

## Book Reviews

LI GUO, *Commerce, Culture, and Community in a Red Sea Port in the Thirteenth Century: The Arabic Documents from Quseir* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004). Pp. xx + 334.

REVIEWED BY FRÉDÉRIC BAUDEN, Université de Liège

Our knowledge of the Red Sea trade, and consequently of the Indian Ocean trade, in the pre-modern period is hardly satisfactory. The main reason does not lie so much in the paucity of the data, provided either by historical sources or primary documents, as in the neglect of these sources. Until very recently, the documents of the Cairo Genizah had barely been studied from the point of view of maritime trade, though some scholars realized the importance of this source for this purpose.<sup>1</sup> The situation has changed since the appearance of Roxani Eleni Margariti's revised doctoral dissertation submitted at Princeton in 2002 (*Aden and the Indian Ocean Trade: 150 Years in the Life of a Medieval Port* [University of North Carolina Press, 2007]). As for historical sources, there is no doubt that the forthcoming publication of É. Vallet's doctoral dissertation on power, commerce, and merchants in Yemen during the Rasulid period (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries) will improve our understanding of trade in the region, too.<sup>2</sup>

The book under review expands our knowledge of this history, as it unveils a significant, though anecdotal, part of the history of Red Sea trade in the early thirteenth century on the basis of previously unpublished documents. These documents, mostly scraps of paper, were brought to light by the excavations carried out by the University of Chicago in 1982 in the Islamic residential complex of the site of Quseir (Qūṣayr al-qadīm), a port later abandoned when ʿAydhāb

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from Goitein's masterpiece, one can cite his articles entitled "From the Mediterranean to India: Documents on the Trade to India, South Arabia, and East Africa from the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Saeculum* 29 (1954): 181–97; "Arabic Documents on the Trade Between India and the Mediterranean Countries (11th and 12th centuries)," in *Proceedings of the Twenty-sixth International Congress of Orientalists* (New Dehli, 1970), 251–56; "From Aden to India: Specimens of the Correspondence of India Traders of the Twelfth Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 23 (1980): 43–66. Also worth a mention is the following study: H. M. Rabie, "Al-Baḥr al-Aḥmar fī al-ʿAṣr al-Ayyūbī," in *Al-Baḥr al-Aḥmar fī al-Tārīkh wa-al-Siyāsah al-Duwalīyah al-Muʿāṣirah* (Cairo, 1979), 105–23.

<sup>2</sup> A major source for the study of trade in this period started to appear in 2003: *Nūr al-Maʿārif fī Nuẓūm wa-Qawānīn wa-Aʿrāf al-Yaman fī al-ʿAhd al-Muẓaffarī al-Wārīf*, crit. ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Jāzīm (Sanaa, 2003–5), 2 vols.



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DOI: [10.6082/M16D5R4M](https://doi.org/10.6082/M16D5R4M). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M16D5R4M>)

DOI of Vol. XIII, no. 1: [10.6082/M1WQ01W6](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1WQ01W6). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/DRTM-CA24> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

superseded it. The documents were discovered in what appeared to be a merchant's house, whose name, Abū Mufarrij, is found in several of them. The dates provided by a small number of documents confirm that his business was active during the first half of the thirteenth century (earliest document dated 612/1215, latest dated 633/1235), a fact substantiated by the numismatic findings. The excavated house proved to be a warehouse (*shūnah*) which also served as a residence for the family. Should we recognize in this discovery a genizah, as Mark Cohen recently suggested?<sup>3</sup> In his view, the archive, together with other material not necessarily connected with the family (official documents, religious texts, charms), was probably saved from oblivion for the same reason that led to the preservation of tens of thousands of fragments in the Cairo Genizah and other genizah-like findings in the Islamic tradition (the documents of the Ḥaram in Jerusalem, the fragments of Quranic manuscripts in the Great Mosque in Sanaa, the documents of the Great Mosque in Damascus): to preserve honorably fragments of the Quran, in the first place, and secondarily documents. These would have been placed in the attic of the shaykh's house and were scattered everywhere in the room when the building collapsed. Though this is a tempting explanation, it fails to address other problems. Guo does not consider the possibility that this cache was a genizah, as he speaks of clearly discarded trash which had not been deliberately kept and was in a state of disorder, and he even notices that a letter seemed to have been "kneaded into a ball and then tossed in [a] trash bin" (p. 158). In another case, an account was found torn into several pieces (p. 41). The main characteristic of the Cairo Genizah is that manuscripts and documents, sometimes even personal archives, were placed in a specific room over quite a long period. If the shaykh's house was used in this way, how can we explain that other documents were found thanks to later excavations in another place not connected with this building and identified as a *sibākh* (organic refuse)?<sup>4</sup> As the archeologists put it, "no significant difference in date or character of the deposits was noted between the material from within and outside the structure, or between different levels within the deposit. This suggests that the *sebakh* is not representative of *in situ* activity but rather accumulated through the deliberate dumping or redepositing of refuse from other parts of the Islamic town."<sup>5</sup> If genizah-like practices were current in Quṣayr al-qadīm, there is no reason that they would not have been applied to

<sup>3</sup> Mark Cohen, "Geniza for Islamicists, Islamic Geniza, and the 'New Cairo Geniza,'" *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 7 (2006): 129–45, 138.

<sup>4</sup> The University of Southampton carried out excavations from 1999 to 2003 (see <http://www.arch.soton.ac.uk/Projects/default.asp?ProjectID=20>). Anne Regourd is in charge of the study of the Arabic documents that surfaced during this new campaign of digging (see <http://www.rqad.leeds.ac.uk/>).

<sup>5</sup> See the interim report for 2003, trench 13 at the website indicated above.



other documents such as those uncovered in trench 13, for instance. At other sites in Egypt, too, documents have been found in layers that looked like refuse. On the other hand, it is known that the recycling of paper documents was a common occurrence.<sup>6</sup>

The book is divided in two sections. The first one is devoted to the study of the material deciphered in the second section. Guo succeeds in making the most of scraps of paper hardly decipherable not so much because of the nature of the handwriting, but rather because of the poor state of preservation. The author manages to reconstruct the social milieu revolving around the shaykh, Abū Mufarrij (chapter I), including his family (as it seems that Abū Mufarrij's business later became a family business, with one of his sons deeply involved), the company and its employees as well as its associates, and all the other categories of persons dealing with the house (clients, suppliers, buyers, but also officials, given that documents issued by this category surfaced together with the collection of business papers). Guo asks why official documents are found among the private business documents: he suggests that Abū Mufarrij's warehouse probably served as a postal address for the official documents or that he acted as a government agent. If so, why were these official documents unearthed in his house if he was supposed to transmit them to the authorities or other recipients? Guo does not answer this question. It might be that some of these official papers were intended for reuse of the blank verso, but in the end they were not.<sup>7</sup>

Chapter II is devoted to the economic problems raised by the business letters, accounts, and the like. The documents provide important data about the metrology in use in this remote part of the Muslim world which barely attracted the attention of medieval historians. As such, it is an incomparable source for the study of weights and measures in the Red Sea: similar data available for the holy cities provide an interesting comparison.<sup>8</sup> Importantly, the author also succeeds in demonstrating that the Quseir economy was first and foremost a credit one based on paper. This is not a surprise, rather it confirms a situation prevailing in the Near East at this time.

<sup>6</sup> Either reused for the blank parts or recycled to produce new paper. See on this Jonathan M. Bloom, *Paper before Print* (New Haven, 2001), 76.

<sup>7</sup> For the reuse of some of the documents, see p. 110. Anne Regourd found, among the papers excavated at Quseir by the University of Southampton, a death certificate which was reused on the back to write a letter. See her article to appear in the proceedings of the Third Conference of the International Society for Arabic Papyrology held in Alexandria in 2006. This practice is also confirmed in other cases (documents of the Cairo Genizah or those excavated in Fustat).

<sup>8</sup> Since Guo's study was published, a book devoted to economic life in the Hejaz during the Mamluk period has appeared: Muḥammad Maḥmūd Anāqirah, *Al-Ḥayāh al-Iqtisādiyyah fī al-Ḥijāz fī 'Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk, 648–923 h., 1250–1517 m.* (Riyadh, 2006).



Among the documents excavated, some were obviously not connected to business: sermons, prayers, block-printed amulets, magical texts, and astrological dials (chapter III). These improve our knowledge of popular culture in such a remote place. A major question is: are these documents related to the business ones and, consequently, with Abū Mufarrij? If we consider that they were unearthed in the shaykh's house and that the business section belonged to Abū Mufarrij, we should, as the author did, regard them as part of the family business. As Guo noticed (p. 84), Abū Mufarrij's son, Ibrāhīm, is described as a *khatīb* in a document, and it is probable that the sermons and the like are to be seen as connected to this activity. The block-printed amulets constitute another group (12 fragments) of highly attractive materials. Considered as a link between Chinese and European printing activities, the block-printed texts raise more questions than they answer. A thorough study of all the specimens preserved in various collections around the world could provide a good starting point. Those found in American and European institutions have recently been published.<sup>9</sup> Thanks to those studied by Guo in his book, there only remain those held in Middle Eastern collections (mainly Egypt) to be analyzed. The Quseir items corroborate that block-printed texts were spread throughout the Near East.

The second part of the book contains the decipherment and philological commentary on the documents. In this part, a selection of business letters, accounts, shipping notes, funeral texts, and amulets are published. These 84 fragments were selected from among several thousand (the exact number is not provided, see p. 104) for their interest and their state of preservation. This does not mean, however, that Guo neglects to analyze in the first part of the book those documents he decided not to publish in this second part. This part is introduced by chapter IV, which deals with the material analysis. Guo provides detailed remarks on the handwriting, including a paleographical study, a survey of the abbreviations and logograms (a particular case remains unsolved, see pp. 111–12), and of the numerals. As for language, most of the items published were written in a type of language that is now referred to as Middle Arabic (in this case, Muslim Middle Arabic), though this designation is not universally accepted.<sup>10</sup> Truly, most of these texts feature several traits generally noticed in modern dialects and found in many documents dated to the medieval period. Guo gives an exhaustive list of the linguistic characteristics of the documents studied and usually compares them to similar features noted in the scientific literature.

The edited texts (chapter V) are organized according to the typology established by the author (pp. 101–5). Guo was not content with only studying photographs

<sup>9</sup> See Karl R. Schaefer, *Enigmatic Charms: Medieval Arabic Block Printed Amulets in American and European Libraries and Museums* (Leiden and Boston, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, P. Larcher, "Moyen arabe et arabe moyen," *Arabica* 48 (2001): 578–609.



of the documents: he paid a visit to the Islamic Museum, where they are now kept. Scrutiny of the actual documents made it possible for him to describe precisely the writing material (color of the paper, dimensions, actual state, and color of the ink). Each document is introduced by a summary of its contents, then the text and the translation are provided together with a commentary on the words that require clarification or those with dubious meaning. Given the state of these fragments and the cursive script with which they were written, the author is to be praised for the result he managed to achieve. The reader must realize that a fragmentary text is in itself difficult to decipher because some parts, decisive for its understanding, may be missing. In this particular case, the difficulty is magnified by the nature of the texts, the language used, and the type of script. If a criticism has to be made, it should regard the fact that the documents edited are not reproduced. Of course, this may well be due to a decision by the publisher rather than the editor. Although four plates display some examples, the reproduced documents are so small that one can hardly compare the edited text with these photographs. Under these circumstances, the reader will have to take the edited text for granted. Fortunately, in the meantime, the documents have been introduced in the Arabic Papyrology Database, and some readings have been improved because the editors had access to scans of the documents. Consequently, the edition must now be read in conjunction with the website.<sup>11</sup>

To conclude, answers to the many questions these documents pose obviously remain conjectural due to the fragmentary state of this “archive,” but the result is a convincing reconstruction of the activities of a family business at the dawn of the thirteenth century. Given the challenge presented by the Quseir fragments, Guo must be commended for the tremendous work he has accomplished on these scraps of paper. His book is indispensable for all those interested in economic and social history, Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade, numismatics, diplomatics, and documents.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://orientw.uzh.ch/apd/project.jsp>. Select “papyri” and on the page that appears, scroll down (“choose an edition”) to “P.QuseirArab.”



