

MAMLŪK STUDIES
REVIEW

XIX



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2012: Elias Ibrahim Muhanna, Harvard University, “Encyclopaedism of the Mamluk Period: The composition of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī’s (d. 1333) *Nihāyat al-‘Arab fī funūn al-‘adab*.”

2013: No prize was awarded.

2014: Noah Gardiner, University of Michigan, “Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period.”

2015: No prize was awarded.

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HANNAH BARKER

RHODES COLLEGE

Purchasing a Slave in Fourteenth-Century Cairo: Ibn al-Akfānī's *Book of Observation and Inspection in the Examination of Slaves*

How were slaves bought and sold in Mamluk Cairo? The answer depends to a surprising degree on which genre of Mamluk texts we consult. This article is based on the genre of slave-buying advice, particularly the fourteenth-century treatise of Ibn al-Akfānī which is published here for the first time. However, a contradiction becomes apparent when Ibn al-Akfānī's medical perspective on the slave market is compared with the legal perspective adopted by the genre of *ḥisbah* manuals. The medically-oriented slave-buying advice manuals considered it essential for a prospective slave buyer to inspect the slave's naked body before committing to purchase, while the legally-oriented *ḥisbah* manuals considered such an inspection inappropriate. To understand how such conflicting legal and medical norms were reconciled in practice, a third genre, the travel narrative, will be added to the analysis.

Most studies of slavery during the Mamluk period have focused on master-slave interactions and on the various types of service required of slaves.¹ Less scholarly

The archival research for this article was funded by a Schmitt Grant from the American Historical Association. I would also like to thank Peter Pormann, Khalid Yossef, Adam Kosto, and Craig Perry for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this article.

¹Amir Mazor, *The Rise and Fall of a Muslim Regiment: The Maṣūriyya in the First Mamluk Sultanate, 678/1279–741/1341* (Bonn, 2015); Hannah Barker, "Egyptian and Italian Merchants in the Black Sea Slave Trade, 1260–1500" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2014); Anne Broadbridge, "Sending Home for Mom and Dad: The Extended Family Impulse in Mamluk Politics," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 15 (2011): 1–18; Julien Loiseau, "Frankish Captives in Mamluk Cairo," *Al-Masaq* 23 (2011): 37–52; Nur Sobers Khan, "Slaves, Wealth and Fear: An Episode from Late Mamluk-Era Egypt," *Oriens* 37 (2009): 155–61; Linda Northrup, "Military Slavery in the Islamic and Mamluk Context," in *Unfreie Arbeit: Ökonomische und kulturgeschichtliche Perspektiven*, ed. M. Erdem Kabadayi and Tobias Reichardt (Hildesheim, 2007), 115–131; Shaun Marmon, "Black Slaves in Mamlūk Narratives: Representations of Transgression," *Al-Qantara* 28 (2007): 435–64; idem, "Domestic Slavery in the Mamluk Empire: A Preliminary Sketch," in *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East* (Princeton, 1999), 1–23; idem, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Society* (Oxford, 1995); 'Alī al-Sayyid Maḥmūd, *Al-ḥawārī fī mujtama' al-Qāhirah al-mamlūkīyah* (Cairo, 1988); Hassanein Rabie, "The Training of the Mamluk Faris," in *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, ed. V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp (London, 1975), 153–63; Ahmad 'Abd al-Rāziq, *La femme au temps des Mamlouks en Égypte* (Cairo, 1973); idem, "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; Sayyid al-Bāz al-'Arīnī, *Al-Mamālīk* (Beirut, 1967); David Ayalon, "L'esclavage du mamelouk," *Oriental Notes and Studies* 1 (1951): 1–66, and a number of other articles.



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attention has been devoted to the purchase of slaves, the economic transaction and legal act that initiated a new master-slave relationship.² Of course, in many ways the market for slaves was similar to markets for other goods: supply and demand, contracts and payments, all operated much the same whether the commodity being exchanged was human or non-human. The most notable difference between the sale of human and non-human goods lay in the inspection process conducted by the buyer.

Legally, every act of sale required the informed consent of all parties. For the buyer, informed consent meant an opportunity to inspect the goods before purchase in order to confirm that their content and quality were as advertised by the seller. Fulfillment of the requirement for informed consent was signaled in the sale contract by a clause stating that “viewing, cognizance, and agreement in a legal manner” had occurred.³ In the case of a slave sale, the prospective buyer would conduct a physical examination and interview in order to determine whether the slave’s physical and mental qualities matched the seller’s description. A thorough inspection demanded expert knowledge of the various qualities commonly found in human bodies and minds, with special emphasis on the qualities considered most and least desirable in slaves.

In addition to fulfilling the legal requirement of informed consent, inspection served a second function in the sale of slaves, one unique to slaves as human commodities. The physical inspection of slaves’ bodies was deeply humiliating. This humiliation was not incidental. It served to reinforce the powerlessness and

²Yusuf Ragib, *Actes de vente d’esclaves et d’animaux d’Égypte médiévale* (Cairo, 2002); idem, “Les marchés aux esclaves en terre d’Islam,” in *Mercati et mercanti nell’alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1993), 721–66; 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. Scholarship on the Mamluk slave trade has developed independently of scholarship on the sale of individual slaves. See Reuven Amitai, “Diplomacy and the Slave Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Re-examination of the Mamluk-Byzantine-Genoese Triangle in the Late Thirteenth Century in Light of the Existing Early Correspondence,” *Oriente moderno* 88 (2008): 349–68; Andrew Ehrenkreutz, “Strategic Implications of the Slave Trade between Genoa and Mamluk Egypt in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century,” in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900*, ed. Abraham Udovitch (Princeton, 1981), 335–45; Benjamin Kedar, “Segurano-Sakran Salvaygo: un mercante genovese al servizio dei sultani mamalucchi, c. 1303–1322,” in *Fatti e idee di storia economica nei secoli XII–XX: Studi dedicati a Franco Borlandi* (Bologna, 1977), 75–91; Charles Verlinden, “Mamelouks et traitants,” in *Économies et sociétés au Moyen Age: Mélanges offerts à Edouard Perroy* (Paris, 1973), 737–47.

³“النظر والمعرفة والمعاقدة الشرعية” or an equivalent phrase. Little, “Six Fourteenth Century Purchase Deeds,” 299, 301. In addition to the *shurūf* manuals cited by Little, see Gabriela Linda Guellil, ed., *Damaszener Akten des 8./14. Jahrhunderts nach at-Tarsusis Kitab al-ʿIḥām: Eine Studie zum arabischen Justizwesen* (Bamberg, 1985), 115.



dishonor of slaves through the profanation (*ibtidāl*) of their bodies in contrast to the inviolability (*ḥurmah*) of the free body.⁴ The humiliation was made especially acute by examining the naked bodies of slaves in public places. Thus by the time a slave changed hands from the old master to the new, a relationship of power and subjection, honor and dishonor, had already been established through the process of inspection.

Humiliating displays of power during the inspection also inhibited the slave's unique ability as a human commodity to interfere with his or her own sale. Individual slaves could choose to cooperate with, acquiesce to, or resist the entire inspection process; confirm or deny the claims of sellers about their health and character; encourage or discourage particular buyers; and in some cases give or withhold consent in contracts for their own sale.⁵ Such maneuvering occurred within very narrow constraints and could be dangerous for the slave. Yet buyers and sellers could not afford to ignore the ability of slaves to exercise their own will in the midst of sale. Humiliating them helped to forestall and overcome their resistance.

For these reasons, inspecting a slave was a complex undertaking and difficult to carry out effectively. It is not surprising that some prospective slave owners sought advice before attempting to buy a new slave. Much of this advice was probably shared in person, but there was also a written genre of slave-buying advice. This genre, the evolution of which has been traced by Hans Müller, was derived from Greek models but took on its own distinctive form in the Islamic intellectual context.⁶ Texts in the slave-buying advice genre might appear as stand-alone manuals or as chapters within encyclopedic works. They were addressed to the prospective slave buyer, who was assumed to be a man buying slaves of either

⁴Baber Johansen, "The Valorization of the Human Body in Muslim Sunni Law," *Princeton Papers in Near East Studies* 4 (1996): 74; Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, 1982), 10–12.

⁵Little, "Six Fourteenth Century Purchase Deeds," 317; Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Jarawānī, *Al-Kawkab al-mushriq fīmā yaḥtāj ilayhi al-muwaṭṭiq li-ālim al-shurūṭ*, ed. Souad Saghbini (Berlin, 2010), 54–55.

⁶Hans Müller, *Die Kunst des Sklavenkaufs nach arabischen, persischen und türkischen Ratgebern vom 10. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg, 1980). The most widely known example of this genre is Ibn Buṭlān's treatise, "Risālat jāmi'ah li-funūn nafi'ah fī shirā' al-raḥiq wa-taqlīb al-'abid," in *Nawādir al-makḥūṭāt*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn (Cairo, 1954), 383–420. A complete Italian translation has been published by Antonella Ghersetti, *Trattato generale sull'acquisto e l'esame degli schiavi* (Catanzaro, 2001). A partial English translation by Bernard Lewis is available in Jarbel Rodriguez, *Muslim and Christian Contact in the Middle Ages: A Reader* (Toronto, 2015), 422–29. Little else has been written about this genre, but see Antonella Ghersetti, "De l'achat des esclaves: entre examen médical et physiognomie: Le chapitre 46 du Kitāb al-dalā'il d'Ibn Bahlūl (Xe s.)," in *Essays in Honour of Alexander Fodor on his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. K. Dévényi and T. Iványi (Budapest, 2001), 83–94.



gender. Their advice centered on the medical knowledge necessary to inspect a slave's body for signs of poor health. Most were written by practicing doctors or scholars with medical expertise. The authors often supplemented their medical advice with ethnographic information (qualities associated with slaves from various places), ethical and political commentary (how to control the behavior of slaves and integrate them into the household), and general recommendations presented as common sense (shop around rather than buying the first available slave). The kinds of service required of these slaves were spelled out most clearly in the ethnographic chapters, which used stereotypes to classify slaves for domestic work, military service, sexual exploitation, hard labor, household or business management, and creative endeavors such as music.

Within these genre conventions, no two slave-buying advice texts are exactly alike. This article focuses on the distinctive features of one Mamluk-era slave-buying advice manual, *The Book of Observation and Inspection in the Examination of Slaves* by Ibn al-Akfānī. *The Book of Observation* survives today in a single manuscript fragment apparently copied in the fifteenth century.⁷ It was acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale Française in 1833 as part of the collection of Jean-Louis Asselin de Cherville, a French consular agent in Cairo from 1806 to 1822.⁸ At that time it had already been bound into a volume with several other texts relating to Mamluk Syria and Egypt.

⁷“Kitāb al-nazar wa-al-taḥqīq fī taqlīb al-raḥīq,” Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Française MS arabe 2234, fols. 148r–151r. The entire volume and its contents are described in W. M. G. de Slane, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1883), 392, accessed online March 17, 2015 at <http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ead.html?id=FRBNFEAD000030154>. Although the catalog lists *The Book of Observation* as folios 148r–157v of the volume, in fact it takes up only folios 148r–151r. Fols. 148–155 form a gathering with two loose sheets, fols. 156 and 157, attached at the end. Ibn al-Akfānī's treatise begins with a title page on fol. 148r. The text of his treatise runs from fol. 148v to fol. 151r but stops abruptly a few lines into fol. 151r. The next line is the beginning of a second, unrelated text which fills the rest of fol. 151r and its margins. The remainder of the gathering consists of an assortment of unrelated texts. The first loose sheet, fol. 156r, is a second title page for Ibn al-Akfānī's treatise using the same layout as the title page on fol. 148r. Perhaps the scribe was practicing. However, the margins of fol. 156r are filled with a continuation of the unrelated text from fol. 155v. The textual continuity from fol. 155v to fol. 156r, from the end of the gathering onto the loose leaf, is signaled with a guide word. The second loose leaf, fol. 157, is blank. Red ink is used to highlight certain letters in Ibn al-Akfānī's treatise, but does not appear elsewhere except for a *bismillah* on fol. 156v. A German translation of Ibn al-Akfānī's treatise is available in Müller, *Die Kunst des Sklavenkaufs*, 177–180, but the original Arabic text has not been published until now.

⁸Marie-Geneviève Guesdon, e-mail message to author, March 31, 2015. The volume containing Ibn al-Akfānī's treatise was number 497 in de Cherville's collection.



The author of *The Book of Observation*, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sā'id ibn al-Akfānī al-Anṣārī, was born in Sinjār in northern Iraq in the 1280s.⁹ He moved to Syria and then to Cairo in the course of his studies, settling down as a physician at the Maṣṣūrī hospital in Cairo by the 1320s. He was also a prolific writer and composed dozens of treatises on a wide variety of topics from ophthalmology to astronomy. His most famous work was an encyclopedia that covered sixty branches of knowledge gathered under the headings of literature, logic, theology, physics, geometry, astronomy, mathematics, and the practical sciences (such as politics). He died in 1348 at the age of sixty, a casualty of the first outbreak of the Black Death in Cairo. Therefore, although the text of *The Book of Observation* is not dated, it was probably composed in Cairo in the second quarter of the fourteenth century.

Ibn al-Akfānī applied his medical knowledge to the purchase of slaves in practice as well as in theory. Slave traders and brokers frequently consulted him about the health of their slaves. According to his friend and biographer al-Ṣafadī, “as for knowledge about slaves, both male and female [*al-raḥīq min al-mamālīk wa-al-jawārī*], he had a wealth of it. I saw those enthusiastic about the trade come to him and talk about what problems had befallen them in the course of their work. He guided them to that which was right and led them to repair their faults.”¹⁰ Given Ibn al-Akfānī's wide-ranging medical knowledge, his great activity as a writer, and his involvement with the local slave market, it is not surprising that he decided to write a treatise in the genre of slave-buying advice.

The Book of Observation is not, however, an entirely original work. Ibn al-Akfānī seems to have based it on an anonymous treatise entitled *Inspection in Slave-Buying* composed in early thirteenth-century Egypt or Syria.¹¹ It is difficult to compare *The Book of Observation* and *Inspection in Slave-Buying* because both surviving texts are incomplete, but Ibn al-Akfānī's version is far shorter and less detailed. It includes no ethnography and less common-sense advice, and it may have been intended to circulate as an introduction to *Inspection in Slave-Buying* rather than an independent treatise. Nevertheless, it was *The Book of Observation* that was named as a model for the third and final known slave-buying advice

⁹Jan Just Witkam, “Ibn al-Akfānī,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., supplement no. 5–6, 381; idem, “Ibn al-Akfānī (d.749/1348) and his Bibliography of the Sciences,” *Manuscripts of the Middle East 2* (1987): 37–41.

¹⁰Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān al-ʿaṣr wa-a'wān al-naṣr*, ed. Fuat Sezgin (Frankfurt, 1990), 2:225–31, no. 1440.

وأما معرفة الرقيق من المماليك والجواري فأليه المال في ذلك، ورأيت المولعين بالصنعة يحضرون إليه ويذكرون ما وقع لهم من الخلل في أثناء ذلك العمل، فيرشدهم إلى الصواب، ويدلهم على إصلاح ذلك الفساد

¹¹“Al-Taḥqīq fī shirā' al-raḥīq,” Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 48 Taymūriyah, Faḍā'il wa-radhā'il. This is the sole surviving version of the text and it lacks the final chapter.



manual of the Mamluk era, *The Apt Statement on Choosing Female and Male Slaves*, composed by al-ʿAyntābī in the late fifteenth century.¹² Like Ibn al-Akfānī, al-ʿAyntābī was a physician at the Maṣūri hospital in Cairo. Unlike Ibn al-Akfānī, al-ʿAyntābī wrote a full slave-buying treatise with substantial sections on common-sense advice, ethnography, and physiognomy. The apparent mismatch between the content of al-ʿAyntābī’s treatise (which appears to follow *Inspection in Slave-Buying*) and its stated model (the abbreviated *Book of Observation*) supports the theory that the combined texts of both the anonymous *Inspection in Slave-Buying* and Ibn al-Akfānī’s *Book of Observation* were circulating together under the title *The Book of Observation*.¹³

It is no coincidence that the two known authors of Mamluk-era slave-buying manuals, Ibn al-Akfānī and al-ʿAyntābī, were both physicians at the Maṣūri hospital. The district where the hospital is located, Khān al-Khalīlī, was also home to some of the larger and more famous slave markets in Cairo, enabling slave sellers, buyers, and brokers to consult the Maṣūri physicians with ease.¹⁴ Mamluk slave markets appeared in three different physical forms: an open market located in a vacant lot or square; a street market in which the slaves stood or sat along the walls; or an enclosed market located within a building (a *khān* or *funduq*) consisting of a central courtyard surrounded by shops on the first floor and rooms for the slaves on the second floor.¹⁵

In the early thirteenth century, two locations within Khān al-Khalīlī were designated as slave markets. One market was closed in 1225 so that al-Kāmil could use the site to build his madrasah.¹⁶ It was replaced for a brief time by an open market located along the same street, Bayn al-Qasrayn, in a space (*sāḥah*) opposite

¹²Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-ʿAyntābī al-Amshāṭī, *Al-Qawl al-sadīd fī ikhtiyār al-imāʾ wa-al-ʿabīd*, ed. Muḥammad ʿĪsā Ṣāliḥīyah (Beirut, 1996); Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ*, ed. Husām al-Dīn al-Qudṣī (Cairo, 1934), 10:128, no.541 is a biography of al-ʿAyntābī.

¹³Müller, *Die Kunst des Sklavenkaufs*, 109–11, 177.

¹⁴Consulting with a physician was also common practice for slave buyers in contemporary Genoa and Valencia. Carmel Ferragud, “The Role of Doctors in the Slave Trade during the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries within the Kingdom of Valencia (Crown of Aragon),” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 87 (2013): 143–69; for Genoa, see Bartolomeo de Bosco, *Consilia* (Lodano, 1620), 493–95, consilium 301.

¹⁵Ragib, “Les marchés aux esclaves,” 722–23. On this architectural form, see Olivia Remie Constantine, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World* (Cambridge, 2003).

¹⁶Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-athār fī Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, ed. Ayman Fuʾād Sayyid (London, 2002–4), 3:304–5; Sylvie Denoix, Jean-Charles Depaule, and Michel Tuchscherer, *Le Khan al-Khalili et ses environs: Un centre commercial et artisanal au Caire du XIIIe au XXe siècle* (Cairo, 1999), 2:25; Nicholas Warner, *The Monuments of Historic Cairo: A Map and Descriptive Catalogue* (Cairo, 2005), no. 428.



Bāb al-Zuhūmah, previously the gate of the old Fatimid palace and later the gate of the Hanbali hall of the madrasah of al-Ṣāliḥ.¹⁷ The market was moved again almost immediately when a retired palace eunuch named Masrūr purchased the site for a small *khān*, Khān Masrūr al-Ṣaghīr, sometime during the reign of al-Kāmil (1218–38).¹⁸

The slave market did not move far, however, reappearing next door as part of Masrūr's large *khān*, Khān Masrūr al-Kabīr. Masrūr's large *khān* was built next to his small *khān*, still in the vicinity of Bāb al-Zuhūmah.¹⁹ In the thirteenth century, the large *khān* boasted ninety-nine rooms and a mosque.²⁰ By the late fourteenth century it was one of the most important *khāns* in Cairo, notable for its many traders from Syria as well as a government office for the deposit of funds for orphans and travelers.²¹ It was also famous as a slave market. Either beside the *khān* or among its exterior shops were two rooms with a bench between them. Turkic and Anatolian *mamlūks* (*al-mamālīk al-turuk wa-al-rūm*) sat on the bench to be displayed for potential buyers.²²

The sultan al-Zāhir Barqūq closed this slave market in the 1380s, and Khān Masrūr went into decline shortly afterwards.²³ Meanwhile the slave market shift-

¹⁷The term used is *ساحة*. Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Al-Rawḍah al-bahīyah al-zāhirah fī khitāṭ al-mu'izzīyah al-Qāhirah*, ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (Beirut, 1996), 25; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-khitāṭ*, 2:431. The Ṣāliḥīyah madrasah is Warner, *Monuments of Historic Cairo*, no. 38.

¹⁸Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Al-Rawḍah al-bahīyah*, 25. Some of the land in question belonged to the author's father. The revenues of the *khān* were used to endow the school established in Masrūr's house after his death. It was renewed in the fourteenth century, incorporated into a *waqf* by al-Ādil Ṭūmānḅāy in the early sixteenth century, then rebuilt as Khān al-Laban in the Ottoman era and as Wakālat Badawīyah bint Shahīn today. Denoix, Depaule, and Tuchscherer, *Le Khan al-Khalili*, 2:30; André Raymond and Gaston Wiet, *Les Marchés du Caire: Traduction annotée du texte de Maqrīzī* (Cairo, 1979), 133–35.

¹⁹Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-khitāṭ*, 3:304–5; Raymond and Wiet, *Les Marchés du Caire*, 133–35; Denoix, Depaule, and Tuchscherer, *Le Khan al-Khalili*, vol. 2 plate 7. The large *khān* was built on the site of the former Khazānat al-Daraq.

²⁰Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Al-Rawḍah al-bahīyah*, 25.

²¹Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-khitāṭ*, 3:304–5.

²²Ibid., 2:246. This method of displaying slaves was also used in fifteenth-century Bursa. Bertrandon de la Broquière, *The Voyage d'Outremer*, trans. Galen Kline (New York, 1988), 84. There is no evidence that the slaves displayed on the bench were auctioned, despite Ragib, "Les marchés aux esclaves," 756. There is also no evidence that the two benches were used to display male and female slaves separately, despite Raymond and Wiet, *Les Marchés du Caire*, 94–95, and Muḥammad Mukhtar, *Bughīyat al-murīd fī shirā' al-jawārī wa-taqlīb al-'abīd* (Cairo, 1996), 86. In fact, I have found no sign that female slaves were ever sold at Khān Masrūr.

²³Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-khitāṭ*, 3:304–5, blamed Timur for this, since his devastation of Syria disrupted the activities of the Syrian merchants who normally used Khān Masrūr as their base in Cairo. The large *khān* was demolished in 1428 by al-Ashraf Barsbāy and rebuilt as a *waqf* for



ed to a new district, Khuṭṭ al-Miṣṭāḥ. This market, located near the Madrasah Ḥusāmīyah, was referred to interchangeably as the slave market (*sūq al-raqīq*) and the female slave market (*sūq al-jawārī*).²⁴ It was a street market on the Darb al-Mushtarak and remained at this location for almost a hundred years.²⁵ The only hiatus occurred in 1418, when it was moved to an unnamed *funduq* opposite the shrine of al-Ḥusayn.²⁶ This may have been Funduq Bahādur, founded in 1258 and located across the street (Darb Jirjī) on the western side of the mosque of al-Ḥusayn.²⁷ A second fifteenth-century street market was found in Khūkhah Sūq al-Jawār, near the madrasah of Sayf al-Islām and the Ḥammām al-Sulṭān.²⁸ It was referred to interchangeably as a market for slaves and female slaves (*sūq al-raqīq* and *sūq al-jawārī*) and was operational until at least 1471.²⁹ There may also have been a third fifteenth-century slave market near Madrasah al-Fakhrīyah during the reign of al-Zāhir Jaqmaq.³⁰

Towards the end of the Mamluk period, the slave market moved yet again. In November 1514, al-Ashraf Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī closed the old slave market and founded a new one (*sūq lil-raqīq*) on the same street as the temporary slave market of 1418.³¹ This may have evolved into Wakālat al-Jallābah, an Ottoman-era street market specializing in black slaves which itself changed location several times

the benefit of the son of Amir Janibak. Denoix, Depaule, and Tuchscherer, *Le Khan al-Khalili*, 2:8–9; Terence Walz, “Wakalat al-Gallaba: The Market for Sudan Goods in Cairo,” *Annales islamologiques* 13 (1977): 217–45.

²⁴Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-khiṭaṭ*, 3:94. The Miṣṭāḥ quarter was located outside the Qanṭarah gate, near the Shaʿrīyah gate, between the Milḥīyin quarter and the Sūwayqah al-Ṣāhib quarter. Al-Maqrīzī’s description of this market was adopted almost word for word by Āqbughā al-Khāṣikī in his own description of Cairo during the reign of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in the early 1500s. Al-Khāṣikī, “Al-Tuḥfah al-fākīrah,” Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Française MS arabe 2265, fol. 40v.

²⁵Al-Khāṣikī, “Al-Tuḥfah al-fākīrah,” fol. 54r; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-khiṭaṭ*, 3:127; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ*, 10:159, no. 643. The street was named after the *ṣilāḥdār* of al-Zāhir Barqūq who died in 821/1418.

²⁶Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. M. M. Ziyadah and Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿAshūr (Cairo, 1934–73), 4:1:442. The shrine was in the same location as the present mosque of al-Ḥusayn. Warner, *Monuments of Historic Cairo*, no. 28.

²⁷Denoix, Depaule, and Tuchscherer, *Le Khan al-Khalili*, 2:52–53.

²⁸Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-khiṭaṭ*, 3:268.

²⁹Alī ibn Dawūd ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbāʾ al-ḥaṣr bi-ibnāʾ al-ʿaṣr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970), 379, 383, and 396. He refers the reader to al-Maqrīzī’s description cited in the previous footnote.

³⁰Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ*, 3:72. The madrasah might have been located in the mosque of ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Fakhrī built in 1418. Warner, *Monuments of Historic Cairo*, no.184. Today it is located on Shārīʿ Port Saʿīd, just south of its intersection with Shārīʿ al-Azhar and north of the Islamic Museum, on the east side of the street.

³¹Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr* (Cairo, 1984), 4:404–5 and 5:94; Denoix, Depaule, and Tuchscherer, *Le Khan al-Khalili*, 52.



while keeping the same name.³² White slaves were sold in the Wakālat al-Kushuk and Khān Ja‘far during the Ottoman era.³³ Markets with these names have been attributed to the Mamluk era as well, but there is no mention of them in contemporary sources.³⁴ The Ottoman pattern of separate markets for black and white slaves, or for male and female slaves, was not characteristic of the Mamluk era either.

However, not all slaves were sold in the context of an organized market. Some were displayed for sale in public places, such as the entrances of mosques and churches, or were led through the streets by criers.³⁵ Others were sold in private spaces such as homes and shops. For example, when the young Ayyubid ruler of Aleppo, al-Manṣūr Muḥammad, wanted to buy a slave in the early thirteenth century, a merchant visited his house with a selection of slaves so that he and his mother could inspect them from behind a veil or screen.³⁶ In the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh was playing cards with a group of friends when a slave merchant appeared with a particularly fine *mamlūk* for sale.³⁷ A private sale environment seems to have been the prerogative of wealthy buyers and a privilege granted to elite slaves, who thus avoided the humiliation of public display.³⁸

Nevertheless, the majority of slaves were sold in noisy, bustling public markets. In an environment full of distractions, how was an ordinary, non-expert slave buyer to take full advantage of his or her right to inspect the goods and avoid fraud? How was he or she to decide whether a slave was truly in good health and

³²Ola Rashad Seif, “The Khan al-Khalili District: Development, Topography and Context from the 12th to the 21st Century” (M.A. thesis, American University in Cairo, 2005), 54; Walz, “Wakalat al-Gallaba”; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, *‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī’s History of Egypt*, trans. Thomas Philipp and Moshe Perlmann (Stuttgart, 1994), 2:314; Raymond and Wiet, *Les Marchés du Caire*, Appendix II.

³³Marcel Clerget, *Le Caire, étude de géographie urbaine et d’histoire économique* (Cairo, 1934), 2:343, citing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources. On Clerget’s map (2:145), the various locations of Wakālat al-Jallābah are numbers 36, 124, and 291; Khān Ja‘far is number 52; and Wakālat al-Kushuk does not appear.

³⁴Mukhtar, *Bughīyat al-murīd*, 85; Na‘īm Zakkī Fahmī, *Ṭuruq al-tijārah al-dawliyah wa-muḥaṭātuhā bayna al-sharq wa-al-gharb* (Cairo, 1973), 224.

³⁵Ragib, “Les marchés aux esclaves,” 723–24.

³⁶Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfā ba‘d al-wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Āshūr (Cairo, 1986), 3:447–67, no. 717. Also *ibid.*, 4:68, no. 769.

³⁷Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirah fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, ed. William Popper (Berkeley, 1909), 6:374.

³⁸Clerget, *Le Caire*, 344; Adam Mez, *The Renaissance of Islam*, trans. Salahuddin Khuda Bakhsh and D. S. Margoliouth (Patna, 1937), 160.



able to provide whatever services the buyer had in mind? Ibn al-Akfānī's response to this dilemma is given in Arabic in Appendix A and in English translation in Appendix B.

His advice can be summed up in six points. First, avoid inspecting slaves when in a state of need or desire, since buyers experiencing urgent need tend not to be concerned about quality.³⁹ Second, avoid choosing a slave on the basis of first impressions, since they may be misleading. Third, disregard statements from the previous owner about the quality of the slave, but do ask about the reason for the sale. Fourth, avoid slaves who resist punishment and who may have been corrupted by a poor environment. Fifth, purchase slave women only during their menstrual period in order to ensure that they are not concealing a pregnancy, and do not forget after purchase that they might wish to become pregnant. This is a reference to *umm walad* status.⁴⁰ A pregnant slave woman would become an *umm walad* if her master acknowledged paternity of her child. The child of an *umm walad* would enjoy free status from the moment of its birth and would be considered a legitimate heir of its father. The *umm walad* herself could not be sold and would be manumitted upon the death of her master.

Ibn al-Akfānī's final piece of advice was a checklist for a thorough head-to-toe inspection of the slave's body in order to detect any hint of injury or disease. Since the surviving manuscript copy is incomplete, the checklist covers only the area from the head to the arms. Nevertheless, a buyer who worked through Ibn al-Akfānī's checklist would be well-informed about the slave's physical state of health and thus well-equipped to avoid fraud, negotiate a fair price, and conclude a valid sale with respect to the requirement for viewing and cognizance of the goods.

Yet Ibn al-Akfānī's manual cannot be taken at face value as a description of how prospective slave buyers acted in the marketplace. Slave-buying advice is a normative genre, telling slave buyers what they ought to do rather than describing what they actually did. To check the accuracy of Ibn al-Akfānī's portrayal of the slave marketplace, his treatise should be compared with sources from two other genres, one normative and one descriptive. The normative genre of *ḥisbah* manuals, manuals for market inspectors, set forth guidelines for the sale of slaves based on legal rather than medical principles. *Ḥisbah* manuals were written by jurists to help the market inspector (*muḥtasib*), a state official, carry out his legal and moral duty "to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong" in the marketplace and other public spaces.⁴¹ In contrast, the descriptive genre of the travel

³⁹Al-ʿAyntābī, *Al-Qawl al-sadīd*, 38 specifies this desire as sexual, but Ibn al-Akfānī does not.

⁴⁰Marmon, "Domestic Slavery in the Mamluk Empire," 4.

⁴¹"تأمرون بالمعروف وتنهون عن المنكر." Quran 3:110, quoted in Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Cairo, 1964–92), 6:296. The duties of a *muḥtasib* are explained in Jonathan



narrative recorded the observations of Mamluk society made by visitors from other parts of the world for the entertainment and edification of their readers.

The comparison between slave-buying advice manuals and *ḥisbah* manuals quickly reveals that although both were normative genres, they were not always in agreement about what the norms for slave-buying were. The two most important surviving Mamluk *ḥisbah* manuals, *The Utmost Authority in the Pursuit of Ḥisbah* by Ibn Bassām and *The Guideposts of Piety in the Principles of Ḥisbah* by Ibn al-Ukhūwah, date from the first half of the fourteenth century.⁴² Both were based on *The Utmost Authority in the Pursuit of Ḥisbah* by al-Shayzarī, a Syrian market inspector with medical expertise who wrote during the twelfth century and whose treatise was still being copied in the fourteenth century.⁴³

Ḥisbah manuals tended to focus on different aspects of slave market procedure than slave-buying advice manuals. In keeping with their legal and moral aims, *ḥisbah* manuals emphasized the enforcement of the law governing slave sales.⁴⁴ Muslims were not to be sold as slaves. Children and slave converts to Islam were not to be sold to non-Muslims. Young children were not to be separated from their mothers. Slave brokers were to check the terms of previous sale contracts for each slave in case any conditions had been placed on his or her resale. They were also to keep a register of their transactions in case of dispute.⁴⁵ All of these areas were outside the purview of the slave-buying advice manuals, which tended to assume that the slaves available in the market were legal to buy. Likewise, *ḥisbah* manuals did not concern themselves with common sense advice, ethnography, or ethical and political commentary because choosing and training the right slave for the right purpose had no bearing on the legality of the sale.

The area where the two genres overlapped and contradicted one another was the physical inspection process. *Ḥisbah* manuals expected that brokers would assist the slave buyer in carrying out the physical inspection. Either the broker

Berkey, “The Muhtasibs of Cairo under the Mamluks: Towards an Understanding of an Islamic Institution,” in *Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden, 2004), 245–76.

⁴²Ibn Bassām, *Nihāyat al-rutbah fī ṭalab al-ḥisbah*, ed. Husām al-Dīn al-Sāmarrāʿī (Baghdad, 1968), 149–52; Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ukhūwah, *Maʿālim al-qurbah fī aḥkām al-ḥisbah*, ed. Reuben Levy (London, 1938), 50. Aḥmad ibn Taymiyah, *Al-Ḥisbah fī al-Islām*, ed. Muḥammad Mubārak (Cairo, 1967), from the same era does not include a chapter on slaves.

⁴³Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Naṣr al-Shayzarī, *The Book of the Islamic Market Inspector: Nihāyat al-Rutbah fī Ṭalab al-Ḥisbah: (the Utmost Authority in the Pursuit of Ḥisbah)*, ed. R. P. Buckley (Oxford, 1999), v. This edition is based on a manuscript produced in Egypt in 711/1310–11.

⁴⁴Ibn Bassām, *Nihāyat al-rutbah*, 149–50; Ibn al-Ukhūwah, *Maʿālim al-qurbah*, 20, 50, 57.

⁴⁵No Mamluk registers have survived, but from the Fatimid era we have D. S. Richards, “Fragments of a Slave Dealer’s Day-Book from Fustat,” in *Documents de l’Islam médiéval*, ed. Yusuf Ragib (Cairo, 1991), 89–96.



himself “must be well acquainted with faults and experienced in incipient illnesses and diseases,” or else “let him turn concerning that to those who know about temperaments and constitutions.”⁴⁶ According to the *shurūṭ* manuals which provided scribes with model documents and legal formulas, if a slave was sold with known faults, “it is important that he [the scribe drawing up the contract] enumerate [each] fault, and that the doctors testify concerning it that is a fault.”⁴⁷ Inspection of the shame zones of male slaves—the area between the navel and the knees—was entirely forbidden.⁴⁸ The shame zones of female slaves—the entire body except for the face, hands, and sometimes the feet and forearms—could not be inspected in public. However, because male ownership of a female slave included the right to have sex with her, the condition of her shame zones was considered relevant to the sale. Therefore a male buyer was permitted to inspect a female slave’s entire body in a private space and in the presence of other women.⁴⁹ Doctors were allowed to examine the shame zones of men and women in private as part of their medical practice, and they may have done so on behalf of the slave buyer as well, although there is no definite evidence for this.⁵⁰

Slave-buying manuals contradicted *ḥisbah* manuals by advising slave buyers to inspect the shame zones of both male and female slaves publicly. *The Book of Observation* specifically recommended examining male slaves for hardness or roughness in the area between the navel and the penis, a direct violation of the *ḥisbah* guidelines.⁵¹ It also advised against buying a slave woman except during her menstrual period. Unfortunately, the surviving text ends before the section where one would expect details on inspecting the female body, including how to determine whether a woman was menstruating or pregnant. *Inspection in Slave-buying* and *The Apt Statement* both give instructions for inspecting the entire female body with respect to general health, menstruation, pregnancy, and wet nursing. This suggests that the missing portion of *The Book of Observation* would also have advocated for inspection of the entire female body, but it is impossible to be sure. In any case, the *ḥisbah* manuals indicate that doctors should not publicly examine the naked bodies of slaves or advise non-doctors on how to do so, while the slave-buying advice manuals recommend the opposite.

⁴⁶ Al-Shayzarī, *The Book of the Islamic Market Inspector*, 103; “يستعان عليها بالذين يعرفون الامزجة وطبائها” Ibn Bassām, *Nihāyat al-rutbah*, 152.

⁴⁷ “مهما كان يعد عيبا، وتشهد به الأطباء أنه عيبا.” al-Jarawānī, *Al-Kawkab al-mushriq*, 73.

⁴⁸ Johansen, “Valorization of the Human Body,” 75 and 78–80, explains the concept of shame zones. Ibn Bassām, *Nihāyat al-rutbah*, 149, forbids their inspection.

⁴⁹ Ottoman markets made use of nearby houses for private inspection. Ragib, “Les marchés aux esclaves,” 738.

⁵⁰ Ragib, “Les marchés aux esclaves,” 747.

⁵¹ See fol. 149v in the appendix to this article.



In practice, did Mamluk slave buyers publicly inspect the shame zones of slaves (in accordance with slave-buying advice) or not (in accordance with the *ḥisbah* manuals)? Travel narratives indicate that the slave-buying advice prevailed. Detailed descriptions of slave inspections are rare in Arabic travel narratives, perhaps because they were too ordinary to be noted. The best description was composed by Ibn al-Mujāwir, who visited the slave market of Aden in the early thirteenth century, around the same time as the anonymous slave-buying advice manual *Inspection in Slave-Buying* was written. According to Ibn al-Mujāwir:

The slave girl is fumigated with an aromatic smoke, perfumed, adorned and a waist-wrapper fastened round her middle. The seller takes her by the hand and walks around the souk with her; he calls out that she is for sale. The wicked merchants appear, examining her hands, feet, calves, thighs, navel, chest and breasts. He examines her back and measures her buttocks in spans. He examines her tongue, teeth, hair and spares no effort. If she is wearing clothes, he takes them off; he examines and looks. Finally he casts a direct eye over her vagina and anus, without her having on any covering or veil.⁵²

Ibn al-Mujāwir's description suggests that the slave-buying manuals which advised public examination of the shame zones were closer to the reality of inspection than the *ḥisbah* manuals.

A second description of a slave inspection comes from a visitor to Alexandria in the late Mamluk period. Felix Fabri, born Felix Schmidt in Zurich in the 1430s, served for much of his life as prior of the Dominican convent of Ulm in Schwabia.⁵³ His duties required frequent travel in Germany and Italy, but he also made time for two pilgrimages to Jerusalem, the first in 1480 and the second from April

⁵²English translation from Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Mujāwir, *A Traveler in Thirteenth-Century Arabia: Ibn al-Mujāwir's Tārīkh al-mustabṣir*, ed. G. Rex Smith (Aldershot, 2008), 162. Arabic text from Oscar Löfgren, *Arabische Texte zur Kenntnis der Stadt Aden im Mittelalter* (Uppsala, 1936), 1:66.

تَبَخَّرَ الْجَارِيَةَ وَتَطَيَّبَ وَتَعَدَّلَ وَيَشَدُّ وَسَطَهَا بِمَفْزَرٍ وَيَأْخُذُ الْمَنَادَى بِيَدِهَا وَيَدُورُ بِهَا فِي السُّوقِ وَيُنَادِي عَلَيْهَا وَيَحْضُرُ التَّجَارَ الْفَجَّارَ يَقْلِبُونَ يَدَهَا وَرِجْلَهَا وَسَاقَهَا وَأَنْفَازَهَا وَسَرْحَهَا وَصَدْرَهَا وَنَحْدَهَا وَيَقْلِبُ ظَهْرَهَا وَيَشِيرُ عَجْزَهَا وَيَقْلِبُ لِسَانَهَا وَأَسْنَانَهَا وَشَعْرَهَا وَيَبْذُلُ الْمَجْهُودَ وَإِنْ كَانَ عَلَيْهَا ثِيَابٌ خَلَعَهَا وَقَلْبَ وَأَبْصَرَ فِي آخِرِ الْأَمْرِ يَقْلِبُ فَرْجَهَا وَجَحْرَهَا مَعَانِيَةً مِنْ غَيْرِ سِتْرٍ وَلَا حِجَابٍ

⁵³Kathryne Beebe, *Pilgrim & Preacher: The Audiences and Observant Spirituality of Friar Felix Fabri (1437/8–1502)* (Oxford, 2014); Nicole Chareyron and Jean Meyers, eds., *Les errances de Frère Félix, pèlerin en Terre sainte, en Arabie et en Egypte (1480–1483)* (Montpellier, 2000), ix–xxxi; Wieland Carls, *Felix Fabri, Die Sionpilger* (Berlin, 1999), 53–62. Bernhard von Breydenbach, who also wrote a lengthy travel narrative, was one of Fabri's companions on his second pilgrimage. Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Sanctarum peregrinationum in montem Syon ad Christi sepulcrum in Hierusalem* (Speyer, 1502).



1483 to January 1484. In the course of his second pilgrimage, Fabri visited Sinai, Cairo, and Alexandria as well as Jerusalem. He then wrote three narratives of his pilgrimage experiences (*Das gereimte Pilgerbüchlein* in rhyming German verse, *Evagatorium* in Latin, and an abridged version of *Evagatorium* in German) as well as a contemplative guidebook for nuns in his spiritual care who could not make the physical journey to Jerusalem, a treatise on the history of Ulm, and an assortment of sermons and theological treatises. Although he hoped to return to the Holy Land a third time, Fabri died and was buried in Ulm in 1502.

Evagatorium was the longest of Fabri's travel narratives. He began writing immediately upon his return from Egypt in 1484 using notes which he had taken during his pilgrimage, and he was still revising it in 1488.⁵⁴ This makes it roughly contemporary with *The Apt Statement*, al-'Ayntābi's fifteenth-century slave-buying advice manual. Fabri's narrative was intended for a learned audience of fellow Dominicans who could appreciate its philosophical references as well as its dramatic anecdotes. He described the Tatar *funduq* in Alexandria as follows:

We stood for some time in this sorrowful market and saw the mournful, or rather terrifying, handling of people. For when a person wants to buy a person, male or female, he enters the building and considers those for sale, which [of them] pleases him. In that consideration are those with the best eyes and most expertise, for there is no doctor or physician who can be compared to them in recognizing the complexions and conditions of people; for immediately, as they look into the face of someone, they recognize of what value, skill, or fortune he may be. If it is a boy, he knows, as he looks at him, for what he may be suitable. Thus they also have such diligence in recognizing the natures and conditions of horses, so that they may seem to have attained all the skill of the medical art to the full, for they immediately discern in one single look all his flaws and achievements, and of what use, age, and value he may be. For they are entirely free from other speculative medical arts, nor is it a question with them of the soul or its capacities, passions, and habits, nor do they ask about its infusion or its union with the body. But, however, in the aforementioned [matter] they are skilled beyond all natural philosophers and physicians, as much in the inspection of animals as of humans. Therefore when anyone wanting to buy a person considers one pleasing to him, he extends a hand into the heap, and leads out a pleasing female or male and appraises [her or him] for buying in various ways, speak-

⁵⁴Chareyron and Meyers, eds., *Les errances de Frère Félix*, xxx.



ing to him and hearing whether the answer is rational. He looks in his eyes, whether they are good and right; whether he hears well; he touches; and then he also strips [him] of his clothes, noting all the members. He considers how modest [he is], how timid, how happy, how sad, how healthy and whole. There, which is shameful to say, the genitals of males and females are handled and openly shown in the presence of all. Also, nude and cut by whips, they are compelled to march, run, walk, and jump in the presence of all, so that it becomes manifestly clear which are sick or healthy, male or female, virgin or corrupt. If they see them blush, they take up position around them striking more, cutting with sticks, buffeting with fists, so that he would do thus in a forced manner what he blushed to do voluntarily in the presence of all.⁵⁵

⁵⁵“Aliquamdiu stetimus in hoc funesto foro et lamentabiles, imo horribiles hominum contrectationes vidimus. Nam dum homo vult emere hominem, masculum aut foemellam, intrat domum et considerat venales, quis sibi placeat, et in illa consideratione sunt oculatissimi et expertissimi, non enim est medicus aut physicus, qui valeat eis comparari in cognoscendis complexionibus et conditionibus hominum; immediate enim, ut in faciem alicujus inspexerint, cujus sit valoris, artis vel fortunae cognoscunt, et si puer est, scit, ut eum inspicit, ad quod habilis sit. Sic etiam in cognoscendis equorum naturis et conditionibus tantam habent industriam, ut videantur omnem physicae artis peritiam ad plenum consecuti, ad unum enim unicum respectum omnes ejus defectus et profectus, et cujus sit utilitatis, aetatis et valoris immediate discernunt. Aliis enim artibus speculativis physicalibus omnino carent, nec est apud eos quaestio de anima aut ejus potentiis, passionibus et habitibus, nec quaerunt de ejus infusione aut unione ejus cum corpore. Sed tamen in praedicto sunt super omnes naturales et physicos periti, tam in inspectione bestiarum quam hominum. Dum ergo aliquis hominem emere volens considerat sibi placentem, extendit manum in cumulum, et placentem foemellam vel masculum educit et variis modis probat emendum, loquitur ei et audit responsum, si rationabile. Respicit ei in oculos, an bonos et rectos habet, an bene audiat, tentat, et demum etiam vestimentis denudat notans omnia membra, quam verecundas, quam timidus, quam laetus, quam tristis considerat, quam sanus et integer. Ibi, quod pudor dictu, masculorum et foeminarum pudenda coram omnibus contrectantur et manifesto ostenduntur, nudi etiam compelluntur caesi flagellis coram omnibus incedere, currere, ambulare et saltare, ut manifeste appareat, utrum infirmus vel sanus, masculus vel foemella, virgo aut corrupta. Et si quos viderint erubescere, circa illos magis instant impellendo, virgis caedendo, colaphisando, ut sic coacte faciat, quod sponte erubuit coram omnibus facere.” Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem*, ed. Conrad Hassler (Stuttgart, 1843–49), 18:165. The same slave market was described in less detail by other late fifteenth-century pilgrims: von Breydenbach, *Sanctarum peregrinationum*, fol. 88r; Arnold von Harff, *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff*, trans. Malcolm Letts (London, 1946), 95; Joos van Ghistele, *Voyage en Egypte de Joos Van Ghistele, 1482–1483*, ed. Renée Bauwens-Préaux (Cairo, 1976), 21. A fifteenth-century traveler in Damascus described a slave woman being cried for sale in the street wearing nothing above her waist. De la Broquière, *The Voyage d’Outremer*, 84.



The stages of inspection observed by Fabri at the slave market in Alexandria correspond roughly to those recommended by Ibn al-Akfānī. The overall process, which Fabri referred to as handling (*contrectatio*), began with a general survey of the slaves offered for sale. This survey, which Fabri called consideration (*consideratio*), was conducted at a distance and based on knowledge of physiognomy. Once the buyer had settled on a slave, he reached into the crowd and extracted the one he had selected for a second and more comprehensive appraisal (*probat emendum*, literally testing the thing to be bought). This stage included public viewing and touching of the slave's naked body. If, having completed the second inspection, the buyer found the slave to be satisfactory, he met with the seller to discuss the price. This description makes clear that the slave-buying manuals' advice to inspect the shame zones prevailed over the *muḥtasib*'s responsibility to prevent it. It also illustrates the dangers that threatened slaves who attempted to resist the slave-buying process: those who balked at the humiliating public inspection of their naked bodies were beaten until they complied.

A second anecdote from Felix Fabri's narrative drives home the role of humiliation in the inspection process. Fabri's guide in Cairo, a *mamlūk* of Hungarian origin, pretended to offer the travelers for sale in the slave market as a joke. Fabri describes the experience as follows:

We came into a market in which many people were held for sale, youths and children of both sexes, black and white, female and male. However, with us standing in that market with our *mamlūk*, many thought that our *mamlūk* had us for sale and that he was a merchant, whence many hurried to see us. Finally one came on a horse, a big man, and asked our *mamlūk* what price we four were. "I," he said, "will buy those four, and I will give a sufficient price. Say how much seems just to you." The *mamlūk* responded to him, "In this market no one will give me a sufficient price for these four slaves; for they are without flaw, whole and healthy. Therefore I will send them to Alexandria, and there they will be led to overseas parts, where the prices are higher." The Saracen was not content with this response and produced ten ducats from his bag, obviously wanting to give ten for each without an appraisal so that he would sell them to him. During this a great rush was made towards us because, when anyone buys a person, many hurry in order to see the price and the appraisal. Thus with great delight we stood for sale;



and when the Saracen perceived us happy and laughing with the *mamlūk*, he understood that we were not for sale and went away.⁵⁶

The fact that Fabri and his traveling companions were identified as free because of their cheerful demeanor implies that the misery of genuine slaves in the market was evident to their buyers and sellers. It is also revealing that the *mamlūk* guide was willing to haggle with a prospective buyer as part of the joke, but that the mock sale stopped as soon as bystanders gathered to watch the appraisal. Apparently public physical inspection and not haggling was the aspect of sale that would have offended the honor of the travelers as free men. The Hungarian *mamlūk* guide, himself a slave or former slave from a Latin Christian background similar to that of the travelers, would have undergone the full sale process at least once and would have known where to draw the line.

This analysis of the slave-buying process as depicted in Mamluk-era slave-buying advice manuals, *hisbah* manuals, and travel narratives has shown that the advice of physicians carried more weight in Mamluk slave markets than the advice of jurists. The more intrusive inspection recommended by physicians such as Ibn al-Akfānī not only enabled buyers to carry out the legal requirement of viewing and cognizance with great thoroughness, but also humiliated slaves and made them more tractable by publicly displaying their powerlessness and dishonor. The less intrusive inspection advocated by jurists permitted the slave to retain some vestiges of honor, but it did not reinforce the extreme power differential on which the institution of slavery was based, nor did it fulfill the buyer's desire to gather as much information about the goods as possible before committing to a purchase. The significance of the slave's nakedness in the marketplace is not apparent, however, without this comparative perspective.

⁵⁶“In forum venimus, in quo venales habebantur multi homines, juvenes et pueri utriusque sexus, nigri et albi, foemellae et masculi. Stantibus autem nobis in illo foro cum nostro Mamalucis aestimabant multi, quod Mamalucus noster venales nos haberet et quod mercator esset, unde multi accurrebant ad videndum nos, tandem venit unus in equo, homo magnus, et interrogavit Mamalucum nostrum, quanti pretii essemus nos quatuor? Ego, inquit, hos quatuor emam, et sufficiens pretium dabo, exprime, quantum tibi justum videtur. Cui respondit Mamalucus: in hoc foro nemo dabit mihi sufficiens pretium pro illis quatuor sclavis; sunt enim sine defectu, integri et sani, mittam ergo eos Alexandriam, et ibi ducentur ad transmarinas partes, ubi magni pretii erunt. Hac responsione non fuit contentus Sarracenus, et produxit de pera sua X ducatos, volens in promptu sine proba emendorum dare pro quolibet decem, ut sibi eos dimitteret. Inter haec magnus fuit concursus factus ad nos, quia, quando aliquis emit hominem, accurrunt multi, ut pretium et appetitatum videant. Cum magna jucunditate sic stetimus venales: et dum Sarracenus cerneret nos laetos et corridentes Mamalucis, consideravit nos non esse venales et abiit.” Fabri, *Evagatorium*, 18:36–37. Fabri also saw Tatar slaves sold at auction in Cairo. *Ibid.*, 18:40.



Appendix A: Ibn al-Akfānī, *Kitāb al-naẓar wa-al-tahqīq fī taqlīb al-raqīq*

[fol. 148r]

كتاب النظر والتحقيق في تقليب الرقيق لابن الأكفاني تغمده برحمته الله.

[fol. 148v]

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. يقول العبد الفقير إلى الله تعالى الواحد البارئ، محمد ابن إبراهيم ابن ساعد الأنصاري رحمه الله: الحمد لله الذي حق حمده وصلواته على سيدنا محمد خير خلقه وعلى آله وصحبه. هذه رسالة مختصرة في تقليب الرقيق وتأمل أحواله. وصنعتها امثال الامر من وجبت طاعته علي لسالف إحسانه إلي. قال يجب أن يكون المستعرض لصنف من الرقيق غير مضطر إليه، فإن الجائع يستطيب كل طعام والعريان يستجيد كل ثوب. ولا تقطع بأول نظرة فإن لها روعة. ولا تشغل بتأمل ملبوس أو زينة، فإنه ربما يدهش. ولا تعتبر بأول حديث تسمعه بسيده الأول أو ذمه إياه. وتساءل عن سبب بيعه. وتحذر شري من تمرد على الضرب والخصومة. واعلم أن الرقيق بأول وهلة إن أطمع طمع وإن كف انقمع، ومتى خالط فاسدا فسد. والحدرد
[احذر]

[fol. 149r]

من حمل الجوارى، فرما أخفينه وجئن بدم كذب. كما تحذر من مكرهن بعد الملك في الحمل، فإنه ربما ألجهن بعضهن كراهة الحمل مع الرغبة فيه. ولا تخون لبائع جارته أن تخرجها إلا في دم لأحمال ما يطراً عليها بعد. فأول ما يسعى النظر إليه من الرقيق القد والقوام وتناسب الاعضاء. ثم تنظر إلى اللون فإن الحائل المائل إلى الصفرة دال على ضعف الكبد، إن قارنه غلظ أو حشاة أو صلابة في الجانب الأيسر مما تحت الاضلاع أو على غلبة الصفراء. إن قارنه شقرة والحائل إلى الكمودة، دال على آفة في الطحال، إن قارنه غلظ أو حشاة أو صلابة في الجانب الأيسر مما تحت الاضلاع أو على غلبة السوداء، إن قارنه قُطرب في الوجه. والعاجي دال على قلة الدم والروح وغلبة البلغم أو ضعف المعدة

[fol. 149v]

إن قارنه هزال البدن. وصلابة ما بين السرة والقضيب أو غلظ سوداء. وأفضل الألوان وأعد لها الصافي في البياض المشرب بجمرة. وهذا في البيض. وأما السمرة، فالصافي منها والسوداء الحالك البراق. ثم تنظر إلى خلو البشرة عن البهق والبرص والنمش والوسم والقوباء والتآليل وكبي النار وأثار القروح في الوجه وسائر الجسد. واعلم أنه ربما ضيع البهق والبرص بالشيطرج والخلل وغسله بالخل والأشنان المكوي يكشفه. ثم تنظر إلى الرأس ومنايته الصدر والعنق فإن عظمه مع دقة العنق وضيق الصدر رديء. وتنظر إلى شكله لئلا يكون مشوهاً، وأن يكون الشعر رجلاً غير مصبوغ ولا متقصف ولا متمرط ولا به داء الثعلب

و[داء] الحية أو سعة أو بعضه أبيض أو بين منابته خلل كثير أو آثار قروح أو قشور كالنخالة. ثم تنظر إلى ما عين رمية من الفضول أو جاحظتين أو غائرتين أو حركتهما مضطربة



[fol. 150r]

وبسواد أحدهما زرقة أو بياضهما كدر أو جامد أو تميل إلى الصفرة أو ظاهر العروق أو لحفهما ظفرة. بل تكونان معتدلتين السواد صافية البياض ملوَّزتين عدلتين. وتتفقد أحفانهما لثلا تكونا غليظة أو خشنة أو مسترخية أو بأحدهما تناثر أو انقلاب إلى داخل أو بأحدهما بياض أو بهما جنون ويعم على المآق الأكبر. فإن ظهر [ت] منه رطوبة، فيه ناصور. وتعتبر نظرها إلى الأشياء الدقيقة والبعيدة وحالهما في الشمس. ثم تنظر إلى الأذن في الضوء الشديد لثلا يكون بهما سدة أو ثؤلول أو لحم زائد أو سدة. وتعتبر بسمعهما في الصوت الحفي وسرعة الجواب. ثم تنظر إلى الأنف كذلك لثلا يكون به قروح أو بواسير أو لحم زائد أو سدة. وتعتبر حاله بإدراك المشمومات الضعيفة وخلو الصوت عن الغنة. ثم تنظر إلى اللسان لثلا يكون عظيماً أو صغيراً جداً أو قد ذهب منه جزؤ بالعض في صدع. بل تختار المعتدل المقدار الرقيق الأحمر الصافي

[fol. 150v]

السريع الحركة. ويكره الأبرص والأصفر [ر] والأسود والخشني لدالتهما على أحلاط رديئة في المعدة. ثم تنظر إلى الأسنان في كمالها وصحتها وبياض لونها وخلوها عن الحفر والمآكل والقيح. وتعتبر اللون والعفن وما فقد منها قبل ألا يغير فإنه يعود دون ما بعده. ثم تتفقد اللثة لثلا تكون حامية أو عفنة أو متقلصة. وتنظر إلى اللهاة لثلا تكون واردة أو مسترخية. ثم تسمع صوتها لثلا يكون أبح أو أغن. ثم تستنكه لثلا يكون انخراً أو حاد النفس. وما كان من تغير الرائحة سببه من الفم يرجى برؤه، وما كان من المعدة فلا برؤ له. وتستششق رائحة الأنف. ثم تتأمل اللوزتين والنغانغ لثلا يكون هناك خنازيراً أو أثرها. ثم تنظر إلى الصدر لثلا يكون ضيقاً أو معوجاً أو بارز الجزء الطائر وإلا قليل اللحم. ثم تنظر إلى الأكتاف لثلا تكون مجنحة ولا مختلفة الوضع. ثم تنظر إلى اليدين لثلا تكونا ذوا قصيرتين أو مختلفي المقدار. ولا يكون المرفق منهلاً إنثناء بغير التواء ولا ورم ولا تشنج. وإن يكون لهما

[fol. 151r]

ورم رقيق مستطيل كأنه دودة فأنه يدل على العروق المديني. وتعتبر قوتها بالقبض الشديد. ثم يتفقد تحت الإبطين.



Appendix B: Ibn al-Akfānī, *The Book of Observation and Inspection in the Examination of Slaves*

[fol. 148r]

The book of observation and inspection in the examination of slaves by Ibn al-Akfānī, may God cover him with His grace.

[fol. 148v]

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. The humble servant, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sā'id al-Anṣārī, may God have mercy upon him, says to God Almighty, the One, the Creator: praise be to God whose praise is true, and His blessings upon our lord Muḥammad, whose character is excellent, and upon his family and his companions. This is a brief treatise about the examination of the slave and the consideration of his conditions. I produced it, obeying the order from its compliance enjoined on me because of the past of his beneficence towards me.

[Ibn al-Akfānī] said that it is necessary for the [slave] inspected to be of a kind of slave which [the buyer] does not need, since the hungry person finds all food delicious and the naked person finds all clothing excellent. Do not decide at first glance, since there is confusion [in that]. Do not be preoccupied by consideration of clothing or adornment, since it may perplex [you]. Do not consider the first report that you hear from his first master, or any criticism of his. Ask about the reason for his sale. Beware of buying one who rebels against beating and argument. Know that if the slave is tempted, he becomes covetous at once, and if he is restrained, he becomes subdued, and when he associates with a corrupt [person], he becomes corrupt.

Beware

[fol. 149r]

of the pregnancy of slave women, since they may hide it and bring forth blood which deceives.⁵⁷ Also beware of their cunning concerning pregnancy after taking possession [of them], since some of them may make themselves stubborn with hatred of pregnancy despite the desire for it. Do not be misled by the seller of his slave woman to take her away except during blood because of whatever pregnancies might befall her later on.⁵⁸

⁵⁷A pregnant slave woman might present the menstrual blood of another woman as her own in order to conceal her pregnancy.

⁵⁸The buyer should not take possession of a slave woman except during her menstrual period. This strategy ensured that she was not pregnant at the time of transfer and that any subsequent



Build, stature, and proportionality of the limbs are what the gaze proceeds to first in the slave. Then look at the color, since wanness inclining towards yellow shows weakness of the liver, if roughness or fullness or hardness on the left side under the ribs or a prevalence of yellow bile accompanies it. If paleness and the inclination towards dullness accompany [the wanness], it shows damage in the spleen, if roughness or fullness or hardness on the left side under the ribs or a prevalence of black bile accompany it, if lupus on the face accompanies it.⁵⁹ [The color] ivory shows lack of blood and of spirit, and the prevalence of phlegm, or weakness of the stomach,

[fol. 149v]

if leanness of the body accompanies it. Hardness or roughness of what is between the navel and the penis is black.⁶⁰ The best and most balanced of the colors is pure white tinged with red. That is concerning white. As for brown, [the best] is pure [brown] and lustrous pitch black. Then look at the freedom of the skin from vitiligo, leprosy, freckles,⁶¹ brands, scabies, warts, burns from fire, and traces of sores on the face and the body in general. Know that vitiligo and leprosy are made to vanish with *shītaraj* and vinegar;⁶² washing it with vinegar and Meccan potash reveals it.

Then look at the head and its roots, the chest and neck, since its size in relation to the thinness of the neck and the narrowness of the chest may be distorted. Look at its form, lest it be deformed, and [that] the hair be straight, not dyed, not broken, and not falling out; without alopecia and ophiasis, or scalp ringworm, or some of it white, or many gaps among its roots, or traces of sores or scabs like bran.

pregnancies would be the responsibility of the buyer and not the seller. Accurately determining the paternity of a slave woman's child was important because if the father was her master, the slave mother gained *umm walad* status and could not be sold. Thus if it were discovered that a slave woman had been sold while pregnant with the seller's child, the sale would become invalid. Another strategy recommended by jurists was for the buyer to observe a period of *istibrā'*, refraining from sexual intercourse with his newly purchased slave woman for one to three months in order to confirm that she was menstruating and not pregnant. Robert Brunschvig, "Abd," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 1:24–40.

⁵⁹ *Quṭrub* can be translated in a number of ways, but a facial rash is one of the distinctive symptoms of lupus.

⁶⁰ Black, i.e., bad.

⁶¹ Lentil-shaped spots of various colors on the skin.

⁶² *Shītaraj* is an herb.



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Then look at what waste an eye expels,⁶³ or [whether they are] protruding, or sunken, or their movement is agitated;

[fol. 150r]

and [whether] there is blueness in the pupil of one of them; or their white is cloudy, dry, inclined towards yellowness, or showing veins; or [whether] their eyelids are covering [them]. Rather they should be even of pupil, pure of white, almond-shaped, equal. Check their eyelids, lest they be rough, coarse, or drooping; or with dispersion in one of them; or turned inward; or with whiteness in one of them; or with a covering on them which extends over the larger corners of the eyes.⁶⁴ If moisture arises from it, there is a fistula. Examine their vision on small and distant things, and [examine] their condition in the sun.

Then look at the ear in strong light, lest they have an obstruction, a wart, excessive flesh, or an obstruction [sic]. Examine their hearing in a lowered voice and [in] the quickness of the answer.

Then look at the nose, thus, lest it have sores, polyps, excessive flesh, or an obstruction.⁶⁵ Examine its condition in perceiving weak scents, and [examine] the freedom of the voice from a nasal buzz.

Then look at the tongue, lest it be big or very small; or [lest there be] a piece which had gone from it with a bite in cracking.⁶⁶ Choose rather the proportionate measure, slim, pure red,

[fol. 150v]

quick in movement. Leprousness, yellowness, blackness, and coarseness are repugnant because their indications are of a distorted mixture in the stomach.

Then look at the teeth, concerning their completeness and their health; the whiteness of their color; and their freedom from cavities, wear, and pus.⁶⁷ Examine the color and the decay and what [teeth] were lost before, lest it change, since it reverts without what is after it.⁶⁸ Then check the gums, lest they be hot or decayed or wrinkled.

⁶³The paragraphs about the eyes and ears begin with singular forms (the eye, the ear) but quickly switch to dual forms (the two eyes, the two ears) in Arabic.

⁶⁴The inner corner of the eye next to the nose.

⁶⁵*Bawāsīr*, translated here as polyps, is more usually translated as hemorrhoids.

⁶⁶If slaves habitually used their teeth to crack nuts, for example, they might accidentally bite and injure their tongues in the process.

⁶⁷*Al-ḥafr* can be translated as cavities or as scurvy.

⁶⁸The buyer should check for color, decay, and missing teeth. If any of these qualities changed after sale, the seller might have used fraudulent means to conceal faults in the teeth. Once the fraud began to wear off, the teeth would revert to their actual state.



Look at the uvula, lest it be swollen or drooping. Then listen to its sound, lest it be hoarse or nasal. Then order him to exhale through his mouth in order to smell it, lest he be rotten or sharp of breath. [If] the reason for whatever change of odor there was is from the mouth, his recovery is expected. [If] whatever [change] there was is from the stomach, there is no recovery for him. Sniff the odor of the nose. Then consider the tonsils and the throat, lest there be scrofula or traces of it there. Then look at the chest, lest it be narrow or curved; or protruding from a heavy part; and nothing but meager of flesh. Then look at the shoulders, lest they be sloped or different in position.

Then look at the two hands, lest they have shortness or be different in measure. The elbows should not be curved, [they should] bend without twisting, and [with-out] swelling or spasms. If they have

[fol. 151r]

a thin, elongated swelling as if it were a worm, then it shows Median veins. Examine their strength with a firm grasp. Then check under the armpits.



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The Mamluk Fortifications of Egypt

Introduction

Apart from the Qāyṭbāy citadel in Alexandria, little is known about the Mamluk fortifications in Egypt, and it is our intention that our article will fill this gap by presenting an initial assessment on the subject.¹ Those writers who have in the past studied Mamluk architecture in Egypt did not show much interest in the military architecture itself and even less so if that military architecture was outside Cairo. Doris Behrens-Abouseif, the most eminent specialist, focused on the architecture of Cairo and, in particular, on religious architecture. Michael Meinecke does mention the construction texts found on military buildings, but his main concern wasn't this kind of architecture. In fact, even the focus of the Mamluk fortifications experts themselves has remained on Bilād al-Shām.²

With regards to the etymology and the vocabulary used in the Middle Ages for defining military constructions, the hierarchical importance of certain buildings is not always apparent. For example, in medieval sources no distinction is made between the terms *burj*, *ḥiṣn*, and *qal'ah*.³ The terminology we use includes terms that are more subtle than those used in Arabic literature.⁴ The castle or *ḥiṣn* is a very rarely-used term in Egypt, unlike the term *qaṣr*, which although often used,

¹This study is drawn from a research program supported by the French Institute of Archaeology in Cairo (IFAO) from 2007 to 2012. The author would like to thank for her support the former Director of Arabic Studies at the IFAO, Dr. Sylvie Denoix.

²Benjamin Michaudel, "Les refortifications ayyoubides et mameloukes en Syrie du Nord (fin XIIe-début XIVe siècle)" in *La fortification au temps des Croisades* (Rennes, 2004), 179-88; Kate Raphael, "Mighty Towers and Feeble Walls: Ayyubid and Mamluk Fortifications in the Light of the Decline of Crusader Siege Warfare," *Crusades* 9 (2010): 147-58; *Burgen und Städte der Kreuzzugszeit*, ed. Mathias Piana (Petersberg, 2008); Nicolas Faucherre, "La forteresse de Shawbak (Crac de Montréal): Une des premières forteresses franques sous son corset mamelouk" in *La fortification au temps des Croisades*, ed. Nicolas Faucherre, Jean Mesqui, and Nicolas Prouteau (Rennes, 2004), 43-65; Kate Raphael, *Muslim Fortresses in the Levant: Between Crusaders and Mongols* (New York, 2011), 52-80; Jean Mesqui, *Châteaux d'Orient* (Milan, 2001).

³Two main sources: al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah (Cairo, 1942), and idem, "Description Topographique et Historique de l'Égypte," trans. Urbain Bouriant, *Mémoire de la Mission Archéologique Française* 17 (Paris, 1900); Ibn Iyās, *Histoire des Mamelouks Circassiens*, trans. Gaston Wiet (Cairo, 1945).

⁴"Glossary of Muslim military architecture," in Stéphane Pradines, *Guidebook of Muslim fortifications in Egypt*, forthcoming.



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does not refer to a fortress but rather to the large mansions and palaces of Cairo. In rural settings, particularly in oases, the *qaṣr* designates the old mud-brick city, which is often situated atop a promontory. *Qal'ah* and *burj* are the most commonly used terms in literature on Egypt. The smallest structure in our list of military architecture vocabulary is the fortified tower or the watchtower, followed by the small fort or barrier fort, a stand-alone structure which defends the sole crossing point on a thoroughfare. *Burj* (*burg* in Egyptian Arabic) is used to describe a tower or a small fort as per the Western definition. The fort or stronghold contained a garrison, which is generally situated atop a hillock and can serve as a blockhouse or as a redoubt.

We have gone back to using European terminology,⁵ without, however, restricting the use solely to those terms that relate exclusively to the West, such as “castle” and “donjon” (keep or master tower). In the West, we used the term “castle” more frequently than in the East, where “fortress” was more common. In terms of size, a fortress can be considered as a “big” castle or *qal'ah* (pl. *qal'āt*). The term *qal'ah* was also used for the “citadel,” which is a fortification that overlooks a city and often straddles its city wall. The function of the citadel is not only to protect the city, but also to control it in order to suppress any internal subversion or revolt. The arsenal can be included within either the fort or the citadel, and it is occasionally located in the city, without being afforded any particular protection, because the city itself is protected by either a citadel or a wall. The city walls or *sūr* are the final element in our fortification typology; the curtain wall, flanked by arrow-slit niches and projecting towers, provides protection for the whole city. More specific terms exist to define elements of the fortification; thus *khandaq*, or the ditch in front of the walls; the *bashūrah*⁶ refers to a barbican in front of a door; and *bāb al-sirr* or *bāb al-khalfī*, which refer to the postern gates.

In Greater Syria, the Mamluks no longer built city walls but used a network of forts to defend their borders.⁷ They reused old Muslim fortresses and Crusader castles.⁸ The same phenomenon could be seen in Egypt, with cities no longer being fortified or at least with very little fortification, the Mamluks preferring instead to use forts to defend the borders of the empire and the trade routes. In Egypt, the fortifications spread considerably, both quantitatively and geographically, across the whole territory (Fig. 1). However, unlike in the West, where there

⁵ Jean Mesqui, *Châteaux et enceintes de la France médiévale* (Paris, 1991, 1993).

⁶ The *bashūrah* is also a bent entrance.

⁷ Luz Nimrod, “Tripoli reinvented: a case of Mamluk urbanization,” in *Towns and Material Culture in the Medieval Middle East*, ed. Yaacov Lev (Leiden, 2002), 57.

⁸ Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: the Mamluk-Īlkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995), 217.



were just as many castles and lords as there were villages,⁹ Egypt was different. The amirs preferred to live in palaces right in the center of the capital city of Cairo. This was the urban elite, who would only leave the city in times of battle, and this was particularly true of *al-mamālik al-sultānīyah*, or the Royal Mamluks. A direct result of this way of life was that the Mamluk fortresses were always constructed by royal patronage rather than individual commissions.¹⁰

Following a presentation of the fortification policies of the Mamluk territories, we will present the different types of Mamluk fortifications in their geographical setting within the Egyptian territory.

1. The Sultans and Fortification Policies of the Territory

1.1 Sultan Builders, Patronage, and War

We can divide the military construction activity of the Mamluk period into three main phases with five sultans. The first phase corresponds to the Crusades and to Sultan al-Zāhir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars (r. 658–76/1260–77), and, subsequently, to Sultan al-Manṣūr Sayf al-Dīn Qalāwūn (r. 678–89/1279–90). The second phase corresponds to the Mediterranean maritime battles with Sultan al-Ashraf Sayf al-Dīn Barsbāy (r. 825–41/1422–38) and Sultan al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy (r. 872–901/1468–96). Finally, the third phase is defined by Sultan al-Ashraf Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (r. 906–22/1501–16), who was responsible for the reform of the Mamluk army to face Turkish and Portuguese threats.

Following a victory at Damietta, the Crusaders under King Louis IX of France (“Saint Louis”) were roundly beaten in the Nile Delta in 1250. During the major battle of Fāraskūr, close to Manṣūrah, the Crusaders were defeated by Baybars (who was only an amir at that time). A period of instability ensued and Sultan Aybak was murdered by Sultan al-Muẓaffar Sayf al-Dīn Quṭuz (r. 657–58/1259–60), and he, in turn, was assassinated by Baybars. In addition to being a great warlord, Sultan Baybars was also a great tactician and he would become the first architect of Mamluk military history.¹¹ In 1260, Quṭuz and Baybars defeated the Mongols at the Battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt in Palestine.¹² After these decisive battles, the Mamluks went from stronghold to stronghold with one victory after another, and the little Armenian kingdom of Cilicia was defeated in 1266. The conquest of Antioch followed and then, in 1271, the Crusader castle known as the “Crac des Chevaliers”

⁹ Georges Bischoff, “Histoire et fonctions des châteaux forts,” in *Châteaux forts en France: entre fantasmes et réalités*, Dossiers d’archéologie 349 (Dijon, 2012), 20–29.

¹⁰ David Ayalon, *Gun Powder and Fire Arms in the Mamluk Kingdom* (London, 1956).

¹¹ Stephen Humphreys, “The Emergence of the Mamluk Army,” *Studia Islamica* 45 (1977): 67–99 and 46 (1977): 147–82.

¹² Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 26–48.



was captured.¹³ Baybars re-introduced the horse post, which had become obsolete during the Ayyubid period. Post stations for the horses were set up at intervals of either 17 km or 30 km. Messages were also delivered by carrier pigeons, with large pigeon lofts being installed on the northeast towers of the Cairo Citadel. It was also Sultan Baybars who started the tradition of the caravan for the hajj with the “Procession of the Palanquin,” which sanctified the pilgrimage from Cairo.¹⁴ Forts were built all along the pilgrimage route to Mecca. In fact, Baybars was one of those rare Mamluk sultans who was interested in having a war fleet.¹⁵ He commissioned the building of galleys and sailing ships in Alexandria and Damietta. Baybars also strengthened the defensive and surveillance measures along the Mediterranean coast, as a Crusader invasion of the Nile Delta remained a real threat.

Sultan Qalāwūn was the second Mamluk sultan to have an effective defense policy for the territory. Ever mindful of security, he commissioned the building of fortresses and watchtowers throughout the kingdom. His son Khalīl was to play an important role in Crusader history as he wrested the town of Saint Jean d’Acre from the Crusaders in 1291. This was to prove a decisive victory for Muslims in the Holy Land.

Following a period of relative peace, two events were to traumatize the Mamluks and galvanize the army into increasing its strength through the practice of military exercises or *furūsīyah*. First was the Cypriot raid on Alexandria in 1365, when the city was completely sacked. After this attack, the port defenses were rebuilt.¹⁶ This raid was to have consequences for the organization of Mamluk defense as the Syrian coastal defenses were razed to the ground so as to prevent the enemy from settling in these cities. Only the Egyptian harbors were saved from this policy. Secondly, in 1401, Tamerlane and his army plundered Damascus and one part of the Mamluk kingdom. Egypt narrowly escaped a real catastrophe and the Mamluks reorganized their army at the beginning of the fifteenth century.¹⁷

It is against this backdrop that Sultan Barsbāy wrote the sweetest chapter of Mamluk naval warfare. At this time, the raids from the Catalan and Cypriot pirates were becoming more and more frequent along the Syrian and Egyptian

¹³ Jean Mesqui, “La fortification des Croisés au temps de Saint-Louis au Proche-Orient,” *Bulletin Monumental* 164, no. 1 (2006): 5–29.

¹⁴ Jacques Jomier, “Le Maḥmal et la caravane égyptienne des pèlerins de la Mecque: XIIIe-XXe siècles,” *Recherches d’archéologie, de philologie et d’histoire* 20 (1953).

¹⁵ David Ayalon, *Gun Powder and Fire Arms in the Mamluk Kingdom* (London, 1956).

¹⁶ André Clot, *L’Égypte des mamelouks: L’empire des esclaves (1250–1517)* (Paris, 1996), 125.

¹⁷ Robert Irwin, “Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamluk Sultanate Reconsidered,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. M. Winter and A. Levanoni (Leiden, 2004), 117–39.



coastlines. Barsbāy commissioned the reconstruction of the city wall of Alexandria with all new towers. The fort's garrison comprised between two hundred and three hundred men. Then Barsbāy decided to relaunch the Būlāq arsenal,¹⁸ with new ships being built around 1424. Subsequently, the Mamluks gained control of the sea from Cyprus. After taking Limassol, the entire island was then conquered in 1426. Thereafter, it was the Ottomans that posed the threat by arriving at the gates of the Mamluk Empire in 1467. Sultan Qāyrbāy continued the coastal fortification work by commissioning the construction of a new citadel in Alexandria in 1479 and he reinforced the whole of the Egyptian coast with small forts or towers located at Abukir, Rosetta, and Damietta.

At the start of the sixteenth century, the Mamluk empire was being pressurized on three fronts: first, it was confronted in North Syria by the Ottoman expansion, then in the Mediterranean Sea by the European corsairs, and, finally, in the Red Sea by the Portuguese.

In 1501, Sultan al-Ghawrī emerged as the great reformer of Mamluk warfare. The sultan arranged the repair of the fortresses of Alexandria and Rosetta and commissioned the building of new forts throughout the whole of Egypt. Al-Ghawrī further raised taxes to complete these projects satisfactorily and he also introduced new duties and explored rather clandestine ways of raising revenue in order to cover the military expenses of the projects undertaken.¹⁹ The fortifications put in place by Sultan al-Ghawrī are indicative of a policy of defense and control of the Egyptian territory. Starting in 1508, the sultan built or renovated several forts at Aqaba, in the Sinai at Nakhil, Nuweiba, and Tur, as well as in the Isthmus of Suez at Ajrud and on the Mediterranean coast at Tina.

In 1502, the Portuguese, who discovered the sea route to India, cut off access to the Red Sea by the Bāb al-Mandab Strait. Cairo sent an expeditionary corps in 1505 to confront this threat. The amir Ḥusayn Mushrif al-Kurdī had the city of Jeddah refortified in 1507 because Western forces were threatening the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, as well as the security of the hajj and trade with the Indian Ocean. In 1506, the Mamluks drove the Portuguese back from Jeddah. Following several victories, the Mamluks ventured forth into the Indian Ocean and, in 1509, they suffered a bloody defeat at Diu,²⁰ a strategically placed port in Gujarat. The Mamluks cooperated with the Venetians who viewed this Portuguese presence as

¹⁸ The al-Fuṣṭāṭ shipyard stopped its activities during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn; see Stéphane Pradines, "Le Qalat al-Qabsh et les forteresses abbasides d'Égypte," *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 23 (2015): 86–87.

¹⁹ Carl Petry, "Military innovations of Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri: Reforms or Expedients?" *Al-Qantara* 14, no. 2 (1993): 447–50.

²⁰ Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Anne Kroell, *Mamlouks, ottomans et portugais en Mer Rouge: L'affaire de Djedda en 1517* (Cairo, 1988), 1–11.



a threat to the economic monopoly they enjoyed over products imported from the Red Sea, which were re-sold in the Port of Alexandria. The Mamluks built a war fleet in Suez comprised of sailing ships and galleys. Although without cannon at the beginning, the Mamluk ships were later equipped with firearms by the Venetians who also contributed ships that had been assembled in the Suez arsenal. The Venetians provided the Mamluk soldiers with three hundred arquebuses. The Suez fleet was ready for action in 1515. After several battles, the opposing navies remained at a status quo, with the Red Sea remaining under Egyptian control, whilst the Indian Ocean fell under Portuguese control.²¹

However, on land, the Mamluks were not as successful. In 1516, the Ottoman Sultan Selim I won the Battle of Marj Dābiq, to the north of Aleppo. It was after this battle that Sultan al-Ghawrī died. The Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Ṭūmanbāy (r. 922–23/1516–17) continued his predecessor's policy, authorizing more and more cannon to be cast. Light firearms, arquebuses, and muskets (*bunduq* and *tufek*) were in widespread use. However, it was too late, because in 1517 Sultan Selim I (r. 918–26/1512–20) won the Battle of Raydanīyah, north of Cairo. Sultan Ṭūmanbāy fled but was pursued and finally captured in the Nile Delta, after which he was executed and his head hung at Bāb Zuwaylah.

1.2. Firearms: Cannons and fortifications

According to al-Qalqashandī, the first cannons were used in Cairo in 1365 and in Alexandria in 1376.²² There was widespread use of gunpowder and artillery by the Mamluk army as far back as the reign of Sultan Qāyṭbāy. The arquebuses (*al-bunduq al-raṣāṣ* or *al-bunduqīyah*) were introduced into Egypt around 895/1490. The Mamluk army regarded the use of these firearms to be dishonorable and, for them, it was only the exploits of the cavalry that mattered.²³ Sultan Qāyṭbāy upheld this tradition in that, apart from a few exceptions, the use of firearms was minimal during battle.

²¹ On the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, see Stéphane Pradines, *Fortifications et urbanisation en Afrique orientale*, Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 58 (Oxford, 2004), 60–82.

²² Robert Elgood, *Firearms of the Islamic world in the Tareq Rajab Museum* (London, 1995), 23–29; David Ayalon, *Gunpowder and Fire Arms in the Mamluk Kingdom* (London, 1956); Robert Irwin, “Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamluk Sultanate Reconsidered,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. M. Winter and A. Levanoni (Leiden, 2004), 117–39.

²³ This remark may be true for the fourteenth and early fifteenth century, but should be moderated for the fifteenth and early sixteenth century; see Albrecht Fuess, “Les Janissaires, les Mamlouks et les armes à feu: Une comparaison des systèmes militaires ottoman et mamlouk à partir de la moitié du quinzième siècle,” *Turcica* 41 (2009): 216–17.



At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the nature of warfare changed, with both the Ottomans and the Portuguese using firearms extensively,²⁴ compared to the Mamluks who struggled to modernize their army, being trapped in a complex social and military system. Sultan al-Ghawrī introduced major changes in his army by using personal firearms and artillery. He decided that his army should expand the use of firearms and he created new military units that specialized in the use of these firearms. This represented a social and cultural revolution which ran contrary to the *furūsīyah* and against the traditional organization of the army that was the backbone of Mamluk society. Al-Ghawrī ordered the construction of a cannon foundry in southern Cairo.²⁵ The cannon used were bombards made up of two sections soldered together which discharged stone balls. The sultan often visited the foundry and took part in the shooting exercises, sometimes with unfortunate consequences. The cannon, being too heavy and inadequately soldered, often exploded. However, despite these technical problems, production of these artillery pieces continued. In 1516, the sultan supplied Alexandria with two hundred firearms.²⁶ Unlike in Europe, the use of firearms was not going to change the morphology of Mamluk fortifications. The building's central structure still remained rectangular and was flanked by circular towers at the corners. Only a few internal embrasures were modified and enlarged in order to accommodate the cannon. The cannon embrasures were easily recognizable by their portholes through which the cannon muzzle was aimed and the chase jutted out.²⁷

As for the infantry, it was Sultan al-Ghawrī who introduced the widespread usage of the arquebus into his army. The Fifth Corps (*al-ṭabaqāt al-khāmīyah*) of his army was created in January 1511.²⁸ In the beginning, this corps comprised approximately three hundred men, all equipped with arquebuses. These soldiers were not highly regarded and their income was at least half that of the others. The arquebusiers were either black slaves or North African soldiers and this unit met with real hostility from the regular troops who regarded them as inferior and lacking in military training. Nicknames such as “motley” army and “false army”

²⁴ The Ottomans had been using firearms since the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. In Europe, the first mention of cannon being used was during the Battle of Crécy in 1346. The Ottomans used bombards and arquebuses and the role of artillery was to prove decisive in the siege of Constantinople in 1453. The use and production of these firearms were influenced by the contact with Italian, German, and Hungarian artillerymen.

²⁵ Francesca Dotti, personal communication. The exact location of the foundry is undoubtedly on the Istabl Antar plateau, possibly even on the site of the Muḥammad ‘Alī gunpowder factory; see S. Pradines, “Muhammad Ali’s fortifications,” forthcoming.

²⁶ Petry, “Military innovations,” 447–50.

²⁷ Mesqui, *Châteaux et enceintes* (Paris, 1991), 85–87.

²⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Histoire des Mamelouks Circassiens*, trans. Gaston Wiet (Cairo, 1945), 4:200, 260.



were a clear sign of the regular army's disdain for them.²⁹ However, according to Ayalon, the decision of the sultan to provide these new recruits with these new weapons was based not on a fear of breaking with the traditions of the *furūsiyah*, but rather on his fear of being dethroned by his own Mamluks using these powerful weapons. The Mamluks did not wish to modernize their army not just because of the “dishonorable” aspect but also because they were afraid that the use of firearms would destabilize their hierarchical system.

2. Mamluk Fortresses of Egypt

We have chosen to present the Mamluk fortifications from a geographical perspective because these buildings were subject to territorial control policies. Moreover, the same fortification could have had several phases of construction and occupation, which is why we considered it more sensible to take this regional approach. First of all, we will consider the Nile Delta and the Mediterranean coast up to Cairo; then the Isthmus of Suez and the Sinai routes; and finally the forts along the Red Sea coast.

2.1 The Nile Delta and the Mediterranean Coast

Al-ʿUmayd

Even though in his *Muslim Architecture of Egypt* Creswell rarely ventures outside the Cairo city limits, he does happen to mention, rather surprisingly, a Mamluk fort called Qaṣr al-ʿUmayd³⁰ which no longer exists today. The fort was located 72 km to the west of Alexandria and six leagues to the west of Burj al-ʿArab. The site is mentioned for the first time by Granger in 1730 and was the subject of a drawing by Pacho in 1824 (Fig. 2). The inscription above the entrance was recorded in 1847. Qaṣr al-ʿUmayd was destroyed around 1870–80, during the construction of a modern lighthouse. The stones from the fort were reused for the foundations of this lighthouse. The last mention of the fort was in 1885. However, from the descriptions and the engravings that are available, we are able to gain some insight into this building. The fort was erected on the edge of the sea and its square shape was flanked by non-projecting quadrangular towers at each corner. The building comprised two stories and the main gate was built from reused antique pink granite. Over the doorway façade was an in-round sculpture of two lions passant surrounding an inscription in relief over the entrance. The name of Aḥmad al-Tāḥir al-Yasmur appears on the inscription, as it was he who had the castle built for Sultan Baybars (ca. 1260). To conclude, therefore, the style of Qaṣr al-ʿUmayd

²⁹ Clot, *L'Égypte des mamelouks*, 182–85.

³⁰ K. A. C. Creswell, *Muslim Architecture of Egypt* (Oxford, 1959), 2:175–77.



could be compared to the Burj al-Sibāʿ in Lebanon.³¹ This tower, known as the “Tower of the Lions,” was, we believe, built during the reign of Baybars and is a majestic, two-story edifice, built to protect the Port of Tripoli.

Alexandria

The Citadel of Alexandria, like the Citadel of Cairo, is one of the most important medieval fortifications of Egypt. Its imposing presence right in the heart of the city has tended to eclipse other fortifications built in Alexandria.³² Before gaining a better understanding of the military architecture of this city, a grasp of the city’s planning and topography is needed. The walls of this medieval city date back to the Tulunid era, even though the walls that are now visible are more recent, being most certainly from the Fatimid and Ayyubid eras.³³ They follow the original outline which corresponds approximately to the boundaries of the Greco-Roman settlement. The city had two ports, on both sides of an isthmus, which was urbanized during the medieval period. The western port was reserved for the mooring of Muslim ships. It was the military port, linked to the administrative and religious power.³⁴ The eastern port was used for the mooring of foreign ships, of either the *Rūmīs* or the infidels. Confining these ships here served two purposes, one security and the other economic, as the customs office, where duties were paid, was located near the entrance of the harbor. The Mamluk sultans took care of the city walls, as evidenced by Sultan Baybars having these walls reinforced in 1260.³⁵ In 1268, the sultan also had a small fort built to protect the western

³¹ Mathias Piana, “The Mamluk Defence System of the Levantine Coast” in *Ports and Forts of the Muslims: Coastal Military Architecture from the Arab Conquest to the Ottoman Period*, ed. Stéphane Pradines, forthcoming.

³² Other fortified locations are mentioned in Alexandria, such as Qaṣr al-Silāh and Qalʿat Dirghām. Sultan Jaqmaq ordered the construction of a square tower on the western side of the eastern port; see Kathrin Machinek, “Aperçu sur les fortifications médiévales d’Alexandrie,” in *Historiographie de la Guerre dans le Proche Orient médiéval* (Cairo, 2015), 363–94.

³³ Very similar to some parts of the walls of Cairo, especially Burj al-Zafar; see Stéphane Pradines, “Burg al-Zafar, une architecture de passage, des Fatimides aux Ayyoubides,” in *21st Colloquium on the History of Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras* (Ghent, 2016), 51–119.

³⁴ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “Topography of medieval Alexandria,” in *AlexMed 2*, ed. C. Décobert (2002), 118–21; Michel Tuchscherer, “Bab al-Bahr ou Porte de la Marine, un quartier commercial en déclin dans Alexandrie intra-muros (1550–1650),” in *Histoire, archéologies, littérature du monde musulman: Mélanges en l’honneur d’André Raymond* (Cairo, 2009), 58.

³⁵ Michael Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien Teil II: Chronologische Liste der mamlukischen Baumaßnahmen, Abhandlungen des DAI Kairo* (Glücksstadt, 1992), 6; Muḥammad ibn Qāsim al-Iskandarānī al-Nuwayrī, *Kitāb al-ilmām*, ed. A. S. ‘Aṭīyah (Hyderabad, 1970), 130–79.



harbor.³⁶ In 1302, an earthquake caused the collapse of seventeen of the city wall towers and Sultan al-Manṣūr Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 762–64/1361–63) rebuilt these walls. Following the Cypriot attack of 1365, Sultan al-Ashraf Zayn al-Dīn Shaʿbān (r. 764–78/1363–77) requested that the city walls be repaired.³⁷ The costs of the repairs were to be covered by the local authorities, the governor, and the city dignitaries,³⁸ but these works were not completed due to a lack of funds. This was quite a rare occurrence, because the vast majority of Egyptian fortifications were royal commissions. Later on, Sultan al-Ghawrī had the city wall pierced with four gateways. The city walls of Alexandria were visible until 1818, before being covered by the modern city. Now there only remain a few sections in public gardens.

Sultan Qāyṭbāy ordered the construction of a citadel on the ruins of the lighthouse of Alexandria.³⁹ The objective of this citadel was twofold, both to protect the city and to ensure the safe passage of the ships in the harbors. The construction manager was Amir Qajmās al-Ishāqī and the master mason was apparently a German from the Mainz region.⁴⁰ The construction work lasted two years, from 882/1477 to 884/1479, and cost more than 100,000 dinars. Ibn Iyās mentions that the financing of these works and the soldiers' salaries came from the *waqfs*.⁴¹

There is a massive square donjon or master tower in the center of the citadel with four circular corner towers, which were small in diameter with a solid base (Fig. 3). Two Qāyṭbāy blazons, dating from 1479, surround the doorway and face southwards.⁴² The entrance comprises a diamond-encrusted, vaulted porch, similar to the one on the Tina fort. The straight entrance is divided into two bent or right-angled passages, one on the right and the other on the left. The main chamber on the ground floor comprised four *īwāns*, with a small mosque which is situated in the center of the building and illuminated by a skylight. It is difficult to provide a description for the brattices or the projecting balcony as these elements were reconstructed by the Comité de Conservation des Monuments Arabes in 1938, using an engraving from *La Description de l'Égypte* as a template. This master tower or keep, a veritable fort in itself and detached from the curtain wall, is also rather special in that it was apparently built atop the ruins of the lighthouse of Alexandria (Fig. 4). The citadel is surrounded by a large curtain wall almost

³⁶ Evliya Çelebi, *D'Alexandrie à Rosette d'après la relation de voyage d'Evliya Çelebi 1672*, trans. J.-L. Bacqué-Grammont in *Alexandrie ottomane 2*, chap. lxxvii, 2.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Machinek, "Aperçu sur les fortifications médiévales d'Alexandrie," 372–78.

³⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Histoire des Mamelouks*, 3:132, 155, describes the garrison as well as the weapons, cannon, and mangonels. Also see al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 445.

⁴⁰ Kathrin Machinek, *Le fort de Qaitbay Alexandria* (2009), 5–6.

⁴¹ Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 411; Ibn Iyās, *Histoire des Mamelouks*, 146–48.

⁴² Kathrin Machinek, *Petit guide du fort Qaytbay à Alexandrie* (Alexandria, 2009), 23–26.



hexagonal in shape and pierced with semi-circular towers quite small in diameter. The main entrance has a south-westerly aspect and faces the isthmus that connects the fortress with the city. The end result is a citadel whose general layout comprises a large central donjon surrounded by a concentric city wall. This is the layout, with some variations, that is also seen in Rosetta and Tina.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī organized the restoration of the fort in order to counter the Ottoman threat in the Mediterranean. A decree promulgated by this sultan appears in an inscription which was inserted above a postern gate and dates from 1501.⁴³ According to this decree, the borrowing of arms stored in the citadel was prohibited and the theft of arms was punishable by death. In 950/1514, Sultan al-Ghawrī visited Alexandria with his amirs in order to inspect the works being carried out on the ancient Citadel of Alexandria. The sultan watched some military training with cannon-shooting maneuvers. The Citadel of Alexandria was endowed with a new wall, which surrounded the first one.⁴⁴ This new wall was flanked by large semi-circular towers and a bastion facing towards the harbor in the southeast. The bastion and the large circular tower to the north were very wide structures which could accommodate heavy artillery pieces. Blockhouses with embrasures were positioned along the coast to the northwest and northeast. A new gateway—*chatelet*—was built in the axis of the main door of the first wall. This projecting gateway was very similar to the one built for the Aqaba Fort by Sultan al-Ghawrī.⁴⁵

Finally in the nineteenth century, the citadel was modernized by Muḥammad ʿAlī. Unfortunately, it was to be severely damaged during the Egyptian rebellion led by Aḥmad ʿUrābī, when the British fleet inflicted severe damage on Alexandria during its heavy bombardment on 11 July 1882. Thereafter, the Citadel was no longer used for military purposes. The fortification was restored by the Comité in 1938 with major anastylosis on the higher parts. Other works were also undertaken by the Supreme Council of Egyptian Antiquities between 1980 and 2000.

⁴³ Max van Berchem, *Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire: Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, ed. M. Chassinat (Paris, 1903), 490–91, n. 321.

⁴⁴ Manuele Fior et al., “La forteresse du sultan Qaitbay à Alexandrie,” in *Alexandrie médiévale* (Cairo, 2008), 313–46; Kathrin Machinek, *Sondages archéologiques au fort Qaytbay à Alexandrie*, 347–67; idem, *Petit guide du fort Qaytbay à Alexandrie*, 8–9.

⁴⁵ Denys Pringle, “The Castles of Ayla (al-ʿAqaba) in the Crusader, Ayyubid and Mamluk Periods” in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, vol. 4, ed. U. Vermeulen and J. Van Steenbergen (Louvain, 2005), 333–53.



Rosetta

The first fortification of Rosetta was a watchtower built in 1260–61 on the initiative of Sultan Baybars.⁴⁶ Subsequently, the fort was completely rebuilt by Sultan Qāyṭbāy.⁴⁷ According to Ibn Iyās, the building works on the citadel were completed in 884/1459. The construction manager was the famous Amir Khāyir Bāy al-ʿAlāʾī.⁴⁸ In the sixteenth century, Sultan al-Ghawrī made improvements to the fortifications and they were inspected in 922/1515.

The citadel is located on the western bank, to the north of the modern city of Rosetta. It controlled the city's harbor and, in particular, protected a major estuary of the Nile. The layout of the Mamluk fortification is very simple: a donjon surrounded by a quadrangular wall with four circular towers located in the corners (Fig. 5). Incorporated within the curtain wall is a series of firing vaulted chambers. Two stairs, situated in the northeast and northwest corners, provide access to the curtain wall parapets. The main entrance is located to the south and the decorated porch way is composed of many reused pharaonic elements.

The central keep dates back further than the curtain walls. Its internal layout is patently reminiscent of the Citadel of Cairo towers, which date from 604/1207. These Ayyubid towers, with narrow corridors and multiple firing chambers, are well known in Syria at the citadels of Bosra and Damascus.⁴⁹ This leads us to believe that the central section of the Rosetta fort dates back to Sultan Baybars and is directly connected to an Ayyubid tradition.⁵⁰ The origins of the Rosetta central keep are connected to the military evolution of the Syrian-Ayyubid towers and citadels that, expanding over the curtain walls, became autonomous defensive buildings such as the Tripoli tower in Lebanon⁵¹ or the Qaṣr al-ʿUmayd in Egypt, with its quadrangular corner towers which project slightly from the main building. The curtain wall of Rosetta Fort is more recent and undoubtedly dates back to the time of either Qāyṭbāy or al-Ghawrī. It is associated with the use of powder weapons with large vaulted firing chambers and cannon openings. At the end of the fifteenth century, all the Mamluk fortifications on the Mediterranean coast had become vulnerable due to their high keeps. Each tower was therefore tightly “boxed in” by a wall equipped with chambers for cannon fire. The Rosetta Fort is

⁴⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 445; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 9, n. 4/13.

⁴⁷ David Nicolle, *The Mamluks, 1250–1517* (Oxford, 1993), 44.

⁴⁸ Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 464, 469; Naguīb Amin, *The Historical Monuments of Egypt, Volume 1: Rosetta* (Cairo, 2008), 190–93.

⁴⁹ Cyril Yovitchitch, *Forteresses du Proche-Orient, l'architecture militaire des Ayyoubides* (Paris, 2011), 190–201.

