Book Reviews

Response to Thomas Bauer, review of *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period,* edited by Roger Allen and D. S. Richards, *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (2007): 137–67.

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Thomas Bauer seems very much intent on discrediting my chapter on Mamluk and Ottoman poetry (in the Post-Classical Period volume of the *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, edited by Roger Allen and D. S. Richards and published in 2006), which apparently contradicts the premises and ideas he himself had already put forward about this long period, one that happens to be his chosen area of specialization.

To this end he has resorted in his review article to an unseemly, incoherent, and unscholarly all-out attack on my ideas, my stance, and my work, even my person. The attack is unseemly because the personal slurs, innuendos, and insinuations generously distributed throughout his paper are unbefitting the tasks and objectives of genuine scholarship, and simply compromise their own source; incoherent because Bauer seems unable to stay the course of a single principle or standard of judgment in his rush to condemn my work and my stance; unscholarly because he builds his case on heavily decontextualized references, betrays a thorough ignorance of my corpus of work (and so my actual stance on particular issues of literature and culture), and critiques my translation of Arabic poetry in a manner that sadly betrays the weakness of his own grasp of the Arabic literary language and its idioms.

First of all, it needs to be acknowledged that there are obviously serious and deep-rooted differences in our assessment of the poetry of the period in question. Yet to slip from scholarly engagement with disagreement and alternative judgments to a vituperative lashing-out, filled with charges of all kinds, including insinuations which are meant to reflect on the person of the other, is beyond ordinary comprehension. Whereas a scholarly disagreement can be welcomed as a contribution to shaping or instigating a debate, this kind of inelegant and uncivil attack cannot be allowed to stand without challenge, although I admit to finding no pleasure whatsoever in having to respond to this level of writing.

Bauer has the audacity to heap personal invective on me simply for thinking differently from him, for not seeing in the poetry of this period the greatness and superior quality he himself sees. And yes, it is indeed true that I do not have a

DOI: 10.6082/M10V89ZR. (https://doi.org/10.6082/M10V89ZR)

DOI of Vol. XII, no. 1: 10.6082/M1571937. See https://doi.org/10.6082/C8X5-T517 to download the full volume or individual articles.

high view of most of the poetry of this period, with the exception (as I said in my essay) of Sufi poetry, some of which is of a high order; of a certain number of other religious poems on account of their ardor and genuine sensibility; and of the work of a very few specific poets, notably al-Bahāʾ Zuhayr and Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī. I am not an easy admirer of anything that I do not find up to standard and I reiterate my unswerving lack of admiration for Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī, who seems to be Bauer's favorite poet of this period—viewed by him as one of the greatest poets of the Mamluk age, and on whom he has written with such high appreciation.

The Arab literary renaissance of the nineteenth century (on which I have written elsewhere[1]) reconnected directly and purposively with the earlier periods (at least seven centuries of them overall, beginning in the sixth century of the Christian era, if not earlier)—in other words, with those periods regarded as forming the golden or "classical" era of our verse, viewed almost unanimously by Arab scholars as the fountainhead of Arabic poetry. It was from the poetry of this period that the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century revivalists took their models, leaping over the Mamluk and Ottoman centuries. The overriding need in the nineteenth century was to inject into a weakened, imitative, and formulaic verse, inherited from those two periods, a strength of language and a well-built phraseology, to rid it of artificiality and what was deemed an absence of profundity or even worthwhile meaning. This leap back to older centuries was certainly an interruption in the course of a poetry that had spanned such a very long period. However, it was certainly also a welcome interruption to its direction, diction, imagery, and semantics. In fact, Arabic literature in both poetry and prose has witnessed several major interruptions, sometimes even arrests, to its steady course of evolution, but this leap back in the modern era to a much older kind of poetry is one of the most serious, and in my estimation, one of the most fortunate. It points to a direct indictment of the kind of poetry which the Mamluk and Ottoman eras had offered. The poet-revivalists, literary historians, and anthologists of the time were unanimous in their rejection of the poetry that directly preceded their times and in their decisive resort to the golden or classical period. They rejected the vacuity and serious aesthetic fatigue that had hampered the inherited poetry of their age, and knew instinctively that a continuity with the immediately previous poetry would lead them to an artistic dead end.[2] Their

[1] See "The Arab Literary Renaissance in the Nineteenth Century," in *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry,* ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden, 1977), 1:15–45.

[2] See my description of the poetry inherited from the Ottoman period in my *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry,* 1:25, where I say: "Arabic poetry in the earlier part of the nineteenth century was benighted in every meaning of the word. It had become a genre mainly concerned with amusement and politesse. . . . It was an exercise of the wits that revolved around itself in a

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judgment, with which I fully agree, was that the poetry of these two periods had been moving overall towards banality, repetitiveness, and artificiality, mired in aesthetic clichés and formulaic descriptions. This was a trend which had its inception during the two periods in question, and the line of poetic decline had continued up to the modern Arab literary renaissance.

Bauer suggests (p. 159) that in taking this position, I simply "rely on blind [sic] personal taste," without questioning the standards I am "applying to the object of research." Yet it is clear that this assessment, and the choice of the Arab revivalists, was (as any contemporary history of the Arab literary renaissance would indicate) a matter of general and home-grown Arab consensus. Yet on this point, Bauer is inconsistent: while he ventures here that this judgment is based on my blind personal taste, he asserts, earlier on in his review, that this assessment is the outcome of a Eurocentric conceptualization derived from Orientalist sources, or expressing the Hegelian view of history, which he suggests was itself the foundation for many Orientalist accounts (see his many pages on this. pp. 141–44). It would be an extraordinary claim to make that this judgment was copied from the ideas of ill-intentioned Orientalists[3] or Hegelian theories—of whose very existence most Arab revivalists of the time were largely unaware. What connection is there between the considered judgment of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Arab poets, critics, anthologists, literary historians, and the huge Arab audience everywhere with Western conceptions of the Mamluk and Ottoman periods? Does Bauer seriously want to imply that the Arabs involved had no powers of independent thought or literary taste, that they were slaves to others outside their own culture? Is this his belittling view of the Arabs, and of their spontaneous judgment of their own poetic history?[4] Perhaps he should

vacuum. . . . [It] had become artificial, imitative and sham . . . [and] bore no relation to the best examples of Classical poetry." It would have been totally unsuccessful technically to try to draw strength for renewal from the Ottoman poetry preceding the revival.

[3] Bauer seems to believe that what he calls "prejudices" which have "for a long time prevented scholars in the Arab and Western world alike from appropriately assessing Mamluk and Ottoman literature" can "easily [sic] be discerned as originating in Western ideologies of this era." See his article, "Mamlūk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2005): 105, also 118. Western prejudices, however, were not really confined to this era, but indeed to the *entire* corpus of Arab literary and cultural history. It is indeed strange that Bauer should overlook this. In fact, even if an early Arab revivalist had come in contact with Western ideas on the subject, I cannot see that he would simply have acquiesced in the assumptions involved. I believe, on the contrary, that men like Nāṣīf al-Yāzijī, whom he gives as an example of one influenced by Western judgments on this literature (pp. 105–6 n.), had quite enough critical judgment themselves to be able to make choices of their own.

[4] If it were at all true, the Arab revivalists and the huge Arab audience at their heel would have shunned their most favorite poet, al-Mutanabbī, who is still regarded by Arabs as a supreme poet,

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critically re-examine his own statements. This is precisely the substance of some modalities of Orientalist discourse: the denial to Arabs either of any intrinsic and independent judgment, grounded in their *own* relevances and needs, or any *value* to such judgment. Despite his overt attack on Orientalist thinking, he is perilously engaged in an equivalent figure of discourse. What reinforces this sense is precisely his inconsistency. Whilst in the introduction to his review, as we have seen, he objects stridently and at length to the premises, periodization, and conception of the volume as a whole (making special reference, of course, to my own article within this [p. 142]) as being Eurocentric and derived from Western imperial visions, he nevertheless equally lashes out against any descriptions of aspects of Arab literary or cultural heritage as evidencing any continuity, or shared concerns, vision, or style: for example, he objects strongly to the notion of an "Arab literary identity" (see p. 161), describing this as an "anachronistic" claim on my part, especially when applied to the period in question, and charging that it results from blind nationalism.

One cannot help reading in this an embodiment of the *newer* form of Orientalist discourse which insists on seeing in the region and its history nothing more than multiple, local, fragmented identities and projects. Certainly one can note a parallel between the structure of thinking and feeling fostered and championed by the contemporary imperial project and this kind of angry response to a stance that suggests that Arab civilization and culture had anything resembling unity to them. I shall return to this point later.

On a more specific level, Bauer needs to make up his mind: am I a Eurocentric subscriber to "Hegelian teleological thinking" (p. 142) which sees the sole function of Islamic culture as bringing "classical thinking . . . to the West" (p. 142), a writer "blinded" by my "nationalist ideology" (p. 161), or a "pro-Western" intellectual, one of those who "hail Western liberal modernity" (p. 162)? It strikes me that his attempt at discrediting my work aims to secure sympathy from a very wide range of practically opposed constituencies of opinion. But it really will not do for him to try to have his cake and eat it too. He needs to develop some consistency of approach and a convincing analysis, beyond simply that of seeking to discredit my work and person, not to mention the volume in question.

Let me turn now to the details of the specific critique Bauer makes of my paper. As part of his interest in discrediting my analysis of the poetry of the period in question, he resorts to accusing me of being ahistorical (p. 159) and essentialist (pp. 159–60). He writes (p. 160): "In her essentialist conception, it is 'the essence of poetry' (p. 29) or the 'poetic essence' (p. 41) imbued with 'the essence of a free Arab spirit' (p. 38) to capture the 'human essence' (p. 29), 'the essence of life' (p.

but who was misunderstood and, to put it mildly, treated lightly by Orientalists.

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29).” What is noteworthy here is the manipulative use of *very short* quotes, taken out of context, and used *out of sequence,* in order to attribute a larger statement to me which I do not make, and which simply serves the purpose of maligning my work. The sinister part in all this is the suggestion, implicit in the way he relates all these short quotes, that it is wrong to use the word “essence” in any context. It is this which sets the stage for the next statement, namely that, according to my conception, “the history of poetry is simply the history of the realization of the *immutable* ‘poetic essence’” (italics added). This betrays an ignorance (or intentional neglect) of the thrust and logic of my work on poetry; most notably relevant to this argument are my *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry,* my chapter on Umayyad poetry—which he lightly mentions—and my chapters on Andalusi poetry.[5] But beyond that, it demonstrates a willful misreading of my own statements in this paper: the only place in my entire paper where I use the term “the essence of poetry” is in reference to what another critic had said, specifically the Andalusi Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājjanī (d. 456/1064) speaking of a poetry previous to his time which was already showing signs of some decline, and by this anticipating the systematic poetic decline during the following Mamluk and Ottoman periods. I write: “For two centuries, he [i.e., al-Qarṭājjanī] said, poets there had lacked all sense of the essence of poetry, and had not, in that time, produced a single *faḥl.*” Again the only place in my entire paper where I use the phrase “poetic essence” is when I say: “Yet, for all the continuity of the old traditions in these and some other poets, there was a relentless, ongoing change in style, strength of language and poetic essence. The parallel phenomena of change and continuity that are so evident in the poetry of the eleventh and twelfth centuries may be seen as clear illustrations of a process that would be repeated constantly throughout the ensuing period under discussion here. . . .”

