

## Book Reviews

SYLVIE DENOIX, *Décrire le Caire: Fustāt-Miṣr d'après Ibn Duqmāq et Maqrīzī: L'histoire d'une partie de la ville du Caire d'après deux historiens égyptiens des XIVe-XVe siècles*. (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1995). Pp. 159.

REVIEWED BY AMY W. NEWHALL, University of Arizona

In many parts of the city, the study of the urban history of Cairo is very rewarding. A profusion of standing monuments and rich remains complements textual evidence in the form of legal documents and, most importantly, late medieval descriptions. In contrast, the area of al-Fuṣṭāṭ, the site first occupied by the Muslim conquerors, is available to us almost only through the historical descriptions of two historians, Ibn Duqmāq (d. 809/1406) and al-Maqrīzī, who, although close contemporaries, wrote entirely independently of each other. The purpose of Sylvie Denoix's book is to reexamine their descriptions of al-Fuṣṭāṭ in order to reconstruct its form in the Mamluk period, an era which scholars have until recently largely ignored. Her particular method of textual analysis also throws light on events that are the great clichés in accounts of al-Fuṣṭāṭ's history: the chaotic reign of the late Fatimid ruler al-Mustanṣir billāh in 446/1060, the burning of al-Fuṣṭāṭ in 1168, and the great time of troubles that occurred in the reign of Faraj ibn Barqūq in 1403. She attempts to determine the true effects of these events: How far east did the early city extend? What was the true nature of the contraction after these events? Where did revival or new development occur? The crisis of 1403 is of special interest to Denoix because, chronologically, her two accounts bracket it. It provides a kind of high-tide mark by which she can measure the flow and ebb of Mamluk urban prosperity.

The chronicles of Ibn Duqmāq (*Kitāb al-Intiṣār li-Wāṣitat 'Iqd al-Amṣār*) and al-Maqrīzī (*al-Mawā'iz wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār*) are well-known: they combine the authors' observations with information they have gathered from earlier sources now lost to us. Ibn Duqmāq's chronicle is of critical importance for al-Fuṣṭāṭ, and Denoix concentrates on it. Because Ibn Duqmāq frequently does not distinguish between historical and observed reality, the picture of the city he presents is timeless and highly subjective. Denoix, by making a very close reading of the text and examining its choice of language and phrasing, attempts to unfreeze and reorder the sequence of his "stills" and reanimate our picture of the evolution of al-Fuṣṭāṭ. In the course of this examination she comes to some conclusions about the attitudes of her chroniclers and how they reflect the times in which they wrote.

From the results of this analysis, Denoix develops a schematic map of Mamluk al-Fuṣṭāṭ. Both in order to test her textual reading and to see if Ibn Duqmāq has neglected to tell us of certain areas, she then superimposes her diagram on the street network generated by two archaeologists at the beginning of the century, Alī Bahgat and Albert Gabriel (and



redated by George Scanlon). While the two do not overlap, they do meet, thus suggesting the limits of the Mamluk revival of the city.

Denoix proceeds to fill in her diagrammatic schema with the street and building information of Ibn Duqmāq and al-Maqrīzī. She is frustrated by their failure to give any sense of quarters, so she works at identifying various agglomerations. Appropriately enough for an important agricultural and commercial entrepôt, warehouses figure largely in the urban inventories, as do such water-reliant enterprises as mills, sugar refineries, paper mills, and potteries. She notes that the concept of nuisance industries did not exist at this time for they were fully integrated in the normal urban fabric. (Under the Ottomans they were regulated and moved.) As in the northern districts of Cairo, buildings frequently had multiple purposes; commercial and residential functions were combined. As for the differing religious groups, there seems to have been no strict partitioning in practice. There were natural concentrations, but no exclusive areas. Nor does there seem to be much clustering by class, although the presence of twenty-four *madrasahs* founded in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods suggests a vogue for living in the area among the military elite.

Denoix's study is one more piece in a long term effort (mostly French) to study and reconstruct medieval Cairo. This effort started in the nineteenth century with Paul Casanova, Paul Ravaisse, and G. T. Salmon and, as she points out, was begun in an arbitrary (and typically colonial) manner by dividing up the areas to be studied before knowing anything about the sources available for them. Nevertheless, these early works remain of fundamental importance; they have paved the way for a crop of scholarship in the last twenty-five years by André Raymond, Władysław Kubiak, Nelly Hanna, Doris Behrens-Abouseif, and Nasser Rabbat, among others. Denoix's study follows upon the pioneering work of Paul Casanova, *Essai de reconstitution topographique de la ville d'al-Fuṣṭāṭ ou Miṣr* (1919), but, whereas Casanova's work was primarily concerned with topography, Denoix's is concerned with historical context and the evolution of the region of al-Fuṣṭāṭ-Miṣr. Her multifarious analytical methods (close textual reading, schematic mapping, archaeological findings, and comparison of her two main sources) succeed in developing new understanding from familiar texts and lead us to a better sense of the fortunes and misfortunes of the oldest section of Cairo, al-Fuṣṭāṭ-Miṣr. She also makes an interesting but speculative attempt to characterize the mentality of the two historians.

The text contains numerous maps illustrating the results of the textual analysis, and the appendices provide a useful selection of translations from Ibn Duqmāq, a list of the region's *madrasahs*, a glossary, and an index of toponyms for both Ibn Duqmāq and al-Maqrīzī.

MICHAEL MEINECKE, *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien*. (Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin GmbH, 1992). Vol. I: Pp. 243, Vol. II: Pp. 576.

REVIEWED BY DORIS BEHRENS-ABOUSEIF, University of Munich

Michael Meinecke's study of Mamluk architecture in Egypt and Syria consists of two volumes. The first includes the analysis, plates, and bibliography. The second is a

detailed catalogue of references in Mamluk literary sources concerning buildings erected in this period; it is followed by a detailed, one hundred page long index (pp. 496-596).

The first volume has eight chapters which follow a chronological sequence. Chapter 1 describes the Cairene school of architecture in the mid-thirteenth century. The second deals with the revival of early Islamic architecture under al-Zāhir Baybars. Chapter 3 deals with the early Qalāwūnid dynasty, chapter 4 with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign, and chapter 5 with the internationalization of Mamluk architecture in the later phase of the Qalāwūnid dynasty. Chapter 6 presents the period of Barqūq. Seven deals with Syria in the aftermath of Tīmūr's invasion. The last chapter discusses the continuity of Mamluk architectural traditions under Ottoman rule.

This is the first work to survey Mamluk architecture as a whole, dealing with Egypt and Syria together. Meinecke's study is concerned with the whole of Syria (Jerusalem, Hebron, Damascus, Hama, Aleppo, and Tripoli) and Cairo, but not with all of Egypt, as it does not tackle the subject of provincial architecture within Egypt. This is partly justified by the scarcity of extant medieval buildings in the Egyptian provinces. There are, however, extant medieval monuments in the Delta (Damietta, al-Maḥallah al-Kubrā, and Fuwā) and Upper Egypt dating from the Mamluk period or built under the Ottomans in the Mamluk tradition, which one would have expected to see in this survey. Since this study discusses Mamluk influence on Anatolia and Turkestan, it should not have omitted entirely the question of how far the style of the capital was adopted in Egypt itself. The relationship between the imperial style of the capital and the provincial style is an interesting question, as has been shown in connection with Ilkhanid and Ottoman architecture by Renata Holod and Aptullah Kuran.<sup>1</sup>

Meinecke's analysis of Mamluk architecture is marked by the great emphasis it puts on foreign influences and transfers of patterns between the Mamluk and other Muslim schools of architecture, as well as between the various regional schools within the Mamluk empire. This idea, which he explains with a busy migration of "workshops" or "lodges," is a kind of *leitmotif* in the book. The following comments will focus, therefore, on this aspect of the study.

In his discussion of the mosque of Sultan Ḥasan the author attributes the stucco inscription frieze in the prayer hall to Iranian craftsmen (pp. 121f.). One of the author's arguments is based on the fact that at that time some Iranian dignitaries built mausoleums in Jerusalem (p. 120). These mausoleums, however, were erected in the local Mamluk style, without apparent Iranian influence. J. M. Rogers has given a much more plausible interpretation of this frieze when he compared it with Mamluk Quran illuminations of the same period, with which it has a striking similarity, much more than with the remote eastern Iranian examples that Meinecke presents.<sup>2</sup> As for the chinoiserie on the portal of Sultan Ḥasan's mosque, they have been common on Mamluk portable objects of metal, pottery, and textile and in Quran illuminations since the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. As again convincingly demonstrated by J. M. Rogers,<sup>3</sup> they were transferred by the trade with China

<sup>1</sup>Renata Holod, "Text, Plan, and Building: On the Transmission of Architectural Knowledge," in *Theories and Principles of Design in the Architecture of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1988), 1-12; Aptullah Kuran, "Ottoman Classical Mosques in Istanbul and in the Provinces," in *ibid.*, 13-22.

<sup>2</sup>Janine Sourdel-Thomine and Bertold Spuler, *Die Kunst des Islam* (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 1973), 326.

<sup>3</sup>J. M. Rogers, "Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations 1260-1360," in *Colloque international sur*



following the Mamluk-Mongol entente during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign, through portable objects, such as porcelain or textiles, rather than through migration of "Iranian specialists," who would have come from eastern Iran just to carve this one frieze and leave the country again.

Coming to Mamluk influence on Anatolia, the author ascribes it to craftsmen who participated in the building of Sultan Ḥasan's mosque, and migrated in large numbers afterwards, exercising a tremendous influence on the architectural development of the Muslim world (p. 131). Meinecke attributes to these craftsmen the plan of the Ulu Cami (1366-67) in Manisa (p. 136), whose prayer hall consists of four naves cut by a large central dome over the *mihrāb*. He argues that this plan, having no precedent in Asia Minor, must have been built under Mamluk influence, as it recalls some mosques of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign which have a large dome over the *mihrāb*. Would craftsmen of Sultan Ḥasan have migrated in the 1360s to Manisa to build there a mosque that recalls the buildings of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad? Why so complicated? There are two mosques in Mosul erected in the late twelfth century, the Jāmi' Nūrī and the mosque of Mujāhid al-Dīn, which show far more similarity with the Manisa plan than the mosques of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and which probably belong to the architectural tradition which produced the Manisa mosque plan. This type of prayer hall was also used in Mardin in eastern Anatolia (1172-76), in Dunaysir in Upper Mesopotamia (1201) and, with some variation, in Aleppo (1223), and is more likely to have pertained to Saljuq Upper Mesopotamian or eastern Anatolian architecture. From there it went under Ayyubid influence to Yemen where we find it at the Ashrafīyah mosque in Ta'izz, whose prayer hall was built in the years 694-97/1294-97. Lewcock has rightly connected the Ashrafīyah plan with that of Dunaysir and, further back, to the plan of the Great Mosque of Lashkari Bazar (ca. 1020).<sup>4</sup> The mosques of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, which Meinecke declares to be the prototype for Manisa follow the model of Baybars's mosque in Cairo, which Creswell rightly ascribed to the influence of Mardin! An attribution of the Manisa mosque plan to the craftsmen of Sultan Ḥasan, who were building four-*iwān* mosques in Cairo, seems therefore far-fetched indeed.

When discussing the dome built by Amir Yashbak al-Dawādār in 1481 and known as Qubbat al-Fadāwīyah (p. 168), Meinecke attributes its architecture to Ottoman influence, basing his argument on the fact that it is a single-dome prayer hall, and comparing its ground plan with that of the mosque of Dāwūd Pasha in Istanbul. A ground plan is not sufficient for such an attribution; the Mamluks were familiar with domed chambers which they used as mausoleums. Neither the elevation, nor the dome profile, nor the transitional zone, nor any other feature in Cairene architecture at that time, or in this monument in particular, betrays any Ottoman influence. Meinecke's analyses are based on ground plans alone, disregarding elevations. The author overlooked, moreover, that this dome had predecessors in Cairo, the earliest being the dome of the Rifā'ī *zāwīyah* built in the 1430s by Sultan Barsbāy near his mausoleum in the cemetery, which is mentioned in his *waqf* deed and is still extant. Another one was erected by Jānībak, *nā'ib* of Jiddah, in 1463, also as a *zāwīyah*, which later was used by the Baktāshī order in Cairo and of which a nineteenth-century photograph has been published in *Annales islamologiques*, vol. 19,

*l'histoire du Caire* (1969) (Cairo: Ministry of Culture, n.d.), 385-403.

<sup>4</sup>Ronald B. Lewcock and G. R. Smith, "Three Medieval Mosques in the Yemen: A Preliminary Report," parts 1 and 2, *Oriental Art* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1974): 75-86; no. 2 (Summer 1974): 192-203.



1983. There is thus a whole group of domed buildings, all of which were *zāwiyahs*, whose tradition seems to be rooted in Bahrī Mamluk architecture. Qubbat al-Naṣr is mentioned by al-Maqrīzī as a *zāwiyah* built during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Although it did not survive, we know at least that it was a domed *zāwiyah*, which leads the tradition back to a period prior to the articulation of Ottoman architecture.

By focusing on the "migration of workshops," the author neglected other possibilities for the transmission of architectural knowledge. The question of how far drawings, elevations, models, or even oral communications might have been used to transfer architectural ideas from one place to another is not considered. The use of the octagonal shaft in Syrian minarets might well have occurred under Cairene influence (p. 189, pl. 133) without necessarily implying that craftsmen from Cairo moved to Damascus to erect such shafts. This kind of influence, which did not involve much more than just an idea and did not include equivalence of proportions and elevations, could have been transmitted by simple drawings or by oral communication. Most of the examples of foreign influences, whether Iranian patterns in Cairo or Mamluk patterns in Turkestan refer to details, often minor details, rather than to entire projects, thus contradicting the idea of migrating lodges. This does not exclude, however, the mobility of individual craftsmen, just as that of scholars or physicians.

The rich material of the survey itself demonstrates, more implicitly than explicitly, that Mamluk architecture on the whole was regionally oriented, and furthermore that Cairo, as imperial capital, enjoyed the lion's share both in quantity and refinement of the work produced. Notwithstanding similarities here and there, it should be recognized that the Cairene style of Mamluk architecture is not much represented outside the capital. Except for Qāyṭbāy's *sabīl* in Jerusalem, there is not one single dome or minaret profile in Syria that could be attributed to the Cairene style. Qāyṭbāy's buildings in Jerusalem are an exception because the sultan was unsatisfied with the first building after he visited it. He eventually ordered it rebuilt by craftsmen he sent from Cairo; the minaret, however, was built in the local style. Also, when the same sultan sent craftsmen to rebuild the Prophet's mosque in Medina, the minaret was erected in a style that had ceased to exist in Cairo more than a century earlier, the latest similar shaft being that of Qūṣūn (736/1335-36). Interestingly, however, this style continued to be used in the Egyptian provinces, namely in the city of al-Maḥallah al-Kubrā.

Meinecke seems to have been under the influence of European art history, especially when he uses the terms "Bauhütte" and "Architektengilde," or guilds of architects (pp. 193f.), basing himself on the term *mi'mārīyah* mentioned in the late Mamluk chronicle of Damascus by Ibn Ṭūlūn.<sup>5</sup> A careful reading of Ibn Ṭūlūn, however, shows that the term *mi'mārīyah* here refers to masons and other building craftsmen rather than designer-architects as understood by Meinecke, who uses the terms "Architekt" and "Künstler" (p. 194) in this context. In Mamluk *waqf* documents of Egypt and Syria, the *mi'mār* is a craftsman, hired on a monthly basis with a relatively low income to take care of a building's maintenance, along with the plumber.

<sup>5</sup>Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā ([Cairo]: al-Mu'assasah al-Miṣrīyah al-Āmmah lil-Ta'līf wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 1962), 1:143, 148, 197.



As for Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-‘Aṭṭār, mentioned here as artist and head of a guild, he was the sultan’s contractor in Damascus. He is designated as the sultan’s *mu’allim* or *mi’mār*, and the context identifies him as contractor: he had to evaluate costs and was in charge of demolition and excavation works. When, following the Ottoman conquest, he was involved in the building of the shrine of Ibn al-‘Arabī in Damascus, he was part of a team of clerks and bureaucrats, as the text explicitly states, all of whom designed the building together.<sup>6</sup> In the Mamluk period the buildings were designed by a consortium of founder, contractor, clerks, land-surveyors, and master-masons.

Neither the lists of urban trades included in the Mamluk *ḥisbah* literature nor the lists of guilds during the Ottoman period ever refer to “guilds of architects”; only craftsmen such as masons, decorators, carpenters, etc., are considered practitioners of trades. The building activity of the Mamluk sultans and amirs was organized by a *dīwān*, or office, at the court under the control of an amir of ten, who was called *shādd al-‘amā’ir al-sulṭānīyah*, and later *mu’allim*, who was also the supervisor of the building craftsmen (al-Qalqashandī, vol. 4, p. 22). In the Ottoman period these crafts were under the supervision of the *mi’mār bāshī*. In the later Mamluk period the *mu’allim* of the sultan could also be a bureaucrat. In any case, he was a member of the Mamluk establishment, equivalent to the modern minister of public works. Moreover, each royal building had its own *shādd*, who often recruited the craftsmen on an ad hoc basis. Aḥmad al-Ṭūlūnī, the *mu’allim* of Barqūq, who was a contractor of non-Mamluk origin, was made amir of ten and his descendants belonged socially to the *awlād al-nās*, i.e., the sons of mamluks; he was, moreover, the sultan’s father-in-law.<sup>7</sup> The *mu’allim al-‘amā’ir*, Ḥasan al-Tanamī, who was appointed in 869/1465, had been governor of Jerusalem and Hebron.<sup>8</sup> The *mu’allims*, as supervisors of the building craft and members of the Mamluk administration, did not migrate, as free-lance professionals, from one region to another in search of jobs, as they could be transferred from one to another. The idea of lodges (*Bauhütten*), which implies an inner organization or even autonomy, migrating from one region to another according to the market’s requirements thus does not conform with our knowledge of Islamic social history. The building craft was largely in the rulers’ hands rather than a free trade.<sup>9</sup>

Meinecke should have been more careful while using the term “Gilde,” or guild, in connection with the Mamluk period. While according to Subhi Labib there were no guilds under the Mamluks in the medieval European sense of autonomous corporations, Ira Lapidus even states they were “nonexistent” in Mamluk cities.<sup>10</sup>

As for the identification of Mamluk monuments, the author calls a four-*īwān* building a *madrasah*, and identifies a hypostyle building as a mosque; the building of Barsbāy in the Coppermiths’ quarter is designated a *madrasah* whereas that of al-

<sup>6</sup>Ibn Ṭūlūn, *al-Qalā’id al-Jawharīyah fī Ta’rīkh al-Ṣāliḥīyah*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān ([Damascus]: Maktab al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmīyah, 1949-56), 1:64; idem, *Mufākahat al-Khillān*, 1:150; 2:37, 68, 124.

<sup>7</sup>See my article, “Muhandis, Shād, Mu’allim—Note on the Building Craft in the Mamlūk Period,” *Der Islam* 72, no. 2 (1995): 293-309.

<sup>8</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr*, ed. William Popper, University of California Publications in Semitic Philology, vol. 8 (Berkeley: University of California, 1930-42), 490.

<sup>9</sup>Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 65.

<sup>10</sup>Subhi Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter (1171-1517)* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1965), 222f.; Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 96.



Mu'ayyad Shaykh is called a mosque (pp. 154f.). This distinction between *madrasah* and mosque, which is based on the building's plan, is not exact. According to recent works based on Mamluk *waqf* documents, both foundations had the same functions as a combined *madrasah-khānqāh*-Friday mosque. It has already been demonstrated that a hypostyle mosque could be as much a *madrasah* as a cruciform one; in the late Mamluk period various plans were used to fulfill the same functions. In this matter, epigraphy, which is often arbitrary, can be misleading; *waqf* data are more reliable.

The analysis of the first volume concentrates on religious architecture. The discussion of plans deals exclusively with prayer halls and their adjoined mausoleums, without referring much to the presence, or absence, of living quarters in the complexes of *madrasahs* and *khānqāhs*. An important share of Mamluk monuments included *madrasahs* or *khānqāhs* or both, i.e., they were also boarding institutions. The originality of Sultan Ḥasan's mosque is not only its monumentality, as stated by the author; it is the first *madrasah* to have the living units away from the courtyard and fully integrated along the facade. Since it is also the first *madrasah* with the status of a Friday mosque, this change is not accidental, but related to the new, more public, functions of the institution. The location of the living quarters in relationship to the prayer hall is therefore significant. The evolution of the multiple complex *madrasah-khānqāh-jāmi'* in the late Mamluk period had a decisive impact on the organization of space in religious architecture, leading ultimately to the living units being detached from the main building and taking the form of an independent *rab'*.

In the bibliography the author confuses Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, the author of *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, with his namesake, Abū al-Ḥasan Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī al-Sakhāwī, who wrote *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb*, identifying them as the same author.

The reader will be grateful for the unique collection of ground plans included in the first volume; some elevations would have been useful to facilitate comparisons.

The second volume is divided into forty-nine entries, chronologically ordered and named by the sultans who ruled in the Mamluk period. The buildings are recorded under the name of the city or location. They are documented with the founders' names and dates and a bibliography of primary and secondary literature. The primary sources used are published historiographical literature. This volume, which according to the introduction was done by Viktoria Meinecke-Berg, comprises very important documentation, no less valuable than the first volume; it is of great use to all scholars of Mamluk architecture and history as well. The detailed three-register index gives easy access to the survey.

The reader should not expect to find in Michael Meinecke's survey of Mamluk architecture a discussion of social, urban, or iconographic aspects of architecture. The study does not refer to *waqf* documents nor does it deal with epigraphy, except to date the building and identify the founder. Unlike Golombek and Wilber's study of Timurid architecture and Goodwin's books on Ottoman architecture, which are agreeable and appealing as readings, this is essentially a reliable survey and reference book. The taxonomic aspect of this gigantic work places it in the Creswell tradition, as an important document for historians of Mamluk architecture.



‘ALĪ AL-SAYYID ‘ALĪ MAḤMŪD, *al-Hayāh al-Iqtiṣādīyah fī Jiddah fī ‘Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk, 648-925 H./1250-1517 M.* (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘ah al-Tijārīyah al-Ḥadīthah, 1991). Pp. 147.

REVIEWED BY CARL F. PETRY, Northwestern University

The appearance of a monograph addressing the economy of an important commercial entrepôt within the Mamluk state, other than the capital Cairo itself, is a welcome event. And since so much contemporary scholarship in Arabic is neglected by Western readers for obvious linguistic reasons, the inclusion of recent works in this language by the editorial staff of *Mamluk Studies Review* for assessment is to be commended. The author has produced a straightforward, if somewhat verbose, description of economic activity in Jiddah as mentioned by Arabic narrative sources that were compiled from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries. Without exception, these texts are available in print; most belong to the roster of well-known chronicles consulted by virtually everyone who has delved into the Mamluk era (There are exceptions, for example: p. 100, note 394; p. 140, entry 7: the Maghribī traveler al-Tujībī’s *Mustafād al-Riḥlah wa-al-Ightirāb*, although published in Tunis, is not a frequently cited work. It nonetheless contains noteworthy details on shipbuilding in Jiddah).