⁵⁰ David Ayalon, “From Ayyūbids to Mamlūks,” *Revue des études islamiques* 49, no. 1 (1981): 43–57.

⁵¹ Mathias Piana, “The Mamluk Defence System of the Levantine Coast,” in *Ports and Forts*, ed. Pradines.



based on the same architectural design as the Citadel of Alexandria and its layout is reminiscent of the Tina Fort with its central nucleus, and we will return to this layout design in our conclusion.

Finally, in 1799, Napoleon's army occupied this building and renamed it Fort Jullien.⁵² To the west, two towers were turned into polygonal bastions using red brick, a typical construction material of this period.⁵³ The arrow-slits and crenels were closed up and pierced with murder-holes to enable firing with muskets. The Rosetta Fort would have warranted a complete archaeological study just for itself, but this has proven difficult because of the rather heavy-handed restorations undertaken by the Egyptian Antiquities in 1985.

Damanhūr

Primary sources also cite other cities along the western delta as having Mamluk fortifications,⁵⁴ which were built either as crossing points or strategically important positions. Thus, in the western delta, Damanhūr had been a provincial capital since the Fatimid era. Apparently this city, which was a stop on the caravan route between Cairo and Alexandria, prospered with the advent of the Mamluk postal service between those two cities. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Sultan Barqūq rebuilt these fortifications as a defense against attacks from the bedouins in the region.⁵⁵

Damietta

Damietta became the most important trading port in Egypt during the Ayyubid period, that is between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Situated on the eastern mouth of the Nile, the Port of Damietta was the destination for all the merchandise coming from the capital, and goods that originated from the Indian Ocean and passed through the Red Sea. Just like Tinnis, Damietta was a production center for textiles and it remained the premier manufacturing center for linen fabric. Many merchants and diplomats from Genoa, Pisa, Florence, and Venice frequented the city. Of course, the prosperity of the port caused envy, and attacks from the Corsairs were not infrequent. Thus it was that the navy of the King of Sicily plundered the Port of Damietta in 1155. Moreover, Damietta was a prime target for the Crusaders, because whoever controlled this city controlled the Nile. The Crusaders attacked the port in 1169 but they were pushed back by Saladin's

⁵² It was during the French fortification works in 1799 that the Rosetta Stone was discovered.

⁵³ Stéphane Pradines, "The French fortifications in Egypt, 1798–1801," *Forts* 42 (2014): 106.

⁵⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 1:2:372; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i' al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Wiesbaden, 1972), 3:132, 155.

⁵⁵ Wan Kamal Mujani et al., "The Effects of the Bedouin Marauding on the Mamluk Economy (872–922AH/1468–1517AD)," *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* 7 (2011): 71–80.



troops. The Chain Tower, known as the Burj al-Silsilah, blocked access to the Nile, and it was located to the north of the port, outside the medieval agglomeration. In 1218, the Chain Tower was captured, thus opening access for foreign ships. The following year, the port was besieged and occupied by the Crusaders.⁵⁶ Damietta was also the target of the Seventh Crusade, which was led by Louis IX. His fleet arrived in 1249 and captured the city. However, after the battle of Fāraskūr and the capture of Louis IX, the Crusaders were forced to surrender Damietta.⁵⁷

Little is known about the Mamluk fortifications in Damietta. Louis IX apparently modelled the ramparts of Aigues-Mortes on the layout of the ramparts in this Egyptian city, namely an enclosure wall protected with semi-circular towers. The old Damietta city of the Crusader times was located to the northeast of the present-day city. Sultan Baybars was responsible both for relocating Damietta to its current position of several kilometers to the southwest of the old city, and for enhancing its defense by means of much more imposing fortifications.⁵⁸ In the fourteenth century, Sultan Qāyṭbāy embellished the city with new mosques and buildings. It is likely that he restored a section of the fortifications in the same way that he restored other coastal cities which formed part of his coastal protection policy.

Umm Mufarrah

Situated in a creek to the east of the present-day Port Fu'ād is a Mamluk fort, half of which has been destroyed by coastal erosion. Its name is Qal'at Umm Mufarrah and it was built by Barsbāy.⁵⁹ This small fort is more like a tower or a watchtower in a creek, evidence of an old mouth of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile delta.

Tina

Although nowadays it has its administrative center in Sinai, to the northwest of the village of Baluza, the Fort of Tina used to provide defense for the eastern edge of the Nile delta, beside the ancient Pelusiac river mouth and the old city of Pelusium (now called Farama). The Port of Tina was established 3 km to the north of the ancient city, as the coastline had shifted towards the north due to the silting up of the bay and the disappearance of the Pelusiac river mouth.

⁵⁶ For the Crusader capture of the city of Tinnis and the building of a fort on Lake Menzalah, see James de Vitry in David Nicolle, *Crusader castles in the Holy Land* (Oxford, 2008), 210–12.

⁵⁷ Jean Richard, *Histoire des Croisades* (Paris, 1996), 310–18.

⁵⁸ David Ayalon, *Gunpowder and Fire Arms in the Mamluk Kingdom* (London, 1956), 9; M. Reinaud, “Histoires des guerres des croisades sous le règne de Baibars, sultan d’Égypte, d’après les auteurs arabes,” *Journal Asiatique* 11 (1827): 4–5.

⁵⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*.



Apparently the Tina agglomeration was established at the beginning of the thirteenth century under al-Kāmil (r. 1218–38). The site extended over two hectares. Around 1424–25, a first watchtower (*burj*) was built on the initiative of Sultan Barsbāy. In 1460–61, he also undertook further fortification works.⁶⁰ In 1508–9, Sultan al-Ghawrī transformed the tower into a real fort (*qal'ah*), to counter the threat of piracy from the Knights of Rhodes and of invasion from the Turks under Sultan Selīm I. From then onwards the Fort of Tina was used under the Ottomans with a garrison ever present right up to the start of the eighteenth century, which goes some way towards explaining why it was in such a good state of conservation compared with the surrounding medieval conurbation, which was totally in ruins.⁶¹ From 1920 until the 1970s, only the central keep was visible, with the rest of the building being silted up by sand.⁶² The Fort of Tina was completely uncovered by the Egyptian Antiquities⁶³ during excavations at the site between 1989 and 1996. The six towers of the curtain wall were uncovered in 1993. One year later, the inspectors of Egyptian Antiquities discovered not only a *hammām* incorporated within one of the towers, but also a large quantity of weapons dating from the Mamluk to the Ottoman periods. Many small stone cannonballs were discovered in the central courtyard of the keep. The balls were made from limestone, pink granite, and white marble reclaimed from the antique site of Pelusium.

The fort is made up of two parts, a central donjon surrounded by an octagonal external wall with towers at each corner (Fig. 6). Incorporated within the curtain walls are niches or firing chambers with the embrasures facing towards the sea. The layout of this star-shaped fortress is very modern and normally seen in artillery forts of the eighteenth century. The curtain wall was flanked by eight semi-circular towers, which jutted out slightly to stave off artillery fire. The entrance is situated to the south, between two towers, turned toward the mainland. A mosque was built *intra muros*, on the west side, against the wall and between two

⁶⁰ Ibn Iyās in Shmuel Tamari, “Qal’at al-Tīna in Sinai, an historical-architectural analysis,” *Annali Instituto universitario orientale* 16 (1978): 78.

⁶¹ Katia Cytryn-Silverman, “The Settlement in Northern Sinai during the Islamic Period,” in *Le Sinai, de la conquête arabe à nos jours*, ed. J. M. Mouton (Cairo, 2001), 15–21.

⁶² The first archaeological reference for Tina can be traced back to Jean Clédat, “Notes sur l’Ithsmes de Suez XIX,” *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* 22 (1923): 171–79 and plates pp. 2–3. The site formed part of a study by Ben Gurion University in 1974 which was published by Shmuel Tamari (1978) in seventy-eight pages and fifteen plates.

⁶³ Refer to the non-published excavation reports of Rafa’a al-Tahir Ahmad, Ahmad Mahir al-Bazawy, Namir ‘Auda Muḥammad, and A’dad al-Sayid Muḥammad. See Sāmī Ṣāliḥ ‘Abd al-Mālik, “Les citadelles ayyoubides et mameloukes du Sinai: Etude archéologique et architecturale” in *La Guerre dans le Proche-Orient medieval*, ed. M. Eychenne and A. Zouache (Cairo, 2015), 289–362.



towers. In the center of the enclosure stands the remains of the keep, also with an octagonal plan. The entrance to the south of the donjon has a very beautiful porchway under a diamond-shaped vault supported by stuccoed pendentives. The porchway is surrounded by two small chambers and two stairs providing access to the stories which have now disappeared. The porch of Tina is very similar to the gate of the master tower in Alexandria. The entrance leads to a central and octagonal courtyard, with five large *īwāns* placed all around this central point. It is also quite likely that the central courtyard had a central skylight like in Alexandria.

The whole of this fortified site really has a feeling of great architectural cohesion and it is difficult to separate the donjon from the wall from a chronological perspective, unlike Alexandria and Rosetta (Fig. 7). The layout of this site is unique for Egypt and for all the Near East. Nonetheless, the link between a central donjon and its surrounding wall with casemates is typical of the typology that we established for the coastal Mamluk forts in Egypt. Nowadays, we can mention similar examples in others parts of the world. On the Muslim side, the Castle of Jalāl al-Dīn is located in Khurasan, in the proximity of Jājarm in the north of present-day Iran. The construction of this building dates back to circa 1361–85. It was built following an Anatolian model, as it was the land of origin of the lords' castle.⁶⁴ In actual fact, the layout of the Fort of Tina is more in keeping with that found in the Holy Land than in either Persia or Central Asia. In fact, around 1160, a new generation of Frankish castles was to appear. The Crusaders used a concentric layout with one or several walls protecting a central donjon.⁶⁵ The Fortress of Arsūf, built in 1241, belongs to these concentric citadels and presents some similarities with Tina.⁶⁶ In its size and layout, the Fort of Tina also resembles that of the famous Castel del Monte,⁶⁷ which was built in 1240 by Frederick II. Although situated in Italy this building has links with Egypt by the history of its commissioner. Frederick II led the Crusade in 1228–29 and enjoyed cordial relations with the sultan al-Kāmil. Just like the Castel del Monte, the Fort of Tina is a small marvel, very sophisticated in its design and a true witness to the cultural and technical exchanges between East and West.

⁶⁴ David Nicolle, *Saracen strongholds AD 1100–1500, The Central and Eastern Islamic Lands* (2009), 32 and 41.

⁶⁵ Ronnie Ellenblum, *Crusader Castles and Modern Histories* (Cambridge, 2007), 236.

⁶⁶ Israël Roll and Benjamin Arubas, “Le château d’Arsur: forteresse côtière pentagonale du type concentrique du milieu du XIII^e siècle,” in *L’architecture en Terre sainte au temps de Saint Louis*, *Bulletin monumental* 164:1 (2006): 67–81.

⁶⁷ Heinz Götze, *Castel del Monte: Geometric Marvel of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1998).



2.2 The Citadel of Cairo

Cairo, the capital city of the Mamluk Empire, was also central to the delta and a strategic communication conduit between Lower and Upper Egypt. Except for the short-lived Ayyubid interlude with the Island of Rhoda Fortress, it was in 1250 that the Mamluk sultans reinstated the “mountain” citadel as the permanent seat of their royal power. The Mamluks carried out many modifications inside the citadel including new palaces, a great mosque, aqueducts, and stables to name a few, but the sole focus of our study is its fortifications. It has to be said that since Casanova’s and Rabbat’s research there have been no major studies carried out on the architecture of the Citadel of Cairo during the Mamluk era.⁶⁸

Under Mamluk control, the Citadel of Cairo was not as isolated as it was under the Ayyubids. Then, it was surrounded by desert with only the rocky plateau of Muqaṭṭam and the Qarafah cemetery nearby, whereas under the Mamluks, the citadel had close links with the city. The austere military building had become a leisure and entertainment center. Concerning Mamluk fortifications, two main phases can be identified at the citadel: one at the end of the thirteenth century and the other at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The ancient Ayyubid gateway of Bāb al-Mudarraġ (the Gate of Steps) retains traces of some of the Mamluk sultans who had renovated the citadel. Three marble plaques with inscriptions were attached to the façade of the curtain wall just in front of the entrance to Bāb al-Mudarraġ: the first one is dedicated to Sultan al-Zāhir Jaqmaq (r. 842–57/1438–53), the second one to Sultan Qāyṭbāy, and the last one to al-ʿĀdil Sayfī al-Dīn Ṭūmanbāy in 1501. The bent entrance has walls and vaults that are covered with several layers of lime.⁶⁹ Several inscriptions and painted blazons are attributed to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (r. 698–741/1299–1341) (Figs. 8 and 9). The major works of al-Nāṣir, in the middle of the fourteenth century, however, cannot be classed as fortification undertakings. They had more to do with development and improvement of the residential areas and those areas restricted for use by the ruling class.

⁶⁸Paul Casanova, *Histoire et description de la citadelle du Caire, Mémoires des Membres de la Mission archéologique française du Caire*, Vol. 6 (Paris, 1897), 509–781. Only Creswell’s studies dealt with the Citadel during the Ayyubid era and military architecture. Rabbat published his work on the history of the Citadel during the Mamluk era in which he describes the different buildings. However, this was not a study of military architecture; see Nasser Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden, 1995).

⁶⁹Some inscriptions are hidden beneath more recent layers. The walls and the ceiling, having started to crumble, revealed these ancient paintings. It would be very interesting to restore this gate and to clear away some layers in order to discover new inscriptions that would help us to understand the history of the citadel.



It was Sultan Baybars who was responsible for the current appearance of the citadel by dividing it into two main enclosures (Fig 10).⁷⁰ The sultan created a military section on one side and on the other, a section reserved for the palace and administrative center. The northern enclosure was reserved for the garrison and the troops, whilst the southern enclosure housed a palatial complex containing mosques, palaces, a *dīwān* for public audience, and a library.⁷¹ The main palace faced southwest and towards the horse market and Rumaylah Square. There was tight security around the access to the royal enclosure. First of all, visitors entered the northern enclosure by means of the Ayyubid gate of Bāb al-Mudarraǰ and then headed in the direction of the southern enclosure by passing by the Bāb al-Qullah (the “Water Jug Gateway”).⁷² This gateway was situated right in the center of the wall that divided the two enclosures. Baybars ordered the construction of a tower known as the Burj al-Qullah. This donjon, which no longer exists today, was situated near the old palace. To the northwest of the present-day museum of the Egyptian police is the tower known as Burj al-Sibāʿ (the Tower of the Lions). Unfortunately, this tower, which was also known as Burj al-Zāwiyah (the Corner Tower),⁷³ was razed to the ground in the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, there is still evidence of a beautiful frieze of lions passant and some facing lions (Fig. 11). This tower was built adjacent to the external façade, which bears the carving of an Ayyubid double-headed eagle. These emblems were pointed towards the city and overlooked the pathway cut through the rock allowing access to the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ. These heraldic signs are clear demonstrations of royal power connected to the main access to the citadel.

Sultan Qalāwūn (r. 1279–90) continued to build several palaces. He transformed several Ayyubid flanking towers into barracks for his officers. In 1283, the sultan ordered the construction of a “great tower” known as the Burj al-Manšūrī, next to the Bāb al-Sirr.⁷⁴ According to Nasser Rabbat, this tower would have been found

⁷⁰ William Lyster, *The Citadel of Cairo: A History and Guide* (Cairo, 1993), 22–23.

⁷¹ Ibid. Lyster talks about the East and West Enclosures, with the East being reserved for the military and corresponding to our Northern Enclosure. Lyster’s Western Enclosure is the Mamluk sultans’ residential area and corresponds to our Southern Enclosure. It is true that the four cardinal directions do not correspond exactly to the locations of the enclosures; however, we prefer to use the terminology “North-South” which was established by K. A. C. Creswell and which is that most commonly used by researchers working on medieval Cairo.

⁷² This Mamluk gate has disappeared and was replaced, during the Ottoman reign, by another known as Bab al-Qullah.

⁷³ There is still some confusion regarding the original name of the “Tower of the Lions.” Was it the Burj al-Zāwiyah (see *L’Art Mamelouk: Splendour et magie des sultans* [2001], 78), the Burj al-Ruknah, or the Burj al-Shakḥḥ (as was proposed by Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 123–25)?

⁷⁴ Bāb al-Wuṣṭanī during the Ottoman period.



under the current Burj al-Wuṣṭanī;⁷⁵ we think that this tower should be placed therefore more to the north, according to the map of *Description de l’Égypte*, where a massive circular tower is reported but no longer exists.⁷⁶ Thereafter, the conqueror of Acre of the Crusades, Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl (r. 689–93/1290–93), built a remarkable building, known as the Burj al-Rafrāf (the Canopy Tower), which overlooked Rumaylah Square. This tower served mainly as an observation point, a belvedere, or a leisure pavilion offering panoramic views of the city.⁷⁷

Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was reinstalled on the throne and reigned for the third time from 1310 to 1341. Throughout this lengthy period, this sultan proved himself to be a great builder.⁷⁸ His improvements to the palaces, the public baths, the gardens, and the fountains all needed a great deal of water, which was cruelly lacking in this area, and so, beginning in 1311, the sultan commissioned the construction of a large aqueduct to carry water from the Nile to the citadel. On its north-south edge, the aqueduct leans against the old Ayyubid city wall. To the north of Fustat, the aqueduct forks out towards the west, towards the mouth of the canal and opposite the Island of Rhoda. Inside the southern enclosure of the citadel, the sultan commissioned the construction of several palaces, the most notable of which was the Qaṣr al-Ablaq (the Striped Palace), which was built between 1313 and 1315. This building comprises a monumental façade with large *īwāns*⁷⁹ and a multi-colored facing, with black and white courses. This section was reserved for administrative and political functions held by the sultan, and it contained a throne room and the Dār al-‘Adl, the Palace of Justice.⁸⁰ The viewing platform of the Burj al-Rafrāf shows a second stage of construction, which is very clearly visible on the exterior facing of the citadel. A stone stairwell, added in 1314 onto the western façade, provided access to the enclosure below and to the stables for the sultan and his court. The sultan then added another enclosure at the foot of the citadel and to the west. This enclosure overlooks Rumaylah Square, with access from the Bāb al-Silsilah (the Gate of the Chain).⁸¹ This enclosure mainly housed the royal stables and granaries. In 1335, the sultan also built a new great mosque, which was opposite Bāb al-Qullah, and sited on the old Ayyubid mosque

⁷⁵ Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 141–43.

⁷⁶ *Description de l’Égypte, Etat moderne*, vol. 1, Carte du Caire, pl. 26.

⁷⁷ Nicholas Warner, *The Monuments of Historic Cairo: A Map and Descriptive catalogue* (Cairo, 2005), 185.

⁷⁸ Doris Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks* (Cairo, 2007), 149–90.

⁷⁹ This survived right up until the time of the French expedition, when its monumental granite columns were depicted in an engraving in *La Description de l’Égypte, Etat moderne*, vol.1, Le Diwan de Joseph, pl. 70.

⁸⁰ Lyster, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 25–32, 91.

⁸¹ Bāb al-‘Azab during the Ottoman period.



known as al-Kāmil. This great mosque was built in two stages, one in 1318 and the other in 1335.⁸² At the southern edge of the citadel, the sultan created a large residential area known as the *hawsh*, with several residences and harems for the royal family.

There is one building that was constructed just after the reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad which piqued our curiosity. That building was the *khānqāh* of Nizām al-Dīn, dating from 757/1356. This *khānqāh* was built on rocky foothills to the north of the citadel. This building is located in an isolated and extremely defensive location. According to Nicholas Warner, the building was apparently modified under French occupation and murder holes were added on the top of the wall.⁸³ We cannot be certain about when the murder holes were added, but we can say that the French did occupy the place known as the Martinet Fort.⁸⁴ The map of Cairo published in the *Description de l’Égypte* clearly shows an Ottoman wall that connected this *khānqāh* to Bāb al-Wazīr and to the citadel. Thanks to its position, this building has always therefore had a defensive purpose.

Other minor re-fortification modifications were undertaken during the fifteenth century, the only traces of which are two inscriptions on marble plaques attached to the facing of the curtain wall in front of the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ. The two inscriptions describe the building works of the two sultans Jaqmaq (1438) and Qāyṭbāy.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Sultan al-Ashraf Janbalāṭ (1500–1) fortified the citadel, and his main focus was the northern enclosure. Janbalāṭ reinforced the curtain walls for protection against artillery fire, with the addition of a buffer zone extending from the Burj al-Saḥrā to the Burj al-Aḥmar. He ordered the building of an artillery platform in the middle of the northern front, which replaced the old Saladin tower. To the northwest, a tower was built atop the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ.⁸⁵ Many posterns and gateways were closed up as protection against a Turkish attack. The postern gates at Burj al-Maṭār and Burj al-Imām were blocked. To the north of Burj al-Muballaṭ, a small postern was closed up by a turret attached to the base of the facing of the curtain wall of the citadel and the rocky plateau.⁸⁶ The final works undertaken by the Mamluks on the citadel can be attributed to Sultan al-Ghawrī and his successor Sultan Ṭumanbāy. In 1508,

⁸² Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The Citadel of Cairo: Stage for Mamluk ceremonial,” *Annales* 24 (1988): 51–59.

⁸³ Warner, *Monuments of Historic Cairo*, 113.

⁸⁴ Stéphane Pradines, “The French fortifications,” 102, 109.

⁸⁵ Lyster, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 38, 44–45.

⁸⁶ According to Warner, this tower was an Ottoman one; see *Monuments of Historic Cairo*, 180. A study will be undertaken on this building which, from all accounts, seems to date from the late fifteenth or the early sixteenth century.



al-Ghawrī ordered the construction of a new palace to the south of the residential enclosure and created a new hippodrome for military parades and troop training. The aqueduct of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was restored and modernized by adding a large hexagonal tower at the mouth of the canal (*fumm al-khalīj*). The tower contained huge waterwheels (*saqīyah*), which were used to supply the citadel with water from the Nile. As successor to al-Ghawrī, Sultan Ṭumanbāy was responsible for several minor fortification works that were commemorated on the plaque at the entrance to Bāb al-Mudarraǰ.⁸⁷ These works, which took place in 1516, were simply the continuation and termination of the defense program set in motion by Sultan Janbalāṭ. Despite all these efforts, however, the Ottomans managed to conquer Egypt without carrying out any great siege at the citadel.

2.3 Isthmus of Suez and Sinai Peninsula

Suez

In the Middle Ages,⁸⁸ the Port of Qulzum (Clysma) controlled the upper reaches of the Gulf of Suez, and was built on the ruins of the ancient Greek city of Clysma. In 1154, al-Idrīsī explained that there were two cities called Qulzum, one inland and the other a port, known respectively as *Qulzum castrum* and *Qulzum portus*.⁸⁹ The Port of Qulzum was linked to the Mediterranean Sea by a north-south route which led to Farama (Pelusium).⁹⁰ Qulzum was also linked to Cairo by a caravan route. Following the construction of the Lesseps canal, the plans of 1855–56 show quite clearly the position of Tell Qulzum, to the north of the present-day city of Suez.⁹¹ This tell or *kawm* was already identified on the map drawn up by the French expedition in 1799 (Fig. 12).

In the Middle Ages, Suez was a lifeless city, and its brackish water meant that the caravan stage between Cairo and Damascus was most unpleasant. It was a

⁸⁷ *L'Art Mamelouk*, 70.

⁸⁸ The Port of Qulzum is mentioned by Ibn Khurradādhbih in the ninth century.

⁸⁹ Al-Idrīsī, *La première géographie de l'Occident*, trans. Chevalier Jaubert (Paris, 1999), 331.

⁹⁰ Bernard Bruyère, *Fouilles de Clysma-Qolzoum (Suez) 1930–1932* (Cairo, 1966), 30–35. Other examples exist in Islamic lands of a port and a city separated; in Arabia, for example the port of Yanbu' al-Baḥr had a land-based city, Yanbu' al-Nakhl, situated on the pilgrimage routes; see 'Alī al-Ghabbān, *Les deux routes syriennes et égyptiennes de pèlerinage au nord-ouest de l'Arabie Saoudite* (Cairo, 2011), 197–201. Al-Mas'ūdī mentions a bridge to the north of Qulzum in 956, which straddled a canal and provided passage to Sinai. Nowadays a place situated in the region still bears the name “Kobri” and could correspond to this place; however, because of agriculture and the creation of the Suez Canal, archaeological interpretation has been rendered difficult for us.

⁹¹ The archaeological sites are also visible on the map of the Isthmus of Suez drawn up by Linant de Bellefonds, in his *Mémoires sur les principaux travaux d'utilité publique exécutés en Égypte, depuis la plus haute Antiquité jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, 1873).



ghostly cesspool right in the middle of the desert. It had also fallen into decay because of the difficulty that the ships had in navigating the Gulf of Suez upstream because of the strong headwinds. Navigators preferred to use the ports of Aydhab and Quseir. Although the city of Suez was just a minor staging point, it nonetheless provided entry to the Red Sea and was in a strategic location. This is why Saladin ordered the building of a small fort (or tower)⁹² in 1181, just at the time of his clashes with Renaud de Châtillon, the Lord of Kérak. The small fort of Suez was restored under Sultan Baybars.⁹³ In the thirteenth century, following their military successes, the Mamluks re-established the North Sinai route, known as the *Via Maris*, all along the coast.⁹⁴ Under the reign of Baybars, the pilgrims would all gather together and follow the Sinai route. The processional caravan, known as the *maḥmal*, which was initiated by Sultans Shajarat al-Durr and Baybars, used the pilgrims' route through central Sinai⁹⁵ from 1268. In 1513, the Mamluks, as the Ayyubids before them had done, transported the component parts of ships across the desert for assembly in the Port of Suez. The Portuguese threat in the Red Sea was no idle threat, and therefore Sultan al-Ghawrī deemed it necessary to reinforce the ports and the caravan routes, by ordering the construction of a tower in Suez and a fort in Ajrud.⁹⁶

Ajrud

The Ajrud or Agrud fort (*Manāhil Ajrūd*) is located 20 km to the northwest of Suez⁹⁷ and it was a large stopover before Sinai and the Nakhl Fort. The site is on barren land to the north of the mountains and the eastern desert. The Ajrud Fort was not built by chance; it was specifically positioned on an old site containing an important well and on the caravan route between Suez/Qulzum and Cairo.⁹⁸ Ajrud is situated at the intersection of Cairo, Bilbeis, and Moses's Springs

⁹² Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 1:1:72.

⁹³ Al-Yūnīnī, *Mir'āt al-Zamān* (1992), 257; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhīrah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhīrah* (Cairo, 1929), 5:192; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh* (1942), 7:72. Texts quoted in Jean-Michel Mouton, "Qolzoum-Suez du commerce au pèlerinage," in *Suez: Histoire et architecture* (Cairo, 2011), 15–44.

⁹⁴ Jean-Michel Mouton, "Autour des inscriptions de la forteresse de Ṣadr (Qal'at al Guindi) au Sinai," *Annales Islamologiques* 28 (1994): 31.

⁹⁵ The central Sinai route shifted up fifty kilometers to the north of Sadr, which facilitated traveling with the creation, by Sultan Baybars, of a station at Tugrat Hāmid; see Jean-Michel Mouton, *Sadr, une forteresse de Saladin au Sināi*, Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres 43 (Paris, 2010), 43–44, and idem, "Qolzoum-Suez du commerce au pèlerinage," 32–36.

⁹⁶ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī' al-Zuhūr*, 4:366.

⁹⁷ Jomier, "Le Maḥmal," 180–81.

⁹⁸ Bir Suez and Bir Gismel (possibly one and the same wells) were situated five kilometers to the west of the city of Suez. Jean Clédat, "Notes sur l'Ithsmes de Suez XII–XV," *BIFAO* 18 (1921): 185; Bruyère, *Fouilles de Clysmā Qolzoum*, 30.



on the Sinai side. The site is the sole crossing point and its strategic importance was even recognized by Napoleon, who decided to station a garrison there and restore its fortifications.⁹⁹ In the nineteenth century, the explorer Richard Burton also mentioned a garrison of about a dozen men there.¹⁰⁰ In 1884, the demise of Ajrud as a stopover on the caravan route was brought about because the pilgrims could use the railway line that was created in 1858 and that linked Cairo and Suez. Nowadays, what is remarkable is that the ruins of the fort are still visible, and we discovered them wedged between an industrial zone, the railway line, and the Suez motorway. To date, no excavation has been undertaken on this site and the most comprehensive archaeological data that we have is that contained in Jomier's article from 1950. The topography of the site can be divided into three parts, a cemetery, a small fort, and a caravanserai (Fig. 13).

The small fort comprises a rectangular enclosure, which is quite narrow (37 m x 15 m) and has two huge towers located in diagonally opposite corners.¹⁰¹ The center of the southwest façade is surmounted by a square domed tower.¹⁰² This tower does not project out from the wall. The curtain walls were indeed made of limestone. The facing comprised tiles and headers with an infill of rubble stone and mortar. The main entrance is located to the southeast and it looks out onto the courtyard that housed the well; there is an inscription dedicated to Sultan al-Ghawri above the entrance.¹⁰³ This inscription confirmed what we had learned from the writings, namely the construction works of the sultan in Ajrud between 1509 and 1510. Apparently this work was supervised by his favorite master builder, Amir Khāyir Bāy.¹⁰⁴

What is unique about the small fort of Ajrud is, undoubtedly, the fact that there is a well contained in its walls. This well is very deep, in fact originally 70 m deep. It is circular in shape with a diameter of 3.6 m. The well has a slabbed surround on which the beasts of burden circulated in order to carry the buckets of water from the well. The well is extremely sophisticated with its waterwheel (*saqīyah*) standing on two supporting arches. This *saqīyah* was used to raise the water from the depths of the well. Mention was made of the Ajrud Well as early as the ninth century by al-Ya'qūbī¹⁰⁵ as well as by all the travelers who visited this stopover. The Ajrud Well is often described as being very old and very deep. Few wells bear

⁹⁹ Stéphane Pradines, "The French fortifications," 107.

¹⁰⁰ Jacques Jomier, "Ageroud: Un caravansérail sur la route des pèlerins de la Mekke," *Bulletin de la société d'études historiques et géographiques de l'Isthme de Suez* 3 (1950): 55.

¹⁰¹ Clédat, "Notes sur l'Isthme de Suez XII-XV," 186.

¹⁰² At the time of Jomier, "Ageroud," 33–56.

¹⁰³ J. Moritz, "Inscription à Ageroud," *Bulletin de l'institut égyptien* 4 (Alexandria, 1910): 100–1.

¹⁰⁴ Jomier, "Ageroud," 51.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.



comparison with the Ajrud Well except perhaps Joseph's Well (Bir Yūsuf) in the Citadel of Cairo, which is 87 m deep.¹⁰⁶ The Ajrud site apparently had three or four large cisterns but nowadays only one is visible and this measures 20 m long, 13 m wide, and 3 m deep; this is located between the fort and the caravanserai.

There is an impressive caravanserai, situated 150 m from the fort, which is a fortified building of nearly 60 m on each side (Fig. 14).¹⁰⁷ Although unfortunately now in ruins, this structure must have been majestic with its four circular corner towers measuring 4.5 m in diameter. The entrance is on the southwest façade, and flanked by two semi-circular towers. The central courtyard measures 36 m on each side, with buildings, storerooms, and dwellings built up against the internal façades of the building. These structures were approximately 12 m wide. The plans of this building closely resemble those of the Mamluk post office studied by Sauvaget.¹⁰⁸ Many of these buildings were to be reoccupied or even emulated by the Ottomans all along the pilgrim route.¹⁰⁹

The plan of the Ajrud Fort is almost identical to that of the Bir Gismel published by Clédat several years beforehand (Fig. 15).¹¹⁰ The building comprises a narrow rectangular area with two towers situated in diagonally-opposite corners and it is only the main entrance that is in a different position than the one in the Ajrud Fort. The Bir Gismel Fort protected two wells, not just one as in the Ajrud Fort. Bir Gismel is identified as Bir Clysmā and thus relates to the Suez Well situated approximately 5 km to the northwest of the city,¹¹¹ at the halfway point of the route leading to Ajrud. We have identified the location of the Ajrud Fort and so we should have been able to identify the Bir Gismel Fort; in fact, there is some confusion about the Ajrud and Bir Gismel forts. The presence of two forts of such similar construction is extremely interesting because it indicates a willingness to standardize the military works along the caravan route.¹¹² Now we come to

¹⁰⁶In fact, Joseph's Well is credited as pre-dating the Citadel of Cairo. These claims are impossible to verify without conducting an advanced architectural study of this work. However, it is worth noting that there is a strange similarity between the Well of Joseph and the Ajrud Well.

¹⁰⁷Jomier, "Ageroud," 50.

¹⁰⁸Jean Sauvaget, *La poste aux chevaux dans l'Empire des Mamelouks* (Paris, 1941), 64–65.

¹⁰⁹Al-Ghabbān, *Les deux routes*; Andrew Petersen, "Ottoman Hajj forts," in *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria, from the coming of Islam to the Ottoman Period*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden, 2006), 307–17.

¹¹⁰Clédat, "Notes sur l'Ithsmes de Suez XIX," 185–86.

¹¹¹Jomier, "Ageroud," 51.

¹¹²Sāmī Ṣāliḥ 'Abd al-Mālik, "The khans of the Egyptian Hajj route in the Mamluk and Ottoman periods," in *The Hajj: collected essays*, ed. V. Porter and L. Saif (London, 2013), 62.



the question of the dating¹¹³ of these works; the inscription published by Moritz¹¹⁴ leaves us in no doubt about the works commissioned by al-Ghawrī on this site, but was it the small fort or the caravanserai? Could it be possible that the plan of the forts with round towers situated in diagonally-opposite corners dates back to the time of Sultan Baybars?

Khān al-Khowinat

Heading in the direction of al-Arish, in the present-day region of Zaraniq, there is a large lake with salt marshes, known as Baldwin Lake (*Sabkhat al-Bardawīl*).¹¹⁵ Tradition has it that it was on the edge of this lake that King Baldwin I died of dysentery on his return from Egypt in 1118. This area has always been a thoroughfare between Palestine and the Nile delta. An Arabian fort was recognized by Clédat in 1914 to the west of the Byzantine city of Ostracine.¹¹⁶ The Supreme Council of Antiquities has recently found and excavated a fortified caravanserai associated with a small village. The caravanserai is square in shape and 50 m on each side (Fig. 16). It has just one entrance to the north, which overlooks a large central courtyard surrounded by porticos. A small mosque was located opposite the entrance (Fig. 17). However, the building is not in a good enough state of conservation for us to be able to confirm whether it was a storied building, even though that is a strong possibility given that the thickness of the walls is more than 1.5 m. The ceramics that we saw make it possible for us to date it to the Mamluk era. We believe that it could be the site of either the city of al-Suwadeh or Uwaradah, which were pillaged and destroyed in the thirteenth century by the Franks.¹¹⁷ This caravan stopover would have been situated between the cities of Farama and al-Arish.¹¹⁸ Moreover, we know that around 1440, the Mamluks commissioned the construction of a series of fortified caravanserais on the trading routes, as far as Galilee.¹¹⁹ To identify the site is quite difficult at this stage in the research process, so for now, it is necessary to mention the presence of an impor-

¹¹³ With regard to the problems of dating the site itself, Ajrud does appear in Arabic sources of the ninth century, but the site is undoubtedly older than that; see Jomier, "Ageroud," 33, 41. Was there a pharaonic occupation? Or could the site appear on the itinerary of the Exodus? These are questions that can only be answered by archaeological excavations.

¹¹⁴ Moritz, "Inscription à Ageroud," 100–1.

¹¹⁵ The ancient Sirbonis Lake.

¹¹⁶ Clédat, "Notes sur l'Ithsmes de Suez VIII–XI," *BIFAO* 17 (1920): 110–11; Jean Clédat, "Fouilles à Khirbet El-Flousiyeh," *Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte* 16 (1921): 6–32.

¹¹⁷ Sāmī Ṣāliḥ 'Abd al-Mālik, "Farama," *Mishkāh* 2 (2007): 109–89.

¹¹⁸ Clédat, "Notes sur l'Ithsmes de Suez XIX," 140, 166; al-Idrīsī, "La première géographie de l'Occident," 340; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, trans. Bouriant, 669.

¹¹⁹ Nicolle, *The Mamluks*, 42–43.



tant fortified Mamluk caravanserai known as Khān al-Khowinat which was built on the banks of Baldwin Lake.¹²⁰

Nakhl

In the Islamic period, Nakhl was inhabited starting from the Umayyad era,¹²¹ but the site seems to be that of a much older construction, situated at the intersection of the north-south and east-west routes heading towards Sinai, from the old Phara in the Wādī al-ʿArīsh, right up to the Gulf of Suez and towards Ayla in the Gulf of Aqaba. The site retains traces of the Roman occupation and was certainly inhabited as far back as the pharaonic period.¹²²

The fort at Nakhl, which is visible today, was built at the request of Sultan al-Ghawrī (Fig. 18).¹²³ Evidence of this foundation is confirmed by the presence of blazons and an inscription. The fort is sited atop a small archaeological tell, which is now the site of a cemetery and surrounded by several large cisterns. The building is square in shape, measuring approximately 30 m on each side, with four circular corner towers, small in diameter (Figs. 18 and 19). An extra semi-circular tower was added on the eastern façade of the fort. The main entrance of the building is situated in the southeast corner and overlooks a central courtyard that is surrounded by rooms; there is no doubt that these were covered. The eastern section, which is wider and more complex, suggests that it comprised two to three stories and was possibly a type of dwelling abutting the curtain wall and the tower on the eastern side. Like all the other forts commissioned by Sultan al-Ghawrī, the building had a dual purpose, first as a caravan stopover and second as a stopover for the pilgrims heading to Mecca.¹²⁴ It is highly likely that the construction manager of the Nakhl fort was again Amir Khāyir Bāy, since Ibn Iyās mentions “several fortifications” undertaken by Sultan al-Ghawrī dated from 914/1508—a “tower” built at Ajrud, one at Nakhl, and one at Aqaba.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Around 1440 the Mamluks built a series of caravanserais on the trade routes to Galilee; see Katia Cytryn-Silverman, *The Road Inns (Khāns) of Bilād al-Shām* (Oxford, 2010).

¹²¹ Sāmī Šāliḥ ʿAbd al-Mālik, “The fort of al-Guwri Nakhl in the Sināi,” *Mishkāh* 2 (2007): 145–205.

¹²² Jean Clédat, “Notes sur l’Ithsmes de Suez XIX and XX,” *BIFAO* 23 (1924): 29–30.

¹²³ The fort was subsequently restored by the sultan Suleiman in 1552.

¹²⁴ Another beautiful example of the military architecture of al-Ghawrī can be seen on the pilgrim route leading to Mecca, in what is now Saudi territory; see ʿAlī al-Ghabbān, *Les deux routes*, 189–97. The al-Aznan Fort is a square-shaped building measuring 40 m on each side with corner towers. The faceted or polygonal towers are used on two levels, with a domed chamber on the ground floor that opens onto three arrow-slits, and on the first story is a terrace with three murder holes for cannon fire. The building is also protected by two small machicolations.

¹²⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr*, vol. 3.



Abyār

The Suez route (Qulzum) to Aqaba (Ayla) passed through the center of Sinai and the Tih Plateau. It was an important route, both for trade relations and for the pilgrimage to the holy places of Islam. Dotted along this hazardous route, which was right in the middle of the desert, were caravan stopovers of which Nakhl, which we mentioned earlier, was the most important one. However, other stopovers did exist with wells and cisterns to supply men and animals with water. The most important stopovers were fortified and information about these stopovers was known only by the texts¹²⁶ and very few architectural remains.

Only Sāmī ‘Abd al-Mālik has been able to identify and discover a Mamluk fort in the center of Sinai, located in the al-Qureis region between Nakhl and Aqaba.¹²⁷ The site of Abyār (Bir al-‘Alā’i) comprises a dam, a well, and a mosque with an inscription dedicated to the Mamluk sultan Kitbughā al-Manṣūrī (694–96/1294–96). A small fort, square in shape with circular towers in the opposite corners, controls the wadi where the site is located.

Another site is located at the side of the present-day motorway between Nakhl and Taba. The site of Ath-Thamad has a monumental inscription on a narrowing of a wadi, and this is carved in natural-cut stone. This inscription bears the name of Sultan al-Ghawrī, and its location right in the middle of the desert is not all that strange. Above the inscription we have identified the base of a watch tower built on the rocky plateau which overlooks the valley. The Mamluk sultan wanted to put his stamp on an important route and thus commemorate the whole of the defensive system that he had put in place both in the Sinai and the Red Sea.

2.4 The Red Sea

We refer to the forts of Aqaba, Nuweiba, and Tūr as “the Mamluk shield of the Red Sea.” In fact, in addition to their role as maritime caravanserais, these forts also ensured safe passage of ships in the Gulfs of Aqaba and Suez.

¹²⁶ Jean-Michel Mouton, *Le Sināi médiéval: Un espace stratégique de l’islam* (Paris, 2000); Sāmī Ṣāliḥ ‘Abd al-Mālik and Jean-Michel Mouton, “Autour des inscriptions de la forteresse de Ṣadr,” *Annales islamologiques* 30 (1996).

¹²⁷ Sāmī Ṣāliḥ ‘Abd al-Mālik, “Abyār al-‘Alā’i ‘alā darb al-ḥājj al-miṣrī fi Sinā’: Dirāsah tārikhiyah-athāriyah mi‘māriyah jadidah ‘alā ḍū’ al-ḥafā’ir al-athāriyah,” *Annales islamologiques* 41 (2007): 1–44, and idem, “Les citadelles ayyoubides et mameloukes du Sināi: Etude archéologique et architecturale,” in *La Guerre dans le Proche-Orient médiéval* (Cairo, 2015), 289–362.



Aqaba

Located today in Jordan, the Mamluk fort of Aqaba is situated 1 km to the south of the old Ayla.¹²⁸ It has a monumental inscription bearing the name of al-Ghawrī, which dates from 920/1514. The building measures 56 m from north to south and 58 m from east to west, and has polygonal corner towers (Figs. 20 and 21). There is a door opening in the middle of the north wall, flanked by round towers which are slightly projecting. The porch (*īwān*) is protected by a murder hole in front of it. Inside the fort, there are storerooms built against the curtain walls. A mosque was also built inside against the southern curtain wall. The supervisor of these works was Amir Khāyir Bāy al-ʿAlāʾī, who was responsible for building the Aqaba Fort on the foundations of the old fortifications of Sultan Baybars.¹²⁹

Nuweiba

At Nuweiba, on the shore of the Sinai, al-Ghawrī ordered the building of another fort in the small village of Tarabin¹³⁰ in 920/1514. This Mamluk fort was reoccupied and modified by the Egyptian government in 1893. The fort still retained its military function and was used by the Egyptian mounted police (camel drivers). The corner towers were incorporated within the new curtain walls and new dwellings and stables were built in the fort enclosure. Several years ago the building was totally restored by Egyptian Antiquities and therefore it is very difficult to distinguish the original sections of the Mamluk building.¹³¹ Nonetheless, the fort appears to have a square-shaped enclosure, 30 m on each side, with four small circular corner towers (Figs. 22 and 23). The main entrance, facing towards the southeast, and the towers are made out of standard coral limestone masonry.

Tur

The Port of Tur has been an important site since ancient times and is inextricably linked to Saint Catherine's Monastery. During the Fatimid period, the site of

¹²⁸ Donald Whitcomb, "The walls of early Islamic Ayla: defense or symbol?," in *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria*, ed. Kennedy, 61; ʿAbd al-Mālik, "The khans of the Egyptian Hajj," 52–64.

¹²⁹ Denys Pringle, "Aqaba Castle in the Ottoman Period, 1517–1917," in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A. Peacock (Oxford, 2009), 95–112; Reem Al-Shqour, *Aqaba Castle, origin, development and evolution of Khans in Jordan: An Archaeological Approach* (Ghent, 2015), 128–37, 248–53, 341–60.

¹³⁰ Nuweiba Tarabin, the old Nuweiba, also known as the "Nuweiba of the Bedouins," as opposed to the Nuweiba of the tourists and the present-day port.

¹³¹ That raises the thorny subject of the conservation work on the Islamic monuments in Egypt. Over the last few years, certain restoration work has ruined, rather than conserved, the monuments. There are plenty of examples, like the fortress of Gezirat al-Pharaoun, the city walls of Cairo at the Bāb al-Naṣr, and the Rosetta Fort.



Tur-Raya was already a fortified port with a caravanserai.¹³² In the turn of the fifteenth to sixteenth century, the Bay of Raya became silted up and was unusable, so a new port was built farther north,¹³³ replacing the old site of Tur-Raya. Eight kilometers separate the Fatimid site from the Mamluk and Ottoman agglomeration. Although the most important traded products were transhipped in the Port of al-Quseir and then transported by way of the Nile up to Alexandria via Cairo, Tur was a very important crossing point at the end of the fourteenth century. Despite the reestablishment of the activities of the Port of Suez at the end of the Mamluk period, Tur still retained its strategic importance as is evidenced by the construction of a fort during the reign of al-Ghawrī.¹³⁴ Unfortunately, today, there are no remains of the fort, but a plan was drawn up by Linnant de Belfont in the nineteenth century.¹³⁵ It shows that the building was square-shaped, 30 m on each side (Fig. 24). The four corners were protected by huge circular towers measuring 8 m in diameter. The towers were almost completely detached from the building, unlike in Nuweiba and Nakhī, where the little towers projected slightly from the curtain wall façades. Each tower had a circular vaulted chamber that housed three arrow-slit niches. The curtain walls, on both the east and west, were each protected by two arrow-slit niches. The southern curtain wall was heavily defended with six or seven arrow-slit niches. The fort gate was facing the north towards the city. The gate was positioned in the center of the north façade and had a bent entrance. A mosque was built inside the fort between the northwest tower and the entrance.

Conclusion

This article presents Mamluk fortifications built on Egyptian territory and recognizes a general evolutionary pattern of this military architecture. It is now necessary to return to the general features of Mamluk military architecture. First, the Mamluks used large quadrangular master towers. This architectural shape is credited to the Ayyubids in the early thirteenth century with the citadels of

¹³² Mutsuo Kawatoko and Yoko Shindo, "Archaeological survey of the Râya/al-Tûr area on the Sinai peninsula, Egypt 2003," in *Mishkâh* 1 (2006): 21–80.

¹³³ The same urban relocation pattern at Tur was seen by Whitcomb at Quseir and Aqaba; see Donald Whitcomb, "Quseir al-Qadim and the location of Myos Hormos," *Topoi* 6 (1996): 747–72; idem, "The Town and Name of Aqaba: an inquiry into the settlement history from an archaeological perspective," in *Studies in the history and archaeology of Jordan* 4 (1997): 359–63. It was also seen by us in Farama/Tina.

¹³⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitâb al-Sulūk*, 1:1:171, 176, 187, 204.

¹³⁵ Linant de Bellefonds wrote one chapter on the fortress of Tur, where he relates that this fortress was similar to those of Aqaba and Nakhī; see Bellefonds in Léon de Laborde and Louis Maurice Adolphe Linant de Bellefonds, *Voyage de l'Arabie Pétrée* (Paris, 1830).



Damascus and Cairo. From 1207, al-ʿĀdil oversaw the reconstruction of the citadel of Damascus. In Cairo, he entrusted the renovation of the citadel to his son al-Kāmil, who was appointed governor of Egypt.¹³⁶ The 1207–8 works are marked by a new style of defense, represented by massive quadrangular towers like Damascus, Bosra, or the Crusader castles.¹³⁷ These main towers are 20 m to 30 m aside and almost 25 m high. These towers there were organized on three levels and included a bossage facing. Overtime, the towers got wider both to better withstand fire from trebuchets and because these towers serve as shooting platforms. The increase in the size of the towers was primarily an adaptation to the progress of the art of siege in the early thirteenth century and the widespread use of counterweight trebuchets.¹³⁸ Five towers of this type were built in Cairo.¹³⁹ The use of covered walkways inside the curtain walls and towers is also an Ayyubid invention that started with the walls of Cairo built in 1177–1200.¹⁴⁰

Continuous stone battlements crowning the curtain walls and towers are assigned to the Mamluk period in the last third of the thirteenth century. The first case, dated between 1270 and 1285, is the Crac des Chevaliers, after its conquest by the Mamluks.¹⁴¹ There was no equivalent system in Europe, where they used an ongoing hoarding wood on stone cornices. In Tripoli, Burj al-Sibāʿ (Tower of the Lions) was supposedly built under Barqūq (r. 1382–99), but we believe that this tower should be attributed to the reign of Baybars. This tower has a façade with antique column header “boutisses,” elements that are also found on the lower parts of the citadels of Alexandria and Rosetta. Another characteristic element of Mamluk military architecture is the use of a cruciform plan, or “Iwan.” The Iwan plan, of Eastern origin, consists of a square central hall or courtyard flanked by four quadrangular vaulted rooms. In the case of the fortifications, the vaulted rooms are often used as firing chambers. Finally, glacis and sloping citadels were developed in the thirteenth century—the most typical case being Aleppo. The Citadel of Aleppo was fortified in the fifteenth century after the Mongol invasion

¹³⁶ Sometimes depending on the scholars, the works at the citadel are attributed to al-Kāmil or al-ʿĀdil. In reality, it is more accurate to follow the analysis of Creswell, who explained that al-ʿĀdil sponsored the work and should be, as such, credited for these accomplishments, even if it was his son, al-Kāmil, and Qaraqūsh who were the master builders of these new fortifications.

¹³⁷ Hugh Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge, 1994), 180–85; Yovitchitch, *Fortresses du Proche-Orient*, 329.

¹³⁸ Paul Chevedden, *The Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet: A Study in Cultural Diffusion* (Washington, 2000), 71–116.

¹³⁹ Lyster, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 44–45.

¹⁴⁰ Stéphane Pradines, Benjamin Michaudel, and Julie Monchamp, “La muraille ayyoubide du Caire: les fouilles archéologiques de Bāb al-Barqiyya et Bāb al-Maḥrūq,” *Annales islamologiques* 36 (2002).

¹⁴¹ Mesqui, *Châteaux d’Orient*, 179.



and consists of advanced towers built in the glacis. A south tower has beautiful circular openings for cannons and is attributed to Sultan al-Ghawrī.¹⁴²

It has been our intention to survey Egyptian fortified sites in a compelling way, and not to fall into the trap of just presenting a dry list with detailed descriptions, as is often the case in archaeological publications. We draw new models to describe the evolution of Mamluk fortifications. These models are based on our Egyptian experience but they can be used to understand Mamluk fortification in Greater Syria, as up to now no such evolution has been proposed.¹⁴³

The first type of Mamluk fortification corresponds to the Crusades and the reign of Sultan Baybars (1260–77). These fortifications were inspired by the master towers developed by the Ayyubids at the beginning of the thirteenth century. These huge and massive quadrangular towers were built over the walls in the citadels of Cairo and Damascus, for example. Baybars reused this concept, not to flank a curtain wall but as a fort by itself. This independent tower was reinforced in the angles with counterforts. This kind of tower-fort was used mainly to protect the coast; unfortunately, most of them were destroyed by later Mamluk sultans to create more ambitious projects. Qaṣr al-ʿUmayd, close to Alexandria, Rosetta in the Delta, and Burj al-Sibāʿ in Lebanon all belong to this model.

The second phase is the link between the Mediterranean maritime conflicts and the works of two sultans, Barsbāy (r. 1422–38) and Qāyrbāy (r. 1468–96). These sultans developed a new kind of Mamluk coastal fortification. Alexandria, Rosetta, and Tina are three examples of this type. These fortresses are composed of a central keep with a concentric curtain wall, which can be circular, square, or octagonal. The walled enclosure is equipped with chambers for artillery. These concentric citadels were very much inspired by the West and Christian fortifications.¹⁴⁴

Finally, the last phase is represented by the works of Sultan al-Ghawrī (r. 1501–16). On the coast, this sultan continued to use the concentric system and reinforced the artillery belts around the central keeps. In the mainland, he created a new network of small forts, with a simple plan: a quadrangular enclosure protected by two opposite or four circular corner towers. The fort protects a central courtyard with storerooms built all around. These forts are quite similar to caravanserais as they had the same functions: to protect merchants, pilgrims, and travelers. Later, these fortifications were reused and copied by the Ottomans.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Ibid., 177.

¹⁴³ Kate Raphael's book *Muslim Fortresses in the Levant: Between Crusaders and Mongols* (London, 2011) did not bring such clear evidence to understand Mamluk fortifications.

¹⁴⁴ Ronnie Ellenblum, *Crusader Castles and Modern Histories* (Cambridge, 2007), 236.

¹⁴⁵ In the Arabian Peninsula and until the nineteenth century in Oman; see Stéphane Pradines, *Fortifications et urbanisation en Afrique orientale* (Oxford, 2004), 83–109.



Our aim was to showcase the Mamluk sites in both their geographical and historical contexts. We have noticed that the sites of these Mamluk fortifications are all grouped together in very strategic regions, whether it be on the Mediterranean coast, the Nile delta, the Sinai routes, or the banks of the Red Sea. The main functions of these fortifications were: (1) to protect the economic interests of the Mamluks; (2) to protect the pilgrim routes against the Bedouin *razias*; (3) to protect the coastal cities against Italian or Cypriot pirates; and (4) to counter the threats of invasion from the Ottomans and Portuguese. Coastal, maritime, and river fortifications served to protect ships, merchants, and travelers during stopovers. They also protected ports against hackers who coveted—such as Bedouins in the desert—the goods and wealth concentrated in these cosmopolitan ports.¹⁴⁶ But the fortifications were not only confined to coastal areas. In a desert country like Egypt, and more generally in the Middle East, water was a scarce and vital commodity. Control and ownership of water was extremely important to supply the caravans of merchants or pilgrims crossing a naturally hostile territory. Therefore, wells are often associated with forts or fortified caravanserais—the distinction between the two types of buildings being very porous.

Our study of Mamluk fortifications in Egypt demonstrates that they were constructed in connection with the conflicts both on the borders and inside the kingdom, within territories and cities. Urban violence is addressed through the citadel building that protects, but also controls a city. The citadels of Cairo and Alexandria were built by the Ayyubids and Mamluks to defend the population and quell insurrections. Urban fortifications, walls, and fortresses are first of all elements that demonstrate power and possession of a territory. This is an extremely important aspect of the fortifications: the symbolic aspect is even more important than the effective and functional aspect. To conclude, the Mamluk fortifications are obviously architectural witnesses of conflicts and crisis, but also witnesses of cultural values and influences. We hope that our article will motivate our colleagues to carry out detailed and monographic studies on each fortification that we have briefly described above.

¹⁴⁶ *Ports and Forts in the Muslim World: Coastal military architecture from the Arab Conquest to the Ottoman Period*, ed. Stéphane Pradines (Cairo, forthcoming).



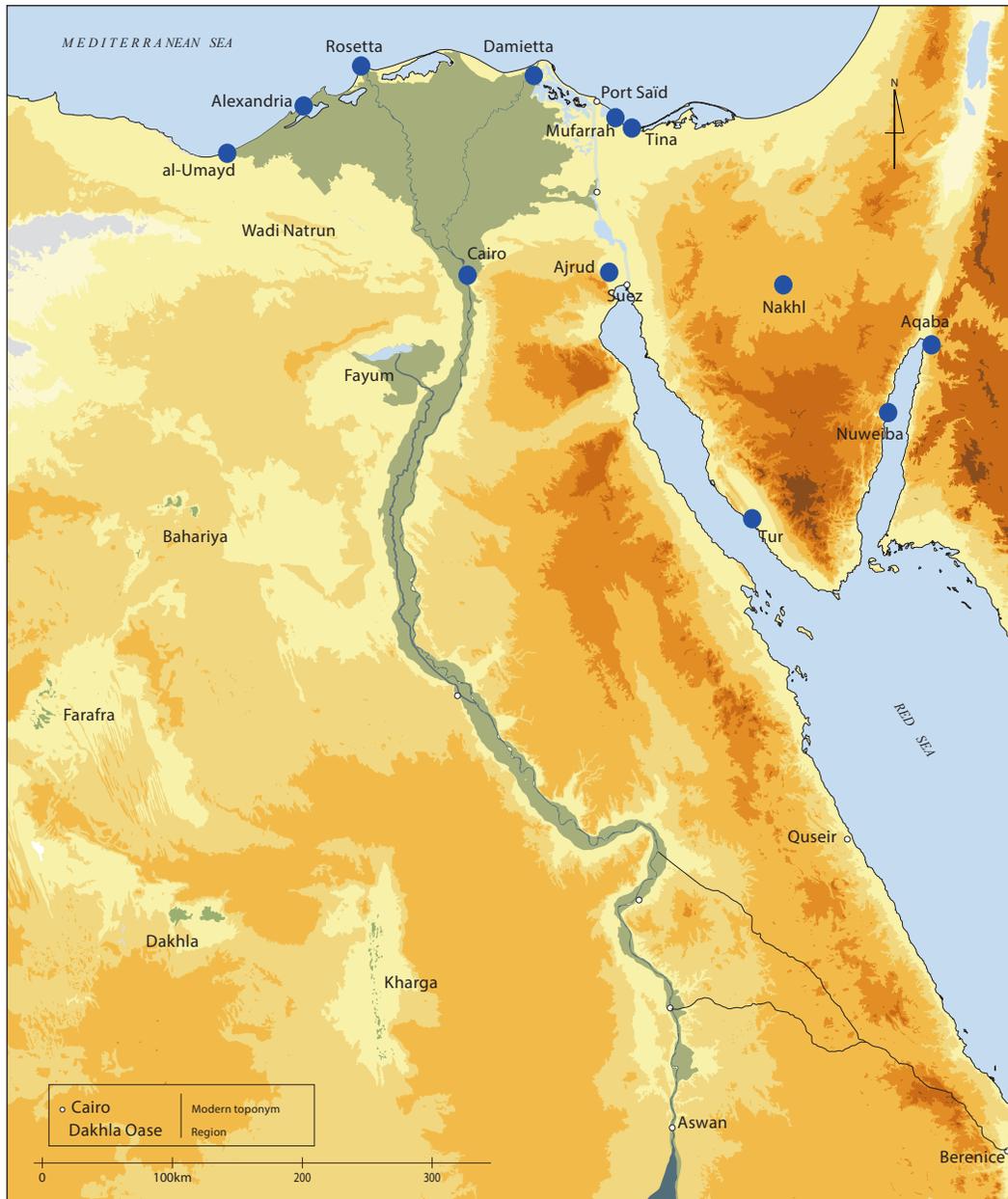


Figure 1: Map of the Mamluk fortifications in Egypt. (Map by the author.)



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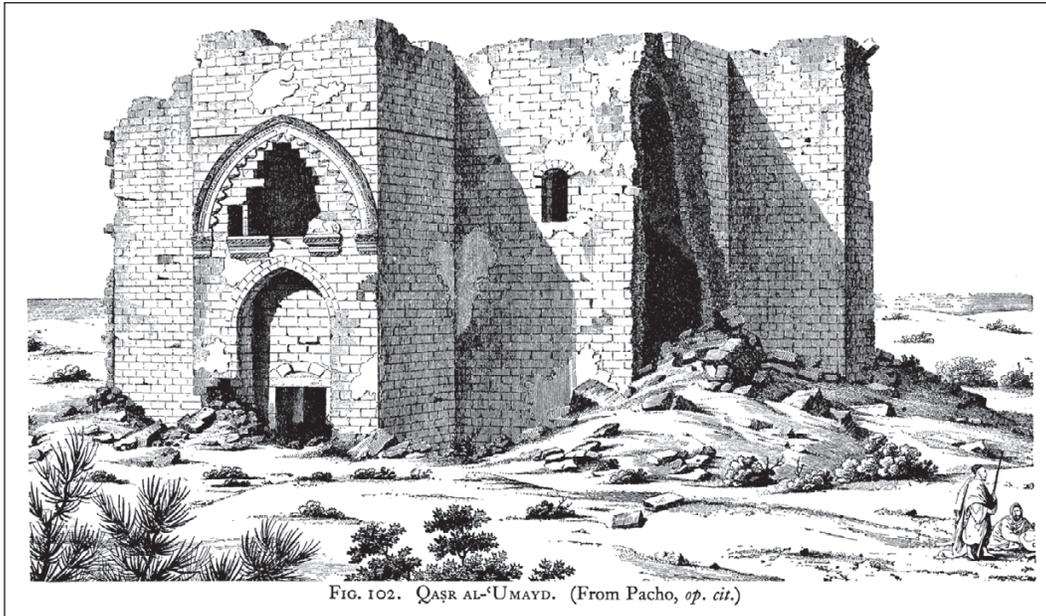


Figure 2: Engraving of the Qaṣr al-ʿUmayd fort. (From Pacho, *Voyage dans la Marmarique, la Cyrénaïque et les oasis d’Audjelah et Maradèh*, 1827.)



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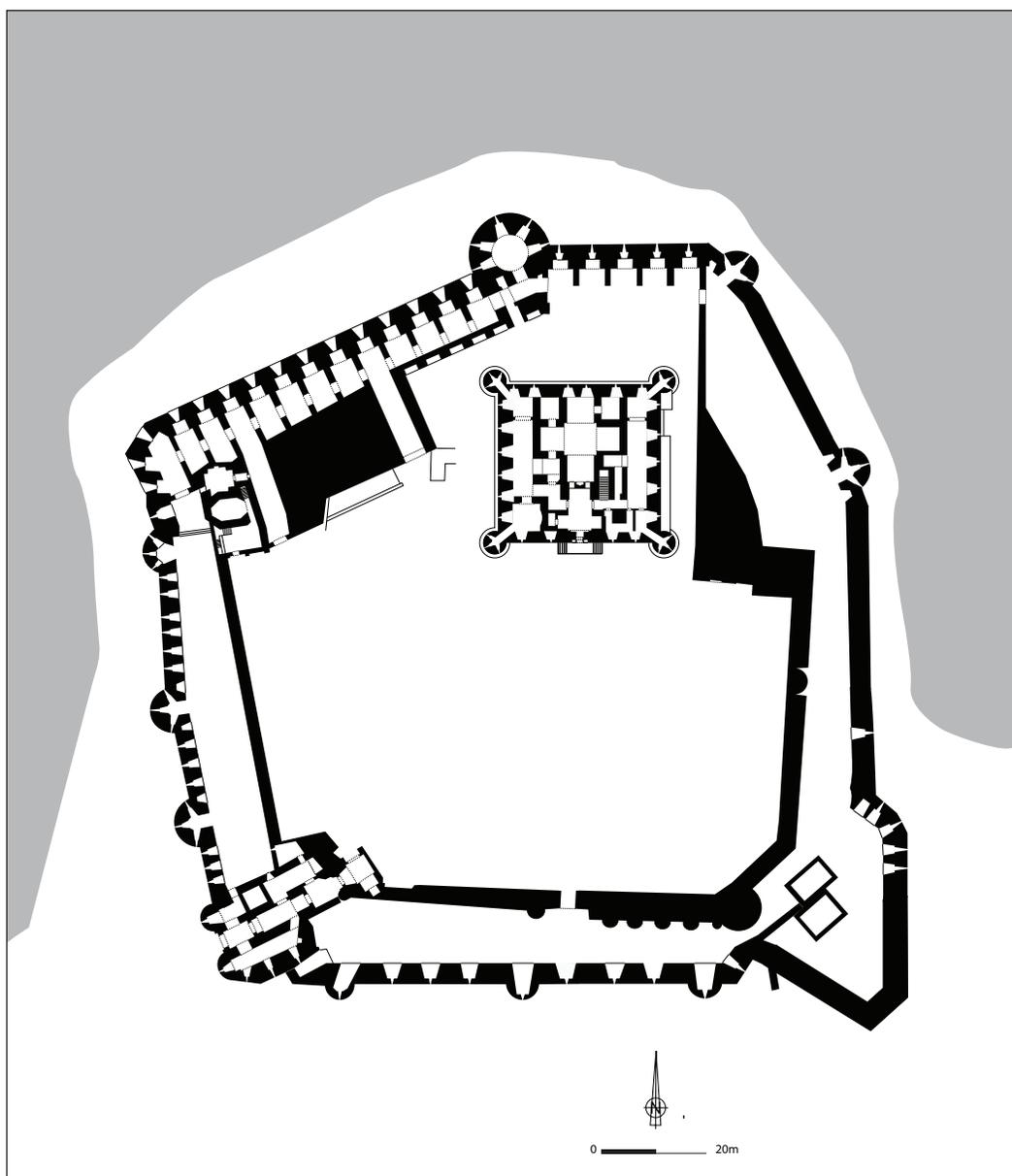


Figure 3: Map of the citadel of Alexandria. (Plan by the author based on *Description de l’Egypte, Etat moderne vol. II*, PL 87, 1809-1829 and Comité de Conservation des Monuments Arabes, 1909.)



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Figure 4: Photograph of the master tower of the citadel of Alexandria. (Photograph by the author.)



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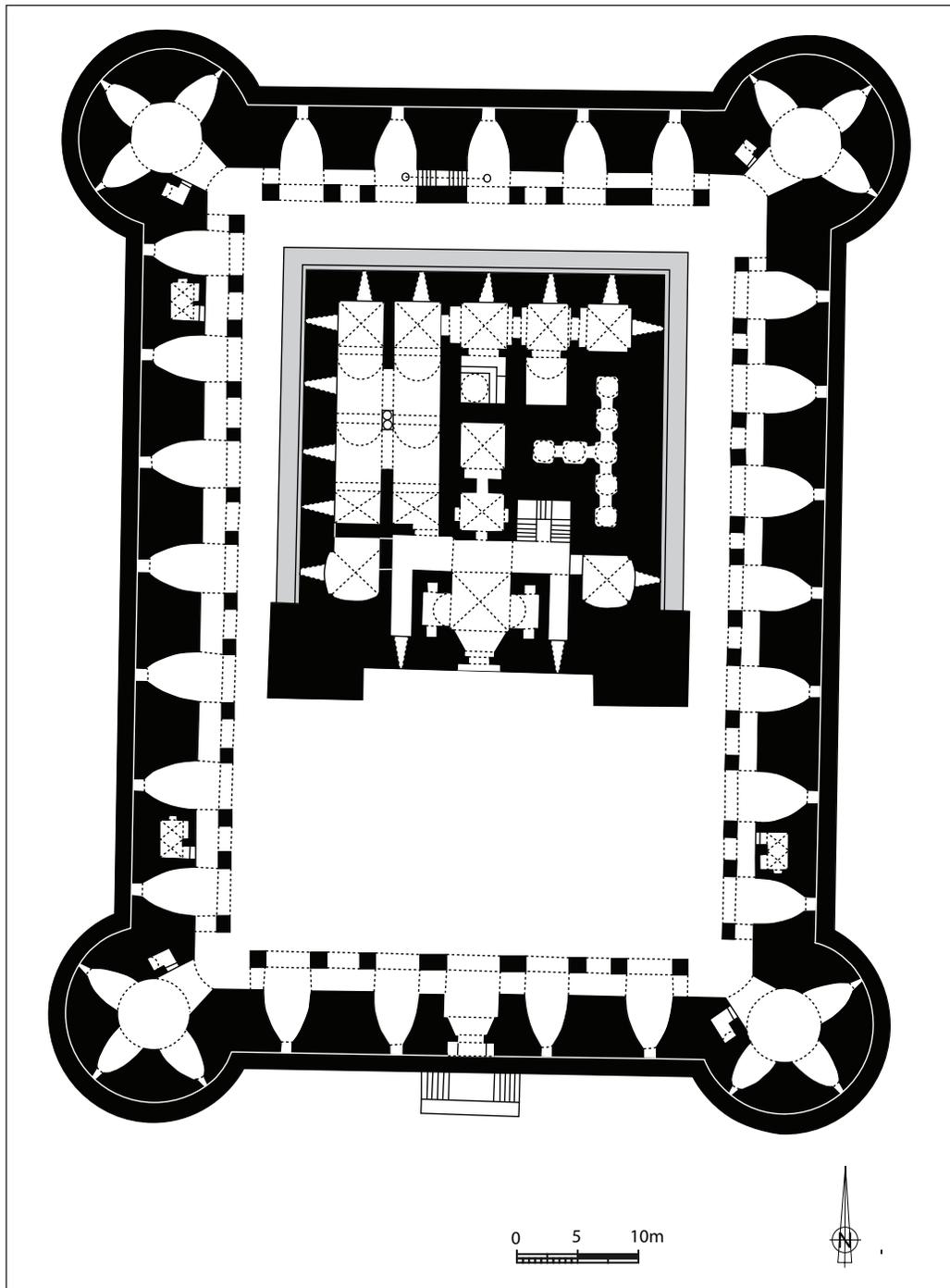


Figure 5: Plan of the Rosetta fortress. (Plan by the author based on Comité de Conservation des Monuments Arabes and Darwish, 1991.)



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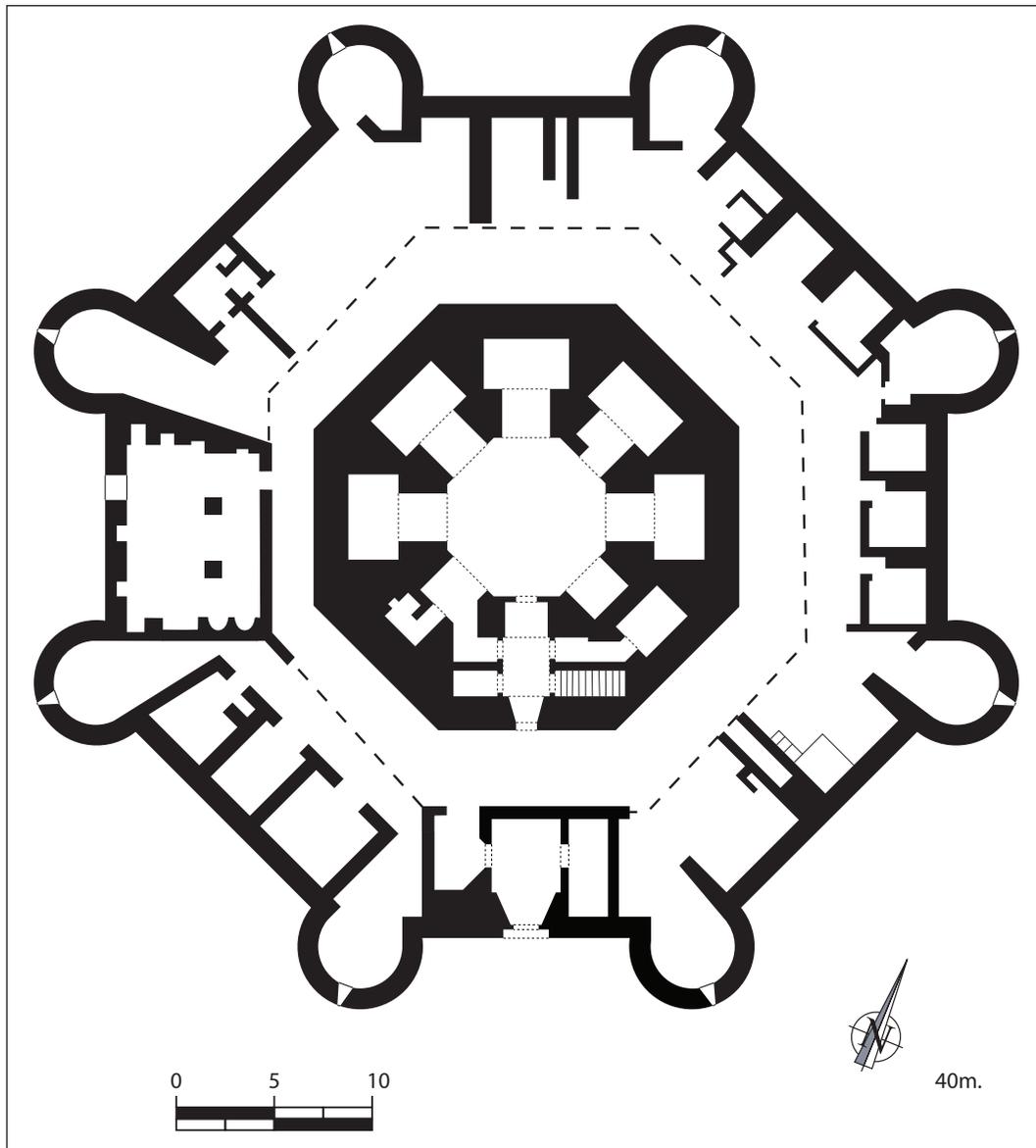


Figure 6: Plan of the Tina Fort. (Plan by the author based on Tamari, 1978 and Abdel Malik, 2011.)



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Figure 7: Photograph of the Tina Fort. (Photograph by the author.)



Figure 8: Photograph of the inscriptions at Bāb al-Mudarraġ. (Photograph by the author.)



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Figure 9: Photograph of painted blazons of al-Nāşir Muḥammad. (Photograph by the author.)



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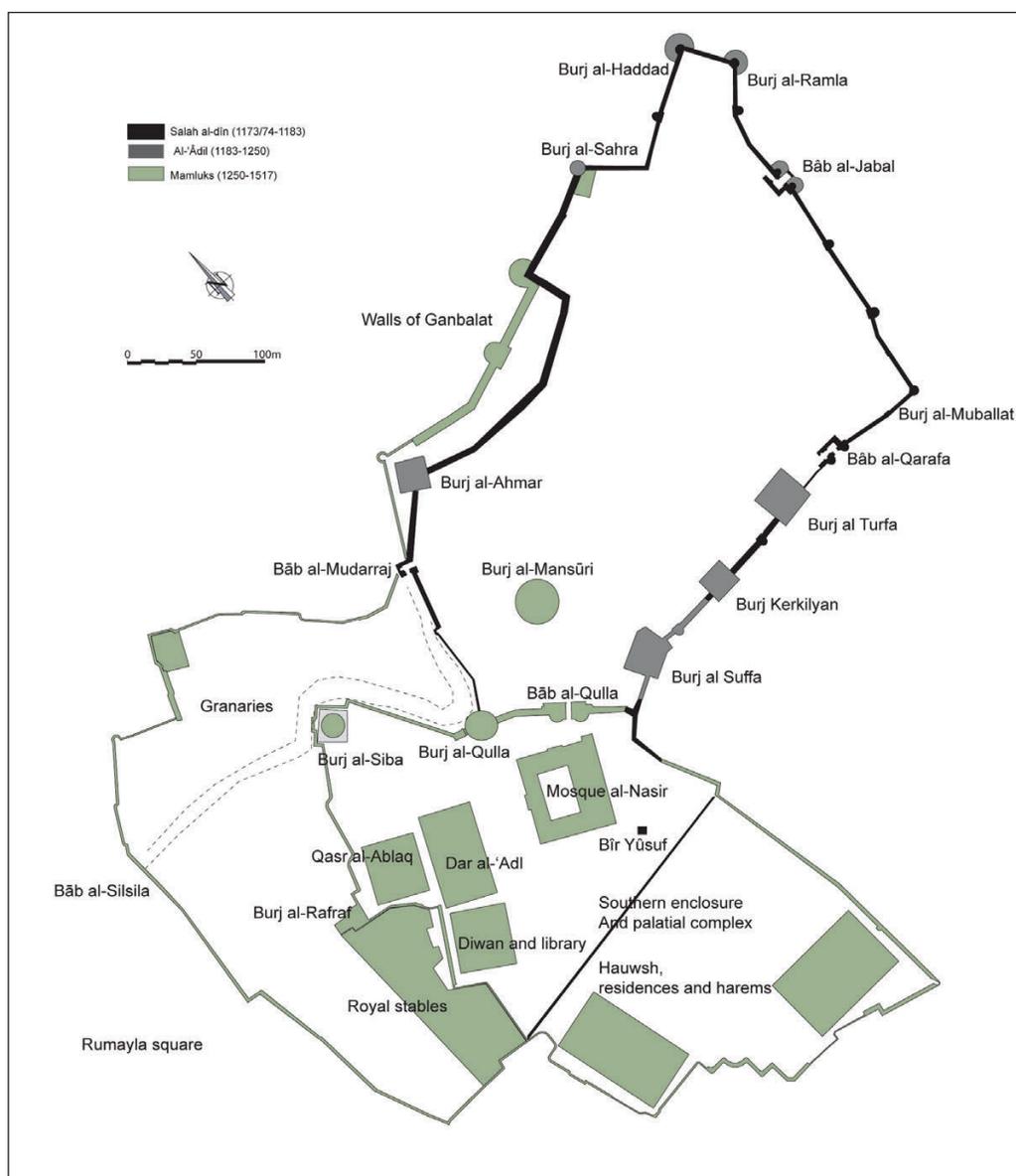


Figure 10: Plan of the citadel of Cairo. (Plan by the author based on Creswell, 1921 and Lyster, 1993.)



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Figures 11a (opposite, top), 11b (opposite, bottom), and 11c: Photographs of the Lions' Tower, citadel of Cairo. (Photographs by the author.)



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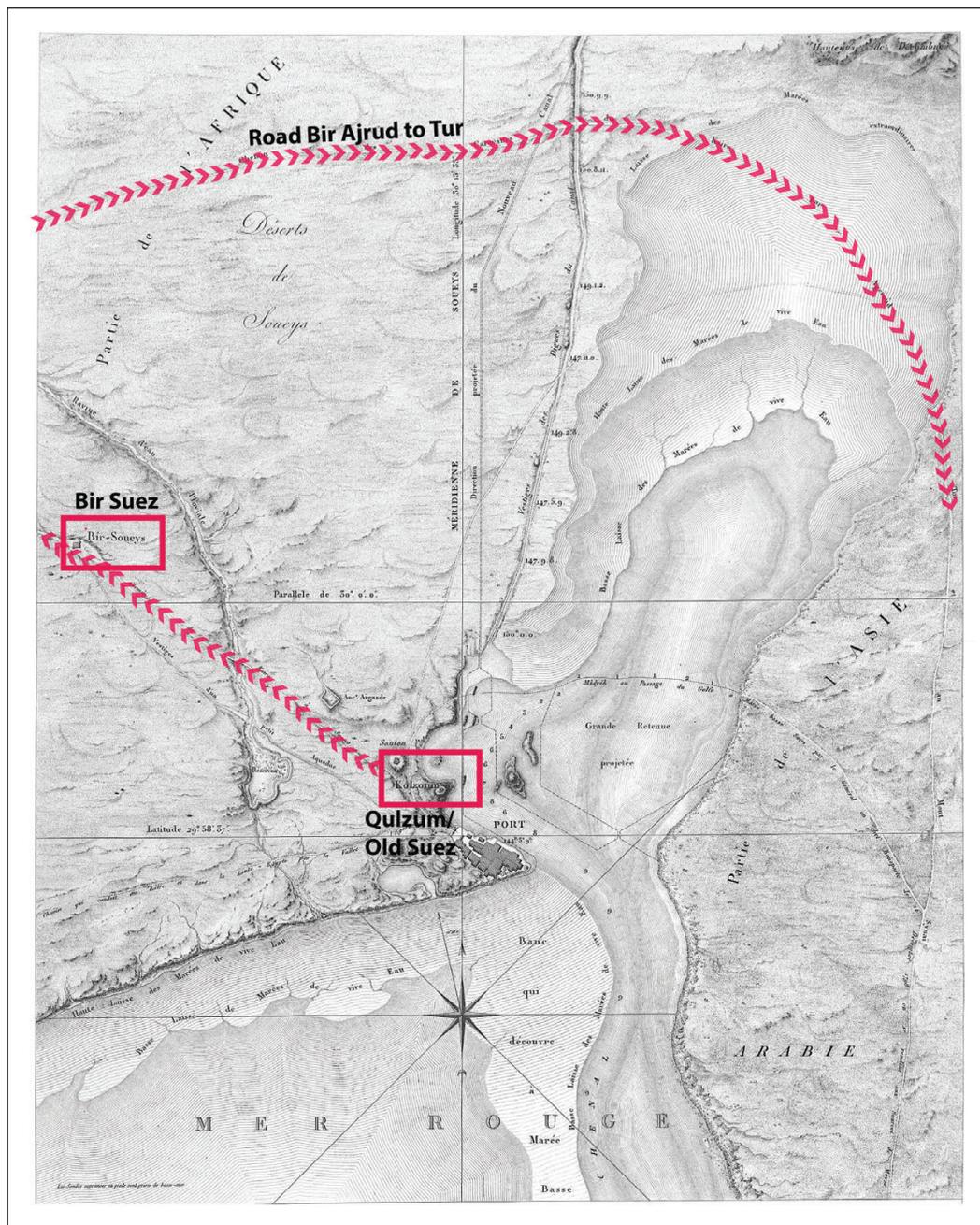


Figure 12: Map of Suez isthmus. (Map updated by the author from *Description de l’Egypte, Etat moderne vol. I, PL II, 1809-1829.*)



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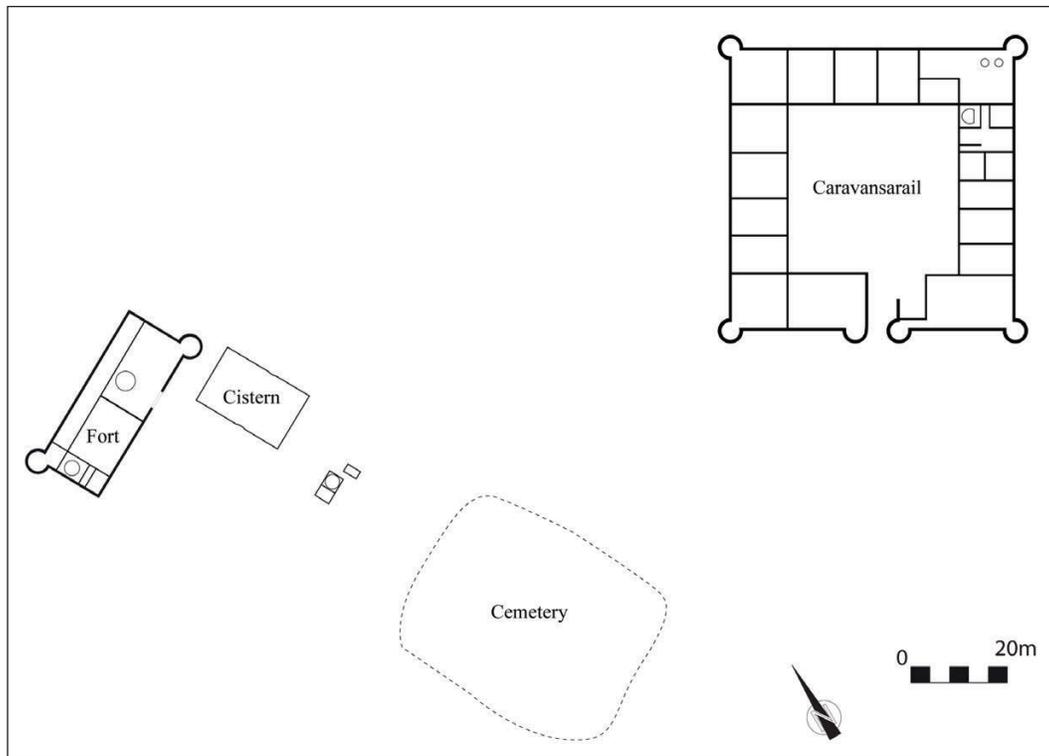


Figure 13: Plan of the fort and caravanserai of Ajrud (Suez). (Plan by the author based on Clédat, 1921 and Jomier, 1953.)



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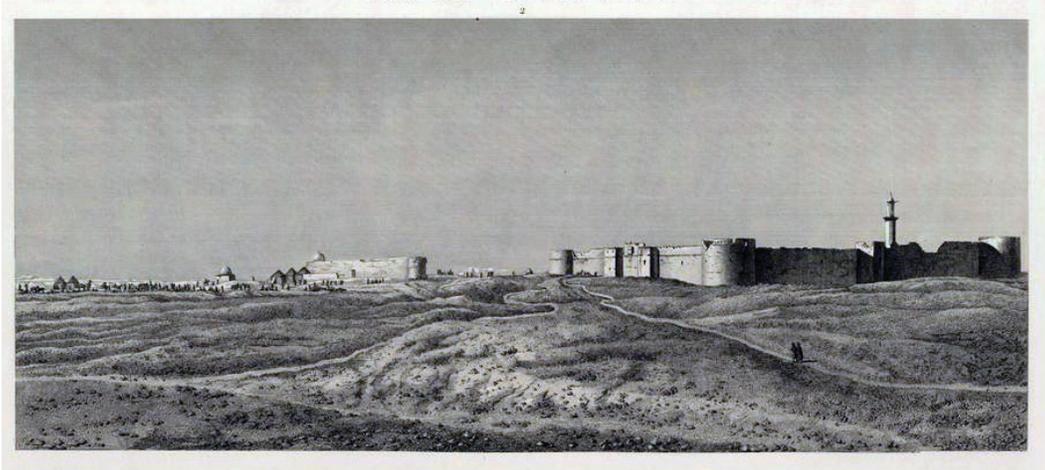


Figure 14: Fort of Ajrud (Suez). (*Description de l’Egypte, Etat moderne vol. I*, PL XII, 1809-1829.)



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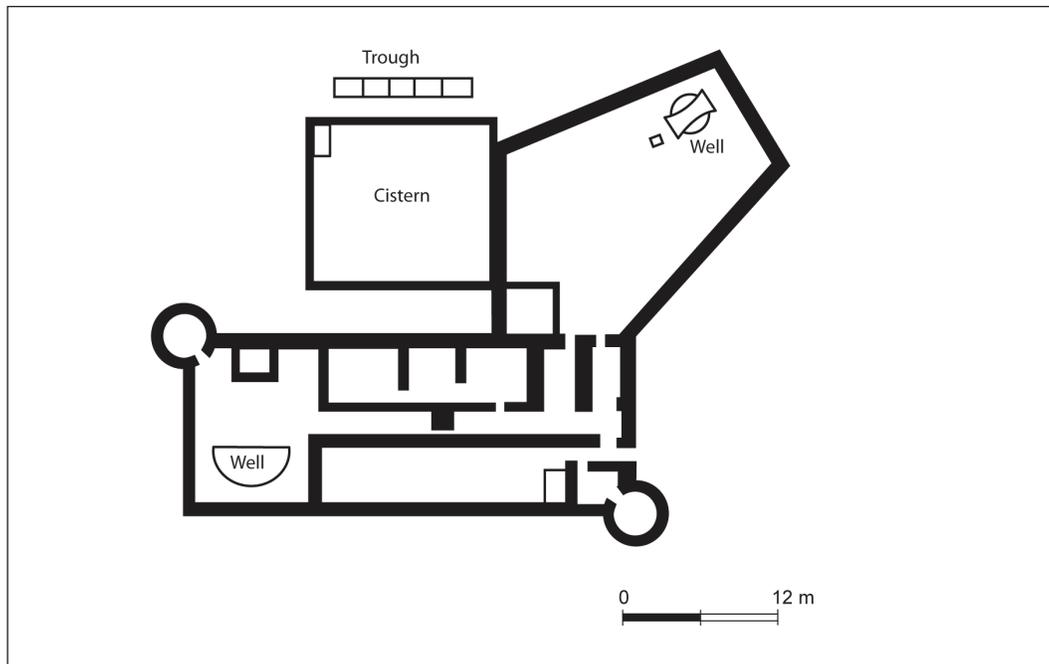


Figure 15: Plan of the fort of Bir Gismel/Bir Suez. (Plan by the author based on Clédat, 1921 and Jomier, 1953.)



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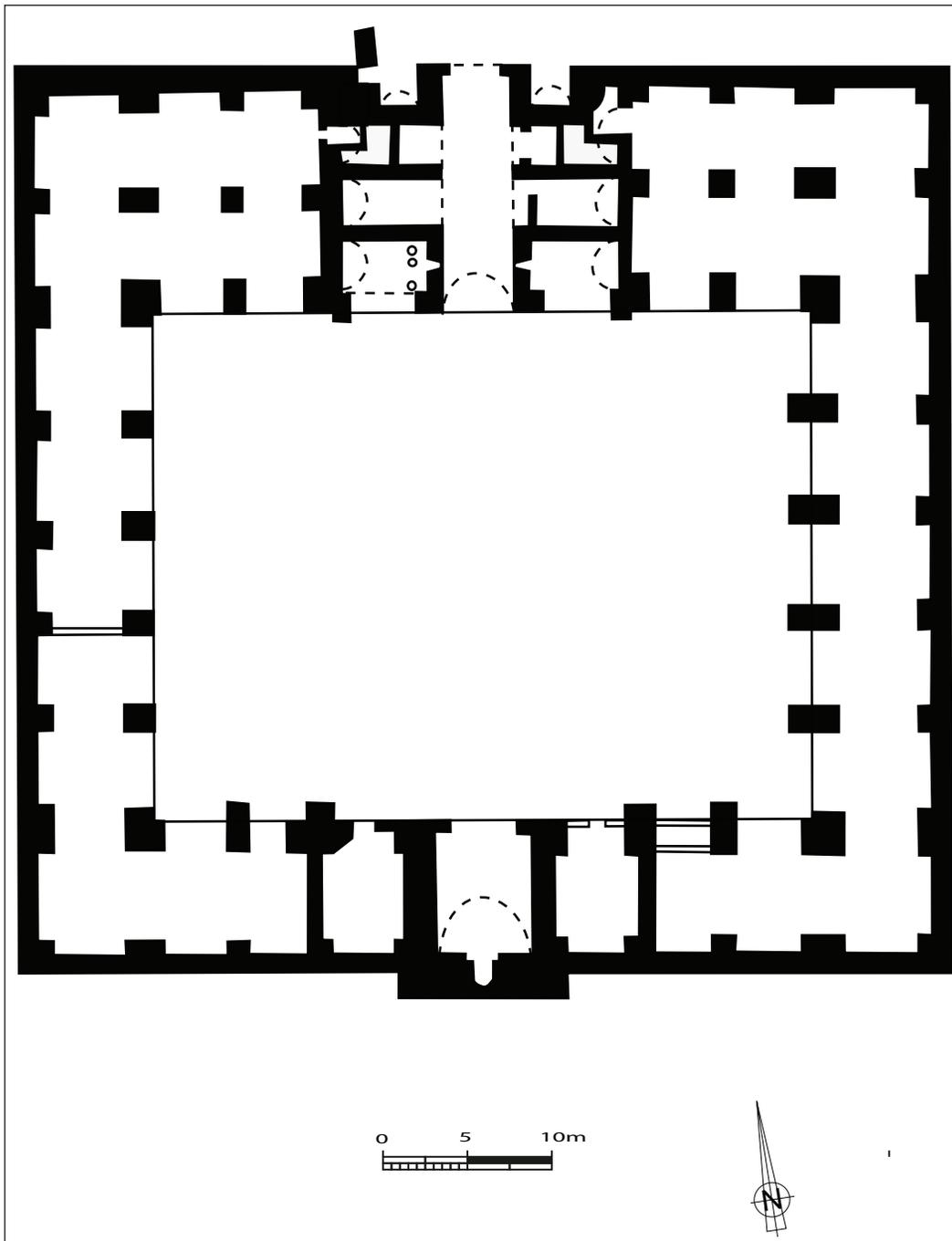


Figure 16: Plan of Khān al-Khowinat. (Plan by the author based on Abdel Malik, 2009.)



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Figure 17: Photograph of Khān al-Khowinat. (Photograph by the author.)



Figure 18: Photograph of the Nakhl fort. (Photograph by the author.)



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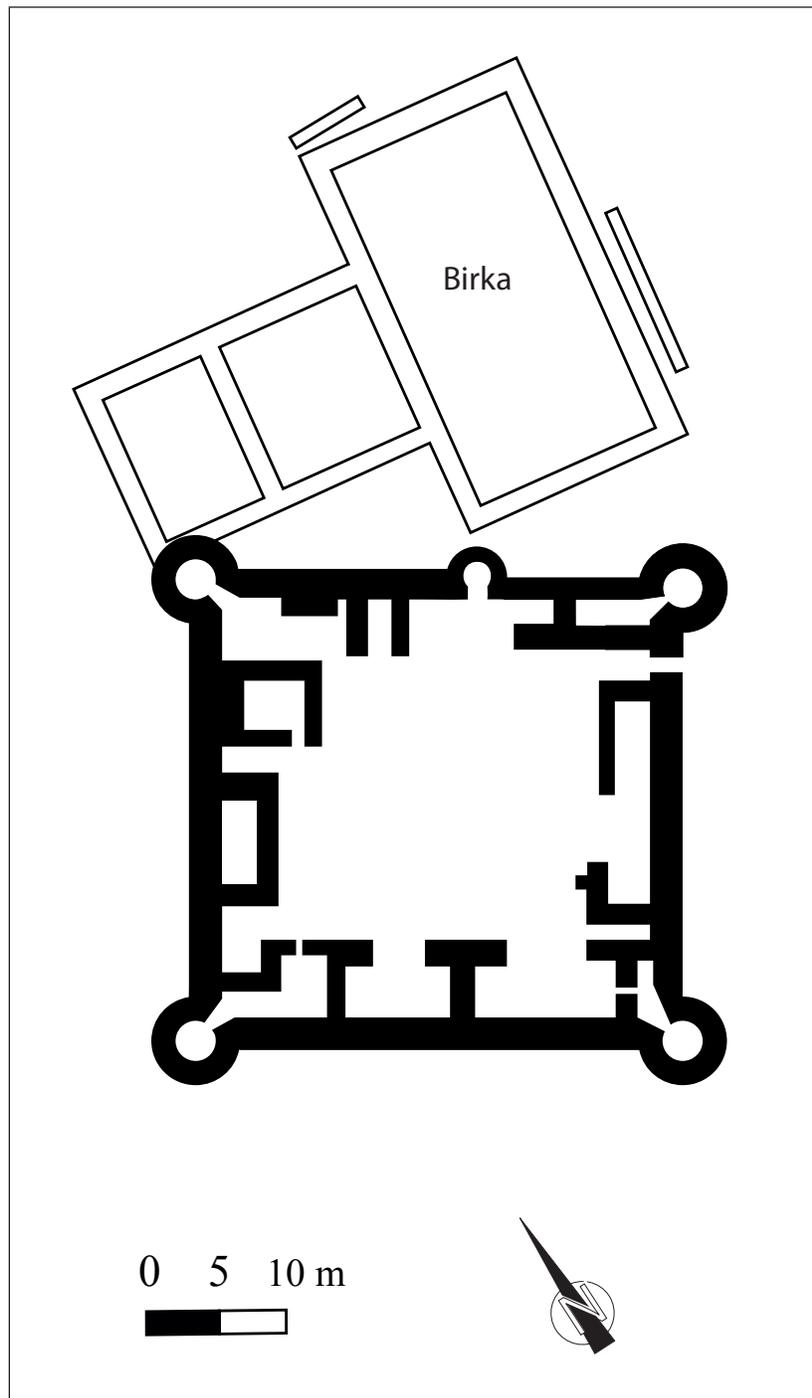


Figure 19: Plan of the Nakhl fort. (Plan by the author based on Abdel Malik, 2007.)



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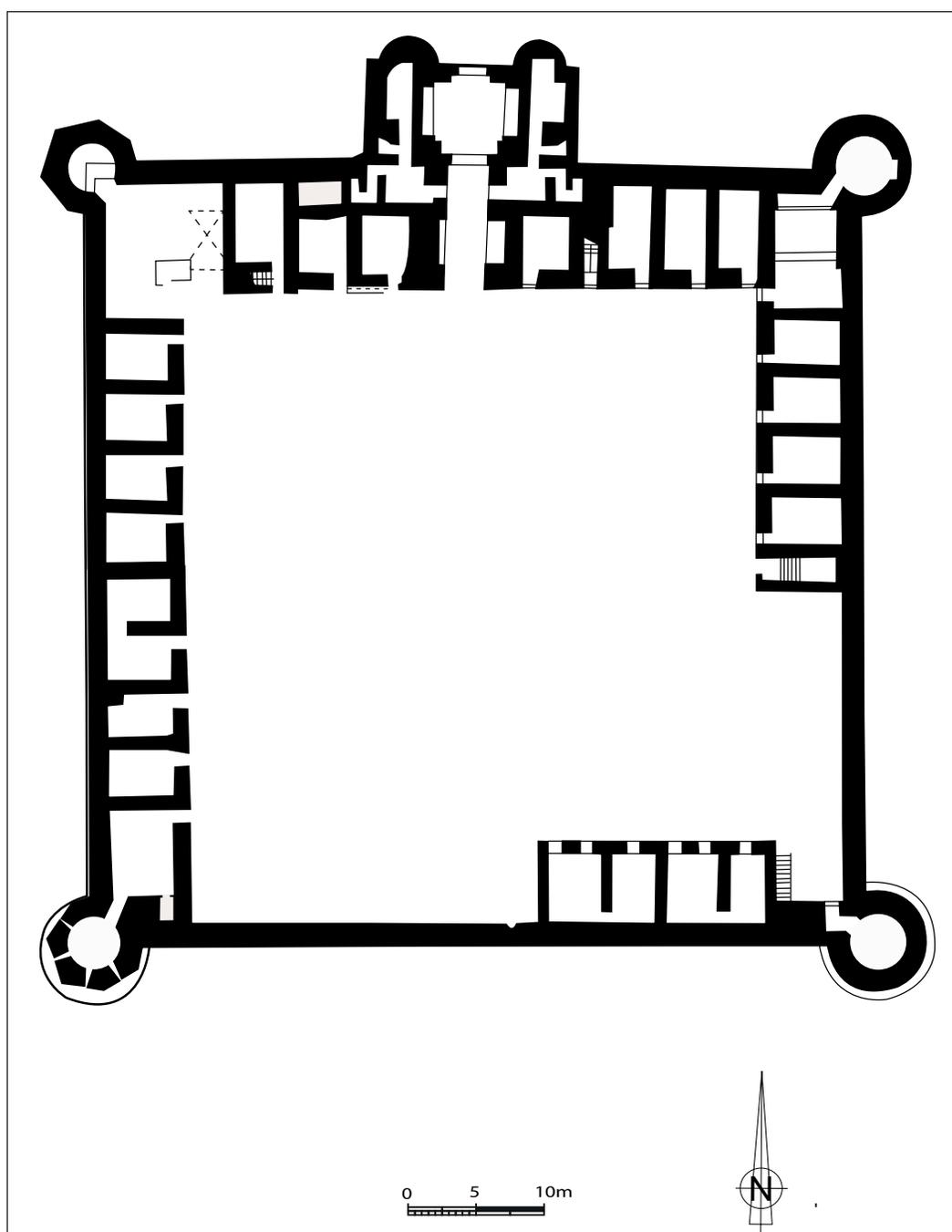


Figure 20: Plan of the Aqaba fort. (Plan by the author based on Pringle, 2009.)