Immutability? Indeed, Bauer singularly fails to provide the reader with the actual context and substance of my argument which emphasizes change in both the social context of literature and accordingly its content, form, and substance. I address this from the very beginning and throughout my paper. I conclude, for example (p. 58):

> What did this lengthy era, full of significant political and social developments, contribute to the course of Arabic poetry on the one hand, and, on the other, to the knowledge of poetry as a universal art form? First, it provides fertile ground for various studies in

[5] See “Umayyad Poetry,” in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period,* The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature (1983); and for the chapters on Andalusi poetry, see: “Andalusi Poetry: the Golden Period” and “Nature Poetry in al-Andalus and the Rise of Ibn Khafaja,” in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain.,* ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden, 1992), 317–66 and 367–97, respectively.

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> the theory of literature, showing many aspects of the nature of "change." It also illustrates the effect of tradition on art, the hold that it has on the imagination of creative writers, the struggle during periods of change between various idioms and also between those forces of resistance and surrender that are a continuous part of the very stuff of poetry.

Clearly, his short quotations, strung together in a contrived way, are grievously misleading, and violate the fundamental trust between critic and reader. Most of his short quotes from my work, which pepper his tirade, are decontextualized in the same mode, and manipulated in the same prejudicial manner in order to attribute to me something I have neither said, nor expressed in my corpus of work, nor ever thought of. This is an issue of *interpretive integrity,* and integrity of transmission. I would have thought that this kind of integrity was one of the fundamental standards of critical and scholarly work.

Which brings me directly to a related issue in Bauer's critique that follows from the above and has to do with the standards of judgment and critique (although it is uncertain after the above demonstration of Bauer's "standards" for critical work whether he can even resonate with the points I will raise). It also again raises the issue of the historical as opposed to an ahistorical approach. Bauer asserts that there are "established premises" of "literary scholarship," which I supposedly violate in my "essentialist" stance, arrogating for myself the "competence to define the aesthetic criteria according to which all poetry of all periods must be measured" (p. 160). Individual critics, however expert, however responsible, will work from the base of differing world views. There is simply no point in Bauer appealing to such "established premises," when responsible critical viewpoints and methodologies vary so widely in practice. Does Bauer view "established" premises as permanently frozen criteria, such that a critic with verve and originality like M. L. al-Yousfi (whom he so categorically maligns in his review) cannot be permitted his own "different" assessment of literary change and values? Should these established criteria hold an observer back from offering a new method of dealing with literary history, a new interpretation and an original treatment of a particular topic, of a literary period, or of an author—all the more so when he or she is dealing with a culture like Arabic culture, which, though highly rich, complex, and multi-faceted, remains for numerous reasons in major need of cogent study, analysis, and interpretation? For someone who speaks so strongly of the need for a historical approach in scholarship, Bauer seems to contradict himself. He has argued earlier (p. 159) that historical judgments change, that there cannot be timeless criteria by which to assess poetic quality. Yet now he talks of "established premises and methods." Can he perhaps be a little more precise?

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However, perhaps these two positions can be harmonized, if one now sees that the source of standards and criteria which may be used, and any reassessments to be allowed within them, can never be home-grown or indigenous. This effectively is Bauer's implicit position. Standards and criteria engendered internally, including within and through the Arab revivalist movement, a whole generation of renewal and regeneration, which laid the foundations in the nineteenth and early twentieth century for the rich developments of modern Arabic poetry, are all illegitimate.

In fact, Bauer's judgment of poetry leaves much to be desired generally. "Jayyusi never asks," he says (p. 164), "what the poets themselves wanted to accomplish, which, *of course, is the only standard according to which they can be measured* [italics mine]." But is that really true? Leaving the personal slur aside, this is one of those resounding critical statements which will simply not stand up to close scrutiny. *The point is, of course, that it is not enough to accomplish what one aims to do. The aim must be worth striving for in the first place.* Whatever standards of poetic or literary assessment have been used, this cannot coherently or artistically be one of them. To begin with, how exactly do we judge what the poet "wanted to accomplish"? What is the criterion for this? Further, at what point, and by what criteria, do we in the first place judge that the poet has "accomplished" what he had wanted to? But let us suppose that we have the means unequivocally to determine what the poet wanted to accomplish and whether he did accomplish it, how then, by this measure, do we find ways of distinguishing between different levels of accomplishment among poets; where is the difference between great poetry and other verse? Or is this distinction no longer to be entertained? Bauer dismisses the idea that good poetry relates to profound issues of human life, and suggests that it is enough to "find a charming entertainment" in it (p. 164) or be "surprised by a pointed literary conceit" (p. 164). I fear Bauer diminishes the entire literary and artistic enterprise by such a "standard."

The point is, of course, that it is not enough to accomplish what one aims to do as a poet or artist: literary criticism classically articulates standards which also turn on the meaningfulness of the text and its substance, not merely its *artfulness*. Great poetry, I affirm, even just good poetry, does not depend primarily on the fulfilment of aim, and certainly does not depend on ornate diction, on elegance and an elaborate poetic style. It is not something remote and abstracted from experience. On the contrary, it is the profound, instinctive, intuitive expression of experience and of a major poet's vision of the world; and that is what gives it universality and permanent appeal. It is a poetry of genuine emotion, which brings out the profound secrets of existence shared by humanity everywhere and therefore belonging to all humanity. Otherwise, why translate any poetry to the world? It is the voice of the conscience, as W. B. Yeats once said, related to the conditions and predicaments of life, and its major lived encounters and

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departures: love, death, hope, despair, pain, deep joy, the struggle for existence, wisdom as an expression of lived experience, and other existential encounters with which living in this world abounds. A poem that concentrates on aesthetics alone can be pleasing and interesting, and perhaps very skillful (as many of the nature poems in al-Andalus and elsewhere were); but to be a truly major poem, it must deal also with vision and experience, with at least some facet, however specific and however small, of the human condition. If we survey the history of poetry world wide, starting with the very first epic, Gilgamesh, it is hard not to acknowledge that the poetry *consistently* considered great, both within a culture and across cultures, has been deemed to have meaningfulness in relation to lived experience, that being another way of talking about the human condition; a depth of meaning, communicated in a profoundly creative way so that it touches the reader or listener. Bauer is, of course, welcome to differ, but he needs to make a better argument. Moreover, it is certainly not my solitary judgment that he will have to take on in such an endeavour

As for the reception by a poet's contemporaries of his or her poetry (see p. 160 of Bauer's review), this is no criterion either. Indeed, I refer again to his own statement earlier: "The perception of whole periods of art," he notes, "is constantly undergoing change" (p. 159). This point has in fact been clearly dealt with in the introduction to my *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry* (see especially pp. 5–9). The perception of the audience during a certain period is no necessary determinant of a poet's contribution and its value. In the modern period poets from many parts of the Arab world have gained great reputation and popularity, not because they have written superior poetry but merely because they have written poetry on political and patriotic subjects which deals with pertinent issues with which the contemporary Arab audience is deeply concerned. Conversely, during the classical period, Dhū al-Rummah (696–735) was regarded as a secondary poet (in fact, one quarter of a poet, as the old critics said). Yet he has now begun to be seen as one of the greatest poets of the classical (golden) period. The quality of poetry is not dependent simply on the "taste" of the audience or of the literary historian, but on its own interior qualities of meaningfulness and stance, as well as poetic charge and literary structure. This is a complex area of creativity. Yet it is a recognized domain within literary assessment, and the history of all literatures shows how reputations, luminous in their time, can crumble, and others, misunderstood or dimmed in the eyes of their contemporaries, are brought back to life; how the best poets survive over centuries and many generations, and how others are left behind.

There are a series of other points which Bauer raises. He bewails my omission of a number of poets of the period. The period had indeed numerous poets. However, to write a literary history of a period does not mean writing about a

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large number of its authors. Let us consider the writing on poets of the modern period. It would take many volumes to cover even one tenth of them. The Bābitain Poetry Organization in Kuwait is presently working on a new encyclopedia, due to come out in October 2008, of Arab poets who lived and died in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There are now already over nine thousand names.

In every age poets have abounded in the Arab world, but one can certainly write the literary history of the modern period, indeed of any period, without mentioning many of its poets. In writing the literary history of a period, especially in the frame of a single chapter, rather than a full-length book, paramount attention must be given not to the sheer *number* of authors, even of some good ones among them, but to those among them who best shaped its literary history.[6] A literary genre is developed, enhanced, moved into a new school, wrenched from its course, or arrested by some of its leading authors, working alone or in groups. It is these of whom a literary historian will speak.

Bauer also attacks me for my supposed attitude to nature poetry (pp. 164, 166). Here, once more, he betrays how little he has actually seen of my work on poetry. He is speaking from a lack of knowledge, unless (as I hope is not the case) he is wilfully ignoring what he knows with a view simply to malign. In my chapter on "Nature Poetry in al-Andalus and the Rise of Ibn Khafāja," [7] I gave a lengthy, positive, and (to the best of my knowledge) new description of this poetry and its aesthetic refinements, particularly the dehumanized[8] (to use Ortega y Gasset's description) poetry of many short poems of *al-wardīyāt, al-rabīʿīyāt, al-nawrīyāt,* etc., which mostly had no relation to human experience and hence to the human condition. This poetry, which began in the East,[9] developed widely in al-Andalus, and has subsequently drawn much admiration from Western moderns. Lorca,

[6] Unless of course one wants merely to give a tepid survey of who wrote during that period: this kind of survey, however, is more of a social science than a critical literary genre of writing. I fear Bauer confuses the two sorts of enterprises, as seen in his use of the method of statistical analysis of poetic output, which offers no critical insights into the literature he treats herein at all. For a single example, see Bauer, "Abū Tammām's Ghazal," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 27 (1996): 18–21.

[7] *The Legacy of Muslim Spain,* 367–79.

[8] See what Ortega y Gasset had to say about dehumanized poetry, i.e., the poetry that does not speak of direct human experience, in *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture and Literature (*Princeton, 1972), 24.

[9] Although the particular kind of poetry concentrating on nature had been written by the pre-Islamic poets in their intricate and "dehumanized" descriptions of the horse and the she-camel, focus on flowers and nature and the seasons as such was introduced in a big way by Ibn al-Muʿtazz (861–908), the one-day caliph in Baghdad, and taken up in the next generation by the Syrian al-Ṣunawbarī and the Egyptian al-Tinnīsī and others, being already fully entrenched when it reached al-Andalus.

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for example, was an admirer, and beautiful selections have been translated by three sets of fine translators in modern times.[10] This is all covered in my chapter.[11] Nevertheless, these poetic miniatures, no matter how perfected and chiselled they were, could never have a claim to be great poetry. Great poetry, not to belabour a point, has always been a poetry of human experience and vision, of the human condition, not simply of artistic and elaborate description. But this is a platitude, something known to every perceptive reader of poetry in any language. If Bauer disagrees, all very well: but he needs to provide a substantive argument; there is no profit in piling up accusations that will not stand the test of time or honest research. My work abounds in statements and interpretations that belie Bauer's aggressive claims.

In the interest of scholarly accuracy, incidentally, I should point out that my Umayyad chapter appeared not in the *Abbasid Belles Lettres* volume of the Cambridge History of Arabic Literature, as Bauer writes (p. 162), but in Volume One, titled *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period* (1983).

