

# MAMLŪK STUDIES REVIEW

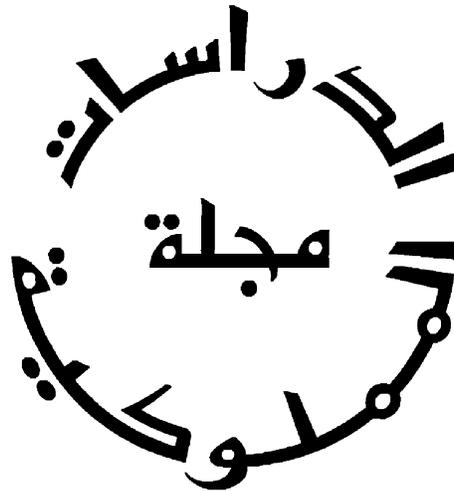
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2007

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# MAMLŪK STUDIES REVIEW

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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

Submissions of original work on any aspect of the field are welcome, although the editorial board will periodically issue volumes devoted to specific topics and themes. *Mamlūk Studies Review* also solicits edited texts and translations of shorter Arabic source materials (*waqf* deeds, letters, *fatawa* and the like), and encourages discussions of Mamluk era artifacts (pottery, coins, etc.) that place these resources in wider contexts. An article or book review in *Mamlūk Studies Review* makes its author a contributor to the scholarly literature and should add to a constructive dialogue.

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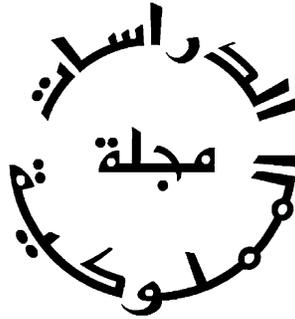
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## The Bruce D. Craig Prize for Mamluk Studies

The Prize Committee is pleased to announce that Nahyan A. G. Fancy (Ph.D., University of Notre Dame) has been named the recipient of the 2006 Bruce D. Craig Prize for Mamluk Studies for his dissertation:

“Pulmonary Transit and Bodily Resurrection: The Interaction of Medicine, Philosophy and Religion in the Works of Ibn al-Nafis (d. 1288)”

The Committee was impressed by Fancy’s thorough and careful reading of the Nafisi corpus in its context—that of the multifaceted interests of a thirteenth-century alim. His work is a brilliant example of how a dedicated effort to understand an historical actor’s own categories of analysis—as opposed to the anachronistic imposition of later paradigms—can lead to real insight. The Committee believes that this is an extremely important and indeed pathbreaking work that provides the basis for thinking about the Mamluk period in a new light and contributes to the ongoing efforts to revise and correct the dominant view of the roles of Muslims in the history of science.

The Bruce D. Craig Prize, carrying a cash award of \$1,000, is given annually by *Mamlūk Studies Review* for the best dissertation on a topic related to the Mamluk Sultanate submitted to an American or Canadian university during the preceding calendar year. In the event no dissertations are submitted, or none is deemed to merit the prize, no prize will be awarded. To be considered for the 2007 Prize, dissertations must be defended by December 31, 2007, and submitted to the Prize Committee by January 31, 2008. Submissions should be sent to:

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The Prize Committee for 2006 consisted of Marlis J. Saleh (University of Chicago); Linda S. Northrup (University of Toronto); and Warren C. Schultz (DePaul University).

**Previous Prize Winners:**

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YOSSEF RAPOPORT  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

## Women and Gender in Mamluk Society: An Overview

On the evening of Saturday, 5 Shawwāl 919 (4 December 1513), Ghars al-Dīn Khalil, a Cairene Hanafī deputy qadi, left home for a night vigil at the Qarāfah cemetery in Cairo.<sup>1</sup> His wife, expecting her husband to be absent for the entire night, sent for her lover, a certain Nūr al-Dīn al-Mashālī, himself a Shafī‘ī deputy judge. Unfortunately for the two, a neighbor gave notice to the husband, who immediately rode over and found the door locked. When he broke in he found his wife and al-Mashālī in bed, embracing each other under the blanket. According to the account of Ibn Iyās, the lovers tried to settle the matter quietly by filling the husband’s purse. Al-Mashālī offered the husband a thousand dinars to keep his mouth shut, while the wife offered all the household goods that belonged to her, i.e., her trousseau, in return for his discretion. But the angry husband was not tempted by gold or silver; he locked them both in the house and went over to the court of the military chamberlain to lodge a complaint. When brought before this military judge, al-Mashālī confessed to the charge of adultery, and the chamberlain ordered that al-Mashālī should be stripped, and had both of them beaten severely. The two were then led through the city, facing backwards on the backs of donkeys. Finally, they were fined 100 dinars each. But then came a bizarre twist to this story; as the woman claimed that she was penniless, the officers of the chamberlain, perhaps following standard procedure a bit too rigidly, ordered the husband to pay the fine for his wife’s adultery; when he refused, he was put under arrest.

When this semi-comic sequence of events reached the ears of an infuriated Sultan Qānṣūh, he convened his council and blamed the qadis for appointing immoral deputies like al-Mashālī, and demanded that the adulterers be punished in the way prescribed by Islamic law, that is, by stoning. It was an unusual order; no stoning had taken place for many years, and apparently never during Qānṣūh’s long reign.<sup>2</sup> But, while the sultan, representing secular authority, was pushing

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<sup>1</sup>The following account is based Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘ī al-Zuhūr fī Waqā‘ī al-Duhūr*, ed. M. Muṣṭafá, H. Roemer, and H. Ritter (Cairo and Wiesbaden, 1960–63), 4:340–50. A short version is given by the Syrian historian Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādiṯ al-Zamān wa-Wafayāt al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān* (Sidon, 1999), 2:252. See also the summary in Carl Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamlūk Sultans and Egypt’s Waning as a Great Power* (Albany, 1994), 149–51.

<sup>2</sup>It is possible that no stoning took place for at least half a century, or even more. Executions for adultery were generally rare. In a study of criminal acts reported in the chronicles during the



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for an Islamic punishment, several jurists issued a fatwa invalidating the verdict, arguing that al-Mashālī had in the meantime retracted his confession. In an overt struggle over the right to interpret the law, the jurists argued that the sultan was bound to act according to the Islamic law of evidence; execution would be a criminal offence, and the sultan liable for the blood money. At this point the sultan called them all senseless fools, telling one of the jurists: “God willing, I hope you go home and find someone doing to your wife what al-Mashālī did to the wife of Khalīl.” Then Qānṣūh dismissed all four chief qadis, paralyzing all legal and economic activity in Cairo for three days. On Wednesday, 7 Dhū al-Qa‘dah (3 January), Nūr al-Dīn and his lover were hanged at the gate of the house of one of the jurists who objected to the death sentence. The two lovers were tied to the same rope, facing each other. Their bodies remained on the gallows for two days, until the sultan gave permission to bury them.

The account of the love and the death of the two adulterers is a good medieval story, and an excellent starting point for a survey of women and gender in the Mamluk period, if only because it serves to correct some common assumptions about the subject. One is that the study of women and gender, naturally a “private” topic, has little to offer for someone interested in politics or economics. It should not come as a surprise that a mundane love affair could turn into a constitutional crisis, pitting the sultan and the judicial elite against each other over the fundamental privilege of interpreting the law. This was not the first time issues of public morality, regulation of households, and gender boundaries were at the forefront of Mamluk politics—the reign of Shajar al-Durr, the periodic royal campaigns against vice, the processions of royal trousseaux, and the arrest of Ibn Taymiyah for his views on divorce are a few examples. Michael Chamberlain has done much to focus our attention on the elite household as the basic unit of social and political action.<sup>3</sup> But an analysis of gender distinctions *within* households offers an equally engaging perspective on Mamluk political and economic history.

Another common cliché is that medieval Arab authors were reluctant to speak about women, and that the domestic history of the Mamluk period will therefore always remain inaccessible. In fact, there are many Mamluk authors who speak very freely about their wives, daughters, and concubines, as well as about the wives, daughters, and concubines of friends, acquaintances, and relatives. Such descriptions are usually found in works devoted explicitly to the self-representation

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reign of Qāyṭbāy, Petry found only one such case, when a Circassian female slave in the sultan’s household was hanged for having an affair with a soldier (Petry, “Disruptive ‘Others’ as Depicted in the Chronicles of the Late Mamlūk Period,” in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt*, ed. Hugh Kennedy [Leiden, 2000], 187).

<sup>3</sup> Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge, 1994).



of the author, an unusually large number of which were produced in the Mamluk period.<sup>4</sup> This trend is already evident in the works of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Syrian historians like Abū Shāmah (d. 665/1268), who includes in his work a poem he recited for his wife, al-Jazarī (d. 739/1338) in his *Tārīkh*, and al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) in *Aʿwān al-Naṣr*.<sup>5</sup> The blurring of lines between history and autobiography, and hence the increasing representation of the domestic, is even more striking in some fifteenth-century works. The example of al-Sakhāwī's extraordinary comprehensive collection of the biographies of contemporary women is well-known.<sup>6</sup> Historians like Ibn Iyās (d. 930/1524) or Ibn Ṭulūn (d. 953/1546) composed chronicles that are also semi-memoirs. Finally, the so-called chronicles of some late fifteenth-century authors, like al-Biqāʿī (885/1480) or Ibn Ṭawq (d. 915/1509), are, for all practical purposes, diaries.<sup>7</sup> Surprisingly, the last two works were in manuscript form until the last decade, and even now are not fully published. The perceived inhibitions of medieval authors with regard to women may be, paradoxically, due to a *modern* lack of interest in editing and publishing works that are short on political violence but strong on trivial, mundane private lives.

<sup>4</sup> Dwight F. Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley, 2001), 52–71; Li Guo, "Mamluk Historiographic Studies: The State of the Art," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 15–43; Donald Little, "Historiography of the Ayyūbid and the Mamlūk Epochs," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1, *Islamic Egypt, 640–1517* (Cambridge, 1998), 421–32.

<sup>5</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Shāmah, *Tarājīm Rijāl al-Qarnayn al-Sādīs wa-al-Sābiʿ al-Maʿrūf bi-al-Dhayl ʿalā al-Rawḍatayn*, ed. M. Zāhid al-Kawtharī (Cairo, 1947); al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh Ḥawādith al-Zamān wa-Anbāʾihi wa-Wafayāt al-Akābir wa-al-Aʿyān min Abnāʾihi*, *al-Maʿrūf bi-Tārīkh Ibn al-Jazarī*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon, 1998); Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿAṣr wa-Aʿwān al-Naṣr*, ed. ʿAlī Abū Zayd et al. (Damascus, 1998). On Abū Shāmah's poem to his wife see L. Pouzet, "Vision populaire de la femme en Syrie aux VIe et VIIe/XIIe et XIIIe siècles," in *Proceedings of the 14th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Budapest, 29 August–3 September 1988* (Budapest, 1995), pt. 1, 295–304.

<sup>6</sup> Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʿ al-Lāmiʿ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ*, ed. Ḥusām al-Qudṣī (Cairo, 1934–36); idem, *Wajīz al-Kalām fī al-Dhayl ʿalā Duwal al-Islām*, ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf, ʿIṣām Fāris al-Ḥarastānī, and Aḥmad al-Khutaymī (Beirut, 1995). Secondary sources include: Huda Lutfi, "Al-Sakhāwī's *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ* as a Source for the Social and Economic History of Muslim Women during the Fifteenth Century AD," *Muslim World* 71 (1981): 104–24; Basim Musallam, "The Ordering of Muslim Societies," in *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Islamic World*, ed. F. Robinson (Cambridge, 1996), 186–97; R. Roded, *Women in the Islamic Biographical Dictionaries: From Ibn Saʿd to Who's Who* (Boulder, 1994); Y. Rapoport, "Divorce and the Elite Household in Late Medieval Cairo," *Continuity and Change* 16, no. 2 (August 2001): 201–18.

<sup>7</sup> Li Guo, "Tales of a Medieval Cairene Harem: Domestic Life in al-Biqāʿī's Autobiographical Chronicle," *MSR* 9, no. 1 (2005): 101–21; Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq: Yawmiyāt Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq (834/1430–915/1509): Mudhakkirāt Kutibat bi-Dimashq fī Awākhir al-ʿAhd al-Mamlūkī, 885/1480–908/1502*, vol. 1, (885/1480–890/1485), ed. Jaʿfar al-Muhājir (Damascus, 2000).



Given that Mamluk chronicles and biographical dictionaries have so much to say about women, it is not surprising that there are by now quite a few studies devoted to Mamluk women, beginning with Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Rāziq’s *La femme au temps des Mamlouks en Égypte*.<sup>8</sup> Biographical dictionaries in particular were used to assess the scholarly, religious, and literary activities of Mamluk women.<sup>9</sup> Documentary sources were also used by historians of women, although there is still much to be done. The Ḥaram collection is very useful in giving a sense of gender relations in a particular time and place, and has been used in this way by Donald Little and, especially, Huda Lutfi, who paid unusual attention to questions of gender.<sup>10</sup> Endowment deeds, mainly from late fifteenth-century Cairo, are very useful in illustrating the economic participation of elite women in the economy, and are the subject of several articles by Carl Petry.<sup>11</sup> On the provincial level, the references to the economic activity of women in the Ayyubid documents from al-Quṣayr are also useful.<sup>12</sup> About a dozen Muslim marriage contracts from the Mamluk period were found in the Egyptian countryside.<sup>13</sup> The wide variety of

<sup>8</sup> Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme au temps des Mamlouks en Égypte* (Cairo, 1973). For a review, see N. Keddie, “Problems in the Study of Middle Eastern Women,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 10 (1979): 225–40.

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Berkey, “Women and Islamic Education in the Mamluk Period,” in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*, ed. N. Keddie and B. Baron (New Haven, 1992), 143–57; Asma Sayeed, “Women and Hadith Transmission: Two Case Studies from Mamluk Damascus,” *Studia Islamica* 95 (2004): 71–94; Omaima Abou-Bakr, “Teaching the Words of the Prophet: Women Instructors of the Hadith (Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries),” *Hawwa* 1, no. 3 (2003): 306–28.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Little, *A Catalogue of the Islamic Documents from al-Ḥaram aš-Šarīf in Jerusalem* (Beirut and Wiesbaden, 1984); idem, “A Fourteenth-Century Jerusalem Court Record of a Divorce Hearing: A Case Study,” in *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honour of Michael Winter*, ed. David J. Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (London and New York, 2006), 67–85; Huda Lutfi, *Al-Quds al-Mamlūkiyya: A History of Mamlūk Jerusalem Based on the Ḥaram Documents* (Berlin, 1985); idem, “A Study of Six Fourteenth-Century *Iqrārs* from al-Quds Relating to Muslim Women,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 26 (1983): 246–94.

<sup>11</sup> Carl Petry, “Class Solidarity versus Gender Gain: Women as Custodians of Property in Later Medieval Egypt,” in *Women in Middle Eastern History*, ed. Keddie and Baron, 122–42; idem, “The Estate of al-Khuwand Fāṭima al-Khāṣṣbakiyya: Royal Spouse, Autonomous Investor,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and History*, ed. Amalia Levanoni and Michael Winter (Leiden, 2004), 277–94.

<sup>12</sup> Li Guo, *Commerce, Culture, and Community in a Red Sea Port in the Thirteenth Century: The Arabic Documents from Quseir* (Leiden, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Su‘ād Māhir, *Al-Nasij al-Islāmī* (Cairo, 1977); idem, “Uqūd al-Zawāj ‘alā al-Mansūjāt al-Athariyah,” in *Al-Kitāb al-Dhahabī lil-Ihtifāl al-Khamsīni bi-al-Dirāsāt al-Athariyah bi-Jāmi‘at al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1978), 1:39–54; Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Rāziq, “Un document concernant le mariage des esclaves au temps des mamlūks,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 13 (1970): 309–14; idem, “Aqdā Nikāh min ‘Aṣr al-Mamālik al-Baḥriyah,” *Al-Majallah al-‘Arabiyyah*



Jewish marriage contracts, divorce litigation, and other evidence from the Geniza mostly predate the Mamluk period, but serve as an essential background for comparison.

Alongside the documentary evidence, there other types of legal sources from the Mamluk period which provide access to the gender dynamics within households. These include compilations of *responsa* by contemporary *muftis*, mostly dealing with real-life cases; and descriptions of judicial proceedings in chronicles, some of which were composed by court officials. Special attention should also be given to legal manuals that reproduce models of common documents for the use of notaries.<sup>14</sup> Gender issues are also discussed by the authors of prescriptive treatises, with the *Madkhal* of the Cairene Maliki jurist Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 737/1336–37) the best known example, thanks mainly to Huda Lutfi's often-cited and articulate discussion.<sup>15</sup> In all these types of legal sources women occupy a prominent place, as family law (along with commercial law) were the primary responsibilities of *qadis* and *muftis*.

What follows here is a survey of those aspects of the social history of women, and the social dimensions of gender distinctions between men and women, that have already been studied by Mamluk historians. The goal is to identify basic social and legal structures that appear crucial to the understanding of gender practices in urban Mamluk society. These include, in the following order: slave-girls and concubines; women in the urban economy; marriage, divorce and polygamy; educational and religious activities.<sup>16</sup> I will attempt, as much as possible, to cover all classes of urban society, from the royal palace to the poor, as obviously men and women interacted differently at different levels of society. I will also highlight

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*lil-ʿUlūm al-Insāniyah* (Kuwait) 6 (1986): 68–88; A. Grohmann, "Einige arabische Ostraka und ein Ehevertrag aus der Oase Bahriya," in *Studi in onore di Aristide Calderini e Roberto Paribeni* (Milan, 1957), 2:499–509; A. Dietrich, "Eine arabische Eheurkunde aus der Aiyūbidenzeit," in *Documenta Islamica Inedita*, ed. J. Fück (Berlin, 1952), 121–54; W. Diem, "Vier arabische Rechtsurkunden aus Ägypten des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts," *Der Islam* 72 (1994): 193–257.

<sup>14</sup> The most important are Gabriela Guellil, *Damaszener Akten des 8./14. Jahrhunderts nach at-Tarsusis Kitāb al-Fīlām, Eine Studie zum arabischen Justizwesen* (Bamberg, 1985); al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir al-ʿUqūd wa-Muʿīn al-Quḍāh wa-al-Muwaqqiʿin wa-al-Shuhūd* (Cairo, 1955); Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥasanī al-Jarawānī, "Mawāhib al-Ilāhiyah wa-al-Qawāʿid al-Mālikiyah," Chester Beatty MS 3401.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal ilā Tanmiyat al-Aʿmāl bi-Taḥsīn al-Niyyāt* (Cairo, 1929–32); Huda Lutfi, "Manners and Customs of Fourteenth-Century Cairene Women: Female Anarchy versus Male Sharʿī Order in Muslim Prescriptive Treatises," in *Women in Middle Eastern History*, ed. Keddie and Baron, 99–121.

<sup>16</sup> Some of these subjects, such as marriage (but not polygamy), divorce, and the economic activities of women, are discussed in far greater detail, and from a considerably different perspective, in my *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge, 2005).



changes in the course of Mamluk history, suggesting that gender institutions underwent radical transformations during the fifteenth century.

As our opening story suggests, it is not only possible to write a history of women and gender for the Mamluk period, it may even be possible to get into the Mamluk bedroom. Mamluk authors produced quite an extensive literature on sex and erotica, which has not received sufficient attention.<sup>17</sup> As Robert Irwin rightly warns us, literary sexual topoi do not reflect actual sexual practices in Mamluk society, and there is definitely an element of stylization in Ibn Iyās' account. But a thorough scrutiny of the chronicles and the *fatāwá* collections will probably draw a distinction between sexual fantasies (interesting in themselves) and sexual practices. A connection between virginity and asceticism, or religious piety, crops up in a variety of contexts, and suggests that a "Christian" attitude with regard to the religious value of the sexual act may have had more influence than commonly assumed.<sup>18</sup> The frequent and extensive references to homosexuality in Mamluk sources have received some attention.<sup>19</sup> In this regard, Khaled El-Rouayheb's recent book on homosexual practices in the Ottoman period should prompt a similar project for the Mamluk period. In particular, El-Rouayheb's rejection of a "homosexual identity" in favor of social distinctions between active and passive sexual roles seems to be a useful framework of analysis for the medieval period as well.<sup>20</sup> Eunuchs have been studied as a social group and as symbolic mediators between spheres, not only male and female, but also the sacred and the profane.<sup>21</sup> A recent study of Mamluk attitudes towards hermaphrodites, another revealing

<sup>17</sup> Ahmad 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Al-Mar'ah fi Kitābat al-Suyūṭī," in *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*, ed. al-Majlis al-A'lá li-Ri'āyat al-Funūn wa-al-Ādāb wa-al-'Ulūm al-Ijtimā'iyah (Cairo, 1978), 195–219; Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, *Sexuality in Islam*, translated from the French by Alan Sheridan (London, 1985).

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt* (Leiden, 1998), 95; Y. Michot, "Un célibataire endurci et sa maman: Ibn Taymiyya (m. 728/1328) et les femmes," in *La femme dans les civilisations orientales et miscellanea aegyptologica: Christiane Desroches Noblecourt in honorem*, ed. Christian Cannuyer (Brussels, 2001), 165–90.

<sup>19</sup> Everett Rowson, "Two Homoerotic Narratives from Mamluk Literature: al-Ṣafadī's *Law'at al-Shāki* and Ibn Dāniyāl's *Mutayyam*," in *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, ed. J. W. Wright and E. Rowson (New York, 1997), 158–91. For a less scholarly approach, see Stephen O. Murray, "Male Homosexuality, Inheritance Rules and the Status of Women in Medieval Egypt: The Case of the Mamluks," in S. Murray and W. Roscoe, *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History and Literature* (New York, 1997), 161–73.

<sup>20</sup> Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500–1800* (Chicago and London, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Shaun Marmon, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Society* (Oxford, 1995); David Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans: A Study in Power Relationships* (Jerusalem, 1999).



border case of ambiguous sexuality, shows a surprising development over time. While in the early Mamluk period the transformation of girls into boys is a cause for public celebrations, there are later cases in which courts are asked to confirm a female sexual identity for persons who, by all outer appearances, were physically male.<sup>22</sup> All in all, a history of Mamluk sexual attitudes and practices is yet to be done, probably feasible, and certainly exciting.

This essay will have comparatively little to say about material culture, although there are a few studies of objects made for, and used by, Mamluk women. The surviving artifacts of Mamluk trousseaux have been surveyed by ‘Abd al-Rāziq and in a recent extensive monograph by al-Wakīl.<sup>23</sup> Both could serve as a good basis for a study that explores the specific social meanings attached to these artifacts. The studies of female attire by Mayer, and more recently, by Stillman, have drawn attention to the social significance of the fashion of urban women, and the state attempts to regulate it.<sup>24</sup> The best known example is the very long-sleeved chemise, which was prohibited in the aftermath of the Black Death, and again by the end of the fourteenth century. The motivations for the extensive sumptuary laws of the Mamluk regime are yet to be fully explained—was it a moral reaction to luxurious consumption or immodest and seductive clothes; was it an attempt to preserve class distinction; or was it fear of cross-dressing, as Mamluk women adopted the male-style *ṭāqīyah* headdress, or the *bughlutāq* military coat? The Mamluk sumptuary regulation is remarkably similar to that attempted in the Italian towns of the Renaissance, and has potential as a fascinating research topic.

Finally, the literary representation of women in the Mamluk period has received much scholarly attention. There are some very insightful studies on the representation of gender in medieval Arabic literature, and studies of the *Arabian Nights* occupy several shelves at most research libraries.<sup>25</sup> Representations of

<sup>22</sup> Tamer el-Leithy, “Of Bodies Chang’d to Various Forms . . . : Hermaphrodites and Transsexuals in Mamluk Society” (unpublished paper, Princeton University, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme*; Fāyızah al-Wakīl, *Al-Shiwār: Jihāz al-‘Arūs fī Miṣr fī ‘Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk* (Cairo, 2001); see review by Vanessa De Gifis, *MSR* 7, no. 2 (2003): 247–50.

<sup>24</sup> L. A. Mayer, “Costumes of Mamluk Women,” *Islamic Culture* 17 (1943): 293–303; Yedida Kalfon Stillman, *Arab Dress, A Short History: From the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times*, ed. Norman A. Stillman (Leiden, 2000), 75–83.

<sup>25</sup> Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman’s Body, Woman’s Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing* (Princeton, 1991); H. Kilpatrick, “Some Late ‘Abbasid and Mamluk Books about Women: A Literary Historical Approach,” *Arabica* 42 (1995): 56–78; Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, “Some Notes on Women in Classical Arabic Literary Tradition,” in *Proceedings of the 14th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, pt. 2, 133–41; Asma Afsaruddin, “Reconstituting Women’s Lives: Gender and the Poetics of Narrative in Medieval Biographical Collections,” *The Muslim World* 92 (2002): 461–80; H. Lutfi, “The Construction of Gender Symbolism in Ibn Sirīn’s and Ibn Shāhin’s Medieval Arabic Dream Texts,” *MSR* 9, no. 1 (2005): 123–61.



women in Mamluk visual arts, on the other hand, have been far less explored. We have no explanation, for example, as to why Mamluk illuminations tend to show women fully wrapped and veiled, while contemporary illuminations from the eastern Islamic world mostly show unveiled women. But the study of the representation of women, whether in literature or in the visual arts, is still hampered by a lack of a coherent, specific historical context to which literary and art history studies could relate. This essay, I hope, will fill that gap.

### SLAVE-GIRLS AND CONCUBINES

It is only appropriate to start our survey of Mamluk slave-girls with Shajar al-Durr, the only female ruler in Egypt's medieval history and the most famous woman from the Mamluk period. Scholarly accounts of Shajar al-Durr—of which there are quite a few, in considerable disproportion to the study of Mamluk women in general—have tended to follow conflicting modern agendas.<sup>26</sup> Feminist historians, such as Fatima Mernissi, have taken Shajar al-Durr as a symbol of women's independence and courage against male privilege, and, in particular, brought to the foreground her murder of Aybak as a female response to a polygamous marriage. More traditionalist historians have relegated her to the background, arguing that she was a mere puppet at the hands of the Mamluk officers, her value derived ultimately from her sexual liaison with al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb. Others have stressed her ethnic Turkish background, and used Shajar al-Durr's success to draw a line between an egalitarian Turkish and nomadic tradition which accepted female rulers, and a patriarchal Arab and Middle Eastern tradition which rejected them.<sup>27</sup> By subjecting Shajar al-Durr's historical figure to such ideological narratives, modern historians have followed the footsteps of their medieval counterparts. The later medieval chroniclers embellished Shajar al-Durr's image and added gory details (who can forget the maids who murder their victim with the famous wooden clogs?), so as to transform her story into a more universal parable of domestic strife; story-tellers recast Shajar al-Durr as a noble princess, ensuring her posthumous fame in the Romance of Baybars.<sup>28</sup>

From the perspective of the social historian, Shajar al-Durr's extraordinary career cannot be fully understood without looking at the institution of female slavery as a necessary complement to male slavery, which was equally integral

<sup>26</sup> David J. Duncan, "Scholarly Views of Shajarat al-Durr: A Need for Consensus," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 22 (2000): 51–69 (with a good bibliography).

<sup>27</sup> See also Amalia Levanoni, "Ṣāgar ad-Durr: A Case of Female Sultanate in Medieval Islam," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, vol. 3, *Proceedings of the 6th, 7th and 8th International Colloquium*, ed. U. Vermeulen and J. Van Steenberg (Leuven, 2001), 209–18.

<sup>28</sup> G. Schregle, *Die Sultanin von Ägypten: Ṣāgarat ad-Durr in der arabischen Geschichtsschreibung und Literatur* (Wiesbaden, 1961).



to the working of the Mamluk military elite in its heyday. Among the military elite, female slaves and male slaves, like Shajar al-Durr and Baybars, did have quite a lot in common. Both Shajar al-Durr and Baybars were skillful political operators whose rise to power was, however, ultimately due to their place in the late sultan's household. In fact, both were among the select few who accompanied al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb to his imprisonment in Karak. Both were products of the same household system of slave recruitment and training, although men and women were, naturally, expected to fulfill different functions within these households, those of warriors and those of courtesans. What was unique about Shajar al-Durr's case—and in this perspective her career is unique, and deserves further study—was that she was allowed to cross the gender division within households, and to publicly take on political leadership in a way that was denied to later generations of concubines.

The recruitment of slave-girls in general, and of concubines in particular, was integral to the structure of the Mamluk military households. There are good indications that the number of female slaves in elite households was always at least as high as, and probably much higher than, the number of male slaves, and it would make sense to view Mamluk slavery as a primarily female phenomenon. Just as a select group of male slaves was trained in the military profession, a select group of slave-girls was trained to become courtesans. Tankiz, governor of Damascus for most of the first half of the fourteenth century, employed an agent in the lands of the Mongols who sought beautiful slave-girls for him. After their arrival in Damascus, some were placed in the care of Ibrāhīm Ṣārim, a famous musician, who taught the girls to play the lute.<sup>29</sup> These slaves were probably later enlisted in the household's musical band (*jūkah*), since during the fourteenth century every leading amir kept a band of ten to fifteen slave-girls.<sup>30</sup> The other slave-girls, presumably, had become concubines. Tankiz had at some point as many as nine slave concubines, each with her private retinue.<sup>31</sup>

The military elite regarded concubines, first and foremost, as a means to overcome the high rates of child mortality. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself is probably the most outstanding example, being survived by fifteen sons.<sup>32</sup> The households of amirs were modeled on that of the sultan, and the role of concubines there was

<sup>29</sup> See al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 1:82 (for the musician), 2:300 (for the agent, Ḥamzah al-Turkumānī).

<sup>30</sup> Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhiraḥ fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhiraḥ* (Cairo, 1929–72), 11:380; cited by 'Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 55.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:565.

<sup>32</sup> P. M. Holt, "An-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (684–741/1285–1341): His Ancestry, Kindred and Affinity," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, vol. 1, *Proceedings of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd International Colloquium*, ed. Vermeulen and Van Steenbergen (Leuven, 1995), 313–24.



similar. Sunqur al-Nūrī (d. 736/1335), a governor of several towns in northern Syria, had as many as sixty concubines. When he died he left twenty-one children.<sup>33</sup> A similar number of concubines were found in Qawsūn's mansion in Cairo in 742/1341.<sup>34</sup> Many of the amirs' wives were themselves manumitted slave-girls. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad used to marry off his slave-girls to leading officers as means of consolidating their loyalty. There is no indication that children born of free women did better than children of concubines, and it is clear that all of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's progeny, whether born of free women or slave-girls, were eligible to become sultans.

An anecdote regarding the household of the Amir Baktimur al-Sāqī (d. 733/1332) illustrates the parallels between the recruitment of male and female slaves. At the height of his career, Baktimur spent 10,000 dinars on the most renowned lute player of the time, a slave by the name of Khūbī. He lodged Khūbī in his mansion on the banks of Birkat al-Fil, away from his wife, herself a former slave of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. When the wife heard about the new and expensive concubine, she asked permission to go and meet her. In preparation for the encounter, Khūbī dressed up in white and took off all her jewelry and make-up. When the wife asked for her name, Khūbī, instead of answering, started playing the lute. As she heard the music, the lady recognized Khūbī and embraced her, explaining to the attendant slave-girls that Khūbī was her *khushdāshah*.<sup>35</sup> The story itself is almost certainly apocryphal.<sup>36</sup> The important aspect is the reference to a bond of *khushdāshīyah* among female slaves who were trained together, mirroring the more famous bonds among male military slaves.

The career of Ittifāq, concubine and wife of three consecutive sultans around the middle of the fourteenth-century, is an exceptional success story, but is also instructive with regard to the opportunities open to a slave-girl in a military household. Ittifāq's starting point was inauspicious. She was a second-generation black slave who was not considered to be strikingly beautiful. She was trained in

<sup>33</sup> Al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:920.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*, ed. 'Adnān Darwīsh (Damascus, 1977–94), 2:229.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:338. Following Baktimur's death, Khūbī was sold to Bashtāk for the extraordinary price of 6,000 dinars, but al-Ṣafadī noted that her jewelry and clothes were worth more than her price. Bashtāk did not treat her as kindly, and married her off to one of his mamluks.

<sup>36</sup> In its main features, the story bears a suspicious similarity to an anecdote concerning Zubaydah, wife of Hārūn al-Rashīd. Zubaydah was jealous of Hārūn's favorite singer. Hārūn then asked some of his wife's relatives to come and hear his new slave singer, so as to assure Zubaydah that Hārūn was only enjoying her artistic skills. As a token of apology for her unfounded jealousy, Zubaydah sent her husband ten concubines (Nabia Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad: Mother and Wife of Harun al-Rashid* [Chicago, 1946], 139; Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* [New Haven, 1992], 84).



the provincial town of Bilbays by the local female Head of the Singers (*dāminat al-maghānī*) who sold her to the *dāminat al-maghānī* of Cairo for the unexceptional sum of 400 dirhams. In Cairo she studied with a renowned lute player, and was then presented to the royal household of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, where she acquired fame for her wonderful voice. Moreover, the sultan's son and future successor, al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl, fell in love with her and married her (the chroniclers say that he had a weakness for black slave-girls). After his deposition, she was married to his brother and heir, al-Kāmil Sha'bān. The next sultan, al-Muẓaffar Ḥājji, initially confiscated her property and banished her from the Citadel. Later, however, he too decided to marry her. After his death she married a civilian government official, and was eventually married off to a Marinid sultan who passed through Cairo.<sup>37</sup> Like a male mamluk who could hope to become sultan, a female slave of humble origins could hope to become a sultan's wife.

The possession of concubines was not restricted to the military elite, but was also rather widespread in other segments of urban society, especially in the first half of the fourteenth century. Al-Ṣafadī speaks with admiration about his friend the jurist Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad al-Zar'ī (d. 741/1342), who on Fridays would alternately frequent the slave market and the book market, thus cultivating the pleasures of both body and mind. His association with Turkish slave-girls was such that he learned to speak their language.<sup>38</sup> 'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Subkī (d. 788/1386), a nephew of Taqī al-Dīn, was also known to have a weakness for slave-girls. He is said to have had sex with more than one thousand.<sup>39</sup> In most reports on concubinage among the civilian elite, it is the sexual aspect that is emphasized.<sup>40</sup> The wealthier members of this class, like 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī (d. 743/1342–43), kept a constant stock of concubines; he had four slaves who bore him children and acquired the status of *ummahāt awlād*, as well as six transient concubines, whom he would exchange in the slave market every now and then.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ittifāq has already attracted the attention of Robert Irwin, who described her as “the Lola Montez of her age” (*The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1382* [London, 1986]), 130, 133). See also 'Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 285, and the sources cited there.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 1:45; literally, al-Ṣafadī says that his friend combined the pleasure of the pearl with that of the stars (*al-durr wa-al-darārī*).

<sup>39</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inba' al-Ghumr bi-Abnā' al-'Umr* (Beirut, 1967–75), 2:239.

<sup>40</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Salām Ibn Abī 'Aṣrūn (d. ca. 631/1234), a Syrian bureaucrat and jurist, had more than twenty concubines. We are told that “his limbs dried up from excessive sexual intercourse” (Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-Zamān* [Hyderabad, 1951–52], 8:692). Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, chief Shafi'ī qādi at the end of the thirteenth century, was also known to be fond of slave concubines (al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 4:582).

<sup>41</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:726.



Many of these slave concubines would have been of Muslim origin. In a query sent to Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, an anonymous questioner expressed doubts about the legality of purchasing concubines. He states that “in our days, everyone, including the scholars and the virtuous, take slave-girls as concubines.” But these men are committing a crime, for “they all know with certitude that these slave-girls must have been Muslims in their countries of origin.” Al-Subkī’s answer was informed by his perception of social realities. First, he noted that sale of Muslim slave-girls is legal as long as there is even the slightest possibility of them being the descendants of slaves, Muslim or non-Muslim. (In Islamic law, a freeborn Muslim could not be enslaved, but servile status is passed on in inheritance.) But his final and most decisive argument is based on the interests of the slave-girl herself. It is she who needs maintenance and protection, and if we do not allow her to be enslaved and sold, she would starve.<sup>42</sup> Whether many female slaves, if any, subscribed to this view, we do not know.

It should also be emphasized that not all slave-girls were concubines. In fact, concubines must have formed only a minority among the thousands of slave-girls that were sold on the markets of Cairo and Damascus. Many slave-girls served as personal attendants to female mistresses.<sup>43</sup> Others were employed as domestics. Al-Sakhāwī devoted a short biographical entry to Abrak al-Sinīn, his domestic servant, from her purchase in 872/1467–68 until her death in 893/1488.<sup>44</sup> Some were skilled professionals. Among the hundreds of slave-girls in the possession of Fakhr al-Dīn Mājīd Ibn Khaṣīb (d. 762/1360), two were famous chefs.<sup>45</sup> The slave-girls destined for sexual services were easily distinguishable from the rest. Unlike other slave-girls, custom required that concubines should be veiled when they appeared in public; and while most slave-girls were probably black, a disproportionate number of concubines were of Turkish origins.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Kitāb al-Fatāwā* (Cairo, 1937), 2:281–85.

<sup>43</sup> In 1483, Felix Fabri met in Gaza a couple of aristocratic Turkish ladies, each accompanied by an Ethiopian female attendant (*The Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, The Library of the Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society, vols. 7–10 [London, 1897], 9:444). The role of slave-girls as attendants is also evident in the Cairo Geniza. See S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Geniza* (Berkeley, 1967–93), 1:130–47.

<sup>44</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 12:5 (no. 24).

<sup>45</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma’rifat al-Duwal wa-al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyādah and Sa’id ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Ashūr (Cairo, 1934–72), 3:59. In 661/1263, Baybars sent two female chefs as a gift to Berke Khan of the Golden Horde (al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān: ‘Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn [Cairo, 1987–], 1:362; cited by ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 55).

<sup>46</sup> Ibn Taymiyah explains that, due to the corruption of society, one cannot allow beautiful Turkish slave-girls to go around unveiled (*Fatāwā al-Nisā’ lil-Shaykh al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyah*, ed.



**DECLINE OF FEMALE SLAVERY?**

In contrast to the first half of the fourteenth century, when the supply of slave-girls to Near Eastern cities appears to have reached a peak, the number of concubines in military households steadily decreased in the fifteenth century. By the end of the Mamluk period no one—not even the sultans—kept concubines in numbers that were even close to those mentioned for the early fourteenth century. In a study of Syrian amirs' endowment deeds from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Michael Winter found no one who had more than one *umm walad*. Again, some of the amirs' wives were their former slave-girls.<sup>47</sup> The royal household underwent a dramatic shift in the latter half of the fifteenth century. Sultan Īnāl (r. 1453–61) had no concubines at all, or at least none that bore him children.<sup>48</sup> Qāyṭbāy did not have any concubines until the last years of his life. He started to take concubines when he faced a problem that no former Mamluk sultan had ever encountered: as a direct result of his marital policy, Qāyṭbāy found himself with no surviving children.<sup>49</sup>

As far as we can rely on our sources for demographic trends, there is good reason to believe that the supply of slave-girls was severely affected by the recurrences of the Black Death from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards. Al-Maqrīzī cites the records of the Bureau of Escheat for the Plague outbreak in Cairo in 822/1419, which show that slave-girls were hit more severely than any other group except children. According to the numbers cited by al-Maqrīzī, 1,369 female slaves died in Cairo during the three months of the Plague, compared with 544 male slaves; taken together, more slaves died in Cairo during this period than free adult Muslims.<sup>50</sup> While these numbers again indicate that female slaves were far more common than male slaves, they also affirm Ayalon's point that slaves, like all foreigners, were more vulnerable to the Plague than the native population.<sup>51</sup>

Aḥmad al-Sā'ih [Cairo, 1988], 79). See also Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn 'an Rabb al-Ālamīn*, ed. Ṭāhā 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd (Beirut, 1964), 2:80.

<sup>47</sup> Michael Winter, "Mamluks and Their Households in Late Mamluk Damascus: A *Waqf* Study," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and History*, ed. Levanoni and Winter, 297–316.

<sup>48</sup> Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī*, 2:368, 3:156; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 12:44 (no. 261).

<sup>49</sup> The last of Qāyṭbāy's children from his wife Fāṭimah died in 873/1469 (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr*, ed. William Popper [Berkeley, 1932], 8:705).

<sup>50</sup> According to al-Maqrīzī, 1,734 free adult Muslims died in the three months of the Plague (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:492; cited by Michael Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* [Princeton, 1977], 178).

<sup>51</sup> David Ayalon, "The Plague and Its Effects upon the Mamluk Army," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1946): 67–73; Dols, *The Black Death*, 185–89. For similar conclusions about the effects of the Plague on the supply of slaves in the Eastern Mediterranean, see Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State: The Merchants of Genoa and Turkey* (Cambridge, 1999),



There are some indications of a shortage of female slaves, although these are inconclusive. The musical bands of slave-girls, a status symbol for fourteenth-century military households, disappeared. Ibn Taghribirdī, writing in the latter half of the fifteenth century, had to explain to his readers that musical bands of slave-girls existed in the previous century.<sup>52</sup> In the late fifteenth century one encounters musical bands composed of Arab—that is, freeborn—singers.<sup>53</sup> In fact, from the second half of the fourteenth century, campaigns against rebellious Bedouin tribes often ended with the enslavement of their womenfolk and children.<sup>54</sup> This practice was condemned by scholars, but most probably allowed to go on because of the demands of the slave markets. White, or Turkish, female slaves became especially dear. The wars with the Ottomans may have resulted in a real shortage of non-African slaves in the last decades of the century.<sup>55</sup> When Burhān al-Dīn Ibn Abī Sharīf, a native of Jerusalem, came to Damascus in 904/1498–99, he had to make do with a black slave-girl.<sup>56</sup>

The prices of slave-girls appear to have been fairly stable, except for a possible rise at the end of the fifteenth century. The Ḥaram documents show that at the end of the fourteenth century one could still buy an Ethiopian female slave for a mere 300 dirhams (about 12 dinars), while the highest price mentioned is 550 dirhams (about 22 dinars).<sup>57</sup> These prices are slightly lower than those quoted for the first half of the century.<sup>58</sup> The evidence for the fifteenth century is too scanty

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<sup>52</sup> Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:380.

<sup>53</sup> Al-Sakhāwī says that during the 1470s, the amir Yashbak min Mahdī tried to prevent provincial governors from hiring bands (*ajwāq*) of Bedouin singers (*Ḍawʿ*, 10:272).

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:673 (a campaign by the governor of Gaza, 750/1349); al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:396 (campaign in Upper Egypt, 820/1417); Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 3:240 (campaign in Upper Egypt, 892/1487). On peasant families in Upper Egypt selling their children into slavery during the famine of 1402–4, see Adam Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt, 1250–1517* (Cambridge, 2000), 168. See also ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 50, for Arab female slaves sold in Cairo in 923/1516.

<sup>55</sup> The Ottomans imposed an embargo on the traffic in slaves during the war of 1485–91 (Shai Har-El, *Struggle for Domination in the Middle East: The Ottoman-Mamluk War, 1485–91* [Leiden, 1995], 198; cites Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 3:206).

<sup>56</sup> Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-Khilān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān* (Cairo, 1962–64), 1:212.

<sup>57</sup> Donald Little, “Two Fourteenth-Century Court Records from Jerusalem Concerning the Disposition of Slaves by Minors,” *Arabica* 29 (1982): 16–49; idem, “Six Fourteenth-Century Purchase Deeds for Slaves from al-Ḥaram Aš-Šarīf,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 131 (1981): 297–337. All these records refer to African slave-girls.

<sup>58</sup> A female slave-girl, who was the concubine of a murder victim, was sold in 730/1330 for 800 dirhams (40 dinars) (al-Jazari, *Tārīkh*, 3:287). As noted above, Ittifāq was sold to the Head of the Singers in Cairo for 400 dirhams (20 dinars). In two Geniza documents dating from the early Mamluk period, the prices mentioned for an African slave-girl are 260 dirhams *nuqrah* (20 dinars)



to allow definitive conclusions.<sup>59</sup> Al-Zawāwī, a Maghribi mystic visiting Cairo, of whom more is said below, agreed to buy a Turkish slave-girl, supposedly a virgin, for 85 dinars.<sup>60</sup> Von Harff, as late as 1497, states that male and female Christian slaves are sold for 15 to 30 ducats.<sup>61</sup> Around the same time, a price of almost 40 dinars is mentioned in a question put to a jurist.<sup>62</sup> All in all, and in view of the prices paid for slaves in fifteenth-century Italian and Anatolian cities, it is likely that prices in Egypt and Syria had gone up.<sup>63</sup>

Fifteenth-century literary sources indicate that men of modest background kept a concubine as a *substitute* for a wife. ‘Alī al-Manūfī (d. 896/1491), for example, a poor tailor and mosque attendant, had three children from a slave.<sup>64</sup> ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥasanī (d. 870/1465), a mathematician of apparently modest income, never married but took a slave as a concubine.<sup>65</sup> The dream diaries of the fifteenth-century Maghribi mystic Al-Zawāwī reveal his preference for a concubine over a wife. When al-Zawāwī considers the prospect of marriage, the Prophet tells him in his dream that in marriage he would become a slave to his bride. The Prophet later suggested that al-Zawāwī should purchase an Ethiopian slave-girl, because the Ethiopians tend to be kinder and better companions, but al-Zawāwī was fixed on a Turkish slave, reputedly better at child-bearing, and a marker of status. When he finally made up his mind, he found an opportunity to purchase a pretty Turkish slave, who was allegedly a virgin, for an exorbitant price of 85 dinars. As is common in al-Zawāwī’s diary, his long dithering came to nothing, and the sale never went through.<sup>66</sup>

In the fifteenth century, the attitude towards concubines had also changed, and they were—like wives—respected more for their skills and piety than for

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and 25 dinars (Eliyahu Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* [Berkeley, 1976], 360–61; ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 49).

<sup>59</sup> Ashtor’s assertion that there was no increase in the price of male and female slaves, apart from military slaves, seems to be based on very thin evidence (Ashtor, *Social and Economic History*, 361).

<sup>60</sup> Jonathan G. Katz, *Dreams, Sufism, and Sainthood: The Visionary Career of Muhammad al-Zawāwī* (Leiden, 1996), 119.

<sup>61</sup> Arnold von Harff, *The Pilgrimage of the Knight Arnold von Harff*, trans. M. Letts (London, 1946), 79.

<sup>62</sup> Zakariyā al-Anṣārī, *Al-Flām wa-al-Ihtimām bi-Jam‘ Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Abī Yaḥyá Zakariyā al-Anṣārī*, ed. Aḥmad ‘Ubayd (Beirut, 1984), 124.

<sup>63</sup> See Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade*, 39–45, 147–49; Halil İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914* (Cambridge, 1994), 1:284; Ashtor, *Social and Economic History*, 498–504.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 6:48 (no. 131).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:243.

<sup>66</sup> Katz, *Dreams*, 117–20.



their looks and voice. Al-Maqrizī went to buy a concubine when he was single. He ended up purchasing a fifteen-year-old slave-girl who had been brought up in the royal household. Al-Maqrizī taught the girl, whom he named Sūl, to read and write and even to compose poetry. Apparently, she never bore him children. He later freed her, and she traveled to Mecca where she died at the age of forty.<sup>67</sup> Another striking example of this change in attitude towards concubines is the biography of Bulbul (Nightingale), a slave-girl of the Damascene scholar Yūsuf Ibn al-Mibrad. Her biography is known to us from a short work Ibn al-Mibrad composed in her memory, entitled *Laqaṭ al-Sunbul fī Akhbār al-Bulbul* (Gleanings from the life of the nightingale).<sup>68</sup> Ibn al-Mibrad depicts Bulbul as a virtuous, modest, and learned woman. Even when Ibn al-Mibrad's brother personally invited her to his wedding, she refused to go, claiming that she swore never to leave the house. She refused to wear an expensive *sinjāb* fur that Ibn al-Mibrad bought her as a gift, citing her master's own legal opinions against the use of this material.<sup>69</sup> We know that Ibn al-Mibrad often read for her, as her name appears on most of his surviving autograph manuscripts.<sup>70</sup> She died in 883/1479, after spending ten years with Ibn al-Mibrad and bearing him a boy and a girl.

If Shajar al-Durr or Ittifāq, singer and royal concubine of three sultans, are emblematic of successful slave-girls in the earlier period, Bulbul's biography projects very different attitudes. The ideal slave-girl was no more the beautiful and witty courtesan, but rather the pious and industrious housewife.

#### WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

In his biography of his slave-girl Bulbul, Ibn al-Mibrad notes that her last act of charity was to leave a bequest for the poor, the money coming from the profits she gained as a spinner. By working as a spinner and spending her earnings as she saw fit, Bulbul resembled many free women in Mamluk urban society, who worked for wages regardless of their marital status. Medieval sources, written by and for men, do not pay adequate attention to the economic activities of women, and often leave us with a distorted image—not only of women's financial independence, but of the functioning of the economy as a whole. This was partly because the contributions of women were often carried out within exclusively female economic spheres. In the framework of a heavily gendered economy, the

<sup>67</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʿ*, 12:66 (no. 404).

<sup>68</sup> Included in Ibn al-Mibrad, *Akhbār al-Nisāʾ al-Musammā al-Rusā lil-Ṣāliḥāt min al-Nisāʾ*, ed. Māhir Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir (Homs, 1993), 17 ff.

<sup>69</sup> On the legal debate over this squirrel fur, see Elizabeth M. Sertain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background* (Cambridge, 1975), 1:202, n. 11; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʿ*, 8:97 (no. 197).

<sup>70</sup> See the remarks by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Sulaymān al-ʿUthaymīn in his introduction to Ibn al-Mibrad, *Al-Jawhar al-Munaddad fī Ṭabaqāt Mutaʾakhhiri Aṣḥāb Aḥmad* (Cairo, 1987), 37.



boundary between economic roles was quite rigid: artisan women spun, artisan men wove; rich daughters received trousseaux, while the sons of the elite acquired positions in public institutions. As the circumstances of elite women were very different from those of women of the lower classes, the following survey will treat the two groups separately.

#### ELITE WOMEN, LAND, AND TROUSSEAUX<sup>71</sup>

In contrast to the preceding Ayyubid period, Mamluk political institutions were distinguished by the exclusion of elite women from landed revenue. Female members of the Ayyubid family received hereditary appanages as late as the middle of the thirteenth century,<sup>72</sup> and Ayyubid women's unusual prominence among patrons of public institutions was a tangible result of this direct access to landed property.<sup>73</sup> During the second half of the thirteenth century, however, the Mamluk sultans confiscated or bought much of the privately owned land and then distributed it as *iqṭāʿ*. As revenue from land was increasingly tied to military service, elite women were marginalized. The career of Khātūn, daughter of the Ayyubid ruler of Damascus al-Malik al-Ashraf Mūsá, illustrates the way Ayyubid women were stripped of their landed assets.<sup>74</sup> In 685/1286, when Khātūn was in her seventies, officials in the Syrian administration went to court and claimed that she had been in a state of mental incompetence (*sifh*) when she sold her lands in several villages near Damascus thirty years earlier. The proofs brought by the state's representatives were accepted, Khātūn was deemed to be unqualified to dispose of her property, and the sale was retroactively invalidated.

As more and more land was alienated in favor of the state, and as the economic activity of elite women was subject to increasing controls, the number of public institutions founded by women fell dramatically. Against the twenty-six religious and charitable institutions women established during less than a century of Ayyubid rule in Damascus, only four were founded in the following century. In Cairo the womenfolk of the royal court had more of a chance to contribute to the city's landscape, especially in the days of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Urdutekin

<sup>71</sup> See also Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce*, 12–30.

<sup>72</sup> R. S. Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 371–5, 415; H. Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt, AH 564–741/1169–1341* (Oxford University Press, 1972), 42–3.

<sup>73</sup> R. Stephen Humphreys, "Women as Patrons of Religious Architecture in Ayyubid Damascus," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994): 35–54. See also Yasser Tabbaa, "Dayfa Khātūn, Regent Queen and Architectural Patron," in *Women, Patronage and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies*, ed. D. Fairchild Ruggles (Albany, 2000).

<sup>74</sup> Jacqueline Sublet, "La folie de la princesse Bint al-Ašraf (un scandale financier sous les mamelouks bahris)," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 27 (1974): 45–50.



bint Nogāy, the Mongol wife of the sultan, funded the establishment of a tomb for her son by endowing tenement houses, a covered market, two bathhouses, and agricultural land.<sup>75</sup> Sitt Ḥadaq, a slave and wet-nurse who became the senior governess in al-Nāṣir's court, established a mosque that has survived to our day.<sup>76</sup> Overall, however, women's representation among the patrons of public buildings in Cairo remained low.

While elite women were excluded from control over land, they still had a claim to a share in their parents' wealth, mainly in the form of trousseaux, "personal items," or heirlooms. These trousseaux (or dowries) functioned as a form of pre-mortem inheritance reserved exclusively for daughters, through a devolutionist mechanism.<sup>77</sup> The trousseau was primarily a transaction between parents and daughters, not between bride and groom. Once it was donated by the bride's parents, it remained under the woman's exclusive ownership and control throughout marriage, and then again through widowhood and divorce. The absolute separation of property between husbands and wives, enshrined by Islamic law, meant that husbands had no formal right over their wives' trousseaux. The high value of these trousseaux is evident from the beginning of the fourteenth century, and should not be underestimated; for many elite women large trousseaux did mean financial security, and in some cases it was the husband who depended on his wife's trousseau rather than the other way around.<sup>78</sup>

A series of Ḥaram documents provides a very explicit illustration of workings of the devolutionist model in Mamluk society. When Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ḥamawī, a wealthy merchant from Jerusalem, became terminally ill in 788/1386, he acknowledged a gift of 10,000 dirhams to his adolescent son, Muḥammad. At the same time, Nāṣir al-Dīn also acknowledged that he had endowed his daughter Fāṭimah with a trousseau, also in the value of 10,000 dirhams. Nāṣir al-Dīn noted that the money was spent on personal effects, as is the custom in trousseaux (*dhālīka ḥawāʾij ʿalá ʿādat al-jihāz*). Fāṭimah received her dowry in the form of a trousseau—"personal effects," such as copper utensils, furniture, and clothing.

<sup>75</sup> Howyda al-Harithy, "Female Patronage of Mamluk Architecture in Cairo," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 1 (1994): 157–59.

<sup>76</sup> Caroline Williams, "The Mosque of Sitt Ḥadaq," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994): 55–64; ʿAbd al-Rāziq, "Trois fondations féminines dans l'Égypte mamelouke," *Revue d'études islamiques* 41 (1973): 97–126.

<sup>77</sup> J. Goody, "Bridewealth and Dowry in Africa and Euroasia," in *Bridewealth and Dowry*, ed. Goody and Tambiah (Cambridge, 1973). See also M. Botticini and Aloysius Siow, "Why Dowries?" *American Economic Review* 93, no. 4 (2003): 1385–98.

<sup>78</sup> Fāyizah al-Wakīl, *Al-Shiwār: Jihāz al-ʿArūs fi Miṣr fi ʿAṣr al-Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk* (Cairo, 2001); see review by Vanessa de Gifis, *MSR* 7, no. 2 (2003): 247–250. For a list of royal trousseaux see ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 150–51.



But the value of her trousseau, or dowry, was exactly equal to the cash gift given to her brother.<sup>79</sup>

Trousseaux and grants of *iqṭāʿ* were also seen as two complementary gender-specific mechanisms of transmitting property, as is seen in the following anecdote regarding the re-distribution of *iqṭāʿ* following the outbreak of the Plague. Faced with high mortality rates among the *iqṭāʿ* holders, the vice-regent of Egypt handed over the *iqṭāʿ* of deceased soldiers to one of their surviving sons. When a soldier's widow prostrated before the vice-regent and told him that her husband left her with only two daughters, the vice-regent sold the deceased soldier's *iqṭāʿ* to another officer for 12,000 dirhams. He then gave the money to the widow, telling her to use it to provide trousseaux for her two daughters.<sup>80</sup>

This pattern of dividing the patrimony along gender lines between daughters and sons was common among Mamluk military and religious urban elites. Giving a trousseau to a daughter was one side of the coin, for at the same time daughters were not allowed to inherit other parts of a family's patrimony, reserved exclusively for sons. Male members of the military elite had a right to hold an *iqṭāʿ* in return for their services. Among the religious elite, sons had a similar right to inherit office from their fathers.<sup>81</sup> The many examples of *nuzūl*, or "handing down," of offices from fathers to sons that are found in the Mamluk sources demonstrate the gender-specific mechanism of inheritance among the elite. While the trousseau was, by definition, reserved exclusively for daughters, the right to hold office was fundamentally the prerogative of sons.

In the second half of the fourteenth century, however, the link between service and control of land began to loosen, and towards the end of the fifteenth century women appear again as major landholders. First, the Plague caused an inheritance windfall effect, benefiting those daughters of military and civilian elite households who survived. A treatise written in Damascus immediately following the first outbreak reveals an anxiety about the sudden surge in wealthy young heiresses.<sup>82</sup> The following decades saw a revival in female patronage of religious buildings, part of a general spate of building activity.<sup>83</sup> In Jerusalem, after a long

<sup>79</sup> Some of the documents were published by Kāmil al-ʿAṣalī, *Wathāʾiq Maqdisīyah Tārīkhīyah* (Amman, 1983–85), 2:83 (no. 25), 120 (no. 44); Little, *Catalogue*, 309. For an assessment of the documents relating to Nāṣir al-Dīn and his financial affairs, see *ibid.*, 18; *idem*, "Six Fourteenth-Century Purchase Deeds."

<sup>80</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 2:86.

<sup>81</sup> Al-Subkī, *Fatāwā*, 2:224. See also the discussion in Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 94 ff.

<sup>82</sup> Al-Ṭarsūsī, *Kitāb Tuḥfat al-Turk*, ed. M. Minasri (Damascus, 1997), 20.

<sup>83</sup> Dols, *The Black Death*, 270; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Patterns of Urban Patronage in Cairo: A Comparison between the Mamluk and the Ottoman Periods," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics*



hiatus, women established at least three madrasahs.<sup>84</sup> In Cairo, female members of the military elite founded as many religious institutions in two decades as they had in the preceding century. These include Madrasat Umm al-Sulṭān, the most remarkable achievement of female patronage in Mamluk Cairo, established by the concubine mother of al-Ashraf Shaḥbān in 770/1368.<sup>85</sup>

A more long-term development was the re-entry of elite women into the land market. By and large, women were still excluded from holding official positions and collecting the tax revenues that came with them (although even this happened towards the end of the fifteenth century, when a widow of a Sufi shaykh was elected to head his *zāwiyah*).<sup>86</sup> Yet, the share of agricultural surplus that was channeled to these positions was gradually decreasing. More and more land was alienated to support endowments that were for the most part private or familial, although charitable in appearance.<sup>87</sup> The rapid growth of family endowment at the expense of *iqṭāʿ* allowed elite women greater access to landed revenue; they could—and did—become beneficiaries, administrators, and founders.

As beneficiaries, women profited from the establishment of endowments more often than not. Although many of the endowment deeds preserved in the legal literature explicitly state that males should receive twice the share of females,<sup>88</sup> some family endowments were intentionally designed to circumvent the Islamic inheritance law in order to improve the lot of daughters. Michael Winter concluded, based on a sample of preserved endowment deeds from late fifteenth-century Damascus, that the portions of what women obtained as beneficiaries are explicitly higher than what they would have received by the Quranic laws of inheritance. The reverse did occur, but is considerably rarer.<sup>89</sup>

*and Society*, ed. Phillip and Haarmann (Cambridge, 1998), 229.

<sup>84</sup> See Mujir al-Dīn al-Ulaymī, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl fī Tārīkh al-Quds wa-al-Khalīl* (Najaf, 1969), 2:36, 43. The endowment deed for the al-Bārūdiyyah madrasah, established by Sufirā Khātūn bint Sharaf al-Dīn al-Bārūdī in 768/1367, has survived (Ḥaram no. 76; discussed in Little, “The Haram Documents as Sources for the Arts and Architecture of the Mamluk Period,” *Muqarnas* 2 [1984]: 69).

<sup>85</sup> ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 22–23; al-Harīthy, “Female Patronage,” 161–67.

<sup>86</sup> Berkey, “Women and Islamic Education,” 145. On the unusual appointment of a widow as shaykhah, see Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 3:233.

<sup>87</sup> See Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, *Al-Awqāf wa-al-Ḥayāh al-Ijtīmāʿīyah fī Miṣr, 648–923 H./1250–1517 M.* (Cairo, 1980); Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?* 190–219; J.-C. Garcin and M. A. Taher, “Enquête sur le financement d’un waqf Égyptien du XVe siècle: Les comptes de Jawhār Lālā,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38 (1995): 262–304.

<sup>88</sup> For examples of endowment deeds in which males receive twice the share of daughters, see al-Subkī, *Fatāwā*, 1:475, 484, 494, 500, 501, 511, 517; 2:9, 10, 29, 40, 50, 50, 72, 167, 168, 177, 183, 187; al-Anṣārī, *Al-Flām*, 164, 165, 167, 168, 171, 175, 182, 185, 187, 189, 191.

<sup>89</sup> Winter, “Mamluks and Their Households,” 297–316. For similar conclusions regarding endowment deeds in contemporary North Africa, see D. Powers, “The Māliki Family Endowment:



By the latter half of the fifteenth century, elite women were often nominated as administrators of their families' endowments. It is possible to identify thirty-eight individual women who served as administrators of family endowments in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Cairo, representing one-fifth of the total number of known administrators.<sup>90</sup> One leading example is Shaqrā', daughter of the former sultan al-Nāṣir Faraj, who brought a lawsuit against an amir who refused to pay the rent on agricultural lands he had leased from her.<sup>91</sup> The same Shaqrā' also contested the control of the family's endowment with her sister's daughter Āsiyah.<sup>92</sup> There are many more examples from the late Mamluk period, clearly demonstrating that women were now trusted to manage family property. It should be emphasized that this phenomenon was not limited to the military elite, and therefore should not be seen as a response to political instability. It was rather a result of the general disassociation of landed revenue and service to the state, which meant that elite women were much more on an equal footing with regard to management of agricultural estates.

Fifteenth-century elite women were not only beneficiaries and administrators of endowments, but also a sizeable minority among the founders. Carl Petry has highlighted the economic career of the lifelong wife of Sultan Qāytbāy, Fāṭimah bint 'Alī Ibn Khāṣṣbak (d. 909/1504). Fāṭimah started acquiring real estate in 878/1473, when she bought ten units of urban property and six agricultural tracts located in the Delta provinces of al-Gharbiyah, al-Sharqiyah, and al-Qalyūbiyah. According to the purchase deed, all of the six units had originally been held in the Army Bureau for distribution as *iqṭā'*. In the next thirty years Fāṭimah constantly bought urban and rural real estate, and continued to invest at the same rate even after the death of her husband—a clear indication that her hold over this property was real. The agricultural units formed between one third and one half of her overall investments, estimated to be several tens of thousands of dinars.<sup>93</sup>

Female founders of endowments appear to constitute about 15–20% of the total

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Legal Norms and Social Practices," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 25 (1993): 379–406.

<sup>90</sup> The data was collected from Muḥammad Muḥammad Amin, *Fihrist Wathā'iq al-Qāhirah ḥattā Nihāyat 'Aṣr Salāṭin al-Mamālīk* (Cairo, 1981). The name of an endowment's administrator appears routinely in the documents, mainly in connection with sale of endowed property through *istibdāl*. Carl Petry estimated that women constituted almost 30% of the endowment administrators in this period ("Class Solidarity," 133).

<sup>91</sup> Petry, "Class Solidarity," 130; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā' al-Ḥaṣr bi-Abnā' al-'Aṣr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970), 471.

<sup>92</sup> Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī'*, 3:79.

<sup>93</sup> Petry, "The Estate of al-Khuwand Faṭima al-Khāṣṣbakiyya."



number of known founders in fifteenth-century Cairo.<sup>94</sup> As opposed to the grand institutions built following the first outbreak of the Plague, fifteenth-century elite women endowed relatively small family tombs and neighborhood mosques, of which little survived.<sup>95</sup> While married couples established only a small proportion of fifteenth-century endowments,<sup>96</sup> their mere existence demonstrates the changes that had occurred in the gender division of property among the elite. In contrast to the early Mamluk period, the lines dividing “male” and “female” types of property had become sufficiently blurred during the fifteenth century as to allow some husbands and wives to merge their assets into one marital fund.

#### ARTISAN WOMEN<sup>97</sup>

The contribution of women to the urban economy has been largely marginalized by medieval and modern scholars. Most studies to date note the role of women in providing a limited range of gender-specific services.<sup>98</sup> We often read about women who performed services directly related to female life, such as midwives,<sup>99</sup> hairdressers,<sup>100</sup> washers of the dead,<sup>101</sup> and female attendants in baths and hospitals.<sup>102</sup> Female and male barbers performed a variety of services, like bloodletting, cleansing and whitening teeth, or removing excessive hair, mainly for women.<sup>103</sup> Some of these professions were considered quite profitable, and there is evidence that midwives and hairdressers were paid generously.<sup>104</sup> Free

<sup>94</sup> For a statistical analysis of late Mamluk endowment deeds preserved in Dār al-Wathā’iq in Cairo, see S. Denoix, “Pour une exploitation d’ensemble d’un corpus: Les Waqf mamelouks du Caire,” in *Le Waqf dans l’espace islamique: outil de pouvoir socio-politique*, ed. R. Deguilhem (Damascus, 1995), 29–44.

<sup>95</sup> Al-Harithy, “Female Patronage,” 159.

<sup>96</sup> See Amīn, *Fihrist*, nos. 163, 194, 247, 254, 389, 403–5, 428, 525, 526, 527, 529, 557, 560, 561.

<sup>97</sup> See also Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce*, 32–38.

<sup>98</sup> Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 1:127–30; Maya Shatzmiller, *Labour in the Medieval Islamic World* (Leiden, 1994), 347–68.

<sup>99</sup> Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 3:290; anonymous ninth/fifteenth-century Shafi’i treatise on marriage, Chester Beatty MS 4665, fols. 28a–29b. See also ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 62, 83.

<sup>100</sup> ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 82, and the sources cited there.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 81; Lutfi, “Manners,” 106; Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 2:172, 3:246; Ibn al-Ukhūwah, *Ma’ālim al-Qurbah fī Aḥkām al-Ḥisbah*, ed. R. Levy (Cambridge, 1938), 101–2.

<sup>102</sup> Female orderlies (*farrāshāt*) were employed in the hospital of Qalāwūn in the beginning of the fourteenth century (Sabra, *Poverty*, 76). On bath-attendants, see ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 44.

<sup>103</sup> Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 4:105–7; ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 75, and the sources cited there.

<sup>104</sup> On the career of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s midwife, see al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:701. In one case, we are told that a hairdresser employed a slave-girl as her assistant (*ibid.*, 3:939; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:521).



women who provided non-skilled services, such as wet-nurses, had to compete with the unsalaried services of slave-girls.<sup>105</sup> Unlike later Ottoman households, there existed no class of salaried, free, domestic servants.<sup>106</sup> Prostitutes, who are frequently mentioned in Mamluk sources but not yet sufficiently studied, appear to have also been mostly recruited from the ranks of slaves brought to Mamluk cities. Ibn Dāniyāl's description of a Cairene procuress has been frequently translated and cited, and justly so, as it projects a very vivid image of the profession.<sup>107</sup>

Far less, however, has been written on the vast majority of women who worked in the production of textiles, traditionally "the main field of female remunerative occupation."<sup>108</sup> Spinning and embroidery were the female professions par excellence, as demonstrated in an anecdote told by the historian Ibn Kathīr. During a visit to Baalbek in 754/1353–54, Ibn Kathīr met a hermaphrodite who was brought up as a girl until the age of fifteen. Then a tiny penis appeared, and the local governor gave orders to celebrate the transformation of the girl into a man by bestowing upon him a military uniform. The young soldier boasted before Ibn Kathīr that he was "skilled in all the professions of women, including spinning, decorating with *tīrāz* bands, and embroidery with gold and silver threads (*zarkāsh*)."<sup>109</sup> Girls were taught spinning and embroidery at a young age. Al-Jazarī mourns with sadness and pride two of his young nieces, who were not only beautiful and pious, but also excelled in the arts of embroidery and sewing.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>105</sup> For a comprehensive study of wet-nurses in medieval Islam, see Avner Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications* (Leiden, 1999). See also 'Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 83–85; Maya Shatzmiller, "Women and Wage Labour in the Medieval Islamic West," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40 (1997): 183–88.

<sup>106</sup> See the important contribution by Madeline Zilfi, "Servants, Slaves and the Domestic Order in the Ottoman Middle East," *Hawwa* 2, no. 1 (2004): 1–33.

<sup>107</sup> On prostitutes, see 'Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme*, 45 ff. For Ibn Dāniyāl and his representation of the archetypical procuress, see Ibn Dāniyāl, *Kitāb Ṭayf al-Khayāl*, ed. Paul Kahle, with a critical apparatus by D. Hopwood (Cambridge, 1992), 22ff; Paul Kahle, "A Gypsy Woman in Egypt in the Thirteenth Century A.D.," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* 29 (1950): 11–15; Francesca M. Corrao, "Women Stories in the Mamluk Age: Loves and Struggles to Survive," in *Proceedings of the Arabic and Islamic Sections of the 35th International Congress of Asian and North African Studies (ICANAS)*, ed. A. Fodor (Budapest, 1999), pt. 2, 101–10; Amila Buturović, "The Shadow Play in Mamluk Egypt," *MSR* 7, [no. 1] (2003): 169–71. See also Ibn Baydakin al-Turkumāni, *Kitāb al-Luma' fi al-Ḥawādith wa-al-Bida'*, ed. Şubḥi Labīb (Wiesbaden, 1986), 163.

<sup>108</sup> Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 1:128. See also Shatzmiller, *Labour*, 352.

<sup>109</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, ed. Aḥmad Abū Muḥim et al. (Beirut, 1994), 14:198. On the social reaction to hermaphrodites see Tamer al-Leithy, "Of bodies chang'd to various forms."

<sup>110</sup> The two sisters followed each other to the grave in 737/1336–37 (al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:976, 980).



While most women spun at home, they did have to go out of the house to buy raw material and sell the finished product. Women congregated in front of the cotton and flax traders' shops, waiting for the carding process to be finished, and later sold the threads directly to the yarn trader, who weighed the finished product.<sup>111</sup> Alternatively, women brought their yarn to mosques, where they negotiated the prices with a male broker acting as their agent. The need of working women to go out was recognized by contemporary jurists. Widows and divorcées in their waiting period retained the right to leave their homes during the day in order to purchase raw material or sell the finished threads. At night these women were also allowed to go to neighbors' houses to spin together and chat.<sup>112</sup>

The Ḥaram documents, as studied by Huda Lutfi, are a rare indication of the extent of working women's contribution to the textile economy. While scribes identified nearly all men by their profession, they did so for only six women (about two percent), including two female water-carriers and one bath-attendant. The small ratio of women carrying occupational titles, however, is more an indication of cultural attitudes than an indication of the actual contribution of women to the workforce.<sup>113</sup> Lutfi tackled the problem of identifying women's occupations by examining ownership of tools, raw materials, or commercial quantities of finished products at the time of death. Even this categorization tends to underestimate female participation in the workforce, since women and men on their deathbed tended to pass on some of their possessions to relatives and friends.

Lutfi's survey shows that a large proportion of all women, maybe even the majority, were employed in the textile industry. Spinning tools, or remnants of crude or spun cotton and flax, were found in the estate inventories of 82 women, about 30 percent of all women. Some of these women owned spindles (*mirdan* or *mighzalah*), but the most frequently mentioned spinning tool was the spinning wheel (*dūlāb ghazl* or *rikkah*). This is a rare indication of the use of spinning wheels in the Mamluk period. It also shows the importance of spinning to poor

<sup>111</sup> 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Naṣr al-Shayzarī, *Nihāyat al-Rutbah fī Ṭalab al-Ḥisbah*, ed. al-Sayyid al-Bāz al-'Arinī (Cairo, 1946), 69, 70; Ibn al-Ukhūwah, *Ma'ālim al-Qurbah*, 225. Ibn al-Ukhūwah notes that spindle makers and flax traders have dealings mainly with women (*Ma'ālim al-Qurbah*, 279).