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Figure 21: Engraving of the Aqaba fort. (From Linant de Bellefonds, *Mémoires sur les principaux travaux d'utilité publique*, 1873.)



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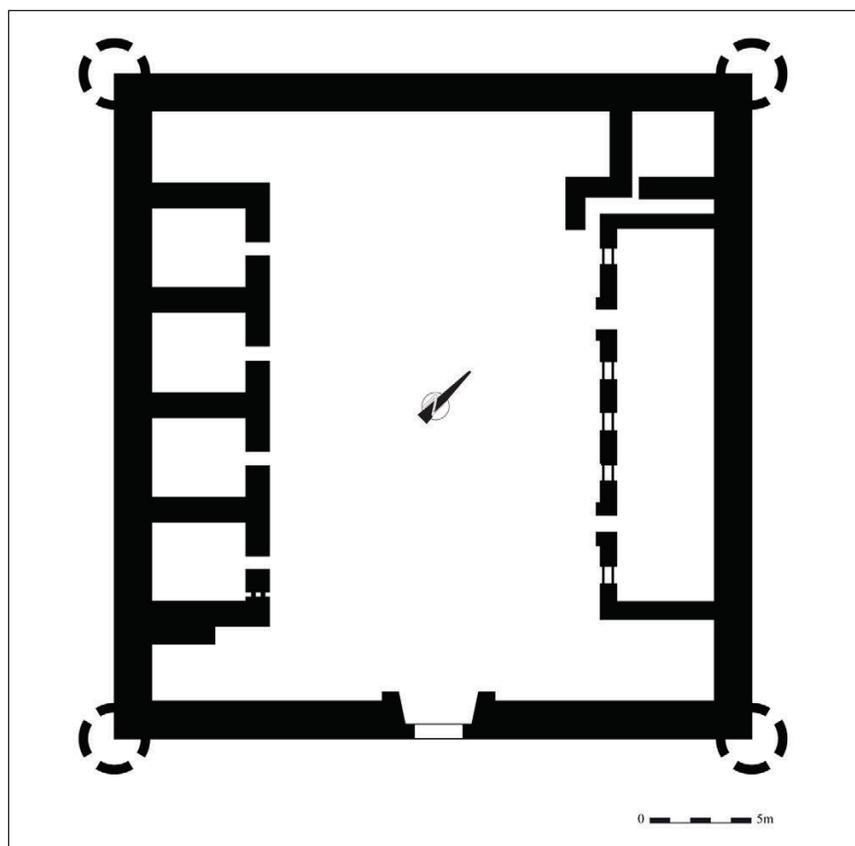


Figure 22: Plan of the Nuweiba fort. (Plan by the author.)



Figure 23: Photograph of the Nuweiba fort. (Photograph by the author.)



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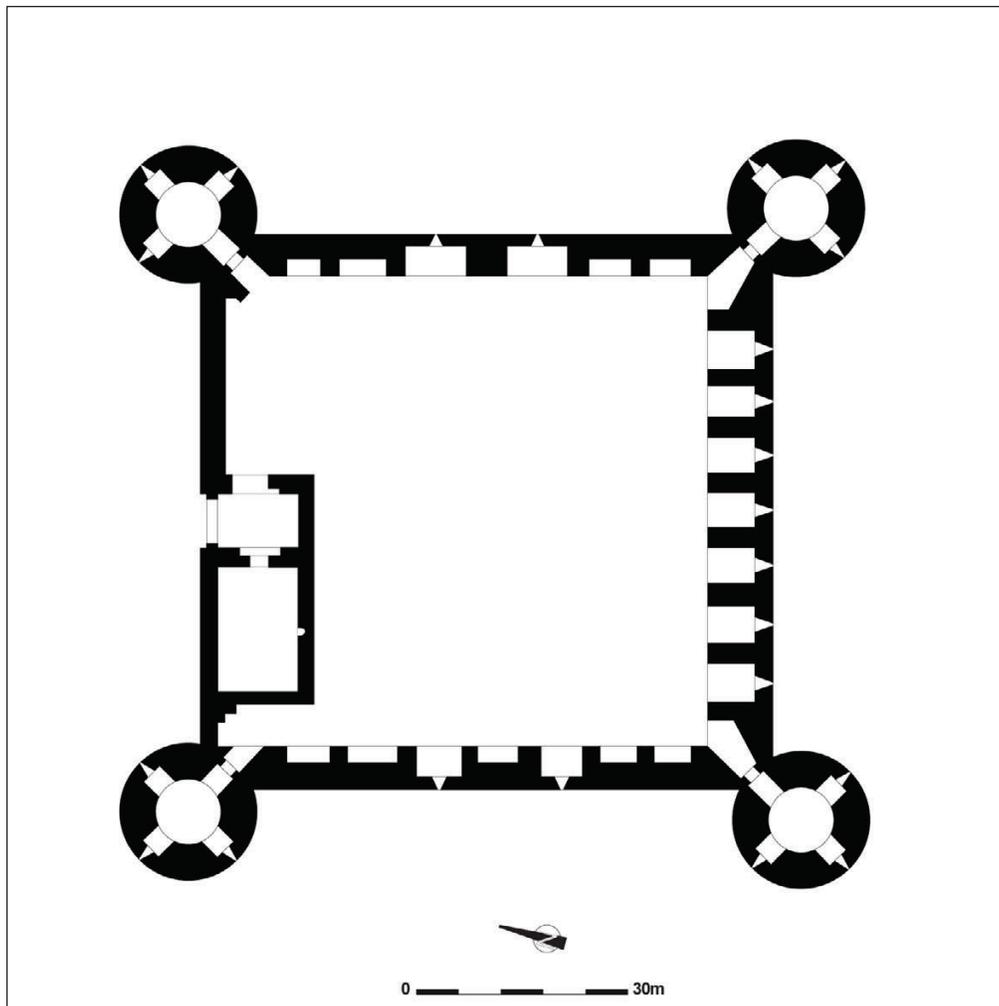


Figure 24: Plan of the Tur fort. (Plan by the author based on Linant de Bellefonds, 1873.)



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ABDESSAMAD BELHAJ

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Disputation is a Fighting Sport: *Munāẓarah* according to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah

In 835, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855) was brought before the council of al-Mu'taṣim to debate the createdness of the Quran. Ibn Ḥanbal refused to dispute with his Mu'tazili adversaries. For, in his understanding, disputation was a concomitant of rational opinion, *kalām*, and innovation, the most vicious threats he stood against. Five centuries later, several biographers of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah (d. 1350), the prominent Hanbali theologian and jurist, inform us that he was an outstanding debater.¹ With regard to disputation, Ibn al-Qayyim is far from being an exception in later Hanbalism. His master Ibn Taymīyah (d. 1328) also engaged in famous theological, juridical, and inter-religious debates. As such, the change in Hanbalism was not accidental, which raises the question: what happened to Hanbalism prior to the period of the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries that explains this shift towards dialectics?

The most probable answer to this question is Ash'arization. In the eleventh century, an Ash'ari-Shafi'i connivance made *kalām* and juridical dialectics part of the madrasah curriculum and the intellectual life of Baghdad. The Ash'ari impact reached prominent Hanbalis such as al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lá (d. 1066) and Ibn 'Aqīl (d. 1119), both of whom left us with rich debate literature in law and theology. Furthermore, the influence of al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111) on Hanbali legal theory is evident, as can be seen in the writings of Ibn Qudāmah (d. 1223).

However, disputation was not taken for granted in Hanbali circles, as scholars had to justify it through a scriptural legitimacy. Two major Hanbali authors attempted such an enterprise. First, Nāṣiḥ al-Dīn ibn al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1236) compiled and described the Quranic uses of various dialectical procedures in his *Kitāb Istikhrāj al-jidāl min al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. Later, Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī (d. 1316), in his

This article builds on a lecture given at the Institut für Islamwissenschaft, Berlin, Germany (February 6, 2012). I would like to extend my thanks to Prof. Birgit Krawietz for making the event possible.

¹Several sources mention his skills in disputation. For example, see Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu'āh fī ṭabaqāt al-lughawīyīn wa-al-nuḥāh*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Beirut, 1979), 1:63. Fawzīyah bint Fahd bint 'Alī al-Masnad attempted a reconstruction of Ibn al-Qayyim's disputation. Her study is normative, apologetic, and incomplete, with useless digressions; see: Fawzīyah bint Fahd bint 'Alī al-Masnad, "Al-Munāẓarah 'inda Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah" (M.A. thesis, The Islamic University of Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd, 2005).



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‘Alam al-jadhal fi ‘ilm al-jadal, adopted the dialectics of Shafi‘i legal theorists, applying its procedures to the Quran, the Prophetic tradition, and Arabic literature.²

It seems that by the time Ibn Taymīyah started his studies, around 1270, rationalization was already unavoidable even within the Hanbali school. A major book in Muslim dialectics was ascribed to Ibn Taymīyah under the title of *Tanbīh al-rajul al-‘āqil ‘alā tamwīh al-jadal al-bāṭil*. This book is a refutation of Rukn al-Dīn al-‘Amīdī’s (d. 1218) juridical dialectics. The style and the content of the book suggest a different author, but within the Hanbali circle nonetheless.³

Hanbali attitudes towards disputation were typically normative; Hanbalis endorsed it with reserve as disputation became an unstoppable rationalist pandemic (to use a medical metaphor Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah cherishes).⁴ The challenge for Hanbalis was to respond to rationalization without compromising their traditionalist foundations. Philosophizing theology and juridical dialectics dominated the era and the old resistance of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal could not work anymore. The response of Ibn Taymīyah and Ibn al-Qayyim are better understood in a framework that can be defined as a traditionalism evolving toward a more rationalized form in order to survive the battle of rationalization.

Ibn Qayyim compared disputation to a fighting sport.⁵ In his *Al-Furūsiyah*, he states that *musābaqah* and *munāḍalah* (horse competition and archery) prepare competitors for *jihād*.⁶ Since each competitor would like to defeat his adversary, he is training hard to overcome him. Likewise, Ibn Qayyim asserts that this is exactly the same case for debaters. One would prepare himself for the debate through practice. He would make statements, objections, and counter argumentation until he masters the core of the issue at hand so that if a follower of falsehood, *mubṭil*, debates him, he would be ready for the challenge.

If disputation is similar to combat, what war of ideas was Ibn al-Qayyim thinking of? In his *Al-Ṣawā‘iq al-mursalāh*, he unfolds for us the target of his campaign, and by the same token, the key motivation of his project and that of his teacher Ibn Taymīyah:

There was darkness in the orient and the light of prophethood and revelation vanished. People gave preference to their intellects,

²Wolfhart Heinrichs, “Ġadal bei at-Ṭūfi: Eine Interpretation seiner Beispielsammlung,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morganländischen Gesellschaft* Supplement iii, I (1975): 463–73.

³George Makdisi, “The *Tanbīh* of Ibn Taymīyah on Dialectic: The Pseudo-‘Aqilian *Kitāb al-Farq*,” in *Medieval and Middle Eastern Studies in Honor of Aziz Suryal Atiya*, ed. Sami A. Hanna (Leiden, 1972), 285–94.

⁴I also refer to the Avicennian pandemic in the sense Yahya Michot used it; see “La pandémie avicennienne au VIe/XIIe siècle,” *Arabica* 40 (1993): 287–344.

⁵In a similar manner to P. Bourdieu’s formula “la sociologie est un sport de combat.”

⁶Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Al-Furūsiyah*, ed. Samīr Ḥusayn Ḥalabī (Ṭanṭā, 1991), 39.



opinions, and politics over revelation. As a result, philosophy and logic took primacy. In this time, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī [d. 1274] was the leader of these people. He replaced the Quran with the *Ishārāt* of Avicenna. Al-Ṭūsī claimed that the latter were demonstrative statements while the Quran was rhetorical transmissions. He persecuted the traditional scholars of Islam.⁷

Ibn al-Qayyim considered al-Ṭūsī to be Satan's follower because both contested divine commands, instead preferring their own reason. For Ibn al-Qayyim, as a consequence of al-Ṭūsī's work, three evils appeared: the dialectics of al-ʿAmīdī, the monism of Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), and the theological skepticism of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209).⁸ All three figures preceded al-Ṭūsī and if one must assign influence, it should be the other way around, especially al-Rāzī's influence on al-Ṭūsī. Be that as it may, Ibn al-Qayyim perceived the rationalization of juridical dialectics, Sufism, and *kalām* as a major threat to traditional knowledge. But he asserted that "God made Ibn Taymīyah to preserve his religion"⁹—i.e., to refute the three axes of evil. Ibn al-Qayyim used a martial metaphor to describe Ibn Taymīyah's campaign and that of his own: God established his soldiers to invade these kingdoms (of evil), some of them with the sword and others with proof and argumentation.¹⁰

Recently, Tzvi Langermann argued that Ibn al-Qayyim's treatment of rational knowledge should be considered as a process of naturalization of science.¹¹ I disagree with this claim. Ibn al-Qayyim rejects logic and dialectics as inauthentic and false forms of knowledge. In his view, traditions bear the perfect example of validity and truth as opposed to that of the philosophers and the theologians. Ibn al-Qayyim's traditionalism is different from that of Ibn Ḥanbal, but it is not his invention. Traditionalism evolved slowly through centuries accepting, in the course of history, certain forms of Sufism, dialectics, and theology that strengthened traditionalism. In particular, through the disciplines of legal theory, early Sunni *kalām*, and Quranic exegesis, which reached him as traditionalized knowledge, Ibn al-Qayyim accepted some Ashʿari-Shafiʿi views on disputation and dealt with them as part of traditionalism. Based on the evidence of Ibn al-Qayyim's theory and practice of disputation, I believe that he sustains a minimal selection

⁷Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Al-Ṣawāʿiq al-mursalāh*, ed. ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Dakhīl Allāh (Riyadh, 1991), 1077.

⁸Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Al-Ṣawāʿiq al-mursalāh*, 1078–79.

⁹Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Al-Ṣawāʿiq al-mursalāh*, 1079.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Tzvi Langermann, "The Naturalization of Science in Ibn Qayyim al-Ġawziyyah's *Kitāb al-Rūḥ*," in *A Scholar in the Shadow: Essays in the Legal and Theological Thought of Ibn Qayyim al-Ġawziyyah*, ed. Caterina Bori and Livnat Holtzman (Rome, 2010), 211–28.



of traditionalized elements with apologetic purposes, allowing him to condemn Ash'ari-Shafi'i rationalization. Ibn al-Qayyim's disputation illustrates his battle against rationalization as incarnated by later Ash'ari theologians. In several fields of science such as astronomy, logic, and medicine, scientific activity grew exponentially in the Mamluk period, becoming widely accepted by Ash'ari theologians and jurists.¹² Thus, Ibn al-Qayyim's chief concern was a de-rationalization and re-traditionalization of Sunnism.¹³

1. Theory

Ibn al-Qayyim's starting point is a dismissal of dialectics as practiced by later theologians and philosophers. He criticizes *jadāl* for its structure, its function, and its implications. First, he rejects it for using logic in argumentation. At this point, he denies naturalization to logic. The very non-Islamic nature of logic and its claim to universal truth through demonstration should suffice as reasons for this refusal. Further, he disapproves of *jadāl*'s claim to be a dialectical law, *sharī'ah jadālīyah*, as established by the theologians.¹⁴ What particularly bothers Ibn al-Qayyim is the possibility that a law (other than the Islamic one) could govern the speech and the behavior of individuals and lead to a different conclusion than that of truth (established by Islamic law). Procedures of disputation, if they were to be accepted, should instead lead to scriptural truth. He admits, however, that the dialectical law contains both falsehood and truth, *fihā ḥaqq wa-bāṭil*.¹⁵ Finally, he dismisses it for its implications such as the negation of attributes, doubt, and confusion of people's faith. Thus, he clearly targets here the theological dialectics of later Ash'ari *mutakallimūn* who used *jadāl* to exclude scriptural proofs (i.e., the ones used by traditionists).

As an alternative to dialectics, Ibn al-Qayyim suggests the *salaf* way of disputation, *ṭarīqat al-salaf fī al-munāzarah*. In his view, the *salaf* model of disputation was unique because it combines scriptural and rational proofs. He wrote a long chapter in his *Badā'i' al-fawā'id* which he entitled *fuṣūl 'aẓīmat al-naḥ' jiddan*, to

¹²Nahyan A. G. Fancy developed this aspect in *Science and religion in Mamluk Egypt: Ibn al-Nafis, pulmonary transit and bodily resurrection* (London, 2013).

¹³Three recent scholarly works considerably upgraded our knowledge and understanding of Ibn al-Qayyim's work: *Islamic Theology, Philosophy and Law: Debating Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya*, ed. Birgit Krawietz and Georges Tamer (Berlin, 2013); *A Scholar in the Shadow*, ed. Bori and Holtzman; and Birgit Krawietz, "Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: His Life and Works," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 10 (2006): 19–64.

¹⁴Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Badā'i' al-fawā'id*, ed. 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-'Umrān (Mecca, 2003), 1533.

¹⁵Ibid.



elaborate on this model.¹⁶ The premise of Ibn al-Qayyim is that the Quran and Sunnah should guide us to the sound way of disputation: the explanation of legal causes, *bayān al-ʿilal*, the distinctions, *furūq*, and the invalidation of the argument by circle, *dawr*, or by infinite regress, *tasalsul*.¹⁷ Moreover, Ibn al-Qayyim states that the Prophet Muḥammad was the first to formulate answers to objections.¹⁸ Ibn al-Qayyim refers here to a terminology and argumentation techniques that he learned from juridical dialectics and later *kalām*. In the first step of his reasoning, Ibn al-Qayyim reconstructs a straw-man argument in which he depicted a general and incomplete model of disputation.¹⁹ In Ibn al-Qayyim's understanding, this legacy was not to be sanctioned, which would be the case if he admitted coexistence between the *jadāl* model and scriptural disputation. For him, however, these are two competing and exclusive ways of disputation. The reason he uses this terminology and these argumentation techniques is to prove that the scriptures contain them in the most perfect way. Hence the second part of his argument, which stated that Muslims must not have recourse to the *jadāl* model.²⁰ By defending the scriptural way of disputation, he aims to restore trust in the scriptures and discard the need to use the way of the theologians, let alone that of the philosophers. Thus, his method is clearly a process of re-traditionalization.

Ibn al-Qayyim re-traditionalized *munāẓarah* by recalling early theologians and jurists, especially Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 935). A human being, he asserted, is either an inquirer, *nāẓir*, or a debater, *munāẓir*, and disputation is either praiseworthy or blameworthy. The praiseworthy disputation is the one where a debater explains to other participants the guiding proof in case they look for truth; he silences them, or invalidates their objections. The other purpose is to incite the opponent to investigate the proofs of truth. If the debater neither knows the truth nor seeks it, it is the case of a blameworthy debate.²¹ Thus, Ibn al-Qayyim traditionalizes al-Ashʿarī and al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111) to allow himself a better position in front of later philosophizing Ashʿari theologians. He assigns a normative function to disputation with two purposes. On the one hand, similar to a fighting sport, disputation should serve the orthodox faith. On the other, praiseworthy disputation excludes dialecticians because they neither defend scriptural truth nor seek it.

¹⁶Ibid., 1533–1610.

¹⁷Ibid., 1533.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Alina Kokoschka and Birgit Krawietz call this process appropriation; see “Appropriation of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya: Challenging Expectations of Ingenuity,” in *Islamic Theology, Philosophy and Law*, ed. Krawietz and Tamer, 1–33.

²⁰Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Badāʾiʿ al-fawāʾid*, 1533.

²¹Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Al-Ṣawāʾiq al-mursalāh*, 1274–75.



The keyword in Ibn al-Qayyim's conception is truth, and this should be the law that rules over the debaters. It is not a rational and deliberated truth, but a scriptural one. Therefore, disputation is a category of calling to Islam, *da'wah*.²² He states that according to the status of the target, disputation is of three sorts: wisdom (*ḥikmah*), preaching (*maw'izah*), and disputation (*jidāl*). If the person called seeks truth sincerely he should be called by wisdom, *ḥikmah*, and there is no need to use preaching or disputation with him. If he went away one should preach to him using enticement and intimidation, *targhīb wa-tarhīb*. If he is stubborn and disputatious, then one has to use disputation with him. In the case that disputation does not work with him, then he has to be punished. If the weapon of the tongue does not persuade him, he should be persuaded by the sword. This is so because disputation with a proponent of falsehood, *mubṭil*, has two benefits. On the one side, it could turn him from his falsehood to truth. On the other, it should stop his evil and enmity so that people would see that he is false.²³

Ibn al-Qayyim plainly turns disputation into a fighting sport in the way of traditions. To delegitimize the competing model of disputation of later theologians and philosophers, he readjusts Sunni materials to include al-Ash'arī and traditional Ash'aris, such as Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī (d. 1083), who weigh heavy in the history of *jadāl*, as well as al-Ghazzālī, critical as he was of dialectics. A passage in Ibn al-Qayyim's *Al-Ṣawā'iq al-mursalāh* illustrates well his reasoning. The *salaf* did not reject *kalām* for using a specific terminology or following certain techniques of argumentation. Actually, they argued, speculated, and disputed with others. They did so, however, with an aim to reach the divine and to understand His speech. They would observe the signs of God and extract rational proofs from them making reason and revelation coalesce.²⁴ Disputation of theologians and philosophers should not oppose revelation because it produces only objections, but not knowledge and guidance.²⁵ Inherent to this argument is a fideistic and spiritualist concept of knowledge, in the manner of al-Ghazzālī. Ultimately, *jadāl* does not produce certainty and that is sufficient to discard it.

2. Practice

Ibn al-Qayyim related ten debates in which he was involved. Sometimes he provides details such as the place, the identity of the adversary, and the outcome of the debate. On occasion, the debate serves as an alibi to long critical discussions of his opponents. Ibn al-Qayyim masters the literary *munāẓarah* in which

²²Ibid., 1276.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., 1274.

²⁵Ibid., 1277.



imaginary objects contest with one another, such as the sky and the earth or the heart and the eye. Thus, he is quite familiar with this flourishing genre of Mamluk literature.²⁶ He is also aware of the didactic use of the virtual debate in order to explain issues on which there are different positions. In the following, I will only deal with actual debates of Ibn al-Qayyim or at least what he narrates as such.

PARTICIPANTS	ISSUE OF DISPUTATION	SUBJECT	SOURCES
IQ vs. a Jewish scholar	Muḥammad's prophethood	Theology	<i>Hidāyat al-ḥayārā</i> ²⁷
IQ vs. a Christian scholar	What prevents Christians from becoming Muslims?	Theology	<i>Hidāyat al-ḥayārā</i> ²⁸ <i>Al-Tibyān</i> ²⁹
IQ vs. a Christian scholar ³⁰	Muḥammad's prophethood	Theology	<i>Al-Ṣawā'iq al-mursalāh</i> ³¹
IQ vs. a prominent Samaritan	The Samaritan direction of prayer	Theology	<i>Badā'i' al-fawā'id</i> ³²
IQ vs. a later Ash'ari	The speech of God	Theology	<i>Al-Ṣawā'iq al-mursalāh</i> ³³

²⁶Thomas Bauer depicts concisely and accurately the literary environment of Mamluk literature in "Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches," *MSR* 9 (2005): 105–32. However, his article does not cover the genre of *munāẓarah* and its particular importance in Mamluk Arabic literature.

²⁷Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā fī ajwibat al-yahūd wa-al-naṣārā*, ed. 'Uthmān Jum'ah Ḍumayriyah (Mecca, 2008/2009), 200–2.

²⁸Ibid., 39 and 272.

²⁹Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Al-Tibyān fī aymān al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṭāṭī (Mecca, 2008/2009), 270–74.

³⁰For aspects of Ibn al-Qayyim's apologetic against Christians and Jews, see Jon Hoover, "The Apologetic and Pastoral Intentions of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's Polemic against Jews and Christians," *The Muslim World* 100 (2010): 476–89.

³¹Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Al-Ṣawā'iq al-mursalāh*, 327.

³²Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Badā'i' al-fawā'id*, 1606–7.

³³Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Al-Ṣawā'iq al-mursalāh*, 1037.



IQ vs. a determinist (likely to be a later Ash'ari) ³⁴	Determinism	Theology	<i>Shifā' al-'alīl</i> ³⁵
IQ vs. a proponent of free will (likely to be a Mu'tazili)	Free will	Theology	<i>Shifā' al-'alīl</i> ³⁶
IQ vs. a proponent of <i>taqlīd</i> (likely to be a Shafi'i-Ash'ari adversary)	Following the Prophet or the later scholars	Theology and law	<i>A'lām al-muwaqqi'in</i> ³⁷
IQ vs. a proponent of <i>taqlīd</i>	<i>Taqlīd</i>	Theology and law	<i>Madārij al-sālikīn</i> ³⁸
IQ vs. a proponent of the impurity of sperm	Whether the sperm is pure or not	Law	<i>Badā'i' al-fawā'id</i> ³⁹

2.1 External Evaluation

A first look at these debates shows the importance of theology (including interreligious debates) for Ibn al-Qayyim. The tone of these debates is harsh, categorical, and Manichaeist. If *munāzarah* is *da'wah*, then it should be primarily with non-Muslims or with heretics. Practice shows then that Ibn al-Qayyim seriously takes disputation as a fighting sport. Truth here is either with them or with his book (the Quran) and either with rationalism or traditionalism.

Ibn al-Qayyim seems to have some trouble with his memory. He narrates the same debate on Muhammad's prophethood in his *Zād al-ma'ād* (an earlier work) as if it were with a Christian Scholar, then in *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā*, the opponent is a Jewish scholar. At the end of this debate, he promises his reader to write a book

³⁴Livnat Holtzman thoroughly analyzed this debate in "Debating the Doctrine of *jabr* (Compulsion): Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya Reads Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," in *Islamic Theology, Philosophy and Law*, ed. Krawietz and Tamer, 61–93.

³⁵Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Shifā' al-'alīl fī masā'il al-qaḍā' wa-al-qadar wa-al-ḥikmah wa-al-ta'līl*, ed. al-Ḥassānī Ḥasan 'Abd Allāh (Cairo, 1975), 285–306.

³⁶Ibid., 307–57.

³⁷Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *A'lām al-muwaqqi'in 'an rabb al-'ālamīn*, ed. Mashhūr ibn Ḥasan 'Al Salmān (al-Dammām, 2002/2003), 3:470, 4:36.

³⁸Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Madārij al-sālikīn bayna manāzil iyyāka na'budu wa-iyyāka nasta'in*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiḳī (Beirut, 1973), 2:388.

³⁹Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Badā'i' al-fawā'id*, 1040–52.



about the proofs of Muḥammad's prophecy (which is most probably his *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā*).⁴⁰

Later Ash'arism caused more theological concerns for Ibn al-Qayyim. The Ash'ari-Hanbali rivalry is at work in Ibn al-Qayyim's disputation (as it was in Ibn Taymīyah's writings). By making the apology of traditionalist theology, he puts philosophizing Ash'aris in the axis of evil. Yet, the war he fought against Ash'arism was literary; it compensates for inferiority in front of the overwhelmingly dominant position that Ash'arism occupied in the Sunni world through long debates.

Taqlīd is an important issue represented by two debates. For this particular issue, Ibn al-Qayyim uses disputation as a literary device to refute his adversaries. The length of the debates and their comprehensiveness indicate the weight of the question in his time. Ibn al-Qayyim means by *taqlīd* imitation of later jurists, theologians, and Sufi masters instead of traditions. That is to say, Ibn al-Qayyim stands against opposing living authorities to the traditions of *salaf*. Ibn al-Qayyim's re-traditionalization, contrary to *taqlīd*, substitutes living authorities with past authorities who should be followed because religion was revealed to them. Therefore, they should be the perfect model of understanding and knowledge. Ibn al-Qayyim is at his best when it comes to *taqlīd*. He combines his outstanding mastery of hadith literature and *fiqh* to give the impression that he attempts to revive Islamic law (a misunderstanding of contemporary readings). His core thesis is that, if you are going to follow someone, you should follow "the banners of those who undersign on behalf of God" (hence the title of his book, *A'lām al-muwaqqi'īn 'an rabb al-'ālamīn*).

Here, law is insignificant. It might even be said that he considers the juridical dialectics of al-'Amīdī's an evil. If that is the case, it is surprising that juridical debates do not have a fair share in his practice. In fact, the reason behind his criticism of al-'Amīdī is that the latter rationalized juridical dialectics, transforming *jadāl* into an art of disputation with no room for traditions.

Ibn al-Qayyim does not mention any internal Hanbali debate, since if he wishes to mobilize forces for his war of ideas, there should be no discord inside the Hanbali school, which he perceived as the vanguard of traditionalism. Moreover, here, Ibn al-Qayyim seems to be almost completely forsaking Ibn Taymīyah's mantle, claiming pride and skill in argumentation. It is him against the others (although he still adheres to Ibn Taymīyah's project). At the thematic level, he also differs from Ibn Taymīyah who was keener on the theological issues of divine attributes.

⁴⁰Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Zād al-ma'ād fi hady khayr al-'ibād*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arnāūt and 'Abd al-Qādir al-Arnāūt (Beirut, 1998), 3:559–61.



2.2 Internal Evaluation

Unsurprisingly, Ibn al-Qayyim does not use logic to support his claims. His argument with non-Muslims is based on sophistry. A recurrent device is the argument from silence (*argumentum e silentio*)—where the final proof is the silence of the opponent, failing to counter argue, thus admitting defeat. Ibn al-Qayyim ends the debate saying that his opponent is unable to speak. In his debate with the Jewish scholar he uses retrospective determinism to maintain that Muḥammad’s prophethood was God’s destiny. Since the victory of Muḥammad indeed occurred, it must have been inevitable and wanted by God. Otherwise, God would not have allowed it. He therefore infers from something that happened that something is good. With his Christian counterpart, he uses an *argumentum ad populum*: namely that most people in the east are Muslims, therefore Islam is true and Christianity is false. Finally, against the Samaritans he uses a proof of alteration, *tahrīf*, since they changed the Jewish direction of prayer, *qiblah*, which was the original one.

As for his debates with Muslims, Ibn al-Qayyim frequently uses three procedures. First is a shotgun argumentation, in which he mobilizes dozens of “proofs” (which he calls *wujūh*) to support his position with the hope that the appeal to this quantity of arguments would destroy his opponent’s position or push him into silence. Also, he relies on transmitted proofs—arguments from authority—because appeal to traditions effectively persuades a Muslim audience. Besides, it confirms his belief in the superiority of scriptural argumentation. He fully exploits traditions and the Companions’ opinions to compete with his rationalist opponents, being able as he is to endlessly quote traditions, far beyond Ibn Taymīyah’s capacity. As a result, Ibn al-Qayyim’s argument often turns into a compilation of traditions, digressions, and redundancy. Third, Ibn al-Qayyim employs the art of contradiction making, *ilzām*, a classic of *kalām*, based on *argument ad absurdum*.⁴¹ For instance, in the issue of *taqlīd* he often argues that a *muqallid* should not engage in a debate because this undermines the very basis of his position, *taqlīd*. This is a contradiction which, in the final analysis, shows the absurdity of *taqlīd*.

Conclusion

The internal assessment of Ibn al-Qayyim’s disputation shows his reliance on theological dialectics, especially on rhetorical devices and contradiction-making. Classical theologians and jurists such as al-Ash‘arī and Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī practiced these techniques and compiled them. These are the weapons Ibn al-Qayyim

⁴¹On this procedure, see Richard M. Frank, “The *Kalām*, an Art of Contradiction-Making or Theological Science? Some Remarks on the Question,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 (1968): 295–309.



uses against the syllogistics of later theologians such as al-Rāzī and al-Ṭūsī. Obviously, al-Ash‘arī and al-Shīrāzī do not belong to the *salaf*, but they are traditionalist or semi-traditionalist scholars. In Ibn al-Qayyim’s view, their method should be free of logic and philosophy and closer to the method of *salaf*.

The struggle Ibn al-Qayyim engages in against non-Muslims and later Ash‘aris is as valid as *jihād*. Ibn al-Qayyim’s disputation does not take part in the “humanist” characteristics of disputation that flourished in Abbasid literary councils such as empathy, cooperative ethics of inquiry, and belief in reason. He constantly reminds his reader that the tongue should strive as much as the sword against opponents. His disputation is martial and exclusivist. Armed with his enthusiasm and belief in traditionalism, he fought against the dialectics of the philosophizing theologians. In his disputation, Ibn al-Qayyim appears as a traditionalist who attacks on all fronts to restore the imagined community of early Muslims. He appeals to the past, which is supposed to represent a perfect model of reasoning and believing on the basis of transmitted traditions.

Thus, there is no case for claiming as Langermann did that Ibn al-Qayyim naturalizes science. Ibn al-Qayyim perceived logic as the enemy, and especially in the hands of later theologians, as it meant the end of traditionalism. In his view, the weapon itself, logic (or science in general), should be opposed with a traditionalist weapon (made by early or classical Sunni scholars). For this reason, it is appropriate to call his enterprise re-traditionalization and de-naturalization of science. It is an apology of traditionalism: Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in the coat of al-Ash‘arī.



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Venetian Merchants and Alexandrian Officials (End of the Fifteenth–Beginning of the Sixteenth Century)

Introduction

In the late Mamluk period Venetian merchants in Alexandria were confronted with a complex administrative, bureaucratic, fiscal, and commercial system. This system was dominated by local elements that were represented, on the one hand, by the Alexandrian authorities and merchants, and on the other by the Venetian consular authorities and merchants. Venetian documents recently studied and known as “tariffs”—dating from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries—present a clear picture of the administrative, fiscal, and economic reality of the Alexandrian market, linked to international trade, at the end of the Mamluk period. Only recently has this kind of document received attention, many years after the pioneering studies by Prof. Ugo Tucci.¹ Various dated from the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, “tariffs” are handwritten booklets (a few to dozens of folios according to the degree of elaboration) concerning only one commercial place. Unsurprisingly, archives and libraries preserve specimens of these documents for Alexandria in Egypt,² Constantinople (1482),³ England,⁴ and Syria (sixteenth century),⁵ that is, for the “pillars” of the Venetian economic world of that

¹U. Tucci, “Tariffe veneziane e libri toscani di mercatura,” *Studi veneziani* 10 (1968): 65–108; idem, “Manuali di mercatura e pratica degli affari nel Medioevo,” in *Fatti e idee di storia economica nei secoli xii-xx: Studi dedicati a Franco Borlandi* (Bologna, 1977), 215–31.

²Of the two most important specimens, one is held by the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, dated 1494 and bearing the name of Lorenzo Arimondo, son of the consul of Alexandria Alvise, and the other by the Venetian State Archives. A text identical to the latter is also found in a manuscript from the middle of the sixteenth century in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, a manuscript formerly property of the cardinal Mazzarino. There are two other Alexandrian “tariffs” of lesser importance copied in miscellaneous codices preserved in England (London and Oxford). All these texts are now published and studied in Alessio Sopraccasa, *Venezia e l’Egitto alla fine del Medioevo: Le tariffe di Alessandria* (Alexandria, 2013).

³Only one manuscript, held by the Venetian State Archives and now published and studied in Alessio Sopraccasa, “Les marchands vénitiens à Constantinople d’après une tariffa inédite de 1482,” *Studi veneziani* 63 (2011): 49–220.

⁴Only one specimen (not dated but from the second half of the fifteenth century) copied in a Venetian merchants’ manual transcribed in the same manuscript of the Alexandrian “tariff” from the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana and published in Sopraccasa, *Venezia e l’Egitto*, 502–15.

⁵Three specimens held by the Venetian State Archives, the Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, and the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana are still unpublished and understudied. For some insights



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time. These documents were written locally by Venetian merchants and consular authorities and they were made public (available to both the resident merchants in Venice and the commission agents overseas). Additionally, they were approved by the Venetian Senate and were of practical use (they are more practical than merchants' manuals and more theoretical than account books).

These documents, far from being the mere product of the action of the central power, collect a knowledge developed by the local administration in close contact with Western merchants; if the general treaties were the junction between the two centers—Venice and Cairo—the “tariffs” were conceived at the periphery, presenting their object—Alexandria—with a depth that is not reflected in any other known source. Thanks to them we can follow the route of the goods imported to and exported from the Egyptian port: this is the route they follow upon leaving the harbor until reaching the Venetian fondaco after leaving the customs house and back. For each commodity the “tariffs” give a list of expenses for its handling, through operations like transport (to or from the harbor, the customs, the fondaco), weighing, measuring, warehousing, sifting, packing, registering of the sale, etc.; they explain the local metrological system; they physically describe spices; there is advice on the best way to negotiate; and, of course, they give a complete description of the taxation on goods. The richness of their information is comparable to what the *al-Minhāj* by al-Makhzūmī was for an earlier period. They offered the Venetian merchant back then and the historian today some useful insight into the Alexandrian market and the economic policy of the Mamluk sultanate, for a period in which the Venetian commercial activity in Alexandria had reached its height. In particular, the procedures of exporting the famous spices⁶ are highly multifarious if we consider the number of officials involved and the range of taxes to be paid.

Administrative and Commercial Structures

In 1490 the Venetian consul Ambrogio Contarini, already known for his travel report on Persia at the court of Uzun Ḥasan,⁷ stipulated an agreement with the Alexandrian port and customs authorities to fix once and for all (if possible) the nature and extent of the expenses for export that Venetian merchants would have

about the Syrian “tariffs,” see Alessio Sopraca, “Le condizioni della presenza veneziana: le tariffe,” in *Rapporti mediterranei, pratiche documentarie, presenze veneziane: le reti economiche e culturali (XIV–XVI secolo)*, ed. Gherardo Ortalli and Alessio Sopraca (Venice, 2017 [forthcoming]).

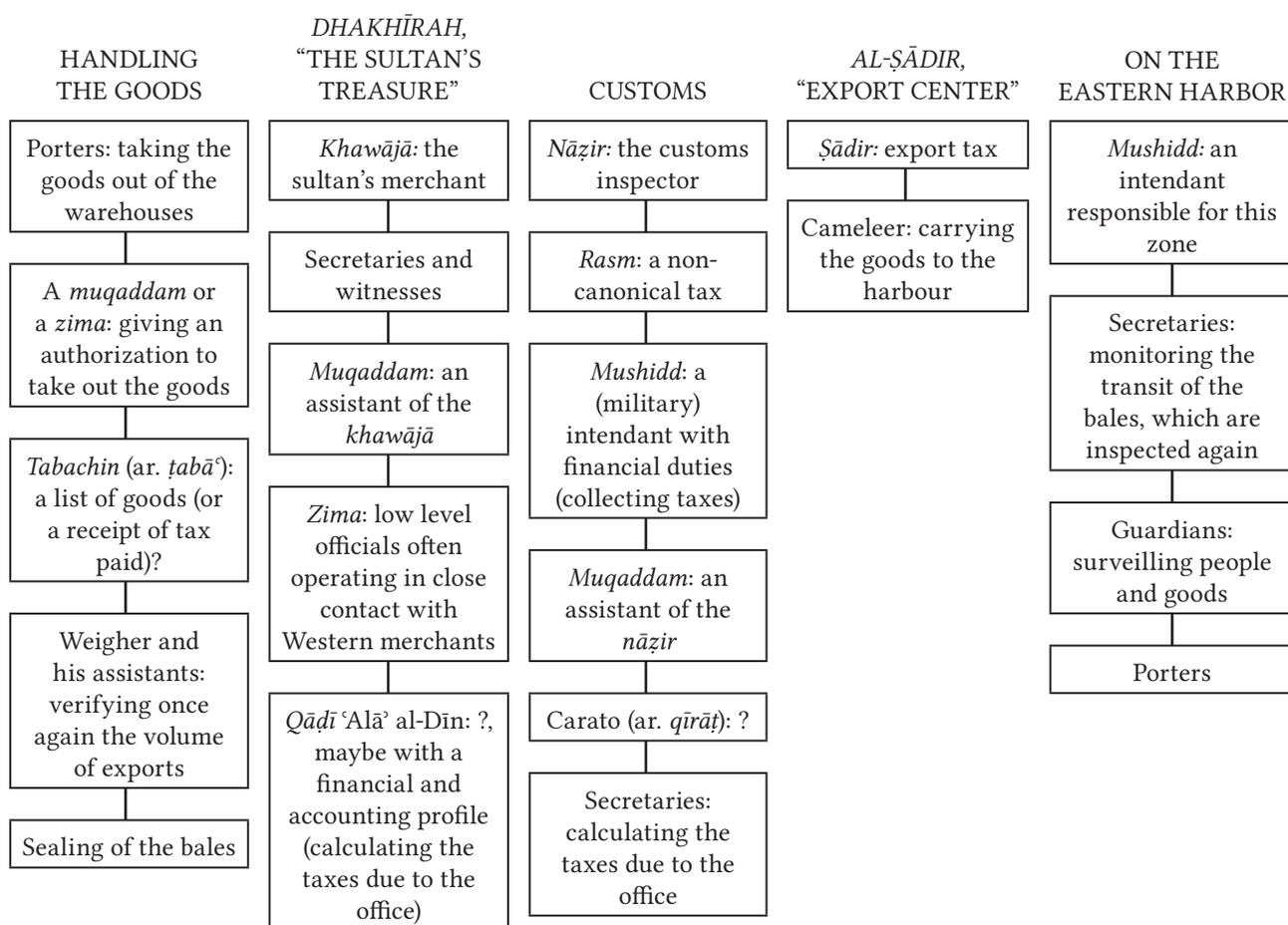
⁶The word “spices” was used by Italian merchants with a commercial—and not a scientific—meaning: it represented the category of the products exported from (in this case) Alexandria.

⁷*I Viaggi in Persia degli ambasciatori veneti Barbaro e Contarini*, ed. Laurence Lockhart, Raimondo Morozzo della Rocca, and Maria Francesca Tiepolo (Rome, 1973), 175–234; on Ambrogio Contarini see Sopraca, *Venezia e l’Egitto*, 68–69, and the bibliography cited there.



incurred. The document was written in Arabic, translated into Venetian for the merchants, kept in the Venetian chancery of Alexandria, and then copied in the “tariff” of the city.⁸ It is possible that it represents one of the fruits of the negotiations between Venice and Cairo in 1489–90, concluded with the promise of better conditions for Venetians in the sultanate.⁹ This agreement is summarized as follows:¹⁰

MAIN EXPORT PROCEDURES: OFFICES, OFFICIALS, AND TAXES
FOLLOWING AN AGREEMENT PASSED IN 1490 BETWEEN THE VENETIAN CONSUL
AND THE ALEXANDRIAN CUSTOMS AND PORT AUTHORITIES



⁸And edited in Sopracasa, *Venezia e l’Egitto*, 590–93.

⁹On these negotiations see *Ambasciata straordinaria al sultano d’Egitto (1489–1490)*, ed. Franco Rossi (Venice, 1988).

¹⁰For a detailed analysis of this agreement see Sopracasa, *Venezia e l’Egitto*, chapter ix.



After the purchase, the goods were stored waiting to be shipped by sea; among the many places where Venetian merchants could leave their goods in Alexandria, the most obvious was their own *fondaco*. Venetians had two of these buildings in the period under consideration. One of them was located where St. Catherine's church lies today,¹¹ in the vicinity of a sensitive zone of Alexandria, around the northern wall, towards the Eastern Harbor. Then the goods were brought out from their place of storage by porters, once the Venetians obtained a permit to do so. The goods were probably annotated on a kind of receipt, re-weighed, and the bales sealed.

At this point the three main offices with the most important people come into play. First was the bureau of the "sultan's treasure" (*dhakhīrah*) for the distribution of the sultan's spices:¹² it is well known that in the Circassian sultanate there was a system of annual sale of fixed amounts of pepper to the Venetian merchants.¹³ The most important figure was called in the Italian sources "merchant of the sultan" (bearing the title of *khawājā*, Venetian *coza*), a merchant who, in addition to his own private business, did business on behalf of the sultan.¹⁴ The sources show that the *khawājā* actually had a very broad field of action, as he was also involved in political matters, and within the framework of commercial activities he frequently interacted directly with the Venetian merchants, as I will soon show. "Officials" such as scribes/secretaries and witnesses, or others with tasks of a financial nature (i.e., accounting) or control and organization belonged to this office.

The official who was always present in Alexandria, and with whom the Venetian merchants had to deal on a daily basis, was the customs inspector. The regular conducting of fiscal and commercial practices depended on him and he was also a merchant, because he profited greatly from the position he occupied, at the

¹¹Oueded Sennoune, "Fondouks, khans et wakalas à Alexandrie à travers les récits de voyageurs," *Annales Islamologiques* 38, no. 2 (2004): 457.

¹²On the *dhakhīrah* see Igarashi Daisuke, "The Evolution of the Sultanic Fisc and *al-Dhakhīrah* during the Circassian Mamluk Period," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 14 (2010): 85–108 (http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/MSR_XIV_2010-Daisuke-pp85-108.pdf; last accessed 20 September 2016).

¹³This system is studied throughout the book by Francisco Apellániz Ruiz de Galarreta, *Pouvoir et finance en Méditerranée pré-moderne: le deuxième État mamelouk et le commerce des épices (1382–1517)* (Barcelona, 2009); for the first half of the fifteenth century see Georg Christ, *Trading Conflicts: Venetian Merchants and Mamluk Officials in Late Medieval Alexandria* (Leiden-Boston, 2012), chapters 13 and 14.

¹⁴Francisco Apellániz discussed them recently: Apellániz Ruiz de Galarreta, *Pouvoir et finance*, 68–83, 106–30.



forefront of international trade.¹⁵ Again, the office comprised staff with various duties of a financial and organizational nature.¹⁶

The third element was the tax and the bureau both known as *ṣādir*. The name clearly shows that it was a tax on exports, even if everything on the previous diagram was taxation on exports. In fact it had a much more varied nature compared to the import, which was reduced to only one tax, 10% of the value of the goods. *Al-ṣādir* was also a physical place, mentioned, for example, by al-Nuwayrī in 1368, near Bāb al-Baḥr, the Sea Gate through which the goods left the city. Ottoman documents of the sixteenth century mention the *sūq al-ṣādir*.¹⁷ Quite logically, associated with this phase is the cameleer, who carried the goods to the Eastern Harbor. In this area, which had its own staff and administration, the goods were checked one last time before they were loaded onto *jurūm*—the traditional Nilotic boats—and taken to Venetian ships or galleys.

The Urban Context of the International Trade: Some Topographic Elements

Bāb al-Baḥr, the Gate of the Sea, was a massive double gate dedicated to the transit of people, of the goods exported from the city, and of wine, although that was an imported product. Its architecture was similar to that of Bāb Rashīd/Rosetta Gate, with a zig-zagged passage that separated a small door from a massive gate immediately following. Once this was crossed, a short road between two walls led to the second massive gate which gave access to the inner part of the city. Next to Bāb al-Baḥr was the customs house. The descriptions of the city's gates left by Ghillebert de Lannoy¹⁸ and Emmanuele Piloti¹⁹ find an exact match with the

¹⁵Dr. Christ has fully discussed this topic in his recent monograph about the consulate of Biagio Dolfin: Christ, *Trading Conflicts*, 91–92, and chapter 12.

¹⁶Regarding the *rasm*, for example, the exact nature of which I can't define, we know from al-Maqrīzī that merchants from India paid it to the customs inspector of Jeddah: Éric Vallet, *L'Arabie marchande: État et commerce sous les sultans Rasūlides du Yémen (626–858/1229–1454)* (Paris, 2010), 669.

¹⁷Michel Tuchscherer, "Bāb al-Baḥr ou Porte de la Marine, un quartier commercial en déclin dans Alexandrie *intra muros* (1550–1650)," in *Histoire, archéologies et littératures du monde musulman: Mélanges en l'honneur d'André Raymond*, ed. Ghislaine Alleaume, Sylvie Denoix, and Michel Tuchscherer (Cairo, 2009), 59, 64.

¹⁸*Œuvres de Ghillebert de Lannoy, voyageur, diplomate et moraliste*, ed. Charles Potvin with Jean-Charles Houzeau (Leuven, 1878), 107–8.

¹⁹*Traité d'Emmanuel Piloti sur le Passage en Terre Sainte (1420)*, ed. Pierre-Herman Dopp (Leuven-Paris, 1958), 179–82.



oldest views of Alexandria, dating from the second half of the fifteenth century,²⁰ that show, from west to east, the *Porta principalis* (main gate), *arsenal* (dockyard), and *doana* (customs). These are the same buildings of which the remains were seen and studied by the engineers of the Napoleonic expedition in Egypt in the late eighteenth century.²¹ So, the customs area represented an intermediate zone between the external and the internal parts of the city. It was of course equipped with warehouses, a courtyard, and had at least two doors, one opening towards the Eastern Harbor and the other leading to the city.²² Thanks to a superposition—made by the service of the topography of the “Centre d’Études Alexandrines” (CNRS, USR 3134)—between the Alexandrian cadaster of the thirties and forties of the twentieth century and the plan of the *Description de l’Égypte* we can recognize the areas of the church of St. Catherine and the Consuls Square as the areas most frequented by Venetian merchants dealing with tax, administrative, and partly commercial procedures.²³

The Interaction between Venetian Merchants and Alexandrian Officials: Some Case Studies Concerning the *Khawājās*

Together with the customs inspector, the most important official the Venetians had to deal with in Alexandria was the *khawājā*: *khawājās* stood out during the fifteenth century and are mentioned in Venetian sources from the second half of the century. In the Venetian sources they are often described in negative terms, as they repeatedly made the regular conducting of commercial exchange awkward for Venetians.²⁴

²⁰ *Atlas historique de la ville et des ports d’Alexandrie*, ed. Gaston Jondet (Cairo, 1921), table 1 (Biblioteca Vaticana Codex Urbinas Latinus 277); Albert Kammerer, *La Mer Rouge, l’Abyssinie et l’Arabie depuis l’Antiquité: essai d’histoire et de géographie historique*, I/1, *Les Pays de la mer Érythrée jusqu’à la fin du Moyen âge: Alexandrie et l’Érythrée* (Cairo, 1929), table 2 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS Latin 4802, fol. 136r).

²¹ *Description de l’Égypte, ou recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l’expédition de l’armée française, État Moderne*, Planches (Paris, 1817), II: tables 84, 88, 98.

²² See also the city plan accompanying the travel report written by Johann Helffrich in the sixteenth century: Johann Helffrich, *Kurtzer und warhafftiger Bericht von der Reyss aus Venedig nach Hierusalem, von dannen inn Aegypten, auff den Berg Sinai, Alcair, Alexandria und folgens widerumb gen Venedig* (Lipsia, 1581). These places can be found on a recently published plan of the city from 1605: Oueded Sennoune, “Le commerce dans les témoignages des récits de voyageurs,” in *Alexandrie Médiévale* 4, ed. Christian Décobert, Jean-Yves Empereur, Christophe Picard (Alexandria, 2011), 114.

²³ The topography of Alexandria is treated in more detail in Sopracasa, *Venezia e l’Egitto*, 305–23.

²⁴ In the Venetian sources—first of all the resolutions of the Senate—one reads that the relations between the two states were troubled by the violation, on the part of the Mamluks, of the terms



The import of hazelnuts (or of walnuts or chestnuts) was a very important feature of commerce in Alexandria, as this kind of fruit was highly appreciated by the local population; for example, hazelnuts were eaten during Ramadan. In 1498 the merchant Alvise Corner was in Alexandria as a commission agent of Giovanni Bragadin and brothers to sell two cargoes of hazelnuts on their behalf. Of these two cargoes, only one had already been sold, and by letter, dated 4 August,²⁵ Alvise explained to the Bragadins that only a part of it was delivered as there were still 210 sacks to deliver because there were no camels available and roads were in bad condition. The Bragadin brothers had seven debtors, who had to deliver pepper in exchange for the hazelnuts, but they were all in Cairo and as soon as they returned to Alexandria, Alvise would urge them to make the deliveries. Furthermore, the Bragadins had two major debtors—bad debtors according to Alvise—Borgomani and Nasandin bene Murchi, who owed 1800 and 1200 ducats respectively.

But from letters dated 14 September 1498 we know that Alvise Corner died,²⁶ perhaps from the pestilence of those days. The problem relating to the two hazelnut cargoes was pending: one still had to be negotiated, while the bulk of the other was sold but sellers had not yet delivered the fifty-four *sporte*²⁷ of pepper according to the terms of the barter. The pepper was still in the hands of the “Moors.” The Counsel of Twelve, which assisted the consul in the administration of local affairs, elected the merchant Alvise Mora to deal with that matter. In October, Alvise wrote about that to the Bragadin brothers.²⁸ He was confronted with an inevitable series of abuses and deceptions, and particularly with juridical problems because, as he wrote, he had to be “officially recognized through the judgment of a *qāḍī* as a true *wakīl*,” a representative. Alvise sent the consul to talk with the *khawājā*, who was our Borgomani, and with the amir of Alexandria; he obtained a charter subscribed to by twelve merchants to certify his role; he found two sultanic regulations establishing that the person elected by the consul was a “true *wakīl*” for administering the personal properties of any Venetian who died in the sultanate (according to the general treaties between Venice and Cairo), and on that matter he also obtained a document delivered by a *qāḍī*. But nothing was

of the treaties: in many cases this was a centralized view of local conflicts involving, for example, apart from the *khawājā*, the customs inspector or the governor. In the commercial practice the local element was often predominant: on this topic see Christ, *Trading Conflicts*, 225–26, 281–84, 286–87.

²⁵ Archivio di Stato di Venezia Miscellanea Gregolin busta 9, not numbered.

²⁶ *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Guglielmo Berchet (Venice, 1879), 2:87.

²⁷ The *sporta* (plural *sporte*) was a weight used especially for pepper (1 = approximately 217 kg): Sopracasa, *Venezia e l’Egitto*, 215, 237–42.

²⁸ Archivio di Stato di Venezia Miscellanea Gregolin busta 9, not numbered.



effective and the *khawājā* and the amir were deaf to the Venetians' grievances. Alvise concluded that both the Bragadins and he had to be very patient because neither the law, nor the consul, nor the promise of extra money had sorted it out to any effect. Alvise put pressure mainly on Borgomani, who was a *khawājā* but also, as we know, one of the debtors when he asked him for at least one or two bales of pepper, hoping that the others would do the same. Alvise was able to obtain seven bales with great difficulty from five different people. He could do nothing more before the departure of galleys, but he promised the Bragadin brothers to keep on it: "like a snake I'll be behind these traitor debtors, trying to find any solution to collect what they owe." But the whole commercial season of that year was difficult and unfavorable to the Venetians, and the reason was due to the *khawājā*: "this disaster and ruin came mainly from the Moor merchants who wanted to damage Borgomani: they wanted the galleys to come back to Venice empty, this way Borgomani would not be able to comply with the obligation of the *dhakhīrah*'s pepper ...; we are the victims of this bad blood between them."

The plan of the Alexandrian merchants was successful because in May 1499 a new *khawājā* came to Alexandria, Ibn Mulqī, with whom the Venetians seemed to have better relations than with Borgomani, who had a debt of 24,000 ducats with the sultan and was hence risking his life.²⁹

With the successor of Ibn Mulqī the situation was difficult again. In September 1503, the former consul of Alexandria, Alvise Arimondo,³⁰ suggested to the Senate to send the galleys to Abūqīr instead of Alexandria until the *khawājā* Amet Bubaco was dismissed from his office. This is because from the latter, as the consul said, "had come all extortions and deceptions last year."³¹ In December 1503, the Senate gave some attention to one of these problems because the merchant Nicolò Bragadin was concerned.³² In the previous year, 1502, Nicolò sold to Amet Bubaco a cargo of hazelnuts for 3000 ducats, but Amet refused to give to Nicolò 1800 ducats and tried to force the Venetian to accept spices for twice their value. According to the *khawājā*, the reason was that in 1501 he had a loss of 2000 ducats related to another cargo of hazelnuts negotiated with the same Nicolò. The Senate gave instructions to the vice consul of Alexandria, Fantino Contarini, to make every effort to obtain the whole payment from the *khawājā*, otherwise Amet would be boycotted.³³

²⁹ *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 758–59.

³⁰ For his biography see Sopraca, *Venezia e l'Egitto*, 39–45.

³¹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia Senato Mar reg. 16, fols. 32v–33r.

³² He was one of the brothers of the above-mentioned Giovanni.

³³ Archivio di Stato di Venezia Senato Mar reg. 16, fol. 41r. The boycott—which Venetians trading with Islamic countries called (a) *batalazione*, from the Arabic *baṭṭāl* or *ibtāl*—was the interruption of the economic relations with a group or an individual decided by Venetian authorities in



However, this kind of situation could generate, to some extent, a domino effect. On 26 November 1504, Bartolomeo di Lamieri and Giovanni Francesco Bragadin³⁴ filed a protest with the consul of Alexandria Alvise Contarini against the above mentioned Nicolò Bragadin.³⁵ Bartolomeo arrived in Alexandria with a hundred casks of olive oil; as he wrote in the protest, “because I was unexperienced about the things of the city, I approached Sir Nicolò to be instructed.” Nicolò, on 6 September, in Bartolomeo’s absence but under his name, sold eighty of those casks to Amet Bubaco *khawājā* in a barter for cloves. Afterwards, the cloves were sieved and transported to the harbor arranged in five bales to be stowed on board galleys. But at that moment Amet refused to allow the spices to leave Alexandria because in his opinion he should have received 516 *qintārs*³⁶ of hazelnuts from Nicolò Bragadin. Amet negotiated the sale of the olive oil with Nicolò and so he refused to talk with Bartolomeo; the latter was the aggrieved party in that affair and he correctly pointed out that his own goods couldn’t be used to pay Nicolò’s debts. Nicolò, for his part, had done nothing to break the deadlock and the galleys were about to leave Alexandria, which is why Bartolomeo was forced to make a protest. The only thing we know about Nicolò’s answer is that he promised to give an explanation in due time. How this affair ended is unknown. What we do know is that in 1515 Nicolò Bragadin was elected consul of Alexandria, the last of the Mamluk period.³⁷

It is clear that Venetians had many troubles when Amet Bubaco was a *khawājā* in Alexandria. On 8 August 1505 the Venetian ambassador to Cairo, Alvise Sanguindino, received some useful information to properly execute his diplomatic mission. Among this information, there was a list of people who were in favor or not with Venice and, among the latter, “above all” there was Amet Bubaco, who was considered to be an enemy.³⁸

These examples show to what extent *khawājās* were embedded in the international trade and could influence it. They were also tied to the central power, even if Alexandrian *khawājās* seemed to have a certain degree of “independence” from

Alexandria or in Venice as an extreme measure of retaliation against a behavior considered very damaging to Venetian interests: Ugo Tucci, “Mercanti veneziani e usi di piazza ad Alessandria alla fine del Quattrocento,” in *Relazioni economiche tra Europa e mondo islamico, secc. xiii-xviii*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence, 2007), 1:366.

³⁴He was the nephew of Nicolò.

³⁵Archivio di Stato di Venezia Miscellanea Gregolin busta 11/I, not numbered.

³⁶The *qintār* used in Alexandria for hazelnuts—as for many of the goods imported into Egypt by Venetians—was named *jarwī* (1= approximately 94–95 kg): Sopracasa, *Venezia e l’Egitto*, 202, 215.

³⁷Archivio di Stato di Venezia Segretario alle Voci reg. 8, fol. 110v.

³⁸*I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Guglielmo Berchet (Venice, 1881), 6:206–7.



that power,³⁹ pursuing personal interests thanks to their position at the forefront of the international trade and to their participation in the diplomatic and political life of the sultanate.

³⁹Apellániz Ruiz de Galarreta, *Pouvoir et finance*, 224, 232–33, 258–59.



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Why Stress Does Matter: New Material on Metrics in *Zajal* Poetry

There has been a long and controversial debate among Arabists on how to scan the al-Andalus-born *zajals* and *muwashshaḥs*.¹ On one extreme we find the defenders of strict ‘*arūd*’ theory (also known as the quantitative or classical theory) whose latest and foremost proponent is Gregor Schoeler. This theory claims that it is possible to scan every *muwashshaḥ* or *zajal* verse with Khalilian and non-Khalilian meters. The second theory, which in the last decades has become synonymous with its main advocate Federico Corriente, posits that the meters of *zajals* from al-Andalus are based on ‘*arūd*’ meters, but that they were modified in such a way that stress patterns could overrule the requirements of the quantitative ‘*arūd*’ system.² Furthermore, in the centuries after the birth of strophic poetry in al-Andalus, Arab scholars and poetry experts from Ibn Bassām and Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk to Ibn Khaldūn declared that strophic poetry was not always governed by ‘*arūd*’.³

This article introduces some fresh theoretical material which may help to defuse this highly charged debate—at least as far as Eastern *zajal* poetry is concerned. The material is part of the treatise *Daf‘ al-shakk wa-al-mayn fī taḥrīr al-fannayn* (The dispelling of doubt and untruth in the writing of the two arts) written by a rather unknown author whose name has only recently surfaced in Western Arab philology: Jamāl al-Dīn or Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Yūsuf al-

¹I am very grateful to my colleagues of the ALEA group at the University of Münster, who supported me with their valuable comments and suggestions.

²I refrain from giving a comprehensive account of the literature produced in this area. Suffice it to mention here the articles written by Corriente and the responses by Schoeler: Federico Corriente, “The meters of the *Muwašṣaḥ*, an Andalusian Adaption of ‘*arūd*’,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 12 (1982): 76–82; Gregor Schoeler, “Ibn Quzmān’s Metrik,” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 40 (1983), cols. 311–32; Federico Corriente, “Again on the Metrical System of *muwašṣaḥāt* and *zaḡal*,” *JAL* 17 (1986): 34–49; Gregor Schoeler, “Über die Metrik andalusischer und nicht-andalusischer *zaḡals*,” in *Festschrift für Hans-Rudolf Singer* (Frankfurt, 1991), 2:887–909; Federico Corriente, “Further remarks on the modified ‘*arūd*’ of Arabic Stanzaic Poetry (andalusi and non-andalusi),” *JAL* 28 (1997): 123–40.

³Margaret Larkin, “Popular Poetry in the Post-Classical Period,” in *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, ed. Roger Allen and D. S. Richards (Cambridge, 2006), 205. On page 217, Larkin cites al-Qurayshī, the editor of Ibn Ḥijjah’s *Bulūgh*, who dates al-Banawānī’s death to 837/1434.



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Banawānī (d. ca. 860/1456).⁴ To date, I have found six manuscripts with this title.⁵ In Paris and Berlin Wetzstein II 108 the book is referred to as *Rafʿ* (“lifting”) *al-shakk wa-al-mayn fī taḥrīr al-fannayn*. Hoenerbach in his seminal work on Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī’s *Al-Kitāb al-ʿāṭil al-ḥālī wa-al-murakhkhaṣ al-ghālī* mentions it as written by an anonymous author.⁶ As the title indicates, the poetics of al-Banawānī is limited to two of the four non-canonical types of poetry, *zajal* and *mawāliyyā*, unlike its two precursors—al-Ḥillī’s *Kitāb al-ʿāṭil* and Ibn Ḥijjah’s *Bulūgh al-amal fī fann al-zajal*—both of which include the other two types, *kān wa-kān* and *qūmā*. Al-Ḥillī’s pioneering *Kitāb al-ʿāṭil* served as a blueprint for Ibn Ḥijjah’s *Bulūgh* and some other minuscule summaries of non-canonical poetics that are included in Ibn Khaldūn’s *Muqaddimah* and al-Ibshīhī’s *Mustaṭraf*. Hoenerbach states that although al-Banawānī copies al-Ḥillī in some minor aspects, he comes up with his own opinions on *zajal* and *mawāliyyā* theory. During my work on the *Dafʿ*, I could consistently verify Hoenerbach’s assumption, which means that this is perhaps the only original treatise on non-canonical poetry that did not plagiarize al-Ḥillī in the essential parts of its poetics. It is interesting to note here that all the poetics of non-canonical poetry were written in the East. Furthermore, while al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ḥijjah give a great amount of space to the masters from al-Andalus such as Ibn Quzmān, Ibn Ghurlah, Madghalīs, and others, al-Banawānī only rarely cites verses from them or includes them in theoretical discussions, a matter that requires further research and deserves a publication in its own right.

⁴Larkin, “Popular,” 202.

⁵I have been able to consult three manuscripts of this work: (1) Berlin, Wetzstein II 108 (complete version); author is given as ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Yūsuf al-Kurdī (d. 860/1456). Although this is the most neatly written of the manuscripts available to me, it contains misspellings, blurs some of the key terms, and omits others, which makes it unreliable in some cases. (2) Wetzstein II 1768, which is incomplete, gives as the name of the author ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Yūsuf al-Yanawānī. The writer of this manuscript, which is bound together with a work on prayer times and the determination of the *qiblah*, left out parts of the introduction and the discussion of *zajal* theory. This becomes evident from the subsections of one chapter (fol. 40, last line: *wa-hum fī baḥrin min jahlihim yakhūḍūn*); in Wetzstein II 108 this sentence is followed by some explanations in rhymed prose on the origins of *zajal*. Instead, Wetzstein II 1768 jumps directly into the discussion of dotted and undotted letters in *zajal* poetry. (3) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 4454; the author is given as Tāj al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Yūsuf al-Banawānī al-Shāfiʿī. The manuscripts that I was not able to consult yet are: (4) Princeton 408h; (5) Cairo, Maḥad al-makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿarabiyyah, al-Azhar, adab 7211; and lastly (6) Istanbul, Millet 1127, fols. 47b–68b, which gives 857/1453 as the author’s date of death.

⁶Wilhelm Hoenerbach, *Die vulgärarabische Poetik des Safīyaddīn al-Ḥillī* (Wiesbaden, 1956), 3. Gregor Schoeler follows Hoenerbach in his article on *zajal* in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. Zadjal.



Metrics as Presented by Yūsuf al-Banawānī

One of the main differences between al-Banawānī in comparison to al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ḥijjah is his theories on prosody. He introduces us to a new system of metrics that other theoreticians employed, too. His contemporary Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, for example, uses *en passant* two of the technical terms that figure in the *Dafʿ*, which I will return to later on in this article.

I applied the metrical system laid out by al-Banawānī to a number of Eastern *zajals* where it fitted well and was utterly versatile because of the short and freely combinable metrical units that this system is made of. After introducing this theory, I will analyze an entire *zajal* by Ibrāhīm al-Miʿmār to demonstrate the viability of al-Banawānī's metrics. The *zajal* in question is constituted exclusively of long syllables, which is an insurmountable challenge to any purely quantitative approach. Where the quantitative criteria of *ʿarūd* fail, measure and rhythm are achieved in a different way as the metrics of al-Banawānī and the inclusion of stress into the equation provide a solution to this issue.

Al-Banawānī begins his chapter on *wazn* with a definition: *al-waznu miʿyārun yukhtabaru bihi ḥālu l-kalāmi ṣiḥḥatan wa-khalalan bi-quwwatin fī ṭabʿi l-insāni walaysat li-kulli insānin bal hibatun mina llāhi l-ʿazīzi l-ḥakīmi li-ṣāhibi ṭ-ṭabʿi s-salīmi wa-lā tustafādu bi-taʿallumin* (fol. 3r, MS Paris). (The meter is a measure with which the condition of the speech is measured in terms of correctness and faultiness, by virtue of an innate power that lies in the nature of man, but not of every man, for it is a gift of the wise and almighty God to the sound-natured one, a power that cannot be acquired by learning.)

He then continues with the definition of terms that *zajal* poets used to describe verses and their structural units: *wa-qad iṣṭalaḥa ahlu ḥādḥā l-fanni ʿalā kalimātin ʿurfīyyatin wa-sammawhā shudhuran* [not *shudhūran* as one would expect] *wa-hiya ka-ṣ-ṣanji li-mawāzīnihim fihā yuḥarrirūna wa-ʿalayhā yuʿawwilūna*. (The people of this art agreed on conventional words and called them *shudhur* ["scattered pieces"] which are like cymbals to their poetic measures; within these they compose [their poems] and on them they rely.)

The sixteen *shudhur* that al-Banawānī lists now (I don't know if the number sixteen was chosen deliberately to refer to the sixteen meters of the Khalīlian metrics) are to be considered mnemonic expressions, from now on referred to as metrical units, which serve the *zajal* poet as an aid to measure the rhythm of his verses. It doesn't seem to be a coincidence that exactly these words have been picked because they occur in a considerable number of *zajals*, especially in the beginning verses.⁷ Thus they are especially apposite to *zajal* poetry because

⁷See, for example, a *zajal* by al-Ḥillī labelled as "Egyptian," which begins with the words *naʿshaq qamar*: Hoenerbach, *Poetik*, 99; and the same in a *zajal* on love by ʿIsā ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿIsā al-Muqaddasī: "Kitāb al-jawhar al-maknūn," MS Escorial 459, fol. 31: *naʿshaq qamar fāqa al-milāh*.



they can be easily remembered and related to (fol. 3r, MS Paris; fol. 5v, MS Berlin, Wetzstein II 108):

1. *na'shaq* (– –)
2. *qamar* (√ –)
3. *qamarī* (√ √ –)
4. *kallilī* (– √ –)
5. *fī sh-shārī'* (– – –)
6. *fī-l-maḥalla* (– √ – –)
7. *mawazzūn* (√ – –) or *fī-l-mawzūn* (– – –)
8. *bijunūkih* or *bijanūkih* (√ √ – –)
9. *man qāl anā* (– – √ –)
10. *ḥubayyibī* (√ – √ –)
11. *yā kalli kallī* (– – √ – –)
12. *kali l-mu'anbar* (√ – √ – –)
13. *badr* (–) or *badra* (– √)
14. *hal* (–)
15. *'asharawāq* (√ √ √ –)
16. *jibn-ə ʔarī* (– √ √ –)

In the manuscripts every single one of these metrical units is written alternately with red and black ink in order to make the distinction between them clearer. Because some forms may appear ambiguous, al-Banawānī as well as other *zajal* specialists, or in his words *ahlu hādihā l-fanni*, take great pains in detailing or rather calculating how these metrical units should be scanned. The basis for the calculation of the derivational forms is the word *na'shaq* and its 'aks ("counterpart") *qamar* (fol. 3r, MS Paris): *fa-hādhihi sittata 'ashara shadhratan 'alayhā madāru mawāzīni l-zajali wa-kulluhā min lafzati na'shaq*. (The *zajal* meters depend on these sixteen metrical units, which are all derived from the word *na'shaq*.)

Now he defines five basic operators with their respective long and short syllables inherent to them that are used to form the combined terms which are listed below:

fa-inna niṣfahā hal ("half of it is *hal*" equaling one length)
wa-thalāthatu arbā'ihā badr or badra
wa-kulluhā na'shaq
wa-'aksuhā muḥarrakan qamarī (the last radical is vowelized
 with a long vowel, written as *yā* in the manuscripts)
wa-thalāthatu arbā'i 'aksihā qamar

The following nine forms are combinations of the aforementioned basic operators which are given in parentheses:



wa-niṣfuhā muḍāfun ilā thalāthi arbā'i 'akshā kallilī (hal + qamar)
wa-niṣfuhā muḍāfun ilā kullihā fī-sh-shāri' (hal + na'shaq)
wa-thalāthatu arbā'i 'akshā ma'a niṣfihā mawazzūn (qamar + hal)
wa-thalāthatu arbā'ihā ma'a kullihā fī-l-maḥallah (badra + na'shaq)
wa-'aksuhā ma'a niṣfihā bijunūkih (qamarī + hal)
wa-kulluhā ma'a kullihā wa-wāwu al-'atfi baynahā yā kalli kallī
(na'shaq wa na'shaq)
wa-thalāthatu arbā'i 'akshā marratayn ma'a niṣfihā kali l-mu'anbar
(qamar + qamar + hal)
wa-niṣfuhā ma'a 'akshā jibn-ə ṭarī (hal + qamarī)
wa-thalāthatu arba'i 'akshā muḥarrakan ma'a niṣfihā mamdūdan
'asharawāq (qamara + hāl)

The terms in parentheses represent the exact syllable structure of the combined terms. Three of the sixteen metrical units listed above are not explained: (7) *fī-l-mawzūn*, (9) *man qāl anā*, and (10) *ḥubayyibī*.

In some cases, I was not sure how to exactly read the metrical units al-Banawānī lists. Luckily he helps us with some detailed explanations on this matter: *thumma ja'alū min dhālika sākinan wa-muḥarrakan* [and not as may be expected *mutaḥarrakan*] *laysa ka-sākini sh-shi'ri wa-muḥarrakihi bal iṣṭilāhan wa-ja'alū lahu qā'idatan fa-mā kāna thānīhi sākinan sammawhu sākinan wa-mā kāna thānīhi muḥarrakan sammawhu muḥarrakan* (fol. 3r, MS Paris). (Then they distinguished between quiescent and moving letters not as the quiescent and moving letters in the canonical poetry but as a [new] convention, which became a rule for them. Accordingly, they call a metrical unit *sākin* when its second letter is quiescent and they call it *muḥarrak* when its second letter is moving.)

fa-yusammūna na'shaq wa-kallilī, wa-badr wa-hal wa-fī-l-maḥallah wa-fī-sh-shāri' wa-man qāl anā wa-jibn-ə ṭarī wa-yā kalli kallī sākinan wa-yusammūna qamar wa-qamarī wa-ḥubayyibī wa-bijunūkih wa-kali l-mu'anbar wa-mawazzūn wa-'asharawāq muḥarrakan. (Therefore they call *na'shaq* and *kallilī* and *badr* and *hal* and *fī-l-maḥallah* and *fī-sh-shāri'* and *man qāl anā* and *jibn-ə ṭarī* and *yā kalli kallī* quiescent and they call *qamar* and *qamarī* and *ḥubayyibī* and *bijunūkih* and *kali l-mu'anbar* and *mawazzūn* [therefore to be read *mawazzūn* with a moving second letter and not *mawzūn*, as one might suppose, with a quiescent second letter] and *'asharawāq* [not *'ashrawāq* because then the second letter would be quiescent].)

In *yā kalli kallī* the second letter (the *alif*) is considered quiescent. In the case of *mawazzūn* and *fī-l-mawzūn* al-Banawānī's reasoning is not clear: in the list of metrical units with moving letters only *mawazzūn* is given, whereas the Berlin manuscript has *fī-l-mawzūn* in the list of sixteen metrical units but does not include it in the distinction between metrical units with *sākin* and *muḥarrak*.



A Long-Syllable *Zajal* on the Throes of a Married Man by Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār

While Thomas Bauer, Anke Osigus, and I were working on the edition of Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār’s *dīwān*, we were surprised to find three *zajals* that consist exclusively of long syllables. One of these is an eighteen stanza-long *zajal tāmm* (a *zajal* with a *maṭla‘* or beginning verse) on a married man who can satisfy neither his wife nor his lover. Only once, in the sixth stanza, does al-Mi‘mār use a short syllable in the word *yaqūl*. All the other cases that might be read short boil down to instances of *wa-* (“and”) and the *a-* of *ana* (“I”), which are read long.

Of course, *zajals* are particularly prone to having more long syllables than poems in classical Arabic mainly because *i‘rāb* is largely absent.⁸ One might argue that a freak version of the *mutadārik* (– –) is at work here, which is normally scanned like this: ˘ ˘ – , but there is a far better solution to the issue at hand. Let’s have a look at the first verses of the poem:

مِنْ عَلْقِي وَالْكُدَّة	مَا أَنَا إِلَّا فِي شِدَّة
صَفَّوْنِي مِنْ دَمِّي	وَأَبْقَا خِرْقَه مَرْمِي
	فِي طُولِ ذِيكَ الْمُدَّة

In transliteration the verses would read like this:

<i>mā nā llā fī sh-shiddah</i>	<i>min ‘ilqī wa-l-kuddah</i>
<i>afrigh fihim sammī</i>	<i>wa-bqā khirqah marmī</i>
	<i>ṣaffawnī min dammī</i>
	<i>fī ṭūl dhīki l-muddah</i>

“Oh my, I am in a plight // because of my sweetheart and the woman
I empty my poison in them // and end up a torn towel discarded
// they sucked my blood
during all this time”

Kuddah is a term used for women, especially beggar women; *‘ilq* means “precious one” and is known, at least since Abū Nuwās, as the passive lover in homosexual relationships. The reading of the first words in verse one as *mā nā llā* instead of *mā ‘anā ‘illā* results on one hand from the avoidance of the disjunctive *hamzah* in *zajals*, which became a general rule. Exceptions to this rule are, however, allowed—a phenomenon that can be observed in this *zajal*, too.⁹ Another reason is the homogeneous metrical structure of the poem that I will describe later, which suggest this reading.

⁸See, for example, Corriente, “Further Remarks,” 126.

⁹Al-Banawānī, Paris ms., fol. 11a; see also Ibn Hījjah, *Bulūgh*, 76.



When scanned with the *mutadārik* or with the metrical unit called *naʿshaq* in al-Banawānī's treatise that likewise consists of two lengths, we get this picture for the whole stanza:

-- / - - / - - // - - / - - / - -
 -- / - - / - - // - - / - - / - - // - - / - - / - -
 -- / - - / - -

Yet the structure of the verses suggests a more effective and elegant solution— if we use the metrical unit called *fī-sh-shāriʿ* (– – –), as suggested by al-Banawānī, the metrical setup would rather look like this:

- - - / - - - // - - - / - - -
 - - - / - - - // - - - / - - - // - - - / - - -
 - - - / - - -

The reason why this scansion with three long syllables is more appropriate than the *mutadārik* with two (– –) or the metrical unit *naʿshaq* by al-Banawānī is that it consists of larger homogeneous units that break up the verse into two parts or feet. There is something else to the metrical structure of the verses: stress. Reading the verses while paying attention to stress, the basic metrical unit becomes – ˘ –, which is exactly the way the metrical unit *fī-sh-shāriʿ* by al-Banawānī is scanned:¹⁰

- ˘ - / - ˘ - // - ˘ - / - ˘ -
 ˘ - - / - ˘ - // ˘ - - / - ˘ - // - ˘ - / - ˘ -
 - ˘ - / - ˘ -

mā nā llā / fī sh-shiddah //

min ʿilqī / wa-l-kúddah

áfrigh fī- / -him sámmī //

wá-bqā khir- / -qah mármī // şaffáwnī / min dámmī

fī tūl dhī- / -ki l-múddah

As we see from the scansion of the verses, the stress is always on the penultimate syllable of every metrical unit – ˘ – except for the first two verses after the *maṭlaʿ*, which follows a different pattern that will be discussed later. This makes it especially appropriate for scanning – ˘ – / – ˘ – instead of – – / – – / – –. Another strong indication for the preference to be given to the scansion – ˘ – is the recurrent appearance of words consisting of three syllables and having the stress

¹⁰ Al-Banawānī does not give any information on stress, yet the existence of two metrical units that both consist of three long syllables suggests that such a reading is possible. But even if such a distinction is not intended on the part of al-Banawānī, the evidence of this *zajal* is enough to demonstrate the importance of stress for the rhythmic structure of the verses of this poem.



on the penultimate syllable. In the poem there are many of these forms, as the two verbs in the second verse (*wa-trábbat* / *wa-tqáyyad*) of the three verses that directly follow the opening stanza demonstrate:

مَّا نِيكَ أَيَّرِي أَحَدًا وَأَتَرَبَّطُ وَأَتَقَيِّدُ أَكْتُبُ لَوْ شِئِي يَمْتَدُّ

mimmā nīk ayrī nhadd wa-trábbat wa-tqáyyad aktúb lū shī yímtadd

“Of what my penis fucked it got wrecked / and strapped and fettered / so I write something [an amulet] that it get long again”

Both verbs are of the *tafa*“*al*-type which are pronounced in *pausa* with an initial *a*- and a quiescent *-t*- in dialect: *atrábbat*, *atqáyyad*. Together with the preceding *wa*- the transliteration reads as given above. As we see, every three-syllable word accounts for one metrical unit with stress on the penultimate syllable.

Apart from this obvious division into two units of three syllables each based on verb forms from the *tafa*“*al*-type, it happens often that this bipartite division is corroborated by word boundaries that are situated between the two three-syllable units; see for example in the first stanza: *mā nā llā* / *fī-sh-shíddah*, *aktúb lū* / *shī yímtadd*, *min ‘ilqī* / *wa-l-kúddah*, *šaffáwnī* / *min dámmī*, *mimmā nīk* / *ayrī nhadd*. This division according to word boundaries accounts for the majority of the metrical units in this *zajal*.

So, how consistently does al-Mi‘mār use this metrical structure in his *zajal*? At the end of a verse the metrical unit – ‘ – is the only one used with the exception of the last metrical units of verses with separate rhyme in stanzas nos. 8, 13, and 16. These three stanzas show stress on the ultimate syllable (– – ‘), thus coinciding with al-Banawānī’s metrical unit *fī-l-mawzūn*, which suggests that al-Mi‘mār diversifies the primary metrical unit *fī-sh-shāri*‘ with a secondary one, *fī-l-mawzūn*. Most probably al-Mi‘mār wanted to liven up the monotonous cadence of ever-recurring *fī-sh-shāri*‘ units throughout the eighteen stanzas of the poem. From the point of view of *zajal* poetics, the changing of metrical units within a poem is allowed if there is any in this case.¹¹ Let’s have a look at stanza no. 8:

وَأَمَّا مِزْرُ السُّودَانَ فَرَعْنَا مِثْلَ أَدْنَانَ مِمَّا أَرَعَقَ يَا رِيحَانَ

قُمْ حَوْلَ لِي وَرَدَّهْ

wa-mmā mizra s-sūdān farrīghnā minnū dnān mimmá z‘aq yā rayḥān

qum ḥáwwil lī wárdah

¹¹Ibn Hījjah, *Bulūgh*, 98.



“As to the Sudanese beer / I emptied jars of it / which make me
scream ‘Oh Rayḥān’ // Get up and turn a cheek to me”

A look at the metrical structure of the stanza reveals the following pattern:

– ˘ – / – – ˘ // – ˘ – / – – ˘ // – ˘ – / – – ˘
– ˘ – / – ˘ –

The last feet of the three verses with separate rhyme all clearly have the accent on the last syllable as in *fī-l-mawzūn*, while the other five metrical units of the stanza adhere to the primary metrical unit *fī-sh-shāri*ʿ.

Apart from these regular occurrences of the secondary unit *fī-l-mawzūn* at the end of the verses in stanzas nos. 8, 13, and 16, al-Miʿmār uses it another five times as the first metrical unit of a verse, two of which occur in the *fī-l-mawzūn*-stanza no. 13 (*qālat ḥāk* in verse one and *ibn an-nās* in verse two), where the verses with separate rhyme already show this type at the end of each verse, as we have seen above. That leaves us with three instances of this unit used elsewhere in the poem, namely in stanza two, verse three: *wa-ysh hū n-náyk*, which could possibly also be scanned as *wa-ysh hú n-nayk*; in stanza six, verse two: *li-l atfāl*; and in stanza ten, verse one: *wa-l-mayshūm*.

As said above al-Miʿmār employs a third pattern in some verses: The first verse after the *maṭla*ʿ is scanned: *áfrigh fī- / -him sámmī //wá-bqā khir-/qah mármī*. Of this type I found four further instances: stanza five, verse one: *áyri mínhā ázla*ʿ; stanza seven, verse two: *nárʿū mínnú mārīs*; stanza fourteen, verse four: *yábqā máhā nájdah*; stanza sixteen, verse four: *yákhra ʿinda l-ʿuqdah*. In all these cases he seems to apply another alternative stress pattern with three times the metrical unit *náʿshaq* (˘ – / ˘ – / ˘ –).

Now, let’s have a look at the numbers. In total the poem consists of 146 three-syllable units, 127 of which are of the type *fī-sh-shāri*ʿ and 14 belong to the *fī-l-mawzūn* type (11 of which occur in stanzas where *fī-l-mawzūn* is the exclusively preferred type at the end of the verse). In five cases the metrical unit *náʿshaq* was employed instead of *fī-sh-shāri*ʿ.

It should be borne in mind that the *náʿshaq* type does not change the accent of the last three syllables, which stays – ˘ –. Only the initial positions change, which means that changes in accent never occur in the crucial end-of-verse positions that always have *fī-sh-shāri*ʿ (or the alternative *fī-l-mawzūn* in the three stanzas mentioned above). As I mentioned earlier, Ibn Ḥijjah uses the same terms for metrical units as al-Banawānī and gives us some information on a similar issue in his *Bulūgh*, where he states that *qamarī* (◡ ◡ –) cannot change into *kallilī* (– ◡ –) when it is placed in end-of-verse position: be it at the end of the first half of a verse, *darb*, or the end of the second half of the verse, *ʿarūd*. Yet in the *hashw*



(“the inner parts”) this is allowed: *wa-min al-mamnū‘āti ‘indahumu l-intiqālu min “kallilī” ilā “qamarī” wa-huwa l-khabnu ‘inda l-‘arūdiyīn ka-l-intiqāli min “fā‘ilun” ilā “fa‘ilīn” fa-in kāna fī-l-ḥashwi jāza wa-in kāna fī-l-qāfiyati allatī hiya l-‘arūdu wa-ḍ-ḍarbu ‘addahu z-zajjālatu khaṭaan fī-l-wazni.*¹² (The shift from *kallilī* (– ʾ –) to *qamarī* (ʾ ʾ –) is forbidden among them. This is called *khabn* among the experts of ‘*arūd*’ where it is like the shift from *fā‘ilun* to *fa‘ilīn*. So if this occurs in the inner part (*ḥashw*) then it is allowed, but when it occurs in the rhyme, either in the ‘*arūd*’ (“last foot of the first hemistich”) or in the *ḍarb* (“last foot of the second hemistich”) then the *zajal* experts deem it an error of meter.)

This rule which resembles rules on meter variation in *qarīd* poetry, of which there are many also in al-Banawānī’s treatise, supposedly contradicts the one that I mentioned earlier on: namely, that a poem may vary the meter in one and the same poem. It seems that the latter rule applies to the consistent use of a meter over larger portions of the poem, as is the case in our *zajal*, where the meter of three verses with separate rhyme in three stanzas differs from the meter of the *kharjah* of the same stanza and the rest of the verses in the surrounding stanzas.

A Contrasting *Zajal* by Ibn Nubātah and Some Concluding Remarks

Zajal was truly not Ibn Nubātah’s (686–768/1287–1366) favorite genre, as he only reluctantly agreed to compose one at Abū al-Fidā’s request. Abū al-Fidā, or by his official title al-Malik al-Mu‘ayyad (672–732/1273–1332), was the governor of Ḥamāh, a city where *zajal* poetry was very much appreciated—as a matter of fact one of the most famous *zajal* poets, ‘Alī ibn Muqātil (d. 761/1359), hails from there. Ibn Nubātah wrote this laudatory *zajal* beginning with the opening verse *lī ḥabīb mā‘ū ‘uwaynāt* (“I have a loved one that has sweet little eyes”) in praise of Abū al-Fidā and included it in his anthology *Muntakhab al-Hadīyah* as well as in his *dīwān*.¹³ Compared with the *zajals* by Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār or al-Ghubārī (d. 741/1341), another widely acclaimed *zajjāl* from Egypt, Ibn Nubātah is rather conservative in the sense of *qarīd*-like in his choice of themes, verse structure, and use of vernacular: only the consistent use of pausal forms, the ending *-ū* for *-hu*, the absence of the disjunctive *hamzah*, and a clumsy Andalusicist *zab* (“now”) in the beginning verse mark it clearly as a *zajal* from the point of view of language. Interestingly, Ibn Ḥijjah praises it as the best of its genre because it supposedly contained none of the “errors” typically committed by other *zajal* authors. It is

¹²Ibn Ḥijjah, *Bulūgh*, 97.

¹³Apart from this *zajal* only one other *zajal*, or *bullayq* as the heading reads, is known. It is located in the autograph manuscript of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s “Ziyādāt ‘alā Diwān Ibn Nubātah,” Göttingen 80 Cod. MS arab. 179, fols. 59r–v.



one of the few not of his own making that Ibn Ḥijjah included at full length in his *Bulūgh*.¹⁴

The whole poem can be scanned unequivocally as *ramal* (– ٥ – –) with the alternative patterns (٥ ٥ – –), (– ٥ – ٥), and (٥ ٥ – ٥) also occurring several times. In al-Banawānī's nomenclature this would correspond to the metrical unit *fī-l-mahallah* (– ٥ – –). In this respect, too, Ibn Nubātah made a conservative choice by sticking to the conventions of the Khalilian system, an important fact considering that *zajjālūn* had a rich array of resources for meter (as we have seen in the discussion of al-Banawānī's poetics above) but also for verse structure and verse arrangement at their disposal. By way of illustration, other *zajjālūn* composed verses that had the length of one verse foot or one word; furthermore they followed conventions on alternation of verse length and inner verse structure in order to create special rhythmic effects within the stanza.¹⁵

When it comes to stress, the verses of Ibn Nubātah's *zajal* have the accent on the penultimate syllable of every verse foot in the majority of the cases but not in the same regular way as is characteristic of al-Mi'mār's *zajal*. Verse-end positions in al-Mi'mār's poem were totally free of variation of stress except in the three verses of the three strophes where he used stress shift from the penultimate to the ultimate syllable homogeneously through all three verses, thus achieving a more regular rhythm over the whole poem. This is not so for Ibn Nubātah: in 38 out of 104 feet he diverges from the basic accent on the penultimate; of these 19 are in verse-end position. Here also Ibn Nubātah seems much closer to *qarīd* than *zajal* poetry, as his adherence to the Khalilian *ramal* and its specific variants seems to favor quantitative over stress-based scansion, thereby establishing a stronger rhythm than the former.

One of the conclusions that can be drawn from the above is that regularity, rhythm, and meter in *zajal* are not only limited to quantitative scanning of the verses but include to a large degree stress, verse structure, and verse arrangement, which are integral to the rhythmic and musical composition of the *zajal* even if its meter is "sufficiently" characterized by the quantitative scansion provided by the Khalilian system, as in Ibn Nubātah's *zajal*. This being said, it seems that some *zajals*, like the one by al-Mi'mār, attach more importance to rhythm and musicality. When considered that most of the *zajal* experts from Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk to Ibn Ḥijjah to Ibn Sudūn state that *zajals* were sung, the enhanced musicality of some *zajals* should not surprise us. This becomes particularly obvious in *zajals* where Khalilian meters do not fit the pattern of a poem, like Ibrāhīm al-Mi'mār's *zajal* discussed in this article and many other *zajals*, which according to al-Banawānī

¹⁴Ibn Ḥijjah, *Bulūgh*, 85, 91–93.

¹⁵See for example Hoenerbach, *Poetik*, 21, and Hakan Özkan, "The Drug Zajals in Ibrāhīm al-Mi'mār's Diwān," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 17 (2013): 220–23.



and Ibn Ḥijjah are governed by a basic set of sixteen metrical units that have hitherto been unaccounted for.

Appendix

The following *zajal* (no. 541 in the *dīwān*) has been taken from the edition of Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār’s *dīwān* currently under preparation at the University of Münster under the supervision of Thomas Bauer. The sigla in the critical apparatus refer to the following manuscripts:

- | | |
|----|--|
| س | = Escorial, árabe 463, fols. 78b–85b |
| ف | = Istanbul, Fatih 3793 |
| ت | = Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-qawmīyah, Taymūr, shi‘r 673 |
| د | = Dublin, Chester Beatty 5483 |
| هـ | = Tehran, Kitābkhānah-yi Millī |
| ل | = London, British Library 8054 |



[٥٤١]

- وَقَالَ أَيضًا [س، ف، ت، د، ه، ل]
- 3 مَآ اَنَا اَلَا فِي شِدَّةٍ مِّنْ عَلْفِي وَالْكُدَّةِ
أَفْرَغُ فِيهِمْ سَمِّي وَأَبْقَا خِرْقَه مَرْمِي صَفَّوْنِي مِّنْ دَمِّي
فِي طُـوْلٍ ذِيكَ الْمُدَّةِ
- 6 مَمَّا نِيكَ أَيَّرِي أَنَهْدُ وَأَثْرَبْتُ وَأَثَقَيْتُ أَكْتُبُ لَوْ شِي يَمْتَدُّ
مَا تَلَقَّى لَوْ مَدَّةُ
- 88a / نَاكَ مِيَّه فِي جُمَعَه أَصْبَحَ مَا فِيهِ مَنَعَه وَأَيْشُ هُوَ النَّيْكَ غَيْرَ صَنَعَه
وَأَنَا مَالِي عُدَّةُ
- 9 وَالْقَجْبَه قَالَ نِيكَ عِشْرِينَ لَا تَرْحَمْنِي وَالْأَمَّ شِي طَلَّقْنِي
إِنْ لَمْ تُتُوفِ الْعُدَّةُ
- 12 أَيَّرِي مِنْهَا أَرْزَعُ وَالْقَجْبَه مَا تَشْبَعُ قَالَ أَعْرِفُ بِالْأَصْبَعِ
ذَالْقَجْبِي هِيَ تُزْدَهُ
- 15 مَا أَحَلَّا الْمَعْشُوقَ يَنْبِي لِلْأَطْفَالِ صَارَ يَحْكِي يَصِيحُ حُو حُو كِي
يَقُولُ أَيَّرِي إِدَّةُ
- في الأَخْضَرِ نِتْكَأَيْشُ نَزَعُوا مِثْلُ مَارِشُ وَأَنْ كَانَ ذَاكَ الْيَسَابِشُ
يَخْرُجُ لَكَ مِنْ فَزْدَهُ
- 18 وَأَمَّا مِزْرُ الشُّودَانَ فَرَعْنَا مِثْلُ أَدْنَانَ مِمَّا أَرْعَقُ يَا رِيحَانَ
فَمِنْ حَوْلِ لِي وَزْدَهُ
- وَنَائِيكَ حَمِّي حَتَّى اتَّقَرُّمَطُ أَيَّرِي صَارَ كَثُوتُ كُرُورِي
مُتَلَفِّفٌ فِي جِلْدِهِ
- 21 وَالْمَيْشُومِ الْأَخْوَولُ طُولٌ لِيَلُو يَتَمَلَّمُ قَامَ بَكْرَه ائْتَلَلُ
مَعَ عَلْفِي مِيَّه عُدَّةُ
- 24 صَارَ يَزْمِيه مِّنْ كَلِمَه حَتَّى عَمُو عَمَه دَارَ قَلِي يِي نِعْمَه
قَالَ لَا حَتَّى أَتْنُدَّهُ
- هُوَ يَصْرَعُ فِيهِ فَاصِحُ وَالْقَجْبَه تَتَوَاقِحُ تَصْرُخُ لَوْ يَا رَاغِحُ
بِالْمَلُغُوبِ تَتَعُدَّهُ
- 27 قَالَتْ هَاكَ يَا مَهْتُوكُ أَيَّشَ أَعْمَلُ بِكَ صَعْلُوكُ ابْنُ النَّاسِ لَكَ مَمْلُوكُ
وَأَلَا أَنَا لَكَ عَبْدُهُ



- 30 وَالْآخِرُ سَاعِدَهَا وَقَوَى سَاعِدَهَا كُتِبُوا أَلَا وَأَعَدَهَا
يَبْتِغِي مَعَهَا نَجْدَهُ
- 33 وَقَالَ ذَا يَبْتَغِيْنَا كَمْ مَرَّةً يَرْفُضُنَا طُولُ عُمُرِهِ يَمُخُّضُنَا
مَا عَنَدُو مِن زُبْدِهِ
- 88b / مَا يَعْرِفُ لِي مِقْدَارُ كَمْ أَحْمِلُ ذَا الْأَشْطَارِ قَدْ كَانَ عَلِقُوا النَّجَارِ
يَخْرُجُ عِنْدَ الْعُقْدَةِ
- 36 انْوَاصُوا فِي حَزْبِي صِرْتُ أَرْعَقُ مِنْ كَرْبِي ذَا كُتِبُوا مِنْ زُبِّي
لَيْشَ مَا أَقْطَعُ ذِي الْقِدَّةِ
- 39 أَنَا وَاللَّهِ تَأْيِيبُ مَا أَعْمَلُ غَيْرُ وَاجِبٍ أَفْضَدُ نِعَمَ الصَّاحِبِ
هُوَ يَكْشِفُ ذِي الشَّدَّةِ

3 مَا أَنَا | مانا ه | عَلِقِي | عقلي ل | سَمِي | سهمي ف | خَرَقَهُ | خُرْمَهُ ف | 5 ذِيكَ | ذيك د هل
6 وَأَتْرَبَطُ | واتقرمط ه | وَأَتَقَيِّدُ | خد واتعقد (تحت السطر س)؛ واتعقد د هل | لَوْ | لوا هل
شي | (لا ترد في ت) | يَمْتَدُّ | ممتد د | 7 تَلْقَى | يلقي ف د هل | لَوْ | لوات هل | 8 أَصْبَحُ |
واصبح ه | وَأَيْشُ | واش د | هُوَ | في ه | 9 عُدَّةٌ | (في حاشية س) | 10 وَالْإِ | ولا ه | 11 إِنْ لَمْ |
أَلَمْ ف ه | ثَوْفٌ | توفيت د هل | 12 أَيْرِي | صار أيري ه | أَرْزَعُ | انزل د | 13 ذَالْقَحْبِ | هي
القحبه س؛ هي ذِي الْقَحْبَةِ ت؛ دالْقَحْبَةِ د؛ ذِي الْقَحْبَةِ ه؛ (والصواب من ف ل) | ثُرْدَةٌ | ترده د ه
ل | 14 يَصِيحُ | يقول د؛ يصرخ هل | 15 يَقُولُ | يقل لو ه | 16 نِتْكَائِسُ | يتكليس د | نَزَعُوا |
نزعوا ف؛ نزعى ت ه؛ يزعا د؛ ترعال | مِثْوُ | منوات د ه | مَارِسُ | مارست | ذَاكَ | داك د
17 يَخْرُجُ | نخرج ف ت؛ تخرج ل | 18 فَرَعْنَا | فرعنا س هل؛ (والصواب من ف ت د) | مِثْوُ | منوات
ت د ه | أَرْعَقُ | فارقع ف | 20 وَنَانِيكَ | وانانيك د هل | كِتْوُ | كوات د هل | 22 لَيْلُوا | ليلوا
ت د هل | بُكْرَةٌ | بكرا ه | 23 عَلِقُوا | علقوات هل | مِيَةٌ | ميت ل | 24 يَزْمِيَةٌ | ترميه د | عَمُو |
غمه ف؛ غموات د ه؛ عموال | عَمَةٌ | غمه ت د هل | قَلِي | قالي بي | خ | صح قال بسي (في حاشية
س)؛ قال بسي د؛ قال بسي هل | 25 لَأَ | (لا ترد في ه) | أَتْنَدَةُ | انده ل | 26 فَاصِحٌ | فاصح ه
تَشَوَاقِحُ | تتوافح ه | لَوْ | لوا د هل | يَا | يا راجح ه | 27 تَتَعَدُّ | تتغده ت هل
28 يَا | مال | صَعْلُوكُ | يا صعلوك ل | مَمْلُوكُ | مهلوك س؛ (والصواب من ف ت د هل)
30 وَالْآخِرُ | قام الآخر د | كِتْوُ | كوات د ل | 32 وَقَالَ | قالت د | 32-39 وَقَالَ... الشَّدَّةِ | (لا ترد
هذه الايات في ل) | 32 ذَا | ذات | عُمُرُهُ | عمرو ف؛ عمرو د؛ ليلوا ه | 33 عَنَدُوا | عندوات د
ه | 34 ذَا | داد | الْأَشْطَارُ | الأسطارات د ه | عَلِقُوا | علقوات د ه | النَّجَارُ | النجار ه | 37 ذِي
الْقِدَّةِ | دالْقَدَةِ ت؛ ذالْقَدَةِ د | 38 مَا أَعْمَلُ | مما أعمل ف | أَفْضَدُ | واقعد ه | 39 هُوَ | هو س؛
(والصواب من ف ت د ه) | ذِي الشَّدَّةِ | دالشده د



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Plague Mortality in Late Medieval Cairo: Quantifying the Plague Outbreaks of 833/1430 and 864/1460

A historian of Ottoman Egypt recently posed some key questions about plague mortality in eighteenth-century Cairo. What he wanted to know was whether or not we should give credence to the historical accounts that report peak urban fatality rates (deaths per day) of a thousand for major epidemics.¹ He also wanted to know how these mortality figures were actually determined and suggested that these numbers might in fact be more symbolic in nature than statistic. Finally, he asked if we can accept the estimations of historians that place cumulative death tolls for Cairo at levels of 100,000 or higher.²

These are very good questions and they apply equally well to Mamluk Cairo and its forty-some plague outbreaks.³ Michael Dols opened this same can of worms nearly four decades ago as he examined mortality from the 833/1429–30 plague outbreak in Cairo.⁴ Dols expressed some dissatisfaction with his attempts, but nevertheless came up with a tentative approximation of some 90,000 for the 833/1430 outbreak's death toll. Dols clearly intended to work on the data from another major plague outbreak (864/1460) but as his career was cut short, the statistics he had gathered were left abandoned on a page of his last article on the subject.⁵

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¹Alan Mikhail, "The nature of plague in late eighteenth-century Egypt," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 82, no. 2 (2008): 260.

