs* in the Madrasah Jārūkhīyah were added later to his duties.¹⁴ Najm al-Dīn's obituary indicates that he was an expert in law and medicine, in keeping with the traditions of the school. This madrasah was built for Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn al-Mubārak, known as al-Mujīr al-Wāsiṭī al-Baghdādī, who studied *fiqh* at the Niẓāmīyah of Baghdad with Abū Manṣūr ibn al-Razzāz. He was also the *mu'īd* (teaching assistant) for al-Imām Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī. Where or with whom

¹⁰Ibid., 805.

¹¹Ibid., 2:347–48.

¹²Ibid., 146.

¹³Al-Nu‘aymī, *Tārīkh al-Madāris*, 2:169.

¹⁴Al-Jazarī, *Hawādīth al-Zamān*, 2:414.



he studied medicine, al-Jazarī does not say, but after Abū al-Qāsim came to Damascus and took over the Jārūkhīyah, he seems to have taught medicine in the school (*wa-nashara bihā al-ṭibb*). Medicine, in addition, was also taught at the Madrasah Dunaysirīyah, right next to the Bīmāristān al-Nūrī (the main Damascene hospital), at the Labbūdīyah Nijmīyah, and at the Madrasah Dakhwārīyah whose founder was the teacher of such medical experts as Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah and Ibn al-Nafīs.¹⁵

The teaching of hard sciences or professional training related to medical practice was not always done in a madrasah. It was done also by apprenticeship. Badr al-Dīn Abū ‘Alī al-Kaḥḥāl came from a family of oculists. His father and grandfather were both oculists (*kaḥḥāl*). Badr al-Dīn, who passed away on Friday, 3 Dhū al-Hijjah 726, also had knowledge of surgery. Naturally enough, when Badr al-Dīn grew old (he lived to be a hundred) and his hand became unsteady, his son Muḥammad began to practice the profession under the supervision of his father (*fa-kāna waladuhu Muḥammad yuḥaḥhil wa-yudāwī al-jarḥā wa-al-mardā bi-huḍūrihi wa-iṣhāratihī*). It would be natural to assume that Muḥammad also read medical books with his father. Other students, al-Jazarī says, "read and apprenticed" with Badr al-Dīn, among them (*mimman qara‘a ‘alayhi wa-iṣtaghala ‘indahu*) Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad, the head oculist and surgeon (*ra’īs al-kaḥḥālīn wa-al-jarā’ihīyah*). His son, Jamāl al-Dīn, was then the chief of physicians (*ra’īs al-ṭibbā’*) in Damascus.¹⁶

Another near-contemporary oculist passed away four years later on Saturday, 15 Dhū al-Hijjah 730. Zayn al-Dīn Ayyūb ibn Ni‘mah al-Nābulṣī resided, presumably as a student, in the Madrasah Shāmīyah that was outside the city walls (*al-Barrānīyah*), where he "memorized *Kitāb al-Luqtah fi al-Tanbih*" and audited (*sami‘a*) *Kitāb al-Adab* of al-Bayhaqī. But when he saw his neighbor, Ismā‘īl ibn al-‘Abbādī al-Kaḥḥāl, practicing his profession, Zayn al-Dīn liked what he saw and decided to become a *kaḥḥāl* himself. So he studied with yet another oculist, Muhyī al-Dīn Tāhir al-Kaḥḥāl, among others, for a "short period" before he started his own practice. He seems to have done well and grew rich as a result. But when Ghāzān Khān attacked Damascus in 700, he fled, with many others including al-Jazarī himself, to Cairo, where he stayed for twenty-two years. His fame and fortune increased there due to the demand for his profession (*wa-nafaqa sūquhu wa-haṣala lahu hazz fi ṣinā‘atihi*). He served the sultan and accompanied him on the hunt. When he returned to Damascus his reputation had already been enhanced and the students flocked to study with him (*wa-qaṣadahu al-ṭalabah*

¹⁵ Al-Nu‘aymī, *Tārīkh al-Madāris*, 2:100–8.

¹⁶ Al-Jazarī, *Hawādīth al-Zamān*, 2:167–68.



*wa-akhadhu ‘anhu).*¹⁷

Al-Jazarī provides the following reports regarding the teaching of other sciences. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān, known as al-Tuyūrī al-Ḥasib, was a professional witness specializing in assessing property values (*yashhadu fī qiyam al-amlāk*) who started out teaching in a *maktab* but eventually had a study circle (*halqah*) in the Umayyad Mosque. A group of students benefited from ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s extensive knowledge (*al-yad al-tūlā*) in calculus, algebra, *muqābalah* (collating, equations), and geometry (*wa-ishtaghala ‘alayhi jamā‘ah fī al-ḥisāb wa-al-jabr wa-al-muqābalah wa-al-handasah, wa-kāna lahu maktab fī awwal amrihi wa-ba‘du ṣāra lahu halqah bi-jāmi‘ Dimashq*).¹⁸ Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī, the muezzin and *muwaqqit* (time-keeper) in Karīm mosque in the Qubaybāt, was an expert astrologer, astronomer, and maker of astrolabes. He studied astronomy with Zayn al-Dīn ibn al-Murāḥhil (a deputy Shafi‘i judge, see below). In turn, Quṭb al-Dīn taught many students these same subjects.¹⁹

MOVEMENT

It is not unusual to read in the obituaries that someone died while a resident in a madrasah. Al-Nuwayrī (d. 732), author of *Nihāyat al-Arab*, for example, reports that his father was born in one madrasah and died in another. He passed away while in the Maliki lecture hall of the Najmīyah Madrasah in Cairo. But although some positions seem to be assigned for life, there was also a considerable movement of scholars from one madrasah to another. And it is worthwhile to notice that the authorities responsible for these appointments took special care not to leave a post vacant in case of death or transfer. Al-Jazarī usually says *wa-a‘tū* (they gave, or they assigned), yet he does not make clear who “they” refers to. (However, the authorities in this instance would usually consist of officials who administer the endowments, each of the chief judges or their deputies, and other relevant government officials.) Some of these appointments could be considered lateral moves, others seem to be promotions.

When al-Jazarī died on Friday, 7 Jumādā II 729, in his residence at the Madrasah Badrā’iyah, he was replaced by Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-‘Abbās Ibn Jahbal, who inaugurated his own lectures there a week later on Monday, 15 Jumādā II. Ibn Jahbal, a scion of a family of learning, vacated his post at the Madrasah Zāhirīyah. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Dhahabī took his place there and inaugurated his own lectures two days later, on Wednesday, 17 Jumādā II. This lecture was attended by the chief Shafi‘i judge of Damascus, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Qūnawī,

¹⁷Ibid., 444–45.

¹⁸Ibid., 156.

¹⁹Ibid., 370.



and a group of hadith and law scholars. Shams al-Dīn ibn al-Dhahabī (a Shafi‘i himself) had been a preacher (*khaṭīb*) in the mosque of Kafar Baṭnā for nearly twenty-six years, having been appointed there in Ṣafar 703. To take over his duties in Kafar Baṭnā, Jamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Masallātī, a Maliki, was appointed. He assumed his duties on Friday, 19 Jumādā II, in the presence of a group of judges and other notables who attended his inaugural sermon. A division of duties was agreed upon in this instance where the sons of Ibn al-Dhahabī occupied the post of leading the prayer (*imāmah*) while Ibn al-Masallātī assumed the duty of preaching only.²⁰ Ibn al-Masallātī was soon after appointed shaykh of the Khānqāh al-Shihābīyah when the previous shaykh died and the post became vacant.

The chief Shafi‘i judge al-Qūnawī passed away on 14 Dhū al-Qa‘dah 729. One of his posts, that of *mashyakhat al-shuyūkh*, was assigned to Sharaf al-Dīn al-Hamdanī, who assumed his post at the Khānqāh al-Sumaysaṭīyah. However, the new chief judge, ‘Alam al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ikhnātī, was transferred from Alexandria. He journeyed to Damascus and assumed his new post in less than two months, on Friday, 1 Ṣafar 730. Two days later, al-Ikhnātī inaugurated his lectures at two locations, at the Madrasah Ghazālīyah and the Madrasah ‘Ādilīyah. As usual in such cases, deputies or substitutes were appointed. One was Zayn al-Dīn Ibn al-Murahhil, known also as Ibn Wakīl Bayt al-Māl; he had been at the Madrasah ‘Adhrāwīyah ever since 6 Sha‘bān 725, when he came from Cairo to replace the departing Ibn al-Zamalkānī who had been promoted to chief Shafi‘i judge of Aleppo and thus had to leave several posts behind. Another of his posts at the Madrasah Masrūrīyah was filled by Jamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Sharīshī. To take Ibn al-Sharīshī’s place at the Ribāṭ al-Nāṣirī, Ḥusām al-Dīn Ḥasan was transferred from Tripoli.²¹

Another deputy appointed by al-Ikhnātī was Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad al-‘Uthmānī. He, however, died very soon afterward. Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn Jahbal, nephew of the above-mentioned Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Jahbal, was then appointed deputy and assumed his duties on Wednesday, 29 Jumādā I 730.²² Chief Judge al-Ikhnātī was soon to assume a teaching post at another school. When two of the teachers at the Madrasah Ṣārimīyah, Najm al-Dīn Hāshim al-Tanūkhī al-Ba‘lbakī and Najm al-Dīn Hāshim al-Ta‘līlī, died, the one in Jumādā II and the other in Rajab, al-Ikhnātī took over their duties as a supervisor and a teacher, respectively.²³

Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Jumlah was appointed chief Shafi‘i judge in Rabī‘ I 733 and

²⁰Ibid., 325.

²¹Ibid., 75, 78.

²²Ibid., 378 f.

²³Ibid., 464, 493.



the letter of appointment arrived fifteen days later. On the following Sunday, it was read in the governor's residence in the presence of other judges. Everyone then went to the Madrasah 'Ādilīyah, where the letter of appointment was read again (*quri'a taqlīduhu thānī marratan*). As part of the duties of the chief Shafi'i judge, Ibn Jumlah taught at the Madrasah 'Ādilīyah and the Madrasah Ghazālīyah. His post as *mu'id* (teaching assistant) at the Madrasah Qaymāriyah (or Qaymāzīyah) was taken over by his nephew Maḥmūd. Ibn Jumlah appointed (or confirmed) Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn Jahbal as his deputy (*nā'ib al-hukm*) which meant that he taught at the Madrasah Atabakīyah. But within six months Muḥyī al-Dīn was promoted and sent to Tripoli to become its chief Shafi'i judge. Ibn Jumlah took over the teaching duties at the Atabakīyah, presumably until the new deputy, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Kāmil al-Tadmurī, arrived from Hebron where he had had the duties of preaching and leading the prayers.²⁴ Ibn Jumlah remained in his post for nearly a year and a half when he became embroiled in a bribery scandal, after which he was stripped of his position and imprisoned in the Madrasah 'Adhrāwīyah (Shawwāl 734; more on this incident below). His duties as chief judge and teacher at the 'Ādilīyah, Ghazālīyah, and Atabakīyah were assigned to Shihāb al-Dīn ibn 'Abd Allāh, who retained his own teaching post at the Madrasah Iqbālīyah because it was his place of original residence. Accordingly, the new Shafi'i chief judge had teaching posts at four schools. In the meanwhile, Ibn Jumlah was transferred to the Citadel, where he remained in prison until 13 Ṣafar 736. When Ibn Jumlah was released, he joined his family, which had been residing all the while at the Madrasah Masrūrīyah.²⁵

There are other examples of this movement from one madrasah to another. 'Imād al-Dīn ibn al-Tarsūsī began teaching at the Madrasah Muqaddamīyah on Sunday, 23 Rabī' I 738. He vacated his post at the Madrasah Qaymāzīyah, which was filled by 'Alā' al-Dīn ibn al-'Izz al-Ḥanafī, who had been the preacher at the Afrām Mosque. 'Alā' al-Dīn was also previously a teacher at the Madrasah Qillījīyah, a post which he left to be filled by another 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, a Hanafi, Sufi shaykh (not to be confused with the deceased chief judge). All this movement took place within three days.²⁶

Death and transfer were not the only causes of replacement. Quick appointments to the vacant posts were made here also. When the celebrated Hanbali scholar Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymīyah was arrested, his teaching post at the Madrasah Ḥanbalīyah was assigned to Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad, known as Ibn al-Jābī. He is said to have acquitted himself well in his inaugural lecture, which

²⁴Ibid., 3:592, 600, 602–3.

²⁵Ibid., 591, 674, 855.

²⁶Ibid., 1016, 1017.



was attended by a number of qadis and notables.²⁷ In another instance, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Miṣrī had been in Aleppo when he was recalled due to his name being associated with a financial scandal. He arrived back on Thursday, 10 Jumādā I 738, and the very next day he was arrested, stripped of his posts at the Madrasah ‘Ādilīyah and the Dawla‘īyah. He was accused of participating in a shady sugar deal that became known after the head of the chancery (*kātib al-sirr*), ‘Alam al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn al-Quṭb, was arrested on accusations of embezzlement. It was rumored that the sugar could be found in the residence of Fakhr al-Dīn at the Madrasah ‘Ādilīyah. Thereupon, his residence was searched (*wa-kabasū baytahu*) but the sugar did not turn up. Unlike in the case of Ibn Jumlah’s family, the authorities ordered Fakhr al-Dīn’s family out of the residence, sealed it, and sealed all of his other properties. With Ibn al-Quṭb in prison and Fakhr al-Dīn in disgrace, a third individual was sought. Al-Amīn al-Sukkārī admitted that they had bought *qand* for the amount of 12 thousand dirhams and they processed it into sugar (*ishtarayna qand bi-ithnay ‘asharah alf dirham, wa-‘amilnāhu sukkar*). He further stated that one third was to go to him, one third to Ibn al-Quṭb, and one third to Fakhr al-Dīn. At that, Ibn al-Quṭb was beaten and jailed in the Citadel, while Fakhr al-Dīn was imprisoned in the Madrasah ‘Adhrāwīyah, where other “scholars” had been held prisoner at the same time. Fakhr al-Dīn’s post at the ‘Ādilīyah was assigned to Ibn al-Naqīb, while the post at the Dawla‘īyah was assigned to the rehabilitated Ibn Jumlah. Fakhr al-Dīn was finally released after 100 days of confinement and only after an order for his release came from the sultan in Cairo. There is no word that he recovered his posts. We are told, however, that he lived in a house that was loaned to him (*a‘ārahū iyyāhū*) by a teacher at the Madrasah Nāṣirīyah.²⁸

The movement from one post to another did not stop here. Ibn Jumlah, who was assigned to the Madrasah Dawla‘īyah after his rehabilitation, was soon transferred to the Madrasah Shāmīyah Barrānīyah (outside the city walls). The imam of Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafīyah, Shams al-Dīn al-Yamānī was appointed in Ibn Jumlah’s place at the Dawla‘īyah. Zayn al-Dīn ibn al-Murāḥīl, whose death necessitated the transfer of Ibn Jumlah in the first place, left a young son who was presumed to take over the teaching duties at yet another school, the Madrasah ‘Adhrāwīyah. As the boy was too young and unqualified for the post, Nūr al-Dīn al-Ardabīlī was appointed to the post until the boy grew up and acquired the qualifications necessary for teaching (*ilā haythu yakbar wa-yata’ahhal lil-tadrīs*).²⁹

While the son of Ibn al-Murāḥīl inherited only one of his father’s assigned

²⁷Ibid., 2:122.

²⁸Ibid., 3:1018, 1020, 1027, 1030.

²⁹Ibid., 1018–20, 1026, 1032.



posts, sometimes several posts, as well as the governmental appointments that originated the entitlement, were kept in the family. Just as the position of chief Shafi‘i judge entitled the position holder to teach at the Madrasah ‘Ādiliyah and the Madrasah Ghazālīyah, it seems that other positions had their associated posts as well. Jamāl al-Dīn Ahmād ibn Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, scion of the Damascene Ibn al-Qalānisī family, came from a long line of Shafi‘i notables. He studied hadith, together with our author al-Jazarī, under Ibn al-Bukhārī, among other scholars of the day. He also studied *fiqh* with Tāj al-Dīn al-Farkah and grammar with his own brother Sharaf al-Dīn. He was employed in the chancery for a time. Later, he was appointed treasurer (*wakīl bayt al-māl*) of Damascus as well as *qādī askar*, a dual post usually held simultaneously by a Shafi‘i and a Hanafi scholar. Jamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Qalānisī taught at the Madrasah Asadīyah, the Madrasah Zāhirīyah, the Madrasah Amīnīyah, and the Madrasah ‘Asrūnīyah.³⁰ Jamāl al-Dīn passed away on Monday, 28 Dhū al-Qa‘dah 731. Within a month, a *marsūm* (an official letter of appointment) arrived with the post on Tuesday, 26 Dhū al-Hijjah 731, appointing ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ibn al-Qalānisī, brother of the deceased, to all of his vacated official as well as teaching posts (*jamī‘ manāsib akhīhi Jamāl al-Dīn . . . wikālat bayt al-māl, wa-qadā‘ al-‘asākir al-mansūrah, wa-tadrīs al-madrasah al-Amīnīyah, wa-al-Zāhirīyah wa-al-madrasah al-‘Asrūnīyah, wa-ghayrihā*). This same ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ibn al-Qalānisī had been appointed to several positions a few months earlier, such as the supervision of the Bīmāristān al-Nūrī. Thus, by the end of the year ‘Alā’ al-Dīn came to hold several sensitive official and associated teaching posts. The continuity of the Ibn al-Qalānisī line in government and madrasah positions is secured not only by having a family *waqf*, but also by incorporating younger members of the family into this structure. As an example, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn declined at least two posts in favor of his nephew: teaching at the Madrasah ‘Asrūnīyah and the management of the wealth of the sons al-Zāhir Baybars (*nazala li-ibn akhīhi al-ṣadr Amīn al-Dīn ibn Jamāl al-Dīn ‘an tadrīs al-madrasah al-‘Asrūnīyah wa-‘an nazar tirkat awlād al-Sultān al-Mālik al-Zāhir*). Amīn al-Dīn inaugurated his own lectures (*dhakara al-dars*) at the Madrasah ‘Asrūnīyah on Wednesday, 6 Muḥarram 732.³¹

REFORM INITIATIVES

By the eighth/fourteenth century, the institution of the madrasah had seen over three hundred years of growth and development. An enormous amount of energy and resources were dedicated to its maintenance and also to insure that the benefits continued to reach society. As we have seen, by the middle of the fourteenth

³⁰Ibid., 507, 508.

³¹Ibid., 2:457, 472, 507, 515.



century there were nearly a hundred madrasahs in Damascus, large and small. Al-Nu‘aymī (d. 978/1570) lists 152 madrasahs in Damascus, other than the 500 or so mosques and the numerous *ribāṭs* and *khānqāhs*, where instruction, usually of a Sufi orientation, also took place. The greater majority of these institutions were founded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. That the institution had become so ubiquitous in the Islamic world is indicated by al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), who lists 73 madrasahs on the Cairo street known as Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, the site of the old Fatimid palace.³² Abuses were bound to crop up due to the large number of institutions, personnel, and amount of money dedicated to this institution. We have seen how the position could be abused as in the cases of Ibn Jumlah and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Miṣrī. George Makdisi reports on several practices such as divisibility of posts and multiplicity of posts. Makdisi refers to Ibn Taymīyah who criticized these practices in the form of *fatwás*. Makdisi also sites Abū Shāmāh (d. 665/1268), who wrote a long poem denouncing some of the abuses that had become prevalent even earlier in his day.³³ The following cases related by al-Jazarī shed further light on this issue and explain some of the steps taken to correct these abuses.

Sayf al-Dīn Tankiz al-Nāṣirī, the governor of Damascus (*nā’ib al-sulṭān*), was visiting the Madrasah Qillījīyah, which was next to his residence, during the early days of Rabī‘ I 729 when he saw iron locks on several rooms (*buyūt*, lit. houses). He asked the supervisors of the madrasah if such rooms belonged to the teachers of law (*fuqahā’*) at the school itself. One replied that the rooms belonged to Fakhr al-Dīn ibn Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī. He continued by saying that they stored in them cloth (*qimāsh*) and other wares (*hawā’ij*). Fakhr al-Dīn was summoned and was criticized for his actions as they were taking away rooms from the *fuqahā’* of the school, given that he owned other places around the city for storage (*wa-ankara ‘alayhi li-kawn lahūm qā‘ah wa-mawādi‘*). It turned out that Fakhr al-Dīn was not alone. The governor then issued an order to the inspector of endowments (*mushidd al-awqāf*) to demand rent from everyone who had a (store) room in a madrasah in which he was not a *faqīh*. Rent was to be assessed from the day each room was occupied. Honorable and highly-regarded assessors (*‘udūl al-qīmah*) were assembled to estimate the value and on Wednesday, 26 Rabī‘ I 729 it was decreed (*rasamū*) that the following should pay what the assessors had determined: Shams al-Dīn ibn Ḥumayd, who was the colleague of Fakhr al-Dīn in the Dīwān al-Jaysh, 600 dirhams; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-Muhaḍhib, 630 dirhams; the sons of ‘Afīf al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī, 400 dirhams; Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn al-Qaṣṣā‘, 400 dirhams; al-Khallāṭī, 400 dirhams. All of these individuals were found in the Madrasah

³² Al-Nu‘aymī, *Tārīkh al-Madāris*, index.

³³ Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*, 161–71. On Abū Shāmāh and his poem, see *ibid.*, 171.



‘Azīzīyah. Unfortunately, al-Jazarī does not mention what happened to Fakhr al-Dīn and his colleagues at the Qillījīyah. However, he says that some rooms and adjacent structures were knocked down to create a long covered and carpeted walkway (*dihlīz*) from the madrasah to the Umayyad Mosque. It is not clear how this would help prevent the abuse from recurring, except maybe in creating a large and continuous space instead of compartments: students could come and go unhindered. The authorities followed up with others in similar circumstances (*tatabba‘ū bāqī al-nās alladhīna hum sukkān al-madāris*). Although the effort seemed extensive, al-Jazarī mentions one more name in particular, Muḥammad al-Khashshāb, known also as al-Bahlawān, who had to pay 100 dirhams.³⁴

Another reform came in response to an order from the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself. A *marsūm* arrived in Damascus in early Dhū al-Hijjah 727. Shortly thereafter, on Friday, 6 Dhū al-Hijjah, the governor assembled the four chief judges, other teachers, and Sufis, and had the sultan’s letter read to the gathering. The letter asked that the deed document (*waqfiyah*) of each madrasah, inside and outside of the Damascus city walls, must be examined to make sure that the madrasah functioned exactly as stipulated in the document. Anyone who did not meet the qualifications (*shurūt*) stipulated by the benefactor must be dismissed. Only those who met the stipulations, including those who held non-teaching positions, could be retained. A “committee” made up of the four chief judges, the treasurer (*wakil bayt al-māl*), the supervisor and the inspector of the endowments (*nāzir al-awqāf wa-mushidduhā*), the accounts controller (*mustawfī*), and a group of *fuqahā’* and teachers began a systematic reading of all the *waqfiyahs*, an activity that took place everyday between the noon prayer and the afternoon prayer until the month of Ṣafar the following year (nearly the two months of Dhū al-Hijjah and Muḥarram).

The first madrasah that was examined was al-‘Ādilīyah and then al-Ghazālīyah (the madrasahs of the Shafi‘i chief judge), but nothing untoward was found there. The deed document of the Madrasah Shāmīyah Juwwānīyah stipulated that the law professor must board in the school (*sharṭuhā al-mabīt*) and the condition was made that all the teachers must sleep in the school if they were to remain employed. The deed document of the Shāmīyah Juwwānīyah stipulated the employment of 20 professors, in addition to other teaching posts, such as teaching assistants, and non-teaching functions such as prayer leader and the one who calls to prayer. The committee found 190 *faqīhs* and thus had to dismiss a total of 130. Leaving 60 behind did not comply with the conditions of the *waqfiyah*, but it must have been a difficult compromise because there was a great deal of commotion and unhappiness as a result of this action.

³⁴ Al-Jazarī, *Hawādīth al-Zamān*, 2:320–21.



Three of the Hanafi schools that were examined also stipulated boarding. These were the Madrasah Khātūnīyah Barrānīyah, the Madrasah Muqadamīyah inside the Farādīs Gate, and the Madrasah Khātūnīyah which is inside the city walls. In addition to boarding, the deeds stipulated that additional prayers must be performed on top of the five ordinary prayers. Al-Jazarī says that as a result of this examination many teachers were dismissed. Only 30 professors remained in these madrasahs where once they had 200, or 150, etc.³⁵

Local self-initiated reform attempts were also reported by al-Jazarī. On Wednesday, 22 Jumādā II 725 the chief Shafi'i judge, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī, presided over a committee made up of the *nāzir al-awqāf* (Shams al-Dīn al-Harrānī), the *mushidd al-awqāf* (Nāṣir al-Dīn Bakr), and the *mustawfī*. Apparently, there have been several complaints from the unhappy trustees of the madrasahs because the *waqf* income was insufficient, due to low prices and presumably meager profits. Some even expressed their complaints by writing to the sultan in Cairo and to the governor in Damascus. Perhaps to forestall government interference, al-Jazarī says that the Shafi'i's surveyed the schools and inspected them (*arākūhā [rawk] wa-kashafū 'alayhim*). They found lecturers with thirteen posts, others with twelve, eleven, or ten, and more or less (*wa-qalīl wa-kathīr*). The committee called all the Shafi'i's who had been assigned residence in the various madrasahs (*wa-hadara fuqahā' al-shāfi'iyyah al-munazzalūna fī al-madāris*). They gathered nearly 600 individuals. The decision was taken to reduce the number of posts held by an individual to three or four posts and to base the salary on the total of stipends gathered from each (*wa-yakūn bi-al-mablūm alladhī yatanāwalahu fī al-majmū'*). Al-Jazarī says that what was said and discussed at this unhappy occasion was too much to explain (*wa-jāra fuṣūl yaṭūl sharḥuhā*) and no one was happy with the outcome (*wa-infaṣala al-jamī' wa-kulluhum ghayr rādin*).³⁶

There were other instances when lecturers were dismissed from their posts based on local initiative as indicated by the following account, although this time it seems that the dismissal was unilateral and the implication is that the action was unjust. Al-Jazarī, furthermore, does not report the circumstances or why the lecturers were dismissed. The chief Shafi'i judge Jamāl al-Dīn ibn Jumlah was appointed to his post in Ṣafar 733, as we have seen earlier. By the middle of Shawwāl 734, nearly a year and a half later, Ibn Jumlah was dismissed due to complaints that he exceeded the law and that he lied under oath when accusations of bribery against him surfaced. These charges involved him and others, such as Zāhir al-Dīn al-Rūmī, Rukn al-Dīn al-Ṣūfī, and Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Duwaydār. A person by the name of Abū Riyāḥ testified in the presence of the governor Tankiz, with the Maliki chief

³⁵Ibid., 197–98.

³⁶Ibid., 73–74.



judge presiding over a council made up of the other two chief judges, amongst others, that Ibn Jumlah exceeded the law. The Maliki chief judge then ordered his imprisonment in the Madrasah ‘Adhrāwīyah. Confirmation of the finding and the judgment finally came from Cairo on Saturday, 23 Shawwāl. To replace the disgraced Ibn Jumlah, the sultan sent an order to appoint, as mentioned earlier, Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Majd al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh. The letter was read in the presence of an assembly by none other than ‘Alam al-Dīn al-Birzālī, al-Jazarī’s mentor and teacher and the source of much of the information for the latter parts of the *Tārīkh*. Shihāb al-Dīn, it will be recalled, took over the posts at the two madrasahs of the chief qadi (al-Ghazālīyah and al-‘Ādilīyah) and at the Atabakīyah, in addition to his own post at the Madrasah Iqbālīyah. Most people expressed satisfaction at this turn of events and felt that Ibn Jumlah got what he deserved, especially for stirring up the earlier case against Ibn Taymīyah. But what is important here is that Shihāb al-Dīn immediately took a reverse course from that of his predecessor. He showed a great deal of generosity in distributing charity, giving twenty to thirty dirhams (and no less than ten) to all those in need. In addition, he hired back all the lecturers that had been dismissed during the last year and a half by Ibn Jumlah. These were about fifty, some of whom had become nearly destitute. He also restored the stipends (*jāmikīyah*) to what they had been before Ibn Jumlah had reduced them.³⁷

CONCLUSION

These reports, culled as they were from one source only, in no way provide a full picture of the madrasah institution. But to the extent that they allow us any conclusion, they give us a glimpse at the institution as it functioned in its dual role: as a place of residence and as a center for education. The Madrasah ‘Adhrāwīyah has the added distinction of being some sort of jail, or a half-way house, to punish those who were guilty of serious transgressions. Ahmad Fikrī, in his study of Cairo’s madrasahs and mosques during the Ayyubid period, says that it was then that the madrasah finally began to perform its main function as a place of residence for the *fugahā*.³⁸ This much could be seen in various reports, especially in the cases of the 600 Shafi‘is (and no doubt others like them) who were *munazzalūn* (given residence) in the various madrasahs. But the madrasah was not simply a *manzil* where one resides; it was also an educational institution, although these reports do not specifically describe a formal curriculum. The often-repeated phrase is *wa-dhakara al-dars*. As we have seen also, transfer from one madrasah to another did not necessarily entail relocation of residence, and having posts at

³⁷Ibid., 3:674–76, 679–81.

³⁸Aḥmad Fikrī, *Masājid al-Qāhirah wa-Madārisuhā* (Cairo, 1969), 2:160.



several madrasahs did not entail multiple residences. The urgency to fill the vacancies must be seen in the importance of the function of *dhikr al-dars* (giving the lesson), as the madrasahs became a more pervasive and regulated institution where imparting of knowledge of various fields took place. And in imparting knowledge, in this knowledge industry, the physical sciences were no different from the religious sciences in that they were equally taught formally and informally. "Quality control" could be exercised, on the one hand, by manuals of *hisbah* and other professional checks, and on the other by the assignment/reassignment of these *fuqahā' /mudarrisūn* who constituted the pool of candidates for promotion to higher posts. Other conclusions could be drawn from these reports, especially when seen in their wider context. Also, it would be interesting to speculate about the relationship of the state to the judiciary when the movement of teachers in one city is charted, and when the transfer of judges (and other related positions) from one city to another is mapped out.



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ELLEN KENNEY

A Mamluk Monument "Restored": The *Dār al-Qur'ān wa-al-Hadīth* of Tankiz al-Nāṣirī in Damascus

INTRODUCTION

Sayf al-Dīn Tankiz al-Nāṣirī governed the province of Syria and played a central role in the polity of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn throughout most of the sultan's lengthy third reign.¹ Installed as *nā'ib al-shām* in 712/1312–13, Tankiz remained in this post until his deposition in 741/1340. An active architectural patron, Tankiz initiated numerous restoration projects, infrastructural endeavors, and new buildings throughout the Syrian province.² The pattern of his patronage has shown him to be not only a prolific builder, but also a sophisticated planner whose individual projects were predicated on long-range urban development schemes. This building program constituted one of the primary tools in the construction of the patron's public image. Moreover, Tankiz's patronage played a significant role in the development of Mamluk urban and architectural design. However, the corpus of Tankiz al-Nāṣirī's architectural work is represented today by only a few, geographically dispersed fragments in varying states of preservation. Some of his commissions survived into the last century and were documented—at least in part—by photographs or drawings. Others are known only through inscriptions or references in geographical texts, historical chronicles, or biographical compilations. In some instances, the only physical remnants of his commissions consist of *ex situ* fragments, sometimes re-used in later architecture. In a few cases, the patron's buildings still stand, although altered over time. This article will deal with one such case: a *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* erected by Tankiz in Damascus, between 728/1327–28 and 739/1338–39. It will investigate the extent to which the original building can be reconstructed hypothetically, situate the

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¹Sources for Tankiz's biography include: Khalil ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, ed. Hellmut Ritter et al. (Wiesbaden, 1962–), 10:420 ff; Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyādah et al. (Cairo, 1934–72), 2:509 ff. Summaries of his career are found in S. Conermann, "Tankiz," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 10:185b; L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry* (Oxford, 1953), 218–19; Michael H. Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem, an Architectural Study* (London, 1987), 223; Ḥayāt N. Ḥajjī, "Al-Amīr Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī Nā'ib al-Shām fī al-Fatrāh 712–741 H/1312–1340M," in *Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh Salṭanat al-Mamālīk fī Miṣr wa-al-Shām* (Kuwait, 1986), 199–283.

²On the subject of Tankiz's architectural and urban patronage, see Ellen Kenney, "Power and Patronage in Mamluk Syria: The Architecture and Urban Works of Tankiz al-Nasiri, 1312–1340" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2004).



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reconstructed building in the corpus of Mamluk architecture, and explore aspects of the foundation's social and political context.

Not surprisingly, of all the cities in the province, it was Damascus—the seat of the *niyābah*—to which Tankiz devoted the most attention over the longest period of time. His civil engineering and infrastructure projects included extensive repairs to the city's canalization system and revitalization of the agricultural zone to its south-east; reconstruction of sections of the city wall and at least one of its gates; numerous street widening and clearing campaigns, both inside and outside the city walls; and the rebuilding of at least one of the city's bridges.³ Among the commercial projects Tankiz commissioned in Damascus are the construction of two *qaysāriyah* buildings and a *khān*, as well as the renovation of *Khān al-Zāhir*.⁴ He carried out major restoration projects at the Umayyad Mosque, and also renovated other historic mosques in the city.⁵ His new monumental commissions include a congregational mosque and mausoleum, a bath, at least one new palace, a mausoleum for his wife, and the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* under discussion here.⁶ However, the priority that Tankiz gave to developing Damascus is not reflected in the city's

³On the canalization project, see Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah fī al-Tārīkh* (Cairo, 1932–39), 14:144 ff., and al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:289. For the patron's works in the Ghūtah, see Muḥammad Farīd Kurd ‘Alī, *Ghūtāt Dimashq*, rev. ed. (Damascus, 1952), 86. References to his repairs of the city walls include Muṣaṭṭal ibn Abī al-Faḍā‘īl, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd wa-al-Durr al-Farīd*, ed. and trans. Samira Kortantamer (Freiburg, 1973), 18 and 86, and Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:157. On his rebuilding of Bāb Tūmah, see *ibid.*, 165; Zayn al-Dīn ‘Umar Ibn al-Wardī, *Tatīmmat al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar*, ed. Ahmad Rif‘at al-Badrāwī (Beirut, 1970), 2:436; and Gaston Wiet et al., *Répertoire Chronologique d'Épigraphie Arabe* (Cairo, 1931–82), 15:35, cat. #5650. Tankiz's rebuilding of a bridge over the Turah River is documented in an inscription published in Wiet et al., *Répertoire*, 15:48, cat. #5670.

⁴Sources for Tankiz's commercial works include Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:74, 156, 157; Wiet et al., *Répertoire*, 14:108, cat. #5368; and Jean Sauvaget, "Caravansérais syriens du Moyen-Age," *Ars Islamica* 7 (1940): 4.

⁵On the restorations at the Umayyad Mosque during Tankiz's governorship, see Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:92, 128, 133 ff., 148; ‘Abd al-Bāṣīṭ al-‘Ilmawī, *Mukhtaṣar al-Tālib wa-Irshād al-Dāris*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1947), 270; H. Sauvaire, "Description de Damas," *Journal Asiatique*, 9th ser., no. 7 (1896): 214; K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1969), 1:1:161, n. 3. On his restorations at other Damascus mosques, see Michael Meinecke, *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien* (Glückstadt, 1992), 2:132, cat. #9C/135 and 185, cat. #9C/404.

⁶References to Tankiz's *jāmi‘*, *turbah*, and *hammām* are found in Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:81, 88; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:184; ‘Abd al-Qādir Ibn Muḥammad al-Nu‘aymī, *Al-Dāris fī Tārīkh al-Madāris*, ed. Ja‘far al-Ḥasanī (Cairo, 1988), 2:425–26; al-‘Ilmawī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 228; Sauvaire, "Description," 237 ff. On his intramural palace, see Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:133 and al-Nu‘aymī, *Dāris*, 1:123. On his wife's mausoleum, see Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:151; al-Nu‘aymī, *Dāris*, 2:274; and Wiet et al., *Répertoire*, 14:267–68, cat. #5589.



extant architecture. His works either have disappeared altogether or survive in poor or fragmentary condition.

In the following pages, I will outline the history of this *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth*, review its modern historiography, situate the building in its urban framework, and describe its architectural characteristics based on a preliminary survey conducted in 1997.⁷ In the next section, I will synthesize this information to re-assess the preservation status of the building, to evaluate its role in the patronage program of Tankiz, and to analyze its place in the wider context of Mamluk architectural history.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Ibn Kathīr first mentions Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* in his entry for the year 728/1327–28. That year, the *nā'ib* made one of his almost annual visits to Cairo to visit al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who lavished him with gifts and honors. While in Cairo, Tankiz purchased some real estate in Damascus, including a house known as Dār al-Fulūs near Sūq al-Buzūrīyīn—a market located south of the Umayyad Mosque in a quarter sometimes referred to as al-Khaḍrā'. After reporting Tankiz's transformation of the old house into a new palace called Dār al-Dhahab, Ibn Kathīr continues: "and he demolished Hammām al-Suwayd near it [i.e., Dār al-Dhahab] and he made it into a *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* of the utmost beauty. He provided it with endowments and organized its shaykhs and students as will be described."⁸ Later in his chronicle, under the entry for the year 739/1338–39, he states:

Among the events of this year was the completion of Dār al-Hadīth "al-Sukarīyah."⁹ Shaykh al-Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Mu'arrikh al-Islām Muḥammad ibn Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī took over as shaykh of hadith in it. Thirty were appointed as traditionists (*muḥaddith*), each of whom were provided rations (*jirāyah*) and pay (*jāmiqīyah*) every month of seven dirhams and half a *ratl* of bread. For the shaykh, thirty dirhams and one *ratl* of bread were assigned. Thirty persons were assigned to read the Quran, with one shaykh for every ten [of them]. For every one of the readers there was a counterpart among the traditionists. A prayer

⁷I am grateful to the administration, faculty, and students at the Kāmilīyah School for their assistance and forbearance with this survey.

⁸Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:133.

⁹Akram al-'Ulabī considers this term a scribal error for "Tankizīyah" (*Khiṭāṭ Dimashq* [Damascus, 1989], 61).



leader (*imām*), a hadith reciter, and substitutes (*nawāb*) were appointed, and twenty dirhams and eight *awāq* of bread were provided for the hadith reciter. It turned out to be very beautiful in its appearance and construction. It is located in the direction of Dār al-Dhahab, which was commissioned by the founder, amir Tankiz. He endowed upon it many places, among them Sūq al-Qashāshīn in Bāb al-Faraj. Its length was twenty *dhirā'* from east to west. He registered it in the *waqf* document, along with Bandar Zaydīn and the old *hammām* in Hims. He also endowed on it shares from other villages. However, he struggled with everything other than al-Qashāshīn and Bandar Zaydīn and Ḥammām Hims.¹⁰

Ibn Kathīr's organization of this information suggests that the project began in 728/1327–28 at the same time as the start of the Dār al-Dhahab rebuilding. Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, in his obituary for Tankiz, is more explicit in dating the construction to that year: "in the year 28, he built Dār al-Dhahab and opposite it he built a *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth*".¹¹ It appears, however, that construction was not carried out promptly, but took nearly eleven years to finish. To extrapolate from Ibn Kathīr's remarks, the bath property, which served as the site for the new building, may have been acquired at the same time as the palace property, during the patron's visit to Cairo. However, no specifics are provided: did Tankiz purchase this property, did he receive it as a gift, or was it obtained through a confiscation? Who was its former owner? About the exact dimensions and boundaries of the property nothing is mentioned, nor is there any indication whether the bath was operational or defunct, and what its physical condition was at the time of acquisition. An earlier topography of the city counts Ḥammām al-Suwayd among the baths of Damascus, but only says that it was located next to the house of a certain Ibn Munzū.¹²

Several years later, in 739/1338–39, the construction of the new *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* was finished. This completion date, chronicled by Ibn Kathīr, is corroborated in the inscription on the lintel of its entrance (fig. 6):

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate. This blessed school (*madrasah*) was founded and endowed for the mendicants (*fuqarā'*) occupied with the Glorious Quran and the scholars (*fuqahā'*) and the listeners (*masma'īn*) of the Prophetic Traditions,

¹⁰ Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:184.

¹¹ Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, ed. Adnan Darwīsh (Damascus, 1977–94), 2:146.

¹² Nikita Eliséef, trans., *La Description de Damas d'Ibn Asakir* (Damascus, 1959), 279, #15.



by His Most Noble Excellency Sayf al-Dīn Tankiz al-Nāṣirī,
Guardian of the Noble Provinces of Syria, the Well-Protected, in
the year 739, at the behest of (*bi-mubāsharah*) the poor slave
Aydamur al-Mu‘īnī.¹³

From the mid-fourteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century, the only explicit references in literary sources to the Tankizīyah that I have found refer to personnel at the institution, rather than physical changes to its structure.¹⁴ Undoubtedly, during this long period the building underwent alterations. It is unlikely that it would have remained unscathed throughout the chronology of destructive events in the subsequent history of Damascus, including the revolts of the late fourteenth century, Timur's invasion of 803/1400, and a series of natural disasters, notably the earthquake of 1173/1759.¹⁵ The latter was responsible for the collapse of the domes on an adjacent building, the Khān Asad Bāshā. In the normal course of events, the building would have been subjected to periods of poor upkeep, subsequent restorations, and possibly the depredations of later architectural patrons, who were known to have quarried old buildings for valuable materials.¹⁶

As late as 1129/1717, the institution was still running.¹⁷ By 1271/1855, however, Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* was being used as a private residence.¹⁸ ‘Abd al-Qādir Badrān, writing around 1330/1912, blames this shift to residential use on mismanagement of the foundation over time, which led to the gradual decline of the institution.¹⁹ He also includes a narrative about an intervention that prevented the owners from tearing down the portal, and ultimately resulted in the re-

¹³Wiet et al., *Répertoire*, 15:115, #5780.

¹⁴For example, Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:156, 510, 581; Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā Ibn Kannān, *Yawmīyāt Shāmīyah*, ed. Akram al-‘Ulabī (Damascus, 1994), 287.

¹⁵A description of the political unrest in Damascus of the late eighth/fourteenth century is found in Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Şaṣrā, *Al-Durrāh al-Muḍī’ah fī al-Dawlah al-Ζāhirīyah* [A Chronicle of Damascus, 1389–1397], ed. and trans. William M. Brinner (Berkeley, 1963). On the damage to the city's urban and architectural fabric during the occupation by Timur's army, see a translation of Ibn Iyās's account in D. S. Margoliouth, *Cairo, Jerusalem and Damascus* (London, 1907), 269–74. The damage from the earthquake of 1173/1759 is assessed in a report excerpted in Muḥammad A. Duḥmān, *Fī Rīḥāb Dimashq* (Damascus, 1982), 193–217, and in Mustapha A. Taher, “Textes d'historiens damascènes sur les tremblements de terre,” *Bulletin des études orientales* 27 (1974): 105. A new edition of the report is forthcoming from Verena Daiber.

¹⁶Asad Bāshā, the patron of two monuments in the same neighborhood as the Tankizīyah, a palace and a *khān*, was known for this practice (Shafīq Imām, *Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires, Palais Azem-Damas* [Damas, n.d.], 10).

¹⁷Ibn Kannān, *Yawmīyāt Shāmīyah*, 287.

¹⁸A. von Kremer, *Topographie von Damascus* (Vienna, 1853), 6.

¹⁹*Munādamat al-Atlāl wa-Musāmarat al-Hayāl* (Damascus, 1960), 64.



establishment of a school in the building. Badrān reports that under the superintendency of Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥalawānī, the interior was "improved." More extensive renovation took place under al-Ḥalawānī's successor, Shaykh Kāmil al-Qaṣāb in 1329/1911, as is commemorated in a second inscription on the portal.²⁰ Shaykh Kāmil restored the building and installed "upper and lower structures" in it, according to Badrān. The precise nature of these structures is not entirely clear. No early photographs of any portion of the building other than the portal have come to light. Along with alterations to the building's physical structure came changes to its moniker: still called the Tankizīyah in the early eighteenth century, it became known as the Osmanīyah in the nineteenth century, and as the Kāmilīyah in the early twentieth century. The *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* was registered as a historic monument in 1367/1948.

MODERN SOURCES

Although the Tankizīyah has never been the subject of a detailed monographic analysis, it is mentioned in a number of publications cataloging the architectural and urban history of Damascus. In his mid-nineteenth century topographical survey of Damascus, A. von Kremer includes a very short notice on the building.²¹ He identifies it as a former madrasah, which in his day was being used as a private residence, and remarks on its beautiful stalactite portal and fine ashlar masonry. However, his incomplete reading of the foundation inscription led him to misattribute and misdate the building.²² In 1330/1912, Badrān published a survey correctly identifying the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* and providing some detail about its recent history.²³ On the subject of its architecture, he praises its portal and claims that the walls of the building retain some of their original construction. Badrān also reports that the building had undergone two phases of reconstruction in the period since von Kremer's publication.

Subsequent references to the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* tend to take more minimalist views of its preservation. The building is mentioned briefly in the topographical study on the city published by Wulzinger and Watzinger in 1924.

²⁰Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *Thimār al-Maqāṣid fī Dhikr al-Masājid*, ed. M. A. Ṭalās (Beirut, 1943), 215; al-'Ulabī, *Khiṭāṭ Dimashq*, 61; Muḥammad A. Duḥmān, *Wulāt Dimashq fī 'Ahd al-Mamālik* (Damascus, 1981), 172.

²¹*Topographie*, 7.

²²His transcription differs substantially from that published by Wiet. It leaves off after the term "*al-nabawī*" and resumes with "*bi-mubāsharah*"—thereby omitting the name and title of Tankiz and the date of the foundation. As a consequence, von Kremer erroneously attributes the foundation to "Aidemir-el-Muini," whom he identifies as a figure who died in the year 667/1268 (*Topographie*, 2:7, n. 2).

²³*Munādamat*, 64–68.



They provide the dates of its construction and of the later restoration, and then continue: "Inneres ganz verändert, Portalnische mit Stalaktiten."²⁴ The equally telegraphic entry in Jean Sauvaget's concise guide to the historical monuments of Damascus published roughly a decade later simply states: "Ecole de tradition prophétique bâti en 1338–39 par Tingiz. Beau *portail* à stalactites; intérieur remanié."²⁵ Muḥammad Ṭalas, in the appendix to his 1336/1943 edition of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥadī's *Thimār al-Maqāṣid fī Dhikr al-Masājid*, includes a note on this building saying that it has a façade and decorated portal. He mentions the renovation of its upper level, and praises the building's masonry, ornamentation, and beautiful mihrab—but does not speculate about the dates for these elements.²⁶ An unnamed inspector from the Department of Antiquities leans toward the interpretation of Wulzinger and Watzinger and Sauvaget in his 1952 report, which claims that the façade and portal were all that remained of the original building.²⁷ Muḥammad Duḥmān's 1963 study of Damascus in the Mamluk period states vaguely that the school still exists and retains much of its design.²⁸ Dorothée Sack's 1989 publication on the urban structure and development of Damascus mentions the building and echoes the Wulzinger-Watzinger/Sauvaget view: "teilweise abgetragen; Teile der Außenwände und Portal erhalten."²⁹ Akram al-‘Ulabī's topographical history of the city, published in the same year, reports that in his day the building was functioning as a children's school and retained its beautiful façade.³⁰ Michael Meinecke also treats the building very summarily in his catalog of Mamluk architecture, although he includes the portal and façade in a wider discussion related to architectural style.³¹

As this review of modern literature on Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* reveals, it is generally accepted that the remains of the Mamluk building consist of a portal and façade, the rest of the present structure belonging to a series of later reconstructions. On the basis of these studies, the initial goal of my field research at the Tankizīyah was to examine and photograph the façade of the building. Presumably, the interior would be of interest only insofar as it might

²⁴Karl Wulzinger and Carl Watzinger, *Damaskus, die Islamische Stadt* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1924), 75.

²⁵Jean Sauvaget, *Les Monuments Historiques de Damas* (Beirut, 1932), 69, #44.

²⁶*Thimār*, 215.

²⁷Archive, Department of Antiquities and Museums, Damascus.

²⁸*Wulāt Dimashq*, 172.

²⁹*Damaskus: Entwicklung und Struktur einer Orientalisch-islamischen Stadt* (Mainz am Rhein, 1989), 104, #3.44.

³⁰*Khitāt Dimashq*, 61.

³¹*Mamlukische Architektur*, 1:87, 182, and 2:180, cat. #9C/380.



represent a sampling of turn-of-the-century architectural remodeling in Damascus. However, the site inspection suggested that the building's stratigraphy was not as straightforward as the literature indicated, and that its analysis would require a close reading not only of the façade, but also of the other external wall and of the building's interior. What follows is a description of the building based on this survey.