This monograph’s value derives exclusively from its factual information. It contributes no fresh methodological insights, nor does it significantly alter existing perceptions of the commercial economy of prominent Red Sea ports throughout the Middle Ages. Indeed, the author himself frequently asserts that details on commercial or manufacturing activity in the port of Jiddah occur rarely in the chronicle literature, thereby enabling only glimpses into the town’s economic history rather than a thorough reconstruction of its foundations. The author seems also minimally acquainted with the profound conceptual transformation in approaches to the economic history of the eastern Mediterranean and Southwest Asia that has occurred over the past three decades. While numerous monographs published in Arabic are listed in the bibliography, these fall into the same particularistic category as the book under review. Few works of broader scope, either in Arabic or other languages, are noted. The absence of any reference to such a comprehensive survey as Subhi Labib’s *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter* (Wiesbaden, 1965), which frequently alludes to the prominence of Jiddah in the commerce of the Red Sea throughout the Mamluk era, is disconcerting.

The author’s depiction of Jiddah’s economy proceeds as follows: the port’s florescence as a trading center in the Mamluk period, its gradual supplanting of Aden as the primary docking facility for ships arriving from south and east Asia, its markets and their influence on daily life, economic crises and their consequences for market activities, measures and weights (with interesting facts on the reckoning of quantities), monetary transactions (also providing significant data on currencies used in transactions), Jiddah’s relations with international centers of trade, land and maritime trade routes, customs and collection enforcement, agrarian and pastoral activities (the latter section mentioning tribal groups rather than analyzing economies of husbandry), and craft industries: shipbuilding (the most intriguing commodity discussion in the monograph, with interesting details on timber scarcity and hulls designed for navigation through coral reefs), tanning of hides,

preparation of confections, braiding of mats, manufacture of rosaries (*masābih*), minerals and metallurgy, pottery and ceramics, marble and plaster work.

Readers seeking to place the commercial history of Jiddah within the wider context of the Hijaz economy as a whole under the Mamluks are advised to consult the recent articles by Richard Mortel, with special emphasis on his "Prices in Mecca during the Mamlūk Period," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 32, no. 3 (October, 1989), pp. 279-334; and "The Mercantile Community of Mecca during the Late Mamlūk Period," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (third series) 4 (1994), pp. 15-35.

Wael B. Hallaq, *Ibn Taymiyya against the Greek Logicians*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Pp. 204.

REVIEWED BY DAVID C. REISMAN, Yale University

This work, Professor Hallaq's most recent, is almost unique to modern studies of Ibn Taymīyah and for this reason deserves our attention. Hallaq has proved an enormously capable writer in his field, the study of logic, specifically of that variety of logic employed in medieval Muslim legal theory. He has written a number of articles on the historical development of legal logic as well as on some of the technical terms peculiar to that field. *Ibn Taymiyya against the Greek Logicians* is his first major work; it is something of a mixed blessing. His profound grasp of the discussions in medieval Arabic works on logic is evident here and in that regard it is an important book. As a work on Ibn Taymīyah's thought in general, however, it is frustratingly incomplete.

The work is made up of three parts. The most substantive of these parts is the translation of an abridgment of Ibn Taymīyah's *Naṣīḥat Ahl al-Imām fī al-Radd 'alā Maṭīq al-Yunān* (otherwise known as *al-Radd 'alā al-Manṭiqīyīn*) by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī (d. 911/1505) entitled *Jahd al-Qarīḥah fī Tajrīd al-Naṣīḥah*. Why Hallaq chose to translate al-Suyūfī's and not Ibn Taymīyah's work will be discussed shortly. The translation is prefaced by an introduction, the strongest aspect of which is the discussion in part 1 of the terms of the argument against logic as Ibn Taymīyah saw them (one of the clearest explanations to date of Ibn Sīnā's theory of essence and existence is that provided in pp. xiv-xvii), and the weakest aspect of which, in light of its stated aim, is the discussion in part 2, "Sources of the Critique." The reader perhaps would have benefited more from solid research into lines of transmission of anti-logic writings than the speculation he is given; the notes on later medieval Latin and early modern European anti-logic writings and the striking similarity between Ibn Taymīyah's conclusions and those of these writings are no more than a curiosity.<sup>1</sup> The section does have a certain value, however, in that it places Ibn Taymīyah's thought within a broader context while stressing the distinctive and original nature of Ibn Taymīyah's contribution. The annotated commentary to the translation is extensive and superb. It evinces Hallaq's wide and discriminating reading of Arabic works

<sup>1</sup>The similarity between Ibn Taymīyah's views and those of the British empiricists was noted by S. S. Nadvi as early as 1927; an extract of his article, originally appearing in *Islamic Culture*, was quoted in the introduction (p. 14) to al-Kutubī's 1949 edition of *al-Radd 'alā al-Manṭiqīyīn*.



on logic and Greek and Arabic philosophy in general. He has taken great pains to trace Ibn Taymīyah's uncited references to opinions of other thinkers; where this has proved difficult, he has delineated the general field of enquiry. Specific issues, the articulation of which in the text might initially strike the reader as abstruse, are precisely explained, often with original examples from Hallaq who, it would seem, is as much a logician as he is an historian of logic—a fortunate state of affairs.

Before turning to the translation, a major criticism regarding Hallaq's choice of work to translate must be raised. Much of the secondary literature on Ibn Taymīyah is either out of date or labors under the misapprehension that the defining characteristic of Ibn Taymīyah's thought is reactionary diatribe. This may or may not be the result of an overemphasis on his role as a social reformer, or even of current social and political climates. The topic is certainly too large to be tackled here. Hallaq's study is the first (recently) to present us with Ibn Taymīyah as a thinker, one who, in the case of logic, has a profound grasp of his topic, is capable of formulating precise and well-founded responses to his opponents, one who has the "extraordinary ability to define and isolate the crucial and fundamental principles upon which the most complex systems of thought are erected" (p. xiv). Why, then, has Hallaq chosen to translate al-Suyūṭī's abridgment and not the *Radd 'alá al-Mantiqīyīn* itself? Ibn Taymīyah's express purpose in refuting Greek logic and its proponents among Arab philosophers, theologians, and Sufis was the discrediting of the systems of metaphysics in vogue among those groups, systems which were based on that logic. Hallaq is aware of Ibn Taymīyah's larger goal (pp. xi-xii) but argues that al-Suyūṭī's abridgment, stripped of the corollary arguments against the metaphysics of these groups (and against its implications for the doctrinal theology of Islam as Ibn Taymīyah conceived of it), "is a more effective critique of logic than that originally formulated by Ibn Taymiyya" (p. liv).<sup>2</sup> Certainly what was advantageous to al-Suyūṭī's goal (on which, see p. liii) does little service to a proper understanding of the larger context of Ibn Taymīyah's program of thought. In part 3 of his introduction, Hallaq further argues that Ibn Taymīyah's work is characterized by digression, repetition, and a certain imbalance between criticism advanced and solutions proposed, this because the aim of Ibn Taymīyah's mission was "persuasion, if not outright dissuasion" (p. 1). With particular regard to the issue of digression, Hallaq notes that this mode of discourse "leaves the modern reader with a sense of frustration" (p. li). Two immediate responses come to mind. First, since when is the modern reader's ease of understanding a criterion for the assessment of the intellectual worth of a medieval treatise? Second, a much more profound examination of Ibn Taymīyah's style and methodology needs to be undertaken before we can place a negative value on a given characteristic of that style. From one perspective, Hallaq has produced an important work on the development of opinions about logic among medieval Arabic thinkers, from another, he has largely dismissed the historical and intellectual context of that development.

Translation is a notoriously difficult business. A judicious balance between, on the one hand, an unreadable literal translation and, on the other, a readable but overly paraphrastic translation is the desired end. It is worth arguing that Hallaq's translation of technical terms should become standard for future studies of logic in Arabic. However, the

<sup>2</sup>Hallaq also says that scholars like Brunschvig and van Ess expressed similar opinions (p. liv, n. 185). Brunschvig characterized the abridgement as "assez fourni" and van Ess noted that al-Suyūṭī had "carefully abridged" Ibn Taymīyah's work; these statements in no way buttress Hallaq's opinion.



reader who is interested in Hallaq's topic and who can read Arabic would be advised to make a careful comparison of the Arabic text with Hallaq's translation as a whole. There are numerous errors, the result of excessive paraphrase, inconsistency in the translation of basic terms, lack of attention to tense, and an outright disregard for certain Arabic particles. Thus, the particle *innamā* would seem anathema to Hallaq as he only rarely translates it. A few examples only: for "the concept of a quiddity is obtained by real definition", p. 8 (85, l. 16),<sup>3</sup> read "the concept of a quiddity is obtained only by real definition"; for "he cannot be said to have formed a concept of the meaning upon hearing that definition", p. 10 (86, ll. 14-15), read "he cannot be said to have formed a concept of the meaning only by hearing that definition"; for "The claim that definitions lead to forming a concept of things is that of the Greek logicians . . .", p. 12 (88, l. 4), read "Only the Greek logicians . . . claim [that definitions lead to forming a concept of things]", etc. The particle *qad* with the imperfect is often left unnoticed; thus, for ". . . because the one who forms a concept does so without words. The hearer [of this definition] can also form a concept without being told anything at all", p. 10 (87, ll. 1-3), read ". . . for the speaker might (*or*: will sometimes) form a concept of the meaning of what he says without articulating [it] and that is [equally] possible for the hearer, without being told anything at all."

Disregard for tense is often evident, particularly in conditional sentences. Hallaq translates, p. 10 (85, ll. 12-15): "If the concepts of things were dependent upon definitions, and if until this day people have not yet formed [*sic*] a concept for any of these matters, and if a judgment is contingent upon conception, so that when a concept is not formed, a judgment is not formed either, then men would have no knowledge of the great majority of their sciences." Read: "If the concept of things had been dependent upon definition and if to this day people had not formed a concept for any of these matters, and if a judgment had been contingent upon a concept—so whenever a concept is not formed, a judgment is not formed—man would have no knowledge of the great majority of his sciences." Further, Hallaq translates, pp. 8-9 (85, l. 16 to 86, l. 2), "Such a definition is either impossible or difficult to come by, as they themselves admit. Hence, it is not always or often possible to form a concept of a particular reality. But since concepts of realities are actually formed, it is known that concepts are not in need of definition." Read: "This definition being either impossible or difficult [to come by], as they themselves have admitted, it would not have been always or often possible to form a concept of a particular reality, but concepts of particular realities have been formed, so it is known that concepts do not stand in need of definitions."

One example of inconsistency in the translation of basic terms will suffice here. Hallaq translates both *dhihn*, p. 6, and *'aql*, p. 9, as "intellect." *Dhihn*, of course, is better rendered "mind," reserving the philosophical term "intellect" for *'aql*. The temptation to paraphrase is often considerable, but equally often it does damage to a precise point an author wants to convey. Hallaq translates, p. 5 (83, ll. 6-7), ". . . although refuting them would require (*yaḥtamīl*) much more than what I have said". Ibn Taymīyah is *not* confessing an insufficiency in his treatise; in fact, he is noting the opposite. "Would require" should read "admits of" or "allows for," the implication being that his treatise comprises the bulk of a compelling refutation. Hallaq, p. 6 (84, ll. 6-8), translates: "Since this statement is not based on knowledge, and [*sic*] it is the first that they have established,

<sup>3</sup>The reference in parentheses is to the Arabic text.



how can it be the basis of the criterion of knowledge and of their claim that logic [*sic*] is a canonical instrument the correct use of which safeguards the intellect from error." Read: "Since this is a statement not based on knowledge, being the first that they have established, how can it be the basis of the criterion of knowledge and of what they claim is a canonical instrument regard for which safeguards the mind against stumbling in (lit.: slipping from) its examination."<sup>4</sup> Hallaq's translation, as it stands, serves as a good but rough guide to reading Ibn Taymīyah's treatise; it could have stood a few more revisions.

Finally, Ibn Taymīyah wrote another treatise against logic (unnoticed by Hallaq), with specific reference to its use in dialectic argumentation (*jadāl*). The work is entitled *Tanbīh al-Rajul al-Ghāfil 'alā Tamwīh al-Jadal al-Bātil* and would seem to be a comprehensive refutation of the *Muqaddimah fī al-Jadal* by Burhān al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 684/1285). Future research into some of the problems involved in Ibn Taymīyah's views on logic (e.g., that discussed by Hallaq, pp. xxviii-xxxii) might benefit from an edition and translation of this work.<sup>5</sup>

Despite some significant problems, Hallaq's work should be viewed as an important contribution to Ibn Taymīyah studies, one that *largely* appreciates and critically evaluates the thought of this important intellectual of the Mamluk period.

REUVEN AMITAI-PREISS, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Īlkhānid War, 1260-1281*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Pp. 272.

REVIEWED BY JOHN E. WOODS, University of Chicago

Until relatively recently, those interested in tracing the broad outlines of the history of the Mamluk state of Egypt and Syria (1250-1517), one of the longest-lived political entities in Islamic annals, were confronted with an astounding dearth of scholarly articles and monographs. This is certainly true of the study of Mamluk foreign relations, especially those with powers in the East—the Mongols and their successors down to the rise of the Safavid dynasty in Iran. Nevertheless, aspects of the Mamluk "Eastern Question" have been delineated in several pioneering works such as Ahmad Darrag's survey of the Mamluk state under one of the most important sultans of the first half of the fifteenth century, *L'Égypte sous le règne de Barsbay, 825-841/1422-1438* (Damascus, 1961); S. Zakirov's study of the "alliance" between the Mamluks and the Mongols of Russia, *Diplomaticheskīe otnosheniya Zolotoi Ordy s Egiptom, XIII-XIV vv.* (Moscow, 1966), and Fāyid Ḥammād 'Āshūr's monograph on relations between the Bahrī Mamluks and the

<sup>4</sup>What Hallaq translates "logic" is, in the text, an attached pronoun the immediate antecedent of which is *mā*; *innahā* (p. 84, l. 7) is incorrect and should be read *innahu*. I would argue that the conjunctive *mā* does not replace "logic" (*manṭiq*), as Hallaq has it, but rather "definition" (*ḥadd*).

<sup>5</sup>George Makdisi discussed the MS in "The Tanbīh of Ibn Taimīya on Dialectic: The Pseudo-'Aqīlian Kitāb al-Farq," in *Medieval and Middle Eastern Studies in Honor of Aziz Suryal Atiya* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 285-294. At least some of the introduction to this work, missing in the MS, can be found in 'Abd al-Hādī's al-*Uqūd al-Durrīyah min Manāqib Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad ibn Taymīyah*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1938), 29-35.



Mongols of Iran, *al-'Alāqāt al-Siyāsīyah bayna al-Mamālīk wa-al-Mughūl fī al-Dawlah al-Mamlūkīyah al-Ūlā* (Cairo, 1976).

A consideration of these and other works reveals a number of persistent geopolitical, economic, demographic, ideological, and cultural themes in the dealings of the Mamluks with their eastern neighbors extending throughout the two and a half centuries of Mamluk independence. The principal areas of direct conflict—the cities of inland Syria and southeastern Anatolia—were frequently the local counterparts of larger patterns of competition for the control of land and sea commercial routes. Among the most important demographic aspects of the period was the influx into the Mamluk state and along its frontiers of large numbers of refugees, renegades, and political enemies from states in the East in the second half of the thirteenth century. After the collapse of the Chingizids in Iran following the death of Abū Sa'īd Bahādūr Khān in 1335, moreover, there was a reflux of Mongol and Turkish tribes from Anatolia and Syria westward onto the Iranian plateau. In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, Tīmūr's policy of peopling Transoxiana by the forced migrations of artisans, craftsmen, and nomads from the territories he conquered also contributed to the dynamic nature of the population history of the period. Finally, the establishment of Shī'ism as the state religion in Safavid Iran in 1501 caused many individuals and groups to seek asylum in India, the Ottoman Empire, and the Arab world. In terms of political and religious ideology, from the Mongol conquests to the rise of the Ottomans, the Mamluks were preoccupied with the threat to Syria and Egypt posed by an infidel, apostate, or heterodox potentate in the East, be it "the king of the Tatars," Tīmūr the Lame, or the Sufi Shah Ismā'īl Ṣafavī.

Most of the literature on Mamluk-Eastern relations focuses on legal and military issues. (A notable exception is the provocative essay by Michael Rogers, "Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations," in *Colloque internationale sur l'histoire du Caire*, Cairo, 1974, pp. 385-403.) Much ink continues to be spilled, for example, on the subject of the alleged "law code" (*yasa*) of Chingiz Khan and its influence or lack of influence on the Mamluks. The second topic that unflinchingly occupies the interest of researchers and amateurs alike is the Battle of 'Ayn Jālūt, the defeat inflicted by the Mamluk army in 1260 upon the forces of Hulagu, Chingiz Khan's grandson and the conqueror of Baghdad. The present study falls into this category.

Beginning in 1260 and ending with the peace treaty of 1323, hostilities between the Mamluks and the Mongols went on for more than sixty years. During this period, the Ilkhanid Mongols launched six offensives against their Mamluk enemies, invading Syria in 1260, 1281, 1299, 1300, 1303, and 1312. They also carried out a defensive campaign against them in Anatolia in 1277. Amitai-Preiss has provided us a detailed account of the first two invasions of Syria as well as Baybars's "intervention" in Anatolia, or one-third of the period of the Mamluk-Ilkhanid wars.

His scheme of presentation is informed by two major factors. The first is heuristic and lies in the relative abundance of Mamluk historical materials and the consequent paucity of Mongol sources. He acknowledges this state of affairs somewhat tautologically: ". . . most of the information at our disposal on the Mamluk-Ilkhanid conflict is derived from the pro-Mamluk Arabic sources. It is true that the corpus of Mamluk historical works is much larger than its pro-Mongol counterpart, and this might be one reason for this phenomenon . . ." (p. 7). This results in far more space and detail accorded the Mamluk component of the narrative, although Persian, Syriac, and Armenian sources are listed in the bibliography.



The second factor determining the shape of his presentation is the centrality given the personality of the second Mamluk sultan Baybars, who ruled for almost seventeen years from 1260 to 1277. Amitai-Priess even designates the second battle of Homs in 1281 "Baybars's posthumous victory." A more appropriate title for the book thus might be *Baybars Fights the Ilkhanids*.

His method of presentation, moreover, is essentially chronological, focusing on political history. The three battles—'Ayn Jālūt (1260), Elbistan (1277), and Homs (1281)—are the pegs on which the narrative is suspended and, when the Mamluks and Mongols are not fighting each other, they are engaged in waging a "Cold War," maneuvering diplomatically, and conducting espionage. Economy, demography, and ideology receive only passing mention. The last two chapters of the work, however, do deal in some detail with several thematic aspects—mainly military and strategic—of the conflict.

The text is illustrated by three plates—photographs of the Jezreel Valley, Birecik, and the plain of Elbistan—which are unfortunately not very well reproduced in the book. Eight maps, four dynastic and genealogical tables, and a glossary are appended to the text. Especially useful are the maps of the areas of the major battle sites and those of the Fertile Crescent and northern Syria-southeastern Anatolia. In connection with the latter, Amitai-Priess gives the Arabic forms of locales in modern Turkey (e.g., Abulustayn for Elbistan) and these maps facilitate their location. There is a problem, however, with the toponym Dokat, identified as "the family castle" of the Anatolian Saljuq sultan (pp. 166, 174, index). This is certainly the town and fortress of Tokat, usually spelled Tūqāt in Arabic.

The philology of the work is fundamentally sound, but the following points should be noted. The term *bahādur* is identified as a Mongol word (p. 108) although it may in fact be earlier, traced by Sir Gerard Clauson in his *Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* to a Hunnish (Hsiung-nu) proper name. The expression *yāsāh* on page 121 is probably a transliteration mistake for *yasākh* ← *yasāq*. Finally, on the meaning of *parvāna*, an element in the name of Anatolian Saljuq strongman Mu'īn al-Dīn Sulaymān, Amitai-Priess quotes the derivation of Claude Cahen in *Pre-Ottoman Turkey* and cites the Persian-English dictionary of Steingass as an authority. Here, he should have consulted works such as Muḥammad Mu'īn's edition of *Burhān-i Qāṭi'* or the *Lughat-nāma* of Dikhudā—he would hardly have used Hans Wehr for the meaning of a Mamluk technical term.

There are some technical problems in the dating of several sections. Between pages 169 and 176, for example, the chronology of Baybars's campaign to Anatolia in 1277 is increasingly bungled.

Page	Amitai-Priess Date	Correct Date
169	Monday, 6 Dhū al-Qa'dah/12 April	Sunday, 6 Dhū al-Qa'dah/11 April
172	Friday, 10 Dhū al-Qa'dah/15 April	Thursday, 10 Dhū al-Qa'dah/14 April
175	Tuesday, 20 Dhū al-Qa'dah/25 April	Sunday, 20 Dhū al-Qa'dah/25 April
176	6 Dhū al-Hijjah/16 May	6 Dhū al-Hijjah/11 May
176	10 Dhū al-Hijjah/20 May	10 Dhū al-Hijjah/15 May

There is another error on page 185 where 29 Jumādā II 679 is identified with 2 November 1280 whereas the correct conversion is 26 October. Here, Amitai-Preiss has given the Gregorian rather than the Julian date.

In conclusion, these are minor flaws in an otherwise competent and workman-like piece of research. We need more detailed monographs of the sort Amitai-Preiss has produced in order to undertake the broader issues discussed at the beginning of this review.

‘ALĪ AL-SAYYID ‘ALĪ, *al-Ḥayāh al-Thaqāfīyah fī al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah: ‘Asr al-Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk 642-923 H.* (Cairo: ‘Ayn lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Buḥūth al-Insānīyah wa-al-Ijtimā‘īyah, 1414/1994). Pp. 304.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD T. MORTEL, King Saud University

One of the major difficulties facing the historian of the Arabian Peninsula in pre-modern times—with the possible exception of the Yemen—is the paucity of primary source material. This is particularly true of Medina, for which we have no contemporary annals comparable to those produced by several generations of native historians of Mecca beginning in the ninth/fifteenth century with al-Fāsī.

Having myself experienced the problems involved in seeking to reconstruct the political history of Medina during the medieval period, I welcomed the invitation to review a work which promised to discuss cultural life in the second holiest city of Islam during the Mamluk era, in anticipation that the author had discovered hitherto unknown contemporary source materials—a rather unlikely prospect, I am forced to concede—or else had dealt with his chosen subject using a methodology based on a thorough review of all relevant Mamluk-era historical and biographical literature, in order to extract the data pertinent to a study of cultural life in Medina, which would then be subjected to rigorous analysis.

After a careful reading of the work I must, however, confess to a serious disappointment. ‘Alī al-Sayyid’s book, instead of describing Medinese cultural life during Mamluk times, appears to this reviewer as a verbose and quite undisguised apology for the Mamluks, lacking in sophistication or the application of any identifiable modern historical methodology, written with the aim of fostering an exaggerated and oftentimes simplistic perception of the extent of Mamluk political, economic, and cultural penetration in the Hijaz, without any awareness of historical progression. The underlying assumption of the work, repeated *ad nauseam*, is that the Mamluks of Egypt had vanquished both the Crusaders and the Mongols, and had thereby assumed primacy in the Islamic world, and must—of necessity—have controlled the Hijaz in general, and Medina in particular, from the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century (see pp. 5ff., 59, 79, 235-236). The author’s thesis is that the existence of “cultural life” in Medina was due—almost *in toto*—to Mamluk political suzerainty, economic superiority, and, naturally, largesse. Whatever cultural life existed in Medina, he seems to be telling the reader, must be the product of Mamluk influence.