²The estimations of Ottoman-era: Daniel Panzac, *La peste dans l'Empire Ottoman, 1700–1850* (Leuven, 1985), 361; André Raymond, "Les grandes épidémies de peste au Caire aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 25 (1972): 203–10.

³The most comprehensive chronology of Mamluk-era plagues is Boaz Shoshan, "Notes sur les épidémies de peste en Egypte in Démographie historique et condition féminine," in *Annales de Démographie Historique Paris* (1981): 395–400.

⁴Michael Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1977), 212–18; idem, "The General Mortality of the Black Death in the Mamluk Empire," in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900: Studies in Economic and Social History*, ed. Abraham Udovitch (Princeton, 1981), 411–14.

⁵Dols, "General Mortality," 409.



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Our goal here is to pick things up where Dols left off. We will answer these questions by studying the 833/1430 and 864/1460 plague outbreaks, investigating in detail how these Mamluk-era plague numbers were put together and determining whether or not these were bona fide statistics for the number of plague fatalities.⁶ By analyzing these numbers quantitatively and performing regressions on the data, we will propose new methods for quantifying the mortality of the Mamluk-era (1347–1517) epidemics.

Plague

If we are to get a sense of whether or not these numbers bear upon reality, it makes sense to include in this discussion a clear understanding of how plague functions quantitatively. For that reason we have used a mathematical model for plague mortality and will employ this model as a guide for discussing the dynamics of the disease itself. The plague is a zoonosis spread between rats by means of the rat flea vector.⁷ The rat flea spreads plague bacteria via the process of feeding on the

⁶The Mamluk-era sources we have consulted include Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Umar Biqā‘ī, *Izhār al-‘aṣr li-asrār ahl al-‘aṣr*, ed. Muḥammad Sālim ibn Shadīd ‘Awfī (Cairo, 1992); Abū Bakr ibn Aḥmad ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qādī Shuhbah*, ed. ‘Adnān Darwish (Damascus, 1977); Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa-al-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1994); ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl, *Nayl al-amal fī dhayl al-duwal*, ed. ‘Umar Tadmurī (Ṣaydá, 2002); Maḥmūd Badr al-Dīn al-Aynī, *Iqd al-jumān fī tārīkh ahl al-zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1987); Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Kitāb al-tibr al-masbūk fī dhayl al-sulūk*, ed. Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Āshūr (Cairo, 2002–7); Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i‘ al-zuhūr fī-waqā‘i‘ al-duhūr*, ed. Muṣṭafá Muḥammad (Cairo, 1982); Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma‘rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyādah (Cairo, 1956–73); Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā‘ al-ghumr bi-abnā‘ al-‘umr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Beirut, 1969); Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-duhūr fī madá al-ayyām wa-al-shuhūr*, ed. William Popper (Berkeley, 1930–42); idem, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirah fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, ed. William Popper (Cairo, 1954–57), translated by William Popper as *History of Egypt 1382–1469 A.D.*, University of California Publications in Semitic Philology, Volumes 13, 14, and 17. (Berkeley, 1954–57).

⁷That *Yersinia pestis* was the cause of these late medieval outbreaks was indicated in the 2010 DNA samples that confirmed that *Yersinia pestis* was responsible for the Black Death and subsequent plague outbreaks in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Stephanie Haensch et al., “Distinct clones of *Yersinia pestis* caused the black death,” *PLoS pathogens* 6, no. 10 (2010): e1001134. Further studies, such as the examination of dental pulp from the mass graves in East Smithfield, England, produced the first draft genome sequence of the bacterium; see Kirsten I. Bos et al., “A draft genome of *Yersinia pestis* from victims of the Black Death,” *Nature* 478, no. 7370 (2011): 507; Hinnebusch et al., “Role of *Yersinia murine* toxin in survival of *Yersinia pestis* in the midgut of the flea vector,” *Science* 296, no. 5568 (2002): 733–35. Hinnebusch et al. describe how the earlier *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis* bacterium acquired—via horizontal gene transfer—two plasmids that effected an evolutionary change in this organism. Via the impetus of the plasmids, the bacterium evolved from a disease of mild enteritis spread through fecal-oral contact to a virulently pathogenic disease with the rat flea as the vector. See also Jarrett et al., “Transmission of *Yersinia pestis*



blood of rats.⁸ When a flea bites an infected rat, ingested plague bacilli concentrate in the flea's proventriculus, which is a kind of one-way check valve for the flea's esophagus. As a check-valve, the proventriculus allows the flea's blood meal to flow into the digestive system while at the same time preventing its reuptake.⁹ What the plague bacilli do is to multiply rapidly in this proventriculus, so rapidly that they form an obstruction for this valve and the obstruction prevents the flea from ingesting blood. As a result, the flea is no longer able to feed and takes on the role of disease vector, transmitting the plague bacteria.

from an Infectious Biofilm in the Flea Vector," *Journal of Infectious Diseases* 190 (2004): 783; Verena J. Schuenemann, Kirsten Bos, Sharon DeWitte, Sarah Schmedes, Joslyn Jamieson, Alissa Mitnik, Stephen Forrest, et al., "Targeted enrichment of ancient pathogens yielding the pPCP1 plasmid of *Yersinia pestis* from victims of the Black Death," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108, no. 38 (2011): E746–E752; Mark Achtman, Giovanna Morelli, Peixuan Zhu, Thierry Wirth, Ines Diehl, Barica Kusecek, Amy J. Vogler, et al., "Microevolution and history of the plague bacillus, *Yersinia pestis*," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 101, no. 51 (2004): 17837–42; Mark Achtman and Michael Wagner, "Microbial diversity and the genetic nature of microbial species," *Nature Reviews Microbiology* 6, no. 6 (2008): 431–40; Florent Sebbane, Clayton O. Jarrett, Donald Gardner, Daniel Long, and B. Joseph Hinnebusch, "Role of the *Yersinia pestis* plasminogen activator in the incidence of distinct septicemic and bubonic forms of flea-borne plague," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 103, no. 14 (2006): 5529; Jessica M. Girard, David M. Wagner, Amy J. Vogler, Christine Keys, Christopher J. Allender, Lee C. Drickamer, and Paul Keim, "Differential plague-transmission dynamics determine *Yersinia pestis* population genetic structure on local, regional, and global scales," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 101, no. 22 (2004): 8408–13.

⁸The bacteria's evolution was recent enough to be part of history, as the range for its evolution is two thousand to twenty thousand years. Clayton O. Jarrett, Eszter Deak, Karen E. Isherwood, Petra C. Oyston, Elizabeth R. Fischer, Adeline R. Whitney, Scott D. Kobayashi, Frank R. DeLeo, and B. Joseph Hinnebusch, "Transmission of *Yersinia pestis* from an infectious biofilm in the flea vector," *Journal of Infectious Diseases* 190, no. 4 (2004): 783.

⁹The proventriculus also serves as a pre-digestive system, by which the spines of the proventriculus break up the incoming food before it reaches the flea's midgut. The blocking of the flea's digestive system caused by the proliferation of masses of plague bacilli in the flea's proventriculus was first discovered and documented by Ada White Bacot and C. J. Martin, "LXVII. Observations on the mechanism of the transmission of plague by fleas," *The Journal of hygiene* 13 Suppl. (1914): 431–37. For recent research discussing this blocking of flea digestive systems, see Ellen A. Lorange, Brent L. Race, Florent Sebbane, and B. Joseph Hinnebusch, "Poor vector competence of fleas and the evolution of hypervirulence in *Yersinia pestis*," *Journal of Infectious Diseases* 191, no. 11 (2005): 1907–8; Rebecca J. Eisen, Scott W. Bearden, Aryn P. Wilder, John A. Monteneri, Michael F. Antolin, and Kenneth L. Gage, "Early-phase transmission of *Yersinia pestis* by unblocked fleas as a mechanism explaining rapidly spreading plague epizootics," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 103, no. 42 (2006): 15380; Clayton O. Jarrett et al., "Transmission of *Yersinia pestis*," 785–89; Kenneth Gage and Michael Y. Kosoy, "Natural history of plague: perspectives from more than a century of research," *Annual Review of Entomology* 50 (2005): 511–14; Hinnebusch et al., "Role of *Yersinia murine* toxin in survival of *Yersinia pestis* in the midgut of the flea vector," *Science* 296, no. 5568 (2002): 733–35.



As the blocked flea attempts to feed on the rat, its esophagus becomes enlarged as the blood is prevented from moving past the block in its proventriculus. The flea is eventually forced to relax its pharyngeal muscles and this sends blood contaminated with plague into the dermis of the rat. The blocked flea eventually dies of starvation and dehydration but not before it has had many opportunities to spread the plague bacteria in this fashion. The infected rats become the collective reservoir that transmits the bacilli to uninfected fleas. Uninfected fleas then become blocked in turn and spread the disease to uninfected rats—and so the cycle continues.

The plague outbreak that results from this interaction is initially an epizootic and not an epidemic. That is to say that the outbreak is at first confined to the rat population and has no direct impact on humans. Epidemic only occurs at the tail end of the epizootic, when the rat population crashes to such a low level that the flea numbers overwhelm the dwindling pool of surviving rats—and the flea index (the average number of fleas per rat) exceeds the flea carrying capacity by a certain margin. At this point there are too many fleas for the few remaining rat hosts, and these fleas, which usually disdain human blood, shift their focus to the human population. These hungry fleas, their feeding attempts multiplied by the blocking of their digestive systems, then move in exponentially rising numbers to humans. Thus when the rat population collapses and diminishes to a low level, there is a rapid increase in the number of infectious fleas without rat hosts.

In the graph below is one of our quantitative reconstructions of historical plague outbreaks, in which one can see the exponential rise in the number of these hungry and host-less fleas. Also shown in this graph is the sharp decline in the rat population and the ensuing rise in the rate of human fatalities (human deaths per day). When the rats die off and release massive numbers of rat fleas, the human outbreak begins. Humans comes last, and in this sense, an epidemic is simply an afterthought of epizootic. This simulation is part of our ongoing effort to assess plague mortality via an adaptation of the Keeling and Gilligan (2000) epizootic model; the numbers for the rats, fleas, and humans displayed in the graph below were generated by the simulation.¹⁰ In these simulations we fitted the model's equations from the Keeling and Gilligan (2000) plague model to historical data sets from Mamluk Cairo. The human casualties were generated by this simulation's quantitative interpretation of this historical data; the rat and

¹⁰The model is that of M. J. Keeling and C. A. Gilligan, "Bubonic plague: a metapopulation model of a zoonosis," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London, Series B: Biological Sciences* 267, no. 1458 (2000): 2219–30; idem, "Metapopulation dynamics of bubonic plague," *Nature* 407, no. 6806 (2000): 903–6. The idea of using the Keeling and Gilligan model in this manner was suggested by the work of Stefan Monecke, Hannelore Monecke, and Jochen Monecke, "Modelling the black death: A historical case study and implications for the epidemiology of bubonic plague," *International Journal of Medical Microbiology* 299, no. 8 (2009): 582–93.



flea numbers were the program's estimation of how many of both it would take to bring this about.

We fitted seventeen parameters (bubonic) and nine differential equations (bubonic) from the Keeling and Gilligan model. To the Keeling and Gilligan model we added stochastic features which account for the very short term oscillations that can be seen in the graph below. We also analyzed hypothetical outcomes using seven parameters (bubonic and pneumonic) and three differential equations (pneumonic) from our own model. As a brief example of how the Keeling and Gilligan model works, the equation ($\lambda_H = F e^{(-aT_r)}$) expresses the proportionate rate of change in the force of the human epidemic and its integral ($\Lambda_H = \int_0^\infty \lambda_H(t) dt$) is proportional to the overall strength of the plague outbreak in the human population. While we ultimately used conventional SIR (Sick Infected Removed) equations for the human population, λ_H is a good shorthand for the manner in which epizootic becomes epidemic. (T_r) is the total number of rats at any given time, (a) quantifies the effectiveness or efficiency by which the flea searches for a host, and (F) is the number of infectious fleas that are actively searching for a new host (i.e., for their food/blood). The more infectious fleas, the more powerful the epidemic; thus F , and the equations for the epizootic that quantify (F), are the driving force of the epidemic. The second term in this equation ($e^{(-aT_r)}$) is in a very loose sense the timer for the human outbreak; with (a) constant, as the rat population falls to a very low level (aT_r) can approach zero and its exponent ($e^{(-aT_r)}$) thus rises to approach one. The equation therefore conveys the timing of swiftly rising human casualties with the mathematical demise of the rats being the signal for the human outbreak to begin.

We used the model to help us visualize and conceptualize the shapes of plague mortality curves. Pneumonic plague was used in one instance to simulate bimodal peaks of some of our plague fatality rate curves; these bimodal peaks can also be seen in other plague outbreaks, such as those of Sydney (1903), Freiberg (1613–14), Bombay (1905–6), Coventry. The notion that someone might try to explain the twin crests of plague epidemics was suggested by Monecke et al. in their adaptation of the Keeling and Gilligan plague model.¹¹ The Monecke et al. adaptation of the Keeling and Gilligan model to the 1613–14 plague outbreak in Freiberg inspired us to do the same for Mamluk Cairo.¹²

¹¹Monecke et al., "Modelling the black death," 588.

¹²W. O. Kermack and A. G. McKendrick, "A Contribution to the Mathematical Theory of Epidemics," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London* 115 (1927): 700–21, in Monecke et al., "Modelling," 585; Peter Curson and Kevin McCracken, *Plague in Sydney: The Anatomy of an Epidemic* (Kensington, NSW, 1990), in Keeling and Gilligan, "Bubonic," 2220; James W. Wood, Rebecca J. Ferrell, and Sharon N. Dewitte-Avina, "The Temporal Dynamics of the Fourteenth-Century Black Death: New Evidence from English Ecclesiastical Records," *Human Biology* 75, no. 4 (2003): 443.



In this recreation, the rat population (dashed line) can be seen to be sinking to a very low level as the number of infectious fleas without hosts rises precipitously (dotted line). The human epidemic can then be seen beginning at the tail end of the rat epizootic.¹³

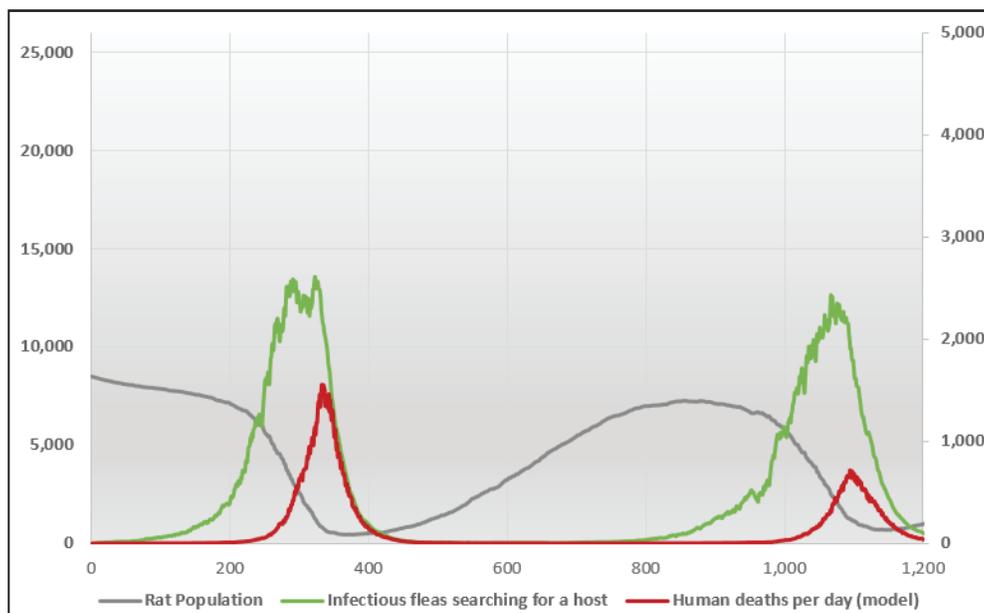


Fig. 1. Two Plague Outbreaks in Close Proximity (time in days). Keeling and Gilligan model differential equations fitted to historical data from Mamluk Cairo. Flea and Rat numbers: left Y-axis, Human fatality rate on the right.

Regarding the point at which the rat population collapses (T_r left y-axis), which on this graph intersects (at time ~ 300 days and ~ 1100 days) the plot of the rising number of human fatalities (right y-axis), Ole Benedictow has a vivid description of this pivot point: “Epidemic diseases that spread directly between human beings produce bell-shaped development curves that reflect the pace of a disseminative process based on human contact and the slow depletion of the pool

¹³The differential equations of the Keeling and Gilligan model quantify the dynamic unfolding of epizootic. Key variables in these equations act out the parts played by susceptible rats, infected rats, infectious host-less fleas, and the flea index (the average number of fleas on a rat). These primary variables govern the way in which the human epidemic plays out quantitatively via the SIR model (SIR: Susceptible, Inflected, Removed). For our simulation, we fit the parameters of the model via the Excel program’s Solver functions, which provides an iterative solution for the minimization of the squared discrepancy between the historical and predicted data. Data for plague fatalities over time (deaths per day) was simulated via nonlinear regression.



of susceptible persons.”¹⁴ Not so with plague and its rat-and-flea underpinnings, as Benedictow points out, illustrating quantitative trajectory with detail from a plague outbreak in 1905 Bombay, “It was the very beginning of this transitional phase that the inhabitants of the plague-stricken block of tenements in Bombay had experienced, when they suddenly were so aggressively attacked by swarms of voracious rat fleas that many of them felt obliged to sleep in the veranda at night. The characteristic features of this transitional phase explain the sudden and dramatic onset of plague epidemics with abruptly skyrocketing morbidity rates and mortality rates. This dramatic and explosive type of epidemic development is in itself a clear indication of plague.”¹⁵

The end of the outbreak, like the beginning, came with relative swiftness, via the starvation and dehydration of tens of thousands of rat fleas that could no longer ingest blood, rat or human. This final moment can be seen in the graph from our simulation as the curve for the rate of human fatalities plunges swiftly and in tandem with the expiration of these fleas—the slight lag between the two being the period of the plague’s incubation and the brief (and usually fatal) course of the illness. A German research team that fitted these same equations to the historical data from a plague outbreak in early modern Freiberg concluded that the average plague outbreak lasts about forty weeks and ends rather suddenly at the limit of the fleas’ endurance. That is to say that the timing of a typical plague outbreak is as follows: twenty weeks for the rat population to collapse, eighteen weeks for the flea population to starve and dehydrate to death, and another two weeks for incubation and course of illness in human hosts.¹⁶

For the purposes of working up scenarios and imagining quantitative possibilities, some of the parameters of the model we used were allowed to float within constraints. One of these parameters that was very responsive to environmental circumstances should be mentioned here because for this one at least we do have some data from Egypt that might apply. This is the parameter for rat-carrying capacity. Rat-carrying capacity is the number of rats that can be sustained on a given area of one kilometer squared. For our simulation, it was the rat-carrying capacity parameter that quantified the level of the rat population at time zero—and this parameter makes a big difference for the quantitative outcome.¹⁷ On the

¹⁴Ole Benedictow, *The Black Death, 1346–1353: the complete history* (Rochester, NY, 2004), 18–19.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Monecke et al., “Modelling,” 590; Nicolas Bacaër, “The model of Kermack and McKendrick for the plague epidemic in Bombay and the type reproduction number with seasonality,” *Journal of mathematical biology* 64, no. 3 (2012): 403–22; Florent Sebbane, Donald Gardner, Daniel Long, Brian B. Gowen, and B. Joseph Hinnebusch, “Kinetics of disease progression and host response in a rat model of bubonic plague,” *The American journal of pathology* 166, no. 5 (2005): 1427–39.

¹⁷Keeling and Gilligan, “Bubonic Plague,” 2226.



graph below we plotted the impact of raising this rat-carrying capacity in increments. What we were simulating was improving upon the rats' environmental conditions step by step, i.e., imagining a dirtier and fouler urban landscape one step at a time. One can see the effects of a higher rat population density on two key variables in the graph below: the number of infectious fleas without a host and the approximate strength of the resulting human epidemic. This scenario of rising increments and exponential results is entirely appropriate for pre-modern Egypt because indications are that environmental and architectural conditions favored an exceptionally high rat population density, and as one can see here, more rats means more infectious fleas and in the end more human lives.¹⁸

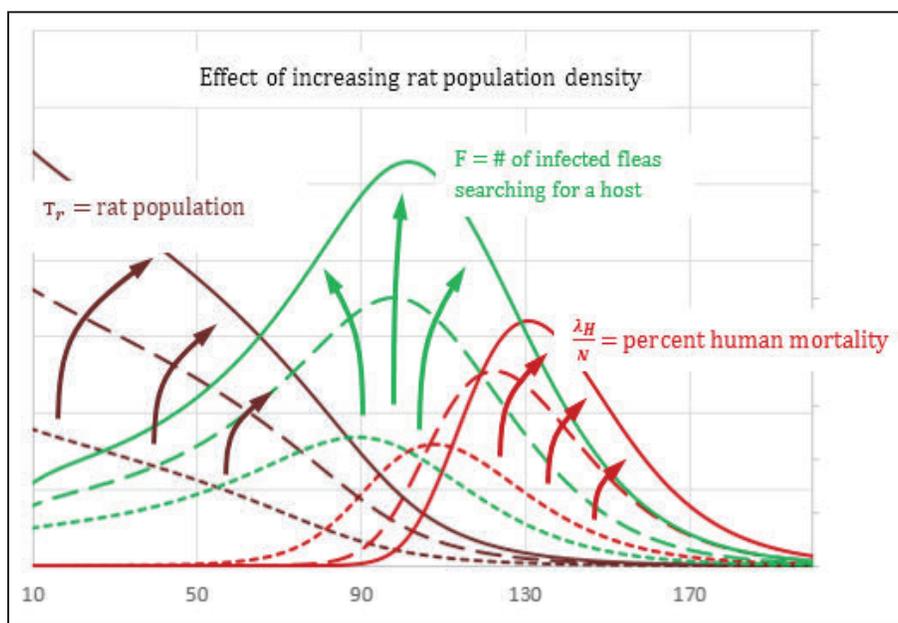


Fig. 2. The outbreak's variables under stress of rat population density

But all of this, it should be noted again, was well beyond the biological worldview of the inhabitants of Cairo. They were like those in the other cities of the Middle East, Europe, and Asia, in that they couldn't help but give scant notice to this biological drama unfolding at their feet. Any attention given in the sources to the natural world's role in plague outbreaks was given not to the sick rats and the

¹⁸For conditions in the early twentieth century, see A. Bacot, George F. Petrie, and Ronald E. Todd, "The fleas found on rats and other rodents, living in association with man, and trapped in the towns, villages and Nile boats of Upper Egypt," *Journal of Hygiene* 14, no. 4 (1914): 498–508 and tables II–IV.



rising flea numbers, but rather to the myriad of nature's creatures, including the birds and the fish, who were said to be dying of plague along with the humans.¹⁹

Plague Narratives (833/1430 and 864/1460)²⁰

Thus the two outbreaks that we are studying were described by medieval observers who were unaware that as they watched the plague march toward them from the north, from Alexandria and the Nile Delta, it was in fact already upon them and in their midst. So for the second of these two outbreaks, 864/1460, the inhabitants of Cairo waited as they received the alarming reports of a very bad plague outbreak approaching. The plague was making its way south and devastating towns and villages along the way.²¹ From the reports of high fatalities in the Delta, which for provincial towns like al-Maḥallat al-Kubrā and Minūf al-Ulyā were in the hundreds per day, the inhabitants of Cairo knew this would be a

¹⁹Though things may have been otherwise half-a-world away. During the third global plague pandemic, Yersin noted that Chinese tradition did regard plague as a disease of rats, and some of these communities took action, i.e., flight, when observing dying rats; see Jessica Girard et al., "Differential plague-transmission dynamics determine *Yersinia pestis* population genetic structure on local, regional, and global scales," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 101, no. 22 (2004): 8413.

²⁰Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:822–26, is the main source for the 833/1430 plague; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:136–47, for the 864/1460 plague. Ibn Taghribirdī's information is the more detailed and precise of the two. Ibn Taghribirdī (812–74/1408–69) was the son of the Mamluk amir Taghribirdī (d. 814/1412), who had been a high-ranking military officer under the sultans al-Zāhir Barqūq and al-Nāṣir Faraj. Ibn Taghribirdī learned history from al-ʿAynī and al-Maqrīzī and was well-versed in numerous subjects. Using his father's connections, he was granted access to court life and to several mid-fifteenth century sultans such as Barsbāy, Jaqmaq, and Khushqadam. His information on plague outbreaks, particularly the 864/1460 outbreak, is to be found in his works *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirah fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (available in translation by William Popper as *History of Egypt*), and *Ḥawādith al-duhūr fī madā al-ayyām wa-al-shuhūr*. Using a manuscript of *Ḥawādith* from the Vatican Library, we were able to piece together two separate accounts that he made of this 864/1460 outbreak. The two data streams of these sources, though not at odds with one another, differ in their focus and ultimately complement one another. The account in *Ḥawādith* contains more detailed quantification of plague mortality for the outskirts (*al-zawāhir*) of Cairo, population centers like Miṣr (Fuṣṭāt), the old capital of Egypt, Būlāq, the shipping depot for grain on the Nile, and important residential areas such as al-Ḥusayniyah to the north of Cairo. Together, these two narratives from Ibn Taghribirdī make the 864/1460 outbreak the best documented of the Mamluk period. For these biographical details, see Wan Kamal Mujani, "The Mamluk Historians and their Accounts on the Economy of Egypt for the Period of 872–922 H/1468–1517 AD," *Journal of History and Social Sciences, Univ. of Karachi* 1, no. 2 (<http://www.jhssuok.com>) (2010): 52–54.

²¹Al-Biqāʿī, *Izhār*, 3:107; ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nayl*, 6:75; Ibn Taghribirdī, "Ḥawādith," Vatican MS 727, fol. 101; idem, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:136.



very bad outbreak.²² As the epidemic closed in and devastated the town of Bilbays on the edge of the eastern desert, and as it set upon the great Sufi monastery of Siryāqūs, the mood of morbid anticipation intensified.²³ Ibn Taghrībirdī noted of this nervous tension that it was a dread so powerful that people were afraid to leave their houses.²⁴ By early February, when the city finally became aware of the epidemic in their midst, the growing number of infections were claiming around a hundred lives a day—and this fatality rate was increasing rapidly.²⁵

By the end of March, more than a thousand inhabitants of Cairo were dying of plague every day.²⁶ Then in mid-April following the customary responses to plague outbreaks, including supernumerary fasting and mass prayers in the desert, the outbreak reached its peak.²⁷ As the living could no longer match their strength to the rising number of dead, desperate people struggled and fought with each other to get proper funeral shrouds. Coffins and corpses were lined up in rows, blessed *en masse* via a very hurried *janāzah* (funeral prayer) and taken out of the city gates for hurried burial in the desert.²⁸ While the dictates of tradition were not overtly against such hasty funeral prayers, they were at odds with the expedient of blessing such large numbers in one collective prayer.²⁹ Mass blessing, like mass burial, became the rule as this outbreak was rising to its full peak.³⁰ And as the peak swept through, even the best attempts to remove the bodies of plague victims left a substantial number of corpses behind, which were unceremoniously deposited in urban gardens or narrow alleyways. They filled

²² Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 2:357; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:139; Popper, *History*, 6:93.

²³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, “Ḥawādith,” fol. 103.

²⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:136–37; Popper, *History*, 4:90–91.

²⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:137; Popper, *History*, 4:91; Ibn Taghrībirdī, “Ḥawādith,” fol. 103a; ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nayl*, 6:75.

²⁶ ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nayl*, 6:80; al-Biqāʿī, *Izhār*, 3:116–17; Ibn Taghrībirdī, “Ḥawādith,” fol. 104b; idem, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:141; Popper, *History*, 4:94.

²⁷ Dols, *Black Death*, 246–50.

²⁸ ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nayl*, 6:80.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ For similar details from 1791, see Alan Mikhail, “The nature of plague in late eighteenth-century Egypt,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 82, no. 2 (2008): 249–75. Mikhail notes, “so great a number of the soldiers and marines stationed in Old Cairo, Gīza, and Būlāq died that mass graves were dug into which their corpses were thrown without any ceremony or final rites. For those not connected to the military, their funerals also had to be done *en masse*, with prayers being said for up to five people at one time. Indeed, the apparatuses charged with the management of death were stretched to their limits during this spring as the demand for undertakers (*al-hawānīt*) and corpse washers (*al-mughassilīn*) far exceeded their available numbers.”



Cairo's streets with the horrible stench of human decay as the death toll finally started to fall.³¹

Looking back further in time to the first of these two outbreaks, it is clear to us that the 833/1430 plague was in fact even more severe. Ibn Taghrībirdī declared that it was the second worst epidemic to visit the Islamic world—after the 749/1348 Black Death (known to late Mamluk Cairo as “*al-wabā' al-āmm*,” the Great Plague).³² In this outbreak bodies were brought to a collection point at one of the main city gates, the Bāb al-Naṣr, and blessed for burial in groups of forty as bodies stretched out from this gate to the Bāb al-Wazīr gate some 2.5 kilometers away.³³ Mass burials followed in this outbreak as well and we are told that the digging of graves went on through the night, with dogs gnawing on corpses left unattended.³⁴ As always, the desperate attempt to dispose of bodies led to extreme practices such as simply throwing corpses into the Nile.³⁵

The Dīwān al-Mawārīth and the Oratories

At the focal point of our study are the social and administrative mechanisms for processing the dead and counting the bodies. These mechanisms are the real sources of our data, the data that the fifteenth-century chroniclers analyzed in their fashion and filtered according to their own dictates of time and necessity. And as it turns out, this data was once the property of the Mamluk Sultanate, more or less. That is to say that those who did the actual counting were either bureaucrats working for the Mamluk regime or ad hoc assemblages and temporary hires supervised by government officials.³⁶ Most of these people were in fact directed by high-ranking amirs appointed by the sultan.³⁷

There were two main agencies that brought these groups of people, clerical workers of one sort or another, together. The first of these was both formal and official and its data is central to our quantifications. It was the Dīwān al-Mawārīth

³¹Dols, *Black Death*, 238.

³²Abd al- Bāsiṭ, *Nayl*, 1:177

³³Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:827.

³⁴Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:828.

³⁵Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat*, 1:427

³⁶Dīwān al-Mawārīth (Office of Inheritances) had official offices at al-Qāhirah (Mamluk Cairo), Miṣr (Fuṣṭāṭ), and Būlāq. In some cases we get first-hand information written out from these *waraqāt al-ta'rif*. Ibn Iyās apparently had these *waraqāt* in hand as he wrote about the plague years 909, 910, and 919. Ibn Iyās also makes his own estimations of the ratios of this Dīwān count and the total number of plague fatalities. See Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4: 301–2, 308. See discussion of this office in Dols, *Black Death*, 175–78.

³⁷See al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:822–26, for sources of his data in the 1430 plague; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:136–47, for sources of his data for the 1460 plague.



al-Ḥasharīyah, which we might translate as “bureau of inheritances,” and it had responsibility for the registration of deaths, inheritances, and the final disposal of the deceased’s assets.³⁸ As Dols describes this agency: “The Dīwān registered only the deaths of those with taxable legacies. The government would take the entire estate of anyone dying without heirs and the residue of an estate where the heirs were not entitled to the whole inheritance. In some instances, the government would confiscate inheritances even when there were heirs. Cairo and Fuṣṭāṭ had separate dīwāns.”³⁹

As the one-time bureaucrat al-Qalqashandī informs us, the Dīwān al-Mawārīth was responsible for the registration of deaths and for the disposal of assets in cases where there were either no designated heirs or no legitimate heirs.⁴⁰ To a certain extent then this all boiled down to money, and money was the regime’s main concern.⁴¹ The sultanate monitored deaths and legacies with an eye to seizing as large a proportion of the deceased’s assets as possible. Though the regime was legally limited to estates without valid heirs, the actual practice was often to seize estates, heirs or no heirs.⁴² Not surprisingly, the Dīwān al-Mawārīth was particularly concerned with the deaths of the richest members of society, and these were often high-ranking members of the ruling regime, whose landed estates (*iqṭāʿ*) were eligible for transfer. But the Mamluk government was in general eager to preside over the transfer of assets from any well-to-do family.⁴³ With money as the object, it is clear that they were interested in only those with worthwhile assets and not with the poor and indigent. It is hard to say exactly where the Dīwān al-Mawārīth drew the line between rich and poor, but anyone with property of good value was probably fair game.

So it’s clear that only part of the population counted in the eyes of the Dīwān al-Mawārīth. What this boils down to in practical terms that concern us quantitatively is that for these two outbreaks, about one-fifth to one-third of all the deaths in the population of Mamluk Cairo were registered (*taʿrīf*) by the Dīwān.⁴⁴ (The

³⁸Dols, *Black Death*, 175–78.

³⁹Dols, *Black Death*, 175.

⁴⁰Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-aʿshā fī šināʿat al-inshāʿ*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 1987), 4:33, 13:385.

⁴¹Al-Qalqashandī, *ibid.*, 11:93, describes how they were concerned with the dying of *muqṭaʿūn* (landholders) so as to transfer their *iqṭāʿ* (their estates).

⁴²The Dīwān al-Mawārīth kept detailed records of property bequests. See *Documents of the Jewish pious foundations from the Cairo Geniza*, ed. Moshe Gil, Publications of the Diaspora Research Institute, vol. 12 (Leiden, 1976), 7.

⁴³See again al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ*, 11:93.

⁴⁴Sources for Dīwān al-Mawārīth figures include, for 1430: al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:822–26; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʿ*, 9:200; ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nayl*, 267–68; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 14:340–43; al-Biqāʿī, *Izhār*; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿiʿ*, 2:113; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 14:339–43. For 1460 see Ibn



registration was called a *taʿrīf*, which for each day was recorded on a separate document known as a *waraqat al-taʿrīf*.) This fraction of one-fifth to one-third of the total population counted by this Dīwān is a fraction central to our quantifications. What we will do is to divide the Dīwān's fatality rate by this fraction to arrive at the total fatalities per day for all of Mamluk Cairo. So this fraction, this ratio, is very important to us, but it seems that it was also very much on the minds the Mamluk-era chroniclers and, in fact, everyone who was involved in the business of counting. The chroniclers in their narratives also try themselves to work out this ratio of the Dīwān deaths to the total number of deaths. Al-Maqrīzī tried to estimate this ratio, as did Ibn Taghrībirdī—and Ibn Iyās several decades later.⁴⁵

For our analysis, what we did was to calculate this ratio by taking cases (specific days) where we had both (1) the number of deaths from the Dīwān al-Mawārīth and (2) the total number of deaths for Mamluk Cairo as a whole. As an example for the purposes of illustrating this process, take the case of plague statistics for the 26 Jumādā I 864 (19 March 1460). On this day, the Dīwān al-Mawārīth produced a *waraqat al-taʿrīf* (death register) recording that there had been 235 deaths on that day. Yet we learn from a second count that included the entire population of Mamluk Cairo that the actual total of all deaths that day was 1153. Using these two numbers we calculate a ratio of the Dīwān to the total, which is $(\frac{235}{1153}) = .204$.⁴⁶ Then by repeating this process for other days in which we had both sets of numbers, we were able to sum up our results and calculate the average ratio for the 864/1460 plague outbreak, which turned out to be .1916, meaning that the Dīwān was only counting one-fifth of all fatalities at this time. Having determined what this ratio was (on average) we could apply it to the many cases. So we then took these isolated and partial statistics and from them computed the whole. So as another example of how this works, for 19 Rabīʿ II 864 (12 February 1460) the Dīwān al-Mawārīth recorded thirty-five deaths, and that is the only figure that we have for that day. We take this number and divide it by the average ratio of the Dīwān to the total, i.e., $(\frac{35}{.1916}) = 183$, and so by the process we get the estimated number of deaths for the many days in which we have only the figures from the Dīwān al-Mawārīth.⁴⁷ About 60% of our data is in fact the result of doing these calculations.

But there is another source of data, and the Dīwān was not the only agency that was doing the counting. From other sources we obtained the total counts for Mamluk Cairo as a whole (i.e., such as the 1153 deaths in the example above). The

Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:136–47; in translation by Popper, *History*, 4:90–100; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 16:130–47; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿi*, 2:357; ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nayl*, 6:74–83.

⁴⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:824; Ibn Taghrībirdī, “Ḥawādith,” fol. 104b.

⁴⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:141.

⁴⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:137.



other agency that counted fatalities was the collection of what were called *muṣallāt* (oratories) around the city of Mamluk Cairo. A *muṣallā* was an open place for prayer with ceremonial scope more limited than that of a mosque. In many cases it was not a building but rather an open area that may or may not have had some kind of enclosing structure.⁴⁸ The bodies of plague victims, wrapped (*takfīn*) in simple white cloth (*kafan*), were brought to these oratories where a final blessing took place, after which the bodies were taken outside of the city gates for inhumation. This blessing itself (the *janāzah*) was in general a rather short process, a few minutes only, but at the peak of these plague outbreaks it became a very rushed and hectic affair, with bodies stacked up in rows and blessed hastily.⁴⁹ According to our sources, there were fourteen of these oratories in (Mamluk) Cairo during the early 1400s and some seventeen oratories in the late fifteenth century.⁵⁰ Most of them appear to have been located at either city gates (e.g., Bāb al-Naṣr, Bāb al-Wazīr, Bāb al-Maḥrūq, Bāb al-Qal‘ah), mosques (al-Azhar, al-Ḥākīm), or markets (al-Biyāṭurah, the Farriers’ Market): presumably anywhere there was sufficient space not claimed by structures and crowds of people.⁵¹ The one *muṣallā* that is most often referred to in the course of these two outbreaks was that of the Bāb al-Naṣr at the northern end of Fatimid Cairo.

Just as the Dīwān al-Mawārīth’s fatality numbers were fractions of the whole, there was also a mathematical relationship—a ratio—between the individual oratories and the sum of all the oratories in Mamluk Cairo. In the same manner in which we derived ratios from partial and full counts above, we also calculated ratios for specific oratories (the Bāb al-Naṣr oratory in particular) and then applied those ratios to derive comprehensive figures for Mamluk Cairo. As was the case with the Dīwān’s ratio with the whole, the bureaucrats and the chroniclers were also interested in the oratory ratios. For example, Ibn Taghribirdī’s attention was drawn to one clerical worker’s fairly accurate estimation of the average ratio

⁴⁸R. Hillenbrand, “Muṣallā,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 7:658–60.

⁴⁹Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 14:341.

⁵⁰Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:827; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:141.

⁵¹Other *muṣallāt* in Mamluk Cairo included one near the mosque of Ibn Jibās (south of Bāb Zuwaylah): see Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā‘iẓ wa-al-i‘tibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār* (Būlāq, 1270/1853–54), 4:273; Āl Malik at Suwayqah al-Ramlah: see al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:192; a *muṣallā* near the Māridānī mosque: see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’*, 1:480. For areas outside of Mamluk Cairo, three *muṣallāt* are mentioned: Zāwiyat al-Khuddām in Ḥusayniyah: see Ibn Taghribirdī, “Ḥawādith,” fol. 104b, *Muṣallā al-īd*, later called *Muṣallā al-amwāt*: see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “A Circassian Mamluk Suburb North of Cairo,” *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* (Dec. 1978): 17; Khūlān in one of the two Qarāfatah: see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’*, 1:480; al-Andalus in the Qarāfah al-Ṣuḡhrā: see al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4:333. Ibn Taghribirdī also notes that there were eleven *muṣallāt* inside Mamluk Cairo during the 841/1438 outbreak; see Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 15:104.



of the deaths per day recorded at the Bāb al-Naṣr oratory to the deaths/day for all the dead for Mamluk Cairo.⁵²

The figure calculated by this minor bureaucrat, relayed to us by Ibn Taghrībirdī, turns out to be quite precise. From the ratio it seems clear that these counters of corpses could be quite thorough. The Mamluk-era interest in ratios may be convenient for quantitative history today, but we are in the dark as to the precise motivation for counting corpses at these oratories. We do know—from evidence of the sultan’s orders—that it was a high priority for the regime. Zayn al-Dīn al-Ustadār, a high-ranking amir under orders from the sultan, apparently organized the process of hiring counters and sending them out to every one of the oratories in Mamluk Cairo.⁵³ That someone really cared about the process of counting the dead is indicated by factors such as the use of independent witnesses, i.e., cases in which counts were made by different, independent observers and then compared with each other for accuracy.⁵⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī notes that at an oratory count at the beginning of April 864/1460, when the plague was at its worst, there were three or more independent persons and/or groups conducting the count. Bureaucratic officialdom was also on display that day, as he describes for us the scene of bureaucrats lining up at the Bāb al-Naṣr oratory to do their counting, with tables, pens, and paper, then working away at the numbers as bodies were lined up along the gate in a low row.⁵⁵

The Urban Setting and the Urban Boundaries

In order to estimate mortality, we first have to quantify the susceptible human population, i.e., the size of the urban population for which the dead were counted, meaning the population of Cairo. But at the outset we are faced with a problematic question: Which Cairo are we talking about? It’s clear that there was more than one Cairo, and that there were in fact multiple urban entities sharing this physical and mental space in the 1400s.

Michael Dols worked on this problem and he broke the urban landscape down into three units of increasing scale: Fatimid Cairo, Mamluk Cairo, and Greater Cairo.⁵⁶ Dols’ three-fold scheme is ideal for our study because Dols’ purpose was the same as ours, to estimate plague mortality, and he was concerned with the reference points and demarcations used by the Mamluk-era chroniclers as they drew boundaries within which they defined the scale of human loss. The map

⁵²Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:140; idem, “Ḥawādith,” fol. 104b.

⁵³Ibn Taghrībirdī, “Ḥawādith,” fol. 104b.

⁵⁴Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:141; Popper, *History*, 4:95.

⁵⁵Popper, *History*, 18:71.

⁵⁶See Dols, “Mortality,” 403, and the maps he used in Popper, *Systematic Notes*, 1:19–37.



below takes in the full compass of all three Cairos, Greater Cairo at its furthest extent, and then inside that Mamluk Cairo, within which was the smaller unit of Fatimid Cairo. Fatimid Cairo is not shown on this map, but it takes up the north-east quadrant of the space defined as Mamluk Cairo.

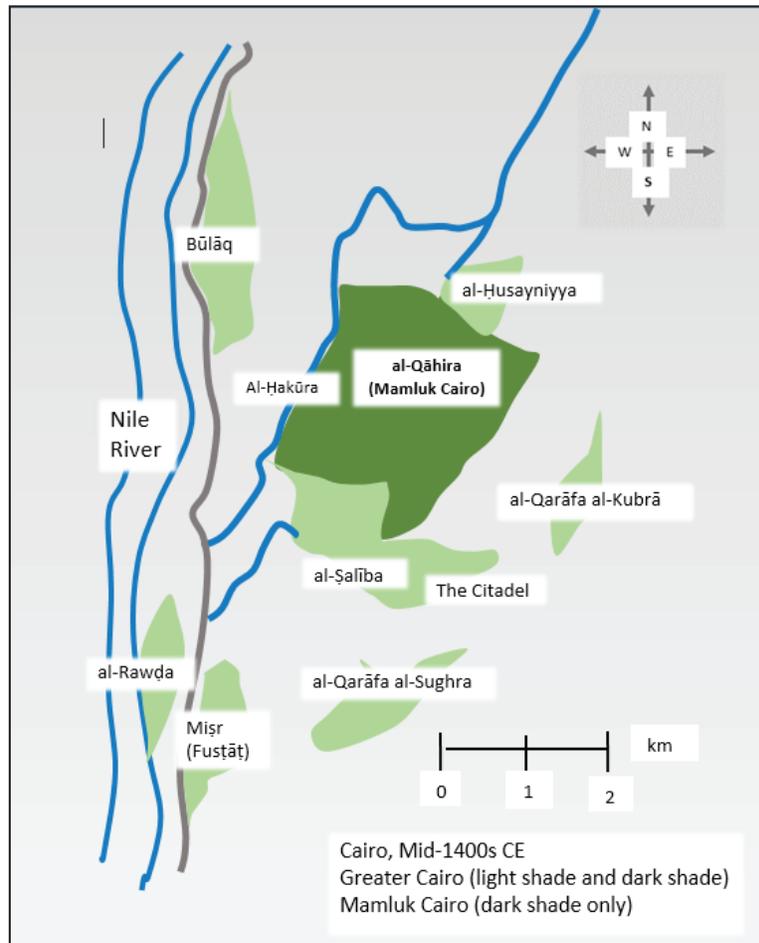


Fig. 3. Map of Greater Cairo, with Mamluk Cairo shown in the center

Greater Cairo

Greater Cairo is, in a sense, nothing more than a term of convenience used by Dols to refer collectively to the scattered and separate areas around Mamluk Cairo.⁵⁷ Whether or not the medieval inhabitants of Cairo considered these areas as a

⁵⁷Dols, "Mortality," 403.



single urban unit is not entirely clear in the sources, but there was at least an expression used for the area as a whole: “al-Qāhirah wa-ẓawāhiriḥā,” Cairo and its outskirts.⁵⁸ Anecdotally, the concept of Greater Cairo as a single unit managed to capture the attention—and spleen—of the seventeenth-century Jean de Thevenot. He complains about the concept in his travelogue as he recounts walking and measuring the inner urban areas from end to end. Ridiculous, he called the idea, like lumping into his home city Paris all of her banlieues, her outlying suburbs. He launches a minor diatribe about those who use the fictive concept of Greater Cairo to boast of the city’s size, noting the vast stretches of intervening and often empty spaces between the urban areas of Būlāq, Fuṣṭāṭ, and Cairo proper. Nevertheless, this bears on a notion of Greater Cairo in the 1400s, a concept that is very important for our analysis, as this “al-Qāhirah wa-ẓawāhiriḥā” is used on a number of occasions as the largest of the units for which mortality was counted. So the chronicles will at times give the largest of mortality figures and specify that this counted for this area as a whole. What we will do below is to use the plague numbers in reverse in order to use them to quantify the relative demographic concentration of this largest unit.

The following are the areas included as Greater Cairo, as mentioned for one or both of the two plague outbreaks:

1. Al-Qarāfatayn (the Two Cemeteries): al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā north of the Muqāṭṭam hills, and al-Qarāfah al-Ṣuḡhrā, south close to Fuṣṭāṭ, to the east/southeast of Mamluk Cairo
2. Būlāq on the Nile northwest of Cairo
3. Miṣr (i.e., Fuṣṭāṭ), Old Cairo, to the south
4. Ḥusayniyah to the north of Mamluk Cairo

Fatimid Cairo

The smallest of our three units is Fatimid Cairo, the original city founded by the Fatimids in 358/969. It was rectangular in shape, approximately 160 hectares in extent, and measured 1.45 km north to south and 1.1 km east to west.⁵⁹ Fatimid Cairo was contained within the much larger unit that Dols defined as Mamluk Cairo.

⁵⁸Examples of this usage can be found in Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr*, 9:200; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirah*, 14:340, 16:145; idem, “Ḥawādith,” fol. 105a; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:826–27.

⁵⁹Raymond, “Al-Maqrīzī’s *Khiṭaṭ* and the Urban Structure of Cairo,” *Institut d’Etudes et de Recherches Sur Le Monde Arabe et Musulman*, 166–67, for maps, and Jean-Claude Garcin, “Toponymie et topographie urbaines médiévales à Fustat et au Caire,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient/Journal de l’histoire économique et sociale de l’Orient* 27, no. 2 (1984): 136, 145.



Mamluk Cairo

The area for which we quantify population and plague fatalities is Mamluk Cairo, intermediate in size between Greater Cairo and Fatimid Cairo. The boundaries of this area have been studied in some detail by a number of scholars, among them William Popper, Michael Dols, Jean-Claude Garcin, Andre Raymond, and Julien Loiseau.⁶⁰ In Loiseau's maps, the area we define as Mamluk Cairo can be seen to measure some 3.25 km north to south, with a slanted and uneven east-west extent averaging about two kilometers.⁶¹

A digression here is essential as it brings us to the most important question about these three Caicos and that is: which one of them was al-Qāhirah, the title used in our sources?⁶² Was al-Qāhirah simply the old Fatimid Cairo, or was it something larger than that? Was it Mamluk Cairo? This is a tricky question and requires some exploration of the subject. The usage of the word al-Qāhirah and the boundaries intended by the word varied not just in the long term (969–1517), but perhaps also in the short term, i.e., over the course of the fifteenth century. The Mamluk-era sources may also have intended more than one thing when they used this term, the meaning changing according to the context and subject matter of their writings. As such, it may be that the meaning of al-Qāhirah in the plague narratives was specific to plagues, and did not apply to other contexts.

When the Ayyubids replaced the original Fatimid mud-brick walls with stone, they also extended those walls to the south, stretching to the new citadel.⁶³ Sultan Qalāwūn extended these walls farther, and it seems that some Mamluk-era writers clearly conceived of al-Qāhirah as an urban zone larger than Fatimid Cairo, i.e., extending far beyond the original Fatimid boundaries.⁶⁴ Whether or not that was true of our 1400s sources, what is clear from al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, etc., and also from the temporal/spatial distribution of plague fatalities, is that the scope of surface area referenced by the usage of the word al-Qāhirah, which was the word they used for counting plague fatalities, was much larger than the 160 hectares of Fatimid Cairo. The apparent fact is that the boundaries of al-Qāhirah

⁶⁰ Julien Loiseau, "Reconstruire la maison du sultan," in *Ruine et recomposition de l'ordre urbain au Caire (1350–1450)*, IFAO Études urbaines 8 (Cairo, 2010), 2:591–93, 600–21; Andre Raymond, "Cairo's area and population in the early fifteenth century," *Muqarnas* (1984): 21–31; Jean-Claude Garcin, "Note Sur La Population Du Caire En 1517," in *Grandes villes méditerranéennes du monde musulman médiéval* (Rome, 2000), 205–13; Popper, *Systematic Notes*, Part 1, Maps 5–12.

⁶¹ Loiseau, "Reconstruire," 2:592–93.

⁶² See references to Mamluk Cairo as found in Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 9:200; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirah*, 14:340, 16:145; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 4:826–27.

⁶³ Andre Raymond, *Cairo*, trans. Willard Wood, (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 83–90.

⁶⁴ Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Al-Rawḍah al-Bahīyah al-Zāhirah fī al-Khiṭaṭ al-Muʿizzīyah al-Qāhirah*, ed. Ayman Fuʾād Rashīd (Cairo, 1996), 19–20; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 1:44.



within which the dead were registered (by the *Dīwān al-Mawārith*), collected (at the *muṣallāt* [oratories]), and counted, encompassed most of the area south of Bāb Zuwaylah and west of the Cairo Canal, al-Khalij al-Miṣrī.

Raymond, Garcin, and Loiseau refer to the area west of the Cairo Canal as the western zone (*Exterieur Ouest*) and the area south of Bāb Zuwaylah as the southern zone. Raymond has studied the extent of the built-up areas (areas of high population density, ~ 400 persons per hectare) and estimated that these areas measured about 266 hectares for the southern zone and 100 hectares for the western zone.⁶⁵ If one adds to this Raymond's estimate for Fatimid Cairo's built-up area (153 hectares), the total built-up urban area of these three is 519 hectares. Excepting a couple of small subsections (al-Ṣalībah in the south, and al-Ḥakūrah to the west), these 519 hectares were the surface area intended by the word of al-Qāhirah in the plague narratives, even if al-Qāhirah meant something else (like Fatimid Cairo) in other contexts.⁶⁶ Compelling evidence makes this case. One example of this evidence is the fact that 50% of the oratories of al-Qāhirah were in fact outside of Fatimid Cairo (the Mu'minī oratory and the Biyāṭurah oratory south of Bāb Zuwaylah).

⁶⁵In a number of studies, Andre Raymond measured the built-up area within these confines and concluded upon painstaking examination that it was about 519 hectares. His are the boundaries of the plague narratives with the only exceptions being Ṣalībah in the south and al-Ḥakūrah in the west. Our sources indicate these two areas were not included in the mortality counts of Mamluk Cairo. Al-Ḥakūrah, in the area that Raymond called the "western zone" (to the west of the Khalij al-Miṣrī), seems to have been a non-residential area, more or less what is proposed by the meaning of this word, i.e., a garden. This area in which al-Ḥakūrah seems to be located is in what Raymond calls the "western zone" that lay between the Khalij al-Miṣrī and the Khalij al-Naṣirī with the observation that its built-up area measured some hundred hectares. The case of al-Ḥakūrah (the word meaning "vegetable garden") is made more difficult as its precise location is hard to identify. William Popper noted it on one of his maps as a smallish sector just west of the Khalij al-Miṣrī. Ṣalībah, however, was a densely inhabited area, first and foremost a street, but also a neighborhood in the section of the city that Andre Raymond called "the southern zone." Ṣalībah seems to have been a subset of this southern zone, which in its largest extent was the whole area (measuring about 226 hectares according to Raymond) from Bāb Zuwaylah at the southern end of Fatimid Cairo down to the citadel in the southeast and the Qanāṭir al-Sibā' in the southwest. For the areas of the southern zone (266 ha) and the western zone (100 ha) see Raymond, "La Population," 206. The scope of the Ṣalībah area seems to have been relatively small, some 25 hectares to the southwest of the Mu'minī oratory in Mīdān Rumaylah across from the citadel.

⁶⁶Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 4:826, lists al-Ḥakūrah and Shāri' al-Ṣalībah as being outside the bounds of the city proper: as he states, "This [death toll] did not include the people of the areas [neighborhoods/environs] outside of Cairo such as al-Ḥakūrah, al-Ḥusayniyah, Būlāq, al-Ṣalībah, Madīnat Miṣr (Fusṭāt), the Cemeteries, and the desert."



So for this article and the quantification of plague mortality, our unit of analysis is the 519 hectares of Mamluk Cairo and al-Qāhirah as used in the plague narratives, which refers to Mamluk Cairo and not just Fatimid Cairo.

Fatimid Cairo	153 hectares
Western Zone	100 hectares
Southern Zone	266 hectares
Total Surface area	519 hectares
Subtract al-Ṣalībah	- 19 hectares
Mamluk Cairo (“collection area”)	= 500 hectares ⁶⁷

Given an approximate surface area of 500 hectares, we can multiply this area by Raymond’s estimated population density of 400 persons per hectare, and this gives us a total urban population of 200,000 as shown in the schematic equations here.⁶⁸

Extent of collection area (Mamluk Cairo)	500 hectares
Population density of collection area	400 persons/hectare
	500 hectares x 400 $\frac{\text{persons}}{\text{hectare}}$
Population within collection area:	= 200,000 persons

Lastly, what we will do with this urban population estimate is to estimate mortality. For example, if our death toll for one of these outbreaks was 50,000 then the total mortality would be:

$$\text{Mortality for al-Qāhirah: } \frac{\text{number of deaths within collection area}}{\text{population within collection area}} = \frac{50,000}{200,000} = 25\%$$

In reality, 200,000 is only a rounded estimate. The true population level fluctuated substantially over time and was impacted by plague depopulation itself.⁶⁹

⁶⁷We measured the area of al-Ṣalībah using Raymond’s map (“La Population,” 204) and comparing it with the details provided in Julien Loiseau, “La Porte du vizir: programmes monumentaux et contrôle territorial au Caire à la fin du XIVe siècle,” *Histoire urbaine* 1 (2004): 7, to determine the approximate boundaries of the Ṣalībah area.

⁶⁸This rounded urban population estimate is in fact the estimate of Raymond and Garcin for the year 1517 (Garcin estimates Greater Cairo’s population to be 270,000; see Garcin, “Note sur,” 213.) However, Raymond’s figure for the early 1400s is substantially lower, in fact as low as 150,000. As a scholarly verdict on Cairo in the early 1400s, Raymond consigns to it a population of merely 150,000 to 200,000, whereas Loiseau pronounces it a ruin; see Raymond, “Cairo’s Area,” 30; Julien Loiseau, “Les demeures de l’empire: Palais urbains et capitalisation du pouvoir au Caire (XIVe-XVe siècle),” *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l’enseignement supérieur public* 36, no. 1 (2005).

⁶⁹Fluctuations haven’t stopped some from trying to pin down urban population with precision: Dols estimated urban population (Mamluk Cairo, roughly 300,000 and Greater Cairo, 450,000) based on William Popper’s mapping of Cairo’s built-up areas. See Dols, “General Mortality,”



Quantitative Analysis (Results)

833/1430

Total deaths in Mamluk Cairo over 95 days ⁷⁰	93,040
Deaths due to natural causes ⁷¹	-1,710
	=91,330
Population of Mamluk Cairo: 200,000	
Mortality of the plague outbreak	$(\frac{91,330}{200,000}) = 46\%$

864/1460

Total deaths in Mamluk Cairo over 117 days	83,057
Deaths due to natural causes	2,106
	= 80,951
Population of Mamluk Cairo: 200,000	
Mortality of the plague outbreak	$(\frac{80,951}{200,000}) = 40\%$

422–23, and idem, *Black Death*, 193–204, which contain detailed discussions of population density whereby Dols estimates an urban population density of 348 persons per hectare. Dols compares his figure to other estimates of urban density, which range from 200 persons per hectare to 400 persons per hectare. Using Popper's *Systematic Notes*, 23, he then estimates the area of Mamluk Cairo as 864 hectares and calculates 864ha x 348 persons/ha = 300,672 concluding that this was the population of Mamluk Cairo in the 1400s; see *Black Death*, 193–204; idem, "General Mortality," 401–2. Since Dols, mapping of the urban space has been greatly revised by Andre Raymond, Jean-Claude Garcin, and Julien Loiseau. For their analyses, see Garcin, "Toponymie," 134–45. Raymond notes that much of Dols' 864 hectares was in fact not densely populated urban space but rather was composed of ponds, gardens, cemeteries, etc., and that is how Raymond arrives at the much lower figure of 519 hectares. The fact that Raymond's population density (400 persons/ha) is higher than that of Dols (348 persons/ha) makes sense if one takes into account Raymond's painstaking mapping efforts and his careful attention to what was inhabited and what was not. For additional discussion of population and population density, see Garcin, "Toponymie," 134–45. Raymond's work was based on al-Maqrīzī's fifteenth-century descriptions of Cairo's urban space. Raymond determined the relative population densities from the locations and numbers of caravanserais, markets, bath houses, mosques, and housing concentrations (*hārah*) in his efforts to measure the extent of built-up areas and the relative concentrations of population; see "La Population," 203, 211–12; idem, "Al-Maqrīzī's Kḥiṭaṭ," 146–49; idem, "Cairo's area and population," 22, 24, 29–30. In similar fashion Julien Loiseau has analyzed Cairo's urban space and measured changes in population density over time after the Black Death; see *Reconstruire*, 117–40.

⁷⁰Chroniclers report a cumulative of 100,000 for Mamluk Cairo, which Ibn Taghribirdī considers a realistic number. See Popper's translation of Ibn Taghribirdī's *Nujūm* in Popper, *History of Egypt*, 18:76.

⁷¹CDR (Crude death rate) estimated as 32.5 out of 1000.



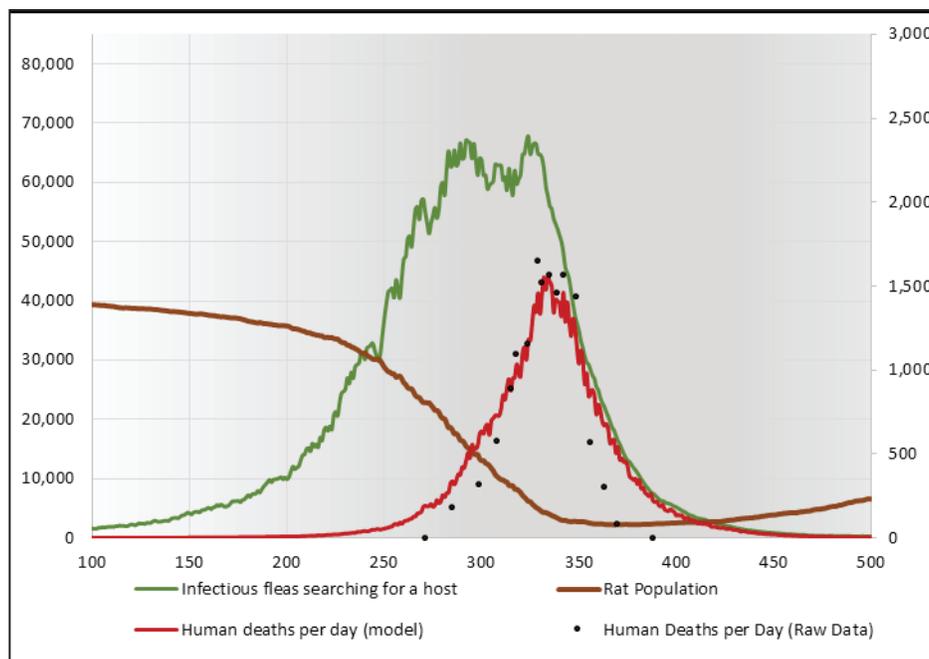


Fig. 4. 864/1460 Plague Outbreak in Cairo (rat and flea numbers estimated from human casualties).

The mortality numbers produced by these data collectors, examiners, and transmitters are shown in the tables below. Tables show the original data for the rates of fatality (deaths per day) as gathered from the two primary sources, the *Dīwān al-Mawārith* and the oratories—and our methods for calculating ratios are indicated in the tables as well. We examined the data from this analysis via our adaptation of the Keeling and Gilligan plague model whereby we fit parameters of our equations for bubonic plague to the historical data provided by Ibn Taghrībirdī and others.⁷² Via integration of these curves for fatality rates (deaths per day) over time in days, we computed the estimated cumulative mortality for both epidemics and from this estimated the likely mortality for both outbreaks. A plot of our simulation for the 864/1460 outbreak is shown above.

⁷²Via the Solver function in Excel. See notes on the use of Solver in nonlinear regressions in Gerdi Kemmer and Sandro Keller, “Nonlinear least-squares data fitting in Excel spreadsheets,” *Nature protocols* 5, no. 2 (2010): 267–81. For the use of Solver in nonlinear regression, see Daniel Harris, “Nonlinear least-squares curve fitting with Microsoft Excel Solver,” *Journal of chemical education* 75, no. 1 (1998): 119–21; Angus M. Brown, “A step-by-step guide to non-linear regression analysis of experimental data using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet,” *Computer methods and programs in biomedicine* 65, no. 3 (2001): 943–44; Harvey J. Motulsky and Lennart A. Ransnas, “Fitting curves to data using nonlinear regression: a practical and nonmathematical review,” *The FASEB journal* 1, no. 5 (1987): 365–74.



Table: The 833/1430 Plague Outbreak in Mamluk Cairo

Sources for the 1430 plague: see al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:822–26; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’*, 9:200; ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nayl*, 267–68; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 14:340–43; al-Biqā‘ī, *Izhār*; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:113, Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 14:339–43.

Date 1429/1430 CE	Fatalities registered by the Dīwān of Cairo	The ratio of the Dīwān fatalities to the total fatalities is derived here	The ratio for the Dīwān fatalities to the total fatalities is applied here	Fatalities counted at the Bāb al-Naṣr Oratory	The ratio for Bāb al-Naṣr fatalities to the total fatalities is derived here	The ratio for Bāb al-Naṣr fatalities to the total fatalities is applied here	Total Fatalities as reported by all 14 oratories	MAMLUK CAIRO	Source of the Final Result
		The average of the three calculations below is .3111	The figures below have been divided by .3111		The result of the calculation below is .3563	The figures below have been divided by .3563	Here are reports of all of Cairo		
28 Dec	12		$12/3111 = 39$					39	Dīwān
11 Jan	16		$16/3111 = 51$					51	Dīwān
25 Jan	48		$48/3111 = 154$					154	Dīwān
26 Jan	100		$100/3111 = 321$					321	Dīwān
9 Feb	300		$300/3111 = 964$					964	Dīwān
24 Feb	400		$400/3111 = 1286$					1286	Dīwān
28 Feb	390	$390/1200 = .33$					1200	1200	All Oratories
3 Mar	350	$350/1200 = .29$					1200	1200	All Oratories
5 Mar	400	$400/1263 = .32$		450	$450/1263 = .3563$		1263	1263	All Oratories
6 Mar				505		$505/3563 = 1417$		1,417	Bāb al-Naṣr
9 Mar				800		$800/3563 = 2245$		2,245	Bāb al-Naṣr
11 Mar				1030		$1030/3563 = 2891$		2,891	Bāb al-Naṣr
2 Apr							0	0	



Table: The 864/1460 Plague Outbreak in Mamluk Cairo

The primary sources for the 1460 plague are: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:136–47, in translation Popper, *History*, 4:90–100; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 16:130–47; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:357; 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nayl*, 6:74–83.

Date 1460 CE	From the Diwān of Cairo	Ratio of Diwān to total (.1916) is derived	The ratio of Diwān to total (.1916) is applied	Bāb al-Naṣr	Mu'minī Oratory	Al-Azhar Oratory	Biyāṭurah Oratory	Total Fatalities of the four main	Total Fatalities as reported by all 17	MAMLUK CAIRO	Source
25 Jan										0	
12 Feb	35		35/.1916 = 183							183	Diwān
22 Feb	60		60/.1916 = 313							313	Diwān
3 Mar	110		110/.1916 = 574							574	Diwān
10 Mar	170		170/.1916 = 887							887	Diwān
13 Mar	209		209/.1916 = 1132							1,091	Diwān
19 Mar	235	235/1153 = .2038							1153	1,153	All oratories
24 Mar	316		316/.1916 = 1649						1910	1,649	Diwān
26 Mar					417/.27 = 1521					1,521	Mu'minī oratory
30 Mar	280	280/1561 = .1794	280/.1916 = 1461	380						1561	Greater Cairo
3 Apr	280		280/.1916 = 1461	570						1,461	Diwān
6 Apr	300		300/.1916 = 1566	570		396	470			1,566	Diwān
13 Apr				350	280	600	204	1434		1434	4 oratories
20 Apr				190	137	130	114	571		571	4 oratories
27 Apr				95	90	65	50	300		300	4 oratories
4 May				25	30	5	23	83		83	4 oratories
22 May									0	0	



Quantitative Analysis (Discussion)

The last part of this study is our assessment of these quantifications. We have concluded that our methods have produced solid estimates of mortality and our discussion on the next few pages details the reasons and analyzes the primary facets of these results, concluding with an analysis of other plague outbreaks (one for 819/1416 and the other for 822/1419) that have a strong bearing on our case for this methodology. Our hope is to continue the work of quantifying the long series of plague outbreaks of the second plague pandemic in Egypt.

Evidence of the Relationship between Numbers (Dīwān and Oratories)

Reliable statistics like these can display consistently ordered patterns whereas unreliable estimates—or gross exaggerations—do so only rarely and by coincidence. If these chroniclers were really making wild guesses for their numbers, we should not expect to see these patterns.

Evidence that these were actual counts of plague deaths can be seen in the mathematical relationships between the data points. The ratio of the daily deaths registered by the Dīwān al-Mawārīth to the total daily deaths for Mamluk Cairo stayed more or less the same over the course of each outbreak. The best way to describe this ordered pattern is to visualize it. The graphs below compare and bring together two data streams, one from the oratories' total deaths per day and the other from the total deaths per day as derived from the Dīwān al-Mawārīth.

Ratios of the Dīwān *ta'rif* to the count by the oratories:

833/1430:	.33	.29	.32
864/1465:	.18	.20	



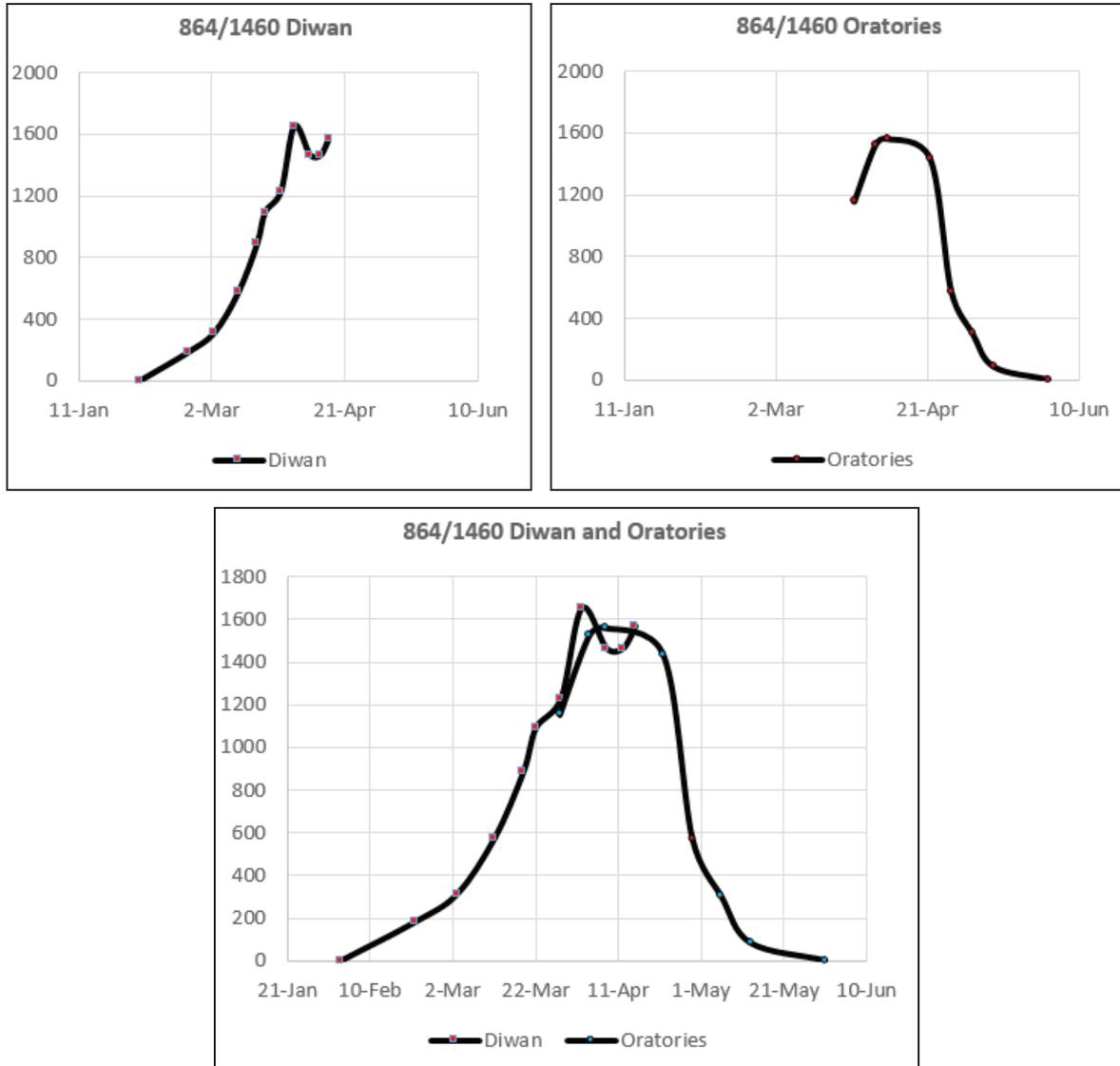


Fig. 5. Data Streams Compared



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For the most part, the same can be said of the ratios of deaths counted at individual oratories relative to the total deaths. Derived totals (from the Bāb al-Naṣr and Mu'minī oratories) and actual totals are shown in the graph below.⁷³

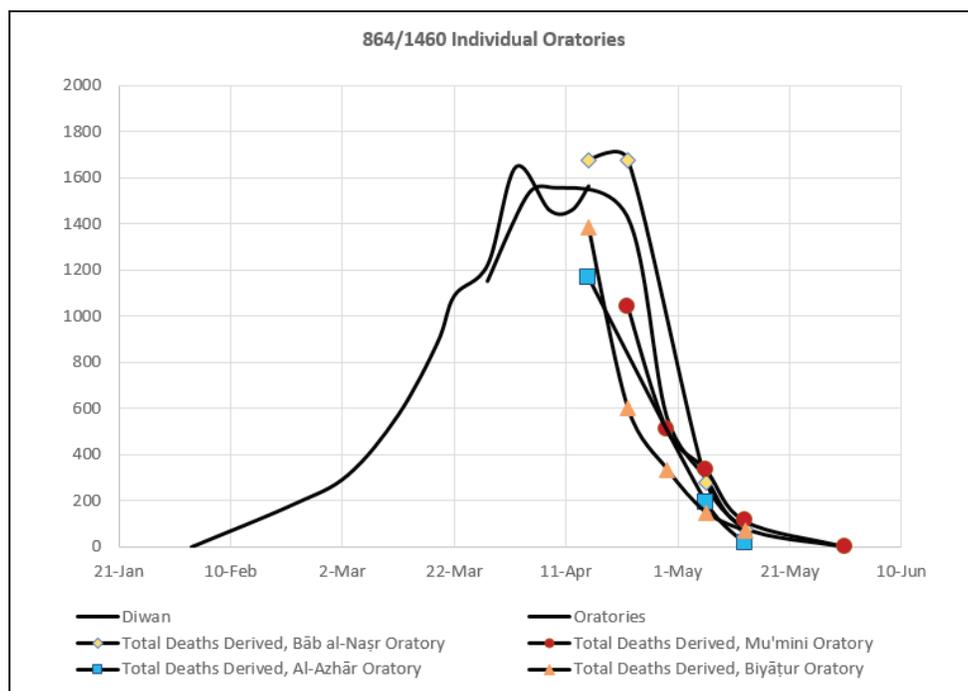


Fig. 6. Oratory Data Streams Compared

The same agreement between data streams (Dīwān al-Mawārith derived and oratories total) was tested via the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test (Z-score -1.342, P-value .180). The test indicated that these two sets came from the same set of data.⁷⁴

Test Statistic^a

	B – A
Z	-1.342 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.180

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on positive ranks.

⁷³The data point from the Bāb al-Naṣr Oratory, 29 April 1460, and the al-Azhar Oratory, 13 April 1460, were excluded as outliers.

⁷⁴This test was performed because the sample size was small and the normality assumption not satisfied.



Nevertheless, it should be added that as these epidemics reached their peaks, the *Dīwān* ceased to produce fatality numbers. Chroniclers note this phenomenon and make a logical observation: the *Dīwān* became overwhelmed when numbers reached a certain limit. Ibn Taghribirdī stresses this point for the 864/1460 outbreak.⁷⁵ However, for epidemics of lesser intensity, like the 819/1416 and 822/1419 outbreaks detailed below, the *Dīwān* continued to count the dead through the duration of the epidemic. The oratories, in general, continued their counts. The pattern seems logical as oratories could divide the labor, the data, into a more manageable count. Yet even these were overwhelmed at the outbreak's peak in 833/1430, which was by far the more severe of the two outbreaks—a death toll of some 12,000 was a 833/1430 peak.⁷⁶

Evidence of the Relationships between Numbers (Ratios with the Outskirts)

Broadening our scope and looking at the results for Greater Cairo (*al-Qāhirah wa-ḡawāhirihā*) we can see another layer of evidence that attests accuracy in the counting of the dead. Ordered relationships can be seen here as well, this time in ratios between Mamluk Cairo and Greater Cairo.⁷⁷ On two separate occasions (one for each outbreak) we have fatalities numbers for Mamluk Cairo and Greater Cairo on the same day and we can set these death tolls side by side and compare their ratios as shown here.⁷⁸

Date	Fatality Rate	Fatality Rate	Relationship	Ratio
833/1430	1286	2100	Mamluk Cairo : Greater Cairo	(.61)
864/1460	1517	2545	Mamluk Cairo : Greater Cairo	(.60)

We can also see consistency in this ratio of Mamluk Cairo to Greater Cairo by comparing our results with data from a very different source, this time not plague statistics, but rather property assessments. These assessments were made by the European traveler Leo Africanus.⁷⁹

⁷⁵Ibn Taghribirdī, “Ḥawādith,” fols. 104b–105a.

⁷⁶A guess at the peak fatality rate (12,600 deaths per day) is noted by al-Maqrizī for 18 March 833/1430; see *Al-Sulūk*, 4:827. This seems to have been a count at the gates of the city and not just the oratories.

⁷⁷Greater Cairo was defined above as Mamluk Cairo plus *Fuṣṭāṭ*, *Būlāq*, and other urban or quasi-urban spaces surrounding Mamluk Cairo.

⁷⁸Sources: for 833/1430: see al-Maqrizī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:825; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 14:339; idem, “Ḥawādith,” fol. 104b.

⁷⁹Garcin, “Note,” 207–10; see also Raymond’s discussion of these figures, “La Population,” 206.



Location	Number of Taxable Households
Al-Qāhirah (here, Fatimid Cairo)	8,000
Bāb Zuwaylah (southern Mamluk Cairo, possibly with part of al-Ṣalībah)	12,000
Bāb al-Lūq (western edge of Mamluk Cairo, possibly with part of al-Ḥakūrah)	3,000
Būlāq	4,000
Qarāfah	2,000
Rawḍah	1,500
Fuṣṭāṭ (estimated from plague data)	(5,060)
Total (Greater Cairo)	35,560

As explained above, Mamluk Cairo was composed of Fatimid Cairo, a southern sector, and a western sector. Here Fatimid Cairo is listed (8,000 households) while the southern area corresponds to Bāb Zuwaylah (12,000 households) and the western area to Bāb al-Lūq (3,000 households). The total for Mamluk Cairo is 23,000 and Greater Cairo totals 35,560—the figure for Fuṣṭāṭ is estimated from the ratio of average fatality rates (Fuṣṭāṭ Dīwān/Cairo Dīwān = .22) for the years 833/1430 and 1438/841.⁸⁰

⁸⁰Potentially one could argue that the area of the Bāb Zuwaylah sector called al-Ṣalībah and the part of Bāb al-Lūq that is called al-Ḥakūrah should both be subtracted from Mamluk Cairo's 23,000. These two subtractions would make the ratios slightly askew from one another, perhaps a ratio of .5 for the Leo Africanus Mamluk Cairo-Greater Cairo relationship. Dols, *Black Death*, 196, uses the same figure we do, 23,000 for Mamluk Cairo.



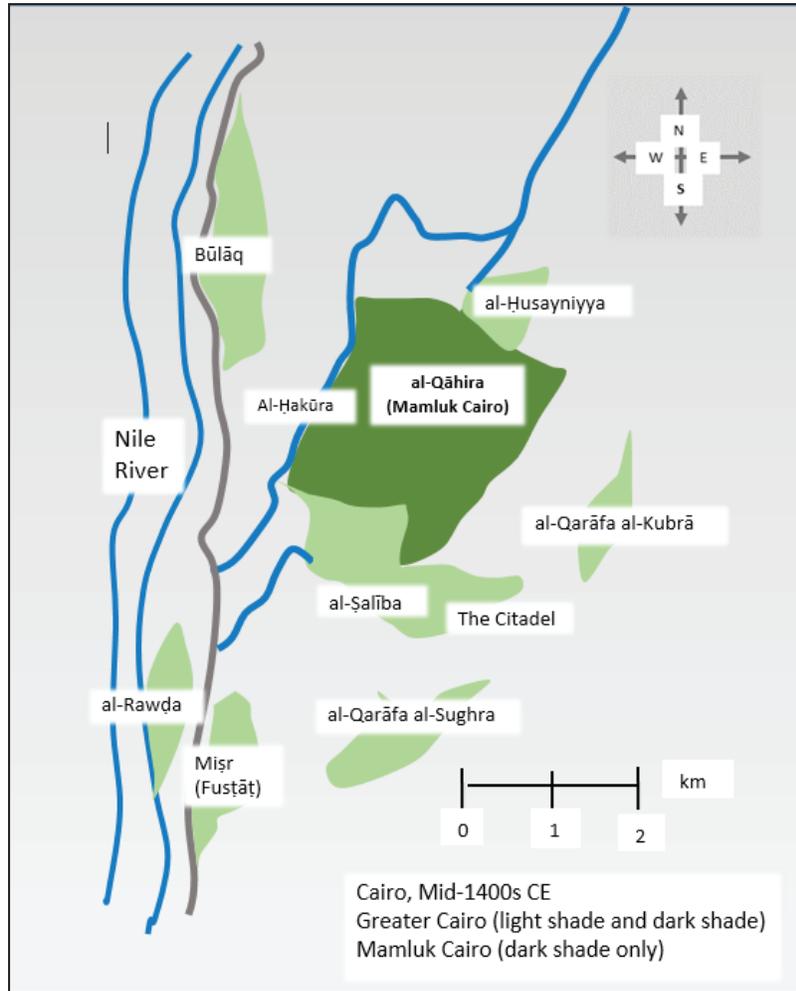


Fig. 3. (Repeated) Map of Greater Cairo, with Mamluk Cairo Shown in the Center

The closeness of the ratios (.65 to .60, less than 10% difference) indicates an ordered relationship.⁸¹

Count	Taxed Houses	Taxed Houses	Relationship	Ratio
922/1517	23,000	38,000	Mamluk Cairo : Greater Cairo	(.65)

⁸¹ Parenthetically, one fatality rate (300 dead/day) from the 864/1460 data set (for the *muṣallā* Zāwiya al-Khuddām in Ḥusayniyah) gives us an opportunity to estimate the potential size of Ḥusayniyah’s population relative to that of Greater Cairo, which is 300/2545, roughly .12.



Outbreak	Fatality Rate	Fatality Rate	Relationship	Ratio
833/1430	1286	2100	Mamluk Cairo : Greater Cairo	(.61)
864/1460	1517	2545	Mamluk Cairo : Greater Cairo	(.60)

Evidence from Earlier Outbreaks

Another way to test the validity of this historical data is to examine similar sets of data from other plague outbreaks in Mamluk Cairo. Ideal in this regard is the case of a plague outbreak in 822/1419 for which we have not only the daily record of deaths but the cumulative total deaths. As the daily rate and the cumulative deaths were recorded by the same *Dīwān al-Mawārith* that provided the numbers above, this seems like a perfect way of determining whether or not our figures were based upon actual death counts. The 822/1419 outbreak allows us to see the *Dīwān's* written figures from its *waraqat al-ta'rif* (daily register of deaths) from all causes plague or otherwise.⁸² The total deaths are listed in categories according to the deceased's gender, age, and legal status.⁸³ These figures are the cumulative deaths over an interval of sixty-eight days.

Table: (a) Rate of fatalities (registered by the *Dīwān al-Mawārith*)⁸⁴

Time in days since the start of the outbreak	Deaths per day registered (<i>al-ta'rif</i>)	Timing of registration
0	25	
5		<i>Dīwān</i> starts counting
15	50	
47	196	
73	77	<i>Dīwān</i> stops counting

⁸² Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:492.

⁸³ Regarding the biological aspects of plague, note the high percentage of children on this list. Children here account for some 70% of the victims (not counting slaves). This can be compared with a general medieval average for Europe of roughly 33% of the total population, with a range in some cases as high as 40 to 45%. This high percentage for children falls in line with the latest research showing that plague was “selective with respect to frailty.” Children and others with weaker immune systems were more vulnerable to plague; see Sharon N. DeWitte and James W. Wood, “Selectivity of Black Death mortality with respect to preexisting health,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 105, no. 5 (2008): 1436–41. For percentages of children in the population, see E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541–1971* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), Table A3.1, 4.

⁸⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:486–92.



Table: (b) Cumulative fatalities (as registered by the *Dīwān al-Mawārith*)

Category of deceased	Total deaths (from day 5 to day 73)
Men	1,065
Women	669
Children	3,969
Male slaves	544
Female slaves	1,369
Christians	69
Jews	32
Sum total	7,717

Comparison of calculated fatalities (from regression of [a] daily fatalities and registered fatalities [b]):

Source	822/1419 total fatalities
Cumulative deaths as reported by <i>Dīwān</i>	7,717
Cumulative obtained via regression of <i>Dīwān</i> fatality rates	8,454



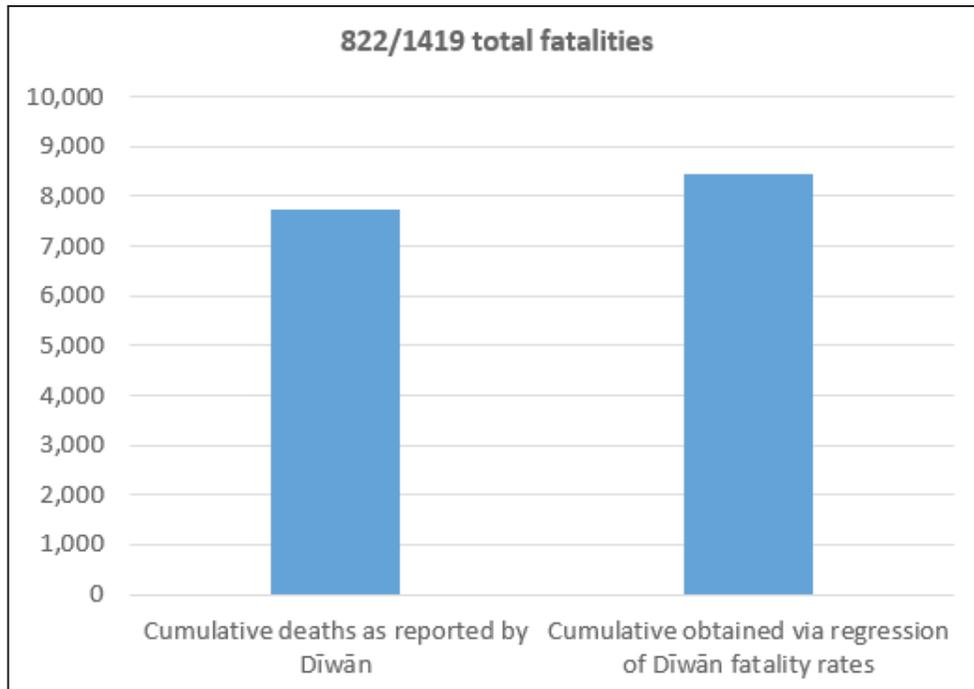


Fig. 7. Graph for 822/1419

As can be seen, the rate of fatalities yields a figure for the total deaths (7,117) that is in proximity to the recorded cumulative of fatalities. Since the fatality rate data consists of only four data points, some disagreement between the two is to be expected. From this perspective, something more can be said about the rounding of numbers. If the 822/1419 cumulative death toll is accurate enough, rounding it, even to the thousands, yields a figure that is a good indicator of mortality. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī and others record a rounded figure (8,000) that indicates an important point: rounding is not in all cases a matter of loose estimation, as it is equally likely to be the product of the process of recording and copying from one text to another.⁸⁵ With a reasonable degree of skepticism, there is a basis for accepting some of the rounded figures, depending on context. Context might include whether or not the number had originated with an eyewitness and whether or not it was accompanied by other data points.

Also in the context of rounding, al-Maqrīzī notes a cumulative death toll for this outbreak of some 10,000. He clarifies that this figure is a total for all of

⁸⁵Thus compare the Dīwān's cumulative of 7,717 with the cumulative (8,000) listed by Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn al-Ṣayrafī. These two take the number 7,717, round off the number of children to 4,000 and add 4,000 adults for an approximate total of 8,000. Rounding in this case is for convenience and not for invention. See also Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʿ*, 7:358; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat*, 4:56.



Mamluk Cairo's population and not just the deaths registered at the Dīwān al-Mawārith. From al-Maqrīzī's numbers we can calculate the Dīwān's ratio to the total as ($\frac{7,710}{10,000} = .77$) and this result matches up fairly well with al-Maqrīzī's reported ratio for the Dīwān al-Mawārith to the total (.72).⁸⁶ Furthermore, 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ's account for the 822/1419 outbreak includes a cumulative death total for Greater Cairo (al-Qāhirah wa-zawāhirihā) of approximately 20,000.⁸⁷ If we use the ratio (.605) for Mamluk Cairo to Greater Cairo (derived from 833/1430 and 864/1460) we see that the resulting figure for Mamluk Cairo (some 12,000) is close to al-Maqrīzī's reported 10,000 deaths for Mamluk Cairo.

Conclusion

The numbers we have examined for these two major outbreaks are either exact counts of plague deaths or rounded approximations of the same. Given that the population level for Mamluk Cairo was likely in the vicinity of 200,000, losses of this magnitude—some 90,000 for 833/1430 and about 80,000 for 864/1460—would surely have had a massive impact on Cairo's economy and society. Other studies are revealing that rural population losses were of a similar magnitude.⁸⁸ We hope that the results we have shown here will open the door to further studies of plague's urban and rural demography over the long term. The data is substantial enough to allow for a solid assessment of mortality over the course of the second plague pandemic.

⁸⁶It should be noted that the ratio of the Dīwān's figures to the total falls over the course of the 1400s (from .72 here to a low of about .09 in 919/1513). For the latter figure, see Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:301.

⁸⁷'Abd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nayl*, 4:38.

⁸⁸See Borsch, "Plague Depopulation and Irrigation Decay in Medieval Egypt," in *The Medieval Globe: Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World*, ed. Monica H. Green (Univ. of Western Michigan, 2014) http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/medieval_globe/1.



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Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate in the Thirteenth to the Early Fifteenth Centuries: Two Cases of Assimilation into the Muslim Environment

Introduction

One of the main characteristics and consequences of the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century were the wide-ranging mass migrations across the Eurasian terrain, resulting in the intermingling of different cultures and ethnic groups. With regard to the migration of tribal units, one of the most interesting questions is how they adapted to the changing conditions as they moved out of their usual climatic, cultural and ethnic habitats. This paper investigates the migration and adaptation of one specific tribe, the Oirats, to the Islamic environment of western Asia and Egypt, where it was dispersed throughout the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. Two different groups of the Oirats will be discussed, one located mainly in Khorasan (but also in Iraq in the mid-fourteenth century), and another which moved to the Mamluk Sultanate in the late thirteenth century. In a longer perspective, the outcome was the same—the Islamization and gradual assimilation to the surrounding environment. However, as will be shown, different strata of the Oirat tribe (tribal nobility vs. the broader tribal masses) assimilated in various periods in different ways and at different rates, depending on the various factors functioning as the triggers for these processes in the Ilkhanate realm and in the Mamluk Sultanate.

The Oirat tribe originated from the border zone between the steppe and the forest southwest of Lake Baikal. Despite the attempts of the tribe to withstand Chinggis Khan before the *quriltai* of 1206, it submitted peacefully to his son Jochi around 1207.¹ Due to its significant numerical strength and the strategic importance of the areas controlled by the tribe, Chinggis Khan warmly accepted its

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¹See my "Imperial Sons-in-law on the Move: Oyirad and Qonggirad Dispersion in Mongol Eurasia," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 22 (2016): 161–98, for a detailed discussion of Oirat origins, locations and general characteristics in the late twelfth–early thirteenth centuries.



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submission. Its nobility was connected to the Golden lineage through marriages and about four thousand Oirats were brought into the right wing of the Khan's army.² Unlike those tribes that did not submit peacefully and were dispersed among other military units, the Oirats were permitted to remain in their areas under the rule of their own commanders. Due to their connections to the Chinggisid clan, over time the representatives of Oirat elite families, followed in most cases by the broader masses of tribesmen, spread all over Mongol Eurasia. Around the mid-thirteenth century, the Oirat sons-in-law of the Chinggisids and the Oirat princesses, along with groups of Oirat tribesmen, were located in China, Mongolia, and the Ilkhanate. It is the last area which is of interest here. As the Persian sources were mainly interested in the nobility, the destinies of the Oirat masses, the existence of which one can trace only up to a very limited point, remain rather unclear. Luckily, the Mamluk chronicles provide us an opportunity to have a look at the (perhaps similar) assimilation processes of Oirat tribesmen in the Mamluk Sultanate.

Before introducing the historical data, it is necessary to stress a few points that have been neglected by researchers until now. First, the importance of the imperial sons-in-law (*güregens*) for the throne, as opposed to the *nökers* (personal companions of the khan) or the members of the royal household (*keshig*), was in general based mainly on the military power supplied to the ruling clan through the mechanism of matrimonial relations with the tribal unit, and less on the personal loyalty of the specific son-in-law to a specific member of the Golden *urugh* (lineage).³ Therefore, in most cases the tight connections between the Oirat tribe and the Chinggisids point indirectly to the presence of broader military units behind the *güregens*. It would be a mistake to overlook this fact, especially in the context of the tight Ilkhanid connections with the Oirats. Another overlooked fact is that the clan was of greater importance for Ilkhanid matrimonial politics than the tribe *per se*. As will be shown below, the Oirat careers and their loyalty to the Ilkhans were connected mainly to their own clan, not to the ethnic group as such, a fact seen especially clearly in the chaotic years after the collapse of the Ilkhanate in 1335. Additionally, analysis of the Oirats in the Mamluk Sultanate also relativizes somewhat the importance of *‘asabīyah*, an important term in

²See *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, ed. and trans. Igor de Rachewiltz (Leiden, 2004), 1:163–65, §239 (hereafter cited as *SH*); Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami' u't-tawarikh = Compendium of chronicles*, trans. and comm. W. M. Thackston (Cambridge, 1998), 1:55–56 (hereafter cited as *JT*); and my "Oyirad and Qonggirad" for the discussion of the first years of the Oirat relations with the Chinggisids.