DESCRIPTION

The Tankizīyah is located inside the city walls in the area south of the Umayyad mosque (fig. 1). It is situated on a block outlined by Sūq al-Buzūrīyīn to the west, Darb Ibn Matrud to the north, Darb al-Rayhān to the east, and Zuqāq al-Durr to the south (fig. 2). This block is immediately south of the former location of Dār al-Dhahab, the patron's new palace, at the present site of the Qaṣr al-‘Azam. To the south lies the long commercial street, known in the Mamluk period as Sūq al-Kabīr, which runs east-west through the walled city. According to Ibn Kathīr, the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* replaced a pre-existing bath building known as Ḥammām al-Suwayd, which the patron apparently purchased and then demolished.³² The property occupies the north-east corner of the block. The north-west corner of the block houses another bath building, which predated Tankiz's construction: the large Ḥammām of Nūr al-Dīn (567/1171–72).³³ There appears to have been a narrow plot between the back of Ḥammām al-Nūrī and the east boundary of the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* site, which is filled today by a building. Whether this plot was built-up or unoccupied at the time of Tankiz's construction is uncertain. Al-‘Ilmawī's information, which locates the Tankizīyah "to the east of Ḥammām Nūr al-Dīn al-Shahīd, below Dār al-Dhahab, behind Sūq al-Buzūrīyīn" could either suggest that there was no other building between it and Ḥammām al-Nūrī, or that what did exist there was unimportant, compared with these landmark buildings.³⁴ It is also possible that this plot formerly belonged to the property of one or the other of these two buildings, from which it was alienated subsequently. The plot south of the Tankizīyah is currently occupied by the Khān Asad Bāshā, constructed in 1166/1753. The sources are silent about this site in Tankiz's day, but reportedly two caravanserais, as well as several houses and shops were demolished to make way for the Ottoman *khān*.³⁵

The north façade of the Tankizīyah consists of the portal, situated at the west

³²Eliséef, *Description*, 279, #15.

³³This bath is also known as Ḥammām al-Buzūrīyīn.

³⁴Al-‘Ilmawī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 21.

³⁵Al-‘Ulabī, *Khiṭāṭ Dimashq*, 447; ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Riḥāwī, "Khānāt Madīnat Dimashq," *Les Annales archéologiques de Syrie* 25 (1975): 64.



end of the building, and a wall of finely dressed stone, stretching eastward (fig. 4). To the east of the portal, two windows pierce the wall at the street level. Two projecting stories, constructed of plastered brick and timber, surmount the lower masonry wall. Around the corner, along the east façade, the same arrangement is found: a lower wall of stone surmounted by two projecting stories. A molding of carved stone forms a rectangular frame surrounding the finely dressed masonry of the monumental portal, although now the molding is lost in its lower segments. The portal consists of a deeply recessed rectangular niche, at the back of which opens the entrance to the building's interior (fig. 5). A flat arch, inscribed with a cartouche bearing the foundation inscription, surmounts the entrance (fig. 6). Above the inscription, a band of joggled *ablaq* revetment spans across and flanks the portal recess. Slightly above this band is an oculus, surrounded by a radial arrangement of joggled *ablaq* voussoirs, which together are outlined by a molding of deeply carved stone. The stone course at the base of this oculus bears the inscription commemorating the nineteenth-century renovations referred to above. Three courses of *muqarnas* form the transition zone from the rectangular niche to the semi-dome of the portal hood. The carvings of the hood represent a conch outlined by a zigzag pattern. Inscribed in the finely dressed masonry above the semi-dome and below the top of the molding frame is a long, recessed cartouche. It is unadorned, but may have been intended to receive an inscription.

East of the portal, another rectangular frame of stone encloses a pair of large rectangular windows. The masonry inside the frame, surrounding the windows, is finely dressed, like that of the portal. Both windows have been partially filled-in with cement, but their lower limits can be discerned one masonry-course above the bottom part of the frame. Flat lintels with relieving arches surmount the windows. Behind modern screens that have been installed in the remaining window portions, there are iron grills. Below the window frames, two and a half courses of unfinished masonry can be seen. In the area east of the window frame, five courses of masonry are visible, above which the wall is thickly plastered. While this masonry differs in quality from that inside the frames of the windows and the portal, it courses through precisely with the more finely dressed masonry. This suggests that all of the elements on the north façade of the building—the portal, the pair of windows, and the east extension of the wall—are contemporary with each other.

Around the corner, on the east side of the building, the same division of the elevation is found (fig. 7). Two tall upper stories project from the lower wall. The lower wall consists of six courses of exposed stone construction, surmounted by a thickly plastered wall. At the south end of the wall, fallen plaster reveals three additional courses of stone. About two-thirds of the way down the wall to the south is another large rectangular window surrounded by a rectangular frame of



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stone molding (fig. 8). As on the north façade, the masonry within the molding is finely dressed. Here, too, the window is partially filled-in with cement. To the north of this window is another small opening, in the plastered section of the wall. Unlike the other windows, this one does not appear to have once been any larger than it is today. There is no evidence of in-fill in the masonry courses below it, nor is there any indication of the finely dressed masonry and molding frame that surrounds the large window to the south. The continuity of masonry courses between the north and east façades and the similarities in the treatment of the framed window compositions between the two sides indicate that the east façade is contemporaneous with the north.

Inside, the entrance leads into a vestibule space, which opens up into an *īwān*. The floor plan of the present building consists of four *īwāns* arranged around a central court with corner rooms in three of the four corners (fig. 3). The entrance vestibule occupies the northwest corner of the building in place of a corner room. On the west side of this vestibule rises a narrow wooden staircase. It is enclosed behind a plastered wall above its first several steps, which are built of stone. The vestibule leads into the west *īwān*, the back of which contains a built-in wooden cupboard constructed beneath part of the staircase and a tall rectangular recess in the wall. The west *īwān* opens onto the central court, which is uncovered. The walls of the interior are covered entirely with plaster which is coated with paint in the lower section. The *īwāns* on the east and west of the court are considerably shallower than those on the north and south. All four *īwāns* are covered with flat ceilings of timber.

The *qiblah* wall of the south *īwān* contains a large mihrab niche, also heavily coated with plaster and paint (fig. 9). Two engaged octagonal colonnettes flank the niche. Their square bases are chamfered at the upper corners to create a transition to the octagonal shafts. The capitals also correspond to the octagonal shafts, each face decorated with a shield-shaped *muqarnas* unit upon which is carved in relief a smaller *muqarnas* form and a tear-drop shape. The unity of the three elements—capital, shaft and base—suggests that they may have been conceived together. In the east and west walls of the *qiblah* *īwān*, doors lead into the south-east and south-west corner rooms, respectively.

The back wall of the north *īwān* is pierced by the two large windows on the north façade (fig. 10). On its east wall, a door leads into the north-east room. Corresponding to this door on the west wall of the north *īwān* is a recessed wall niche. In the east *īwān*, a broad staircase of stone construction lines the south side (fig. 11). It leads to a landing from which it continues in reinforced concrete to the upper story. Along the back wall of the east *īwān*, a row of faucets and a drainage basin have been installed. The large window on the east façade opens onto the east *īwān*, but it is partly blocked by the staircase.



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The pavement of the *īwāns* is level with the court, rather than raised. There is no fountain or basin in the courtyard, nor are there channels for the collection and drainage of rainwater. The pavement is composed of a striking combination of black and creamy-colored stone. In the central court, the bi-chromatic stones are arranged in a striped pattern, while in the north and south *īwāns*, black stones create a rectangular outline of the space. In the west *īwān*, a similar outline of black stone traces around the staircase. The pavement of the east *īwān* is partially covered with modern tiles, and no black stones are in use there. The staircases in the east and west *īwāns* lead to a gallery in the second story of the building. This gallery runs around the central court, on the north, east, and west sides. It is lined by doors leading into rooms on all three sides. A third story of rooms surmounts this level. On the south side, the façade of the *qiblah īwān* rises up to the gallery level and the balcony does not run across it. Above the arch of the *qiblah īwān*, rooms corresponding to the third story have been erected. All of these upper story constructions are built of wood and plastered brick.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The similarity of the upper stories of the Tankizīyah to Damascus architecture of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and their correspondence with the building history described by Badrān, support their attribution to the period of Shaykh Kāmil's rebuilding.³⁶ Clearly, the portal of the building dates to the original Mamluk construction. The similarity between the framing zone of this portal and that of the paired windows east of it—as well as the continuity of the stone courses along this wall—indicate that the entire north façade belongs to the same construction phase. In light of the homogeneity of masonry on both the north and east exterior walls, the east façade can be considered contemporaneous with the north façade and its portal. Therefore, it, too, can be identified as an original element of the building. Of the four windows piercing these two walls, three clearly date to the initial construction period, although they have subsequently been partially in-filled. Their iron grills also represent typical fenestration details of Mamluk architecture in Syria.³⁷ The date of the fourth window is more ambiguous.

The exterior of Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* is rather austere. Its masonry

³⁶On the characteristics of turn-of-the-century Damascus architecture, see Gérard Robine, *Palais et demeures de Damas au XVIII* (Damascus, 1990); Yves Roujon, *Le Midan: Actualité d'un Faubourg ancien de Damas* (Damascus, 1997); Brigid Keenan, *Damascus, Hidden Treasures of the Old City* (New York, 2000); Annie-Christine Daskalakis, "Damascus Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Houses in the Ablaq-Ajami Style of Decoration: Local and International Significance" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2004).

³⁷Numerous examples of typical Mamluk-period iron grill windows can be found in Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*; in particular, see pp. 93–95.



is monochrome, with the exception of some details around the portal, and is articulated only by the moldings that frame the portal and windows.³⁸ In this respect, the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* relates to the mausoleum and *ribāṭ* structure which Tankiz erected nearby on behalf of his wife, Sutayyah, at around the same time (730/1330). Like the portal at this *turbah*, the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* portal is stylistically conservative. Absent are such distinctive features as the dramatic *ablaq* masonry that stretched along the façade of Tankiz's congregational mosque in Damascus, or the fan motif that graces that mosque's two portals, as well as the portal of his madrasah in Jerusalem. The façade of the Turbah al-Takrīyah in the Ṣāliḥīyah district of Damascus (erected by 698/1299) provides a close stylistic comparison to the Tankizīyah façade, although its composition is different. There, the portal is more squat than that at the Tankizīyah, but its *muqarnas* hood is almost identical. The Takrīyah portal is flanked on each side by a pair of windows, whereas at the Tankizīyah the arrangement is asymmetrical. An even closer analogy can be found in the façade of the mausoleum of Uljaybughā, located outside the walls of Damascus to the south-west. It has the same asymmetrical disposition of the portal with paired windows to one side and its portal bears an almost identical *muqarnas* hood. The façade of the mausoleum of Uljaybughā also has an oculus very similar to that at the Tankizīyah, composed of radial *ablaq* voussoirs surrounded by heavy molding. The main difference between these two façade compositions is the placement of the oculus: on the former it is situated over the paired windows; at the latter, it makes up part of the portal decoration. This building is undated (its patron died in 754/1353), but, on the basis of its similarity to the Tankizīyah, Meinecke posits that it may have been constructed around 740/1339–40.³⁹

Regarding the interior of Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth*, is it "ganz verändert"? Some elements of the interior are unquestionably modern, most obviously the plumbing works and modern pavement in the east *īwān*. Regarding the staircase in the east *īwān*, the upper portion is clearly recent. Furthermore, the awkward relationship between the staircase and the original window suggests that the lower section also belongs to a later phase. As for the staircase in the entrance vestibule, its position and narrow proportions are more compatible with *comparanda* from the Mamluk period.⁴⁰ The first few steps might represent traces of an original staircase, but all of the rest—including the wooden constructions around and

³⁸Meinecke relates the absence of *ablaq* masonry in this building, and others dating slightly earlier and later, to the absence from Damascus of the workshop specializing in the technique (*Mamlukische Architektur*, 2:87).

³⁹*Ibid.*, 182.

⁴⁰See, for example, Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 90, 161, 303, and 345–46.



below it—appear to be later. The timber ceilings of the four *īwāns* appear to be relatively new, and the balcony and all of the upper-story rooms belong to the turn-of-the-century renovations.

The general layout of the ground floor, on the other hand, is not necessarily due to one of the later renovations. The floor plan corresponds to a Syrian building type, featuring a central court flanked by *īwān*-like spaces or lateral prayer halls—a building tradition which spans over two centuries.⁴¹ These central-court buildings vary considerably in several respects: the nature of the spaces opening up off the courts, the number and depth of their *īwāns*, the disposition of the entrance vestibules, and the superstructures of the courts. In some instances, domes or vaults covered the central courts, while in others the courts were open. While the Syrian central court plan was applied most often to madrasah architecture, its use was not restricted according to building category. Tankiz's builders could have drawn on numerous local variations of this building type, such as the madrasah of Rabī‘ah Khātūn (also called Madrasah Ṣāhibah), ca. 643/1245, located in the Ṣāliḥīyah quarter of the city.⁴² There, *īwāns* flank the central court on three sides and an axial entrance vestibule occupies the fourth. As at the Tankizīyah, corner rooms are arranged between the *īwāns*, although their disposition is a little different. Another Damascus building that shares the general design found at the Tankizīyah is the Turbah al-Ḥāfiẓīyah (also known as the Turbah of Bakhtī Khātūn), which dates to ca. 648/1250.⁴³ There wide *īwāns* and a lateral prayer hall open off a square central court, which was originally covered with cross-vaults. As in the later building, the entrance does not open directly into the court but rather through a lateral vestibule. However, the overall arrangement of the Ḥāfiẓīyah is considerably less symmetrical than that of the Tankizīyah. The madrasah of Afrīdūn al-‘Ajāmī (744/1343–44), constructed in Damascus about five years after the completion of the Tankizīyah, presents an even closer parallel to the Tankizīyah floor plan.⁴⁴ A lateral entrance vestibule in the north-west corner of the building leads into one of four *īwāns* disposed around a central court, while small rooms occupy the other three corners.

⁴¹For broader discussions of Syrian central court buildings, see Meinecke, "Rückschlüsse auf die Form der seldschukischen Madrasa in Iran," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 3 (1985): 190 ff.; idem, "Der Hammam Mangak und die Islamische Architektur von Busra," *Berytus* 32 (1984): 186–90; Yasser Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* (University Park, 1997), 84–93 and 129–34.

⁴²Ernst Herzfeld, "Damascus, Studies in Architecture, III," *Ars Islamica* 11–12 (1946): 9–15, fig. 10. See also Tabbaa, *Constructions*, fig. 111.

⁴³Herzfeld, "Damascus, Studies in Architecture, III," 63–64, and fig. 149; Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur*, 1:79–80, fig. 62.

⁴⁴Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur*, 1:109 fig. 70, and 2:199 #16/15; Sauvaget, *Monuments Historiques de Damas*, 70.



Although the central court buildings of Syria sometimes feature four *īwāns*, they evolved as something quite distinct from the "four-*īwān* madrasah" building type that came to be prevalent in the architecture of Mamluk Cairo, such as the madrasah of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (695 to 703/1295–96 to 1303–4) or the *khānqāh* of Baybars al-Jāshankīr (707 to 709/1307–8 to 1310).⁴⁵ The scale of the latter is generally much larger, with *īwāns* averaging almost twice the square footage of those in the Syrian examples, courtyards measuring up to four times as large, and elevations reaching considerably higher proportions. Their courtyards are usually rectangular rather than square, and their lateral *īwāns* are usually centrally placed on a long façade, flanked by rows of small chambers. However, by the second decade of the fourteenth century, the Syrian style of central court building can already be found in Cairo. In particular, two Cairo buildings—both constructed within the decade preceding Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth*—resemble the Damascus *Tankizīyah* quite closely, at least with respect to their floor plans: the madrasah of Al-Malik al-Jūkandār (719/1319–20) and the madrasah of Zayn al-Dīn Yūsuf (725/1325).⁴⁶ Both relatively small-scale by Cairene standards, they feature the same broad-*īwān*, cruciform plan as the Damascus building. Similarly, the mosque of Ahmād al-Mihmandār in Cairo, which also dates to 725/1325, shares the overall cruciform plan.⁴⁷ Thus, not only was this central court format firmly rooted in the building tradition of the Syrian province, it also had become fashionable—relatively recently—in the architecture of the capital.

As these comparisons demonstrate, the general floor plan of the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* building as it survives today fits well within the architectural vocabulary of its time and place. The main difference between it and its antecedents in Damascus is that the *Tankizīyah* is slightly more symmetrical than the other examples of its type. For Ayyubid Aleppo, Yasser Tabbaa argues that the regularity

⁴⁵The question of the four-*īwān* madrasah type is discussed in K. A. C. Creswell, *The Origin of the Cruciform Plan of Cairene Madrasas* (Cairo, 1922); idem, *Muslim Architecture of Egypt* (Oxford, 1952–59), 2:132; L. Hautecoeur and Gaston Wiet, *Les Mosquées du Caire* (Paris, 1932), 311 ff.; Ernst Herzfeld, "Damascus, Studies in Architecture, II," *Ars Islamica* 10 (1953): 13–29; Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur*, 1:64 f. Very useful reviews of these discussions can be found in Tabbaa, *Constructions*, 84–93 and 129–34; and Abdallah Kahil, "The Sultan Hasan Complex in Cairo" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2002), 79–85.

⁴⁶On the madrasah of Al-Malik al-Jūkandār, see Creswell, *Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, 2:270–72, fig. 149, plates 103a–c and 114b; and Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur*, 2:124 and 1:64, fig. 36, plates 47b and 52b. On the madrasah of Zayn al-Dīn Yūsuf, which apparently incorporated an earlier mausoleum (ca. 697/1297–98) into its south-west corner, see Laila Ali Ibrahim, "The Zawiya of Saīh Zain ad-Dīn Yusuf in Cairo," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 30 (1974): 79–110; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo* (Leiden, 1989), 111, fig. 23 and plate 78; and Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur*, 2:85–86, 139.

⁴⁷Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur*, 1:64, fig. 37 and 2:139.



of such building plans is a function of patronage: buildings constructed by more elevated patrons tend to be more symmetrical than those of lower level patrons.⁴⁸ This explanation applies just as aptly to Mamluk Damascus, where Tankiz had the wealth and clout to obtain a sizeable property—even in the built-up section of the intramural city. There, his architects could apply a relatively symmetrical plan without the constraints imposed by less expansive building sites. The fact that the present plan of Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* compares so closely with typical madrasah floor plans is consistent with what little is known about *dār al-hadīth* architecture in Syria. Sauvaget has demonstrated that there was little difference architecturally between the two building types.⁴⁹

Not only does the floor plan of Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* conform to a local building type found in Damascus both before and after the original construction date, it also has a close parallel in the corpus of Tankiz's own commissions: the Madrasah al-Tankizīyah in Jerusalem.⁵⁰ Its endowment deed survives in the form of a copy transcribed into an Ottoman court document, and provides additional information about the structure, including a description of sections of the upper story that no longer survive.⁵¹ The foundation encompassed multiple functions, including a madrasah for legal studies, a *khānqāh* of Sufi devotions, a *dār al-hadīth* for transmission of Prophetic tradition, and—across the square in a separate building—a *ribāṭ* for women. Tankiz ordered the construction of both the Damascus building and the Jerusalem building in the same year. The Jerusalem Tankizīyah is well preserved in its lower story. It retains much of its original superstructure and some of its upper story. Its portal leads through a cross-vaulted vestibule into the north *īwān*, and then into a spacious court furnished with a central fountain and deep *īwāns* on all sides. Corner rooms occupy the spaces between the "cross arms" of the cruciform floor plan created by the four *īwāns*.

The fact that the Jerusalem madrasah—built almost concurrently with the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* in Damascus and commissioned by the same patron—shares so many features with the extant floor plan of the Damascus building supports the attribution of the latter to the original Mamluk construction phase, at least in its general layout. Working in the other direction, moreover, the better-preserved Jerusalem madrasah provides a model from which to hypothesize about original aspects of the Damascus building that no longer survive. For example, in the Jerusalem madrasah, as well as in other central-court buildings in Damascus and

⁴⁸Tabbaa, *Constructions*, 134.

⁴⁹*Les Monuments Ayyoubides de Damas* (Paris, 1938), 1:15–25.

⁵⁰Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 223–39.

⁵¹Kāmil al-‘Asalī, *Wathā’iq Maqdisiyah Tārīkhīyah* (Amman, 1983), 105–24.



elsewhere, the pavement of the lateral *īwāns* or chambers is elevated in relation to the central court. However, the current pavement of the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* in Damascus is level throughout. Also, the absence in the Damascus building of any kind of basin or fountain at the center of the court distinguishes it from most other buildings of its type in the region. Presumably, there would have been ample infrastructure for such a water installation, since the site formerly housed a *hammām*. These inconsistencies suggest that the pavement was re-done at some point in the building's history, eliminating original raised *īwān*-floors and perhaps a central basin or fountain also. The fact that the black flagstones of the west *īwān* form an outline around the staircase and cupboard, features that probably post-date the original building phase, supports this idea. The bi-chrome pavement itself sheds little light on the issue, since this feature had a very long currency in the region.

The question of the original superstructure poses another dilemma. While the external walls and the internal divisions of space can be attributed to the initial construction phase of the building, they provide no evidence about how the building was roofed-over. Were the *īwāns* originally vaulted, or were they covered with flat ceilings of wood? Both ceiling types are found in local *comparanda*, and both are present in the Jerusalem Tankizīyah. Was the central court originally covered, or was it open, as it is today? Either possibility is plausible. In Jerusalem, the court is covered. Interestingly, its roofing system can be considered something of a trademark of Tankiz's buildings and represented an innovation in the architectural history of the city, newly introduced to Syria from the Anatolian region. It is a type of cross-vault in which the groins are incised, sometimes referred to as a "folded cross-vault."⁵² The fact that this vaulting device was being employed by the patron elsewhere in Damascus contemporaneously is demonstrated by its presence in the mausoleum of Sutaytah. Might the same vaulting device have been employed at the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth*? This question remains open. However, one feature of the floor plan may hold a clue. The central court forms an "inscribed square"—that is, instead of right angles formed by the adjoining *īwān* walls protruding into the court, one finds inverted angles (except in the north-west corner). Certainly, not all cross-vaulted spaces of the period share this feature. However, in the contexts in which the inscribed-square plan is found—more often than not—there is a cross-vault, usually a folded cross-vault.⁵³ Such

⁵²For a discussion of this vaulting device and its connection with Tankiz's patronage, see Kenney, "Power," 420–23. On the development of the folded-cross vault, see Hautecoeur and Wiet, *Les Mosquées du Caire*, 277; Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 90; Hayat Salam-Leibich, *The Architecture of the Mamluk City of Tripoli* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), 102–6; and Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur*, 1:145.

⁵³See, for instance, the Madrasah al-Nūrīyah in Tripoli (Salam-Leibich, *Mamluk Tripoli*, 122–23),



configurations originally may have been designed to help absorb the pressure created by the vault above.

A theory of the patronage process behind the construction of the Damascus Tankizīyah might go something like this: by 728/1327–28, Tankiz had decided to commission a number of projects, including two institutions: a *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* in Damascus and a multi-purpose foundation in Jerusalem. A general plan was drawn up that would be applied to both buildings. This plan was somewhat familiar to the Damascus setting, having a number of antecedents there and in other towns of northern Syria, and had recently been adopted in Cairo. In Jerusalem, on the other hand, it was novel, and its introduction there demonstrates the complex nature of the regional transfer of architectural design in the early Mamluk period.⁵⁴ Interestingly, this floor plan—once introduced into the Jerusalem repertoire—became very popular there.⁵⁵

In his chronicle, Ibn Kathīr explicitly praises the beauty of Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* (see above). Presumably, the finished building would have been embellished with some kind of decorative program, but there are no remains of such features in evidence at the building today. It is tempting to imagine the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* decorated with the elements employed in many of Tankiz's other constructions: polychrome bands of marble paneling, intricate patterns of marble mosaic, gilded friezes of marble or stucco bearing scrolls or epigraphy—all of which were broadly characteristic of mural decoration in monumental architecture of the early Mamluk period. Perhaps the program also included the etched-marble medallion panels or the glass mosaic with which the patron was more specifically associated.⁵⁶ It may be that once the decoration specialists were done with Tankiz's other projects, they were available to put the finishing touches on the interior of patron's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth*. Interestingly, the characteristic work of these specialists begins to appear in a series of buildings in Cairo, not immediately after its last dated use in Tankiz's other Syrian commissions but several years later—at

or the numerous examples in Jerusalem: the Madrasah al-Arghūnīyah (759/1358), the Madrasah al-Lu'lū'iyyah (775/1373–74), the Madrasah al-Ṭashtamurīyah (784/1382–83), and the Dār al-Sitt Tunshuq (Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 360, 425, 462–63, and 495).

⁵⁴On this phenomenon in general, see Meinecke, "Mamluk Architecture—Regional Architectural Traditions: Evolution and Interrelations," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 2 (1985): 163–75.

⁵⁵Variations of this plan can be found in Jerusalem at the three madrasahs cited in note 53, as well as the Madrasah al-Baladīyah (782/1380). See Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 443–55.

⁵⁶On Tankiz's connection with these decorative elements, see Kenney, "Power," 436–53; Caroline Williams, "The Mosque of Sitt Hadaq," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994): 55–64; Finbarr Barry Flood, "Umayyad Survivals and Mamluk Revivals: Qalawunid Architecture and the Great Mosque of Damascus," *Muqarnas* 14 (1997): 57–79; Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur*, 1:95–99, plate 60.



around the same time that the Damascus Tankizīyah was completed.⁵⁷

ENDOWMENT

Considering that the *waqfiyah* of the Damascus Tankizīyah has not been found, we are fortunate to have some fragmentary information about endowment for the institution from Ibn Kathīr and al-Nu‘aymī.⁵⁸ Although Ibn Kathīr makes no claims to have consulted the original records on the institution, the details that he provides are so specific (albeit incomplete), that he probably did so. Al-Nu‘aymī, on the other hand, explicitly cites a *waqf* record. However, it seems that his record was an amended version of the institution’s *waqfiyah*, reflecting changes in the property holdings, the positions provided, and the salaries allocated. Both authors limit their discussions about the *waqfiyahs* to the categories of endowments and staffing, whereas the original *waqfiyah* would probably have included other topics as well, such as a description of the building’s location, site, and infrastructure, a description of the building itself including materials used in its construction and decoration, specifications for the particular functions of its various spaces, allocations of funding for the necessary furnishings (such as oil, lamps, candles, and floor coverings), stipulations about the qualifications of people who could study and work there, and detailed job descriptions of the personnel.⁵⁹

Ibn Kathīr acknowledges that the properties he enumerates represent only a few of the places Tankiz endowed for the *dār al-qur’ān wa-al-hadīth*. Al-Nu‘aymī also lists only a few properties, but does not indicate that it is a partial account. Both historians include Sūq al-Qashāshīn at Bāb al-Faraj, the north-west gate of the city bordering the citadel and leading out to the important extramural zone known as Taht al-Qal‘ah. Ibn Kathīr provides the dimensions of the *sūq* as being twenty *dhirā‘* in length from east to west, while al-Nu‘aymī describes its components: nineteen shops on the interior of the *sūq* and eighteen on the exterior. Tankiz owned a number of other shops in the vicinity of Bāb al-Faraj, the total value of which amounted to 85,000 dirhams, as reported in the inventory of the patron’s holdings that were confiscated after his arrest and execution in 741/1340.⁶⁰ The next property on Ibn Kathīr’s list is called simply “Bandar Zaydīn.” Al-Nu‘aymī’s version clarifies this entry: “and the *kharājī* [property subject to land

⁵⁷ Mosque of Alṭunbughā al-Māridānī, 738/1338 (Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur*, 2:178, #9C/373); the foundation of Aqbughā ‘Abd al-Wāḥid, 740/1339–40 (ibid., 186, #9C/412); mosque of Sitt Ḥadaq, 740/1339–40 (ibid., 183, #9C/395).

⁵⁸ For Ibn Kathīr’s passage on the endowment, see above; al-Nu‘aymī, *Dāris*, 1:123–26. See also Badrān, *Munādamat*, 64–65.

⁵⁹ Cf. the patron’s *waqfiyah* for his Jerusalem foundation (see note 51 above).

⁶⁰ For the confiscation inventory, see al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi*, 10:429.



tax] was a garden known as al-Bandar in Zaydīn." Zaydīn can be identified as a village in the Ghūṭah, a verdant agricultural district east of Damascus, where the patron owned additional property and a decade earlier had overseen an extensive public-works project and installed a pleasure garden.⁶¹ Al-Nu‘aymī lists no other properties, while Ibn Kathīr includes a bath in the town of Hims (which he designates as the "Old Bath"), and the proceeds from "other villages." The confiscation inventory lists a number of other holdings in Hims belonging to Tankiz. It is intriguing to note Ibn Kathīr's remark about the "struggle" that the patron had with the endowments other than those listed. What was the nature of the difficulty? Was the income that these properties yielded insufficient? Was their ownership disputed?

PERSONNEL

Ibn Kathīr provides a list of positions established at the Tankizīyah, but only mentions the salaries of a few of them. According to his information, Tankiz provided for thirty traditionists (*muḥaddithīn*) and thirty Quran students.⁶² He established one position for a hadith shaykh and three for Quran shaykhs. Also on the staff were one prayer leader, one hadith reciter, and an unspecified number of substitutes. The shaykh's salary was to be thirty dirhams and one *ratl* of bread per month, the hadith reader was to earn twenty dirhams and eight *awāq* of bread per month, and the *muḥaddithīn* were paid seven dirhams and half a *ratl* of bread per month. Ibn Kathīr mentions no staff for the maintenance of the building and its revenues. Some of the terminology employed in the foundation inscription of the Damascus Tankizīyah is at odds with that found in the accounts of Ibn Kathīr and al-Nu‘aymī. In the inscription, the institution is referred to as a madrasah rather than a *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth*. Interestingly, the hadith scholars are referred to as *fuqahā'*, a term more commonly used for students of law at a madrasah, and *masma'īn*.⁶³

At the *dār al-hadīth* established as part of Tankiz's multi-purpose institution

⁶¹On Tankiz's other properties in the Ghūṭah, see al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi*, 10:429; on his projects there, see Kurd 'Alī, *Ghūṭat Dimashq*, 86, n. 1.

⁶²The first individual to be appointed as shaykh of the Tankizīyah was none other than the famous scholar and prolific author Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī. Earlier, Tankiz had appointed him to a position at the madrasah and turbah of Umm al-Ṣāliḥ. Not long after that, the *nā'ib* promoted him to the Dār al-Hadīth al-Ζāhirīyah, and then gave him an additional post at the Nafīsiyah. Al-Dhahabī retained the post at the Tankizīyah until his death in 748/1348. Interestingly, Tankiz's patronage of al-Dhahabī did not guarantee a favorable epitaph from the scholar (Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, 2:155; M. Bencheneb, "al-Dhahabī," *EI*², 2:214–16).

⁶³This usage is discussed in Gary Leiser, "The Endowment of the al-Zahiriyya in Damascus," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 2, no. 1 (1984): 47–48.



in Jerusalem, the *waqf* provided for twenty traditionists, who were given seven and a half dirhams and a half *ratl* of bread; one hadith shaykh, paid forty dirhams and one *ratl* of bread; one assistant whose salary seems to be omitted; and one reader, paid twenty dirhams and a half *ratl* of bread.⁶⁴ The Jerusalem *waqfiyah* also supported several staffers. Thus, the faculty-to-student ratios and the salaries allocated at the two institutions appear to have been comparable, except for the shaykh's salary, which was higher in Jerusalem than in Damascus. There is no indication that the Damascus foundation was meant to be residential. The *dār al-hadīth* component of the Jerusalem institution was not.

In the *waqfiyah* consulted by al-Nu‘aymī, the student-staff ratio had changed considerably. The faculty positions included a shaykh for recital (*mashyakhat al-iqrā'*), whose salary goes unmentioned;⁶⁵ a prayer leader (*imām*), who was to be paid 120 dirhams monthly;⁶⁶ three hadith shaykhs, each of whom earned fifteen dirhams per month;⁶⁷ and one *kātib al-ghaybah*, who was paid ten dirhams monthly. This *waqfiyah* also provided for a large staff to perform a variety of duties. Forty dirhams per month were provided for a muezzin, a doorman, and an unspecified number of caretakers. A *dīwān* representative (*ṣahābat al-dīwān*), a supervisor (*musharrif*), and a bookkeeper (*‘āmil*) were also on the payroll, each at forty dirhams per month. The position of revenue collector (*jabāyah*) was allocated fifty dirhams monthly, while the positions of overseer of property (*shahādat al-‘imārah*) and the inspector of property (*mashadd al-‘imārah*) paid twenty-five dirhams each. The *waqf* also provided for a builder/architect's post (*mi‘māriyah*), to be paid fifteen dirhams monthly. Moreover, the staff included a superintendent (*nāżir*) and a lieutenant-superintendent (*nā’ib al-nāżir*). As for the student body, al-Nu‘aymī mentions only twelve Quran students (*al-mushtaghalūn bi-al-qur’ān al-‘azīm*), each of whom would be given seven and a half dirhams per month, and five hadith "listeners" (*mustam‘ūn*), each of whom earned seven and a half dirhams per month. It should be noted that while the student stipend had not changed, the provision covered fewer than half the Quran students and only a quarter of the traditionists originally supported.

⁶⁴ Al-‘Asalī, *Wathā’iq*, 113–16.

⁶⁵ According to al-Nu‘aymī's source, this post was designated for an individual by the name of al-Burhān al-Irbidī (*Dāris*, 1:127). I have yet to identify this figure.

⁶⁶ The version of the *Dāris* excerpted by Badrān lists a Quran shaykh (*Munādamat*, 64), but the Cairo edition does not.

⁶⁷ These posts were also designated for specific individuals: one was held by al-Burhān Ibn al-Taqī; another was assigned to the son of the shaykh; and the third was for al-Shams al-Armawī. Again, I have no firm identification yet for these individuals.



PATRONAGE AND THE PAST

As the historical sources cited above suggest, the construction of the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* appears to have extended over a prolonged period of around eleven years, beginning in 728/1327–28 and ending in 739/1338–39. This timing is interesting in light of the broad patterns of Tankiz's patronage activity.⁶⁸ It coincides with a building boom that included projects in a number of cities throughout the *niyābah*, as well as Damascus. Prior to the start-up of this *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* project, Tankiz's nearest-dated monumental construction in Damascus had been his congregational mosque, finished around a decade earlier. After the completion of that project, there is a hiatus of over five years in dated building works sponsored by Tankiz. This hiatus was followed by a sudden surge in the patron's building activity. The projects he undertook in Damascus concurrent with this 728/1327–28 to 739/1338–39 time-span of the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* construction include: ongoing repairs to the waterways (727/1326–27 and 729/1328–29); intramural street widenings at Bāb al-Barīd (east of the Umayyad Mosque) and in the market area between the south-west of the Umayyad Mosque and the area of Sūq al-Buzūriyīn (728/1327–28 to 729/1328–29); several extramural street widenings (729/1328–29 to 732/1331–32); ongoing restoration work at the Umayyad Mosque (727/1326 to 730/1329); the new palace mentioned above; the mausoleum and *ribāṭ* of the patron's wife (730/1330); repair of one of the city gates, Bāb Tūmah (734/1333); rebuilding of a bridge over the Turah River (735/1335).⁶⁹

Outside of Damascus, the patron was equally active during this period, sponsoring a major ongoing project in Jerusalem, which included work on the city's canalization (727/1326–27 to 728/1327–28), the madrasah, *khānqāh*, *dār al-hadīth*, and *ribāṭ* foundation (729/1329), two baths, a *qaysāriyah*, and a number of restorations on behalf of the sultan at the Ḥaram al-Sharīf.⁷⁰ Tankiz also undertook restoration work at the Ḥaram al-Khalīl in Hebron (732/1332); construction and restoration in Ajlun (728/1328); alterations at the congregational mosque of Gaza (729/1330); and the rebuilding of Qal'at Ja'bar (733/1332–33 to 736/1335–36).⁷¹ The fact that Tankiz had so many commissions underway concurrently could account for the unusually long delay in completion of the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth*. The difficulties that he encountered with the institution's endowments, reported by Ibn Kathīr (see above), might also have contributed to the delay.

The significance of the physical setting for Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* must not be overlooked. At a time when the majority of new architectural

⁶⁸On these patterns, see Kenney, "Power," Chapter Six.

⁶⁹Sources for these works are cited above.

⁷⁰Kenney, "Power," Chapter Three. See also Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 223–48 and 273–98.

⁷¹Kenney, "Power," 281–315 and 347–59.



commissions were situated outside the city walls, Tankiz erected his structure at the heart of the walled city. The fact that he was able to construct three of his new commissions in Damascus at such plum intramural sites demonstrates the patron's purchasing power and political strength. An incident involving Sanjar al-Jawilī suggests the risk involved in refusing to cooperate with Tankiz's schemes of property acquisition. According to al-Maqrīzī, Tankiz wanted to purchase a house owned by Sanjar located in the vicinity of the Jāmi' Tankiz. Sanjar refused to sell, so Tankiz took the matter before the sultan. Sanjar ended up in prison for eight years.⁷²

The site of the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* had other characteristics to recommend it, in addition to its intramural location. Its proximity to the Umayyad Mosque to the north, Sūq al-Kabīr to the south, and important markets streets to the west, guaranteed a steady stream of pedestrian traffic in its neighborhood. Passersby would be reminded of the patron's generosity by seeing the building and by hearing the patron's name included in the prayers conducted there.⁷³ This district south-west of the Umayyad Mosque became something of a focal point for Tankiz's *intra muros* architectural and urban patronage. It was in this zone that he erected his magnificent new palace and his wife's mausoleum, as well as his *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth*. Tankiz was responsible for refashioning this area in other ways as well. Around the same time that his *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* construction commenced, Tankiz began a major overhaul at the Umayyad Mosque. This renovation included the reopening of the south-west gate of the mosque, Bāb al-Ziyādah, which had long been closed.⁷⁴ Bāb al-Ziyādah led to a network of market streets south of the mosque, which Tankiz also reshaped. In 729/1328–29, he widened Sūq al-Silāh, a market street located on the north-south artery leading to the newly opened Bāb al-Ziyādah.⁷⁵ In the same year he ordered the clearing of encroachments and the widening of Sūq al-Nashābiyīn, the bowmakers' market, which ran east-west linking Sūq al-Silāh and Sūq al-Buzūriyīn.⁷⁶ In a zone farther

⁷² *Al-Mawā'iz wa-al-I'tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭāṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Bulaq, 1853), 2:389.

⁷³ According to al-Asyūṭī's model for the ideal *dār al-qur'ān*, lessons were to be preceded by "supplications for divine rewards for the endower, his family, and the Muslim dead in general." (Donald P. Little, "Notes on Mamluk Madrasahs," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 6 [2002]: 14). In the *waqfiyah* of the Jerusalem Tankizīyah, this requirement was made explicit in the curricula for the traditionists, the law students, and the Sufis, as were the locations in specific *īwāns* of the building for their instructional and devotional activities (al-'Asalī, *Wathā'iq*, 113–16).

⁷⁴ Flood demonstrates that the new gate was installed slightly to the east of the original one (*The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture* [Leiden, 2001], 142).

⁷⁵ Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:144 f.

⁷⁶ Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1967), 262, n. 55.



to the west between the city gates, Bāb al-Naṣr and Bāb al-Jābiyah, he had shops demolished, benches removed from the streets, and even a mosque torn down and rebuilt in a different location (735/1335).⁷⁷ The following year, Tankiz ordered further clearing work in the coppersmiths' market, located next to the Umayyad Mosque.⁷⁸ A number of the patron's commercial properties were found in this area south of the Umayyad Mosque, as well. On the western end, at Bāb al-Jābiyah, there was one known as Khān al-‘Arāsah. At the southeast corner of the Umayyad Mosque was another, known as Sūq al-Dahshah. A third, Khān al-Bayd, was located on the north side of Sūq al-Kabīr.⁷⁹

This zone south and west of the Umayyad Mosque was rich in historic associations. In Tankiz's day, part of it was still called al-Khaḍrā', a reference to the Qaṣr al-Khaḍrā', the Umayyad palace that had once stood there.⁸⁰ It was in this zone that a cluster of monuments erected by Nūr al-Dīn was also to be found: the famous *bimāristān*, the funerary madrasah, and—on the plot next to the one Tankiz chose for his *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth*—the bath which supported Nūr al-Dīn's madrasah endowment. Tankiz's choice of building type may be related to an interest in creating associative links between himself and renowned rulers of the city's past. Supposedly, it was Nūr al-Dīn who founded the first independent *dār al-ḥadīth* institution, which he erected in Damascus.⁸¹ Prior to this development, hadith study had generally taken place under the aegis of other religious institutions or at the residences of the instructors. Nūr al-Dīn's model was immediately adopted by other patrons and appears to have been particularly popular in Damascus. One of the characteristics of Tankiz as a builder was his astute manipulation of architecture, space and history—of the "iconography of architecture"—to promote the construction of his own image.⁸² By obtaining a property in this historically charged location for his new foundation, the patron was able to make his mark in history—quite literally. Just as he situated his building in physical proximity to

⁷⁷Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:171.

⁷⁸Sauvaire, "Description (Conclusion)," 204.

⁷⁹Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:74; Rihāwī, "Khānāt," 53–54.

⁸⁰See, for example, the description of this neighborhood in Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's account (Guy Le Strange, *Palestine Under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from AD 650 to 1500* [London, 1890], 270).

⁸¹Fuat Sezgin, "Dār al-Ḥadīth," *EI*², 2:125–26.

⁸²For an innovative application of Richard Krautheimer's theory of the iconography of architecture ("Introduction to an 'Iconography of Medieval Architecture,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 [1942]: 1–33) to Mamluk references to the Umayyad past, see Flood, "Umayyad Survivals," 57–79; on this theme, see also Bethany Walker, "Commemorating the Sacred Spaces of the Past: The Mamluks and the Umayyad Mosque at Damascus," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67, no. 1 (2004): 26–39.



important monuments of the past, he positioned himself relative to their illustrious founders.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Tankiz introduced an additional element to Nūr al-Dīn's concept, by combining a Quran school with the *dār al-hadīth*. In fact, Tankiz has been credited with innovating this particular type of dual-purpose foundation.⁸³ However, it is not entirely certain that this was, in fact, an innovation; nor is it clear how significant such a distinction of function was at the time. Part of the problem lies with the slippery terminology, which confounds the taxonomies and chronologies of historians, both medieval and modern. For example, at the much earlier *dār al-hadīth* founded by Ibn Shaddād in Aleppo (618/1221), the foundation inscription specifically labels the building as a *dār al-hadīth*, but then goes on to state that the endowment was to provide instruction in Quran studies as well as hadith.⁸⁴ Al-Nu‘aymī's list of *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīths* in Damascus puts the Tankizīyah as the earliest such institution. Yet, as pointed out above, the building's foundation inscription contains no mention of the term *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth*, but rather refers to the building as a madrasah.⁸⁵ With such variability of institutional nomenclature and function, it is difficult to claim that Tankiz's foundation represents a distinct innovation and that such an innovation would have had significance in the patron's own time. In any case, as a dual-purpose building type, the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth* does not appear to have attained the popularity among subsequent building patrons that Nūr al-Dīn's *dār al-hadīth* did. Al-Nu‘aymī's survey of institutions in Damascus lists only three *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīths*, as opposed to thirteen *dār al-hadīths* and seven *dār al-qur'āns*.

CONCLUSION

In light of the centrality of Tankiz in the political arena of his day, the impact of his building works on Mamluk architectural development, and the interest of his commissions for the study of architectural and urban patronage, it is important for the extent of his works to be understood as well as possible. In the case of the patron's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-hadīth*, the remains of the original building appear to

⁸³Sezgin, "Dār al-Hadīth," 126.

⁸⁴Tabbaa, *Constructions*, 43–44.

⁸⁵The inscription also raises another intriguing point. What exactly was the role of Aydamur al-Mu‘īnī, at whose behest the building was constructed, according to the text? I have not arrived at a satisfactory identification for this figure. He clearly is not who von Kremer supposed him to be: an individual who died in the year 667/1268. Von Kremer erroneously attributes the building to that Aydamur and dates the building according to his death date (*Topographie*, 2:7). Also intriguing is the physical composition of this part of the inscription: it is inserted in two parts outside the frame of the cartouche bearing the foundation information. Was it an afterthought, or perhaps a later addition? Or did the engravers simply run out of space within the cartouche?



be under-represented in the scholarship on the architectural history of Damascus. It seems likely that the alterations to the interior mentioned by Wulzinger and Watzinger, Sauvaget, and others are not as comprehensive as these authors suggest. The turn-of-the-century revisions undertaken by Shaykh Kāmil probably correspond primarily to the elements of wood, brick, and plaster construction—the stairways, ceilings, balconies, and upper-story rooms. The lower level, with its solid construction of large stone masonry and its classic floor plan of four *īwāns* and corner rooms surrounding a central court, could very well belong to the original building and could provide at least a general outline of its configuration. The renovations appear to have been more additive than transformative in nature. In effect, the original building, which has been reduced over the course of the centuries architecturally through a succession of alterations, has been further diminished through a process of scholarly transmission. "Restoring" what remains of the original building to the corpus of Mamluk architecture of Damascus contributes to a clearer understanding of the architectural chronology of the region and of broader issues about Mamluk architectural patronage.