Some further corrections: *uqḥuwān* appears as "daisy" in more than one dictionary: see Wehr and *The Concise Oxford English-Arabic Dictionary*. Bauer attempts to critique my translations. But is he really competent to speak of my translation from the Arabic, or to make such high-handed judgments of it? Has he really mastered the language to this extent? In fact, when we look at a collection of his own translations (see his above-mentioned article on Abū Tammām), it appears that he does not understand the poetic idiom or is unable, at least, to deal with it in translation. His translations, to put it very mildly, leave much to be desired on account of the author's doggedly literal rendering of some passages in the poems he quotes, which betrays a serious lack of knowledge of the Arab poetic idiom as well as his poetic sensibility. His translations of excerpts from Abū Tammām's poetry, for example, are literal and flat; they betray an incapacity to understand the idiomatic meaning of the Arabic lines and the necessity of translating them without undue homage to the literal details (as is indeed the case with idioms in all languages). What poetic pleasure will a reader in English gain from Bauer's translation of some of the *ghazal* passages from Abū Tammām?

[10] See Cola Franzen's lovely translation of a selection of these poems, *Poems of Arab Andalusia* (San Francisco, 1989); James Bellamy and Patricia Owen Steiner, *Banner of the Champions, an Anthology of Medieval Arabic Poetry from Andalusia and Beyond (*Madison, 1989); and Christopher Middleton and Leticia Garza-Falcon, *Andalusian Poems* (Boston, 1992).

[11] Indeed, as I also said in my opening address at the conference on *qaṣīdah* poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa at the School of Oriental and African Studies in July 1993, "Let me say at the outset . . . that I am not a conventional lover of poetry. True lovers of poetry cannot fail to see the splendor of every aesthetic form: they are versatile, mobile, open to every kind of beautiful utterance, endlessly captivated by the poignant poetic passage in any language and in any form." See *Qaṣīda Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa,* ed. Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Leiden, 1995), 1:1.

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What, for instance, does Abū Tammām (along with many other poets of the Classical Age) mean by *naqā*?[12] Just a heap of sand? Or one to compare to a part of the beloved's body? Her buttocks, in fact: rounded, ample, and white like a sandhill. Since a "sandhill" has no such connotations for an English reader, such a translation completely robs the verse of its poetic substance:

> Oh twig of a moringa tree of tender growth, upon a sandhill (oh twig)
> Of which the upper part sways (p. 15).

The poet's intention is simply to describe the slim waist of the beloved and her ample white buttocks.

Most of the translations included in this article are lacking in accuracy and, particularly, in poetic appeal; they render the phrases verbatim, disastrous in any translation.

I could embark on a long list pointing out the mistakes or infelicitous choices Bauer has made in translation. *Aḥshāʾ* (p. 14 of the same article) cannot be translated in English literally as "viscera" without a grotesquely misplaced connotative effect. The verb *alifa, yaʾlafu* is not to be translated as "acquainted with" but as "familiar with" (p. 17). And how can anyone offer the following in the same article as a good translation:

> Beauty prostrated itself before his face when it saw the perplexity
> of the minds brought on by his outstanding beauty (p. 16)!

In other words: "Beauty itself was in awe at the loveliness of his face when it saw all the wonder his beauty stirred."

Again, it is a well-known usage to say, when describing the tenderness of the beloved's skin, that, being so tender, even water scratches *(khamasha)* it (not as Bauer says: "makes smooth his skin") so that it becomes red, as if wearing a robe of embers (Bauer, pp. 16–17).

Then consider this:

> Separation had made me swallow the juice of colocynths, and separation has made me bereft of a son. (p. 17 of the same article).

What does all this mean when all the poet intends is that separation has made him suffer bitterly and feel bereft? The colocynth *(ḥanẓal)* is idiomatically understood, not just in poetry, but also in present-day prose and conversation, to denote bitterness of experience. Translated *literally* into English, it loses its meaning, and, like several of the other translations I have quoted, looks virtually

[12] See pp. 14–15 of "Abū Tammām's Ghazal."

DOI: 10.6082/M10V89ZR. (https://doi.org/10.6082/M10V89ZR)

DOI of Vol. XII, no. 1: 10.6082/M1571937. See https://doi.org/10.6082/C8X5-T517 to download the full volume or individual articles.

comic. And *thakila* can also mean losing someone loved, not just losing one's child (see *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* under *thakila*).

There are many similar renderings in Bauer's poetic translation, and indeed in his discourse. For example, how can he translate *mujūn* as "satire"?[13] *Mujūn* is the use of heavy, bad language, uncontrolled and impervious to social decorum. It was a sign of the age itself, and of its accepted ethics and culture—one that he describes as "a culture of refinement, sophistication, and elegance" (p. 162 of his review on our volume)—that the word *mujūn* was used openly by poets and was explicitly present as a section title in some of their *diwāns*. It would be quite impossible for poets to use it in their poetry now.

But in this context, Bauer accuses me of "prudishness." My objection to the poetry of this period that delved into mere sexual delineation is simply an objection to vulgarity, which is inimical to art and which is amply manifested in the poetry of this period.[14] By way of contrast, I refer the interested reader to a poem I have quoted elsewhere by the early Iraqi poet ʿAbd al-Ghaffār al-Akhras (1780–1863).[15] In this lively, spirited, and delightful poem, the poet speaks of lust and wine and of a gaiety dizzy with drink. The problem is not a content that includes some explicit sexuality-–as al-Akhras's poem in fact does-–but the triviality from which most of the sexually explicit poetry of the period under discussion suffered, a triviality whose legacy is a corpus of bad and vulgar verse.

I note, in this context, that Bauer presents me as deliberately maligning ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿah (p. 162), stating that I have regarded the Umayyad period as "marred" by the ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿah syndrome. He contrives the following phrase to describe it (to be understood presumably as reflecting my position): "an abominable degeneration that consists of enjoying one's life without feeling guilt." I have treated the issue of guilt and shame in Arabic culture elsewhere, and would note that the above statement, with its implications, is not in my essay on Umayyad poetry nor has it ever been in my thought.[16] How did Bauer come to invent such words and such an attitude? Authentic scholarship is a matter of hard-earned status, depending first and foremost on a reputation for veracity of research and honesty of interpretation. This kind of personal assault on another scholar, through innuendo, misquotation, and slur, is (to put it charitably) highly unusual.

And "homophobia" (a further implied censure)? In my chapters on Andalusi

[13] See "Mamlūk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches," 116.

[14] Ibn ʿUnayn was banished from Damascus on account of his harsh invective, full of wantonness and crudity.

[15] See *Trends and Movements,* 1:30–31.

[16] The reader can see what I wrote on ʿUmar in my chapter, "Umayyad Poetry" in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period,* 422–24 and *passim*.

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poetry, I spoke with genuine admiration of the anguish of a dying poet (Ibn Shuhayd), expressed in lovely and heart-rending verse, at parting with ʿAmr, a young man with whom he was deeply in love.[17] Yet again Bauer fails to provide the actual context for my discussion of sexuality and love (or for that matter my discussion of eulogy and almost every other matter I do address) in the period in question, preferring to enumerate the appearance of words and tiny phrases from that discussion, as though this was any kind of genuine critical assessment. The fact that I am addressing the ways that two of the major genres of Arabic poetry (love poetry/*ghazal* and eulogy) became transformed in response to radical transformations and changes in the historical, social, and institutional conditions of the time apparently is not an issue he deems worthy of serious engagement.

What is worse here, however, is his discreditable and defamatory charges of homophobia and racism, threading their way throughout his review in order to be explicitly presented at the end (p. 167). Indeed, perhaps what is particularly outrageous is his ill-concealed attempt to assimilate my descriptions of the pre-Islamic Arabs to the waves of fascism in Europe of the twentieth century (p. 161). Again, all he has to say is based on the same method of selective quotation and enumeration as I have already outlined. However, the contexts and ways in which he repeatedly brings up the phrase "the Arab race," a phrase I never used, in order to attribute to me ideas that I express neither implicitly nor explicitly, do raise a question about his own stance.

Why should it irk this writer so much if I posit a difference between the Arabs of old and the Arabs of the later urban centuries (p. 161)? And if I describe the old Arab way of life, so different from the urbanized and stylized way of life of the Mamluk and Ottoman periods? People may justifiably hold opposing views, but that is totally different from a mere assault on another in terms of multiple personal innuendo, defamation, and invective.

Why, too, this strange ire and rage (p. 161) because I see a basic concept of poetry common to all Arabic-speaking peoples, and a unified Arab poetic identity? This is a simple fact of literary history; it has been the case in the past and remains so now, throughout the Arab world. It would be extremely difficult, at the present time, to attribute an unsigned poem to a specific Arab country or region—more so, indeed, than in the period under discussion, when regional poetries exhibited certain differences of diction and tone. Changed means of communication, and the ubiquity of conferences and poetry festivals, have ensured that the poetry of the whole Arab world has now become to a high degree unified; and poetries are now distinguished rather through the known styles of certain poets than via local

[17] See my article "Andalusi Poetry: The Golden Period," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain,* 339–40 and *passim.*

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identities. This is an interesting point of literary history.[18] What does it have to do with some "nationalist ideology" that blinds judgment? Indeed, Bauer's ire betrays the nature of his own stance on what can be permissibly said about the Arabs, or permitted for them, a point that I have addressed earlier. Interestingly, although he has issues to raise with some of the other authors, his invective is reserved only for the Arab scholars he disagrees with in the volume. It feels like a new old story. M. L. al-Yousfi (whom Bauer also attacks with slurs) is one of the very finest critics of poetry and prose literature in contemporary Arabic. The author of a seminal three-volume work, *Fitnat al-Mutakhayyal* (Beirut, 2002), he is original, creative, and gives a much-needed new and cogent interpretation and a breath of fresh air to literary criticism in the Arab world.

It is not within the rules of decorum in scholarly criticism that a reviewer should (directly or by implication) accuse an author of such negative personal qualities as homophobia and blind national fanaticism, even racism. At best, this serves to betray Bauer's ignorance of my work and his remarkable capacity to leap to judgments which suit either his own preferences or his naive concept of poetry. Yet beyond that, and given the inconsistencies, contradictions, and manipulations as well as the ugliness of the accusations his "review" is replete with, one is left questioning what impulse actually informs this review. He has addressed none of the manifold and extended *technical* points I raise about the development of poetry during the period, nor the extensive social and historical discussion I provide that addresses the environment for the development of this poetry in its different forms, and the constant comparisons with the poetry that came before and after it (except either to outright deny any historical approach on my part, or to treat it in a very superficial and denigrating way when he wishes to make his unscrupulous charges of racism).

I have fervently dedicated myself over the last thirty years or so to serving the reputation and status of my beleaguered culture and literature, and of Arab/Islamic civilization, through translations and studies. To this end, I founded East-West Nexus/*PROTA* with the vision and aim of providing the English-speaking

[18] A very telling example, which demonstrates my point perfectly, can be drawn from a recent public occasion: on September 7, 2007, Abu Dhabi Satellite Television broadcast (10:00 p.m. local time) an inter-Arab poetry contest for best poet. Thirty-five poets from all over the Arab world (including the Sudan and Mauritania, from which two of the five finalists were selected) competed in this. One of the activities performed, as part of the occasion, was a shared collective composition of a single Arabic poem. A poet would say one verse, in the two-hemistich form, and then a second poet would add another verse in the same meter and rhyme, attempting to develop the semantic element of the poem, until all of them had had their say. The difference in their rendering was only in poetic value and skill, but there was no trace in the wordings themselves to denote the diverse local identities of the poets. This suggests the vibrancy of a shared poetic language, style, and stance.