³On the general importance of the imperial sons-in-law of the Golden *urugh* in the political architecture of Chinggisid Eurasia, a topic rather neglected, see my "Oyirad and Qonggirad."



Ibn Khaldūn's understanding of the ethnic dimension of the history of nomadic peoples.⁴

The first part of this article discusses the dispersion and partial assimilation of the tribesmen into areas of Greater Iran and later into the Mamluk Sultanate during the thirteenth century, while the second part concentrates on the processes of the Oirats' political, cultural and religious assimilation in these areas toward the early fifteenth century. It will be shown that as far as can be seen from the case of the upper stratum of the tribal nobility, the Oirats in the Ilkhanate preserved their identity and their homogeneity as long as they preserved their relation of symbiotic dependence (and notwithstanding the Islamization that might already have happened) with the ruling clan. The collapse of Ilkhanid rule in 1335 went hand in hand with the collapse of power of the Oirat elite, but the tribe continued to appear in the sources until at least the early fifteenth century, although never reaching the same heights of power as in the Ilkhanid period. The conversion to Islam of the Oirats in the Ilkhanate was a rather less relevant (if not negligible) factor in their subsequent assimilation (and certainly so until 1335–36). The situation with the Oirats in the Mamluk Sultanate was quite different, as the Oirat leadership was purged very quickly and the tribal mass was continuously exposed to the impacts of the assimilation processes, which led to their absorption into the host (Islamic) society. In this case the conversion to Islam was of primary importance in the loss of Oirat identity. However, despite all these processes, one can trace the Oirats in Syria until the mid-fourteenth century and in Cairo to at least the early fifteenth century. The reasons for this lie in the internal political processes of the Sultanate as well as characteristics of the tribesmen themselves, such as their beauty.⁵

Part I. 1230s–1299

The Oirats in Greater Iran

The presence of the Oirats in Western Asia can be seen as early as the late 1230s and early 1240s, when Arghun Aqa, the famous Oirat bureaucrat, was sent by

⁴One of the keynotes of Ibn Khaldūn's worldview was the idea of the importance of *'asabīyah*, the mechanism of social cohesion based on blood or ethnic closeness. "Group feeling results only from (blood) relationship or something corresponding to it...this is a natural urge in man, for as long as there have been human beings" (Walī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. F. Rosenthal [London, 1958], 1:264). As the following discussion shows, the importance of *'asabīyah* should not be exaggerated.

⁵See below.



the court in Qaraqorum to govern the conquered areas in the west.⁶ However, nothing is known about mass migrations of the Oirats to Iran until the western campaign of Hülegü Khan (1255–65). The Oirat military unit under the command of Buqa Temür, a grandson of Chinggis Khan and the son of Törelchi, son of the Oirat Qutuqa Beqi (an imperial son-in-law), was included into the right wing of the Khan's army, representing the interests of his mother Checheyigen, daughter of Chinggis Khan.⁷ Buqa Temür actively participated in the Mongol campaigns against the Ismailis and in the conquest of Baghdad.⁸ During the first two gen-

⁶Arghun Aqa, one of the most prominent and well-known Mongol bureaucrats of Mongol Eurasia, came to Greater Iran in the early 1240s, sent by the then regent of the empire, Töregene Khatun, widow of Ögedei Khan, to govern the western areas of the Mongol realm. Waṣṣāf clarifies that the areas under his control included Khorasan, Transoxania, Gurjistan, Sistan, Kerman, Fars, Iraq, Azerbaijan, and Rum (*Geschichte Waṣṣāf's: Persisch herausgegeben und Deutsch übersetzt von Hammer-Purgstall*, ed. Sibylle Wentker and Klaus Wundsam [Vienna, 2012], 3:131). His headquarters were in Ṭūs in Khorasan, and his personal estates were most probably in the famous meadow of Rādkān nearby. Indeed, Minorsky states that Arghun Aqa died at Rādkān of Ṭūs, and suggests that Arghun Aqa's own estates were in that district (Vladimir Minorsky, "Ṭūs," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 10:743). For more about him see Peter Jackson, "Arghun Aqa," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 2 (1986): 401–2; Georg Lane, "Arghun Aqa: Mongol Bureaucrat," *Iranian Studies* 32, no. 4 (1999): 459–82. About his family see my "New Light on Early Mongol Islamization: The Case of Arghun Aqa's Family" (forthcoming, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*).

⁷Alā' al-Dīn 'Atā Malik Juvaynī, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. John A. Boyle (Seattle, 1997), 607–8. *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah* calls him "amīr bas mu'tabar wa mu'zam" ("extremely respected and very powerful commander"), locating him as the fifth in the list of Hülegü Khan's commanders (Yihao Qiu, *Wuzu pu" yu Yilihanguo shi—"Wuzu pu" "Yilihanshixi" yizhu yu yanjiu* [Beijing, 2013], 188—hereafter *SP*). *Mu'izz al-Ansāb* calls him a "great, respected amir," locating him in the first rank of Hülegü Khan's commanders (*Mu'izz al-Ansāb*, trans. Sh. Kh. Vohidov [Almaty, 2006], 75—hereafter cited as *MA*). The status of the regiment under his command is not clear, but it was presumably not less than a *tümen*. At the same time, a contemporary account of the conquest by [pseudo] Ibn al-Fuwaṭī does not mention Buqa Temür (cf. Hend Gilli-Elewy, "Al-Ḥawādiṭ al-ḡāmi'a: A Contemporary Account of the Mongol Conquest of Baghdad, 656/1258," *Arabica* 58, no. 5 [2011]: 353–71). In general, the practice of Mongol rulers sending some military units in order to protect their interests during the ongoing campaigns was typical for the expansion period of Mongol rule in Eurasia.

⁸Buqa Temür is mentioned in *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* in the section concerning the war against the Ismailis as having moved within the right wing of the army (*JT*, 2:483). He is also listed as one of the few commanders who expressed a positive attitude towards the prolongation of the siege of the Ismaili fortress Maymun Diz in the late autumn of 1256 (*JT*, 2:484). Buqa Temür's important role in the conquest of Baghdad is also stressed. Together with Baiju Noyan and Su'unchaq Noyan, he is known to have gained control of the western side of Baghdad on the eve of Saturday, January 22, a few days after the siege had begun (*JT*, 2:495). After February 1, Buqa Temür was ordered to patrol the water routes from the city towards Madayin and Basra with a *tümen* of soldiers in order to prevent the enemies from escaping (*JT*, 2:496). According to Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, the Ajami Tower was seized on February 6 (John A. Boyle, "The Death of the Last 'Abbāsīd Caliph: A Contemporary Muslim Account," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 6 [1961]: 158). Indeed, his



erations of Hülegüid rule, his clan was connected matrimonially with the Golden lineage: both his daughters married Hülegü Khan and his son Jaqir married a princess.⁹ After Buqa Temür's death in 1260, however, the importance of his clan decreased.¹⁰ His descendants and the Oirat tribesmen under their command pre-

troops prevented the caliph's *dawādār*, Mujāhid al-Dīn Aybeg, from fleeing and forced him to return to the city (*JT*, 2:497). The title *dawādār* in the Abbasid and Mamluk times meant "the keeper of the royal inkwell" (David Ayalon, "Dawādār," *EI2*, 2:172). About a week after these events, some "learned 'Alids" came from the city of Hilla to the south of Baghdad, requesting Hülegü to appoint them a *shahna* (governor). Buqa Temür was sent by the Khan "to test the people of Hilla, Kufa and Wasit," cities to the south and southeast of Baghdad. This expedition had a punitive character, leading also to the subjugation of Wasit, Shushtar, and Basra (*JT*, 2:499–500; Boyle, "Last 'Abbāsīd Caliph," 161). About the *shahna* and his duties see A. K. S. Lambton, "The Internal Structure of the Saljuq Empire," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: The Saljuq and Mongol periods*, ed. John A. Boyle (Cambridge, 1968), 244–45.

⁹The information provided by Rashīd al-Dīn concerning the daughters and sisters of Buqa Temür is controversial. However, one can clearly state that two of the close female relatives of Buqa Temür (either his sisters or his daughters), Güyüg Khatun and Öljei Khatun, were married to Hülegü Khan (*JT*, 1:56; cf. *JT*, 1:57; *JT*, 2:352). *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah* does not give exact information about Güyüg Khatun, mentioning only that she is of the Oirat tribe, but claims Öljei Khatun to be a daughter of Törelchi, i.e., sister of Buqa Temür (*SP*, 186). *Mu'izz al-Ansāb* gives rather confusing information, according to which Öljei Khatun, though theoretically a daughter of Törelchi, was in fact a daughter of Chinggis Khan, and Güyüg Khatun was a daughter of one Buralji Güregen (*MA*, 74). According both to *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah* and *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, Hülegü married Güyüg Khatun before all other wives (*SP*, 185; *JT*, 2:472). It is also interesting that after the death of Hülegü, Öljei Khatun was taken by Abaqa (*SP*, 239; *JT*, 3:515). As mentioned in *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*, before he married her, Abaqa already had other wives, but she is mentioned first in the text of the source due to her fame, "chūn āvāzah-yi ū" (*SP*, 239). The issue of those two wives was a significant one. Güyüg Khatun gave birth to Jumghur, second son of Hülegü, and a daughter, Buluqan Aqa, while Öljei Khatun gave birth to the Khan's eleventh son Möngke Temür and three girls: Jamai, Menggügen, and Baba (*JT*, 2:476). Further, at least half of the matrimonial connections of Hülegü Khan's children with some Oirat background were made with Oirat counterparts, probably to strengthen the union of the two sides. Thus, Tolun Khatun, the elder wife of Jumghur, was his cousin of Oirat origin, being a daughter of Buqa Temür, the brother of Jumghur's mother Güyüg Khatun. After the death of Jumghur, Tolun Khatun was given to Hülegü Khan's fourth son, Tekshin (*JT*, 2:474). Jumghur's half brother, Möngke Temür, also married, among others, his close Oirat relative. His first wife was Öljei Khatun, daughter of Buqa Temür and niece of his mother, the elder Öljei Khatun (*JT*, 2:475). Jaqir Güregen, son of Buqa Temür, married Menggügen, daughter of the elder Öljei Khatun and thus his cousin (*SP*, 218; *JT*, 2:476).

¹⁰Regarding the death of Buqa Temür see *JT*, 2:503. After the death of Buqa Temür one finds almost no trace of his clan in Ilkhanid politics or military affairs. It should be remembered that the clan of Buqa Temür preserved intensive relations not only with the Hülegüid lineage, but also with the Jochids. Köchu Khatun, another daughter of Törelchi or of Buqa Temür (*JT*, 1:56), married Toqoqan, second son of Batu Khan. Two of her sons, Möngke Temür (1266–80) and Toda Möngke (1280–87), later became Khans of the Golden Horde in the formative years of the Ilkhanate (1260s–80s). The matrimonial connections of Buqa Temür's family with the Jochids made him



served their dwelling area between Mosul and Diyarbakir, in today's southeastern Anatolia (the first being their *kishlaq*, winter residence, and the second, apparently, their *yaylaq*, summer residence) until the events of early 1296 described below.¹¹

The next Oirat clan to rise to power in the Ilkhanate was the family of Arghun Aqa. Though he enjoyed a high status as administrator and governor long before the 1260s, his position (and subsequently that of his clan) probably rose even more during the rule of Abaqa Khan (1265–82).¹² His clan seems to have been deeply

a high-standing relative of the Jochids in the service of Hülegü. Granted that the relations between the Oirat descendants of Qutuqa Beqi and the Jochids were still strong, the high position of Buqa Temür and his family (especially of his sisters and daughters) could also be explained by Hülegü's need to balance the Jochids' influence on the Oirats in his realm. Taking into consideration the tense relations between the houses of Jochi and Hülegü since the latter's move westward, favoring the Oirats and nurturing relations with them became an issue of strategic significance for the Ilkhan. In fact, one should remember that the Oirats were granted by Chinggis Khan to Jochi back in the early 1200s, as the latter subdued them along with other forest tribes without bloodshed and waste of manpower. The connection between the two sides seems to have continued for decades, and it might be that Buqa Temür preserved some connections with the Jochid house. The Jochid units in the Hülegüid army in the 1250s are always mentioned together with the units of Buqa Temür. Thus, for example, while listing the princes and amirs who stayed with Hülegü on the Hamadan plain in the spring of 1257 while preparing for the Baghdad campaign, the chronicler explicitly mentions three Jochid princes, Quli, Balagha, and Tutar, along with Buqa Temür, among the attending amirs (*JT*, 2:487; John A. Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, ed. John A. Boyle [Cambridge, 1968], 5:346). This adds a new dimension to the allegedly suspicious deaths of all three aforementioned Jochid princes in the Hülegüid realm exactly in 1260, following or occurring at the time of Buqa Temür's death (Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History," 353).

¹¹*The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l-Faraj*, trans. and comm. A. W. Budge (repr. Amsterdam, 1976), 597–98; cf. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Tārīkh al-Hijrah* (Berlin, 1998), 309. See John M. Smith, Jr., "Mongol Nomadism and Middle Eastern Geography: Qīshlāqs and Tūmens," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden, 1999), 39–56, for a general discussion of the dwelling areas of the Mongol army in the Ilkhanate.

¹²Some observations support this conclusion. The first comes from analysis of the lists of Abaqa Khan's amirs in *Shu'ab-i Panjānah* and *Mu'izz al-Ansāb*. Arghun Aqa holds the first position there, whereas in the list of Hülegü's amirs, he holds the thirteenth place (*SP*, 191, 242; *MA*, 82). *Shu'ab-i Panjānah* calls him a "most respected great amir (Arghun Āqā amirī ba-ghāyat mu'tabar muzām būd)." At the same time, *Mu'izz al-Ansāb* does not mention him in the list of Hülegü's amirs. Besides this, Arghun Aqa fought alongside Abaqa (when the latter was still a prince), including in the Battle of Herat against Baraq, the ruler of the Chaghadaid Khanate, in 1270 (Lane, "Arghun Aqa," 479–80, and Michal Biran, "The Battle of Heart [1270]: A Case of Inter-Mongol Warfare," in *Warfare in Inner Asia*, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo [Leiden, 2002], 175–220 and esp. 191–96). Many of the Mongol administrators participated in military operations (e.g., Mas'ūd Beg, Shams al-Din Juvaynī), but in the time of Hülegü, Arghun Aqa is not known to have taken part in the Khan's wars.



rooted in Khorasan and the bordering areas since the time of the United Empire. This continued into the Hülegüid rule, the Oirat commanders from Arghun Aqa's family serving the Ilkhans and establishing multiple ties of marriage with them.¹³ Unlike the clan of Buqa Temür, the Oirat descendants of Arghun Aqa were connected with Khorasan.¹⁴ In parallel, the process of the gradual Islamization of the family took place. As some indications suggest, its gradual conversion to Islam started earlier than assumed before, in the first decades of Arghun Aqa's presence in Khorasan.¹⁵ In fact, it was this process that at least partly prepared the ground for the conversion of Ghazan Khan (and subsequently the Islamization of

¹³Arghun Aqa left at least ten sons, two daughters, and quite a few grandchildren, whose names are to a large extent unknown. All male descendants whose biographical details are known were involved in military affairs, two of them—Nawruz and Lagzi—explicitly being mentioned as imperial sons-in-law. Thus, Nawruz was married to Toghanchuq (Toghan Khatun), the fourth daughter of Abaqa, and was one of his commanders, while his brother Lagzi married Baba, mentioned above, the daughter of Hülegü and Öljei Khatun (*SP*, 246–47; *JT*, 2:471; *JT*, 3:517; *MA*, 85). Rashīd al-Dīn mentions that the multiple daughters of Arghun Aqa were married “to rulers and commanders” (*JT*, 1:57), but only two are known. An (unnamed) daughter of Arghun Aqa was married to prince Kingshū, Jumghur's son (*JT*, 3:595; Charles Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islam: The Conversion of Sultan Mahmud Ghazan Khan,” *Pembroke Papers* 1 [1999]: 162). Another daughter of his, Mengli Tegin, married Amir Tasu from the Eljigin clan of the Qonggirat, and their daughter Bulughan Khatun Khorasani is listed as the second wife of Ghazan (*JT*, 3:593, and see below, n. 61). She is mentioned in *Mu'izz al-Ansāb* as “Bulughan Khatun, daughter of Yisu Aqa from the Eljigin tribe” (*MA*, 93). Her name—Khorasani—could have some connections with her mother's family estates in Khorasan. She is also listed as the second wife of Ghazan in the *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*, her father's name being Bisūqā (*SP*, 314). Additionally, according to Waṣṣāf, Nawruz was also related by marriage (unclear in what way) to Jochi's grandson Ureng Timur (named Ertoktimurschah in Waṣṣāf's chronicle)—Waṣṣāf, *Geschichte*, 3:136.

¹⁴After the death of Arghun Aqa his family kept its influence in Khorasan. In general, Khorasan had a special status in the Ilkhanate, as income collected in the province was not attached to the general income of the dynasty, and the administration of the province was often (at least formally) in the hands of the representatives of the crown prince (as, for example, of Ghazan when he was a prince). Cf. Vladimir Bartold “Istoriko-geograficheskiy obzor Irana,” in idem, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniy* (Moscow, 1971), 7:112, and Qāshānī, who speaks about Abū Sa'īd (Maryam Parvisi-Berger, “Die Chronik des Qashani über den Ilchan Ölgäitü (1304–1316): Edition und kommentierte Übersetzung” (Ph.D. diss., Göttingen, 1968), 1:155—hereafter *TÖ*). After the death of Arghun Aqa in 1275, Nawruz inherited his father's status as an administrator of Khorasan (Michal Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* [London, 1997], 57). His wintering area was in Dara-i Jaz, in the very north of Khorasan, near today's Iranian border with Turkmenistan (*JT*, 3:594). It is of importance that *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah* calls him “one of the great and respected amirs of Khorasan (az jumlah-yi umarā'i-yi mu'tabar-i Khurāsān)” already in the list of Abaqa's commanders (*SP*, 247).

¹⁵On this issue, which has been rather ignored, see my “New Light.”



the Ilkhanate) in 1295.¹⁶ Indeed, following the conversion of Ghazan (stimulated, if not orchestrated, by Nawruz, son of Arghun Aqa) and the former's enthronement, the clan of Arghun Aqa enjoyed a rise in status. Nawruz became one of the most powerful personalities in the Ilkhanate.¹⁷ As is well known, this changed abruptly in 1297, when Nawruz was accused of collaboration with the Mamluk Sultanate and was executed together with most of his family.¹⁸

The third Oirat elite clan in the Ilkhanate was of importance mainly in its last decades. Its founder, Tengiz Güregen, was a relative of Qutuqa Beqi,¹⁹ an imperial son-in-law, who married daughters of both Güyüg and Hülegü Khan.²⁰ In the times of Güyüg he already held a high position. According to Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, during the war between Qubilai and Arigh Böke, Tengiz was sent against the latter, captured him, and brought him to Qubilai, who, according to the chronicler, gave him Hülegü Khan's daughter Tögödech as "a reward."²¹ It was at this time, probably, that he also relocated to the Ilkhanate,²² his daughter Arighan

¹⁶Until now the main emphasis of the research on Mongol Islamization in the Ilkhanate was the analysis of the conversion of the highest levels of Mongol society (see, e.g., Melville, "Pādshāh-i Islam," 159–77; Reuven Amitai, "The Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 [2001]: 15–25). A notable exception is the paper of Judith Pfeiffer, which deals with the conversion of the Mongol commanders in the early period of Ilkhanid history (idem, "Reflections on a 'Double Rapprochement': Conversion to Islam among the Mongol Elite during the Early Ilkhanate," in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff [Leiden, 2007], 369–89). Concerning Oirat conversion, only a paper of Michael Hope, "The 'Nawrūz King': The Rebellion of Amir Nawrūz in Khurasan (688–694/1289–94) and its Implications for the Ilkhan Polity at the End of the Thirteenth Century," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 78, no. 3 (2015): 451–73, can be mentioned in addition to my "New Light."

¹⁷According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Ghazan Khan, "realizing how much he owed Nawrūz for the favors and deeds he had performed, ... issued a decree awarding Nawrūz the unconditional emirate and vizierate of all lands and peoples from the Oxus to Syria, and from the banks of the eastern sea to the farthest end of the western sea" (*JT*, 3:629); cf. Mu'īn al-Dīn Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab al-tavarikh-i Mu'ini*, ed. Jean Aubin (Tehran, 1957), 151. Note that *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah* calls Nawruz "amīr al-umārā" in the list of Ghazan's commanders (*SP*, 319). See Judith Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran: Chingiz Khan to Uljaytu 1220–1309* (London/New York, 2006), 296–305, for the discussion of Nawruz's financial and administrative policies.

¹⁸On these events and on the detailed discussion of the sources see my "New Light."

¹⁹The exact nature of this connection is not clear. Rashīd al-Dīn uses the word *khwīshy*, which indeed means "family relation," but at the same time this connection could have been invented in order to raise the status of Tengiz's family (Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-Tavārikh*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṣṭafā Mūsavī [Tehran, 1994], 101).

²⁰The name of the first is unknown; the name of the second was Tögödech (*JT*, 2:476; *SP*, 218).

²¹This statement is not clear (*Dhayl-i Jāmi' al-Tavārikh-i Rashīdī*, transl. and comm. E. R. Talyshkhanov [Baku, 2007], 148—hereafter cited as *DJTR*).

²²The time of his arrival in Iran is not clear, as he appears in the list of Hülegü's commanders (*SP*, 191).



Egachi becoming a concubine of Hülegü Khan.²³ Rashīd al-Dīn states that during the struggle for power between Aḥmad Tegüder and Arghun, Tengiz remained on the side of the latter, testifying that Abaqa wanted Arghun to rule.²⁴ It is not clear when he died, but his influence and high position passed to his children and grandchildren. Tögödech was delivered to Tengiz's son Sulaymish and grandson Chichek in a levirate succession, bearing children from all three.²⁵ Furthermore, Arghun Khan's first wife—and the mother of his fourth son, Khitai Oghul—was Qutlugh Khatun, Tengiz Güregen's daughter.²⁶ After her death the Khan married her niece Öljetei, but “since she was only a child, he did not touch her.”²⁷ According to *Mu'izz al-Ansāb*, she was married to Ghazan Khan,²⁸ but this is not mentioned in the *Jāmi' al-Tavārikh*. Most probably she was married to Öljetü in 1305.²⁹ We will return to this clan in the second part of this article.

Oirats in the Mamluk Sultanate

Close to the end of the thirteenth century the Oirats also appeared as a group in the Mamluk realm. The group under discussion comprised the descendants of Buqa Temür and the tribesmen under their command who had stayed in the area between Diyarbakir and Mosul from the death of Buqa Temür in 1260 until 1296, when the majority, if not all, of them left the Ilkhanate and migrated to the Mamluk Sultanate. Factional struggles within the Ilkhanate's ruling class are the most obvious reason for this migration. More precisely, competition between Baidu and Ghazan on the one hand, and the decision of Türaqai Güregen, son of Jaqir Güregen and grandson of Buqa Temür, to side with Baidu in the early

²³She is called in *Shu'ab-i Panjānah* “the daughter of Bilkir Güregen,” which contradicts the data of *Jāmi' al-Tavārikh* (SP, 209). The reason for this inconsistency is not clear.

²⁴JT, 3:558. As his daughter Qutlugh Khatun was the chief wife of Arghun, he certainly had reasons to side with him.

²⁵JT, 1:56; MA, 89; SP, 218. If true, this indicates the great esteem in which this connection was held as well as the benefits the family reaped from it. Despite the fact that all of the chronicles speak about this three-fold re-marriage, Bai Cuiqin called this “unreliable,” especially with regard to Rashīd al-Dīn's claim that she bore children to her last husband (Bai Cuiqin, “Woyila guizu yu Chenjisihanxi lianyin kaoshu,” in Du Rongkun and Bai Cuiqin, *Xi menggu shi yanjiu* [Guilin, 2008], 33). The exact careers of his son and grandson are not clear. Chichak is known to have cooperated at some point with Baidu against Geikhatu Khan (MA, 87; SP, 280), but this did not prevent Öljetü from marrying his daughter. See below.

²⁶JT, 3:561–62.

²⁷SP, 287–88; JT, 3:561.

²⁸MA, 93.

²⁹See below.



1290s, caused this large-scale Mongol migration.³⁰ Following the rise of Ghazan, Tūraqai—himself a Chinggisid son-in-law—decided to leave the Ilkhanate out of fear of the troops Ghazan had sent to arrest him.³¹ Tūraqai, with his tribesmen, crossed the Euphrates and arrived in Damascus in early January 1296. The group

³⁰An alternative motive, which concerned a property conflict between the Turcomans and the Oirats, was mentioned by Bar Hebraeus, but no additional sources support this explanation. According to the chronicle, which I cite for the sake of completeness, "...a certain tribe of Mongols, who were called 'AWIRATAYE, who were wintering round about the Monastery of Mar Mattai, and it happened that they had a complaint against the King of Kings. And messengers came from him to them, uttering curses and threats, because in the days when Baidu reigned, those 'AWIRATAYE had laid their hands on certain Turkomans and taken from them sheep and cattle, and herds of horses, and stallions, and mules, and camels without number. And after the kingdom of Baidu had come to an end and Kazan was ruling, the command went forth that the Turkomans should take it all back again from the 'AWIRATAYE, and everyone who resisted and would not obey was to die the death. And because the great number of these possessions had come to an end, and nothing at all of them remained with the 'AWIRATAYE, they suffered great tribulation, and they were treated with contempt by the ambassadors and by the Turkomans. [And] they leaped upon the ambassador and upon the Turkomans and killed them. And they took their families and everything which they were able to carry, and they fled to Syria—a body of ten thousand soldiers and fighting men" (*Chronography*, 597–98). This text might reflect some real conflicts between the newly arrived Oirats and the Turcoman population of the area, but the connection between this possible tension with the Turcomans and the Oirats' flight is undoubtedly wrong.

³¹Al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, 309; cf. Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān* (Cairo, 1989), 3:304. After his father's death, Tūraqai married Menggügen, daughter of Hülegü Khan, in a levirate marriage (*JT*, 1:57). The Mamluk sources tend to stress the fact, even though at the moment of his migration Menggügen might have already passed away (*JT*, 1:57). The Mamluk sources apparently regard this as a "status" issue (Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Histoire des sultans mamlouks*, ed. E. Blochet [Paris, 1919], 2:590; Abū Bakr ibn 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmi' al-Ghurar*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann [Cairo, 1971], 8:361; Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībīrdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* [Cairo, 1986], 7:60). Note also a claim, which appears, e.g., in *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, according to which Tūraqai married a daughter of Mōngke Temür, son of Hülegü (al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, 309–10). Thackston also claims that Tūraqai Güregen had married Ara Qutluq, daughter of Mōngke Temür, before Menggügen, referring probably to Rashīd al-Dīn himself, who claims this in the Oirat chapter (*JT*, 1:57, and *ibid.*, 2:476, n. 2). *Mu'izz al-Ansāb* gives an opposite version, i.e., that he married Ara Qutluq after Menggügen (*MA*, 83). Both these statements contradict yet another passage of Rashīd al-Dīn, according to which Ara Qutluq married Tūraqai Güregen, whose sister Eltüzmiş Khatun was a wife of Abaqa Khan (*JT*, 3:515). This gives us two Tūraqai Güregens, with different fathers. The father of the Tūraqai Güregen who fled to Syria was the Oirat Jaqir Güregen, while the father of Tūraqai Güregen of Qonggirat was Qutluḡ Temür Güregen (cf. *JT*, 1:56–57, and *ibid.*, 3:515). The real situation is not fully clear, but it seems that Tūraqai had one wife only, i.e., Menggügen, daughter of Hülegü Khan.



was followed by their women, children, and livestock (the Mamluk sources talk about at least one *tūmen*).³²

Impressive as it was, the arrival of the Oirats in 1296 was an extraordinary event for the Sultanate only with regard to their number. Indeed, there had been a continuous stream of Mongol refugees from the Ilkhanate to Syria and Egypt since the 1240s. In general, they were understood in the chronicles as a part of a broader *wāfidiyah* phenomenon.³³ Usually those immigration cases were limited to individuals or small groups.³⁴ Additionally, the Oirats were also not unknown to the Sultanate, as some of the earlier Mongol refugees were of Oirat origin (such as Shaykh ‘Alī, a Sufi shaykh who arrived in 1282–83).³⁵ Oirats had also come to the Sultanate as prisoners of war, most notably al-Malik al-‘Ādil Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā, the ruling sultan at the time of Tūraqai’s arrival.³⁶ He was a

³²The sources talk about ten thousand people (*insān*) or families (*bayt*). For the first see al-Malik al-Mu‘ayyad ‘Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidā, *Tārīkh al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar* (Cairo, 1907), 4:33, and cf. “ten thousand soldiers and fighting men” of Bar Hebraeus (*Chronography*, 598); for the second see *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultane in den Jahren 690–741 der Hīgra nach arabischen Handschriften*, ed. K. V. Zetterstéen (Leiden, 1919), 38; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 8:361; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, 7:60. According to other versions, there were about eighteen thousand “families” (Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* [Cairo, 1992], 31:267; Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. M. M. Ziyādah [Cairo, 1934], 1:812; Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, ed. Costi K. Zurayk and Nejla Izzedin [Beirut, 1939], 8:203). There is a difference between “10,000 people” and “10,000 families.” If the latter version is correct, then the migration wave should indeed be considered highly significant (see Smith, according to whom an average Mongol family consists of 5–6 persons: Smith, “Qīshlāqs and Tūmens,” 40, and cf. Reuven Amitai, “Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role in Early Mamluk Political Life,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 1 [2008]: 130).

³³On the general phenomenon of *wāfidiyah* see David Ayalon, “Wafidiyya in the Mamluk Kingdom,” *Islamic Culture* 25 (1951): 89–104.

³⁴See Nakamachi Nobutaka, “The Rank and Status of Military Refugees in the Mamluk Army: A Reconsideration of Wāfidiyah,” *MSR* 10, no. 1 (2006): 57–58, for the detailed list of the Mongol immigration cases to the Sultanate. See also Tsugitaka Sato, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam* (Leiden, 1997), 99–103.

³⁵Not much is known about this person and his rather unusual life. He was of Oirat origin, converted to Islam of the Sufi type while still in the Ilkhanate, and went to the Mamluk Sultanate, together with some of his Mongol followers. They were accepted by the sultan Qalāwūn, and granted *iqṭā‘āt* and the titles of amirs of ten and forty (*ṭablkhānah*). The status of the shaykh deteriorated at some point and he was imprisoned along with his followers (al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, 217; see also Reuven Amitai, “Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42, no. 1 [1999]: 37; Nakamachi, “Rank and Status,” 68).

³⁶Another example is Sayf al-Dīn Salār al-Manṣūrī, one of the most important mamluks of Qalāwūn (about him see Amitai, “Mamluks of Mongol Origin,” 123).



mamluk of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and became sultan in early 1294 after successfully organizing a *coup d'état* against the then-nine-year-old future sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn,³⁷ brother of the murdered al-Malik al-Ashraf Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl (1290–93).³⁸ According to Ibn al-Dawādārī, Kitbughā was himself of Oirat origin.³⁹ His genealogical connections are not clear, but he was probably not of noble origin, as no information can be found about his background.

Before moving to the discussion of Oirat assimilation in the Mamluk Sultanate in the fourteenth century, the general outline of the events immediately following the Oirat migration should be given. First, messengers of the sultan, some of them sent directly from Cairo, met the group.⁴⁰ After a short stop in Damascus,⁴¹

³⁷He ruled three times: 1293–94, 1299–1309, and 1309–41. See further in Peter M. Holt, “al-Nāṣir,” *EI2*, 7:991–92.

³⁸Abū al-Fidāʾ, *Tārīkh al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:31, cf. Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 105. The new sultan was himself of Mongol origin, captured during the First Battle of Homs (December 1260) and bought by Qalāwūn (Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah fi al-Tārīkh* [Beirut, 1993], 13:399; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, 7:55. More sources in Amitai, “Mamluks of Mongol Origin,” 122, n. 16.).

³⁹Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 8:361. If this was true, he should have been of the first generation of Oirat tribesmen who came to Iran with Buqa Temür. The ethnic origin of the sultan was of significance for the manner in which the later events were judged by other players on the Sultanate’s political scene. For discussion of this see, e.g., Ayalon, “Wafidiyya,” 100.

⁴⁰In fact, five Mamluk amirs were entrusted with the mission of meeting the fleeing Oirats. Following the immediate request from Damascus concerning the newcomers, the amir ʿAlam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Dawādārī received orders to meet the group (al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, 310, cf. al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-Jumān*, 3:305). During the following week or so, three other amirs—Shādd al-Dawāwīn, Shams al-Dīn Sunqur al-ʿAsar from Damascus, and Shams al-Dīn Qarasunqur al-Manṣūrī, together with Sayf al-Dīn Bahādur al-Hājj al-Ḥalabī al-Hābib from Egypt—were dispatched by personal order of the sultan to appropriately receive the Oirats (al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, 310; Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 39; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:298; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:812; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:204; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 8:362; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, 7:60). Of special interest is Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqar al-Manṣūrī; though not being “Mongol” *per se*, Qarāsunqar is remembered in the sources as a one who had escaped to the Ilkhanate, married a cousin of Öljeitü, and died among Mongols, and he was “respected among the Mongols, as if he had been brought up among them” (Kobi Yosef, *Ethnic Groups, Social Relationships and Dynasty in the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517)* [Tel Aviv, 2010], 48 and also n. 174). Possibly the sultan’s choice to dispatch this person was connected to his interest in the Mongols. Concerning the meaning of *dawādār*, al-Qalqashandī explains it as “an associate of the wazīr,” appointed by the sultan from the military class, whose main duty was to collect taxes (Linda Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of Al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria [678–689 A.H./1279–1290 A.D.]* [Stuttgart, 1998], 222–24).

⁴¹“And there was a great celebration because of their arrival”—claim the chroniclers, while Ibn al-Dawādārī adds: “And the governor and all the warriors of al-Sham [put on their] best clothes [in honor of the Oirat arrival].” See Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 39; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:297; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:812; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:204; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Du-*



the leaders⁴² and the elders of the tribe were taken to Cairo, accompanied by Qarāsunqar al-Manṣūrī.⁴³ There they were warmly welcomed by the sultan in the citadel.⁴⁴ During the meeting in Cairo the Oirat nobles officially became amirs, were granted salaries and *iqṭā'āt*, and some of them were elevated to the ranks of *ṭablkhānah* (such as Tūraqai) or commanders of ten (such as Ulūṣ).⁴⁵ According to one remark of al-ʿAynī, Kitbughā even wanted to give Tūraqai the rank of a commander of one hundred and control over one thousand warriors.⁴⁶ On the other hand, the majority of the tribesmen were left in Palestine or southern Syria, and were later settled in the area of al-Sāḥil, more particularly in Atlit.⁴⁷

These events were met with significant discontent among the Mamluk amirs.⁴⁸ The situation got even worse as these Oirats from Diyarbakir, unlike their tribes-

rar, 8:362. According to Ibn Taghribirdī, “the people were happy because of their [coming] and their submission [to the rule of Islam]” (Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, 7:60). The Oirat leadership left Damascus on February 12, i.e., 7 Rabīʿ II, according to Zetterstéén, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 39; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:812; and Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:204. Al-Nuwayrī speaks of 17 Rabīʿ II, but this seems to be a mistake (al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:298).

⁴²The Mamluk sources name three of them, the already mentioned Tūraqai and two others—Ulūṣ and Koktay (al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:298; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:812). Ulūṣ was called “Arqawūn” by Ibn al-Dawādārī (Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 8:362), and Koktay was called “Kokbāy” by al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:812.

⁴³Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:298; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:812; Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 343.

⁴⁴The sources mention 113 or 200 people altogether (Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʿil, *Histoire*, 590; Zetterstéén, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 39; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:298; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:812; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:204; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 8:362). At least one chronicler mentions the number “two hundred” (Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʿil, *Histoire*, 2:590), while al-ʿAynī says: “about one hundred” (idem, *ʿIqd al-Jumān*, 3:305). Al-Maqrīzī mentions larger numbers in his *Khiṭaṭ*, “about 300,” but this seems to be an incorrect estimate (Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Mawāʿiz wa-al-Iʿtibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* [Beirut, 1998], 3:43).

⁴⁵Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:298; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:812; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:204; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 8:362; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, 7:60; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-Jumān*, 3:305–6; al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, 310; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 43. One can also find a profound discussion of this issue in Nakamachi, “Rank and Status,” 64–68 and Amitai, “Mamluks of Mongol Origin,” 130–31. See below, n. 51, on the relation between getting an *iqṭaʿ* and converting to Islam in the Sultanate, a condition not fulfilled by the Oirats in 1296.

⁴⁶Al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-Jumān*, 3:305–6, 308; cf. al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, 310; Nakamachi, “Rank and Status,” 66.

⁴⁷Al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, 310; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:299; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 8:362. This was not the first time that a big *wāfidiyah* wave was settled on the Palestinian coast. An earlier case was 3000 of the Kurdish Shahrazūrīyah who came to al-Karak from the Ilkhanate in 1259 (Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 100; Ayalon, “Wafidiyya,” 97–99).

⁴⁸Cf. Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʿil: “And so it happened that they [the Oirat commanders] sat in Bab al-Qalʿa [gates of the Cairo Citadel] in the places of [Mamluk] great amirs and commanders, ... and their



men in Khorasan, had not yet converted to Islam when they came to the Sultanate and preserved their shamanistic beliefs. This fact aggravated the discontent both in military circles and among the populace, especially since the Oirats did not fast during Ramadan and even ate in public.⁴⁹ Also, the way the Oirats slaughtered horses (they beat them on the head until they died, rather than cutting the throat) made many raise their eyebrows.⁵⁰ According to some sources, the amirs demanded that the sultan force the Oirats to convert to Islam first in order to get access to the military ranks, but Kitbughā refused to do so.⁵¹ The discontent of the Mamluk commanders, together with general popular suspicion towards the Oirats,⁵² as well as the rather unstable position of Kitbughā himself and the effects of a drought in the Sultanate, led quickly to the dismissal of the sultan by the vice-sultan Ḥisām al-Dīn Lājīn in November 1296.⁵³ The nobles

[amirs'] hearts got inflated by fear, that this issue [Oirat 'lawlessness'] would continue, and become worse, ... and they considered the Sultan to be imbecilic for bringing them [Oirats] closer to him" (Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Histoire*, 590–91). The chronicler probably refers to the places which the Mamluk commanders used to occupy during the gatherings.

⁴⁹See, e.g., al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, 310, and also cf. Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah* (Cairo, 1930), 3:262–63.

⁵⁰Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:298. Cf. Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:204; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:812; al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 3:308. On this issue see David Ayalon, "The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān: A Reexamination (Part A)," *Studia Islamica* 33 (1971): 118.

⁵¹Al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 3:307–8. As al-Maqrīzī mentions, the sultan prevented those who demanded Oirat conversion from imposing it on the tribesmen (idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 43). It is important to note that it was an accepted practice since the time of Baybars to demand the conversion of *wāfidīs* to Islam before endowing them with *iqṭā'āt* (most of the Mongols before the Oirats and also the *wāfidīyah* from the Crusaders' ranks did so; see more on this in Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 99–103). The distribution of the *iqṭā'āt* to the Oirats did not follow these rules, and this fact understandably further weakend the position of Kitbughā among the Mamluks. Note an interesting remark by Muḥammad Ibn Shiḥnah al-Ḥalabī (d. 1412), cited uncritically by Sato, who claims in his "Rawdat al-Manāzīr fī 'Ilm al-Awā'il wa-al-Awākhir" that the Oirats were given *iqṭā'āt* after their conversion to Islam, a statement which does not apply to the Oirats during the period of Kitbughā (Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 103, n. 1). The manuscript of this work, cited by Sato, as well as another manuscript, that of Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī's "Kitāb Durrat al-Aslāk fī Dawlat al-Atrāk," also cited *ibid.*, were unfortunately not accessible to me.

⁵²To some degree one could claim that the ensuing purge of the Oirat leadership was part of the traditional struggle between the Mamluks in the transition period between sultans. At the same time, the Oirat *wāfidīyah* was perceived as a treacherous group that could not be trusted, as they had left their previous masters (Yosef, *Ethnic Groups*, 192–93). It was not ethnic identity, apparently, but the question of anticipated behavior according to specific rules which played a larger role in the formulation of a negative judgment.

⁵³The sultan's dismissal less than a year after the Oirats' arrival was only partly caused by his support of the tribe, as well as their cultural and religious "stubbornness" (cf. al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 3:308, 311–12, al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, 310; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 44). Other factors of



among the Oirats—Tūraqai and his close associates—were arrested and either incarcerated in the prison of Alexandria or executed.⁵⁴ Another Oirat commander, Ulūṣ, was later released and stayed in Egypt.⁵⁵ This same Ulūṣ, together with his tribesmen, attempted to reinstall Kitbughā in the early autumn of 1299, near Tall al-ʿAjjūl⁵⁶ on the outskirts of Gaza, as the Mamluk army entered Palestine and moved eastward toward Ghazan’s invasion.⁵⁷ The revolt was suppressed; the leaders were hung and other participants were imprisoned. As a result of the two purges, the period during which the Oirats had played a role in Mamluk politics was definitely over. The masses of the Oirats did not disappear, however, instead going through a complicated process of cultural and religious integration into the society of the Mamluk Sultanate during the fourteenth century. The mechanisms of this process will be discussed below in comparison with the Oirats in the Ilkhanate.

an objective nature, such as the pandemic that severely affected parts of the Sultanate during Kitbughā’s reign and the economic decline of that period, precipitated the sultan’s dismissal as well, but the explanations of a “psychological” or “cultural” nature should in no case be seen as less important. See Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il: “Moreover, there was a severe pandemic of plagues and an unknown number of people died in Egypt, up to the point that almost every place in the country was full of dead bodies of its citizens, lying on the street, and the population level had decreased, and it was impossible to bury everybody because of the big number of the dead, and the dogs ate some of them and some of them were gathered to heaps ...” (Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Histoire*, 591–92; cf. Al-ʿAynī, *Iqd al-ḡumān*, 3:299–303). Also see Sato, who states that Kitbughā was seen as an “ill-omen sultan” because of all these events (Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 106). Indeed, chroniclers discussed the fact that the Oirats were not Muslims and also pointed out the ethnic connection between the sultan and the newcomers (e.g., Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 8:361).

⁵⁴ Al-ʿAynī, *Iqd al-ḡumān*, 3:356. Many historical chronicles do not speak of these events, while al-Maqrīzī mentions it in his *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, explaining the reasons for the Oirat rebellion in 1299: “And the group of Oirats, who came [to the Muslim realm] in the times of al-ʿĀdil Kitbughā, became furious, because a big number of their [Oirat] amirs was killed in the times of Lājīn ...” (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:883). He gives more information in his *Khiṭaṭ*, repeating more or less the information provided by al-ʿAynī (al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 43).

⁵⁵ Al-ʿAynī, *Iqd al-ḡumān*, 3:356. The reason for this is unclear.

⁵⁶ This place is located about four miles from today’s city of Gaza (Carolyn R. Higginbotham, *Egyptianization and Elite Emulation in Ramesside Palestine: Governance and Accommodation on the Imperial Periphery* [Leiden, 2000], 82).

⁵⁷ Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 58; al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikrah*, 330; cf. Reuven Amitai, “Whither the Ilkhanid Army? Ghazan’s First Campaign into Syria (1299–1300),” in *Warfare in Inner Asian History (500–1800)*, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo (Leiden, 2007), 227, and Nakamachi, “Rank and Status,” 80. It is interesting that we again find Ulūṣ in the military elite circles after his release from prison, but there is no more detailed information on him nor his accomplices. According to Ibn al-Dawādārī, among those whom these Oirats intended to kill during the revolt was Sayf al-Dīn Salār, also of Oirat origin (Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-ḡāmiʿ al-Ghurar*, ed. Hans R. Roemer (Cairo, 1960), 9:10).



Part II. 1300 until the Early Fifteenth Century

Oirats in the Ilkhanate

From the moment the descendants of Buqa Temür left the Ilkhanate, they had no further importance for Mongol history in Iran. Two other Oirat clans, however, continued to establish themselves in the Ilkhanate and can be traced more or less at least until Temür's rise to power (i.e., 1370s). The first is the clan of Arghun Aqa. Despite its systematic removal from power in 1297, the clan preserved its positions in Khorasan. According to a remark of Qāshānī, Oyiratai Ghazan, brother of Nawruz, came to the Ilkhanid court in 1306 in order to confirm his right to rule in the area.⁵⁸ It seems that the Oirat nobility did not constitute a united group in Khorasan in the first decades of the thirteenth century, as Faryūmadī mentions a cousin of Oyiratai Ghazan, Amir Hajji, as another local Oirat leader.⁵⁹ Not much, however, is known about their rule or the areas under their control. Even less is known about the basis of their power in the area, or more precisely what constituted the military backbone of the clan, which had been so deeply rooted in Khorasan since the 1240s. One can suppose that the main areas were Tūs and Mashhad.⁶⁰ Whatever the real state of affairs, however, the Oirats of this clan were positioned at a distance from the centers of Ilkhanid power—a remarkable change in comparison with the first years of Ghazan's rule.

The main winner of the *de facto* disappearance of the two major Oirat clans from the Ilkhanid scene towards the early 1300s was a third clan, that of Tengiz Güregen. The relations between Tengiz and Arghun Khan have already been mentioned. Analysis of the biographical and matrimonial information concerning the two last Ilkhans, Öljeitü and Abū Sa'īd, shows that they were both tightly connected to the lineage of Tengiz Güregen. Though he himself had probably already passed away, the matrimonial network connected his clan and the Golden *urugh* and supported the establishment of his descendants' position in the later Ilkhanate. Thus, two⁶¹ important wives of Öljeitü, namely Hajji Khatun, mother

⁵⁸ TÖ, 1:57.

⁵⁹ Jürgen Paul, "Zerfall und Bestehen: Die Čaun-i qurban im 14. Jahrhundert," *Asiatische Studien* 65, no. 3 (2011): 705.

⁶⁰ See below, n. 105, about the areas under the control of Arghun Shāh, son of Oyiratai Ghazan, towards the end of Ilkhanid rule.

⁶¹ Öljeitü had three additional wives of Oirat origin. Therefore, altogether five of his twelve wives were connected to this tribe. Those three were Gunjishkab, great-granddaughter of Buqa Temür, mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn as the first wife of Ghazan Khan (JT, 2:473; note that Qāshānī does not mention any connection with Ghazan [TÖ, 1:25], as well as *Mu'izz al-Ansāb* [MA, 97]); Bujughan, daughter of Lagzi Güregen and his wife Baba (TÖ, 1:25; she is called YWH'AN in the manuscript used by Parvisi-Berger [TÖ, 2:7, l. 5b] and Bujughan in Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad Qāshānī, *Tārikh-i Ūljaitū* [Tehran, 2005], 7; cf. MA, 97), and the seventh wife of



of the future sultan Abū Saʿīd,⁶² and her sister Öljetai (Iljetai),⁶³ were direct descendants of Tengiz.⁶⁴ One can also find women of Oirat origin around Sultan Abū Saʿīd, not only his mother Hajji Khatun, but also his third wife, Malika Khatun, who was a daughter of Tuq, son of Sulaimish, son of Tengiz Güregen.⁶⁵ However, despite these close relations, the Oirat presence in Ilkhanid power circles is not visible in the sources in the first decade of the fourteenth century. Qāshānī, for example, names no recognizable commanders of Oirat origin in the list of Öljeitü's main amirs.⁶⁶ The analysis of Ghazan's will to his brother Muḥammad, the future sultan Öljeitü, is an additional indicator. Cited at the beginning of the

Öljeitü, the aforementioned Bulughan Khatun Khorasani, granddaughter of Arghun Aqa (*TÖ*, 1:26, 51; Charles Melville, "Bologan Khatun," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 4:339). Thus, the five Oirat wives of Öljeitü represented all three Oirat clans of the Ilkhanate. It seems, however, that since the 1300s those of Tengiz Güregen's clan were of primary importance. Concerning Bulughan Khatun, *Mu'izz al-Ansāb* calls the fourth wife of Öljeitü "Taghai, from Khorasan, daughter of Amir Yisu, son of Arghun Aqa, former wife of the son of Ghazan Khan" (*MA*, 97). This inconsistency between the sources can probably be explained by a simple mistake in *Mu'izz al-Ansāb*. Another confirmation regarding her identity can be seen in the report about her visiting the grave of "her husband" Ghazan Khan in Tabriz (*TÖ*, 1:72 and 2:74, l. 50b). She married the Ilkhan on June (or July) 12, 1305, and died on July 25, 1308 (*TÖ*, 1:78, and Melville, "Bologan Khatun," 339). Her multiple levirate marriages are a sign of the importance of the Khorasanian Oirats also after the 1290s, at least on the regional level.

⁶² *TÖ*, 1:51; 2:45, l. 30b.

⁶³ According to *Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*, she died on October 4, 1315, and was buried in Tabriz near the tomb of her son Abū al-Khayr, who died as a child (Faṣīḥ Aḥmad ibn Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Hawafī, *Fasihov svod [Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī]*, transl. D. Yu. Yusupova [Tashkent, 1980], 45). Regarding the name of her son, his destiny, and burial place, see *TÖ*, 1:50, and *MA*, 99.

⁶⁴ It is difficult to identify the girl's parental connection. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the father of Arghun Khan's wife was Sulaimish, son of Tengiz (*JT*, 3:561). *Mu'izz al-Ansāb* agrees with him in the chapter that concerns the wives of Arghun Khan (*MA*, 93), while disagreeing in the chapter of the wives of Öljeitü (*MA*, 97), claiming that the father of Hajji Khatun, the fourth wife, and Öljetei, the sixth, was Chichak and not Sulaimish. Here he agrees with Qāshānī, who reports that the father of Hajji Khatun, wife of Öljeitü, was "Chichak, son of Tengiz" (*TÖ*, 1:25). At the same time, Qāshānī mentions that she was a granddaughter and not great-granddaughter of Tengiz (*ibid.*: 50). He probably makes a mistake, calling Sulaimish by the name of his son—Chichak. The name "Öljetei, daughter of Sulaimish" is presented in a different manner in *Mu'izz* in the list of Arghun Khan's wives, where she is called "Öljai" (*MA*, 93). The names of the aforementioned wife of Arghun Khan and the sixth wife of Öljeitü are written almost the same in Persian: "الجتای" (Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh*, ed. B. Karimi [Tehran, 1959], ?:806) vs. "اولجاتای" (*TÖ*, 2:8, l. 6a). Also, according to *Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*, 45, the father of Öljetei was Sulaimish. In my opinion, the text of Qāshānī includes a mistake in the general list of wives and the person mentioned in all these sources is indeed Öljetei, daughter of Sulaimish.

⁶⁵ *MA*, 100.

⁶⁶ *TÖ*, 1:26–28.



Tārīkh-i Öljeitü, it includes a list of the most important military amirs and those among them who were called “the pillars of the state,” who ought to be the main supporters of the new khan. All of them were members of the *keshig*, representing the main power holders of the state.⁶⁷ None of those mentioned are of clearly Oirat origin.⁶⁸ The list of Öljeitü’s amirs given by *Mu‘izz al-Ansāb* differs from that of Qāshānī, and includes two amirs of possible Oirat origin: “Kharbanda Noyan, Yisu Aqa’s son” (presumably the same amir Yisu [Tasu] mentioned above) and amir Chichak, who could be that same Chichak, son of Sulaimish, the sultan’s father-in-law.⁶⁹ However, their identity cannot be confirmed. If this silence of the sources indeed represents the real state of affairs, it clearly attests to the decline of the Oirats’ position in the Ilkhanate by the end of Ghazan’s rule, when Arghun Aqa’s clan disappeared and the influence of Tengiz Güregen’s clan was still in its formative period.

This limbo was not long, though. Rather early, ‘Alī Pādshāh, the brother of Hajji Khatun and uncle of the future sultan Abū Sa‘īd, appears in the descriptions of the Gilan (1307) and Rahba (1313) campaigns of Öljeitü, though not in the lists of amirs.⁷⁰ He is also known to have accompanied Abū Sa‘īd in 1315 on his way to Khorasan, later appearing in the list of the sultan’s amirs alongside with his brother Muḥammad (son of) Chichak (the only Oirat *güregen* of that period, whose wife Qutlugh Mulk was a daughter of Geikhatu).⁷¹ Another com-

⁶⁷Ibid., 29–32.

⁶⁸A detailed analysis of the list and its decoding is not one of the goals of this article, so the aforementioned statement cannot be proven for the time being. Charles Melville is now working on decoding this list, and his findings might confirm or refute it (Charles Melville, “The Keshig in Iran: The Survival of the Royal Mongol Household,” in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff [Leiden, 2006], 153–54).

⁶⁹MA, 99. If this information is correct, then we can indeed see this as one more indicator of the preservation of the power of Tengiz Güregen’s line in the court after Ghazan Khan’s rule. This seems logical, as almost all of the powerful Oirat amirs at the end of Hülegüid rule are from his family.

⁷⁰DJTR, 35, 58; Charles Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327–37: A Decade of Discord in Mongol Iran* (Bloomington, IN, 1999), 16. Note the Islamic and the somewhat Persianized name of this Oirat (as well as that of his brother Muḥammad). One wonders when the conversion to Islam took place in the case of Tengiz Güregen’s clan, and whether its conversion was similar to that of Arghun Aqa’s family. This issue cannot be resolved as the sources remain silent.

⁷¹MA, 102; DJTR, 125, 129; Melville, *The Fall*, 16. Muḥammad (son of) Chichak also appears as Muḥammad Beg. Al-Aharī calls the brother of ‘Alī Pādshāh Muḥammad Beg (Abū Bakr al-Qutbī al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, transl. and comm. J. B. van Loon [The Hague, 1954], 57; Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* [Cambridge, 2008], 141). Melville supposes this to be a mistake of al-Aharī, whose intention was to talk about the brother of ‘Alī Pādshāh, Muḥammad (son of) Chichak (Melville, *The Fall*, 31, n. 83). Hāfiz-i Abrū differenti-



mander of Oirat origin appears in the same list, mentioned as the brother of ‘Alī Pādshāh.⁷² Tight matrimonial connections with the Hülegüid clan and the benefits they gave both sides, although not as strong as in earlier periods, served as a guarantor for Oirat loyalty to the throne. ‘Alī Pādshāh and Muḥammad (son of) Chichak not only participated in military campaigns on Öljeitü’s side, but also stayed loyal during Abū Sa‘īd’s rule.⁷³ In some periods they even served as governors. Thus, ‘Alī Pādshāh was sent by Abū Sa‘īd to Baghdad and the surrounding areas after the decline of Chobanid power in 1328,⁷⁴ while his brother was sent that same year to serve as a governor of Rum.⁷⁵ Although Muḥammad lost his position a year later after participating in the rebellion against the sultan’s wife, Baghdad Khatun, and the vizier Ghiyāth al-Dīn, ‘Alī Pādshāh kept his high position until the very end of Abū Sa‘īd’s rule.⁷⁶ It is also of crucial importance that

ates between Muḥammad Chichak and Muḥammad Beg (*DjTR*, 129), and Melville supports this distinction, citing Waṣṣāf, according to whom Muḥammad Beg (Qushchi) was a son of Baytmish Bayghala (Melville, *The Fall*, 19, 39). For more on his wife, the daughter of Geikhatu, see al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 64, and Melville, *The Fall*, 56.

⁷²MA, 102. Album mentions two brothers of ‘Alī Pādshāh: Ḥāfiẓ and Muḥammad Beg. He also agrees with al-Aharī, identifying the latter one with Muḥammad (son of) Chichak (Stephen Album, “Studies in Ilkhanid History and Numismatics I: A Late Ilkhanid Hoard (743/1342),” *Studia Iranica* 13, no. 1 [1984]: 67). The other commander, mentioned by *Mu‘izz al-Ansāb*, could thus be this Ḥāfiẓ. Also, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū mentions Qunjushkab, a relative of Abū Sa‘īd on the mother’s side, as amir of Öljeitü. (*DjTR*, 121). The source is wrong, taking Gunjishkab, the wife of a sultan, for an amir (Melville, *The Fall*, 14, n. 30).

⁷³*DjTR*, 119, 139; al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 55; Melville, *The Fall*, 22.

⁷⁴Al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 57. Aubin also claims (based on Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū) that ‘Alī Pādshāh was a hereditary chief of the Oirats of Diyarbakir (Jean Aubin, “Le quriltai de Sultān-Maydān [1336],” *Journal Asiatique* 279 [1991]: 179). Album claims that ‘Alī Pādshāh was the governor of Diyarbakir, citing *Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uweys* and *Zayl Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh Rashīdī* (Album, “Studies I,” 61). These chronicles do not state this clearly, mentioning ‘Alī Pādshāh as the hereditary chief of the Oirats in general and talking about him as the ruler of Baghdad (*DjTR*, 148; al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 57). Apparently, this was correct only after the death of Sutai in 1332. According to the history of Diyarbakir, ‘Alī Pādshāh was appointed to the governorship of Mosul and Irbil after the death of Sutai in 1332, continuing the work of his predecessor of persecuting the *dhimmīs* of the area (Melville, *The Fall*, 42, n. 120). So also Ilish, citing Ibn al-Munshī (Ludger Ilish, “Geschichte der Artuqidenherrschaft von Mardin zwischen Mamluken und Mongolen 1260–1410 AD” [Ph.D. dissertation, Münster/Westfalen, 1984], 98); see also Claude Cahen, “Contribution à l’histoire du Diyār Bakr au quatorzième siècle,” *JJA* 243 (1955): 73–74; Avedis K. Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301–1480* (Cambridge, MA, 1969), 76.

⁷⁵Al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 57. Muḥammad (son of) Chichak is meant.

⁷⁶For more information, see *DjTR*, 139–40, and al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 57. Another interesting remark is given by *Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uweys*. A few weeks before the death of Abū Sa‘īd, he ordered the “whole army of Baghdad and Diyarbakir” to proceed towards Arran and stay there, ready to react to the possible advance of Uzbek Khan (al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 59). Keep-



Sutai Akhtachi of the Sunit,⁷⁷ the ruler of Diyarbakir since 1312, was married to Buyan Agha, the daughter of Hülegü's son Möngke Temür and his Oirat wife Öljei Khatun.⁷⁸ Album claims that during his stay in Diyarbakir until his death in 1332, Sutai—and afterwards his son Hajji Taghay—had the powerful support of the Oirat confederacy of the area.⁷⁹ Besides this, Hajji Taghay's nephew, Ibrāhīm Shāh, son of his brother Barambay, was a favorite of Abū Sa'īd and was married to 'Alī Pādshāh's daughter.⁸⁰ These connections served as a basis for the Oirat support of Sutai's family in Diyarbakir, which changed only after Abū Sa'īd's death.⁸¹

The positions of the Oirats at the Ilkhanid court were continuously challenged by other factions at the court, among them the Chobanids and the powerful vizier Ghiyāth al-Dīn. Compared to the gradual rise to power of the Chobanids and Jalayirids that took place during the reign of Abū Sa'īd, the outstanding position of Hajji Khatun's brothers was more of an exception, as no other prominent Oirats can be found at that time. The role which 'Alī Pādshāh played in the fall of the Chobanids in the mid-1320s was probably based on his sister's personal enmity towards Choban.⁸² His family's relative security *vis-à-vis* the power holders could not have been achieved without her support. Furthermore, at the end of Abū Sa'īd's rule 'Alī Pādshāh and his brother were in exile or disgrace. However, they preserved their influence and military power, which helped them after the death of Sultan Abū Sa'īd on November 30, 1335. As the Pādshāh did not have a son, a window of opportunity opened for those interested, among them the clan of Tengiz Güregen.

It was the combined influence of Hajji Khatun and her brother 'Alī Pādshāh which stood behind the short-lived but explosive rise of the Oirat star on the political scene of the disintegrating state. Different contenders for the throne were proposed by different power factions. The decision of Ghiyāth al-Dīn and the amirs of the court to give the throne to the descendant of Arigh Böke, Arpa

ing in mind the connections of the then ruler of Baghdad, 'Alī Pādshāh, in Diyarbakir, the fact that the armies of these two areas moved together can mean that this was the Oirat army—or at least an army under the control of Oirat commanders.

⁷⁷Jürgen Paul, "Mongol Aristocrats and Beyliks in Anatolia: A Study of Astarābādī's *Bazm va Razm*," *Eurasian Studies* 9, nos. 1–2 (2011): 115.

⁷⁸JT, 2:475; MA, 79, Melville, *The Fall*, 22.

⁷⁹Stephen Album, "Studies in Ilkhanid History and Numismatics II: A Late Ilkhanid Hoard (741/1340) as Evidence for the History of Diyar Bakr," *Studia Iranica* 14 (1985): 46–47, 71. If this is correct, one wonders who those Oirats were.

⁸⁰Melville, *The Fall*, 32.

⁸¹For more on the connections between the Oirats and the family of Sutai, and their relations to the Ilkhanate and the Mamluks, see Patrick Wing "The Decline of the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate's Eastern Frontier," *MSR* 11, no. 2 (2007): 77–88.

⁸²DjTR, 144–45; Aubin, "Le quriltai," 179; Melville, *The Fall*, 15.



Khan (1335–36),⁸³ was supposedly a trigger for ‘Alī Pādshāh’s attempt to counter them.⁸⁴ According to Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, old strife between the families of Arigh Böke and Tengiz Güregen from the time of Möngke’s rule broke out and led to the disagreement of ‘Alī Pādshāh and his family with Arpa Khan’s enthronement.⁸⁵ Conflicts between the vizier and ‘Alī Pādshāh during Abū Sa‘īd’s reign might have aggravated the situation. In the beginning of April 1336, ‘Alī Pādshāh put Mūsá Khan, son of Baidu, on the throne.⁸⁶ During the months which preceded these events, he sought the support of Hajji Taghay in Diyarbakir, but was disappointed.⁸⁷ Remarkably, ‘Alī Pādshāh also asked for the support of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, to whom he promised Baghdad.⁸⁸ On April 29–30, 1336, the two parties engaged in battle, which ended when a significant percentage of Arpa Khan’s forces changed sides.⁸⁹ Ghiyāth al-Dīn and Arpa Khan died on May 3 and 15 respectively.⁹⁰ Yet another possible obstacle for ‘Alī Pādshāh’s plans was eliminated during those weeks. A short while after the death of Abū Sa‘īd, the latter’s wife, Dilshad Khatun, daughter of the Chobanid Demashq Khwaja, who was pregnant with a possible contender for the throne, fled to seek the protection of

⁸³He was connected to Arigh Böke through Mangqan, Malik Temür’s son.

⁸⁴Shabānkārahī states that the vizier secured the support of Hajji Khatun, while Ḥāfiz-i Abrū claims this to be fully Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s decision (al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 59; *DġTR*, 144; Melville, *The Fall*, 44). Melville suggests that the sympathies of Hajji Khatun were on the side of ‘Alī Pādshāh (Melville, *The Fall*, 44, n. 125).

⁸⁵*DġTR*, 148. This story was mentioned above. If it is true, it could testify to the preservation of family memory over such a long period of time. If false, this story might still have been used by the family of ‘Alī Pādshāh in a time of need to justify its disagreement with the decisions of Ghiyāth al-Dīn.

⁸⁶The Mamluk chronicles also mention these events; see for example Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Ägypten und Syrien zwischen 1317 und 1341 in der Chronik des Mufaḍḍal b. Abi l-Faḍā’il*, ed. Samira Kortantamer (Freiburg, 1973), 175 (German), 394 (Arabic).

⁸⁷The relations between ‘Alī Pādshāh and Hajji Taghay changed when the latter feared he would lose the hereditary right to rule in Diyarbakir (Ilish, “Geschichte der Artuqidenherrschaft,” 98).

⁸⁸Melville, *The Fall*, 47. ‘Alī Pādshāh was known as a very devoted Muslim, also being remembered in the chronicles as destroying churches of the area (ibid., n. 136). It is also of importance that Hajji Taghay is reported as being Christian—and so the conflict between the two leaders also seems to have had a religious dimension. There is no clear explanation for the contact with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Most probably this was simply a part of the *Realpolitik* strategy of ‘Alī Pādshāh.

⁸⁹Melville counts about five or six *tümens* changing sides, while especially stressing that Hajji Taghay, Sutai’s son, did not follow their example and remained loyal to Arpa Khan, being very hostile to ‘Alī Pādshāh and the Oirats (Melville, *The Fall*, 49, n. 145; *DġTR*, 152–53). Later Hajji Taghay is found among the supporters of Shaykh Ḥasan in Rum (*DġTR*, 153). Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il gives another date—April 13 to April 27 (Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Chronik*, 176 [German], 394 [Arabic]).

⁹⁰Al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 60, and Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 139.



‘Alī Pādshāh. It was probably the military power of the Oirats behind ‘Alī as well as his family connections with her deceased husband that led her to choose him as a defender. However, as Dilshad Khatun gave birth to a girl three days after Arpa Khan’s death, on May 18, ‘Alī Pādshāh could back Mūsá Khan as a legitimate contender. Dilshad Khatun had already refused to enthrone her child.⁹¹

The enthronement of Mūsá Khan in Tabriz on May 6, 1336, made ‘Alī Pādshāh the *de facto* ruler of the majority of both Arab and Persian Iraq.⁹² Nevertheless, unsuccessful in getting the support of the amirs and blamed for breaking the treaty with them, ‘Alī Pādshāh was confronted by Choban’s son-in-law, Shaykh Ḥasan Buzurg, the ruler of Anatolia.⁹³ Shaykh Ḥasan found another contender for the throne, a descendant of Möngke Temür, Hülegü’s son, and enthroned him as Muḥammad Khan.⁹⁴ In the battle on July 24, 1336, between the armies of the two contenders near Qara Darra, ‘Alī Pādshāh was killed. Mūsá Khan fled first to Baghdad (presumably to search for the Oirats’ help) and then to Khuzistan in southern Iraq, one of the dwelling areas of the tribe at that time.⁹⁵ Muḥammad Beg and Ḥāfīz, brothers of ‘Alī Pādshāh, joined him.⁹⁶ The army sent by Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to ‘Alī Pādshāh had already reached Ja‘bar, close to the Euphrates. However, when the sultan received news of the death of ‘Alī Pādshāh, the army was sent back.⁹⁷

After the defeat of ‘Alī Pādshāh, a significant number of Oirats, led by his brothers, continued to support the army of Mūsá Khan. Joined by additional forces, among them Maḥmūd ibn Isan Qutluḡ, governor of Hamadan, Mūsá Khan

⁹¹ *DġTR*, 152; Melville, *The Fall*, 46.

⁹² The date of Mūsá Khan’s enthronement is given according to Faryūmādhī’s continuation of Shabānkārahī’s *Majma‘ al-Ansāb fī al-Tawārīkh* (Album, “Studies I,” 66, n. 45). Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il calls ‘Alī Pādshāh a *mudabbir* (the real ruler) of Mūsá Khan (Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Chronik*, 178 [German], 393 [Arabic]).

⁹³ *DġTR*, 152; al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 62. On these events and the two decades that followed the collapse of Ilkhanid rule, see also a newly published book on the Jalayirid tribe in the Ilkhanate and the post-Ilkhanid scene: Patrick Wing, *The Jalayirids* (Edinburgh, 2016), 74–100.

⁹⁴ *DġTR*, 153; al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 62. It is not clear whether this boy had any Oirat roots, as Möngke Temür indeed was married to (among others, probably) the Oirat woman, who theoretically could be one of the ancestors of the child. Even if this was the case, this Oirat connection seems very weak and irrelevant.

⁹⁵ *DġTR*, 154–55; Album, “Studies I,” 67.

⁹⁶ Album, “Studies I,” 67.

⁹⁷ Ilish, “Geschichte der Artuqidenherrschaft,” 99. According to al-Shujā’ī, the army turned back after the arrival of the messenger sent mistakenly by Shaykh Ḥasan and Muḥammad Khan, who thought that the sultan had sent an army to their aid (Shams al-Dīn al-Shujā’ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-Awlādihi*, ed. and trans. Barbara Schäfer [Wiesbaden, 1985], 2:20–21). Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il does not mention the sultan helping ‘Alī Pādshāh, but speaks of the arrival of the messenger at the court of the sultan (*Chronik*, 183 [German], 391 [Arabic]).



decided to cooperate with yet another contender for the throne in order to withstand Shaykh Ḥasan and his protégé. A new temporary ally of Mūsá Khan and his coalition was Togha Temür, a descendant of Chinggis Khan's brother Jochi Qasar, who was enthroned in Khorasan at the beginning of 1337.⁹⁸ Despite these efforts, the attempt of Mūsá Khan to win the throne did not succeed. On June 15, his army, together with the army of Togha Temür, faced Shaykh Ḥasan near Maraghah, 80 miles south of Tabriz. After the flight of Togha Temür, Mūsá Khan and his Oirat supporters were defeated.⁹⁹ Mūsá Khan was captured and killed by Ḥasan Buzurg on July 10, and Muḥammad, the brother of 'Alī Pādshāh, was killed by Kurds shortly thereafter.¹⁰⁰ The chronicles do not reveal much about the fate of the Oirat supporters of Mūsá Khan. Some massacres against Oirats during the period of Mūsá Khan's wars with Shaykh Ḥasan are mentioned, but their dates are difficult to determine. At least one of the massacres took place near the Jaghatu River in northern Iran.¹⁰¹ According to al-Shujā'ī, after the battle in which 'Alī Pādshāh was killed, a number of Oirats fled towards Mardin, while some of them died on the way.¹⁰² After the death of Mūsá Khan, the senior members of his Baghdadi administration, including the vizier Najm al-Dīn Maḥmūd, fled to Cairo.¹⁰³

Following the death of 'Alī Pādshāh, the Oirat players in the post-Ilkhanid realm were fragmented, their matrimonial networks destroyed, and their military probably insufficient to lead the remnants of the Ilkhanate. During the confrontation between Mūsá Khan and Shaykh Ḥasan, Hajji Taghay and his nephew

⁹⁸ Al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, 64.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Melville, *The Fall*, 55–56.

¹⁰¹ *DJTR*, 154–55. The Jaghatu river, also known as Zarrine-Rud, is one of the tributaries of Lake Urmia in today's Iranian province of West Azerbaijan (Henry C. Rawlinson, "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz, Through Persian Kurdistan, to the Ruins of Takhti-Soleimán, and from Thence by Zenján and Tārom, to Gilán, in October and November, 1838; With a Memoir on the Site of the Atropatenian Ecbatana," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 10 [1840]: 11, and Guy Le Strange, *Baghdad: During the Abbasid Caliphate* [New York, 2011], 165). Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il mentions that about a thousand supporters of Mūsá Khan tried to fortify themselves in the Huftiyan fortress, "in [the] Kurdish mountains close to Mosul" (idem, *Chronik*, 185–86 [German], 390 [Arabic]; about the place see Le Strange, *Baghdad*, 193). Their fate is not clear.

¹⁰² Al-Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, 2:20.

¹⁰³ Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 195; al-Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, 34; Ilish, "Geschichte der Artuquidenherrschaft," 99. According to al-Shujā'ī, after his arrival in Egypt he became an amir of a hundred and was appointed vizier of Egypt (al-Shujā'ī, *Beiträge zur mamlukischen Historiographie nach dem Tode al-Malik an-Nāṣirs, mit einer Teiledition der Chronik Shams ad-Dīn ash-Shugā'īs*, transl. and ed. Barbara Schäfer [Freiburg, 1971], 129 and 9 of the Arabic text).



Ibrāhīm Shāh, a son-in-law of ‘Alī Pādshāh, supported the latter.¹⁰⁴ Another Oirat, the Khorasanian Arghun Shāh, grandson of Arghun Aqa, was involved in a chain of fragile alliances with different actors in the territory of Khorasan, aimed at raising a “Khorasanian” Ilkhan as his puppet ruler.¹⁰⁵ Thus, in 1337, he fought on the side of Togha Temür, killing Muḥammad Mulayd, a protégé of Ḥasan Buzurg in Khorasan, with two of his sons in the second half of 1338.¹⁰⁶ At this time, matrimonial connections with the Oirats (and among the Oirats) no longer served as a guarantee of mutual support, especially in comparison to the situation a few decades earlier.¹⁰⁷ The reason for this was apparently the disappearance of the Ilkhanid ruling clan, the central power holder, whose support secured the high status of the Oirats and united them. After the death of those Oirat commanders who rose to power at the time of the Ilkhans, very few Oirat personalities can be found in the chronicles. Their power networks, created and preserved during Ilkhanid history, no longer existed, and the situation became worse with the decentralization of power in the territory of what had a decade earlier been the Ilkhanid state. The report of *Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uweys* regarding the fact that the daughter of Muḥammad Beg, brother of ‘Alī Pādshāh, was given to Shaykh Ḥasan Buzurg after the death of her father should be seen in the light of the arguments given above.¹⁰⁸ Baghdad still seems to have been controlled by the Oirats for some time after the death of ‘Alī Pādshāh, but it was lost relatively quickly.¹⁰⁹ Except for Arghun Shāh (after the death of his cousin Ḥiyatughā in 1336), no promising Oirat leader who was able to reunite the tribal power survived in the post-Ilkha-

¹⁰⁴The same conclusion is drawn by Album (Album, “Studies II,” 72–73).

¹⁰⁵He was a son of Oyiratai Ghazan, mentioned above. He and two of his sons, Muḥammad Beg and ‘Alī Beg, controlled Ṭūs, Mashhad, and Nishapur most of the time from the collapse of the Ilkhanate until the conquests of Temür in the 1370s. The group ruled by them was called Ja’un-i Qurban, and the discussion about their origin is ongoing in the research. See more for the discussion of this Oirat lineage in Paul, “Zerfall und Bestehen,” 695–734, and my “New Light.” For a discussion of this period of Khorasanian history see also John M. Smith, Jr., *The History of the Sarbadār Dynasty 336–1381 A.D. and Its Sources* (The Hague/Paris, 1970), 93–102.

¹⁰⁶Al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uweys*, 65.

¹⁰⁷The conflict between two cousins—Arghun Shāh, Oyiratai Ghazan’s son, and yet another grandson of Arghun Aqa Ḥiyatughā, son of Amir Hajji—regarding the power on the parts of Ja’un-i Qurban in the mid-fourteenth century is very demonstrative (see more in Paul, “Zerfall und Bestehen,” 705).

¹⁰⁸Al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uweys*, 64–65. A possible explanation is given by Melville, who sees in this marriage an attempt of Shaykh Ḥasan to seal his victory against Mūsā Khan and his supporters and at the same time to strengthen his position by marrying a Hülegüid wife (Melville, *The Fall*, 56, also n. 168).

¹⁰⁹This conclusion can be based on some reports found in *DJTR*, 161–62, 169.



nid realm.¹¹⁰ Hajji, ‘Alī Pādshāh’s son, fled to the Mamluk Sultanate shortly after his father’s demise, following his father’s order, as ‘Alī Pādshāh was reportedly a friend of Sayf al-Dīn Tengiz, the governor of Syria. After his arrival, Tengiz sent Hajji to the sultan, who bestowed upon him an amirate (most probably an *iqṭāʿ*) in Damascus.¹¹¹

The marginalization of Oirat power and their solely local interests in the post-Ilkhanid realm become even more evident during the struggle for power between the Jalayirids and the Chobanids which began after the defeat of Mūsā Khan. This conflict began with the appearance of yet another contender for power, a grandson of Choban named Shaykh Ḥasan Kuchek. At the end of 1337, he staged the return of his father Temür Tash (who had been killed in Egypt by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1328) and proclaimed a new contender to lead the Chobanids (and even married to him two wives of his father, including his own mother).¹¹² A new coalition of Chobanid forces was created, and it included several unspecified Oirats, the former supporters of Shaykh Ḥasan. The rule of Ḥasan Buzurg and Muḥammad Khan in Tabriz came to an end on July 16, 1338, after the defeat of the Jalayirid by the Chobanid coalition.¹¹³ After another turbulent period, the pseudo-Temür Tash was denounced by his former master, Ḥasan Kuchek, and, after unifying his army and some Oirat forces (probably different from those staying with Arghun Shāh in Khorasan), entrenched himself finally in Baghdad.¹¹⁴ Following his victory against Mūsā Khan near Maraghah, Shaykh Ḥasan gave Baghdad and the area of the Oirats to his amir Qarā Ḥasan, but it seems that the Oirats still preserved their dominion there.¹¹⁵ At the same time, Ḥasan Kuchek enthroned a sister of Sultan Abū Saʿīd, Sati Beg, in Tabriz as a puppet ruler.¹¹⁶ She

¹¹⁰Paul, “Zerfall und Bestehen,” 705.

¹¹¹Al-Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, 2:44–45. I was unable to check the Arabic text of the source and used the German translation only. For this reason, the exact name of ‘Alī Pādshāh’s son is still unclear, as the translator of the German volume calls him “Hawaga.” “Khawaja” is thus my reading of it.

¹¹²As the real Temür Tash was executed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1328, the appearance of the false one caused a reaction from Cairo. A messenger was sent to Taghay ibn Sutai in order to inform him about the real state of affairs, but his mission was unsuccessful (Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, *Chronik*, 194–96 [German], 384–85 [Arabic]).

¹¹³*DJTR*, 158–59; cf. Wing, *The Jalayirids*, 86–87.

¹¹⁴As far as the information of Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū is concerned, the pseudo-Temür Tash and some of the Oirats who cooperated with him controlled Baghdad and Arab Iraq at some point in 1339. A conflict finally arose between the two sides and the Oirats killed pseudo-Temür Tash (*DJTR*, 161–62).

¹¹⁵Al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uweys*, 64.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 67; *Mujmal-i Faṣiḥī*, 64. Al-Aharī is not clear enough, as he mentions both Hajji Khatun and Sati Beg in the same context. The translation by van Loon is as follows: “In Warzuqan, Hajji Khatun, the mother of the august sultan Abū Saʿīd ..., and Sati Beq was installed on the throne



ruled for another year, then was dismissed and forced to marry another puppet of Ḥasan Kuchek, enthroned around May 1339 as Sulayman Khan (1339–44).¹¹⁷ The coalition between pseudo-Temür Tash and some of the Oirat amirs was preserved during most of this period, controlling Baghdad and Arab Iraq.¹¹⁸

The fate of the Oirats in the post-Ilkhanid space in the following decades is somewhat unclear. As we can learn from the sources (as well as from their silence), following the rise of Oirat power during the first years after the collapse of the dynasty in 1335, the Oirats never succeeded in positioning themselves in the post-Ilkhanid world as a unified power comparable to the Jalayirid example.¹¹⁹ Starting in the 1340s, the Oirats continuously appear in the chronicles. Until the invasion of Temür, Arghun Shāh and his clan remained in power in

and obeyed” (al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uweys*, 67). Beyond this, it is difficult to understand the remark of van Loon who suggests reading “sister” instead of “mother” in the cited sentence (ibid., n. 186), since Hajji Khatun was definitely the mother of Abū Sa‘īd. A Russian translation of the same source makes it clear that both Hajji Khatun and Sati Beg were enthroned. At the same time, the Russian researchers mention that according to Hamdallah Qazwini, only Sati Beg was raised to the throne (al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Sheykh Uweys*, transl. and comm. M. D. Kyzimov and V. Z. Piriev [Baku, 1984], 117, n. 140). Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū mentions only Sati Beg (*DJTR*, 160).

¹¹⁷ Album, “Studies I,” 78–79. The date of her dismissal is unknown, but the first coins fabricated in Tabriz in Sulayman’s name appear in 1339 (*DJTR*, 164–65, and Album, “Studies I,” 78). The fate of Sulayman Shāh is not clear, but coins in his name were still minted in Baghdad and throughout the Jazira in 1344 and in Baghdad in 1345 (Album, “Studies I,” 100).

¹¹⁸ *DJTR*, 161–62. Ḥāfiẓ, the brother of ‘Alī Pādshāh, can be found on the side of Sati Beg and Ḥasan Buzurg in Baghdad in 1339–40 (al-Shujā‘ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, 81). This is confirmed by the fact that the messengers sent by Ḥāfiẓ and Ḥasan Buzurg are said to have come to Cairo that same year and to have asked the sultan for military help (Ibn Abī al-Faḍā‘il, *Chronik*, 213 [German], 376 [Arabic]).

¹¹⁹ Concerning the tribal units of Timur’s army which could be clearly identified as such, it seems that the Oirats never appeared in such a context, probably because they were mainly integrated into the Ilkhanid power networks, but not into the Chaghadaid, and they did not accompany Temür or were not connected to him in the first decades of his rise to power (cf. Beatrice Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran* [Cambridge, 2007], 14–16, also 21–24). Note also a source of unclear origin from Mughal times (mid-seventeenth century), which was published in English translation by Major Davy in 1783 and was then understood as a record by Sharaf al-Din ‘Alī Yazdī from Temür himself (idem, *Political and Military Institutes of Tamerlan*, transl. Major Davy [Delhi, repr. 2009]). According to Habib, this text was not a later forgery of the Mughal period but a genuine, original Turkic text, originating probably from the first decades after Temür’s death and representing thus “a very early post-Timur historical tradition” (Irfan Habib, “Timur in the Political Tradition and Historiography of Mughal India,” *Cahiers d’Asie centrale* 3, no. 4 [1997]: 307–8). If so, this text, which also includes a detailed list of the twelve main tribal units of the Temürid army, is of great interest. Naming such tribes as the Barlas, Jalayir, Arghun, and Suldus, this list clearly does not include any mention of the Oirats (*Political and Military Institutes*, 112–13), which can also be seen as a reflection of the Oirats’ position under Temür, especially compared to Ilkhanid times.



Khorasan (Tūs and Mashhad, as well as other areas).¹²⁰ It seems also that there was a significant Oirat presence in the Diyarbakir area at least until the end of the fourteenth century.¹²¹ With time, mentions of the Oirats become scarcer. The name “Oirats,” however, lingers continuously on the political scene until at least the early fifteenth century, and in some rare cases also later.¹²² On the one hand, it appears as the identifier of some military units or groups, given usually as “the Oirat troops” (*lashkar-i ūyrāt*),¹²³ which participated in battles between different

¹²⁰See, e.g., *DJTR*, 161; for more information on the Ja’un-i Qurban under the Timurids and more sources see Paul, “Zerfall und Bestehen,” 713–18. It may be of interest that at the end of the nineteenth century, the area north of Mashhad was still called a “yurt of Juni Qurban tribe” (Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān Ṣanī’ al-Dawlah, *Maṭla’ al-Shams* [Teheran, 1884–86; repr. 1976], 158; Minorsky, “Tūs,” 744).

¹²¹See, e.g., two remarks of Yazdī, in which the Oirats or their leaders appear in the context of Diyarbakir. The first one is Yazdī’s description of Temūr’s campaign in Diyarbakir, where he mentions one of the local commanders named Kyzyl Mir ‘Ali Oyirat, who submitted to Temūr (Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī, *Ẓafarnāmah*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abbāsī [Tehran, 1336/1957–58], 1:469). The second concerns the division of Temūr’s empire in 1403, a time during which Temūr gave Arab Iraq and Diyarbakir “[as well as the] Oirats and hazarajāt of those places” to Aba Bakr Mirza (Yazdī, *Ẓafarnāmah*, 2:368–69). Concerning the term “hazarajāt”—“little thousand”—see H. R. Roemer, “The Jalayirids, Muzaffarids and Sarbadārs,” *The Cambridge History of Iran: The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, ed. P. Jackson and L. Lockhart (Cambridge, 1986), 6:19, who mentions this term in the context of the establishment of Ja’un-i Qurban. This also raises the issue whether the Oirats of Diyarbakir could have become parts of the Aq Qoyūnlū and Qarā Qoyūnlū Turkmen confederations, which evolved during the second half of the fourteenth century in the Diyarbakir areas. Note that the city of Āmed (Diyarbakr) became a capital of the Aq Qoyūnlū after Temūr made the Bayandor family, the leading clan of the confederation, custodians of this area in the early fourteenth century (R. Quiring-Zoche, “Aq Qoyūnlū,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2:163–68). Note also an interesting remark of Zayn al-Dīn Qazvīnī, according to whom a group of Oirats intended to go to Diyarbakir and to join Qarā Muḥammad Turkman, the father of Qarā Yūsuf, the future leader of the Qarā Qoyūnlū (idem, *Zayl-i Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, ed. Īraj Afshār [Tehran, 1372/1993], 100). Due to the limitations of this paper I will not delve into this issue further, but it is worth future research.

¹²²The Timurid section of *Mu’izz al-Ansāb* does not include any amirs clearly identified as Oirat, except one, named Muḥammad, the amir of Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, the ruler of Herat (1469–1506, except 1470). See *MA*, 188; Shiro Ando, *Timuridische Emire nach dem Mu’izz al-ansāb: Untersuchung zur Stammesaristokratie Zentralasiens im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1992), 194. About Ḥusayn Bāyqarā see Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden, 2007), 43–73.

¹²³See, e.g., al-Aharī, *Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uweys*, 66, 80; *Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*, 158; Hāfiz-i Abrū, *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh*, ed. Sayyid Kamāl Ḥājj-i Sayyid Jawādī (Tehran, 1380/2001), 1:538 and passim, 3:149; *DJTR*, 173. Oirats also appear in the army of Shaykh Uweys in 1358 against Akhidjuk, ruler of Tabriz (cf. Wing, *The Jalayirids*, 123, n. 23). Taking into account the fact that the base of Shaykh Uweys was in Baghdad as well as the previous connections between the tribe and Baghdad’s vicinity, it is plausible to suppose that at least some of them remained there (*DJTR*, 195). The



coalitions and permanently changed sides, or in some cases as “Oirat servants” (*aḥshām-i ūyrāt*).¹²⁴ On the other hand, the Timurid chronicles include a remarkable number of personalities whose personal names include the addition “Oirat.”¹²⁵ Though in most cases these were the names of different military commanders in Timurid areas, they were not of primary rank. Therefore, the Oirats, as a tribal unit, do not seem to have played a significant role in the Timurid world, especially in comparison to their role in the Ilkhanid period, but their presence is unmistakable and clearly points to the preservation of their tribal identity (even if only in terms of their tribal name) at least until the early fifteenth century.

Oirat dispersion in the Ilkhanate and assimilation in the Islamic environment can be traced in two different periods of time. First, there is the period when the dynasty was strong, during which time we are mainly able to follow what happened to the tribal nobility and its relations with the central power. As shown, various Oirat elite families dominated the political landscape of the Ilkhanate at different stages of its history. In some regard, being located mostly along the borders in the northeastern (Khorasan) and northwestern (Diyarbakir) areas, Oirat tribal groups, whose support was well secured through such networks, served as a security belt for the dynasty, staying at the same time relatively far from the power centers. The status of the tribe was secured mainly by its military capabilities and strategic locations, and with very few exceptions Oirats are not present in the bureaucratic services of the Ilkhanate. After the massacre of Arghun Aqa’s family in 1297, tribal status *vis-à-vis* the ruling clan and other players at the court changed. Yet Oirat positions were still strong, with the family of Tengiz Güregen playing an important role (especially in the times of Abū Sa’id and after his death). While the migration of the Oirat *tümen* to the Mamluk Sultanate in 1296 probably weakened the Oirats in Diyarbakir, it was the fall of the Hülegüid dynasty which led to a severe loss of tribal strength in Greater Iran. We can suppose that the conversion to Islam reached the Oirat nobility relatively early, in the first decades of the Oirat presence in Iran and Iraq, at least in the cases of Amir Arghun and Tengiz Güregen. The conversion to Islam of the tribal nobility (and, as one can suppose, of the main mass of the tribesmen towards the first decades of the fourteenth century) prepared the ground for the following *de facto* integration of the Oirats also as a tribal body in the Ilkhanid and post-Ilkhanid Islamized

sources do not allow us to clarify the issue of the origin of the troops under the command of Tengiz Güregen’s clan, or their location during the Ilkhanate period in general.

¹²⁴ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh*, 3:148, 399–400.

¹²⁵ Some examples are Sayyid Aḥmad, a *kalāntar* (chief, tribal leader) of the Oirat tribe, killed by Sultan Aḥmad Jalayir’s army in 1378 (Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh*, 2:930); Amir Šāliḥ Oirat, mentioned by Zayn al-Dīn Qazvīnī (idem, *Zayl-i Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, 99–100), as well as Shaykh ‘Alī Oirat, *shahna* of Erbil, who went to meet Temür in 1393 near Tikrit (Yazdī, *Zafarnāmah*, 1:460).



realm in the broader sense. The conversion may have been a political choice for the Oirat elite, but was certainly not the trigger of Oirat assimilation in a larger sense, which eventually led to the disappearance of the tribe as such from the chronicles around the beginning of the fifteenth century. The immediate trigger, rather, was the collapse of Ilkhanid power networks connected directly to Hül-egüid central rule. Thus, when Ilkhanid central rule came to an end, the history of the Oirat tribe as a political body (except for the short rise of the Oirat star in 1335–36) also ended and the second period started. The Oirats were no longer able to create long-term strategic connections with the leading political core, but had to compete with other tribal groups. The result for the next decades was a power decline and marginalization of the tribe in comparison with other players, such as the Chobanids and Jalayirids. The main reason for such a development can be seen precisely in the way the tribe positioned itself throughout the whole period of Ilkhanate history and developed its matrimonial networks.

Analyzing the period from the collapse of the Ilkhanate until the early fifteenth century, one can also attempt to analyze the larger tribal groups. In a sense, tribal uniformity (even if connected not to the whole tribe but to specific clans) had been preserved and probably even strengthened among the Oirats as long as the Ilkhanid dynasty existed and flourished. When the dynasty disappeared and the *coup de etat* of ‘Alī Pādshāh failed, the Oirat nobility were either purged in the battles or lost their positions as the leading forces in the post-Ilkhanid realm. The Oirat tribesmen, however, did not disappear immediately, and at least in Diyarbakir (and partly in Baghdad and possibly Khorasan as well) they remained under the control of the local Oirat nobility. Loss of the connection to the ruling house, however, along with the ongoing Islamization, led throughout the following four or five decades to the *de facto* integration of the Oirats into the broader tribal landscape of the post-Ilkhanid space (probably due in part to their entry into newly established groups like the Turkmen confederations). The reason it took so long lies, in my opinion, exactly in the way the Oirat tribal identity was preserved and empowered during Ilkhanid times.

Oirats in the Mamluk Sultanate

The mechanisms of Oirat conversion and assimilation into the Ilkhanid realm can be seen only through an analysis of the Oirat nobility, the top level of the tribal elite. The history of the lower levels of the tribe, their daily life, and assimilation processes is not accessible through existing sources. The case of the Oirats in the Mamluk Sultanate, to which the next part of this article will be dedicated, therefore presents a unique case for a closer analysis of the lower strata of Oirat society in continuous contact with an Islamic host environment, providing rich material for comparisons with the Ilkhanate.



As a starting point I would like to take a remark of al-Nuwayrī, according to whom:

Numerous of them [Oirats] died. And amirs took their grown up sons to serve them, and they were the most beautiful people. And soldiers and others took their daughters for marriage. And those who were left of them became part of the army, dispersed in the Muslim lands and converted to Islam. Those who are left of them are in the [military]¹²⁶ service until today.¹²⁷

Three main issues from this quote deserve to be highlighted, namely the territorial dispersion of the tribesmen, their professional occupation in the Mamluk Sultanate, and their social contacts with the surrounding Islamic, primarily Mamluk, society. In the case of the Ilkhanid Oirats the question of territorial dispersion was left without a clear answer, though some main locations could be identified. The Mamluk sources, however, mention two main locations of imposed Oirat resettlement in the Sultanate in the late thirteenth to fourteenth centuries: in Cairo and on the northern Palestinian coast.¹²⁸ According to al-Maqrīzī, the Oirats settled in the northernmost quarter of Cairo (then the outskirts of the city), al-Ḥusaynīyah, outside the Bāb al-Futūḥ, during the reign of Sultan al-ʿĀdil Kitbughā.¹²⁹ At that time it was already a center of *futūwah*¹³⁰ groups and not the most prestigious part of the capital, although certainly one of its liveliest.¹³¹ Since

¹²⁶This according to the translation of Elham (Shah M. Elham, “Kitbugā und Lāḡīn: Studien zur Mamluken-Geschichte nach Baibars al-Mansūrī und an-Nuwairī” [Ph.D. dissertation, Freiburg i. Br., 1977], 173).

¹²⁷Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:268. Cf. al-Maqrīzī, who repeats some of this information and also says that they spread across the coastal areas, in particular in Atlit, or entered the local armies, or were dispersed (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:813). Cf. also Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:205, and David Ayalon, “The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān: A Reexamination (Part C1),” *Studia Islamica* 36 (1972): 135.

¹²⁸Ayalon also mentions that the Oirat presence was known in the area of Qus in Upper Egypt, but it is not clear on which sources he bases this statement (David Ayalon, “The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān: A Reexamination [Part C2]: Al-Maqrīzī’s Passage on the Yāsa under the Mamluks,” *Studia Islamica* 38 [1973]: 121); also cf. *ibid.*, n. 1, for the discussion of another claim of al-Maqrīzī concerning the settlement of the Mongol *wāfidīs* in the area of Al-Lawq.

¹²⁹Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 43. For a good map of Mamluk Cairo, on which the location of al-Ḥusaynīyah can be clearly found, see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks* (London, 2007), 52–53.

¹³⁰Originally these groups included young noblemen gathered according to their interests (from sport to mystical search). However, towards the end of the thirteenth century the *futūwah* acquired somewhat negative, often criminal, connotations in Egypt (Robert Irwin, “Futuwwa’: Chivalry and Gangsterism in Medieval Cairo,” *Muqarnas* 21 [2004]: 162–64).

¹³¹Irwin, “Futuwwa,” 163. According to al-Maqrīzī’s statement, cited by André Raymond, “Husayniyya was the most prosperous artery of Old Cairo and Cairo” (André Raymond, *Cairo: City*



Fatimid times, this area had been inhabited by auxiliary military forces. Thus, seven thousand Armenian soldiers of the Fatimid vizier Badr al-Jamālī (1015–94) settled in this area together with the Armenian community of Cairo.¹³² The name of the quarter itself, al-Ḥusaynīyah, is derived from the name of the regiment of black slaves that were also settled there in Fatimid times.¹³³ Before the Mamluk period and during the early years of the Sultanate, this quarter (which later included the *zāwīyah* of Shaykh Khaḍīr al-Mihrānī, Baybars' tutor) was still a residence for the military, inhabited since the 1260s by numerous Mongol immigrants from the Ilkhanate.¹³⁴ As has been mentioned, in the 1290s the quarter accepted a new wave of Mongols, this time of Oirat origin. If the decision to settle them in the quarter was Kitbughā's, he perhaps sought to keep the Oirats outside the central areas of Cairo, where existing Mamluk regiments were lodging. It seems reasonable to suggest that during the months between Kitbughā's first meeting with the Oirat leadership and his overthrow, a number of Oirats moved to Cairo (first to al-Ḥusaynīyah) spontaneously or were brought there by Mamluk commanders. These Oirats created a base for further tribal settlement in this area.¹³⁵ Regarding Oirat settlement in Cairo not much else is known, in part because Cairo faced a process of decline as a result of the years of the Great Crisis (1348–1412), which included three waves of the Black Death (1348–49, 1374–75, and 1379–81), a precipitous decrease in population, and a series of economic disasters, most significantly

of History [Cairo, 2001], 123). Indeed, it seems that the quarter was important enough for the city, at least in the first half of the fourteenth century, as eight out of ten mosques in the quarter were built during Sultan al-Nāṣir's reign (Raymond, *Cairo*, 124, 136).

¹³²Thus according to al-Maqrīzī; see Seda B. Dadoyan, *The Fatimid Armenians: Cultural and Political Interaction in the Near East* (Leiden, 1977), 116, on this issue and its historical context.

¹³³Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (Albany, NY, 1994), 180, n. 53; Raymond, *Cairo*, 55.

¹³⁴Irwin, "Futuwwa," 163.