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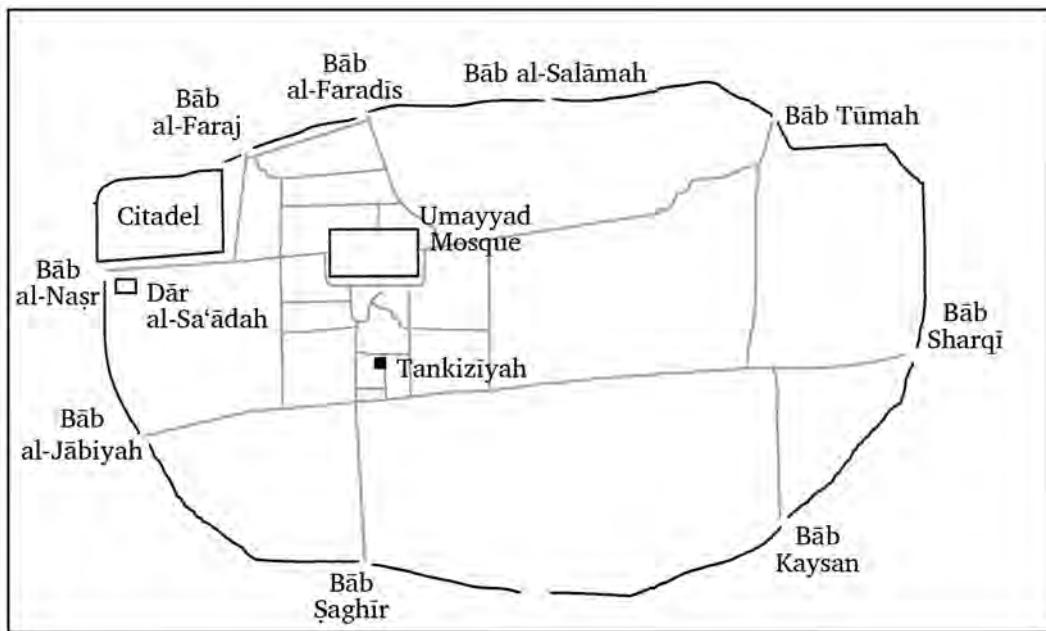


Fig. 1. Damascus, Tankiziyah: location map (not to scale)



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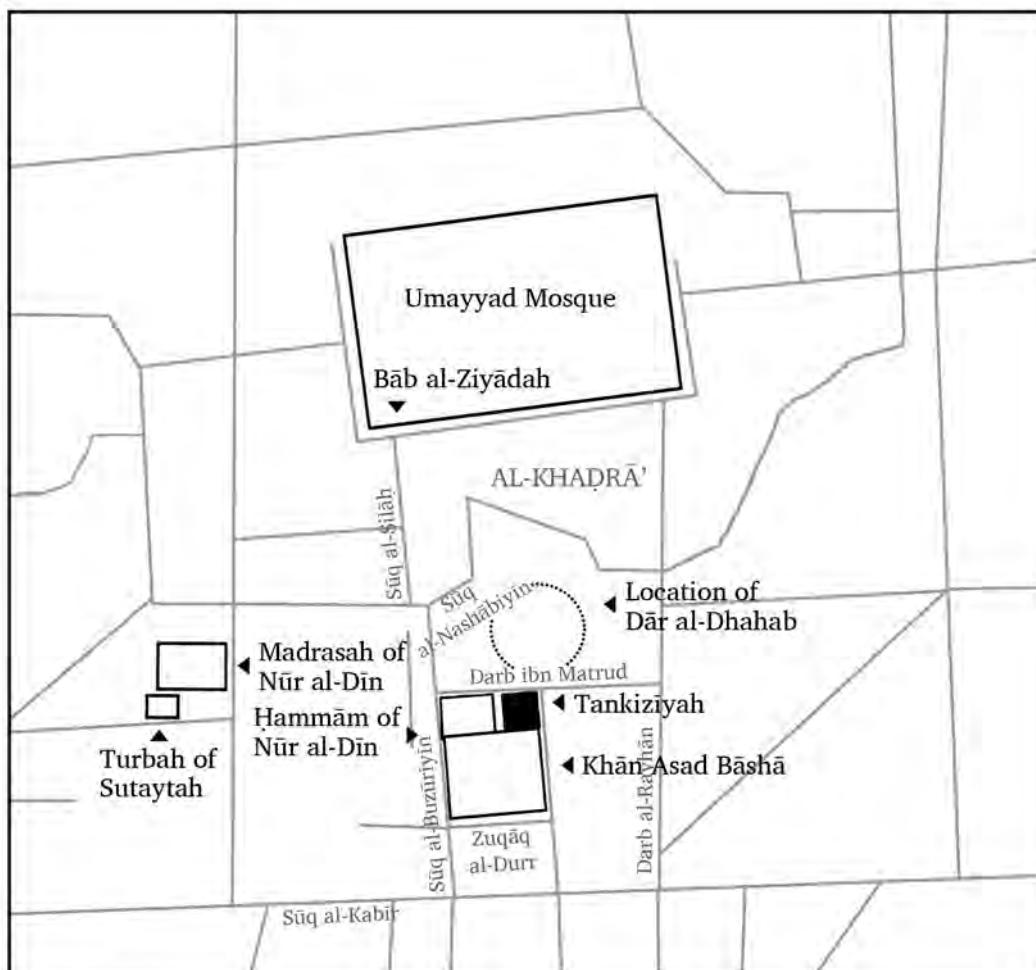


Fig. 2. Damascus, Tankiziyah: site map (not to scale)



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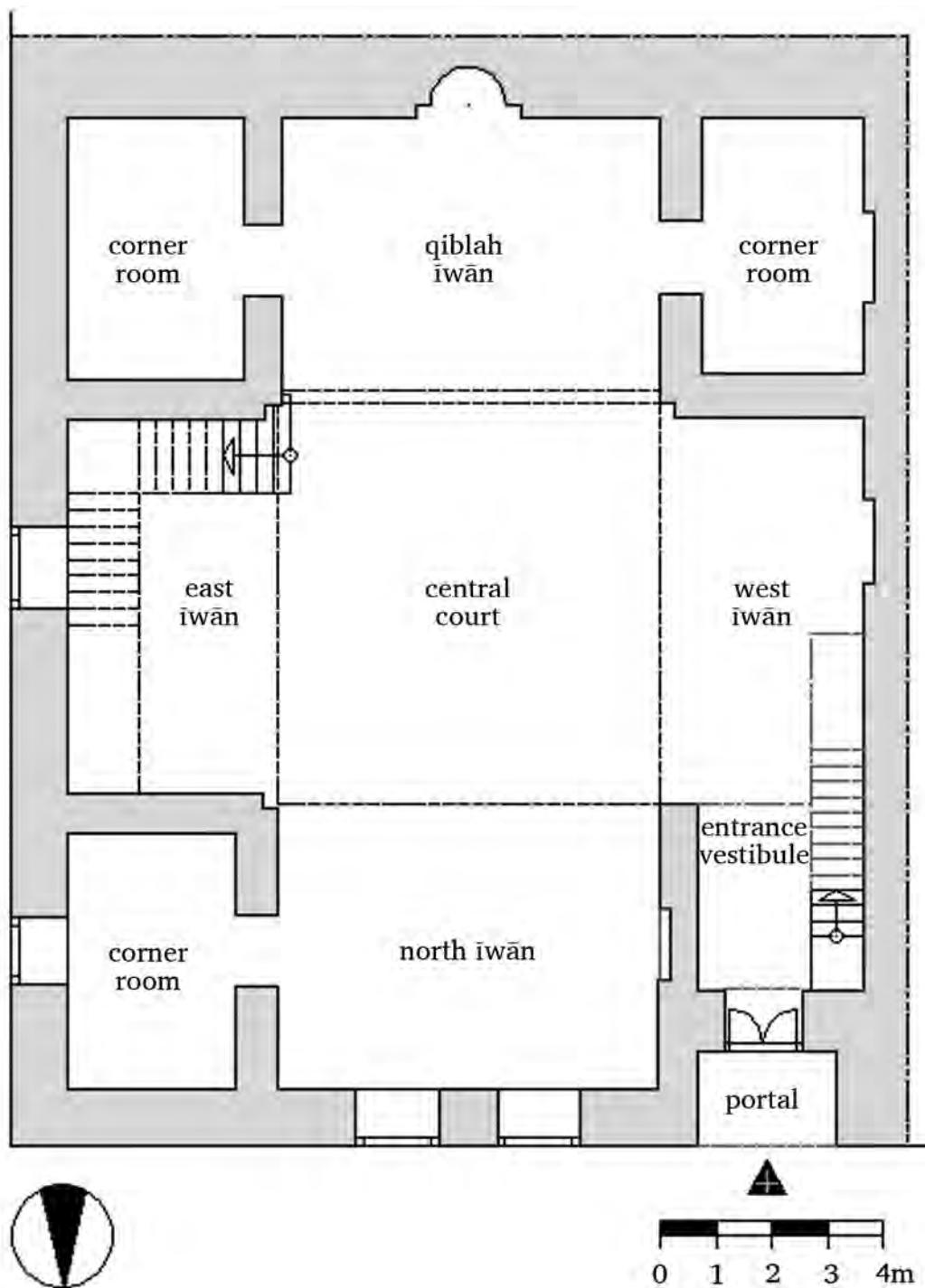


Fig. 3. Damascus, Tankiziyah: floor plan (S. Poschmann)



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Fig. 4. Damascus, Tankizīyah: north façade



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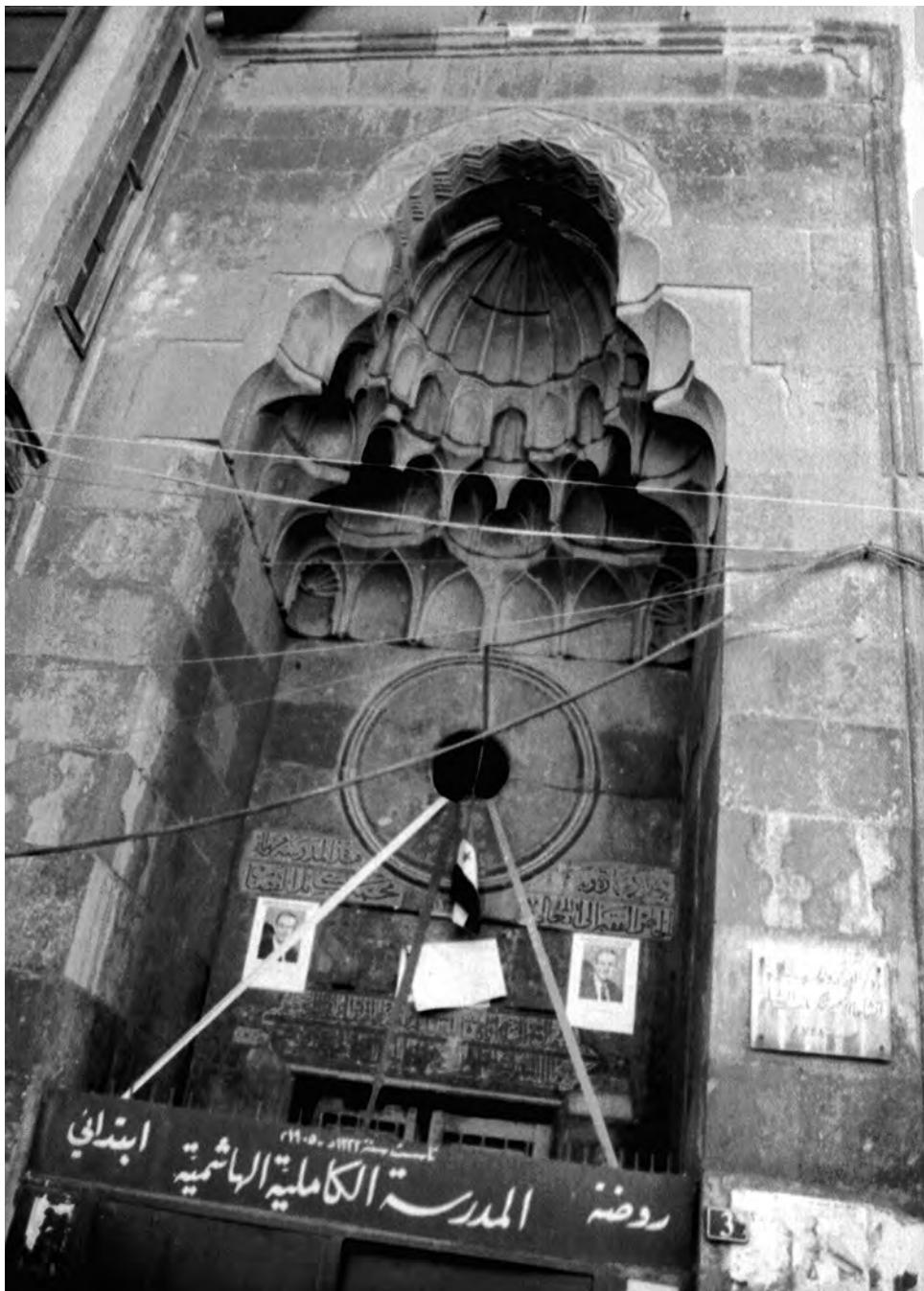


Fig. 5. Damascus, Tankiziyah: portal



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Fig. 6. Damascus, Tankizīyah: foundation inscription



Fig. 7. Damascus, Tankizīyah: east façade



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Fig. 8. Damascus, Tankiziyah: east façade, large window



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Fig. 9. Damascus, Tankiziyah: interior, view of south *iwān*



Fig. 10. Damascus, Tankiziyah: interior, view of north and west *iwāns*



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Fig. 11. Damascus, Tankiziyah: interior, view of east *iwan*



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Fahl during the Early Mamluk Period: Archaeological Perspectives

THE JORDAN VALLEY IN MAMLUK ARCHAEOLOGY

The hot and fertile Jordan Rift Valley, copiously provided with water by the many springs and waterway systems it embraces, has featured prominently in the archaeology of Mamluk southern Bilād al-Shām since the mid-twentieth century (fig. 1). The information generated by a number of early surveys and excavations in the valley was interpreted as evidence for renewed prosperity from the thirteenth century, brought about by widespread resettlement and a rejuvenated rural economy based on the cultivation of sugar cane. The evidence was also seen as suggesting that this prosperity suddenly ended in the mid to late fourteenth century due to the collapse of the sugar industry, abandonment of the land, and growing nomad infiltrations. In pioneering archaeological work undertaken on the floor of the broader eastern side of the valley, site occupation datable to Mamluk times was especially easy to identify due to the distinctive glazed, industrial and hand-made painted ceramics typical of the period, while many prominent hydraulic installations were likewise effortless to detect and record.

Seminal amongst the early survey work in the valley was the comprehensive archaeological survey undertaken in two parts during early spring in 1975 and 1976 between the Yarmuk River and the Dead Sea on the east bank of the Jordan Valley.¹ A total of 224 sites were explored, of which 107 revealed evidence of "Ayyubid/Mamluk" occupation—that is, almost half of the sites surveyed. That impressive statistic encouraged Ibrahim, Sauer, and Yassine to remark: "the epoch that was introduced with the Ayyubid/Mamluk witnessed a transformation of the Jordan Valley far beyond the scope of any that had occurred previously."² They

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¹Mo‘awiyah Ibrahim, James A. Sauer, and Khair Yassine, "The East Jordan Valley Survey, 1975 (Part One)," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 222 (1976): 41–66; Khair Yassine, James A. Sauer, and Mo‘awiyah Ibrahim, "The East Jordan Valley Survey, 1976 (Part Two)," in *Archaeology of Jordan: Essays and Reports*, ed. Khair Yassine (Amman, 1988), 189–207; and the publication of the Ayyubid to Ottoman ceramics from the survey in Jum‘a M. H. Kareem, *The Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley in the Mid- to Late Islamic Period*, BAR International Series, no. 877 (Oxford, 2000), 66–80.

²Yassine, Sauer, and Ibrahim, "East Jordan Valley Survey, 1976 (Part Two)," 203.



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concluded that many new sites were founded, and sugar mills established at water sources. "Ayyubid/Mamluk" occupation was especially easy to identify in the valley through the ubiquitous presence of sugar pots.

The perceived rapid increase, near explosion, of settlement profiles in Mamluk times has been commonly associated with the agricultural development of the valley by land-owning amirs and especially the estate-style cultivation of sugar cane using servile labor.³ While recent studies have moved towards presenting more complicated explanations for settlement development and change for all Jordan during the middle ages, there is little doubt that the Mamluk period is a significant one in the social and economic history of the rift valley.

Contributing to an understanding of settlement profiles in the Jordan Valley during Mamluk times are the results of excavations undertaken in the early 1980s at Tabaqat Faḥl by team members from the Sydney component of the Sydney-Wooster Excavations at Pella (fig. 1). Work on the main archaeological mound in particular exposed significant Mamluk-period settlement at the site, including a mosque, occupational levels belonging to an adjacent settlement, and a large cemetery at the eastern end of the mound. This article focuses on the results of that work, including new ceramic studies undertaken by McPhillips, and reviews the insights these excavations offer for understanding the nature of human settlement in the Jordan Valley during the Mamluk period.

FAHL WITHIN THE MAMLUKAH OF DAMASCUS

Tabaqat Faḥl, more simply known as Faḥl into early Ottoman times,⁴ did not escape the notice of Islamic geographers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Noted in both the geographical compilation of al-Dimashqī (d. ca. 1327) and the exhaustive study of al-Qalqashandī (d. 1418), the *Iqlīm Faḥl* was one of the many districts that formed the extensive Mamlakat Dimashq in Bilād al-Shām during the Mamluk period (1250–1517).⁵ In Jordan the territory of the Mamlakat Dimashq

³Generally on investment in sugar by Mamluk amirs, see E. Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ, 1983), 206–8; idem, "Levantine Sugar Industry in the Late Middle Ages: a Case of Technological Decline," in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900*, ed. A. L. Udovitch (Princeton, NJ, 1981), 91–112.

⁴Initially named Fiḥl in Umayyad and Abbasid times, the name transmuted into Faḥl at some point between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, probably because the original name was meaningless in Arabic, as noted by al-Ya‘qūbī (Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmād ibn Abī Ya‘qūb ibn Ja‘far al- Ya‘qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, trans. M. J. De Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographicorum Arabicorum*, vol. 7 [Leiden, 1892], 327, l. 55). The village name of Faḥl persists in the early Ottoman *daftars*, for which see W. D. Hütteroth and K. Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography of Palestine, Trans-Jordan and South Syria in the Late 16th Century* (Erlangen, 1977), 167.

⁵Shams al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Dimashqī, a Syrian, died in Ṣafad in 727/1327; D. M. Dunlop,



encompassed all of the territory north of the dramatically deep gorge of Wādī Mūjib, and was partitioned into five main regions.⁶ While arrangements were fluid, these regions were in general:

- 1) the Balqā' region, which included the towns of al-Salt, Amman, and al-Zarqā', all fortified under the Ayyubids;⁷ also Hisbān, a town of sufficient importance to be the capital of the Balqā' for a period;⁸
- 2) the Jabal 'Awf region including the fortified town of 'Ajlūn, the castle of which was built between 1188 and 1192 and extended in 1214–15;⁹
- 3) the Sawād (used specifically to designate an area under cultivation), and in particular the district (*iqlīm*) of Bayt Rās and that of Fahl;¹⁰
- 4) the upper Ghawr (properly the floor of the Jordan Valley) with its principal town of al-Quṣayr, modern North Shūnah, seemingly equipped with a small fort (as the name would suggest);
- 5) the middle Ghawr around the town of 'Amatah (modern Abū 'Ubaydah), the burial place of the supreme commander of the Muslim forces in Bilād al-Shām and one of the Companions of the Prophet.

Hence the boundary between the Mamlakat Dimashq and the Mamlakat al-Karak was positioned along the Wādī Mūjib/Wādī Wālah catchment, which placed the southern Ghawr in Karak. Zīzah (modern Jīzah) in the Balqā' seemingly functioned as a forward post on the Karak road, as it was equipped with a water reservoir and a solid fort.¹¹

⁶"Al-Dimashkī," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 2:291; Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās al-Qalqashandī, an Egyptian, was an accomplished Mamluk bureaucrat who died in 821/1418; C. Edmund Bosworth, "Al-Kalkashandī," *EI*², 4:509–11. Both works, while essentially authoritative, incorporated much material drawn from other sources, some early.

⁷For a recent synopsis of modern scholarship on Mamluk administrative divisions in Jordan, 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): 241–43.

⁸Salṭ: M. Adnan Bakhit, "Al-Salṭ," *EI*², 8:999–1000; J. Garrow Duncan, "Es-Salt," *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* (1928): 28–100; Amman: A. Ostrasz, "The Citadel of Amman: The Conservation and Restoration of the Ayyubid Tower," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 41 (1997): 395–402; Jason Wood, "The Fortifications," in *Studies on Roman and Islamic 'Amman*, ed. Alastair Northedge (Oxford, 1992), 105–113–14, 125; al-Zarqā': Andrew Petersen, "Two Forts on the Medieval Hajj Route in Jordan," *ADAJ* 35 (1991): 347–50.

⁹Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilad al-Sham," 249–50.

¹⁰C. N. Johns, "Medieval 'Ajlun," *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine* 1 (1932): 21–33; R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: the Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193–1260* (New York, 1977), 77.

¹¹Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Dimashqī, *Nukhbāt al-Dahr fī 'Ajā'ib al-Barr wa-al-Bahr*, trans. A. Mehren, *Collectio Editionum Rariorum Orientalium* (Leipzig, 1923), 201, 1. 3.

¹¹David Kennedy, *The Roman Army in Jordan* (London, 2000), 123–24; Petersen, "Two Forts on



Within the *Iqlīm Fahl* and giving the district its name was the settlement of Fah̄l, an ancient place continuously occupied since before 6000 B.C.E. due to the presence of fertile lands and multiple springheads, the latter creating the second most powerful water source in the Jordan Valley between Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea.¹² The middle Islamic name of Fah̄l can be traced back to the ancient Semitic name "Pahil,"¹³ and the continuity of this name over four millennia is indicative of the site's long history of settlement. The historical significance of Fah̄l was partly strategic, partly resource-based. In addition to abundant water and good soils, Fah̄l served as a traditional "gateway" location between the coastal routes of Palestine and the highland roads that traversed the Jordan highlands. Although in most of the Mamluk period the main lateral road from east to west passed north of Fah̄l over the *Jisr al-Mujāmi‘ah*, which joined Baysān with al-Quṣayr, the site retained a strategic importance as it lay between the fortified settlements of al-Quṣayr in the upper Jordan valley and 'Ajlūn, positioned high in the Jabal 'Awf region to the south-east.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF MAMLUK FAHL

The occupational history of Fah̄l in middle Islamic times received scant attention until the Sydney University team commenced archaeological investigations on the main *tall* of Ṭabaqat Fah̄l in the 1980s.¹⁴ While recent excavations have uncovered more Mamluk levels on the southern edge of the *tall*, as described below, the investigations are still limited to the mosque, small areas of the settlement, and part of the cemetery.

The first attention to Islamic-period occupation at Fah̄l, albeit only modest, came out of a reasonably detailed survey of the site undertaken by John Richmond

the Medieval Hajj Route," 350–55.

¹²Water Resources Development Directorate—Water Quality and Pollution Control Division, *Water Quality in Jordan, Part 1: Springs* (Amman, 1979), "Ṭabaqat Fahil" with a mean discharge of 1391.32 cubic meters per hour as recorded in 1972 and 1975; Department of Water Resources Development, *Spring Flow Data in Jordan Prior to October 1985*, Technical Paper No. 51 (Amman, 1986), with a median flow of 1130 cubic meters per hour as recorded in 1972–74 and 1983–86. Peak flow was between April and September, the summer growing and autumn processing seasons.

¹³Or "Pahila," transliterated to "Pahir" in Egyptian and first attested ca. 1800 B.C.E.; Robert H. Smith, *Pella of the Decapolis Volume 1: The 1967 Season of the College of Wooster Expedition to Pella* (Wooster, OH, 1973), 24–25.

¹⁴Names continue to be transformed by events at Ṭabaqat Fah̄l. Today the archaeological *tall* is locally referred to as "Bella," whereas Ṭabaqat Fah̄l is the official name for the village on the plain to the west of the antiquities site.



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in the 1930s.¹⁵ His published description focuses on the visible tombs and architecture, noting early churches and the absence of "Crusader work."¹⁶ Structures on the flat top of the mound are ignored, even though "Arab" ruins are labeled on the accompanying map along with the limits of a new village (fig. 2), in existence until bombed during the War of Attrition (1967–70) and still in ruins when first visited by Walmsley in 1977 (fig. 3).¹⁷ The map also shows the clear outline of a rectangular building next to an "Arab Cemetery" on the southern edge of the mound, but only incidentally does Richmond identify this building as a mosque in a caption to a photograph (fig. 4). Further observations of Islamic medieval ceramics were made by Nelson Glueck in a 1942 visit,¹⁸ and then in 1958 the first real indication of the extent of Middle Islamic occupation at Faḥl came about from work in one of two exploratory soundings undertaken by R. W. Funk and H. N. Richardson on the main mound at Faḥl.¹⁹ Here they initially encountered some two meters of "Medieval and early Arab occupation," but about which very little else was said except that "the strata were not clearly defined for the most part."²⁰ With the 1967 excavations of Robert Smith, which focused on the West Church and tombs, a corpus of Middle Islamic pottery was recovered from tomb overburden in Area II, the tombs east of the main mound (fig. 5).²¹ Tomb 2 produced ceramics of Middle Islamic date mixed with fragmentary human bone, but unlikely from a burial.²² Tomb 7, which had collapsed into an underlying tomb (8), had significant Middle Islamic material, including sheep, goat, camel, and cattle bones (the latter

¹⁵John Richmond, "Khirbet Faḥil," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (1934): 18–31.

¹⁶Ibid., 29.

¹⁷This village features prominently in the photographs on the endpapers of Smith's publication of his 1967 season of excavations, and is accompanied by a vivid first-hand account of the June War and the damage that was subsequently inflicted on Ṭabaqat Faḥl and its village; Smith, *Pella of the Decapolis 1*, 21–22.

¹⁸Nelson Glueck, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine IV*, Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research 25/28 (New Haven, CT, 1951), 254–57.

¹⁹Nine days were devoted to digging, for which forty laborers from the village were hired "including about half women and girls who proved to be excellent workers"; R. W. Funk and H. N. Richardson, "The 1958 Sounding at Pella," *Biblical Archaeologist* 21 (1958): 82.

²⁰Ibid., 88–89. There is no doubt that the levels associated with the Mamluk settlement of Faḥl are archaeologically challenging, but Funk and Richardson betray their disinterest in the Islamic periods elsewhere in their account. In their brief report, they devote two pages to outlining ancient historical references to Faḥl and nearly four to its Graeco-Roman and early Christian history, but no mention is made of Islamic references to the site although these had already been made available 75 years earlier in Guy Le Strange, "Account of a Short Journey East of the Jordan," *PEQ* 16 (1885): 157–80.

²¹Smith, *Pella of the Decapolis 1*, 168–95.

²²Ibid., 177.



suggesting sedentary life) either dumped or washed in, or both.²³ The ceramics ranged from glazed wares, mostly local slipped-glazed but also blue-black underglazed frit ware and glazed relief ware, to the ubiquitous Hand-Made Geometric Painted wares (HMGPW), sugar pots and basins, and coarse cooking wares.²⁴

Accordingly with the commencement of the University of Sydney's excavations in 1979 on the main mound, some knowledge of Middle Islamic settlement at Faḥl had already been retrieved from earlier work, but none of this gave useful details about the nature of that settlement or its geographical and chronological extent. The first encounter was with an extensive cemetery in the south-eastern corner of the mound, located over an area of Byzantine-Umayyad housing destroyed in the earthquake of 749 C.E. (fig. 5, Area IV).²⁵ Attention was subsequently directed towards the mosque (Area XVII), the outline of which was still clearly visible on the top of the mound next to the cemetery of the modern village, the burial ground still being in use at the time (fig. 6).²⁶ In an at times harsh winter of 1982, Ghazi Bisheh as the Departmental Representative supervised the excavation of the mosque, uncovering a rectangular building made of reused stone blocks. A third area of Mamluk occupation on the mound at Faḥl was uncovered with the opening of two rectangular excavation units to the east and west of the reopened Square 1 of Funk and Richardson, where significant Hellenistic deposits had been found in the 1958 sounding and more were hoped for (fig. 5, Area XXIII).²⁷ Little architecture of Mamluk date was uncovered in this area; rather, thin interwoven courtyard levels were encountered instead. The complexities of the strata called for meticulous excavation, yet were rich with discarded material culture. More recently further Middle Islamic material was uncovered through the excavations of S. Bourke in Area XXXII, located immediately south of the mosque. In spite of

²³Ibid., 193–95.

²⁴Ibid., 236–43. That Smith retrieved and published this material is commendable, while his reluctance to place plain wheel-made wares after the Abbasid period can be excused given the poor state of knowledge at the time.

²⁵Stephen Bourke, "First Preliminary Report on the Excavation and Study of Human Remains at Pella," in *Pella in Jordan 2: The Second Interim Report of the Joint University of Sydney and College of Wooster Excavations at Pella 1982–1985*, ed. A. W. McNicoll, J. Hanbury-Tenison, et al. (Sydney, 1992), 225–26; also Christopher Browne, "Palaeopathological Survey of the Human Remains from Pella," in *Pella in Jordan 2*, 227–29; Christopher Browne, "Arthritis in Antiquity," *Patient Management* (1991): 29–34.

²⁶Fuller details in Alan Walmsley, "Settled Life in Mamluk Jordan: Views of the Jordan Valley from Faḥl (Pella)," *ARAM* 10 (1998): 1–15; see also idem, "The Islamic Period: the Later Islamic Periods," in *Pella in Jordan 2*, 190–92, but now dated.

²⁷Walmsley, "Settled Life in Mamluk Jordan," 192–93.



its limitations, the material from these four discrete areas provide a more detailed insight into the settlement of Faḥl in Mamluk times, including its place in the cultural and economic life of the Jordan Valley.

THE MOSQUE AT FAḤL

The Faḥl mosque was built on open land towards the southern edge of the main mound, with the settlement located to its north and west (fig. 2, "Arab" ruins). Given its open location there was no restriction on the mosque's plan, which conformed to the shape of a plain rectangle measuring some 19 by 9.5 meters (fig. 7). A niche (mihrab) projecting some 1.8 meters was placed mid-point in the long south (qiblah) wall, and emphasized internally by the incorporation of two short columns on either side of the niche. To its right (west) the remains of three stone steps were uncovered, which clearly belonged to a minbar (fig. 8). The only doorway into the building was placed axially opposite the mihrab in the north wall of the mosque, either side of which were three evenly-spaced vertical windows, making six in total. The northern wall faced part of the settlement, and to separate the mosque from the cemetery to the east a wall extended out northwards from the north-east corner of the hall. No evidence for a porch was found in front of the entrance wall.

Internally, the hall of the mosque, measuring ca. 7.25 by 14.5 meters, was divided into three lateral aisles by two rows of four low-set columns positioned some 4.25 meters apart. The columns once carried six high-pointed arches, the voussoirs of which were found between the columns in a tumbled but orderly line upon the earth floor. At either end of the rows the columns were buttressed by a small wall against the short east and west walls, surely to carry the outward thrust of the colonnades. The remains of thin walls between the end columns suggest that all six recesses formed by the buttresses were made into benches and/or screened off from the body of the hall, more than likely with drapes. As the floor area of the hall measured ca. 105 square meters, it could have supported a congregation of up to 85–100 persons, and the presence of a minbar indicates a resident imam at some time in the mosque's history.

Construction of the mosque was of stone throughout, except probably for the roof. Much of the building stone came from reused material, especially the columns, one of which was of Troad grey granite, and the well-squared overlapping blocks at the wall corners. All the walls were built in 0.35 meter-deep foundation trenches with the exception of the qiblah wall, where it was built almost directly on the ground surface. The columns inside the hall were sunk from a half to three-quarters of a meter below the floor surface. The floor as found was essentially compacted earth, although remnants of a plaster surface were found in front of the mihrab. Mats made out of reeds, once copious in the Wādī Jirm, were probably used to



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cover the floor. The roof was almost certainly flat, built from a traditional construct of wood beams, cane, and matting sealed over with earth.²⁸

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT OF THE MOSQUE

The Faḥl mosque is not a unique structure in the architectural heritage of Mamluk Jordan. Since its unearthing a number of other Mamluk-period mosques have been located, and some excavated, in the region, many of which conform to the style of the Faḥl mosque.²⁹

Two prominent mosques clearly belong to the same architectural tradition as the example at Faḥl. The first and perhaps earlier of the two is the small mosque in the Ayyubid-period fort at Azraq. This building, the result of a major reconstruction of an earlier Roman-period fort, is dated to 1236–37 by an inscription over the entrance doorway, and attributes its construction to ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak, Lord of Ṣalkhad. The mosque, probably part of ‘Izz al-Dīn’s building program, is a free-standing structure of basalt placed in the center of the fort’s courtyard. In plan the mosque is essentially rectangular, with its long axis running parallel to the qiblah wall. The hall features a double, laterally-oriented line of high-pointed arches that spring from deeply buried columns (fig. 9). The roof is flat and of stone, although rebuilt. However, the Azraq mosque is not as wide as the example at Faḥl, with two instead of three arches per row, while the arches terminate on pilasters, not engaged pillars. Also different is the location of the doorway, which is in the short east wall, as is the inclusion of only two windows, one either side of the mihrab high up in the qiblah wall.

The second mosque stands in front of the Cave of the Sleepers (al-Kahf wa-al-Raqīm), located south-east of Amman. Tradition holds this is the cave mentioned in the Quran in which a group of youths hide with their dog Qiṭmīr, sleeping, for 300 or 309 years to preserve their faith (Quran 18:9–26, “al-Kahf”). In later times the site was venerated by the construction of two mosques; one above the cave, perhaps Umayyad, and a second in front of the cave, either later Ayyubid or Mamluk. This latter mosque had a doorway in the short west wall,

²⁸After excavation the partially collapsed south wall was restored. Subsequently, the mosque walls were partially and sympathetically rebuilt in a traditional style by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

²⁹Editor’s note: In addition to the structures described below, a contemporary mosque of nearly identical scale, construction, and plan was recently surveyed in the village of Ḥubrāṣ, roughly 22 kilometers northeast of Faḥl (Bethany J. Walker, “The Northern Jordan Survey 2003—Agriculture in Late Islamic Malka and Hubras Villages: A Preliminary Report on the First Season,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 339 [2005]: 76–77). It is currently being excavated and restored by Grand Valley State University, with the collaboration of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and the Ministry of Religious Endowments.



which led to an irregular courtyard positioned between the qiblah wall of the mosque and the cut rock face containing the tomb entrance. A second, blocked doorway in the west wall might suggest the mosque was an adaptation of an earlier building, maybe a church. From the court, entry to the mosque was through three broad openings in the north wall each ca. 2.37 meters wide, probably originally arched and left permanently open. In the center of the south wall a two-meter deep mihrab was located and, to the right (west), a minbar built of stone blocks with four steps remaining. Given the considerable thickness of the walls, the al-Kahf mosque may have been roofed with a stone vault.

Community mosques of a similar style were also built in other towns and villages in Jordan as part of a general program of cultural and political restructuring to counteract Shi‘ite-Fatimid and Crusader influence in the region. The village of Sūf, northwest of Jarash, was equipped with a mosque of rectangular shape with lateral colonnades, while a number of long-room mosques each with a deep, horseshoe-shaped mihrab have been identified in the ‘Ajlūn area, some of which have been excavated in recent years.³⁰

THE CEMETERY

An extensive cemetery belonging to the Mamluk settlement has been identified on the south-eastern quadrant of the main mound, probably starting to the east of the mosque where a modern cemetery, no longer in use but protected, is located. The excavation of the eastern sector of the Mamluk cemetery was coincidental to the principal intention of the work in Area IV, which was to investigate the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine settlement of Pella over an extended area.³¹ Between 1979 and 1982, over 250 individuals were disinterred, consisting of 110 adults and 142 children and adolescents. All were buried in ovoid pits measuring 1.5 to 1.75 meters in length and about 0.5 meters wide. Each body was laid in a pit on its right side, extended, with the head pointing east and the face turned to the south

³⁰Yūsuf Ghawānimah, *Al-Masājid al-Islāmiyah al-Qadīmah fī Mītiqat ‘Ajlūn* (Irbid, 1986); Neil D. MacKenzie, "Ayyubid/Mamluk Archaeology of the 'Ajlun Area: A Preliminary Typology," *ADAJ* 46 (2002): 615–20.

³¹Interim reports in P. Watson, "The Byzantine Period: Byzantine Domestic Occupation in Areas III and IV," in *Pella in Jordan* 2, 163–81; Anthony McNicoll, Robert H. Smith, and Alan Walmsley, "Chapter 7: The Umayyad Period," in *Pella in Jordan 1. An Interim Report on the Joint University of Sydney and The College of Wooster Excavations at Pella 1979–1981*, ed. Anthony McNicoll, Robert H. Smith, and Basil Hennessy (Canberra, 1982), 123–41; A. W. McNicoll, "Chapter 6: The Hellenistic Period," in *Pella in Jordan* 2, 103–18; a more recent assessment of the Umayyad houses in Alan Walmsley, "Households at Pella, Jordan: the Domestic Destruction Deposits of the Mid-Eighth Century," in *Objects in Context, Objects in Use: The Archaeology of Everyday Life*, ed. Adam Gutteridge, Ellen Swift, and Mattia Guidetti, Late Antique Archaeology (Leiden, in press).



(the qiblah). In some instances rough field stones were laid along the pit flanking the body. Grave goods were scarce, mostly personal jewelry such as finger rings, earrings, and bracelets in glass and copper.³²

As a result of a study of the skeletal material by Stephen Bourke,³³ it was concluded that the average life span of the Mamluk population was 30 to 35 years, perhaps a little lower than in earlier periods but nevertheless close to a standard pre-industrial life expectancy. The absence of any trauma to the bones would suggest that the principal cause of death was acute infection. Female lifespan was slightly less than males, probably due to the hazards of childbirth. Bourke noted that small changes in the morphology of the Mamluk population could be observed when compared to the earlier Roman-period population at Faḥl, which were suggestive of the introduction of Negroid and Asiatic (Turkic?) groups into the local population. Overall, however, this shift was only minor; rather, the evidence was for "significant biological continuity from Roman through to Mamluk times."³⁴ In other words, the Mamluk population of Faḥl was genetically little separated from their Roman-Byzantine predecessors, indicating Mamluk Faḥl was inhabited by people drawn from the local population, and not predominantly by outsiders such as imported labor.

A pathological study of the Mamluk skeletal material by C. D. Browne has identified compelling evidence for degenerative spinal disease and osteoarthritis of peripheral joints in the population of Faḥl.³⁵ These are degenerative joint diseases caused by hard work. While infant mortality levels were high, as common in pre-industrial societies, the stature of the population, bone mineralization, dental features, and the absence of skeletal deformities was suggestive of generally good levels of nutrition.

THE MAMLUK SETTLEMENT

The Mamluk-period settlement of Faḥl was in two sections, located to the north and east of the mosque. A rough outline of ruins corresponding to the settlement is given on Richmond's fold-out plan,³⁶ and in the 1980s could still be easily

³²On glass bracelets in the Jordan Valley, see Margreet Steiner, "Glass Bracelets from Tall Abu Sarbut," in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* (Amman, 1995), 5:537–39.

³³Stephen Bourke and Karen Hendrix, "Twenty Years of Australian Physical Anthropology in Jordan: Retrospects and Prospects," in *Australians Uncovering Ancient Jordan: Fifty Years of Middle Eastern Archaeology*, ed. Alan Walmsley (Sydney/Amman, 2001), 77–88; Bourke, "Excavation and Study of Human Remains at Pella," 221 and 225–26.

³⁴Bourke and Hendrix, "Twenty Years of Australian Physical Anthropology in Jordan," 86.

³⁵Browne, "Palaeopathological Survey of the Human Remains from Pella"; idem, "Arthritis in Antiquity."

³⁶Richmond, "Khirbet Faḥil," pl. V; see fig. 2 of this article.



traced by a spread of truncated stone walls and pottery scatter. The remains were visible in two parts: over an area of approximately 110 by 80 meters north of the mosque on the summit of the mound and a smaller area of 35 by 20 meters to the west of the mosque, in total about one hectare. The descriptions provided in the first European travelers' accounts, especially that of G. Schumacher,³⁷ record that the collapsed house walls of the settlement still stood to considerable height in the nineteenth century, but by the time of Richmond's visit in 1933 he could observe that "no walls remain above ground level."³⁸ The walls had, it seems, been removed in the first decades of the twentieth century to build the village of Tabaqat Fah̄l, just as the West Church was being quarried for its stone by the villagers at the time of Richmond's visit.³⁹ Nevertheless, surviving surface remains in the 1980s indicated that each domestic unit of the Mamluk settlement consisted of rooms facing out onto an open courtyard and surrounded by an enclosure wall.

Modest excavations during the 1988 season either side of Funk and Richardson's 1950s' sounding in the center of the mound (designated Area XXIII) exposed finely stratified layers belonging to a courtyard, consisting of a complex sequence of accumulated deposits consisting of interleaved black ash and yellow clay lenses.⁴⁰ Although conducted on a small scale, the excavations succeeded in producing an excellent sequence of ceramics from the early Mamluk period, firmly dated by coins, and forms part of McPhillips' study that follows.

MAMLUK POTTERY FROM FAH̄L

Ceramics from Fah̄l broadly datable to the Mamluk period represent a distinct corpus of wares that can be clearly differentiated from the early and pre-Islamic material culture of the site. The following report focuses on a representative selection of ceramic material recovered by the University of Sydney team in 1988 from two excavation plots, each of which measured five by ten meters, located in the center of the main archaeological tell of Khirbat Fah̄l to the west (plot XXIID) and east (plot XXIIIE) of Funk and Richardson's original 1958 sounding.⁴¹ These excavations revealed evidence of courtyard residential compounds constructed in stone and mud brick walls and beaten earth floors.⁴² The structures were associated

³⁷Gottlieb Schumacher, *Pella* (London, 1888).

³⁸Richmond, "Khirbet Fahil," 30

³⁹Ibid., 26.

⁴⁰First reported in Walmsley, "The Islamic Period: the Later Islamic Periods," 192–93.

⁴¹Ibid., 192.

⁴²In 1999, excavations directed by Stephen Bourke brought to light more Middle Islamic material, in association with courtyard housing units divided by what is probably a street (pers. comm., Stephen Bourke). This material has been studied by McPhillips and will be included in the final



with at least nine Mamluk-period stratigraphic sequences of occupation and other deposits, while eleven copper alloy coins minted between 1341 and the final decade of the fourteenth century have been identified from Area XXIII, providing some elements for the creation of a relative chronology for the accompanying pottery corpus.⁴³

The Mamluk sequences represent a single period of Middle Islamic occupation and are superposed directly over Byzantine and early Islamic occupation, recognized by a sharp break in the material culture: there is no evidence available to suggest occupation in this zone in the intervening Islamic centuries or later than the fifteenth century.⁴⁴ This interim report is not intended to be definitive, nor does it include the full range of comparative published data, but rather it brings up to date the current state of knowledge of the ceramics from the site based on a study of the Area XXIII pottery undertaken by McPhillips in the spring of 2000.⁴⁵ A total of 1726 vessel fragments from the 1988 Area XXIII excavations have been assigned to twelve categories of ware and to a more detailed typology according to form.⁴⁶ The following discussion presents an overview of this material with an indication of its importance relative to the rest of the assemblage. The catalogue number of the featured specimens is given in parentheses.

HAND-MADE WARES

HAND-MADE GEOMETRIC PAINTED WARE (324, FIG. 10)

Often referred to by the acronym HMGPW,⁴⁷ this ware is constantly present in

publication on Mamluk Fahl.

⁴³Alan Walmsley, "Islamic Coins," in *Pella in Jordan 1979–1990: The Coins*, ed. Kenneth A. Sheedy, Robert Carson, and Alan Walmsley, Adapa Monograph Series, v. 1 (Sydney, 2001), 63–66, 152–53.

⁴⁴The uppermost deposits in this area of the tell did see major perturbation after 1967, yet diagnostic Ottoman or later wares are not seen in surface or other deposits.

⁴⁵Mamluk pottery has been published previously from Fahl as follows: from Tomb 2 and Tomb 7 in Smith, *Pella of the Decapolis 1*, 236–43, pls. 70–77, 86, and 93–94; and a preliminary publication of the Area XXIII material in Walmsley, "The Islamic Period: the Later Islamic Periods," 193–98, pls 125–27; and idem, "Settled Life in Mamluk Jordan," 138–41, figs. 9–10. The present author has also presented a concise description with photographs in Stephen McPhillips, "Ceramics from Middle Islamic Fahl," in *Australians Uncovering Ancient Jordan: Fifty Years of Middle Eastern Archaeology*, ed. Alan Walmsley (Sydney/Amman, 2001), 271–78.

⁴⁶A much larger quantity of non-diagnostic pottery was examined by the current author, but this has not been added to the quantification given here as its value is affected by the discard of body sherds of unspecified wares at the time of excavation.

⁴⁷See 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*, ed. Roland-Pierre Gayraud, IFAO, Textes arabes et études islamiques, vol. 36 (Cairo, 1998), 65–93.



non-elite sites in Bilād al-Shām from the twelfth century on through to the twentieth century.⁴⁸ At Fahl it is the second most represented category of Mamluk pottery, and consists primarily of jars, bowls, and basins. Geometric decoration in black, brown, purple, or red paint is usually applied to the greater part of the surface over a thick coat of white slip. Several of the larger open forms in this ware also have applied bands with finger impressions on the exterior surface. The finished surface is often highly burnished, which contrasts with the often thickly and irregularly made character of this ware, which was produced in village bonfire kilns. There is considerable variation in the fabrics within the Fahl assemblage, but they are always coarse and gritty, with abundant vegetal inclusions. A number of the examples possess textile impressions on the interior surface, indicating the use of a simple mold manufacturing technique.⁴⁹ Taken in combination with the two subsequent wares below, 31.2% of the assemblage consists of hand-made material.

RED PAINTED HAND-MADE WARE

Six pieces of a burnished ware with a thinly applied red painted exterior decoration occur in this assemblage. A similar ware has elsewhere been suggested as a possible precursor to the more common HMG PW in Jordan.⁵⁰

HAND-MADE COARSE WARE (209, FIG. 11)

This sizeable group of pottery consists of jars with large horizontal loop handles, jugs, and bowls in a thick walled ware containing abundant coarse crystalline and other inclusions. The exterior surface of this type is frequently slipped and burnished. These were clearly used as cooking pots, for there is evidence of burning on the interior or exterior surfaces of some of the Fahl examples. This class of ceramic is common throughout Middle Islamic Bilād al-Shām in the Mamluk period.⁵¹

⁴⁸ At the Damascus Citadel excavations this ware is notable by its near absence; see Stephen McPhillips, "Twelfth Century Pottery from the Citadel of Damascus," in "Études et travaux à la citadelle de Damas 2000–2001: un premier bilan," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 53–54, Supplément: Citadelle de Damas, ed. Sophie Berthier and Edmond Al-Ajji (2001–2): 139–55.

⁴⁹ For examples excavated at Fahl, see Smith, *Pella of the Decapolis* 1, pl. 86.

⁵⁰ Johns, "The Rise of Middle Islamic Hand-Made Geometrically-Painted Ware in Bilad al-Sham," 66; Robin M. Brown, "A 12th Century A.D. Sequence from Southern Transjordan: Crusader and Ayyubid Occupation at Al-Wu'eira," *ADAJ* 31 (1987): 284; idem, "Late Islamic Ceramic Production and Distribution in the Southern Levant: A Socio-Economic and Political Interpretation" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York, 1992), 245–46.

⁵¹ For discussion of distribution, see Brown, "Late Islamic Ceramic Production and Distribution in the Southern Levant," 256–59. Similar jars are published from Jerusalem: G. J. Wightman, *The Damascus Gate, Jerusalem: Excavations by Crystal-M. Bennett and Basil Hennessy at the Damascus*



WHEEL-MADE UNGLAZED WARES

SUGAR POT WARE (186, FIG. 12)

More than ten percent of the Mamluk pottery from the Fah̄l assemblage belongs to this ware, which consists solely of large ribbed jars and straight-sided bowls in a uniformly soft yellow fabric with some fine inclusions.⁵² Although not connected directly to the sugar manufacturing process, these jars have been identified as containers for the finished product at a number of other sugar producing sites.⁵³ It is likely that sugar cane cultivation and production took place in the Wādī Jirm immediately south of Khirbat Fah̄l, explaining perhaps the presence of such a quantity of this ware in domestic contexts on the tell. Nineteenth century visitors to Ṭabaqat Fah̄l refer to recently abandoned mills in the Wādī Jirm,⁵⁴ and water mills are mentioned in the vicinity of Fah̄l in the Ottoman *daftars* of the sixteenth century.⁵⁵ The Jordan Valley was a major sugar cane growing and refining area in the Mamluk period.⁵⁶

PLAIN UNGLAZED WARE (95, FIG. 13)

This group consists of bowls, jars, and jugs. The closed forms have looped handles

Gate, Jerusalem, 1964–66, BAR International Series no. 519 (1989), pl. 61:8, and have recently been published from Rāfiqah (Raqqah) in northern Syria; Marcus Milwright, "Ceramics from the Recent Excavations near the Eastern Wall of Rafiqa (Raqqa), Syria," *Levant* 37 (2005): 197–219. Fine walled wheel-made cooking wares with interior glazing are absent from the Fah̄l assemblage.

⁵²Sugar pots from Tombs 2 and 7 at Fah̄l had been initially dated to the Abbasid period: Smith, *Pella of the Decapolis 1*, 237. This group has also been referred to as "Plain Ware" at Fah̄l: Walmsley, "The Islamic Period: the Later Islamic Periods," 193–94.

⁵³Tell Abū Ṣarbūt and Dhra' al-Khān both provide local comparative material in the Jordan Valley: Kareem, *Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley*, 66–80; Margreet Steiner, "The Excavations at Tell Abu Sarbut, A Mamluk Village in the Jordan Valley," *ARAM* 9–10 (1998): 145–51; H. E. LaGro, "Sugar Pots: A Preliminary Study of Technological Aspects of a Class of Medieval Industrial Pottery from Tell Abu Sarbut, Jordan," *Newsletter of the Department of Pottery Technology, University of Leiden* 7/8 (1989–90): 7–20; H. E. LaGro and H. de Haas, "Announcing a Study of Islamic Pottery from Tell Abu Sarbut," *Newsletter of the Department of Pottery Technology* 6 (1988): 89–96, and idem, "Syrup Jars and Sugar Pots: A Preliminary Study of a Class of Medieval Industrial Pottery from Tell Abu Sarbut, Jordan, Part II," *Newsletter of the Department of Pottery Technology* 9–10 (1991–1992): 55–68; H. J. Franken and J. Kalsbeek, *Potters of a Medieval Village in the Jordan Valley: Excavations at Tell Deir 'Alla: A Medieval Tell, Tell Abu Gourdan, Jordan* (Amsterdam/Oxford, 1975), 143–54.

⁵⁴Schumacher, *Pella*, 33–34, 51.

⁵⁵Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography of Palestine, Jordan and Southern Syria in the Late 16th Century*, 167. However, there is no mention of sugar production in this period.

⁵⁶Ashtor, "Levantine Sugar Production in the Late Middle Ages," 92–93; J. H. Galloway, *The Sugar Cane Industry, An Historical Geography from its Origins to 1914* (Cambridge, 1989), 31–35, 43.



and a few examples show elongated and thickened cylindrical necks with internal filters. They are close in fabric to the "thin painted ware," although the only secondary surface treatment is an occasional whitish slip. Parallels are provided by several regional sites, the most extensively published being those from Tall Qaymūn (Tall Yoqne'am).⁵⁷ In the south of Jordan similar "cream wares" have been excavated in both urban and rural contexts and are well represented at sites such as Khirbat Fāris.⁵⁸

RED WARE (113, FIG. 14)

This is a hard dense ceramic which is pale or dark reddish to gray in color and is thrown in a well-levigated siliceous clay. The main forms are medium to large bowls and jars with thickened rounded rims and comparatively thin walls. Published parallels exist from Jerusalem and Tall Qaymūn.⁵⁹

THIN PAINTED WARE (49, FIG. 15)

This is a fine ware fired reddish yellow to pink with reddish brown or black painted decoration sometimes over a white or yellowish slip. The most common shapes are jars and jugs with vertical loop handles. In both its decorative technique and its fabric, it is reminiscent of earlier Islamic pottery from the site.⁶⁰

WHEEL-MADE GLAZED WARES

MONOCHROME GLAZED WARE (541, FIG. 16)

Monochrome glazed wares are the most frequently occurring Mamluk ceramic from the Fahl excavations.⁶¹ Forms represented are overwhelmingly footed bowls with incurving or everted rims. The uniformly thick lead glaze is green, yellow, or sometimes brown in color and always applied over a thick white slip, often spilling over onto the exterior surface. The fabric is hard yellowish red to pale

⁵⁷ Miriam Avissar, "The Medieval Pottery," in *Yoqne'am I, The Late Periods*, ed. A. Ben-Tor, M. Avissar, and Y. Portugali, *Qedem Reports*, vol. 3 (Jerusalem, 1996), 151–55, 167–68.

⁵⁸ Mads Sarley Pontin, "The Pottery," in A. M. McQuitty, M. Sarley Pontin, M. Khoury, M. P. Charles, and C. F. Hoppe, "Mamluk Khirbat Faris," *ARAM* 9–10 (1997–98): 189.

⁵⁹ A. D. Tushingham, *Excavations in Jerusalem 1961–1967* (Toronto, 1985), 1:142–51, pls. 34–43; Avissar, "Medieval Pottery," 128–29, 151–53. Very close forms in a similar ware dating to the Mamluk period have been catalogued in the Damascus Citadel excavations (pers. comm., Véronique François).

⁶⁰ Alan Walmsley, "Tradition, Innovation, and Imitation in the Material Culture of Islamic Jordan," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* (Amman, 1995), 5:661 (Walmsley's Ware 8). See comments in Walmsley, "The Islamic Period: the Later Islamic Periods," 194 (Type 2).