Without, however, denying the significance of Mamluk influence in the Hijaz, I do call ‘Alī al-Sayyid’s point of view into question. Although the Mamluks repeatedly attempted to extend their sovereignty over the Hijaz from the reign of Sultan Baybars, the



Hijaz in general cannot be said to have fallen completely into the Mamluk orbit until the early ninth/fifteenth century. What we do certainly observe, during the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries, is a pattern of gradually increasing Mamluk involvement in the political life of both Mecca and Medina. Moreover, I have been unable to discern in ‘Alī al-Sayyid’s book any awareness or understanding of the modalities of the evolution of Mamluk control over Medina, and its ramifications on Medinese cultural life. Specifically, to what extent is the author justified in referring to Medina as a “Mamluk city”? (p. 162)

Earlier, I have alluded to the scarcity of data for the history of Medina during the Mamluk period, whether political, economic or cultural history is intended. ‘Alī al-Sayyid is himself also acutely aware of the parameters of this dilemma, and frequently complains of the scarcity of information specific to Medina (pp. 90, 102, 249, 279), a situation which unfortunately leads him to vapid generalizing from non-Hijazi sources, including *ḥisbah* manuals, Egyptian *waqf* documents, Mamluk histories, etc., under the assumption that the same or similar circumstances must have prevailed in Medina (e.g., pp. 81ff.). Thus, when he discusses the *madrasah* (in Medina), he finds himself forced to describe that institution as it developed in Mamluk Cairo (pp. 99-109). There is no doubt in the mind of this reviewer that, if the author had restricted himself to a consideration of the data pertaining exclusively to Medina, the size of the resultant work would have been greatly diminished, but its potential importance would have been similarly increased.

A number of serious flaws mar the book. The author—although he makes frequent mention of Ibn Farḥūn as a historian of Medina—is unaware of the existence of at least one manuscript copy of his *Naṣīḥat al-Mushāwir wa-Tasliyat al-Mujāwir*, an indispensable mine of information on political and cultural affairs in Medina during the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries.

Equally serious is the absence of any background concerning the precise religious affiliation of the sharifs of Medina or political developments in the amirate. Although ‘Alī al-Sayyid is aware of the Shī‘ism of the Husaynid sharifs of Medina, he makes no mention of their specific sectarian allegiance within Shī‘ism as a whole, i.e. Imāmī, or Twelver, Shī‘ism, as opposed to the Zaydism of their Ḥasanid cousins in Mecca. Indeed, ‘Alī al-Sayyid appears to be completely unaware of political developments in the two amirates of Mecca and Medina, as opposed to external influences, to the extent that he claims that Jammāz ibn Shīḥah (d. 704/1304) was the last of the line of Husaynid amirs of Medina! The reality of the matter is that the Husaynids retained control of the amirate for several centuries thereafter. Elsewhere (p. 35), he asserts that the history of the Husaynid sharifs of Medina was distinguished—compared with the history of their cousins the Ḥasanid sharifs of Mecca—by the notable absence of factional strife and struggle for control of the reins of power; once again, the facts simply do not support this statement.

Finally, the author’s discussion of the factors which he believes promoted the development of cultural life in Medina lacks credibility, in that he gives primacy of place to economic factors, particularly the India trade. A careful examination of both the primary and secondary literature on economic life in the medieval Hijaz will, I believe, clearly demonstrate that Mecca—with its Red Sea port of Jiddah—and not Medina, was the principal beneficiary of the dramatic increase in the volume of this trade which begins to be observed in the eighth/fourteenth century. In comparison, Medina and its port of al-Jār, are relegated to a position of total insignificance. Furthermore, ‘Alī al-Sayyid’s contention that the expansion of the India trade in the Red Sea-Hijaz region was a result of Mamluk policy



(pp. 13 ff.) is simply not substantiated by the facts. On the contrary, it was the disastrous economic policies of the Mamluk administration in Cairo, beginning with the reign of Sultan Barsbāy when *de facto* Mamluk suzerainty came to be imposed on the Hijaz, that led to the decline and eventual disappearance of the India trade in the Red Sea-Hijaz region.

In summation, ‘Alī al-Sayyid’s work should be seen, not as a consideration of indigenous manifestations of cultural life in Medina during Mamluk times, but rather a discussion of cultural contacts between Mamluk Egypt and Medina, or, perhaps, Mamluk contributions to cultural life in Medina. Even with this caveat in mind, a potential reader must also be prepared for sweeping generalizations, and a historical methodology based upon an uncritical repetition of material found in the primary sources, with little or no attempt at comparison and analysis.

JONATHAN BERKEY, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). Pp. 238.

REVIEWED BY TH. EMIL HOMERIN, University of Rochester  
AND DEBORAH DERYLAK, University of Chicago

In this work based on dissertation research, Jonathan Berkey provides a detailed description of religious education in Mamluk Cairo (1250-1517). Berkey’s main focus is on higher education, primarily Islamic jurisprudence—the study of one or more of the four major schools of Sunnī law—which, not surprisingly, was the preserve of the scholarly elite (*‘ulamā’*) and their students. Berkey, however, moves beyond this select group to discuss other aspects of the education system including the place in it of women and the ruling Mamluk military elite, as well as the educational institutions themselves and their place in the urban setting of medieval Cairo. Throughout, the author contends that the transmission of religious knowledge in Mamluk Egypt was vital to easing certain social boundaries as it brought together individuals from groups that otherwise might not have mingled so easily.

When first examining the *‘ulamā’*, Berkey focuses on the personal. He draws much of his data from medieval biographical dictionaries, which encourage such an approach because their biographies tell us more about their subjects’ teachers than about the places where any given individual studied. Concomitantly, while texts were obviously central to instruction, these texts were not only read, but were, ideally, orally passed from teachers to students. As Berkey notes, “the belief that only oral transmission is truly legitimate, lies deeply embedded in the Islamic educational system” (p. 24). Thus it was largely the *ijāzah*—the “license” to teach a given work with its chain of transmission from shaykh to student—which afforded one scholarly authority. A close personal relationship between master and student, then, was at the heart of this system of normative education with its rather elastic institutional structure.



Personal contact was likewise essential to patronage, for as Berkey observes:

Urban society in the Mamluk period was characterized by a web of patronage that bound the ulama as a group to the military elite. In exchange for protection from external enemies and income from bureaucratic and legal appointments, the educated elite legitimized the Mamluk regime by enjoining obedience on the local population, mediating the government's needs for tax revenues, and performing a host of tangible and intangible services to the state (p. 101).

In several instances, Berkey reveals some of the ties between specific individual benefactors of schools and certain instructors there, and here, too, we see the informality of the system and the fluid way in which schools were administered. Wealthy endowers of institutions often appointed instructors, while ruling sultans who might not be directly affiliated with a school could make appointments. Scholars, too, took similar liberties by reserving and endowing posts for their sons and favored students.

Berkey provides his strongest evidence for the flexibility of the system of religious education in his discussion of the institutions themselves. This chapter is based primarily on a careful study of *waqf* documents, deeds of charitable endowment which, in this case, provided for the erection and maintenance of schools, specific classes to be taught, the staff and, usually the faculty. Berkey makes several cogent observations, noting in particular that the diverse structure of higher education "resulted from the complete absence of any overarching state or ecclesiastical authority responsible for shaping Islamic education, or indeed any aspect of Islamic religious culture. Norms might be established, in practice as in belief, by consensus within the Muslim community" (p. 60).

Berkey underscores this diversity by noting the difficulties historians have had in even defining the term *madrasah*, the most common historical marker for a school of Islamic jurisprudence. He states that, "[n]ot all madrasas were exclusively or even principally educational institutions, and, as in earlier periods, much serious legal and religious instruction took place outside of madrasas" (p. 47). Mosques and Sufi convents, for example, also frequently supported and maintained similar educational endeavors.

Just as higher education was not solely the property of any single type of institution, the *'ulamā'* themselves were rarely bound exclusively to a single institution for their support. Some scholars often held several posts at once and even moved from institution to institution in what might be regarded as a medieval version of "double-dipping." Further, scholars also participated in teaching circles held outside of their respective institutions, and these gatherings served to extend religious education beyond the realm of jurisprudence and higher education, to a larger body of interested non-academics.

Clearly the schools were by no means limited to instruction in jurisprudence. Other subjects taught included Quranic exegesis, *ḥadīth*, the linguistic sciences, and occasionally, medicine, and many classes were open to a larger public. In particular, women and Mamluk amirs—although rarely numbered among the scholarly elite—often excelled in the popular study of *ḥadīth*, even to the point of receiving *ijāzahs* from their instructors which they in turn passed on to their students.

Just as important, most classes and nearly all education, for that matter, took place in a religious setting. Many of the most important educational institutions were part of a

*madrasah*-mosque complex with classes and study periods organized around the times for formal daily prayers, and surrounded by other pious and devotional activities such as the public recitation of the Quran or *ḥadīth*. As Berkey insightfully observes, the transmission of religious texts “took place alongside, and sometimes as part of Sufi activities, public sermonizing, and popular religious celebration, and those who devoted themselves to education did not necessarily see their efforts as something fundamentally distinct from public worship” (p. 50).

Throughout his study, Berkey explicitly moves from the personal to the societal, highlighting the major roles that Islamic education and its institutions played in Mamluk Cairo. Thus, Berkey reserves most of his conclusions regarding education’s important social dimension for his final chapter. Perhaps this discussion would have been more nuanced had it woven together and extended certain strands mentioned in earlier chapters. For instance, Berkey might have addressed the question of why certain schools attracted a large number of foreign students. Given that students were drawn more to individual teachers than to institutions, how did the presence of a large foreign contingent affect an institution’s place within Cairene society? Again, given the prominent functions of educational institutions as centers for worship and education for the public as well as for the scholarly elite, Berkey might have offered further analysis of the factors involved in an individual’s decision to endow an institution besides political interests and the accrual of social and symbolic capital.

Finally, Berkey’s passing comparisons to western medieval education might have been expanded somewhat to enhance his arguments. He pointedly concludes:

For centuries in the medieval West, higher education, often literacy itself, was the almost exclusive prerogative of a clerical elite consecrated to the service of an established Church. Islam, of course, has neither a church nor a clergy, and therefore lacks two fundamental impediments to broad social interest and participation in education. . . . In particular, the emphasis on the personal as opposed to institutional contacts and relationships, and the unquestioned superiority of the spoken as opposed to the written word guaranteed the persistent openness and informality of the system of education (p. 216).

Nevertheless, while the earliest medieval “universities” in Europe were mobile guilds or corporations of students and scholars sanctioned by papal or imperial authority, they were not bound to any particular location. By contrast, higher education in Mamluk Cairo was in some sense often linked to, though not defined by, its endowed institutions. Further, though these early European guilds were degree-awarding institutions, the license to teach conferred by them might have been usefully compared to the Muslim *ijāzah* and the authoritative masters who controlled its granting.

These few observations aside, Jonathan Berkey’s *The Transmission of Knowledge* is a patiently researched and well-written study of a fundamental aspect of medieval Muslim religion and society. Berkey’s work is insightful and stimulating, and it lays fertile ground for further research.



DAYF ALLĀH IBN YAḤYÁ AL-ZAHRĀNĪ, *Zayf al-Nuqūd al-Islāmīyah: Min Šadr al-Islām ḥattā Nihāyat al-‘Ašr al-Mamlūkī*. (Mecca: [s.n.], 1413/1993). Pp. 149.

RA’FAT MUḤAMMAD AL-NABARĀWĪ, *al-Sikkah al-Islāmīyah fī Mišr: ‘Ašr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Jarākisah*. (Cairo: Markaz al-Ḥaḍārah al-‘Arabīyah lil-‘I‘lām wa-al-Nashr, 1993). Pp. 371.

ADEL ALLOUCHE, *Mamluk Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrīzī’s Ighāthah*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994). Pp. 162.

REVIEWED BY WARREN C. SCHULTZ, DePaul University

Scholarship on Mamluk economic and monetary history has come a long way over the past fifty years. The numerous studies by Ashtor, Bacharach, Balog, Ehrenkreutz, the Fahmīs (father and son), Labib, Popper, Rabie, Shoshan, and Udovitch are well known and have provided a strong foundation for the field. Still, as seen by the three works reviewed here, there is work to be done and scholarship continues, albeit with varying levels of usefulness. And, as is often the case, that level of usefulness is often related to the facility with which the author handles both the literary and numismatic sources.

The subject matter of *Zayf al-Nuqūd al-Islāmīyah* is both more and less than that which its title claims. More in that this short book goes beyond an English definition of the word counterfeiting to include such matters as governmental issues of lightweight or debased coinages, and less in that it provides an overview only of the Arabic-speaking lands (from North Africa to Iraq), ignoring the Islamic lands to the East. The author makes no claim to thoroughness for such a wide ranging topic over such a long time frame, promising only to give an overview of the problem and terminology of counterfeiting and to provide well known examples of it from Islamic history. The work is organized around lists (thus we have the eighteen ways of counterfeiting, the eight reasons for counterfeiting, and the four ways to detect it, etc.) followed by notable examples drawn from the Arabic chronicles. By far the largest number of these anecdotes are drawn from the Mamluk period (pp. 33-37).

Despite the convenience of having so many Mamluk era citations gathered between two soft covers, Mamlukists will find little of benefit in this work. The reasons are numerous. First of all, there is nothing new. All of the events cited are known and have been discussed in previous work on Mamluk money. Secondly, there is little analysis or interpretation of the anecdotes cited, and what little there is often cannot be trusted. Examples of this last problem are best illustrated by the following three categories: an uncritical and sometimes careless use of the sources, a concern only with the normative, and a lack of awareness of the numismatic record.

Al-Zahrānī’s careless use of sources is illustrated by the following examples. In the discussion of the events of the end of the eighth/fourteenth century (p. 51), we read that the Ustādār Maḥmūd ibn ‘Alī “opened” a mint in Alexandria during the second reign of al-Zāhir Barqūq. A careful reading of what al-Maqrīzī and other Mamluk authors had to say about this event reveals that Maḥmūd ibn ‘Alī only reopened a previously closed mint. This

is an apparent minor point when taken out of context, but it is important when considering the total picture of the actions of Barqūq and his *ustādār*. Similarly, al-Zahrānī claims (p. 36) that the many different types of coins mentioned by the sources as circulating in the early to mid-ninth/fifteenth century are proof of the monetary chaos of the period, yet he ignores that those same sources often include exchange rate information revealing how merchants and money changers did business in such a marketplace. Al-Zahrānī's uncritical approach to the literary sources is seen most vividly in his dubious assertion (p. 33) that the Mamluk period saw more counterfeiting than any other period in Islamic history. While it is likely that we have more accounts of counterfeiting from the Mamluk era than any previous period of Islamic history, it must be asked whether this is only a reflection of the fact that we have more sources about the Mamluks to draw upon. This is especially crucial to consider given the numerous counterfeit coins from many Islamic dynasties that can be examined in major collections around the world.

It must also be stressed that this is a normative work based on normative attitudes. Despite the number of stories drawn from the chronicles, the book is concerned with how money ought to be, and not how it actually was. Al-Zahrānī begins his overview of Islamic money and counterfeiting with a brief survey of relevant Quranic, *ḥadīth*, and legal material as well as a brief discussion of the first truly Islamic coinage, that of the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik. His subsequent discussion of numerous citations from the next eight centuries is then based on the unstated assumption that the money of 'Abd al-Malik is the only true Islamic coinage, and any deviation from its standards must represent a form of counterfeiting. Given the tremendous diversity of coinages issued by the many subsequent Islamic dynasties—similar in some ways but varying widely in others—this is essentialism in the worst way. It even ignores that Islamic jurists reconciled themselves to the existence of different coinages, and concentrated their legal rulings on the basic requirements needed for the money used by Muslims. This essentialism leads to several anachronistic assumptions. Al-Zahrānī cites authors as far apart temporally as al-Jāhīz and al-Qalqashandī in his description of the characteristics of "Islamic coinage" ignoring the reality that over the seven plus centuries between these two men not only did the money change but even the definitions of basic terms had varied. Thus al-Qalqashandī is quoted in the discussion of early Islamic silver *dirhams*, resulting in the assertion that early Islamic *dirhams* were only two-thirds silver, when it is known that they are over 90 percent pure. Furthermore, this example hinges on al-Qalqashandī's use of the term *nuqrah* to indicate an alloy of two-thirds silver and one-third copper, yet Ayyubid and some Mamluk sources assert that *nuqrah* indicated fine silver. Let the reader beware.

Finally, nowhere is this normative concern more evident than in al-Zahrānī's lack of awareness of the numismatic evidence. While coins that were clipped, broken, of varying weights and alloys, and of foreign origin do not fit in his definition of a proper Islamic coinage, it is known that coins such as these circulated in Mamluk markets. This shortcoming extends beyond the borders of Egypt, as when the author asserts (wrongly) that the Ashrafī *dīnār* of al-Ashraf Barsbāy was the first Muslim gold coin to be issued to a non-*mithqāl* weight standard. There are numerous lighter-weight gold coins from earlier Muslim states as any perusal of coin dealers' lists would reveal. There is also no acknowledgment that numismatic evidence indicates that even the weight value of the *mithqāl* unit changed over time and place. In conclusion, Mamlukists interested in the matter of counterfeiting in the sultanate would be best served by skimming this work and



devoting their time and their attention to studies such as Bacharach's "Foreign Coins, Forgers, and Forgeries in 15th Century Egypt" in *Actes du 8ème Congrès international de numismatique* (Paris, 1976), pp. 501-511.

Unlike the first book reviewed, Ra'fat al-Nabarāwī's *al-Sikkah al-Islāmīyah fī Miṣr: 'Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Jarākisah* is based on a thorough familiarity with both the literary and numismatic sources. As Ḥasan al-Bāshā notes in his forward, this book addresses an important period in the monetary history of Egypt, that of the reign of the Circassian Mamluk sultans, 784-922/1382-1517. Al-Nabarāwī examines this topic first by analyzing the surviving numismatic evidence, classified by stylistic analysis (section one), and then surveying the exchange rate information found in the contemporary literary sources (section two). These extensive discussions are sandwiched between a brief introduction and a short conclusion.

As anyone who has worked on Mamluk money can testify, the chief obstacle to its study is access to the coins. Collections are scarce, sometimes limited in scope, or even closed to examination. Thus, the chief value of this work lies not in any new interpretation of the Mamluk monetary system, but in the wealth of data packed into it. This is especially true of the numismatic section, in which the author states that he has published 636 new coin types (p. 348). There the reader will find not only information about previously published Mamluk coins but also the results of the author's personal and in-depth examination of four major collections: those of the American Numismatic Society, the Egyptian Library, the Islamic Art Museum in Cairo, and the personal holdings of the noted collector Dr. Henry Awad. The last two are unpublished and especially welcome additions. Thus the book is a very useful and much more detailed supplement to the relevant sections of the long out of print *The Coinage of the Mamlūk Sultans of Egypt and Syria* by Paul Balog (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1964). Indeed, for those who cannot locate a copy of Balog's corpus, al-Nabarāwī's book along with Sāmiḥ 'Abd al-Raḥmān Fahmī's *al-Waḥdāt al-Naqḍīyah al-Mamlūkīyah: 'Aṣr al-Mamālīk al-Baḥrīyah* (Jiddah, 1403/1983) will make an adequate substitute.

Some minor comments are in order. First, it is worth asking why the rather artificial distinction of Circassian period (vis-à-vis the Baḥrī or Turkish period) has been followed. The many shortcomings of following this division have been pointed out by scholars interested in other aspects of the Mamluk Sultanate, and similar shortcomings are found in the field of monetary history. A wider perspective reveals that the money issued by al-Zāhir Barqūq and subsequent Circassian sultans can only be understood in the context of the money issued by the earlier sultans. If any major break in monetary practice is to be emphasized, it is better to look at events in the reigns of al-Nāṣir Faraj, al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, and/or al-Ashraf Barsbāy and not the reign of al-Zāhir Barqūq.

Second, while the claim of 636 new coin types is technically true, it must be noted that quantity does not always equal importance. In classical numismatic terminology, any variation in coin legend, design, style or other factors can constitute a new type. While changes of these types may be extremely significant and of major importance to the economic historian, it may also happen that such differences are insignificant and of interest only to the collector. Many of the changes noted here fall into the latter category. For example, a large number of the new types cited occur in the copper coinage from the reigns of Barqūq. Almost all are the result of minor changes in legend placement, and, in the



opinion of this reviewer, have about as much economic significance as changes in date on the American quarter dollar.

Third, the book's stylistic analysis of Circassian Mamluk coins would have benefited from a change in format. Long term trends in coinages are illustrated much better when the coins are arranged in mint series rather than by reign of individual sultan. Fourth, it should be noted that al-Nabarāwī's exchange rate data—while useful—has been superseded by that found in Ḥamūd al-Najīdī's *al-Niḏām al-Naqdī al-Mamlūkī*, (Alexandria, n.d.). On the other hand, the book also contains a helpful glossary of Mamluk monetary terminology (pp. 339-345). While this is a welcome aid in keeping track of all those adjectival labels the Mamluks applied to their money, it also contains an oft-repeated error: al-Nabarāwī repeats Balog's assertion that the *dirham (min al-) fulūs* was a copper coin weighing one *dirham* (2.97 grams), a conclusion not borne out by the numismatic or chronicle evidence.

Finally, there are sixteen plates featuring 134 coins. These photographic reproductions are of much better quality than is normally encountered in Middle Eastern publications (cf. the poor illustrations found in *Zayf al-Nuqūd al-Islāmīyah*). Unfortunately, however, the coins are reproduced at larger than actual size and not according to any consistent scale. Ashrafī *dīnārs*, for example, are nowhere near an inch in diameter. Anyone unfamiliar with the coinage should use the plates with caution.

Last to be reviewed is *Mamluk Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrīzī's Ighāthah*, Adel Allouche's masterful translation of a Mamluk historian and civil servant's strident criticism of the ruling Mamluk elite and their monetary policies. Many reviewers have already commented upon why this book is a welcome replacement for Gaston Wiet's 1962 French translation, and those reasons need only be endorsed and not repeated here. This reviewer has also written a long discussion of Allouche's book for the *American Journal of Numismatics*, and what follows is a synopsis of the comments found there. Briefly stated, they are as follows: if this translation does nothing more than eliminate the common misunderstanding that *Ighāthah al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghummah* is about famines, then Allouche will have achieved a great deal. Allouche's study goes beyond that, however, by providing an elegant and highly readable translation of this important economic treatise. That said, Allouche's only passing familiarity with the numismatic evidence necessitates treating with caution the monetary analysis found in the translation's introduction and supporting material.