‘ABD AL-RAHMĀN MUDAYRIS AL-MUDAYRIS, *Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah fī al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī (648–923 H./1250–1517 M.): Dirāsah Tārīkhīyah* (Riyadh: Markaz al-Malik Fayṣal lil-Buḥūth wa-al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmīyah, 2001/1422). Pp. 438.

REVIEWED BY JOHN L. MELOY, American University of Beirut

This book is not so much a historical study of Medina during the Mamluk period as it is a compendium of information on five aspects of the city gathered from primary sources. Readers interested in a new take on Medina or the Hijaz in the Mamluk period will not find it here. Al-Mudayris’s overall approach is based on the received view that Mamluk power was the only effective force in the region, operating through direct control of Mecca.

*Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah* seems to have been assembled according to a prescribed notion of what is necessary for a book to contain. Al-Mudayris divides his material into five chapters covering the fields of politics, economics, society, religion, and scholarship. These are systematically subdivided into descriptive subcategories. He rarely refers to secondary literature of any kind; the bibliography includes secondary works, mostly in Arabic along with two articles in English by Richard Mortel. The work includes a number of appendices, including three documents transcribed from al-Qalqashandī’s *Ṣubḥ al-A‘shā*; these are only briefly cited in the text, and they are not annotated. The author’s including them seems to be simply because they are there. An unfortunate consequence of al-Mudayris’s method is that connections between these various fields are overlooked or neglected. He does, briefly, acknowledge the importance of the connection between politics and economics (p. 106), but readers who are interested in the relationships of any of these areas will have to undertake their own analysis.

Given the author’s approach and method, some of his conclusions are predictable. His view is that the political history of indigenous rulers of Medina is one of contention and weakness which allowed the Mamluks to dominate the region. The economy of the city was overshadowed by the florescence of Jedda, which is attributable to the Mamluks. Religious practice in the city shifted from Shi‘ism to Sunnism as a result of Mamluk control, a topic discussed by Mortel. Some conclusions lack support. The author claims that the city’s “social structure” underwent transformation as a result of the influx of scholars who settled in Medina. It is not clear that this trend started only in the second half of the thirteenth century, and the transformative impact of foreign *mujāwirūn* on local society is not altogether clear. Scholarly production increased and had an impact on the wider Islamic world; neither assertion is adequately proven.

Nevertheless, readers may find value in some of the book’s descriptive information. While the chapters on politics and economics do not offer much new,



there are sections on somewhat unusual topics, such as marriage ties, customs and traditions, and even food, which may be useful to some researchers. The author's unwillingness to tackle the significance of any of the data may irritate the reader, along with the occasional judgmental comment about "bad" cultural practices, like the use of talismans (p. 158). Overall, *Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah* is not particularly illuminating, but the selective reader may derive some value from parts of it.

JON HOOVER, *Ibn Taymiyya's Theodicy of Perpetual Optimism*. Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science, vol. 73 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007). Pp. xii + 276.

REVIEWED BY CATERINA BORI

This book is devoted to a specific theological topic, that of theodicy. Theodicy is that branch of theology that elaborates on divine justice and seeks to explain the existence of evil in relation to it. The opening question is: where does Ibn Taymiyah stand between the two main trends of Islamic theology concerning the relationship between evil and divine justice? These two trends are the so-called free will tradition, as represented by Mu'tazilī *kalām*, and the optimistic tradition, exemplified mainly by Ibn Sīnā. Jon Hoover's detailed and competent analysis of Ibn Taymiyah's writings leads to the conclusion that, while on the specific problem of evil Ibn Taymiyah is to be set along the optimistic trend of al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sīnā, his very original image of a dynamic and perpetually active God sets him apart both from the *mutakallimūn* and the philosophers' idea of God's perfection in its unchanging and timeless essence. This analysis emerges from Chapter 2, which focuses on Ibn Taymiyah's elaboration of God's wise purpose (*ḥikmah*) while preserving his self-sufficiency. Hoover examines Ibn Taymiyah's argument for the rationality of God's acts, demonstrating how he distanced himself from the Ash'arī denial of God's wise purpose in creation, from the Mu'tazilī disassociation of any wise purpose from God (*al-ḥikmah al-maṭlūbah munfaṣilah 'anhu*), and from Ibn Sīnā's stress on God's strong self-referentiality that finds its utmost expression in creation by emanation and in the eternity of the world. The unique idea of God's perpetual dynamism in acting and willing (already discussed by Hoover in two important articles) shapes a personal and "close" image of God that can be seen to set aside Ibn Taymiyah from the previous traditions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It may be noted that at p. 79 (a quote from Ibn Taymiyah's *Majmū'āt al-Fatāwā*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad [Cairo, n.d.], 8:84), it would be more appropriate to translate *maḥdhūrān* as "two things to be afraid of or to be



If things are so, Ibn Taymīyah then needs to explain how it is possible to maintain human accountability. This is the subject of Chapters 3 and 4. Hoover opens here with a commentary on a passage of the *Tadmuriyah* that presents a three-fold typology of human error in relation to the issue of compatibility between God's creation (of all human acts: *khalq*) and his command (*amr*), the former corresponding to God's decree (*al-qadā' wa-al-qadar*) and the latter to the revealed law (*al-shar'*). He examines the "polemical" labels (p. 106) Ibn Taymīyah exploits to outline the error of these groups and notes the "oddity" (p. 112) of grouping together as *mushrikūn* Jahmīs, Jabrīs, Ash'arīs, and antinomian mystics.

More could have been said in this regard. The topic is intriguing and the linguistic choices of Ibn Taymīyah reveal much of his originality and deserve further investigation. *Mushrik* is primarily the person who associates other beings with God as objects of worship or prayer. Next, *mushrik* is commonly taken to be an idolater (one who worships an *eidōs*, literally an image [of God]), although the Arabic root (*sh.r.k*) is not semantically equivalent to that of idolatry. Yet, as Gerald Hawting has recently shown, both Muslim tradition (outside the Quran) and the secondary literature generally identify *mushrikūn* as idolaters/polytheists, whereas in the Quran the *mushrikūn* are presented as "imperfect monotheists."<sup>2</sup> Ibn Taymīyah proposes a strikingly similar view to this Quranic conception of *shirk*. In fact, here and elsewhere he takes the *mushrikūn* to represent those whose monotheistic faith is incomplete.<sup>3</sup> One has the impression that Ibn Taymīyah deploys a targeted communicational strategy here. On the one hand, he draws upon Quranic terminology for the labels of the three erring groups (*Majūs*, *Mushrik*, *Iblīs*). On the other, he bends the original meaning of these words to serve his own needs and understanding of their error. Thus, his personal interpretation shapes three collective categories which are closely connected to scriptural language. Seen in this way, the "oddity" (p. 112) Hoover perceives in Ibn Taymīyah's

avoided," rather than "two prohibited things."

<sup>2</sup> Gerald Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). The expression "imperfect monotheists" is taken from Gerald Hawting, "Idolatry and Idolater," *The Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* 2:478.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance, *Majmū'āt al-Fatāwā*, 10:264-65: the *mushrikūn* among the Arabs were those who professed the *tawhīd al-rubūbiyah* (the uniqueness of God's lordship), but not the *tawhīd al-ulūhiyah* (the uniqueness of God's divinity). They did not fully accept Muhammad's message and the priority of joining both the confessional and practical dimension of the proclamation of God's uniqueness (*wa-lā yajma'ūna bayna al-tawhīd al-qawli wa-al-tawhīd al-'amali*). In fact, they did not deny that God was the Creator, but "together with their recognition that Allah is the only Creator, they used to consider other Gods together with Him." Also translated by Yahya Michot, "La Foi et l'Amour: du *tawhīd* théorique à sa mise en œuvre effective," *Textes Spirituels* VI, in *Le Musulman* 19 (Paris, 1992): 11–12.



grouping of *mushrikūn* is perhaps not so odd. Each of the three rubrics is both broad enough and clearly enough defined to embrace different theological stances with regard to the issue of compatibility between *khalq* and *amr*. Ibn Taymīyah's criterion is not that of the classical theological approaches to the problem of evil, but is strictly related to the strong ethical concern of neglecting God's command. Thus, the *mushrikūn* equally comprise Jahmīs, Jabrīs, Ash'arīs (i.e., al-Rāzī) and antinomian Sufis. Their common denominator is their disregard towards the commanded aspect of divine creation (i.e., the law) by stressing the compulsion of God's will. They are incomplete in their *īmān*. While Hoover identifies their determinism as the common element characterizing their imperfect faith (pp. 12 and 114), he fails to highlight properly the ethical outlook that drives Ibn Taymīyah's categorization and his understanding of Islamic history and tradition that underpins the choice of his labels. This is all the more relevant considering that in the first chapter the author outlines Ibn Taymīyah primarily as a jurist even in his theological discourse. Thus, these people's dismissal of God's *amr* and their consequent nullification of the value of *shar'* are for Ibn Taymīyah a major concern and explain why the *mutaṣawwifah*, in their claim of attaining Reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*) are classified under this label. For the same reason, elsewhere Ibn Taymīyah violently attacks the epistemological validity of Aristotelian logic as a means of attaining metaphysical knowledge. As Wael B. Hallaq has rightly remarked, Ibn Taymīyah's final preoccupation is that of destroying the metaphysical foundation of speculative mysticism that nullifies the distinction between Commander and commanded, hence the value of the law. Hoover could usefully have used Hallaq's analysis in order to clarify Ibn Taymīyah's thinking on this point.

The second part of Chapter 3 tackles the causes of error and shows Ibn Taymīyah's concern with balancing out "creation" and "command." Hoover usefully familiarizes the reader with the key terminological accord between *khalq* and *amr* by which Ibn Taymīyah often describes these two branches of God's activity. He also illustrates Ibn Taymīyah's failure in elaborating a full argument for the compatibility between the two.