¹³⁵According to Raymond, their numbers were not significant, probably amounting only to several hundred (Raymond, *Cairo*, 124). It seems plausible that more Oirats appeared in Cairo during the first half of the fourteenth century. At the same time, as Sato remarks, citing al-Maqrīzī, at its height the suburb's population did not exceed 7,000 people (Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 109, n. 2). If so, even several hundred could indeed be of significance for the quarter. Note also al-Maqrīzī, who mentions that the quarter expanded due to the Tatar refugees who were settled there in the late thirteenth century, the Oirats without doubt being counted as such (al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:22; Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo*, 55).



at the beginning of the fifteenth century.¹³⁶ At the same time, the Oirat presence in the quarter can still be traced up to the early fifteenth century.¹³⁷

As noted above, however, a great part of the tribe had been settled in the area of Atlit. The sources stress that on their way to the coastal areas the Oirats were not permitted to enter large cities, such as Damascus, instead staying in the open fields and having markets organized for them outside the urban area (in the areas of al-Ṣanamayn and al-Kiswah).¹³⁸ Given that the decision for their relocation was made by the sultan himself, one can suppose that these strict policies were also formulated by him.¹³⁹ Information concerning the ensuing developments is scattered, but one can find remarks concerning the Oirat presence in Palestine and northwestern Bilād al-Shām throughout the whole fourteenth century. There are hints of Oirats located in Damascus and Safed throughout the first half of the fourteenth century, and in Tripoli (Bilād al-Shām) in the early fifteenth (a fact which might suggest a continuous dispersion of the Oirats from the area of Atlit). A peculiar remark by al-Ṣafadī indicates that a group of Oirats could be found in the inner circle of Sunqur Shāh Shams al-Dīn al-Manṣūrī, a Mamluk

¹³⁶ About the Great Crisis and its influence on Cairo and its suburbs see Raymond, *Cairo*, 138–48, and esp. 147–48, about the fate of the al-Ḥusayniyah quarter (and cf. André Raymond, “Al-Maqrīzī’s *Khīṭaṭ* and the Urban Structure of Mamluk Cairo,” *MSR* 7, no. 2 [2003]: 150–51, on the history of the quarter according to al-Maqrīzī). See also Ayalon’s article about the impact of the plague on the Mamluk army, especially in Egypt (David Ayalon [Neustadt], “The Plague and Its Effects upon the Mamluk Army,” *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1 [1946]: 67–73), as well as the relevant passage in Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* [Cambridge, 1993], 4).

¹³⁷ According to al-Maqrīzī, the Oirats “became known for their *zu‘ara* (gangsterism) and *shujā‘a* (boldness), and they were called al-Badūra. So an individual Oirat might be called al-Badr such-and-such. They adopted the dress of *futuwwa*, and they carried weapons. Stories about these people proliferate” (transl. by Irwin). Irwin also suggests that the Oirats organized their activities in Cairo based on the *futūwah* lodges, and that “there was no such thing as popular *futuwwa* in Egypt prior to the arrival of the Oirats and that they brought its rituals with them from Ilkhanid Iraq” (Irwin, “Futuwwa,” 164; cf. al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:44–45). He does not explain his statement.

¹³⁸ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 31:299; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8:205. So also Ibn al-Dawādārī: “and no one of them [Oirat tribesmen] succeeded to enter Damascus, and common people and artisans of all kinds went out to them [out of the city]” (Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, 8:362). Both al-Ṣanamayn and al-Kiswah are today cities to the south of Damascus, located about 50 and 13 km from it respectively.

¹³⁹ On the one hand, as Ayalon stresses, these policies conformed with the usual Mamluk policies of dealing with the big waves of *wāfidiyah* (Ayalon, “Great Yāsa C1,” 135). On the other hand, it might be that Kitbughā also sought to prevent the Oirats from assimilation and dispersion, hoping to keep them as his power base *vis-à-vis* the established Mamluk circles. Nonetheless, it is difficult to surmise what the sultan’s policies towards the tribesmen would have been if his fall had not followed so abruptly and whether he would have tried to keep them separate in the following years.



governor of Safed in the early fourteenth century. According to the text, a few of those Oirats were in contact with the governor and hunted lions with him.¹⁴⁰ Another remark by al-Ṣafadī concerns a significant amount of the *iqṭāʿāt* which were given to the Oirats (and other *wāfidiyah*) troops in the area of Damascus by Sayf al-Dīn Ṭughay, amir of the stables (*amīr akhūr*) of Tankiz, the governor of Bilād al-Shām.¹⁴¹ Tankiz became governor in 1312, which means that the Oirat presence in Damascus was still relevant and recognizable as such in Bilād al-Shām during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. This forced the people in the inner circle of Tankiz to take care of their needs (probably expecting their favors or support in return).¹⁴² Additionally, as mentioned in the *Nayl al-Amal fī Dhayl al-Duwal* of ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ, there was a quarter (*maḥallah*, residential neighborhood) called the *maḥallah al-ʿuwayrātīyah* in Tripoli around 809/1406–7.¹⁴³ It seems that a group of the tribe moved there at some point and settled in or established a quarter, which bore the trace of their name until at least the early Ottoman period. Two Ottoman censuses of the mid-sixteenth century state that a small number of Muslim families (one says 18, the other 28) inhabited the quarter, but nothing is known concerning the ethnic affiliation of the inhabitants.¹⁴⁴

The second issue on which Mamluk sources provide more data than the Persian ones is the personal and group careers of the tribesmen. First, as seen in the remarks of al-Nuwayrī and al-Maqrizī, some of the Oirats were taken into personal service of Mamluk amirs or entered the army. We will return to the first point while discussing the perceived beauty of the Oirats and its consequences. Concerning the second, however, it is known from other sources that the major-

¹⁴⁰ Khalil Ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt*, ed. Bernd Radtke (Wiesbaden, 1979), 15:499.

¹⁴¹ Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt*, ed. Wadad Al-Qadi (Wiesbaden, 2009), 16:447; Khalil Ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-Aṣr wa-Aʿwān al-Naṣr* (Damascus, 1997), 2:599; cf. Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī wa-al-Mustawfā baʿd al-Wāfī* (Cairo, 1990), 6:407. Both sources mention a “thousand” *iqṭāʿāt*, but this probably just means “a lot.”

¹⁴² As we know, however, that the Oirats were accepted mainly in the *ḥalqah* regiments (see below), the importance of those Oirats in Syria and their possible influence on local politics should not be overestimated. It seems, however, that there were personal relations between Tankiz and the Oirats (see above the remark by al-Shujāʿī concerning Hajji, son of ʿAli Pādshāh, who fled to Tankiz in 738/1337–38 and got an *iqṭāʿ* in Syria).

¹⁴³ ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalil al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-Amal fī Dhayl al-Duwal* (Sidon, 2002), 1:23.

¹⁴⁴ ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nayl al-Amal*, 1:23, n. 4. I was not able to access the Ottoman census mentioned in the footnote by the editor of the Arabic edition, ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī. From the text of the footnote it seems that there is no basis to claim that those families found in the census were identified as Oirats. See more about the text and the author in Sami G. Massoud, *The Chronicles and Annalistic Sources of the Early Mamluk Circassian Period* (Leiden, 2007), 67–69.



ity of the Oirats entered the *ḥalqah* units, the usual resort for the *wāfidiyyah*.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, as far back as 1296, many of their elders and commanders were appointed as *ḥalqah* amirs with *iqṭāʿāt*.¹⁴⁶ Subsequent developments are less clear. In 1309 an Oirat unit (most likely stationed in Syria) joined al-Nāṣir Muḥammad during his exile in Karak, but as soon as the latter was restored to the throne, the Royal Mamluks forced him to dismiss the Oirats, not wanting them to have equal status and claiming the Oirats were untrustworthy.¹⁴⁷ There is not much information about this unit, however.

Oirats were involved not only in the military itself, but could also be found, for example, as attendants (or servants, *aṭbāʿ*) of the Mamluks in the Cairo citadel around the early 1330s.¹⁴⁸ Additionally, there is information that in the early 1330s a number of Oirats served as arms-bearers of the *silāḥdārīyah* and *jamdārīyah* mamluks.¹⁴⁹ Not much is known about these Oirat groups either, but, remembering al-Maqrīzī's critical discussion of Oirat criminal behavior in Cairo toward the end of the fourteenth century, one wonders what alternatives remained for the hundreds of young Oirats who did not succeed in, or did not want to enter, military service *per se*.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Ayalon, "Wafidiyya," 99–100. The *ḥalqah*, one of the units of the Mamluk army (but known also under the Ayyubids), was composed mainly of non-Mamluks and was, as stressed by Levanoni, "a flexible military structure, open to change according to circumstances" (Amalia Levanoni, "The Ḥalqah in the Mamluk Army," *MSR* 15 [2011]: 38; on this unit see also David Ayalon, "Ḥalka," *EI2*, 3:99). It included a certain amount of different *wāfidiyyah* groups, but also a number of sons of the mamluks (*awlād al-nās*), and, moreover, some unfortunate mamluks and even amirs in a number of cases, as well as an increasing number of civilians starting from the early fourteenth century (see Levanoni, "Ḥalqah," 42–44; David Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army–II," *BSOAS* 15 [1953]: 449; Ulrich Haarmann, "The Sons of Mamluks as Fiefholders in Late Medieval Egypt," in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, ed. Tarif Khalidi [Beirut, 1984], 142). Note also the remark of Ayalon, according to which the *ḥalqah* in Syria seems to have been a much stronger and much more important element than in Egypt (Ayalon, "Ḥalka," 99). It is therefore logical to surmise that the main Oirats in the *ḥalqah* units were stationed in Syria, which is also the reason why one hears about Oirat *iqṭāʿāt* in Syria and not in Egypt.

¹⁴⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭāṭ*, 43.

¹⁴⁷ Ayalon, "Wafidiyya," 101; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, 8:258; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:83.

¹⁴⁸ Ayalon, "Wafidiyya," 101.

¹⁴⁹ See David Ayalon, "L'Esclavage du mamelouk," *Oriental Notes and Papers* 1 (1951): 15, for this issue and additional sources; cf. Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* (Leiden, 1995), 61.

¹⁵⁰ Al-Shujāʿī's *Tārīkh* includes an interesting remark about a group called by the chronicler "*jund baṭālah min awlād al-Ḥusayniyyah*," "... soldiers from the sons of Ḥusayniyyah," which participated in the revolt of the Royal Mamluks against Sayf al-Dīn Qawsun al-Sāqī, one of the favorites of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who served as a regent of his infant son al-Ashraf. The revolt took place in late September and early October of 1341. Barbara Schäfer translated this sentence as indicating



Rather remarkable in this context is the case of one Qararnah al-Silāḥdār, who arrived in the Sultanate with the Oirats of Tūraqai Güregen and provides a rather unique example of an Oirat from the migration wave of 1296 who rose high in Mamluk society. According to Ibn Ḥajar, he advanced in his career under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad when the sultan sent him as an envoy to the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd. The most obvious reason for this decision would be his knowledge of the Mongol language and customs, but taking into consideration the importance of the Oirat in the close circle of Abū Saʿīd, one wonders whether it was not the Oirat affiliation of Qararnah that led to his choice as an envoy to the Ilkhan. After returning from the Ilkhanate, Qararnah was appointed a *silāḥdār*. After the collapse of the Ilkhanate, he was sent by the sons of al-Nāṣir, al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl (1342–45) and al-Kāmil Sayf al-Dīn Shaʿbān (1345–46), as an envoy to the then ruler of Baghdad, Shaykh Ḥasan Buzurg. After his return, Qararnah was appointed an amir of 40 (*ṭablkhānah*). He died in 749/1348–49 of the plague.¹⁵¹ Although the reason this specific Oirat had such a different trajectory is not clear, it serves as an interesting confirmation that the Oirats of Tūraqai could make a rather successful career in the Sultanate, the most deciding factors probably being their personal qualities and their patrons among the Mamluks at the beginning of their stay. Unfortunately, however, more information is not accessible.

The third issue is the least tangible one: the identity of the group. As mentioned by al-Nuwayrī (and confirmed by al-Maqrīzī), the group converted to Islam. It is not clear whether the process of Islamization was fully completed when al-Nuwayrī wrote his book, as the chronicler died in 1331, less than 40 years after the Oirats' arrival. Yet it seems clear from the quoted passage that three decades after the arrival of the Oirat *wāfidiyah* in the Sultanate, the lines between the tribesmen and the surrounding society had blurred and their assimilation, in which Islamization played a leading role, was on its way. In addition to the objective processes listed, one should mention that the Oirats were not only non-Muslims, but were also not part of *ahl al-kitāb* from the point of view of Islamic law, and as such could not benefit from the advantages of the relatively secure and stable status shariʿah could give to *ahl al-dhimmah*. Being idolaters according to the shariʿah, the small group of Oirats with shamanistic beliefs could not expect any recognition from the Muslim religious and political authorities. In the

two groups, namely the soldiers and the sons of Ḥusaynīyah. However, I cannot see this from the manuscript provided in the end of her book (Schäfer, *Beiträge nach dem Tode*, 155, and cf. *ibid.*, 31 of the Arabic text). One wonders whether these “soldiers” were of Oirat blood, but the sources are silent concerning this issue. See Frédéric Bauden, “The Sons of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Politics of Puppets: Where Did It All Start?” *MSR* 13, no. 1 (2009): 53–81 for discussion of the period immediately following al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's death, as well as the book by Schäfer, cited above.
¹⁵¹Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah*, 3:248; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:796; cf. Nakamachi, “Rank and Status,” 74 and 80.



longer run this also stimulated the Islamization of the tribe.¹⁵² It should also be kept in mind that the Oirats came from the Ilkhanate at a time when conversion to Islam had already become a common occurrence.¹⁵³ The conversion of Ghazan had already taken place only a few months before Tūraqai's escape.¹⁵⁴ Surely the Oirats were already acquainted with Islam when they arrived in the Sultanate, especially after living in the Islamic environment of the Ilkhanate.¹⁵⁵ All these factors accelerated the Oirat assimilation into the Muslim society.

Analysis of the Islamization of other groups under Muslim rule throughout history (such as Jews and Christians) has illustrated that only those groups who succeeded in maintaining economic independence survived multiple persecutions, preserved their ethnic homogeneity, and were able to resist conversion to Islam in the long run.¹⁵⁶ The Oirat case was different. Everything that happened to the Oirats after their arrival tended to weaken the boundaries between them and the dominant society, eroding their identity. First, there were purges of their leadership. Second, intermarriage, mentioned by al-Nuwayrī, played an important role. According to Muslim law, interfaith marriage is permitted only between Muslim men and non-Muslim women, forbidding Muslim women to marry non-

¹⁵²Of course, when the Muslim conquerors faced idolaters in India, mostly beginning with the Ghaznavid period, legal scholars had to develop judicial arguments for how to deal with them, usually *de facto* accepting their right to live and preserve their religion without conversion. The situation in India cannot be compared with the Oirat situation in Egypt due to the small number of Oirats compared to the size of the Hindu population in India. See, for example, Nehemia Levtzion, "Towards a Comparative Study of Islamization," in *Conversion to Islam*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion (New York/London, 1979), 13, and Peter Hardy, "Modern European and Muslim Explanations of Conversion to Islam in South Asia: A Preliminary Survey of the Literature," in *ibid.*, 68–99.

¹⁵³Melville, "Pādshāh-i Islam," 161.

¹⁵⁴*JT*, 3:620–621.

¹⁵⁵Such a previous acquaintance with Islam, however, could also have promoted the Oirats' Islamization in the longer run.

¹⁵⁶On the subject of Jews, for example, in comparison to the Christian communities of Northern Africa and the Samaritans, see Shlomo D. Goitein, "Religion in Everyday Life as Reflected in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza," in *Religion in a Religious Age*, ed. Shlomo D. Goitein (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), 3–17; Milka Levy-Rubin, "New Evidence Relating to the Process of Islamization in Palestine in the Early Muslim Period—the Case of Samaria," *Journal of the Economic and Society History of the Orient* 23, no. 3 (2000): 268–69; David J. Wasserstein, "Islamisation and the Conversion of the Jews," in *Conversions islamiques: Identités religieuses en Islam méditerranéen*, ed. Mercedes Garcia-Arenal (Paris, 2001), 55–56; Glayds Frantz-Murphy, "Conversion in Early Islamic Egypt: The Economic Factor," in *Muslims and Others in Early Islamic Society*, ed. R. Hoyland (Aldershot, 2004), 14–17.



Muslim men.¹⁵⁷ Further, children born of mixed marriages automatically receive the religion of the father according to Islamic law, meaning that at least *de jure* the child becomes Muslim. Third, the dispersion of the Oirats throughout the Muslim lands also weakened their connections with their fellow tribesmen and, after they joined the Mamluk army, stimulated their conversion to Islam. Fourth, the Oirats could have found themselves in the Mamluk Sultanate in the early fourteenth century in a situation similar to (or much worse than) that of the Samaritans in Palestine a few centuries earlier, or of the Latin churches in Tunisia or elsewhere in North Africa under Almoravid (1040–1147) and Almohad (1121–1269) rule, as they lacked a self-sustaining economic structure which could grant them independence in social terms.¹⁵⁸ Finally, many, if not most, of their young boys were taken as servants and lovers by Mamluk commanders due to their outstanding physical beauty. This might have further eroded the borders of the group.¹⁵⁹ After their leaders were executed in 1299, the Oirats lacked representation at the highest levels of the state and were even more exposed to the processes of group deformation.¹⁶⁰ The fact that the Oirats almost disappear from

¹⁵⁷The prohibition is mainly based on the Quranic verse 2:221. See Yohanan Friedman, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge, 2003), 160–93, and Milka Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire* (Cambridge, 2011), 123–24.

¹⁵⁸Michael Brett, “The Islamization of Egypt and North Africa,” *The First Annual Levtzion Lecture* (Jerusalem, 2005), 21–26. In the case of all accepted groups of *ahl al-kitāb*, some sort of economically sustainable community (such as that of the Jews in Fatimid Cairo or the lands and property of the Coptic Church in Egypt) existed before the arrival of Islam and was partly still preserved after it. See more in Goitein, “Religion in Everyday Life,” 3–17, and idem, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza, Vol. I: Economic Foundations* (Los Angeles, 2000). Cf. also V. L. Ménage, “The Islamization of Anatolia,” in *Conversion to Islam*, ed. Levtzion, 63–64.

¹⁵⁹The beauty of the Oirats, both women and men, was one of the most noted features of the tribe (see, e.g., Okada Hidehiro, “Origins of Dörben Oyirad,” *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher*, N.F. 7 (1987): 185, who stresses the beauty of the Oirat women and its importance for the status of the tribe, and cf. al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:44). It is not clear whether the Oirat boys were taken as servants starting with their arrival in 1296 or whether this was one of the outcomes of the deterioration of their status. I can hardly agree with Levanoni, according to whom the Oirats “voluntarily chose to serve the Mamluks in Egypt” (Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 17). Levanoni also mentions that “their sons were taken as mamluks at an early age by the amirs in Egypt” (ibid.). As far as I can see from the sources she cites, namely Ibn al-Furāt (*Tārīkh*, 8:205) and al-Maqrīzī (*Khiṭaṭ*, 3:44–45 in another edition), the sons of the Oirats were primarily taken as servants and lovers, (even though, of course, there are cases of Oirat mamluks connected to this *wāfiḍīyah* wave, as shown in this article). Even when they entered military service (*‘asākīr*), as claimed, e.g., by al-Maqrīzī (ibid.), this does not mean that they were accepted as mamluks.

¹⁶⁰Despite a significant number of Oirats who apparently entered military service in the decade following their arrival, Yosef claims that from 1293 until the end of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s third reign there was a gradual decrease in the number of mamluks identified as Mongols (Yosef,



the sources during the fourteenth century might in itself attest to their rapid assimilation into the Muslim environment.¹⁶¹

For the sake of completeness, two more aspects should be discussed. First, despite the fact that the Oirats arrived with their livestock, it is not clear whether the geographical, climatic, and social conditions of the Palestinian coast were suitable for the continuation of the migration cycles common to the Mongols. While in power (in the Ilkhanate, the Golden Horde, and even in China), the Mongols could indeed partly preserve their traditional lifestyle, if not fully restore their traditional economic activity.¹⁶² Strangers in a territory that was not under their control, the Oirats could have faced the need to change their traditional nomadic way of life (as seen indeed in the case of the Oirat settlement in Cairo). At the same time, another option is possible, i.e., that the assimilation could have led not only to the Oirats' disappearance within the settled population, but that it could also have enforced a partial merging of the Oirat population from the Palestinian coast with other semi-nomadic groups of Central Asian origin dwelling in those areas, known by the general name Turcomans.¹⁶³ Not much information can be found about those tribal units, mostly loyal to Cairo, but it is possible that a significant part of the Oirat population which remained in the areas allotted to them disappeared during the fourteenth century, somewhat similar to the Oirats in the post-Ilkhanid areas, into the wider Turcoman population.¹⁶⁴ This could also ex-

Ethnic Groups, 62–63). It is difficult to explain this, considering that the most significant waves of Mongol migration took place after 1293. It might, as Yosef supposes, be a result of a change in the perception of the ethnic identity of the mamluks or of the change in the composition of the new mamluks. At the same time, it might also indicate that there were not many high-standing mamluks of Mongol origin mentioned in the sources. Almost certainly this was the fate of the Oirats after their leadership was exterminated—they entered the military but almost never rose to high positions.

¹⁶¹ Although, as suggested by Yosef, this may also have resulted from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's attempts to downgrade the memory of Mongol rule and its impact on the Sultanate, another explanation is given by Yosef, according to whom a policy existed during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, aimed at letting the previous periods of Mamluk history, when the Mongols *de facto* or *de jure* ruled the country, fall into oblivion (Yosef, *Ethnic Groups*, 72). If this is correct, it could provide an explanation as to why one cannot find Mongols in the chronicles.

¹⁶² Smith, "Qīshlāqs and Tūmens," 44–45.

¹⁶³ There is some research discussing this topic, but the issue has still not been explored in depth (see Tuvia Ashkenazi, *Les Turkmènes en Palestine* (Tel Aviv, 1930); David Kushnir, "The Turcomans in Palestine during the Ottoman Period," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 11, nos. 1–2 (2005): 81–94; Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, "The Turcomans and Bilād aš-Šām in the Mamluk Period," in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation*, ed. Khalidi, 169–80.

¹⁶⁴ The exact nature of the Turcomans' economic activity in the territory of Greater Syria in the period under discussion is not clear. Most of them apparently kept to the lifestyle of pastoral nomadism (Kellner-Heinkele, "Turcomans," 169; Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, "Turkomans in Syria



plain why the Oirats disappear from the chronicles so quickly.¹⁶⁵ Even if they had preserved their identity among the Turcomans, they would have been perceived as Turcomans by outside observers.¹⁶⁶

There is an additional, rather peculiar, point to mention before the end of the discussion. The rapid deconstruction of the Oirat community, their mass conversion to Islam and intermarriages, as well as possible changes in their way of life all testify to a one-sided influence of Muslim society on the newcomers. At the same time, though, the Mamluk chronicles tend to make a very curious connection of a reverse nature—one between the arrival of the Oirats and the development of homoerotic relations between the military elite of the Sultanate and Oirat youngsters.¹⁶⁷ The outstanding physical appeal of the Oirats resulted not only in attracting Mamluk men to Oirat women, but also to Oirat young men. The most detailed report of this is given by al-Maqrīzī, according to whom Oirat

and Circassian Power,” *Mediterranean World* [地中海論集] 20 [2010]: 47). See also Ibn Shaddād’s remark, according to whom about 40,000 Turcomans were allowed to settle in the area of al-Sāḥīl during the rule of Baybars under the condition that they would conquer their *iqṭā’āt* from the Crusaders (*Die Geschichte des Sultans Baibars von ‘Izz ad-dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Shaddād* [st. 684/1285], ed. Ahmad Hutait [Wiesbaden, 1983], 335). Mentioning this quotation, Sato writes “[t]he Arabic text reads ‘mā yunif ‘alā arba’in alf bayt,’ but we do not understand what ‘bayt’ means exactly” (Sato, *State and Rural Society*, 100, n. 2). As above, by “bayt” one should understand “yurt,” “family,” meaning an organic household, consisting of five or six people; therefore the number of the Turcomans seems to have been even bigger than that of the Oirats.

¹⁶⁵The exact location of the Turcomans in Palestine and Southern Syria is also not clear, as according to Chapoutot-Remadi, at least in the fourteenth century one finds Turcomans mostly north of Aleppo (idem, “Turkomans in Syria,” 50). Kellner-Heinkele also mostly discusses the Turcoman population in the Aleppo area (idem, “Turkomans,” 169–70). Thus, more research on the Turcoman groups in Palestine should be conducted.

¹⁶⁶It is possible that with time, these Turcoman populations became part of a greater group of Bedouins. On a map published in 1938 by Ashkenazi, one can clearly see a considerable presence of semi-nomadic tribes of Turcoman origin (*Arab al-Turkmān*) to the west, northwest, and south of Atlit (today’s Emek Jesrael and Sharon area)—relatively close to the coastline (Tuvia Ashkenazi, *Tribus Semi-Nomades de la Palestine du Nord* [Paris, 1938], 21–22, 43, and the attached map).

¹⁶⁷Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 43–45. The usage of the label “homosexual” for describing relationships between Oirat boys and Mamluks would not suit the case under discussion and in no way should be seen in the modern sense of “homosexual” relations. The reason for this is the fact that the spectrum of sexual and gender identities in medieval Muslim societies was much more multifaceted and flexible than is sometimes perceived in modern times. That is why sexual relations between beardless boys and mature Mamluk men were seen as normal male sexual activity, especially when the young boys served as the “passive,” “accepting” partner. Additionally, the fact that beardless boys were not yet thought to be fully developed men should be taken into consideration. More on this issue can be found in Everett K. Rowson, “The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice Lists,” in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York and London, 1991), 50–79.



youngsters were so desired by Mamluk commanders that when there were not enough of them in Cairo more were brought from Syria.¹⁶⁸ Even more interesting in this context is that the Oirats are blamed for bringing homosexuality into the Mamluk realm. In the early years of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's second reign, Ḥisām al-Dīn Azdamar al-Majīrī, messenger of the sultan, came to Ghazan. Among the topics raised by Ghazan was the following:

Al-Majīrī said: "He [the Khan] heard all these words, and there were no servants next to us, ... and he asked me: 'How [did it happen] that your amirs left women and are using boys [instead of them]?' That is—beardless [boys]." [Al-Majīrī] said: ... "God save the Khan! Our amirs were not acquainted with such a [behavior], but it was introduced to our country [recently] with the coming of Tūraqai of your [origin], and he came to us with boys from the sons of Tatars, and the people [started] to be engaged in them instead of women." And al-Majīrī said: "And when the Khan heard this answer, he took it close to his heart and it made him angry..."¹⁶⁹

Sexual relations between an older man and a younger boy in the military circles of the Mamluk army of course did not appear in the Sultanate for the first time after the Oirats came to its territory and had also not been brought to the Islamic lands by the Mongol invasion, but had rather been part of the Muslim military elite's customs for centuries, and not only in Egypt.¹⁷⁰ Yet the aforementioned connotation of the Oirat appearance in the Sultanate is not implausible. Taking

¹⁶⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 44; Everett K. Rowson, "Homoerotic Liaisons among the Mamluk Elite in Late Medieval Egypt and Syria," in *Islamicate Sexualities: Translations across Temporal Geographies of Desire*, ed. Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Cambridge, MA, 2008), 223–24. See also Ayalon, "Great Yāsa C2," 121, and esp. his n. 2, which discusses al-Maqrīzī's statement about the Mongol *wāfidiyah* in general. Cf. al-Maqrīzī's notice about the beauty of the population of al-Ḥusayniyah due to the large number of Oirats who settled there (al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 44; Rowson, "Homoerotic Liaisons," 223). Note also an interesting report, namely that the famous mamluk of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Sayf al-Dīn Ulmās, had a love affair with a boy from al-Ḥusayniyah (Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo*, 182). I was unfortunately unable to locate Behrens-Abouseif's source, and thus could not determine whether this boy was indeed of Oirat origin, but this remark certainly fits into the general framework of the discussion. See also the discussion of a mosque built by Ulmās in Cairo. In its inscription he asked God for forgiveness for his "temptation, lust, and greed," possibly connected to the love affair mentioned above (on this site and the inscription see Chahinda Fahmy Karim, "The Mosque of Ulmas al-Hajib," in *The Cairo Heritage: Essays in Honor of Laila Ali Ibrahim*, ed. Doris Behrens-Abouseif [Cairo, 2000], 123–47, esp. 128, and Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo*, 180–83). For the biography of Ulmās see al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, ed. Joseph van Ess (Wiesbaden, 2008), 9:370–71.

¹⁶⁹ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, ed. Roemer, 9:73–74.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Rowson, "Homoerotic Liaisons," 204–38.



into account the numerous mentions of the outstanding beauty not only of Oirat women, but also of their men, and the sexual connotations of a hairless young male body in Muslim (and especially Mamluk) culture, it seems reasonable that Oirat boys became so popular in the military elite circles that their homosexual connotation became visible and strong in the society.¹⁷¹ At the same time, the attempt of the chronicler (or of the amir himself) to shift the responsibility for the phenomenon onto the Mongols seems to be part of a larger framework of ascribing types of behavior condemned by the shari‘ah to immigrants and especially to Mongols.¹⁷² It would be interesting to ask whether the Oirats’ arrival changed the phenomenon under discussion in Mamluk society in the long run. As this question surpasses the limits of this article, sexual associations with the Oirats can be treated here merely as a curious addition to the discussion.

Conclusion

This paper has traced the migration of the Oirat tribe from the Mongolian plateau to the western parts of Eurasia—to eastern Anatolia and the Mamluk Sultanate—and its assimilation into its host environments from the thirteenth until the early fifteenth centuries. In the beginning of the fourteenth century the process of migration had already been completed, so that Oirats could be found from western Khorasan to Upper Egypt. Toward the early fifteenth century, as far as the sources tell us, most, if not all, of the tribesmen had assimilated into the Islamic environments of their host areas. Some retained their original tribal designation,

¹⁷¹See, for example, David Ayalon, “Sex, Romances and Marriages,” in idem, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans: A Study of Power Relationships* (Jerusalem, 1999), 316–25, esp. 317–18. At the same time, this homoerotic connotation could be interesting in the context of the *futūwah* initiation rituals, some of which included observing young beardless boys undressed before dressing them in the new garment of a *futūwah* member. As Irwin claims, it seems likely that the Oirats organized their activities in Cairo “on the basis of futuwwa lodges” (Irwin, “Futuwwa,” 164). This claim can hardly be confirmed or rejected, as no other information can be found, except that given by al-Maqrīzī in his *Khiṭaṭ* (see above, n. 129). Much more problematic is the claim of Irwin that “it is possible that there was no such thing as popular *futuwwa* in Egypt prior to the arrival of the Oirats and that they brought its rituals with them from Ilkhanid Iraq. While al-Maqrīzī clearly did not think that the Oirats were Muslims, they may still have thought of themselves as such” (Irwin, “Futuwwa,” *ibid.*). As was shown above, the Oirats of Tūraqai preserved their nomadic style of life in Iraq and Anatolia and that can hardly be supposed to include any *futūwah*-style rituals similar to those of the settled population of Cairo. Additionally, during the time of al-Maqrīzī the Oirats were certainly Muslims, and al-Maqrīzī did not try to deny this (cf. al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:813).

¹⁷²As Yosef mentions, Mongols in general and Oirat *wāfidis* in particular were seen in the Sultanate as unbelievers and the possessors of assorted bad qualities (Yosef, *Ethnic Groups*, 1:171). At the same time, homoerotic liaisons were not a rare phenomenon in Mongol society, so this could be a typical political accusation for al-Majīrī (see more in Rowson, “Homoerotic Liaisons,” 212–22).



but most lost it up to the point that it was no longer represented in the texts. As has been shown in this article, two different patterns of Mongol tribal assimilation can be distinguished in the Oirats' case. To put it simply, the assimilation of tribal nobility was different from the assimilation of the tribal masses, and the position of the tribal elite was crucial for the speed of the assimilation process. As neither Persian nor Arabic sources alone provide enough information on these processes, it is necessary to read both together. While the Persian sources concentrate mainly on the nobility and provide information about their conversion to Islam, the Mamluk sources fill in the gap and give us a significant amount of data concerning the lower strata of Oirat society.

The case of the elite in Ilkhanid society manifests gradual voluntary assimilation, during which the Oirats, closely connected to the Chinggisids, preserved the homogeneity of their tribal units and their identity (their name and their genealogical connections with the Golden *urugh*). The established power networks collapsed together with Ilkhanid rule, making room for new political actors. Probably due to their very close relations with the Ilkhanid clan (and especially with the last Ilkhan), and due even more to the failure of 'Alī Pādshāh's revolt, the Oirats were unable to compete with the Jalayirids, the Chobanids, and other players in the long run. The subsequent death and migration of members of the ruling elite, however, did not lead to the immediate disappearance of the Oirats from the chronicles. Even though the Oirats never rose to the heights of power they had had under the Ilkhanate, they remained a significant group, particularly in the military of the post-Ilkhanid realm, almost completely disappearing from the sources only after the death of Temür (1405). As far as I can see, the disappearance of the Oirats (as a tribe) from the sources correlates with the disappearance of the Oirat military commanders or local rulers of Oirat origin. This is seemingly related to the reestablishment of power networks in the post-Ilkhanid areas, either by Temür and his descendants, or by other nomadic actors such as the Jalayirids, as well as the Aq and Qarā Qoyūnlū.

As for the broader tribal masses, throughout the two hundred years under discussion their assimilation was highly dependent on the position of the tribal elite *vis-à-vis* the power-holder, whether the Ilkhanids or the Mamluks. In the first case, as long as the tribal elite was an integral part of the ruling elite, the Oirat tribe preserved its identity and cohesiveness, even if the main loyalty went to the clan (the specific lineage headed by a certain tribal leader), and not to the tribe. The collapse of the dynasty led to the collapse of the tribal elite, but the disappearance of the Oirats from the tribal landscape of the post-Ilkhanid realm took six decades or more. This is due first to the great prestige of the tribe and its strong roots in its home areas, mainly Diyarbakir, since the mid-thirteenth cen-



ture, and second to the numeric strength of the Oirats, a fact accounting for their important role in the Ilkhanid and post-Ilkhanid military.

The case of the Oirats in the Mamluk Sultanate was different, since the Oirat elites were purged almost immediately after their arrival. The sources show us fairly clearly what happened when the Oirats lost their leadership and had to survive in the Islamic environment. Dispersion and intermarriage, which encouraged conversion to Islam, led to the relatively fast disappearance of the Oirats as an organized group. Unlike the Ilkhanid case, this process was quick (it took just a few years rather than decades) and even if the tribal name was preserved (as in the case of al-Ḥusaynīyah), it is not clear whether one can talk about the Oirats in those areas as having preserved their tribal identity and identifying themselves with their former Mongol tribe, or whether the tribal name simply became a social marker, connected with the good-looking boys and girls on the streets of Cairo. Putting aside some specific characteristics of Mamluk society (as the homoerotic discourse does not appear at all in Ilkhanid or Timurid sources in the Oirat context), one can suppose that the same processes (dispersion, intermarriage, conversion) influenced the Oirat tribal masses in the post-Ilkhanid space after the collapse of their tribal elites. As suggested above, the Oirat “disappearance” from the sources may also have been connected with their becoming part of the larger Turcoman confederations in both Iraq and Syria.



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The Iconography of a Military Elite: Military Figures on an Early Thirteenth-Century Candlestick (Part II)

Iconography of the Candlestick: The Horsemen

When looking at the horsemen on the Costa candlestick one is struck by the way in which the artist who designed these men and animals seems to have been at pains to illustrate a number of distinct combat actions (photographs 4–12 and figures 1–9).^{*} It is almost as if he was inspired either by pictures in lost early cavalry training manuals, or by what he saw on a regular basis in the *maydān* training ground of the city where he worked. If the candlestick was made in early thirteenth-century Mosul, as seems most likely, the artist or craftsman would surely have often seen fully trained *mamlūk* or *ghulām* troops training on the open space south of the citadel. This was separated from the main urban area by a wall but was still located within the overall fortifications of the city, serving as Mosul's main *maydān*, next to the old Uqaylid and newer Zangid walls.¹ The *atabeg* or ruler of Mosul, Mas'ūd 'Izz al-Dīn, was also said to have had a kiosk or viewing position built for himself and his immediate entourage at this *maydān*. There would be a notable increase in the construction, repair, and use of such officially established or sanctioned military training grounds in Syria and Egypt from the 1240s onwards. But perhaps this process actually started a decade or so earlier in places like Mosul.

In other words, the candlestick might be one of the earliest surviving illustrations of *furūsīyah* cavalry training exercises as well as itself reflecting a revival of interest in such specialized skills. Of course many “cavalry postures” or weapons techniques are shown in Islamic art of this and earlier centuries. Certainly they appear in greater variety than are shown in Western European or Byzantine art. Only Chinese and to some extent Central and Inner Asian art compete in this respect. The earliest surviving *furūsīyah* military training manuals date from over a century later than the Costa candlestick. Whether their illustrations are based upon lost earlier *furūsīyah* manuals is unknown, but it is interesting to see how several of the cavalry skills shown in the illustrations which accompany these texts almost mirror those on the candlestick.

^{*}See Part I, “The Iconography of a Military Elite: Military Figures on an Early Thirteenth-Century Candlestick,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 18 (2014–15): 57–90, for photographs 1-15c and figures 1–9 (http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/MSR_XVIII_2014-15_Nicolle.pdf).

¹D. L. Patton, “A History of the Atabegs of Mosul and their Relations with the Ulama, A.H. 521–660/A.D. 1127–1262” (Ph.D. diss., New York Univ., 1982), 46–48.



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The magnificently illustrated manuscript of *Warqah wa-Gulshāh*, now in the Topkapı Library, is particularly varied in its illustrations of fighting skills and combat techniques. Like the candlestick, its illustrations are widely thought to be in a style stemming from the early thirteenth century, though the precise dating and provenance of the manuscript remains a matter of debate. According to Alan Safani, the name of the presumed artist, ‘Abd al-Mu’min of Khoy (a town north of Lake Urmia in northwestern Iran), has been identified on one page.² The manuscript can fairly be described as a product of a Seljuq artistic milieu, but whether this was Azerbaijan, Iran, or Anatolia remains unknown. Safani emphasized the heritage of Sassanian Iranian art as well as that of pre-Islamic Central Asian wall painting. He also noted evidence for artistic continuity through early Islamic wall paintings in Afghanistan and Iran, fragments of which survive and which were often mentioned in written sources from the eighth and twelfth centuries, as well as written evidence for earlier illustrations of the *Shāhnāmah* than currently exist.³

Because the cavalymen on the Costa candlestick form a running frieze, each man being on combat with the person either preceding or following him, the relationship between their differing military techniques may be significant. Some *furūsīyah* manuals placed particular emphasis upon the specific weapon a man should employ when facing an opponent armed in a particular manner. Chapter 4 of the *Kitāb nihāyat al-su’l*, for example, deals with encounters between horsemen: part one when a horse-archer meets others, part two when a spear-armed horseman meets others, part three when a sword-armed horseman meets others, part four when a javelin-armed horsemen meets others, and part six when a horseman armed only with a *khanjar* large dagger meets others. Chapter 5 similarly deals with encounters between horsemen and infantry; chapter 6 focuses upon encounters between infantry and horsemen, and chapter 7 upon infantry against infantry.⁴ These all entailed very specific recommended skills which the properly trained, professional military élites of the Islamic Middle East were expected to possess.

Two of the nine figures on the Costa candlestick are fighting with bow and arrow (figures 5 and 6) and one with a sword (figure 4). The other six all fight with various types of spear or lance (figures 2–3 and 7–9). This distribution of weapons may seem surprising to observers brought up on the idea that Middle Eastern Islamic armies, especially those dominated by Turks during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, relied primarily upon horse archery. Nevertheless, closer study

²Alan Safani, “The Battlescenes of Varqa va Golshah and their Prototypes,” *Marsyas* 21 (1981–82).

³*Ibid.*, 2–5.

⁴A. S. M. Lutful-Huq, “A Critical Edition of *Nihayat al Su’l* [Al-Aqsarā’i]” (Ph.D. diss., London Univ., 1956), Ch. 4.



of the documentary sources and, above all, the *furūsīyah* military training literature of these and previous centuries confirms that horse archery was but one of the skills expected of a professional soldier.

Dr. Shihab al-Sarraf, the leading scholar in the highly specialized field of Arab *furūsīyah* literature, emphasizes the fact that horse archery was regarded as a military skill of relatively minor importance in Abbasid *furūsīyah* traditions. Abbasid *furūsīyah* literature came to full flowering in the ninth and tenth centuries, and thereafter remained the primary source for the bulk of those *furūsīyah* texts which date—or appear to date—from subsequent centuries. In reality, of course, most twelfth- to fifteenth-century *furūsīyah* texts were either copies of, abbreviations of, or updated versions of Abbasid texts. In the Abbasid originals the *laʿb al-rumḥ* or “lance game” was of far greater importance than horse archery in military training and presumably thus in military combat. Indeed, skill in *laʿb al-rumḥ* remained basic to the assessment of troops for muster and payment. Not until the emergence of the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt and Syria in the mid-thirteenth century did the importance and status of archery really start to rise, and even so, this phenomenon was more characteristic of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

For example, in the *Tabṣīrat arbāb al-albāb* written by al-Ṭarsūsī for Saladin around 1170, there seems to be an assumption that a horse archer was primarily a lancer. Here the author states that when a horseman wanted to use a bow, he should first put his spear under his right thigh, but if that position was already occupied by a sword—presumably meaning the second or “saddle sword” shown in some Islamic art sources (figures 126y and 175, perhaps also 126nn)—he should put the spear under his left thigh.⁵ Preference for the right over the left thigh must have reflected the greater encumbrance that a spear would form on an archer’s left side.

One of the horse archers on the Costa candlestick shoots forward while the other aims to the rear in the manner known to European scholars as the Parthian Shot. Both are using ordinary arrows while other arrows fly through the air or lie upon the ground. None of these missiles appears to be the “short arrow” or dart mentioned in various *furūsīyah* texts, and noted in European sources from the Crusader period. Such “darts” were shot from an ordinary hand-held, composite bow using an arrow guide. All the evidence, including the abundant numbers of medieval Middle Eastern arrows uncovered by archaeologists, show that ordinary arrows were of a consistent length. This was for the simple reason that an archer always drew to his cheek—in other words a full draw. If an archer did not

⁵Murḍī ibn ʿAlī ibn Murḍī al-Ṭarsūsī, *Contribution à l’Étude de l’Archerie Musulmane*, trans. A. Boudot-Lamotte (Damascus, 1969), 146–47.



do so, it was impossible for him to aim properly and archers certainly did not attempt to vary the speed of their arrow by altering the length of the draw.

The second archer, who is shooting to the rear and slightly downwards (figure 5), turns in the saddle. This was the case in the majority of all other representations of the so-called Parthian Shot in Islamic and other art. The often mentioned invention of a special saddle with a very low cantle or rear, which enabled a horse archer to shoot directly backwards at a *qabaq* or raised target,⁶ was a *maydān* display trick. As such it was intended for public display rather than the battlefield. On the Costa candlestick the only horseman who appears to be injured seems to have an arrow through his neck (photograph 10; figure 7), but this arrow is the only one which clearly lacks a blade! Might this be another reference to *furūsīyah*; perhaps to a training exercise made slightly less dangerous by the use of blunt arrows?

There is relatively little reference to training with the sword in early *furūsīyah* literature. It almost appears that skill with a sword was already expected of a soldier, almost as part of his education before entering the *maydān* as part of a military team. For a member of the military elite the sword was, of course, the most personal of weapons. It was also regarded as a fighting man's last line of defense. Perhaps it was otherwise seen as relatively unimportant in terms of overall cavalry training; at least until the Mamluk era. Priorities then seem to have changed, as reflected in the *Nihāyat al-su'l*, which devotes considerable space to exercises with the sabre, along with several illustrations (photograph 58).

This leaves those horsemen who wield a spear or lance. The study of this weapon and its variations within medieval Islamic civilization is complicated by the fact that so many different terms were used. Many reflected differences amongst such weapons, either major or more subtle. Some were used both on horseback and on foot. There also seems to have been some degree of overlap in the terminology of spears to be thrust, javelins to be thrown, and long-hafted staff weapons for both cut and thrust. Despite over a century of modern study, this remains a field which lacks clarity where its terminology is concerned (see Appendix 3). What remains clear is that there was genuine variety, even amongst spears or lances for use on horseback. This is, of course, also apparent on the Costa candlestick. Here the weapons vary considerably in the length of their hafts, the sizes or shapes of their blades, and the possession of one blade or a blade plus a blade-like foot or butt. Meanwhile the pennons attached to such weapons are almost equally varied.

Like so many Islamic sources from this period, the *Nihāyat al-su'l* training manual agrees that more than one kind of spear was used by cavalry. This is

⁶David Ayalon, "Notes on the Furūsīyya Exercises and Games in the Mamlūk Sultanate," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961): 55–56.



specifically noted in the text's answer to the question: "Where should a lance be put if one wants to use the bow or other weapon?" The answer was: "Whether the lance is heavy or hollow or of knotted cane, then, according to the experts, it should be hung from the belt."⁷ In fact, a clear distinction between long and short lances had been made explicit from an early period. For example, the chronicler al-Balādhurī quoted a poem which celebrated the early Muslim victory at the battle of al-Ghamr: "Yea, may all short and humble lances be sacrificed, In favor of the horsemen's lances at al-Ghamr."⁸ Discussion of the relative merits of long and short spears also featured in the writings of al-Jāhīz in the ninth century, though this scholar also maintained that the *rumḥ* was more effective when a cavalryman was using the still not universally accepted stirrups.⁹

A similar distinction was drawn between hard and seemingly solid lance hafts of *nab'* wood and the more easily broken hafts of reed, in this case during the tenth century.¹⁰ The lances of *nab'* used by the Fatimid forces in North Africa during the late ninth century were described as "flexible" by the poet and Fatimid polemicist Muḥammad Ibn Hānī' al-Andalusī, clearly suggesting that this was a positive characteristic.¹¹ This *nab'* has been identified as *grewia tenax* (*chadara tenax*) whose timber was imported into Arabia from several directions during the medieval and probably also the pre-Islamic periods. In contrast, in thirteenth-century northern India, Muḥammad Ibn Manṣūr al-Dīn Mubārakshāh's description of lances with hafts of reed as being wobbly and unreliable was clearly intended as a criticism.¹² One of the strangest forms of cavalry lance was that described by Usāmah Ibn Munqidh in the twelfth century. He recalled how the people (presumably meaning the garrison) of Ḥimṣ in central Syria joined two spears together to form a *rumāḥ mu'allifah* or compound lance which had a total length twenty *dhirā'an* (twenty Islamic cubits, which has been interpreted as eighteen western cubits), perhaps nine meters.¹³ It was so long that the end trailed upon the ground when a horseman rode by.

⁷David Nicolle, "The Reality of Mamluk Warfare: Weapons, Armour and Tactics," *Al-Masāq* 7 (1994): 89.

⁸Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. De Goeje (Leiden, 1866), 135; idem, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, trans. P. K. Hitti and F. C. Murgotten (London, 1916), 1:148.

⁹Al-Jāhīz, *Al-Bayān wa-al-tabyīn*, ed. Ḥasan al-Sundūbī (Cairo, 1947), 14.

¹⁰Marius Canard, "L'Impérialisme des Fatimides et leur Propagande," in *L'Expansion Arabo-Islamiques et ses Repercussions*, ed. Marius Canard (London, 1974), 168.

¹¹Muḥammad Ibn Hānī' al-Andalusī, *Tabyīn al-ma'ānī fī sharḥ dīwān Ibn Hānī'*, ed. Z. 'Alī (Cairo, 1934), 686–87.

¹²Muḥammad Ibn Manṣūr Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārakshāh, *Ādāb al-ḥarb wa-al-shujā'ah*, ed. A. S. Khwānsārī (Tehran, 1969), 261.

¹³Usāmah Ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-i'tibār*, ed. P. K. Hitti (Princeton, 1930), 101; idem, *Memoires of an Arab-Syrian Gentleman*, trans. P. K. Hitti (Princeton, 1929), 131.



In the *furūsīyah* texts fighting with the spear or lance was regarded as a “middle distance” form of combat, lying between long-distance projectile weapons like the bow and arrow, and close combat with swords, maces, etc.¹⁴ Thrusting with the lance was also considered to be the most effective and prestigious form of combat.¹⁵ Small wonder that it was given pride of place on high status works of art such as the inlaid brass Costa candlestick.

High regard for the lance was similarly reflected in literature, where its varied techniques were often described in detail. In the *Warqah wa-Gulshāh* poetic epic, the text of which probably dates from at least a century before the surviving illustrated manuscript in the Topkapı Library, one horseman “turned a lance in his hand like a serpent.”¹⁶ Elsewhere in the same text a cutting (presumably lateral) blow made an opponent lose his stirrup.¹⁷ Other thrusts were driven into an enemy’s thigh,¹⁸ or aimed at his arms.¹⁹ This was all very different from the extremely limited, though undeniably effective, arsenal of blows possible with the couched lance as preferred by the Western knightly elite.

While the significance of the lance as a cavalry weapon during the early thirteenth century is surely reflected in the horsemen who adorn the sides of the Costa candlestick, the importance of what were called “the arts of the lance” in *furūsīyah* literature of the Mamluk period and earlier has been emphasized by Shihab al-Sarraf in a number of publications.²⁰ He noted that, no matter how important the legacy of Abbasid *furūsīyah*, it was in the field of lance play that the Mamluks showed genuine creativity and where their contribution to *furūsīyah* was most apparent.

The credit for these developments went almost entirely to Syrian lance masters and above all to the celebrated Syrian master Najm al-Dīn al-Aḥḍab al-Rammāḥ (1238–96). He is credited with making innovations in three of the four recognized categories of military lance play. However, Najm al-Dīn al-Aḥḍab al-Rammāḥ’s fame rests principally upon the seventy-two *bunūd* chapters or exercises that he condensed from the no less than 150 *bunūd* in the original Abbasid *furūsīyah*

¹⁴Lutful-Huq, “A Critical Edition of *Nihayat al Su’l*,” 8, 316.

¹⁵Ibid., 43, 335.

¹⁶Ayyūqī, “Le Roman de Varqe et Golshāh,” ed. and trans. A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Arts Asiatiques* 22 (1970): verse 365.

¹⁷Ibid., verse 447.

¹⁸Ibid., verses 540–41.

¹⁹Ibid., verses 1145–46.

²⁰Shihab al-Sarraf, “Furūsiyya Literature of the Mamlūk Period,” in *Furusiyya*, vol. 1, *The Horse in the Art of the Middle East*, ed. D. Alexander (Riyadh, 1996), 123–24; idem, “Mamlūk Furūsīyah Literature and its Antecedents,” *MSR* 8 (2004): 172–75.



treatises.²¹ One of the most accessible surviving versions of Najm al-Dīn al-Aḥḍab al-Rammāḥ's work is an abbreviation by Muḥammad Ibn ʿĪsā al-Aqsarāʿī, who himself stemmed from Damascus. Al-Aqsarāʿī was a younger contemporary of Najm al-Dīn al-Aḥḍab al-Rammāḥ as well as a student of one of the great lance master's own students, ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Rammāḥ. Being unable to find a definitive copy of Najm al-Dīn's *Kitāb al-bunūd* treatise, he used four different versions of this work in his own *Nihāyat al-suʿl*. Shihab al-Sarraf infers from this and other evidence in al-Aqsarāʿī's work that there was probably more than one version of Najm al-Dīn's original *Kitāb al-bunūd*.²²

Amongst the great variety of skills with a spear demanded of a horseman in the *Nihāyat al-suʿl* is that of “turning the weapon above the head,” as seems to be shown on the Costa candlestick (figure 9). In practical terms this enabled a horseman to strike or parry in any direction.²³ The candlestick also shows a horseman thrusting to the rear (figure 3), though here the weapon is held at chest or neck height. Another interesting passage in the *Nihāyat al-suʿl* refers to rotating the lance “in the Khurāsānī fashion.”²⁴ In fact this Khurāsānī style of lance combat included several other thrusts, parries, and manoeuvres, but it was meanwhile stated to be “old fashioned” or was at least regarded as being long established. The *Nihāyat al-suʿl* is not alone in describing different methods of using the cavalry lance, each of which has its own name. One of the most interesting is the “Syrian attack” which is presented as a *Rūmī* [Byzantine] style. The text makes it clear that this is none other than the couched lance so characteristic of Western knights.²⁵

The idea that the couched lance was tactically superior to other methods of using a spear on horseback, including those that were more widespread in the Islamic Middle East, and that this accounted for the Crusaders' success in many battles, must be viewed with great caution.²⁶ Furthermore, it was clearly not the only combat style capable of penetrating armor. Although Usāmah Ibn Munqidh's fascinating book of recollections was the work of an old man, often bringing to mind the adventures of his youth, an account of how he pierced two coats of mail with a lance thrust at the back of a fleeing horseman is one of the most detailed to come down to us from the medieval period. On this occasion Usāmah

²¹A. Carayon, “La Furūsiyya des Mamlūks; une élite sociale à cheval (1250–1517)” (Ph.D. diss., Aix-en-Provence, 2012), 232–34.

²²Al-Sarraf, “Mamlūk Furūsīyah Literature,” 173–74.

²³Lutful-Huq, “A Critical Edition of *Nihāyat al Suʿl*,” 182 passim.

²⁴Ibid., 193.

²⁵Ibid., 197.

²⁶Nicolle, “The Impact of the European Couched Lance on Muslim Military Tradition,” *Journal of the Arms and Armour Society* 10 (1980): 6–40 (reprinted in D. Nicolle, *Warriors and their Weapons around the Time of the Crusades*, Variorum Collected Studies Series [Burlington, VT, 2002], Ch. 4).



made it clear that he was not using the couched lance.²⁷ Nevertheless, elsewhere in his book the old man does advocate the couched technique of lance play.²⁸

There are nine horsemen galloping around the sides of the Costa candlestick, all heading in the same direction and moving from right to left. There are also nine horsemen in the inner circle of inlaid figures on the Freer Gallery Canteen, similarly heading from right to left in an anti-clockwise direction. The latter figures have been described in detail by Eva Baer, though sometimes her interpretations of their weaponry and combat actions are slightly misleading:

They are headed by an archer [in fact both the archers on this piece of metalwork are armed with crossbows, which makes them especially unusual and interesting], who is shown directly under the spout of the vessel. To indicate the caesura in the composition, the artist placed a single plant in front of the first horse. The riders are armed and depicted in the act of fighting. Two carry bows [crossbows]; the rest throw [wield, as none appear to be using their weapons as javelins] lances with gonfalons and streamers. With the exception of the mount belonging to a lancer ... [figure 4 counting anti-clockwise] wearing a curious hat or helmet, the lancers' horses all wear heavy, richly decorated caparisons. The archers' horses are equipped only with light saddlecloths.²⁹

Eva Baer continued:

The horsemen, in contrast, are part and parcel of an Islamic tradition that conveys the idea of princely activities, such as the hunt, warfare, and royal games. The weapons, caparisons, and armor in this frieze are not of the standard Islamic type found in paintings and art objects of the time, however. The first and third rider [counting anti-clockwise] are armed with crossbow and arrow; the others carry lances with gonfalons and streamers. The horses numbered 2 and 6 [counting anti-clockwise] are covered with huge, slit saddlecloths that hang down on either side; number 9 has basketweave trappings that give the impression of woven leather strips, and its head is encased in armor.

Baer then noted that such unconventional details are not unique to Islamic warriors, as they appear in the candlestick under consideration in this article: "... a

²⁷Usāmah Ibn Munqidh, *Memoires of an Arab-Syrian Gentleman*, 41–42, 68–69.

²⁸Ibid., 42, 70.

²⁹Eva Baer, *Ayyubid Metalwork with Christian Images*, Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture, Supplements to *Muqarnas*, vol. 4 (Leiden, 1989), 21.



long slit saddlecloth is illustrated in the Varqa and Gulshah manuscript, but they are also reminiscent of Crusader outfits. Gonfalons with two streamers and the huge saddlecloth are featured on Crusader seals and in illustrated manuscripts and were in fact distinguishing marks of the Frankish knights. M. Dimand, the first among Western scholars to interpret the Freer canteen, was convinced that it depicted European Christians and probably Crusaders.³⁰ Eva Baer, like so many others, accepted Dimand's thesis, concluding with the remark that: "his notion that these warriors were meant to represent Crusaders was probably correct and would fully agree with the character of the rest of the decoration."³¹

Dr. Julian Raby also largely agreed with such an identification of some of the figures on the Freer Canteen and, by the extension of similar arguments, on the Costa candlestick. He has written that: "In fact, the figures of Crusader and Muslim knights on the reverse of the [Freer] canteen relate to those on a candlestick [the Costa candlestick] we have already associated with Mosul, while the [Christian] figurative imagery on the front has strong links not to Syria but to Jacobite Syriac imagery connected to monasteries in Mosul and what is now southeast Turkey." Dr. Raby then produces detailed evidence linking the Christian iconography of the Freer Canteen to Mosul and nearby Syriac monasteries in the early thirteenth century, further strengthening this location and period as the origin of both the Freer Canteen and the Costa candlestick.

Julian Raby now turns to the military figures:

On the rear of the canteen there is a frieze showing a combat between Crusader and Muslim knights, and the figures are a simplified version of those found on a candlestick [the Costa candlestick] we earlier associated with Mosul—it bears the diagnostic octagon motif, and uses banal inscriptions similar to those on the ewer by Ibrahim ibn Mawaliya. The figures on the candlestick are considerably more detailed than those on the canteen; and the flying pennants are intelligible on the candlestick in a way that they are not on the canteen. ... As the candlestick dates, I believe, to the late 1220s or early 1230s, and the canteen to a decade or more later, we can see the process of deformation over time. Yet the two objects seem ultimately to have shared a common model. The relationship between the candlestick and the canteen strengthens the attribution of the canteen to Mosul, and their dependence on a graphic model confirms what we have seen from the other few examples

³⁰M. S. Dimand, "A Silver-Inlaid Bronze Canteen with Christian Subjects in the Eumorphopoulos Collection," *Ars Islamica* 1 (1934): 17.

³¹Baer, *Ayyubid Metalwork*, 46.



cited: that there was a phase of Mosul production in the second quarter of the thirteenth century that drew on a pictorial tradition for inspiration.³²

It is only on the identification of some of the horsemen on both the candlestick and the canteen that I venture to disagree with both these highly respected scholars. One of the key features which Dimand highlighted to support his contention that some or all of the cavalymen on the Freer Canteen were Westerners or Crusaders was the presence of crossbows (photograph 15a). This weapon is not, of course, shown on the Costa candlestick. Nevertheless it is important to point out that more recent studies have shown that the crossbow was far from being a specifically Western or European weapon during this period, or indeed during the Middle Ages as a whole (photographs 17 and 56). Furthermore, its use on horseback as shown on the Freer Canteen, as distinct from being carried by mounted infantrymen who dismount to fight, appears to have been more typical of the medieval Islamic world (photograph 16) than it was of medieval Europe with the exception of the strongly Islamic-influenced Iberian Peninsula (figures 102a–b), at least until the fifteenth century.³³

There is also a widespread assumption that horse armor was more typical of the knightly elites of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Latin Christendom, including the Crusader States, than it was of the rival Islamic military elites. There is no disputing the fact that horse armor suddenly became common in Islamic art following the Mongol invasions and conquests (figures 183 and 184). Nevertheless, horse armors and caparisons had been seen earlier, though it is often difficult to distinguish between horse coverings with a protective function and those without such a purpose (figures 89, 90, perhaps 112, 126b, 126oo, and strongly Islamic-influenced 143). Furthermore, such equipment had been seen in pre-Islamic art from territories which became part of the medieval Islamic world (figures 78a–c and 79). And, of course, it was mentioned quite frequently in Islamic written sources, both in Arabic and Persian, and latterly Turkish.

One of the most interesting but little-known representations of medieval horse armor comes from the Hoysala culture of southwestern India. Here some of the horse armors include the otherwise seemingly unknown feature of holes through which the rider thrust his feet to control his animal and which, presumably, offered greater protection when fighting men on foot (figures 130a–d). Meanwhile horse armor had been a feature of a small and specialized proportion of Byzan-

³²Julian Raby, “The Principal of Parsimony and the Problem of the ‘Mosul School of Metalwork,’” in *Metalwork and Material Culture in the Islamic World*, ed. V. Porter and M. Ross (London, 2012), 46–52.

³³The question of the use and relative importance of the crossbow in the medieval Islamic world will be the focus of a forthcoming study which I hope to undertake with Arthur Credland.



tine heavy cavalry throughout the early and high medieval periods (figure 113). In contrast it had for all intents and purposes disappeared from the rest of Christian Europe, from the fall of the Western Roman Empire until the late twelfth century. Even then it only became widespread from the thirteenth century onwards (figures 129, 131, 133, 143, 169a-b, 170a-b, and 173a-b).

I would therefore venture to suggest that, from the seventh to mid-twelfth century, horse armor was more common in the Islamic world than in western, central and even Mediterranean Europe. Even so it is important, though not always entirely possible, to differentiate the terminology of true horse armor, non-protective caparisons, and merely oversized saddlecloths. Terms which undoubtedly referred to horse armor of varying methods of construction, including padded, quilted, or simply felt “soft armor,” include the commonly used Arab word *tijfāf*. Although *tijfāf* originally referred to a method of construction employing felt, it may have been, or have become, synonymous with the Persian *bargustuwān*. The latter clearly indicated usage rather than construction and was eventually absorbed into Arabic, sometimes as *barkustuwān*. This was translated as a “steel caparison” in fourteenth-century Mamluk Egypt,³⁴ and even as a gilded or inlaid elephant armor of the thirteenth-century Delhi Sultanate.³⁵

Also in thirteenth-century Islamic northern India, the term *bargustuwāni-i jāmagī* was specifically used for a quilted form of horse armor. As such it should therefore be attacked with the same type of broad arrowheads as the quilted *khaftān* soft armor worn by a man.³⁶ Another later medieval term for a horse armor or caparison was *barāsim*.³⁷ In early medieval Turkish Central Asia, horse armor was known as *kedimli*,³⁸ while it is possible that the later Turcoman Turkish term for a large felt horse cloth or caparison, *gezermen*, was somehow linked to *gustuwān*, a shortened form of the term *bargustuwān* seen in early thirteenth-century Ghurid northern India.³⁹ Here the word *baghtāq* or *baghlṭāq* may have indicated a form of horse armor,⁴⁰ or horse accoutrements in general, though this Persian term could also mean a form of headgear for a man. Perhaps in this context it referred to a covering or armor for the horse’s head—namely a chamfron. Another term used by Persian writers in Islamic northern India during the thir-

³⁴ Ayalon, “Notes on the Furūsiyya,” 48.

³⁵ Simon Digby, *War-Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate, a study of Military Supplies* (Oxford, 1971), 50–53.

³⁶ Edward McEwen, “Ādāb al-Ḥarb,” *The Islamic Quarterly* 18 (1971): 81–83.

³⁷ G. Douillet, “Furūsiyya,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 2:952–54.

³⁸ Emel Esin, “The Horse in Turkic Art,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 10 (1965): 198.

³⁹ Claude Cahen, “Les armes chez les Ghūrīdes,” in “Un Traité d’armurerie composé pour Saladin,” *Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales* 12 (1947–48): 60; Mubārakshāh, *Ādāb al-ḥarb*, 425.

⁴⁰ Ibid.



teenth century was *par dum*, which clearly meant a crupper or that piece of horse armor that protected the animal's rump.⁴¹

There were various terms for the chamfron or piece of armor protecting a horse's head but whether they indicated anything more specific remains unclear. One such term in Arabic was *barāqī*,⁴² while another used in the fourteenth-century Mamluk Sultanate was probably *sarī*.⁴³ The term *tishtanīyah*, as used in al-Andalus, is normally translated as a form of helmet but it may actually have meant or have included the chamfron, having stemmed from the medieval Latin word *testinia* which was used for such a chamfron in the tenth- and eleventh-century Iberian Peninsula.⁴⁴

Separate terms were used for non-protective, usually decorative caparisons and the particularly large horse cloths which were used to denote the rider's high status. These included *kabush*, which is usually translated as a horse cloth.⁴⁵ In fact, it was almost certainly the same as the *kanbush* of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Mamluk Sultanate, normally translated as a caparison or non-protective covering for a horse.⁴⁶ The *ghashī* or horse cover placed "over the saddle" as a sign of high rank or status, was used in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Yemen.⁴⁷ Meanwhile the term *ādram* was used for an ordinary saddle cloth in thirteenth-century northern India.⁴⁸ A little later and at the westernmost extreme of the medieval Islamic world in Marinid Morocco, a *burqu* saddle cloth seems to have been the same as the Middle Eastern *ṭiyāb al-surūj*, as both were embroidered or otherwise decorated and used as a caparison or horse cloth during the early fourteenth century.⁴⁹ Here it is important to note that there is no real evidence that the caparisons with floral design, placed upon the Marinid sultan's horse, were protective. Similarly, the word *shalīl* could refer to a striped

⁴¹Mubārakshāh, *Ādāb al-ḥarb*, 332–33.

⁴²Douillet, "Furūsiyya," 952–54.

⁴³Awsī al-Anṣārī, "Glossary," in *A Muslim Manual of War; being Tafrīj al-Kurūb fī Tadbīr al-Ḥurūb*, ed. and trans. G. T. Scanlon (Cairo, 1961), 128.

⁴⁴F. Gabrieli, "Gli Arabi in Spagna e in Italia," in *Ordinamenti Militari in Occidente nell'alto Medioevo*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo 15/2 (Spoleto, 1968), 709–11.

⁴⁵Douillet, "Furūsiyya," 952–54.

⁴⁶Leo Ary Mayer, *Mamluk Costume* (Geneva, 1956), 15, 58, 76.

⁴⁷Muḥammad Ibn Ḥaṭīm, *The Ayyūbids and Early Rasūlids in the Yemen [567–694/1173–1295]*, trans. G. Rex Smith, Gibb Memorial Series 26 (London, 1978), 2:126.

⁴⁸Mubārakshāh, *Ādāb al-ḥarb*, 332–33.

⁴⁹Marius Canard, "Les Relations entre les Mérinides et les Mamelouks au XIVe siècle," *Annales de l'Institut Orientales de la Faculté des Lettres d'Alger* 5 (1939–41): 55–58.



caparison for a horse,⁵⁰ and also for a garment worn beneath a man's armor in fourteenth-century Marinid Morocco.⁵¹

Such an abundance of occasionally specific terminology must surely indicate that horse armors, as well as other forms of non-protective horse coverings, were far from unusual in the medieval Islamic world. In fact, the written sources provide stronger evidence than the infrequent pictorial representations and uncertain archaeological record. All this begs the question of where, when, and why horse armor was adopted by Muslim cavalry, but not by Western European mounted warriors until significantly later. The earliest widespread use of horse armor appears to have been in Inner Asia, perhaps more specifically in Khwārazm.⁵² It then spread, along with so many other advances in horse harness and cavalry practice, from Central Asia to neighboring China, Iran, and elsewhere, eventually including the Middle East and Europe.

Here it is worth noting that the bronze and iron scale horse armors found during the excavation of the late third-century Roman frontier fortress of Dura Europos in Syria are likely to have been either of Parthian origin, or at least to have reflected strong Parthian-Iranian influence upon local cavalry forces in Roman Syria. Early pictorial representations of horse armor in Central and Inner Asia, though clearly showing substantial forms of such defenses, are usually too crude to prove the existence of more specific items such as head-protecting chamfrons. However, Chinese art sometimes steps into the breach by showing Uighur Turkish cavalry horses with armors consisting of several separate sheets plus clearly delineated chamfrons.⁵³

Pictorial sources from pre-Islamic Iran can be equally informative, while early Arab chronicles confirm the presence of horse armor in those Sassanian armies which were defeated during the first decades of Islamic history.⁵⁴ Given the profound impact that the Sassanian military heritage had upon early Islamic armies, it is not surprising to soon find comparable cavalry in Muslim forces.⁵⁵ On the other hand the most dramatic and detailed late Sassanian representation of horse armor, the massive high relief rock-cut carving of a presumed ruler at Tāq-i Bustān (photograph 18), does not appear to have been typical of the tradition so

⁵⁰Douillet, "Furūsiyya," 952–54.

⁵¹Canard, "Les Relations," 55–58.

⁵²J. W. Eadie, "The Development of Roman Mailed Cavalry," *Journal of Roman Studies* 57 (1967): 161–62.

⁵³Esin, "The Horse in Turkic Art," 198.

⁵⁴Al-Ṭabarī, *Chronique de Tabari*, trans. M. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1867), 2:228. For a less clear-cut reference, see al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 135; al-Balādhurī, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, trans. P. K. Hitti and F. C. Murgotten, 1:403.

⁵⁵Claude Cahen, "Djaysh," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 2:504–9.



rapidly adopted by the Muslim-Arab conquerors of Iran. The Tāq-i Bustān horse armor covered only the front part of the animal and thus recalls the form of horse armor that Byzantine cavalry supposedly copied from their Avar foes in eastern and central Europe. Thus, paradoxically, the Tāq-i Bustān rider may himself be a clearer reflection of Byzantine-Avar technological influence than of the Iranian-Sassanian military technology which influenced subsequent Islamic armies.

The position becomes clearer during the Umayyad period from the mid-seventh to mid-eighth centuries. *Tijfāf* soft armor, presumably for men and horses, was worn by *khayl mujaffafah* cavalry but, when worn by a man on foot, was described as being cumbersome and easily penetrated by arrows shot from close range.⁵⁶ The largely Arab Khāraji rebels who caused such problems for the Umayyads and their successors could field numerous such *mujaffafah* armored cavalry even in the late seventh century.⁵⁷ By the early eighth century the sources make it clearer that this form of soft armor was for the horses rather than their riders,⁵⁸ with one reference specifically stating that *mujaffaf* cavalry feared infantry archers using heavy *nabl* armor-piercing arrows.⁵⁹ Perhaps the most interesting such reference dates from the mid-eighth century and described “gilded” *tijfāf* on a light colored horse.⁶⁰ This must surely indicate that the horse armor in question, even if it still incorporated some “soft” element such as felt, also had harder surfaces which would be gilded—perhaps lamellae as seen at Tāq-i Bustān or like the scale-covered horse armors from Dura Europos. It need not have been of metal, of course, but could consist of hardened leather.

Given the growing wealth and military sophistication of Islamic armies under the Abbasid caliphate, it should not be surprising to find references to five hundred horses parading with what seems to be “long” horse armor as well as brocade saddlecloths in the early tenth century.⁶¹ Around the same time, Persian sources in the eastern regions of the Islamic world start to use the term *bargustuwān* for horse armor.⁶² A decade or so earlier the Byzantine emperor Leo VI (886–912), in Constitution 18 of his *Taktika* book of military advice, recorded that the horses of

⁵⁶Nicolaus Fries, *Das Heereswesen der Araber zur Zeit der Omajjaden Nach Tabarī* (Tübingen, 1921), 42, 61.

⁵⁷Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*, ed. DeGoeje (Leiden, 1879–1901), 2:958.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 1406, 1517, 1704.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 1407.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 1537.

⁶¹A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes* (Brussels, 1950), 2:76.

⁶²Notably by Balʿamī in his translation of al-Ṭabarī’s massive history; A. D. H. Bivar, “Cavalry Equipment and Tactics on the Euphrates Frontier,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972): 291.



Turkish leaders “are covered in front with iron and quilted material.”⁶³ Leo may, however, have been conflating the Magyars of eastern Europe and the Turks of the western steppes. Furthermore, the horse armor he describes seems to be the front-only form previously associated with the Avars and also seen on the Tāq-i Bustān rock-cut statue.

While the Byzantine Emperor Leo VI makes no mention of horse armor amongst the Muslims, only a generation later the elite *ghulāms* or *mamlūks* of the Ḥamdanid ruler of northern Syria, Sayf al-Dawlah (r. 944–67), did ride armored horses just like those of their Byzantine opponents.⁶⁴ Another source notes that armor for men and for horses was being manufactured in the fortified Muslim frontier city of Tarsus immediately prior to its conquest by the Byzantines in 965.⁶⁵ Ibn al-Qalānīsī, writing many years later but drawing upon contemporary sources, made clear the effectiveness of professional *ghulām* cavalry, armed with spears, swords, or maces and riding horses with *tijfāf* armor in late tenth-century Syria.⁶⁶ Such equipment, plus proper training, enabled these largely Turkish soldiers to ride down opposing Fatimid infantry and break their formations.⁶⁷ Almost more interesting was Ibn al-Qalānīsī’s reference to the horse armor used by the leader of these freebooting mercenaries, Alftegīn (Alptekīn), which he described as being *tijāfif min marāyah*, “*tijfāf* with mirrors.”⁶⁸ The armor was thus almost certainly made of metallic lamellar or, less probably, metallic scale construction. These varied horse armors were significant, and abundant, enough for Alftegīn to give twenty armored or caparisoned horses to the Byzantine Emperor as part of a peace agreement.⁶⁹

Before turning to Alftegīn’s Fatimid rivals in Syria and Egypt, reference should be made to the eastern Iranian regions where Firdawsī wrote his epic *Shāhnāmah* at the end of the tenth century. This massive text makes several mentions of *bargustuwān*, though on one occasion it refers to elephant rather than horse armor. Firdawsī also repeated the legend that the first horse armor had been made

⁶³Leo VI, *The Taktika of Leo VI, Text, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. and trans. G .T. Dennis (Washington, 2010), 455.

⁶⁴Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, 2:333.

⁶⁵Marius Canard, “Quelques Observations sur l’introduction géographique de la Bughyat at’Taleb de Kamāl ad-Dīn ibn al-‘Adīm d’Alep,” *Annales de l’Institut Orientales de la Faculté des Lettres d’Alger* 15 (1957): 49.

⁶⁶Ibn al-Qalānīsī, *Dhayl Tārīkh Dimashq: History of Damascus*, ed. H .F. Amedroz (Beirut, 1908), 14–15.

⁶⁷Ibn al-Qalānīsī, “Continuation of the History of Damascus” in *Historiens Arabes*, trans. J. Sauvaget (Paris, 1946), 86–87.

⁶⁸Ibn al-Qalānīsī, *Dhayl Tārīkh Dimashq*, 18; idem, “Continuation of the History,” 91.

⁶⁹Marius Canard, “Les Relations Politiques et Sociales entre Byzance et les Arabes,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964): 55.



by the ancient mythological Persian ruler Jamshīd,⁷⁰ whom Firdawsī presented as the fourth ruler of the world and inventor of many things for the benefit of mankind. Elsewhere in the *Shāhnāmah*, *bargustuwān* horse armor covered everything except the animal's eyes but could be cut or pierced with a sword to kill the horse. Elsewhere in this epic, *bargustuwān* was a form of soft armor or padding worn by men who were also protected by a *jawshan* lamellar cuirass.

There is no evidence that Fatimid cavalry used horse armor during the rise and early conquests of this Shi'i caliphal dynasty. It was then very clearly adopted for at least a small, heavily-armored elite of Fatimid cavalry after 991. However, that was almost a generation after Fatimid armies suffered an embarrassing setback at the hands of Alftegīn's Turkish *ghulām* adventurers in Syria.⁷¹ Almost at once, mention was made of the gilded horse armors introduced into Egypt, perhaps primarily for parade purposes, by the Fatimid caliph al-'Azīz (975–96).⁷²

Thereafter, mention of horse armor becomes more widespread within the Islamic world, though it always remained the equipment of a specialized and rarely numerous elite. Even the Central Asian Shi'i traveler and writer Nāṣir-i Khusraw's claim that every horse in one part of an important Fatimid parade in Egypt early in the eleventh century was "covered" by a *zirhī* mail or *jawshan* lamellar armor needs to be taken with a piece of salt. Supposedly a helmet was "placed on the pommel of every saddle," though this may have been a confused reference to the neck-protecting crinet and the head-protecting chamfron.⁷³ Nāṣir-i Khusraw was, of course, a pious supporter and indeed propagandist for the Shi'i caliphate. About a century later Ibn al-Ṭuwayr described a comparable Fatimid process but makes no mention of horse armor.⁷⁴

By the mid-eleventh century some Byzantine cavalry were riding fully mailed horses (figure 113),⁷⁵ and a little over a century later some of the cavalry whom Saladin sent to raid the Saffuriyah region of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem were described as *mudajjaj*, which is normally translated as "heavily armored" or

⁷⁰Firdawsī, *Shāhnāmah*, ed. J. A. Vullers (Leiden, 1877–80), 1:23; Firdawsī, *The Shāhnāma of Firdawsī*, trans. A. G. and E. Warner (London, 1905), 1:132.

⁷¹Beshir Ibrahim Beshir, "The Fatimid Caliphate 386/996–487/1094" (Ph.D. diss., London University, 1970), 71.

⁷²Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Story of Cairo* (London, 1902), 134.

⁷³Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Sefer Nameh: Relation du Voyage de Nassiri Khosrau*, ed. and trans. G. Shefer (Paris, 1881), 137 (English) and 46 (Persian); Beshir, "The Fatimid Caliphate," 67–70.

⁷⁴Marius Canard, "La Procession du Nouvel An chez les Fatimides," *Annales de l'Institut Orientales de la Faculté des Lettres d'Alger* 10 (1952): 364–98.

⁷⁵Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London, 1966), 211.



“slow walking.”⁷⁶ A decade or so later the Khwārazmshāh sent an army against the invading Kara Khitai on the Central Asian frontier of Islam that reportedly included large numbers of armored cavalry on armored horses, at least according to a later chronicler who was relying upon much earlier sources.⁷⁷

The indigenous tradition of horse armor seen in parts of medieval Hindu India may have been a local development of a form harking back to the influence of pre-Islamic Sassanian Iran. Otherwise, the first evidence for horse armor in Islamic northern India seems to indicate a technology introduced by recent Turco-Muslim conquerors. Thus the horse armor used by Ghurid forces while invading India in the twelfth century largely seems to have been of leather or quilted construction, though perhaps including some metal elements.⁷⁸

There can be little doubt that the conquering Mongols had a profound impact upon horse armor in the eastern Islamic regions, and of the Middle East. They clearly made abundant use of horse armors, probably to a greater extent than any of their Islamic foes. Nevertheless, the Mongols’ initially acute shortage of iron meant that the great majority of such protections were made of leather or raw-hide lamellae,⁷⁹ or of a system of laminated and hooped leather elements which was probably introduced to the Middle East by the Mongols.

The Mamluk Sultanate emerged in Egypt and then in Syria some decades after the making of the Costa candlestick. Nevertheless, the use of horse armor within the early Mamluk Sultanate’s armies might shed light on the situation a generation or so earlier. During, or shortly after, the period of Sultan Baybars I (r. 1260–77) some sources recorded the use of *bargustuwān* horse armor “made of *jawshan*”—in other words being of lamellar construction. This presumably means that the term *bargustuwān* now referred to horse armor in general rather than specifically felt or quilted manufacture. Such protections were reserved for the horses of elite cavalry. Nevertheless, there is still an element of doubt hanging over such evidence because the surviving versions of these sources may have had later terminology inserted at a time when such terms had lost their original or specific meanings.⁸⁰

⁷⁶Imād al-Dīn al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī, *Conquête de la Syrie et de la Palestine*, ed. Le Comte Carlo de Landberg (Leiden, 1888), 14; idem, *Al-Fath al-Qussī fī al-Fath al-Qudsī: Conquête de la Syrie et de la Palestine par Saladin*, trans. H. Massé (Paris, 1972), 15.

⁷⁷Mawlānā Minhāj al-Dīn, *Tabakāt-i Nāsiri: A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia*, trans. H. G. Raverty (London, 1881), 262.

⁷⁸Ibid., 464–65.

⁷⁹H. Stocklein, “Arms and Armour,” in *A Survey of Persian Art*, ed. A. U. Pope (London, 1939), 3:2558.

⁸⁰Al-Qāḍī Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Baybars I of Egypt*, trans. S. F. Sadeque (Oxford, 1956), *passim*.



In contrast the *Kitāb Nihāyat al-suʿl* can be seen as a reliable source, though it unfortunately assumes a great deal of knowledge on the part of its reader. For example, this early Mamluk *furūsiyah* manual uses an otherwise unknown Arabic word, *b-r-dh-n-b*, appearing without its short vowels, in the context of horse armor. This must surely be the crupper of a horse armor, called *par dum* in Persian or *barzanab* or *bardhanab* in some other sources.⁸¹ Elsewhere, the question is asked: “What about the horse armors (*tijāfif*, plural of *tijāf*) and the way in which the horse is facing and the bells (*ajrās*, plural of *jaras*),” when such items of the horse harness are not in use but liable to be needed at short notice. In reply the *Nihāyat al-suʿl* states: “The horse armor should be [kept] under the [horse’s] saddle, and placed in front of the horse with its bridle, and the bells hanging by its mouth.”⁸²

The reference to *ajrās* “bells” (normally of the small spherical type) remains something of a mystery although the context strongly suggests that they form part of the bridle or bit. It seems unlikely that these *ajrās* were simply decorative, since they are given prominence in a military training text which is otherwise focused upon practical matters. This term had been used in the context of military horse-harness since at least the early ninth century, when al-Jāḥiẓ, in his *Manāqib al-Turk*, quoted the Khurasanis (troops of Arab origin long resident in eastern Iran) as taking particular pride in their use of such “bells.” These, by implication, were less characteristic of other troops in the Abbasid army. The small spherical bells that were found during archaeological excavations at the medieval Islamic city of Nīshāpūr may indeed have been harness decorations. Similar bells found in medieval Central Asian grave sites were almost certainly such harness decorations. Meanwhile the many small decorative elements shown on horse harnesses in stylized early Islamic art could be interpreted in the same way, while spherical bells were clearly attached to horse harness in more realistic Coptic- and Byzantine-influenced art in early medieval Christian Nubia.

Yet none of this would explain why the ninth-century Abbasid Khurasanis and the author of the Mamluk *Nihāyat al-suʿl* placed such emphasis on these *ajrās* unless the word currently referred to an entire decorated military bridle and perhaps its associated decorative collars. Another meaning of the Arabic verb *jaras* indicates the making of a low or soft sound. The somewhat similar Persian word *charist* meant to gnash or grind the teeth. Given the tendency for the Arabs to slightly modify or indeed to play with the meanings of words adopted from other languages, especially from Persian, might the *ajrās* in both al-Jāḥiẓ and the *Nihāyat al-suʿl* refer to a specific type of bit and bridle which not only jangled

⁸¹Lutful-Huq, “A Critical Edition of *Nihayat al Suʿl*,” 143.

⁸²Lutful-Huq, “A Critical Edition of *Nihayat al Suʿl*,” 13, 319; Nicolle, “The Reality of Mamluk Warfare,” 80.



when moved but tended to make the horse “chomp at the bit?” Might it thus refer to the fully developed curb bit which became a feature of cavalry equipment in the medieval Islamic world (figures 1–6, 8, 46–50, 77a–b, 83, 86, 94, 95, 101, 110, 114, 116, 118, 122 a and c, 124, 125a–d, 126a–b, 127, 136, 138a–c, 145a–b, 146, 148, 157, 158 [on a mule], 159b, 163b, 165, 172, 179, 181a and c, 182a–b, and 183), subsequently in Byzantium (figures 105, 109, and 113), and subsequently in Western Europe (figures 102a, 129, and 131)? Here it is worth noting that such bits were considerably less popular amongst the nomadic peoples of Central and Inner Asia.

Unfortunately there is no real evidence that this was the case, and the Arabic terminology used for the curb bit and its various elements included nothing like the words *jaras* or *ajrās*.⁸³ Mr. Said Hunaidi, who has already helped me understand various aspects of medieval *furūsīyah*, replied to an urgent request concerning the possible use of *jaras* in the context of horse harness, and for clarification of medieval Arabic terminology of the curb bit (Appendix 4). He pointed out that the *jaras* was, and still is, a small spherical metal bell that was used most commonly on the horse and camel harness. For horses it was sometimes used on bridles but more commonly on reins or breast or crupper straps, though not on saddle or girth straps. One of the earliest Arab-Islamic references to various parts of a horse’s bit strongly suggests that the snaffle rather than the curb bit was used by the Arabs at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. This was when Abū al-Haytham Ibn Tayyahān, the representative of the Banū ‘Abd al-Ashal tribe, was in negotiations with the Prophet. Apparently emphasizing the importance of his position, and perhaps also the constraints under which he was speaking, Abū al-Haytham said: “I am amongst my people [the Banū ‘Abd al-Ashal] in a position like the place of the *fa*’s in the *qayqabū*” (see Appendix 4 for these technical terms).⁸⁴

All the sources agree that mail hauberk was the primary form of armor used in the Islamic world until the fourteenth century. It had, of course, also been used by three technologically important pre-Islamic civilizations: Romano-Byzantine, Sassanian Iranian, and Turco-Soghdian Central Asian (photographs 18, 32, and 57). It had similarly been mentioned frequently in pre- or early Islamic Arab poetry, and was often illustrated in subsequent centuries (photograph 54; figures 89, 93, 94, 99, perhaps 105, 106, 127, 132b, 143, 150a, c, and probably e, 156a, 167, 177a–b, 183, and 184).

Only one horseman on the Costa candlestick might be wearing some form of arm protection (photograph 7; figure 4) which may perhaps be of splinted construction (for comparative material see photographs 20 and 21; figures 10a, 11a–b, 79, 84, 87a, 164c–e, 172, 178, 181a, and 185). This same figure is also the only man

⁸³Said Hunaidi, e-mail to the author, January 26, 2013.

⁸⁴Said Hunaidi, e-mail to the author, January 27, 2013.



on the Costa candlestick who is fighting with a sword. Various forms of arm defenses had been used in what would become the Islamic world since pre-Islamic times, including a remarkably sophisticated gauntlet found in a late Sassanian archaeological context. But while arm or hand protections are clearly shown in some pre-Islamic art, they remain unclear in Islamic figural art until the late fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. On the other hand, they were mentioned in early documentary sources, not least in the chronicle of al-Ṭabarī. At a very early date he refers to the *sāʿad*, which was probably a lower arm protection comparable to the later vambrace.⁸⁵ On a slightly later occasion al-Ṭabarī states that Khārājī cavalry armed with a *rumḥ* spear were protected by a *dirʿ* mail hauberk, a *mighfar* mail coif, and *sāʿad* arm defenses.⁸⁶ Although al-Jāḥiẓ, writing in the ninth century, maintained that the early Muslim Arabs did not use the *sāʿad*,⁸⁷ al-Masʿūdī specifically describes that the Khurasani cavalry attacking Baghdad early in the ninth century had the *dirʿ* mail hauberk, the *jawshan* lamellar cuirass, the *tijfāf*, either in the form of soft armor for the man or horse armor, plus the *sāʿad*.⁸⁸ The *sāʿad*, *kaff* (see below), and *dirʿ* were supposedly worn by an early, semi-mythological king of Yemen, according to Ḥasan Ibn Aḥmad al-Hamdānī writing in the tenth century.⁸⁹ Yet the *sāʿad* is rarely mentioned in the *Shāhnāmāh* at the end of that same century.⁹⁰

By the early Mamluk period the term *sāʿad* probably referred to a sort of rigid iron vambrace to protect the elbow and lower arm.⁹¹ This was seen amongst the Mongols and would soon be used in Russia, later in Europe, and of course in later medieval Persian and other Islamic art. This interpretation is almost confirmed by a statement in the *Nihāyat al-suʿl* where the *sāʿad* is described as being useful to ward off blows, and being put on in a similar manner to the *bayḍah* helmet.⁹² Furthermore, it could be laced to the *jawshan* cuirass (presumably to the form which had short sleeves) and could be untied while shooting with the bow to

⁸⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:411.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:998.

⁸⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Al-Bayān*, 15.

⁸⁸ Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab; Les Prairies d'Or*, vol. 6, ed. and trans. C. Barbier de Maynard and P. de Courteille (Paris, 1861–77), 6:453.

⁸⁹ Ḥasan Ibn Aḥmad al-Hamdānī, *Al-Iklīl*, vol. 8, ed. Al-Karmalī al-Baghdādī (Baghdad, 1931), 255–57.

⁹⁰ Firdawsī, *The Shāhnāma of Firdausī*, trans. Warner, 1:301; Firdawsī, *Shāhnāmāh*, ed. J. A. Vullers, 2:13.

⁹¹ Lutful-Huq, “A Critical Edition of *Nihayat al Suʿl*,” 12, 318.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 16, 320–21.



hang down to the hand by its straps.⁹³ The latter comment suggests that the rigid *sāʿad* vambrace was otherwise an encumbrance while shooting.

The early Mamluk *Nihāyat al-suʿl* military training manual mentions several different items of equipment for the arms and legs, in addition to separate and distinct boots and gaiters.⁹⁴ They included the *kumm ghishan* “imitation sleeve” but not the *kaff* of earlier sources. The Mamluk *kumm ghishan* was described as being made of silk brocade or thin leather, or a mixture of both, being attached to the sleeve of a *jawshan* and arm-protecting *sāʿad* while shooting. Perhaps it thus provided a smooth surface to avoid the bow-string snagging on the pieces of armor which protected the archer’s arm.⁹⁵ On the other hand, this does not sound entirely dissimilar to the *kaff* made of *ḥadīd* iron worn by a Syrian cavalryman but which was nevertheless cut off by an opponent’s sword early in the eighth century.⁹⁶ It must also surely have been the same as the *kaphi* shoulder or upper arm defenses, worn with or forming part of a mail hauberk in the Georgian poetic epic *The Man in the Panther’s Skin* by Rustaveli (1184–1216).⁹⁷

As already stated, the *kaff* was worn with a *sāʿad* arm defense and what has been interpreted as the long form of *dirʿ* mail hauberk in a tenth-century Arabic source.⁹⁸ Here the *kaff* has been translated as a gauntlet for the hand, though this particular context as well as other sources strongly suggest it was for the upper arm. Thus it may have been a form of close-fitting rerebrace or a pendant extension to the shoulder armor. Even so it should be noted that the Byzantine emperor Leo VI maintained that Saracen cavalry wore armor “in the Roman [Byzantine] manner”; this including *podopsella* and *cheiropsella*,⁹⁹ which G. T. Dennis translated as shin guards and gauntlets.¹⁰⁰ It may nevertheless be safer merely to regard them as unclear defenses for some parts of the legs and arms. Byzantine military terminology can be as difficult as that found in medieval Arabic, Persian, and Turkish texts. For example, John Haldon translated *cheiromanika* as arm guards for elite Byzantine cavalry,¹⁰¹ while P. Schreiner earlier translated *manikia* or *manikellia* as shoulder, upper arm, or elbow protection which, having been

⁹³Ibid., 21, 322.

⁹⁴Nicolle, “The Reality of Mamluk Warfare,” 80.

⁹⁵Lutful-Huq, “A Critical Edition of *Nihayat al Suʿl*,” 21, 322.

⁹⁶Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1402.

⁹⁷Shota Rustaveli, *The Man in the Panther’s Skin*, trans. M. S. Wardrop (London, 1912), verses 426, 998, 1392.

⁹⁸Al-Hamdānī, *Al-Iklīl*, 8:255–57.

⁹⁹Leo VI, *The Taktika of Leo VI*, 476.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 479.

¹⁰¹John Haldon, “Some Aspects of Byzantine Military Technology from the Sixth to the Tenth Centuries,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 1 (1975): 21.



introduced by the emperor Nicephoros Phokas (r. 963–69), were made of silk and cotton. This surely meant that they were a form of padded or quilted soft armor.¹⁰²

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Turks undoubtedly used *qulluq* vambraces,¹⁰³ which almost certainly developed from the forms previously shown in Central and Inner Asian art. According to the Turkish *Book of Dede Korkut*, whose earliest surviving text dated from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries, such separate arm defenses were “laced on.”¹⁰⁴ However, the Persian term *bāzūband*, which came to be used for vambraces across much of the Islamic world, does not seem to have been used until many years later.

Two of the horsemen on the Costa candlestick wear what appear to be close-fitting rounded helmets or hats (photographs 3 and 5; figures 3 and 5). The normal Arabic term for the rounded helmet was *bayḍah* (literally “egg”) and was in common usage from the earliest Islamic written sources. Generally speaking the term *bayḍah* is also assumed to refer to a helmet of one-piece construction, several of which survive in the archaeological record (photograph 22; figures 12 to 15). This in turn strengthens a distinction made in some sources between those wearing round helmets and those wearing pointed ones of presumably segmented construction. Of course the latter could simply be pointed or have some sort of finial or spike at top (figure 16). Rounded helmets and hats are common in the pictorial record (figures 85 [a hat], 126j–l, 126o–p, 132b, 135, 138b–c, 141a, 151; and 163a) but tended to disappear following the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century. Thereafter helmets of clearly one-piece construction had some sort of point (photograph 23).

Two horsemen on the Costa candlestick wear what appear to be brimmed helmets (photographs 7 and 12; figures 4 and 9) though in the first case the headgear may better be interpreted as a fur *sharbush* (see below). Such headgears have sometimes been described as a sun hat because of their shape, but given this example’s association with the best surviving fragment of a face-protecting mail aventail on the Costa candlestick, it seems unlikely to have been a non-protective hat. No specific Arabic term seems to relate to such a style of helmet, which may simply have been regarded as another form of *khūd*, *khūdh*, or *khūdhah*. A large number of comparable brimmed helmets or hard hats have recently come to light in Syria, in twelfth- to fourteenth-century archaeological contexts. Some of the

¹⁰²P. Schreiner, “Zur Ausrüstung des Kriegers in Byzanz, dem Kiever Russland and Nordeuropa nach bildlichen und literarischen Quellen,” in *Les Pays du Nord et Byzance: Actes du colloque nordique et internationale de byzantinologie tenu à Upsal 20–22 avril 1979*, Acta Universitatis Upsalensis, Figura, n.s. 19 (1981), 221–22.

¹⁰³Arif ‘Alī of Tokat, *Dānishmandnāme: La Geste de Melik Dānişment*, ed. and trans. I. Mélikoff (Paris, 1960), 1:352, 2:167.

¹⁰⁴*The Book of Dede Korkut*, trans. Geoffrey Lewis (London, 1974), 165.



latter are also remarkably well preserved (figures 24 and 25). Other illustrations of brimmed helmets or hats remain rare, sometimes unclear, and problematical in medieval Islamic and closely associated art (photographs 26–29 and 39b; figures 122a–b, 174, 181a and c). In contrast, brimmed helmets would become commonplace in later medieval Europe (figures 17, 18, 129).

There is again only one horseman on the Costa candlestick who seems to wear a helmet with a neck-guard extension (photograph 5; figure 2). Like the brimmed helmet or hat, there seems to be no specific term for a helmet with a neck protection in Arabic or indeed Persian. On the other hand such helmets are notably more common in the iconographic record, though not in the archaeological one. Exceptions can be found amongst the recently uncovered “organic” helmets from Syria. The latter examples are made of layers of hardened leather or rawhide (photographs 30–31). Pictorial representations are abundant though tending to be concentrated in the Islamic heartlands of Iran and the Middle East (figures 89, 119a–c, 126a–d, f–j, l–m, o–q, 141b, 142b, 150f, 164a–b, 178, 180, 181c, and 184). Many of the neck extensions in the pictorial record are, however, likely to be cloth-covered flexible aventails.

Four figures on the Costa candlestick probably wear mail coifs or aventails, which protect their necks and a varying amount of their faces (photographs 1, 2, 4, and 9; figures 4, 5, 7, and 12). In only one case does this seem to be worn without a helmet, and must therefore be a coif which also covered the top of the wearer’s head (photograph 4; figure 1). The others are more likely to represent a mail aventail which hung curtain-like from the rim of a helmet. The Arabic term for a mail coif was *mighfar*, and it had been used since the dawn of Islam. Perhaps the mail aventail also came to be called a *mighfar*, though this is far from clear. No full mail coifs are known to survive in the archaeological record of medieval Islamic civilization. However, this form of head protection had been used throughout much of the Middle East since pre-Islamic times. During the late Roman and early Byzantine era, the full head-covering mail coif usually seems to have formed an integral part of a large mail hauberk (photograph 32), as it would continue to do in medieval Europe well into the thirteenth century. In the eastern regions of the pre- and early Islamic world the mail aventail was preferred (figures 12, 79, and 82), as it continued to be until armor finally fell out of favor (photograph 55 and probably 57; figures 88, 89, 97, 126c, e, h–j, s–u, 127, 132b, 167, 182, and 185).

None of the horsemen on the Costa candlestick wear face-covering visors attached to their helmets. Yet it is worth noting that some facial protections were used during this period, though seemingly only in regions under the strongest Turkish (figures 126p and q) and subsequently Mongol influence. This is because it was a piece of armor primarily designed to protect the wearer against arrows. Not surprisingly, it was more common amongst nomadic and other tribal peoples



of the Central and Inner Asian steppes, as well as amongst mercenaries recruited from such peoples.

The apparent lack of armor on two of the otherwise well-armed horsemen on the candlestick (photographs 8 and 12; figures 5 and 9) can be explained by the widespread use of fabric covered armor in the medieval Islamic world. This fashion went back several centuries and, judging by the pictorial evidence, was used long before specific terms such as *kazāghand* and *qarqal* came into use during the eleventh to fourteenth centuries. Surviving archaeological evidence is almost entirely from the late medieval period (photographs 33–36). Furthermore, quilted, otherwise padded, or felt “soft armors” would look essentially the same as other items of clothing in all but the most detailed and realistic of pictorial representations. Only occasionally did Islamic art go into such detail and even these few pictures could be interpreted in various ways (figures 88, 105, 150b and 150d [beneath a small lamellar cuirass]).