⁶¹ It is probable that the presence of glazed wares in the assemblage has been somewhat exaggerated due to their high visibility during excavation.



yellow, and is well-levigated with small quantities of fine inclusions. There are a few fragments from closed forms from the site, and only one lamp. This prominence of monochrome glazed wares is not unusual at a site in the Jordan Valley,⁶² but at Fahl it represents a larger proportion of the pottery repertoire than at other village sites in Northern Jordan, resembling more the situation at rural Palestinian sites, to which it was more accessible in this period.⁶³

SLIP PAINTED WARE (79, FIG. 17)

Underglaze slip painted ware is the second most frequent glazed pottery in the assemblage. In fabric it is fine and a consistent brittle red with few visible inclusions. The principal form at Fahl is a carinated bowl with an incurving thickened rim. This is a ware well known at many sites in Bilād al-Shām, but generally occurs less frequently in Jordan than in Syria and Palestine.⁶⁴ The carinated form is dated at Burj al-Aḥmar to after 1265.⁶⁵ A single sherd from the Fahl group is green glazed.

GLAZED INCISED WARE (43, FIG. 18)

Lead glazed wares with decoration incised into the underlying white slip are represented at Fahl, but owing to the highly fragmentary and somewhat limited

⁶²Brown, "Late Islamic Ceramic Production and Distribution in the Southern Levant," 456.

⁶³As is the case at Ḥisbān, for example, Bethany J. Walker and Øystein S. LaBianca, "The Islamic Qusur of Tall Hisban: Preliminary Report on the 1998 and 2001 Seasons," *ADAJ* 47 (2003): 443–71. A recent survey in northern Jordan has revealed a situation closer to that at Fahl, with high proportions of monochrome glazed bowls: Bethany J. Walker, "The Northern Jordan Survey 2003," 79. Palestinian sites that include abundant material include Belmont Castle: Richard P. Harper and Denys Pringle, *Belmont Castle: The Excavation of a Crusader Stronghold in the Kingdom of Jerusalem*, British Academy Monographs in Archaeology no. 10 (London, 2000), esp. the sections by Anthony Grey, "The Unglazed Pottery," 87–100, and Katherine Knowles, "The Glazed Pottery," 101–16; Tall Qaymūn (Tel Yoqne‘am), Avissar, "The Medieval Pottery," 96ff.; and Za‘rin, Anthony Grey, "The Pottery of the Late Periods from Tel Jezreel: an Interim Report," *Levant* 26 (1994): 60.

⁶⁴Marcus Milwright, "Trade and Patronage in Middle Islamic Jordan: the Ceramics from Karak Castle" (D.Phil. diss., University of Oxford, 1999), 170. Comparanda are too numerous to list here; this ware is well attested in Bilād al-Shām and further afield from the twelfth century, continuing at many sites well into the Mamluk period. In the Damascus Citadel excavations there is a locally distinctive development of this ware from the twelfth century through the Mamluk period: Stephen McPhillips, "Pottery of the Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries from the Citadel of Damascus" (Ph.D. diss., University of Sydney, 2004), 241–42, 251–52; Véronique François, pers. comm.

⁶⁵Denys Pringle, *The Red Tower (al-Burj al-Aḥmar): Settlement in the Plain of Sharon at the Time of the Crusaders and Mamluks, A.D. 1099–1516* (London, 1986), 149–50, fig. 50.



nature of the material, it has not been possible to divide this group into more detailed categories present at sites where it is more common.⁶⁶ The majority of this group possess simple geometric patterns incised into a white slip under a green or yellow glaze,⁶⁷ with a smaller number having much broader incised lines (gouged ware) or large areas without slip at all (reserve slipped ware). A few sherds exhibit more than one glaze color, and may be considered as part of the "splashed glazed" family. Incised ware fabrics are not readily distinguishable from those of the slipped glazed group, and indeed it is probable that incised vessels have been registered with the monochrome group as large parts of incised ware bowls were left undecorated.

STONEPASTE WARES (48, FIG. 19)

Stonepaste or fritware pottery is characterized by a siliceous white or off-white pottery body with a make-up of ten parts quartz, one part glass frit or glass fragments, and one part fine white clay.⁶⁸ It occurs infrequently within the Area XXIII assemblage and consists entirely of fine bowls and a small number of small jars. The white body is covered by a transparent alkaline glaze, colored by mineral additions, such as copper for turquoise in the case of the pottery of this group from Fahl, which otherwise have a colorless glaze. A slip was not required as a base for applying painted decoration, as the stonepaste body itself fulfilled this function and reflected light through the glaze to highlight its color and any underglaze decoration. The Fahl stonepaste pottery is highly fragmentary, but geometric or

⁶⁶At Za‘rin (Tall Jezreel), a site of similar size to Fahl in the Marj ibn ‘Āmir (Jezreel Valley), a range of incised wares are represented: Grey, "Pottery of the Late Periods from Tel Jezreel," 57–59. It is interesting to note that the author observes a relatively limited presence of glazed incised material in relation to monochrome glazed pottery at Tall Qaymūn (Tel Yoqne‘am) during the Mamluk reoccupation of the site from the beginning of the fourteenth century; Avissar, "Medieval Pottery," 96.

⁶⁷In the Damascus Citadel excavations, this material is typical of the Mamluk period; twelfth-century and earlier incised lead glazed wares are both finer walled and possess a more lightly applied incised decoration; McPhillips, "Pottery of the Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries from the Citadel of Damascus," 251–52; Véronique François, pers. comm. Tushingham has suggested a similar distinction at the Armenian Garden in Jerusalem; Tushingham, *Excavations in Jerusalem*, 143.

⁶⁸See James Allan, "Abu ‘l-Qasim's Treatise on Ceramics," *Iran* 11 (1973): 113–14. James Allan, L. R. Llewellyn, and F. Schweizer, "The History of So-called Egyptian Faience in Islamic Persia: Investigations into Abu ‘l-Qasim's Treatise," *Archaeometry* 15, no. 2 (1973): 165–73; Alan Caiger-Smith, *Lustre Pottery: Technique, Tradition, and Innovation in Islam and the Western World* (London, 1985), 199; Robert Mason and Michael Tite, "The Beginnings of Islamic Stonepaste Technology," *Archaeometry* 36 (1994): 77–78. The treatise of Abū al-Qāsim, written in Iran at the beginning of the fourteenth century, is of interest owing to its descriptions of the manufacture of fritwares and techniques of underglaze painting.



vegetal painted decoration is discernible in several combinations of color: black, cobalt blue or turquoise under a colorless glaze, and black or cobalt blue under a turquoise glaze. The fabric is consistently granular and off-white in color. The sherds of this ware are often considerably degraded or very small due to their fragile nature. There are good parallels for this material, particularly at urban sites in Bilād al-Shām, with production probably occurring at Damascus and in central and northern Syria. The range of stoneware exhibited in the Fahl group is consistent with Syrian wares of the Mamluk period.⁶⁹

MOLDED WARES

RELIEF MOLDED GLAZED WARE (FIG. 20)

Five sherds of this ware were catalogued, all from bowls with pronounced incurving rims and epigraphic relief molded decoration on the exterior surface. The glazes are glassy, thick, and generally made to a higher standard than those of other lead-glazed ceramics above. In color they are yellow, green, and brown, while in section they are pale red and fine. This ware is likely to have been produced at Jerusalem,⁷⁰ and is relatively prominent at certain urban sites in southern Bilād al-Shām such as Karak and Tell Hisbān,⁷¹ but is rarer elsewhere.

CONCLUSION ON THE CERAMICS

The range of pottery excavated in Area XXIII at Fahl offers a reflection of the socioeconomic realities at an agricultural settlement in the Jordan Valley that also served as a local hub and transit point in the early Mamluk period. At a time when the Jordan Valley had become a highly developed area of large-scale agriculture, Fahl—with its abundant water resources, fertile soils and strategic location—was well positioned to play a role in the massively expanded economic activity of the area during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The association of a significant

⁶⁹Archaeological evidence for the dating of these families of stoneware wares to within the Mamluk period is provided by the Damascus Citadel excavations (pers. comm., Véronique François) and by work in northern Syria, such as at Qal'at Ja'bar: Cristina Tonghini, *Qal'at Ja'bar Pottery: A Study of a Syrian Fortified Site of the Late 11th–14th Centuries*, British Academy Monographs in Archaeology, vol. 11 (London, 1998), 52–55. Similar material to that from Fahl can be found from a range of published Mamluk contexts in the southern Bilād al-Shām, such as at Tall Qaymūn (Tel Yoqne'am): Avissar "The Medieval Pottery," 113–16, and at al-Burj al-Ahmar: Pringle, *The Red Tower*, 150–53. For a thorough survey of the distribution of Mamluk stoneware wares, see Tonghini, *Qal'at Ja'bar Pottery*, 52–55 (fritware 3).

⁷⁰Avissar, "Medieval Pottery," 102; Nahman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, 1980), 255, fig. 302.

⁷¹Milwright, "Trade and Patronage in Middle Islamic Jordan," 184; Walker and LaBianca, "Islamic Qusur of Tall Hisban," 464–66.



proportion of the pottery with the manufacture of sugar has been remarked on above.⁷² Furthermore, the range of ceramics in the corpus can be paralleled to those of other rural sites in Palestine and northern Jordan, but less so to rural sites further to the south.⁷³ The presence of a considerable proportion of glazed wares that are well-documented in the wider region also underlines the full integration of Fah̄l into the economy of the region. Unglazed wheel-made wares and monochrome lead glazed pottery, along with the slip painted and incised sub-groups, are well known at Palestinian and larger Jordanian sites, to which Fah̄l was readily accessible owing to its location near the intersection of two valleys, the Jordan and the Marj ibn ‘Āmir (Jezreel), at a point where coastal and highland routes met. The stoneware and relief glazed wares found at Fah̄l are likely to have been imported from Damascus and Jerusalem respectively, and are a reminder of the position of the village close to the road between these two cities where it crossed the Jordan river. The hand-made wares from Fah̄l are similarly well-represented at other rural sites in Bilād al-Shām, but are more likely to have been manufactured in closer proximity to the site. It is interesting to note that all ceramic cooking vessels belong to this group. Studies of the Ottoman *daftars*, although from the sixteenth century, provide some parallel indicators of the nature of the local economy and population in the immediate proximity of Fah̄l.⁷⁴

⁷²Mamluk or Middle Islamic sites have been identified in the vicinity of Tabaqat Fah̄l, particularly the sugar production sites in the Jordan Valley such as Khirbat al-Maḥrūqāt at the base of the Wādī al-Yābis: Jonathan Mabry and Gaetano Palumbo, "Survey in the Wadi el-Yabis (Irbid District, Jordan), 1987," *Syria* 65 (1988): 425–27; idem, "The 1987 Wadi el Yabis Survey," *ADAJ* 32 (1988): 296–302; and a large number of other sites on the valley floor: Kareem, *The Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley*, 181–204; Cherie Lenzen, Jum'a M. H. Kareem, and S. Thorpe, "Jisr Sheikh Hussain Regional Survey," in *The Archaeology of Jordan II.1*, ed. Denyse Homès-Fredericq and Basil Hennessy (Leuven, 1989), 66–67; Ibrahim, Sauer, and Yassine, "East Jordan Valley Survey, 1975 (Part One)," 41–66; Yassine, Sauer, and Ibrahim, "East Jordan Valley Survey, 1976 (Part Two)." Further Middle Islamic sites have been identified higher up the eastern side of the Jordan Valley from Fah̄l: S. Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des Nördlichen Ostjordanlandes* (Wiesbaden, 1970), 39–94, as well as the better known Baysān: G. M. Fitzgerald, *The Beth Shan Excavations, 1921–23, The Arab and Byzantine Levels* (Philadelphia, 1931) and al-Himmeh: Adrian Boas, "Late Ceramic Typology," in *The Roman Baths of Hammat Gader*, ed. Yizhar Hirschfeld (Jerusalem, 1997), 382–95.

⁷³Hand-made wares, including HMGPW, represented the majority of the wares collected in the rural settlements of the Arḍ al-Karak (the agricultural lands around Karak) of the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, which contrasts strikingly with the situation inside the castle itself; Brown, "Late Islamic Ceramic Production and Distribution in the Southern Levant," 240–41.

⁷⁴Taxes were levied on wheat, barley, sesame, goats, honey, and watermills; nine heads of family (or bachelors) are recorded as residing here at this later era: Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography of Palestine, Jordan and Southern Syria in the Late 16th Century*, 167. The *Fah̄l al-Taḥta* referred to in the *daftars* may correspond either to Tabaqat Fah̄l or to another settlement



There is no firm evidence in this corpus for pottery from periods immediately prior or posterior to the Mamluk centuries, except the possible late twelfth- to early thirteenth-century (Ayyubid) Red Painted Hand-made Ware, represented by only a few sherds in the corpus. Otherwise, both the dates of the excavated coins, even taking into account fluctuating supply levels over the period, and the range of wares represented within this group of pottery indicate that it is consistent with an interpretation of a date from around the middle part of the thirteenth century to the first part of the fifteenth century. The absence of Ottoman material is in line with Schumacher's observation that there was no permanent settlement on the tell in the late Ottoman period, with the pre-1967 village being built no earlier than the start of the twentieth century.⁷⁵

AL-DIMASHQĪ, AL-QALQASHANDĪ, AND ARCHAEOLOGY

The social and economic reconstruction of Jordan, resolutely pursued by the Ayyubid and especially Bahri Mamluk elites following the Crusader interregnum, included an active program of mosque and shrine building among other activities, especially at sites of particular religious significance such as Mu'tah, Māzar, al-Kahf, 'Amatah (Abū 'Ubaydah), and Jabal Hārūn. Fahāl, surely remembered for the decisive Battle of Fahāl that drove a wedge between Jerusalem and Damascus in 635, may have been a beneficiary of this policy, bringing advantages in addition to its administrative role in the Mamluk province of Dimashq. The archaeological evidence points to the existence of a settlement of some note during Mamluk times, and a community honored by the erection of a mosque equipped with a minbar. As the ceramics also indicate, the presence of glazed wares in some numbers, including Relief Molded Glazed Ware from Jerusalem and stoneware wares from Damascus or further north, suggest Fahāl was something more than an isolated agricultural settlement in early Mamluk times, with contacts that extended outside the immediate area. Likewise, the coins show Fahāl's involvement in a broader monetary economy, and together the finds could be taken to suggest that Fahāl was one of the more important sites in the Jordan Valley during early Mamluk times. It may have functioned as a focal point for the local community and served as a way station on east-west routes from the valley into the Jordanian mountains, especially the 'Ajlūn road.

Can these discoveries assist in understanding al-Dimashqī as a source, even in

at the base of the valley, perhaps in the vicinity of modern al-Masharia⁶: Walmsley, "Settled Life in Mamluk Jordan," 142.

⁷⁵In the early nineteenth century two British naval commanders visited "Tabathat Fahkil" during a journey through the region, and described the ruins of a village on the tell, clearly corresponding to Khirbat Fahāl: C. L. Irby and J. Mangles, *Travels in Egypt and Nubia, Syria and Asia Minor; During the Years 1817 and 1818* (London, 1823), 304; see also Schumacher, *Pella*, 51.



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the smallest way? Generally, al-Dimashqī has been judged as a less than critical scholar who incorporated earlier material in his work without exercising any rigorous editorial control.⁷⁶ The contradictions found in his geographical work would seem to confirm this, for instance by placing Amman, al-Salt, al-Zarqā', and the Balqā' in both Karak and Dimashq provinces. However, the extensive archaeological evidence from Mamluk Faḥl would indicate that al-Dimashqī's sources were rooted in an historical reality, and that the inclusion of Fiḥl as an *iqlīm* in Dimashq was not an historical relic of much earlier times, but reflected a current, or near-contemporary, situation.⁷⁷ Hence archaeology may serve to confirm the usefulness of al-Dimashqī as a source on the geography of early Mamluk Bilād al-Shām.

⁷⁶Dunlop, "Al-Dimashkī."

⁷⁷If this reasoning is correct Bayt Rās, also listed by al-Dimashqī as another *iqlīm* of Dimashq, should reveal evidence for significant Mamluk-period occupation, including a mosque.



APPENDIX: INVENTORY OF CERAMICS: FIGURES 10 TO 20

Figure 10. Hand-Made Geometric Painted Ware

1. Jar, Cat. No. 16903, Area XXIIIE 7.8; core 7.5YR 5/1, surface 10YR 6/1; brown paint 2.5YR 4/2; gray fabric with infrequent fine red, white, and gray grits and organic temper
2. Bowl, Cat. No. 16910, Area XXIIIE 8.2; slipped and burnished interior surface; core 7.5YR 7/6, surface 7.5YR 8/2 and 7.5YR 8/4; dark brown paint 5YR 3/2; reddish yellow fabric with abundant coarse white grits and organic tempering, some finer red and gray inclusions
3. Bowl, Cat. No. 16628, Area XXIIID 1.4; burnished interior and exterior surface; core 7.5YR 7/4, int. surface 2.5YR 7/8, ext. 2.5YR 6/6 and 5YR 7/4; dark red paint 7.5R 4/3; pink fabric with infrequent gray, red, and white grits and some organic temper

Figure 11. Hand-Made Coarse Ware

1. Lid, Cat. No. 16672, Area XXIIID 1.14; core 10YR 7/3, surface 10YR 8/2; pale brown fabric with gray, red, and white grits
2. Bowl, Cat. No. 16658, Area XXIIID 1.8; self-slipped; core 10YR 8/3, surface 10YR 8/2, 10YR 8/4 and 5YR 7/4; pale brown fabric with white and gray grits and organic temper
3. Cooking Jar, Cat. No. 16645, Area XXIIID 1.5; self-slipped with traces of burnishing exterior; core 10YR 4/1, surface 10YR 6/2 and 10YR 8/2; pale brown fabric with abundant mineral inclusions (quartz?) and organic temper

Figure 12. Sugar Pot Ware

1. Jar, Cat. No. 16775, Area XXIIID 6.46; core 2.5YR 6/8, ext. surface 2.5YR 6/6 and 10YR 8/3, int. surface 2.5YR 6/6 and 5YR 6/8; dense light red fabric with gray and white grits and abundant chaff
2. Jar, Cat. No. 16841, Area XXIIIE 3.4; core 10YR 7/4, ext. surface 5YR 8/4 and 7.5YR 8/4, int. surface 5YR 6/3 and 7.5YR 8/4; pale brown soft lightweight fabric with gray grits and organic tempering

Figure 13. Plain Unglazed Ware

1. Jug or jar with neck filter, Cat. No. 16403, Area XXIIIE 3.9; core 5YR 7/6, ext. surface 2.5YR 8/3 and 10YR 8/3, int. surface 7.5YR 8/4; light red fabric with very fine gray, white, and red grits
2. Jar, Cat. No. 16604, Area XXIIID 1.3; core 10YR 8/4, surface 7.5YR 8/4; porous pale brown fabric with prominent white grits
3. Jar, Cat. No. 16632, Area XXIIID 1.4; core 7.5YR 5/1, ext. surface 10YR 8/3,



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int. surface 5YR 6/4; porous pale brown fabric with reddish brown, gray, and white grits

4. Bowl, Cat. No. 16431, Area XXIIIE 3.11; core 10YR 5/1, margins and surface 7.5YR 8/4; fabric as Fig. 13.3

Figure 14. Red Ware

1. Jug, Cat. No. 16967, Area XXIIIE 1.9; core 2.5YR 5/6, surface 5YR 5/4; dense red fabric with infrequent fine grits
2. Jar, Cat. No. 16972, Area XXIID 6.46; core 2.5YR 5/6, surface 5YR 5/4; fabric as Fig. 14.1
3. Basin, Cat. No. 16948, Area XXIID 6.20; core 10YR 7/2, surface 10YR 6/1; fabric as Fig. 14.1, although pale gray in color

Figure 15. Thin Painted Ware

1. Closed form, Cat. No. 16457, Area XXIID 6.26; core 10YR 7/4, surface 2.5YR 8/3; parallel diagonal lines of black paint exterior (7.5YR 5/1); fine pale brown fabric with frequent fine gray and white grits
2. Jar, Cat. No. 16425, Area XXIID 100.2; core 10YR 5/1, surface 7.5YR 8/4; dribbles of black paint exterior (7.5YR 5/1); fine porous light gray fabric with reddish brown, gray, and white grits
3. Jar, Cat. No. 16419, Area XXIID 7.13; core 2.5YR 6/6, surface 2.5YR 8/4 and 10YR 8/2; dribbles of black and dark red paint exterior (7.5YR 5/1); fine light gray fabric with gray and white grits

Figure 16. Monochrome Glazed Ware

1. Bowl, Cat. No. 16704, Area XXIID 1.34; creamy white slip interior and to ca. 40mm below exterior lip, dark green glaze interior and dribbles exterior, dark brown in color where it has dripped over unslipped surface; core 5YR 6/6, surface 2.5YR 4/4; fine reddish yellow fabric with occasional mineral grits
2. Bowl, Cat. No. 16570, Area XXIID 5.28; pale yellow slip over interior surface and to ca. 27mm below exterior rim, covered by thick mustard glaze; glaze drips exterior; core 10YR 7/4, ext. surface 2.5YR 8/2 and 7.5YR 7/3; hard pale brown fabric with frequent rounded black, gray, and white grits
3. Bowl, Cat. No. 16815, Area XXIIIE 1.10; yellow glaze with black speckling on exterior foot, spots of very pale brown slip exterior and some glaze drips interior foot; core 7.5YR 8/4, ext. surface 7.5YR 6/4 and 10YR 8/3; fabric as Fig. 16.2

Figure 17. Slip Painted Ware

1. Bowl, Cat. No. 16819, Area XXIIIE 2.1; pale yellow glaze exterior, appears



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pale yellow over slip and light red on remaining surface; core 2.5YR 4/4, surface 2.5YR 4/4; fine light red fabric with occasional mineral grits

2. Bowl, Cat. No. 16627, Area XXIID 1.4; green glaze over a white slip producing crosshatched motif; core 2.5YR 6/6, surface 2.5YR 7/6; fabric as Fig. 17.1

Figure 18. Glazed Incised Ware

1. Bowl, Cat. No. 16920, Area XXIIIE 101.3; pale yellow glaze to rim, green glaze splashed on rim and interior, horizontal incised bands and areas in reserve incised into cream slip on interior surface; core 2.5YR 6/6, surface 2.5Y 8/3; fine light red fabric with occasional mineral grits
2. Bowl, Cat. No. 16935, Area XXIIIE 100.2; green glaze and white slip interior and dripped on lower exterior surface, incised floral motif interior; core and surface: 7.5YR 7/2; fine pinkish gray fabric with occasional white and red grits
3. Bowl, Cat. No. 16829, Area XXIIIE 2.2; yellow glaze with splashes of pea green glaze and white slip interior, unslipped (reserve) zones appear reddish brown; core and surface: 2.5YR 6/8; fine light red fabric with occasional white and red grits

Figure 19. Stonepaste Ceramics

1. Ledge rimmed bowl, Cat. No. 16727, Area XXIID 5.16; turquoise glaze entire surface over black underglaze painted geometric motif interior and pairs of parallel stripes exterior; core 10YR 8/2; friable off white stonepaste fabric
2. Ledge rimmed bowl, Cat. No. 16882, Area XXIIIE 4.10 and 6.3; colorless glaze entire surface over black underglaze painted geometric motif interior and pairs of parallel stripes and band at rim exterior; core 10YR 8/2; friable off white stonepaste fabric
3. Small bowl, Cat. No. 16682, Area XXIID 1.24; colorless glaze entire surface over black and cobalt blue underglaze painted geometric motif interior and cross-hatched black bands exterior; core 10YR 8/2; friable off-white stonepaste fabric
4. Jar, Cat. No. 16696, Area XXIID 1.32; thick turquoise glaze exterior, dripped to foot, colorless glaze interior surface; core 10YR 8/2; friable off white stonepaste fabric

Figure 20. Relief Molded Glazed Ware

1. Bowl, Cat. No. 16925, Area XXIIIE 102.8; thick dark green glaze entire surface, relief molded vegetal motif exterior; core 5Y 7/1; soft light gray fabric with very fine white and black grits
2. Bowl, Cat. No. 16928, Area XXIID 100.2; thick dark green glaze exterior



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surface, yellow interior; sharp molded fluting exterior; core 7.5YR 8/6; soft reddish yellow fabric with very fine white and black grits

Thanks to Judith Sellers for original pencil drawings of the hand-made and glazed vessels with surface decoration.



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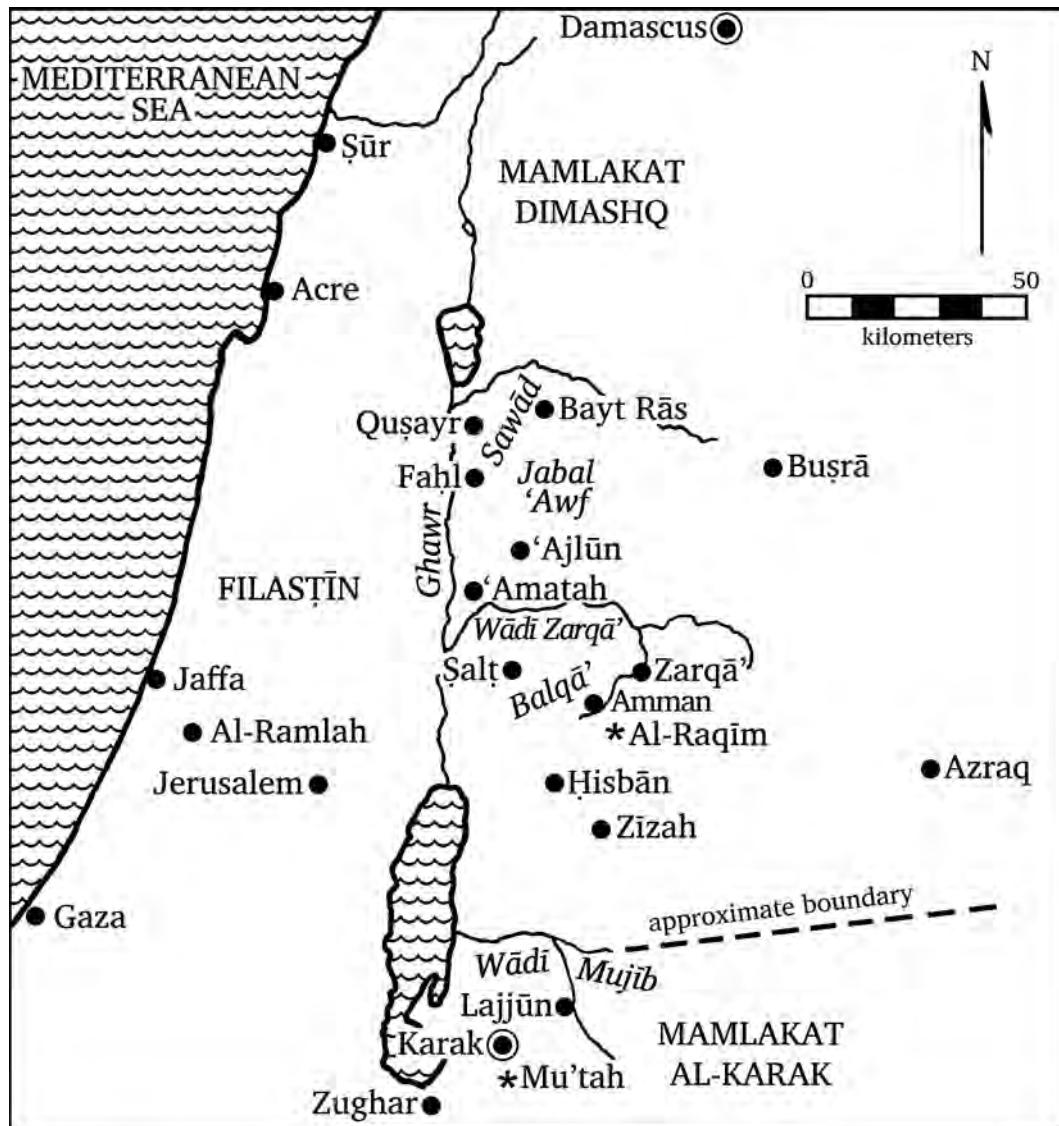


Fig. 1. Generalized map of Jordan and Palestine in Mamluk times



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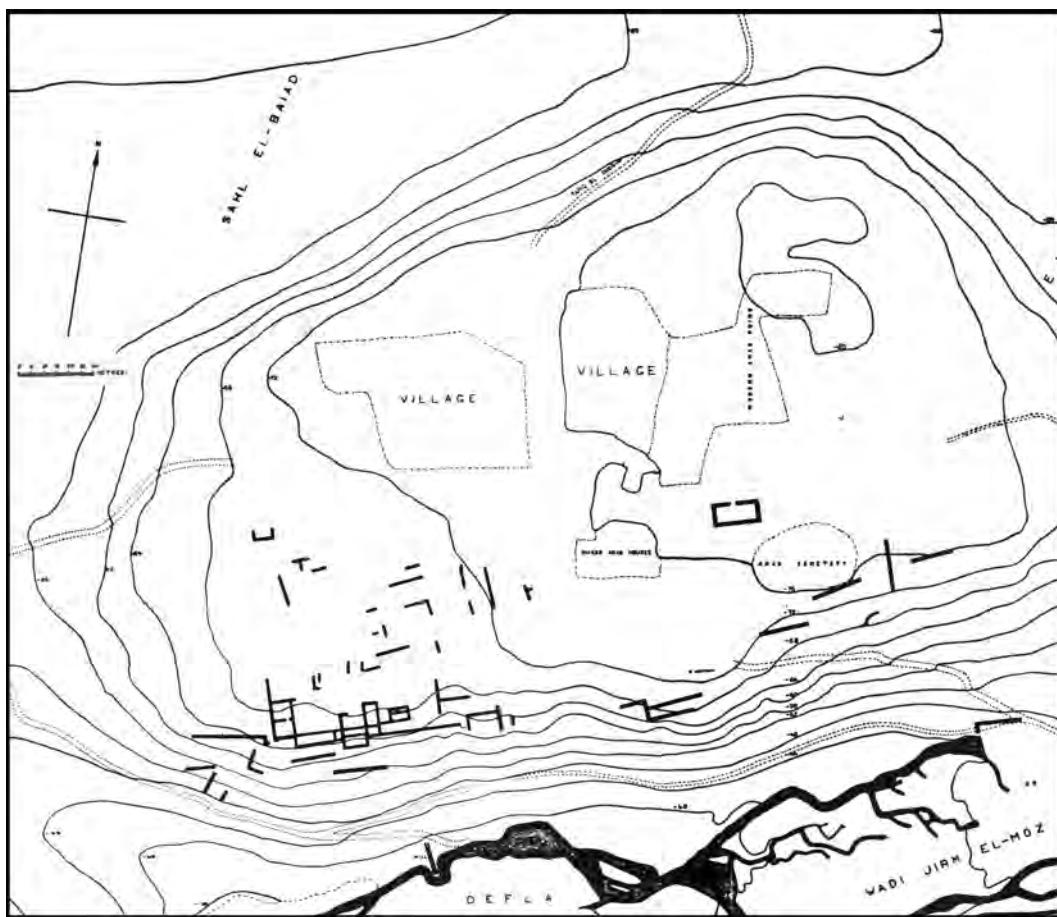


Fig. 2. The main mound at Fahl as depicted in the map of Richmond, "Khirbet Fahil," pl. 5



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Fig. 3. View of the top of the main mound at Faḥl in 1977 (Walmsley)



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Fig. 4. Photograph of a lintel from Richmond described as "reused in abandoned mosque. Summit of Khirbat" (Richmond, "Khirbet Fahil," pl. 3 fig. 2)

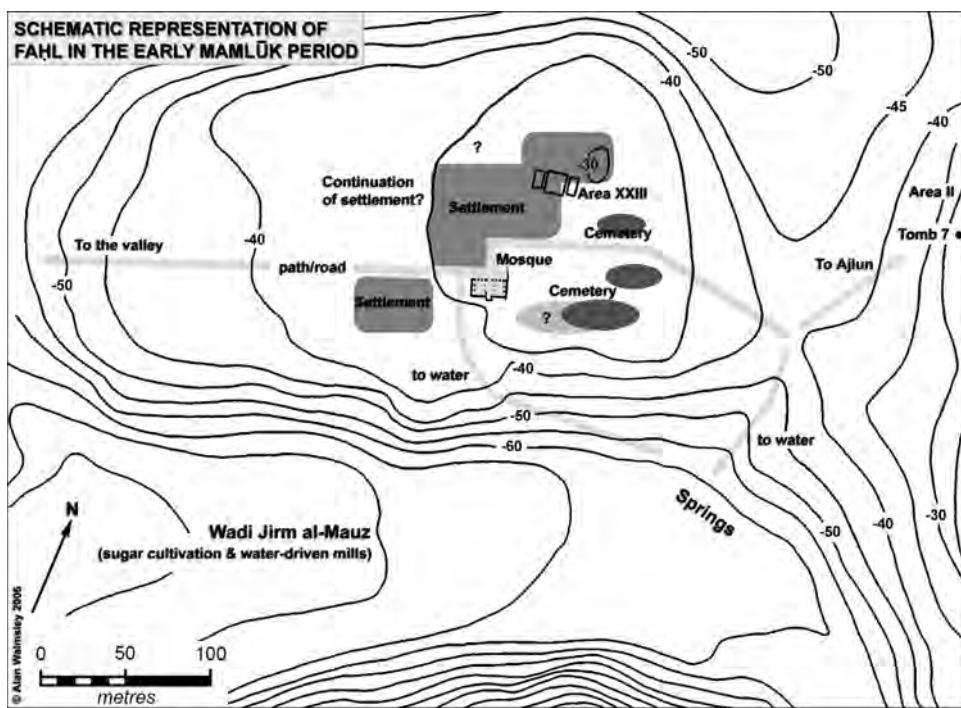


Fig. 5. Reconstructed plan of Faḥl in early Mamluk times



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Fig. 6. View of the Mamluk mosque before excavation (Walmsley 1981)

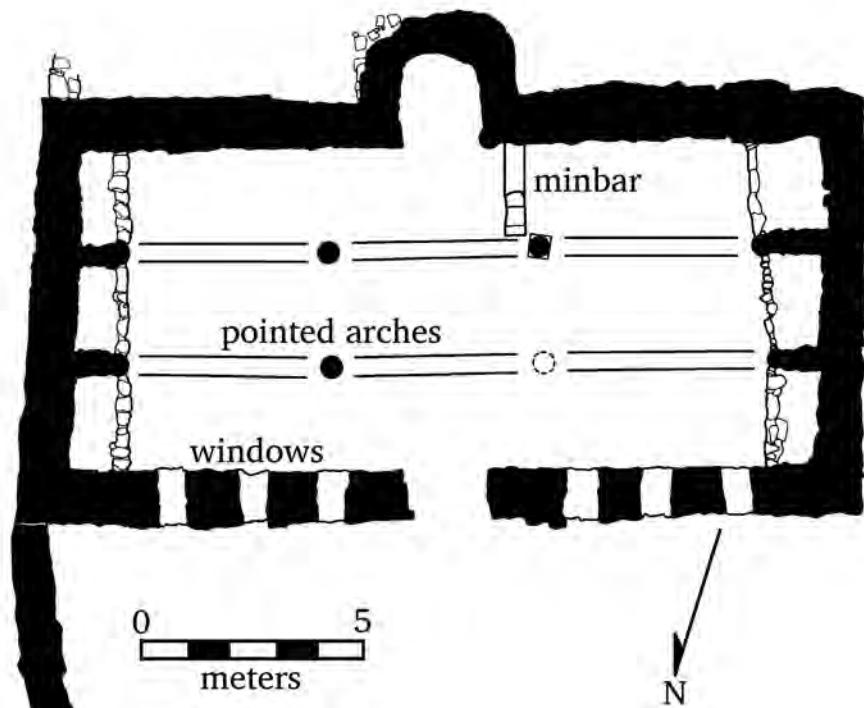


Fig. 7. Plan of the Mamluk mosque of Faḥl (T. Hart)



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Fig. 8. View of the mihrab and minbar following excavation (Pella Project 1982)



Fig. 9. The hall of the Azraq mosque, after 1236, showing the arcades and mihrab. Photograph by T. E. Lawrence, courtesy of The Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, London



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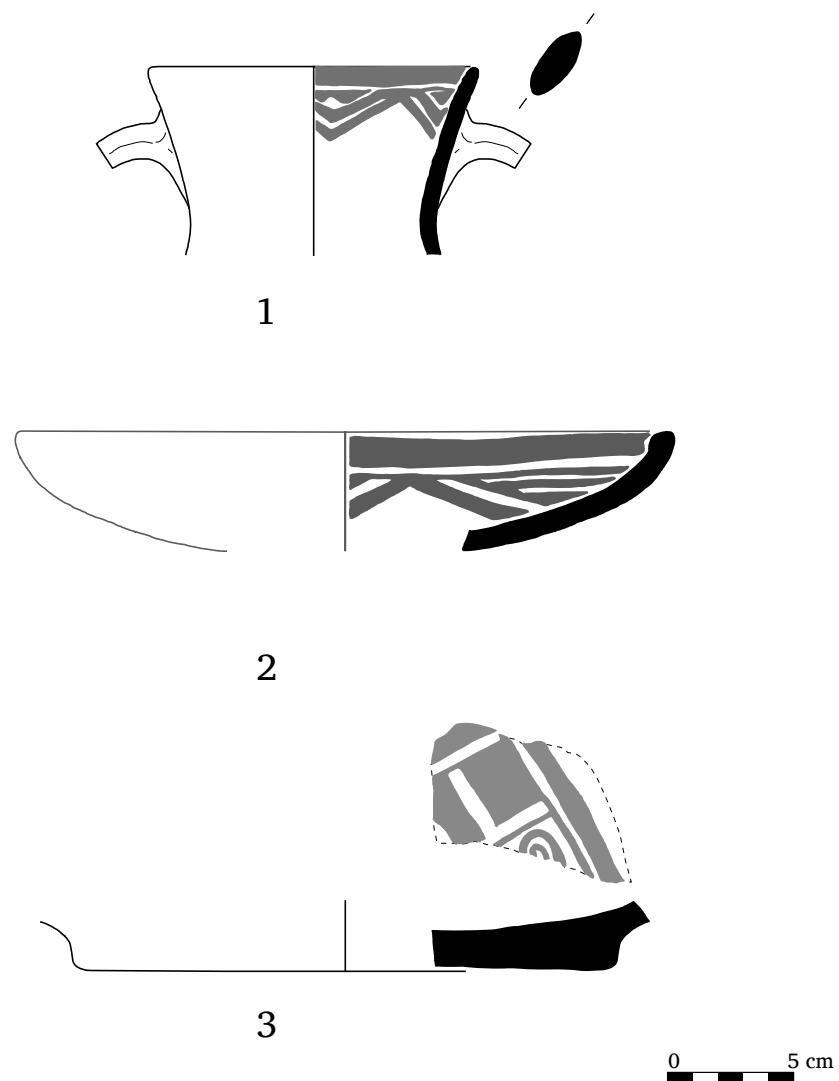


Fig. 10. Hand-Made Geometric Painted Ware: jar (1) and bowls (2–3)



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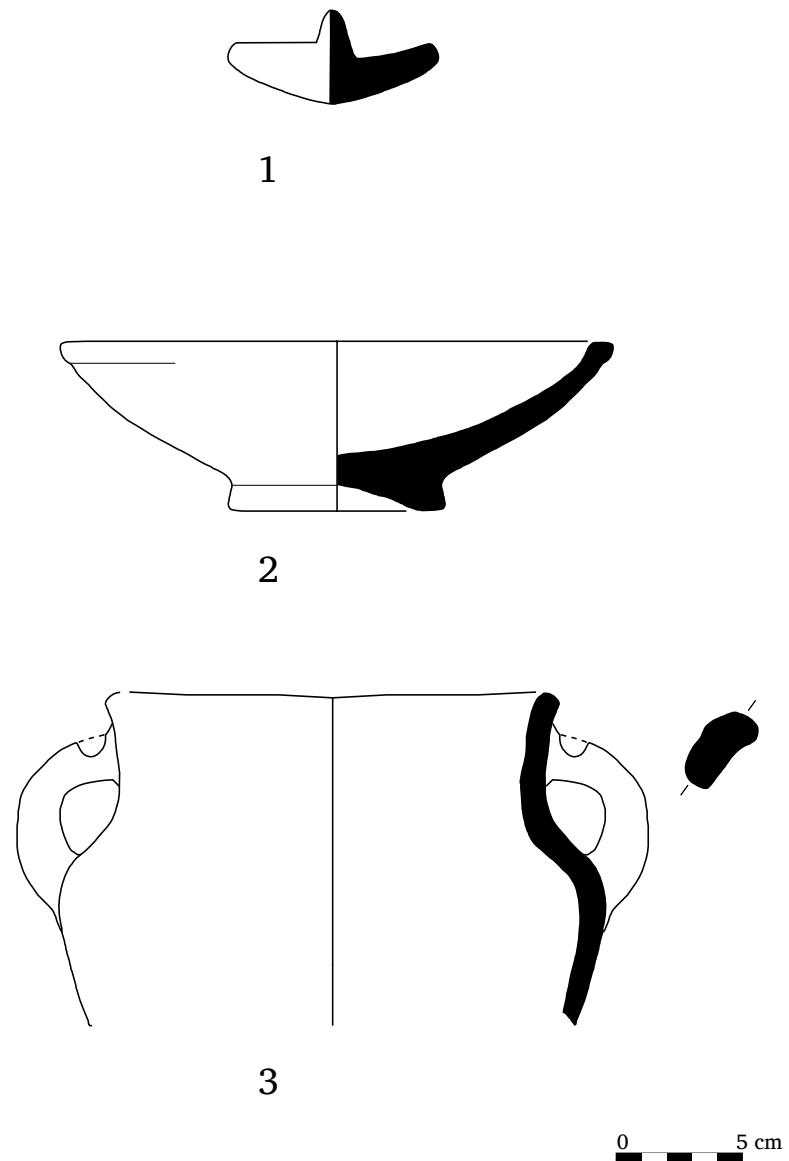


Fig. 11. Hand-Made Coarse Ware: lid (1), bowl (2), and cooking jar (3)



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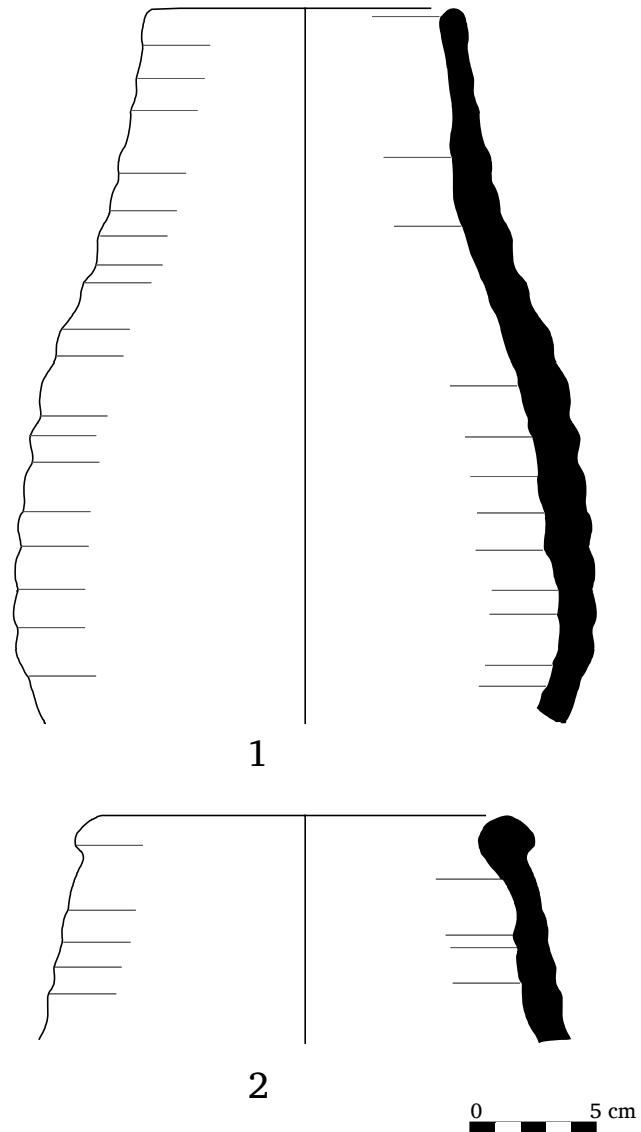


Fig. 12. Sugar Pot Ware: jars (1-2)



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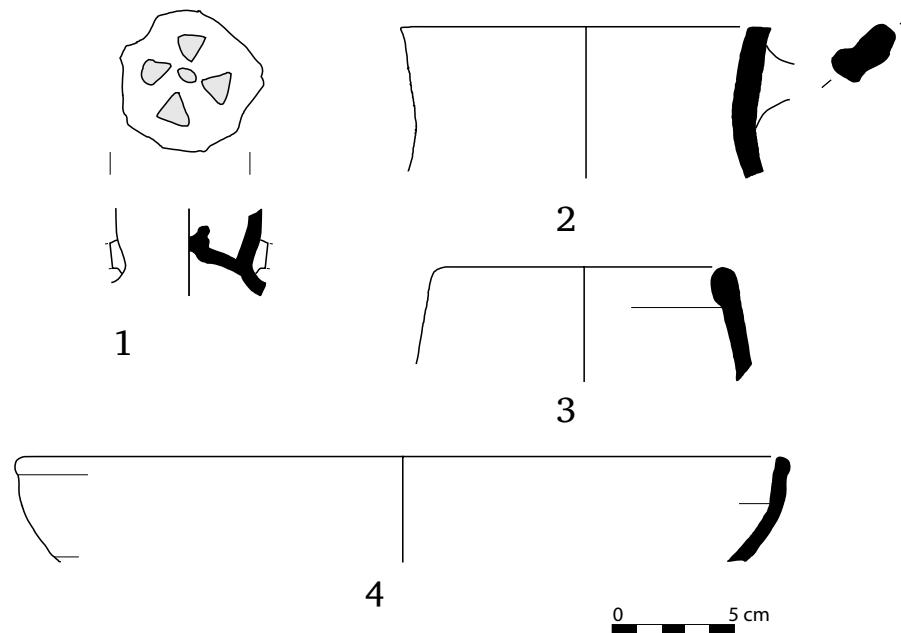


Fig. 13. Plain Unglazed Ware: closed forms (1–3) and bowl (4)

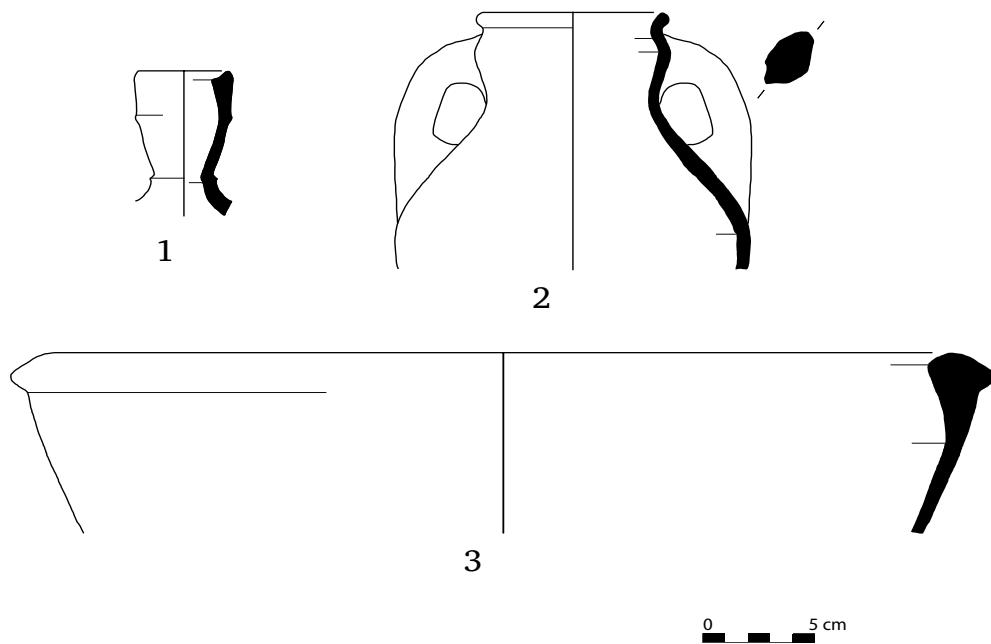


Fig. 14. Red Ware: closed forms (1–2) and basin (3)



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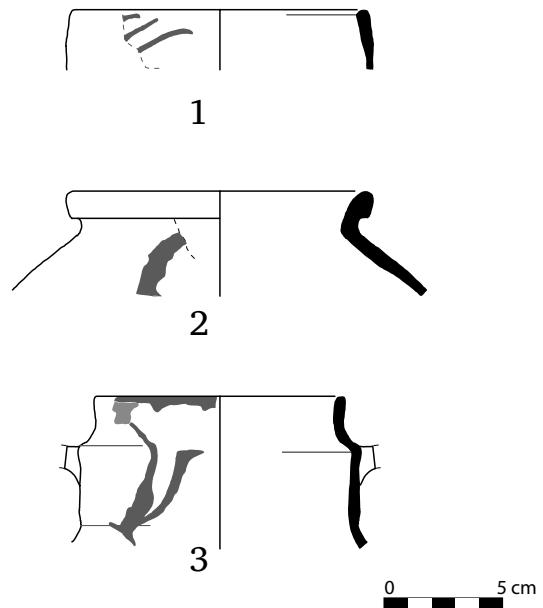


Fig. 15. Thin Painted Ware: jars (1–3)