Allouche's translation is based upon the Cairo 1940 Arabic edition. The *Ighāthah* itself is a short work; in this volume the translation fills but sixty-three pages. Following the lead of the text itself, Allouche has divided the *Ighāthah* into nine sections. The translation is supplemented by a twenty-page introduction and nine useful appendices. The first of these appendices is in effect a glossary, while the remaining eight are tabular presentations of exchange rates and commodities prices. These appendices and the accompanying notes to the text bear witness to Allouche's thorough familiarity with the relevant contemporary literary sources.

Allouche argues persuasively that it is in the context of al-Maqrīzī as critic that the *Ighāthah* should be understood, calling it a polemical treatise (p. 13). In it al-Maqrīzī blames the Mamluks for Egypt's economic problems. Unlike earlier crises, which he states were caused by natural phenomena, al-Maqrīzī believes the difficulties of the first decade



of the ninth/fifteenth century were caused by the “malfeasance and negligence of the public good” exhibited by Egypt’s rulers (p. 24). While also condemning Mamluk practices such as the selling of offices and high taxation, al-Maqrīzī devotes the bulk of his critique to the Mamluks’ monetary policies, specifically their excessive issuance of copper coinage. If the government were to abandon copper coins and return to silver and gold, argues al-Maqrīzī, the troubles would cease (pp. 80-81). Regardless of whether al-Maqrīzī’s antidote was correct or not, Allouche rightly emphasizes that al-Maqrīzī’s concern about economic and monetary matters was rare for the time, and it is those issues and not famines which are the true subject of the work (pp. 5, 13).

In Allouche’s introduction to the translation he promises both a “presentation and [an] explanation of a number of relevant issues” (p. x). After a short historical overview, the introduction is broken up into five sections addressing five issues: Contemporary Views of the Early Circassians; The Date of al-Maqrīzī’s *Ighāthah*; The Notion of *Ghalā*; The Scope of the *Ighāthah*; and A Discussion of al-Maqrīzī’s Views. Woven throughout the introduction are several conclusions drawn about Mamluk money. It is clear that Allouche has based his conclusions primarily upon the evidence found in the chronicles. While the author does make frequent reference to Balog’s corpus of Mamluk coins (mentioned above), it is evident from his discussion that he is not intimately familiar with the coins themselves. As a result, his brief analysis of Mamluk money, while better than many which have preceded it, should still be treated with caution.

I will limit my discussion to two examples. First of all, it is no longer universally accepted that the Mamluk monetary system was ever “based” on any particular metal as al-Maqrīzī claims and Allouche (and others) have repeated. The numismatic record is quite clear that coins in all three metals—gold, silver, and copper—were in existence throughout the entire Mamluk period, albeit subject to temporary shortages and frequent changes in supply and demand. Thus when al-Maqrīzī alleges that (a) silver coins were not minted in the reign of al-Zāhir Barqūq, and (b) silver was no longer minted by “about” 1403 (p. 15), the numismatic evidence indicates that these scenarios were (a) not true, and (b) only a temporary interruption in minting. Furthermore, because one particular coin was more commonly cited in price quotations or exchange rates does not mean that it was the “basis” of the system, merely that it was a common currency at that time. Exchange rates, by definition, require the presence of two types of money. Thus, Allouche’s frequent assertions that the Mamluk monetary system was based first on gold, then silver, and later on a “copper dirham of account” (pp. 15-20) should be discounted.

My second comment concerns this “copper *dirham* of account.” In his preface, Allouche rightly acknowledges the tremendous difficulties encountered in understanding Mamluk monetary terms (p. x). These terms are used inconsistently in the sources and frequently have multiple meanings. Nowhere are these problems more evident than in the phrase *dirham/darāhim min al-fulūs* found in the Mamluk era texts. Separately, the term *dirham* may refer to either a silver coin or a weight unit, while *fulūs* (sg., *fals*) always refers to copper coins. But as Allouche points out, when these words are linked together, the resulting phrase has caused much confusion among modern scholars. It has been interpreted (and translated) many ways, ranging from the assumption that it was still a silver coin to the definition that it was a copper coin weighing a *dirham* (as seen above in al-Nabarāwī’s book). Neither of these is correct. The phrase refers to a unit of account, and it means the amount of copper coins (*fulūs*) necessary to achieve the value of one silver



coin (*dirham*). Allouche rightly recognizes this term as a unit of account, and his translation is the better for it.

Throughout the book, however, Allouche renders *darāhim min al-fulūs* as “dirham of account.” While this usage is better than William Popper’s “trade-dirham,” it is still problematic. Contrary to Allouche’s belief, this “dirham of account” was not the only unit of account in use in the Mamluk domains (pp. 9, 17). Given the extremely irregular weights of Mamluk gold and silver coins struck before the reform issues of the 1420s, it is probable that these coins were weighed for all transactions. The value of the weighed amount of coins was then determined by comparison to their respective unit of account. Thus Mamluk money was no different from other contemporary monies in that it consisted of two parts: the coin itself and the unit of account by which its value was determined. The inherent problem of Allouche’s use of “dirham of account” for *darāhim min al-fulūs* is that his phrase could easily be confused with the unit of account specific to the silver *dirham*. A more accurate and less misleading (albeit inelegant) rendering of the Arabic phrase would be “a silver *dirham*’s worth of copper coins.” Better yet, why not use the transliterated Arabic phrase itself?

A final word on the *Ighāthah* itself is needed. The powerful indictment by al-Maqrīzī notwithstanding, it should not be forgotten that many modern scholars have reached a different conclusion regarding the economic troubles that beset the Mamluk sultanate, arguing that the monetary policies followed were a reaction to economic difficulty, not a cause of it. That should be kept in mind lest the reader be swept aside by Allouche’s flowing translation of al-Maqrīzī’s polemic.

MUḤAMMAD ḤAMZAH ISMĀ‘ĪL AL-ḤADDĀD, *al-Sultān al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn: Tārīkh Ahwāl Miṣr fī ‘Ahdihī, Munsha’ atuhu al-Mi‘mārīyah* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbulī, 1993). Pp. 245.

REVIEWED BY LINDA S. NORTHRUP, University of Toronto

Al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn, whose reign (1279-1290) was of considerable importance, both with respect to the establishment of the Mamluk sultanate in Egypt and Syria and within the broader context of world history, has recently been the subject not only of a monograph but also of numerous articles treating various aspects of his rule. His reign is also covered in some recent general histories of the Mamluk period. Yet, despite the relatively intense scrutiny to which this sultan and his reign have been subjected, Qalāwūn remains a rather enigmatic, even somewhat colorless, personality.

Until recent studies brought attention to the political and military importance of his reign, Qalāwūn was perhaps best known for his monumental complex in Cairo, comprising a *bīmāristān* (hospital), *qubbah* (dome), and *madrāsah* (school), whose remains, with the exception of the hospital, still stand today. The hospital in particular, as one of the most advanced medical institutions of its day and well-documented, has attracted scholars interested in social, cultural, and medical history.<sup>1</sup> The complex as a whole—the first multi-

<sup>1</sup>For example, Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, *al-Awqāf wa-al-Ḥayāh al-Ijtīmā‘īyah fī Miṣr 648-*



purpose institution of its kind in Egypt—has been a focus for architectural historians with respect to both plan and decoration.<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding the apparent scope of the monograph as indicated by the title, one would expect that, as an archaeologist by training and a lecturer (*mudarris musā'id*) in the College of Archaeology (Kulliyat al-Āthār) of Cairo University, al-Ḥaddād's real focus would be this complex. Integrating the findings of his archaeological survey within the wider historical and socio-cultural framework of the period might enable him to cast new light on this sultan and his reign. Expectations are raised by the fact that this book was submitted to, and won first prize in, a competition sponsored by the Historical and Archaeological Committee of the High Council for Culture in Egypt. It is also recommended by two of Egypt's most eminent medieval historians, Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āshūr and Su'ād Māhir Muḥammad (inside back cover).

Al-Ḥaddād divides his monograph into two parts: historical narrative and description of the monuments. Part 1, entitled "Sultan Qalāwūn and the Condition of Egypt during His Reign," is subdivided into three chapters: (1) "Qalāwūn and the Sultanate"; (2) "The Internal Condition of Egypt during the Reign of Qalāwūn"; and (3) "External Relations." Part 2, "The Extant Monuments of Sultan Qalāwūn in the City of Cairo: The Architectural Complex in Mu'izz al-Dīn lillāh Street," comprises an introduction and four chapters. Each of the first three chapters is devoted to one component of Qalāwūn's complex (*bīmāristān*, *qubbah*, *madrasah*), while the fourth is intended as an analytical study of the entire complex. The text is embellished with notes, as well as with plans and photographs (unfortunately not well reproduced). The work includes a bibliography of primary and secondary sources used, but lacks an index.

There are, in my opinion, two problems with this study, the first of which is methodological. There is no apparent thesis. Further, the author fails to define the relation between the historical and descriptive sections of the work. The length of the two parts suggests that they have equal importance; the historical narrative occupies ninety-two pages, while the study of the monuments consumes eighty-six pages. The function of part 1, the historical narrative, however, is puzzling. The basic outline of Qalāwūn's reign has been traced elsewhere by Surūr, 'Āshūr, Ḥasan, Rabie, and myself,<sup>3</sup> and the most insightful accounts of Qalāwūn's sultanate published to date are found in Robert Irwin's *The Middle East in the Middle Ages* and Ulrich Haarmann's contribution in *The*

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923/1250-1517 (Cairo: Dār al-Nahḍah al-'Arabīyah, 1980), especially 156-172; also Ahmad Issa Bey, *Histoire des bimaristans (hôpitaux) à l'époque islamique* (Cairo: Imprimerie Paul Barbey, 1928), passim; published in Arabic as *Ta'riḫ al-Bīmāristānāt fī al-Islām* (Damascus: Maṭbū'āt Jam'īyat al-Tamaddun al-Islāmī, 1939).

<sup>2</sup>For example, Max Herz, *Die Baugruppe des Sultans Qalāwūn in Kairo*, *Abhandlungen des Hamburgischen Kolonialinstituts*, 42 (Hamburg: L. Friederichsen, 1919); K. A. C. Creswell, "The Māristān, Mausoleum, and Madrasa of Sultan Qalā'ūn," *Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 190-212.

<sup>3</sup>Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1948); Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āshūr, *Miṣr fī Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Baḥrīyah* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣrīyah, 1959), among other works; 'Alī Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, *Ta'riḫ al-Mamālīk al-Baḥrīyah* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣrīyah, 1967); Hassanein Rabie, "Qalāwūn," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 4:484-486. Linda S. 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.)*, under review for publication.



*Encyclopaedia of Islam* article "Miṣr."<sup>4</sup> Al-Ḥaddād brings neither new information nor a new perspective to his narrative. Nor does he use his synthesis as a framework within which to interpret the findings of his survey of the monuments.

The archaeological (i.e., descriptive) survey of Qalāwūn's complex which constitutes part 2 is, perhaps, somewhat more useful. In addition to providing a physical history of the complex and the various modifications to it as well as detailed descriptions of its plan, architectural components and decoration, the author on occasion usefully compares and contrasts textual descriptions with the actual remains of the structure (e.g., p. 123). But when he delves, for example, into social history, repeating what the endowment deeds and historical accounts say about health care, the clientele of the hospital and its employees, al-Ḥaddād contributes little that has not been said elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> His most interesting, and perhaps most important, observation, based on a comment of Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, is that the sultan does not seem to have intended the *qubbaḥ* as his burial place, for the tomb itself was not part of the original structure; it was built only after Qalāwūn's death (pp. 140-141). Rather, the *qubbaḥ* served an architectural function, to draw attention to the complex; it was also the site of religious activities: Quran recitation, discussions of *ḥadīth*, teaching of Quran commentary and *fiqh* (p. 141). Rather than serving as a conclusion in which the results of the archaeological survey are analyzed within the historical and historiographical context, the final chapter provides a discussion of the scholarly literature regarding the main features of the three principal components of the complex. Several questions remain unanswered. What does this descriptive archaeological survey add to what we learn from documents and texts? Are there considerations other than those mentioned in the sources which might have stimulated Qalāwūn to build such a complex, incorporating a hospital? If inspired by Nūr al-Dīn's hospital, as some sources relate, is it possible to detect the influence of Nūr al-Dīn's hospital on Qalāwūn's, either physically or in terms of functions? To what degree was the sultan himself involved in the plan? Do the archaeological remains shed any further light on his reign, character or personality?

A second criticism concerns the historiographical basis of al-Ḥaddād's monograph. Although Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir and Baybars al-Manṣūrī (*Zubdat al-Fikrah fī Ta'rīkh al-Hijrah*) have been used, several other important contemporary sources (e.g., Baybars al-Manṣūrī's *al-Tuḥfah al-Mulūkīyah fī al-Dawlah al-Turkīyah* and Shāfi' ibn 'Alī's *al-Faḍl al-Ma'thūr min Sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, among others) in which the complex has been discussed have not been consulted. Noticeably, the sources most frequently cited date to the later Mamluk period: al-Maqrīzī, al-'Aynī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and Ibn Iyās. Although these sources often contribute new information, in at least one instance their uncritical use results in an anachronistic use of terminology.<sup>6</sup> An account of Qalāwūn's reign, based on a much wider range of contemporary and later Mamluk literary sources, first analyzed historiographically, will be found in my own study on Qalāwūn.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>(Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986); and Section 5: "The Mamluk Period 1250-1517," 2nd ed., 7:165-177, respectively. See also Northrup, *Slave to Sultan*.

<sup>5</sup>E.g., al-Ḥaddād, 55-57, 128-139. Cf. Amīn, *al-Awqāf wa-al-Ḥayāh al-Ijtīmā'īyah*, 156-172; idem, in the appendix to his edition of Ibn Ḥabīb's *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-Banīh* (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-'Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1976), 295-396.

<sup>6</sup>The terms *mushtarawāt*, *ajlāb* and *julbān* (al-Ḥaddād, 42) to describe categories of *mamlūks* are not, to my knowledge, found in the sources for Qalāwūn's reign.

<sup>7</sup>*From Slave to Sultan*.



Similarly, on several occasions al-Ḥaddād cites the endowment deed for Qalāwūn's complex, drawn up by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Katkhudā, leader of the Qāzdughlīyah janissary unit in Egypt during the second half of the eighteenth century and *nāzir* at that time of Qalāwūn's hospital, rather than Qalāwūn's original deeds, without telling us why. Though the existence of Katkhudā's deed has been known for some time, this document has not been widely available to scholars until recently,<sup>8</sup> and it would have been appropriate to note the importance of this source, which, (though not having seen it myself) I suspect, includes the endowment deed for the *madrasah*, which is not found among the extant documents dating to the thirteenth century.

Although al-Ḥaddād has used current secondary literature in Arabic, his failure to supplement older, and still valuable, foreign scholarship with more recent research—whether with regard to the historical narrative or description of the complex—is unfortunate. Important recent foreign studies treating aspects of Qalāwūn's reign are not cited in the historical narrative.<sup>9</sup> Of more importance, no study of Qalāwūn's monuments in a Western language later than Creswell's foundational study, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, vol. 2 (1959) is cited. He accuses "Orientalists" of neglecting the role of local tradition as an influence on the elements of the *madrasah*, but makes no reference to Michael Meinecke's important, detailed analysis of the decorative system employed in the complex in which local influences *are* traced.<sup>10</sup> He might also have mentioned the plans of the World of Islam Festival Trust to restore this monument.<sup>11</sup> For whom is this work intended? If meant for a lay public, with a general interest in Egypt's history and monuments, al-Ḥaddād's work presents a clearly written and generally accurate synthesis of Egyptian and, albeit, older foreign scholarship. The specialist, however, will likely be disappointed. Having failed to interpret the findings of the archaeological survey in the light of the historical conditions of Qalāwūn's reign or to make use of important documentation and research, whether original sources or the most recent foreign scholarship, an opportunity has been lost to illumine further Qalāwūn's life and reign.

<sup>8</sup>For excerpts from this document (Ministry of Awqāf, Cairo, no. 1012) regarding the hospital, see Issa Bey, *Histoire des bimaristans*, 69-72. Al-Ḥaddād also cites Muḥammad Sayf al-Naṣr Abū al-Futūḥ's "Madrasat Sulṭān al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn bi-al-Naḥḥāsīn bi-al-Qāhirah: Dirāsāt Atharīyah fī Ḍaw' Wathīqah Jadīdah," *Majallat Kullīyat al-Ādāb*, Jāmi'at Ṣan'ā' (1984), which I have not yet seen.

<sup>9</sup>For example, Adel Allouche and P. M. Holt, among others, on diplomacy; Robert Irwin and Donald P. Little on the conquest of Tripoli and Acre, respectively.

<sup>10</sup>"Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn in Kairo: Untersuchungen zu Genese mamlukischen Architekturdekoration," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 27, no. 1 (1971): 47-80.

<sup>11</sup>Alistair Duncan, "Proposed Restoration and Rehabilitation of the Madrasa, Mausoleum, and Maristan of Sultan Qala'un," in *Islamic Cairo: Architectural Conservation and Urban Development of the Historic Centre*, ed. Michael Meinecke, Art and Archaeology Research Papers (London: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Abteilung Kairo, 1980), 74-76.



HAYĀT NĀṢIR AL-HAJJĪ, *Suwar min al-Ḥaḍārah al-‘Arabīyah al-Islāmīyah fī Salṭanat al-Mamālīk* (Kuwait: Dār al-Qalam lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 1992/1412). Pp. 249.

REVIEWED BY JOHN L. MELOY, University of Chicago

This book consists of four studies in the administrative and social history of the Mamluk period, with an emphasis on the Baḥrī period and the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn in particular. The author’s preface is unnecessarily apologetic for the book’s limited purview in light of the fact that a complete study of the period’s civilization would be a vast undertaking. In fact, the range of topics, like those covered in the author’s many other published works, is quite broad: the papers collected here deal with the fields of administration, law, education, and medicine. The preface also unnecessarily justifies the exploration of the articles’ topics on the basis of the unique achievements of Islamic civilization during this period. This claim comes across as more than a bit overstated and is based in part on a number of unsubstantiated assertions, for example, that the Mamluks’ unbounded enthusiasm for Islam was the foundation of the civilization and that half of Upper Egypt’s population converted to Islam during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

The first article, entitled “al-Taqsīm al-Idārī fī Miṣr Zaman al-Mamālīk al-Baḥrīyah” (The Administrative Division of Egypt at the Time of the Baḥrī Mamluks), discusses the *iqṭā‘* system in Egypt by way of a description of the cadastral surveys and land distributions ordered by Sultan Ḥusām al-Dīn Lājīn and Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (*al-rawk al-ḥusāmī* and *al-rawk al-nāṣirī*, respectively). The author presents information on both surveys as well as the economic importance of the latter; unfortunately, the conclusion offers little synthetic analysis beyond the assertion that *al-rawk al-nāṣirī* was long-lived because it was an administrative organization that conformed to Egypt’s political, economic, and social conditions. The third paper, “Min Mazāhir Niẓām al-Ta‘līm fī Miṣr Zaman al-Mamālīk” (On Features of the Educational System in Egypt at the Time of the Mamluks) consists of a series of discussions on the various institutions—mosques, *madrasahs*, *khānqāhs*, *ribāṭs*, and *zāwīyahs*—that offered instruction, as well as sections on faculty, students, certification, libraries, and *maktab-sabīls*. This article, too, is descriptive, and offers no argument about the nature of education in Mamluk Egypt. Both papers appear to have been published previously; I have partial references to articles of the same titles by the author in *Majallat Dirāsāt al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* and *Majallat al-Jāmi‘ah al-Mustanṣirīyah*, although I have not been able to identify the issues.

The second and fourth articles are slightly revised versions of articles that appeared earlier, although there is no reference to this fact. The first of these, “al-Qaḍā’ wa-al-Quḍāh fī Miṣr fī ‘Ahd al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (709-741 H./1309-1341 M.)” (The Judiciary and Judges of Egypt in the Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn) appeared in *Dirāsāt: al-‘Ulūm al-Insānīyah*, vol. 13, no. 12 (1986): 65-95. The version in this book includes a number of new paragraphs and a conclusion. The article begins with a very brief discussion of the institution of chief judgeships for each of the four Sunnī legal *madhhabs* during the reign of Baybars and developments during the reign of Qalāwūn. The body of the article covers various aspects of the judiciary during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The conclusion, like the introduction, poses broader questions about aspects of the judiciary. The uniqueness of the Mamluk judiciary with respect to the chief judgeships is



substantially diminished when one considers that the Fatimids sponsored chief judges in both Shī‘ī and Sunnī *madhhabs*, and that Nūr al-Dīn Zangī appointed chief judges in a number of *madhhabs* as well. The article entitled “al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī mundhu Ta’sīsihi wa-ḥattā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thāmin” (The Manṣūrī Hospital from Its Foundation to the End of the Eighth Century) consists of discussions on the *waqfiyah* of the hospital, apparently (there is no explicit reference) as published by Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn in his edition of Ḥasan ibn Ḥabīb’s *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-Banīh*. It also contains discussions of the hospital’s equipment, its medical, financial, and administrative organization, and the study of medicine in the hospital, and it concludes with a discussion of the hospital in the following century. This article, the book’s fourth and last piece, first appeared in *al-Majallah al-‘Arabīyah lil-‘Ulūm al-Insānīyah*, vol. 8, no. 29 (1988): 6-35. The version under review includes only a few changes.

These four articles use a wide range of chronicle and encyclopedic sources, both published and unpublished. In each of the papers, the author presents a great deal of information; the papers, however, are informed by only the briefest references to secondary literature in any language, and the conclusions offer little in the way of synthetic analysis. Since the book does not approach the sources with any particular methodological strategy, these articles serve only as introductory surveys and do not offer substantial insights into their respective topics.

P. M. HOLT, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy (1260-1290): Treaties of Baybars and Qalāwūn with Christian Rulers*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995). Pp. 161.

REVIEWED BY ANNE F. BROADBRIDGE, University of Chicago

P. M. Holt’s latest work, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, combines two of his main research interests: the political and military history of the Levant during the epoch of the Crusades and the critical translation of Arabic sources into English. These interests have already emerged in such works as his *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades* (Warminster, 1977), *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London, 1986), and *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince* (Wiesbaden, 1983), a translation of Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Alī’s *al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar*.

The work under review is the twelfth volume in the series entitled *Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts*, edited by Ulrich Haarmann. In it Holt presents translations of eleven truces and treaties negotiated by the Mamluk sultans Baybars and Qalāwūn with various Christian states of both the Middle East and Europe. Previously, Holt published a number of these texts in assorted scholarly journals; the remaining material was hitherto unavailable in English. All of the texts are pertinent to the history of the thirty-year period between 1260 and 1290, which witnessed both the consolidation of the Mamluk Sultanate as a significant power in the eastern Mediterranean, and the obliteration of the Frankish Crusader states in the Levant, which was assured by the 1291 Mamluk conquest of Acre.



Although the main body of the book consists of the translations, Holt does include a concise analytical introduction. This accounts for the bulk of the critical analysis found in the book; despite its brevity, it is clear and thoughtful. In it he discusses the sources in which he found the various truces and treaties, details the status of the truce in its various forms as it was known and used in Mamluk diplomatic practice, and provides a concise description of Mamluk relations with such powers as the European Christian kingdoms, the Levantine Crusader and Armenian states, and the Byzantine Empire. He briefly addresses several overarching regional strategic and economic issues, and highlights the specific strategic policies undertaken by Baybars and Qalāwūn in their dealings with the Christian states. Finally, he situates each truce historically and explains how it reflects the changing military and political situation in the region.