No less than seven of the nine figures on the Costa candlestick appear to wear lamellar or laminated armor (photographs 4–11; figures 1–8). The term *jawshan* referred to almost all forms of lamellar cuirass, though some other more specialized terms were used. The early Mamluk *Nihāyat al-suʿl* military training text mentions several kinds of mail and lamellar armors, also noting that there were occasions in which both were needed at the same time—as was, of course, frequently shown in the pictorial record. Nevertheless, this was clearly not always the case. This text adds the interesting detail that a lamellar cuirass could be joined to a mail hauberk by straps, which were themselves presumably buckled, and which could then be undone if the cuirass made movement difficult by constricting the hauberk.¹⁰⁵ Elsewhere the *Nihāyat al-suʿl* was critical of the sort of short or limited lamellar cuirass which was shown on the Costa candlestick and which had appeared more frequently in early medieval Islamic art. Indeed, the long or full lamellar cuirass would subsequently be more closely associated with the Mongols. Even so, this text did admit that the short cuirass was more suitable for a horse-archer.¹⁰⁶

Here I would like to draw attention to work in experimental archaeology undertaken by Russell Mitchell, a specialist in the making and use of armor made of leather. His work has shown that rawhide proves much more effective than leather or otherwise treated leather, especially against arrows and other thrusting weapons. It was also far superior to the mail armors upon which European warriors overwhelmingly depended from Late Roman times until the fourteenth century (of course supplemented by their use of shields). Commenting in 2003 on photographs I had taken of the multi-layered, laminated leather elements of

¹⁰⁵Nicolle, “The Reality of Mamluk Warfare,” 80.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 82–84.



assorted cuirasses from a castle in Syria's Euphrates valley (probably al-Raḥbah), Russell Mitchell wrote: "Based on the way that the edges lay down so smoothly on those composite sheets, I am really starting to wonder if they are hardened leather, or if they are really unbleached, thin goat rawhide."¹⁰⁷

No complete medieval lamellar armor of this kind is known to have survived but fragments of cuirass as well as individual lamellae, either of iron, bronze, hardened leather, or rawhide, have been found in many archaeological contexts, mostly amongst the Turco-Mongol peoples of the Eurasian steppes but occasionally in a specifically Islamic archaeological context (figures 19a–h, 20a–b, 21, 22a–b, 23a–d, 25a–e). Lamellar cuirasses, or in some cases perhaps laminated or "hooped" cuirasses, also appear frequently in several types of late pre-Islamic and medieval Islamic art (photographs 20, 21, 28; figures 79, 82, 84, 87a, 91, 92, perhaps 93, 95, 120, 126a–c, f, g, h, s, t, v–x, 127, 150d, 164c–e, 176, 178, 180, 181c, and 185). More obvious illustrations of "hooped" armor are less common and all seem to date from after the Mongol invasions (photographs 37 to 39a–b; figure 24). Indeed it seems likely that this method of making leather or rawhide armors was introduced to the Islamic Middle East by those selfsame Mongols.¹⁰⁸

The figures on the Costa candlestick have lost too much of their inlay to be able to state whether any of them was wearing a *dirʿ* mail hauberik. Yet the written sources make abundantly clear that such hauberiks were the longest established and most basic form of metallic armor in the Islamic Middle East, as they had been for more than a century before the coming of Islam. This form of armor was known as *dirʿ* in Arabic and by the clearly related term *zirih* in Persian. Only small fragments have been uncovered by archaeologists (photograph 36; figure 26), but this type of armor clearly came in a variety of styles, with short or three-quarters or long sleeves, short or long hemmed, and often worn beneath a lamellar cuirass (photographs 18 and 32; figures 82, 87b, 89, 91–95, 99, perhaps 105, 106, 127, 132b, 143, 150a, c, and e, 156a, 161, 167, 177a–b, 183, and 184).

[To be continued]

¹⁰⁷Russell Mitchell, e-mail message to the author, August 13, 2003.

¹⁰⁸David Nicolle, "Jawshan, Cuirie and Coat-of-Plates: An Alternative Line of Development for Hardened Leather Armour", in *A Companion to Medieval Arms and Armour*, ed. David Nicolle (Woodbridge, 2002) 179–221 & pls. XIII-1 to XIII-45.



Appendix 3: The Terminology of Spears, Javelins, and Staff Weapons in the Medieval Islamic World

Despite having been studied by linguists for well over a century, the terminology of spears, javelins, and staff weapons in the medieval Islamic world remains somewhat unclear. What has not yet been achieved is a satisfactory synthesis between the written terminology, illustrations of such weapons in Islamic art, and the growing archaeological evidence.

The separation or differentiation of terminology for javelins to be thrown and staff weapons to be wielded is particularly problematic. Indeed there seems to be a surprising and even somewhat illogical overlap—illogical, at least in terms of the practical use of such weapons.

For example, the *allah* was sometimes said to be similar to the *ḥarbah*.¹⁰⁹ The *ʿanazah* was also similar to the *ḥarbah*, being a short spear with large head¹¹⁰ that could be thrown from horseback.¹¹¹ However, it sometimes had a metallic foot or blade at its base,¹¹² and sometimes had *ʿalam* streamers added to serve as a banner during the early Islamic period.¹¹³ The *ašm* was a short spear with a very long blade.¹¹⁴ The *qunṭārīyah* was almost certainly much the same as the Byzantine-Greek *kontarion* cavalry spear. The latter was considered to have a weak shaft, had traditionally been adopted by the Byzantines from the Turco-Mongol Avars of the western steppes and Central Europe, and was about 3.6 meters long.¹¹⁵ However, some sources suggest this length was for cavalry whereas an infantryman's *kontarion* should be 4.25 meters long. Also called the *doru*, it had a blade of about 25 centimeters or more.¹¹⁶

In Arabic *dhawābil* was a collective term for spears, sometimes with *dhuʿābah* tassels.¹¹⁷ *Ghābar* was an early Arabic poetic term for the typical bedouin spear

¹⁰⁹ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Hudhayl al-Andalusī, *La Parure des Cavaliers et l'Insigne des Preux*, trans. L. Mercier (Paris, 1924), 242–43; Fredrich Wilhelm Schwarzlose, *Die Waffen der Alten Araber* (Leipzig, 1886), 213.

¹¹⁰Marius Canard, “Le Cérémonial Fatimite et le Cérémonial Byzantin,” *Byzantion* 21 (1951): 389; ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Hudhayl al-Andalusī, *La Parure des Cavaliers*, 242–43.

¹¹¹Max von Oppenheim, “Der Djerīd und das Djerīd-Spiel,” *Islamica* 2 (1926): 590.

¹¹²Schwarzlose, *Die Waffen*, 212.

¹¹³George C. Miles, “Miḥrāb and ʿAnazah: A Study in Early Islamic Iconography,” in *Archaeologica Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld*, ed. G. C. Miles (New York, 1952), 166–67.

¹¹⁴Murḍī ibn ʿAlī ibn Murḍī al-Tarṣūṣī, “Un traité d’armurerie composé pour Saladin,” ed. and trans. Claude Cahen, *Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales* 12 (1947–48): [ed.] 112 and [tr.] 134.

¹¹⁵François Aussaresses, *L’Armée Byzantine à la fin du VIe Siècle* (Paris, 1909), 50–53.

¹¹⁶Haldon, “Byzantine Military Technology,” 32–33.

¹¹⁷Imād al-Dīn al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī, *Conquête de la Syrie*, passim; idem, *Al-Faṭḥ al-Qussī*, passim.



with a long bamboo haft.¹¹⁸ In thirteenth- and fourteenth-century al-Andalus the *khirs* was a short lance, though longer than the *ḥarbah*.¹¹⁹ In early ninth-century Iraq the *khaṭīl* was supposedly an oversized spear used by the vainglorious in an attempt to frighten their foes,¹²⁰ while the *makhmūs* was a cavalry spear, apparently about five cubits long.¹²¹ The *marbūʿāt* was a medium-sized spear characteristic of *mawālī* cavalry in the ninth century¹²² whereas the *miṭrād*, originally a short spear or javelin designed to pierce armor, had supposedly not been used by the pre- or early Islamic Arabs.¹²³ By the tenth century it was used as a standard or banner by the Ikhshidid rulers of Egypt,¹²⁴ as it would also be used by the thirteenth-century Ghurids of Afghanistan and northern India.¹²⁵

According to al-Jāḥiẓ the *nīzak* or *nayzak* was a short spear which could also be thrown as a javelin. Longer than the *ʿanazah* but shorter than the *rumḥ*, it was used by *mawālī* cavalry and had a *zujj*, sharp foot or lower blade which could be thrust against a pursuer.¹²⁶ *Nīzah* remained the generic Farsi term for a spear or lance. The best *nīzah* had hafts of Indian reed, like the Arabic *rumḥ*, but this weapon could also be thrown, which must surely have differentiated it from the very long bedouin *rumḥ*. On the other hand the Persian *nīzah* came in a variety of forms, though these were normally used as thrusting weapons and could have colored pennons, as described in the *Shāhnāmāh*.¹²⁷ A longer version, the *nīzah darāz*, was used by infantry and was stated to be 9 cubits long in the *Shāhnāmāh*,¹²⁸ which would almost rate the weapon as a pike. A *nīzah khaṭṭī*, having a haft of the finest bamboo from the al-Khaṭṭ coastal region between Basra and Baḥrayn, was

¹¹⁸Schwarzlose, *Die Waffen*, 214–15.

¹¹⁹James T. Monroe, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry* (London, 1974), 332–33; ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Hudhayl al-Andalusī, *La Parure des Cavaliers*, 242–43.

¹²⁰Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Al-Bayān*, 21–22.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo/Baghdad, 1965), 27; idem, “Jāḥiẓ of Basra to Al-Fath ibn Khāqān on the Exploits of the Turks and the Army of the Khalifate in General,” trans. C. T. Harley-Walker, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (October 1915): 652.

¹²⁴Claude Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord à l’Époque des Croisades* (Paris, 1940), 369 and n. 3.

¹²⁵Mubārakshāh, *Ādab al-ḥarb*, 330.

¹²⁶Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Al-Bayān*, 21–22.

¹²⁷Firdawsī, *Shāhnāmāh*, ed. J. A. Vullers, 2:369–70; Firdawsī, *The Shāhnāma of Firdausī*, trans. A. G. and E. Warner, 2:72.

¹²⁸Firdawsī, *Shāhnāmāh*, ed. J. A. Vullers, 2:1280; Firdawsī, *The Shāhnāma of Firdausī*, trans. A. G. and E. Warner, 4:147.



recommended by the great vizier Nizām al-Mulk for both infantry and cavalry guard units at the Seljuq court.¹²⁹

From the early eighth century onwards the term *qanāh* became a general or almost generic Arab term for the spear. It included the long *qanāh* spears used by the Arab-*Khārajī* rebels and the “short and hollow” *qanāh* lances used by Turks according to al-Jāhīz in the ninth century.¹³⁰ Elsewhere, however, al-Jāhīz describes the *qanāh* of Arab cavalry as being long, solid, heavy, and shorter than the infantryman’s *qanāh*.¹³¹ He also stated that the long Arab *qanāh* had a *zujj* foot and a *sinān* blade.¹³² Far away in fourteenth-century al-Andalus, Ibn Hudhayl maintained that the *qanāh* was similar to the *rumḥ*.¹³³ *Sa’dah* was another word used for the lance or spear earlier in al-Andalus.¹³⁴

Back in the Middle East the *qunṭārīyah* was used by both Muslims and Crusaders during Saladin’s era.¹³⁵ Al-Tarṣūṣī, writing for Saladin himself, stated that the *qunṭārīyah* was a long spear or lance of beech, fir, or other wood, with a large, acorn-shaped blade. It was not particularly long, but was only used as a piercing rather than a cutting weapon. It was used by *Rūmī* cavalry and was “rested on the saddle” during the attack.¹³⁶ This would appear to be a slightly misunderstood reference to the couched-lance technique, characteristic of European knightly cavalry but also used by Byzantine and fully trained Muslim professional cavalry. Usāmah ibn Munqidh seemed to use the term *qunṭārīyah* interchangeably with the term *rumḥ* when referring to Arab cavalry in Syria,¹³⁷ but he did point out that it was the universal weapon of Crusader horsemen.¹³⁸ Others similarly agreed that it was used by Crusader cavalry.¹³⁹

In contrast the *rabā’ith*, a form of spear with a broad blade used by bedouin Arabs during the tenth century, was said to be of Syriac linguistic origin.¹⁴⁰ Yet

¹²⁹Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsāt Nāmah*, ed. Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Khalkhālī (Tehran, 1932), 67; Nizām al-Mulk, *The Book of Government of Rules for Kings: The Siyāsāt Nāma*, trans. Hubert Darke (London, 1960), 96–97.

¹³⁰Al-Jāhīz, *Rasā’il*, 52–53; idem, “Jāhīz of Basra to Al-Fath ibn Khāqān,” 671.

¹³¹Al-Jāhīz, *Al-Bayān*, 14.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Hudhayl al-Andalusī, *La Parure des Cavaliers*, 242–43.

¹³⁴Monroe, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry*, 94–95.

¹³⁵‘Imād al-Dīn al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī, *Conquête de la Syrie*, passim.

¹³⁶Murḍī ibn ‘Alī ibn Murḍī al-Tarṣūṣī, “Un traité d’armurerie,” [ed.] 113 and [tr.] 135.

¹³⁷Ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-I’tibār*, 38–39, 66.

¹³⁸Idem, 38–39 and passim.

¹³⁹Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Tārīkh Dimashq*, 340.

¹⁴⁰Muḥassin ibn ‘Alī al-Tanūkhī, *The Table-Talk of a Mesopotamian Judge*, ed. and trans. D. S. Margoliouth (London, 1922), [ed.] 53 and [tr.] 58.



the term might be related to the Byzantine *riptarion*, which was a light throwing spear or javelin used by both infantry and cavalry. Unfortunately these *riptaria* were also sometimes called *akontia*, being around 2.4 meters long with a head or blade of no more than 22 centimeters.¹⁴¹

The term *zhūpīn*, *zūpīn*, or *zūbīn* was more specific. This was a two-pointed spear or javelin, originally used by Daylami infantry from the mountains of northern Iran.¹⁴² Similar in some respects to the Arab *mizrāq* but shorter than the *rumḥ*, it may have been related to a comparable weapon used in mountainous Armenia. The *zhūpīn* could be thrust as well as thrown, and could also be used on horseback. It was recorded in the hands of a *ghulām* professional soldier during one *lāʿab* training exercise in the tenth century.¹⁴³ In the *Shāhnāmāh*, however, the *zhūpīn* is only mentioned in the hands of foot soldiers. A slight variation of the term in the epic *Warqah wa-Gulshāh* poem reads as *zūbīn*, which is surely identical to the *zhūpīn* or *zūpīn* found elsewhere.¹⁴⁴

Hafted weapons with two blades, in some cases of equal sizes though usually with a larger blade at the top and a smaller blade or foot at the bottom, are relatively abundant in medieval Islamic art, including the Costa candlestick [figures 1, perhaps 2, 3, 9, 80, 81, 88, 94, perhaps 111, 134a–b, 140, 142a–b, and 168]. They may also be present in the more limited archaeological record [figures 28a–b].

¹⁴¹Haldon, “Byzantine Military Technology,” 32–33.

¹⁴²C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids* (Edinburgh, 1963), 111.

¹⁴³Ibn al-Qalānisi, *Dhayl Tārīkh Dimashq*, 14.

¹⁴⁴Ayyūqī, “Le Roman de Varqe et Golšāh,” verse 328.



Appendix 4: Said Hunaidi on the Terminology of Horse Bits in the Medieval Arab-Islamic World

To understand the terminology of *furūsiyah* manuscripts Said Hunaidi used Arabic-to-Arabic dictionaries, primarily *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīt* and *Muʿjam al-Ṣaḥḥah*. The most important original source was Abū al-Haytham ibn Tayyāhān, a poet who acted as spokesman for his people, the Banū ʿAbd al-Ashhal, during negotiations with the Prophet Muḥammad at ʿAqabah.¹⁴⁵ In a summary of his findings, Said listed the following terms, though cautioning that his answer could cause controversy: curb bit = *zimām* or *nakkilū* or *ḥakamah*; snaffle bit = *shakīmah*, which can be used with a *misṣhal* and/or a *fāʿs* and/or lower *jaflah*. He also provided the following specific translations of the Arabic terms used in *furūsiyah* manuscripts:

fāʿs: vertical metal piece in the *shakīmah*.

ḥakamah: type of curb.

ʿidhār: something on the sides of the *misṣhal*; I could not clearly identify it and whether it is part of a snaffle or curb but I suspect it is an addition for both.

jaflah ʿulīyah: the metal or leather which goes above the bit and around the nose.

jaflah suflīyah: the metal or leather which goes underneath the bit and around the chin.

lijām: an Arabized Persian word used to generally describe bits.

misṣhal: round rings on the sides of the snaffle.

nakkilū: type of curb mainly referred to as a “mail [*barīd*, postal service] curb.”

niṭāq [or *miʿzar*]: something on the sides of the *misṣhal*; I could not clearly identify it and whether it is part of a snaffle or curb but I suspect it is an addition for both.

qayqabū: usually a type of wood used in saddle-making though it was also used to refer to metal snaffles.

shakīm: snaffle.

siḥāl: something on the sides of the *misṣhal*; I could not clearly identify it and whether it is part of a snaffle or curb, but I suspect it is an addition for both.

surd: something on the sides of the *misṣhal*; I could not clearly identify it and whether it is part of a snaffle or curb but I suspect it is an addition for both.

zimām: type of curb.

zīyār: something on the sides of the *misṣhal*; I could not clearly identify it and whether it is part of a snaffle or curb but I suspect it is an addition for both.

¹⁴⁵Muhammad Mohar Ali, *Sīrat al-Nabī and the Orientalists* (Medina, 1997), 840, 845–47.





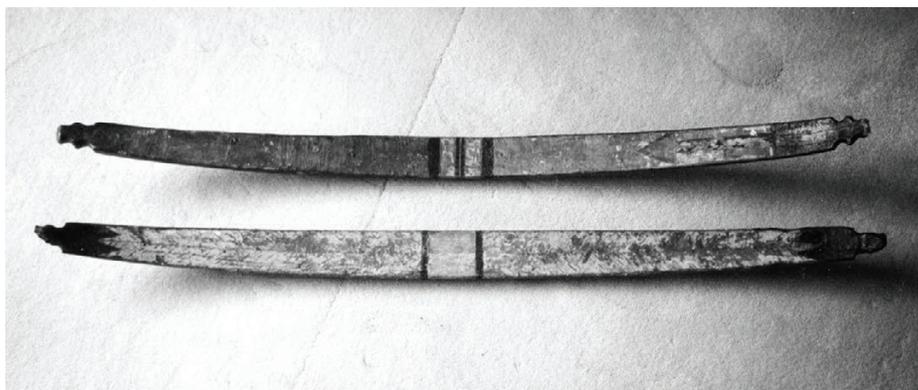
Photograph 16. Huntsman using a crossbow on horseback, large enamelled glass flask, Mamlūk Syria, 1250–60 AD (British Museum, inv. 69.1-20.3, London, UK).



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Photograph 17. Two crossbow staves of composite construction, probably from the castle of al-Raḥba, Euphrates valley in north-eastern Syria, Ayyūbid or early Mamlūk, 13th or 14th centuries (Qatar Ministry of Antiquities, Doha, Qatar).



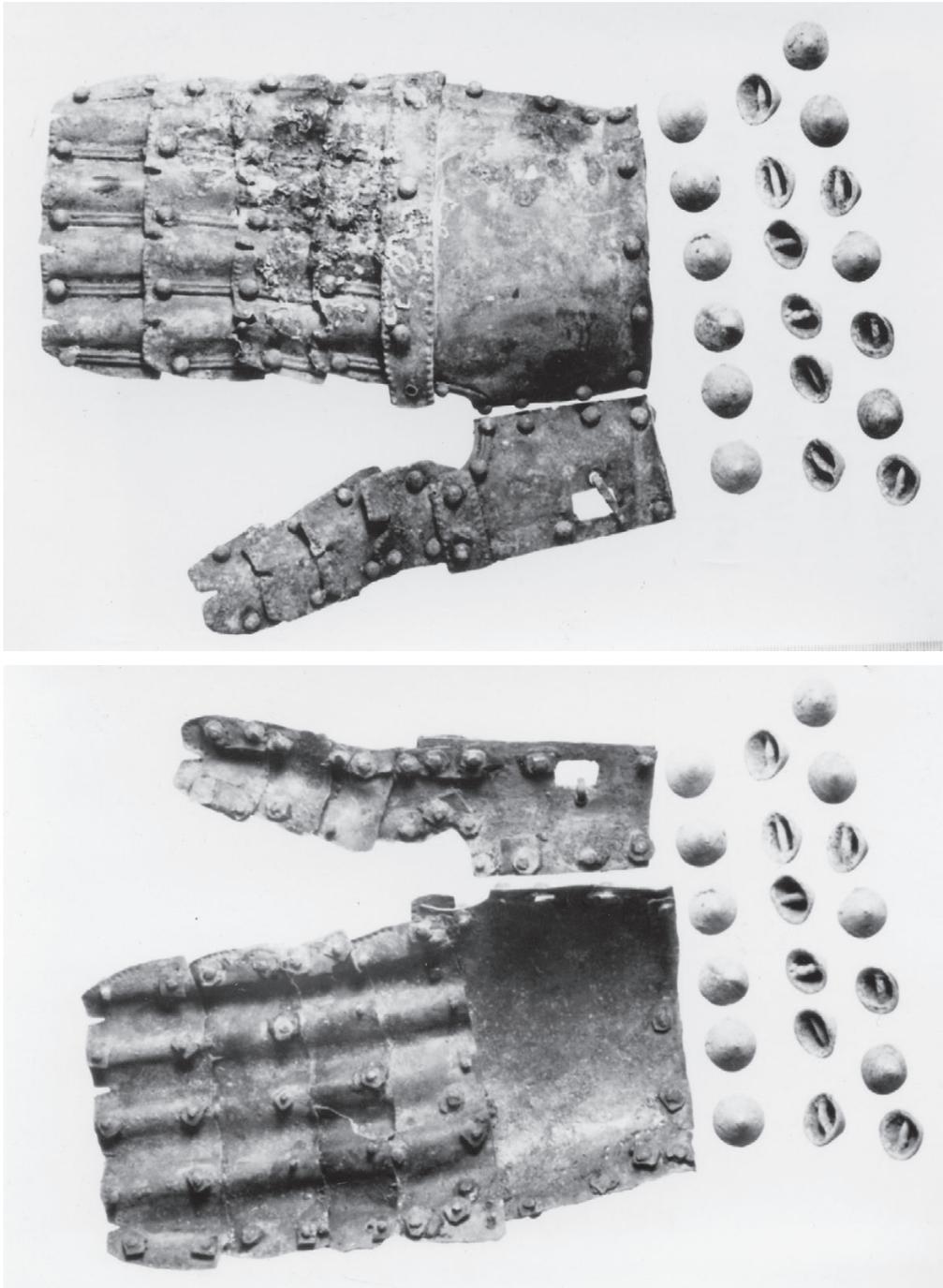
Photograph 18. High relief carving of a presumed late Sassanian ruler, Iran, early 7th century (in situ, Taq-i Bustan, Iran).



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Photographs 19a-b. Exterior [a] and interior [b] of a bronze gauntlet, late Sassanian, 6th or 7th century (inv. no. O.38824, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz, Germany).



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Photograph 20. Picture of a fully armoured horseman on a leather-covered wooden shield found in the Castle of Mug, Sughdian Central Asia under early Islamic suzerainty, early 8th century (Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia).

Photograph 21 (following page). Drawing of an Arab or Berber armoured cavalryman wearing lamellar armour, probably of leather judging by the remaining brown colour, a mail hauberk tinted blue and visible at his neck beneath another garment, and a turban, on a fragment of paper from Fustāt, Fāṭimid, 11th-12th centuries (Keir Collection, inv. 1.8, London).



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Photograph 22. One-piece iron helmet with decorative brow-band, North Africa, perhaps 11th-14th centuries (Museum of Islamic Studies, Raqqadah, Tunisia).



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Photograph 23. Illustration in a copy of the *Sulwān al-Mutā' fī cUdwān al-Atbāc* by Muḥammad Ibn Abi Muḥammad Ibn Ḍafar, Mamlūk Egypt, probably early 14th century (Homaizi Collection, Kuwait).



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Photographs 24–25. Exterior and interior of a helmet made of wooden blocks covered with gesso and layers of cloth, from Tower 4 of the Citadel of Damascus, early Mamlūk, mid-late 13th century (Conservation Department, inv. 2001/5, Ministry of Antiquities, Damascus, Syria).



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Photograph 26. Coptic Gospel, Egypt, c.1250 AD (Biblioth  que de Fels, Ms. 1, Institut Catholique, Paris, France).



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Photograph 27. Enamelled glass flask, Mamlūk Syria, 1250–60 AD (British Museum, inv. 69.1-20.3, London, UK).



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Photographs 28–29. Details from the inlaid decoration of the “Baptistère de Saint Louis”, Mamlūk, Egypt, late 13th–early 14th century (Musée du Louvre, Paris, France).



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Photographs 30–31. Exterior and interior of a helmet made of layers of hardened leather or rawhide, from Tower 4 of the Citadel of Damascus, early Mamlūk, mid-late 13th century (Conservation Department, inv. 2001/22/137, Ministry of Antiquities, Damascus, Syria).



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Photograph 32. Facsimile of a wall painting showing Philistines at the Battle of Eben-Ezer, from a synagogue in the Syro-Roman frontier fortress of Dura Europos, mid-3rd century (Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, USA; original in the National Museum, Damascus, Syria).



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Photographs 33–34. Interior (above) and exterior (following page) of part [right thorax] of a scale-lined *qaraqal* cuirass from the Citadel of Damascus, Mamlūk Syria, late 15th or early 16th century (Ministry of Antiquities, Damascus, Syria).



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Photograph 35. Fragment of quilted material and a “roll” of quilting, probably from quilted soft armour or from a saddle blanket, from the Citadel of Damascus, Mamlūk Syria, late 15th or early 16th century (Ministry of Antiquities, Damascus, Syria).



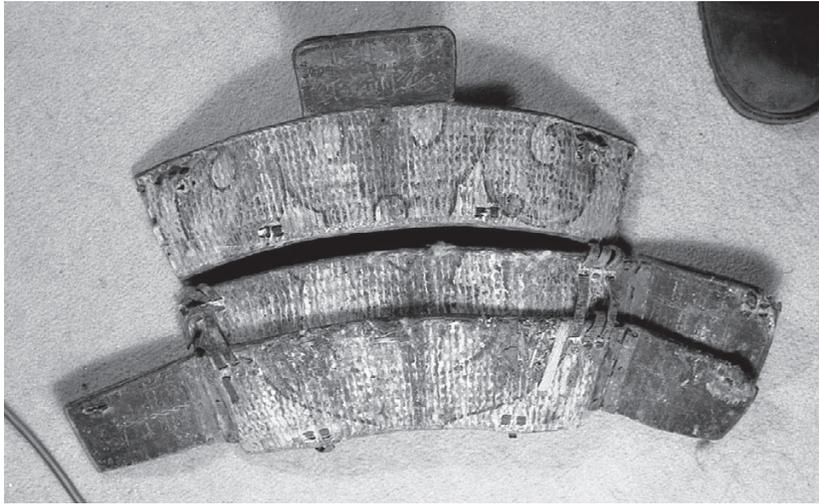
Photograph 36. Fragment of iron mail still attached to a textile covering, from the Citadel of Damascus, Mamlūk Syria, late 15th or early 16th century (Ministry of Antiquities, Damascus, Syria).



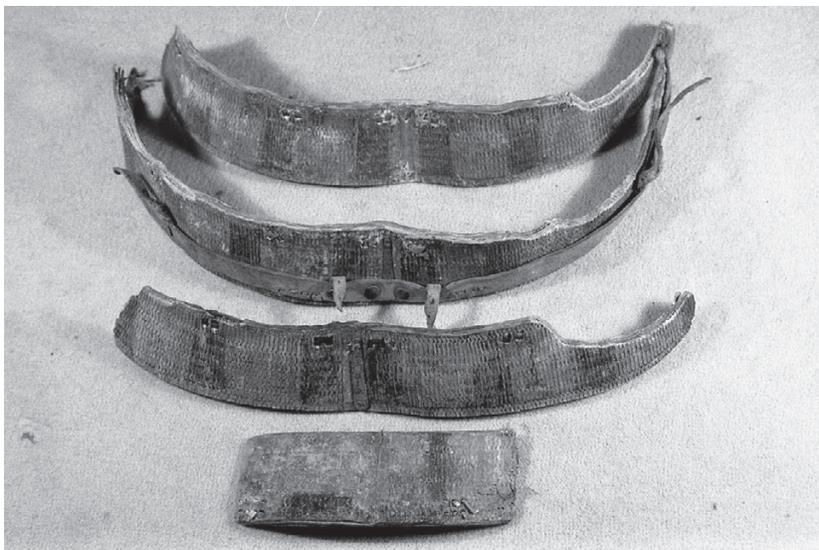
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Photograph 37. Part of a hooped or laminated cuirass covering the upper back and back of the neck, each element made of several lays of leather rawhide, early Mamlūk or captured from the Il-Khānid Mongols, probably from the castle of al-Raḥba, Syria, late 13th or 14th centuries (Qatar Ministry of Antiquities, Doha, Qatar).



Photograph 38. Part of a hooped or laminated cuirass covering the small of the back, back of the neck and rear of the waist, each element made of several lays of leather rawhide, early Mamlūk or captured from the Il-Khānid Mongols, probably from the castle of al-Raḥba, Syria, late 13th or 14th centuries (Qatar Ministry of Antiquities, Doha, Qatar).



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Photographs 39a (above) and 39b (following page). Cavalrymen and foot soldiers on an isolated manuscript page, probably Timūrid Iran or Azarbayjan, late 14th-early 15th centuries (*Fatih Albums*, Topkapi Library, Ms. Haz.2153, f. 138v, Istanbul, Turkey).



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Photograph 40. Nock of a broken arrow and a fragment of possible bowstring, from the Citadel of Damascus, Mamlūk Syria, late 15th or early 16th century (Ministry of Antiquities, Damascus, Syria).

Photograph 41. (following page) Detail of a silver-gilt plate found at Malo-Amkovskaya near Perm, probably Turco-Sughdian, perhaps made in Semirechye, 9th-10th century (Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia).



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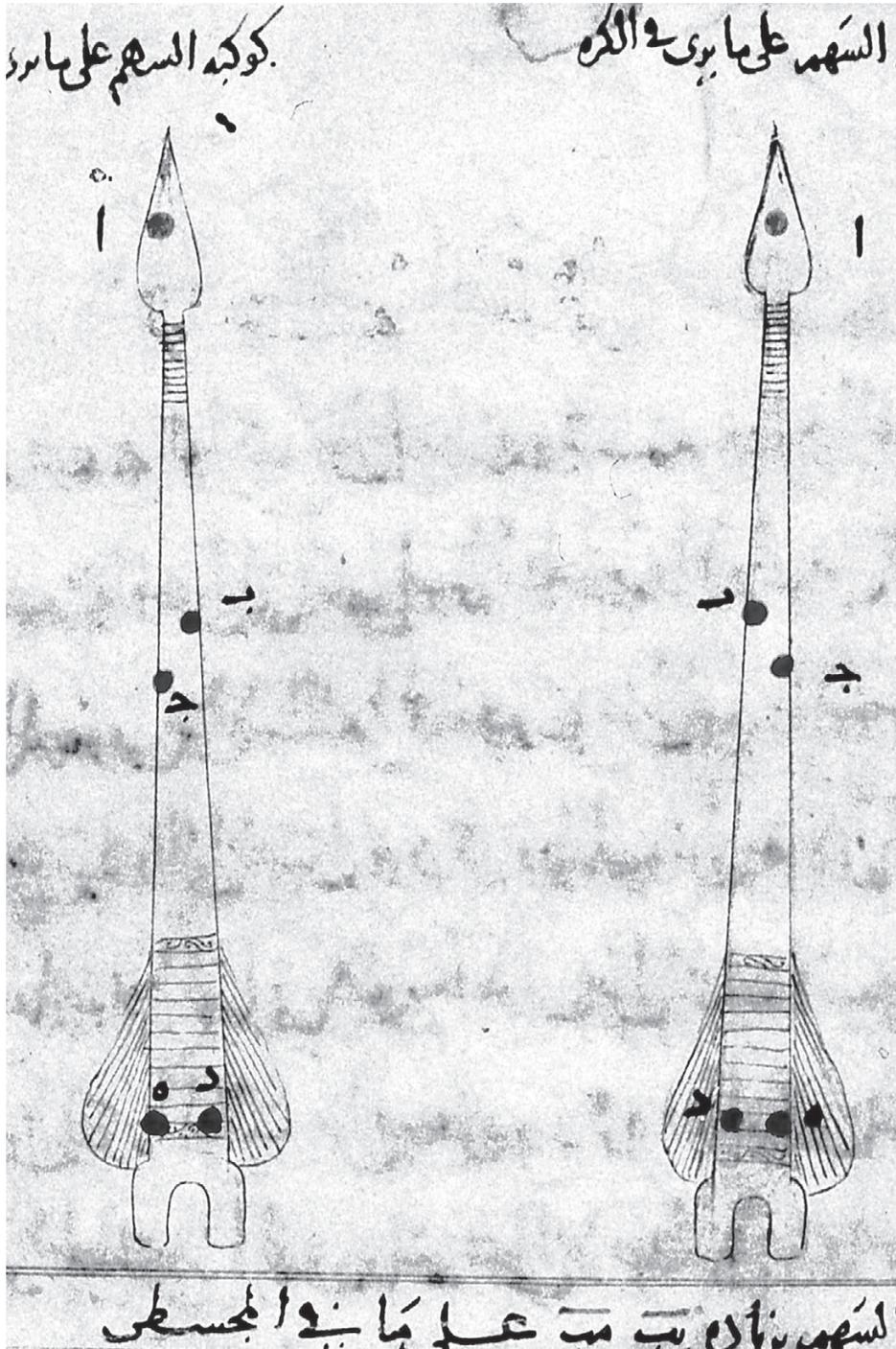
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Photograph 42. Arrows in the *Maqāl fī al-kawākib* of Abū cAlī Ibn Abī al-Ḥasan, probably Iraq 1009 AD (Bodleian Library, Ms. Marsh 144, p.140, Oxford, UK).



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Photograph 43. Composite bows, probably from the castle of al-Raḥba, Syria, early Mamlūk or captured from the Il-Khānid Mongols, late 13th or 14th centuries; note that, being unstrung, these bows curve in the opposite direction to the form they would take when strung (Qatar Ministry of Antiquities, Doha, Qatar).



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Photograph 44. Pieces of wood roughly cut to preliminary shapes to form the cores of composite bows, from Tower 4 of the Citadel of Damascus, early Mamlūk, mid-late 13th century (Conservation Department, inv. 2001/95, Ministry of Antiquities, Damascus, Syria).



Photograph 45. Archery equipment from a grave at Moschevaya Balka, north Caucasus, perhaps Alan, 8th-9th century (Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia).



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Photograph 46. Scabbard and hilt fragments, from Tower 4 of the Citadel of Damascus, early Mamlūk, mid-late 13th century (Conservation Department, inv. 2001/unnumbered, Ministry of Antiquities, Damascus, Syria).



Photograph 47. Iron curb-bit, from the Citadel of Damascus, Mamlūk Syria, late 15th or early 16th century (Ministry of Antiquities, Damascus, Syria).



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Photograph 48. Large saddle blanket, Iran, late 19th century (Textile Museum, inv. 1977.36.64, Washington, USA).



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Photograph 49. Fragment of a stucco statuette of a horseman, showing stirrup leathers although the foot and stirrup are lost, from Khirbat al-Mafjar [Qaṣr Hishām], Jericho, Umāyyad, early 8th century (Rockefeller Museum, East Jerusalem, Palestine).



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Photograph 50. Wall painting of a horse-archer from Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Ghārbī, Umāyyad early 8th century (National Museum, Damascus, Syria).



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Photograph 51. Wall painting of a mounted falconer from Nishāpūr area, Sāmānid, 10th century (Museum of Islamic Archaeology, Tehran, Iran).



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Photograph 52. Fragment of a scale-lined armour, perhaps from a horse-armour, probably from the castle of al-Rahba, Syria, Ayyūbid or early Mamlūk, 13th or 14th centuries (Qatar Ministry of Antiquities, Doha, Qatar).



Photograph 53. Pieces of hardened leather armour with part of the strap system which joined them together, perhaps elements of a horse-armour, from the Citadel of Damascus, late Mamlūk, late 15th-early 16th centuries (Ministry of Antiquities, Damascus, Syria).



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Photograph 54. Painted paper fragment showing combat between Muslim warriors emerging from a fortress and Crusaders, Fāṭimid Egypt, early-mid-12th century (Dept. of Oriental Antiquities, inv. 1938-3-14-01, British Museum, London, UK).



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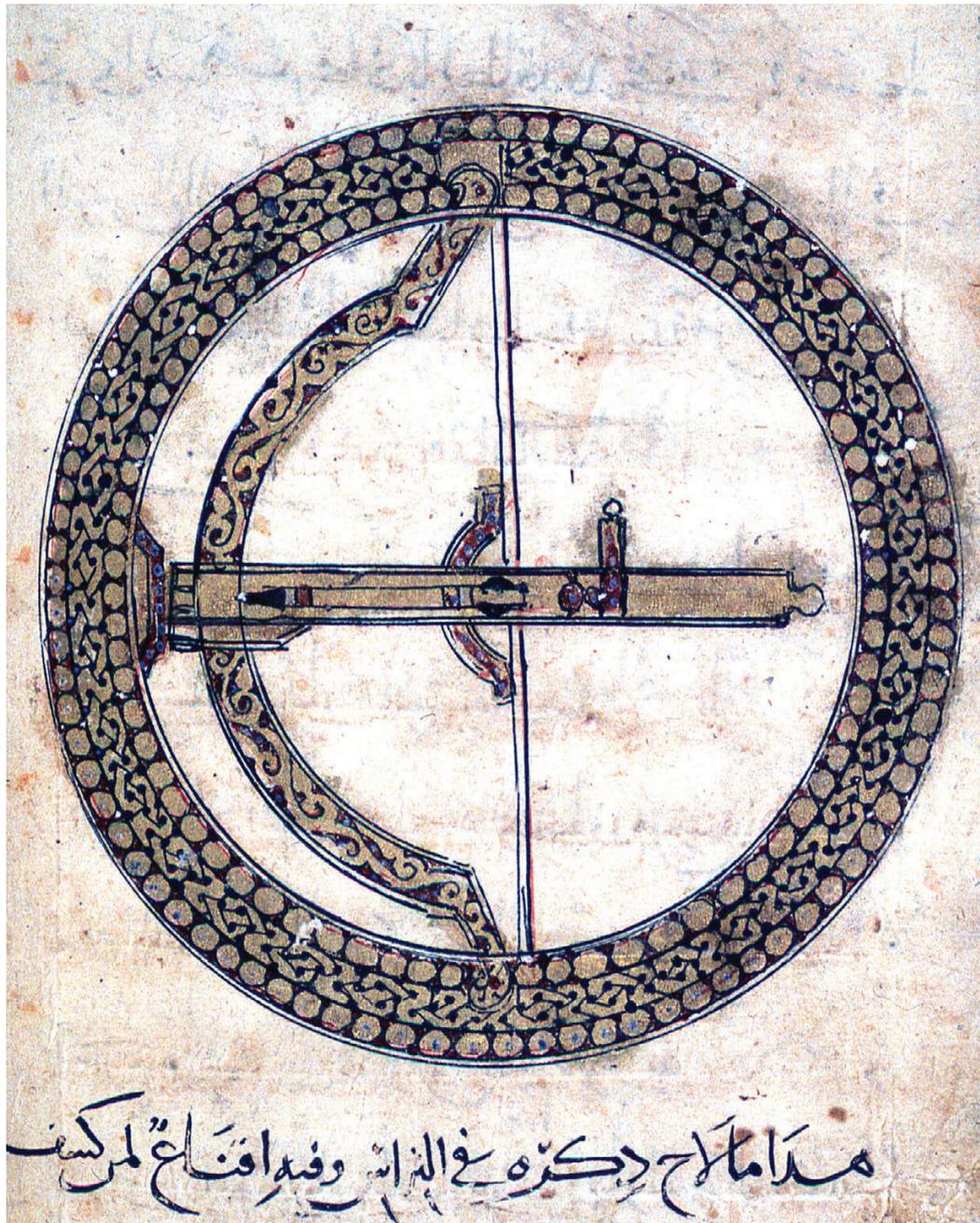
Photograph 55. Helmeted guardsman with face-covering mail aventail, fragment of wall-painting from Sabz Pushan, Nīshāpūr, Sāmānid, 10th century (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA).



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Photograph 56. Crossbow mounted inside a shield, experimental weapon illustrated and described in the *Tabṣira* by Murḍī Ibn cĀlī Ibn Murḍī al-Ṭarsūsī written for Saladin, late Fāṭimid or early Ayyūbid Egypt, c.1170 AD (Ms. Hunt.264, f.117, Bodleian Library, Oxford, UK).



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Photograph 57. Warrior in full mail armour assisting a prostrate man, detail of a wall painting from Penjikent, Sughdian, early 8th century (Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia).



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Photograph 58. Cavalry training in the use of the sabre in a copy of the *Nihāyat al-sūl wa'l-umnīyah fī taclīm acmāl al-furūsīyah* military training manuscript attributed to Muḥammad Ibn c̄sā Ibn Ismācīl al-Ḥanafī, Mamlūk Egypt or Syria, 1371 AD (facsimile of British Library, Ms. Add. 18866, f.122b, London, UK; courtesy of Mr. Abdul Mostafa).

Line drawings

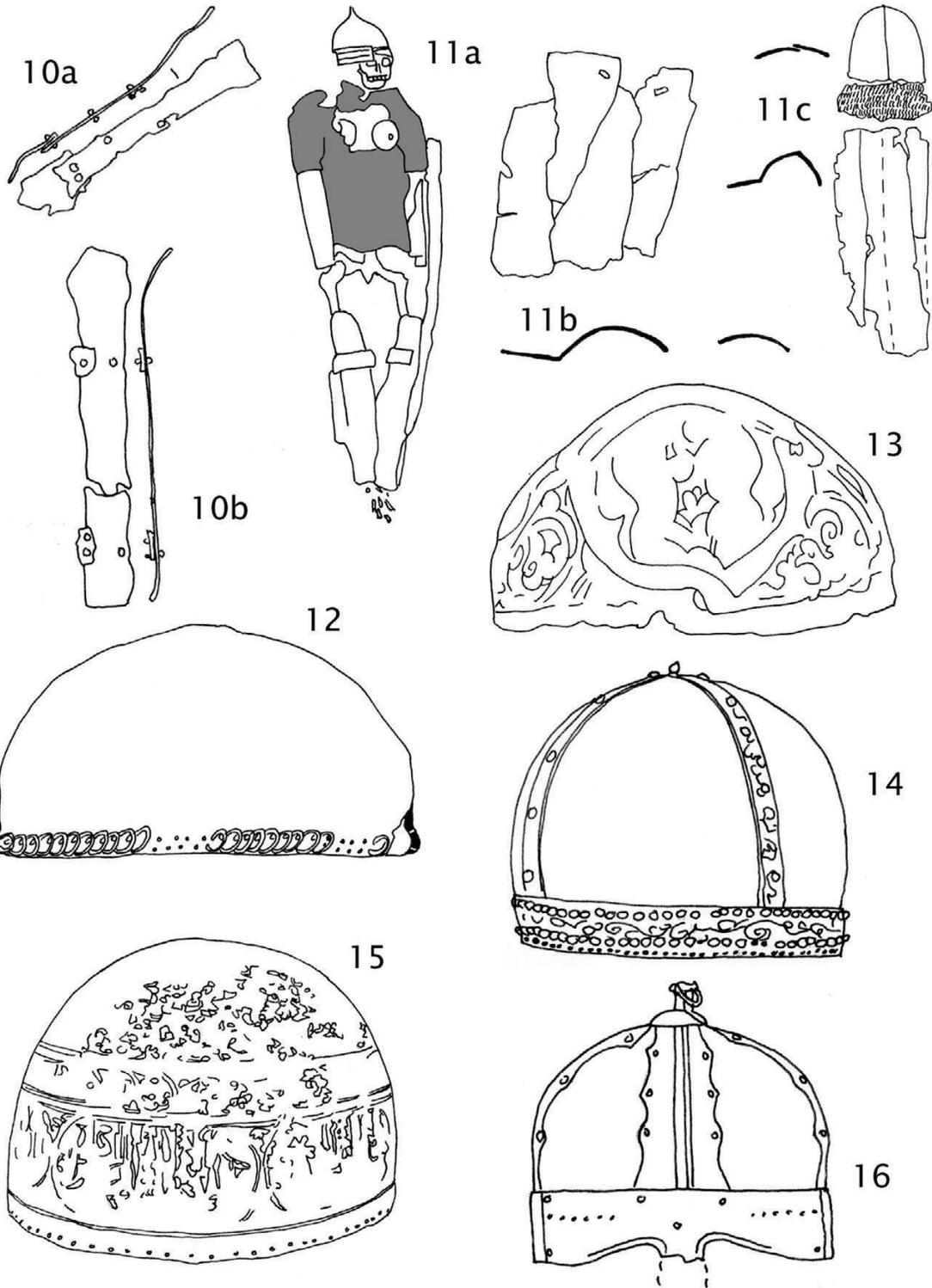
Note that illustrations of surviving military equipment, horse-harness, and clothing (figs. 10–75) are grouped according to type of artefact, then chronologically, and finally by region. However, illustrations of comparative art sources (figs. 76–185) are grouped chronologically, then according to medium, and finally by region.



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Military Equipment, Horse-harness and Clothing

Figure 10. Limb defences, 9th–10th centuries Khazar, from Kozzyi Skaly, Mount Beshtau near Pyatigorsk, southern Russia (after M. Gorelik¹⁴⁶):

- a. splinted vambrace;
- b. splinted greave

Figure 11. Material from the grave of a Turkish Kipchaq warrior, from Dmitrievskaya, pre-Kuban steppes of southern Russia, 12th–early 13th century (after Yu.V. Zelen-skii¹⁴⁷):

- a. skeleton [simplified] with helmet, mail shirt [shaded grey], limb defences and long sabre;
- b. vambrace;
- c. knee-protection with mail flap and greave

Figure 12. One-piece iron helmet from Varaghsah temple [Jartepah II], early 8th century (after M. Samibayev¹⁴⁸; believed to be in storage in the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan).

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Figure 16. Segmented and framed iron helmet, southern Iran 13th–14th century (after V.V. Ovsyannikov¹⁴⁹).

¹⁴⁶Gorelik, M., *Arms and Armour of South-Eastern Europe in the Second Half of the First Millennium AD*, in D. Nicolle (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval Arms and Armour* (Woodbridge 2002) fig. XI-5: 23–24.

¹⁴⁷Zelenskii, Yu.V., [Ю.В. Зеленский], “Поножи из половецкого погребения в степном Прикубанье», *ВОЕННАЯ АРХЕОЛОГИЯ*, 1 (2008) 116–117, pls. 1–5.

¹⁴⁸M. Samibayev (private communication 1992).

¹⁴⁹Ovsyannikov, V.V. [В.В. Овсянников], “К Вопрос о Защитном Вооружении Поздних Кочевниковуюжого Урала», in Ююсю Худяковб (et al. eds.), *Военное Днело Древнего и Средневекового Населения Северной и Центральной Азии* (Novo Sibirsk 1990) 141– 149, fig 1.



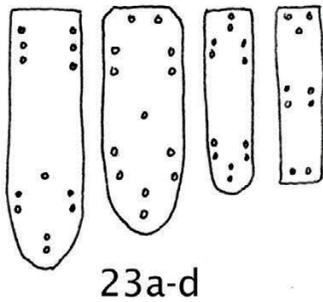
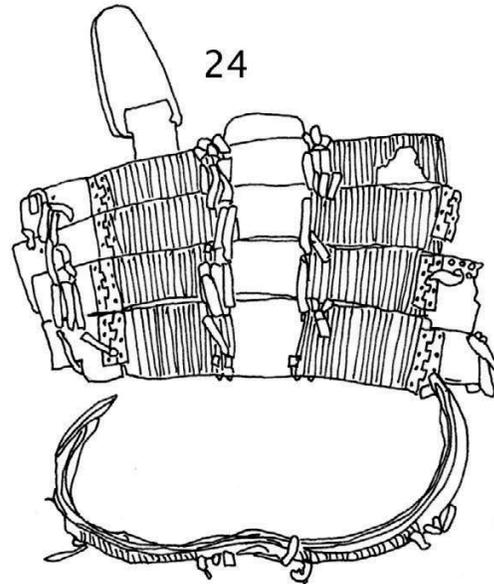
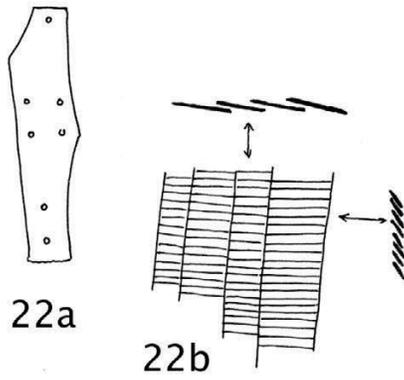
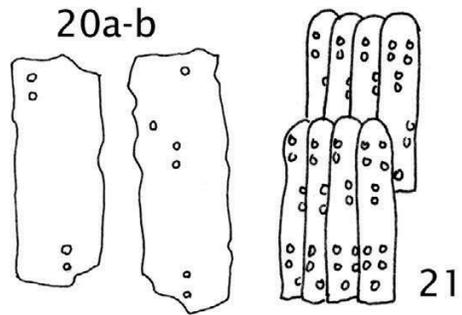
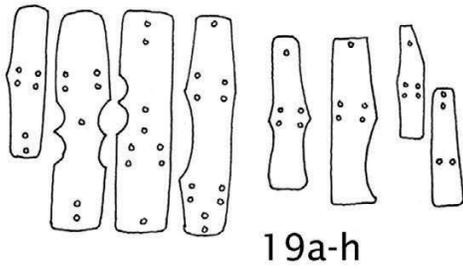
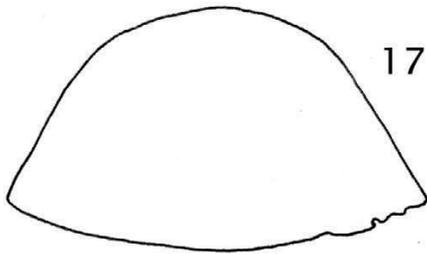


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¹⁵⁰Megaw, A.H.S., "Supplementary Excavations on a Castle Site at Paphos, Cyprus, 1970–1971", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 26 (1972) fig. 42.

¹⁵¹Gorelik, M., *Arms and Armour of South-Eastern Europe in the Second Half of the First Millennium AD*, in D. Nicolle (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval Arms and Armour* (Woodbridge 2002) fig. XI-2: 3.

¹⁵²Mazhitov, N.A. [н.а. Мажитов], *Курганы Южного Урала VIII–XIII вв* (Moscow 1981) fig. 43: 4–5.

¹⁵³Gorelik, M., *Arms and Armour of South-Eastern Europe in the Second Half of the First Millennium AD*, in D. Nicolle (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval Arms and Armour* (Woodbridge 2002) fig. XI-5: 19.

¹⁵⁴Ovsyannikov, V.V. [В.В. Овсянников], "К Вопрос о Защитном Вооружении Поздних Кочевниковуюго Урала», in Ююсю Худяковб (et al. eds.), *Военное Днело Древнего и Средневекового Населения Северной и Центральной Азии* (Novo Sibirsk 1990) fig. 1.



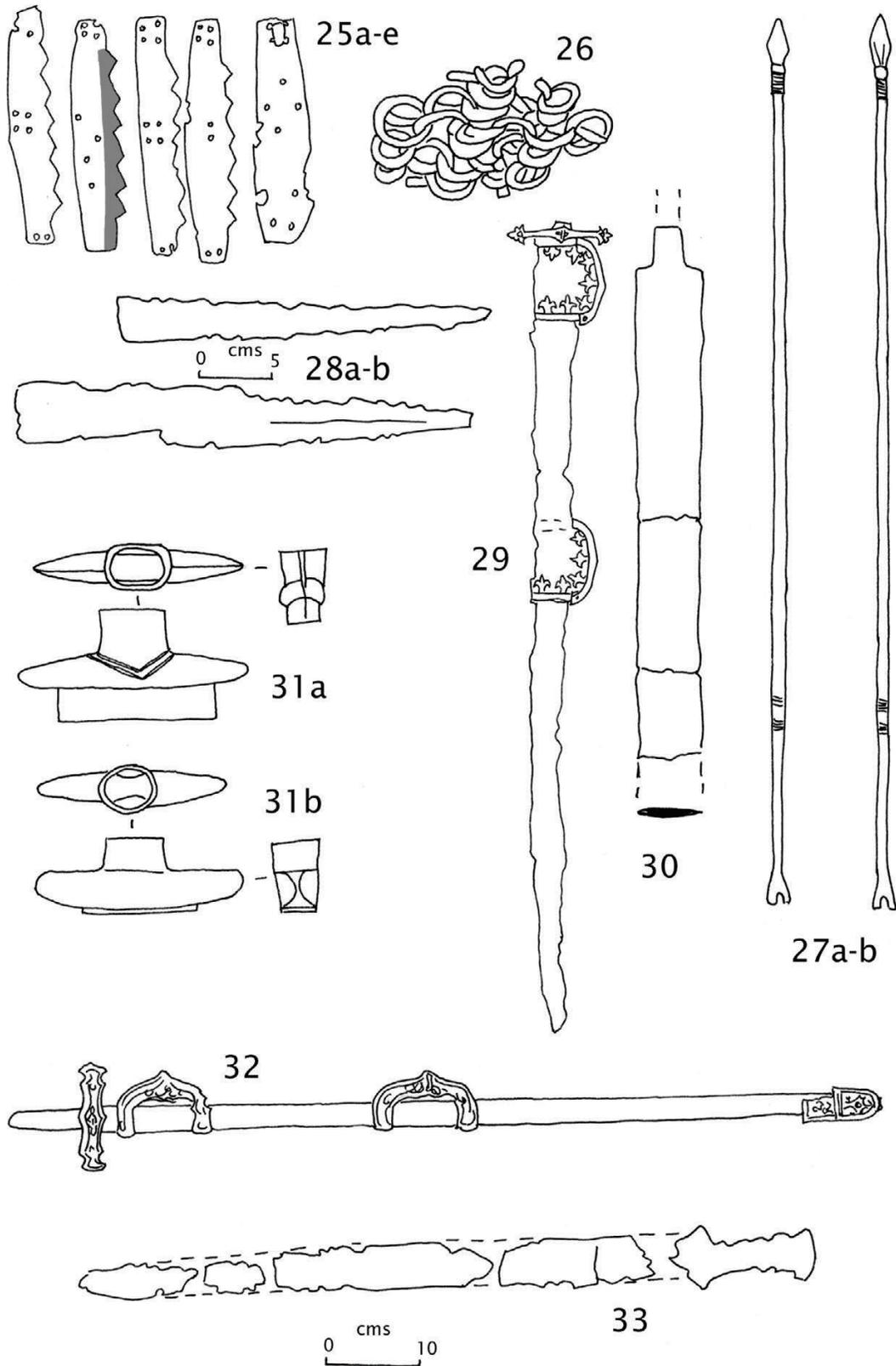


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¹⁵⁵ Mazhitov, N.A. [н.а. Мажитов], *Курганы Южного Урала VIII–XIII вв* (Moscow 1981) fig. 43: 6.

¹⁵⁶ Khudyakov, Y.S. [Ю.С. Худяков], *Вооружение Енисейских Кыргызов VI–XII в.в.* (Novo Sibirsk 1980) fig. 24: 7–8.

¹⁵⁷ M. Gorelik (personal communication 2004).

¹⁵⁸ Khudyakov, Y.S. [Ю.С. Худяков], *Вооружение Средневековых Крчевниковой Сибири и Центральной Азии* (Novo Sibirsk 1986) fig. 85: 1.

¹⁵⁹ M. Gorelik (personal communication 2004).



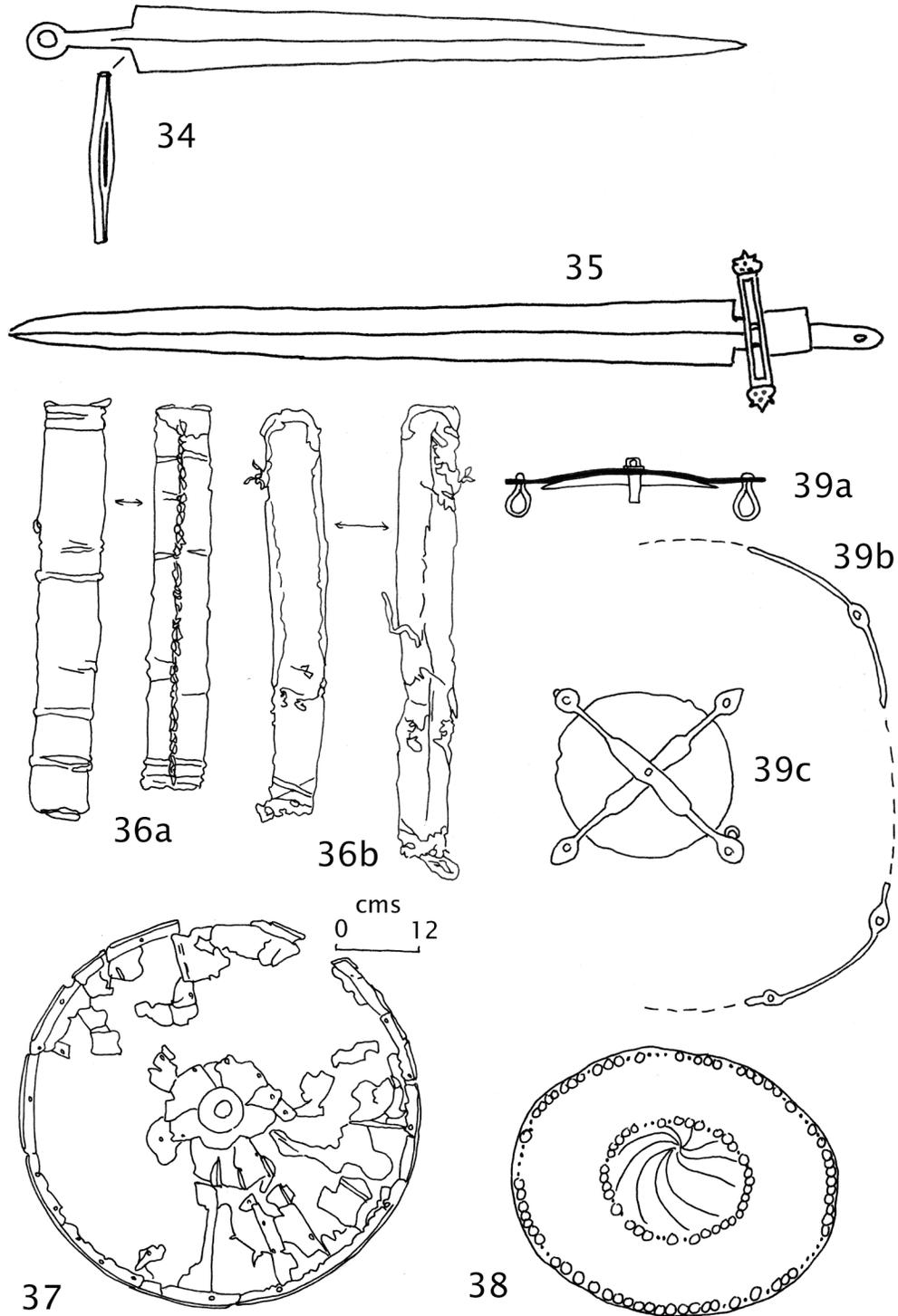


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Figure 37. The remains of the iron segmented covering, rim and boss of a shield from Bishtam Qalca [Beshtam-Kala], 12th–13th centuries, Islamic Central Asia (M. Gorelik¹⁶⁰)

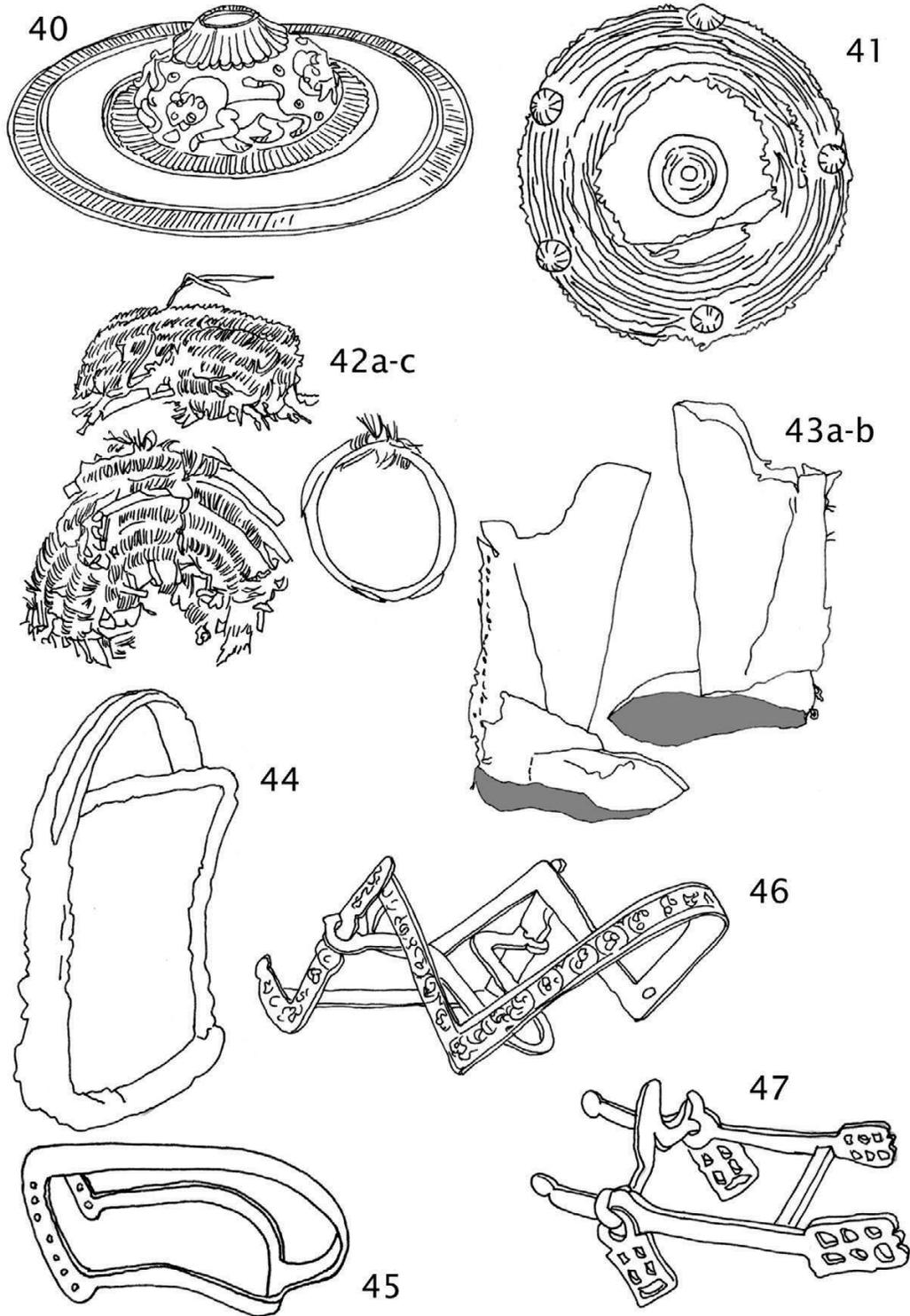
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¹⁶⁰M. Gorelik (personal communication 2004).

¹⁶¹M. Gorelik (personal communication 2004).





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Figure 46. Bronze curb-bit with gilded decoration, Sassanian 3rd–5th centuries (Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 1971.223A & B, New York, USA).

Figure 47. Iron curb-bit from Andalusia, said to be early 8th century Visigothic [probably later] (Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. nr. 47.100.24, New York, USA).

¹⁶²M. Gorelik (personal communication 2004).



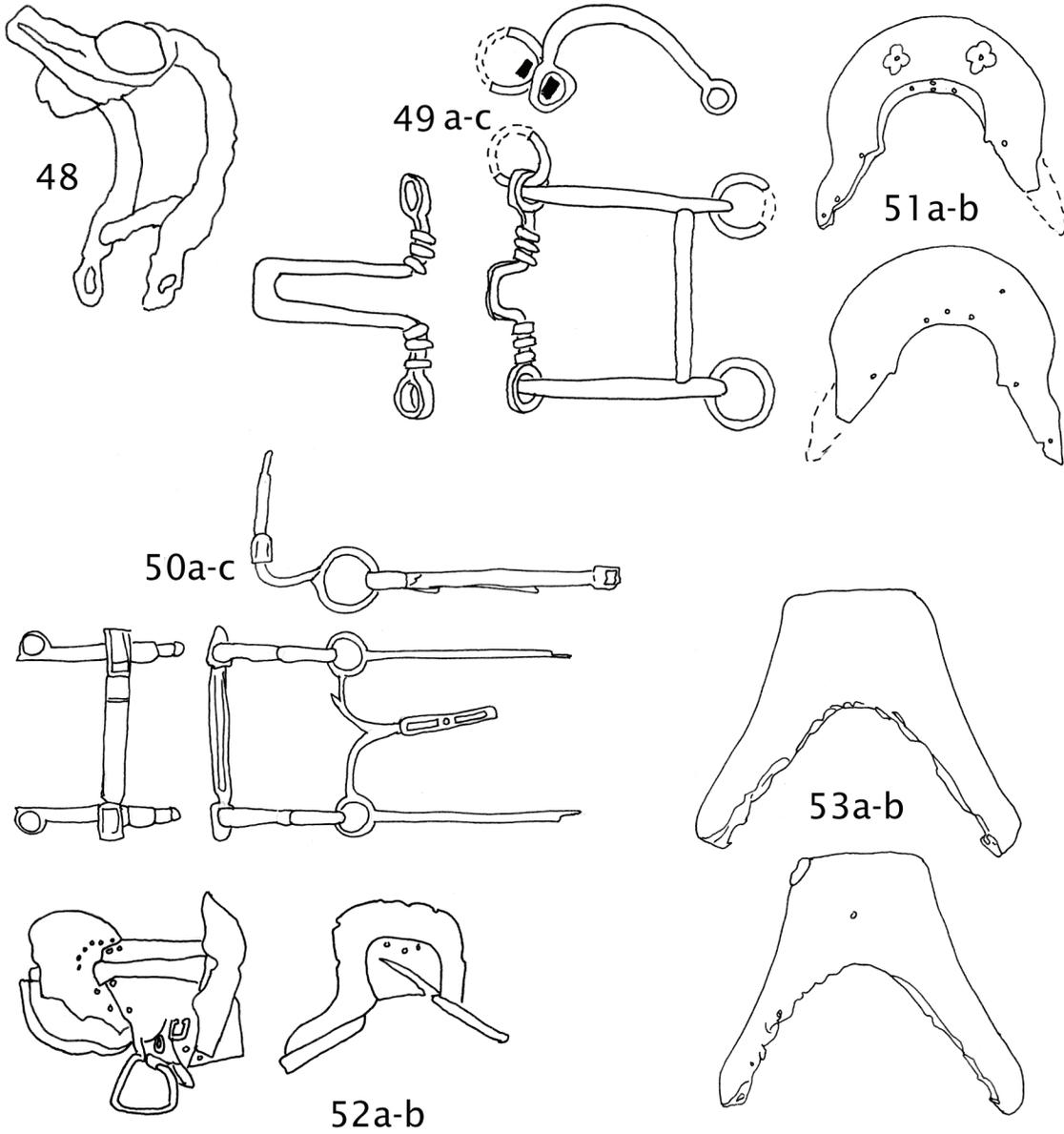


Figure 48. Corroded iron bit from Penjikent, Sughdian or Central Asian Islamic, early 8th century (after V. Raspopova; probably in the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia).

Figures 49a–c. Three views of a bronze curb-bit from Penjikent [inside view, section through the curb is shown black], Sughdian or Central Asian Islamic, early 8th century (after V.I. Raspopova¹⁶³; probably in the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia).

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Figures 51a–b. Two views of part of a saddle from a warrior's grave at Uono Sum, 8th–9th century Turkic (Regional Historical Museum, Zargalant, Mongolia).

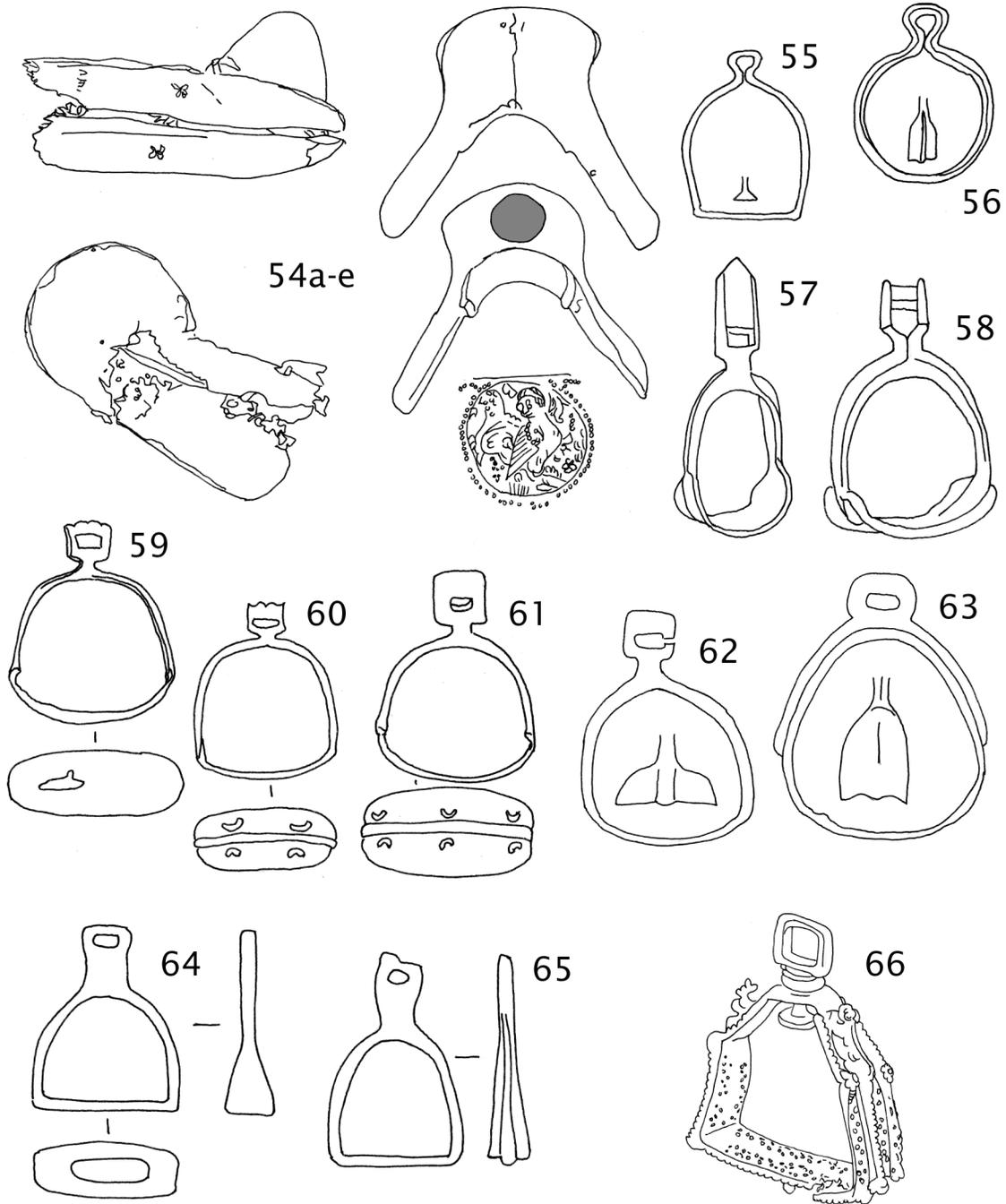
Figures 52a–b. Two views of a saddle from a warrior's grave at Chovd Sum, 10th–14th century Turkic or Mongol (Regional Historical Museum of the Aimaks Uvs [province], Ulaangom, Mongolia).

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¹⁶³Raspopova, V.I. [В.И. Распопова], *Металлические Изднлия Раннесредневекового Согда* (Leningrad 1980) fig. 79: 3.

¹⁶⁴Navarro Palazón, J. (personal communication 1995).zzzz





Figures 54a–e. Broken elements of an almost complete saddle from Tower 4, Citadel of Damascus, late Ayyūbid or early Mamlūk, 13th–14th century (Conservation Department inv. 2001/unnumbered, National Museum, Damascus, Syria):

- a. seat and cantle from beneath;
- b. seat and cantle from above;
- c. rear of pommel;
- d. front of pommel [position of “harpies” decoration shaded grey];
- e. embossed leather decoration including a harpie motif

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Figure 63. Stirrup from a warrior’s grave at Legerevskie, southern Urals region of central Russia, Turkic 9th–10th centuries (after N.A. Mazhitov¹⁶⁹).

Figures 64–65. Stirrups from warrior’s graves in Piatigorsk area, north-central Caucasus region of southern Russia, Alanic or Turkic 10th–12th centuries (after M. Gorelik¹⁷⁰).

Figure 66. Bronze stirrup from Iran or northern India, eastern Islamic 11th–12th centuries (Nasser D. Khalili Collection, inv. MTW 803, London).

¹⁶⁵Mazhitov, N.A. [н.а. мажитов], *курганы южного урала VIII–XIII вв* (Moscow 1981) fig. 6: 8 & 31.

¹⁶⁶M. Gorelik (personal communication 2009).

¹⁶⁷Grach, A.D. [А.Д. Грач] (et al. eds.), *Енисейские Кыргызы в центре Тувы* (Moscow 1998) fig. 12: 3–5.

¹⁶⁸Mazhitov, N.A. [н.а. Мажитов], *Курганы Южного Урала VIII–XIII вв* (Moscow 1981) fig. 22: 12.

¹⁶⁹Mazhitov, N.A. [н.а. Мажитов], *Курганы Южного Урала VIII–XIII вв* (Moscow 1981) fig. 43: 15.

¹⁷⁰M. Gorelik (personal communication 2011).



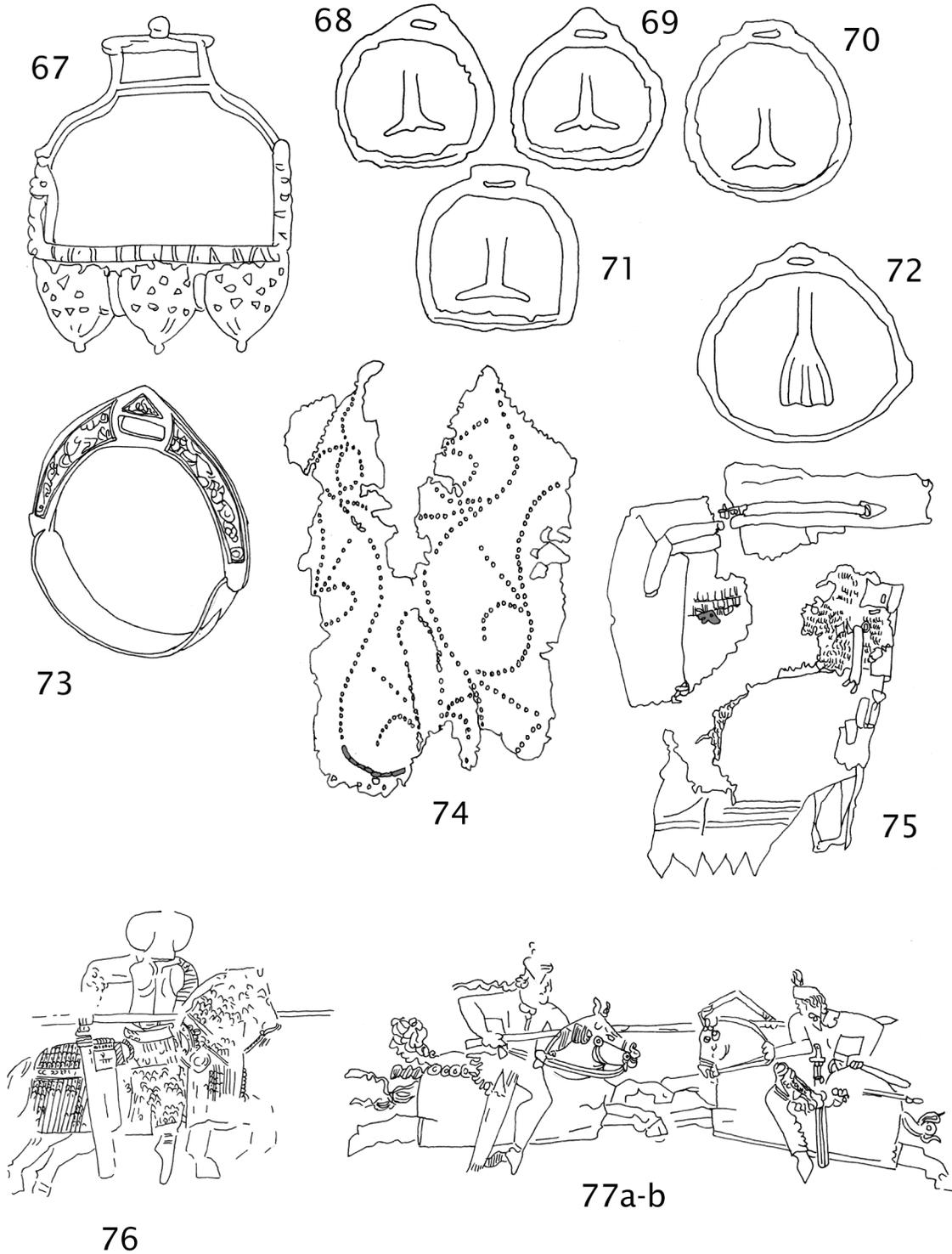


Figure 67. Bronze or latten stirrup, probably from Iran, 11th–12th centuries (Nasser D. Khalili Collection, inv. MTW 737, London).

Figures 68–71. Iron stirrups from warriors' graves, Dmitrievskaya area, Kuban region of southern Russia, Turkic 11th–14th centuries (after M. Gorelik¹⁷¹).

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Figure 73. Decorated iron stirrup from Khūrāsān, Turco Islamic 12th century (Furusiyya Art Foundation, London, UK).

Figure 74. Part of a very corroded iron chamfron found during the excavations of Soba [a few remaining stiches to secure missing fabric covering are shown grey], Nubian or imported from Islamic Egypt, 8th–14th centuries (after L. Allason-Jones¹⁷³).

Figure 75. Fragment of the fabric backing for a scale-lined armour [probably a horse armour] with leather edging and lacing, from Dura Europos in north-eastern Syria, Syro-Roman, Parthian or Sassanian 3rd century (Yale University Art Galleries, Newhaven, USA).

Comparative Art Sources

Figure 76. Carved rock relief of a cavalryman on an armoured horse, late 2nd–early 3rd centuries, Parthian (*in situ* Tang-i Sarwak, Iran).

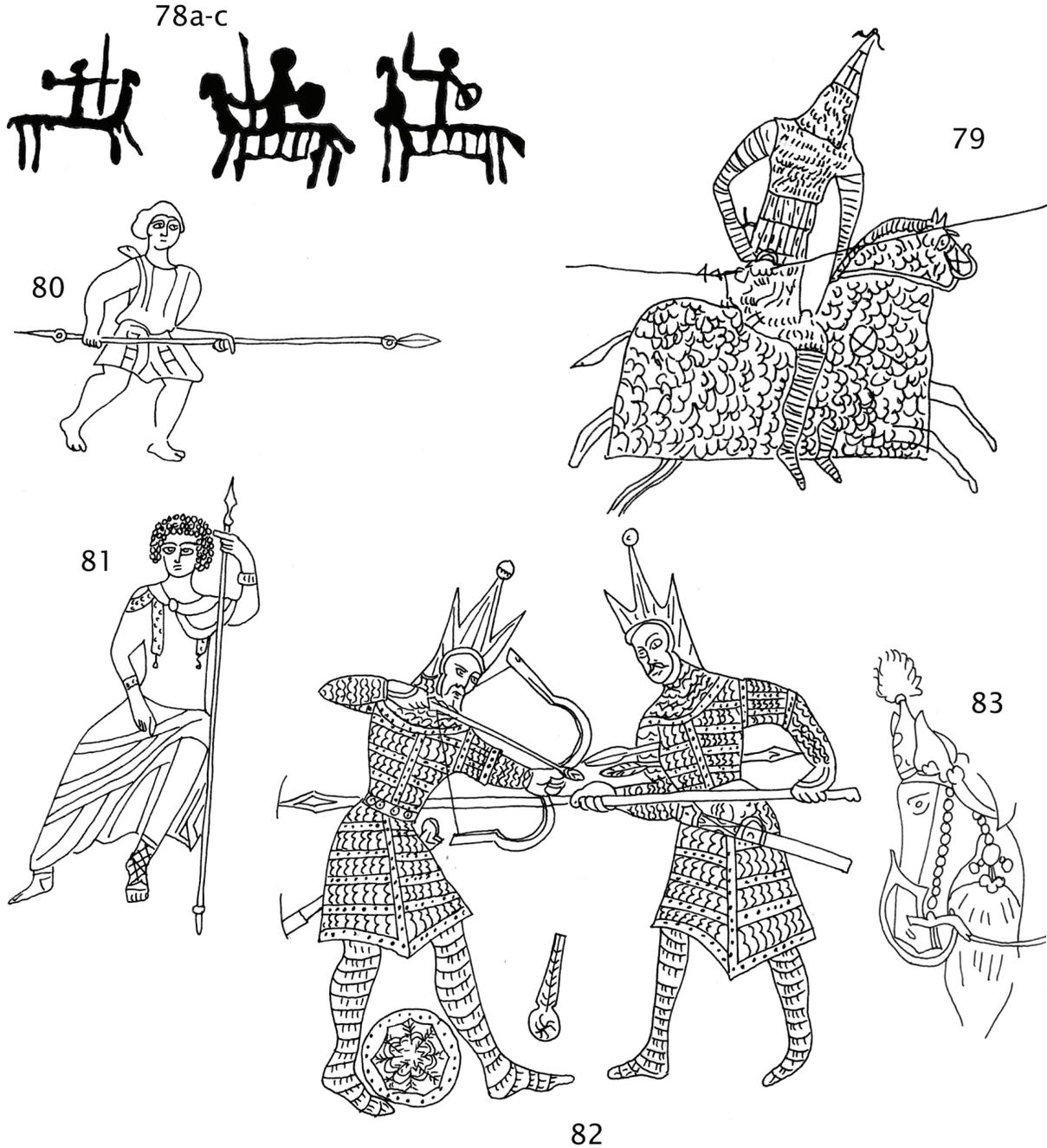
Figures 77a–b. Carved rock relief of Bahram II's army in combat, 276–293 AD, Sassanian (*in situ* Naqsh-i Rostam, Iran).

¹⁷¹M. Gorelik (personal communication 2011).

¹⁷²Mazhitov, N.A. [н.а. Мажитов], *Курганы Южного Урала VIII–XIII вв* (Moscow 1981) fig. 73: 4.

¹⁷³Allason-Jones, L., *Catalogue of Weaponry from Soba Excavations 8–14 cents.* (unpublished manuscript).





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Figure 84. Part of the hero-warrior's lamellar cuirass and laminated arm defences, detail of a wall painting from Penjikent, Sughdian, early 8th century (Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia).

Figure 85. Tribute-bearer, perhaps from Iran, riding side-saddle, detail of a wall painting from the palace of Afrāsiāb, Sughdian, early 8th century (Afrāsiāb Site Museum, Samarqand, Uzbekistan).

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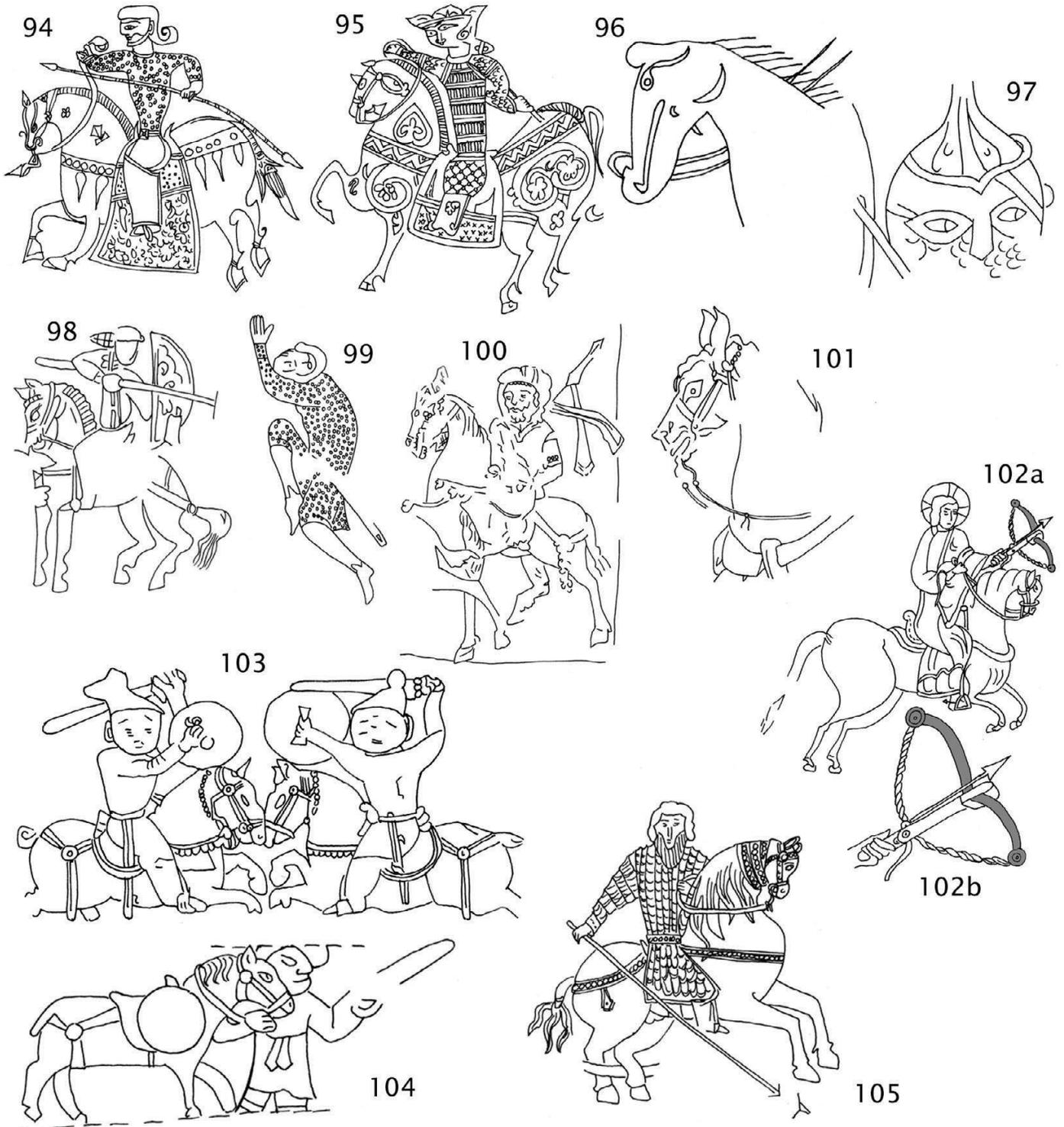
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Figure 92. Mounted warrior with lamellar and mail armour [lower part of horse obscured by rim of the bowl], ceramic bowl from Nishapur area, eastern Iran, 10th century (Motamed Collection, Frankfurt; probably now in the Linden Museum, Stuttgart, Germany).

Figure 93. Mounted warrior with mail and probably lamellar armour, ceramic bowl from the Nishāpūr area, eastern Iran, 10th century (ex-Faroughi Collection, Tehran; probably now in the Museum of Islamic Archaeology store, Tehran, Iran).

¹⁷⁴Negmatov, N.N. [Н.Н. Негматов], “О Живописи Дворца Афшинов Уструшаны», *Советская Археология*, 3 (1973) figs. 4 & 12.





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Figure 101. Bridled horse on a fragment of manuscript from Fuṣṭāṭ, Fāṭimid Egypt, 11th–early 12th centuries (Museum of Islamic Art, inv. 15610, Cairo).

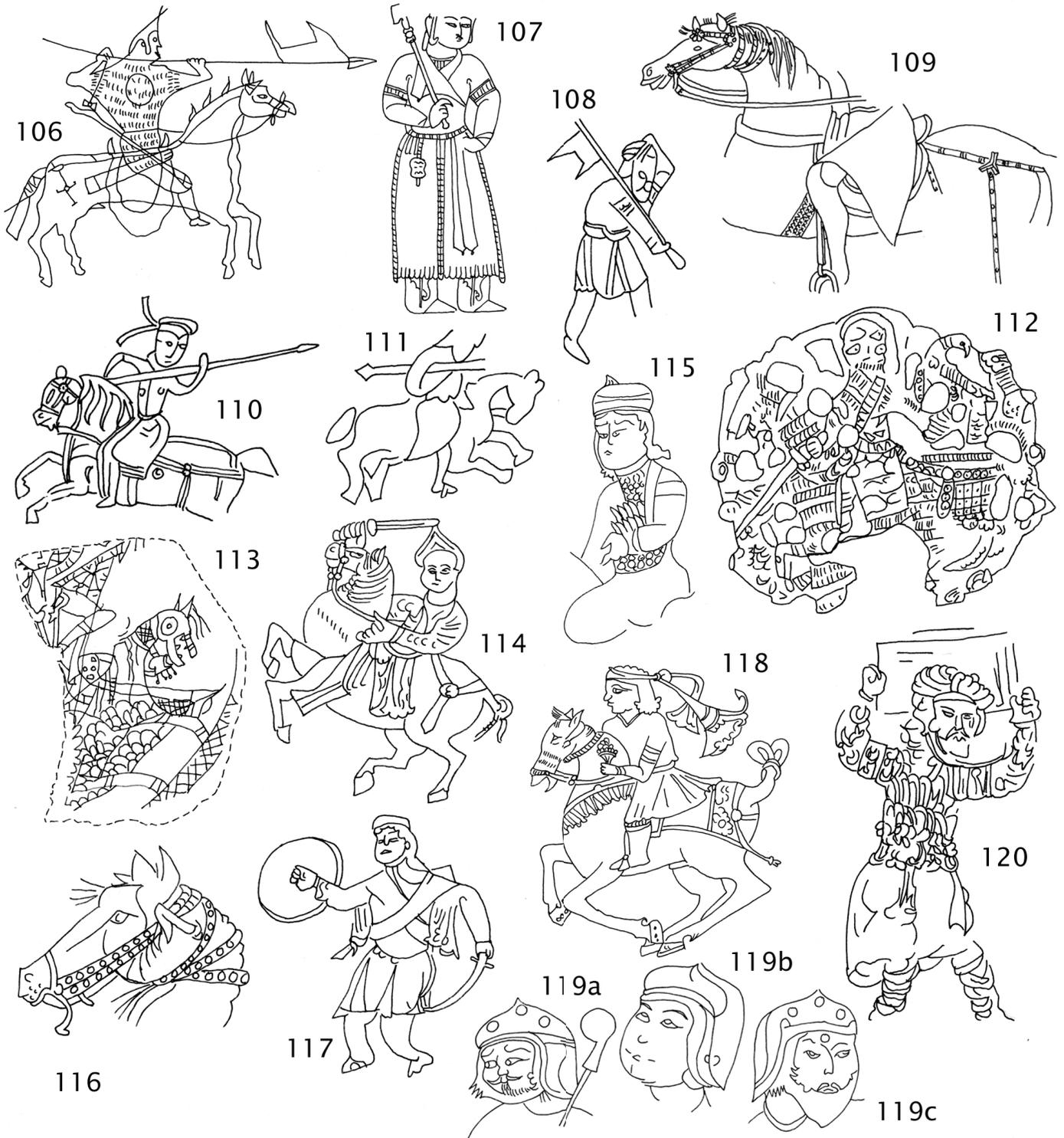
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Figure 105. Warrior saint [probably St. George or St. Theodore] with an apparently lamellar cuirass, carved relief, Georgian, mid-11th century (*in situ* on the exterior of the Cathedral, Nikortsminda [Nicatorzinda], Georgia).





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Figure 106. Petraglyph of an armoured horseman, Khirgiz Turkish, south-central Siberia, 11th–12th centuries (after Y.S. Khudyakov¹⁷⁵).

Figure 107. Guard of the sultan, wall painting from Lashkarī Bazar, Ghaznawid, 11th century (Archaeological Museum, Kabul, Afghanistan).

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Figure 109. Horse of St. Theodore, detail of a wall painting in the church, Georgian, 1096 AD (*in situ*, Iprari, Georgia).

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Figure 112. Horseman on a possibly armoured horse, gilden bronze harness decoration, Atabeg Syria or Seljuqid Anatolia, 12th–13th centuries (Furusiyya Art Foundation, inv. RR-943, London, UK).

Figure 113. Warrior saint on an armoured horse, fragment of sgraffito-ware ceramic from Iznik [Nicea], Byzantine c.1200 AD (Archaeological Museum, Iznik, Turkey).

Figure 114. Cavalryman on a sgraffito-ware ceramic bowl, Seljuq Iran, 12th century (Freer Gallery of Art, inv. 61-21, Washington, USA).

Figure 115. Ruler's attendant, with mail and lamellar armour, Seljuqid Iran, late 12th–early 13th centuries (Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 63.1386, Boston, USA).

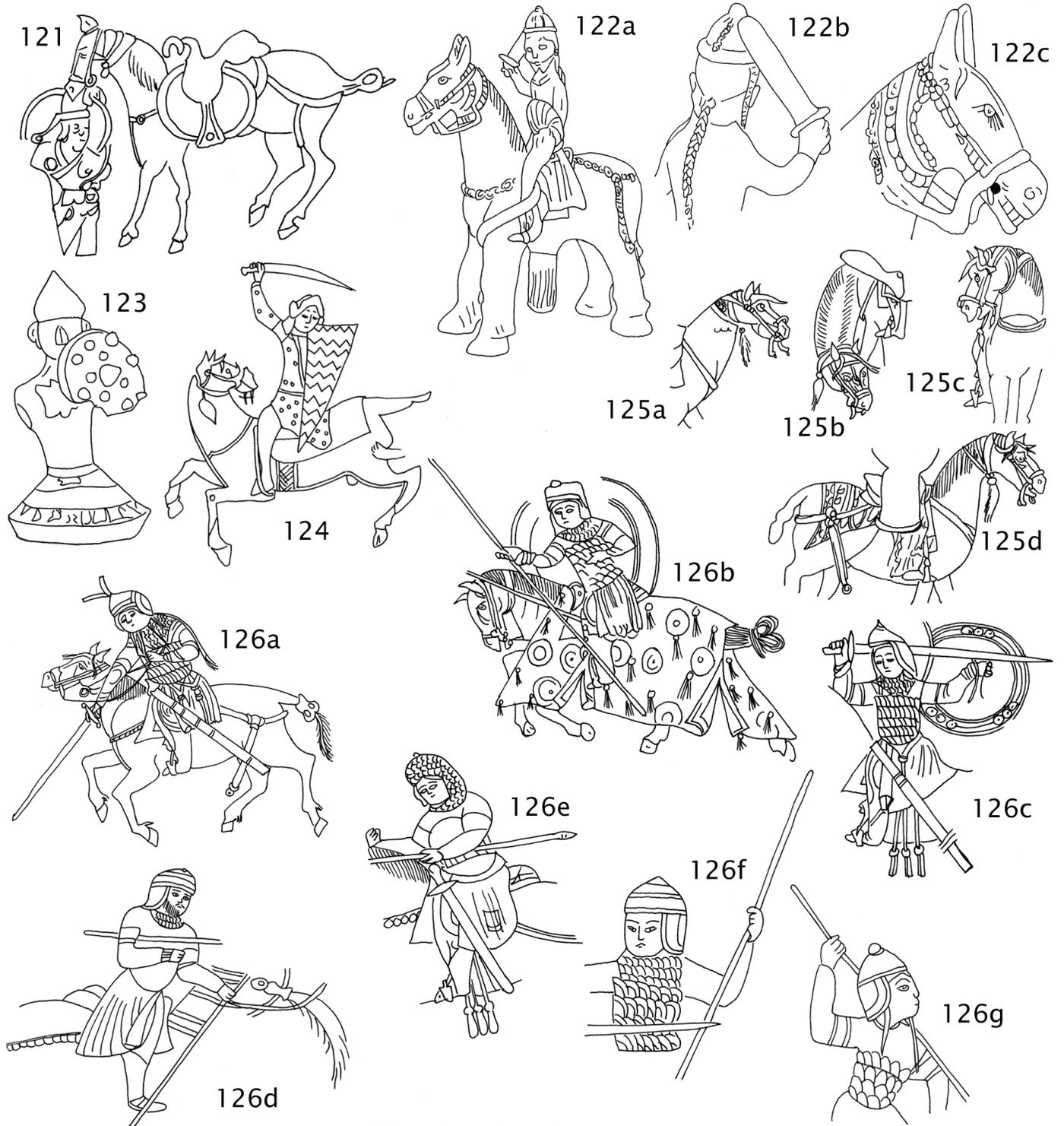
Figure 116. Bridled horse, detail of a ceramic lustre tile illustration of “The Iranians leave the castle of Furud” [episode in the *Shāhnāmah*], Iran, late 12th–early 13th centuries (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA).