<sup>112</sup> 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad al-Rāfi'ī, *Al-'Azīz Sharḥ al-Wajīz*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwad and 'Ādil Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mawjūd (Beirut, 1997), 9:510; al-Subkī, *Fatāwā*, 2:314–20. According to the established doctrine, the permission is only granted to single women who are not entitled to marital support.

<sup>113</sup> The small ratio of women identified by profession is comparable with the evidence from the comprehensive Florentine Catasto of 1427. The Catasto, a census of both rural and urban population, lists about 7,000 female-headed households. But only 270 of these women carry a professional title of any sort, mainly domestic servants, religious women, or beggars (D. Herlihy, *Opera Muliebri: Women and Work in Medieval Europe* [New York, 1990], 158–62). See also, for the Ottoman period, Zilfi, "Servants, Slaves and the Domestic Order."



women, as the purchase of a spinning wheel appears to have been a substantial investment. According to a record of the sale of one poor woman's chattels, a spinning wheel, together with small quantities of wheat, cotton, and yarn, fetched 20 dirhams. All her other assets put together, that is her utensils and clothes, were sold for a similar amount.<sup>114</sup>

The Ḥaram documents suggest that the great majority of women worked for wages. Rather than being on the margins of the urban economy, women formed the majority of the textile industry's workforce, supplying most of the unskilled labor at the early stages of production. In the Ḥaram documents we find more than three female spinners for every male weaver, and this is most probably an underestimate. In the contemporary European textile industry, which was at a comparable technological level, one weaver required up to fifteen spinners to supply him with threads.<sup>115</sup>

All in all, Mamluk sources reveal widespread participation of women in the labor force, and a normative attitude towards women who worked to earn their living. The same is true for the Jewish community of the Geniza, where women's remunerative work became more widespread during the Mamluk period, eventually becoming the norm.<sup>116</sup> The explanation for the normative attitude towards female labor, among both Muslims and Jews, may be sought in the expansion and technological innovation of the contemporary textile industry. The volume of textile production significantly increased in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>117</sup> This was also a period of technological innovation. The introduction of the draw-loom in the middle of the thirteenth century facilitated the weaving of repeat patterns, large figures, and inscriptions.<sup>118</sup> The introduction of Asiatic spinning wheels, which represented a limited technical improvement

<sup>114</sup> Lutfi, *Al-Quds*, 64–67.

<sup>115</sup> Claudia Opitz, "Life in the Late Middle Ages," in *A History of Women in the West*, ed. Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot (Cambridge, MA, 1992), vol. 2, *Silences of the Middle Ages*, 304. Another study puts the number of carders and spinners required to supply thread to one weaver at twenty (M. Wiesner, "Spinsters and Seamstresses: Women in Cloth and Clothing Production," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: the Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers [Chicago, 1986], 194).

<sup>116</sup> Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 3:132–35.

<sup>117</sup> For general summary, see Bethany J. Walker, "Rethinking Mamluk Textiles," *MSR* 4 (2000): 167–95.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 174 ff. L. Mackie, "Towards an Understanding of Mamluk Silks: National and International Considerations," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 127–46. For a reference to the use of the draw-loom in the Dār al-Tirāz in Alexandria in 770/1369, see Muḥammad Ibn al-Qāsim al-Nuwayrī, *Kitāb al-Ilmām bi-al-ʿIlām fīmā Jarat bihi al-Aḥkām wa-al-Umūr al-Muqḍiyah fi Waqʿat al-Iskandriyah*, ed. A. S. Atiyya (Hyderabad, 1968–76), 6:4; cited by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Marzūq, *History of Textile Industry in Alexandria, 331 BC–1517 AD* [Alexandria, 1955], 65–67).



over the spindle, may also have contributed to an expansion in the production of textiles.<sup>119</sup> Since the vast majority of working women participated in the production of textiles, the expansion of the industry and the introduction of the spinning wheel may have meant working women had more opportunities to participate in the urban economy.

### MARRIAGE, POLYGAMY, AND DIVORCE

#### ŞADĀQ AND NAFAQAH<sup>120</sup>

Contrary to popular conceptions of marriage in traditional Muslim societies, and in spite of the emphasis placed in Islamic law on the gifts of the groom, Mamluk society was a dotal society, i.e., a society where the dowry, or trousseau, brought by the bride was the substantial gift at marriage.<sup>121</sup> The significance of these trousseaux for elite women has been discussed above. The grooms were required to pledge a marriage gift (*mahr* or *şadāq*), but it was much smaller than the dowry, and for the most part deferred as a security for divorcées and widows. The groom's marriage gifts were normally specified in cash, and divided into advance and deferred portions, with the advance payments almost always smaller than the deferred portion.<sup>122</sup> By the thirteenth century it had become common to divide the deferred portion into yearly installments. These methods of payment and others appear together in various combinations. Each marriage contract was different, and the parties to the contract were at liberty to choose the financial arrangements as they saw fit.

Of particular importance are marriage contracts, more common in the later Mamluk period, which designated a portion of the marriage gift as due debt (*ḥall*) "payable upon demand." This term is found in documents and legal literature from the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>123</sup> By the middle of the fourteenth century it was standard practice in Damascus to designate part of the marriage

<sup>119</sup> Lutfi, *Al-Quds*, 297. A woman working with a spinning wheel appears in a thirteenth-century illustration of the *Maqāmāt* (Ahmed Y. al-Hassan and Donald R. Hill, *Islamic Technology: an Illustrated History* [Cambridge, 1986], 186). There are no references to spinning wheels in the Geniza (Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 1:99). Ibn al-Ukhūwah, writing in the beginning of the fourteenth century, discusses the proper manufacture of a spindle (*mirdan*), but does not refer to spinning wheels (*Ma'ālim al-Qurbah*, 279).

<sup>120</sup> See also Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce*, 51–68.

<sup>121</sup> For dotal regimes in medieval Europe, see Martha Howell, *The Marriage Exchange: Property, Social Place and Gender in Cities of the Low Countries, 1300–1500* (Chicago, 1998), 197–212, and the references cited there.

<sup>122</sup> This was true also for Jewish marriage contracts. See Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 3:122.

<sup>123</sup> The earliest mention of the term comes from an Egyptian marriage contract dated 677/1278, where the *şadāq* is divided into a due portion of 100 dirhams and ten yearly installments of 40 dirhams ('Abd al-Rāziq, "Aqdā Nikāḥ").



gifts as payable upon demand.<sup>124</sup> This new feature of marriage contracts attracted the attention of Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭarsūsī (d. 758/1357), the chief Hanafi qadi of the city, who devoted a treatise to the interpretation of the clause. According to his view, a “payable upon demand” stipulation allows the wife to demand payment at any time during the marriage, and the qadi should send the husband to jail if he refuses to pay up.<sup>125</sup>

The other financial obligation of husbands was marital support, the husband’s primary duty during marriage, and the way this obligation was fulfilled underwent significant change during the Mamluk period. Up to the end of the thirteenth century, husbands supported their wives by buying food in the market and, quite literally, putting bread on the table. From the beginning of the fourteenth century, however, we find some husbands paying cash allowances to their wives. The Egyptian moralist Ibn al-Ḥājj criticizes husbands who leave money with their wives in order to allow them to buy flax or water from peddlers.<sup>126</sup> Ibn al-Ḥājj also reports that wives often demand a small payment from their husband before going to bed with them, a payment which he calls a bed-fee.<sup>127</sup> Legal manuals from this period specifically approve of cash allowances as a permissible form of marital support.<sup>128</sup> The Italian merchant Frescobaldi, visiting Egypt in 1384, notes that spouses reach an agreement on a daily allowance for the wife’s support. The amounts of this allowance vary according to social position, from three to one dirham a day, and less than that among the poor.<sup>129</sup> A century later, von Harff refers to cash payment of marital support as “the law of the country.”<sup>130</sup>

By the fifteenth century, marital support had come to consist of a variety of cash payments. Formal settlements with regard to payments in lieu of clothing were registered before a qadi and were effectively an integral part of the marriage contract.<sup>131</sup> The annual payments for clothing could reach substantial sums. In a case from the end of the century, a husband paid for his wife’s clothing by transferring

<sup>124</sup> Guellil, *Damaszener Akten*, 169–70.

<sup>125</sup> Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭarsūsī, *Al-Fatāwā al-Ṭarsūsīyah aw Anfa‘ al-Wasā’il ilā Tahrīr al-Masā’il*, ed. Muṣṭafā Muḥammad Khafāji (Cairo, 1926), 29–34.

<sup>126</sup> Lutfi, “Manners,” 104; Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 4:103.

<sup>127</sup> Lutfi, “Manners,” 107–8; Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 2:169.

<sup>128</sup> See late fourteenth-century Shafi‘i jurists such as al-‘Uthmāni, “Kifāyat al-Muftiyīn wa-al-Ḥukkām fi al-Fatāwā wa-al-Aḥkām,” Chester Beatty MS 4666, fols. 49b–50a; al-Aqfahsī, “Tawqīf al-Ḥukkām ‘alā Ghawāmiḍ al-Aḥkām,” Chester Beatty MS 3328, fol. 106b.

<sup>129</sup> Leonardo Frescobaldi, Giorgio Gucci, and Simone Sigoli, *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine, and Syria in 1384*, trans. T. Bellorini and E. Hoade (Jerusalem, 1948), 49 (cited by Ashtor, *Histoire des prix et des salaires dans l’Orient médiéval* [Paris, 1969], 367).

<sup>130</sup> Von Harff, *Pilgrimage*, 112.

<sup>131</sup> Al-Anṣārī, *Al-Flām*, 269. For a model document, see al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir al-‘Uqūd*, 2:221–22.



to her name an item of real estate.<sup>132</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī acknowledged in his will that he still owed his wife 300 gold dinars for undelivered clothing.<sup>133</sup> A Jewish reference is again illuminating. Rabbi David ibn Zekharya, writing in the early sixteenth century, notes that Jewish wives in Egypt and Palestine ask their husbands for cash instead of clothing, and thus make small savings. The women then buy second-hand clothes, or otherwise clothes of lesser value, and invest the remaining sum in interest-bearing loans.<sup>134</sup>

The spread of cash payments and allowances amounted to a significant monetization and formalization of marriage, which was characteristic of fifteenth-century marriages. A fifteenth-century husband would have usually owed his wife the deferred part of the marriage gift, an annual payment for her clothing, a daily allowance, and perhaps the rent for living in her house. In addition, she may have been entitled to demand a due portion of the marriage gift at any point during the marriage. The best illustration for the variety of debts burdening a fifteenth-century husband comes from an Egyptian document dated 861/1456, which records a matrimonial financial settlement. The husband, an artisan by the name of Mūsá al-Bardanūhī, acknowledges that he owes his wife, Umm al-Ḥasan, a total of 3,900 copper dirhams (about 13 gold dinars). These include 600 copper dirhams for the due portion of his marriage gift; 800 for the postponed portion of his marriage gift, i.e., the yearly installments; 1,500 in lieu of clothing undelivered for the past two years; and 1,000 for the sale price of textile items that belonged to her. Mūsá undertakes, in front of the qadi and witnesses, to pay the remainder of the *ṣadāq* in ten annual installments, as well as a monthly payment of 60 copper dirhams towards the other outstanding debts.<sup>135</sup> There is no indication that this document was drawn up as part of a divorce settlement. The couple, it seems, were expecting to continue living together, with Mūsá gradually paying off his debts to his wife.

#### POLYGAMY

The issue of polygamy appears to be one of the more sensitive subjects in the history of women and gender in medieval Islam, and the conflicting approaches to the issue are reflected, for example, in the study of polygamy in the Jewish Geniza society. In his *Mediterranean Society* Goitein claimed that “by custom, albeit not

<sup>132</sup> Al-Anṣārī, *Al-ʿIlām*, 242.

<sup>133</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir wa-al-Durar fī Tarjamat Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Ḥajar*, ed. Ibrāhīm Bājis ʿAbd al-Majīd (Beirut, 1999), 3:1203.

<sup>134</sup> Ruth Lamdan, *A Separate People: Jewish Women in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt in the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden, 2000), 121.

<sup>135</sup> W. Diem, “Vier arabische Rechtsurkunden aus Ägypten des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts,” *Der Islam* 72 (1995): 206–27.



by law, the Geniza society was essentially monogamous.”<sup>136</sup> Mordechai Friedman, who studied the known cases of polygamy from the Geniza in far more detail, pointed out that the phenomenon was not limited to the upper classes. More often than not, the husbands were members of the lower classes of the Jewish community. Although a quantitative estimate is very difficult, Friedman argues that one cannot brush off polygamy in the Geniza society as marginal.<sup>137</sup>

It is even harder to say how widespread polygamy was in medieval urban Muslim society. The estate inventories of the Ḥaram are the only window through which we can have a rough impression of the extent of polygamy in a given community, and they suggest that Goitein’s minimalist estimate of polygamy is closer to the mark. Out of 123 men who were married at the time of their death, only three husbands died leaving two wives. One of these men was a soldier and a resident of Jerusalem.<sup>138</sup> Another was an Anatolian curiosity dealer. One of his two wives bore the same geographical *nisbah* as her husband, and she is likely to have been the senior wife, since he appointed her as executrix of his estate.<sup>139</sup> The Ḥaram documents suggest that polygamy had to do with wealth, and that, in demographic terms, polygamy was a marginal institution in late fourteenth-century Jerusalem.

We do know, on the other hand, that polygamy was widely practiced by traveling merchants and scholars. An itinerant merchant would not expect his wife to travel with him, and upon arriving alone in a town where he might spend several months he was in need of a female consort. He needed someone to care for him—to clean the house and wash his clothes. Without some form of legal relationship, either marriage or slavery, hiring a female domestic servant would have been difficult. The account of the travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah is a well-studied example. During thirty years of travel, after leaving Tangiers in 1325, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah married at least ten times. In Damascus he left a pregnant wife, and learned that she had borne him a son only after arriving in India. In the Maldives he married four local women simultaneously as means of obtaining family connections that helped him in the local court. While the legal wives remained behind, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah rarely traveled without a slave-girl, and he regularly mentions purchasing them. All in all, five children are mentioned in the travelogue. None of them came back with him to North Africa.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 3:205.

<sup>137</sup> M. A. Friedman, *Ribīy Nashīm be-Yisrael: Mekorot Ḥadashim mi-Genizat Kahir* (Jerusalem, 1986), 4.

<sup>138</sup> Ḥaram no. 284.

<sup>139</sup> Lutfi, *Al-Quds*, 256 (note that the two documents concern the same person); Little, “Six Fourteenth-Century Purchase Deeds,” 325 ff; al-ʿAsalī, *Wathāʾiq*, 2:149 (no. 53).

<sup>140</sup> R. Kruk, “Ibn Baṭṭūṭah: Travel, Family Life and Chronology: How Seriously Do We Take a Father?” *al-Qanṭara* 16 (1995): 369–84. Kruk argues that Ibn Baṭṭūṭah’s account of his wives,



As with slave concubinage, the fifteenth century appears to signal a decline in the institution of polygamy. One of the most striking developments in the late Mamluk period was the transformation of the royal household from a polygamous to a monogamous institution, based on long-lasting marriages. Starting with Sultan Īnāl, Mamluk sultans had only one wife at a time, in stark contrast to the marital policy of previous sultans. Zaynab bint Badr al-Dīn Ibn Khāṣṣbak bore all of Īnāl's children, and we are told that he never married any other wife. Al-Sakhāwī specifically says that Īnāl's monogamy set him apart from previous rulers.<sup>141</sup> Al-Zāhir Khushqadam (r. 1461–67) married Shukurbāy al-Aḥmadiyah, a manumitted slave-girl of a previous sultan, when he was still a junior officer. He had concubines, but did not marry any other wife until her death in 870/1465. He then married Surbāy, one of his concubines, who was also the mother of his eldest daughter.<sup>142</sup> Qāyṭbāy (r. 1468–95) was married to Fāṭimah bint 'Alī Ibn Khaṣṣ Bak, who was his first and only wife.<sup>143</sup> He entertained no concubines after their marriage in 1458, and started taking them only towards the end of his life, because he had no male heirs.<sup>144</sup> These “first and only wives” were also increasingly visible on the public scene, as was demonstrated in a recent study of the ceremonies associated with their pilgrimage.<sup>145</sup>

There is some evidence that changes in the royal household reflected general changes in fifteenth-century Mamluk society. One such change was a more restrictive attitude towards polygamy, as women often appear to actively try to prevent their husbands from taking a second wife. Restrictions on men's ability to contract new marriages or to purchase concubines were not new to Mamluk society, nor to Muslim society in general.<sup>146</sup> In the fourteenth century, however, stipulations against polygamy appear to have been quite rare.<sup>147</sup> Most of the concubines, and children is probably one of the more reliable aspects of the travelogue.

<sup>141</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 12:44 (no. 261); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 8:793; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:368, 3:156. See also K. Johnson, “Royal Pilgrims: Mamlūk Accounts of the Pilgrimage to Mecca of the Khawand al-Kubrā (Senior Wife of the Sultan),” *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000): 114–19.

<sup>142</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 12:68 (no. 417); Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:435; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 8:584, 593. See also Johnson, “Royal Pilgrims,” 119–21.

<sup>143</sup> See Petry, “The Estate of al-Khuwand Fāṭima al-Khāṣṣbakiyya”; Johnson, “Royal Pilgrims,” 121–23.

<sup>144</sup> Ibn Taghrībirdī and Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, both writing in the 1470s, report that Qāyṭbāy had no other wives or concubines (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 8:630, 705; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā' al-Ḥaṣr*, 60). He changed this policy later in his reign. His heir, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, was born to a concubine in 887/1482–83 (Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3:197, 288).

<sup>145</sup> Johnson, “Royal Pilgrims,” 111–14.

<sup>146</sup> Adolf Grohmann, *Arabic Papyri in the Egyptian Library* (Cairo, 1934–62), vol. 1, nos. 38, 39, 41; idem, “Arabische Papyri aus den Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,” *Der Islam* 22 (1935): no. 8.

<sup>147</sup> Ibn Taymiyah had to refer his readers to the “old Maghribi marriage contracts,” where these



references to restrictions on polygamy come from fifteenth-century sources, such as the diary of the Damascene notary Ibn Ṭawq. In one example, Ibn Ṭawq reports that when Badr al-Dīn ibn al-Yāsūfī married the daughter of a certain Ibn Nabhān as a second wife in 886/1482, he promised her to divorce his first wife and to reside in her house. But since he was unable to divorce his first wife, the marriage was dissolved the next day. Eventually, the couple married again eleven days later, with the bride consenting to a polygamous arrangement. This time Ibn al-Yāsūfī promised, in the presence of the bride's father, not to marry a third wife and not to lodge the two wives in the same house.<sup>148</sup>

Polygamy was definitely a frequent reason for divorce in fifteenth-century Cairo. Najm al-Dīn Ibn Ḥijjī preferred not to consummate his marriage with his young bride and relative, Fāṭimah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Bārīzī (d. 899/1494), because he had married a second and more mature woman. Al-Sakhāwī tells us that his second wife "took hold of his heart," and convinced him to divorce his cousin.<sup>149</sup> The fifteenth-century scholar al-Biqā'ī provides a rich personal description of his marriage breaking up because of his polygamy, an account recently studied by Li Guo. After marrying Sa'ādāt bint Nūr al-Dīn al-Būshī, the daughter of a Sufi shaykh with a handsome position, al-Biqā'ī went on a long journey to Syria. There he contracted a marriage with a local woman, as was common practice for traveling merchants and scholars, and divorced her before his journey home. But that was not acceptable, at least not in the eyes of the young wife and her mother. The couple was divorced soon afterwards.<sup>150</sup>

That some wives felt they had a right to prevent their husbands from taking another wife is indicated by an intriguing incident that occurred in 876/1471, when a common woman appeared before Sultan Qāyṭbāy himself in order to complain that her husband had taken another wife. At the time Qāyṭbāy was holding sessions for the petitions of commoners, as part of an experiment in royal justice.<sup>151</sup> Ibn Iyās tells us that this particular petition convinced the sultan that the experiment was a waste of time.<sup>152</sup> Did Qāyṭbāy dismiss the petition because

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stipulations were to be found (Ibn Taymīyah, *Majmū' Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad Ibn Taymīyah*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-ʿĀsimī al-Najdī [Riyadh, 1381–86/1961–66], 32:164–65). It is interesting to note that in the Geniza the stipulation against polygamy was known as the Qayrawanese, i.e., the North African, condition (Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 3:149).

<sup>148</sup> Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Ta'liq*, 1:114, 121. See also *ibid.*, 1:198, 402.

<sup>149</sup> For the second wife, Fāṭimah bint Kamāl al-Dīn al-Adhru'ī, see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 12:100 (no. 629). For the first wife, see *ibid.*, 94 (no. 589).

<sup>150</sup> Guo, "Tales of a Medieval Cairene Harem," 103–9.

<sup>151</sup> Petry, *Protectors*, 151–55.

<sup>152</sup> Al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā' al-Ḥaṣr*, 391. According to another version, the husband did not take another wife, but rather had sex with his slave-girl (Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī'*, 3:63).



the woman had no legal cause, or because it was petty and unworthy of his attention? In any case, the fact that a common woman had the nerve to approach the sultan on the issue of polygamy is striking. She, at least, must have believed in her right to a monogamous marriage.

A final indication of a change in the attitude to polygamy in the fifteenth century was the institutionalization of clandestine marriages (*nikāḥ al-sirr*). According to a model document provided in a manual for notaries, a clandestine marriage contract is like any other except that it is never made public. The presence of witnesses is required, but they take it upon themselves to keep the marriage secret (*kitmān al-nikāḥ*). The author explains that men have recourse to clandestine marriages when they are taking a second wife.<sup>153</sup> Evidently, it was not always easy to keep such a secret. ‘Azīzah bint ‘Alī al-Zayyādī (d. 879/1475), the daughter of a Cairene scholar, married the Meccan ‘Afīf al-Dīn al-Ījī when he visited Cairo. This marriage was kept secret from his first wife and paternal cousin, Ḥabībat Allāh bint ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, who remained in Mecca. But when the Cairene wife accompanied her husband to Mecca, ‘Afīf al-Dīn was forced to divorce her by the pressure of the first wife.<sup>154</sup>

#### DIVORCE<sup>155</sup>

As is well known, Islamic marriage law allows for a husband to pronounce a unilateral repudiation, while a wife needs either the husband’s consent for divorce or the intervention of the courts. But, in spite of the simplicity of the legal act of repudiation, arbitrary unilateral repudiations were not as common as one might expect. Most husbands were deterred, first and foremost, by the financial costs of divorce. Upon unilateral repudiation husbands were expected to pay all their remaining financial obligations, including the late and due portions of their marriage gift, any arrears in payments of support and clothing, and other debts they may have incurred during the marriage. On top of these payments, husbands were also required to pay a compensation gift (*mut‘ah*) to their divorcées. The divorcée had a right to this compensation as long as she did not forfeit this right in her divorce settlement, and when the divorce was not her fault.<sup>156</sup>

Rather than being a major mechanism of actual divorce, repudiation was more often used as a threat against a disobedient wife. Islamic Sunni law accords special

<sup>153</sup> He also notes that all schools accept the validity of this marriage, except the Malikis (al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir al-Uqūd*, 2:89).

<sup>154</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw‘*, 12:82 (no. 505) (second wife); 12:19 (no. 102) (first wife). See also Lutfi, “Al-Sakhāwī’s *Kitāb al-Nisā’*,” 114; Musallam, “The Ordering of Muslim Societies,” 193–94.

<sup>155</sup> See also Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce*, 69–110.

<sup>156</sup> On the payment of *mut‘ah* in a court record from Jerusalem, see Little, “A Fourteenth-Century Jerusalem Court Record of a Divorce Hearing.”



status to threats of repudiation, which are usually called divorce oaths. These oaths are considered conditional phrases, the act of divorce being contingent on the fulfillment of the condition. For example, a husband would threaten a divorce if his wife were to leave home without his permission. Threats of divorce were also used in order to deter wives from visiting a neighbor or from divulging a family secret.<sup>157</sup> A husband who suspected his wife of pilfering his money threatened divorce if the money was not returned.<sup>158</sup> Strained relations with the mother-in-law were also a common reason for pronouncing divorce oaths.<sup>159</sup>

By extension, divorce oaths were often used as pledges for commitments which went far beyond the domestic sphere, and had nothing to do with the wife's behavior.<sup>160</sup> Divorce oaths were incorporated into the oath of allegiance (*bay'ah*) used by the Mamluk sultans. Moreover, they gradually became prevalent among all classes of society, and were used in all sorts of financial, social, and familial contexts. Under certain circumstances, men were even compelled to undertake divorce oaths as part of the judicial process. The central role of divorce oaths to Mamluk society is highlighted by the challenge posed by Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymīyah to the validity of these oaths. Ibn Taymīyah argued that violation of a divorce oath requires an act of atonement, not the actual dissolution of marriage. After having been prohibited twice from issuing fatwas on this subject, Ibn Taymīyah was eventually arrested. The debate over Ibn Taymīyah's doctrines on divorce oaths reflects the importance of divorce as a public, and not merely private, institution.

The legal form of the majority of actual divorces in Mamluk society was consensual separation (*khul'*), although the formalities of divorce deeds concealed an interplay of various legal and extralegal forces. Consensual separations meant that the wife gave up her financial rights, and in particular her claim to the late marriage gift, in return for a divorce. According to the legal phrasing of the divorce documents, it was always the wives who initiated the consensual divorces; they ask for the divorce and give up their financial rights in return. But jurists sometimes expressed concern as to whether women who entered consensual separation were acting voluntarily.<sup>161</sup> It is clear that husbands could extract favorable divorce settlements by playing the card of custody. In Islamic

<sup>157</sup> Ibn Taymīyah, *Fatāwā al-Nisā'*, 253, 255; idem, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, 33:162, 226–27.

<sup>158</sup> Ibn Taymīyah, *Fatāwā al-Nisā'*, 253; idem, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, 33:163, 229; al-Subkī, *Fatāwā*, 311.

<sup>159</sup> Al-Nawawī, *Fatāwā al-Imām al-Nawawī al-Musammā bi-al-Masā'il al-Manthūrah*, ed. 'Alā' al-Dīn Ibn al-'Aṭṭār (Beirut, 1982), 140; Ibn Taymīyah, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, 33:112, 164–68.

<sup>160</sup> See a fuller discussion in my "Ibn Taymiyya on Divorce Oaths," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and History*, ed. Levanoni and Winter, 191–217.

<sup>161</sup> Ibn Taymīyah, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, 32:355, 358–61; al-Subkī, *Fatāwā*, 2:297.



law divorced mothers lose their right of custody over their children as soon as they remarry. Mamluk *fatāwá* reveal that mothers could also lose custody if the father wanted to take the child to another locality,<sup>162</sup> to provide him or her with better education or living standards,<sup>163</sup> or if the father could demonstrate neglect on the part of the mother.<sup>164</sup> Divorcees could secure custody only by accepting divorce settlements in which they undertook to pay for the upkeep of the child. A common settlement of consensual separation allowed the mother to have custody for a fixed period of time (even if she re-married), and in return agreed to pay part of the child support during that period.<sup>165</sup>

Most divorce negotiations were informal, and the role of the courts was mainly confined to putting an official stamp on the settlements brought before them. Judicial divorce (*faskh*), the most drastic sanction a wife could hope for from the courts, was generally reserved for grass widows. But even in cases of absentee husbands, many separations were settled without recourse to such judicial intervention, since husbands often deposited with their wives a conditional bill of divorce before going on a journey. Conditional bills of divorce appear very often in the Geniza,<sup>166</sup> and were widely used among the Muslim majority. In such a bill, the husband made the divorce of his wife contingent on his absence for a certain period of time. If the husband was not to return, the wife had the right to confirm the divorce in court.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>162</sup> Ibn al-Šalāḥ, *Fatāwá wa-Masā'il Ibn al-Šalāḥ*, ed. 'Abd al-Mu'ṭi Qal'ajī (Beirut, 1986), 462–63 (no. 429); Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'in*, 3:295. See also detailed accounts of custody cases put before the thirteenth-century Syrian jurist al-Fazārī. Contrary to the majority of his contemporary jurists, al-Fazārī argued that that the interests of the child's education and safety override the father's right to relocate the child ('Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Firkāḥ al-Fazārī, "Fatāwá al-Fazārī," Chester Beatty MS 3330, fols. 98a, 99b–101b).

<sup>163</sup> Ibn Taymiyah, *Fatāwá al-Nisā'*, 289 (a merchant takes his child on a business trip to the Red Sea); Ibn al-Šalāḥ, *Fatāwá*, 463 (no. 431) (a father takes his child from the village to the city because of the better quality of education in the city).

<sup>164</sup> In order to demonstrate neglect, neighbors were asked to testify that they had heard the baby crying when left alone in the house (al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir al-'Uqūd*, 2:239–40).

<sup>165</sup> Al-Fazārī, "Fatāwá," fol. 93b (wife agrees to support the child for two years); al-Ṭarsūsī, *Anfa' al-Wasā'il*, 44, 47 (in return for custody rights, a wife forfeits her *ṣadāq*, support during the waiting period, and child support for seven years). For model documents, see al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir al-'Uqūd*, 2:228, 240–41, 247–48.

<sup>166</sup> Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 3:155, 189–205.

<sup>167</sup> Ibn al-Šalāḥ, *Fatāwá*, 444 (no. 398), 450 (no. 411). In cases from the fifteenth century, the conditional divorce was to come into effect after a very short absence of two months or even ten days (al-Anšārī, *Al-I'lām*, 267; al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Ḥawī lil-Fatāwá fi al-Fiqh wa-'Ulūm al-Tafsīr wa-al-Ḥadīth wa-al-Uṣūl wa-al-Naḥw wa-al-'Irāb wa-Sā'ir al-Funūn* [Cairo, 1352/1933], 1:267).



Divorce settlements, like so many other aspects of gender, changed in the course of the fifteenth century, especially as a result of the expanding jurisdiction of the *mazālim* courts headed by government officials. The military courts were more resolute when dealing with husbands who failed to provide for their wives, and in general were far more interventionist in the domestic sphere. The difference of approach between the religious and the military courts is well illustrated in a tragic case of child marriage, for which we have firsthand testimony of a legal official. In 875/1470 the chronicler Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, who was employed as a deputy Hanafi qadi, received a petition from the maternal aunt of a twelve-year-old girl, whose parents were absent from the city. The aunt asked the Hanafi deputy to save the girl from poverty by marrying her off to a suitable husband. In accordance with the request, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī married the girl to a soldier in the service of one of the royal mamluks, negotiating a marriage gift of seven gold dinars, and inserting a clause forbidding the man to consummate the marriage until the girl attained puberty. Despite this stipulation, the soldier raped the girl. He continued to beat her until she accepted a consensual divorce in which she forfeited her marriage gift. The husband even lodged a complaint against the girl with the police (*naqībs*), and she was fined a gold dinar for her supposed insubordination. When the girl returned home, her maternal aunt appealed to the *dawādār* Yashbak min Mahdī. The *dawādār* ordered the soldier to be flogged, and asked the chief Hanafi qadi, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī's superior, to invalidate the divorce settlement. The soldier also had to pay the girl four dinars, about half of the promised marriage gift.<sup>168</sup> It seems that in this case, the more aggressive and interventionist approach of the military court was also the more just.

The most striking aspect of Mamluk divorce, at least in the fifteenth century, was its frequency. Thanks to al-Sakhāwī's *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'* we can speculate about the rate of divorce in fifteenth-century Cairo.<sup>169</sup> Al-Sakhāwī records the marital history of 168 fifteenth-century Cairene women, mentioning 287 marriages concluded by these women.<sup>170</sup> This is an average of almost two marriages per

<sup>168</sup> Al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā' al-Haṣr*, 226–29. See translation and analysis by Carl Petry, “Conjugal Rights versus Class Prerogatives: A Divorce Case in Mamlūk Cairo,” in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, Piety*, ed. G. Hambly (London, 1999), 227–40. My interpretation of the text is substantially different from Petry's, both in its details and its overall significance. According to Petry, the case demonstrates the prerogatives of the military elite.

<sup>169</sup> A point made by Musallam, “The Ordering of Muslim Societies,” 186–97. See also Lutfi, “Al-Sakhāwī's *Kitāb al-Nisā'*”; Berkey, “Women and Islamic Education.”

<sup>170</sup> Included in the sample are only women who were born in Egypt after 790/1388, or, if the date of birth is unknown, died after 853/1450 (including those still living when the final draft of the work was completed, shortly before the author's death in 902/1497). It excludes entries copied from earlier historical works, such as the hundreds of entries for Hijazi women drawn from the biographical dictionaries composed by al-Fāsi (d. 832/1428) and Ibn Fahd (d. 885/1480).



woman, although some were married four, five, and six times. When al-Sakhāwī mentions the cause of dissolution (in 171 marriages), three out of ten ended with divorce. It is probable that the actual rate of divorce among the general population of Cairo was higher. Al-Sakhāwī was not aware of all the marriages going on in the city, and some short-term unions may have escaped his attention. It is also probable that the rate of divorce among the lower classes was higher than among the elite, as was the case in the Jewish Geniza society. The prevalence of divorce is even more remarkable if we keep in mind the high mortality rate, augmented in this period by the Plague. Death and divorce meant that marriage tended to be a much shorter affair than it is today.

Al-Sakhāwī's biographical dictionary offers quite a few examples of wives pursuing a divorce against the wishes of their husbands. When his own brother, Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, became so ill as to be confined to his bed, his wife refused to accompany him to his family's quarters and kept asking for divorce. In return she forgave him any debts and even gave him financial compensation.<sup>171</sup> Zaynab, daughter of the chief qadi Muḥibb al-Dīn ibn al-Shiḥnah, "was not satisfied [with her husband] and they were divorced." The verb is used in the dual form, indicating a mutual action.<sup>172</sup> Another Zaynab, a descendant of the Banū al-Bārīzī dynasty of civilian administrators, was widowed in 850/1446. She avoided remarriage for several years, until, at the request of her son, she concluded a marriage alliance with a senior government official. But she later pleaded with her new husband and he divorced her.<sup>173</sup>

A final observation is that for al-Sakhāwī divorce is almost always a decision taken by the couple, not by their extended families. The intervention of in-laws is rarely mentioned. The mother and brother of Qurrat al-ʿAyn bint Abū Bakr al-Sakhāwī, the orphaned minor niece of al-Sakhāwī, were influential in causing her divorce from the husband chosen for her by al-Sakhāwī himself.<sup>174</sup> But al-Sakhāwī generally prefers to talk about divorces caused by the absence of passion, as well as love-marriages. After her divorce from her first husband and paternal cousin, the daughter of the chief Shafiʿī qadi Jalāl al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī went on to marry an amir nicknamed ʿAddād al-Ghanam (Sheep Counter). Her first husband tried to talk her into coming back, but to no avail, as she fell "desperately in love" with

<sup>171</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʿ*, 11:46.

<sup>172</sup> Text: *lam taḥṣul ʿalā tāʿil wa-fāraqā* (ibid., 12:49–50 [no. 292]; 10:264 [no. 1064]).

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 12, 49 (no. 291) (Zaynab); 10:252 (no. 1050) (Najm al-Dīn). See also Lutfī, "Al-Sakhāwī's *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ*," 114.

<sup>174</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʿ*, 12:116 (no. 704). In a case from Syria, a marriage alliance of the Banū al-Shiḥnah and Banū al-Ṣawwāf did not materialize because of a fight between the womenfolk of the two households (Ibn Taghribirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 8:570; al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʿ*, 3:113–14).



her new husband.<sup>175</sup> Other women chose to marry their social inferiors. Fāṭimah bint Abī al-Khayr, widow of the renowned jurist Ibn al-Humām, married one of the porters on board a ship heading to Mecca in 898/1493. Al-Sakhāwī malignly adds that it seems she was unable to control her desire and married him simply for sex.<sup>176</sup>

#### WOMEN AND RELIGION

A recurring theme of this survey is that most aspects of Mamluk society were gendered, with both men and women contributing to economic and political life, but doing so in largely separate spheres of activity. The same is true for women's participation in religious life. Because so few religious texts composed by Mamluk women have survived, it is easy to imagine Mamluk Islam as an exclusively male endeavor. But there is now sufficient evidence to show that, outside the formal and all-male madrasah system, women played a far from marginal role in religious life. They were of course recipients of religious knowledge and exhortations, through oral preaching and recitation, and, among the traditionalist Sunni elite, through reading and study of religious literature. But women were also active participants and contributors to religious life. In the transmission of hadith, a popular and non-professional pious activity, women were on equal footing with men, their prominence dependent solely on their literacy and longevity. Outside the literate and traditionalist classes, the growth of the organized mystical movements in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries cannot be fully understood without taking into account the phenomenal spread of exclusively female Sufi institutions known as *ribāṭs*, which are probably the most distinctively Mamluk form of female religiosity.

#### WOMEN AND LITERACY

The evidence for the spread of literacy among elite women is quite extensive. While a few prescriptive texts call for putting a limit on the education of girls, they do so in a context of an education system in which girls were taught by male and female instructors.<sup>177</sup> Moreover, these statements appear to have had no impact on actual practice among scholarly families, who took pride in teaching their daughters to read and write. Nuḍār (d. 730/1330), the daughter of the Muslim philologist Ibn Ḥayyān, copied her father's works in several volumes, and so did Fāṭimah

<sup>175</sup> Text: *tatahālaku fī al-tarāmī 'alayhi* (al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 12:41 [no. 243]). See also *ibid.*, 2:188 (Walī al-Dīn); 2:240 ('Addād al-Ghanam).

<sup>176</sup> Text: *li-qaṣd al-mukhālaṭah wa-'adam imkān al-taḥarruz* (al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 12:91 [no. 567]).

<sup>177</sup> Shatzmiller, *Labour*, 355; A. Giladi, "Gender Differences in Child Rearing and Education: Some Preliminary Observations with Reference to Medieval Muslim Thought," *Al-Qantara* 16 (1995): 291–308.



(d. 731/1331), daughter of the historian al-Birzālī.<sup>178</sup> Fāṭimah bint Kamāl al-Dīn al-Maghribī (d. 728/1328) was known for her superb handwriting.<sup>179</sup> Jonathan Berkey has found 411 examples of fifteenth-century literate elite women who are mentioned by al-Sakhāwī in his biographical dictionary. These women are said to have memorized the Quran, received an *ijāzah* to transmit a tradition, and studied basic works of grammar or al-Būṣīrī's ode to the Prophet.<sup>180</sup> In the Geniza we find private letters written by Jewish women, and there is no apparent reason to believe that Muslim women did not do the same.<sup>181</sup>

The problem is, of course, that nearly the entire corpus of surviving Mamluk texts has been written by men. There are a few verse fragments scattered in historical works, like al-Sakhāwī's correspondence with his neighbor Fāṭimah (b. 855/1451), daughter of Kamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd. He quotes lines of her poetry addressed to him personally and gives titles of her poems. She sent him an elegy of 31 lines to console him for the loss of two of his brothers.<sup>182</sup> But for most of the Mamluk period, we have no female authors who speak to us in their own voice.<sup>183</sup> The absence of female authors was not simply for want of literate women; rather, the forms and the extent of female literary expression were subject to social restrictions. In a society that attached high value to texts, authorship was an empowering act.<sup>184</sup> When we examine the few surviving texts that were written by women, they not only show great skill, but also that the authors were very well

<sup>178</sup> Both died in the prime of their youth, and we owe their biographies to their mourning fathers. On Nuḍār see Th. Emil Homerin, "I've Stayed by the Grave: A Nasīb for Nuḍār," in *Literary Heritage of Classical Islam: Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of James A. Bellamy*, ed. Mustansir Mir (Princeton, 1993), 107–18; Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self*, 77. On Fāṭimah bint 'Alam al-Dīn al-Birzālī, see al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:477; al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 4:30.

<sup>179</sup> Al-Jazarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:297.

<sup>180</sup> Berkey, "Women and Islamic Education," 147–49; Lutfi, "Al-Sakhāwī's *Kitāb al-Nisā'*," 119–21; Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Dictionaries*, 69.

<sup>181</sup> J. Kramer, "Women's Letters from the Cairo Geniza: A Preliminary Study" (in Hebrew), in *Eshnav le-Ḥayehen shel Nashim be-Ḥevrōt Yehūdiyōt*, ed. Yael Atzmon (Jerusalem, 1995), 161–81.

<sup>182</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 12:107–12 (no. 674); Abou Bakr, "Teaching the Words of the Prophet," 321 ff.

<sup>183</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, who compiled a collection of women's poetry from the classical sources, fails to mention even one poetess from the Mamluk period (Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Nuzhat al-Julasā' fi Ash'ār al-Nisā'*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid [Beirut, 1958]).

<sup>184</sup> For a general survey of female authors in medieval Islam, see Marlé Hammond, "Literature: 9th to 15th Century," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, vol. 1, *Methodologies, Paradigms and Sources* (Leiden, 2003), 42–50. See also Dana al-Sajdi, "Trespassing the Male Domain: The Qaṣīdah of Laylā al-Akhyaliyya," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 31 (2000): 121–46. In Sung China one finds a similar gap between the spread of literacy among elite women and the few remains of their literary production (P. Ebrey, *The Inner Quarter: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period* [Berkeley, 1993], 120–24).



versed in the Islamic tradition—further suggesting that female education, unlike female authorship, was not restricted.

Given all the other changes in gender relations towards the end of the Mamluk period, it may not be a coincidence that the foremost female author lived at the turn of the sixteenth century. Like other literate women in the Mamluk period, ʿĀʾishah al-Bāʿūniyah (d. 922/1516) was member of a scholarly family, whose members held high positions in the religious hierarchy of Damascus. Not unusually for her class, she studied poetry, hadith, mysticism, and jurisprudence. But unlike most other Mamluk women, ʿĀʾishah was also a prolific author, and she has left us more Arabic works than any other woman prior to the modern period. Her work is underlined by a belief in the mystical quality of praising the Prophet, and motivated by a vision of the Prophet during her pilgrimage to Mecca in 880/1475. In her most famous poem, an ode to the Prophet, every verse contains an example of a rhetorical device—a literary form that required extensive knowledge of Arabic language and literature. Her Sufi compendium, a collection of insights into the mystical themes of penance, sincerity, *dhikr*, and love, suggests a very wide knowledge of Sufi literature, Quran, and hadith. Although some of her love poetry conveys an all-consuming passion towards God, ʿĀʾishah’s femininity is not necessarily the defining aspect of her literary legacy. Rather, she should be seen as a well-read and active participant in the religious and literary world of her time, further indication that men and women did partake in the same religious discourses.<sup>185</sup>

#### WOMEN AND HADITH

The main venue for religious activity among the literate women of the traditionalist, and especially Hanbali, elite was transmission of hadith. This was not a marginal phenomenon; hundreds of female hadith transmitters are mentioned in the biographical dictionaries, and women were major authorities for some of the most famous scholars of the Mamluk period, such as Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, al-Dhahabī, and al-Suyūṭī. In a recent study, Asma Sayeed has found that a disproportionate number of these transmitters came from the Hanbali circles of al-Šālihiyah suburb of Damascus, where a traditionalist ethos of the cultivation of the prophetic Sunnah was dominant. Like their brothers, women were brought as infants, often still in arms, to receive certificates in the hope that they would reach old age, and would be celebrated for their transmissions. Indeed, those women who did become famous owe it to their longevity; the most famous, such as Zaynab bint al-Kamāl (646–740/1248–1339) and ʿĀʾishah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī

<sup>185</sup> For ʿĀʾishah al-Bāʿūniyah and her poetry, see Th. Emil Homerin, “Living Love: The Mystical Writings of ʿĀʾishah al-Bāʿūniyah (d. 922/1516),” *MSR* 7, [no. 1] (2003): 211–34; see also Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self*, 8.



(723–816/1323–1413), lived to their nineties, and became famous only in their sixties.

Women’s study and transmission of hadith was done outside the formal madrasah system. Although they founded madrasahs, and sometimes acted as their administrators, they were always excluded from receiving a salaried position or pursuing formal studies. The evidence of *samā’āt* (certificates of oral transmission) shows that the female transmitters held assemblies both at their own houses and at the houses of others. In these informal assemblies women and men participated alongside each other, with no formal segregation. As expected, women are the primary transmitters when they grow older, but there is evidence of continuous participation of women in the study of tradition. Although only the octogenarians made it to biographical dictionaries, women participated in the study and recitation of traditions throughout their lives.

The study of hadith, contrary to law or theology, allowed women an almost equal footing with men. Since the Prophet’s wife ‘Ā’ishah appears so prominently as transmitter of tradition from the Prophet, women were not at any disadvantage with regard to their trustworthiness. They were considered as reliable as men in the relation of hadith; unlike testimony in court, it did not put them in a position of power over men. For women, as well as for other pious Muslims who were not formally trained, prophetic traditions were thus the most appealing of the Islamic sciences; at an elementary level, even lay people could memorize short, popular collections. Prophetic traditions were recited in informal gatherings, especially in the Hanbali circles of Damascus, in order to make God and his Word more accessible. As we have seen, elite women were able to read extensively in other branches of religious knowledge, including history, poetry, mysticism, and even law. Informal study of hadith gave these literate women a venue to reflect and discuss their approach to religion.<sup>186</sup>

It should also be emphasized that the memorization itself was of secondary importance, as in this period transmission was no longer about the actual authentication of texts. Authority did not really lie with the transmitter but rather with the written text which was reproduced, and the system of *ijāzah* developed precisely when the veracity of the hadith collection was guaranteed. The prize in the transmission of hadith was the shortest possible chain of transmission achieved by old men and women who heard traditions when they were infants. It carried with it not a guarantee of authenticity but, like the visitation of tombs and the relics of saints, another kind of *barakah*.<sup>187</sup> For the Sunni traditionalist families, a

<sup>186</sup> A point made by Abou Bakr, “Teaching the Words of the Prophet,” 315.

<sup>187</sup> Eerik Dickinson, “Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī and the Isnād,” *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* 7, no. 1 (2002); discussed in this context by Asma Sayeed, “Women and Ḥadīth Transmission in Islamic History” (Ph.D. diss, Princeton University, 2005).



text carried the kind of proximity to God other groups sought by venerating saints or visiting tombs.

The ideal of the pious woman who faithfully transmits the words of the Prophet harks back, of course, to ‘Ā’ishah herself, and Mamluk male authors show in fact an unprecedented interest in celebrating her biography. This trend reached its peak in the fourteenth century, with the composition of specialized works dealing with ‘Ā’ishah’s criticisms of transmissions by male Companions of the Prophet. Al-Zarkashī (d. 795/1392) is the most prominent example of enhancing the religious prestige of ‘Ā’ishah as the most reliable and useful critic of prophetic traditions, including those transmitted on the authority of the first four caliphs. Unlike earlier Sunni writers, whose works he expands, al-Zarkashī defines ‘Ā’ishah’s unique attributes not only as a wife and a daughter, but in terms of her religious devotion, generosity, and asceticism. The Mamluk works dealing with ‘Ā’ishah emphasize her hadith transmission as well as a symbol of Sunni—as against Shi‘i—communal memory and solidarity.<sup>188</sup>

#### WOMEN AND MYSTICISM<sup>189</sup>

Outside of the Hanbali circles of Damascus and their traditionalist, anti-Sufi allies, women largely expressed their religiosity through mystical institutions. Women are often mentioned in connection with the visitation of graves, especially by the moralists who wanted them to abstain from wailing or dressing immodestly.<sup>190</sup> The criticisms voiced by moralists have tainted these activities as less than purely spiritual, but visitation probably represented for women a real spiritual undertaking in its own right, as much as it did for men, although the venues were often separate. The visitation of tombs was incorporated into poor women’s weekly schedule, alongside their domestic chores and textile production. A few particularly vivid accounts come from the pen of the Damascene Ibn Ṭūlūn, who reports that women congregated every Wednesday near the tomb associated with the Biblical figure King Ṭālūt outside Damascus, where they listen to blind men recite the accounts of saints. The Grotto of Hunger near Mt. Qāsiyūn was the site of a similar female congregation every Friday, following the noon prayer.<sup>191</sup>

The most distinctive expression of the mystical activities and aspirations of Mamluk women was the exclusively female religious house, usually known as

<sup>188</sup> D. Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past: the Legacy of ‘Ā’isha bint Abī Bakr* (New York, 1994), 25, 54–58, 86–95, 194.

<sup>189</sup> See also Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce*, 38–44.

<sup>190</sup> Lutfi, “Manners,” 114–15.

<sup>191</sup> Josef W. Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford, 2002), 168–71.



*ribāṭ*. The *ribāṭ* came to be identified with female piety during the Fatimid period.<sup>192</sup> Along with the *zāwiyah* and the *khānqāh*, the *ribāṭ* was associated with the Sufi mystical movement, but the functions of these institutions became differentiated during the Mamluk period. While the *zāwiyah* was usually linked to a specific Sufi order and the *khānqāh* to prayers for the dead, the *ribāṭ* emerged as a hospice for the needy, with social welfare as its main goal.<sup>193</sup> In principle, *ribāṭs* could also be either male or female, and there were some *ribāṭs* for men in the Mamluk period. It seems, however, that women came to be considered the natural recipients of the *ribāṭ*'s charitable role.

The establishment of *ribāṭs* in all Mamluk urban centers reached a peak in the latter half of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth. The *Ribāṭ al-Baghdādiyyah*, established in Cairo in 684/1285, was the most famous *ribāṭ* devoted exclusively to women. The daughter of Sultan Baybars, Tidhkārbāy Khātūn, endowed the institution for the benefit of a female mystic called Zaynab al-Baghdādiyyah, after whom it was named. Zaynab had already acquired a large following among the women of Damascus when Tidhkārbāy invited her to come to Cairo. The *ribāṭ* was located next to Baybars' *khānqāh*, and was probably intended as a sister institution.<sup>194</sup> At least eight additional *ribāṭs* for widows and old women existed in Cairo during the first half of the fourteenth century.<sup>195</sup>

Syrian cities had an even larger number of women's religious houses. Six were established in Aleppo during the thirteenth century, although there they were called *khānqāhs* rather than *ribāṭs*. An inscription on one of the *khānqāhs*, erected by an Ayyubid princess in the first half of the century, said that it was built "for the poor women who wish to reside in it, so that they would perform the five daily prayers and sleep there."<sup>196</sup> In Damascus the term *ribāṭ* had come to mean a specifically female place of worship. A Damascene author, Ibn Zufar al-Irbili (d. 726/1326), remarks that a *ribāṭ* is a *khānqāh* devoted exclusively to women (*al-rubuṭ hiya al-khawāniq allatī takhtaṣṣu bi-al-nisā'*). He then enumerates

<sup>192</sup> Al-Maqrizī, *Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-Āthār al-Ma'rūf bi-al-Khiṭaṭ al-Maqrizīyah*, ed. Muḥammad Zaynhum and Madīḥah al-Sharqāwī (Cairo, 1998), 3:652.

<sup>193</sup> Th. Emil Homerin, "Saving Muslim Souls: The *Khānqāh* and the Sufi Duty in Mamluk Lands," *MSR* 3 (1999): 67. For a somewhat different view, see D. Little, "The Nature of *Khānqāhs*, *Ribāṭs* and *Zāwiyas* under the Mamlūks," in *Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adams*, ed. W. Hallaq and D. Little (Leiden, 1991), 91–107; Sabra, *Poverty*, 25.

<sup>194</sup> On *Ribāṭ al-Baghdādiyyah*, see al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:181; al-Maqrizī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:602–3; Sabra, *Poverty*, 84.

<sup>195</sup> Leonor Fernandes, *The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: the Khanqah* (Berlin, 1988), 11; Berkey, "Women and Islamic Education," 150.

<sup>196</sup> Anne-Marie Eddé, *La principauté ayyoubide d'Alep (579/1183–658/1260)* (Stuttgart, 1999), 428.



twenty such institutions, fifteen within the city itself and an additional five in its suburbs.<sup>197</sup> Some of the money for these institutions came from the pockets of the womenfolk of the Damascene elite. In 730/1330, the wife of the governor of Damascus endowed the largest female *ribāṭ* in the city, next to her own tomb.<sup>198</sup>

The female *ribāṭs* should be considered indications of the spread of the mystical orders during the thirteenth century. Al-Maqrizī dwells on the authoritarian element in the Ribāṭ al-Baghdādiyyah, where widows and divorcées were sometimes forced to stay during their waiting period so as to protect them from forbidden sexual contacts. But reducing the female *ribāṭs* to their authoritarian aspects does injustice to the spiritual aspirations of medieval Muslim women. Some of the founders were female, and quite a few elite women appear to have chosen to spend their widowhood years there. Rather, women must have been moved by the same ideals of asceticism and inner reflection as men, but were not integrated into the exclusively male institutions. It is interesting to note that not all the women who took the mystical path resided in *ribāṭs*. Ibn al-Ḥājj, writing in the first half of the fourteenth century, notes the growth of exclusively female Sufi groups in Cairo, but does not mention any association with an institution or establishment.<sup>199</sup> In the case of Zaynab al-Baghdādiyyah, and most probably in others, the establishment of a *ribāṭ* was intended to support an already existing group of pious women.

Besides their spiritual functions, the female *ribāṭs* catered to the needs of poor single women who were excluded from other Sufi foundations. The dual nature of the Sufi institutions that provided men both with spiritual space and with lodging options, held true for the female *ribāṭs*. The use of the term poverty is confusing for, as demonstrated by Adam Sabra, the medieval sources do not make a clear distinction between poverty as a social phenomenon and poverty as a religious ideal.<sup>200</sup> A man finding himself in a strange town, or in a sudden state of destitution, could go to one of the Sufi hospices and hope to receive a bed and a meal. But these institutions were meant to accommodate men only. When a lonely woman squatted in a room of a *zāwīyah*, she was thrown out. Ibn Taymiyah, who ruled in her case, explained that her sex made her ineligible.<sup>201</sup> In an anecdote about a fourteenth-century Damascene scholar, it is told that he used to live near

<sup>197</sup> Al-Irbilī, *Madāris Dimashq wa-Rubuṭihā wa-Jawāmi'uhā wa-Ḥammāmatihā*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān (Damascus, 1947), 11, cited by Louis Pouzet, *Damas au VIIIe/XIIIe siècle: Vie et structures religieuses d'une métropole islamique* (Beirut, 1988), 211.

<sup>198</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:121; al-Nu'aymī, *Al-Dāris fī Tārīkh al-Madāris*, ed. Ja'far al-Ḥusaynī (Damascus, 1948-51), 2:274-75.

<sup>199</sup> Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 2:141; Lutfi, "Manners," 116.

<sup>200</sup> Sabra, *Poverty*, 31.

<sup>201</sup> Ibn Taymiyah, *Fatāwā al-Nisā'*, 189.



the Ribāṭ al-‘Ajā’iz (of the Old Women), which functioned as a washing place for poor women and their children. Whenever a woman needed soda-ash for bodily washing, or soap for laundry, she received some from the scholar’s family.<sup>202</sup>

There was one common denominator among practically all the women who stayed in *ribāṭs*, and that was freedom from matrimonial obligations. A woman who wanted to join a *ribāṭ* was not necessarily poor; but she almost certainly had to be single. This was true even for the women mystics who were not affiliated with a *ribāṭ*. Ibn al-Ḥājj describes pious women who choose to remain unmarried.<sup>203</sup> Ibn Baydakīn, a thirteenth-century author, similarly rebukes women who refrain from marriage out of misguided piety.<sup>204</sup> This was not about virginity in the Christian sense, although, as noted above, virginity had a certain saintly value in popular culture. Prior marriages did not pose an obstacle in the spiritual path taken by Sufi women. All contemporary sources agree that the residents of *ribāṭs* were widows or divorcées—that is, women who were *no longer* married.

The institution appears to have fallen out of favor in the fifteenth century, when female hospices appear fewer and smaller compared with their predecessors. By the end of the fifteenth century, Damascus still had at least five female *ribāṭs*.<sup>205</sup> But al-Sakhāwī tells of women, including his own mother, who used to open their private houses to widows and divorcées.<sup>206</sup> The reliance on this form of neighborhood charity suggests a decline in the importance of hospices. So does the late fifteenth-century account of Felix Fabri, who describes poor women lying, and even giving birth, in the streets of Cairo.<sup>207</sup> The prominence of the all-women *ribāṭ* was a uniquely Mamluk phenomenon; while Sufi institutions for men survived well beyond the beginning of the sixteenth century, virtually none of their sister institutions survived into the Ottoman period.

The rise and decline of the female *ribāṭs* bear intriguing similarities to the fate of the female religious houses, especially those of the Beguines, which dotted

<sup>202</sup> Ibn al-Mibrad, *Al-Jawhar al-Munaḍḍad*, 174.

<sup>203</sup> Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 2:141.

<sup>204</sup> Ibn al-Baydakīn, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, 144.

<sup>205</sup> Al-Nuʿaymī, *Al-Dāris*, 2:193–95. His contemporary Ibn al-Mibrad mentions only one single women’s *ribāṭ* in the city, established in the first half of the fourteenth century (*Thimār al-Maqāṣid fī Dhīkr al-Masājīd*, ed. Muḥammad Asʿad Talas [Beirut, 1943], 124). Obadiah, who visited Jerusalem in 1488, noted the existence of several community houses for Jewish widows (*Jewish Travelers*, ed. E. Adler [London, 1930], 235; Obadiah Betinoro, *Me-Italyah li-Yerushalayim: Igrōtav shel R. Ovadyah mi-Bartenura me-Erets Yisrael*, ed. A. David and M. Hartom [Ramat Gan, Israel, 1997], 65, 69).

<sup>206</sup> On open houses for widows and poor women, see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʿ*, 12:131, 148; Lutfi, “Al-Sakhāwī’s *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ*,” 119.

<sup>207</sup> Sabra, *Poverty*, 108.



Western European cities in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>208</sup> Like the Beguinages, the foundation of *ribāṭs* presupposes a large number of single women in the cities, and, as a necessary corollary, a normative attitude to female labor. Judging by the sheer number of *ribāṭs* founded during the thirteenth century, most of their residents must have come from the lower classes. In either case, these single women did not want, or were not able, to return to their natal families or to find a new husband. Instead, they found in the *ribāṭ* a sheltered female space, and a parallel, gendered, form of mysticism.

#### CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this survey was to draw a picture of the gender boundaries in Mamluk urban society, and to suggest that the gendered spheres of women were complementary, rather than subordinate, to those of men. This was true in most political, economic, and social aspects of public life. The importation of slave-girls to be trained as courtesans paralleled that of male slaves intended for the military, and there is even a reference to a parallel female *khushdāshīyah* network. The trousseaux given at the weddings of female members of these elite households were not merely a token of affection, nor gifts meant to placate the groom, but a mechanism of pre-mortem inheritance, in direct parallel to the grant of *iqṭāʿ* or the inheritance of office. In textile production, the most important urban industry, the contributions of female spinners were no less important than those of the male weavers, and disregarding this runs the risk of misunderstanding the urban economy as a whole. The growth of the mystical Sufi orders in the thirteenth century saw the rise not only of *zāwīyahs* for men, but also of *ribāṭs* for women, who were as actively engaged in the spiritual quest that characterized religious life of the period.

The notion of female dependence and passivity as a mark of medieval Muslim society in general, and Mamluk society in particular, flies against the evidence of the medieval sources. The principle of strict separation of property between spouses, enshrined in Islamic law but also generally accepted in practice, meant that women of all classes had a certain degree of financial independence during their marriage, whether by investing their trousseaux, lending them on interest, or, most commonly, by working for wages. In turn, this strict separation of property and female financial independence allowed for extraordinarily high rates of divorce, which were the most distinctive aspect of domestic life in the Mamluk period. High divorce rates, along with high mortality rates, meant that the reality

<sup>208</sup> On the Beguines, see S. Murk-Jansen, *Brides in the Desert: The Spirituality of the Beguines* (Maryknoll, NY, 1998); C. Neel, "The Origins of the Beguines," in *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*, ed. Judith M. Bennett, Elisabeth A. Clark, Jean F. O'Barr, B. Anne Vilen, and Sarah Westpahl-Wihl (Chicago, 1989), 240–60.



of family life was far from any notion of domestic haven. The custody of children was often contested, and courts were often asked to enforce divorce settlements and extract arrears in maintenance payments.

A second purpose of this survey was to point out the developments in the history of women and gender during the Mamluk period. In terms of economic access, the gender division of property appears to have become less rigid in the fifteenth century. As a result of the expansion of *waqf* family endowments at the expense of *iqṭāʿ*, the link between service and landed revenue loosened, allowing many upper class women to actively participate in the real estate market. In the sphere of domestic relations, the fifteenth century marks a significant shift towards the monetization of marriage. Instead of putting bread on their wives' tables, fifteenth-century husbands often paid their wives with cash, in the form of daily stipends and clothing allowances. The pattern of polygamy also shifted, most clearly indicated by the essentially monogamous nature of the royal household in the late fifteenth century. Finally, the apparent decline in the supply of slave-girls, following a peak in the first half of the fourteenth century, meant that fifteenth-century amirs no longer boasted of dozens of concubines residing in their harems. As slave-girls became more of a rarity, attitudes towards them also changed, and they were now more often appreciated for their piety than for their beauty or their voice.

These economic and social developments are accompanied by cultural shifts. While many medieval scholars talked about women quite often, fifteenth-century authors tend to blabber about them. Any reticence about exposing the women of one's own household, as well as those of other households, completely disappears from the semi-chronicles, semi-diaries of al-Sakhāwī, al-Biqāʿī, and Ibn Ṭawq, to name just the most explicitly personal of the late fifteenth-century authors. Even the objection to female authorship appears to give way, as least in the case of ʿĀʾishah al-Bāʿūniyah, whose mystical prose and poetry demonstrates the depth of this woman's reading and education.

Do these changes relate to more general changes in Mamluk society during the fifteenth century? It is perhaps premature to draw firm conclusions, as long as both the study of women and gender and the study of Mamluk society have yet to exhaust the rich literary and documentary sources. But one may still note that Mamluk political authority was closely related, in its symbolism, to the domestic authority enjoined by heads of households over their women and their slaves. The early Mamluk period witnessed a sharp distinction between the private and the public. The male heads of households enjoyed a great degree of autonomous power in their own households, and monopolized public power and access to landed revenue by virtue of their official positions. Relations within the domestic unit were clearly differentiated from those governing the market economy; cash



exchanged hands only at marriage's points of entry and exit. By the fifteenth century, on the other hand, the relationship between the public and the private, the Mamluk state and the households it governed, had changed. The blurring of gender distinctions within households, the increasing monetization of domestic relationships, the decline in polygamy and concubinage, all made households less autonomous, less hierarchical, and less isolated. As the autonomy of the head of the household gave way, the courts, both military and religious, adapted an increasingly interventionist approach—which had contradictory results. On the one hand, fifteenth-century wives found it easier to obtain a judicial divorce; on the other hand, the state authorities now saw it as their role to discipline disobedient wives.

The tragic tale of the two adulterous lovers which began this survey is a remarkable indication of these changes. The cuckolded husband, who, instead of seeking either private revenge or the concealment of his wife's infidelity, chooses to go over to the police station and report a crime, is definitely a product of the fifteenth century; a fourteenth-century husband would have found this behavior astounding. Before the middle of the fifteenth century it is practically impossible to find any husband who asked religious or secular courts for help in disciplining his wife. But in the fifteenth century this was a common practice, with husbands lodging public complaints about a wife who ran away from home, or about an affair she was having. It seems that the traditional mechanisms of patriarchy, like a threat of repudiation or physical violence, were now seen as less effective. The account of this adulterous relationship is so striking because it indicates the shifts—nothing less than dramatic—in the power relations within households during the Mamluk period, as well as the eventual affirmation of the role of the state in regulating the private sphere.



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## The Four Madrasahs in the Complex of Sultan Ḥasan (1356–61): The Complete Survey

The Complex of Sultan Ḥasan in Cairo is one of the most celebrated works of Mamluk architecture. Since the publication of the monograph entitled *Mosquée du Sultan Hassan au Caire* by Max Herz Pasha<sup>1</sup> in 1899,<sup>2</sup> several studies have addressed the building in terms of its typology, stylistic influence, patronage, and meaning. However, the monograph and the studies that followed remain without a complete survey of the four madrasahs attached to the complex. The ground floor plan of the complex, documented by the early monograph, reveals their essence and relationship to the main building but does not fully document the madrasahs as independent spatial units. This survey focuses on the four madrasahs and presents the results of a field survey with complete documentation of their floor plans and sections, published here for the first time (Figs. 1–20).<sup>3</sup> The drawings are supplemented in this introduction by a brief analysis and information pertaining to the assigned functions and personnel for the madrasahs provided by the *waqf* document of Sultan Ḥasan.<sup>4</sup>

The complex had an elaborate functional program, with a *bimāristān*, a *sabil-kuttāb*, a congregational mosque, four madrasahs, and a mausoleum. Its plan follows the cruciform four-*iwān* type. Four great tunnel-vaulted *iwāns* flank the main *ṣaḥn* and constitute the major order of the complex. The four madrasahs are

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<sup>1</sup> Max Herz Pasha (1856–1919) was a Hungarian architect. He was in Egypt between 1880 and 1914. He worked for the Technical Bureau of the Ministry of Awqaf until 1890 when he joined the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe, which he later headed. The complex of Sultan Ḥasan was one of the many monuments the Comité restored during his twenty-five years of service.

<sup>2</sup> See Max Herz, *La Mosquée du Sultan Hassan au Caire* (Cairo, 1899).

<sup>3</sup> The initial survey and documentation were conducted as part of my dissertation field research in 1991 in Cairo. See Howayda Al-Harithy, "Urban Form and Meaning in Mamluk Architecture" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Dār al-Wathā'iḳ al-Qawmiyah in Cairo possesses two documents for the *waqf* with which Sultan Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn endowed his great complex in al-Rumaylah near the Citadel. The first (no. 40/6) is the original *waqfiyah* drawn up for Sultan Ḥasan. It is written on parchment, but most of it has been lost or is damaged. The second (no. 365/85) is a contemporary bound manuscript copy and a more complete document preserving the content of the original. It is this version that is fully published. See *The Waqf Document of Sultan Al-Nasir Hasan b. Muhammad b. Qalawun for his Complex in Al-Rumaila*, ed. Howayda Al-Harithy (Berlin/Beirut, 2001).



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of the single-*iwān* type and occupy the corners created by the cruciform plan. These constitute the minor order in the spatial organization of the complex. Although the four-*iwān* building type has roots in Cairo going back to its introduction by the Ayyubids, none of its predecessors utilize the type with such originality. By the time the complex was built in 1356, the type had matured and was widely used in a variety of religious buildings including madrasahs, *khānqāhs*, and *zāwiyahs*. Examples include the madrasah of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad on al-Mu‘izz Street (1295), its neighbor the madrasah of al-Zāhir Barqūq (1384–86), the *khānqāh* of Baybars al-Jāshnikir (1307–10), and the *zāwiyah* of Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn Yūsuf (1295–1325). The plan of the complex uses a monumental version of the four-*iwān* plan in combination with the single-*iwān* type. It is therefore a masterful combination and a unique interpretation of the four-*iwān* plan. By inserting a single-*iwān* madrasah in each of the four corners as a minor order to the major cruciform one, the plan distinguishes the public zone from the private zone of each of the madrasah units and adjusts scale and accessibility. The public zone includes the *jāmi‘*, the major teaching *iwāns*, and the mausoleum, while the madrasahs and their living units remain separate and private.

The madrasahs are dedicated to the teachings of the four Sunni schools. According to the *waqf* document, dated Saturday, 15 Rabī‘ II 760 (1359), and Thursday, 2 Rajab 760 (1359),<sup>5</sup> the largest of the major *iwāns*, that of the qiblah, is dedicated to the Friday *khutbah*, the reading of the Quran, and the meetings of the Shafi‘i students with their professor to conduct their general public lectures. The remaining three major *iwāns* are approximately equal in size. The southwestern *iwān* was dedicated to the sessions of the Hanbali School, the northwestern to the Hanafi School and the northeastern to the Maliki School.

. . . He also dedicated the *qibli iwān* to the delivery of the *khutbah*, the reading of the blessed Quran, and the meeting of the Shafi‘is with their professor to conduct their public lecture in it . . . and dedicated the *bahri iwān* as well to the meeting of the Hanafis with their professor to conduct their public lecture in it, and dedicated the eastern *iwān* as well to the meeting of the Malikis with their professor to conduct their public lecture in it, and dedicated the western *iwān* as well to the meeting of the Hanbalis with their professor to conduct their public lecture in it. . . . as to the place east of the mentioned *qibli iwān*, he endowed the *iwān*, at the end of which lies the mihrab, as a mosque for God almighty where prayers are to be held, worship is to be performed, the Quran to be read, good deeds are to be offered, and noble education is to

<sup>5</sup> Published in its entirety in 2001; see *The Waqf Document of Sultan Al-Nasir*, ed. Al-Harithy.



be conducted. He endowed the rest of the mentioned place as a madrasah for the pursuit of education in accordance with the *madhhab* of al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, may God bless him, and for the lodging of the fifty individuals assigned to live in it . . . twenty five individuals from the seniors and twenty five individuals from the juniors.<sup>6</sup>

According to the *waqf* document,<sup>7</sup> all four madrasahs are treated equally in terms of personnel assigned, salaries, number of students, and their stipends.<sup>8</sup> Each madrasah is assigned a professor, three teaching assistants, a supervisor, and one hundred students, fifty of whom are residents. “A professor, who is a Hanafi jurist known for his piety, is to conduct the teaching of Hanafi *fiqh* in the *baḥrī iwān* designated for him above; three assistants are to be assigned to him who have the same qualifications as those required of the Shafi‘ī assistants, and a hundred students from his *madhhab*, on the condition that the professor, assistants, and students conduct themselves as required of the Shafi‘īs and in accordance with the restrictions and conditions outlined above. . . .”<sup>9</sup> Besides their stipends, the *waqf* provided students with seasonal gifts and medical care. “The measure of two head of camels, twenty head of cattle, and ten head of sheep are to be slaughtered during ‘Īd al-Aḍḥá and divided in half. One half is to be distributed to the residents of the aforementioned places, including students and staff, as the *nāzir* sees fit. The second half is to be distributed to the orphans, tutors, supervisors, and the poor and needy outside the aforementioned places, both neighbors and strangers.”<sup>10</sup>

Though the design of the four madrasahs is a variation of the single-*iwān* plan, they vary a great deal in size and interior organization of living units. Each madrasah has a private teaching *iwān*, a courtyard with a fountain, latrines, living units, and a large room above the *iwān* that may have served as a library (figs. 21–25). The living units range in size. The average room has an area of 10 square meters. The Ḥanafīyah Madrasah has 56 living units, the Shāfi‘īyah has 52, and the Mālikīyah has 44, while the Ḥanbaliyah has only 22 living units. Its *iwān* has an area of 30 square meters compared to the *iwān* of the Ḥanafīyah, which

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 149–50.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 148–75.

<sup>8</sup> For details on the salaries and stipends, see Muḥammad M. Amīn, “Maṣārīf Awqāf al-Sultān al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ‘alá Maṣāliḥ al-Qubbah wa-al-Jāmi‘ wa-al-Madāris wa-Maktab al-Sabil bi-al-Qāhirah,” in Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabih fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-Banīh* (Cairo, 1986), 3:341–449.

<sup>9</sup> *The Waqf Document of Sultan Al-Nasir*, ed. Al-Harithy, 151.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 172–73.



has an area of 67.5 square meters. It is clear that though the *waqf* document treated the four madrasahs equally, the design seems to have accommodated the site conditions and the sizes of the madrasahs in a more hierarchical fashion that responded more to the actual following of the four madrasahs in Egypt. The Ḥanafīyah was most popular and the Ḥanbalīyah was the least popular at the time.