Two maps of the northern and southern Fertile Crescent follow the introduction. While these maps are pertinent to those truces negotiated by the Mamluk sultans with the Frankish Crusader or Armenian states, they do not cover regions mentioned in other treaties. Therefore another map, perhaps of the entire Mediterranean basin, would have been welcome, especially for those texts concerned with Genoa, Aragon, and the Byzantine empire.

Holt introduces each annotated translation by clarifying the immediate circumstances of the truce, pinpointing its location in the sources, and referring to existing medieval or modern translations. Where necessary, he also translates variant copies of the text in the form of appendices. The book concludes with two indices, one of persons and one of places.

This work is a useful compilation of important primary sources, which so far have not been presented in a unified collection. Holt provides a skilled translation of the texts, thereby making them more accessible to Middle East historians and historians of the Crusades. Although the translations account for the bulk of the book, he furnishes a coherent historical context for each truce and establishes its relevance to the overall events of the time. *Early Mamluk Diplomacy* is a useful handbook for scholars investigating the political and diplomatic issues of the time period, and can also be used to introduce original sources to students.

MOHAMED TAHAR MANSOURI, *Recherches sur les relations entre Byzance et l'Égypte (1259-1453) (d'après les sources arabes)*. (Tunis: Université de Tunis 1. Faculté des Lettres de la Manouba, 1992). Pp. 309.

REVIEWED BY WALTER E. KAEGI, University of Chicago

This is a useful but nevertheless disappointing and rather superficial first attempt to write a comprehensive history of Byzantine-Mamluk relations. A comprehensive examination of Byzantine-Mamluk relations is an important desideratum of late Byzantine history. Unfortunately, this effort cannot fill that need. The author rightly stresses his use of Arabic and not Greek sources, and it is this fact that does indeed provide the principal value of the book, especially for Byzantinists and historians of Mediterranean trade who are not Arabists.



The author writes in general, sometimes excessively broad terms. Pages 1 to 90 are merely derivative background, without any original evidence or new interpretations. He describes how the Mamluks attempted to bar more Crusades through diplomacy with Byzantium (pp. 97-98), the continuation of Italian commerce with the Mamluks, and the Mongol menace. However, in examining Mamluk-Mongol relations (pp. 104-111), he fails to use the 1984 Indiana University dissertation of Bruce Lippard on "The Mongols and Byzantium, 1243-1341." He rightfully emphasizes the Mamluk need for slaves and horses and therefore the mutuality of interests of Byzantium and the Mamluks in keeping navigation open in the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. He briefly refers to Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus's need to turn toward the Mongols, his detention of a Mamluk envoy to the Kipchaks for two years to avoid Mongol displeasure (p. 111). His real discussion of Byzantine-Mamluk relations begins on page 113. He notes that Mamluk sources do not give details about the reception of Byzantine envoys (p. 119). He notes that both parties used Melkite Christians as envoys (p. 118). He concludes that there is little evidence about the backgrounds of Mamluk ambassadors to Constantinople. His references to these embassies from Arabic sources, however, are valuable for Byzantinists.

The author's delineation of Arabic sources' descriptions of Byzantine qualities on page 137 are similar to some that Nadia Maria El-Cheikh Salibi has found in Arabic sources for earlier medieval periods in her 1992 Harvard University dissertation "Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs."

Mansouri assesses how the fifteenth century Emperor John V established Byzantine consular representation at Alexandria. He reviews commercial relations on pages 147-149, including the Mamluk need to import slaves. However, he provides no statistics, probably because none exist, on the number of slaves who passed through Byzantine-controlled navigational routes to Mamluk Egypt. Mansouri notes that there is little information on Byzantine merchants in Egyptian ports in the Muslim sources. He speculates that some horses may have come to Mamluk Egypt via Byzantium (pp. 164-165). There is nothing new in the author's description of relations between Emperor Manuel II (r. 1391-1425) and the Mamluks. He gives a useful description of growing relations between the early Ottomans and the Mamluks, on pages 203-205.

While the Byzantinist will learn something from this book about Arabic sources on the Mamluks and some of the problems that pushed the Mamluks to seek relations with the Byzantines, he will find nothing new here about Byzantium and the Byzantines. In short, it is the author's collection and citation of Muslim, that is, Arabic, sources on Mamluk-Byzantine relations that is the greatest contribution of this book. Even more desirable would have been the translation and analysis of these references for the use of non-Arabists, whether Byzantinists or medievalists, as A. A. Vasiliev did in his *Byzance et les arabes* for an earlier period of Byzantine-Muslim relations.

Mansouri does not show an up-to-date knowledge of the latest scholarship on Byzantium in this period. He omits reference, for example, to Kenneth Setton's magisterial *Papacy and the Levant*, to books and articles on Byzantine economic history by Michael Hendy, other work on Palaeologan history by Alice-Mary Talbot and Speros Vryonis, studies on relevant aspects of Byzantine Jewish history by Zvi Ankori (on the Karaite Jews), and Steven Bowman generally on Jews in the Palaeologan Byzantine Empire. His familiarity with more specialized modern scholarship in article form seems to disappear early in the 1980s. He does not cite the latest editions of some important Byzantine sources



such as Niketas Choniates and George Pachymeres. Although Mansouri could not have known it when he finished the manuscript of his book, the 1995 doctoral dissertation (History, University of Chicago) of John B. Williams on the Genoese slave trade, "From the Commercial Revolution to the Slave Revolution: The Development of Slavery in Medieval Genoa," provides valuable comparative material on the contemporary slave trade in the central and western Mediterranean, even though Genoa's slave trade in the central and western Mediterranean was not a direct source for Mamluk slaves. This book is useful, but a more thorough and rigorous study is still desirable, together with a fuller exploration of the sources and their ambiguities. Mamluk historians should use this book with great caution as a guide or introduction to Byzantine topics, because the author is simply unfamiliar with some of the most important recent work and interpretations of the relevant Byzantine historical context.

STEFAN HEIDEMANN, *Das Aleppiner Kalifat (AD 1261): Vom Ende des Kalifates in Bagdad über Aleppo zu den Restaurationen in Kairo*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994). Pp. 424.

REVIEWED BY LUTZ WIEDERHOLD, Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg

Students of Mamluk history are often envied by their colleagues who work on other periods and areas of Islamic civilization for the abundance of historiographical and prosopographical sources at their disposal. It is true that certain phases of Mamluk rule over Egypt and Syria are documented in a much greater number of narrative sources than the preceding and subsequent periods of the history of Egypt and Syria—not to speak of other areas of the Islamic world. However, it must be kept in mind that, in these sources, certain periods and aspects of Mamluk history are hardly documented at all. Furthermore, over the past decades, students of Mamluk history have become more and more aware of the fact that the historiographical accounts cannot be taken at face value but must be examined from various perspectives.

The incompleteness and the potential tendentiousness of information in narrative sources has been a general problem of modern western historiography since its emancipation as an autonomous scholarly discipline, that is, since the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was at that time that western historians started to utilize systematically the results of smaller specialized scholarly disciplines—described as auxiliary sciences—in their attempts to reconstruct historical reality. In the book that is reviewed here, one of these auxiliary sciences, numismatics, serves as a critical tool in the examination of an important political and ideological aspect of the early history of Mamluk rule. According to the author, Stefan Heidemann, it was a number of coins struck in Aleppo in the name of the Caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (659/1261) that aroused his interest in the particulars of the transfer of the Abbasid Caliphate from Baghdad to Cairo (pp. XI, 134). Generally, Heidemann's focus is on the events between the murder of the last Abbasid of Baghdad, al-Musta'ṣim, by Hülāgü's soldiers in 656/1258 and the demise of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh, the second Abbasid Caliph after the fall of Baghdad (d. 701/1302).



The contents of the book are organized in eleven chapters. In the first ten chapters, Heidemann provides a description of events that is mainly based on narrative sources (Mongol and Mamluk) and is occasionally compared with numismatic evidence. He presents a painstaking analysis of the relationship between the main protagonists of the fall and the restoration of the Caliphate. He devotes particular attention to the conflict between the two pretenders to the Abbasid Caliphate after the fall of Baghdad, al-Mustaşir billāh and al-Ḥākīm bi-Amr Allāh, and to the role of the military elite as represented by Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 658/1260-667/1269) and the Amir Aqqūsh al-Burlī. Chapter 11 contains a description of 161 coins and a discussion of their historical relevance. At the end of the book, 137 of these 161 coins are reproduced in plates.

#### CRITIQUE OF PREVIOUS STUDIES, GENERAL FRAMEWORK, AND THESES

Heidemann premises his study with some critical remarks on the current state of research on the Mamluk-Abbasid Caliphates of Aleppo and Cairo and on the role of Sultan Baybars (pp. 3-9). He describes the view prevalent among contemporary Western and Arab historians as oscillating between two different positions. According to one, Baybars restored the Caliphate in order to legitimate his regime ("Herrschaftslegitimation"); according to the other he did so in order to realize his own political aims ("Machtpolitik," p. 8).

Heidemann's approach, as he states, differs from previous studies in the following respects: (1) He views the overthrow of the Baghdad Caliphate not merely as the necessary result of the Mongol occupation but as the consequence of the differing ideological positions of the various groups involved. (2) Furthermore, he promises an explanation of the Mamluk-Abbasid Caliphates that is not exclusively based on ideological patterns like the justification of political power ("Herrschaftslegitimation"), but mainly on the reconstruction of the sequence of political events ("die Abfolge tagespolitischer Ereignisse," p. 9).

In his introduction, Heidemann refers to a great number of earlier studies on his subject. However, some of his general remarks on the present state of research and his project appear to be based on an artificial polarization of phenomena and approaches that might equally be viewed as interdependent. This, for example, is the case when he makes a distinction between an approach based on ideological patterns like "Herrschaftslegitimation," and one that focuses predominantly on the politics of the day when he explains the emergence of the Caliphates of Aleppo and Cairo (pp. 9, 11, 12). Also, his usage of the term "Caliphate" does not always indicate whether he means the abstract concept of caliphal rule, or the Caliphate as a political institution in interrelation with other institutions of legislative and executive power (pp. 9, 24, 27, 28 n. 2).

#### SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY, RESULTS

Heidemann's book is, among other things, an essay on the dialectics of event and description. He points to the fact that different historiographers—according to their confessional affiliation—put the overthrow of the Baghdad Caliphate into different perspectives (pp. 12-16). It is one of the strengths of the book that the author keeps in view these differences in the evaluation of historical information. In cases where his sources contradict each other or do not provide a full picture of events, he does not fill the gaps with presumptions. (One may find a few exceptions to this observation, as, for

example, the remark on rivalries between the tribes of the Āl ‘Alī and the Āl Muhannā, p. 131. But, even in cases like this, a hypothesis is clearly identifiable to the attentive reader.) One should also mention the fact that Heidemann largely refrains from obscuring the borderline between information and interpretation. Verbatim quotations of the Arabic text (in transliteration) on several occasions (pp. 26, 41, 62, etc.) enable the reader to form his own opinion.

The incorporation of numismatic evidence into his argumentation is of particular interest. He points to the importance of the *sikkah* (the mentioning of rulers on coins) for the chronology of political events (pp. 209-211). According to him, the *sikkah*—often neglected besides the *khuṭbah* as another expression of the submission to a superior power—is in some cases the only material source for the reconstruction of historical events. This is illustrated by a number of concrete examples. To mention one of them, the only non-literary proof for the existence of the Caliphate of Aleppo are several *dirhams* struck in the name of al-Ḥākīm bi-Amr Allāh in 659/1261 (p. 134; on the mentioning of the Caliphate of Aleppo in narrative sources, see p. 133).

On the other hand, Heidemann emphasizes that, for the time examined, coins must not be regarded as a substitute for missing historiographical evidence. For example, the subjugation of local rulers of northern Mesopotamia like Badr al-Dīn Lu’lu’ by the Mongols is not confirmed by numismatic evidence since the Mongols did not consider this form of recognizing their supremacy as important (p. 36).

In his conclusions, Heidemann makes reference to his methodological approach. He describes various historical developments as the result of political events (pp. 107, 197) as well as of diametrically opposed ideological positions among the Mongols and the Muslims concerning the notion of legitimate power (pp. 36, 44, 55, 56-57, 61, 102, 195).

Philologically, the book is sound. Only occasionally one finds cases of inconsistency in the transliteration of Arabic (for example “*ilā an-nabī*” against “*‘alā d-darāhimi*,” pp. 72, 134 n. 9). One clear mistake is the transliteration of the Arabic term for civil strife as “*fiṭna*” instead of “*fitna*” (pp. 61, 62, 65).

To conclude, Heidemann has produced a valuable study on a subject which called for a comprehensive analysis. In view of the deficiencies of narrative sources his endeavors to incorporate numismatic evidence into his argumentation are useful. In principle, his methodological approach is identical with that of Reiske and other early representatives of Islamic numismatics. However, the wide range of sources and the critical discussion of the secondary literature lead him to original conclusions which offer a basis for further studies on Islamic coinage and on the early Mamluk period.

M. L. BENHASSINE, *Deux études sur la pensée économique d’Abderrahmane Ibn Khaldoun dans “Al Muqaddima”* (Algiers: Editions El-Adib, 1991). Pp. 54.

REVIEWED BY GILLES HENNEQUIN, Centre national de la recherche scientifique

From reading the preface (pp. 7-9), one might think that the author intended to rework his two articles dating from the 1970s into a single text. Ultimately he seems to have been content with a pure and simple reproduction of the originals in apparent



expectation of an Arabic translation to be made by one of his colleagues. The second article (pp. 25-46) is actually the older of the two (written in 1974, though released only in 1980), the other text (pp. 11-24) dating from 1977. In either case, M. L. Benhassine implicitly confesses to his having knowledge of the *Muqaddimah*<sup>1</sup> only from the first edition of the French translation by Vincent Mansūr Monteil.<sup>2</sup>

The article from 1974 is entitled, with great precision, "La pensée économique d'Ibn Khaldoun dans le chapitre V, tome II." Benhassine insists that it is indeed in that very chapter entitled "Comment gagner sa vie?" ("How to make a living") that Ibn Khaldūn has collected "l'essentiel de ses réflexions économiques" (p. 25). The article from 1977 purports to complement the former by exploiting the wealth of the rest of the *Muqaddimah* (ibid.: ". . . digressions, . . . remarques passagères sur la vie économique et ses imbrications avec le corps social de la société maghrébine des quatorzième et du quinzième siècles . . ." -sic-scattered "dans d'autres parties de l'oeuvre"), and proclaims its ambition for synthesis through the title "La pensées économiques d'Abderrahmane Ibn Khaldoun (1332-1406)" (p. 11).<sup>3</sup>

One need not stand on the authority (?) of Friedrich Engels to observe that "les penseurs des formations sociales précapitalistes ont développé une réflexion économique et sociale" preceding largely "l'économie politique du capitalisme" which did not become a science until the seventeenth century. Concerning the very purpose of the *Muqaddimah*, namely, how to understand "les causes de la naissance, de l'évolution et de la décadence ou de la disparition de la civilisation," Benhassine apparently takes exception to Ibn Khaldūn's alleged failure to resort in a more systematic fashion to the explication "par l'activité économique." This Marxist infatuation, still common in the 1970s, seems ridiculous in the wake of the ideological collapse of the self-proclaimed "socialisme scientifique" (p. 8). The developments assigned to the principal concepts of Ibn Khaldūn are hardly original.<sup>4</sup> One can readily admit that on certain points—labor-value, intervention of the state in economic life, etc.—Ibn Khaldūn did make an appreciable advance over his contemporaries, but it is unlikely that one can speak meaningfully of "identité conceptuelle entre les éléments de pensée économique d'Ibn Khaldoun et les fondateurs de l'économie politique classique anglaise" (p. 44). His observations about money are largely illusory: one fears that a large part of what Benhassine believes he has discerned in the corresponding passages of Ibn Khaldūn are but a figment of his own imagination. The numerous and sometimes lengthy allusions of Ibn Khaldūn to gold and silver, to the *sikkah*, etc., (see index, p. 47) unfortunately contain nothing, as far as perception and comprehension of economic phenomena are concerned, that marks any substantial advance over, say, the period of the

<sup>1</sup>"Prolégomènes" consisting of introduction (comprising invocation, foreword, and introduction *stricto sensu*) and book 1 (comprising preface and chapters 1-6) of *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, or "Reflections on the History of the Arabs, Persians, and Berbers."

<sup>2</sup>Ibn Khaldūn, *Discours sur l'histoire universelle (al-Muqaddima)* new translation, preface, and notes, 3 vols. (Beirut, 1967, 1968). Second edition, revised (3 vols.) (Paris, 1978); the only significant addition to the first edition is to be found in vol. 1, pp. xli-xlvi: "À la recherche d'Ibn Khaldūn."

<sup>3</sup>Ibn Khaldūn, *Économie politique*, trans. Vincent Monteil, Classiques arabes, 6 (Paris, 1981) conveniently gathers together the most significant "economic" passages of the *Muqaddimah* drawn from the Beirut-Paris publication: chaps. 5, pp. 1-22; 3, pp. 36-41, 45, 48; 4, pp. 11-20.

<sup>4</sup>See Monteil, préface, vol. 1 (Beirut, 1967), xxv-xxxiv; M. Talbi, "Ibn Khaldūn," *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2nd ed., 3:849-855.



Geniza.<sup>5</sup> One is led to believe that the author of the *Muqaddimah*, like the author of the "Traité des monnaies"<sup>6</sup> and of *al-Ighāthah*,<sup>7</sup> who happened to be his student at al-Azhar,<sup>8</sup> would continue to maintain with money the same kind of relationship that Monsieur Jourdain had with prose.<sup>9</sup>

The only change made in the new edition is the "Index abrégé des termes économiques utilisés dans Al-Muqaddima" (pp. 47-53) that Benhassine, "pour permettre un suivi ou un approfondissement de l'étude des problèmes économiques" and according to highly subjective and therefore largely arbitrary standards, has compiled from the second edition<sup>10</sup> of the translation of Monteil and which is little more than a useless repetition of the "Index des notions et des institutions" figuring in the former (vol. 3, Paris, 1978, pp. 1365-1372).

Even if Benhassine's arguments are not always persuasive to the reader, one would not want to mince matters with an author who, on the theme—as real today as six centuries ago—of the decline of the Maghrib, visibly and understandably shares the anguish previously experienced by Ibn Khaldūn. French speakers will add their unreserved admiration for the mastery demonstrated by Benhassine in his handling of their language.

<sup>5</sup>S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 1: *Economic Foundations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 230: ". . . strange as it may appear, that highly monetized society of the Geniza period had no proper word for the abstract concept of money."

<sup>6</sup>See the author's views in *Hommages à la mémoire de Serge Sauneron*, 2 vols. (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1979), 2:317-328.

<sup>7</sup>Adel Allouche, *Mamluk Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrīzī's Ighāthah* (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1994), with observations of Michael Bates in *Newsletter, Oriental Numismatic Society*, no. 141 (Summer, 1994), 4.

<sup>8</sup>Monteil, préface, viii.

<sup>9</sup>See the author's views in his review of *La pensée socio-économique d'El Makrizi*, by Fathallah Oualalou, *Annales islamologiques* 15 (1979): 474-478, and more recently, in his "Waqf et monnaie dans l'Égypte mamluke," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38, no. 3 (1995): 305-312.

<sup>10</sup>See above, note 2.



ALEXANDER SCHEIDT, *Das Königheit von al-Karak in der mamlūkischen Zeit: Aus dem arabischen Geschichtswerk von Muḥammad ‘Adnān al-Bakhīt übersetzt und ausführlich erläutert.* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1992). Pp. 288.

REVIEWED BY DONALD P. LITTLE, McGill University

As all students of Mamluk history know, Karak was the seat of one of the seven provinces into which Mamluk Syria was divided, each being ruled by a governor appointed by the sultan in Cairo. More than any of these provinces, Karak was focused on a fortress, which bore its name. Constructed on a high spur by Crusaders in 1142, it commanded pilgrimage and caravan routes. This strategic prize was captured for Islam by the Ayyubids in 1188 and eventually fell to the Mamluks in 1263 during the reign of Baybars. Thereafter, while retaining its military and administrative importance in Transjordan, it figured frequently as a place of banishment and retreat for Mamluk dignitaries, most prominently for al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who used it as his headquarters before returning to power in Cairo for the third time and later sent four of his sons there for training, away from the various vices of the big city.<sup>1</sup> As one of the most imposing and celebrated fortresses of the Mamluk Empire, with numerous references in the sources to it and the province it controlled, it is not surprising that it should be chosen as a subject for separate research.

This was first done by no less a scholar than Muḥammad ‘Adnān al-Bakhīt, known in the West primarily as the convener of the Bilād al-Shām conferences held in Amman but also as author of several works relating to the history of Muslim Syria. As a young scholar at the American University of Beirut he submitted an M.A. thesis in 1965, later revised and published in 1976 as *Mamlakat al-Karak fī al-‘Ahd al-Mamlūkī*. In order to make this somewhat inaccessible work better known to Western scholars Alexander Scheidt translated, corrected, and amplified it, which he, in turn, submitted to Heidelberg University. If only as a curious specimen of an M.A. twice removed, the present work is a noteworthy piece of scholarship.

The book is divided into nine chapters plus an appendix, covering the following topics: (1) A sketch of the history of Karak under the Crusaders and Ayyubids. (2) The boundaries of the province of Karak and a description of its towns and villages under the Mamluks. (3) Pilgrimage sites located in the principality. (4) Its inhabitants, sedentary and Bedouin, Muslim and Christian. (5) Economic aspects. (6) Administrative officials, military and civilian. (7) History of Mamluk Karak. (8) Sketches of notables. (9) Notes, bibliography, indices. The appendix contains Scheidt’s own brief survey of the history of Karak under the Crusaders, Ayyubids, and Mamluks.

Since almost all the chapters consist mainly of annotated lists of people and places, and since the notes, bibliography, and indices constitute half the book, it is obviously designed for reference rather than sustained reading. As such, it should be useful to scholars who might be interested in taking a more conceptual approach to the role of this province in the Mamluk state.

<sup>1</sup>See David Ayalon, “The Eunuchs in the Mamluk Sultanate,” *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, ed. Myriam Rosen-Ayalon (Jerusalem: Institute of Asian and African Studies, 1977), 292.



CARL F. PETRY, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reign of the Mamluk Sultans al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in Egypt*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993). Pp. 236.

CARL F. PETRY, *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994). Pp. 226.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL WINTER, Tel-Aviv University

As the readers of *Mamluk Studies Review* are well aware, the Mamluk Sultanate has been the subject of numerous important studies, in part owing to the unusual wealth of the source material for that period (1250-1517). There are excellent studies about the army, bureaucracy, economy and finance, cities, religious life, higher education, minorities, art and architecture, and historiography of the Mamluk era. There are surprisingly few monographs about Mamluk sultans, and not enough orderly, detailed, and authoritative narrative history.<sup>1</sup> Carl F. Petry's two books about the reigns and personalities of the Mamluk sultans al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy (872-901/1468-1496) and Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī (906-922/1501-1616)<sup>2</sup> are a much needed addition to the list of sultans' monographs and a coherent narrative history of the last half-century of Mamluk history. The two sultans were by far the most important rulers in the late Mamluk period. Their reigns were long and both were clever, experienced and powerful sultans, whose very different personalities dominated Egypt's domestic and foreign policies.