Chapter 4 examines the problem of human acts. Here Hoover exploits Western philosophical categories, moving away from previous interpretations of Ibn Taymīyah's thought on this issue by Laoust, Makari, and Gimaret. He classifies the Hanbali theologian as a "soft determinist" or a "compatibilist," that is, as admitting human choice within the framework of a strong determinism. Given the importance of al-Rāzī for the understanding of Ibn Taymīyah's doctrine, one would have expected the author to have made direct use of Rāzīyan texts rather than relying upon those quoted by Gimaret. A slip occurs at p. 170, where the



*Sunnah* of Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311/923) is quoted as no longer extant, whereas it has recently been published.<sup>4</sup>

The final two chapters get to the heart of the theodicean problem, and they deal respectively with evil and divine justice. What does Ibn Taymīyah make of evil? Hoover's attention to this issue is substantially new in the field of Taymīyan scholarship. In trying to make sense of the existence of evil, Ibn Taymīyah is shown to have echoed a series of Avicennan optimistic solutions, while embarking upon an edifying and spiritual understanding of evil's wise purpose that draws him close to Sufi and Mu'tazilī ideas. The other side of the coin is divine justice. Ibn Taymīyah confronts the two extremes (Mu'tazilī free-will theodicy and Ash'arī voluntarism), setting himself apart by connecting divine justice to God's wise purpose and accepting Ibn Sīnā's optimism through al-Ghazālī's "best of all possible worlds." This analysis is especially interesting because it shows the connection of Ibn Taymīyah to the "optimism" of al-Ghazālī (and Ibn 'Arabī). It is a shame, however, that Hoover did not take this further and attempt a more detailed explanation of the reasons for the *shaykh al-islām's* ambivalent attitude towards al-Ghazālī's dictum. This may have thrown further light on the development of the shaykh's thought on the issue and on his relationship with his own sources. Another important issue—beyond the scope of the book but interesting for future research—is that of Ibn Taymīyah's (or Ibn 'Arabī's?) contribution to the acceptance of al-Ghazālī's dictum from the fourteenth century onwards. This will give an idea of the impact of some Taymīyan ideas on the surrounding intellectual *milieux*.

From this book, Ibn Taymīyah emerges as a literalist theologian drawing upon elements of Islamic philosophy in order to provide a further rationale for revealed knowledge. By doing so, he produced a highly original synthesis of Islamic tradition that in terms of methodology aimed at keeping together reason and revelation, and in terms of ethics sought to guide the believer towards the right path to God. Hoover has done a good job in highlighting two key elements in Ibn Taymīyah's theory of God's acts and the Taymīyan way of talking about God: God's wise purpose and "the highest similitude." Both recur throughout the book and will hopefully be useful interpretative tools for further research. The purpose of the book is to shed new light on Ibn Taymīyah's theodicy through an analysis of the shaykh's own arguments and by contextualizing his thought in the main trends of Islamic philosophy and theology. While the first is fully accomplished, the second is less thoroughly achieved (the author is aware of this: see pp. 4 and 237). That said, Hoover has offered the reader a solid intellectual framework in which to set the topic of theodicy and has provided a stimulus for further research. A more

<sup>4</sup> Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Khallāl, *Al-Sunnah*, 5 vols., ed. 'Aṭīyah ibn 'Atīq al-Zahrānī (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāyah, 1995).



complete appreciation of Ibn Taymīyah's originality as a theologian will emerge not only by exploring his appropriation of the doctrines of previous thinkers, but also by considering what the Hanbalis of his time were writing, studying, and discussing, as well as their position on the theological issues that animated late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century traditionalist circles.

That criticism aside, Hoover's book is the first in a Western language solely devoted to Taymīyan theology. While Chapters 2 to 6 will be of interest mainly to the specialist in theology, Chapter 1 provides an excellent grid of interpretation for the scholar interested in any of Ibn Taymīyah's fields of knowledge. It is an attempt to define the authentic quality of Taymīyan scholarship and activism. The latter is an aspect that deserves more consideration, not as something that dictates the shaykh's ideology, as Hoover rightly points out (p. 24), but as a concrete expression of a system where not only theology and jurisprudence but also action are intimately intertwined. Hoover's definition of Ibn Taymīyah's theology as a theological *fiqh* is penetrating.<sup>5</sup> It implies that *fiqh* is inclusive of theology and that Ibn Taymīyah's scholarship is to be seen as jurisprudential even when he is deeply preoccupied with specific theological questions. In this regard, it will be important to further investigate the shaykh's legal writings with attention to his views on theology in a non-theological context. By itself, this definition calls for a more vigilant interest in Ibn Taymīyah's engagement in the affairs of the society in which he lived.

As a framework in which to set Ibn Taymīyah's discourse on theodicy, Hoover's book represents an important contribution towards the understanding of the meaning of Ibn Taymīyah's scholarship. In a consistent and informative way, Hoover builds on the work of Yahya Michot in challenging the established idea of Ibn Taymīyah's strict traditionalism. In doing so, he does justice to the complexity of one of the most important thinkers in the Islamic tradition. By making available in a single volume a broad spectrum of hitherto underutilized sources, it paves the way for a new understanding of Taymīyan theodicy and related issues.

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<sup>5</sup> It should be read in conjunction with Yossef Rapoport's contribution on Ibn Taymīyah's legal thought, which also draws attention to the deep correspondence between theology and *fiqh*: Yossef Rapoport, "Ibn Taymiyya's radical legal thought: Rationalism, pluralism and the primacy of intention," in *Ibn Taymiyya and his Times*, ed. Shahab Ahmad and Yossef Rapoport (forthcoming, Karachi: Oxford University Press).



SAMI G. MASSOUD, *The Chronicles and Annalistic Sources of the Early Mamluk Circassian Period* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007). Pp. 477 + xii.

REVIEWED BY PAULINA B. LEWICKA

The corpus of annalistic literature dating back to the Circassian, or Burji, Mamluk period includes over seventeen titles, most of which constitute fundamental source material for all kinds of researchers dealing with the Mamluk epoch. As such, these sources—and particularly their published majority—are constantly read, re-read, reconsidered, and referenced. Oddly enough, until now we have had at our disposal only fragmentary studies discussing this corpus from a historiographical point of view. The research undertaken by Sami Massoud is, to use his own words, a result of his endeavor to “fill this lacuna,” by which he means establishing “the value of the Burji historical works in their own right [and] in relation to one another” (p. 6). Indeed, Massoud’s *Chronicles and Annalistic Sources* is the first comprehensive critical analysis of the works written by the historians and chroniclers of the Burji Mamluk era.

In order to realize his objectives, Massoud applied, “albeit with some modifications,” the methodology pioneered by Donald P. Little in his study of the sources for the reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn. In practical terms, this means that Massoud’s method, which he calls a “micro” approach to historiography, consists of word-by-word comparisons of individual accounts of particular events as recorded in chronicles and annalistic sources of the epoch. Indeed, there is probably no other way to detect the inter-relatedness and interdependence of the sources, identify borrowings, discover the original contribution of each historian, and explore the genesis and scope of reports and their impact on the construction of the narrative. By applying this textual collation in order to analyze his sources, Massoud also intended to provide “a detailed understanding of the events of a given year.” This avowed intention might appear to be a gesture towards the limited circle of readers interested in the details of the developments of 778, 793, and 804 A.H. However, this is not the case: by providing a detailed understanding of particular events, Massoud wants to make it possible for “modern historians to revisit, reevaluate, and reconsider historical data” (p. 7).

Has Massoud achieved what he planned? The essential part of *Chronicles and Annalistic Sources* consists of three chapters, each of them devoted to a discussion of records relating to one historical annal. The choice of each of the three annals subjected to source analysis was not made at random. Chapter one deals with the annal of 778/1376-77, which was a year of mamluk rebellions against, and subsequent murder of, the sultan al-Ashraf Shaḥbān. It seems the annal was chosen by Massoud because the events surrounding the sultan’s murder permeate all the



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DOI: [10.6082/M16D5R4M](https://doi.org/10.6082/M16D5R4M). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M16D5R4M>)

DOI of Vol. XIII, no. 1: [10.6082/M1WQ01W6](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1WQ01W6). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/DRTM-CA24> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

narratives about the year 778 produced by authors over the next century and beyond. The year 793/1390–91, to which chapter two is devoted, was the year of the “aftershock” of Barqūq’s overthrow and his return to rule, as well as the year in which he consolidated his power. As Massoud observes, it would have probably been more interesting to study the accounts of the disturbances that accompanied Barqūq’s resumption of power at the turn of 791 and in the early part of 792. Due to their multitude and diversity, however, analyzing the events and records of either of these years would have been too demanding to reach satisfactory conclusions. One of the reasons, therefore, why the annal of the year 793/1390–91 was subjected to analysis was simply that it was less complicated than the previous two. The third annal analyzed by Massoud, that of 804/1401–2, does not relate to any particular political or social event. From a historical point of view, the records making up this annal reflect, on the one hand, the ongoing strife within the Mamluk governing circles in Syria, and on the other, they echo the aftermath of the devastation which Syria suffered as a result of Tamerlane’s incursion of 803/1400. From a historiographical point of view, the year 804/1401–2 represents, as Massoud puts it, “the end of a historiographical cycle” (p. 8), by which he means that the works of three authors who witnessed the emergence of the Circassian sultanate as mature historians conclude just before 804/1401–2. At the same time, the year 804 heralded the beginning of a new generation of self-conscious historians who were old enough to comprehend and record the events of their day. As such, the year 804 is, according to Massoud, pivotal from both historical and historiographical points of view, which apparently was the reason why he subjected it to analysis.

Within each chapter, the analysis of records related to a given annal is preceded by a concise presentation of crucial developments which took place in the year discussed. In each of the three chapters, the examined sources are divided into two main categories: the works of authors whose lives coincided with the events reported in a given annal, and the works of later historians. Each of these two categories is further subdivided into a section devoted to Egyptian historians and a section devoted to Syrian historians. In turn, each of these sections consists of subsections discussing individual historians and their works, many of which are still available only in manuscript form. Generally, the historians are introduced into the text according to their year of birth. The analysis of accounts written by a given historian is preceded by a concise presentation of his biography.

For example, in chapter three, in which the annal of 804/1401–2 is studied, first the appropriate accounts of contemporary Egyptian historians are discussed. The list includes Ibn Duqmāq, al-ʿAynī, al-Maqrīzī, and al-ʿAsqalānī. The analysis of their works is followed by an examination of accounts written by contemporary Syrian authors. In this case, the appropriate section includes the analysis of *Tārikh*



*Ibn Ḥijjī*. Analogically, the subchapter dealing with “Later historians” includes a section on “Egyptian historians,” and the list includes Ibn Taghrībirdī, al-Ṣayrafī, al-Malaṭī, Ibn Iyās, and an anonymous author of a chronicle entitled *Jawāhir al-Sulūk fī al-Khulafāʾ wa-al-Mulūk*. In the section devoted to later Syrian historians, Massoud examines the accounts written by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah. As in the case of two previous chapters, chapter three ends with brief comments on “minor historians.”

These three analytical chapters are followed by three appendices, one appendix supplementing each of the chapters. Generally speaking, these appendices include the English rendering of the individual reports which were subjected to analysis in the preceding chapters; each of the three appendices consists of entries referencing reports mentioned in the analysis. Each entry is numbered and organized according to four categories (political/military/administrative affairs, religious life, social history/ miscellany, and foreign affairs) and then identified by the abbreviation of its author’s name. As a result, the reader can easily check the text of the reports referred to in the study, as well as find their location in the sources.

Due to its very particular nature, a study based on a word-by-word analysis of sources by means of textual collation can hardly be summarized. However, the intrinsic value of this kind of work consists not in its storyline, but in the details which fill it and which take the form of dozens of conclusions and hypotheses drawn by the author in the course of the Benedictine effort made in comparing the records. Therefore, to appreciate a study such as Massoud’s *Chronicles and Annalistic Sources*, one has to savor its details (including the collated fragments of transcribed Arabic records inserted into the text) and recognize their value. Taking this into consideration, it seems that the most appropriate way to demonstrate the quality and significance of the discussed work is to indicate some of the most characteristic conclusions and hypotheses formulated by its author.