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world, to the best of my ability, with some of the finest manifestations of Arab creative talent, past and present. If I had found in the poetry of the period in question the beauty and greatness which Bauer strives to intimate it has, I would most certainly have included it in my agenda. What could prevent me from further enriching the general work I have undertaken by bringing forward more fruits of original creativity in Arabic? In my work on this project, I have consistently enjoyed the companionship of some of the best world scholars in the field of Arabic and Islamic studies. Many, from literally across the world, have shared in the vision and its objectives, and the work of bringing it to life. There may well be a number of people who may, however, not have welcomed it. This is part of the territory of such attempts at contributing to the transformation of cultural discourses about various issues and regions in the world. But it would be a sad development indeed should the field of Arabic studies fall into the hands of one such as Thomas Bauer, to be expressed in terms of such crude and personal virulence of language, intention, and tone.

Critics, in any age, work responsibly but from an inevitably—indeed bracingly—wide variety of viewpoints; and it is for the reader to make an informed choice. I myself, while observing scholarly principles, always including a close study of historical background, make my assessments from a viewpoint of heartfelt artistic conviction. What is more, I do this openly and in a spirit of respect for my readers and their intelligence. If readers, having read what I have to say, disagree with my viewpoint, I can do nothing about it. If, on the other hand, they find themselves convinced or enthused, then all the Bauers in the world can do nothing to stop this happening.

The above will, I trust, suffice to show the many-sided flaws in Bauer's blind defense of his personal view of the age, and in his venomous attack on views that differ. The only answer to the differing views of others which Bauer should give in order to defend his point of view and to show the soundness of his judgment is not to rain slurs and vituperation on those who differ from him, but rather to put down a genuinely convincing argument about this age, and translate its poetry *poetically* and demonstrate its superiority.

Meanwhile literature and criticism move vigorously on.

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Denise Aigle, *Le Fārs sous la domination Mongole: Politique et Fiscalité (XIIIe-XIVe s.)*. Studia Iranica, Cahier 31 (Paris: Association pour l'Avancement des Études Iraniennes, 2005). Pp. 246. Includes glossary, maps, and genealogical charts.

Reviewed by Patrick Wing, Tulane University

Recent scholarship devoted to the provinces of the Mamluk Sultanate has raised important issues regarding the relationship between imperial authority and the influence and interests of local notables. A recent issue of this journal (11, no. 1, 2007) was devoted entirely to Syria, demonstrating an awareness of the need to consider aspects of Mamluk history taking place outside the citadel in Cairo. Denise Aigle's recent book offers scholars of Mamluk history an opportunity to examine some of these same issues in the context of the Mongol Ilkhanate in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Aigle's *Le Fārs sous la domination Mongole* makes an important contribution to our understanding of the relations between the Ilkhan court, the Mongol administrative elite, and the local Persian notables through a study of the political, social, and economic aspects of Mongol rule in Fars. Aigle's attention to the dynamics of power between military, administrative, and religious elite owes much to the work of Jean Aubin, whom she credits for influencing her approach in this work. Her stated objective is to examine the modalities of Mongol rule in Fars from the first appearance of the Mongol armies in Iran until the end of the Injuid dynasty in 1357.

In the introduction, Aigle points out that the Salghurid rulers of Fars submitted to the Mongols, and thus did not suffer the direct shock and devastation of the Mongol invasion. In addition, the province did not receive a large immigration of Mongol tribes, as was the case in Khurasan, Azarbayjan, and Anatolia. Mongol rule in Fars was exercised in a fiscal manner, and it is in the networks between the local notables, the Salghurid ruling house, and the Mongol rulers at the *ordo* (the court-camp of the khan) that Aigle examines the patterns and impact of Mongol rule in Fars.

Central to Aigle's thesis is the notion that Mongol rule in Fars caused a break in traditional administrative patterns. Previously, financial and secretarial offices had been handed down, generation to generation, in established families. However, under the Mongols, a dual administrative system was set up, consisting of both Mongol and local personnel, directed from the *ordo*. This structure meant that the provincial notables expended great energy and resources to secure loyal clients among the amirs, courtiers, and royal relatives at the *ordo* in order to pursue their own personal interests. The political maneuvering at the royal court meant that Mongol officials serving in Fars could not rely on the local nobility to faithfully manage fiscal affairs in the province. This situation, combined with

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weak Salghurid rulers, led the Ilkhans to take more direct control over fiscal and administrative affairs in Fars.

Aigle traces this process chronologically through the death of the last Ilkhan ruler, Abū Saʿīd, in 1335, after which Fars became an object of desire and conflict among the several factions of amirs who attempted to take control in Iran. Conflict in the two decades after the death of Abū Saʿīd was focused on the family of the Injuids, so-called because they had been assigned to administer the Ilkhanid crown holdings *(īnjū)* in Fars in the early fourteenth century, and the Muzaffarids, another local dynasty that had ruled Kirman and Yazd under the Ilkhans. Aigle attributes the eventual victory of the Muzaffarids to their ability to incorporate the local *pahlavān*s, members of youth organizations devoted to the arts of wrestling and archery. Aigle argues that the *pahlavān*s, with their personal bands of followers, greatly contributed to the Muzaffarids' military success. At the same time, the Muzaffarid amir Mubāriz al-Dīn Muḥammad's appeal to religion won him the support of the population of Shiraz. The combination of the *pahlavān*s and Islam enabled the Muzaffarids to take Shiraz in 1353 and execute the last Injuid leader in 1357.

A general issue which could have been addressed more directly in the book was the attitude of the Ilkhan rulers themselves toward Fars, which may help account for its historical development in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In other words, why was Fars spared the devastation of the initial Mongol conquest and the subsequent influx of Mongol tribesmen, in a way that Khurasan and Azarbayjan were not? I would suggest that the Ilkhans' concern with controlling commercial traffic from China and Central Asia to the Mediterranean and Black Seas had a direct impact on the political structure of Mongol Iran from the time of the first imperial governorates there in the 1230s and 1240s. The east-west trade route made direct control of cities like Tabriz and the foundation of the city of Sulṭānīyah an important part of the Ilkhanid political economy. Fars remained outside this economic pattern, and thus the Ilkhans were content to rely on the Salghurids, Injuids, and Muzaffarids to administer Fars, Kirman, and Yazd. However, as Aigle convincingly argues, contrary to common assertions, the Mongols did play an active role in the provincial administration. They did not simply leave the Persian personnel to manage the business of government. The value of this work is in Aigle's skillful analysis of the interests of the political elites, and the ways in which the political structure of the Ilkhanate provided opportunities for and limitations to those local political actors, from the Salghurid governors to the *pahlavān* youth organizations.

In *Le Fārs sous la domination Mongole,* Denise Aigle has not merely provided a "local history" of an Ilkhanid province, but has shown how local interests depended on and influenced the imperial center. As historians of the Mamluk Sultanate and

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Mongol Ilkhanate continue to examine issues of imperial-provincial interaction, the possibility for more comparative studies becomes more realistic and more promising. Such comparisons of Mamluk and Ilkhanid provincial administration and economy would surely yield valuable new insights into both of these states and the relations between them.

Al-Taʿlīq: Yawmīyāt Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq. Edited by Sheikh Jaafar al-Muhajer (Jaʿfar al-Muhājir). Vol. II: 891/1486 to 896/1491 (text: pp. 577–1069), vol. III: 897/1492 to 902/1497 (text: pp. 1081–1517). (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 2002, 2004).

Reviewed by Li Guo, University of Notre Dame

Woody Allen once famously remarked that ninety per cent of life is about showing up. To illustrate the point, here we have a journal, by a Damascene court clerk in the fifteenth century, which is virtually a laundry list of his showings-up, and no shows, at countless appointments and events required by his job, his family, and his community. The trajectory and significance of Ibn Ṭawq's *Al-Taʿlīq* have been discussed by Stephan Conermann and Tilman Seidensticker in their review article published earlier in this journal,[1] with an outline of the contents of volume I, the first of four. Volumes II and III, under review here, cover the final years of Sultan Qāytbāy (r. 872–901/1468–96) and the first half of his son Muḥammad's short reign (r. 901–3/1496–98). In the following I have lumped together notes from my preliminary reading of this spectacularly rich text, in an attempt to present a reader's digest of sorts. I will first comment on the compositional features of the text, then describe its main contents, situating the piecemeal diary-entry fragments into context. I will conclude with a categorized list of the materials contained in the text that may be of interest for future research.

I.

For anyone familiar with the modern conventions of a diary, the most notable aspect of Ibn Ṭawq's narrative is its hybrid format: a strange blend of a "public" text, in the format of *tārīkh* annals, and a "private" journal. A synopsis of the opening segment of the year 891/1486 exhibits the pattern (pp. 577–79). It begins with a list of the statesmen of the Mamluk Sultanate in Cairo. Then comes the diary proper, of the first day of the year, to be broken down into nine items:

[1] "Some Remarks on Ibn Ṭawq's (d. 915/1509) Journal *al-Taʿlīq,* vol. 1 (885/1480 to 890/1485)," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (2007): 121–35.

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(1) The day fell on a Sunday. Cold weather.

(2) Banyan trees and almond trees began to blossom.

(3) Lesson of Arabic grammar took place at the mosque of the author's patron *(sayyidī),* the Shafiʿi judge Shaykh al-Islām (of whom little is known). Students in attendance and the textbooks used.

(4) A messenger arrived from Cairo, reporting the release of a group of Hanafi scholars from the Citadel.

(5) Lecture at the Grand Mosque ended up with a visiting scholar, ʿAlī al-Miknāsī al-Maghribī, accompanied by a "beardless lad" and others, being badly beaten by a man, also from the Maghrib. The skirmish was ignited when the visitor, a Shafiʿi, made fun of the assaulter, a Maliki.

(6) The *nāʾib* of Syria took off for the northern frontiers. Names of the generals in his entourage and those who stayed behind in Damascus.

(7) List of the four chief judges in Damascus.

(8) List of the civic officials in Damascus.

(9) Meeting with a local shaykh, Abū al-Faḍl, at the latter's request.

Here items 6–8, on local state affairs in Damascus, were recorded perhaps out of the necessity of stocktaking at the beginning of a new year. By and large, an overall concern for the Mamluk state runs throughout the text. The annual hajj processions, military campaigns in Bilād al-Shām, news from Egypt and the Hijaz, and so forth, all find their way into the diary. However, the thin coverage of state affairs amounts to nothing more than mostly secondhand hearsay, introduced with the phrase "I heard that *(samiʿtu* or *balaghanī)*. . . ." It is evident that the author's motivation and impulse for writing the diary lay in his consummate interest in the wellbeing of himself, his community (his family and a small circle of associates and neighbors), and his place: Damascus and its suburbs. It is this portion of the text that stands out as truly original and unique, and merits our attention.