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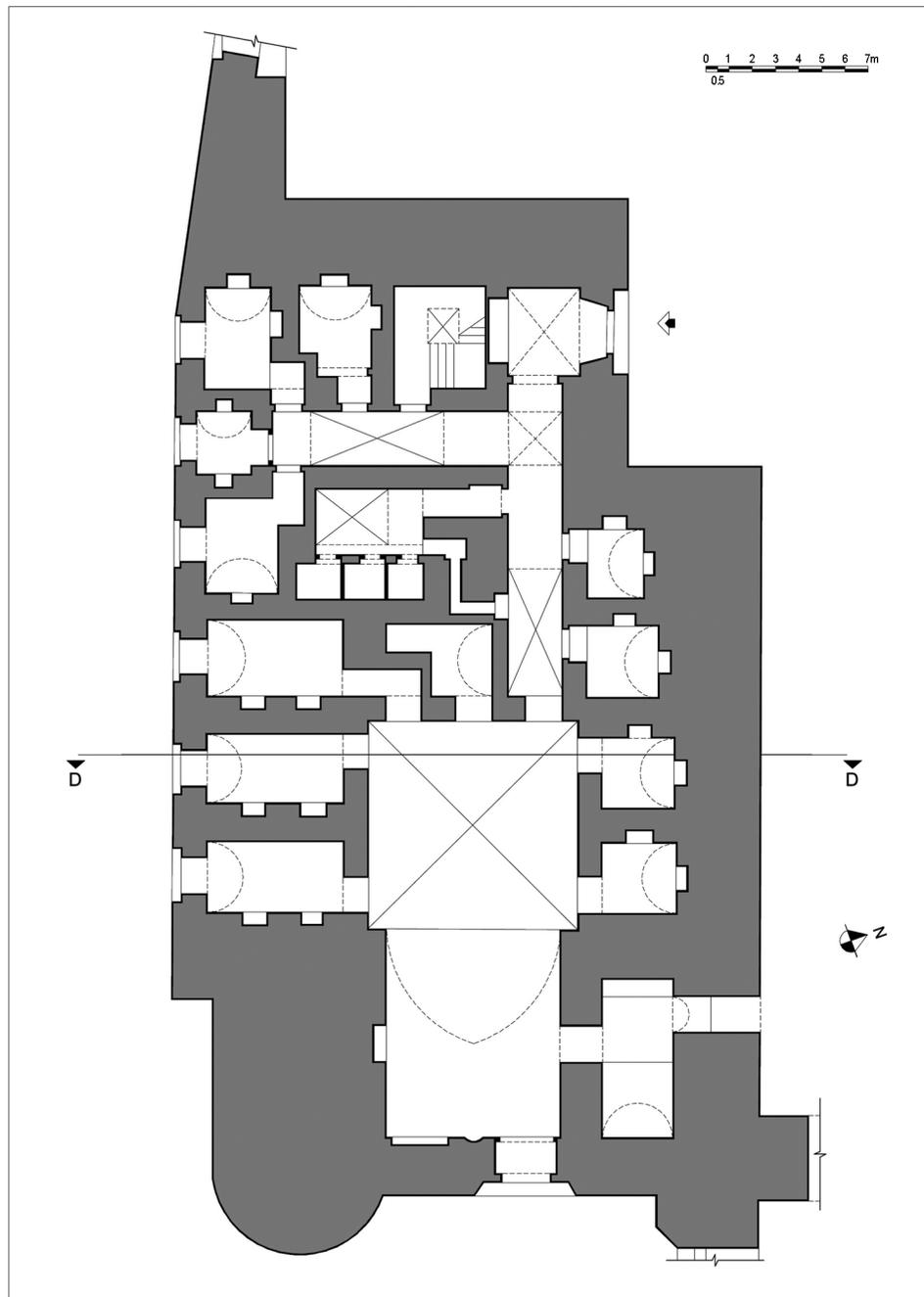


Fig. 1. Ḥanafiyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, ground floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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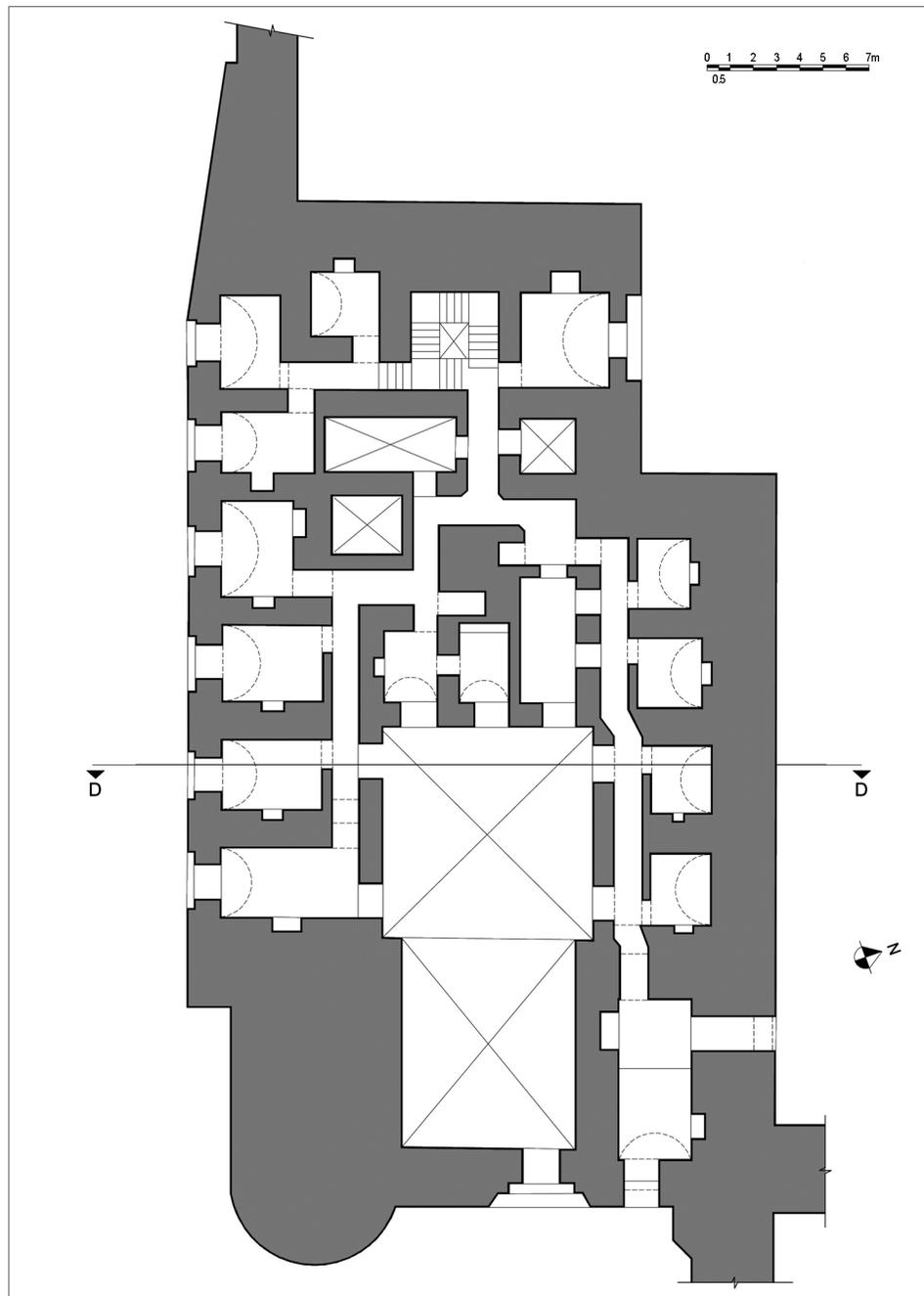


Fig. 2. Ḥanafiyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, second floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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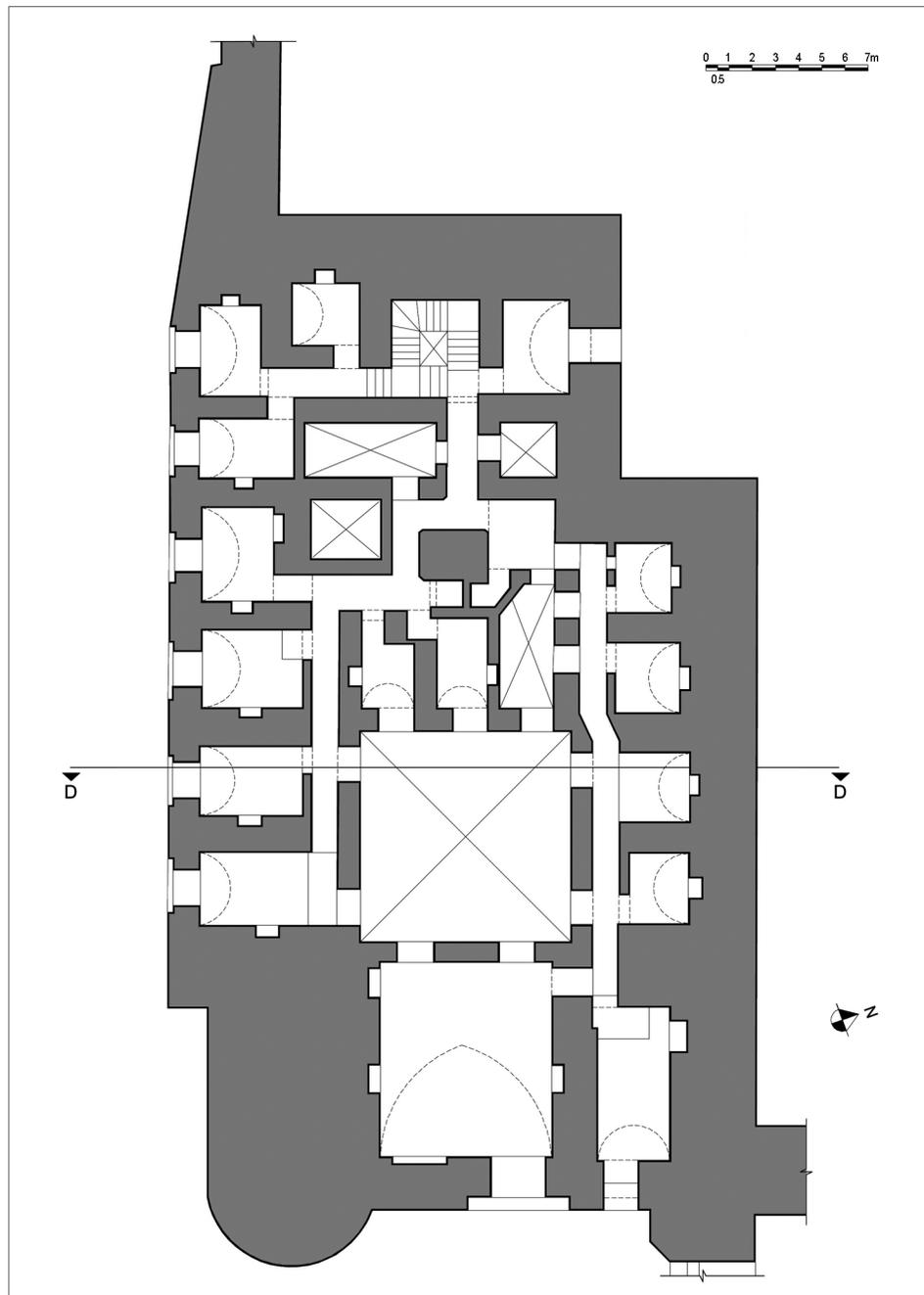


Fig. 3. Ḥanafiyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, third floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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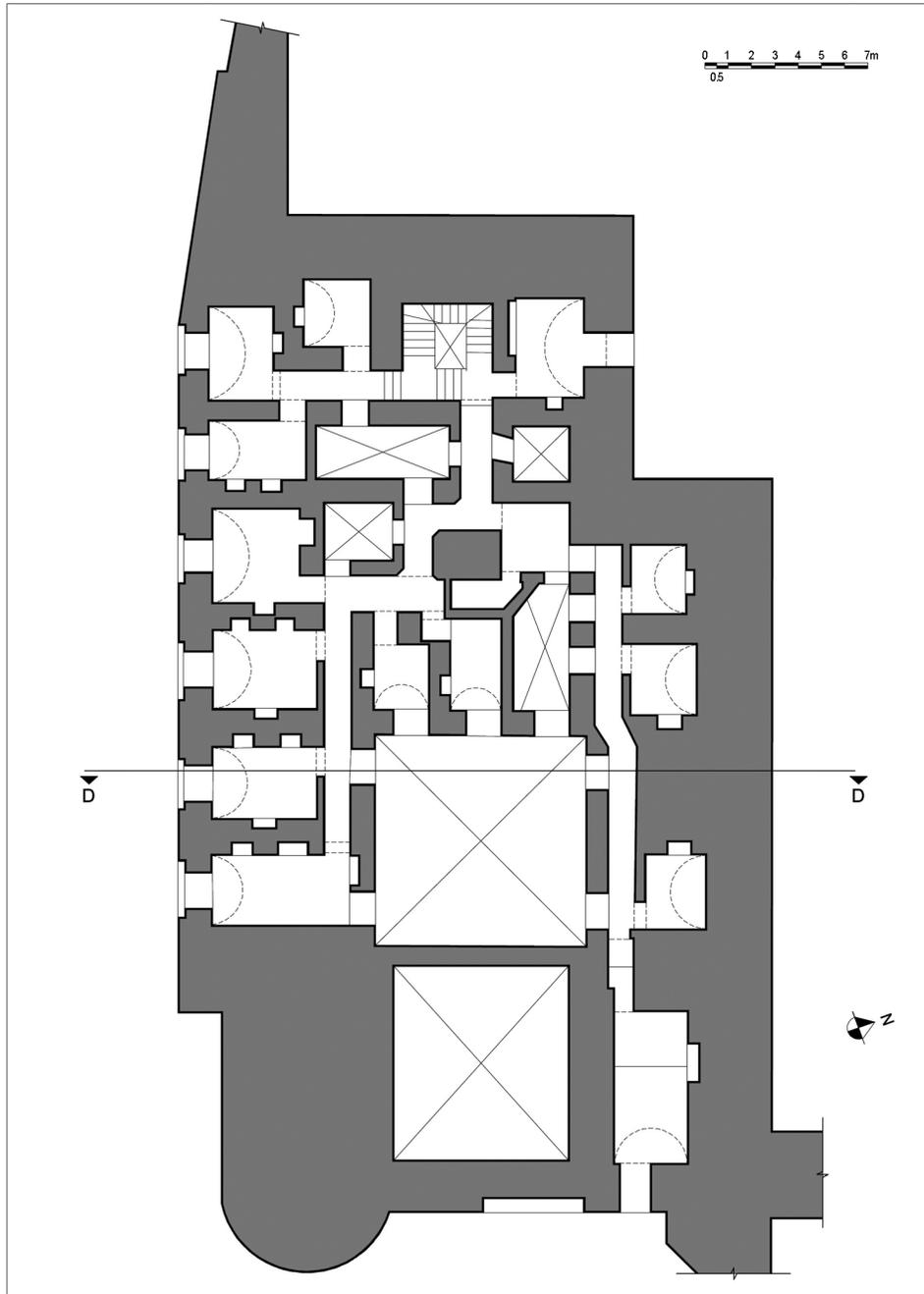


Fig. 4. Ḥanafiyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, fourth floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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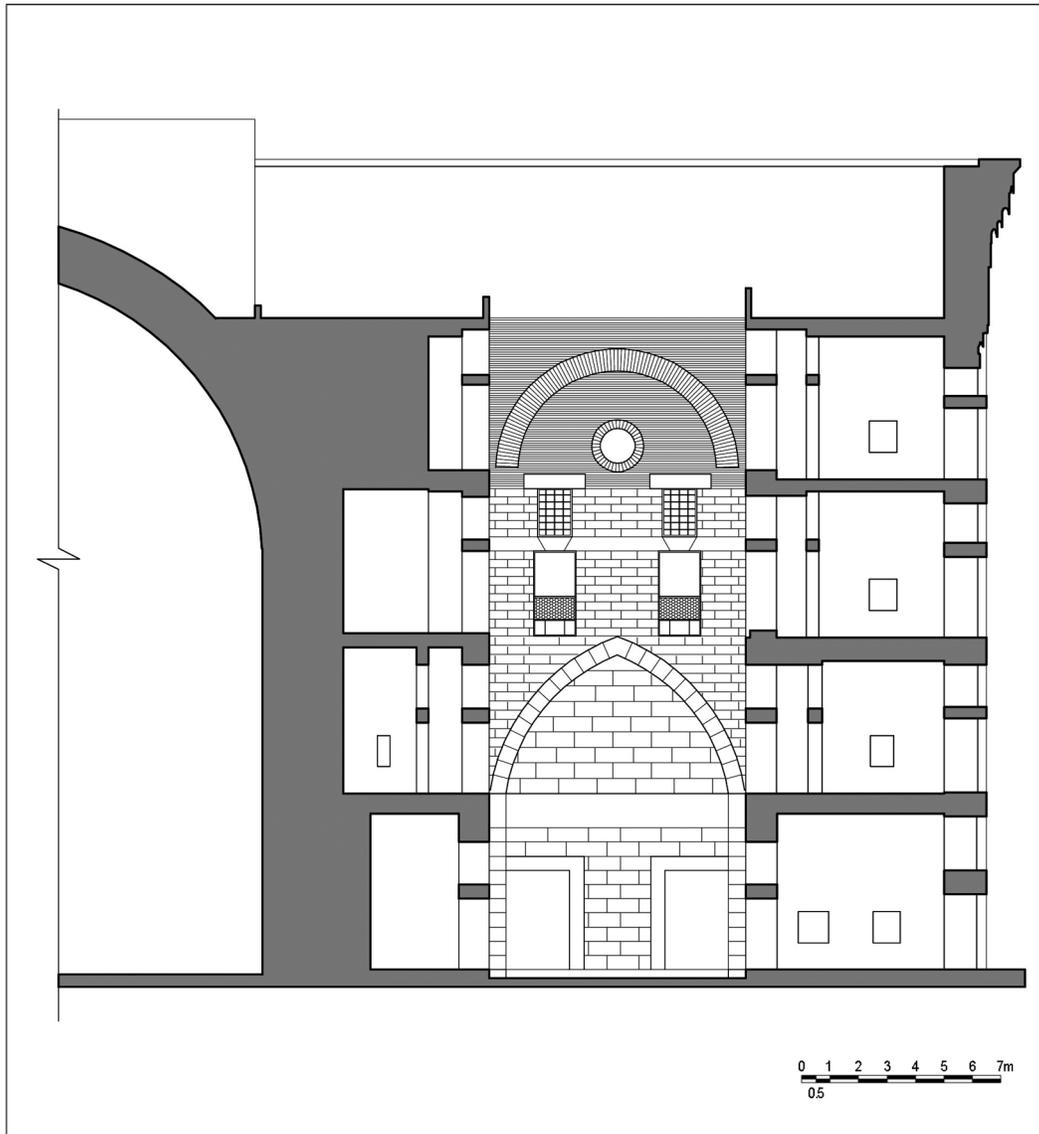


Fig. 5. Ḥanafiyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, section DD (H. Al-Harithy)



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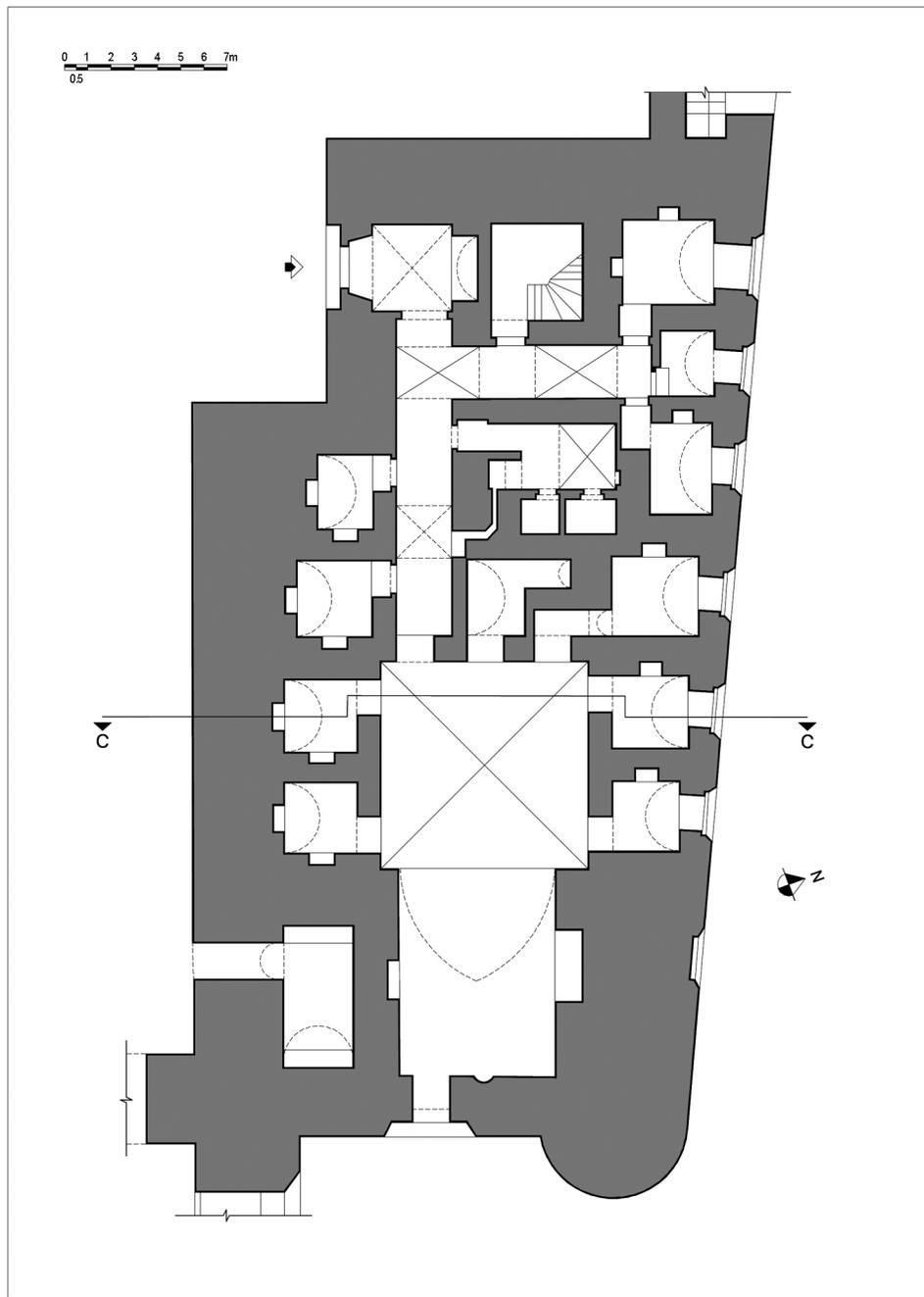


Fig. 6. Shāfiʿiyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, ground floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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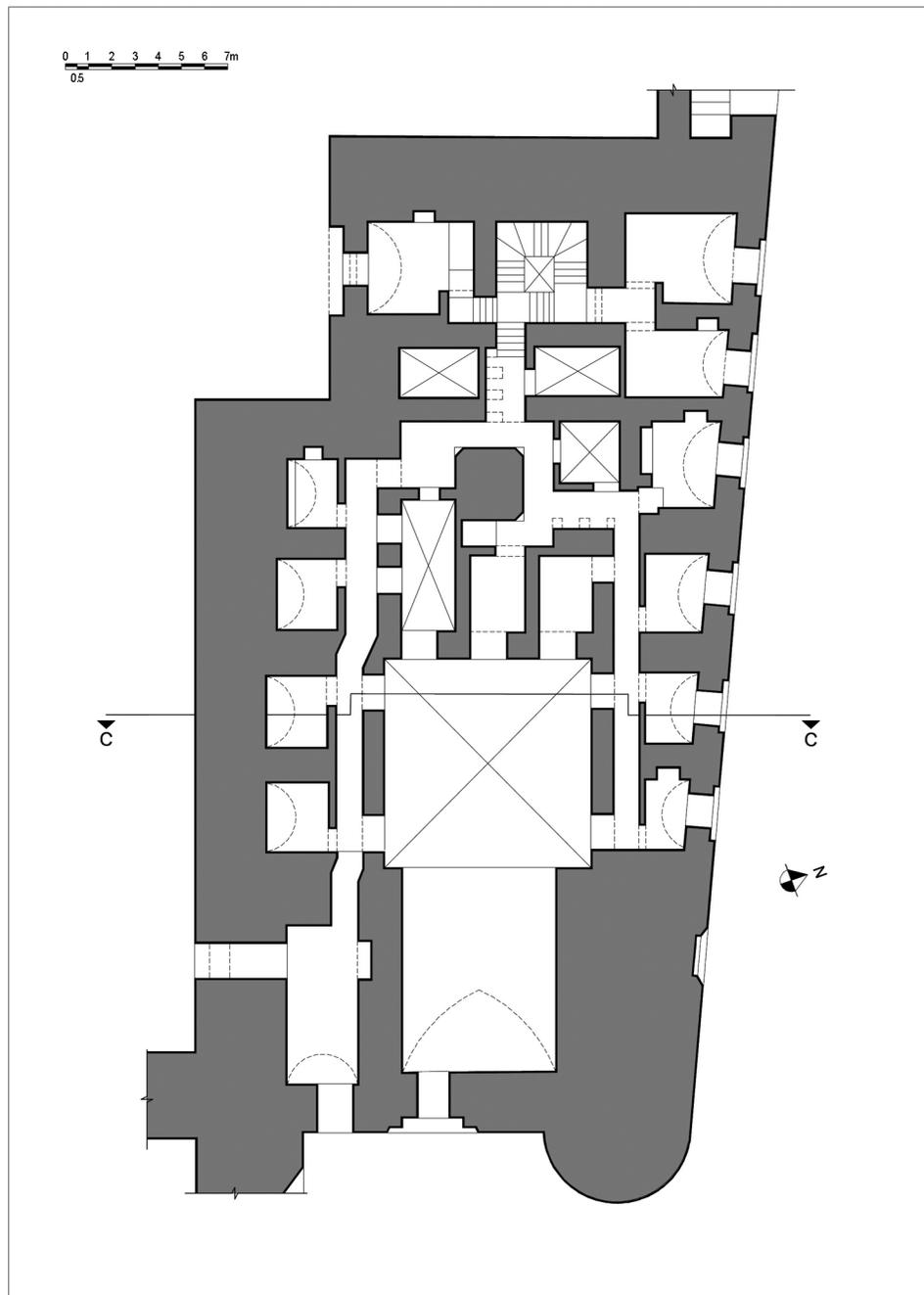


Fig. 7. Shāfi'iyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, second floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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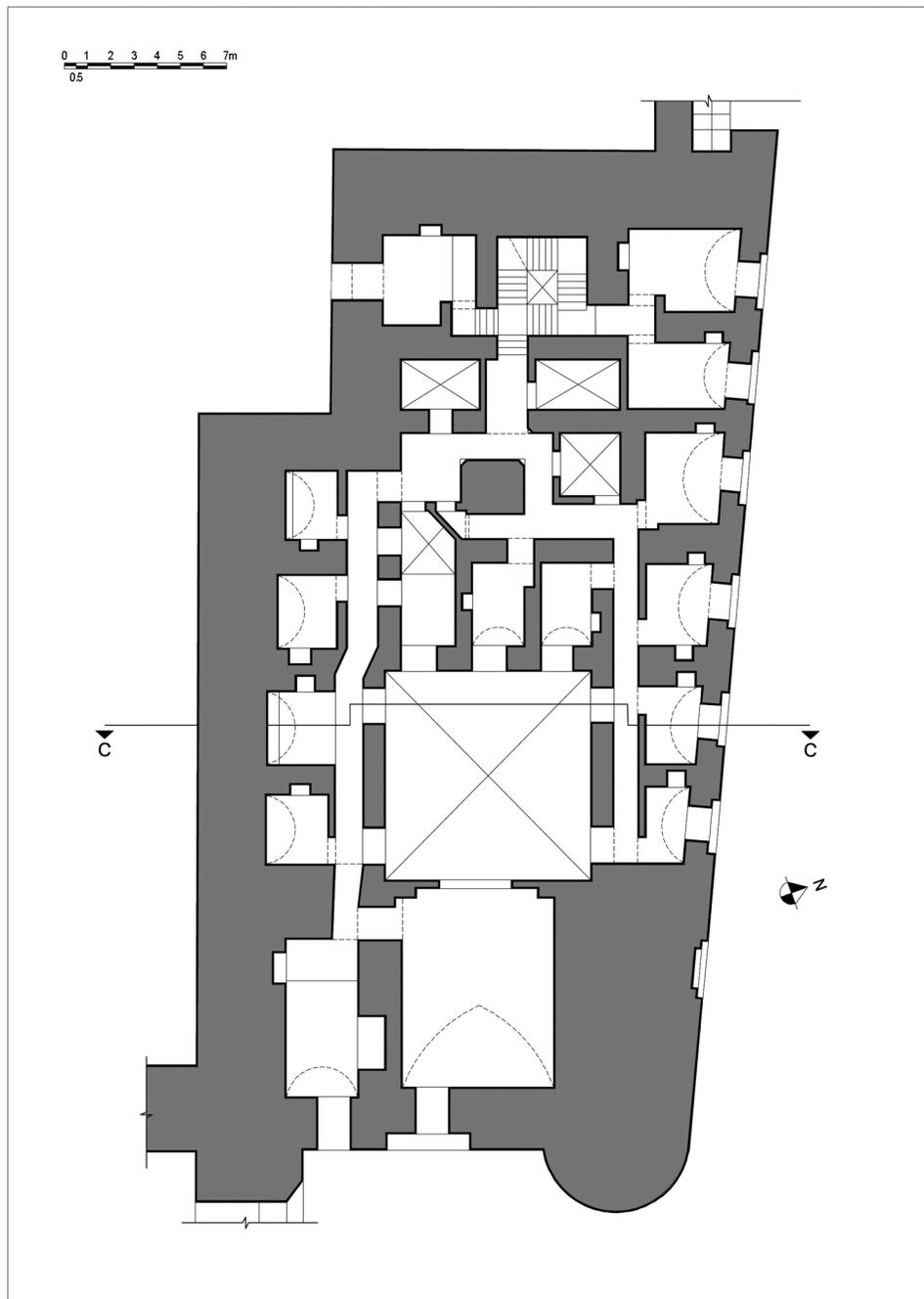


Fig. 8. Shāfi'iyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, third floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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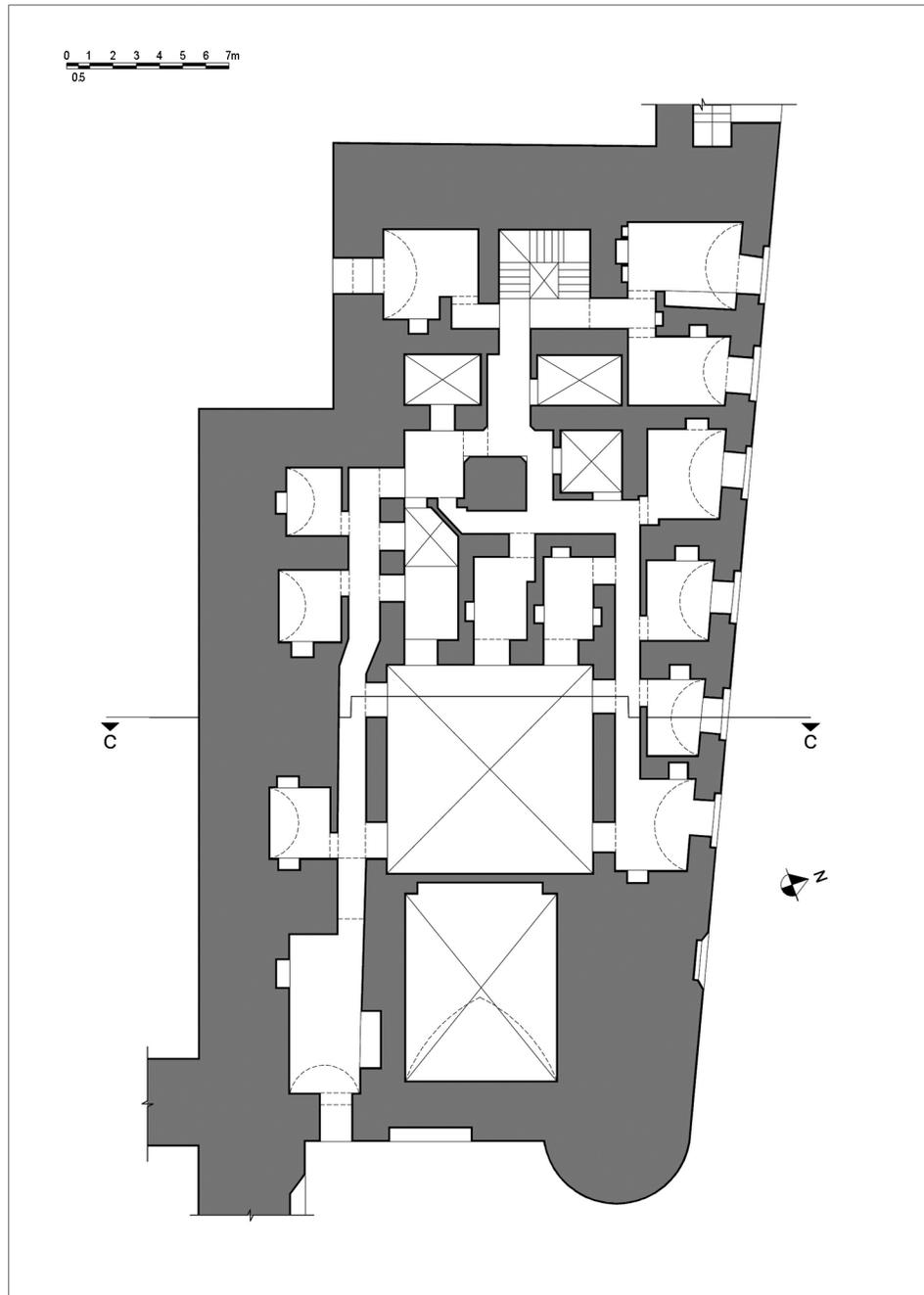


Fig. 9. Shāfi'iyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, fourth floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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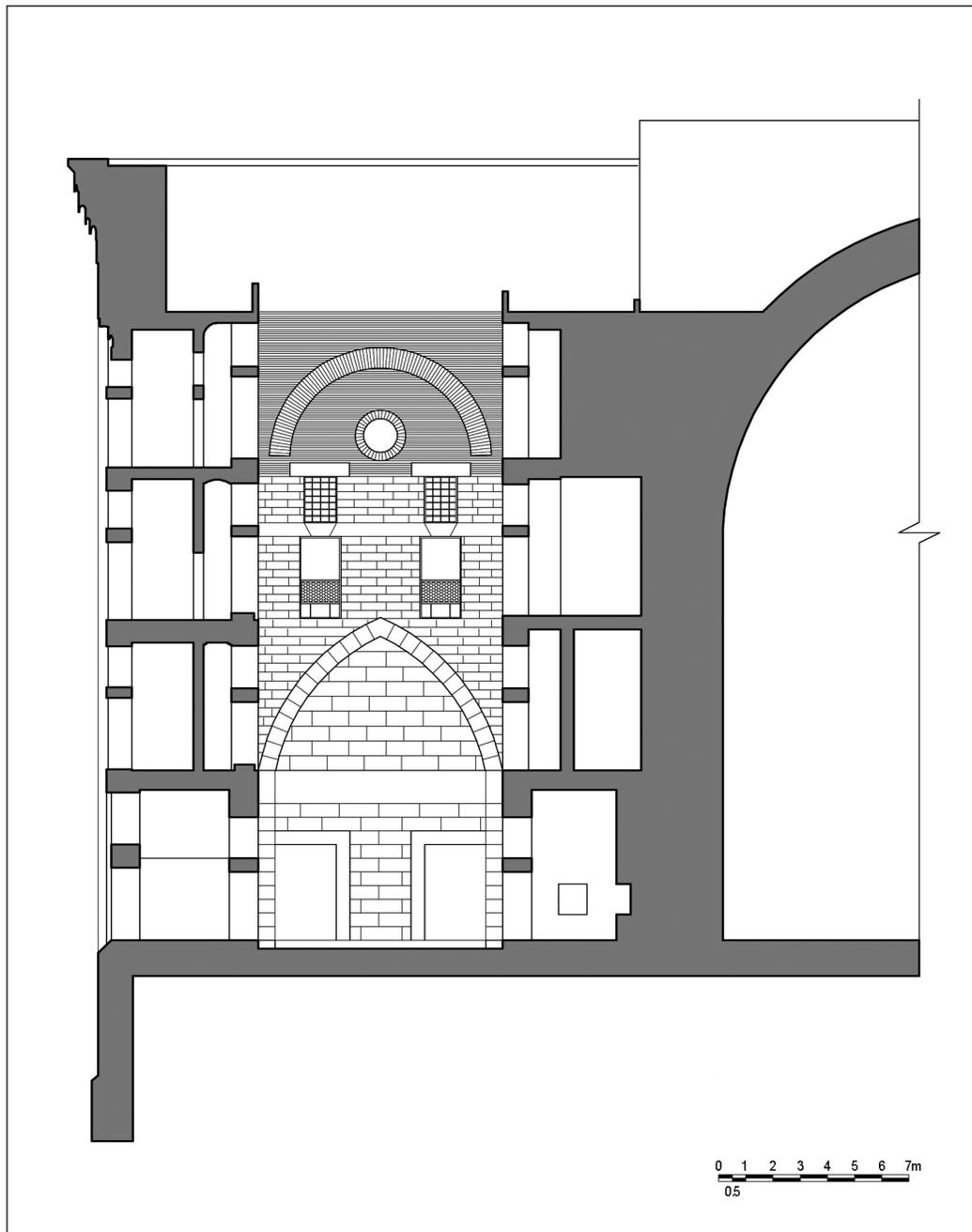


Fig. 10. Shāfi'iyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, section CC (H. Al-Harithy)



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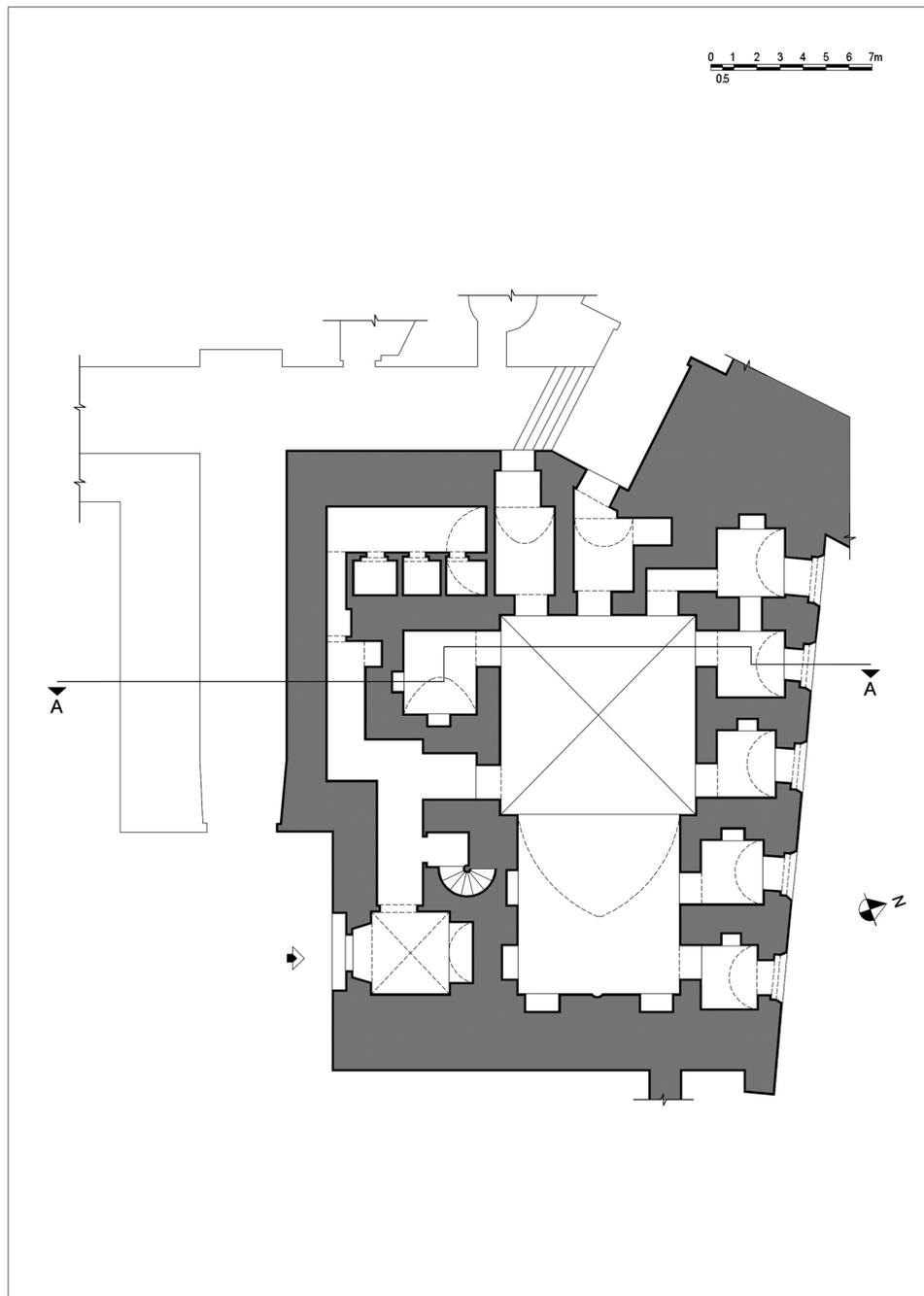


Fig. 11. Mālikīyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, ground floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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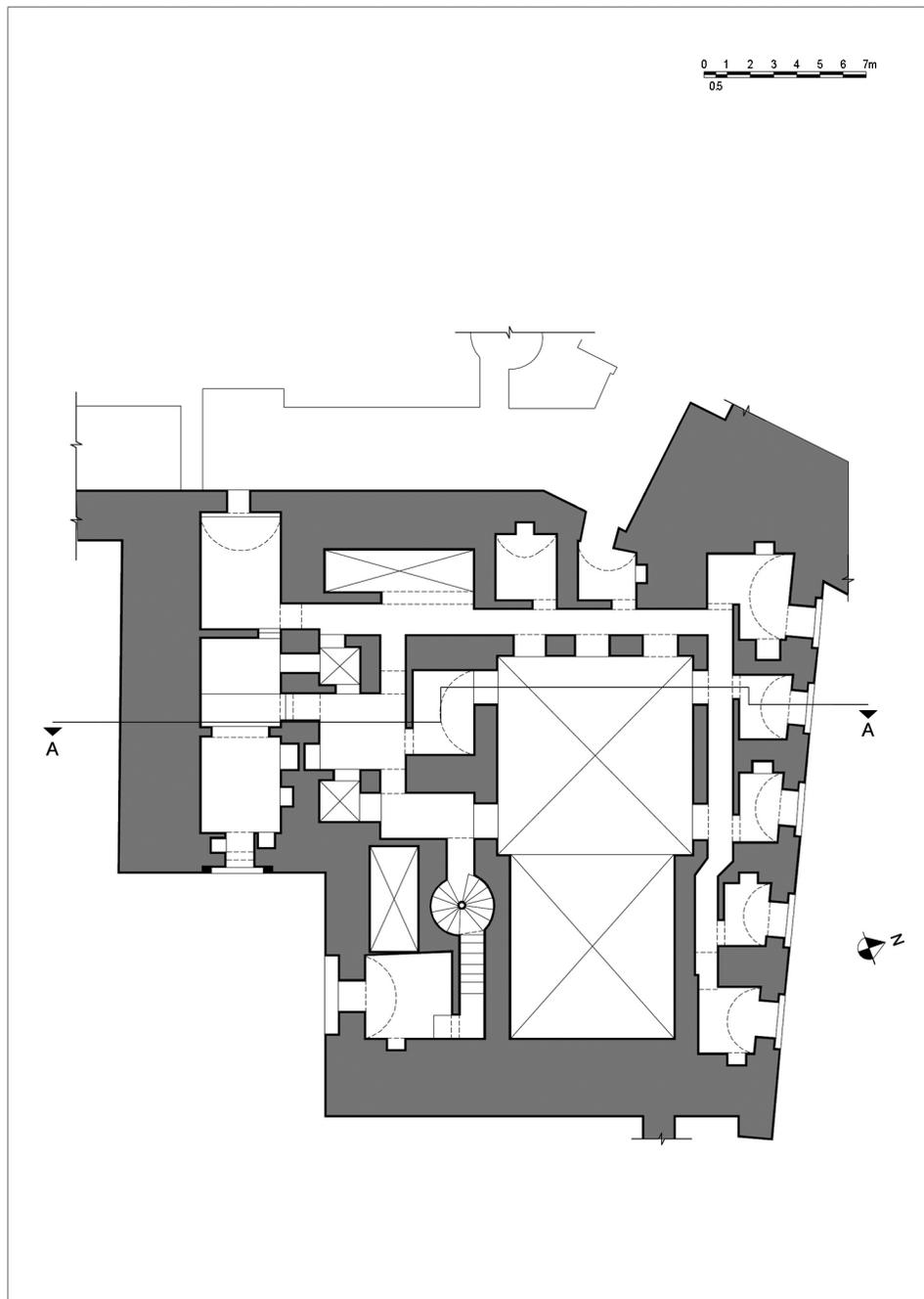


Fig. 12. Mālikīyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, second floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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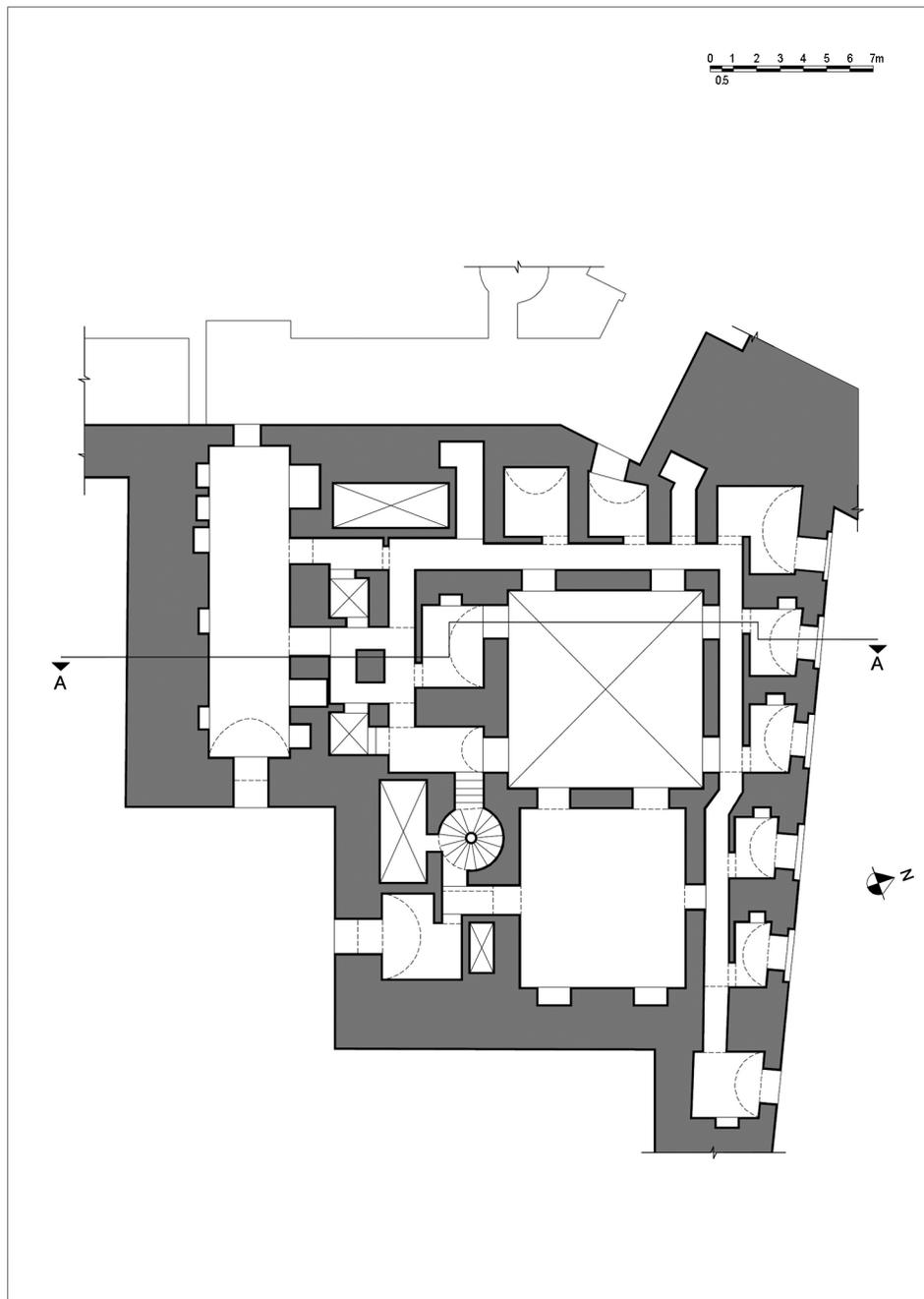


Fig. 13. Mālīkiyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, third floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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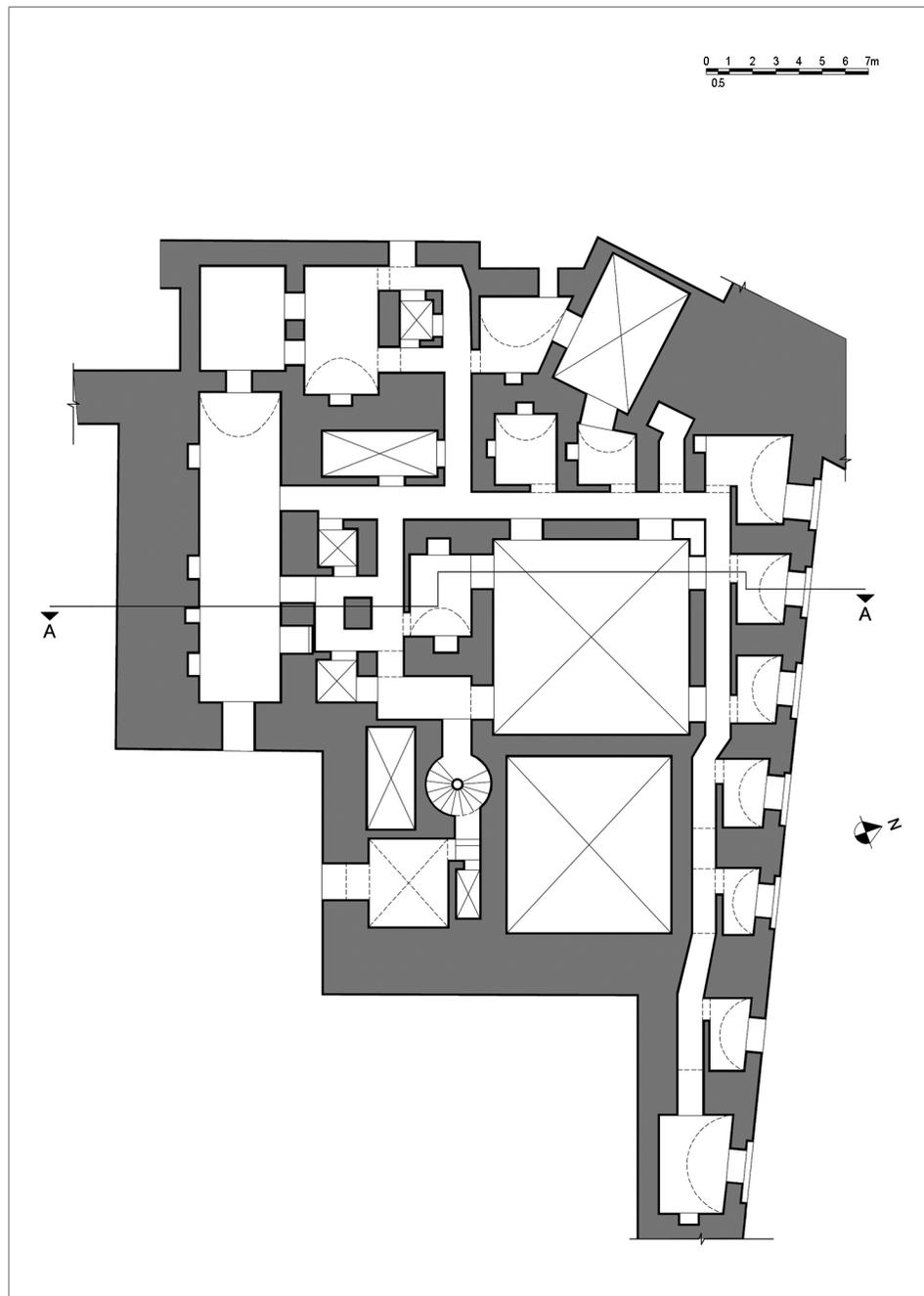


Fig. 14. Mālikīyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, fourth floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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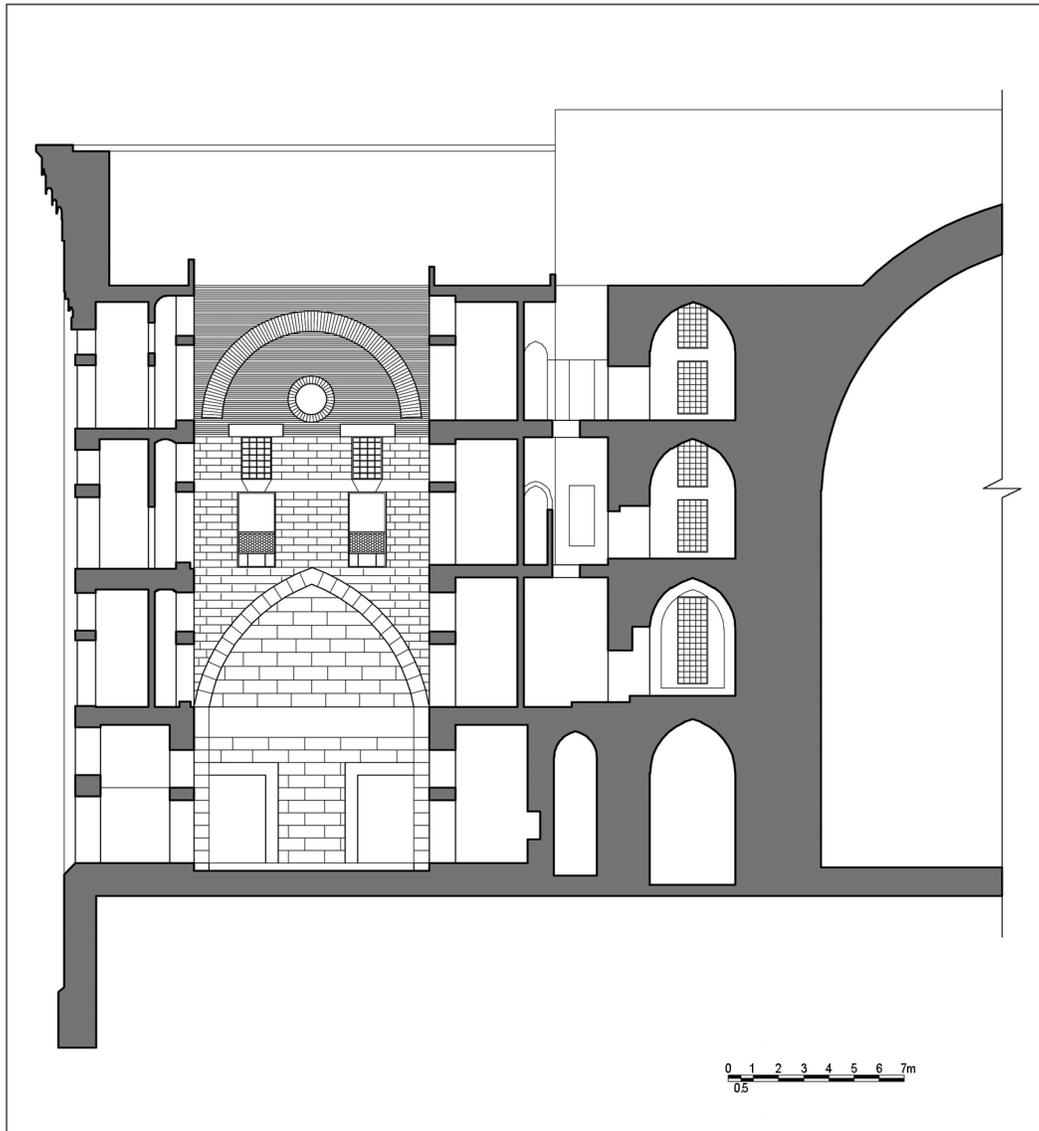


Fig. 15. Mālīkiyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, section AA  
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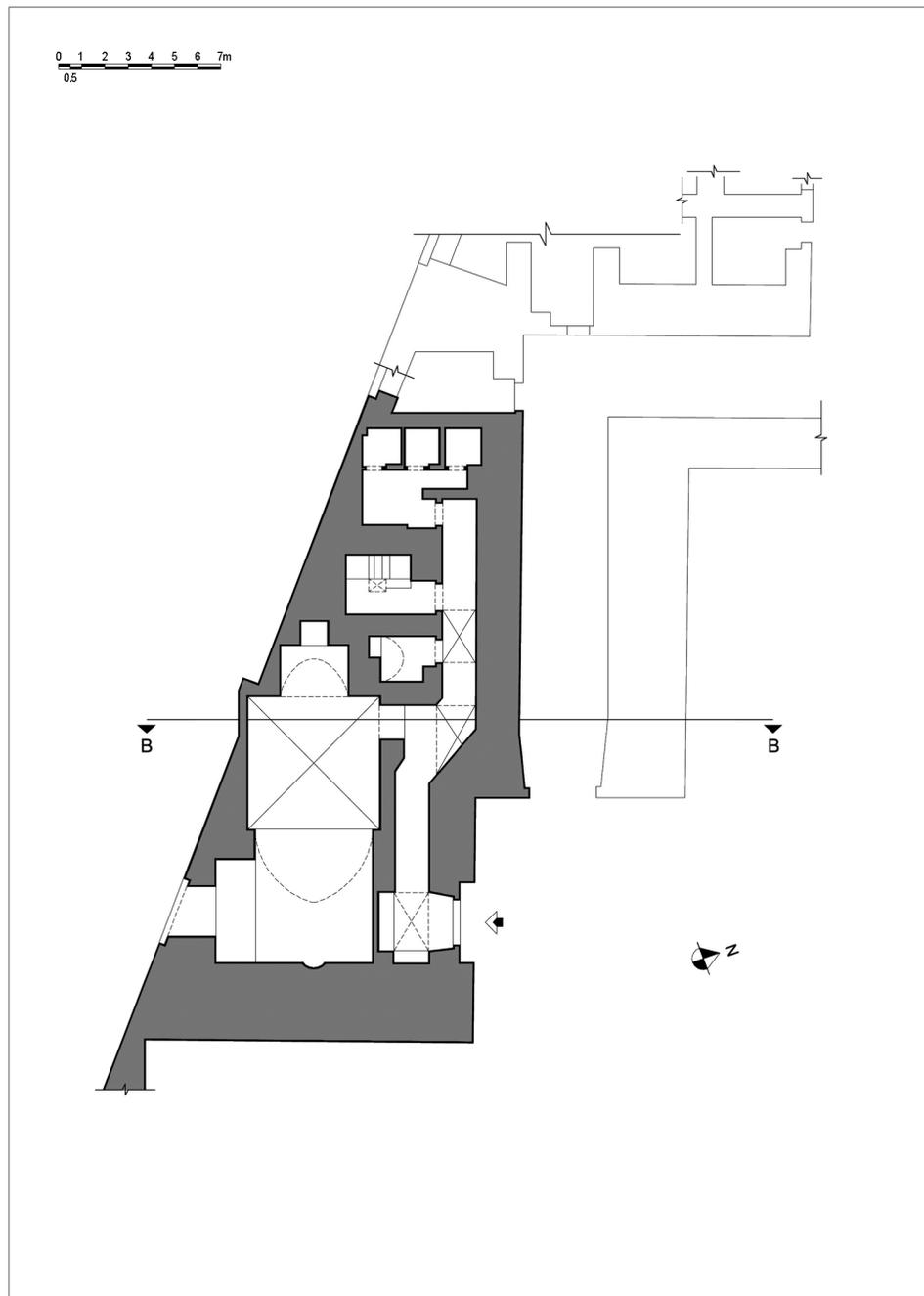


Fig. 16. Ḥanbaliyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, ground floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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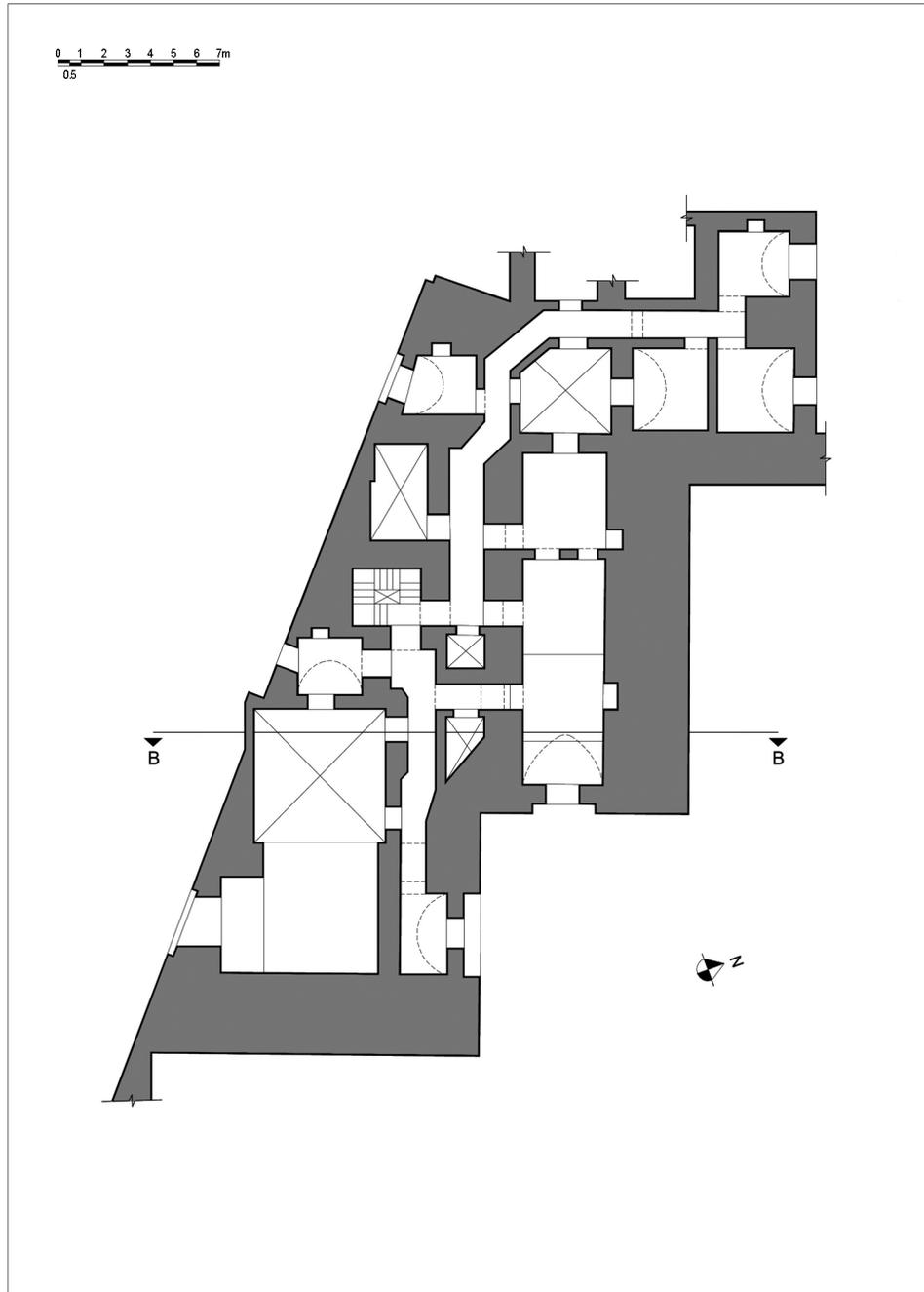


Fig. 17. Ḥanbaliyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, second floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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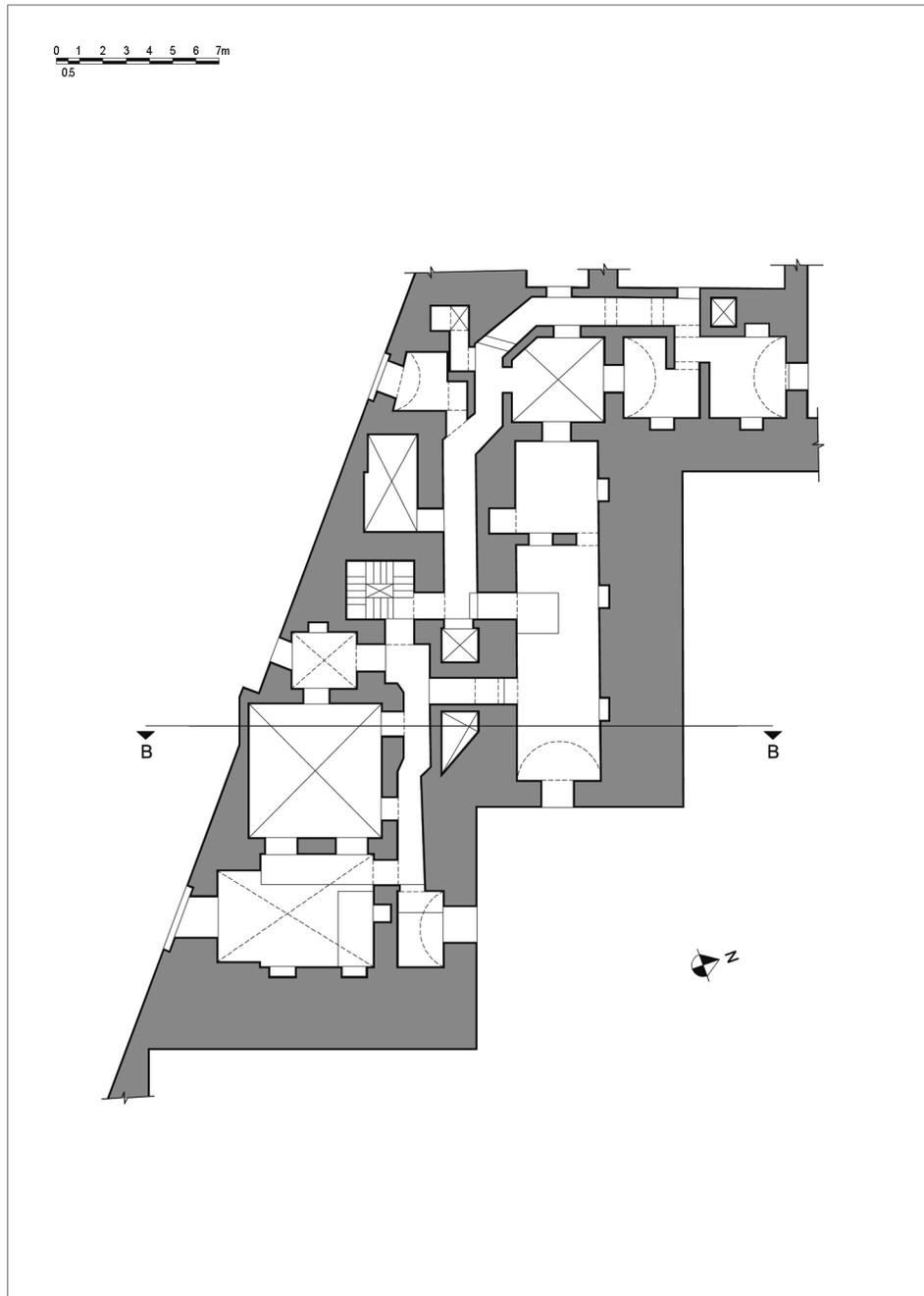


Fig. 18. Ḥanbaliyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, third floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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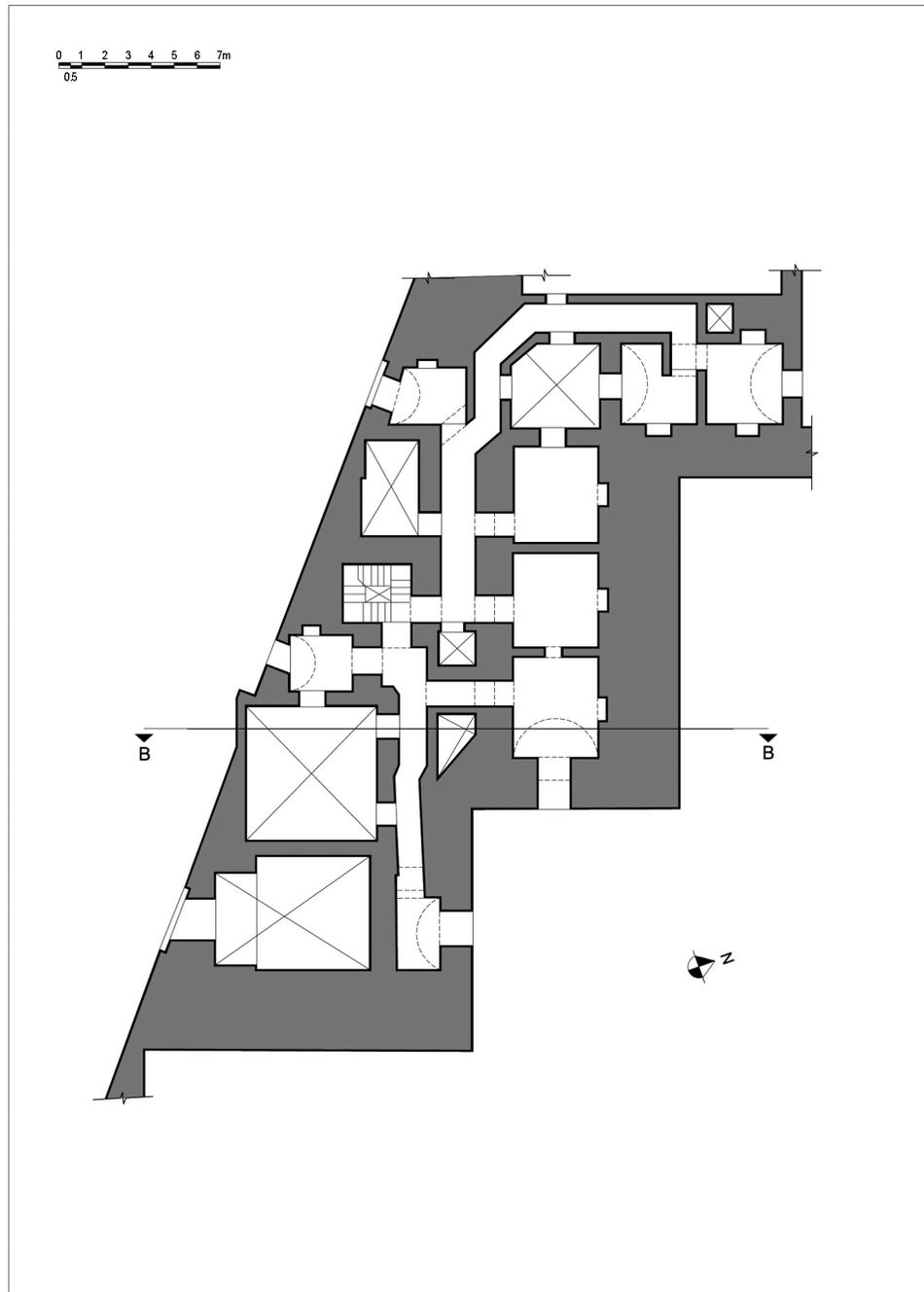


Fig. 19. Ḥanbaliyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, fourth floor plan (H. Al-Harithy)



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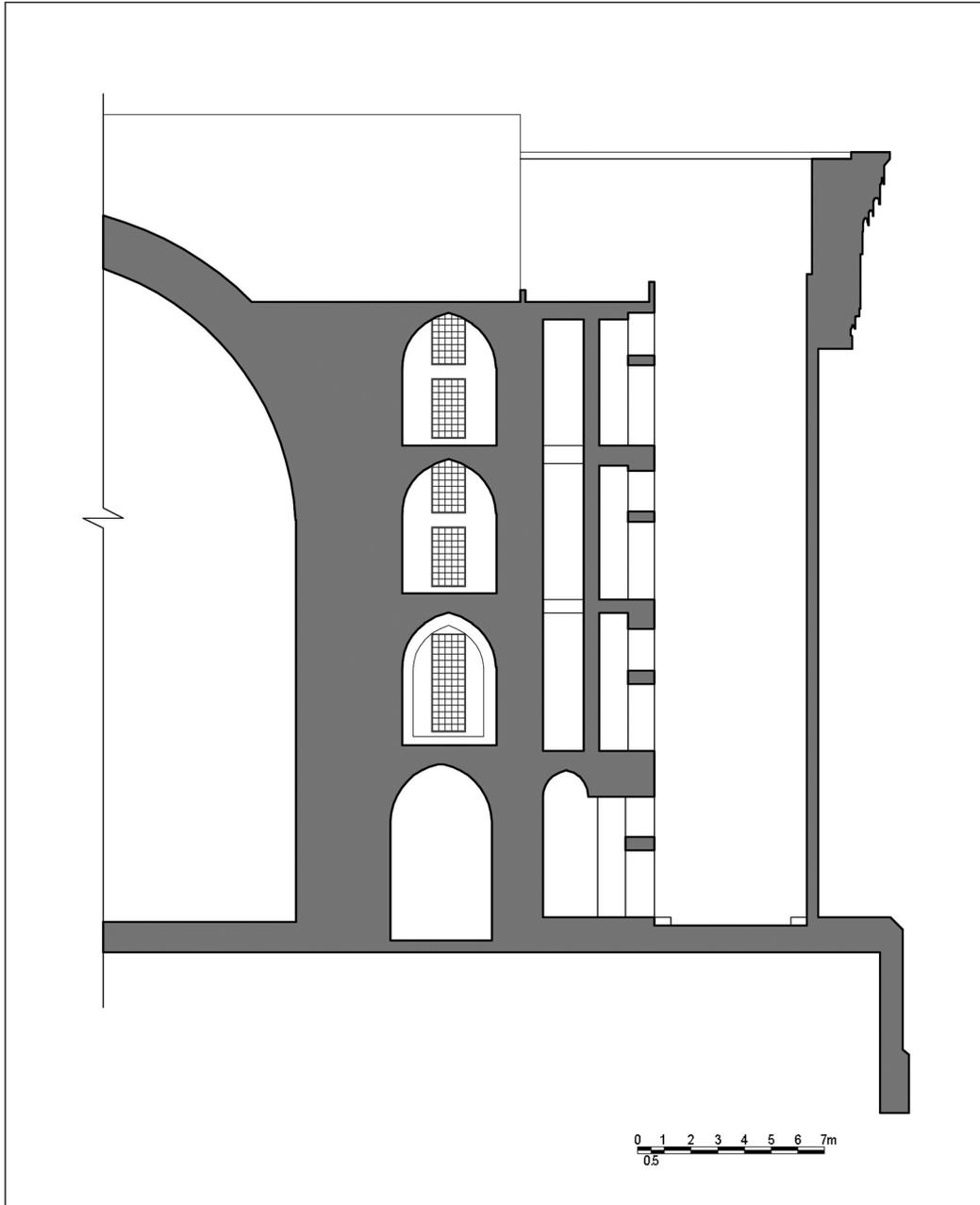


Fig. 20. Ḥanbaliyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, section BB (H. Al-Harithy)



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Fig. 21. Ḥanafīyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, interior view of courtyard (H. Al-Harithy)



Fig. 22. Ḥanafīyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, interior view of *iwān* (H. Al-Harithy)



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Fig. 23. Ḥanafiyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, interior view of living unit (H. Al-Harithy)



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Fig. 24a. Ḥanafīyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, interior view from living units (H. Al-Harithy)



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Fig. 24b. Ḥanafiyah Madrasah, Complex of Sultan Ḥasan, Cairo, interior view from living units (H. Al-Harithy)



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## The Decline of the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate's Eastern Frontier

In the period following the death of the last Mongol Ilkhan ruler Abū Saʿīd in 736/1335, the region east of the Mamluk Sultanate, from the Euphrates to the Oxus, was thrown into political upheaval. The Ilkhanate had been ruled by a dynastic line descended from Hülegü Khan, which, although witness to occasional succession disputes, had continued to provide undisputed leadership in the region since 656/1258. By the fourteenth century, dynastic succession had been settled in one branch of the Hülegüid family, through Hülegü's son Abaqa, and Abaqa's son Arghun. While this pattern helped to prevent the kind of succession crises that had occurred in the thirteenth century, it created a new problem of uncertainty when Abū Saʿīd Bahādur Khan died without an heir in 736/1335. The uncertainty of legitimate succession left several factions from among the state's military elite scrambling to maintain their privileged positions. Various families of amirs and local notables entered into alliances with each other as well as with members of peripheral lines of the Ilkhanid royal family in an attempt to enhance their prestige and legitimize their claims to authority. In particular, the military governors in the western Ilkhanid provinces, in roughly the area from Baghdad north to Mosul, Diyarbakr, and Erzurum, which formed the traditional border zone with the Mamluk state, sought aid and recognition from the sultan in Cairo. Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad welcomed such overtures as an opportunity to both secure the Mamluk northeast frontier, as well as extend the authority of the state beyond the Euphrates. For a brief period, it seemed as if this had been achieved, and the name of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was read in the *khuṭbah* in the mosques of Baghdad, Mosul, and Diyarbakr. This article is an attempt to untangle the often confusing web of political networks and allegiances in this frontier zone and to analyze the factors that led to the recognition of Mamluk authority east of the Euphrates River, as well as the breakdown in relations and the eventual reversion to the *status quo ante*, with the Euphrates dividing the Mamluk domains and the lands which would continue to look to the legacy of the Ilkhanate as a model for its geographical and political orientation.