Figure 117. Warrior with a curved sabre, ceramic plate from Sāwa, Iran, 12th–13th centuries AD (Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia).

Figure 118. Huntsman with long bandana, ceramic dish from Rayy, late 12th century (Museum für Islamische Kunst, inv. nr.I.15/60, Berlin, Germany).

¹⁷⁵Khudyakov, Y.S. [Ю.С. Худяков], *Вооружение Енисейских Кыргызов VI–XII в.в.* (Novo Sibirsk 1980) fig. 47.





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Figures 119a–c. Helmeted warriors, detail of a ceramic lustre tile illustration of “The Iranians leave the castle of Furud” [episode in the *Shāhnāmah*], Iran, late 12th–early 13th centuries (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA).

Figure 120. “Rustam frees Bizan”, illustration of an episode in the *Shāhnāmah*, ceramic lustre tile, Iran, 12th–13th centuries (ex-Keir Collection, London; inv. no. 182).

Figure 121. Man tending his horse, ceramic lustre tile, Iran, 12th to early 14th centuries (Museum of Islamic Art, Jerusalem, Israel).

Figures 122a–c. Glazed ceramic statuette in the form of a horseman fighting a serpent, from Raqqa, Atabeg or Ayyūbid Syria, 12th–early 13th centuries (National Museum, Damascus, Syria).

Figure 123. Top of a ceramic flask in the form of a helmeted warrior with a shield, from Raqqa, Atabeg or Ayyūbid Syria (Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, Germany).

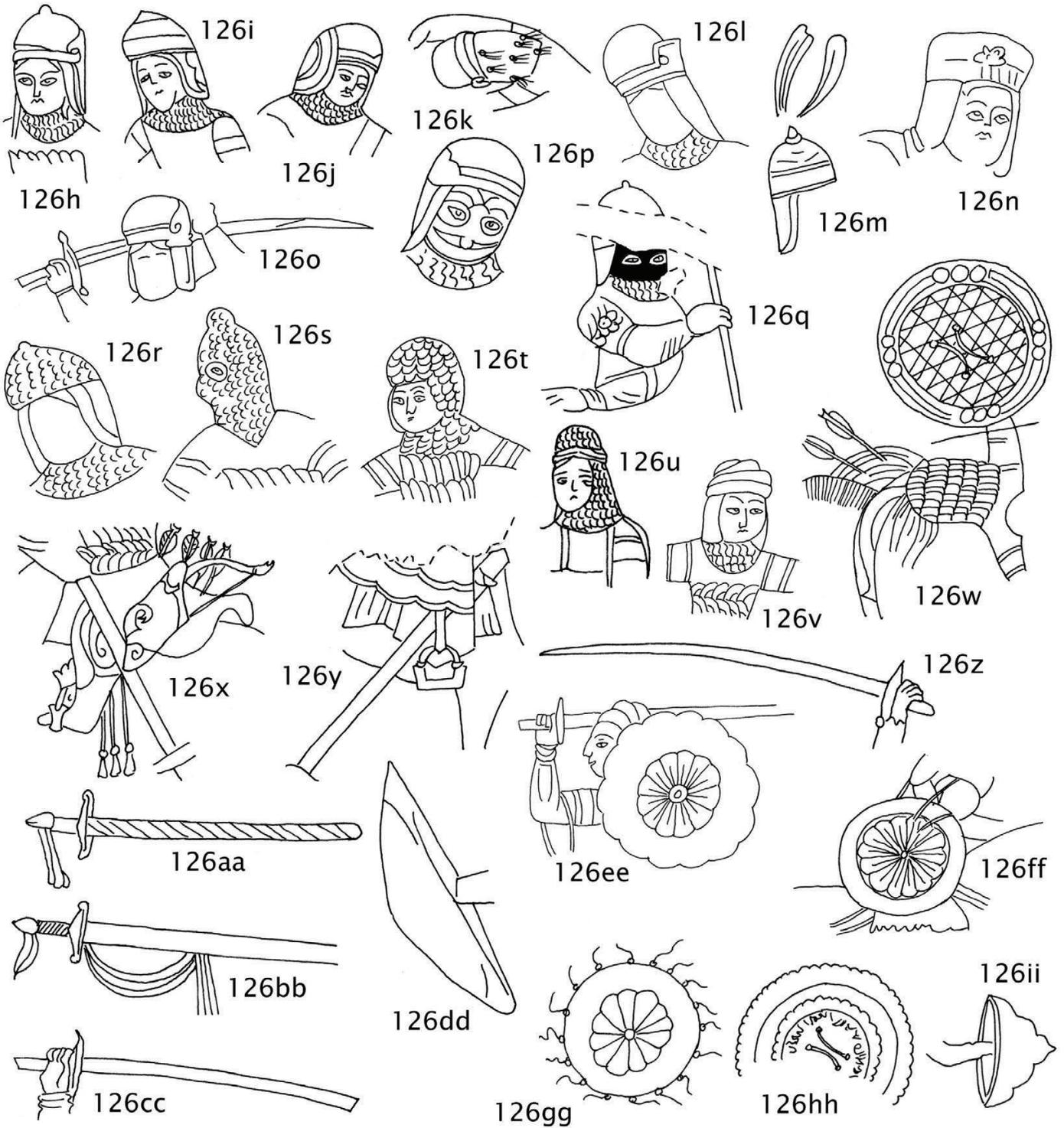
Figure 124. Cavalryman with a Turkish sharbūsh hat and a Byzantine-style triangular shield [note that the apparent curvature of the straight sword is due to the shape of the dish and the angle of the photograph from which this drawing was made], painted ceramic bowl from Raqqa, Ayyūbid Syria, late 12th or early 13th centuries (Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, Germany).

Figures 125a–d. Details of horse harness in the *Kitāb al-Tiryāq* manuscript [note the rider in 125b is almost sitting side-saddle], northern Iraq, 1199 AD (Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Ar. 2964, Paris, France).

Figures 126a–oo. Details from the *Warqah wa Gulshāh* manuscript, Azarbayjan or western Iran, 12th–early 13th centuries AD (Topkapi Library, Ms. Haz. 841, Istanbul, Turkey):

- a. “Night attack by Rabī Ibn Adnān” [f.3/6a];
- b. “Combat between Rabī and Warqah” [f.18/18b];
- c. “Night attack by Rabī Ibn Adnān” [f.3/6a];
- d–e. “Warqah overthrows a warrior of Aden” [f.39/37b];
- f. “Warqah and his father leave the Banū Shaybah” [f.8/10a];
- g. “Battle between Banū Zabbah and Banū Shaybah” [f.9/11a];





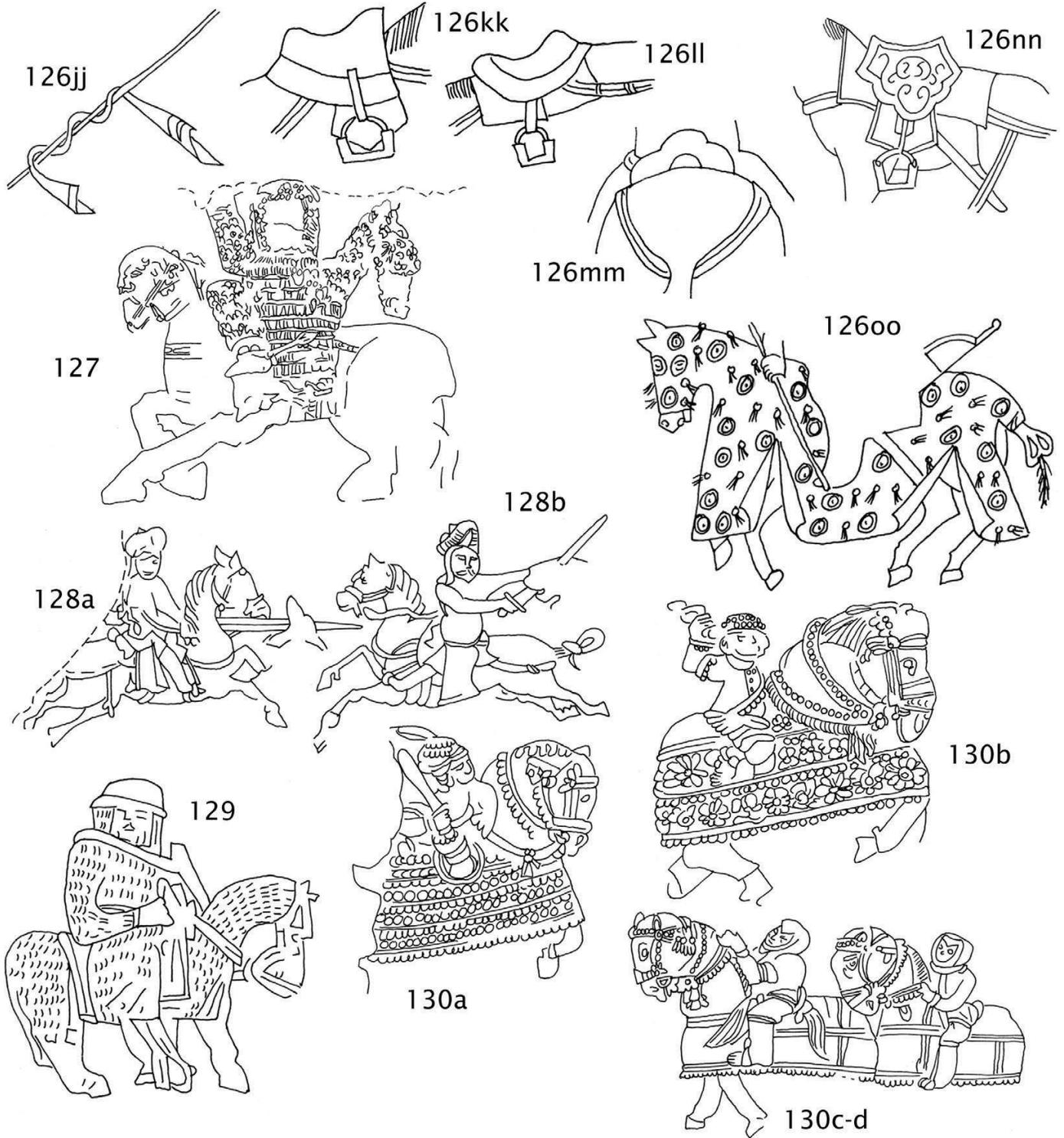
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- h. “Battle between Banū Zabbah and Banū Shaybah” [f.10/12a];
- i–j. “Gulshāh comes to take off her veil” [f.22/21b];
- k. “Gulshāh kills Rabī Ibn Adnān” [f.23/22a];
- l. “Army of Yemen defeats troops of Aden and Bahrayn” [f. 41/39a];
- m. “Warqa taken prisoner by Rabī” [f/21/20b];
- n. “Rabī wounds Warqa in the thigh” [f.18/18b];
- o. “Army of Yemen defeats troops of Aden and Bahrayn” [f. 41/39a];
- p. “Warqah and Gulshāh attack Rabī” [f.20/20a];
- q. “Warqah and his father leave the Banū Shaybah” [f.8/10a];
- r. “Gulshāh kills Rabī Ibn Adnān” [f.24/23a];
- s. “Warqah leads the army out of the city of Yemen” [f.37/35a];
- t. “Warqah fight Rabī” [f.17/18a];
- u. “Gulshāh kills Rabī Ibn Adnān” [f.23/22a];
- v–w. “Battle between Banū Zabbah and Banū Shaybah” [f.10/12a];
- x. “Rabī Ibn Adnān in combat with Banū Shaybah” [f.11/13a];
- y. “Warqah discusses with his father” [f.7/9a];
- z. “Warqah and Gulshāh attack Rabī” [f.20/20a];
- aa–bb. “Combat between Gulshāh and Qālib” [f.26/25a];
- cc–dd. “Army of Yemen defeats troops of Aden and Bahrayn” [f. 41/39a];
- ee. “Rabī’s night attack on the Banū Shaybah” [f.4/7b];
- ff. “This idol of vengeance gave a blow of the lance” [f.24/25b];
- gg–hh. “Warqah and Gulshāh attack Rabī” [f.20.20a];
- ii. “Rabī Ibn Adnān in combat with Banū Shaybah” [f.12/13b];





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- jj. “Combat between Rabī and Warqah’s father” [f.13/15a];
- kk–ll. “Combat between Gulshāh and Qālib” [f. 26/25b];
- mm. “Battle between Banū Zabbah and Banū Shaybah” [f.9/11a];
- nn. “Warqah recites a poem over the body of his father” [f.15/16b];
- oo. “Combat between Rabī and Warqah’s father” [f.13/15a];

Figure 127. Perseus with Medusa’s head, relief carving on a buttress of the broken or unfinished Tigris bridge south of Jazīrat Ibn cUmār, Atabeg north-eastern Syria, mid- to late 12th century (*in situ* cAyn Dīwār, Syria).

Figures 128a–b. Stucco panel from the pavilion of Qīlij Arslan II in Konya, Seljuq Anatolia, 1173/4 AD (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, inv. no. 2831, Istanbul, Turkey).

Figure 129. Mail-armoured cavalryman on a mail-armoured horse, carved capital, Castilian Iberia, late 12th century (*in situ* Church of San Lorenzo, Vallejo de Mena, Burgos, Spain).

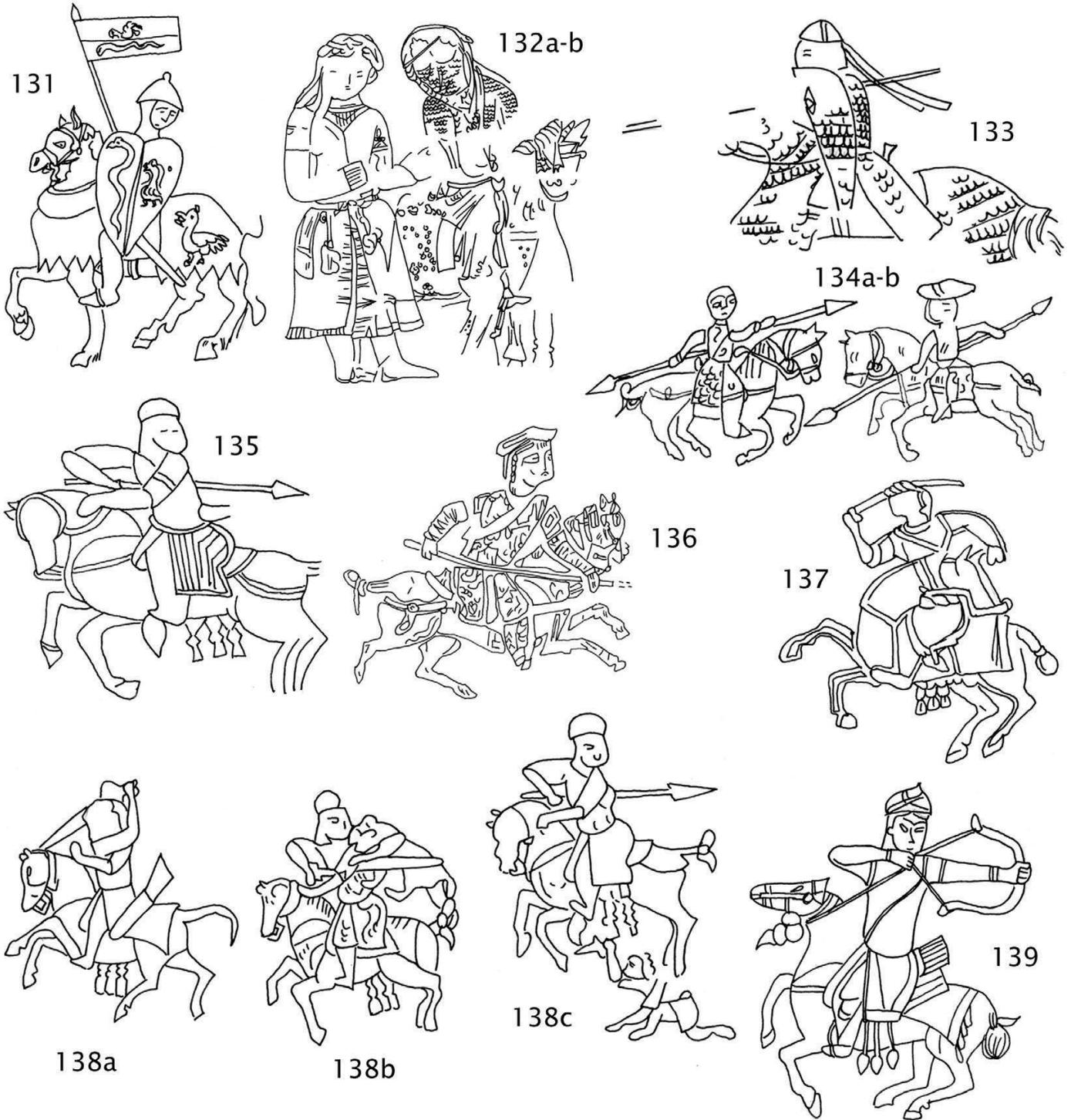
Figures 130a–d. Stone relief carvings of cavalrymen, Hoysala south-west Indian, 12th–13th centuries (*in situ* Halebidu [a–b] and Somanathapura [c–d], India).



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Figure 131. Seventeenth or eighteenth century drawing of a now lost floor mosaic showing donors of the aristocratic Papparone family, originally in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, 12th century (Vatican Library, Ms. Barberiano-Latino 4333, f.6, Rome, Italy).

Figure 132. Damaged wall painting of a man on foot and a horseman with mail armour and a face-covering mail aventail, late 12th–early 13th centuries (private collection, Berlin, reportedly destroyed in World War Two).

Figure 133. Damaged wall painting of a horseman with a mail hauberk, riding a horse with a possibly mail caparison (*in situ* Church of Sts. Peter and Paul, Coincy, France).

Figures 134a–b. Horsemen in combat with double-ended spears, silver-inlaid brass pen-box, probably Iran, 1281 AD (British Museum, inv. no. 91.6–23.5, London, UK).

Figure 135. Horseman on an inlaid bronze candlestick, Seljuqid Iran, 1225 AD (Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 57.148, Boston, USA).

Figure 136. Horseman on a silver-inlaid bronze pot, probably Seljuqid Iran, 13th century (Furusiyya Art Foundation, London, UK).

Figure 137. Horseman on an inlaid brass tray, Mongol north-western Iran, late 13th century (British Museum, inv. OA.1878.12-30.706, London, UK).

Figures 138a–c. Scenes of hunting and combat on an inlaid bronze candlestick made by al-Dhakī and Ibn Jaldak, 1225 AD (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA).

Figure 139. Horse-archer on an inlaid bronze ewer made by Yūnus Ibn Yūsuf al-Mawṣilī, northern Iraq or Syria, 1246/7 AD (Walters Art Gallery, inv. no. 54.456, Baltimore, USA).



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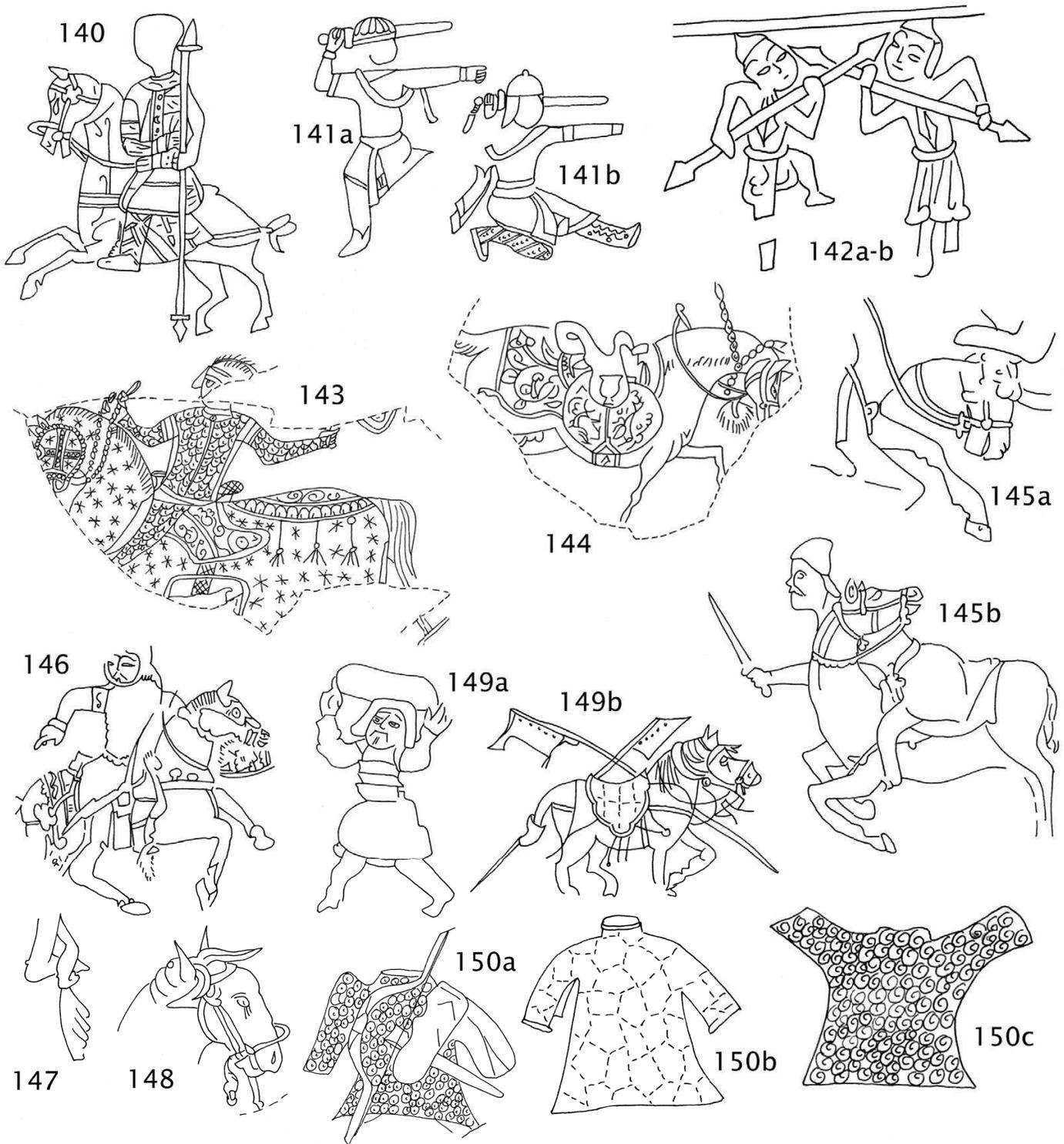


Figure 140. Horseman with a double-ended spear [note that the cross-gartering on legs suggests he is a mounted infantryman] on an inlaid bronze candlestick, probably Azarbayjan or Seljuqid Anatolia, late 13th century (Musée du Louvre, inv. Koechlin Collection 3436, Paris, France).

Figures 141a–b. Inlaid zodiac figures on the back of a steel mirror, Syria or Seljuqid Anatolia, late 13th century (Topkapi Museum, Istanbul, Turkey).

Figures 142a–b. Foot-soldiers in combat with double-ended spears, inlaid bronze cup, probably Azarbayjan, c.1220 AD (“The Wade Cup”, Museum of Art, Cleveland, USA).

Figure 143. Mailed horseman on a caparisoned horse [probably representing a Latin Christian knight] on a broken sgraffito-ware plate, Arab workmanship in the Crusader Principality of Antioch, early 13th century (Archaeological Museum, Antakya, Turkey).

Figure 144. Saddled horse with a Mamlūk heraldic cup motif on the saddle-flap, on a fragment of a glazed ceramic bowl from Fustat, Mamlūk Egypt, late 13th century (reportedly in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, Egypt).

Figures 145a–b. Horsemen in combat on an embossed or relief glazed ceramic vase, perhaps Syria or Seljuqid Anatolia [labeled as from Iran], 13th century (National Museum, Damascus, Syria).

Figure 146. Horseman on a fragment of a minai-ware ceramic bowl, late Saljuqid Iran, 13th century (Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, Egypt).

Figure 147. Man riding with a decorated stirrup, glazed ceramic fragment, Iran, 13th century (private collection).

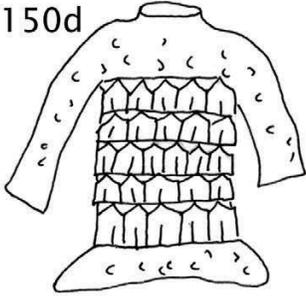
Figure 148. Head of a bridled horse on a lustre ceramic bowl from Rayy, Iran, late 13th century (Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 16.87, Rogers Fund 1916, New York, USA).

Figures 149a–b. Illustration of Rustam freeing Bihzād and other episodes from the *Shāhnāmah*, on a glazed ceramic beaker from Rayy, Seljuqid Iran, early 13th century (Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, USA).

Figures 150a–f. Illustration of an assault upon a castle with named figures [unidentified event], Iran, probably c.1228 AD (Freer Gallery of Art, inv. no. 43.3, Washington, USA): a–d. four armours and a set of archery equipment stored on top of the castle [a & c are mail shirts or hauberks, b may be a mail-lined *kazāghand* or scale-lined *qarqal*, d is a lamellar cuirass apparently attached to a long-sleeved garment or armour];



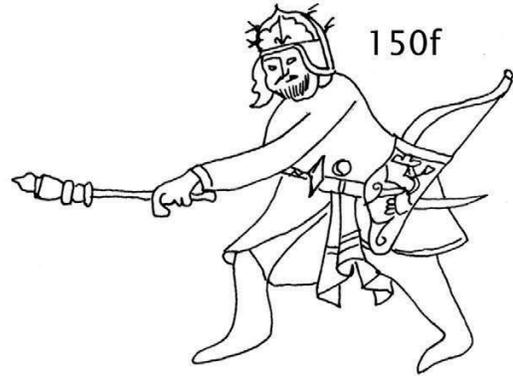
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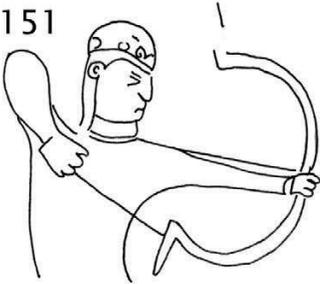
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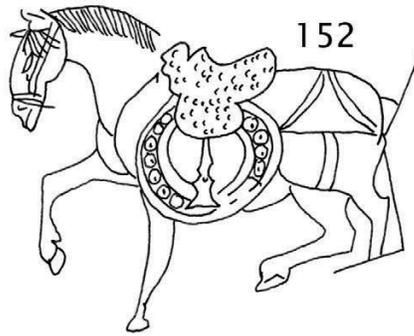
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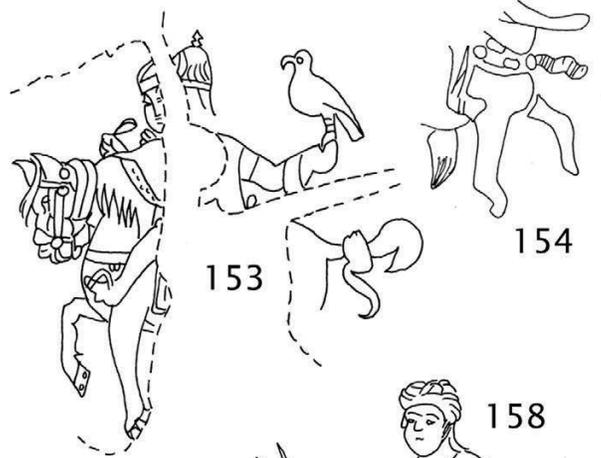
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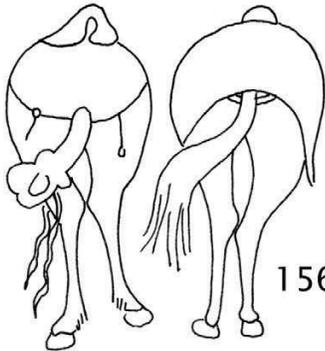


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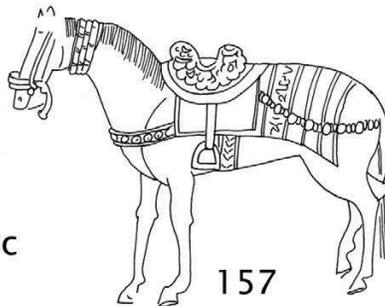


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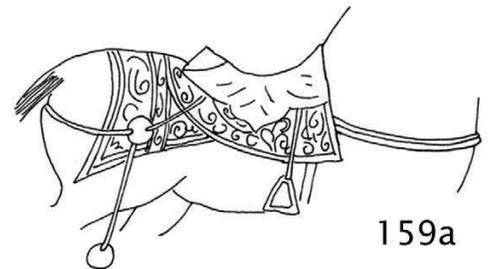
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156c



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159a



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- e. one of the senior warriors attacking the castle;
- f. armoured huntsman from the exterior of the bowl

Figure 151. Archer on a relief ceramic tile, perhaps from Kāshān, Iran, 13th century (Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, Germany).

Figure 152. Saddled horse on a ceramic tile, Mongol-Iran, 1250–1300 AD (British Museum, inv. OAG. 1983.212.229, London, UK).

Figure 153. Mounted falconer on three fragments of a glazed ceramic wall-tile from the Citadel of Konya, Seljuqid Anatolia, 13th century (Ceramics Museum, Konya, Turkey).

Figure 154. Horseman on a fragment of a glass mosque lamp, Ayyūbid Syria, 1225–75 AD (Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. 330-1900, London, UK).

Figure 155. Allegorical figure of War on a page from a manuscript by cAbdullāh Ibn al-Fadhl, Iraq, 1222 AD (ex-Royal Asiatic Society, London; reportedly now in the Library of the Rockefeller Museum, East Jerusalem, Palestine).

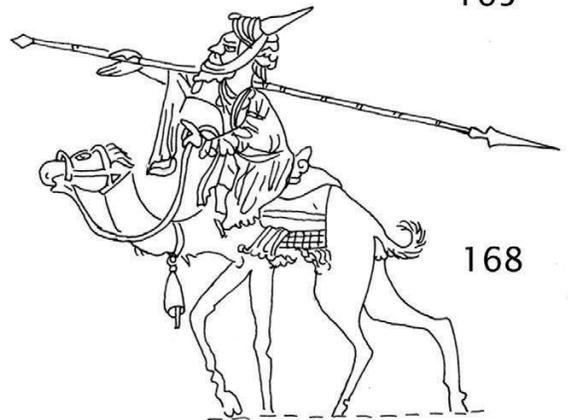
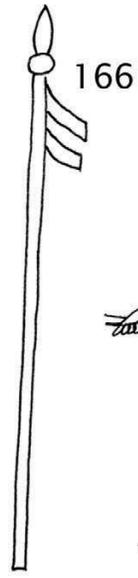
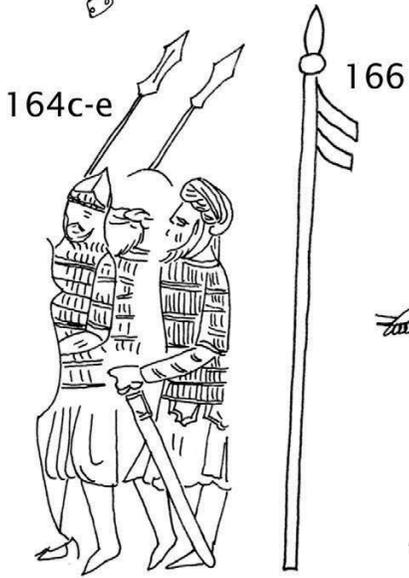
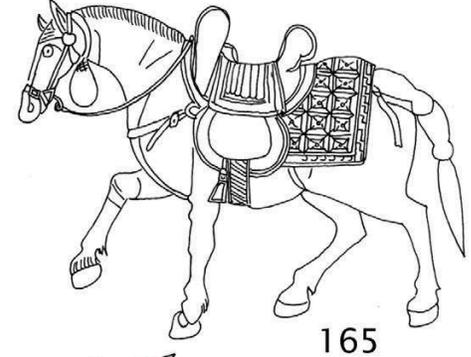
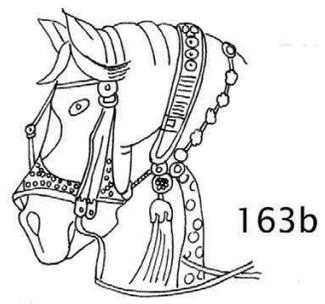
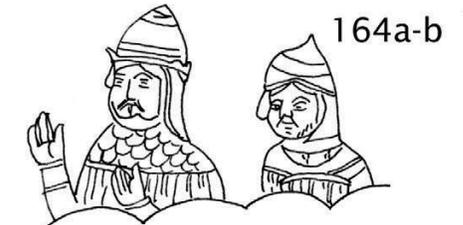
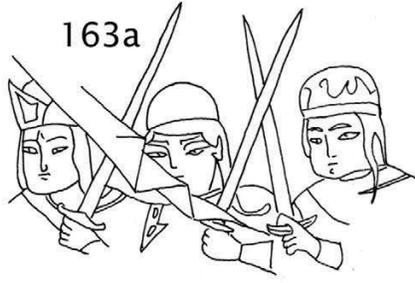
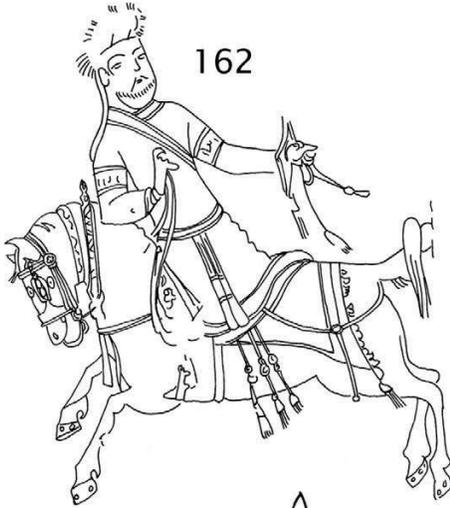
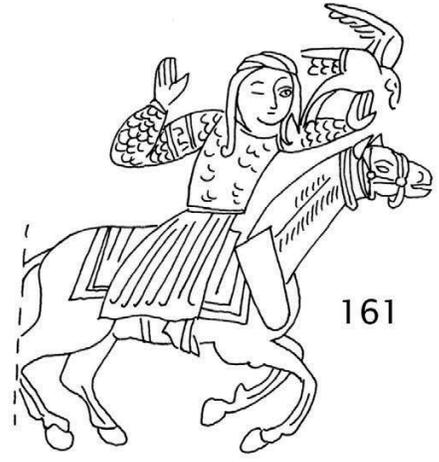
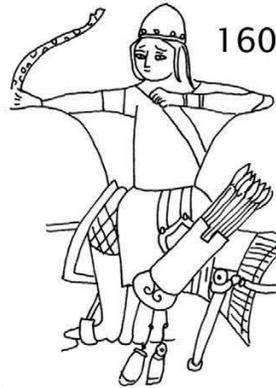
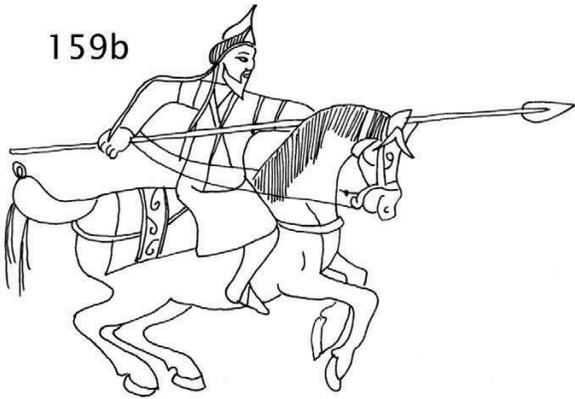
Figures 156a–c. Military figures and saddled horses from the rear, in a copy of the *Maqāmāt of al-Ḥarīrī* [apparent mail hauberk of figure a highlighted in grey], Iraq, 1237 AD (Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Arabe 5847, f. 29 [a] and f.59 [b & c], Paris, France).

Figure 157. Saddled horse in a copy of the *Maqāmāt of al-Ḥarīrī*, Iraq, 1242–58 AD (Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Esad Effendi 2916, Istanbul, Turkey).

Figure 158. Man riding an ass with an apparent sheepskin caparison or oversized saddlecloth in a copy of the *Maqāmāt of al-Ḥarīrī*, Iraq or Syria, 1237 AD (Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Arabe 3929, f. 117, Paris, France).

Figures 159a–b. Saddled horse and rider training a horse for combat, in a copy of the *Kitāb al-Bayṭarah*, Iraq or Syria, 1210 AD (Topkapi Library, Ms. Ahmed III 2115, Istanbul, Turkey).





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Figure 160. One of the warriors on the frontespiece of the *Kitāb al-Tiryāq* manuscript, northern Iraq, early 13th century (National Library, Ms. AF.10, Vienna, Austria).

Figure 161. Mounted falconer wearing a mail hauberk or shirt, frontespiece to an unidentified manuscript, probably northern Iraq, early 13th century (Hans P. Kraus Collection, New York, USA).

Figure 162. Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu', Atabeg ruler of Mosul, on the frontespiece to volume 2 of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, Mosul, northern Iraq, 1219 AD (Royal Library, inv. no. ms. Cod. Arab 168, Copenhagen, Denmark).

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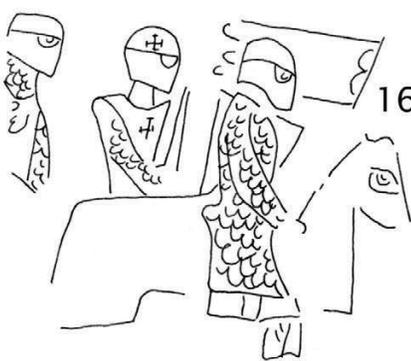
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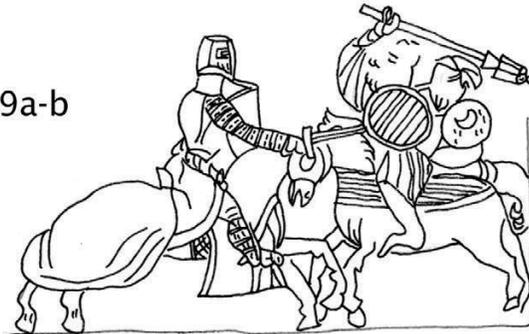
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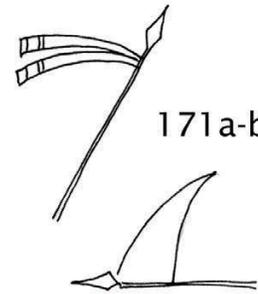




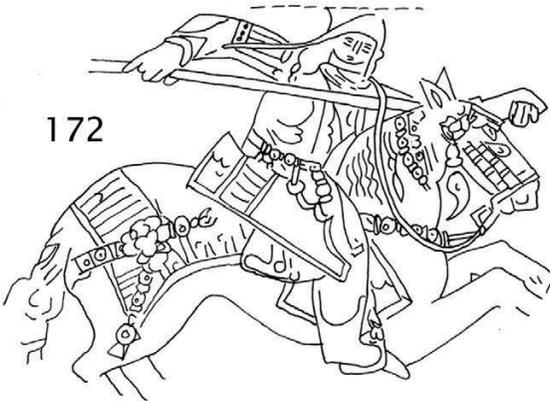
169a-b



170a-b



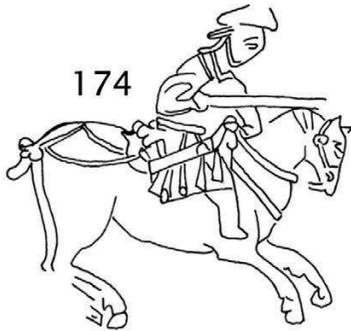
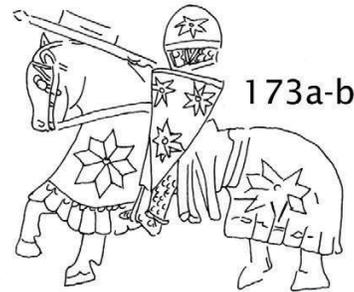
171a-b



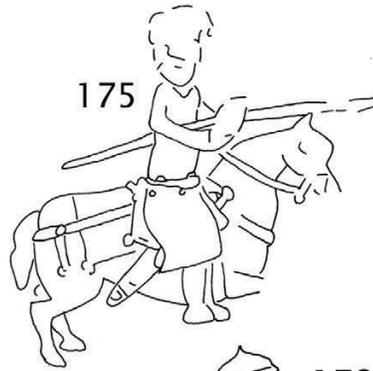
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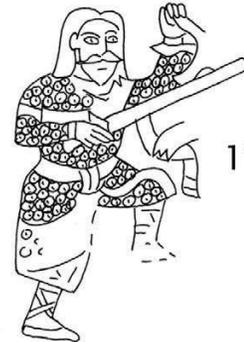
173a-b



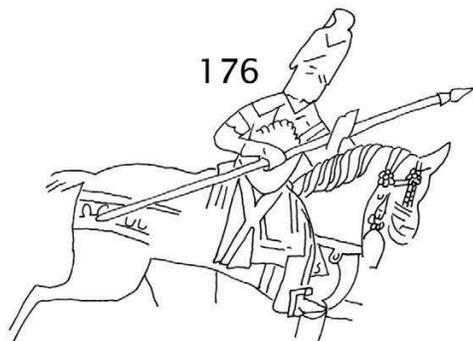
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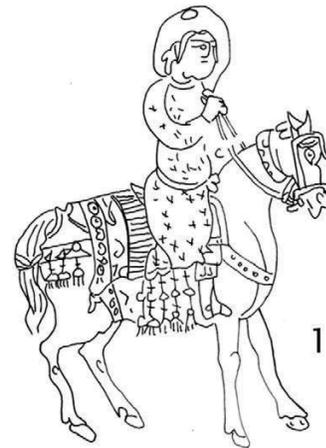
177a-b



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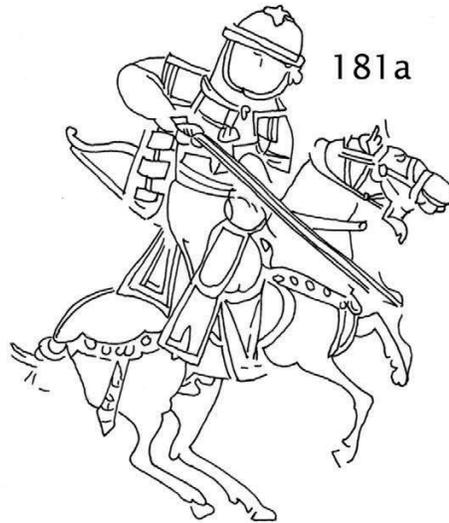
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¹⁷⁶Janabi, T. al-, *Studies in Medieval Iraqi Architecture* (PhD thesis, Edinburgh University, 1975) 175.

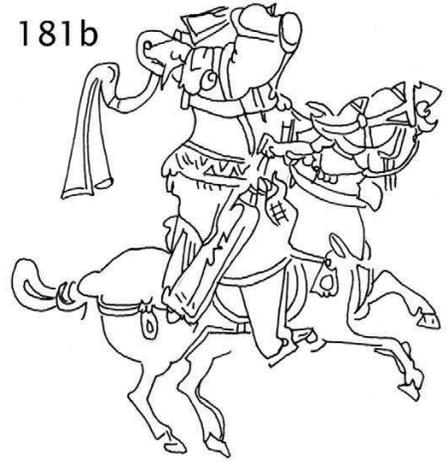




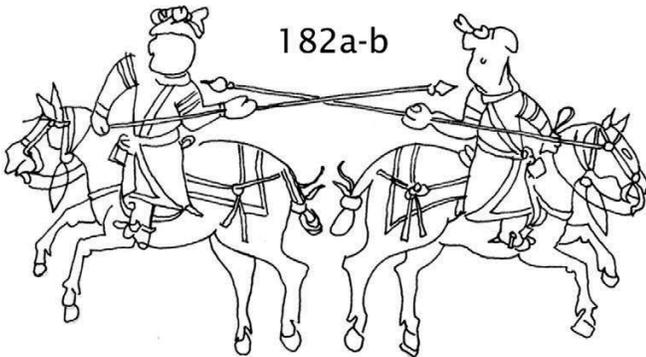
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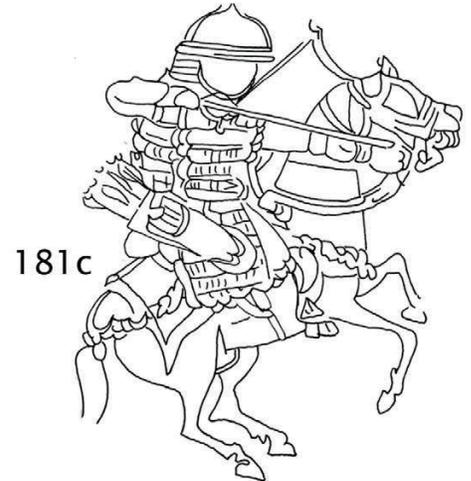
181a



181b



182a-b



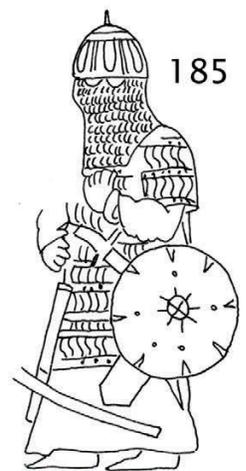
181c



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Book Reviews

Mathieu Eychenne, *Liens personnels, clientélisme et réseaux de pouvoir dans le sultanat mamelouk (milieu XIIIe-fin XVe siècle)* (Damas-Beyrouth: Presses de l'Ifpo, 2013). Pp. 605.

Reviewed by Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, Université Pierre Mendès-France (Grenoble)

Dans son ouvrage intitulé *Liens personnels, clientélisme et réseaux de pouvoir dans le sultanat mamelouk (milieu XIIIe-fin XVe siècle)* Mathieu Eychenne propose une réflexion sur les liens et les réseaux mis en œuvre par les élites militaires, religieuses et administratives à l'époque des Mamlouks bahrites (1250-1382), démarche menée à partir de concepts empruntés pour l'essentiel au sociologue P. Bourdieu et à l'historien moderniste J-P. Dedieu. C'est donc un projet ambitieux que propose M. Eychenne, car les thèmes étudiés par l'auteur, en particulier ceux du clientélisme et de la vénalité des charges ont déjà fait l'objet d'études ou d'articles. Les trois mouvements qui constituent l'ouvrage, « Constitution et formes de liens personnels », « Pratiques sociales et clientélisme », « La dynamique des réseaux de pouvoir », reposent sur un important corpus prosopographique complété par quatre annexes et un glossaire.

On regrette que l'auteur n'ait pas consacré ne serait-ce que quelques lignes aux diverses sources qui lui ont permis de retracer les biographies très fouillées des divers acteurs qui guident son propos, que ces notices s'inscrivent dans une famille ou qu'elles figurent à titre individuel dans l'ouvrage. En effet, une classification des genres (biographies, chroniques historiques, relations de voyage, recueils de topographie historique, cadastre, ...) s'imposait d'autant que tous les auteurs ne furent pas des contemporains des personnages évoqués. Leur distanciation vis-à-vis des faits qu'ils évoquent est souvent discutable et doit être systématiquement contextualisée.

Lors de la première partie, dans le premier chapitre, M. Eychenne établit une intéressante taxinomie linguistique sans toutefois préciser quels critères ont présidé à l'ordre de présentation: son classement est-il aléatoire ou renvoie-t-il à une finalité? Quoi qu'il en soit, cette typologie est par la suite rarement corrélée avec les chapitres suivants, ce qui lui confère un côté quelque peu artificiel, ce qui est dommage.

Le chapitre 3 consacré à la pratique linguistique appelle également quelques réflexions. Peut-on suivre M. Eychenne dans ses généralisations sur le sujet? En ef-



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fet, il ne dit rien sur le nombre, même approximatif, d'individus parfaitement bilingues à l'instar de l'émir Arghūn al-Nāṣirī (p. 161). Quels critères permettaient à al-Maqrīzī d'affirmer qu'untel maîtrisait une langue seconde ? Dans le cas des individus passerelles, tel Ibrāhīm al-Zu'ri censé avoir appris la langue turque grâce à ses esclaves féminines, M. Eychenne ne précise pas ce que l'on doit entendre par langue turque (p. 171). Les esclaves en question avaient probablement un bon niveau syntaxique et un vocabulaire étendu pour endosser le rôle de professeur. Quant aux maîtres éduquant leurs esclaves dans la langue arabe, il fallait préciser si tous les esclaves étaient concernés et dans quel but. S'il ne s'agissait que des consignes relevant du quotidien, éducation semble alors un bien grand mot.

M. Eychenne écrit également qu' « il est donc certain que les *'ulamā'* ont constitué l'un des plus importants vecteurs de la dissémination de la langue turque dans les milieux cultivés » (p. 178), or le milieu des savants n'a jamais été monolithique. L'auteur aurait dû préciser, voire définir, ce qu'il entendait par « milieu cultivé ». En effet, qui étaient les personnes concernées ? Tel auteur pouvait dire le plus grand bien d'un savant alors que tel autre le dénigrait. Quelle part de subjectivité, d'appréciation personnelle voire relationnelle entrait dans le jugement porté sur le savoir des oulémas, sur leurs personnalités ou sur leurs agissements ?

Ce qui suit laisse également perplexe et pose la question de l'utilité de l'annexe 1 intitulée « Les secrétaires employés par les émirs *mamlūk*-s. » L'auteur écrit que « leur enseignement [celui des *'ulamā'* connaissant le turc] aurait sans doute eu un plus grand impact sur les administrateurs civils, si ceux-ci n'avaient été massivement recrutés parmi les coptes » (p. 178). L'auteur estime donc que les divers édits sultaniens, le sac d'Alexandrie en 1365, les pressions exercées par les émirs sur leur personnel chrétien ou juif pour les amener à adopter l'islam ainsi que les conversions opportunistes n'auraient eu aucun impact ou du moins qu'un impact si peu significatif qu'il n'y aurait pas eu de « changement confessionnel » dans les bureaux du milieu du XIIIe à la fin du XIVe siècle. Cette affirmation, que l'on peut juger radicale d'autant qu'elle n'est pas étayée, renvoie à une sous-exploitation de l'annexe 1. En effet, sur les 95 secrétaires répertoriés, un seul est [toujours] copte. Parmi les convertis, on compte 29 coptes, un chrétien, deux juifs et un samaritain. Quarante-et-un secrétaires sont musulmans. Pour les vingt personnages restants, il n'y a aucune indication religieuse. On déplore par ailleurs que cette intéressante annexe soit quasiment réduite au rôle de figurante dans cet ouvrage : en effet, 70 individus n'ont pas d'entrée dans l'index des noms de personnes, ce qui signifie qu'ils sont absents des diverses analyses. Or un certain nombre d'enseignements pouvaient être tirés de cette liste et ils auraient permis à l'auteur d'affiner sa pensée, mais il est vrai que ce dernier a surtout été attiré par ceux qui occupaient le devant de la scène. On peut faire une remarque identique pour l'annexe 2 intitulée, « Les émirs *mamlūk*-s et leurs administrateurs ».



Dans la deuxième partie de l'ouvrage, M. Eychenne emploie de manière récurrente les expressions « liens d'estime et d'affection, grande affection » (pp. 210, 286), oubliant que le pragmatisme des émirs les conduisait à être aimables envers des savants ou des administrateurs prompts à leur apporter leur soutien. Cet opportunisme relationnel était également de mise chez les civils tel ce Sharaf al-Dīn Khālid « qui se mettait au service de tout le monde » (p. 286). Même si des relations d'amitié ont pu voir le jour, rares sont celles qui ont résisté au temps (cf. spoliations, mises à mort évoquées par l'auteur), ce que les chroniqueurs s'empressent de mentionner. Qui plus est, rappelons que la générosité, quelle que soit la forme qu'elle ait pu revêtir (cadeaux, postes) est une attitude fréquente en politique pour s'attacher une clientèle, dans tous les milieux et à toutes les époques (p. 316). Les Mamlouks n'en ont jamais eu l'exclusivité.

Certains points auraient demandé quelques éclaircissements, et notamment ceux qui suivent et qui sont directement en lien avec le sujet. On aurait aimé savoir comment l'émir Shaykhū avait pu octroyer un *iqṭā'* au shaykh al-Hirmās et si la pratique était courante, voire antérieure aux Mamlouks (p. 228). Pourquoi Shams al-Dīn Ghibriyāl se réfugia-t-il dans sa *turba*, alors qu'il est enterré dans celle de son maître (p. 280)? De la même manière, pourquoi Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā ibn Shaykh al-Sallāmīyah est-il « enterré dans sa *turba*, construite à al-Ṣālihiyya, dans la mosquée de l'émir Āqūsh al-Afram » (p. 285) et que signifie *turbah*?

Les parties sur la vénalité et le népotisme traitées avec le plus grand soin n'apportent rien de bien neuf; toutefois, il manque dans la bibliographie deux travaux de référence sur le sujet: l'ouvrage de A. Abd al-Raziq, *al-Badhl wa-al-bartalah zamān salāṭīn al-mamālīk (dirāsah 'an al-rishwah)* (Le Caire, 1979) ainsi que l'article de C. Petry « A Paradox of Patronage during the Later Mamlūk Period » (*Muslim World* 73 [1983]).

On ne peut que saluer le patient travail de prosopographie entrepris par l'auteur dans le cadre des parcours familiaux et individuels, travail méticuleux s'il en est. Toutefois, il extrapole parfois la pensée d'un auteur, par exemple dans l'anecdote suivante extraite du *Tālī Kitāb al-Wafayāt* d'Ibn al-Ṣuqā'i. D'après M. Eychenne, le vizir Hibat Allāh al-Fā'izī aurait choisi comme *nā'ib* le *ṣāhib* Ya'qūb ibn 'Abd al-Rafī' ibn al-Zubayr, car ce dernier « connaissait la langue turque ce qui lui permettait d'espionner les émirs » (p. 168). Or « ce qui lui permettait d'espionner les émirs » ne figure ni dans le texte arabe ni dans la traduction française de J. Sublet.¹ Par ailleurs, on signalera quelques curiosités de traduction: par ex. *bayt al-māl* est traduit par « trésor des musulmans » (p. 193) et dans le glossaire par « maison du trésor » (p. 540) et *mushidd al-ṣuḥbah* par « inspecteur militaire » (p. 75, note 30) et dans le glossaire par « responsable de la comptabilité » (p. 547). Une recherche dans le *Subḥ al-A'shā* d'al-Qalqashandī (absent de la bibliographie) aurait permis

¹ *Tālī* n° 273. L'auteur ne précise que rarement s'il utilise le texte arabe ou la traduction.



d'expliciter ces différences. Certaines traductions littérales sont maladroites: ainsi « il était entré dans son œil et avait empli son cœur (p. 286), « Lū'lū' al-Ḥalabī dépasse les limites dans la torture des personnes spoliées (p. 459) et « L'émir Alākuz al-Nāṣirī, chargé d'appliquer les ordres, fait toutefois preuve d'une certaine conciliation à son égard [Ibn Hilāl al-Dawla] et ne l'applique que très légèrement à la torture. » (p. 461).

On regrettera l'abus de vocables et d'expressions anachroniques, voire erronés dont voici un court florilège: apanage (pour *iqṭā'*, p. 199, par ailleurs emprunté à E. Quatremère, *Histoire des sultans mamlouks*, I/2, p. 17), réseaux interconnectés (p. 248), *homines novi* (p. 433), bénéficiant de ce label (p. 478) et contrat social (quatrième de couverture), ainsi qu'une savoureuse curiosité, l'expression « organigramme fonctionnel » (p. 540). En effet, ce vocabulaire ne renvoie ni à la réalité ni aux pratiques de l'époque mamlouke.

En résumé, on déplore que ce gros ouvrage au titre prometteur et dont l'introduction laissait entrevoir un renouvellement dans l'étude des liens personnels entre les élites turques et les civils n'ait pas fait l'objet d'une réflexion plus approfondie, l'aspect proposographique l'emportant trop souvent sur l'analyse. Il manque également dans cet ouvrage quelques lignes de mise en perspective qui auraient permis d'inscrire les Mamlouks bahrides dans la chaîne de l'Histoire. En effet, ces derniers succèdent aux Ayyoubides, or rien n'est dit sur un éventuel héritage sociétal alors que les premiers souverains bahrides furent au service des derniers Ayyoubides. De la même manière, on ne saura pas si les usages étudiés ont perduré à l'identique sous les Circassiens. Quoi qu'il en soit, on saluera la patience et l'art de l'auteur dans sa reconstitution minutieuse des pratiques pour ne pas dire des codes mis en place par les divers groupes et individus appartenant à l'élite ou ayant réussi à s'y arrimer pendant la période bahride.



Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising Diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate: Gifts and Material Culture in the Medieval Islamic World* (London-New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014). Pp. xxi +242.

Reviewed by Valentina Vezzoli, University Ca' Foscari Venice

The inspiration for a book dedicated to Mamluk diplomacy and its material culture arose during the participation of the author in an international conference organized in Liège by Prof. Frédéric Bauden in 2012, *Mamluk Cairo: a Cross-road for Embassies*. This event, combined with the recent growth of studies focused on the history of diplomacy in Europe and in the Islamic world, brought Doris Behrens-Abouseif to undertake this new project on the reconstruction of Mamluk diplomacy. The Mamluk Sultanate played, in fact, a prominent role in international diplomacy, being not only an important political power but also a unique commercial authority, which stipulated alliances and treaties with the main political partners of the contemporary world. The book investigates gift-giving practices in the Mamluk world, presenting the objects that were offered, but also the role they played in this process, their economic and social value, and their iconography. The author traces the evolution of Mamluk diplomacy over time and underlines the incongruity existing between the image of Mamluk art that emerged from this study and our common definition of it. The data presented in this book are based on a rich assortment of examples and episodes issued from written sources, both from Mamluk and European chronicles, compared, where possible, to the existing material culture of the Mamluk period.

With this publication, Behrens-Abouseif adds, as she has done in the past, another important contribution to the knowledge of Mamluk history, culture, and art, revealing a rich and inestimable source of information exploitable also for future studies on the Mamluk world.

The volume is organized in three parts. The first part is dedicated to “The Culture of Gifts” in Mamluk society. Chapter 1 (The World of the Mamluks) provides a general introduction to Mamluk history, emphasizing the role that this dynasty played in a significant moment of the Islamic world, marked by the Crusaders’ presence in the Holy Land and Syria, and by the destructive arrival of the Mongols from Central Asia. It emerges that the Mamluks not only promptly reacted to this complex political situation but also established themselves as main characters in the international political and economic scene, controlling the commerce of spices with the Far East, supervising the Muslim and Christian pilgrimage routes, and intensifying diplomatic relations worldwide.

After this historical introduction, Chapter 2 (Protocol and Codes of Gift Exchange) focuses on rules and protocols related to gift-giving as a medium of dip-



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lomatic strategy. The Mamluk protocol implies, in fact, a rigid behavior regarding ambassadors and emissaries' reception in Egypt: these personalities should be treated with respect, hospitality, and protection. The practice of welcoming foreign delegations with precious gifts and reception parades was already known in the Roman, Byzantine, and Sasanian traditions, and the Mamluks perpetrated this code of honor. The author provides several examples documenting how foreign ambassadors and their retinues were welcomed at the citadel of Cairo with parades, musical performances, and crowds of curious spectators. The *dār al-ḍiyāfah* (palace of hospitality) was arranged in order to receive these delegations and to display their gifts (precious textiles, slaves, animals, gems and gold, spices and perfumes). Gifts (known in Arabic chronicles as *hadīyah* and *taqḍimāh*) were considered an essential element of diplomatic relations: a code used to promote alliances and to show the strength and richness of the Mamluk Sultanate. Mamluks also used to receive presents from their vassals, which were actually tributes paid to ensure protection (money, animals, precious objects), and used to send them robes of honor (*khil'ah*), ceremonial belts, and textiles, symbolizing their political supremacy. Chronicles report detailed lists indicating the value of diplomatic gifts, which was estimated on the basis of their price but also of the political role of their emissaries. The practice of offering "second-hand" gifts was also common, and owning these objects, in fact, had added value, since they previously belonged to eminent personalities or came from exotic places.

In the second part of the volume, "Gifts in Geo-Political Contexts," the author discusses the use of diplomatic gifts in specific political situations, mentioning how the Mamluks dealt with their neighbors, allies, and enemies. Particularly well documented is Chapter 3, dedicated to "The Red Sea and Indian Ocean Connection" and especially to Yemen. Given their interests in the spice trade, the Mamluks had a particular relation with Yemen, which had to regularly offer a kind of tribute to the Egyptian sultans, comprised of luxurious and exotic goods (textiles, slaves, animals, spices and scents, precious objects from China and Africa), in order to assure their protection and help. This tax caused several controversies and the Yemeni Rasulids did not always respect their agreement, provoking the fury of the Mamluks. Less information has been collected regarding the Indian embassies, even if diplomatic gifts sent from that region were particularly rich.

The Mamluks also maintained regular political and commercial connections with Christian and Muslim kingdoms of "Africa" (Chapter 4). Ethiopia, which played an important role in the Red Sea trade, sent diplomatic embassies to Cairo, frequently with the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria as intermediary, in order to ensure commercial affairs but also the protection of Christians in lands under Mamluk control. North Africa, and the Maghrib in particular, was the major



source of horses, black slaves, and leather for the Egyptian Sultanate, which were frequently sent as diplomatic gifts. One of the most beautiful and impressive embassies that ever reached Cairo, according to Mamluk chronicles, came from the Maghrib: a Merinid princess, planning to go on pilgrimage to Mecca, stopped in Cairo in 1338 and brought with her gifts “unheard of in East and West”: horses, falcons, bejeweled belts and swords, pearls and gemstones.

Given the extremely critical political situation in Eastern regions, the Mamluks entertained continuous diplomatic relations with “The Black Sea, Anatolia, Iran and Central Asia” (Chapter 5). Their strategic alliance with the Golden Horde promoted the exchange of impressive diplomatic gifts. In 1263, a special Mamluk embassy sealed the alliance between Baybars and Berke Khan. As described by many Mamluk authors, it included a beautiful Quran manuscript penned by the Caliph ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, wrapped in red gold-brocaded textile and encased in an ivory and ebony box, but also Venetian gowns, rugs, gilded lamps, horses and camels, porcelains, and sugar. The Golden Horde’s presents had a completely different composition, whose diplomatic value was not inferior to Mamluk gifts: animals, fur, leather, mamluks, and slave girls. The Ilkhanids were another important political authority in the region and although their initial relations with the Mamluks were tense, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s diplomacy allowed for a détente between them. One of his amirs, Aytamish, played an important role by conducting several impressive and advantageous embassies to Tabriz, which not only improved the political relations between the two sultanates, but also promoted artistic and cultural influences as evidenced by developments in Mamluk architecture, ceramic production, and the art of the book. Equally complex was the Mamluks’ diplomatic relations with the Timurids, who considered themselves as Chinghiz Khān’s descendants and rulers of the Muslim world, and judged the Mamluks as their vassals. The nature of the diplomatic gifts they exchanged with the Mamluk court was frequently provocative and controversial. In later periods, the Mamluks also had to deal with the Safavids of Iran. The diplomatic relations between the two sides were complicated and the Safavids showed a lack of respect toward the Mamluks. Nevertheless, in 1512 they sent to Cairo an impressive embassy, offering to the sultan silver and golden vessels, horses and leopards, silks and precious textiles.

The more dangerous and powerful rival of the Mamluks in the East were, however, the Ottomans, despite the friendly façade and the good diplomatic relations existing between the two sides. The Ottomans sent rich and gorgeous gifts to the Mamluk sultan to celebrate their alliance or on the occasion of important events. Following the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, for instance, they sent to Cairo captured Byzantine dignitaries, mamluks, furs, textiles, golden swords, an elephant, and a zebra. They respected a strict gift protocol, sending for every



embassy sets of nine pieces, called *tuquzat*, usually composed of textiles (mostly from Bursa), silver vessels, mamluks, female slaves from conquered territories, animals, and rugs. The Mamluks, on their side, offered textiles, horses, arms, and imported goods from India and the Far East. The Ottoman military conquests of Mamluk territories cracked this relation and brought the two armies to a military confrontation. Nevertheless, until the very last moment of his reign, the Mamluk sultan al-Ghawrī tried to maintain good diplomatic relations in order to forestall the invasion of Syria and Egypt. In September 1516, a few days before his death on the battlefield near Aleppo, al-Ghawrī sent a gift package of ten thousand dinars and a message asking for peace, which remained unheeded.

Behrens-Abouseif also investigates the rich diplomatic relations developed between the Mamluks and “Europe” (Chapter 6), focusing on their connections with Spain, Italy, France, and Cyprus. The Mamluks entertained diplomatic contacts with Latin kingdoms since the reign of Baybars (r. 1260–77), who is considered the founder of Mamluk diplomacy, in order to promote trade and facilitate the export of Egyptian products to Europe. Beyond the economic relations developed with Spanish kingdoms and with France (since the mid-fifteenth century) and the complex political interests in Cyprus, which became a vassal of the sultanate in 1427, the main commercial partner of the Mamluks in Europe was the city of Venice. Even though the Mamluk chronicles rarely mentioned embassies and gifts sent to the *Serenissima*, the Italian archives are rich with texts describing these events. The exchange of gifts with Venice occurred especially during the fifteenth century, becoming more substantial at the end of it, when conflicts between Europe and the Mamluks and the advance of the Portuguese commercial fleet threatened the established Mediterranean trade. Mamluks sent to the Doge a standard gift package, made of Chinese porcelains, spices, scents, balsam oils, and textiles. When the Venetian ambassador Domenico Trevisan arrived in Cairo in 1512 he brought with him crystal vessels mounted with gold, luxury textiles, furs, and cheese blocks. Another Italian city, Florence, tried to obtain the Mamluks’ favor for commercial purposes by arranging a treaty with the sultan in 1496. Behrens-Abouseif focuses in particular on the description of the outstanding Mamluk embassy that arrived in Florence in 1487 and on the impact that it had on the Italian people and artists. Among the Egyptian gifts (porcelains, textiles, balsams and drugs, animals), the giraffe sent by Qāyrbāy stoked the imagination of Florence’s inhabitants and had the privilege to be depicted by many famous Italian painters.

In Part Three, “The Gifts,” Doris Behrens-Abouseif focuses on the material culture associated with diplomatic relations, presenting in Chapter 7 (Tradition and Legacy) the use of gifts in Middle Eastern and Muslim tradition. Also employing references from specific literature, such as the *Book of Gifts and Rarities* (eleventh century), she traces the history of gifts offered by Muslim sultans to their



commercial partners or allies (spices, textiles, ceremonial tents, horses, exotic items, and animals), comparing this picture to the European diplomatic tradition. Mamluk diplomacy was partially influenced by its predecessors, the Fatimids and Ayyubids, whose legacy is discussed by the author. If the Fatimids' tradition was mainly based on opulence and extravagance, including the offering of precious gems and jewelry, the Ayyubids' diplomatic customs were more similar to the Mamluks' as they also conferred a more important role to gifting exotic animals and horses.

Chapter 8 is devoted to the description of offered and received objects and the role they played in Mamluk diplomacy. The Mamluks did not follow a strict diplomatic protocol for gift-giving, instead adapting their presents to the political and cultural situation of their counterpart. The author provides a detailed description of the most common and valuable diplomatic gifts appearing in Mamluk diplomacy: spices and porcelains, mamluks and craftsmen, exotic animals, balsams and theriacs, religious gifts, textiles, military and equestrian gifts. Behrens-Abouseif pays particular attention to textiles, which played a relevant role in Mamluk diplomacy. She provides a documented discussion of the importance of the royal manufacture *Dār al-Ṭirāz* for the Mamluks and their predecessors, tracing the different stages of this production in Egyptian history. The use of lavish inscribed gowns and, later, golden belts and furs in Mamluk costumes and diplomacy displays the new dimension of gift practices adopted by the Mamluks, who were trying to represent their political and economic supremacy through the celebration of their sultanate. Additionally, the author presents the existing material evidence of Mamluk textiles preserved in museum collections, and emphasizes the influence that Islamic patterns had on Italian art.

The final chapter of Part 3 (Chapter 9, Gifts and Mamluk Identity) includes a reflection on what the role of gifts in Mamluk diplomacy was and how it evolved from the early to the late Mamluk period, providing a new look at the aesthetic taste of the Mamluk upper class. It emerges that, unlike other countries, Mamluk Egypt preferred to offer to its allies and partners precious and original objects rather than products they exported. The author underlines the importance of the concept of *tuḥaf*, unusual, special, or exclusive objects. Diplomatic gifts, even if selected to please the recipient, were also intended to represent the Mamluks abroad and were thus decorated with inscriptions, mentioning the name of the sultan or amirs, and blazons. They represented the greatness of the Mamluk Sultanate and they reflected the taste of a society oriented to an international sphere.

Behrens-Abouseif's conclusion is a summary of the three parts composing this book. The author underlines here how, even if there was a shared culture of diplomatic gifts between the Oriental and Western worlds, Mamluk diplomacy was



able to express its own identity, showing peculiar and distinctive characteristics that distinguished it from its predecessors and contemporaries.

This volume provides a unique insight into Mamluk diplomacy and its material culture, gathering an impressive amount of documentation issued from written evidence (from Arab and European chronicles), which will constitute an important source of information for scholars and students approaching the history of the Mamluk world. The author wisely employs this data in order to discuss different topics related to Mamluk diplomacy: protocols of gift-giving, political and commercial strategies, tradition and legacy, and definition of art. She thus succeeds in describing the complex world of Mamluk society, emphasizing both its inner features as well as its international connections. Behrens-Abouseif's book exhorts scholars to approach the rich material culture of the Mamluk period preserved in museum collections, and to interpret it in the light of this new evidence.



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Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Ṣarāyirah, *Al-Nuqūd al-Fiḍḍīyah al-Mamlūkīyah min Qal‘at al-Karak* (Al-Zarqa: Ministry of Culture, 2010). Pp. 232.

Reviewed by Warren C. Schultz, DePaul University

This book contains two types of material. One is a catalogue with descriptions of the 135 Mamluk dirhams housed in the Karak Citadel Museum in Jordan. The other is the background information needed to contextualize these coins. This latter material takes up the first 152 pages of the volume and includes short and very basic discussions of the Mamluk Sultanate, the history of money, the organization of the mint, metallic purity, metrology, and the like. Anyone familiar with the Mamluks or their coinage may skip this section. The catalogue, on the other hand, is very useful for its contribution to the expanding corpus of published Mamluk coins. The coins are thoroughly described with inscriptions identified and diameters and weights provided. This is very helpful for two reasons. The first is that the quality of the plates included in the volume is so poor as to render them essentially useless. The second is that the specimens described here are not linked to the standard typology used in Mamluk numismatics, that developed by Paul Balog in his *Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1964). The descriptions provided, however, allow the attentive reader to tentatively attribute these coins to the corresponding Balog number when that is possible. The latter qualification is made necessary by the fact that Balog’s typology is outdated. For example, awareness of Mamluk dirhams from the northern Syrian city of Lādhiqīyah—one of which is included here—came well after Balog’s work was published.

Since this volume may be inaccessible to some, it is useful to summarize its numismatic evidence. Of the 135 specimens, 122 date from the Kipjak period and 13 from the Circassian. Some of the earlier dirhams included in this book are from the huge hoard of 2244 dirhams dating from the reigns of Sultans Quṭuz to Kitbughā found in 1963. (For more on that hoard, see Saleh Khaled Sari, “A Critical Analysis of a Mamluk Hoard from Karak,” Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Michigan, 1986.) The first table identifies the sultans whose names appear on these coins as well as the number of specimens linked to each ruler (p. 37).

Sultan	Number of coins	Sultan	Number of coins	Sultan	Number of coins
Baybars	40	Muḥammad	22	Ḥasan	3
Berke Qān	6	Kitbughā	5	Ṣāliḥ	1
Salāmish	1	Baybars II	2	Sha‘bān	2
Qalāwūn	30	Aḥmad	1	Aynāl	4
Khalīl	5	Ismā‘īl	4	Qāyṭbay	9
				Total	135



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The second table provides the mints of the 135 dirhams (pp. 119–20).

Sultan	Cairo	Damascus	Aleppo	Ḥamāh	Lādhiqīyah	MM
Baybars	11	4		2		22
Berke Qān	3					3
Salāmish						1
Qalāwūn	7	9		2		12
Khalīl	1	1				3
Muḥammad	3	2	7	4	1	5
Kitbughā	1	1				3
Baybars II	1					1
Aḥmad				1		
Ismā'īl		1	1			2
Ḥasan			1			2
Ṣalīḥ						1
Sha'bān				1		1
Aynāl	1	2				1
Qāytbāy	2		4			3
	31	20	13	10	1	60

There are some production problems to be aware of. The content of the list of design ornaments (*al-zakhārif al-nabātīyah*) found on pp. 155–56 indicates that those two pages are in reverse order. Similarly, the correct order of the list of border designs (*al-zakhārif al-handasīyah*) found on pp. 157–59 should be 158, 159, 157. Also, page 188 is reprinted on page 189, and page 209 is repeated on 210.



Julien Loiseau, *Reconstruire la maison du Sultan: ruine et recomposition de l'ordre urbain au Caire, 1350–1450*. Études urbaines 8 (Le Caire: IFAO, 2010). 2 vol., 660 p. dont 25 planches de photographies et plans en noir et blanc.

Reviewed by Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, Université Pierre Mendès-France (Grenoble)

Le gros ouvrage de Julien Loiseau s'intitule *Reconstruire la maison du Sultan: ruine et recomposition de l'ordre urbain au Caire, 1350–1450*. Les quatre parties qui le composent sont:

Volume I : Archéologie d'une crise urbaine (pp. 13–140), Le sultanat à l'épreuve de la crise ou l'aggiornamento de l'ordre mamlouk (pp. 143–214) ;

Volume II : Le cœur de la fabrique urbaine, acteurs et enjeux d'un nouveau siècle (pp. 217–406), Gouverner Le Caire, le sultanat au défi de sa capitale (pp. 409–82).

L'ouvrage comprend également des annexes très complètes (tableaux, cartes) ainsi qu'un lexique et deux index. On a là un travail intéressant et bien documenté qui suscite toutefois quelques interrogations et remarques.

Ce travail s'appuie essentiellement sur trois auteurs, al-Maqrīzī (1364–1442), Ibn Taghrībirdī (1409–70) et Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406). Si les œuvres de ces trois auteurs sont dûment mentionnées, celles d'autres auteurs sont absentes, en particulier celles d'al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām fī al-dhayl 'alā Duwal al-islām* (4 vols., Beyrouth, 1995), d'Ibn Zāhirah, *al-Fadā'il al-bāhirah fī mahāsin Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Le Caire, 1969), et de 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl al-Zāhirī, *Nayl al-amal fī dhayl al-duwal* (9 vols., Beyrouth, 2002). Il manque également l'édition des années 815–823 du *'Iqd al-jumān* d'al-'Aynī (éd. al-Ṭanṭāwī, Le Caire, 1985).

Un grand nombre de textes sont désormais à la disposition des chercheurs et on ne peut plus affirmer que l'historiographie de la fin du XVe et du début du XVIe siècle se limite aux œuvres d'al-Ṣayrafī et d'Ibn Iyās, même si leur intérêt n'est plus à démontrer (p. 7). Rappelons qu'à l'instar de leurs prédécesseurs, tous les auteurs ont abondamment puisé dans les travaux de leurs devanciers pour écrire les leurs, remarque qui s'adresse également aux *Khīṭaṭ* d'al-Maqrīzī, pierre angulaire de la présente recherche, même si le savant égyptien a été « promu au patrimoine de la République arabe » (p. 7). On s'étonnera par ailleurs que dans un ouvrage traitant pour l'essentiel d'urbanisme les deux revues pionnières dans le domaine de la conservation du patrimoine égyptien que furent le *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte* et le *Comité de conservation des monuments arabes du Caire* ne figurent pas dans la bibliographie. Seule la seconde est créditée d'une occurrence (figure 3, p. 110).



Un autre point interpelle: les bornes temporelles retenues par l'auteur. En effet, 1350 ne renvoie à aucune prise ou fin de règne (al-Nāṣir Ḥasan perd le trône en 1351, remplacé par son frère al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ) et en 1450 le sultan Jaqmaq est encore sur le trône: il ne décède qu'en 1453. Choisir 1450 est d'autant plus curieux que dans les annexes (p. 531-536), c'est l'année 1453 qui est mentionnée. Une explication de l'auteur eût été la bienvenue, car ces dernières sont suivies par la liste des mosquées du vendredi au Caire construites entre 1454 et 1517 (pp. 537-41).

Par ailleurs, on notera une curieuse utilisation de la concordance des temps. Dans le texte, l'auteur a visiblement fait le choix d'ignorer les dates hégiriennes alors qu'il les mentionne dans certaines notes ainsi que dans l'index dédié aux noms de personnes (mais uniquement quand il répertorie les sultans). J. Loiseau a par ailleurs une vision particulière du siècle retenu (1350-1450), car il fait débiter le prologue de son ouvrage intitulé « Le Caire à l'heure des événements » en 1399, date correspondant à la mort de Barqūq et au début du règne de son fils Faraj (pp. 13-15). Le règne des six derniers Qalā'ūnides est escamoté alors que le dernier d'entre eux perd le trône en 1382. Or ces informations n'arrivent qu'à la p. 179 de son ouvrage. Dans le cadre d'un tel sujet, un rapide aperçu de la situation politique entre 1350 et 1399 était indispensable dès les premières pages.

À ce propos, l'auteur aurait dû dès l'introduction préciser ce qu'il entendait par « Maison du sultan », expliquer le sens de la majuscule d'autant que d'un point de vue politique et urbanistique, les souverains n'ont pas été les seuls à bâtir, tous ceux qui ont disposé de moyens financiers ont également eu à cœur d'imprimer leur marque dans le paysage du Caire, cette remarque étant par ailleurs valable pour tout le territoire de l'État mamlouk. Si on prend l'angle d'attaque politique, l'auteur considère que des administrateurs civils ont appartenu à la Maison du sultan, mais d'après quels critères? Par ailleurs, ont-ils fait jeu égal avec les militaires composant cette entité?

Quasiment toute la démonstration de l'auteur repose sur les épaules d'un personnage, l'*ustādār*. J. Loiseau met en valeur le rôle de ce dernier qui, il faut le souligner, n'occupait que le neuvième rang dans l'organigramme des fonctions militaires (Popper, *Egypt and Syria*, I, p. 93). On aurait aimé savoir combien d'individus ont détenu cette fonction pendant la période prise en considération et pendant combien de temps, de quel milieu ils étaient issus (militaire ou civil) et surtout si tous ont œuvré dans le domaine urbain à l'instar d'un Jamāl al-dīn Yūsuf al-Bīrī ou d'un 'Abd al-Ghanī ibn Abī al-Faraj. En effet, écrire dans la conclusion que le héros de l'histoire est l'intendant de la Maison du sultan, alors que dans le tableau intitulé « Les demeures des grands commis civils dans l'espace urbain », sur 37 individus seuls 9 sont étiquetés *ustādār*, c'est opérer une confusion entre la fonction et son titulaire. Tous les *ustādār* n'ont pas été des émules des deux hommes précédemment évoqués. Il y a donc là une généralisation qu'il eût fallu démontrer.



Par ailleurs, J. Loiseau traduit le mot *amīr* par officier (cf. traduction de G. Wiet), et définit les gens de l'administration comme étant des commis civils, certains étant qualifiés de grands commis (cf. à ce propos la définition et l'emploi du terme "grand commis" dans le Robert). Or tous les personnages répertoriés dans le tableau intitulé « Les demeures des grands commis civils dans l'espace urbain » ne peuvent être mis sur un même pied. D'abord parce que certains appartiennent à des familles de notables (Les Bārīzī, les Kuwayz), d'autres n'ont détenu leur fonction que peu de temps (al-Bashīrī). Enfin, d'aucuns ont occupé la fonction de vizir. Or celle-ci n'avait plus aucun lustre après les réformes d'al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā'ūn et de Barqūq (si Ibrāhīm ibn al-Hayṣam est considéré comme un notable, c'est moins par sa fonction que par la situation de sa famille).

Si le tableau intitulé « Les mosquées du vendredi au Caire au début du XVe siècle » (pp. 520–36), est des plus intéressants, on déplore que les bâtiments construits pendant la fourchette chronologique qui intéresse l'auteur ne fassent pas l'objet d'un traitement à part, ou du moins d'une signalétique. En effet, l'auteur répertorie des bâtiments construits aux Xe–XIe (par ex. n° 17, p. 521), XIIe (n° 18, p. 521), XIIIe (n° 3, p. 520) et XIVe siècles (n° 1, p. 520). Il eût été pertinent de donner au lecteur un aperçu concret de la situation. Cette façon de procéder est d'autant plus curieuse qu'elle entre en contradiction avec les graphiques 2 et 3 de la p. 386.

Enfin, il est regrettable que de temps à autre, ce travail soit défiguré par des expressions inadéquates flirtant avec le vocabulaire commercial, par exemple « nombreuses sont les mosquées dont la fondation servit de produit d'appel au développement d'un quartier » (p. 32). Dans son enthousiasme, l'auteur évoque « de véritables monuments urbains et des édifices plus modestes (sic) » (p. 76), puis plus loin « une grande architecture sultaniennne » (on aurait aimé comprendre ce que l'auteur entend éventuellement par « une petite architecture sultaniennne », p. 244), alors que les adjectifs « formidable » et « prodigieux » jouent le rôle de leitmotiv : « la formidable étendue » (p. 39), « une formidable mue urbaine » (pp. 139, 143), « le prodigieux éclatement de la croissance urbaine » (p. 52), « une prodigieuse floraison d'institutions religieuses » (p. 121), et ainsi de suite...



ʿĀʾishah al-Bāʿūniyah, *The Principles of Sufism*, edited and translated by Th. Emil Homerin (New York University Press, 2014). Pp. xx +200.

Reviewed by Nathan Miller, University of Chicago

Thomas Emil Homerin's edition and translation of ʿĀʾishah al-Bāʿūniyah's previously unpublished *Principles of Sufism* (*Kitāb al-Muntakhab fī Uṣūl al-Rutab fī ʿIlm al-Taṣawwuf*) represents a fine addition to the Library of Arabic Literature (LAL) series, and to the growing body of translations of Mamluk texts. The translation is fluid, readable, and literary, and the Arabic text is handsome and accurate, although in accordance with LAL editorial policy, there is little apparatus. Homerin provides a brief introduction to the translation, a glossary of names and terms, endnotes, a bibliography, and an index. The endnotes mostly explain allusions to Quran verses, hadith, and classic Sufi texts. As the *Principles of Sufism* is a highly intertextual work, these endnotes and the glossary of names and terms are particularly helpful for navigating the expansive world of medieval Arabic Sufism.

Although she was not as towering a figure of Sufism and Islam as some of her contemporaries such as al-Suyūṭī, al-Sakhāwī, or Zakariyā al-Anṣārī, the life and works of ʿĀʾishah al-Bāʿūniyah (d. 923/1517) are nevertheless of great interest, and are highly representative of a number of important trends of her period, particularly her fervent devotion to the figure of the Prophet. Her most famous poem, *Al-Faṭḥ al-Mubīn fī Madḥ al-Amīn*, is a *badʿīyah*, a poem illustrating rhetorical devices, in praise of the Prophet. Besides *Al-Faṭḥ al-Mubīn*, however, only a handful of her works have been published, and nearly twenty other manuscripts remain unedited. Indeed, she enjoys the probable distinction of having published more than any other woman writing in Arabic before the twentieth century. Her biography and a detailed summary of the *Principles* have been laid out by Homerin elsewhere,² but some main points are salient here.

ʿĀʾishah was born sometime in the mid-fifteenth century into a prominent Damascene family of Shaffʿī jurists, receiving an extensive religious education. She and her family were also strongly affiliated with the Qādirī Sufi order, prominent in the Levant. Having been widowed, and no doubt affected by the troubled state of Syria at the end of the Mamluk dynasty, she moved with her son, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (897–925/1489–1519), to Cairo in 919/1513. They were robbed of all their possessions on the way, but in Cairo were supported by the Mamluk minister Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad ibn Ajā (d. 925/1519). In 1516, ʿĀʾishah and ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, now in the service of Ibn Ajā, returned to Syria. Shortly before the de-

² Emil Homerin, "Recalling You, My Lord": ʿĀʾishah al-Bāʿūniyah on *Dhikr*," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 17 (2013): 130–54; idem, "Living Love: The Mystical Writings of ʿĀʾishah al-Bāʿūniyah (d. 922/1516)," *MSR* 7, [no. 1] (2003): 211–34.



cisive defeat of the Mamluks at Marj Dābiq in 922/1516, the penultimate Mamluk sultan, al-Ghawrī, met with the highly-regarded ʿĀʾishah, no doubt as part of his ineffective plan to shore up Sufis' support before the decisive battle for pious and political reasons. ʿĀʾishah died in Damascus the following year.

The *Principles*, whose date of composition does not seem to be known, is divided into four chapters, representing the most fundamental mystical stations: repentance (*al-tawbah*), sincerity (*al-ikhhlās*), remembrance (*al-dhikr*), and most importantly, love (*al-maḥabbah*). An epilogue (*khātimah*) on love concludes the work. Each chapter adheres to a structure of first citing relevant Qurānic verses, followed by hadith, then quotations from early Muslims and famous Sufis. Each chapter then ends with some of ʿĀʾishah's own poetry and observations, although these are also scattered throughout. There is a logical progression structuring the text, although the linkages are not thematized and may not be evident on a first reading.

The chapter on repentance begins with a detailed etymology of the word for "repentance," *tawbah*, from *tāba* meaning "to return." This is not pedantry; although there are distinct levels of repentance—common folk regret sin and fear Hell, while the elect, who have a sense of God's nearness, seek to turn entirely towards him, and away from anything else—these degrees are to be seen as part of a sequence of returning, ultimately entirely, towards God. Stories of famous Sufis' repentance illustrate true *tawbah*, and ʿĀʾishah concludes, as she often does, by offering practical markers of true repentance: that it is sealed with good works.

The chapter on sincerity picks up on the theme of God's absolute uniqueness and oneness, as well as the importance of good deeds; the trait running through all of the hadith, anecdotes, and verses in this chapter is that one ought to act only for the sake of God, not out of any baser motive. Then, as true remembrance of God, in Sufism, consists not of words on the lips, but of the presence of God to the heart, the third chapter on *dhikr* describes a turning inward from the discussion of external repentance and actions of the first two chapters. The dual nature of "remembrance" is also emphasized: when the servant remembers her Lord, he remembers her. Remembrance is thus a reciprocal spiritual act, the basis of a relationship between the servant and God. In the fourth and final chapter, this reciprocal relationship is seen to culminate in love, *maḥabbah*, the distinguishing markers of which ʿĀʾishah poetically describes. Thus, over the course of the text, a movement from external isolation from God is converted into an internalized relationship with him.

The text of the *Principles* falls squarely within the tradition of moderate, Sunnah-friendly Sufism embodied since at least the fifth/eleventh century by Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, whose manual, the *Risālah*, and Qurānic exegesis, the *Laṭāʾif al-Ishārāt*, are very frequently cited by ʿĀʾishah. The controversial Ibn ʿArabī is



nowhere to be seen, nor is the influence of the often elliptical Egyptian Ibn al-Fārīḍ discernible in the straightforward diction of ‘Ā’ishah’s verse. However, as with other late-Mamluk figures, ‘Ā’ishah does not draw exclusively on figures from any one Sufi path (*ṭarīqah* or *ṭā’īfah*). For example, in addition to Qādirī texts, some Shadhilī figures such as Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh are cited fairly often. On a final note, one might ask whether ‘Ā’ishah’s text differs in any way from one penned by a man from the same period. It does not seem to, but as Homerin points out, it is striking that in the conclusion of the chapter on love (pp. 127–41), four anecdotes given almost in a row, drawn from the famous classical Sufis Sumnūn, Dhū al-Nūn, and al-Shiblī, are all about women’s spiritual experiences.

I would suggest a handful of emendations to the translation and to the Arabic text. In the translation, for *inna la-hū lladhī yanwī* (p. 34), I would read “he [God’s servant] receives what he intends,” not “so the One is there to Protect him”; for *idhā khalawtum bī*, “when you were alone with Me,” not, “when you forsook Me”; for *ghaybat al-dhākir ‘an al-dhikr* (p. 81), “the absence of the one who remembers from remembrance [itself],” not “the absence of the one who remembers in the remembrance”; for *wa-min al-dalā’il an tarā mutabassiman*, “among the signs is to see a smiling [lover],” not “from these signs, you will see him smile”; for *man sārārūhu fa-abdā al-sirra mujtahidan, lam yu’minūhū* (p. 131), the *man* is probably conditional, so “Whomever they tell a secret to, if he reveals it openly (reading *mujtahiran* for *mujtahidan*), they won’t believe him,” not “They told him a secret, and he tried but could not keep it. So they’ll never trust him.” In the Arabic, *al-kilāyah* (p. 138) seems to be a misprint for *al-wilāyah*; *yaṭfa*, or *yutfa* (p. 142), should be written with the *hamzah* on an *alif*. On the same page I would be inclined to read *ilāhī* for *ilī* and similarly on p. 162 *ilāhīyah* (shortening the *alif* of *ilāhīyah* for metrical necessity) for *alīyah*.

These are perhaps cavils compared to the otherwise high quality of the edition and translation of this carefully crafted and lovely work of ‘Ā’ishah al-Bā’ūniyah. *The Principles of Sufism*, especially with its notes, will be helpful for researchers dealing with late Mamluk Sufism, but the book will also be accessible to general readers and undergraduates. Hopefully more scholars of Mamluk literature, particularly those working with the massive body of unedited secular literature deserving attention, will propose further works to the Library of Arabic Literature.



Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, *Délinquance et ordre social: L'état mamlouk syro-égyptien face au crime à la fin du ix^e-xv^e siècle*, Scripta mediaevalia 21 (Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2012). Pp. 293.

Reviewed by Carl F. Petry, Northwestern University

Publication of Martel-Thoumian's incisive monograph marks a signal advance in the analysis of subjects heretofore regarded as either peripheral to the so-called "main" currents of pre-modern Islamic History (elite politics and social structure, formal religious doctrines, inter-regime rivalries), or irretrievable due to alleged inadequacies of coverage in primary sources. Investigation of crime, or transgressive behavior more generally, for decades the object of wide-ranging research with regard to pre-modern European societies, has been neglected for the central Islamic lands in this era (a defect undiscussed by the author in this work), despite its rich—if uneven—treatment in period texts. Martel-Thoumian considers the issue of crime as depicted in narrative chronicles compiled in Syria and Egypt (specifically, Damascus and Cairo) during the final half-century of the independent Mamluk Sultanate (from the ascension of al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy in 872/1468 to the defeat of Qānṣawh al-Ghawri by the Ottomans in 922/1517).

Following a brief overview of the sultanate's political trajectory (noteworthy for rising tensions between regional powers and irresolvable fiscal shortfalls internally), the book opens with a discussion of the diverse social cadres from which persons portrayed as criminal were drawn (Ch. 1, part II: *Sociologie du délinquant*). Martel-Thoumian acknowledges the consequences resulting from the confinement of sporadic criminal coverage to commentaries appearing in surviving chronicles. The earliest criminal registers in Egypt or Syria date from the Ottoman period. Despite the biases and selectivity evident in narratives provided by these chronicles, their range of detail and nuance offers insights about perspectives of offenders and attitudes of contemporary observers lacking in terse formulaic entries of registers, given their statistical gain.

The author proceeds with an outline of the institutions formally charged with controlling and penalizing transgressive acts (Ch. 2, *Institutions judiciaires et pouvoir politique*). The officials discussed figure prominently in well-known secondary surveys of judicial systems in medieval Islamic societies (the magistrate [*qādī*] and market inspector [*muḥtasib*]), juxtaposed against the agents of enforcement (the sultan, prefect of police [*wālī al-shurṭah*], chamberlain [*ḥājib*], and executive adjutant [*dawādār*]) who possessed the effective means of suppressing crime. The author dwells on political realities of this period that witnessed the progressive supplanting of formal judicial procedures by interests of the military oligarchy,



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and consequent waning of autonomous implementation of shari‘ah on the part of those ideally charged with its custodianship.

The monograph subsequently examines several categories of crime, which the author ranks according to their prominence in the narrative texts (Ch. 3, *Les délits*): violation of property (brigandage, robbery, theft) or of person (assault, homicide, rape); insurgency against ruling authorities (troop rebellions, civilian mob riots); and deviance from religious doctrines or prescribed social norms (apostasy, blasphemy, vices and forbidden pleasures). The reviewer’s comments on the author’s omission of several criminal categories follows. Martel-Thoumian continues with a detailed analysis of punishments and sanctions, noteworthy for its alertness to the context of intended objectives and actual effects (Ch. 4: *Les châtiments*). Perhaps the monograph’s most perceptive section is its graphic depictions of punishments—in their grisly variety—which are not presented principally for “shock value,” although this vividly comes across. Their arrangement persuasively conveys the ruling authorities’ own scale of relative gravity, counterpoised against a diminishing scale of efficacy in terms of genuine prevention.

The monograph concludes with a discussion of regime stratagems and tactics aimed at forestalling transgressions, guarding property assets, and upholding public security (Ch. 5: *Prévenir et lutter contre la criminalité*). In light of endemic fiscal crises and tensions between rival competitors for regional hegemony, measures sporadically applied by the authorities during the sultanate’s final decades to limit the populace’s access to weapons or consumption of alcohol, for example, were conspicuous for their ineffectiveness. Continuous frequency of reported incidents implies ubiquitous recurrence rather than effective suppression.

With regard to geographical range, the study’s focus and original findings center on the provincial capital, Damascus, under the late Mamluks. The author’s previous research and accumulation of data have concentrated on the social structure of that city during the Circassian period. A quantitative check of references to primary sources cited in the notes confirms Damascus’s consistent primacy of place (in a similar vein, the bibliography lists a copious range of secondary sources, intrinsically valuable as a general reference, but minimally cited with relevance to arguments raised in the text). By contrast, the imperial metropolis, Cairo, is discussed essentially in its context as the center of regime power and base of the sultanate’s higher authority (as in Chapter 2). The author’s detailed discussions of theft, brigandage, Bedouin predation, homicide, personal assault, and vice are limited to their Damascene milieus for the most part. This partiality of place may to some extent account for the striking absence of several prominent categories of transgression from the study. Crimes of fiscal corruption and fraud (bribery, asset confiscation on false charges, abusive taxation, embezzlement) are not considered. No reference to manipulation of charitable trusts (*waqf*, *awqāf*), a



ubiquitous practice regarded as particularly egregious as a violation of shari'ah by chroniclers of the period, appears (the term is listed in neither the glossary nor index). The crimes of espionage by foreigners or domestic agents, or treason on the part of militarists at several ranks (feared by the ruling establishment as a capital threat, and prosecuted ruthlessly) receive minimal attention. These omissions may reflect the relative marginality of Damascus from the epicenter of fiscal and political power in Cairo. In contrast with their Egyptian counterparts, Damascene chroniclers focused their commentaries on modes of transgression noteworthy in their home town: endemic gang rivalry; mob resistance to local authorities; assaults, homicides, and thefts among the civil populace; and a plethora of indigenous vices.

These preferences of topical coverage are especially evident in the myriad observations offered by Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ṭawq (d. 915/1509), author of *al-Ta'liq*, a voluminous daily journal of Damascene events, set down between 885/1480 and 906/1500. Affirmed by Martel-Thoumian as the source providing many of the most illuminative glimpses into transgressive activity—on a consistent basis—during the interval under consideration, Ibn Ṭawq was likely not positioned to say much about the areas of transgression bypassed in the study.

Absence of these criminal categories limits the scope of Bernadette Martel-Thoumian's analysis, but does not detract from its numerous discerning insights on the topics addressed in depth throughout the work. The monograph contributes significantly to the investigation of criminality and behavior traditionally depicted as deviant from norms prescribed in religious canons of the central Islamic world during the Late Middle Ages. Its author is to be commended for enriching an ongoing conversation about subjects that are central to enhancing our understanding of dimensions of social behavior long neglected in this discipline.



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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	وُّ	ūw	يِّ	īy (medial), ī (final)		
		ى	á	وِ	aw	يِ	ay		
						يِّ	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 or a title. 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 terms which are found in English dictionaries, such as 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.

For information about fonts and Unicode, see mamluk.uchicago.edu.

mamluk.uchicago.edu



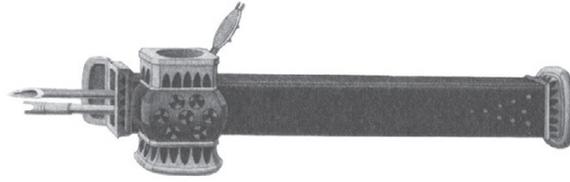
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