The entries vary in length. There are long ones, and extremely terse ones. "There is nothing worth writing," is the usual explanation for leaving one day's record blank. Sometimes an entire day's entry consists of a single item. One entry reads "The 19th (Rabīʿ I, year 891), Saturday. It rained early in the day" (p. 602); "the 19th (Shawwāl, year 898), Friday. Bars and taverns (? *al-khammārāt wa-al-waqqāfāt*) have been on the rise" reads another (p. 1210). There are also a few unexplained lacunae: a long stretch from Shaʿbān to Dhū al-Ḥijjah of the year 892 (pp. 713–24); the last three weeks of the year 896 (pp. 1067–68); and the last week of the year 900 (p. 1366). All these lacunae occurred at the end of a given year when the author was perhaps preoccupied with some sort of end-of-the-year rush. When he was traveling, the entries tend to be short "due to fatigue," (for example, pp. 664–65, 787–90). On occasion, failing health was the cause for tardiness: resulting from an illness "of forty-three days," starting from the end of

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the year 899, the second half of the first month of the ensuing year 900 remained unrecorded, and the entries of the first three months are accordingly sparse (pp. 1308–21), a rarity for this otherwise consistent and diligent diarist.

II.

Overall, the journal makes an intriguing read, in light of the idiosyncrasy of a "private" text, whose context was perhaps better known to the author alone. A case in point: the author mentions that he once "slept" on the bed of his patron's son, the soon-to-be-married Muḥammad (p. 580). The significance of this seemingly off-hand reference is that, according to an ancient Damascene custom (the editor supplemented this information in the footnote), it was considered preferable to have a pious person sleep in the bridal bed three nights prior to the wedding. The author's record of the nights he slept in the groom's house was thus a testimony to his status in his community and his closeness to his patron's family. But since the diary was perhaps never meant to be made public, this kind of scrupulousness can hardly be viewed as self-promotion, for he also kept a record of where he slept after the wedding, rotating between his own house, the residence of the shaykh at the mosque, and other places. Why was that an important issue, then?

It turned out that Ibn Ṭawq's concern for his own job performance was perhaps the *raison d'être* for writing the diary in the first place. The tireless accounts of his whereabouts—where he prayed for the day, where he spent the night, and where he went on those work-related trips—may have to do with the fact that he lived in the suburbs and had to "commute" to the city to report to work and somehow felt the need to record all of his movements. The ubiquitous phrases such as *ḥaḍartu al-Shāmīyah fī khidmat sayyidī* ("was present at the Shāmīyah mosque [or other places] to attend to business for the patron . . .), or *lam adkhul al-madīnah* ("did not come to the city today . . .") underline such functionality of the text. It is perhaps for a similar reason that the no-shows were recorded. Our court clerk was very mindful about his personal hygiene: "Didn't attend the session today; had to go to the bathhouse," is a frequent diary entry. If it was time to do laundry, he would take the day off as well.

As diaries go, tidbits of private life are inevitable. Ibn Ṭawq is candid about it. He describes his medical conditions, namely the pathological mood swings *(taghayyur mizāj)* he suffered (pp. 1362, 1421, 1427, 1449). He laments over family problems: "have had some difficulty," one entry reads, "with the relatives" (p. 1216); "wife has not been feeling well for two days. God have mercy," reads another (p. 1221). He complains about being short of cash from time to time: "have been in bad shape money-wise these days . . . " (p. 829); "deep in debt these days . . . " (p. 847); "have had a hard time [due to legal wrangling over money]" (pp. 1152–53). Nevertheless, he seemed to lead quite a good life. A

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lifetime "foodie," his passion for well-prepared meals is unmistakable. We read about his anger over some "so-so quality smoked meat, pickles, and grape leaf wraps" (p. 910); his complaint that "meat was not to be had in Damascus for a week; I have not had meat for two days and two nights!" (p. 1101); and his description of the "six main dishes" presented at the dress rehearsal for his son's wedding banquet (pp. 1419, 1422). One may take note here that the where's-the-beef question was not only for the author's own gastronomic gratification, but was also related to the welfare of his community. "Meat was not available this week in the marketplace; only statesmen and notables *(al-dawlah wa-al-kibār min al-nās)* could have it. God have mercy! . . .," reads one entry (p. 1260); "wheat was sold at [such a high price] thanks to the unjust policy *(ẓulm)* of the governor of Syria!" reads another (p. 1238).

The intimate nature of the diary genre certainly allowed the liberty to divulge some strongly worded commentaries on his surroundings. For example, he was not too happy to see that in a Christian quarter "Muslims and Christians mingle . . . That's not right!" (p. 602). He is not hesitant in lashing out at some Mamluks, including one particular amir who was a "tyrant, unjust, and dead drunk . . ." (p. 1186). Nor does he hold back any thoughts on business transactions he helped to facilitate and finalize. On more than one occasion, he makes it clear that he "was not satisfied with the deal at all" (p. 725).

Ibn Ṭawq had a keen eye for the happenings around him and was fastidious in recording them. Stories of the good, the bad, and the ugly make for some side-bar tales, aside from his own affairs. In telling the tales, his attitudes are unmistakable. For example, the sporadic accounts of the Mamluk military movements are underlined by his awareness of the state of Mamluk rule in the twilight years, in that "the Ottoman advances" pepper his narrative. At one point he exclaims that "the [Mamluk] army collapsed!" (p. 1428). Scandals, especially sexual escapades, are fixtures in the diary, and they are not for entertainment value alone. As a career Shafiʿi, Ibn Ṭawq uses these scandals to point out the moral shortcomings of other *madhhab*s. We read stories, with pointed information, about a "Hanafi" scholar who had impregnated a girl during Ramaḍān and was castrated as a penalty (p. 667); a "Hanbali" who had too much to drink (p. 1103); another "Hanbali who disguised himself as a female to mingle with women" (pp. 1171–72); and, alas, more misbehavior by "some Hanafis" (p. 1180).

There are plenty of unpleasant stories to go around: a raid that involved a preacher *(khaṭīb),* alcohol, and two singing girls (p. 656); Sufis destroying bars in the Christian quarters (p. 1011); a hashish smuggling ring (p. 1141); and more narcotics raids (pp. 1007, 1426, 1515, 1516). Nearly every page contains some dramatic episode in the author's neighborhood: domestic abuse, slave girls running away, shouting matches and fist fights between neighbors, crimes (murder, theft,

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prostitution, etc.), fires, riots in the city, and so forth. While most are matter-of-fact, some are quite gruesome, such as the coroner's report of a murder case in the back alleys (pp. 1476–77).

Speaking of neighborly behavior, Ibn Ṭawq obviously had some ax to grind, if only in his journal. Oddly enough, the dirty laundry of his patron's family—money problems (pp. 1378–79), the harem feuds *(nakd)* among two strong-willed wives and a husband in between (pp. 1462, 1515)—forms one of the main story lines. Looming in the background is the shaykh's difficult wife, referred to frequently as "that Egyptian woman," whose "evil deeds" are enumerated in the diary entries, making her *the* villain of all. We are told, for example, that at the wedding of the above-mentioned Muḥammad, the mother-in-law, in her double capacity as the groom's step-mother *and* the bride's birth mother (she had been married to Shaykh al-Islām's brother, whose daughter was to marry Muḥammad), failed to show up. The woman, as Ibn Ṭawq tells it, was "possessed by Satan" and mentally unstable. Ibn Ṭawq then goes on to report that the party went on without a hitch: "the female guests" were fed with a feast of "eight grilled sheep," various kinds of rice dishes, bread, dairy products, and dessert, to be washed down with refreshments; that he personally accompanied the groom to the pre-nuptial bath; that the newlyweds consummated their union at "the early minutes of two o'clock." At the end of the day, the "Egyptian woman's wicked tricks" were defeated by divine intervention (p. 581). Inquiring minds, however, may still want to know: why an account of the food for "female attendees" only? Why such bitter animosity against this particular woman?

One also finds records of birth, death, illness, marriage, divorce, circumcision, and so forth, in the diary entries. Particularly interesting are the accounts of several cases of abortion or miscarriage. The verb used here is *asqaṭat,* the implication of which is not altogether clear. The lexicographers' definition of "a pregnant female cast her young one, or fetus, abortively, or in an immature, or imperfect, state" (Lane, Hava) encompasses a wide range of possibilities: abortion, still birth, or miscarriage. Since most of the incidents involve baby girls—a girl "of two months" (conception? birth?) had been "cast" (p. 899); two girls had been "cast" two days in a row (p. 1325); another girl met the same fate (p. 1363)—one would be inclined to think that abortion was the case here. But we also have cases involving a girl and boy (p. 1047), the circumstances of which remain vague. Such, of course, are the limits of a text of this kind. On the other hand, it is exactly this kind of scrupulous, and intriguing, detail that make Ibn Ṭawq's diary a valuable source for the study of Mamluk history, society, and culture.

III.

Taken all together, Ibn Ṭawq's diary entries are straightforward and repetitive,

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but never dry or dull. The journal is local, personal, and informative.

For the student of *environment and natural history,* Ibn Ṭawq's meticulous observations of climate variation and flora and fauna in the vicinity of Damascus stand out as one of the most consistent records of its kind. Attention to the environment and climate variation (solar and lunar eclipses, new moons, earthquakes, the position of the sun, migratory locusts, flooding rivers, etc.) has long been a hallmark of the Syrian historians. Ibn Ṭawq's documentation achieves a new standard in this arena.

For the historian of *architecture and urban development,* Ibn Ṭawq's detailed first-hand descriptions of the houses, mosques, alleys, residential quarters, and other properties are valuable. Certification and verification of measurements of the buildings constituted a large part of his job and he did it diligently. The journal is full of documented accounts about the buildings and grounds in Damascus and its suburbs.

For the study of the *history of the Arabic language,* especially Damascene colloquial, the text provides intimate raw material. Ibn Ṭawq had the tendency to quote people's dialogue, including some heated exchanges, in real situations; the result is a text full of local usage and slang. It is also in this particular area that the present edition has left something to be desired. Although some features of the "Middle Arabic" are noted on occasion, for example, the missing *ḥamzah* (p. 1090, n. 2, *juzayn* for *juzʾayn*) and the *ẓāʾ*/*ḍād* interchange (p. 1211, n. 3; p. 1258, n. 1), many others are not indicated at all, for example, *r-w-s*, for *ruʾūs*, which looks very odd. But overall, the editor did a superb job in transcribing the impossibly cursive handwritten manuscripts. For such a long text, typos and errors are surprisingly few (I spot only one: *aḥmar*an, p. 835). Particularly helpful are the cultural and sociolinguistic notes on all things Syrian or Damascene.

For the student of *social history* of the late Mamluk era, Ibn Ṭawq's snapshots—of the personnel changes in ulama circles, books he read, teaching sessions he attended, poems recited in his presence, and so forth—shed light on his intellectual environment. He was also very alert to the non-Muslim communities. His account of some measures imposed by the local officials on the *dhimmīs*—for example, when they go to the bathhouse, men should wear a rope around their waists and women a bell—is unique to his diary (p. 755, n. 2). As for the study of everyday life in Damascus, the diary is a mine of information. In addition to his aforesaid addictive enthusiasm for the meals he and his fellow Damascenes had savored, our author had a taste for other fine things. He loved his furs and cloth, evidenced by the care given to the detailed accounts of what he wore on a given day. He was also watchful of the fashion trends in his city as well. One entry, for example, notes that high-heeled shoes *(al-tasūmah)* were "hot" among the Damascene ladies, but were once banned (p. 643).