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### THE ILKHANID WESTERN PROVINCES

Following the second wave of Mongol migration to Iran as part of Hülegü's campaign against the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs and the Abbasid caliph in the 650s/1250s, the territory of Arab Iraq, Diyarbakr, and the Lake Van region came to form the western frontier of the newly founded Mongol state. This state, known as the Ilkhanate, extended from the Oxus to Euphrates, with its center in the province of Azarbayjan and the urban center of Tabriz. Hülegü's army of conquest, which formed the basis of this migration, included several different tribal contingents, some of which represented older groups that had lived in Mongolia in the time of Chinggis Khan, as well as some newer, non-tribal military units. From among the older tribal groups, the Oyrat came to occupy the territory on the western edge of the Ilkhanate, adopting seasonal migration routes between summer pastures in eastern Anatolia and winter pastures in the area around Mosul.<sup>1</sup> These migration routes corresponded territorially with the Ilkhanid military governorship of Diyarbakr, centered in Mosul.

These provinces were overseen by amirs appointed by the Ilkhanid central authority. They were charged with maintaining security on the frontier, and keeping order among the Oyrats. However, due to the Oyrats' own internal leadership, this was not always possible. In 695/1296, the Tatar Ilkhanid governor of Diyarbakr, Mūlāy Noyan, was faced with a migration of several Oyrat military units and their households under the leadership of their chief, Ṭarqāy Gūrgān. Mūlāy confronted the Oyrats, but was defeated and could not prevent them from resettling in Mamluk Syria.<sup>2</sup> The frontier with the Mamluks was quite fluid, and such examples of Mongol *wāfidiyah* to Syria and Egypt were not uncommon.<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this article, it is important to recognize a fundamental tension in the Diyarbakr province, which was home to large numbers of a single tribal group, the Oyrats, under the nominal authority of a non-Oyrat imperial appointee. The breakdown in central authority in the Ilkhanate after 736/1335 would lead to a parallel breakdown of this pattern of frontier administration, leading to instability and the opportunity for the Mamluk Sultanate to extend its influence in the region.

In addition to the Ilkhanid governor at Mosul, there were two other important political and military posts on the western frontier. To the northeast of Diyarbakr was the governorate of Ahlat, in the region around Lake Van.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the amir of the "right hand" of the Ilkhanid army, also known as the commander of

<sup>1</sup>Faruk Sümer, *Kara Koyunlular (Başlangıçtan Cihanşah'a kadar)* (Ankara, 1962), 1:33.

<sup>2</sup>Rashid al-Din Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī, *Jāmi' al-Tavārikh*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṣṭafa Mūsavī (Tehran, 1994), 1262.

<sup>3</sup>See David Ayalon, "The Wafidiya in the Mamluk Kingdom," *Islamic Culture* 25 (1951): 89–104.

<sup>4</sup>Sümer, *Kara Koyunlular*, 33.



Anatolia (*amīr-i rūm*) resided in this region, west of Tabriz. It is at the intersection of these three Ilkhanid posts (Diyarbakr, Ahlat, Rūm) and three prominent political families that we will examine the role of the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in the events on the Ilkhan frontier after 736/1335.

#### THE FAMILY OF AMIR SŪTĀY AND THE OYRATS

Mūlāy Noyan died in 712/1312, and his position was given to a certain Amīr Sūtāy.<sup>5</sup> Although Sūtāy's background is not certain, it is clear that he was not a member of the Oyrat tribe.<sup>6</sup> He was a stable master (*aqtajī* [= *akhtājī*]<sup>7</sup>), and claimed to have been present at the conquest of Baghdad in 656/1258. Al-Ṣafadī writes that he was over one hundred years old when he died in 732/1331–32.<sup>8</sup> During the reign of Abū Sa'īd (717–36/1317–35) he governed Diyarbakr while his three sons governed Ahlat.<sup>9</sup> However, when Sūtāy died, his position in Diyarbakr passed to the Oyrat amir 'Alī Pādshāh.<sup>10</sup> His promotion to this post was likely related to the fact that he was Abū Sa'īd's uncle, the brother of his mother Ḥājī Khātūn.<sup>11</sup> 'Alī Pādshāh came into control of the entire upper Tigris region, from Baghdad to Diyarbakr, including its large population of his fellow Oyrat tribesmen. The three sons of Sūtāy, who had served in Ahlat, opposed 'Alī Pādshāh's authority, no doubt stung that their father's assignment had not gone to a member of the family. In particular, Sūtāy's son Ḥājī Ṭaghāy clashed with the Oyrat chief, but was initially defeated. He would have to wait three more years for the breakup of the Ilkhanate to provide him an opportunity to reclaim Diyarbakr for the descendants of Sūtāy.

<sup>5</sup>Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jāmi' al-Tavārikh*, ed. Khānbābā Bayānī (Tehran, 1317 [1939]), 54; Sümer, *Kara Koyunlular*, 33.

<sup>6</sup>Claude Cahen has characterized Sūtāy's son, Ḥājī Ṭaghāy, as the chief Oyrat who represented the principal surviving military force of the Mongol regime in upper Mesopotamia in the 730s/1330s. See Claude Cahen, "Contribution à l'histoire du Diyār Bakr au quatorzième siècle," *Journal Asiatique* 243 (1955): 76. However, his conflict with 'Alī Pādshāh and the Oyrats, according to Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, was based on the "ancient hatred (*kīnah*) which he held in his heart for Amīr 'Alī Pādshāh and the Oyrat tribe." Because of this, he "raised his head in opposition to them. He committed all of his efforts to eradicating that tribe." See Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl*, 152. Due to this conflict of Ḥājī Ṭaghāy with the Oyrat tribe, and based on this reason given by Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, it seems safe to say that Ḥājī Ṭaghāy, and hence his father Sūtāy, were not of the Oyrat tribe.

<sup>7</sup>Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1963), 1:117–18.

<sup>8</sup>Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān al-ʿAṣr wa-A'wān al-Naṣr* (Beirut and Damascus, 1998), 2:486.

<sup>9</sup>Sümer, *Kara Koyunlular*, 33–34.

<sup>10</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān al-ʿAṣr*, 2:486.

<sup>11</sup>Dāvūd ibn Muḥammad Banākātī, *Tārīkh-i Banākātī: Rawḍat Ūlā al-Albāb fī Ma'rīfat al-Tavārikh va-al-Ansāb*, ed. Ja'far Shi'ār (Tehran, 1348 [1969]), 473.



### THE CHUBANIDS

The Chubanids' eponym, Amīr Chūpān, was a member of the Suldus tribe. He ruled the Ilkhanate virtually independently after the death of Öljeytü Khan in 716/1316, and was grooming his son, Dimashq Khvājah, to follow in his place.<sup>12</sup> Reaction from the other amirs and from a maturing Abū Saʿīd came in the form of a purge of Amīr Chūpān and his children in 727/1327. Dimashq Khvājah was executed after being accused of having an affair with Ṭughā Khātūn, the former wife of Öljeytü<sup>13</sup> while Amīr Chūpān was on campaign in the east. Upon receiving word of his son's death, Amīr Chūpān took refuge with Malik Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kart in Herat. Amīr Chūpān's other son, Tīmūr Tāsh, was the Ilkhanid military governor in Anatolia, where he had claimed to be the *mahdī*.<sup>14</sup> After his brother was killed in 727/1327, he fled to the south and entered Mamluk territory under the protection of the amir Sayf al-Dīn Aytmiş.<sup>15</sup> His arrogant posturing, as well as his ostentatious dispersal of riches to the other Mamluk amirs, drew the ire of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.<sup>16</sup> When Amīr Chūpān was executed in Herat, Abū Saʿīd demanded that the Mamluk sultan send Tīmūr Tāsh back to the Ilkhanid court. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad thus had his chance to be rid of Tīmūr Tāsh, and in the summer of 728/1328, Tīmūr Tāsh was strangled in Cairo.<sup>17</sup>

Abū Saʿīd was thus able to take greater personal control over the affairs of the Ilkhanate. Although the Chubanids were temporarily neutralized, Tīmūr Tāsh's son Shaykh Ḥasan (known as *kūchak*, "the small," or "the younger") would renew the fortunes of his family by claiming that his father was still alive and had come back after a long pilgrimage journey.<sup>18</sup> Shaykh Ḥasan and his brother Malik Ashraf

<sup>12</sup>An illustration of Dimashq Khvājah's position in the state is provided by Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, who arrived in Baghdad in 727/1327, coinciding with a visit by Abū Saʿīd to the city. He saw the khan and his vizier, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad, on a boat on the Tigris. In front of them was Dimashq Khvājah who, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah wrote, held mastery over Abū Saʿīd. See Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, A.D. 1325–1354*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb (Cambridge, 1971), 336–37. For the details of Amīr Chūpān's role in the Ilkhanate, see Charles Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327–1337: A Decade of Discord in Iran* (Bloomington, 1999); idem, "Abū Saʿīd and the Revolt of the Amirs in 1319," in *L'Iran Face à la Domination Mongole: Études reunites et présentées par Denise Aigle* (Tehran, 1997), 89–120; idem, "Wolf or Shepherd? Amir Chupan's Attitude to Government," in *The Court of the Ilkhans, 1290–1340*, ed. Julian Raby and Teresa Fitzherbert (Oxford, 1996), 79–93.

<sup>13</sup>Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Travels*, 337.

<sup>14</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿAṣr*, 2:111; Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fi Aʿyān al-Miʿah al-Thāminah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Wārith Muḥammad ʿAlī (Beirut, 1977), 1:307.

<sup>15</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿAṣr*, 2:113.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 115.

<sup>18</sup>Ḥāfiz Abrū, *Dhayl*, 156.



would establish Chubanid authority in the former Ilkhanid center of Azarbayjan in the 740s/1340s and 750s/1350s. However, in the immediate aftermath of Abū Saʿīd's purge of the Chubanids, the fortunes of a different Shaykh Ḥasan began to rise.

#### SHAYKH ḤASAN JALAYIR

Timūr Tāsh's position in Anatolia passed to Shaykh Ḥasan (known as *buzurg*, "the large," or "the elder"), a descendant of one of Hülegü's high-ranking Jalayir amirs. His mother was Öljetey Sultān, the sister of the Ilkhanid rulers Ghazan and Öljeitü.<sup>19</sup> Shaykh Ḥasan was married to Amīr Chūpān's daughter Baghdād Khātūn, although Abū Saʿīd forced Shaykh Ḥasan to divorce her and then married her himself after Amīr Chūpān's execution. Shaykh Ḥasan thus had close family ties with the Chubanids and the Ilkhanid royal house, which had ensured him of a high status in the state. With the fall of the Chubanids, he became the commander-in-chief (*amīr-i ulūs*) of the Ilkhanid forces, with his base of operations in eastern Anatolia. In these last years of the Ilkhanate, Shaykh Ḥasan was in close contact with the Mamluk state. As early as 729/1328–29, after taking over Timūr Tāsh's position in Anatolia, his own envoys started to arrive at the court of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.<sup>20</sup> Al-Maqrīzī describes Shaykh Ḥasan as the deputy (*nāʾib*<sup>21</sup>) of Abū Saʿīd, although they each sent separate diplomatic dispatches to Cairo. Until Abū Saʿīd's death, both sides were eager to maintain the friendly relations that had been established since the end of Mongol-Mamluk hostilities in 723/1323.<sup>22</sup>

#### THE END OF THE ILKHANATE AND UNCERTAINTY ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

When Abū Saʿīd Bahādūr Khan died on 13 Rabīʿ II 736/30 November 1335, in the words of Ḥāfiz Abrū, "the kingdom without a sultan became like a body without a soul and a flock without a shepherd."<sup>23</sup> Abū Saʿīd had no living male children. The only hope for the uncontested continuation of the dynasty was the unborn child of his wife Dilshād Khātūn. She was the daughter of Dimashq Khvājah ibn Amīr Chūpān, and had become the favorite of Abū Saʿīd in the later years of his reign. Her child would not be born until the following May, and in the intervening

<sup>19</sup>Abū Bakr al-Qutbī al-Ahrī, *Taʾriḫ-i Shaikh Uwais (A History of Shaikh Uwais): An Important Source for the History of Ādharbaijān in the Fourteenth Century*, trans. J. B. Van Loon ('s-Gravenhage, 1954), 83.

<sup>20</sup>Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Maʿrifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah (Cairo, 1934), 1:310.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 320.

<sup>22</sup>Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamlūk-Īlkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995).

<sup>23</sup>Ḥāfiz Abrū, *Dhayl*, 143.



months various factions maneuvered for position in the political vacuum. One of these factions was led by Abū Saʿīd's vizier, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad, who enthroned Arpā, a descendant of Hülegü's brother, Ariq Böke.<sup>24</sup> Opposition to Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad and Arpā Khan came from the Oyrat amirs, led by ʿAlī Pādshāh. Not only did ʿAlī Pādshāh have the military advantage of his tribal following, but he also had a symbolic advantage as the guardian of Abū Saʿīd's unborn child, after Dilshād Khātūn had sought his protection in Baghdad.<sup>25</sup> It seems likely that ʿAlī Pādshāh assumed that if she gave birth to a son, he would have an undisputed claim to the Ilkhanid throne. However, before the birth, ʿAlī Pādshāh and the Oyrats raised their own Chinggisid protégé as their symbolic leader, a descendant of Baydu Khan named Mūsá.

On 27 Ramaḍān 736/9 May 1336, the two sides joined in battle at the Jaghatu River. Although the forces of Arpā and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad greatly outnumbered the Oyrats, ʿAlī Pādshāh emerged victorious after two of Arpā's amirs defected, and after concocting a ruse which convinced both Arpā and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad that the other had been defeated.<sup>26</sup> They were both eventually executed, and ʿAlī Pādshāh emerged as the apparent heir to Ilkhanid power in Tabriz. Nine days after the battle, Dilshād Khātūn gave birth to a girl, and ended the hope that a succession crisis could be forestalled by the birth of a commonly recognized male heir. ʿAlī Pādshāh attempted to rule through his Chinggisid protégé Mūsá Khan and his vizier, Jamāl Ḥājī ibn Tāj al-Dīn ʿAlī Shīrvānī, but opposition to his regime soon emerged, finding a focus in Anatolia with Shaykh Ḥasan Jalayir and the sons of Amīr Sūtāy. The end of the Ilkhanid dynasty gave rise to conflict among these representatives of the military elite who could no longer rely on a strong authority at the center to maintain the balance among their various interests, which included the Sutayid claims to Diyarbakr. It was in these subsequent conflicts that these Ilkhanid military elites looked to the Mamluks as a source of political and symbolic support, in a period when a commonly recognized ruler no longer existed to provide the political and symbolic basis for the Ilkhanid state.

#### THE MAMLUK CONNECTION

The Mamluk view of the events in the years following Abū Saʿīd's death can be traced through the diplomatic missions and reports that reached Cairo from the east which were recorded by al-Maqrīzī in his *Kitāb al-Sulūk*. Just a week after the Oyrats' victory at the Jaghatu River, envoys representing ʿAlī Pādshāh and Mūsá

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 148.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 149.



Khan arrived in the Mamluk capital. They were well received, and presented with great wealth. Two days later, the day that Dilshād Khātūn's daughter was born, the envoys rode out from the Citadel and visited the tombs of al-Shāfi'ī, Sayyidah Nafisah, and Sultan Qalāwūn.<sup>27</sup> After describing the envoys' visit, al-Maqrīzī digresses to provide the background to their arrival. He explains that 'Alī Pādshāh had persuaded the sons of Sūtāy (Sūntāy) to join with him, while at the same time promising to turn Baghdad over to Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in return for the sultan's help against the sons of Sūtāy. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was delighted at this, and raised several military units to aid 'Alī Pādshāh.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, the sons of Sūtāy had joined with Shaykh Ḥasan Jalayir in Anatolia.<sup>29</sup> After the battle, al-Maqrīzī writes, 'Alī Pādshāh stood alone in charge of the *urdū*, and raised Mūsá to the royal throne.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had entered into an alliance with 'Alī Pādshāh, who had agreed to govern Baghdad in the name of the Mamluks in exchange for support against his rivals, the sons of Sūtāy. Following the battle at the Jaghatu River, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's Oyrat ally 'Alī Pādshāh enthroned a new Ilkhan, who was essentially his puppet. The Sutayids had been neutralized, and it seemed as if Mesopotamia had become, if not a province of the Mamluk Sultanate, at least a friendly vassal.

'Alī Pādshāh's success was short lived, however. Sūtāy's son Ḥājī Ṭaghāy turned to Shaykh Ḥasan Jalayir for help in driving 'Alī Pādshāh out of Diyarbakr. Shaykh Ḥasan agreed, summoning a Hülegüid prince named Muḥammad from Tabriz, whom he crowned as khan, in opposition to Mūsá Khan. After entrusting Anatolia to his deputy Eretna,<sup>31</sup> Shaykh Ḥasan set out for Tabriz with his following of amirs and the army of Rum to confront 'Alī Pādshāh.<sup>32</sup> For Shaykh Ḥasan, however, the main issue may not have been a matter of seizing power for himself, but rather a desire to limit the personal power of 'Alī Pādshāh and ensure consensus among the amirs. Before confronting 'Alī Pādshāh in battle, Shaykh Ḥasan called on 'Alī Pādshāh to give up his power and allow a sultan to be named by all the amirs. He appealed to the custom of their ancestors, and their background in a common (Ilkhanid) *ulūs*. Ḥāfiẓ Abrū relates Shaykh Ḥasan's message to 'Alī Pādshāh:

We have all been in one *ulūs* and we know one another. The

<sup>27</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 1:397.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 398; Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl*, 152.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 1:398.

<sup>31</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Anadolu Beylikleri ve Akkoyunlu, Karakoyunlu Devletleri* (Ankara, 1988), 156.

<sup>32</sup> Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl*, 152.



custom of the fathers and ancestors is clear. It is better that we all agree and seat a padishah on the throne who is deserving of the sultanate, and everyone stays on his own path and custom. Since that which you seek is that which brings discord throughout the land, in order that unlawful (*nā-ḥaqq*) blood does not flow and the country remains flourishing and inhabited, the condition we give you is to either heed my words or suffer.<sup>33</sup>

‘Alī Pādshāh did not receive this ultimatum. Instead, the other Oyrat amirs replied that, “we have taken the kingdom by the power of our own hands. . . . [Shaykh Ḥasan] cannot deceive us with these fables (*afsānhā*).”<sup>34</sup> The Oyrat position was that their rule was justified merely by the military force they were able to command. Contrary to this was Shaykh Ḥasan’s appeal to the tradition of consensus and election of the ruler by all members of the military elite. The convention of political acclamation (*quriltay*) was a tradition of nomadic steppe politics, and had precedent in the Mongol empire going back to the *quriltay* which named Chinggis Khan the ruler of all Mongols in 602/1206. Although more often than not, a *quriltay* was a symbolic confirmation of a single dominant contender for the throne, rather than an election among several candidates, it was an occasion for members of the royal family and the amirs to gather and assert their voice in the collective political enterprise. The fact that a major *quriltay* had not been held for either Arpā or Mūsā Khan meant that Shaykh Ḥasan, the *amīr-i ulūs*, had not consented to these choices for political leadership, and was asserting what he assumed to be his traditional right to take part in the process of enthroning the new khan.

With the Oyrats’ refusal to compromise, both sides prepared for military conflict. In the ensuing battle at Qarā Durrah, near Ālādāgh, on 14 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 736/24 July 1336, Shaykh Ḥasan’s forces, referred to by Ḥāfiẓ Abrū as the Anatolians (*rūmī*), and the supporters of Muḥammad Khan (*muḥammadīyān*), defeated ‘Alī Pādshāh and the Oyrat army.<sup>35</sup> Shaykh Ḥasan and Muḥammad Khan occupied Tabriz, the Ilkhanate’s urban capital. Now in control of eastern Anatolia and Azarbayjan, Shaykh Ḥasan had assumed the paramount position in the Ilkhanid domains.

The defeat of ‘Alī Pādshāh meant that Ḥājī Ṭaghāy ibn Sūtāy had regained control of his father’s province of Diyarbakr. Once again, his family governed both Mosul and Ahlat, while the remaining Oyrat troops came under the leadership of Shaykh Ḥasan, who established his authority in Baghdad. For the moment, it

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 152–53.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 153.



seemed as if the Mamluks had lost their influence east of the Euphrates. Initially, neither Shaykh Ḥasan nor the Sutayids made promises to govern in the name of the Mamluk sultan. Shaykh Ḥasan's nominal allegiance was to the newly enthroned Muḥammad Khan, although, in reality, Shaykh Ḥasan himself represented the real authority in the region from Baghdad to Tabriz. However, the Jalayirid amir did maintain friendly relations with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, sending an envoy and a gift to the sultan after his victory at Ālādāgh.<sup>36</sup>

Shaykh Ḥasan's campaign against 'Alī Pādshāh, and his subsequent occupation in Azarbayjan and Iraq, meant that his former post in eastern Anatolia was vacant. Shaykh Ḥasan had left his deputy Eretna in charge there before heading east, and Eretna was eager to assert his own authority. He did this in part by seeking official recognition as the *nā'ib* of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in Anatolia in return for including the sultan's name on his coins and in the Friday prayer.<sup>37</sup> Al-Maqrizī writes that this support from the Mamluks frightened Shaykh Ḥasan, who, later in the same year (738/1337–38), sent a messenger to the sultan requesting peace.<sup>38</sup> Soon after, in 740/1339–40, Shaykh Ḥasan again appealed to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, this time asking him to send the Mamluk army to take over Baghdad, Mosul, and Persian Iraq.

At first glance, such a request seems hard to believe. Why would Shaykh Ḥasan invite the intervention of a foreign army? However, when we examine the challenges and setbacks Shaykh Ḥasan had faced since Ālādāgh in 736/1336, it seems plausible that an allied Mamluk military presence would be a welcome source of support. Shaykh Ḥasan had lost a large portion of his troops to the Chubanid amir Shaykh Ḥasan-i Kūchak. As mentioned earlier, Shaykh Ḥasan-i Kūchak claimed that his father Tīmūr Tāsh was still alive, and that he had returned from Egypt and the hajj pilgrimage to claim the rights of the Chubanids in the Ilkhanate. Although "Tīmūr Tāsh" was a Turkish former deputy of the real Tīmūr Tāsh, named Qarā Jūrī, all of Shaykh Ḥasan-i Buzurg's Chubanid and Oyrat forces left him to join Shaykh Ḥasan-i Kūchak when the false Tīmūr Tāsh appeared.<sup>39</sup> Shaykh Ḥasan-i Buzurg was driven out of Azarbayjan, and after an unsuccessful attempt to seek support from Khurasan in 739/1339,<sup>40</sup> he turned to the Mamluks. He also sought to renew his alliance with Ḥājī Ṭaghāy ibn Sūtāy, and requested that the Mamluks broker a peace between them.<sup>41</sup> Although it does

<sup>36</sup>Al-Maqrizī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 1:421.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 445; Uzunçarşılı, *Anadolu Beylikleri ve Akkoyunlu*, 156.

<sup>38</sup>Al-Maqrizī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 1:446.

<sup>39</sup>Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl*, 157.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 159–61.

<sup>41</sup>Al-Maqrizī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 1:489.



not seem that the Mamluk army took up Shaykh Ḥasan-i Buzurg's invitation to come to Baghdad, Mosul, and Persian Iraq, the Mamluk amir Aḥmad Sāqī did negotiate a peace agreement between the Jalayirid and Ḥājī Ṭaghāy.<sup>42</sup>

It is likely that the Mamluks hoped to win over Ḥājī Ṭaghāy and Shaykh Ḥasan-i Buzurg as their new frontier allies. With the re-emergence of the Chubanids, Timūr Tāsh's son Malik Ashraf had come to power in Anatolia. Eretna, who had governed that region in the name of the Mamluks, was marginalized, but would establish his own independent principality in Kayseri.<sup>43</sup> Having lost their vassal in Anatolia, the Mamluks looked to Diyarbakr and Iraq to secure their frontier against the Chubanids. In 741/1340–41, the Mamluk amir Aḥmad Sāqī rode to Sultaniyya on behalf of the sultan and demanded oaths of allegiance from Ḥājī Ṭaghāy and Shaykh Ḥasan-i Buzurg. They again requested that the sultan send the army to take over the eastern lands (*bilād al-sharq*). The Mamluk amir insisted that they each send their sons as security of their pledge of allegiance to the Mamluks. Ḥājī Ṭaghāy sent his son Barhashīn, while Shaykh Ḥasan sent Ḥājī Ṭaghāy's nephew, Ibrāhīm Shāh, to Aleppo.<sup>44</sup> From Aleppo, these two traveled on to Egypt and arrived in Cairo on 6 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 741/23 May 1341. Two days later, they had an audience with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Barhashīn and Ibrāhīm Shāh had brought with them the qadis of Baghdad, Mosul, and Diyarbakr, and presented the oaths of Ḥājī Ṭaghāy and Shaykh Ḥasan, as well as the amirs and soldiers, who pledged to be obedient to the Mamluk sultan. They also reported that the *khuṭbah* had been said in the sultan's name in Baghdad, Mosul, and Diyarbakr. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad then indicated that the army should be discharged to them.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, at the end of the third and final reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 741/1341, the Mamluk Sultanate had established its authority in Arab Iraq and Diyarbakr. With the instability arising from the end of the Ilkhan dynasty, as well as the end of effective Oyrat leadership following the defeat of 'Alī Pādshāh, the Sutayids had reclaimed the territory they had governed for the Ilkhans. However, without Ilkhanid dynastic authority, they aligned themselves with Shaykh Ḥasan-i Buzurg Jalayir and the Mamluks to ensure their position and security. The Mamluks, having first recognized 'Alī Pādshāh, and then Eretna as their vassals on the eastern frontier, had finally found what they must have hoped to be a more stable arrangement. The Mamluk army would march east, and from Iraq and Diyarbakr, extend their reach against the Chubanids in the very heartland of the Ilkhanate.

Such a campaign did not take place, however. Soon after Barhashīn and Ibrāhīm

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Uzunçarşılı, *Anadolu Beylikleri ve Akkoyunlu*, 156.

<sup>44</sup>Al-Maqrizī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 1:517.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 519–20.



Shāh met with the sultan, a message arrived in Cairo from the Artuqid governor of Mardin, al-Malik al-Şāliḥ. It informed the sultan that when the Chubanids went to fight Shaykh Ḥasan and Ḥājī Ṭaghāy, they pressed for peace, and took an oath to watch over the Euphrates for them. Al-Malik al-Şāliḥ added that there was no longer any use in sending the Mamluk army to the east.<sup>46</sup> Shortly thereafter, another message arrived from Aleppo, confirming that Shaykh Ḥasan and Ḥājī Ṭaghāy had made peace with the Chubanids. Al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī both report that this so agitated al-Nāşir Muḥammad that he was afflicted with bloody diarrhea.<sup>47</sup>

Al-Maqrīzī attributes the failure of the sultan to send the army to the east in support of Shaykh Ḥasan and Ḥājī Ṭaghāy to a truce they made with the Chubanids. Al-Nāşir Muḥammad's agitation came when he realized that he would have no support from these amirs in the campaign. Such a truce is not mentioned by either the Jalayirid historian Ahrī, nor by the Timurid historian Ḥāfiẓ Abrū. Ahrī writes that the Chubanids fought an inconclusive battle with Shaykh Ḥasan-i Buzurg. The Jalayirid amir fell back to Baghdad, while the Chubanids devastated Persian Iraq.<sup>48</sup> According to Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, the Chubanids attacked the Sutayids in Diyarbakr, then Shaykh Ḥasan-i Buzurg in Baghdad. He was able to repel them and hold on to Arab Iraq, while Shaykh Ḥasan-i Kūchak withdrew to Erzurum, where they destroyed a city held by the Sutayids, and even defiled the grave of Ḥājī Ṭaghāy's son.<sup>49</sup> Thus, it is difficult to recreate a precise picture of what actually took place among these various factions. We can conclude, however, that the contacts between the Jalayirids and Sutayids, and the Mamluks were significantly disrupted by the Chubanids. The Mamluk state faced its own internal disorder following al-Nāşir Muḥammad's death. He was succeeded by a series of short-lived sons and grandsons, most of whom ruled only nominally, with various amiral factions competing for actual power.<sup>50</sup> Instability within the Mamluk state, combined with a relative stability in the former Ilkhanid territory after 741/1341 led to an end to the co-optation of frontier governors which had been attempted under al-Nāşir Muḥammad. The Chubanids under Shaykh Ḥasan-i Kūchak, and then under his brother Malik Ashraf, were able to control the center of the Ilkhanid state in Azarbayjan, and the strategic urban centers of Tabriz and Sultaniyya.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 521.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 522; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Mişr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1929–72), 9:162. In fact, the sultan had been ill for some time, and died a few days later, on 18 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 741/4 June 1341.

<sup>48</sup>Ahrī, *Ta'rikh-i Shaikh Uwais*, 68.

<sup>49</sup>Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl*, 165.

<sup>50</sup>Linda Northrup, "The Bahri Mamlūk Sultanate, 1250–1390," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1, *Islamic Egypt, 640–1517* (Cambridge, 1998), 287.



Their authority there would continue until an invasion from the Golden Horde led by Jānī Beg Khan in 758/1357. The Jalayirid amir Shaykh Ḥasan-i Buzurg maintained his authority in the traditionally Oyrat territory of Arab Iraq and Diyarbakr. His son and successor Shaykh Uvays would take advantage of the instability following the Golden Horde's invasion of Azarbayjan, and reunite Tabriz and Baghdad in 759/1358, establishing an independent Jalayirid dynasty which lasted until the fifteenth century.

Further research remains to be done in order to understand the complex political dynamics in play between the Mamluk Sultanate and the successor states to the Ilkhanate. Relations continued to be maintained across the frontier, but as the dust began to settle in the years after 736/1335, it became clear that the political center of gravity east of the Euphrates remained Azarbayjan. Especially after Shaykh Uvays' re-conquest of Tabriz in 759/1358, there was little room for maneuvering on the frontier, since the provinces of Arab Iraq and Diyarbakr were more firmly tied to the center in Tabriz under Jalayirid rule. Thus, conditions more closely resembling the period of Öljejtü and Abū Sa'īd were established, leading to a more stabilized relationship between Cairo and Tabriz. Overt claims to Mamluk sovereignty in Iraq, Diyarbakr, and eastern Anatolia were no longer possible without the kind of fluidity and uncertainty that had existed in these regions immediately after the collapse of the Ilkhan dynasty.



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## The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymīyah's Three "Anti-Mongol" Fatwas

### INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The anti-Mongol fatwas of Ibn Taymīyah (d. 728/1328) belong to a precise historic context, that of the various attempts made by the Ilkhans to gain control of Syria (Bilād al-Shām) in the period following the fall of Baghdad in 656/1258 and the abolition of the Abbasid caliphate.<sup>1</sup> Between 658/1260 and 712/1312, the Mongol rulers of Persia would launch six separate campaigns in the region. On the two occasions when they succeeded in briefly occupying Syria, in 658/1260 and 699/1299–1300, the Ilkhans laid the foundations of an administrative system, indicating a longer-term project of incorporating the region into their empire.<sup>2</sup> The first invasion, led by Hülegü (r. 1256–65), was halted by the Mamluk sultan Qutuz and the amir Baybars on 25 Ramaḍān 658/3 September 1260 at 'Ayn Jālūt.<sup>3</sup> This defeat did not put an end to the Ilkhans' military initiatives, but it did establish the spheres of influence of the two rival powers. The Mamluks dominated the countries of the Levant, while on the far side of the Syrian desert the Ilkhans held Mesopotamia and the Iranian plateau. No official peace having been agreed upon, the deployment of spies (*jāsūs*), skirmishes, and periodic raids by both sides kept hostilities between the two states alive.<sup>4</sup> In 1281,

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<sup>1</sup>The literature concerning the life and works of Ibn Taymīyah is very extensive. The most comprehensive general books about this Hanbali scholar are: Henri Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Taḳī-d-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymīya, canoniste hanbalite né à Ḥarrān en 661/1262, mort à Damas en 728/1328* (Cairo, 1939); Victor Makari, *Ibn Taymiyyah's Ethics: The Social Factor*, American Academy of Religion Academy Series no. 34 (Chicago, 1983); H. Laoust, "La biographie d'Ibn Taymiyya d'après Ibn Kaṭīr," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 9 (1943): 115–62; Alfred Morabia, "Ibn Taymiyya, le dernier grand théoricien du ḡihād médiéval," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 30 (1978): 85–100. Ibn Taymīyah was a native of Ḥarrān, a city considered to be a Sabian city. Their presence made the city a Hanbali center. On the Sabians, see Michel Tardieu, "Ṣābiens coraniques et 'Ṣābiens' de Ḥarrān," *Journal asiatique* 274, nos. 1–2 (1986): 44.

<sup>2</sup>Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War against the Mamluks," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David Morgan (Leiden, 1999), 58.

<sup>3</sup>See Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "In the Aftermath of 'Ayn Jālūt: The Beginnings of the Mamlūk-Īlkhānid Cold War," *Al-Masāq* 10 (1990): 1–21; idem, "'Ayn Jālūt Revisited," *Tarih* 2 (1992): 119–50.

<sup>4</sup>Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamlūk-Īlkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995).



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Hülegü's successor Abāqā (r. 663–80/1265–82) took the initiative of launching a new attack. It came to an end with the victory of the Mamluk sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (r. 678–89/1279–90) at Ḥimṣ.<sup>5</sup> The latent state of war between the two rival powers was not ended by the conversion of the Ilkhans to Islam, despite the attempts at conciliation made by Tegüder Aḥmad (r. 680–83/1281–84), who, having converted to Islam,<sup>6</sup> sent two embassies to Qalāwūn to announce his desire to end hostilities.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Ghāzān Khān (r. 694–703/1295–1304), who had also converted to Islam just before his enthronement,<sup>8</sup> led three major offensives against Syria. The first took place in the winter of 699/1299–1300.<sup>9</sup> The second, which began in the autumn of 700/1300–1, ended that winter without any confrontation having taken place between the Mongol and Mamluk forces. Ghāzān Khān's third attempt to wrest Syria from the Mamluks began in spring 702/1303 and ended with the Mamluk victory at Marj al-Ṣuffār on 2 Ramaḍān 702/20 April 1303. The last Mongol invasion of Mamluk territory was undertaken in 712/1312 by Öljeitü (r. 703–17/1304–17), who was also a Muslim. These last four Ilkhanid invasions were repelled by the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, in the last two periods of his reign (698–708/1299–1309 and 709–41/1310–41).<sup>10</sup>

The Ilkhans' ambitions of dominating Syria are attested by the many missions they sent to the Latin West to seek an alliance with the papacy and the Christian

<sup>5</sup>On this invasion, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 179–201; Linda Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamlūk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678–689 A.H./1279–1290 A.D.)* (Stuttgart, 1998), 108–12.

<sup>6</sup>On the conversion of Tegüder Aḥmad, see Reuven Amitai, "The Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001): 15–43.

<sup>7</sup>On these embassies, see Peter M. Holt, "The Ilkhān Aḥmad's Embassies to Qalāwūn: Two Contemporary Accounts," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49, no. 1 (1986): 128–32. In 681/1282–83 Tegüder Aḥmad wrote a letter to Qalāwūn in which he complained that Mamluk spies disguised as *faqīrs* had been captured by a Mongol patrol. Although they should have been killed, they had instead been sent back to the sultan as a sign of good will; see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 147.

<sup>8</sup>On Ghāzān Khān's conversion to Islam, see Charles Melville, "Pādishāh-i islām: The Conversion of Sulṭān Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān," *Pembroke Papers* 1 (1990): 159–77.

<sup>9</sup>There is a very good description of this campaign by Reuven Amitai, "Whither the Īlkhānid Army? Ghāzān's First Campaign into Syria (1299–1300)" in *Warfare in Inner Asian History (500–1800)*, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo (Leiden, 2002): description of the campaign: 225–53; composition of the armies: 239–44; on the bibliography dealing with previous studies on Ghāzān Khān's incursions in Syria: 222, n. 7.

<sup>10</sup>At the time of Ghāzān Khān's first invasion of Syria, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (second reign, 1299–1309) was at the head of the Mamluk armies. He was only fifteen years old. The sultan's power rested in the hands of the great amirs: Salār (*nā'ib al-salṭanah*) and Baybars al-Jashnakir (*ustādār*); see Amitai, "Whither the Īlkhānid Army?" 226–27.



kings against the Mamluk sultanate.<sup>11</sup> Abāqā sent several embassies, notably at the time of the Lateran council of 1274.<sup>12</sup> Arghūn in turn sent several missions to the West, the most important of which was headed by the Nestorian monk Rabban Ṣawmā in 1287.<sup>13</sup> In 1299 he sent two letters, in Mongolian and Latin, to the papacy<sup>14</sup> and to King Philip IV of France.<sup>15</sup> Before his campaign of 1299–1300, Ghāzān Khān contacted the king of Cyprus, Henri II de Lusignan, in the hope of obtaining military assistance.<sup>16</sup> After his return to Persia without having

<sup>11</sup>On the relations between the Ilkhans and the West, see Jean Richard, “Le début des relations entre la papauté et les Mongols de Perse,” *Journal asiatique* 237 (1949): 291–97, reprinted in *Les relations entre l’Orient et l’Occident au Moyen Age: Etudes et documents* (London, 1977); idem, “D’Ālğigidaï à Gazan: la continuité d’une politique franque chez les Mongols d’Iran,” in *L’Iran face à la domination mongole*, ed. Denise Aigle (Tehran, 1997), 57–69, reprinted in *Français et Orientaux dans le monde des croisades* (London, 2003); idem, “La politique orientale de Saint Louis: La croisade de 1248,” in *Septième centenaire de Saint Louis: Actes des colloques de Royaumont et de Paris (17–21 mai 1970)* (Paris, 1976), 197–207, reprinted in *Les relations entre l’Orient et l’Occident au Moyen Age*. For a survey of Ilkhanid-European relations, see John A. Boyle, “The Il-Khans of Persia and the Princes of Europe,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 20 (1976): 25–40; Karl Ernst Lupprian, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern* 13. *Jahrhundert anhand ihres Briefwechsels*, Studi e testi no. 291 (Vatican City, 1981), 67–82. For Hülegü’s letter of 1262, see Paul Meyvaert, “An Unknown Letter of Hulagu, Il-Khan of Persia, to King Louis IX of France,” *Viator* 11 (1980): 245–59; Denise Aigle, “The Letters of Eljigidei, Hülegü and Abaqa: Mongol Overtures or Christian Ventriloquism?” *Inner Asia* 7, no. 2 (2005): 143–62.

<sup>12</sup>See Jean Richard, “Chrétien et Mongols au concile: la papauté et les Mongols de Perse dans la seconde moitié du XIIIe siècle,” in *1274, année charnière, mutations et continuités, Lyon-Paris, 30 septembre–5 octobre 1974*, Colloques internationaux du CNRS, no. 558 (Paris, 1977), 30–44; Aigle, “The Letters of Eljigidei, Hülegü and Abaqa,” 152–54.

<sup>13</sup>On Rabban Ṣawmā’s embassy, see Morris Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu: Rabban Sauma and the First Journey from China to the West* (Tokyo/New York/London, 1992). Syriac narrative on this mission in: *Histoire de Mar Jab-Alaha, Patriarche et de Raban Sauma*, ed. Paul Bedjan (Leipzig, 1895); French translation by J.- B. Chabot, *Histoire de Mar Jabalaha III, Patriarche des Nestoriens (1281–1317) et du moine Rabban Ṣauma, Ambassadeur du roi Argoun en Occident (1287)* (Paris, 1895). There is now an Italian translation with commentaries by Pier Giorgio Borbone, *Storia di Mar Yahballaha e di Rabban Sauma: un orientale in Occidente ai tempi di Marco Polo* (Turin, 2000).

<sup>14</sup>Arghūn sent a letter in Latin, dated 18 May 1285 in Tabriz, to Pope Honorius IV. It is reproduced in Lupprian, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern*, 244–46. A letter in Mongol, dated the fifth of the new moon of the first month of the Year of the Tiger (14 May 1290) in Urmiya, was sent to Pope Nicholas IV. It has been published and translated with a commentary by Antoine Mostaert and Francis W. Cleaves, “Trois documents mongols des Archives Secrètes du Vatican,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 15, no. 3–4 (1952): 445–67.

<sup>15</sup>Text and commentaries in *Les lettres de 1289 et 1305 des ilkhans Argun et Öljeitü à Philippe le Bel*, ed. Antoine Mostaert and Francis W. Cleaves (Cambridge, MA, 1962), 17–53. Arghūn’s letter was an answer to a promise made by the king of France to send an army should the Ilkhan launch a war against the Mamluks.

<sup>16</sup>After the fall of Acre and the loss of their last possessions in the Holy Land in 690/1291, the



as much as made contact with the Mamluk army, the Ilkhan exchanged letters and embassies with Pope Boniface VIII with the objective of forming a united front against the Mamluks.<sup>17</sup> Öljeitü too, in 1305, long before his invasion of Syria in 1312, sent a letter in Mongolian to the kings of France and England with the same purpose in mind.<sup>18</sup>

As can be seen, Ghāzān Khān's reign did not by any means inaugurate an era of peace. In fact, immediately after converting to Islam, he adopted the title *Pādishāh al-Islām* (king of Islam), thus making plain his ambition to assume the leadership of the Muslim world. The Ilkhan advanced religious justifications for his invasion of Bilād al-Shām in December 699/1299.<sup>19</sup> He accused the Mamluks of having invaded Ilkhanid territory at Mardīn, where they were supposed to have committed various acts of moral turpitude (*af'āl-i makrūh*). Amongst the misdeeds ascribed to them were orgies with the daughters of Muslims (*dukhtarān-i musalmānān*) and drinking sessions in mosques, all during the month of Ramaḍān.<sup>20</sup> A fatwa of "the imams of the faith and the ulama of Islam"<sup>21</sup> had entrusted Ghāzān Khān with

Franks had withdrawn to Cyprus.

<sup>17</sup>In spring 1302, Ghāzān Khān sent a letter to this pope in Mongol script. Text and commentaries in Mostaert and Cleaves, "Trois documents mongols," 467–78.

<sup>18</sup>Text and commentaries in *Les lettres de 1289 et 1305 des ilkhans Argun et Öljeitü à Philippe le Bel*, 55–85. In parallel with this pursuit of an alliance with the Christian West, the Ilkhans sent a series of letters and embassies to the Mamluk sultans inviting them to submit: Hülegü to Qutuz in 1260; Abāqā to Baybars in 1268 and 1277; Geikhetü to al-Malik al-Ashraf Khalil in 1293. Ghāzān Khān in turn wrote to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn in 1300 and 1302, again ordering the Mamluks to submit. On these letters, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "An Exchange of Letters in Arabic between Abaga Ilkhan and Sultan Baybars (A.H. 667/A.D. 1268–69)," *Central Asiatic Journal* 38, no. 1 (1994): 11–33; idem, "Mongol Imperial Ideology," 57–72, where several of these letters are the subject of a commentary.

<sup>19</sup>Beyond Reuven Amitai's studies cited in the notes above, on Ghāzān Khān's campaigns in Syria, see Angus D. Stewart, *The Armenian Kingdom and the Mamluks* (Leiden, 2001), 136–46. The author emphasizes the role played by the Armenians.

<sup>20</sup>Rashīd al-Dīn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, ed. Karl Jahn (s'-Gravenhague, 1957), 124. This information is confirmed by Abū al-Fidā', who writes that this Mamluk incursion provided Ghāzān Khān with the pretext to invade Syria; see *Memoirs of a Syrian Prince: Abu'l-Fidā', Sultan of Hamāh (672–732/1273–1331)*, translated with an introduction by Peter M. Holt (Wiesbaden, 1983), 35.

<sup>21</sup>Rashīd al-Dīn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 125. The following year, in his correspondence with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Ghāzān Khān once more condemned the Mamluk atrocities against Mardīn and its region, and affirmed that this was his reason for invading Syria; see *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān*, ed. and trans. Li Guo (Leiden and Boston, 1998), vol. 1 (English translation), vol. 2 (Arabic text), 1:181–84, 2:212–14 (Ghāzān Khān's letter); 1:194–98, 2:243–47 (al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reply) (hereafter cited as Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī); Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abi al-Faḍā'il, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd wa-al-Durr al-Farīd fīmā ba'da Ibn al-'Amīd*, ed. and trans. E. Blochet as *Histoire des sultans mamluks*, *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. 12, fasc. 3, vol. 14, fasc. 3, vol. 20, fasc. 1 (Paris, 1919–29), 20:1:549–54 (Ghāzān Khān's letter); 571–80 (al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's



his mission against the perpetrators of these offences. The Ilkhan thus presented himself as the protector of Islam. It should be emphasized that his conversion had caused a considerable stir in the Muslim East,<sup>22</sup> and the population of Damascus, which had suffered from the exactions of the Mamluk ruling class, was ready to come to terms with the Mongols, particularly after the *amān* that Ghāzān Khān had caused to be read in the Umayyad Mosque on 8 Rabi' II 699/2 January 1300, some days after his victory at Wādī al-Khaznadār on 27 Rabi' I 699/22 December 1299.<sup>23</sup>

Bilād al-Shām was not the only front that Ghāzān Khān's conversion opened in the hostilities between the two rival powers; repercussions were also felt in the Hijaz. In 702/1303, when Ghāzān Khān was in the Najaf region, just before his last invasion of Syria, he issued a decree in support of the sayyids and guardians of the Ka'bah in which he declared his attachment to the two holy cities. He planned to organize a caravan under the protection of the amir Quṭlugh-Shāh<sup>24</sup> and a thousand horsemen, which would bear a cover (*sitr*) for the Ka'bah and a decorated *maḥmal* in his name. Twelve gold tomans were to be distributed to the governors of Mecca and Medina as well as to the Arab notables and tribal shaykhs.<sup>25</sup> Quṭlugh-Shāh's defeat at Marj al-Ṣuffār in April 702/1303, however, obliged Ghāzān Khān to renounce these plans. The Ilkhan's death in 703/May 1304 finally put an end to his ambitions.

Ghāzān Khān, having officially converted to Islam in 1295, attacked Syria three times. His first invasion, during the winter of 699/1299–1300, was to some extent a success, as he temporarily occupied Syria. The occupation of Damascus resulted in a crisis in the city which illuminates a number of aspects of social solidarities there, as has been demonstrated by Reuven Amitai in an article published in 2004.<sup>26</sup> In the present article, I propose to analyze the three so-called

reply).

<sup>22</sup>The account of Ghāzān Khān's conversion is reported by al-Jazarī, on the authority of 'Alam al-Dīn al-Birzālī, in his "Jawāhīr al-Sulūk" (Bibliothèque nationale MS arabe 6739, fols. 155v–157v), and by the Persian sources, particularly Rashīd al-Dīn, who gives a very different version; see Melville, "Pādīshāh-i islām," 159–77.

<sup>23</sup>See the discussion on this confrontation in Amitai, "Whither the Īlkhānid Army?" 221–64 (see also the bibliography, note 7).

<sup>24</sup>In the sources, this person's name appears in two forms: Quṭlugh-Shāh or Quṭlū-Shāh. In this article I have adopted the former, which corresponds to his exact title.

<sup>25</sup>Charles Melville, "The Year of the Elephant' Mamuk-Mongol Rivalry in the Hejaz in the Reign of Abū Sa'īd (1317–1335)," *Studia Iranica* 21 (1992): 207.

<sup>26</sup>Reuven Amitai, "The Mongol Occupation of Damascus in 1300: A Study of Mamluk Loyalties," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden and Boston, 2004), 21–39. The author studies the cases of the Mamluk amir Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq, Arjuwāsh, the governor of the citadel, and a major religious authority of the city, Ibn



“anti-Mongol” fatwas issued by Ibn Taymiyah. When read in the context of the historic circumstances in which they were written, these fatwas inform us as to Ibn Taymiyah’s attitude in face of the danger represented by the Mongol attempts to gain control of Bilād al-Shām. They reveal the great Hanbali scholar’s view of the Mongol regime as well as his position regarding Shi‘ism and certain religious communities in Bilād al-Shām, whom he considered dissidents from Sunni Islam; in other words, these fatwas acquaint us with Ibn Taymiyah’s thinking at a crucial point in the region’s history. In order to properly understand the argument that Ibn Taymiyah develops in these texts, they must be read, not only in the light of the events that took place in the region as we know them from the historical sources, but also in relation to the terms of the *amān* that Ghāzān Khān caused to be read to Damascus’s population in the Umayyad Mosque. By means of that *amān*, Ghāzān Khān expressed his vision of the role that the Persian Ilkhanate should play in the Muslim East.

#### SOURCES AND STUDIES

There is no critical edition of Ibn Taymiyah’s fatwas. The Riyadh edition, published in thirty volumes, is regarded as authoritative today.<sup>27</sup> The three fatwas in question are to be found in volume 28 (*Kitāb al-Jihād*).<sup>28</sup> They differ considerably in length. The first is seven pages long,<sup>29</sup> the second is unusually long for a document of this kind at thirty-five pages,<sup>30</sup> and the third is eight pages long.<sup>31</sup> It is possible, on the basis of the content of the fatwas, which includes numerous references to historic events attested in the chronicles, as well as the names of persons and places, to give an approximate date for the three documents. As is shown below, the order in which they appear in the Riyadh edition does not correspond to the chronological order in which they were issued.

Despite their historic interest, these three fatwas have not been the subject of many studies. The first reference to Ibn Taymiyah’s anti-Mongol fatwas appears in Henri Laoust’s *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Taḳī-d-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiya*, published in 1939.<sup>32</sup> Laoust uses various passages from the fatwas to

Taymiyah.

<sup>27</sup>*Majmū‘ Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad ibn Taymiyah*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim al-Najdī al-Ḥanbalī (Riyadh/Mecca, 1381–86/1961–67, repr. 1417/1995). Old edition, also not critical: Ibn Taymiyah, *Kitāb Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā* (Cairo, 1326–29/1908–11). In this edition, the anti-Mongol fatwas are located in vol. 4, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, 289–302.

<sup>28</sup>*Majmū‘ Fatāwā*, 28:501–52.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 501–8.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 509–43.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 544–51.

<sup>32</sup>Henri Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Taḳī-d-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiya, canoniste*



illustrate the thinking of their author, but without engaging in a systematic study of them.<sup>33</sup> Thomas Raff's short monograph,<sup>34</sup> published in a very limited edition, dates from 1973. The writer presents the historic context in which Ibn Taymiyah's action took place, and then proposes an analysis of the second fatwa, long extracts from which he translates into English. Thomas Raff assumes that the fatwa was issued shortly before the battle of Marj al-Şuffār (2 Ramaḍān 702/20 April 1303): "Ibn Taimiya devoted his efforts to inciting the fanaticism of Mamluk troops for the crucial day, i.e. the Battle of Marj as-Şuffār, by making exhortations to them and even participating in the combat himself."<sup>35</sup> Thomas Raff's analysis, which is not thematically structured, is at times somewhat confused. In addition, he commits some errors of interpretation regarding the Mongol culture and political regime that Ibn Taymiyah denounces. His study's principal aim is to present the Hanbali scholar as a fervent partisan of jihad, when in fact, as we shall see, his position was a far more subtle one, arising from the circumstances the people of Damascus were faced with due to the state of war. Jean Michot addressed the issue of these fatwas, especially the second one, in his translation of Ibn Taymiyah's *Lettre à un roi croisé*, and in a twenty-page article, both published in 1995.<sup>36</sup> Paradoxically, he does not study the legal arguments deployed by Ibn Taymiyah. While Jean Michot's two publications are founded on an immense erudition, they essentially seek to highlight the role played by the Hanbali scholar their author terms "the great Damascene teacher"<sup>37</sup> during this time of crisis, when Muslims of the city came to seek his advice on how to face aggressors who had converted to Islam. We are, nevertheless, indebted to Michot for having established the correct reading of a defective spelling, something Thomas Raff had failed to do. This reading allows us to understand a passage of the second fatwa which had until then remained obscure: "*aḥkām al-mushrikīn—kanā'isan—wa-jankhishkḥān malik.*" Jean Michot demonstrates that the word *kanā'isan* is in fact a corruption of *ka-yāsā*, the manuscript form of which is very similar.<sup>38</sup> This

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*hanbalite né à Ḥarrān en 661/1262, mort à Damas en 728/1328* (Cairo, 1939).

<sup>33</sup>Henri Laoust, *Essai*, 63–65 (the Mongol danger); 117–23 (the struggle against the Tatars); 368–69 (the jihad).

<sup>34</sup>Thomas Raff, *Remarks on an Anti-Mongol Fatwā by Ibn Taimiya* (Leiden, 1973).

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>36</sup>Ibn Taymiyah, *Lettre à un roi croisé*, ed. and trans. Jean Michot, *Sagesses musulmanes*, no. 2 (Louvain-la-Neuve and Lyon, 1995); *idem*, "Un important témoin de l'histoire et de la société mameloukes à l'époque des Ilkhans et de la fin des croisades: Ibn Taymiyya," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, ed. U. Vermeulen and D. de Smet (Louvain, 1995), 335–53.

<sup>37</sup>Ibn Taymiyah, *Lettre à un roi croisé*, 9.

<sup>38</sup>See the clever reading of this passage in Michot, "Un important témoin," 346.



renders the phrase comprehensible: “that which, of the rules of the associationists (*aḥkām al-mushrikīn*)—such as the *yāsā* (*ka-yāsā*) of Chinggis Khan, king of the polytheists—is most gravely contrary to the religion of Islam.”<sup>39</sup> This reference to the *yāsā* enables us to understand Ibn Taymīyah’s argument when he refutes the political regime of the Mongols and their version of Islam.

In addition to Ibn Taymīyah’s fatwas, this article will analyze the text of the *amān* to Damascus’s population issued by Ghāzān Khān and the letters exchanged between the latter and sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. These texts have been transmitted to us by a number of Mamluk chronicles, some contemporary with the events and some slightly later.<sup>40</sup> It is, however, the historians of the Syrian school who are richest in detail concerning the occupation of Damascus. The principal source for the period is al-Birzālī, but the text is not very accessible.<sup>41</sup> For this reason I have relied here on the *Dhayl Mir’āt al-Zamān* of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1325–26), whose authorities for the events of the period in question are al-Birzālī (d. 739/1338–39) and al-Jazarī (d. 739/1338–39).<sup>42</sup> In all the sources, the text of the *amān* appears to have been faithfully transmitted, with few divergences.

<sup>39</sup>*Majmūʿ Fatāwā*, 28:530.

<sup>40</sup>The historical sources dealing with this period are rich and plentiful. They have been analyzed by Donald P. Little in his work *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik an-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāʾūn*, Freiburger Islamstudien, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden, 1970). The text of the *amān* has been transmitted by Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmiʿ al-Ghurar*, vol. 9, *Al-Durr al-Fākhir fī Sirat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, ed. Hans R. Roemer (Freiburg and Cairo, 1960), 20–23 (hereafter cited as *Kanz*); an anonymous chronicle published by K. V. Zetterstéén, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultanane in den Jahren 690–741 der hīgra nach arabischen Handschriften* (Leiden, 1919), 66–68 (hereafter cited as *Beiträge*); Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd*, 14:3:476–81 (hereafter cited as Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil).

<sup>41</sup>Al-Birzālī, “Muqtafā li-Tārīkh al-Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abī Shāmāh,” Topkapı Sarayı MS Ahmet III 2951/1–2; on the poor state of the manuscript, see Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography*, 46–47, and Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 41. On the events of 699/1299–1300, see Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:132–65, 2:97–127. See also J. Somogyi, “Adh-dhahabīs Record of the Destruction of Damascus by the Mongols in 699–700/1299–1301,” in *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume*, ed. S. Löwinger and J. Somogy (Budapest, 1948), 2:353–86 (hereafter cited as al-Dhahabī). As Reuven Amitai points out (“The Mongol Occupation of Damascus,” 26, n. 22), the translation of al-Dhahabī’s *Tārīkh al-Islām* is not always an exact translation of the manuscript in the British Library (MS Or. 1540, fols. 123a–131a). The sources for the events in question here have been analyzed in Little, *An Introduction to Mamluk Historiography*, chapter 1, and in Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:54–80.

<sup>42</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:139–41, 2:102–4. It seems that Ibn al-Dawādārī and *Beiträge*’s author did not utilize Quṭb al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī, but rather his source, al-Jazarī.



**THE MONGOLS, THE NEW DISSIDENTS OF ISLAM**

## THE FATWAS AND THE STATUS OF THE COMBATANTS

The context is one of war. The principal objective of Ibn Taymīyah's three fatwas is, *a priori*, to determine the status of the soldiers who were fighting, at the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth, in the armies of the two sides. In 658/1260, when Hülegü had attempted to seize Syria, fighting his soldiers did not pose any particular legal problem as the Mongols were at that time considered infidels. It was a question of repelling invaders who, like the Christian Franks, sought to capture a part of the Islamic territory, the *dār al-islām*. Jihad against the invaders was entirely legitimate. But when, forty years later, Ghāzān Khān attacked Bilād al-Shām, most of his soldiers were converts to Islam like himself. The Muslims who came to Ibn Taymīyah in search of a legal opinion did not know what stance to adopt towards this new kind of aggressor: what did the imams have to say about these Tatars (i.e., the Mongols) who were advancing towards Syria, given that they had pronounced the two declarations of faith (*shahādātayn*), claimed to follow Islam, and had forsaken the unbelief (*al-kufr*) which they had initially professed? In their ranks were Mamluk prisoners who fought against their Muslim brothers under duress; what was to be done? The Tatars were Muslims like the Mamluks; what was the status of the Mamluk soldier who refused to fight? What was the status of the Mamluk soldiers who had voluntarily joined the ranks of the Tatars?

Ibn Taymīyah was well aware of the danger that Ghāzān Khān's attacks represented, not just from the military point of view but, most of all, because many Muslims did not understand why they should fight against Muslim armies whose leader enjoyed great prestige. He had officially converted to Sunni Islam before becoming Ilkhan, he treated his Persian subjects well, and he was coming to Syria in order to put an end to the tyrannical rule of a military caste. Ibn Taymīyah's fears were also expressed by the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in his reply in Muḥarram 701/September 1301 to a letter that Ghāzān Khān had sent him in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 700/August 1301.<sup>43</sup> The sultan accused his correspondent of stressing his conversion to Islam only to gain a tactical advantage, and lamented that the majority of the heroic troops (that is, the Mamluks) believed his conversion was sincere, and thus refused to fight him.<sup>44</sup>

Ibn Taymīyah's answer to those who sought his opinion on the matter was decisive: the Mongols must be fought, just like all the groups whom it is lawful to fight. He defines these groups in his three fatwas. All of Ibn Taymīyah's arguments are aimed at bringing the Mongols within the scope of one of these categories.

<sup>43</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:181-84, 2:212; Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, 20:1:571-80.

<sup>44</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:195, 2:224; Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, 20:1:574.



Some of the groups that must be fought are classified as *bughāh*, a term which in the early years of Islam designated those who rebelled against legitimate authority.<sup>45</sup> Ibn Taymīyah also includes in the category of groups to be fought those who fail to perform any one of the requirements of Islam, such as the performance of the five canonical prayers, the payment of legally-required tax (*al-zakāt*), fasting (*al-ṣawm*), and the pilgrimage to Mecca (*al-ḥājj*). Those who do not take part in jihad against the infidels (*al-kuffār*)<sup>46</sup> in order to make them submit and pay the poll-tax (*al-jizyah*) must also be fought. Those who engage in adultery (*al-zinā*) and the consumption of fermented drinks (*al-khamar*) must be harshly repressed as they contravene the divine order. These last two acts fall into the category of offences canonically disapproved in the Quran (*ḥudūd Allāh*). Also amongst the groups that must be fought are those who do not order good and forbid evil (*al-amr bi-al-ma'rūf wa-al-nahy 'an al-munkar*), since for Ibn Taymīyah this duty is another form of jihad.<sup>47</sup> In the second fatwa, Ibn Taymīyah includes in the category of groups that must be fought those who deny the free will of God (*al-qadar*),<sup>48</sup> his decree (*al-qaḍā'*), his names and his attributes, as well as those who display innovation (*al-bid'ah*) contrary to the Quran and Sunnah, those who do not follow the path of the pious forebears (*al-salaf*), and an entire assemblage of Muslim religious movements which Ibn Taymīyah considered deviant with regard to scriptures and to the consensus (*al-ijmā'*) of scholars in the religious sciences. As can be seen, this definition of the groups to be fought is a very broad one. Ibn Taymīyah takes the view that every community which is a cause of disorder on the earth<sup>49</sup> must be fought, on the basis of the principle that disorder is more to be

<sup>45</sup>The term *bughāh* also refers to those who overstep the limits in following their own interpretations of the canonical texts. It is not permitted to fight them without having first attempted to bring them back to the straight and narrow. According to Ibn Kathīr, at the time of Ghāzān Khān's third attempt to conquer Syria, the feelings of Damascus' population towards the Mongols were the same. People asked themselves: why fight them? The Mongols were Muslims; they were not rebels (*bughāh*) against al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's authority since they had acknowledged his power. See Laoust, "La biographie d'Ibn Taimīya d'après Ibn Katīr," 131.

<sup>46</sup>In the Quran, the term *kāfir* (plural, *kuffār*) designates: "Those who disbelieve in that which We have given to them" (*li-yakfurū bi-mā ataynahum*); see Quran 30:34. A more general use of the word to mean "infidel" subsequently became very common. Generally speaking, a *kāfir* is one who rejects a true message although knowing it to be true, whether he is polytheist, Jewish, Christian, or indeed Muslim; see W. Björhman, "Kāfir," *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2nd ed., 4:425–27.

<sup>47</sup>In his theory of jihad Ibn Taymīyah notes that the Kharijites called themselves *ahl al-da'wah*; see Laoust, *Essai*, 362–63.

<sup>48</sup>This refers to theologians who proclaim the principle of God's free will; see Josef van Ess, "Ḳadiriyya," *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2nd ed., 4:384–88.

<sup>49</sup>On Ibn Taymīyah's conception of grievous sin (*fiṣq*), see Laoust, *Essai*, 190, 260, 313, 421, 455, n. 4.



feared than death; the public manifestation of heresy is thus to be more rigorously fought against and punished than silent heresy.<sup>50</sup>

The composition of Ghāzān Khān's armies particularly inspired Ibn Taymīyah's anger. In their ranks, he writes, fight infidels (*al-kuffār*), polytheists (*al-mushrikūn*), and Christians. The Mongol armies were indeed made up of elements of diverse origins. They included Christians such as the Armenians and Georgians, as well as Muslim soldiers who, serving local sovereigns (the sultans of Rūm and Bilād al-Shām's principalities), had no choice but to join the Mongol war machine. Reuven Amitai, however, has shown that these forces played only a secondary role in comparison to that of the original Turco-Mongol troops from Inner Asia.<sup>51</sup> Ibn Taymīyah criticizes the make-up of armies for what was, in his eyes, an even more serious reason. Side by side with the Mongol soldiers fought Mamluk amirs and troops who had voluntarily joined the ranks of the invaders. Ibn Taymīyah considered them apostates who must be made to pay the prescribed penalty.<sup>52</sup>

The Mongol ranks included a certain number of renegade Mamluks (*al-munazzifūn*), led by the former governor of Damascus, Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq al-Manṣūrī (d. 701/1310–11).<sup>53</sup> In 1298, at the end of the reign of Sultan al-Manṣūr Lāchīn (1296–99),<sup>54</sup> news of a new Mongol attack on Syria reached Cairo. A group of high-ranking Mamluk amirs, led by Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq, fled along with their men to the Persian Ilkhanate, hoping thereby to escape the order for their arrest issued by Mengü-Temür al-Ḥusāmī, Sultan al-Manṣūr Lāchīn's *nā'ib* in Damascus.<sup>55</sup> Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq and his amirs were well received on their arrival in Ilkhanid territory, and were immediately sent to Ghāzān Khān's court (the *ordo*) where the

<sup>50</sup>Laoust, *Essai*, 364, n. 2.

<sup>51</sup>See Amitai, "Whither the Ilkhanid Army?" 223–25.

<sup>52</sup>Thomas Raff (*Remarks*, 50) writes that Ibn Taymīyah considered the Rāfiḍī (i.e., the Shi'ites) apostates, but the Hanbali scholar does not use the term *al-murtadd* for any Shi'ite. He criticizes the Shi'ites for helping the polytheists, Jews, and Christians to fight the Muslims and compares them to the Kharijites. However, the Jews and Christians seem not to have been considered apostates by Ibn Taymīyah. See *Majmū' Fatāwā* (Riyadh/Mecca), 28:530.

<sup>53</sup>Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq had been captured in the battle of Elbistan in 1276, and was subsequently enlisted among the mamluks of Qalāwūn; see Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 174, n. 68. He was governor of Damascus from 697/1297 to 698/1298; see his biography in Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mī'ah al-Thāminah* (Hyderabad, 1348–50/1929–32), no. 612, 3:213–15.

<sup>54</sup>On al-Manṣūr Lāchīn's reign, see P. M. Holt, "The Sultanate of Manṣūr Lāchīn (696–8/1296–9)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 3, no. 6 (1973): 521–32.

<sup>55</sup>In Cairo, at the same time, a conspiracy of amirs ended the rule of al-Manṣūr Lāchīn, who was killed along with his *nā'ib*. When Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq and his amirs came to know of this, they realized that their desertion had served no purpose; see Amitai, "The Mongol Occupation of Damascus," 22–23.



Ilkhan received them in person. Sums of money were paid to them in accordance with their military rank, and they were given Mongol women in marriage. Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq married the sister of one of Ghāzān Khān's wives.<sup>56</sup> At the battle of Wādī al-Khaznadār, the Mongol troops were led by Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq and the Mongol amir Quṭlugh-Shāh (d. 707/1307).<sup>57</sup> The new Mamluk soldiers helped Ghāzān Khān gain victory on 27 Rabīʿ I 699/22 December 1299.<sup>58</sup> At the beginning of Rabīʿ II 699/late December 1299, shortly before the Mongol armies entered Damascus, Ibn Taymīyah went to meet Ghāzān Khān with a delegation of Damascene notables. There he saw the Mamluk renegades in the enemy army, which may explain his resentment towards them.

In the second fatwa, the list of those who must be fought due to their collusion with the Mongols is longer and somewhat different. Apart from non-believers of all kinds (*al-kuffār*, *al-mushrikūn*, *al-fussāq*, etc.) and the Mamluk renegades, he cites various categories which do not appear in the other two fatwas. He denounces persons ranking amongst “the worst of the innovators”, such as the Rāfiḍī (i.e., the Twelver Shiʿites), whose heresies had been influenced by those who are amongst “the worst of all creatures: the freethinkers (*al-zindīq*, plural *al-zanādiqah*), hypocrites, who do not inwardly believe in Islam.”<sup>59</sup> Ibn Taymīyah considered that the *zanādiqah* weakened Sunni Islam by divulging the heresies uttered by the Shiʿites.<sup>60</sup> Amongst the dissenting Muslims who must be fought, Ibn Taymīyah cites the extremist Shiʿites (*ghulāt al-shīʿah*), in other words the

<sup>56</sup>Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq was accompanied by ten amirs and his entourage of some 500 soldiers; see Amitai, “The Mongol Occupation of Damascus,” 23–24.