Generally speaking, the opinions and judgments expressed by Massoud can be divided into those that refer to micro-scale historiography and those that apply to a more universal context. The former are the direct result of Massoud’s efforts to achieve one of the main objectives of his research, that is “to examine inside the confines of a single annal, the disposition of *akhbār* and their interrelation within sources” (p. 10). Meticulous, precise, and insightful, these opinions not only define a given historian’s contribution to our knowledge about the events of a given year, they also constitute essential material without which formulating more universal comments would not be possible. Thus one can learn, for example, that Ibn al-ʿIrāqī’s chronicle “is of little value for anyone interested in investigating the social and political scene in Egypt in 778” (p. 48); that “for the year 778 . . . [al-ʿAynī’s] *ʿIqd al-Jumān* has absolutely nothing original to offer” (p. 40); or that “as regards the annal of the year 778, the primary significance of al-Maqrīzī



[i.e., his *Kitāb al-Sulūk*] is that he replicates the contents of Ibn al-Furāt's *Tārikh al-Duwal*" (p. 49). One can also learn details such as the fact that Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr* "offers a rather poor account of the events of the year 778," that "it is a condensed summary of other people's work" (p. 59), and that it "does not add anything dramatically original to our knowledge of the year 793" (p. 118). A researcher can also read that "the annal of the year 778 in *Jawāhir al-Sulūk* does not reflect Ashtor's assertion that it contains original data not found in contemporary sources" (p. 77), and that generally "*Jawāhir al-Sulūk* is not a very useful source for the events of the year 778" (p. 81). As for Ibn Iyās, we can learn that "perhaps the most striking characteristic of the annal of the year 793 in *Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr* is the extent to which it diverges in many parts of its narrative from the general consensus sketched by the other chronicles" (p. 137).

Naturally enough, a great many of Massoud's micro-scale conclusions result from his investigation of textual borrowings. Al-Sakhāwī, for example, relied mostly on Ibn Ḥajar's *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr*, but also on Ibn al-ʿIrāqī's *Dhayl*, at least for the year 778. As for Ibn Ḥajar's *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr*, "the highly condensed and disorganized nature of the narrative, coupled with his [Ibn Ḥajar's] propensity to rewrite other authors' *akhbār*" (p. 55), made it arduous to identify the sources from which Ibn Ḥajar borrowed. However, as far as his elaboration of the annal of 778 is concerned, it can be established with some degree of certainty that he relied on Ibn al-Furāt, Ibn Duqmāq, and Ibn Ḥijjī. Sometimes, as in the case of Ibn Khaldūn's *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, the clues are so confusing that it is impossible to give a clear answer regarding borrowings. At other times, as in the case of certain data included in the annal of 793/1390–91 in the anonymous *Jawāhir al-Sulūk*, Massoud leaves it for others to determine "whether the author derived this information from an unknown source . . ." or "had recourse to artistic licence by simply inventing this account" (p. 142).

As for Massoud's more general assumptions, comments, and hypotheses, they refer to many different aspects of the works discussed. Most often, they concern a given historian, his style, his reliability, and the value of his work for modern historians. A typical example of such comments are the remarks referring to Ibn Duqmāq's *Nuzhat al-Anām*: the analysis of this chronicle brings Massoud to the fundamental conclusion that it is "the most original of sources in that it was copied extensively by other authors, such as Ibn al-Furāt and al-ʿAynī, and yet does not appear to contain major borrowings from any other works" (p. 34). From the section on Ibn al-Furāt one can learn that *Al-Muntaqá* (i.e., Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah's selections from *Tārikh Ibn al-Furāt*) is "superior to all other chronicles in terms of wealth of information," and that "it contains a substantial number of in-depth additional data that appear to be original" (p. 36). Moreover, *Al-Muntaqá* "contains more accounts of political events than any other contemporary source,



and it also outdoes these with regard to social and religious affairs” (p. 38). As for the anonymous *Jawāhir al-Sulūk*, Massoud warns researchers that reading this chronicle “leaves one with the impression that its author was more interested in the form that his narrative would take than in the historical content it might provide. Moreover, he took some liberty in rewriting history” (p. 80).

Perhaps the most illustrative of Massoud’s shrewd and expert style are the sections devoted to Ibn Iyās. Thus, all those who use, or intend to use, Ibn Iyās’s *Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr* can learn that one of the many narrative techniques used by Ibn Iyās was combining story elements from different sources. However, beyond the data he borrowed from others, the chronicle contains a “substantial amount of information found in no other source” (p. 72). Such a feature would generally be considered a positive quality. However, Massoud leaves no doubt as to the value of at least some of such pieces of information, which he describes as “likely to have been nothing but dramatic embroiderings” (p. 73). Massoud further devalues the quality of Ibn Iyās’s accounts by stressing that the chronicler used to take “considerable liberty in rearranging the story line and plots of certain events” or, in other words, to romanticize certain events whenever these lent themselves to such a treatment, and to alter the storyline for dramatic purposes (p. 75). In practical terms, this means that “the fundamental narrative elements of some series of *akhbār* in *Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr* are generally common to Ibn Iyās and to most other historians, but their order of appearance, chronological anchoring, circumstantial dimensions, and, more importantly, the dramatic results of the events they depict,” (p. 138) frequently place “his narrative at odds with the accounts of most other historians” (p. 73). However, one should remember that “despite the profound changes to which Ibn Iyās subjected a number of his reports, the information he used to construct his narrative was made up of historical facts” (p. 75).

In other words, Ibn Iyās’s *Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr* is a mixture of history and fiction. The main problem with Ibn Iyās, however, is that he was the foremost chronicler to witness the decline of the Mamluk state and Egypt’s transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule. Consequently, modern historians dealing with this period are forced to rely on him as far as the source material is concerned; for this reason, Massoud’s remarks should always be kept in mind. In fact, Massoud’s *Chronicles and Annalistic Sources* is an extremely useful and indispensable guide to all Burji historiography. The textual collation applied by Massoud has resulted in the production of what Mamlukologists need most of all (and what D. P. Little sought to establish): “an analytical survey of the sources of the period that aims at classifying them in terms of their value to modern historians” (quoted on p. 7). Sami Massoud did his work perfectly. The few typing errors, such as misspelling Jo Van



Steenbergen's name as "Joe" (p. 42), are probably the only examples of imprecision or oversight in this book. The term "*muswadda*" as used by Massoud on p. 22 and defined as "foundation" (of a book) could be also spelled "*musawwadah*," as it was in Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid's 1995 edition of al-Maqrīzī's *Musawwadat Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wa-al-Itibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār*. The form "*musawwadah*" is not the only correct form, but it is perhaps less Egyptian—and therefore more classical—in flavor. In general, due to its informativeness and uniqueness, the value of the book cannot be overestimated.

BERNADETTE MARTEL-THOUMIAN, *Catalogue des manuscrits historiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de Damas: Période mamlouke* (Damascus: Institut français du Proche-Orient, 2003). Pp. 336.

REVIEWED BY RENÉ-VINCENT DU GRANDLAUNAY, Institut dominicain d'Études orientales

The manuscript collection in the Damascus National Library has numbered over 40,000 titles ever since collections from various Syrian cities were assembled there in the 1980s. Catalogues previous to this date are perforce obsolete. Such is not the case for the catalogue reviewed here: though published in 2003, the author has personally told me that it was completed ten years earlier, in 1993. In this work, Bernadette Martel-Thoumian has compiled the catalogue of manuscripts concerning the Mamluk period (648–922/1250–1517) found in this sizeable and outstanding collection. She grounds her undertaking on previous works, in which she occasionally shows undue trust. We wish to mention specifically the two-volume *Fihris Makḥṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub al-Zāhirīyah: al-Tārīkh wa-Mulḥaqātuḥu*, published by the Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī bi-Dimashq, the first volume of which was edited by Yusuf Eche in 1947, and the second by Khālīd al-Rayyān in 1973.

Note that manuscripts dating to the Mamluk period, but containing pre-Mamluk texts, have justifiably been omitted from this description. Likewise, from works on general history, only the manuscript sections related to the Mamluk period have been retained. Hence, manuscripts of *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* by Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) are not comprehensively described [26–27]:<sup>1</sup> only volume 10, covering the period from 617/1220 to 702/1303, has been included in this work. Similarly, from the anonymous manuscript of the *Tārīkh al-Islām* [38], only the specifically Mamluk sections 7, 8, and 9 have been described.

<sup>1</sup> The description number in Martel-Thoumian's catalogue is enclosed in square brackets.



This work begins with an introduction primarily concerned with the codicological content of the catalogue. It provides such information about the manuscripts as the type of ink utilized by the writer, the written symbols and ornaments, the catchwords and vowelings, the paper, the types of annotation, and the quires and binding. Following the introduction, the main body of the work includes 237 manuscript descriptions, arranged by alphabetical order of title. Fifteen illustrations of specimens are then displayed, followed by a selected bibliography and indexes.

The 237 descriptions cover fewer than 160 titles. All in all, this is quite a small sample for a historical period spanning nearly 300 years and for such a large collection as this. Each description follows a uniform pattern:

1. The header: sheet number (we prefer the French term “notice” to Martel-Thoumian’s “fiche”), manuscript number in the new collection (the previous call numbers of manuscript excerpts from the *Zāhiriyyah* are mentioned), Arabic title of the work transliterated into Roman letters, name of the author transliterated into Roman letters, title of the work in Arabic, name of the author in Arabic.

2. Description: the nature of the work, the *incipit* followed by the *explicit*, a description of the manuscript, a codicological description, the place of origin of the manuscript, marks indicating the ownership or previous reading of the manuscript.

3. Reference to text editions

The indexes provided are numerous, but inconsistent in their presentation: they appear in Arabic script and in Roman transliteration. Thus, seven indexes are rendered in French: (1) Manuscripts (which might have been more accurately termed “Titles”), (2) Authors, (3) Copyists, (4) *Waqf* founders, (5) Owners, (6) Sellers and buyers, (7) Readers. Two indexes appear in Arabic: (1) *al-makḥṭūṭāt* (understand *al-ʿanāwīn*) and (2) *al-mūʾallifūn*.

#### THE CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

Martel-Thoumian’s work, while inspired by her predecessors’, is novel in that it takes into account the newly expanded collection of Damascus manuscripts. Most importantly, it undertakes a systematic codicological description, which has been heretofore lacking. In addition to being far superior to the descriptions included even in the best editions, it is above all more comprehensive than those included in similar catalogues. The precision which characterizes this work was made possible by the author’s regular immersion in manuscript texts. Our gratitude must be extended to the directors of the Damascus National Library for authorizing the creation of such a catalogue.



**ADDITIONAL REMARKS**

The following remarks are meant both as an encouragement of and a contribution to a much-needed Arabic edition of this exquisite catalogue.

**A. ROMANIZATION**

It is regrettable that the Roman transliteration of the modern names cited in this catalogue is somewhat imprecise. As a rule, using abbreviations in Arabic is a perilous undertaking. Only specialists will recognize that, for instance, the designations A. M. Hilw [129] and F. M. Ḥilū [135] refer to the same individual, ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥilū. Likewise, A. Bigawi, the Egyptian editor of *Tabṣīr al-Muntabih fī Tahrīr al-Mushtabih* by Ibn Ḥajar, becomes A. M al-Bagawi [189]. Another Egyptian editor, ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar, is called A. M. Umarau [145]. With regard to Arabic spelling, the *alif* in *ibn* is too often accompanied by a *hamzah* [71], [82], [138], [215].