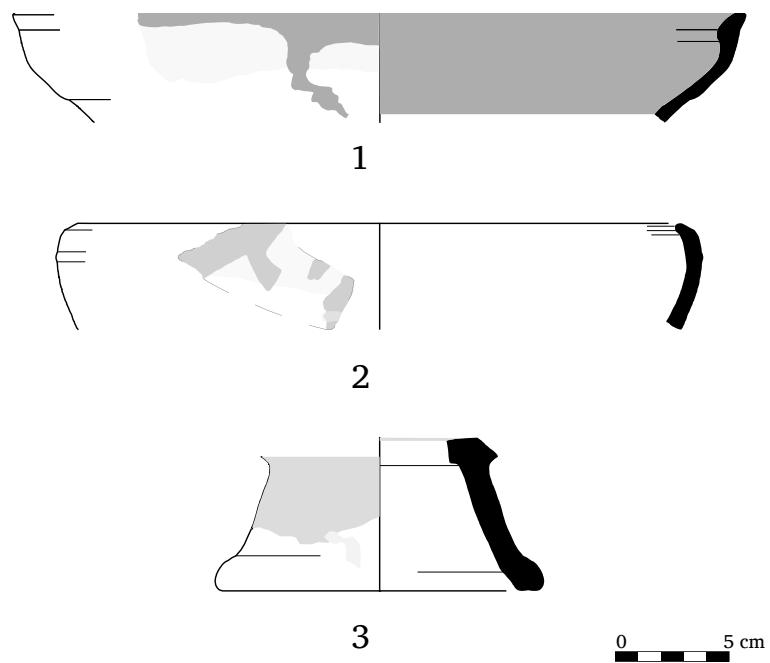


Fig. 16. Monochrome Glazed Ware: bowls (1–3)



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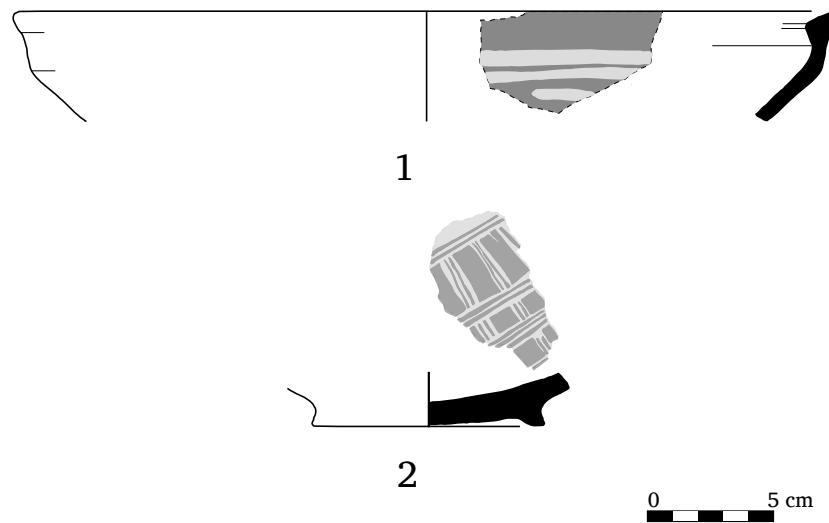


Fig. 17. Slip Painted Ware: bowls (1–2)

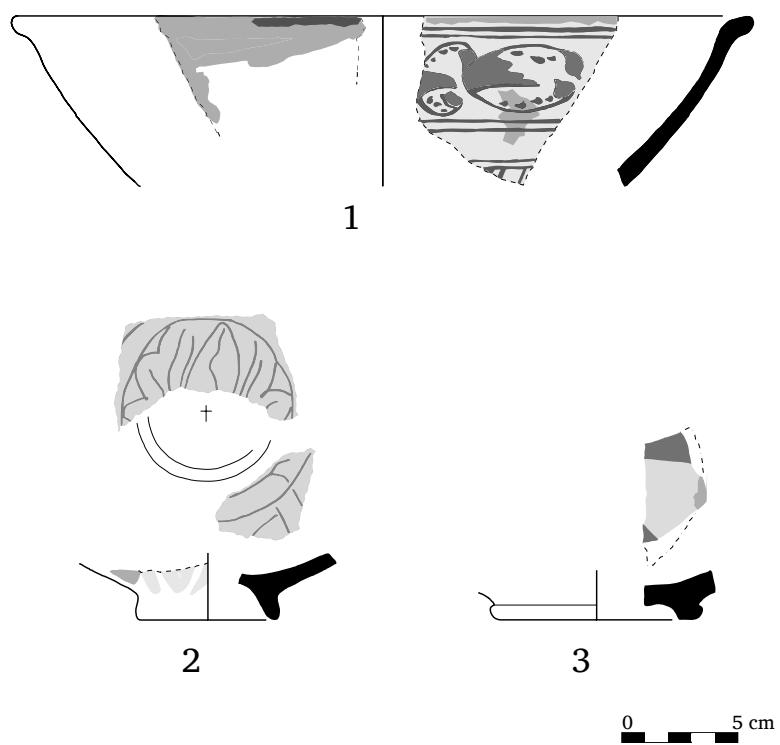


Fig. 18. Glazed Incised Ware: bowls (1–3)



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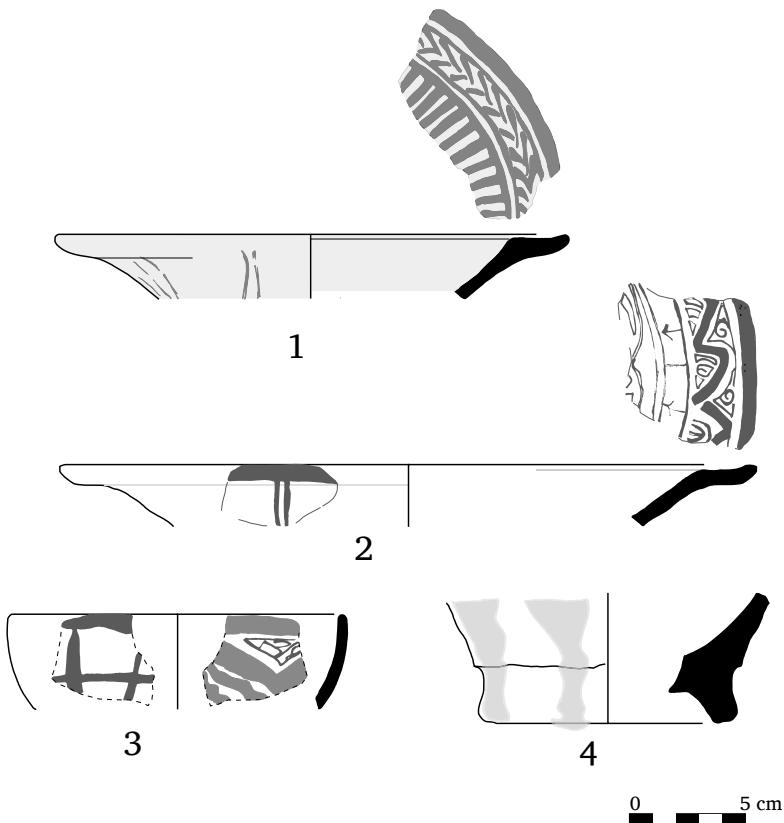


Fig. 19. Stonepaste Ceramic: bowls (1–3) and jar (4)

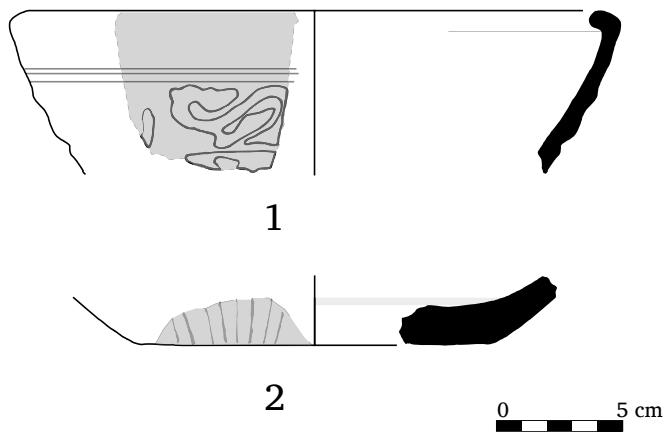


Fig. 20. Relief Molded Glazed Ware: bowls (1–2)



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ALISON MCQUITTY

Khirbat Fāris: Vernacular Architecture on the Karak Plateau, Jordan

For periods when historical documentation is available, it is tempting to ignore the contribution that archaeology can make to a more rounded picture of the past. In addition, the results of archaeological excavation can often raise issues that are absent from the historical record. This is particularly true of marginal subjects in marginal areas. Such a subject is rural vernacular architecture.

During the Early and Middle Islamic periods, written sources indicate a prosperous rural economy on the Karak Plateau supporting a network of villages lasting through to the sixteenth century. This was punctuated by episodes rather than centuries of disruption.¹ One such village was probably Khirbat Fāris, although its earlier name of Tadun does not appear in the histories and geographies of this period.² Nor does it appear in the sixteenth-century Ottoman cadastral records, *daftar-i mufaṣṣal*, when the site was possibly recorded as a *mazrā‘ah*.³ The term *mazrā‘ah* is usually translated as an agricultural area with no settlement that was dependent on a permanently occupied village. However, several authors have suggested that the term should be interpreted as defining the type of agricultural

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This article is based on the results of excavations carried out at Khirbat Fāris 1988–94 under the direction of the author and Dr. Jeremy Johns. I would like to thank Dr. Bethany Walker for her encouragement in submitting this contribution and also Dr. Marcus Milwright, who provided invaluable bibliographic assistance and an unpublished manuscript of his research on Karak and environs in the Middle Islamic period.

¹For a full discussion of the historical accounts of this period and earlier see 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.

²The name is recent: in 1987 when the excavation directors were prospecting for a site to excavate they met several of the landowners from the family of Fāris Majālī, who was buried on the site at the end of the nineteenth century. In response to the question "what is this site called?" the landowners replied "Khirbat Fāris." The name that appears on maps is Khirbat Tadun. Thus archaeology gives legitimacy to land-ownership!

³These surveys are generally accepted as based on the earlier Mamluk fiscal landscape and are used extensively by archaeologists as well as historians for providing social and economic information relevant to the Middle Islamic period. The edition used here is Wolf-Dieter Hütteroth and Kamal Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan and Southern Syria in the Late 16th Century* (Erlangen, 1977).



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produce, that is grain, rather than the type of occupation.⁴ As the description below reveals, this fits well with the evidence from Khirbat Fāris: the architectural remains for the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries are considerable and show parallels to historically testified village settlement.

Historians and geographers of the Mamluk and earlier periods refer to architecture in general and even detail construction methods.⁵ However, their primary interest, and that of their audience, did not lie in detailing provincial domestic housing. The same is true of Mamluk *waqfiyāt*, which, while being a rich source of information about agriculture, climate, and crops, are not concerned with the physicality of the village houses and farmsteads. Such things did not produce revenue.⁶ In the absence of historical records, the evidence from Khirbat Fāris offers an opportunity to examine trends and changes in Middle Islamic rural life. In the following discussion considerable use is made of ethnographic analogy. Although such houses have been noted archaeologically, there is little in the available historical and archaeological literature describing these types in detail. This is despite the wealth of ethnographic information regarding their construction and use—at least in the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries.

Khirbat Fāris is located just west of the King's Highway approximately seventeen kilometers north of the Crusader, Mamluk, and later stronghold of Karak, the Mamluk administrative center of the province⁷ (fig. 1). The site is situated on the northern edge of the Wādī Ibn Ḥammād where the plateau falls steeply away to the wadi below. As an agricultural settlement it was in a favorable position: the vast arable expanses of the plateau still support harvests of wheat, barley, and pulses while the wadi flanks are cultivated with more labor-intensive crops:

⁴This discussion relates to the later Ottoman period but the issues raised may be relevant for this preceding period. See Abdul-Karem Rafeq, "Land Tenure Problems and Their Social Impact in Syria around the Middle of the Nineteenth Century," in *Land Tenure and Social Transformations in the Middle East*, ed. Tarif Khalidi (Beirut, 1984), 371–96; Linda Schilcher, "The Grain Economy of Late Ottoman Syria and the Issue of Large-Scale Commercialization," in *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East*, ed. Çagler Keyder and Faruk Tabak (Albany, 1991), 173–228.

⁵E.g., al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāṣīm fī Ma'rīfat al-Aqālīm*, trans. André Miquel as *La meilleure répartition pour la connaissance des provinces* (Damascus, 1963), 227. Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (London, 1958), 2:357–63. See Muhammad Muhammad Amīn and Laila 'Ali Ibrahim, *Architectural Terms in Mamluk Documents (648–923H/1250–1517M)* (Cairo, 1990), for the rich vocabulary used in these descriptions. However, this vocabulary is focused on Egyptian documents.

⁶Bethany J. Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Transjordan: a 'Boom and Bust' Economy," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 2 (2004): 119–47.

⁷Muhammad 'Adnān Bakhīt, *Das Königreich von al-Karak in der mamlukischen Zeit* (Berlin, 1992).



nowadays tomatoes and in the past, according to al-Muqaddasī, almonds, fruit trees, and grapes.⁸ The botanical remains from the excavation show a preponderance of grain, both wheat and barley, and also pulses, figs, olives, and grapes. From the thirteenth century onwards a few exotic crops such as cotton, sorghum, watermelon, pistachio, and citrus fruits start to appear. These required irrigation and were probably grown in the Jordan Valley although there is also evidence for more local irrigation.⁹ This landscape is currently shared with semi-nomads and Bedouin who practise animal husbandry. Animal husbandry is also a very important part of the mixed farming economy of village communities. The excavated faunal remains reflect this with an overwhelming majority coming from sheep and goat with a significant amount of cattle bones in later periods.¹⁰ In order to gain subsistence or even surplus from a marginal area such as the Karak Plateau, this would undoubtedly have been the case in the past.¹¹ Indeed, some of the buildings at Khirbat Fāris, e.g., the nineteenth century "barns," are interpreted as the structures of semi-nomadic communities rather than settled village communities. Other settlements of similar appearance, namely scattered, ruined stone structures, and surface pottery scatters of the distinctive thirteenth/fourteenth-century hand-made pottery (fig. 2) share the same location and one can talk of a pattern of these settlements at five-kilometer intervals fringing the western edge of the Karak Plateau.

The excavations have shown that the site has been occupied for over 4,000 years, and it may indeed have an earlier origin. However, the main research concentration has been on the post-first century settlement while this article focuses particularly on the twelfth–sixteenth-century architectural and material remains. Calendar dates are chosen over historical terminology: vernacular architecture and functional artifacts are inherently conservative, and distinctions in their typology do not fall conveniently into dynastic divisions.¹² Before excavation started two

⁸Al-Muqaddasī, trans. Miquel, *La meilleure répartition*, 211.

⁹Chantelle Hoppé, "A Thousand Years of Farming: Agricultural Practices from the Byzantine to Early Ottoman Period at Khirbet Faris, the Kerak Plateau, Jordan" (Ph.D. diss., University of Sheffield, 1999). M. P. Charles and C. F. Hoppé, "The Archaeobotanical Remains," in "Mamluk Khirbat Faris," *ARAM* 9–10 (1997–98): 181–226.

¹⁰Lisa Yeomans, "The Mammalian and Bird Bone from Khirbat Faris," unpublished archive report.

¹¹The Faris Project includes as one of its aims the characterization of this complex land-use from the Late Antique period onwards. Recent research focused more directly on the Middle Islamic period is reported in Alexandrine Guérin, "Architecture villageoise et tribu nomade: Définition d'un peuplement dans le Lağā à la période islamique (Syrie méridionale)," *Berytus* 44 (1999–2000): 79–108.

¹²For further discussion of this topic see A. McQuitty, "The Rural Landscape of Jordan in the Seventh–Nineteenth Centuries AD: the Kerak Plateau," *Antiquity* 79 (2005): 327–38.



nineteenth-century barns (fig. 3), previously termed Mamluk farmsteads,¹³ a first to sixth-century vaulted structure, and Fāris' tomb were visible (fig. 4).

Fāris Majālī's grave seems to have been placed on top of an earlier Muslim shrine. In 1851 the French traveller de Saulcy stopped at Khirbat Fāris/Tadun and recorded a structure sounding remarkably akin to the remains surviving on the site.¹⁴ He described a square building with walls standing two meters high and approached by steps. He noted a massive lintel into which the formula *bismillāh* was scratched; this lintel still survives. The building was obviously already ruined but it does not sound as if the small "tower" associated today with Fāris Majālī's grave had been erected on these ruins. De Saulcy suggests that while at first it was probably a pagan temple it was converted to a Christian church and then to a mosque. Here it is suggested that the structure was in fact the domed shrine of a *walī* or local holy man. Often such shrines became the focus for cemeteries. The obviously visible graves at Khirbat Fāris are those of the descendants of Fāris Majālī around whose tomb they congregate but there are also traces of earlier examples. There was no folk-memory of an earlier shrine and, if so, for whom it had been built. Equally, without excavation it is impossible to give a date to the structure. However, as part of the push to recover the Islamic character of the region following the Crusader interregnum, there was a burgeoning of shrine construction in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which may be the construction date for this shrine.¹⁵

Excavations revealed several houses of various forms. A nucleus of barrel-vaulted rooms surrounding a central courtyard and connected to the settlement beyond by winding alleys was uncovered at the western edge of the site (fig. 5). The date of this complex appears to be thirteenth–sixteenth centuries based on coin, ceramic, and stratigraphic evidence. It is very likely that the complex continued to be used into the seventeenth century.¹⁶ In addition, several early twentieth-century examples of such buildings were recorded at Humūd, a village thirteen kilometers east of Khirbat Fāris; their construction informs the following discussion. The houses in Humūd were built by people from Karak rather than the "villagers"

¹³Udo F. C. Worschech, *Northwest Ard el-Kerak 1983 and 1984: A Preliminary Report* (Munich, 1985).

¹⁴Félicien de Saulcy, *Voyage autour de la mer Morte et dans les terres bibliques: exécuté de décembre 1850 à avril 1851* (Paris, 1853).

¹⁵Alan Walmsley, "Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Jordan and the Crusader Interlude," in *The Archaeology of Jordan*, ed. Burton MacDonald, Russell Adams, and Piotr Bienkowski (Sheffield, 2001), 533.

¹⁶Given the lack of historical records referring specifically to Khirbat Fāris and a continuing lack of knowledge concerning seventeenth-century village ceramics on the Karak Plateau, it is hard to be more precise.



themselves. In fact these houses were used as part of the cycle of permanent resettlement of the land by Christian tribes in the nineteenth century. One was originally used as a *madāfah* (guest-house) for the tribe when they came from Karak with their flocks on a seasonal basis, in spring and late summer. The flocks were stabled in nearby caves. In the spring grain was planted and the flocks grazed on the spring growth while in late summer the same grain was harvested and the flocks grazed on the stubble. Ultimately the seasonal settlement became a permanent settlement in the early twentieth century.¹⁷

The individual buildings at Khirbat Fāris and Ḥumūd are characterized by their relatively small dimensions (average: internal measurements 4.00x3.00 meters and height 2.00 meters) and massive side-walls (average: 1.00 meter thick) which either re-use earlier walls or are constructed from two skins of stones with an in-fill of rubble and mud mortar. The ground plan is often trapezoidal with the wider end being at the entrance. The entrance-wall was not bonded to the vault itself, and in the Ḥumūd examples a rectangular antechamber roofed with reeds and branches marked the entrance. The wall stones are roughly shaped and squared although those for the vault itself are singularly shaped, almost like (European!) loaves of bread. These show no signs of working. Huge amounts of mortar were used to secure the vault which was built over a form of sacks that were later removed. The end walls, being non-weight-bearing, are less substantial. One example from Khirbat Fāris featured an end wall that was merely slapped-up against a pre-existing earth "wall." The roof was flat and consisted of substantial layers of earth and brushwood nearly a meter thick, sealed by a final layer of mud-plaster. In short, the construction seems to have been haphazard. Traces of a much larger and longer barrel-vaulted building were detected on the surface just to the east of the excavated area. A cistern was excavated nearby and its contents of a fine fourteenth-century marvered glass bowl (fig. 6), and several wheel-made water jugs or *ibrīq*, are interpreted as being associated with this larger barrel-vault.¹⁸

Parallels to this type of architecture are mainly confined to Jordan. At Ḥisbān a residential complex of similar-sized barrel-vaulted structures including a *hammām* and *īwān* surrounding a central courtyard has been dated to the fourteenth century.¹⁹ This complex is located on the summit of the citadel of Ḥisbān. Adjacent to this suite of rooms is a long barrel-vaulted structure that is interpreted as being the

¹⁷Pierre Medebielle, *Madaba et son histoire chrétienne* (Jerusalem, 1987), 301.

¹⁸M. A. Sarley Pontin, "The Pottery," and M. Khoury, "The Glass," in "Mamluk Khirbat Faris," 181–226.

¹⁹Bethany 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): 251.



storeroom of the governor's residence.²⁰ In the fourteenth century Ḥisbān had been made administrative capital of the Balqā'.²¹ The Ḥisbān examples offer extremely close parallels to Khirbat Fāris in terms of construction details. In earlier excavation reports there are references to "many low-ceilinged vaults" and a vaulted room with plastered *masṭabah* and window; this is mirrored at Khirbat Fāris²² (fig. 7). The nature of the material found in the storeroom associated with this complex is remarkable, including "serving vessels monumental in size and bearing lengthy dedicatory inscriptions to unnamed amirs" and lamps, including fragments of a fine glass mosque lamp. This and the similarities of the plan to that of al-Nāṣir Muhammad's palace inside Karak castle have led the excavators to conclude that the barrel-vaulted complex was the residence of the governor of the Balqā'.²³ The architecture is strikingly similar to Khirbat Fāris; the difference lies in the location of the complex within the site, the nature of the associated material, and the general historical background.

Parallels for the smaller barrel-vaulted buildings also come from further afield. A thirteenth-fourteenth-century example from Horvat Berechot in the Hebron hills has been excavated.²⁴ Many of the houses surrounding the better-known town and churches of Umm al-Raṣaṣ on the Mādabah Plains are of this type but are not arranged around courtyards. These are probably nineteenth century in date. A nearly complete barrel-vaulted structure containing late Ottoman artifacts was uncovered at Ra's al-Qabub in northern Jordan.²⁵ Such barrel-vaulted houses were a common sight in Jordanian and Palestinian villages of the recent past, when they were used as animal stables or oven-houses.²⁶ At the present state of knowledge it would appear that such barrel-vaulted houses fall within the late thirteenth–mid-twentieth-century date-range and are distributed throughout Jordan and the hills of Palestine. Needless to say, this distribution probably has more to do with our state of knowledge than past reality.

At Khirbat Fāris, this architecture is totally different from that of the preceding periods. At the beginning of the twelfth century new houses were built using but modifying the surviving structures of the sixth century. Where the stone roof-rafters

²⁰Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Transjordan," 133.

²¹Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilad al-Sham," 251.

²²Phyllis A. Bird in *Heshbon 1968*, ed. Roger S. Boraas and Siegrief H. Horn (Berrien Springs, 1969), 200–2.

²³Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Transjordan," 132.

²⁴Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Palestinian Dwelling* (Jerusalem, 1995), 43–44.

²⁵Edward B. Banning et al., "Wadi Ziqlab Project 1987: A Preliminary Report," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 33 (1989): 54.

²⁶Ammar Khammash, *Notes on Village Architecture in Jordan* (Lafayette, LA, 1986), 43.



were missing, wooden beams were used to support the flat roof. However, these houses differed in detail from their antecedents. Here the newly-built arches spring from arch-walls, effectively acting as buttresses, or from the base of the house-wall rather than being bonded *into* the house-wall. The space between the arch-walls is used for *rawīyāt*/grain-bins²⁷ for storing the household's harvest. The *rawīyah* was filled through a hole in the roof and taken out through a hole at the base. Apart from the grain-bins there are generally few built-in features, mainly various shaped niches recessed into the thick walls. The entrance is almost always parallel to the arches. This, the so-called "Transverse-Arch House," was also the most common rural house throughout Jordan during the nineteenth and early twentieth century²⁸ (fig. 9).

As pointed out in the introduction, during the periods under discussion, twelfth–sixteenth centuries, the Karak Plateau was known as a fertile and arable land scattered with villages. The area was also well-known for its livestock, including sheep, goats, cattle, camels, and horses, that were raised by the Bedouin tribes and sold to the governments of the time for use by their armies. In particular, the Mamluk state prized the horses of the *bādiyah* tribes.²⁹ Within the time-frame under consideration there was a noticeable change in the type of architecture seen in one of these villages, Khirbat Fāris. What was the impetus behind these startlingly different types of construction? It is the direct interest of the Mamluk state that seems to coincide with the observed change in architecture.³⁰

One possible effect of this that can be seen in the architecture is the changing provision for storage of agricultural produce.³¹ In the earlier twelfth-century "Transverse-Arch House," agricultural storage seems to have been carried out at the household level within each dwelling-unit. By contrast, the later barrel-vaulted houses at Khirbat Fāris exhibited no provision for agricultural storage and were used simply for residence. Storage of crops may have occurred off-site in caves and cisterns as has been suggested for earlier periods and occurred later when produce was hidden from Ottoman tax-collectors.³² Storage may have been centralized on a community level and have taken place in large barrel-vaulted

²⁷*Rawīyah* is a vernacular term in use in Jordan and Palestine.

²⁸McQuitty, "The Rural Landscape of Jordan."

²⁹Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: the Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382* (Beckenham, 1986), 115.

³⁰See Walker for detailing of this investment.

³¹For further discussion of this topic see Ruba Kana'an and Alison McQuitty, "The Architecture of al-Qasr on the Kerak Plateau: an Essay in the Chronology of Vernacular Architecture," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 126 (1994): 127–51.

³²Øystein LaBianca, *Sedentarization and Nomadization* (Berrien Springs, 1990), 194.



structures like the one still buried at Khirbat Fāris or excavated as the "governor's storeroom" at Hisbān. Alternatively taxation was direct and was taken in kind at the threshing-floor: there was little need for large-scale storage.

Various reasons for this architectural change can be suggested. It is tempting to assume that as in the case of early twentieth-century Ḥumūd, these barrel-vaulted houses represent the process of sedentarization. More state investment was put into agriculture in the atmosphere of increased security that the Mamluks offered after the turmoil of the Crusader interregnum. Communities were encouraged "to settle down" in villages. However, as both historical records and archaeology have shown, there were rural settlements on the Karak Plateau in the centuries immediately before the Mamluks stamped their authority on the region. A more nuanced interpretation may be that a change in the agricultural administration of the landscape resulted in a change in the control of the surplus produce. What had once been for the family and tribe was now for the state.



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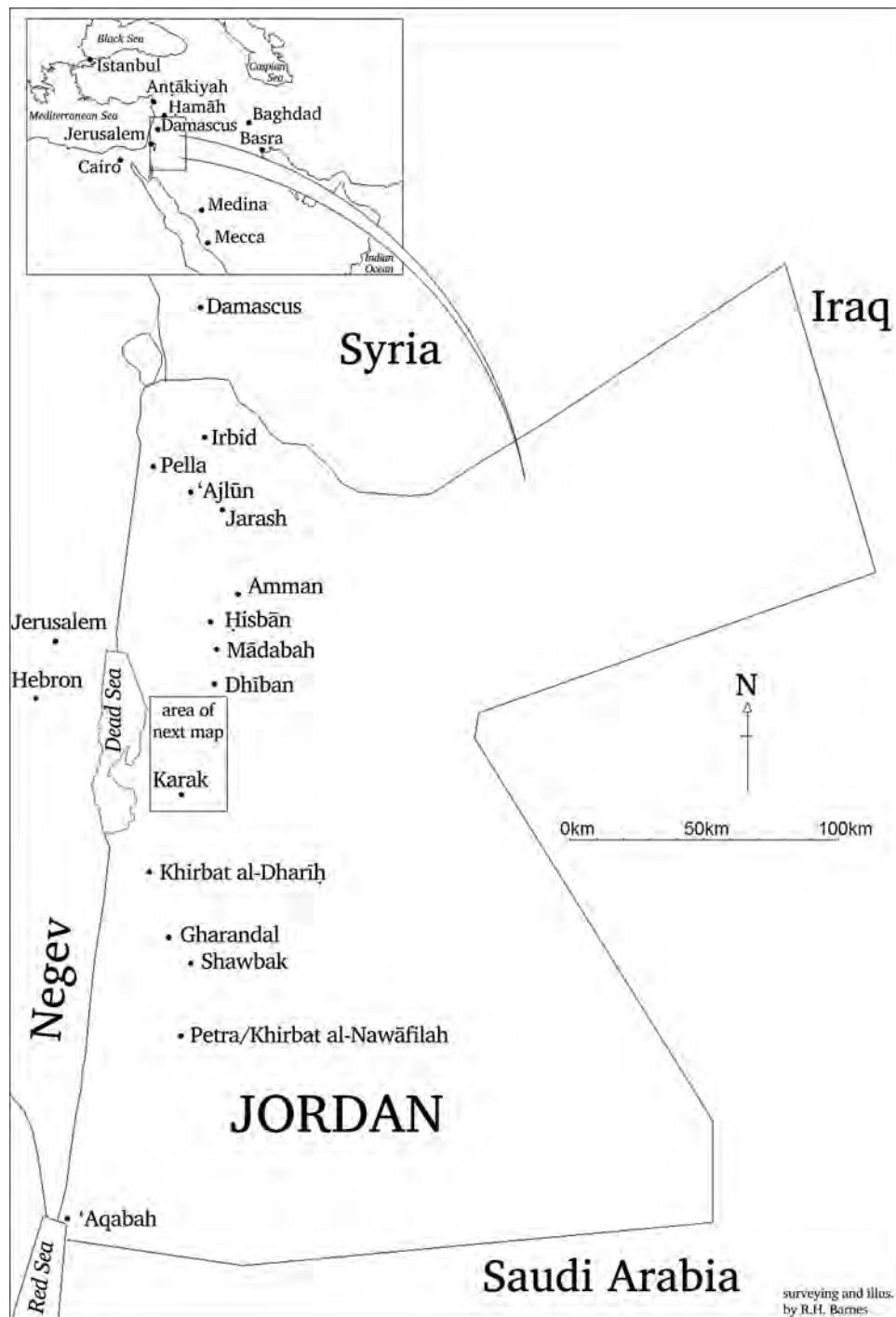


Fig. 1a. Map to show location of Khirbat Fāris



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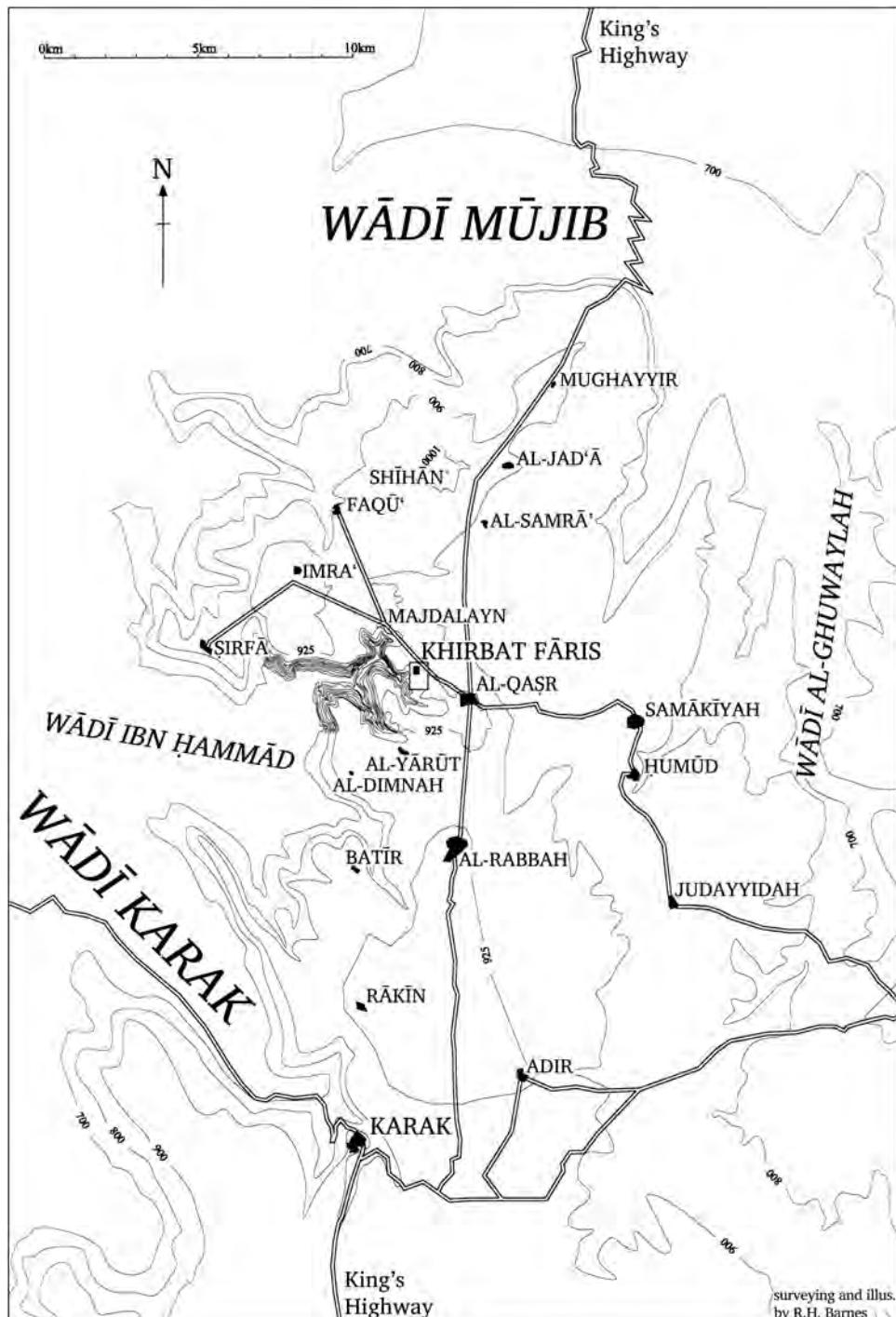


Fig. 1b. Map to show location of Khirbat Fāris



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Fig. 2. Fourteenth-century hand-made pottery from Khirbat Fāris



Fig. 3. Nineteenth-century "barn" at Khirbat Fāris



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Fig. 4. View to show possible shrine on right on which Fāris' tomb, the small tower, is constructed. The tomb on the left belongs to Shilash, Fāris' son.



Fig. 5. View of complex of barrel-vaulted houses at Khirbat Fāris



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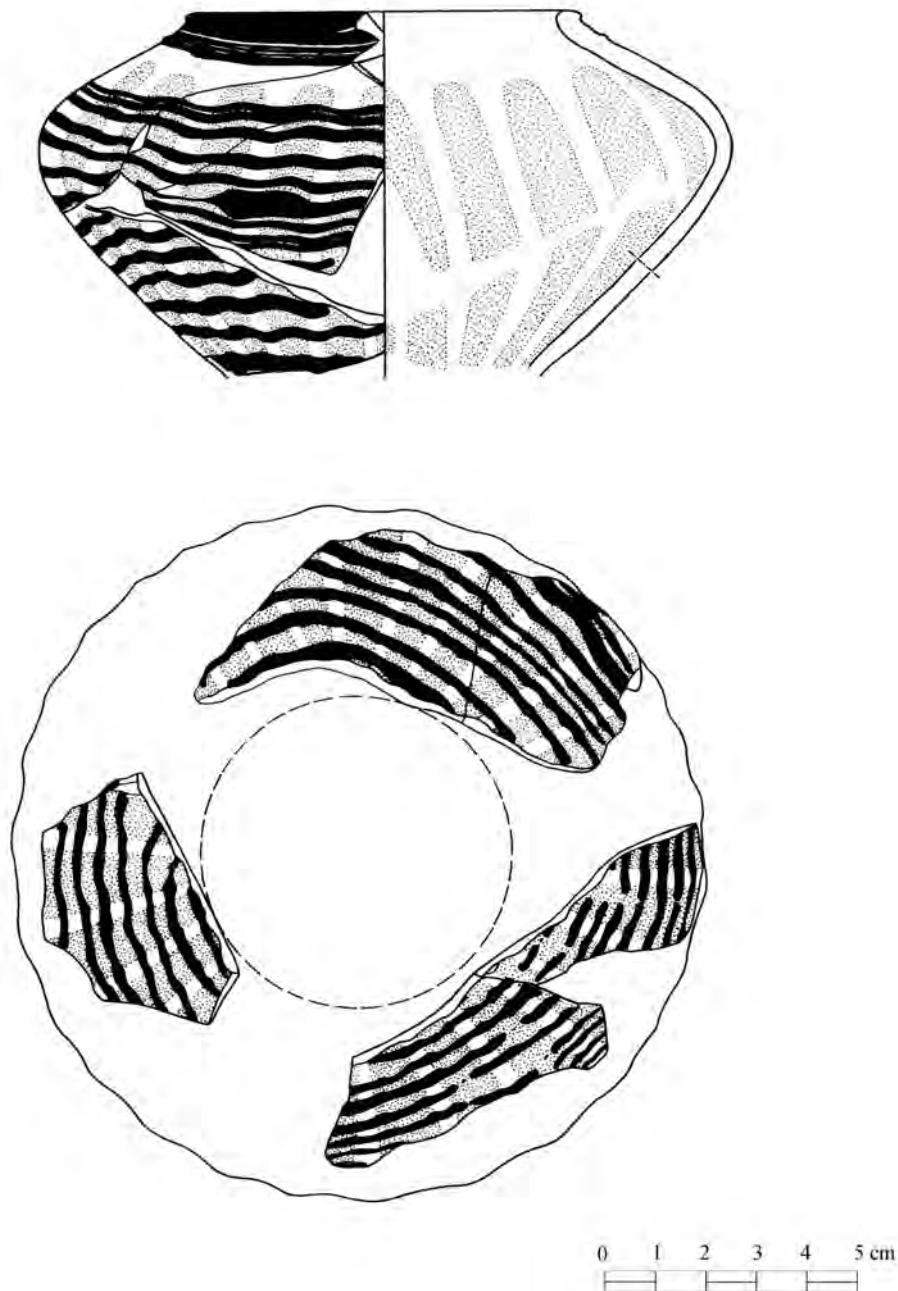


Fig. 6. A fourteenth-century marvered glass bowl



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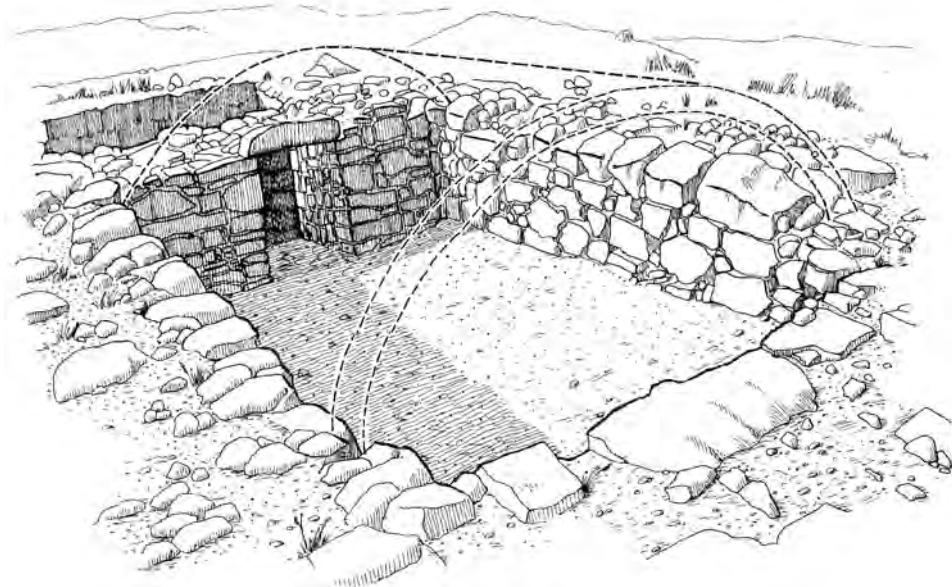


Fig. 7. A reconstruction drawing of one of the barrel-vaulted houses



Fig. 8. *Rawiyat* in a nineteenth-century house



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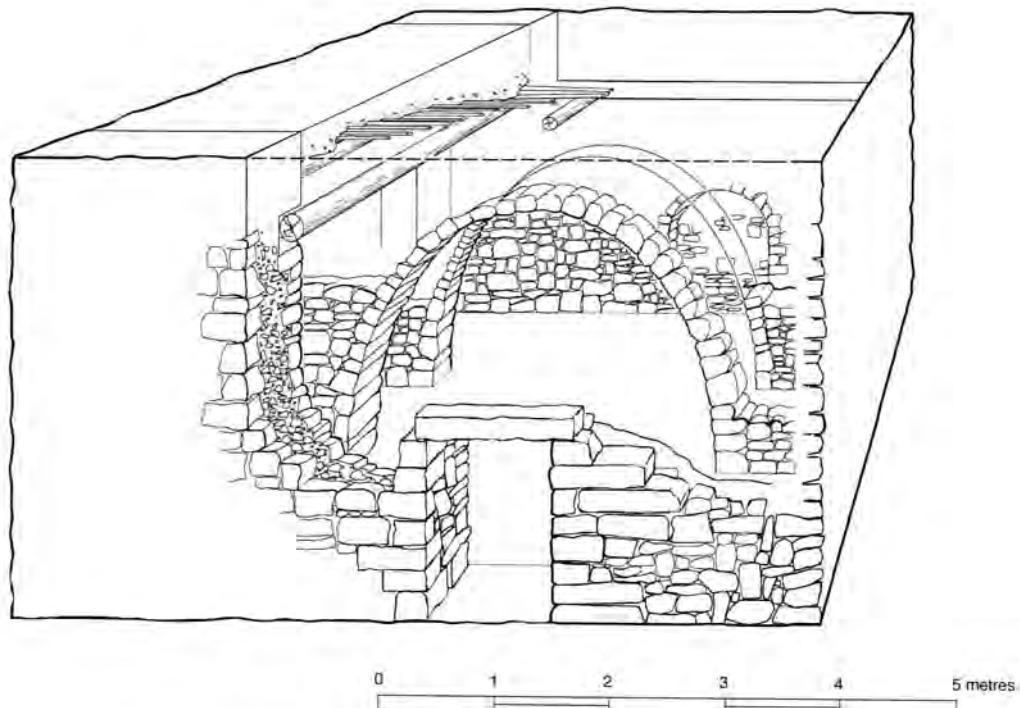


Fig. 9. A reconstruction drawing of a "Transverse-Arch House"



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Sowing the Seeds of Rural Decline?: Agriculture as an Economic Barometer for Late Mamluk Jordan

The 1995 publication of Amalia Levanoni's *A Turning Point in Mamluk History* challenged historians of the Mamluk period to define and account for the political, social, and economic shifts that accompanied the Bahri-Burji transition. The ten years since have produced a growing corpus of studies on what has come to be known as "Mamluk decline"; this scholarship has been wide-ranging, making use of a variety of written (chronicles and, recently, *waqfiyāt*) and art historical (minor objects and archaeology) sources. The recent interest in rural endowments (*waqf*) illustrates well the new and exciting directions research on this topic has taken. An analysis of rural properties and proprietorship has revealed nuanced developments in social relations, in addition to political structure and economics, and suggests that more complex processes were at work than a model of "decline" can describe. Land was the basis of political, economic, and social relations in the Middle Ages. Significant shifts, then, in the way land was controlled, whether through usufruct or full ownership on one level, or dictating cropping strategies on another, resulted in what we now consider "transformations" of Egyptian society, a more neutral assessment of the fifteenth century than was possible ten years ago.

Such is the perspective of the state. What is missing, however, from such debates are the voices of the peasants themselves. What impact did these transformations have on the countryside, on village life, on rural markets, and on the peasantry that did not directly participate in political decision-making? Considering the political, economic, and social shifts of the period from the vantage point of the non-Egyptian provinces has the benefits of some degree of political distance; analysis of different, but complementary, sources of data; and demographic and economic diversity that one does not get from a reading of Egyptian written sources alone.

Today's Jordan, which the Mamluks administered as the Province of Karak and the southernmost districts of Damascus Province, provides us with a unique opportunity to analyze state-peasant relations and reassess the developments of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. An intense and broad-based investment by Cairo in Jordanian agriculture through most of the fourteenth century suggests a concern for long-term objectives. Jordan was, for Cairo, the physical

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communications corridor to Syria, a mediator in political relations with the Syrian amirs, and a "cash cow," so to speak, through exploitation of its agricultural markets.¹ Its decline in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, is discernible on many levels: villages are abandoned, agricultural production is reduced, particular industries collapse (such as sugar production), and there are marked demographic losses. Traditionally, historians and archaeologists (who have been gradually coordinating their research efforts) have identified the factors behind these developments as local amiral rebellions;² natural and demographic disasters, such as drought, earthquakes, and plague;³ overt withdrawal of state monies;⁴ and climatic change.⁵ Such factors alone betray a provincial viewpoint and differ in emphasis from Egyptian-based scholarship, which emphasizes political and economic developments in the capital and is largely the result of different historiographies. Significantly, concurrent with these events were the large-scale purchase of rural lands from the Bayt al-Māl and their endowment as *waqf* by sultans, phenomena documented a good fifty years earlier than in Egypt that will be discussed in detail below.

This article explores the transformations of the Jordanian countryside in the fifteenth century in terms of these rural *awqāf*, settlement and demographic shifts, and traditional and state-sponsored planting strategies, and considers them in relation to the larger political and economic challenges of the late Mamluk period. In addition, the long-term environmental impact of Jordanian and Mamluk land management practices will also be considered. The agricultural regime of Jordan

¹Bethany J. Walker, "Mamluk Investment in the Transjordan: A 'Boom and Bust' Economy," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 2 (2004): 119–47.

²Shawkat R. Hujjah, *Al-Tārīkh al-Siyāsī li-Minṭaqat Sharq al-Urdun (min Janūb al-Shām) fī 'Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālik al-Thāniyah* (Irbid, 2002).

³Yūsuf Ghawānimah, "Al-Tā'ūn wa-al-Jafāf wa-Atharuhumā 'alā al-Bī'ah fī Janūb al-Shām (al-Urdun wa-Filasṭīn) fī al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 315–22.

⁴Bethany J. Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilād al-Shām in the Eighth/Fourteenth Century: The Case of Ḥisbān," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62, no. 4 (2003): 241–61; idem, "Mamluk Investment in the Transjordan."

⁵Nicole Shehadeh, "The Climate of Jordan in the Past and Present," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 25–28; A. M. Frumkin, M. Margaritz, I. Carmi, and I. Zak, "The Holocene Climatic Record of the Salt Caves of Mount Sodom, Israel," *The Holocene* 1, no. 3 (1991): 181–200; Christopher Heim, Norbert R. Nowaczyk, and Jörg F. W. Negendank, "Near East Desertification: Evidence from the Dead Sea," *Naturwissenschaften* 84 (1997): 398–401; Bernhard Lucke, Michael Schmidt, Ziad al-Saad, Oliver Bens, and Reinhard F. Hüttl, "The Abandonment of the Decapolis Region in Northern Jordan—Forced by Environmental Change?" *Quaternary International* 135, no. 1 (2005): 65–82.



is, thus, used as a barometer for transformations of late Mamluk society in southern Bilād al-Shām.

REVIEW OF SOURCES

Jordanian historiography for the late Mamluk period relies on a set of sources not generally consulted by other Mamluk scholars. Because the Ottomans continued Mamluk administrative practices here until the mid-sixteenth century, when the first large-scale censuses were taken in the region, early Ottoman tax registers (*defters*) are an excellent, and widely used, source for late Mamluk economics, agriculture, land use, and demographics in Jordan.⁶ While these registers are far from complete, they do present a wide range of data that includes population estimates (numbers of Muslim and non-Muslim households/*khāneh* and "bachelors"/*mufrad*); status of rural property defined by degree of permanent settlement and cultivation (permanently settled village/*qaryah*, cultivated plot isolated from a settlement/*mazrā'ah*, untaxed ruins/*kharāb*, small plot of cultivated land/*qit'ah*); ownership or usufruct status (private estate of the sultan or provincial amir/*khāṣṣ*, amir as tax recipient/*timār* or *zi'āmat*, charitable or family endowment/*waqf*); estimated annual revenues, in *akches* (the Ottomans' smallest silver coin), with taxes on each crop, livestock, and industry type specified; and, occasionally, incidental information, such as how the estate was acquired and access to water. *Awqāf* figure prominently in these registers, and many of them are Mamluk in date. For this reason, scholarship on late Mamluk Jordan has long been steeped in *waqf* studies.

The Ottomans levied the '*ushr* tax on *awqāf*, itemizing them individually as sources of revenue, along with crops, livestock, and industries. All endowed properties, including those supporting most mosques and madrasahs, were subject to taxation, with the exception of properties financing al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharafayn, the Khalīl al-Rahmān mosque in Hebron, and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.⁷ The Ottoman state, moreover, generally maintained the integrity of the largest of

⁶Muhammad 'Adnān al-Bakhīt, *Nāhiyat Bani Kinānah (Shamālī al-Urdun) fī al-'Aṣr al-'Āshir al-Hijrī/al-Sādis 'Āshir al-Milādī* (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 al-Bakhīt and Nūrān Rajā Hammūd, *The Detailed Defter of Liwā' 'Ajlūn (The District of Ajlun) Tapu Defteri No. 970, Istanbul* (Amman, 1989); idem, *The Detailed Defter of Liwā' 'Ajlūn (The District of Ajlun) Tapu Defteri No. 185, Ankara 1005 A.H./1596 A.D.* (Amman, 1991); Wolf-Dieter Hütteroth and Kamal Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan and Southern Syria in the Late 16th Century* (Erlangen, 1977).