<sup>57</sup>See his biography in Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Durar al-Kāminah*, no. 648, 3:225; see also David Morgan, “Quṭlugh-Shāh Noyan,” *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., 5:559.

<sup>58</sup>On the ambiguous role Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq played during this battle, see Amitai, “The Mongol Occupation of Damascus,” 25.

<sup>59</sup>*Majmūʿ Fatāwā*, 28:520.

<sup>60</sup>Laoust, *Essai*, 366.



Ismā‘īliyah and Nuṣayriyah of Syria,<sup>61</sup> the Jahmiyah,<sup>62</sup> the Ittiḥādiyah, believers in mystic union (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), and disciples of Ibn ‘Arabī and Ibn Sab‘īn,<sup>63</sup> designated as *ahl al-bid‘ah*. In this second fatwa, the Ilkhan’s Christian allies are omitted from the list of groups to be fought although they are denounced in the other two fatwas. It may be supposed that in drawing up this long fatwa, Ibn Taymiyah’s objective was to set out his view of the Mongol regime, which he saw as undermined by Shi‘ah subversion, and to denounce Syria’s Muslim sects, against whom he was engaged in a relentless struggle because he considered them a danger to Sunni Islam.

#### JIHAD AGAINST THE MONGOLS FROM THE LEGAL POINT OF VIEW

Ibn Taymiyah, in order to justify the practice of jihad against Muslim invaders, relies on the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet, but he also sought out historic events from the early years of Islam which could serve as paradigms to support his argument. A case in point was the reign of the fourth caliph, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (656–61). It was during this period that the first great sedition (*al-fitnah*) in the history of the Islamic community took place: the Battle of the Camel in November/December 656 and the Battle of Ṣiffīn in July 657, which in turn led to the emergence of the Kharijites.<sup>64</sup> The precedents established by these famous battles enabled the Hanbali scholar to draw a distinction between different kinds

<sup>61</sup>This was an extreme Shi‘ite sect in Syria and southern Turkey, named after Muḥammad ibn Nuṣayr al-Fihri al-Numayri, a disciple of the tenth or eleventh Twelver imam; see Shahrastānī, *Le livre de religions et des sectes*, trans. Daniel Gimaret and Guy Monnot (Paris, 1986), 542, n. 255. Laoust (*Essai*, 124–25) refers to this text. This fatwa was edited and translated into French by M. S. Guyard, “Le fetwa d’Ibn Tamiyyah sur les Nosairis,” *Journal asiatique* 18 (1871): 158–98. It was issued after the raid by Baybars (d. 676/1277) on the Ismā‘īliyah fortresses in Syria; see H. Halm, “Nuṣayriyya,” *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., 8:148–50. As Yaron Friedman points out, Ibn Taymiyah confuses the Nuṣayriyah and the Ismā‘īliyah in this fatwa, no doubt because in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Nizārī branch of the Ismā‘īliyah had taken over a number of fortresses in the mountains where the Nuṣayriyah lived, the Jabal Anṣariyah; see Yaron Friedman, “Ibn Taymiyya’s *Fatāwā* against the Nuṣari-‘Alawī Sect,” *Der Islam* 82, no. 2 (2005): 353. It is the only branch of the *ghulāt* still in existence; see Kais M. Firro, “The ‘Alawis in Modern Syria: From Nuṣayriya to Islam via ‘Alawiya,” *Der Islam* 82, no. 1 (2005): 1–31.

<sup>62</sup>Jahm ibn Safwān (d. 128/746) is the presumed founder of the Jahmiyah sect. From the doctrinal point of view, they held that the Quran had been created, and denied the existence of the attributes of God. They are known primarily from the works of their critics, such as the Hanbalis, foremost among them Ibn Taymiyah, who associates them with the Qādiriyyah and the Mu‘tazilah; see W. Montgomery Watt, “Djahmiyya,” *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., 2:398–99.

<sup>63</sup>On this personage, see A. Faure, “Ibn Sab‘īn,” *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., 3:945–46.

<sup>64</sup>On ‘Alī’s caliphate, see H. A. R. Gibb, “‘Alī,” *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., 1:392–97; E. Kohlberg, “‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 1:843–45. On the Kharijites, see G. Levi Della Vida, “Khārijites,” *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., 4:1106–9.



of rebellion against the authority of the caliph.

Ibn Taymīyah links those rebels, who introduced sedition into the Islamic community in its early years, with the events taking place in his time. Islam, after six centuries of undivided supremacy, was being shaken by these new Muslims whose political ideology permitted them to strike deals with Christians, the heretical sects of Islam, and the Shi‘ah. Ibn Taymīyah’s principal grievance with the Mongols of Iran was their collusion with—in his view—all these infidels. He uses this as the basis for justifying jihad against those who declare that it is permitted “to kill the best of the Muslims.”<sup>65</sup> Since Bilād al-Shām was the scene of a new *fitnah*, he reasons, the Quranic prescription must be followed: “And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for Allāh.”<sup>66</sup>

The battles which took place during ‘Alī’s reign allowed Ibn Taymīyah to draw a distinction between the different internal conflicts suffered by the young Muslim community. Scholars in the field of religious science had not come to any consensus (*al-ijmā‘*) as to the position to take regarding the adversaries in the battles of the Camel and Şifīn. The believers were free to side with either camp. The Battle of the Camel, which set ‘Alī against ‘A’ishah, had seen several of the Companions of the Prophet, including Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr, take the side of his widow and as it happened, the battle came to an end with the death of those two Companions. At the moment of confrontation between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiyah, there were those who protested against human arbitration between the two parties, citing the Quranic verse: “And if two parties of believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them. And if one party of them doeth wrong (*baghat*) to the other, fight that which doeth wrong (*allatī tabghī*) till it return unto the ordinance of Allāh.”<sup>67</sup> Conversely, Ibn Taymīyah states, there was indeed consensus among the believers to support ‘Alī in his struggle against the Kharijites. Among their ranks there was no Companion of the Prophet. Since they called for obedience to the prescriptions of the Quran, they could not be excluded from the Islamic community. However, they asserted what was not permitted, that part of the Sunnah of the Prophet contradicted the Book of God. Ibn Taymīyah’s reasoning is straightforward: since the *ijmā‘* of the scholars called for the Kharijites to be fought, it was all the more legitimate to pursue jihad against the Mongols who, while adhering to the laws of Islam, continued to follow the precepts of Chinggis Khan.

At the top of the hierarchy of the groups to be fought within the army of Ghāzān Khān are the Mamluk renegades (*al-munazzifūn*). Ibn Taymīyah relies

<sup>65</sup>*Majmū‘ Fatāwā*, 28:505.

<sup>66</sup>Quran 2:193.

<sup>67</sup>Quran 49:9.



on the position of the pious forebears (*al-salaf*), who at the beginning of Abū Bakr's caliphate (632–34) termed those who refused to pay the *zakāt* (the legally-mandated alms) apostates, even though they fasted, prayed, and did not fight against the Muslim community. Ibn Taymīyah recalls that according to the Sunnah of the Prophet, the penalty set out for the apostate (*al-murtadd*) is harsher than that which applies to those who are unbelievers (*al-kāfir al-aṣli*). The apostate must be put to death, even if he is incapable of fighting, whereas many jurisconsults do not decree the execution of the unbeliever.<sup>68</sup>

The question of the Mamluk prisoners who were forced to fight in Ghāzān Khān's army was a delicate point for Ibn Taymīyah. Many Muslims were unsure as to whether it was justifiable to kill Mongol soldiers who were Muslims, or worse still, their Mamluk brothers who had been taken prisoner and impressed into the enemy army. Here too, Ibn Taymīyah has recourse to the outstanding events of the first centuries of Islam. He uses the Prophet's first great battle against the Meccans, that of Badr in 624, to justify jihad against Ghāzān Khān's soldiers. During that famous battle, a Companion of the Prophet and several of his followers had been taken prisoner. Ibn Taymīyah considers that if, as at Badr, the Mamluk prisoners fighting in the Mongol army are killed in the battle they will be considered martyrs for God's cause.

As can be seen, Ibn Taymīyah uses the classic procedure of reasoning by analogy in his argument to justify jihad against the Muslim Mongols, transposing to his own time the known cases of *fitnah* that had pitted different groups of Muslims against one another. By virtue of this relatively simple argumentation, the Hanbali sage establishes a typology of the sorts of *bughāh* that must be fought, in order to convince those Muslims who were still hesitating to take up arms to repel Ghāzān Khān's armies. The Mongols are likened to the Kharijites, while the renegade Mamluks, the *munazzifūn*, are relegated to an even worse status, that of apostates (*ahl al-riddah*).

#### A TRACT AGAINST THE MONGOL REGIME

Ibn Taymīyah had numerous contacts with the Mongol authorities, which he reports in his fatwas. His claims are borne out by the historic sources, which give many details on the matter. These contacts are undoubtedly the source of his information on the Ilkhanid political regime and various aspects of Mongol culture. Ibn Taymīyah did not have the opportunity to have a long conversation with Ghāzān Khān; he met the Ilkhan briefly when, accompanied by a group of religious figures from Damascus, he went to meet him on 7 Rabi' II 699/1 January 1300 to ask him to spare the lives of the city's civilian population (that is, to

<sup>68</sup>*Majmū' Fatāwā*, 28:534.



grant them his *amān*).<sup>69</sup> Contemporary historiography has until now maintained that this was the only occasion on which Ibn Taymīyah met Ghāzān Khān.<sup>70</sup> Jean Michot, in 1995, drew attention to the fact that the two might have met again subsequently and suggested that the question deserved to be studied.<sup>71</sup> He based this on the evidence of the Ilkhan's minister Rashīd al-Dīn, who reports a meeting between them which supposedly took place on 9 Rabī' II 699/3 January 1300 at the Ilkhan's encampment at Marj al-Rāhiṭ.<sup>72</sup> The Mongol sovereign asked his visitors: "Who am I?" They replied as one voice, listing his genealogy as far back as Chinggis Khan. In reply to his question as to the name of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's father, they said, "al-Alfī".<sup>73</sup> The Mongol sovereign then asked them the name of the father of "al-Alfī," a question which the Damascene notables were unable to answer. Ghāzān Khān's noble lineage thus could not be compared with the ancestry of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Alfī, that is, the son of a Turkish slave, with no noble lineage.<sup>74</sup> By establishing Ghāzān Khān's prestigious *nasab* in contrast to that of the Mamluk sultan, Rashīd al-Dīn clearly sought to elevate the Ilkhan's prestige in the eyes of the Damascene delegation. This lack of lineage was proof that the Mamluk regime was a mere product of chance, devoid of any right to rule.<sup>75</sup> Given that the Mamluk sources do not mention this meeting between Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymīyah, one may question whether it in fact took place. Rashīd al-Dīn might have confused Ibn Taymīyah's meeting with Ghāzān Khān with the discussions the scholar held with various Ilkhanid authorities, such as his interview with the great amir Quṭlugh-Shāh which took place after Ghāzān Khān's withdrawal from Damascus. Indeed, in his second fatwa, Ibn Taymīyah remarks that a Mongol leader addressed him, saying, "Our king is the son of a king, the son of seven generations of kings, while your

<sup>69</sup>The interview took place in the village of Nabk, near the Ilkhan's camp at Marj al-Rāhiṭ; see Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:138–39, 2:101–2; *Kanz*, 20; *Beiträge*, 66. A detailed account of the meeting is given in Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, 14:3:475. The interpreter reported Ghāzān Khān's words to the delegation of notables, informing them that the *amān* they had come to ask for had already been sent to Damascus before their request.

<sup>70</sup>Laoust, *Essai*, 117–20; Raff, *Remarks*, 20–24.

<sup>71</sup>Michot, *Lettre à un roi croisé*, 75, n. 125.

<sup>72</sup>Rashīd al-Dīn speaks of a delegation of notables from Damascus (Ibn Taymīyah's name is not mentioned), received by the Ilkhan on 6 Rabī' II 699/31 December 1299. He specifies that the notables had come to meet the Mongol army in order to make their submission (*ilī kardand*); see Rashīd al-Dīn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 128.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>The term "al-Alfī" refers to the fact that the sultan Qalāwūn had been bought for a sum of one thousand dinars. Rashīd al-Dīn thus emphasizes that the Mamluk sultans, of servile origin, had in the beginning been mere chattel.

<sup>75</sup>Rashīd al-Dīn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 128.



king is the son of a client.”<sup>76</sup>

Jean Michot assumed that the bulk of the exchanges between Ibn Taymīyah and Ghāzān Khān occurred in the course of the interview Rashīd al-Dīn recounts between these two great figures of the age. He based his hypothesis on a later writer, Ibn Yūsuf al-Karamī al-Marī (d. 1033/1624), who reports the explicit evidence given by the Syrian historian Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347–48) to the effect that the Hanbali scholar had two meetings with the Ilkhan.<sup>77</sup> But the second meeting Michot refers to in this regard does not appear to have happened at the time of Ghāzān Khān’s first invasion of Bilād al-Shām, but rather during his third and final incursion into the region.

Caterina Bori has recently edited and translated a short biography of Ibn Taymīyah which had hitherto remained unpublished.<sup>78</sup> This work, written by Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, clearly states that Ibn Taymīyah met the Ilkhan a second time: “at the time of Ghāzān Khān, he (i.e., Ibn Taymīyah) was very active. . . . He met the king twice (*ijtima‘a bi-al-malik marratayn*).”<sup>79</sup> As Bori notes, Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī’s remarks as to Ibn Taymīyah’s activity refer to the third invasion of Syria and the famous battle of Shaqḥab (2 Ramaḍān 702/20 April 1303) in which Ghāzān Khān and his army were defeated.<sup>80</sup> Ibn Taymīyah took part in this battle, bearing arms and urging the combatants to engage in jihad. During the fighting he issued a fatwa exempting the Mamluk soldiers from the ritual fast during the month of Ramaḍān.<sup>81</sup> Given the circumstances of Ibn Taymīyah’s meetings with Ghāzān Khān, he can hardly have had the opportunity to engage in a long conversation which could be the basis of his knowledge of the Mongol regime. Ibn Taymīyah did, however, have closer contacts with Ghāzān Khān’s two great amirs, Quṭlugh-Shāh (d. 707/1307) and Mulāy (d. 707/1307),<sup>82</sup> and with

<sup>76</sup>*Majmū‘ Fatāwā*, 28:542.

<sup>77</sup>Michot, *Lettre à un roi croisé*, 75–76, n. 125, citing Ibn Yūsuf al-Marī, *Al-Shahādah al-Zakiyah fi Thanā’ al-A‘immah ‘alā Ibn Taymīyah*, ed. Najm ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Khalaf (Amman and Beirut, 1404/1983), 42.

<sup>78</sup>Caterina Bori, “A New Source for the Biography of Ibn Taymiyya,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 67, no. 3 (2004): 321–48. The manuscript is preserved in the Maktabat al-Asad in Damascus (*Majmū‘* 3128) and is identified, on the basis of its incipit: *hādhihi nubdhah min sirat shaykh al-islām Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymīyah*. See *ibid.*, 321.

<sup>79</sup>“Nubdhah,” fol. 72r.

<sup>80</sup>Bori, “A New Source for the Biography of Ibn Taymiyya,” 343, n. 29.

<sup>81</sup>The fast had begun on 1 Ramaḍān 702/19 April 1303, on the eve of the battle. Ibn Taymīyah relied on a hadith of the Prophet dating from the year of the conquest of Mecca to excuse the combatants from the ritual fast; see Laoust, “La biographie d’Ibn Taymīyah d’après Ibn Katīr,” 132.

<sup>82</sup>The name of this figure appears in different forms in the Arab sources consulted. Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī gives it in the form Būlāhim or Būlāy, 1:163–64, 2:124; *Beiträge*, 78–79 (Būlay); *Kanz*, 36



various major figures of the Ilkhanid state, including the viziers Saʿd al-Dīn and Rashīd al-Dīn and other important persons<sup>83</sup> such as the Armenian king of Sīs.<sup>84</sup> The historical sources report many details of Ibn Taymīyah's encounters with Qutlugh-Shāh, which took place on 21 Jumādā I 699/14 February 1300,<sup>85</sup> and the amir Mulāy, when Ibn Taymīyah visited him in his tent and negotiated the release of numerous prisoners.<sup>86</sup> On this occasion he had a discussion with the amir about the murder of al-Ḥusayn, the grandson of the Prophet, by Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiyah on 10 Muḥarram 61/10 October 680. Not wishing to displease Mulāy, Ibn Taymīyah was reserved in giving his views on this topic.<sup>87</sup> Ibn Taymīyah's information on the Mongol regime was undoubtedly based on the discussions he had with important figures in the Ilkhanid state rather than on the conversations he may have had with Ghāzān Khān.

From a reading of these fatwas, it appears that Ibn Taymīyah was well-informed as to the political views of the Ilkhans, but he interprets them according to his own interpretive system—that of the rigorist Islam he symbolized—and from a polemical perspective. Ghāzān Khān, in his three attacks on Syria, was continuing the policy of his predecessors Hülegü and Abāqā, but he portrayed his arrival in Bilād al-Shām as being in the name of Islam. Before analyzing the way Ibn Taymīyah describes the Mongol regime in his second fatwa, it is necessary to consider the *amān* Ghāzān Khān caused to be read in the Great Umayyad Mosque on 8 Rabīʿ II 699/2 January 1300, before the entry of his troops into Damascus.<sup>88</sup>

#### GHĀZĀN KHĀN, LEADER OF THE MUSLIM WORLD

Following his official conversion to Islam, Ghāzān Khān wished to present himself as leader of the eastern Muslim world. Some Persian sources adopt millenarian motifs in dealing with his conversion.<sup>89</sup> He is depicted as renewing Islam, while (Bulāy); Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʿil, 14:3:504–5 (Mūlāy); Rashīd al-Dīn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 130 (Mūlāy).

<sup>83</sup>According to Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī (1:158, 2:119), those present included: the treasurer Sharīf Qutb al-Dīn and his secretary (*al-mukātib*) Ṣadr al-Dīn, Najīb al-Kaḥḥāl al-Yahūdī, the *shaykh al-mashāʾikh* Nizām al-Dīn Maḥmūd, and the *nāzir al-awqāf* Aṣīl al-Dīn ibn Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī.

<sup>84</sup>On this interview, see Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī (1:157–58, 2:119).

<sup>85</sup>Alam al-Dīn al-Birzālī recorded the testimony of Ibn Taymīyah on 25 Jumādā 699/18 February 1300; see Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī (1:157, 2:119).

<sup>86</sup>He went to his camp on 2 Rajab 699/24 March 1300 and returned to Damascus on 4 Rajab/26 March; see Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:163–64, 2:124; al-Dhahabī, 377.

<sup>87</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:163–64, 2:124; *Kanz*, 36; *Beiträge*, 78–79; al-Dhahabī, 379; Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʿil, 14:3:668–69.

<sup>88</sup>The decree had been promulgated on 5 Rabīʿ II 699/30 December 1299, just before the delegation's mission to Nabk on 7 Rabīʿ II 699/ January 1300. Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:142, 2:104.

<sup>89</sup>Melville, “*Pādshāh-i islām*,” 170.



his great amir Nawrūz, who had encouraged him to convert, is described as a second Abū Muslim.<sup>90</sup> After the Abbasid conquest of Syria and Egypt, Abū Muslim had wanted to put an end to the curses uttered against the family of the Prophet.<sup>91</sup> The famous Iranian theologian Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī in his *Nizām al-Tawārīkh*<sup>92</sup> also highlights the figure of the Ilkhan after his conversion to Islam: “Ghāzān Khān has rendered obsolete the bravery of Rūstam [the legendary champion of Iran], the generosity of Ḥātīm al-Ṭā’ī [the epitome of magnanimity in pre-Islamic Arabia],<sup>93</sup> and the justice of Anūshirvān [one of the outstanding pre-Islamic Iranian monarchs].” As Charles Melville quite rightly notes, “Ghāzān Khān puts a seal on these separate strands of Irano-Islamic history.”<sup>94</sup> Ghāzān Khān also had black banners made, resembling those of the Abbasid caliphs, and made Christians and Jews pay the poll tax (*al-jizyah*), from which they had been free since the abolition of the caliphate at Baghdad.<sup>95</sup> The Ilkhan intended, by this series of symbolic actions, to pose as leader of the Muslim community. One can even see in the coupling of Ghāzān Khān and the amir Nawrūz a desire to present the Ilkhanid Islamic regime as successor to the Abbasid caliphate. By denouncing, as we have seen, the misdeeds committed by the Mamluks at Mardīn, he based the legitimacy of his Syrian campaign on Islam. Ghāzān Khān’s position as “king of Islam” (*pādishāh al-islām*) is clearly visible in the text of his *amān* to the population of Damascus, which is laden with Quranic quotations cited in support of his claims.<sup>96</sup>

The text of the *amān* starts with a preamble quite similar to those that open the letters the khans sent to the popes and to Western and Muslim rulers. It begins by praising God: “By the power of God Almighty,”<sup>97</sup> followed by the names of

<sup>90</sup>Melville, “*Pādshāh-i islām*,” 170.

<sup>91</sup>Jean Calmard, “Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans,” in *L’Iran face à la domination mongole*, ed. Denise Aigle, Bibliothèque iranienne 45 (Tehran, 1997), 281.

<sup>92</sup>It is a universal history. Three sets of manuscript versions exist, which have been studied by Charles Melville, who shows that the second set was drawn up by al-Bayḍāwī himself at the beginning of the reign of Ghāzān Khān. Al-Bayḍāwī was undoubtedly in Tabriz and witnessed the events himself; see Charles Melville, “From Adam to Abaqa,” *Studia Iranica* 30, no. 1 (2001): 70. On the different versions, see idem, “From Adam to Abaqa: Qāḍī Baiḍāwī’s Rearrangement of History, Part II,” *Studia Iranica* 35, no. 1 (2007), in press.

<sup>93</sup>C. Van Arendonk, “Ḥātīm al-Ṭā’ī,” *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., 3:282–83.

<sup>94</sup>Melville, “From Adam to Abaqa: Qadi Baidawi’s rearrangement of history, Part II.”

<sup>95</sup>Melville, “*Pādshāh-i islām*,” 164–70; Calmard, “Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilhans,” 281.

<sup>96</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:139–42, 2:102–4; *Kanz*, 20–23; *Beiträge*, 66–68; Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, 14: 3:476–81.

<sup>97</sup>Despite its clearly Islamic tone, the text of the *amān* is in line with the documents of Mongol chancelleries. *Beiträge*’s author and Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, who transmit the text in its entirety, differ only in a few minor details. Conversely, in the text transmitted by Ibn al-Dawādārī and Ibn Abī



the addressees: “The amirs of ten thousand (*umarāʾ al-tūmān*), of one thousand, of one hundred, and all our victorious troops: Mongols, Persians,<sup>98</sup> Armenians, Georgians, as well as all those who have come under the yoke of our obedience (*tāʿatnā*) should be informed.”<sup>99</sup> There then follows Ghāzān Khān’s declaration, divided into three parts.

The first part is dedicated to recalling the great event for the Islamic world that was represented by the Ilkhan’s official conversion to Islam just before his enthronement. Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Saʿd al-Dīn Muḥammad, who had heard his profession of faith, had recounted it five years earlier on his return from the pilgrimage, in the Ribāṭ al-Sumaysāṭī beside the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. The text of the *amān* emphasizes that Ghāzān Khān had been chosen by God, who had illuminated his heart with the light of Islam. This claim is illustrated with a Quranic quotation: “Is he whose breast God has expanded unto Islam, so he walks in a light from his Lord?<sup>100</sup> But woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of God! Those are in the manifest error.”<sup>101</sup>

Ghāzān Khān then denounces the Mamluk regime whose governors (*al-ḥukkām*)<sup>102</sup> had left the way of Islam (*khārījūna ʿan ṭarīq al-islām*): they are no longer tied to the commandments of Islam (*bi-ḥukm al-islām*). By their lack of faithfulness to each other, they sow disorder among the population.<sup>103</sup> This last claim is also illustrated by a Quranic quotation: “When one of them turns his back, he would hasten about the earth, to do corruption there and to destroy the tillage and the

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al-Faḍāʾil the eulogy of God which opens the text of the *amān* includes the additional sentence fragment: “Through the power of God Almighty and the good fortune of the reign of the sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān” (*bi-quwwat Allāh taʿālā wa-iqbāl dawlat sultān Maḥmūd Ghāzān*). This second part of the eulogy could be described as a calque of the preambles of the letters sent by the Mongol khans. The Mongolian equivalent of the introduction of Ghāzān Khān’s *amān* would be *mōngke tenggri kücündür qaʿan-u süü-dür* (with the force of Eternal Heaven, with the good fortune of the great khan). Here the great khan is replaced by Ghāzān Khān himself.

<sup>98</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 2:102 (*al-bārik*), perhaps for *al-tājik*; *Beiträge*, 62, and *Kanz*, 20 (*al-tatār*); Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, 14:3:477 (*al-tāzik*).

<sup>99</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:139–40, 2:102; *Beiträge*, 62; *Kanz*, 21; Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, 14:3:476.

<sup>100</sup>This sentence implies: “Is it he who has remained a non-believer?”

<sup>101</sup>Quran 39:22.

<sup>102</sup>The term used in the sources is neither *al-malik* nor *al-sultān*, terms which designated the supreme holder of power in the Mamluk state; *al-ḥukkām* (Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:102; *Beiträge*, 62; *Kanz*, 21; and Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, 14:3:476) is a term which rather alludes to the governors appointed by the Mamluk sultans. Blochet’s translation is thus not entirely accurate. But it may be possible that Ghāzān Khān employes this term to testify to the superiority of the Ilkhanid regime compared to that of the Mamluks.

<sup>103</sup>Ghāzān Khān here denounces the rivalries and treachery between the various amirs and their houses of mamluks, which led to considerable instability in the power structure.



stock, and God loves not the corruption!”<sup>104</sup> Ghāzān Khān alludes here to the instability of power in the Mamluk state at the time, notably due to the youth of the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.<sup>105</sup> He also criticizes the Mamluks for violating the wives of the Muslims and their goods: justice and equity were absent from the kingdom. Ghāzān Khān’s aim is to justify his Syrian campaign: “our fervor for Islam has urged us to march against this land with a host of soldiers in order to put this aggression to an end and pull this tyranny away.”<sup>106</sup> A further Quranic quotation is enlisted to support this claim: “Surely God bids to justice and good-doing and giving to kinsmen; and He forbids indecency, dishonor, and insolence, admonishing you, so that haply you will remember.”<sup>107</sup> He had come to spread justice (*al-ʿadl*) and charity (*al-iḥsān*), an assertion illustrated by a prophetic hadith saying that those who render justice with equity (*al-muqṣitūn*) will enjoy God’s favor.<sup>108</sup>

The text of the *amān* presents Ghāzān Khān as a sovereign boasting all the qualities of the ideal prince portrayed in the Islamic “mirrors for princes” genre. As his resounding victory over the rebellious enemy (*al-ʿadūw al-tāghiyah*) shows, he is aided by God: “tore them utterly to pieces”<sup>109</sup> and then “the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) has come, and falsehood (*al-bāṭil*) has vanished away; surely falsehood is ever certain to vanish.”<sup>110</sup> Ghāzān Khān is thus presented as the protector of his new subjects, the Muslim populations of Bilād al-Shām. Here we again find the image, presented in both the “mirrors” literature and the prophetic traditions, of the sovereign as shepherd of his flock. It is the duty of the Ilkhan to punish those of his soldiers who had carried out reprehensible acts against the population: “In the confusion, some soldiers engaged in pillage; they have been killed as an example, so that they may cause no harm to the men who practice different religions (*ahl al-adyān*), under the pretext that their beliefs are different from theirs, whether Jewish, Christian, or Sabeian,<sup>111</sup> as since they pay the poll tax (*al-jizyah*), defending them is one of the legal obligations (*al-waḏāʿif al-sharʿiyah*).”<sup>112</sup> In this case, the authority invoked in support of this declaration is a hadith of the

<sup>104</sup>Quran 2:205.

<sup>105</sup>On the lack of sultan’s authority, see Peter M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East From the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London, 1986), 107–13.

<sup>106</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:140, 2:103; *Beiträge*, 62; *Kanz*, 21; Ibn Abi al-Faḏāʿil, 14:3:477.

<sup>107</sup>Quran 16:90.

<sup>108</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:140, 2:103; *Beiträge*, 62; *Kanz*, 21; Ibn Abi al-Faḏāʿil, 14:3:477.

<sup>109</sup>Quran 39:19.

<sup>110</sup>Quran 17:81.

<sup>111</sup>Here the term Sabians perhaps is an allusion to the Sabians of Ḥarrān; see Tardieu, “Šābiens coraniques et ‘Šābiens’ de Ḥarrān.”

<sup>112</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:141, 2:103; *Beiträge*, 62; *Kanz*, 22–23; Ibn Abi al-Faḏāʿil, 14:3:480.



Prophet: “The imam in charge of people is their shepherd, and every shepherd is responsible for the flock he has under his command.”<sup>113</sup> As can be seen, Ghāzān Khān in this *amān* follows the Mongol tradition that puts all religions on the same footing, all the more important since there were Christians amongst his soldiers and he undoubtedly hoped to win the Christian populations of Bilād al-Shām over to his cause.

Although he is not mentioned by name in the sources,<sup>114</sup> it would appear that Ibn Taymīyah was one of the group of religious figures who attended the reading of this *amān*, as well as the official proclamation, also at the Umayyad Mosque, of the *firmān* naming Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq representative (*al-nāʿib*) of Ghāzān Khān in Syria and governor of Damascus, a position he had held before fleeing to Ilkhanid territory. The aim of these texts was to convince the people of Damascus that the Ilkhan had come to Syria to protect the civilian populations, victims of the Mamluk regime. Ibn Taymīyah’s second fatwa is to some extent a response to the Ilkhanid political ideology, as he saw it through his personal contacts with various Mongol authorities. The official texts which had been read in public during the brief occupation of Damascus in 1300 confirmed for Ibn Taymīyah the danger posed to Islam should Syria come under the control of the Mongols, despite the fact that the latter were themselves Muslims. The letter Ghāzān Khān addressed to al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, some months later, doubtless reinforced Ibn Taymīyah’s beliefs in this regard.<sup>115</sup> On 16 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 700/20 August 1301 a meeting took place in the Citadel of Cairo between the envoys of Ghāzān Khān, including the qadi Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad, a descendant of the Prophet, and the great Mamluk amirs. Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad made a short speech, studded with Quranic citations, about peace and consensus between Muslims. It was well received by those present. The qadi prayed for the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and then for Ghāzān Khān. The envoys then presented a letter from the Ilkhan sealed with his seal. On 18 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 700/23 August 1301, the letter was read before al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the great amirs, and the rank-and-file Mamluk soldiery.<sup>116</sup> In it, Ghāzān Khān recalled that all that had passed between him and the Mamluk sultan was nothing other than the application of the decree of God

<sup>113</sup>Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Bulaq, 1311–13/1893–95), Aḥkām, 1, Istiqrād, 20; Muslim, *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Istanbul, 1334/1916), Imārah, 20; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Al-Musnad* (Cairo, 1313/1896), 54, 111.

<sup>114</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:139; *Kanz*, 20; *Beiträge*, 62; Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, 14:3:476.

<sup>115</sup>On these events and the letter see Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, vol. 1; *Kanz*; Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, 20:1:547–54. According to Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, the letter was in Mongol script; see *ibid.*, 549. The text of this letter sometimes differs slightly from al-Yūnīnī’s version. We use here the account of this Syrian historian.

<sup>116</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:181, 2:243.



and of his free will (*qaḍā' Allāh wa-qaḍarihi*).<sup>117</sup> The Ilkhan reminded the Egyptian sovereign that the basis of the confrontation between the two parties was the Mardīn affair which had taken place during the month of Ramaḍān the previous year, when Satan had entered the city.<sup>118</sup> Once again, a Quranic verse was used to support Ghāzān Khān's statements: "[They, i.e., the Mamluks] entered the city, at a time when its people were unheeding."<sup>119</sup> Ghāzān Khān added: "It was the rule of Islam [to be understood as he who directs the *ummah*] to fight against rebels (*ḥukm al-islām fi qitāl al-bughāh*)."<sup>120</sup> For Ghāzān Khān, the rebels in question were the Mamluk soldiers, who were to blame for the disturbances in Mardīn.

#### THE MONGOL POLITICAL ORDER AS SEEN BY IBN TAYMĪYAH

Ghāzān Khān's arguments against the Mamluks are a mirror image of the criticisms Ibn Taymīyah levels against the Mongols; here, the *bughāh* are the Mamluks themselves. For the Hanbali scholar, the danger was pressing, and in the fatwa he therefore presents the Egyptian sultans as the true champions of Islam. According to Ibn Taymīyah, they are part of the group made victorious whom the Prophet referred to when saying: "A group of my community will never cease to show their support for the victory of right, and neither those who oppose them nor those who betray them shall cause them any harm, until the hour passes."<sup>121</sup> From Yemen to Andalusia, Ibn Taymīyah observes, the Muslim world was weakened by disunity, the poor participation in jihad against the Franks, Tartars, and sectarian religious movements. Worse still, those who were in authority in Yemen had sent a message of submission and obedience to the Ilkhans.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, in the Hijaz, the people were straying and the believers were being degraded, all the more so since Shi'ism was gaining the upper hand.<sup>123</sup> Ibn Taymīyah here refers to the difficulties the Mamluks had encountered in imposing their rule in the cities of the Hijaz and Yemen, a region with a long tradition of Zaydī Shi'ism. Since the conquest of Yemen in 569/1174 by Saladin's son Tūrān-Shāh, it had been the duty of the "Sultan of Islam" to protect the holy places of the Hijaz and settle succession disputes between the *sharīfs* (descendants of the Prophet) of Mecca and Medina. Ibn Taymīyah saw Ghāzān Khān's claims over the holy places, as well as those of Öljeitü at a later stage, as a grave danger for Sunni Islam, and for

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., 1:181, 2:212.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 1:182, 2:212.

<sup>119</sup>Quran 28:15.

<sup>120</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:182–83, 2:213.

<sup>121</sup>*Majmū' Fatāwā*, 28:531.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 533

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.



this reason he argued in favor of the Mamluk regime. The Mongols looked down on al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Alfi's lack of noble lineage. But in a polemical spirit, Ibn Taymiyah retorted that Ghāzān Khān's ancestors were without doubt all sons of kings, but they were all sons of infidel kings. There was nothing to be proud of about being the son of an infidel king; a Muslim Mamluk is better than an infidel king.<sup>124</sup> In Ibn Taymiyah's view, the Mongol dynasty of Iran is thus personified by infidel kings and impious Muslims.

Through his contacts with a number of high-ranking figures in the Ilkhanid state, Ibn Taymiyah gained information about the Mongol political ideology. The Hanbali scholar reproaches the Ilkhans for not fighting on behalf of Islam, but rather in order to gain the submission of peoples, whoever they might be: "Whoever enters into their obedience of the Age of Ignorance (*al-jāhiliyah*) and into their infidel way (*al-kufriyah*) is their friend (*ṣadīquhum*), even if he is an infidel (*al-kāfir*), a Jew, or a Christian. Whoever refuses to submit is their enemy (*adūwuhum*), even if he were to be one of the prophets of God."<sup>125</sup>

This second fatwa, indeed, represents the world order as the Mongols imagined it: they were invested with the mandate of eternal Heaven (*mōngke tenggeri*). The realization of this world order involved drawing a distinction between peoples "in harmony" (*il*) and those in a "state of rebellion" (*bulgha*).<sup>126</sup> In 1246 the great khan Güyük had sent a letter to Pope Innocent IV, of which we have a Persian copy. He wrote, "By divine power (*bi-quvvat-i khudāy*),<sup>127</sup> from the rising to the setting of the sun, all territories have been granted to us. . . . You must now say, with a sincere heart, 'We are in harmony with you (*īli*)' . . . , then we will know of your submission. . . . And if you do not observe God's order, and contravene our orders, you will be our enemies (*yāghī*)."<sup>128</sup>

The Ilkhans adopted for themselves the idea of the heavenly mandate enunciated by the great khans. In a letter in Arabic which Hülegü addressed to the Ayyubid ruler of Syria, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, inviting the latter to join his forces with Hülegü's, he wrote: "We have conquered Damascus by the sword

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 542.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 525. Giovanni de Plano Carpini, citing the laws and ordinances (*leges et statuta*) of Chinggis Khan, was one of the first writers to mention this obligation of submission; see Iohannes de Plano Carpini, *Ystoria Mongalorum*, vol. 1 of *Sinica Franciscana*, ed. P. Anastasius Van den Wyngaert (Quarrachi-Firenze, 1929), 64.

<sup>126</sup>On these two terms see Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente in Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1963–75), vol. 2, no. 768 and no. 653.

<sup>127</sup>The original Mongolian text probably included the formula *mōngke tenggeri künciindür* (with the force of Eternal Heaven), the Turkish equivalent of which appears in the preamble to the letter: *māngü tāngri künciündä* (in the Latin version: *dei fortitudo*).

<sup>128</sup>Here the term *yāghī* is an equivalent to classical Mongol *bulgha*.



of God (*fataḥnāhā bi-sayf Allāh*), we are the army of God (*naḥnu jund Allāh*).”<sup>129</sup> As the letter was addressed to a Muslim sovereign, the term *Allāh* replaced the Mongolian *tenggeri* so as to make sense in the addressee’s culture. The intention is to affirm that the Mongols enjoyed a divine mandate.

The concept of Eternal Heaven was readily understood by the Christians, and by the Muslims, as a metaphor for a personalized God. But the *tenggeri* of the mediaeval Mongols referred as much to the physical sky as to the supernatural entities that might reside there, and was not worshipped at all. As for the term *möngke*, it does not evoke the Christian idea of an eternity with neither beginning nor end, but rather solidity and durability.<sup>130</sup> In the *Secret History of the Mongols*,<sup>131</sup> the influence of this concept is clearer from the reign of Chinggis Khan’s successor Ögödei on, and we subsequently find the formula repeatedly used to indicate that the ruler enjoyed the protection of the *tenggeri*.<sup>132</sup>

This Mongol political theocracy was, of course, sharply rejected by Ibn Taymiyah who found in it a weighty argument against Ilkhanid Islam. The Tatars may have pronounced the Muslim declaration of faith, he writes, but they have deviated from the laws of Islam (*khārijūn ‘an sharā‘i al-islām*) by keeping their ancient beliefs from the Age of Ignorance. One observes that Ibn Taymiyah is addressing the same reproaches to the Ilkhans that Ghāzān Khān levelled against the Mamluks in his *amān*. The Hanbali scholar explains the deviant theology of the Mongols as follows: “It is that the Tatars believe grave things about Chinggis

<sup>129</sup>Bar Hebraeus, *Tārīkh Mukhtaṣar al-Duwal*, ed. A. Ṣāliḥānī (Beirut, 1890), 277. On this letter see also Hein Horst, “Hülagüs Unterwerfungsbriefe an die Machthaber Syrien und Ägyptens,” *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 150, no. 2 (2000): 429–34.

<sup>130</sup>Françoise Aubin, “Some Characteristics of Penal Legislation among the Mongols (13th–21st Centuries)” (paper presented at the conference Central Asian Law: An Historical Overview, Leiden, October 2003). In his *Tat’arac’ Patmut’iwnk’* (History of the Tatars), the Armenian historian Grigor Akanc’i (d. 1335) wrote: “When they [i.e., the Mongols] unexpectedly came to realize their position, being much oppressed by their miserable and poor life, they invoked the aid of God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and they made a great covenant with him to abide by his commands . . . These are the precepts of God which he imposed on them and which they themselves call *yasax*”; see “History of the Nation of the Archers,” ed. and trans. Robert P. Blake and Richard N. Frye, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12, nos. 3–4 (1949): 289–91.

<sup>131</sup>This text is the first to have been written in Mongolian. It is the bearer of Mongol identity and includes much information on Mongol social and political organization; see Igor de Rachewiltz, “Some Remarks on the Dating of *The Secret History of the Mongols*,” *Monumenta Serica* 24 (1965): 185–205; William Hung, “The Transmission of the Book known as *The Secret History of the Mongols*,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14 (1951): 433–92; Larry Moses, “The Quarreling Sons in the *Secret History of the Mongols*,” *Journal of American Folklore* 100 (1987): 63–68; idem, “Epic Themes in the ‘Secret History of the Mongols,’” *Folklore* 99 (1988): 170–73.

<sup>132</sup>See Marie-Lise Beffa, “Le concept de *tänggäri*, ‘ciel’ dans l’Histoire secrète des Mongols,” *Études mongoles et sibériennes* 24 (1993): 215–36.



Khan. They believe that he is the son of God, similar to what the Christians believe about the Messiah (*al-maṣīh*). The sun, they say, impregnated his mother . . . , he was a bastard (*walad ziná*), despite which they hold him to be the greatest messenger of God.”<sup>133</sup>

The reference to Chinggis Khan as the son of God is based on the Mongols’ legend of their origin. According to that legend, Alan-Q’oa, their mythical ancestor, gave birth to three sons after the death of her husband. A being with “pale yellow” skin had crept into her tent three times and its light had penetrated her stomach.<sup>134</sup> Since the *tenggeri* was seen by Christians and Muslims as a personalized God, there was only one step needed to consider Chinggis Khan the son of God. This, for Ibn Taymīyah, was a grave heresy. But, worse yet in the eyes of the Hanbali scholar, since the Mongols considered Chinggis Khan son of God, they elevated him to the rank of a law-giving prophet. Thus the greatest of their leaders in Syria, writes Ibn Taymīyah, when he addressed the Muslim envoys and was trying to find common ground with them declared, “Behold two very great signs (*āyah*) come from God: Muḥammad and Chinggis Khan.”<sup>135</sup>

The information Ibn Taymīyah relied on in denouncing Mongol Islam was based on his interview with the Mongol amir Quṭluḡ-Shāh, converted to Islam under the name Bahā’ al-Dīn.<sup>136</sup> He declared to Ibn Taymīyah he was a descendant of Chinggis Khan and that his illustrious ancestor had been a Muslim (*kāna musliman*).<sup>137</sup> He also said that God had sealed the line of prophets with Muḥammad and Chinggis Khan, the king of the earth (*malik al-baṣīṭah*); anyone who did not obey him was

<sup>133</sup>*Majmūʿ Fatāwá*, 28:521–22.

<sup>134</sup>The Mamluk historian al-ʿUmārī (d. 1349) reports this legend, which undoubtedly circulated orally in the Muslim East and whose origin is to be found in the *Secret History of the Mongols*; see al-ʿUmārī, *Das Mongolische Weltreich: al-ʿUmārī’s Darstellung der mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masālik al-abṣār wa mamālik al-amṣār*, ed. Klaus Lech (Wiesbaden, 1968), Arabic text: 2–3. Thomas Raff sees in this legend the concept of the immaculate conception, which exists in both Christianity and Islam and would on this basis be present also in the Genghiskhanian tradition. This analysis is not quite accurate, as Raff (*Remarks*, 46–47) repeats the point of view of the Muslim authors themselves. The present writer has shown elsewhere that this legend is part of a wider context of miraculous births attributed to heroes in the East since antiquity. The legend was subsequently Islamized by the Timurid historical tradition, since Timur was presented as the descendant of Chinggis Khan. On the development of this myth, see Denise Aigle, “Les transformations d’un mythe d’origine: l’exemple de Gengis Khan et de Tamerlan,” in *Figures mythiques de l’Orient musulman*, ed. D. Aigle, *Revue des Mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 89–90 (2000): 151–68. Ibn Taymīyah muddles Alan-Q’oa, the mythic ancestor of the Mongols, with Chinggis Khan’s mother.

<sup>135</sup>*Majmūʿ Fatāwá*, 28:521.

<sup>136</sup>According to Thomas Raff (*Remarks*, 46), the leader here is Ghāzān Khān himself at the time of the interview at Nabk.

<sup>137</sup>*Beiträge*, 76; *Kanz*, 32. According to Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī (1:157, 2:119) Chinggis Khan was not a Muslim.



considered a rebel (*man kharaja min ṭā'atihi fa-huwa khārijī*).<sup>138</sup> Here again one notes that Ibn Taymīyah's arguments against the Mongols are the same as those used by Ghāzān Khān to denounce the Mamluk regime.

Religious tolerance, or rather the Mongol khans' pragmatism displayed in dealing with the various religious communities of their empire, was another basis for polemics against the Mongols. All the sources are indeed unanimous that Chinggis Khan made it a rule not to give any religion pre-eminence over any other and granted tax immunity for the churchmen if they accepted Mongolian authority.<sup>139</sup> Ibn Taymīyah describes the Ilkhanid regime in the following terms: "Every person who lays claim to a branch of learning or to a religion, they consider him a scholar, whether the jurist (*al-faqīh*), the ascetic (*al-zāhid*), the priest (*al-qīsis*) and the monk (*al-rāhib*), the rabbi (*danān al-yahūd*), the astrologer (*al-munajjim*), the magician (*al-sāhir*), the physician (*al-ṭabīb*), the secretary (*al-kātib*), or the keeper of the accounts (*al-ḥāsib*). They also include the guardian of the idols (*sādin al-aṣnām*)."<sup>140</sup>

In the categories listed by Ibn Taymīyah we find the representative authorities of the three monotheistic religions found in the Ilkhanid empire, but also representatives of important positions in every princely court: administrative officials, physicians, and those charged with determining whether the conjunction of the stars favored the prince in his political and other actions. The reference to the guardian of the idols has a polemic function here. Ibn Taymīyah emphasized the Mongols did not make any distinction between believers who had been granted a divine book and others.

Ibn Taymīyah issues fatwas to construct a typology of religious matters (*'ibadāt wa-sā'ir al-ma'mūr*) amongst Adam's progeny (*min Banī Ādam*).<sup>141</sup> He considers that every act of worship whose origin is a divine order includes three categories (*aqṣām*): the rational (*'aqlī*), the confessional (*millī*), and the legal (*shar'ī*).<sup>142</sup> He considers the rational to be "what the followers of reason among the sons of Adam agree on, whether they have been granted a book or not."<sup>143</sup> The confessional is "what the believers of varied religious confessions (*ahl al-milal*) granted a divine book agree upon," in other words both Muslims and Quranic People of the Book

<sup>138</sup>Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, 1:158, 2:119; *Beiträge*, 76; *Kanz*, 32.

<sup>139</sup>There is a good discussion of the origin of this policy in Yao Tao-chung, "Ch'iu Ch'u-chi and Chinggis Khan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46 (1986): 201–19. Thanks to Thomas Allsen for this reference.

<sup>140</sup>*Majmū' Fatāwā*, 28:525.

<sup>141</sup>*Ibid.*, 20:66 (*Kitāb Uṣūl al-Fiqh*). On these fatwas, see also Michot, "Un important témoin," 351–52.

<sup>142</sup>*Majmū' Fatāwā*, 20:66.

<sup>143</sup>*Ibid.*



(*ahl al-kitāb*).<sup>144</sup> The legal is “what is exclusive to the followers of Quranic law.”<sup>145</sup> Lastly, Ibn Taymīyah deals with the question of royal politics (*siyāsāt al-malakīyah*) which come not under a confession or a divine book, but in which the rational and the legal are necessary.<sup>146</sup> To illustrate this type of government, the Hanbali scholar gives the example of the Chinggiskhanid regime.<sup>147</sup>

Chinggis Khan had conceived a law, the *yāsā*, according to “his reason (*‘aqlihi*) and his own opinion (*dhīhnihi*).”<sup>148</sup> On this basis Ibn Taymīyah develops an argument that the Mongols were guilty of blameworthy innovation (*al-bid‘ah*): “He has caused men to leave the ways of the prophets in order to take up that which he has innovated: his way of the Age of Ignorance (*sunnat al-jāhiliyah*) and his infidel law (*sharī‘atihi al-kufriyah*).”<sup>149</sup> With this reasoning, Ibn Taymīyah argues against the Mongols’ political system. The Ilkhans’ Islam, according to Ibn Taymīyah, exposes the Muslim religion to a grave risk because in it the rational (*al-‘aqli*) had replaced the legal (*al-shar‘i*).<sup>150</sup>

The Mongols of Iran were promoting a modern Islam: they advocated religious freedom and claimed to follow the *yāsā*, the law established by Chinggis Khan. In other words, although they had converted to Islam, the Mongols did not comply with the principles of Islamic law. Ibn Taymīyah denounces a form of Islam where the authority of the *yāsā* perpetuates submission to an indeterminate divinity, the *tenggeri*, at the cost of strict obedience to the shari‘ah.

As we can see, this second fatwa goes far beyond a normal fatwa. It is an outright condemnation of the politico-Islamic order founded by the Ilkhans. The Hanbali scholar seems to synthesize all the information which he can gather on

<sup>144</sup>The Quran and Islamic tradition thus designate the Jews and Christians, holders of an ancient book. The designation was later applied to the Sabeans (Ṣābi‘ūn) of the Quran (the Sabeans of Ḥarrān were considered star-worshippers) and to the Zoroastrians; see G. Vajda, “Ahl al-Kitāb,” *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., 1:272–74.

<sup>145</sup>*Majmū‘ Fatāwā*, 20:66.

<sup>146</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup>*Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>148</sup>This information regarding the manner of legislating on the basis of Chinggis Khan’s reason is only to be found in the Islamic sources, evidence that Muslim authors saw in the *yāsā* the equivalent of religious law, contrary to the shari‘ah; see David O. Morgan, “The ‘Great Yāsā of Chingiz Khan’ and Mongol Law in the Īlkhānate,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49, no. 1 (1986): 163–76; Denise Aigle, “Le ‘grand yasa’ de Gengis-khan, l’Empire, la culture mongole et la shari‘a,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 47, no. 1 (2004): 31–79; idem, “Loi mongole vs loi islamique: Entre mythe et réalité,” *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 5, no. 6 (2005): 971–96.

<sup>149</sup>*Majmū‘ Fatāwā*, 28:523.

<sup>150</sup>Jean Michot, risking anachronism, speaks of “secularization through Genghiskhanian rationalism”; see Michot, *Lettre à un roi croisé*, 66; idem, “Un important témoin,” 252–53.



the Mongols. In these fatwas, Ibn Taymīyah refers to persons of high rank and events attested in the historical chronicles. This information allows us to give an approximate dating to these three texts.

#### ATTEMPTING TO DATE THE FATWAS AND CONCLUSION

The first and third fatwas are clearly fatwas that seek to define the status of the combatants in the armies of the two sides. The first fatwa, whose content regarding the Mongols is not as virulent as that of the second, may well have been issued after the Mamluk defeat at Wādī al-Khaznadār, at the time of the occupation of Damascus by the Ilkhanid troops, when Ibn Taymīyah was acting as an intermediary between the local population and the Mongol authorities. This fatwa takes a more conciliatory tone towards the Mongols soldiers. Ibn Taymīyah recognizes that the fact that they are Muslims must be taken into account. While they must be fought, they first must be called to respect the prescriptions of Islam; the *kuffār* who are amongst their ranks must be invited to convert.<sup>151</sup> The third fatwa is dedicated to considering the status of the Mamluks who fought, under duress or willingly, in the Mongol armies. It may have been issued at the time of the battle of Wādī al-Khaznadār which was won partly due to their presence in the Mongol ranks.

The “second” fatwa, on the other hand, unusually long, is an outright condemnation of the Ilkhanid regime and Shi‘ism. It addresses the problem posed by the Mongols and their conversion to Islam, but goes far beyond this topic since Ibn Taymīyah also brings up many religious sects in Bilād al-Shām, such as the Ismā‘īliyah, the Nuṣayriyah, and Ibn ‘Arabī’s followers, religious tendencies against which Ibn Taymīyah fought incessantly throughout his life.

Nevertheless, this criticism of the Mongol regime, accused of being under the influence of major Shi‘ite figures, is the essential topic of the fatwa. Thomas Raff cites the absence of any reference to Ghāzān Khān’s third invasion of Syria, on 12 Rajab 702/2 March 1303, or to the Mamluk victory at Marj al-Ṣuffār on 2 Ramaḍān 702/20 April 1303, and on this basis concludes that the fatwa was undoubtedly proclaimed in Rajab or Sha‘bān 702/1303, just before that battle. However, as Jean Michot points out in his translation of Ibn Taymīyah’s *Lettre à un roi croisé*,<sup>152</sup> Thomas Raff missed a clear allusion in the fatwa to Öljeitü’s conversion from Sunni Islam to Twelver Shi‘ism. The king of these Tatars has now been won over to Rāfiḍism, writes Ibn Taymīyah; the Hijaz, if they capture it, will be “entirely corrupted.”<sup>153</sup> Öljeitü’s conversion to Shi‘ism probably took

<sup>151</sup> *Majmū‘ Fatāwā*, 28:404.

<sup>152</sup> Michot, *Lettre à un roi croisé*, 74, n. 125.

<sup>153</sup> *Majmū‘ Fatāwā*, 28:533.



place at the end of 708/1308 or the beginning of 709/1309.<sup>154</sup> The fatwa cannot, therefore, have been written before this date. It may have been written in Cairo, where Ibn Taymīyah was staying, just before the new Mongol threat on Bilād al-Shām in 1312 led by the Ilkhan Öljeitü. At that point Ibn Taymīyah left Cairo to support the jihad in Syria.<sup>155</sup>

Troubled by the establishment of a new political system in a large part of the Muslim world, Ibn Taymīyah denounces the theocratic conception of power based on a law created through the reason of one man, Chinggis Khan. According to the Hanbali scholar, Ghāzān Khān, despite his conversion to Islam, had remained faithful to the Mongol *yāsā*, raising the danger that malign innovations could be introduced into legalistic, shari‘ah-based Islam. The Mongols of Iran, even after their conversion to Islam, had not perpetrated any religious persecutions. They had not made their Islam a “state religion.” Ibn Taymīyah, as a militant Hanbali scholar, was deeply convinced that religion and state were inextricably linked; without the discipline imposed by revealed law, the state would become tyrannical. Ghāzān Khān’s form of Islam, based on the rational (*‘aqlī*), risked competing with the true religion (*dīn al-ḥaqq*),<sup>156</sup> which was based on the legal (*shari‘ah*). Viewed in this light, Ilkhanid Islam was the bearer of a conception of power that did not accept the Quran and the interpretation thereof as its sole source of political legitimacy.

However, Ibn Taymīyah’s “second fatwa” can only be understood in the historical context in which it was written. This was the time of Öljeitü’s conversion from Sunni Islam to Shi‘ism in 709/1309 and his moves to gain control over the Hijaz and the holy places of Islam. For Ibn Taymīyah, the Ilkhanid regime was perverted by Shi‘ite tendencies from the time of its establishment. These began after the fall of Baghdad with the intrigues of Mu‘ayyad al-Dīn ibn al-‘Alqamī (d. 656/1258), minister of the last Abbasid caliph, al-Musta‘ṣim.<sup>157</sup> As far as Ibn

<sup>154</sup>The Ilkhan’s conversion to Shi‘ism was followed by the mass conversion of his amirs, with the exception of the two most powerful, Sa‘īd Chūpān and Isen Quṭlugh. From this date forward, the *khuṭbah* was given in the name of the Shi‘ite imams, and coins struck in their name. See Judith Pfeiffer, “Conversion Versions: Sultan Öljeitü’s Conversion to Shi‘ism (709/1309) in Muslim Narrative Sources,” *Mongolian Studies* 22 (1999): 41. As Jean Calmard (“Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans,” 283) points out, the proclamation of Shi‘ism aroused violent opposition in Sunni strongholds in Iran (Isfahān, Qazwīn, and Shirāz), despite the fact that the *khuṭbah* did not include any execration of the Sunnism of the first caliphs.

<sup>155</sup>He returned to Damascus on 1 Dhū al-Qa‘dah 712/28 February 1313, after a brief stay in Jerusalem; see Henri Laoust, “Ibn Taymiyya,” *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., 3:977.

<sup>156</sup>Quran 9:59.

<sup>157</sup>*Majmū‘ Fatāwā*, 28:528. He corresponded with the Mongols prior to their attack on Baghdad and contributed to Hülegü’s victory over the caliph’s army; see John A. Boyle, “Ibn al-‘Alqamī,” *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., 3:724.



Taymiyah was concerned, this Shi'ite perversion could only lead to a complete Shi'ite takeover of the Ilkhanid regime, a takeover that was consummated with the conversion of the "king of the Tatars to Rāfiḍism." Although he is not named, this assertion relates to Öljeitü. Ilkhanid Rāfiḍism was for Ibn Taymiyah an even greater danger than the Chinggiskhanian rationalism of Ghāzān Khān, for it could spread throughout *Dār al-Islām*, and most of all to the Hijaz. The Mamluk regime was the only bastion against this menace. The situation in Mecca provided the Ilkhan with the opportunity to intervene and to widen the influence of Ilkhanid Shi'ite Islam. Since the death of Abū Numayy, head of the Zaydī Shi'ite Banū Qatādah family, in 701/1302, the struggle for power between his four sons had affected the stability of the holy city.<sup>158</sup> As a result, the Mamluks had considerable difficulty in retaining their influence there. In 705/1306, Öljeitü sent an Iraqi caravan with a *maḥmal*<sup>159</sup> to Mecca, just as Ghāzān Khān had tried to do in 702/1303 shortly before his death. In 710/1310, Öljeitü proclaimed his Shi'ite profession of faith on his future mausoleum at Sulṭāniyah, then capital of the Persian Ilkhanate.<sup>160</sup> In the foundation inscription on the mausoleum, he styles himself "*sharīf al-islām wa-al-muslimīn*," a play on words alluding to his control of the Hijaz through his domination of the *sharīfs* of Mecca.<sup>161</sup> A number of inscriptions engraved on this Sulṭāniyah mausoleum, such as "may God give him victory" and "may God spread his shadow and glorify his lands"<sup>162</sup> clearly refer to the Ilkhan's desire to extend his domain, and by implication to dominate Bilād al-Shām. In Ibn Taymiyah's view, Shi'ism was once again a real danger in the region, all the more so as there were already present numerous Shi'ite sects who were ready to strike deals with the enemy. In this "second fatwa," the virulence of his attacks against the Ilkhanid regime is a response to the Ilkhans' attempts, since their conversion to Islam, to present themselves as leaders of the Muslim world. Öljeitü's future mausoleum in Sulṭāniyah—built with certain parallels with the Ka'bah in Mecca—and its epigraphic program symbolized the Shi'ite Ilkhan's desire to occupy the position of protector of the holy places of Islam, hitherto held by the Mamluks.

In drawing up this fatwa, Ibn Taymiyah was highly conscious of the danger that the Ilkhans' Shi'ite Islam represented for the Sunni Muslim *ummah*. Öljeitü's claims to Syria were to bear no fruit, however: his campaign, launched in 712/1312, would spend a month besieging Raḥbah and never crossed the Euphrates.<sup>163</sup> His

<sup>158</sup>Melville, "The Year of the Elephant," 199.

<sup>159</sup>Ibid.

<sup>160</sup>Sheila Blair, "The Epigraphic Program of the Tomb of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya: Meaning in Mongol Architecture," *Islamic Art* 2 (1987): 61.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>162</sup>Ibid.

<sup>163</sup>Melville, "The Year of the Elephant," 199.



claims to the holy places also came to nothing. His great amir Ḥājjī al-Dilqandī was sent at the head of a thousand troops to the aid of Ḥumayḍah ibn Abī Numayy, who had come to the Ilkhan's court in 716/1316 requesting military assistance against his brother so as to establish his authority in Mecca. News reached Ḥājjī al-Dilqandī on the road that on 30 Ramaḍān 706/16 December 1316 the Ilkhan had departed from this world.<sup>164</sup> As Jean Calmard emphasizes, Öljeitü's religious policy had aroused considerable fears in the Sunni world Ibn Taymīyah so fervently defended. It is in this context that this long fatwa must be read. It is one of the numerous texts that the Hanbali polemicist drew up at the request of the Mamluk authorities, notably in opposition to the great Shi'ite 'ālim Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, to whom the Shi'ite sources attribute the credit for Öljeitü's conversion to Twelver Shi'ism.<sup>165</sup> Finally, while the first and third fatwas are clearly juridical texts, the "second fatwa" is a text that, taking into account the other sources and its markedly polemical character, we might describe as being of a historical nature.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid., 200. It was reported that Ḥājjī al-Dilqandī had been given orders by Öljeitü to exhume the bodies of the first caliphs Abū Bakr and 'Umar from their place alongside the Prophet Muḥammad; see *ibid.* Moreover, Öljeitü had in mind to transfer the mortal remains of 'Alī and al-Ḥusayn to his future mausoleum at Sulṭānīyah; see Calmard, "Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans," 284.

<sup>165</sup>See Calmard, "Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans," 282–83.



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## Some Remarks on Ibn Ṭawq's (d. 915/1509) Journal *Al-Ta'liq*, vol. 1 (885/1480 to 890/1485)

### I

On our table lies the first volume of a four-volume journal or diary (*Al-Ta'liq*) that Ibn Ṭawq, a native of Jarūd (near Damascus, today Jayrūd), wrote some five hundred years ago. With its customary thoroughness and high quality, the Institut Français d'Études Arabes de Damas (IFEAD) has published the first 555 pages of a work in which one finds the everyday notes of a little-known Damascene court clerk covering the years from 885/1480 up to 908/1502. The edition is based on the autograph manuscript held by the Maktabat al-Zāhiriyah (Asad National Library Ms. 4533).

The story of how this text was published is just as remarkable as the manuscript itself: The Shi'ite qadi of Baalbek, al-Shaykh Ja'far al-Muhājir, who is known as the author of several historical works on the Shi'ites in Bilād al-Shām,<sup>1</sup> came to IFEAD with the manuscript in 1996. He had worked intensively on the text from 1977 to 1982. When he decided to leave Beirut with his family and settle in Baalbek because of the Lebanese civil war, his attention was directed to the *Ta'liq* by Thurayyā Kurd 'Alī, who was in charge of the manuscripts of the Zāhiriyah library at that time. During the war, he spent several hours every day at his desk deciphering the difficult script. In this way, little by little, a bundle of papers with the transcription of the whole text emerged, around 1,800 pages all together. Sarab Atassi, the secrétaire scientifique at IFEAD, took care of the manuscript and promised to publish it in the following years. Ja'far al-Muhājir had done excellent work, considering that Ibn Ṭawq frequently uses the vernacular to express himself and it is well known that there are only a few preliminary studies in this field.<sup>2</sup>

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Edited by Ja'far al-Muhājir (Damascus: Institut Français d'Études Arabes de Damas, 2000). Pp. 555. This is an extended review of the first volume. The second and third volumes have now also been published. We would like to express our thanks for useful hints and help to Frédéric Bauden, Lutz Berger, Tarif Khalidi, Hilary Kilpatrick, Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, Florian Schwarz, and Dana Sajdi.

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, his *Al-Hijrah al-Āmilīyah ilā Īrān fī al-Āṣr al-Ṣafawī* (Beirut, 1989), *Sittat Fuqahā' Abtāl* (Beirut, 1994), and *Jabal 'Āmil tahta al-Iḥtilāl al-Ṣalībī* (Beirut, 2001).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. the bibliography in Joshua Blau's excellent *Handbook of Early Middle Arabic* (Jerusalem, 2002). Information on the spoken Arabic of the Mamluk period can be found in Clifford Edmund



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Furthermore the author's handwriting is extremely difficult to read, particularly since the diacritics are almost completely missing (as is shown by the facsimile printed at the end of volume 1). In the printed version, the original text is left almost unchanged. To make it more understandable, minor modifications were made in some places which are always marked and in many cases commented upon.

The journal itself is quite unusual. It contains much information about all strata of society, i.e., about the different circles of ulama, the professors of the madrasahs, the shopkeepers, rural society, and the local population. Ibn Ṭawq primarily focuses on the groups at the fringe of urban society who usually are not the main subjects of Arabic historical literature. He writes about the business of the simple man, everyday economic life, public festivals, protests against the encroachments of the authorities, and about organized gangs who made the streets insecure. Ibn Ṭawq describes things in his *Ta'liq* which he has witnessed or about which he has been informed firsthand. He himself was from a rural family and earned his living as a minor court clerk (*shāhid-kātib*). He had a special relationship with the Shafi'i qadi and *shaykh al-islām* Qāḍī 'Ajlūn (Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn 'Abd Allāh, d. 928/1521), and whenever he was off duty, Ibn Ṭawq joined the sessions of this scholar. In the shade of the Qāḍī 'Ajlūn, he wrote his own work that was actually intended as a sort of local chronicle but also was meant to contain some of the author's personal experiences (*ba'd mā yata'allaqu bi-kātibihī*, as is expressly stated in the second sentence of the chapter devoted to the year 888).

## II

One could end the review of the first volume of Ibn Ṭawq's *Ta'liq* with that. But perhaps it makes sense to put the text in a broader context by suggesting at least one path for further research. We would like to draw attention to a group of texts which can to varying degrees be called "diaries" or "journals" as well. What they have in common is that they convey information about events which happened during the authors' lifetime in chronological order, i.e., proceeding from day to day, from month to month, and from year to year. This is, of course, something they have in common with many works belonging to the annalistic branch of Arabic historical writing. But they differ in that they do not focus only on political events and the lives and deaths of prominent personalities but also provide details and commentary on mundane topics of everyday occurrences and on personal matters, or both. Even so, a clear demarcation of what can be called

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Bosworth, *The Medieval Islamic Underworld: The Banū Sāsān in Arabic Society and Literature* (Leiden, 1976); Paul Kahle, "Eine Zunftsprache der ägyptischen Schattenspieler," *Islamica* 2 (1926): 313–22; and Karl Wilhelm Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultane in den Jahren 690–741 der Hira nach arabischen Handschriften* (Leiden, 1919), 1–33.



a diary and what should rather be considered a political journal remains a matter of opinion.

Furthermore, one can ask whether or not certain parts of voluminous works such as *Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr* by Ibn Iyās (d. ca. 930/1524)<sup>3</sup> should be included in the group of diaries in this sense as well. Ibn Iyās also describes many events of his own era in a diary-like style, where festivities, scandals, petty crimes, and the gossip of the day figure prominently. And one last point: even though our scope goes beyond the Mamluk area and time, dynastic changes cannot divide a literary genre that develops and flourishes over the centuries.

The year 1985 may be considered as signaling a new interest in the history of everyday life, at least in Germany, manifesting itself in universities as well as in exhibitions. In that year, but probably completely independent of that fashionable novelty, Annemarie Schimmel's book *Alltagsnotizen eines ägyptischen Bürgers* (An Egyptian citizen's notes on everyday life) was published,<sup>4</sup> being an extract from volumes 4 and 5 of Ibn Iyās' above-mentioned work *Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr*. And even decades before Schimmel's work appeared, everyday life in the medieval Islamic world was considered an interesting topic, a prominent example being Adam Mez' *Die Renaissance des Islams*, which was published in 1922.<sup>5</sup> Since then, many publications have in passing made some contribution to the history of everyday life in medieval Islam,<sup>6</sup> but an attempt to give an encyclopaedic survey has, to our knowledge, not so far been made.

### III

Some works will probably be familiar already. The first chronicle which, without too much discussion, can be included within the genre of Arabic diaries is al-Musabbiḥī's (d. 420/1029) *Akhbār Miṣr wa-Faḍāʾiluhā*, of which only the last of its forty volumes has been preserved.<sup>7</sup> This volume treats parts of the years 414 and 415 Hijrah which correspond to the years 1023 to 1024 A.D., that is, some years after al-Ḥākim's reign (r. 386–411/996–1021). Some of the first volumes seem to

<sup>3</sup>Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr fī Waqāʾiʿ al-Duhur*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Beirut and Wiesbaden, 1960–84).

<sup>4</sup>Annemarie Schimmel, *Alltagsnotizen eines ägyptischen Bürgers* (Stuttgart, 1985).

<sup>5</sup>Adam Mez, *Die Renaissance des Islams* (Heidelberg, 1922).

<sup>6</sup>Cf. *Patterns of Everyday Life*, ed. David Waines (Ashgate, 2002).

<sup>7</sup>Ed. Ayman Fuʾād Sayyid and Thierry Bianquis, *Tome quarantième de la Chronique de l'Égypte de Musabbiḥī* (Cairo, 1987). This edition is based on the unique manuscript preserved in the Escorial. 80 pages of poetry are not included in the printed text but have been published separately: *Al-Juzʾ al-Arbaʿin min Akhbār Miṣr*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār (Cairo, 1984). Al-Musabbiḥī is said to have written 28 books, which, with two exceptions, are all devoted to *adab*. See Thierry Bianquis, "Al-Musabbiḥī," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 7:650–52.



have dealt with periods long before the author's own lifetime. The preserved last part, which quotes from official documents, is an important source for political history and court intrigues, but also is a gold mine for facts about everyday life. We hear about a dog who enters a mosque and is killed as a consequence, a boy drowning in the Nile, a hippopotamus which found its way to Cairo, three "yellow" Indians curing eye diseases, a bear causing panic, a convert to Islam who had only pretended to undergo circumcision (which becomes obvious only after his death), about people recovering the corpses of persons drowned in the Nile and demanding money from the relatives, and much more. As with many of the diarists, al-Musabbiḥī had a peculiar thematic preoccupation: he was especially interested in crimes in his native quarter al-Fuṣṭāṭ, and it seems that he had access to the log of the local police station. His reports are useful for gaining a picture of the *practice* of law enforcement, which is much less well known than the rules of *fiqh* manuals, handbooks for judges, and fatwa collections.<sup>8</sup> He writes about his own activities in several instances, for example when he had participated in audiences at the caliph's court or in one of the caliph's public appearances. Once he tells us that he was unable to attend a festivity due to severe pains. Among the many obituaries, there are several persons mentioned from his own circle of friends or acquaintances without any political significance. A slave girl with whom al-Musabbiḥī has a child suddenly dies, and he expresses his deep grief in moving words which sound much more authentic than most of the many elegies we know from Arabic poetry.<sup>9</sup>

Then we have the autograph diary of Ibn al-Bannā', an eleventh-century Hanbali doctor of Baghdad. His text deals with the period from 1 Shawwāl 461/3 August 1068 until 14 Dhū al-Qa'dah 461/4 September 1069, but originally his notes seem to have been continued for nine more years.<sup>10</sup> Like al-Musabbiḥī, he is said to have been a prolific author, but his diary, unlike his Egyptian colleague's work, seems not to have been meant for the eyes of the public. Its main topics are the social, political, and religious affairs in Baghdad in which Ibn al-Bannā' took part. He records his own activities in this sphere, for example, his delivery of the Friday *khuṭbah* in the palace mosque or cathedral mosque, or a funeral oration, or

<sup>8</sup>Al-Musabbiḥī was the main source for Yaacov Lev, "The Suppression of Crime, the Supervision of Markets, and Urban Society in the Egyptian Capital during the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 3 (1988): 71–95. For some more aspects of criminal justice drawn from al-Musabbiḥī, see Tilman Seidensticker, *On Crucifixion in Medieval Islam* (forthcoming).

<sup>9</sup>Al-Musabbiḥī, *Akḥbār*, 16, lines 9–10 (*wa-nālanī 'alayhā min al-wajdi mā lā ajidu lahu kāshifan illā Allāh*).