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In the domain of social history, Ibn Ṭawq's journal is, in my opinion, most remarkable for its accounts of his daily activities in the capacity of court clerk *(shāhid, kātib),* and is therefore most valuable for the study of *economic life and related legal practices*. Yossef Rapoport's sensible reading, and successful use of the material contained in the journal in his excellent study of marriage and divorce in Mamluk society is but one good example.[2] And there is much more. A sampling of the cases Ibn Ṭawq personally oversaw in the first month of the year 891/1486 (pp. 580–90) is sufficient to give a glimpse of the kind of data the text contains and promises:

Day 4: a rental deal concerning a property near al-Bādiraʾīyah.

Day 7: a case of break-in in al-Ṣāliḥīyah.

Day 8: a dispute between Shafiʿi and Maliki fellows over a debt.

Day 11: a real estate transfer deal involving the author's patron; and prior to that, a property transfer deal involving the sultan's personal translator.

Day 15: a case of jewelry theft by the servant of a Mamluk soldier.

Day 17: a rental deal concerning a property near Bāb al-Barīd.

Day 19: a *waqf* lease; and disputes over a will.

Day 22: family feud with regard to property rights involving the author's patron.

Day 30: the closing of the above-mentioned deal involving the sultan's translator.

And this covers only one month's worth of Ibn Ṭawq's court-related work. Following are more of his job activities as recorded in the diary:

Notarizations *(shahidtu ʿalá),* marriage licenses *(ʿaqd),* case briefings *(infaṣalat al-qaḍīyah),* the description of which occupies most of the space in the text.

Verifications (pp. 736 *[thubūt],* 859 *[tarikah],* 999 *[qaṭīʿah],* 1007, 1264 [fake documents]).

Negotiations and settlements (pp. 584, 696, 758, 765–66, 789 [complaint by a Christian], 890 [mediation efforts, *al-iṣlāḥ*], 897 [crop harvest], 1450 [negotiation with fellahin over *kharāj*-revenues]).

Property inspection and appraisal: the commonly used verb is *ṭalaʿtu,* "I went to such-and-such place to inspect . . ." (pp. 605, 617, 623, 628, 630, 637, 647, 707, 759, 818, 862, 867, 877, 878, 882, 883, 884, 888, 927, 968, 989, 1018, 1041, 1082, 1118, 1119, 1162, 1204, 1261, 1264, 1366, 1375, 1466, 1514). Sometimes the inspection involved inventory after a house eviction or state-enforced confiscation (pp. 743, 795, 904, 1253), as well as crop inventory for tax farmers (pp. 955, 1050, 1139, 1143, 1192, 1345, 1357).

Document preparation: mostly *kitāb* (letters) *(passim),* but also other kinds of

[2] Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge, 2005).

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documents, such as *waqf* papers (p. 1494); *shahādah* (certificate of properties) (pp. 921–22); *nuzūlāt* (residential certificate) (pp. 1014, 1088, 1132); *waraqah (*letter for the sultan) and *wuṣūl* (receipts) (p. 1375); *kharāj (*account) (pp. 1453, 1514). He tells many interesting trivial details. The letters between Egypt and Syria, for example, were collected and delivered in sealed/locked postal bags *(khirqah mukhayyaṭah, kīs);* important letters were written on a specific kind of paper and wrapped in blue handkerchiefs for delivery (p. 1209).

Document delivery: *kitāb* (letters), *waraqah* (decrees), *shahādah* (certificates) (pp. 587, 617, 671, 748, 771, 772, 826, 852, 855, 860, 864, 868–69, 886, 988); *taṣdīq* (pp. 638, 649); *fatwá* (pp. 710, 762, 828); secret documents (p. 814).

Payment collection and delivery: collecting (pp. 651, 652, 906, 1012, 1063–64); paying (pp. 665, 671, 828–29, 1010, 1045, 1046, 1254); collecting and paying (pp. 1126, 1145, 1212–13, 1236); money exchange (pp. 1212, 1217 [florin to dirham, for exporting goods from Europe]); and occasionally, returning (!) the money (p. 1213).

Ibn Ṭawq was very good with numbers and had, thankfully, the good habit of writing them down in his diary. Crunching numbers, after all, was his job. A typical case is an accounting session *(muḥāsabah)* with the senior accountant (*raʾīs al-ḥiṣṣah,* pp. 1165–66, 1381, 1382, 1514). Another major task was inventory *(ʿaddādah),* the documentation of which abounds (for example, pp. 1445–47). Other than that, the diary entries contain more numbers: the measurements of the properties (pp. 749–50); various inventories (pp. 842–43, of a *tarikah* [bequest]); expenses of military activities (p. 1228, for a spy network); salaries and compensation paid to the Mamluks and government employees (pp. 823, 875, 904, 1086, 1100); various currencies *(dhahab Ashrafī, fiḍḍah ʿadadīyah, fiḍḍah Shāmīyah, laffat Ḥamawīyah)* and exchange rates with foreign currencies ("single" florin *[iflūrin mufārid]* and "double" florin *[iflūrin muzāwij],* pp. 1217, 1220).

And then, there are lots of prices. Prices of foodstuffs are quoted on a nearly weekly basis. Other prices seldom seen in chronicles abound here, such as those for houses (pp. 915, 1285); farm and orchard leases (pp. 623, 950, 1194); rental/leasing rates (pp. 632, 638, 863–64, 1052 [the annual fees for the restaurant district, Dār al-Tuʿm, was 8,000 *fiḍḍah*], 1341 [a bath house's monthly lease was settled for 160 *fiḍḍah*], 1475–76); slave girls (a "flawed one with bad manners and weak sight" went for 1,230 dirhams [p. 594]; a black maid for 1,300 dirhams [p. 604]; a legally acquired one *[al-sharʿīyah al-mūjibah]* for a sum of 1,170 *fiḍḍah* [p. 730]; a "Muslim" maid of Ethiopian origins went as high as 42 *Ashrafīyah* gold, in cash [*ḥāllah*, p. 1148]; another for 12 gold [p. 1149]); horses (pp. 649, 1273), sheep (p. 760), and cattle (pp. 781, 917). By the way, the cost for causing the wrongful death of a boy was 600 gold, cash (p. 1364).

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Such are the sundry facts one can learn from the diary of a fifteenth-century Damascene court clerk. The categorized list above is far from complete. And the text as a whole, as it stands, is far from being "private" as well. Perhaps this is the way Ibn Ṭawq wanted it, after all. He makes it clear that the diary served the purpose of getting the record straight, insofar as *fal-yuʿlam dhālika*, literally "let it be known," is a phrase frequently used by the author to conclude a business-related entry. In any case, modern students of Mamluk history should be thankful that the hard-working fellow not only showed up for work but also felt obliged to leave a record of it. What a record!

Hasan M. El-Shamy, *A Motif Index of The Thousand and One Nights* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006). Pp. 680.

Reviewed by Robert Irwin

In the last five years or so there has been an explosion of academic interest in *The Arabian Nights*. In 2004 several conferences were held to mark the tercentenary of the publication of the first volume of Antoine Galland's French translation of *Alf Laylah wa-Laylah*. The Kyoto conference proceedings were published as *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism: Perspectives from East and West,* edited by Yuriko Yamanaka and Tetsuo Nishio. The Paris conference resulted in *Les Mille et Une Nuits en partage,* edited by Aboubakr Chraïbi. The papers given at Wolfenbüttel were published in special issues of *Fabula* and *Marvels and Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies*. Recent years have also seen the publication of Daniel Beaumont's *Slave of Desire: Sex, Love and Death in The 1001 Nights; New Perspectives on Arabian Nights: Ideological Variations and Narrative Horizons,* edited by Wen-Chin Ouyang and Geert Jan van Gelder; Margaret Sironval's *Album Mille et Une Nuits; The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia,* edited by Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen; and *The Arabian Nights Reader,* edited by Ulrich Marzolph. We also have a new German translation by Claudia Ott from the Arabic edition of Muhsin Mahdi and a French translation by Jamel Eddine Bencheikh and André Miquel of the Calcutta II printed text of the *Nights* (handsomely published as a three-volume set in a Pléiade edition). In 2008 Penguin will publish a new translation by Malcolm Lyons of the Calcutta II version of the *Nights,* the first translation into English of this version since Richard Burton's in the 1880s.

Hasan El-Shamy is a distinguished and widely published expert on Arab folklore. His previous works include *Folktales of Egypt* (1980) and *Folk Traditions of the Arab World: A Guide to Motif Classification*, (2 vols., 1995). Stith Thompson

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published *The Motif-Index* between the years 1932 and 1936. This catalogued in a fairly systematic fashion the elements that could be combined to make up either a folktale or a more literary composition. Although Thompson aimed at global coverage, as El-Shamy pointed out in his *Folk Traditions of the Arab World,* Arabic folklore was badly underrepresented in Thompson's Eurocentric compilation. *A Motif Index of The Thousand and One Nights* represents a further attempt by El-Shamy to redress this imbalance. It is also a major step forward in the study of *The Arabian Nights,* as thousands of story-telling items are here systematically catalogued for the first time.

A Motif Index is a useful book, even if one is not interested in folklore and its categories, since the book can serve general readers as a partial index to the *Nights*. If, for example, one cannot remember which story has the protagonist spying on bird-maidens as they bathe, or which story has a succession of sorcerers who demand that they be tied up and thrown into a lake, then one may find the right story by judicious use of El-Shamy's catalogue, which consists of a huge index of motifs, broadly classified in the way Thompson had laid out. It also includes a shorter alphabetical index of motifs as well as a short register of tale-types laid out following a numerical classification. (El-Shamy has not just classified new material, but he has also added new motif types to Thompson's structure.) If one looks up "mamluke" in El-Shamy's alphabetical index, the first reference is to P.508.1, "Mamelukes expected to rise to high ranks" from the story of "Dalila the Swindler." The second reference is to K252.5, "free person attired like slave (mameluke) sold as slave" from the same story. However, *A Motif Index,* compiled according to folkloristic criteria, is only a partial index, and if, for example, one looks up "camel" in the alphabetical index, one finds only three references to camels (and one of those is to a lover's bite said to have been caused by a camel), whereas if one looks up "camel" in *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia,* one finds many more very interesting references to these animals.

Each of El-Shamy's motifs (over 5,500 of them) is normally cross-referenced to an Arabic text of the *Nights*, to Burton's English translation, to Victor Chauvin's *Bibliograpie des ouvrages Arabes ou relatifs aux Arabes dans l'Europe chrétienne de 1800 á 1885* (1892–1922), and to *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*. This is an admirable and formidable piece of work, except that the choice of Arabic text as a base of reference strikes me as problematic. The text chosen was published in four volumes, printed by the Maktabat al-Jumhūrīyah (Cairo, n.d.). One problem is that this text is not widely available in the West; for example, London University's School of Oriental and African Studies does not possess a copy of this edition (and neither do I). Secondly, the authenticity of this "folk edition of *Alf laylah wa laylah*" is asserted, rather than demonstrated. Among other things, it would be useful to know how much it differs from the Būlāq text. On a more general issue,

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El-Shamy makes the following remark: "Most of the narratives constituting *Alf laylah wa laylah* in the Arabic language are literary representations of traditional folktales." This may well be so, but how many is "most"? And can we be sure that the folk version always precedes the literary one? Quite a few of the stories seem to have originated in the repertoire of *nudamāʾ* or in the compositions of moralists working with the theme of *faraj baʿd al-shiddah*.