**B. THE TEXT EDITIONS**

After listing the items which are to receive descriptions, Martel-Thoumian states in her introduction that she “might provide the text edition.” We wish to elaborate on this point, which will hopefully be handled more carefully in future manuscript catalogues. This holds especially true when dealing with the Arabic-Islamic heritage, which is presently experiencing a proliferation of editing, not always of the highest quality.<sup>2</sup> An effort to mention text editions would have been expected within the framework of this catalogue; however, only forty descriptions provide satisfactory information in this regard. Obviously, to indicate every single edition of a given text is out of the question, for this is not the main purpose of a catalogue of manuscripts. Nonetheless, if a text has only one edition, however mediocre, it must be mentioned and qualified as such. Indeed, familiarity with poor editions provides incentive for the production of more thorough works. As stated at the beginning of this review, the catalogue was completed in 1993. Hence, its list of text editions appears somewhat outdated to readers in 2003. In 2007, the year of the present review, its datedness is more glaring still. Here, we

<sup>2</sup> Though these texts don’t always deserve to be edited (i.e., descriptions 107, 183), we list hereunder those in the catalogue which have not been edited, at the date of the present review: [3], [4], [5, 6, 7], [12], [25], [30, 31], [32, 33], [34], [38–39], [41], [42], [53, 54], [55], [56], [57], [58], [59], [60], [61], [62], [63], [68], [69], [70], [71], [75], [80], [81], [82], [83], [84], [85], [91, 92], [96], [101, 102, 103], [105], [107], [108], [112], [119], [128], [137], [138], [143], [148] [148], [149], [150], [151], [152], [153], [155], [156], [157, 158], [179], [181], [182], [183], [187], [188], [190], [191], [192], [193], [194], [197], [198], [199], [200, 201], [202, 203], [207], [215], [216], [219], [235], [236], [237].



provide a list of editions with which Martel-Thoumian might have acquainted herself, in addition to those published after 1993.

[1] *Āthār al-Bilād wa-Akhbār al-ʿIbād* by al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283). This text was first edited by F. Wüstenfeld in *Zakariya ben Muhammed ben Mahmud el-Cazwini's Kosmographie* (Göttingen: Verlag der Dietrichschen Buchhandlung, 1848–49). It has been reprinted twice: (1) Wiesbaden: M. Sändig, 1967; and (2) Frankfurt: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, 1994.

[2] *Kitāb Ikhbār al-Kirām bi-Akhbār al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* by al-Asadī (d. 1066/1656). A mediocre edition of this text has been produced by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ghulām Muṣṭafā (Cairo: Dār al-Ṣaḥwah, 1985.)

[3] *Irshād al-Sālik ilā Manāqib al-Mālik* by Ibn Mibrad (d. 909/1503). To be more precise, the author's *nasab* (the string of ancestors mentioned in a name) is Yūsuf ibn Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥādī. Reference number 6 to Brockelmann is mistaken: instead of II, pp. 130–31, read GII, 107–8, and SII, 130–31.

[8] *Asmāʾ Muʾallafāt al-Imām Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyah* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah (d. 751/1350). Surprisingly, the author failed to connect this text with the manuscript later described in description [213], though they both share the same *incipit*.

[13] [14] [15] *Kitāb al-ʿIḥām bi-ʿĀlām Bayt Allāh al-Ḥarām* by al-Nahrawālī (d. 990/1582). It is regrettable that ʿAlī Muḥammad ʿUmar fails to annotate the text in his edition (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Diniyah, 2004).

[16] *Al-ʿIḥām fī Wafayāt al-ʿĀlām* by al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347). The first edition was published in Beirut in 1991 by ʿAbd al-Jabbār Zakkār and Riyyād ʿAbd al-Majīd Murād.

[26][27] *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah (al-juzʾ al-ʿāshir)* by Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373). One should now depend on ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī's edition (Cairo: Dār Hajar, 1999), which includes annotations and indexes.

[35][36][37] *Tāj al-Tarājim* by Ibn Quṭlūbughā (d. 879/1474). We can now rely on the edition by Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān Yūsuf (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1992), which includes annotations and indexes.

[45][46][47][48][49] *Tuḥfat al-Anām fī Faḍāʾil al-Shām* by Ibn al-Imām (d. 1015/1606). A good edition, including annotations and indexes, has been made by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Fayyād Ḥarfūsh (Damascus: Dār al-Bashāʾir, 1998).

[51][52] *Tuḥfat al-Ẓurafāʾ bi-Asmāʾ al-Khulafāʾ* by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505). Al-Suyūṭī inserted this poem, which he composed in a traditional form, as a conclusion to his *Tārīkh al-Khulafāʾ*. This poem is contained in the two manuscripts described here. It is located at the end of the extremely mediocre editions of the *Tārīkh al-Khulafāʾ*. However, Maḥmūd Naṣṣār's edition of al-Suyūṭī's *Kitāb al-Tabarrī min*



*Ma'arrat al-Ma'arrī* (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1989) also contains an edition of the *Tuḥfat al-Zurafā'*.

[60] *Tarjamat al-Badawī* by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1448). This proves the existence of a second manuscript of this *Tarjamah* of Aḥmad al-Badawī written by Ibn Ḥajar. In her superb work, *Al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Badawī, un grand saint de l'islam égyptien* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale [IFAO], 1994), Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen presumed that there was only one extant manuscript (p. 16). Apparently, this text has not yet been edited.

[76][77][78] *Tawḍīḥ al-Mushtabih* by Ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Qaysī (d. 842/1438). The manuscript in this collection does not display the title or author's name. On page 196 of his *Fihrist Makḥṭūtāt Dār al-Kutub al-Zāhiriyah: al-Tārīkh wa-Mulḥaqātuḥu*, published in Damascus, Yusuf Eche ascribes this text to Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, thus confusing it with another work by Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr al-Muntabih fī Tahṛīr al-Mushtabih*. However, in 1964, ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī edited this *Tabṣīr al-Muntabih* (Cairo: Muʿassasah al-Miṣriyah al-ʿĀmmah lil-Taʿlīf wa-al-Anbāʾ wa-al-Nashr). A simple comparison between both *incipits* dispels all ambiguity: the *Tabṣīr al-Muntabih* must be distinguished from the *Tawḍīḥ al-Mushtabih*. Moreover, in 1986, Muḥammad Naʿīm al-ʿIrqūsī edited the latter text (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risālah), which he attributed to its true author, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Qaysī al-Dimashqī (d. 842), better known by his *shuhrah* Ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn. Hence, Martel-Thoumian's erroneous attribution is surprising inasmuch as she is familiar with the edition of the *Tabṣīr al-Muntabih* and probably with the *Tawḍīḥ al-Mushtabih*, re-edited in 1993.

[79] *Thabt al-Bulqīnī* by Ibn al-Bulqīnī (d. 868/1464). Note that this work is comprised of a list of the shaykhs of Sirāj al-Dīn Abū Ṣāliḥ ʿUmar ibn Raslān al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1403), compiled by his son Ṣāliḥ (cf. Yūsuf ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Marʿashlī, *Muʿjam al-Maʿājim wa-al-Mashyākhāt* [Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2002], 1:493).

[86][87][88] *Husn al-Muḥādarah fī Akhbār Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505). Note ʿAlī Muḥammad ʿUmar's very recent edition of *Husn al-Muḥādarah* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanjī, 2007), with notes and indexes.

[89] *Tārīkh al-Khamīs fī Aḥwāl Anfas Naḥīs* by al-Diyārbakrī (d. 966/1559). The Beirut edition referred to in this catalogue is most likely the 1984 reprint by the Muʿassasat Shaʿbān lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ.

[101][102][103] *Dhayl Lawāqih al-Anwār fī Ṭabaqāt al-Sādah al-Akhyār* by al-Shaʿrānī (d. 973/1565). This is likely *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣuḡhrā'*, the most recent edition of which, by Saʿīd Hārūn ʿĀshūr (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb), completely ignores the three Damascus manuscripts.

[104] *Sukkardān al-Sulṭān* by Ibn Abī Ḥajalah (d. 776/1375). This has been edited by ʿAlī Muḥammad ʿUmar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanjī, 2001).



[111] *Al-Sham‘ah al-Muḍī‘ah fī Akhbār al-Qal‘ah al-Dimashqīyah* by Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546). The information provided about the text edition is somewhat succinct. At the very least, we may add that this text was printed without notes on the basis of the Damascus manuscript by the Maktabat al-Qudsī wa-al-Budayr, Damascus, 1929. Dār Zāhid al-Qudsī, Cairo, recently reprinted this edition without dating it. However, we believe it was produced at the beginning of the 1990s.

[123][124][125][126][127] *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanaḥīyah* by al-Ḥinā‘ī (d. 979/1571). Although unable to consult this text, we know of its existence; it has been edited in three volumes by Muḥyī al-Dīn Hilāl al-Sarḥān (Baghdad: Maṭba‘at al-Waqf al-Sunnī, 2004).

[129] *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍī‘ah fī Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanaḥīyah* by Ibn Abī al-Wafā‘ (d. 775/1373). The Cairo edition by ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥilū, with notes and indexes, is preferable (Giza: Mu‘assasat al-Risālah, 1993).

[134] *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘īyah* by Abū Bakr al-Muṣannif (d. 1014/1605). This was first edited by Nu‘mān al-A‘zamī al-Kutubī (Baghdad: al-Maktabah al-‘Arabīyah, 1937), and then by ‘Ādil Nuwayhid (Beirut: Dār al-Afāq al-Jadīdah, 1971).

[139][140] *Ṭabaqāt al-Lughawīyīn wa-al-Nuḥāh* by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505). The second Cairo edition by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (‘Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī) was made in 1964, not in 1973 as Martel-Thoumian claims. A third Cairo edition was published in 2005. The editor, ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar, provides few annotations and, as usual, neglects both of these Damascus manuscripts.

[141] *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn* by al-Dāwūdī (d. 945/1539). ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar has produced an edition (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1972), with few notes, but some indexes.

[159][160] *Al-Kawākib al-Durriyah fī Tarājim al-Sādah al-Ṣūfiyah* by al-Munāwī (d. 1031/1621). The most recent edition is likely that of Muḥammad Adīb al-Jādir (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1999). This edition mainly relies on the manuscript described in [159], and it includes notes and indexes.

[162] *Kawkab al-Rawḍah* by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505). This text was edited by Muḥammad al-Shishtāwī in 2001 (Cairo: Dār al-Afāq al-‘Arabīyah) and is yet another example of an Egyptian editor’s ignoring all manuscripts located outside of Egypt.

[163][164] *Lubb al-Lubāb fī Tahrīr al-Ansāb* by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505). We may also mention, with the utmost reservation, the edition by Muḥammad and Ashraf Aḥmad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz available at the Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah (Beirut, 1991).

[166]–[175] *Lawāqih al-Anwār fī Ṭabaqāt al-Sādah al-Akhyār* by al-Sha‘rānī (d. 973/1565). ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥasan Maḥmūd prepared the latest edition (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1993 [vol. 1], 2001 [vol. 2]). However, a critical edition is still needed.



[176][177] *Al-Majma‘ al-Mu‘assas lil-Mu‘jam al-Mufahras* by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1448). Yūsuf ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mar‘ashlī has indeed edited this text in 4 volumes (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1992). This edition takes into account the two manuscripts described in this work. The editor mentions another manuscript which should have been included in this catalogue since it belongs to Al-Maktabah al-‘Uthmānīyah of Aleppo, no. 241 (395 fols.), and dates back to the year 895. Neither the editor nor Martel-Thoumian were able to consult the manuscript—it seems to have disappeared.