<sup>10</sup>George Makdisi, "Autograph Diary of an Eleventh-Century Historian of Baghdad," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 18 (1956): 9–31 (= part 1), 239–60 (= part 2); 19 (1957): 13–48 (= part 3), 281–303 (= part 4), 426–43 (= part 5).



his visit to an ill colleague. All in all, he includes himself and his own activities in his book much more than al-Musabbiḥī, but everyday life is seldom mentioned, with the exception of some miraculous incidents and the information that he had his blood drawn together with a number of others from his family on 17 Rajab 461/11 May 1069.<sup>11</sup> Instead of al-Musabbiḥī's passion for crime, Ibn al-Bannā' devotes special attention to dreams, both his own and those which were reported to him by others. This happened many times because he was considered an expert in the interpretation of dreams. During the 13 months which are covered by the fragment, 26 dreams are reported, the length of which are between a few lines and a whole page. Some are just recorded, others briefly commented upon, and still others are subject to extensive interpretation. The author's own dreams give, voluntarily or involuntarily, some insight into his ambitions and longings. Besides the dreams, there are about half a dozen remarks of a personal character. To give just one example: "A woman with a baby girl came to my door. The family and a maid-servant of ours saw her. They said, 'She has two heads.' But I could not bear to look at her (*mā tāba qalbī anḡur ilayhā*). We gave her mother something, and she went away."<sup>12</sup>

Like his forerunners al-Musabbiḥī and Ibn al-Bannā', Ibn Ṭawq has a particular interest: he is obsessed with weather. With the help of his *Ta'liq*, we are able to write a nearly uninterrupted history of the meteorologic phenomena in Damascus for more than two decades. This fact can best be explained by his rural background, because he shares this predilection with two authors of another diary who were farmers: the father and son al-Rukaynī from the Jabal 'Āmil in the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries (see below). He tells us about the direction of the wind, changes in the weather, differences in the appearance of clouds, about cold, heat, frost, and snow. Typical of the almost affectionate manner in which the topic is treated is what he says about 18 Muḡarram 888: *wa-fī laylatihi 'inda al-tasbīḥi ḡaṣala bakhākhu maṡarin wa-istamarra ilā ākhirihi lam tura al-shamsu wa-al-maṡaru 'ammālun bi-sukūnin wa-ḡaṣala bi-hi khayrun kathīrun wa-lillāhi al-ḡamd* ("in the night, at the time we said *subḡāna Allāḡ*, a drizzle began and continued until the end of that day; the sun was not seen all day long, and the rain did its work quite calmly, and caused much benefit, praised be the Lord!").<sup>13</sup> In comparison to his two forerunners, Ibn Ṭawq devotes even more attention to everyday life than al-Musabbiḥī; the *Ta'liq* allows a reconstruction of all aspects of life in Damascus in the last decades of the Mamluk period.

To give just a few examples from a random selection of about 60 pages (*Al-Ta'liq*

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., part 4, 290 § 143 (Arabic text) = 302 (English translation).

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Part 2, 246 § 34 (Arabic text) = 258 (English translation).

<sup>13</sup>Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Ta'liq*, 1:232, ll. 9–10.



23–63 and 224–41): his master Qāḍī ‘Ajlūn has a severe marital row (*ghayṣ kabīr jiddan*) with his Egyptian wife (25, lines 11–12); a farmer’s wife and a stranger are struck dead by a dilapidated wall somewhere in the gardens and the wife is not buried properly due to the dubious circumstances of her death (29, ll. 9–12); in a garden, two men are caught together with a strange woman; their wine is poured out, and one of the men manages to flee, while the other one is punished with 40 lashes, and the woman is imprisoned (58, ll. 2–6); the caretaker of the al-Saqīfah mosque does illicit things (*al-makrūh*) in the mosque with the slave girl of a shaykh’s wife, and after they are caught, he flees by throwing himself in the river, while the girl is struck with a sword and wounded (61, ll. 15–18); a tavern is closed (29, l. 2); wine is poured out (36, ll. 14–15; 233, l. 13; 236, l. 19–237, l. 2); two Muslims drink wine, and someone informs Qāḍī ‘Ajlūn (239, ll. 6–9); some poor people force their way into a Christian’s house where some Muslims are drinking wine together with beardless boys (240, ll. 11–13); the collapse of a ceiling of a building kills six persons, two survive (36, ll. 5–7); forty poor farmers attack three shops owned by Christians (48, ll. 4–10).

Ibn Ṭawq devotes even more space to his personal life than Ibn al-Bannā’. On a Monday, his wife and children visit the Turkish bath, and the sums of money given to the staff are enumerated in detail: *lil-dāyah hibat ashrafī, lil-ḥammāmiyah 20, al-nāṭīrah wa-ummuhā 12, al-waqqād 2* (35, ll. 2–3). On the occasion of the pilgrims’ return, the author buys two sheep and has them cooked (45, ll. 7–8). When Ibn Jum‘ah’s wife gives birth to a dead girl, he sends her three chickens (233, ll. 17–18). He mentions that he caught a cold accompanied by a shivering fit and fever (29, ll. 7–8), and he tells us that a room called *al-murabba‘* is covered (with mattresses) and that the family sleeps in this room on the next night (35, ll. 16–17). A visit to the flowering gardens of Zamlakā and Daqqāniyah with five friends is reported (36, ll. 8–9); several days later Ibn Ṭawq notes that the flowers and blossoms are extremely beautiful (*fī ghāyat al-ḥusn*, 39, l. 14), and even the picking of some flowers is considered worth mentioning (*qataftu min satrā ba‘d ward*, 235, l. 2). The author’s wife has, on 15 Rabī‘ I 888/23 April 1483, her brother sell a brooch made of gold to buy a copy of the Quran with the money (237, ll. 8–9). Value judgements are not very frequent, but they exist: a book written by Shihāb al-Dīn al-I‘zāzī is generously assessed as “not bad, for him” (*wa-ḥiya kitābah bi-al-nisbah ilayhi lā ba’sah bihā*, 32, ll. 13–14), and the transfer of the *muqaddam Dimashq* to Ṭartūs is warmly welcomed (*wa-hādhīhī nafyah wa-lillāh al-ḥamd*, 43, ll. 3–4).

#### IV

After this comparison between Ibn Ṭawq and his two predecessors, we would like to conclude our contribution with a list of later works that have some affinity with



the “diary” genre. In some cases we can only adduce the authors, titles, and dates, while in other instances we give some additional information. There is a certain overlap with the authors treated by Dana Sajdi in her doctoral dissertation on contemporary chronicles written by commoners in the eighteenth-century Levant.<sup>14</sup> Our list does not, of course, claim to be exhaustive. We did not include authors who died after the year 1800 A.D., with the exception of the Rukaynis’ chronicle, because al-Rukaynī senior wrote his part prior to 1778.<sup>15</sup>

1. About one generation after Ibn Ṭawq, Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546) wrote his *Mufākahat al-Khillān fi Ḥawādith al-Zamān*, which treats Damascus up to 951/1544; for the years before the author’s adulthood, Ibn Ṭawq and other historians such as al-Buṣrawī (see below) are used as sources.<sup>16</sup> “The importance of Ibn Ṭūlūn’s history—which is a contemporary chronicle written as *dhayl* to the contemporary chronicle of Ibn Ṭūlūn’s teacher, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Nu‘aymī (d. 1521)—may be seen in the fact that it was among the most widely circulated history books in Damascus during the two centuries after his death. . . . Ibn Ṭūlūn, an ‘*ālim par excellence*, was acutely conscious of being a member of a scholarly community . . . [but:] In other words, Ibn Ṭūlūn’s chronicle is less about the ‘*ulamā*’ and more about the suffering of ‘the people.’”<sup>17</sup>

2. In 1099/1687, Yaḥyá Ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Qāsim, author of the *Bahjat al-Zaman fi Ḥawādith al-Yaman*, died.<sup>18</sup> This work, devoted to the history of the Yemen, and above all of Ṣan‘ā’, is also mainly restricted to the five decades which the author himself witnessed. The author turns out to be especially fond of repeating second-hand horror stories and fairy tales.

3. Ismā‘īl ibn Tāj al-Dīn al-Maḥāsini (d. 1102/1691), preacher of the Umayyad

<sup>14</sup>Dana Sajdi, “Peripheral Visions: The World and Worldviews of Commoner Chroniclers in the 18th Century Ottoman Levant” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2002).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 126–28.

<sup>16</sup>Ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Cairo, 1962–64) and Aḥmad Aybāsh (Damascus, 2002, under the title *Ḥawādith Dimashq al-Yawmiyah Ghadāt al-Ghazw al-‘Uthmāni lil-Shām 926–951: Ṣafaḥāt Maḥqūdah Tunsharu lil-Marrāh al-‘Ulā min Kitāb ‘Mufākahat al-Khillān ilkh.*”). The Cairo edition contains the preserved parts of the first volume, covering roughly the years from 884/1479 to 926/1519, based on the unique manuscript (autograph) of the Tübingen University Library. The Damascus edition is a reconstruction of the second volume with the help of quotations in later works.

<sup>17</sup>Sajdi, “Peripheral Visions,” 479–80.

<sup>18</sup>Ed. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥabashī as *Yawmiyāt Ṣan‘ā’* (Abu Dhabi, 1996). This text is based on the author’s *musawwadah* from the library of the Friday mosque in Ṣan‘ā’. It is not a complete edition but a selection of parts considered important for social history. The manuscript has three volumes with altogether 1,459 pages of 20 to 22 lines. This means that the edition is shortened to a third of the size of the manuscript. On Yaḥyá ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Qāsim, see ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥabashī’s introduction, containing a long list of his works (5–16, 122 titles).



mosque in Damascus, wrote his account of the time between Ṣafar 1077/August–September 1666 and Jumādā I 1100/February–March 1689 on the empty space in a volume of Arabic poetry. These notes, spread throughout all 325 pages, were extracted from that scrapbook (*kunnāsh*) by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid.<sup>19</sup> There are many remarks on everyday matters and the author's personal life.<sup>20</sup>

4. Muḥammad al-Makkī, author of a *Tārīkh Ḥimṣ*,<sup>21</sup> died in 1135/1722 and also concentrates on the three decades before his own death, mainly in the region of Hims and its environs. “All of the above factors lead us to conclude that al-Makkī must have had an intimate professional involvement with the *maḥkamah* of Ḥimṣ, similar in function to that of a court clerk; what exactly that function was, however, we are unable to identify. . . . The fact of al-Makkī's occupation is reflected in the writing and content of his chronicle. Just like a court *sijill*, his chronicle records deeds and transactions in summary form, with a minimum of narrative, external context, and authorial interjection. . . . Al-Makkī is remarkably eclectic about who or what he reports: his news ranges from the comings and goings of the town notables, to the death of a garbage collector, to the marriage of a barber, to a water-bearer's murder of his mother-in-law, to the death of the neighbor of the author's daughter. . . . Muḥammad al-Makkī was a court clerk with more than a touch of opportunism.”<sup>22</sup> Al-Makkī does not talk too much about himself, but everyday life is one of his favorite topics. His style shows a peculiar fondness for nominal expressions instead of verbs, a sort of “officialese” (*nuzūl al-bard, islām dhimmī, majīʿ fulān, wuqūʿ fulān fī al-ʿAṣī*).

5. Another author from the Bilād al-Shām is Muḥammad ibn Kannān (d. 1153/1740) who, in his *Al-Ḥawādith al-Yawmīyah min Tārīkh ʿAsharah Alf wa-Mīʾah*, covers the time from 1111 to 1153 (1699 to 1740), all of which he witnessed himself.<sup>23</sup> The autograph is preserved in two manuscripts in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (nos. 9479 and 9480 Ahlwardt). On him and his work, Dana Sajdi writes: “Perhaps unexpectedly of a bookish man, Ibn Kannān was also a socially active fellow. He spent much [of] his time paying social visits and going to engagement

<sup>19</sup>“Ṣafahāt fī Tārīkh Dimashq fī al-Qarn al-Ḥādīyah ʿAsharah al-Hijrī Mustakhrajah min Kunnāsh Ismāʿīl al-Maḥāsīnī,” *Majallat Maʿhad al-Makḥḥūtāt al-ʿArabiyyah* 6 (1960): 77–160.

<sup>20</sup>Sajdi, “Peripheral Visions,” 28, n. 82, states that al-Maḥāsīnī is dealt with by Naila Takiyeddine Kaidbey, “Historiography in Bilad al-Sham: the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” (Ph.D. diss., American University of Beirut, 1995), 387–96.

<sup>21</sup>Ed. ʿUmar Najīb al-ʿUmar (Damascus, 1987). Al-Makkī is one of the seven chroniclers dealt with in Sajdi, “Peripheral Visions”; on his biography, cf. the section “Muhammad Ibn Kannān: Struggling for Tenure in the Damascene Academy,” 91–113.

<sup>22</sup>Sajdi, “Peripheral Visions,” 85–86, 91.

<sup>23</sup>Ed. Akram Ḥasan al-ʿUlābī under the title *Yawmīyāt Shāmīyah* (Damascus, 1994). The author is another one of the seven chroniclers dealt with in Sajdi, “Peripheral Visions.”



parties, weddings, and circumcision celebrations. His favorite pastime, however, was picnicking. Ibn Kannān loved the gardens and parks of Damascus, and it was there that he spent most of his springs and summers, particularly toward the end of his life. . . . Ibn Kannān's enchantment with nature is not only illustrated by his interest in botany (reflected in a very large section of *Al-Mawākib al-Islāmīyah*) but also in the fact that he marked time according to the seasonal fruits and flowers: 'in the days of the apple,' 'in the days of the attack of the roses (*fī hujūm al-ward*),' 'in the days of the apricot,' and 'in the days of grapes and figs.' Often, these picnics functioned as scholarly salons. It was in the fresh air, surrounded by flowers, and sitting by the water, that Ibn Kannān and his fellow teachers exchanged knowledge and discussed topics outside their teaching curricula."<sup>24</sup>

6. Thirty years later, another Syrian author, Aḥmad al-Budayrī al-Ḥallāq (d. 1175/1762), wrote his *Ḥawādith Dimashq al-Yawmīyah*, treating the years 1154–75/1741–62, again as an eyewitness. Al-Budayrī's "Daily Events of Damascus" is surely one of the most fascinating documents of eighteenth-century Bilād al-Shām. This collection of current events, observations, and comments, arranged in the form of annals written by an obscure Damascene barber, provides a much-needed corrective and supplement to the indispensable but often dry and monotonous biographical and historical works of the time. Al-Budayrī's precious text, which is remarkably close to the vernacular, has a complex history. It is even possible that the folios of the original manuscript had been used as wrapping paper in the *sūq*. But somehow the importance of the work had ever been forgotten. The man who used al-Budayrī's diary as a historical source was in any case Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Qāsimī (d. 1317/1900), who is justly famous for his work on the crafts and guilds of Damascus.<sup>25</sup> He changed the wording of the original text by rewriting it. Al-Budayrī had written his diary in a language which al-Qāsimī found too close to the colloquial and therefore repulsive, so he changed the wording wherever he deemed necessary, and in an unspecified number of places omitted passages which he found long-winded or otherwise superfluous. The revised form of the diary in the redaction of al-Qāsimī is preserved in the family library of the Qāsimīs in Damascus under the title *Tanqīḥ al-Shaykh Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Qāsimī li-Ḥawādith Dimashq al-Yawmīyah*. The book was edited in 1959 by Aḥmad 'Izz al-Dīn in Cairo.<sup>26</sup> The barber's original work is preserved in a unique manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (no. 3551/2, autograph?). Dana Sajdi is currently editing this manuscript. The original version omits the *nisbah* al-Budayrī

<sup>24</sup>Sajdi, "Peripheral Visions," 99.

<sup>25</sup>*Qāmūs al-Ṣinā'āt al-Shāmīyah*, ed. Zāfir al-Qāsimī (Paris, 1960).

<sup>26</sup>Muḥammad Jamil Sulṭān published a second edition together with a short study on the author and his work (Damascus, 1997).



for which reason Sajdi refers to him as Ibn Budayr.<sup>27</sup> Ibn Budayr's diary faithfully reflects the shop-talk of his time. He has a lot to say on this subject, especially, for example, on prostitutes. In a barber's talk with his customers, conversation would naturally also turn to gossip and scandals involving "honor," mistreatment or unacceptable behavior of women, and the like. The author writes about the everyday problems of people of his class and social standing, elucidating many details. He was not in anyone's service and was therefore in a position to praise and criticise freely whatever he felt merited praise or criticism.

7. Ḥaydar Riḍā al-Rukaynī and his unnamed son left a diary which was first published in an incomplete edition of the subsequently lost unique manuscript in the Shī'ite journal *Al-'Irfān* in 1938–39.<sup>28</sup> "The chronicle begun by the Shī'ī farmer Ḥaydar Riḍā al-Rukaynī (henceforth al-Rukaynī Sr.) and completed by his unnamed son (henceforth al-Rukaynī Jr.) records events in rural Jabal 'Āmil in the years 1163/1749 to 1247/1832. While neither father nor son informs us exactly where they live in southern Lebanon, the events of the chronicle take place overwhelmingly in that region, and end with al-Rukaynī Jr.'s migration to Damascus. . . . This is the first contemporary chronicle in the Shī'ī tradition of Jabal 'Āmil, and the only chronicle in Arabic-Islamic history known to have been written by farmers. . . . These novel spheres are reflected in the content of the Rukaynīs' chronicle: for example, the agriculturalists' overriding concern with the weather, on the one hand; and the 'Āmili Shī'ī's iteration of a strong sense of regional and communal identity on the other."<sup>29</sup>

## V

As stated above, our knowledge of the history of everyday life in medieval Muslim times is still in its beginnings, and this is even more evident if we widen the somewhat vague notion of "everyday life" to include mentality, "Lebensgefühl," perceptions and emotions of the individual. It is true that some promising beginnings have been made, e.g., the study of Thomas Bauer on love (especially

<sup>27</sup>On Ibn Budayr, another one of the chroniclers treated by Sajdi, cf. "Peripheral Visions," 66–80, and idem, "A Room of His Own: the 'History' of the Barber of Damascus," *MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (2003): 19–35. See also George Haddad, "The Interests of an Eighteenth Century Chronicler of Damascus," *Der Islam* 38 (1963): 258–73, and Antonino Pellitteri, "Imagine Donna in *Hawadith Dimashq al-Yawmiyya* (1741–1762) di Ahmad al-Budayri al-Hallaq," in *Verse and the Fair Sex: Studies in Arabic Poetry and in the Representations of Women in Arabic Literature*, ed. Frederick de Jong (Utrecht, 1993), 153–70.

<sup>28</sup>More recent editions based in part on the 'Irfān printing, entitled *Jabal 'Āmil fī Qarn, 1163–1274 H/1749–1832 M*, have been published by Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ (Beirut, 1997) and Ḥasan Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ (Beirut, 1998).

<sup>29</sup>Sajdi, "Peripheral Visions," 40–41, 505. The Rukaynīs' book is again one of the chronicles dealt with by Sajdi, *ibid.*, where the authors and their diary are introduced on pp. 125–39.



homosexual and homoerotic, and concentrating mainly—but not exclusively—on early Abbasid times)<sup>30</sup> and three articles by Bernadette Martel-Thoumian on crime, suicide, illicit pleasure, and punishment in Mamluk times.<sup>31</sup> For all these questions our diaries are one important source, but of course ample information can be found in other types of documentary evidence. Within the last few years historians with a focus on Europe have been occupied with similar sources and invented the technical term “ego documents.”<sup>32</sup> Originally, this phrase was coined by the Dutch historians Jacques Presser and Rudolph Dekker in the 1950s. Their main field was the analysis of memoirs, travel stories, letters, and diaries. All of them had one thing in common: an author who reports in the first person “about his own behavior and feeling and about topics and events that concern him personally.” This approach was then picked up and developed further at a workshop organized by Winfried Schulze in 1992.<sup>33</sup> The participants came to a comprehensive definition:

All texts which can be typified as ego documents should have one thing in common: you should find in them rudimentary or explicit statements made by an individual about his perception of social phenomena like family, community, country, group or tribe or about his reflection on his relations with these societal systems and their changes. These statements should justify individual behavior, reveal fears, manifest values and norms, and reflect a personal conception of and an outlook upon life.<sup>34</sup>

This definition significantly broadens the scope of our sources. Now we have to

<sup>30</sup>*Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1998).

<sup>31</sup>“Voleurs et assassins à Damas et au Caire (fin IXe/XVe-début Xe/XVIe siècle),” *Annales islamologiques* 35 (2001): 193–240; “La mort volontaire: le traitement de suicide et du suicidé dans les chroniques mamloukes tardives,” *Annales islamologiques* 38 (2004): 405–35; and “Plaisirs illicites et châtements dans les sources mamloukes (fin IXe/XVe-début Xe/XVIe siècle),” *Annales islamologiques* 39 (2005): 275–323.

<sup>32</sup>Andreas Rutz, “Ego-Dokumente oder Ich-Konstruktion? Selbstzeugnisse als Quellen zur Erforschung des frühneuzeitlichen Menschen,” *zeitenblicke* 1, 2 (2002) <[www.zeitenblicke.historicum.net/2002/02/rutz/index.html](http://www.zeitenblicke.historicum.net/2002/02/rutz/index.html)> (7 March 2006). On the problem of the perception of the subject, see Stefan Elit, “‘Ich’ war einmal: Literaturwissenschaftliche Problemhorizonte bei Subjektivität in Texten,” *ibid.* (7 March 2005). After being declared dead some time ago, the author has now been resurrected: *Rückkehr des Autors: Zur Erneuerung eines umstrittenen Begriffs*, ed. Fotis Jannidis, Gerhard Lauer, Matias Martinez, and Simone Winko (Tübingen, 1999).

<sup>33</sup>Winfried Schulze, “Ego-Dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte? Vorüberlegungen für die Tagung ‘EGO-DOKUMENTE,’” in *Ego-Dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte*, ed. Winfried Schulze (Berlin, 1996), 11–30.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 28.



take into consideration not only the above-mentioned autobiographical or semi-autobiographical works but all texts in which information about an individual are given indirectly, i.e., non-intentionally and non-purposefully: wills, tax records, criminal case files, merchant and invoice books, interrogation protocols, photographs, or other documents of a non-literary character.

For the first corpus, the so-called autobiographical genre, the term “Selbstzeugnisse” has been established.<sup>35</sup> In a pathbreaking essay, Benigna von Krusenstjern comes to the conclusion that, on the one hand, “Selbstzeugnisse” include a “Selbstthematisierung durch ein explizites Selbst” and, on the other hand, they are “selbst verfaßt, in der Regel auch selbst geschrieben (zumindest diktiert) sowie aus eigenem Antrieb, also ‘von sich aus,’ ‘von selbst’ entstanden.”<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, she distinguishes four categories of “Selbstzeugnisse”:<sup>37</sup> (1) “egocentric” reports in which the reference to the speaker is central and forms the greater part of the work; (2) texts, in which the speaker speaks about himself but also about his interests, emotions, and concerns. In the third category, material things (“die Anteile von Welt”) are the main theme of the narration. The world of the speaker has to stay in the background. The fourth variant hardly refers to the “Selbstzeugnisse” since there is no explicit individual speaking. Instead of a speaker we hear an implicit narrator, for example in the form of a chronicler.

Today, ego documents, “Selbstzeugnisse,” and their categorization are well known among historians. They are a fertile field of research so that within the last fifteen years numerous monographs, collective volumes, and articles have been published.<sup>38</sup> This phenomenon is closely connected with the historical-anthropological turn within the humanities which itself has been initiated by a concentration on micro-historical and “alltagsgeschichtliche” approaches.<sup>39</sup> What

<sup>35</sup>Benigna von Krusenstjern, “Was sind Selbstzeugnisse? Begriffskritische und quellenkundliche Überlegungen anhand von Beispielen aus dem 17. Jahrhundert,” *Historische Anthropologie* 2 (1994): 462–71.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 463.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 470.

<sup>38</sup>Up to now, research on ego documents seems to have been a European field of study. By far the greater part of the literature is in German. Cf., for example, Benigna von Krusenstjern, *Selbstzeugnisse der Zeit des Dreißigjährigen Krieges: Beschreibendes Verzeichnis* (Berlin, 1997); Harald Tersch, *Österreichische Selbstzeugnisse des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit (1400–1650)* (Vienna, 1998); *Das dargestellte Ich: Studien zu Selbstzeugnissen des späteren Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Klaus Arnold, Sabine Schmolinsky, and Urs Martin Zahnd (Bochum, 1999); *Das Strafgericht Gottes: Kriegserfahrungen und Religion im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nationen im Zeitalter des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, ed. Matthias Asche (Münster, 2001); *Von der dargestellten Person zum erinnerten Ich: Europäische Selbstzeugnisse als historische Quellen (1500–1850)*, ed. Kaspar von Greyerz, Hans Medick, and Patrice Veit (Cologne, 2001).

<sup>39</sup>See Dirk van Laak, “Alltagsgeschichte,” in *Neue Themen und Methoden der Geschichtswissenschaft*,



we can see is a reconsideration of the (historical) individual and the epistemological circumstances of his socialization.<sup>40</sup> The central questions can be: What did a pre-modern person think of faith, religion, sexuality, power, society? How did he experience war, violence, childhood, aging? What was his relationship to his own body? What can we say about his feelings and emotions?<sup>41</sup>

If Mamlukologists are going to work with categories like ego documents and “Selbstzeugnisse,” we obviously have to find new material. A number of different kinds of sources can be added to our diaries. By way of example, some works from the Mamluk era can be listed, such as memoirs: Ibn Iyās’ *Badā’i’ al-Zuhūr*; reports of diplomatic missions: Ibn Ājā’s (d. 881/1476) *Tārīkh al-Amīr Yashbak al-Zāhiri*;<sup>42</sup> autobiographies: Ibn Khaldūn’s (d. 808/1406) *Kitāb al-Ta’rīf bi-Ibn Khaldūn wa-Riḥlatuhu Gharban wa-Sharqan*,<sup>43</sup> Ibn Ṭūlūn’s *Al-Fulk al-Mashḥūn fī Aḥwāl Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn*,<sup>44</sup> al-Suyūṭī’s (d. 911/1505) *Al-Taḥadduth bi-Ni’mat*

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ed. Michael Maurer (Stuttgart, 2003), 14–78; Hans Medick, “Quo vadis Historische Anthropologie? Geschichtsforschung zwischen Historischer Kulturwissenschaft und Mikro-Historie,” *Historische Anthropologie* 9 (2001): 78–92; Alf Lüdtke, “Alltagsgeschichte, Mikro-Historie, historische Anthropologie,” in *Geschichte: Ein Grundkurs*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Goertz (Reinbek, 1998), 557–78; *Alltagsgeschichte: Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Goertz (Frankfurt and New York, 1989); *Sozialgeschichte, Alltagsgeschichte, Mikrohistorie*, ed. Winfried Schulze (Göttingen, 1994).

<sup>40</sup>Cf. Michael Maurer, “Historische Anthropologie,” in *Neue Themen und Methoden der Geschichtswissenschaft*, ed. Maurer, 294–387; Gert Dressel, *Historische Anthropologie: Eine Einführung* (Vienna, 1996); Richard van Dülmen, *Historische Anthropologie: Entwicklung, Probleme, Aufgaben* (Cologne, 2000).

<sup>41</sup>On these topics, see also the articles in *Islamwissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft: Mentalitätsgeschichte: Ansätze und Möglichkeiten*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Syrinx von Hees (Schenefeld, 2007).

<sup>42</sup>On this text, see Stephan Conermann, “Ibn Aġās (st. 881/1476) ‘Ta’rīḥ al-Amīr Yašbak az-Zāhiri’—Biographie, Autobiographie, Tagebuch oder Chronik?” in *Die Mamluken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur: Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942–1999)*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam (Schenefeld, 2003), 123–79.

<sup>43</sup>Cairo, 1979. On Mamluk autobiographies, see Stephan Conermann, “Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 955/1548): Life and Works,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (2004): 115–40.

<sup>44</sup>Damascus, 1929.



*Allāh*;<sup>45</sup> private letters;<sup>46</sup> travel literature;<sup>47</sup> *bid'ah* works;<sup>48</sup> *waqfiyāt*;<sup>49</sup> and last but not least, chronicles.<sup>50</sup>

It is no easy task for Mamlukologists to identify the world view, experiences, and emotions of individuals, because our sources are much scantier than their European counterparts. Nevertheless, we are convinced that we are in a good position for further studies in this field. To track down the independent and creative element of men and women during the Mamluk era seems to be a promising task. It would help to understand power as a form of social practice, and the constructed experience of the self, as well as the outlines of a self-image, can be one way to

<sup>45</sup>Ed. Elizabeth M. Sertain (Cambridge, 1975).

<sup>46</sup>See, for example, al-Ṣafadī's (d. 764/1363) "Alḥān al-Sawāji' min al-Nādī wa-al-Rāji'," Berlin MS 8631. An introduction to the analysis of such texts is Stephan Conermann, "Arabische Privatbriefe des 13./19. Jahrhunderts: Ego-Dokumente, Selbstzeugnisse und historisch-anthropologische Quelle," in Ulrich Haarmann, *Briefe aus der Wüste: Privatpapiere der in Gadamis ansässigen Yuṣā'-Familie aus dem 19. Jahrhundert*, aus dem Nachlaß herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Stephan Conermann (Schenefeld, 2006), 1–40.

<sup>47</sup>One could name al-Qāsim ibn Yūsuf al-Tujībī's (d. 730/1329) *Mustafād al-Rihlah wa-al-Ightirāb*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Manṣūr (Tunis, 1981), and Abū Ḥasan 'Alī al-Qalṣādī al-Andalusī's (d. 891/1486) *Rihlah*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Ajfan (Tunis, 1985). Both of them spent a long time in Egypt on their pilgrimage. On Arabic travel literature, see now Ralf Elger, "Der Raum als Zeichen göttlicher Macht und des Wirkens der Zeit im Libanon-Reisebericht *al-Manāzil al-mahāsiniyya fi r-rihla at-Ṭarābulusiyya* des Yahyā al-Mahāsini (st. 1053/1643)," in *Erzählter Raum in Literaturen der islamischen Welt*, ed. Roxane Haag-Higuchi and Christian Szyska (Wiesbaden, 2001), 69–80; idem, "Adab and Historical Memory: The Andalusian Poet/Politician Ibn al-Khaṭīb as Presented in Aḥmad al-Maqqarī (986/1577–1041/1632), *Nafh at-ṭīb*," *Die Welt des Islams* 42 (2002): 289–306; idem, "Selbstdarstellungen aus Bilād ash-Shām: Überlegungen zur Innovation in der arabischen autobiographischen Literatur im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert," in *Eigene und fremde Frühe Neuzeit: Genese und Geltung eines Epochenbegriffs*, ed. Renate Dürr, Gisela Engel, and Johannes Süßmann (Munich, 2003), 123–37; idem, "Individualität und Kulturkritik in arabisch-muslimischen Ego-Dokumenten, 15.–18. Jahrhundert," *Periplus* (2003): 30–50; and idem, "Narrheiten und Heldentaten: Die merkwürdigen Reisen des Muṣṭafā al-Laṭīfī (1602–1711)," in *Erkundung und Beschreibung der Welt: Zur Poetik der Reise- und Länderberichte*, ed. Xenja von Ertzdorff and Gerhard Gieseemann (Amsterdam and New York, 2003), 267–87.

<sup>48</sup>Typical works of this genre are al-Turkumānī's (fl. at the end of the eighth/fourteenth and at the beginning of the ninth/fifteenth century) *Kitāb al-Luma' fi al-Ḥawādith wa-al-Bida'*, ed. Subhi Labib (Cairo and Wiesbaden, 1986), Ibn Taymiyah's (d. 728/1328) *Kitāb al-Iqtidā' al-Ṣira'āt al-Mustaqīm Mukhālafat Aṣḥāb al-Jahīm*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥāmid al-Fiḳī (Cairo, 1950), and Ibn al-Ḥājj's (d. 737/1336) *Al-Madkhal* (Cairo, 1929).

<sup>49</sup>For an overview of this material, see Stephan Conermann and Lucian Reinfandt, "Anmerkungen zu einer mamlukischen *waqf*-Urkunde aus dem 9/15. Jahrhundert," in *Die Mamluken*, ed. Conermann and Pistor-Hatam, 179–238, esp. 179–90.

<sup>50</sup>Konrad Hirschler, in his *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (London, 2006), presents a fresh and original theoretical approach to Ayyubid/Mamluk historiography.



approach that notion. If the layers of the different discourses can be removed, it would be possible to reveal Mamluk individuals. In the last analysis, we would like to find new ways to describe the process of individualization in terms other than the common European ones.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>On the concept of European individuality, see *Entdeckung des Ich: Die Geschichte der Individualisierung vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Richard van Dülmen (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2001), and Martin Scheutz and Harald Tersch, “Individualisierungsprozesse in der Frühen Neuzeit? Anmerkungen zu einem Konzept,” *Wiener Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Neuzeit* 1 (2001): 38–59.



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## In Search of “Post-Classical Literature”: A Review Article

Readers interested in Arabic history have waited a long time for a history of Arabic literature during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods that would provide an outline, both comprehensive and concise, of this much-neglected field. Finally, a volume of the Cambridge History of Arabic Literature has appeared that promises to fill the gap. All too soon, however, the reader interested in Mamluk and Ottoman literature will realize that the wait is not over. Whereas some of the articles are of high quality (others are of much lower quality), the volume as a whole does not give an overall impression of the period in question, because its concept is marred by a highly Eurocentric approach. First of all, it treats Mamluk and Ottoman literature under the heading “post-classical.” Second, it is divided into the categories poetry-prose-drama; and third, poetry and prose are each subdivided according to a characterization as elite or popular. In the following, I will address these three major points as they relate to the book in general without treating each article individually. In a last section I will deal especially with Salma Jayyusi’s opening article on Mamluk poetry. As is often the case with reviews, aspects that discomfited and even angered the reviewer are dealt with in more detail than those that satisfied him. Therefore I found it more useful to focus on the problematic points of the book than to praise individual authors for their new insights, of which there are many. Further, I will focus on the topics especially relevant to the present journal and treat articles on the Ottoman period rather briefly.

### 1. “POST-CLASSICAL”

The term “postclassical” is a relative one. In order to define the postclassical, it is necessary to know what the classical is. The term “classical,” however, has no indigenous counterpart, and its meaning is not given *a priori*. Since the editors do not even touch the issue, it has to be dealt with here in more detail because it is the central issue in the perception of Arabic literature and culture as a whole, as we shall see.

As for the term “classical literature,” it is a European term coined to designate the literature of classical antiquity. Subsequently, literature that shared certain

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A review of *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, edited by Roger Allen and D. S. Richards (Cambridge, 2006). Pp 481.



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characteristics with the literature of Greece and Rome was also termed "classical." These characteristics may have been of either form or content, such as harmony, clarity, and simplicity. In another respect, just as Greek and Latin literatures were considered models for several periods of European literature, a literary corpus that was considered a model for future generations was called classical. In this last respect, "classical" has always been a stamp of quality implying that the "classical" is something exemplary, good, and excellent, whereas the non-classical is not.

Since the reference to classical antiquity cannot possibly be a major point for defining Arabic "classical" literature, what else can?

There exists a sense of "antique, old" when, during most of pre-modern Arabic literature, authors used to distinguish between the *mutaqaddimūn* and the *muta'akhhirūn*. But this distinction between "the ancients and the moderns" is too vague and varies too much over the centuries to be of great help. In most periods of Arabic-Islamic culture, continuity was considered a major virtue. It is no wonder, then, that many a litterateur paid lip-service to the achievements of the ancients, though considering contemporary authors more captivating and interesting than the old stuff, as countless anthologies of the Mamluk period clearly demonstrate. Even Ibn Ḥijjah does not hesitate to pronounce proudly the superiority in the field of the *tawriyah* in his own time.<sup>1</sup> However, he would never have gone as far as to denounce the older literature as outdated and worthless and to consider it as something against which one has to rebel, as was often the case in European literary history. Instead, a statement like that of al-Shawkānī (d. 1250/1832), who wrote that Ibn Nubātah was an "excellent and creative poet, who, in all kinds of poetry, surpassed his contemporaries, all those who came after them, and even most of those who lived before him,"<sup>2</sup> not only proves the high esteem in which Ibn Nubātah was held (see below), but articulates a strong perception of literary continuity that makes it rather improbable that "classical" and "postclassical" are adequate equivalents of *mutaqaddimūn* and *muta'akhhirūn*.

A similar problem with the use of the term "classical" becomes obvious when we observe the fate of the term "neoclassical" in the scholarship of Arabic literary history. The term was coined in Western scholarship to designate poets of the third/ninth century such as Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī<sup>3</sup> since their *qaṣā'id* seemed to follow the model of the pre- and early Islamic *qaṣīdah*, the most obvious equivalent to the "classical" (in the sense of "antique") literature of the West. As it became clear, however, that the poets of the "neoclassical" *qaṣīdah* did not aim at imitating

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, *Khizānat al-Adab wa-Ghāyat al-Arab*, ed. Kawkab Diyāb, 2nd ed. (Beirut, 1425/2005), 3:185–93.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Shawkānī, *Al-Badr al-Ṭālī' bi-Maḥāsin Man ba'da al-Qarn al-Sābi'* (Beirut, 1418/1998), 2:131.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Charles Pellat, "Al-Buḥturī," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd. ed., 1:1289–90.



the pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah*, the term was rendered inappropriate in the view of most contemporary scholars. But it may still serve as an illustration of the confusion that can be caused by the terms “classic” and “classical.” For if we accept the term “neoclassical” in this sense, we can hardly accept the existence of a “postclassical” literature *after* the “neoclassical” because the “neo” has to come *after* the “post.” According to that logic, Mamluk poetry should be labeled “postneoclassical,” and consequently, the poets of the nineteenth century who continued in the vein of Ibn Nubātah, such as Nāṣif al-Yāziji, should be termed neopostneoclassical poets, and Aḥmad Shawqī, rather than simply calling him neoclassical, as is generally done, should therefore be called a neoneopostneoclassical poet!

Since the reference to an allegedly “classical” (in the sense of antique) period leads us nowhere, let us try the criterion of “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur.”<sup>4</sup> Arabists tried to apply this notion by contrasting “mannerism” and “classicism” in the tradition of Curtius.<sup>5</sup> But whereas one may differentiate between a classical and a mannerist *style*, the dichotomy does not yield a period. There is no classical *period* as opposed to a period of mannerism. Instead, both styles coexist during nearly all periods of Arabic literature. There were mannerist poets already in the Umayyad period (to mention only al-Ṭirimmāḥ, d. 110/728) and the style of Abbasid poets ranged from the simple and unsophisticated to the highly stylized and contrived, changing often from poem to poem.<sup>6</sup> This plurality of style is also obvious in the Mamluk period, to mention only Ibn Nubātah’s poems to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ibn Faḍl Allāh as an example for the *maṣnū’* style and his hunting *urjūzah* as an example of the *maṭbū’* style, considered a model for unmannered poetry by Mamluk critics.<sup>7</sup> Given this permanent stylistic plurality, the criterion of “classical” style is unsuitable for periodization and does not provide us with a classical or a post-classical period.

So the last possibility to find a classical period is to look for what has been considered as exemplary and taken as a model. Again, the result varies a great deal over the centuries. Whereas it may be possible to speak of a “canonization

<sup>4</sup> Winckelmann’s characterization of Greek sculpture, which became a guiding principle of German classical literature: “Kennzeichen der griechischen Meisterstücke ist endlich eine edle Einfalt und eine stille Größe so wohl in der Stellung als im Ausdruck,” first in *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Dresden, 1755).

<sup>5</sup> See Wolfhart Heinrichs, “‘Manierismus’ in der arabischen Literatur,” *Islamwissenschaftliche Abhandlungen: Fritz Meier zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Richard Gramlich (Wiesbaden, 1974), 118–28; see also Stefan Sperl, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry* (Cambridge, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> See Thomas Bauer, *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1998), 106–49.

<sup>7</sup> See Geert Jan van Gelder, “Poetry for Easy Listening: *Insijām* and Related Concepts in Ibn Ḥijjāh’s *Khizānat al-Adab*,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, [no. 1] (2003): 31–48.



of the *jāhiliyyah*,"<sup>8</sup> this does not constitute a classical period, since it soon lost its function as a model. For Mamluk poets, *jāhili* poetry was something old and distant, a noble heritage learned at school and alluded to from time to time, but not considered as *the* classical period of Arabic literature, just as Beowulf and contemporary Old English poetry can hardly be said to constitute the classical period of English literature.

In any case, the editors of the book under review who use the term "postclassical Arabic literature" seem to have something else in mind. To call a period "from approximately 1150 till 1850" (p. 8) a postclassical period implies that Arabic literature had a classical period from approximately 500 to 1150, i.e., for six and a half centuries! This stands in marked contrast to the few decades of classical French, German, or English literature! Is there any sound argument that can justify the existence of a classical period of 650 years? And is there any sound argument that can explain why an author of the eleventh century should be in any way more classical than an author of the thirteenth?

The notion "classical" in the sense "exemplary, providing the standards" cannot be applied to more than half a millennium. It makes sense, however, in respect to singling out authors or works. Certainly Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī were "classical" authors of *madīḥ* poems (rather than "neoclassical") in providing models much admired and followed for centuries. In the same sense, it is justified to speak about the "classical *maqāma*" as Steward does on p. 148, having in mind the *maqāmāt* of al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī. In the same sense it is an undeniable fact that the letters of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil (d. 596/1200), "mannered" as they may be, are a most "classical" work, admired and emulated far into the Ottoman period. In the same sense, Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. 750/1350) is the author of the classical *badī'iyah* and Ibn Dāniyāl (d. 710/1310) the author of the classical shadow play. For al-Shawkānī (d. 1250/1832) Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366) was a classical author par excellence, as we have seen above.

This might be one possibility for the use of the word "classic" in the context of Arabic literature in a meaningful way. But to try to construct monstrous periods of "classical" and "postclassical" literature leads to the most ridiculous results. So Rosella Dorigo Ceccato, forced to adhere to the senseless terminology of the volume, divides her (excellent) article on drama into two parts: "Origins" (pp. 348–56) and "Post-Classical Drama" (pp. 356–68). Shouldn't there be something "classical" in between? Did the Arabs really tumble immediately from "semi-dramatic texts" (p. 356) into the "postclassical"?

It becomes clear, therefore, that the word "classical" can only be applied to Arabic literature in two ways. First, it has become customary to differentiate

<sup>8</sup> See Heinrichs, *Manierismus*, 121.



between “classical Arabic literature” as opposed to “modern Arabic literature.” I can see no reason to object to this usage, since “classical Arabic literature” in this sense does not refer to a certain period, but to a continuous though manifold and heterogeneous literary tradition based on the classical Arabic language (though not exclusively composed in it). Second, it can be applied to certain authors or works that gained “classical” status in the course of literary history. This, however, happened repeatedly and at any time, and what was “classical” in one time was not necessarily so in another. Only this notion can do justice to the dynamic nature of the history of Arabic literature.

The way the terms “classical” and “postclassical Arabic literature” are used in the present volume has the opposite effect: It *denies* this very dynamic nature of Arabic literature, *denigrates* its history of one and a half millennia, *disregards* its manifold developments, and *squeezes* it into the corset of the imperialist “decline and fall” model. Since none of the meanings of “classical” discussed above can be reconciled with the assumption of the existence of a postclassical period between 1150 and 1850, it becomes obvious that the designation “postclassical” is nothing but a euphemism for “decadence,” and the title of the book nothing but a polite English version of *‘aṣr al-inḥiṭāt*. In the introduction it is further suggested that one should distinguish a postclassical period from a premodern period (esp. p. 21). But a foolish idea does not become better when it is elaborated. Just the opposite. It is not only illogical in itself, since every period that was before the modern period is a premodern period, but displays even more clearly the teleological concept that is behind a terminology of this kind.

The idea of a “postclassical” period is a concept heavily dependent on the philosophical ideas of Hegel, who presupposed that the whole of human history is a process of steady progress of mankind that gradually advances to self-knowledge. In this process, the different cultures of mankind contribute their own share and thus help to attain the overall progress of the human race. But as soon as they have done their bit, they have fulfilled their purpose and are prone to vanish in the general stream of progress, which, destined to reach a single goal, cannot be a manifold one. Though there may be a little disagreement about the telos of mankind (the Prussian monarchy, Victorian civilization, communist society, or Western democracy), Hegelian teleological thinking is the background as well of the idea of the “white man’s burden,” of Fukuyama’s “end of history,” of the current extinction of the cultural plurality of the world in the wake of “globalization”—and also of a concept like “postclassical literature” or the thoughtless application of the notion “Middle Ages” to the world of Islam.

Terms like “Islamic Middle Ages” and “Arabic postclassical literature” are not as harmless as they seem, but inevitably carry a strong political connotation.



According to the Hegelian teleological worldview that is behind them, Islamic culture has to fulfill one single important task, that is, to bring classical thinking (here: science and philosophy of antiquity) to the West during the “dark” Middle Ages. A nice formulation of this task is given by Léon Gauthier, who wrote in 1948:

Dès la fin de ce XII<sup>e</sup> siècle, le [sic] tâche principale, bien qu’inconsciente, de l’Islâm est accomplie, qui était de transmettre à l’Europe . . . l’incalculable trésor de la science et de la philosophie grecque. Désormais, la pensée arabe ne produit plus dans l’ordre des sciences physiques ou métaphysiques un seul ouvrage vraiment digne d’attention, Ibn Rochd avait été, pour la pensée spéculative gréco-arabe, comme le bouquet final d’un brillant feu d’artifice.<sup>9</sup>

Salma Jayyusi’s introductory remarks to her article, in which she strives to expose the decadence and worthlessness of “postclassical” poetry, are an echo of this world view: “The history of the Arab world in medieval times was one of great effervescence; a truly brilliant civilization was forged and served as a link between the older Mediterranean cultures and the European Renaissance” (pp. 25–26)—but then things went wrong.

In the world of the eastern Mediterranean, the urban culture of the (Eastern) Roman Empire was not destroyed, but gradually transformed. The cultural milieu of Aleppo at the time of al-Mutanabbî was not essentially different from that of the Roman Empire, whereas those of Rome, Cologne, and Paris were. Recently, Gotthard Strohmaier again stressed that one cannot speak of a “reception” of antiquity in Islam, because there was no crossing of boundaries and the creation of something completely new, which is the essence of reception, but rather the continuation of something given, adapted to new circumstances, i.e., as Rosenthal has called it, a “Fortleben der Antike im Islam.”<sup>10</sup> In the absence of a cultural break between antiquity and the Middle Ages as in the West, it makes no sense to speak about the “Islamic Middle Ages.” Nevertheless, the expression is still current and repeatedly used in the volume under review. The expression “Islamic Middle Ages,” however, clearly reflects the teleological, Eurocentric view exposed above, since it makes no sense to speak about Middle Ages when Europe is not the reference. There was obviously no “medieval culture of the Pueblo Indians” and there were no “Aztec Middle Ages.” Islam, instead, had to fulfill its single task in

<sup>9</sup> Léon Gauthier, *Ibn Rochd (Averroès)* (Paris, 1948), 11; see also Anna Akasoy, “A Baghdad Court in Constantinople/Istanbul,” *Das Mittelalter* 10 (2005): 136–47, here 138.

<sup>10</sup> See Gotthard Strohmaier, “Das Bild und die Funktion vorchristlicher griechischer Religion bei arabischen Autoren des Mittelalters,” in *Reflections on Reflections: Near Eastern Writers Reading Literature*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth and Andreas Christian Islebe (Wiesbaden, 2006), 181–90.



the history of human progress, i.e., to enlighten the dark Middle Ages. According to this ideology, Islamic culture must necessarily be a phenomenon of the Middle Ages, since it was in the Middle Ages when it had to fulfill its duty for the human race. Because this notion posits a single history of the *Weltgeist*, the entire human race lived in the Middle Ages at this time. Therefore, only a few scholars (most prominently Mez and Hodgson) came to doubt the very existence of an Islamic Middle Ages. As has been realized repeatedly, the mentality of the people of these “Middle Ages” was anything but “medieval,” rather more akin to the mentality of Renaissance and baroque Europe.<sup>11</sup> The inevitable connotation of the construction of “Islamic Middle Ages” is to deny Islam’s own history, and to derive its history exclusively from a European point of view.

For reasons probably better sought in European history than in the history of Islam, the second half of the twelfth century seems to be a key date in the Hegelian historiography of Islam: note the exact coincidence of Gauthier’s date for the accomplishment of Islam’s principal task for world (i.e., Western) history and the onset of Allen’s period of “postclassical” literature! At that time Islam had fulfilled its duty, and, consequently, lost the right to exist as a culture in its own right. From then on, only Europe (and later North America) had a history, whereas the Orient lay in a deep motionless sleep awaiting the moment to be awakened by well-meaning European imperialists, whose mission it was “den Neuaraber . . . in die Hallen moderner europäischer Gesittung einzuführen,” as Alfred von Kremer put it in 1871.<sup>12</sup> Having fulfilled its task for the Middle Ages, Islam had nothing to do other than await the onset of modernity, generously brought to the Orient by the colonial powers. According to this imperialist ideology, Islamic history of the period after the fulfillment of Islam’s task to the *Weltgeist* can only be “post-” and “pre-,” since Islam has no right to persist as a culture of its own, a culture that has the right to set its own “post-s” and “pre-s.” The echoes of this kind of thought can be heard clearly enough in contemporary political discourse, and even, I would dare to say, in the sound of the bombs exploding at this very moment in Iraq and other Islamic countries.

I have not the slightest doubt that Roger Allen, the co-editor and writer of the introduction, had no thought in mind of subscribing to this ideology. Nevertheless, “bien qu’inconsciente,” to use Gauthier’s words, he contributed to it with all his “pre-s” and “post-s.” His introduction to the volume (“The Post-Classical Period:

<sup>11</sup> See Adam Mez, *Die Renaissance des Islam* (Heidelberg, 1922), English transl. *The Renaissance of Islam* (London, 1937), and Bauer, *Liebe*, 93–98.

<sup>12</sup> Alfred von Kremer, “Nāṣif al-jāziḡi,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 25 (1871): 243–47, here 245; see also Thomas Bauer, “Die *badī’iyya* des Nāṣif al-Yāziḡi und das Problem der spätosmanischen arabischen Literatur,” in *Reflections on Reflections*, ed. Neuwirth and Islebe, 49–118.



Parameters and Preliminaries," pp. 1–21) is puzzling enough, since beside his "pre-" and "post-" ideas, Allen severely criticizes the notion of "decadence," subscribes to Hodgson's critique of the notion "Islamic Middle Ages," and encourages efforts to achieve a new perspective on the period in question. Reading these lines, one cannot help but feel that the editor is criticizing the foundational concept of his own volume rather than justifying it. Unfortunately, the fact remains that the volume is called *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, and that the series title "Cambridge History of . . ." ascribes authority to a designation which does not designate anything but a colonialist Western concept that denies more than half a millennium of Arabic literature its own right. As Samir Kassir has recently pointed out, the concept of "Golden Age" and subsequent "decadence" has done much harm to the Arabs and still prevents them from rethinking their own history.<sup>13</sup> It goes without saying that an editor of a volume in such a prestigious series as the Cambridge History has a responsibility not to use terms that do more harm than good. The present editors, though obviously not unaware of the problematic, failed to assume this responsibility. In the introduction, the reader comes across a quotation of Abdelfattah Kilito that says (p. 20):

To us it seems more appropriate to regard Arabic poetics on its own terms and to avoid treating the subject as a kind of deviation from a model realized in other times and under other skies. The governing principles should be derived from characteristics that are intrinsic to it, not those of works from some other poetics. . . . To be sure, the negative approach can also be fruitful, but only when, in studying what a culture has not done, it manages to identify what it has done and not what it ought to have done.

How true this is, but how strange it is to find this quote in a book whose title conveys a notion that is nothing but a derogatory term for six hundred years of Arabic literature that failed to live up to Western standards!

Previous volumes of CHAL that dealt with the centuries prior to 1150 were named after the ruling dynasties ("Umayyad" and "Abbasid"). While it is true, as Allen complains, that a periodization along dynastic lines means "to categorize the literary output from without rather than within" (p. 5), it has the great advantage that, after all, the dynasties *existed*, whereas a phantom such as a "postclassical period" did not. A term used for periodization has no other task than to delimit a certain time span. It is futile to search for a term that can sufficiently characterize a literary epoch. A single term can never do justice to a whole period, and interpretations of literary periods vary greatly. Therefore, instead of interpreting

<sup>13</sup> Samir Kassir, *Considérations sur le malheur arabe* (Paris, 2004).



a period in order to label it, the procedure should be the opposite, i.e., to delimit the period by some external feature and only then to interpret it. Italians are completely satisfied with sorting their literature according to centuries. After all, the *cinquecento* is as undeniable a fact as is the Mamluk period. The image of the period may change, and it may turn out that the turn of centuries or the change of dynasties did not correspond to literary changes. To find this out is the task of the literary historian, who has to give his own interpretations but must not be hampered by senseless concepts such as “medieval” or “postclassical.” Since it is a Herculean task to fight against such concepts once they are established, their creation is not a contribution to the progress of scholarship. Therefore I strongly advocate “Saljuq,” “Ayyubid,” “Mamluk,” and “Ottoman” as terms for the periodization of Arabic literature. It is true that they do not say much about the literature of the time. But this is an advantage rather than a handicap because it provides for the possibility of changing interpretations without being burdened with a prejudicial terminology. Further, dynastic terms are quite precise. Whether to ascribe the years of Shajar al-Durr’s reign to the Ayyubid or Mamluk dynasty is a very minor problem compared to the task of delimiting the Islamic “Middle Ages” or the phantom of a “postclassical” period. And, of course, there are a number of dynasties that can serve for periodization rather than only a single “postclassical” period, and a period that bears the name of a dynasty will not be mistaken for a given reality of literary history.

Several contributions to the book do in fact take periods as a given reality and do not shrink from a plain reification, if not personification, of “the period.” The article on “Criticism in the Post-Classical Period: A Survey” by William Smyth (chapter 19, pp. 387–417) may serve as an example. Smyth’s article is especially strong on Ibn al-Athīr, but a bit cursory on other authors and fields. Yet it may pass as a good article, though I cannot help the impression that it would have been a better article if the author were less infected with the idea of a postclassical period. Smyth uses formulations according to which the period becomes an actor in itself, as when he says that “the post-classical period is mainly concerned with organizing the heritage of the classical” (p. 417). Besides the fact that the statement is patently incorrect, it displays a view according to which a period is not a tentative abstraction derived from a careful examination of the works created during a certain span of time, but rather an entity that has a character in itself, which is imprinted on everything created during this period just as the genetic code is imprinted on one’s offspring. According to this concept, which again owes much to German idealism, Smyth can say that Ibn Maṣūm’s *Anwār al-Rabiʿ* “demonstrates the level of artificiality and elaboration that scholars and poets regarded as aesthetically satisfying in the post-classical period.” The text is taken as an offspring of its period, the existence of which is



simply taken for granted. The geographical background of its author (India and the Yemen), his social position, his interesting biography, his particular character, the target audience of the work—all this seems to be irrelevant to understanding the text, since it was shaped by the character of the *period*. The text is believed to necessarily embody the “genetic code” of the mother period. Therefore, its characteristics can be generalized without hesitation, since the text cannot do other than display the characteristics of the period, and since all texts bear the stamp of the mother period, they can hardly display different characteristics. This procedure, however, does not do justice to the plurality of a period, which in this case is not acknowledged at all. As for Ibn Ma‘šūm’s *Anwār*, it is one of only four large *badi‘īyah*-cum-commentary-cum-anthology works that were composed between Ibn Ḥijjah (d. 837/1434) and Muṣṭafá al-Ṣalāḥī (d. 1265/1849).<sup>14</sup> With an average of one per century, one may ask how characteristic these works actually are. On the other hand, we have the genre of the hunting *urjūzah*, which displays a very low level of “artificiality and elaboration,” written, however, by authors who were also producers of highly artificial prose.<sup>15</sup> Given Smyth’s statement, one wonders if these texts were either not conceived as “aesthetically satisfying,” or if the mother period gave birth to monsters.

One of the consequences of this approach is the obsession with the question of what is *new* in this period. According to Smyth, everything that has any sort of predecessor is not new. Therefore, neither al-Sakkāki nor Ibn al-Athīr nor al-Qartājannī produced anything really new, because they had predecessors. “In the post-classical period, the disciplines that deal with criticism are largely a continuation of the subjects and methods established in the previous five centuries” (p. 387). Well, this is the nature of scholarship. What would be the benefit of disregarding everything that had been written in the previous five centuries simply to produce something completely new? Smyth’s article itself presents hardly anything that is new. This does not diminish its value. Smyth’s obsession with innovation, however, prevents him from recognizing what really was new. To take one example, he writes in quite a deprecating way about al-Ṣafadī’s book on the *tawriyah* (“There was very little by way of real analysis,” p. 407). He forgets, however, that this was the first treatise ever written about the subject, and that it was considerably improved upon by Ibn Ḥijjah’s treatment of the same subject. He is also unaware of the simple fact that there is no theory of double entendre in modern Western stylistics whatsoever. Ibn Ḥijjah’s book, therefore, is not only the best book ever written on the double entendre, but is still *state of the art!* But for Smyth, for whom periods are closed entities, it is perhaps inconceivable that

<sup>14</sup> See Bauer, “Die *badi‘īyya* des Nāṣif al-Yāziḡi.”

<sup>15</sup> See Bauer, “The Dawādār’s Hunting Party: A Mamluk *Muzdawija Ṭardiyya*, probably by Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍlallāh,” forthcoming in *Festschrift Remke Kruk*.



a work written more than five hundred years ago in another culture can have any immediate relevance for the present.

It is quite obvious that the volume was not a labor of love for the editors. As Allen realizes quite clearly, the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods on the one hand, and the Ottoman period on the other hand, are periods quite different in nature and character, and each of them would have deserved a volume of its own. But the deprecatory nature of the whole enterprise becomes clear already in the first line of the introduction, which says that the present volume is “probably the last” of the CHAL. We thus learn that the Mamluk and Ottoman periods are not deemed worthy of two volumes, while the Abbasid period was granted a volume dedicated to literature and another one dedicated to “religion, learning and science” (Cambridge, 1990). Obviously the publishers think that there was no “religion, learning and science” during this time about which a Western public needs to be informed. Could there be a clearer expression of the Hegelian worldview described above?

Not only will there be no volume on Mamluk and Ottoman learning and science, but the volume under review is also marred by several disturbing lacunae. The volume is not called “Arabic literature of the Mamluk and Ottoman *empires*,” but “Arabic literature in the post-classical *period*.” Therefore it should cover the whole of the literature written in the Arabic language irrespective of the country in which it was written. But this is not the case. The chapter on Mamluk historiography is limited exactly to the historiography of the Mamluk empire. Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb is not mentioned, and the author even apologizes for mentioning the Tūnis-born Ibn Khaldūn (p. 166). In the whole volume, the name al-Maqqarī does not appear once. Despite its title, the chapter on historiography of the Ottoman period is not limited to the Ottoman *period*, but to the Ottoman *empire*. Consequently, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-‘Aydarūs and his *Nūr al-Sāfir* are not mentioned (despite its importance for our knowledge of the history of Egypt and Syria in the tenth/sixteenth century), nor is any other of the many Yemeni historiographic works. In the entire volume, the Yemen is only mentioned in Larkin’s article on popular poetry, while the extremely rich *fushḥá* literature of this important part of the Arabic world is completely disregarded in all other chapters. The quite remarkable bloom of Arabic literature in India during the eighteenth century is either completely unknown to the editors or deemed, for whatever reason, unworthy of mention. Its most famous protagonist, Āzād al-Bilgrāmī (1116–99/1704–84), however, is still today venerated and studied intensively in Pakistan and India. By neglecting authors like him—not to mention those of Oman or sub-Saharan Africa—an important aspect of the later Ottoman period is obscured, i.e., its tendency to a specific form of cultural “globalization” of the Islamic world.



Two further general critical remarks may be allowed here. First, the nearly complete disregard of French, German, and Italian scholarship in many articles is a sad sign of the increasing provincialism of Arabic studies. This provincialism is further manifested in several contributions due to their being, as a Mamluk author would have put it, "bare of the clothes of literary theory." Only if terms and concepts are applied with the same diligence and theoretical knowledge as is the practice in fields dealing with Western literatures will Arabic studies become a discipline on an equal footing with its more progressive neighbors and, due to the wealth of its material, be able to inspire these disciplines instead of stumbling on mired in the prejudices and ill-defined concepts of the nineteenth century.

## 2. POETRY–PROSE–DRAMA

As we have already seen in the case of the term "postclassical," the editors scarcely discuss the central notions of the book and its basic principles of organization. The first of these principles was to organize the articles in sections on poetry, prose, and drama, and to add an article on criticism. Poetry and prose (but not drama) are again split into two parts, one dedicated to elite poetry/prose, the other to popular poetry/prose. Is this organization, which is not explained with a single word, really as plausible as the editors obviously assume? The three categories "poetry," "prose," and "drama" obviously were applied because the editors wanted to avoid the more usual Western classification "epic/narrative," "lyric," and "drama," and they were right to do so since this partition is no longer the state of the art of literary scholarship, and it obviously does not fit Arabic literature at all. For example, *inshā'* is not epic and a lot of Arabic poetry is not really lyrical. Nevertheless, to substitute "prose" for "epic" and "poetry" for "lyric" does not make things any better. First, the three notions are now no longer on the same level, for what else could a drama be than either poetry or prose? And second, even these notions cannot deny their Western origin and they prevent the reader from conceiving of Mamluk and Ottoman literature under categories other than established Western ones. Inconsistencies resulting from this classification become obvious all too soon. The *maqāmah* is discussed at length both in the prose section and in the drama section. The fact that *maqāmāt*, shadow plays, chancellery letters, the *Sīrat 'Antar*, and the *Thousand and One Nights* consist of a mixture of poetry and prose is obscured by this division, and so is the fact that poetry and prose so often interacted in a single act of communication. A letter of praise, congratulation, or condolence often comprised both a *qaṣīdah* and a prose text referring to it. Still, in the case of Ibn Nubātah, we find the *qaṣīdah* in the *Dīwān* and the corresponding letter in one of his prose collections. But later Mamluk authors gave up this formal division between poetry and prose. The *Dīwān* of al-Qīrāṭī, to take only one example, comprises both prose and poetry



and no longer separates the *qaṣīdah* and its accompanying prose letter.<sup>16</sup> These developments are necessarily obscured by the division into prose, poetry, and drama, a concept that runs contrary to the indigenous development. This becomes very clear in the instructive article “The Role of the Pre-Modern: the Generic Characteristics of the *Band*” by ‘Abdallah<sup>17</sup> Ibrahim (chapter 4, pp. 87–98), where Ibrahim argues convincingly that the *band*, despite its rhythmic structure, is rather to be considered prose. But the editors found it not prosaic enough and put the article in the poetry section.

The concept of dividing the book into chapters dedicated to prose, poetry, and drama meets its final collapse in the section “popular prose.” Here we find all the chapters dealing with the popular epics. It is only reasonable to unite these chapters under a common heading, but the heading cannot be “prose,” since the *Sīrat Banī Hilāl* is a work of oral poetry, its formal aspects being so excellently presented in Reynolds’ article (see pp. 314–18) that the editors should have understood that this *sīrah* is not a work of prose, and therefore does not belong in the “popular prose” section. It would have belonged in an “epic” section, but most of the other prose chapters would not. Therefore we see, as so often, that the application of modern Western categories and the disregard of indigenous categories can never do justice to any other culture than the Western. Ibn Sūdūn was wiser in not separating prose and poetry in his *Muḍḥik al-‘Abūs*. Instead of separating prose and poetry, he separates *jidd* and *hazl*, which, by the way, would have been an indigenous concept that could have been of more use for a volume of this kind (it is only touched upon accidentally on p. 138). The same is true for many other indigenous concepts. But there are no chapters on anthologies, epigrams, chronograms, *badi‘iyāt*, travelogues, *muṭārahāt*, *taqārīz*, and so on; all these are forms or genres that were of exceeding importance for Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman authors and readers, but of no importance to the editors of this book, who prefer to apply modern (though partially dated) Western concepts instead. This does not mean that there are no Western terms and concepts that do fit. A particularly fitting one is the term *prosimetrum*, a Latin term for a literary piece that is made up of alternating passages of prose and poetry. It is only too obvious that many literary genres of Arabic literature such as the *maqāmah* are far more adequately described as *prosimetrum* than as prose or poetry. The term *prosimetrum* has already been applied successfully to Arabic literature and other Near Eastern literatures, but is not taken into account in the volume under review.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See al-Qīrāṭī, “Kitāb Maṭla‘ al-Nayyirayn,” Istanbul, MS Fātiḥ 3861.

<sup>17</sup> Or ‘Abdullah, as on pp. v and viii.

<sup>18</sup> *Prosimetrum: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Narrative in Prose and Verse*, ed. Joseph Harris and Karl Reichl (Cambridge, 1997). See especially the contributions by Wolfhart Heinrichs (“Prosimetrical Genres in Classical Arabic Literature,” pp. 249–75) and Dwight Reynolds (“Prosimetrum in



Instead, we get a whole section on "drama," comprising an article by Rosella Dorigo Ceccato (chapter 17, "Drama in the Post-Classical Period: a Survey," pp. 347–68) and a second one by Philip Sadgrove (chapter 18, "Pre-Modern Drama," pp. 369–83). These two articles complement each other. While Ceccato focuses on the *maqāmah* genre and the traditional ("classical"?) shadow play, Sadgrove treats forms of drama attested mainly in a later period such as the Karagöz, the marionette theater, masquerades, burlesques, and other forms of popular entertainment. Both articles are highly informative. Nevertheless they raise doubts as to whether it is really justified to devote a separate section to "drama." *Maqāmāt* are "semi-dramatic texts" (p. 356) and not drama, and the early shadow plays are still very close to the vulgar *maqāmah*. The performative aspect of these genres—all of them *prosimetric* genres—is high, just as is that of the recitation of the *sīrahs* (mentioned p. 367), but a performative aspect does not make a text a drama in the Western sense of the word (and there is no other sense). Sadgrove's article is, to my knowledge, the best existing summary of popular dramatic enterprises in the Arabic world, though I hesitate to accept the heading "pre-modern drama" since the main part of his article talks about the nineteenth and even the twentieth century. The heading thus creates the impression (certainly unintended by Sadgrove, who is probably not responsible for the title) that "modernity" is a property of enlightened intellectual (i.e., Western) culture, and the popular is a residuum of the unenlightened past. Further, problematic as the category "popular" is, it cannot be justified that the dramatic or semi-dramatic texts dealt with in Sadgrove's article do not bear the word "popular" in their heading and are treated separately from popular poetry and prose, though they are nothing other than popular poetry and prose and do not even differ in their performative character from most of the other popular poetic, prosaic, and prosimetric genres.

Despite the quality of these articles, the expectations of a reader not familiar with Arabic literary history will be rather disappointed by the drama section. Instead of finding something like Euripides, Molière, and Shakespeare, he is confronted with semi-dramatic forms such as the *maqāmah* on the one hand and popular dramatic representations that were not regarded as high literature on the other. This will not convince the reader that there was a "real" dramatic culture in the Arabic world. But what else could one expect? In most cases when a non-Western phenomenon is measured against a Western concept, the difference comes out as a deficit, even if this is not the aim of the author. Drama is a good example. Since Shmuel Moreh tried to refute the common prejudice according to which pre-modern Arabic literature did not know drama, it has become *en vogue* to argue the opposite. However, the two chapters on drama in this volume,

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Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Arabic Literature," pp. 277–94).



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good as they are, rather corroborate the prejudice than correct it. But why do we have to prove that there was “real” pre-modern drama in the Arabic world? Has anybody ever questioned the value of English literature on account of its failure to develop the genres of *maqāmah* and *badī‘iyah*? Why then do we have a separate section on drama, separating texts from the genres and forms to which they were felt to belong when they were created, and crowd them together under a concept that did not play a decisive role in the minds of the creators of these texts and their audiences? In pre-modern Arabic literature, the property of being dramatic did not necessarily create a different genre. Just as there were *muwashshahāt* that were composed as song texts and others that were never sung nor intended to be, there were texts with a minimal performative potential and others with a great one. Some of these texts could be performed by more than one person, and some implied the use of masks or puppets. Thus they are drama in the full sense of the word, but this did not set them apart from related non-dramatic genres in a way similar to the way “drama” is separated from “lyric” and “epic” in the traditional Western conception. Though there was drama, for pre-modern Arabic literature the notion of “drama” can only be of heuristic value, since it was hardly perceived as a separate category of texts. The structure of the book, dividing Arabic literature into the three categories poetry, prose, and drama, therefore means nothing but to squeeze Arabic literature into the Procrustean bed of a Western concept that can only present Arabic literary history in a distorted form.

A further shortcoming of the book is the fact that there are no articles on the indigenous conceptions mentioned above with the exception of the *band*, certainly not the most important of them. And while there are no separate chapters on the different poetic genres like love, praise, description, or satire (and some of the more important ones such as hunting and chronograms do not receive a single word), there is again one exception, Emil Homerin’s article on “Arabic Religious Poetry, 1200–1800” (chapter 3, pp. 74–86). It is, of course, a futile attempt to exhaust six hundred years of flourishing religious poetry (both Muslim and Christian) in a mere thirteen pages. But thanks to Homerin’s gift as a translator these pages are among the most enjoyable in the volume.

### 3. ELITE VERSUS POPULAR

What is true for the genre division is also true for the division into the parameters “elite” vs. “popular.” As usual, the editors have little to say about it. Allen at first seems to be aware of the problem and quotes Heath’s all too true statement that “warns the researcher against establishing the concepts of elite and popular as static monoliths” (p. 19). But this did not prevent Allen from making this dichotomy one of the guiding principles of the volume. His own expositions are not very helpful. They focus on the equation standard language = elite vs.



vernacular = popular, which is very problematic, as we will see. In any case, the authors of the individual contributions must have felt abandoned by the editors and left to escape as best they could. Let us take the section "popular prose," which comprises six contributions, all of them good, some of them excellent.

Dwight F. Reynolds opens this part with a summary article (chapter 11, "Popular Prose in the Post-Classical Period," pp. 245–69). The same author tells the story of "*A Thousand and One Nights*," especially the story of its reception, which, in this case, is to a certain extent also the story of its genesis (chapter 12, pp. 270–91). A lively picture of the "*Sīrat ‘Antar ibn Shaddād*" is drawn by Remke Kruk (chapter 13, pp. 292–306). Especially remarkable is her elaboration of the "feminist" aspect of the epic. Equally informative is the article on "*Sīrat Banī Hilāl*," again by Reynolds (chapter 14, pp. 307–18). Peter Heath's "Other Sīras and Popular Narratives," especially strong on bringing out a typology of the different epics, could well have served as an introduction to the whole *sīrah* section. Some overlapping could have been avoided, but the principle of editorial minimalism proved stronger (chapter 15, pp. 319–29). Though one would miss Kamal Abdel-Malek's chapter on "Popular Religious Narratives," its connection to the period in question and the section "popular prose" remains somewhat vague (chapter 16, pp. 330–44). A chapter on the popular anthology, important as it is for an understanding of the intellectual world of the middle classes, is missing.<sup>19</sup>

Six good articles, but the whole is not more than the sum of its parts, because no conclusive picture about the social place of a distinct literary phenomenon emerges. This is mainly due to the lack of a consistent concept of "popular" and "elite" that could serve as a basis for all the articles. Let us see how the authors tried to help themselves out of the dilemma.

At first, one would assume that "popular literature" should be "popular" in a certain way. However, in Reynolds' article on the *Nights* we read that "the *Nights* was neither a highly regarded nor even a particularly popular work during these centuries." Given the small number of manuscripts and references to it, Reynolds is certainly right. But this confronts us with the remarkable phenomenon of "unpopular popular literature." Obviously, the term "popular" is not as self-evident as the editors seem to suppose. Similar to Allen's introductory remarks, Reynolds tries a definition according to linguistic criteria. According to him, popular texts of the pre-modern period are those "that preserve or imitate to varying degrees a colloquial aesthetic" (p. 246)—"colloquial" in the sense of "colloquial Arabic" (*ibid.*).

<sup>19</sup> See Thomas Bauer, "Literarische Anthologien der Mamlukenzeit," *Die Mamluken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur: Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942–1999)*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam (Hamburg, 2003), 71–122, esp. 98–106, and Giovanni Canova, "Una pagina di *al-Kanz al-madfūn* sugli uomini più illustri," *Ultra mare: Mélanges de langue arabe et d'islamologie offerts à Aubert Martin*, ed. Frédéric Bauden (Louvain, 2004), 93–107.



Though the point is important, it is not enough for a definition of the “popular.” If it were, Abdel-Malek’s contribution would have no place in this section because none of the texts treated by him display any elements of colloquial language. On the other hand, the historiographic writings of Ibn Duqmāq (d. 809/1496), one of the *awlād al-nās* and certainly a member of the social elite, display a reasonable amount of colloquial influence. Ibn Ḥajar, who drew heavily on Ibn Duqmāq’s writings, cannot help stating that Ibn Duqmāq, “despite his passion for literature and history, was bare of the clothes of the Arabic language, and his speech was vulgar (*‘ammī al-‘ibārah*).”<sup>20</sup> Should one, then, establish a new category “popular historiography”? (Note that the name of Ibn Duqmāq is not mentioned in the book under review).