However, there is much of interest in El-Shamy's short introduction to his index. Burton's translation comes in for some well-deserved criticism. El-Shamy is right to point out that, in the frame story, Sheherazade survives through total submission to the will of Shahriyar and that there is no suggestion that the sultan should be punished for having previously killed so many women. The feminist view of Sheherazade as someone who uses stories therapeutically in order to cure the sultan of his madness must be rejected as anachronistic and as something imposed upon the frame story rather than actually being found in it. More generally, El-Shamy claims, surely correctly, that the stories in his sample are thoroughly male in their orientation: "Women-bound tales are virtually non-existent in *Alf laylah*." To Mamlukists, mention of the word *inshāʾ* will summon memories of wading through the chancery treatises of al-ʿUmarī and al-Qalqashandī. But El-Shamy uses the word to refer to a literary style, signifying "a literary composition in classical academic Arabic, not in the vernacular." Folktales suffer distortion and elaboration when they are written up in the *inshāʾ* manner.

To judge by the bibliography, very little has been written about the folklore of the *Nights* except by El-Shamy. The value of the introduction would have been enhanced by reference to parallel or contrasting work on the *Nights* and on Arabic folk literature more generally. Not all the stories are timeless and lacking a historical context and Patrice Coussonet has done patient work in dating selected stories and giving them a historical context. Malcolm Lyons's magnificent work on Arabic folk epics might also have been mentioned.

Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria: From the Coming of Islam to the Ottoman Period. Edited by Hugh Kennedy. History of Warfare, vol. 35 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006). Pp. xix + 323.

Reviewed by Reuven Amitai, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

This beautifully produced book (with a price to match) contains many of the papers from a conference held in Aleppo in September 2003. As indicated by the title, the individual articles cover a wide chronological span, stretching before and

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after the period usually covered by this journal, although Mamlukists—especially those with an interest in archaeology, historical geography, or military history—may find all of them of interest. The various approaches found in the articles reflect the training and methodologies of the authors: archaeology, architecture, history, and numismatics. Some authors, it is seen, clearly have read the Arabic sources closely in the original, while others are dependent on translations, many of which are quite old and perhaps outdated. Several papers are detailed technical discussions of individual sites, often provisional publications or summaries of works in progress. Other papers are *tours d'horizon,* giving an overview of a particular topic or area. These, to my mind, will be of particular interest for readers of *MSR*. Two archaeologically informed historians (Stefan Heidemann and Angus Stewart) have succeeded in presenting riveting accounts of a couple of sites, integrating historical and archaeological information (and in the former case, numismatic evidence). The inclusion of an author (John France) specializing in the Frankish view of warfare in the Levant is a welcome addition, and his article provides an interesting and significant perspective on the topic.

Actually, several of the papers, particularly at the beginning of the book, deal more with post-military architecture than sites with real defensive intent. The first two articles, by Denis Genequand and Ignacio Acre, are certainly of this kind. The former, writing about "Umayyad castles," shows that there had been a shift from the military architecture of late antiquity on the frontier with the desert, to a more palatial style. The round towers of Umayyad palaces may have been inspired by Roman models, but were no longer of a true military nature. Likewise, Acre's article on Qaṣr Ḥallabāt in Jordan shows a demilitarization of the site, the aim of which was to project grandeur and to show hospitality rather than to serve as a focus of defense. Donald Whitcomb, in his paper on the walls of early Ayla (chapter 5) takes up this issue, although the matter is not cut and dried here: the city represents a transitional form between the Roman legion camp and the Muslim *amṣār* (military camps that turned into cities). It is not clear how important its walls were, and perhaps they may have been more symbolic than functional.

The symbolic values of city or castle walls, projecting power perhaps more than actually providing it, is a matter that resurfaces elsewhere in the book. It comes up in the third chapter by Jan-Waalke Meyer, who discusses the early Abbasid Kharāb Sayyār to the southeast of Ḥarrān. Its weak wall had little military worth, and thus may have been symbolic like those Umayyad sites mentioned above. The situation of the nearby Ḥiṣn Maslamah, today Madīnat al-Fār, also has what can be described as weak city walls and thus appears to be similar (chapter 4 by Claus-Peter Haase). Perhaps a comment regarding the inclusion of these two sites in the volume is in order. "Greater Syria," the translation of Bilād al-Shām

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as far as I understand it, means the territory between the eastern Mediterranean coast and the Euphrates River. East of the river is al-Jazīrah. The inclusion of these sites, deep within this last mentioned region, in the present volume may have more to do with present day political realities than the historical and geographical consciousness of the pre-modern residents of these regions. On the other hand, Qalʿat Simʿān, the subject of chapter 6 by Jean-Luc Biscop, is firmly in Syria, on the road between Antioch and Aleppo. Its fort, or "kastron," was apparently built in 966 along with a crude enclosure wall around the surrounding town under Byzantine auspices. Here, too, a strict application of the title of the book would preclude its inclusion, but it was in the general environs of Muslim rulers, and as the editor writes (p. 2), "it seemed . . . important and useful to present a scientific account of Byzantine fortification of tenth century Syria for purposes of comparison." The symbolic value rather than the military worth of the construction is also noted here by the author.

With the comprehensive article by Nasser Rabbat, "The Militarization of Taste in Medieval Bilād al-Shām" (chapter 7), we enter the portion of the book that will definitely interest students of Mamluk studies in particular and the pre-Ottoman history of the Turks in the Middle East in general. This article is an excellent review of expressions of legitimization and identity of the Turkish military class, be it of tribal or mamluk origins, particularly as found in construction projects of various types. First, we learn of the new-found importance of citadels under the Turks, which combined palace, audience halls, barracks, and stables, a process which appears to have begun before the arrival of the Saljuqs, but which gains real momentum in Syria and its environs with the Saljuqs and their various successors. Adornment, be it monumental inscription or zoomorphic ornamentation (dragons, large felines—not necessarily only lions, etc.), as well as military themes, are also found in abundance. This article is a very good starting point for the textual historian wanting to explore material aspects and expressions of Turkish rule in Syria, and can also serve as appropriate reading for students learning about Syria and its neighbors in the period between the first arrival of Turkish tribes in the eleventh century and the Ottoman conquest at the beginning of the sixteenth. I have just one point of possible disagreement: I am not convinced that the Mamluk military class was seeking or achieved a greater accommodation with their subjects in the fifteenth century. The sense that I get is actually a greater alienation between rulers and ruled, or at least the latter's growing dissatisfaction with the heavy-handed attitude and actions of the former.

The next chapter by Benjamin Michaudel, "The Development of Islamic Military Architecture during the Ayyubid and Mamluk Reconquests of Frankish Syria," is a laudable first attempt (to the best of my knowledge) to give an overview of this important topic. In spite of some important studies of specific

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forts and some comments in the literature about Mamluk fortification policy, there is no comprehensive work on either this subject or the general approach of the Mamluks, let alone that of their Ayyubid predecessors, to fortification construction. This is a nice preliminary survey of mostly urban Ayyubid and Mamluk military architecture and I found the author's terse but systematic analysis of the development of military architecture cogent and easy to follow. On the other hand, the article does not really take into consideration either the role of the Mongols as generating a more serious Mamluk approach to fortifications or the Mamluk policy of destroying captured Frankish fortifications on the coast, while rebuilding those inland. Certain interesting Ayyubid forts in southwest Bilād al-Shām, such as Mt. Tabor and al-Ṣubaybah (the latter with important Mamluk additions) are not discussed. In short, this article is a very useful comparative, albeit preliminary, study, and it should be seen as a jumping off point for further comprehensive and comparative research on this hitherto ignored aspect of Ayyubid and Mamluk military history.

Stefan Heidemann's paper on "The Citadel of al-Raqqa and Fortifications in the Middle Euphrates Area" is to my mind an exemplary study combining historical, archaeological, and numismatic sources to provide a picture of one particular urban fortification within the regional context. The article also contains a pithy and useful definition of the roles of an urban citadel (p. 129), worthy of citation by those interested in this topic, and not only in the framework of late medieval Islamic military history. Heidemann's discussion of the increased construction of fortifications in the area complements that in Rabbat's article mentioned above. Initially, the citadel here and elsewhere in the region served garrisons and winter camps (for other troops I presume). Under the Ayyubids, it functioned more as a princely residence and lacked clear military value, a fact proved during the Mongol conquest of the region.

A more technical study is provided by Sophie Berthier on the citadel of Damascus (chapter 10: "Le citadelle de Damas: Les apports d'une étude archéologique"), reflecting the spate of excavations and other research at this site in recent years. This is a distillation of many studies and projects conducted by many scholars, not all of them published, providing archeologists and historians with much useful and interesting information, not the least of which is the detailed plan of the citadel (albeit without a scale or directional arrow). I personally found the information about the water supply system most fascinating, which helps to explain why the Mamluk defenders were able to hold out in the citadel during the three months of Mongol occupation of Damascus in early 1300, a fact that I should have taken into consideration in my previous work. In fact, I am glad that the role of the Mongols as destroyers of fortifications (and thus indirectly catalysts for further construction work) was noted here, as it was in the following

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article by Julia Gonnella on Aleppo, the name of which ("The Citadel of Aleppo: Recent Studies") reveals its intent and scope. Gonnella's chapter is a nice review of studies, published and unpublished, from recent excavations, which should be of interest for archeologists and historians alike.

Aleppo is also the subject of the short but insightful paper by Yasser Tabbaa: "Defending Ayyubid Aleppo: The Fortifications of al-Ẓāhir Ghāzī (1186–1216)." This is a successful attempt to trace the development and implementation of a systematic fortification strategy of this dynamic ruler of north Syria, who—along with his descendents—was often at loggerheads with other Ayyubid princes, as well as other Muslim and Christian neighbors. The main objective of these forts was indeed to provide an answer to Ayyubid rivals and potential nomadic troublemakers, and not so much "serious" enemies such as the Franks, and the Mongols of the near future. The judicious use of resources to build and strengthen fortifications led in a period of three decades to an enlarged and consolidated principality, whose continued existence was thus facilitated after al-Ẓāhir's death, and provided the basis for al-Nāṣir Yūsuf's expansion to Damascus and much of Bilād al-Shām in 1250. I have, however, some reservations about the idea that al-Ẓāhir was attempting to create "defensible borders" (p. 180). I doubt if such a concept existed in the pre-modern period; in most cases the best one could hope for was an effective frontier system. Given technologies, geography, and the number of troops available, there was no such thing as an Ayyubid equivalent of a Maginot Line or anything close to it. I would suggest that al-Ẓāhir, by constructing and repairing these fortifications, was (1) attempting to make clear which territories were under his influence and power; and (2) creating a means to better control them.[1]

The next two chapters, by Sauro Gelichi ("The Citadel of Ḥārim") and Cristina Tonghini and Nadia Montevecchi ("The Castle of Shayzar: The Fortification of the Access System"), are both fairly technical, detailed descriptions of two medium-sized castles in north Syria (the former an urban citadel). Archaeologists will certainly find these papers of interest, but historians will also derive benefit from the verbal descriptions, the plans, and the photographs, as they will be able to imagine the size and grandeur of these places when they encounter them in the sources for both the Ayyubid and Mamluk period. Cyril Yovitchitch's article ("The Tower of Aybak in ʿAjlūn Castle") is a good, readable study looking at both the archaeology and history of the site, which also frequently appears in our sources. Here, too, it is suggested that the building of the fort had much to do with its symbolic value and was not only a military matter. My one reservation with this article was that the author cites (p. 226) without comment the pioneering work

[1] On the matter of medieval frontiers and castles in them, see the recent book by R. Ellenblum, *Crusader Castles and Modern Histories* (Cambridge, 2007), chapters 8 and 9.