[184] *Mudhakkirāt Yawmīyah* by Aḥmad ibn Ṭawq (d. 915/1509). Ja‘far al-Muhājir completed the edition of this text between 2000 and 2004 at the Institut Français du Proche-Orient (IFPO) in Damascus (formerly the Institut Français d’Etudes Arabes de Damas [IFEAD]). The title in French is *Journal d’Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq, 834–915/1430–1509 : La vie quotidienne à Damas à la fin de l’époque mamelouke*. It includes notes and indexes.

[186] [*Dhayl*] *Mir‘āt al-Zamān* by al-Yunīnī (d. 726/1326). Note that the title of al-Yunīnī’s work is *Dhayl Mir‘āt al-Zamān*, which continues Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī’s (d. 1256/654) *Mir‘āt al-Zamān*.

[195] *Al-Ma‘azzah fīmā qīla fī al-Mazzah* by Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546). Note the Egyptian re-edition in 2002 (Cairo: Dār Zāhid al-Qudsī) of the 1929 edition.

[196] *Al-Muqtanā fī al-Kunā* by al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347). This manuscript provided the basis for Ayman Ṣāliḥ Sha‘bān’s edition (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah, 1997).

[204][205][206] *Manāqib Ibn Qawwām* (not Qawām), i.e., Abū Bakr ibn Qawwām (d. 659/1261), written by his grandson Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Qawwām (d. 718/1318). We have grouped the descriptions 204, 205, and 206 in the same paragraph, since we believe them to be three manuscripts of a single text, authored by the same person. The manner of their presentation in this catalogue is misleading. A comparison with a similar manuscript belonging to the Dār al-Kutub in Cairo might explain their different *explicit*s. Manuscript DK 2597 *Tārikh*, which Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī “transcribed” in a recent commercial edition, resembles the manuscript portrayed in description 206. This manuscript comprises two distinct texts: (1) *Manāqib Ibn Qawwām*, then (2) *Manāqib Sayyidī Abī al-‘Abbās al-Sabtī*. One might easily overlook the second text, the title of which adjoins the end of the *Manāqib Ibn Qawwām*. For this reason, the *explicit* of the *Manāqib Sayyidī Abī al-‘Abbās al-Sabtī* is often taken to belong to the *Manāqib Ibn Qawwām*. We believe this to hold true in the present case, since the *explicit* provided in description 206 is identical to the one at the end of the *Manāqib Sayyidī Abī al-‘Abbās al-Sabtī*. The *Manāqib Ibn Qawwām* has therefore been “edited,” though very poorly, by Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah, 2005).



[208] *Al-Minhāj al-Sawī fī Tarjamat al-Nawawī* by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505). Note the existence of an edition one year older than the one indicated in this catalogue, by Aḥmad Shafiq Damj (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1998), with notes.

[209][212] *Al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-al-ʿtibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* by al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442). Ayman Fuʿād Sayyid’s edition must now be added (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2002–4), with notes and indexes.

[213] *Muʿallafāt Ibn Taymīyah* by “Ibrāhīm, the author’s student” (!): probably the same text as the one presented in [8]. The late copyist limited his undertaking to Quran-related works, for which he listed approximately twenty titles.

[217][218] *Nuzhat al-Anām fī Maḥāsin al-Shām* by Ibn al-Badrī (d. 894/1489). An edition based on manuscript 9210, portrayed in description [218], has since been made by Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ (Damascus: Dār al-Bashāʿir, 2006), with notes and indexes.

This fine research tool provided by Martel-Thoumian compels us to dream of a time when conscientious editors may gain easy access to such sources as these. If, for instance, the number of manuscripts consulted in some Egyptian editions is limited, it is probably simply because the task of collating all known manuscripts often proves discouraging. Yet, this is no justification—intellectual endeavors must be judged by their own standards. Admittedly, research conditions in Arab countries are not yet conducive to progress. The complicated process involved in accessing the Damascus manuscripts is a most significant example of this.

Let us conclude by saying that the usefulness of this work will only be felt when similar endeavors are initiated and related to one another. Indeed, the study of a manuscript in isolation contributes nothing, in and of itself, to its intelligibility. It must rather be understood within the wider context of manuscript production, in which texts can be categorized according to manufacturing techniques or places of production. Other similar works would create a corpus of codicological studies, making a worthwhile investigation of manuscript production possible.

Finally, we express the hope that an Arabic edition of this catalogue might be published, thus offering encouragement to the numerous Arab editors and historians of the Mamluk period. The French text will remain inaccessible to the majority of these scholars, whose thirst for progress we do not question



YOSSEF RAPOPORT, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge University Press, 2005). Pp. 137 + xii.

REVIEWED BY LI GUO, University of Notre Dame

The book under review is, to my knowledge, the first monograph in a western language that “sets out to explain the economic, legal and social causes of Muslim divorce in the Middle Eastern cities of Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem in the Mamluk period (1250-1517)” (p. 4). In doing so, the author has utilized an impressive array of primary sources and recent scholarship, all woven into a narrative that is graced with clarity, precision, and erudition. The result is a splendid blend of social history and Islamic Studies (Islamic law in particular), of macroscopic breadth and microscopic minutiae, of solid quantitative analysis and fine storytelling.

In his introduction to the subject, scope, and sources, the author is quick to warn us that this is not “a grand narrative about patriarchy and Islam” (p. 7), nor does it touch upon *all* the issues related to marriage and family, among these the choice of spouses, polygamy and concubinage, love and sexuality (p. 11). In other words, this is not just another book on marriage and divorce, or gender and women, in Islam in general. Five chapters—the first three on economic issues and the last two on legal discourse—constitute the main narrative, followed by a short conclusion. In a sense, each chapter can be read separately as an independent essay on the given topic. (As a matter of fact, earlier versions of chapters 4 and 5 have been published elsewhere as independent papers.) But they all relate to one another within a grand framework: while the first three chapters focus on “money,” namely, money brought into marriage, money earned outside of marriage, and money managed within a marriage, the last two “legal” chapters examine divorce in practical procedures and divorce/repudiation in practice and theory, respectively.

Chapter 1, “Marriage, divorce and the gender division of property,” deals with the nuts and bolts of the economics in a Muslim marriage and divorce. Various forms of financial and monetary deals that were brought into a marriage are on display, under the rubrics of “the dowry,” “dowry and inheritance,” and “land, cash and credit.” Here we witness the exquisite method at work, a remarkable feature of the book. The chapter starts off with an intriguing divorce case, which leads to a thorough pondering of the sources and some in-depth discussion, winding down with succinct summation and conclusion. The presentation of the individual cases does not stop at what the sources have to offer, but extends to an interpretation, with a modern sensibility, of legal opinions from various schools of Muslim legal



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DOI: [10.6082/M16D5R4M](https://doi.org/10.6082/M16D5R4M). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M16D5R4M>)

DOI of Vol. XIII, no. 1: [10.6082/M1WQ01W6](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1WQ01W6). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/DRTM-CA24> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

tradition (for example, pp. 17, 21, 23–24, etc.). The author posits the interesting argument that the exclusion of Mamluk elite women from receiving landed revenue as trousseaux, a practice that had been common in the Ayyubid time, pushed them towards the credit market to gain economic independence (pp. 22–25). However, the gender (or gendered) division of property was sometimes challenged, not by legal thinking, but rather by natural disaster, such as the Black Death. In such cases, large fortunes were temporarily moved to elite daughters out of anxiety, resulting in elite women, married or single, becoming major patrons of religious buildings (pp. 26–29). The phenomenon of Mamluk elite women becoming major patrons of religious endowments has long been noted by historians—Stephen Humphreys, Carl Petry, Jonathan Berkey, among others—and now, thanks to the present book, we have a better idea as to how and why this happened.

It may initially come as a surprise that the ensuing Chapter 2, “Working women, single women and the rise of the female *ribāt*,” seems to step away from the topic of marriage and divorce, and instead explores some of the unknown, or least investigated, aspects of salaried women in and out of wedlock. The rationale for such a “side tour” is explained by the author, in his Introduction, as follows: for the majority of working women, dowries were of less value, and therefore an investigation of women’s employment and wages is “crucial for an understanding of the balance of power that existed between husbands and wives, as well as for a comprehension of the phenomenon of frequent divorce” (p. 6). This chapter is for me the most unexpected, ground-breaking, and thought provoking segment of the book, not least because the medieval sources are notoriously silent on women living on the margins of society, but also because the subject of “working women” has yet to be adequately addressed in modern scholarship. Once again, the author is in total control of his sources and has done an admirable job in combing through historical narratives as well as literary texts, such as poetry, for fragmentary piecemeal materials. He has also successfully avoided the easy pitfall of sensationalizing the gender-sensitive subject (the phrase “working women” alone would surely bring about a dubious wince from some corners) by focusing on three socio-economic arenas where single women either shone or made their presence keenly felt: the textile industry, the women’s shelter (*ribāt*), and women immigrants in Jerusalem. The three segments deal with these arenas from different angles: professional, institutional, and demographic. While the discussion of women in the textile industry (spinning and embroidery were “the female professions par excellence” in the Islamic Near East, as we are told [p. 34]) dwells heavily on the well-known sources, such as the Cairo Geniza and S. Goitein’s monumental synthesis of it, it has also incorporated recent scholarship, such as Bethany Walker’s discussion of Mamluk textiles (pp. 37–38). With regard to elite single women’s shelter/lodging, Remie Constable’s book on the *funduq*



appeared too late for the author to consult. It would be very interesting to see if some comparison between the two would yield a new understanding of this fascinating issue. The picture of the immigrant women in Jerusalem depicted in this chapter is an intriguing one: some of them were probably, judging from the descriptions in the sources, “part-time spinners, part-time beggars and part-time pilgrims” (p. 49). Again, the survey relies on well-known sources, such as the Ḥaram documents and Huda Lutfi’s examination of them, but Rapoport has also utilized some new and/or little used sources—namely three literary works—that shed light on working women in Mamluk Syria (p. 49). Although he does not treat these sources extensively, one can hope that more investigation and study are to come from the author.

Chapter 3, “The monetization of marriage,” takes us once again back to Muslim marriage per se, or the monetary arrangements within a marriage, to be more precise. Various forms of domestic monetary and financial arrangements are discussed, among them the marriage gift (*ṣadāq*), marital support, and a cash allowance—ranging from food money (*idam*), clothing (*kiswah*), to “bed-fee” (*ḥaqq al-firāsh*; one ought to read the book to find out what is at stake here; pp. 60–61). The thematic discussion is followed, and illustrated, by a case study of the saga of Zumurrud, a slave-girl in Mamluk Jerusalem whose revolving-door marriages drive home the many points elucidated herein (pp. 64–68). This is the most fun chapter to read. What makes it even more enjoyable is the fact that all the colorful anecdotal accounts (from sources no less than Ibn Ṭawq, whose Damascene diary offers an endless supply of such material, among others) are accompanied by the author’s careful number crunching, based on the documents (contracts, legal opinions, etc.).