The colloquial element is central in the poetry of the *zajal*. In the east, the *zajal* first flourished at the turn of the seventh–eighth/thirteenth–fourteenth centuries. Its most important early representative was al-Maḥḥār (d. 711/1311). His *diwān* contains the remarkable number of 37 *azjāl*, which represent a major corpus of the eastern *zajal* in its earlier period. Of middle class origin, he soon became the court poet of the Ayyubid branch that still reigned in the province of Ḥamāh in the Mamluk era. Some of his *azjāl* display a definite middle-class flavor,<sup>21</sup> but he used this form also to praise ulama and members of the ruling dynasty (note that the name of al-Maḥḥār is not mentioned in the book under review). It is obvious that the *zajal* tradition became firmly rooted in the courtly milieu of Ḥamāh, which is not a “popular” milieu at all. Still Ibn Nubātah, the most elite poet of the period, found it inevitable to compose—however reluctantly—a panegyric *zajal* on Abū al-Fidā’, then ruler of Ḥamāh known by his regnal title al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad.<sup>22</sup> An elite poet, addressing a panegyric poem to an author of several scholarly books who happens to be at the same time a most distinguished governor of a province, bearing the title of a sultan—if this is not elite, what is? It is only too obvious, therefore, that the linguistic form of a work of literature is not enough to serve as a shibboleth between elite and popular literature.

Obviously, the social background of Mamluk literature is different from the expectations of the editors. Allen’s statement that “we have a . . . representative sample of the literary productions of the elite, often centered around the court” (p. 19) reflects the idea of a modern Western intellectual about how “medieval” literature should be. But it has little to do with reality. Instead, the court (which court?) did not play a major role in Mamluk literature any more, since there were

<sup>20</sup> See *MSR* 7, [no. 1] (2003): 257–62.

<sup>21</sup> See *MSR* 10, no. 1 (2006): 211–13.

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Nubātah published it in his *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah*; and it is quoted in nearly all manuscripts of his *Diwān*, but not in the printed version; see my “The Works of Ibn Nubātah,” forthcoming in this journal.



few courts left in which Arabic poetry played a role. The major exceptions were courts in areas not addressed in this volume (Maghrib, Yemen), and the short-lived court of the Ayyubids in Ḥamāh, mentioned above. But precisely this court was a center of vernacular poetry! Allen fails to notice that Mamluk literature (and probably Ottoman literature as well), as it has come down to us, is mainly a bourgeois phenomenon. The ulama did not compose poetry for a court, but for other members of their own social group, and the standards of ulama poetry were adopted to a large extent even by members of the artisan middle class, as the poetry of al-Mi‘mār and other craftsmen shows.<sup>23</sup> The ulama elite was not in principle against “popular” literature, but since mastery of flawless classical Arabic was one of their main means of distinction, they hesitated to produce texts in the vernacular. Yet there are some, and, more important, elite ulama were among the readers and admirers of vernacular poetry. Thus it is no wonder that a secretary of the chancellery and elite poet like ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Mawṣilī (d. 789/1387) “adorned,” as he says, the *diwān* of the popular poet al-Mi‘mār with a pompous preface.<sup>24</sup> The contrast between ‘Izz al-Dīn’s sophisticated rhymed prose and the vernacular *azjāl* on sex and drugs in the later part of al-Mi‘mār’s *diwān* could hardly be greater, nor could there be any more instructive proof that there was no clear-cut boundary between the popular and the elite in Mamluk times. Instead, there was a continuum that reached from the *mawwāl* of the illiterate, the poetry—partly in the vernacular, partly in often deviant standard language—of the artisans, the *muṭāraḥāt* of ulama who cultivated poetry as a pastime and a means of presenting themselves as a perfect “gentilhuomo,” to the extreme end of the highly sophisticated creations of the professional *udabā’*. All these creations, however, belonged to a single poetic world, that was governed by a set of similar aesthetic norms and subtle social mechanisms that determined which sort of literary text was to be produced or read/heard at which social occasion and in which linguistic form. This issue, which is not only central to the history of Mamluk literature, but also essential for the understanding of Mamluk society as a whole, has hardly been touched upon in scholarship so far. The arrangement of the book under review even fosters the notion of a dichotomy between “elite” and “popular” and thus impedes scholarly progress rather than encouraging it.

While “popular prose” received six chapters, the section “popular poetry” has only one, albeit long and important: “Popular Poetry in the Post-Classical Period, 1150–1850” by Margaret Larkin (chapter 10, pp. 191–242). In her article, Larkin discusses many of the features mentioned above. She is well aware of

<sup>23</sup> See Thomas Bauer, “Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār: Ein dichtender Handwerker aus Ägyptens Mamlukenzeit,” *ZDMG* 152 (2002): 63–93. There is a strange preoccupation with courts in this volume. On p. 83 even the stonemason and architect al-Mi‘mār is labelled a “court poet.”

<sup>24</sup> See “Dīwān al-Mi‘mār,” Dār al-Kutub MS 673 Shi‘r Taymūr, fols. 1v–2r.



the difficulties in defining the popular and the elite and stresses several times that there is no clear-cut division between them. She is right in emphasizing the fact that members of different social layers “shared much in the way of cultural paradigms and life experience, including the use of colloquial language in their everyday lives” and that members of the elite often enjoyed popular poetry in non-standard form (p. 193). As one of the reasons for the fact that the Mamluk era was “the heyday of popular Arabic literature” she identifies a “blossoming of the middle strata of society, including craftsmen and shopkeepers” (p. 220). For this group, in which literacy must have been quite widespread (p. 220), she uses the felicitous term “petite bourgeoisie” (pp. 194, 219, 222). While I completely agree with her sociological analysis, Larkin perhaps overestimates the role of patronage for Mamluk literature. There were hardly any professional poets in this period, who depended entirely on poetry for their livelihood. Most poetry was composed by persons who made their living mainly as secretaries, religious scholars, traders, or craftsmen. On the other hand, one must not overlook the fact that there was a flourishing book market in the Mamluk period, which provided a more secure income than patronage for an *adīb*. The poet al-Bashtakī derived his entire income working as a scribe and “editor” of books,<sup>25</sup> and with his many popular anthologies, the *adīb* al-Nawājī achieved financial success in the book market.

After general considerations about the nature and background of “popular” poetry, Larkin gives a profound survey of the history and the different forms of strophic poetry in which she happily also includes the Maghrib, Sudan, and the Yemen. Two subsections are dedicated to a more detailed presentation of Mamluk and Ottoman popular poetry. Since her article will become a standard text on its subject, some additions and corrections may be in place here: the poet mentioned on p. 211, line 6, is known as al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī rather than as al-Ḥijāzī al-Anṣārī. Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār “the architect” (mentioned pp. 211, 212) was also known as al-Ḥajjār, “the stone-cutter.” Probably he started as a stone-cutter and acquired more sophisticated skills in the building crafts later. He was never a weaver. Instead, al-Ṣafadī mixed him up with a different person named Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Alī al-Ḥā’ik in his *Wāfi*, but corrected his error later in his *Alḥān al-Sawāji’*.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately,

<sup>25</sup> See Bauer, “The Works of Ibn Nubātah, Part 2,” forthcoming in *MSR*.

<sup>26</sup> See Bauer, “Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār,” 63–93; see also idem, “Die Leiden eines ägyptischen Müllers: Die Mühlen-Maqāme des Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār (st. 749/1348),” *Ägypten–Münster: Kulturwissenschaftliche Studien zu Ägypten, dem Vorderen Orient und verwandten Gebieten (Festschrift Erhart Graefe)*, ed. Anke Ilona Blöbaum et al. (Wiesbaden, 2003), 1–16; and idem, “Das Nilzaḡal des Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār: Ein Lied zur Feier des Nilschwellenfestes,” in *Alltagsleben und materielle Kultur in der arabischen Sprache und Literatur (Festschrift Heinz Grotzfeld)*, ed. Ulrike Stehli-Werbeck and Th. Bauer (Wiesbaden, 2004), 69–88.



Brockelmann chose al-Ḥā'ik as the main part of the poet's name. Nevertheless, he should not be called something other than al-Mi'ṣmār, a name he repeatedly uses himself in his poetry. His *dīwān* does not contain a *kān wa-kān* poem (p. 212), but rather thirty-four *mawwāliyā* and twelve *azjāl* and *balāliq*, in addition to about five hundred epigrams in *fushā* (or what al-Mi'ṣmār considered to be *fushā*). This case shows clearly that the epigram, which is completely ignored in the volume under review, was also an important form of popular literature. Ibn Nubātah composed at least eighteen *muwashshahāt*, but was not a "zajal specialist" (p. 217). There is only the one above-mentioned *zajal* on Abū al-Fidā' and a *bullayq* in the autograph manuscript of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's additions to Ibn Nubātah's *dīwān*,<sup>27</sup> which nicely corroborates the interest of the elite in vernacular poetry. The bowdlerized edition of al-Nawāji's *ʿUqūd al-Laʿālī* (p. 218) is superseded now by the much better edition by Aḥmad Muḥammad ʿAṭā (Cairo, 1999). Ibn Sūdūn did not acquire sufficient religious education to "equip him for a life as . . . [a] religious scholar" (p. 227).<sup>28</sup> Instead, we must reckon the lower-level personnel of madrasahs and mosques such as lamp-lighters, muezzins, and imams as part of the petite bourgeoisie. Many of them may not have had any more religious knowledge than the butcher next door. The existence of this group again demonstrates the continuum between middle class and high-brow ulama. At the present, it is still difficult to assess how much popular poetry has been preserved (p. 231). There may be more than expected. I refer only to the still unpublished text presented by Madeleine Voegeli: "*Manṣūbat Ṣafā l-ʿaiṣ*—ein volkstümliches, ägyptisch-arabisches Zaḡal aus dem 17. Jahrhundert," *Asiatische Studien* 50 (1996): 463–78.

A few words on the five chapters dealing with "elite prose" shall conclude this section.

Muhsin al-Musawi's survey article on "Pre-Modern Belletristic Prose" (chapter 5, pp. 101–33) is certainly one of the best contributions in this volume. The author is familiar with the enormous output of the prose literature of the Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman period and its multifariousness, which does not fail to impress him: "The sheer variety of prose-writing surveyed in this chapter attests to the existence of a dynamic culture characterized by the active involvement of *littérateurs*, widespread networks and a magnanimous devotion to the world of writing" (p. 132). More than most other contributors he succeeds in putting the literary works into their proper social context. He does not look for nonexistent courts, but points to the overwhelming importance of the chancellery and other learned milieus for the literature of the period. These findings enable him to

<sup>27</sup> Göttingen, 8o Cod. Ms. arab. 179, fols. 59r–v.

<sup>28</sup> See *MSR* 7, [no. 1] (2003): 267–72.



explain the stylistic properties of different genres in an unprejudiced way. Contrary to Salma Jayyusi, who complains about a “lack of virility” (see below), al-Musawi appreciates the stylist’s “quest for elegance” (p. 109) and notices the broad stylistic range of the texts of this period. This literature’s “variety, richness and energy defy sweeping generalizations. Indeed it calls for a more serious and careful analysis. . . .” (p. 133). Would that all editors and contributors had followed this maxim!

The chapters on “The Essay and Debate (*al-Risāla and al-Munāẓara*)” by Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila (chapter 6, pp. 134–44) and on “The *Maqāma*” by Devin Stewart (chapter 7, pp. 145–58) are too short to give a comprehensive idea of the rich output in these fields. It turns out further that it is hard to distinguish between *risālah*, *maqāmah*, and *munāẓarah* without doing injustice to the autochthonous understanding of these notions. Stewart’s concept of the *maqāmah* is focused too strongly on the Ḥarīrian *maqāmah*. The wealth of forms and subjects of the latter *maqāmāt* appears as a deviation from the classical model rather than as an enrichment. Both contributions are hampered by the fact that the contributors do not treat texts that are still in manuscript, which, however, is the case for the majority of the texts relevant to these chapters.

The inadequate short chapter on “Mamluk History and Historians” (chapter 8, pp. 159–70) by Robert Irwin can hardly be called a scholarly contribution. Its last sentence, according to which the “Mamluk age was obsessed by the past and we cannot mention here all who ventured to write history” (p. 170), true as it may be, is a weak excuse for the lack of any discernable concept. Sometimes one cannot help but feel that Irwin followed the method of one of the historiographers which he, for whatever reason, chose to mention at the expense of more important ones. “When Qirtāy was bored or short of information, he made things up and his chronicle contains the most fantastic misinformation” (p. 164). Let us take a paragraph from page 162. Here we read the following sentences, none of which can go unchallenged: “Al-Kutubī . . . and Ibn Kathīr . . . were the last prominent representatives of the Syrian ‘*ulamā*’ school of historiography.” What about Ibn Ḥabīb and Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah? “Al-Ṣafadī . . . believed in history as a vehicle for moral uplift.” What gave Irwin that idea? “. . . [Y]et he wrote no chronicle. Instead he produced . . . the *Wāfi*. . . . He also produced two smaller biographical compendia, on blind persons and on contemporaries.” There is another one on one-eyed persons and another on the rulers and governors of Damascus. Irwin continues by saying that al-Ṣafadī “produced, among other things, a *maqāma* on wine.” I know of no such *maqāmah*; perhaps he misunderstood the title *Rashf al-Rahīq fī Waṣf al-Ḥarīq*—“a quantity of pederastic verse”; perhaps he means the *Law‘at al-Shākī*, which is a *maqāmah* and, in any case, quite mislabeled as being



“pederastic verse,”<sup>29</sup> “. . . and a famous poem on the beauty spot (*khāl*).” Famous the text is indeed, but not to Irwin who otherwise would have realized that it is an anthology of epigrams written by many different authors. Irwin goes on: “He also interested himself in occult matters and wrote on alchemy as well as on *malāḥim* (disasters prefiguring the end of the world).” As a matter of fact, al-Ṣafadī never wrote on *malāḥim* or any related subject, and he was an outspoken opponent of alchemy. In his *Al-Ghayth al-Musajjam*, which is an anthology ordered in the form of a commentary on al-Ṭughrā’ī’s *Lāmīyat al-‘Ajām*, al-Ṣafadī starts with a biography of al-Ṭughrā’ī. Since al-Ṭughrā’ī was an alchemist, al-Ṣafadī takes up the subject, discusses the pros and cons, and comes to reject it vehemently. But since alchemy provides a lot of nice concepts for love poetry, the literary side of alchemy becomes the main aspect of al-Ṣafadī’s chapter.<sup>30</sup> This grave misunderstanding of al-Ṣafadī would have been reason enough for the editors to intervene, as is also the strange fact that, of all articles, an article on history and historiography does not give the hijrah dates.

More carefully written is Michael Winter’s contribution on “Historiography in Arabic during the Ottoman period” (chapter 9, pp. 171–88). It is a detailed presentation of Ottoman period historiography in the central Arab lands (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq). In a volume on literature, more information about the literary aspects of the chronicles mentioned would have been desirable. The diaries, such as the sensational *Al-Ta‘līq* by Ibn Ṭawq (874–915/1430–1509), are not mentioned. The original version of the chronicle written by the barber Ibn Budayr is not lost (p. 182), but preserved in a Chester Beatty manuscript.<sup>31</sup>

The lack of a uniform system of dating is symptomatic of the carelessness with which the book as a whole was produced. To give but two more examples: on p. 123, Ibn Ḥabīb is mentioned for the first time. The dates of his birth and death are given correctly. For whatever reason, the index refers to this page calling him Ibn Ḥabīb al-Dimashqī (p. 123). On pp. 144 and 158 he is called by his more common *nisbah* Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī. Though on p. 144 the date of his death (but not of his birth) is given, we are surprised to read on p. 158 “death date unknown.” In the index, Ibn Ḥabīb is split into two persons, a Dimashqī and a Ḥalabī. Al-Khafāji is subjected to a similar schizophrenization (p. 469).

<sup>29</sup> On the work see Everett K. Rowson, “Two Homoerotic Narratives from Mamlūk Literature: al-Ṣafadī’s *Law‘at al-shāki* and Ibn Dānyāl’s *al-Mutayyam*,” in *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, ed. J. W. Wright, Jr., and Everett K. Rowson (New York, 1997), 158–91.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Ghayth al-Musajjam fi Sharḥ Lāmīyat al-‘Ajām* (Beirut, 1411/1990), esp. 1:22.

<sup>31</sup> See Dana Sajdi, “A Room of His Own: The ‘History’ of the Barber of Damascus (fl. 1762),” *The MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (2003): 19–35.



#### 4. MAMLUK POETRY: FORGOTTEN BY THE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT?

The article by Salma Jayyusi prompts two questions: First, why does a scholar who has earned indubitable merit in several fields of Arabic literary history choose to write about one on which she is poorly informed and for which she displays a disquieting lack of empathy? And second, why do the editors publish an article that falls far short of scholarly standards?

We have to deal with this article in more detail for several reasons. First, its position as the first chapter of the book and its title “Arabic Poetry in the Post-Classical Age” (pp. 25–59) suggest that it is meant to be one of the central articles of the volume. Second, it is an aggregation of virtually all common prejudices against Mamluk and Ottoman literature.<sup>32</sup>

The first phenomenon that strikes the reader is Jayyusi’s concept of literature, which is completely ahistoric. It is inconceivable to her that the perception of a literary period is necessarily shaped by the literary background and the value system of the critic. These factors are subject to change and therefore the perception of whole periods of art are constantly undergoing change. One need only point to the term “gothic,” which was coined as a derogatory term, while the Gothic period is considered nowadays one of the greatest periods of European art history. In a similar way, the term “baroque” was created to denounce the art of a whole period, and not too much time has elapsed since the time when baroque literature (quite similar to much of Arabic poetry) had been considered a senseless aggregation of silly word-play, and baroque opera as the most idle thing that has ever appeared on the stage. In the meantime, Gryphius, Marino, and Donne have taken their proper places in the history of literature again, and many opera lovers are of the not-entirely-unjustified opinion that the revival of baroque opera was one of the most exciting occurrences on the stage during the last fifty years. For any historian of art and literature who deserves this name, it has become commonplace not to rely blindly on personal taste, but to critically question the standards she/he is applying to the object of research. Not so for Salma Jayyusi. While the Arab critics of the period in question were quite aware of the fact that the taste of the audience changes through the centuries and that to appeal to a certain taste is not yet enough to qualify a text as good or bad, Jayyusi does not consider such changes significant, and thus neglects a significant aspect of the way modern scholarship has come to consider literary history. Instead, literature is the manifestation of an essence that is not subject to historic change. Jayyusi does not ask about the background of a poetic text. Her only concern is if the text is part of “the poetic”—Jayyusi uses the word with the definite article—or rather,

<sup>32</sup> It is amazing how exactly Jayyusi’s article corroborates the list of prejudices against Mamluk poetry that I drew up in my article “Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches,” *MSR* 9, no. 2 (2005): 105–32.



“the genuinely poetic” (p. 57). In her essentialist conception, it is “the essence of poetry” (p. 29) or the “poetic essence” (p. 41), imbued with “the essence of a free Arab spirit” (p. 38) to capture the “human essence” (p. 29), “the essence of life” (p. 29).

According to this conception, the history of poetry is simply the history of the realization of the immutable “poetic essence.” Consequently, the expectations and reactions of contemporary audiences are of no importance whatsoever. Thus Jayyusi can say in her critique of Ibn ‘Unayn’s style with its alleged “use of new and still unidiomatic words and the coining of new derivatives” that “such a technique manages only to shock the reader’s sensibility with its alien effect, stunting any possible achievement of emotional and rhythmic fulfillment in the poem” (p. 44). But what if Ibn ‘Unayn’s readers were not shocked? What if they considered the poem perfectly emotionally and rhythmically fulfilled (whatever “rhythmic fulfillment” may mean exactly)? For Jayyusi this would make no difference at all, because the audience of this decadent age, estranged as it was from “the poetic essence,” had no ability to judge what is shocking and what is not. Even worse, this very audience prevented the “poetic essence” from coming to light. Unnoticed by this audience, however, there was something great and unchangeable in the background, something like “the broad, ever living memory of Arabic poetry” (p. 51). “Ever living”? Obviously not, since the sentence in which this phrase occurs deals with poems by al-Shābb al-Zarīf that even Jayyusi finds “gentle and musical.” However, she asks, “one wonders why the poems in question failed to enter the broad, ever living memory of Arabic poetry” (p. 51). But how can she know how actively al-Shābb al-Zarīf’s poems were memorized during the Mamluk period? Judging by the many quotations of his poems in anthologies, I would guess that they were memorized for well over several centuries. Even though it may have been memorized by thousands of people over several centuries, all this is of no relevance whatsoever to the author, who evaluates the poetry of this period against the standard of an unchanging “poetic essence.” Stating that there was “no single poetic genius” during the period in question, Jayyusi then proceeds to modify this statement in a most revealing way: “Many such were surely born, and yet the development of their talents was hampered by the standards and expectations in vogue during their lifetime” (p. 39). Poetry, in this conception, has nothing to do with its time and audience, but is an unchangeable entity that incarnates itself in poetic geniuses. Society’s only role in this model is to help or to hinder the poetic essence in its natural growth in its genius.

Jayyusi arrogates for herself the competence to define the aesthetic criteria according to which all poetry of all periods must be measured. This is not only contrary to the established premises and methods of literary scholarship, but, even more, the criteria applied by Jayyusi sometimes seem bizarre. So we read in



a short passage on p. 27, headlined “An unstable world,” that pre-Islamic Arabia was a stable world, whereas the advent of Islam with its “unique capacity to maintain an a-racial attitude” shattered this very stability and planted the seeds of instability. “Once converted, a new Muslim was accepted into the community of believers without undue regard for origin, race or color. But while this may be regarded as a superior quality in Islam, it was not conducive to a continuation of the old stability.” (p. 27) Re-reading the passage time after time, I cannot help but read as its central message that in principle, it is the racial egalitarianism of Islam that brought about the mess of the “period of decadence.” This basis of Jayyusi’s conception of literature helps us to find the place where, according to this conception, the “poetic essence” and the “ever living memory” of Arabic poetry has been situated all this time, concealed, but still present: it is in the Arab race itself, in which there has always been the “enduring latent power of a once great poetry” (p. 59), though this could not manifest itself in times of “extraneous linguistic intrusions” (p. 37), and therefore “its vigour diminished . . . hemmed in by the circumstances of Arab life” (ibid.). Little surprise then that it is the pre-Islamic period against which the Mamluk and Ottoman poets have to be measured, because this was the only period in which “a free Arab spirit, linking creative expression to the roots of the soul and imbuing it with the vision and meaning of life and living” (p. 38) could unfold. The author goes on to portray a picture of the pre-Islamic Arabs that is similar to the way the pure and heroic ancestors were portrayed during the many outbreaks of ideological madness during the European twentieth century: “How estranged had the Arabs of the urban centuries become from the values of the Arabs . . . who had aestheticized their contradictions through the eloquent sayings of the poets . . . tenderness, devotion and selflessness towards women and love, but also a defiant and boastful self-centredness in tribal hostilities . . . , generosity and hospitality, but also a relentless aggression bent on plunder and the use of force for survival? This was the law of the desert, of scarcity and aridity, and it organized their life, gave it shape and challenge, and filled it with nostalgia, a constant sense of loss, a perennial craving for the impossible, for a constantly receding point of anchor, for a love that will be never requited . . .” (p. 38).

So there we are, with the pure Arab spirit of the *jāhiliyah*, which was revived to a certain degree by al-Mutanabbī to yield a second climax of Arabic literature (p. 27), and to be destroyed by the foreign intruders of the period of decadence. But the “true poetic spirit” lived on in the Arab race. Blinded by her nationalist ideology, Jayyusi claims in an amazingly anachronistic way that even in the dark times of decadence there “was a basic concept of Arab literary identity . . . , and it made poetry and literature not a regional but rather a national cultural output” (p. 39). Thanks to this everlasting Arab spirit, poetry could be revived by “the great



neoclassicist" "Aḥmad Shawqī . . . and the poetry of some leading modernists such as Adūnīs . . ." (p. 38), totally irrelevant as all this is to a history of the literature between the Abbasid and the modern period. In her article on poetry of the Mamluk and Ottoman period, Jayyusi mentions more poets from the periods before and after than from the period in question itself. She praises al-Akḥṭal, Abū Tammām, al-Buḥṭurī, al-Mutanabbī, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (p. 33); she hails Shawqī, Gibrān Khalīl Gibrān, Badawī al-Jabal, Adūnīs, Badr Shākīr al-Sayyāb, Maḥmūd Darwish (p. 38), but does not mention al-Maḥḥār, al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, al-Āthārī, al-Damāmīnī, al-Ḥājirī, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ḥammāmī, al-Qīrātī, al-Talla‘farī, al-‘Azāzī, Ibn Maṭrūḥ, Ibn Qurnāṣ, ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Mawṣilī, or Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī, to mention only a few major Mamluk poets that are treated nowhere in the volume.

Instead we learn that the "universal poetic spirit" is embodied in the Arab race and manifested itself in the poetry of the *jāhiliyyah* and the few centuries during which its "power" still lasted. But already the Umayyad period (on which Jayyusi has made some lucid notes in her contribution in the Cambridge History of Arabic Literature *‘Abbasid Belles-Lettres* volume) is marred by the "‘Umar ibn Abī Rabī‘ah . . . syndrome" (p. 49), an abominable degeneration that consists of enjoying one's life without feeling guilt. In the typical schizophrenia that characterizes many pro-Western intellectuals of the Arab world, who hail Western liberal modernity and at the same time are stuck in puritan Victorian morality, she complains: ". . . rarely do we encounter a genuine spiritual conflict in poems where the poet describes wine drinking and frolicking. On the contrary, the treatment of the subject is often lighthearted, and the notion of sin and punishment is not usually a disturbing, heart-wrenching experience" (p. 29). Again and again she laments the "failure of the era to uphold moral ideals" (p. 43) and grumbles about the "poets of decadent morality (*mujūn*) with whom the age abounded" (p. 47). And indeed, a period during which people enjoyed life, sex without guilt, and racial harmony—what a horrible world this must have been!

This urban, tolerant, and cosmopolitan culture, a culture of refinement, sophistication, and elegance, a culture of friendship, love of beauty, and wit, is not Jayyusi's world. She yearns for a culture of primitive heroism ("poems pulsating with life and pregnant with the vision of glory and infallibility," p. 27), of puritanism and sexual guilt, in which a fascination with beauty has to be rejected for not being "a decisive avowal of an exclusive emotion" (p. 51). Love is a "universal experience" (pp. 48, 51) the true nature of which is as unchangeable as the "poetic essence." For all times and cultures it is true that it "is always the particularity and exclusivity of love, its transcendence of beauty and physical qualities, that really matters. The whole period, it must be said, exhibits this deficit, the love it offers being more dependent on physical passion and desire than on any absorbing and abiding attachment" (p. 51). Throughout the article,



Jayyusi displays a strange obsession with the subject of sexuality, which is raised in half of the pages of the chapter; see pp. 29 (“sex”), 35 (“homosexuality,” “promiscuity,” “sexual satiety”), 38 (“perverse and graphic sexual depictions”), 39 (“homosexual poetry”), 41 (“heterosexual and homosexual”), 42 (“homosexual,” “sexual promiscuity”), 43 (“sexual imagery of a graphic and repellent quality”), 44 (“reckless sexual escapades”), 47 (“decadent morality”), 48 (“erotic encounters,” “addiction to pleasure”), 51 (“physical passion and desire”), 53 (“homosexuality,” “polygamous outlook on love and sexuality”), 54 (“homosexual and heterosexual”). Jayyusi does not consider the social and mental history of love and sexuality, and ignores studies that have been written on this subject in recent years. Instead, the subject of sexuality is raised mainly to defame the period as morally decadent and to contrast it with her prudish concept of heroism. This heroism is “virile” but asexual. It is revealing that whereas sexuality is only mentioned in a degrading way, “virility” is seen as the main quality of poetry. The words “virility” and “virile” occur five times throughout the article (pp. 26, 29, 31, 40, 41). “Virility,” however, was not a goal sought by Mamluk and Ottoman Arabic authors, whereas “elegance” was. However, the word “elegance” does not appear even once in Jayyusi’s article.

Given this attitude towards her subject, an impartial scholarly treatment of any of its aspects cannot be expected. Her only concern is to draw as negative a picture of the period in question as possible. Therefore, there is little point in trying to refute her attacks against Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk (too much “sexual promiscuity” and therefore—?—too many “intricate figures of speech,” p. 42), Ibn ‘Unayn (“reckless sexual escapades,” p. 44), al-Bahā’ Zuhayr (“lacks a vision of life or of the future,” p. 48), al-Shābb al-Zarīf (“lacks the necessary immediacy,” p. 51), al-Ḥillī (considers “wine drinking and homosexuality . . . a source of amazement,” p. 53), and Ibn Nubātah (“senses little depth or philosophy of life,” p. 56). For every one of them Jayyusi manages to find a criterion according to which the poet in question cuts a poor figure. Further, to depreciate the later Mamluk and Ottoman poets, she states that “‘Umar Mūsā Bāshā, the scholar best known for his specialization on the Syrian poets of this era, closes his study with al-Shābb al-Zarīf.” Did this great scholar, the indefatigable fighter against prejudice and the protagonist of a revaluation of the Mamluk and Ottoman period, deserve this treatment? Did he deserve to be mentioned as a crown-witness for the feeble state of Ottoman literature while his pioneering work on ‘Umar al-Yāfi<sup>33</sup> is not mentioned a single time in the whole volume? His is, by the way, the only book-length study known to me that is dedicated to an Arabic poet of the Ottoman period, and since it is furthermore a good study, it should be a central point in

<sup>33</sup> ‘Umar Mūsā Bāshā, *Quṭb al-‘Aṣr ‘Umar al-Yāfi* (Damascus, 1996).



every discussion of Ottoman Arabic poetry. In the entire volume under review, however, *neither* al-Yāfi *nor* ‘Umar Mūsá’s study on him are mentioned even once! And what is true for ‘Umar Mūsá’s study on al-Yāfi is also true for his groundbreaking study on Ibn Nubātah,<sup>34</sup> perhaps the best contribution to the history of Mamluk literature in the Arabic language, which Jayyusi ignores. Since I cannot believe that a person writing about Mamluk literature who knows the name of ‘Umar Mūsá has never heard of this scholar’s principal work, which first appeared in 1963 and is available now in a third edition, I can only conclude that she does not mention it on purpose because it contradicts her thesis. Thus, the most important monograph ever written on a poet of the Mamluk period is in all probability *purposely omitted* from this volume, which claims to be a standard work on this period!

It is quite clear by now that Jayyusi tries to portray everything in the darkest possible colors, and everything that cannot be portrayed in an outright negative fashion is nevertheless seen against a negative background. So nature poetry is not a sign of the love of nature or a new, individualistic, and completely non-medieval perspective on nature, but only an “escape . . . from tiresome external demands” (p. 36), “a refuge from the burden of eulogy” (p. 37), and we learn that flower poems (p. 36: read *zahrīyāt* instead of *zuhriyāt*) “lacked any active communication with the human condition” (p. 37). Though I do not know exactly what “to actively communicate with the human condition” means, it is clear enough to me that it probably cannot be accomplished by flower poems or Chopin waltzes. But I cannot see how this speaks against them. I, for my part, do not play Chopin waltzes in order to communicate with the human condition but to find a charming entertainment, and I read flower poems to enjoy poetic imagination and to be surprised by a pointed literary conceit. It is, after all, not the task of a work of art to communicate with the human condition or the world spirit, but with the audience.

It is Jayyusi’s practice to prescribe for every theme, form, and genre what it *should* do in order to be able to criticize the poets for not having done exactly that. Jayyusi never asks what the poets themselves wanted to accomplish, which, of course, is the only standard according to which they can be measured. For just as one cannot blame Chopin for not having composed Beethoven’s ninth symphony, one cannot blame Ibn Qurnāṣ for not having composed al-Mutanabbī’s ode on al-Ḥadath. Ibn Qurnāṣ, by the way, is the author of some of the most charming nature epigrams of the period. His name does not appear anywhere in the volume under review. His *Dīwān* is unpublished, but al-Ṣafadī, who held him in great esteem, quotes him quite often in his *Al-Kashf wa-al-Tanbīh ‘alá Waṣf al-Tashbīh*, ed. Hilāl

<sup>34</sup> ‘Umar Mūsá Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣri: Amīr Shu‘arā’ al-Mashriq* (Cairo, 1963, 3rd ed. 1992).



Nājī (Leeds, 1420/1999), which is a rich source of Mamluk nature poetry, and is not mentioned by Jayyusi.

Let us have a brief look at what Jayyusi has to say about nature poetry. In her enthusiasm for *jāhili* virility, Jayyusi cannot find much worth in Abbasid descriptive poetry. Though “fully artistic, fully inventive,” it was nothing but “a solution for poets who had reached the end of their tolerance of the age of poetic utilitarianism” (p. 37). It is not easy to make sense out of this utterance. At least it is clear that, according to its author, descriptive poetry of the Abbasid period is not of great value. But if it is so in Abbasid times, it must be even worse in Mamluk times. Therefore Jayyusi continues: “During the period under study, poets continued to compose such miniatures with inventive, though often dispassionate, skill.” What makes her assume that Ibn Qurnāṣ felt less passion towards dewdrops than al-Ṣanawbarī did? Jayyusi continues: “Yet the search for novelty did not abate, as these purely descriptive examples were independent of other themes.” On p. 30, this literature is disparaged for its “repetition,” and now it is faulted for its “search for novelty”—what could these poets have done to satisfy Salma Jayyusi? What, after all, is wrong with descriptive poetry that is descriptive? And the rest of the sentence is simply wrong, for among the most impressive longer nature descriptions of the Mamluk period were the introductory parts of hunting poems and letters. Different from Abbasid hunting literature, a Mamluk hunting *urjūzah* or a *risālah ṭardīyah* inevitably started with a long description of the breaking of dawn and the awaking of nature, until the hunting party set forth on their hunt. Here description is not at all “independent of other themes.” Jayyusi, however, does not treat Mamluk hunting literature. And so she continues: “As greater affectation seeped in and the impact of external forces became overriding, poets became increasingly preoccupied with linguistic devices applicable to all themes. Gradually a greater artificiality can be seen in the use of poetic conceits and the vast array of figures of speech fashionable at the time” (p. 37). Even granted that by “linguistic devices” she means “stylistic devices,” the sentence does not become much clearer. As we have known since antiquity, stylistic devices are used to bring about a certain effect on the audience. The theory of rhetoric, however, has no “overriding external forces” or “inseeping affectations” on its agenda. But even if the reader tries to make some sense out of this statement, it is still wrong, since al-Ṣafadī’s, Ibn Nubātah’s, and Ibn Qurnāṣ’s descriptive poetry is by no means more mannered and loaded with stylistic devices than that of the Abbasid period. On the contrary, while young Ibn Ḥabīb tried to show off by imitating the Abbasid metaphor-based *conchetto* (simply to demonstrate that he could do this as well),<sup>35</sup> most other authors used a simpler style or used *tawriyah*

<sup>35</sup> See Thomas Bauer, “‘Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!’ Das poetische Erstlingswerk des Historikers Ibn Ḥabīb im Spiegel seiner Zeitgenossen,” in *Festschrift Hartmut Bobzin*, forthcoming.



to please the audience with the intelligent use of *double entendre*, which, by the way, was not an idle play on words unrelated to the "human condition," but in very direct and immediate relation to the world view of the time.<sup>36</sup>

In the course of her discussion of descriptive poetry Jayyusi gives a fragmentary and wrong (*uqḥuwān* does not mean "daisies") translation of a poem ascribed to Ibn al-Muʿtazz (p. 36). It is surprising that Jayyusi, who mostly quotes Mamluk poetry second hand on the basis of al-Farrūkh's *Tārīkh al-Adab al-ʿArabī*, fails here also to check this Abbasid poem in the *Dīwān* of Ibn al-Muʿtazz. Had she done this, she would have noticed that the lines quoted start with a motif of love poetry (and therefore are not independent of other themes), and that the lines occur there in a different order.<sup>37</sup>

So we see that all the reader of the chapter on "descriptive poetry" in the article on "postclassical poetry" gains is some pseudo-psychological considerations about descriptive poetry as a means to escape a (nonexistent) constraint on panegyric poetry, two mistranslated lines taken randomly from a poem by an author who does not belong to the period in question, and a lot of erroneous and disparaging remarks about a form of poetry of which the author is clearly not well informed. But a reader of the volume, who wants to learn more about Mamluk and Ottoman Arabic literature, has a right to get an answer to questions like: Who were the protagonists of descriptive poetry during the period in question? What themes and motifs did they use? What did they describe? Is there a difference between the role of nature poetry in Syria and in Egypt (indeed there is)? Was there a continuation of the flourishing nature poetry of the Mamluk period in the Ottoman period? As to the last question, Jayyusi has not the slightest idea. Neither do I, having read nothing but a few nature poems by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿAydārūs (1135–93/1722–78), another poet, well known and highly regarded in his time, who goes completely unmentioned in the volume under review.<sup>38</sup> But instead of telling the readers that Ottoman descriptive poetry, which seems to have produced some interesting specimens in the field of nature poetry, has not yet been studied enough to allow further judgment, Jayyusi announces her verdict that all of this literature is worthless.

It seems obvious by now that Jayyusi has never read the most important texts of the period and does not value the secondary literature about it in whatever language. Since she clearly does not know much about Mamluk and Ottoman

<sup>36</sup> I attempted some preliminary considerations in my article "Ibn Ḥajar and the Arabic Ghazal of the Mamluk Age," in *Ghazal as World Literature I: Transformations of a Literary Genre*, ed. Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth (Beirut, 2005), 35–55, esp. 44–48, but the whole topic needs more study.

<sup>37</sup> See *Dīwān Shiʿr Ibn al-Muʿtazz*, ed. Yūnus A. al-Sāmarrāʾī (Beirut, 1997), 2:594–95.

<sup>38</sup> *Dīwān al-ʿAydārūs al-Musammá Tarwīḥ al-Bāl wa-Tahyij al-Balbāl* (Cairo, 1418/1998).



society, her chapter on eulogy (pp. 32–34) lacks substance, and to declare that the “postclassical” poet was “a mere pawn at the mercy of princes and leaders who controlled his livelihood” (p. 36) reveals her lack of knowledge about the social role of poetry during these periods. Surprisingly, she considers Ibn Ḥijjah’s *Khizānat* (sic, instead of *Khazānat*) *al-Adab* “a study of the poetic art of al-Sharaf al-Anṣārī” (p. 50). Her translations are at best whimsical, sometimes wrong. The only poem she quotes in the section on Ibn Nubātah is an epigram in which the poet asks for a pair of earrings. The epigram is quoted for no other reason than to disparage Ibn Nubātah and to show that he “was dedicated to the act of asking, sometimes shedding part of his dignity” (p. 56). But here she is quoting a poem she does not understand. Every experienced reader of Mamluk poetry will realize immediately that this two-line epigram has a point at the end of the second line that consists of a double entendre. Clear as this is, the point of the epigram is not easy to understand in this case. There may be an obscenity behind it. In any case, the humorous nature of the epigram is corroborated by the fact that the poem is the first poem of the section *al-mudā‘abah wa-al-mujūn* in Ibn Nubātah’s collection of epigrams entitled *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī*.<sup>39</sup> The whole poem, therefore, is nothing but a joke. Whereas I am ignorant of the double meaning of the last words, Jayyusi is even ignorant of her ignorance.

Jayyusi opines that her “study has been primarily devoted to a process of degeneration” (p. 59), but her contribution, with its arguably racist and homophobic overtones, is an example of the degeneration of Arabic studies. The same is true for Muhammad Lutfi al-Yousfi’s article on “Poetic Creativity in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries” (chapter 2, pp. 60–73), which I will pass over in silence not only because it treats the Ottoman period, but also because to claim that the process of decadence started with the advent of Islam is simply absurd, and to publish this rubbish is an academic scandal. These two articles are a slap in the face of every serious scholar in the field of Mamluk and Ottoman poetry. In the blurb (p. i) we read that this book will be “a unique resource for students and scholars of Arabic literature for many years to come.” Let us hope that this threat will not come true!

<sup>39</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2234, fol. 179r–v.



## Book Reviews

*Al-Mawā'iz wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār li-Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Qādir al-Maqrīzī*. Edited by Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid. Vols. 1–2 (London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1422/2002).

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In the field of historiography, the Egyptian scholar al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) is one of the most renowned and esteemed representatives together with his master and friend, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406). Despite the charges of plagiarism often leveled against him and the assertion that he was a mere compiler, his works are considered to be invaluable for the history of Egypt from the beginning of the Islamic conquest until his time. The most frequently advanced reason for this appraisal lies in the numerous sources, most of which are now considered lost, that were summarized and abridged by al-Maqrīzī in his works. His masterpiece *Al-Mawā'iz wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Athār*, truly original in its conception and plan, the main subject of which is the topographical history of the city of Cairo, remains the unequalled source for historians dealing with Egypt and more particularly Cairo. Acclaimed by his contemporaries, its importance was quickly recognized and it is for this reason that it was among the early texts printed by the nascent Bulāq press. This edition, published in 1853 in 2 volumes, has remained for more than 150 years the standard text, despite its defects and shortcomings. Reprinted several times and the basis of new editions (!)<sup>1</sup> that multiplied its mistakes, the Bulāq version was obviously unsatisfactory and several scholars of the early twentieth century called for a critical edition of this fundamental text. One of them, Gaston Wiet, answered the call and tried to produce a text meeting the standards of critical editing prevailing at that time (i.e., derived from those long established in the field of Classical studies). He produced an edition (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1911–27), praised not only for its scientific method (several manuscripts were collected and collated, the result of which was conscientiously indicated in footnotes) but also as a technical achievement. Five volumes, covering pages 1–322 of the Bulāq edition, were issued. However, this edition, although representing an improvement in comparison to the Bulāq edition, still contained many mistakes (which is confirmed by the numerous *errata* added at the end of each volume) and Wiet decided to put an abrupt end to his

<sup>1</sup>See, for the last of these (ed. Muḥammad Zaynuhum and Madiḥah al-Sharqāwī, Cairo, 1998, 3 vols.), my review in *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (2004): 299.



project once he discovered that more than 170 manuscripts of this work were preserved in libraries around the world. He claimed that it was impossible for a single man to proceed further and that this should be a collective work involving specialists for the various periods covered by the book. This was in 1927 and for the last 75 years nobody has taken up such a project, although similar enterprises were launched (for instance al-Ṣafadī's *Al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafāyāt*, now coming to an end after more than 60 years, al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, and Ibn 'Asākir's *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*).

Finally, Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid decided to make that effort alone. Sayyid opines (vol. 1, introduction p. 4) that, although he is aware of the difficulties one would encounter working alone on such a text, projects involving several scholars, all the more so in the Orient, rarely succeed in producing anything good,<sup>2</sup> and suggests moreover that in his mind this kind of text must be edited by a single individual having a clear and harmonized idea of the whole.<sup>3</sup> But if it is true that collective projects require more time than individual ones, they generally produce an excellent result because of the involvement of several specialists with the same text. Furthermore, the second argument could be valid if the edited text would have represented the expression of the author's reflection on a particular subject (philosophical, juridical, or scientific), requiring from the editor an understanding of the author's overall concept. This is not the case with the *Khīṭat*, which has always been defined as an accumulation of facts compiled by the author from various sources and organized in a very lucid way. In some ways, it is comparable to the work required in the edition of a biographical dictionary or a chronicle. Clearly, some collaboration would have benefitted the final result, as we shall see.

Sayyid is probably the best specialist on Muslim Egypt, especially of the Fatimid period. His many studies and critical editions of important historical sources plainly show that his interests focus on this subject. No one in the Orient was better prepared to undertake such a project. During the past twenty years, he has mainly published sources which were used by al-Maqrīzī in his numerous works and this has placed him in a good position to undertake a critical edition of the *Khīṭat*. He planned to publish the whole text in four volumes together with a final volume consisting of various indexes. At the time we are writing this review, volumes 3 (788 pages) and 4 (1,089 pages in two parts) have already been published, which means that in the space of two years 3,263 pages of critical text have been produced. This implies that the text has not only been published,

<sup>2</sup>“ . . . fa-istaqarra fi yaqīnī anna al-a'māl al-jamā'iyah—wa-‘alā al-akhaṣṣ fi al-sharq—nādiran mā yuktab la-hā al-najāh.”

<sup>3</sup>“ . . . amā anna taḥqīq kitāb mithla al-mawā'iz wa-al-i'tibār yajib an yatimma min qibali shakḥ wāḥid ḥattā yasūda ḍabṭihi [sic] wa-ikhrājīhi [sic] fikr muwaḥḥad munsajim dūna tanāquḍāt.”



but also critically edited, as it clearly appears that the editor has been working on each volume in succession, and that while he was preparing the next volume for publication he was reading at the same time the proofs of the preceding one. In conclusion, each volume was produced in six months, probably a world record in the discipline! We could legitimately fear that the editor has botched his work, but this is definitely not the case. However, it is clear that mistakes, omissions, and shortcomings still exist and that a careful proofreading would have avoided<sup>4</sup> most of them. Nevertheless, the whole is nicely produced and will remain for years the standard edition for this text.

The question that immediately arises in the reader's mind is whether or not this edition may be considered to be a critical and definitive edition of this important work. Before stating our opinion, we would like to describe Sayyid's working method. The editor had at his disposal two volumes of the draft (*musawwadah*)—the second and fourth part of it—covering respectively the contents of volume 2 and the beginning of volume 3, and of the end of volume 3 and volume 4. He had already prepared a critical edition of the second part of the draft, but not of the fourth, which, he says (vol. 1, introduction p. 109), he discovered (*‘athartu ‘alayhā*) during a visit to Istanbul in 2001.<sup>5</sup> In addition, he collected copies of several manuscripts containing various parts of the text. According to him, the number of these manuscripts exceeds 180. Wiet had already gathered information about 170 manuscripts at the beginning of the twentieth century and the number must have increased since then, with the discovery of new holdings and the publication of catalogues that has known an extraordinary development in the past decades. Unfortunately, the author gives no list of these manuscripts, declaring that this is useless for the reader (*lā yufīd minhā al-qārīʿ*). The reader would probably have preferred to decide whether it was useful or not. That is a pity, since this would have been the very first census of all the manuscripts of the *Khīṭaṭ* in the world! Sayyid surely did not have adequate information about all of them and this is clear in the introduction to volume 2, where new manuscripts are mentioned. In fact, they are all to be found in Brockelmann's *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* and reference is made to old catalogues, so that one wonders why they were not described in the first volume, and why these and not others. During several stays in Istanbul, Paris, and Leiden, Sayyid was able to consult a great number of these manuscripts and was able to identify several copies made

<sup>4</sup>For instance, we could give the following omission: on page 124 of the introduction of volume 1, the number of folios of a manuscript is not given and the space is occupied by several dots, indicating that the editor was supposed to fill this space with the information.

<sup>5</sup>Although this same manuscript, as well as the other part of the draft, is mentioned in F. E. Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kültüphanesi Arapça Yazmalar Kataloğu* (Istanbul, 1962–69). See 3:588.



from a copy in the author's own handwriting. To these, another one must be added: preserved in the Maktabat al-Asad (MS 3437) in Damascus, it represents a copy of a part of the draft and must be placed together with the two parts of the autograph draft preserved in Istanbul (TK Hazine 1472 and TK Emame 1405). Unfortunately, no stemma, which would have helped the reader to understand the choices made by the editor and the relationships of the different manuscripts, is provided.

Among these manuscripts, Sayyid decided to use a group of five manuscripts based on al-Maqrīzī's copy, preferring Aya Sofya MS 3475 (referred to as *al-aṣl*) for volume 1 and another group of five manuscripts, with a preference for Aya Sofya MS 3483 (referred to as *al-aṣl*) for volume 2, together with part 2 of the draft (TK Hazine 1472) and Maktabat al-Asad MS 3437 copied on the draft. As he acknowledges himself (vol. 1, introduction p. 8), the only acceptable way to prepare a critical edition of the *Khīṭaṭ* presupposes publication of the draft, a task he himself performed. But why then did he not follow the same method with the fourth part of the draft he consulted in 2001? We know that al-Maqrīzī's preserved drafts represent an early stage of his writing, that he modified the plan, and that at that time he recorded a lot of data which do not appear in the final version. Due to the subsequent disappearance of most of his sources, these are the only accounts we have of these lost texts and the data, in many cases, cannot be found elsewhere. The best way would have been to publish first this new part of the draft, completing the edition he gave of the second part. One must keep in mind, however, that this version does not really reflect the image of the author's conception of the book. It can help in reading some words difficult to identify in copies of the final version, but parts of the drafts can surely not be integrated into the edition of the final version, because the author chose not to include them after careful consideration. At least, discrepancies, additions, or corrections offered by the draft can be added in footnotes to enlighten the reader. Nevertheless, Sayyid sometimes adds sentences, words taken from the draft (e.g., vol. 2, p. 245) not appearing in the manuscripts of the final version. More serious is the following dealing with al-Maqrīzī's notebook which the present writer discovered and identified among the holdings of the University of Liège (Belgium).<sup>6</sup> We responded to Sayyid's request for a copy of some folios which allowed him to ascertain exactly the contents of some of the abstracts it contains. One can see that he decided to add, from these fragmentary folios, passages not found in the final version of the *Khīṭaṭ* just on the basis that it was the source of al-Maqrīzī for

<sup>6</sup>A critical edition of this notebook is in preparation by the present writer. See Frédéric Bauden, "Maqriziana I: Discovery of an Autograph Manuscript of al-Maqrīzī: Towards a Better Understanding of his Working Method—Description: Section 1," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (2003): 21-68.



that given passage.<sup>7</sup> Here and there, he also refers to the Liège manuscript, saying that a summary of al-Maqrīzī's source for a given passage is to be found in it, without referring to the folio numbers. The question is why Sayyid decided to refer to this particular manuscript and to use some fragmentary parts without having a complete knowledge of its contents and a precise description of it.

The *apparatus criticus* is limited to the discrepancies noticed between the Bulāq edition and the manuscript used as a basis. The editor explains this decision by the fact that given the existence of two parts of the draft and several manuscripts copied on the basis of al-Maqrīzī's manuscript of the final version in his own handwriting, it is useless to indicate the various readings offered by these manuscripts. If there are discrepancies, they are due to the copyists. Once again, this is a strange bias that deprives the reader of the possibility to freely choose what he might consider a better reading. The result is that we only have in the footnotes the result of the collation with the Bulāq printed text, although this collation is not always properly done. A comparison of the first pages of volume 1 has produced the following results: p. 7, l. 8 (*mimmā allafahu wa-jama'ahu*. Bulāq: the two verbs are inverted, not indicated); l. 10 (*anbiyā' Allāh wa-rusulihi*. According to Sayyid, the word *Allāh* does not appear in Bulāq. Bulāq reads: *anbiyā'ihī wa-rusulihi*); *ibid.* (*Allāh ta'alā*. The second word appears in Bulāq); l. 15 (*akhbār ma'rūfah 'indahum*. Bulāq has: *akhbār 'indahum ma'rūfah*. Not indicated); l. 18 (*al-qudrah al-bashariyah*. The last word is in Bulāq contrary to what Sayyid says); p. 8, l. 10 (*mashyakhah*. Bulāq has *shaykhah* [sic]. Not indicated); l. 22 (*maqna'*. According to Sayyid, Bulāq has *matā'*, but one reads *qana'*). Of course, these mistakes have no importance for the edited text, since they refer to the Bulāq edition, but since the editor went to great pains to collate both and to indicate in the footnotes the result of this, one should expect it to be accurate.

Sometimes, he also indicates in the footnotes the different readings of the Maktabat al-Asad manuscript and the draft. Notes that were found in the margin in the author's hand by the copyists who used al-Maqrīzī's manuscript of the final version were copied in the same way (i.e., in the margin with the letter *ḥā'* used as a symbol over the note to indicate *ḥāshiyah* [commentary], sometimes with the words *bi-khattihī* [in his handwriting]). The editor decided to place them in the critical apparatus. We know that al-Maqrīzī added notes to his works almost until the last days of his life. Therefore, the marginal notes that were found by the copyists in his final version were meant to be placed in the text itself. Al-Maqrīzī did not do it because it was too difficult to make a new clean copy (*mubayyadah*) just for small additions. Thus Sayyid should have integrated them where indicated

<sup>7</sup>For instance, vol. 1, p. 756, where he relies on the beginning of a resumé dealing with Ibn al-Ma'mūn's history. No reference to the folio in the Liège manuscript is given. A copy of only the recto of this folio was communicated to Sayyid, who thus did not see the end of this resumé.



by al-Maqrīzī. However, the editor must be commended for having collated, when it was possible, the text with the sources al-Maqrīzī exploited. He indicates in the footnotes where a passage is to be found if the original text has been preserved and printed and he gives the result of the collation in the critical apparatus. Here again, unfortunately, he could not refrain from adding or correcting words on the basis of what is to be found in the original source (e.g., vol. 2. p. 151, from Ibn Ḥawqal). It would be strange that all the five different manuscripts based on the author's final copy would have discrepancies of this sort. Moreover it is not even certain that the edition of the source used by al-Maqrīzī is to be trusted. For instance, in vol. 1, p. 179 (l. 4), the text reads: *naḥa'a min waja' al-qalb wa-al-kulyatayn*, while the manuscript of reference (*aṣl*) and the Bulāq text give *al-ṣulb* instead of *al-qalb*. The correction is made on the basis of the source, Ibn al-Bayṭār, and in spite of the manuscripts used. The reading they provide, however, is confirmed by Ibn Abī al-Ḥawāfir, “Badā'i' al-Akwān fī Manāfi' al-Ḥayawān” (Dublin, Chester Beatty MS 4352, fol. 38r): *fa-yanḥa'u min waja' al-kulá wa-al-ṣulb!* It is clear that it designates the region situated between the kidneys (*kulyah*) and the spinal column (*ṣulb*).

The text is also abundantly vocalized, which helps in the reading of some difficult words. Nevertheless, the vocalization is sometimes not strictly necessary (*faṭḥah* over the letter preceding a *tā' marbūṭah*, for instance), or superfluous (words easy to read are fully provided with vowels while other more difficult ones are not), or even inaccurate (p. 7, l. 9: *'urifata*; p. 8, l. 1: *jumalin akhbār*; p. 8, l. 5: *adraktu*, read *adrakat*, . . .).

A positive point regards the annotation, profusely provided and always accurate with its context, which enlightens the reader on the subject touched upon in the text. A clear identification of most of the individuals, place names, technical words, etc., appearing in the text is supplied and is very helpful. It is a pity that the references to publications in Latin characters are often misspelled. Both volumes contain several plates illustrating the manuscripts used, buildings preserved in Cairo, or plans proposing a reconstruction of lost structures on the basis of the description given by al-Maqrīzī, the quality of which is unfortunately not always of the required standard.

The first volume is preceded by a long introduction, most of it taken, almost word for word, from the introduction published with the edition of the draft in 1995. In it, Sayyid comments on the book itself and its subject with a detailed survey of the books written on the same theme by previous and subsequent authors up until the nineteenth century (introduction pp. 8–30). He then places al-Maqrīzī in the historical context in which he lived, providing a detailed biography (pp. 30–39, entitled *tarjamah jadidah lil-Maqrīzī* as in the 1995 edition of the draft) and bibliography (pp. 40–53). This latter is, however, incomplete and sometimes



inaccurate.<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly, we are still lacking a thorough analysis of al-Maqrīzī's life and a detailed enumeration of all his works citing the manuscripts and the editions.

Sayyid proceeds on pages 53–68 with an analysis of the writing process of the *Khīṭaṭ*. Many interesting conclusions may be drawn from this part of the introduction. The editor clarifies the problem of the charge of plagiarism made by al-Sakhāwī against al-Maqrīzī. According to al-Sakhāwī's master, Ibn Ḥajar, al-Maqrīzī plagiarized al-Awḥadī's book on the *Khīṭaṭ* of Cairo in a major way. This al-Awḥadī, who died in 811/1408, was al-Maqrīzī's neighbor and colleague and he used to allow him to consult his library as well as his own writings. At his death, al-Maqrīzī inherited his book on the *Khīṭaṭ*, which was not finished and was mostly still in draft form. Although he made great use of this draft, al-Maqrīzī never mentions al-Awḥadī in his own book, but he acknowledges him in his biographical dictionary of his contemporaries (*Durar al-ʿUqūd al-Farīdah*). For Sayyid (p. 64), this suffices to exonerate al-Maqrīzī from the charge of plagiarism. The present writer has recently identified part of al-Awḥadī's draft and will be able to prove that al-Maqrīzī was not so innocent. The most useful part of this introduction (pp. 69–98) deals with the sources of al-Maqrīzī in the first volume. Since R. Guest, no attempt has been made to study this aspect of the book, which is not unimportant as we have already noted. Not only based on the authors and titles given by al-Maqrīzī, the study also supplies a list of sources identified thanks to the original texts through which it can be deduced what part was taken from it by the author. We now have a detailed account for almost every passage of the text which will open possibilities for further research in this field. This introduction concludes with a description of the most important editions of the book, the most useful studies of it, and finally of the manuscripts (unfortunately not complete) and the technique used to critically edit this text.

The introduction in volume 2 is almost as long as the one in the first volume. Here again, the most interesting part of it deals with the sources used by the author in this second volume (pp. 19–49). The remaining part is filled with a description of al-Maqrīzī's autographs of his other works. We learn that the editor, during a stay in Paris, had the opportunity to visit Leiden where he was able to consult al-Maqrīzī's autographs. On this basis, he provides us with a complete and accurate description of them, even if the link with the *Khīṭaṭ* is not immediately

<sup>8</sup>For example, the short treatise entitled *Al-Bayān al-Mufīd fī al-Farq bayna al-Tawḥīd wa-al-Talḥīd* is not a work composed by al-Maqrīzī. It was copied by him from a manuscript he found in Damascus in 813. This false attribution goes back to G. C. Anawati, who published it in 1969. See G. C. Anawati, "Un aspect de la lutte contre l'hérésie au XV<sup>ème</sup> siècle d'après un inédit attribué à Maqrīzī (le *Kitāb al-bayān al-mufīd fī al-farq bayn al-tawḥīd wa-al-talḥīd*)," in *Colloque international sur l'histoire du Caire (27 mars-5 avril 1969)* (Cairo, n.d.), 23–36.



obvious. In any case, the Leiden MS Or. 14533 (part of *al-Muqaffá*) had already been described by J. J. Witkam and the same can also be said of MS Or. 560 which, as early as 1851, was very precisely analyzed by de Goeje (the latter not cited).

To conclude, Sayyid must be commended for having undertaken the task of editing the *Khīṭaṭ*, a task that nobody else felt up to until now. In achieving it, he managed to collect the best manuscripts, and to produce a readable text, full of scientific annotations and illustrations which help the reader to better understand al-Maqrīzī's text, probably better than ever. However, for the reasons I have given, we clearly cannot consider his work a critical edition, as it is defined nowadays, or a definitive one. It is to be hoped that in the near future he will be able to produce a second edition closer to the version of the *Khīṭaṭ* as al-Maqrīzī wrote it and giving full satisfaction to the reader from a critical point of view.

‘ALĪ IBN DĀWŪD AL-JAWHARĪ AL-ŞAYRAFĪ, *Inbā’ al-Ḥasr bi-Abnā’ al-‘Aşr*, 2nd ed. Edited by Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo: al-Ḥay’ah al-Mişriyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 2002). Pp. 22, 562.

REVIEWED BY STEPHAN CONERMANN, *Universität Bonn*

This printed version of the *Inbā’ al-Ḥasr bi-Abnā’ al-‘Aşr* is a so-called second edition of a text which was first published in 1970. In fact, it is simply a reprint of the first edition. The chronicle was written by a certain Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Jawharī al-Şayrafī (819–900/1416–95). This man was the son of a money-changer in the *dīwān* of the sultan in Cairo, who supplemented his meagre income by trading in the jewellers’ market. Although al-Şayrafī enjoyed quite a good education, he could never get rid of a strong awareness of his father’s low social standing.

After a while al-Şayrafī attracted the attention of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449). This eminent and influential scholar encouraged his promising disciple to try his luck as an historian. At the same time, al-Şayrafī applied for a position as a Hanafi qadi in the capital. But all his endeavours to find good employment failed. Only once, in 871/1466, was he granted the opportunity to stand in for the Hanafi *qāḍī al-quḍāh* Ibn al-Shihnah (d. 890/1485). For some time, al-Şayrafī worked as imam at the *Zāhirīyah* mosque. To earn his living, he



had to make copies of all sorts of manuscripts. His favorite texts were the works of his teachers Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, Ibn Taghribirdī (d. 874/1470), and al-Kāfiyājī (d. 879/1474) to which he usually added his own remarks and commentaries. Unfortunately, fame and glory were denied him, as he was overshadowed by such erudite contemporaries as al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451), al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), and Ibn Iyās (d. ca. 930/1524).

It is said that al-Ṣayrafī's efforts to become a professional historian produced nothing but scornful laughter among his colleagues. They reproached him for having a very boring and long-winded style and for writing unfounded works by ignoring the known sources. Al-Sakhāwī, whom our author obviously knew personally, complains in a spiteful biography in his *Dawʿ al-Lāmiʿ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ* that he had absolutely no understanding of the historical sciences. These defamatory remarks by a well-known and highly respected alim show the arrogance and the conceit of Mamluk scholarly circles. Perhaps they are also a sign of uncertainty among the established historians about their social status faced with a substantial growth of historical writing among the lower classes during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A great number of people from society's lower strata joined the traditional circles of theologians, *muḥaddithūn*, and *munshīs* who normally held a monopoly on historiography. Examples of this development include the anonymous soldier who wrote the first volume of the chronicle that has been published by Zetterstéen, the humble Turkish army officer Ibn al-Dawādārī (d. after 736/1335), who struggled all his life to establish his reputation as a scholar, Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī (d. 888/1483), a reader of hadith works who was always looking for a better job, or, of course, our al-Ṣayrafī.<sup>1</sup>

The *Inbāʿ al-Ḥasr bi-Abnāʿ al-ʿAṣr* treats in a panegyric way the reign of Qāyṭbāy during the years 873–86/1468–81. The work represents a typical “Widmungsschrift” (eulogy). Al-Ṣayrafī wanted to present the sultan his small text in the hope of being rewarded with a position at court. Unfortunately, his desires were not fulfilled. Al-Ṣayrafī's *Inbāʿ al-Ḥasr bi-Abnāʿ al-ʿAṣr* may be grouped with similar “opportunistic texts” (“Zweckschriften”) in which a high representative of the ruling class is praised to the skies.<sup>2</sup> For example, one could cite Ibn Abī

<sup>1</sup>See Ulrich Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit* (Freiburg, 1969).

<sup>2</sup>On this quite popular genre, see Otfried Weintritt, *Formen spätmittelalterlicher islamischer Geschichtsdarstellung: Untersuchungen zu an-Nuwairī al-Iskandārānis Kitāb al-Imām und verwandten zeitgenössischen Texten* (Beirut, 1992), 183–200; Peter M. Holt, “Literary Offerings: A Genre of Courtly Literature,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge, 1998), 3–16; Rudolph Veselý, “Ibn Nāhid's *As-Sira aṣ-Ṣaykhiya* (Eine Lebensgeschichte des Sultans al-Muʿayyad Ṣayḥ): Ein Beitrag zur Sira-Literatur, *Archiv Orientalní* 67 (1999): 149–220; Henning Sievert, *Der Herrscherwechsel im Mamlukensultanat: Historische und historiographische Untersuchungen zu Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī und Ibn Taghribirdī* (Berlin, 2003).



Ḥajalah's (d. 776/1375) *Kitāb Sukkardān al-Sultān al-Malik al-Nāṣir*,<sup>3</sup> al-ʿAynī's *Al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar*<sup>4</sup> and *Al-Sayf al-Muḥannad fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Muʿayyad Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī*,<sup>5</sup> Muḥammad Ibn Nāhiḍ al-Juhānī al-Kurdi's (d. 841/1438) *Al-Sīrah al-Shaykhīyah*,<sup>6</sup> or Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsi's *Tārikh al-Malik al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy*.<sup>7</sup>

This edition of the *Inbāʾ al-Ḥasr bi-Abnāʾ al-ʿAṣr* is based on the only known manuscript, located in the Czech National Library in Prague. Ḥasan Ḥabashī has done a very good job. The printed text is nearly flawless and provides helpful commentaries. But we should keep in mind that the merits of the editor have been well-known for twenty years. Instead of going into that in more detail it seems more worthwhile to say something about al-Ṣayrafī's two other preserved chronicles.

His *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-al-Abdān fī Tawārikh al-Zamān* covers the years from 784/1382 to 842/1438.<sup>8</sup> It is a normal dynastic history in which Mamluk politics are analyzed by analogy to the hagiographical description of the Prophet's acting as a statesman in Medina. Al-Ṣayrafī uses an annalistic approach that was common practice in his time: he subdivides his text into days, months, and years. At the end of every year, one finds necrologies not only of Egyptians but also of prominent figures from all Islamic countries. Al-Ṣayrafī's style has a closeness to spoken Arabic and on some occasions the grammar is not congruent with *fushḥā*. Although it is focused on a chronologically fixed period, the *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-al-Abdān fī Tawārikh al-Zamān* is an Islamic universal history which starts with the creation of the world and with the prophet Adam and ends in the lifetime of the author. The first part of the chronicle which bears a special title ("*al-Jawhariyah*") is dedicated to the history and genealogies of God's messengers up to Muḥammad. With Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsi, al-Ṣayrafī shares the bad habit of copying unscrupulously from al-Maqrīzī's *Al-Sulūk*.

A third work by al-Ṣayrafī is called *Al-Durr (al-Thāmin) al-Manẓūm fīmā Warada fī Miṣr wa-Ahluhā (wa-ʿAmaluhā) min Mawjūd wa-Maʿdūm bi-al-Khuṣūṣ wa-al-ʿUmūm* ("The string of precious pearls: the traditional general and specific knowledge on Egypt and her provinces").<sup>9</sup> This is a typical *faḍāʾil* work. The author tells us that his *Al-Durr (al-Thāmin) al-Manẓūm* contains a description of all the beauties,

<sup>3</sup>(Bulāq, 1871).

<sup>4</sup>Ed. Hans Ernst (Cairo, 1962).

<sup>5</sup>Ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt (Cairo, 1987).

<sup>6</sup>Ed. by Veselý in his *Ibn Nāhiḍ's As-Sīra aṣ-Ṣaykhīyah*, 172–220.

<sup>7</sup>Unedited, but see Sievert, *Herrscherwechsel*.

<sup>8</sup>Ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970–73).

<sup>9</sup>Unedited. For manuscripts, see Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden, 1949), S2:41.



merits, and miracles that can be found in Egypt. The reader learns everything that the Quran, the Sunnah, and the Muslim scholars, historians, and philosophers have to say on this topic. It seems to be more than a remarkable coincidence that we can, in this respect, draw a parallel to Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī, whom the guild of Mamluk ulama discredited as being as lousy as al-Ṣayrafī. Like our chronicler, he tried his hand at writing panegyric prose about his native country. But his *Al-Faḍā'il al-Bāhirah fī Maḥāsin Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira*<sup>10</sup> was not much of a success. Nevertheless, a comparison of both scholars would be just as worthwhile as a detailed analysis of the three works we have received from al-Ṣayrafī.

ROBERT IRWIN, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies* (London: Allen Lane, 2006). Pp. 376 + index.

REVIEWED BY JOHN RODENBECK

Robert Irwin remarks in his introduction that the subject of his latest book “is neither very important nor very glamorous—still less actually sinister” and observes that he would never have written it except for Edward W. Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), to which it is a rejoinder. Orientalists in general, he points out, have had very few readers and little influence. One might observe here that the current celebrity in the White House of an Orientalist academic like Bernard Lewis is unprecedented in Orientalism since its beginnings 450 years ago and is in any case due not to his scholarship, but to his elaboration from 1990 onward of a myth that has been found useful by the engineers of the Bush regime’s Middle Eastern policies.

Irwin need hardly point out that the title Said chose for *Orientalism* is a misnomer or that the polemic for which Said is famous is directed not against Orientalists in general, but almost exclusively against Western Arabists, all of whom Said blames for perennially sustaining, inculcating, and encouraging innumerable prejudices in Europe and America, which have somehow led in turn to imperialism and a host of other wicked follies. It is thanks to Said, in fact, that since 1978 the word *orientalist* has come colloquially to function chiefly as a code word for “anti-Arab.”

<sup>10</sup>Unedited. However, for this text consult Stephan Conermann, “Lebensspender, Stätte der Erinnerung, Gedächtnisort: Der Nil während der Mamlukenzeit (1250-1517),” in *Wasser—Lebensmittel, Kulturgut, politische Waffe*, ed. Ulrich Hübner and Antje Richter (Schenefeld, 2004), 15–60, esp. 48–50.



“I have no significant disagreement,” Irwin says, “with what Said has written about Palestine, Israel, Kipling’s *Kim*, or Glenn Gould’s piano playing.” Said’s *Orientalism*, however, Irwin sees as an ignorant, irrational, and frequently dishonest polemic based upon a radical over-estimation of the power of literature. While adhering to the Marxist-Foucaultian notion that any verbal representation of something is inevitably skewed by the cultural matrix from which it comes, Said makes no distinction between the literal and the figurative or between what is physical and what is verbal and appears to believe that mere discourse about something actually has at least the weight, value, and ultimate import, for good or ill, of the real thing to which it refers.

One upshot of such curious attitudes is to deny all the past and much of the present their own reality. Said’s blanket condemnation of all past or present Western scholarship, moreover, which he condemns for its ineluctable Westernness, leads to the conclusion that the only significant qualification for doing research on the Arabic language or literature or the Arab world is a genetic one: no non-Arab, dead or alive, need ever apply. Taken together, these convictions amount to a declaration that history (as well as, say, archaeology, linguistics, cultural anthropology, or travel-writing) is really impossible, a conclusion that might explain why a sense of history—except as fiction or myth—is so absent from everything Said himself ever wrote.

Whatever its original value as an alarum, Irwin observes, the long-term influence of Said’s polemic has been largely malign. And the present situation, when an entire tradition of scholarship has been discredited and a whole generation of Arabists have been not only dispirited, but placed under multiple suspicion, cries out for redress. As Irwin has seen it, the publication of a true history of Orientalism—as true as one could make it—was a moral necessity.

Mamlukologists may recognize his title as an allusion to *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* (1913), lines that took the following form in the last act of Flecker’s posthumously produced play *Hassan* (1922):

We travel not for trafficking alone;  
By hotter winds our fiery hearts are fanned:  
For lust of knowing what should not be known.

(These same lines also supplied the title for the memoirs [1988] of a charming polyglot American spy who worked in the Middle East, Archie Roosevelt [1918–1990]—by no means to be confused with another American spy who worked in the Middle East, his first cousin Kermit [1916–2000], mastermind of the coup that in August 1953 felled Iran’s first democratically elected government.)

Irwin’s first chapter deals with Said’s claim that what he monolithically styles “The West” has been perennially and viscerally anti-Middle-Eastern since classical



times, the days of Herodotus or of Sophocles, Aeschylus, and especially Euripides. Irwin looks at the actual texts of the *Histories* and *The Bacchae*, however, and points to a plentiful scholarly literature that settled this question some time ago. To demonstrate the baselessness of charges that in Rome under the empire Arabs were regarded as Alien Others, Irwin reminds us that Septimius Severus married an Arab lady, Julia Domna, who became not only the mother of Caracalla, but also in her own right the most powerful politician in Rome. Meanwhile her elder sister Julia Maesa, married to a Syrian noble, had two daughters, Julia Soaemias and Julia Mamaea, who became respectively the mothers of the emperors Heliogabalus and Alexander Severus. Irwin also draws our attention to yet a fourth Roman emperor, Philip, who was known as “Philip the Arab” (244–49).