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of C. N. Johns on the castle of ʿAjlūn that "arose as a direct retort to the new Latin castle of Belvoir . . . placed on the escarpment on the opposite side of the Jordan valley, between Tiberias and Baysan."[2] How a castle some forty miles from another as the crow flies can be a "retort" is beyond me. If that was the intent, I am sure that the Franks were not too perturbed.

Other names from the Arabic chronicles come alive in the next two chapters by Janusz Bylinski ("Exploratory Mission to Shumaymis—2002") and Balász Major ("Medieval Cave Fortifications of the Upper Orontes Valley"). The story of the cave fortifications was a real eye opener for me (I confess that I have not yet had the opportunity to tour the Upper Orontes region). True, the existence of these "forts" did not significantly shift the strategic balance in north Syria, but it does shed some light on the control of a rural area. I was impressed by this author's combined use of archaeological data (much of which he himself collected) and the evidence from the Arabic sources; he did not rely on older translations or summaries. Angus Stewart ("Qalʿat al-Rūm/Hṙomgla/Rumkale and the Mamluk Siege of 691 AH/1292 CE") does a fine job describing al-Ashraf Khalīl's campaign to take this castle, really a small fortified city, putting his narrative in both a larger historiographical and archaeological context. A stickler might say that this paper does not really belong in this volume, as it only tangentially deals with Muslim military architecture and the fortification under discussion is really not in Syria by just about any definition. True, but mention is made of the Mamluk and Ottoman phases of the construction, and the discussion of the Mamluk siege offers important insight into the defensive strategies employed against a Mamluk military offensive. It is fascinating to see the Mamluks here not only as patrons of military architecture, but also as those seeking to negate its advantages.

John France's essay ("Fortifications East and West," chapter 20) is in my opinion one of the most important and interesting contributions in the book, since it analytically surveys the "confrontation" between Western siege technologies and Muslim military architecture from the beginning of the Crusades, while comparing Frankish and Muslim fortifications in general and examining the question of influence, primarily the latter on the former. In general, the author does not see too much Eastern (not just Muslim, since Byzantium is included here too) influence on the fortification architecture of the Franks, and also does not see a great initial technological disparity between the two sides in this area. Perhaps this last claim is going too far. To my eye, the Norman Tower of London seems fairly modest compared to Antioch or even Jerusalem of this period, let alone the contemporary citadels in these cities. Muslim fortified cities took weeks if not months (and in some cases years and even decades) to be conquered by the first

[2] C. N. John, "Medieval ʿAjlûn," *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 1 (1932): 23.

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Crusaders. This not only reflects the social organization of the besieged population and its resolution, and conversely was not only a problem of logistics and faulty organization and discipline of the attackers, but shows *inter alia* the strength and sophistication of the fortifications that had to be taken. I also think that Dr. France underestimates the importance of the Frankish concentric fortification, found in such places as Belvoir (Kawkab al-Hawā'), Crac des Chevaliers (Ḥiṣn al-Akrād), Marqab, and elsewhere, a type of fortress that began to be developed in the mid-twelfth century. The point of this concentric plan was not only to provide covering fire to the outer wall from the higher inner one, but also to provide a platform for the firing of artillery. By raising the height of the firing platform, the trebuchets had a greater range than the attacker shooting from below.[3]

The volume concludes with two papers on Ottoman fortifications. The first, by Kay Prag ("Defensive Ditches in Ottoman Fortifications in Bilād al-Shām"), actually deals mainly with one ditch (or moat) in Jerusalem. This, by the way, is the only paper in the book to discuss Palestine, an integral part of medieval Bilād al-Shām. The final paper is by Andrew Petersen, and looks at "Ottoman Hajj Forts" in Transjordan, fortifications that are very different from those discussed elsewhere in the volume. Personally, I would have liked some more discussion of the dating of these structures, and the historical context in which they were constructed.

In spite of different emphases and methodologies, the papers are uniformly of high quality and interest. I must commend the general excellence of the plates: the color photographs are crisp and clear, and extremely evocative. I do, however, have some comments about some other technical aspects of the volume: while articles dealing with specific locations had plans or maps, not all were provided with a directional arrow or a scale. There was no map for the whole volume showing clearly and conveniently where all the sites discussed in the articles were located. Some of the papers use only translations of sources found in older, pioneering publications. I think it should be a must that the latest scientific editions and the full array of sources be used for researching a site, and archeologists should seek the cooperation of historians if necessary.

As mentioned above, a theme that emerges in many of the papers is the symbolic importance of fortifications, which project power and grandeur to the military-

[3] In addition to R. Ellenblum's book cited above, see idem, "Frankish and Muslim Siege Warfare and the Construction of Frankish Concentric Castles," in *Dei gesta per Francos: Etudes sur les croisades dédiées Jean Richard/Crusade Studies in Honour of Jean Richard,* ed. M. Balard, B. Z. Kedar, and J. Riley-Smith (Aldershot, 2001), 187–98; idem, "Three Generations of Frankish Castle-Building in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," in *Autour de la première croisade: actes du Colloque de la Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East: Clermont-Ferrand, 22-25 juin 1995,* ed. M. Balard (Paris, 1996), 517–51.

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political elite, the ruled population, and enemies. At the same time, some authors also address the military side of military architecture, looking at the advantages and disadvantages of a particular construction project or fortified spot, a complex of sites, or more general questions of fortification policy and technology. Taken all together, this collection certainly enriches our understanding of fortification planning, architecture, and construction, the roles of fortifications in military, political, social and cultural life, the actual maintenance and use of fortifications, and the attempts to negate their effectiveness by attackers, all in Greater Syria and neighboring lands from the advent of Islam until the early modern period.

At the beginning of the volume, it is written that the book "is dedicated to the people of Bilād al-Shām, both officials and ordinary folk," and this is indeed a worthy and honorable dedication. I hope that in the future, conditions will be such that conferences of this type will also include scholars from the southwest portion of Bilād al-Shām, for the benefit of all participants and perhaps even for scholarship in general.

LUCIAN REINFANDT, *Mamlukische Sultansstiftungen des 9./15. Jahrhunderts: Nach den Urkunden der Stifter al-Ašraf Īnāl und al-Muʾayyad Aḥmad Ibn Īnāl.* Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, vol. 257 (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2003). Pp. 469.

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The reign of the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Īnāl (r. 857–65/1453–61) has not attracted a great deal of attention. Thus Lucian Reinfandt's book, which is a revised version of his dissertation written under the supervision of the late Ulrich Haarmann and Monika Gronke at the Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel, is most welcome. The main part of his book is an edition with translation and commentary of two parchment scrolls from the Dār al-Kutub al-Qawmīyah (no. 63 tārīkh = DK) and the Dār al-Wathāʾiq al-Qawmīyah (no. 51/346 = DW) in Cairo (part B, pp. 97–397). These scrolls contain various documents regarding the pious foundations *(waqf/awqāf)* of sultan Īnāl and his son and successor Aḥmad. In the first part Reinfandt gives a historical introduction to the reign of Īnāl, demonstrating the importance of Īnāl's foundations for understanding his reign.

To this end Reinfandt gives a stimulating description of the legal and financial means used by Īnāl and other sultans of the fifteenth century in the establishment of pious foundations. Public foundations *(waqf khayrī)* in particular were endowed with much more property than would have been necessary to finance their upkeep. In fact, Reinfandt calculates a surplus of 90% for Īnāl's foundation

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of a madrasah, a *khānqāh,* and a mausoleum in the northern cemetery of Cairo. While a great part of this property was probably acquired illegally, for example by embezzling the funds of the state treasury, the surplus could be used by the founder at will. By the addition of further endowments this private reserve could be increased. Reinfandt scrutinizes the persons and strategies involved in creating this clandestine economy, although some aspects of it have to remain obscure due to the lack of sources. It is one of Reinfandt's main theses (following Carl Petry) that public foundations of Mamluk sultans served as their private banks which provided them with the necessary means to act independently despite a chronic budget deficit. Pious foundations were thus a means to stabilize not only their own rule but also the succession of their sons, although their hopes of creating dynasties were not fulfilled.

Of importance in this context is the flexibility of the *waqf* law. By means of *istibdāl,* i.e., the exchange of *waqf* property with property of another foundation, the *waqf* became a dynamic and adaptive economic instrument in the fifteenth century. Reinfandt's work is especially important for the study of "Stiftungswirklichkeit" (reality of foundations) since it illustrates how two specific foundations developed in real life after the founder had specified his intentions in the endowment deed.

After the death of Īnāl and the deposition of his son Aḥmad, the foundations of Īnāl's family were confiscated by the new sultan. However, they were not totally dissolved but continued to exist well into the Ottoman period. Reinfandt speculates that only the surplus, i.e., the bulk of the income, had been confiscated, leaving the institutions as such enough property to ensure their survival. Thus the mausoleum of Īnāl became not only the center of the sultan's family as a burial plot but also in economic terms, because of additional endowments of his descendants which provided income for the members of the family. In this sense Īnāl's establishment of his madrasah-mausoleum complex was crucial for the further development of his newly created family.

Reinfandt then gives a detailed description of the two main foundations of Īnāl including lists of the endowed property (pp. 59–96): the just-mentioned public foundation of a mausoleum, a madrasah, and a *khānqāh,* and his family foundation. Both foundations are documented respectively in scrolls DK and DW together with later additional foundations ("Zustiftungen"), various judicial authentications and certifications, testimonies, and *istibdāl* documents. All in all Reinfandt identifies 17 documents in DK and 9 documents in DW. His careful analysis of the different types of documents and of the composition of the scrolls as such is very helpful for further research on Arabic diplomatics (pp. 97–135).

In the edition of these two documents (pp. 137–255) Reinfandt follows clear editorial principles, publishing the text as written in the documents. Unfortunately, the reliability of Reinfandt's edition could not be checked since only one picture

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of scroll DK is given. Especially for scholars interested in paleography and diplomatics it would have been desirable to have more pictures of both documents. The final part of Reinfandt's book is the translation of the documents (257–397). This translation together with its comprehensive historical, topographical, and diplomatic commentary is not only of importance for its content. With the glossary of legal, economic, or architectural terms, titles, measurements, and the like, given in the appendix (pp. 414–57), it is an important tool for anyone dealing with Arabic legal documents.

While the translation of such a large amount of legal documents with their very specific language is an admirable work as such, the method of a very literal line by line translation leads sometimes to unsatisfying results. For example, on p. 309, lines 9ff., a certain phrase in German referring to the enactment of a court ruling which is repeated several times in DK and DW is more or less incomprehensible because of the unclear syntax. A similar case is p. 378, line 859ff. Beside this, a few oversights can be detected which a careful final edit would have prevented, such as incomplete sentences (p. 376, note. 909), references to maps that are not included in the book (p. 135), and an incorrect numbering of pages in the index (one has to add 6 to the numbers given in the index).

Despite these minor shortcomings, the analysis and edition of sultan Īnāl's foundation documents represent a very valuable contribution to the study of the history of the late Mamluk period and shows once again the value of documents as historical sources.

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