⁷Muhammad 'Adnān al-Bakhīt, "Awqaf During the Late Mamluk Period and the Early Ottoman Times in Palestine and Jordan," in *Urbanism in Islam*, ed. Editorial Committee of the Research Project "Urbanism in Islam, a Comparative Study," 1994 (Tokyo, 1990), 188.



the Mamluk *awqāf*, keeping former sultanic endowments together as a unit and assigning their ‘*ushr* revenue to the governor (*mīr*) of Liwā’ ‘Ajlūn or as *khāṣṣ shāhī* for the sultan himself.⁸ Such estates may have represented a financially stable institution for the Ottoman state and, thus, a reliable source of revenue. The longevity of some of these private, rural estates suggests that the Mamluks had achieved some degree of financial success in at least one area of their agricultural investments.

The results of archaeological fieldwork in Jordan the last fifteen years have produced an extensive database on patterns of settlement, including the emergence of new administrative centers and the abandonment of once thriving villages; the location of industrial and marketing centers and trade routes; and corpuses of small finds with economic significance (coins, imported pottery and glass, textiles).⁹ Analyses of such fieldwork’s historical value has been previously published and do not need to be discussed in detail here.¹⁰ In recent years archaeological research has employed environmentally-focused data collection, such as soil and water analysis.¹¹ The implications of such scientific work, combined with the more traditional research on administrative documents described above, are significant and allow us to make preliminary statements about developments in the Jordanian agricultural regime and how they relate to the larger issue of Mamluk “decline.”

Outside of the Ottoman *defters* and archaeological reports, however, there have been precious few other sources of information on rural life in Mamluk Jordan. Contemporary written sources, including chronicles and administrative manuals, give only a spotty picture of the Jordanian agricultural regime. Many Jordanian towns and villages become visible in the Arabic sources only in the fourteenth century. Three villages, for example, in which I have been doing intensive fieldwork—Hisbān, Malkā, and Ḥubrāṣ—attract local historians’ attention at this

⁸ Al-Bakhīt and Ḥammūd, *Tapu Defteri* No. 185, 52.

⁹ The impact of the political and economic trends examined in this article on the standard of living of Jordanians in the late Mamluk period is dealt with in my forthcoming *Life on the Mamluk Frontier: Transjordan, 1250–1517 A.D.*, which relies on such archaeological and ethnographic data.

¹⁰ Walker, “Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilād al-Shām,” 249–61; idem, “Mamluk Investment in the Transjordan”; idem, “The Northern Jordan Survey 2003—Agriculture in Late Islamic Malka and Hubras Villages: A Preliminary Report of the First Season,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 339 (2005): 67–111; idem, “Regional Markets and their Impact on Agriculture in Mamluk and Ottoman Transjordan,” in *On the Fringe of Society: Archaeological and Ethnoarchaeological Perspectives on Pastoral and Agricultural Societies*, Symposium hosted by the Albright Institute in Jerusalem, June 3, 2004, ed. Eveline van der Steen and Benjamin Saidel (Jerusalem, 2006, in press).

¹¹ Lucke et al., “The Abandonment of the Decapolis Region.”



point, perhaps because of their political or economic importance during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign. Although settled as a village on and off since the Iron Age, Ḥisbān in central Jordan was made the administrative capital of the Balqā' district around 710/1310.¹² According to the results of recent archaeological investigations, it was also a redistribution point, at this time, for refined cane sugar, grown and processed in the Jordan River Valley, and housed a small garrison of a half dozen soldiers.¹³ Isolated references in the early thirteenth century aside, it is not mentioned regularly by either Syrian or Egyptian historians until early in the fourteenth century.¹⁴ The same is true for two contemporary villages in northern Jordan: Ḥubrāṣ and Malkā. Ḥubrāṣ, occupied since the Byzantine period, may have had two mosques in the thirteenth century; by the sixteenth century it was one of the largest villages in the region.¹⁵ The farmers of Malkā were productive enough in 796/1393 for Sultan Barqūq to endow the village for his madrasah-mausoleum complex in Cairo; Malkā's population doubled over the course of the sixteenth century.¹⁶ All three villages were, moreover, known for their marketplaces and their residents for their level of education: the *nisbahs* al-Ḥisbānī, al-Ḥubrāṣī, and al-Malkāwī were prominent in biographical dictionaries of Syrian scholars.¹⁷ The majority, by far, of historical references to these villages are fourteenth-century in date.

The absence of such villages from earlier Mamluk sources, however, may merely reflect the problems of Syrian historiography. Several key Syrian sources simply do not cover the chronological transition from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. Published and edited excerpts from al-Yūnīnī's chronicle, *Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān*, do not extend beyond 701/1301–2. Likewise, entries for the years

¹²Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilād al-Shām," 249–50.

¹³Bethany J. Walker, "The Late Ottoman Cemetery in Field L, Tall Hisban," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 322 (2001): 1–19; idem, "Mamluk Administration of Transjordan: Recent Findings from Tall Hisban," *Al-'Uṣūr al-Wusṭā* 13, no. 2 (2001): 29–33; idem, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilād al-Shām," 254, 258; Bethany J. Walker and Øystein S. LaBianca, "The Islamic *Quṣūr* of Tall Hisban: Preliminary Report on the 1998 and 2001 Seasons," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 47 (2003): 443–71.

¹⁴Ibn Shaddād, in his biography of Salāḥ al-Dīn completed in 1228 (*Al-Nawādir al-Sultānīyah wa-al-Mahāsin al-Yūsufiyah*), mentions that Salāḥ al-Dīn withdrew his forces to Hisbān after a failed attempt to take the Crusader fortress at Karak (cited in Malcolm Russell, "Hesban during the Arab Period: A.D. 635 to the Present," in *Historical Foundations: Studies of Literary References to Hesban and Vicinity*, Hesban 3, ed. Larry Geraty and Leona G. Running [Berrien Springs, 1989], 28).

¹⁵Walker, "Mamluk Investment in the Transjordan," 129–30.

¹⁶Ibid., 130–31.

¹⁷Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilād al-Shām," 250; idem, "Mamluk Investment in the Transjordan," 130–31.



711–39/1311–38 in al-Jazarī's *Hawādith al-Zamān* are no longer extant.¹⁸ While the Egyptian historian al-‘Aynī, in his *Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān*, does preserve some of the sections missing from these two sources, his chronicle after 701/1301 is only available in manuscript form.¹⁹ Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, who is a rich, albeit inconsistent, source of information regarding agriculture and village life in southern Bilād al-Shām, begins his chronicle only in 741/1340.²⁰ Mamluk officials serving in the region, such as the amir Baybars al-Manṣūrī who was governor of Karak in 680–85/1281–86, show little interest in rural events and the state of local agriculture in their written narratives.²¹

Nothing illustrates these trends more clearly than the coverage of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's cadastral survey (*rawk*) of southern Bilād al-Shām in 713/1313 by both Syrian and Egyptian sources. There is no equivalent for Syria of Ibn al-Jī‘ān's *Kitāb al-Tuḥfah al-Sanīyah bi-Asmā’ al-Bilād al-Miṣrīyah* or Ibn Duqmāq's *Kitāb al-Intiṣār li-Wāṣiṭat ‘Iqd al-Amṣār*, which summarize the results of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's subsequent survey of Egyptian land in 715/1315.²² The historian of Mamluk Egypt can mine a wealth of information from Ibn al-Jī‘ān's account, including a catalogue of village names and their location, the amount of cultivatable land attached to each village (recorded in feddans), the annual estimated fiscal yield (cash equivalent in dinars), in whose name the land was and now is registered, the status of that registration (as *iqtā‘*, *mulk*, *waqf*, etc.), soil types and access to water, and suitability for food and cash crops.²³ The surveys of southern Syria (that is Damascus Province, Hims, Baalbek, Ṣafad, and Gaza), Egypt, Tripoli (in 717/1317), and Aleppo (in 725/1325) are briefly described by al-Nuwayrī and al-Maqrīzī. Like al-Maqrīzī, whose narrative is the more detailed of the two, al-Nuwayrī, in his *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*, is more concerned with personnel and procedure than the results of the surveys. The only comment he makes about the local reception of the 715/1315 survey was that "upon the distribution of the *iqtā‘* documents there were disagreements and conflicts" (*wa-*

¹⁸Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilād al-Shām," 246.

¹⁹Donald P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamluk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Mālik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā’ūn* (Montreal, 1970), 80–87.

²⁰Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr Ahmād Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qādī Shuhbah*, ed. ‘Adnān Darwīsh (Damascus, 1994), 2:8.

²¹Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilād al-Shām," 247.

²²Sato Tsugitaka, "Historical Character of *al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī* in Mamluk Syria," in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Bilād al-Shām*, Amman, Jordan, 20–25 April 1974 (Amman, 1984), 224.

²³Sharaf al-Dīn Yahyā Ibn al-Jī‘ān, *Kitāb al-Tuḥfah al-Sanīyah bi-Asmā’ al-Bilād al-Miṣrīyah* (Cairo, 1898).



*hasala fī tafrīqihā [al-amthilah] ikhtilāf wa-id̄tirāb).*²⁴ A contemporary in Ḥamāh, Abū al-Fidā', surprisingly makes no mention of any of the three cadastral surveys in Syria carried out by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. He does, however, make reference to the Nāṣirī revolt in Tripoli that al-Nuwayrī, by combining his description of the two events in the same narrative, implicitly ties to the survey of that city in 717/1317.²⁵ Likewise, Ibn al-Dawādārī, an important source for events in Syria in the first half of the fourteenth century, makes no reference at all to any of the Syrian surveys, only the Egyptian one (described as the *rawk mubārak*), which he suggests was one of the most important events of the year 715/1315, along with the campaign in Malta.²⁶ This is all the more surprising since he describes the passing of his father, an amir, in 713/1313, while on a tour of Syrian fortresses (perhaps in connection with the 713/1313 survey), and since throughout his chronicle Ibn al-Dawādārī expresses concern for the condition of Syrian *iqtā'*s.²⁷ An event that should have had a real impact on the Syrian countryside is not worth mentioning by some of the local sources of the period. The implications of the 713/1313 survey for rural developments in Jordan will be considered shortly.

While copies of the 713/1313 survey are no longer extant, we do have important economic documents related to Jordanian agriculture in this period at our disposal, though finding them is the proverbial "looking for a needle in the haystack." Moreover, one has to be intimately familiar with the local geography and topography to recognize them for what they are. The Dār al-Wathā'iq and Wizārat al-Awqāf in Cairo and the archives of St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai preserve copies, in various forms, of *waqfiyāt* recording the endowment of Jordanian farmland for charitable purposes during the late fourteenth century. One has been published and analyzed in part: the endowment of the village of 'Adar, near Karak, in 777/1375 by Sultan Sha'bān.²⁸ A second has been analyzed in a couple of recent publications and will be published shortly: the endowment of the village of Malkā in northern Jordan by Sultan Barqūq in 796/1393 for his madrasah-mausoleum

²⁴ Shihāb al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* (Cairo, 1997), 32:206.

²⁵ Malik al-Mu'ayyad 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'il Abū al-Fidā', *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar*, ed. Muhammad Husayn (Cairo, 1999), 4:98; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 32:255–60.

²⁶ Abū Bakr ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Aybak ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa Jāmi' al-Ghurar* (Cairo, 1960), 9:286–87.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 266.

²⁸ Waqfiyah 8/49, Dār al-Wathā'iq, Cairo, in Yūsuf Ghawānimah, *Tārīkh Sharqī al-Urdun fī 'Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Ūlā (al-Qism al-Ḥadārī)* (Amman, 1979), 243–44, and idem, "Al-Qaryah fī Janūb al-Shām (al-Urdun wa-Filastīn) fī al-'Asr al-Mamlūkī fī Daw' Waqfiyāt 'Adar," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 1 (1982): 363–71.



complex on the Bayn al-Qaṣrayn in Cairo.²⁹ In addition to these are references in unpublished, contemporary *waqfiyāt* to a village on the outskirts of Karak (its name is not preserved in the fragmentary manuscript),³⁰ for the same complex in Cairo, and other rural land in the vicinity of Karak for Sultan Ḥasan's monumental madrasah complex in Cairo (endowed in 762/1360–1).³¹

All other references to large, endowed estates in Jordan are either summarized in the early Ottoman *defters*³² or contemporary chronicles. These Ottoman documents describe landed estates in terms of their physical extent, local topography and water sources, roads, quality of the land, agricultural installations of various sorts, neighboring villages, previously endowed properties within the village, and buildings or plots of land that have been abandoned or otherwise fallen out of use. They are coming under renewed scrutiny for their potential contribution to settlement cycles and agricultural and environmental history.³³

For documentation for the late Mamluk period we are more fortunate. Biographical dictionaries (Ibn al-Jī‘ān's *Al-Qawl al-Mustazraf*, Ibn Tūlūn's *Muṭākahāt al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān*, and Ibn Iyās' *Badā'i‘ al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i‘ al-Duhūr*), biographies of Burji Mamluk sultans (Ibn Şaṣrā's *Kitāb al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah fī al-Dawlah al-Ẓāhirīyah*), and the products of contemporary, local historians ('Abd al-Bāṣīt's *Nayl al-Amal fī Dhayl al-Duwal*) are available, largely in manuscript form, for research on fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Jordan and the region. They have been used, with much success, by Shawkat Ramadān Hujjah, in his recent monograph on Burji Mamluk Jordan.³⁴ However, provincial capitals (such as Karak) and the largest administrative centers, towns, and villages ('Ajlūn, for example) are the most visible in these sources, making research on less politically important villages and their hinterland very difficult.

While my research on agriculture in Mamluk Jordan is ongoing, and I have not yet examined the manuscripts of the sources described above other than *waqfiyāt*, I believe—on the basis of the Ottoman *defters*; Mamluk-period *waqfiyāt*; a variety of published, primarily Syrian, sources; and archaeological and geological data—that some trends are emerging which suggest the following:

²⁹Waqfiyah 9/51, Dār al-Wathā‘iq, Cairo, in Walker, "Mamluk Investment in the Transjordan," 130; idem, "The Northern Jordan Survey"; idem, "Regional Markets."

³⁰Waqfiyah 49, microfilm 15, fols. 1–4, Dār al-Wathā‘iq, Cairo.

³¹Waqfiyah 40, microfilm 15, fols. 1–3, Dār al-Wathā‘iq, Cairo.

³²Mehmed İpsirli and Muhammed Dāwūd al-Tamīmī, *Awqāf wa-Amlāk al-Muslimīn fī Filasīn* (Istanbul, 1982); al-Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Banī Kinānah*, and idem, *Tapu Defteri* No. 275; Bakhīt and Hammūd, *Tapu Defteri* No. 970, and idem, *Tapu Defteri* No. 185.

³³Walker, "The Northern Jordan Survey."

³⁴Hujjah, *Al-Tārikh al-Siyāsī*; see my review in *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 2 (2004): 219–23.



1. The Mamluk state, from the beginning, was actively investing in the infrastructure of southern Bilād al-Shām. While much of this investment was initially security-driven, it certainly benefited regional agricultural markets, through the construction of roads, storage facilities, and caravanserais and *wikālahs*.

2. During the third quarter of the fourteenth century, Mamluk sultans were purchasing entire villages in Jordan from the Bayt al-Māl and were already endowing them as *waqf* for institutions, primarily madrasahs, located outside Jordan. Most of this rural property was located in the Jordan River Valley, the rich agricultural regions of the Yarmouk River riparian, and the Karak Plateau, on which there had already developed an extensive system of land ownership by local families, both Muslim and Christian.³⁵ Much of the land around Karak was, moreover, already tied up in earlier endowments for Sufi shrines and Christian monasteries.³⁶

3. The fifteenth century witnessed what initially appears to be a withdrawal of state monies from Jordan: garrisons are abandoned, there are no new public building projects, the local tribesmen no longer receive "security monies." The effects of this process, however it is defined, were made worse by drought and the insecurity of the main transport routes for agricultural surplus. As a result, some, but far from all, sectors of the local agrarian regime went into decline, particularly labor-intensive projects such as sugar cane production and processing. Villages in particular regions of Jordan were abandoned, with a general resettlement in the well-watered highlands.

4. On the eve of the Ottoman conquest, two different pictures of rural Jordan emerge. On the one hand, villages have resorted to traditional patterns of land tenure, agricultural production, and marketing—namely communally-owned lands, largely cultivated on a subsistence basis, with limited specialized production for local markets and traditional trading partners. This pattern remained in place through the Ottoman period and was adapted to the requirements of the Tanzimat in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the largest *waqf* estates remained intact through at least the sixteenth century and maintained their prosperity well into the Ottoman period. The Ottomans exploited both categories of land to create a broad and diverse tax base that contrasted with the seemingly specialized agricultural markets of the Mamluk period.

5. Mamluk-period land management in Jordan, while opening up new markets temporarily, did lead, in the long run, to environmental degradation, particularly in terms of soil exhaustion and exacerbating the process of deforestation begun in earlier periods.

We will examine each of these points in turn.

³⁵Waqfīyah 49, fols. 1–4, Dār al-Wathā'iq, Cairo.

³⁶Ibid.



TRANSFORMATION OF THE JORDANIAN AGRICULTURAL REGIME

At the beginning of the Mamluk period Transjordan represented a security concern; Ayyubid princes still maintained castles there, and the principle hajj route from Damascus to Mecca ran through the middle of the region. Sultan Baybars initiated an ambitious defensive project that involved reinforcing the citadel walls and towers at former Ayyubid castles, such as Karak and Shobak, and building new fortifications at what would become rural capitals, such as Ḥisbān and Salt.³⁷ He also built and leveled roads and reorganized the *barīd* system that would, by the eighth/fourteenth century, blossom into a comprehensive communications network of postal centers (*marākiz*), pigeon and fire towers, and caravan and pilgrim stops. Several of the stops on the hajj route—‘Ajlūn, Zarqā, Salṭ, and ‘Aqabah were among the largest—maintained seasonal markets (*aswāq mawsimiyah*) that catered to pilgrims.³⁸ Amirs and sultans from the thirteenth through the sixteenth century invested in these markets, providing endowments for caravanserais and building new markets within these towns.³⁹ By combining the hajj route with state-sponsored market institutions, the Mamluks merely formalized a relationship between pilgrimage and business that had been part of Islam from the time of the Prophet.⁴⁰ Such investments indirectly benefited the local agricultural sector. While the initial objectives of infrastructure development were defensive, the networks and facilities that grew out of it facilitated the transport of agricultural goods from fields to markets and on to ports.⁴¹

The state's overarching concern for defense (against both foreign and domestic enemies) also impacted the structure of administration in the region. Mamluk administration of southern Bilād al-Shām was particularly fluid, with periodic shifts in administrative borders and district (*ṣafaqah*) capitals (*niyābahs* or *wilāyahs*) and the combination or division of districts.⁴² The promotion of a previously undistinguished village to a district capital, for example, served to solidify relations

³⁷Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilād al-Shām," 243.

³⁸Yūsuf Ghawānimah, "Al-Tijārah al-Dawlīyah fī al-Urdun fī al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 3 (1987): 323–30; Faysal ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad Banī Ḥamad, "Al-Aswāq al-Shāmīyah fī al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī" (M.A. thesis, Yarmouk University, 1992); Sa‘īd Ṣalīḥ Mūsā Khalīl, "Al-Tijārah al-Dākhilīyah fī Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Thānīyah (784–922 A.H./1382–1516 A.D.)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Jordan, 1992), 51–52; Hujjah, *Al-Tārīkh al-Siyāsī*, 252–57.

³⁹Ghawānimah, "Al-Tijārah al-Dawlīyah," 326–27.

⁴⁰Bethany J. Walker, "The Globalizing Effects of *Hājj* in the Medieval and Modern Eras," in *Connectivity in Antiquity: Globalizing as Long Term Historical Process*, ed. Øystein S. LaBianca and Sandra Schram (London, 2005), 68.

⁴¹Walker, "Regional Markets."

⁴²Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilād al-Shām," 241–46.



between the sultan and the powerful local tribes of Transjordan in the power struggles among the Mamluk elite throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Two examples from the Balqā' district of central Jordan illustrate this well. As noted earlier, the small village of Ḥisbān came to prominence in the fourteenth century when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad made it the capital of the Balqā' (*Wilāyat Balqā'*), as a reward, the written sources lead us to believe, for the loyalty of its local tribes during his periods of exile in Karak.⁴³ After an earthquake destroyed the Ḥisbān citadel in mid-century, the capital of the Balqā' was then moved to Amman, a move that, according to Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, served the financial interests of Mamluk amirs who had investments there.⁴⁴ In a similar vein, the previously independent Province of Karak was merged, first with the districts of ‘Ajlūn and Salt in the third quarter of the eighth/fifteenth century, and then with the Province of Damascus in the early tenth/sixteenth century. Contemporary sources attribute this change to an attempt by the state to eliminate the independence of the Karak governors and quell the amiral rebellions there that rocked Jordan in the late Mamluk period.⁴⁵ Such administrative shifts had an important impact on local society. Money followed the movement of centers of political power. For some fifty years Ḥisbān served as a district capital with a governor (*wālī*); a small garrison of perhaps a half dozen mamluks; and a large storage facility and redistribution point for processed cane sugar, an industry monopolized by the Mamluk elite.⁴⁶ When the capital was moved to Amman in 1356, the judiciary, governorship, and most of the district markets were transferred from Ḥisbān.⁴⁷ There is little archaeological evidence for the sugar industry in Ḥisbān after this, and the village was gradually abandoned.⁴⁸ By the late sixteenth century there was no permanent settlement at the site, although local Bedouin continued to pay a tax to the Ottoman government for seasonal cultivation of small plots of land there.⁴⁹ Similarly, there is significant archaeological evidence for the abandonment of the central Karak Plateau for the isolated southwest rim at the time of the amiral

⁴³Ibid., 245.

⁴⁴Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:550.

⁴⁵Hujjah, *Al-Tārīkh al-Siyāsī*, 185–87.

⁴⁶Walker, "The Late Ottoman Cemetery"; idem, "Mamluk Administration"; Walker and LaBianca, "The Islamic *Qusūr*."

⁴⁷Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilād al-Shām," 245.

⁴⁸Walker, "Mamluk Administration," and idem, "Tall Ḥisbān, 2004—An Investigation in Medieval Rural History," *Newsletter of the American Center of Oriental Research* 16, no. 2 (2004): 1–3.

⁴⁹Al-Bakhīt and Ḥammūd, *Tapu Defteri* No. 185, 149; Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography*, 169.



revolts and administrative changes of the late Mamluk period.⁵⁰

A third factor that had an effect on the agricultural regime of Jordan was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's cadastral survey of southern Bilād al-Shām in 713/1313. This was the first of four surveys ordered by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, which collectively laid the economic foundations for Mamluk society by reallocating *iqtā'*s among the sultan, amirs, and members of the *halqah*. Most of the scholarly studies of these surveys have focused on the Egyptian one of 715/1315 and its political and economic ramifications.⁵¹ It is more difficult to do the same for Syria. There are no records, either in original or summary form, of any of the three Syrian surveys, and, as discussed earlier, there are very few references to them by Syrian historians. The surveys, thus, do not appear to attract the notice or interest of contemporaries. Nonetheless, a few suggestions may be made about the possible structural impact of the 713/1313 *rawk* on agricultural production, land tenure, and markets in Jordan.

The immediate results of the survey were to fragment land, assigning smaller, non-contiguous, and often widely dispersed, shares to the *muqtā'*s, and to give more control over land to the sultan himself. How this affected agricultural production and village life in general would have depended on several factors: the types of crops traditionally grown there, the nature of traditional crop rotation, how water was distributed, and how and when taxes were paid and collected. Describing these factors first requires an understanding of how the *iqtā'* system functioned economically and socially, that is what the relationships were between *muqtā'*s and *fallāhūn*. In the absence of written sources dealing directly with southern Syria on such matters, we have to depend on Egyptian sources, taking into account that Egyptian and Syrian societies were organized differently, that there were differences in access to and sharing of water, and a different history of land proprietorship. Hassanein Rabie and Sato Tsugitaka's monographs on rural Egypt are suggestive in this regard. Relying largely on the accounts of the management and planting cycles of Egyptian agricultural land by al-Makhzūmī, Ibn Mammātī, al-Nābulusī, and al-Nuwayrī, they conclude the following:

⁵⁰Robin Brown, "Late Islamic Ceramic Production and Distribution in the Southern Levant: A Socio-Economic and Political Interpretation" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Binghamton, 1992), 440–41.

⁵¹Sato Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam: Sultans, Muqta's, and Fallahūn* (Leiden, 1997), 138–43; Carl F. Petry, "Fractionalized Estates in a Centralized Regime: The Holdings of al-Ashraf Qāytbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī According to their Waqf Deeds," *Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient* 41, no. 1 (1998): 96–117. A single article by Sato in the 1980s is one notable exception (Sato Tsugitaka, "Historical Character of *al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī* in Mamluk Syria," in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Bilād al-Shām*, ed. University of Jordan [Amman, 1984], 223–25).



1. The *muqtā'* was responsible for digging canals, building dams, and maintaining both. He relied on peasants for most of these activities but could use corvée labor and his own soldiers when needed. By and large he did not reside on his *iqtā'*; he generally relied on his own agents (*wakīls*) to estimate local taxes and collect them on his behalf.⁵² Because the *iqtā'āt* were fractured, one *muqtā'* could hire as many as four or five *wakīls* for these purposes.⁵³

2. *Muqtā'*s rarely interfered in the internal operations of the planting and harvests. It was the *fallāhūn* themselves who decided what to plant, on what schedule to rotate crops, and how to share water. In other words, local custom generally prevailed in matters of cropping, harvest, and processing. One notable exception is sugar production, which was more closely monitored by the *muqtā'*, who in Jordan tended to be the sultan himself. On "sugar estates" the cropping of the sugar plant took precedence over other crops and customary water sharing agreements, interrupting crop rotation and the planting of summer crops.⁵⁴

3. Taxes on grains (*kharāj al-zirā'ah*) were generally paid in kind in Egypt.⁵⁵ The presence of grain storage facilities throughout Jordan by the fourteenth century suggests that grain was stored on the *iqtā'āt* that produced the grain and at transport depots on main roads. Grain surplus could be used for times of need, which was often exploited by the state through forced purchases (*tarḥ*), or to provide provisions for agricultural laborers who supplemented the labor on sugar estates.⁵⁶

While Jordanian agriculture was broad-based and produced a variety of grains, fruits, and vegetables for the region, the staple here, as in Egypt, was wheat. Wheat is a winter crop that requires adequate rainfall during the growing season (200–300 centimeters per year in Jordan) and dry storage. It is grown in all of the country, but the largest fields are on the open plains of central and southern Jordan. Because Jordan's *wādīs* run with water only seasonally and are not generally navigable, local farmers had no major river, like the Nile, on which to rely for transport of grains to major storage facilities. Therefore, much transport from threshing floors to granaries (*shuwan*) must have been done overland, on the extensive road system developed in the early Mamluk period. The granaries took two forms: formally built *shūnahs*, which is a common enough place name in the Jordan Valley, and reused cisterns, which are ubiquitous in the country's soft

⁵²Sugar tax is one notable exception: *muqtā'*s, who were generally the sultans themselves, often personally supervised the collection of tax on sugar.

⁵³Hassanein Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt: A.H. 564–741/A.D. 1169–1341* (London, 1972), 65.

⁵⁴Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 212 and 233.

⁵⁵Rabie, *Financial System*, 74–76.

⁵⁶Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 201.



limestone beds and can preserve grains for up to two years.⁵⁷ Both facilities required regular maintenance through cleaning and plastering. Because of Jordan's special hydrological conditions and infrastructure, its grain industry was highly vulnerable to drought and the security of the road system. As for cropping patterns, the *fallāhūn* of Jordan traditionally practiced a two-crop rotation on most cultivated land, including the Jordan Valley. Land tenure, where there was private ownership, has historically been communal, with a division of revenues among villagers after the harvest according to shares, known today as *mushā'* and very similar to the pattern of shares adopted by the *muqtā'*s.⁵⁸

Given these factors, but in the unfortunate absence of written sources for verification, one can cautiously propose that the *rawk* of 713/1313 impacted Jordanian agriculture in multiple ways. To begin with, the fragmentation of *iqṭā'*āt may have produced a more complex system of tax collection and transportation, particularly of grains, under the supervision of the agents of multiple *muqtā'*s. It is not clear at this point whether there was any coordination of efforts on the part of these agents or if tax revenues (in kind or in cash) were simply divided by the *muqtā'*s shares of the revenues after the harvest or sale and conversion of crops to currency. Regardless, the multiplication of *muqtā'*s meant heavier traffic on the road system and made more vital than ever the security of these transportation corridors for the purposes of tax collection.

On a second note, the concentration of *iqṭā'*āt in the hands of the sultan led to the development of large estates based on the production of specialized cash crops, such as sugar cane and olive oil, for export markets. These "plantations" transformed traditional cropping, water sharing, and labor organization. The sugar plantations in the Jordan Valley and on the tributaries of the Jordan River best illustrate these patterns. Cane sugar production requires a soft, well-drained soil, high temperatures, extensive irrigation, and a large labor force.⁵⁹ In addition to

⁵⁷J. M. H. Kareem, *The Settlement Patterns in the Jordan Valley in the Mid- to Late Islamic Period* (Oxford, 2000), 10; Carol Palmer, "Following the Plow": the Agricultural Environment of Northern Jordan," *Levant* 30 (1998): 155.

⁵⁸Communal land ownership was the pattern in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and is also suggested by early Ottoman tax registers. It remains to be documented with certainty that this was the traditional pattern in the Mamluk period, however. In her historical-anthropological analysis of late Ottoman *mushā'*, Carol Palmer suggests ways to identify communal land tenure in historical periods archaeologically (Carol Palmer, "Whose Land Is It Anyway? An Historical Examination of Land Tenure and Agriculture in Northern Jordan," in *The Prehistory of Food: Appetites for Change*, ed. Chris Gosden and Jon Hather (London, 1999), 300–2. The private ownership of land by individual families is documented for the Karak region (see note 34), but so far this pattern seems to be unique for Jordan as a whole.

⁵⁹Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 216; Kareem, *Settlement Patterns*, 13.



resident *fallāhūn*, seasonal, migrant workers assisted in some of the heaviest labor tasks associated with sugar processing, and there is some evidence for the use of slaves, as well.⁶⁰ The soil requirements, the long period of cultivation (ten months), and the labor intensive activities associated with pre-sowing land preparation and maintenance make it impossible to grow other summer crops, namely vegetables, that tend to bring in large revenues, or to maintain the traditional two-crop rotation.⁶¹ Moreover, growing sugar cane requires the diversion of irrigation water from other crops.⁶²

The concentration of land in the hands of a single *muqtā*‘, as in the case of the sultanic sugar estates, was certainly conducive to plantation-style production. What impact, however, the fragmentation of the largely grain-producing plains had on annual yields and tax revenues in general has yet to be determined. The nineteenth-century grain boom of Palestine and Transjordan would not have been possible without the development of large landed estates after the implementation of the Ottomans’ 1858 Land Law. There was a significant shift at that time from subsistence farming and limited production for local markets to surplus production for export to Europe.⁶³ Ottoman tax registers, as well, indicate that large estates brought in more tax revenue for the state than family or village-owned farms, explaining their conversion to taxable units by Ottoman authorities. In the absence of a comparison of grain yields between the pre- and post-*rawk* periods, which is not yet possible, such patterns do suggest that fragmentation of grain lands is more expensive, in the end, to administer.

In summary, all of these developments required more from the *muqtā*‘s, in terms of maintenance of irrigation canals and storage facilities, than before al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s survey, diverted Jordanian agriculture from a diversified to a specialized and export regime, and was profit-driven. It altered labor organization, local market, and traditional cropping and water distribution practices. Such a transformation of the local regime was certainly profitable, as the Ottoman *defters* demonstrate; however, it required a strong state and demanded safe transport and storage. Security was a particular concern for grain production, which was concentrated on the open plains and was particularly susceptible to disruption during times of political unrest. As the linchpin of the Mamluk economy, problems in the grain sector had serious ramifications to the state’s economy as a whole.

⁶⁰Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 185; Kareem, *Settlement Patterns*, 11.

⁶¹Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 217 and 220.

⁶²Ibid., 212.

⁶³Linda Schilcher, “The Grain Economy of Late Ottoman Syria and the Issue of Large-Scale Commercialization,” in *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East*, ed. Çaglar Keyder and Faruk Tabak (Albany, 1991), 173–95.



WAQFIYĀT AND LAND MANAGEMENT

The sultanic estates of Mamluk Jordan were, in part, the result of the gradual transformation of *iqtā’āt* into *khāṣṣ*, or crown lands, by purchase from the Bayt al-Māl, as is verified in the original *waqf* documents. They were then endowed as *waqf* for charitable institutions, the majority of which were sultanic madrasah complexes in Cairo. The alienation of state land has been recently examined for fifteenth-century Egypt, where the process is documented with sales and purchase writs and deeds from the late Mamluk and early Ottoman period.⁶⁴ Petry has described the process as an investment strategy for later Mamluk sultans.⁶⁵ According to his estimates, some 1000 *waqfiyāt* of the pre-Ottoman period are extant in Cairo’s archives, most of these are Mamluk in date, and 30% of these date to the reign of Sultan al-Ghawrī.⁶⁶ Most of the land in these endowments was acquired piecemeal, through shares of rural land or villages, the kind of fragmentation produced by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s cadastral surveys.⁶⁷ In the case of al-Ghawrī’s endowments, Petry has demonstrated that revenues from rural estates far exceeded the expenses required to maintain the endowment proper, in some cases resulting in a 90% surplus, a large revenue not accounted for by any documented expenditure.⁶⁸ Petry suggests in his studies that these were, thus, a form of “clandestine investment” that, on one hand, resulted in the erosion of the *iqtā’āt* system, but on the other created significant asset-building in the form of private property.⁶⁹

Abū Ghāzī’s recent monograph on land tenure in late Mamluk Egypt has received much attention for its statistical analysis of the same phenomenon.⁷⁰ His data largely supports the conclusions of Petry in the 1990s: 1) 95.79% of all documented land sales from the Bayt al-Māl in the pre-Ottoman period date to the Burji Mamluk period;⁷¹ 2) most of these purchases were of former *iqtā’āt*;⁷² and 3) the majority of these purchases took place during the reigns of Īnāl, Khushqadam,

⁶⁴Carl F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt’s Waning as a Great Power* (Albany, 1994), 196–210; idem, “Waqf as an Instrument of Investment in the Mamluk Sultanate: Security vs. Profit?” in *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study*, ed. Miura Toru and John Edward Philips (New York, 2000), 99–115; ‘Imād Badr al-Dīn Abū Ghāzī, *Taṭawwur al-Hiyāzah al-Zirā’iyah fī Miṣr Zaman al-Mamālik al-Jarākisah* (Cairo, 2000).

⁶⁵Petry, “Waqf as an Instrument.”

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., 103.

⁶⁸Ibid., 104.

⁶⁹Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?* 210.

⁷⁰Abū Ghāzī, *Taṭawwur al-Hiyāzah*.

⁷¹Ibid., 16.

⁷²Ibid., 18.



Qāytbāy, and al-Ghawrī (the highest at 64.5%).⁷³ He further suggests that by the time of the Ottoman conquest one half of former state land was now in private hands;⁷⁴ that the Bayt al-Māl was, for all intents and purposes, empty;⁷⁵ and that some 88.89% of Egypt's agricultural land was tied up in *waqf*.⁷⁶ Of the three social groups that purchased state lands (the Mamluk elite, amirs' families and retainers, and Egyptian civilians), the largest land owners were the Mamluk elite (sultans and amirs), at 43.1% of all documented purchases from the Bayt al-Māl.⁷⁷ Abū Ghāzī states, furthermore, that in some cases entire villages were, indeed, purchased as complete units,⁷⁸ an observation that would not have been possible without reading the available Ottoman land sales files.

Abū Ghāzī's conclusions are justifiably conservative: that we cannot know for certain what the real objectives were for this rush to purchase and endow former state lands at the end of the Mamluk period. He dismisses the point of view of Arab contemporaries, who cite financial and security (that is military) crises for which liquidation of public lands was necessary. Certainly, the process led to the creation, for better or worse, of newly-propertied classes, who now could dispose of land as they saw fit. This is, of course, another way of describing social transformations that cannot be said to be purely "decline" or "development." Perhaps the most intriguing of his conclusions was that by broadening the base of private ownership, the agricultural base of the Mamluk economy could be revived.⁷⁹ By his own admission, the author has no evidence for such a claim, but offers it only as a final thought in his study.

As for Jordan, the same process occurred here, but there were some important differences. The largest documented sultanic endowments date to the reign of Barqūq and were concentrated in the Jordan Valley and the Sawād of the northern hill country (some of the richest farmland in the region); the earliest recorded endowments consisted of entire villages, not merely shares. The documented examples are few:

1. Sultan Baybars—two shares of the village Bayt Rāmah in the Jordan Valley, for his madrasah complex in Cairo, no date given.⁸⁰
2. Sultan Sha'bān—the village of 'Adar near Karak, in its entirety, for an

⁷³Ibid., 28.

⁷⁴Ibid., 105.

⁷⁵Ibid., 83.

⁷⁶Ibid., 66.

⁷⁷Ibid., 110.

⁷⁸Ibid., 104.

⁷⁹Ibid., 125.

⁸⁰Al-Bakhīt and Ḥammūd, *Tapu Defteri* No. 185, 32.



unnamed recipient, in 777/1375.⁸¹

3. Sultan Barqūq—the Jordan Valley villages of Nimrīn, Kafrīn, and Zarā‘ah, in their entirety, for his madrasah-mausoleum complex in Cairo, no date given;⁸² the village of Malkā in the Sawād, in its entirety, for the same complex, in 796/1393.⁸³

4. Sultan Khushqadam—three shares each of the Sawād villages of Marw and Harhār, for his madrasah complex in Cairo, no date given;⁸⁴ twelve shares of an unnamed *mazrā‘ah* (isolated farm) in the Jordan Valley for the same complex, no date given.⁸⁵

The lands described are located in the most fertile regions of Jordan and fall into three categories: grain fields of the plains, sugar plantations of the Jordan Valley, and the orchards of the Sawād (which produced high quality olive oil, as they do today). Wheat, sugar, and olive oil—these were the staples of the average man’s diet in this period, and were, thus, excellent commodities to control by enterprising entrepreneurs. The revenues collected from these estates, which remained intact through the sixteenth century, are recorded in the Ottoman *defters*. However, to give an idea about the scale of production and the possible revenues to the *mawqūf* at the time of endowment, I will rely on recent archaeological data that continues to supplement the archival work for this study.

CASE STUDY: FINANCIAL RETURNS FROM HISBĀN SUGAR AND MALKĀ OLIVE OIL

Ḥisbān was an administrative center, and there is no evidence that any of its land was made *waqf* during the Mamluk period. However, its role in the transport and redistribution of processed cane sugar has been documented by recent archaeological investigations, which also indicate the scale of the sugar produced in the region. During the 1998, 2001, and 2004 field seasons, the southern end of a domestic complex, identified as the residence of the *wālī al-Balqā'*, was excavated.⁸⁶ A long and narrow, barrel-vaulted storeroom, approximately 8 meters long and 2 meters wide, defined this space. On the basis of pottery and coins recovered from floor levels, it has been dated to the fourteenth century. The storeroom was full of mendable ceramic vessels, including sugar jars, which were hour-glass in shape

⁸¹ Ghawānimah, *Tārīkh Sharqī al-Urdun*, 243–44; idem, "Al-Qaryah fī Janūb al-Shām."

⁸² İpşirli and al-Tamīmī, *Awqāf wa-Amlāk*, 94; al-Bakhīt and Ḥammūd, *Tapu Defteri No. 185*, 32.

⁸³ Waqfīyah 9/51, Dār al-Wathā‘iq, Cairo; Walker, "The Northern Jordan Survey"; idem, "Mamluk Investment in the Transjordan," 130.

⁸⁴ Al-Bakhīt, *Nāḥiyat Bani Kinānah*, 38 and 45.

⁸⁵ Al-Bakhīt and Ḥammūd, *Tapu Defteri No. 185*, 32.

⁸⁶ Walker, "Late Ottoman Cemetery"; idem, "Mamluk Administration of Transjordan"; Walker and LaBianca, "The Islamic *Qusūr*"; Walker, "Tall Ḥisbān, 2004."



and built for overland transport. The sugar jars were originally placed directly on the floor, along both sides of the room, while other vessels were stored on wooden shelves along the walls. The destruction of this complex by earthquake and fire in mid-century preserved much of its contents.

A rough estimate of the carrying capacity of this storeroom is 94 store jars, each holding some 6750 cubic cm of raw sugar. Using modern calculations for the density of processed cane sugar, the weight of the contents of each jar would have been 6.075 kg, or a total of 571 kg for all the jars in storeroom, if filled to capacity. To determine the market value of the sugar stored here in fourteenth-century currency, I adopt the price scheme developed by Ashtor, which he bases on Italian price lists recorded by weight of product in Damascus *qintārs*.⁸⁷ The Ḥisbān storeroom would, thus, at full capacity have held some 3.1 *qanātīr* of processed cane sugar, which, if the end product was raw sugar, would have been worth 3875 dirhams or 194 dinars by the third quarter of the fourteenth century.⁸⁸ While this seems a modest amount, it alone would have contributed 10% of a cargo of sugar carried on a Venetian galley in the fourteenth century.⁸⁹

Archaeological surveys in the *wādīs* surrounding Tall Ḥisbān have identified many water mills, but their date and function are still uncertain. If the sugar stored at Ḥisbān was not a local product (and this has still not been established), it may have been transported there from the Jordan Valley, 15 kilometers to the west, where there is written and archaeological evidence for extensive sugar production at this time. Ḥisbān, like other administrative centers in Palestine and Transjordan, served double-duty as a storage and transport depot for agricultural products en route to regional markets and ports. In short, if the Ḥisbān sugar was grown and processed locally, it was en route to Mediterranean ports for export to Europe; if a product of the Jordan Valley, it may have been on its way to Egypt or local markets.

Malkā is today one of the largest and most prosperous villages in northern

⁸⁷Eliyahu Ashtor, "Levantine Sugar Industry in the Later Middle Ages—An Example of Technological Decline," *Israel Oriental Studies* 7 (1977): 252. Considerations of vacillating exchange rates of the dinar and its relation to the dirham, while currently debated in Mamluk scholarship, are well beyond the scope of this article. Prices are presented merely to suggest scale of production.

⁸⁸The carrying capacity of the storeroom is based on my own field notes and a published floor plan (Walker and LaBianca, "The Islamic *Qusūr*," Fig. 5) and my own ceramic profile drawings and one published photo (Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern Bilād al-Shām," 255, Fig. 3). Price estimates are based on Ashtor, "Levantine Sugar Industry," 252, Table 252 (price entry for Nov. 1379 C.E.) and Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 243. I have relied on an internet source for current calculations on the density of processed sugar, which is 900 kg per each cubic meter: www.sugartech.co.za/density/index.php.

⁸⁹Ashtor, "Levantine Sugar Industry," 236.



Jordan, known for its high-quality olive oil. It must have given the Mamluk state considerable income, as well, in the late fourteenth century, because, as we have already discussed, Sultan Barqūq endowed the entire village, among other rural and urban properties in Egypt and Syria, in financial support of his madrasah complex on the Bayn al-Qaṣrayn. According to the original *waqfīyah*, now housed at the Dār al-Wathā’iq in Cairo, olive orchards and presses (*ma’āṣir*) are listed as important parts of the estate.⁹⁰

An archaeological survey in 2003 revealed evidence of the olive oil industry that is described in this document. It is possible to cautiously estimate production of this single factory, while keeping in mind that other presses were in operation at the same time, elsewhere in the medieval village. The group of presses surveyed was located in a cave (Cave 12) that had been used for olive oil production since the Byzantine period. It contained a half dozen shafts cut into the natural cave walls to hold press arms, as well as two ceiling holes for screw-and-weight presses. In addition, the remnants of a basalt grinding stone were left in the cave interior. According to calculations made for similar weighted lever plants at Hellenistic Maresha, and assuming that all six presses were in use in this period and operating simultaneously, six hectares of olive groves would have supported this single plant at Malkā and could have produced 13,000–27,000 liters of olive oil annually. Of this amount, over 10,000 liters were surplus, exceeding the needs of local consumption, and were thus available for sale in local markets or export.⁹¹

As for the value of such surplus in fourteenth-century currency, we once again rely on Ashtor. Today a liter of olive oil weighs 9/10 of a kilogram; the 10,000 liters surplus from this single plant at Malkā would have weighed a total of 9000

⁹⁰Waqfīyah 51/9, Dār al-Wathā’iq, Cairo.

⁹¹Nahum Sagiv and Amos Kloner, "Maresha Underground Olive Oil Production in the Hellenistic Period," in *Olive Oil in Antiquity: Israel and Neighbouring Countries from the Neolithic to the Early Arab Period*, ed. D. Eitam and M. Heltzer (Padova, 1996), 276–77. This is based on a conservative population estimate of 150 people, arrived at by using figures from an Ottoman land register (*Tapu Tahrir Defterleri*) of 1596–97. The census records 27 families (*khāneh*) and 15 bachelors (*mufrad*) (al-Bakhīt, *Nāhiyat Banī Kinānah*, 22, Table I). A peasant family, for the purposes of Ottoman tax registers, consisted of a nuclear family (mother, father, and children) (Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600* [London, 1994, reprint], 144). Our modest estimate is deliberately low at a five-member household. (Such numbers should be used with caution, however. For criticisms of calculating population size on the basis of Ottoman tax surveys, see Bekir Kemal Ataman, "Ottoman Demographic History (14th–17th Centuries): Some Considerations," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 35 (1992): 187–98, and Heath W. Lowry, "The Ottoman *Tahrir Defterleri* as a Source for Social and Economic History: Pitfalls and Limitations," in *idem, Studies in Defterology: Ottoman Society in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Istanbul, 1992), 3–18.



kg, which was the equivalent of 482 Syrian *qintārs*.⁹² Ashtor, citing Ibn Kathīr, records an export price in the year 1347 of 4.5 dirhams per Damascus *ratl* of oil, which was 9 dinars per Syrian *qintār*.⁹³ In the mid-fourteenth century, then, this plant could have produced a profit of 440 dinars annually. This is, of course, assuming the same end product, which was soap. If the oil was of a higher quality and sold as table oil, it would have been worth considerably more. Regardless, this was no negligible profit: it would have represented, for example, over 30% of the cost of a shipment of 2790 jars of Spanish olive oil to Alexandria in 1405.⁹⁴

Clearly, profit could be made from such specialized production, even when the scale of production at a single site was modest. But was profit the primary rationale for land purchases from the Bayt al-Mäl, as we presume these to be, and for their subsequent endowment during the late fourteenth and throughout the fifteenth centuries? Contemporaries commented on and lamented the abuses of rural land by Mamluk amirs but, apparently, had nothing to say about the alienation of state lands in Jordan. Nonetheless, the Ottoman tax registers describe the development of these estates in the sixteenth century and are rather instructive about the financial longevity of the endowments. I will summarize the contents of these registers as regards the villages described above:

1. ‘Adar—The village was no longer settled on a permanent basis by 945/1538 and had devolved into a *mazrā‘ah* (isolated farm), administered, and perhaps cultivated, by Karak town.⁹⁵ ‘Adar produced an annual revenue of 100 *akches*,⁹⁶ which belonged to the sultan’s *khāṣṣ*.⁹⁷ Barqūq’s endowment had, apparently, been dissolved.

2. Nimirīn—In the years following the Ottoman invasion this village had dwindled in size but rebounded by the close of the century. In 945/1538 it was a very small village of five households that controlled only 5 feddans of cultivated land, which produced wheat, barley, sorghum, cotton, and sesame;⁹⁸ sugar cane

⁹² My estimates for modern weight and volume calculations were retrieved on-line at: www.olivebusiness.com/oliveHandbook/GrowingOlives/olive_balance_sheet.htm.

⁹³ Eliyahu Ashtor, *Histoire des prix et des salaries dans l’orient médiéval* (Paris, 1969), 407.

⁹⁴ Notarial records in the Vatican record a shipment of olive oil from Seville to Alexandria in 1405, when the Mamluk state was now importing large quantities of oil from Europe; the shipment was worth 1400 dinars at the time (Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* [Princeton, 1983], 214). While there is a fifty-year difference between this shipment and the price estimate used above, and we are not certain from the data provided about the quality of the oils and how they compare, the comparison in profits is, nonetheless, informative for the scale.

⁹⁵ Al-Bakhīt and Ḥammūd, *Tapu Defteri* No. 970, 152.

⁹⁶ Al-Bakhīt and Ḥammūd, *Tapu Defteri* No. 185, 75.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 306.

⁹⁸ Al-Bakhīt and Ḥammūd, *Tapu Defteri* 970, 102.



was not grown any more. The tax registers make reference to Barqūq's original endowment but suggest that part of the revenues from this village once earmarked for his madrasah in Cairo were now being used, along with the villages of Kafrīn and Zarā'ah, to support the Mūsā shrine (arguably a local shrine in Wādī Mūsā). Annual taxable revenues totaled 3659 *akches*. By 1005/1596 there were six households, still small for a village of the time in the Jordan Valley, controlling 20 feddans of cultivated land. Annual revenues from this land came to 3470 *akches*.⁹⁹ Of this, 695 *achkes* were set aside for the Mūsā *zāwiyah* and 2756 *akches* for Barqūq's Cairo complex; the 'ushr tax on both of these endowments belonged to the sultan as his private fisc (*khāṣṣ*).¹⁰⁰

3. Kafrīn—The fate of Kafrīn mirrored that of nearby Nimrīn. In 945/1538 the village had an imam and consisted of 37 households, which cultivated 10 feddans of land. Taxable crops included wheat, barley, sorghum, cotton, and sesame and brought 6900 *akches* in taxable revenues a year, which were divided among two endowments (those of Nabī Mūsā *zāwiyah* and Barqūq's Cairo complex) and the sultan's *khāṣṣ*. According to the register for 1005/1596 the population had grown to 43 households (the largest in the Jordan Valley at the time) and cultivated land had doubled, producing some of the highest yields in the province.¹⁰¹ Both endowments were retained, that of Barqūq receiving 12665 *akches*/year (17921/year with Nimrīn and Zarā'ah combined) and Mūsā shrine a modest 665 *akches*/year.¹⁰² As with the Nimrīn, there is no mention of sugar production in the register entries.