As the book takes the commonly high divorce rate in the Islamic Near East as its starting point, chapter 4, “Divorce, repudiation and settlement,” and chapter 5, “Repudiation and public power,” dive into the thick of Islamic legal discourse regarding the institutional aspects of divorce and repudiation procedures, as well as their impact on society as a whole. Chapter 4 begins with a general outline of the issues and questions at stake, and proceeds to deal with several carefully chosen topics. The topics in this chapter include the various steps in a divorce case, stemming from the initial repudiation and leading to the final showdown in court, in both the Islamic courts (pp. 74–78) and the military courts (pp. 79–82). The chapter winds up with a synthesis of divorce in fifteenth-century Cairo (pp. 82–88). Chapter 5 tackles the rift between the state and the religious scholars over the use of repudiation, and more specifically the Sunni law regarding the use of divorce oaths. The discussion proceeds in two directions: one historical (pp. 91–96), in a survey and narration of the societal, cultural, and even linguistic, functions of divorce oaths in Mamluk society, and one legal (pp. 96–105), through a retelling



and contextualization of the failed “reform” championed by Ibn Taymiyah, which eventually got him into serious trouble. On the widely practiced use of divorce oaths in daily life situations, the author weaves a tapestry of individual scenes where divorce oaths were used in such a “baffling variety of social contexts” (p. 92)—such as in connection with financial obligations, in the marketplace, during quarrels, and associated with gift giving in popular literature (by the way, the *Arabian Nights*, which is essentially a Mamluk text, is also full of such expressions uttered by the characters in all the above-mentioned situations)—that they lost their true meaning and judicial function. The discussion of the legal hair-splitting regarding the fine line between real divorce oaths and subterfuges designed to circumvent them is based on a thorough reading of the sources and a careful re-construction of how the jurists and Everymen handled the challenge (pp. 93–96). The discussion of Ibn Taymiyah’s attempted reform of the divorce oath is enhanced by a clear and nuanced analysis of his writings on the subject and their theological background and doctrinal ramifications. In the final analysis, as the author has strongly argued, the Sunni doctrine on divorce oaths “withstood Ibn Taymiyya’s attack” (p. 105), in part due to the efforts of the state authorities to suppress the Hanbali’s extremist dogma, and, more importantly, due to the fact that it never gained currency among jurists, let alone the common people, who continued using non-committal “divorce” oaths in their daily life as they pleased. “Ibn Taymiyya’s attempt to reform the Sunni law on divorce oaths,” as the author puts it, “highlights the inextricable link between the patriarchal order of the domestic sphere and the patriarchal values at the heart of the political and social order. Perhaps more than any individual story of failed marriage, the reaction of the Mamluk state to the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya demonstrates the crucial role of the institution of divorce within medieval Islamic society” (pp. 109–10). Hence the significance of the subject, which has received a superb and well-deserved treatment in this magnificent book.

There are many reasons to admire this book. For a serious scholarly work that tackles such an important topic on such a large scale, it is pleasantly readable: exquisitely compact and clear, free of dreadful jargon, and oftentimes amusing and fun. Not a single page is dull, insofar as theoretical discourse is always illustrated by a slew of case studies full of dicey dilemma, colorful personality, and dramatic punch. And it is typo-free; no small feat for a work with extensive quotes from Arabic material. What a treat!



CATERINA BORI, *Ibn Taymiyya: una vita esemplare: Analisi delle fonti classiche della sua biografia* (Pisa and Rome: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 2003) (Supplemento n. 1 alla Rivista degli studi orientali volume LXXVI). Pp. 234.

REVIEWED BY ARAM SHAHIN, University of Chicago

This monograph, originally presented as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Rome, grew out of the author's research into Ibn Taymiyah's *fatāwā* against the Mongols. The aim of the study is to analyze the representation or the image of Ibn Taymiyah as propounded by the various biographers of his life. The author does not offer a study of Ibn Taymiyah's doctrines or his thought, nor does she aim for a historical reconstruction of his biography. The critical analysis of the biographical material focuses on the texts composed during the eighth/fourteenth century (p. 19). The premise is that this biographical material must be read as a reflection of the conflicts that arose around Ibn Taymiyah and his authority. The biography is thus seen as a polemical and political instrument. It becomes a battleground in which the focus is not simply the authority of Ibn Taymiyah himself, but rather that of the individual or group whom he represents and which legitimizes or perpetuates its own social status by taking advantage of the image of Ibn Taymiyah (p. 20).

The author lays out the required steps for the study of Ibn Taymiyah as follows: (1) a comparison of all available versions of a notice or report; (2) the contextualization of each report, taking into account the formation of the writer, his *madhhab*, the group that he represents, and his relation to Ibn Taymiyah or to his adversaries; and (3) the identification of the doctrinal and moral model which Ibn Taymiyah needed to fit in order to recognize the more personal and individual characteristics of his image. The author also points out the importance of identifying the individual(s) for whom the biography was intended (p. 24). Following this approach, the study of the biographical tradition of an individual ought to reveal important information concerning the biographers themselves and of the social, political, and cultural context in which the portrayal of the individual is created (p. 24).

The division of the various chapters of the book does not follow a chronological pattern, but rather proceeds according to themes. The monograph itself is divided into two parts. Part one (pp. 27–59) is a description of the sources utilized in the study. Part two (pp. 61–170), comprising the bulk of the work, is dedicated to the study of various aspects of the biographical tradition concerning Ibn Taymiyah.

The author divides the sources that she utilized for her study into three categories: (1) biographical monographs and biographical notices in biographical dictionaries and chronicles; (2) chronicles; and (3) polemical texts composed



against Ibn Taymiyah or against the ideas of which he was a proponent. In chapter one, which comprises the entirety of part one, the author gives a brief description of the sources that she deems most important and that she utilized most frequently. This is not simply a description of the contents of each work accompanied by a short biographical notice of its author, but also a description of the sources utilized by the author of the work. The reader is thus introduced to the interconnectedness of all of these sources, as many depend on others and derive from them while sometimes presenting the information from a different perspective and with different aims.

The second chapter (pp. 63–110) is an evaluation of how the biographical tradition developed the material for the biography of Ibn Taymiyah with the focus being placed on four aspects: (1) the intellectual formation of Ibn Taymiyah; (2) the moral ideal attributed to him; (3) his polemical image; and (4) the formation of his myth.

With regard to the intellectual formation of Ibn Taymiyah (pp. 63–77), Bori points out a number of aspects that do not conform to the list of conventional *topoi* that one finds given in biographies of Muslim scholars in Islamic literary sources. One of these is the lack of mobility of Ibn Taymiyah during this formative period. Unlike what is usually described of other scholars, once the family of Ibn Taymiyah moved to Damascus, Ibn Taymiyah himself never traveled in search of teachers and knowledge. He, therefore, did not embark on the *riḥlah fi ṭalab al-‘ilm*, which seems to have been an essential part of the career of a religious scholar (pp. 66–67). Despite this, Ibn Taymiyah wrote a number of treatises on hadith. Thus, he was, as Bori remarks, “a *muḥaddith* without *riḥlah*” (p. 68). As such, Ibn Taymiyah cannot be considered a true *muḥaddith*, but rather an expert in the use and citation of Prophetic hadith as proofs in argumentation (*ibid.*). This would put in doubt the true value of some of the titles that are ascribed to him by some biographers. It is possible that such titlature was given to him to impress rivals and strengthen his credibility (pp. 68–70).

The absence of the *riḥlah* in the formative period of Ibn Taymiyah lends weight to the hypothesis that he obtained his education entirely in Damascus. The majority of his teachers who are mentioned in his biographies were Hanbalis and Damascenes. Those who were not originally from Damascus had moved there or passed by there, imparting their knowledge to Damascene students, thereby creating an inversion of the *riḥlah* model (pp. 69–70).

One aspect of the intellectual creativity of Ibn Taymiyah was his poetical compositions. Apparently, he was a mediocre poet who did not compose much poetry. Some critical biographers, like al-Dhahabī, point this out, whereas more adoring students, like Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī, omit any mention of it. Whether the poetic inadequacy of Ibn Taymiyah was due to his austere nature and the revulsion that he



might have had towards poetry or to some other factor, remains an open question (pp. 70–72). However, if we wanted to suppose that he, following the admonition of some sayings attributed to the Prophet, shunned poetry for religious reasons, we would need to wonder why he bothered to compose any poetry at all.

There are two tendencies in the biographical sources in depicting Ibn Taymīyah: one makes him follow the model of Ibn Ḥanbal, while the other depicts him as an independent scholar who did not follow any particular juristic *madhhab* (p. 73). In the latter case, hagiographers tend to present the independence of Ibn Taymīyah as a positive aspect of his juristic thought. However, others, like al-Dhahabī, saw this in a negative light and condemned his teacher's break with the four legal *madhhabs* (pp. 75–77).

The exemplary model on which the biography of Ibn Taymīyah is based is that of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, while the moral ideal attributed to Ibn Taymīyah is based on two intertwined aspects: (1) the idea of *zuhd*, understood as total dedication to knowledge, extreme religious devotion, and detachment from worldly material attractions; and (2) activism and polemic in the struggle for a rigid and literal interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah, which is expressed in the participation in public life with the conviction that this action is in the best interests of the community (p. 77). The *zuhd* of Ibn Taymīyah was expressed and described mainly through three aspects of his lifestyle: (1) his parsimony in nourishing himself; (2) his abhorrence of expensive clothing that might make him stand out from common people; and (3) his disinterest in money (pp. 78–82).

One interesting aspect of Ibn Taymīyah's life is his celibacy. As the author points out, despite the existence of a number of precedents for this, it is quite unusual for a Muslim religious scholar not to marry, as marriage is considered a *sunnah* of the Prophet and the foundation block of Islamic society. Bori suggests that Ibn Taymīyah might have been of the opinion, shared by a few other scholars, that marriage and family were an impediment from the proper pursuit of knowledge. However, the biographers of the Damascene celibate inserted the information concerning his celibacy within a discussion of his asceticism, probably in an attempt to disguise an aspect of his life that did not conform well to the Islamic model of a Muslim scholar (pp. 82–86).

Some of the more endearing qualities of Ibn Taymīyah's character were his confrontational and aggressive attitude. Some of his students applauded his relentlessness in standing up for his beliefs, but others lamented his uncouth manners and his attachment to polemics. There might have been an attempt by later Hanbali scholars to distance themselves from this aspect of Ibn Taymīyah's opinions and scholarship (pp. 86–91).

Bori selects two episodes from the biographical narratives of Ibn Taymīyah to show the creation of the mythos surrounding his character. The first episode is his



funeral, whereas the second one is his meeting with the Ilkhanid ruler Ghāzān.

The reports about the funeral of Ibn Taymīyah emphasize the attendance of large numbers of people, both men and women. Ironically, the reports also give details of popular commotion, excessive manifestations of grief, and acts of veneration and mass hysteria that accompanied the funeral—the kinds of behavior that Ibn Taymīyah had fought against during his own lifetime. The model on which the narrative of the funeral is based is that of Ibn Ḥanbal himself. The absence of three individuals who were associated with the governor of Damascus and were responsible in some way or another for the imprisonment and eventual death of Ibn Taymīyah is mentioned in the reports. This seems to be done in order to contrast the overwhelming popular presence at the funeral with the absence of an official representation, establishing a dichotomy between the people and the administration (pp. 92–99).

The second episode which Bori studies in detail is the meeting between Ibn Taymīyah and the Ilkhanid sovereign Ghāzān. Here, the author contrasts the information presented in chronicles with that given in biographies of Ibn Taymīyah. As is to be expected, the latter are more detailed, more dramatic, and accentuate more the role and character of Ibn Taymīyah (pp. 99–108). Bori seems to give more credence to the chronicles than to the biographies and describes how al-ʿUmarī “constructs” an episode and an anecdote (pp. 106–7). That biographies of Ibn Taymīyah would tend to eulogize and aggrandize him and to exaggerate certain points in his favor is to be expected. However, I do not see why chronicles should be considered more impartial and objective or why chroniclers should be considered more trustworthy than biographers. In some instances, the chronicler and the biographer were the same individual.