Professor Petry has an unparalleled knowledge of the last half-century of the history of that sultanate, and his earlier contributions, particularly his *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1981), have established his reputation as one of the leading historians in the field. The first book, *Twilight of Majesty*, presents a lucid and authoritative political history of the two sultans' reigns. The book is a highly readable account of dramatic events, internal politics and international diplomacy, and wars. The focus is on the personalities and strategies of both sultans, but also gives fascinating profiles of their top military and civilian assistants and officers. Petry has based his narrative on the excellent Arabic sources, primarily the chronicles of Ibn Taghrībirdī, al-Ṣayrafī, al-Malāṭī, and Ibn Iyās. The writing is done with sensitivity, insight and empathy, yet with a scholar's critical caution. Moreover, Petry demonstrates real literary talent. The style is rich and idiomatic, yet the second volume, *Protectors or Praetorians?* in particular,

<sup>1</sup>There are exceptions, some quite recent: Peter Thorau's study of Sultan Baybars I (1987), Amalia Levanoni's book about al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā'ūn (1995) and Ahmad Darrag's study of Sultan Barsbāy (1961). As for political history, one should mention Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250-1382* (London: Croom Helm, 1986) and P. M. Holt, *The Age of Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London: Longman, 1986), a useful introductory survey.

<sup>2</sup>Petry has decided to use the variant Qānṣūh rather than the more common Qānṣawh. In the list of the Mamluk sultans on page ix of *Twilight of Majesty*, there is an error concerning al-Ghawrī's reign which was 1501-1516 (not 1517), and Ṭūmānbāy's reign which was from 922 to the first days of 923 (1516 to the first days of 1517) and not 922/1517. This is obviously a technicality; the dates in the relevant chapters are correct.



has compelled the present reviewer, who is not a native speaker of English, to consult his dictionary more frequently than usual, to find many of the text's words and phrases defined as "formal," "literary," or even "old use."

The second book, *Protectors or Praetorians?*, is more thematic than chronological and is an analysis of the Mamluk regime's characteristics and the strategies employed by the two sultans to survive against internal and external threats. Petry examines the ways the rulers exercised power and ponders over the historical, societal, cultural, and even ethical meanings of the mechanics of Mamluk government in that period.

The main theme that runs through both books is the comparison between the two sultans. This approach is natural, and was done by their contemporaries, most notably Ibn Iyās, the last and one of the greatest representatives of Mamluk historiography. Qāyṭbāy was regarded by his contemporaries and by the following generations as a model sultan: a just ruler, a pious Muslim, a brave warrior, a wise and benevolent monarch. Qāyṭbāy was also successful in his foreign policy. He was victorious over Shāh Suwār, the Turcoman chief who challenged Cairo's suzerainty in Anatolia, handled skillfully the aggression of Uzun Ḥasan on the sultanate's northern borders, and even forced the mighty Ottomans to respect the *status quo* in the buffer zones separating the two empires in Anatolia after a series of fierce battles from 1484 to 1491. In his obituary of Qāyṭbāy, Ibn Iyās eulogizes him in superlatives: "His career developed in glory and majesty. . . . He was serene and dignified, correct in decorum, invariably respected, projecting an aura of majesty to official ceremonies. . . . Although tainted by greed, he was the noblest of Circassian rulers, their finest."<sup>3</sup>

Inevitably, Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī was compared to Qāyṭbāy and was found wanting. Here is what Ibn Iyās has to say in his obituary of the last effective Mamluk sultan: "Al-Ghawrī's sultanate lasted fifteen years, nine months, twenty-five days, each of which weighed down on the people like a thousand years. . . . Truly the list of al-Ghawrī's misdeeds was endless."<sup>4</sup> Ibn Iyās acknowledges al-Ghawrī's strong personality and talents, but presents him as a selfish and cruel *bon vivant*, and a grasping tyrant.

Petry is careful to look at the chronicler's judgment critically. He calls Qāyṭbāy "Revered Conservator," and defines his main goal and achievement as the maintenance of the *status quo*: "That Qāyṭbāy had not a single new idea about governing his realm not one of his biographers found blameworthy."<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that Qāyṭbāy's image as almost the ideal ruler was adopted not only by Ṭūmānbāy, al-Ghawrī's nephew and successor, who demonstratively followed Qāyṭbāy's (and not al-Ghawrī's) style of rulership, but even the Ottomans, who fought him in Anatolia and finally destroyed the Mamluk Sultanate. The *Qānūn-nāme-i Miṣir*, of 1525, the code regulating the administration of Ottoman Egypt, expressly calls for adherence to "Qāyṭbāy's laws" in administrative or fiscal matters.

While recognizing the unsavory sides of Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī's character, Petry correctly notes that we are almost wholly dependent for the description of al-Ghawrī on one source—the chronicle of Ibn Iyās, who makes no secret of his intense dislike for him, especially when compared to Qāyṭbāy. Petry finds al-Ghawrī far more original and interesting than his revered predecessor, and calls him "Vilified Innovator." Indeed, Petry

<sup>3</sup>Translated by Carl Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 15-16. Petry notes that Ibn Taghrībirdī's opinion of Qāyṭbāy, whom he served personally, was more reserved and critical.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 119, 121.

<sup>5</sup>*Twilight of Majesty*, 234; *Protectors or Praetorians?*, 224.



emphasizes the contrast between the deeply conservative Qāyṭbāy, who left things as they were, and al-Ghawrī, who “experimented with artillery, recruited new military units from outside the Mamluk caste<sup>6</sup> or manipulated *waqfs* to pay them.” Predictably, these innovations raised apprehensions and opposition. Petry even speculates what could have happened, had the Ottomans not put an end to the Mamluk state and with it to al-Ghawrī’s military and financial experiments before they had the opportunity to mature into substantive reform.<sup>7</sup> I am not sure that these speculations do not go too far; after all, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Qāyṭbāy’s incompetent son and successor (1496-1498), also tried to create a corps of arquebusiers, and Qāyṭbāy too converted income from his *waqf* funds into a private reserve, the sultan’s personal fisc, as Petry himself shows.<sup>8</sup> My own feeling is that precisely since Ibn Iyās’s evidence is almost all we have about al-Ghawrī’s personality, Petry’s judgment of him is too lenient. As Petry’s own account demonstrates in many instances, the sultan was justly “vilified”; it is his achievements as innovator which I doubt. Yet these slightly different evaluations are admittedly subjective, and impossible to prove conclusively in a scholarly argument.

The personal contrasts between the two sultans are well documented, and convincingly pointed out by Petry. For example, both sultans faced a similar predicament when they had to decide how to host an Ottoman prince who sought shelter in their court from the sultan in Istanbul, Cem in Qāyṭbāy’s case, Qurqud in al-Ghawrī’s. The Mamluk sultan had to weigh the obligation of royal hospitality (and possible political benefits in the future) against the need to refrain from antagonizing the Ottoman sultan. Petry concludes: “Restraint marked Qāyṭbāy’s approach, excess al-Ghawrī’s.”<sup>9</sup> Or consider the two sultans’ entirely different approach to religion: for Qāyṭbāy piety influenced his actions, while for the other, display compensated for his oppression. Piety versus pomp: most of Qāyṭbāy’s lavish expenditures promoted rituals or structures devoted to religious service; al-Ghawrī preferred festivals or edifices that advertised the regime’s beneficence in more secular ways.<sup>10</sup>

The second of Petry’s books surveys the central issue of Mamluk foreign policy, including the position of Syria in the sultanate,<sup>11</sup> but its most original contribution is the writer’s discussion of Mamluk government and economy, again relying on the chronicles and other literary sources, as well as on his pioneering study of the *waqf* documents. Petry examines the conditions of the exploited subjects of the sultanate, who suffered from the rulers’ growing demand for funds. During Qāyṭbāy’s reign extra money was needed in the first place to finance his sixteen northern campaigns; al-Ghawrī needed the money mainly to withstand the pressure of his troops. Assessing Egypt’s agriculture, Petry writes: “The evidence, such as it is, depicts an inordinate heightening of demand rather than a decline in output.”<sup>12</sup> Egypt’s craft industries in the late Middle Ages were as accomplished and sophisticated as ever, but there were few changes in methods of production. Part of the

<sup>6</sup>The arquebusiers, who were armed with hand guns which the Mamluk horsemen could not and would not use.

<sup>7</sup>*Protectors or Praetorians?*, 225.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 199-200.

<sup>9</sup>*Twilight of Majesty*, 182.

<sup>10</sup>*Protectors or Praetorians?*, 158-159.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, chap. 3.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 107-108.



explanation is that craftsmen had little incentive to increase their output if they faced the certainty of its expropriation.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, commerce exhibited signs of languor—local stagnation and foreign rivalry. The late Mamluk period witnessed stasis instead of growth.<sup>14</sup>

Chapter 6 examines methods, norms and practices of the people's exploitation by the sultans. Petry rightly focuses his attention not on bureaucratic structures but on clientage, rewards, and risks of the sultans' men. The stakes were high, but as Petry writes "al-Ghawrī's agents, excepting Zaynī Barakāt, came to violent ends at his hands. When their usefulness no longer matched the antipathy they provoked from his soldiers, al-Ghawrī turned on them and they suffered a scapegoat's fate."<sup>15</sup> Al-Zaynī Barakāt ibn Mūsā is indeed the most colorful figure among al-Ghawrī's assistants—a man who rose from obscure origins to unprecedented power, owing to his resourcefulness in expropriating funds from the rich through extortion and torture and serving at the same time as a popular *muhtasib* (market inspector), who alone succeeded in maintaining price stability. It should be mentioned also that the Ottoman authorities later found him indispensable. Another fascinating example of an opportunist in the sultan's service presented by Petry is Sarī al-Dīn ibn al-Shiḥnah, a Syrian jurisconsult who betrayed his professional and religious conscience in al-Ghawrī's service. The book describes and discusses the uses and limits of loyalty, confiscation, and torture in a thoughtful and vivid way which has not been done before in Mamluk studies.

Clearly, the author of *Protectors or Praetorians?* believes that by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century the Mamluks merited the epithet of Praetorians due to their venality and lawlessness. He shows that the Mamluk regime became responsible for economic lethargy: "A regime dedicated to upholding the status quo rarely encourages entrepreneurship."<sup>16</sup>

In concluding this review of two truly remarkable additions to the growing research library on the Mamluk period, I would make two suggestions: (a) *Twilight of Majesty* could have benefited from a chapter bridging the reigns of the book's two protagonists. The intervening five years, 1496-1501, during which four lesser sultans reigned, should have been covered, even if the study rightly focuses on the two great sultans. Students would benefit from a complete chronological coverage of the period. (b) The account of military and diplomatic relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and its neighbors, particularly the Ottoman Empire, is entirely based on the Arabic chronicles. The study could benefit from a view from Istanbul about the development of the Mamluk-Ottoman rivalry. There are important primary and secondary sources in Turkish whose findings could be integrated into Petry's book (this applies especially to *Twilight of Majesty*).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 113, 117.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 117-120.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 222.



NASSER O. RABBAT, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995). Pp. 339.

REVIEWED BY DORIS BEHRENS-ABOUSEIF, University of Munich

Nasser Rabbat's study of Cairo's Citadel consists of eight chapters that describe the genesis and evolution of the Citadel until its apogee in the last phase of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign. Chapter 1 relates the history of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's foundation of Cairo's Citadel as the seat for Egypt's government following the fall of the Fatimid Caliphate, and shows that it was conceived as a defensive structure reflecting the founder's military upbringing and the Syro-Mesopotamian and east Anatolian tradition of that period, to which the founder belonged. Chapter 2 describes the Citadel in its present configuration. Here not only primary and secondary sources and various plans are used for the topography, but also recent excavations of the 1980s. In his capacity as architect the author is moreover able to provide his own plans of certain areas made especially for this study. Someone who is not already familiar with Cairo's Citadel may find it difficult, however, to follow certain passages, the descriptions not always being lucid. Perhaps some architectural details, such as the measurements, should have been left out of the topographical text, and either dealt with separately or simply indicated in the scales of the figures.

Chapter 3 is a reconstruction of the Citadel in its Ayyubid form, discussing Casanova's and Creswell's previous interpretations and placing it in the historical context of the period. Rabbat gives Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's foundation inscription special attention. In the course of this discussion, he makes a comparison between the use of Sūrat al-Faṭḥ in the inscription and the citation of this Quranic text at the Mashhad al-Juyūshī built by Badr al-Jamālī in 1085, concluding that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's inscription, which commemorated his ascendancy and celebrated his victory by citing this same Quranic text, was emulating at the same time Badr al-Jamālī's military victories. A few pages later the author states that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's inscription has extraordinary features such as a "break with established epigraphic tradition" in order to express the great significance the Citadel had for its builders (p. 73). There is a contradiction here with the former comparison, but the latter interpretation is more convincing. It is difficult to believe that the colossal Citadel would need any reference to Badr al-Jamālī's tiny construction erected one hundred years earlier. Sūrat al-Faṭḥ is universal and appropriate to be used for any victory commemoration. When he compares the inscription's style with that of al-Qāḍī al-Faḍīl, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's famous secretary, suggesting that it might have come from al-Qāḍī's own pen, Rabbat makes a very interesting statement.

The statement that "a citadel in an Islamic city would have had a congregation mosque, so Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's plan must have provided for one, although no source credits him with building it" (p. 65) needs rectification. Friday mosques were not common in citadels at that time in Egypt or elsewhere; al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn's citadel at Rawḍah, for example, did not have a *jāmi'*. The Ayyubids, who adhered to the Shāfi'ī rite, were cautious not to have more than one Friday mosque within an urban agglomeration, a dogma shared also by the Mālīkī rite. Therefore Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn canceled Friday prayer at al-Azhar, leaving only al-Ḥākim's mosque as the *jāmi'* of al-Qāhirah and 'Amr's mosque as that of al-Fuṣṭāṭ. In spite of its significance, the Citadel in the Ayyubid period was not conceived from the



outset as a city in its own right. It was al-Zāhir Baybars who allowed more Friday mosques to exist in Cairo; Friday prayer at the Citadel was probably due to al-Zāhir's, and not to an Ayyubid, initiative. A pre-existing *masjid*, however, could have been transformed into a *jāmi'*.

Chapters 4 through 7 go on with the reconstruction of the Citadel in the respective periods of the early Bahrī Mamluks, the early Qalāwūnid dynasty, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's early reign (1310-25) and, finally, his third period (1333-41). Here the author exploits thoroughly the copious descriptions of Mamluk literary sources and tries to extract an image as exact as possible from the texts. Whereas the Citadel's walls survive in very good condition, the Mamluk residential structures, where most of the architectural iconography was concentrated, have almost entirely disappeared.

Chapter 5 includes a comment on the fragment of a mosaic panel from an *īwān* that Rabbat identifies as the Īwān Ashrafī, recently excavated at the Citadel. The panel represents an architectural structure, which the author interprets as a celebration of conquests and territorial expansion. There are, however, Mamluk art objects with similar architectural representations: An anonymous bowl at the Museo Nazionale of Florence, published by D. S. Rice,<sup>1</sup> shows three houses with pergola amongst trees, very reminiscent of the one published in this book (p. 163, fig. 23). Architectural settings can also be seen on early Mamluk glass beakers at the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, published by Esin Atıl.<sup>2</sup> Whereas the bowl is uninscribed, the beakers bear votive inscriptions for an anonymous sultan together with Christian themes. The architectural structures on the beakers belong to the pleasance type as do those on the bowl and at the Īwān Ashrafī, where they are set amidst trees and birds and with pergolas including figures. It is possible, therefore, that architectural representation was a decorative topos in early Bahrī Mamluk art, referring to royal pastimes, as do musical scenes, thus bearing auspicious meanings.

In his lexicographic discussion of architectural terms, the author is looking for an "exact meaning" (p. 217), which, as he shows, proves to be impossible. This is not surprising; there is a large number of similar examples that rather indicate the ambivalent character of architectural terms used in historiography as well as in *waqf* documents, and that cannot be pinned down to a specific architectural form. The word *maṣṭabah* in the Mamluk period refers to a bench, to a stage, and to a hippodrome; *qā'ah* refers simultaneously to a reception hall, to an entire palace, and also to a factory or workshop; *rīwāq* means a gallery in a mosque, an apartment, and a hall in a palace; *iṣṭabl* designates a stable and it refers to an important palace, Iṣṭabl Qūṣūn. Epigraphy refers to some mosques and palaces alike with the vague term *makān*.

Coming to the origin of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's Īwān Kabīr, which is a basilical plan combined with a dome, the author rightly refers to the Umayyad tradition of basilical audience halls (p. 256). In fact, the combination of the tripartite ground plan with a dome already exists at al-Aqṣá Mosque in Jerusalem and it is taken over, in a less oblong shape, in Fatimid shrines. Rabbat rejects, however, the continuity of this pattern in Fatimid shrines, which I demonstrated earlier, with the argument that the shrine plan derives from

<sup>1</sup>"Studies in Islamic Metal Work—IV," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15, no. 3 (1953): 502-503.

<sup>2</sup>*Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), 125, 126, 144.



the *majlis*.<sup>3</sup> He overlooks here a fundamental difference between the shrine and the *majlis*, which is the absence of the dome in the latter. The Fatimid shrine plan is not only a combination of a tripartite plan with a dome, but it shares with the Īwān Kabīr, furthermore, the square instead of the oblong configuration and moreover, as at Sayyidah Ruqayyah and Yaḥyá al-Shabīh, the ambulatory passage around the dome, which in both cases fulfills ceremonial functions. Being chronologically, geographically, and formally closer to the Īwān than the Umayyad Syrian tradition, the late Fatimid shrine plan must represent an intermediary stage.

Rabbat identifies the Dīwān al-Ghūrī mentioned by Evliya Çelebi as the Īwān Kabīr, arguing that it was misnamed Dīwān al-Ghūrī before its name changed again to Dīwān Yūsuf (p. 245). There is confusion here. Evliya makes a clear distinction between what he calls "Divanhane-i Sultan Gauri" and the Īwān Kabīr or Divanhane of Qalāwūn [*sic*] and also the *qaṣr* which he calls Yusuf Köşkü. The Īwān Kabīr is described as Old Divanhane, having forty-four columns ('*amūd*) made of stone known only from Aswan (i.e., granite). He attributes it, wrongly however, together with the mosque, to Qalāwūn instead of to his son.<sup>4</sup> What Evliya calls the "Yusuf Köşkü" is the *qaṣr*, known in the Ottoman period as Qaṣr Yūsuf and used at that time as a factory for the *kiswah* of the Ka'bah (p. 566). When referring to the Dīwān al-Ghūrī, Evliya mentions it as having a flat roof resting on wooden poles (*direk*), without dome, and being used as audience hall of the Ottoman pashas (p. 179). The pashas never dwelt at the Īwān or that part of the Citadel, but only in the Ḥawsh section, which had been rebuilt almost entirely by al-Ghūrī.<sup>5</sup> Not only these clear descriptions but also his placement of al-Ghūrī's hall as connected to administrative buildings and next to Qāyṭbāy's "Divanhane," itself overlooking the mausoleum of Imam al-Shāfi'ī, leave no doubt that it was part of the Ḥawsh and could not have been mistaken for the Īwān. Evliya Çelebi dwelt many years at the Citadel and knew its history and read its inscriptions. We should trust him in this matter.

To complete the picture of the Īwān, Rabbat reconstructs as well the Dār al-'Adl ceremonial that took place therein, and connects it with the spatial organization, illustrating this with drawings. The last chapter, "The Citadel and the Mamluk System," offers an interesting and convincing interpretation of the Citadel's topography, which Rabbat links with the structure of the Mamluk army, distinguishing between the private or inner (*juwānīyah*, *khāṣṣakīyah*) troops of the sultan, and the rest of his *mamlūks*, showing the correspondence between the function and status of the various contingents and their settlement in relation to the Sultan's palace. By linking the apogee of the Citadel with Cairo's expansion, the author fills out the context of the royal residence to show its impact on the neighboring areas, al-Qāhirah's southern quarters, and to demonstrate al-Nāṣir's ambitious schemes for his capital.

Nasser Rabbat's book demonstrates a sound knowledge of Mamluk history and society together with good bibliographical work and informative architectural surveying. The author also consulted *waqf* documents when dealing with lexicographic analysis, admitting that they were not of great help, however, for his research on the Citadel. His investigative methods are very thorough; occasionally the author tends toward

<sup>3</sup>"The Citadel of Cairo: Stage for Mamluk Ceremonial," *Annales islamologiques* 24 (1988): 77f.

<sup>4</sup>Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnamesi*, vol. 10 (Istanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1938), 171-172.

<sup>5</sup>Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā' i' al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá, 5 vols. (Cairo: In Kommission bei Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1960-84), 5:94.



overinterpretation, which makes the reading sometimes tedious. The great merit of this book is its approach, which always connects the architecture with its social and historical setting, seeking the function it was created to fulfill and the circumstances that accompanied its evolution, making it intelligible and interesting. The book succeeds in revealing the greatness of a monument, unique in many respects, not only in Islam but probably in the whole medieval world.

MARTINA MÜLLER-WIENER, *Eine Stadtgeschichte Alexandrias von 564/1169 bis in die Mitte des 9./15. Jahrhunderts: Verwaltung und Innerstädtische Organisationsformen*. (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1992). Pp. 331.

REVIEWED BY CARL F. PETRY, Northwestern University

The revision in approaches to the social history of the Muslim Middle Ages that began with the publication of Ira Lapidus's *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1967) almost three decades ago has transformed our thinking about many aspects of urban life in the central Islamic lands. Yet an overwhelming focus on a few prominent cities, those that inspired a diverse group of writers to pen a range of sources sufficiently broad and textured to enable a meaningful qualification of assertions appearing in narrative chronicles, remains a methodological problematic, if not a defect, of this revision.

The author's attempt to write a coherent analysis of Alexandria during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods therefore represents a laudable initiative. Anyone familiar with the secondary literature, in both Arabic and Western languages, generated over the preceding thirty years is well aware that Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo have been worked over to a degree verging on excess. This writer's own concentration on the Egyptian capital is a case in point. Yet, as Müller-Wiener's monograph abundantly substantiates, such a concentration did not occur because of happenstance infatuation on the part of modern historians with the "grande métropole," at the expense of important provincial towns. The sources available have themselves oriented even revisionist scholars toward the capital cities. Even so vital a center of commerce and manufacture as Alexandria did not induce contemporary writers to compile a series of works showcasing the medieval city. The author confronts this situation in her opening chapter addressing the coverage provided by surviving texts. She notes that the late medieval prosopographer al-Sakhāwī mentions four so-called histories of Alexandria in his treatise on historiography: *I'lān bi-al-Tawbīkh*. One of these was misclassified, since it is in fact a biography of Alexander the Great. The three others do not provide significant data on the city's administration or economy. Müller-Wiener has thus turned to the published sources that focus primarily on the capital Cairo, and mention events or persons prominent in Alexandria's history as asides. This monograph was conceived as a library exercise, with no on-site consultation of either archival documents (charitable trusts [*awqāf*] for the most part) or unedited manuscripts. Whether such an inquiry would have significantly altered the author's findings about the political economy of medieval Alexandria is open to question.