4. Zarā'ah—Likewise, in 945/1538 Zarā'ah constituted 11 households, one imam, and cultivated 10 feddans, which produced some 7150 *akches* in annual revenue.¹⁰³ It produced the same crops as Nimrīn and Kafrīn. At this point, however, it seems that the village was separated from Barqūq's original estate and specifically earmarked as a *timār* for one Maḥmūd Jawūsh.¹⁰⁴ By 1005/1596 the population grew to 17 households that controlled less land (6 feddans), shared water from Wādī Zarqā, and paid taxes on presses (*ma'āṣir*), presumably olive presses.

5. Malkā—This village experienced notable growth throughout the sixteenth century. By mid-century it had its own mosque, and by 1005/1596–97 its population had doubled.¹⁰⁵ Its annual revenues in summer crops and olives were among the

⁹⁹ Al-Bakhīt and Hammūd, *Tapu Defteri* No. 185, 43.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 125.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 25 and 43.

¹⁰² Ibid., 126.

¹⁰³ Al-Bakhīt and Hammūd, *Tapu Defteri* No. 970, 112.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Hütheroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography*, 202.



highest in the region by the century's close.¹⁰⁶

6. Marw and Harhār—The agricultural production of these villages has long been focused on wheat. By 941/1534 Harhār was the largest wheat-producer in northern Jordan. Khushqadam's endowment continued to be recognized by the Ottoman state, although it was now taxed. All tax revenue now went to the provincial governor as his private estate (*khāṣṣ*).¹⁰⁷

7. Bayt Rāmah—By 1005/1595–96, when the registers were compiled in a final form, this village had been abandoned (*khālī*). It did, nonetheless, pay 2400 *akches* annually in taxes to a sultanic endowment.¹⁰⁸ The farmland of Bayt Rāmah was probably cultivated by the residents of a nearby village.

These former sultanic endowments in the sixteenth century follow the general pattern of growth (in terms of population and revenues) and agricultural diversification that characterizes early Ottoman Jordan. The largest of the pre-Ottoman endowments were, by and large, retained, and taxed at 10%; those tax revenues then became the *khāṣṣ* of the Ottoman sultan or provincial governor. On the other hand, agricultural land that was not endowed seems to have fragmented even further into small hamlets or communally-held land, cultivated and tax-paying but, in many cases, no longer permanently settled. Much of central Jordan falls into this category, including Hisbān, the former capital of the Balqā', which was fully abandoned by the end of the century and paying only a pastoral tax, presumably by semi-nomadic tribes that camped there on a seasonal basis.¹⁰⁹ The regional pattern of growth and decline that emerges for late Mamluk and early Ottoman Jordan suggests, perhaps, that endowment was the key to preserving the financial solvency of agricultural estates, particularly in times of political turmoil.

LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE STATE'S RURAL POLICIES

Contemporaries, of course, had their own ideas about the economic health of the Mamluk state in the fifteenth century. Al-Maqrīzī was one of the most vocal critics of fiscal practices. His *Ighāthat al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghumma* is a well-structured critique of what he believed to be the worst of these practices and describes the damage they have done to the Egyptian economy: inflated prices and forced purchases (*tarḥ*), bribery (particularly damaging when financial offices are purchased in this manner), high taxes, and an unstable and inflated currency. According to al-Maqrīzī, one natural factor lay behind such practices: drought,

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.; al-Bakhīt, *Nāhiyat Banī Kinānah*, 88 and 162.

¹⁰⁷ Al-Bakhīt, *Nāhiyat Banī Kinānah*, 45.

¹⁰⁸ Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography*, 167, entry #P43.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Bakhīt and Hammūd, *Tapu Defteri* No. 185, 149; Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography*, 169.



which ultimately led to grain shortages.¹¹⁰

The point of view of Syrian historians was comparable, in that they identified drought as the single most important factor behind the financial and political decline of Bilād al-Shām and the regional political struggles that flowed from it. Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, who often commented on agricultural conditions throughout Syria, discussed the problems of Jordanian agriculture in his obituary of Iyās al-Jarkashī, who was the Supervisor of the Jordan Valley (*Mushadd al-Aghwār*) during Barqūq's reign and died in prison in 799/1396. Contemporaries condemned Iyās for causing the economic collapse of the Jordan Valley in this period by diverting shared water to his own plantations, forcing sales of his own sugar on local residents at inflated prices (*tarh*), and terrorizing peasants by cutting the hands off accused thieves.¹¹¹ After receiving complaints from local peasants and administrators alike for his abuses, Sultan Barqūq had Iyās arrested and executed that year. Ibn Şaşrā records the events that followed: the former viceroy in Damascus was named to replace Iyās as *Mushadd al-Aghwār*. Once he took up his new post, he began buying up wheat from the markets in the Jordan Valley at low prices, hoarding them, and reselling at inflated ones during the height of a famine.¹¹²

Throughout the events of this year, contemporaries recognized the sultan's active role in addressing rural grievances and responding to drought and famine. Al-Maqrīzī, in his *Ighāthat al-Ummah*, mentions the grain shortages of 796/1393–94 as illustrating a rare instance when the government acted responsibly to avoid famine. For al-Maqrīzī, there was no famine that year, in spite of drought and grain shortages, because Barqūq invested so much money in charitable endowments.¹¹³ This intriguing statement suggests that, in the eyes of contemporaries, the endowment of rural lands, even while creating vast private estates for the elite, resulted in good things for the people. Moreover, it was a response to natural crises, such as drought, grain shortages, and famine—all the result of rainfall of insufficient levels to support an adequate grain harvest.

Jordanian agriculture is particularly susceptible to drought. Many regions of the country receive just enough rainfall to support the cropping of grains without irrigation; even today, the wheat crop fails one out of every five years from insufficient rainfall.¹¹⁴ Historical, palynological, sedimentological, and

¹¹⁰ Adel Allouche, *Mamluk Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrīzī's Ighāthah* (Salt Lake City, 1994), 50–54.

¹¹¹ Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:630–31.

¹¹² Ibn Şaşrā as recorded in Ḥujjah, *Al-Tārīkh al-Siyāsī*, 81.

¹¹³ Allouche, *Mamluk Economics*, 53.

¹¹⁴ Palmer, "Following the Plow," 132. Here is where Jordan ecologically differs the most from Egypt: unlike the Nile (before the building of the Aswan Dam), the Jordan River has no annual



dendrochronological analyses have all indicated that the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries witnessed several cycles of drought in the region and a general trend towards desertification: higher temperatures, reduced rainfall, and abandonment of once cultivated fields.¹¹⁵ Such processes coincided with cycles of settlement abatement (and in many cases whole-scale abandonment of villages), which are documented by archaeological surveys. So, too, are the local soils vulnerable, particularly to mismanagement of the land. Sugar cultivation is especially hard on soil, depleting it of mineral resources and water; sugar cane must be planted on land that has been left fallow for at least four years.¹¹⁶ After two years' of harvest, the land must once again be left fallow or crops other than sugar should be planted. According to Ibn Mammātī, land on which sugar was planted was taxed at a lower rate after the first year, thus losing value over time.¹¹⁷ Sugar processing is, moreover, ecologically demanding, in terms of fuels and minerals.¹¹⁸ Deforestation is, thus, a potential correlate of sugar production, leading to further environmental challenges. With the gradual removal of forested areas, soil cover erodes and what remains is depleted of its constituent minerals; recent soil analyses have identified such patterns for the historical periods in Jordan.¹¹⁹ Written sources and soil science

flood. In other words, Egyptian agriculture traditionally relied on flood-basin irrigation, whereas Jordanian farmers depended on regular rainfall for their largely dry-farming grains regimen. Thus, "drought" for Egyptian historians meant that the Nile did not reach plenitude a given year, resulting in lower grain yields, whereas for the Syrian historian local drought meant rainfall too low to support the minimum grain yield on which the local population depended for survival. (For a recent analysis of drought from an Egyptian perspective, see Stuart J. Borsch, *The Black Death in Egypt and England: A Comparative Study* (Austin, 2005): 34–39.)

¹¹⁵ Alan Horowitz, "Preliminary Palynological Indications as to the Climate of Israel during the Last 6000 Years," *Paleorient* 2, no. 2 (1974): 407–14; Ghawānimah, "Al-Ṭā‘ūn wa-al-Jafāf"; Shehadeh, "Climate of Jordan"; W. van Zeist, "Past and Present Environments of the Jordan Valley," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 199–204; Heim et al., "Near East Desertification"; Lucke et al., "Abandonment of the Decapolis."

¹¹⁶ Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 216.

¹¹⁷ Rabie, *Financial System of Egypt*, 75.

¹¹⁸ Effie Photos-Jones, Konstantinos D. Politis, Heather F. James, Alan J. Hall, Richard E. Jones, and Jerry Hamer, "The Sugar Industry in the Southern Jordan Valley: An Interim Report on the Pilot Season of Excavations, Geophysical and Geological Surveys at Tawahin as-Sukkar and Khirbat ash-Shaykh ‘Isa, in Ghawr as-Safi," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 46 (2002): 591–614.

¹¹⁹ B. Lucke, Z. al-Saad, M. Schmidt, R. Bäumler, S.-O. Lorenz, P. Udluft, K.-U. Heussner, and B. J. Walker, "Soils and Land Use in the Decapolis Region (Northern Jordan): Implications for Landscape Development and the Impact of Climate Change," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* (forthcoming); Øystein S. LaBianca, "A Forest that Refuses to Disappear: Cycles of Environmental Degeneration and Regeneration in Jordan," Report to the National Geographic Society, Research Grant Number 5758–96, www.casa.arizona.edu/MPP/ngs_report/ngs_rep.html. There is



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analyses suggest, then, that reduced rainfall and cash crop farming together may have contributed, in the long term, to environmental degradation and crop failures.

The abandonment of villages and fields also contributes to desertification, as long-term fallow land is vulnerable to erosion.¹²⁰ While in the long run climatic shifts may account for this abandonment, the immediate causes in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries in Jordan, according to contemporary sources, were the armed conflicts among amirs posted there and their poor (short-sighted) administration of the lands under their supervision. These rebellions seem to have peaked during Faraj's reign and were worst in the region around Karak.¹²¹ There are, thus, dialectical and complex relations among political turmoil, settlement decline, and environmental decline.

AGRICULTURAL HISTORY FROM A SOIL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE

Archaeological surveys verify the general decline of Jordan during the fifteenth century, which is characterized "on the ground" by marked demographic decline. It is a striking characteristic of the period from an archaeological perspective that the rapid growth of villages and intensive water use during the fourteenth century (on a scale unparalleled since the Byzantine period) is followed in the fifteenth by abandonment of villages in some parts of the country and a marked reduction in population in those villages that continued to be occupied through the sixteenth century.

The Northern Jordan Project, one of two archaeological projects I direct in the country, was launched in 2003 to identify the human and climatic factors behind the demographic fluctuations of the period.¹²² The project began a research collaboration last summer with soil specialists and palaeobotanists from Germany, Jordan, and the U.K. with the goal of measuring soil development (and specifically

still no archaeological or soil scientist consensus on the factors behind deforestation in Jordan. It may have been the combined result of overexploitation of timber for fuel and industrial activities (most notable in the Iron Age and Roman periods) and possible clearance of forests to create olive orchards and grain fields, along with climate change and irregular rainfall, which militated against regeneration of forests. For discussions on the relationships between olive cultivation and deciduous forests, see U. Baruch, "The Late Holocene Vegetational History of Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee), Israel," *Paléorient* 12, no. 2 (1986): 37–47, and Reinder Neef, "Introduction, Development and Environmental Implications of Olive Culture: The Evidence from Jordan," in *Man's Role in the Shaping of the Eastern Mediterranean Landscape*, ed. S. Botteme, G. Entjes-Nieborg, and W. van Zeist (Rotterdam 1990), 303–5.

¹²⁰ Carlos Cordova, "Pollen Samples from Malkā, Jordan: Preliminary Report," unpublished lab report, Northern Jordan Survey project files, 2004; Lucke et al., "The Abandonment of the Decapolis."

¹²¹ Walker, "Review of Ḥujjah," 221–22; Ḥujjah, *Al-Tārīkh al-Siyāsī*, 250 ff.

¹²² Walker, "Northern Jordan Survey."



erosion), in combination with archival research (primarily *waqfīyāt*) and archaeological survey and excavation, to identify changes in crops grown and climatic conditions and their relationship, if any, with the political circumstances of the day.¹²³ Preliminary results of these seasons suggest that the combined effect of drought and political instability damaged the agricultural sector in the geographically exposed lowlands and plateaus and that demographic decline was far from universal for the region.

CONCLUSIONS—DECLINE OR TRANSFORMATION?

“Decline” is in the eye of the beholder. From the vantage point of Jordan, what characterizes the fifteenth century is not urban violence, high taxes on industry, changing trade routes, and confiscation of property—the conditions traditionally cited for Egypt—but climatic and political conditions that made it difficult to farm and to maintain traditional village life. Drought and civil unrest, caused by the amiral conflicts in Karak, seem to have the greatest negative impact on village life and the economy in general in southern Bilād al-Shām. The endowment of the most productive estates in the region during this period may have staved off the worst consequences of both, by allowing for centralized control (and a consistent land management policy), creating security (political, military, and economic), and providing a venue for financial investment in the region (in irrigation canals and dams, roads, storage facilities, etc.) While such endowments did rob the Bayt al-Māl of important tax revenues, it also funneled them into what may have been more effective financial channels. That these were successful enterprises is indicated by their administration in the early Ottoman period: it was more lucrative for the Ottoman state to keep these estates intact than to break them into much smaller *timārs* or *zi‘āmets*. While the evidence is thus far meager, what sources we do have at our disposal suggest that the process of creating rural *awqāf* from former state lands may have been a form of land development, sponsored by the state to respond to and recover from agricultural crises, such as drought, famines, and plague. Seen in this light, the fifteenth century was more a period of rural transformations than decline of the state.

¹²³ Lucke et al., “Soils and Land Use.”



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The Dīwān of Ibn al-Fārid: Readings of its Text Throughout History, edited by Giuseppe Scattolin (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2004). Pp. 276.

REVIEWED BY TH. EMIL HOMERIN, University of Rochester

After years of painstaking research Dr. Giuseppe Scattolin has at last published his critical edition of Ibn al-Fārid's *Dīwān*. While Ibn al-Fārid lived during the Ayyubid period, his verse was a dominant influence on later Arabic poetry composed under the Mamluks. Moreover, his verse and mystical ideas were, at times, sources of contention among factions of ulama during Mamluk rule, while Mamluk amirs endowed the grave and shrine of this poet whom they venerated as a saint.¹

Prior to Scattolin, many editions of Ibn al-Fārid's *Dīwān* were published during the twentieth century, yet all, excepting the edition by A. J. Arberry, lacked careful editing or were flawed in some way. As for Arberry's edition, it was based on the Chester Beatty manuscript that was independent of the main line of transmission from Ibn al-Fārid's grandson, 'Alī, and so it lacked 'Alī's hagiographical introduction and appendix of additional, probably spurious verse, ascribed to Ibn al-Fārid.² Now, Scattolin has joined these separate lines of transmission in his meticulous edition of the *Dīwān*.

Adding to this work's importance is Scattolin's re-discovery during his research of several old manuscripts of the *Dīwān*, including one in Konya dating from between 1242 and 1274, making it the oldest known manuscript. Similar to the Chester Beatty manuscript, it is independent of 'Alī's transmission and contains the same fifteen major poems, in addition to a few quatrains and riddles. Scattolin used the Konya manuscript as his primary text to which he then added material from other manuscripts, including those representing 'Alī's line of transmission. In his introduction, Scattolin enumerates and describes the eight manuscripts and thirteen earlier printed editions whose readings and variants appear in the notes to the poems. Scattolin then carefully walks the reader through the critical apparatus of his own edition, which is followed by a "basic bibliography," and illustrations of some of the most important manuscripts (pp. 12–28).

Scattolin precedes this important textual information with some brief

¹See Th. Emil Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Fārid, His Verse, and His Shrine*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York, 2001).

²A. J. Arberry, *The Mystical Poems of Ibn al-Fārid* (Dublin, 1952, 1956).



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speculations on the stages of Ibn al-Fārid’s life (pp. 1–4). He states that during his last years in Cairo, Ibn al-Fārid chose “to live in seclusion,” though we have no evidence to support this. Given that Ibn al-Fārid was married, had at least three children, and a number of students, this seems unlikely. Further, when discussing Ibn al-Fārid’s shrine, Scattolin claims that it was “in time enlarged and embellished by many sultans” (p. 3). In fact, to my knowledge, the shrine was never formally endowed by a Mamluk or Ottoman sultan, though they may have attended activities there and given donations. For the most part, the shrine was supported by a *waqf* established by two Mamluk amirs, Tīmūr al-ibrāhīmī and his protégé Barqūq al-Nāṣirī (d. 877/1472).³

As in his previous studies of Ibn al-Fārid, Scattolin reads the poet’s verse, particularly the *Al-Tā’iyah al-Kubrā*, as an autobiographical account of the poet’s mystical experience, in this case of “separation” (*farq*) from God, “absolute unity” (*al-ittihad*) with God, and “universal, all-comprehensive union . . . the synthesis of the One and the Many” (*al-jam’*) (pp. 5–6). Scattolin then notes the importance of love to Ibn al-Fārid as a catalyst to his mystical transformation to the “Perfect Man.” Despite Scattolin’s use of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s terminology to describe this mystical apotheosis, he is careful to distinguish between some of the ideas of these two contemporaries (pp. 7–11). Scattolin ends this section by offering a partitioning of the *Al-Tā’iyah al-Kubrā* into ten sections “to help the reader to better understand Ibn al-Fārid’s mystical experience expressed in his great mystical poem” (pp. 11–12).

Throughout his introduction, Scattolin makes scarcely any mention of the classical Arabic poetic tradition of which Ibn al-Fārid is a part. Addressing this slightly is the preface by a French translator of Ibn al-Fārid, Jean-Yves L’Hôpital (pp. ix–xx). There L’Hôpital touches upon the difficult and, at times, obscure poetic language of Ibn al-Fārid, his use of alliteration for its musical qualities, and the appearance of place names and pilgrimage stops in his verse. L’Hôpital also draws attention to Ibn al-Fārid’s use of the “fawn” or “gazelle” to represent his beloved, whom the poet also identifies by the name Laylā and the names of other famous Arab beauties. Like Scattolin, L’Hôpital ends with a short discussion of Ibn al-Fārid’s monistic ideas and experience. While both discussions of Ibn al-Fārid’s verse and mystical life are limited, Scattolin’s critical Arabic edition of the *Dīwān* of Ibn al-Fārid is of immense value, and he is to be commended for his substantive contribution to the study of Sufism and Arabic literature.

³Homerin, *Arab Poet*, 60–62, and idem, “The Domed Shrine of Ibn al-Fārid,” *Annales islamologiques* 25 (1990): 133–38.



STUART J. BORSCH, *The Black Death in Egypt and England: A Comparative Study* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005). Pp. 195.

REVIEWED BY RALPH S. HATTOX, Hampden-Sydney College

The potential reader of this comparison of the effects of the fourteenth-century visitation of the Plague in Egypt with those in England should know from the beginning that this is by no means a comprehensive examination of all aspects—social, intellectual, psychological, institutional—of that calamity. It compares, rather, the dramatically different economic consequences of the Black Death on the two areas.

Borsch points out for the potential generalist that the sources for the economic history of Mamluk Egypt are by no means as vast or as accessible as those available for late-medieval Western Europe. He mines the usual archival and literary sources: *waqfiyāt*, chronicles, administrative handbooks, and the like. For his raw economic data for pre- and post-Plague Egypt, he relies on a land survey of 1315 and an Ottoman survey from the end of the sixteenth century. In order to exploit the former effectively and to extrapolate from it data which could be compared to the later survey, he had to establish the value of the *dīnār jayshī*, used in the 1315 survey. He devotes an entire chapter to this discussion of establishing meaningful currency equivalents.

Borsch is aware of the methodological questions that are raised by comparing two such seemingly disparate regions as England and Egypt, and, if he doesn't manage to eliminate all potential objections, he does make a good case for his approach. He points out the similarities of the two: relatively equivalent populations, similarities in the decentralized relationship of the "nobility" and the sovereign, the relative insularity of both, and their similar agriculturally-based economies. He is perhaps a bit too quick to summarily dismiss as an "Orientalist trap" consideration of non-economic cultural factors, and their inherent differences, as having some economic impact. Still, by the end of Borsch's discussion the reader is willing to allow that England and Egypt, if not identical, were near-analogues in their respective regions.

Why, then, were the economic consequences of the calamity so different for the two lands? In England there was the well-known economic benefit for those who survived: wages rose, rents fell, as did the prices of foodstuffs. In Egypt, by contrast, Borsch's comparison from his pre-and post-Plague data sets demonstrates that wages dropped, rents and prices of foodstuffs rose.

The answer Borsch provides is multifaceted, and based on institutional and social factors. There is first and foremost the dramatic difference in patterns of landholding. While both states treated land and the revenues derived from



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agricultural activity as the source of support for a warrior aristocracy, the relationship of each aristocracy to the land and its tenants diverged radically. In Egypt the members of the Mamluk institution were supported by *iqtā*'s, uninheritable and alienable grants of land, supplying revenue for an individual Mamluk or amir, which were administered by civil servants. Since tenure in any particular holding might be short, there was great incentive to milk them for all possible short-term gains, and little incentive to make long-term improvements. The beneficiaries neither lived on their estates, nor did they have more than minimal familiarity with their holdings or tenants; actual physical visits to one's holdings, if they occurred at all, were limited to participation in expeditions to deal with revolts, Bedouin incursions, or other sources of peril. In these expeditions Mamluks reflected an understanding that, their constant infighting and jockeying for power notwithstanding, they had a common interest in keeping the countryside in line.

This solidarity is cited by Borsch as one of the chief factors in the economic collapse that followed the Plague. When faced with a post-Plague economic crisis in which market forces would have tended to drive up wages and drive down rents and revenues, he sees the Mamluk landholders as making common cause, presenting "a united front in the face of rural labor demands," by not breaking ranks; they profited as well from state decrees which regularly raised the ceiling on rents that could be charged. While in England there were similar acts by the Crown and Parliament to mitigate the economic "hardships" of landholders as a result of the dramatic shrinkage of the supply of labor, in the end these failed, and market forces prevailed. Here each member of the landholding aristocracy was in effect competing in the marketplace with all the others for the services of labor. The long term results saw a rise in wages and a decrease in rents.

For the Egyptian peasant and for the economy of Egypt as a whole, the calamity was compounded by the dramatic deterioration of the complex irrigation system by which the annual cycles of the Nile were put to productive use. It took not only manpower but money to do the yearly maintenance chores required to keep the system functioning, and both were in short supply. Not only were there smaller revenues coming in from agricultural lands, but civil administrators, working in the interest of their individual Mamluk clients, diverted monies that would have gone to irrigation maintenance to meet the continuing revenue needs of the urban elite. More land became uncultivable, with the consequent effect on the price of foodstuffs. As their situation became dire, peasants with increasing frequency sought the perceived security of urban life; their lands, at the same time, more and more were claimed by Bedouin, a process that further exacerbated the economic collapse.

One might at first be tempted to criticize Borsch's work as in one sense uneven: rather than being a full and detailed original study of both the Egyptian



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and English economies, it is more a study of the Egyptian economy, and how his findings compare with those of earlier historians concerning England; his use of primary sources is limited entirely to the Egyptian side of the equation. This is hardly a serious flaw, since it would take an almost impossibly versatile historian to be able to pursue both lines with equal skill. In weaving together material extracted from a variety of sources and shedding light on how, starting from a roughly equivalent point, the economic fate of two societies could so dramatically diverge owing to such factors as land tenure and institutional structures, Stuart Borsch has taken us one step closer to an understanding of how the modern world, starting from one near-universal Eurasian calamity, emerged as it did. As he points out, such studies as his, focusing on other societies, could profitably be taken up. The work at hand provides a solid, if not flawless, paradigm.

AHMAD ŞUBHİ MANŞUR, *Al-‘Aqā’id al-Dīniyah fī Miṣr al-Mamlūkiyah bayna al-Islām wa-al-Taṣawwuf* (Cairo: al-Hay’ah al-Miṣrīyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 2000). Pp. 404.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD McGREGOR, Vanderbilt University

This book aims to set things straight regarding the nature of Sufism. Under a thin veneer of historiographical terminology, at base the author’s position is that Sufism is un-Islamic. In short, the author holds that Sufism arose as a deviant practice among Muslims, while in contrast Islam (as reducible to the author’s Quranic quotations) is unchanging, and thus pure, ahistorical, and monolithic. The book is not concerned with the medieval debates over various Sufi concepts or practices, but is rather a long lesson for the reader in how Mamluk era Sufism is not compatible with the author’s own (unexamined) understanding of Islamic religion. The methodological flaws run deep. The point is even made that one of the duties of the historian is to identify and warn contemporary readers against “mistakes” like Sufism. It does not seem to bother the author that this methodology is utterly untenable when it turns to material outside the researcher’s own cultural sphere. Coptic religious history, or say that in China under the Ming dynasty, are thus beyond the horizon of this historian.

The first part of the introduction provides a discussion of the nature and goals of Sufism, followed by sections on its origins and relation to asceticism (*zuhd*). The reader is told that a detailed treatment of Sufi terminology is impossible here because Sufis are inconsistent and utterly subjective in their use of terminology



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(pp. 15, 41). The impossibility of a religious tradition sustaining itself while its participants cannot communicate with one another, or those who come after them, does not arise. In reality, there is plenty to say about the evolution of Sufi terminology (or, for example, theological or legal terms), but the fact that vocabulary shifts in meaning over time is surely not proof that it is subjective. The author builds on this "subjectivity," tying the Sufi idea of *dhawq* (tasting) to the Quranic idea of *hawā'* (desire, selfish passion). The aim here is to conflate mystical epistemology with the Quranic condemnation of "him who takes his own passion as a god. . ." (Quran 25:43). The origin of Sufism is predictably Christian and Jewish, although no historical evidence is provided. Instead, a Quranic quotation to the effect that it itself is the perfection of religion is taken as proof that Sufism could thus have nothing to add or be of any use (p. 22). The entire premise that any religious inspiration (*wahy*) could occur after the revelation of the Quran is rejected (p. 23). The ascetics are superior to the Sufis because they are diligent in their prescribed prayers, but asceticism is finally also rejected as fundamentally superfluous (pp. 26–28).

The second part of the introduction asserts that Sufism was behind an intellectual decline among the ulama of the Mamluk period. Evidence for this decline is the proliferation of commentaries and epitomes, although no details are provided. This correlation between intellectual decline and the production of commentaries is adopted without question. The only heroes fighting this decadence were the *mujtahids*, like Ibn Taymīyah. The introduction ends with a concise summary of the author's approach and ultimate conclusion, one that denies any historicity to Islam, reducing it to an abstract theological statement that takes it out of the realm of human history. We are told that, ". . . in the end Sufism is simply the sum of the opinions of those who follow it . . . and what disgraces Sufis disgraces Sufism; but Islam is different, it is the rule of God over humanity. It is unaffected by the faults of Muslims" (p. 41). Logically, what is said here about Sufism would also apply to the elaboration of *kalām* or Islamic law, but that goes unsaid.

The body of the study takes up figures such as al-Ghazālī, Ibn 'Arabī, and Ibn Taymīyah. Critics of Ibn 'Arabī such as al-Baqā'ī are touched upon, as is his defender al-Sha'rānī. A few lesser but more colorful Sufis of the period are singled out as examples of the poison fruit of Sufism. These include al-Bājirbaqī, Ibn Baqaqī, and Ibn Labbān, each of whom held beliefs accepted only by his followers. A long description is then provided of the figure of the *walī*, his veneration by his followers, and the un-Islamic nature of it all. There is no analysis, historical or otherwise, in this treatment.

The author picks from the historical chronicles familiar to all historians of Mamluk Egypt. However, the bibliography does provide brief annotations to eighty-eight manuscripts (most of them hagiographical documents) found in the Egyptian



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National Library. The concluding section restates the assertion that this study "makes clear the gap between the religion of Islam and the beliefs of many Muslims in the Mamluk period" (p. 359). Sufism has been a mistaken path taken by many. The author deduces from this the root of an intellectual decline in the Islamic world, one that would later open the door to European invasion and domination (p. 373). The author asserts finally that Sufism, like Wahhabism, is an extreme best avoided.

This book offers young academics in Egypt and elsewhere a poor model for critical or stimulating research. Viewing history as a soapbox from which to expound one's own religious beliefs has no place in a multi-religious global village. Perhaps even worse, this approach tempts the researcher with short cuts out of difficult historical complexities, be they methodological or fact-based. Tendentiousness, religious or otherwise, smooths over the difficulties that writing history should embrace, and even seek out.

ANNE-MARIE EDDÉ, *La principauté Ayyoubide d'Alep (579/1183–658/1260)*
Freiburger Islamstudien, vol. 21 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999). Pp. 727.

REVIEWED BY BETHANY J. WALKER, Grand Valley State University

Anne-Marie Eddé's *opus magnum*, a seven-hundred page tome on the Ayyubid Principality of Aleppo, is based on her doctoral dissertation, written under the supervision of Dominique Sourdel and submitted to the Sorbonne in 1995. The author, who is now Director of the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris, worked closely with the leading French and German scholars of the Ayyubid and Crusader Levant, including Jean-Claude Garcin, Jean Richard, Heinz Halm, and Hans Mayer, and the author's debt to these scholars is duly acknowledged throughout the volume. This formidable monograph is the most synthetic, detailed, and exhaustive textual study of Ayyubid Aleppo now available. Much more than another analysis of the Ayyubid city, Eddé's work is a finely-tuned analysis of the principality and the role of the city within it during a brief eighty-year period.¹ Building on the textual

¹Previous works on Ayyubid Aleppo include: Muhammad Rāghib al-Tabbākh, *I'lām al-Nubalā' bi-Tārīkh Halab al-Shahbā'* (Aleppo, 1923–26); J. Sauvaget, *Alep, essai sur le développement d'une grande ville syrienne, des origines au milieu du XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1941); D. Sourdel,



and theoretical foundations laid by Jean Sauvaget in his 1941 monograph,² Eddé spins his short chapter on the Ayyubid city into an encyclopedic compendium and analysis of written sources relevant to the principality as whole when it was at its height, through an evaluation of Aleppo's political, economic, religious, and social institutions. The work offers a sophisticated model of textual criticism that is applicable to any period of research.

The goals of Eddé's study, described in detail in her Introduction, are to present a synthesis of the data available on Ayyubid Aleppo, culled entirely from the textual sources, and to situate the city in the context of its principality and the principality in a larger political context (p. 16). She deliberately eschews theoretical works and non text-based studies in favor of a purely textual approach to the topic, in spite of the availability of a wealth of art historical, archaeological, and anthropological sources. She is, moreover, careful to cite only those secondary sources whose focus areas are geographically close to and roughly contemporary with hers: comparisons with Ayyubid Egypt are kept to a minimum, there are practically no references to scholarship on medieval Europe, and Mamluk sources are carefully selected for their relevance to twelfth- and thirteenth-century northern Syria. She justifies such an approach to her topic, accepting the pitfalls in rejecting other forms of supporting scholarship, in these terms:

Nous avons voulu au contraire rester au contact des sources au risqué d'apparaître parfois trop analytique. L'intérêt d'une telle étude n'était pas de faire correspondre des connaissances générales acquises sur d'autres terrains à la situation en Syrie du Nord, mais bien au contraire de partir des données éparses et fragmentées qui apparaissent dans nos sources pour aboutir à une synthèse régionale qui offre, malgré ses imperfections, sa propre originalité (p. 586).

While her selection is focused, the sources she adopts for her study are extensive, combining chronicles, biographical dictionaries, geographies, royal decrees, treaties, and coins (limited to a coin catalogue and one numismatic study in article form) and epigraphy (however to a limited degree). The Arabic sources include Ibn Shaddād, 'Imād al-Dīn al-İsfahānī, Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn al-'Adīm, and Ibn Wāṣil,

²"Esquisse topographique d'Alep intro-muros à l'époque ayyoubide," *Annales archéologiques de Syrie* 2 (1952): 109–33; H. Gaube and E. Wirth, *Aleppo: Historische und geographische Beiträge zur baulichen Gestaltung, zur sozialen Organisation, und zur wirtschaftlichen Dynamik einer vorderasiatischen Fernhandelsmetropole* (Wiesbaden, 1984).

²Sauvaget, *Alep*.



among the chroniclers; the biographical dictionaries of Ibn al-Qiftī and Ibn al-‘Adīm (*Bughyat al-Tālib fī Tārīkh al-Halab*); the topographies of al-Harawī, Yāqūt, and Ibn Shaddād (*Al-A‘lāq al-Khaṭīrah fī Dhikr Umarā’ al-Shām wa-al-Jazīrah*); and a variety of Mamluk sources that incorporate earlier, Ayyubid material (al-Nuwayrī, al-Dhababī, al-Qalqashandī, al-Yūnīnī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Khallikān, al-Ṣafadī, Ibn al-‘Imād, al-Dimyātī, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, and Abū al-Fidā’, among others). Eddé also makes use of several sources in Persian (Ibn Bībī, for the Seljuks of Rum, and Rashīd al-Dīn, for the Il Khanids), Syriac (Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus), Armenian (many brief accounts), and Latin (largely secondary sources on the Crusader states), all in French translation. Much of the quantitative (prices, salaries, revenues), enumerative (lists of settlements and public buildings), and demographic (family trees, charts of *nishbāhs* and professions) data are culled with care from these sources and are tabulated in convenient forms in the many appendices that are included at the back of the monograph.

In terms of its structure, *La principauté Ayyoubide d’Alep* consciously mirrors that of the Ayyubid chapter in Sauvaget’s monograph,³ which was divided into a historical survey; an analysis of urban development; and descriptions of the archaeological remains of the city, its basic characteristics, and its physical development. Eddé divides her study into two parts: political and social history. Part One largely expands on Sauvaget’s historical summary, focusing on the reigns of al-Zāhir Ghāzī (579–613/1183–1216), al-‘Azīz (613–34/1216–36), and al-Nāṣir Yūsuf II (634–58/1236–60). Each chapter is subdivided into multiple sections, based on the outstanding characteristics or developments of each reign, such as the diplomatic relations of the principality under al-Zāhir, an assessment of Tughril’s regency, a comparison of the early and later years of al-Nāṣir’s reign and a description of his diplomatic and strategic failures; and the events leading up to the Mongol invasion. Eddé’s unique contribution in this section is diplomatic history, a topic on which she had already published extensively. On this topic she writes a nuanced and thoroughly documented assessment of the Aleppan sultans’ diplomatic relations with other Ayyubid states, the Seljuks of Anatolia, the Armenians of Cilicia, the Crusaders, and Italian mercantile states. She concludes Part One with a sobering evaluation of the collapse of Ayyubid Syria, which she suggests was due as much to structural failures (Ayyubid rivalries, al-Nāṣir’s political and diplomatic inexperience, the ethnic heterogeneity of Aleppo’s army) as to the Mongol invasion of 658/1260 (pp. 191–92).

Part Two is dedicated to social and administrative history in a broad sense and more fully explores themes that were merely summarized in Sauvaget. It is subdivided into three sections: administrative history (the institutions and power

³Ibid., 129–54.



of the state), social history (the religious and cultural life of Aleppo), and what the author calls "the activities of the countryside and towns" (in short, the hinterland). Section One aims at identifying the different levels and forms of power in thirteenth-century Aleppo (political, economic, and social), their institutional forms, and how they interact and intersect on the levels of officialdom and civilian society.⁴ Eddé considers the institution of *iqtā'* a central component in the multi-faceted power structure binding the state to its officials and the general population. The author traces the development of *iqtā'* in the principality and offers promising lines of inquiry for evaluating political, economic, and social relations in the process. She suggests that as part of the process towards centralization, Sultan al-Zāhir strengthened the hand of the state over the powerful amirs by reassigning their *iqtā'*s, which were largely important towns and fortresses, to governors (*wālis*) or their lieutenants (*nā'ibs*), compensating amirs with *iqtā'*s consisting of villages (or shares thereof) and agricultural land (pp. 281–82). In this way strategic centers came under the direct control of the sultan and agricultural land was essentially farmed out to amirs and occasionally rotated, foreshadowing the Mamluk *iqtā'* system of the fourteenth century. This analysis is followed by a description of Aleppo's defensives and a highly readable and entertaining narrative of Ayyubid warfare (pp. 291–310). Her suggestions about the long-term environmental impact of siege warfare, based entirely on written sources, may be supported by archaeological and environmental research and warrant further consideration by specialists in these fields. Military presence was not always detrimental to the countryside, however. For the author, fortresses were the expression of the power of the Ayyubid state in all its forms: they were not merely military centers but were also integral to the economic life of the countryside by generating development. Citing written sources, she claims that village markets thrived under the economic stimulus of castles nearby and that their markets often collapsed and the villages declined or were abandoned once a fortress was abandoned or destroyed (p. 298). Again, such patterns are confirmed by the archaeological record, which illustrates in sometimes vivid ways how closely garrison and village economies were intertwined in the Ayyubid and Mamluk-period Levant.⁵

⁴This theme has recently been the focus of a three-year joint research initiative of the French and American institutes in Cairo, called "Exercising Power in the Age of the Sultanates" (www.arce.org/ifao/ifao.html). The proceedings of a bi-lingual conference launched by this project and held in Amman in May, 2005, is being published by l'Institut Français du Proche Orient in Damascus and Amman (*L'Exercise du pouvoir à l'age des sultanats: Bilad al Shām et l'Iran*, ed. B. J. Walker and J-F. Salles [in press]).

⁵To cite only one example, it appears that the village of Ḥisbān in central Jordan was gradually abandoned after the relocation of the Mamluk citadel to nearby Amman in the mid-fourteenth century. The village likely supplied the garrison with foodstuffs and played a role in the processing



Eddé devotes her second section of Part Two to Aleppo's religious and cultural life, for which she relies heavily on biographical dictionaries and such entries included in chronicles in reconstructing social classes, power relations, economic activity, and demographic change.⁶ One of the most interesting themes to emerge from this section is that the revival of Sunni Islam under the Ayyubids did not necessarily eradicate Shi'ism.⁷ Aleppo retained its religious diversity, even while numerous madrasahs were built to promote "orthodox" Islam and the sultan ordered from time to time an attack on local Shi'ah communities. Eddé cites three different Shi'ah communities in Aleppo, all of which maintained a presence in the city throughout the period and are attested in the written sources: the *ashrāf* (direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad), the *Imamis* (Twelver Shi'is), and the assimilated *Ismailis* (a holdover from the period of Fatimid control of the region) (pp. 436–37).

The final section is the most innovative of the monograph and should have the most to offer social historians. It deals with what is often called the "hinterland," that is rural society and the physical landscape and resources of the countryside. Maintaining her concern with power relations throughout, Eddé carefully combs the texts for references to the countryside and the fellahin.⁸ She describes the overwhelming concern for water in the sources and the methods used to capture, transport, and store it. She describes the natural resources of the countryside, including agricultural products, timber, salt, and minerals, and the exploitation of these resources by the state and *muqta'*s.⁹ Unfortunately, many of these descriptions take the form of lists, which is often all the original texts had to offer on such subjects. Eddé also attempts to describe village-Bedouin relations (p. 500) and the ranking of settlements (pp. 570–73) through the written sources. Here, however,

and distribution of cane sugar for the state official stationed there. See B. J. Walker, "Mamluk Administration of Transjordan: Recent Findings from Tall Hisban," *Al-'Usūr al-Wustá* 13, no. 2 (2001): 29–33; B. J. Walker and Ø. S. LaBianca, "The Islamic *Qusur* of Tall Hisban: Preliminary Report on the 1998 and 2001 Seasons," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 47 (2003): 443–71; and B. J. Walker, "Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilād al-Shām* in the Fourteenth Century: The Case of Hisban," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62, no. 3 (2003): 241–61.

⁶The author identifies twelve amirs and over 344 names of the civilian elite in the biographical entries for this study (p. 18).

⁷In this she disagrees with Sauvaget, who asserts that the madrasahs succeeded to such a degree in their proselytizing functions that Shi'i Islam survived merely as the doctrine of a weak and disappearing community that played no active role in Aleppan society (Sauvaget, *Alep*, 137).

⁸Her primary sources in this respect are Ibn al-'Adīm, Ibn Shihnah, Ibn Shaddād, and Yāqūt.

⁹The medieval texts, once again, offer tantalizing information on contemporary assessments about environmental decline. Deforestation, for example, is attributed by the Arab sources to the construction of new homes and to siege warfare (p. 497). Eddé makes the most of references, as few of them as there are, to generate a meaningful narrative.



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is where over-reliance on the medieval texts and refusing to incorporate the results of archaeological and anthropological research (which has an extensive literature on the subject) weaken the narrative: the author has little to say about village or nomadic life in general, admitting that the sources are largely silent about such matters. In short, one cannot discuss the "hinterland" in any depth without recourse to the archaeological literature.

Her written sources, however, are strong when it comes to numbers: Eddé exerts much effort in reconstructing price lists of agricultural commodities and assessing price fluctuations of the same (pp. 554–58). Her population estimates illustrate the most creative and rigorous use of the textual material at her disposal (pp. 558–65). Eddé arrives at an estimate of 50,000–80,000 people living in Aleppo on the eve of the Mongol invasion, a number at which she arrives using a variety of methods adopted in earlier studies on Islamic cities, based on: the number of baths in the city (one bath servicing 3,000–5,000 people), the number of *masjids*, city density calculated at 200 people/hectare (applied in studies on Nishapur, among other cities), the number and size of houses, and the size of the city's Great Mosque. Eddé uses a combination of all of these and checks them against numbers provided by the texts, which she admits are probably exaggerated by the Arab historians.

In her intensive and extensive, I should say exhaustive, use of the available textual material Eddé is to be congratulated. It is a gargantuan task, and she makes the most of her source material to write a coherent and ambitious narrative. It is also in the exclusive use of these sources that she is to be criticized. Although Eddé justifies her methodology in her Introduction, and indeed reminds her reader of this throughout the monograph, the "grand narrative" suffers in places, nonetheless, because there has been no recourse to the rich scholarly literature generated by art historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, and environmental historians.¹⁰ The treatment of Ayyubid Aleppo is, thus, uneven, with strengths in the analysis of political and economic history but a weakness in cultural history. To her credit, the author is more than aware of such deficits,¹¹ acknowledging throughout where her sources fail and presenting her work as only a first stage in a synthesis of available written sources on the topic (p. 15). In this regard, it is the questions that emerge from her reading of the more limited sources that are the most interesting

¹⁰The author does cite a few art historical sources, but they are out-of-date and do not reflect the best of the literature available for her study.

¹¹Her goal is ultimately synthesis of the fractured written record and to let that record speak for itself: "L'intérêt d'une telle étude n'était pas de faire correspondre des connaissances générales acquises sur d'autres terrains à la situation en Syrie du Nord, mais bien au contraire de partir des données éparpillées et fragmentées qui apparaissent dans nos sources pour aboutir à une synthèse régionale qui offre, malgré ses imperfections, sa propre originalité" (p. 586).



and should generate scholarly research in this field for years to come. Such questions as the role of the *muqta'* in planting decisions, what accounts for village abandonment, how to describe political actors and action, what was the relationship between central and regional powers, and how to define Aleppo as a "city" are promising lines of inquiry across the disciplines.

These criticisms aside, Eddé's monograph offers one of the best models for textual criticism in modern Islamic historiography and is the best description available to us today of Ayyubid Aleppo; it is beautifully written, exhaustive in its textual synthesis and analysis, and a truly excellent reference for the period. Mamluk scholars will benefit from the work's holistic portrait of the principality on the eve of Mamluk annexation, which describes the institutions, personnel, settlement network, land management systems, and defensive network that were passed on to the Cairo-based sultanate. The author appropriately concludes her study with what she believes was, ultimately, the character of Ayyubid Aleppo: there was social mobility (merchants were religious scholars, scholars were soldiers, soldiers were poets), ethnic diversity and tolerance (urban neighborhoods were not segregated), and religious diversity (Christians and Shi'is were active members of their mixed communities), and the foundations were laid there for the future economic prosperity of northern Syria (through its trade with Europe) (pp. 582–86). Although the Mongol invasion dealt Aleppo a terrible blow, it was the society described by Eddé that experienced a renaissance in the fourteenth century, this time under the Mamluks (p. 586).

SHAMS AL-DĪN ABŪ ‘ABD ALLĀH MUHAMMAD IBN ABĪ BAKR IBN QAYYIM AL-JAWZĪYAH,
Al-Turuq al-Hukmīyah fī al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘īyah, aw, Al-Firāsah al-Mardīyah
fī Aḥkām al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘īyah, edited by Sayyid ‘Umrān (Cairo: Dār al-
 Ḥadīth, 1323/2002). Pp. 286.

REVIEWED BY JON HOOVER, Near East School of Theology, Beirut

By the Mamluk era, much of the Muslim religious establishment had made peace with the political impotency of the caliphate, and it was widely accepted that the military rulers and their *mazālim* courts performed necessary public functions that fell outside the jurisdiction of the qadi and the jurists' *fiqh*. While not challenging the fundamental order of the Mamluk government, Ibn Taymīyah (d. 1328) and his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah (d. 1350) contested this limitation of religious law in a number of works on *al-siyāsah al-shar‘īyah* (governance in accord with



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the shari‘ah). These writings reconceive the *fiqh* to encompass the offices of public administration, endow the non-caliphal ruler with religious authority, and make the overall welfare of Muslim society the aim of the shari‘ah.

A key work in the genre of *al-siyāsah al-shar‘iyah* is Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Al-Turuq al-Hukmīyah*. This is dedicated primarily to the evaluation of evidence in court cases. In the formalistic judicial procedure of classical *fiqh*, the qadi could take only verbal testimony of reputable witnesses (and sometimes circumstantial evidence) into account. It was thus difficult to attain convictions, leading to the notion that Islamic law was inadequate in itself to maintain civil order. Rejecting these limitations, Ibn al-Qayyim draws all manner of evidence, including testimony extracted through judicial torture, into a religious framework devoted to public justice. This serves both to inform *mazālim* procedures with religious legitimacy and guidance and to challenge the qadis to expand their range of admissible evidence.

The interest of such ideas to modern Muslims seeking comprehensive Islamicization of the political sphere is apparent. This helps explain the proliferation of editions and printings of Ibn Taymīyah’s and Ibn al-Qayyim’s works on *siyāsah*. The edition of Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Al-Turuq al-Hukmīyah* under review was prepared by Sayyid ‘Umrān. As for text critical matters, ‘Umrān tells us only that he relied on two copies (unidentified), one of which was already edited. The printing contains a number of unfortunate errors not found in previous editions (p. 9 l. 15 *hādhīhi* for *hal*; p. 107 l. 15 a stray *alif* after *idhā*; p. 182 l. 3 *al-hukm* spelled *al-ḥukkm*, etc.), but footnotes helpfully define terms and give Quran and hadith references. In short, this text gives access to Ibn al-Qayyim’s thought, but it is little more than a trade edition, and not a very good one at that. Rather than comment further on ‘Umrān’s work, I have judged it more useful to compile a history of the printing of Ibn al-Qayyim’s text to draw attention to the numerous versions available and encourage someone to assemble a serious critical edition of this important work.

Ibn al-Qayyim’s text has come into the hands of at least eight editors since 1900. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqī’s edition (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sunnah al-Muhammadīyah, 1372/1953) is based on two late manuscripts. Although undated, al-Fiqī reckons that the first was copied in the late nineteenth century at the earliest. The second was copied in 1338/1919–20.

Al-Fiqī notes that the company Shirkat Tab‘ al-Kutub al-‘Arabīyah—which, he adds, was established and run by Muḥammad ‘Abduh—also made Ibn al-Qayyim’s text available, but he regrets that it seems to have been based on a corrupt source full of omissions. The edition in question was printed at the Maṭba‘at al-Ādāb wa-al-Mu’ayyad in Egypt in 1317/1899–1900. Unfortunately, it does not include any mention of its editor or manuscript source. It differs from al-Fiqī’s text at many points and suffers a large omission on p. 121 corresponding to



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al-Fiqī pp. 122–38 and ‘Umrān pp. 105–19.

An edition by Ahmād ‘Abd al-Halīm al-‘Askarī (Cairo: Al-Mu’assasah al-‘Arabīyah lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr, 1380/1961) gives no indication of its textual sources. Perhaps al-‘Askarī had resort to al-Fiqī’s text since comparison of the first three pages in the two editions shows only very minor differences.