The third chapter of the book discusses the activism of Ibn Taymīyah. Bori begins by giving us glimpses of the activism, both military and religious, of a number of individuals who lived in the thirteenth century in Damascus. This is done for the purpose of contextualizing the activism of Ibn Taymīyah himself and to show the existence of tensions between religious groups, in particular between Hanbalis and Shafiʿis (pp. 112–17). The activism of Ibn Taymīyah himself is divided into:

(1) military activism, including: exhortation of governors and sultans to defend the Muslims from the Mongols; negotiating with the Mongols to secure the release of prisoners or the sparing of bloodshed; and participation in campaigns against the Mongols and against the Shiʿites in Lebanon (pp. 118–23). Bori notes that the most significant of Ibn Taymīyah’s initiatives in this regard occurred during the years 698–705/1298–1305 (p. 118). She also sees a difference in the perspective of Syrian and Egyptian historiography with regard to Ibn Taymīyah’s role in military events. Syrian historiography, especially that based in Damascus, portrays



Ibn Taymīyah as a local hero. On the other hand, Egyptian historiography often neglects to mention his interventions and participation in these events (p. 123).

(2) civil activism, including: the smashing of wine containers; the destruction of stones and idols that attracted people; and the disruption of chess games (pp. 123–30). Bori points out that none of Ibn Taymīyah's activism was directed against the authorities themselves, rather, contrary to the practice of Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Taymīyah cooperated with them and in his writings urged obedience to rulers.

Some sources imply that the reason behind Ibn Taymīyah's activism was his political ambitions, and some accusations were leveled against him of plotting sedition against the governorate of Damascus. Some of Ibn Taymīyah's supporters, like Ibn Kathīr, attributed these accusations to envy (pp. 131–33). Bori argues that the accusations and tribulations that Ibn Taymīyah suffered have to be seen within the larger framework of the conflict and competition between the different *madhhabs* and religious factions (pp. 136–39).

A contradictory image of Ibn Taymīyah thus arises in the biographical sources. There is an oscillation between the image of the wise ascetic who abstains from any contact with the political world following the model of Ibn Ḥanbal, and the image of an activist who willfully cooperates with those in power, especially in cases of military emergencies. However, this contradiction is balanced by the coherence of Ibn Taymīyah's actions and his political thought that envisaged a position of intermediary power for the ulama in Islamic society. Although this is a break with the original Hanbali position, it is echoed in the local Damascene Hanbali activism of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (p. 139).

The fourth and last chapter of the book provides a biographical study of some contemporaneous adversaries of Ibn Taymīyah and authors of polemics against him. The objectives of this study are three: (1) to identify the dynamics of social competition in Damascus at the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century in which to place some of the tensions that were focused around Ibn Taymīyah; (2) to point out the themes over which he was mostly attacked; and (3) to give a portrait of Ibn Taymīyah as depicted by his adversaries (p. 141). It would seem that the role, social position, and doctrinal position of the polemicists are often more revealing than the contents of their writings themselves, which were a vehicle and symbol of the conflict, not its true essence (*ibid.*).

Bori begins by arguing for the correctness of the attribution of *Al-Naṣīḥah al-Dhahabīyah*, a critical letter addressed to Ibn Taymīyah, to his disciple al-Dhahabī (pp. 142–48). The letter strongly criticizes Ibn Taymīyah's excessively polemical attitude. It also shows Ibn Taymīyah's involvement in the struggle among the ulama to acquire prestige and authority through the control of the religious institutions of Damascus (pp. 147–48).

Bori then presents brief biographical sketches of five of the adversaries of Ibn



Taymiyah: four Syrian residents in Damascus and one Egyptian, three of whom were Shafi'is, one Hanafi, and one Maliki (pp. 148–54). The author argues that the intellectual polemic against Ibn Taymiyah and the traditionalist group led by him cannot be separated from the battles for the control of teaching positions at religious institutions (p. 154).

Most of the writings of the five individuals presented in the previous section have not survived. On the other hand, the numerous writings of Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355–56) against Ibn Taymiyah have survived, and this allows for a more in-depth study of the polemics aimed at Ibn Taymiyah. The rest of the chapter is dedicated exclusively to the polemics of al-Subkī (pp. 155–69).

The book concludes with four appendices: (1) a description of biographies of Ibn Taymiyah that were deemed of secondary importance by Bori due to their brevity or derivative content (pp. 177–81); (2) a table listing the teachers of Ibn Taymiyah as given in seven sources (pp. 183–86); (3) a table listing the titles given to Ibn Taymiyah in eight sources (pp. 187–90); and (4) a translation of *Al-Naṣīḥah al-Dhahabīyah* (pp. 191–94).

This is a very interesting study that highlights a number of aspects of Ibn Taymiyah's life and the way that they have been portrayed by various writers who were mostly his contemporaries. For those readers who are approaching Ibn Taymiyah for the first time, it is advisable that they start by reading a standard biography of the scholar before immersing themselves in Bori's work so that they may become familiar with the general outline of the events of Ibn Taymiyah's life. However, for all the Ibn Taymiyah enthusiasts out there, this will be required reading and a necessary reference point for all future research on the Damascene scholar's life as well as the religious and social milieu in which he lived.

Having said that, I must point out that this must be the worst edited book that I have read—either that or it is the first one that I have read with any diligence. In the 177 pages of text, from the preface to the last appendix, I have found at least one error in 116 pages, or in about 66% of the pages of the book. This is quite frustrating for the reader, especially since the majority of these errors are obvious slips or typographical errors that should have been easily corrected. In what follows, I will mention a number of the more salient errors.

- The word Ġumādā [Jumādā] that appears in the names of two lunar Islamic months has two long vowels and not just one, Ġumāda, as given on pp. 46, 51, 53, 68, 82 (note 89), 120, 131 (note 80), 134, and 151.

- The Arabic equivalent of the name David is Dā'ūd or Dāwūd, with two long vowels, not Da'ūd or Dawūd as it appears in the name of Abū Dā'ūd on pp. 92 (note 133), 95 (in text and in note 151), 98, 130 (note 74), 195 (the bibliography), and 215 (the index).



- The name of the city on the Mediterranean coast is ‘Akkā, with a long vowel, not ‘Akka as given on pp. 122 (in the text and in note 41), 123, and 215 (the index).

- The name Ibn Ruššayq al-Mağribī is found on pp. 40 (in text and in note 54), 148 (note 30), and 221 (the index), and as Ibn al-Ruššayq al-Mağribī on pp. 148 (in the text) and 163 (in the text and in note 129). The name of the student of Ibn Taymiyah is actually Ibn Rushayyiq al-Mağhibī (d. 749/1348 or 9), as is clearly voweled by Shams and al-‘Imrān.<sup>1</sup>

- The title of the work by Ibn Tagħribirdī is *Al-Manhal al-Šāfi*, not *al-Manħal al-Šāfi* as given on pp. 40 (note 52), 43 (in the text and in note 74), 44 (notes 74, 75, and 76), 149 (note 40), 198 (twice, in the bibliography).

- Marğ al-Rāhiṭ on pp. 100, 104, and 105 (twice) should be corrected to Marğ Rāhiṭ.

- There is some confusion in the name of Ğahm b. Šafwān. The name is given correctly twice on p. 162, note 124, but in the same note and in the text on the same page as well as on p. 164, the name is incorrectly given as Ğahm b. Šufyān.

- Two works that are cited in the book are not listed in the bibliography: Ibn al-Ĥāğğ, *al-Madħal al-šar‘ al-šarif* [sic] on p. 80 (note 80),<sup>2</sup> and M. Sakhy, “al-Wāsiṭ,” on p. 116 (note 21), that should be corrected to M. Sakly, “Wāsiṭ.”

- On p. 41, note 59, the title of a second article by de Somogyi and its page numbers has been completely omitted, although it is listed in the bibliography on p. 212. In the bibliographic entry, in the title of the article, it is “Adh-Dhahabī’s record” not “Adh-Dhahabī record,” and the article appears in the *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume*, not the *Goldziher Memorial Volume*, as correctly given in note 59 on p. 41.

- On p. 42, note 67, Ğamāl al-Dīn Āqqūš al-Afram is identified as governor, first of Damascus from 698 to 709 AH (1298–1309/1310 AD), and then of Kark. Within the text on the same page, his death date is given as ca. 720 AH/1320–21 AD. This information is repeated in an article by the author, except that the death date of al-Afram is given for certain as 720 AH.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the article, Bori

<sup>1</sup> See *Al-Jāmi‘ li-Sīrat Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyah (661–728) (khilāl Sab‘at Qurūn)*, collected by Muḥammad ‘Uzayr Shams and ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-‘Imrān (Mecca: Dār ‘Ālam al-Fawā’id lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 1420/[1999]), 10–13 and 220. For biographical information on Ibn Rushayyiq, see the references on p. 11, note 3. On pp. 10–13, Shams and al-‘Imrān argue that Ibn Rushayyiq al-Mağhibī is the author of a short work entitled “Asmā’ Mu’allafāt Ibn Taymiyah” that has been attributed to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah by some other scholars.

<sup>2</sup> The name of Ibn al-Ĥāğğ in the index on p. 220 is not placed in the correct alphabetical order, and neither is Ibn Ḥallikān nor Ibn Ḥaldūn.

<sup>3</sup> Caterina Bori, “A New Source for the Biography of Ibn Taymiyya,” *Bulletin of the School of*



identifies the second place of his governorate as Kark (on pp. 42, 148, and 222). The correct place name is al-Karak, in central Jordan. Reuven Amitai reads the name of the individual as Aqūsh al-Afram.<sup>4</sup>

There is one major complaint that I have, and that is in the method of citation of modern Arab authors. Bori has taken the approach of citing these authors by using initials for the first and middle names. I cannot recommend this method at all and must insist on seeing the full names of the authors to avoid any possible confusion in their identities. This might work for Western authors (although I would like to see the full name of these fellows as well), but for Arabic authors it can be nightmarish. What exactly is one supposed to do with the author identified simply as M. Y. Mūsā (p. 18, note 30)?<sup>5</sup> This system also fails to indicate compound names. For example, ‘A. ‘A. al-Marāḡī (ibid.) is supposed to be the abbreviation for ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Marāḡī. But how can the reader know whether the two ‘ayns represent the initials of two separate names or whether they are indeed representing the given compound name? And what exactly happened to the definite article in front of the second ‘ayn?<sup>6</sup> Bori herself is inconsistent, as she sometimes cites some scholars with their full name, while at other times she only gives the scholar’s last name. As is to be expected, the use of abbreviated names has led her to commit some errors. For example, on p. 18, note 30, Ṣ. ‘A. al-Ḥāmid is supposed to stand for Ṣā’ib ‘Abd al-Ḥāmid. The author of *Tarjamat Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah* is Muḥammad Kurd ‘Alī, not ‘A. al-Kurdī. On p. 24, note 56, the editor’s name is not ‘A. Ġ. al-Faryawā’ī, but ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Faryawā’ī. I think that it is always best to give the full name of all cited scholars, especially those with Arabic names.

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*Oriental and African Studies* 67, pt. 3 (2004): 344, note 35. This article is an edition, translation, and study of a biography of Ibn Taymīyah by his student Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347 or 48) given the title *Nubdhah min Sirat Shaykh al-Islām Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymīyah*.

<sup>4</sup> Reuven Amitai, “The Remaking of the Military Elite of Mamlūk Egypt by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn,” *Studia Islamica* 72 (1990): 159–60.

<sup>5</sup> The full name of the scholar is Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsá.

<sup>6</sup> The same problem arises with the name of the scholar Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, whose full name is cited a number of times, but at others is abbreviated as Ṣ. D. al-Munajjid.