The monograph begins with an outline of Alexandria's political history to the extent that it may be gleaned from the sources examined. This survey essentially presents a list of events or crises that attracted the attention of writers based in Cairo or the Syrian capitals, along with a discussion of individuals salient in these developments. The author observes that the status of Alexandria, traceable from the Fatimid era onward, evolved from a semi-autonomous border entrepôt to a district within the west Delta province of al-Buḥayrah, and finally, after 767/1365, reverted to an autonomous province. The year 1365 was important since the author regards an event in that year as the pivotal event in the city's decline. Peter I of Lusignan, King of Cyprus, launched a maritime invasion against Alexandria that left much of the town in ruins and implanted an abiding paranoia over Frankish aggression in the Mediterranean within the Mamluk regime. The authorities in Cairo augmented the military rank and defensive capability of the city's governor. They replaced the *wālī*, a junior amir of forty subordinate to superiors in both Damanhūr and Cairo, with a *nā'ib* who was a senior amir of one hundred empowered to act independently on the sultan's behalf for the city's protection.

The author's subsequent discussions: of Alexandria's administrative patterning, and the roles of its senior jurists, financial supervisors, market inspectors, religious scholastics and Sufi mystics, rely heavily on generic descriptions of these figures in Arabic texts and secondary literature. Much of this material covers ground thoroughly trodden by specialists in the field, who will be the monograph's primary audience. Although the author has persuasively demonstrated the paucity of data illuminating classes of society below the military, mercantile, and scholastic elites that predictably dominated the city's ruling hierarchy, one does ponder the lack of attention paid to the contexts of commercial organization or urban unrest as these were manifested in this particular setting.

Many of the author's explanatory discourses deal with urban conditions that prevailed widely throughout the central Islamic lands, with little specific relevance to Alexandria. It is possible that the Arabic sources are not conducive to the production of a study similar to Jean-Claude Garcin's masterful analysis of Qūṣ in Upper Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The latter work also recognizes lacunae in primary sources, but it delves further than the book under review into the distinctive consciousness of the regional entity it reconstructs. One could hardly argue that Alexandria loomed less vividly in the imagination of contemporary writers than did Qūṣ, a smaller and more isolated garrison base defending the overland spice route between the Nile and the Red Sea. Garcin himself readily acknowledged the fortuitous survival of al-Udfuwī's biographical compendium<sup>2</sup> that preserved many intimate details on individuals active in that town. Nonetheless, one comes away from Garcin's nuanced analysis with a heightened respect for the insights an extended encounter *in situ* with the sources can promote.

The author also states that an objective of her monograph is to assess Alexandria's decline from an affluent commercial metropolis to a depressed regional port. This is indeed a significant issue, but one minimally elucidated since the monograph terminates rather abruptly with the mid-fourteenth century when the Levant trade with Europe was still important. The extensive commentary by the late fifteenth-century chronicler Ibn Iyās, who

<sup>1</sup>*Un centre musulman de la haute-Égypte médiévale: Qūṣ* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1976).

<sup>2</sup>*al-Ṭāli' al-Sa'īd al-Jāmi' Asmā' Nujabā' al-Ṣa'īd* (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣrīyah lil-Ta'lif wa-al-Tarjamah, 1966).



attributed the deterioration of Alexandria to the rapacity of the Circassian sultanate, is largely omitted (with the exception of his lament over the city's woeful condition in 1515, p. 89).

The preceding remarks should not be construed as a dismissal. The author's claim about the state of the sources should indeed give pause to those seeking a detailed understanding of Islamic urban history outside the heavily documented centers. She has thoroughly sifted through the texts available in published editions to produce a study that plausibly traces the evolution of Alexandria's position within the administrative structures of medieval Egypt—no small feat. I do believe that a study of this kind would benefit from on-site research and reflection. Such questions as the relevance of surviving *waqf* documents to the elite sponsorship of charitable foundations in the city could be explored.

The monograph, despite careful preparation, is dotted with a few errors, due more to typographical misprints than to author oversight. The example of Shaykh Abū al-'Abbās, which should read Abū al-Ḥasan, in reference to the founder of the Shādhilī order (p. 269, line 19) may be attributed to a mistake by the typist or word processor. These are minor and do not detract from the monograph's value.

BERNADETTE MARTEL-THOUMIAN, *Les civils et l'administration dans l'État militaire Mamlūk (IXe/XVe siècle)*. (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1991). Pp. 516.

REVIEWED BY W. W. CLIFFORD, University of Chicago

Since Weber's famous designation of the bureaucracy of the New Kingdom of Egypt as the historical model of all later bureaucracies, any study of Egyptian administration is necessarily welcome. Looking into the late Mamluk period, Martel-Thoumian has chosen to study not so much bureaucracy as bureaucrats themselves. Certainly there is some justification for this. Weber after all had little to say about such administrators except that they represented an "Oriental-Egyptian type." That is, they were organically stratified, tradition-bound, and irrationally oriented empiricists shaped by the eternal dynamic of Egypt's *Naturalwirtschaft*. Whatever the structural relationship between ancient and medieval Egypt, Martel-Thoumian has wisely moved beyond Weber's idealization of a functional bureaucratic personality to study actual civilian administrators in the round. Indeed, her attempted reconstruction of their social milieu has led Jean-Claude Garcin, who wrote the preface to her book, to embrace Martel-Thoumian's work as an example of the new "Histoire 'totale'."

Still, Martel-Thoumian's study does allow one to see something of the extent to which the administrative environment reflected a Weberian division between bureaucratic and patrimonial/prebendal societies. Did administrators, for instance, enforce a guild-like closure of their elite? Martel-Thoumian claims they maintained "an open milieu" (pp. 84, 433), preserving especially their provincial ties (p. 85). Did administrators enjoy tenure of office? Martel-Thoumian makes clear that they served entirely at the pleasure of the ruler, with whom they enjoyed at best a relationship "always full of ambiguity" (p. 161). Were public and private resources segregated? Since, as she suggests, the guiding vision of civil administrators was to acquire as much wealth and property as possible during their



uncertain tenures, that separation seems unlikely. Was pecuniary compensation regulated? She finds little evidence of salaries, only monthly rations (p. 348), which may have encouraged at least some functionaries to supplement their earnings through parallel commercial careers (p. 350). To what extent were careers based on seniority? She argues that they were established and regulated almost entirely on the bases of heredity, clientelism, and venality. Without any apparent collegial organization to engender group solidarity, there were no collective norms in which seniority might have prevailed, ultimately, to protect civil administrators from sultanic whim. Clearly Martel-Thoumian means us to see ninth/fifteenth century Egypt not as a *Beamtenstaat* but a mere *Bureaukratie*—a civil officialdom full of arbitrary, grasping, and politically dependent families serving their own parochial interests.

Indeed, the family looms large in her study. Like the earlier efforts of Joan Gilbert and Carl Petry, her work affirms the value of prosopography as a tool for reconstructing historical elites through their personal lives, in this case, lives dedicated to the transformation of bureaucratic families into administrative dynasties. This is best reflected in perhaps the most original feature of her analysis—the social uses of matrimony. Martel-Thoumian theorizes in fact two types of marriage strategies: the “political strategy” and “economic strategy.” The former, based on exogamy, was meant to reinforce the prominent but often uncertain social status experienced by civil administrative families. The latter, based on endogamy—particularly with the daughter of the paternal uncle (*bint al-‘amm*)—was intended to help preserve family resources. Unfortunately, she can shed no light on the impact of polygamy in the “economic strategy.”

The “political strategy” centered around concluding marriage alliances principally with the *umarā’* as well as with other prominent administrative families. Martel-Thoumian is not really on any new ground in her assertion that the civil administrators of Circassian Egypt identified closely with the *umarā’*, whose *dīwāns* formed a “nursery” (*pépinière*) for state bureaucracies (p. 131). Indeed, she largely reiterates conclusions reached by Petry a decade ago about the close clientelistic relationship between the *umarā’* and administrators, especially those of Syrian or Coptic origins. She argues more provocatively, however, that civil administrative families held other social elites—clerical, judicial, and mercantile—in considerably less matrimonial esteem. She believes marriage relationships with clerical and judicial groups were infrequent because often such people were clients of prominent administrators, who exercised their “discretionary powers” to obtain posts on their behalf. With commercial groups, there were no matrimonial affiliations whatever. She, at any rate, can find no trace of them (p. 369), despite the likelihood that some civil administrators must have come themselves from commercial backgrounds (p. 130). The mystery deepens since a majority of the administrative families studied lived in two of the most important centers of economic activity in Cairo—al-Qāhirah and Būlāq. Moreover, she believes that in al-Qāhirah at least some of the lesser functionaries living around the *sūqs* may have owned shops; she further speculates that other civil administrators engaged in parallel commercial careers.

The lack of intimate ties between administrative and especially mercantile elites does not seem readily explicable, certainly when compared with other societies such as China, where merchants and bureaucrats were often closely intertwined historically. Ultimately, Martel-Thoumian has been unable to develop our understanding about the place of merchants in the Circassian civil elite much beyond where Petry left it more than a decade



ago. The problem is deserving of greater discussion since any relationship between governmental and entrepreneurial elites bears on the larger issue of capital formation in traditional societies. One possible answer to this social distance lies in her suggestion that prominent civil administrative families, through their acquisition of landed property largely for conversion into *awqāf*, may have developed an attitude "latifundiaire" (pp. 384, 430). This cultural identification, reinforced no doubt by their social climbing among the Mamluk *Landadel*, may have inhibited administrative families from greater social intercourse with other groups, including those who derived their incomes chiefly from commerce rather than land.

Martel-Thoumian provides little cultural context for evaluating such things as social attitudes. She has described in great detail the origins, functions, and careers as well as marital connections of civil administrators. Yet, the sum total of these empirical observations does not seem to account entirely for their social role in the Circassian period. Indeed, this underscores the central paradox of Martel-Thoumian's study: although these administrators possessed a social milieu they did not ultimately constitute a "coherent social group." This is all the more curious since she maintains that, while perhaps geographically and confessionally diverse, these functionaries issued generally from the same social (secretarial/judicial) environment.

This paradox is an issue of no small importance for Circassian history. Scholars have long viewed the ninth/fifteenth century as a period of systemic decline of Mamluk society driven largely by a financial collapse in which Mamluk bureaucrats were highly complicit. Martel-Thoumian has not perhaps explored this issue as fully as it deserves. She does suggest that civil-administrative families were too socially fragmented by competition for status and resources to develop the same sort of social solidarity which, she believes, allowed the '*ulamā*' to act autonomously of Mamluk rapacity. Though this is a largely materialist view, she also indicates a more cultural explanation for this lack of "esprit de corps." Though pious and educated, civil administrators, she believes, failed to extend their role as "cultural guardians." One infers that, unlike the earlier Confucian *chün-tzu* or the later Prussian *Berufsmensch*, ninth/fifteenth century Egyptian civil administrators did not constitute an intelligentsia. Though educated, they were not it seems an intellectually unitary group whose actions reflected a social knowledge of the relationship between structure and belief in their society. They exercised no mediatory function between social groups and cultural ideas; they were content apparently to remain passive transmitters of ruling class interests. Certainly they did not act as spokesmen for social groups unable to speak for themselves. Martel-Thoumian does not share Pety's view about the constructive, if symbolic, social role played by the Circassian civil administrative elite in society; in any case, she does not see these administrators intervening meaningfully on behalf of the communities that they oversaw.

Though certain administrators enjoyed access to rulers, the administrative elite did not seek to play a role equivalent to the '*ulamā*' in influencing the direction of state policy; weak matrimonial links between administrators and clerics perhaps underscore this disparity in social consciousness. Certainly, civil administrators made no intellectual claim to a "Mandate of Heaven" by which they might have converted personal influence over rulers into direct power. As Martel-Thoumian puts it, they were hardly a "noblesse de robe" (p. 435). No Mamluk sultan need have feared a *Beamtenrevolution* conducted by radicals "in dressing gown and slippers." Still, Pety has suggested recently that late



Mamluk government experienced "tokens of propensity for change at the final hour." Was a cultural rift emerging between "traditionalists" and "modernists" within the late Mamluk bureaucracy, such as affected the late Ottoman administrative elite a half millennium later? Might this rift have been reflected in a split between secular and *adab* education? In light of the recent works of Jonathan Berkey and Michael Chamberlain, one regrets Martel-Thoumian's failure to discuss more fully the role which education may have played in shaping the social identity of the civil administrative elite, particularly how it may have reoriented them culturally in the final, crucial years of the Classical Mamluk state.

As valuable as Martel-Thoumian's empirical generalizations about the civilian administrative elite are, one regrets her decision not to raise more substantive issues about structure and process in Mamluk administration itself. She might easily have broadened her description of the lives of bureaucrats to engage, for instance, the long-standing functionalist-interactionist debate about the sociology of the bureaucratic profession. Were the actions of civil administrators in late medieval Egypt totally structured by their competitive social environment or was there a functional pattern of institutional behavior which created some collective orientation among them? Did civil administrators operate among themselves entirely on the basis of intimidation and autonomy, or were their actions in some way shaped by such things as trust and collegiality? Only by raising new types of questions about Mamluk society are scholars ever likely to realize Garcin's ultimate hope, expressed about Martel-Thoumian's otherwise admirable book, that we be able "to modify our vision of the Mamluk military state."

MICHAEL CHAMBERLAIN, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Pp. 199.

REVIEWED BY JOHN L. MELOY, University of Chicago

Scholars have long investigated the place of elite culture, and in particular the role of learning, in the medieval Middle East, and in recent years researchers have started to explore the popular manners and customs of this time and place. At its core, *Knowledge and Social Practice* investigates one feature of the manners and customs of the learned elite of Damascus: "the practices by which power and status were acquired, exerted, and asserted" (p. 2). Michael Chamberlain argues that "it was the elite household (*bayt*; pl., *buyūt*), and not the state, the agency, or the autonomous corporate or religious body, that held power, and that exercised it in most of its social, political, cultural, and economic aspects" (p. 2). The subjects of this study are the *a'yān* of Damascus during the years 1190-1350, when "Syria and Egypt maintained a strong and fairly stable position within Mediterranean and Indian Ocean patterns of trade," and which saw the arrival of people from a variety of ethnic groups. The end of this period is marked by "the beginning of the end," when the Black Death swept the Middle East starting in 748/1347 (pp. 25-26). However, the author has a much broader aim: he poses the fundamental problem in such a way that the entire exercise serves as a critique of the study of the medieval Middle East, examining a variety of issues and themes in Islamic history. In so doing, Chamberlain has taken on various methodological and historical objectives, perhaps too many, to the extent



that the impact of this book is somewhat diminished in its attempt to solve fundamental issues in the study of the medieval Middle East.

Chamberlain's introduction presents a necessarily wide-ranging discussion of the historical and methodological issues germane to the book's elaborately constructed problem. The author's thesis, that "[t]he a'yān of Damascus advanced their strategies of social survival through cultural practices associated with knowledge," enables an understanding of "how elite households constructed their fundamental social bonds, competed among themselves and with others, and passed on their status in time" (p. 23). The argument is built on three concepts: "maladroit patrimonialism," *manṣab*, and *fitnah*. What made the social position of the civilian elite so intriguing during this period, the author writes, was that with the rise of the military patronage state from the time of the Zangids, the civilian elite's hold on property weakened. Chamberlain asserts that the civilian elite were never fully incorporated into the state apparatus and the bureaucracy was never established as a strong and permanent force in society. The result of this social and political configuration was that the military rulers "never had the knowledge, the agencies, and the independent coercive power to coordinate and control the subordinate elites upon whom they depended to rule. Rather, power was diffused among the households of powerful amīrs and a'yān" (p. 8). The political order of "maladroit patrimonialism" compelled the elite to use *manṣabs*, "stipendiary posts" (p. 24), as a means to maintain status and power, just as the military elite struggled over *iqṭā's*. Chamberlain argues that elite practices, such as lecturing, reading, writing, reproducing texts, debating, and scholarly discipleship, have been misinterpreted as educational endeavors; instead, these should be treated as forms of social and political competition. This leads the author to "show how both amīrs and a'yān had similar relations to rulers, similar forms of social and political competition, and imagined the social and political universes in similar ways" (p. 8). Thus it is *fitnah* that embodies the distinctively political character of the city's social relations:

By studying the competitive practices of fitna as exercised by both amīrs and a'yān, we come to understand on a more general level what historians have formalized as the distinct spheres of "society," "culture," and the "state." We can also undermine the anachronistic notion of the existence of "state" and "society" as distinct entities, and of political and social competition as the separate domains of amīrs and a'yān respectively. Fitna . . . was not the temporary breakdown of a preexisting legitimate order, but in concert with maladroit patrimonialism formed the central dynamic of all elite social and political life. It imposed its logic on most of their political and social relationships. (p. 9)

Five chapters follow the introduction. Chapter 1 reviews the changes in power relations that occurred with the establishment of the military patronage states, elaborating also the concepts of "maladroit patrimonialism" and *fitnah*. The discussion provides comparative material from the Latin West and Sung China. Chapter 2 reviews the *madrāsah*, the *dār al-ḥadīth*, and the *waqf*, mainly in terms of previous scholarship, and discusses how these issues have been misunderstood, all of which sets up arguments laid out in the following chapters. Chapter 3 argues that the foundation of *waqfs*, which offered *manṣabs*, changed social life by offering objects of social struggle, rather than the objects



of higher education. Chapter 4 discusses the means by which the civilian elite gained social distinction and passed it on within households. The chief proposition here is that these practices cannot be reduced to a matter of higher education; in medieval Damascus, these practices “are better studied as a single group of ritual, mimetic, and performative practices” (p. 108). Chapter 5 describes the civilian elite’s control over the production of knowledge in social struggles, relying on a description of “how the a’yān imagined the social world and the nature of social competition” (p. 153). Thus “law,” “education,” and “the suppression of heresy” were fields of social contest between members of the *‘ulamā’*, rather than scholarly endeavors.

Chamberlain’s methodological premise is that by asking how the elite used writing, we can make more effective use of the surviving literary sources, chiefly the biographical dictionaries. By means of this methodological framework, the author claims to solve a variety of related problems—principally Eurocentrism and the inappropriate and ineffective use of sources—that have plagued studies of the medieval Middle East. Western scholars, in looking for their native social categories in the medieval Middle Eastern situation, have found only “a nightmarish reversal of the European social order” (p. 4). The result has been that Islamic “institutions” have been measured against those of Europe and interpreted as “corrupt,” or at best as “informal.” A reconsideration of the available sources, biographical dictionaries in particular, entails also a critique of those who have lamented the paucity of documentary sources from the medieval Middle East and who have failed to see the value of the sources that we do possess. Chamberlain’s approach consists of three elements: (1) A critical use of the sources (p. 3), founded on the recognition that biographical dictionaries are sources for the cultural practices of the learned elite mentioned above (p. 7); (2) A comparative “Eurasian” perspective, in an effort “to see more clearly the distinctiveness of the social and cultural history of Damascus, and of the Middle East more broadly” (p. 28). The author believes this is necessary because “it enables us to criticize the mistaken imposition of European notions of order on the high medieval Middle East” (p. 24); and (3) A more precise understanding of “informality” in medieval Islamic societies (p. 4), which, when used as a category is drained of its “particularity and complexity” (p. 7). This aspect of the investigation is built upon the notion of the reproduction of social practice, as elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu.<sup>1</sup> The quest here is for the “deeper structures” of medieval Middle Eastern social life, particularly, the use of “symbolic capital” as a means of competing for and perpetuating relationships of power (p. 23).

Chamberlain’s approach to the notion of informality is probably the most innovative aspect of the book. The interpretation of these cultural practices as performative and mimetic is an illuminating approach, although I am not convinced that this interpretation is sufficient to explain why some individuals succeeded and others failed in obtaining *manṣabs*, or why others refused them. To what extent might intellectual convictions have affected any of these actions? Can the substance of their scholarly endeavors be divorced from their cultural practices? It seems to me that this approach would be that much more illuminating if it acknowledged the educational aspects of these practices. As for the thesis that the *bayt* was the principal repository of social power, the role of households of civilian elite remains disappointingly unclear. The author’s portrayal of social competition between

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) and *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).



scholars is plausible, but how this competition occurred between households, a number of which are mentioned on occasion, is not described at all. Some of these households were wealthy, by the author's own account, and it is difficult to imagine that material resources played no role in the consolidation of their positions, even among the scholarly community. Had the author described the social interaction of even one typical household synchronically or diachronically, the book's argument in this regard would perhaps have been more convincing.

The other two aspects are not tackled so successfully. Quite frankly, the Eurasian perspective reveals little about the Middle Eastern situation. As for a critical use of the sources, Chamberlain is quite right to investigate the sources for evidence concerning cultural practices and to see in prosaic educational activities a more telling cultural function. However, a critical use of the biographical dictionaries should entail a discussion of camps within the scholarly community and the differential treatment of entries; not to do so is simply to regard them as documentary information, a problem all too often encountered in the historiography of medieval Islam. This feature of his approach is based on a subsidiary argument that medieval Middle Eastern archives are not preserved because "the document collections that existed appear not to have had the critical role in political and social competition characteristic of state, corporate, or household archives elsewhere" (p. 17) and that "[t]he scarcity of original documents thus represents a fundamental difference in the social uses of writing" (p. 18). This argument is flawed. Chamberlain assumes divergent cultural attitudes based on the differential preservation of evidence; subsequent attitudes toward cultural heritage must be considered first. Indeed, chronicle authors frequently mention anecdotes suggesting that medieval Middle Easterners did "brandish" documents, and both chancery and notarial manuals testify to a demand for documentation. What is clear is that the individuals, families, and institutions that had any reason to store documents simply did not survive for centuries.

Two stylistic points, though minor, are frequent and obvious enough to deserve attention here as well. First, transliteration systems, obnoxious to read as they are, must be tolerated, and effective ones conform consistently to Arabic orthography. Chamberlain uses a version of the transliteration system used by the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, modified with respect to several features, of which the treatment of some is troubling: "without assimilation of the definite article or elision of the hamza al-waṣl." These, we are told, are how "titles and proper nouns are spelled in data bases and research resources" (p. 26). The first feature is not followed consistently while the second is by no means standard practice in libraries with romanized catalogs. His treatment of the *tā' marbūṭah* in construct is inconsistent as well. "Tā'riḫh," used throughout the book, is plain wrong. In general, the transliterated text needs a thorough editing. Second, the prescriptive nature of the prose, while enthusiastic, nonetheless betrays a certain blindness to the historiographic perspectives that, for better or worse, have shaped our field: "if we learn to read the sources more carefully . . ." (p. 21), and "[i]n all cases we have to read these sources critically, and we must be especially concerned to take into account the motives of their authors in writing them." (p. 20). Unfortunately, this study does not include a thorough discussion of the motivations and attitudes that may have guided the compilers of biographical dictionaries, and the possibility of differential treatment of scholars from competing households, so that there is a tendency to treat the information in these sources as documentary. This is by no means a problem unique to this study, since our field's

sources require all historians, perhaps more than other fields of history, to be historiographers.