Muhammad Jamīl Ghāzī’s edition appeared in both Jeddah (Dār al-Madanī lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, no date) and Cairo (Maṭba‘at al-Madanī, no date). Although paginated and typeset differently, these two printings may have come out about the same time. Both include an introduction by Ghāzī dated 29 Dhū al-Qa‘dah 1397/November 10, 1977. In the preface to the Cairo printing, the publisher Maḥmūd ‘Alī al-Madanī briefly honors the passing of his father during Ramaḍān 1398/1978. This note is absent from the otherwise identical preface to the Jeddah version. Ghāzī bases his text on a photograph—in the possession of a certain Muhammad Naṣīf—of a complete manuscript in the Baghdad library Maktabat al-Awqāf al-‘Āmmah dated Dhū al-Ḥijjah 811/1409. Ghāzī notes that this manuscript is better than the defective sources used by ‘Askarī and al-Fiqī, and Ghāzī’s text does in fact differ from these two at many points.

A printing by Ibrāhīm Ramaḍān (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī, 1991) does not indicate its source. However, information in footnotes on the first three pages referring to “the printed text” (unidentified) and to textual variants mentioned by “the editor” (again unidentified) correspond to what we find in al-Fiqī’s edition.

‘Iṣām Fāris al-Ḥarastānī, another editor of Ibn al-Qayyim’s text (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1998), criticizes the poor quality of earlier editions, but regrettably he fails to note his sources. The text itself is clearly printed and is accompanied by notes defining terms and providing hadith references. There is also a hadith index. While this edition provides hadith collections and numbers, the references in ‘Umrān are more helpful in that they also indicate the books (*kitāb*) and sections (*bāb*) in the respective collections.

Coming out in the same year as ‘Umrān’s work, the text of Ṣāliḥ Ahmād al-Shāmī (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1423/2002) is drawn from al-Fiqī and an edition by Bashīr Muḥammad ‘Uyūn, which I was unable to locate. Al-Shāmī provides no publication information for ‘Uyūn’s edition and tells us only that the latter based his text on a number of earlier printings of Ibn al-Qayyim’s work. Al-Shāmī’s primary contribution is sustained attention to the structure and rational division of the text.

Also worth mentioning is the English translation of Ibn al-Qayyim’s work by Ala’eddin Kharofa, *The Legal Methods of Islamic Administration* (Kuala Lumpur: International Law Book Services, 2000). The translation is serviceable if somewhat free, and it follows variously the Arabic of Ghāzī (Jeddah), al-‘Askarī, and al-Fiqī (in an undated printing by Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah in Beirut). Kharofa’s division



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of the work into ten chapters is not found in the Arabic and sometimes obscures the flow of Ibn al-Qayyim's argument.

To conclude, substantial effort has been given over the last several decades to making Ibn al-Qayyim's *Al-Turuq al-Hukmīyah* readily accessible. From a scholarly point of view, however, the situation is chaotic. Pagination varies widely from printing to printing. Very little progress has been made toward a critical edition, and no one available version is of such distinguished quality that it might serve as the reference standard until such time as there is a proper critical edition. The time is thus ripe for a disciplined attempt at a critical text.

‘ĀMIR NAJĪB MŪSĀ NĀṢIR, *Al-Hayāh al-Iqtisādīyah fī Miṣr fī al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 2003). Pp. 390.

REVIEWED BY STUART BORSCH, Assumption College

For any scholar in search of an up-to-date survey of the Mamluk economy, this book serves as a valuable resource. Its scale and scope cover a wide panorama of factors that drove and influenced the Mamluk economy. The title is slightly misleading, as the book is really a study of the agrarian, not urban side of the economy. However, this misnomer is a pleasant surprise for scholars, as the rural facets of Egypt's economy still remain neglected compared to the urban ones.

The first chapter is devoted to geography and offers fresh material for those interested in the subdivisions and routes of major canals in Egypt's agrarian system. It also provides a detailed survey of population levels during the Mamluk period. It also provides a very well-documented examination of plague deaths in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The second chapter explores the variations in landholding. It extensively details the function and operation of that enigmatic and elusively complicated structure: the *iqtā‘* system. Although not the last word in exploring this subject, the book is very helpful in outlining and clarifying areas of this method of tax farming. The book then describes the agrarian side of pious endowments (*waqf*), relating the ways in which funds were channeled from donor to tax farmer and tax farmer to the endowment. The nature of *rizq* as well as *milk* lands are also discussed here.

The third chapter is devoted to the organization of agrarian life, a subject that has been relatively ignored in previous studies. The use of specific agricultural tools is described here, as well as the way in which labor was applied to different applications. The all-important irrigation system is studied in careful detail, a



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systematic if not novel approach to the structure of wet-farming in the delta and valley of the Nile. This chapter also includes a very engaging exploration of the social conflicts and problems associated with the systems of *iqtā'* and *waqf*.

Chapter four serves as an encyclopedia of the different plants and animals raised in the agrarian economy of Egypt. The author provides a separate description and series of tables on the various kinds of crops grown for proto-industry and urban consumption. It also covers, in some depth, the use of animals for traction and pasture in the rural life of Egypt.

Chapter five examines, minutely, the kinds of rents or taxes imposed on peasants. Some of this is a repeat of details that can be found in other sources, but it serves well as a general outline of the organization of *kharāj*, *'ushr*, *jizyah*, and *mukūs*. For a reader approaching these subjects for the first time, this is a valuable source of reference information.

The final chapter is perhaps the best and most original in the book. The author takes on the difficult task of describing peasant life in Mamluk Egypt. This is a very difficult area due to a paucity of sources but the author is able to extract enough information to provide a fresh and cogent look at this too-often ignored arena of life in the Mamluk Sultanate.

This book provides a valuable reference for scholars, as well as keen insight into otherwise obscure areas of Egyptian life.

HASAN AḤMAD JAGHĀM, *Al-Jīns fī A‘māl al-Imām Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Sūsah: Dār al-Ma‘ārif lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr, 2001). Pp. 395.

REVIEWED BY SYRINX VON HEES, Universität Bonn

The work under review claims to present examples of al-Suyūṭī's writings on matters of sexual life. In the introduction the author states his aim in writing this book: "I consider it our obligation—we, the people of this age—to re-establish connection to and better understanding of what our grandfathers left us in the form of literary and scientific heritage. We did not comprehend all the dimensions of this legacy. In many cases we did not even look at it. I hope, that (through this book) we will undermine the wall of indifference which separates the cultivated among us from the pioneers of Arab civilization, who were more tenacious than ourselves" (pp. 18–19). The author attributes special tenacity to Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, especially in his writings on sexuality. Jaghām claims that al-Suyūṭī's books on erotica, characterized by the usage of explicit sexual diction, were until



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now ignored in studies on al-Suyūṭī and his works (p. 25). He accuses modern scholars interested in al-Suyūṭī either of deliberately ignoring these works or of denying that these works were written by al-Suyūṭī. He argues that modern Arab scholars' avoiding work on these books stems from religious conservatism and apparent piety, which is a late development in Arab culture (pp. 69–78). However, in the introduction he undermines his own argument by presenting the reader with a quotation from al-Jāhīz criticizing his contemporary colleagues for avoiding explicit sexual terminology (pp. 23–24).

The author has used most of the studies and bibliographical works on al-Suyūṭī written in Arabic only. He points out, that in certain bibliographies, the names of some of these books were altered and others were not mentioned at all, due to the fear that they might offend the modesty of the readers (p. 69).

After the introduction, he presents the readers with a summary of al-Suyūṭī's biography. In it he most probably overlooked a minor mistake, claiming that al-Suyūṭī lived for 92 years (p. 33). In a subchapter he gives the characteristics of al-Suyūṭī's writings on sexuality, stating that al-Suyūṭī used the most explicit and sometimes vernacular words so as to reach the broadest public possible (pp. 63–64). He gives a typology of al-Suyūṭī's erotic literature, saying that "since al-Suyūṭī was an imam and a *faqīh*," he wrote his works according to the following schema: first Quranic testimony, second exegesis of the Quran, followed by hadith, linguistics, anecdotes and historical events, and finally poetry (p. 52). However, this typology does not apply at least to one of the books cited in this work, namely *Rashf al-Zulāl min al-Sihr al-Halāl*.

The excerpts from fourteen of al-Suyūṭī's works start on page 81, thus comprising the main bulk of this book. Six works are completely devoted to "the science of coitus": *Shaqqā' iq al-Utrunj fī Raqīq al-Ghunj* (pp. 81–102); *Nuzhat al-Muta' ammil wa-Murshad al-Muta' ahhil fī al-Khatīb wa-al-Mutazawwaj* (pp. 103–27); *Rashf al-Zulāl min al-Sihr al-Halāl* (pp. 129–63); *Al-Īdāh fī 'Ilm al-Nikāh* (pp. 165–91); *Al-Wishāḥ fī Fawā' id al-Nikāh* (pp. 193–228); *Al-Ayk fī Ma'rifat al-Nayk* (pp. 229–39). In another part, Jaghām selects quotations on sexual life from eight works by al-Suyūṭī dealing with various subjects: *Nuzhat al-Julasā' fī Ash'ār al-Nisā'* (pp. 243–49); *Al-Mustazraf fī Akhbār al-Jawārī* (pp. 251–59); *Nuzhat al-'Umr fī al-Tafḍīl bayna al-Bīd wa-al-Sūd wa-al-Sumr* (pp. 261–66); *Kitāb al-Rahmah fī al-Tibb wa-al-Hikmah* (pp. 267–91); *Ghāyat al-Ihsān fī Khalq al-Insān* (pp. 293–307); *Laqt al-Murjān fī Aḥkām al-Jānn* (pp. 309–22); *Al-Kanz al-Madfūn wa-al-Falak al-Mashhūn* (pp. 323–41); *Al-Muzhir fī 'Ulūm al-Lughah wa-Anwā' iḥā* (pp. 343–50).

In this main part of Jaghām's book the author does not specify the reason for selecting certain extracts and omitting others. Most of the works from which Jaghām extracted his selections were edited recently, as he mentions himself, and



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the rest were printed in the nineteenth century, mainly in Egypt. In some cases, he criticizes the editors and corrects their work without referring to any original manuscript (for example, p. 95). It is evident from the footnotes that he did not use original manuscripts. His footnotes are not systematic and precise. In many cases he does not provide page numbers of the secondary literature he is citing, nor any information on the editions of primary sources he is using. Due to the lack of proper usage of quotation marks and footnotes it is sometimes impossible to distinguish between the comments of the author and the original text of al-Suyūtī.

A work which is reproduced in *toto* is *Rashf al-Zulāl min al-Sihr al-Halāl*. In the introductory comment on this work the author argues that al-Suyūtī's intention in writing this book was to fight the widespread homosexual behavior of his contemporaries. This is the interpretation of Jaghām, who also claims that showing homosexuals the delights of heterosexual life is a proven cure for homosexuality in our days (p. 133). Such an interpretation and such a statement are definitely questionable. The author projected his own opinion onto al-Suyūtī's book, which belongs to the *maqāmāt* genre; its language and message are not at all pedantic.

Jaghām, without referring to any manuscript, tries to reconstruct a work attributed to al-Suyūtī, namely *Al-Ayk fī Ma'rifat al-Nayk*. His reconstruction of al-Suyūtī's work is very dubious, because the excerpts he uses are derived from another book by Ni'mat Allāh al-Jazā'irī, where the latter does not at all indicate that this material belongs to al-Suyūtī (pp. 229–39).

Jaghām states that the medical work of al-Suyūtī is disappointing because it is full of descriptions of superstitious practices (pp. 268–69 and 272–73). In footnotes he tries to explain to the reader the names of some spices used in medical prescriptions. However, he fails in a number of cases, as for example his fantastic explanations for *dār sīnī* and *qāqūlah*, which are simply cinnamon and cardamom (p. 274).

In the final analysis this work is not a scholarly contribution to our knowledge of al-Suyūtī and his writings on erotica.

AHMAD HUŞAYT, *Qadāyā min Tārīkh al-Mamālik al-Siyāsī wa-al-Hadārī* (648–923 H/1250–1517 M) (Beirut: al-Furāt lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2003). Pp. 295.

REVIEWED BY AMALIA LEVANONI, University of Haifa

This volume is a selection of Huşayt's articles on important issues in the history of the Mamluk Sultanate (648–923/1250–1517). It is divided into two parts consisting



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of eleven chapters, which have previously been published individually as articles. The first includes four chapters dealing with contemporary historiography, both Mamluk and European, while the second contains seven chapters on internal issues in the Mamluk Sultanate and its foreign relations with the Mongol Ilkhanate and the Crusaders. The book also includes an introduction, index, and a short biography of the author.

Part One of the book begins with a chapter on the reign of al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 658–76/1260–77) and one on the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (710–41/1310–41). These are followed by two chapters on the treaties signed during Baybars' reign, which coordinated land use, commercial activity, and security between the Mamluks and the Franks.

Chapters in Part Two deal with a variety of political, religious, and economic issues. These include chapters on the Mamluk Sultanate's relations with the Kasrawānī hillmen, Cyprus, and the Kārimī merchants. Other chapters deal with issues of religious institutions under the Mamluks, such as the role of the Abbasid Caliphate and the construction and maintenance of mosques and madrasahs by the elite. The book ends with a chapter devoted to the biases of contemporary Western historiography on the Mamluks.

The rationale behind dividing the book into two parts is not clear. If a division in such a volume is necessary at all, then all chapters dealing with documents and historiography should have been systematically included in one part, and the rest, which discuss Mamluk institutions and historical events, in another. This volume relies heavily on and, in fact, summarizes Western and French research in particular, up until the late 1970s. Only rarely is a recent study mentioned and therefore the book's contribution to the present state of Mamluk research is small. Moreover, the preface offers a promise that new data is included in the volume in addition to the chapters already published by Hütayt. Unfortunately, the reprinted chapters do not appear in their original format nor is any indication given as to where and when they were previously published. Thus, even the difficult task of going back to Hütayt's original publications in order to discover the book's new contributions has been rendered impossible. Despite these drawbacks, this volume serves as a testament to the author's broad research activity. Indeed, to the present reviewer's mind, it might have been more appropriate had this book appeared as a variorum volume in honor of Ahmad Hütayt as one of the leading Arab scholars of Mamluk history.



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ŞUBHĪ ‘ABD AL-MUN‘IM, *Al-Mughūl wa-al-Mamālīk: al-Siyāsah wa-al-Sirā‘* (Cairo: al-‘Arabī lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 2001). Pp. 135.

REVIEWED BY ANNE F. BROADBRIDGE, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

In this short work Şubhī ‘Abd al-Mun‘im discusses three aspects of Mongol-Mamluk interaction during the Ilkhanate in Iran (1258–1335): the period of hostility and warfare (1258–1317), the period of peaceful relations (1317–35), and cultural and social cooperation during this latter period. A secondary interest for ‘Abd al-Mun‘im is the role that Christians played as military allies of the Mongols during the period of hostility, but this theme disappears in the two later sections. ‘Abd al-Mun‘im used Arabic sources, and contemporary works either in Arabic or translated from other languages. Although he consulted neither Persian nor Armenian sources directly, he did rely on works based on them. Nevertheless this leads to a certain weakness in the analysis, for both the Armenian and Persian sources must themselves be read for proper treatment of Mamluk-Ilkhanid relations. ‘Abd al-Mun‘im’s Arabic sources include all the usual chronicles, but no biographical dictionaries, which is unfortunate; nor did he include a single work by Muhyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, the official biographer for Baybars, Qalāwūn, and Khalīl, for no reason that I can understand.

I found the work to be creative, interesting, and thoughtful, although I did not always agree with the author’s conclusions. It does, however, have some flaws. First, it suffers from a certain simplification of the role played by religion: ‘Abd al-Mun‘im’s discussion of cooperation between the Ilkhans and Christian rulers, for example, is full of interesting detail about Christian Mongols and their effect on historical events; however, he does not take into account the power discrepancy between the two sides, or the differences among types of Christians. Thus he never explains what it meant to be a vassal to the Mongols, nor does he distinguish between the Armenians (who were vassals), and the popes (who were not). Similarly he claims that unity in religion caused al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to be on splendid terms with both Abū Sa‘īd and Choban, yet never explains why Muḥammad refused all of Abū Sa‘īd’s attempts at a marriage alliance even though he had plenty of eligible daughters, and forbid Choban from being buried in his own tomb in Medina. At times ‘Abd al-Mun‘im also seems to tweak his historical evidence to glorify Muslims more than appropriate: he says that the Mamluks defeated the Mongols at ‘Ayn Jālūt and “saved Islam,” after which the Ilkhan Hulegu died, but fails to mention that Hulegu was not even at ‘Ayn Jālūt, or that his death was five full years later. Likewise when discussing the Ilkhanid invasions of Mamluk Syria, ‘Abd al-Mun‘im makes the Mamluks look like undefeated heroes by mentioning only their victory at Marj al-Ṣuffār in 702/1303, and not the



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two previous invasions (699/1299–1300, 700/1300–1), during one of which the Mamluks themselves were routed (at Wādī al-Khaznadār), while during the other no battle occurred. Surely such details should be included in a serious historical work, even though they paint a less favorable picture of the Mamluks.

A greater flaw is that ‘Abd al-Mun‘im has not read extensively in the Western literature. This is an ongoing problem for Western and Middle Eastern scholars, since neither side reads enough of the other’s work (and yes, this historian includes herself). It seems sometimes that there are two parallel literatures developing, which is a shame. Here this kept the author from gaining familiarity with major ideas that would have contributed greatly to his argument. ‘Abd al-Mun‘im could have benefited from the work of Charles Melville (on the Assassins, the Hijaz, and Ghazan’s conversion); Adel Allouche (Ahmad Teguder’s hostile, not friendly, intentions towards the Mamluks); Reuven Amitai (on the Cold War, Ahmad Teguder’s conversion, and many other topics), and David Ayalon (on demographics). Nor has the author read sufficiently in Mongol history, which leads to omissions or misinterpretations: he describes the center of the empire in the 1290s as Mongolia, not China, ignores the effect of Möngke’s death on the battle of ‘Ayn Jälüt, and omits the Ilkhanid rebellion of 1319 when explaining why it took several years to arrange a peace between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Abū Sa‘īd.

But despite these flaws, I still appreciated the book: I liked ‘Abd al-Mun‘im’s smooth and coherent combination of topical and chronological approaches, his choice of precise historical detail, and most of all the sense this book gave me of a lively mind at work. For example, ‘Abd al-Mun‘im argued that Ghazan’s attacks on the Mamluks were influenced by no fewer than six interesting factors: the flight of rebel Oirats to Egypt, the rebellion of Ghazan’s governor Sülemish, a Mamluk desire to retake Baghdad, Ghazan’s own desire to transfer the Abbasid caliphate to Baghdad, Ilkhanid disdain for the Mamluks, and finally Ghazan’s attempt to increase his separation from the Great Khan in China, with whom he had broken politically. Although I myself would offer a different interpretation for the same set of events, I finished the book feeling that Șubhī ‘Abd al-Mun‘im is an author with whom I would like to engage in spirited discussion.



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‘IMĀD ABŪ GHĀZĪ, *Tūmān Bāy: al-Sultān al-Shahīd* (Cairo: Mīrīt, 1999). Pp. 96.

REVIEWED BY RALPH S. HATTOX, Hampden-Sydney College

Al-Ashraf Tūmānbāy is one of those unfortunates who, owing to the circumstances of their public careers, get less attention than they deserve. It is easy to view his reign as something of an anti-climax, to believe that the conquest of Egypt and Syria by the Ottomans was inevitable after (perhaps even before) Marj Dābiq and the death of Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī in August 1516, and that the battles of al-Raydaniya and Giza were merely epilogues to a drama that had been played out months earlier. Tūmānbāy, if we give him much thought at all, is seen as at best a transitional leader, a Dönitz, whose role it was merely to hold things together until the new masters arrived.

The work at hand reminds us that that view is not entirely universal, and, if it does not contribute anything profound to our understanding of the period, it does give us a glimpse at the place this Circassian holds in the Egyptian national consciousness. ‘Imād Abū Ghāzī is the editor of *Wathā’iq al-Sultān al-Ashraf Tūmān Bāy: Dirāsah wa-Tahqīq wa-Nashr li-Ba’d Wathā’iq al-Waqf wa-al-Bay’ wa-al-Istibdāl*. The work at hand is not, nor is it meant to be, an in-depth examination of Tūmānbāy’s sultanate; it is rather a short summary of the events of his life, one volume in the publisher’s “National Heritage: Personalities” series. This is telling, for one of the author’s desires is to convey Tūmānbāy’s importance, despite his foreign origins, as an Egyptian hero.

Abū Ghāzī begins his narrative with the scene of Tūmānbāy’s execution; far from being a mere dramatic device, it underscores the fact that perhaps nothing in al-Ashraf Tūmānbāy’s life was quite as important as the manner and circumstances of his death. It was in this that he became, rather than a forgettable bridge between one regime and another, *al-sultān al-shahīd*, a martyr not for the faith, but for an independent Egypt.

A nephew of Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī, Tūmānbāy was given by his uncle as a gift to Qāytbāy. He was manumitted during the brief reign of Muḥammad ibn Qāytbāy, and began his rapid ascent through the ranks when his uncle became sultan. By 1505–6 he was already commander of a thousand, and two years later he was promoted to the *dawādārīyah al-kubrā*. In this capacity he became Qānṣawh’s right-hand man, overseeing collection of taxes in the Ṣa‘īd and elsewhere, acting as an intermediary with various segments of the political and religious hierarchy as well as with the populace. When his uncle left Cairo in 1516 for what was to be his final confrontation with the Ottomans, Tūmānbāy was the obvious choice for *nā’ib al-ghaybah* at Cairo.

For the author all this is clearly prelude to Tūmānbāy’s months of glory, when



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following Marj Dābiq he assumed the mantle of a dauntless fighter for a lost cause. This was no Dönitz, merely overseeing the surrender and transfer of power. Nor was he a Talleyrand, smoothly adjusting to and serving the new order. Indeed, when Selim offered him terms in return for his cooperation, he staunchly refused. The picture that Abū Ghāzī paints for us is that of a worthy man who rejects offers for position and power until he becomes convinced that his duty lay in assuming the sultanate and organizing resistance to the new order, not for the sake of his Mamluk comrades, but for the sake of the Egyptian people.

Of course many of the subordinates that thrust the sultanate upon Tūmānbāy would prove uncooperative in the coming months. Discontent and even treachery in the ranks, as well as monumental difficulties in raising the funds needed for further resistance, made an already daunting task a hopeless one. Tūmānbāy's fellow amirs insisted on falling back on al-Raydaniya to make their stand. This resulted, of course, in defeat, in part owing to deliberate treachery by those who sought to secure their futures through collaboration.

Tūmānbāy's determination to resist the Ottomans, or at least his sense that some duty obliged him to do so, went unabated following the rout. He organized resistance at Cairo where, for a short time, he and some seven thousand loyal troops, along with some dauntless Cairenes, managed briefly to eject the Ottomans. When the city was retaken, Selim's revenge on the town was frightful. Tūmānbāy himself eluded capture and fled south, where for some time, in the company of rebellious native elements as well as remnants of the Mamluk army, he conducted a somewhat effective guerrilla campaign. In the end, however, he decided on one last battle at Giza, and, defeated once again, fled to the Buḥayrah. He ultimately fell into Ottoman hands, either through betrayal by tribesmen, the relentless pursuit by Selim's agents, or his own decision to surrender. Abū Ghāzī discusses the circumstances of his captivity, and the question of whether he was tortured or well-treated by Selim. He concurs with those Arabic sources which maintain that Tūmānbāy was rather well-treated, and that Selim was even inclined towards clemency. In the end practical political policy dictated Selim's actions: he was convinced by renegade amirs that as long as Tūmānbāy lived he would be the focus of continued opposition to Ottoman rule.

Abū Ghāzī clearly feels something of a partisanship towards his subject. Tūmānbāy, he tells us, was revered in the memory of Egyptians for his qualities of kindness and humility, as well as for his courage on the battlefield. He does concede that Tūmānbāy had his faults, among which were some fairly brutal measures towards rebellious nomads and peasants in the Sha'īd when he was his uncle's henchman, and turning a blind eye to the corruption of those around him. But this work is clearly not one intended to demonstrate Tūmānbāy's shortcomings,



but rather to discuss his place in the national consciousness of Egypt in subsequent centuries.

There is little new that this book has to offer to the specialist concerning the last few decades of the Mamluk sultanate. It is in large part based on Ibn Iyās and Ibn Zunbul, and while it does incorporate some documentary material and later Egyptian sources and European travellers' accounts, there is no systematic use of contemporary or modern Turkish sources. But Abū Ghāzī's treatment of his subject offers a valuable glimpse at the reverence with which at least some modern Egyptians regard this last Mamluk sultan. To Abū Ghāzī Tūmānbāy was less of a Mamluk hero than an Egyptian one, who, in spite of his Circassian origins, was embraced by Egyptian public sentiment both immediately after his death and in the coming decades and centuries as a symbol of resistance to foreign occupation.

DAMIEN COULON, *Barcelone et le grand commerce d'orient au moyen âge: un siècle de relations avec l'Égypte et la Syrie-Palestine, ca. 1330–ca. 1430*, Bibliothèque de la Casa Velásquez, vol. 27 (Madrid: Casa de Velásquez, Barcelona: Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània, 2004). Pp. 933.

REVIEWED BY BENJAMIN ARBEL, Tel Aviv University

What is generally called the "Levant trade," a term reflecting the Eurocentric character of relevant studies, has for many years attracted considerable interest among historians. This also applies to its late medieval phase, when all territories of that "Levant" were ruled by the Mamluks. The three most important studies on this period are Wilhelm Heyd's old, but still useful, two-volume study of the Levant trade in the Middle Ages, published in 1885–86, and essentially based on Western sources; Subhi Labib's book on Egyptian trade in the later Middle Ages (1965), the first serious study integrating Arabic with Western sources, but with rather limited use of European archival documents; and Eliyahu Ashtor's book (1983), in which Arabic and Western sources were used as well, this time, however, including an impressive amount of unpublished material from a great variety of European archives.¹

Venice and Genoa, the main protagonists of this trade, have been for decades

¹Wilhelm Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen âge* (Leipzig, 1885–86); Subhi Y. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter (1171–1517)* (Wiesbaden, 1965); Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1983).



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the favored subjects of many articles, chapters, short monographs, and publications of sources dedicated to the commercial exchange between Christian Europe and the Islamic Levant. A few other monographs were dedicated to the commercial history of single cities, such as Marseilles or Montpellier, but these were not exclusively focused on relations with the Mamluk territories. This is also the case of Carrère's important study of Barcelona's economy in the later Middle Ages and of Del Treppo's classic work on the commercial expansion of Catalonia in the fifteenth century.² It is probably the richness of the source material, a great part of which still remains unpublished, which until now has deterred scholars from writing extensive syntheses centered on the main participants in this trade. The present volume, which focuses on Barcelona's trade with Egypt and Syria-Palestine between 1330 and 1430, can therefore be considered, despite the rich historiography already dealing with the Levant trade, as an important breakthrough. As a matter of fact, this monumental book is the most detailed, thorough, and voluminous monograph hitherto published on the history of the Levant trade of one of the major trading centers of southern Europe in the late Middle Ages.

This impressive study is essentially based on archival material gleaned from different collections in Barcelona, particularly notarial documents and account books of private commercial firms, as well as official registers of the royal administration and of the city of Barcelona. These are supplemented by published sources, mainly Aragonese and, to a certain extent, Arabic as well, particularly those available in translation into Western languages.

The book is divided into three parts: the first deals with the infrastructure of trade in the wider sense of this term, including both institutional and technical factors. The discussion opens with an examination of the role of the Church and the papacy. With the idea of a Crusade still in vogue, trade with the Mamluks was officially banned by the Church, but tolerated in practice, in exchange for licenses sold by the papacy, and often resold to merchants directly involved in this activity.

The discussion then turns to the attitude of the Aragonese crown to commercial relations with the Mamluks and its relevant diplomatic interventions, with special attention to the change resulting from the rise to the throne of Alfonso V (1416–44). Probably because he was a bitter enemy of the papacy, this king tried to prove his loyalty to Christendom by allying himself with the Hospitallers of Rhodes, and by encouraging piracy in the eastern Mediterranean, all of which had negative repercussions on Catalan trade with the Mamluks. On the other hand, the king derived profits by issuing licenses to trade with the Muslims and by collecting

²Claude Carrère, *Barcelone, centre économique à l'époque des difficultés, 1380–1462* (Paris, 1967); Mario Del Treppo, *I mercanti catalani e l'espansione della Corona d'Aragona nel secolo XV* (Naples, 1972).



customs imposed on this activity. These two opposing interests were reflected in great instability in the commercial relations with the Mamluks, as if the crisis caused by the pepper monopoly imposed by the Mamluk sultan were not enough.

The city of Barcelona constituted another institutional factor influencing the development of trading relations with the Islamic Levant. It had much to gain from the Levant trade, and supported it by nominating Catalan consuls in Alexandria and Damascus. These consuls are the subject of a detailed examination, including their social and professional profile, their functions and prerogatives. The Catalan capital derived income from this trade through customs dues, and was often at loggerheads with the Crown concerning the right to collect dues on the goods imported to and exported from the city.

Ships constitute the last subject treated in this first part of the book. A database including all ships mentioned in the sources as operating between Barcelona and the Levant allows Coulon to draw a large picture of commercial shipping during the century under examination. Like their Genoese rivals, the Catalans preferred using round ships rather than galleys in their trade with the Levant, although the latter were occasionally used as well. Ship owners, shipmasters, and seamen then come under Coulon's close scrutiny, to be followed by an analysis of the vicissitudes of maritime traffic, the seasons of navigation, the routes followed, the organization of convoys and the duration of crossings. The last chapter of this part concerns piracy, an important factor in the activities of Catalans in the eastern Mediterranean.

The second part of this study deals with the mechanisms and objects of Barcelona's Levant trade: commercial techniques, the use of capital, and the goods imported and exported. It is mainly based on a serial and quantitative analysis of a large amount of notarial contracts preserved in the historical archives of Barcelona. Noteworthy is the preponderant role still occupied by the *commenda* contract, which was by then already in decline in other major centers of the Mediterranean trade, such as Venice, as a consequence of structural changes in the organization of international trade. The fact that this was also exceptional in Barcelona's trade with other regions suggests that it must have resulted from the conditions peculiar to its trade with the Mamluk Sultanate. According to Coulon, one cause of such conservatism was the absence of substantial colonies of Catalan merchants in Egypt or Syria, which forced merchants to continue in the old ways of pooling funds from different investors back home and accompanying their goods on their way to and from the Levant. This somewhat archaic pattern of commercial practices was also reflected in the field of maritime insurance. Premium insurance reached Barcelona's Levant trade relatively late, and its functions were partly covered by *cambium maritimum* (maritime exchange) contracts, which combined credit with an element of insurance. However, when premium insurance did become widespread in Barcelona's Levant trade in the 1420s, it must have constituted one of the



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factors that brought profits derived from this activity to unprecedented levels. Further explanations for this relative conservatism include the low level of support offered to the merchants of Barcelona by the state, compared to the situation in Venice, Florence, and Genoa, as well as the lack of any infrastructure in the eastern Mediterranean, which meant that Venetian and Genoese merchants enjoyed intrinsic advantages over their commercial rivals.

The abundance of extant commercial contracts from the century between 1330 and 1430 allows the author to reconstruct the long-term trends of Barcelona's Levant trade, partly influenced by more general developments, such as the Black Death, and partly by political circumstances in both the Iberian Peninsula and the Mamluk Sultanate. The grave commercial crisis caused by the Plague in the mid-fourteenth century was prolonged owing to the exhaustion of the Aragonese silver mines in Sardinia, conflicts between Aragon and Castile (1356–75), and the sack of Alexandria by King Peter I of Cyprus in 1365. The evidence on investments and on shipping is unequivocal in this regard. However, from the 1370s onwards, the author has traced a slow recovery which, according to him, by the turn of the century brought the scope of investments in this trade to its pre-Plague level, and by the 1420s, to well above this level. The new crisis of the 1430s was again consequent upon political developments, namely the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples by Alfonso V and its repercussion on the maritime milieu. Trade began to revive in the 1450s, but finally collapsed owing to the civil war that started in Barcelona in 1462.

The goods normally exchanged between Barcelona and the Mamluk Sultanate were similar to those which traveled on board Venetian or Genoese ships, namely various textiles, metals, dyes, furs, and foodstuff travelling eastwards, and spices, drugs, and different dyestuff that were shipped westwards. The trade in these commodities is subject to a close examination, partly incorporating data derived from studies based on Italian sources. The impact of political developments on trade in specific goods is brought to the fore. Thus, the conquest of Famagusta by the Genoese, the great rival of the Catalans, pushed the merchants of Barcelona to trade in Syria, which had an impact on the sort of goods traded by them—more ginger at the expense of pepper (1373–1415). After 1415, Rhodes, ruled by the Knights of St. John, became a key center for Catalan trade, and pepper, brought there from Alexandria, again became the prime object of the Catalan spice trade.

The changing roles of precious products exported to Mamluk lands in exchange for spices and drugs are also exposed with great clarity in this study. In the earlier period, silver mining in Sardinia provided Catalan merchants with precious metal that could be exchanged for expensive goods imported from Egypt and Syria, but when this resource had been exhausted, a substitute was found by extracting and exporting coral and coral products from the western basin of the Mediterranean.



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Since most of Coulon's data on commodities moving between Barcelona and the Levant are gleaned from contracts signed in Barcelona, the book is more informative on goods travelling eastwards than on those exported from the Levant. Nevertheless a detailed discussion of the various spices, their different types, their prices, and, as much as possible, the trends characterizing the trade in these costly products between the mid-fourteenth and the early fifteenth century are also provided.

The book's third part deals with the human factor, examining the identity of the people involved in this commercial current, and the changes characterizing Barcelona's mercantile milieu during the period under consideration. A quantitative approach is here combined with individual and family histories, offering an interesting panorama of the human aspects of this trade. According to Coulon, in the earlier phases, Barcelona's Levant trade attracted a wide variety of investors, including not only big merchants, but also women, Jews (before the 1391 pogroms), *Conversos*, inhabitants of other Catalonian towns, and even foreigners, such as Genoese and Florentines. By the end of the period, however, this trade was concentrated in the hands of a restricted group of big Barcelonese merchants. Yet, the latter were unable to use their wealth to acquire political power, since the government of the city continued to be controlled by the relatively closed oligarchy of the *honrats*. The growing tensions between these two elites finally brought about the civil war of 1462–72, which also ended the prosperity of Barcelona's Levant trade.

The book is accompanied by many tables, maps, and diagrams, three appendices covering some 200 pages (pp. 673–873), three résumés (in French, Catalan, and English), and a very useful index, including personal names, toponyms, and subjects.

His thorough reconstruction of this long-term commercial activity allows Coulon to propose several new interpretations. The author discards the earlier image of this period of Barcelona's economic history as "a period of difficulties," a term coined by Cl. Carrère. According to Coulon, although the Levant trade gradually became concentrated in a few hands, its key role as an economic engine must have positively influenced Barcelona's general economic situation, particularly between 1370 and 1430.

Another interpretative contribution is Coulon's use of the Braudelian concept of "world-economy." The term was originally coined to characterize a model of economic structure of the early modern period, namely "an economically autonomous section of the planet able to provide for most of its own needs, a section to which internal links and exchanges give a certain organic unity." According to Braudel such "world-economies" always had a "center of gravity," called by him "a world-city," and sometimes several such centers which were competing



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with one another for supremacy.³ Coulon claims that the same model can be used to describe the Mediterranean economy of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with Barcelona functioning, at least for a time, as one of its three main economic centers, together with Venice and Genoa. Seen from the perspective of each of the competing economic capitals, this "world-economy" had different colors and components, but they all contended for the domination of the lucrative spice trade with the Mamluk Sultanate. The role of the latter was essential in this system, but to a great extent passive. The Mamluk Sultanate was integrated into the world systems of the Western commercial powers and largely dependent on them. This late-medieval "world-economy" was, according to Coulon, a kind of laboratory, preparing the world-economies of the early modern period.

That being said, Coulon admits that Barcelona never reached the level of involvement in Levantine trade attained by its two main rivals, Venice and Genoa. According to the author, there was no continuous presence of Catalan merchants in Egypt and Syria, commercial practices employed in this trade were outdated, and the number of ships involved and the amount of capital invested was lower than those of the two leading powers. This relative weakness resulted, according to Coulon, from the status of Barcelona's merchants in their own city as well as from Barcelona's subordinate status in the Aragonese kingdom. Unlike the two Italian republics, Barcelona remained dependent upon the policies of a crown that did not always consider the interests of Barcelona's merchants as paramount.

The size of the book and its great interest are my only excuses for the lengthy presentation of its content. What follows are a few critical remarks, which in no way are meant to diminish my admiration and esteem for this impressive and solid work. It is only natural that many of the following observations are inspired by E. Ashtor's book on the Levant trade in the later Middle Ages, where Catalans, and specifically the merchants of Barcelona, occupy a central position, and with whom Coulon is occasionally conducting a dialogue, sometimes agreeing with and sometimes arguing against Ashtor's claims. In fact it was Ashtor who already pointed to the importance of Catalan trade with the Mamluk territories during the last decade of the fourteenth century and the first decade of the fifteenth. Like Coulon, he also considered the Catalans, alongside the Venetians and Genoese, as a major trading power, distinguishing between these three and the "smaller trading nations."⁴

Our remarks will start with a question: is it useful to invest so much effort in investigating one commercial aspect of a single city, important as it may have

³Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century*, vol. 3, *The Perspective of the World*, trans. S. Reynolds (London, 1979), 22, 25–26.

⁴Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 199, 233, 236.



been? The answer, I believe, is in the affirmative for two main reasons: firstly, only in this way can one appreciate the scope, intensity, and dynamism of Barcelona's commercial contacts with the Mamluk Sultanate. The second reason is connected to Coulon's findings, according to which Barcelona was one of the centers contending for the Braudelian title of a "world-city," and that Barcelona's Levant trade was an essential component in assuring Barcelona's economic prosperity. Yet, even according to Coulon, the trade with Mamluk territories, although occupying a central place in this "world-economy," was not even the most important component of its foreign trade as measured by the capital invested and the intensity of commercial shipping. Luckily, however, Coulon is aware of this fact, and, like him, we have now to reconsider his findings in the light of studies that have dealt with the economy of Barcelona in a wider perspective. But even in a more restricted discussion, dealing with Barcelona's Levant trade, there is more to be said about the role played by other Aragonese territories in this system, especially Sicily. Some of Ashtor's remarks and his discoveries in Sicilian archives could serve as a starting point for elaborating on this issue.⁵

Not unrelated to the above is the problem of the sources. This book is mainly based on materials found in the archives and libraries of Barcelona. The use of Arabic sources is rather limited, and no use at all is made of archival material outside of Barcelona. Moreover, the extensive work carried out by Ashtor, although often cited and used throughout Coulon's book, is not always fully utilized. To give one example: apparently, no Catalan notaries were active either in Alexandria or Damascus during the period under consideration. However, Venetian notaries who were active in the Mamluk Levant also served non-Venetian clients, including Catalans. Coulon's claim that there were no colonies of Catalan merchants established in Alexandria and Damascus in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, on which he partly bases his explanation of the continued use of *commenda* contracts, contradicts evidence from the same period presented by Ashtor on the basis of Venetian notarial documents and Western travelogues.⁶ In fact, using non-Barcelonese sources could have been very useful to bridge lacunae in the archives of the Catalan capital. This can be exemplified with respect to Coulon's discussion of goods exchanged between the Mamluk Levant and Barcelona. The author's examination of this subject is essentially founded on *commenda* contracts from the registers of Barcelonese notaries. He openly admits that this fact constitutes one of the weaknesses of his data base, since goods shipped from the Levant westward would often not be recorded in these contracts. Yet we have learned from the studies of Melis, Ashtor, and others how richly documented are the lists

⁵E.g., *ibid.*, 139–40, 222, 235.

⁶*Ibid.*, 147–48, 222–23, 232–33, 236, 340.



of ship cargoes and price lists of commodities found in the Datini archives at Prato.⁷ The integration of such material would have served Coulon well.

Another observation concerns the author's calling into question Ashtor's famous thesis regarding the technological decline of Middle Eastern industries in the later Middle Ages, and more specifically, the discussion of this theme in relation to the sugar industry.⁸ Great quantities of sugar were imported from the Levant to Barcelona until 1370, when imports of this product began to decline and finally disappear from the documentation. Although it is not quite clear where this sugar originated, especially since many ships stopped over in Cyprus (which was already a major sugar producer), Coulon uses this material to question Ashtor's thesis. According to Coulon, rather than any technological decline of Oriental sugar production, it was the Genoese conquest of Famagusta in 1370 that encouraged other Western powers to embark on a "second wave" of sugar plantations in Sicily and Spain. Yet such a claim is problematic, since it is based on the assumption that most of the sugar imported to Barcelona came from Cyprus (i.e., where the Genoese intervention took place), rather than from Mamluk territories, where Catalan trading activities were rising in the 1370s. Ashtor did not claim that Cyprus suffered from technological decline—quite the contrary, he mentioned Cyprus as part of the Western enterprises that were more advanced in their sugar-producing techniques than those of Egypt and Syria. The Catalans might have renounced buying Cypriot sugar after 1370, but this is not an argument that contradicts Ashtor's thesis.

Relatively little is said in this book about Catalan contacts with Egyptians and Syrians, or their relations with rival trading nations present in the Mamluk Levant. It is indeed an important chapter in the economic and social history of Barcelona, and consequently, the Mamluks and the commercial milieus of their cities occupy only a marginal place in this book. This is not to say that the author has not fulfilled his task. The book is already long enough as it is, and some work must be left for future studies. Coulon has produced an excellent study, which will long serve scholars who continue to be attracted by the fascinating world of the Levant trade.

⁷Ibid., 149–50, 194–98.

⁸Eliyahu Ashtor, "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 L. Udovich (Princeton, 1981), 91–132. An earlier version was published as "Levantine Sugar Industry in the Later Middle Ages—An Example of Technological Decline," *Israel Oriental Studies* 7 (1977): 226–80, reprinted in his *Technology, Industry and Trade: The Levant versus Europe, 1250–1500*, ed. B. Z. Kedar (Aldershot, 1992), article 3.



SHAMS AL-DĪN MUHAMMAD IBN ḤASAN AL-NAWĀJĪ, *Kitāb al-Shifā' fī Badi' al-Iktifā'*, edited by Hasan Muhammad 'Abd al-Hādī (Amman: Dār al-Yanābī 'lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2004). Pp. 424.

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The Cairene writer al-Nawājī (d. 859/1455) is known chiefly as the author of the Bacchic anthology *Halbat al-Kumayt*. Among other works of his that have been edited in modern times are an anthology of strophic poems, 'Uqūd al-La'āl fī al-Muwashshahāt wa-al-Azjāl, and a short, essayistic treatise on the poetics of verse and prose, *Muqaddimah fī Ṣinā'at al-Nazm wa-al-Nathr*. Many more titles are known to have been written by him and some are preserved in manuscripts. Ḥasan 'Abd al-Hādī has devoted himself to publishing some of these, such as *Al-Maṭāli' al-Shamsīyah fī al-Madā'ih al-Nabawīyah*¹ and *Ṣahā'if al-Hasanāt fī Waṣf al-Khāl*.² Another edition is the work under review. It has been edited before, by Maḥmūd Ḥasan Abū Nājī,³ but the present editor seems to be unaware of this. His edition is of an altogether different order. The earlier edition is based on a single manuscript; it is only lightly and superficially annotated, and it lacks an index. In contrast, Ḥasan 'Abd al-Hādī lists 29 manuscripts, 25 of which he has been able to use. In addition, he provides a critical apparatus that has swelled the book to a size some four times as large as its predecessor. In spite of its size and its merits the edition leaves something to be desired. The various manuscripts are described but their relationships are not discussed; presumably the manuscript listed as no. 1, from the Escorial (erroneously said to be in Madrid), was used as the basis for the edition, but this is nowhere stated. There is an appendix (pp. 303–36) with variant readings. There are indexes of persons, books mentioned, technical terms, places, peoples and nations, months (one questions the use of references to Dhū al-Hijjah or Sha'bān), and rhymes.

Al-Shifā' fī Badi' al-Iktifā' (a somewhat flippant paraphrase would be "Quenching the thirst that on everybody's lips is: on poetic ellipsis") is a rather short treatise-cum-anthology devoted to a poetic device that was incorporated by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. 749/1349) in his seminal *Badi'īyah*; Pierre Cachia translates it as "truncation."⁴ The first example al-Ḥillī provides in his own commentary, *Sharḥ al-Kāfīyah al-Badi'īyah*,⁵ is a verse by Ibn Maṭrūḥ (d. 649/1251): "I shall

¹Amman, 1999.

²Amman, 2000.

³Beirut: Maktabat al-Hayāt, A.H. 1403, 108 pp.

⁴*The Arch Rhetorician* (Wiesbaden, 1998), 54.

⁵Ed. Nasīb al-Nashāwī (Damascus, 1982), 105.



not stop, renounce, give in / as long as I'm alive, or even when (. . . *wa-la idhā*)."
 The words "I'm dead" are easily supplied by the attentive listener and therefore no longer needed. Al-Nawājī's older contemporary, Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (d. 837/1434), quotes many more examples in his work on *bādī'*, *Khizānat al-Adab*,⁶ and distinguishes between two kinds: ellipsis of a whole word, and ellipsis of part of a word, the latter being more difficult but also more attractive. Among his examples (and those of al-Nawājī, see p. 172) is an epigram by Ibn Makānis (d. 794/1392):

That lovely fawn! He came to visit me
 shyly, at night, seeking a place to dwell [reading
mustawṭinan, with Ibn Ḥijjah].
 Yet he stayed only long enough for me
 to say to him, "Come in! You're very wel-"
(ahlan wa-sahlan wa-mar).

Arab grammarians and rhetoricians studied ellipsis in its various forms and usually called it *ḥadhf*. The term *iktifā'*, "sufficiency," was used by Ibn Rashīq in his *Al-'Umdah* in the chapter on *ījāz*, "brevity," as is duly mentioned by al-Nawājī; it has little to do with *iktifā'* as it was introduced into *bādī'* by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī. Nevertheless, al-Nawājī tries to deal with both kinds of ellipsis in his book, devoting an introductory and somewhat perfunctory chapter to cases of *ḥadhf* in the Quran (e.g., the standard example Quran 12:82, *wa-is'ali al-qaryata* "ask the town," meaning "ask the people of the town"). As for the Ḥillian sense of *iktifā'*, neither al-Nawājī nor, strangely, the two modern editors seem to have been aware that Ibn Rashīq discusses precisely this phenomenon elsewhere, in the chapter on *ishārah*.⁷ Calling it a form of *ḥadhf*, he quotes some odd verses, such as the anonymous *bi-al-khayri khayrātin* [thus, not *khayran*] *wa-in sharran fā / wa-lā urīdu al-sharra illā an tā*, where *fā* stands for *fa-sharr* and *tā* for *tashā'*. These and similar verses are old: they are quoted by Sībawayh⁸ and many subsequent grammarians, who had to cope with these and similar extreme distortions practised by early *rajaż* poets when in a jocular mood. No doubt to a poet and critic from the Mamluk period such whimsical use of language would have been merely a disfigurement, a form of barely acceptable poetic license, certainly not part of refined *bādī'*, and therefore to be ignored.

⁶Bulāq, A.H. 1291, 157–64.

⁷Ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (repr. Beirut, 1972), 1:252–53.

⁸Ibid., 310–11.

⁹*Kitāb Sībawayh* (Bulāq, A.H. 1316), 2:62, section "Indicating a word by means of one letter."



Ibn Rashiq also discusses a yet more extreme form of ellipsis: three lines attributed to Abū Nuwās in which the rhyme words are replaced by gestures indicating a kiss, "no, no!" and "go away!", respectively; the lines are also found in Ibn Dāwūd al-Isbahānī, *Al-Zahrah*,¹⁰ but not in Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān*. Again, it is disappointing to see that neither al-Nawājī nor his editors were aware of this unique case of unrhymed verse.

Al-Nawājī makes some further distinctions, between forms of *iktifā'* with or without other forms of *badi'* such as *tawriyah* (double entendre). A charming but untranslatable example of the latter, again by Ibn Makānis, is the punch line of a distich in praise of his own poetry:¹¹ "Say, when those who taste it find it sweet: / This is, by God! sweet magic!" The last words, *siḥrun ḥalā*, would immediately evoke the very common expression *siḥrun ḥalāl*, "licit magic," said of particularly eloquent speech. Al-Nawājī's presentation of *iktifā'* does not make any significant improvement on that of his one-time friend (and subsequent enemy) Ibn Ḥijjah, apart from arranging his material more systematically and giving more examples. Ibn Ḥijjah, too, had pointed out that the figure could fruitfully be combined with his favorite device, double entendre. Indeed, the verse quoted above, ending in "... to say to him: 'Come in, you're very wel-,'" is an illustration of this, for it could also be rendered as "to say to him: 'Come in!' And he went (*wa-marr*)."

The edition is very richly annotated, with numerous references given for most of the verses quoted by al-Nawājī. Some 87 pages are filled with information on every person mentioned in the text, arranged chronologically. Much of this is rather superfluous: anyone worth his salt in Arabic studies can find information on well-known persons of the early centuries; we do not need a whole page of references for al-Bukhārī or al-Mutanabbī. However, the information on persons from the Mamluk era is by no means useless, as long as important poets such as Ibn Makānis are absent from reference works (he has no entry either in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* or in the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*).

¹⁰Ed. Ibrāhīm al-Sāmarrā'ī (Beirut, 1985), 789.

¹¹*Kitāb al-Shifā'*, 181.



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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	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		ه, t (in construct)		ال	al-		

ـ	a	ـ	u	ـ	i
ـ	an	ـ	un	ـ	in
ـ	ā	ـ	ū	ـ	ī
ـ	ā	ـ	ūw	ـ	īy (medial), ـ (final)
ـ	á	ـ	aw	ـ	ay
				ـ	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.

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