The next chapter takes up the period from the foundation of Islam to the beginning of the fourteenth century, an era in Europe illuminated much less by “ancient Greek science and technology transmitted via Arabic renditions translated into bad Latin” than by the direct acquisition of techniques, knowledge, and skills developed more recently among the Persians and Arabs themselves. Irwin here points to the likes of Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen), al-Khwārizmī (Algoritmi), Ibn Rushd (Averroes), and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna). Capable European Arabists included William of Tripoli, Ricoldo da Monte Croce, and, of course, Raymond Lull, all of whom were Christian missionaries. The Councils of Vienne (1311–12) and Basel (1341) decreed that chairs of Arabic should be established at Avignon, Bologna, Oxford, Paris, and Salamanca, but by that time the medieval vogue for Arabic had passed and in fact these decrees came to nothing.

In the third chapter, “Renaissance Orientalism,” Irwin deals first with the term *Renaissance*, which he understands in the ordinary sense recognized as primary by the OED: “The great revival of art and letters under the influence of classical models which began in Italy in the 14th century and continued during the 15th and 16th.” Since the Arabs demonstrably had no positive interest in Greek art, architecture, poetry, or drama and not even a negative interest in Latin, the suggestion that they were somehow responsible for the European Renaissance is absurd. In fact, as Irwin demonstrates, there was a general flight from Arabic and Arabic learning during this period, exemplified first in Petrarch (1304–74), who may justly be said to have founded the Renaissance, and his attack on Averroism, which signaled a reaction against earlier Arab intellectual influence and the Aristotelian attitudes to which it was linked.

Irwin ascribes the beginnings of Orientalism to a much later early-modern figure, the mad Guillaume Postel (1510–81), who held the first chair of Arabic at what became the Collège de France (1539) and whose career coincided not only with the rise of travel and travel literature, but also with much diplomatic activity surrounding the long-enduring naval and military alliance between France and the



Ottoman Empire. Said mentions Postel twice in *Orientalism*, but not his peculiar and entertaining beliefs, among which was the attractive idea that “almost everything in Asia was superior to almost everything in Christendom.” The great Huguenot scholars Julius Caesar Scaliger (1540–1609) and Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614) were interested in Arabic, but never achieved Postel’s mastery of the language. Irwin notes (p. 110) that the lack of Orientalists specialized in Turkish studies has persisted into the twentieth century.

The next three chapters provide a meticulous history of Orientalism as it arose out of sixteenth-century France to reach full maturity in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the first volume of which, in English, French, and German, was completed in 1913. All the great figures, including the elder Pococke—whose name Said misspells even in the indexes of both editions of *Orientalism*—are treated at fair length; and for most Mamlukologists a rehearsal here would be superfluous. Apart from the men—with the possible exceptions of Gertrude Bell and Annemarie Schimmel, there appears never to have been any outstanding lady Orientalists, a fact that some might construe as a tribute to the level-headedness of the fair sex—institutions and major projects are also discussed. In each chapter Irwin makes the necessary corrections to Said’s narrative, which tends to elevate the unimportant or the irrelevant (e.g., Flaubert) to prime status while ignoring the greatest schools of Orientalist learning. Most notably excluded by Said, as he himself vaguely acknowledges in his introduction to *Orientalism*, are the Germans, who dominated the field for a century and a half. But Said also omits any mention of the Italians, who have had an important Orientalist tradition from Marracci onward, and the Russians, whose Kazan University was the backbone of an ambitious and successful imperialist agenda and actually employed Arabs, Turks, Persians, and Afghans as professors. Irwin, by contrast, gives us the full story.

Chapter Seven is devoted to giants—Goldziher (designated by Irwin “the greatest of the Orientalists”), Nöldeke, Snouck Hurgronje, Caetani, E. G. Browne, Margoliouth, Massignon, Kratchkovsky, Brockelmann, and others—and describes the beginnings of SOAS. Chapter Eight treats the rise, thanks largely to the destruction of German institutions in two world wars and the flight of German intellect in between, of British Orientalism and the beginnings of Orientalism in the U.S. A concluding paragraph here reflects on problems peculiar to British academia, which are in some ways the reverse of difficulties in the U.S. and elsewhere. Chapter Nine, titled “An Enquiry into the Nature of a Certain Twentieth-Century Polemic,” confronts Said head-on, concluding that “on the whole . . . the good qualities of *Orientalism* are those of a good novel. It is exciting, it is packed with lots of sinister villains, as well as an outnumbered band of goodies, and the picture that it presents to the world is richly imagined, but essentially fictional.”

The last chapter considers various Muslim attacks on Orientalism, including



those of Kurd ‘Ali and A. L. Tibawi, the secular critiques of Abdallah Laroui and Anouar Abdel-Malek, and finally the just resentment of certain attitudes apt to appear in Western Orientalist works—arrogance in particular—expressed by two distinguished Oriental scholars, Fazlur Rahman and my friend and neighbor in Languedoc, Muhsin Mahdi. The fact that he gives them the last word indicates the degree to which Irwin has sought to remain scrupulously just and honest, as well as deeply informed. This book is not a defense of Orientalism, but something much better: a conscientiously straightforward history of the subject.

*Sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars ḥasb al-Riwāyah al-Shāmiyah*. Edited by Jūrj Būhās and Kātyā Zakhariyā (Damascus: al-Ma‘had al-Fransī lil-Dirāsāt al-‘Arabīyah bi-Dimashq, 2000–4). 5 vols.

REVIEWED BY LI GUO, University of Notre Dame

Yes, you read it right: that is the way the protagonist’s name is spelled—with a *ṣād*, instead of a *sīn*—a literary device used by the anonymous authors apparently aimed at distancing themselves from the risky business of art imitating life. Hereby hangs the tale of the Syrian version of the *Romance of Baybars*, one of the few surviving pre-modern Arabic popular tales. Riding on the tide of the hugely successful 10-volume French translation, *Roman de Baïbars* (1986–98), by Georges Bohas, the coeditor of the volumes under review, and Jean-Patrick Guillaume, the state of the study of this monumental work has never been in better shape. The publication of the “Syrian” text, as opposed to the more familiar Egyptian versions, should thus be considered a milestone in this collective enterprise.<sup>1</sup>

Like other Arab folktales, such as the *Arabian Nights* and the *Sīrat ‘Antarah*, the history of the manuscripts of the *Sīrat Baybars* has its share of twists and surprises. The oldest manuscript, the Vatican MS, goes back as far as the sixteenth century, and the subsequent modern prints one finds everywhere in street bookstalls all over the Arab world today are mostly cut-and-paste renditions of the manuscripts

<sup>1</sup>On the French translation and the related publishing activity around it, see Robert Irwin’s review of *Lectures du Roman de Baybars*, ed. Jean-Claude Garcin (Marseille: Editions Parenthèses, 2003), in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 67, no. 3 (2004): 395–96; also see the three special issues of *Arabica*, 51, nos. 1–2, 3 (2004), guest edited by Jean-Claude Garcin, dedicated to this subject.



now housed in various libraries, mostly in Europe. Thomas Herzog discovered a manuscript in the possession of a storyteller (*ḥikawāṭī*) in Aleppo. Through the teamwork by mostly Arab scholars, a hand copy was made in 1949 under the auspices of the French Institute. Actually originating in Damascus, this “Aleppo codex” is very close to the version handed down through another Damascene *ḥikawāṭī*. The merit of the Aleppo codex, in the coeditors’ own words, is the fact that it is “complete,” in the sense that the original quires are intact and the imagined life and career of Baybars/Baybars̄ is brought to a grand finale. Given the remarkable fact that the uncut, un-sanitized edition is being published in Damascus, of all places, in the present day, the editors seem to have been compelled, in the Introduction, to bring up two rather sensitive issues, in addition to the usual information about the manuscripts and the editorial policies: first, that the Baybars dealt with here is a fictionalized figure (as in “any resemblances to the actual person are purely coincidental”); second, the retaining of the “dirty” stuff, namely sexually explicit material, contained in the original text is justified on the grounds of “legitimate academic reasons” (vol. 1, pp. 13–16).

This is a long text. The part published so far covers only half of it. To facilitate the reading, each volume begins with an Introduction (repeated), and, starting from Volume Two, a cumulative synopsis of the story line and plots covered in the previous volume(s).

Volume One (pp. 334) starts off with a dream al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb had: that a wonder boy will eventually rise to lead the Mamluks to eternal triumph. A Damascene merchant is sent to marketplaces, in Syria, to purchase young boys to be brought up as soldiers. Among them is a sick orphan named Maḥmūd and two boys who would eventually become “big shots” themselves: Qalāwūn and Aйдamur. Out of jealousy, Qalāwūn bullies the orphan while Aйдamur acts as his protector. On their way back to Cairo via Aleppo, the boy, in fact the scion of a king, is abandoned in a hospital, thanks to a trap set by Qalāwūn. After some more twists, he is adopted by a Syrian woman, Sitt al-Shām, under whose care he learns, and perfects, the arts of *furūsiyah*. Sitt al-Shām names the boy Baybars̄, after her deceased son.

The boy is then brought to Cairo to be presented to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ and his wife Shajarat al-Durr. On his way, he saves the life of a lad who was about to be buried alive by his own father, a member of the Ismāʿīlī militia who had known, all along, the future of the wonder boy through the divination (*jafr*) of their imam. At Baybars̄’ urging, Ibrāhīm, the lad, pledges to sever his ties with his family and gives up his name to become Ḍāʿī al-Ism, or Nameless. He is to become Baybars̄’ confidant and right-hand man. Villains do their best to battle the hero along the way: in addition to the arch rival Qalāwūn, there is an even more dangerous enemy, a Christian named John, disguised as a Muslim qadi, who



had assassinated al-Ṣāliḥ's chief judge in order to become his replacement. His goal is to thwart Baybars, whom he saw in an epiphany as the ultimate threat to Christendom. Minor villains consist of a legion of the "evil vizier" type, those who work for, or are associated with, the establishment; and all of them hold some grudge against the hero. Good Muslims they are not: chief among them are a "sissy" pedophile (*al-shaykh al-mukhannath*), a homosexual (*lūṭī*), and a gangster (*qā'id 'ayyārīn*). And then there is a Jewish *kātib*, who steals money from Baybars' estate. (By the way, he also runs a successful real-estate business on the side.) The stage is set for high drama, with a full cast, historical and fictional.

Volume Two (pp. 340) follows up Baybars' quick rise to power: from a low ranking officer (*shāwīsh al-dīwān*), to the governor of Egypt, then Commander of the Left Wing Brigade (*silāḥ-dār muyassarāh*), and finally the most important post, Commander of the Right Wing Brigade (*silāḥ-dār muyammanah*), replacing Qalāwūn, further fueling the latter's resentment and jealousy. Baybars' triumphs over the Franks and the Mongols are described with great fanfare. Battlefield scenes, in Antioch, Jerusalem, Constantinople, the Bilād al-Shām, and Alexandria, are interwoven with garden variety cloak-and-dagger sabotage attempts staged by the hero's inner-circle enemies to do him in. Diplomatic negotiations between Baybars and the Franks in Alexandria and Genoa show his savvy. And his solicitation of aid—from the Ismā'īlī *Fidā'iyyīn* militia (through the connection of Nameless), the sympathetic Mamluk rank-and-file, and the civic elite—to form a loose alliance, demonstrates his maturity and readiness for bigger things. Here the plot involving the clandestine Christian qadi as the main villain gets even more tricky: al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ designates Baybars to succeed him, a development that further enrages John, who in turn incites the rebellion of the governor of Syria, 'Īsā al-Nāṣir, and secretly invites the Frankish army to occupy the Syrian lands. Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ thus leads his last, and fatal, expedition to Syria, over the course of which he dies suddenly. Some have suspected Baybars' involvement in the sultan's death.

Volume Three (pp. 379) begins with the ensuing power struggle after al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's death. His son 'Īsā, who is "fond of drinking and pretty boys," is named al-Malik al-Ghāzī and has an immediate clash with Baybars, who declines to take over despite al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's will. A series of bloody court intrigues take place and Baybars is stripped of power. And then, under mysterious circumstances, al-Malik al-Ghāzī, "the queer and alcoholic" (*lūṭī wa-sikkīr*) boy king is found dead, wine cup in hand. His brother Khalīl, the son of Shajarat al-Durr, is enthroned with the regnal title al-Malik al-Ashraf. Accompanied by Baybars, who has since been brought back on account of the pressing Frankish threat on the border, the young sultan dies on an expedition to Syria. Again, Baybars is accused by his enemies, among them Aybak, an ambitious general, and the disgruntled Kurds.



Aybak marries Shajarat al-Durr and is made the sultan, with the title al-Malik al-Mu‘izz. Fearing for his safety and avoiding the potential *fitnah*, Baybars goes East again, to Syria, where he prospers and overcomes a series of attempts on his life and finally confronts Aybak in battle and wins.

In Syria, Baybars is approached by Berke-Khan, the brother of Hülegü, who claims that he and his daughter Tāj Bakht have converted to Islam. Berke-Khan and his troops are killed by heavy snows in Syria. Baybars brings the surviving Tāj Bakht back to Damascus, and, with the blessing of his adoptive Syrian mother, marries the Mongolian princess. He declares himself to be the ruler of Syria, with the title al-Malik al-‘Adil. Defeated and a political lame duck, Aybak returns to Cairo and is soon assassinated, in the bath, by a jealous Shajarat al-Durr, who then jumps from the balcony to her own death. Once again, Baybars declines the throne, and Uṭuz is elected, only to be immediately killed by his own Mamluks. With the repeated urgings by the power brokers (*al-a‘yān*), Baybars is finally declared the sultan, with the regnal title al-Malik al-Ṣāḥir.

The new sultan immediately faces a new round of sabotage, set up by John the Christian, who has poisoned the water sources in Jerusalem and nearly kills Baybars, who has come to safeguard Muslims in the city. Baybars is helped by Nameless, by now known as Siyāj al-‘Adhārā, or Virgins’ Keeper, a nickname bestowed upon him by Tāj Bakht, for having rescued her and her young son Sa‘id during a raid in al-‘Arish on their way from Syria to Egypt. The Queen has also adopted the young man as her brother. Baybars appoints his old friend, and new brother-in-law, Commander of the Right Wing Brigade. The volume ends with the sultan’s conquest of Antioch and his negotiations with the dissenting Ismā‘īlis in the Syrian highlands.

After this, the narrative gets fuzzy. Volume Four (pp. 332) and Volume Five (pp. 368) read like an epic in its true sense: a combination of a road map, of the hero’s endless military victories, and a thriller, full of suspense and over-the-top plot developments. This is by far, for better or worse, the most entertaining and fantastic portion of the tale. Some of the highlights include a spy operation in Constantinople to win the release of some 800 Muslim prisoners of war, the capture of Baybars in al-Shaqif castle and his miraculous rescue by Ibrāhīm/Nameless/Siyāj al-‘Adhārā, and another assassination attempt plotted by Hülegü’s men in Damascus. Topping this all off is an episode of conspiracy with seduction wrought, again, by John the Christian, who has tricked Marina, the beautiful daughter of a Frankish general in Macedonia, to send an invitation to Baybars to witness her conversion to Islam with the help of a beautiful Muslim woman, Sharifah al-Maghribiyah. Off the hero goes, but manages to escape again, and brings the two women back to Muslim territory. Marina is to marry Sa‘id, Baybars’ son, and the Maghribī girl is to become the wife of Qalāwūn. The sultan finally has made



it back to Cairo, along with the entire entourage and the newlyweds, including Ibrāhīm, who is also given a royal lineage by marrying the daughter of the Persian Shah, whom he has convinced to convert to Islam.

The hero's next triumphal act is on the international stage. Baybars first successfully defends Tripoli against the Franks and then, in a swirl of seemingly ridiculous plots, negotiates a truce with the Mongols led by Timur, the uncle of his wife, who has come to Cairo to pay tribute. This part of the text is the stuff of pulp-fiction, with a story line that goes like this: Timur has conspired to kidnap Baybars and gain control through manipulating the young and naïve al-Saʿīd; Ibrāhīm, the unsung hero, discovers the plot but becomes caught in a rivalry with al-Saʿīd and his mother, Tāj Bakht, Timur's niece. Timur then dispatches the captured Baybars and his son, in a trunk, to Aleppo, in the hope that by this gesture he would win the favor of his brother Hülegü to give him the land of Syria as a gift. With the help of Ibrāhīm and the Ismāʿīlī *Fidāʿī* militia, Baybars manages to escape and returns to Cairo.

There are more battles for the hero to win against the enemies: the plotters and conspirators, the Franks, and the Mongols. Fights have broken out in Tripoli and then extended to Europe. The Mamluk army, led by Ibrāhīm, wins decisively near Lombardi (Arabic: *jisr al-inkibār*, "Bridge of Defeat"), in northern Italy. Replete with panegyrics, which come in handy for storytelling performance, Volume Five ends with the Mamluk victory over Genoa.

So far as storytelling goes, the historicity of such a tall tale can easily be challenged. The text is known to have been produced at a much later time, in the sixteenth century, to be precise, and the "red flag" is all over the place: people's habit of sipping coffee (which would have been unheard of in Baybars' time) being one, and the Mamluk army's use of the cannons (*al-midfaʿīyah*) by Baybars' troops another. (The editors state that cannons were not introduced to the Mamluks until the early sixteenth century [vol. 4, p. 32, n. 46]; however, based on a description in Ibn Mengli's *Al-Aḥkām al-Mulūkīyah*, a *furūsiyah* treatise, the use of cannons by the Mamluks can be dated at least as early as the reign of al-Ashraf Shaʿbān [1363–76], which was, of course, still nearly a century later than Baybars' time.) In essence, what we have here is an Ottoman text telling a Mamluk tale. Going through the text, one cannot help but marvel at the rich details of the hitherto little known aspects of *mamlūkīyāt*: how boys were purchased and trained to be Mamluks, what soldiers wore on the battlefield, what they ate, how they entertained themselves in leisure times, and the frequent references to homosexual activities, and tendencies, among them. Whether these descriptions reflect historical reality or educated imagination is a matter for further exploration. I, for one, would like to think that the truth lies somewhere in between. There is no denial that the documentation is rooted in the traditional narrative repertoire and collective



memory, which are worthy of serious study in their own right. Aside from the genre-related paradigm—that of good vs. evil, good Muslims beating up the bad guys, and the royal lineages, and intrinsic virtues, of all the heroes involved—there is a striking dimension of this particular version: the Syrian context of the hero's background and success it duly adds to the commonplace narrative. In this representation, Baybars is not only portrayed as the adopted son of Lady Syria, Sitt al-Shām, but is also being helped along the way by an alter ego, Ibrāhīm, with strong ties to the Ismā'īlīs. Equally fascinating for me is the way the Syrian storytellers take sides in the Qalāwūnids vs. Zāhirids scheme, which was long a bone of contention in Mamluk historiography. This text is full of such intrigues, both in the materials it presents and in the way they are presented.

And then there are other materials that any student of pre-modern Arab culture would savor: the language (a blend of the classical and “Middle Arabic,” proverbs and jokes, idioms and slang, multilingual—Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Frankish—features), food and drink (preparation, descriptions, recipes), scenes of daily life (marketplace, wedding, health care, housekeeping, hygiene and beautification, attire, dream interpretation), entertainment (music, dance, games), and much, much more.

The editors are to be commended for providing us with a well-executed edition. It is based on the Damascene manuscript, and collated with the “Aleppo codex” for missing folios and variants. The reader is thankful for the profuse footnotes that tackle a wide range of problems—historical, lexicographical, linguistic, and literary. For me, especially useful are the notes on the Syrian vernacular as well as the Persian and Turkish loanwords that pepper the text. (Which raises another issue for today's Mamluk scholars: the importance of acquiring a working proficiency of Persian and Turkish.) Some footnotes are repeated, perhaps for the convenience of the reader, so he/she needs not go back to Volume One for an explanation of a rare word in Volume Five. For a text so long, some inconsistencies in execution are unavoidable. There are some redundancies: on “Christian” (vol. 4, p. 214, n. 33) and on al-Mutanabbī (vol. 4, p. 246, n. 45), for example. Some notes fail to catch the words in their first appearance: the word *kindī/jundī*, for example, is seen in Volume One, but is only footnoted in Volume Two (p. 33); *al-jarīd*, a sort of fencing game, appears in Volume One, but waits till Volume Three to be explained (p. 95). The typography is adequate, with very few errors. Speaking of which, I do have one quibble, with the editors' tendency to alter the text in order to “correct” its Middle Arabic features, by adding the *nūn* suffix to the imperfect plural, and the *alif al-wiqāyah* to the perfect plural. Insofar as the characteristics of the Middle Arabic are valuable for scholastic purposes in their own right, this kind of scrupulous editorial touch seems to me to be unnecessary, and impossible: while some of the “irregular” features are being corrected, many, many others are



not. (There is a long list of them; I will not dwell on them in detail due to space concerns.) In any case, the “fuṣḥāfication” of a profusely Middle Arabic oriented text simply does not work. That said, the achievement of the editors is enormous and the completion of the full text is eagerly awaited. A volume of index and glossary would be icing on the cake.

ṢĀ'IB 'ABD AL-ḤAMĪD, *ʿIlm al-Tārīkh wa-Manāhij al-Mu'arrikhīn: fī ʿIlm al-Tārīkh Nash'atan wa-Tadwīnan wa-Naqdan wa-Falsafatan wa-Manāhij Kibār Mu'arrikhī al-Islām* (Beirut: al-Ghadīr, 2001). Pp. 312.

REVIEWED BY JUNE DAHY, University of Copenhagen

This historiographical work seeks to introduce classical and modern approaches to the writing of history, as well as the main classical Arabic historians. It is written as a manual for students and introduces them to the critical reading of history. The content is organized systematically, divided into three main sections, each of which is divided into smaller chapters. The first section is entitled “The Science of History and Historical Research.” The second is devoted to “Historical Schools and Philosophy of History.” The third, and longest, section is reserved for the book’s main focus, the presentation of classical Islamic historical writings, and simply called “The Discourses of the Historians.”

In the first section history as a science and the job of the historian are defined. It also contains the genesis of historical writing in ancient Europe, and history writing in Europe of the Middle Ages and in modern Europe until 1955. A short, but very informative chapter on modern Islamic historians is also included, illustrating how national historical writing overtook historiography in its Islamic framework. The central chapter of the introductory section deals with methods of historical criticism, and stresses the importance for students to question the motives, goals, and biases of the historian, as well as the political context in which the text was written.

In the second section, the importance of historical criticism amongst the historians of the classical Islamic era is addressed. In the Islamic era, historical criticism went beyond simply testing the *isnād*, which had been dispensed with by historians as early as al-Ya‘qūbī (d. after 292/905) and al-Mas‘ūdī (346/956). ‘Aql, or reason, was also a very early criterion for the selection of material. Even a



sound *isnād* was not enough to ensure the inclusion of fantastic or “untrustworthy” material in historical writing. In addition, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd illustrates the ways in which early Islamic historians, including al-Mas‘ūdī, Ibn Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), and Ibn al-Ṭīqṭaqā (d. 701/1302), expressed their own vision of the proper aims and scope of historical writing.

Philosophy of the science of history is the topic of the second section. The student is introduced to the classical European philosophers such as Machiavelli, Rousseau, and Voltaire, as well as later modern philosophers such as Hegel. In addition, the classical Arabic and Islamic theorists are introduced. These include of course Ibn Khaldūn and several modern theorists. The chapter on the theory of history is primarily concerned with defining the elements that create complex civilizations and cultures. Both Ibn Khaldūn and the modern religious philosophers are presented as “Islamic”; however, a more nuanced discussion taking into account the differences in their presuppositions and historical contexts would have been appropriate here. It seems that Ibn Khaldūn is labelled “Islamic” because he flourished in classical Islamic times, whereas the modern Islamic theorist ‘Imād al-Dīn Khalīl is called so because he takes the Quran as his point of departure for understanding history.

The presentation of this section only aims at presenting the individual philosopher, and ignores the historical currents or trends that impacted the philosophers as a group, be they European or Islamic. The absence of historiographical perspective also characterizes the presentation of the historians and their works. Although this has been accomplished by historians such as ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Dūrī and Tarif Khalīdī, their works are not included in the references of this book.

The book’s third section, entitled “The Discourses of the Historians” (*Manāḥij al-Mu‘arrikhīn*), is devoted to the introduction of several classical historians. It begins with a survey of the different genres within Islamic historical writing, including local histories, annals, universal histories, etc. Artistic or poetic exposition of historical matter is also included, though characterized as unfit for serious history writing.

Following this are systematic introductions to individual historians, divided into three groups, listing several historians in each, but giving special attention to the most important:

1. The *sīrah-maghāzī* literature: Ibn Ishāq, Aban Ibn ‘Umar al-Aḥmar, and al-Wāqīdī (d. 207/822)
2. Early universal history writing comprising al-Ya‘qūbī (d. after 292/905), al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), and al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 346/956).
3. Discourses of the later universal historians: Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406).

A general point of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s investigation is how individual historians



treated the early Islamic era and the emergence of the Shi‘i schism. Generally, he also focuses on the historian’s personal relationship with Shi‘ism. This could be understood as a reflection of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s own sectarian sympathies, and might lead the reader to question his criticism of both Shi‘i and Sunni sources. On the other hand, this does not undermine his analysis, which is an excellent point of departure for further reading of the sources.

The presentation of the historians follows a rough scheme, where each historian is examined with respect to the conditions in which he wrote, use of sources, use of *Isrā’īliyyāt*, and an evaluation of his importance for later historians.

The second chapter of this section on the exposure of historians is occupied by introductions to al-Ya‘qūbī, al-Ṭabarī, and al-Mas‘ūdī. Al-Ya‘qūbī (d. 292/905) and al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 346/956) are clearly the favorites of the author. Al-Ya‘qūbī is presented as a scientific historian, who leaves out all kinds of myths and fabulous material. He could do this because of his own wide knowledge of other nations, acquired during his own travels. Al-Ya‘qūbī was also the first to recognize the relation between geography and history, a discourse developed by al-Mas‘ūdī, who explicitly stipulates the importance of travelling and collection of information about peoples where they live. Al-Mas‘ūdī’s travels served as a supplement to his written sources and he is often seen as a geographer as well as a historian. Al-Ya‘qūbī is also distinguished for being the first historian to record the years of the deaths of the members of the House of the Prophet, thereby introducing the new discipline of obituaries, or *wafayāt*.

The author’s main objection to al-Ṭabarī’s method is that al-Ṭabarī chooses the sources he prefers before choosing the accounts of events. Al-Ṭabarī then registers all accounts available in the chosen sources and presents them uncritically and as having the same value. Al-Ṭabarī is also criticized for not leaving out mythical and fabulous material, a step al-Ya‘qūbī was able to take, and for concentrating exclusively on political history. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd is also critical of al-Ṭabarī for limiting himself to a single source—Sayf ibn ‘Umar al-Tamīmī—for the period of the Shi‘i schism in Islam, and for leaving out Mu‘āwiyah’s correspondence with Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr. Drawing attention to these observations is of great importance because of al-Ṭabarī’s overwhelming influence. Al-Ṭabarī is still the main source for early Islamic history. In fact, al-Ṭabarī’s influence and popularity were so great that his own sources were not preserved, since they were no longer needed after al-Ṭabarī. This in particular led to an uncritical reading of al-Ṭabarī, since later historians did not research his sources, and thus failed to fulfil their obligations as professional historians.

The chapter “The Later Universal Historians” gives special attention to the three best-known historians of the later Islamic era: Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Kathīr, and Ibn Khaldūn. The historian of the Crusades, Ibn al-Athīr, is examined in terms



of his sources and methods. Once rid of al-Ṭabarī as his main source, he shows more independence and often tends to combine his sources into one narrative. Ibn al-Athīr's critical attitude toward Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, different from other historians, is examined and examples of this are thoroughly presented. Ibn al-Athīr also introduced a system of references that serves to avoid repetition of *akhbār*. Ibn al-Athīr is further distinguished as a historian who linked the history of various Islamic lands, thus incorporating the sources for the history of the Maghrib or the western part of the Islamic world. In doing this he succeeds in presenting the beginning of the Reconquista and the Crusades as one historical movement.

Ibn Kathīr (700–74/1300–73), described as “the historian of the Mamluks,” was heavily influenced by his contemporary, the Hanbali Ibn Taymīyah, leading him to write in a way that revealed his ideology or *madhhab*. No doubt ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd finds this approach unsuitable for history writing. Ibn Kathīr's work *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* is also shown to be rather uneven. The end of the Buwayhid era, the Seljuks, the Fatimids, and the Ayyubids are treated together in one of the work's fourteen volumes, whereas the Mamluk era, up until the year 767, of which Ibn Kathīr was a contemporary, takes up one whole volume, sometimes taking the shape of a diary. This way of reading Ibn Kathīr, however, fails to see his value as a source for his own age. The observation that he was influenced by his *madhhab*, which though originally Shafi‘i is often labelled neo-Hanbali, could have been further elaborated. In the context of Mamluk religious policy this *madhhab* was strongly ideological and reflects the first Mamluks' anti-Mongol and anti-Shi‘i mobilization. This in fact makes Ibn Kathīr an excellent source for the early Mamluk period.

The last historian to be examined is Ibn Khaldūn, best known for his sociological theories about the nature of human society. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd shows how Ibn Khaldūn used this theory of *‘aşabīyah*, or tribal solidarity, to explain how Mu‘āwīyah became powerful within the Quraysh and thus was able to seize power in the early Islamic community. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd also observes that Ibn Khaldūn mentions al-Mas‘ūdī several times and even calls him the imam of the historians. This has led ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd to a most interesting examination of al-Mas‘ūdī as a source for Ibn Khaldūn. He has actually found several instances of nearly identical headings concerning government and leadership of the state, and the role played by religion in state building. Obviously Ibn Khaldūn was inspired by al-Mas‘ūdī, who lived more than 450 years before him. But it is the accomplishment of Ibn Khaldūn that he voiced his theory for the benefit of generations.

In his concluding chapter, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd acquaints the reader with three interesting Shi‘i historians who represent special points of departure for historical investigations. The first of these three is Ibn Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), who developed a method he called *tajārib*, or experience, by which he singled out only



those events from which mankind is supposed to gain knowledge and wisdom. Events over which mankind has no control, such as divine or prophetic actions, are left out. Ibn Miskawayh is very precise in describing his method but too harsh, in ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s view, on the prophet’s *sīrah*, leaving out too many events important to Islam. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd next treats the lesser known historian al-Ṭabarsī, who specialized in the *siyar* of the twelve Shi‘i imams, and finally Ibn al-Ṭīqṭaqā and his fourteenth-century work *Kitāb al-Fakhrī*.

*Stiftungen in Christentum, Judentum und Islam vor der Moderne: Auf der Suche nach ihren Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden in religiösen Grundlagen, praktischen Zwecken und historischen Transformationen.* Edited by Michael Borgolte (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005). Pp 297.

REVIEWED BY ALBRECHT FUESS, Universität Erfurt

Universal history is certainly in vogue these days and “foundations are a phenomenon of Universal history,” as Borgolte emphasizes in his introduction. Therefore one wonders why a comparative conference on foundations has not taken place earlier. Prof. Dr. Michael Borgolte (Medieval History at the Humboldt University, Berlin) and Dr. Johannes Pahlitzsch (Seminar for Arabic and Semitics, Freie Universität Berlin) therefore deserve much credit for organizing such a worthwhile inquiry.

This edited volume is the fruit of the conference: “Foundations in the Great Cultures of Old Europe,” which took place in June of 2003 at the Humboldt University in Berlin. Now one could argue whether the term “great” is really appropriate in this context, but maybe this was meant as a response to Rumsfeld’s definition of “old” and “new” in the European context at that time. However, the actual title of the proceedings, which translates as: “Foundations in Christianity, Judaism and Islam before modernity: Searching for commonalities and differences in religious principles, practical aims and historical transformations,” describes more precisely the intention of the editor, i.e., to present a comparative point of view on the history of foundations with a special stress on the ways they were used to raise revenue according to the principles of the three Abrahamic religions.

This collected volume contains eight English and six German articles. Out of the fourteen contributions, two are on Mamluk history, while two others speak about foundations in other periods of Islamic history. Five focus on foundations



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in Christianity, with the Byzantine era well represented in three articles. Two discuss Jewish practice (with strong references to Islamic practice), while two more synthesize the themes at the beginning and the end of the volume. Another contribution stands somewhat apart as it addresses pious foundations during the time of the Roman Emperor Augustus.

The book is divided into the three thematic fields: “*memoria* as motive,” “*charity* as duty,” and “state and society as field of operation.” In his German introduction Borgolte broadly examines foundations and their founders. Foundations, he says, serve a higher purpose than to preserve a good memory (*memoria*) of the founder. Often the founder would like to see his endowment be given as charity (*caritas*) which serves the society through feeding the poor, student scholarships, and the like. In other cases the founder acts as patron for science and art (Einleitung, p. 12). Not all foundations are completely altruistic though, since foundations may serve as well to preserve private money from being taken by the tax collector, as happens for example in the case of the Islamic pious foundation, the *waqf*. Although Borgolte elaborates his initial thoughts on the role of foundations in society, this section of the introduction remains rather short and one would have liked him to link the chapters more systematically under thematic headings, maybe by providing a bit more of an analytical hypothesis about what he sees as commonalities and differences, instead of merely describing the contents of the following chapters.

The book then continues with the contribution of Susanne Pickert, who argues that in ancient Rome foundations were quite often used by former slaves and social climbers (*homines novi*) to ensure they were remembered, while the members of the old nobility used other ways to preserve their legacy. Ralf Lusiardi opens the door to the medieval period with his overview of foundations in the monotheistic religions of medieval Europe. Giving to charity in medieval Europe was apparently always linked to receiving a positive or negative reward in the afterlife, especially in Christianity, which has been characterized in this context by experts as “Religion der Angst” (p. 67). The concept of purgatory, which was introduced by the Catholic church around the thirteenth century, then further enhanced the importance of the practice of *memoria* and foundations. One of the shortcomings of this article is that while the Christian practice of endowment is well described, the discussion concerning the other two monotheistic religions, especially Islam, remains rather shallow, thereby devaluing the insights in the rest of the paper.

The “Islamic” part of the book begins with a German introduction by Johannes Pahlitzsch on the aspect of *memoria* in Islamic foundations from the early times until the Mamluk period. Actually, it is this kind of introductory and comprehensive survey that the reviewer would have liked to read for the Christian and the



Jewish side as well. Pahlitzsch explains how the idea of *memoria* in the Islamic realm overcame the early Islamic theological objection against tomb cults until it became an integral part of Islam, culminating in the emergence of the institution of the *turbah-madrasah* from the eleventh century onwards. With the *turbah-madrasah* the Islamic pious foundation (*waqf*) witnessed a remarkable increase of popularity. *Waqf* played a key role from then on in Muslim memorial culture and it became a common concept that the memory of the founder lived on through his pious deeds. A *waqf* document which was issued for the foundation of the grave of the Prophet Moses by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars in 1270 reads as follows: “it [the foundation] keeps alive the memory of the founder, . . . whereby he receives a second life” (p. 92). Adam Sabra then elaborates the ambivalent character of Islamic foundations between private charity and public policy in the Mamluk period. He especially draws attention to the fact that the land which the Mamluk military elite used to establish foundations was quite often initially *iqṭāʿ* (fief)-land, which should have theoretically paid the armies and should not have been used by pious foundations; moreover, in many cases they contributed more to the relatives of the founder than to the general public. However, attempts to abolish the *awqāf*, as happened in 1378 when Sultan Barqūq attempted to convert it back into public land to benefit the army, were unsuccessful, as this practice had been too widespread among the Mamluk elite. Sabra further advocates reconsidering the classical dichotomy of *waqf khayrī* (charitable foundation) and *waqf ahli* (family foundation), because “historians of Islamic foundations now realize that many *awqāf* served both groups” (p. 101). Ana Maria Carbeilleira-Debasa in her chapter describes the positive effects of the institution of foundations in Islamic Spain, which is called *hubs* in the Maghrebi context. This is followed by three articles on endowment practices in Christian Byzantium (John Thomas on aspirations of Byzantine founders, Peregrine Horden on motives of Byzantine philanthropists, and Dionysios Ch. Stathkopoulos on foundations of hospitals in the late Byzantine period). Ludwig Steindorf then presents a valuable introduction to the system of foundations in the period of the Kievan Rus’ in Ukraine and Russia.

Of more direct interest for the Mamluk scholar might be Mark Cohen’s study on foundations and charity among Jews in medieval Egypt. The study makes explicit use of the Geniza documents of medieval Cairo and states that only 10% of the revenue from Jewish foundations (sing. *heqdesh*) went to direct charity, i.e., feeding the poor, whereas 76.3% was given as salaries to Jewish scholars and officials and about 14% went to the maintenance of synagogues. In the contemporary European Jewish *heqdesh* system it was apparently the opposite; most of the proceeds from foundations went directly to the poor. Cohen explains this on one hand by the fact that in Egypt Jews were very much influenced by the Islamic *waqf* system, which also contained many aspects of indirect charity



distribution, and that on the other hand in Egypt there were more direct charities available for Jews, which could be financed, for example, by intercommunity taxes, than in the more restricted life in the European ghettos.

Judah Galinsky discerns differences in foundation practices in the Jewish community of Germany and Spain in the fifteenth century, whereby the Islamic example in Spain apparently had a decisive impact in creating such distinctions. Benjamin Scheller then applies a modified Weberian approach to the connection between foundations and political power in the Occident and how studying this question can help us to understand the history of nation building in pre-modern Europe. This is followed by Suraiya Faroqhi's description of the state of the art of modern scholarship concerning pious foundations of the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The final contribution of the volume is reserved for the late doyen of *waqf* studies, Gabriel Baer. The article, which is here printed posthumously, was first delivered as a lecture in 1981 and is published in this book with the help of Miriam Hoexter, another very important and influential scholar of Muslim *waqf* studies. The paper is titled "The Muslim *waqf* and similar institutions in other civilizations." Baer's intention was "to find out the particular characteristics of the Muslim *waqf*, and to derive from these findings some more general conclusions" (p. 258), but it seems to me he has not succeeded. He correctly describes the success story of the *waqf*; how it became one of the most long-lasting foundations in the history of mankind and how it developed into the principle way to circumvent the rules of succession and inheritance in the Quran, while still being considered religiously acceptable. Nevertheless, there are some shortcomings in the argumentation once Baer leaves the Judeo-Islamic aspects of his analysis. To be honest, I did not really understand the relevance of comparing *waqf* to Hindu religious and charitable trust and endowment practices in early modern Nepal. Such comparisons are bound to be lopsided, simply because the scholar draws on one side (here from the side of Islam) from primary sources and on the other side only relies on secondary sources.

My main critique of this volume would follow the same direction. If you really want a comparative work, then you have to make it more comparative. First of all, a glossary containing all technical terms used in the volume and their detailed explanation could be a start. The outer framework of the topic could be outlined more stringently, so that contributions might be more intertwined or focused on the same questions. For any comparative chapters my suggestions would be to bring scholars from different fields together to write such papers. There are very good articles in this book but as they stand now, they lack an inner cohesion.

Having said all this, I am well aware that these points are easier to posit than to fulfill. In any case, one has to acknowledge that a very important step in universal foundation studies has been achieved by the participating scholars and especially



the organizers of the conference, and that there are certainly more exciting studies in this field to come.

*Noble Ideals and Bloody Realities: Warfare in the Middle Ages.* Edited by Niall Christie and Maya Yazigi. *History of Warfare*, vol. 37 (Leiden, New York: Brill, 2006). Pp. 269.

REVIEWED BY WALTER E. KAEGI, The University of Chicago

This collective volume is, on balance, a useful contribution to the understanding of medieval warfare even though the papers are disconnected and of uneven quality. Overall quality, despite some lapses, is good. These are materials or explorations of topics towards writing a history of medieval warfare, without any comprehensive synthesis. Most of these diverse papers were originally part of a program of a medieval workshop at the University of British Columbia in late 2003.

The papers fall into three explicit categories: (1) Noble Ideals: Perceptions of Warfare, (2) Bloody Realities: War In Practice, and (3) Unto the Breach: Re-examining Issues in Medieval and Modern Military Historiography.

The Crusades are prominent within this collection of essays even though the Crusades are not the subject of every contribution. But there are unexplicable and major gaps. For the readers of this journal conspicuously absent are the Mamluks, who appear only briefly in an allusion on page 93. The very regrettable omission of the Mamluks is even more striking because many of the actual papers discuss thirteenth- and fourteenth-century military topics. Although the fate of Crusading states is interlinked with their warfare and diplomacy with the Mamluks, none of that is found in this volume. The best Islamic history paper is that of Hugh Kennedy on “The Military Revolution and the Early Islamic State,” pp. 197–208. It is a valuable contribution with many insights concerning Turkish soldiers in ninth- and tenth-century Iraq. Likewise of special interest is the essay by Niall Christie, “Religious Campaign or War of Conquest? Muslim Views of the Motives of the First Crusade,” pp. 57–72, who wisely consulted with Paul M. Cobb of the University of Notre Dame concerning particulars of the Arabic texts. Christie explores fragmented Muslim reactions and notes the relatively modest claim, within Muslim sources, for Frankish motivations for holy war. A third essay of special interest is Piers D. Mitchell, “The Torture of Military Captives in the



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Crusades to the Medieval Middle East,” pp 97–118. He does not discuss any cases of torture in Mamluk-Crusader warfare.

Treadgold’s essay “Byzantium, the Reluctant Warrior,” pp. 209–34, rightly rejects, as I have, the concept of holy war for Byzantium (pp. 210–12), but with qualifications. He then discusses what he calls Byzantine “civil wars,” on pp. 224 ff. He criticizes the coverage of civil wars in my *Byzantine Military Unrest* (1981); however, its subject was never intended to be what he calls “civil wars.” Instead its explicit subject was military seditions, conspiracies, intrigues, rivalries, and expressions of grievances between 471 and 843 C. E. These are not synonymous with civil wars. This is a false categorization. His critique of my work is erroneous. There is nothing wrong with Treadgold’s listing, cataloging, and commenting on Byzantine civil wars, but civil wars were not my chosen subject. Treadgold omits citation and use of the important and lengthy monograph by Catherine Holmes on the civil war-ridden reign of Basil II: *Basil II and the Governance of Empire* (Oxford, 2005). Readers should exercise caution with respect to Treadgold’s numbers for Byzantine armies and his criticisms of John Haldon; among others, see the English-language review by Wolfram Brandes, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 95 (2002): 716–25, and the review by J.-M. Carrié and S. Janniard, “L’Armée romaine tardive dans quelques travaux récents: 1ere partie: L’Institution militaire et les modes de combat,” *Antiquité Tardive* 8 (2000): 321–41.

David J. Hay offers a useful collection and review of instances of civilian casualties and suffering in his paper “‘Collateral Damage?’ Civilian Casualties in the Early Ideologies of Chivalry and Crusade,” pp. 3–25. He concentrates on the period of the earliest Crusades.

John France, “Thinking about Crusader Strategy,” pp. 75–96, revisits some of his previous conclusions about the Crusades, most notably the First Crusade. In his words, it was “a papal strategy to achieve survival and perhaps dominance in a changing Europe” (p. 93). He stresses the papal and Crusaders’ need for a Byzantine alliance and of course the importance of Jerusalem.

What readers will not find are histories of operational warfare, with the possible exception of Milwright’s essay. Fascinating but undocumented speculations abound in his paper, “Reynaud of Châtillon and the Red Sea Expedition of 1182–83,” pp. 235–60, concerning possible objectives in this failed raid. According to him, the objectives of the expedition may have included seizure and removal of physical remains of Muhammad and other eminent Muslims from Medina.

Kelly DeVries, “Medieval Warfare and the Value of a Human Life,” pp. 27–55, argues provocatively that changes in later medieval warfare resulted in the reduction of the value of human life from that of the early and high middle ages. He challenges some generalizations about the history of warfare that appear in recent surveys.



Deborah Gerish, “Holy War, Royal Wives, and Equivocation in Twelfth-Century Jerusalem,” pp. 119–44, explores aspects of gender theory and royal identity. Her essay would have profited from consulting the valuable art historical dissertation of Cecily J. Hilsdale, “Diplomacy by Design: Rhetorical Strategies of the Byzantine Gift” (University of Chicago, 2003), and especially her important article on twelfth-century royal identity in the eastern Mediterranean: “Constructing a Byzantine Augusta: A Greek Book for a French Bride,” *Art Bulletin* 87 (2005): 458–83.

Papers do not concentrate exclusively on the eastern Mediterranean. One investigates conditions in Spain: Paula D. Stiles, “Arming the Enemy: Non-Christians’ Roles in the Military Culture of the Crown of Aragon during the *Reconquista*,” pp. 145–61. She investigates the policies towards Muslims and Jews in recently conquered regions in the twelfth through fourteenth centuries, especially in the Ebro valley. Two papers refer to aspects of warfare in medieval England: David G. Sylvester, “Communal Piracy in Medieval England’s Cinque Ports,” pp. 163–76, and Ilana Krug, “Wartime Corruption and Complaints of the English Peasantry,” pp. 177–93, an instructive, acute, and revealing investigation of military finance and grievances with special attention to the reigns of Edward I and Edward III.

These are essays worth reading and absorbing. Some are stimulating as well as informative. No coherent picture emerges, but the collective volume has a place in any bibliography on medieval and Crusading warfare. There is a short index, but it lacks maps or figures or a comprehensive bibliography. It belongs in libraries on the history of warfare, medieval military history, medieval history, Byzantium, medieval Islam, and the medieval eastern Mediterranean.

*Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honour of Michael Winter*. Edited by David J. Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon. Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern History, vol. 5 (London and New York: Routledge, 2006). Pp. 258, figures, tables, and a list of publications.

REVIEWED BY W. W. CLIFFORD, The University of Chicago

This volume, in English, is one of two published simultaneously to commemorate the retirement of Professor Michael Winter from the department of Middle Eastern and African History at Tel Aviv University after more than three decades



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of distinguished academic service. The second volume, in Hebrew, is said by the editors to be concerned with religious and educational matters less historically embedded, presumably, than the present collection of articles. Dr. Winter, it should be noted, was for some years before taking up his post at Tel Aviv University an inspector in the Arab section of the Israeli Ministry of Education.

The “leitmotif” of this volume, as of Dr. Winter’s scholarship generally, is the mutual historical interdependence of Mamluk and Ottoman Egypt, and the editors are quite unapologetic in their rejection of “that epochal date of 1516/1517” with its anachronistic “implications of closure and rupture” as a watershed in Egyptian history. Indeed, these contributions have been groomed to reflect this “crossover” in the “historical experience of Arabic-speaking societies in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent during the period from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries.”

As with many *Festschriften*, however, some contributions are more germane to the editors’ purposes than others. Particularly apposite is Daniel Crecelius’s study of the financial administration of Damietta’s *zāwiyahs*, mosques, and madrasahs during the last half of the eighteenth century, which provides an overview of the gradual impoverishment of religious institutions in the Delta following their heyday in the late Mamluk period. The *siġillāt* reveal clearly that many of these smaller religious centers “could barely sustain their function” over time, and while some larger ones enjoyed relatively greater and more stable incomes—the result of more numerous and profitable, long-term, commercial leaseholds—they too were steadily falling prey to inflation and physical decay. Even the once illustrious Mu’ayyadiyah mosque, one of many tributes to Sultan Qāyṭbāy’s pious profligacy, was barely a going concern on the eve of Napoleon’s invasion.

Miri Shefer of Tel Aviv University has profiled continuities and changes in the profession of court medicine between the late Mamluk and early Ottoman periods. Ottoman sultans had long been interested in acquiring Mamluk medical experts for their relatively unsophisticated courts and the conquest gave them an unqualified opportunity to gratify this cultural desire. A case in point, the Qaysunizades, a family of Cairene physicians who had served the late Mamluk court, were recruited to tend not only Yavuz Selim, but a whole succession of Ottoman sultans down to the early seventeenth century. Yet, in spite of the dramatic medical brain-drain from Cairo to Istanbul in the aftermath of the conquest, the post of court physician in the Ottoman period was generally more likely to be filled by Anatolian than Egyptian medical experts. Increasingly absent, too, by the seventeenth century, Shefer contends, were court physicians of *dhimmī* origin. This was so, despite the fact that the medical profession under the Ottomans remained an open occupation circumscribed only by the acquisition of medical ‘ilm and remained still one of the few paths to great wealth and position open to non-Muslims, unlike in the Mamluk period.



Rachel Milstein of Hebrew University, through a close comparison of illustrated hajj certificates with the illuminated *Fuṭūḥ al-Ḥaramayn* of Muḥyī al-Dīn Lārī, has detected in their stylized representations certain actual changes in the urban landscape of Mecca and Medina from the Mamluk through the early Ottoman periods. These include such things as modifications to the archways and roofs of the Haram, the fountains by the Maʿlah cemetery, even the novel erection of coffeehouses near the Jabal ʿArafat. Her research has not only revealed Mecca as an “intense” center of book production but suggested the evolution from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries of a discernible “Meccan school” of manuscript illumination among the *mujāwirūn* in the Holy City.

Amnon Cohen, also of Hebrew University, has seen equally no “watershed in the popular customs and habits” of Palestinians relative to the annual religious festival centered around the Maqām Nabī Mūsá in the Judean Desert near Jericho. A walled complex of some note by the end of the Mamluk epoch, the *maqām* continued to thrive during the early Ottoman period, supported both by private endowment and public monies commensurate with its increasingly blended role as a shrine, rest stop, and security post for travelers diverting to Jerusalem off the main Damascus–Mecca Pilgrimage route. Coincidentally, in this same volume, Reuven Amitai has shed new light on the foundation of the Nabī Mūsá complex in the early Mamluk period through his analysis of an inscription of al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars on the mosque. In this volume, too, Hanna Taragan has further embedded these observations on Maqām Nabī Mūsá and other Mamluk religious sites in a general consideration of the psychology of Baybars’ architectural usages. Whether through the incorporation of the cushion voussoir in portal arches, the revival of the hypostyle mosque, or even just the salvage of historic building materials, Baybars sought to “visually reflect the power struggle between the two religions [Islam and Christianity]” in medieval Syro-Egypt.

Boaz Shoshan of Ben Gurion University has drawn attention to a clutch of instructional Sufi sermons, *Al-Rawḍ al-Fāʾiq fī al-Mawāʾiẓ wa-al-Raqāʾiq*, to contemplate the increasing integration of Sufic knowledge into mainstream Islamic culture during this Mamluk-Ottoman “crossover.” Though little known and of uncertain authorship, such scarce examples of *mawāʾiẓ* literature, Shoshan believes, are vitally important in shedding light not on the organizational but rather ideational structure of late medieval Egyptian culture.

Daphna Efrat of Open University has reiterated that theme in her contribution, noting that the ostensible divide between popular and elite religious practices was visibly “bridgeable” in late medieval Syria as well. This is particularly noticeable in the social consolidation of public veneration of the *walī Allāh* in Mamluk Jerusalem and Hebron, both already prolific centers of pilgrimage, saintly tombs, and lodges.



A few contributions are perhaps inevitably wide of the mark paced off by the editors. Some are temporally displaced. Articles, for instance, by Ursula Wokoeck of Tel Aviv University on the expropriation of the Egyptian peasantry and Gabriel Warburg of the University of Haifa concerning the role of the Sufi *tariqah* in the Islamization of the Sudan are considerations of chiefly nineteenth-century history. Other contributions are geographically displaced. The joint study by Minna Rozen and Benjamin Arbel of the University of Haifa and Tel Aviv University, respectively, concerning the Istanbul fire of 1569, based principally on the letters of the Venetian *bailo* Marcantonio Barbaro, certainly sheds new light on the problems of urban renewal in Istanbul, but not Cairo. The survey by Amy Singer, also of Tel Aviv University, of the Ottoman *‘imaret* institution in the early seventeenth century, derived from Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatname*, is similarly devoid of any references to Egypt, despite the fact that Çelebi not only took in the sights but resided there some years writing up his travel notes.

Singer’s conclusion that the *‘imaret* system, geared especially for the needs of travelers, “established a shared culture across the Ottoman Empire” is nevertheless insightful. Puzzling, though, is her contention that the “genesis of the *‘imaret* is as yet untraced” and without any “parallel in Middle Eastern . . . history in the pre-modern period.” If there is no antecedent in the Mamluk period, there is one certainly in the Byzantine. With its roots in classical antiquity, the *xenon* (hospice) emerged in the early medieval period as part of an administrative effort, both public and private, to dispense *philanthropia* at the diocesan and eparchic level. *Xenones* served travelers of every description, especially indigent pilgrims and refugees. Primarily centers of food distribution, they sometimes also provided temporary housing, quartermaster, medical, and even burial services. While often annexed to churches, monasteries, and shrines, there were numerous independent urban *xenones* as well as those posted out along the highways that crisscrossed the Byzantine Empire. Indeed, many of the cities listed by Singer as possessing *‘imarets* in the Ottoman period correspond to already well-known centers of industrialized philanthropy in the Byzantine period. Though likely in decline during the last century and a half of its existence, the Byzantine *evage systemata* surely informed the inception of the Ottoman *‘imaret* system.

Even a contribution with seemingly greater temporal and geographic relevance such as Jane Hathaway’s observations on the “prelude” to Ottoman rule in the Yemen touches on Egypt only tangentially. Moreover, her contention that the acquisition of the Yemen “loomed large” in Ottoman strategic thinking as a means of forestalling a “Portuguese . . . reconquest of Jerusalem” seems far-fetched. At the turn of the sixteenth century, the Ottomans were far more absorbed by the strategic problem of protecting Anatolia from Safavid Iran than Palestine from Portugal.



In sum, scholars generally will find much of interest in this *Festschrift*. Mamlukists in particular will discover a bonus in three additional contributions to fourteenth-century Syro-Egyptian history. Donald P. Little has reproduced and interpreted yet another important Haram collection document concerning a divorce proceeding in Jerusalem; Carl F. Petry has brought to light a bizarre criminal incident in Cairo replete with interesting sociological implications; and Amalia Levanoni has tied the increasing military employment of the *awlād al-nās* to a revolutionary attempt by the Qalawunids to establish “a new political nobility in the Mamluk army,” to offset the declining importation of *mamālīk* of Turkish origin over the course of that century. Finally, the *Festschrift* provides an interesting cross-section of current, younger Israeli scholarship, particularly at Tel Aviv University, centered around Winter’s unitary vision of late medieval/early modern Near Eastern history.

NICHOLAS WARNER, *The True Description of Cairo: A Sixteenth-Century Venetian View* (London: The Arcadian Library; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Vol. I, pp. 216; vol. II, pp. 237 + topographic key; vol. III, 1 map.

REVIEWED BY JOHN RODENBECK

These days it is probably Nicholas Warner who knows more about the physical fabric of Mamluk Cairo than anyone else alive. He has done restoration and conservation in the city’s historic zone, and his stunning *Monuments of Historic Cairo: A Map and Descriptive Catalogue*, published in 2005, is as complete a survey of what is known about its monuments and their current state as we are ever likely to have. His elegant three-volume *True Description of Cairo* succeeds in a complementary task, evoking with unparalleled thoroughness the physical reality of the city as it was near the end of the Mamluk era. It rests on the story of one particular Venetian map of Cairo, which Warner describes as “the first great surviving representation of the city of Cairo in the Renaissance tradition of the aerial oblique view”: *La Vera Descrizione de la Gran Città del Caiero* [sic], which was drawn on wood blocks by the Greek artist Giovanni Domenico Zorzi of Malvasia and printed with an accompanying commentary in booklet form by Matteo Pagano of Venice. Both map and commentary were published in or before 1549, but obviously drew upon material dating back as far as the 1490s.



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The chief subject of the legends and vignettes printed on the map is the capture of the city by Selim the Grim in 1517. The legends, which are in Venetian, are the basis of the commentary, which is in Latin. The most probable author of the commentary, Guillaume Postel (1510–81), identified by Robert Irwin as the first Orientalist, probably never visited Cairo and thus likewise drew upon earlier material. This view/map survives in only two impressions (one in the Arcadian Library, the other in the Kupferstichkabinett und Sammlung der Zeichnungen in Berlin), the commentary in only three known copies (in the British Library, the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the Kunstbibliothek in Berlin).

The first volume of Warner's trilogy begins with a consideration of medieval and early modern European visions of al-Mahrūsah—sometimes quite fanciful—then moves on to an analysis that contains the following: (1) A chapter surveying all the surviving and known images of Cairo from the early fourteenth century to the mid- or late-seventeenth, with an illustration of each. Of special interest here are a sketch (held in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana) and a watercolor map or view (held in the Archivio di Stato di Torino) of Cairo as seen and rendered at first hand from the height of the Muqattam by Pellegrino Brocardo of Liguria. Painter, musician, traveller, pilgrim, and priest, Brocardo visited the city in 1556. Like most of the other materials in this chapter, neither the sketch nor the map has been published before. (2) A chapter on Pagano, Zorzi, and Postel, their sources and aims, and the techniques involved in producing such an enormous piece of work. (3) A chapter on the cultural and economic context of sixteenth-century Venice, which enjoyed both commercial and cultural ties with Egypt stretching back over several centuries. (4) An appendix demonstrating the subsequent persistence of Pagano's image of Cairo throughout the following century and a half. (5) A second appendix consisting of extracts from the well-known letter addressed by Brocardo to Antonio Gigante da Fossombone, secretary to Ludovico Beccadelli, bishop of Ragusa, who became Brocardo's patron. Dated 1557 and first published in 1803, it describes what Brocardo had seen in Cairo the previous summer, including such major public events as the opening of the dam at the head of the Khalij al-Miṣri during the annual flood of the Nile and the departure of the caravan bearing the *mahmal* to Mecca, with its enormous escort of Ottoman troops. Of all important travelers' accounts surviving from this period Brocardo's is the only one composed so shortly after the events it describes. (6) A bibliography of relevant works in English, French, Italian, German, and Latin. (7) An index to volumes I and II.

The second volume consists of (1) A facsimile of *Descriptio Alcahirae*, Postel's three-chapter Latin commentary on the map, followed by (2) Warner's own detailed commentary on Postel and (3) A series of 32 addenda in which Warner takes up items in the map that range from Pagano's business address to the depiction of monuments and several unlabeled vignettes ignored by Postel.



Of the three chapters in Postel's *Descriptio*, the first and second are generally deluded, wrong, or negligible, and serve chiefly to remind us that Postel came to entertain ideas that were very bizarre even by the standards of his own era and, indeed, spent the last 19 years of his life in a madhouse. Postel's third chapter, however, containing his commentary on the 34 legends printed on the map, owes a great deal to sound earlier sources, such as Leo Africanus. Here Warner brings to bear on Postel the results of an enormous amount of research among primary and secondary sources, providing a kind of compendium of available scholarship. Continuing in this same vein with 32 addenda of his own, independent of Postel, Warner then offers a wonderful collection of accurate and detailed historical insights drawn from secondary sources, much of which has the additional virtue of being attached to real physical objects—the buildings of Mamluk al-Maḥrūsah—most of them still extant. Others of Warner's addenda consider in detail some of the unlabeled vignettes printed on the map. Many of them are amusing; and they range in subject matter from palm trees and camels to a stout citizen defecating into the Nile, a vision that suggests someone's first-hand observation.

The map itself, finally, on heavy paper and measuring more than two meters long and a meter and a quarter wide, constitutes the third volume. It comes folded and slip-cased to match the first two volumes and does somehow succeed in giving an impression of the majesty of the Mamluks' imperial capital. Though there are many obvious omissions and errors, there are also many touches of authenticity.

As Warner observes, for example, not one Christian church is shown, though there were—and are—many. The aqueduct is placed south of Old Cairo, a major error copied repeatedly by subsequent plagiarists and thence mistakenly taken as a valid clue by archaeologists, who have looked in vain for physical evidence of an aqueduct in that location. What the absence thereof shows instead is the degree to which European depictions of al-Maḥrūsah became traditional, rather than being based on observation. Unlike earlier images, on the other hand, Pagano's map shows Cairene houses correctly as flat-roofed; and the city's mosques, which are identified as Cairene even down to this day by their characteristic pairing of dome and minaret, have all been supplied both with domes of various kinds and recognizably Mamluk minarets. Pagano's map thus has an overall flavor that is familiar and curiously right.

These three volumes have already been described by Robert Irwin in a review in *Times Literary Supplement* as “fit for the shelves of scholar princes.” They are a triumph of modern book design and printing and binding technology. I have suggested elsewhere that Nicholas Warner and the Arcadian Library should be celebrated, Mamluk-style, with lights, music, acrobatics, and feats of horsemanship.



JALĀL AL-DĪN AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *Kawkab al-Rawḍah fī Tārīkh al-Nīl wa-Jazīrat al-Rawḍah*. Edited by Muḥammad al-Shishtāwī (Cairo: Dār al-Āfāq al-ʿArabīyah, 2002). Pp. 620.

REVIEWED BY STEPHAN CONERMANN, Universität Bonn

For this recently published edition of the work *Kawkab al-Rawḍah fī Tārīkh al-Nīl wa-Jazīrat al-Rawḍah* from the pen of the well known Muslim scholar, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), the editor Muḥammad al-Shishtāwī has collated seven manuscripts. Six of them are preserved in the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah and the last one in al-Azhar. As al-Shishtāwī himself admits, none of these manuscripts are the best ones available. They are neither very reliable nor of good quality. Apparently, the selection principle was more due to the location of the holding libraries than to research criteria. In any case, in his preface to the text, al-Shishtāwī gives us no further editorial principles. But faced with the fact that we have knowledge of a large number of accessible manuscripts of al-Suyūṭī's text, this seems to be a rather unsatisfactory way of proceeding. So while we are pleased to have a printed version of this remarkable text, strictly speaking this is no feat of scholarship. At best it is a good *editio princeps*.

And yet the contents of the work are quite interesting. It is part of the Mamluk literature about the Nile which, up to now, has only been partly analyzed by Mamlukologists. From a comparatist's point of view, various questions might suggest themselves. One could, for example, ask what genre the *Kawkab al-Rawḍah fī Tārīkh al-Nīl wa-Jazīrat al-Rawḍah* represents? How can we categorize pre-modern Arabic texts that focus more or less exclusively on the Nile and its island al-Rawḍah? What are the specific literary characteristics of these works? In a pioneering article, Thomas Bauer has edited, translated, and interpreted a *zajal* on the Nile written by Ibrāhīm al-Mi'mār (d. 749/1348).<sup>1</sup> Thomas Bauer points out that it is surprisingly rare for Egyptian Mamluk poets to write about the great river and its life-giving floods. Besides the above-mentioned *zajal*, there also exists an epigram of Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366) and some verses from Ibn Sūdūn's (d. 868/1464) *Dīwān*—but what else do we have? Fortunately, you find more when you look at the *maqāmah* literature. Even our author, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, composed a *maqāmah* dedicated entirely to the Nile flood: *Al-Maqāmah al-Baḥrīyah (aw al-Nīliyah) fī al-Rakhā'*

<sup>1</sup> See Thomas Bauer, "Das Nilzaḡal des Ibrāhīm al-Mi'mār: Ein Lied zur Feier des Nilschwellenfestes," in *Alltagsleben und materielle Kultur in der arabischen Sprache und Literatur: Festschrift für Heinz Grotzfeld zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Thomas Bauer and Ulrike Stehli-Werbeck (Wiesbaden, 2005), 69–88.



*wa-al-Ghalā*.<sup>2</sup> Another epos which bears the title *Bulbul al-Rawḍah* deals only with the famous island, on which al-Suyūṭī lived and worked for many years.<sup>3</sup> This work contains the same verses we find included in his *Kawkab al-Rawḍah fī Tārīkh al-Nīl wa-Jazīrat al-Rawḍah* (pp. 344–50).

Al-Suyūṭī says that he took the first part of the title, which means “The star (i.e., the abundance of flowers) of the island Rawḍah,” from the *Ṣiḥāḥ* of the lexicographer al-Jawharī (d. ca. 397/1006–7).<sup>4</sup> He wants, al-Suyūṭī continues, to present the reader with a beautiful and edifying book about “the history of the Nile and the island al-Rawḍah.” Concerning the genre, one could probably say that his work is representative of the so-called *faḍā’il*-literature<sup>5</sup> which was very popular during the time of Mamluk rule in Egypt and Syria. A characteristic trait of these texts is the compilation of known and unknown historical events, occurrences, legends, poems, marvels, wonders (*‘ajā’ib*) and traditions in praise of persons, locations, books, tribes, and other things. This genre is linked with geographic descriptions as well as with pure *‘ajā’ib* works in which the producer of the texts tells about marvellous things as they exist in reality or fantasy. The narration is meant to evoke general astonishment in the recipient’s mind at the wonder of God’s creation. So, if we find in many treatises implausible and dubious as well as realistic and scientifically accepted *‘ajā’ib* side by side, the authors actually are aware of the difference between the two categories.<sup>6</sup> A good example is Ibn Iyās’ (d. 930/1524) “Nashq al-Azhār fī ‘Ajā’ib al-Aqṭār” (MS Gotha 1518), which is about the description of the Wonders of the World with the focus on Egypt and the Nile.

Additional books from the Mamluk epoch in which the Nile is praised are Jalāl al-Dīn Maḥallī’s (d. 864/1459) “Al-Qawl al-Mufīd fī al-Nīl al-Sa‘īd” (MSS Paris 2259 and 2260) and al-Aqfahsī ibn al-‘Imād’s (d. 808/1405) “Risalah fī al-Nīl wa-Ahrāmihā” (MS Berlin 6115). Neither of them has hitherto been the subject of scholarly analysis. Al-Suyūṭī’s *Kawkab al-Rawḍah fī Tārīkh al-Nīl wa-Jazīrat al-Rawḍah* is just another typical *faḍā’il* work. We should read it as a supplement

<sup>2</sup>Ed. in *Maqāmāt al-Suyūṭī al-Adabīyah al-Ṭibbīyah*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Salīm (Cairo, 1988), 161–80.

<sup>3</sup>Ed. in *ibid.*, 181–93, and by Nabīl Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Aḥmar (Cairo, 1981).

<sup>4</sup>Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Kawkab al-Rawḍah fī Tārīkh al-Nīl wa-Jazīrat al-Rawḍah*, ed. Muḥammad al-Shishtāwī (Cairo, 2002), 16.

<sup>5</sup>See Stephan Conermann, “Der Nil während der Mamlūkenzeit (1250–1517),” in *Wasser—Lebensmittel, Kulturgut, politische Waffe: Historische und zeitgenössische Probleme und Perspektiven in asiatischen und Afrikanischen Gesellschaften*, ed. Ulrich Hübner and Antje Richter (Schenefeld, 2004), 15–60, esp. 46–53.

<sup>6</sup>On this topic, see Syrinx von Hees, “The Astonishing: A Critique and Re-reading of ‘Aḡā’ib Literature,” *Middle East Literatures* 8, no. 2 (2005): 101–20.



to his *Husn al-Muḥādarah fī Tārīkh Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*<sup>7</sup> which, like Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī's (d. 888/1438) *Al-Faḍā'il al-Bāhirah fī Maḥāsin Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*,<sup>8</sup> puts the main emphasis on the description of Cairo and the Nile.

Another quite remarkable text is a sermon on the Nile (*khutbah fī al-Nīl*) which can be found in 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ibn Nubātah's (d. 374/984–85) *Dīwān al-Khutab al-Minbariyah*. But serious doubts have been raised as to whether these pages are really from his hand or whether someone else incorporated them into this collection much later.<sup>9</sup>

How is a representative *faḍā'il* work structured? What can be said about its constituent elements? Let's take al-Suyūṭī's *Kawkab al-Rawḍah fī Tārīkh al-Nīl wa-Jazīrat al-Rawḍah* as an example: after having quoted the related verses from the Quran and the traditions, the author explains the word "Rawḍah." Then he continues with a description of the island's fortifications, buildings, palaces, mosques, and bridges. Then follows a survey of the Nile and the wonders connected with it like the rising and falling of the floods and the Nilometer. The next things al-Suyūṭī finds interesting enough to speak of are the flowers, plants, and fruits on al-Rawḍah. After a detailed analysis of these things he quite suddenly turns to the history of his subject: all rulers who did something for the glory and reputation of the island are mentioned. Poems and verses, including his own, are added to the facts. Finally he gives the reader a list of all the sultans who visited al-Rawḍah.

By and large, this kind of *faḍā'il* literature can be seen as a very clever and skillful compilation of sayings, myths, verses, and historical information about the Nile taken from the works of many Muslim scholars and writers. Against this backdrop, it is quite normal that al-Suyūṭī quotes extensively from the books of Ibn Bayṭār (d. 646/1248), Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871), Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), Ibn Ḥawqal (d. after 378/988), Ibn Wardī (d. 749/1349), al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956), al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), and above all from al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442). In addition to this, he includes numerous passages from his own treatises in his new work. For a modern scholar this whole procedure seems to be neither honest nor creative, but we should keep in mind that the technique of compilation which we can find in many pre-modern literatures should not be mentioned in connection with what is nowadays called plagiarism. A compilation is an innovative and original work which in general belongs to a different genre than source materials.<sup>10</sup> We should direct our thoughts about al-Suyūṭī's *Kawkab*

<sup>7</sup>Ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1967).

<sup>8</sup>Ed. Muṣṭafá al-Saqqá and Kāmil al-Muhandis (Cairo, 1969).

<sup>9</sup>See Sabine Dorpmüller, "Und Er goß aus das Wasser in Strömen . . ." Eine Nilpredigt von Ibn Nubāta al-Haṭīb?" in *Alltagsleben und materielle Kultur*, ed. Bauer and Stehli-Werbeck, 137–62.

<sup>10</sup>On the art of compilation, see Kurt Franz, *Kompilation in arabischen Chroniken: Die Überlieferung*



*al-Rawḍah fī Tārīkh al-Nīl wa-Jazīrat al-Rawḍah* (and about *faḍā'il* literature in general) more in this direction, if we want to come to a better understanding of his interesting text(s).

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*vom Astand der Zang zwischen Geschichtlichkeit und Intertextualität vom 9. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 2004).



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## Arabic Transliteration System

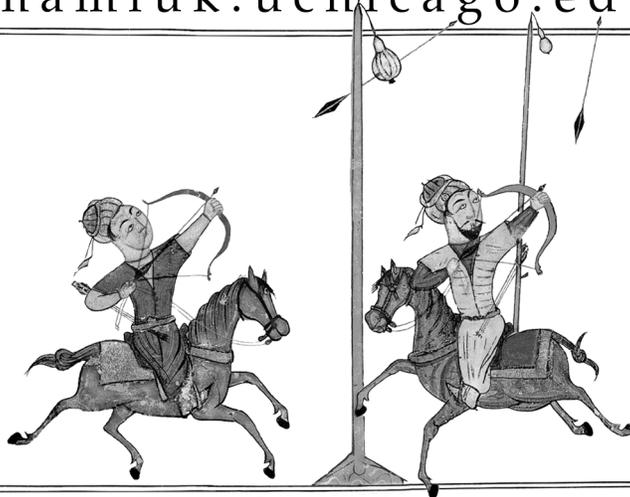
Romanized Arabic in *Mamlūk Studies Review* follows the Library of Congress conventions, briefly outlined below. A more thorough discussion may be found in *American Library Association-Library of Congress Romanization Tables* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1991).

ء	’	خ	kh	ش	sh	غ	gh	م	m
ب	b	د	d	ص	ṣ	ف	f	ن	n
ت	t	ذ	dh	ض	ḍ	ق	q	ه	h
ث	th	ر	r	ط	ṭ	ك	k	و	w
ج	j	ز	z	ظ	ẓ	ل	l	ي	y
ح	ḥ	س	s	ع	‘				
		ة	h, t (in construct)			ال	al-		
		َ	a	ُ	u	ِ	i		
		َـ	an	ُـ	un	ِـ	in		
		آ	ā	وُ	ū	يِ	ī		
		أ	ā	وُـ	ūw	يِـ	īy (medial), ī (final)		
		ى	á	وَ	aw	يِـ	ay		
						يِـ	ayy		

Avoid using apostrophes or single quotation marks for ‘*ayn* and *hamzah*. Instead use the Unicode characters ‘ (02BF) and ’ (02BE).

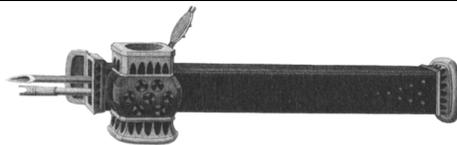
Capitalization in romanized Arabic follows the conventions of American English; the definite article is always lower case, except when it is the first word in an English sentence. The *hamzah* is not represented when beginning a word, following a prefixed preposition or conjunction, or following the 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 *li-l-sultān*. Note also the following exceptional spellings: Allāh, billāh, lillāh, bismillāh, mi’ah, and 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, and 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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