In spite of these criticisms, there is no doubt that Chamberlain's investigation of how knowledge was used by the *a'yān* of Damascus is a significant and incisive methodological contribution to medieval Islamic history, illuminating new aspects of research in daily culture and education in the medieval Levant. As can be seen from the summary above, the author has set for himself a problem with many ramifications, and it may well be the author's attempt to deal with all of them that lends the book a rather unfocused quality, notwithstanding the attempts to sharpen conceptual aspects of the argument. Social historians of medieval Islam will nevertheless find it stimulating reading.

BOAZ SHOSHAN, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Pp. 148.

REVIEWED BY TH. EMIL HOMERIN, University of Rochester

Inspired by Peter Burke's *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (1978), Boaz Shoshan has undertaken the study of popular culture in Cairo during the period corresponding approximately to the Mamluk era (1250-1517). Readers should be warned, however, that the product of Shoshan's research thus far is not a comprehensive treatment of the subject—as his book's title might suggest—but rather a small collection of disparate essays whose subjects touch upon particular aspects of what Shoshan has designated as popular culture. In the introduction, Shoshan raises several pertinent points regarding the specter of death looming over the masses, and the question of how people spent their leisure time. This leads to the thorny problem of the definition of "popular culture," which Shoshan tends to equate with "those socially inferior to the bourgeoisie; hence, supposedly also illiterate, at least by and large" (p. 7).

Leaving aside further discussion of definition, Shoshan turns in his first essay to Sufism and its importance to the religious life of Mamluk Cairo. Shoshan notes the contributions made by the Sufi orders to congregational life, and the vital role of the Sufi shaykhs and their sermons for disseminating Islamic doctrines and religious obligations. Shoshan pays particular attention to the sermons of the famous Shādhilī Sufi master Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh (d. 1309), which stress the importance of faith, repentance, and avoiding the wiles of Satan and sin, as well as the performance of prayer, religious duties, and *dhikr*. Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh also extols visiting the tombs of the pious saints, who have the ability to perform miracles and acts of grace.

Shoshan then briefly considers the *mawlid*s, or "saints' days," and some of their rituals and licentious behaviors that were rumored to have occurred during these times of popular revelry. He then concludes this chapter by probing Sufism's "reintroduction into Islam of the old association of religion and magic" (p. 18). He reports several lively cases of charlatans and con-men to be found in Mamluk sources, together with Ibn Taymīyah's legal opinion condemning many Sufi tenets regarding the saints and their miracles. Shoshan also cites a number of miracles ascribed to various Sufis and saints, and the



mediation by some of these figures between the Mamluk regime and the larger Cairene populace.

The various reports of saints and sinners recounted by Shoshan are quite engaging, and he is also to be commended for selecting the often ignored popular sermons as a source and instrument to probe religious life in medieval Islam. However, Shoshan falls victim to the still pervasive misreading of Islam as having an "orthodoxy." Shoshan consistently contrasts Sufis to "orthodox scholars (*'ulamā'*)" (p. 21; also see pp. 11, 13) when many Sufi shaykhs were, in fact, respected members of the *'ulamā'* having a special expertise in the study and practice of mysticism. Shoshan appears to regard conservative legal scholars, such as Ibn Taymīyah, as the "orthodox" men of religion, though most of them, too, (including Ibn Taymīyah) regarded mystical dimensions of Islam to be a vital and nourishing part of their faith. Further, the doctrines and practices reviewed by Shoshan including the belief in saints and miracles, the visitation of their shrines, and celebration of their *mawlid*s, clearly were not held by the illiterate alone, but as Mamluk sources explicitly report, they were embraced by elite and commoner alike and so were quite "popular," though not in Shoshan's restricted sense of the word.

Without transition or logical connection, Shoshan proceeds to his second chapter on a biography of Muḥammad ascribed to the story-teller Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bakrī (fl. 13th century?). Shoshan details the arrangement and contents of the work, which was quite popular in its own day, and is still influential today. Shoshan maintains that al-Bakrī's account of the Prophet does not differ substantially from similar works composed by medieval Muslim scholars, yet many of the latter group denounced al-Bakrī as a liar and teller of tall tales. Shoshan seems at a loss to explain this discrepancy, attributing it to "the personalities involved much more than the nature of the material itself" (p. 38).

A more logical explanation than Shoshan's undocumented assertion of conflicting personalities is class or career conflict. Many story-tellers and popular preachers were not the product of the educated elite, though they often dealt with the same religious subjects, albeit in a more entertaining fashion. This fact, together with the story-tellers' popularity, posed a threat to the religious establishment and its control of the sacred canon. Thus in order to preserve true religion and to protect the common herd from going astray, unauthorized teachers of religion, such as al-Bakrī, had to be vigorously opposed, even if a particular work or teaching by them was in general agreement with scholarly consensus.

Turning to chapter 3, Shoshan examines the Cairene celebration of Nawrūz, a spring festival that was popular for some time and "celebrated by both the elite and the ordinary people" (p. 42). Shoshan discusses the early Iranian origins of the festival, possible influence on it from ancient Egyptian, Roman, and Coptic sources, and the incorporation of the holiday into the Muslim calendar. Then he comparatively analyzes the festival and its rituals in terms of the medieval European carnival with its reversal of status and its uninhibited, wanton celebration. Shoshan concludes that Nawrūz may have served to ease social tensions between Cairo's elite minority and the struggling lower classes, while at the same time conveying the poor's frustration, anxiety, and dissatisfaction to the authorities.

Similar matters involving public protest are the subject of chapter 4 as Shoshan examines the issue of "moral economy." He begins the chapter with an insightful account of the Cairene public's demand for a ruler who was a born Muslim, and hence the mass demonstrations in support of the young sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against his foreign-



born, convert rival. Shoshan builds on this example to postulate the presence in Cairo of what E. P. Thompson has labeled a "moral economy," "a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community" (p. 65). Shoshan supports his assertion by a careful and detailed analysis of the Mamluk grain trade, and the grain riots and protests resulting from abuses which frustrated the masses' expectations and/or violated accepted government policies.

Chapter 5 serves as a kind of conclusion to this book which Shoshan describes as being "about the culture of ordinary people in medieval Cairo" (p. 67). However, the acceptance and active participation of Mamluks and members of the scholarly class in many of the matters involving Sufis, Nawrūz, and public protests would suggest otherwise. Though the regime and some religious scholars might call for the banning of certain popular celebrations or practices (particularly if public morality or sexual promiscuity were an issue), Shoshan's assertion that "the learned and the rulers" exhibited a "general hostility . . . toward the culture of the commoners" (p. 70) appears extreme, if not plain wrong. In fact, in this final chapter, Shoshan cites additional accounts of royal and scholarly participation in popular events and festivals (e.g. the Hajj caravan, and the "Plenitude of the Nile"), and the veneration of Sufis. In the end, Shoshan, too, seems to sense the limitations and inadequacy of viewing Islam through the distorting lens of high vs. low cultures or its religious equivalent—and, perhaps origin—in orthodoxy vs. heterodoxy when he says (pp. 77-78):

[W]e come to the argument that, in the final analysis, a refined approach to the history of culture should transcend the "chotomous" view, the tendency to emphasize the dichotomy between "high" and "low". . . . The Cairene case was no exception: in medieval Cairo the cult of saints created a common ground for the people and the elite.

Shoshan's approximately eighty pages of essays are followed by an appendix listing chronologically forty-two Sufi shaykhs of the Mamluk period and some of the sources which mention them. Why Shoshan included this appendix is not at all clear, though scholars of Sufism may find it of some use. After this appendix are forty-two pages of copious endnotes and a select bibliography, which underscores Shoshan's laudable comparative approach to popular culture. Nevertheless, while he cites important studies on Europe, he ignores relevant studies on Islam. For example, concerning Islamic preaching, preachers and story-tellers Shoshan neglects the pioneering work of Johannes Pederson (1948, 1953) as well as Merlin Swartz's edition and translation of Ibn al-Jawzī's *Kitāb al-Quṣṣāṣ* (1971). Regarding the Muslim cult of the saints, Shoshan mentions that he knew of but did not consult Christopher Taylor's 1989 dissertation on the important pilgrimage guide by Ibn al-Zayyāt; I am curious to know why, since Taylor's dissertation is easily obtained through dissertation reprint services, or why Shoshan did not consult Ibn al-Zayyāt directly. Further, Shoshan incorrectly ascribes 'Alī al-Sakhāwī's *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb* to the famous Mamluk biographer Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī.

Such shortcomings aside, Boaz Shoshan's *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* does contribute to the nascent research field of medieval Muslim popular culture while, at the same time, underscoring the need for the further sustained study of medieval Muslim societies.



MOHAMED-MOAIN SADEK, *Die Mamlukische Architektur der Stadt Gaza*. (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1991). Pp. 700.

REVIEWED BY JONATHAN M. BLOOM, Richmond, New Hampshire

This book is the text of a doctoral dissertation submitted to the Freie Universität, Berlin in 1990 concerning architecture in the Palestinian city of Gaza during the Mamluk period. German doctoral dissertations, which must be published, normally represent work at a level between an American M.A. and a Ph.D., and this book is no exception. The first of its eight sections is an introduction to the city of Gaza, including discussion of topography, history, meaning (i.e., historical role), and population. The second through sixth sections present the surviving buildings of the Mamluk city, including nine mosques, two *madrassahs*, one *zāwiyah*, the governor's palace, and a *qaysārīyah*. The seventh section discusses additional buildings that are known to have existed but are now destroyed: these include twenty-six mosques, seven *madrassahs*, a *zāwiyah*, a *ribāt*, the birthplace of the Imam al-Shāfi'ī, four tombs, a *mastabah*, a palace, a *maydān*, a bath, a hospital, two caravanserais and three water-dispensaries. The book concludes with an assessment of the style of Mamluk architecture in the city, in which the author considers such features as plans, architectural elements—including courts, minarets, entrances, arches, and domes—and finally decoration—including *muqarnas*, *ablaq*, and vegetal, geometric, and epigraphic ornament. The book is illustrated with over two hundred pages of plans, sections, and rather gray, small and sometimes amateurish (e.g., nos. 36, 39, etc.) photographs. The plan of the city in the pocket was originally published in the *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* in 1888.

This is a straightforward book which presents the material in a methodical and logical, if not particularly exciting, fashion. The typical presentation of a building comprises several parts, including discussion of its location, dating and history, a general description, discussion of restorations, analysis of the exterior, description of special ornament, a review of the documentary sources, and a presentation of the inscriptions. The author is not especially interpretive or critical of his sources, but, considering the alternatives, this can be seen as a blessing. The book's value lies in documenting largely unfamiliar material before it disappears and making it accessible for further study. Considering that the field of Islamic art and architecture is now over a century old, the author's potted recapitulations of the early history of such features as the mosque, *mihrāb*, and minaret are of little interest, particularly since the Gaza material offers little, if anything, new on the subject. The decision to present the material in a typological, rather than chronological, framework means that the monumental evidence is hardly used to help explain why and illustrate how Gaza developed as a regional center during the Mamluk period.

This study invites comparison with several other recent works on Mamluk and Syrian architecture. The most important is, of course, the late Michael Meinecke's masterpiece, *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien* (Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Islamische Reihe, 5-6. Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1992), which represents the culmination of over two decades of the author's work on the subject. Despite the earlier publication date of Dr. Sadek's book, he was able to consult Meinecke's work in proof, and Meinecke was able to incorporate Sadek's



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DOI: [10.6082/M17942T6](https://doi.org/10.6082/M17942T6). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M17942T6>)

findings in his far more integrative and detailed study, which will remain the book of first reference for Mamluk architecture for many decades. It might be fairer to compare Dr. Sadek's book with recent studies about architecture in provincial Mamluk cities, in which case it stands between Michael Hamilton Burgoyne's magisterial *Mamluk Jerusalem, an Architectural Study, with additional historical research by D. S. Richards* ([London]: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1987) and Hayat Salam-Leiblich's *The Architecture of the Mamluk City of Tripoli* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1983). Nasser O. Rabbat's imaginative work, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), successfully integrates architectural and archaeological information with historical sources for the Mamluk period. Perhaps the most innovative of recent studies is Terry Allen's work on Ayyubid and early Mamluk architecture based on an extraordinarily close reading of texts and examination of masonries. The evidence of the stones themselves reveals how individual masons worked and demonstrates how they moved from one project to another. Not only is Dr. Allen's methodology innovative, but so is the electronic form in which he is publishing his new book. It can be found on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.wco.com/~books/readmeaa.html>.

AMALIA LEVANONI, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310-1341)*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995). Pp. 221.

REVIEWED BY W. W. CLIFFORD, University of Chicago

Readers may gain the impression from Levanoni's title that her monograph is exclusively about the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. In fact, she ranges widely over the whole of the Bahrī period and even well into that of the Circassian. Indeed, Levanoni's ultimate concern is with the Mamluk army of the Circassian period, and her task is to demonstrate precisely how "the spreading of professional and moral laxity in the Mamluk army" of the ninth/fifteenth century "set in during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's [third] rule" (pp. 98-99). In doing so, Levanoni has broken significantly with the ahistorical model of the Mamluk system often associated with David Ayalon. Levanoni's focus on the problems of change within the early eighth/fourteenth century Mamluk army recalls similar efforts made twenty years ago by R. Stephen Humphreys to question the stasis of the Syro-Egyptian military structure during the mid-seventh/thirteenth century. Humphreys's controversial admonition at the time that the early Mamluk army "should not be understood teleologically," as he believed Ayalon understood it, "but as a series of responses to . . . a changing sociopolitical context" has clearly struck a responsive chord in Levanoni.<sup>1</sup>

The "dynamic" nature of the Mamluk system was manifest, Levanoni believes, in its sudden transition from normative to anomic social behavior in the early eighth/fourteenth century. In short, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign generated regressive changes in traditional practices of "training, advancement and remuneration" within the Mamluk military—changes which led later in the century to a proletarianization of the army and a

<sup>1</sup> R. Stephen Humphreys, "The Emergence of the Mamluk Army," *Studia Islamica* 45 (1977): 69.



collapse of internal social discipline. In the half century before al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, she argues, social solidarity among the Mamluks had been much more cohesive, based on "norms," that is, one infers, idealized cultural constraints on action. These were represented by the "principle of loyalty" and "a specific code of conduct which included modesty, order, and strictness," and which tended "to foster a sense of respect for authority" as well as "underpin master-mamluk relations" (pp. 14-19, 34). Levanoni seems to be arguing that the early Mamluks, owing to a high degree of both primary and secondary socialization, were actually able to internalize such norms, though she readily concedes we know little of the system by which *mamālīk* were raised and advanced (p. 3).

Yet, how reflective were such "norms" of a common value system among the early Mamluks? Levanoni suggests elsewhere that the motivation behind their social behavior may have been more material than normative, secured ultimately by Baybars's linkage of "rank" and "economic power" through "military hierarchy" (p. 10). Perhaps the social stability Levanoni perceives in the early period reflects not so much internalized cultural definitions of behavior as individual responses to a common material stimulus. In any case, Levanoni's functional assumptions about the effectiveness of early Mamluk socialization largely ignore the role of coercion in maintaining early consensus; she appears to hold to the Durkheimian view that conformity to social norms is better achieved through socialization than external sanctions. Yet, early sultans, including Baybars, relied heavily on a system of external rewards and penalties to regulate already highly dynamic social relationships among the Mamluks. Levanoni has obligated herself to argue, somewhat naively, that the same sociopolitical tensions extant in the early eighth/fourteenth century were not already present just fifty years earlier at the formation of the Mamluk state.

If Levanoni indeed accepts that there was a consistency of belief, values, and norms among the early Mamluks, how then did this cultural system collapse so soon and so completely? Conformity to norm is of course a matter of degree; actors always bring something with them to their social encounters. Norms can and do change, therefore, and any concept of social process has to explain how this occurs. Levanoni's explanation is rather *deus ex machina*. She believes largely that al-Nāṣir's "general laxity" and "permissiveness" were the root cause of "decline" of the Mamluk system. Indeed, one detects a certain Khaldunian censure of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad—a ruler like the Umayyad Hishām or the Abbasid al-Mu'taṣim whose reign marked the end of true *siyāsat al-mulk wa-al-sultān*. Levanoni argues ultimately that al-Nāṣir consciously intended to destroy the social fabric of the Mamluk system through his dissociative behavior, though she relies somewhat incautiously on Circassian sources for this controversial observation (pp. 30-31, n. 13). While heeding Humphreys's advice elsewhere, she seems to have ignored his admonition against conflating the authority of non-contemporary Circassian with contemporary Bahārī chroniclers.<sup>2</sup>

Like many before her, then, Levanoni cannot finally resist reducing Mamluk history to the personal idiosyncrasies of Mamluk rulers. Yet, political cultures rarely change so dramatically for such simplistic reasons. And even an unstructured and conflictive environment such as Levanoni has described eventually creates pressure for the

<sup>2</sup> R. Stephen Humphreys, "The Emergence of the Mamluk Army (Conclusion)," *Studia Islamica* 46 (1977): 179; ". . . we must abandon our traditional reliance on al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī, for both men . . . tend to reinterpret their sources (while ostensibly reproducing them) in light of the conditions and issues of their own time."



development of new norms through a new process of mediation, negotiation, and compromise. What, then, were the new cultural definitions that emerged after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad? Levanoni can seem to suggest only normlessness as a new norm. This sort of argumentation, which plays neatly into the Orientalist myth of Mamluk anarchy, may still resonate among traditional scholars, but modern social historians, historical sociologists and political anthropologists of the Middle East, who arguably could have been Levanoni's most appreciative audience, are not likely to find this sort of reductionism particularly persuasive.

It is equally unlikely, though for different reasons, that the doyen of Mamluk studies, David Ayalon, will find Levanoni's arguments any more compelling. She has after all fundamentally rejected his basic assumptions about the ideal nature of the *mamlūk's* relationship with his patron (*ustādh*) and comrades-in-bondage (*khushdāshīyah*). Indeed, Ayalon made what might be considered a pre-emptive criticism of Levanoni when, in 1990, he suggested that any future attempt to undercut his *idée fixe* about the Mamluk system would be "a very erroneous and most unwelcome tendency."<sup>3</sup> Ayalon has, of course, admitted that discipline and training declined later, during the Circassian period, and with it the loss of the "feeling of solidarity" within the Mamluk system as a whole, but he is unlikely to concede its origins scarcely a half century after the rise of Baybars. Ayalon's ready admission that the auxiliary military arm, the *ḥalqah*, began its disintegration in al-Nāṣir's day is of course tied precisely to his belief that the *ajnād al-ḥalqah* lacked in any case the very "feeling of solidarity linking companions in slavery and freedom (*al-khushdāshīyah*)."<sup>4</sup>

Levanoni's own evaluation of the Mamluk army's poor relation, the *ḥalqah*, conforms to Ayalon's general view that it experienced an administrative "down-grade" over the course of the eighth/fourteenth century (pp. 106-109). Levanoni, however, suggests a further interesting ramification. The *ḥalqah* may have emerged after al-Nāṣir's death as an open recruiting ground for the *umarā'* in their political squabbles. One wonders if the *ajnād al-ḥalqah*, as they endured official *déclassement*, might also have made their experience and services available to the *'āmmah*, improving perhaps the paramilitary competence of proto-militia like the *ḥarāfīsh*. Unlike Ayalon, Levanoni has not attempted to distinguish between the conditions of the *ḥalqah* of Egypt and that of Syria. Did the Syrian *ḥalqah* suffer ultimately a fate similar to its Egyptian counterpart? It is, of course, tempting to see a degraded *ḥalqah* as a paramilitary link in Syrian urban history between the high medieval *aḥdāth* and the late medieval *zu'ar*. Certainly, the image of disaffected *ajnād al-ḥalqah* buttresses Levanoni's larger argument about the proletarianization of the Mamluk army by rowdy "rank-and-file mamluks" (pp. 61-72).

In trying to differentiate her belief in the radical social transformation affected during al-Nāṣir's third reign from earlier interpretations, Levanoni has perhaps inevitably overstated her case at points. Her contention, for instance, that until the death of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad "the common people, *al-'āmmah*, lacked all influence on matters of rule and government" (p. 109) overlooks the impact the Cairene populace already had on the politics of al-Nāṣir's second reign. Or, Levanoni believes that "the formative years of the Mamluk

<sup>3</sup> David Ayalon, "Baḥrī Mamlūks, Burjī Mamlūks—Inadequate Names for the Two Reigns of the Mamlūk Sultanate," *Tārīḥ* 1 (1990): 46.

<sup>4</sup> David Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army—II," *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt (1250-1517)* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1977), 456.



state" witnessed an almost perfect solidarity between master and man. Her argument that it was only after al-Nāṣir's reign that amirs and sultans "could no longer count on the loyalty of their own mamluks" (pp. 86, 115) ignores the humiliation, mistreatment, and betrayal suffered, for instance, by early sultans such as al-Malik al-Sa'īd Barakah, Baybars's son, or al-Malik al-Muzaffar Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's predecessor, at the hands of their own *mamālīk*.

Levanoni's provocative break with the traditional interpretation of the Mamluk system seems, ultimately, more instinctual than conceptual. She has broached important issues of historical sociology and even anthropology but, without the benefit of even the most basic social scientific texts, has been unable to develop them analytically. Without such a discursive framework she has not perhaps gotten the most out of her own discussion; certainly, she has missed a valuable opportunity to provide the sort of modern insight into problems of medieval Middle Eastern social structure and process which, for instance, Michael Chamberlain has recently done. Nevertheless, Levanoni's work stands as both a credible alternative to the ahistorical view of David Ayalon, as well as the most detailed current study of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, somewhat better overall than the only other modern monograph, that of Hayat Nasser al-Hajji, which curiously she fails to cite.<sup>5</sup>

Levanoni has effectively circumnavigated the unremarkable if well-established modern tradition of political biography of Mamluk rulers by focusing on some of the linkages between the problems of one reign and those of others. In doing so, she has perhaps unintentionally delineated one of the principal shortcomings of Mamluk studies: the inability to envision the Mamluk polity as a holistic sociopolitical system—a state—whose operation possessed an internal logic capable of transcending the temporal limitations of individual reigns and personalities. This myopia has long been abetted by unrealistic historiographic perceptions of the Mamluk as an atavistic and regressive superimposition on indigenous Syro-Egyptian civilization. Fortunately, recent scholarship has begun to draw attention to certain socialized aspects of Mamluk behavior—desire for political consensus, leisure, education and manners, progressive agricultural management, and affiliation with local religious custom; no doubt the evolving study of women and family structure will help to portray the Mamluks in an even more socializing environment.

In sum, Levanoni has painted a rather grim picture of the Mamluk system scarcely a half century after its foundation. Yet, despite her rigorous claims of "decline" in the early eighth/fourteenth century, the Classical Mamluk state remained intact for another two centuries, and even afterward Mamluk political culture continued to thrive almost into the modern period. Perhaps we should be assessing the Mamluk achievement not in terms of its putative early failure but, rather, its obvious viability as a sociocultural phenomenon. The ultimate value of Levanoni's book, ironically, may be to awaken in scholars the need to rethink more incisively what we mean by Mamluk "decline."

<sup>5</sup> Hayat Nasser al-Hajji, *The Internal Affairs in Egypt during the Third Reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn 709-741/1309-1341* (Kuwait: Kuwait University Press, 1978).

